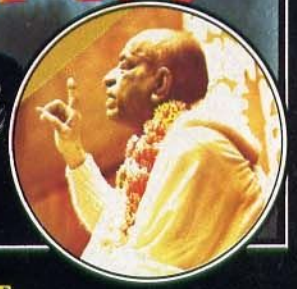


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

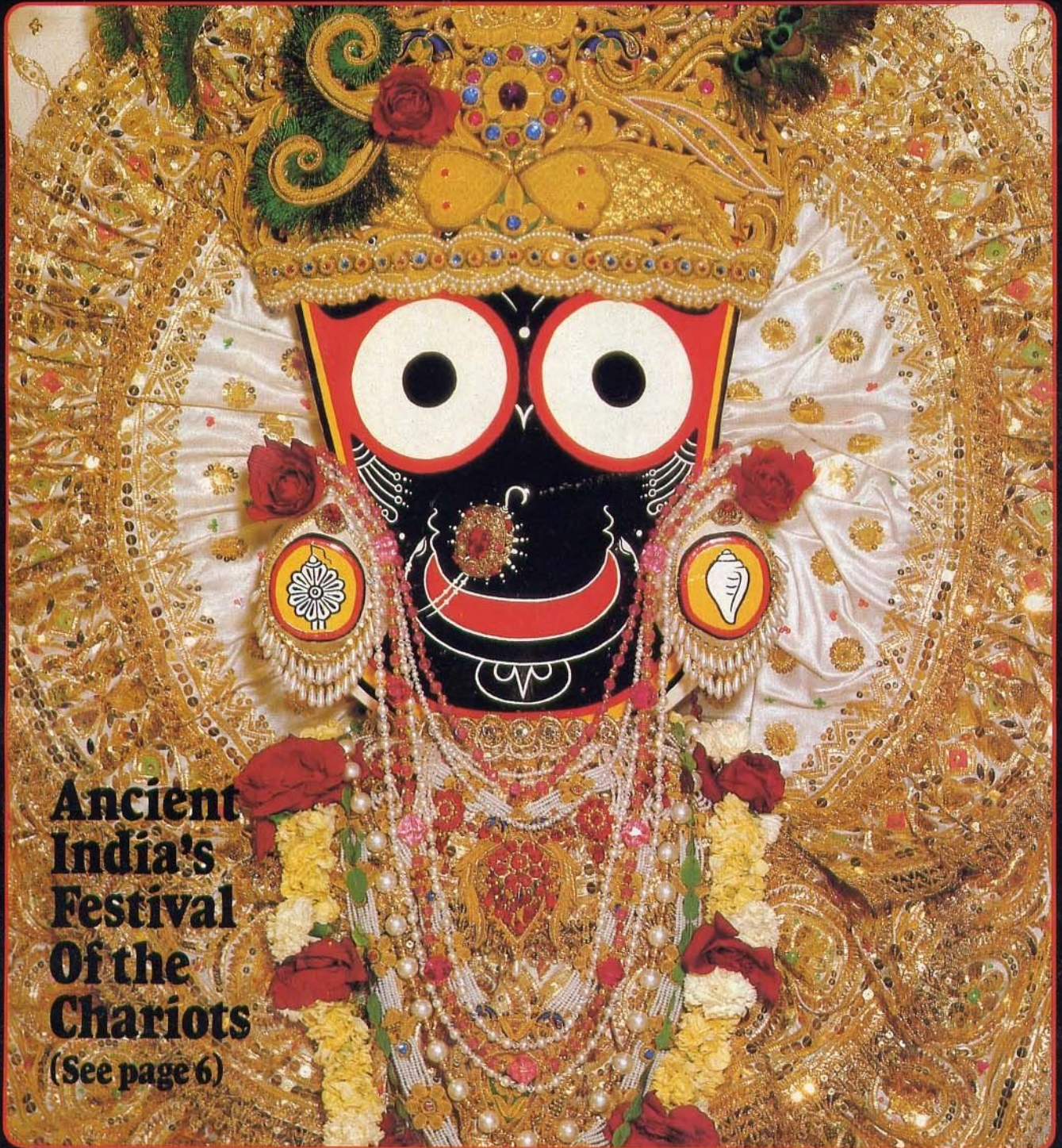


# BACK TO GODHEAD



Vol. 13 No. 6

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



**Ancient  
India's  
Festival  
Of the  
Chariots**  
(See page 6)



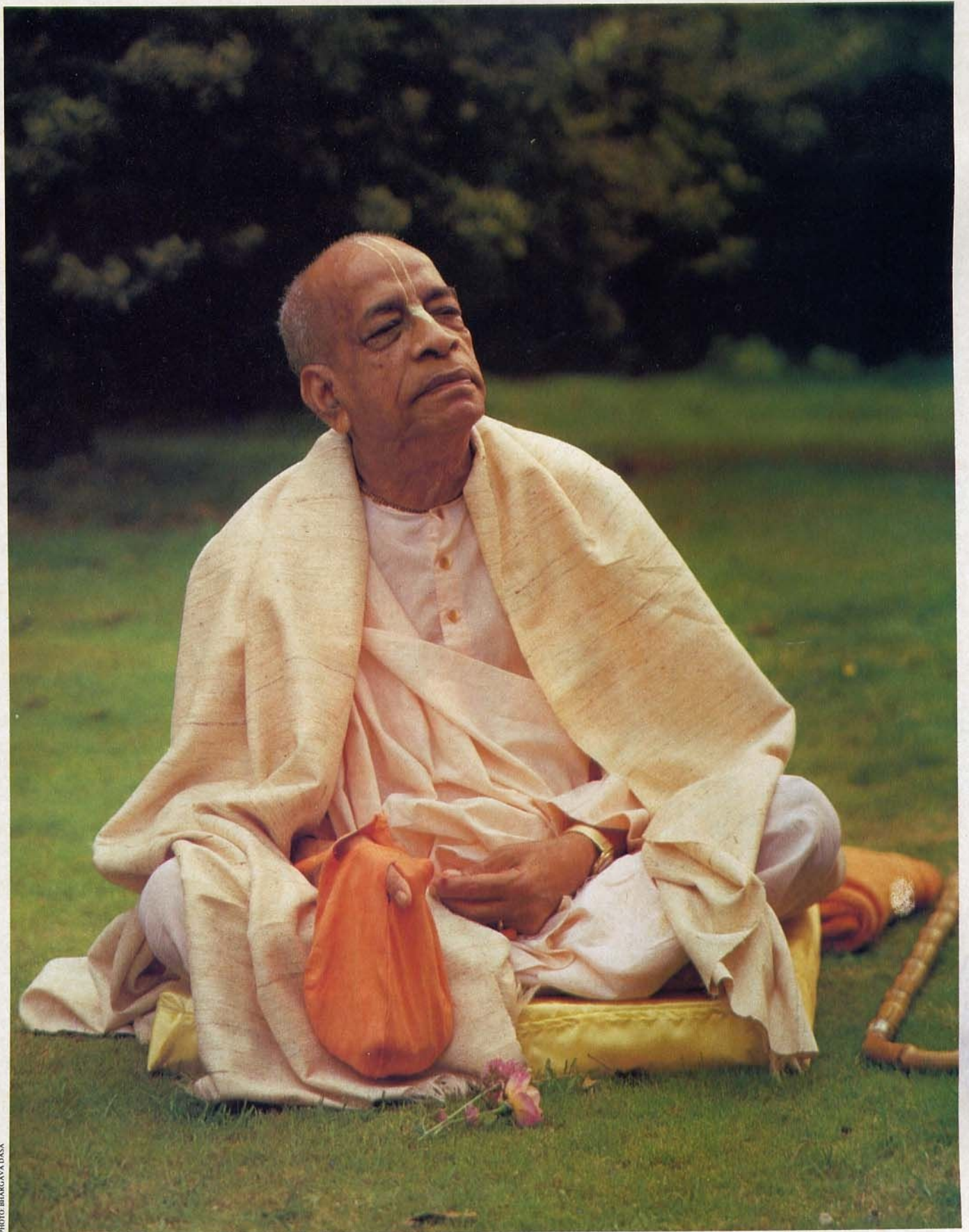


PHOTO: BHARGAVA DASA

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



# BACK TO GODHEAD

VOL. 13, NO. 6

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

FOUNDED 1944

## FOUNDER

(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. Sanskrit words and names in BACK TO GODHEAD are spelled according to a scholarly system that shows how to pronounce each word. The sound of the short **a** is like the **u** in **but**. 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 **ṛ** is pronounced like the **ri** in the English word **rim**. The **c** is pronounced as in **chair**. The aspirated consonants (**ch**, **jh**, **dh**, etc.) are pronounced as in **staunch-heart**, **hedge-hog** and **red-hot**. The two spirants **ś** and **ṣ** are like the English **sh**, and **s** is like the **s** in **sun**. So pronounce *Kṛṣṇa* as KRISHNA and *Caitanya* as CHAITANYA.

◀ His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda came to America in 1965, at age seventy, to fulfill his spiritual master's request that he teach the English-speaking world the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In a dozen years he published some seventy volumes of translation and commentary on India's Vedic literatures, and these are now standard course and reference books in universities worldwide. Meanwhile, traveling almost nonstop, Śrīla Prabhupāda molded his international society into a worldwide confederation of *āśramas*, schools, temples, and farm communities. He passed away at Lord Kṛṣṇa's dearest town (Vṛndāvana, India) in 1977, and his disciples are carrying on the movement he started.

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**COVER:** Thousands of years ago, Kṛṣṇa manifested His form called *Jagannātha*, the Lord of the Universe. This summer His chariots will carry Him through main streets and parks in cities all over the world. (See page 6.) (Cover photo: Nityatṛptā-devī dāsī.)

**ABOUT BACK TO GODHEAD:** "Godhead is light" has always been BACK TO GODHEAD's byword—"Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience." Godhead means the source of everything, and this journal is meant to assist readers in cultivating practical, scientific realization of Godhead. To this end BACK TO GODHEAD explores the ideas presented in ancient India's Vedic literatures, especially *Bhagavad-gītā*. As the *Gītā* itself informs us, "When one is enlightened with the knowledge by which nescience is destroyed, then his knowledge reveals everything, as the sun lights up everything in the daytime."



# There Is a Transcendental World....

How to reach the spiritual realm. His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda speaks on *Bhagavad-gītā*, India's time-honored source book of spiritual science.

*avyakto 'kṣara ity uktas  
tam āhuḥ paramāṁ gatim  
yaṁ prāpya na nivartante  
tad dhāma paramaṁ mama*

"My supreme abode is unmanifested and eternal, and it is the supreme destination. When one goes there he never comes back [to this material world]." [Bg. 8.21]

In this verse the word *avyaktaḥ* means "that which is not manifested." This material world is manifested before us, but the spiritual world is not manifested. Still, although not manifested, the spiritual world is eternal (*akṣaraḥ*). *Akṣaraḥ* means "that which has no annihilation." In the material world a thing is born, it stays for some time, it develops, it produces some by-products, it dwindles, and then it vanishes. These are the six changes of material things. But the spiritual world, which at present is not manifested before us, is *akṣaraḥ*, or eternal. It is not annihilated.

At the present moment, because we are covered by the material dress of material senses, the spiritual world—or anything spiritual—is not conceivable. But we can *feel* that there is *something* spiritual. That is possible. Although we are fully in ignorance of the spiritual reality, still we can feel it. If you analyze yourself silently—"What am I? Am I this finger? Am I this foot? Am I this hair? Am I this body?"—you'll deny: "No, I'm not this." So, what is beyond this body—that is spiritual, and that we can feel.

We cannot see the spirit within the body (although it is there), but we can distinguish a dead body from a living body. In a dead body something is lack-

ing. Again, that "something" is spirit. So although we have no eyes to see, the spirit is there. This is the beginning point of *Bhagavad-gītā*. *Avināśi tu tad viddhi yena sarvaṁ idaṁ tatam* [Bg. 2.17]: that spiritual existence is eternal, whereas this body is not eternal.

Now, here it is said that the spiritual atmosphere is *avyaktaḥ*, unmanifested. So how can we have it manifested before us? We have a little feeling of it, but how can it be manifested? Yes, you can have it manifested—by practicing this Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which we are preaching.

In the Vedic literature it is said, *ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhavet grāhyam indriyaiḥ*. *Indriyaiḥ* means "the senses." We perceive or we get knowledge through the instruments of different senses—the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin. These are our five senses for gathering knowledge. And there are five senses for working—the voice, hands, legs, genital, and anus. So we have ten senses. And these ten senses are being conducted by the mind. Now, *ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhavet grāhyam indriyaiḥ*: "With these dull material senses and mind we cannot understand Kṛṣṇa's name, form, and so forth." Why? Because Kṛṣṇa is completely spiritual, and He's absolute; therefore His name is also spiritual, His form is spiritual, His qualities, His opulences, His paraphernalia—everything is spiritual. But at the present moment, due to our material bondage and conditioning, we cannot understand what is spiritual.

But this ignorance can be removed by this process: chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. How is this? I'll give you an example. When a man is sleeping, how can you awaken



ANA



SRI UPENDRA



SRI SANKARANA



SRI SRIDHARA



SRI NRSIMHA









“There is a transcendental world. Because it is spoken in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, there is no cause for doubting this information. The only thing is how to *feel* it, how to *understand* it.”

him? By the vibration of sound. “Mr. Such-and-such, just get up! Get up! The time is up!” Although he is practically unconscious and cannot see, still that hearing process is so prominent that a sleeping man can be awakened by the vibration of sound. Similarly, although the spirit soul is now overpowered by material bondage and material conditioning, his spiritual consciousness can be revived by this transcendental vibration: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Now, these are Sanskrit words, so some of you may not know the meaning of this Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. The meaning of Hare Kṛṣṇa is, it is simply addressing the Supreme Lord and His energy. *Harā* is the energy, and *Kṛṣṇa* is the Supreme Lord. So we are addressing, “Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa”—“O energy of the Lord, O Lord, please accept me.” That’s all—“Please accept me.” We have no other prayer. “Please accept me.” Lord Caitanya taught that we should simply cry for the Lord and that we should simply pray for Him to accept us. That’s all. So this vibration is simply a cry for addressing the Supreme Lord, requesting Him, “Please accept me. Please accept me.”

*ayi nanda-tanuja kiṅkaram  
patitam mām viṣame bhavāmbudhau  
kṛpayā tava pāda-pañkaja-  
sthita-dhūli-sadrśam vicintaya*

This prayer was offered by Lord Caitanya. He’s praying, “O my dear Kṛṣṇa, son of Nanda.” Kṛṣṇa played the part of a foster son of Nanda Mahārāja. And Kṛṣṇa is very delighted when He is connected with some of His devotees’ names. So Lord Caitanya addresses Him, “O Kṛṣṇa, son of Nanda, somehow or other I have now fallen into this ocean of nescience and ignorance. Please pick me up and place me as one of the atoms at Your lotus feet.” That’s all. If a man falls into the ocean, his only chance for survival is if someone goes and saves him. If someone picks him up just one inch above the water, he feels immediately relieved. Immediately. So, as soon as we are fixed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we feel immediate relief. There is no question about it. It is such a nice thing.

So, we cannot perceive the transcendental nature of the Supreme Lord—His

name, His fame, and so forth—with our materially conditioned senses and mind. By speculating about what the name of God is, you cannot understand what the name of God is. By speculating about what the form of God is, you cannot possibly understand His form. But as soon as you become situated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness—*sevonmukhe hi jihvādau svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*: if you engage yourself in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then gradually God will reveal Himself before you. Oh, you cannot see God by your own endeavor. But if you qualify yourself, God will reveal Himself and you’ll see. This is the process. You cannot order, “O God, please come before me and dance before me.” No. He is not an order supplier. You have to act in such a way that He’ll be pleased to reveal Himself before you, and then you’ll see Him fully.

So here in this verse it is said, *avyaktaḥ, akṣaraḥ*—there is a transcendental world. Because it is spoken in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and because the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself is speaking, there is no cause for doubting. There is no cause for doubting this information. The only thing is how to *feel* it, how to *understand* it. That understanding will gradually be developed—and it will be shown, it will be revealed to you—if you take up this chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

This is a simple process, a very simple process. Even children can take part in it. Even a child of six months took part in it. Perhaps in the last meeting you have seen: there was a small child sitting on the lap of his father, and he was also joining in. [Claps his hands in imitation of the child.] You see? Because it is automatic—a dog will dance, a cat will dance, a child will dance. There is no necessity of preliminary qualifications for understanding the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, because it is from the spiritual platform. It is from the spiritual platform. So this simple process will reveal before you what the spiritual kingdom is, what God is, what you are, what this material world is, why you are conditioned, what the remedy is—*everything* will be revealed gradually, step by step, step by step.

*Avyakto 'kṣara ity uktaḥ*: in the Vedic literature it is said that the spiritual world is unmanifested. But still it is eternal. We

have to see through the books of knowledge. We have to believe. And it will be revealed, if you follow the process. For example, suppose you purchase a ticket for India from Air India or Pan American Airlines. Why do you purchase? You can disbelieve: “What is the evidence that I shall go to India by purchasing the ticket?” But when you see that other people are going to India, the company’s running, and so forth—under these circumstances you develop some faith: “Yes, the plane will take me to India.” And actually, when you purchase the ticket and sit down on the plane, the next morning you arrive in India. Now, why did you have faith? Because Pan American is a company which is authorized, which is recognized. Therefore you are developing faith.

Faith you must have. Without faith you cannot go a step forward, even in your ordinary life. But faith in *what*? Ah, the belief and faith should be in the authorized thing. That is the process. You must have faith, for without faith you cannot make progress. But not blind faith. Rather, you should accept something which is recognized. So *Bhagavad-gītā* is recognized. As far as India is concerned, *Bhagavad-gītā* is recognized cent per cent. It doesn’t matter whether they are theists or atheists—all classes of men in India accept *Bhagavad-gītā*. And outside India all scholars, all religionists, all philosophers have accepted *Bhagavad-gītā* as authority. So there is no doubt about *Bhagavad-gītā*’s being authority. Even Professor Einstein regularly read *Bhagavad-gītā*—such a great scientist. And there is much more evidence.

