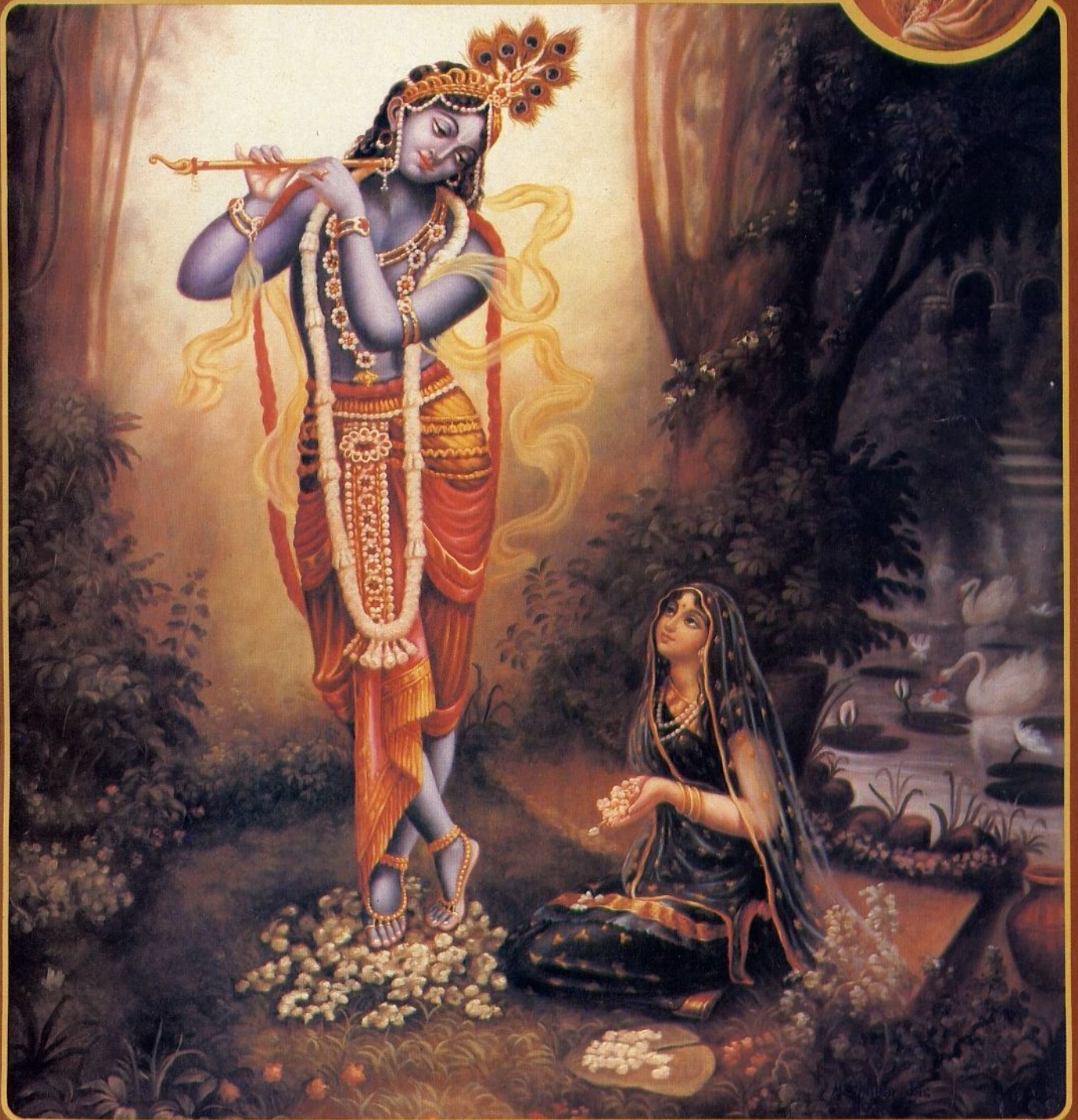


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

BACK TO GODHEAD

Vol.15 No.11 THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



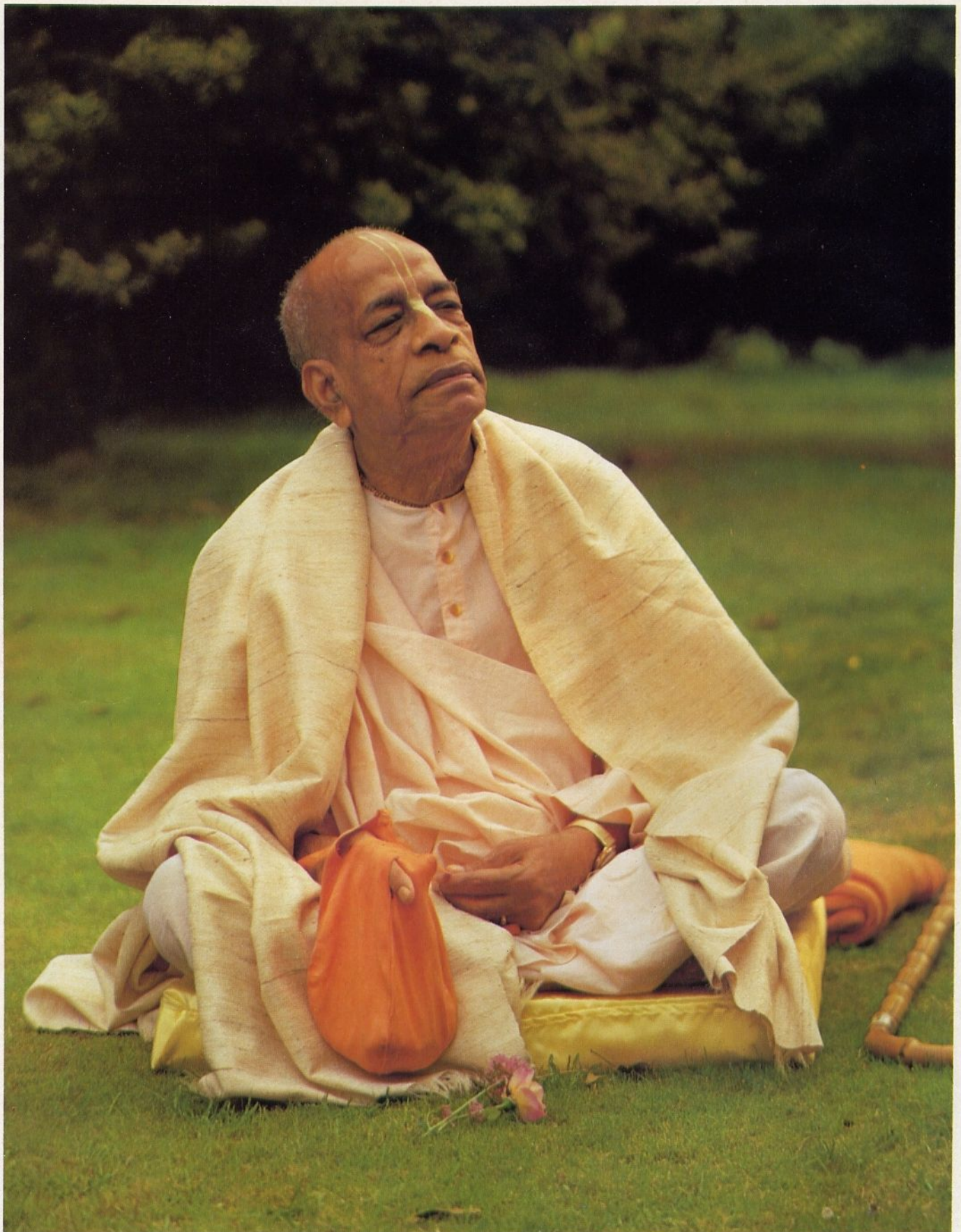


PHOTO: BHARGAVA DASA

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

BACK TO GODHEAD

VOL. 15, NO. 11

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

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(under the direction of His Divine Grace
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda)

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda

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PRONUNCIATION of Sanskrit words and names. BACK TO GODHEAD follows the international scholarly standard. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in **but**, long **ā** like the **a** in **far** (and hold it twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in **evade**, long **ī** like the **i** in **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* (*dāsi* for women), meaning "servant." For instance, the name *Kṛṣṇa dāsa* means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

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

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COVER: The Divine Couple, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, enjoy amorous pastimes in the spiritual realm Goloka. Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, lives eternally for the pleasure of Rādhā, the embodiment of pure devotion to Him, and She in turn knows no object other than His satisfaction. This loving exchange, although resembling the mundane love affairs of the material world, is pure, eternal, and full of bliss and knowledge. Throughout history, Kṛṣṇa's devotees have considered service to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa the ultimate goal of spiritual realization. (Cover art: Muralīdhara dāsa.)

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."

RETURNING TO THE ABODE OF REAL PLEASURE

A lecture by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness
Delivered on September 30, 1972, in Laguna Beach, California.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you very much for your coming here to participate in this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. We are calling everyone to go back home, back to Godhead. The place where we intend to go is Goloka-vṛndāvana, the abode of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. There Kṛṣṇa is residing with His consort, Rādhārāṇī. Kṛṣṇa is the supreme paramour, and Rādhārāṇī is His consort. Here in the material world a boy and girl try to enjoy conjugal love, but the ideal conjugal love is there, between Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. Here the same thing is present, but it is perverted. The original is there.

Jaya rādhā-mādhava kuñja-bihārī. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are always engaged in loving affairs in the *kuñja*, the groves of Vṛndāvana. Kṛṣṇa is *gopī-jana-vallabha*, very dear to the *gopīs* and the *gopas*. The *gopīs* are the cowherd girls, and the *gopas* are the cowherd men and the cowherd boys. So Vṛndāvana is a village; it is not a city like Los Angeles. It is a village, and Kṛṣṇa is always taking pleasure there on the bank of the River Yamunā (*yāmuna-tīra-vana-cārī*).

There are very nice gardens on the bank of the Yamunā, and whenever there is some danger . . . Of course, in the original Vṛndāvana there is no question of danger. It is a blissful, transcendental abode. But when Kṛṣṇa comes down to this planet, He shows us a replica of the original Vṛndāvana. That Vṛndāvana on earth is in India, about ninety miles from New Delhi. It is exactly the same as the original Vṛndāvana, but because it is in this material world, there sometimes appears to be some danger there. So, when Kṛṣṇa was present on this earth, there was sometimes danger in Vṛndāvana. (Actually there was no danger, because Kṛṣṇa was present, but it appeared as if there were.)

Once there were torrents of rain for seven days. Indra, the demigod in charge of the water department of this universe, had become very angry. Kṛṣṇa had stopped the cowherd men from worshiping Indra, so Indra became angry and poured torrents of rain on Vṛndāvana for seven days continuously. But Kṛṣṇa immediately lifted up a hill called Govardhana on His little finger like an umbrella, and in this way He protected all the residents of Vṛndāvana. Therefore Kṛṣṇa is also known as *Girivara-dhārī*, the lifter of Govardhana Hill. Although Kṛṣṇa usually played like an ordinary human child, when there was a need He manifested His godly power. When it was necessary to protect the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, He lifted a big hill, although at that time He was only seven years old by material calculation.

But in the original Vṛndāvana there is no such thing as the wrath of Indra, or any danger of torrents of rain overflowing the land. There everything is blissful, transcendental, and eternal. Here in this material world we have only a little sample of that happiness, because whatever we have here is merely an imitation, a shadow, of the original. On the desert there sometimes appears to be a vast ocean of water when actually there is no water. Animals are often misled by such a mirage. They are thirsty, and they think that there is water in the desert, and they run after it. The animal runs, and the water also advances. In this way the animal becomes fatigued and dies.

This example illustrates our situation in this material world. We are hankering after water, after pleasure. We are thirsty, but we are being misled by the so-called water of a mirage. For example, when I was coming here, on both sides of the highway



I could see the manifestations of materialistic civilization: electric power stations, huge oil pumps, big, big motorcars, lights, motels, hotels, and so many other things. People are thinking that these things will give them relief, that their thirst will be quenched, their hankering for water satisfied. But their efforts have failed. In your country, especially, so many young people, the flowers of your country, are frustrated. That's a fact. You know it, I know it.

So this kind of mirage, this shadow of water, will not help us. But because there is a shadow of water, we can understand that there is real water somewhere. It is not that the shadow of water is all in all. There is water, but not in the desert. In the desert the shadow of water will not quench our thirst. We have to seek out that real



Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the groves of Vṛndāvana

water elsewhere, not in the desert.

This is the information the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is giving: where to find the real “water,” the real pleasure. You do not know where real pleasure is to be found, how your great thirst can be satisfied. That you do not know.

*na te viduḥ svārtha-gatim hi viṣṇum
durāśayā ye bahir-artha-māninaḥ
andhā yathāndhair upanīyamānās
te 'pīśa-tantryām uru-dāmnī baddhāḥ*

People do not know the ultimate goal of life, their real self-interest. Everyone must be self-interested, but no one knows what his real self-interest is. There is no education about the ultimate goal of life (*na te viduḥ*). People are trying to satisfy themselves, to become happy and prosperous,

by adjusting the material nature. This is *bahir-artha-māninaḥ*. *Bahir-artha-māninaḥ* means “giving great importance to the materialistic way of life.”

God has many energies, both spiritual and material. *Parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate*. From the *Vedas* we understand that the Supreme Lord has many energies. And whatever we see is the activity of His energies. For example, take electric energy. The electricity comes from the powerhouse, and by utilizing that electric energy we can work in so many ways. We can operate a heater, a cooler, this microphone, a tape recorder—so many things. But all of these things work because the energy is coming from that powerhouse. Similarly, whatever wonderful things you are seeing in this world are simply the

interactions of various energies of the Lord.

Another example is that of heat and light. Every scientist understands that this whole cosmic manifestation depends upon heat and light. These two energies are coming from the sun, and the material world is a creation of the sunshine's heat and light.

Similarly, there are two energies of God. One is called the material energy; the other is called the spiritual energy. Both of them come from the Supreme Spirit, exactly as heat and light come from the sun. But just as heat is not light, the spiritual energy is not the material energy. There is a distinction. This is called inconceivable simultaneous oneness and difference, *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*. This is our philosophy. While it is true that nothing is different

from God, it is not true that everything is God. Simultaneous oneness and difference.

So, two energies are working, the material and the spiritual. The spiritual energy is superior, and the material energy is inferior. The material energy is composed of earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence, and ego. And the spiritual energy is the spiritual force, the living force. Every one of us is a combination of these two energies, the spiritual energy and the material energy. You can understand it. As soon as the spiritual energy is away from one's body, which is a combination of material energy, the body becomes simply a lump of matter and can no longer move. This is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: *yayedam dhāryate jagat*. The whole world is moving by the combination of the material and the spiritual energies, and both of them come from one source, exactly as heat and light both come from the sun.

So although this material world is not different from God, it is not God. We have to transfer ourselves from this material energy to the spiritual energy. That is the goal of human life. The human life is a higher or better form of life, whereas the animals, the trees, the aquatics, the insects, the reptiles are lower forms. There are 8,400,000 forms of life, and out of them this human form of life—especially the civilized human life—is an elevated life of developed consciousness. The consciousness of a human being is more developed than the consciousness of an aquatic or a tree or a plant or a cat or a dog. Why has this developed consciousness been given by God? To understand Him. This is the only purpose.

Now this developed human consciousness is being misused in the matter of animal life. The aim of modern scientific advancement and philosophical speculation is to find out how we can enjoy our senses better. But after all, no matter how much you improve materialistic life, it is still a life of sense gratification. There is no question of superior or inferior sense gratification. Whether one drinks water from a golden tumbler or an earthen tumbler, the taste of the water is the same. Simply because you put the water in a golden pot, that does not mean the taste of the water will improve. No, the taste will remain the same. Similarly, the taste of eating, sleeping, sex, and defense is the same, whether in the dog's life or in the human's life.

In materialistic life, we are merely trying to taste the same water in different pots. Sometimes we're in the pot called the body of a dog, sometimes in the pot called the body of a hog, and sometimes in the pot called the body of a human being. But developed human consciousness is meant

for something else, not for tasting these things—eating, sleeping, sex, and defense—which are common in every species of life. That developed consciousness is meant for understanding God. Yet in the modern civilization that developed consciousness is being utilized for changing the "pot." Suppose I have come here to Laguna Beach in my nice motorcar. So, it is only a pot, that's all. I could come here in some other kind of vehicle, or by walking. There would be no real difference—it would have taken a little more time, that's all. But we are thinking, "Because we have this motorcar instead of a bullock cart, we are

Developed human consciousness is not meant for eating, sleeping, sex, and defense. It is meant for understanding of God.

advanced in civilization." That is a mistake. Whether you travel on a bullock cart or in a motorcar, your purpose is to transport yourself from one place to another. A nice motorcar may save some time, and you may feel some extra pleasure . . . But actually there is no pleasure. Rather, the bullock cart is more comfortable, because in these motorcars you are always thinking that there may be an accident at any moment. Yes, you are always afraid. And accidents are happening. Recently one of our devotees died in a car accident. Many people are dying.

So, material advancement means that you create a little convenience and side by side you create so many inconveniences. That is inevitable. You have created motorcars, but side by side you have created death by motorcar accidents. What are the statistics in your country? How many people are dying in accidents? [Someone says fifty thousand a year.]

In this way you cannot be happy, because the more you advance in materialistic civilization, the more you become implicated. The real purpose of life is to go back home, back to Godhead. We are missing the point. There is no guarantee that we will have a human body in our next life. By nature's way, by the evolutionary process, we have been given this

chance of the human form. After transmigrating through 8,400,000 species of life, we have gotten this human form of life, with developed consciousness. We should use this developed consciousness to understand God, not to progress from the comforts of the bullock cart to those of the motorcar. No, human consciousness is not for this purpose. The so-called scientists are thinking that we have advanced in civilization from the primitive age because we have advanced from the bullock cart to the motorcar. But that is not actual advancement. We are missing the point: this human form of life is meant for realizing God, for realizing the self.

