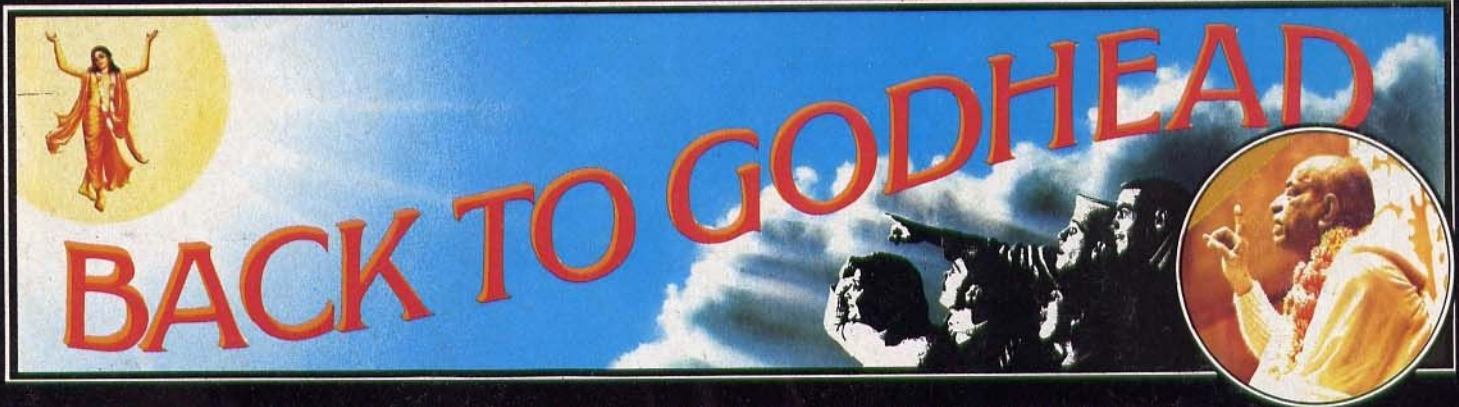


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



Vol. 13 No. 10

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

T.Q.K P.H. 11



Lord Kṛṣṇa,
The Butter Thief

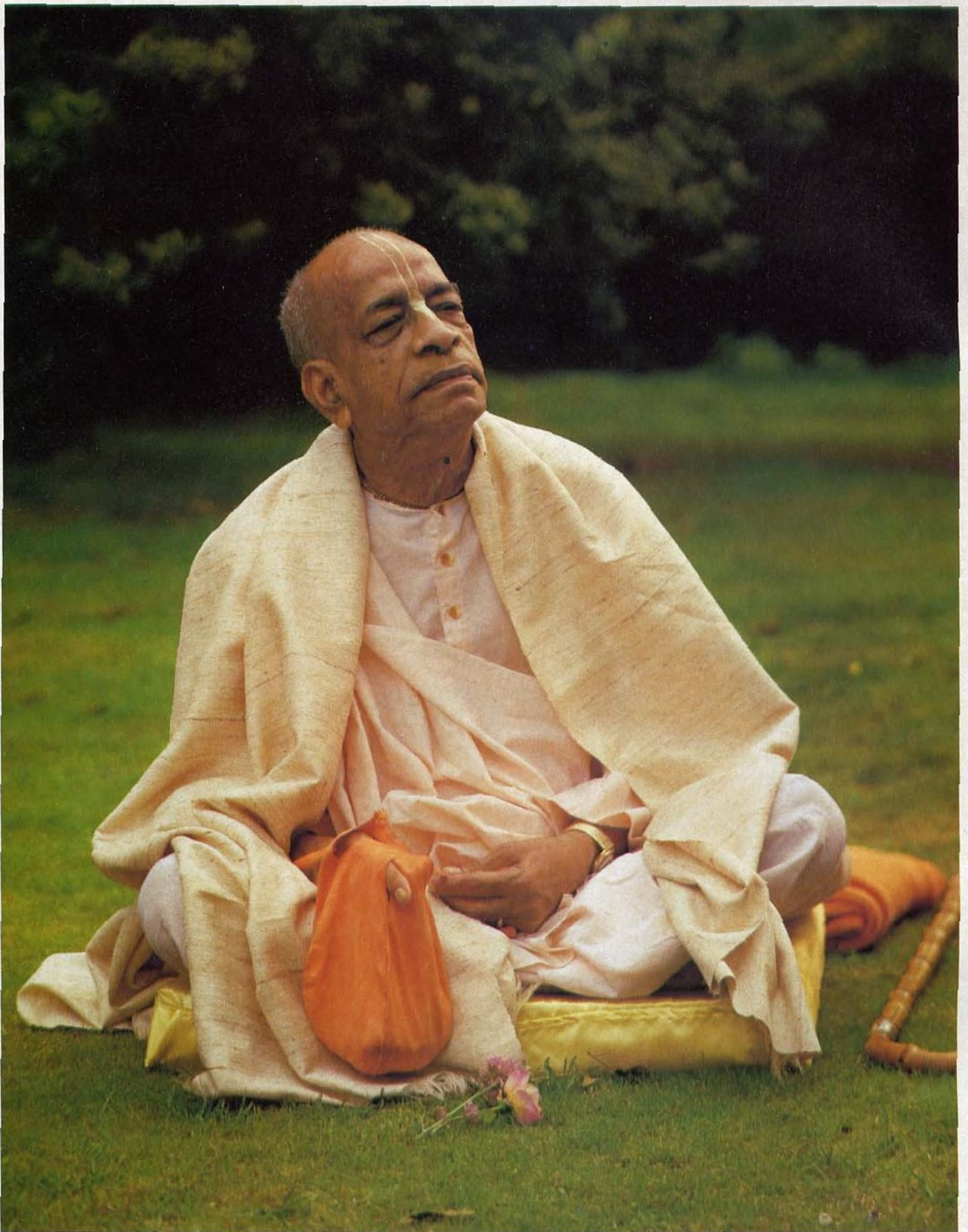


PHOTO: BHARGAVA DASA

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

BACK TO GODHEAD

VOL. 13, NO. 10

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. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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PRONUNCIATION of Sanskrit words and names.
BACK TO GODHEAD follows the international scholarly
standard. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in **but**, long **ā**
like the **a** in **far** (and hold it twice as long as the short
a). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in **evade**, long **ī** like the **i** in
plique. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **rim**, and **e**
like the **ch** in **chair**. Pronounce the aspirated conso-
nants (**ch**, **jh**, **dh**, etc.) as in **staunch**-heart,
hedge-hog, and **red**-hot. Finally, pronounce sibilants **ś**
and **ṣ** like **sh**, and **s** like the **s** in **sun**. So for *Kṛṣṇa* say
KRISHNA, and for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

ABOUT SANSKRIT NAMES in by-lines, credits, and
text. Members of the International Society for Krishna
Consciousness receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or His
great devotees, combined with *dāsa* (*dāsī* for women),
meaning "servant." For instance, the name *Kṛṣṇa*
dāsa means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

◀ His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami
Prabhupāda came to America in 1965, at age 70, to
fulfill his spiritual master's request that he teach Kṛṣṇa
consciousness to the English-speaking world. In a
dozen years he published some seventy volumes of
translation and commentary on India's Vedic
literatures, and these are now standard 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 in 1977 in In-
dia's Vṛndāvana, the holy place most sacred to Lord
Kṛṣṇa, and his disciples are carrying forward the move-
ment he started.

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COVER: Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Butter Thief. People all over India still cherish the
memory of Lord Kṛṣṇa stealing butter. Here the ladies of Vṛndāvana village are
about to catch Him (along with His brother, Balarāma, right) in the act. Fifty cen-
turies ago, on the bank of the Ganges, a young devotee of Kṛṣṇa told a death-
bound king about these and other of the Lord's pastimes. It was truly "The
Deathless Nectar." (See page 32.) (Cover art: Dhṛti-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."



THE YOGA FOR OUR AGE

Keep On Working - But with a Higher Desire

Ages ago, *yoga* ("linking up with the Supreme") meant giving up all work and all desire. Now that's no longer possible—or even preferable.

by HIS DIVINE GRACE A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca
anāśritaḥ karma-phalaṁ
kāryaṁ karma karoti yaḥ
sa sannyāsī ca yogī ca
na niragnir na cākriyaḥ*

"The Blessed Lord said: One who is unattached to the fruits of his work and who works as he is obligated is in the renounced order of life, and he is the true mystic—not he who lights no fire and performs no work." [*Bhagavad-gītā* 6.1]

In this Sixth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Lord explains that the eightfold *yoga* system is a means to control the mind and the senses. However, this process is very difficult for people in general to perform, especially in this age of Kali [quarrel and hypocrisy]. Although the eightfold *yoga* system is recommended in this chapter, the Lord emphasizes that the process of *karma-yoga*, or acting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is better.

In this world everyone acts to maintain his family members and their paraphernalia, but no one is working without some self-interest—some desire for personal gratification—be it concentrated or extended. But this is not the perfection of work. The criterion of perfection is to act in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, not with a view to enjoy the fruits of work.

To act in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the duty of every living entity, because we are constitutionally part and parcel of the Supreme. The parts of the body work for the satisfaction of the whole body. The limbs of the body do not act for self-satisfaction but for the satisfaction of the complete whole. Similarly, the living entity who acts for the satisfaction of the supreme whole and not for personal satisfaction is the perfect *sannyāsī* [renunciant] and the perfect *yogī*.

In a past age, by strictly restraining his mind and senses a yogī saw the Lord in his heart. But we can attain the same result by working with devotion.

Impersonalistic *sannyāsīs* sometimes artificially think that they have become liberated from all material engagements, and therefore they cease to perform *agni-hotra yajñas* (fire sacrifices). But actually, unless one comes to the standard platform of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, there is no question of liberation. Liberation means to be free of all self-interest. But the impersonalists are self-interested, because their goal is to become one with the supreme, impersonal Brahman. So they have a demand.

But a devotee has no demand. He simply engages himself in the service of Kṛṣṇa for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa, and he does not want anything in return. That is pure devotion. As Lord Caitanya says, *na dhanam na janam na sundarim kavitaṁ vā jagad-īśa kāmaya*: "O Lord of the universe, I do not want any wealth, I do not want any number of followers, I do not want a nice wife. Simply let me be engaged in Your service, that's all." This is the *bhakti-yoga* system.

We see another example of this pure devotion when Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva says to Prahāda Mahārāja, "My dear boy, you have suffered for Me so much. Whatever you want, you can have." But Prahāda refuses the offer: "My dear master, I am not doing mercantile business with You, in which I will take some remuneration from You for my service." This is pure devotion.

So the impersonalistic *yogīs* and *jñānīs* demand that they become one with the Supreme. Why do they want to become one with the Supreme? Because, on account of separation from the Supreme, they have bitter experience of the material pangs. But a devotee has no such suffering. Although separate from the Lord, the devotee is fully enjoying in the service of the Lord.

Of course, the desire to become one with the Supreme is greater than any material desire, but it is not without self-interest. Similarly, the mystic *yogī* who ceases all material activities and practices

the *yoga* system with half-closed eyes also desires some satisfaction for his personal self. He wants some material power. That is the result of mystic *yoga* practice. If you are actually practicing the regulative principles of mystic *yoga*, then you can get eight kinds of perfection. You can become lighter than a cotton swab. You can become heavier than a boulder. You can get anything—whatever you like—immediately. Such powerful *yogīs* exist. Viśvāmītra Yogī, for example, wanted to get human beings from a palm tree. He thought, "Why should people be born only after living nine months within the womb of a mother? Let them be produced just like fruit." And he actually did it.

So sometimes *yogīs* are so powerful that they can do wonderful things. But these are all material powers. In time such *yogīs* are also vanquished. How long can one remain living on the strength of material power? But the *bhakti-yogī* does not want any such powers. A person acting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness works for the satisfaction of the whole, without self-interest. He has no desire for self-satisfaction. His criterion is the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa, and thus he is the perfect *sannyāsī* and the perfect *yogī*. As quoted before, Lord Caitanya's prayer shows that He is the highest perfectional symbol of Kṛṣṇa consciousness:

*na dhanam na janam na sundarim
kavitaṁ vā jagad-īśa kāmaya
mama janmani janmanīsvare
bhavatād bhaktir ahaitukī tvayi*

"O Almighty Lord, I have no desire to accumulate wealth, nor to enjoy beautiful women, nor to have any number of followers. I want only the causeless mercy of Your devotional service in my life, birth after birth." [*Sikṣāṣṭaka* 4]

A devotee does not want even salvation. That is why Lord Caitanya says "birth after birth." The salvationists and the voidists want to stop this material

**“In the *beginning*, one may stop all nonsensical work and sit down.
But those who are advanced should work for Kṛṣṇa.”**

way of life. But Caitanya Mahārabhu says “birth after birth.” This means He is prepared to undergo all kinds of material pangs, birth after birth. Then what does He want? He simply wants to be engaged in the service of the Lord. That is the perfection of *yoga*.

Are there any questions?

Devotee: Śrīla Prabhupāda, I’ve read that the spiritual soul is no bigger than one ten-thousandth part of the tip of a hair. In the spiritual sky is the spiritual soul still just that big?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, that is his constitutional position. Whether in the spiritual sky or the material sky, he’s the same. But just as in the material world you develop a material body, so in the spiritual world you can develop a spiritual body. You follow? Your position is that of a small particle, but spirit can expand. In the material world this expansion is being done in contact with matter. And in the spiritual world, that expansion can be done in spirit. Here in the material world I am a spiritual soul, but I am different from my body—because the body is matter and I am living force. And in the spiritual world, everything is living force. There is no dead matter. Therefore, everyone’s body is spiritual.

Entering the spiritual world is just like mixing oil with oil: there is nothing but oil, that’s all. But the material world is like a mixture of oil and water: there is a distinction between the spiritual living entities and the material nature. So I am a spiritual soul, like a drop of oil. Now I am in the “water” of the material energy, and there is a distinction. But if I am put into the “oil” of the spiritual world, then everything’s all right.

The impersonalists do not want to develop a spiritual body. They simply want to remain as spiritual particles. That is their idea. But we Vaiṣṇavas [devotees] want to serve Kṛṣṇa. Therefore we require hands, legs, a mouth, a tongue—everything. And in the spiritual world we are given a suitable body. Just as you get your present body from the womb of your mother, so you can get a spiritual body in the spiritual world—not from the womb of a mother, but by another process.

Devotee: How does that process work?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness turns your material body into a spiritual body. It is something like putting an iron bar into a fire. The more the iron bar stays in the fire,

the more it becomes like fire. When the iron bar is red-hot, it has acquired the qualities of fire. You can touch the iron bar anywhere, and it will act like fire. Another example is electrified metal. A copper wire is not electricity, but when it is electrified you will immediately get an electric shock if you touch it. Similarly, if your body is spiritualized, then material activity is ended.

By “material activity” I mean sense gratification. The more one becomes spiritualized, the more his material demands become nil. Finally, there are no more material activities. So how can you come to that platform? The first example is appropriate: you have to keep the iron bar constantly within the fire. In other words, you have to keep yourself constantly in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Then even your material body is spiritualized.

The Sanskrit word *svaṛṇa-maya* means “golden.” Something can be called *svaṛṇa-maya* when it is made of pure gold or when it is made of something else but has a thick coating of gold. Similarly, when one’s material body performs only spiritual activities, it is spiritual, although seemingly still composed of material elements. Therefore, in India saintly persons are not cremated after death. Of course, here in America everyone is put into the grave after passing away. But in India, in accordance with the Vedic system, only the bodies of very high personalities, especially the bodies of great devotees, are not burned. Their bodies are considered spiritual.

How have they become spiritual? When your body is no longer engaged in any material activities but simply in spiritual activities in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, your body is spiritual. Similarly, if everyone in this world became fully Kṛṣṇa conscious—if nobody worked for sense gratification but only for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa—this world would immediately become the spiritual world.

This idea requires a little time to understand. The point is that anything used for Kṛṣṇa—simply for Kṛṣṇa’s satisfaction—is spiritual. Because we are using this microphone for talking about Kṛṣṇa, it is spiritual. Similarly, we are preparing food for Kṛṣṇa and offering it to Him with love, and it is becoming *prasāda*, “the Lord’s mercy.” Now, what is the difference between *prasāda* and ordinary food? When we distribute *prasāda*, people sometimes say, “Why is this *prasāda*? We eat the same fruit—you

have simply cut it into pieces, and it has become *prasāda*?” They can say that, but factually it *is prasāda*. If you go on eating *prasāda*, you become spiritualized. Again, the example of the iron rod is appropriate. If I take that hot iron rod and I say, “It is fire,” somebody may say, “Oh, why is it fire? It is iron.” So I say, “Touch it. . . .” You see? These are crude examples, but they give the idea.

So actually, in a higher sense there is no matter. Everything is spiritual—because Kṛṣṇa, the source of everything, is spiritual. Kṛṣṇa is the whole spirit, and matter is one of the energies of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, matter is also spirit. But because the material energy is being misused—because it is not being used for the purpose of Kṛṣṇa—we call it “matter.” So our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement aims to respitalize the whole thing—the whole social situation, political situation, and everything else. It is a very nice movement. People should try to understand it. Actually, we are trying to spiritualize the whole world. Of course, that may not be possible, but the ideal is like that. And at least if individually one tries this respitalization method, his life becomes perfect.

Devotee: Śrīla Prabhupāda, in the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says He will provide for His devotees. Then what is the meaning of the saying, “God helps those who help themselves”?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: “Helping yourself” means that you put yourself under Kṛṣṇa’s direction. That is helping yourself. And if you think, “Oh, I can provide for myself,” then you are not helping yourself.

For example, as long as my finger is connected to my hand, I will spend thousands of dollars to cure it if there is some trouble. But if my finger is cut off from my body, you can trample it down with your feet and I won’t care about it. Similarly, to help oneself means to put oneself in the proper position, as part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. That is really helping yourself. Otherwise, how can you help yourself?

The finger can help itself by keeping itself in the proper position—as part of the hand—and in that way working for the whole body. That is the finger’s proper position. But if the finger thinks, “I shall remain separated from this body and help myself,” it will die.

So as soon as you think, “I shall live independently, without caring for

“Of course, when one sits down, at least he does not do any nonsense. But that is simply a negation of nonsense, that’s all.”

Kṛṣṇa,” that is your death. And as soon as you engage yourself as part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, that is your life. Therefore, helping yourself means to know your position and to work in that way. That is helping yourself. But without knowing what your position is, how can you help yourself? It is not possible.

Guest: Can we also serve Kṛṣṇa just by not doing anything bad? Wouldn’t that also help Kṛṣṇa—refraining from sinful acts?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: If you want to serve Kṛṣṇa, that means you must do something. Serving means doing. What do you mean by the word “serve”? When you actually serve somebody, are you not doing something? So you can serve Kṛṣṇa by going to teach Kṛṣṇa consciousness, by cooking for Him, by cleansing His temple—by doing so many things. Helping Kṛṣṇa means doing something for Him. Helping Kṛṣṇa does not mean that you sit down tightly, but that you act in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Whatever assets you have, utilize them for Kṛṣṇa. That is *bhakti*, or devotional service. Now, what assets do you have? You have your mind. All right—think of Kṛṣṇa. You have hands—wash the temple or cook for Kṛṣṇa. You have legs—go to the temple of Kṛṣṇa. You have a nose—smell the flowers offered to Kṛṣṇa. In this way you can engage everything in Kṛṣṇa’s service.

