

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

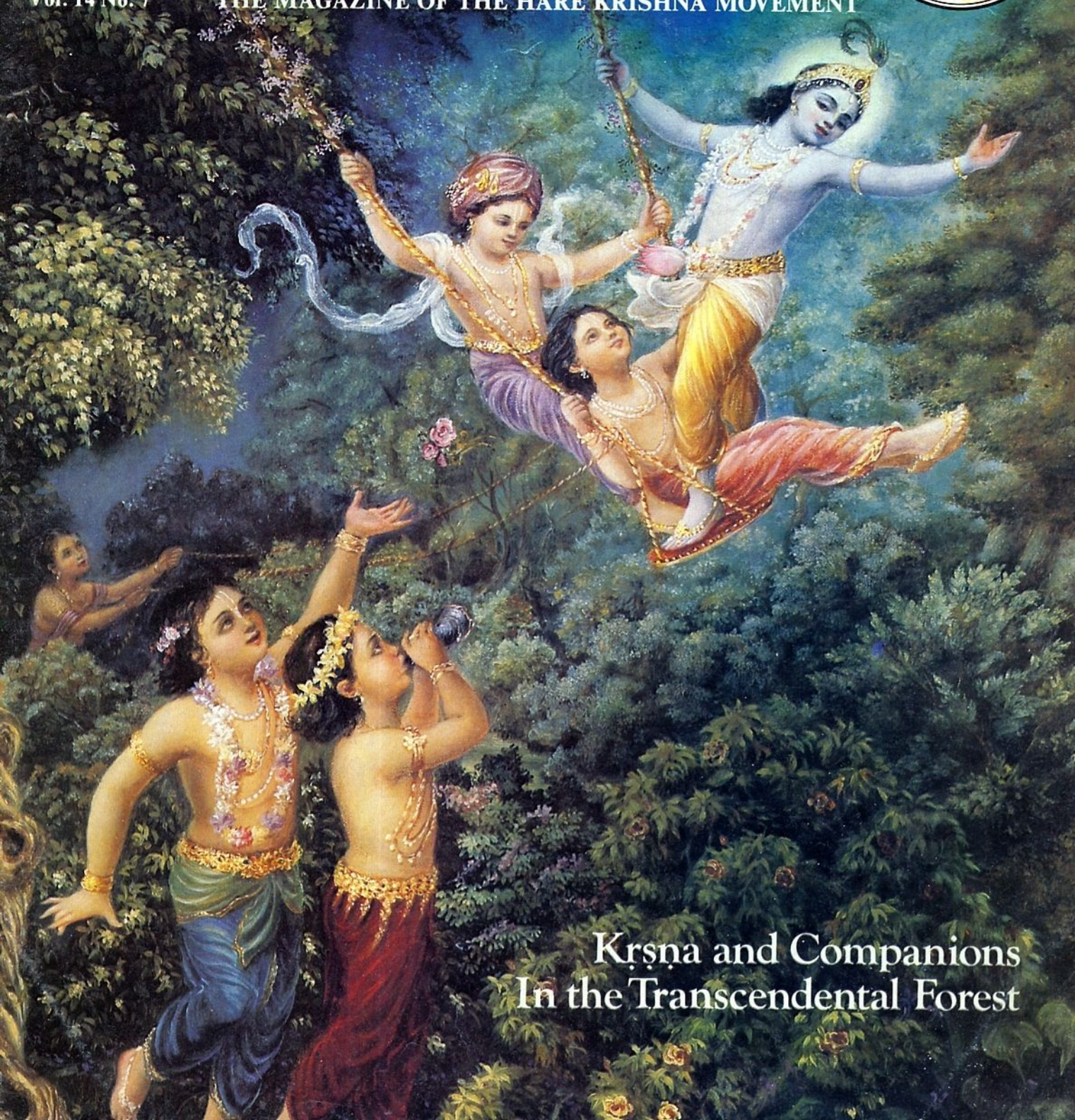


# BACK TO GODHEAD



Vol. 14 No. 7

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



Kṛṣṇa and Companions  
In the Transcendental Forest



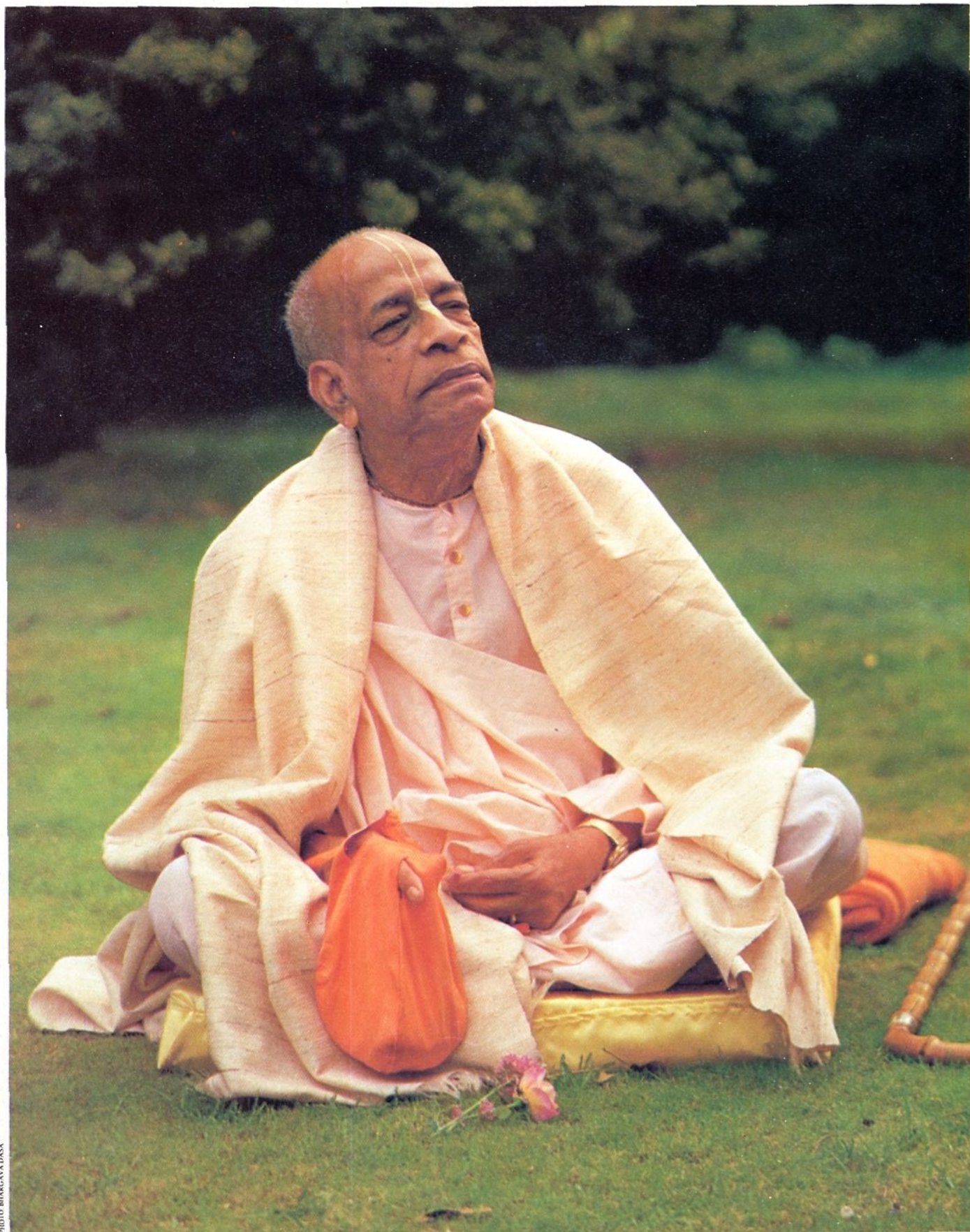


PHOTO: BHARGAVA DASA

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



# BACK TO GODHEAD

VOL. 14, NO. 7

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

FOUNDED 1944

## FOUNDER

(under the direction of His Divine Grace  
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda)  
His Divine Grace  
A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda

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PRONUNCIATION 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 **pique**. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **rim**, and **ṛ**  
like the **ch** in **chair**. Pronounce the aspirated consonants  
(**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** (**dāsi** for women),  
meaning "servant." For instance, the name **Kṛṣṇa dāsa**  
means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

◀ His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami  
Prabhupāda came to America in 1965, at age seventy, to  
fulfill his spiritual master's request that he teach the  
science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout 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 **asṛāmas**,  
schools, temples, and farm communities. He passed  
away in 1977 in India's Vṛndāvana, the place most sacred  
to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and his disciples are carrying forward the  
movement he started.

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**COVER: Lord Kṛṣṇa and Companions in the Transcendental Forest.** Illusioned  
materialists who think the Supreme Personality of Godhead an ordinary person,  
transcendentalists intent upon His impersonal aspect, and even devotees who accept  
Him as their master cannot understand how certain exalted souls—having performed  
volumes of devotional service—are now playing with the Supreme Godhead Himself  
as His cowherd friends. (Cover art: Jagat-kāraṇa-devī dāsi.)

**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."



# A MANIFESTO OF KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, read this statement at a press conference in Los Angeles, during December of 1968.

**T**he International Society for Krishna Consciousness is a movement aiming at the spiritual reorientation of mankind through the simple process of chanting the holy names of God. The human life is meant for ending the miseries of material existence. Our present-day society is trying to end these miseries by material progress. However, it is visible to all that in spite of extensive material progress, human society is not peaceful.

The reason is that the human being is essentially a spirit soul. It is the spirit soul which is the background of the development of the material body. However the materialistic scientist may deny the spiritual existence in the background of the living force, there is no better understanding than accepting this living force as ultimately the spirit soul within the body.

The body is changing—from one form to

another—but the spirit soul is existing eternally, without change. This fact we can experience even in our own life. Since the beginning of our material body in the womb of our mother, our body has been changing from one shape to another, at every second and at every minute. This process is generally known as "growth," but actually it is a *change of body*.

On this earth we see change of day and night and change of season. The more primitive mentality attributes this phenomenon to changes occurring in the sun. For example, in the winter primitive people think the sun is getting weaker, and at night they presume, sometimes, that the sun is dead. With more advanced knowledge we see that the sun is not changing at all in this way. Seasonal and diurnal changes are attributed to the change of the position of the earth.

Similarly, we experience bodily changes: from

PHOTO: BHĀRGAVA DĀSA









embryo to child to youth to maturity to old age and to death. The less intelligent mentality presumes that after death the spirit soul's existence is forever finished, just as primitive tribes believe that the sun dies at sunset. Actually, however, the sun is rising in another part of the world. Similarly, the soul is accepting another type of body. When the body gets old like an old garment and is no longer usable, the soul accepts another body, just as we accept a new suit of clothes. Modern civilization is practically unaware of this truth.

People do not care about the constitutional position of the soul. There are different departments of knowledge in different universities and many technological institutions, all to study and understand the subtle laws of material nature, and there are medical research laboratories to study the physiological condition of the material body, but there is no institution to study the constitutional position of the soul. This is the greatest drawback of materialistic civilization, which is simply an external manifestation of the soul.

People are enamored of the glittering manifestation of the cosmic body or the individual body, but they do not try to understand the basic principle of this glittering situation. The body looks very beautiful, working with full energy and exhibiting great traits of talent and wonderful brain work. But as soon as the soul is away from the body, this entire glittering situation of the body becomes useless. Even the great scientists who have offered many wonderful scientific contributions have been unable to trace out the personal self which is the cause of such wonderful discoveries.

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, therefore, is basically trying to teach this science of the soul, not in any dogmatic way, but through complete scientific and philosophical understanding. In the background of this body you can find the soul, whose presence is perceivable by dint of consciousness. Similarly, in the universal body of the cosmic manifestation, one can perceive the presence of the Supreme Lord, or the Absolute Truth, by virtue of the presence of Supersoul and Super consciousness.

The Absolute Truth is systematically experienced in the *Vedānta-sūtra* (generally known as the Vedānta philosophy), which is elaborately explained by the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, a commentary by the same author. The *Bhagavad-gītā* is the preliminary study of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, for understanding the constitutional position of the Supreme Lord, or the Absolute Truth.

The Absolute Truth is realized in three

phases of understanding, namely as Brahman (the impersonal universal soul), as Paramātmā (the localized universal soul), and at the end as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. An individual soul is understood in three aspects: first as the consciousness pervading the entire body, then as the spirit soul within the heart, and ultimately as a person. Similarly, the Absolute Truth is first realized as impersonal Brahman, then as localized Supersoul (Paramātmā), and at the end as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa.

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Everyone is trying  
to become  
the Supreme Lord,  
either socially,  
politically, or  
individually.  
Therefore there is  
competition  
for this  
false lordship.

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Kṛṣṇa means "all-inclusive." Or in other words, Kṛṣṇa is simultaneously Brahman, Paramātmā, and the Personality of Godhead, just as every one of us is simultaneously consciousness, soul, and person.

The individual person and the Supreme Person are qualitatively one but quantitatively different. Just like the drop of sea water and the vast mass of sea water—both are qualitatively one. The chemical composition of the drop of sea water and that of the mass of sea water are one and the same. But the quantity of salt and other minerals in the whole sea is many, many times greater than the quantity of salt and other minerals contained in the drop of sea water.

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement upholds the individuality of the soul and the Supreme Soul. From the Vedic *Upaniṣads* we can understand that both the Supreme Person, or God, and the individual person are eternal living entities. The difference is that the Supreme Living Entity or Supreme Person maintains all the innumerable other living entities. In the Christian way of understanding, the same principle is admitted, because in the

Bible it is taught that the contingent entities should pray to the Supreme Father so that He may supply means of maintenance and give pardon for their sinful activities.

So it is understood from any source of scriptural injunction that the Supreme Lord, or Kṛṣṇa, is the maintainer of the contingent living entity, and that it is the duty of the contingent entity to feel obliged to the Supreme Lord. This is the whole background of religious principles. Without these acknowledgements there is chaos, as we find in our daily experience at the present moment.

Everyone is trying to become the Supreme Lord, either socially, politically, or individually. Therefore there is competition for this false lordship, and there is chaos all over the world—individually, nationally, socially, collectively. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is trying to establish the supremacy of the Absolute Personality of Godhead. One who has attained a human body and intelligence is meant for this understanding, because this consciousness makes his life successful.

This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is not a new introduction by mental speculators. Actually, this movement was started by Kṛṣṇa Himself. On the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, at least five thousand years ago, the movement was presented by Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. From *Bhagavad-gītā* we can understand that He had spoken this system of consciousness long, long before, when He had imparted it to the sun-god Vivasvān. That calculation goes to show that before Kṛṣṇa spoke the *Bhagavad-gītā* again on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, He had once before explained it—at least forty million years ago.

So this movement is not at all new. It is coming down in disciplic succession and from all the great leaders of India's Vedic civilization, including Śaṅkarācārya, Rāmānujācārya, Madhvācārya, Viṣṇu Svāmī, Nimbārka, and lately, about 480 years ago, Lord Caitanya. The disciplic system is still being followed today. This *Bhagavad-gītā* is also very widely used in all parts of the world by great scholars, philosophers, and religionists. But in most cases the principles are not followed as they are. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement means to present the principles of the *Bhagavad-gītā* as they are—without any misinterpretation.

From the *Bhagavad-gītā* we can understand five main principles, namely God, the living entity, the material and spiritual nature, time, and activities. Out of these five items God, the living entity, nature (material or spiritual), and time are eternal. But activities are not eternal.

(continued on page 33)



# BENEDICTION

## At the University of Maryland

At U. of M.'s recent commencement ceremony, Hare Kṛṣṇa chaplain Alaṅkāra dāsa Brahmācārī spoke these words to a crowd of 15,000.

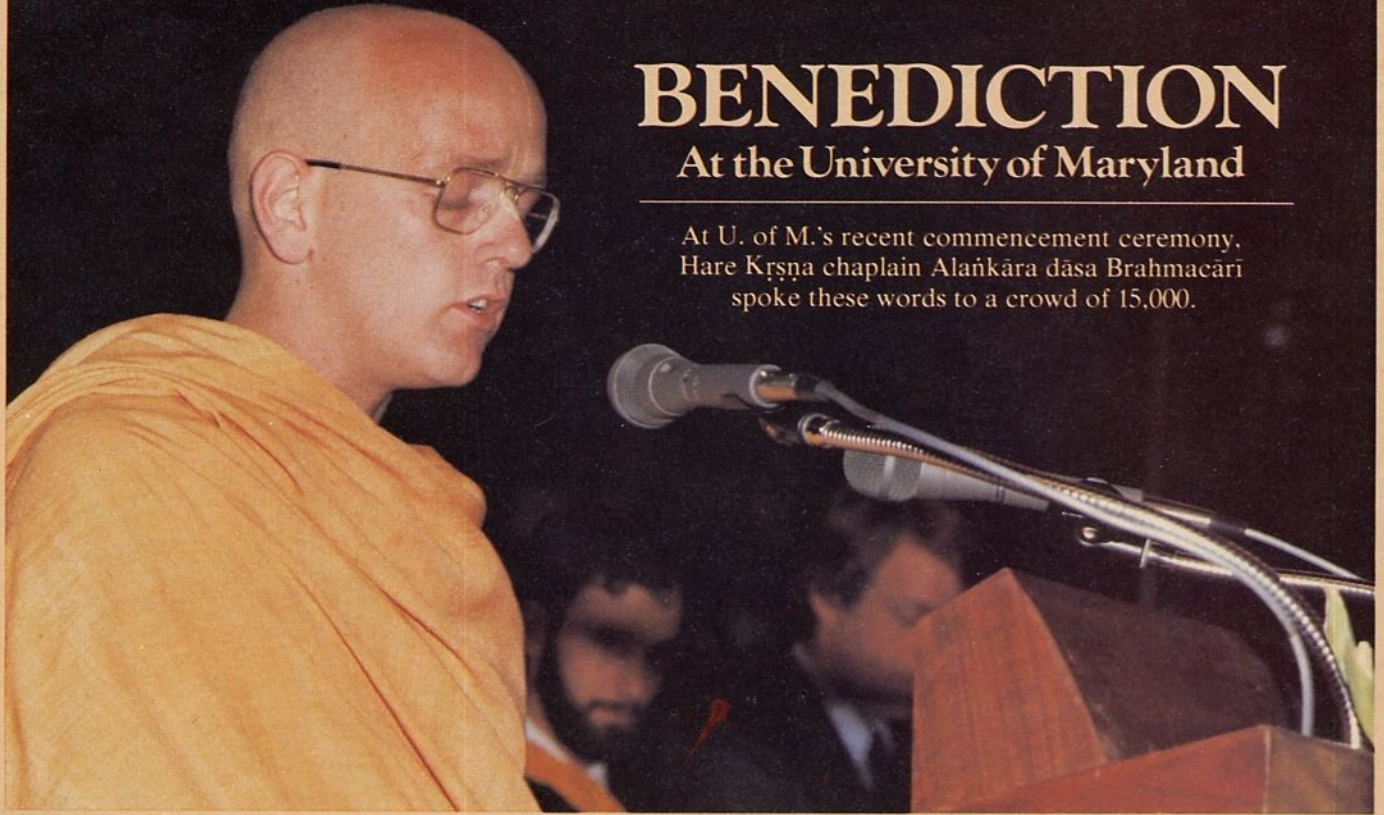


PHOTO: ANANDA DEVADASA

Members of the Board of Regents, President Toll, Chancellor Gluckstern, learned faculty, honored graduates, parents, and friends:

I would like to offer my humble respects to my teacher, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, who has extensively introduced the spiritual heritage of India to the Western academic community over the past decade.

