

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



Vol.15 No.6

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



The Sounds Of Victory



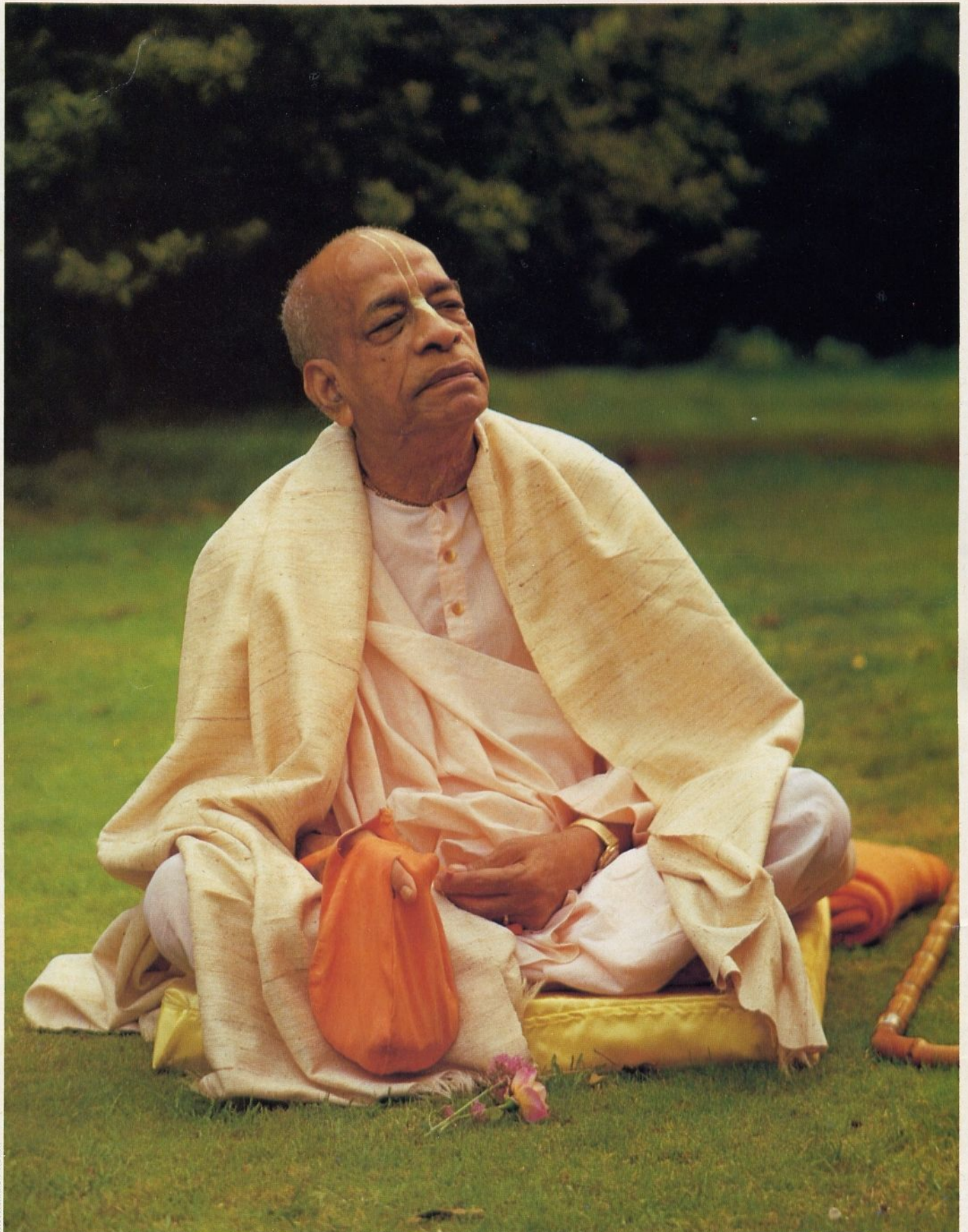


PHOTO BHARGAVA DASA

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

BACK TO GODHEAD

VOL. 15, NO. 6

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

FOUNDED 1944

FOUNDER

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

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PRODUCTION Prabhupāda dāsa
PHOTOGRAPHY Vidyānanda dāsa, Nityatṛptā-
devī dāsi, Viśākhā-devī dāsi
COMPOSITION Mahā-māyā-devī dāsi
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ARCHIVES Parama-rūpa dāsa
PRINTING CONSULTANT Paul Bleier

PRONUNCIATION of Sanskrit words and names.
BACK TO GODHEAD follows the international scholar-
ly 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 the sibilants **ṣ** and **ś** 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 *āśramas*,
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.

Published monthly, \$8.00 per year (\$10.00 outside
USA), by the Bhaktivedānta Book Trust.

Subscription Offices: 3764 Watseka Avenue, Los
Angeles, California 90034.

Editorial Offices: The Hare Krishna Building, 340 W.
55th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019.

European Subscription Offices: BBT, Croome Court,
Savern Stoke, Worcester, WR8 9DW, England.

Indian Subscription Offices: BBT, Hare Krishna
Land, Juhu, Bombay 400 054, India.

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ISSN 0005-3643

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."

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COVER. The Sounds of Victory. Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, took the role of charioteer for His devotee Arjuna in the decisive Battle of Kurukṣetra five thousand years ago. The blowing of the conchshells signaled inevitable defeat for the Kaurava warriors, usurpers of a throne belonging to Arjuna and his pious brothers, the Pāṇḍava princes. Here on the battlefield Kṛṣṇa spoke the immortal *Bhagavad-gītā*, setting forth the science of self-realization in seven hundred verses and reestablishing the principles of a God conscious society for the future of mankind. (Cover art: Rāmanātha dāsa.)

GAINING FREEDOM FROM THE CYCLE OF BIRTH AND DEATH

A lecture by

HIS DIVINE GRACE A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*ajo 'pi sann avyayātmā
 bhūtānām īśvaro 'pi san
 prakṛtiṁ svām adhiṣṭhāya
 sambhavāmy ātma-māyayā*

"Although I am unborn and My transcendental body never deteriorates, and although I am the Lord of all sentient beings, I still appear in every millennium in My original, transcendental form."

[*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.6]

Kṛṣṇa is unborn, and we are also unborn, but the difference is that unlike the Lord we have been entangled in a material body. Therefore we cannot keep our position as unborn, but have to take birth and transmigrate from one body to another, with no guarantee of what kind of body we shall receive next. Even in this life, we are obliged to accept one body after another. A child gives up his childhood body and accepts the body of a boy, and the boy gives up his boyhood body to accept a youthful body, which he then gives up for an old body. Therefore it is natural to conclude that when one gives up one's old body, one will have to accept another body; again one will accept the body of a child.

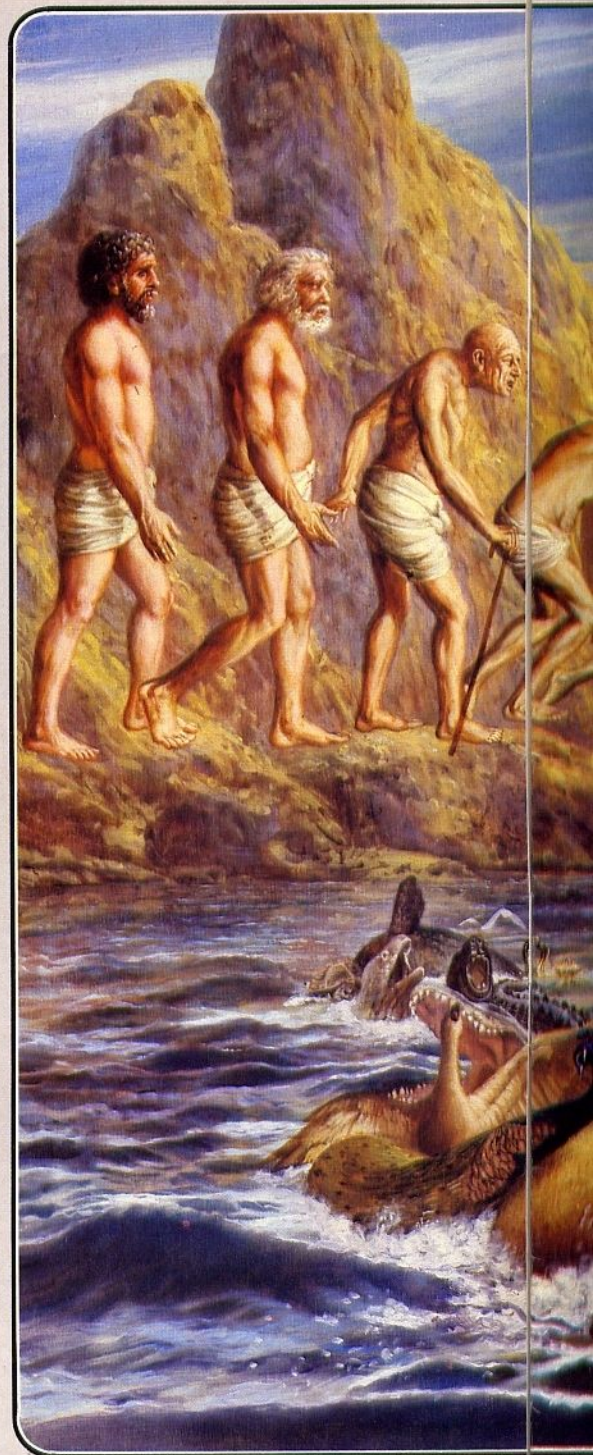
This is a natural cycle of this material world. It is similar to changes of season. After spring comes summer, and after summer comes fall and then winter, and then spring again. Similarly, after day comes night, and after night comes day. And just as these cyclic changes take place one after another, we change from one body to another, and it is natural to conclude that after leaving the present body we shall receive another body

(*bhūtvā bhūtvā pralyāte*).

This conclusion is very logical, it is supported by the *sāstra*, the Vedic literature, and it is also affirmed by the greatest authority, Kṛṣṇa Himself. Therefore why should we not accept it? If one does not accept this—if one thinks that there is no life after death—one is foolish.

There is life after death, and there is also the chance to free oneself from the cycle of repeated birth and death and attain a life of immortality. But because we have been accustomed to accepting one body after another since time immemorial, it is difficult for us to think of a life that is eternal. And the life of material existence is so troublesome that one may think that if there is an eternal life, that life must be troublesome also. For example, a diseased man who is taking very bitter medicine and who is lying down in bed, eating there and passing stool and urine there, unable to move, may find his life so intolerable that he thinks, "Let me commit suicide." Similarly, materialistic life is so miserable that in desperation one sometimes takes to a philosophy of voidism or impersonalism to try to negate his very existence and make everything zero. Actually, however, becoming zero is not possible, nor is it necessary. We are in trouble in our material condition, but when we get out of our material condition we can find real life, eternal life.

Because we are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, who is *ajā*, beyond birth and death, we are also *ajā*. How could we be otherwise? If my father is happy and I am the son of my father, why should I be unhappy? I can naturally conclude that I shall enjoy my father's property just as



my father is enjoying it. Similarly, God, Kṛṣṇa, is all-powerful, all-beautiful, all-knowledgeable, and complete in everything, and although I may not be complete, I am part and parcel of God, and therefore I have all the qualities of God to a partial extent.

God does not die, so I also shall not die. That is my position. That is explained in *Bhagavad-gītā* (2:20): *na jāyate mriyate vā kadācit*. Describing the soul, Kṛṣṇa says that the soul is never born (*na jāyate*), and if one is not born how can he die? There is no question of death (*mriyate*



vā). Death is for one who has taken birth, and if one has no birth he can also have no death.

Unfortunately, however, we do not know this. We are conducting scientific research, but we do not know that every living entity is a spiritual soul, with no birth and no death. This is our ignorance. The soul is eternal, everlasting, and primeval (*nityaḥ śāśvato 'yam purāṇo*). The soul does not die with the annihilation of the body (*na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*). But although the soul does not die, it accepts another body, and this is

called *bhava-roga*, the material disease.

Since Kṛṣṇa is the supreme living entity (*nityo nityānāṁ cetanaś cetanānām*), we are exactly like Kṛṣṇa, the difference being that Kṛṣṇa is *vibhu*, unlimited, whereas we are *aṇu*, limited. Qualitatively, we are as good as Kṛṣṇa. Therefore whatever propensities Kṛṣṇa has, we have also. For example, Kṛṣṇa has the propensity to love someone of the opposite sex, and therefore we have this same propensity. The beginning of love is present in the eternal love between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. We are also seeking eternal love,

Transmigration Through the Species. The *Vedas* describe that every living entity in the material world constantly reincarnates through 8,400,000 different forms of life, until at last he attains a human body. This is the point in the soul's evolution at which he can achieve liberation from repeated birth and death by reviving his original Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or God consciousness. The soul never changes, despite the inevitable aging and decay of the body. At death, if the living entity has failed to revive his loving relationship with God, he must again accept birth among the various species.

but because we are conditioned by the material laws, our love is interrupted. But if we can transcend this interruption, we can take part in loving affairs similar to those of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī. So our aim should be to go back home, back to Kṛṣṇa, because since Kṛṣṇa is eternal, we shall there receive an eternal body.

Although Kṛṣṇa is eternal, or unborn, it is sometimes said that He takes birth. But although Kṛṣṇa takes birth, His birth is not like ours. That we should know. The Lord says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.9):

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

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

It is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that when Kṛṣṇa first appeared, He did not take birth from the womb of Devakī; rather, He first appeared in the majestic four-armed form of Viṣṇu, and then He became a small child on Devakī's lap. Therefore Kṛṣṇa's birth is transcendental, whereas our birth takes place by force, by the laws of nature. Kṛṣṇa is not under the laws of nature; the laws of nature work under Him (*mayādhyaḥśena prakṛtiḥ sīyate sa-carācaram*). Prakṛti, nature, works under the order of Kṛṣṇa, and we work under the order of nature. Kṛṣṇa is the master of nature, and we are servants of nature. So it may appear that He has taken birth just like us, but in fact He has not. Only foolish persons say that He has taken birth like an ordinary human being. Kṛṣṇa confirms this in *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.11), *avaḥjananti mām mūḍhā mānuṣīṁ tanum āśritam*: “Because I have appeared just like a human being, those who are rascals think that I am also just like an ordinary human.” *Param bhāvam ajānantaḥ*: “They do not know the mystery behind God's taking birth like a human being.”

Kṛṣṇa is everywhere. The Lord is situated in everyone's heart (*īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṁ hṛd-deśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati*). And since He is within us and is all-powerful, why should it be difficult for Him to appear before us? When the great devotee Dhruva Mahārāja was engaged in meditation on the four-handed form of Viṣṇu, all of a sudden his meditation broke, and he immediately saw before him the same form upon which he had been meditating. Was it very difficult for Kṛṣṇa to appear in this way? Of course not. Similarly it was not difficult for Him to appear before Devakī in the same four-handed form. Therefore Kṛṣṇa says, *janma karma ca*

me divyam: “One must understand My transcendental birth and activities.”

But why should Kṛṣṇa perform the pastime of taking birth? To glorify those who are very pious and very much advanced in spiritual understanding. Kṛṣṇa comes as the son of Devakī to glorify His devotee Devakī. Kṛṣṇa becomes the son of Yaśodā to glorify Yaśodā. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa appears in the dynasty of Mahārāja Yadu, His great devotee, just to glorify Mahārāja Yadu. Thus Kṛṣṇa is still known as Yādava, the descendant of Mahārāja Yadu. Kṛṣṇa has no obligation to take His birth in a particular family or country, but He takes birth to glorify a certain person or a certain family because of their devotion. Therefore His birth is called *divyam*, transcendental.

The Lord is not obliged to take birth, but we are obliged to do so. That is the distinction between our birth and the birth of Kṛṣṇa. If by our *karma*, or activities, we are fit to take birth in a good family in human society or demigod society, we shall do so, but if our activities are low like those of animals, we shall have to take birth in a family of animals. That is the force of *karma*. *Karmaṇā daiva-netreṇa jantor dehohapattaye* (*Bhāg.* 3.31.1). We develop a certain type of body according to our *karma*.

The human form of life is meant for understanding the Supreme, the Absolute Truth (*athāto brahma-jijñāsā*). But if we do not endeavor for this, if we misuse this opportunity and simply remain like animals, we shall return to an animal form of life. Therefore the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is trying to save people from going down to animal life.

