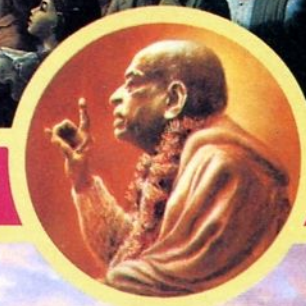


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

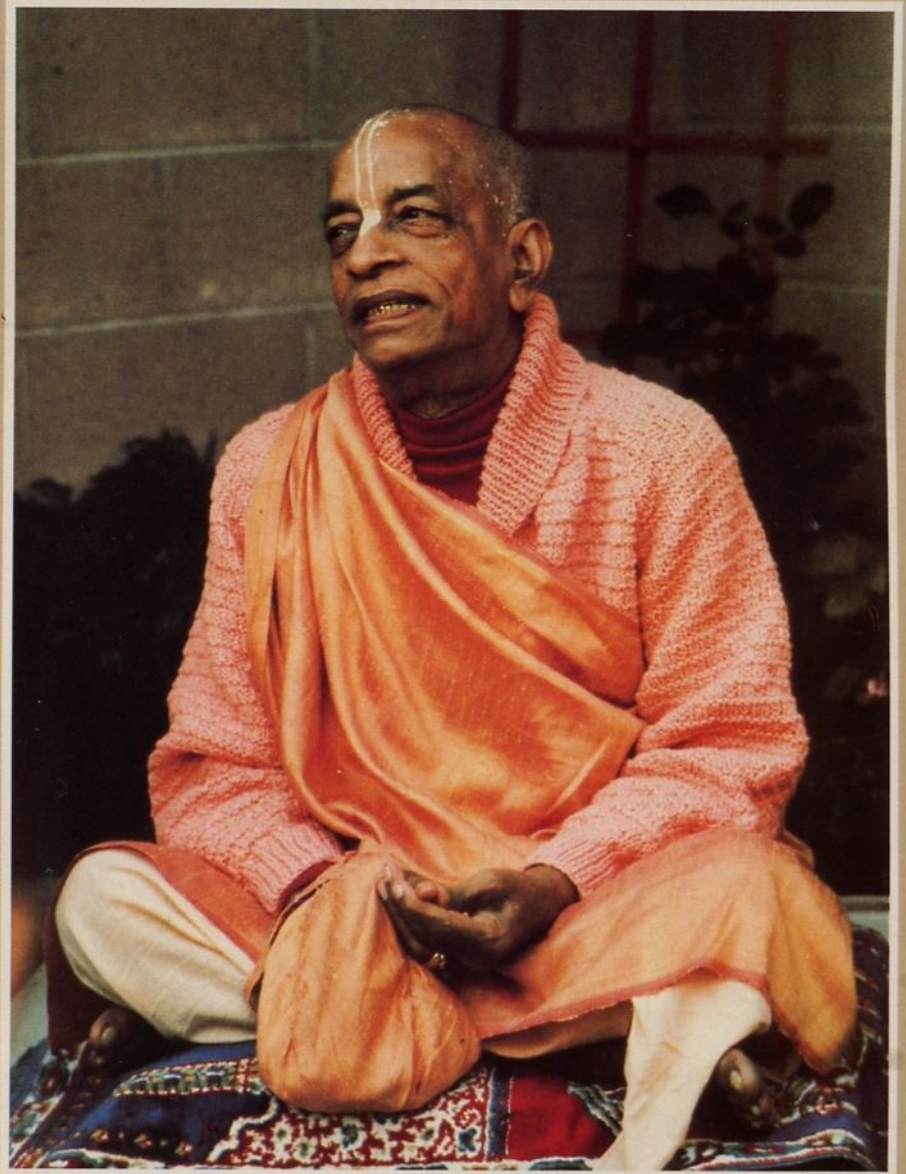
BACK TO GODHEAD

April 1983 \$1.50

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,
 Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, came to America in 1965, at age sixty-nine, 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 literature, and these are now standard in universities world-wide. 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. His disciples are carrying forward the movement he started.