India's philosophy of *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*, which explains the inconceivable oneness and diversity of God's creation, is the unique gift of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the great saint and scholar of medieval India.

We are all in the womb of the Age of Kali, a historical age in which the faults of society and the individual are like a great ocean. Who has not experienced this current phenomenon? To some extent we are all implicated.

Now we have all acquired the necessary knowledge to commence our work in this life, and we hear the wise men of ancient Greece begging, like echoes coming down through the ages, "Know thyself."

We are perplexed as to what is of paramount importance—whether to get on with the work of expanding our fruitive activities, or to endeavor for only as much comfort as we require and address ourselves mainly to that ancient command.

"But we have not had the time until

now" is our reply. "Then when *will* you make the time in this short life?" comes the curt response from within.

In this society of rapidly changing values, mass marketing, media propaganda, ecological disasters, and imminent atomic conflicts, what is that activity which is most pleasing to the soul? How can we receive the *prime* benediction that will make all of our activities successful? Just like the philosopher's touchstone, which can turn any substance to gold, what is that activity which can make all of our endeavors auspicious?

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, says,

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

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

Democritus once called all existence just "atoms and the void." Yet Plato rebutted, "This world came to be, in very truth, through the providence of God—a living being with soul and intelligence." Through the eye of knowledge, Plato could perceive the antimaterial nature,

where the soul thrives in its constitutional relationship with the Supreme Soul. And when one attains this knowledge of the soul, one reaches the apex of evolution. Socrates said that in the world in which we now live there is no equality, but that the *idea* of equality springs from the state of the soul. Presently, of course, we are embarrassed by the inequalities and contradictions of our modern civilization, notably man's inhumanity to man.

In this Age of Kali, we are like the man in the hospital bed who is encumbered by so many tubes, bottles, needles, and bandages. When his friends come and ask him, "How are you doing?" he replies, "Fine, thank you." Unlike such a person, we must recognize the real problems of life—old age, disease, death, and rebirth—and we must actually try to solve them. How well we do this will influence the future of this country and of humanity. In the *Garga Upaniṣad* it is said, *yo vā etad akṣaram gārgy aviditvāsmāl lokāt praiti sa kṛpaṇaḥ*: "He is a miserly man who does not solve the problems of life as a human and who thus quits this world like the cats and dogs, without understanding the science of self-realization."

Therefore, this human form of life is itself the greatest asset and benediction; and to know the self is the real goal of education.

Thank you very much. Hare Kṛṣṇa. 🙏



“THIS OTHER KIND OF FESTIVAL”

# THE CHARIOTS ROLL AGAIN

In all the world, the Festival of the Chariots has had the longest run . . . several thousand years and getting more popular all the time.

by JAGAJIVANA DĀSA



PHOTO ANOCHIA DĀSA

**A moving experience, in many ways.** Festival-goers in Sydney, Australia, (above) and New York City (far right) grab the ropes and pull Lord Kṛṣṇa's chariots farther and farther toward their destination. Kṛṣṇa smiles appreciatively (in His Deity form as Jagannātha, the Lord of the Universe, right) and pulls everyone farther and farther toward inner realization.



PHOTO NITAVARJAN DEVI DĀSA







PHOTO: MICHAEL GOODMAN/ISTOCK

About ten years ago, my work was reporting on the usual kind of festival, the kind that generally comes to mind when you hear the word.

Altamont, the West Coast version of Woodstock, pretty well tells the story. It was amazing how many hundreds of thousands of us came out for that festival, and how desperately we wanted to have a celebration. Yet from the start it was clear we were going to have some big disagreements over what we were celebrating. Up on stage, musicians and festival guards were punching one another out. And the moment the star of the festival got down from his helicopter and started making his way through the crowd to sing "Gimme Shelter," somebody reached out and gave him a fist in the face. We'd come there to celebrate and get ourselves together, and during that last set, one of us got himself knifed to death.

Sure, this was a somewhat special case, and yet it pretty much sums up that whole experience with festivals . . . big pilgrimages to watch somebody on stage act out the collective ego trip. He was a god, and you were a god, and if anybody crossed anybody else, it was a war of the gods.

Then this other kind of festival came into my life, in Golden Gate Park during July of 1970. The one-two-three, one-two-three of the hand cymbals could have been coming from hi-hat or ride cymbals, and the oblong Indian drums had a long-drawn-out mooring sound that might have made ordinary trap drummers feel like throwing their tom-toms away. But mainly, for the first time in my experience, everybody seemed to be appreciating someone else (and not just some stand-in for themselves). The someone else was round-eyed, smiling Jagannātha: Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the Universe. And at last everybody was celebrating together. We had finally found one song we could all sing—and sing and sing, for hours. Blacks, whites, yellows, browns, kids, old folks, profs, cops—family unity at last. Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Rāma. The words stayed with you like no others. We were singing to the Lord of the Universe, an old, very special, long-forgotten friend of the family.

It was an experience that was really moving, in many ways. We grabbed the chariot ropes and pulled Kṛṣṇa, and He pulled us along with Him. Kṛṣṇa's chariot

*JAGAJĪVANA DĀSA came to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in 1970. Before that he was a reviewer for Down Beat magazine.*



**Get-together in Golden Gate Park.** "Blacks, whites, yellows, browns, kids, old folks, profs, cops—family unity at last. Hare Kṛṣṇa. Hare Rāma. The words stayed with you like no others. We were singing to an old, very special, long-forgotten friend of the family."











PHOTO: BHARGAVA DĀSA

Thousands celebrate (above), with elephant rides (right), a vegetarian feast (next right), and music, drama, films, boutiques, art exhibits . . . all in the mood of affection for Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa and His brother Balarāma set the mood five centuries ago, when They appeared in India as Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda (above at right, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa with arms upraised).

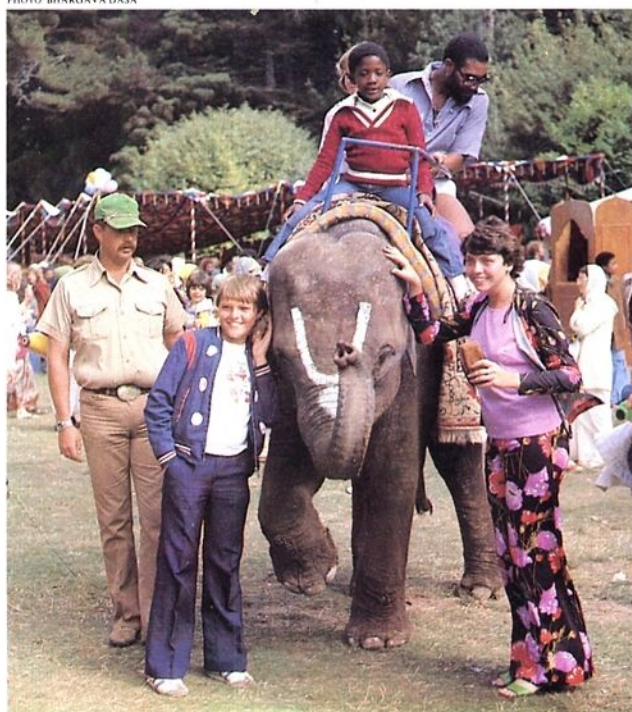


PHOTO: MURALĪVADANA DĀSA

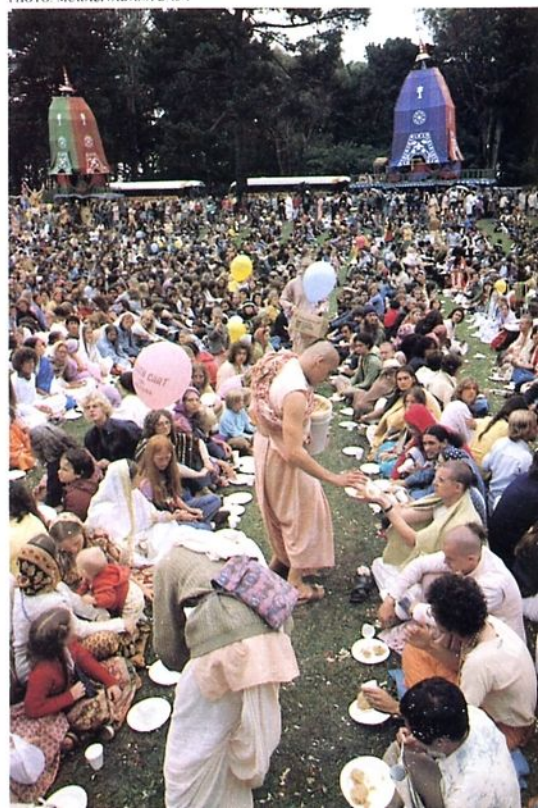
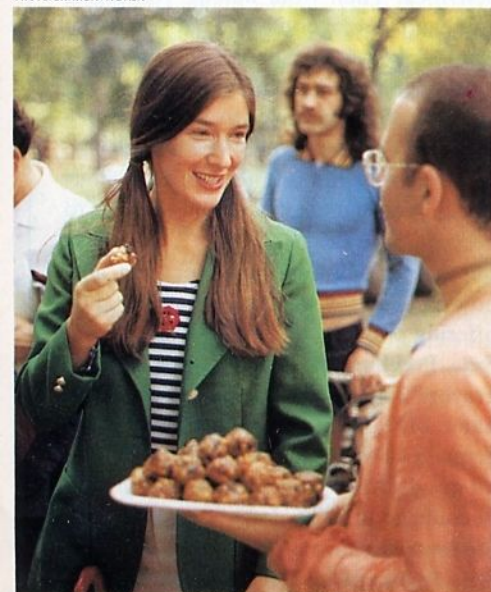






PHOTO: BHĀRGAVA DĀSA

PHOTO: MURALĪVADANA DĀSA



"Anyone who asked about recipes [as for fruit-nut-honey balls, above] would invariably hear, '... and the most important ingredient is that you offer everything to Kṛṣṇa.'"

rolled on and on, and the waves of chanting and feeling rolled in and in, deeper and deeper. Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare. Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Two lines that held all the beauty imaginable. The more you chanted, the more you experienced it. There was actually someone named Kṛṣṇa who somehow, some time ago, we let slip away. But now He was right here in His name, and smiling from His chariot, and everything was clearing and turning pure and lustrous and fresh.

We kept moving along together, pulling Kṛṣṇa's chariot or playing drums or cymbals or clapping, and always chanting. *Hare* . . . knowingly or unknowingly, we were calling on Harā (Kṛṣṇa's eternal consort Rādhā) to help us back to the spiritual forest of Vṛndāvana, where everyone has pure devotion for Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa, the all-attractive one. Hare Kṛṣṇa. We were calling on Harā to help us, here and now, back to our natural affection and devotion for the Supreme Personality of

Godhead, the all-pleasureful one. Hare Rāma.

Then, too, there was the feast, all gratis. And you had to reflect, "When was the last time thousands and thousands of people feasted together?" And what a feast it was. Spicy, tomatoey cauliflower-and-potato curry . . . puffy, buttery wheat patties . . . cold and creamy sweet rice . . . whipped lemon-and-yogurt drink . . . Anyone who asked the devotees about the recipes would invariably hear, "... and the most important ingredient is that you offer everything to Kṛṣṇa."

It seemed a lot of people, including some noted musicians who were there, were taking the idea to heart. Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, playing music and staging dramas for Kṛṣṇa, offering delicious vegetarian dishes to Kṛṣṇa and feasting. The fool-proof formula for an instant festival, anywhere and everywhere. When we make things happen for Kṛṣṇa on that kind of grand scale, then we've really got something to celebrate.



# ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

## Why Our Schools Don't Have a Prayer

*This exchange between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and a divinity student took place in Los Angeles, during January of 1974.*

**Student:** Many people are frightened about the way the schools are falling apart . . . students not even learning how to read and write, many turning to drugs and robbing and raping their teachers.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. What is the value of this kind of schooling?

**Student:** Not an awful lot.

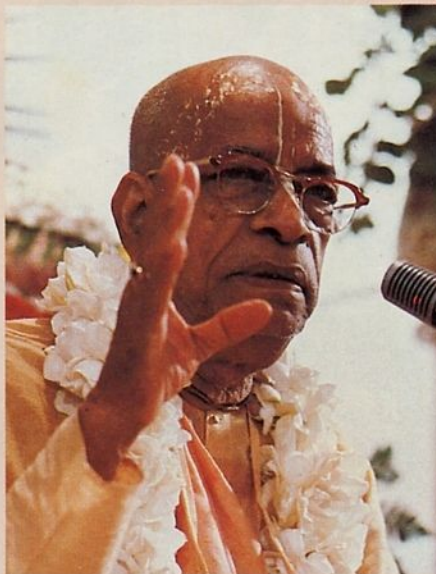
**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** It is all cheating. You have left God out. That is the height of cheating. So naturally the rest of your so-called schooling must also be cheating. Suppose you are doing a mathematical calculation and you start by figuring, "2 + 2 = 3." After that you may use the most sophisticated techniques and formulas, but your whole calculation will be wrong.

**Student:** Now things have gotten to the point that we can't even have prayer in the public schools. We used to have a prayer at the beginning of each school day. But then one atheist lady (and no doubt other people behind the scenes) pushed and pushed until the Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional. Now prayer in the schools is banned.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** But even if prayer were allowed, that would not help. Prayer is still going on in the churches, and what is the benefit? People are losing interest, because it has all become simply a ritualistic show—"Churchianity." The thing is, you have to become educated in the science of God. You must have direct, scientific experience of God. People aren't interested in dry words. They have become scientific-minded; they want results.

**Student:** Well, most people still have a sentimental attachment to God, so most likely they would like to see at least a semblance of prayer in the schools . . .

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** No. Do something practical! "Prayer" means chanting the holy name of the Lord. If you don't know the holy name of the Lord, we are giving it. You'll have no expenditure, and no loss. So why don't you try this? Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. And if you actually chant Hare



Kṛṣṇa, you will get scientific, realized knowledge of God—direct, personal experience of God. Then everything beneficial will follow for society.

**Student:** Yes. But, you see, right now you can't chant Hare Kṛṣṇa in the schools. That law is still there on the books. You can't chant until somebody changes the law.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** So my disciples can do that.

**Student:** They should try to fight the law?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. Just recently I heard that the senators and congressmen have set aside one special day each year for public prayer. Just one day—but they still want prayer. So if they actually *want* prayer, why are they prohibiting it all the rest of the year? Just see the contradiction! They have banned prayer because of their inexperience. And now they are experiencing, "This does not help us." Otherwise, what is the use of introducing prayer again? They have experienced that without prayer things have failed. That is a fact.

**Student:** You were saying earlier that fifty to sixty percent of the senators and congressmen are lawyers . . .

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, and nowadays "lawyer" means cheater. One who can tactfully break the law—he is a good lawyer. They will find some flaw in the letter of the law so that they can avoid the

spirit of the law.

**Student:** Actually, to ban prayer in the schools they had to avoid the whole point of the First Amendment—that "Congress shall make no law prohibiting the free exercise of religion." They said a prayer might trample an atheist's right not to pray.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** So now the children cannot have a prayer in their schools. These government men are mostly lawyers, cheaters. Like Nixon. What is Nixon's situation now?

**Student:** Well, he couldn't get any less popular; so now he's getting more popular. People forget.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** People have become cheaters, and that is why they elect such cheaters as their representatives. You Americans can make all the propaganda you want, but you will not be happy without offering prayer to God.

**Student:** That's right.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** But be scientific. To begin with, follow God's laws and lead a pure life: no illicit sex, no meat-eating, no intoxication, no gambling. If you reinstate prayer in the schools, that is not bad; but unless you first become pure, your prayer will have no practical effect. You yourselves must be free from all these impure activities. Then from among yourselves you can elect a good leader. If you really want a good leader, then you yourselves must become good. And you can become good by offering prayer to God.

**Student:** Forgive me, but this sounds like we're getting into some sort of vicious circle. A moment ago you said we have to become pure or good *first* . . . otherwise our prayer will have no effect. So now how can you say we can become good by offering prayer?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Not just any kind of prayer. "Prayer" means that you chant the name of God. If you simply chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, you will be in touch with God—the all-good. And then naturally you will become good. Why don't you try it?

**Student:** We have little more to lose.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** But if you chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, you will be the gainer. Just chant and see the result.



## AN OPEN LETTER TO A WRITER

# Waking Up From The American Dream

“. . . You have written, 'When in recent memory has it been less a privilege to be young in America?'. . . But when has it been less a privilege to be *anything* in America?'

by HṚDAYĀNANDA DĀSA GOSWAMI

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*Harper's magazine recently published an article called "Childhood's End," in which Scott Spencer, a novelist, argues that the postwar "golden age" of childhood has given way to a new era. Today's child feels unwelcome in a society of economic instability, where parents view their children as financial burdens and as intruders on their present standard of living. Parental ambivalence and abuse are becoming commonplace, even in affluent families. And many public schools have closed on the plea of insufficient funds. These are symptoms, Mr. Spencer points out, of America's new attitude toward her children, and the result is childhood alcoholism, drug addiction, prostitution, illiteracy, criminality, and, most alarmingly, suicide. In the following letter, His Divine Grace Hṛdayānanda dāsa Goswami responds to Mr. Spencer's article.*

Mr. Scott Spencer  
c/o Harper's Magazine Company  
Two Park Avenue  
New York, New York 10016

Dear Mr. Spencer,

I sincerely commend you for your article "Childhood's End," in which you have stated, "History's fair-haired flower children have passed . . . and in their place

comes a changeling generation that may be the most disturbed and demoralized in this century." I admit that being myself a former "fair-haired flower child" from Berkeley, and having spent the last five years doing missionary work in Latin America, I did not comprehend, till now, the sorrowful condition of America's youth. Upon returning to the States, I find a number of excellent thinkers, yourself certainly included, pointing to the "deep steady undertow of the times."

Throughout your discussion you apparently accept a clear distinction between man's higher and lower nature, and call for a return to virtuous, meaningful life. Yet for those bereft of any tangible spiritual understanding, virtuous life is difficult to achieve, harder yet to maintain. We seem to lack a deeper awareness that might sustain us as a nation.

