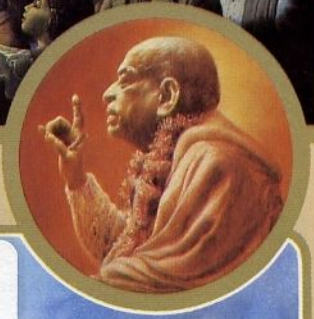


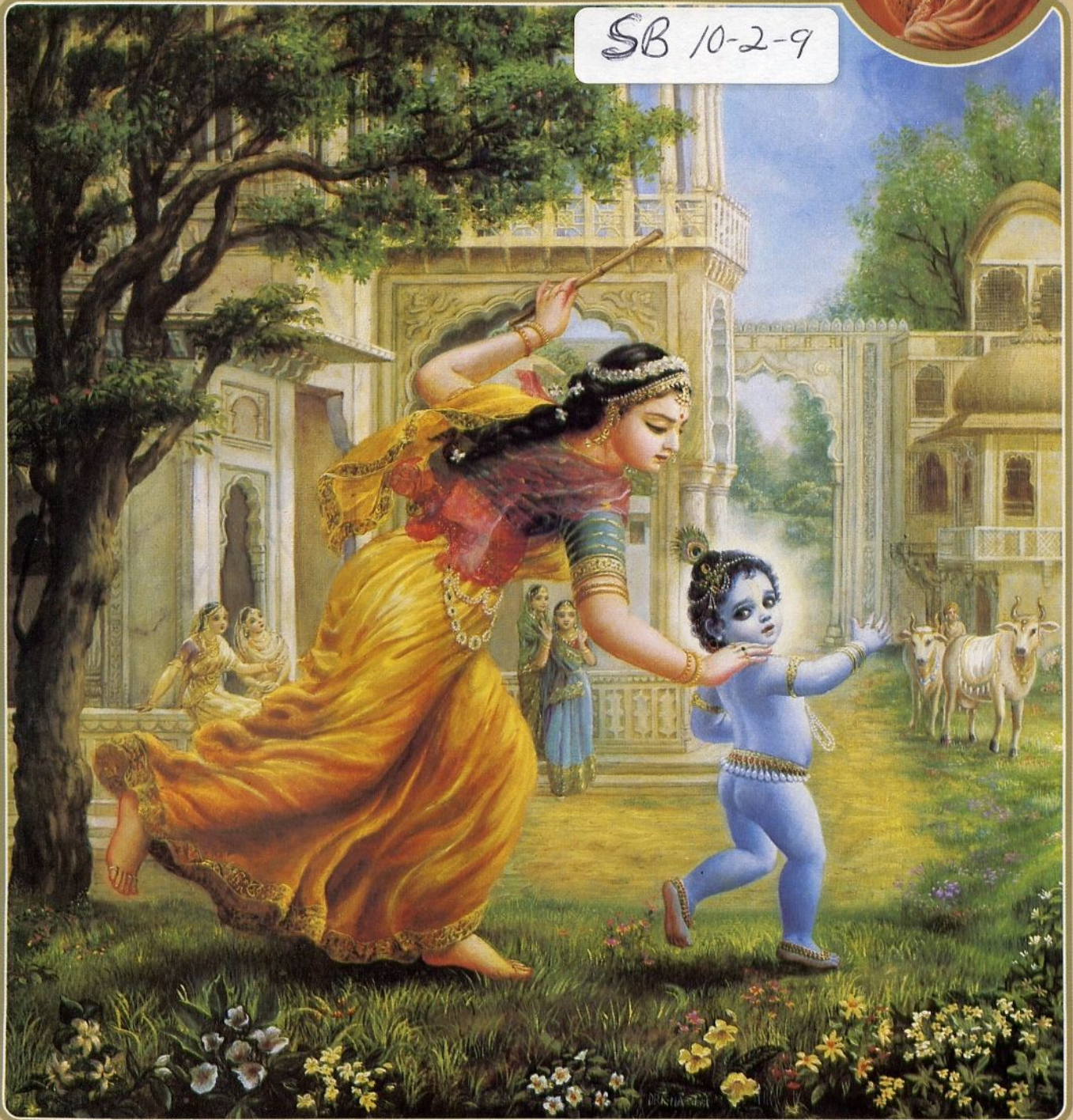
Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

# BACK TO GODHEAD

Vol.15 No. 9 THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



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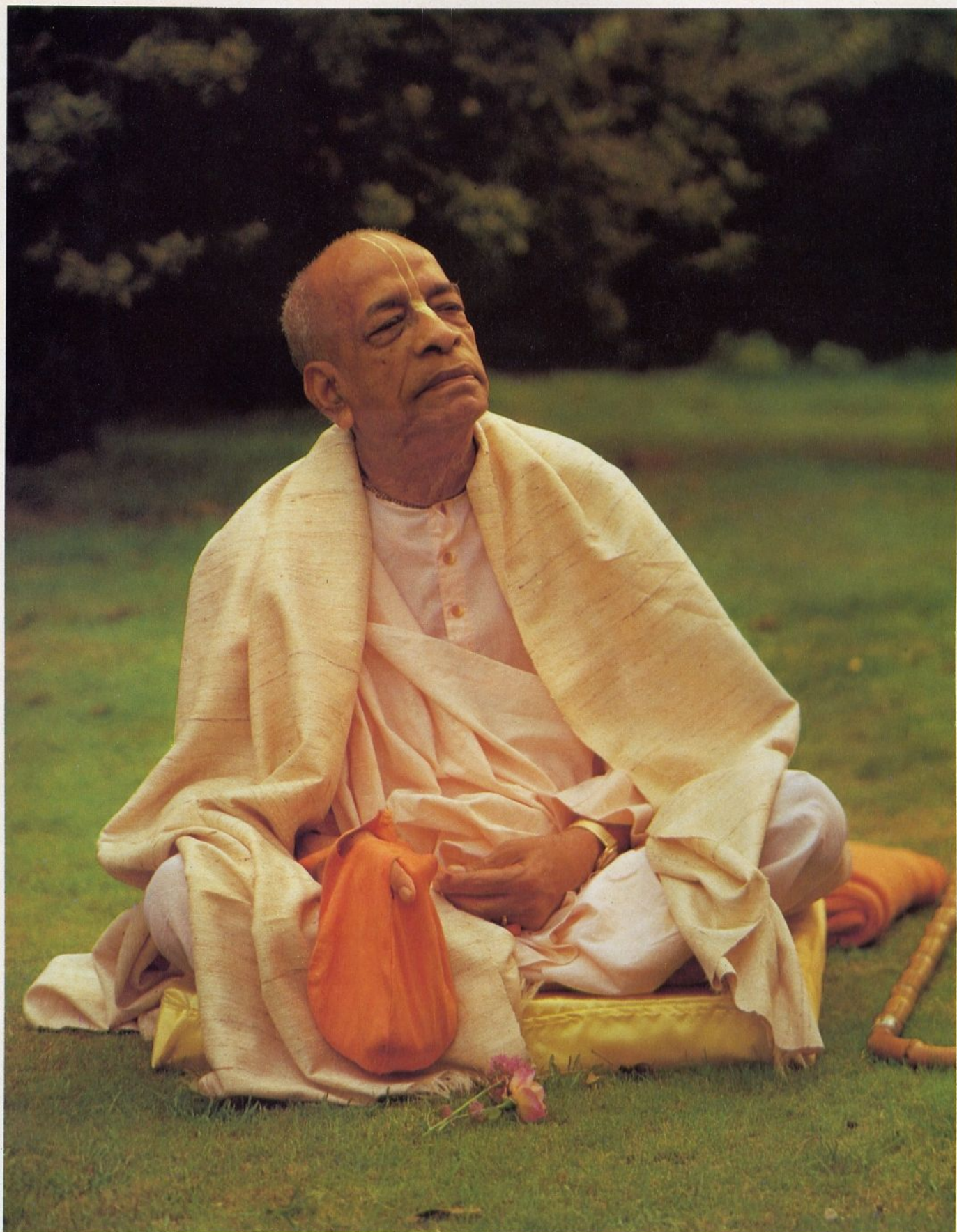


PHOTO: BHARGAVA DASA

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



# BACK TO GODHEAD

VOL. 15, NO. 9

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

FOUNDED 1944

## FOUNDER

(under the direction of His Divine Grace  
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His Divine Grace  
A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda

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PRONUNCIATION of Sanskrit words and names. BACK TO GODHEAD follows the international scholarly standard. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in **but**, long **ā** like the **a** in **far** (and hold it twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in **evade**, long **ī** like the **i** in **plique**. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **r** 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 **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh**, and **s** like the **s** in **sun**. So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, and for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

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

◀His Divine Grace A. C. 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.


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**COVER: Controlling the Supreme Controller.** Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the creator, maintainer, and destroyer of all universes. Yet despite His supreme position, He takes pleasure in surrendering Himself to His loving devotees. Playing the part of Mother Yaśodā's darling but mischievous child, Lord Kṛṣṇa broke a butter pot and then ran in fear of being punished. The Vedic scriptures describe that such transcendental pastimes are full of spiritual bliss. By absorbing his mind in these pastimes, the pure devotee achieves the spiritual world and the eternal company of Lord Kṛṣṇa. (Cover art: Dīrghā-devī dāsī.)

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







# ENTERING THE SPIRITUAL SKY

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

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

“There is another, eternal nature, which is transcendental to manifested and non-manifested matter. It is supreme and is never annihilated. When all in this world is annihilated, that part remains as it is.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 8.20)

**W**e cannot calculate the length and breadth of even this universe, yet there are millions and millions of universes like this one within the material sky. And above this material sky there is another sky, which is called the spiritual sky. In that sky all the planets are eternal, and life is eternal, also. We cannot know these things by our material calculations, so we must take this information from *Bhagavad-gītā*.

This material manifestation is only one fourth of the whole manifestation, both spiritual and material. In other words, three fourths of the total manifestation is beyond the covered, material sky. The material covering is millions and millions of miles thick, and only after penetrating it can one enter the open, spiritual sky. Here Kṛṣṇa uses the words *bhāvaḥ anyah*,

**The material world appears like a cloud** covering a small portion of the spiritual sky. The Vedic scriptures explain that although the material world undergoes perpetual creation and annihilation, the spiritual world is eternally manifest. In the self-luminous spiritual world the highest planet is Goloka Vṛndāvana, the lotuslike abode of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. There Lord Kṛṣṇa enjoys loving exchanges with His pure devotees.

which mean “another nature.” In other words, there is another, spiritual nature besides the material one we ordinarily experience.

But even now we are experiencing the spiritual as well as the material nature. How is that? Because we ourselves are a combination of matter and spirit. We are spirit, and only as long as we are within the material body does it move. As soon as we are out of the body, it is as good as stone. So, since we can all personally perceive that there is spirit as well as matter, we should also know that there is a spiritual world as well.

In the Seventh Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa discusses the spiritual and material natures. The spiritual nature is superior, and the material nature is inferior. In this material world the material and spiritual natures are mixed, but if we go beyond this material nature altogether—if we go to the spiritual world—we will find only the superior, spiritual nature. This is the information we get in the Eighth Chapter.

It is not possible to understand these things by experimental knowledge. The scientists can see millions and millions of stars through their telescopes, but they cannot approach them. Their means are insufficient. What to speak of other planets, they cannot approach even the moon planet, which is the nearest. Therefore, we should try to realize how incapable we are of understanding God and God's kingdom by experimental knowledge. And since getting understanding this way is not possible, it is foolishness to try. Rather, we have to understand God by hearing *Bhagavad-gītā*. There is no other way. No one can understand who his father is by experimental knowledge. One has to

simply believe his mother when she says, “Here is your father.” Similarly, one has to believe *Bhagavad-gītā*; then one can get all the information.

Nonetheless, while there is no possibility of experimental knowledge about God, if one becomes advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness he will realize God directly. For example, through realization I am firmly convinced of whatever I am saying here about Kṛṣṇa. I am not speaking blindly. Similarly, anyone can realize God. *Svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*: direct knowledge of God will be revealed to anyone who sticks to the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Such a person will actually understand, “Yes, there is a spiritual kingdom, where God resides, and I have to go there. I must prepare to go there.” Before going to another country, one may hear so much about it, but when he actually goes there he understands everything directly. Similarly, if one takes up the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one day he'll understand God and the kingdom of God directly, and the whole problem of his life will be solved.

Here Kṛṣṇa uses the word *sanātanaḥ* to describe that spiritual kingdom. The material nature has a beginning and an end, but the spiritual nature has no beginning and no end. How is that? We can understand by a simple example. Sometimes, when there is a snowfall, we see that the whole sky is covered by a cloud. But actually that cloud is covering only an insignificant part of the whole sky. Because we are very minute, however, when a cloud covers a few hundred miles of the sky, to us the sky looks completely covered. Similarly, this entire material manifestation (called the *mahat-tattva*) is like a cloud covering an insignificant portion of



the spiritual sky. And, just as when the cloud clears we can see the bright, sunlit sky, so when we get clear of this covering of matter, we can see the original, spiritual sky.

Furthermore, just as a cloud has a beginning and an end, the material nature also has a beginning and an end, and our material body also has a beginning and an end. Our body simply exists for some time. It takes birth, grows, stays for some time, gives off some by-products, dwindles, and then vanishes. These are the six transformations of the body. Similarly, every material manifestation undergoes these six transformations. Thus at the end this whole material world will be vanquished.

But Kṛṣṇa assures us, *paras tasmāt tu bhāvo 'nyo 'vyakto 'vyaktāt sanātanaḥ*: Beyond this destructible, cloudlike material nature, there is another, superior nature, which is eternal. It has no beginning and no end." Then He says, *yaḥ sa sarveṣu bhūteṣu naśyatsu na vinaśyati*: "When this material manifestation is annihilated, that superior nature will remain." When a cloud in the sky is annihilated, the sky remains. Similarly, when the cloudlike material manifestation is annihilated, the spiritual sky remains. This is called *avyakto 'vyaktāt*.

There are many volumes of Vedic literature containing information about the material sky and the spiritual sky. In the Second Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we find a description of the spiritual sky: what its nature is, what kind of people live there, what their features are—everything. We even get information that in the spiritual sky there are spiritual airplanes. The living entities there are all liberated, and when they fly in their airplanes they look as beautiful as lightning.

So, everything in the spiritual world is substantial and original. This material world is only an imitation. Whatever we see in this material world is all imitation, shadow. It is just like a cinematographic picture, in which we see only the shadow of the real thing.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [1.1.1] it is said, *yatra tri-sargo 'mṛṣā*: "This illusory material world is a combination of matter." We have all seen a pretty mannequin of a girl in a shopkeeper's showcase. Every sane man knows that it is an imitation. But the so-called beautiful things in this material world are just like the beautiful "girl" in the shopkeeper's window. Indeed, whatever beautiful thing we see here in this material world is simply an imitation of the real beauty in the spiritual world. As Śrīdhara Svāmī says, *yat satyatayā mithyā sargo 'pi satyavat pratīyate*: "The spiritual world is real, and the unreal, material manifestation only appears real." Something is real only if it will exist eternally. Reality cannot be vanquished. Similarly,

real pleasure must be eternal. Since material pleasure is temporary, it is not actual, and those who seek real pleasure don't take part in this shadow pleasure. They strive for the real, eternal pleasure of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Here Kṛṣṇa says, *yaḥ sa sarveṣu bhūteṣu naśyatsu na vinaśyati*: "When everything in the material world is annihilated, that spiritual nature will remain eternally." The aim of human life is to reach that spiritual sky. But people do not know the reality of the spiritual sky. The *Bhāgavatam* says, *na te viduḥ svārtha-gatiṁ hi viṣṇum*: "People do not know their self-interest. They do not know that human life is meant for understanding spiritual

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## Everything in the spiritual world is substantial and original. Whatever we see in this material world is only an imitation.

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reality and preparing ourselves for being transferred to that reality. It is not meant for remaining here in the material world." The whole of Vedic literature instructs us like this. *Tamasī mā jyotir gama*: "Don't remain in the darkness; go to the light." This material world is darkness. We are artificially illuminating it with electric lights and fires and so many other things, but its nature is dark. The spiritual world, however, is not dark; it is full of light. Just as on the sun planet there is no possibility of darkness, there is no possibility of darkness in the spiritual nature, because every planet there is self-illuminated.

It is clearly stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* that the supreme destination, from which there is no return, is the abode of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Person. The *Brahma-saṁhītā* describes this supreme abode as *ānanda-cinmaya-rasa*, a place where everything is full of spiritual bliss. Whatever variegatedness is manifest there is all of the quality of spiritual bliss—nothing there is material. That spiritual variegatedness is the spiritual expansion of the Supreme Godhead Himself, for the manifestation there is totally of the spiritual energy.

Although the Lord is always in His supreme abode, He is nonetheless all-pervading by His material energy. So by

His spiritual and material energies, He is present everywhere—both in the material and in the spiritual universes. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, the words *yasyāntaḥ-sthāni bhūtāni* indicate that everything is sustained by Him, whether it be spiritual or material energy.

It is clearly stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* that only by *bhakti*, or devotional service, can one enter into the Vaikuṅṭha (spiritual) planetary system. In all the Vaikuṅṭhas there is only one Supreme Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, who has expanded Himself into millions and millions of plenary portions. These plenary expansions are four-armed, and They preside over innumerable spiritual planets. They are known by a variety of names: Puruṣottama, Trivikrama, Keśava, Mādhava, Aniruddha, Hṛṣīkeśa, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, Śrīdhara, Vāsudeva, Dāmodara, Janārdana, Nārāyaṇa, Vāmana, Padmanābha, and so on. These plenary expansions are like the leaves of a tree, the main trunk of the tree being like Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa, dwelling in Goloka Vṛndāvana, His supreme abode, systematically and flawlessly conducts all affairs of both universes (material and spiritual) by the power of His all-pervasiveness.

Now, if we are at all interested in reaching Kṛṣṇa's supreme abode, then we must practice *bhakti-yoga*. The word *bhakti* means "devotional service," or, in other words, submission to the Supreme Lord. Kṛṣṇa clearly says, *puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pāṁtha bhaktiḥ labhyaḥ tv anyanyāyā*. The words *tv anyanyāyā* here mean "without any other engagement." So, to reach the spiritual abode of the Lord, we must engage in pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa.

One definition of *bhakti* is given in the authoritative book *Nārada-pañcarātra*:

*sarvopādhi-vinirmuktaṁ  
tat-paratvena nirmalam  
hṛṣīkena hṛṣīkeśa-  
sevanam bhaktir ucyate*

"*Bhakti*, or devotional service, means engaging all our senses in the service of the Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the master of all the senses. When the spirit soul renders service unto the Supreme, there are two side effects. First, he is freed from all material designations, and second, his senses are purified simply by being employed in the service of the Lord."

Now we are encumbered by so many bodily designations. "Indian," "American," "African," "European"—these are all bodily designations. Our bodies are not we ourselves, yet we identify with these designations. Suppose one has received a university degree and identifies himself as an M.A. or a B.A. or a Ph.D. He is not that degree, but he has identified with that designation. So, *bhakti* means to free oneself from these designations (*sarvopādhi-*



vinirmuktam). *Upādhi* means “designation.” If someone gets the title “Sir,” he becomes very happy: “Oh, I have this ‘Sir’ title.” He forgets that this title is only his designation—that it will exist only as long as he has his body. But the body is sure to be vanquished, along with all its designations. When one gets another body, he gets other designations. Suppose in the present lifetime one is an American. The next body he gets may be Chinese. Therefore, since we are always changing our bodily designations, we should stop identifying them as our self. When one is determined to free himself of all these nonsensical designations, then he can attain *bhakti*.