So you should believe that there is a spiritual atmosphere, and that it is the kingdom of God. And here it is stated, *yam prāpya na nivartante*: if somehow or other you can reach that spiritual atmosphere, then the result is *na nivartante*: you’ll never have to take another material body. So *tad dhāma paramam mama*: you’ll become quietly and happily situated in your eternal life. Don’t you think so? Now, suppose you are placed in some country where you can understand, “I’ll have no more death, no more miseries, no more old age, no more disease.” Will you not be happy? Suppose you are transferred to a country where these things are available. . . . “Yes, I shall, I *must* be happy! If I can go to some place where I’ll not have to die



“You should believe that there is a spiritual atmosphere, and if somehow or other you can reach that spiritual atmosphere, you’ll never have to take another material body.”

again or become old or have any diseases—oh! Certainly I shall accept it. That is my desire, my heart’s desire. I want that.”

Why do you want that? Because you have the right to it. It is your prerogative. You are eternal, you are blissful, you are full of knowledge. But you are now covered by this material entanglement, so you have forgotten your self.

So here Kṛṣṇa is giving you the chance to revive your original status of life. Here it is clearly said, *yaṁ prāpya na nivar-tante*: if you somehow or other can approach that spiritual atmosphere, then you haven’t got to return to this land of miseries. Now we are trying to become happy by transferring ourselves to the moon planet. We are thinking that if we can transfer ourselves to the moon we shall be happy. But this is useless. *Bhagavad-gītā* has already informed you, *ābrahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ punar āvartino ’rjuna*: even if you go to the highest planet (of course you cannot go there, but suppose you could go by your sputnik or by aeronautic means), still you could not avoid the four principles of material miseries—namely birth, death, old age, and disease. So you should not desire a place anywhere within this material world. Either in this country or that country or this planet or that planet—you’ll never be happy.

But here Kṛṣṇa gives us valuable information. *Avyakto ’kṣara ity uktas tam āhuḥ paramām gatim*: if you can reach the highest perfectional stage—if you can reach Kṛṣṇa’s supreme abode—then only will you no longer be required to come back again to this nonsensical material world. This is the information you get from the *Bhagavad-gītā*. And what shall you do there? Some philosophers think that that spiritual atmosphere must be impersonal. Impersonal, void—some philosophers think like that. The impersonalist Śāṅkarites and the Buddhists believe that there is voidness in the spiritual atmosphere. But the *Bhagavad-gītā* does not disappoint you in that way.

That voidness philosophy has created atheism. Just try to understand clearly: I am a spiritual being, so I want enjoyment. That is my life. I want enjoyment. But as soon as I see that my spiritual future is void, I must feel inclined to enjoy this material life. Therefore the impersonalists simply discuss this voidness and impersonalism, but as much as

possible, they enjoy material life. Simply armchair philosophical discussion. As soon as we look at their behavior, we see that they’re too much attached to material enjoyment. So they may enjoy some speculation, that’s all. But there is no benefit.

But really, if one has any spiritual sense he’ll at once cease all this nonsensical enjoyment. That is the symptom of any real idea of spirituality. *Bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir anyatra ca*. The test is . . . if you have developed your Kṛṣṇa consciousness, if you have developed your devotional spirit, your spiritual realization, the result will be that you’ll be at once detached from all kinds of material enjoyment. How is this? It is just like when a hungry man is given nice food. As soon as he eats and feels satisfaction, he says, “No, I don’t want any more. I am satisfied.” *Svāmin kṛtārtho ’smi varam na yāce*. This is also

stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [18.54]. You’ll find,

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

“One who is transcendently situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman and becomes fully joyful. 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 [Kṛṣṇa].”

Oh. One who is spiritually realized—his symptom will be full satisfaction. He’ll no longer be hankering after this nonsensical material enjoyment. That is spiritual realization. It is very clearly stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā—rasa-varjaṁ raso ’py asya param dṛṣtvā nivar-tate*:  
(continued on page 32)

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# The Festival Of the Chariots

Intimations of a Festive World

by JAGAJIVANA DĀSA





This Kṛṣṇa culture," His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda used to say, "has so many festivals. We could have one every day. In the spiritual world, every day is a festival." And when you first see the chariots, you wonder whether that's just where they've come from. Three soaring, silk-covered peaks rumbling along on ten-foot wheels—you have a feeling they've come from somewhere you've been before but haven't been back to for a long while.

"Yoga," as Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "means 'link'—our link with the Supreme. At the present moment we

have forgotten our link with Kṛṣṇa. But He has not forgotten; He is always thinking of ways to take us back home." As you walk with the chariots, along the beachfront or through the park or down the avenue, it seems Kṛṣṇa is making good at His end of the link.

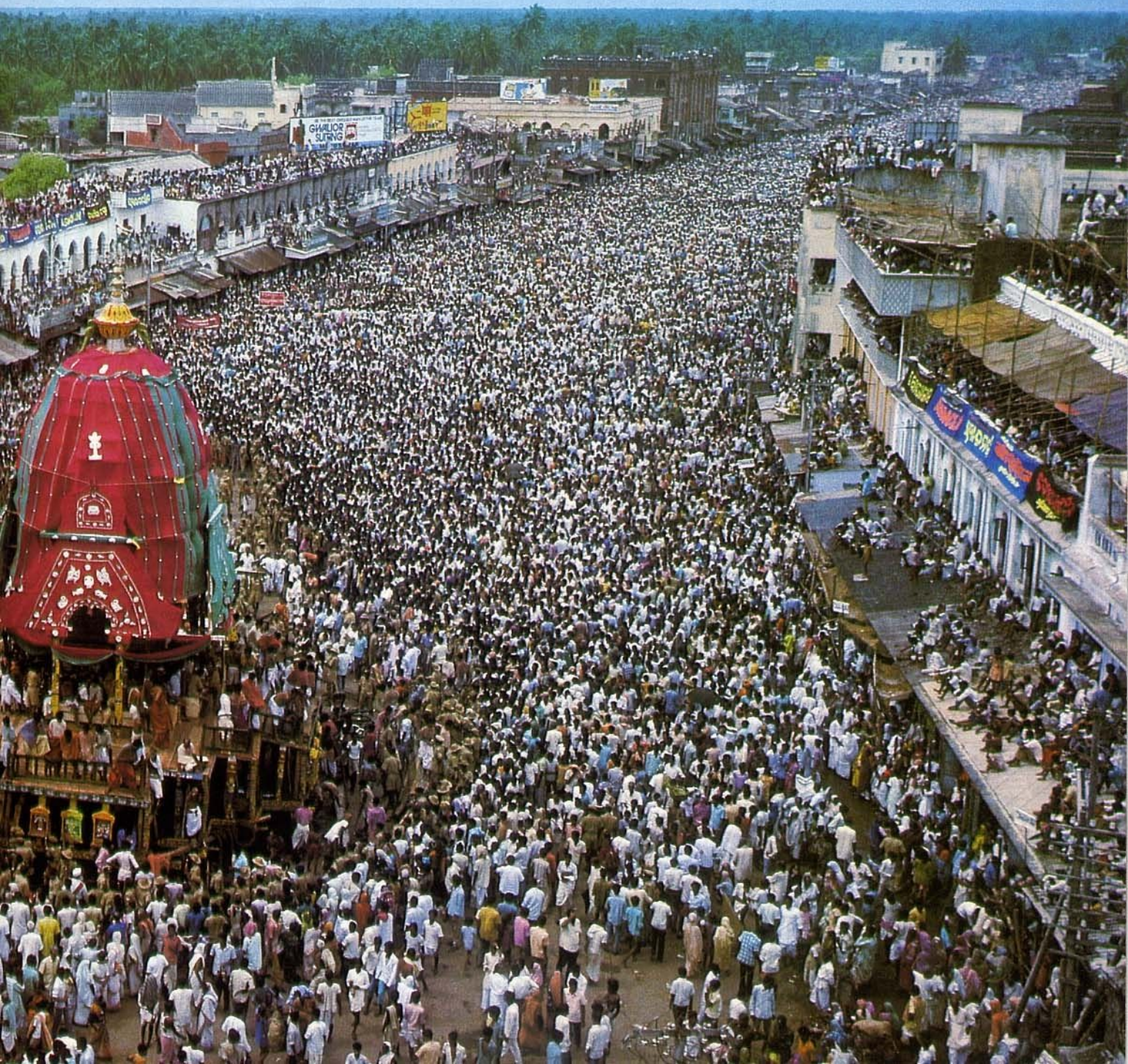
During the afternoon you'll hear or remember hearing that fifty centuries ago, Lord Kṛṣṇa visited this planet to help us revive our feeling for the spiritual world. Once Kṛṣṇa and His brother and sister took a chariot ride like this one, and He was overjoyed to meet His eternal consort, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Rādhārāṇī urged Kṛṣṇa to come back to

the rural northern Indian village of Vṛndāvana, where everyone has pure ecstatic love for Him—Vṛndāvana, the replica of the spiritual world.

"The place We are in now," Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī told Kṛṣṇa, "is crowded with people and always filled with the clatter and confusion of their coming and going. In Vṛndāvana, however, there are flower gardens, and the humming of the bees and chirping of the birds can be heard."

As you watch the big wheels carrying Kṛṣṇa back to His Vṛndāvana world, you sense that maybe you've been spinning your wheels in this citified world. And

*(continued on page 10)*





## The Festival's Inspiration

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda brought the ancient Indian Ratha-yātrā, the Festival of the Chariots, to the West in 1967. That year Śrīla Prabhupāda held the festival in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, and it quickly caught on all over the world. In 1969, at the third San Francisco festival, Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke these words:

“My dear American boys and girls, I thank you very much for your taking part in this great festival known as Lord Jagannātha's Ratha-yātrā. This festival has been held every year for the last two thousand years or more in India, and in your country perhaps this is the third year we have held this great Ratha-yātrā festival. We are also holding this festival in Boston, London, New York, and Columbus. The purpose for this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is to invoke your dormant love for Jagannātha, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Every one of us—not only human beings but every living entity including birds, beasts, and aquatics—is part and parcel of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And just like a son has the right to inherit the property of his father, so we have the prerogative to achieve the status of our father, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This status is called *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha*. *Sat* means ‘eternal,’ *cit* means ‘complete in knowledge,’ *ānanda* means ‘bliss,’ and *vigraha* means ‘person.’ As we are all persons, so the Supreme Personality of Godhead is also a person, but He is very, very great. And He being the greatest, He supplies the needs of all other individual persons. We have a relationship with Lord Jagannātha, and we are meant to participate in His qualities of eternity, knowledge, and bliss.

“This inauguration of the Ratha-yātrā festival will bring a new chapter in the history of the world—it is that potent. It is stated in the Vedic literature that anyone who sees Lord Jagannātha seated on this chariot will never again have to take birth within this miserable material world.”

◀ For two thousand years or more, pilgrims have gone each summer to the holy Indian city of Purī (previous spread), on the Bay of Bengal, to commemorate Lord Kṛṣṇa's famous chariot ride. Now, thanks to Śrīla Prabhupāda, the Festival of the Chariots has come to the West, and Americans and Europeans are taking part.



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PHOTO: MURALIVADANA DASA

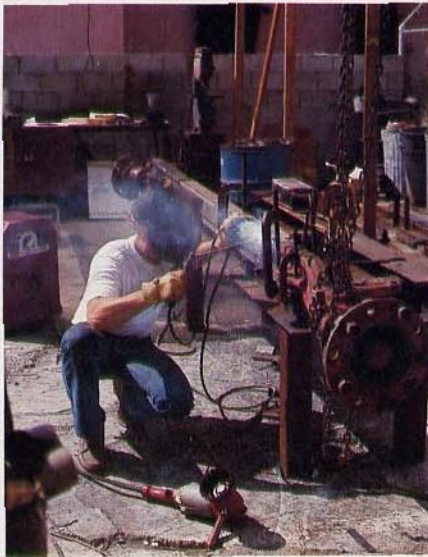
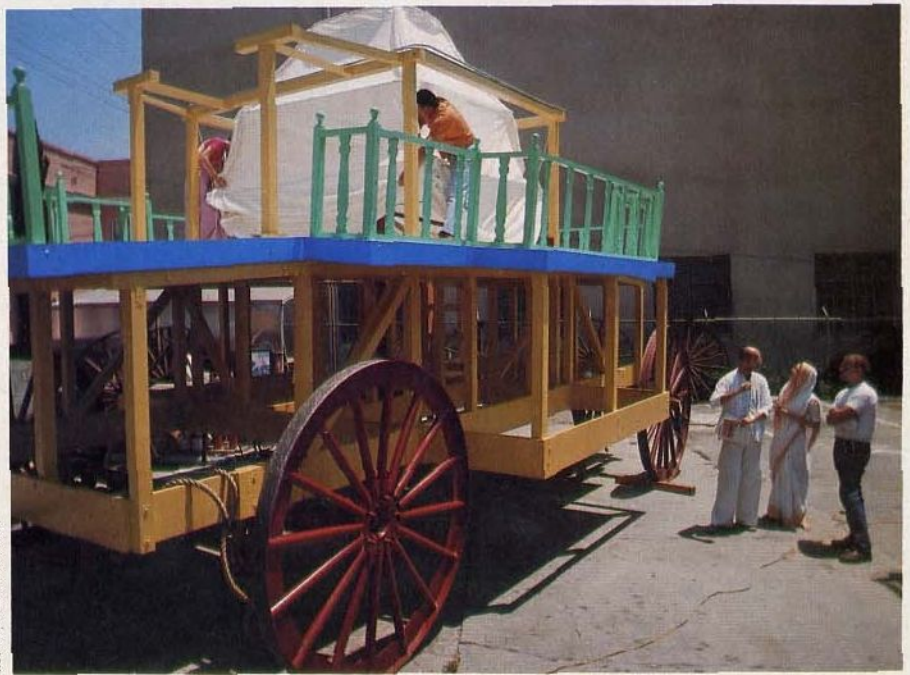


PHOTO: BHARGAVA DASA



PHOTO: MURALIVADANA DASA



**A seamstress adds finishing touches** (left) to a chariot canopy. Top to bottom: stringing garlands that will adorn the chariots; welding an axle that will hold a six-ton frame; painting festival gateways in authentic style; making measurements that will make the chariots' ride a smooth one. (All photos here and on the pages that follow come from the 1977 festival in Los Angeles.)





PHOTO: NITYATRIPTA-DEVI DASI

**Painted elephants move into position** (above), and the sound of the conch cuts through the summer air (right). At last, the Festival of the Chariots is going to start.

(continued from page 7)

now, perhaps with your arms tugging a little on the chariot ropes, you're helping to take Kṛṣṇa back to Vṛndāvana. And you're thinking.

Escapism. This has got to be some kind of escapism. Otherwise, how could all these people leave everything behind like this and come out here to pull these chariots, play some hand cymbals and drums, and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare? Somehow it doesn't seem right.

Then a young lady in a *sārī* walks up with a cup of whipped yoghurt, orange juice, and raspberries, over ice.

"Take it," she says. "It's free. It's spiritual food—*prasāda*, the Lord's mercy. We offered it to Kṛṣṇa."

By now the chariots have gotten to the park or meadow where they were headed. Unusual to see so many people chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa all at once. All these booths—where did all this food come from?

"From our farms, sir," says a young lady behind a counter marked "Indian Delicacies," as she hands you a plate filled with breaded potato-cauliflower chunks in a spicy tomato sauce, little triangular-shaped pastries with zesty green-pea fillings, and some fruit-nut-honey balls. "Śrīla Prabhupāda our spiritual master says that most people are working so hard, simply for nothing. But actually, since the Supreme Lord is everyone's father . . . that makes us all a rich man's children. And a rich man's children don't have to work hard. They can spend their time the way we are

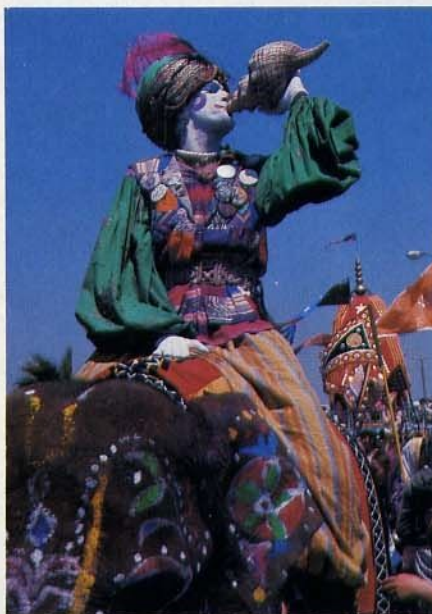


PHOTO: NITYATRIPTA-DEVI DASI

here, with art and philosophy and drama and music."

Does this young American lady really believe all this?

"Sir, even the economists—they've known for a long time that it's human nature to work only when you actually have to, only when you need food or shelter. So like Śrīla Prabhupāda says, every day can be a festival. If we keep some cows and a little land—and there's plenty of land for everyone in the world—then our economic problems, all our problems, are finished."

Seems a little too simplistic.

"Prabhupāda usually gives the example of the ass. The ass thinks he has to carry a big heavy load all day so that at the end of the day his master will give him a few morsels of grass. What he doesn't realize is that he can get grass everywhere, all over the world, for free.



PHOTO: BHARGAVA DĀSA

And in our age people are acting just like asses. This industrial civilization is just a heavy load on everybody's back. Prabhupāda says it's an ass civilization."

Sure enough: biting the hand that feeds them.

"This industrial civilization isn't supplying the food," the young lady comes back. "God is supplying it. He's the one that makes the rain fall, and the crops and cows come from Him. In the spiritual world no one has to do hard labor. And here—for anybody who's using his human intelligence to cultivate God consciousness, Kṛṣṇa will make this world as good as the spiritual world. He promises that in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: 'Don't work so hard. I'll give you everything if you just surrender to Me.'"

What if everybody did this kind of thing? Wouldn't it be the end of modern civilization?





Lord Jagannātha looks on (left) as festival-goers surround His chariot and walk with Him along the parade route. All afternoon an attendant fans the Lord with a yak-tail whisk.