The appearance of Lord Kṛṣṇa is compared to the growth of sandalwood trees in the Malaya Hills (*malayasyeva candanam*). There are two Malayas—the Malaya Hills and the part of the world now known as Malaysia. The *candana* tree, or sandalwood tree, can grow anywhere—there is no rule that it has to grow in Malaysia or the Malaya Hills—but because this sandalwood grows in large quantities in those parts of the world, it is known as *malaya-candana*. In the Western countries there is scented water known as eau de cologne. It can be manufactured anywhere, but because it was originally manufactured in the city of Cologne, it is known as eau de cologne. Similarly, sandalwood can grow anywhere, but because it was originally very prominent in Malaysia and the Malaya Hills, it is known as Malayan sandalwood.

Because India is a tropical country and sandalwood is very cooling, people in India use sandalwood pulp as a cosmetic. Even now, during the very warm days of the summer season, those who can afford

to do so apply sandalwood pulp to their bodies and feel cool all day. In India it was the system that after bathing and sanctifying the body by applying marks of *tilaka*, one would offer obeisances to the Deity, take some *candana-prasāda* from the room of the Deity, and apply it as a cosmetic to the body. This was called *prasāadhanam*. But it is said that in the Kali-yuga, the present age, *snānam eva prasāadhanam* (*Bhāg.* 12.2.5): if one can even bathe nicely, that is *prasādhana*. In India even the poorest man will take an early morning bath every day, but when I came to America I saw that even taking one's daily bath may be a difficult thing and is often not the practice. In India we are accustomed to see people bathe thrice in a day, but in New York I have seen that one may have to go to a friend's house to bathe because one may not have facilities to do so at home. These are symptoms of Kali-yuga. *Snānam eva prasāadhanam*. In the Kali-yuga it will be very difficult even to take a bath.

Another symptom of Kali-yuga is *dākṣyaṁ kuṭumba-bharaṇam* (*Bhāg.* 12.2.7): one will be famous for his pious activities simply if he can maintain his family. The word *dākṣyam*, meaning “famous for pious activities,” comes from *dakṣa*, which means “expert.” In Kali-yuga one will be considered expert if he can maintain a family consisting of himself, his wife, and one or two children. In India, of course, the traditional family is the joint family, consisting of a man and his wife, their parents and children, their in-laws, and so on. But in Kali-yuga it will be difficult to maintain a simple family of oneself, one's wife, and a few children. When I was living in New York, among the people coming to our classes was an old lady who had a grown son. I asked her, “Why doesn't your son get married?” She replied, “Yes, he can marry when he can maintain a family.” I did not know that maintaining a family was such a difficult job here. But this is described in the *Bhāgavatam*: if one can maintain a family, he will be considered a very glorious man, and if a girl has a husband she will be considered very fortunate.

It is not our business to criticize, but the symptoms of Kali-yuga are very severe. The duration of Kali-yuga is 432,000 years, and although only 5,000 years of it have passed, already we find so many difficulties, and the more we grow into this Kali-yuga, the more the times will be difficult. The best course, therefore, is to complete our Kṛṣṇa consciousness and return home, back to Godhead. That will save us. Otherwise, if we come back again for another life in Kali-yuga, we shall find difficult days ahead, and we shall have to suffer more and more.



PHOTO: BHARGAVA DĀSA

ENCOUNTERS WITH THE LORD OF THE UNIVERSE

The British derided the roughly carved form of Lord Jagannātha as He rode on His chariot in Purī, but a century later that same form would win the worship of thousands of Westerners . . .

by RAVĪNDRA SVARŪPA DĀSA

Few things seemed more expressive of heathen idolatry to British missionaries in India than the annual chariot festival at Jagannātha Purī in Orissa. When the three great forms of Jagannātha (Kṛṣṇa, "Lord of the Universe"), Balarāma (His first expansion), and Subhadrā (His spiritual energy) were pulled on towering chariots mobbed by ecstatically chanting devotees, missionary outrage knew no bounds. Published reports from the last century evince an utter inability to comprehend the spectacle. Jagannātha is denounced as "the Moloch of Hindoostan," with "a frightful visage painted black, with a distended mouth of a bloody color." The European failure to understand Jagannātha naturally placed the

onus on the Indians: the parade of Jagannātha was simply an instance of the cultural inferiority of Indians, an example of primitive idol worship in all its pomp and savage ostentation, to be expected in India, "where the benighted Hindu," as one hymn put it, "bows down to wood and stone."

The British Empire has vanished, while the festival at Purī goes on. What is more, Lord Jagannātha now yearly rides His huge chariot through the streets of New York, London, Paris, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Boston, and many more cities. Thousands of Westerners turn out to throng about the chariots. The times have changed; Jagannātha has prevailed. The triumph

of Jagannātha means at least that the worship of the deity, once so incomprehensible to Westerners, has become intelligible and important to many of us. It has transcended mundane cultural differences and become the focus of a universal spiritual culture in its own right.

I want to tell you how Lord Jagannātha came into my own life, how I came to understand and indeed to worship Him as God Himself. Even though you may not embrace such worship yourself, you might like to understand why some of us do. The coming of Jagannātha to the West is arguably one of the significant cultural events of our time, and anyone who wants to understand these times will have to understand how Jagannātha came to be



PHOTO: NITYATEPTA-DEVI DASI

pulled down Fifth Avenue. My own story is part of that history.

I can see how the physical appearance of the deities of Jagannātha Purī could lead some to a superficial apprehension of them as "heathen idols." Kṛṣṇa Himself is usually shown in His eternal, spiritual, two-handed humanlike form. (Precisely speaking, our human form is Kṛṣṇalike.) But in the form of Jagannātha, Kṛṣṇa appears somewhat stylized or abstract, like a work of primitive art. His body is rounded, without visible legs. His two arms come straight out at you, and His

hands are indicated only by the outline of a discus on the end of one arm and of a conch on the other; these are emblems of divinity held by the Lord. His large countenance is jet black, and He has huge and perfectly round white eyes that stare at you intently. His wide red mouth is drawn up in a mirthful smile. Balarāma, who is Kṛṣṇa's first expansion and who appeared historically with Kṛṣṇa as His older brother, is slightly larger. His complexion is pure white, and His red-rimmed eyes are shaped like teardrops. Balarāma is smiling in delight. The deity of Subhadrā,

Kṛṣṇa's spiritual potency and, historically, His sister, is yellow complexioned. Her arms are not visible at all. Her eyes are like Balarāma's, and she is smiling almost mischievously from her place between her two larger brothers. All three fix their gaze on you with the round black centers of their wide eyes.

It is said that King Indradyumna first commissioned these three deities, and engaged Viśvakarmā, the architect of the demigods, to carve them. The impatient king took a peek at the work before the sculptor was finished, thus breaking his



Lord Kṛṣṇa appears in the form of Jagannātha, seen here accompanied by His sister Subhadrā (center) and His elder brother Balarāma (left). Although uncommon in His features and aspect, Jagannātha is the same Kṛṣṇa glorified in the Vedic scriptures as the Lord of the Universe.

and spirit into matter. The authorized worship of the deity is thus quite different from the worship of idols, of manmade surrogates for God. I will return to this point later.

I came into personal contact with Lord Jagannātha in the summer of 1968, some time before I met His devotees, who revealed His identity to me. I had just finished my first year of graduate work in religion. My study of religion was far from academic. I had come to view the historic collapse of value and meaning in Western civilization as an immense threat not only to our culture but to me personally. Religion had been on the retreat for at least five hundred years, and all attempts to construct secular substitutes had failed. I saw that most sensitive, intelligent people held no convictions at all, while those who believed did so with a fanaticism that exposed their convictions as a desperate defense against the terror of their own bottomless nihilism. I needed options other than these. I had decided to study religion especially to see if any solutions were available outside contemporary Western culture.

That year I had learned Hinduism from a scholarly swami of the impersonalistic or monistic school; I found his teachings attractive. He taught that the highest truth, called "Brahman" in the *Vedas*, was "the negation of all attributes or relationships." If we can destroy the illusion of multiplicity, we will realize our identity with Brahman and be liberated.

The characterization of "Brahman" by thoroughgoing negations was plausible to me, since it was cognitively no different from the atheistic or nihilistic view of reality I already held. To think that there is nothing beyond the world and to think that beyond the world is "Brahman," without relations or qualities, is practically the same. The latter idea, however, occurs in a context that promises ultimate liberation from the world.

We also learned about *karma-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga* as means to attain impersonal liberation. *Bhakti* was the worship of God in a personal form, a worship that ultimately ends, according to my teacher, when the aspirant realizes that the difference between himself and God is illusory. And that summer I tried practically to

promise. Angered, Viśvakarmā walked off the job, and Indradyumna installed the deities as they were. We understand, however, that Kṛṣṇa intended to appear in these particular forms; there was no happenstance. A person with spiritual vision can see that the deity of Jagannātha is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa Himself. A devotee once asked Śrīla Prabhupāda (who introduced the authorized process of deity worship to the West) why Jagannātha looked different from Kṛṣṇa. "Oh?" Śrīla Prabhupāda replied. "He looks different?"

The deity of Kṛṣṇa is a form of Kṛṣṇa Himself, and this is directly perceived by an advanced devotee. The appearance of Kṛṣṇa as the deity is, however, especially intended for those of us who are not so advanced, who do not have the purified vision to see directly the spiritual form of God. God is not wood or stone: He is spirit. But He is capable of appearing as wood or as stone. Since we can see or touch only wood and stone, God, out of mercy to us, appears so that we can see and serve Him personally. For God there is no problem in turning matter into spirit

apply the swami's teachings about *karma-yoga*.

During the summer I worked in a tin-can factory in Salem, Oregon; my wife and I were visiting her family there. The pay was good, the work hellish. Our ears plugged against the din, we crawled like ants around the sprawling body of a roaring assembly line that devoured sheets of metal at one end and spewed out endless racks of finished cans at the other. Serving the machine like a robot, moving without letup at the machine's pace in a fixed mechanical routine, I tried to apply the "yoga of work" as taught by the swami.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa says that we should perform our work as an offering to Him by surrendering the fruits of our work to Him. This means practically I should give the fruit of my work—my earnings—to Kṛṣṇa's representative, the devotee, for him to use in Kṛṣṇa's service by preaching, temple worship, and so on. That is how we can perform our work for God without attachment: we give the results to Him.

This straightforward understanding of the *Gītā*, however, was not available to the swami, since, according to him, we ourselves are God. To keep the money for ourselves is to give it to God. The swami had to propound a more convoluted doctrine. He taught that *karma-yoga* entailed a sort of conceptual renunciation, trying to become unattached to the fruits of our labor by a mental act, while, all the same, we enjoy them. To do this, the swami said, you should try not to think about the results of your work while you are working; you should try to work for the sake of the work itself. You should merge yourself totally into your work, become lost in it. So, day after day, I tried to merge into the tin-can factory, to become absorbed with all my might in the endless repetition of a mindless routine. But I felt no liberation, no ecstasy. The only joy I could take in the work was getting the paycheck at week's end.

Yet in spite of my bad instruction in *karma-yoga*, there may have been something sincere in my efforts, for as it turned out, part of the fruit of my work did become used (without my knowledge) for Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa says in the *Gītā* that He is in the heart of every creature, and when He sees in one a sincere desire to return to Him, He makes the proper arrangements.

At the end of summer my wife and I visited a famous import plaza in Portland, where we wandered for hours, making a few purchases with the summer's savings. As we were preparing to leave, I happened upon a large cardboard box filled with carved figures six inches high; some were black, some white, and some yellow.

I stopped and picked one up, staring in wonder at its glowing black face; its wide round eyes looked back into mine. I examined each figure in amazement. They seemed to be primitive works of art, and yet they achieved an effect so sophisticated it contrasted startlingly with the apparent crudeness of execution. The faces of the figures, with their intensely staring eyes and their broad smiles, exquisitely combined profound wisdom and spontaneous joy. The unity was fascinating, and I remember thinking how un-

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fathomable was the mentality that had produced these figures.

Having only enough money left to purchase one of them, I stood before the box, picking up one and then another. When we left, I was carrying Lord Balarāma home with me.

"One cannot attain the Supreme or any form of self-realization," Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in *Kṛṣṇa*. "without being sufficiently favored by Balarāma. One must have the spiritual strength which is infused by Balarāma. Balarāma is spiritual power, or the original spiritual master. And the spiritual master is the representative of Balarāma, who gives spiritual strength."

Not knowing the identity of my figure, not even knowing that He was somewhere an object of worship, I placed Him on the shelf over my desk in Philadelphia, where for the next two semesters He watched over my labors, my speculative struggles to find some transcendent purpose to my life. His face, which so extraordinarily fused knowledge and bliss, never lost its fascination.

It was the height of the social warfare of the sixties. I belonged to both sides and equally mistrusted both. I attended classes, read books, wrote papers, even taught courses, but I saw no future for me

in the academic establishment. ("Twenty years of schooling and they put you on the day shift," Bob Dylan wisely warned.) My friends belonged to what came to be called the counterculture. In the evenings we would sit together seeking pharmacological liberation, watching reality crumble. Sweet anarchy sang to us from the streets. We waited for the end, that apocalypse just around the corner, which for some reason never came. The most evident disintegration was taking place in the relationships and in the personalities of the people about me: there was no future in it.

I delved into the world's religions, toiled over books while my white-faced figure smiled down. I concluded that year that some essential teaching of all religion had been succinctly captured by the Buddha in three propositions. The first was that material existence is suffering. Some people never see this; to me it was excruciatingly obvious. The second proposition was that the root cause of this suffering is our cravings, our desires. I accepted this on the testimony of the Buddha and many other spiritual authorities from different traditions; it made a great deal of sense to me. Consequently, I accepted the third proposition: freedom or release from suffering is attained by extirpation of these desires.

As I became increasingly convinced of these things, I also became more and more aware that the life I was leading was wrapping me tighter and tighter in the skein of desires. Both the counterculture and the establishment were dedicated to the satisfaction of material desires: the whole disagreement was in the method to achieve it. Whether indigenous or imported, all the religions with which I had had personal contact had also accommodated themselves to the same enterprise. No help or even encouragement would ever come from these quarters. Yet by myself I was utterly unable to control my senses. I wanted to extirpate all material cravings and attachments, yet I couldn't even quit smoking cigarettes.

Whatever illusions I retained about the possibilities of material life were completely shattered in the fall, when my brother Bob, two years my junior, was killed on the highways. Death shed its abstractness and lived with me with the vivid immediacy of another person. And beneath all the turmoil of grief, I began to gain the hard kernel of a dreadful, awesome clarity. I saw that we live our ordinary lives only by virtue of a frenetic denial of death. The close proximity of death released me from the desperate charade so necessary to our ordinary life: the denial of mortality that makes confidence men of us all. I saw how we waste

our spirit in elaborate self-deceptions, in the endless barren labor of a fake consciousness. Yet I knew that in time these deceptions would grow back. We require our lies. We must pretend not to see the slaughter all around us, the knife at our throats. Consciousness would destroy our paradise. I realized that the only means to a consciousness free of illusion and self-deception lay in becoming genuinely unattached to material existence. After the death of my brother, my desire for release became intense and urgent.

That same fall, when crossing campus on the way to class, I saw for the first time a row of saffron-robed Kṛṣṇa devotees chanting. It intrigued me that the missionary effort was now coming this way. The next time I saw them, I purchased a pamphlet called *Who Is Crazy?* I gave it a quick reading and couldn't make much of it. Soon after that, a friend dropped by with news of something new in town, something really "far out": a Hare Kṛṣṇa "love feast." He had never been to anything more far out. He came Sunday to take us. I had to be coaxed; I hated to disturb the languor of my Sundays.

We parked on a drab street of tightly packed row houses, went up some broken steps, left our shoes on a sagging porch, and when the door opened walked into dazzling splendor and overwhelming beauty. That was my immediate impression. Looking back, I realize that the temple then was rather makeshift and barren: a few pictures on the wall, a tacked-together altar against the front window. Still, the air was thick with heady incense and the pungency of exotic spices cooking; the throbbing chant of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* came from the temple room, where a press of bodies, hands upraised, swayed to the music. We chanted, heard a lecture, feasted. My senses were overwhelmed by the density of stimuli put out by this utterly strange environment; every item of the feast exploded against my palate like a small revelation.

I never heard anything as welcome as the lecture after the chanting. The devotee spoke very strongly about the need to become free from material desires. He laid down four regulative principles, the pillars of spiritual life: no meat-eating, no intoxication, no illicit sex, no gambling. I know that many people who hear this in a Kṛṣṇa temple are put off. I was attracted at once. At last, I thought, someone is willing to tell the truth.