We are misusing that higher intelligence and consciousness for manufacturing motorcars, and we are very proud of our advancement. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes this mentality in the verse cited before: *na te viduḥ svārtha-gatiṁ hi viṣṇuṁ durāśayā ye bahir-artha-māninaḥ*. Foolish rascals do not know what the aim of life is. They are captivated by the external energy of God. *Andhā yathāndhair upanīyamānās te piśa-tantryām uru-dāmnī baddhāḥ*. They are led by blind leaders. These materialistic leaders—the politicians, the scientists, the philosophers, the technologists, and so on—are all blind, and they are leading other blind people. So what will be the result? The result will be catastrophe.

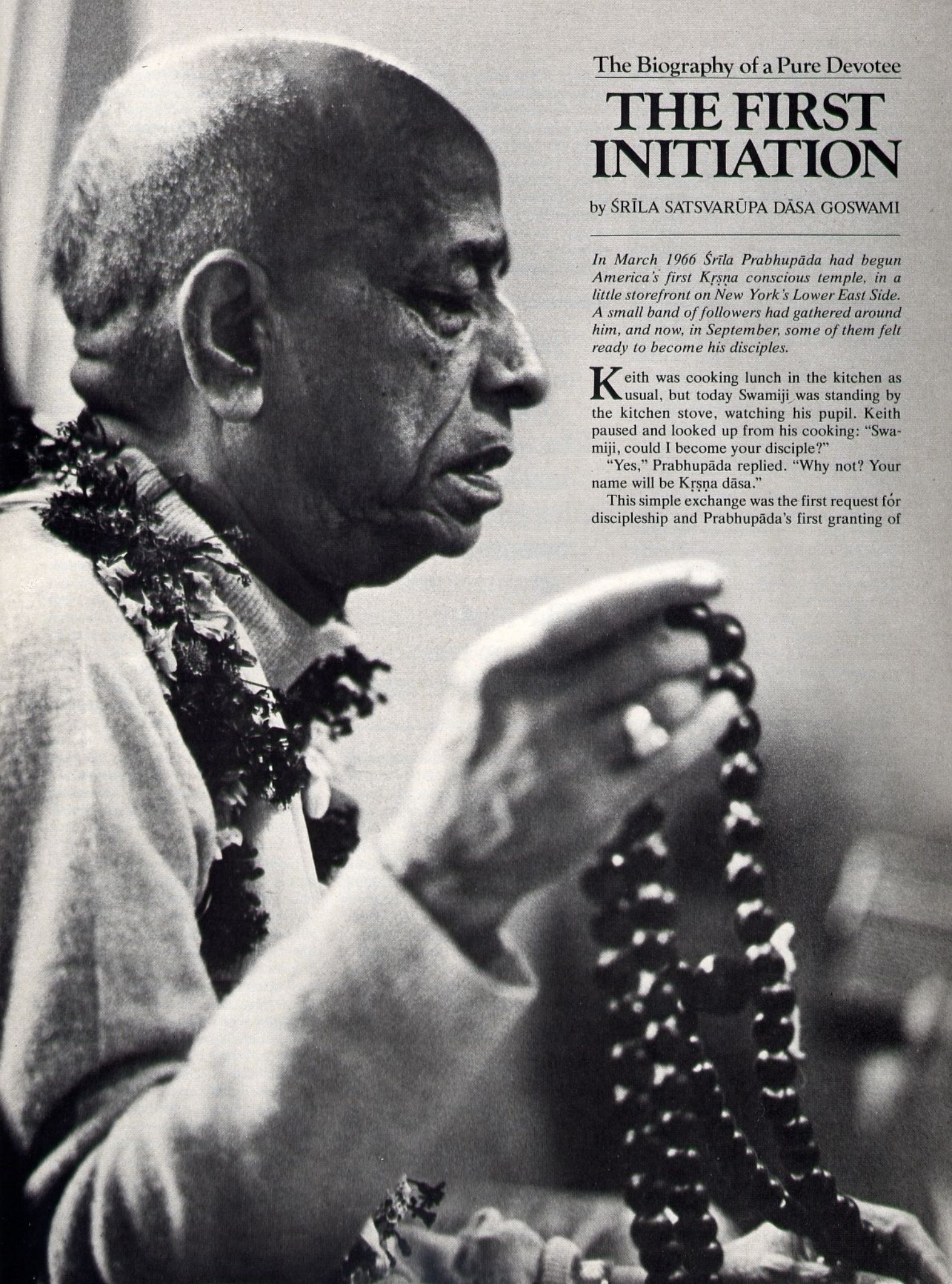
If one man has eyes, he can lead thousands of blind men: "Please come. I shall help you cross the road." But if the leader is blind and the followers are blind, then they will all fall into the ditch. And that is happening. The leaders and the people are all thinking that by bodily comfort, by sense gratification, they will be happy. But that is not possible.

People do not have any actual knowledge. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* [2.13] it is said,

*dehino 'smin yathā dehe
kaumāraṁ yauvanam jāra
tathā dehāntara-prāptir
dhīras tatra na muhyati*

"As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. The self-realized soul is not bewildered by such a change." You, me, and every one of us is engaged within a body. I am a spirit soul, and you are a spirit soul. The Vedic injunction is *aham brahmāsmi*: "I am Brahman, spirit." Brahman is not Parabrahman, the Supreme Brahman. Don't make a mistake. Parabrahman is God. We are Brahman, part and parcel of God. We are fragments of the Supreme; we are not the Supreme Himself. The Supreme is different. For example, you are all Americans, but the supreme American is your president, Mr.

(continued on page 28)



The Biography of a Pure Devotee

THE FIRST INITIATION

by ŚRĪLA SATSVARŪPA DĀSA GOSWAMI

In March 1966 Śrīla Prabhupāda had begun America's first Kṛṣṇa conscious temple, in a little storefront on New York's Lower East Side. A small band of followers had gathered around him, and now, in September, some of them felt ready to become his disciples.

Keith was cooking lunch in the kitchen as usual, but today Swamiji was standing by the kitchen stove, watching his pupil. Keith paused and looked up from his cooking: "Swamiji, could I become your disciple?"

"Yes," Prabhupāda replied. "Why not? Your name will be Kṛṣṇa dāsa."

This simple exchange was the first request for discipleship and Prabhupāda's first granting of

initiation. But there was more to it than that. Prabhupāda announced that he would soon hold an initiation. "What's initiation, Swamiji?" one of the boys asked, and Prabhupāda replied, "I will tell you later."

First they had to have beads. Keith went to Tandy's Leather Company and bought half-inch wooden beads and cord to string them on. It was much better, Swamiji said, to count on beads while chanting—a strand of 108 beads, to be exact. This employed the sense of touch, and like the Vaiṣṇavas of India one could count how many times one chanted the *mantra*. Some devotees in India had a string of more than a thousand beads, he had said, and they would chant through them again and again. He taught the boys how to tie double knots between the 108 beads. The number 108 had a special significance: there were 108 *Upaniṣads*, as well as 108 principal *gopīs*, the chief devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The initiates would be taking vows, he said, and one vow would be to chant a prescribed number of rounds on the beads each day. About a dozen of Swamiji's boys were eligible, but there was no strict system for their selection: if they wanted to they could do it.

Steve: *Although I was already doing whatever Swamiji recommended, I sensed that initiation was a heavy commitment. And with my last strong impulses to remain completely independent, I hesitated to take initiation.*

Prabhupāda's friends saw the initiation in different ways. Some saw it as very serious, and some took it to be like a party or a happening. While stringing their beads in the courtyard, Wally and Howard talked a few days before the ceremony.

Wally: *It's just a formality. You accept Swamiji as your spiritual master.*

Howard: *What does that entail?*

Wally: *Nobody's very sure. In India it's a standard practice. Don't you think you want to take him as a spiritual master?*

Howard: *I don't know. He would seem to be a good spiritual master—whatever that is. I mean, I like him and his teachings a lot, so I guess in a way he's already my spiritual master. I just don't understand how it would change the situation.*

Wally: *Neither do I. I guess it doesn't. It's just a formality.*

September 8

Janmāṣṭamī day, the appearance day of Lord Kṛṣṇa. One year before, Prabhupāda had observed Kṛṣṇa's birthday at sea aboard the *Jaladuta*, just out of Colombo. Now, exactly one year later, he had a small crew of Hare Kṛṣṇa chanters. He would gather them all together, have them observe a day of chanting, reading scripture,

fasting, and feasting—and the next day would be initiation.

At six o'clock, Prabhupāda came down and was about to give his morning class as usual, when one of the boys asked if he would read from his own manuscript. Prabhupāda appeared shy, yet he did not hide his pleasure at having been asked to read his own *Bhagavad-gītā* commentary. Usually he would read a verse from Dr. Radhakrishnan's Oxford edition of the *Gītā*. Although the commentary presented

**“It's not enough
merely to chant
holy words.
One must be pure
inside and out.
Chanting in purity
brings spiritual
advancement.
The impure can
become pure by
following Kṛṣṇa.”**

impersonalist philosophy, the translations, Prabhupāda said, were ninety-percent accurate. But this morning he sent Roy up to fetch his manuscript, and for an hour he read from its typewritten pages.

For observing Janmāṣṭamī there were special rules: there should be no eating, and the day was to be spent chanting, reading, and discussing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If anyone became too weak, he said, there was fruit in the kitchen. But better that they fast until the feast at midnight, just like the devotees in India. He said that in India, millions of people—Hindus, Muslims, or whatever—observed the birthday of Lord Kṛṣṇa. And in every temple there were festivities and celebrations of the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa.

“And now,” he said at length, “I will tell you what is meant by initiation. Initiation means that the spiritual master accepts the student and agrees to take charge, and the student accepts the spiritual master and agrees to worship him as God.” He paused. No one spoke. “Any questions?” And when there were none, he got up and walked out.

The devotees were stunned. What had

they just heard him say? For weeks he had stressed that when anyone claims to be God he should be considered a dog.

“My mind's just been blown,” said Wally.

“*Everybody's* mind is blown,” said Howard. “Swamiji just dropped a bomb.”

They thought of Keith. He was wise. Consult Keith. But Keith was in the hospital. Talking among themselves, they became more and more confused. Swamiji's remark had confounded their judgment. Finally, Wally decided to go to the hospital to see Keith.

Keith listened to the whole story: how Swamiji had told them to fast and how he had read from his manuscript and how he had said he would explain initiation and how everybody had leaned forward, all ears . . . and Swamiji had dropped a bomb: “The student accepts the spiritual master and agrees to worship him as God.” “Any questions?” Swamiji had asked softly. And then he had walked out. “I don't know if I want to be initiated now,” Wally confessed. “We have to worship him as God.”

“Well, you're already doing that by accepting whatever he tells you,” Keith replied, and he advised that they talk it over with Swamiji . . . *before* the initiation. So Wally went back to the temple and consulted Howard, and together they went up to Swamiji's apartment. “Does what you told us this morning,” Howard asked, “mean we are supposed to accept the spiritual master to be God?”

“That means he is due the same respect as God, being God's representative,” Prabhupāda replied, calmly.

“Then he is not God?”

“No,” Prabhupāda said, “God is God. The spiritual master is His representative. Therefore, he is as good as God because he can deliver God to the sincere disciple. Is that clear?” It was.

It was a mental and physical strain to go all day without eating. Jan was restless. She complained that she couldn't possibly stay any longer but had to go take care of her cat. Prabhupāda tried to overrule her, but she left anyway.

Most of the prospective initiates spent several hours that day stringing their shiny red wooden beads. Having tied one end of the string to a window bar or a radiator, they would slide one bead at a time up the string and knot it tightly, chanting one *mantra* of Hare Kṛṣṇa for each bead. It was devotional service—chanting and stringing your beads for initiation. Every time they knotted another bead it seemed like a momentous event. Prabhupāda said that devotees in India chanted at least sixty-four rounds of beads a day. Saying the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* on each of the 108 beads constituted one round. His spiritual master had said that anyone who didn't

chant sixty-four rounds a day was fallen. At first some of the boys thought that they would also have to chant sixty-four rounds, and they became perplexed: that would take all day! How could you go to a job if you had to chant sixty-four rounds? How could anyone chant sixty-four rounds? Then someone said Swamiji had told him that thirty-two rounds a day would be a sufficient minimum for the West. Wally said he had heard Swamiji say twenty-five—but even that seemed impossible. Then Prabhupāda offered the rock-bottom minimum: sixteen rounds a day, without fail. Whoever got initiated would have to promise.

The bead-stringing, chanting, reading, and dozing went on until eleven at night, when everyone was invited up to Swamiji's room. As they filed through the courtyard, they sensed an unusual calm in the atmosphere, and Houston Street, just over the wall, was quiet. There was no moon.

As his followers sat on the floor, contentedly eating *prasādam* from paper plates, Swamiji sat among them, telling stories about the birth of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa had appeared on this evening five thousand years ago. He was born the son of Vasudeva and Devakī in the prison of King Kāṁsa at midnight, and His father, Vasudeva, immediately took Him to Vṛndāvana, where He was raised as the son of Nanda Mahārāja, a cowherd man.

Prabhupāda also spoke of the necessity of purification for spiritual advancement. "It is not enough merely to chant holy words," he said. "One must be pure inside and out. Chanting in purity brings spiritual advancement. The living entity becomes impure because he wants to enjoy material pleasure. But the impure can become pure by following Kṛṣṇa, by doing all works for Kṛṣṇa. Beginners in Kṛṣṇa consciousness have a tendency to relax their efforts in a short time, but to advance spiritually you must resist this temptation and continually increase your efforts and devotion."

Michael Grant: *I first heard about the initiation just one day before it was to take place. I had been busy with my music and hadn't been attending. I was walking down Second Avenue with one of the prospective initiates, and he mentioned to me that there was going to be something called an initiation ceremony. I asked what it was about, and he said, "All I know is it means that you accept the spiritual master as God." This was a big surprise to me, and I hardly knew how to take it. But I didn't take it completely seriously, and the way it was mentioned to me in such an offhand way made it seem not very important. He asked me very casually whether I was going to be involved, and I, also being very casual about it, said, "Well, I think I*

will. Why not? I'll give it a try."

Jan didn't think she would make an obedient disciple, and initiation sounded frightening. She liked the Swami, especially cooking with him. But it was Mike who convinced her—he was going, so she should come along with him.

Carl Yearens knew something about initiation from his readings, and he, more than the others, knew what a serious commitment it was. He was surprised to hear that Swamiji was offering initiation,

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and he was cautious about entering into it. He knew that initiation meant no illicit sex, intoxication, or meat-eating, and an initiated disciple would have new responsibilities for spreading the teachings to others. Carl was already feeling less involved since the Swami had moved to Second Avenue, but he decided to attend the initiation anyway.

Bill Epstein had never professed to be a serious disciple. Holding initiation was just another part of the Swami's scene, and you were free to take it seriously or not. He figured it was all right to take initiation, even if you weren't serious. He decided to try it.

Carol Bekar was surprised to hear that some people would be taking initiation even though they had no intentions of giving up their bad habits. She had stopped coming around regularly ever since the Swami had moved, and she felt no desire to ask for initiation. The Swami probably wouldn't initiate women anyway, she figured.

Robert Nelson hadn't forgotten the Swami and always liked to help whenever he could. But except for an occasional

friendly visit, he had stopped coming. He mostly stayed to himself. He still lived uptown and wasn't into the Lower East Side scene.

James Greene thought he wasn't pure enough to be initiated: "Who am I to be initiated?" But the Swami had asked him to bring something over to the storefront. "I came, and it was just understood that I was supposed to be initiated. So, I thought, why not?"

Stanley had been chanting regularly again and had come out of his crazy mood. He was sticking with the Swami and his followers. He asked his mother if he could be initiated, and she said it would be all right.

Steve wanted some more time to think about it.

Keith was in the hospital.

Bruce had only been attending for a week or two, and it was too soon.

Chuck was on a week's vacation from the regulated spiritual life at the temple, so he didn't know about the initiation.

No one was asked to shave his head or even cut his hair or change his dress. No one offered Prabhupāda the traditional *guru-dakṣiṇā*, the donation a disciple is supposed to offer as a gesture of his great obligation to his master. Hardly anyone even relieved him of his chores, so Swamiji himself had to do most of the cooking and other preparations for the initiation. He was perfectly aware of the mentality of his boys, and he didn't try to force anything on anyone. Some of the initiates didn't know until after the initiation, when they had inquired, that the four rules—no meat-eating, no illicit sex, no intoxication, and no gambling—were mandatory for all disciples. Prabhupāda's reply then was, "I'm very glad that you are finally asking me that."