So Kṛṣṇa consciousness means working, activity. On the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra Arjuna was declining to act, and Kṛṣṇa was enthusing him to act. This is the whole purport of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Kṛṣṇa consciousness does not mean that you give up work, but that you *engage yourself in work*—for Kṛṣṇa.

Of course, in this Sixth Chapter Kṛṣṇa will say something about meditation, but He never says to Arjuna, “My dear friend Arjuna, don’t fight this way. Just sit down and meditate upon Me.” Have you seen this anywhere in the *Bhagavad-gītā*? No. In the *beginning* of meditation one may stop all nonsensical work and sit down tightly. But those who are advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness should work for Kṛṣṇa.

For example, suppose a child is creating some disturbance. The mother says, “My dear child, sit down here.” But if the child can work nicely, the mother says, “Oh, my dear boy, you have to do this, you have to do that, you have to do that.”

So you should sit down tightly and refrain from doing nonsense, but not from doing sensible things. Of course, when one sits down, at least he does not do any nonsense. But that is simply negation of nonsense, that’s all. That is not *positive* activity. Kṛṣṇa consciousness means doing positive activities for Kṛṣṇa.

Negation of activity is not life. Positive activity is life. “Don’t do this” is not life. “Do this” is life. The whole *Bhagavad-gītā* is “do.” “Do fight for Me,” says Kṛṣṇa. Arjuna pleaded, “Don’t induce me to fight,” but Kṛṣṇa did not like that. “You are speaking like a non-Aryan [*anārya-juṣṭam*],” He told Arjuna. *Kutas tvā kaśmalam idam*: “How have these impurities come upon you?”

So Kṛṣṇa consciousness does not mean sitting idly. No. All the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa are full of activities. When you go to the spiritual world, Kṛṣṇa is always

dancing. Twenty-four hours a day you have to dance there and eat there. Where is the sitting down? There is no question of sitting down. Have you heard anything about the *gopīs* [Kṛṣṇa’s cowherd girlfriends] meditating? Sitting down? [Laughter.] Have you heard of this? And what were Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s activities? Simply dancing, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. You see?

You are a spiritual soul, so how can you stop yourself from acting and simply remain silent? That is not possible. Arjuna refused to do this. You’ll find in this chapter that when Kṛṣṇa recommended, “My dear Arjuna, this is how one meditates,” Arjuna immediately refused. “My dear Kṛṣṇa, it is not possible for me.”

And that was actually the fact. How could it have been possible for him? He was a householder, he wanted a
(continued on page 30)

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The temple (above, flanked on left by old house) reminds community members what they're about, and so does the community's Sanskrit name: *Murāri-sevaka*, "the place where everyone is a servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa."

Young Dāru Brahman Dāsa (right) helps take care of the cows, just the way Kṛṣṇa did some fifty centuries ago.



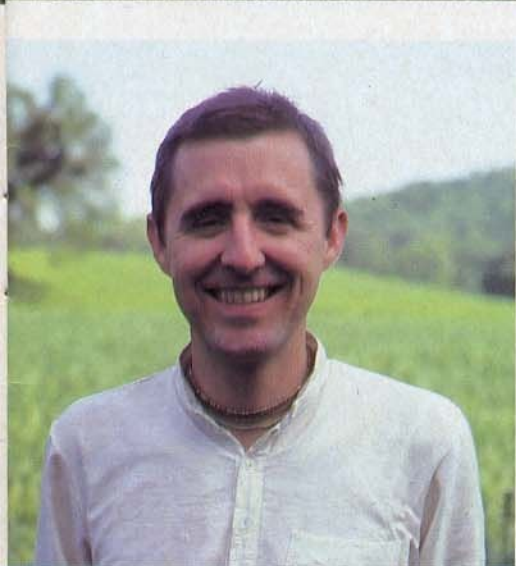
LYNCHBURG, TENNESSEE

These Farmers Know a Lot More Than Farming

Here they tell us about their self-sufficient spiritual community in the Appalachian foothills.

by MANDALEŚVARA DĀSA

PHOTOS BY MURALĪVADANA DĀSA



“A high standard of spiritual living,” says founder Balavanta Dāsa (above), “—that’s why we came to this land.” (Above right: a view along the valley.)

In the southern Appalachian foothills, near Lynchburg, Tennessee, you’ll find another kind of farming community.

“We started out in 1976,” says Balavanta Dāsa. “At first we figured we’d just plant corn or some other cash crop and make a lot of money for Kṛṣṇa. But when I told our spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda, he sat back thoughtfully and said, ‘Making money on our farm? That is a material idea. We don’t care about money—we just want to be self-sufficient.’”

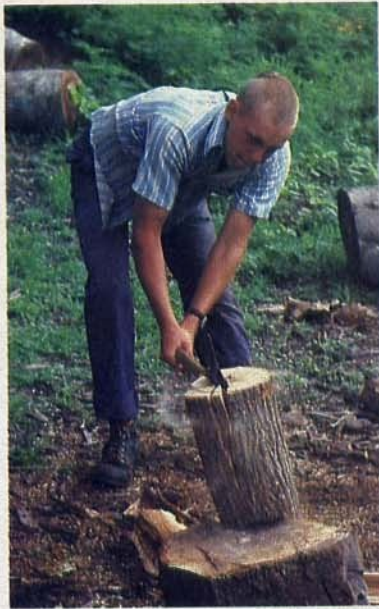
“Then it dawned on me. Śrīla Prabhupāda didn’t want just an ordinary farm, and he certainly didn’t want an agribusiness. What he did want was a self-sufficient spiritual community where all kinds of people would want to live and work.”

Nṛsīmhī-devī Dāśī says she realizes most people think the community’s life must be quite hard. “But when you

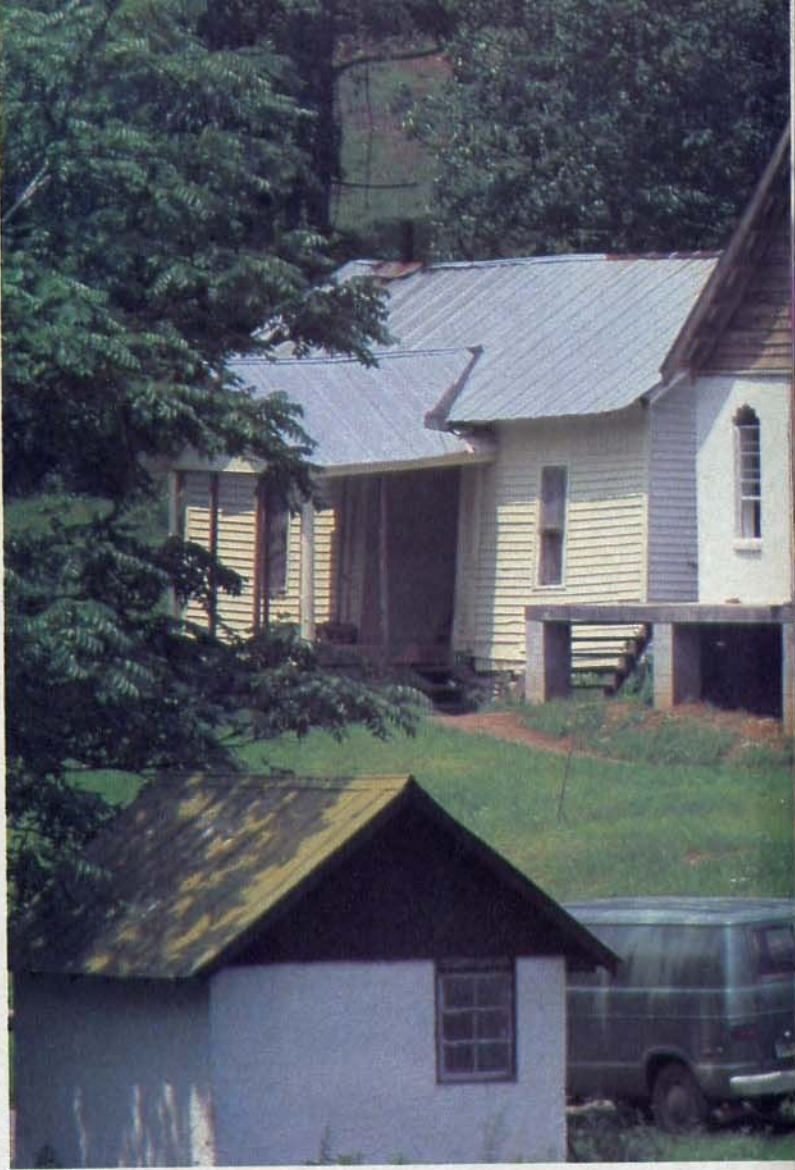
move out here you get your own house, and if you want you can plant a garden. Pure spring water comes right out of the tap, and the air is *so* fresh—no blue exhaust smoke.

“One day last spring,” she says, “I was sitting up on the front porch mending clothes. And I could hear the birds and the cowbells from all across the valley. I could even hear the breeze. My mind felt so clear—this was just the kind of place Kṛṣṇa lived in. And I remembered when I was back in Chicago, just before I came to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I was sewing then, too—out on the fire escape overlooking the alley. And all I could see was garbage cans and people coming out and dumping trash. All I could hear was cars and trucks going by and machines running and jets roaring overhead. Now, that’s what I call hard.”

Says Balavanta, “Some people think we’re just struggling along out here,



A grassroots approach to ecology: Raghupati Dāsa (right) chops wood for the kitchen stove, and Janmāṣṭamī Dāsa (below) hammers a new house together.



while they're enjoying their high standard of living back in the city. But just what is that 'high standard of living'? A while back I was at a big political dinner in New York. John D. Rockefeller and his wife were there. But everybody was wearing synthetic suits. You know—the kind they make from petroleum by-products. And they were having frozen peas and cauliflower, coffee, brown-and-serve rolls, margarine . . .

"Here on the farm we dress in pure cotton, wool, and silk. And we never have to eat any of that junk food. It's all fresh—cauliflower and green peas right out of the garden, with just-ground spices and real butter. And the milk products out here are so rich and creamy—we call storebought milk 'white water.'"

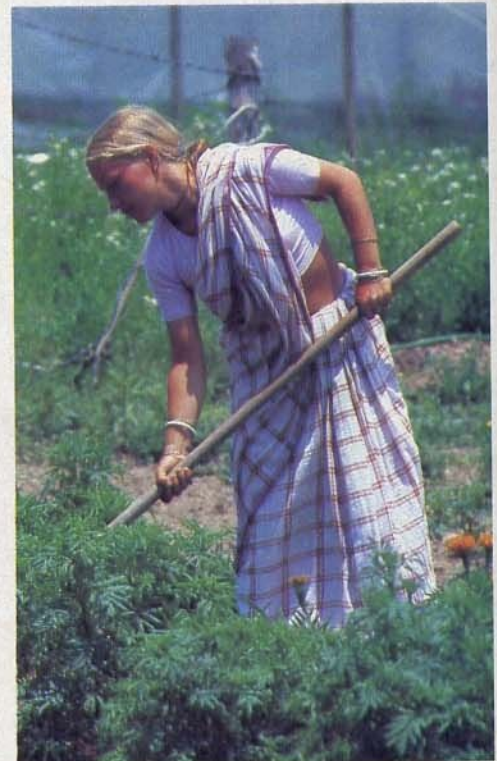
Assistant coordinator Vedaguhya Dāsa spent several years touring Third World countries. "Wherever I went—Latin America, Asia, North Africa—people really wanted to live on the land and keep some cows and do some plain, honest work. But the propaganda

A self-sufficient spiritual community: the village center (above) includes the temple and a few cabins. "When you move out here you get your own house," says Nṛsimhī-devī Dāsi (right), "and if you want you can plant your own garden."

pushers keep them thinking they'll be happier in the city, slaving in some factory or office building.

"When I came back to America," he says, "I tried to get into the ecology movement, but my heart just wasn't in it. To me, politics and legal maneuvers aren't the best way to deal with the environment. I figured it would take a grassroots movement, spreading out from the individual to the family to the community to the whole society. Finally, a friend and I opened a vegetarian restaurant. We thought we'd save our money and buy a farm.

"Then one day I met Balavanta, and he told me all about Śrīla Prabhupāda's





Stacking hay bundles for the cows (left) and pulling weeds out of the bean patch (above): community members want to live on the land, keep some cows, do plain, honest work, and please Lord Kṛṣṇa. Their open secret: "Work to please Kṛṣṇa, and everyone will be pleased."

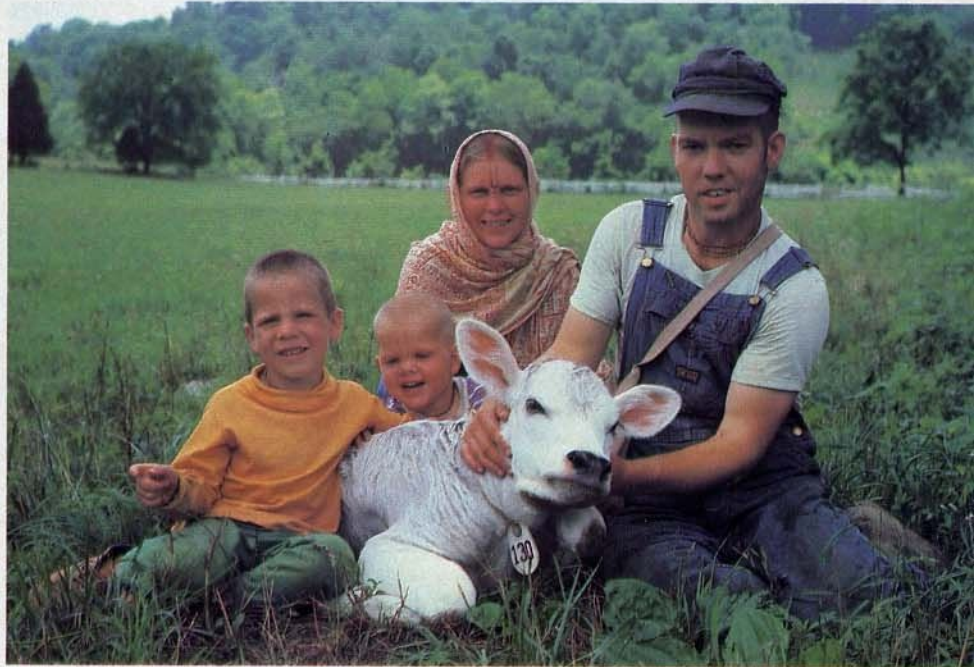


“Without all the ruckus and headaches,” says Balavanta, “oxen (above) do the same work as tractors and trucks.” These Brown Swiss oxen are pulling hay to the cows’ feed trough. Dāru Brahman leads the way, while from atop the cart, his younger brother Sādhu Dāsa watches. Says Jaganmitra Dāsa (right, at scale), “We grow our own potatoes and make them into chips. Then we offer them to Kṛṣṇa, and get more orders than we can fill. Being self-sufficient is easy. It’s being greedy that would be hard.”





An ideal place for families: Dāru and Sādhu (below) help their mother and father, Svayamprabhā-devī Dāsī and Sarvasiddhi-rāṭ Dāsa, take care of the cows and bulls; Nṛsīrṁhī-devī Dāsī and her husband Varāha Dāsa (next down) look out across the valley; children play (bottom) in the lush greenery near the village center.



plan for starting Kṛṣṇa conscious farms all over the world. So I gave whatever money I'd saved up, and that became the down payment for this place."

This is one farm community that treats the cow and bull with care. The reason: the cow provides milk and the bull plows the fields. "In a very real sense," says Balavanta, "they play the role of mother and father. . . ."

"A few days back, I was walking behind Mother Kalindī, one of our cows. Now, in two daily milkings she gives about seventy pounds, so I knew she had to be carrying about thirty-five. She could hardly walk—what to speak of running away or defending herself. And she doesn't drink a drop (even her calf can't drink very much)—she gives all that extra milk for us! I mean, what are we going to do with the grass? But God has arranged that the cow takes it and turns it into milk, the miracle food. So we protect our mother. We don't slaughter her."

Some people think that animals have no soul and so it's all right to slaughter them. Not true, says Sarvasiddhi-rāṭ Dāsa, who takes care of the herds.

"A while back one of our cows died. The vet and I were both standing there. So I said, 'What's the difference between a living cow and this dead cow? The body is still there—all the chemicals. But where's the life?'"

"He couldn't answer. Then I told him,





A refreshing jump in the lake (above).

“Plenty of people are watching our community,” says Janmañjaya Dāsa (right, with his wife Tārā-devī Dāsī and their children). “Why? Because we’re living a lot like they used to. Deep down inside, they all want to live on the land, be neighborly, and worship the Lord.”

“The life is in the soul, and when the soul leaves the body, so does the life. And it’s just like that with us, too. The life is in the soul. So the cow has a soul, and you have a soul. I wouldn’t kill you, and I wouldn’t kill a cow, either.” He had to admit it made sense. We’re famous all over the county for not killing our cows or bulls.”

“You know,” Balavanta points out, “oxen do the same work as tractors and trucks—without all the ruckus and headaches. Sure, we’re still using a few machines, but before long we’re going to replace them all with animal power. We’re going to be totally self-sufficient. You might save a little time with a tractor, but you’ve got to spend a lot more time working to pay for it. Then the blasted thing breaks down—maybe right in the middle of spring planting—so you have to haul it into the shop, and they have to ship the part in from halfway across the country. Meanwhile, you’re standing there twiddling your thumbs.

“Lots of cows and bulls and lots of grain—that’s the sign of a healthy economy. But today most farmers lean



so much on machines and oil products that when an energy crisis comes, they don’t know what to do.”

“I’ve talked a lot with our neighbors,” says Janmañjaya Dāsa, the community’s president. “And they have some surprising things to say. Take Mr. Durham. He told me plenty of people are watching our community. Why? Because we’re living a lot like they used to. Deep down inside, they all want to live on the land, be neighborly, and worship the Lord.”

Just as in old India, the community’s life centers on the temple. After spending the day in the fields and pastures, everyone comes together in the evening to hear narrations about Kṛṣṇa, chant

Kṛṣṇa’s names, and dance in ecstasy.

“This farm belongs to Kṛṣṇa,” says Titikṣā-devī Dāsī, “and everybody here knows that. God is everywhere, and He owns everything, so we’re all working to please Him. The cows are giving their milk, the cooks are preparing food, the gardeners are growing fruit, vegetables, and flowers—all of us are working to please Kṛṣṇa.”

Could this way of living be too old-fashioned for people today?

“Well,” says Balavanta, “one time in India I was walking with Śrīla Prabhupāda when a farmer came up the road. He was chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, and he bowed at Śrīla Prabhupāda’s feet. They



exchanged a few words in Hindi, and later Śrīla Prabhupāda told me that the farmers in India know more than the biggest philosophers in the West. This farmer knew there's a God. He knew he'd had past lives. He also knew that depending on his *karma*—what he did in this life—he'd get another body. And he knew that if he's thinking of Kṛṣṇa when he passes away, he'll go to Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world. He was a farmer, that's all. Yet he understood such a deep thing—he knew why he was here.” 🙏

On this farm you can see God everywhere— and that includes the temple, where the Deity forms (left) of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda invite all to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and offer the fruits of their labor. The cows (below) give their milk. A few hours ago, this Brown Swiss gave birth to a calf.



ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

How to Find Perfect Knowledge in an Imperfect World

This conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and physicist Gregory Benford took place in October, 1973, at the Los Angeles Kṛṣṇa center.

Dr. Benford: You are probably familiar with what Western theology calls “the problem of evil”: Why does evil exist?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Evil is the absence of good, just as darkness is the absence of sunlight. If you keep yourself always in the light, where is the question of darkness? God is all-good. So if you keep yourself always in God consciousness, then there is no evil.

Dr. Benford: But why was the world created with evil men?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Why was the police department created? Because there is a necessity. Similarly, some living entities want to enjoy this material world; therefore God creates it. He is just like a father who gives a separate room to his mischievous children to play in. Otherwise, the naughty boys would always disturb him.

Dr. Benford: This world, then, is something like a prison?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, it is a prison. Therefore, there is suffering here. In the prison house you cannot expect comfort, because unless there is suffering, there is no lesson for the prisoners. That is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: *duḥkhālayam aśāvatam*. *Duḥkhālayam* means “the place for suffering.” And *aśāvatam* means “temporary.” You cannot make a compromise and say, “All right, I am suffering, but I don’t care about that—I shall remain here.” You cannot remain here; you will be kicked out. Now you are thinking that you are an American, you are a great scientist, you are happy, you are getting a good salary. . . . That’s all right, but you cannot stay in this post. The day will come when you will be kicked out. And you do not know whether you are going to be an American or a scientist or a cat or dog or demigod. You do not know.

Dr. Benford: I think that I will probably be nothing.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, that is another kind of ignorance. Kṛṣṇa explains in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [2.12], *dehino ’smin yathā dehe kaumāraṁ yauvanam jarā/ tathā dehāntara-prāptiḥ*: first you are in the body of a boy, then a young man, and in



the future you will be in the body of an old man—

Dr. Benford: But after I’m an old man I might be nothing.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, no. *Tathā dehāntara-prāptiḥ*: after death you will pass into another body. So you cannot say, “I am going to be nothing.” Of course, you may say *anything*, but the laws are different. You may know the law, or you may not know the law. It doesn’t matter—the law will act. For example, if you think, “I will touch the fire—it will not burn me,” that is not a fact. It will burn. Similarly, you may think there is nothing after death, but it is not a fact.

Dr. Benford: Why does a person like me—someone who’s trying to understand the world rationally—seem to find no way in which to do it?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: You are trying to know things rationally, but you are not going to the proper teacher.

Dr. Benford: But I feel that by studying the world I can acquire knowledge, and there is a way to check that knowledge. You formulate hypotheses, you perform experiments, you verify your ideas, and then you see if you can use these ideas in the practical world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is one more kind of ignorance—because you do not know that you are imperfect.

Dr. Benford: Oh, I know that I’m not perfect.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Then what is the use of your trying to study the world this way

and that way? If you are imperfect, the result will be imperfect.

Dr. Benford: That’s true.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So why waste your time?

Dr. Benford: But there doesn’t seem to be any other way of finding knowledge.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Even for material knowledge, you have to go to the university and consult a professor. Similarly, when you want to learn spiritual knowledge—perfect knowledge—you have to approach a perfect teacher. Then you will get perfect knowledge.

Dr. Benford: But how does one know when the teacher is perfect?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: It is not difficult. A perfect teacher is one who has learned from another perfect teacher.

Dr. Benford: But that merely removes the problem a step.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, because there is one perfect teacher—Kṛṣṇa—who is accepted by all classes of teachers. In India we still find the Vedic culture, which is taught by Vedic scholars. And all these Vedic teachers accept Kṛṣṇa as the supreme teacher. They take lessons from Kṛṣṇa and teach that.

Dr. Benford: So anyone I meet who accepts Kṛṣṇa as the perfect teacher—he is a perfect teacher?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Anyone who is teaching the teachings of Kṛṣṇa—he is a perfect teacher.

Dr. Benford: Then all the devotees here are perfect teachers?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, because they are teaching only Kṛṣṇa’s teachings, that’s all. *They* may not be perfect. But whatever they are speaking is perfect, because it is taught by Kṛṣṇa.

Dr. Benford: Then you are not perfect?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, I am not perfect. None of us claim that we are perfect—we have so many defects. But because we don’t speak anything beyond Kṛṣṇa’s teachings, our teaching is perfect. We are just like a postman who brings you a money order for one thousand dollars. He is not a rich man, but if he delivers to you the envelope *as it is*, you are benefited. He is not a rich man, but his perfect dealing—his honest dealing—is perfect. Similarly, we are not perfect; we are full of imperfections. But we don’t go beyond the teachings of Kṛṣṇa—that is our process—and therefore our teachings are perfect.

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 EIGHTEEN

Mahārāja Parikṣit Cursed by a Brāhmaṇa Boy

In this part of our continuing presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the sages assembled at Naimiśāranya Forest request Sūta Gosvāmī to continue narrating Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in connection with the saintly King Parikṣit. Then Sūta Gosvāmī begins his account of how King Parikṣit was cursed by a brāhmaṇa boy.

TEXT 9

उपवर्णितमेतद्वचः पुण्यं पारीक्षितं मया ।
वासुदेवकथोपेतमाख्यानं यदपृच्छत् ॥ ९ ॥

upavarṇitam etad vaḥ
punyaṁ pāriksitam mayā
vāsudeva-kathopetaṁ
ākhyānaṁ yad aprcchata

upavarṇitam—almost everything described; etad—all these; vaḥ—unto you; punyam—pious; pāriksitam—about Mahārāja Parikṣit; mayā—by me; vāsudeva—of Lord Kṛṣṇa; kathā—narrations; upetaṁ—in connection with; ākhyānam—statements; yat—what; aprcchata—you asked from me.

TRANSLATION

O sages, as you did ask me, now I have described almost everything regarding the narrations about Lord Kṛṣṇa in connection with the history of the pious Mahārāja Parikṣit.

PURPORT

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the history of the activities of the Lord. And the activities of the Lord are performed in relation with the devotees of the Lord. Therefore, the history of the devotees is not different from the history of Lord Kṛṣṇa's activities. A devotee of the Lord regards both the activities of the Lord and those of His pure devotees on an equal level, for they are all transcendental.

TEXT 10

या याः कथा भगवतः कथनीयोरुत्कर्षणः ।
गुणकर्माश्रयाः पुष्पिः संसेव्यास्ता बुभूषुभिः ॥ १० ॥

yā yāḥ kathā bhagavataḥ
kathaniyuru-karmaṇaḥ
guṇa-karmāśrayāḥ pumbhiḥ
samsevyaś tā bubhūsubhiḥ

yāḥ—whatever; yāḥ—and whatsoever; kathāḥ—topics; bhagavataḥ—about the Personality of Godhead; kathaniya—were to be spoken by me; uru-karmaṇaḥ—of Him who acts wonderfully; guṇa—transcendental qualities; karma—uncommon deeds; āśrayāḥ—involving; pumbhiḥ—by persons; samsevyaḥ—ought to be heard; tāḥ—all of them; bubhūsubhiḥ—by those who want their own welfare.

TRANSLATION

Those who are desirous of achieving complete perfection in life must submissively hear all topics that are connected with the transcendental activities and qualities of the Personality of Godhead, who acts wonderfully.

PURPORT

The systematic hearing of the transcendental activities, qualities and names of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa pushes one towards eternal life. Systematic hearing means knowing Him gradually in truth and fact, and this knowing Him in truth and fact means attaining eternal life, as stated in the Bhagavad-gītā. Such transcendental, glorified activities of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa are the prescribed remedy for counteracting the process of birth, death, old age and disease, which are considered to be material awards for the conditioned living being. The culmination of such a perfectional stage of life is the goal of human life and the attainment of transcendental bliss.

TEXT 11

शुभय उचुः
सुत जीव समाः सौम्य शाश्वतीर्विशदं यशः ।
यस्त्वं शंससि कृष्णस्य मर्त्यानाममृतं हि नः ॥ ११ ॥

ṛṣaya ūcuḥ
sūta jīva samāḥ saumya
śāśvatīr viśadam yaśaḥ
yas tvaṁ śamsasi kṛṣṇasya
martyānām amṛtaṁ hi naḥ

ṛṣayaḥ ūcuḥ—the good sages said; sūta—O Sūta Gosvāmī; jīva—we wish you life for; samāḥ—many years; saumya—grave; śāśvatīḥ—eternal; viśadam—particularly; yaśaḥ—in fame; yaḥ tvaṁ—because you; śamsasi—speaking nicely; kṛṣṇasya—of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa; martyānām—of those who die; amṛtaṁ—eternity of life; hi—certainly; naḥ—our.

TRANSLATION

The good sages said: O grave Sūta Gosvāmī! May you live many years and have eternal fame, for you are speaking very nicely about the activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead. This is just like nectar for mortal beings like us.

PURPORT

When we hear about the transcendental qualities and activities of the Personality of Godhead, we may always remember what has been spoken by the Lord Himself in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.9). His acts, even when He acts in human society, are all transcendental, for they are all accentuated by the spiritual energy of the Lord, which is distinguished from His material energy. As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, such acts are called *divyam*. This means that He does not act or take His birth like an ordinary living being under the custody of material energy. Nor is His body material or changeable like that of ordinary living beings. And one who understands this fact, either from the Lord or from authorized sources, is not reborn after leaving the present material body. Such an enlightened soul is admitted into the spiritual realm of the Lord and engages in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. Therefore, the more we hear about the transcendental activities of the Lord, as they are stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the more we can know about His transcendental nature and thus make definite progress on the path back to Godhead.

TEXT 12

कर्मण्यसिन्ननाश्रुते धूमधूम्रात्मनां भवान् ।
आपाययति गोविन्दपादपद्मासवं मधु ॥१२॥

*karmany asminn anāśvāse
dhūma-dhūmrātmanām bhavān
āpāyayati govinda-
pāda-padmasavam madhu*

karmani—performance of; *asmin*—in this; *anāśvāse*—without certainty; *dhūma*—smoke; *dhūmra-ātmanām*—tinged body and mind; *bhavān*—your good self; *āpāyayati*—very much pleasing; *govinda*—the Personality of Godhead; *pāda*—feet; *padma-āsavam*—nectar of the lotus flower; *madhu*—honey.

TRANSLATION

We have just begun the performance of this fruitive activity, a sacrificial fire, without certainty of its result due to the many imperfections in our action. Our bodies have become black from the smoke, but we are factually pleased by the nectar of the lotus feet of the Personality of Godhead, Govinda, which you are distributing.

PURPORT

The sacrificial fire kindled by the sages of Naimiṣāraṇya was certainly full of smoke and doubts because of so many flaws. The first flaw is that there is an acute scarcity of expert *brāhmaṇas* able to carry out such performances successfully in this age of Kali. Any discrepancy in such sacrifices spoils the whole show, and the result is uncertain, like agricultural enterprises. The good result of tilling the paddy field depends on providential rain, and therefore the result is uncertain. Similarly, performance of any kind of sacrifice in this age of Kali is also uncertain. Unscrupulous greedy *brāhmaṇas* of the age of Kali induce the innocent public to such uncertain sacrificial shows without disclosing the scriptural injunction that in the age of Kali there is no fruitful sacrificial performance but the sacrifice of the congregational chanting of the holy name of the Lord. Sūta Gosvāmī was narrating the transcendental activities of the Lord before the congregation of sages, and they were factually perceiving the result of hearing these transcendental activities. One can feel this practically, as one can feel the result of eating food. Spiritual realization acts in that way.

The sages of Naimiṣāraṇya were practically sufferers from the smoke of a sacrificial fire and were doubtful about the result, but by hearing from a realized person like Sūta Gosvāmī, they were fully satisfied. In the *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa*, Viṣṇu tells Śiva that in the age of Kali, men full of anxieties of various kinds can vainly labor in fruitive activity and philosophical speculations, but when they are engaged in devotional service, the result is sure and certain, and there is no loss of energy. In other words, nothing performed for spiritual realization or for material benefit can be successful without the devotional service to the Lord.

TEXT 13

तुल्याम लवेनापि न स्वर्गं नापुनर्भवम् ।
भगवत्सङ्गिसङ्गस्य मर्त्यानां किमुताशिशः ॥१३॥

*tulayāma lavenāpi
na svargam nāpunar-bhavam
bhagavat-saṅgi-saṅgasya
martyānām kim utāśiṣaḥ*

tulayāma—to be balanced with; *lavena*—by a moment; *api*—even; *na*—never; *svargam*—heavenly planets; *na*—nor; *apunar-bhavam*—liberation from matter; *bhagavat-saṅgi*—devotee of the Lord; *saṅgasya*—of the association; *martyānām*—those who are meant for death; *kim*—what is there; *uta*—to speak of; *āśiṣaḥ*—worldly benediction.

TRANSLATION

The value of a moment's association with the devotee of the Lord cannot even be compared to the attainment of heavenly planets or liberation from matter, and what to speak of worldly benedictions in the form of material prosperity, which are for those who are meant for death.

PURPORT

When there are some similar points, it is possible to compare one thing to another. One cannot compare the association of a pure devotee to anything material. Men who are addicted to material happiness aspire to reach the heavenly planets like the moon, Venus and Indraloka, and those who are advanced in material philosophical speculations aspire after liberation from all material bondage. When one becomes frustrated with all kinds of material advancement, one desires the opposite type of liberation, which is called *apunar-bhava*, or no rebirth. But the pure devotees of the Lord do not aspire after the happiness obtained in the heavenly kingdom, nor do they aspire after liberation from material bondage. In other words, for the pure devotees of the Lord the material pleasures obtainable in the heavenly planets are like phantasmagoria, and because they are already liberated from all material conceptions of pleasure and distress, they are factually liberated even in the material world. This means that the pure devotees of the Lord are engaged in a transcendental existence, namely in the loving service of the Lord, both in the material world and in the spiritual world. As a government servant is always the same, either in the office or at home or at any place, so a devotee has nothing to do with anything material, for he is exclusively engaged in the transcendental service of the Lord. Since he has nothing to do with anything material, what pleasure can he derive from material benedictions like kingship or other overlords, which are finished quickly with the end of the body? Devotional service is eternal; it has no end, because it is spiritual. Therefore, since the assets of a pure devotee are completely different from material assets, there is no comparison between the two. Sūta Gosvāmī was a pure devotee of the Lord, and therefore his association with the *ṛṣis* in Naimiṣāraṇya is unique. In the material world, association with gross materialists is veritably condemned. The materialist is called *yoṣū-saṅgi*, or one who is much attached to material entanglement (women and other paraphernalia). Such attachment is conditioned because it drives away the benedictions of life and prosperity. And just the opposite is *bhāgavata-saṅgi*, or one who is

always in the association with the Lord's name, form, qualities, etc. Such association is always desirable; it is worshipable, it is praiseworthy, and one may accept it as the highest goal of life.

TEXT 14

को नाम तृप्येद् रसवित्कथायां
महत्तमैकान्तपरायणस्य ।
नान्तं गुणानामगुणस्य जग्मु-
योगेश्वरा ये भवपाद्यमुख्याः ॥१४॥

ko nāma tṛpyed rasavit kathāyām
mahattamaikānta-parāyaṇasya
nāntaṁ guṇānām aguṇasya jagmur
yogēśvarā ye bhava-pādma-mukhyāḥ

kaḥ—who is he; nāma—specifically; tṛpyet—get full satisfaction; rasa-vit—expert in relishing mellow nectar; kathāyām—in the topics of; mahat-tama—the greatest amongst the living beings; ekānta—exclusively; parāyaṇasya—of one who is the shelter of; na—never; antam—end; guṇānām—of attributes; aguṇasya—of the Transcendence; jagmuḥ—could ascertain; yoga-īśvarāḥ—the lords of mystic power; ye—all they; bhava—Lord Śiva; pādma—Lord Brahmā; mukhyāḥ—heads.

TRANSLATION

The Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa [Govinda], is the exclusive shelter for all great living beings, and His transcendental attributes cannot even be measured by such masters of mystic powers as Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā. Can anyone who is expert in relishing nectar [rasa] ever be fully satiated by hearing topics about Him?

PURPORT

Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā are two chiefs of the demigods. They are full of mystic powers. For example, Lord Śiva drank an ocean of poison of which one drop was sufficient to kill an ordinary living being. Similarly, Brahmā could create many powerful demigods, including Lord Śiva. So they are *īśvaras*, or lords of the universe. But they are not the supreme powerful. The supreme powerful is Govinda, Lord Kṛṣṇa. He is the Transcendence, and His transcendental attributes cannot be measured even by such powerful *īśvaras* as Śiva and Brahmā. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa is the exclusive shelter of the greatest of all living beings. Brahmā is counted amongst the living beings, but he is the greatest of all of us. And why is the greatest of all the living beings so much attached to the transcendental topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa? Because He is the reservoir of all enjoyment. Everyone wants to relish some kind of taste in everything, but one who is engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord can derive unlimited pleasure from such engagement. The Lord is unlimited, and His name, attributes, pastimes, entourage, variegatedness, etc. are unlimited, and those who relish them can do so unlimitedly and still not feel satiated. This fact is confirmed in the *Padma Purāna*:

ramantē yogino 'nante satyānanda-cid-ātmani
iti rāma-padenāsau paraṁ brahmābhidhīyate

“The mystics derive unlimited transcendental pleasures from the Absolute Truth, and therefore the Supreme Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead, is also known as Rāma.”

There is no end to such transcendental discourses. In mundane affairs there is the law of satiation, but in transcendence there is no such satiation. Sūta Gosvāmī desired to continue the topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa before the sages of Naimiṣāraṇya, and the sages also expressed their readiness to hear from him continuously. Since the Lord is transcendence and His attributes are transcendental, such discourses increase the receptive mood of the purified audience.

TEXT 15

तन्नो भवान् वै भगवत्प्रधानो
महत्तमैकान्तपरायणस्य ।
हरेरुदारं चरितं विशुद्धं
शुश्रूषतां नो वितनोतु विद्वन् ॥१५॥

tan no bhavān vai bhagavat-pradhāno
mahattamaikānta-parāyaṇasya
harer udāraṁ caritaṁ viśuddhaṁ
śuśrūṣatāṁ no vitanotu vidvan

tat—therefore; naḥ—of us; bhavān—your good self; vai—certainly; bhagavat—in relation with the Personality of Godhead; pradhānaḥ—chiefly; mahat-tama—the greatest of all greats; ekānta—exclusively; parāyaṇasya—of the shelter; hareḥ—of the Lord; udāraṁ—impartial; caritaṁ—activities; viśuddham—transcendental; śuśrūṣatāṁ—those who are receptive; naḥ—ourselves; vitanotu—kindly describe; vidvan—O learned one.

TRANSLATION

O Sūta Gosvāmī, you are a learned and pure devotee of the Lord because the Personality of Godhead is your chief object of service. Therefore please describe to us the pastimes of the Lord, which are above all material conception, for we are anxious to receive such messages.