Then the devotee began to explain how the control of the senses was practically possible. Mere negation or suppression of material desire, he said, will not work. The senses require engagement: if you

try to stop the material activities of your senses without replacing those activities with something superior, you will quickly fall down. But if you give your senses superior spiritual engagement, your material activities will naturally cease, and you will remain fixed in consciousness. Spiritual life, he said, begins with control of the tongue: eating for sense gratification and talking of material things bind us firmly to material existence. Of course, it is virtually impossible to stop eating or talking. But if we eat only the spiritual

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food offered to Kṛṣṇa and chant and talk only about Kṛṣṇa, then our senses have spiritual engagement and automatically cease their material activities. Similarly, the devotee explained, all the other senses can be engaged in the spiritual activity of devotional service.

For the first time I had heard a reasonable account of how to become free from material desires. The devotee had, as if talking directly to me, explained my own failure and told me how to succeed. The lecture was so sensible, and the devotees and their temple were so attractive, that I began that week to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, and I returned to the temple next Sunday with enthusiasm.

If I had realized how coherent the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness was, I might have been able to deduce from the lecture on sense control that it was integral with an extremely personal conception of God. Without such a conception, the idea of "spiritual activity" or "transcendental engagement of the senses" becomes meaningless. If God has no name, form, or qualities, how can we talk about Him? If He is not an individual person, how can we serve Him? If the impersonalists are right, then chanting and hearing about Kṛṣṇa or serving Kṛṣṇa

are material activities, and they would not purify our senses and gradually uproot our material desires.

I naturally assumed, however, that the devotees were impersonalists like me. They were speaking strongly to the contrary, but it took some exposure for their words to penetrate the barrier of my own impersonalism. Their conception of God, of Kṛṣṇa, was so concrete, so specific in its detail, that I assumed it had to be taken as a symbol or qualified in some other way. Kṛṣṇa's luminous blue complexion, the peacock feather on His fine black hair, the silver flute raised to the smiling lips—surely these were material images, at best a manifestation in the world of time and space of something originally unmanifest, before which all words and images must fail. If we brought such words and images to the Supreme, then wouldn't we be limiting it by our mundane conceptions?

All my preconceptions were destroyed, however, when at the love feast I overheard a devotee say to someone: "Oh, no, you don't understand. Kṛṣṇa is *beyond* that light! The clear light is emanating from the transcendental body of Kṛṣṇa!" Instantly, all the different pieces of the Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy I had heard came together coherently. And in my mind the conceptual edifice of impersonal philosophy came crashing down as though someone had put a bomb under it.

The devotees presented a powerful case. I had thought that a personal conception would have limited the Supreme, but I found their arguments that the impersonal conception was the most limiting of all to be completely persuasive. For what is the difference between God defined completely by negations and no God at all? (I recalled the ease with which I had passed from nihilism to impersonalism.) What is great about a big zero? It is the impersonalists, the devotees argued, who impose their material conceptions on the Supreme, not the personalists. The impersonalists assume that if God has form, it must be a material form like ours; if He has activities and qualities, they must be material activities and qualities. Upon hearing about God's name, form, qualities, and activities, the impersonalists immediately limit Him by thinking of them as material. Therefore, they deny all these attributes and reduce God down to a nullity. Because they are enmeshed in the material conception of life, they cannot comprehend that there can be spiritual name, spiritual form, spiritual qualities, and spiritual activities. The devotees of God accept such transcendental variegatedness. They admit that God has an impersonal feature, but they

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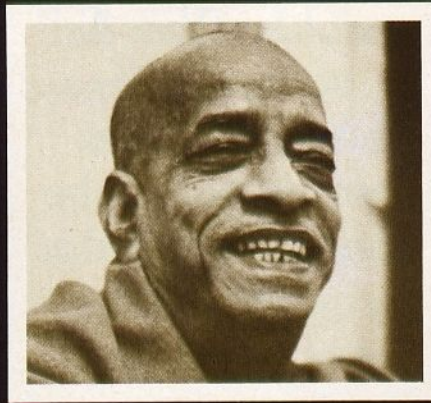
The Biography of a Pure Devotee

“I’M DOING THIS FOR THE SWAMI”

1966: The Lower East Side, New York.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s young followers would ring the buzzer at 26 Second Avenue, open the door, and walk into the spiritual world.

by ŚRĪLA SATSVARŪPA DĀSA GOSWAMI



After a yearlong struggle, Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mission of transplanting Kṛṣṇa consciousness from India to America won its first dedicated supporters.

In Keith, Prabhupāda had a serious follower. Within a week of their meeting, Keith had moved out of the Mott Street apartment and was living with Prabhupāda. He still dressed in his ragged denim shorts and T-shirt, but he began to do all the Swami’s shopping and cooking. While in India, Keith had learned some of the etiquette of reverence toward a holy man and the principles of discipleship. His friends watched him curiously as he dedicated himself to the Swami.

Keith: *I saw that he was cooking, so I asked him if I could help. And he was very happy at the suggestion. He showed me how to make capātīs without a rolling pin by pressing out the dough with your fingers. Every day we would make capātīs, rice, dāl, and curries.*

So Keith became the dependable cook and housekeeper in Prabhupāda’s apartment. Meanwhile, at the Mott Street apartment, the boys’ favorite topic for discussion was their relationship with the

Swami. Everyone thought it was a serious relationship. They knew Swamiji was *guru*. And when they heard that he would be giving daily classes at 6 a.m., up in his apartment, they were eager to attend.

Keith: *I used to walk along the Bowery and look for flowers for him. When there were no flowers, I would take a straw or some grass. I loved going over there in the morning.*

Chuck: *I brought a few grapes and came to the Swami’s door. This was all new. Previously I would always walk toward McDougall Street, toward Bohemia, aesthetic New York—and now I walked to the Lower East Side toward the business district, where there were no artists or musicians, but simply straight buildings. And somehow, outside the carnival atmosphere, there was the richest attraction for the senses and the heart.*

Howard: *I would walk very briskly over to Swamiji’s, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, feeling better than ever before. Miraculously, the Lower East Side no longer looked drab. The sidewalks and buildings seemed to sparkle, and in the early morning before the smog set in, the sky was red and golden.*

Chuck: *I came into the hall of his building, and there were many, many names printed on plaques over the mailboxes. I immediately found the name, “A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami,” handwritten on a slip of torn paper, slipped into one of the slots. I rang the buzzer and waited. After a few moments, the door buzzed loudly, and I entered through the security lock. I walked through the small garden into the rear building and upstairs.*

Prabhupāda held his classes for almost two months in the privacy of his room, the same room where he typed and talked to guests. To Keith it was not simply a class in philosophy but a mystical experience of sweetness.

Keith: *The sound of his voice, the sun coming up . . . we’d chant for a few*

From *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*, by Sat-svarūpa dāsa Goswami. © 1980 by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.

minutes, softly clapping hands, and Swamiji would speak. The thing that got me most was simply the sound of his voice, especially while he was chanting Sanskrit. It was like music.

So as not to disturb the neighbors, Prabhupāda would say, "Chant softly," and he asked the boys to clap softly, so softly that their hands barely touched. Then he would chant the prayers to the spiritual master: *samsāra-dāvānala-līḍhaloka*. "The spiritual master is receiving benediction from the ocean of mercy. Just as a cloud pours water on a forest fire to extinguish it, so the spiritual master extinguishes the blazing fire of material existence." With his eyes closed, he sat singing softly in the dim morning light. The few who attended—Keith, Howard, Chuck, Steve, Wally—sat entranced. Never before had the Swami been so appreciated.

Chuck: *The Swami was sitting there, and in the mornings he would look not shiny and brilliant, but very withdrawn. He looked as if he could sit like a stone maybe forever. His eyes were only two tiny slits of glistening light. He took out his cymbals and played lightly on the edge—one, two, three—and he began to sing in a deep voice that was almost atonal in its intervals. It was a melody-monotone that did not express happiness or sadness. We chanted along with him as best we could, but several times Swamiji stopped and said, "Softly." After about thirty minutes of chanting, we stopped. Then he opened his eyes wider and said, "We must chant softly, because sometimes the neighbors are complaining."*

After singing, the Swami would give one of the boys a copy of Dr. Radhakrishnan's edition of *Bhagavad-gītā* to read aloud from. He would correct their mispronunciations and then explain each verse. Because only a few people were present, there was always ample time for everyone to discuss the philosophy.

Steve: *Swamiji mentioned that mangoes were the king of all fruits, and he even mentioned that they were not easily available in this country. It occurred to me that I could bring him mangoes. There was a store on First Avenue that always kept a stock of fresh mangoes in the cooler. I began a regular habit. Every day after getting off work, I would purchase one nice mango and bring it to Swamiji.*

Wally: *Some of the boys would say, "I'm doing this for the Swami." So I went to him and said, "Is there something I can do for you?" So he told me I could take notes in his class.*

The boys were sure that their service to Swamiji was spiritual, devotional service. By serving the spiritual master, who was a representative of Kṛṣṇa, you were

serving Kṛṣṇa directly.

One morning Prabhupāda told Howard that he needed help in spreading the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Howard wanted to help, so he offered to type the Swami's manuscripts of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Howard: *The first words of the first verse read, "O the King." And naturally I wondered whether "O" was the king's name and "the king" stood in apposition. After some time I figured out that "O king" was intended instead. I didn't make the correction without his permission. "Yes," he said, "change it then." I began*

They picked it up quickly: You did something, but for Kṛṣṇa. Service had to be done voluntarily, out of love, not by force.

to point out a few changes and inform him that if he wanted I could make corrections, that I had a master's in English and taught last year at Ohio State. "Oh, yes," Swamiji said. "Do it. Put it nicely."

He was giving them the idea of devotional service. "A devotee may not be perfect at first," he said, "but if he is engaged in service, once that service has begun he can be purified. Service is always there, in the material world or the spiritual." But service in the material world could not bring satisfaction to the self—only *bhakti*, purified service, service rendered to Kṛṣṇa, could do that. And the best way to serve Kṛṣṇa was to serve the representative of Kṛṣṇa.

They picked it up quickly. It was something you could do easily; it was not difficult like meditation—it was activity. You did something, but you did it for Kṛṣṇa. They had seen Swamiji respond to the Bowery bum who had come with a gift of toilet paper. "Just see," Swamiji had said, "he is not in order, but he thought, 'Let me give some service.'" But service had to be done voluntarily, out of love, not by force.

Wally: *Swamiji once asked me, "Do you think you could wear the Vaiṣṇava tilaka when you are on the streets?" I said,*

"Well, I would feel funny doing it, but if you want me to I will." And Swamiji said, "No, I don't ask you to do anything you don't want to do."

Steve: *One day when I brought my daily mango to him he was in his room surrounded by devotees. I gave him my mango and sat down, and he said, "Very good boy." The way he said it, as if I were just a tiny little boy, made everyone in the room laugh, and I felt foolish. Swamiji, however, then changed their mood by saying, "No. This is actually love. This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness." And then they didn't laugh.*

When Howard first volunteered to do editing, he spent the whole morning working in Swamiji's room. "If there is any more typing," Howard said, "let me know. I could take it back to Mott Street and type there."

"More? There's lots more," Swamiji said. He opened the closet and pulled out two large bundles of manuscripts tied in saffron cloth. There were thousands of pages, single-spaced manuscripts of Prabhupāda's translations of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Howard stood before them, astonished. "It's a lifetime of typing," he said. And Prabhupāda smiled and said, "Oh, yes, many lifetimes."

Because of Prabhupāda's presence and the words that he spoke there and the *kīrtanas*, everyone was already referring to the storefront as "the temple." But still it was just a bare, squalid storefront. The inspiration to decorate the place came from the Mott Street boys.

Howard, Keith, and Wally devised a scheme to surprise the Swami when he came to the evening *kīrtana*. Wally removed the curtains from their apartment, took them to the laundromat (where they turned the water dark brown from filth), and then dyed them purple. The Mott Street apartment was decorated with posters, paintings, and large decorative silk hangings that Howard and Keith had brought back from India. The boys gathered up all their pictures, tapestries, incense burners, and other paraphernalia and took them, along with the purple curtains, to the storefront, where they began their day of decorating.

At the storefront the boys constructed a wooden platform for Prabhupāda to sit on and covered it with old velvet cloth. Behind the platform, on the rear wall between the two windows to the courtyard, they hung the purple curtains, flanked by a pair of orange ones. Against the orange panel, just above Swamiji's sitting place, they hung a large original painting of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa on a circular canvas that James Greene had done. Prabhupāda had commissioned James, giving him the

dust jacket from his *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, with its crude Indian drawing, as a model. The figures were somewhat abstract, but the Lower East Side critics who frequented the storefront hailed the work as a wonderful achievement.

Keith and Howard were less confident that Prabhupāda would approve of their paintings and prints from India, so they hung them near the street side of the temple, away from Swamiji's seat. One of these prints, well known in India, was of Hanumān carrying a mountain through the sky to Lord Rāmacandra. The boys had no idea what kind of being Hanumān was. They thought perhaps he was a cat, because of the shape of his upper lip. Then there was the picture of a male person with six arms—two arms, painted greenish, held a bow and arrow; another pair, bluish, held a flute; and the third pair, golden, held a stick and bowl.

By late afternoon they had covered the sitting platform, hung the curtains, tacked up the decorative silks and prints and hung the paintings, and were decorating the dais with flowers and candlesticks. Someone brought a pillow for Swamiji to sit on and a faded cushion from an overstuffed chair for a backrest.

In addition to the Mott Street cache, Robert Nelson took one of his grandfather's Belgian-style Oriental rugs from his garage in the suburbs and brought it by subway to the storefront. Even Raphael and Don took part in the decorating.

The secret was well kept, and the boys waited to see Swamiji's response. That night, when he walked in to begin the *kīrtana*, he looked at the newly decorated temple (there was even incense burning), and he raised his eyebrows in satisfaction. "You are advancing," he said as he looked around the room, smiling broadly. "Yes," he added, "this is Kṛṣṇa consciousness." His sudden, happy mood seemed almost like their reward for their earnest labors. He then stepped up onto the platform—while the boys held their breaths, hoping it would be sturdy—and he sat, looking out appreciatively at the devotees and the decorations.

They had pleased him. But he now assumed a feature of extreme gravity, and though they knew he was certainly the same Swamiji, their titterings stuck in their throats, and their happy glances to each other suddenly abated in uncertainty and nervousness. As they regarded Swamiji's gravity, their joy of a few moments before seemed suddenly childish. As a cloud quickly covers the sun like a dark shade, Prabhupāda changed his mood from jolly to grave—and they spontaneously resolved to become equally grave and sober. He picked up the *kara-tālas* and again smiled a ray of apprecia-

tion, and their hearts beamed back.

The temple was still a tiny storefront, with many hidden and unhidden cockroaches, a tilted floor, and poor lighting. But because many of the decorations were from India, it had an authentic atmosphere, especially with Swamiji present on the dais. Now guests who entered were suddenly in a little Indian temple.

Mike Grant: *I came one evening, and all of a sudden there were carpets on the floor, pictures on the wall, and paintings. Just all of a sudden it had blossomed and was full of people. I was amazed how in just a matter of days people had brought*

Their hearts had awakened to Swamiji's promise of expanded consciousness, and they sensed in his company something exalted.

so many wonderful things. When I came that evening and saw how it had been decorated, then I wasn't so much worried that he was going to make it. I thought it was really beginning to take hold now.

Prabhupāda looked at his group of followers. He was moved by their offering him a seat of honor and their attempts at decorating Kṛṣṇa's storefront. To see a devotee make an offering to Kṛṣṇa was not new for him. But *this* was new. In New York, "this horrible place," the seed of *bhakti* was growing, and naturally, as the gardener of that tender sprout, he was touched by Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Glancing at the pictures on the wall he said, "Tomorrow I will come look at the pictures and tell you which are good."

The next day, Prabhupāda came down to appraise the new artwork on display. One framed watercolor painting was of a man playing a drum while a girl danced. "This one is all right," he said. But another painting of a woman was more mundane, and he said, "No, this painting is not so good." He walked to the back of the temple, followed anxiously by Howard, Keith, and Wally. When he came upon the painting of the six-armed person, he said, "Oh, this is very nice."

"Who is it?" Wally asked.

"This is Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu,"

Śrīla Prabhupāda replied.

"Why does He have six arms?"

"Because He showed Himself to be both Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. These are the arms of Rāma, and these are the arms of Kṛṣṇa."

"What are the other two arms?" Keith asked.

"Those are the arms of a *sannyāsī*."

He went to the next picture, "This is also very nice."

"Who is it?" Howard asked.

"This is Hanumān."

"Is he a cat?"

"No," Prabhupāda replied. "He is a monkey."