You have written, "When in recent memory has it been less a privilege to be young in America?" Granted. But might we not add, "When has it been less a privilege to be old in America?" Old age has been stripped of its last remnant of grace and wisdom. Again, when has it been less a privilege to be a white male in America, scorned by minorities, jilted by women? Is anything comparable to the constant pain of someone whose wife is

unfaithful? For that matter, when has the status of the American woman been so bizarre as today? She sacrifices her innocence, her beauty, her chastity, and her security in exchange for the lofty reward of driving police cars and garbage trucks, punching computers, and laboring in impersonal factories and offices, precisely the things which have long alienated and depressed sensitive men.

In short, when in recent memory has it been less a privilege to be *anything* in America? Your exposé of the growing crisis of youth is not at all unwelcome, nor does it lack special importance in the midst of many "crises," yet if our main focus shifts from the infection itself to an admittedly painful symptom, the disease may not be cured. You state, "it is false—even wicked—to speak of the family in isolation . . . blame should not be isolated when the whole of society is withdrawing its commitment to children." Yet "society," en masse, is also not the real target. Egalitarian rhetoric aside, we are still a nation of sheep, though we be electronic sheep, retrenching sheep, or whatever. The mass of people cannot initiate or even conceive of the "good society" without the guidance of the strong and the intelligent.

In fact, it is precisely the so-called "guardians" of society, the learned, who



have unleashed a withering two-hundred-year barrage on the people's simple adherence to God's law. A flood of Western "thinkers" have urged us to see ourselves as combinations of molecules pushing and pulling their way to consciousness. Thus, moral and spiritual issues are reduced to molecular interactions. Can we really expect ordinary men and women to withstand the combined onslaught of the biologists, physicists, sociologists, anthropologists, geneticists, psychologists, and so on, backed by the full weight of government support?

After innumerable Western thinkers have taken their best shot at the "myth" of God and religion, it is, rather, remarkable testimony to our piety that the least trace of decency remains. As we cry for virtue, the seraphic scientists, lusting after the Scandinavian "prize of prizes," fall over each other, vying to explain the universe without the nuisance of a "God."

Meanwhile, ostensibly pious gentlemen beg out of the whole issue of life's ultimate meaning with easy slogans like "There are so many ways," "Everyone thinks he's got the answer," "No one can know these things," and so forth. How odd that educated Americans, the great exponents of the scientific method, are so unscientific in spiritual matters. Perhaps we are overawed or overbored by the prospects of extracting enlightenment from conflicting spiritual claims.

The proud, befuddled West might well take assistance in this regard from the Sanskrit Vedic literatures, perhaps the oldest on earth. *Bhagavad-gītā*, the most popular Vedic text, assures us that pure consciousness, different from the mechanical body, can be distilled from our worldly mind, much as pure water is distilled from muddy water. Caught in the nightmare of modern life, we seek a peaceful dream. But the *Gītā* urges that we wake up entirely.

For example, Mr. Spencer, you have described adult consumer madness. However, the desire to exploit the material world extends beyond gross consumption. Identification with material designations like nationality, family, and sex are also subtly rooted in the illusory physical concept of the self. Thus the voracious body and the body-centered mind coalesce in material illusion.

Despite popular versions of Eastern thought, pure consciousness—beyond body and mind—is not impersonal or egoless. As the *Gītā* points out, ego-loss is simply an attempt to negate or eliminate the perplexities of material desire, whereas retention of pure ego entitles us to enjoy personal existence without the pain of illusion. The idea that "I am the greatest;

everything is for my consumption" is surely false ego, but the conviction that "I am an eternal servant of God [Kṛṣṇa]" is pure ego. Thus our ego should not be amputated but cleansed.

In recent centuries, both East and West have also subjected God to a strange type of inverse logic. Based on his tiny experience, man declares, "All forms are limiting; thus God, being unlimited, is formless." Wearied with finite integers, man seeks infinity in zero. This peculiar logic has drained spiritual life of a personal

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## Surrender to an unknown God is a chilling act of faith. Surrender to the partially known is also fraught with dangers. The *Gītā* presents a unique alternative.

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sense of the Supreme. Reassuringly, the *Gītā* describes superior and unrestricted categories of form and personality, beyond material experience. So one need not concoct a formless, impersonal God to transcend the chafing boundaries of material form and ego.

Thus, by recognizing the personal spiritual status of all life forms and simultaneously by recognizing the unlimitable Personality of Godhead, the *Bhagavad-gītā* provides a clue for revamping and reunifying our aching society on firm spiritual ground. If we can comprehend that all bodies—whether of poets or insects, politicians or trees—house individual souls, and that all souls are spiritually identical in their potential knowledge and beatitude as eternal servants of God, then we've accomplished something. Such all-encompassing and realizable spirituality is the foundation upon which noble conduct can be molded. Bromidic appeals for decency for decency's sake, or even for sanity, are already anachronisms.

Perhaps because Christianity and Islam sought so violently to reveal to the "barbarians" the "only way," we tend to fear that all systematic appeals for enlighten-

ment or love of God are blindly sectarian. It is platitudinous to state that we see our own faults in others. Yet we would do well to consider the vast monotheistic wisdom of the Sanskrit *Vedas* of India, especially the corollary Vedic literatures, known as *smṛti* (including *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*), which are especially intended for this fallen age.

Limited programs such as ecology, disarmament, and social harmony are reactions to problems and, thus, defensive. To return to a more enlightened attitude toward children is difficult, since former relationships were based on a now-shattered Christian world view. With our very understanding of our selves and our world in shambles, our actions will continue to drift into the dark seas of irrationality. In our buckling condition, a piecemeal and defensive approach will bring little result. The logic of watering the root of the tree, not the branches and leaves, dictates that we build a free and God-centered society, one utilizing all available information.

Surrender to an unknown God is a chilling act of faith. Surrender to the partially known is also fraught with dangers. The *Gītā* presents a unique alternative. We may learn, through primeval Vedic knowledge, the nature of the Absolute, His sublime transcendental personality, His energies, and His opulences. When our attraction becomes mature, surrender is spontaneous and ecstatic. Surrender to the Supreme does not entail neglect of worldly affairs. The parent, the scholar, the student, the businessman, the administrator can all effectively execute their duties while learning the art of surrendering to God. The result, in all spheres, will be wonderful.

Religious freedom, historically, meant the right to choose a meaningful way to worship God. If we redefine it as the freedom to defy God, then the deplorable condition of the young is only one of the many agonies we will bear in the breast of our nation.

Yours sincerely,  
Hṛdayānanda dāsa Goswami

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*HIS DIVINE GRACE HRDAYĀNANDA DĀSA GOSWAMI is one of the spiritual masters that ISKCON's founder-ācārya Śrīla Prabhupāda selected to initiate new disciples. He came to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in 1969, and in 1972 he received sannyāsa (the renounced order). He has lectured extensively at colleges and universities throughout the United States. Also, he speaks fluent Spanish and Portuguese and played a pioneering role in bringing Kṛṣṇa consciousness to Latin America. Currently he directs ISKCON projects in Brazil.*

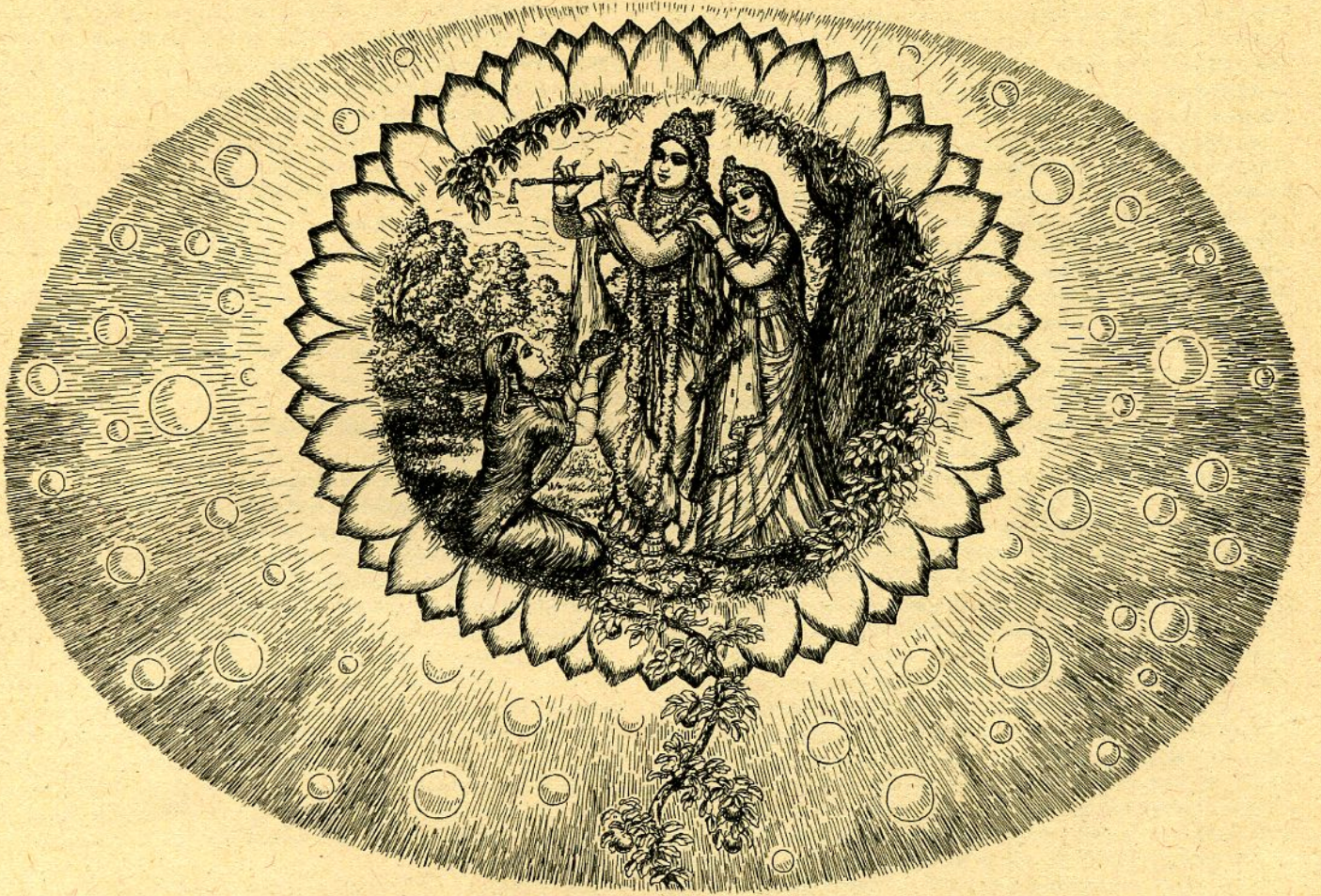


The Beautiful Story of the Personality of Godhead

# ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

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

## Second Canto: "The Cosmic Manifestation"



### CHAPTER TWO The Lord in the Heart

As our serialized presentation of Srimad-Bhagavatam continues, we learn how the yogī who has reached Satyaloka, the highest material planet, can penetrate the coverings of the material universe and reach the eternal kingdom of God.

#### TEXT 27

न यत्र शोको न जरा न मृत्यु-  
नीर्तिर्न चोद्वेग ऋते कुतश्चित् ।  
यच्चित्तोऽदः कृपयानिर्दंविदां  
दुरन्तदुःखप्रभवानुदर्शनात् ॥२७॥

na yatra śoko na jarā na mṛtyur  
nārtir na codvega ṛte kutaścit  
yac cit tato 'dah kṛpayānidān-vidān  
duranta-duḥkha-prabhavānudarśanāt

na—never; yatra—there are; śokaḥ—bereavement; na—nor; jarā—old age; na—nor; mṛtyuḥ—death; na—nor; artih—pains; na—nor; ca—also; udvegaḥ—anxieties; ṛte—save and except; kutaścit—sometimes; yat—because of; cit—consciousness; tataḥ—therefore; adah—compassion; kṛpayā—out of heartfelt sympathy; an-idam-vidām—of those who are ignorant of the process of devotional service; duranta—unsurpassable; duḥkha—misery; prabhava—repeated birth and death; anudarśanāt—by successive experience.

#### TRANSLATION

In that planet of Satyaloka, there is neither bereavement, nor old age nor death. There is no pain of any kind, and therefore



there are no anxieties, save that sometimes, due to consciousness, there is a feeling of compassion for those unaware of the process of devotional service, who are subjected to unsurpassable miseries in the material world.

### PURPORT

Foolish men of materialistic temperament do not take advantage of successive authorized knowledge. The Vedic knowledge is authorized and is acquired not by experiment but by authentic statements of the Vedic literatures explained by bona fide authorities. Simply by becoming an academic scholar one cannot understand the Vedic statements; one has to approach the real authority who has received the Vedic knowledge by disciplic succession, as clearly explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.2). Lord Kṛṣṇa affirmed that the system of knowledge as explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā* was explained to the sun-god, and the knowledge descended by disciplic succession from the sun-god to his son Manu, and from Manu to King Ikṣvāku (the forefather of Lord Rāmacandra), and thus the system of knowledge was explained down the line of great sages, one after another. But in due course of time the authorized succession was broken, and therefore, just to reestablish the true spirit of the knowledge, the Lord again explained the same knowledge to Arjuna, who was a bona fide candidate for understanding due to his being a pure devotee of the Lord. *Bhagavad-gītā*, as it was understood by Arjuna, is also explained (Bg. 10.12-13), but there are many foolish men who do not follow in the footsteps of Arjuna in understanding the spirit of *Bhagavad-gītā*. They create instead their own interpretations, which are as foolish as they themselves, and thereby only help to put a stumbling block on the path of real understanding, misdirecting the innocent followers who are less intelligent, or the *śūdras*. It is said that one should become a *brāhmaṇa* before one can understand the Vedic statements, and this stricture is as important as the stricture that no one shall become a lawyer who has not qualified himself as a graduate. Such a stricture is not an impediment in the path of progress for anyone and everyone, but it is necessary for an unqualified understanding of a particular science. Vedic knowledge is misinterpreted by those who are not qualified *brāhmaṇas*. A qualified *brāhmaṇa* is one who has undergone strict training under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master.

The Vedic wisdom guides us to understanding our relation with the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and to acting accordingly in order to achieve the desired result of returning home, back to Godhead. But materialistic men do not understand this. They want to make a plan to become happy in a place where there is no happiness. For false happiness they try to reach other planets, either by Vedic rituals or by spacecraft, but they should know for certain that any amount of materialistic adjustment for becoming happy in a place which is meant for distress cannot benefit the misguided man because, after all, the whole universe with all its paraphernalia will come to an end after a certain period. Then all plans of materialistic happiness will automatically come to an end. The intelligent person therefore makes a plan to return home, back to Godhead. Such an intelligent person surpasses all the pangs of material existence, like birth, death, disease and old age. He is actually happy because he has no anxieties of material existence, but as a compassionate sympathizer he feels unhappiness for the suffering materialistic men, and thus he occasionally comes before the materialistic men to teach them the necessity of going back to Godhead. All the bona fide *ācāryas* preach this truth of returning home, back to Godhead, and warn men not to make a false plan for happiness in a place where happiness is only a myth.

### TEXT 28

ततो विशेषं प्रतिपद्य निर्भय-  
स्तेनात्मनापोऽनलमूर्तिरत्वरन् ।  
ज्योतिर्मयो वायुमुपेत्य काले  
वाय्वात्मना खं बृहदात्मलिङ्गम् ॥२८॥

tato viśeṣam pratīpadya nirbhayaś  
tenātmānāpo 'nala-mūrtir atvaran  
jyotirmayo vāyumu upetya kāle  
vāyvatmānā kham bṛhad ātma-liṅgam

tataḥ—thereafter; viśeṣam—particularly; pratīpadya—by obtaining; nirbhayaḥ—without any doubt; tena—by that; ātmānā—pure self; āpaḥ—water; anala—fire; mūrtiḥ—forms; atvaran—by surpassing; jyotiḥ-mayaḥ—effulgent; vāyumu—atmosphere; upetya—having reached there; kāle—in due course of time; vāyuvā—air; ātmānā—by the self; kham—ethereal; bṛhat—great; ātma-liṅgam—the real form of the self.

### TRANSLATION

After reaching Satyaloka, the devotee is specifically able to be incorporated fearlessly by the subtle body in an identity similar to that of the gross body, and one after another he gradually attains stages of existence from earthly to watery, fiery, glowing and airy, until he reaches the ethereal stage.

### PURPORT

Anyone who can reach Brahmaloaka, or Satyaloka, by dint of spiritual perfection and practice is qualified to attain three different types of perfection. One who has attained a specific planet by dint of pious activities attains places in terms of his comparative pious activities. One who has attained the place by dint of *virāt* or Hiraṇyagarbha worship is liberated along with the liberation of Brahmā. But one who attains the place by dint of devotional service is specifically mentioned here, in relation to how he can penetrate into the different coverings of the universe and thus ultimately disclose his spiritual identity in the absolute atmosphere of supreme existence.

According to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, all the universes are clustered together up and down, and each and every one of them is separately sevenfold-covered. The watery portion is beyond the sevenfold coverings, and each covering is ten times more expansive than the previous covering. The Personality of Godhead who creates all such universes by His breathing period lies above the cluster of the universes. The water of the Causal Ocean is differently situated than the covering water of the universe. The water that serves as covering for the universe is material, whereas the water of the Causal Ocean is spiritual. As such, the watery covering mentioned herein is considered to be the false egoistic covering of all living entities, and the gradual process of liberation from the material coverings, one after another, as mentioned herein, is the gradual process of being liberated from false egoistic conceptions of the material gross body, and then being absorbed in the identification of the subtle body till the attainment of the pure spiritual body in the absolute realm of the kingdom of God.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī confirms that a part of the material nature, after being initiated by the Lord, is known as the *mahat-tattva*. A fractional portion of the *mahat-tattva* is called the false ego. A portion of the ego is the vibration of sound, and a portion of sound is atmospheric air. A portion of the airy atmosphere is turned into forms, and the forms constitute the power of electricity or heat. Heat produces the smell of the aroma of the earth, and the gross earth is produced by such aroma. And all these combined together constitute the cosmic phenomenon. The extent of the cosmic phenomenon is calculated to be diametrically (both ways) four billion miles. Then the coverings of the universe begin. The first stratum of the covering is calculated to extend eighty million miles, and the subsequent coverings of the universe are respectively of fire, effulgence, air and ether, one after another, each extending ten times further than the previous. The fearless devotee of the Lord penetrates each one of them and ultimately reaches the absolute atmosphere where everything is of one and the same spiritual identity. Then the devotee enters one of the Vaikuṅṭha planets, where he assumes exactly the same form as the Lord and engages in the loving transcendental service of the Lord. That is the



highest perfection of devotional life. Beyond this there is nothing to be desired or achieved by the perfect *yogī*.