PHOTO: BHARGAVA DASA

PHOTO: BHARGAVA DASA



With the crowd swelling (left), the chariots reach an impasse, some telephone lines. But thanks to some special engineering, the canopies lower and the chariots pass without difficulty. Leading the way (above) are Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda, who five centuries ago advised, "In a humble state of mind, one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly."





PHOTO: VISAKHA-DEVI DASI



Inside the festival grounds guests visit the book booth (above) and delve into the science of *yoga* and God realization. Pictures of Kṛṣṇa (next right) attract much attention, and many guests take garlands (far right) to offer to the Jagannātha Deity.





**The Kṛṣṇa culture.** Chanting and dancing (left): people who try it find the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* the ultimate *yoga* experience. Feasting and philosophy (below): after visiting the Indian Delicacies booth, guests line up for the Changing Bodies diorama exhibit.



PHOTO: NITYA TRIPATI-DEVI DASI

PHOTO: MIRALATI/ANNA DASA

PHOTO: NITYA TRIPATI-DEVI DASI



“In a way, yes. Of course, that’s sort of like asking, ‘What would happen to the prison if all the prisoners left?’ But what would be the harm? And a prison is exactly what this civilization is. Slaughterhouses, casinos, breweries. Everything here is calculated to keep you thinking you’re just a highly evolved animal and make you forget that you’re really spiritual.

“Now, if you’ll check into the books and paintings and recordings at the booths over there, you’ll see how modern technology can do something spiritual for you. And over here you’ll find a diorama exhibit, Changing Bodies. It shows how your body keeps changing from babyhood to childhood to middle age and on and on until death, while you always stay the same person. That’s the way Kṛṣṇa explains it in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: ‘Just try to understand that you are not your body but a spirit soul, eternally related to Me. Then become My devotee, and you will come to Me in the spiritual world.’ Kṛṣṇa has given us a beautiful world to live in and become Kṛṣṇa conscious, but this industrial civilization is making people work hard for nothing, just like asses. Who’s escaping? They’re escaping. They’re escaping happiness.”

But that statue on the chariot. The one with the smile and the big eyes. That’s Kṛṣṇa, no doubt.

“Yes, that’s Kṛṣṇa, in His special Deity form called *Jagannātha*, the Lord of the Universe. In His original form Kṛṣṇa never leaves the spiritual world, but we can’t see that form while we’re stuck here in this material world with these material bodies. So Kṛṣṇa manifests Himself through matter. Actually, to Him it makes no difference, because both matter and spirit are His energies. The Vedic literatures say, ‘You cannot see the Lord’s spiritual qualities with your blunt material senses, but if you serve Him lovingly with your tongue and your ears and with eyes anointed with devotion, then you’ll see Him face to face.’ It’s like Śrīla Prabhupāda once said: ‘I know you are all trained as atheists, but there really is a Kṛṣṇa.’”

Maybe so. Otherwise, how could this spiritual food taste so unbelievably good? How could Kṛṣṇa’s words in the *Bhagavad-gītā*—“You are not your body but a spirit soul, eternally related to Me”—make so much sense? How could those simple drums and little cymbals and the names “Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare” move so many people so deeply? “There really is a Kṛṣṇa”—right, right. It’s all starting to come back now. 🙏



# ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

## On "Human Suffering and an Unjust God"

This conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and social worker Ashoka Chugani took place in Bombay, India.

**Mr. Chugani:** I feel that your Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is doing very valuable work here in India. Perhaps you know of our success, also. We are making arrangements for many villagers in the outlying areas around Bombay to receive greatly needed eye operations. We have facilities for 5,200 patients.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** We are following *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is. *Bhagavad-gītā* doesn't teach that you help the people by taking care of their eyes. Kṛṣṇa does not give us any such philosophy in *Bhagavad-gītā*. That is your own idea. But we are applying *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is. That is the difference between your work and ours. Our program is, instead of giving relief only to the eyes, we give people real relief. If you give a man Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he won't have to take another birth in this material world. That means no more material bodies—no more eyes, no more disease. This is real relief from suffering.

Somebody's taking care of the eyes, somebody's taking care of the stomach, somebody the teeth, somebody something else, on and on. But this will not solve the problem. The real problem, *Bhagavad-gītā* says, is *janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhi*—birth, death, old age, and disease. Because you took birth, you have these eyes, so you're bound to have eye disease. Birth, death, old age, and disease: because you have accepted birth, you must accept old age, disease, and death. Hospitals may give some temporary relief, but that is not the solution. The solution is to stop birth, death, old age, and disease. If you are able to give that solution, then there will be no more eye trouble, ever.

Suppose a diseased man goes to a doctor for treatment. His symptoms are sometimes headache, sometimes eye-ache, sometimes stomachache. Now, if the doctor gives medicine only for the symptoms, is that the cure? No. This man has a disease, and if you cure the disease, the symptoms will be cured automatically. Similarly, *everyone within this material world is suffering from repeated birth and death*. But *Bhagavad-gītā* is meant for giving the real cure—how



not to take another birth in this material world.

Kṛṣṇa's advice in the *Bhagavad-gītā* is that we tolerate this temporary suffering. Just as your body is not permanent, so your diseases are also not permanent. You should tolerate the temporary suffering and solve the real problem—you must stop your repetition of birth and death. But people do not know that birth and death can be stopped, so they are simply busy with the temporary problems.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* explains how, on leaving his body at the time of death, one can go back home, back to Godhead—*tyaktvā dehaṃ punar janma naiti mām eti*. No more birth in this material world—that is the real cure for all suffering.

**Mr. Chugani:** What about the problem of starvation? We are working to solve...

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Starvation? This is not a problem. The *Vedas* say, *nityo nityānām cetanas cetanānām eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān*. God is perfectly providing food for all living beings. If someone is not getting any food, that is a blessing. It is God's arrangement to correct him.

Suppose a child is diseased and his father does not give him any food to eat. That is not starvation—it is his father's blessing. It is the cure. Why should the child complain? The so-called starvation problem is just a mental concoction. But we don't concoct anything; we get our knowledge from the scriptures. *Tat te*

*'nukampām susamīkṣamāṇo bhujāna evāṭma-kṛtām vipākam*: if a devotee of the Lord is starving, he doesn't complain. He takes it as God's blessing. "I did something wrong, so God has put me into this difficulty. It is His blessing." This is our view; this is scripture.

People often ask this question: "How can God be unkind to some people and kind to others? It's unjust." But this is foolishness. God is not unjust; God is good, but people do not understand God. Because you are unintelligent, when you see that people are starving you say that God is not good. But the fact is that *you* are not good. Each man's suffering is simply his own fault. So a devotee takes suffering as Kṛṣṇa's blessing, and because a devotee is thinking like that, his liberation is guaranteed (*mukti-pade sa dāya-bhāḥ*).

**Mr. Chugani:** The ways of God in the world are difficult for us to understand. They do seem unjust.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Actually, you don't believe in God. And this godlessness is the real problem. You only believe in God if God is your servant and order supplier. "God, if You don't help me, I won't serve You." People think of God as their servant and order supplier.

One of my Godbrothers—from Germany—told me that in the Second World War, when the men of Germany went to fight, all the women were left at home. So, they went to the church and prayed to God that their husbands, their fathers, and their sons would return home. But none of them returned home, and the people all became atheists. "Ah, it is useless to go to the church! I prayed so much for my husband, but he did not come. It is useless!"

So this is their understanding of God. When the war was declared, they didn't consult God. But when their husband is going to die, then they petition God. They order God to make their husbands return from the war unharmed. "God did not bring him back. He did not carry out my order. So God is unjust. We're not interested in God."

And this is the attitude here, also. When people act sinfully, God is never consulted. But when they suffer, then they cry to God. And if He doesn't supply their order, they become atheists. "God is unjust!" they say. This is their rascaldom.



The Beautiful Story of the Personality of Godhead

# ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

Translation and commentary by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda  
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

## First Canto: "Creation"

### CHAPTER SIXTEEN

#### How Parikṣit Received the Age of Kali

In this part of our continuing presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the devotee-king Parikṣit learns that the age of Kali has infiltrated his kingdom: personifying the age, a lower-class man in royal garb is beating the legs of an innocent cow and bull. (The cow is the embodiment of the earth, and the bull is the embodiment of religious principles.)

#### TEXT 1

सूत उवाच

ततः परीक्षिद् द्विजवर्यशिक्षया  
महीं महाभागवतः शशास ह ।  
यथा हि स्रत्यामभिजातकोविदाः  
समादिशन् विप्र महद्गुणस्तथा ॥ १ ॥

sūta uvāca

tataḥ parikṣid dvija-varya-śikṣayā  
mahīm mahā-bhāgavataḥ śaśāsa ha  
yathā hi sṛtyām abhijāta-kovidāḥ  
samādiśan vipra mahad-guṇas tathā

sūtaḥ uvāca—Sūta Gosvāmī said; tataḥ—thereafter; parikṣit—Mahārāja Parikṣit; dvija-varya—the great twice-born brāhmaṇas; śikṣayā—by their instructions; mahīm—the earth; mahā-bhāgavataḥ—the great devotee; śaśāsa—ruled; ha—in the past; yathā—as they told it; hi—certainly; sṛtyām—at the time of his birth; abhijāta-kovidāḥ—expert astrologers at the time of birth; samādiśan—gave their opinions; vipra—O brāhmaṇas; mahad-guṇaḥ—great qualities; tathā—true to that.

#### TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: O learned brāhmaṇas, Mahārāja Parikṣit then began to rule over the world as a great devotee of the Lord under the instructions of the best of the twice-born brāhmaṇas. He ruled by those great qualities which were foretold by expert astrologers at the time of his birth.

#### PURPORT

At the time of Mahārāja Parikṣit's birth, the expert astrologer-brāhmaṇas foretold some of his qualities. Mahārāja Parikṣit developed all those qualities, being a great devotee of the Lord. The real qualification is to become a devotee of the Lord, and gradually all the good qualities worthy of possession develop. Mahārāja Parikṣit was a mahā-

bhāgavata, or a first-class devotee, who was not only well versed in the science of devotion but also able to convert others to become devotees by his transcendental instructions. Mahārāja Parikṣit was, therefore, a devotee of the first order, and thus he used to consult great sages and learned brāhmaṇas, who could advise him by the śāstras how to execute the state administration. Such great kings were more responsible than modern elected executive heads because they obliged the great authorities by following their instructions left in Vedic literatures. There was no need for impractical fools to enact daily a new legislative bill and to conveniently alter it again and again to serve some purpose. The rules and regulations were already set forth by great sages like Manu, Yājñavalkya, Parāśara and other liberated sages, and the enactments were all suitable for all ages in all places. Therefore the rules and regulations were standard and without flaw or defect. Kings like Mahārāja Parikṣit had their council of advisers, and all the members of that council were either great sages or brāhmaṇas of the first order. They did not accept any salary, nor had they any necessity for such salaries. The state would get the best advice without expenditure. They were themselves sama-darśī, equal to everyone, both man and animal. They would not advise the king to give protection to man and instruct him to kill the poor animals. Such council members were not fools or representatives to compose a fool's paradise. They were all self-realized souls, and they knew perfectly well how all living beings in the state would be happy, both in this life and in the next. They were not concerned with the hedonistic philosophy of eat, drink, be merry and enjoy. They were philosophers in the real sense, and they knew well what is the mission of human life. Under all these obligations, the advisory council of the king would give correct directions, and the king or executive head, being himself a qualified devotee of the Lord, would scrutinizingly follow them for the welfare of the state. The state in the days of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira or Mahārāja Parikṣit was a welfare state in the real sense of the term because no one was unhappy in that state, be he man or animal. Mahārāja Parikṣit was an ideal king for a welfare state of the world.

#### TEXT 2

स उत्तरस्य तनयामुपयेम इरावतीम् ।  
जनमेजयादींश्चतुरस्तस्यामुत्पादयत् सुतान् ॥ २ ॥

sa uttarasya tanayām  
upayema irāvatiṁ  
janamejayādīṁś caturas  
tasyām utpādayat sutān

saḥ—he; uttarasya—of King Uttara; tanayām—daughter; upayeme—married; irāvatiṁ—Irāvati; janamejaya-ādīn—headed by Mahārāja Janamejaya; caturasḥ—four; tasyām—in her; utpādayat—begot; sutān—sons.



## TRANSLATION

King Parikṣit married the daughter of King Uttara and begot four sons, headed by Mahārāja Janamejaya.

## PURPORT

Mahārāja Uttara was the son of Virāta and maternal uncle of Mahārāja Parikṣit. Irāvati, being the daughter of Mahārāja Uttara, was the cousin-sister of Mahārāja Parikṣit, but cousin-brothers and -sisters were allowed to get married if they did not belong to the same *gotra*, or family. In the Vedic system of marriage, the importance of the *gotra*, or family, was stressed. Arjuna also married Subhadrā, although she was his maternal cousin-sister.

*Janamejaya*: One of the *rājarsi* kings and the famous son of Mahārāja Parikṣit. His mother's name was Irāvati, or according to some, Mādravati. Mahārāja Janamejaya begot two sons of the names Jñātānika and Śaṅkukarṇa. He celebrated several sacrifices in the Kurukṣetra pilgrimage site, and he had three younger brothers named Śrutasena, Ugrasena and Bhīmasena II. He invaded Takṣalā (Ajanta), and he decided to avenge the unlawful curse upon his great father, Mahārāja Parikṣit. He performed a great sacrifice called *Sarpa-yajña*, to kill the race of serpents, including the *taṅṣaka*, which had bitten his father to death. On request from many influential demigods and sages, he had to change his decision to kill the race of snakes, but despite stopping the sacrifice, he satisfied everyone concerned in the sacrifice by rewarding them properly. In the ceremony, Mahāmuni Vyāsadeva also was present, and he personally narrated the history of the Battle of Kurukṣetra before the King. Later on by the order of Vyāsadeva, his disciple Vaiśampāyana narrated before the King the subject matter of *Mahābhārata*. He was much affected by his great father's untimely death and was very anxious to see him again, and he expressed his desire before the great sage Vyāsadeva. Vyāsadeva also fulfilled his desire. His father was present before him, and he worshiped both his father and Vyāsadeva with great respect and pomp. Being fully satisfied, he most munificently gave charities to the *brāhmaṇas* present at the sacrifice.

## TEXT 3

आजहाराम्भेषांस्त्रीन् गङ्गायां भूरिदक्षिणान् ।  
शरद्वर्तं गुरुं कृत्वा देवा यत्राक्षिगोचराः ॥ ३ ॥

ājahārāśva-medhāns trīn  
gaṅgāyām bhūri-dakṣiṇān  
śāradvatam gurum kṛtvā  
devā yatrākṣi-gocarāḥ

ājahāra—performed; *aśva-medhān*—horse sacrifices; *trīn*—three; *gaṅgāyām*—the bank of the Ganges; *bhūri*—sufficiently; *dakṣiṇān*—rewards; *śāradvatam*—unto Kṛpācārya; *gurum*—spiritual master; *kṛtvā*—having selected; *devāḥ*—the demigods; *yatra*—wherein; *akṣi*—eyes; *gocarāḥ*—within the purview.

## TRANSLATION

Mahārāja Parikṣit, after having selected Kṛpācārya for guidance as his spiritual master, performed three horse sacrifices on the banks of the Ganges. These were executed with sufficient rewards for the attendants. And at these sacrifices, even the common man could see demigods.

## PURPORT

It appears from this verse that interplanetary travel by the denizens of higher planets is easy. In many statements in *Bhāgavatam*, we have observed that the demigods from heaven used to visit this earth to attend sacrifices performed by influential kings and emperors. Herein also we find that during the time of the horse sacrifice ceremony of Mahārāja Parikṣit, the demigods from other planets were visible even to the com-

mon man, due to the sacrificial ceremony. The demigods are not generally visible to common men, as the Lord is not visible. But as the Lord, by His causeless mercy, descends to be visible to the common man, similarly the demigods also become visible to the common man by their own grace. Although celestial beings are not visible to the naked eyes of the inhabitants of this earth, it was due to the influence of Mahārāja Parikṣit that the demigods also agreed to be visible. The kings used to spend lavishly during such sacrifices, as a cloud distributes rains. A cloud is nothing but another form of water, or, in other words, the waters of the earth transform into clouds. Similarly, the charity made by the kings in such sacrifices are but another form of the taxes collected from the citizens. But, as the rains fall down very lavishly and appear to be more than necessary, the charity made by such kings also seems to be more than what the citizen needs. Satisfied citizens will never organize agitation against the king, and thus there was no need in changing the monarchical state.

Even for a king like Mahārāja Parikṣit there was need of a spiritual master for guidance. Without such guidance one cannot make progress in spiritual life. The spiritual master must be bona fide, and one who wants to have self-realization must approach and take shelter of a bona fide spiritual master to achieve real success.

## TEXT 4

निजग्राहौजसा वीरः कलिं दिग्विजये क्वचित् ।  
नृपालङ्घरं शूद्रं घ्नन्तं गोमिथुनं पदा ॥ ४ ॥

nijagrāhaujasā vīrah  
kalim digvijaye kvacit  
nṛpa-līṅga-dharam śūdrām  
ghnantam go-mithunam padā

nijagrāha—sufficiently punished; *ojasā*—by prowess; *vīrah*—valiant hero; *kalim*—unto Kali, the master of the age; *digvijaye*—on his way to conquer the world; *kvacit*—once upon a time; *nṛpa-līṅga-dharam*—one who passes in the dress of a king; *śūdrām*—the lower class; *ghnantam*—hurting; *go-mithunam*—a cow and bull; *padā*—on the leg.

## TRANSLATION

Once, when Mahārāja Parikṣit was on his way to conquer the world, he saw the master of Kali-yuga, who was lower than a śūdra, disguised as a king and hurting the legs of a cow and bull. The King at once caught hold of him to deal sufficient punishment.