It was to be a live Vedic sacrifice, with a ceremonial fire right there in the front room of Swamiji's apartment. In the center of the room was the sacrificial arena, a platform of bricks, four inches high and two feet square, covered with a mound of dirt. The dirt was from the courtyard, and the bricks were from a nearby gutted building. Around the mound were eleven bananas, clarified butter, sesame seeds, whole barley grains, five colors of powdered dyes, and a supply of kindling. The eleven initiates took up most of the remaining space in the front room as they sat on the floor knee to knee around the sacrificial arena. The guests in the hallway peered curiously through the open door. For everyone except the Swami, this was all new and strange, and every step of the ceremony took place under his direction. When some of the boys had made a mess

(continued on page 20)

IMMORTAL LONGINGS

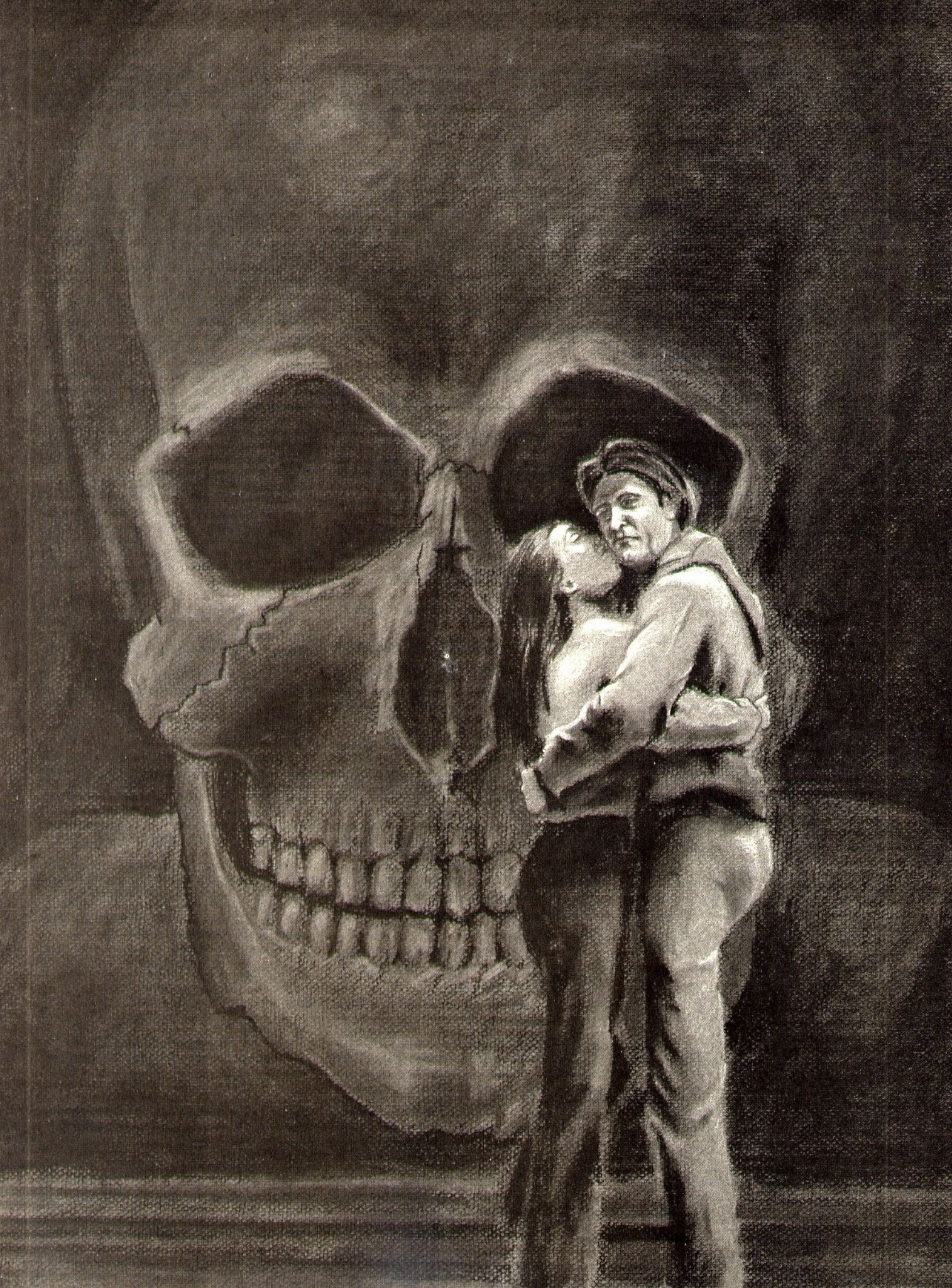
by RAVĪNDRA SVARŪPA DĀSA

No one likes to be the bearer of bad news. Not only is it unpleasant; it can be dangerous. Kings routinely used to kill on the spot hapless messengers bringing word of defeat.

Even so, most people still acknowledge that truth, however unpalatable, is preferable to illusion, however cheering. This is, after all, only practical, for the facts as they affect us have a certain implacable stubbornness to which even the most compelling illusions must eventually yield. Facts always win—simply because they are facts.

You have probably gathered that I have some fairly unpleasant things to say.

Indeed, the illusion I want to destroy is perhaps the most deeply rooted and pervasive of all human convictions. It is the idea that we can achieve happiness through the enjoyment of



our senses, especially through that prototype of all pleasure, sex and sexual love. Certainly no effort has been pursued as doggedly, and yet produced a record of such consistent failure, as this one. The wonder is that this history of universal defeat has in no way dampened the hope of imminent victory.

Certainly, with the disintegration of traditional religions and the official establishment of secular philosophies, this illusion has gained the force of an obsession. If we are no more than sophisticated animals, if our existence as individual conscious subjects is something haphazardly thrown up between two infinities of nothingness, then we would be foolish not to mine our allotment of duration for as much sensual bliss as possible. Since this is all we have, we had better give it our best effort.

Sexual Fantasy

Such sentiments have greatly contributed to the presently widespread movement toward a full sensual awakening through the liberation of sexuality. Given that the body provides our only access to happiness, we must extirpate those constraints upon our fulfillment, those internal impediments inculcated by discarded, life-denying religions and moralities—the repression of desires, the consciousness of guilt, the fear and hatred of the body. Now one cultivates a liberated and expansive life, free from all repressions; one aspires to drink deeply at the wells of pure pleasure, unpolluted by guilt or shame, healed and whole in spirit through a joyous acceptance and celebration of the body.

It shouldn't take much experience of the actual conduct of sexual relations for an alert person to recognize that this vision of unrestrained, joyous sex is an unrealizable fantasy. Nevertheless, the fantasy still seems to exercise an irresistible fascination. I suppose that people must blame its disappointments on repressions still unpurged, residual guilt and shame, and a lack of trust in and surrender to the body itself.

But in fact none of us can wholeheartedly trust in and surrender to the body, because we know, beneath the bluff and the bravado, that our bodies are frail and weak and dying and that the greatest pleasure it gives us is heartbreakingly brief. We find ourselves bound within a complexity of muscle and vein that nature can dismantle at any moment, in any of thousands of horrible ways. Our strength and beauty leak away in daily increments. Our body disintegrates before our eyes and becomes itself a major source of our suffering, and then we die.

Therefore, no one can help but be horrified by his body (even though the

mind must repress those feelings in self-defense). This horror is not an artificial hate or fear imposed by some life-denying religion. It is only a sensible reaction to a correct perception.

Our position is intrinsically divided. We are not whole. We are endowed with a developed consciousness that makes our incarceration in bodies like those of animals agonizing for us. We can imagine, abstract, generalize, range far beyond the narrow limits of local place and time. Our minds continually search for the first principles behind all things, for the one that

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This is sex.**

underlies the many, for the permanent that persists through all change, for the eternal beyond the temporal. Meanwhile we struggle fitfully in a dying body. Our spirits reach for the infinite; our molars rot.

The consciousness that gives us such strong intimations of immortality also forces us to be acutely aware of our helplessness before nature, our fragility before the huge weight of the universe, and the constant threat of death under which we live. Even a small child draws the connection between the bleeding cut on his finger and the animals he sees exploded in gore upon the roadside.

All the same, we are possessed by an unremitting desire for pleasure, by the conviction that happiness is our right. This conflicts with the reality of our condition. Therefore, the mind represses with great power our perception of reality and our horror at our situation. Any person will verbally admit to you that he knows he is going to die, but the admission rings curiously hollow. It is as if he were talking about someone else. At heart, he refuses to believe it. This is how he lives a "happy" life—at least for a time.

We should recognize that most of human culture is a complicity to sustain our vital delusion, a skillful artifice to keep ourselves unconscious. We erect and vie for

artificial or symbolic goals so that we can prove to ourselves our strength and power, our endurance and invulnerability; we have thousands of ways of patting ourselves and each other on the back. But of course, nature grinds relentlessly on and pays no heed to our fine and tender feelings, our banners and our flags, our list of conquests and victories. While we keep ourselves resolutely preoccupied and distracted, absorbed in our illusory enterprises, death comes, to our great surprise.

We dismiss death from our minds to be happy, but it doesn't really work. On the contrary, since in this world life and death are bound tightly together, to retreat from death is to retreat from life. One cannot become selectively unconscious.

This explains the loss of that pristine and glorious vision of the world we knew as a child, a loss poets ceaselessly lament. Somehow we fall from grace, and thereafter we experience life with a deadened spirit and narrowed consciousness, a diminished capacity for feeling. Adulthood fully initiates us into the established system of illusions, into a life of intense effort toward makeshift goals whose real purpose is to keep us from thought. Such a life is necessarily thin, grey, tasteless, and it has an undercurrent of constant, nagging despair, for which most societies provide some sort of anesthetic—intoxicants, television, or the like. All the while, the wonder and splendor of the edenic world of our childhood lies shining all about us, but we have turned away from it in fear, for we have learned that it is a place of death.

This discovery begins early enough, but our retreat into organized unreality takes time. Yet there is one thing more than anything else that seals it. This is sex.

The Ultimate Failure

My assertion, of course, goes quite counter to the tenet of the sexual liberation movement that through surrender to sex we can gain a new innocence and thus enter a world radiant with intense and joyous experience. But such a liberated posture ignores that the body which is the vehicle of sexual pleasure is also the vehicle of pain and disease and senescence and death.

The initiation into sex, that experience of overwhelming subjugation to the body for pleasure, is precisely that experience which contributes most to the diminished capacity for living. This is not so hard to see. Our first sexual act precipitates a tenacious identification with the body, forges a fast bond to it. Thereafter, we are committed to the project of seeking happiness through the senses. At the same time, we awaken to a deep and abiding dread: We have sealed our pact with mortality.

As sex deadens the spirit, it quickens all the senses. It becomes the center of all material enjoyment. Yet sensual pleasures depend entirely upon the favorable arrangement of circumstances, and so the more a person is committed to pursuing these pleasures, the greater his anxiety. Most of all he needs money. Sex indentures him to ceaseless labor. Securing attractive sexual partners is at best an elaborate and troublesome pursuit, fraught with dangers to one's self-esteem. As a person becomes older, the pursuit becomes harder and depends almost entirely upon his ability to maintain his social prestige and display his opulence and generosity. There is no end to worry and to fear.

On the other hand, we may try to withdraw from the anxieties of the sexual marketplace and take the advice of countless popular songs by seeking the one we "love" and who "loves" us in return. Such a discovery is rare enough, but it hardly ends our sufferings. On the contrary, nothing can compare to our anguish when we lose the object of our love—or that one's love for us. Love is no shelter. And we have discovered that as people increasingly demand sexual fulfillment from marriage, the less durable such relationships are becoming.

Our inability to sustain relationships is at the heart of our predicament. All our happiness and our achievement depend upon our successfully perpetuating relationships, and our ultimate failure to do so is called death. Small losses prefigure the larger one. We want to live, to expand our organism, to increase the power of our being—in short, to overcome death. As sex is the act of creation of life, we turn to it to commune with the energy of life itself and to prove our vital power. This power becomes embodied in offspring. Our family becomes the nucleus of a fortification composed of real estate, money, social connections, privilege, and power. We feed our vital force by competing with enemies and destroying them. In this way we prosper and gloriously expand. Yet all these activities have a desperate and driven character. We are trying to fool ourselves. For at heart we know very well that nothing can protect us, that all our powerful friends, aristocratic relatives, and sweet-faced children are fallible soldiers in the war, and that all of us are doomed.

Revolt Against Death

I think I have drawn an honest picture of our human predicament, and I am afraid that by now you must be thinking I am willfully obtuse. You may indeed be willing to admit that all of us have to settle for less happiness in life than we want (as Freud put it, the "reality principle" replaces the "pleasure principle"), and you might admit

that sex never really does live up to its promise. All the same, it still gives us *some* pleasure, and with the pain and suffering we have to face, why shouldn't we at least accept this pleasure?

Sex is a biological drive; it is fundamental to life itself. We cannot be free of it, and so even though it is not without difficulties, even worse are the difficulties of suppression and frustration. So what can we do? It is simply perverse to keep harping on the dark side of things, and all this bad news is pointless.

But there is, I assure you, a point.

The project of self-realization does not call for enduring a bleak life of frustration to attain a future heavenly enjoyment.

I would like you to consider the possibility that our revolt against the sentence of death imposed by the body, our intuitive consciousness that we are meant for more than casual destruction, may have a justification in dimly apprehended, obscured fact. Our developed human consciousness, which keeps us from being comfortable in an animal body, may indicate or symptomize a fundamental feature of existence.

To put it another way, consider the possibility that our involvement in sex, and in the whole frantic enterprise of sensual life that expands from it, constitutes a kind of intoxication or stupefaction of awareness that occludes our normal consciousness of our real nature—a nature that is in fact not subject at all to death. If this is so, there is a prospect for realizing, through the excavation of that eternal self, an inherent and inalienable happiness absolutely independent of the states of the body. One can achieve this, however, only if one can remove the stupefaction of consciousness by directing his energies away from the project of material satisfaction that centers on sex.

The project of uncovering the eternal self that I am proposing should not be confused with the repressive programs that have been propagated in the name of religion. The project of self-realization

does not call for enduring a bleak life of frustration and deprivation to attain a future heavenly enjoyment. Nor does it propose that we seek happiness as a neutral "peace," the mere absence of pain, through atrophy of the affections. On the contrary, I propose that our desire to possess an unending existence of uninterrupted, every-intensifying bliss is legitimate, and that there is a practical way we can fulfill it immediately, a way so natural, powerful, and attractive that all other engagements lose their allure.

Fundamental Ignorance

You may be thinking, however, that if there were anything to this, it would have already been accepted by our intellectual and political leaders and embedded in educational policy. The problem is that a person's knowledge is relative to his situation. When a person is habituated to sensual enjoyment and to sex, his instruments of perception malfunction, and so he is unable to comprehend or experience his own eternal nature, no matter how outstanding he may otherwise be. Such people are sunk in an ignorance so profound, so fundamental, that even their greatest knowledge is really a kind of advancement in ignorance. In spite of repeated failures, they perpetually put forward hopeless and quixotic schemes to bring happiness, and they seem to have an animallike obliviousness to the essential character of the world. Even though they mislead others, however, they are ultimately not worthy of anger or scorn: they suffer like everyone else.

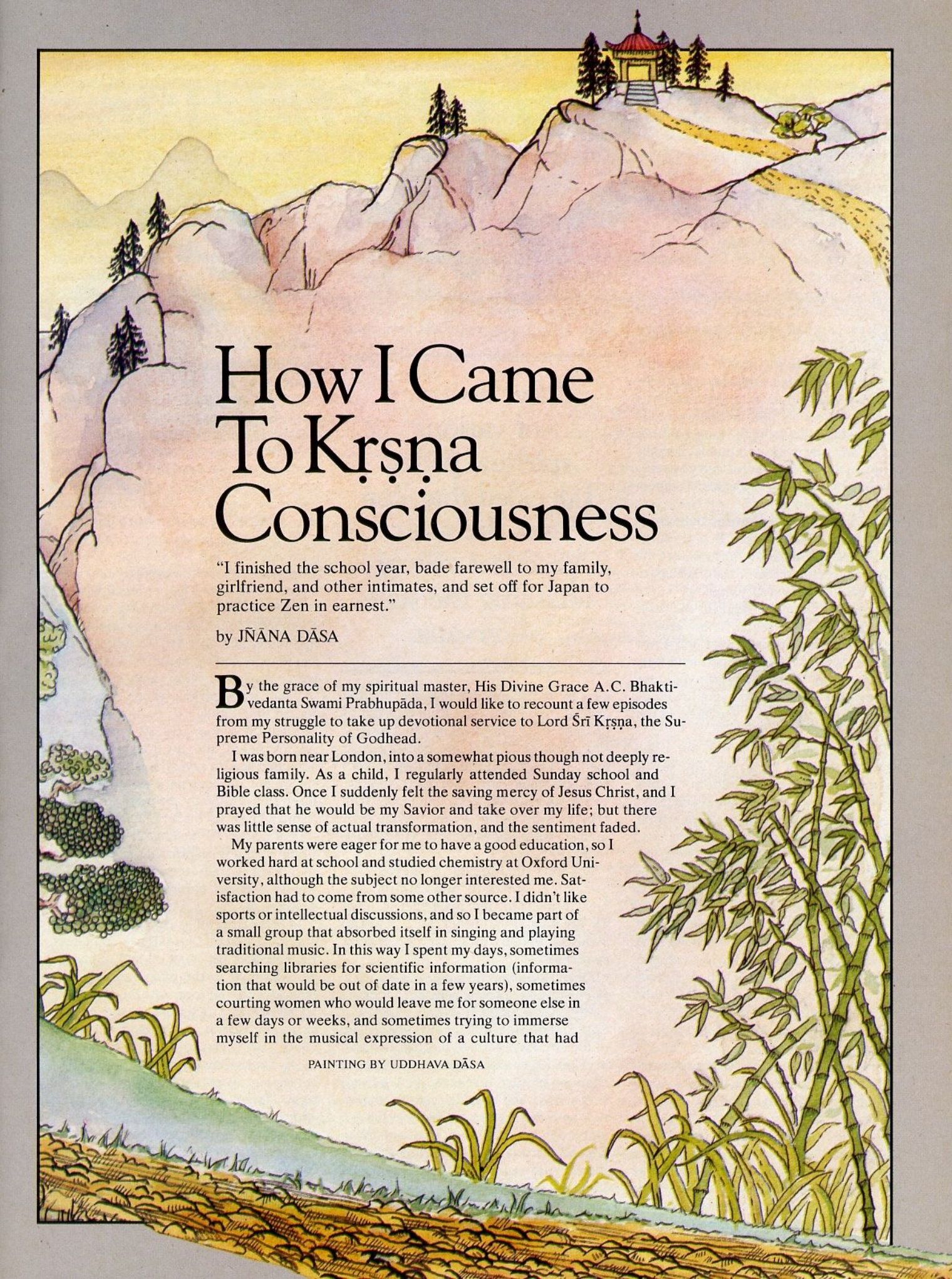
Knowledge concerning the eternal self and the method of freeing it can come only from one who is himself free. This implies that if there is such a person there must have been a historical succession of them passing down the teaching. In fact, such traditions have appeared in many countries, and often enough—although the usual course is that it will flourish for a while, become compromised by the spirit of material enjoyment, and then look absurd and be rejected.