## TEXT 29

घ्राणेन गन्धं रसनेन वै रसं  
रूपं तु दृष्ट्या स्वसनं त्वचैव ।  
श्रोत्रेण चोपेत्य नभोगुणत्वं  
प्राणेन चाकृतिमुपैति योगी ॥२९॥

*ghrāṇena gandham rasanena vai rasam  
rūpaṁ ca dr̥ṣṭyā svasanaṁ tvacāiva  
śrotreṇa copetya nabho-guṇatvaṁ  
prāṇena cākṛtiṁ upaiti yogī*

*ghrāṇena*—by smelling; *gandham*—aroma; *rasanena*—by taste; *vai*—exactly; *rasam*—palate; *rūpaṁ*—forms; *ca*—also; *dr̥ṣṭyā*—by vision; *svasanaṁ*—contact; *tvacā*—touch; *eva*—as it were; *śrotreṇa*—by vibration of the ear; *ca*—also; *upetya*—by achieving; *nabho-guṇatvaṁ*—identification of ether; *prāṇena*—by sense organs; *ca*—also; *ākṛtiṁ*—material activities; *upaiti*—attains; *yogī*—the devotee.

## TRANSLATION

The devotee thus surpasses the subtle objects of different senses like aroma by smelling, the palate by tasting, vision by seeing forms, touch by contacting, the vibrations of the ear by ethereal identification, and the sense organs by material activities.

## PURPORT

Beyond the sky there are subtle coverings, resembling the elementary coverings of the universes. The gross coverings are a development of partial ingredients of the subtle causes. So the *yogī* or devotee, along with liquidation of the gross elements, relinquishes the subtle causes like aroma by smelling. The pure spiritual spark, the living entity, thus becomes completely cleansed of all material contamination to become eligible for entrance into the kingdom of God.

## TEXT 30

स भूतसूक्ष्मेन्द्रियसंनिकर्ष  
मनोमयं देवमयं विकार्यम् ।  
संसाद्य गत्या सह तेन याति  
विज्ञानतत्त्वं गुणसंनिरोधम् ॥३०॥

*sa bhūta-sūkṣmendriya-sannikarṣaṁ  
manomayaṁ devamayaṁ vikāryam  
saṁsādyā gatyā saha tena yāti  
vijñāna-tattvaṁ guṇa-sannirodham*

*sah*—he (the devotee); *bhūta*—the gross; *sūkṣma*—and the subtle; *indriya*—senses; *sannikarṣam*—the point of neutralization; *manomayaṁ*—the mental plane; *deva-mayaṁ*—in the mode of goodness; *vikāryam*—egoism; *saṁsādyā*—surpassing; *gatyā*—by the progress; *saha*—along with; *tena*—them; *yāti*—goes; *vijñāna*—perfect knowledge; *tattvam*—truth; *guṇa*—the material modes; *sannirodham*—completely suspended.

## TRANSLATION

The devotee, thus surpassing the gross and the subtle forms of coverings, enters the plane of egoism. And in that status he merges the material modes of nature [ignorance and passion] in this point of neutralization and thus reaches egoism in goodness. After this,

all egoism is merged in the mahat-tattva, and he comes to the point of pure self-realization.

## PURPORT

Pure self-realization, as we have several times discussed, is the pure consciousness of admitting oneself to be the eternal servitor of the Lord. Thus one is reinstated in his original position of transcendental loving service to the Lord, as will be clearly explained in the following verse. This stage of rendering transcendental loving service to the Lord without any hopes of emolument from the Lord, or any other way, can be attained when the material senses are purified and the original pure state of the senses is revived. It is suggested herein that the process of purifying the senses is by the yogic way, namely the gross senses are merged in the mode of ignorance, and the subtle senses are merged in the mode of passion. The mind belongs to the mode of goodness and therefore is called *devamaya*, or godly. Perfect purification of the mind is made possible when one is fixed in the conviction of being the eternal servitor of the Lord. Therefore simple attainment of goodness is also a material mode; one has to surpass this stage of material goodness and reach the point of purified goodness, or *vasudeva-sattva*. This *vasudeva-sattva* helps one to enter into the kingdom of God.

We may also remember in this connection that the process of gradual emancipation by the devotees in the manner mentioned above, although authoritative, is not viable in the present age because of people's being primarily unaware of *yoga* practice. The so-called *yoga* practice by the professional protagonists may be physiologically beneficial, but such small successes cannot help one in the attainment of spiritual emancipation as mentioned herein. Five thousand years ago, when the social status of human society was in perfect Vedic order, the *yoga* process mentioned herein was a common affair for everyone because everyone, and especially the *brāhmaṇa* and *kṣatriya*, was trained in the transcendental art under the care of the spiritual master far away from home, in the status of *brahmacharya*. Modern man, however, is incompetent to understand it perfectly.

Lord Śrī Caitanya, therefore, made it easier for the prospective devotee of the present age in the following specific manner. Ultimately there is no difference in the result. The first and foremost point is that one must understand the prime importance of *bhakti-yoga*. The living beings in different species of life are undergoing different terms of engagement according to their fruitive actions and reactions. But in the execution of different activities, one who secures some resources in *bhakti-yoga* can understand the importance of service to the Lord through the causeless mercy of the Lord, as well as that of the spiritual master. A sincere soul is helped by the Lord through meeting a bona fide spiritual master, the representative of the Lord. By the instruction of such a spiritual master, one gets the seed of *bhakti-yoga*. Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu recommends that the devotee sow the seed of *bhakti-yoga* in his heart and nurture it by the watering of hearing and chanting the holy name, fame, etc., of the Lord. The simple process of offenselessly chanting and hearing the holy name of the Lord will gradually promote one very soon to the stage of emancipation. There are three stages in chanting the holy name of the Lord. The first stage is the offensive chanting of the holy name, and the second is the reflective stage of chanting the holy name. The third stage is the offenseless chanting of the holy name of the Lord. In the second stage only, the stage of reflection, between the offensive and offenseless stages, one automatically attains the stage of emancipation. And in the offenseless stage, one actually enters into the kingdom of God, although physically he may apparently be within the material world. To attain the offenseless stage, one must be on guard in the following manner.

When we speak of hearing and chanting, it means that not only should one chant and hear of the holy name of the Lord as Rāma, Kṛṣṇa (or systematically the sixteen names Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare), but one should also read and hear the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in the association of devotees. The primary practice of *bhakti-yoga* will



cause the seed already sowed in heart to sprout, and by a regular watering process, as mentioned above, the *bhakti-yoga* creeper will begin to grow. By systematic nurturing, the creeper will grow to such an extent that it will penetrate the coverings of the universe, as we have heard in the previous verses, reach the effulgent sky, the *brahmajyoti*, and go farther and farther and reach the spiritual sky, where there are innumerable spiritual planets called *Vaikuṅṭhalokas*. Above all of them is *Kṛṣṇaloka*, or *Goloka Vṛndāvana*, wherein the growing creeper enters and takes repose at the lotus feet of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the original Personality of Godhead. When one reaches the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa at *Goloka Vṛndāvana*, the watering process of hearing and reading, as also chanting of the holy name in the pure devotional stage, fructifies, and the fruits grown there in the form of love of God are tangibly tasted by the devotee, even though he is here in this material world. The ripe fruits of love of God are relished only by the devotees constantly engaged in the watering process as described above. But the working devotee must always be mindful so that the creeper which has so grown will not be cut off. Therefore he should be mindful of the following considerations:

1) Offense by one at the feet of a pure devotee may be likened to the mad elephant who devastates a very good garden if it enters.

2) One must be very careful to guard himself against such offenses at the feet of pure devotees, just as one protects a creeper by all-around fencing.

3) It so happens that by the watering process some weeds are also grown, and unless such weeds are uprooted, the nurturing of the main creeper, or the creeper of *bhakti-yoga*, may be hampered.

4) Actually these weeds are material enjoyment, merging of the self in the Absolute without separate individuality, and many other desires in the field of religion, economic development, sense enjoyment and emancipation.

5) There are many other weeds, like disobedience to the tenets of the revered scriptures, unnecessary engagements, killing animals, and hankering after material gain, prestige and adoration.

6) If sufficient care is not taken, then the watering process may only help to breed the weeds, stunting the healthy growth of the main creeper and resulting in no fructification of the ultimate requirement: love of God.

7) The devotee must therefore be very careful to uproot the different weeds in the very beginning. Only then will the healthy growth of the main creeper not be stunted.

8) And by so doing, the devotee is able to relish the fruit of love of God and thus live practically with Lord Kṛṣṇa, even in this life, and be able to see the Lord in every step.

The highest perfection of life is to enjoy life constantly in the association of the Lord, and one who can relish this does not aspire after any temporary enjoyment of the material world via other media.

### TEXT 31

तेनात्मनात्मानमुपैति शान्त-  
मानन्दमानन्दमयोऽवसाने ।  
एतां गतिं भागवतीं गतो यः  
स वै पुनर्नेह विषज्जतेऽङ्ग ॥३१॥

tenātmānātmānam upaiti śāntam  
ānandam ānandamayo 'vasāne  
etaṁ gatim bhāgavatīm gato yaḥ  
sa vai punar neha viṣajjate 'ṅga

*tena*—by that purified; *ātmanā*—by the self; *ātmānam*—the Supersoul; *upaiti*—attains; *śāntam*—rest; *ānandam*—satisfaction; *ānandamayāḥ*—naturally so being; *avasāne*—being freed from all material contamination; *etaṁ*—such; *gatim*—destination; *bhāgavatīm*—devotional; *gataḥ*—attained by; *yaḥ*—the person; *saḥ*—he; *vai*—certainly;

*punaḥ*—again; *na*—never; *iha*—in this material world; *viṣajjate*—becomes attracted; *aṅga*—O Mahārāja Parikṣit.

### TRANSLATION

Only the purified soul can attain the perfection of associating with the Personality of Godhead in complete bliss and satisfaction in his constitutional state. Whoever is able to renovate such devotional perfection is never again attracted by this material world, and he never returns.

### PURPORT

We should specially note in this verse the description of *gatim bhāgavatīm*. To become merged in the rays of the Parabrahman, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as desired by the *brahmavādī* impersonalist, is not *bhāgavatīm* perfection. The *bhāgavatas* never accept merging in the impersonal rays of the Lord, but always aspire after personal association with the Supreme Lord in one of the *Vaikuṅṭha* spiritual planets in the spiritual sky. The whole of the spiritual sky, of which the total number of the material skies is only an insignificant part, is full of unlimited numbers of *Vaikuṅṭha* planets. The destination of the devotee (the *bhāgavata*) is to enter into one of the *Vaikuṅṭha* planets, in each of which the Personality of Godhead, in His unlimited personal expansions, enjoys Himself in the association of unlimited numbers of pure devotee associates. The conditioned souls in the material world, after gaining emancipation by devotional service, are promoted to these planets. But the number of ever-liberated souls is far, far greater than the number of conditioned souls in the material world, and the ever-liberated souls in the *Vaikuṅṭha* planets never care to visit this miserable material world.

The impersonalists, who aspire to merge in the impersonal *brahmajyoti* effulgence of the Supreme Lord but have no conception of loving devotional service to Him in His personal form in the spiritual manifestation, may be compared to certain species of fish, who, being born in the rivers and rivulets, migrate to the great ocean. They cannot stay in the ocean indefinitely, for their urge for sense gratification brings them back to the rivers and streams to spawn. Similarly, when the materialist becomes frustrated in his attempts to enjoy himself in the limited material world, he may seek impersonal liberation by merging either with the Causal Ocean or with the impersonal *brahmajyoti* effulgence. However, as neither the Causal Ocean nor the impersonal *brahmajyoti* effulgence affords any superior substitute for association and engagement of the senses, the impersonalist will fall again into the limited material world to become entangled once more in the wheel of births and deaths, drawn on by the inextinguishable desire for sensual engagement. But any devotee who enters the kingdom of God by transcendental engagement of his senses in devotional service, and who associates with the liberated souls and the Personality of Godhead there, will never be attracted to the limited surroundings of the material world.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.15) also the same is confirmed, as the Lord says, "The great *mahātmās*, or the *bhakti-yogīs*, after attaining My association, never come back to this material world, which is full of miseries and is nonpermanent." The highest perfection of life, therefore, is to attain His association, and nothing else. The *bhakti-yogī*, being completely engaged in the Lord's service, has no attraction for any other process of liberation like *jñāna* or *yoga*. A pure devotee is a one hundred percent devotee of the Lord and nothing more.

We should further note in this verse the two words *śāntam* and *ānandam*, which denote that devotional service of the Lord can really bestow upon the devotee two important benedictions, namely peace and satisfaction. The impersonalist is desirous of becoming one with the Supreme, or in other words, he wants to become the Supreme. This is a myth only. The mystic *yogīs* become encumbered by various mystic powers and so have neither peace nor satisfaction. So neither the impersonalists nor the *yogī* can have real peace and satisfaction, but the devotee can become fully peaceful and satisfied because of his association with the complete whole. Therefore, merging in the Absolute or attaining



some mystic powers has no attraction for the devotee.

Attainment of love of Godhead means complete freedom from all other attractions. The conditioned soul has many aspirations such as becoming a religious man, a rich man, or a first-class enjoyer or becoming God himself, or becoming powerful like the mystics and acting wonderfully by getting anything or doing anything, but all these aspirations should be rejected by the prospective devotee who actually wants to revive his dormant love of God. The impure devotee aspires after all of the above-mentioned material things by perfection of devotion. But a pure devotee has none of the tinges of the above contaminations, which are the influence of material desires, impersonal speculations and attainment of mystic powers. One can attain the stage of love of God by pure devotional service, or by "a learned labor of love," for the sake of the devotee's lovable object, the Personality of Godhead.

To be more clear, if one wants to attain the stage of love of Godhead, he must give up all desires for material enjoyment, he should refrain from worshiping any of the demigods, and he should devote himself only to the worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He must give up the foolish idea of becoming one with the Lord and the desire to have some wonderful powers just to get the ephemeral adoration of the world. The pure devotee is only favorably engaged in the service of the Lord, without any hope of emolument. This will bring about love of Godhead, or the stage of *śāntam* and *ānandam*, as stated in this verse.

#### TEXT 32

एते सृती ते नृप वेदगीते  
त्वयाभिपृष्टे च सनातने च ।  
ये वै पुरा ब्रह्मण आह तुष्ट  
आराधितो भगवान् वासुदेवः ॥३२॥

*ete sṛtī te nṛpa veda-gīte  
tvayābhipṛṣṭe ca sanātane ca  
ye vai purā brahmaṇa āha tuṣṭa  
ārādhitō bhagavān vāsudevaḥ*

*ete*—all that is described; *sṛtī*—way; *te*—unto you; *nṛpa*—O Mahārāja Parikṣit; *veda-gīte*—according to the version of the *Vedas*; *tvayā*—by Your Majesty; *abhipṛṣṭe*—being properly inquired; *ca*—also; *sanātane*—in the matter of eternal truth; *ca*—verily; *ye*—which; *vai*—certainly; *purā*—before; *brahmaṇe*—unto Lord Brahmā; *āha*—said; *tuṣṭaḥ*—being satisfied; *ārādhitāḥ*—being worshiped; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *vāsudevaḥ*—Lord Kṛṣṇa.

#### TRANSLATION

Your Majesty Mahārāja Parikṣit, know that all that I have described in reply to your proper inquiry is just according to the version of the *Vedas*, and it is eternal truth. This was described personally by Lord Kṛṣṇa unto Brahmā, with whom the Lord was satisfied upon being properly worshiped.

#### PURPORT

The two different ways of reaching the spiritual sky and thereby getting emancipation from all material bondage, namely either the direct process of reaching the kingdom of God or the gradual process through the other higher planets of the universe, are set forth exactly according to the version of the *Vedas*. The Vedic versions in this connection are, *yadā sarve pramucyante kāmā ye 'sya hr̥dī śrītāḥ/ atha martyo 'mrto bhavaty atra brahma samaśnute* (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 4.4.7) and *te 'rcir abhisambhavanti* (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 6.2.15): "Those who are free from all material desires, which are diseases of the heart, are able to conquer death and enter the kingdom of God through the Arci planets." These Vedic versions corroborate the version of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and the latter is further confirmed by Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who affirms that the truth was disclosed by the Supreme Personality of

Godhead Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Vāsudeva, to Brahmā, the first authority on the *Vedas*. The disciplic succession holds that the *Vedas* were uttered by Lord Kṛṣṇa to Brahmā, by Brahmā to Nārada, and by Nārada to Vyāsadeva, and then by Vyāsadeva to Śukadeva Gosvāmī and so on. So there is no difference between the versions of all the authorities. The truth is eternal, and as such there cannot be any new opinion about the truth. That is the way of knowing the knowledge contained in the *Vedas*. It is not a thing to be understood by one's erudite scholarship or by the fashionable interpretations of mundane scholars. There is nothing to be added and nothing to be subtracted, because the truth is the truth. One has to accept, after all, *some* authority. The modern scientists are also authorities for the common man for some scientific truths. The common man follows the version of the scientist. This means that the common man follows the authority. The Vedic knowledge is also received in that way. The common man cannot argue about what is beyond the sky or beyond the universe; he must accept the versions of the *Vedas* as they are understood by the authorized disciplic succession. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* also the same process of understanding the *Gītā* is stated in the Fourth Chapter. If one does not follow the authoritative version of the *ācāryas*, he will vainly search after the truth mentioned in the *Vedas*.

#### TEXT 33

न ह्यतोऽन्यः शिवः पन्था विशतः संसृताविह ।  
वासुदेवे भगवति भक्तियोगो यतो भवेत् ॥३३॥

*na hy ato 'nyah śivaḥ panthā  
viśataḥ saṁsṛtāv iha  
vāsudeve bhagavati  
bhakti-yogo yato bhavet*

*na*—never; *hi*—certainly; *ataḥ*—beyond this; *anyah*—any other; *śivaḥ*—auspicious; *panthāḥ*—means; *viśataḥ*—wandering; *saṁsṛtau*—in the material world; *iha*—in this life; *vāsudeve*—unto Lord Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa; *bhagavati*—the Personality of Godhead; *bhakti-yogaḥ*—direct devotional service; *yataḥ*—wherein; *bhavet*—may result in.

#### TRANSLATION

For those who are wandering in the material universe, there is no more auspicious means of deliverance than what is aimed at in the direct devotional service of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

#### PURPORT

As will be clarified in the next verse, devotional service, or direct *bhakti-yoga*, is the only absolute and auspicious means of deliverance from the grip of material existence. There are many indirect methods for deliverance from the clutches of material existence, but none of them is as easy and auspicious as *bhakti-yoga*. The means of *jñāna* and *yoga* and other allied disciplines are not independent in delivering a performer. Such activities help one to reach the stage of *bhakti-yoga* after many, many years. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (12.5) it is said that those who are attached to the impersonal feature of the Absolute are liable to many troubles in the pursuit of their desired goal, and the empiricist philosophers, searching after the Absolute Truth, realize the importance of Vāsudeva realization as all in all after many, many births (Bg. 7.19). As far as *yoga* systems are concerned, it is also said in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.47) that amongst the mystics who pursue the Absolute Truth, the one who is always engaged in the service of the Lord is the greatest of all. And the last instruction in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.66) advises fully surrendering unto the Lord, leaving aside all other engagements or different processes for self-realization and liberation from material bondage. And the purport of all Vedic literatures is to induce one to accept the transcendental loving service of the Lord by all means.