In the above verse from the *Nārada-pañcarātra*, the word *nirmalam* means “completely pure.” What is that purity? One should be convinced, “I am spirit (*aham brahmāsmi*). I am not this material body, which is simply my covering. I am an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa; that is my real identity.” One who is freed from false designations and fixed in his real constitutional position always renders service to Kṛṣṇa with his senses (*hr̥ṣikena hr̥ṣikeśa-sevanam bhaktir ucyate*). The word *hr̥ṣika* means “the senses.” Now our senses are designated, but when our senses are free from designations, and when with that freedom and in that purity we serve Kṛṣṇa—that is devotional service.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī explains pure devotional service in this verse from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* [1.1.11]:

*anyābhilāṣita-sūnyam  
jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam  
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-  
śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

“When first-class devotional service develops, one must be devoid of all material desires, of knowledge tainted by monistic philosophy, and of fruitive action. A pure devotee must constantly serve Kṛṣṇa favorably, as Kṛṣṇa desires.” We have to serve Kṛṣṇa favorably, not unfavorably. Also, we should be free from material desires (*anyābhilāṣita-sūnyam*). Usually one wants to serve God for some material purpose. Of course, that is also good. If someone goes to God for some material gain, he’s far greater than the person who never goes to God. That is admitted in *Bhagavad-gītā* [7.16]:

*catur-vidhā bhajante mām  
janāḥ suktīno rjuna  
ārto jijñāsor arthārthī  
jñānī ca bhāratarābha*

“O best among the Bhāratas [Arjuna], four kinds of pious men render devotional service unto Me—the distressed, the desirer of wealth, the inquisitive, and he who is searching for knowledge of the Absolute.” But it is best that we not go to God with

some desire for material benefit. We should be free of this impurity (*anyābhilāṣita-sūnyam*).

The next words Rūpa Gosvāmī uses to describe pure *bhakti* are *jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam*. The word *jñāna* refers to the effort to understand Kṛṣṇa by mental speculation. Of course, we should try to understand Kṛṣṇa, but we should always remember that He is unlimited and that we can never fully understand Him. It is not possible for us to do this. Therefore, we have to accept whatever is presented to us in the revealed scriptures. The *Bhagavad-gītā*, for example, is presented by Kṛṣṇa for our understanding. We should try to understand Him simply by

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**Kṛṣṇa is such a  
great person that  
although situated  
in His own abode,  
He is still  
all-pervading,  
and everything is  
within Him.**

---

hearing from books like *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The word *karma* means “work with some fruitive result.” If we want to practice pure *bhakti*, we should work in Kṛṣṇa consciousness selflessly—not just to get some profit out of it.

Next Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī says that pure *bhakti* must be *anukūlyena*, or favorable. We must culture Kṛṣṇa consciousness favorably. We should find out what will please Kṛṣṇa, and we should do that. How can we know what will please Kṛṣṇa? By hearing *Bhagavad-gītā* and taking the right interpretation from the right person. Then we’ll know what Kṛṣṇa wants, and we can act accordingly. At that time we will be elevated to first-class devotional service.

So, *bhakti-yoga* is a great science, and there is immense literature to help us understand it. We should utilize our time to understand this science and thus prepare ourselves to receive the supreme benefit at the time of our death—to attain to the spiritual planets, where the Supreme Personality of Godhead resides.

There are millions of planets and stars within this universe, yet this entire universe is only a small particle within the total creation. There are many universes like ours, and, as mentioned before, the

spiritual sky is three times as large as the total material creation. In other words, three fourths of the total manifestation is in the spiritual sky.

We get information from *Bhagavad-gītā* that on every spiritual planet in the spiritual sky there is an expansion of Kṛṣṇa. They are all *puruṣa*, or persons; they are not impersonal. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says, *puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha bhaktyā labhyas tv ananyayā*: One can approach the Supreme Person only by devotional service—not by challenge, not by philosophical speculation, and not by exercising in this *yoga* or that *yoga*. No. It is clearly stated that one can approach Kṛṣṇa only by surrender and devotional service. It is not stated that one can reach Him by philosophical speculation or mental concoction or some physical exercise. One can reach Kṛṣṇa only by practicing devotion, without deviating to fruitive activities, philosophical speculation, or physical exercise. Only by unalloyed devotional service, without any admixture, can we reach the spiritual world.

Now, *Bhagavad-gītā* further says, *yas-yāntaḥ-sthānī bhūtāni yena sarvam idaṁ tatam*. Kṛṣṇa is such a great person that although situated in His own abode, He is still all-pervading, and everything is within Him. How can this be? The sun is located in one place, but the sun rays are distributed all over the universe. Similarly, although God is situated in His own abode in the spiritual sky, His energy is distributed everywhere. Also, He’s not different from His energy, just as the sun and the sunshine are not different, in the sense that they are composed of the same illuminating substance. So, Kṛṣṇa distributes Himself everywhere by His energies, and when we become advanced in devotional service we can see Him everywhere, just as one can light a lamp anywhere by plugging it into the electric circuit.

In his *Brahma-saṁhitā*, Lord Brahmā describes the qualifications we require to see God: *premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti*. Those who have developed love of God can constantly see God before them, twenty-four hours a day. The word *sadaiva* means “constantly, twenty-four hours a day.” If one is actually God realized, he doesn’t say, “Oh, I saw God yesterday night, but now He’s not visible.” No, He’s *always* visible, because He’s everywhere.

Therefore, the conclusion is that we can see Kṛṣṇa everywhere, but we have to develop the eyes to see Him. We can do that by the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. When we see Kṛṣṇa, and when we approach Him in His spiritual abode, our life will be successful, our aims will be fulfilled, and we’ll be happy and prosperous eternally.



# ARTISANS OF A SPIRITUAL ORDER

“Here our ambition is not to become great artists  
but sincere devotees of God.”

by YOGEŚVARA DĀSA

Real craftsmanship is, above all else, a spiritual exercise.” A mass of spinning clay turns between his fingers. The clay gradually grows into a slender urn that curves and tapers beneath his touch.

“Art is a way of glorifying God. He’s in the clay we dig out of the ground. He’s in the water that softens it. Our tools are given by Him. Isn’t it only right that our work be for His pleasure?”

While speaking, Sadāśiva-priya dāsa guides the hands of a young man working diligently to mold a vase. Slowly, as the boy repositions his fingers, the vase straightens its posture.

“My father used to teach me like this,” Sadāśiva-priya says, “When I became a devotee, he gave me one of his potter’s wheels so I would continue my crafts.”

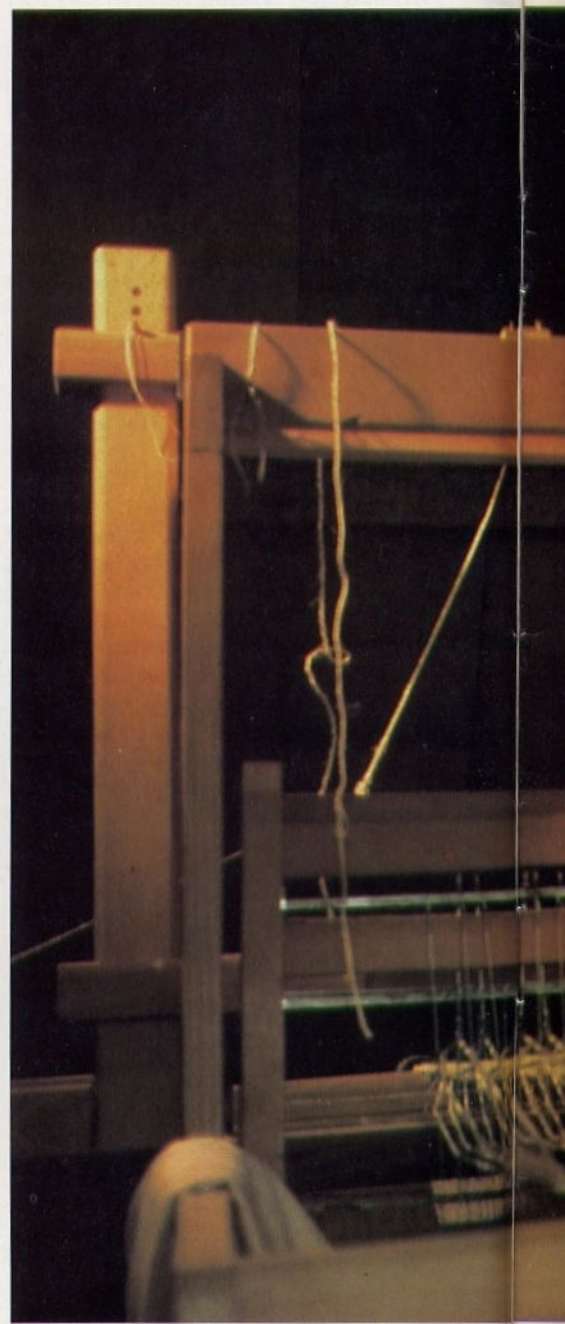
Sadāśiva-priya shared an aspiration with other devotee artisans in France. They wanted to establish workshops where craftspeople could exercise their talents in service to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord. In 1975 the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement purchased a farm in the Touraine region of central France,



PHOTO: YOGEŚVARA DĀSA

and the artisans took charge of several old buildings on the property. They cut wood to renovate floors and roofs and hauled stones from nearby quarries to repair broken walls. Within a year the first ateliers were finished, and the potters and weavers installed their equipment. Word of the artisans group spread, and soon other craftspeople came to the farm and started workshops for painting, design, horticulture, naturopathy, and a factory that produces incense and vegetable-based soap.

“We have many friends who sympathize with our principle of dedicating artistic skills to God’s service,” says



Bhūta-bhāvana dāsa, who directs the silk-screen and press operation at the farm. Before becoming a devotee he was a student at l’Ecole des Beaux Arts and previous to that a missionary student in Chile.

“I needed to express myself artistically,” he says, “but the same lack of substance I had known in the Church came back to haunt me in the theater. My friends and I had mastered many innovative dance forms and dramatic techniques, but we had nothing of value to say to people. The theater itself was void of real meaning.”

In 1972 he met devotees on the streets of Paris and soon after began





chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa as a daily meditation. Gradually he adopted the principles of devotional life. He never forgot that he had left the theater to become purified. He wanted his talents to have deeper meaning for people. Like most of the artisans at the New Māyāpur farm, he says his artistic abilities have blossomed since he dedicated himself to Kṛṣṇa conscious practices.

“For a devotee,” Bhūta-bhāvana explains, “every act—whether it be weaving cloth or washing dishes—is meant to be an offering to God. If we concentrate on our tapestry or painting but neglect to keep Kṛṣṇa’s temple



PHOTO: YOGEŚVARA DĀSA

**Immersed in working his loom,** Bhakta Claude (above), a devotee artisan at the Kṛṣṇa conscious farm in Valencay, France, prepares cloth from hand-spun wool. Devotee weavers create throw rugs, bedspreads, and functional garments for members of the community. At left, Claude shares his craft with a student from the farm’s primary school. Together they weave a simple sitting mat.



**In the weavers' loft,** a devotee prepares her loom for a new pattern. Dyed yarn for the work hangs from rafters. The devotees transformed run-down shacks into workshops with wood and stone from the farmland.



PHOTO: VISAKHA-DEVI DAS





PHOTO: YOGEŚVARA DĀSA

**Having chosen a variety of dried herbs,** Avyāya dāsa (left) mixes remedies for common ailments. Medicinal plants grow wild on the New Māyāpur farm. Below, Bhūta-bhāvana dāsa offers Paris artist Ramon Dilley a Kṛṣṇa conscious critique on a painting for public exhibition. In the silk-screen workshop at New Māyāpur (bottom right), Bhūta-bhāvana inspects a poster announcing an upcoming festival. The workshop also produces two- and three-color calendars and lithographs of devotional subjects. Sadāśiva-priya dāsa (bottom left) decorates a vase before glazing it. Potters at the farm cut their own wood to fuel a kiln built with hand-made bricks.

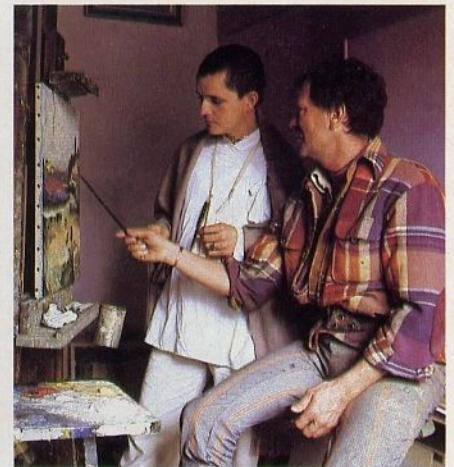


PHOTO: YOGEŚVARA DĀSA

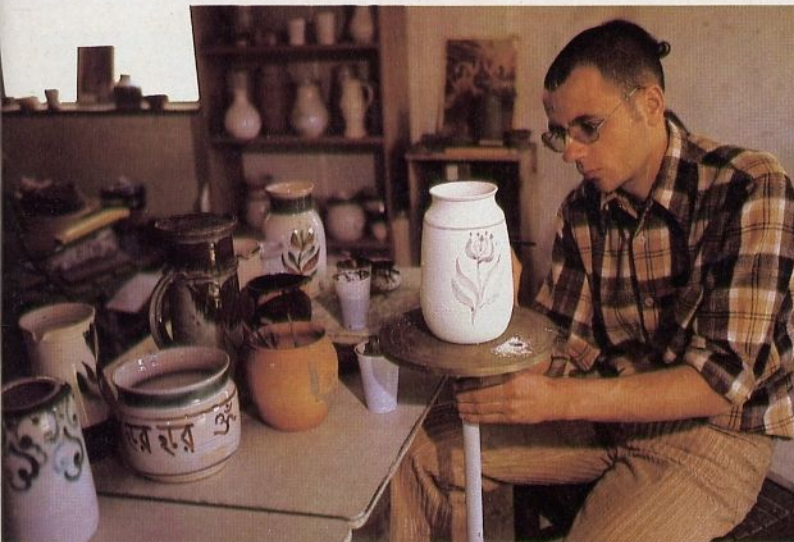


PHOTO: YOGEŚVARA DĀSA



clean, then we have missed the point of devotional service. Here our ambition is not to become great artists but sincere devotees of God.”

The devotees welcome everyone who wants to take part in the crafts work, but only those who agree to follow the devotional principles—no meat-eating, intoxication, extramari-

tal sex, or gambling—are allowed to live on the farm. Those who are still in the process of adopting these devotional standards are “friends of Kṛṣṇa,” as the devotees call them. Some of Kṛṣṇa’s friends rent homes nearby to make it easier to attend workshops and temple ceremonies. Others, like Ramon Dilley, an artist of

some repute in France, have started building country studios on land adjoining the farm.

“We extend ourselves to visitors and friends,” Bhūta-bhāvana says. “We don’t expect that everyone can adjust to a strict devotional life right away, so here is a chance for them to take to spiritual life without having to make a





PHOTO: VISAKHA-DEVI DASI

**Devotional arts around the world.**

Devotees of Kṛṣṇa collaborate on a sculpture of Garuḍa (above), the eagle carrier of Lord Viṣṇu. Their creations, in the ancient art form called *puṭula*, the crafting of earthen dolls, fill a Vedic museum at the Hare Kṛṣṇa community in Los Angeles. Bhakti-siddhānta dāsa (right) adds highlights to a head for one of the museum's exhibits. At far right, an intricate jeweled pattern absorbs the attention of a *pūjārī*, or attendant to the Deity of Lord Kṛṣṇa.



PHOTO: VISAKHA-DEVI DASI

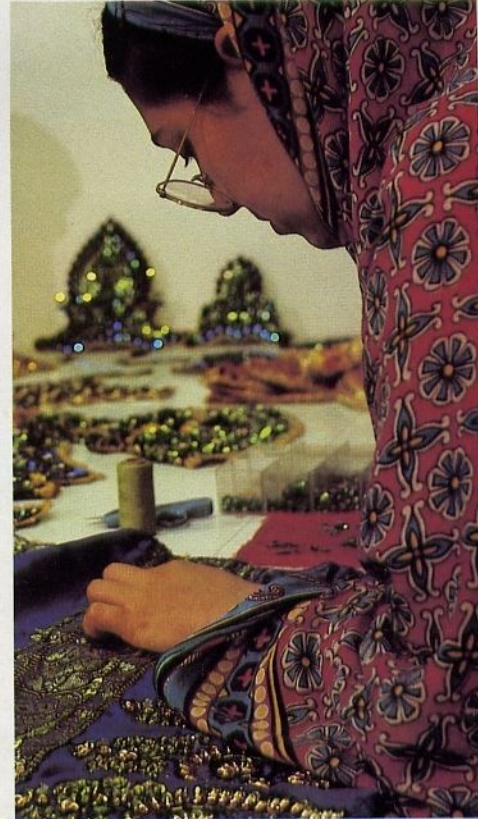


PHOTO: VISAKHA-DEVI DASI

'leap of faith.' By coming here to exercise their artistic skills, they associate with the devotees, and they learn what to expect if they want to advance further in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Visiting the wood-and-brick homes on the farm property, one sees bedspreads and sitting mats from the weavers' loft. Devotees serve guests their meals in clay bowls, cups, and plates made at the pottery barn. Bhūta-bhāvana's silkscreen posters illustrating verses from the *Bhagavad-*

*gītā* and other Vedic scriptures adorn walls and classrooms. Sticks of home-made incense burn long into the night.

"We would like people to recognize through our work that the true creator is God," Bhūta-bhāvana explains. "He is the ability in man, the source of all inspiration and intelligence. Our art is merely an imitation of His, a rearranging of elements He has created. If even one person becomes inspired to serve Kṛṣṇa by seeing our work, we will consider our efforts successful." 🙏



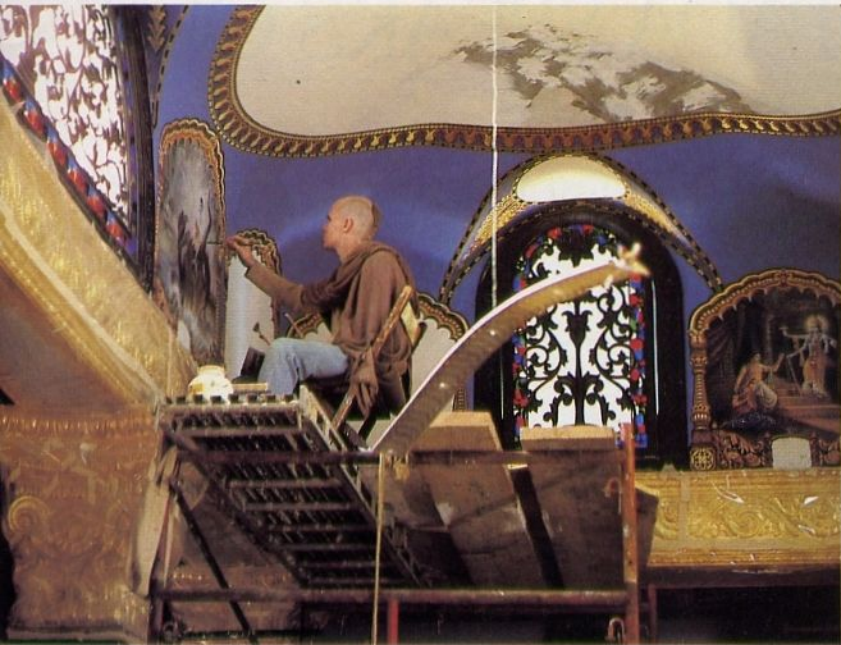


PHOTO: VISAKHĀ-DEVĪ DASĪ

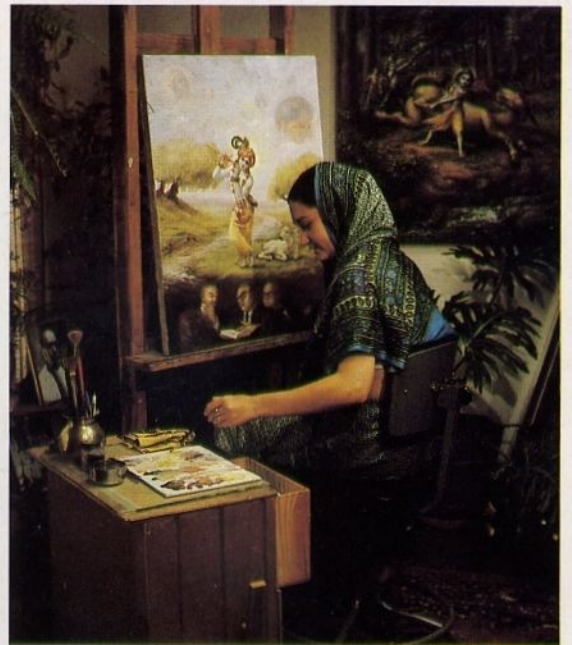


PHOTO: VISAKHĀ-DEVĪ DASĪ



PHOTO: NETYĀTRĪPTĀ-DEVĪ DASĪ

**A painting of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes** (above left) receives details on the ceiling of the Hare Kṛṣṇa palace in West Virginia. Devotee artists and artisans worked for six years to complete the palace. Above and left, painters concentrate on canvases depicting events from the Vedic literature.



# ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

## Can We Put a Date on Wisdom?

*This exchange between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and a British student took place some seven years ago during an early-morning walk in London.*

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** The message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness comes from the spiritual world. It is not of this material world. Therefore sometimes people may misunderstand it. So we have to explain it nicely. They cannot even understand what is the soul. Big, big scientists. Big, big philosophers. They have no information of the spirit and the spiritual world. Therefore, sometimes they find it very difficult to understand.

**Guest:** Lately I've been doing some research on the dating of the *Vedas*. You know, some archaeologists maintain that the evidence from the Harappa dig and Mohenjo-Daro show the dating of the *Vedas* in fact to be a great deal later than previously thought. This would seem to deprive the *Vedas* of a certain amount of authority, because they no longer would appear to be the most ancient religious scriptures in the world.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** *Veda* does not mean "religion." *Veda* means "knowledge." So if you can trace out the history of knowledge, then you can trace out the date for the origin of *Veda*. Can you trace out when knowledge began? Can you trace it out?

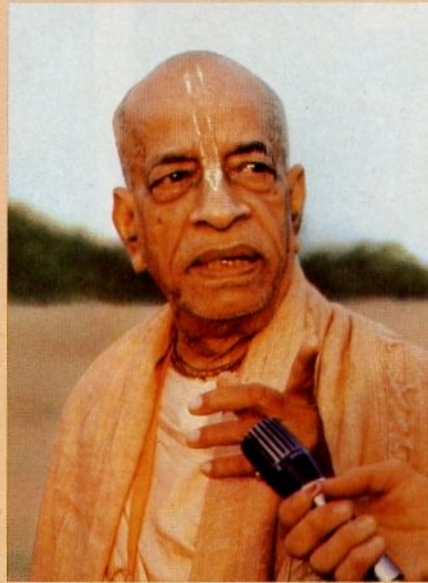
**Guest:** I wouldn't think we could.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** So how can you trace out the history of *Vedas*? *Vedas* means knowledge. So first of all find out from which date knowledge began. Then you find out the age of the *Vedas*.

The history of *Veda* began from the date of the creation of this material world. No one can give the date of the creation. The creation begins with the birth of Brahmā, and you cannot calculate even the length of Brahmā's one day. During Brahmā's night, the universe is devastated to some extent, and during his daytime, creation takes place again. There are two kinds of devastations. One devastation takes place during the night of Brahmā, and one final devastation annihilates the entire cosmic manifestation. But these teeny people are speculating about the dates of *Vedas*. That is ludicrous.

There are many microbes that grow in the evening and die just as the day is beginning. One night is their whole span of life. So our life is like that. What history can you write? Therefore, we receive Vedic knowledge from Vedic authorities.

One should not be a frog philosopher.



Do you know about frog philosophy? Dr. Frog had never seen the Atlantic Ocean, and somebody informed him, "Oh, I have seen such a vast mass of water."

So Dr. Frog said, "Oh, is it bigger than this well?"

**Guest:** Yes, it was beyond his conception.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. So these scholars are like frogs rotting in their wells. What can they possibly understand of the Vedic knowledge?

**Guest:** Yes, I see. To change the subject, I wonder whether you feel that the *Vedas* affirm that the most true form of life, the most pure form of life, is one that's lived alongside nature, not against nature as we seem to be doing in our urban setting.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Oh, yes. Real life means you have to minimize your bodily activities so that you can save time and devote yourself to spiritual understanding. That is real life. And the present civilization based on the bodily concept of life is animal life. It is not civilized life.

*Athāto brahma-jijñāsā:* civilized life begins when one is so much advanced that he inquires about the spirit soul. But when there is no such inquiry, when people cannot inquire what is spirit soul, they are like cats and dogs.

Vedic life teaches one to become as free as possible from bodily disturbances. Therefore, Vedic education begins with *brahmacharya*, celibacy. You see? But these rascals cannot check their sex life. Their philosophy is that you should go on with sex life unrestrictedly and when there is pregnancy kill the child.

**Guest:** Yes.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** That is their rascal

philosophy. They have no idea that by training one can forget sex life. And if you forget sex life, where is the question of abortion? But they cannot do that. Therefore it is said, *adānta-gobhir viśatām tamisram:* by unrestricted sense enjoyment they are gradually going down to the level of animal life.

A person who indulges in abortion, killing the baby in the womb, will be put into a womb in his next life, and somebody will kill him. As many babies as he has killed, he'll have to accept that many lives and be killed. So for hundreds of years it will be impossible for him to see daylight. He'll remain in the womb and be killed. People don't know nature's laws. One cannot violate nature's laws as one can the state laws. Suppose you kill somebody—you can escape by trick. But you cannot escape nature's law. As many times as you have killed, that many times you must be killed within the womb. That is nature's law.

**Guest:** Only last week I was talking to a nurse who works on an abortion ward in one of the main London hospitals. It's terrible. Some of the fetuses are in such an advanced state of development that clearly life is a strong possibility.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** There is no question of possibility. Life begins from the very beginning of sex. The living entity is very small. By nature's law, according to his *karma*, he's sent into the father's semen and injected into the mother's womb. The sperm and egg cells from the man and woman emulsify and form a body that is just like a pea. Then that pealike form develops gradually. This is all described in the Vedic literature. The first stage is the manifestation of nine holes—for the ears, eyes, nostrils, mouth, genitals, and rectum. Then the senses gradually develop, and by six and a half months everything is complete, and the living entity's consciousness comes back. Prior to the formation of the body, the living entity remains unconscious, like in anesthesia. Then he dreams, and then gradually comes to consciousness. At that time he becomes very much reluctant to come out, but nature gives him a push, and he comes out. This is the process of birth.

This is Vedic knowledge. In the Vedic literature you'll find everything perfectly described. Therefore, how can the *Vedas* be subject to history? But the difficulty is that we are speaking of things that are spiritual. Therefore it is sometimes difficult for the gross materialists to understand. They are so dull-headed that they cannot understand.



# Manifesto for a Politics of Transcendence

For a just and sane society we must go beyond  
the impasse between the right and the left.

by RAVĪNDRA SVARŪPA DĀSA

The Republican Party seems to have emerged from its recent national convention as a reconstituted American conservative party, and the November elections may give the voters at least the appearance of choice between a clear right and a clear left. They say this is a good thing, but I have always had a problem making that kind of choice, and I suspect a lot of other people do too. My problem is that both sides seem to make good sense.

Confronted with an advocate of either the right or the left, I have always been able to see his point. This used to put me in a paralyzing bind and make me at heart rather guiltily apolitical. I envied the assurance of those who could make themselves partisans of one side or the other. Of course, there was always the center, the traditional refuge of ideological wimps like me. But I need consistency, and you pay dearly for contradiction, especially when it is embodied in social policy. So there I was stuck.

I could not reject the appeal of the left to my highest ideals, to my unshakable intuition that all people are equal and that social fact ought to reflect it. Yet when the right insisted, with hard-eyed realism, that people are in fact not equal and no amount of sentiment is going to make them so, I had to agree. Each side had a strong case, although I did note that neither seemed to embrace its position because of disinterested observation of the nature of things. The right had the social upper hand and wanted to keep it; the left was on the bottom and wanted a leg up. As for me, I

was out of it altogether; I could identify neither with those who had power nor with those who wanted to seize it. Yet I didn't doubt the importance of the issue—American presidential elections might be, as critics claim, all make-believe, but the fate of the world hangs in the hostility between the capitalists on the right and the communists on the left, and that no one can ignore.

I did not become a devotee of Kṛṣṇa to resolve my political impasse, but among the unhopd-for bonuses Kṛṣṇa consciousness gave was a social doctrine that resolves this intractable dilemma, that unifies, without contradiction, in concrete social policy the absolute equality of all people with the relative inequalities their differing abilities and aptitudes create. This social vision provided something I would have thought impossible: a society with clear division of labor into classes, but without exploitation, enmity, and conflict. This was an extraordinarily enlivening discovery, for I saw that it is the solution to the political face-off that threatens the whole world.

*Varṇāśrama-dharma*, as the social manifesto of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is called, is the blueprint for a spiritual civilization, for it is based upon the idea that people are spiritual beings. As living creatures, we are tiny but eternal sparks of the supreme living being, although we are now confined within mortal material bodies. We cannot plausibly expect to attain happiness by relying on our bodies, since they are certain to become diseased, to age, and finally to die. Rather, our welfare can rest only upon cultivation of our authentic and eternal self, the soul. We suffer unremittingly because we identify ourselves with our bodies, besieged as

they are by material nature. So if a society wants to secure the highest good for all its members, it must arrange for all of them to attain enlightenment concerning the true self and thus enter into a full, pure consciousness that is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss. At the same time, such a society must satisfy, as simply and efficiently as possible, all needs of the body. *Varṇāśrama-dharma* is designed to achieve both these goals.

A materialist would immediately object that since "the soul" is a metaphysical concept referring to something we cannot experience, any social system based on it must be quite dubious. But it is simply false that the soul cannot be experienced (it is, indeed, the condition for our having any experience at all), and the *varṇāśrama* society is designed precisely to foster that experience. And since materialistic society creates the conditions that make experience of the soul virtually impossible, the objection in effect begs the question.

We are spiritual beings in material bodies, and it is *varṇāśrama-dharma* that integrates and reconciles the absolute equality of all people as spiritual beings with the relative inequalities imposed upon them by the conditions of their material embodiment. It calls for society to be divided into four occupational groups (called *varṇas*) and four spiritual orders (*āśramas*). This division into *varṇas* is quite natural. No civilized society can do without four classes: intellectuals (called *brāhmaṇas*), political and military leaders (*kṣatriyas*), farmers and merchants (*vaiśyas*), laborers and artisans (*śūdras*). Lack of any one of these would obviously cripple a society. They form the head, arms, belly, and legs of the social body, which can be

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healthy only if all the parts are sound and working cooperatively. What is more, every human being is born with a constellation of innate qualities and aptitudes that places him into one of these four groups. (Personal qualities alone determine membership; membership by birth, as in the Indian caste system, is not the authentic *varṇa* system.)

If I describe the duties and qualities of each of these *varṇas*, you will be able to recognize intuitively the four human types.

The *brāhmaṇa*, or intellectual, knows the absolute truth by theoretical knowledge and direct realization, and in light of that he guides the practical policies of the political leaders. As the head of society, he has the vision to direct the actions of the whole body. By occupation the *brāhmaṇa* is a teacher, and he instructs everyone not only in the particular service of his *varṇa* but also in the universal service to God, the basis for self-realization. A youth suitable to be trained as a *brāhmaṇa* must have a love of study and a desire for knowledge. He is naturally peaceful and tolerant and is spontaneously attracted to purity, to self-control and to austerity. He is honest and instinctively religious.

The *kṣatriya*'s service is to protect the other members of society. He governs and when necessary fights. A person suitable to be trained as a *kṣatriya* must be quite intelligent, but his intelligence will have a more practical direction than a *brāhmaṇa*'s. He has great natural courage and is attracted to performing great deeds at personal risk. He is a natural-born leader, resourceful and determined. His body is strong; his character, forceful. He is spontaneously liberal and generous, and he likes to use his strength to protect others.

A *vaiśya*'s occupations are farming, trade, business, and—this is important—cow protection. *Vaiśyas* produce the wealth of society. They must also be intelligent, but their intelligence is of a shrewder, narrower sort than the *kṣatriya*'s. *Vaiśyas* are not as passionate as *kṣatriyas*, and they lack their courage and liberality of spirit. Heroism impels the *kṣatriya*; profit, the *vaiśya*. Cow protection prevents the *vaiśyas* from succumbing to greed and exploitation. Regarding as his mother the cow which gives him milk and as his father the bull which plows to produce grains, the *vaiśya* learns to live in a personal, harmonious, nonexploitative way with the animals—and with the earth—that produce his wealth. Cow protection instills religious principles in the *vaiśyas* and keeps them close to the land.

Those who are not intelligent enough to be *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, or *vaiśyas* are *śūdras*. They do the manual work of society. Since they lack the intelligence for

the independent action of the others, *śūdras* work under supervision as general assistants to the three other *varṇas*.

I think that the advantages of recognizing these divisions are evident. Since they are based on natural character and aptitude, it is possible to discern the tendency of a child at an early age and to tailor his education to develop his natural talents and to cultivate the virtues peculiar to his position. This would go a long way toward solving the problems of vocation and motivation that now plague

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## The Vedic social system recognizes that people are born with different material abilities and that it is no service to individuals or society to pretend otherwise.

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our educational system. With the explicit recognition of four separate groups, each can develop as a distinct subculture. Each *varṇa* requires its own set of particular duties and values (called *sva-dharma*), and no end of confusion and misery is caused by not recognizing this, by trying to impose the standard of one on all, or by concocting some "universal" standard that fits no one. If we recognize the four *varṇas*, then people will be fulfilled by working with all their talents and energy, and society will prosper by their contributions.

Of course, I hear the loud objection: You have just argued for an incredibly reactionary class structure (*śūdras*, indeed!) that will have all the abuses intrinsic to such divisions. The higher groups will exploit the lower, social injustice will flourish, and hatred and conflict will tear it apart.

The answer to this problem is *sanātana-dharma*, "eternal religion and duty." Although each *varṇa* has its particular *sva-dharma*, all share equally in the single, overarching, universal *dharma* called *sanātana-dharma*. This is the intense com-

mon consciousness of cooperative subordinate service to God. In the practice of *sanātana-dharma*, everyone is absolutely equal. It is more important than *sva-dharma*, and it effectively prevents the exploitation of one group by another.

The intuition of the equality of all people is a fundamental spiritual insight. It is a fact that demands recognition in concrete social policy. At the same time, the material differences among people also demand recognition. The error of the right, however, is to see such differences as fundamentally important and to give spiritual equality only lip service (if any service at all), putting it safely in the next world. The left errs, on the other hand, in the application of its insight. It tries to impose a spiritual fact upon a material condition, imposing equality by fiat where it does not exist.

*Varnāśrama-dharma* synthesizes material difference with spiritual oneness. It recognizes that people are born with innately different material capabilities and that it is no service to individuals or society to pretend otherwise. Therefore, *varṇāśrama-dharma* has class division, but without exploitation, injustice, envy, and conflict. This is how.

First of all, the goal of all members of the *varṇas* is self-realization, so that the standard of advancement in life for everyone is a matter of spiritual development, not material aggrandizement. Although an individual performs a particular service according to his material condition, his foremost duty in life is to understand himself as a spiritual being, distinct from his temporary material body. This is *sanātana-dharma*, and it offers a powerful means of spiritual realization (taught in the *Bhagavad-gītā*) equally available to all the *varṇas*, independently of material qualifications. Therefore, success or advancement in life does not depend upon getting riches, power, or social prestige.

Furthermore, *varṇāśrama* society is God-centered. The *sanātana-dharma*, the eternal religion or essential nature, of the infinitesimal spiritual beings is to serve the one infinite supreme being. They do this by offering the fruits of their labor in devotional service to God, who in this way is concretely recognized as the supreme enjoyer of everything. Exploitation arises only when a person forgets his position as servant and tries to usurp the position of God by utilizing another's goods or labor for his own enjoyment. I may serve another, but if I see that he is in fact as much a servant as I, then he will not be exploiting me, nor will I be envious of him. In the intense common consciousness of the supremacy of God and of the universal bond of subordinate servitorship to God, which

(continued on page 20)



# 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. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

## Second Canto: "The Cosmic Manifestation"

### CHAPTER SIX

#### Puruṣa-sūkta Confirmed

*In this installment of our serialized presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Lord Brahmā continues to inform his son and disciple Nārada about Lord Kṛṣṇa's all-encompassing universal form, a form so great that Brahmā finally confesses, "O Nārada, it is difficult to measure the glories of the Supreme Person."*

#### TEXT 6

बाहवो लोकपालानां प्रायशः क्षेमकर्मणाम् ॥ ६ ॥

bāhavo loka-pālānām  
prāyaśaḥ kṣema-karmaṇām

*bāhavaḥ*—arms; *loka-pālānām*—of the governing deities of the planets, the demigods; *prāyaśaḥ*—almost always; *kṣema-karmaṇām*—of those who are leaders and protectors of the general mass.

#### TRANSLATION

The Lord's arms are the productive fields for the great demigods and other leaders of the living entities who protect the general mass.

#### PURPORT

This important verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is corroborated and nicely explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.41-42) as follows:

yad yad vibhūtimat sattvaṁ  
śrīmad ūrjitaṁ eva vā  
tat tad evāvagaccha tvaṁ  
mama tejo-'rīṣa-sambhavam

athavā bahunaiena  
kiṁ jñātena tavārjuna  
viṣṭabhyāham idaṁ kṛtsnam  
ekāṁśena sthito jagat

There are many powerful kings, leaders, learned scholars, scientists, artists, engineers, inventors, excavators, archaeologists, industrialists, politicians, economists, business magnates, and many more powerful deities or demigods like Brahmā, Śiva, Indra, Candra, Sūrya, Varuṇa and Marut, who are all protecting the interest of the universal affairs of maintenance, in different positions, and all of them are different powerful parts and parcels of the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the father of all living entities, who are placed in different high and low positions according to their desires or aspirations. Some of them, as particularly mentioned above, are specifically endowed with powers by the will of the Lord. A sane person must know for certain that a living being, however powerful he may be, is neither absolute nor independent.

All living beings must accept the origin of their specific power as mentioned in this verse. And if they act accordingly, then simply by discharging their respective occupational duties they can achieve the highest perfection of life, namely eternal life, complete knowledge and inexhaustible blessings. As long as the powerful men of the world do not accept the origin of their respective powers, namely the Personality of Godhead, the actions of *māyā* (illusion) will continue to act. The actions of *māyā* are such that a powerful person, misled by the illusory, material energy, wrongly accepts himself as all in all and does not develop God consciousness. As such, the false sense of egoism (namely myself and mine) has become overly prominent in the world, and there is a hard struggle for existence in human society. The intelligent class of men, therefore, must admit the Lord as the ultimate source of all energies and thus pay tribute to the Lord for His good blessings. Simply by accepting the Lord as the supreme proprietor of everything, since He is actually so, one can achieve the highest perfection of life. Whatever a person may be in the estimation of the social order of things, if a person tries to reciprocate a feeling of love towards the Supreme Personality of Godhead and is satisfied with the blessings of the Lord, he will at once feel the highest peace of mind for which he is hankering life after life. Peace of mind, or in other words the healthy state of mind, can be achieved only when the mind is situated in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. The parts and parcels of the Lord are endowed with specific powers for rendering service unto the Lord, just as a big business magnate's sons are empowered with specific powers of administration. The obedient son of the father never goes against the will of the father and therefore passes life very peacefully in concurrence with the head of the family, the father. Similarly, the Lord being the father, all living beings should fully and satisfactorily discharge the duty and will of the father, as faithful sons. This very mentality will at once bring peace and prosperity to human society.