I was taught the science of self-realization by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who follows from a historical tradition going back thousands of years in India. The teachings of that tradition, recorded in ancient Sanskrit texts like *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, recognize a variety of methods for self-realization, but recommend strongly, above all others, the method called *bhakti-yoga*.

To help explain this method of freeing the self, let me first set out a more detailed account of the self and its relation to matter and to other selves.

(continued on page 28)





How I Came To Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

“I finished the school year, bade farewell to my family, girlfriend, and other intimates, and set off for Japan to practice Zen in earnest.”

by JÑĀNA DĀSA

By the grace of my spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, I would like to recount a few episodes from my struggle to take up devotional service to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

I was born near London, into a somewhat pious though not deeply religious family. As a child, I regularly attended Sunday school and Bible class. Once I suddenly felt the saving mercy of Jesus Christ, and I prayed that he would be my Savior and take over my life; but there was little sense of actual transformation, and the sentiment faded.

My parents were eager for me to have a good education, so I worked hard at school and studied chemistry at Oxford University, although the subject no longer interested me. Satisfaction had to come from some other source. I didn't like sports or intellectual discussions, and so I became part of a small group that absorbed itself in singing and playing traditional music. In this way I spent my days, sometimes searching libraries for scientific information (information that would be out of date in a few years), sometimes courting women who would leave me for someone else in a few days or weeks, and sometimes trying to immerse myself in the musical expression of a culture that had

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already practically vanished.

The scientific knowledge I acquired was an accumulation of facts in well-researched fields. I don't recall anyone's transmitting a sense of life's mystery or wonder or of responsibility for understanding life's purpose. In fact my so-called moral tutor told me at the end of his course, "Actually the most important thing is to learn how to take your liquor."

"Isn't getting a degree most important?" I asked. After all, why else had I come to the university?

"It's not the *most* important thing. You can get by in life without a degree, but you'll never get anywhere if you can't take your drink."

This, then, was the nature of the elite into which I had been initiated—spiritually bankrupt and socially irresponsible. I entered society without the slightest idea that seeking relief from the pangs of birth and death was even acceptable, socially or intellectually. Certainly I had no understanding that this was the especial responsibility of human life.

After teaching chemistry at high school for a year, I went for a Postgraduate Certificate of Education at London University. The head of the Education Department smugly recounted his maxim "Those who can't do something teach it, and those who can't teach it teach others how to teach it." It was his little joke, but I saw that the men who ran the department were confused about their aims, although they had made a comfortable living for themselves. I also saw that I was little better than they were.

I wanted material security, but I was also interested in the exotic and earthy vigor of primitive cultures. So I took employment as an expatriate teacher in a rural high school in Ghana, West Africa. The environment fascinated me: the vivid colors and patterns of birth, growth, and death, the individuality expressed by the animals, the birds, and even the insects and plants in their struggle for existence, and the emotional fullness of the people, with their simple life and colorful festivals. I joined in the customs of the local people, sought to understand their beliefs as much as I could, and immersed myself in their music and rhythmic drumming.

I was frustrated with the limitations of the life I had known so far, and I longed for the wings to range over a wider spiritual landscape. Still, I was a young dog. I had no higher knowledge and no spiritual insight. My only escape from the mundane world was through music and song. Religion? I was a "reverent agnostic." The conventional religion I had seen so far was dull. I reserved judgment, but my other attempts to enjoy life seemed more important. There was practically no question of

duty to God. My basis for moral judgments was simply that I should live without "spoiling things" for myself and others.

But now my perspective started to change. At college I had doubted the simplistic religious faith of my childhood (and I still did), but now the vitality around me challenged my materialistic complacency. I had the leisure to contemplate the potency of the life force and the order and complexity of living forms and relationships. Where did material science even begin to explain all this?

I could see that there was a supreme intelligence, whom I called "the Lord of Life." Now, I suppose I could have come

After a survey of various spiritual paths, I decided that Zen was the most practical way of attaining the state of *nirvāṇa*.

alive by worshiping this source of life, but instead I withdrew into drugs and what I thought to be trances of spiritual insight. My attempts to raise my consciousness seemed very significant, although in fact I was becoming more and more remote, afraid, and unable to communicate with others. And joyful, exotic Africa now seemed weird and dangerous. I decided to return to London.

For the time being, I shelved the question of service to "the Lord of Life," but I wanted to find some sort of relief for my mental confusion. So I began to count my breaths, as an exercise in inner awareness.

Once, someone in London gave me a *Back to Godhead* magazine, but I couldn't understand it. In the front was a picture of Śrīla Prabhupāda, looking very grave. One of the articles described the joys of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and had pictures of Bengali chanting parties. It seemed nice, but not very serious, and I couldn't see the connection with the Supreme Absolute. Once I met a devotee in a shop. She said "Hare Kṛṣṇa!" just as I would say "Happy Christmas!" Later, one afternoon, I visited London's Hare Kṛṣṇa temple, but I saw no one there, and feeling insecure I walked out.

I was more interested in the doctrine that one can free oneself from all miseries by stopping material activity and desires and realizing that both the world and our sense of individual existence are illusory. In other words, "We only think we are suffering. You can stop suffering by stopping the activities of the mind."

After a survey of various spiritual paths, I decided that Zen was the most practical way of attaining this state of *nirvāṇa*. For one thing, it seemed to correspond most closely with the experiences of enlightenment I felt I had had in Africa. Also, it hardly required any faith in anything external, and this I felt was good. I had little faith in the materialistic culture and beliefs in which I had been raised, but I had been schooled all too well in skepticism. The principal requirements for Zen, it seemed, were dogged determination and concentration. I thought I was capable of that.

After returning from Africa I had managed to hold down teaching jobs for a year and a half, but I was becoming more and more disgusted. The children would ask, "Why do we have to learn this, Sir?" "Because you have to pass exams to get a proper job." But I didn't want a better job myself. Neither the children nor I were interested in what I had to teach them.

Meanwhile, I was becoming more disappointed than satisfied in my attempts to find material happiness. To admit that it was illusory and try to find reality seemed better than to carry on vainly struggling.

I was really serious about Zen. I had waited long enough to be sure of that. I finished the school year, gave notice, cut off my beard and the long hair I had defended against several headmasters, got rid of my musical paraphernalia, bade farewell to my family, girlfriend, and other intimates, and set off for Japan to practice Zen in earnest. Somehow I thought that it would not be very spiritual to fly to Japan, so I took a train across Russia, and it was two weeks before I arrived at my destination.

I climbed the steps from the road, past engraved stones ("Form is just emptiness. Emptiness is just form."), and along the wooded path to the main gate, where I paused with one foot over the threshold. Cicadas sizzled under the hot sun, emphasizing the silence. Everything was swept clean—the courtyard, the paths, even the mossy banks were completely free of fallen leaves and twigs—but no one was to be seen. Dragon Marsh Temple stood as if transported from another dimension, a dimension of intense stillness.

At last I was granted an interview. The Rōshi, or teacher, had many disciples in the West, and he allowed me to live with the monks, rising early in the morning,

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ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

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

Second Canto: "The Cosmic Manifestation"

CHAPTER SIX

Puruṣa-sūkta Confirmed

In this installment of our serialized presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Lord Brahmā finishes informing his son and disciple Nārada about the details of sacrifice to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Then Brahmā confesses that despite his great intelligence and mystic powers, still he cannot fathom the full truth of the Lord.

TEXT 26

नामधेयानि मन्त्राश्च दक्षिणाश्च व्रतानि च ।
देवतानुक्रमः कल्पः सङ्कल्पस्तन्त्रमेव च ॥२६॥

*nāma-dheyāni mantrās ca
dakṣiṇāś ca vratāni ca
devatānukramah kalpah
saṅkalpas tantram eva ca*

nāma-dheyāni—invoking the names of the demigods; *mantrāh*—specific hymns to offer to a particular demigod; *ca*—also; *dakṣiṇāh*—reward; *ca*—and; *vratāni*—vows; *ca*—and; *devatā-anukramah*—one demigod after another; *kalpah*—the specific scripture; *saṅkalpah*—the specific purpose; *tantram*—a particular process; *eva*—as they are; *ca*—also.

TRANSLATION

Other necessities include invoking the different names of the demigods by specific hymns and vows of recompense, in accordance with the particular scripture, for specific purposes and by specific processes.

PURPORT

The whole process of offering sacrifice is under the category of fruitive action, and such activities are extremely scientific. They mainly depend on the process of vibrating sounds with a particular accent. It is a great science, and due to being out of proper use for more than four thousand years, for want of qualified *brāhmaṇas*, such performances of sacrifice are no longer effective. Nor are they recommended in this fallen age. Any such sacrifice undertaken in this age as a matter of show may simply be a cheating process by the clever priestly order. But such a show of sacrifices cannot be effective at any stage. Fruitive action is being carried on by the help of material science and to a little extent by gross material help, but the materialists await a still more subtle advancement in the process of vibrating sounds on which the Vedic hymns are established. Gross material science cannot divert the real purpose of human life. They can only increase the artificial needs of life without any solution to the problems of life; therefore the way of materialistic life leads to the wrong type of human civilization. Since the ultimate aim of life is spiritual realization, the direct way of invoking the holy name of the Lord, as mentioned above, is precisely recommended by Lord Caitanya, and people of the modern age can easily take advantage of this

simple process, which is tenable for the condition of the complicated social structure.

TEXT 27

गतयो मतयश्चैव प्रायश्चित्तं समर्पणम् ।
पुरुषावयवैरेते सम्भाराः सम्भृता मया ॥२७॥

*gatayo matayaś caiva
prāyaścittam samarpaṇam
puruṣāvayavair ete
sambhārāḥ sambhṛtā mayā*

gatayah—progress to the ultimate goal (Viṣṇu); *matayah*—worshipping the demigods; *ca*—as also; *eva*—certainly; *prāyaścittam*—compensation; *samarpaṇam*—ultimate offering; *puruṣa*—the Personality of Godhead; *avayavaiḥ*—from the parts of the body of the Personality of Godhead; *ete*—these; *sambhārāḥ*—the ingredients; *sambhṛtāḥ*—were arranged; *mayā*—by me.

TRANSLATION

Thus I had to arrange all these necessary ingredients and paraphernalia of sacrifice from the personal bodily parts of the Personality of Godhead. By invocation of the demigods' names, the ultimate goal, Viṣṇu, was gradually attained, and thus compensation and ultimate offering were complete.

PURPORT

In this verse, special stress is given to the person of the Supreme Lord, and not to His impersonal *brahmajyoti*, as being the source of all supplies. Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Lord, is the goal of sacrificial results, and therefore the Vedic hymns are ultimately meant for attaining this goal. Human life is thus made successful by pleasing Nārāyaṇa and getting entrance into the direct association of Nārāyaṇa in the spiritual kingdom of Vaikuṅṭha.

TEXT 28

इति सम्भृतसम्भारः पुरुषावयवैरहम् ।
तमेव पुरुषं यज्ञं तेनैवायजमीश्वरम् ॥२८॥

*iti sambhṛta-sambhārah
puruṣāvayavair aham
tam eva puruṣam yajñam
tenaivāyajam īśvaram*

iti—thus; *sambhṛta*—executed; *sambhārāḥ*—equipped myself well; *puruṣa*—the Personality of Godhead; *avayavaiḥ*—by the parts and parcels; *aham*—I; *tam eva*—unto Him; *puruṣam*—the Personality of Godhead; *yajñam*—the enjoyer of all sacrifices; *tena eva*—by all those; *ayajam*—worshiped; *īśvaram*—the supreme controller.

TRANSLATION

Thus I created the ingredients and paraphernalia for offering sacrifice out of the parts of the body of the Supreme Lord, the enjoyer of the sacrifice, and I performed the sacrifice to satisfy the Lord.

PURPORT

People in general are always anxious to have peace of mind or peace in the world, but they do not know how to achieve such a standard of peace in the world. Such peace in the world is obtainable by performances of sacrifice and by practice of austerity. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (5.29) the following prescription is recommended:

*bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasāṁ
sarva-loka-maheśvaram
suhṛdaṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ
jñātvā mām śāntim rocchati*

“The *karma-yogīs* know that the Supreme Lord is the factual enjoyer and maintainer of all sacrifices and of the austere life. They also know that the Lord is the ultimate proprietor of all the planets and is the factual friend of all living entities. Such knowledge gradually converts the *karma-yogīs* into pure devotees of the Lord through the association of unalloyed devotees, and thus they are able to be liberated from material bondage.”

Brahmā, the original living being within the material world, taught us the way of sacrifice. The word “sacrifice” suggests dedication of one’s own interests for satisfaction of a second person. That is the way of all activities. Every man is engaged in sacrificing his interests for others, either in the form of family, society, community, country or the entire human society. But perfection of such sacrifices is attained when they are performed for the sake of the Supreme Person, the Lord. Because the Lord is the proprietor of everything, because the Lord is the friend of all living creatures, and because He is the maintainer of the performer of sacrifice, as well as the supplier of the ingredients of sacrifices, it is He only and no one else who should be satisfied by all sacrifices.

The whole world is engaged in sacrificing energy for advancement of learning, social upliftment, economic development and plans for total improvement of the human condition, but no one is interested in sacrificing for the sake of the Lord, as it is advised in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Therefore, there is no peace in the world. If men at all want peace in the world, they must practice sacrifice in the interest of the supreme proprietor and friend of all.

TEXT 29

ततस्ते भ्रातर इमे प्रजानां पतयो नव ।
अयजन् व्यक्तमव्यक्तं पुरुषं सुसमाहिताः ॥२९॥

*tatas te bhrātara ime
prajānāṁ patayo nava
ayajan vyaktam avyaktam
puruṣaṁ su-samāhitāḥ*

tataḥ—thereafter; *te*—your; *bhrātaraḥ*—brothers; *ime*—these; *prajānām*—of the living creatures; *patayaḥ*—masters; *nava*—nine; *ayajan*—performed; *vyaktam*—manifested; *avyaktam*—nonmanifested; *puruṣam*—personalities; *su-samāhitāḥ*—with proper rituals.

TRANSLATION

My dear son, thereafter your nine brothers, who are the masters of living creatures, performed the sacrifice with proper rituals to satisfy both the manifested and nonmanifested personalities.

PURPORT

The manifested personalities are the demigods like the ruler of the heavenly kingdom, Indra, and his associates; and the nonmanifested per-

sonality is the Lord Himself. The manifested personalities are mundane controllers of the material affairs, whereas the nonmanifested Personality of Godhead is transcendental, beyond the range of the material atmosphere. In this age of Kali the manifested demigods are also not to be seen, for space travel has completely stopped. So both the powerful demigods and the Supreme Personality of Godhead are nonmanifested to the covered eyes of the modern man. Modern men want to see everything with their eyes, although they are not sufficiently qualified. Consequently, they disbelieve in the existence of the demigods or of the Supreme God. They should see through the pages of authentic scriptures and should not simply believe their unqualified eyes. Even in these days, God can also be seen by qualified eyes tinged with the ointment of love of God.

TEXT 30

ततश्च मनवः काले ईजिरे ऋषयोऽपरे ।
पितरो विबुधा दैत्या मनुष्याः क्रतुभिर्विभ्रम् ॥३०॥

*tataś ca manavaḥ kāle
ijire ṛṣayo 'pare
pitāro vibudhā daiṭyā
manuṣyāḥ kratubhir vibhum*

tataḥ—thereafter; *ca*—also; *manavaḥ*—the Manus, the fathers of mankind; *kāle*—in due course of time; *ijire*—worshiped; *ṛṣayaḥ*—great sages; *apare*—others; *pitaraḥ*—the forefathers; *vibudhāḥ*—the learned scholars; *daiṭyāḥ*—great devotees of the demigods; *manuṣyāḥ*—mankind; *kratubhir vibhum*—by performance of sacrifices to please the Supreme Lord.

TRANSLATION

Thereafter, the Manus, the fathers of mankind, the great sages, the forefathers, the learned scholars, the Daityas and mankind performed sacrifices meant to please the Supreme Lord.

PURPORT

The *daiṭyas* are devotees of the demigods because they want to derive the greatest possible material facilities from them. The devotees of the Lord are *eka-niṣṭha*, or absolutely attached to the devotional service of the Lord. Therefore they have practically no time to seek the benefits of material facilities. Because of their realization of their spiritual identity, they are more concerned with spiritual emancipation than with material comforts.

TEXT 31

नारायणे भगवति तदिदं विश्वमाहितम् ।
गृहीतमायोरुगुणः सर्गादावगुणः स्वतः ॥३१॥

*nārāyaṇe bhagavati
tad idam viśvam āhitam
grhīta-māyuru-guṇaḥ
sargādāv aguṇaḥ svataḥ*

nārāyaṇe—unto Nārāyaṇa; *bhagavati*—the Personality of Godhead; *tad idam*—all these material manifestations; *viśvam*—all the universes; *āhitam*—situated; *grhīta*—having accepted; *māyā*—material energies; *uru-guṇaḥ*—greatly powerful; *sarga-ādau*—in creation, maintenance and destruction; *aguṇaḥ*—without affinity for the material modes; *svataḥ*—self-sufficiently.

TRANSLATION

All the material manifestations of the universes are therefore situated in His powerful material energies, which He accepts self-sufficiently, although He is eternally without affinity for the material modes.