As already explained in the texts of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (First Canto), either direct *bhakti-yoga* or the means which ultimately culminate in *bhakti-yoga*, without any tinge of fruitive activity, constitutes the



highest form of religion. Everything else is simply a waste of time for the performer.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī and all other *ācāryas*, like Jīva Gosvāmī, agree that *bhakti-yoga* is not only easy, simple, natural and free from trouble, but is the only source of happiness for the human being.

#### TEXT 34

भगवान् ब्रह्म कर्त्स्न्येन त्रिरन्वीक्ष्य मनीषया ।  
तदध्यवस्यत् कूटस्थो रतिरात्मन् यतो भवेत् ॥३४॥

*bhagavān brahma kārtsnyena  
trir anvīkṣya manīṣayā  
tad adhyavasyat kūṭa-sṭho  
ratir ātman yato bhavet*

*bhagavān*—the great personality Brahmā; *brahma*—the Vedas; *kārtsnyena*—by summarization; *trih*—three times; *anvīkṣya*—scrutinizingly examined; *manīṣayā*—with scholarly attention; *tat*—that; *adhyavasyat*—ascertained it; *kūṭa-sṭhaḥ*—with concentration of the mind; *ratih*—attraction; *ātman (ātmani)*—unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *yataḥ*—by which; *bhavet*—it so happens.

#### TRANSLATION

The great personality Brahmā, with great attention and concentration of the mind, studied the Vedas three times, and after scrutinizingly examining them, he ascertained that attraction for the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the highest perfection of religion.

#### PURPORT

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī is referring to the highest Vedic authority, Lord Brahmā, who is the qualitative incarnation of Godhead. The Vedas were taught to Brahmāji in the beginning of the material creation. Although Brahmāji was to hear Vedic instructions directly from the Personality of Godhead, in order to satisfy the inquisitiveness of all prospective students of the Vedas, Brahmāji, just like a scholar, studied the Vedas three times, as generally done by all scholars. He studied with great attention, concentrating on the purpose of the Vedas, and after scrutinizingly examining the whole process, he ascertained that becoming a pure, unalloyed devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the topmost perfection of all religious principles. And this is the last instruction of the *Bhagavad-gītā* directly presented by the Personality of Godhead. The Vedic conclusion is thus accepted by all *ācāryas*, and those who are against this conclusion are only *veda-vāda-ratas*, as explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.42).

#### TEXT 35

भगवान् सर्वभूतेषु लक्षितः स्वात्मना हरिः ।  
दृश्यैर्बुद्ध्यादिभिर्द्रष्टा लक्षणैरनुमापकैः ॥३५॥

*bhagavān sarva-bhūteṣu  
lakṣitaḥ svātmanā hariḥ  
dṛśyair buddhy-ādibhir draṣṭā  
lakṣaṇair anumāpakaiḥ*

*bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *sarva*—all; *bhūteṣu*—in the living entities; *lakṣitaḥ*—is visible; *sva-ātmanā*—along with the self; *hariḥ*—the Lord; *dṛśyair*—by what is seen; *buddhi-ādibhiḥ*—by intelligence; *draṣṭā*—one who sees; *lakṣaṇair*—by different signs; *anumāpakaiḥ*—by hypothesis.

#### TRANSLATION

The Personality of Godhead Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is in every living being along with the individual soul. And this fact is perceived and hypothesized in our acts of seeing and taking help from the intelligence.

#### PURPORT

The general argument of the common man is that since the Lord is not visible to our eyes, how can one either surrender unto Him or render transcendental loving service unto Him? To such a common man, here is a practical suggestion given by Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī as to how one can perceive the Supreme Lord by reason and perception. Actually the Lord is not perceivable by our present materialized senses, but when one is convinced of the presence of the Lord by a practical service attitude, there is a revelation by the Lord's mercy, and such a pure devotee of the Lord can perceive the Lord's presence always and everywhere. He can perceive that intelligence is the form-direction of the Paramātmā plenary portion of the Personality of Godhead. The presence of Paramātmā in everyone's company is not very difficult to realize, even for the common man. The procedure is as follows. One can perceive one's self-identification and feel positively that he exists. He may not feel it very abruptly, but by using a little intelligence, he can feel that he is not the body. He can feel that the hand, the leg, the head, the hair and the limbs are all his bodily parts and parcels, but as such the hand, the leg, the head, etc., cannot be identified with his self. Therefore just by using intelligence he can distinguish and separate his self from other things that he sees. So the natural conclusion is that the living being, either man or beast, is the seer, and he sees besides himself all other things. So there is a difference between the seer and the seen. Now, by a little use of intelligence we can also readily agree that the living being who sees the things beyond himself by ordinary vision has no power to see or to move independently. All our ordinary actions and perceptions depend on various forms of energy supplied to us by nature in various combinations. Our senses of perception and of action, that is to say, our five perceptive senses of (1) hearing, (2) touch, (3) sight, (4) taste and (5) smell, as well as our five senses of action, namely (1) hands, (2) legs, (3) speech, (4) evacuation organs and (5) reproductive organs, and also our three subtle senses, namely (1) mind, (2) intelligence and (3) ego (thirteen senses in all), are supplied to us by various arrangements of gross or subtle forms of natural energy. And it is equally evident that our objects of perception are nothing but the products of the inexhaustible permutations and combinations of the forms taken by natural energy. As this conclusively proves that the ordinary living being has no independent power of perception or of motion, and as we undoubtedly feel our existence being conditioned by nature's energy, we conclude that he who sees is spirit, and that the senses as well as the objects of perception are material. The spiritual quality of the seer is manifest in our dissatisfaction with the limited state of materially conditioned existence. That is the difference between spirit and matter. There are some less intelligent arguments that matter develops the power of seeing and moving as a certain organic development, but such an argument cannot be accepted because there is no experimental evidence that matter has anywhere produced a living entity. Trust no future, however pleasant. Idle talks regarding future development of matter into spirit are actually foolish because no matter has ever developed the power of seeing or moving in any part of the world. Therefore it is definite that matter and spirit are two different identities, and this conclusion is arrived at by the use of intelligence. Now we come to the point that the things which are seen by a little use of intelligence cannot be animate unless we accept someone as the user of or director of the intelligence. Intelligence gives one direction like some higher authority, and the living being cannot see or move or eat or do anything without the use of intelligence. When one fails to take advantage of intelligence he becomes a deranged man, and so a living being is dependent on intelligence or the direction of a superior being. Such intelligence is all-pervading. Every living being has his intelligence, and this intelligence, being the direction of some higher authority, is just like a father giving direction to his son. The higher authority, who is present and residing within every individual living being, is the Superself.

At this point in our investigation, we may consider the following question: on the one hand we realize that all our perceptions and activities are conditioned by arrangements of material nature, yet we also ordinarily feel and say, "I am perceiving" or "I am doing." Therefore we can say



that our material senses of perception and action are moving because we are identifying the self with the material body, and that the superior principle of Superself is guiding and supplying us according to our desire. By taking advantage of the guidance of Superself in the form of intelligence, we can either continue to study and to put into practice our conclusion that "I am not this body," or we can choose to remain in the false material identification, fancying ourselves to be the possessors and doers. Our freedom consists in orienting our desire either toward the ignorant, material misconception or the true, spiritual conception. We can easily attain to the true, spiritual conception by recognizing the Superself (Paramātmā) to be our friend and guide and by dovetailing our intelligence with the superior intelligence of Paramātmā. The Superself and the individual self are both spirit, and therefore the Superself and the individual self are both qualitatively one and distinct from matter. But the Superself and the individual self cannot be on an equal level because the Superself gives direction or supplies intelligence and the individual self follows the direction, and thus actions are performed properly. The individual is completely dependent on the direction of the Superself because in every step the individual self follows the direction of the Superself in the matter of seeing, hearing, thinking, feeling, willing, etc.

So far as common sense is concerned, we come to the conclusion that there are three identities, namely matter, spirit and Superspirit. Now if we go to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, or the Vedic intelligence, we can further understand that all three identities, namely matter, individual spirit, and the Superspirit, are all dependent on the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Superself is a partial representation or plenary portion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The *Bhagavad-gītā* affirms that the Supreme Personality of Godhead dominates all over the material world by His partial representation only. God is great, and He cannot be simply an order supplier of the individual selves; therefore the Superself cannot be a full representation of the Supreme Self, Puruṣottama, the Absolute Personality of Godhead. Realization of the Superself by the individual self is the beginning of self-realization, and by the progress of such self-realization one is able to realize the Supreme Personality of Godhead by intelligence, by the help of authorized scriptures, and, principally, by the grace of the Lord. The *Bhagavad-gītā* is the preliminary conception of the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the further explanation of the science of Godhead. So if we stick to our determination and pray for the mercy of the director of intelligence sitting within the same bodily tree, like a bird sitting with another bird (as explained in the *Upaniṣads*), certainly the purport of the revealed information in the *Vedas* becomes clear to our vision, and there is no difficulty in realizing the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva. The intelligent man therefore, after many births of such use of intelligence, surrenders himself at the lotus feet of Vāsudeva, as confirmed by the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.19).

## TEXT 36

तस्मात् सर्वात्मना राजन् हरिः सर्वत्र सर्वदा ।  
श्रोतव्यः कीर्तितव्यश्च सर्वतन्वो भगवान्मृणाम् ॥३६॥

*tasmāt sarvātmanā rājan  
hariḥ sarvatra sarvadā  
śrotavyaḥ kīrtitavyaś ca  
smartavyo bhagavān ṛṇām*

*tasmāt*—therefore; *sarva*—all; *ātmanā*—soul; *rājan*—O King; *hariḥ*—the Lord; *sarvatra*—everywhere; *sarvadā*—always; *śrotavyaḥ*—must be heard; *kīrtitavyaḥ*—glorified; *ca*—also; *smartavyaḥ*—be remembered; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *ṛṇām*—by the human being.

## TRANSLATION

O King, it is therefore essential that every human being hear about, glorify and remember the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, always and everywhere.

## PURPORT

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmi begins this verse with the word *tasmāt*, or "therefore," because in the previous verse he has already explained that there is no auspicious means for salvation other than the sublime process of *bhakti-yoga*. The *bhakti-yoga* process is practiced by the devotees in different methods like hearing, chanting, remembering, serving the lotus feet of the Lord, worshiping, praying, rendering service in love, becoming friendly, and offering all that one may possess. All nine methods are bona fide methods, and either all of them, some of them or even one of them can bring about the desired result for the sincere devotee. But out of all the nine different methods, the first one, namely hearing, is the most important function in the process of *bhakti-yoga*. Without hearing sufficiently and properly, no one can make any progress by any of the methods of practice. And for hearing only, all the Vedic literatures are there, compiled by authorized persons like Vyāsadeva, who is the powerful incarnation of Godhead. And since it has been ascertained that the Lord is the Supersoul of everything, He should therefore be heard and glorified everywhere and always. That is the special duty of the human being. When the human being gives up the process of hearing about the all-pervading Personality of Godhead, he becomes victim to hearing rubbish transmitted by man-made machines. Machinery is not bad because through the machine one can take advantage of hearing about the Lord, but because machinery is used for ulterior purposes, it is creating rapid degradation in the standard of human civilization. It is said here that it is incumbent upon the human beings to hear because the scriptures like *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are made for that purpose. Living beings other than human beings have no ability to hear such Vedic literatures. If human society gives itself to the process of hearing the Vedic literature, it will not become a victim to the impious sounds vibrated by impious men who degrade the standards of the total society. Hearing is solidified by the process of chanting. One who has perfectly heard from the perfect source becomes convinced about the all-pervading Personality of Godhead and thus becomes enthusiastic in glorifying the Lord. All the great *ācāryas*, like Rāmānuja, Madhva, Caitanya, Sarasvatī Thākura or even, in other countries, Muhammad, Christ and others, have all extensively glorified the Lord by chanting always and in every place. Because the Lord is all-pervading, it is essential to glorify Him always and everywhere. In the process of glorifying the Lord there should be no restriction of time and space. This is called *sanātana-dharma* or *bhāgavata-dharma*. *Sanātana* means eternal, always and everywhere. *Bhāgavata* means pertaining to Bhagavān, the Lord. The Lord is the master of all time and all space, and therefore the Lord's holy name must be heard, glorified and remembered everywhere in the world. That will bring about the desired peace and prosperity so eagerly awaited by the people of the world. The word *ca* includes all the remaining processes or methods of *bhakti-yoga*, as mentioned above.

## TEXT 37

पिबन्ति ये भगवत आत्मनः सतां  
कथामृतं श्रवणपुटेषु सम्भृतम् ।  
पुनन्ति ते विषयविदूषिताशयं  
व्रजन्ति तच्चरणसरोरुहान्तिकम् ॥३७॥

*pibanti ye bhagavata ātmanaḥ satān  
kathāmṛtam śravaṇa-puṭeṣu sambhṛtam  
punanti te viṣaya-vidūṣitāśayam  
vrajanti tac-carāṇa-saroruhāntikam*

*pibanti*—who drink; *ye*—those; *bhagavataḥ*—of the Personality of Godhead; *ātmanaḥ*—of the most dear; *satām*—of devotees; *kathāmṛtam*—the nectar of the messages; *śravaṇa-puṭeṣu*—within the earholes; *sambhṛtam*—fully filled; *punanti*—purify; *te*—their; *viṣaya*—material enjoyment; *vidūṣita-āśayam*—polluted aim of life; *vrajanti*—do go back; *tat*—the Lord's; *carāṇa*—feet; *saroruhāntikam*—near the lotus.



## TRANSLATION

Those who drink through aural reception, fully filled with the nectarean message of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the beloved of the devotees, purify the polluted aim of life known as material enjoyment and thus go back to Godhead, to the lotus feet of Him [the Personality of Godhead].

## PURPORT

The sufferings of human society are due to a polluted aim of life, namely lording it over the material resources. The more human society engages in the exploitation of undeveloped material resources for sense gratification, the more it will be entrapped by the illusory, material energy of the Lord, and thus the distress of the world will be intensified instead of diminished. The human necessities of life are fully supplied by the Lord in the shape of food grains, milk, fruit, wood, stone, sugar, silk, jewels, cotton, salt, water, vegetables, etc., in sufficient quantity to feed and care for the human race of the world as well as the living beings on each and every planet within the universe. The supply source is complete, and only a little energy by the human being is required to get his necessities into the proper channel. There is no need of machines and tools or huge steel plants for artificially creating comforts of life. Life is never made comfortable by artificial needs, but by plain living and high thinking. The highest perfectional thinking for human society is suggested here by Śukadeva Gosvāmī, namely, sufficiently hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. For men in this age of Kali, when they have lost the perfect vision of life, this *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the torchlight by which to see the real path. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī Prabhupāda has commented on the *kathāmṛtam* mentioned in this verse and has indicated *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to be the nectarean message of the Personality of Godhead. By sufficient hearing of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the polluted aim of life, namely lording it over matter, will subside, and the people in general in all parts of the world will be able to live a peaceful life of knowledge and bliss.

For a pure devotee of the Lord, any topics in relation with His name, fame, quality, entourage, etc., are all pleasing, and because such topics have been approved by great devotees like Nārada, Hanumān, Nanda Mahārāja and other inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, certainly such messages are transcendental and pleasing to the heart and soul.

And by the constant hearing of the messages of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and later of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, one is assured herein by Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī that he will reach the Personality of Godhead and render Him transcendental loving service in the spiritual planet of the name Goloka Vṛndāvana, which resembles a huge lotus flower.

Thus by the process of *bhakti-yoga*, directly accepted, as suggested in this verse, by sufficient hearing of the transcendental message of the Lord, the material contamination is directly eliminated without one's attempting to contemplate the impersonal *virāṭ* conception of the Lord. And by practicing *bhakti-yoga*, if the performer is not purified from the material contamination, he must be a pseudodevottee. For such an impostor there is no remedy for being freed from material entanglement.

*Thus end the Bhaktivedanta purports of the Second Canto, Second Chapter, of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, entitled "The Lord in the Heart."*

## CHAPTER THREE

### Pure Devotional Service: The Change in Heart

## TEXT 1

श्रीशुक उवाच

एवमेतन्निगदितं पृष्टवान् यद्भवान् मम ।  
नृणां यन्म्रियमाणानां मनुष्येषु मनीषिणाम् ॥ १ ॥

śrī-śuka uvāca  
evam etan nigaditam  
pṛṣṭavān yad bhavān mama  
nṛṇām yan mriyamāṇānām  
manuṣyeṣu manīṣiṇām

śrī-śukaḥ uvāca—Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said; *evam*—so; *etat*—all these; *nigaditam*—answered; *pṛṣṭavān*—as you inquired; *yad*—what; *bhavān*—your good self; *mama*—unto me; *nṛṇām*—of the human being; *yad*—one; *mriyamāṇānām*—on the threshold of death; *manuṣyeṣu*—amongst the human beings; *manīṣiṇām*—of the intelligent men.

## TRANSLATION

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Mahārāja Parikṣit, as you have inquired from me as to the duty of the intelligent man who is on the threshold of death, so I have answered you.

## PURPORT

In human society all over the world there are millions and billions of men and women, and almost all of them are less intelligent because they have very little knowledge of spirit soul. Almost all of them have a wrong conception of life, for they identify themselves with the gross and subtle material bodies, which they are not, in fact. They may be situated in different high and low positions in the estimation of human society, but one should know definitely that unless one inquires about his own self beyond the body and the mind, all his activities in human life are total failures. Therefore out of thousands and thousands of men, one may inquire about his spirit self and thus consult the revealed scriptures like *Vedānta-sūtras*, *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. But in spite of reading and hearing such scriptures, unless one is in touch with a realized spiritual master, he cannot actually realize the real nature of self, etc. And out of thousands and hundreds of thousands of men, someone may know what Lord Kṛṣṇa is in fact. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 20.122–123) it is said that Lord Kṛṣṇa, out of His causeless mercy, prepared the Vedic literatures in the incarnation of Vyāsadeva for reading by the intelligent class of men in a human society which is almost totally forgetful of the genuine relation with Kṛṣṇa. Even such an intelligent class of men may be forgetful in their relation with the Lord. The whole *bhakti-yoga* process is therefore a revival of the lost relation. This revival is possible in the human form of life, which is obtained only out of the evolutionary cycle of 8,400,000 species of life. The intelligent class of human being must take a serious note of this opportunity. Not all human beings are intelligent, so the importance of human life is not always understood. Therefore *manīṣiṇām*, meaning "thoughtful," is particularly used here. A *manīṣiṇām* person, like Mahārāja Parikṣit, must therefore take to the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa and fully engage himself in devotional service, hearing, chanting, etc., of the holy name and pastimes of the Lord, which are all *hari-kathāmṛta*. This action is especially recommended when one is preparing for death.