Hanumān is glorified in the scripture *Rāmāyaṇa* as the valiant, faithful servant of Lord Rāmacandra. Millions of Indians worship the incarnation of Lord Rāma and His servitor Hanumān, whose exploits are perennially exhibited in theater, cinema, art, and temple worship. In not knowing who Hanumān was, the Mott Street boys were no less ignorant than the old ladies uptown who, when Prabhupāda had asked whether any of them had seen a picture of Kṛṣṇa, had all stared blankly. The Lower East Side mystics didn't know Hanumān from a cat, and they had brought back from their hashish version of India a picture of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu without even knowing who He was. Yet there was an important difference between these boys and the ladies uptown: the boys were serving Swamiji and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. They were through with material life and the middle-class work-reward syndrome. Their hearts had awakened to Swamiji's promise of expanded Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and they sensed in his personal company something exalted. Like the Bowery bum who had donated toilet paper during Prabhupāda's lecture, the Lower East Side boys did not have their minds quite in order, and yet, as Prabhupāda saw it, Kṛṣṇa was guiding them from within their hearts. Prabhupāda knew they would change for the better by chanting and hearing about Kṛṣṇa.

The summer of 1966 moved into August, and Prabhupāda kept good health. For him these were happy days. New Yorkers complained of the summer heat waves, but this caused no inconvenience to one accustomed to the 100-degree-plus temperatures of Vṛndāvana's blazing summers. "It is like India," he said, as he went without a shirt, seeming relaxed and at home. He had thought that in America he would have to subsist on boiled potatoes (otherwise there would be nothing but meat), but here he was happily eating the same rice, *dāl*, and *capātīs*, and cooking on the same three-stacked cooker as in India. Work on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*

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ENCOUNTERS

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affirm that He also possesses, beyond that, an eternal personal feature of transcendental name, form, qualities, and activities full of bliss and knowledge. In this way, there are no limits placed upon the Supreme. Specific form does not limit God, for He has unlimited transcendental forms (but of all such forms, that of Kṛṣṇa is the highest).

I found these arguments unassailable. True, it was still amazing to think that God was, in His highest feature, a bluish youth, tending cows in His spiritual abode—but then, on the other hand, shouldn't God *be* amazing, the most amazing of all?

The detailed artistic depictions of Kṛṣṇa I saw in the temple were more than just accurate representations of Him; they were nondifferent from Him. This was a feature of His absolute or spiritual nature. Kṛṣṇa, the devotees explained, is absolute, or nondual. The variety of the spiritual world is not affected by the duality that characterizes material variety. When, for example, I say the word *water*, it doesn't quench my thirst, because in the world of duality the object and its name are different. But in the spiritual world there is no such duality. I say "Kṛṣṇa" and Kṛṣṇa is fully present. As He is fully present in His name, Kṛṣṇa is also fully present in His picture or statue. Because of such nonduality, we can associate with Kṛṣṇa directly through His name, or through the deity, and we become purified by that association. (I knew this to be factually true: after a few weeks of chanting, I was beginning to give up my bad habits; the clamor of material desire was subsiding.)

Thus, the deity worship of the Kṛṣṇa devotees, as witnessed with such distress by the foreign missionaries at Purī, is based on a cogent and powerful philosophy of personalism, one which, I became convinced, far excels any religious philosophy produced in the West. At the root of the missionaries' failure to understand the worship of Jagannātha was their own deep impersonalism. For even though Christianity claims to be a personal religion, it has become undermined by impersonal speculation. If you ask a Christian to describe God, he will generally be able to give you only a concatenation of abstractions, which he will then qualify by saying that they do not literally apply to God. What little he gives with one hand, he takes away with the other. As the great Catholic theologian Thomas Aquinas confessed: "We cannot know what God is, but only what He is not." If this is so, then how can we love God, a cipher, an unknown? There can be no

spiritual engagement for the mind and the senses, only denials and barren abnegations, and then an inevitable return to material activities in frustration. This is the tragedy of Western spirituality.

The full import of the philosophy of personalism came to me gradually. I studied the books of Śrīla Prabhupāda with close attention, and one by one tested all his arguments until I was fully satisfied of their soundness. But at the same time, I could feel the effects of

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chanting as a direct experiential confirmation. And on my third or fourth visit to the temple, something extraordinary happened.

During the chanting, my eyes roamed about the temple. I was only beginning to take in all that was there. Suddenly I saw, high over the altar, something that stopped me cold. There, looking down at me, was an intimately familiar face: the same pure white complexion, those same intense eyes, that same wide smile. It was a larger version of the figure who had stood for so long over my desk. I was so shaken I could hardly eat. As soon as I could, I sought out the temple president.

"Who is that figure over the altar—the white one?" I asked him with great trepidation.

"That's Lord Balarāma," he said. "He's Kṛṣṇa's brother. He's Kṛṣṇa's first expansion and is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa."

"The black one is Kṛṣṇa?"

"The black one is Kṛṣṇa, and the white one is Balarāma."

I had to tell him.

"Look," I said. "I don't know what to do about this. But the white one—"

"Balarāma."

"Balarāma. I have Him at home."

The devotee looked at me.

"Really. I have Him at my house. I got Him at an import plaza a couple of years ago . . . What should I do with Him?"


"Worship Him," the devotee said immediately.

So when I got home, I took Lord Balarāma down and dusted Him off. I got some cloth and made a place in my living room for Him. I began to offer Him incense, and I would sit and chant in front of Him.

It was impossible to persuade myself that there was merely a coincidence here. It amazed me each time to look upon that face which had attracted me for so long, whose mystery I had tried so often to fathom, and now to know that it was in fact the face of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Balarāma had led me to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. A devotee had told me that by the grace of Kṛṣṇa you get a spiritual master, and by the grace of the spiritual master you get Kṛṣṇa. I didn't doubt that at all.

A year later, my wife and I and our two children moved into the Kṛṣṇa temple. By the summer of 1972, when I was president of the Philadelphia temple, by the kindness of Śrīla Prabhupāda I was able to install in the temple large and gravely beautiful deities of Jagannātha, Balarāma, and Subhadrā and to take them out through downtown Philadelphia in the first chariot festival on the East Coast of America.

I wanted to give you a personal glimpse into a small part of a large story of the coming of Jagannātha to America. You can see many elements at work: the frustration of material life, the pressures of a turbulent time, even an intellectual confrontation between personal and impersonal theology. Many elements were at work, but there is one thing that should not be overlooked. Kṛṣṇa Himself—in the forms of the Jagannātha deities—was there for me to take. He had arrived on these shores coincidentally with His pure devotee, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Jagannātha came to the West of His own accord, because *He* wanted to. Because we were at long last ready for Him. 



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ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the "cream of the Vedic literatures" of ancient India. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa*, or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. The original Sanskrit text is presented here with transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Second Canto: "The Cosmic Manifestation"

CHAPTER FIVE

The Cause of All Causes

As our serialized presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam continues, Lord Brahmā, the creator of our universe, begins to describe in detail the cosmic processes set into motion by an authority and controller even more powerful than he.

PURPORT

Even Brahmā, the creator of the universe, admits that he is not the actual creator but is simply inspired by the Lord Nārāyaṇa and therefore creates under His superintendence those things already created by Him, the Supersoul of all living entities. Two identities of soul, the Supersoul and the individual soul, are admitted to be in the living entity, even by the greatest authority of the universe. The Supersoul is the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, whereas the individual soul is the eternal servitor of the Lord. The Lord inspires the individual soul to create what is already created by the Lord, and by the good will of the Lord a discoverer of something in the world is accredited as the discoverer. It is said that Columbus discovered the Western Hemisphere, but actually the tract of land was not created by Columbus. The vast tract of land was already there by the omnipotency of the Supreme Lord, and Columbus, by dint of his past service unto the Lord, was blessed with the credit of discovering America. Similarly, no one can create anything without the sanction of the Lord, since everyone sees according to his ability. This ability is also awarded by the Lord according to one's willingness to render service unto the Lord. One must therefore be voluntarily willing to render service unto the Lord, and thus the Lord will empower the doer in proportion to his surrender unto the lotus feet of the Lord. Lord Brahmā is a great devotee of the Lord; therefore he has been empowered or inspired by the Lord to create such a universe as the one manifested before us. The Lord also inspired Arjuna to fight in the field of Kurukṣetra as follows:

*tasmāt tvam uttiṣṭha yaśo labhasva
jītvā śatrūn bhunṅṣva rājyaṁ samṛddham
mayaivaite nihatāḥ pūrvam eva
nimitta-mātraṁ bhava savyasācin*

(Bg. 11.33)

The Battle of Kurukṣetra, or any other battle at any place or at any time, is made by the will of the Lord, for no one can arrange such mass annihilation without the sanction of the Lord. The party of Duryodhana insulted Draupadī, a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa, and she appealed to the Lord as well as to all the silent observers of this unwarranted insult. Arjuna was then advised by the Lord to fight and take credit; otherwise the party of Duryodhana would be killed anyway by the will of the Lord. So Arjuna was advised just to become the agent and take the credit for killing great generals like Bhīṣma and Karṇa.

In the Vedic writings such as the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, the Lord is described as the *sarva-bhūta-antarātmā*, or the Personality of Godhead who resides in everyone's body and who directs everything for one who is a soul surrendered unto Him. Those who are not surrendered souls are put under the care of the material nature (*bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni yantrārūdhāni māyayā*); therefore, they are allowed to do things on their own account and suffer the consequences themselves. Devotees like Brahmā and Arjuna do not do anything on their own account, but as fully surrendered souls they always await indications from the Lord; therefore they attempt to do something which appears very wonderful to ordinary vision. One of the Lord's names is Urukrama, or one whose actions are very wonderful and are beyond the imagination of the living being, so the actions of His devotees sometimes appear very wonderful due to the direction of the Lord. Beginning from Brahmā, the topmost intelligent living entity within the universe, down to the smallest ant, every living entity's intelligence is overseen by the Lord in His transcendental position as the witness of all actions. The subtle presence of the Lord is felt by the intelligent man who can study the psychic effects of thinking, feeling and willing.

TEXT 18

सच्चं रजस्तम इति निर्गुणस्य गुणान्त्रयः ।
स्थितिसर्गनिरोधेषु गृहीता मायया विभोः ॥१८॥

*sattvaṁ rajas tama iti
nirguṇasya guṇāḥ trayāḥ
sthiti-sarga-nirodheṣu
grhītā māyayā vibhoḥ*

sattvaṁ—the mode of goodness; *rajaḥ*—the mode of passion; *tamaḥ*—the mode of ignorance; *iti*—all these; *nirguṇasya*—of the Transcendence; *guṇāḥ trayāḥ*—are three qualities; *sthiti*—maintenance; *sarga*—creation; *nirodheṣu*—in destruction; *grhītāḥ*—accepted; *māyayā*—by the external energy; *vibhoḥ*—of the Supreme.

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord is pure spiritual form, transcendental to all material qualities, yet for the sake of the creation of the material world and its maintenance and annihilation, He accepts through His external energy the material modes of nature called goodness, passion and ignorance.

PURPORT

The Supreme Lord is the master of the external energy manifested by the three material modes, namely goodness, passion and ignorance, and as master of this energy He is ever unaffected by the influence of such bewildering energy. The living entities, the *jīvas*, however, are affected by or susceptible to being influenced by such modes of material nature—that is the difference between the Lord and the living entities. The living entities are subjected by those qualities, although originally the living

entities are qualitatively one with the Lord. In other words, the material modes of nature, being products of the energy of the Lord, are certainly connected with the Lord, but the connection is just like that between the master and the servants. The Supreme Lord is the controller of the material energy, whereas the living entities, who are entangled in the material world, are neither masters nor controllers. Rather, they become subordinate to or controlled by such energy. Factually the Lord is eternally manifested by His internal potency or spiritual energy just like the sun and its rays in the clear sky, but at times He creates the material energy, as the sun creates a cloud in the clear sky. As the sun is ever increasingly unaffected by a spot of cloud, so also the unlimited Lord is unaffected by the spot of material energy manifested at times in the unlimited span of the Lord's rays of *brahmajyoti*.

TEXT 19

कार्यकारणकर्तृत्वे द्रव्यज्ञानक्रियाश्रयाः ।
बध्नन्ति नित्यदा मुक्तं मायिनं पुरुषं गुणाः ॥१९॥

kārya-kāraṇa-kartṛtve
dravya-jñāna-kriyāśrayāḥ
badhnanti nityadā muktam
māyinaṁ puruṣam guṇāḥ

kārya—effect; *kāraṇa*—cause; *kartṛtve*—in activities; *dravya*—material; *jñāna*—knowledge; *kriyā-śrayāḥ*—manifested by such symptoms; *badhnanti*—conditions; *nityadā*—eternally; *muktam*—transcendental; *māyinaṁ*—affected by material energy; *puruṣam*—the living entity; *guṇāḥ*—the material modes.

TRANSLATION

These three modes of material nature, being further manifested as matter, knowledge and activities, put the eternally transcendental living entity under conditions of cause and effect and make him responsible for such activities.

PURPORT

Because they are between the internal and external potencies, the eternally transcendental living entities are called the marginal potency of the Lord. Factually, the living entities are not meant to be so conditioned by material energy, but due to their being affected by the false sense of lording it over the material energy, they come under the influence of such potency and thus become conditioned by the three modes of material nature. This external energy of the Lord covers up the pure knowledge of the living entity's eternally existing with Him, but the covering is so constant that it appears that the conditioned soul is eternally ignorant. Such is the wonderful action of *māyā*, or external energy manifested as if materially produced. By the covering power of the material energy, the material scientist cannot look beyond the material causes, but factually, behind the material manifestations, there are *adhibhūta*, *adhyātma* and *adhidaiva* actions, which the conditioned soul in the mode of ignorance cannot see. The *adhibhūta* manifestation entails repetitions of births and deaths with old age and diseases, the *adhyātma* manifestation conditions the spirit soul, and the *adhidaiva* manifestation is the controlling system. These are the material manifestations of cause and effect and the sense of responsibility of the conditioned actors. They are, after all, manifestations of the conditioned state, and the human being's freedom from such a conditioned state is the highest perfectional attainment.

TEXT 20

स एष भगवाँस्त्रिभिरैतैरयोक्षजः ।
स्वलक्षितगतिर्ब्रह्मन् सर्वेषां मम चेश्वरः ॥२०॥

sa eṣa bhagavāṁ liṅgais
tribhīr etair adhokṣajāḥ
svalakṣita-gatir brahman
sarveṣāṁ mama ceśvaraḥ

saḥ—He; *eṣaḥ*—this; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *liṅgaih*—by the symptoms; *tribhīḥ*—by the three; *etaiḥ*—by all these; *adhokṣajāḥ*—the Superseer Transcendence; *su-alakṣita*—veritably unseen; *gatih*—movement; *brahman*—O Nārada; *sarveṣāṁ*—of everyone; *mama*—mine; *ca*—as also; *iśvaraḥ*—the controller.

TRANSLATION

O Brāhmaṇa Nārada, the Superseer, the transcendent Lord, is beyond the perception of the material senses of the living entities because of the above-mentioned three modes of nature. But He is the controller of everyone, including me.

PURPORT

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.24–25) the Lord has declared very clearly that the impersonalist, who gives more importance to the transcendental rays of the Lord as *brahmajyoti* and who concludes that the Absolute Truth is ultimately impersonal and only manifests a form at a time of necessity, is less intelligent than the personalist, however much the impersonalist may be engaged in studying the *Vedānta*. The fact is that such impersonalists are covered by the above-mentioned three modes of material nature; therefore, they are unable to approach the transcendental Personality of the Lord. The Lord is not approachable by everyone because He is curtailed by His *yogamāyā* potency. But one should not wrongly conclude that the Lord was formerly unmanifested and has now manifested Himself in the human form. This misconception of the formlessness of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is due to the *yogamāyā* curtain of the Lord and can be removed only by the Supreme Will, as soon as the conditioned soul surrenders unto Him. The devotees of the Lord who are transcendental to the above-mentioned three modes of material nature can see the all-blissful transcendental form of the Lord with their vision of love in the attitude of pure devotional service.

TEXT 21

कालं कर्म स्वभावं च मायेशो मायया स्वया ।
आत्मन् यदृच्छया प्राप्तं विबुधुषुरुपाददे ॥२१॥

kālam karma svabhāvaṁ ca
māyeṣo māyayā svayā
ātman yadṛcchayā prāptam
vibubhūsur upādade

kālam—eternal time; *karma*—the fate of the living entity; *svabhāvaṁ*—nature; *ca*—also; *māyā*—potency; *iśaḥ*—the controller; *māyayā*—by the energy; *svayā*—of His own; *ātman (ātmani)*—unto His Self; *yadṛcchayā*—independently; *prāptam*—being merged in; *vibubhūsuḥ*—appearing differently; *upādade*—accepted for being created again.