## PURPORT

The purpose of a king's going out to conquer the world is not for self-aggrandizement. Mahārāja Parikṣit went out to conquer the world after his ascendance to the throne, but this was not for the purpose of aggression on other states. He was the Emperor of the world, and all small states were already under his regime. His purpose in going out was to see how things were going on in terms of the godly state. The king, being the representative of the Lord, has to execute the will of the Lord duly. There is no question of self-aggrandizement. Thus as soon as Mahārāja Parikṣit saw that a lower-class man in the dress of a king was hurting the legs of a cow and a bull, at once he arrested and punished him. The king cannot tolerate insults to the most important animal, the cow, nor can he tolerate disrespect for the most important man, the *brāhmaṇa*. Human civilization means to advance the cause of brahminical culture, and to maintain it, cow protection is essential. There is a miracle in milk, for it contains all the necessary vitamins to sustain human physiological conditions for higher achievements. Brahminical culture can advance only when man is educated to develop the quality of goodness, and for this there is a prime necessity of food prepared with milk, fruits and grains. Mahārāja Parikṣit was astonished to see that a black *śūdra*, dressed like a ruler, was mistreating a cow, the most important animal in human society.



The age of Kali means mismanagement and quarrel. And the root cause of all mismanagement and quarrel is that worthless men with the modes of lower-class men, who have no higher ambition in life, come to the helm of the state management. Such men at the post of a king are sure to first hurt the cow and the brahminical culture, thereby pushing all society towards hell. Mahārāja Parikṣit, trained as he was, got the scent of this root cause of all quarrel in the world. Thus he wanted to stop it in the very beginning.

## TEXT 5

शौनक उवाच

कस्य हेतोर्निजग्राह कलिं दिग्विजये नृपः ।  
 नृदेवचिह्नयुक् शूद्रकोऽसौ गां यः पदाहन्त् ।  
 तत्कथ्यतां महामाग यदि कृष्णकथाश्रयम् ॥ ५ ॥

śaunaka uvāca  
 kasya hetor nijagrāha  
 kalim digvijaye nṛpaḥ  
 nṛdeva-cihna-dhṛk śūdra-  
 ko 'sau gām yaḥ padāhanat  
 tat kathyatām mahā-bhāga  
 yadi kṛṣṇa-kathāśrayam

śaunakaḥ uvāca—Śaunaka Ṛṣi said; kasya—for what; hetoḥ—reason; nijagrāha—sufficiently punished; kalim—the master of the age of Kali; digvijaye—during the time of his world tour; nṛpaḥ—the King; nṛ-deva—royal person; cihna-dhṛk—decorated like; śūdrakaḥ—lowest of the śūdras; asau—he; gām—cow; yaḥ—one who; padāhanat—struck with his leg; tat—all that; kathyatām—please describe; mahā-bhāga—O greatly fortunate one; yadi—if, however; kṛṣṇa—about Kṛṣṇa; kathā-śrayam—related with His topics.

## TRANSLATION

Śaunaka Ṛṣi inquired: Why did Mahārāja Parikṣit simply punish him, since he was the lowest of the śūdras, having dressed as a king and having struck a cow with his leg? Please describe all these incidents if they relate to the topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

## PURPORT

Śaunaka and the ṛṣis were astonished to hear that the pious Mahārāja Parikṣit simply punished the culprit and did not kill him. This suggests that a pious king like Mahārāja Parikṣit should have at once killed an offender who wanted to cheat the public by dressing like a king and at the same time daring to insult the purest of the animals, a cow. The ṛṣis in those days, however, could not even imagine that in the advanced days of the age of Kali the lowest of the śūdras will be elected as administrators and will open organized slaughterhouses for killing cows. Anyway, although hearing about a śūdraka who was a cheat and insulter of a cow was not very interesting to the great ṛṣis, they nevertheless wanted to hear about it to see if the event had any connection with Lord Kṛṣṇa. They were simply interested in the topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa, for anything that is dovetailed with the narration of Kṛṣṇa is worth hearing. There are many topics in the *Bhāgavatam* about sociology, politics, economics, cultural affairs, etc., but all of them are in relation with Kṛṣṇa, and therefore all of them are worth hearing. Kṛṣṇa is the purifying ingredient in all matters, regardless of what they are. In the mundane world, everything is impure due to its being a product of the three mundane qualities. The purifying agent, however, is Kṛṣṇa.

## TEXT 6

अथवास्य पदाम्भोजमकरन्दलिहां सताम् ।  
 किमन्यैरसदालापैरायुषो यदसद्व्ययः ॥ ६ ॥

athavāsya padāmbhoja-  
 makaranda-lihām satām  
 kim anyair asad-ālapair  
 āyūṣo yad asad-vyayaḥ

athavā—otherwise; asya—of His (Lord Kṛṣṇa's); pada-ambhoja—lotus feet; makaranda-lihām—of those who lick the honey from such a lotus flower; satām—of those who are to exist eternally; kim anyaiḥ—what is the use of anything else; asat—illusory; ālapaiḥ—topics; āyūṣaḥ—of the duration of life; yat—that which is; asat-vyayaḥ—unnecessary waste of life.

## TRANSLATION

The devotees of the Lord are accustomed to licking up the honey available from the lotus feet of the Lord. What is the use of topics which simply waste one's valuable life?

## PURPORT

Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees are both on the transcendental plane; therefore the topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa and of His pure devotees are equally good. The Battle of Kurukṣetra is full of politics and diplomacy, but because the topics are related with Lord Kṛṣṇa, the *Bhagavad-gītā* is therefore adored all over the world. There is no need to eradicate politics, economics, sociology, etc., which are mundane to the mundaners. To a pure devotee, who is actually related with the Lord, such mundane things are transcendental if dovetailed with the Lord or with His pure devotees. We have heard and talked about the activities of the Pāṇḍavas, and we now are dealing with the topics of Mahārāja Parikṣit, but because all these topics are related to the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they are all transcendental, and pure devotees have great interest in hearing them. We have already discussed this matter in connection with the prayers of Bhīṣmadeva.

Our duration of life is not very long, and there is no certainty of when we shall be ordered to leave everything for the next stage. Thus it is our duty to see that not a moment of our life is wasted in topics which are not related with Lord Kṛṣṇa. Any topic, however pleasant, is not worth hearing if it is devoid of its relation to Kṛṣṇa.

The spiritual planet, Goloka Vṛndāvana, the eternal abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, is shaped like the whorl of a lotus flower. Even when the Lord descends to any one of the mundane planets, He does so by manifesting His own abode as it is. Thus His feet remain always on the same big whorl of the lotus flower. His feet are also as beautiful as the lotus flower. Therefore it is said that Lord Kṛṣṇa has lotus feet.

A living being is eternal by constitution. He is, so to speak, in the whirlpool of birth and death due to his contact with material energy. Freed from such material energy, a living entity is liberated and is eligible to return home, back to Godhead. Those who want to live forever without changing their material bodies should not waste valuable time with topics other than those relating to Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

## TEXT 7

क्षुद्रायुषां नृणामङ्ग मर्त्यानामृतमिच्छताम् ।  
 इहोपहृतो भगवान् मृत्युः शामित्रकर्मणि ॥ ७ ॥

kṣudrāyūṣāṁ nṛṇām aṅga  
 martyānām ṛtam icchatām  
 ihopahūto bhagavān  
 mṛtyuḥ śāmitra-karmani

kṣudra—very small; āyūṣām—of the duration of life; nṛṇām—of the human beings; aṅga—O Sūta Gosvāmi; martyānām—of those who are sure to meet death; ṛtam—eternal life; icchatām—of those who desire it; iha—herein; upahūtaḥ—called for being present; bhagavān—representing the Lord; mṛtyuḥ—the controller of death, Yamarāja; śāmitra—suppressing; karmani—performances.



## TRANSLATION

O Sūta Gosvāmī, there are those amongst men who desire freedom from death and get eternal life. They escape the slaughtering process by calling the controller of death, Yamarāja.

## PURPORT

The living entity, as he develops from lower animal life to a higher human being and gradually to higher intelligence, becomes anxious to get free from the clutches of death. Modern scientists try to avoid death by physiochemical advancement of knowledge, but alas, the controller of death, Yamarāja, is so cruel that he does not spare even the very life of the scientist himself. The scientist, who puts forward the theory of stopping death by advancement of scientific knowledge, becomes himself a victim of death when he is called by Yamarāja. What to speak of stopping death, no one can enhance the short period of life even by a fraction of a moment. The only hope of suspending the cruel slaughtering process of Yamarāja is to call him to hear and chant the holy name of the Lord. Yamarāja is a great devotee of the Lord, and he likes to be invited to *kīrtanas* and sacrifices by the pure devotees, who are constantly engaged in the devotional service of the Lord. Thus the great sages, headed by Śaunaka and others, invited Yamarāja to attend the sacrifice performed at Naimiṣāranya. This was good for those who did not want to die.

## TEXT 8

न कश्चिन्म्रियते तावद् यावदास्त इहान्तकः ।  
एतदर्थं हि भगवानाहृतः परमर्षिभिः ।  
अहो नृलोके पीयेत हरिलीलामृतं वचः ॥ ८ ॥

na kaścīn mriyate tāvad  
yāvad āsta ihāntakaḥ  
etat-arthaṁ hi bhagavān  
āhūtaḥ paramarṣibhiḥ  
aho nṛ-loke pīyeta  
hari-līlāmṛtaṁ vacaḥ

na—not; kaścīn—anyone; mriyate—will die; tāvat—so long; yāvat—as long as; āste—is present; iha—herein; antakaḥ—one who causes the end of life; etat—this; arthaṁ—reason; hi—certainly; bhagavān—the representative of the Lord; āhūtaḥ—invited; parama-ṛṣibhiḥ—by the great sages; aho—alas; nṛ-loke—in human society; pīyeta—let them drink; hari-līlā—transcendental pastimes of the Lord; amṛtam—nectar for eternal life; vacaḥ—narrations.

## TRANSLATION

As long as Yamarāja, who causes everyone's death, is present here, no one shall meet with death. The great sages have invited the controller of death, Yamarāja, who is the representative of the Lord. Living beings who are under his grip should take advantage by hearing the deathless nectar in the form of this narration of the transcendental pastimes of the Lord.

## PURPORT

Every human being dislikes meeting death, but he does not know how to get rid of death. The surest remedy for avoiding death is to accustom oneself to hearing the nectarean pastimes of the Lord as they are systematically narrated in the text of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. It is advised herein, therefore, that any human being who desires freedom from death should take to this course of life as recommended by the ṛṣis headed by Śaunaka.

## TEXT 9

मन्दस्य मन्दप्रज्ञस्य वयो मन्दायुषश्च वै ।  
निद्रया ह्रियते नक्तं दिवा च व्यर्थकर्मभिः ॥ ९ ॥

mandasya manda-prajñasya  
vayo mandāyusaś ca vai  
nidrayā hriyate naktam  
divā ca vyartha-karmabhiḥ

mandasya—of the lazy; manda—paltry; prajñasya—of intelligence; vayah—age; manda—short; āyusaḥ—of duration of life; ca—and; vai—exactly; nidrayā—by sleeping; hriyate—passes away; naktam—night; divā—daytime; ca—also; vyartha—for nothing; karmabhiḥ—by activities.

## TRANSLATION

Lazy human beings with paltry intelligence and a short duration of life pass the night sleeping and the day performing activities that are for naught.

## PURPORT

The less intelligent do not know the real value of the human form of life. The human form is a special gift of material nature in the course of her enforcing stringent laws of miseries upon the living being. It is a chance to achieve the highest boon of life, namely to get out of the entanglement of repeated birth and death. The intelligent take care of this important gift by strenuously endeavoring to get out of the entanglement. But the less intelligent are lazy and unable to evaluate the gift of the human body to achieve liberation from the material bondage; they become more interested in so-called economic development and work very hard throughout life simply for the sense enjoyment of the temporary body. Sense enjoyment is also allowed to the lower animals by the law of nature, and thus a human being is also destined to a certain amount of sense enjoyment according to his past or present life. But one should definitely try to understand that sense enjoyment is not the ultimate goal of human life. Herein it is said that during the daytime one works "for nothing" because the aim is nothing but sense enjoyment. We can particularly observe how the human being is engaged for nothing in the great cities and industrial towns. There are so many things manufactured by human energy, but they are all meant for sense enjoyment, and not for getting out of material bondage. And after working hard during the daytime, a tired man either sleeps or engages in sex habits at night. That is the program of materialistic civilized life for the less intelligent. Therefore they are designated herein as lazy, unfortunate and short-lived.

## TEXT 10

सूत उवाच  
यदा परीक्षितं कुरुजाङ्गलेऽवसत्  
कलिं प्रविष्टं निजचक्रवर्तिते ।  
निशम्य वार्तामनतिप्रियां ततः  
शरासनं संयुगशौण्डिराददे ॥ १० ॥

sūta uvāca  
yadā parikṣitaṁ kuru-jāṅgale 'vasat  
kaliṁ praviṣṭaṁ nija-cakravartite  
niśamya vārtāmatipriyāṁ tataḥ  
śarāsanam saṁyuga-śauṅḍira adade

sūtaḥ uvāca—Sūta Gosvāmī said; yadā—when; parikṣitaṁ—Mahārāja Parikṣit; kuru-jāṅgale—in the capital of Kuru's empire; avasat—was residing; kaliṁ—the symptoms of the age of Kali; praviṣṭam—entered; nija-cakravartite—within his jurisdiction; niśamya—thus hearing; vārtam—news; anati-priyām—not very palatable; tataḥ—thereafter; śarāsanam—arrows and bow; saṁyuga—having gotten a chance for; śauṅḍiḥ—martial activities; adade—took up.

## TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: While Mahārāja Parikṣit was residing in the capital of the Kuru empire, the symptoms of the age of Kali began



to infiltrate within the jurisdiction of his state. When he learned about this, he did not think the matter very palatable. This did, however, give him a chance to fight. He took up his bow and arrows and prepared himself for military activities.

### PURPORT

The state administration of Mahārāja Parikṣit was so perfect that he was sitting in his capital peacefully. But he got the news that the symptoms of the age of Kali had already infiltrated into the jurisdiction of his state, and he did not like this news. What are the symptoms of the age of Kali? They are (1) illicit connection with women, (2) indulgence in meat-eating, (3) intoxication and (4) taking pleasure in gambling. The age of Kali literally means the age of quarrel, and the above-mentioned four symptoms in human society are the root causes for all kinds of quarrel. Mahārāja Parikṣit heard that some of the people of the state had already taken to those symptoms, and he wanted to take immediate steps against such causes of unrest. This means that at least up to the regime of Mahārāja Parikṣit, such symptoms of public life were practically unknown, and as soon as they were slightly detected, he wanted to root them out. The news was not palatable for him, but in a way it was, because Mahārāja Parikṣit got a chance to fight. There was no need to fight with small states because everyone was peacefully under his subordination, but the Kali-yuga miscreants gave his fighting spirit a chance for exhibition. A perfect *kṣatriya* king is always jubilant as soon as he gets a chance to fight, just as a sportsman is eager when there is a chance for a sporting match. It is no argument that in the age of Kali such symptoms are predestined. If so, then why was there preparation for fighting out such symptoms? Such arguments are offered by lazy and unfortunate men. In the rainy season, rain is predestined, and yet people take precautions to protect themselves. Similarly, in the age of Kali the symptoms as above mentioned are sure to infiltrate into social life, but it is the duty of the state to save the citizens from the association of the agents of the age of Kali. Mahārāja Parikṣit wanted to punish the miscreants indulging in the symptoms of Kali, and thus save the innocent citizens who were pure in habit by culture of religion. It is the duty of the king to give such protection, and Mahārāja Parikṣit was perfectly right when he prepared himself to fight.

### TEXT 11

खलंकृतं श्यामतुरङ्गयोजितं  
रथं मृगेन्द्रध्वजमाश्रितः पुरात् ।  
वृतो रथाश्चद्विपपत्तियुक्तया  
स्वसेनया दिग्विजयाय निर्गतः ॥११॥

*svalaṅkṛtaṁ śyāma-turaṅga-yojitaṁ  
ratham mṛgendra-dhvajam āśritaḥ purāt  
vṛtaḥ rathāśva-dvipapatti-yuktayā  
sva-senayā digvijayāya nirgataḥ*

*su-alaṅkṛtaṁ*—very well decorated; *śyāma*—black; *turaṅga*—horses; *yojitaṁ*—tackled; *rathaṁ*—chariot; *mṛga-indra*—lion; *dhvajam*—flagged; *āśritaḥ*—under the protection; *purāt*—from the capital; *vṛtaḥ*—surrounded by; *ratha*—charioteers; *aśva*—cavalry; *dvipapatti*—elephants; *yuktayā*—thus being equipped; *sva-senayā*—along with infantry; *digvijayāya*—for the purpose of conquering; *nirgataḥ*—went out.

### TRANSLATION

Mahārāja Parikṣit sat on a chariot drawn by black horses. His flag was marked with the sign of a lion. Being so decorated and surrounded by charioteers, cavalry, elephants and infantry soldiers, he left the capital to conquer in all directions.

### PURPORT

Mahārāja Parikṣit is distinguished from his grandfather Arjuna, for black horses pulled his chariot instead of white horses. He marked his flag with the mark of a lion, and his grandfather marked his with the mark of Hanumānji. A royal procession like that of Mahārāja Parikṣit surrounded by well-decorated chariots, cavalry, elephants, infantry and band not only is pleasing to the eyes, but also is a sign of a civilization that is aesthetic even on the fighting front.

### TEXT 12

मद्राश्वं केतुमालं च भारतं चोत्तरान् कुरून् ।  
किम्पुरुषादीनि वर्षाणि विजित्य जगृहे बलिम् ॥१२॥

*bhadraśvaṁ ketumālaṁ ca  
bhārataṁ cottarān kurūn  
kimpuruṣādīni varṣāṇi  
vijitya jagṛhe balim*

*bhadraśvaṁ*—Bhadraśva; *ketumālaṁ*—Ketumāla; *ca*—also; *bhārataṁ*—Bhārata; *ca*—and; *uttarān*—the northern countries; *kurūn*—the kingdom of the Kuru dynasty; *kimpuruṣa-ādīni*—a country beyond the northern side of the Himalayas; *varṣāṇi*—parts of the earth planet; *vijitya*—conquering; *jagṛhe*—exacted; *balim*—strength.