(continued in next issue)





# Every Town and Village

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

## A New Farming Village in the Rockies

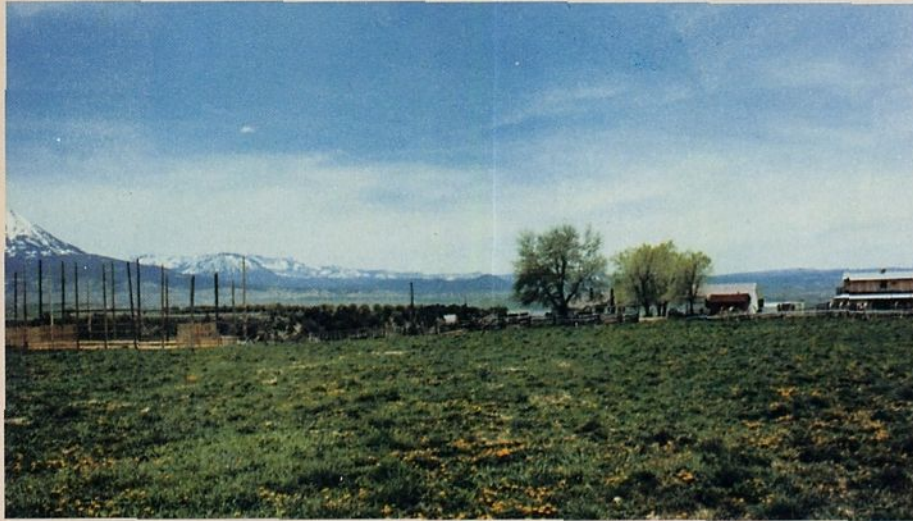


PHOTO: JIM KOENIG

Part of the agricultural terrain is a ninety-acre tract of alfalfa (above). New Varṣāṇa also has abundant wooded areas, along with two streams and five ponds.

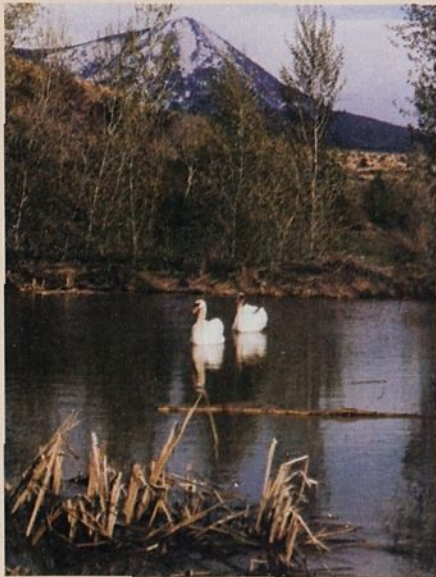


PHOTO: JIM KOENIG

The devotees have stocked the ponds with geese, ducks, and swans (above).

Recently, Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees from Denver started ISKCON's fifteenth farm community, a 340-acre spread atop Sunshine Mesa and overlooking the Peonia-Hotchkiss fruit valley, on the western slope of the Colorado Rockies. The community is called New Varṣāṇa, after the birthplace of Lord Kṛṣṇa's eternal consort, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, in Vṛndāvana, India.

Fourteen devotees, including two married couples and four young children, are hard at work transforming the site into a Kṛṣṇa conscious farm community. They will establish a *gurukula*, or spiritual primary and secondary school, as soon as possible.

This past January Prāṇa-vallabha dāsa, coordinator of the project, decided to provide financial support by starting a company called Govinda's Goodies. In their Denver kitchens devotees make "Bliss Bars," a candy that is both wholesome and holy (the devotees offer all the bars to Lord Kṛṣṇa). As of June 1, Denver's natural food stores had sold some sixty thousand Bliss Bars, and the devotees are planning to produce from eighty to one hundred thousand per month. Eventually Govinda's Goodies will move to New Varṣāṇa. Most of the ingredients for Bliss Bars will come from the farm.

New Varṣāṇa has both wooded and agricultural terrain (including a ninety-acre tract planted with alfalfa), along with two streams and five ponds, part of an

irrigation system fed by the local reservoir. So far, the devotees have cultivated a two-acre vegetable garden, and they have stocked the ponds with geese, ducks, and swans. A number of peacocks are strutting around the barnyard, and a flock of twenty doves is feeling quite at home. A cow and its calf arrived with Nirguṇa dāsa, a devotee from San Diego who now oversees the farm's agriculture and livestock. The devotees plan to have a full herd of cows and to grow all sorts of grain, fruit, and vegetables.

The first new building the devotees propose to build is an all-purpose structure that will include residential quarters, offices, guest rooms, and a temple. The basement will have a giant kitchen, to accommodate the anticipated growth of both the New Varṣāṇa community and Govinda's Goodies.

Surabhīr-abhipālayantam Swami, the architect who designed ISKCON's Bombay temple, is drawing up a master plan for New Varṣāṇa that melds traditional Vedic styling and modern alternative-energy technology.

On a visit to New Varṣāṇa in early May, His Divine Grace Śrīla Rāmeśvara Swami (director and spiritual guide for the Hare Kṛṣṇa centers in Colorado, Utah, Nevada, Hawaii, and southern California) said he wants the community to stick to the simple yet sublime farming-and-village life of ancient India's Vedic civilization.

## 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 493 Caitanya Era - Vaiṣṇava month of Śrīdhara		
August 4	August 5	August 8
Pavitrāropanī-ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans). Beginning of Jhulana-yātrā of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda.	Disappearance of Śrīlā Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīlā Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita Gosvāmī, and Śrī Govindadāsa Paṇḍita.	End of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda Jhulana-yātrā. Appearance of Lord Baladeva (fasting).
Vaiṣṇava month of Hrīṣīkeṣa		
August 15	August 16	August 18
Śrī Kṛṣṇa-janmāṣṭamī, the appearance day of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa (fasting).	Śrī Nandotsava. Appearance of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.	Annadī-ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).
August 27	August 30	August 31
Appearance of Śrī Sitādevī, consort of Śrī Advaita Prabhu.	Appearance of Śrī Lalitā.	Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī, the appearance of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī (fasting until noon).

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**Queen Elizabeth II** bows slightly to receive a garland worn earlier by the Kṛṣṇa Deity at London's ISKCON center. Making the presentation is eight-year-old Bhaktimatī dāsī.



## KṚṢṆA'S GARLANDS GRACE BRITISH HEADS OF STATE

The Queen, the Duke, and the Prime Minister and an encounter with "the all-attractive one."

by MUKUNDA DĀSA and KEN SHOULER

Kṛṣṇa's devotees well know that He is, as His name says, "the all-attractive one." It is the uninitiated who are generally slow in acknowledging this fact. But recently in London's Hyde Park a distinguished group of uninitiates were re-awakened to Kṛṣṇa's universal beauty. There, during a celebration of the United Nations' International Year of the Child, Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh humbly received garlands from two eight-year-old Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees—Varsha Patel and Bhaktimatī dāsī, of London's Bhaktivedanta Manor. (The Manor is the largest center for Indian culture in Great Britain.)





PHOTO: RADHAKRISHNA DAS

**The royal couple,** the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, seem pleased with the touch of garlands that first touched Lord Kṛṣṇa. The Duke received his garland from Varsha Patel, the daughter of one of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement's many life members in London.



PHOTO: RADHAKRISHNA DAS

"Hare Kṛṣṇa," said Bhaktimatī, greeting the Queen and the Duke with palms pressed together in the traditional *praṇāma* gesture.

"What did you say?" the Queen asked.

"Hare Kṛṣṇa," Bhaktimatī answered, nodding respectfully.

The Queen gave a gracious smile and bowed slightly to help the garland over the brim of her hat. Then Varsha offered a garland to the Duke.

Later, six-year-old Yamunā dāsī presented a garland to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Yamunā was attired as Lord Kṛṣṇa, complete with bluish hue, peacock feather, glistening silk *dhoti*, and necklaces and bangles. The Prime Minister caught sight of Yamunā at a distance and walked directly up to her with hands folded in a gracious exchange of *praṇāmas*.

"Who are you?" the Prime Minister asked Yamunā.

"I am Kṛṣṇa."

"Then why are you blue?"

"Because Kṛṣṇa is blue."

The Prime Minister smiled and kindly accepted Lord Kṛṣṇa's garland. Then she gave Yamunā a big hug. (The next day the two were pictured together in the *Sun*, Britain's largest daily newspaper.)

**Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher** enjoys a few moments with Kṛṣṇa (portrayed by six-year-old Yamunā dāsī). "Why are you blue?" the Prime Minister asked.



The Biography of a Pure Devotee

# ON THE BOWERY

by SATSVARŪPA DĀSA GOSWAMI

*After he arrived in America, in September of 1965, Śrīla Prabhupāda stayed at a family's apartment in Butler, Pennsylvania, next at an impersonalist yogi's aśrāma in uptown Manhattan, and then in a tiny room on Seventy-second Street. By March of 1966, a few young people were coming to hear him speak, but his circumstances were still humble; he had seen no real breakthrough in his work to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. When a thief made off with what little he had, Śrīla Prabhupāda reconsidered his students' requests that he move downtown.*





One day in April, 1966, someone broke into Śrīla Prabhupāda's room on Seventy-second Street and stole his typewriter and tape recorder. As Prabhupāda returned to the building, the janitor informed him of the theft. An unknown burglar had broken the transom glass above the door, climbed through, taken the valuables, and escaped. As Prabhupāda heard the details of the crime, he became convinced that it was the janitor himself who had broken in and stolen his things, and that the man was now offering a fictitious account of a thief who had gone through the transom. Knowing there was no way he could prove this, Śrīla Prabhupāda simply accepted his loss with disappointment. In a letter to India, he described the theft as a loss of more than one thousand rupees (\$125.00).

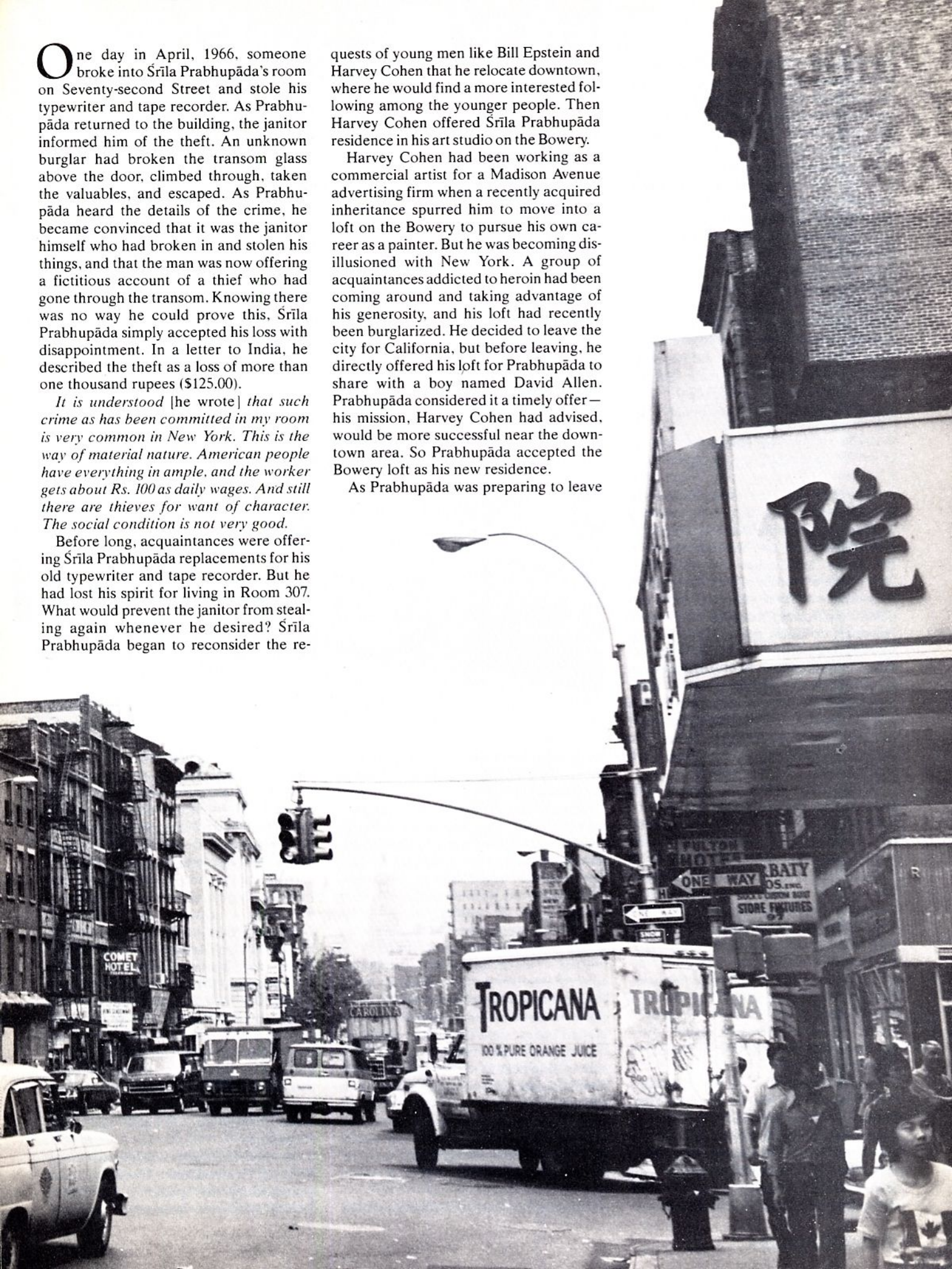
*It is understood [he wrote] that such crime as has been committed in my room is very common in New York. This is the way of material nature. American people have everything in ample, and the worker gets about Rs. 100 as daily wages. And still there are thieves for want of character. The social condition is not very good.*

Before long, acquaintances were offering Śrīla Prabhupāda replacements for his old typewriter and tape recorder. But he had lost his spirit for living in Room 307. What would prevent the janitor from stealing again whenever he desired? Śrīla Prabhupāda began to reconsider the re-

quests of young men like Bill Epstein and Harvey Cohen that he relocate downtown, where he would find a more interested following among the younger people. Then Harvey Cohen offered Śrīla Prabhupāda residence in his art studio on the Bowery.

Harvey Cohen had been working as a commercial artist for a Madison Avenue advertising firm when a recently acquired inheritance spurred him to move into a loft on the Bowery to pursue his own career as a painter. But he was becoming disillusioned with New York. A group of acquaintances addicted to heroin had been coming around and taking advantage of his generosity, and his loft had recently been burglarized. He decided to leave the city for California, but before leaving, he directly offered his loft for Prabhupāda to share with a boy named David Allen. Prabhupāda considered it a timely offer—his mission, Harvey Cohen had advised, would be more successful near the downtown area. So Prabhupāda accepted the Bowery loft as his new residence.

As Prabhupāda was preparing to leave





his Seventy-second Street address, an acquaintance, an electrician who worked in the building, came to warn him. The Bowery was no place for a gentleman, he protested. It was the most corrupt place in the world. Prabhupāda's things had been stolen from Room 307, but moving to the Bowery was not the answer. The electrician urged Prabhupāda to take his friendly advice: "No, Swamiji, you cannot go there!" But Prabhupāda had decided that an auspicious offer was being made. Now he wanted to go forward, and he disregarded warnings of the Bowery's dangers. As he would later say, "I couldn't understand the difference between friends and enemies. My friend was shocked to hear that I was moving to the Bowery, but although I passed through many dangers, I never thought that 'this is danger.' Everywhere I thought, 'This is my home.'"

### Between Harold's and the Half Moon

Śrīla Prabhupāda's new home, the Bowery, had a long history. In the early 1600's, when Manhattan was known as New Amsterdam and was controlled by the Dutch West Indies Company, Peter Minuit, the Governor of New Netherland, staked out a north-south road, which was called "the Bowery" because a number of boweries, or farms, lay on either side. It was a dusty country road, lined with quaint Dutch cottages and bordered by the peach orchards growing on the estate of Peter Stuyvesant. It became part of the high road to Boston and was of strategic importance during the American Revolution as the only land entrance to New York City.

In the early 1800's, the Bowery was predominated by German immigrants, later in the century it became predominantly Jewish, and gradually it became the city's center of theatrical life. However, as a history of Lower Manhattan describes, "After 1870 came the period of the Bowery's celebrated degeneration. Fake auction rooms, saloons specializing in five-cent whiskey and knock-out drops, sensational dime museums, filthy and rat-ridden stale beer dives, together with Charles M. Hoyte's song, 'The Bowery! The Bowery!—I'll Never Go There Any More!', fixed it forever in the nation's consciousness as a place of unspeakable corruption."

The reaction of Śrīla Prabhupāda's electrician friend was not unusual. The Bowery is still known all over the world as a skid row, a place of ruined and homeless alcoholics. Perhaps the uptown electrician had done business in the Bowery and had seen the derelicts who at various times sat and passed a bottle or lay unconscious in



the gutter or staggered up to passersby, drunkenly bumping into them and asking for money.

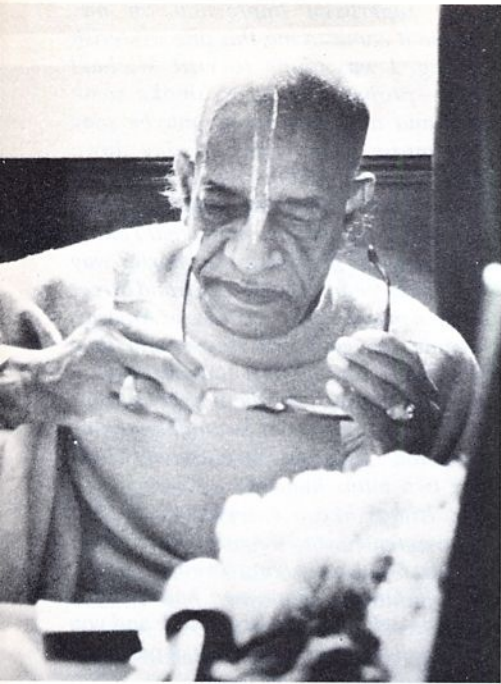
Most of the Bowery's 7,600 homeless men slept in lodging houses that required them to vacate the rooms during the day. Having nowhere else to go and nothing else to do, they would loiter on the street—standing silently on the sidewalks, leaning against walls, or shuffling slowly along, alone or in groups. In cold weather they would wear two coats and several suits of clothes at once and would sometimes warm themselves around a fire they would keep going in a city garbage can. At night those without lodging crawled into discarded boxes, slept on the sidewalks, on doorsteps, and street corners, or sprawled side by side next to the bars. Thefts were commonplace; a man's pockets might be searched ten or twenty times while he slept. The rates of hospitalization and death in the Bowery were five times higher than the national average, and many of the homeless men bore marks of recent injuries or violence.