PURPORT

The speaker on the transcendental activities of the Lord should have only one object of worship and service. Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And the audience for such topics should be anxious to hear about Him. When such a combination is possible, namely a qualified speaker and a qualified audience, it is then and there very much congenial to continue discourses on the Transcendence. Professional speakers and a materially absorbed audience cannot derive real benefit from such discourses. Professional speakers make a show of *Bhāgavata-saptāha* for the sake of family maintenance, and the materially disposed audience hears such discourses of *Bhāgavata-saptāha* for some material benefit, namely religiosity, wealth, gratification of the senses, or liberation. Such *Bhāgavatam* discourses are not purified from the contamination of the material qualities. But the discourses between the saints of Naimiṣāraṇya and Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī are on the transcendental level. There is no motive for material gain. In such discourses, unlimited transcendental pleasure is relished both by the audience and by the speaker, and therefore they can continue the topics for many thousands of years. Now *Bhāgavata-saptāhas* are held for seven days only, and after finishing the show, both the audience and the speaker become engaged in material activities as usual. They can do so because the speaker is not *bhagavat-pradhāna* and the audience is not *śuśrūṣatām*, as explained above.

TEXT 16

स वै महामागतः परीक्षिद्
येनापवर्गाख्यमदभ्रबुद्धिः ।
ज्ञानेन वैयासकिशब्दितेन
भजे खगेन्द्रध्वजपादमूलम् ॥१६॥

sa vai mahā-bhāgavataḥ parikṣid
yenāpavargākhyaṁ adabhra-buddhiḥ
jñānena vaiyāsaki-sabdītena
bheje khagendra-dhvaja-pāda-mūlam

sah—he; vai—certainly; mahā-bhāgavataḥ—first-class devotee; parikṣit—the King; yena—by which; apavarga-ākhyam—by the name of liberation; adabhra—fixed; buddhiḥ—intelligence; jñānena—by knowledge; vaiyāsaki—the son of Vyāsa; sabdītena—vibrated by;

bheje—taken to; *khaga-indra*—Garuḍa, the king of the birds; *dhvaja*—flag; *pāda-mūlam*—soles of the feet.

TRANSLATION

O Sūta Gosvāmī, please describe those topics of the Lord by which Mahārāja Parikṣit, whose intelligence was fixed on liberation, attained the lotus feet of the Lord, who is the shelter of Garuḍa, the king of birds. Those topics were vibrated by the son of Vyāsa [Śrīla Śukadeva].

PURPORT

There is some controversy amongst the students on the path of liberation. Such transcendental students are known as impersonalists and devotees of the Lord. The devotee of the Lord worships the transcendental form of the Lord, whereas the impersonalist meditates upon the glaring effulgence, or the bodily rays of the Lord, known as the *brahmajyoti*. Here in this verse it is said that Mahārāja Parikṣit attained the lotus feet of the Lord by instructions in knowledge delivered by the son of Vyāsadeva, Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Śukadeva Gosvāmī was also an impersonalist in the beginning, as he himself has admitted in the *Bhāgavatam* (2.1.9), but later on he was attracted by the transcendental pastimes of the Lord and thus became a devotee. Such devotees with perfect knowledge are called *mahā-bhāgavatas*, or first-class devotees. There are three classes of devotees, namely the *prākṛta*, *madhyama*, and *mahā-bhāgavata*. The *prākṛta*, or third-class devotees, are temple worshipers without specific knowledge of the Lord and the Lord's devotees. The *madhyama*, or the second-class devotee, knows well the Lord, the Lord's devotees, the neophytes, and the nondevotees also. But the *mahā-bhāgavata*, or the first-class devotee, sees everything in relation with the Lord and the Lord present in everyone's relation. The *mahā-bhāgavata*, therefore, does not make any distinction, particularly between a devotee and nondevotee. Mahārāja Parikṣit was such a *mahā-bhāgavata* devotee because he was initiated by a *mahā-bhāgavata* devotee, Śukadeva Gosvāmī. He was equally kind, even to the personality of Kālī, and what to speak of others.

So there are many instances in the transcendental histories of the world of an impersonalist who has later become a devotee. But a devotee has never become an impersonalist. This very fact proves that on the transcendental steps, the step occupied by a devotee is higher than the step occupied by an impersonalist. It is also stated in the *Bhāgavad-gītā* (12.5) that persons stuck on the impersonal step undergo more sufferings than achievement of reality. Therefore knowledge imparted by Śukadeva Gosvāmī unto Mahārāja Parikṣit helped him attain the service of the Lord. And this stage of perfection is called *apavarga*, or the perfect stage of liberation. Simple knowledge of liberation is material knowledge. Actual freedom from material bondage is called liberation, but attainment of the transcendental service of the Lord is called the perfect stage of liberation. Such a stage is attained by knowledge and renunciation, as we have already explained (*Bhāg.* 1.2.12), and perfect knowledge, as delivered by Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, results in the attainment of the transcendental service of the Lord.

TEXT 17

तन्नः परं पुण्यमसंबुतार्थ-
माख्यानमत्यद्भुतयोगनिष्ठम् ।
आख्यान्तन्ताचरितोपपन्नं
परीक्षितं भागवताभिरामम् ॥१७॥

*tan naḥ param puṇyam asaṁvṛtārtham
ākhyānam atyadbhuta-yoga-niṣṭham
ākhyāhi anantācaritopapannam
pāriṣitam bhāgavatābhirāmam*

tat—therefore; *naḥ*—unto us; *param*—supreme; *puṇyam*—purifying; *asaṁvṛta-artham*—as it is; *ākhyānam*—narration; *ati*—very; *adbhuta*—wonderful; *yoga-niṣṭham*—compact in *bhakti-yoga*; *ākhyāhi*—describe; *ananta*—the Unlimited; *ācarita*—activities; *upapannam*—full of; *pāriṣitam*—spoken to Mahārāja Parikṣit; *bhāgavata*—of the pure devotees; *abhirāmam*—particularly very dear.

TRANSLATION

Thus please narrate to us the narrations of the Unlimited, for they are purifying and supreme. They were spoken to Mahārāja Parikṣit, and they are very dear to the pure devotees, being full of *bhakti-yoga*.

PURPORT

What was spoken to Mahārāja Parikṣit and what is very dear to the pure devotees is *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is mainly full of the narrations of the activities of the Supreme Unlimited, and therefore it is the science of *bhakti-yoga*, or the devotional service of the Lord. Thus it is *para*, or supreme, because although it is enriched with all knowledge and religion, it is specifically enriched with the devotional service of the Lord.

TEXT 18

सूत उवाच

अहो वयं जन्ममृतोऽद्य हास
वृद्धानुवृत्त्यापि विलोमजाताः ।
दौःकुल्यमाधि विधुनोति शीघ्रं
महचमानामभिधानयोगः ॥१८॥

sūta uvāca

*aho vyaṁ janma-bhrto 'dya hāsmā
vṛddhānuvṛttyāpi viloma-jātāḥ
dauskulyam ādhim vidhunoti śighram
mahattamānām abhidhāna-yogaḥ*

sūtaḥ uvāca—Sūta Gosvāmī said; *aho*—how; *vayaṁ*—we; *janma-bhrtaḥ*—promoted in birth; *adya*—today; *ha*—clearly; *āsmā*—have become; *vṛddha-anuvṛttyā*—by serving those who are advanced in knowledge; *api*—although; *viloma-jātāḥ*—born in a mixed caste; *dauskulyam*—disqualification of birth; *ādhim*—sufferings; *vidhunoti*—purifies; *śighram*—very soon; *mahat-tamānām*—of those who are great; *abhidhāna*—conversation; *yogaḥ*—connection.

TRANSLATION

Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī said: O God, although we are born in a mixed caste, we are still promoted in birthright simply by serving and following the great who are advanced in knowledge. Even by conversing with such great souls, one can without delay cleanse oneself of all disqualifications resulting from lower births.

PURPORT

Sūta Gosvāmī did not take his birth in a *brāhmaṇa* family. He was born in a family of mixed caste, or an uncultured low family. But because of higher association, like Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī and the great ṛṣis of Naimiṣāraṇya, certainly the disqualification of inferior birth was washed off. Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu followed this principle in pursuance of the Vedic usages, and by His transcendental association He elevated many lowborn, or those disqualified by birth or action, to the status of devotional service and established them in the position of *ācāryas*, or authorities. He clearly stated that any man, whatever he may be, whether a *brāhmaṇa* or *sūdra* by birth, or a householder or mendicant in the order of society, if he is conversant with the science of Kṛṣṇa, he can be accepted as an *ācārya* or *guru*, a spiritual master.

Sūta Gosvāmī learned the science of Kṛṣṇa from great ṛṣis and authorities like Śukadeva and Vyāsadeva and he was so qualified that even the

sages of Naimiṣāraṇya eagerly wanted to hear from him the science of Kṛṣṇa in the form of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. So he had the double association of great souls by hearing and preaching. Transcendental science, or the science of Kṛṣṇa, has to be learned from the authorities, and when one preaches the science, he becomes still more qualified. So Sūta Gosvāmī had both the advantages, and thus undoubtedly he was completely freed from all disqualifications of low birth and mental agonies. This verse definitely proves that Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī did not refuse to teach Sūta Gosvāmī about the transcendental science nor did the sages of Naimiṣāraṇya refuse to hear lessons from him because of his inferior birth. This means that thousands of years ago there was no bar to learning or preaching the transcendental science because of inferior birth. The rigidity of the so-called caste system in Hindu society became prominent within only one hundred years or so when the number of *dvija-bandhus*, or disqualified men in the families of higher castes, increased. Lord Śrī Caitanya revived the original Vedic system, and He elevated Ṭhākura Haridāsa to the position of *nāmācārya*, or the authority in preaching the glories of the holy name of the Lord, although His Holiness Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was pleased to appear in a family of Mohammedans.

Such is the power of pure devotees of the Lord. The Ganges water is accepted as pure, and one can become purified after taking a bath in the waters of the Ganges. But as far as the great devotees of the Lord are concerned, they can purify a degraded soul even by being seen by the lowborn, and what to speak of association. Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu wanted to purify the whole atmosphere of the polluted world by sending qualified preachers all over the world, and it remains with the Indians to take up this task scientifically and thus do the best kind of humanitarian work. The mental diseases of the present generation are more acute than bodily diseases; it is quite fit and proper to take up the preaching of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* all over the world without delay. *Mahattamānām abhidhāna* also means dictionary of great devotees, or a book full of the words of great devotees. Such a dictionary of the words of great devotees and those of the Lord are in the *Vedas* and allied literatures, specifically the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

TEXT 19

कृतः पुनर्गुणतो नाम तस्य
महत्तमैकान्तपरायणस्य ।
योऽनन्तशक्तिर्भगवाननन्तो
महद्गुणत्वाद् यमनन्तमाहुः ॥१९॥

*kutaḥ punar gṛṇato nāma tasya
mahattamaikānta-parāyaṇasya
yo 'nanta-śaktir bhagavān ananto
mahad-guṇatvād yam anantam āhuḥ*

kutaḥ—what to say; *punaḥ*—again; *gṛṇataḥ*—one who chants; *nāma*—holy name; *tasya*—His; *mahat-tama*—great devotees; *ekānta*—exclusive; *parāyaṇasya*—of one who takes shelter of; *yah*—He who; *ananta*—is the Unlimited; *śaktiḥ*—potency; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *anantaḥ*—immeasurable; *mahat*—great; *guṇatvāt*—on account of such attributes; *yam*—whom; *anantam*—by the name *ananta*; *āhuḥ*—is called.

TRANSLATION

And what to speak of those who are under the direction of the great devotees, chanting the holy name of the Unlimited, who has unlimited potency? The Personality of Godhead, unlimited in potency and transcendental by attributes, is called the *ananta* [Unlimited].

PURPORT

The *dvija-bandhu*, or the less intelligent, uncultured men born of higher castes, put forward many arguments against the lower-caste men

becoming *brāhmaṇas* in this life. They argue that birth in a family of *sūdras* or less than *sūdras* is made possible by one's previous sinful acts and that one therefore has to complete the terms of disadvantages due to lower birth. And to answer these false logicians, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* asserts that one who chants the holy name of the Lord under the direction of a pure devotee can at once get free from the disadvantages due to a lower-caste birth. A pure devotee of the Lord does not commit any offense while chanting the holy name of the Lord. There are ten different offenses in the chanting of the holy name of the Lord. To chant the holy name under the direction of a pure devotee is offenseless chanting. Offenseless chanting of the holy name of the Lord is transcendental, and, therefore, such chanting can at once purify one from the effects of all kinds of previous sins. This offenseless chanting indicates that one has fully understood the transcendental nature of the holy name and has thus surrendered unto the Lord. Transcendentally the holy name of the Lord and the Lord Himself are identical, being absolute. The holy name of the Lord is as powerful as the Lord. The Lord is the all-powerful Personality of Godhead, and He has innumerable names, which are all non-different from Him and are equally powerful also. In the last word of the *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord asserts that one who surrenders fully unto Him is protected from all sins by the grace of the Lord. Since His name and He Himself are identical, the holy name of the Lord can protect the devotee from all effects of sins. The chanting of the holy name of the Lord can undoubtedly deliver one from the disadvantages of a lower-caste birth. The Lord's unlimited power is extended on and on by the unlimited expansion of the devotees and incarnations, and thus every devotee of the Lord and incarnations also can be equally surcharged with the potency of the Lord. Since the devotee is surcharged with the potency of the Lord, even fractionally, the disqualification due to lower birth cannot stand in the way.

TEXT 20

एतावतालं ननु सूचितेन
गुणैरसाम्भानतिशयनस्य ।
हित्वेतरान् प्रार्थयतो विभूति-
र्यस्याङ्घ्रिरेणुं जुषतेऽनभीप्सोः ॥२०॥

*etāvātālaṁ nanu sūcitena
guṇair asāmyānatisāyanasya
hitvetarān prārthayato vibhūti-
yasyāṅghri-reṇuṁ juṣate 'nabhīpsōḥ*

etāvātā—so far; *alam*—unnecessary; *nanu*—if at all; *sūcitena*—by description; *guṇaiḥ*—by attributes; *asāmya*—immeasurable; *anatisāyanasya*—of one who is unexcelled; *hitvā*—leaving aside; *itarān*—others; *prārthayataḥ*—of those who ask for; *vibhūtiḥ*—favor of the goddess of fortune; *yasya*—one whose; *āṅghri*—feet; *reṇuṁ*—dust; *juṣate*—serves; *anabhīpsōḥ*—of one who is unwilling.

TRANSLATION

It is now ascertained that He [the Personality of Godhead] is unlimited and there is none equal to Him. Consequently no one can speak of Him adequately. Great demigods cannot obtain the favor of the goddess of fortune even by prayers, but this very goddess renders service unto the Lord, although He is unwilling to have such service.

PURPORT

The Personality of Godhead, or the Parameśvara Parabrahman, according to the *śrutis*, has nothing to do. He has no equal. Nor does anyone excel Him. He has unlimited potencies, and His every action is carried out systematically in His natural and perfect ways. Thus the Supreme Personality of Godhead is full in Himself, and He has nothing to accept from anyone else, including the great demigods like Brahmā. Others ask for the favor of the goddess of fortune, and despite such prayers she

declines to award such favors. But still she renders service unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, although He has nothing to accept from her. The Personality of Godhead in His Garbhodakāśāyī Viṣṇu feature begets Brahmā, the first created person in the material world, from His navel lotus stem and not in the womb of the goddess of fortune, who is eternally engaged in His service. These are some of the instances of His complete independence and perfection. That He has nothing to do does not mean that He is impersonal. He is transcendently so full of inconceivable potencies that simply by His willing, everything is done without physical or personal endeavor. He is called, therefore, Yogeśvara, or the Lord of all mystic powers.

TEXT 21

अथापि यत्पादनत्वावसृष्टं
जगद्विरिञ्चोपहृताहंशाम्भः ।
सेषं पुनात्यन्यतमो मुकुन्दात्
को नाम लोके भगवत्पदार्थः ॥२१॥

*athāpi yat-pāda-nakhāvasṛṣṭam
jagad viriñcopahṛtāraṅśāmbhaḥ
śeṣam punāty anyatamo mukundāt
ko nāma loke bhagavat-padārthaḥ*

atha—therefore; *api*—certainly; *yat*—whose; *pāda-nakha*—nails of the feet; *avasṛṣṭam*—emanating; *jagat*—the whole universe; *viriñca*—Brahmāji; *upahṛta*—collected; *arhaṅśa*—worship; *ambhaḥ*—water; *sa*—along with; *īśam*—Lord Śiva; *punāti*—purifies; *anyatamaḥ*—who else; *mukundāt*—besides the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *kaḥ*—who; *nāma*—name; *loke*—within the world; *bhagavat*—Supreme Lord; *pada*—position; *arthaḥ*—worth.

TRANSLATION

Who can be worthy of the name of the Supreme Lord but the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa? Brahmāji collected the water emanating from the nails of His feet in order to award it to Lord Śiva as a worshipful welcome. This very water [the Ganges] is purifying the whole universe, including Lord Śiva.

PURPORT

The conception of many gods in the Vedic literatures by the ignorant is completely wrong. The Lord is one without a second, but He expands Himself in many ways, and this is confirmed in the *Vedas*. Such expansions of the Lord are limitless, but some of them are the living entities. The living entities are not as powerful as the Lord's plenary expansions, and therefore there are two different types of expansions. Lord Brahmā is generally one of the living entities, and Lord Śiva is the via medium between the Lord and the living entities. In other words, even demigods like Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva, who are the chief amongst all demigods, are never equal to or greater than Lord Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, and all-powerful demigods like Brahmā and Śiva are engaged in the worship of Viṣṇu or Lord Kṛṣṇa; therefore who can be more powerful than Mukunda (Lord Kṛṣṇa) to be factually called the Supreme Personality of Godhead? The goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva are not independently powerful; they are powerful as expansions of the Supreme Lord, and all of them are engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord, and so also are the living entities. There are four sects of worshipful devotees of the Lord, and the chief amongst them are the Brahma-sampradāya, Rudra-sampradāya and Śrī-sampradāya, descending directly from Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva and the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, respectively. Besides the above-mentioned three *sampradāyas*, there is the Kumāra-sampradāya, descending from Sanat-kumāra. All of the four original *sampradāyas* are still scrupulously

engaged in the transcendental service of the Lord up to date, and they all declare that Lord Kṛṣṇa, Mukunda, is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and no other personality is equal to Him or greater than Him.

TEXT 22

यत्रानुरक्ताः सहसैव धीरा
व्यपोह्य देहादिषु सङ्गमूढम् ।
व्रजन्ति तत्पारमहंस्यमन्त्यं
यस्मिन्नहिंसोपशमः स्वधर्मः ॥२२॥

*yatrānuraktāḥ sahasaiva dhīrā
vyapohya dehādiṣu saṅgam ūḍham
vrajanti tat pārama-haṁsyam antyam
yasminn ahimsopāśamaḥ sva-dharmaḥ*

yatra—unto whom; *anuraktāḥ*—firmly attached; *sahasā*—all of a sudden; *eva*—certainly; *dhīrāḥ*—self-controlled; *vyapohya*—leaving aside; *deha*—the gross body and subtle mind; *ādiṣu*—relating to; *saṅgam*—attachment; *ūḍham*—taken to; *vrajanti*—go away; *tat*—that; *pārama-haṁsyam*—the highest stage of perfection; *antyam*—and beyond that; *yasmin*—in which; *ahimsā*—nonviolence; *opāśamaḥ*—and renunciation; *sva-dharmaḥ*—consequential occupation.

TRANSLATION

Self-controlled persons who are attached to the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa can all of a sudden give up the world of material attachment, including the gross body and subtle mind, and go away to attain the highest perfection of the renounced order of life, by which nonviolence and renunciation are consequential.