### TRANSLATION

Mahārāja Parikṣit then conquered all parts of the earthly planet—Bhadraśva, Ketumāla, Bhārata, the northern Kuru, Kimpuruṣa, etc.—and exacted tributes from their respective rulers.

### PURPORT

*Bhadraśva*: It is a tract of land near Meru Parvata, and it extends from Gandha-mādana Parvata to the saltwater ocean. There is a description of this *varṣa* in the *Mahābhārata* (*Bhīṣma-parva* 7.14–18). The description was narrated by Sañjaya to Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira also conquered this *varṣa*, and thus the province was included within the jurisdiction of his empire. Mahārāja Parikṣit was formerly declared to be the emperor of all lands ruled by his grandfather, but still he had to establish his supremacy while he was out of his capital to exact tribute from such states.

*Ketumāla*: This earth planet is divided into seven *dvīpas* by seven oceans, and the central *dvīpa*, called Jambūdvīpa, is divided into nine *varṣas*, or parts, by eight huge mountains. Bhārata-varṣa is one of the above-mentioned nine *varṣas*, and Ketumāla is also described as one of the above *varṣas*. It is said that in Ketumāla *varṣa*, women are the most beautiful. This *varṣa* was conquered by Arjuna also. A description of this part of the world is available in the *Mahābhārata* (*Sabhā* 28.6).

It is said that this part of the world is situated on the western side of the Meru Parvata, and inhabitants of this province used to live up to ten thousand years (*Bhīṣma-parva* 6.31). Human beings living in this part of the globe are of golden color, and the women resemble the angels of heaven. The inhabitants are free from all kinds of diseases and grief.

*Bhārata-varṣa*: This part of the world is also one of the nine *varṣas* of the Jambūdvīpa. A description of Bhārata-varṣa is given in the *Mahābhārata* (*Bhīṣma-parva*, Chapters 9 and 10).

In the center of Jambūdvīpa is Ilāvṛta-varṣa, and south of Ilāvṛta-varṣa is Hari-varṣa. The description of these *varṣas* is given in the *Mahābhārata* (*Sabhā-parva* 28.7–8) as follows:

*nagarāṁś ca vanāṁś caiva  
nadīś ca vimalodakāḥ  
puruṣān deva-kalpāṁś ca  
nārīś ca priya-darśanāḥ  
adr̥ṣṭa-pūrvān subhagān  
sa dadarṣa dhanāñjayaḥ*



*sadanāni ca śubhrāni  
nārīs cāpsarasām nibhāh*

It is mentioned here that the women in both these *varṣas* are beautiful, and some of them are equal to the Apsarās, or heavenly women.

**Uttarakuru:** According to Vedic geography the northernmost portion of Jambūdvīpa is called Uttarakuru-*varṣa*. It is surrounded by the salt-water ocean from three sides and divided by Śṛṅgavān Mountain from the Hiraṇmaya-*varṣa*.

**Kimpuruṣa-*varṣa*:** It is stated to be situated north of the great Himalaya Mountain, which is eighty thousand miles in length and height and which covers sixteen thousand miles in width. These parts of the world were also conquered by Arjuna (*Sabhā* 28.1-2). The Kimpuruṣas are descendants of a daughter of Dakṣa. When Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira performed a horse sacrifice *yajña*, the inhabitants of these countries were also present to take part in the festival, and they paid tributes to the Emperor. This part of the world is called Kimpuruṣa-*varṣa*, or sometimes the Himalayan provinces (*Himavati*). It is said that Śukadeva Gosvāmī was born in these Himalayan provinces and that he came to Bhāratavarṣa after crossing the Himalayan countries.

In other words, Mahārāja Parīkṣit conquered all the world. He conquered all the continents adjoining all the seas and oceans in all directions, namely the eastern, western, northern and southern parts of the world.

#### TEXTS 13-15

तत्र तत्रोपश्रव्णानः स्वपूर्वेषां महात्मनाम् ।  
प्रगीयमाणं च यशः कृष्णमाहात्म्यसूचकम् ॥१३॥  
आत्मानं च परित्रातमश्वत्थाज्ञोऽस्त्रतेजसः ।  
स्नेहं च वृष्णिपार्यानां तेषां भक्तिं च केशवे ॥१४॥  
तेभ्यः परमसंतुष्टः प्रीत्युज्जृम्भितलोचनः ।  
महाधनानि वासांसि ददौ हारान् महामनाः ॥१५॥

*tatra tatropaśṛvṇānaḥ  
sva-pūrveṣāṃ mahātmanām  
pragīyamāṇaṃ ca yaśaḥ  
kṛṣṇa-māhātmya-sūcakam*

*ātmānaṃ ca paritrātam  
āsvatthāmano 'stra-tejasaḥ  
snehaṃ ca vṛṣṇi-pāṛthānām  
teṣāṃ bhaktim ca keśave*

*tebhyaḥ parama-santuṣṭaḥ  
prīty-ujjṛmbhīta-locanaḥ  
mahā-dhanāni vāsānsi  
dadau hārān mahā-manāḥ*

*tatra tatra*—everywhere the King visited; *upaśṛvṇānaḥ*—continuously he heard; *sva-pūrveṣāṃ*—about his own forefathers; *mahā-ātmānaṃ*—who were all great devotees of the Lord; *pragīyamāṇam*—unto those who were thus addressing; *ca*—also; *yaśaḥ*—glories; *kṛṣṇa*—Lord Kṛṣṇa; *māhātmya*—glorious acts; *sūcakam*—indicating; *ātmānaṃ*—his personal self; *ca*—also; *paritrātam*—delivered; *āsvatthāmaṇaḥ*—of *Āsvatthāmā*; *astra*—weapon; *tejasaḥ*—powerful rays; *sneham*—affection; *ca*—also; *vṛṣṇi-pāṛthānām*—between descendants of Vṛṣṇi and those of Pṛthā; *teṣāṃ*—of all of them; *bhaktim*—devotion; *ca*—also; *keśave*—unto Lord Kṛṣṇa; *tebhyaḥ*—unto them; *parama*—extremely; *santuṣṭaḥ*—pleased; *prīti*—attraction; *ujjṛmbhīta*—pleasingly open; *locanaḥ*—one who has such eyes; *mahā-dhanāni*—valuable riches; *vāsānsi*—clothing; *dadau*—gave in charity; *hārān*—necklace; *mahā-manāḥ*—one who has a broader outlook.

#### TRANSLATION

Wherever the King visited, he continuously heard the glories of his great forefathers, who were all devotees of the Lord, and also

of the glorious acts of Lord Kṛṣṇa. He also heard how he himself had been protected by the Lord from the powerful heat of the weapon of *Āsvatthāmā*. People also mentioned the great affection between the descendants of Vṛṣṇi and Pṛthā due to the latter's great devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa. The King, being very pleased with the singers of such glories, opened his eyes in great satisfaction. Out of magnanimity he was pleased to award them very valuable necklaces and clothing.

#### PURPORT

Kings and great personalities of the state are presented with welcome addresses. This is a system from time immemorial, and Mahārāja Parīkṣit, since he was one of the well-known emperors of the world, was also presented with addresses of welcome in all parts of the world as he visited those places. The subject matter of those welcome addresses was Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa means Kṛṣṇa and His eternal devotees, as the king means the king and his confidential associates.

Kṛṣṇa and His unalloyed devotees cannot be separated, and therefore glorifying the devotee means glorifying the Lord and vice versa. Mahārāja Parīkṣit would not have been glad to hear about the glories of his forefathers like Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira and Arjuna had they not been connected with the acts of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The Lord descends specifically to deliver His devotees (*paritrāṇāya sādḥunām*). The devotees are glorified by the presence of the Lord because they cannot live for a moment without the presence of the Lord and His different energies. The Lord is present for the devotee by His acts and glories, and therefore Mahārāja Parīkṣit felt the presence of the Lord when He was glorified by His acts, especially when he was saved by the Lord in the womb of his mother. The devotees of the Lord are never in danger, but in the material world which is full of dangers at every step, the devotees are apparently placed into dangerous positions, and when they are saved by the Lord, the Lord is glorified. Lord Kṛṣṇa would not have been glorified as the speaker of the *Bhagavad-gītā* had His devotees like the Pāṇḍavas not been entangled in the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra. All such acts of the Lord were mentioned in the addresses of welcome, and Mahārāja Parīkṣit, in full satisfaction, rewarded those who presented such addresses. The difference between the presentation of welcome addresses today and in those days is that formerly the welcome addresses were presented to a person like Mahārāja Parīkṣit. The welcome addresses were full of facts and figures, and those who presented such addresses were sufficiently rewarded, whereas in the present days the welcome addresses are presented not always with factual statements but to please the postholder, and often they are full of flattering lies. And rarely are those who present such welcome addresses rewarded by the poor receiver.

#### TEXT 16

सारथ्यपारवदसेवनसख्यदौत्य-  
वीरासनानुगमनस्तवनप्रणामान् ।  
स्निग्धेषु पाण्डुषु जगत्प्रणतिं चविष्णो-  
र्भक्तिं करोति नृपतिश्चरणारविन्दे ॥१६॥

*sārathya-pāraśada-sevana-sakhya-dautya-  
vīrasānanugamana-stavana-praṇāmān  
snigdheṣu pāṇḍuṣu jagat-praṇatim ca viṣṇo  
bhaktim karoti nṛ-patiś caraṇāravinde*

*sārathya*—acceptance of the post of a chariot driver; *pāraśada*—acceptance of the presidency in the assembly of the Rājasūya sacrifice; *sevana*—engaging the mind constantly in the service of the Lord; *sakhya*—to think of the Lord as a friend; *dautya*—acceptance of the post of a messenger; *vīra-āsana*—acceptance of the post of a watchman with a drawn sword at night; *anugamana*—following in the footsteps; *stavana*—offering of prayers; *praṇāmān*—offering obeisances; *snigdheṣu*—unto them who are malleable to the will of the Lord; *pāṇḍuṣu*—unto the sons of Pāṇḍu; *jagat*—the universal; *praṇatim*—one who is obeyed; *ca*—and; *viṣṇoḥ*—of Viṣṇu; *bhaktim*—devotion;



*karoti*—does; *nṛ-patiḥ*—the King; *caraṇa-aravinde*—unto His lotus feet.

### TRANSLATION

Mahārāja Parikṣit heard that out of His causeless mercy Lord Kṛṣṇa [Viṣṇu], who is universally obeyed, rendered all kinds of service to the malleable sons of Pāṇḍu by accepting posts ranging from chariot driver to president to messenger, friend, night watchman, etc., according to the will of the Pāṇḍavas, obeying them like a servant and offering obeisances like one younger in years. When he heard this, Mahārāja Parikṣit became overwhelmed with devotion to the lotus feet of the Lord.

### PURPORT

Lord Kṛṣṇa is everything to the unalloyed devotees like the Pāṇḍavas. The Lord was for them the Supreme Lord, the spiritual master, the worshipable Deity, the guide, the chariot driver, the friend, the servant, the messenger and everything they could conceive of. And thus the Lord also reciprocated the feelings of the Pāṇḍavas. Mahārāja Parikṣit, as a pure devotee of the Lord, could appreciate the Lord's transcendental reciprocation of the feelings of His devotees, and thus he himself also was overwhelmed with the dealings of the Lord. Simply by appreciating the dealings of the Lord with His pure devotees, one can attain salvation. The Lord's dealings with His devotees appear to be ordinary human dealings, but one who knows them in truth becomes at once eligible to go back home, back to Godhead. The Pāṇḍavas were so malleable to the will of the Lord that they could sacrifice any amount of energy for the service of the Lord, and by such unalloyed determination they could secure the Lord's mercy in any shape they desired.

### TEXT 17

तस्यैवं वर्तमानस्य पूर्वेषां वृत्तिमन्वहम् ।  
नातिदूरे किलाश्चर्यं यदासीत् तन्निबोध मे ॥१७॥

*tasyaivaṃ vartamānasya*  
*pūrveṣāṃ vṛttim anvaham*  
*nātidūre kilāścaryam*  
*yad āsīt tan nibodha me*

*tasya*—of Mahārāja Parikṣit; *evam*—thus; *vartamānasya*—remaining absorbed in such thought; *pūrveṣāṃ*—of his forefathers; *vṛttim*—good engagement; *anvaham*—day after day; *na*—not; *ati-dūre*—far off; *kilā*—verily; *āścaryam*—astonishing; *yad*—that; *āsīt*—was; *tat*—which; *nibodha*—know it; *me*—from me.

### TRANSLATION

Now you may hear from me of what happened while Mahārāja Parikṣit was passing his days hearing of the good occupations of his forefathers and being absorbed in thought of them.

### TEXT 18

धर्मः पदैकेन चरन् विच्छायासुपलभ्य गाम् ।  
पृच्छति स्नाश्रुवदनां विवत्सामिव मातरम् ॥१८॥

*dharmah padaikena caran*  
*vicchāyām upalabhya gām*  
*prcchati smāśru-vadanām*  
*vivatsām iva mātaram*

*dharmah*—the personality of religious principles; *padā*—leg; *ekena*—on one only; *caran*—wandering; *vicchāyām*—overtaken by the shadow of grief; *upalabhya*—having met; *gām*—the cow; *prcchati sma*—asked; *śru-vadanām*—with tears on the face; *vivatsām*—one who has lost her offspring; *iva*—like; *mātaram*—the mother.

### TRANSLATION

The personality of religious principles, Dharma, was wandering about in the form of a bull. And he met the personality of earth in the form of a cow who appeared to grieve like a mother who had lost her child. She had tears in her eyes, and the beauty of her body was lost. Thus Dharma questioned the earth as follows.

### PURPORT

The bull is the emblem of the moral principle, and the cow is the representative of the earth. When the bull and the cow are in a joyful mood, it is to be understood that the people of the world are also in a joyful mood. The reason is that the bull helps production of grains in the agricultural field, and the cow delivers milk, the miracle of aggregate food values. The human society, therefore, maintains these two important animals very carefully so that they can wander everywhere in cheerfulness. But at the present moment in this age of Kali both the bull and the cow are now being slaughtered and eaten up as foodstuff by a class of men who do not know the brahminical culture. The bull and the cow can be protected for the good of all human society simply by the spreading of brahminical culture as the topmost perfection of all cultural affairs. By advancement of such culture, the morale of society is properly maintained, and so peace and prosperity are also attained without extraneous effort. When brahminical culture deteriorates, the cow and bull are mistreated, and the resultant actions are prominent by the following symptoms.

### TEXT 19

धर्म उवाच

कच्चिद्भद्रेऽनामयमात्मनस्ते  
विच्छायासि म्लायतेषन्मुखेन ।  
आलक्ष्ये भवतीमन्तरार्धि  
दूरे बन्धुं शोचसि कञ्चनम्ब ॥१९॥

*dharma uvāca*  
*kaccid bhadre 'nāmayam ātmanas te*  
*vicchāyāsi mlāyateṣan mukhena*  
*ālakṣaye bhavatīm antarārdhim*  
*dūre bandhum śocasi kañcanāmba*

*dharmah uvāca*—Dharma inquired; *kaccit*—whether; *bhadre*—madam; *anāmayam*—quite hale and hearty; *ātmanah*—self; *te*—unto you; *vicchāyā asi*—appear to be covered with the shadow of grief; *mlāyatā*—which darkens; *īṣat*—slightly; *mukhena*—by the face; *ālakṣaye*—you look; *bhavatīm*—unto yourself; *antarārdhim*—some disease within; *dūre*—long distant; *bandhum*—friend; *śocasi*—thinking of; *kañcana*—someone; *amba*—O mother.

### TRANSLATION

Dharma [in the form of a bull] asked: Madam, are you not hale and hearty? Why are you covered with the shadow of grief? It appears by your face that you have become black. Are you suffering from some internal disease, or are you thinking of some relative who is away in a distant place?

### PURPORT

The people of the world in this age of Kali are always full of anxieties. Everyone is diseased with some kind of ailment. From the very faces of the people of this age, one can find out the index of the mind. Everyone feels the absence of his relative who is away from home. The particular symptom of the age of Kali is that no family is now blessed to live together. To earn a livelihood, the father lives at a place far away from the son, or the wife lives far away from the husband and so on. There are sufferings from internal diseases, separation from those near and dear,



and anxieties for maintaining the status quo. These are but some important factors which make the people of this age always unhappy.

### TEXT 20

पादैर्न्यूनं शोचसि मैकपाद-  
मात्मानं वा वृषलैर्भोक्ष्यमाणम् ।  
आहो सुरादीन् हृतयज्ञभागान्  
प्रजा उत खिन्मघवत्यवर्षति ॥२०॥

*pādair nyūnam śocasi maika-pādam  
ātmānam vā vṛṣalair bhokṣyamāṇam  
āho surādīn hrta-yajña-bhāgān  
prajā uta svin maghavaty avarsati*

*pādaiḥ*—by three legs; *nyūnam*—diminished; *śocasi*—if you are lamenting for that; *mā*—my; *eka-pādam*—only one leg; *ātmānam*—own body; *vā*—or; *vṛṣalaiḥ*—by the unlawful meat-eaters; *bhokṣyamāṇam*—to be exploited; *āhoḥ*—in sacrifice; *sura-ādīn*—the authorized demigods; *hrta-yajña*—devoid of sacrificial; *bhāgān*—share; *prajāḥ*—the living beings; *uta*—increasing; *svit*—whether; *maghavati*—in famine and scarcity; *avarsati*—because of rainlessness.

### TRANSLATION

I have lost my three legs and am now standing on one only. Are you lamenting for my state of existence? Or are you in great anxiety because henceforward the unlawful meat-eaters will exploit you? Or are you in a sorry plight because the demigods are now bereft of their share of sacrificial offerings because no sacrifices are being performed at present? Or are you grieving for living beings because of their sufferings due to famine and drought?