#### TEXT 7

विक्रमो भूर्भुवः स्वश्च क्षेमस्य शरणस्य च ।  
सर्वकामवरस्यापि हरेश्चरण आस्पदम् ॥ ७ ॥

vikramo bhūr bhuvah svaś ca  
kṣemasya śaraṇasya ca  
sarva-kāma-varasyāpi  
hareś caraṇa āspadam

*vikramaḥ*—forward steps; *bhūḥ bhuvah*—of the lower and upper planets; *svaḥ*—as well as of heaven; *ca*—also; *kṣemasya*—of protection of all that we have; *śaraṇasya*—of fearlessness; *ca*—also; *sarva-kāma*—all that we need; *varasya*—of all benedictions; *api*—exactly; *hareḥ*—of the Lord; *caraṇaḥ*—the lotus feet; *āspadam*—shelter.

#### TRANSLATION

Thus the forward steps of the Lord are the shelter for the upper, lower and heavenly planets, as well as for all that we need. His lotus feet serve as protection from all kinds of fear.



## PURPORT

For absolute protection from all sorts of fear, as well as for all our needs of life, we must take shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord, not only in this planet but also in all the upper, lower and heavenly planets. This absolute dependence on the lotus feet of the Lord is called pure devotional service, and it is directly hinted at within this passage. No one should have any kind of doubt in this matter, nor should one be inclined to seek the help of any other demigods, because all of them are dependent on Him only. Everyone, except the Lord Himself, is dependent on the mercy of the Lord; even the all-pervading Supersoul is also dependent on the supreme aspect of Bhagavān, the Personality of Godhead.

## TEXT 8

अपं वीर्यस्य सर्गस्य पर्जन्यस्य प्रजापतेः ।  
पुंसः शिश्र उपस्थस्तु प्रजात्वानन्दनिर्घृतेः ॥ ८ ॥

apām vīryasya sargasya  
parjanyaasya prajāpateḥ  
puṁsaḥ śiśna upasthas tu  
prajāty-ānanda-nirvṛteḥ

apām—of water; vīryasya—of the semen; sargasya—of the generative; parjanyaasya—of rains; prajāpateḥ—of the creator; puṁsaḥ—of the Lord; śiśnaḥ—the genitals; upasthas tu—the place where the genitals are situated; prajāti—due to begetting; ānanda—pleasure; nirvṛteḥ—cause.

## TRANSLATION

From the Lord's genitals originate water, semen, generatives, rains, and the procreators. His genitals are the cause of a pleasure that counteracts the distress of begetting.

## PURPORT

The genitals and the pleasure of begetting counteract the distresses of family encumbrances. One would cease to generate altogether if there were not, by the grace of the Lord, a coating, a pleasure-giving substance, on the surface of the generative organs. This substance gives a pleasure so intense that it counteracts fully the distress of family encumbrances. A person is so captivated by this pleasure-giving substance that he is not satisfied by begetting a single child, but increases the number of children, with great risk in regard to maintaining them, simply for this pleasure-giving substance. This pleasure-giving substance is not false, however, because it originates from the transcendental body of the Lord. In other words, the pleasure-giving substance is a reality, but it has taken on an aspect of pervertedness on account of material contamination. In the material world, sex life is the cause of many distresses on account of material contact. Therefore, the sex life in the material world should not be encouraged beyond the necessity. There is a necessity for generating progeny even in the material world, but such generation of children must be carried out with full responsibility for spiritual values. The spiritual values of life can be realized in the human form of material existence, and the human being must adopt family planning with reference to the context of spiritual values, and not otherwise. The degraded form of family restriction by use of contraceptives, etc., is the grossest type of material contamination. Materialists who use these devices want to fully utilize the pleasure potency of the coating on the genitals by artificial means, without knowing the spiritual importance. And without knowledge of spiritual values, the less intelligent man tries to utilize only the material sense pleasure of the genitals.

## TEXT 9

पायुर्यमस्य मित्रस्य परिमोक्षस्य नारद ।  
हिंसाया निर्वृतेर्मृत्योर्निरयस्य गुदं स्मृतः ॥ ९ ॥

pāyur yamasya mitrasya  
parimokṣasya nārada  
himsāyā nirvṛteḥ mṛtyor  
nirayasya gudam smṛtaḥ

pāyuh—the evacuating outlet; yamasya—the controlling deity of death; mitrasya—of Mitra; parimokṣasya—of the evacuating hole; nārada—O Nārada; himsāyāḥ—of envy; nirvṛteḥ—of misfortune; mṛtyoḥ—of death; nirayasya—of hell; gudam—the rectum; smṛtaḥ—is understood.

## TRANSLATION

O Nārada, the evacuating outlet of the universal form of the Lord is the abode of the controlling deity of death, Mitra, and the evacuating hole and the rectum of the Lord is the place of envy, misfortune, death, hell, etc.

## TEXT 10

पराभूतेरधर्मस्य तमसश्चापि पश्चिमः ।  
नाड्यो नदनदीनां च गोत्राणामस्थिसंहतिः ॥ १० ॥

parābhūteḥ adharmasya  
tamaśāś cāpi paścimāḥ  
nāḍyo nada-nadinām ca  
gotrāṇām asthi-samhatih

parābhūteḥ—of frustration; adharmasya—of immorality; tamaśāḥ—of ignorance; ca—and; api—as also; paścimāḥ—the back; nāḍyaḥ—of the intestines; nada—of the great rivers; nadinām—of the rivulets; ca—also; gotrāṇām—of the mountains; asthi—bones; samhatih—accumulation.

## TRANSLATION

The back of the Lord is the place for all kinds of frustration and ignorance, as well as for immorality. From His veins flow the great rivers and rivulets, and on His bones are stacked the great mountains.

## PURPORT

In order to defy the impersonal conception of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, a systematic analysis of the physiological and anatomical constitution of His transcendental body is given here. It is clear from the available description of the body of the Lord (His universal form) that the form of the Lord is distinct from the forms of ordinary mundane conception. In any case, He is never a formless void. Ignorance is the back of the Lord, and therefore the ignorance of the less intelligent class of men is also not separate from His bodily conception. Since His body is the complete whole of everything that be, one cannot assert that He is impersonal only. On the contrary, the perfect description of the Lord holds that He is both impersonal and personal simultaneously. The Personality of Godhead is the original feature of the Lord, and His impersonal emanation is but the reflection of His transcendental body. Those who are fortunate enough to have a view of the Lord from the front can realize His personal feature, whereas those who are frustrated and are thus kept on the ignorance side of the Lord, or, in other words, those who have the view of the Lord from the back, realize Him in His impersonal feature.

## TEXT 11

अव्यक्तरससिन्धूनां भूतानां निधनस्य च ।  
उदरं विदितं पुंसो हृदयं मनसः पदम् ॥ ११ ॥

avyakta-rasa-sindhūnām  
bhūtānām nidhanasya ca  
udaram viditām puṁso  
hṛdayam manasaḥ padam



*avyakta*—the impersonal feature; *rasa-sindhūnām*—of the seas and oceans of water; *bhūtānām*—of those who take birth in the material world; *nidhanasya*—of the annihilation; *ca*—also; *udaram*—His belly; *viditam*—is known by the intelligent class of men; *pumsaḥ*—of the great personality; *hṛdayam*—the heart; *manasaḥ*—of the subtle body; *padam*—the place.

## TRANSLATION

The impersonal feature of the Lord is the abode of great oceans, and His belly is the resting place for the materially annihilated living entities. His heart is the abode of the subtle material bodies of living beings. Thus it is known by the intelligent class of men.

## PURPORT

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.17–18) it is stated that according to human calculations one day of Brahmā is equal to one thousand ages of four millenniums (4,300,000 years) each, and the same period is calculated to be his night also. A Brahmā lives for one hundred such years and then dies. A Brahmā, who is generally a great devotee of the Lord, attains liberation after such a downfall. The universe (called the *brahmāṇḍa*, or the round football-like domain controlled by a Brahmā) is thus annihilated, and thus the inhabitants of a particular planet, or of the whole universe, are also annihilated. *Avyakta*, mentioned here in this verse, means the night of Brahmā, when partial annihilation takes place and the living entities of that particular *brahmāṇḍa*, up to the planets of Brahmaloḥa, along with the big oceans, etc., all repose in the belly of the *virāt-puruṣa*. At the end of a Brahmā's night, the creation again takes place, and the living entities, reserved within the belly of the Lord, are let loose to play their respective parts as if being awakened from a deep slumber. Since the living entities are never destroyed, the annihilation of the material world does not annihilate the existence of the living entities, but until liberation is attained one has to accept one material body after another, again and again. The human life is meant for making a solution to this repeated change of bodies and thereby attaining a place in the spiritual sky, where everything is eternal, blissful and full of knowledge. In other words, the subtle forms of the living entities take place in the heart of the Supreme Being, and such forms take tangible shape at the time of creation.

## TEXT 12

धर्मस्य मम तुभ्यं च कुमारानां भवस्य च ।  
विज्ञानस्य च सत्त्वस्य परस्तात्मा परायणम् ॥१२॥

*dharmasya mama tubhyaṁ ca  
kumārānām bhavasya ca  
vijñānasya ca sattvasya  
parasyātmā parāyaṇam*

*dharmasya*—of religious principles, or of Yamarāja; *mama*—mine; *tubhyam*—of yours; *ca*—and; *kumārānām*—of the four Kumāras; *bhavasya*—Lord Śiva; *ca*—and also; *vijñānasya*—of transcendental knowledge; *ca*—also; *sattvasya*—of truth; *parasya*—of the great personality; *ātmā*—consciousness; *parāyaṇam*—dependent.

## TRANSLATION

Also, the consciousness of that great personality is the abode of religious principles—mine, yours, and those of the four bachelors Sanaka, Sanātana, Sanat-kumāra and Sanandana. That consciousness is also the abode of truth and transcendental knowledge.

## TEXTS 13–16

अहं भवान् भवश्चैव त इमे मुनयोऽग्रजाः ।  
सुरासुरनरा नागाः खगा मृगसरीसृपाः ॥१३॥

गन्धर्वाप्सरसो यक्षा रक्षोभूतगणोरगाः ।  
पशवः पितरः सिद्धा विद्याधराश्चरणा दुमाः ॥१४॥  
अन्ये च विविधा जीवा जलस्थलनभौकसः ।  
ग्रहर्क्षकेतवस्तारास्तदितः स्तनयित्तवः ॥१५॥  
सर्वं पुरुष एवेदं भूतं भव्यं भवच्च यत् ।  
तेनेदमावृतं विश्वं वितस्तिमधितिष्ठति ॥१६॥

*aham bhavān bhavaś caiva  
ta ime munayo 'grajāḥ  
surāsura-narā nāgāḥ  
khagā mṛga-sarispāḥ*

*gandharvāpsaraso yakṣā  
rakṣo-bhūta-gaṇoragāḥ  
paśavaḥ pitarāḥ siddhā  
vidyādhraś cāraṇā drumāḥ*

*anye ca vividhā jīvā  
jala-sthala-nabhaukasāḥ  
graharṁkṣa-ketavaś tārāś  
tadītaḥ stanayitnavaḥ*

*sarvaṁ puruṣa evedaṁ  
bhūtaṁ bhavyaṁ bhavaś ca yat  
tenedam āvṛtaṁ viśvaṁ  
vitastim adhiṣṭhatai*

*aham*—myself; *bhavān*—yourself; *bhavaḥ*—Lord Śiva; *ca*—also; *eva*—certainly; *te*—they; *ime*—all; *munayaḥ*—the great sages; *agra-jāḥ*—born before you; *sura*—the demigods; *asura*—the demons; *narāḥ*—the human beings; *nāgāḥ*—the inhabitants of the Nāga planet; *khagāḥ*—birds; *mṛga*—beasts; *sarispāḥ*—reptiles; *gandharva-apsarasāḥ*, *yakṣāḥ*, *rakṣāḥ*—*bhūta-gaṇa-uragāḥ*, *paśavaḥ*, *pitarāḥ*, *siddhāḥ* *vidyādhraś*, *cāraṇāḥ*—all inhabitants of different planets; *drumāḥ*—the vegetable kingdom; *anye*—many others; *ca*—also; *vividhāḥ*—of different varieties; *jīvāḥ*—living entities; *jala*—water; *sthala*—land; *nabha-okasāḥ*—the inhabitants of the sky, or the birds; *graha*—the asteroids; *rṁkṣa*—the influential stars; *ketavaḥ*—the comets; *tārāḥ*—the luminaries; *tadītaḥ*—the lightning; *stanayitnavaḥ*—the sound of the clouds; *sarvaṁ*—everything; *puruṣaḥ*—the Personality of Godhead; *eva idam*—certainly all these; *bhūtaṁ*—whatever is created; *bhavyam*—whatever will be created; *bhavaḥ*—and whatever was created in the past; *ca*—also; *yat*—whatever; *tena idam*—it is all by Him; *āvṛtam*—covered; *viśvaṁ*—universally comprehending; *vitastim*—half a cubit; *adhiṣṭhatai*—situated.

## TRANSLATION

Beginning from me [Brahmā] down to you and Bhava [Śiva], all the great sages who were born before you, the demigods, the demons, the Nāgas, the human beings, the birds, the beasts, as well as the reptiles, etc., and all phenomenal manifestations of the universes, namely the planets, stars, asteroids, luminaries, lightning, thunder, and the inhabitants of the different planetary systems, namely the Gandharvas, Apsarās, Yakṣas, Rakṣas, Bhūtagaṇas, Uragas, Paśus, Pitās, Siddhas, Vidyādharaś, Cāraṇas, and all other different varieties of living entities, including the birds, beasts, trees and everything that be, are all covered by the universal form of the Lord at all times, namely past, present and future, although He is transcendental to all of them, eternally existing in a form not exceeding nine inches.

## PURPORT

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, by His partial representation, measuring not more than nine inches as Supersoul, expands by His potential energy in the shape of the universal form, which includes



everything manifested in different varieties of organic and inorganic materials. The manifested varieties of the universe are therefore not different from the Lord, just as golden ornaments of different shapes and forms are nondifferent from the original stock reserve of gold. In other words, the Lord is the Supreme Person who controls everything within the creation, and still He remains the supreme separate identity, distinct from all manifested material creation. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.4–5) He is therefore said to be *Yogeśvara*. Everything rests on the potency of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and still the Lord is different from and transcendental to all such identities. In the Vedic *Puruṣa-sūkta* of the *R̥g mantra*, this is also confirmed. This philosophical truth of simultaneous oneness and difference was propounded by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and it is known as *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*. Brahmā, Nārada and all others are simultaneously one with the Lord and different from the Supreme Lord. We are all one with Him, just as the gold ornaments are one in quality with the stock gold, but the individual gold ornament is never equal in quantity with the stock gold. The stock gold is never exhausted even if there are innumerable ornaments emanating from the stock because the stock is *pūrṇam*, complete; even if *pūrṇam* is deducted from the *pūrṇam*, still the supreme *pūrṇam* remains the same *pūrṇam*. This fact is inconceivable to our present imperfect senses. Lord Caitanya therefore defined His theory of philosophy as *acintya* (inconceivable), and as confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* as well as in the *Bhāgavatam*, Lord Caitanya's theory of *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva* is the perfect philosophy of the Absolute Truth.

## TEXT 17

स्वधिष्ण्यं प्रतपन् प्राणो बहिश्च प्रतपत्यसौ ।  
एवं विराजं प्रतपंस्तपत्यन्तर्बहिः पुमान् ॥१७॥

*sva-dhiṣṇyam* pratapan *prāṇo*  
*bahiḥ ca* pratapaty *asau*  
*evaṁ virājam* pratapaṁś  
*tapaty antar* *bahiḥ* *pumān*

*sva-dhiṣṇyam*—radiation; *pratapan*—by expansion; *prāṇaḥ*—living energy; *bahiḥ*—external; *ca*—also; *pratapati*—illuminated; *asau*—the sun; *evaṁ*—in the same way; *virājam*—the universal form; *pratapan*—by expansion of; *tapati*—enlivens; *antaḥ*—internally; *bahiḥ*—externally; *pumān*—the Supreme Personality.

## TRANSLATION

The sun illuminates both internally and externally by expanding its radiation; similarly, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, by expanding His universal form, maintains everything in the creation both internally and externally.

## PURPORT

The universal form of the Lord, or the impersonal feature of the Lord known as the *brahmajyoti*, is clearly explained here and compared to the radiation of the sun. The sunshine may expand all over the universe, but the source of the sunshine, namely the sun planet or the deity known as *Sūrya-nārāyaṇa*, is the basis of such radiation. Similarly, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Kṛṣṇa is the basis of the impersonal *brahmajyoti* radiation, or the impersonal feature of the Lord. This is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.27). So the universal form of the Lord is the secondary imagination of the impersonal form of the Lord, but the

primary form of the Lord is *Śyāmasundara*, with two hands, playing on His eternal flute. Seventy-five percent of the expansive radiation of the Lord is manifested in the spiritual sky (*tripād-vibhūti*), and twenty-five percent of His personal radiation comprehends the entire expansion of the material universes. This is also explained and stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.42). Thus the seventy-five percent expansion of His radiation is called His internal energy, whereas the twenty-five percent expansion is called the external energy of the Lord. The living entities, who are residents of the spiritual as well as the material expansions, are His marginal energy (*taṭastha-śakti*), and they are at liberty to live in either of the energies, external or internal. Those who live within the spiritual expansion of the Lord are called liberated souls, whereas the residents of the external expansion are called the conditioned souls. We can just make an estimate of the number of the residents of the internal expansions in comparison with the number of residents in the external energy and may easily conclude that the liberated souls are far more numerous than the conditioned souls.

## TEXT 18

सोऽमृतस्याभयस्येशो मर्त्यमन्नं यदत्यगात् ।  
महिमैष ततो ब्रह्मन् पुरुषस्य दुरत्ययः ॥१८॥

*so 'mṛtasyābhayasyeśo*  
*martyam annam* *yad atyagāt*  
*mahimaiṣa tato brahman*  
*puruṣasya duratyayaḥ*

*saḥ*—He (the Lord); *amṛtasya*—of deathlessness; *abhayasya*—of fearlessness; *iśaḥ*—the controller; *martyam*—dying; *annam*—fruitive action; *yat*—one who has; *atyagāt*—has transcended; *mahimā*—the glories; *eṣaḥ*—of Him; *tataḥ*—therefore; *brahman*—O *brāhmaṇa* Nārada; *puruṣasya*—of the Supreme Personality; *duratyayaḥ*—immeasurable.

## TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the controller of immortality and fearlessness, and He is transcendental to death and the fruitive actions of the material world. O Nārada, O *brāhmaṇa*, it is therefore difficult to measure the glories of the Supreme Person.