TRANSLATION

The Lord, who is the controller of all energies, thus creates, by His own potency, eternal time, the fate of all living entities, and their particular nature, for which they were created, and He again merges them independently.

PURPORT

The creation of the material world, wherein the conditioned souls are allowed to act subordnately by the Supreme Lord, takes place again and again after being repeatedly annihilated. The material creation is something like a cloud in the unlimited sky. The real sky is the spiritual sky,

eternally filled with the rays of the *brahmajyoti*, and a portion of this unlimited sky is covered by the *mahat-tattva* cloud of the material creation, in which the conditioned souls, who want to lord it against the will of the Lord, are put into play as they desire under the control of the Lord by the agency of His external energy. As the rainy season appears and disappears regularly, the creation takes place and is again annihilated under the control of the Lord, as confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.19). So the creation and annihilation of the material worlds is a regular action of the Lord just to allow the conditioned souls to play as they like and thereby create their own fate of being differently created again in terms of their independent desires at the time of annihilation. The creation, therefore, takes place at a historical date (as we are accustomed to think of everything which has a beginning in our tiny experience). The process of creation and annihilation is called *anādi*, or without reference to date regarding the time the creation first took place, because the duration of even a partial creation is 8,640,000,000 years. The law of creation is, however, as mentioned in the Vedic literatures, that it is created at certain intervals and is again annihilated by the will of the Lord. The whole material or even the spiritual creation is a manifestation of the energy of the Lord, just as the light and heat of a fire are different manifestations of the fire's energy. The Lord therefore exists in His impersonal form by such expansion of energy, and the complete creation rests on His impersonal feature. Nonetheless He keeps Himself distinct from such creation as the *pūrṇam* (or complete), and so no one should wrongly think that His personal feature is not existent due to His impersonal unlimited expansions. The impersonal expansion is a manifestation of His energy, and He is always in His personal feature despite His innumerable unlimited expansions of impersonal energies (Bg. 9.5-7). For human intelligence it is very difficult to conceive how the whole creation rests on His expansion of energy, but the Lord has given a very good example in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. It is said that although the air and the atoms rest within the huge expansion of the sky, which is like the resting reservoir of everything materially created, still the sky remains separate and unaffected. Similarly although the Supreme Lord maintains everything created by His expansion of energy, He always remains separate. This is accepted even by Śaṅkarācārya, the great advocate of the impersonal form of the Absolute. He says *nārāyaṇaḥ paro 'vyaktāt*, or Nārāyaṇa exists separately, apart from the impersonal creative energy. The whole creation thus merges within the body of transcendental Nārāyaṇa at the time of annihilation, and the creation emanates from His body again with the same unchanging categories of fate and individual nature. The individual living entities, being parts and parcels of the Lord, are sometimes described as *ātmā*, qualitatively one in spiritual constitution. But because such living entities are apt to be attracted to the material creation, actively and subjectively, they are therefore different from the Lord.

TEXT 22

कालाद् गुणव्यतिकरः परिणामः स्वभावतः ।
कर्मणो जन्म महतः पुरुषाधिष्ठिताद्भूत् ॥२२॥

*kālād guṇa-vyatikaraḥ
pariṇāmaḥ svabhāvataḥ
karmaṇo janma mahataḥ
puruṣādhiṣṭhitāḍ abhūt*

kālāt—from eternal time; *guṇa-vyatikaraḥ*—transformation of the modes by reaction; *pariṇāmaḥ*—transformation; *svabhāvataḥ*—from the nature; *karmaṇaḥ*—of activities; *janma*—creation; *mahataḥ*—of the *mahat-tattva*; *puruṣa-adhiṣṭhitāt*—because of the *puruṣa* incarnation of the Lord; *abhūt*—it took place.

TRANSLATION

After the incarnation of the first *puruṣa* [Kāraṇārṇavaśāyī Viṣṇu], the *mahat-tattva*, or the principles of material creation,

take place, and then time is manifested, and in course of time the three qualities appear. Nature means the three qualitative appearances. They transform into activities.

PURPORT

By the omnipotency of the Supreme Lord, the whole material creation evolves by the process of transformation and reactions one after another, and by the same omnipotency, they are wound up again one after another and conserved in the body of the Supreme. *Kāla*, or time, is the synonym of nature and is the transformed manifestation of the principles of material creation. As such, *kāla* may be taken as the first cause of all creation, and by transformation of nature different activities of the material world become visible. These activities may be taken up as the natural instinct of each and every living being, or even of the inert objects, and after the manifestation of activities there are varieties of products and by-products of the same nature. Originally these are all due to the Supreme Lord. The *Vedānta-sūtras* and the *Bhāgavatam* thus begin with the Absolute Truth as the beginning of all creations (*janmādy asya yataḥ*).

TEXT 23

महतस्तु विकूर्वाणाद्रजःसत्त्वोपवृंहितात् ।
तमःप्रधानस्त्वभवद् द्रव्यज्ञानक्रियात्मकः ॥२३॥

*mahatas tu vikurvāṇād
rajaḥ-sattvopabrṁhītāt
tamaḥ-pradhānaḥ tv abhavat
dravya-jñāna-kriyātmakah*

mahataḥ—of the *mahat-tattva*; *tu*—but; *vikurvāṇāt*—being transformed; *rajaḥ*—the material mode of passion; *sattva*—the mode of goodness; *upabrṁhītāt*—because of being increased; *tamaḥ*—the mode of darkness; *pradhānaḥ*—being prominent; *tu*—but; *abhavat*—took place; *dravya*—matter; *jñāna*—material knowledge; *kriyā-ātmakah*—predominantly material activities.

TRANSLATION

Material activities are caused by the *mahat-tattva*'s being agitated. At first there is transformation of the modes of goodness and passion, and later—due to the mode of ignorance—matter, its knowledge, and different activities of material knowledge come into play.

PURPORT

Material creations of every description are more or less due to the development of the mode of passion (*rajas*). The *mahat-tattva* is the principle of material creation, and when it is agitated by the will of the Supreme at first the modes of passion and goodness are prominent, and afterwards the mode of passion, being generated in due course by material activities of different varieties, becomes prominent, and the living entities are thus involved more and more in ignorance. *Brahmā* is the representation of the mode of passion, and *Viṣṇu* is the representation of the mode of goodness, while the mode of ignorance is represented by Lord *Śiva*, the father of material activities. Material nature is called the mother, and the initiator for materialistic life is the father, Lord *Śiva*. All material creation by the living entities is therefore initiated by the mode of passion. With the advancement of the duration of life in a particular millennium, the different modes act by gradual development. In the age of Kali (when the mode of passion is most prominent) material activities of different varieties, in the name of advancement of human civilization, take place, and the living entities become more and more involved in forgetting their real identity—the spiritual nature. By a slight cultivation of the mode of goodness, a glimpse of spiritual nature is perceived, but due to the prominence of the mode of passion, the mode of goodness becomes adulterated. Therefore one cannot transcend the limits of the

material modes, and therefore realization of the Lord, who is always transcendental to the modes of material nature, becomes very difficult for the living entities, even though prominently situated in the mode of goodness through cultivation of the various methods. In other words, the gross matters are *adhibhūtam*, their maintenance is *adhidaivam*, and the initiator of material activities is called *adhyātmam*. In the material world these three principles act as prominent features, namely as raw material, its regular supplies, and its use in different varieties of material creations for sense enjoyment by the bewildered entities.

TEXT 24

सोऽहङ्कार इति प्रोक्तो विकुर्वन् समभूत्त्रिधा ।
वैकारिकस्तैजसश्च तामसश्चेति यद्भिदा ।
द्रव्यशक्तिः क्रियाशक्तिर्ज्ञानशक्तिरिति प्रभो ॥२४॥

so 'haṅkāra itī prokta
vikurvan samabhūt tridhā
vaikārikas taijasas ca
tāmasas ceti yad-bhidā
dravya-śaktiḥ kriyā-śaktir
jñāna-śaktir itī prabho

saḥ—the very same thing; *ahaṅkārah*—ego; *itī*—thus; *proktaḥ*—said; *vikurvan*—being transformed; *samabhūt*—became manifested; *tridhā*—in three features; *vaikārikah*—in the mode of goodness; *taijasah*—in the mode of passion; *ca*—and; *tāmasah*—in the mode of ignorance; *ca*—also; *itī*—thus; *yat*—what is; *bhidā*—divided; *dravya-śaktiḥ*—powers that evolve matter; *kriyā-śaktiḥ*—initiation that creates; *jñāna-śaktiḥ*—intelligence that guides; *itī*—thus; *prabho*—O master.

TRANSLATION

The self-centered materialistic ego, thus being transformed into three features, becomes known as the modes of goodness, passion and ignorance in three divisions, namely the powers that evolve matter, knowledge of material creations, and the intelligence that guides such materialistic activities. Nārada, you are quite competent to understand this.

PURPORT

Materialistic ego, or the sense of identification with matter, is grossly self-centered, devoid of clear knowledge of the existence of God. And this self-centered egoism of the materialistic living entities is the cause of their being conditioned by the other paraphernalia and continuing their bondage of material existence. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* this self-centered egoism is very nicely explained in the Seventh Chapter (verses 24 through 27). The self-centered impersonalist, without a clear conception of the Personality of Godhead, concludes in his own way that the Personality of Godhead takes a material shape from His original impersonal spiritual existence for a particular mission. And this misleading conception of the Supreme Lord by the self-centered impersonalist continues, even though he is seen to be very interested in the Vedic literatures such as the *Brahma-sūtras* and other highly intellectual sources of knowledge. This ignorance of the personal feature of the Lord is due simply to ignorance of the mixture of different modes. The impersonalist thus cannot conceive of the Lord's eternal spiritual form of eternal knowledge, bliss and existence. The reason is that the Lord reserves the right of not exposing Himself to the nondevotee who, even after a thorough study of literature like the *Bhagavad-gītā*, remains an impersonalist simply by obstinacy. This obstinacy is due to the action of *yogamāyā*, a personal energy of the Lord that acts like an aide-de-camp by covering the vision of the obstinate impersonalist. Such a bewildered human being is described as *mūḍha*, or grossly ignorant, because he is unable to under-

stand the transcendental form of the Lord as being unborn and unchangeable. If the Lord takes a form or material shape from His original impersonal feature, then it means that He is born and changeable from impersonal to personal. But He is not changeable. Nor does He ever take a new birth like a conditioned soul. The conditioned soul may take a form birth after birth due to his conditional existence in matter, but the self-centered impersonalists, by their gross ignorance, accept the Lord as one of them because of self-centered egoism, even after so-called advancement of knowledge in the *Vedānta*. The Lord, being situated in the heart of every individual living entity, knows very well the tendency of such conditioned souls in terms of past, present and future, but the bewildered conditioned soul hardly can know Him in His eternal form. By the will of the Lord, therefore, the impersonalist, even after knowing the Brahman and Paramātmā features of the Lord, remains ignorant of His eternal personal feature as ever-existent Nārāyaṇa, transcendental to all material creation.

The cause of such gross ignorance is constant engagement by the materialistic man in the matter of artificially increasing material demands. To realize the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one has to purify the materialistic senses by devotional service. The mode of goodness, or the brahminical culture recommended in the Vedic literatures, is helpful to such spiritual realization, and thus the *jñāna-śakti* stage of the conditioned soul is comparatively better than the other two stages, namely *dravya-śakti* and *kriyā-śakti*. The whole material civilization is manifested by a huge accumulation of materials, or, in other words, raw materials for industrial purposes, and the industrial enterprises (*kriyā-śakti*) are all due to gross ignorance of spiritual life. In order to rectify this great anomaly of materialistic civilization, based on the principles of *dravya-śakti* and *kriyā-śakti*, one has to adopt the process of devotional service of the Lord by adoption of the principles of *karma-yoga*, mentioned in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.27) as follows:

yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi
yaj juhoṣi dadāsi yat
yat tapasyasi kaunteya
tat kuruṣva mad-arpanam

“O son of Kuntī, all that you do, all that you eat, all that you offer and give away, as well as all austerities that you may perform, should be done as an offering unto Me.”

TEXT 25

तामसादपि भूतादेर्विकुर्वाणाद्भूतमः ।
तस्य मात्रा गुणः शब्दो लिङ्गं यद् द्रष्टृदृश्ययोः ॥२५॥

tāmasād api bhūtāder
vikurvāṇād bhūn nabhaḥ
tasya mātṛa guṇaḥ śabda
liṅgam yad draṣṭṛ-dṛśyayoh

tāmasāt—from the darkness of false ego; *api*—certainly; *bhūta-adeh*—of the material elements; *vikurvāṇāt*—because of transformation; *abhūt*—generated; *nabhaḥ*—the sky; *tasya*—its; *mātṛa*—subtle form; *guṇaḥ*—quality; *śabdaḥ*—sound; *liṅgam*—characteristics; *yat*—as its; *draṣṭṛ*—the seer; *dṛśyayoh*—of what is seen.

TRANSLATION

From the darkness of false ego, the first of the five elements, namely the sky, is generated. Its subtle form is the quality of sound, exactly as the seer is in relationship with the seen.

(continued in next issue)

The Vedic Observer

Surviving the 80s

How to prepare for the inevitable.

by DRUTAKARMĀ DĀSA

In Siberia and in North Dakota, deep below the desolate plains and prairies, the missile crews are waiting. Beneath the oceans glide the nuclear-powered submarines, stocked with their deadly loads of MIRVed warheads. Soviet soldiers in their helicopters, tanks, and troop carriers are roaring into Afghanistan. At Ft. Bragg the airborne battalions are getting restless. And if you look up at the sky at night, you'll see the spy satellites cruising by overhead, seeming to weave in and out of the stars and planets, keeping a lifeless eye on everything.

The forces of time and violence whirl. Destruction starts its slow dance. Who knows where it will all end?

Today at UCLA some students are demonstrating against the draft. A leftist girl grabs the bullhorn and screams to the crowd that the imperialists are creating war hysteria and we've got to stop the bosses' racist war.

"There are seven bills before Congress to start up the draft!" she says. "Don't you see what's happening?"

Now some fraternity boys waving American flags push their way in, and cool, crack media people surge forward like assault troops, so that their mikes and cameras can catch the conflict for the evening news.

The students want to be detached, free to enjoy themselves and develop their careers and potentials. But now they feel themselves being pulled out to sea by the undertow of historical forces. They have to program into their futures the likelihood, however slight, of war, just as they have already programmed recession.

But it's not only the students who are feeling the pinch. The Gallup pollsters recently found that eighty-four percent of Americans are dissatisfied with the way things are going. And they are convinced things are going to get worse. In his best-seller *How to Prosper During the Coming Bad Years*, Howard J. Ruff predicts an

"international monetary holocaust which will sweep all paper currencies down the drain and turn the world upside down." Tens of thousands of average homeowners and businessmen pay big fees to attend Ruff's survival seminars. And he's not alone. The apocalyptic vision of financial collapse has spawned an entire industry of newsletter writers and purveyors of survival equipment.

People are storing supplies of food and water in their cars, just in case the war or depression breaks out while they're on the way to the supermarket or drive-in. Waterbeds are enjoying renewed popularity, because survivalists have discovered that they are good for storing large amounts of water—up to 225 gallons. Kerosene lamps and wood-burning stoves are selling more than they have since the beginning of the century. And then there are the guns—an advertisement in a gun magazine shows a pretty young lady holding a big semiautomatic rifle and saying, with a smile, "Make love not war, but be prepared for both."

But wait a minute. Is any of this really going to help anyone survive? Ultimately no one survives. After all, each individual must submit to the force of time; he must age and die.

Nobody is going to walk out of this world alive. The Americans, the Russians, the Afghans, the Shah, the President, the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, the postman — all are going to get zapped one way or another.

And this is why the Vedic sages called the earth *Martyaloka*, the planet of death. In the West St. Augustine wrote that "our whole life is nothing but a race towards death." Some of us may survive for a few years, but in the end we cannot avoid the common fate, which is truly "as sure as death and taxes."

And what will happen to us as a result of death? We will have to give up everything—home, family, wealth, bank bal-

ance, gold, guns, dehydrated food cache, and whatever else we happen to be attached to. As the Supreme Lord says in *Bhagavad-gītā*, *mṛtyuḥ sarva-harāś cāham*—"I am all-devouring death." In the end He takes back everything—including our very body.