PURPORT

Only the self-controlled can gradually be attached to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Self-controlled means not indulging in sense enjoyment more than is necessary. And those who are not self-controlled are given over to sense enjoyment. Dry philosophical speculation is a subtle sense enjoyment of the mind. Sense enjoyment leads one to the path of darkness. Those who are self-controlled can make progress on the path of liberation from the conditional life of material existence. The *Vedas*, therefore, enjoin that one should not go on the path of darkness but should make a progressive march towards the path of light or liberation. Self-control is actually achieved not by artificially stopping the senses from material enjoyment, but by becoming factually attached to the Supreme Lord by engaging one's unalloyed senses in the transcendental service of the Lord. The senses cannot be forcibly curbed, but they can be given proper engagement. Purified senses, therefore, are always engaged in the transcendental service of the Lord. This perfectional stage of sense engagement is called *bhakti-yoga*. So those who are attached to the means of *bhakti-yoga* are factually self-controlled and can all of a sudden give up their homely or bodily attachment for the service of the Lord. This is called the *paramahansa* stage. *Haṁsas*, or swans, accept only milk out of a mixture of milk and water. Similarly, those who accept the service of the Lord instead of *māyā*'s service are called the *paramahānsas*. They are naturally qualified with all the good attributes, such as pridelessness, freedom from vanity, nonviolence, tolerance, simplicity, respectability, worship, devotion and sincerity. All these godly qualities exist in the devotee of the Lord spontaneously. Such *paramahānsas*, who are completely given up to the service of the Lord, are very rare. They are very rare even amongst the liberated souls. Real nonviolence means freedom from envy. In this world everyone is envious of his fellow being. But a perfect *paramahansa*, being completely given up to the service of the Lord, is perfectly nonenvious. He loves every living being in relation with the Supreme Lord. Real renunciation

means perfect dependence on God. Every living being is dependent on someone else because he is so made. Actually everyone is dependent on the mercy of the Supreme Lord, but when one forgets his relation with the Lord, he becomes dependent on the conditions of material nature. Renunciation means renouncing ones dependence on the conditions of material nature and thus becoming completely dependent on the mercy of the Lord. Real independence means complete faith in the mercy of the Lord without dependence on the conditions of matter. This *paramahansa* stage is the highest perfectional stage in *bhakti-yoga*, the process of devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

TEXT 23

अहं हि पृष्टोऽर्यमणो भवद्भि-
राचक्ष आत्मावगमोऽत्र यावान् ।
नभः पतन्त्यात्मसमं पतत्रिण-
स्तथा समं विष्णुगतिं विपश्चितः ॥२३॥

*aham hi prṣṭo 'ryamaṇo bhavadbhir
ācakṣa ātmāvagamo 'tra yāvān
nabhaḥ patanty ātma-samam patattriṇas
tathā samam viṣṇu-gatiṁ vipaścitaḥ*

aham—my humble self; *hi*—certainly; *prṣṭaḥ*—asked by you; *aryamaṇaḥ*—as powerful as the sun; *bhavadbhiḥ*—by you; *ācakṣe*—may describe; *ātma-avagamaḥ*—as far as my knowledge is concerned; *atra*—herein; *yāvān*—so far; *nabhaḥ*—sky; *patanti*—fly; *ātma-samam*—as far as it can; *patattriṇaḥ*—the birds; *tathā*—thus; *samam*—similarly; *viṣṇu-gatiṁ*—knowledge of Viṣṇu; *vipaścitaḥ*—even though learned.

TRANSLATION

O ṛṣi, who are as powerfully pure as the sun, I shall try to describe to you the transcendental pastimes of Viṣṇu as far as my knowledge is concerned. As the birds fly in the sky as far as their capacity allows, so do the learned devotees describe the Lord as far as their realization allows.

PURPORT

The Supreme Absolute Truth is unlimited. No living being can know about the unlimited by his limited capacity. The Lord is impersonal, personal and localized. By His impersonal feature He is all-pervading Brahman, by His localized feature He is present in everyone's heart as the Supreme Soul, and by His ultimate personal feature He is the object of transcendental loving service by His fortunate associates the pure devotees. The pastimes of the Lord in different features can only be estimated partly by the great learned devotees. So Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī has rightly taken this position in describing the pastimes of the Lord as far as he has realized. Factually only the Lord Himself can describe Himself, and His learned devotee also can describe Him as far as the Lord gives him the power of description.

TEXTS 24–25

एकदा धनुरुद्यम्य विचरन् मृगायां वने ।
मृगाननुगतः श्रान्तः क्षुधितस्तृपितो भृशम् ॥२४॥
जलाशयमचक्षणः प्रविवेश तमाश्रमम् ।
ददर्श मुनिमासीनं शान्तं मीलितलोचनम् ॥२५॥

*ekadā dhanur udyamya
vicaran mṛgayām vane
mṛgān anugataḥ śrāntaḥ
kṣudhitaḥ tṛṣṭito bhṛśam*

*jalāśayam acakṣāṇaḥ
praviveśa tam āśramam
dadarśa munim āsīnān
śāntam milita-locanam*

ekadā—once upon a time; *dhanuḥ*—arrows and bow; *udyamya*—taking firmly; *vicaran*—following; *mṛgayām*—hunting excursion; *vane*—in the forest; *mṛgān*—stags; *anugataḥ*—while following; *śrāntaḥ*—fatigued; *kṣudhitaḥ*—hungry; *tṛṣṭitaḥ*—being thirsty; *bhṛśam*—extremely; *jala-āśayam*—reservoir of water; *acakṣāṇaḥ*—while searching for; *praviveśa*—entered into; *tam*—that famous; *āśramam*—hermitage of Śamika Ṛṣi; *dadarśa*—saw; *munim*—the sage; *āsīnam*—seated; *śāntam*—all silent; *milita*—closed; *locanam*—eyes.

TRANSLATION

Once upon a time Mahārāja Parikṣit, while engaged in hunting in the forest with bow and arrows, became extremely fatigued, hungry and thirsty while following the stags. While searching for a reservoir of water, he entered the hermitage of the well-known Śamika Ṛṣi and saw the sage sitting silently with closed eyes.

PURPORT

The Supreme Lord is so kind to His pure devotees that in proper time He calls such devotees up to Him and thus creates an auspicious circumstance for the devotee. Mahārāja Parikṣit was a pure devotee of the Lord, and there was no reason for him to become extremely fatigued, hungry and thirsty because a devotee of the Lord never becomes perturbed by such bodily demands. But by the desire of the Lord, even such a devotee can become apparently fatigued and thirsty just to create a situation favorable for his renunciation of worldly activities. One has to give up all attachment for worldly relations before one is able to go back to Godhead, and thus when a devotee is too much absorbed in worldly affairs, the Lord creates a situation to cause indifference. The Supreme Lord never forgets His pure devotee, even though he may be engaged in so-called worldly affairs. Sometimes He creates an awkward situation, and the devotee becomes obliged to renounce all worldly affairs. The devotee can understand by the signal of the Lord, but others take it to be unfavorable and frustrating. Mahārāja Parikṣit was to become the medium for the revelation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as his grandfather Arjuna was the medium for the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Had Arjuna not been taken up with an illusion of family affection by the will of the Lord, the *Bhagavad-gītā* would not have been spoken by the Lord Himself for the good of all concerned. Similarly, had Mahārāja Parikṣit not been fatigued, hungry and thirsty at this time, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* would not have been spoken by Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the prime authority of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. So this is a prelude to the circumstances under which *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was spoken for the benefit of all concerned. The prelude, therefore, begins with the words "once upon a time."

TEXT 26

प्रतिरुद्धेन्द्रियप्राणमनोबुद्धिमुपारतम् ।
स्थानत्रयात्परं प्राप्तं ब्रह्मभूतमविक्रियम् ॥२६॥

*pratiruddhendriya-prāṇa-
mano-buddhim upāratam
sthāna-trayāt param prāptam
brahma-bhūtam avikriyam*

pratiruddha—restrained; *indriya*—the sense organs; *prāṇa*—air of respiration; *manah*—the mind; *buddhim*—intelligence; *upāratam*—inactive; *sthāna*—places; *trayāt*—from the three; *param*—transcendental; *prāptam*—achieved; *brahma-bhūtam*—qualitatively equal with the Supreme Absolute; *avikriyam*—unaffected.

TRANSLATION

The muni's sense organs, breath, mind and intelligence were all restrained from material activities, and he was situated in a trance apart from the three [wakefulness, dream and unconsciousness], having achieved a transcendental position qualitatively equal with the Supreme Absolute.

PURPORT

It appears that the *muni*, in whose hermitage the King entered, was in yogic trance. The transcendental position is attained by three processes, namely the process of *jñāna*, or theoretical knowledge of transcendence, the process of *yoga*, or factual realization of trance by manipulation of the physiological and psychological functions of the body, and the most approved process of *bhakti-yoga*, or the engagement of senses in the devotional service of the Lord. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* also we have the information of the gradual development of perception from matter to a living entity. Our material mind and body develop from the living entity, the soul, and being influenced by the three qualities of matter, we forget our real identity. The *jñāna* process theoretically speculates about the reality of the soul. But *bhakti-yoga* factually engages the spirit soul in activities. The perception of matter is transcended to still subtler states of the senses. The senses are transcended to the subtler mind, and then to breathing activities and gradually to intelligence. Beyond the intelligence, the living soul is realized by the mechanical activities of the *yoga* system, or practice of meditation restraining the senses, regulating the breathing system and applying intelligence to rise to the transcendental position. This trance stops all material activities of the body. The King saw the *muni* in that position. He also saw the *muni* as follows.

TEXT 27

विप्रकीर्णजटाच्छत्रं रौरवेणाजिनेन च ।
विशुष्यत्तालुदकं तथाभूतमयाचत ॥२७॥

viprakīrṇa-jaṭācchannam
rauraveṇājīnena ca
viśuṣyat-tāluḥ udakam
tathā-bhūtam ayācata

viprakīrṇa—all scattered; *jaṭā-ācchannam*—covered with compressed, long hair; *rauraveṇa*—by the skin of a stag; *ajīnena*—by the skin; *ca*—also; *viśuṣyat*—dried up; *tāluḥ*—palate; *udakam*—water; *tathā-bhūtam*—in that state; *ayācata*—asked for.

TRANSLATION

The sage, in meditation, was covered by the skin of a stag, and long, compressed hair was scattered all over him. The King, whose palate was dry from thirst, asked him for water.

PURPORT

The King, being thirsty, asked the sage for water. That such a great devotee and king asked for water from a sage absorbed in trance was certainly providential. Otherwise there was no chance of such a unique happening. Mahārāja Parikṣit was thus placed in an awkward position so that gradually *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* could be revealed.

TEXT 28

अलब्धतृणभूम्यादिरसम्प्राप्तार्घ्यं ननुतः ।
अवज्ञातमिवात्मानं मन्यमानश्चुकोप ॥२८॥

alabdha-trṇa-bhūmyādir
asamprāptārghya-sūṅṛtaḥ
avajñātam ivātmānaṁ
manyamānaś cukopa ha

alabdha—having not received; *trṇa*—seat of straw; *bhūmi*—place; *ādih*—and so on; *asamprāpta*—not properly received; *arghya*—water for reception; *sūṅṛtaḥ*—sweet words; *avajñātam*—thus being neglected; *iva*—like that; *ātmānaṁ*—personally; *manyamānaś*—thinking like that; *cukopa*—became angry; *ha*—in that way.

TRANSLATION

The King, not received by any formal welcome by means of being offered a seat, place, water and sweet addresses, considered himself neglected, and so thinking he became angry.

PURPORT

The law of reception in the codes of the Vedic principles states that even if an enemy is received at home, he must be received with all respects. He should not be given a chance to understand that he has come into the house of an enemy. When Lord Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by Arjuna and Bhīma, approached Jarāsandha in Magadha, the respectable enemies were given a royal reception by King Jarāsandha. The guest enemy, namely Bhīma, was to fight with Jarāsandha, and yet they were given a grand reception. At night they used to sit down together as friends and guests, and in the day they used to fight, risking life and death. That was the law of reception. The reception law enjoins that a poor man, who has nothing to offer his guest, should be good enough to offer a straw mat for sitting, a glass of water for drinking and some sweet words. Therefore, to receive a guest, either friend or foe, there is no expense. It is only a question of good manners.

When Mahārāja Parikṣit entered the door of Śamika Ṛṣi, he did not expect a royal reception by the ṛṣi because he knew that saints and ṛṣis are not materially rich men. But he never expected that a seat of straw, a glass of water and some sweet words would be denied to him. He was not an ordinary guest, nor was he an enemy of the ṛṣi, and therefore the cold reception by the ṛṣi astonished the King greatly. As a matter of fact, the King was right to get angry with the ṛṣi when he needed a glass of water very badly. To become angry in such a grave situation was not unnatural for the King, but because the King himself was not less than a great saint, his becoming angry and taking action were astonishing. So it must be accepted that it was so ordained by the supreme will of the Lord. The King was a great devotee of the Lord, and the saint was also as good as the King. But by the will of the Lord, the circumstances were so created that they became ways to the King's becoming unattached to family connection and governmental activities and thus becoming a completely surrendered soul unto the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The merciful Lord sometimes creates such awkward positions for his pure devotees in order to drag them towards Himself from the mire of material existence. But outwardly the situations appear to be frustrating to the devotees. The devotees of the Lord are always under the protection of the Lord, and in any condition, frustration or success, the Lord is the supreme guide for the devotees. The pure devotees, therefore, accept all conditions of frustration as blessings from the Lord.

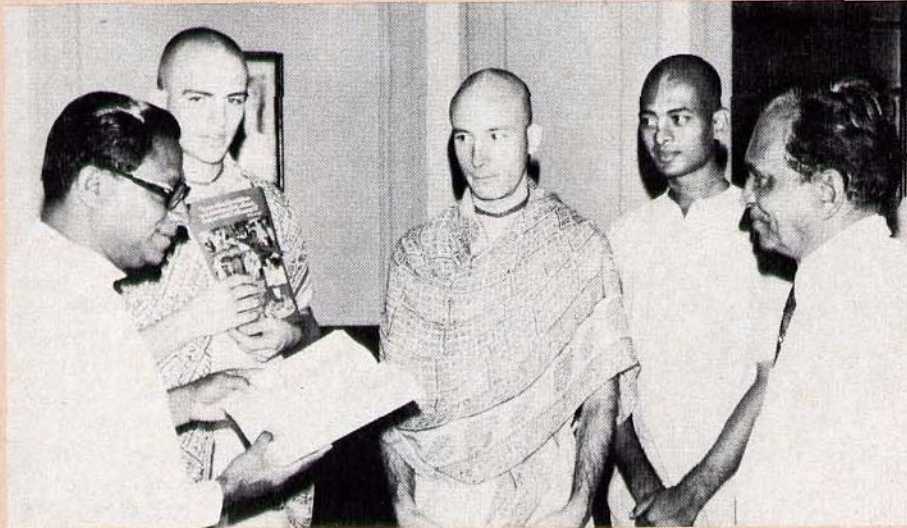
(continued in next issue)



Every Town and Village

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

Gītā "Very Valuable," Says Prime Minister



Prime Minister R. Premadasa, of Sri Lanka, reads aloud from *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. Also on hand (left to right) are Ripughna Dāsa, Rohiṇī-kumāra Dāsa, Mahākartā Dāsa, and Mr. Vincent Perera, Minister of Sports and Parliamentary Affairs.

In July ISKCON devotees paid a visit to R. Premadasa, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka. They presented Mr. Premadasa with several books about the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, including *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.

"These books are very valuable," said the Prime Minister. "I've read the *Gītā* before. I liked it very much."

While paging through the *Gītā*, Mr.

Premadasa, a Buddhist, found a verse he especially appreciated and read it aloud to those assembled in his office. "For one who is born, death is certain, and for one who is dead, birth is certain." As the *Gītā* also explains, the prime duty of a head of state is to see that the citizens get free from this cycle of reincarnation by becoming spiritually realized.

Sri Lanka: ISKCON Feeds Citizens, Commemorates Lord Buddha

During a three-day festival commemorating the day Lord Buddha appeared in the world (and also the day he attained enlightenment), ISKCON Food Relief volunteers in Sri Lanka fed over six thousand people. Following instructions given in the ancient Vedic literatures, the volunteers offered vegetarian food to the Supreme Lord and then distributed it to the general public.

Since Lord Buddha is recognized as one of the many incarnations of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the ISKCON devotees placed a statue of Lord Buddha upon an altar and worshiped it with incense and flowers, just as they worship the Deity of Kṛṣṇa. Thousands of joyous Buddhists took part in the celebration, the first of its kind in

Sri Lanka. At the festival the devotees also released the first issue of a Kṛṣṇa conscious newspaper printed in the local language, Sinhalese.

Sri Lanka has fertile land and plentiful rainfall, yet food prices are twice as high as in neighboring India, and many staples, such as rice, are in short supply. So at their center in Colombo, the nation's capital, ISKCON devotees feed hundreds of people each week. Local merchants and ISKCON Food Relief headquarters in New York City provide funding for the free meals.

Director of India's Center for Performing Arts Reviews Bhāgavatam

Bombay—Dr. Narayana Menon, executive director of the National Center for the Performing Arts, said this about Śrīla Prabhupāda's English translation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the narrative of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes on earth some fifty centuries ago:

"I have been familiar with *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* since my childhood, hearing it regularly, as read by my grandmother or chanted by *paṇḍitas* in the temples of Kerala. But this is the first time that I have gone through it with care, attention, and an inquiring mind. My first and immediate reaction was one of humility, faced with such profound thought and intellectual sophistication. The translation is clear, with a kind of luminosity that only a poet can bring to it. This is a book to be read, reread, studied, and cherished. His Divine Grace deserves our gratitude for making available to us an English rendering of this great work. He conveys everything that is inherent in the original Sanskrit."

BACK TO GODHEAD Readers Donate Farm

Not long ago, Robert and Susan Pollard, of Shepard, Texas, read a copy of *BACK TO GODHEAD*, visited the Houston Kṛṣṇa center, and gave a donation: a sixty-acre farm in the pine-forested hill country north of the city. Thanks to the Pollards, the devotees are now transforming the farm into a retreat for people who want to experience the Kṛṣṇa conscious life in an ideal setting.

Hare Kṛṣṇa 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 492 Caitanya Era
Vaiṣṇava month of Dāmodara (October 17—November 14, 1978)

Oct 23 (Dāmodara 7)	Oct 24 (Dāmodara 8)	Oct 25 (Dāmodara 9)
Disappearance of Śrīla Naroṭtama dāsa Ṭhākura.	Śnāna-dānādi-mahotsava at Śrī Rādhā Kuṇḍa.	Appearance of Śrīla Viracandra Prabhū.
Oct 27 (Dāmodara 11)		Oct 28 (Dāmodara 12)
Śrī Rāmā-ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans). Completion of English rendering of Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.		Disappearance of Śrī Nārāyaṇa Sarakāra Ṭhākura.
Nov 1 (Dāmodara 16)	Nov 2 (Dāmodara 17)	Nov 4 (Dāmodara 19)
Śrī Govardhana-pūjā, Worship of Bali Mahārāja. Appearance of Śrīla Rasikānanda Prabhū.	Disappearance of Śrīla Vāsu Choṣa Ṭhākura.	Disappearance of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
Nov 8 (Dāmodara 23)	Nov 11 (Dāmodara 26)	Nov 14 (Dāmodara 29)
Disappearance of Śrīla Śrinivāsa Acārya, Śrīla Dhanañjaya Paṇḍita, and Śrīla Gadādhara Ṭhākura.	Śrī Uttānā-ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans). Disappearance of Śrīla Gaurakṣora Dāsa Bābājī.	Winter rāsa dance of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Disappearance of Śrīla Bhūgarbha and Kāśīyāra Paṇḍita Gosvāmts.