Prabhupāda's loft, at 94 Bowery, was six

blocks south of Houston Street. At Houston and Bowery, derelicts converged in the heavy crosstown traffic. When cars stopped for the light, bums would come up and wash the windshields and ask for money. South of Houston, the first blocks held mostly restaurant supply stores, lamp stores, taverns, and luncheonettes. The buildings were of three and four stories—old, narrow, crowded tenements, their faces covered with heavy fire escapes. Traffic on the Bowery ran uptown and downtown. Cars parked on both sides of the street, and the constant traffic passed tightly. During the business day, working people passed briskly among the slow-moving derelicts. Many of the store windows were covered with protective iron gates, but behind the gates the store owners lit their varieties of lamps and arrayed their other merchandise to attract prospective wholesale and retail customers.

Ninety-four Bowery was just two doors north of Hester Street. The corner was occupied by the spacious Half Moon Tavern, which was frequented mostly by





At 94 Bowery (left) Śrīla Prabhupāda (above) used an "artist-in-residence" loft for chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, lecturing, and translating *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* into English.

neighborhood alcoholics. Above the tavern sat a four-story Bowery flophouse, marked by a neon sign—"Palma House"—which was covered by a protective metal cage and hung from the second floor on large chains. The hotel's entrance at 92 Bowery (which had no lobby, but only a desolate hallway covered with dirty white tiles) was no more than six feet from the entrance to 94.

Ninety-four Bowery was a narrow, four-story building. It had long ago been painted gray and bore the usual facing of massive black fire escapes. A well-worn black double door, its glass panels reinforced with chicken wire, opened onto the street. The sign above the door read "A.I.R. third and fourth floors," indicating that artists-in-residence occupied those floors.

The first floor of the next building north, 96 Bowery, was used for storage, and its front entrance was covered with a rusty iron gate. At 98 Bowery was another tavern—Harold's—smaller and dingier than the Half Moon. Thus the block consisted of two saloons, a flophouse, and two buildings with lofts.

### Temple in a Loft

In the 1960's, loft living was just beginning in that area of New York. The city had given permission for painters, musicians, sculptors, and other artists (who required more space than available in most apartments) to live in buildings that had

been constructed in the nineteenth century as factories. After these abandoned factories had been fitted with fireproof doors, bathtubs, shower stalls, and heating, an artist could inexpensively use a large space. These were the A.I.R. lofts.

Harvey Cohen's loft, on the top floor of 94 Bowery, was an open space almost a hundred feet long (from east to west) and twenty-five feet wide. It received a good amount of sunlight on the east, the Bowery side, and it also had windows at the west end, as well as a skylight. The exposed rafters of the ceiling were twelve feet above the floor.

Harvey Cohen had used the loft as an art studio, and racks for paintings still lined the walls. A kitchen and shower area were partitioned off in the northwest corner, and a room divider stood parallel with the Bowery about fifteen feet from the Bowery-side windows. This divider did not run from wall to wall, but was open at both ends, and it was several feet short of the ceiling.

It was behind that partition that Śrīla Prabhupāda had his personal living area. A bed and a few chairs stood near the window, and Prabhupāda had set his typewriter on his metal trunk, next to the small table where he kept his stacks of *Bhāgavatam* manuscripts. He had also strung a clothesline for drying his *dhotis*.

On the other side of the partition was a dais, about ten feet wide and five feet deep, on which Prabhupāda sat during his *kīrtanas* and lectures. The dais faced west, toward the loft's large open space. In that open area were a couple of rugs and an old-fashioned solid wood table. Before leaving for California, Harvey had painted a canvas depicting Lord Caitanya dancing with His associates, and this stood on an easel in the open area.

The loft was a four-flight walk up, and the only entrance, usually heavily bolted, was a door in the rear, at the west end. This door opened into a hallway, which led to the right for a few steps and finally into the open area. If a guest entered during a *kīrtana* or lecture, he would see Śrīla Prabhupāda about thirty feet from the entrance, seated on his dais. At other times, a guest might enter and find the whole loft dark, with a light visible only on the other side of the partition, where Prabhupāda was working.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was living on the Bowery, sitting under a small light, while hundreds of derelicts also sat under hundreds of naked lights on the same city block. He had no more fixed income than any derelict in the area, nor any greater surety of a permanent residence. Yet his consciousness was entirely different. He was translating *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* into English, speaking to the world through his

Bhaktivedanta purports. His duty, whether in a fourteenth-floor apartment on Riverside Drive or in a corner of a Bowery loft, was to establish Kṛṣṇa consciousness as the prime necessity for all humanity. He went on with his translating and with his constant planning and dreaming of a temple for Kṛṣṇa in New York City. Because his consciousness was absorbed in Kṛṣṇa's universal mission, he did not depend on his surroundings for shelter. Home for him was not a matter of bricks and wood, but of taking shelter of Kṛṣṇa in every circumstance. As Prabhupāda had said to his friends uptown, "Everywhere is my home," whereas without Kṛṣṇa's shelter the whole world would be a dangerous place.

Often, Śrīla Prabhupāda would refer to a scriptural statement that people in the material world live in three different modes: goodness, passion, and ignorance. Life in the forest is in the mode of goodness, life in the city is in passion, and life in a degraded place like a liquor shop, a brothel, or the Bowery is in the mode of ignorance. But to live in a temple of Viṣṇu is to live in the spiritual world, Vaikuṅṭha, which is transcendental to all three material modes.

But is a Bowery loft a temple? At least this loft, when Prabhupāda was holding his meetings and performing *kīrtana* there, unquestionably was. And when he was behind the partition, working in his corner before the open pages of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, that room was as good as his room back at Rādhā-Dāmodara temple in Vṛndāvana, India.

### "The Energy of Being Close to Him"

News of the Swami's presence in the Bowery loft spread, mostly by word of mouth at the Paradox restaurant, and people began to come by in the evening to hear and chant with him. The musical *kīrtanas* were especially popular on the Bowery, since the Swami's new congregation consisted mostly of local musicians and artists, many of whom responded more to the transcendental music than to the philosophy. Every morning he would hold a class on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, attended usually by David Allen, Robert Nelson, and another boy, and he would still occasionally teach cooking to whoever was interested. He was almost always available for personal talks with any inquiring visitors or with his new roommate David.

David Allen had heard that Harvey Cohen was moving to San Francisco if he could sublet his A.I.R. loft. Harvey hadn't known David very long, but on the night before Harvey was to leave, he coincidentally met David three different times



in three different sections of the Lower East Side. Harvey took this as a sign that he should rent the loft to David—but he specifically stipulated that Śrīla Prabhupāda should move in with him.

Śrīla Prabhupāda and David Allen got on well together. Although each had his own designated living area in the large loft, the whole place soon became dominated by Śrīla Prabhupāda's preaching activities. At first, Śrīla Prabhupāda considered David an aspiring disciple. Writing to his friends in India, he described his relationship with the American boy.

*He was attending my class at 72nd Street along with others [Prabhupāda wrote], and when I experienced this theft case in my room, he invited me to his residence. So I am with him and training him. He has good prospects because already he has given up all bad habits. In this country, illicit connection with women, smoking, drinking, and eating of meats are common affairs. Besides that, there are other bad habits, like using [only] toilet paper [and not bathing] after evacuating etc. But by my request he has given up ninety percent of his old habits, and he is chanting mahā-mantra regularly. So I am giving him the chance, and I think he is improving. Tomorrow I have arranged for some prasādam distribution, and he has gone to purchase some things from the market.*

When David had first come to the Bowery, he appeared like a clean-cut college student. He was eighteen years old, about six feet tall, blue-eyed, handsome, and intelligent-looking. Most of his new friends in New York were older and considered him a "kid." David's family lived in the Midwest, and his mother was paying one hundred dollars monthly to sublease the loft. Although David did not have much experience, he had read that a new realm of mind expansion was available through psychedelic drugs, and he was heading fast into the hazardous world of LSD. His meeting with Śrīla Prabhupāda came at a time of radical change and profoundly affected his life.

*It was a really good relationship I had with the Swami [David relates], although I was overwhelmed by the tremendous energy of being that close to him. It spurred my consciousness very fast. Even my dreams at night would be so vivid of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I was often sleeping when the Swami was up, because he was up late in the night working on his translations. That's possibly where a lot of the consciousness and dreams just flowed in, because of that deep relationship. It also had to do with studying Sanskrit. There was a lot of immediate impact with the language. The language seemed to have such a strong mystical quality, the way he translated it word for word.*

Prabhupāda's old friend from uptown, Robert Nelson, continued to visit him on the Bowery. Robert was impressed by Prabhupāda's friendly relationship with David, who he saw was learning many things from the Swami. Robert bought a small American-made hand organ, similar to an Indian harmonium, and donated it to David for chanting with Prabhupāda. At seven in the morning, Robert would come by, and after *Bhāgavatam* class he would talk informally with Śrīla Prabhupāda, telling his ideas for making records and

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**“We started this conversation, and he mentioned Lord Caitanya and the whole thing. He came out with this flow of strange things to me, right there in the street.”**

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selling books. He wanted to continue helping Śrīla Prabhupāda as he had done uptown. They would sit in chairs near the front window, and Robert would listen while Prabhupāda talked for hours about Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya.

#### Saffron in a Dingy Alcove

New people began coming to see Prabhupāda on the Bowery. Carl Yearegens, a thirty-year-old black man from the Bronx, had attended Cornell University and was now independently studying Indian religion and Zen Buddhism. He had experimented with drugs as “psychedelic tools,” and he had an interest in the music and poetry of India. He was influential among his friends and tried to interest them in meditation. He had even been dabbling in Sanskrit.

*I had just finished reading a book [he relates] called The Wonder That Was India. I had gotten the definition of a sannyāsī and a brahmācārī and so forth. There was a vivid description in that particular book of how you could see a sannyāsī coming down the road with his saffron robe. It must have made more than*

*just a superficial impression on me, because it came to me this one winterish evening. I was going to visit Michael Grant—probably going to smoke some marijuana and sit around, maybe play some music—and I was coming down Hester Street. If you made a left on Bowery, you could go up to Mike's place on Grand Street. But it's funny that I chose to go that way, because the shorter way would have been to go down Grand Street and then make a right on Bowery. Anyway, I decided to go down Hester and then make a left, and all of a sudden I saw in this dingy alcove a brilliant saffron robe. As I passed I saw it was Swamiji knocking on the door, trying to gain entrance. There were two bums hunched up against the door. It was like a two-part door—one door was sealed, and the other was locked. The two bums were lying on either side of Swamiji. One of these men had actually expired—which often happened, and you had to call the police or health department to get them.*

*I don't think I saw the men lying in the doorway until I walked up to Swamiji and asked him, “Are you a sannyāsī?” And he answered yes. We started this conversation about how he was starting a temple, and he mentioned Lord Caitanya and the whole thing. He just came out with this flow of strange things to me, right there in the street. But I knew what he was talking about somehow. I had the familiarity of having just read this book and delved into Indian religion. So I knew that this was a momentous occasion for me, and I wanted to help him. We banged on the door, and eventually we got into the loft. He invited me to come to a kīrtana, and I came back later that night for my first kīrtana. From that point on, it was a fairly regular thing—three times a week. At one point Swamiji asked me to stay with him, and I stayed for about two weeks.*

It was perhaps because of Carl's interest in Sanskrit that Prabhupāda began holding a Sanskrit class in the loft. Every day he taught a few students how to form the letters of the alphabet and pronounce the Sanskrit sounds. He used a chalkboard he had found in the loft, and his students wrote their exercises in notebooks. Carl and a few others would spend hours working on Sanskrit with Prabhupāda, who would look over their shoulders to see if they were writing correctly and would review their pronunciation. The boys were learning not only Sanskrit but the instructions from *Bhagavad-gītā*. Each day Prabhupāda would give them a different verse to write down in the Sanskrit alphabet (*devanāgarī*), transliterate into the Roman alphabet, and then translate word for word into English. But their

*(continued on page 33)*



# An Astronomer Who Says “We’re Alone” in Our Galaxy

by JAYĀDVAITA SWAMI

W e inhabitants of earth are quite likely the only civilized beings in our galaxy. So contends a scientific study that recently won front-page attention in the “Science” section of the *New York Times*.

Dr. Michael H. Hart, an astronomer at Trinity University (San Antonio, Texas), assembled data about the conditions under which life apparently arose and evolved on earth. He fed this data into a computer and ran through a series of mathematical calculations: If the earth, he wanted to know, had been closer to or farther from the sun, what would the earth’s atmosphere have been like, and what would have been the chance that life could have arisen and developed?

According to the *Times*, Dr. Hart’s studies assumed that two basic planetary conditions are necessary for the creation of life and the evolution of an advanced civilization.

“The first condition,” the *Times* reported, “is that prevailing temperatures must be moderate, and the second is that they must remain so continuously for at least 3.7 billion years—the time that elapsed on this earth between the origin of life and our present level of evolution.”

Dr. Hart discovered that if the earth had been five percent closer to the sun, a runaway “greenhouse effect” would have taken place, broiling the atmosphere at temperatures close to 900 degrees. And had the earth been even one percent farther away, it would have been a cold, barren desert. In either case, the origin and development of life as we know it would have been impossible.

But what of life on planets orbiting other suns? Dr. Hart ran more variations through the computer and calculated, for stars of varying size and brilliance, the inner and outer boundaries of a “continuously habitable zone” within which a planet would have to orbit—for at least 3 or 4 billion years—to provide an atmosphere suitable for life’s origin and evolution to the advanced living forms we know.

His results show these zones to be surprisingly narrow. And since few if any planets are likely to have orbited continuously within these narrow corridors for the aeons required, Dr. Hart suggests that civilized life on other planets must be exceedingly rare. At least in our galaxy, he suggests, we are indeed quite likely alone.

With scientific acumen, Dr. Hart acknowledges that his calculations may need adjustment or revision. But he has assiduously tried to take into account all known and relevant variables, and he presents his findings with the confidence of a professional who has done his best to cover all the angles. Still, Dr. Hart’s scientific findings are not nearly as well-grounded as they would seem. Despite all the mathematical rigor to which he has subjected his computerized simulations, his theories rest upon certain fundamental postulates that just don’t stand up to a close look.

To be specific: Dr. Hart has built into his theories two broad but utterly unnecessary assumptions.

First, he has assumed (but not demonstrated) that life can, in his words, “spontaneously arise” from a combination of material elements.

Second, he has apparently assumed (but again failed to demonstrate) that the only conditions under which life can “spontaneously arise and evolve” are conditions the same as, or at least closely resembling, the conditions under which this process supposedly took place on earth.

These notions, we submit, are not facts, nor even reasonable assumptions. Rather, they are the researcher’s own biases or beliefs. Indeed, they are part of a modern scientific mythology; they peek out at us from amidst Dr. Hart’s algorithms and equations like curious unicorns and centaurs.

Elsewhere in his writings Dr. Hart has insisted, “Any scientific theory must be based upon evidence.” So let us subject

Dr. Hart’s assumptions to his own test.

First, what about the assumption that life can “spontaneously arise” from matter? Is there any justification for such a claim? If we were to propose the opposite—that life arises from life—our evidence would be abundant. We directly perceive that living beings take birth from other living beings. Living trees come from living seeds, living seeds from living trees. Living babies come from living mothers. Since the beginning of history, reliable observers have reported that life comes from life.

But where is the example of a living being that has spontaneously arisen from matter? No such being has yet come forward. Why not?

If Dr. Hart can bring forward even one such spontaneously manifested creature, we will gratefully offer our apologies, and the entire scientific world will undoubtedly offer its highest acclaim. But until that time, we feel obliged to regard Dr. Hart’s first assumption—that life can spontaneously arise from matter—as humbug. Evidence refuses to support it.

What about Dr. Hart’s second assumption—that life could arise and evolve only in an atmosphere the same, or very nearly the same, as that in which it arose and evolved on earth?

Of course, to begin with, if there is no convincing evidence that life did in fact “spontaneously arise” on earth, the rest of the proposition is more or less meaningless. And did life on earth, however it arose, gradually evolve from one-celled forms to civilized human beings? Archaeological, geological, and mathematical evidence—or lack of evidence—makes even this venerable theoretical assumption seem increasingly doubtful.

But beyond all this, why should we at all assume that life—whether civilized or primitive—could exist only under conditions similar to those on earth? This may be true of life as we know it—but then again there may be forms of life about which we know absolutely nothing. May



there not be forms of life that thrive under conditions we ourselves would find unbearable? Why must all forms of life—even all forms of civilized life—be like the life found here on earth?

A scientific theory, Dr. Hart says, must be based upon evidence. But surely scientists have no evidence that living beings can't live in the universe unless they live like us. We may be able to say how we are living, and we may honestly admit that we have seen no beings elsewhere living otherwise—but that is a statement about the limits of what we have seen, not about the limits of what may or may not exist. To say that what we haven't seen cannot exist is arbitrary, arrogant, and closed-minded. What we should say, if we are to be honest, is that we don't know.

And that's just what an honest scientist does say. "You ask me whether there's extraterrestrial intelligence," says an astronomer who asked the *Times* that he not be identified. "My reply is that maybe there's something out there and maybe not. Your guess is as good as mine—and don't let any astronomer tell you otherwise."

This is where Kṛṣṇa comes in. While scientists can do little more than guess and speculate about whether or not there's life on other planets, the devotees of Kṛṣṇa already know in detail what's out there.

The Vedic literatures—the writings that form the basis of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement—give explicit information about the prevailing atmospheres on other planets and about the living beings who reside on planets other than our own.

Closer to home, the Vedic literatures give us a clear and reasonable explanation of what the phenomenon we call life actually is.

According to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, which presents the fundamental principles of Vedic knowledge, the living being is in essence an infinitesimal but extremely powerful spark of consciousness. By its very nature, that spark of conscious energy is permanent; it has no beginning and no end, although it resides within a body that is temporary. While present within the body, the conscious spark animates the body with intelligent vitality, and after the spark dwells within the body for some time, the laws of nature force it to leave the body, bringing about the phenomenon we call death.

At death the spark of consciousness—the actual living entity—doesn't actually die, but travels to a newly created body, which it then inhabits and invests with life, until death again takes place. So birth, death, and rebirth follow one another in a continuous cycle.

The living being travels not only from one body to another but from one species

to another, although by nature's laws he forgets, each time he is reborn, what he felt, did, and learned in his previous body.

The *Gītā* is careful to point out that although the bodies in which consciousness lives are repeatedly created and destroyed, the consciousness itself never takes birth or dies. In the *Gītā*'s words, consciousness is "unborn, eternal, ever-existing, undying, and primeval."