## PURPORT

The glories of the Lord, in the transcendental seventy-five percent of the Lord's internal potency, are stated in the *Padma Purāṇa* (*Uttara-khaṇḍa*). It is said there that those planets in the spiritual sky, which comprises the seventy-five percent expansion of the internal potency of the Lord, are far, far greater than those planets in the total universes composed of the external potency of the Lord. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, the total universes in the external potency of the Lord are compared to a bucketful of mustard seeds. One mustard seed is calculated to be a universe itself. In one of the universes, in which we are now living, the number of planets cannot be counted by human energy, and so how can we think of the sum total in all the universes, which are compared to a bucketful of mustard seeds? And the planets in the spiritual sky are at least three times the number of those in the material sky. Such planets, being spiritual, are in fact transcendental to the material modes; therefore they are constituted in the mode of unalloyed goodness only.

(continued in next issue)





# Every Town and Village

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



Support beams rise from the newly laid second story of the memorial shrine for Śrīla Prabhupāda in Vṛndāvana, India. The dome of the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma temple appears at upper right.

## Śrīla Prabhupāda Shrine Under Way

**Vṛndāvana, India**—The central spire will reach seventy feet into the sky, white marble elephants, lions, swans, and peacocks will decorate the façade. Curving staircases leading to the gallery of paintings will be balanced on either side by waterfalls, fountains, and canopies of flowers.

Although the opening is still more than a year away, work progresses rapidly on this memorial *samādhi* (tomb) in honor of the late founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

The disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda are offering the memorial in accordance with Vaiṣṇava tradition. It is customary for Kṛṣṇa devotees to build such a *samādhi* in honor of their departed spiritual master, as a sign of their devotion to him. Although devotion is more an internal affair than an outward combination of bricks and mortar, the shrine nonetheless bears great meaning as a sacred place of pilgrimage for remembering the spiritual master and his instructions.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's *samādhi* will stand in the front courtyard of the Kṛṣṇa-

Balarāma Temple he himself established in Vṛndāvana, the small village of north India where Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared five thousand years ago. Śrīla Prabhupāda had made Vṛndāvana his residence before leaving India in 1965 to spread the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa to the West. Here he had translated the first of sixty volumes of Sanskrit scripture. And here, in 1977, he departed, having established more than one hundred temples for Kṛṣṇa consciousness internationally.

The *samādhi* has an unusual design. Whereas most Vaiṣṇava shrines are small, simple structures, devotees have conceived of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *samādhi* on a unique scale meant to reflect his importance as the leading exponent of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the world. Two buildings form the memorial structure. One houses a museum depicting Śrīla Prabhupāda's accomplishments in spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness; the other houses the actual plot where Śrīla Prabhupāda's body rests.

The project was designed by His Holiness Surabhīr-ahhipālayantam dāsa Goswami, an architect among Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples. It is slated for completion by the fall of 1981.

## Governor of Bali Welcomes Kṛṣṇa Devotees



His Holiness Prabhupāda-kṛpā Goswami presents ISKCON publications to the Governor of Bali.

**Bali, Indonesia**—His Excellency Bapak Ida Bagus Mantra, Governor of the Indonesian island of Bali, recently extended a warm reception to devotees of ISKCON, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. The people of Bali pride themselves on their ancient civilization, which has roots deep in Hinduism. Materialism and technology have had their impact here, nonetheless, and the Governor was pleased to hear of the devotees' endeavors to establish the principles of the original Vedic culture. "People here need to be reminded that they are not the body but the soul," the Governor said.

Gaura-maṅḡala-bhūmi dāsa, an ISKCON student from Australia, directs a team of devotees in translating the Society's books into the Indonesian language, a program which the Governor enthusiastically endorsed.

## 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 Padmanābha		
October 5	October 19	October 20
Paksavardhanī Mahādvādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).	Victory celebration of Lord Rāmacandra. Appearance of Śrīpāda Madhvācārya.	Pāśāṅkuṣā Ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).
October 21	October 23	
Dāmodara-vrata and Kārtika-vrata begin. Disappearance of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī.	Last month of Cāturmāsya-vrata begins (fasting from urad dālī). Spring Rāsa-yātrā of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Disappearance of Śrīla Murāri Gupta.	
Vaiṣṇava month of Dāmodara		
October 28	November 3	
Disappearance of Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura.	Śrīrāma Ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans). Disappearance of Śrīla Narahari Sarāṅkara Ṭhākura. English edition of Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta completed by Śrīla Prabhupāda (1974).	



# Manifesto

(continued from page 14)

the leaders, above all, teach by their own actions, lie the harmony and cooperation among *varṇas* that prevent exploitation, envy, and conflict. Since everyone's duty is devotional service, the material differences among engagements do not matter. Cleaning the streets and running the government are of equal worth, and every person can become perfect by doing his own work in the service of God.

Of course, if anyone in a responsible position loses his sense of subordinate service and begins to exploit his facilities for his own enjoyment, the evils of class division which we have experienced in our time will arise. One strong safeguard against this is the institution of *āśramas*, a division of life into four stages that is especially to be observed by the *brāhmaṇas* and the *kṣatriyas*. This system enjoins that a person must first be educated as a celibate student (*brahmacharya*) before marriage, family, and "worldly" life (*grhastha*). *Grhastha* life must end at fifty or so, when husband and wife leave family and social affairs and cultivate renunciation and spiritual life (*vānaprastha*). Finally, when they are sufficiently prepared, they separate, and the husband spends the end of his life as a wandering mendicant preacher (*sannyāsa*). In this way the *āśrama* system insures that the socially most powerful people will also be the most renounced.

The soundness of the whole *varṇāśrama-dharma* system ultimately rests upon the *brāhmaṇas*. They educate all members, and their teaching will have force, commanding the respect of the powerful and passionate *kṣatriyas*, as long as they themselves set the highest example of purity and renunciation. The purity of brahminical culture is the foundation of *varṇāśrama-dharma*.

This system might remind you, as it did me when I first heard it described, of the society of medieval Europe, a purportedly God-centered civilization with its four orders of clergy (*brāhmaṇas*), feudal lords (*kṣatriyas*), bourgeois (*vaiśyas*), and serfs (*śūdras*). For a time, at least, the European kings required priestly sanction to rule; they were crowned by the pontiff. The ideal king was supposed to be saintly. Yet this society was only a rather primitive approximation of *varṇāśrama-dharma*. The *brāhmaṇas* never came to a sufficiently high standard of purity, and when they became corrupt, the civilization lost what spiritual vision it had, and the whole system crumbled. And it is still crumbling.

For the collapsing of the primitive medieval *varṇāśrama-dharma* has taken more than five hundred years, and it constitutes all of our modern European history. It

began with the corruption of the *brāhmaṇas*. When the *brāhmaṇas* become tainted by worldly ambition, they lose their moral and spiritual authority—the only power they ever possess—and the *kṣatriyas* begin to see them as worldly princes on the same level as themselves. There is no longer any justification for brahminical preeminence, and therefore the *kṣatriyas* break loose from brahminical domination, a social revolution epitomized in Europe by the Protestant Reformation. Without brahminical direc-

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tion and restraint, the *kṣatriyas* rapidly lose self-control and become intolerable tyrants. No longer can they justify their sovereignty by divine sanction. The *vaiśyas* therefore rebel against the oppression of a corrupt and useless nobility, an upheaval epitomized by the French Revolution. The clever and enterprising *vaiśyas* come to life, accumulate capital, build up industry and commerce and, in their untrammelled greed for profit, ruthlessly oppress and exploit the *śūdras*, who mount their own rebellion, an upheaval exemplified by the ongoing communist revolution.

The concept of *varṇāśrama-dharma* thus makes our own history intelligible, and several things become clear. One is that we have formed our ideas of society, class, and their relations on the basis of a society in various stages of progressive decay or collapse, and we are now living through the terminal state of that collapse. The idea of *varṇāśrama-dharma* is thus quite relevant to our contemporary social and political experience.

We can see the present conflict between the left and the right, the communists

(*śūdras*) and the capitalists (*vaiśyas*), as the terminus of a long process of social decay, and neither side, therefore, has any future, any real hope of creating a just and sound society. Both are rooted in the past and are expressions of social putrefaction. Certainly, European and American society in the twentieth century has become fatally infected by *vaiśya* values run amok. But *śūdra* values run amok are no improvement. As a totally materialistic philosophy, communism fosters rather than eliminates the seeds of exploitation and conflict, encouraging the very conditions it seeks to ameliorate. Consequently, under communism there will never be a society free from the domination of one group by another, of the many by the few, and that domination will be carried on by the most brutal means possible. Both capitalist and communist ideologies are products of exploitation and envy, and neither can therefore hope to eliminate them. They cannot offer release from the process of social degeneration because they are created by it, and their conflict will merely insure, one way or another, the eventual destruction of civilization.

If there is any chance for a restoration of human civilization, the impetus must come from outside the conditions of decay. It must begin with the creation of *brāhmaṇas*. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement was designed specifically to make those *brāhmaṇas*, the nucleus of a complete *varṇāśrama-dharma* society. A modern *varṇāśrama-dharma* society does not have to repeat the spiritual, social, and technological shortcomings of medieval Europe. Kṛṣṇa consciousness provides a much higher standard of purity than was available to the medieval *brāhmaṇas*. (That you can verify for yourself.) And a new *varṇāśrama-dharma* society can use all the technological achievement of our time in divine service. Thus the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is the seed of a new culture, potentially a complete human civilization, springing up just when the old and primitive *varṇāśrama* civilization reaches the final stages of its destruction. It offers an alternative to all of us trapped in that destruction.

We have come a far way from the Republican national convention. But I hope that when you are faced with the choice between right and left—in November, and afterwards, as the president conducts the conflict with the communist nations—you will look at it in a new light. *Varṇāśrama-dharma* does solve that intractable political problem. It is a radical solution, in the sense that it goes to the root of the difficulty, and it calls for a respiritualization of human society. That may seem to ask for a lot, but, on the other hand, the times may give us no alternative.

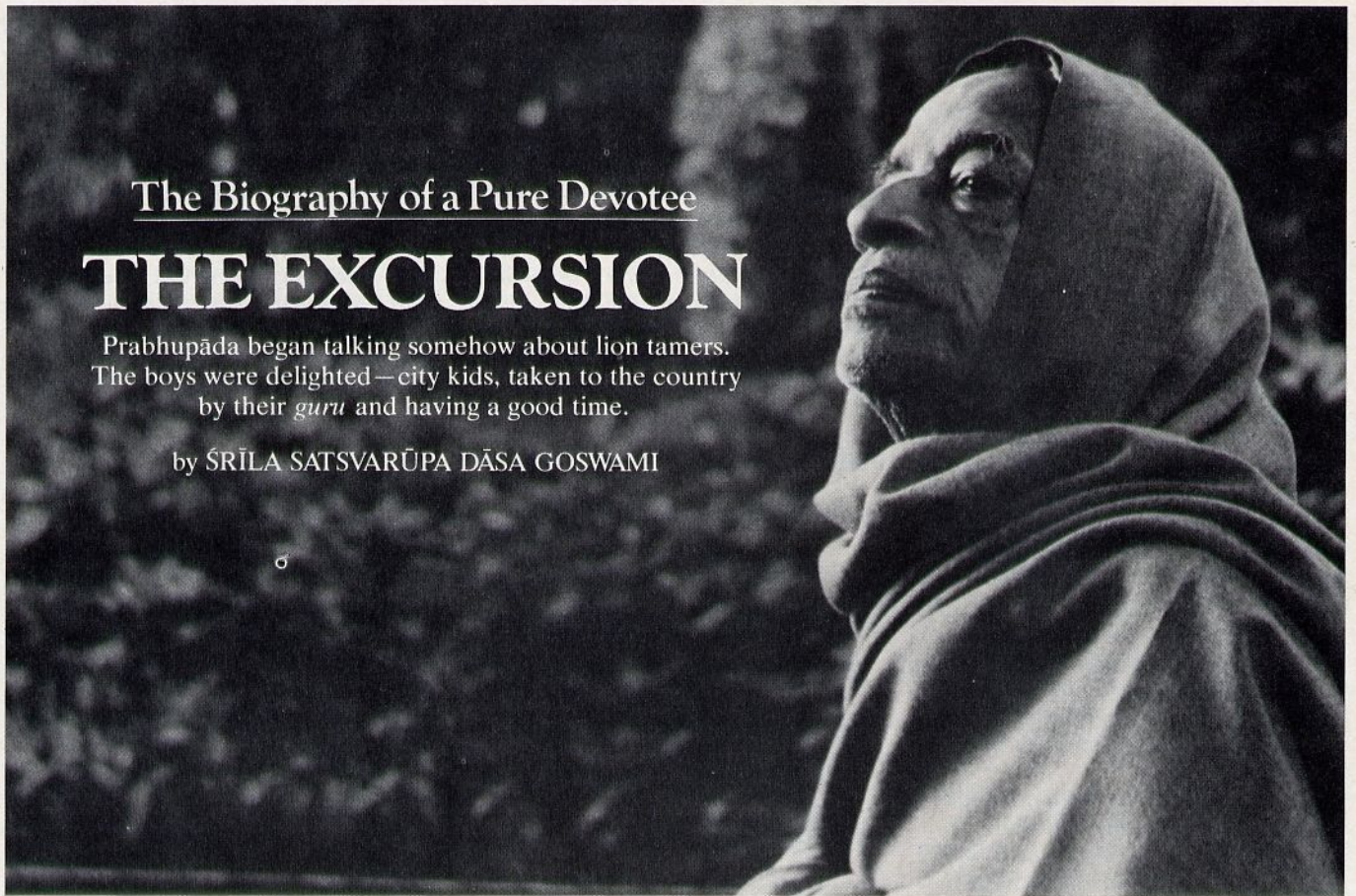


The Biography of a Pure Devotee

# THE EXCURSION

Prabhupāda began talking somehow about lion tamers. The boys were delighted—city kids, taken to the country by their *guru* and having a good time.

by ŚRĪLA SATSVARŪPA DĀSA GOSWAMI



The small storefront temple at 26 Second Avenue had begun to thrive. Śrīla Prabhupāda, by his chanting, his strong preaching, his delicious meals of prasādam, but most of all by his transcendental loving personality, had attracted a few sincere followers. Now he held and increased their affection by giving them both philosophical and personal advice.

Inevitably, meeting with Śrīla Prabhupāda meant a philosophical discussion.

Chuck: I asked Swamiji, "Can you teach me rāja-yoga?" "Oh," he said. "Here is Bhagavad-gītā." He handed me a copy of the Gītā. "Turn to the last verse of the Sixth Chapter," he said, "and read." I read the translation out loud. "And of all yogīs, he who is worshipping Me with faith and devotion I consider to be the best." I could not comprehend what "faith" and "devotion" meant, so I said, "Sometimes I'm getting some light in my forehead." "That is hallucination!" he said. So abruptly he said it—although he did not strain his person, the words came at me so intensely that it completely shocked me. Rāja means 'king'—king yoga," he said, "but this is emperor yoga."

I knew that he had attained such a high

state not by using chemicals from a laboratory or by any Western speculative process, and this was certainly what I wanted. "Are you giving classes?" I asked. He said, "Yes, if you come at six in the morning I am giving classes in the Gītā. And bring some flower or fruit for the Deity." I looked into the adjoining room, which was bare with a wooden parquet floor, bare walls, and a tiny table, and on the table was a picture of five humanlike figures with their arms raised above their heads. Somehow, they didn't look like any mortal that I'd ever seen. I know that the picture was looking at me.

When I came out on the street in front of the storefront there were a few people standing around, and I said, "I don't think I'm going to take LSD any more." I said it out loud to myself, but some other people heard me.

Steve: I wanted to show my appreciation for spiritual India, so I presented to Swamiji that I had read the autobiography of Gandhi. "It was glorious," I said. "What was glorious about it?" Swamiji challenged. When he asked this, there were others present in the room. Although I was a guest, he had no qualms about challenging me for having said something foolish. I searched through my remembrances of Gandhi's autobiography to answer his challenging question, "What is glorious?" I began to relate that one time Gandhi, as

a child, although raised as a vegetarian, was induced by some of his friends to eat meat, and that night he felt that a lamb was howling in his belly. Swamiji dismissed this at once, saying, "Most of India is vegetarian. That is not glorious." I couldn't think of anything else glorious to say, and Swamiji said, "His autobiography is called Experiments with Truth. But that is not the nature of truth. It is not to be found by someone's experimenting. Truth is always truth."

Although it was a blow to my ego, being exposed and defeated by Swamiji seemed to be a gain for me. I wanted to bring before him many different things for his judgment, just to see what he had to say about them. I showed him the paperback edition of the Bhagavad-gītā that I was reading and carrying in my back pocket. He perused the back cover. There was a reference to "the eternal faith of the Hindus," and Swamiji began to take the phrase apart. He explained how the word Hindu was a misnomer and does not occur anywhere in the Sanskrit literature itself. He also explained that Hinduism and Hindu beliefs were not eternal.

Bruce: After I talked about my desire for religious life, I began telling him about a conflict I had had with one of my professors in English literature. He was a Freudian, so he would explain the characters in all the novels and so on in a Freudian



context and with Freudian terminology. Everything was sexual—the mother for the son, this one for that one, and so on. But I would always see it in terms of a religious essence. I would see it in terms of a religious impulse, or some desire to understand God. I would write my papers in that context, and he would always say, “The religious can also be interpreted as Freudian.” So I didn’t do very well in the course. I was mentioning this to the Swami, and he said, “Your professor is correct.” I was surprised—I am going to an Indian swami, and he is saying that the professor was correct, that everything is based on sex and not religion! This kind of pulled the rug out from under me when he said that. Then he qualified what he’d said. He explained that in the material world everyone is operating on the basis of sex; everything that everyone is doing is being driven by the sex impulse. “So,” he said, “Freud is correct. Everything is on the basis of sex.” Then he clarified what material life is and what spiritual life is. In spiritual life, there is a complete absence of sex desire. So this had a profound effect on me.

He wasn’t confirming my old sentimental ideas, but he was giving me new ideas. He was giving me his instructions, and I had to accept them. Talking to the Swami was very nice. I found him completely natural, and I found him to be very artistic. The way he held his head, the way he enunciated his words—very dignified, very gentlemanly.

The boys found Swamiji not only philosophical, but personal also.

Steve: A few nights later, I went to see the Swami and told him I was reading his book. One thing that had especially caught my attention was a section where the author of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Vyāsadeva, was admitting that he was feeling despondent. Then his spiritual master, Nārada, explained that his despondency had come because although he had written so many books, he had neglected to write in such a way as to fully glorify Kṛṣṇa. After hearing this, Vyāsadeva compiled the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

When I read this, I identified with the fact that Vyāsadeva was a writer, because I considered myself a writer also and I knew that I was also despondent. “This was very interesting about the author, Vyāsadeva,” I said. “He wrote so many books, but still he was not satisfied, because he had not directly praised Kṛṣṇa.” Although I had very little understanding of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Swamiji opened his eyes very wide, surprised that I was speaking on such an elevated subject from the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. He seemed pleased.

Chuck: I had come by in the afternoon, and Swamiji had given me a plate of prasādam. So I was eating, and a chili burned my mouth. Swamiji said, “Is it too hot?” “Yes,” I said. So he brought me a tiny teacup with some milk, and then he took some rice off my plate and took a piece of banana and crushed it all up together with his fingers and said, “Here, eat this. It will kill the action of the chilies.”

Bruce: There wasn’t anything superficial about him, nor was he ever contrived, trying to make some impression. He was just completely himself. In the Swami’s room there was no furniture, so we sat on

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the floor. And I found this to be very attractive and simple. Everything was so authentic about him. Uptown at another swami’s place we had sat on big, stuffed living room chairs, and the place had been lavishly furnished. But here was the downtown swami, wearing simple cloth robes. He had no business suit on—he wasn’t covering up a business suit with those saffron robes. And he wasn’t affected, as the other swami was. So I found myself asking him if I could be his student, and he said yes. I was very happy, because he was so different from the other swami. With the uptown swami I was wanting to become his student because I wanted to get something from him—I wanted to get knowledge. It was selfishly motivated. But here I was actually emotionally involved. I was feeling that I wanted to become the Swami’s student. I actually wanted to give myself, because I thought he was great and what he was giving was pure and pristine and wonderful. It was a soothing balm for the horrible city life. Uptown I had felt like a stranger.