PURPORT

The question put by Nārada before Brahmā concerning the sustenance of the material creation is thus answered. Material actions and reactions, as the material scientist can superficially observe, are not basically ultimate truth in regard to creation, maintenance and destruction. The material energy is a potency of the Lord which is displayed in time, accepting the three qualities of goodness, passion and ignorance in the forms of Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva. The material energy thus works under the supreme spell of His Lordship, although He is always transcendental to all such material activities. A rich man constructs a big house by spending his energy in the shape of resources, and similarly he destroys a big house by his resources, but the maintenance is always under his personal care. The Lord is the richest of the rich because He is always fully complete in six opulences. Therefore He is not required to do anything personally, but everything in the material world is carried out by His wishes and direction; therefore, the entire material manifestation is situated in Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The impersonal conception of the supreme truth is due to lack of knowledge only, and this fact is clearly explained by Brahmājī, who is supposed to be the creator of the universal affairs. Brahmājī is the highest authority in Vedic wisdom, and his assertion in this connection is therefore the supreme information.

TEXT 32

सृजामि तन्नियुक्तोऽहं हरो हरति तद्वशः ।
विश्वं पुरुषरूपेण परिपति त्रिशक्तिधृक् ॥३२॥

*srjāmi tan-niyukto 'ham
haro harati tad-vaśaḥ
viśvaṁ puruṣa-rūpeṇa
paripāti tri-śakti-dhṛk*

srjāmi—do create; *tat*—by His; *niyuktaḥ*—appointment; *aham*—I; *haraḥ*—Lord Śiva; *harati*—destroys; *tad-vaśaḥ*—under His subordination; *viśvam*—the whole universe; *puruṣa*—the Personality of Godhead; *rūpeṇa*—by His eternal form; *paripāti*—maintains; *tri-śakti-dhṛk*—the controller of three energies.

TRANSLATION

By His will, I create, Lord Śiva destroys, and He Himself, in His eternal form as the Personality of Godhead, maintains everything. He is the powerful controller of these three energies.

PURPORT

The conception of one without a second is clearly confirmed here. The one is Lord Vāsudeva, and only by His different energies and expansions are different manifestations, both in the material and in the spiritual worlds, maintained. In the material world also, Lord Vāsudeva is everything, as stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.19). *Vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti*: everything is Vāsudeva only. In the Vedic hymns also the same Vāsudeva is held to be supreme. It is said in the *Vedas*, *vāsudevāt paro brahmaṇ na cānyo 'rtho 'sti tattvataḥ*: in fact there is no greater truth than Vāsudeva. And Lord Kṛṣṇa affirms the same truth in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.7). *Mattaḥ parataram nānyat*: "There is nothing above Me [Lord Kṛṣṇa]." So the conception of oneness, as overly stressed by the impersonalist, is also accepted by the personalist devotee of the Lord. The difference is that the impersonalist denies personality in the ultimate issue, whereas the devotee gives more importance to the Personality of Godhead. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* explains this truth in the verse under discussion: Lord Vāsudeva is one without a second, but because He is all-powerful, He can expand Himself as well as display His omnipotencies. The Lord is described here as omnipotent by three energies (*tri-śakti-dhṛk*). So primarily His three energies are internal, marginal and external. This external energy is also displayed in the three modes of goodness, passion and ignorance. Similarly, the internal potency is also displayed in three spiritual modes—*saṁvit*, *sandhinī* and

hlādinī. The marginal potency, or the living entities, is also spiritual (*prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām*), but the living entities are never equal to the Lord. The Lord is *nirasta-sāmya-atīśaya*; in other words, no one is greater than or equal to the Supreme Lord. So the living entities, including even such great personalities as Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva, are all subordinate to the Lord. In the material world also, in His eternal form of Viṣṇu, He maintains and controls all the affairs of the demigods, including Brahmā and Śiva.

TEXT 33

इति तेऽभिहितं तात यथेदमनुपृच्छसि ।
नान्यद्भगवतः किञ्चिद्भाष्यं सदसदात्मकम् ॥३३॥

*iti te 'bhihitam tāta
yathedam anupṛcchasi
nānyad bhagavataḥ kiñcid
bhāvyaṁ sad-asad-ātmakam*

iti—thus; *te*—unto you; *abhihitam*—explained; *tāta*—my dear son; *yathā*—as; *idam*—all these; *anupṛcchasi*—as you have inquired; *na*—never; *anyat*—anything else; *bhagavataḥ*—beyond the Personality of Godhead; *kiñcit*—nothing; *bhāvyaṁ*—to be thought ever; *sat*—cause; *asat*—effect; *ātmakam*—in the matter of.

TRANSLATION

My dear son, whatever you inquired from me I have thus explained unto you, and you must know for certain that whatever there is (either as cause or as effect, both in the material and spiritual worlds) is dependent on the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

PURPORT

The complete cosmic situation, both in the material and in the spiritual manifestations of the energies of the Lord, is working and moving first as the cause and then as the effect. But the original cause is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Effects of the original cause become the causes of other effects, and thus everything, either permanent or temporary, is working as cause and effect. And because the Lord is the primeval cause of all persons and all energies, He is called the cause of all causes, as confirmed in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* as well as in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. The *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.1) affirms:

*iśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ
sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ
sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*

And in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.8) it is said:

*aham sarvasya prabhavo
mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate
iti matvā bhajante mām
budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ*

So the original primeval cause is *vigraha*, the personal, and the impersonal spiritual effulgence, *brahmajyoti*, is also an effect of the Supreme Brahman (*brahmano hi pratiṣṭhāham*), Lord Kṛṣṇa.

TEXT 34

न भारती मेऽङ्ग मृगोपलक्ष्यते
न वै क्वचिन्मे मनसो मृषा गतिः ।
न मे हृषीकाणि पतन्त्यसत्पथे
यन्मे हृदौत्कण्ठयता धृतो हरिः ॥३४॥

na bhārati me 'ṅga mṛṣopalakṣyate
na vai kvacin me manaso mṛṣā gatiḥ
na me hṛṣikāṇi patanty asat-pathe
yan me hṛdautkaṅṭhyavatā dhṛto hariḥ

na—never; bhārati—statements; me—mind; aṅga—O Nārada; mṛṣā—untruth; upalakṣyate—prove to be; na—never; vai—certainly; kvacin—at any time; me—mine; manasaḥ—of the mind; mṛṣā—untruth; gatiḥ—progress; na—nor; me—mine; hṛṣikāṇi—senses; patanti—degrades; asat-pathe—in temporary matter; yat—because; me—mine; hṛdā—heart; autkaṅṭhyavatā—by great earnestness; dhṛtaḥ—caught hold of; hariḥ—the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

TRANSLATION

O Nārada, because I have caught hold of the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari, with great zeal, whatever I say has never proved to have been false. Nor is the progress of my mind ever deterred. Nor are my senses ever degraded by temporary attachment to matter.

PURPORT

Lord Brahmā is the original speaker of Vedic wisdom to Nārada, and Nārada is the distributor of transcendental knowledge all over the world through his various disciples, like Vyāsadeva and others. The followers of Vedic wisdom accept the statements of Brahmāji as gospel truth, and transcendental knowledge is thus being distributed all over the world by the process of disciplic succession from time immemorial, since the beginning of the creation. Lord Brahmā is the perfect liberated living being within the material world, and any sincere student of transcendental knowledge must accept the words and statements of Brahmāji as infallible. The Vedic knowledge is infallible because it comes down directly from the Supreme Lord unto the heart of Brahmā, and since he is the most perfect living being, Brahmāji is always correct to the letter. And this is because Lord Brahmā is a great devotee of the Lord who has earnestly accepted the lotus feet of the Lord as the supreme truth. In the *Brahma-saṁhitā*, which is compiled by Brahmāji, he repeats the aphorism *govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi*: “I am a worshiper of the original Personality of Godhead, Govinda, the primeval Lord.” So whatever he says, whatever he thinks, and whatever he does normally in his mood are to be accepted as truth because of his direct and very intimate connection with Govinda, the primeval Lord. Śrī Govinda, who pleasingly accepts the loving transcendental service of His devotees, gives all protection to the words and actions of His devotees. The Lord declares in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.31), *kaunteya pratijānāhi*: “O son of Kuntī, please declare it.” The Lord asks Arjuna to declare, and why? Because sometimes the declaration of Govinda Himself may seem contradictory to mundane creatures, but the mundaner will never find any contradiction in the words of the Lord’s devotees. The devotees are especially protected by the Lord so that they may remain infallible. Therefore the process of devotional service always begins in the service of the devotee who appears in disciplic succession. The devotees are always liberated, but that does not mean that they are impersonal. The Lord is a person eternally, and the devotee of the Lord is also a person eternally. Because the devotee has his sense organs even at the liberated stage, he is therefore a person always. And because the devotee’s service is accepted by the Lord in full reciprocation, the Lord is also a person in His complete spiritual embodiment. The devotee’s senses, being engaged in the service of the Lord, never go astray under the attraction of false

material enjoyment. The plans of the devotee never go in vain, and all this is due to the faithful attachment of the devotee for the service of the Lord. This is the standard of perfection and liberation. Anyone, beginning from Brahmāji down to the human being, is at once put on the path of liberation simply by his attachment in great earnestness for the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the primeval Lord. The Lord affirms this in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.26):

mām ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa
bhakti-yogena sevate
sa guṇān samatīyaitān
brahma-bhūyāya kalpate

Anyone, therefore, who is earnestly serious in heart and soul about being in intimate touch with the Personality of Godhead in the relationship of transcendental loving service will always be infallible in words and action. The reason is that the Supreme Lord is Absolute Truth, and anything earnestly dovetailed with the Absolute Truth attains the same transcendental quality. On the other hand, any amount of mental speculation on the strength of material science and knowledge without any bona fide touch with the Absolute Truth is sure to be a mundane untruth and failure, simply due to not being in touch with the Absolute Truth. Such godless, unfaithful words and actions, however materially enriched, are never to be trusted. That is the purport of this important verse. A grain of devotion is more valuable than tons of faithlessness.

TEXT 35

सोऽहं समाश्रयमयस्तपोमयः
प्रजापतीनामभिवन्दितः पतिः ।
आस्थाय योगं निपुणं समाहित-
स्तं नाध्यगच्छं यत आत्मसम्भवः ॥३५॥

so 'ham samāmnāyamayas tapomayah
prajāpatīnām abhivanditah patih
āsthāya yogam nipuṇam samāhitah
tam nādhyagaccham yata ātma-sambhavaḥ

saḥ aham—myself (the great Brahmā); samāmnāya-mayah—in the chain of disciplic succession of Vedic wisdom; tapaḥ-mayah—successfully having undergone all austerities; prajāpatīnām—of all the forefathers of living entities; abhivanditah—worshipable; patih—master; āsthāya—successfully practiced; yogam—mystic powers; nipuṇam—very expert; samāhitah—self-realized; tam—the Supreme Lord; na—did not; adhyagaccham—properly understood; yataḥ—from whom; ātma—self; sambhavaḥ—generated.

TRANSLATION

Although I am known as the great Brahmā, perfect in the disciplic succession of Vedic wisdom, and although I have undergone all austerities and am an expert in mystic powers and self-realization, and although I am recognized as such by the great forefathers of the living entities, who offer me respectful obeisances, still I cannot understand Him, the Lord, the very source of my birth.

(continued in next issue)



Every Town and Village

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



Devotees Spread Aloha Spirit in Honolulu

Honolulu, Hawaii—Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees recently took part in the gala floral parade celebrating Hawaii's Aloha Festival. In tune with the festival's theme ("Music, the International Language"), they chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by traditional Indian instruments, as they rode in the three-mile parade on their float.

The Hare Kṛṣṇa float won second prize among ninety-five entries in the parade, which was televised statewide and seen by nearly half a million people. Devotees had worked day and night for a week to build the float and decorate it with red and white carnations and Hawaiian foliage and wildflowers, so that it resembled a garden in Kṛṣṇa's ideal forest abode, Vṛndāvana.

At the front of the float danced figures of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda, who began the movement of congregational Hare Kṛṣṇa chanting five hundred years ago in Bengal. Behind them, brightly dressed devotees enacted pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Devotees in the center of the float sang Hare Kṛṣṇa and played musical instruments. And atop the float, on a silk-cushioned, seven-petaled lotus, sat a life-size figure of Śrīla Prabhupāda, who first brought Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the West. Two dozen devotees pulled the float along the parade route with ropes.

Narahari dāsa, president of Honolulu's Hare Kṛṣṇa center, explained the meaning of the Aloha Festival and the devotees' participation in it: "As everyone knows, Hawaii is the Aloha State. In Hawaiian

vernacular, this word *aloha* means 'love.' When one has great love and friendship for all mankind, he is said to have the 'aloha spirit.' The Aloha Festival celebrates this spirit by bringing together for a week of festivities the many ethnic groups that make up Hawaii's population. As devotees of Kṛṣṇa we felt right at home taking part, because we know that the real aloha spirit is realized when people from all walks of life join together in glorifying God. This is the very basis of the *saṅkīrtana* movement, the movement of congregational chanting of the holy names of God."

Ecuador's National Police Applaud Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

Quito, Ecuador—Ālanātha Swami, representing the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), recently ended a week-long lecture series on the principles of spiritual life, given before the entire police force and police training crew of this Ecuadorian capital city.

The lectures, held at the request of Jaime Torán Pabón, Chief of Police Education, covered such topics as the value of religious principles in civic activity and practical programs for implementing moral and spiritual training on a national scale.

In a certificate of appreciation offered

to ISKCON at the end of the series, Chief Pabón wrote, "Ālanātha Swami helped us better understand the meaning of yoga and the Kṛṣṇa religion and their great utility for social development. Such information should be known by all police officials if they are to best fulfill their calling. I wish to publicly applaud the devotees in general for their selfless spirit and Ālanātha Swami in particular for his insightful lectures."

Similar acclaim came from Ruben Poncoca, Chief of Transit Police, and Galo E. Granja, head of the military police divisions in Quito.

In his summary remarks before the police department Ālanātha Swami said, "Crime is not a phenomenon limited to fixed national or social circumstances. Crime pervades every culture where God consciousness is not at the center. Our purpose is to remind people that crime can never be decreased without the implementation of positive spiritual education."

During the lecture series, Ālanātha Swami describes, police officials were principally interested in devotional practices that supplanted drug use and inspired young people to a more moral, God-centered life. "There is no secret," he says. "Kṛṣṇa consciousness means leading a clean, healthy life based on knowledge of one's relationship with God. Once that relationship is established, degrading material habits naturally fall away."

ISKCON has functioned in Ecuador for the last three years. Projects of the Society there include a temple and restaurant in downtown Quito.

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 Nārāyaṇa		
December 5	December 18	December 25
Disappearance of Śrīla Sāraṅga Ṭhākura.	Mokṣadhī Ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).	Disappearance of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.
January 2	January 4	January 7
Unmīlinī Mahādvādaśī (fasting from grains and beans). Disappearance of Śrīla Devānanda Paṇḍita.	Disappearance of Śrīla Uddharaṇa Datta Ṭhākura and Śrīla Maheśa Paṇḍita.	Appearance of Śrīla Locanadāsa Ṭhākura.
January 9	January 16	January 17
Disappearance of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and Śrīla Jagadīśa Paṇḍita.	Putradā Ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).	Appearance of Śrīla Jagadīśa Paṇḍita.

INITIATION

(continued from page 7)

of trying to apply the Vaiṣṇava *tilaka* to their foreheads, Prabhupāda had patiently guided his finger up their foreheads, making a neat, narrow "V."

He sat before the mound of earth, looking out at his congregation. They appeared not much different from any other group of young hippies from the Lower East Side who might have assembled at any number of happenings—spiritual, cultural, musical, or whatever. Some were just checking out a new scene. Some were deeply devoted to the Swami. But everyone was curious. He had requested them to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* softly throughout the ceremony, and the chanting had now become a continuous drone, accompanying his mysterious movements as head priest of the Vedic rite.

He began by lighting a dozen sticks of incense. Then he performed purification with water. Taking a spoon in his left hand, he put three drops of water from a goblet into his right and sipped the water. He repeated the procedure three times. The fourth time he did not sip but flicked the water onto the floor behind him. He then passed the spoon and goblet around for the initiates, who tried to copy what they had seen. When some of them placed the water in the wrong hand or sipped in the wrong way, Swamiji patiently corrected them.

"Now," he said, "repeat after me." And he had them repeat, one word at a time, a Vedic *mantra* of purification:

*om apavitraḥ pavitra vā
sarvāvasthām gato 'pi vā
yaḥ smaret puṇḍarikākṣaṁ
sa bāhyābhyan taraḥ śuciḥ
śrī-viṣṇuḥ śrī-viṣṇuḥ śrī-viṣṇuḥ*

The initiates tried falteringly to follow his pronunciation of the words, which they had never heard before. Then he gave the translation: "Unpurified or purified, or even having passed through all situations, one who remembers the lotus-eyed Supreme Personality of Godhead is cleansed within and without." Three times he repeated the sipping of water, the drone of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* filling the room as the goblet passed from initiate to initiate and back again to him, and three times he led the chanting of the *mantra*: *om apavitraḥ* . . . Then he raised a hand, and as the buzzing of the chanting trailed off into silence, he began his lecture.

After the lecture, he asked the devotees one by one to hand him their beads, and he began chanting on them—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma,

Hare Hare. The sound of everyone chanting filled the room. After finishing one strand, he would summon the owner of the beads and hold the beads up while demonstrating how to chant. Then he would announce the initiate's spiritual name, and the disciple would take back the beads, bow to the floor, and recite:

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya
kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-
svāmin iti nāmine*

**As the flames
began to die and the
smoke thickened,
a few initiates got up
and ran coughing
to the other room,
and the guests
retreated into the
hallway.**

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, having taken shelter at His lotus feet." There were eleven initiates and so eleven sets of beads, and the chanting lasted for over an hour. Prabhupāda gave each boy a strand of neck beads, which he said were like dog collars, identifying the devotee as Kṛṣṇa's dog.