This is a simple observation, but most people prefer to avoid it. Many thousands of years ago, in India, a great saint asked a king, "What is the most amazing thing in the world?" The king replied, "The most amazing thing is this: at every moment hundreds and thousands of living entities meet death, but a foolish living being nonetheless thinks himself deathless and does not prepare for the inevitable." Instead, everyone becomes a survivalist; everyone makes elaborate plans and arrangements to live forever.

Admittedly, the situation in the Mideast and in Southwest Asia is perilous. The fifty-three Americans held captive . . . the Soviets overrunning Afghanistan . . . OPEC pushing the world economy toward collapse. No wonder the price of gold has been going up and down like a yo-yo. The stakes are high. Millions are afraid for their survival, both financial and physical.

But don't forget—even if the world were a garden of peace and everybody had tons of gold and perfect happiness and satisfaction, everybody would still be in danger of death at every moment. In the end nobody would survive.

Therefore in the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says, *janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhī-duḥkha-doṣānudarśanam*: an intelligent person realizes that no matter how pleasant or unpleasant his environment may be, he cannot avoid miseries such as old age, disease, and death.

So a real survivalist must deal with this basic question—how to overcome death. At first glance this appears impossible. Death seems compulsory. But it isn't. It can be overcome—not with automatic weapons, stashes of gold, dehydrated

food, four-wheel-drive vehicles, or CB radios, but with spiritual knowledge.

In that sense, the best survival manual in the world is the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Nobody should be without a copy. After all, if people are going to invest so much time, money, and energy in preparing for a nuclear war or financial disaster that may or may not happen, then why not spend some time preparing for the disaster that is 100% certain to strike everyone? For that, *Bhagavad-gītā* is essential.

The *Gītā* tells us that the first step to surviving death is to understand the real nature of the self. Without this knowledge one is sure to panic in the clutch. The key concept to remember is that *your self is different from your body*. The self is permanent; the body is temporary. Armed with this understanding, you are equipped to pass the ultimate test. According to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the self "is not slain when the body is slain." The Lord further explains, "Only the material body of the indestructible living entity is subject to destruction."

How can this be? Actually the self is seated in the body like a driver on a machine. Here's an example—just imagine that we do finally get into a war. You're with an armored column that has just smashed through the enemy's front lines, and you are dashing toward his border at top speed. Then—WHAM. A fighter-bomber catches you with an air-to-ground missile. Your M61 tank is out of commission, totaled. But you get out, hop into an armored personnel carrier, and go on with the war. You are in a different vehicle, but you are the same person. In the same way, we change our bodies lifetime after lifetime. At a certain point in time, your body is bound to be destroyed. And then you'll enter another body, and another, and another. Needless to say, this constant changing of bodies is not the ideal condition. Dying and being reborn thousands of times is not exactly fun.

At this point we have to reevaluate our concept of death—it isn't just a one-shot thing. We can take some consolation in the fact that the self never really perishes. Yet unless we can somehow get out of the cycle of repeated birth and death, we must still suffer.

The natural position of the self is to exist in the spiritual world, which is described in the *Vedas* as being *sac-cid-ānanda*. *Sat* means eternal, *cit* means full of knowledge, and *ānanda* means full of ever-increasing pleasure. Such is the nature of the spiritual world, where there exist countless spiritual and very beautiful personalities.

And among all these personalities, one

is Supreme—God. In Sanskrit, the language of the sacred books of India, He is called Kṛṣṇa. In Kṛṣṇa's world there is no struggle for survival. Life goes on naturally, from moment to moment, always very mellow, forever. The *Vedas* call the spiritual world *Vaikuṅṭha*, which means "free from anxiety." That is where we've all come from.

Each of us is like a spiritual spark emanating from the fire of the Absolute Truth. But when a spark falls away from

The survival mania is a symptom of collapse. A mentality dominated by the drive for bodily survival is little better than an animal's.

the central fire, it loses its fiery glow. In the same way, when some of the tiny spiritual beings leave the supreme spiritual being, they lose their eternal nature and take on different material bodies, one after another, in the material world.

But actually, our sufferings in this world are like the suffering one experiences in a dream. Imagine you are dreaming that you are an explorer walking through a tropical forest. There are orchids in the trees. Parrots are flying here and there. You hear the sound of a waterfall. The air is warm and fragrant with the perfume of exotic flowers. Then suddenly you hear a roar, and you see the tiger leaping upon you with claws extended, glaring yellow eyes, and fearsome fangs. But if *you* can see *yourself* being attacked by the tiger, logically it can't really be you that's in trouble—even in the middle of sleep your intellect is struggling to tell you that. But no, the dream is too strong, and you experience a terror that's all too real, until you wake up and realize who you really are. Then both the terror and the dream disappear.

In the same way, we are now asleep to our real, spiritual identity. We are all originally eternal servants of the Supreme Lord, residents of the kingdom of God, but we are now sleeping and dreaming in

the material world. We are identifying with a dreamlike body. We are struggling to survive amid many fearful situations. We are trying to counteract these situations in many ways, but in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we learn, "When we have a troublesome dream, we cannot relieve it with a troublesome hallucination. One can counteract a dream only by awaking." Similarly, our material existence is due to ignorance and illusion. Unless we awaken to spiritual consciousness, we cannot be relieved of such dreams. For the ultimate solution to all problems, we must awaken to spiritual consciousness.

And how do we awaken? The best process for awakening a sleeping person is sound vibration. So in this age the *Vedas* recommend that in order to awaken from the sleeping condition of material life, which is very fearful, one should chant the transcendental sound vibration of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. This chanting awakens the self to its natural condition of eternity, knowledge, and bliss.

But even though we can free ourselves from all kinds of fear and danger by studying the philosophy of *Bhagavad-gītā* and chanting the Lord's names, many are reluctant to try it. Instead, they continue to make plans for a permanent settlement in an impermanent world. Actually, their survival mania is less a solution to than a symptom of the collapse of human civilization. A mentality dominated by the drive for bodily survival at all costs is little better than an animal's.

According to the sages of ancient India, man shares four activities with the animals—eating, sleeping, mating, and fearing. And of these drives, fear is the strongest. An animal eats, sleeps, and mates in a climate of fear. If you approach an animal while it is eating, sleeping, or mating, it becomes very fearful and prepares to defend itself or run. So the human beings who are spending so much time and energy preparing for physical survival should not feel very proud—after all, even an animal will fight for its food, for its lair, for its mate and offspring. A human being who is concerned only with such matters is no better than an animal. He may indeed survive for some time, but his efforts will ultimately be wasted. In his next life he will probably wind up being born as an animal.

Human life is meant for more than surviving in order to eat, sleep, and have sex. It is meant for solving the greatest problem of human existence—how to become free of death. That is real survival.



Every Town and Village

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

Kṛṣṇa Temple Moves to Miami Oceanfront



The pool area and private beach of Govinda's Boardwalk Hotel.

Miami Beach, Florida—The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement has relocated its Miami center to a 100-room hotel on the oceanfront of Miami Beach. The new center—renamed “Govinda’s Boardwalk Hotel”—includes a temple, an auditorium, a vegetarian restaurant, a pool and cabana area, and a private beach. The money to buy the hotel, which is located on Collins Avenue between 24th and 25th streets, came mostly from the sale of the movement’s former Miami property, which had

jumped in commercial value over the past several years.

“Govinda’s Boardwalk Hotel,” explains Vira-Kṛṣṇa Goswami, director of the center, “is intended for people who would like to spend their vacation learning about spiritual life. Devotees will occupy only about thirty of the rooms; the rest are reserved for guests. A wide variety of programs will give every guest a chance to pick up the basic ideas of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.”

Indian Scholar Reviews Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Books

“It gave me great pleasure recently to study the publications of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. Particularly *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the great Indian classic describing the science of God, presented with the original Sanskrit texts, word-for-word meanings, and meaningful and devotional translations, drew my full attention. The beautiful and informative texts of Śrīla Vyāsadeva have been properly augmented by the great insight and devotional qualities of A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. The Bhaktivedanta *Bhāgavatam* clearly reveals the Vedic knowledge to modern man in the form of a comprehensive

and accessible encyclopedia, useful for many different aspects of study, both in the sciences and in the humanities. In publishing the *Bhāgavatam* in this way, Śrīla Prabhupāda has done a great service to the people by showing them the practical application of *bhāgavata* [devotional] principles to present-day problems. This *śāstra* [scripture] is taking on an important significance as the guide for a rapidly growing international society dedicated in all seriousness to the spiritualization of humanity.

“Certainly I am very glad to have these beautiful and important books in our

library, and I strongly recommend them for use by educators, scholars, students, and lay readers in every kind of library.”

—Dr. S.D. Joshi (Ph.D., Harvard; Director, University of Poona, India.)

Devotees Begin Farm Project in Spain

Brihuega, Spain—ISKCON now has an expansive farm and villa in Brihuega, Spain, about an hour’s drive northeast of Madrid. Of classic design, the main building has more than forty rooms, including two large kitchens. In addition, six suites promise more than adequate accommodations for guests. Another structure nearby will provide separate *āśramas* for sixty men and forty women. Scattered over the farm’s nine hundred acres are many smaller buildings that will serve as homes, machinery and husbandry sheds, and dairy barns.

The farm lies in a beautiful, fertile valley fed by the swiftly flowing Tajuña River. Pure drinking water springs from a source deep within the surrounding foothills. With such an ideal spiritual environment, the Brihuega farm is sure to attract many to the Kṛṣṇa conscious way of life.

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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 494 Caitanya Era—Month of Vāmana		
July 3	July 7	July 8
Appearance of Śrīla Vakreśvara Paṇḍita.	Disappearance of Śrīla Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita.	Yoginī-ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).
July 12	July 13	July 14
Disappearance of Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita Gosvāmī and Śrīla Sacchīdananda Bhaktivinoda Thākura.	Śrī Gundīcā-mārjana (cleaning of the Gundīcā temple). Śrīla Prabhupāda forms ISKCON (1966).	Śrī Jagannātha Ratha-yātrā. Disappearance of Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī and Śivānanda Sena.
Month of Śrīdhara		
July 18	July 23	July 27
Śrī Lakṣmī-vijaya.	Śayanāikādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).	Beginning of Cāturmāsya-vrata (fasting from spinach). Disappearance of Sanātana Gosvāmī.

BECOMING A DEVOTEE OF KṚṢṆA

Guidelines for achieving yoga's highest goal.

by YOGEŚVARA DĀSA

Kṛṣṇa is a Sanskrit name for God. Literally, *Kṛṣṇa* means "the all-attractive one." And Kṛṣṇa consciousness means the day-to-day awareness of our eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. The technical term for Kṛṣṇa consciousness is *bhakti-yoga*, or the *yoga* of devotion. There are many kinds of *yoga*, or means for linking oneself with the Supreme. *Karma-yoga*, or sacrifice of the fruits of work, leads to *jñāna-yoga*, or knowledge of the difference between matter and spirit. This leads to *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, by which one develops mystic powers through meditation. But of all *yoga* practices *bhakti* is the highest, because it is nothing less than the eternal activity of the soul after liberation from the material world. When the soul leaves the material body, all other *yoga* practices end, but *bhakti*, being the very nature of the soul, continues without end.

Many people practice modern versions of *yoga* exercise to achieve better health or digestion, or a better sex life, or to subdue mental stress. These "updated" forms are not, however, real *yoga*. The word *yoga* means "linking with the Supreme," and the rules governing proper *yoga* exercises are so rigorous as to be nearly impossible in the present age. Even Arjuna, the hero of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, rejected the austere physical disciplines of such *yoga* as impractical for him. Kṛṣṇa then informed him that these difficult practices would be unnecessary if he simply took up devotional *yoga*: "Of all

yogīs, he who always abides in Me with great faith, worshiping Me in transcendental loving service, is most intimately united with Me in *yoga* and is the highest of all." (*Bhagavad-gītā*, 6.47)

Five hundred years ago, Kṛṣṇa appeared as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to demonstrate how to perform *bhakti-yoga*. At different moments in history, the Supreme Lord appears, either in person or else represented by His pure devotee, to deliver a means of self-realization appropriate to a particular culture and environment. Every true *avatāra*, or appearance of the Supreme Lord, is recorded in advance, and without scriptural confirmation no one can be accepted as an *avatāra* of God. More than four thousand years before the advent of Śrī Caitanya, His appearance and mission were described in the Vedic texts. His teachings, now being carried forward by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), were brought to the West in 1965 by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, ISKCON's Founder-*Ācārya*.*

Coming to Know Kṛṣṇa

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's disciples compiled an extensive literature on the practice of *bhakti-yoga*. Their books describe that hearing (in Sanskrit, *śravaṇa*) is the most effective means for

**Ācārya*: one who teaches by example as well as by precept.

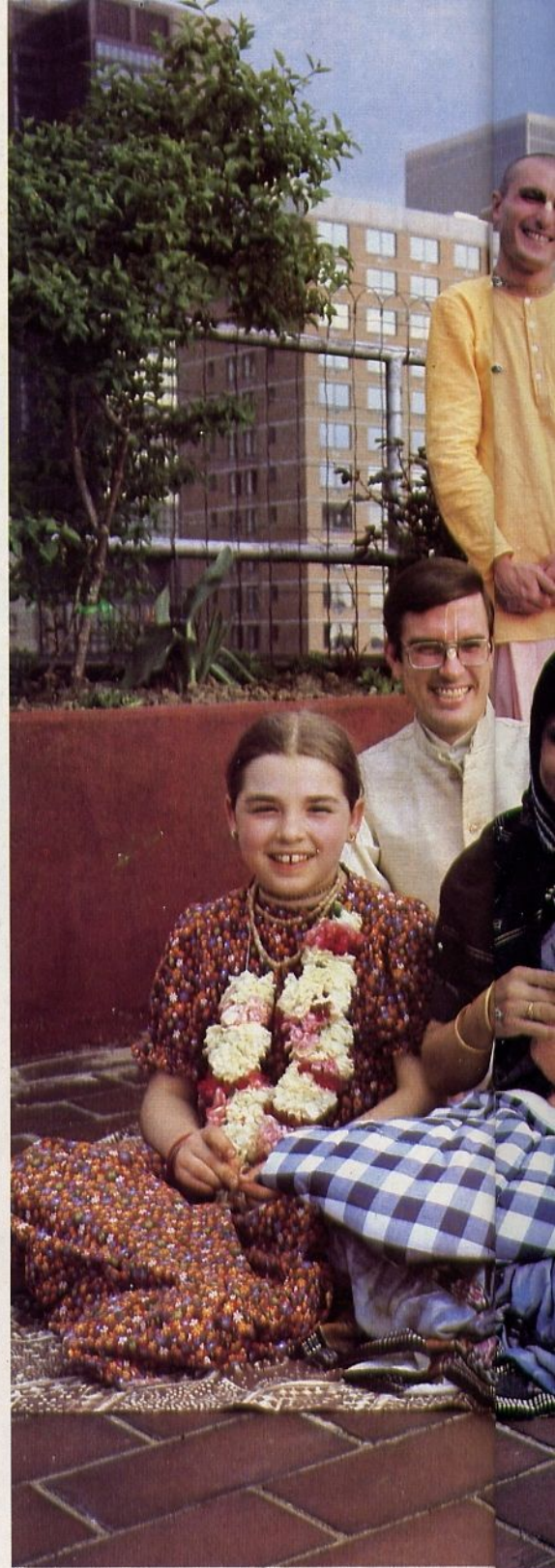


PHOTO: YAMARĀJA DĀSA

imbibing a sense of devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Many people therefore begin cultivating their Kṛṣṇa consciousness by attending the classes on the *Bhagavad-gītā* and other texts held daily in Kṛṣṇa temples. One needs no previous qualifications in *yoga* to hear about Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa's activities and personal qualities are so attractive that anyone who simply hears about them receptively will discover a natural af-



finity for Kṛṣṇa and His devotional service.

To be effective, of course, hearing demands not only that the hearer be receptive to the message but also that the speaker transmit the teachings purely. That is why, for example, when a devotee lectures in public he takes great care to present faithfully what he has learned from his spiritual master. Invented ideas

about the Absolute Truth have little value; opinions are, after all, as individual as their authors. Knowledge of God, on the other hand, has remained unchanged since the time Kṛṣṇa first spoke the Vedic sciences to Brahmā at the dawn of creation. Brahmā, architect of the material universe, in turn transmitted the Vedic teachings to his disciples, who then taught their disciples, and so on down through

the ages. This method of teaching is called *paramparā*, or the system of descending knowledge (as opposed to ascending knowledge, that which is achieved through empiric research).