On one occasion, our conversation turned to my previous trip to India in 1962, and I began talking about how much it meant to me, now much it moved me. I

even mentioned that I had made a girl friend there. So we got to talking about that, and I told him that I had her picture—I was carrying the girl’s picture in my wallet. So Swamiji asked to see. I took out the picture, and Swamiji looked at it and made a sour face and said, “Oh, she is not pretty. Girls in India are more beautiful than that.” Hearing that from the Swami just killed any attachment I had for that girl. I felt ashamed that I had an interest in a girl that the Swami did not consider pretty. I don’t think I ever looked at the photograph again, and certainly I never gave her another thought.

Bruce was a newcomer and had only been to one week of meetings at the storefront, so no one had told him that the members of Ananda Ashram, Dr. Mishra’s yoga retreat, had invited Swamiji and his followers for a day in the upstate countryside. Bruce had just arrived at the storefront one morning when he heard someone announce, “The Swami is leaving!” And Prabhupāda came out of the building and stepped into a car. In a fit of anxiety, Bruce thought that the Swami was leaving them for good—for India! “No,” Howard told him, “we’re going to a yoga āśrama in the country.” But the other car had already left, and there was no room in Swamiji’s car. Just then Steve showed up. He had expected the boys to come by his apartment to pick him up. They both had missed the ride.

Bruce phoned a friend up in the Bronx and convinced him to drive them up to Ananda Ashram. But when they got to Bruce’s friend’s apartment, the friend had decided he didn’t want to go. Finally he lent Bruce his car, and Swamiji’s two new followers set out for Ananda Ashram.

By the time they arrived, Prabhupāda and his group were already taking prasādam, sitting around a picnic table beneath the trees. Ananda Ashram was a beautiful place, with sloping hills and lots of trees and sky and green grass and a lake. The two latecomers came walking up to Swamiji, who was seated like the father of a family, at the head of the picnic table. Keith was serving from a big wok onto the individual plates. When Prabhupāda saw his two stragglers, he asked them to sit next to him, and Keith served them. Prabhupāda took Steve’s capātī and heaped it up with a mound of sugar, and Steve munched on the bread and sugar, while everyone laughed.

Prabhupāda began talking somehow about lion tamers, and he recalled that once at a fair he had seen a man wrestling with a tiger, rolling over and over with it down a hill. The boys, who rarely heard Swamiji speak anything but philosophy,



were surprised. They were delighted—city kids, taken to the country by their *guru* and having a good time.

Steve: *I was walking with Swamiji across a long, gentle slope. I wanted him to see and approve a picture of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa I had found in a small book, Nārada-bhakti-sūtra. I had planned to get a color reproduction of it to give to each of his followers. So as we were walking across the grass I showed him the picture and asked him whether it was a nice picture of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa for reproducing. He looked at the picture, smiled, nodded, and said yes.*

Bruce: *I walked with Swamiji around the grounds. All the others were doing something else, and Swamiji and myself were walking alone. He was talking about building a temple there.*

Prabhupāda walked across the scenic acreage, looking at the distant mountains and forests, and Keith walked beside him. Prabhupāda spoke of how Dr. Mishra had offered him the island in the middle of the *āśrama's* lake to build a temple on. "What kind of temple were you thinking of?" Keith asked. "How big?" Prabhupāda smiled and gestured across the horizon. "As big as the whole horizon?" Keith laughed. "Yes," Prabhupāda replied.

A few Ananda Ashram men and women came by. One woman was wearing a *sarī*. Prabhupāda turned to the other women and said, "A woman who wears a *sarī* looks very feminine."

It was late afternoon when some of Swamiji's followers gathered by the lake and began talking candidly about Swamiji and speculating about his relation to God and their relation to him.

"Well," said Wally, "Swami never claimed to be God or an incarnation, but he says that he is a *servant* of God, teaching *love* of God."

"But he says that the spiritual master is not different from God," said Howard. They stood at the edge of the mirrory calm lake and concluded that it was not necessary to talk about this. The answers would be revealed later. None of them really had much spiritual knowledge, but they wanted their faith to deepen.

Afterward, Keith, Wally, and Howard wandered into the meditation room. There was a seat with a picture of Dr. Mishra, who was away in Europe. But the most remarkable thing was a blinking strobe light. "I feel like I'm in a head shop on St. Mark's Place," said Wally. "What kind of spiritual meditation is this?" Howard asked. A Mishra follower, wearing a white *kurtā* and white bell-bottoms, replied that their *guru* had said they could sit and meditate on this light. "Swamiji says you should meditate on Kṛṣṇa," said Keith.

After sunset, everyone gathered in the large room of the main building to watch a slide show. It was a loose collection, mostly of assorted slides of India and the Ananda Ashram. A record by a popular Indian sitarist was playing in the background. Some of the slides were of Viṣṇu temples, and when one slide passed by quickly, Prabhupāda asked, "Let me see that. Can you go back and let me see that temple again?" This happened several times when he recognized familiar temples in India. Later in the show, there were several slides of a girl, one of the members of Dr. Mishra's *āśrama*, demonstrating Indian

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dance poses. As one of her pictures passed, an *āśrama* man joked, "Turn back and let me see *that* temple again." The joke seemed at Swamiji's expense and in poor taste. His followers didn't laugh.

Then came Swamiji's lecture. He sat up cross-legged on the couch in the largest room in the mansion. The room was filled with people—the Swami's followers from the Lower East Side as well as the Ananda Ashram *yogīs*—sitting on the floor or standing along the walls and in the doorway. He began his talk by criticizing democracy. He said that because people are attached to sense gratification, they vote for a leader who will fulfill their own lust and greed—and *that* is their only criterion for picking a leader. He went on for forty-five minutes to explain about the importance of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, his reel-to-reel tape recorder moving silently.

Then he led a *kīrtana* that bridged all differences and brought out the best in everyone that night. Several nights before, in his apartment on Second Avenue, Prabhupāda had taught his followers how to dance. They had formed a line behind him while he demonstrated the simple step. Holding his arms above his head, he would first swing his left foot forward

across the right foot, and then bring it back again in a sweeping motion. Then he would swing his right foot over the left and bring it back again. With his arms upraised, Prabhupāda would walk forward, swinging his body from side to side, left foot to right side, right foot to left side, in time with the one-two-three rhythm. He had shown them the step in regular time and in a slow, half-time rhythm. Keith had called it "the Swami step," as if it were a new ballroom dance.

Prabhupāda's followers began dancing, and soon the others joined them, moving around the room in a rhythmic circle of ecstasy, dancing, swaying, sometimes leaping and whirling. It was a joyous hour-long *kīrtana*, the Swami encouraging everyone to the fullest extent. A visitor to the *āśrama* happened to have his stringed bass with him, and he began expertly turning out his own swinging bass improvisations beneath the Swami's melody, while another man played the *tablās*.

The Ananda Ashram members had been divided of late into two tense, standoffish groups. There was the elderly crowd, similar to the old ladies who had attended the Swami's uptown lectures, and there was the young crowd, mostly hip couples. But in the *kīrtana* their rifts were forgotten and, as they discovered later, even healed. Whether they liked it or not, almost all of those present were induced to rise and dance.

Then it was late. The Swami took rest in the guest room, and his boys slept outside in their sleeping bags.

Howard: *I awaken three or four times, and each time I am flat on my back looking up at the stars, which are always in different positions. My sense of time is confused. The sidereal shifts dizzy me. Then, just before morning, I dream. I dream of devotees clustered about a beautiful golden youth. To see him is to be captivated. His transcendental body radiates an absolute beauty unseen in the world. Stunned, I inquire, "Who is he?" "Don't you know?" someone says. "That's the Swami." I look carefully, but see no resemblance. The youth appears around eighteen, straight out of Vaikuṅṭha [the spiritual world]. "If that's Swamiji," I wonder to myself, "why doesn't he come to earth like that?" A voice somewhere inside me answers: "People would follow me for my beauty, not for my teachings." And I awake, startled. The dream is clear in my mind—more like a vision than a dream. I feel strangely refreshed, bathed in some unknown balm. Again I see that the constellations have shifted and that the dimmer stars have faded into the encroaching dawn. I remember Swamiji*  
*(continued on page 30)*



# SEARCHING PAST THE MECHANICS OF PERCEPTION

The deeper scientists probe into the nature of perception,  
the farther away their subject recedes.

by SADĀPŪTA DĀSA

The idea that now dominates the life sciences is that life can be completely understood within the framework of chemistry and physics. Those who subscribe to this viewpoint say that we can explain all features of life—from the metabolic functioning of cells up to the mental phenomena of thinking, feeling, and willing—as the consequences of underlying chemical processes. With the spectacular successes achieved by modern molecular biology, this viewpoint has become so pervasive that, in the words of Nobel-prize-winning molecular biologist James Watson, “Complete certainty now exists among essentially all biochemists that the . . . characteristics of living organisms . . . will all be completely understood in terms of the coordinative interactions of small and large molecules.\*

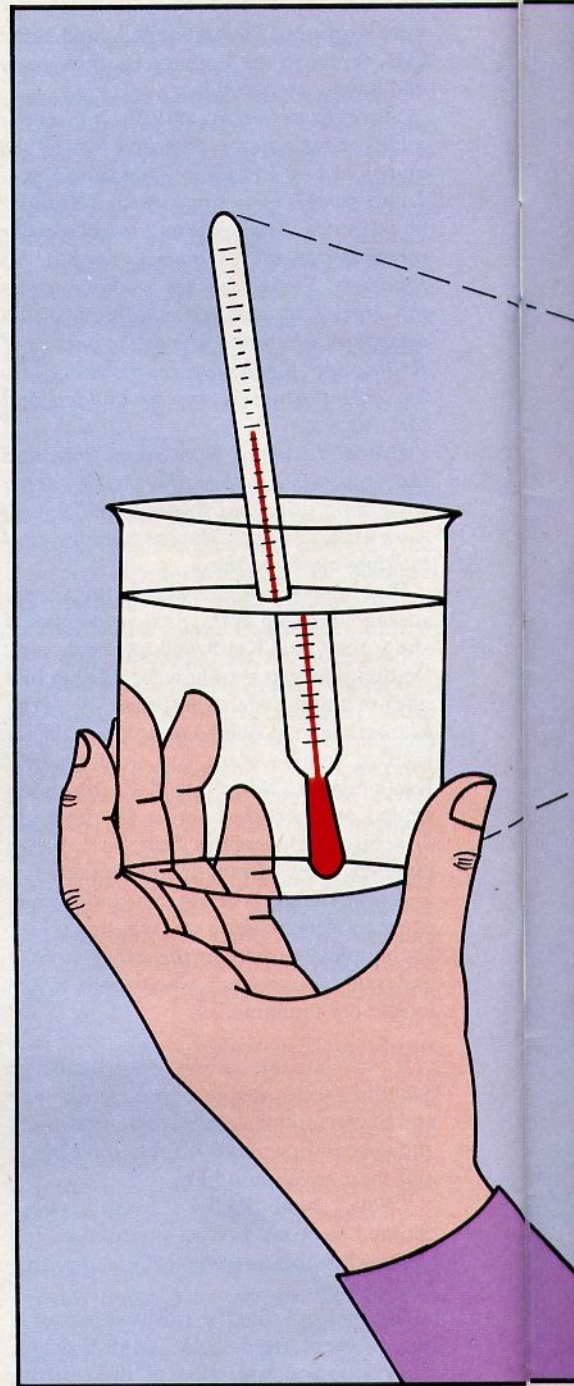
Yet despite the popularity of this view, we can point to at least one feature of life—the phenomenon of conscious awareness—that is not amenable to a molecular explanation. The basic phenomenon of conscious awareness is the most immediate aspect of our experience, and it is automatically presupposed in all our sensations, feelings, and thought processes. Yet even though consciousness certainly exists and is of central importance to our

lives, the current theoretical framework of biological and physical science cannot even refer to consciousness, much less explain it.

To see this, let us examine the process of conscious perception through the eyes of modern science. Our examination will take us through several levels of successively increasing detail, and at each level we will try to ascertain whether our scientific picture of reality sheds any light on the nature of consciousness.

First let us consider a man observing a physical object—in this case, a thermometer. Figures 1 and 2 depict the operation of the man’s sense of sight on the grossest biological level. The process of perception begins when light reflected from the thermometer is focused on the retina of the man’s eye, forming an inverted image. This light induces chemical changes in certain retinal cells, and these cells consequently stimulate adjacent nerve cells to transmit electrical impulses. These cells in turn stimulate activity in other nerve cells, and a systematic pattern of pulses is transmitted down the optic nerve. The image of the thermometer is now encoded in this pattern of pulses.

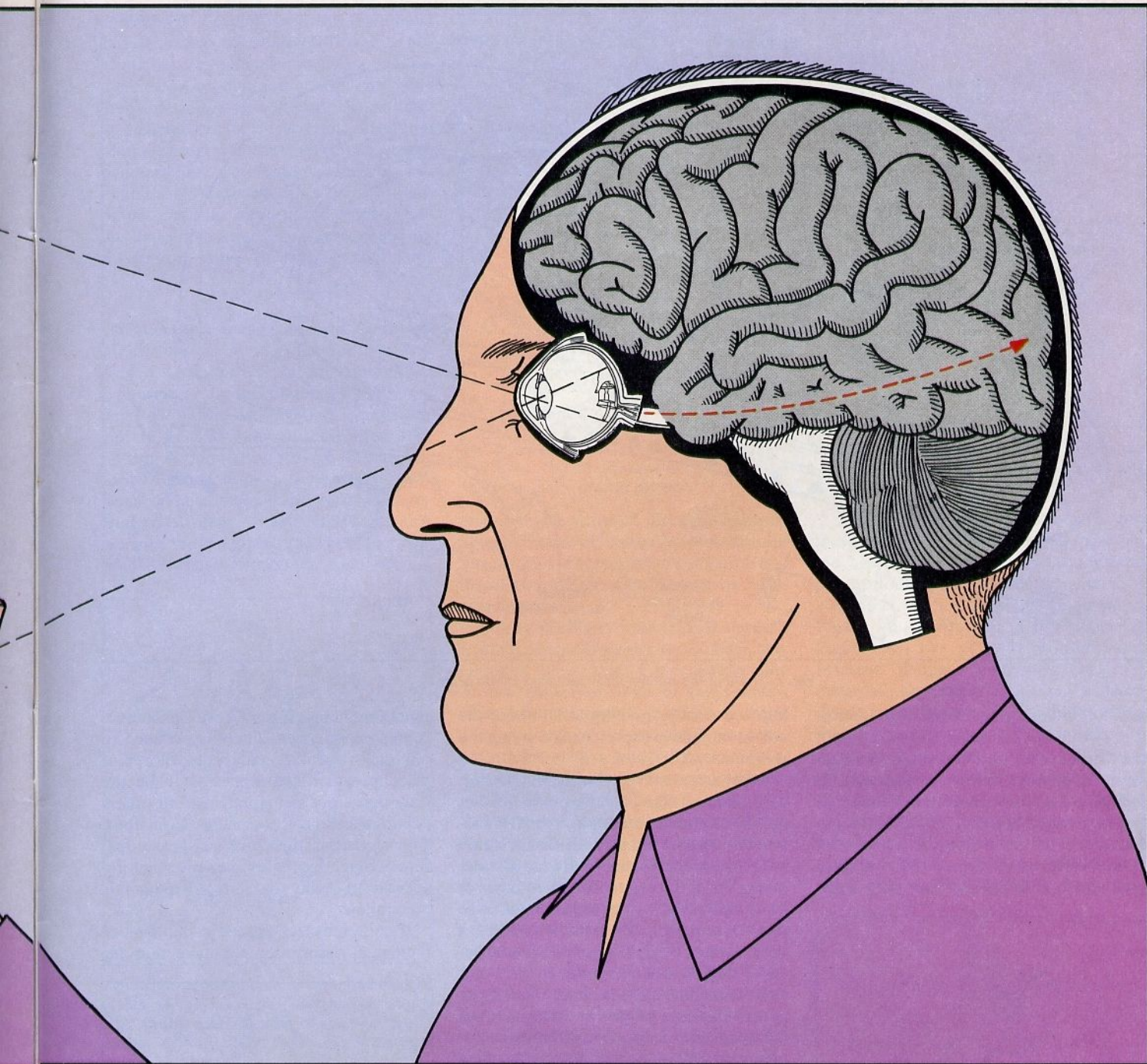
When these pulses reach the brain, a very complicated response occurs, involving many electrochemical actions and reactions. Although scientists at present do not know the details of this brain activity,



they are nonetheless in substantial agreement about the basic phenomena involved. When the impulses streaming down the optic nerve reach the brain, they modify the overall pattern of chemical concentrations and electrical potentials maintained by the brain’s vast network of nerve cells. This pattern, scientists say, represents in coded form the specific content of the man’s thoughts and sensory impressions. As time passes, the physiochemical transformations of this pattern give rise to sequences of electrical impulses that emerge from the brain along various motor nerves, and these impulses in turn evoke corresponding sequences of muscular contractions. These organized contrac-

\*James Watson, *Molecular Biology of the Gene*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.A. Benjamin, 1970), p.67.





tions constitute the man's gross external behavior, which may include spoken reports of his sensations, such as "I am seeing a thermometer."

### What and Where Is Consciousness?

At this point in our investigation, we can understand how descriptions of this kind may, at least in principle, shed light on a person's external behavioral responses to environmental stimuli. We can easily imagine constructing a machine involving photocells and electronic circuitry that would respond to a red light by playing a tape recording of the statement "I am seeing a red light." On a more sophis-

ticated level, we can visualize a computer that will analyze the images produced by a television camera and generate spoken statements identifying various objects. Thus although we are grossly ignorant of the actual physical transformations occurring in the brain, we can at least conceive of the possibility that these may correspond to processes of symbol manipulation analogous to those that take place in computers. We can therefore imagine that the man's statement, "I am seeing a thermometer," is generated by a computational process physically embodied in the electrochemical activity of the nerve cells in the brain.

But all this tells us nothing about the

**Fig. 1.** The process of perception begins when light from an object enters the eye and is focused on the retina. This light stimulates a series of neurochemical reactions that ultimately reach the brain as a systematic pattern of pulses. These in turn give rise to an exceedingly complex set of electrochemical reactions within the brain itself. Although scientists have investigated these processes in great detail, explaining the actual subjective conscious perception of an object has completely eluded them.