BACK TO GODHEAD is the monthly journal of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. When Śrīla Prabhupāda began the Society (in New York City, in 1966), he put into writing the purposes he wanted it to achieve. They are as follows:

1. To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all peoples in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life and to achieve real unity and peace in the world.
2. To propagate a consciousness of Kṛṣṇa, as it is revealed in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.
3. To bring the members of the Society together with each other and nearer to Kṛṣṇa, the prime entity, thus developing the idea within the members, and humanity at large, that each soul is part and parcel of the quality of Godhead (Kṛṣṇa).
4. To teach and encourage the *saṅkīrtana* movement, congregational chanting of the holy names of God, as revealed in the teachings of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
5. To erect for the members and for society at large a holy place of transcendental pastimes dedicated to the personality of Kṛṣṇa.
6. To bring the members closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler, more natural way of life.
7. With a view toward achieving the aforementioned purposes, to publish and distribute periodicals, books, and other writings.

BACK TO GODHEAD

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

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PRONUNCIATION. We spell Sanskrit words and names by a scholarly system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in **but**, long **ā** like the **a** in **far** (and hold it twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in **evade**, long **ī** like the **i** in **pique**. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **r** in **rim**, and **ṛ** like the **ch** in **chair**. Pronounce the aspirated consonants (**ch**, **jh**, **dh**, etc.) as in **staunch-heart**, **hedgehog**, and **red-hot**. Finally, pronounce the sibilants **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh**. So for **Kṛṣṇa** say **KRISHNA**, and for **Caitanya** say **CHAITANYA**.

SPIRITUAL NAMES. 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."

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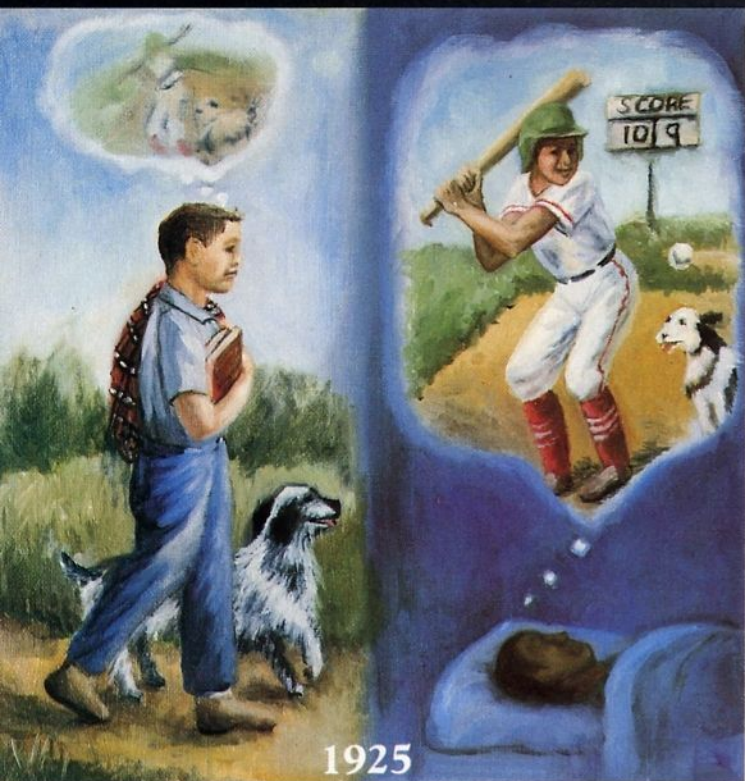
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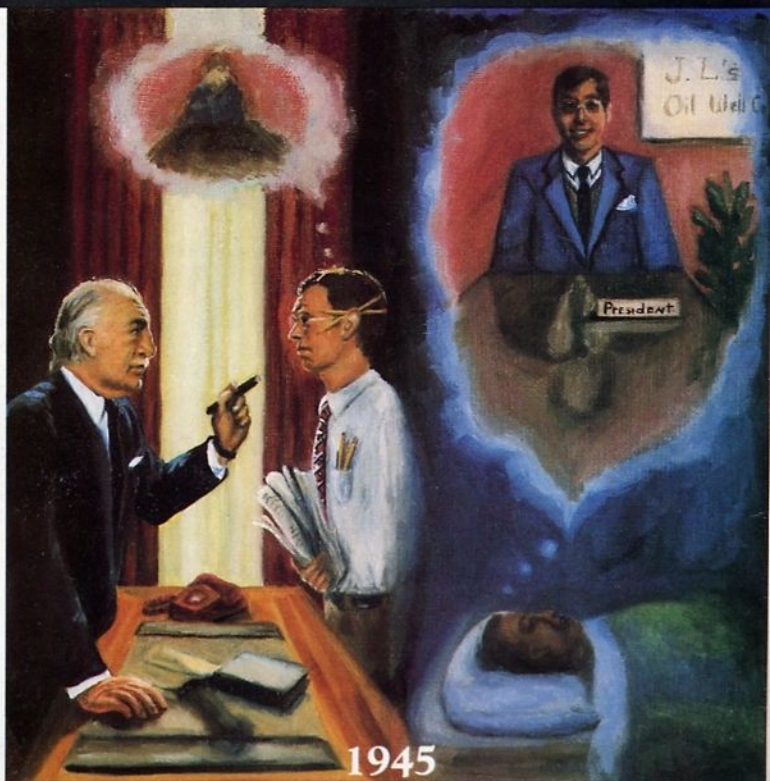
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COVER: Five thousand years ago, on the sacred Kurukṣetra plain in northern India, Arjuna leads his army into battle against the Kurus. Lord Kṛṣṇa has taken up the reins of His devotee's chariot, and together the invincible pair are determined to restore just rule to the world. There is little doubt that they will, for as the *Bhagavad-gītā* says, "Wherever there are Kṛṣṇa, the master of all mystic power, and Arjuna, the supreme archer, there will certainly be victory, opulence, extraordinary power, and morality." (Painting: Bharadvāja dāsa)