In other words, according to the *Gītā*, life doesn't have to wait three or four billion years until it can cook into exist-

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**Even on earth,  
creatures live  
everywhere. So  
why shouldn't  
other living beings  
live anywhere  
in the creation,  
clothed by nature  
in bodies matched  
to the environment?**

---

tence in some tepid chemical stew. Nor can life be scorched, frozen, burned, or exploded out of existence. The living spark can live anywhere, under any conditions.

Indeed, the *Gītā* tells us that there are countless numbers of conscious living entities and that they live everywhere, throughout the entire universe.

Even on earth, with its varied environmental extremes, living creatures live virtually everywhere, in bodies properly suited to their surroundings. The jellyfish couldn't change places with the aardvark or the eagle, nor the penguin with the butterfly, the salamander, or the rainbow trout. Yet each lives comfortably in its natural home. There are living beings on the land, in the sky, in the water, and from Vedic literature we learn that there are also living entities in fire, in bodies suitable for a fiery environment. A human being, when properly suited up, can survive even underwater, amidst fire, or in outer space. So why shouldn't other living beings be able to live anywhere in the creation, clothed by nature in bodies matched to their environment?

Certainly it is reasonable that they

should, and the Vedic literatures tell us that in fact living beings reside everywhere throughout the creation.

Of course, one may not wish to accept the statements of the Vedic literatures as facts. That is one's prerogative. But in India, at least, self-realized sages of extraordinary erudition and perceptivity have for countless generations accepted the Vedic writings as thoroughly reliable sources of knowledge. Vedic sociological predictions made thousands of years ago have proved true in recent days in precise detail. And the great Indian botanist Sir Jagadis Chandra Bose won scientific acclaim primarily by empirically verifying botanical information given in the *Vedas* and presenting it to his European colleagues in conventional scientific form.


Quite possibly a time will come when the Vedic information about extraterrestrial life will also come to be verified empirically—but we may have to wait decades, centuries, or even thousands or millions of years. Meanwhile, the Vedic literatures offer a shortcut: if one accepts the Vedic statements on their own authority, one immediately gets detailed information infinitely more reliable than Dr. Hart's computerized simulations and more extensive than we could ever hope to gather by imperfect scientific research.

According to the Vedic literatures, all the planets in the universe are inhabited, many of them by civilizations far more advanced than our own.

But then, argues the astronomer, by now we should certainly have seen these other beings. To which we counter that until the mid-1800's we had not even seen the common gorilla, although it lives in great numbers right here on earth, well within reach of our universities and scientific institutes.

We ought to admit, then, that our vision is limited, our senses feeble and imperfect.

Yet even if we were somehow able to visit all the various planets of the universe and shake hands with our extraterrestrial neighbors, we would still not have solved—any more than they—the basic problem of our existence, the problem of repeated birth and death. From *Bhagavad-gītā* we learn that even if we could live on the highest planet, known as Brahmaloka, whose inhabitants enjoy a duration of life practically inconceivable to the residents of earth, we would still have to die, and then come back in another body.

This ultimate problem, the problem of birth and death, can be solved—but only by purification of consciousness, and not by any amount of speculative scientific research. Human life is meant for solving this problem, and one should seriously try to understand how to do so, before another lifetime comes to an end. 



# MANIFESTO

(continued from page 4)

Activities in the material nature are different from activities in the spiritual nature. Though the spirit soul is eternal (as we have explained), the activities are temporary. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement aims at placing the spirit soul in his eternal activities. We can practice eternal activities even when we are materially engaged. To act spiritually simply requires direction, but it is possible, under the prescribed rules and regulations.

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement

teaches these spiritual activities, and if one is trained in such spiritual activities, one is transferred to the spiritual world, of which we get ample evidence from the Vedic literatures, including the *Bhagavad-gītā*. The spiritually trained person can be transferred to the spiritual world easily — by change of consciousness.

Consciousness is always present, because it is the symptom of the living spirit soul, but at the present moment our consciousness is materially contaminated. For instance, water pouring down from a cloud is pure, but as soon as the water comes in touch with the earth it becomes

muddy — immediately. Yet if we filter the same water, the original clearness can be regained. Similarly, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is the process of clearing our consciousness. And as soon as our consciousness is clear and pure, we are eligible to be transferred to the spiritual world, for our eternal life of knowledge and bliss. This is what we are hankering for in this material world, but we are being frustrated at every step, on account of material contamination. Therefore, this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement should be taken very seriously by the leaders of human society.

# BOWERY

(continued from page 30)

interest in Sanskrit waned, and Śrīla Prabhupāda gradually gave up the daily classes to spend time working on his own translations of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Prabhupāda's new friends may have regarded these lessons as Sanskrit classes, but actually, of course, they were *bhakti* classes. Śrīla Prabhupāda had not come to America as an ambassador of Sanskrit; his Guru Mahārāja, his spiritual master, had ordered him to teach Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But he had found in Carl and some of his friends a desire to investigate Sanskrit, so he encouraged it. As a youth, Lord Caitanya also had started a Sanskrit

school, with the real purpose of teaching love of Kṛṣṇa. He would teach in such a way that every word meant Kṛṣṇa, and when His students objected He closed the school. Similarly, Prabhupāda had no mission to perform on behalf of Sanskrit linguistics, and when he found that the interest of the A.I.R. bohemians in Sanskrit was transitory, he gave up holding these classes.

By the standard of classical Vedic scholars, it takes ten years to master Sanskrit grammar. And if one does not start until his late twenties or thirties, it is usually too late. Certainly none of Prabhupāda's students were thinking of entering a ten-year concentration in Sanskrit grammar, and even if they were, they

would not have realized spiritual truth simply by becoming grammarians.

Prabhupāda thought it better to use his Sanskrit background to follow the Sanskrit commentaries of the previous authorities and translate the verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* into English. Otherwise, the secrets of Kṛṣṇa consciousness would remain locked away in the Sanskrit. Teaching Carl Yeargens *devanāgarī*, *sandhi*, verb conjugations, and noun declensions was not going to give the people of America transcendental Vedic knowledge. It was better, Prabhupāda thought, to use his proficiency in Sanskrit for translating many volumes of the *Bhāgavatam* into English for millions of potential readers.

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# NOTES

(continued from page 36)

Huge amounts of farming land in America are taken up to grow corn and other feed for fattening up doomed cattle. Much of the same land could be used to grow grains for human consumption, and because grains yield many times greater food value when consumed directly than when

transformed into meat, this would alleviate world hunger. At any rate, what with the pressures of inflation, Americans may eventually find it impossible to maintain their "high standard" of meat-eating.

The biggest superstition of the meat-eater is that without meat he cannot be healthy. But proteins and vitamins that are available in meat are also amply provided in nature's diet of grain, nuts, beans, and

milk products. The Kṛṣṇa conscious diet provides ample protein in preparations such as *capātīs* (whole-wheat bread patties) and *dahl* (split-pea or mungbean soup). As the *New York Times* noted recently, new discoveries about the habits of early men on this planet show that man is actually intended to be a fruit-eater, and that his present diet of meat is harmful to him.

Even among animals, the cow is considered special, and this is based not on myth but on reason. The magnanimous cow requires only a little grass, which is available naturally in the pasture, and in return she gives abundant milk, not only for her calves but also for the human family. And thus she supplies mankind with food rich in vitamins. In the original Vedic culture, life was rural and agrarian, and each man kept several cows and grew his own produce on his own land. He also used bulls to plow the fields. We may think that a life based on drawing milk from the cow and crops from the bull is primitive and peculiar, but the artificiality of our present mechanized, urbanized way of life is becoming obvious, even to the die-hard champions of technological progress, and the day may not be far off when man will actually be forced to return to these natural ways of life. Reverence for mother cow is not useless but practical, and therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa advises in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that a section of humanity, the agriculturalists, should take protection of the cow as part of their social duty.

What is at stake is America's role of world leadership. Our leadership does not consist merely in maintaining the highest material standard or the biggest military power. It is a leadership that has always been essentially spiritual. This is the meaning of the U.S. stand on human rights. Commentators who recognize our moral decay offer various suggestions about "moral rearmament." We suggest that those who are interested in a spiritually vital America give unprejudiced deliberation to the points we have made regarding the sin of animal slaughter. Although our moral deficiencies are multiple, the bad reactions resulting from the single anomaly of animal slaughter are enough to offset all humanitarian or religious improvements that may otherwise appear in our American way of life. Reaction to sinful activities is known in Vedic philosophy as *karma*, and the slaughterhouse is bringing severe reactions (bad *karma*) upon our society. Cow killing is killing America. And to halt this bad effect, we need not adopt artificial ideas, but just turn sincerely to the unavoidable meanings of the Golden Rule and "Thou shalt not kill." —SDG

## Enhance your spiritual life

For spiritual realization, all you really need is the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra. But to enhance your spiritual life, you may want to add the items listed below.

**1 Mantra Meditation Beads:** a string of 108 hand-carved "japa beads" — chanters use them as an aid to concentration during meditation on the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra. Each string of beads comes with a cotton carrying bag and an instruction pamphlet. \$4.95.

**2 Magazine Binder:** (for your copies of *Back to Godhead*): a handy way to keep each month's issue in mint condition. Holds 12 issues. \$4.95.

**3 Deity Poster:** a full-color photo of the beautiful Deities at the Bhaktivedanta Manor, in England. Poster-size. \$2.00.

**4 Karatālas:** pure bell-metal hand cymbals used in chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra. Imported from India. \$12.00/pair.

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**8 Tapestries:** colorful Madras cloth, for bedspreads, curtains, pillow cases, wall hangings, or clothing material.  
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Hare Kṛṣṇa  
Hare Kṛṣṇa  
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa  
Hare Hare  
Hare Rāma  
Hare Rāma  
Rāma Rāma  
Hare Hare

WHAT IS A *MANTRA*? In Sanskrit, *man* means "mind" and *tra* means "freeing." So a *mantra* is a combination of transcendental sounds that frees our minds from the anxieties of life in the material world.

Ancient India's Vedic literatures single out one *mantra* as the *mahā* (supreme) *mantra*. The *Kali-santarāṇa Upaniṣad* explains, "These sixteen words—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—are especially meant for counteracting the ill effects of the present age of quarrel and anxiety."

The *Nārada-pañcarātra* adds, "All *mantras* and all processes for self-realization are compressed into the Hare

Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*."

Five centuries ago, while spreading the *mahā-mantra* throughout the Indian subcontinent, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu prayed, "O Supreme Personality of Godhead, in Your holy name You have invested all Your transcendental energies."

The name *Kṛṣṇa* means "the all-attractive one," the name *Rāma* means "the all-pleasing one," and the name *Hare* is an address to the Lord's devotional energy. So the *mahā-mantra* means, "O all-attractive, all-pleasing Lord, O energy of the Lord, please engage me in Your devotional service." Chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, and your life will be sublime.



# NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

## Meat-eating: the West's Sacred Cow

Americans tend to scorn India's recent national ban on cow slaughter. We have difficulty appreciating the Hindus' view that the cows are holy, and most Americans have little knowledge of how a rural economy like India's is dependent on the life of the cow and her by-products. But a more basic tenet we all hold dear—the right to live—is one we should consider in its relevance to the mass slaughter of cows and other animals.

In the U.S. there is still strong support of the commandment "Thou shalt not kill." Our federal constitution guarantees everyone the right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." The protests against nuclear energy and the lobbying of the environmentalists put human survival above other priorities. Our reluctance to take part in wars is also based on strong desires to protect American lives as well as the lives of others. The U.S. government's objections to executions in Iran as well as our other strong stands on human rights around the world are examples of our tendency not to take cheaply the elimination of human life. Although we in this country commit a million abortions yearly, a very significant percentage of Americans abhor this practice as equal to murder and so have launched a vigorous "right to life" movement. And when a convicted murderer was recently given the death penalty, opponents of capital punishment protested that to take the life even of a habitual criminal was cruel and inhuman.

But although millions of harmless cows are slaughtered daily, hardly a single cry of objection is raised anywhere in the land. Indeed, almost everyone affirms the killing of animals by daily eating their flesh. But there are good reasons to think that the ethic "Thou shalt not kill" should also be applied to animals, and especially the cow.

Many of us rarely even see a live cow. We see the cartoon figures of Elsie the Cow and Elmer the Bull on the cartons of milk, yogurt, and cheese that we get from the freezer of the supermarket. And we also see a version of a happy Elsie on many restaurant signboards. One restaurant in New York bears the sign "The Sacred Cow—Fabulous Steaks." Another place, "The Happy Cow Restaurant—Beef Steaks," is advertised by a blissful-looking cow standing in a blazing-hot frying pan.

Another, "The Jolly Cow," shows a Disneyesque cow happily licking her lips and inviting us to steaks and hamburgers.

But does anyone really believe that the cow *likes* to be killed, dances happily in the frying pan, or relishes the thought of her flesh being served to casual diners? If you have ever seen the cows peacefully grazing or heard their pitiful screams as they are executed in the slaughterhouse, you know very well that they have the same "gut feelings" as humans do regarding their own right to live. Yet slaughtering cows does not disturb the consciences of billions of meat-eaters, because they choose not to apply the ethics of the sacredness of life to animals. But we should reconsider this double standard.

Our American ethic draws much from the Judeo-Christian commandment "Thou shalt not kill," as well as from the humanistic Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." But we choose to take the commandment to mean that although thou shalt not kill the human, thou shalt kill the animal. Members of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, which is based on the Vedic scriptures, have basically the same monotheistic theology as Christianity: There is a Supreme Being by whose intelligence and will everything is created, maintained, and annihilated—and man can be happy in this life and the next only by adhering to the codes of religion as given by God in holy scriptures. "Thou shalt not kill" is also a tenet of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and it is for this reason that the followers of Kṛṣṇa do not kill the cow or other animals. Kṛṣṇa devotees have not taken the protection of the cow as an all-in-all conclusion of religion, but rather as a natural consequence of following God's order not to kill.

Theologically, the reason a God-conscious person cannot take another's life is that he recognizes every person as having an individual spiritual nature or soul and thus as being a son of God. The *Vedas* cite six symptoms by which we can understand the presence of the soul in a living being: birth, growth, production of by-products, duration, dwindling, and death. These symptoms signify the difference between dead matter and a living being. It is indefensible, therefore, to say that the human has a soul but an animal like the

cow does not.

"But," we may say, "the animals cannot understand philosophy or science." Still, this is no reason to kill them. A small child cannot understand philosophy either, but that does not mean we can kill him. If an elderly, successful son approaches his father and advises him to kill a younger son because he is only a baby or simply because he is foolish and less successful, the father will not agree. Nor does the Supreme Father approve of the so-called Christian son who kills the cows and claims that this is sanctioned by God the Father.

The Vedic scriptures admit, "One living being survives by eating another." Nevertheless, they also advocate nonviolence. This means that in order to live, one should keep violence to a minimum. Vegetables are also a lower form of life, and so, strictly speaking, being a vegetarian does not in itself free one from the impiety of violence and killing. In Kṛṣṇa consciousness the taking of life for eating becomes sanctified, because the devotees eat only food first offered to God. This act of devotion transforms eating into taking *prasāda*, Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

But Kṛṣṇa does not ask for the cow in such offerings unto Him. When He appeared on this earth some five thousand years ago, Kṛṣṇa Himself showed affection and favor to the cow. In fact, He personally took to cowherding. The Bible, Koran, and Buddhist teachings also stress that nonviolence is applicable to the animals, and that their lives should be protected. Only in dire necessity can one justify the taking of a life; and selfish indulgence of the tongue is not a dire necessity.

But meat-eating is truly "a sacred cow" in America. The beef industry is so extremely powerful that when President Carter held a token meatless luncheon at the White House in 1977, he was sent all sorts of threatening telegrams. For most Americans, giving up meat-eating is as unthinkable as giving up driving. We think we cannot live without it. And because of greed and attachment to a standard of living that allows us to eat meat three times a day, we refuse to recognize that "Thou shalt not kill" should, according to logic, scripture, and common decency, apply to the animals as well as to men.

There are subreligious arguments, also, in favor of sparing the life of the cow.

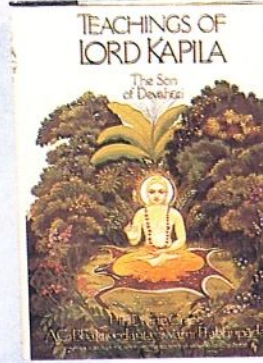
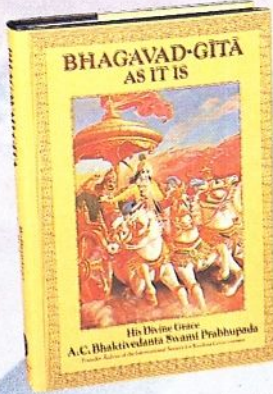
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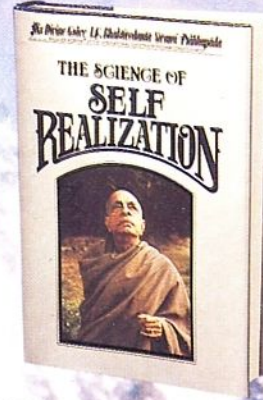
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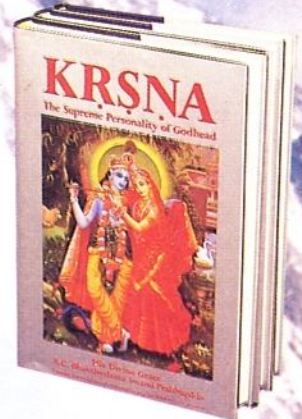
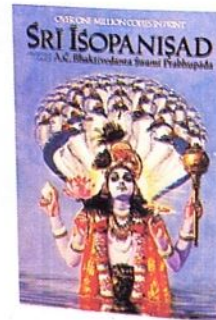
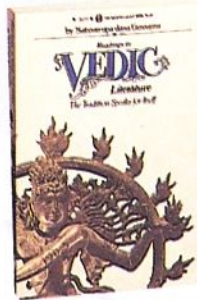
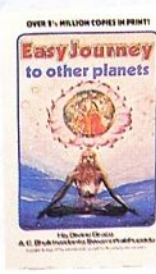
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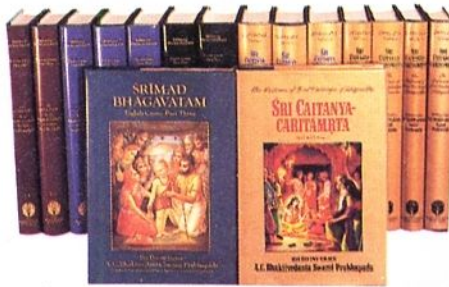
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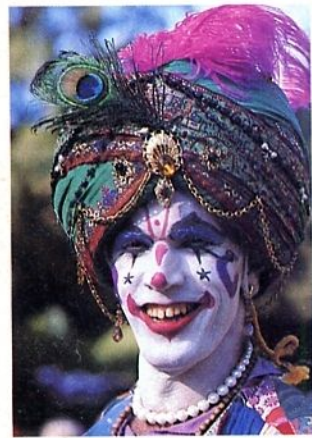
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