Each month the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (publisher of BACK TO GODHEAD) distributes well over one million magazines and books. Here are a few letters from readers.

Last night I had a most fortunate experience. I was approached by one of your devotees, and he gave me a copy of BACK TO GODHEAD. I found your magazine to be both highly inspiring and profoundly beautiful. It is because of this that I have enclosed a check for a subscription. Thanks.

Steven Hummel
Watertown, Massachusetts

I am a fourteen-year-old student at boarding school who felt an emptiness until I found Lord Kṛṣṇa. A young man sold me one of your beautiful books for a very reasonable price, and so, being bored, I read it. I agree wholeheartedly with all I read in the book, and I wish I could learn more.

You may consider me too young to believe, but I truly find this a wonderful discovery.

Tom McCorkle
Candler, North Carolina

Your advice concerning chanting the Kṛṣṇa mantra seems very reasonable. After reading the latest issue of BACK TO GODHEAD, I have added the Kṛṣṇa mantra to my other devotional activities. I work all night at my police department and have a fine opportunity to chant.

I think that meditation has added greatly to the benefits that I derive from attendance at daily Mass at my parish church. I have also visited the Miami branch of ISKCON and made friends with some wonderful devotees.

My daily duties had been a fight for me, especially because one of my children, Michael, is severely afflicted with cerebral palsy. The nectar that ISKCON offers has helped me greatly. BACK TO GODHEAD helps me face each new day with additional hope.

Jeffrey Alb
Miami, Florida

About six months ago a friend of mine gave me the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. I was immediately drawn to it. I read it

LETTERS

through rather quickly, and I was overwhelmed by its meaning in my life. I then started reading it thoroughly. I found that my life was indeed changing. I have never completely known this feeling before, this feeling of true peace and security. I can see things now as I never saw them before.

Clayton Jester
Brooksville, Florida

I wish I could tell you how *Bhagavad-gītā* has filled the void in my life, but I would grow old writing.

Jim Kindle
Quincy, Illinois

I have just completed reading *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and was deeply moved by it. My wife and I have been studying *yoga* for nearly two years now, and it was not until we read Swami Bhaktivedanta's translation of the *Gītā* that we began to feel something happening in our lives.

Bill Kerns
Yakima, Washington

I was raised through my childhood by the beliefs of the Catholic Church, but I never really understood and realized God as I have through the teachings of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. The past few years I have been very confused in trying to find my purpose in life, but through meditation and reading the Bible I was beginning to feel a purpose in God realization. However, I was always backsliding to the materialistic world.

I believe the teachings of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and those of the Bible are striving for the same goal of teaching the path of spiritual realization through God, although I understand the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* because it is more clearly presented.

Thomas Waskin
(U.S. Serviceman in Germany)

I have found out about Hare Kṛṣṇa. I would like to know more. I know little English. You have books in Japanese. Please send me all you have. Kṛṣṇa very beautiful. I would like to know more about Kṛṣṇa.

Takashi Ohira
Kobe, Japan

Over a year ago, the book *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was given to me as a gift. In just the last two weeks, I have really sat down and studied this book, and I love it. As I read, a peaceful, good feeling seems to overtake me, and I can't concentrate on my everyday problems. I love it!

Mary Beth Tuerk
Birmingham, Michigan

I feel I've been deluded most of my life, living for false ideals and impossible goals. I buy things and do things not because I want or need to, but because I've been pressured and conditioned to accept it. I as an individual have no real goal or purpose in life.

Sometimes I would mentally set myself apart from the world to observe it impartially. All I would see were people wandering aimlessly about, with as much purpose as rats in a maze. Then the question arises, why do I exist and what purpose do I serve? The Bible tells us man was meant to serve God, but doesn't explain who or what God is or even how to serve Him. I think Śrīla Prabhupāda has answered these questions quite thoroughly and honestly, leaving absolutely no room for doubt in my mind—Kṛṣṇa's the answer.

Sometimes I think of life as traveling through a dark tunnel, hoping to catch a glimpse of the light at the far end. Some people never see that light, but live and die in darkness. But, through the good fortune of meeting a devotee one afternoon and receiving from him a copy of BACK TO GODHEAD magazine and the opportunity to read several of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, I feel I now have a chance to reach Kṛṣṇa and achieve the real goal of life.

Although at present I am unable to participate in full devotional service, I would like to help propagate Kṛṣṇa consciousness; please accept my check and enroll me as a life member. Thank you.

Frank Coniglio
Brooklyn, New York

Bhagavad-gītā means “The Song of God.” Five thousand years ago Lord Kṛṣṇa taught the *Gītā* to His friend Arjuna. Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna, *bhaktō 'si me sakhā ceti*: “Because you are My devotee as well as My friend, you are authorized to enter into the transcendental mystery of this science.” So the basis of this science is *bhakti*, devotion. Jesus taught, “You should love God with all your heart and all your soul.” That was the first lesson—to love God with all your heart and all your soul. That is the main purpose of life.

Other than developing our love for God, all other aims in life are useless, temporary. All of us are seeking some sort of satisfaction—all of us want to love and be loved. But we have forgotten where to place our love. We're trying to love something temporary, so we're always frustrated. And we always end up in distress, because even if we find some woman or man we love very much, finally one of us has to die, and then the whole relationship is finished. And what do we have left? Nothing, because the relationship was just based on the body, the external feature of the soul.

I don't have to explain the existence of the soul. That you must already accept, or else why would you be in the theological seminary? So the soul is eternal and the body is temporary. And God is eternal; He has always been. And we are part and parcel of God. This is also stated in the

HIS HOLINESS BHAVĀNANDA GOSWAMI is one of eleven spiritual masters that ISKCON's founder-ācārya Śrīla Prabhupāda selected to initiate new disciples. He is also ISKCON's co-director for East India, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

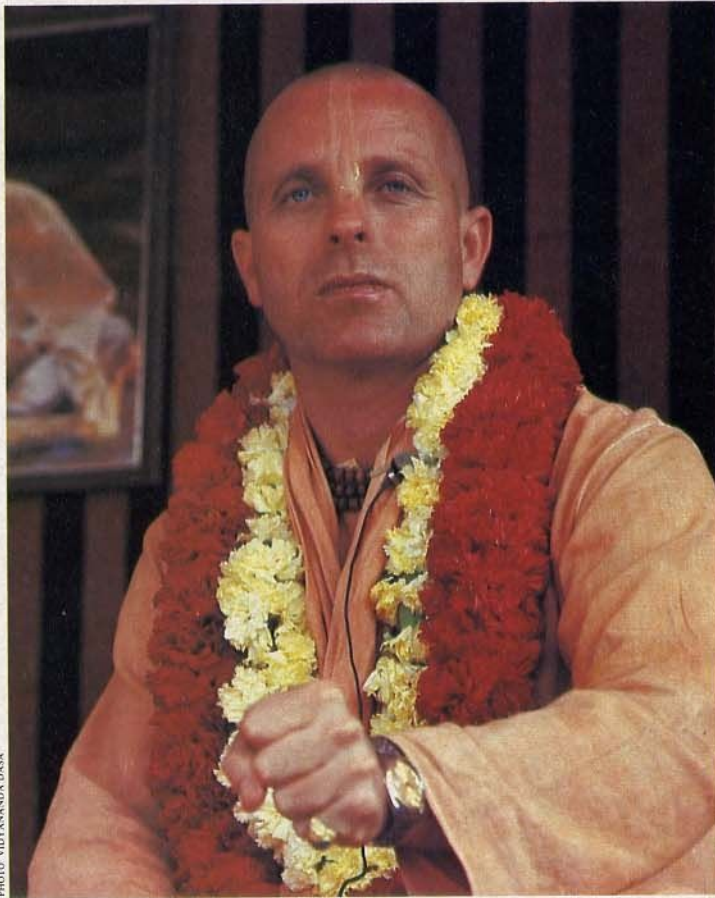


PHOTO: VIDYANANDA DASA

“YOU ARE NOT FOLLOWING YOUR TEACHER”

His Holiness Bhavānanda Goswami addresses Christian divinity students at St. Paschal's Seminary, Yarra Theological College, in Melbourne, Australia.

Bible—man is created in the image of God. What can we understand from this? It's quite clear: man is created in God's image, so God has to be a person. He is not a nonentity. If God is the creator of heaven and earth and all things (I remember the words from my catechism), who is God? He is our creator, too, and He has created us in His image.

But by associating with this material nature from time immemorial, we've forgotten our real position. And here we have the purpose of the priestly class of men—to enlighten all fallen, conditioned souls as to what their real position is. To do that, you yourself have to know your position: you're part and parcel of God—you have all the qualities of God—but as

So just as we have arms, legs, eyes—a body—God also has arms, legs, eyes: He has a body. But there is a difference. Right now we're in these material bodies, but His body is spiritual. He is *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha*. He has a form [*vigraha*] comprised of eternity [*sat*], knowledge [*cit*], and bliss [*ānanda*—ecstatic consciousness.

And He's the source of everyone. Kṛṣṇa says, *aham sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate*: “I am the source of everything material and everything spiritual; everything is emanating from Me.” [Bg. 10.8] Now, since you're part and parcel of God, you must have all the qualities of God, just as a drop from the ocean has all the qualities of the ocean. But the difference is in quantity. For instance, in Islam we find *Allah bham*—“God is great.” Yes, God is great, but *how* is God great? That is real theological study—to understand not just that God is great but *how* great God is. Religion without philosophy is simply sentiment, fanaticism. You may say God is great, but how great is He? That we want to know. That is the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Anyway, we're part and parcel of God—we're all spirit souls. So we have all the qualities of God, though in minute quantity.

long as you relate to yourself on the platform of the body and think and act foolishly, then you must suffer. All our suffering is due to ignorance. We don't know how to act and how not to act. We don't know what to do and what not to do. We're bewildered. But God, Kṛṣṇa, is so kind that He's given His lawbook, the revealed scripture. He's telling us what to do and what not to do. How kind He is. And that revealed scripture is delivered by Kṛṣṇa's representatives.

Lord Jesus is a representative of Kṛṣṇa; he is the son of God. Kṛṣṇa says, *ahaṁ bīja-pradaḥ pitā*: "I am the seed-giving father of all living entities." [Bg. 14.4] St. Francis also understood this.

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

[Bg. 5.18]

Paṇḍita means "learned man," and through his knowledge—realized knowledge—the learned man sees the cow, the elephant, the dog, and the dog-eater with equal vision. How does he see them as the same? He understands, *ahaṁ bīja-pradaḥ pitā*: God is the seed-giving father of everyone, every living entity. If you have that understanding and realization from within your heart, then you can understand everyone—everyone is your brother.

Because no one has this understanding, the whole world is in chaos. We may say "brotherhood," but we don't accept the existence of a common father. How can we be brothers? We're simply juggling words. So we have the United Nations—disunited nations, simply groups of dogs barking at each other. No understanding. Every attempt that we make for world peace, for world brotherhood, ends in frustration, ends in chaos, because we have no knowledge. We're simply in ignorance. And the role of the priest is to enlighten us with real knowledge of who we all are, who God is, what this material universe is, and what our relationship with God is. These questions can be asked only by those who have come to the human platform of life. If you have not asked that question (I don't mean you specifically, because you are in the theological seminary—you must have asked that question), then you are not considered human.

So, what we have today is simply an animal society. Spending all their time just figuring out elaborate methods of eating, elaborate methods of sleeping,

elaborate methods of defense, and elaborate methods of having sex. A dog eats; we eat—the principle is the same. We may eat in a fancy restaurant, but the principle of eating is the same. The dog sleeps in the street, and we sleep on a fancy waterbed, but the sleeping principle is the same. The dog defends with his teeth and his claws, and we defend with so many elaborate antiballistic missiles, but the defense principle is the same. And the dog has sex in the street, and we have sex in many fancy ways, but the sex principle remains the same. Fancy eating, sleeping, mating, and defending—that is not human civilization.

**The role of the
priest is to enlighten
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is, what this
material universe is,
and what our
relationship with
God is.**

It is just highly polished cat-and-dog civilization. This understanding you should have.

If you're going to disseminate knowledge, then you should have knowledge—real understanding. Then you can have compassion for all the fallen, conditioned souls and really enlighten them. They are suffering due to ignorance. Now, your duty is to dispel that ignorance with the shining lamp of knowledge. And knowledge means knowing who you are, who God is, what this material creation is, and what your relationship with God is. If you concentrate on those points, everything else will come—you will have full knowledge.

There's a story about a woman whose husband was drowning.

She was screaming, "My husband's drowning!"

Then a social worker came along and told her, "Don't worry, ma'am—I'll save him!"

So he swam out to her husband and tried to pull the man back to shore by the collar of his jacket. But somehow in the

commotion the drowning man slipped out of his jacket, and the social worker just brought back the jacket, with nobody inside it.

"Here you are, lady," he said. "I've saved your husband!"

She was furious. "You haven't saved him—you've saved his jacket!"

This is the state of present-day society. Everyone is busy trying to save the external covering of the soul. So many hospitals, so many this, so many that... all simply trying to save the person's external covering, his material body. No one sees that the spiritual person within is suffering simply because of ignorance—he doesn't know who he is. No matter how many hospitals you open, you're not going to stop anybody from dying. It is not possible. No matter how many medicines you may invent, you still cannot prevent disease. No matter how many surgeries you perform on a person's face, no matter how many exercises you have him do, you can't prevent him from growing old. And no matter how much contraception you use, you cannot prevent birth. As surely as people must meet their death, so they must surely take another birth. And as soon as they take birth, they *must* grow old, and they must suffer disease, and they must die again. Here are the problems of life. So real social work is to enlighten people with this knowledge—how, when you die, you'll be able to return to your original, eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa, with God.

But unless you know what *your* relationship with God is, then how can you teach anyone else? "Physician, heal thyself"—before you dare to teach others. That is the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement: how to heal yourself from the real disease—this material contamination. You have to enlighten yourself with real knowledge about your true identity and your relationship with God.

And you can do that very simply, very easily, and very joyfully by chanting the names of God. God has countless names, because His names refer to His countless qualities. Jehovah, Adonai, or Allah—God has countless qualities, and He has countless names. Any of these bona fide names of God that you chant can deliver you from this material contamination. Our hearts are filled with polluted desires. Those desires have been building up since time immemorial, due to our contact with this material nature. So we have to cleanse the heart. And we can cleanse the heart by chanting God's names, by praying. That is also in your scripture—to praise

God—"All glories to God; praise Him with cymbals and drums." That is also written there.

And you should *do* it, because that is the instruction of your teacher, your *guru*. *Guru* means "teacher." It also means "heavy"—heavy with knowledge, and heavy with responsibility. You are here in this theological seminary to learn how to be *gurus*, to teach others. And the only process for realization of knowledge is to accept the authority, the higher authority. Take Jesus, for instance. He was a *guru*. He had knowledge of God, and his good disciples received that knowledge in a submissive mood—not challenging, but in a submissive mood. And he left them instructions, so many instructions. Moral instructions, so that they could rise from the modes of ignorance and passion to the platform of material goodness, and so that from that platform they could understand transcendental science. That is why he said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife"—so many instructions... "Thou shalt not kill."

One who does not follow the instructions of the *guru* is called *guru-druha*, the killer of the *guru*. If you do not follow the instruction of your spiritual teacher, then you are killing him. Jesus said, "Thou shalt not kill," but today so much killing is going on. St. Francis saw everyone equally. You are killing so many cows, and you are drinking the blood. *You are not following the instruction of your guru.*

The cow gives milk, the perfect form of food. And practically everyone in this room, I'm sure, was raised on cow's milk. Now, we'd have to say that whoever gives milk for raising the baby is a mother. So the cow is my mother—I was raised on her milk. Then, when I'm strong enough, let me cut my mother's throat and drink her blood. This is supposed to be advanced civilization... *Animal civilization!* Why animal civilization? Because you're not following the instruction of your teacher. You are not following the instruction of your *guru*. Therefore, everything becomes chaotic. It must... He is the representative of God. And God is the protector of the cow. [Pause.] Does anyone have any questions?

Q: You seem to think that we don't practice what we preach.

A: No, I didn't say that. I was just saying that we practice what we preach.

Q: In your talk you were saying that we don't follow our teacher.

A: I didn't say that *you* don't. If the shoe fits, wear it. [Laughter.]

Q: You referred earlier to some knowledge of the catechism. Were you at one time a Catholic?

A: Yes.

Q: Would you be able to disclose information about your change or conversion or whatever word you like to use?

A: Actually, I haven't changed or converted. I have simply increased my knowledge and understanding of God. Actually, Christ taught Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but due to the time and place in which he taught, he wasn't able to give complete instruction. After all, he was

We can cleanse the heart by chanting God's names, by praying. That is also in your scripture—to praise God—"All glories to God; praise Him with cymbals and drums."

speaking to barbarians. That is his glory—that he went among the barbarians to preach love of God. But they attempted to kill their own teacher. So he couldn't give full information about Kṛṣṇa. But he was teaching love of God, no doubt. We accept Christ as a pure devotee, the son of God.

Q: Do you accept him as God Himself?

A: No, we do not accept him as God, and nowhere does he say he is God. Always Jesus said, "I am the son of God, and my Father and I are one." You are also one with Kṛṣṇa, as I was explaining earlier. Everyone is spirit. All of us are souls, spiritual souls. We have the same quality as God. But now we're just covered over by this powerful material nature—because we don't have the same quantity or magnitude as God. He's great; we're tiny. Jesus never said he was God. He is the son of God, and we accept him as that, and we give him all respect as a pure devotee of the Lord.

Q: Why do you talk as if you have greater knowledge than we do?

A: Do you really want to know? By the

mercy of our spiritual master, we have some greater knowledge than you. But that is not a statement of pride, because I was a dog until I met my *guru*. I was a dog. But by his mercy he has elevated me, though I am totally unqualified for the position of a teacher. It's all by his mercy. You can't amount to anything without the mercy of your *guru*. For instance, Jesus took fishermen and farmers, and he taught them God consciousness and turned them into great devotees of the Lord.

Q: How do you feel about women's lib?

A: Women's lib is actually a big trick by the men to exploit the women. The women can't admit that, but it is. "Let me exploit the women, have sex with them, and if they get pregnant, I'll give them the choice: 'Either you go on the dole, or you can kill your child in the womb—you can become a murderer.'" This is women's liberation—murder the child in the womb, liberation to murder. It's all a trick by the men, and the women can't admit it. They cannot face that. They are simply being deceived by men who want to utilize them and exploit them for their own sense gratification—and all in the name of women's liberation. And then the men leave them to beg from the government or become murderers. Nonsense.