### PURPORT

With the progress of the age of Kali, four things particularly, namely the duration of life, mercy, the power of recollection, and moral or religious principles will gradually diminish. Since Dharma, or the principles of religion, would be lost in the proportion of three out of four, the symbolic bull was standing on one leg only. When three fourths of the population of the whole world become irreligious, the situation is converted into hell for the animals. In the age of Kali, godless civilizations will create so many so-called religious societies in which the Personality of Godhead will be directly or indirectly defied. And thus faithless societies of men will make the world uninhabitable for the saner section of people. There are gradations of human beings in terms of proportionate faith in the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The first-class faithful men are the Vaiṣṇavas and the *brāhmaṇas*, then the *kṣatriyas*, then the *vaiśyas*, then the *sūdras*, then the *mlecchas*, the *yavanas* and at last the *caṇḍālas*. The degradation of the human instinct begins from the *mlecchas*, and the *caṇḍāla* state of life is the last word in human degradation. All the above terms mentioned in the Vedic literatures are never meant for any particular community or birth. They are different qualifications of human beings in general. There is no question of birthright or community. One can acquire the respective qualifications by one's own efforts, and thus the son of a Vaiṣṇava can become a *mleccha*, or the son of a *caṇḍāla* can become more than a *brāhmaṇa*, all in terms of their association and intimate relation with the Supreme Lord.

The meat-eaters are generally called *mlecchas*. But all meat-eaters are not *mlecchas*. Those who accept meat in terms of scriptural injunctions

are not *mlecchas*, but those who accept meat without restriction are called *mlecchas*. Beef is forbidden in the scriptures, and the bulls and cows are offered special protection by followers of the *Vedas*. But in this age of Kali, people will exploit the body of the bull and the cow as they like, and thus they will invite sufferings of various types.

The people of this age will not perform any sacrifice. The *mleccha* population will care very little for performances of sacrifices, although performance of sacrifice is essential for persons who are materially engaged in sense enjoyment. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* performance of sacrifices is strongly recommended (Bg. 3.14–16).

The living beings are created by the creator Brahmā, and just to maintain the created living being progressively towards the path back to Godhead, the system of performing sacrifice is also created by him. The system is that living beings live on the produce of grains and vegetables, and by eating such foodstuff they get vital power of the body in the shape of blood and semen, and from blood and semen one living being is able to create other living beings. But the production of grains, grass, etc. becomes possible by rain, and this rain is made to shower properly by performance of recommended sacrifices. Such sacrifices are directed by the rites of the *Vedas*, namely *Sāma*, *Yajur*, *Rg* and *Atharva*. In the *Manu-smṛiti* it is recommended that by offerings of sacrifice on the altar of the fire, the sun-god is pleased. When the sun-god is pleased, he properly collects water from the sea, and thus sufficient clouds collect on the horizon and rains fall. After sufficient rains fall, there is sufficient production of grains for men and all animals, and thus there is energy in the living being for progressive activity. The *mlecchas*, however, make plans to install slaughterhouses for killing bulls and cows along with other animals, thinking that they will prosper by increasing the number of factories and live on animal food without caring for performance of sacrifices and production of grains. But they must know that even for the animals they must produce grass and vegetables, otherwise the animals cannot live. And to produce grass for the animals, they require sufficient rains. Therefore they have to depend ultimately on the mercy of the demigods like the sun-god, Indra and Candra, and such demigods must be satisfied by performances of sacrifice.

This material world is a sort of prison house, as we have several times mentioned. The demigods are the servants of the Lord who see to the proper upkeep of the prison house. These demigods want to see that the rebel living beings, who want to survive faithlessly, are gradually turned towards the supreme power of the Lord. Therefore, the system of offering sacrifice is recommended in the scriptures.

The materialistic men want to work hard and enjoy fruitive results for sense enjoyment. Thus they are committing many types of sins at every step of life. Those, however, who are consciously engaged in the devotional service of the Lord are transcendental to all varieties of sin and virtue. Their activities are free from the contamination of the three modes of material nature. For the devotees there is no need for performance of prescribed sacrifices because the very life of the devotee is a symbol of sacrifice. But persons who are engaged in fruitive activities for sense enjoyment must perform the prescribed sacrifices because that is the only means to get free from the reaction of all sins committed by fruitive workers. Sacrifice is the means for counteracting such accumulated sins. The demigods are pleased when such sacrifices are performed, just as prison officers are satisfied when the prisoners are turned into obedient subjects. Lord Caitanya, however, has recommended only one *yajña*, or sacrifice, called the *saṅkīrtana-yajña*, the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, in which everyone can take part. Thus both devotees and fruitive workers can derive equal benefit from the performances of *saṅkīrtana-yajña*.

(continued in next issue)





# Every Town and Village

A look at the worldwide activities of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

## Kṛṣṇa's Town Gets Bhaktivedanta Gate

When pilgrims arrive in northern India's Vṛndāvana village, the place in India most sacred to Lord Kṛṣṇa, they now pass through a gate dedicated to the memory of the Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

The gate rises forty-five feet above Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg, the main road into the village. Local officials named the gate in Śrīla Prabhupāda's honor, and ISKCON devotees funded, designed, and constructed it.

Vṛndāvana is especially sacred to Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees because there the Lord performed His transcendental pastimes five thousand years ago. Since Śrīla Prabhupāda glorified Vṛndāvana by making Kṛṣṇa's glories known throughout the world, the residents feel it appropriate that visitors enter Vṛndāvana on Bhaktivedanta Swami Road, through Bhaktivedanta Swami Gate.



A memorial to Śrīla Prabhupāda: Bhaktivedanta Gate welcomes pilgrims to Kṛṣṇa's dearest town, Vṛndāvana.

## Śrīla Prabhupāda's Successors Accept Disciples

Recently the International Society for Krishna Consciousness entered a new phase in its history, as eleven successor *gurus* appointed by ISKCON's founding spiritual master began initiating new disciples around the world.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda selected the eleven successor *gurus* in June 1977, five months before he passed away. According to the Vedic system, a spiritual student has to take initiation from a *guru* still physically present on earth. So Śrīla Prabhupāda, who represents an unbroken chain of spiritual masters coming down through time from Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, chose some of his most advanced disciples to carry on the chain and initiate new devotees. These eleven *gurus* may also request other disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda to share this responsibility of initiating new devotees, so that the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement will continue its growth. But the future generations of *gurus* and disciples will always honor Śrīla Prabhupāda as the Founder-*Ācārya* of ISKCON.

## ISKCON Berkeley Starts New Country Āśrama

ISKCON's Berkeley center has turned a secluded ranch in northern California into a haven for people who want to experience the Kṛṣṇa conscious way of life in an ideal setting.

The four-hundred-acre ranch lies in a pine-forested mountain valley a hundred miles north of San Francisco. Guests

take part in predawn meditations on the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, classes in *bhakti-yoga*, and workshops in Vedic cooking and gardening. In keeping with the farm's name (New Hṛṣīkeśa, after the famed Himalayan *yoga* village), all who stay there refrain from meat-eating, illicit sex, gambling, and intoxicants.



## Vaiṣṇava Calendar

Kṛṣṇa-conscious devotees follow a spiritual calendar that divides the year into twelve months, each named for a different form of Kṛṣṇa. The devotees at the ISKCON center nearest you will gladly tell you about the meaning of the festivals listed here.

Year 493 Caitanya Era Vaiṣṇava month of Vāmana (June 21–July 20, 1978)		
June 21 (Vāmana 1)	June 25 (Vāmana 4)	June 30 (Vāmana 9)
Disappearance of Śrīla Śyāmananda Prabhu	Disappearance of Śrīla Vakreśvara Paṇḍita.	Disappearance of Śrīla Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita.
July 1 (Vāmana 10)	July 5 (Vāmana 14)	July 6 (Vāmana 15)
Yoginī-ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).	Disappearance of Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita Gosvāmi and Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.	Śrī Guṇḍicā-mārjana.
July 7 (Vāmana 16)	July 11 (Vāmana 20)	July 13 (Vāmana 22)
Ratha-yātrā of Lord Jagannāthadeva. Disappearance of Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmi.	Herā-pañcamī.	Founding of ISKCON in 1966 by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
July 15 (Vāmana 24)	July 16 (Vāmana 25)	July 20 (Vāmana 29)
Return Ratha-yātrā of Lord Jagannāthadeva.	Śayanaikādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).	Disappearance of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmi.



# Our Place in Lord Brahmā's Lifetime

In Ancient India's Vedic literatures we find a cosmic calendar that shows the cycle of ages—and how to break out of it.

by VIŚĀKHĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

How long we live greatly depends on what kind of body we have. For example, an insect might stay around for only a month, while a human being sometimes lasts for 100 years. And as the time-honored *Bhagavad-gītā* informs us, the inhabitants of planetary systems higher than ours have bodies of a still higher quality and so live much longer than we do here. In fact Lord Brahmā, the administrative demigod who resides on the highest planet in the universe, lives not a moment less than 311 trillion 40 billion years.

Of course, modern scientists have some inkling that a single 24-hour span on some higher planets may equal an earth year or maybe more, but they have no idea just how much more. *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.17) tells us this about the length of Lord Brahmā's day and night:

*sahasra-yuga-paryantam  
ahar yad brahmaṇo viduḥ  
rātriṃ yuga-sahasrāntām  
te 'ho-rātra-vido janāḥ*

"By human calculation, 1,000 great ages taken together is the duration of Brahmā's day. And such also is the duration of his night."

Here's the calculation in detail. First, we add up the 4 *yugas* (ages) shown in the chart. This is 1 *divya-yuga* (great age), or 4.32 million years. Now, when we multiply by 1,000, what we come up with—and this is a mere 12 "hours" (1 daytime) in Lord Brahmā's life—is 4.32 billion earth years. His daytime plus his nighttime comes to 8.64 billion years. What's more, 360 of these days and nights make 1 of Brahmā's "years," and he lives for a full 100 of these "years."

All of this may seem fantastic to us, but as Einstein learned some years ago, time is relative. Take, for example, an amoeba, whose life span is less than an hour. If we could explain our life span to the amoeba, just think how flab-

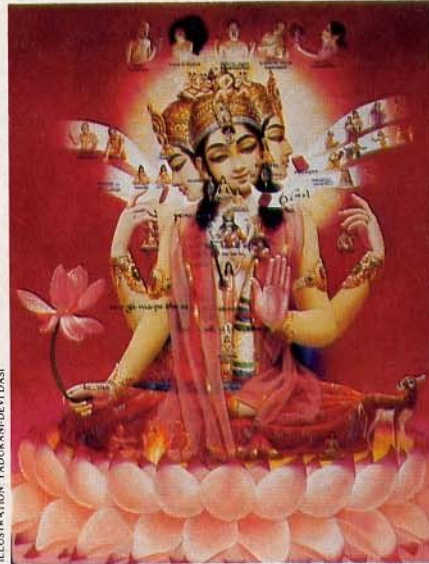


ILLUSTRATION: YADURANI DEVI DĀSĪ

bergasted he would be. In the same way, although we may be astounded by Brahmā's life span, to him it seems quite normal and, if anything, rather short.

## Understanding the Overseer

On a grand, cosmic scale, Lord Brahmā is an overseer—he manages the process of creation within this universe. At the beginning of each of his days, all varieties of life-forms appear, and when his night comes there is a partial annihilation until the next day, when he sets everything in motion all over again. Although Brahmā lives for such a vast span of time and has such awesome responsibilities, we can get a rough idea what his life is like.

Brahmā starts his day by meditating on the Supreme Lord. He prays that he may "engage in the Lord's service in the creation of the material world," and that "I may not be materially affected by my works, for thus I may be able to give up the false prestige of being the creator." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.9.23)

Although he holds such an exalted place in our universe, Brahmā acknowledges God's supremacy and does not want to become illusioned into thinking that he is independently powerful. He wants to remember always that the original cause of everything is Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Just as a gardener doesn't create seeds but simply sows and waters them to make a garden grow, so Lord Brahmā does not create life (the soul), but receives power from the Supreme Lord to place certain souls into certain types of bodies.

So at the beginning of his day, Brahmā places each one of us—each individual spiritual soul—into a particular body. As Brahmā's day wears on, we transmigrate from one body to another, sometimes to the upper planetary systems and sometimes to the lower ones; sometimes to the body of a pigeon and sometimes to that of a prince—until, after 4.32 billion earth years have passed, Lord Brahmā's day ends. Then we go into a dormant state, until his next day begins and the whole cycle starts again.

We may take exception to all this information, since we can't recall any of it. But after all, what can we recall of even our present lifetime? For instance, we know for sure that we were once in our mother's womb, but can we remember that experience? And what to speak of past lifetimes in other bodies? Brahmā, however, sees our futile wanderings and feels compassion. He sees us suffering from various types of miseries—anxiety, anger, disease, insomnia, natural disturbances—because of our forgetfulness. "The material miseries are without factual existence for the soul," he assures us. Still, many of us refuse to hear about our actual identity and our relationship with the Supreme Lord, and as a result, we keep on suffering in this material world.



## Lord Brahmā's Daytime (A Mere 12 of His Hours) Lasts 4.32 Billion of Our Years

Even when we consider 1 day in Lord Brahmā's life, we have to talk in terms of *divya-yugas* (great ages). And although a *divya-yuga* lasts 4.32 million earth years, it takes 1,000 of them—4.32 billion of our years—to make Lord Brahmā's daytime, a mere 12 hours of his life. And Brahmā lives for 100

"years" (311 trillion 40 billion of our years).

As the chart below shows, each *divya-yuga* (each one-thousandth of Lord Brahmā's daytime) contains 4 *yugas* (ages). Right now we are in the Kali-yuga of the 28th *divya-yuga* in the 1st day of Lord Brahmā's 51st year.

### A Look Inside 1 Divya-yuga (Great Age) in Lord Brahmā's Day

	<i>Satya-yuga</i>	<i>Tretā-yuga</i>	<i>Dvāpara-yuga</i>	<i>Kali-yuga</i>
<b>General Characteristics of Each Yuga</b>	Truthfulness, austerity, mercy, cleanliness, wisdom, and religiosity predominate. Vice and ignorance are practically nonexistent.	Vice enters.	Religiosity and all other good qualities decline. Vice gains momentum.	Hypocrisy and vice flourish. Cheaters pose as leaders. People are quarrelsome, lazy, misguided, unlucky, and always disturbed by famine, drought, excessive taxation, disease, and family disunity.
<b>Length of Yuga</b>	1,728,000 years	1,296,000 years	864,000 years	432,000 years
<b>Average Human Life Span at Start of Yuga</b>	100,000 years	10,000 years	1,000 years	100 years
<b>Incarnation of Supreme Lord for Yuga</b>	White Incarnation (Lord Kapila)	Red Incarnation (Lord Yajña)	Blackish Incarnation (Lord Kṛṣṇa)	Yellow Incarnation (Lord Caitanya)
<b>Method of Self-Realization and God-Realization Recommended for Yuga</b>	Silent Meditation	Costly Ritualistic Sacrifices	Lavish Temple Worship	<i>Saṅkīrtana</i> (Mass Public Chanting of God's Names)

## Beyond Brahmā

In *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.16) Lord Kṛṣṇa tells us exactly what our situation is and what we can do about it: "From the highest planet in the material world—Lord Brahmā's residence—down to the lowest, all are places of misery wherein repeated creation and annihilation take place. But one who attains to My abode never comes to this material world again."

As long as we live here in the material world, we can know that we face three times of bodily annihilation: (1) the moment of our death, (2) the end of each of Brahmā's days (when there is a partial annihilation), and (3) the end of Brahmā's lifetime (when the entire universe becomes unmanifest for thousands

of aeons, until the Lord again manifests Brahmā and the rest of the universe).

This has been going on in the past, and it is still going on. "Again and again this multitude of living entities become active; and again and again they are helplessly dissolved." (Bg. 8.19) No one can calculate how long we have been revolving in the cycle of creation and dissolution. But by using our intelligence properly, we can get out of this insane cycle and save ourselves from a bleak future.

"Yet," Lord Kṛṣṇa promises, "there is another nature, which is eternal and is transcendental to the manifested and unmanifested matter. It is supreme and is never annihilated. When all in this world is annihilated, that part remains as it is. That supreme abode is the supreme

destination. When one goes there, he never comes back. That is My supreme abode." (Bg. 8.20-21)

As we've seen, the soul's sojourn from body to body throughout Brahmā's lifetime is pitiable and pointless. Now that we have the human form of life, we have a rare chance to understand our real situation—a chance to see that with each rising and setting of the sun, our inevitable demise is coming closer, and that all the wealth in the world can't stop it. Lower life forms don't have enough brain substance to understand this process, but human beings can read Vedic literature and take its advice: "Do not spend your time uselessly in mundane affairs; all these things will be finished at the time of annihilation. Instead, look

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# REMEMBERING ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA

## Some Personal Recollections by His Disciples

I remember being with Śrīla Prabhupāda once when a cynical reporter interviewed him. The man challenged, "You claim God is speaking to you directly, telling you what to do?"

"Yes," Śrīla Prabhupāda said.

Sitting there beside Śrīla Prabhupāda, I could feel the reporter's skepticism. "How can God speak to any man?" he pressed on. "How can any man see and hear God?"

Looking for words that his materialistic mind could accept, I spoke up. "Lord Kṛṣṇa is in everyone's heart, and He gives you the intelligence to see exactly what to do and how to make the right decision. In that way Kṛṣṇa can guide you from within."

Śrīla Prabhupāda looked at me and shook his head. "Why are you saying this nonsense?" he said. "Kṛṣṇa will speak to you *directly*. You will see Him and hear Him. Every decision I make—Kṛṣṇa is telling me to do it directly."

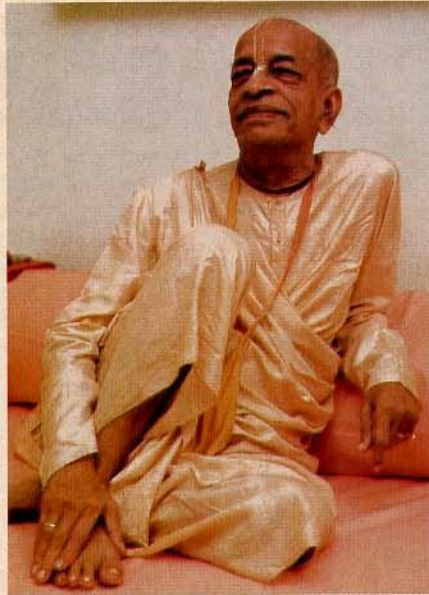
That was one of the few times I saw Śrīla Prabhupāda reveal his position so openly. He was actually seeing Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa was telling him everything.