After Wally received his beads and his new name (Umāpati), he returned to his place beside Howard and said, "That was wonderful. Getting your beads is wonderful." In turn, each initiate received his beads and his spiritual name. Howard became Hayagrīva, Wally became Umāpati, Bill became Ravindra Svarūpa, Carl became Karlāpati, James became Jagannātha, Mike became Mukunda, Jan became Janakī, Roy became Rāya Rāma, and Stanley became Stryadhīṣa. Another Stanley, a Brooklyn boy with a job, and Janos, a college student from Montreal, both of whom had rather peripheral relationships with the Swami, appeared that night and took initiation with the rest—receiving the names Satyavrata and Janārdana.

Then Swamiji began the sacrifice by sprinkling the colored dyes across the

mound of earth before him. With fixed attention his congregation watched each mysterious move, as he picked up the twigs and wooden splinters, dipped them into clarified butter, lit them in a candle flame, and built a small fire in the center of the mound. He mixed sesame seeds, barley, and clarified butter in a bowl and then passed the mixture around. Each new disciple took a handful of the mixture to offer into the fire. He then began to recite Sanskrit prayers, asking everyone please to repeat them, each prayer ending with the responsive chanting of the word "svāhā" three times. And with *svāhā* the initiates would toss some of the sesame-barley mixture into the fire. Swamiji kept pouring butter, piling up wood, and chanting more prayers, until the mound was blazing. The prayers kept coming and the butter kept pouring and the fire got larger and the room got hotter.

After fifteen or twenty minutes, he asked each of the initiates to place a banana in the fire. With eleven bananas heaped on the fire, the flames began to die, and the smoke thickened. A few of the initiates got up and ran coughing into the other room, and the guests retreated into the hallway. But Swamiji went on pouring the remaining butter and seeds into the fire. "This kind of smoke does not disturb," he said. "Other smoke disturbs, but this kind of smoke does not." Even though everyone's eyes were watering with irritation, he asked that the windows remain closed. So most of the smoke was contained within the apartment, and no neighbors complained.

Swamiji smiled broadly, rose from his seat before the sacrificial fire, the blazing tongue of Viṣṇu, and began clapping his hands and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Placing one foot before the other and swaying from side to side, he began to dance before the fire. His disciples joined him in dancing and chanting, and the smoke abated. He had each disciple touch his beads to the feet of Lord Caitanya in the Pañca-tattva picture on the table, and finally he allowed the windows opened. As the ceremony was finished and the air in the apartment was clearing, Swamiji began to laugh: "There was so much smoke I thought they might have to call the fire brigade."

Prabhupāda was happy. He arranged that *prasādam* be distributed to all the devotees and guests. The fire, the prayers, the vows, and everyone chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa had all created an auspicious atmosphere. Things were going forward. Now there were initiated devotees in the Western world. Finally most of the disciples went home to their apartments, leaving their spiritual master to clean up after the initiation ceremony.

(To be continued)

How I Came

(continued from page 14)

chanting *sūtras*, cleaning, and sitting in *zazen* (focusing the mind on the nothingness that is supposed to underlie all existence and activity).

I took to the life seriously, and the monks readily accepted me. After a while I was invited to move into their quarters, and finally the teacher agreed to ordain me a monk. I appreciated the discipline and orderliness of their humble life, with its emphasis on cleanliness and neatness, and in the natural, peaceful atmosphere of the charming wooden temple set amongst forested hills and paddy fields I had the feeling of getting to the roots of the Zen tradition.

"When the mind halts, one has achieved enlightenment." Now I was on the path toward stilling the mad mind. Every day I would battle with it, counting my breaths or concentrating on the word *mu* ("none"). The lofty Bodhisattva concept inspired me. Instead of seeking only his own release from birth and death, the Bodhisattva vows to enlighten all other beings. Transcending the limits of material personality, he appears throughout the material world in suitable forms to rescue suffering beings from illusion and misery. Aspiring to attain this state, I struggled with the abominably dry practice, striving to quell the ceaseless agitation of my mind. We had gruelling week-long meditation *sesshins*, in which we would sit for many hours a day in the oppressive summer heat and the piercing cold of mid-December. Because there was no heating and our quarters were made of lattice and paper, January and February were especially austere. Sometimes as we sat we would feel earth tremors. The buildings would shake, and the warning bells in the eaves would jingle. "This is a test of my *samādhi*," I would think, and I would try harder to blot out the troublesome mind. Still, it did not halt.

After a few months, doubts began to crowd in. It was too obvious that the other monks were not at all liberated from material attachments. They ate meat and fish outside the temple's dining hall, they smoked, and from time to time they would return from the town drunk and with bite marks on their necks from amorous pastimes. Their interest was professional; they had to put in two years at a training hall before they could take over the temples of their parents for a livelihood. The teachers were more dignified, but they also ate meat and fish and were partial to hot rice wine. They introduced me to various aspects of refined Japanese social life that seemed to have little to do with liberation from birth and death and were quite incongruous with Zen teachings.

The most serious students appeared to be the Westerners who visited the temple from time to time. Without exception, either they were baffled by the contradictions they saw in the behavior of the monks, or else they stayed and came to a stickier end. One American boy returned home after a week-long meditation session at the temple and stabbed himself. Another young man I had known at the Zen group in London despaired of attaining enlightenment, went to a nearby barn, and hanged himself in a meditation posture. An American lady became deranged and

Avalokiteśvara, the Bodhisattva of compassionate wisdom, taught concentration on the sound of one's own voice rather than silent meditation.

had to return to America.

I persevered. I was determined to attain awakening and could see no better situation for working on it, although I had doubts about the degree of attainment of my teacher and about Zen philosophy itself. I read the *Lotus Sūtra* and the *Surāṅgama Sūtra* and found that two of the most important personages in the Buddhist hierarchy, namely the Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Mañjuśrī, both recommended concentration on sound rather than silent meditation. Avalokiteśvara, the Bodhisattva of compassionate wisdom, particularly prescribed concentration on the sound of one's own voice. This started my interest in chanting.

I soon read *The Way of a Pilgrim*, a book that relates how a Russian peasant reached deep absorption and spiritual bliss by ceaselessly chanting the name of Jesus. The book moved and impressed me. My teacher took me to visit a neighboring Christian nunnery, and I was rather ashamed of the contrast between our rigid formality and their simple, joyful spontaneity.

One of the other Western students and I began discussing, "If all religions are equivalent to one another, what is the equivalent in Zen to love of God?" At first I thought the question would be easy to

answer, but then I saw that there was no equivalent. Zen denies the reality of personal identity, both in the individual and in the Absolute. So in Zen it is not possible for love of God to be the ultimate stage, for neither the individual nor God is seen as having a real existence. Here was a problem. Either the personal feature of the Absolute was an inferior concept, which Zen transcends, or else the philosophy and practice of Zen were incomplete.

I did not understand such questions at the time, nor did the other monks. "*Zen wo zenzen wakarimazen*," they would quip ("I don't understand Zen at all"). They gradually lost patience with my efforts to abstain from eating meat and drinking liquor. Such abstinence was tolerable in the temple but too troublesome when supporters entertained us in their houses. "Why don't you drink whiskey with the rest of us?" demanded my immediate superior at one stop for refreshment. "It's just egotism. That's what it is. Everyone agrees." I consulted my teacher, and he found a small hut in the mountains where I could practice solitary Zen.

The retreat was the last building on a mountain path. Above me were forested hills, and the only sounds were the plaintive calls of Japanese nightingales and the sweet trickling of rivulets running down toward the valley. So I began a new phase in the battle to still my turbulent mind. All day long I concentrated on the sounds of bells, simple flutes, and my own chanting. (I could no longer bear to sit and concentrate on nothingness. It had been driving me crazy.)

But I fared even worse in the peace and tranquility of the mountains than in the confusion of the temple. After two or three days of austerity I would go on a binge of eating, sexual desires became troublesome after being absent for more than a year, and I began to meditate on my family. It was plain that I was not becoming free from material attachments, despite every effort to do so.

Then I went to visit a fellow Zen student from London who was staying with a friend in Kyoto. This friend was engaged to marry the daughter of a priest of the Buddhist Pure Land sect, and while waiting in the house I read some books the priest had left there. The real purpose of Gautama Buddha's appearance, these books explained, was to preach the chanting of the name of the compassionate Buddha Amitabha. The books quoted authorities such as Vasubandhu and Nagarjuna, recognized patriarchs in the Zen line, who prescribed surrender to the Other Power and chanting of the name of Amitabha Buddha as the way of liberation. Enlightenment by one's own efforts, they said, is difficult, like traveling on land, whereas reaching

perfection by surrendering to the Other Power and the holy name is easy, like traveling on water.

It all tied in! The same emphasis on sound and chanting. The same conviction that silent meditation was not practical. After a kindly priest instructed me in chanting the name of the compassionate Amitabha Buddha, I began the continuous chanting of *nama amida bu* ("obeisances to Amitabha Buddha"). I longed for the mercy and realization that would free me from the miseries imposed by the mind. I no longer relied on my own ability to reach enlightenment. I needed help.

On the northern side of Japan there are many followers of this way, including a number of people who were supposed to have experienced a complete change of heart by deep faith in the holy name. I made a barefoot pilgrimage in my monk's dress, chanting and searching for someone who could show me the way to realization. Sometimes at night I would sleep leaned against my backpack, with only my rain cape and broad bamboo hat to serve as shelter against the wind and rain. In the morning I would sit on the seashore in meditation, the rain pattering on my hat and cape and smoothing the surf before me. But nothing could soothe the raging of my mind. Who could have been more lonely and miserable? I despaired of finding happiness in materialistic life, yet I could find no transcendental alternative.

Frustrated and disappointed, I returned to London and tried to pick up the relationships I had left two years before. But there was no point of contact. I was convinced that the aims of these people I had known were futile, but I had nothing to offer them. I did not want to spend my days with people who had no inner life, but I had no real life of my own.

I was becoming desperate. I chanted the names of Jesus and Buddha and prayed often—but to whom? I was not sure whether the Absolute was a person, and if so, who? So I just prayed, "Please! Please!"

I saw that the skepticism with which I had grown up had been crippling my ability to trust in a transcendental life. So I put my trust in the unknown supreme, once again cut loose from my former ties, and went to the community of a self-styled Buddha who was preaching love and trust. But I found the Buddha making passes at the wife of one of his followers, and once again I was on the road. This had been my last hope. Now I was finally exhausted.

In a cheap boarding house near Victoria Station in London, I kneeled by a broken bed and for the first time acknowledged my complete helplessness. "My dear Lord," I prayed, "I don't know who You are or what Your name is or anything about You. I am sure You are there, but I

don't know how to find You. I cannot live like this for many days more." It was a prayer of utter distress and helplessness, like that of a baby crying for its mother to pick it up.

The next morning I wanted to make a phone call, but I couldn't find a phone box. I walked a long way before finding a row of them, all full. While I was waiting, a Hare Kṛṣṇa devotee came over from a house on the other side of the street. He wanted to make a call too. "Go ahead," I told him. "I'm not in a hurry."

As he tried to get through, we talked. "Where have you been?" he asked.

I chanted the names of Jesus and Buddha and prayed often— but to whom? I was not sure whether the Absolute was a person.

"In Japan," I told him. "I was studying Buddhism."

"Whew! That must have been dry."

I was surprised he knew. "Well, yes, it was."

I told him that I was looking for a spiritual master and that I wanted to find a community or group who were chanting the holy name.

"Why don't you come back with me," suggested my new friend. "That's what we're doing."

He made his call, and we went to the apartment where the devotees were staying. He told me that he was initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda and that his name was Jagajīvana dāsa. "This is the *Bhagavad-gītā*," he offered, showing me a book. "It gives us a lot of information about the soul and reincarnation. Do you believe in reincarnation?"

"Yes. Buddhists don't accept the existence of the soul, though. They say there is no real self. It's just illusory."

"Well, if there's no real self, what is it that reincarnates, and what stops your body from decaying until the time of death?"

"I don't know. Buddhists say you can't really understand that until you have gained enlightenment."

"Are you enlightened?" he asked.

"No," I said. "I'm not."

"Do you know anyone who is?"

"I don't think so."

"Do you think there is anyone who is enlightened?"

"I'm not sure. I think there may be one or two people. I don't really know where, though."

"How can you become spiritually realized if you don't have a teacher who is realized?"

"I don't know. It's a difficult problem. Is your teacher self-realized?"

"Oh, yes," Jagajīvana said confidently. "Śrīla Prabhupāda is a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa."

"Who is Kṛṣṇa, really?" I asked.

Jagajīvana happily began to tell me about Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord. He told me of Kṛṣṇa's personal form, qualities, and pastimes and read me a story about Kṛṣṇa's cowherd boyfriends helping to dress Kṛṣṇa in the morning. While one of Kṛṣṇa's friends was tying on Kṛṣṇa's ankle bells, Kṛṣṇa teased him, out of transcendental love. Mother Yaśodā scolded Kṛṣṇa, but the friend said he liked being teased by Kṛṣṇa.

The story was intimate and simple. "This is a miracle," I thought. "Last night was the first time I completely put my trust in the Lord, and already He is answering my prayer. This may be the end of my search. Perhaps Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of Life who showed Himself to me in Africa! I neglected Him for so long, and now that I've turned to Him He is showing Himself again. If only I can become self-realized by chanting Kṛṣṇa's name!"

A beautiful photograph fascinated me. A group of robed young men and women with vertical lines of *tilaka* on their foreheads were chanting and dancing. I gazed and gazed at their sweet expressions of joyful absorption and prayed that I could become like them.

Jagajīvana took me to his temple, and after three days of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, eating *prasādam* (food offered to Kṛṣṇa), and working with the devotees, I felt greatly relieved of my anxiety. "I don't care what my family and friends think," I told Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, the presiding form of Kṛṣṇa the devotees worshiped in the temple, "I want to love You and serve You. Please don't let me go."

The life of the devotees was practical and full of spiritual potency. I reveled in the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa and the classes, and I appreciated the *prasādam*. Of course some parts of the teaching were still difficult to accept, but I was convinced that Kṛṣṇa was the Lord of my life and that He would look after me. It would be a struggle, painful at times, but I would gradually become Kṛṣṇa conscious. It would just be a matter of time.



Anne Schaufuss

Model Devotee

She had money, glamor, exciting work, admiring friends—
but she gave it all up for Kṛṣṇa.

by YOGEŚVARA DĀSA

Anne Schaufuss has lived what most women can hardly dream. Born of an illustrious Dutch stage family, she entered the Danish Royal Ballet at age six and performed during the next ten years, until she grew too tall (5'11" by age sixteen). Not one to be easily discouraged, she went on to become Miss Denmark of 1965 and set out soon after to earn a living. Within six months her picture appeared on the cover of *Vogue* magazine, and that launched her career as one of Europe's most sought-after fashion models.

A million dollars and three dozen magazine covers later, Anne had wealth, fame, and apartments in most European capital cities. Anne Schaufuss had everything. Except, maybe, happiness. But that posed no problem. In her world if you didn't have something, you sent out for it.

The young woman sitting before me now wears no makeup or jewelry. Her dress is a single piece of embroidered cotton, nine yards long, wrapped around the waist and brought over the head. It's a far cry from the dreamlike creations of

the world's finest designers, but since becoming a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Anne prefers the reserved appearance that a *sārī* offers.

"Women who live for the next new dress," she says, "do not realize that true beauty lies in knowledge of the self as soul and not body. As a model I had admiring friends, exciting work, money, but I always felt uncomfortable with the superficiality of that sort of life."

In 1973, while flying from one modeling assignment to another, Anne met a young

woman in Orly airport, Paris. She told Anne that she came from the Kṛṣṇa temple, where everyone practiced *bhakti-yoga*, devotional service to God.

"I was familiar with *yoga* exercises," Anne explains, "and sensed that *yoga* led to a superior kind of life, but I told the devotee it wasn't really for me, since I didn't have the time and it didn't seem to go along with my work. She explained that *bhakti-yoga* was very simple and that I could do it anywhere, anytime. She gave me a book and the address of the Paris temple, and I promised to visit."

Two months later, she did. "There was a class on *Bhagavad-gītā* going on, so I sat down with thirty or so other guests and listened to Bhagavān Goswami speak about how conflict arises from people falsely identifying themselves with their bodies: white, black, man, woman, rich, poor. The temple was located in a very elegant section of Paris, but the devotees appeared humble and unpretentious. Their clothes were simple, and everyone sat on the floor.

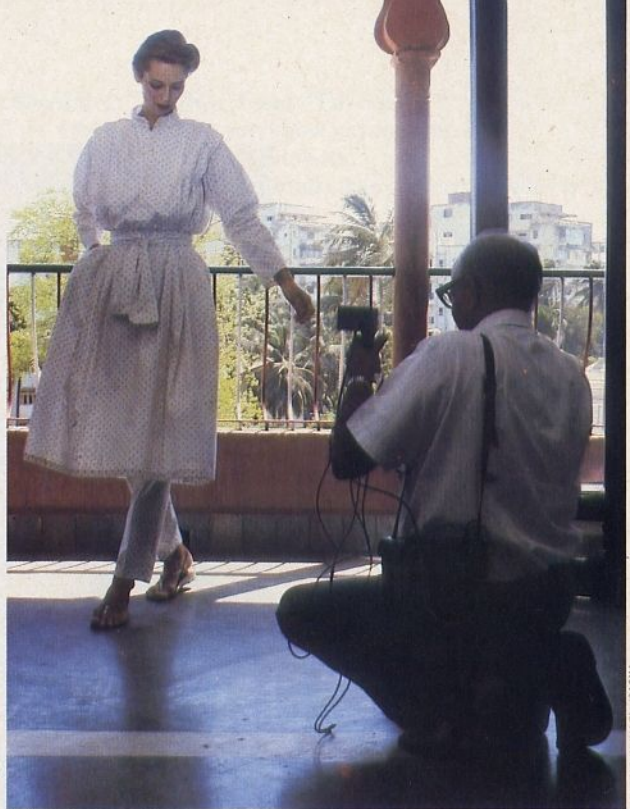
"After the class I went to Bhagavān Goswami and told him I wanted to do *yoga*. 'All you have to do is chant Hare Kṛṣṇa,' he said. He explained that the name of God is not different from God and that chanting puts one in direct contact with God through His holy name. 'Is that all I have to do?' I said. Actually, I wasn't sure how that was *yoga*, but I saw no reason not to try."