This *paramparā* system forms the foundation of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. How has Kṛṣṇa consciousness spread around the world so quickly? Why, of all the translations of *Bhagavad-gītā*,

did Śrīla Prabhupāda's edition alone inspire an international movement of devotion to Kṛṣṇa? The answer is *paramparā*. Only Śrīla Prabhupāda's edition presents the unaltered teachings of Kṛṣṇa, as relayed by the *paramparā* system. In every other English translation the commentator uses the *Gītā* as a vehicle for his own philosophy. But Śrīla Prabhupāda, as a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, was motivated only to awaken people's natural love for Kṛṣṇa. He acted as a message carrier, not as an interpreter or philosopher. The explanations received from the *paramparā* are sufficient for reviving God consciousness; they need no additions or interpretations. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement has grown because it is nourished by the pure teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples are carrying on that pure heritage.

Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa

For previous ages, when people lived much longer and could concentrate better than today, the Vedic texts recommended solitary meditation and physical *yoga* practice as means to achieve self-realization. But for most people today, of course, such methods are impossible. It

material sounds, like "water" or "light," they themselves have no substance; their value lies in the meaning they convey. A material sound is different from the idea it represents. On the spiritual platform, however, no distinction separates a sound from its meaning. And so the name *Kṛṣṇa* possesses the same purifying qualities as Kṛṣṇa Himself.

What are those purifying qualities? The *Vedas* compare them to the influence of the sun on a puddle of urine. Just as the sun evaporates the liquid, eliminates the obnoxious smell, and renders the spot clean—without itself ever becoming contaminated—so the name of Kṛṣṇa acts like a spiritual sun to clean away the contamination of material qualities like lust and greed and to reveal the soul hidden within.

Chanting is a simple process that can be performed anywhere, under any circumstances, and even an inexperienced chanter can realize immediate results. The first result of chanting is an abatement of material anxieties. Formerly one had to withdraw to the woods or mountains and practice severe penances to achieve full detachment from material anxieties. In the present age, however,



PHOTO: BHARGAVA DASA

would be unreasonable to expect a married man with business responsibilities to abandon his work and family for the austere life of a recluse. Rather, for this age the *Vedas* recommend the chanting of God's holy names: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. The chanting of this *mantra* (spiritual sound) has the same purifying influence as associating directly with Kṛṣṇa. Since God is absolute, He and His name are nondifferent. When we utter ordinary

the same result is available through chanting. Devotees chant in two ways: either *soto voce*, as a personal meditation, while turning sacred beads called *japa-mālā*, or congregationally, in the temple or at home or in public.

The *japa-mālā* strand consists of 108 beads, each separated from the next by a small knot. An additional bead, somewhat larger, is the starting point. One does not chant on this bead; rather, it serves to indicate when one has finished each "round" of 108 beads. A chanter turns



PHOTO: MURALIVADANA DASA

each bead between thumb and forefinger while reciting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. Then he moves on to the next bead and again recites the *mantra*. At the end of each round, the chanter begins the next round in the opposite direction, rather than crossing over the large bead.

An initiated devotee, or one aspiring for initiation, chants at least sixteen rounds daily. Rounds take six or seven minutes each, or a daily total of an hour and a half to two hours.

Saṅkīrtana, or public chanting of the



PHOTO: YOGESVARA DĀSA



Sankirtana, chanting the holy names in public, brings Kṛṣṇa consciousness to every town and village. Above, devotees in Chicago carry on the tradition of public chanting inaugurated five hundred years ago by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in Bengal, India. At left, a devotee displays *japa* beads, used for personal meditation on the holy names. To receive initiation, a candidate must regularly chant sixteen "rounds" of beads daily. At far left, devotees in Bogotá, Colombia, hear a morning class from the ancient Sanskrit texts.



holy names, was introduced by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in Bengal at the turn of the sixteenth century. He promulgated public chanting as the highest welfare activity and the religious duty for the present age. Both the street chanting that devotees perform in cities and towns around the world and the *japa* chanting are full of spiritual potency. *Japa* meditation, however, engages only the tongue and the ear of the chanter, whereas *saṅkīrtana* has the added advantage of benefiting all who hear the chanting, and it also engages the entire body in dance, which takes place as a natural part of congregational chanting.

The basic principle of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is remembering Kṛṣṇa. And that is why devotees regularly chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. In the beginning, a candidate for spiritual initiation may not be prepared to chant sixteen rounds daily. If not, he should determine some smaller number—two or three rounds, for example—that he will chant without fail. It is better to chant regularly than sporadically—three rounds every day is better than ten rounds one day and none the next. Progressively, as one continues to chant, one will naturally develop a desire to adopt the other principles and practices of *bhakti-yoga*.

The Morning Program

A Kṛṣṇa devotee is careful to maintain internal and external purity as protection against the conditioning that impedes spiritual growth. So upon rising in the morning, a devotee recites the holy names of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* for internal purity and bathes for external purity. The *Bhagavad-gītā* also describes that one cannot become successful in *yoga* if one eats or sleeps too much or too little. The Vedic scriptures therefore recommend not more than six hours rest at night for those seeking spiritual advancement. One can better progress spiritually if one takes



PHOTO: MURALIVADANA DASA

rest early, instead of keeping late hours engaged in materialistic activities, and if one does not eat heavily at night.

For one aspiring to self-realization, the hours preceding sunrise, which are called *brāhma-muhūrta*, are particularly auspicious. Devotees generally rise by 3:30 a.m. to attend the first ceremony of the day, *maṅgala-ārati*, during which they greet the Kṛṣṇa Deity* and offer varieties of gifts such as incense, flowers, and foods.

*The Deity is a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa's personal form, fashioned from elements such as marble or wood. Kṛṣṇa appears in the Deity form to facilitate the service of His devotees.



PHOTO: YAMARAJA DASA

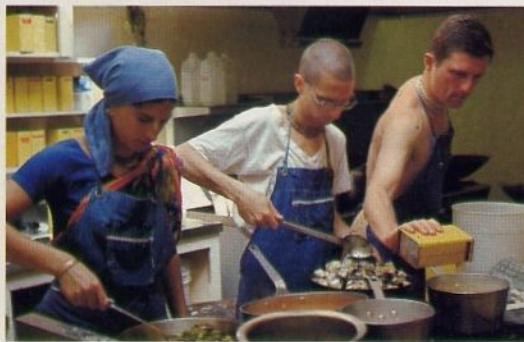


PHOTO: VISAKHA-DEVI DASI

Greeting the Deity of Lord Kṛṣṇa (far left), devotees assemble each morning for the *ārati* ceremony. At left, devotee cooks demonstrate the art of Vedic cuisine: fresh fruits, vegetables, grains, and milk products are blended with carefully chosen spices and then offered on a simple "guru-Gaurāṅga" altar (above).

Devotees who live too far away to attend morning ceremonies in the temple rise early and perform the same offering at home, meditating before a simple altar that bears a photo of the spiritual master (*guru*) and a painting of Śrī Caitanya (Gaurāṅga), surrounded by His principal associates, called collectively the Pañca-tattva. Whether at home or in the temple, these daily services, held during the peaceful morning hours and accompanied by the sweet melodies of *ārati* and the pleasing vision of the Deity or guru-Gaurāṅga altar, awaken in the neophyte a sense of his eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

The activities so far described are important for cultivating *bhakti-yoga*. If the candidate for devotional service wants to advance steadily, however, he must also follow four regulative principles that constitute the pillars of devotional life.

The Diet

The first regulative principle is no meat, fish or eggs in the diet. Meat-eating is the single greatest obstacle to spiritual prog-

ress. Fish are also considered animal life, and eggs undeveloped animal life. Despite popular opinions to the contrary, no scripture in the world encourages meat-eating, although some concessions may be mentioned for persons unable to control their tongues. Even then, however, the *Vedas* strictly prohibit cow-killing. The Vedic culture considers the cow a mother to human society because she supplies us her milk, and it encourages cow protection as essential to a peaceful society. Milk stimulates the growth of the healthy brain tissues required for understanding the finer points of spiritual life. Meat, on the other hand, contains large quantities of toxins and cholesterol that dull perceptions and make spiritual progress nearly impossible.*

Becoming a vegetarian is not in itself the goal. To make spiritual progress one must offer his food to the Supreme Lord with love and devotion. In preparing a meal, the devotee remembers that the offering is meant for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure, not his own. This does not decrease the

*See *Back to Godhead* Vol.15, No. 1-2.

Initiation into Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a joyous event that reestablishes one's eternal link with Kṛṣṇa. Here a disciple receives the sacred *japa* beads from her spiritual master, Śrīla Rāmeśvara Swami, one of the disciples Śrīla Prabhupāda named as initiating *gurus*.

satisfaction of eating; rather, the pleasure is increased by the devotional effort and by the fresh ingredients used exclusively in preparing food for offering to Kṛṣṇa.

All the practices of *bhakti-yoga* aid in awakening our dormant sense of God consciousness. The devotee therefore follows strict kitchen rules while preparing an offering. The most important rule is never to taste a preparation before it has been offered to Kṛṣṇa. He must be the first to enjoy. God has no need of our food. He is *ātmārāma*, completely self-satisfied. He nonetheless appreciates the love and devotion with which His devotee prepares an offering. The more one centers one's thoughts on Kṛṣṇa, the more the offering is a success. This is real *yoga*: not to give up eating, but rather to sanctify the food one eats by first offering it to Kṛṣṇa.

No Intoxication

The second regulative principle is no intoxication, by which is meant the use of any substance that exaggerates or dulls perceptions, including coffee, tea, and tobacco as well as alcohol and drugs. Devotees reject anything that impedes progress in devotional life, and certainly stimulants or depressants are bound to affect concentration on spiritual practices. Sometimes people propose that drugs can lead to spiritual exaltation. Authorities in the *paramparā*, however, have always dismissed that idea. Drugs act on the body and mind but have no access to the soul, which transcends matter.

No Illicit Sex

Illicit sex refers not only to sexual relations outside of marriage but also to intercourse within marriage not intended for procreation. This does not mean an artificial renunciation of all sex, but rather its regulation. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says that sex with the goal of procreating and raising God conscious children is sacred, for in such consciousness the sex act becomes an offering to Him.

No Gambling

Gambling is simply a waste of time and money. Human life is short. The sage



PHOTO: NITYATRPTA-DEVI DASI

Cāṅakya used to say that a moment of life spent without pursuing self-realization was the greatest loss, for it could not be bought back for all the gold in the world. And that was before inflation.

Initiation

The most important moment for the practitioner of *bhakti-yoga*, one who has successfully followed the four regulative principles for at least six months, is initiation by the spiritual master. The *guru* awards initiation when he feels confident that the candidate has shown his or her sincerity and determination to become Kṛṣṇa conscious. In contrast with the fifteen-minutes-a-day *yoga* practices available from pseudogurus and swamis, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a constant effort to dedicate one's life to the service of God. The spiritual master therefore refrains from awarding initiation to people still addicted to materialistic habits. The act of initiation in essence links the disciple with Kṛṣṇa through the intermediary of the *guru*. The *guru's* duty is to liberate the disciple from repeated birth and death by properly guiding him and instructing him from scripture, and the disciple's duty is to follow lifelong the *guru's* teachings. It is not necessary to live in a temple to receive initiation, but life at home must follow the same norms as those of the temple community, including rising early, eating only *prasāda* (vegetarian foods offered first to Lord Kṛṣṇa), and the other principles of *sādhana-bhakti* (devotional service in practice).

Working for Kṛṣṇa

Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute Truth, includes all things, and any talent or skill can be used in His service. An artist can paint scenes of the spiritual world as described in the *Vedas*. A writer can write articles on the science of *bhakti-yoga*. An architect can design and build temples, schools, and *āśramas* dedicated to Lord Kṛṣṇa. A businessman can help propagate Kṛṣṇa consciousness by printing books or offering professional services. Everyone, in other words, has a part to play in Kṛṣṇa's devotional service.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda founded the International Society for Krishna Consciousness in 1965, his intention was to make Kṛṣṇa consciousness available to people on all levels of society. He instructed his disciples, those students who had dedicated their lives completely to the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa, to treat visiting guests with the greatest respect and courtesy. "Visiting Kṛṣṇa's temple is visiting the spiritual world," he would say. Sunday open houses at the many Kṛṣṇa temples around the world have become well attended weekly functions for thousands who practice *bhakti-yoga* at home. Here friends and newcomers participate in ecstatic *āratī* ceremonies, share in the multicourse free feast, and receive answers to their questions on spiritual life. Whatever one's background, the programs of Kṛṣṇa consciousness provide common ground for progress along the spiritual path.

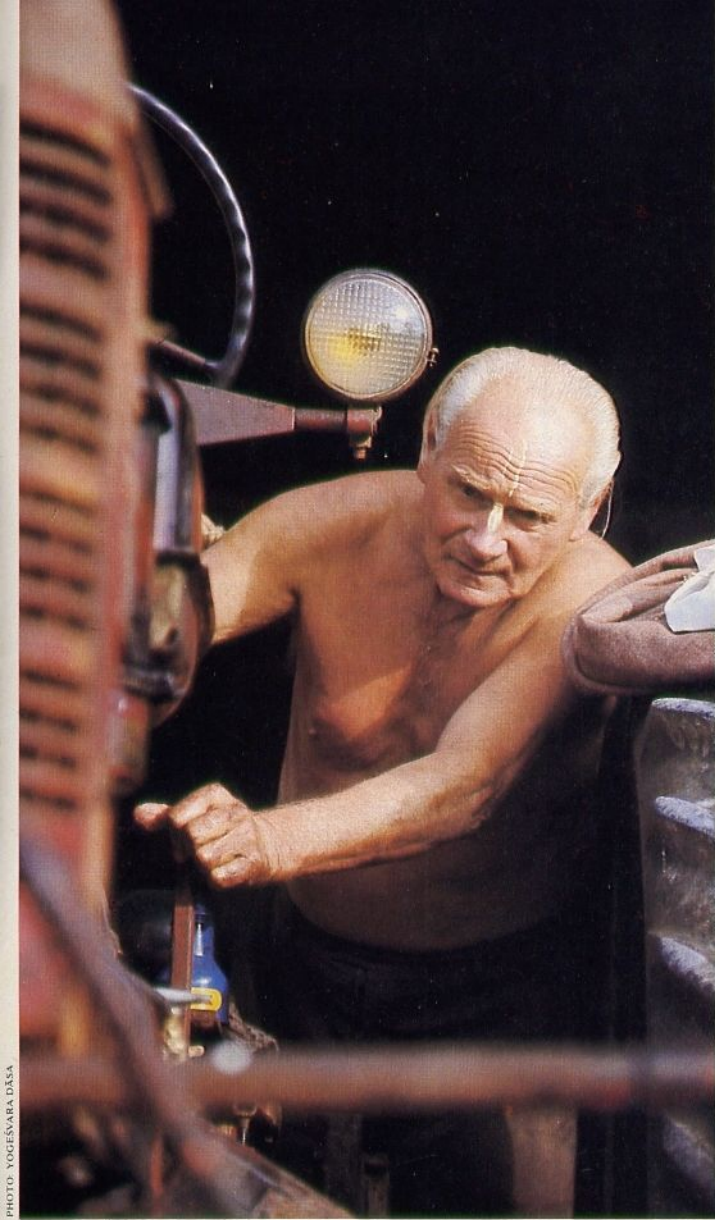


PHOTO: YOGĒSVARA DĀSA

PHOTO: BHARGAVA DASA

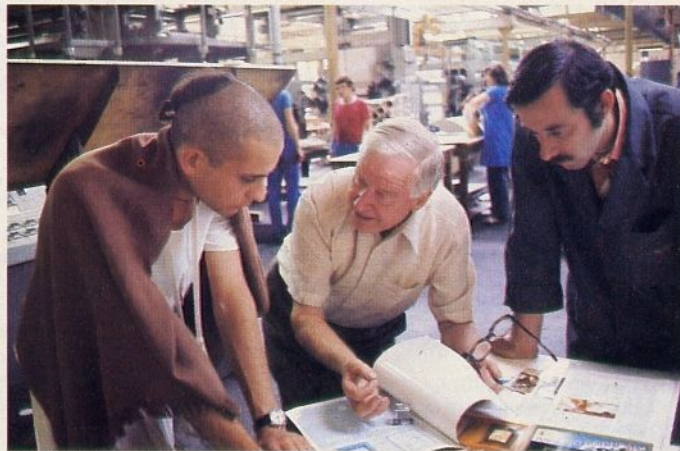


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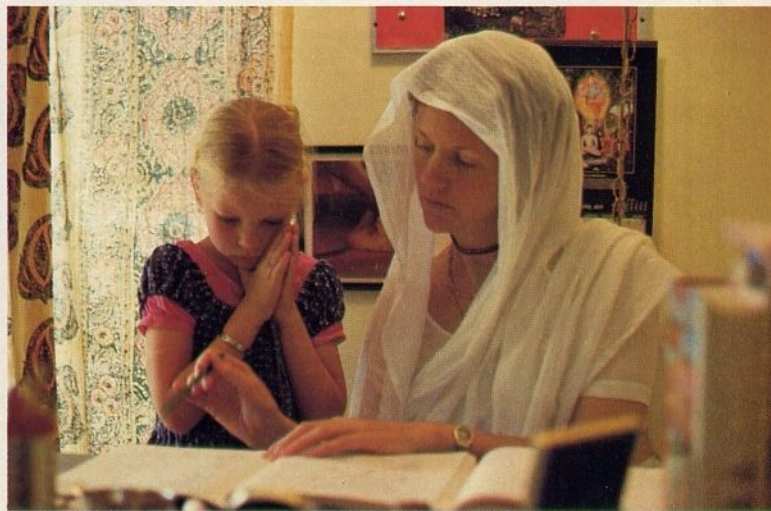