Q: For Catholics there is love of God, but there is also action toward one's neighbor. Do you—

A: Yes. If you develop your love for God, for Kṛṣṇa, then naturally you love everything about Him, including His creation. But aren't the animals your neighbors? Don't they have rights? True, they're not so intelligent. But just because they're less intelligent, that doesn't mean you should use your higher intelligence to think up so many different ways to kill them. If you have a neighbor (if you're regarding everyone as your neighbor), perhaps your neighbor is not so intelligent—maybe he's a little retarded—so does society stand for it if you go up and smash him in the head with a hammer? "He's my neighbor, but he's not so intelligent, a little retarded. So let me kill him." We don't allow that. We're suffering because we're breaking the law of Kṛṣṇa, we're breaking the law of God. You may not have to answer to the state, but you cannot escape the law of God. There is no moment when we're away from God. Kṛṣṇa says, *iśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānām hṛd-deśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati*: "I am within the heart of every living entity." He's within our hearts, so no one can keep anything hidden from Kṛṣṇa. ❀

Questions People Ask About Chanting

HARE KṚṢṆA HARE KṚṢṆA
KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA HARE HARE
HARE RĀMA HARE RĀMA
RĀMA RĀMA HARE HARE

Q. *Can I chant Hare Kṛṣṇa while I'm doing yoga?*

A. Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is *yoga*. *Yoga* means “linking up with the Supreme,” or Kṛṣṇa—and Kṛṣṇa is present in His name—so if you chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, you’re doing the ultimate *yoga*. You’re in direct touch with Kṛṣṇa.

Actually, the original purpose of *yoga* exercises was simply to quiet the mind and senses so that the *yogī* could meditate on Kṛṣṇa in his heart. Now opportunists have watered *yoga* down and turned it into a health fad.

So . . . yes, chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* while you’re doing your *yoga* exercises. And chant it anytime and anywhere. Stay “linked up” with Kṛṣṇa. That’s real *yoga*.

Q. *I don't understand Sanskrit. Will the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra work for me?*

A. Absolutely. The *mahā-mantra* is like fire: it will bring you warmth and light, whether or not you understand it.

Q. *What if I'm tired of formulas for spiritual enlightenment? What if I just want to relate to people?*

A. That’s fine. If you chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, you’ll enter the ultimate interpersonal relationship. Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme, is present in His name. So by chanting His name purely, you’ll rediscover your unique relationship with Him.

In the spiritual world, some liberated souls relate to Kṛṣṇa as the Absolute and meditate on Him with awe and reverence. Others relate to Him as master and serve Him with a sense of duty and respect. And still others relate to Him as a friend and joke and play with Him. Some even relate to Him as their child and take care of Him. And others relate to Him as their lover.

If you think about it, you’ll begin to see that whatever rela-

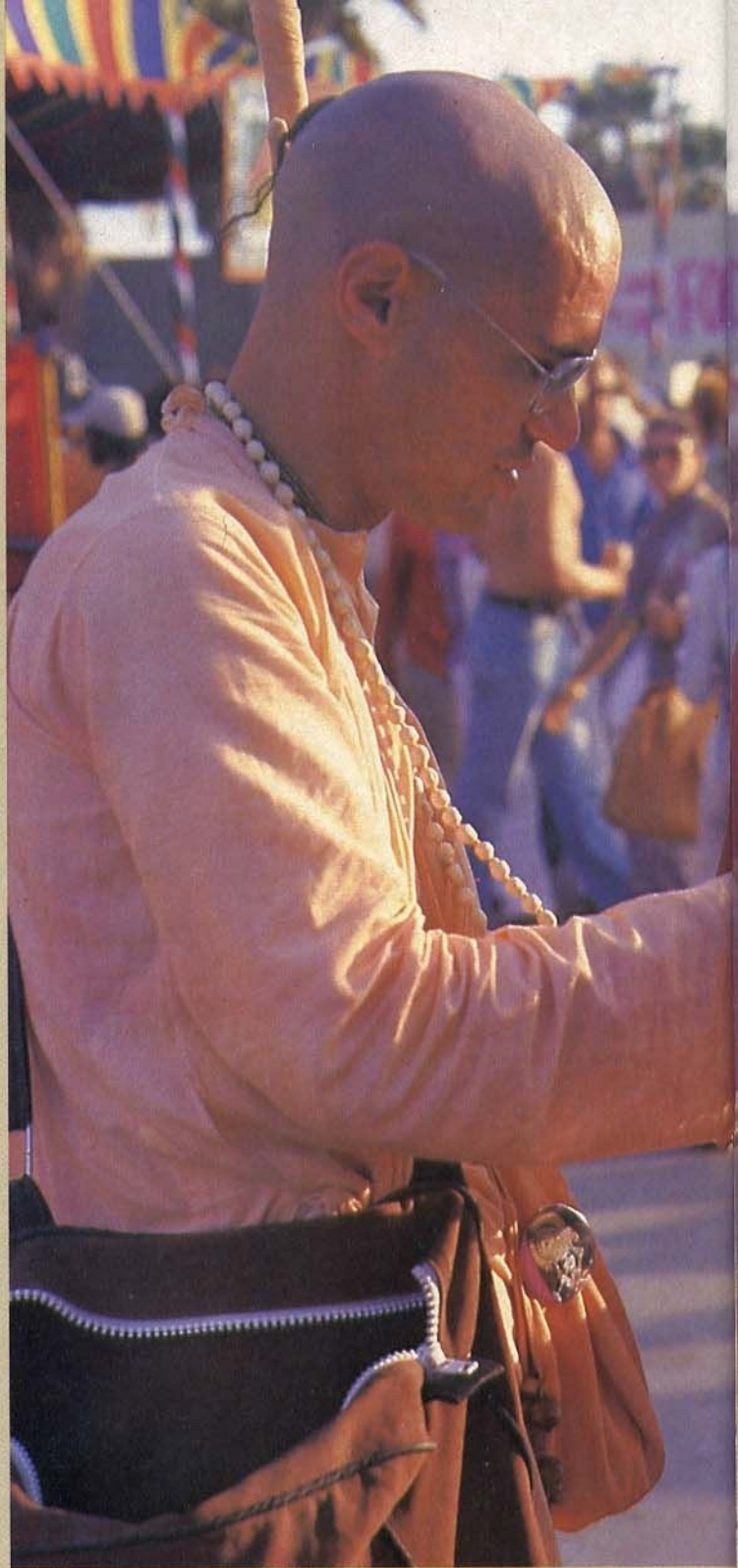


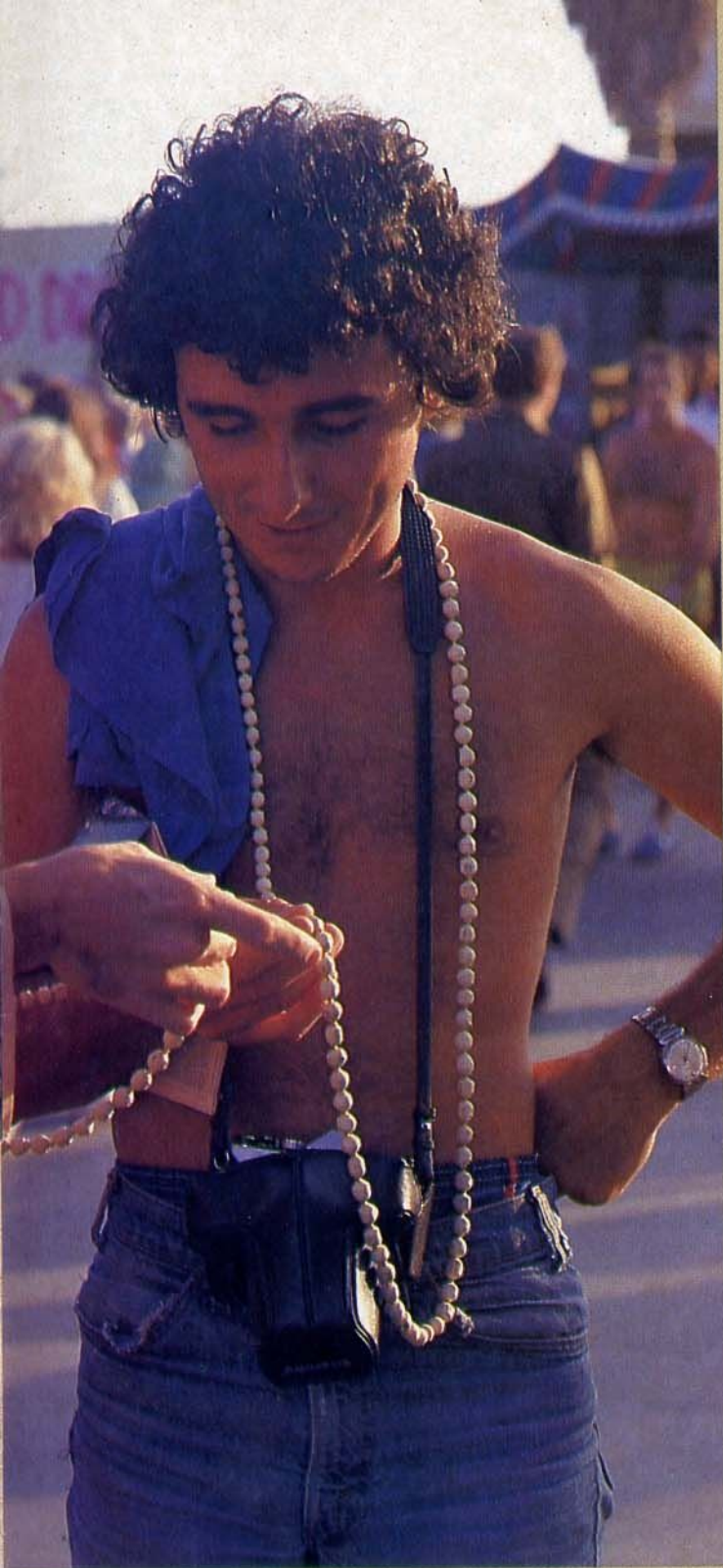
PHOTO: VIDYANANDA DĀSA

tionships you’ve experienced in this material world are feeble, short-lived imitations of the lasting relationships that the residents of the spiritual world enjoy with Kṛṣṇa. The way to revive your own relationship with Kṛṣṇa is to chant His names.

Q. *Why should I start chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa?*

A. For starters, here are four good reasons: birth, old age, disease, and death.

Sooner or later, we all have to face old age, disease, death,



But if we chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, we'll revive our long-forgotten relationship with Lord Kṛṣṇa. And Kṛṣṇa promises He'll be our swift deliverer.

Q. *Would it be a good idea to tell a dying person to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa?*

A. It would be a great idea. The Vedic literatures say, *ante nārāyaṇa-smṛtiḥ*: remember Kṛṣṇa at the end of your life and you'll go to live with Him in the spiritual world. And the best way to remember Kṛṣṇa is to chant His names.

What you're thinking about when you pass away will determine what happens to you in your next life. If you're thinking about your pet dog, you might come back with four legs instead of two. But whatever you come back as, you're sure to get old and diseased and die, and you're sure to get another material body—unless you remember Kṛṣṇa.

If you chant Kṛṣṇa's names, you'll return to the spiritual world and live there forever.

Q. *I'm aware that chanting is the best way to get ready for death. But why rush it—why not just wait until we get old?*

A. How do you know you're not old already? Actually, "old" just refers to someone who's about to die, and who can be sure the "someone" isn't him? You don't have any guarantees that you'll live to be ninety. Better to start chanting the *mahā-mantra* now.

Another thing to consider: when you die, your mind and body will be going through all kinds of changes, and it will be impossible to chant unless you've been practicing.

Q. *Why so much talk about death? What about happiness here and now?*


A. You're right. We all want happiness here and now. But we have to know where to look for it.

Trying to find happiness in satisfying your body is like trying to eat pudding that has sand in it.

Whatever bodily happiness you experience is temporary; it won't last. And besides, it comes mixed with old age, disease, death, and rebirth. So when you opt for bodily happiness, you get a huge quotient of sand.

But the spiritual happiness you'll find in your relationship with Kṛṣṇa is one-hundred-percent pure, and it lasts forever. And if you chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, you can experience this lasting spiritual happiness for yourself, here and now.

Q. *How can just a sound give you so much happiness?*

A. The Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* isn't an ordinary sound. Kṛṣṇa is present in His names, and because Kṛṣṇa is the reservoir of all spiritual pleasure, His names are also full of pleasure. That's why a great spiritual master once said he wanted millions of ears to hear Kṛṣṇa's names and millions of tongues to chant them. 

and birth (or shall we say rebirth). Of course, in our modern world we've managed to push these miseries fairly well out of sight. We've isolated the old people in the nursing homes and the diseased, dying, and newborn in the hospitals. And our TV screens, feature films, newspapers, and billboards bombard us with images of youth, beauty, and health.

But we can fool ourselves only so long. Our turn will come. And then we'll have to trade in our present body and get another, and on it will go, life after life. India's Vedic literatures call this phenomenon the cycle of birth and death.

Address Questions to:

Questions People Ask About Chanting
 BACK TO GODHEAD
 3764 Watseka Avenue
 Los Angeles, California 90034

YOGA FOR OUR AGE

(continued from page 5)

kingdom, he wanted to rule over the country. Where was the time for his meditation? So he flatly refused: "My dear Kṛṣṇa, it is not possible for me." He said:

*cancelaṁ hi manaḥ kṛṣṇa
pramāthi balavad dṛḍham
tasyāhaṁ nigrahaṁ manye
vāyor iva suduṣkaram*

"My dear Kṛṣṇa, You are asking me to control the mind, but it is so powerful and restless that I think controlling the mind is as hard as controlling the wind." [Bg. 6.34]

If there is a high wind, can you control it? Yet it is a fact that the mind is as difficult to control as a high wind—Arjuna gives this example. But if you engage the mind in thinking of Kṛṣṇa, then it is controlled.

Otherwise, artificially, you cannot con-

trol it. It is impossible. It was impossible for Arjuna—what to speak of others. Who was Arjuna? He was personally talking with Kṛṣṇa. Do you think he was an ordinary man? No, he was a *great* man. And even *he* said that it is impossible to control the mind. So you can control the mind only when you fix the mind on Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. Then no nonsense can come within your mind, but simply Kṛṣṇa. That is the perfection of meditation. ❀

Wisdom from Bhagavad-gītā

[Excerpts from the Twelfth Chapter—
"Devotional Service"]

Lord Kṛṣṇa said: Just fix your mind upon Me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and engage all your intelligence in Me. Thus you will live in Me always, without a doubt.

My dear Arjuna, O winner of wealth, if you cannot fix your mind upon Me without deviation, then follow the regulative principles of *bhakti-yoga*. In this way you will develop a desire to attain to Me.

If you cannot practice the regulations of *bhakti-yoga*, then just try to work for Me, because by working for Me you will come to the perfect stage.

If, however, you are unable to work in

Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then try to act giving up all the results of your work, and be self-situated.

If you cannot take to this practice, then engage yourself in the cultivation of knowledge. Better than knowledge, however, is meditation, and better than meditation is renunciation of the fruits of action, for by such renunciation one may have peace of mind.

One who is not envious but is a kindly friend to all creatures, who does not think himself a proprietor, who is free from false ego and equal both in happiness and distress, who is always satisfied and engaged in devotional service with determination, and whose mind and intelligence are fixed upon Me—he is very dear to Me.

He for whom no one is put into difficulty and who is not disturbed by anxiety, who is steady in happiness and distress, is very dear to Me.

A devotee who is not dependent on the ordinary course of activities, who is pure, expert, without cares, free from all pains and not striving for some result is very dear to Me.

One who does not grasp either pleasure or grief, who neither laments nor desires, and who renounces both auspicious and inauspicious things, is very dear to Me.

One who is equal to friends and enemies, who is equipoised in honor and dishonor, heat and cold, happiness and distress, fame and infamy, who is always free from contamination, always silent, and satisfied with anything, who doesn't care for any residence, who is fixed in knowledge and engaged in devotional service, is very dear to Me.

He who follows this imperishable path of devotional service and fully engages himself with faith, making Me the supreme goal, is very, very dear to Me. ❀

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REMEMBERING ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA

A Personal Recollection

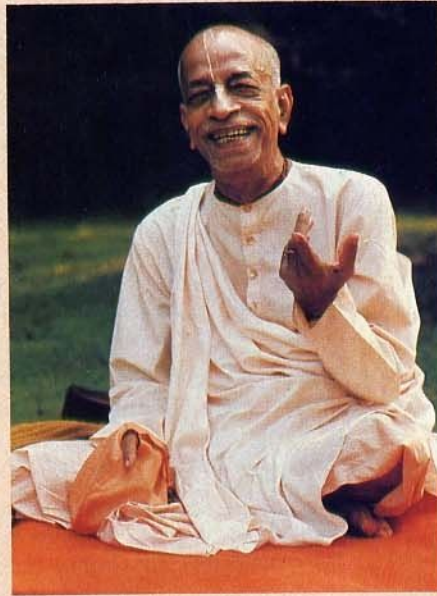
In December of 1971, I arranged a speaking program for Śrīla Prabhupāda in Madras, India. Thousands of people came to hear him, and the leading newspaper carried a summary of his lecture every day. Then the Chief Justice of Madras invited him to speak before a large gathering of High Court judges, advocates, and other leading citizens. Śrīla Prabhupāda appealed to the audience to follow the examples of Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī and Rūpa Gosvāmī, who in the sixteenth century had given up their exalted posts as prime minister and finance minister in the Bengal government to help Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu spread the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto the six Gosvāmīs, namely Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, and Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, who kicked off all association of aristocracy as insignificant. In order to deliver the poor conditioned souls, they accepted the garments of mendicants, but they are always merged in the ecstatic ocean of intimate love for Kṛṣṇa and bathe always and repeatedly in the waves of that ocean." (*Ṣaḍ-gosvāmī-aṣṭaka 4*)

After the program the Chief Justice invited Śrīla Prabhupāda and his disciples to dinner at his home, and he disclosed that he wanted to join our movement as soon as possible. Śrīla Prabhupāda again began to glorify the six Gosvāmīs, but this time in a different way. He explained how after going to Vṛndāvana, the Gosvāmīs were always longing for Lord Kṛṣṇa and His eternal consort Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. "They never said, 'Now I have seen God! Now I am satisfied!' No! Rather, they were saying, 'Where is Rādhā? Where is Kṛṣṇa?'"

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto the six Gosvāmīs, who were chanting very loudly everywhere in Vṛndāvana and shouting, 'Queen of Vṛndāvana, Rādhārāṇī! O Lalitā! O Kṛṣṇa, son of Nanda Mahārāja! Where are you all now? Are you just on the hill of Govardhana, or are you under the trees on the bank of the Yamunā? Where are you?' These were their moods in executing Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

The Chief Justice respectfully presented Śrīla Prabhupāda with a sandal-



wood garland and a small statue of Kṛṣṇa. Then, to demonstrate the ecstasy the Gosvāmīs felt when they were bereft of Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Prabhupāda did something truly wonderful. He held the statue of Kṛṣṇa in front of Sarasvatī, his personal secretary's three-year-old daughter, and he said, "Who is this, Sarasvatī?"

"Kṛṣṇa!" Sarasvatī exclaimed.

Śrīla Prabhupāda held the statue in front of Sarasvatī's eyes and then slowly moved it around to the side, until he had hidden it behind his back. Then Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "Sarasvatī, where is Kṛṣṇa?"

When Sarasvatī realized that Kṛṣṇa was gone, a startled look of anxiety crossed her face. Her eyes darted in all directions—"Where is Kṛṣṇa?"