Rāmeśvara Swami

One day about twenty of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples, including my husband and me, were walking with him at Venice Beach, in Los Angeles. After a while Śrīla Prabhupāda started talking about women—how they tend to be less spiritually intelligent than men and more inclined toward sense gratification. He spoke in this way for several minutes. Then he looked right at me with his special radiant look and said, "Don't you mind." Everyone laughed. Śrīla Prabhupāda was talking frankly about women, but he didn't want me to feel personally discouraged. I was laughing inside, too, because I was remembering something he had told us hundreds of times. "You are not your body. You are not a man or a woman but a spirit soul, a servant of God." I saw it that day more clearly than ever before. Śrīla Prabhupāda was teasing me into understanding the first point of spiritual life: *aham brahmāsmi*—"I am spirit."

Viśākṣā-devī dāśī

One evening in 1969, while Śrīla Prabhupāda was visiting London, he



spoke at a well-attended gathering and rebutted all sorts of challenging questions. In his usual, magnificent way, Śrīla Prabhupāda defeated one critic after another and established the eternal truths of Vedic knowledge. He even dismissed one overly fervent opponent by calling him a fool and telling him to sit down.

The next day I was giving Śrīla Prabhupāda his daily massage. He was due to speak again that evening, and I felt like a trainer getting a prizefighter ready for his next bout. I was talking glowingly of his triumph the evening before, and I went on in this way for several minutes, praising him more and more. Suddenly he stopped me with a thunderous "No!" And then, with a voice so small—a voice that seemed to come from deep within—he said, "I am just a humble servant." He didn't think himself a great speaker. He had simply repeated Kṛṣṇa's words from *Bhagavad-gītā*. And immediately I felt unworthy of being in the same room with him.

Trivikrama Svāmī

In 1967, on December 17, His Divine Grace kindly accepted me as his disciple. For a while afterward I still lived at home, since I was underage and was attending high school. Along with his many other unique qualities, Śrīla Prabhupāda often revealed compassion and patience of the highest degree. I

remember once I wrote him a six-page letter about my Kṛṣṇa conscious activities while living back at home.

It was a really inconsequential letter. I related to Śrīla Prabhupāda that I'd made an altar for him and that each day I was making an offering to Kṛṣṇa. The offering consisted of cattails, moss, acorns, and bark, which at that time I thought were nice. Of course, as time went on I learned through experience and reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books that actually these things were rather strange and unconventional, to say the least.

Nonetheless, out of his fatherly kindness Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote back:

"My blessings are upon you for your nice prosecution of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Whatever you are doing at the present moment is approved by me, and I think, on account of your becoming a sincere soul, Kṛṣṇa is dictating from within and you are doing things very nicely."

Kaṅcambāla-devī dāśī

One morning some of Śrīla Prabhupāda's students were walking with him in London's Regents Park. All kinds of flowers grew there, and I was remembering that each day we offered lovely flowers like these to the Kṛṣṇa Deity back at the temple.

Before long I asked Śrīla Prabhupāda, "When we offer flowers to Kṛṣṇa, do their spirit souls go back to the spiritual world?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda remained silent awhile and then answered, "Yes. But factually they are *already* in the kingdom of God." He stopped, waved his cane over the cranes, ducks, people, and flowers in the park, and said, "They are all in the kingdom of God."

Starting to see from his point of view, I said, "Yes, Śrīla Prabhupāda, but they are not aware that they are in the kingdom of God."

He replied, "That is the duty of a spiritual master—to make them aware."

Another time I was with several devotees in Śrīla Prabhupāda's room at our small temple in Edinburgh, Scotland. As he was sitting, a shaft of sunlight entered the window and lit up the whole room. Śrīla Prabhupāda remarked with a wave of his hand, "When you become Kṛṣṇa conscious, it is just like that."

Svāti-devī dāśī



# Cooling the Nuclear Vesuvius

by BALAVANTA DĀSA

After the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, President Kennedy estimated that the possibility of a nuclear holocaust had been "somewhere around one out of three. . . . Everything the U.S. has built in three centuries would have disappeared within eighteen hours. Even the fruits of victory would have been ashes in our mouths." At that time everyone hoped the near-disaster would spur world leaders toward an effective disarmament treaty. But just the opposite has happened. Envoys have met thousands of times to discuss disarmament, but no one has destroyed a single warhead. In fact, since 1965 the world's nuclear stockpile has multiplied more than tenfold, and now both the U.S. and the Soviet Union are daily building three hydrogen bombs, each one powerful enough to wipe out greater Paris and its ten million inhabitants. Far from taking the Cuban missile crisis as a warning to disarm, the world's major nations have created a nuclear Vesuvius primed to erupt at any moment.

If you doubt that our leaders consider nuclear war an essential (and even convenient) option, the remarks that follow should convince you. During the summer of 1974, President Nixon told California Senator Alan Cranston, "At any moment I could go into the next room, push a button, and, twenty minutes later, sixty million people would be dead." And the 1974 Senate Hearings on Nuclear War and Foreign Policy included this statement: "The NATO doctrine is that we will fight with conventional forces until we are losing, and then fight with tactical nuclear weapons until we are losing, and then we will blow up the whole world." Of course, we've all heard the theory that with nuclear weapons war is out of the question. Alfred Nobel said the same thing when he invented dynamite. So to think that our fleets of missiles and bombs will never see action is to think that history won't repeat itself. The world's great fighting forces have always seen action. The Roman legions, the Spanish Ar-

mada, the Wehrmacht—all were meant for war, and all went to war.

"But," you may ask, "if world history has been a history of wars, and if history repeats itself, then what chance do we have now for peace? Was there ever a time of peace?" The answer is yes. The *Purānas*, the Koran, the Bible, and the teachings of Confucius tell of an ultracivilized age when wise, saintly monarchs (similar to Plato's philosopher kings) ruled a world totally at peace. This peace resulted not from repression but from the wisdom of rulers and citizens who knew God's laws and followed them.

Just as federal laws govern a nation, so God's laws govern the universe. And just as the state punishes a thief or a murderer, so God punishes a nation that transgresses His laws. This punishment takes such forms as natural disaster, social disorder, economic hardship—and war. Ancient India's Vedic literatures give us this basic law for a peaceful world: "Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself—those things set aside as his quota—and one must not take other things, knowing well to whom they belong." (*Īśa Upaniṣad, mantra 1*)

In former ages people knew that encroaching upon others' property violates not only civil laws but God's laws. Unlike modern materialists, who know only how to grab and keep grabbing, the ancients knew that everyone gets his quota of life's necessities from God—and that if someone takes more than his quota, he is in effect stealing from God.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa affirms, *aham sarvasya prabhavaḥ*: "I am the source of everything." In other words, everything in existence comes from Him. Clearly, we have not created the material energy—the land, water, sunlight, and so on—so how can we say we own it? After a carpenter takes some bricks, wood, and cement and builds a house, can he claim that he owns it? Not

unless he wants to see the inside of a jail. The house belongs to the person who supplied the carpenter with the building materials. And it's the same way on the cosmic scale. God supplies us with the food we eat, the air we breathe, the water we drink, the land we live on. Even our bodies and minds come from Him. It's all His property—but still we're claiming it as our own. This is thievery, and how can a bunch of thieves ever be peaceful or happy? They'll just fight over the loot. And this is exactly what's happening in the world today.

Take the U.S. Did we create these fifty states? If we've become the rightful owners just by living on the land, then what about the people who were here before we came on the scene? Didn't we, in one way or another, steal the land from them? But now, of course, we've outlawed stealing. What kind of hypocrisy is this? Do we think the laws of nature will let us go on this way?

The Middle East conflict is another classic case of thieves fighting over stolen goods. The Jews, the Palestinians, the Syrians—all fighting over the same piece of desert land. But how can any of them claim the land as their own? We come into this world naked and empty-handed, and we leave the same way. Whatever we "own" while we're here is only ours on loan. If I visit New York for two weeks, can I claim, "Now that I've been in New York for two weeks, the city belongs to me"? This is madness. Yet in the same way we are visiting this planet for a few years, and soon we'll have to leave. How, then, can the Jews or the Arabs or anyone else claim that a certain piece of land belongs to them?

Actually, everything belongs to God, the supreme creator and supreme father. When the people of the world understand this idea, then their territorial claims and counterclaims will disappear like so many mirages. Just as two brothers can live together peacefully on their father's estate, so a God conscious Arab and a God conscious Jew can live

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# Questions People Ask About Chanting

**Q.** Does chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa have anything to do with reincarnation?

**A.** Definitely. The whole process of reincarnation depends on what you're thinking about at the time of death. If you're thinking about a dog, you could become a dog in your next life. If a husband is thinking about his wife, he could become a woman. Similarly, if the wife is thinking about her husband, she could become a man. But if you are thinking about Kṛṣṇa, you will go to the spiritual world. There you'll have a spiritual body, so that you can associate with Kṛṣṇa.

If you are not thinking of Kṛṣṇa, you're sure to take birth again in this

material world—perhaps as a human being, perhaps as an animal or a plant. This is not desirable, of course, because everyone who takes birth in the material world must undergo the miseries of disease, old age, death, and rebirth. So, as the *Vedas* explain, we should remember Kṛṣṇa at the time of death. And the easiest way to do this is to chant His holy names, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*.

**Q.** Does chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa give you good karma?

**A.** No. The Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* gives you no *karma* whatsoever. Good *karma* means you will get riches, aristocratic birth, advanced education, and beautiful bodily features. But in order to enjoy these opulences you have to take on another material body. This is a bad bargain, because no matter how good your *karma* is, you will still have to get old, get sick, die, and take birth again—

perhaps as a poor, ignorant, ugly, or lowborn person, or even as a plant or an animal. This is called the cycle of birth and death. So whether you have good *karma* or bad *karma*, it is all actually bad. It is like being on a ferris wheel. Sometimes you're going up, but the next moment you're headed back down. You take birth, die, and take birth again, endlessly.

But by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa you free yourself from both good and bad *karma*. You don't have to take on a material body to enjoy the results of good *karma* or suffer the results of bad *karma*. You attain to your *svarūpa-siddha*, your original spiritual identity. Actually, everyone has a unique, timeless relationship with Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world. You may become one of Kṛṣṇa's servants or friends. As such, your body will be free from *karma*, and full of eternity, knowledge, and bliss.

**Q.** Is chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa a form of yoga?

**A.** Yes. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa affirms that of all forms of *yoga*, *bhakti-yoga* (devotional service to Him) is the



HARE KṚṢṆA HARE KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA HARE HARE



highest. And the best way to perform *bhakti-yoga* is to chant Kṛṣṇa's names. In Sanskrit *yoga* means "to link up" with the Supreme Person, and the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is a transcendental sound vibration that puts you directly in touch with Lord Kṛṣṇa, just as the sound vibration of a telephone puts you in touch with friends in distant places.

**Q.** *Where does the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra come from?*

**A.** Sometimes people say that it's from India, but really the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is like the sun: it may appear first in the East and only later appear in the West, but that doesn't make it Indian. As an old Bengali song informs us, "The sound of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is coming from Kṛṣṇa's planet in the spiritual sky."

**Q.** *What's the history of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra?*

**A.** Great sages were chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* millions of years ago; in fact, the Vedic literatures say that the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is *nitya*, timeless. Five hundred years ago Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya taught that chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is the best way for everyone to become self-realized in the present age. He

predicted that the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* would reach every town and village in the world. In 1965 His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda came to America and began fulfilling that prediction, and his disciples are carrying on his work.

**Q.** *What is a mantra?*

**A.** The word *mantra* comes from the ancient Sanskrit language. *Man* means "mind," and *tra* means "release." So a *mantra* is a combination of transcendental sounds meant to release the mind from all the anxieties of material life. The Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is known as the *mahā-mantra*, or great *mantra*. It is the essence of all *mantras*.


**Q.** *What does the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra mean?*

**A.** The Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is the sound representation of Kṛṣṇa Himself. So it is impossible to talk about the meaning of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* in the same way we would discuss the meaning of an ordinary word. The meaning of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is self-contained.

This is not true of ordinary words. For instance, the word "water" is different from the substance water. If you are thirsty and say "water, water, water,"

you will remain thirsty. But Kṛṣṇa is not different from His name. So when we say "Kṛṣṇa," He is actually present. We can experience His qualities of eternity, knowledge, and bliss in the sound vibration of His name. That is the meaning of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. But you can't understand it intellectually—you'll have to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* and experience its transcendental meaning for yourself.

**Q.** *How will I know if the chanting is working for me?*

**A.** It will be self-evident. If you eat a good meal, you know when you're satisfied. You don't need to be told. In the same way, when you chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, you'll know beyond a doubt that it's working for you. The *Vedas* say that by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, you will experience transcendental pleasure—a spiritual pleasure much more satisfying than the pleasures of the bodily senses. So one of the first signs that the *mantra* is working for you will be that you'll lose interest in gross pleasures like gambling, intoxication, illicit sex, and meat-eating. By experiencing a higher pleasure, you'll forget about lower pleasures. That's how you'll know the chanting is working. 

**HARE RĀMA HARE RĀMA RĀMA RĀMA HARE HARE**



10-2-11



ILLUSTRATION: PARINSHI DASA



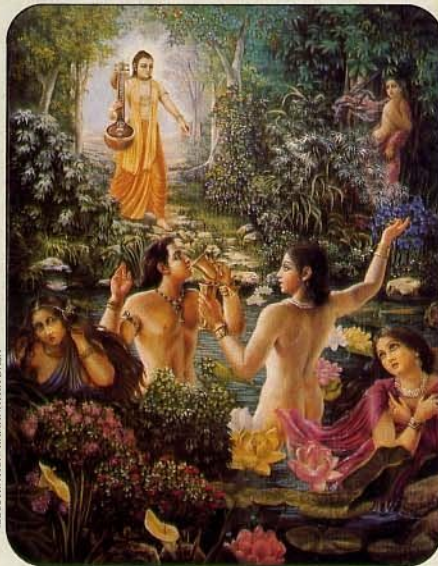
# A Curse For the Better

When child Kṛṣṇa crawled through the courtyard,  
a 36,000-year curse turned into a blessing.

**K**uvera the treasurer of the demigods had two boys. As often happens with rich men's sons, young Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva became addicted to intoxication and sex. One day they went searching for their favorite pleasures in a splendid garden on the bank of the Ganges. There they got themselves drunk on a liquor called Vāruṇī, and singing noisily, they wandered through fragrant flowers with beautiful young girls. Soon the young demigods and their companions plunged into the lotus-filled Ganges waters. Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva were enjoying the company of the young girls just the way male elephants enjoy splashing and sporting with female elephants.

But then the great sage Nārada passed nearby, and at once the young girls felt ashamed and covered themselves with their dresses. Yet Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva were blinded with drink and false pride. They remained naked. When Nārada saw how degraded the two young demigods had become, he felt compassionate and wanted to free them from their false enjoyment. So he decided to curse the boys in a way that would in the end prove a blessing.

"Through their pious activities in past lives," Nārada reflected, "these two souls have become the sons of the great demigod Kuvera. But now false pride and liquor have driven them mad, and they cannot even understand that their bodies are uncovered. So if they want so much to be naked, they should get direct experience by living in the bodies of trees. This will be a proper lesson for them. I will arrange that despite their being in tree bodies, they will be able to remember their past sins. Not only that, but by my special favor, after thirty-six thousand years they will see Kṛṣṇa, the



Supreme Personality of Godhead, face to face. At that time they will come back to their real position as His devotees."

Then Nārada went back to his *āśrama*, and Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva turned into twin *arjuna* trees. By Nārada's mystic power the trees grew at the very spot in Vṛndāvana village where the courtyard of Kṛṣṇa's childhood home was to be.

One day thirty-six thousand years later, mother Yaśodā was breastfeeding her baby Kṛṣṇa. Suddenly she noticed that the pot of milk she had been heating up was boiling over on the stove. So she put Kṛṣṇa down and rushed to set things aright. Angered at being left alone, Kṛṣṇa broke a pot of butter, ate part of the contents in a secluded place, and started feeding the rest to the monkeys. When mother Yaśodā found Kṛṣṇa, she punished Him by tying Him to a large wooden mortar she sometimes used for grinding spices.

"First of all," Lord Kṛṣṇa thought to Himself, "Mother left without feeding Me enough milk. That's why I broke the butter pot and gave the butter in charity

10-2-10

to the monkeys. Now she has tied Me to this mortar. So now I shall do something even more mischievous than before." He decided He would pull down the tall pair of *arjuna* trees in the yard.

To fulfill the blessing-curse of His great devotee Nārada, little Kṛṣṇa crawled toward the trees, well aware who they really were. "Nārada is My dear and affectionate devotee," Kṛṣṇa thought to Himself. "Since he wanted Me to come face to face with Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva, I must surely do so."

Of course, no one—not even the sons of the treasurer of the demigods—can see the Supreme Personality of Godhead on the strength of his prestige or high position. But Nārada was Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee and he wanted the boys to see Him; so Kṛṣṇa also wanted it.

Soon Kṛṣṇa passed between the two *arjuna* trees, and the big mortar that He was tied to turned crosswise somehow and stuck between them. Then Kṛṣṇa pulled on the rope with great strength, and the two trees, limbs and branches shaking, crashed to the ground.

Out of the broken, fallen trees came Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva, their purified bodies shining like fire and illuminating all directions. At once they came before child Kṛṣṇa and bowed respectfully.

"That Nārada should deliver us by his curse was all Your plan," they said. "You are the supreme mystic, and everything—past, present, and future—is known to You. Although we have stayed here for so long a time in the bodies of trees, at last You have come as a small boy to deliver us."