Anne chanted whenever she had a few minutes: in airplanes, in hotel rooms, between photo sessions. "Chanting helped me give up bad habits. It was amazing, especially since I wasn't trying very hard. I had been smoking since age thirteen, for example. When I started chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, I would pick up a cigarette and tell myself, 'I'm going to smoke, but first I'm going to chant one round on my beads.' After one round I would think, 'No, I'm going to chant two rounds, then smoke.' By the time I finished two rounds of chanting beads, I felt so good I didn't need the cigarette any more."

Other changes took place for her as well. "In the beginning I chanted with a playful attitude, but after a while I discovered that the chanting had changed my vision of things. I was no longer impressed by a ride in a Rolls Royce or by seeing my picture on a magazine cover. Socializing with nondevotees became distasteful. Instead of going to parties, I would visit the Kṛṣṇa temple in different countries and bring flowers for the altar. I liked the devotees' company and always felt at ease around them."

As she continued to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and study the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Anne's dedication to Kṛṣṇa consciousness grew. It

Whether on assignment (in Bombay, at right) or at home with devotees (in Paris, below, during an interview for *Paris-Match*), Sātārūpa performs her various duties, both professional and devotional, for the pleasure of Lord Kṛṣṇa. (*Paris-Match* photo, bottom, by Jean Claude Sauer.)



a

PHOTO: VIDYANANDA DAS



b

PHOTO: YOGESVARA DAS

took time, however, for her to reconcile work and spiritual conviction. Parking herself under a table between modeling sessions to chant the daily rounds of beads didn't win much applause from her agency. Preaching detachment from sex and drugs to the other models didn't go over very big either.

"I used to bring girlfriends to the temple, but all it came to was rumors that my involvement with Kṛṣṇa consciousness was just a publicity stunt. Finally one day I picked up the phone, called my agent, and told him to cancel all my bookings because I had decided to move into the temple."

Anne swore off modeling for three years. "I did menial jobs. I washed the temple floor and made flower garlands for the altar. Then one day I cooked and everyone





PHOTO: MUKALYADANA DASA

liked it, so for a whole year I cooked for 110 devotees.”

Like the other devotees in the temple, Anne followed the strict routine of daily devotional activity. Each day she rose at 4:00 a.m. to bathe and take part in morning ceremonies and classes. Then she chanted for an hour and a half on her beads. The entire community took breakfast together at 8:30, and then each went off to his or her service for the day. For several months Anne worked intensely on translating the *Bhagavad-gītā* into Danish and took part in Hare Kṛṣṇa festivals. She even organized a soiree at a fashion photographer's studio. On her guest list were friends from the modeling agency, members of the press, and acquaintances from Paris society. For the event devotees prepared a banquet of exotic vegetarian dishes, and devotee musicians played songs on classical Indian instruments. The next day articles started appearing in the press across Europe: “Cover Girl Chooses Krishna.”

a



PHOTO: MUKALYADANA DASA

In 1974 Anne traveled to India with the Paris devotees for an annual pilgrimage. She visited Vṛndāvana, where Lord Kṛṣṇa had performed His pastimes five thousand years ago, and she saw Mayapur in West Bengal, the birthplace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who had inaugurated the congregational chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa as the most sublime method for reviving love for God in the present age.

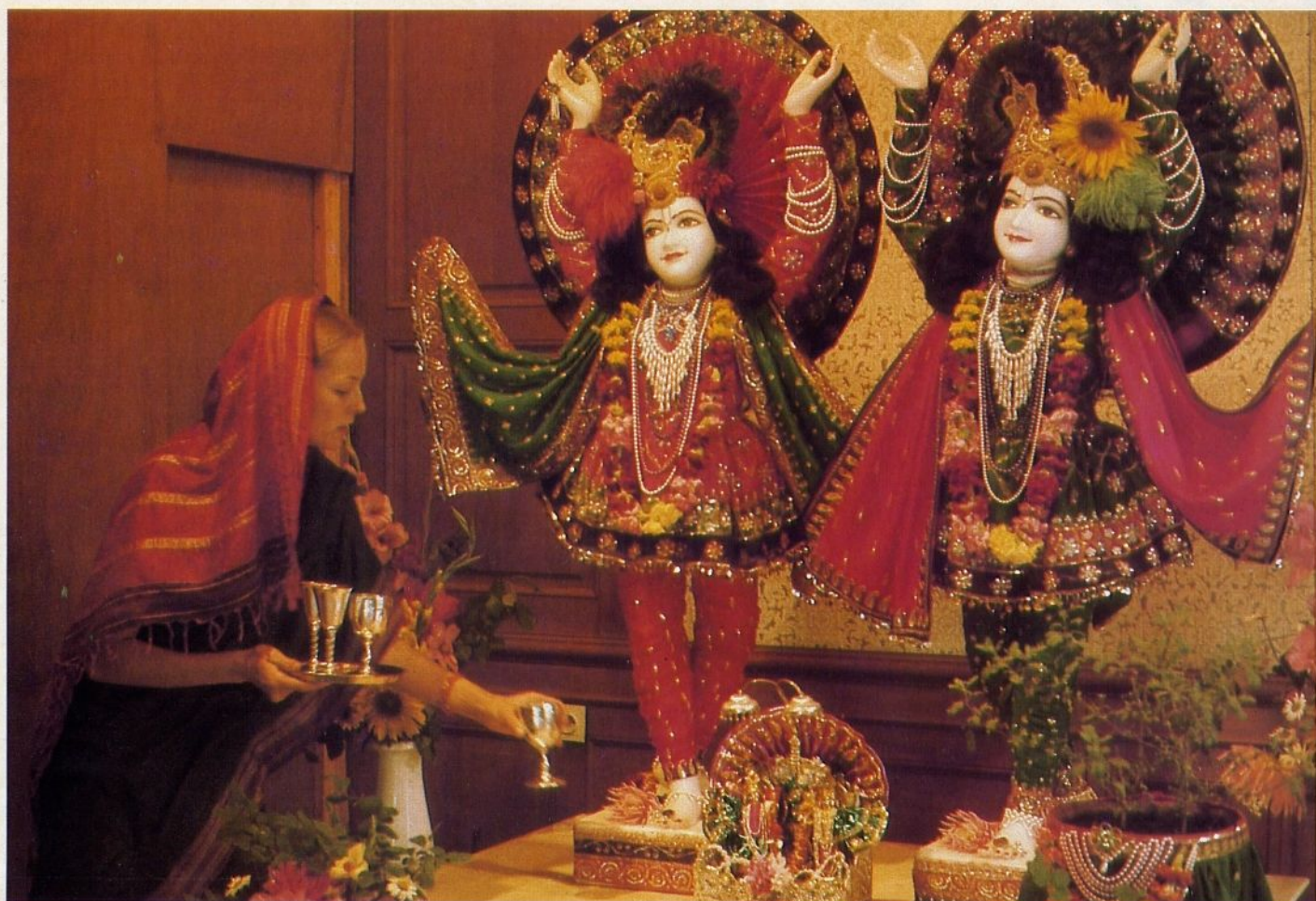
b

When she got back, Anne requested initiation. She is now Sātarūpa-devī dāsī, a disciple of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. At initiation she vowed to abandon all intoxicants, meat-eating, gambling, and sex outside of marriage, and to chant sixteen rounds of beads daily. She strictly follows these principles despite constant travel, for she has resumed modeling—but with a difference. Her purpose now is to help pay for the construction of a school for devotee children.

“To help build the school I have to go where the work is and not be afraid of falling down into bad habits again. I try to remember my spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who came alone to the West without any money or friends to spread love of Kṛṣṇa, and that gives me inspiration.”

In her modeling, Sātarūpa says, she finds practical illustrations of Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy. “Once I was modeling four million dollars worth of diamonds. The owners, the security guards, the studio people, everyone was worried and nervous

At the Hare Kṛṣṇa farm in Valencay, France, Sātarūpa tends to simple services like cooking, housework, gardening, and interior decoration. Above, she shows children from the farm's elementary school how to string newly picked flowers into garlands to offer to Lord Kṛṣṇa.



a PHOTO: MURALIYANDANA DASA

that someone might try to steal them. I had to stay in my seat the whole time and not move about the studio while wearing the stones. The diamonds were very beautiful, but what a waste of money and what a terrible position the people who like to wear them must be in, constantly in danger of being robbed and killed just for wearing such things. Later I was thinking, We may have such opulence in this life, but just like those diamonds I wore and then finally had to give back, everything that's given to us in this material world has to be given back when we leave. It's all temporary. I model Dior gowns, Sherrer haute couture, St. Laurent originals, but everything I wear I have to give back. In this world we're allowed to use Kṛṣṇa's energy for a little while, like this body, but that too will grow old, and then we have to give it up."

When modeling, Sātarūpa refuses furs, cigarettes, and alcohol. This limits her assignments but opens a lot of discussions. "People are curious about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. All they know is what they read in the papers, but when you talk with them they get very interested and start thinking about it seriously.

"I encourage them to just try chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. They have nothing to lose and everything to gain. It doesn't cost anything, but it brings satisfaction, whether

Duties in the temple, such as preparing Kṛṣṇa's altar (above and at right), occupy much of Sātarūpa's time when she is not on assignment. "The worship in the temple," she says, "helps me focus my attention on Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Person." In Paris (opposite) she joins devotees in *saṅkīrtana*, congregational chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*.

you're a success or a failure materially. Actually, material success is failure, because it never brings satisfaction."

When she has time to visit the Kṛṣṇa conscious farm in France, Sātarūpa teaches the children stories from the Vedic scriptures and cooks vegetables in cream sauce. She also takes time to answer letters from friends, famous and obscure, who want to know whether what they read in the fashion magazines is true, that she really has found happiness in serving Lord Kṛṣṇa.

"It doesn't matter how much success you have if you don't have Kṛṣṇa," she says. "That's a fact. Without Kṛṣṇa, just headaches. There's a young girl, Barbara, who travels with me. She is very pretty and wanted to become a model. So I have her meet all these models, eminently successful people, and afterward she just shakes her head. 'They're not happy!' she says. 'They're in total anxiety!' She's beginning to realize that there's less to glamor



b PHOTO: MURALIYANDANA DASA

than what most people think. If you become rich, you need dogs and locks. Become a model and spend your time worrying about being on next month's cover or waking up with a wrinkle. But become Kṛṣṇa's devotee, and your life becomes sublime."



REAL PLEASURE

(continued from page 4)

Nixon. You cannot say that because you are an American, you are therefore Mr. Nixon. That you cannot say. Similarly you, I, and every one of us are Brahman, but that does not mean we are Parabrahman. Parabrahman is Kṛṣṇa.

Īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ. *Īśvaraḥ* means “controller.” Every one of us is a controller to some extent. Somebody is controlling his family, somebody is controlling his office, somebody is controlling his business, somebody is controlling his disciples. And somebody is controlling his dog. If one hasn’t anything else to control, one keeps a pet dog or a pet cat to control. Everyone wants to be a controller. That’s a fact. But the supreme controller is Kṛṣṇa. Here in this material world the so-called controller is controlled by somebody else. I may control my disciples, but I am controlled by somebody else, my spiritual master. Therefore, nobody in this material world can say, “I am the supreme, absolute controller.” No. But when you find a controller who is not controlled by anyone else, that is God, that is Kṛṣṇa.

So, this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is scientific, authorized, and understandable by reasonable men. If you kindly take interest in this movement, you will be benefited. Your life will be successful; the aim of your life will be achieved. That is a fact. Try to read our literature; we have many books. You can come and see how our students are advancing in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You can try to learn from them by association. If one wants to become a mechanic, he enters a factory and associates with the mechanics, and gradually he also becomes a mechanic. Similarly, we are opening these centers just to give everyone an opportunity to learn how to go home, back to Godhead. That is our mission.

This movement is scientific and authorized because we are receiving knowledge directly from Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in the form of *Bhagavad-gītā*, and we are presenting *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is, without nonsensical comments. Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. We are saying the same thing, that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, “Become

My devotee. Always think of Me. Worship Me. Offer your obeisances unto Me.” We are teaching all people to think of Kṛṣṇa always by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. By chanting this Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, you will always think of Kṛṣṇa.

So our methods are very simple. We don’t manufacture any new method. Why create a new method? The old method is perfect, authorized, and accepted by great *ācāryas* [exemplary spiritual teachers]. And people are actually benefiting from Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So why should we manufacture something new? Anything we manufacture must be imperfect, because we are imperfect. We should simply take up the perfect method; then we shall become perfect. That is our process.

The teachings of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Perfect, are there in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and we are preaching the same philosophy throughout the world. Many people are accepting these teachings, and I wish that all of you present here will kindly accept this philosophy, return to the abode of Kṛṣṇa, and in this way make your life successful. Thank you very much. 🌸

LONGINGS

(continued from page 11)

There are two categories of selves. All selves are eternal and of the nature of pure cognition and bliss, but one category contains numberless selves, and the other category contains one self alone. The one self is called the supreme self because it completely sustains the many. The one is infinite and self-sufficient; the many are infinitesimal and dependent. (You may call the many infinitesimal selves “souls” and the one infinite self “God,” but I have avoided these terms because speculative philosophy and theology have burdened them with such misinformation, controversy, and a general bad name that I would rather start here with a verbal clean slate.) You may compare the supreme self to the sun and the subordinate selves to the atomic particles of sunshine; so we can speak of the one supreme self as the energetic and of the multitudinous subordinate selves as the energy. Just as the atoms of sunshine are a part of the sun, though removed from it, so the individual selves are separated particles of the supreme self, and accordingly they are qualitatively identical with the supreme, even though they are quantitatively minute. Each fragmental self possesses a tiny allotment of all the qualities of the complete self.

The milieu in which the supreme self eternally dwells with the subordinate selves is called the spiritual, or internal,

energy. In that atmosphere, the supreme self is the unwavering object of love for the subordinate selves because He is supremely attractive—for this reason, He is called “Kṛṣṇa” (“the all-attractive one”). Each act of the subordinate selves expresses their uninterrupted, ever-increasing love for Kṛṣṇa, who returns His own feelings in the same way. Thus each self is fully satisfied because he is fully absorbed in an eternal loving relationship with the supremely lovable person, the source of all beauty. Kṛṣṇa returns the love of the subordinate selves without reservation, in a relationship that time cannot sunder. This is the natural condition of the selves.

As the origin of everything, the supreme self is the supreme enjoyer, and the subordinate selves derive their own sustenance and bliss by participating in His enjoyment. They cannot enjoy independently. Yet it happens that some selves want this one thing. Having everything, an eternal life of bliss and knowledge, they nevertheless want to controvert their own essential nature as subordinate, dependent beings. They want to become the supreme self. Instead of serving, they would like to be served. Thus they want to abrogate their relationship with Kṛṣṇa; since they have a minute amount of the independence the supreme possesses in full, they can do it.

Kṛṣṇa does not transgress the small independence of His fragmental parts, and He accedes to their desire. For them—that is

to say, for us—He creates another milieu, called the material, or external, energy. Of course, it is logically impossible for the supreme self to grant subordinate selves their desire to be the supreme, for by definition there can be only one supreme. It is the essential nature of the subordinate selves to serve, to be controlled by, the supreme. That nature cannot be changed, but in the material energy the tiny selves can have the illusion that they are independent, that they are the supreme, that they are the enjoyers and the controllers. All the same, they remain inescapably under the control of Kṛṣṇa’s material energy, which they cannot overcome.

Returning to A Pure Existence

Selves are beings that experience, centers of consciousness, subjects. Matter does not experience; it is without subjectivity; it is completely an object. Selves live; matter is lifeless. When the selves enter the alien, material energy, they acquire and animate bodies made out of lifeless matter. Driven by a desire to forget Kṛṣṇa and their relation to Him, they identify themselves with bodies of matter. In this way the self becomes a divided being. Now the self thinks of itself as a product of nature, as an object created and destroyed in time. As the body is damaged by disease and injury, as it disintegrates with age, and as it dies, the self thinks, “This is happening to me.” Thus

the self enters the interminable horror of material existence, a nightmare of carnage from which it cannot awake. As one body is destroyed, nature transfers him to another, to undergo a similar destruction.

The self moves blindly through these bodies, driven by an overwhelming appetite for enjoyment. In its original condition, the self is filled with a ceaseless love for the supreme, all-attractive self. This love is constitutional; it cannot be removed; it is the self's very life. Therefore, when the self turns aside from the proper object of his love, that love is not annihilated but becomes transmuted or redirected. When the self contacts the material energy, his love for Kṛṣṇa is transformed into lust, just as milk in contact with acid turns into curd.

So the erotic drive is indeed part of our essential makeup. But it is a transformation of what is in fact our love for Kṛṣṇa. Desire, therefore, cannot possibly be annihilated, nor can it be successfully repressed or suppressed. However, it can be reverted to its original state.