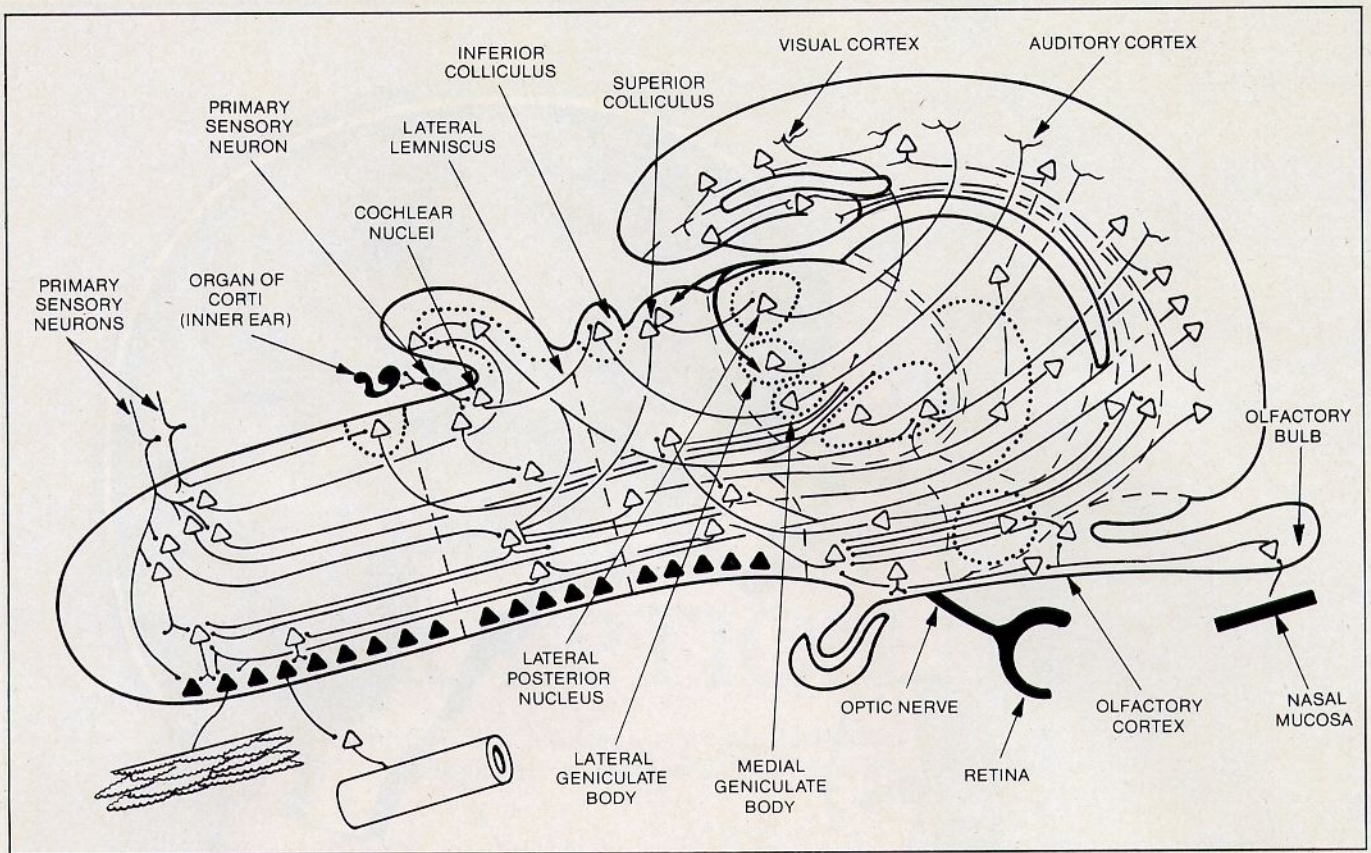


Fig. 2. Some of the main neural pathways in the brain.

man's conscious perceptions. Our description of the image formed on the retina of the man's eye says nothing about the conscious perception of that image, nor do scientists suppose that conscious perception takes place at this point. Likewise, the statements that light-sensitive cells in the retina have been stimulated and that sequences of nerve impulses have been

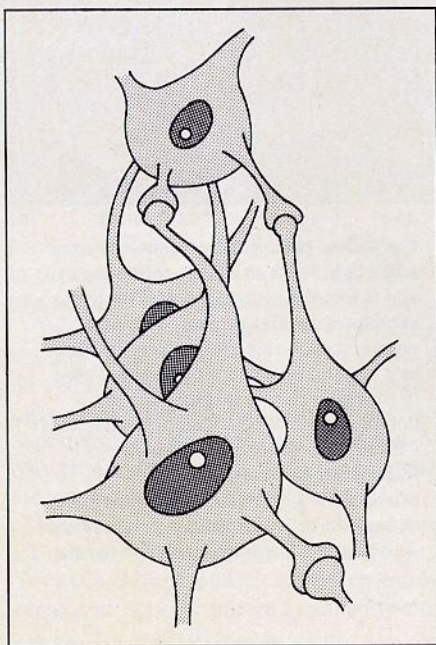


Fig. 3. Can the patterns of neural excitation account for the conscious experience of seeing?

induced convey nothing at all about the actual subjective experience of seeing the thermometer.

Many scientists feel that conscious perception must take place in the brain. Yet our description of the brain, even if elaborated in the greatest possible detail, would consist of nothing more than a list of statements about the electrochemical states of brain cells. Such statements might have some bearing on patterns of behavior, but they cannot explain consciousness, because they do not even refer to it.

At this point one may argue that since consciousness is subjective, we cannot use the word *consciousness* in scientific statements describing objective reality. One might point out that while we can observe a man's behavior and measure the physical states of his brain, we could not possibly find any measurable evidence of his so-called consciousness. According to this idea, the man's statements about his conscious perceptions are simply electrochemical phenomena that require physical explanation, but to say that consciousness exists in any real sense is meaningless.

Each of us can refute this argument by considering the matter in this way: The reality of my own conscious perceptions is certainly undeniable, and my understanding of all other aspects of reality depends on this basic fact. Thus I know by direct perception that consciousness exists in me, and it is also perfectly justifiable to suppose

that other beings like me have similar conscious experiences. There is no need to embrace the futile and absurd viewpoint of solipsism, which holds that I am the only conscious being and that all others occupy a lesser status as mere automatons. Consciousness, therefore, exists as a feature of objective reality, and any scientific account of reality that fails to explain it is incomplete.

If consciousness exists but the level of biological description we have thus far

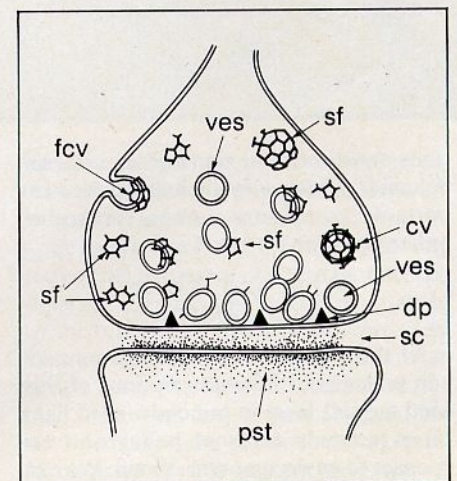


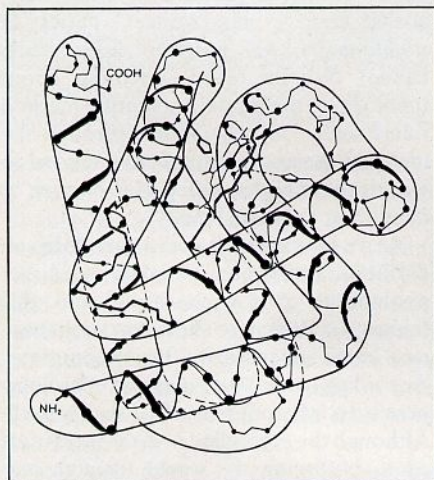
Fig. 4. A single synaptic junction between two nerve cells. (pst: postsynaptic thickening; sc: synaptic cleft; dp: dense projections; ves: vesicle; cv: complex vesicle; fcv: formation of complex vesicle; sf: shell fragments.)



considered does not refer to it, then how can we understand consciousness in terms of our existing scientific world view? The mere assertion that neural impulses "generate" consciousness does not constitute an explanation, for it offers no conception of any connection between impulses and our conscious perceptions. Our only recourse is to examine the structures and processes of the brain more closely, with the hope that a deeper understanding of their nature will reveal such a connection.

### Going Deeper

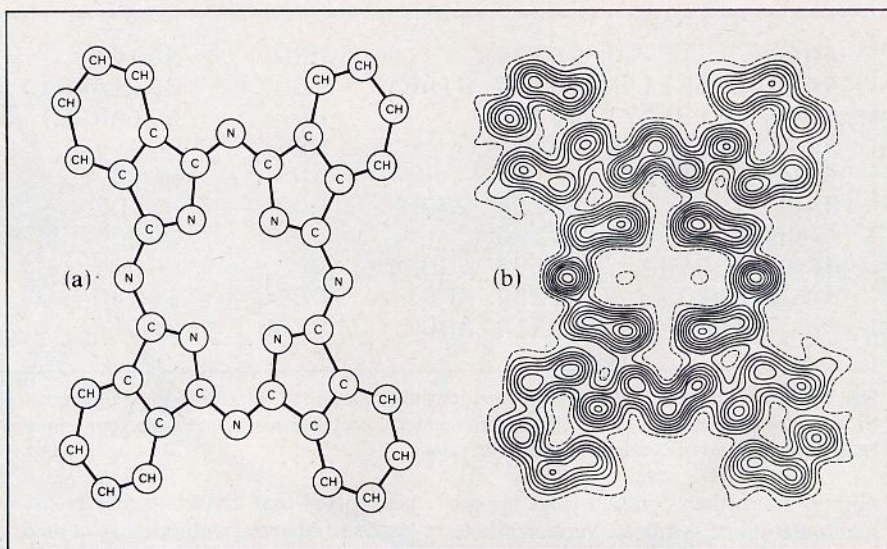
Figure 3 presents a closer view of some of the neurons in the brain, and Figure 4 depicts the detailed structure of one of the synapses, or connecting links, between neurons. When we examine living cells closely, we find many intricate structures known as organelles. Just as we can describe the functions of the gross body in terms of the combined actions of its many component cells, so in principle we can describe the functions of the cells in terms of these subcellular components. Yet this



**Fig. 5.** The three-dimensional structure of myoglobin, a large biological molecule. Can knowledge of the configurations of such molecules convey anything about the nature of our conscious awareness?

does not help us in our attempt to understand consciousness, for it merely leads to a more complicated account of bodily behavior. As before, there is no reference to the conscious experience of seeing.

Let us go deeper. What is the essential nature of the cellular organelles? As we earlier pointed out, the nearly unanimous opinion of modern biochemists is that one can understand all biological structures as combinations of molecules, and all biological processes as the consequences of molecular interactions. Figure 5 depicts the three-dimensional structure of a globular protein, one of the main kinds of complex molecules found in the body. Organic chemistry describes the structure of such



**Fig. 6.** (a) The structural diagram of an organic molecule. (b) An electron-density map for this molecule. Will the essence of consciousness be disclosed by the study of the structure and transformations of such patterns?

molecules in terms of three-dimensional arrangements of atoms, and molecular interactions in terms of the formation and dissolution of chemical bonds, or interatomic links.

Biochemists have found that living cells contain many different kinds of extremely complex molecules. For example, the *E. coli* bacterium, one of the simplest unicellular organisms, is said to contain some two to three thousand different kinds of proteins, each of which consists of thousands of individual atoms. A complete molecular description of a single cell would therefore be enormously complex, and, in fact, scientists have not yet come close to providing such a description, even for the *E. coli* bacterium.

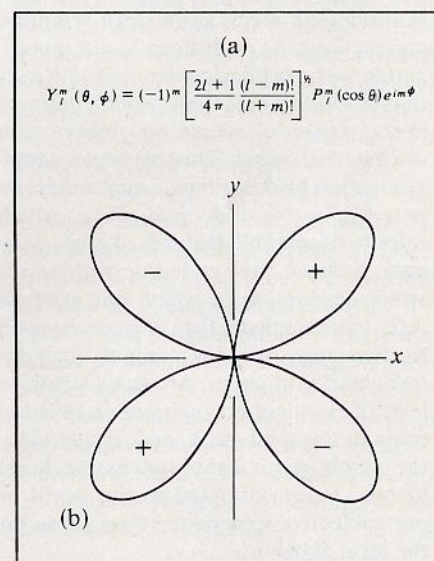
Yet however complex it might be, a description on this level would consist of nothing more than a long list of statements about the making and breaking of chemical bonds. Such a list could give us no greater insight into the nature of consciousness than any of the higher-order descriptions we have considered thus far. In fact, lists describing patterns of bonds and lists describing trains of nerve impulses are equivalent, in the sense that both say nothing about conscious experience.

### Can Quantum Theory Explain Consciousness?

Can we find the insight we are seeking by taking a closer look at the atomic structure of molecules? In Figure 6 we see a diagram representing the spatial distribution of electrons within an organic molecule. Those who subscribe to the modern scientific world view claim that we can completely understand atoms and molecules in terms of the interactions of subatomic particles such as protons, neutrons, and electrons.

The branch of science that deals with these interactions is known as quantum mechanics, and it describes subatomic phenomena in terms of mathematical equations, such as the one depicted in Figure 7(a). Although pictures such as Figure 7(b) can partially express some features of these equations, they are essentially impossible to represent in three-dimensional form. We might wonder, therefore, whether some deep insight into the abstract mysteries of these fundamental physical equations might finally enable us to grasp the nature of consciousness.

Unfortunately, however, this hope must meet with disappointment. If we study the essential nature of these mathematical equations, we find that they amount to



**Fig. 7.** A quantum mechanical diagram describing the electronic structure of a single hydrogen atom is depicted in (b). These structures are represented in the quantum theory by equations such as the one shown in (a).



4A00	00120	ORG	4A00H
4A00 ED5B114A	00130 START	LD	DE, (ARG1)
4A04 3A134A	00140	LD	A, (ARG2)
4A07 47	00150	LD	B, A
4A08 210000	00160	LD	HL, 0
4A0E 19	00170 LOOP	ADD	HL, DE
4A0C 10FD	00180	DJNZ	LOOP
4A0E C30E4A	00190 LOOP1	JP	LOOP1
4A11 E803	00200 ARG1	DEFW	1000
4A13 14	00210 ARG2	DEFE	20

Fig. 8. The reduction of mathematical equations to fundamental rules for symbol manipulation. (Here multiplication is defined in terms of elementary computer instructions.) Can consciousness be defined in terms of combinations of such rules?

nothing more than codified rules for the manipulation of symbols. Such symbols, in turn, are simply marks drawn from an arbitrary finite alphabet. They may be represented either by the internal states of an electronic computer or by marks on a piece of paper.

Thus Figure 8 gives us a glimpse of the ultimate appearance of a fundamental quantum mechanical description of nature when reduced to its elemental constituent terms. In this figure the alphabet of marks consists of 0, 1, 2, . . . , 9, A, B, C, . . . , F, and the rules for their manipulation are expressed in terms of the internal language of a particular computer. These rules simply describe certain ways of rearranging patterns of marks to create new patterns. Finally, in Figure 9, we reach the end of our investigation of the scientific world view. Here we find both patterns of marks and the rules for their manipulation encoded as strings of ones and zeroes.

At this point we meet with final frustration in our effort to understand consciousness in terms of modern scientific conceptions. At each stage of our investigation we have been confronted with a set of symbols that refer to repeating patterns in the stream of events we observe with our external senses. Thus we began our investigation by describing a man with symbols like *retina* and *optic nerve*, which refer to observable features of gross anatomy. Now we have ended up with an abstract description in which our symbols refer to mathematical constructs, or even to elementary rules for manipulating arbitrary marks on paper. At each successive level of examination, our symbols failed to refer to consciousness, and, if anything, the symbols on each successive level seemed *more* unrelated to the world of our subjective experience than those on the level above it.

### An Extension of the Scientific Method

How, then, are we to understand consciousness? Although we know by direct

perception that consciousness exists, we have seen that the methodology of modern science is inherently incapable of revealing anything about it. Does this mean that we have encountered an insurmountable barrier to our understanding of reality? The answer, in fact, is no. In our remaining space we will outline an extension of the scientific method that can give us a satisfying understanding of consciousness.

This extension, known as *sanātana-dharma*, is delineated in the Vedic literatures of India, such as *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Since it has been known for a very long time, it is an extension of the modern scientific method only in the sense that it has a greater scope than this method and logically includes it. Historically speaking, we would have to say that the modern scientific method is a contraction of *sanātana-dharma*.

We can break down the subject matter of *sanātana-dharma* into the following basic categories: the Supreme Self, or *paramātmā*; the individual self, or *jīvātmā*; the superior, or spiritual, energy; and the inferior, or material, energy. As with any science, *sanātana-dharma* consists of a body of theory supported by observations. But the methods of observation employed by *sanātana-dharma* enable it to deal directly with all four of these categories, whereas modern science is restricted entirely to the category of the material energy.

According to *sanātana-dharma*, the real

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1011011010100110000011101010111110010011
10100011100111000101100100010000111101001
00011011010100010110101111001010100011111
10010000100101010101100011110100011101010
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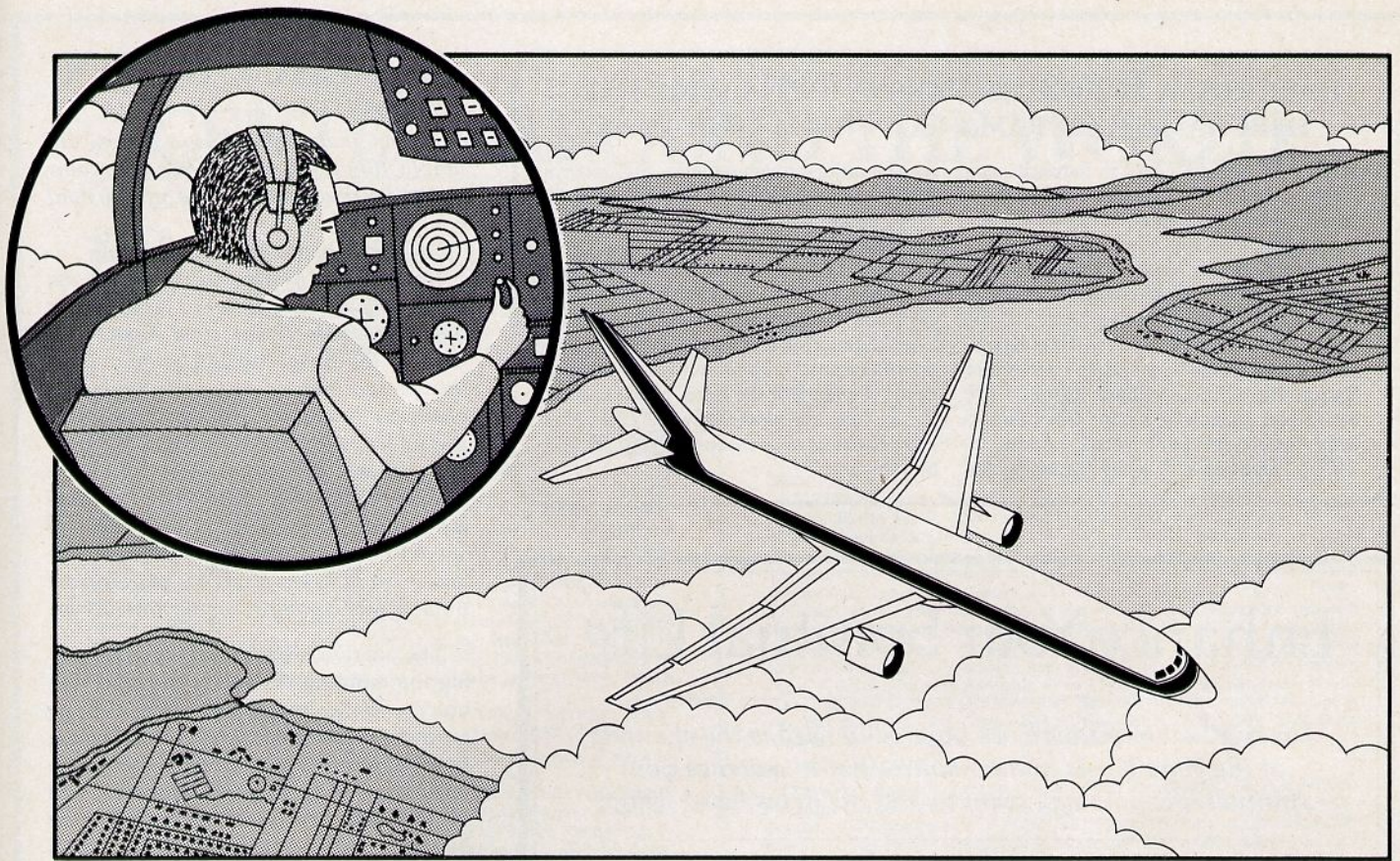
Fig. 9. The ultimate reduction of scientific description to patterns of marks—in this case ones and zeroes—that correspond directly or indirectly to the outcomes of physical measurements. Although consciousness is the primary feature of our existence, by its very nature it eludes description in these terms.

self, or *jīvātmā*, of each individual person is an entity distinct from the material elements that make up the physical body. The *jīvātmā* is equipped with senses inherently capable of perceiving the *paramātmā*, other *jīvātmās*, and both the superior and inferior energies. However, in the state of existence familiar to us, the *jīvātmā* is associated with a physical body and can perceive the world only through the material sensory apparatus of that body.