"O Lord," the brothers went on, "let us always simply serve Your servants, especially Nārada. It is by his grace and  
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# Transcendental World

(continued from page 5)

“When one experiences a higher taste, he ceases sense enjoyment.” For example, a doctor will forbid a diseased man: “Don’t eat. Don’t have sex life. . . .” So many don’ts. The patient is forced to accept those don’ts, but inside he feels, “Oh, if I could eat I’d be happy.” Inside he wants the forbidden things. But a spiritualist—he has inner strength. He’s not impotent, but he doesn’t like sexual intercourse. He doesn’t like it. He hates it. That is spiritual life: inner strength. He can marry *thrice*, but he has detachment. That is spiritual life. *Param dr̥ṣṭvā nivartate*: if you get something superior, naturally you give up all inferior things.

So we want enjoyment. But this atheism, this voidness, and this impersonalism have created an atmosphere in which we are simply speculating but we remain addicted to this material enjoyment. This is not the process. The next verse in *Bhagavad-gītā* [8.22] says, *puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha bhaktyā labhyaḥ tv anyanyayā*: if you accept this principle of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the devotional path, and if you worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then you can have spiritual realization and become detached from material enjoyment. Then your life becomes sublime. Oh, that is the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Here it is clearly said, *puruṣa*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha*: *paraḥ* means supreme, and *pārtha* means Arjuna. So Kṛṣṇa says, “O My dear Arjuna, in the spiritual atmosphere is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” He’s a person just like you and me. Just as we are talking face to face, so when you reach the spiritual atmosphere you’ll talk face to face with God. You’ll play with Him, you’ll eat with Him—everything.

How can you attain that state? *Bhakti-yā*: by devotion. Not by speculating, but by devotion. You have to submit. You have to render transcendental loving service to the Lord. That is the way. *Bhakti-yās tv anyanyayā*. *Tv anyanyayā* means without any adulteration. What is that adulteration? “I love God for some material benefit.” That is adulteration. “I love God to become one with Him.” That is adulteration. This adulteration in devotional service will not help you. Unadulterated: *tv anyanyayā*.

*Yasyāntaḥ-sthāni bhūtāni yena sarvaṃ idam tatam*. That Supreme Personality, although He’s a person just like you and me, is still so widespread that everything is within Him and He’s within everything. He’s outside and inside. That is the full conception of God. God is everywhere, but still He has His kingdom, His abode, His associates, everything. Just like the sun. The sun’s energy spreads all

over the universe, but still the sun has his own planet, his own residence.

So God, or Kṛṣṇa, is in the spiritual atmosphere. If we approach Him, then our life will be successful, our aims will be fulfilled, and we’ll be happy and prosperous eternally. Not temporarily, but eternally. Thank you very much. 🙏

## Brahmā’s Lifetime

(continued from page 25)

toward the eternal world. Learn how to go back home, back to Godhead.”

As we can see on the chart, the age that we’re living in (the Kali-yuga) is an ocean of faults. But we have one exceptional opportunity: simply by chanting the names of God, we can become freed from Lord Brahmā’s cycle of creations and then return home, back to Godhead. Five centuries ago the Supreme Personality of Godhead appeared as Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and personally taught this sublime process of God realization. At that time even Lord Brahmā came to this planet to take part in the Lord’s mission. And Brahmā—along with Lord Caitanya’s other followers to the present day—always chants the names of God recommended in the Vedic literature: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. 🙏

International Society for Krishna Consciousness

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# HOW TO MAKE EVERYBODY HAPPY

## Without Making Yourself Miserable

by SĪTĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ



In college I was a would-be humanitarian, always getting myself into one altruistic group or another.

I leafleted with grape and lettuce workers, read books to blind people, demonstrated against the war in Vietnam, and quit jobs when it became clear my employers were discriminating against minorities.

Later I wanted to go into humanitarian work full-time, and I looked into the Peace Corps and VISTA. “Who’s the most needy?” I thought. “The Appalachian poor? The hungry children in Peru? Or maybe the Bangladesh refugees, or the handicapped?” With so many problems that needed solving—addiction, racism, crime, unemployment, poverty, war—it was a real mind-boggler deciding where to put my energy.

In the fall of 1970, my search took me to the Kṛṣṇa center in Buffalo, New York, where I talked awhile with the coordinator, Guṇagrāhī dāsa. I told him I wanted to work with people and help solve problems, and he told me I was going about it the wrong way.

“You’re like a mother putting drops in her child’s ear,” he said. “The thing is, the infection has probably traveled there from some other part of the body. So even though the drops stop the pain for a while, it’s going to start again. You’ve got to treat the real *cause* of the pain, not just the symptoms, you know? So the world’s problems are just symptoms of the real disease—that we’ve forgotten our link with the Supreme—and welfare work is only patchwork.”

These sounded like sweeping statements, and I wasn’t sure which way I was being swept, but I kept listening.

“See,” Guṇagrāhī went on, “in one part of the world you might solve the hunger problem, but a war or an epidemic is going to crop up somewhere else. It’s kind of like stepping down on an air bubble in your carpet. You keep stepping down, and it keeps popping up

in some new spot. Finally you’ve got to lift the carpet and get rid of the bubble altogether. So ordinary welfare work doesn’t get to the real problem—it doesn’t help people revive their God consciousness, their love for Kṛṣṇa.”

I picked up some of what he was saying, but there was still something bothering me. “You’re talking about love for Him, but if He’s so loving, what are we doing with all these problems? Why so much suffering?”

He didn’t seem to mind the question. “He’s like a father who asks his kids not to fool around with matches. If they do it anyway and get burned, whose fault is that? In *Bhagavad-gītā* and other spiritual texts, like the Bible or the Koran, the Lord explains that we should use all the world’s resources not just for surviving but for *reviving*—our God consciousness. Then there’d be no shortage of anything. The only thing we’re short of now is God consciousness. Take paper, for instance. All over the world we cut down so many trees and print so many magazines and novels that are only good for lining wastebaskets—stuff that tells you zero about God consciousness and if anything, brings you down to dog consciousness. So now there’s a paper shortage, and young people who’ve read all this trash literature are committing all sorts of crimes. And whose fault is that? We’ve misused what God has given us.”

“Wait, though,” I said. “Why has He put us into this situation? Hasn’t He more or less abandoned us?”

“He didn’t ask us to come here,” Guṇagrāhī answered. “We wanted to come. We’ve abandoned Him. So the best welfare work you can do is to teach people how to link up again with God. That’s what *yoga* means—‘linking up.’ It’s the greatest art and the greatest science, the greatest welfare work.”

“But if I did that,” I objected, “how would I be helping with starvation, crime, poverty, racism, drug addiction. . . . These are the things millions of people have to live with day in and day out. Are you asking me to look the other

way, to forget about all these things?”

“Did you ever try to water a tree leaf by leaf?” he said. “It would take you forever, and the tree wouldn’t get any water. It would start shriveling up . . . until you started watering the root. The world is just like that: a big tree with so many leaves—all of us. And the root is the Supreme Lord. He’s the source. So if we satisfy Him, we can satisfy everyone in the world. Everything’s coming from Him anyway, so why not give everything back to Him? Satisfy Kṛṣṇa, learn to love Him again. And He’ll take care of all our needs—material and spiritual—without our even asking. But our leaders have so many independent schemes that can only fail.”

My mind was straining for a more complex answer. He seemed to notice but kept going.

“Or say your eyes are getting a little sore,” he said, “and you get some carrots to heal them. Now, you don’t want to stick the carrots right into your eyes. That would really make them sore. You put the carrots into your stomach, and then your eyes get the benefit. So all of us are like a huge body, and the Lord is like the stomach. If we satisfy Kṛṣṇa, then we automatically satisfy everyone.”

What could I say?

“In the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement,” Guṇagrāhī went on, “we’re trying to help people see that our real problem is spiritual: we’ve forgotten our link with the Supreme. All those problems you mentioned—addiction, crime, war—we’ve got all those problems because we’ve lost sight of who we really are: the family members of the Supreme Spirit. What the addict or the criminal or the warmonger is craving is really spiritual happiness—the lasting peace and satisfaction that Kṛṣṇa will give us when we devote ourselves to Him.”

Gradually Guṇagrāhī convinced me that I shouldn’t dedicate my life to an ordinary welfare cause. He capped things with a story about a sick boy and his well-meaning brother. It seems their mother



had left word that her sick son should stay away from solid foods, but still the boy asked his brother to bring him some cake. So the brother brought the cake, figuring that he was being terribly kind, and of course, the sick boy got sicker. When their mother found out what had happened, she gave the well-meaning brother a beating. In other words, if you don't know the prescription for the problem, then don't try to treat it. You'll

just make the problem worse and get yourself into trouble. Again, the world's real problem is spiritual, and the prescription has to be spiritual.

By the end of my talk with Guṇagrāhī, I felt sure that the best thing I could do was to work with the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. I moved to the Buffalo center, and I've spent the past few years in Los Angeles at the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, where

I operate a type-composing computer. It's direct involvement with the publishing of my spiritual master's translations of the Vedic literatures, the books that fully explain the science of spiritual welfare work. Śrīla Prabhupāda once wrote me, "Just go on in this way, trying to please Kṛṣṇa, and you will find yourself becoming happier and happier." He was right, and if you come and help us, you'll find out just how right. ❁

## Nuclear Vesuvius

(continued from page 27)

together peacefully on God's land. In God's mind is there any line of demarcation between Israel and Lebanon or the United States and Cuba? This nation against that, black against white, Jew against Arab, Catholic against Protestant—all these conflicts are due simply to our lack of God consciousness. The only solution for us is to recognize the real

owner: God. This doesn't mean we have to give up everything and live like ascetics. Actually, as God's family we have a right to live on His property. But now we have forgotten our bond with the supreme father, which means we have also forgotten our bond with one another. That's why we're having so much trouble living and working together.

Imagine some people standing on a bridge over a small pond. If each of them

starts tossing stones in at random, the ripples will clash, and in no time the water will become choppy. But if the people could toss the stones at the same central point, then the ripples would never clash; they'd harmonize. In the same way, if our nation has its center of interest and another nation has its center of interest, our interests will clash. But when we see that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the perfect center of interest, then we won't clash. We'll have peace. ❁



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## A Curse For the Better (continued from page 31)

mercy that we have been able to see You face to face. From now on, may our words describe Your pastimes, may our ears hear Your glories, may our bodies work to please You, may our minds think of Your lotus feet, and may our eyes gaze upon Your devotees."

Child Kṛṣṇa smiled broadly. He said, "I know that My pure devotee Nârada has given you his causeless mercy, that he has saved you from false pride in your wealth and beauty. You are very fortunate, not only because you were cursed by him, but also because you had the great opportunity just to see him. When one is face to face with the sun, he is no longer in darkness. Similarly, if one is fortunate enough to see a great devotee like Nârada, then he is no longer in the darkness of ignorance.

"O Nalakūvara and Maṅgirīva, because you have reawakened transcendental love for Me, your lives have now become successful. This is your last lifetime in the material world. Never again will you fall away from your loving devotional service to Me."

Nalakūvara and Maṅgirīva circumambulated Lord Kṛṣṇa and bowed down before Him again and again. Then they departed, and child Kṛṣṇa sat there, still bound to the grinding mortar.

Soon Kṛṣṇa's father Nanda Mahārāja and all the neighborhood cowherd men and women arrived on the scene. They were astonished to see Kṛṣṇa sitting between the fallen trees. What had happened? Had Kṛṣṇa done this? But how could He have pulled down two gigantic trees? Who had actually done it? While the cowherd men were puzzling over the matter, the children who had been playing nearby said, "Kṛṣṇa crawled between the two trees, and the wooden mortar topsy-turvyed and stuck there. Then Kṛṣṇa pulled the rope, and the trees fell down. Finally two shining men came out and talked with Kṛṣṇa. We saw all of this with our own eyes."

Most of the cowherd men found it impossible to accept that Kṛṣṇa had uprooted the trees in such a wonderful way. But some of them believed the children and told Nanda Mahārāja, "Your little Kṛṣṇa is different from the other children. He just might have done it." Smiling, Nanda Mahārāja untied the rope and freed his wonderful son from the grinding mortar.

*[Adapted by Drutakarm dâsa from Śrîmad-Bhâgavatam, translation and commentary by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupâda.]*



# NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

## More Than Meals: Solving the Food Shortage

Some people take a quick glance at the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement and conclude that its members are not working to solve humanity's day-to-day crises. These people tend to think that by chanting the names of God (Hare Kṛṣṇa), the devotees have become "otherworldly," "out of touch with reality." Or, if they stop a moment and hear what the devotees have to say about the world's problems, they may think, "Spiritual solutions can't really help anyone." Neither of these misgivings holds true. Let us consider, for example, the Kṛṣṇa conscious approach to one of the worst problems facing the world today—food shortage.

Experts often tell us that the world is in danger: we can expect more and more people and less and less food, with little hope that the supply will increase. But no one who's read *Bhagavad-gītā* or has his fair share of common sense will go along with the idea that the earth is incapable of producing more food. After all, food is ultimately coming from nature's bounty, or, simply, from God. As anyone knows, grain (the main food substance for all living beings) is not manufactured in the scientist's laboratory but results from the Lord's mercy in the form of rainfall and fertile fields.

So we should accept God's arrangement and make the most of the natural source of food He has given us. All we have to do is increase our agricultural development all over the world. But thanks to the artificial values of industrialized society, the world's population has swung away from the farms and into the cities. And as a consequence, countries like Africa, India, America, and Australia have vast tracts of uncultivated—wasted—land.

To set an example on a small scale, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness society is developing self-sufficient farms based on the principle of "simple living and high thinking." Already, devotees have started some twenty of these farms around the world. By raising their own grains and vegetables, and by protecting the cows and drawing milk from them, the devotees are proving that a life based on cultivating God consciousness and accepting the mercy of God in the form of grain and milk products is a plain and simple solution to the starvation

problem. (It's, as well, a solution to almost all other problems.) These self-sufficient farm communities are totally beyond comparison—either spiritually or materially—with the crime- and crisis-filled cities.

Of course, if all the people in the world are going to move to God conscious, agricultural communities, that will require a complete cultural revolution. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is advocating just this kind of overhaul in consciousness, but admittedly today's propaganda for industrialization and consumption is making things difficult. Even though the Kṛṣṇa conscious village plan is sound, economically and in every other way, people tend to dismiss it with remarks like, "Your plan may work for you, but what if some people don't go along with it? We'll still have our big cities, our vast tracts of uncultivated land, and our food shortage."

Yet even if people don't move *en masse* to God conscious farm communities, and even if, as the experts promise, the population keeps growing, there's still enough food being produced around the world to feed everyone. Our only real shortage is a shortage of Kṛṣṇa (God) consciousness. What makes one group of people in one part of the world think they can throw away thousands of tons of grain and pay farmers not to produce while people in other parts of the world starve? Simple. A shortage of God consciousness. The various "isms" such as nationalism, capitalism, and communism are all based on the bodily concept of life, and do not permit the spiritual vision which would enable people to share the fruits of the earth. As long as we are thinking black-vs.-white, American-vs.-Russian, Palestinian-vs.-Israeli, this-vs.-that, we cannot share the bounty of the earth. This problem can be alleviated only by spiritual understanding. We have to become God conscious and realize that we're all part and parcel of God—that's how we're all alike, and that's how we can share and share alike.

The critics may still object: "It seems you'll help the starving only if they become devotees of God; otherwise, you'll let them go on starving." Not so. Even now, near eastern India's Bangladesh, ISKCON Food Relief is feeding an average of twenty thousand people each

month. (CARE has offered additional supplies.) And not long ago, when a cyclone killed tens of thousands in southern India's Andhra Pradesh province, ISKCON Food Relief came through for the survivors with emergency food distribution.

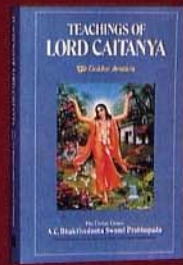
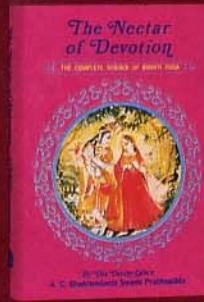
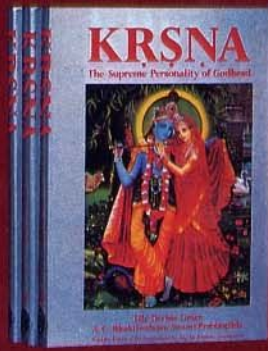
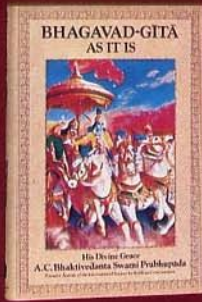
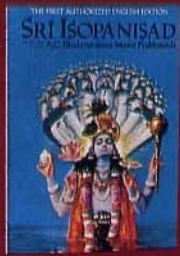
But more important than the immediate meals that ISKCON makes available is the dissemination of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which alone can put an end to food shortage and starvation. As *Bhagavad-gītā* informs us, the suffering conditions around the world are simply *karma*, nature's reactions to our sinful actions, and we cannot avoid these reactions through altruism or political maneuvering. We have witnessed repeatedly that human efforts make almost no dent in drought and famine conditions. Who can control nature but the Supreme? Only with His blessing will nature provide us with rain and crops. True, in times of famine wealthy men may come forward and offer huge donations, but if there is no grain available, then their money is totally useless.

After all, whatever sufferings people are undergoing are prescribed by God's natural law. And these laws aren't subject to change by presumptuous meddlers who think they know more than God. In a hospital, for instance, the doctor may give orders that some of his patients should fast. Now, if some do-gooder wants to ignore the doctor's orders and provide the starving patients with full meals, the hospital authorities will take his so-called compassion as meddling. In the same way, when welfare workers ignore the law of *karma* they are just wasting their time. For anyone who has gone against God's natural law, suffering is inevitable.

One final note about the charge that devotees are "otherworldly." In one sense, it's true. As *Bhagavad-gītā* explains, this temporary material world will always have its quota of suffering; that is its nature. The eternal soul can be perfectly happy only when he returns to the eternal, blissful, spiritual world. Of course, we can go back to Godhead only if we have developed our love for God in this world. And if we'll just do that, then all our worries about a food shortage are over.

—SDG





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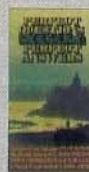


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