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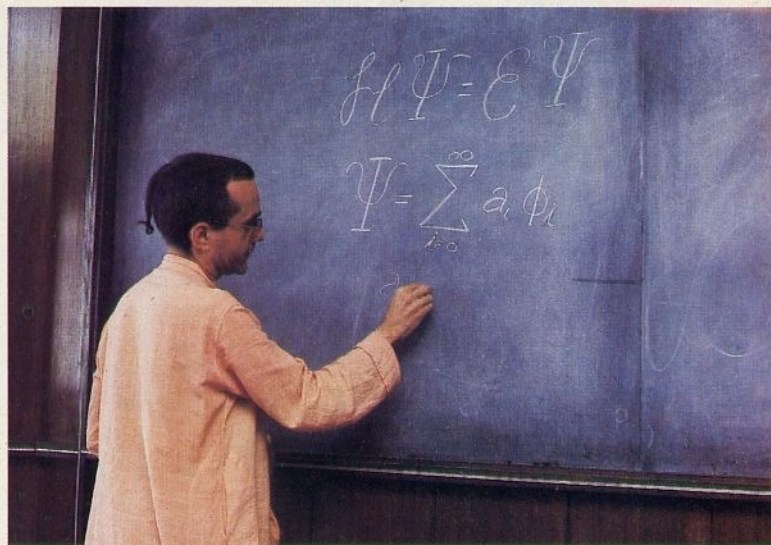
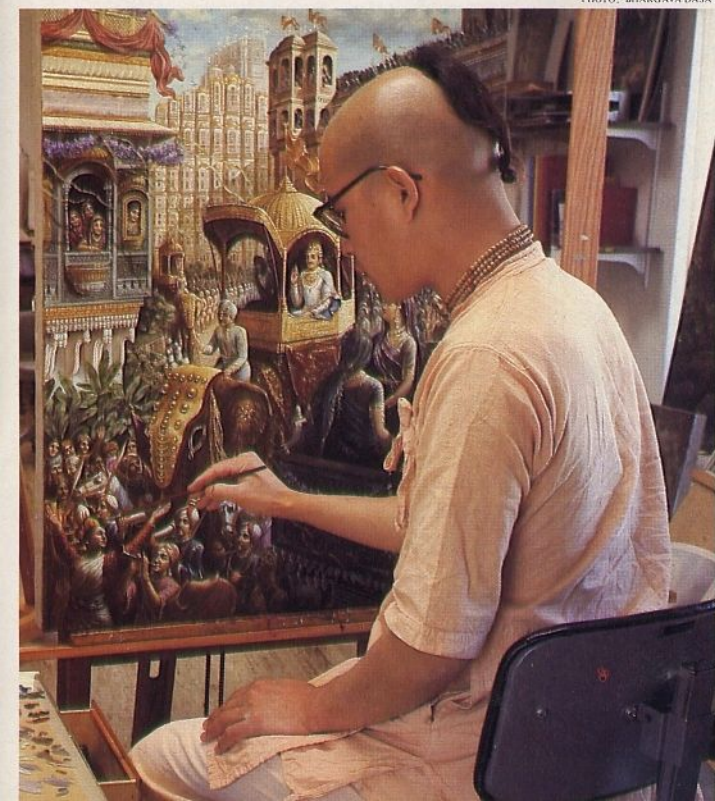


PHOTO: VIDYANANDA DASA



Working for God. Whatever skills or talents one has one may use in devotional service. Kṛṣṇa relishes the expression of love in each offering, whatever form it takes. Clockwise, from upper left: a farmer gears up his tractor for work in Kṛṣṇa's fields; a devotee and businessmen work together in publishing literature on Kṛṣṇa consciousness; a teacher instructs students in devotional and academic subjects; a mathematician explores theism through science; an artist glorifies Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

**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 anxiety.

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 present age of quarrel and anxiety." Five centuries ago, while spreading the

mahā-mantra throughout India, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu prayed, "O Supreme Lord, in Your 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.

SWAMI

(continued from page 13)

had also gone on regularly since he had moved into the Second Avenue apartment. And now Kṛṣṇa was bringing these sincere young men who were cooking, typing, hearing him regularly, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, and asking for more.

Prabhupāda was still a solitary preacher, free to stay or go, writing his books in his own intimate relationship with Kṛṣṇa—quite independent of the boys in the storefront. But now he had taken the International Society for Krishna Consciousness as his spiritual child. The inquiring young men, some of whom had already been chanting steadily for over a month, were like stumbling spiritual infants, and he felt responsible for guiding them. They were beginning to consider him their spiritual master, trusting him to lead them into spiritual life. Although they were unable to immediately follow the multifarious rules that *brāhmaṇas* and *Vaiṣṇavas* in India followed, he was hopeful. According to Rūpa Gosvāmī the most important principle was that one should "somehow or other" become Kṛṣṇa conscious. People should chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and render devotional service. They should engage whatever they had in the service of Kṛṣṇa. And Prabhupāda was exercising this basic principle of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the furthest limit the history of Vaiṣṇavism had ever seen.

Although he was engaging the boys in cooking and typing, Prabhupāda was not doing any less himself. Rather, for every sincere soul who came forward to serve, a hundred came who wanted not to serve but to challenge. Speaking to them, sometimes shouting and pounding his fists, Prabhupāda defended Kṛṣṇa against the *Māyāvāda* philosophy. This was also his service to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. He had not come to America to retire. So with each new day came yet another confirmation that his work and his followers and his challengers would only increase.

How much he could do was up to Kṛṣṇa. "I am an old man," he said. "I may go away at any moment." But if he were to "go away" now, certainly Kṛṣṇa consciousness would also go away, because the Kṛṣṇa consciousness society was nothing but him: his figure leading the chanting while his head moved back and forth in small motions of ecstasy, his figure walking in and out of the temple through the courtyard or into the apartment, his person sitting down smilingly to discuss philosophy by the hour—he was the sole maintainer of the small, fragile, controlled atmosphere of Kṛṣṇa consciousness on New York's Lower East Side.

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 excellent 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.

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5 Mrdaṅga Drum: lightweight, double-headed Indian-style drum used in chanting the *mahā-mantra*. Unbreakable. Comes with an instruction book and cassette instruction tape. \$89.50

6 SPECIAL: *The original Hare Kṛṣṇa Meditation Album*. In 1966 Śrīla Prabhupāda made this unique recording with his first disciples. On it Prabhupāda explains the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, and he and his disciples chant. A historic recording. C-60 cassette. \$4.00.

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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Books to Save the World

Now approximately forty million of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books have been printed and distributed in more than thirty languages. What *are* these books actually?

When he began them in India, one of his associates asked him, "Why bother? Aren't there enough Vedic scriptures?" But most of the *Vedas* had never been translated into English and given elaborate commentary. His spiritual master had asked him to preach to the people in the West. Śrīla Prabhupāda felt that with these books he could create a revolution in consciousness. He had faith in the potency of the words of Kṛṣṇa.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* had already been translated dozens of times into English. Again the question was asked, this time by an American woman: "What is the need for another *Bhagavad-gītā* in English?" As Śrīla Prabhupāda explained, it had never before been given in the spirit in which Kṛṣṇa Himself had spoken the *Bhagavad-gītā*. It had never been translated and explained by a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa. He felt there was a great need to deliver the *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is, because despite so many *Bhagavad-gītās* in English, no one had ever become a devotee of Kṛṣṇa by reading them.

Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote more than sixty books—English translations and commentaries on the Vedic scriptures: *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in twenty-nine volumes, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (describing the life and teachings of Lord Caitanya) in seventeen volumes, *The Nectar of Devotion*, the *Kṛṣṇa* books, and many, many more.

In America alone, more than eight million books have been distributed. Who has them? Where are all these books? Many are owned by people who bought them not so much because they went out thinking, "Today I will buy a translation of the *Vedas*," but because they were approached by Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees and handed these books. Forty mil-

lion, almost all passed out by the ubiquitous devotee book distributors, on streets or in parking lots or airports. Forty million books spread all over the world in people's homes, on bookshelves. (Śrīla Prabhupāda said he wanted a *Kṛṣṇa* book—a collection of the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa in story form—in every home.) And they are in virtually all the public and university libraries.

The books are scholarly, deep philosophy. Too deep? Even the greatest sages can't know everything about Kṛṣṇa. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the science of God. But Śrīla Prabhupāda has made it simple, explaining it just as he heard it from his spiritual master and just as he has experienced it in his personal realization of Kṛṣṇa. Once a devotee related to Śrīla Prabhupāda that often people said they admired the books' Sanskrit verses but thought it all a little too deep for themselves. On hearing this, Śrīla Prabhupāda reflected and replied, "Yes, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is very deep."

And yet these books work. I know a policeman in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, who faithfully reads Śrīla Prabhupāda's books; over the months he has given up smoking, intoxicants, and even meat-eating, and he regularly chants the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*.

Many books are at first put aside on the shelf and not read, or they are passed from place to place unread . . . but finally someone starts to read one. A marine in the barracks, a service station attendant with time on his hands, a fashion model in Denmark, a hermit on Vancouver Island, a student writing a report.

To people who join the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, these books are their bible. But to compare other scriptures to the Vedic literatures is like comparing the pocket dictionary to the unabridged international dictionary. Look up "the soul" or "life after death," or look up an explanation for creation, or try to inquire

how God is great—in any of the world's other scriptures you will get scanty information compared to what Śrīla Prabhupāda has given.

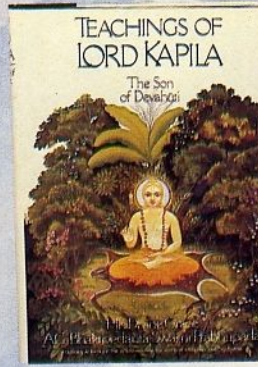
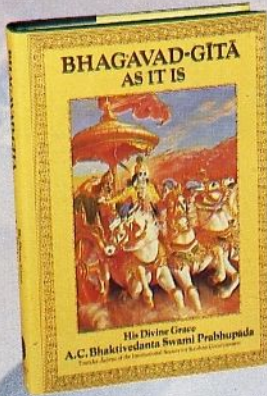
To the atheists, to the various exploiters of humanity, and to the sensualists, these books are formidable opposition. But what can the opponents do? It is too late: Śrīla Prabhupāda's books are already there, and they are working, as the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says, "to create a revolution in the impious civilization." The media's barrage against the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement as a dangerous, mindless cult has certainly affected many people, but it is superficial propaganda. It will pass, like last year's newspapers, whereas the message of the *Gītā* and the *Bhāgavatam* will not pass. Rather, the knowledge in these books will become more and more effective. And to those books that have already been distributed, more and more are being added every day by sincere devotees who continue to distribute them.

Śrīla Prabhupāda used to say that if a person reads one page of these books, his life could become perfect. Open one at random, and see what they say. From *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, First Canto: "When there are too many materialistic activities by the people in general all over the world, there is no wonder that a person or nation attacks another person or nation on slight provocation. That is the rule of this Age of Kali, or quarrel. The atmosphere is already polluted with corruption of all descriptions, and everyone knows it well. . . . The quarrels are not due to the issues in question but to the polluted atmosphere of this age: systematically there is propaganda by a section of the people to stop glorification of the name and fame of the Supreme Lord. Therefore, there is a great need to spread the message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* all over the world to do the supermost good as well as to bring about the desired peace in the world." —SDG

Climb to the highest consciousness

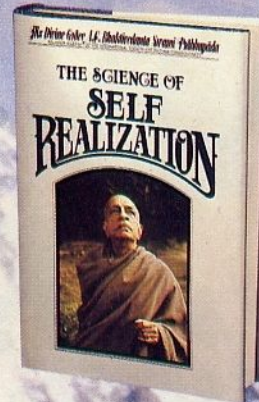
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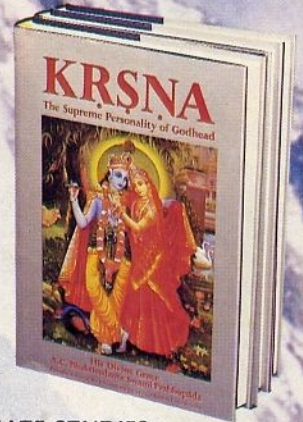
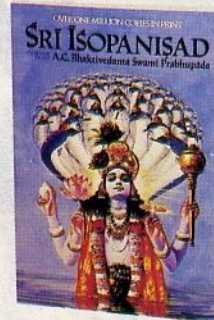
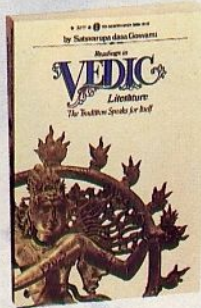
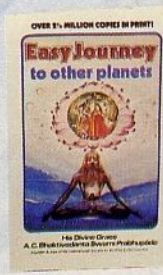
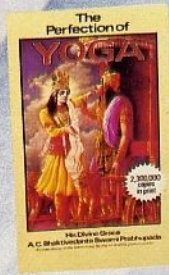


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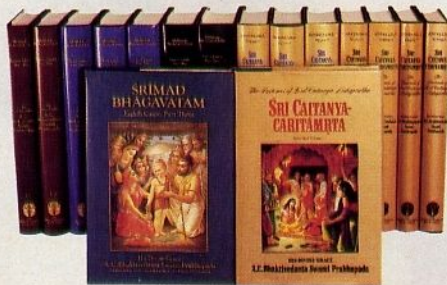
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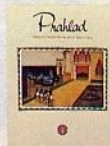
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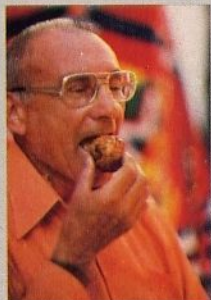
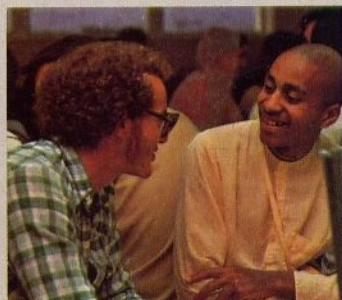
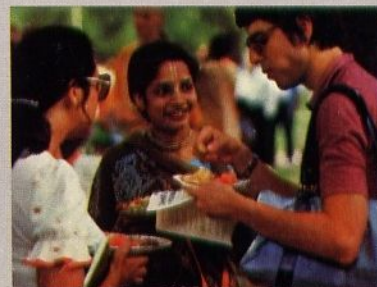
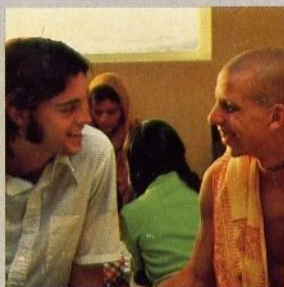
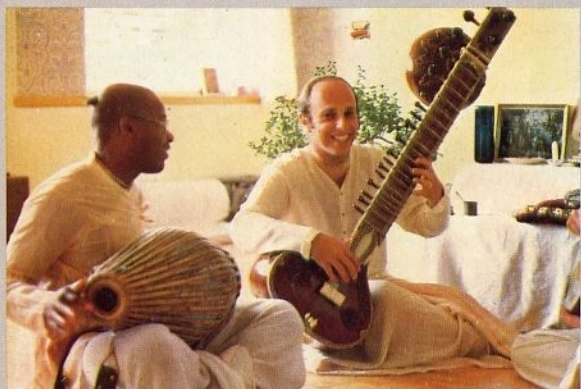
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