The situation of the embodied *jīvātmā* is like that of a pilot flying an airplane on instruments (Fig. 10). The pilot can obtain only a very limited picture of his surroundings from such devices as the radar screen and the altimeter, although he still has his normal senses and, in fact, uses them to observe these instruments. The embodied *jīvātmā* is similarly hampered. Since the sensory apparatus of the body is composed of matter, this apparatus can provide information only about configurations of material energy and their transformations. One can use this information to make indirect inferences about the other categories forming the subject matter of *sanātana-dharma*, but this information cannot directly reveal anything about them. Since the modern scientific method relies solely on observation through the material senses, scientists have tended to ignore these higher categories or even to deny their very existence.

As we have seen, however, modern scientific theories cannot explain our direct perception of consciousness, and this failure is sufficient to show that such theories must necessarily be incomplete. According to *sanātana-dharma*, consciousness is an inherent feature of the *jīvātmā*. Although the embodied *jīvātmā* is restricted to observing the world through material senses, all sensory information must eventually reach the senses of the *jīvātmā* itself. The self-referential aspect of consciousness, whereby the self is not merely aware but is *aware* that it is aware, arises because the true senses of the *jīvātmā* perceive their own operation. Thus the self is never completely limited to perceiving the material energy but also has





**Fig. 10.** The embodied living being, or *ātmā*, is like a pilot flying an airplane on instruments. Just as reading an instrument panel can afford the pilot only a limited picture of his surroundings, gathering information with the material senses affords the *ātmā* only a limited picture of reality.

some awareness of the spiritual category.

At this point one may object that although modern science might not be able to explain consciousness, we gain nothing by asserting that a nonmaterial self exists and that consciousness is one of its characteristics. One may say that this simply amounts to assigning a name to the mystery of consciousness—a name, in fact, that consists of nothing more than some marks on a piece of paper.

We reply to this objection by pointing out that *sanātana-dharma* provides methods whereby the consciousness of the individual can expand beyond the level of the material senses and come into direct contact with the *paramātmā* and the superior, spiritual energy. *Sanātana-dharma* states that the Absolute Truth, the cause of all causes, is an eternal sentient personality who is the source of the innumerable *jīvātmās*, or individual selves. These selves are also eternal persons, and though quantitatively minute and permanently individual, they are of the same qualitative nature as the unlimited Supreme Person. Thus each individual *jīvātmā* has a natural, constitutional relationship with the Supreme.

This relationship is one of loving personal reciprocation between the individual *jīvātmā* and the *paramātmā*. Since personal reciprocation requires the use of senses, such a relationship can be experienced only if it is possible for the individual

person to engage in active sensory perception on a level completely transcendental to the realm of matter. The purpose of the practical methodology of *sanātana-dharma* is to enable the embodied individual to attain to this level of sensory activity and reawaken his dormant relationship with the Supreme Person.

One method of doing this is by chanting the names of the Supreme Person. Since the Absolute Truth is personal, He has innumerable names, such as Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, and Govinda, and since He is absolute, these names are nondifferent from Him. By chanting these names, the *jīvātmā* comes into direct contact with the Supreme Person, and thus the *jīvātmā* gradually awakens to his natural relationship with the Supreme.

Here we see an interesting contrast between the use of symbols in *sanātana-dharma* and in modern science. From the viewpoint of modern science, the names Kṛṣṇa and Govinda could at most be patterns of marks that play some computational role in a theoretical system. To the scientist, the ultimate justification for the use of such symbols would lie in the correlations he might find between the results of these computations and some measurements involving the physical senses.

If we simply examine these names through our physical senses, this viewpoint seems valid. However, *sanātana-dharma* takes into account the full sensory ca-

capacity of the self. From the viewpoint of *sanātana-dharma*, the pattern of marks corresponding to the name Kṛṣṇa and the manipulation of those marks on paper are the least significant aspects of the name Kṛṣṇa. On the level of spiritual perception, the name Kṛṣṇa is identical with the Supreme Person Himself. Thus Kṛṣṇa is not merely a symbol but a name with inherent, absolute meaning. Because of his natural relationship with the Supreme, the *jīvātmā* can directly appreciate absolute reality; he is not limited simply to manipulating insubstantial networks of symbols that reduce in the end to nothing but strings of ones and zeroes.

We conclude by observing that *sanātana-dharma* offers an explanation of consciousness that is satisfying in a very genuine sense. In science, we generally say that an explanation is satisfying if it leads to new insights and new, interesting realms to explore. As it stands, modern science cannot provide such an explanation of consciousness. In contrast, *sanātana-dharma* introduces us to a realm of experience that gives us a deep understanding of the absolute nature and meaning of our own conscious existence.

SADĀPŪTA DĀSA studied at the State University of New York and Syracuse University and later received a National Science Fellowship. He went on to complete his Ph.D. in mathematics at Cornell, specializing in probability theory and statistical mechanics.



**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.

**THE EXCURSION**

(continued from page 23)

telling me that although most dreams are simply functions of the mind, dreams of the spiritual master are of spiritual significance.

Keith also had a dream that night.

Keith: *I saw KṚṣṇa and Arjuna on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra. Arjuna was inquiring from KṚṣṇa, and KṚṣṇa was reciting the Bhagavad-gītā to him. Then that picture phased out, and the images changed. And there was Swamiji, and I was kneeling in front of him, and the same dialogue was going on. I had the understanding that now is the time, and Swamiji is presenting the same thing as KṚṣṇa, and we are all in the position of Arjuna. The dream made it very clear that hearing from Swamiji was as good as hearing from KṚṣṇa.*

The sun rose over the mountains, streaking the morning sky above the lake with colors. Wally and Keith were walking around the grounds saying to Prabhupāda how beautiful it all was. "We are not so concerned with beautiful scenery," said Prabhupāda. "We are concerned with the beautiful one who has made the beautiful scenery."

Later . . . Prabhupāda sat next to Bruce in the Volkswagen returning to the city. The car went winding around on a ribbon of smooth black mountain road, with lush green forests close in and intermittent vistas of mountains and expansive sky. It was a rare occasion for Bruce to be driving Prabhupāda in a car, because none of the Swami's boys had cars. They would always travel by bus or subway. It seemed fitting for the Swami to have a car to ride in, but this was only a little Volkswagen, and Bruce winced whenever they hit a bump and it jostled Prabhupāda. As they wound their way on through the mountains, Bruce recalled something he had read in a book by Aldous Huxley's wife about the best places for meditation. One opinion had been that the best place to meditate was by a large body of water, because of the negative ions in the air, and the other opinion was that it was better to meditate in the mountains, because you are higher up and closer to God. "Is it better for spiritual realization to meditate in the mountains?" Bruce asked. Prabhupāda replied, "This is nonsense. There is no question of 'better place.' Are you thinking that God is up on some planet or something and you have to go up high? No. You can meditate anywhere. Just chant Hare KṚṣṇa."

After some time the drive became tiring for Prabhupāda, and he dozed, his head resting forward.

(To be continued)

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# NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

## A Day in Vṛndāvana, India, the Land of Kṛṣṇa

Walking in the early morning, I see the tower of the Madana-mohana temple in my path. The village of Vṛndāvana is still dark, and the temple tower is almost indistinguishable from the nearby trees. I enter the Yamunā's waters, and downriver I hear the *sādhus'* carefree cries. Chanting and singing, they sound as though they have nothing to lose.

On my way back to ISKCON's Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma temple, I visit the ancient Rādhā-Dāmodara temple. In the Rādhā-Dāmodara compound a small boy sits beside the *samādhi* (tomb) of Rūpa Gosvāmī. His lips are moving, repeating the name of God: "Rāma, Rāma, Rāma." He does not appear to be a particularly saintly boy, just a shopkeeper's son wearing an old sweater and pants. But *he lives here*. How fortunate he is to be a tot here and not in the Bronx. Things are gentle and simple. And not far from the surface is the special nature of Vṛndāvana—everything and everyone is close to Kṛṣṇa.

While it is still early morning I return to the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma temple. An old woman is grasping a broom with no handle and whisking together leaves and dust, cleaning the temple courtyard. She bends low (the branches of the *tamāla* tree are also low) and sings Hare Kṛṣṇa, slowly sweeping.

Midmorning. From the window of my third-floor room in the ISKCON Vṛndāvana guest house, I can look down into several neighboring yards. A woman sits on a rope cot; another woman stands behind, combing the sitting woman's hair. On a nearby roof, a man is taking big balls of soft cow dung from a basket, bunching them and patting them down; after baking in the sun, the cow-dung patties will serve as fuel for cooking.

Little children, some naked, play in the dust of the *parikrama* trail, the trail along the perimeter of Vṛndāvana. Playfully they pour sand on one another. A donkey, snorting and guffawing, rolls in the sand to scratch its back. A renunciant offering repeated obeisances lies prostrate on the ground. Bent old widows pass by with walking sticks. And dogs howl from roof-

tops, mischievous monkeys run, hogs eat filth in the riverside sewage—but even all this seems peaceful; it is not the violent, industrial city.

Late afternoon. From my window I see an old man with a gray beard, like an ancient sage's, petting his cow and feeding her from his hand. Cows come home and wait at the courtyard gate. The old man opens the gate, and the cows enter. They go stand before a mud-walled trough and feed. They have been out scavenging, sometimes eating paper and rags.

The economy of Vṛndāvana is based on the cow and the land, just as it was when Kṛṣṇa was here five thousand years ago. Nowadays there is much wrong in Vṛndāvana, but there is always a willingness to forgive. Even those who are condemned to the lower species of life are blessed and close to liberation. Nothing here is ordinary.

It is evening, and in the temple I stand before the Deities of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. There is a secret beyond the material vision of Vṛndāvana, and I pray to be able to understand it.

The scriptures say that Vṛndāvana in India is a replica of the original Vṛndāvana in the eternal spiritual world—but to see it as such requires spiritual vision. In the spiritual world of Vṛndāvana, the buildings are made of touchstone, the water is nectar, and the trees are known as wish-fulfilling trees, for they yield whatever one desires. In Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa herds His cows and plays on His flute, and He is worshiped by hundreds and thousands of cowherd girls who are all goddesses of fortune.

Śrīla Prabhupāda says, "When Kṛṣṇa descends to the material world, this same Vṛndāvana descends, just as an entourage accompanies an important person. Because when Kṛṣṇa comes His land also comes, Vṛndāvana is not considered to exist in the material world. Therefore, even today devotees take shelter of the Vṛndāvana in India [situated roughly eighty miles south of New Delhi], for it is considered to be a replica of the original Vṛndāvana."

I ponder: *Can I undergo the austerities required to reach the transcendental understanding of Vṛndāvana—to attain to the bliss of pure love of God?*

As I walk in the evening, most of the people I pass say, "Haribol," "Hare Kṛṣṇa." We exchange respects with folded hands. I walk Vṛndāvana's main road, which used to be Chattikara Road but is now named Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg, after His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Walking along Śrīla Prabhupāda's road toward the Raman Reti neighborhood, back to where Śrīla Prabhupāda has his gorgeous Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma temple, I'm remembering my prayer to be allowed to understand Vṛndāvana. It's not an easy thing; it's the highest transcendental realization.

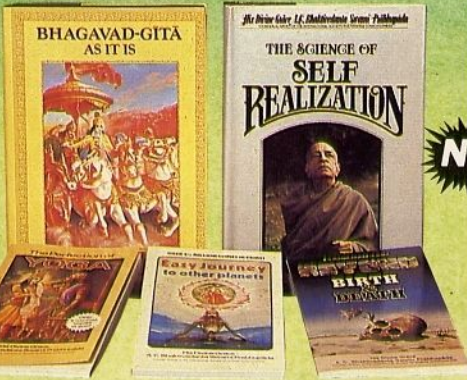
And I'm also remembering that it is a great fortune that Kṛṣṇa sent His pure devotee, Śrīla Prabhupāda, to spread the simple process of chanting the holy names: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. By this process of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, even the most fallen souls can enter into the essential realization of Vṛndāvana: love of Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda says, "For the devotee, there is no need to pray to the Lord for transferal to the Vaikuṅṭha [eternal] world. A pure devotee can create Vaikuṅṭha or Vṛndāvana anywhere, simply by chanting the glories of the Lord without offense."

As I walk, a peacock within a tree climbs upward through the branches. Light green parrots merge into the green trees. The gnarled trees, hundreds of years old, a few of them thousands of years old—and yet they are sprouting green sprigs and leaves.

At nightfall I enter the front gates of the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma temple compound. Hundreds of guests are coming and going, attending the *kīrtana* before the Deities. I offer my obeisances before Śrīla Prabhupāda's *samādhi*. Overhead is a faint sliver of moon, and within the temple, devotees are proclaiming the glories of Vṛndāvana: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. —SDG



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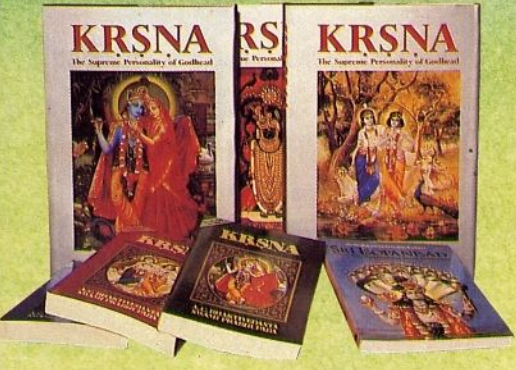
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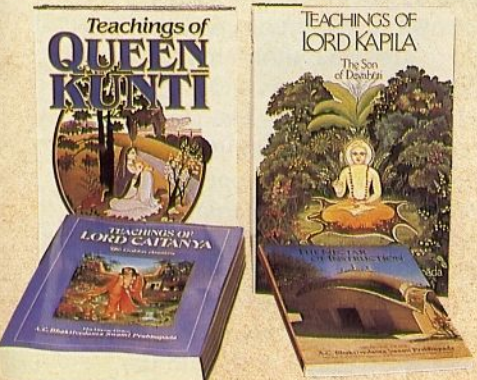
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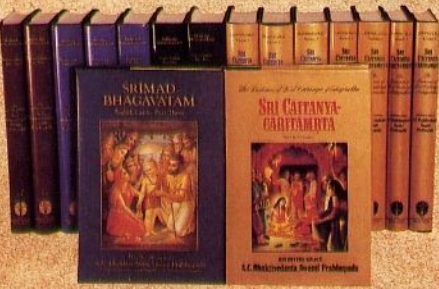
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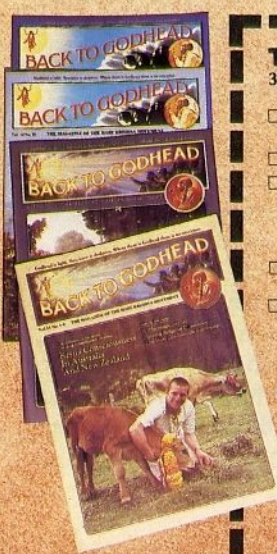
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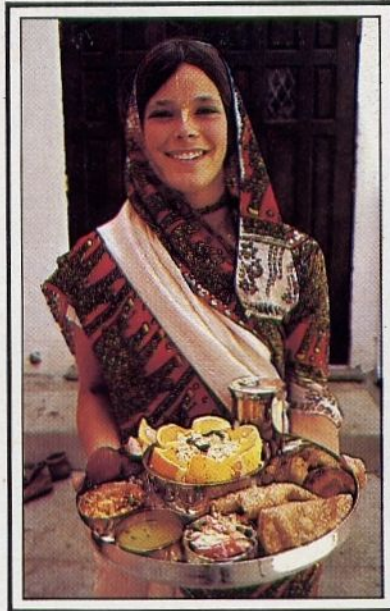
# The Sunday Feast

It's a kind of open house. You come alone or with your friends or family. When you first come in, you might like to meet some of the devotees. Maybe you'll want to sit down and talk philosophy. Look through some of the books and magazines. Or maybe you'll just wander around on your own and see what the place is all about. It's up to you.

The schedule differs from center to center. Generally things get started with some chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa. It's a kind of meditation. The idea is to meditate on the sound. And if you decide to join along in the chanting too—well, so much the better. And if you feel like dancing in ecstasy, fine! You take it as you like, at your own pace, in your own way.

After the chanting (it usually goes for twenty minutes or so) there's a talk on *Bhagavad-gītā*. This is the basic book of spiritual knowledge the Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees get their philosophy from. It's five thousand years old, originally written in Sanskrit, and its ideas have drawn some of the deepest minds of the world. Emerson and Thoreau revered it. Albert Schweitzer found it fascinating. Mahatma Gandhi said it was the most important book in his life. If you haven't read it yet, you're in for quite a profound encounter.

And of course you can ask the devotees questions about it too. In fact, the whole *Bhagavad-gītā* comes to us in the form of a dialogue, and questions and answers have always provided the way to get at the essence of what the book is all about.



After the talk about the *Gītā* comes a ceremony called *ārati*. If you've never been to a Hare Kṛṣṇa temple before and you've never been to India, chances are you've never seen anything quite like it. *Ārati* is an ancient and very beautiful ceremony that helps you come out into your spiritual identity, into a higher awareness, and ultimately into being reunited with Kṛṣṇa—God—in a very personal way.

In the *ārati* ceremony, Kṛṣṇa Himself appears on the temple's altar in His Deity form (a statue, most people would say). A devotee offers Kṛṣṇa flaming lamps of camphor and ghee, fragrant flowers, peacock fans, and a special white whisk called a *cāmara*. All this to the sounds of hand cymbals, drums, and the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa. The effect of the ceremony is that you actually feel that you're in the personal presence of Kṛṣṇa—which in fact you are. (We're all in Kṛṣṇa's presence all the time, without thinking about

it, but the *ārati* ceremony helps us realize it.) How it happens may be a little hard to explain. But when you attend the ceremony, the spiritual experience is very pure and natural. That's why Kṛṣṇa temples in India have held *ārati* ceremonies every day since longer ago than anyone can remember.

After *ārati* comes the feast. And it's no small-time snack. Devotees have spent all day—sometimes more—cooking wonderfully varied dishes, with devotion for Kṛṣṇa. After the food is offered to Kṛṣṇa (that's part of what goes on with the *ārati*, devotees and guests alike sit down to sumptuous plates. There are sweet things made with milk and grains and sugar that taste something like ice cream, cake, and smooth cream cheese all rolled into one. There are salty things, spicy things, fried things, baked things, blended things . . . People have been known to go on for hours later asking, "And what were those spicy yellow balls with the tomato sauce? And was that yogurt with the soft little white cakes in it?" Others have just eaten and smiled big smiles.

After the feast, maybe you pick up a copy of *Bhagavad-gītā* to take home with you. And when you finally leave, you probably feel a whole lot richer within yourself than you did when the evening started.

And that, in a nutshell, is what it's all about.

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(See page 31 for the center nearest you.)