Yet as long as we are impelled by the erotic drive, we take on a succession of bodies of matter. We move up the hierarchy of beings; in the lower stages of our evolution, in plant and then animal bodies, our consciousness is heavily covered. We are only dimly and fitfully sentient. When at last we acquire human bodies, our consciousness, that effulgence of the eternal self, becomes uniquely uncovered. This fuller manifestation of the eternal self in beings that still inhabit material bodies creates a problematical situation, full of the tensions of a divided nature, and provides a kind of suffering that ignorant animals do not experience. The gift of uncovered consciousness causes us to wonder: Who am I? Why am I here? What is my purpose? Why must I die? Such questions lead us toward self-realization. If we do not at least begin upon this course, then we must take another. The revelation of our spiritually conscious nature shows us the incongruities of our position in matter, and the proper response is to seek freedom from material entanglement and thus resolve the sufferings that arise from duality. Unfortunately, too many people respond to the illuminations of a higher consciousness by frantically trying to snuff it out by pursuing intense animal satisfactions that produce a narrow, excited awareness, and by seeking the oblivion of drugs. This course drops the self again into animal bodies, in which it will devour and be devoured, until it at last returns to human form and once more confronts its eternal nature.

If we seize the chance of human consciousness, we can solve the problem of existence by cultivating knowledge of the

self, become freed from engagement in matter, and return to our pure existence in intimate, eternal love with Kṛṣṇa.

Our return to our normal condition is engineered by Kṛṣṇa. While we have forgotten Him, He has not forgotten us; He has remained close by our side through all our wanderings in darkness and in pain, waiting for us to show the first flicker of a desire to abandon our illusory project of becoming the supreme. When, in the hidden depths of our being, we start to yearn for Kṛṣṇa and to regret our folly in turning away, Kṛṣṇa immediately arranges for us to meet one of His self-realized representatives. This person tells us explicitly about

The gift of consciousness causes us to wonder: Who am I? Why am I here? What is my purpose? Why must I die?

the conditions of material existence, about our eternal nature, and about our relation with Kṛṣṇa, thus reviving our latent knowledge. He also initiates us onto the path of spiritual restoration with direct practical instructions. We would probably think that freedom from material conditions was some unrealizable idea, if we did not have Kṛṣṇa's representative before us as a living testament to its factuality.

The Flavor Of Natural Love

The essence of the program to return the self to its pure state consists of bringing that self into direct contact with Kṛṣṇa. The simplest and most effective way of doing this is through sound. The sounds that name or describe Kṛṣṇa are of a totally different nature from sounds that name or describe material things. This is because Kṛṣṇa is absolute, or nondual. The duality of the material world entails that a substance and its name have nothing intrinsic in common. If, for example, I say "water, water, water," my thirst is not slaked. On the other hand, if I say "Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa," or any other personal name of the supreme self, I come directly into contact with Him. By thus using our tongue to utter and ear to hear the names and glorifi-

cation of the supreme, we are united with Him. That contact is potent. Kṛṣṇa is the supreme pure, and His association is purifying. We are qualitatively one with Kṛṣṇa, and His association revives that original character, reawakens our native consciousness. Quickly, then, we begin to experience our eternal nature and to taste the remarkable flavor of our natural love, and as we do so we lose interest in the material substitutes that used to attract us. Our lust begins to be transformed back into love again. Thus, the revival of pure consciousness is based not on the repression or suppression of desire, but on its respiritualization.

This is different from sublimation. Sublimation is an artificial replacement of a gross physical urge with a more refined substitute, and the satisfaction it affords is never as intense and absorbing as the satisfaction of the original urge. But when, by contrast, our love is returned to Kṛṣṇa, it gains immeasurably in intensity and in power, for it has found its proper object, and it is now free from the fear of change and death that block its investment in material things. Our love for Kṛṣṇa begins to flow effortlessly, unchecked and unimpeded. It exfoliates without limit. Since Kṛṣṇa includes all other selves, our love expands to encompass them also. As one begins to live and breathe the atmosphere of unconditioned and uninterrupted love for Kṛṣṇa, he sees the whole world in a new light, and his former attempts to exploit it for his own pleasure seem perverse.

From the very beginning of Kṛṣṇa consciousness one gains the positive taste for spiritual existence, and so the addictions of the senses become relatively easy to give up. The four greatest impediments to spiritual life—illicit sex, intoxication, meat-eating, and gambling—can be abandoned with surprising ease. When one has the real thing, a real life of unceasing bliss and knowledge, there is no difficulty in putting aside the counterfeits.

Unconditional love for Kṛṣṇa is manifest in unconditional engagement in the service of Kṛṣṇa, in service that has no desire for reward and no interruption. This is the characteristic that distinguishes love from its perverted material transformation, lust, in which personal gain is the motive. Even the sexual union of a man and a woman can be used in the service of Kṛṣṇa. It is extremely good fortune for a child to be born from parents engaged in self-realization, for from his earliest moments he lives in an atmosphere unconditioned by lust and greed and he takes in the principles of spiritual life with his mother's milk. Such children can be conceived only when the parents unite specifically for that purpose and insure the good qualities of their offspring through their

**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.

own purification of consciousness. The first duty of parents is to be able to deliver their children from death, and family life dedicated to that purpose is conducive to self-realization and as such need not be artificially renounced.

But sex for any other purpose—sex to exploit the body for enjoyment, to fuel the delusions of the ego—is the cause of death. Sex more than anything else fixes our false identification of our selves with the body, rivets us into the flesh, and addicts us to material aggrandizement. Sexual desire can never be satisfied, for it grows by what it feeds on. This permanently frustrated desire causes a deep and abiding rage, which deepens our illusion. The twin delusions of desire and hate drive us on through interminable bodily incarcerations, hurtling us over and over into forms that fill us with fear, suffer the ceaseless onslaught of injury and disease, disintegrate while we still occupy them, and are destroyed. In reality none of this happens to us, but we have erroneously identified ourselves with the body and have thereby taken these torments upon us. Death is an illusion we have imposed upon ourselves by our desire to enjoy this world. Sex is the essence of that desire. Sex, therefore, is death.

It is only right that we struggle against the sentence of death. It is only proper that we seek a life of uninterrupted and unending pleasure uncompromised by shame or fear. It is only natural that we want to be whole and at one with ourselves, uncompromised by duality. The most deadly delusion is that sex is a way to these goals, for in fact it is the greatest single impediment. It is the cause of our disease, which we embrace as the cure.

The restrictions upon sexual activity enjoined by religions were originally meant to assist in overcoming this greatest block to human happiness. Unfortunately, now only the restrictions and negations survive, while the real reason for them has been forgotten.

But the viable path of self-realization is once again open. It may seem to you that, whatever good intentions you may have, the sexual drive is too powerful for you to overcome. It is true that it is too strong for artificial suppression. But I know from experience that if you simply begin by taking up the positive practices of *bhakti-yoga*, especially the reciting of the name of KṚṣṇa in the form of the Hare KṚṣṇa *mantra*, you will find that what seemed so formidable a barrier becomes easy to cross and that your authentic life, beyond the world of birth and death, is at hand. 🌸

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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Getting to Know those Decent, Hardworking “Misled” People

During the three years I have been living at the ISKCON farm in Port Royal, Pennsylvania, I have noted with pleasure how things occur with natural regularity. The four seasons are well defined: Spring is spring, summer is hot and verdant, autumn brings a harvest of corn (this year about sixty acres) as well as potatoes and beans, and winter is a time of wood-cutting, wood-burning, and snowfall. The cows produce their milk and offspring with natural regularity; even the births occur in regular runs, as this year first saw two new heifers and then three new bulls. The devotees also regularly go about their duties in the fields, the barn, or wherever, worshiping the Deity of Lord Kṛṣṇa and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Another regular occurrence around here is that each year the local newspaper carries an article commending us for our hard work and decency but condemning us for not being Christians. We always answer the criticism, and the paper prints our reply. A few weeks ago Jim Bauer, in his local column “As I See It,” wrote the following:

“First, concerning the ‘activities’ at the ‘farm,’ I would like to share some thoughts from my visit during the recent ‘Open House Festival’ held there.

“Frankly, I had mixed emotions about the whole experience. On one hand, I was impressed by the condition of the grounds, the friendliness of the people (‘Krishna devotees’) and their apparent total devotion to the cause of Krishna (they put me to shame with the zeal they have for their God). On the other hand, however, I couldn’t help thinking how sad it is that so many ‘good’ people are being ‘led down the wrong path.’

“They are deceiving themselves and others, too, when they say they worship the same God that Catholics, Protestants and Jews do. The Bible says there is only one God—God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost—it says nothing about Krishna or anyone else being the true God.

“The question I think we have to ask ourselves is not ‘Am I safe in the same county with these people?’ or other similar thoughts, but rather, ‘Why did these people choose their way of life and beliefs, and what can we do to insure that our children aren’t taken down the wrong path?’”

Seeing the article, our temple president, Paramānanda dāsa, immediately seized the opportunity to inform local people of the true nature of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He wrote a reply that the paper published the following week.

“Dear Mr. Bauer:

“I thought your editorial in last week’s paper contained some criticisms of the devotees of Krishna which were both inaccurate and misleading to the general public, so I would like to take this opportunity to reply ‘as I see it.’

“Your point of criticism is that because the word ‘Krishna’ is not mentioned in the Bible as a name of God, in fact the Krishna devotee is not worshiping, glorifying, or serving God but someone else and is on the ‘wrong path.’

“Actually the word ‘Krishna’ means ‘all-attractive.’ It is a name which describes the supreme qualities of God. There is no reason to say that if I call God Krishna He is no longer God.

“The principles of religion are not sectarian. One cannot rightly say that God is Christian, Jewish, Protestant, Hindu, or Muslim. It is like saying the sun is American because it rises every day in America. It also rises in France, Africa, and China. God is the father of every living being, regardless of what nomenclature people use to address Him.

“The Hare Krishna chant is a simple prayer, meaning ‘O Lord, please engage me in Your service.’ Why criticize a person for this? When I see a very devout follower of Lord Jesus, I am inspired by his example, I respect him, and I don’t engage in envious criticism of him.

“Contrary to some popular rumors, the Krishna religion is not a new religion. Its scriptures, the Vedas, are 5,000 years old and predate all other revealed scriptures in the world.

“Also contrary to some popular conceptions, it teaches monotheism, the worship of one supreme God. The same principles of religion that are summarized in the Ten Commandments are given throughout the Vedic scriptures. If you judge the tree by its fruit, then you won’t be sad and say that the devotee of Krishna is on the wrong path. As I see it, there is room for all of us in the kingdom of God.”

Paramānanda’s advice that Mr. Bauer judge by the fruits is in line with the familiar Biblical teaching. The same teaching is found in the Vedic scriptures also: *phalena paricīyate*, “judge by the results.”

When Śrīla Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, visited our farm in 1976, he also was concerned with the fruits of our Kṛṣṇa conscious farming village. He liked the field production (that year we harvested five hundred tons of corn, thirty tons of

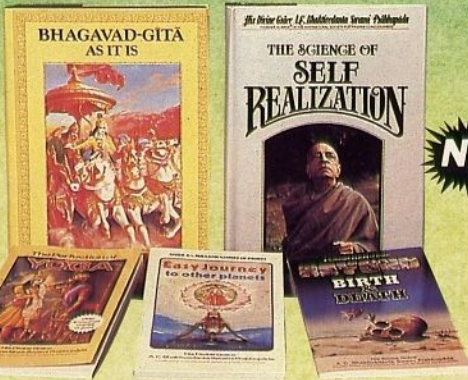
wheat, ten tons of potatoes). He was astonished at the quantity of milk our cows were giving (at least six cows each gave eighty pounds of milk a day). And he specifically commented on the farm’s atmosphere of happiness and harmony; even the kittens and dogs played together peacefully. Śrīla Prabhupāda named the farm *Gītā-nāgārī*, “the community where *Bhagavad-gītā* is sung.” He told us to go on developing the project as a transcendental village, living the way Lord Kṛṣṇa lived when He appeared in the world thousands of years ago—depending on nature and the cows.

Columnist Jim Bauer also saw the fruits, but he wasn’t able to appreciate them. Many of our visitors, however, *have* appreciated. One local farmer, Stan, an active member of a major Protestant denomination yet something of a philosophic seeker, had the patience and good will to sit and talk with us. He asked us about our understanding of God. We quoted the Vedic scriptures; he quoted the Bible. We also discussed our faiths on the basis of logic and human feeling. We talked for hours, personally, openly, and we had lunch together. Later Paramānanda dāsa showed him around the farm and exchanged ideas on farming. Stan was especially impressed to see we were plowing with oxen—a revolutionary innovation to most American farmers. By the end of the day Paramānanda and Stan, despite their so-called religious differences, were fast friends. Stan wrote his own letter to the paper, which subsequently published it.

“... After visiting the people at ISKCON and talking with Ben (Paramānanda) and Bob for quite a long time about God’s world and His people, I find it to have been nearly impossible to disagree about any subject concerning the interrelationship of God, man and man’s destiny, except possibly how, how fast, or how far man should acquire a ‘back to the Bible’ type of living. I would like to thank them for their fine hospitality and very good intellectual conversation, and I would like to recommend to everybody that you go visit with them to share and to learn. Keep an open mind, don’t judge till you hear their side of the story lest ye may be judged also. Love thy neighbor by visiting them, and by all means get to know what good is—get to know what God is, for they do know about God and are more than willing to share God’s love.”

Such are the fruits of open-minded conversations between people of “different” religions. —SDG

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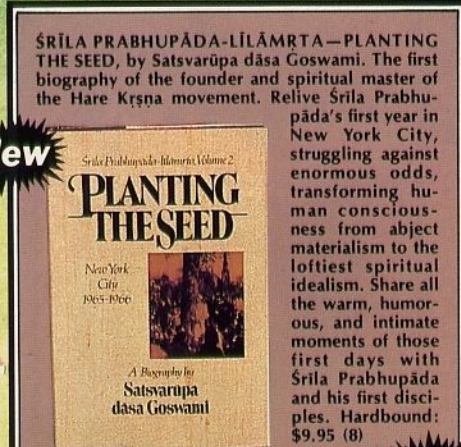
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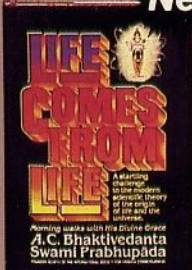
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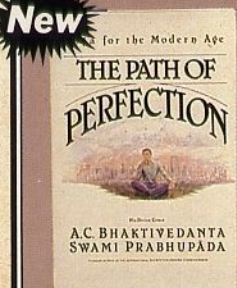
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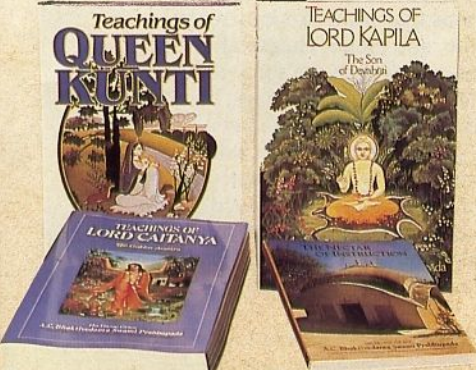
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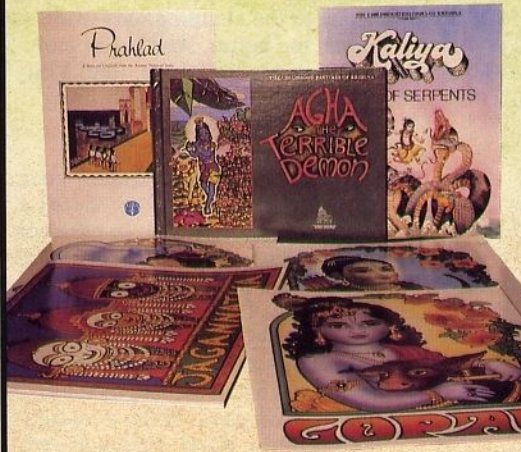
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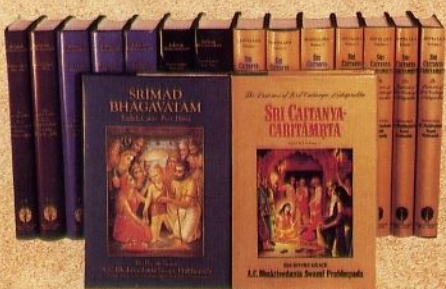
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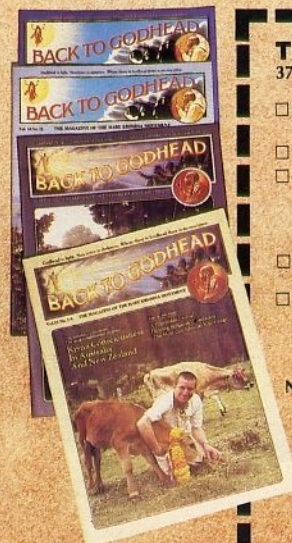
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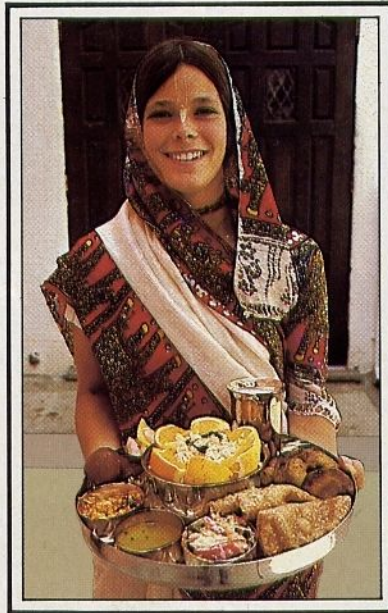
The Sunday Feast

It's a kind of open house. You come alone or with your friends or family. First 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 a bit 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 of the chanting. 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*. In case you don't already know, *Bhagavad-gītā* 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 *Gītā* is 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 *āratis* 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 that taste like ice cream, cake, and cream cheese all rolled into one. There are 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 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.

(See page 31 for the center nearest you.)

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