But Kṛṣṇa was nowhere to be found. She appealed to the faces of the devotees, glanced at their hands, and looked around behind their backs, searching everywhere. Unable to find Kṛṣṇa, she became stunned.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's grave voice broke the silence. "Sarasvatī, where is Kṛṣṇa?"

Sarasvatī began again to look anxiously all over the room, but still she could not find Him.

Then a devotee said, "Sarasvatī, where is Kṛṣṇa? *Who has Kṛṣṇa?*"

Sarasvatī's mind awakened with a realization. She opened her eyes wide, raised her eyebrows, and exclaimed,

"Prabhupāda has Kṛṣṇa!" She immediately turned to Śrīla Prabhupāda and rushed to his lotus feet. "Prabhupāda has Kṛṣṇa!"

Śrīla Prabhupāda carefully brought the statue of Kṛṣṇa from behind his back and gradually moved it before the expectant eyes of Sarasvatī.

"Prabhupāda has Kṛṣṇa!"

Suddenly, Śrīla Prabhupāda removed the statue from Sarasvatī's vision and again said, "Sarasvatī, where is Kṛṣṇa?" Thus he repeated the same procedure. As we observed this touching exchange, we all gained the clear realization that Śrīla Prabhupāda held Kṛṣṇa within his hand and that he could deliver Kṛṣṇa to us whenever he felt our desire for Kṛṣṇa was sufficiently intense. We could also understand that Śrīla Prabhupāda knew our inner feelings. He perfectly knew the heart of everyone. Although Sarasvatī was only three years old, Śrīla Prabhupāda could understand her heart. He knew just how to engage her in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

And finally, we could witness Śrīla Prabhupāda as the supreme preacher, engaging everything and everybody in spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Śrīla Prabhupāda had wanted to demonstrate transcendental anxiety in separation from Kṛṣṇa, and thus he had created a situation wherein a three-year-old-girl could instruct a Chief Justice. As a result of Śrīla Prabhupāda's grace, everyone—from little Sarasvatī to the Chief Justice of Madras—became fully absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and completely attached to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa's dearest servant, His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda.

All this brought to mind an old devotional song about the special glories of the Kṛṣṇa conscious spiritual master.

*kṛṣṇa se tomāra, — kṛṣṇa dite pāra
tomāra śakati āche*

"Kṛṣṇa is yours; you have the power to give Him to me."

*āmi ta' kāṅgāla — 'kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa' bali
dhāi tava pāche pāche*

"I am simply running behind you, shouting, 'Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!'"

Girirāja Svāmī

THE DEATHLESS NECTAR

On the bank of the Ganges, a young devotee of Kṛṣṇa showed a death-bound king the way to immortality.

King Parīkṣit was cursed to die within seven days. Yet he took it all as Kṛṣṇa's will, and at once he went to the Ganges to fast till the fatal moment. On hearing the news, great sages came from all over the universe to witness his passing.

"Please tell me," the king asked, "—what is the duty of one who is about to die?"

Before the sages came to any consensus, a sixteen-year-old boy arrived, along with a noisy crowd of street urchins and women who had been following him for days as if he were a madman. Śukadeva had long arms and curly hair that lay strewn over his shoulders. He was naked, and his bluish bodily hue was reminiscent of Lord Kṛṣṇa's. His eyes were gentle and wide, his ears and nose were raised, and because of his fair form and enchanting smiles, he was attractive to ladies.

The sages at the bank of the Ganges could tell that Śukadeva was a self-realized soul. So even though his body looked young and unkempt, they rose from their seats to honor him. . . .

Most of the sages knew that Śukadeva was the son of Vyāsadeva, the great spiritual master who had put the *Vedas* into writing. After performing lengthy penances, Vyāsadeva and his wife had conceived Śukadeva. But strangely, for twelve years he refused to leave his mother's womb. During that time his father instructed him about Lord Kṛṣṇa and repeatedly asked him to come out. But Śukadeva told his father he was afraid he would waste his life by falling into worldly illusion. Vyāsadeva kept reassuring his son, but Śukadeva never

believed him. From within the womb he pointed out how attached Vyāsadeva himself was to wife, children, home, and the rest.

Finally, Vyāsadeva went to Dvārakā city and told Lord Kṛṣṇa about his dilemma. So Kṛṣṇa accompanied him back to his cottage and promised Śukadeva he would never fall into worldly illusion. His fears gone, Śukadeva came out of the womb, but instantly he left to teach the world what his father had taught him about the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa.

Afraid he had lost his child, Vyāsadeva cried out after him, "Oh, my son!" But only the trees echoed in response, so the griefstricken Vyāsadeva followed Śukadeva into the forest. Far into the distance, he saw his son passing a lake where some young girls were bathing. When the young boy went by, the girls didn't cover their bodies, but when Vyāsadeva came near, they covered themselves at once. He asked the girls about this, and they replied that his son's heart was pure. Vyāsadeva was a married man, and had to observe distinctions between male and female, but Śukadeva did not. Instead, he saw spiritual souls in different kinds of dress. He was transcendental to sex relations, and that is why the girls weren't very concerned about him.

In any case, Vyāsadeva kept after his son. But through his mystic power Śukadeva projected a double of himself. The double returned home with the pacified father and led a normal family life. He even fathered a child.

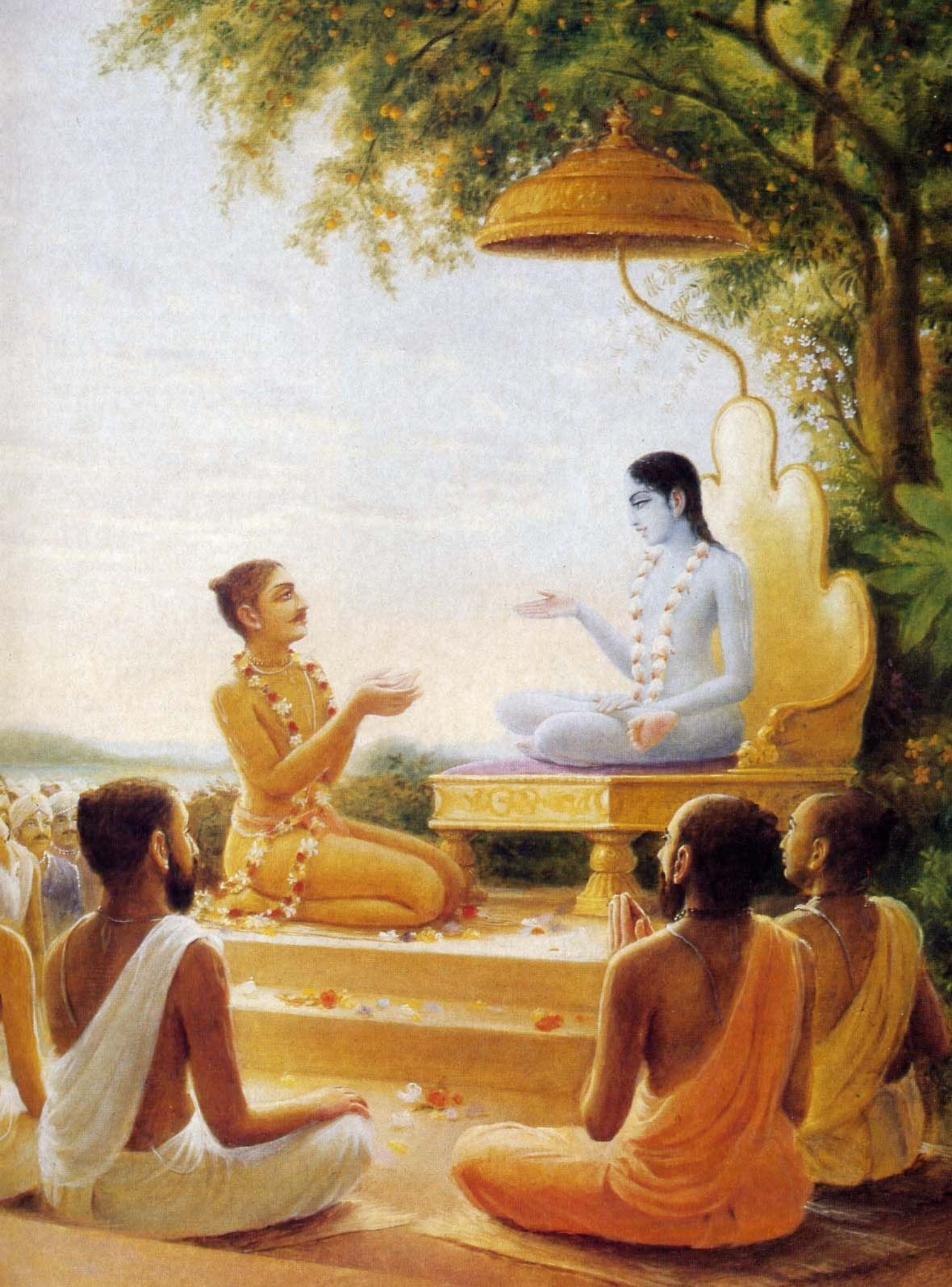
Meanwhile, the real Śukadeva wandered about the provinces of Kuru and

Jāṅgala as though dumb and retarded. He looked like a madman, but actually he was the most elevated transcendental personality, completely self-satisfied and independent. The glamor of worldly possessions never attracted him, nor did he ever become a lackey for worldly men—Śukadeva thought such a fate worse than drinking poison.

As far as Śukadeva was concerned, the whole world was a mere jugglery of names. It made no more sense than the babble of sea waves, and it was full of phantom forms that were doomed to disappear. Fools call these forms "wife," "children," "family," "home," "country," "society," and so forth, and struggle to maintain them. But Śukadeva didn't care for such false things and wasted effort. All his life he searched for spiritual truth and urged everyone else to do the same.

"When there is enough ground to lie on," he said, "what is the use of cots and beds? When one can use his own arms, what is the need for a pillow? When one can use the palms of his hands, what need is there for all kinds of utensils? Are there no torn clothes lying on the common road? Do the trees no longer give their fruit? Are the rivers dried up? Do they no longer supply water to the thirsty? Are the mountain caves now closed? Or above all, does the Almighty Lord no longer protect the fully surrendered souls who spread His glories? Why, then, should anyone flatter those who are intoxicated by hard-earned wealth? As his ultimate goal in life, one should simply worship the Supreme Lord.

"Both by rising and by setting," said



Śukadeva, “the sun brings death nearer for everyone—except him who uses his valuable time to discuss the pastimes of the Lord. Do the trees not live a long life? What good is it? Do the bellows of the blacksmith not breathe? All around us, do the beasts not eat and discharge semen? Are we any different if we will not hear the glories of the Lord?”

“One who has not heard and chanted

such messages has ears like snake holes and a tongue like that of a frog. By croaking, the frog simply calls the serpents to swallow him up—and by talking of worldly things, men are simply calling death. Let them sing the eternal songs of the Lord and make themselves eternal.

“Your head may be covered with a silken turban or golden crown,” he warned, “but if you won’t bow your

head to the Lord, then your turban or crown is just a useless weight. Your hands may be decorated with glittering bangles, but if you won’t use your hands to clean the temple of the Lord, then they are no better than the hands of a corpse. The eyes that will not look at the beautiful form of Kṛṣṇa are like the eyes on the plumes of peacocks, and the legs that don’t move to the holy places where Kṛṣṇa is remembered are no better than tree trunks. The person who has never served a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa is certainly a dead body, though he may be breathing.”

At any rate, when Śukadeva arrived on the bank of the Ganges, King Parīkṣit bowed his head, and all the sages offered their greetings. Śukadeva exchanged embraces, handshakes, and nods, and he bowed down to his father Vyāsadeva, who was also at the gathering. At this the street urchins and women who had followed the boy sage were struck with wonder and fear. They stopped their frivolous activities, and everything was full of gravity and calm.

Śukadeva was surrounded by saintly sages and demigods, just as the effulgent moon is surrounded by brilliant stars, glowing planets, and other radiant heavenly bodies. He was full of beauty, and all respected him for his pure devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Now Śukadeva sat down—perfectly pacified, intelligent, and ready to answer any questions without hesitation.

King Parīkṣit bowed down before him and inquired with sweet words and folded hands: “You are the spiritual master of great saints and sages. So I am begging you—show me the path of perfection for one who is to die.”

Śukadeva answered, “My dear King, your question is glorious, because it is very beneficial for all kinds of people.

“My dear King, you have only seven days to live. But don’t lament—what is the value of a long life that is wasted? Better *one moment* of full consciousness, because that will start you on the path to eternity. O King, one who desires freedom from death must always hear about, glorify, and remember the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Chanting His names and pastimes constantly—great authorities tell us that this is the way to success. Drink deeply of this deathless nectar—the Lord’s eternal pastimes—and surely you will reach His eternal abode. O King, the highest success in life is to remember Kṛṣṇa at death.”

[Adapted by Drutakarmā dāsa from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, translation and commentary by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.]



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LETTER FROM A FATHER

Not long ago, the father of Daniel Garland (Brahma-muhūrta Dāsa) wrote to his son.

Dear Daniel,

I have probably said this before, but if so, pardon the repetition. My visit with you there was a very moving, total experience, and I know I will never be the same again after that visit. I think you are all a tremendously impressive and dedicated group of young men and women, who have dedicated your lives in as total, beautiful, and significant a way as anyone possibly could. Also—I am certain the world is helped more by the kind of dedication you are giving each day to the world around you than it is helped by almost any other human efforts. There must be times when your own inner struggles are extreme and when the behavior of others on the outside—like me—is very disheartening and frustrating to all of you.

It is hard for me to imagine what a totally transformed human being you have become and what your own inner life and value system—your whole world of meaning—must be.

Please don't be too harsh on those of us who for one reason or another have not been able to make the total transformation that I am certain you would like to see come about.

It has been nice writing you—thinking about you—and may all the very best be with you. Much love, Dad

CORRECTION. A chart in *Our Place in Lord Brahmā's Lifetime* (BTG Vol. 13, No. 6) mistakenly listed the White Incarnation of Kṛṣṇa as Lord Kapila and the Red Incarnation as Lord Yajña. In fact, the white and red incarnations are known simply as Śukla and Rakta respectively.

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Living Simpleminded / Dying Ignorant

The poet's vision is "to see infinity in a grain of sand and eternity in an hour." In much the same way, a person who ponders Lord Kṛṣṇa's words in *Bhagavad-gītā* can see the Transcendence even in the daily affairs of this material world.

Case in point: a recent article reported that each year, 20 million Americans suffer sports injuries. It seems a large percentage of these mishaps occur to people thirty-five and older who refuse to recognize that their bodies are aging. One prominent doctor quipped that these people are suffering from "an acute case of simplemindedness."

Now, the good doctor may well claim that anyone who thinks his fifty-year-old body can cavort around the tennis court the way it did at twenty is simpleminded. But in the *Gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa tells us that the so-called old man is still young—inside—and that anyone who can't appreciate his inner psychology is simpleminded.

In other words, Kṛṣṇa points to an enduring, ever-youthful self within the aging outer body. And He describes that while the outer body is changing from boyhood to youth to old age, the inner self stays the same. (Every day we see mothers recognize full-grown men as the same sons they once burped on their shoulders, even though the sons' bodies have completely changed.)

As Kṛṣṇa goes on to explain, the inner self (the *ātmā*) will live for eternity—but the body has to grow old and diseased and die, and until we become self-realized, we'll go on getting more and more bodies that have to grow old and diseased and die. So why don't our knowledgeable doctors tell us how we can deal with this most critical injury—death? Could the answer be they don't know how to treat it? Actually, both pa-

tients and doctors show an acute case of simplemindedness when they don't see that the body has to grow old and decrepit and die. If they completely forget the inner self and fail to get the self in shape for death and the next life, then there's no word for it but simplemindedness.

In our human life we're supposed to be preparing ourselves. But not so much by exercising our bodies or giving them extra rest. Rather, we have to analyze our situation—discover the difference between the body and the self, find out about Kṛṣṇa's cure for death. Though the rage today is simplemindedness, we have to gain the presence of mind to see ahead, to our death and beyond.

For most of us, the real disease is that we're ignoring the self and the next life. Old age means a bit more than having to cut out baseball and tennis. It means we're going to die. So before we get too far along in years, we have to start a spiritual fitness program. We have to exert ourselves strenuously for self-realization.

* * *

This brings us to another "grain of sand." In the past decade, death has become a fashionable topic. It's no longer taboo, and in fact, people *talk about it* as if they were quite unafraid and thoroughly enlightened about its meaning. They read bestsellers like *Life After Life*, and they flock to courses on death and dying. But what does all this amount to? Has anyone come to understand what *his* death will actually be like? It doesn't seem so. Death dilettantes may record volumes of scientific data about the physiological and mental experiences dying people go through, and they may try to help the patient die "easier," but they can't tell us what death really is.

Yet *Bhagavad-gītā* tells us: death means the soul leaves the body. If that simple explanation isn't enough, we can observe the fact in everyday life. At a funeral someone laments, "My husband is gone!" In other words—and we all know it—the self has left the body. The corpse may be lying in the coffin, but the actual living person has left.

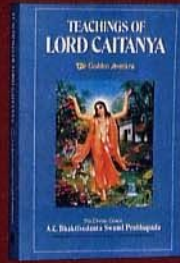
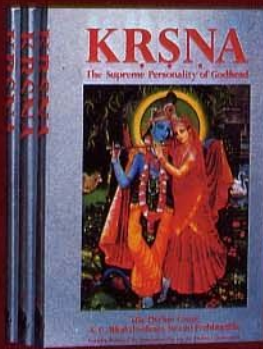
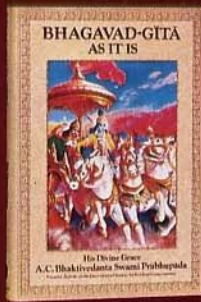
Unfortunately, we soon forget this lesson, perhaps after seeing a psychologist who specializes in "grief therapy." But our so-called experts can't explain death away just by saying, "It happens to everybody," or, "You still have your own life left to live."

What, after all, has happened to the person who left his body? The *Gītā* says, "For the soul there is never birth or death, nor having been, does he ever cease to exist. He is original, unborn, eternal, and undying. He is not slain when the body is slain." After he leaves one body he simply gets another.

What kind of body will we get? That will depend on our mental state when we leave this body. India's Vedic literatures describe 8.4 million different species, from the lowest aquatics and plants up through insects and reptiles and birds and beasts to human beings. After death we may have to take a body in any one of these species. And if we do things that are great wrongs in the eyes of God—say, needlessly killing other living beings or neglecting self-realization—we'll certainly not attain a higher body.

So we can't just ignore the signs of old age and death we daily see around us. And we have to see beyond the facile, faddish investigations. If we want to see things as they really are, we have to look to *Bhagavad-gītā* and get transcendental vision.

—SDG



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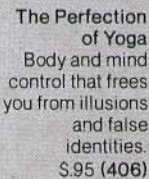
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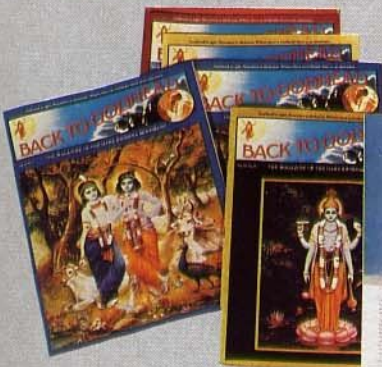


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