1925



1945

The Self And Its Bodies

A lecture given in June 1976
by His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,
Founder-Ācārya of
the International Society for Krishna Consciousness,
at the Detroit Hare Kṛṣṇa center

*yathājñās tamasā yukta
upāste vyaktam eva hi
na veda pūrvam aparāṁ
naṣṭa-jaṅma-smṛtis tathā*

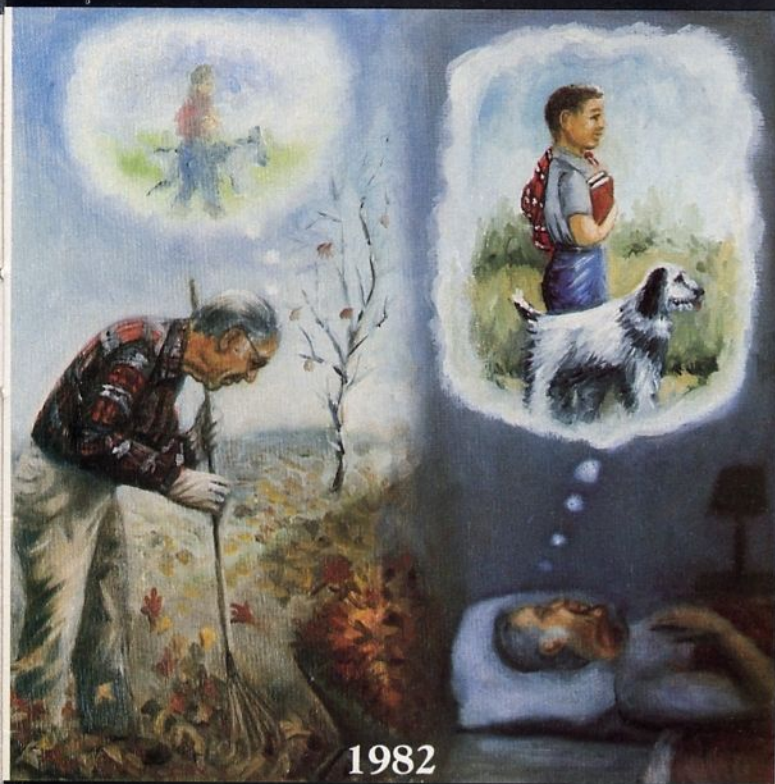
“As a sleeping person acts according to the body manifested in his dreams and accepts it to be himself, so one identifies with his present body, which he acquired because of his past religious or irreligious actions, and is unable to know his past or future lives.”

—Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.1.49

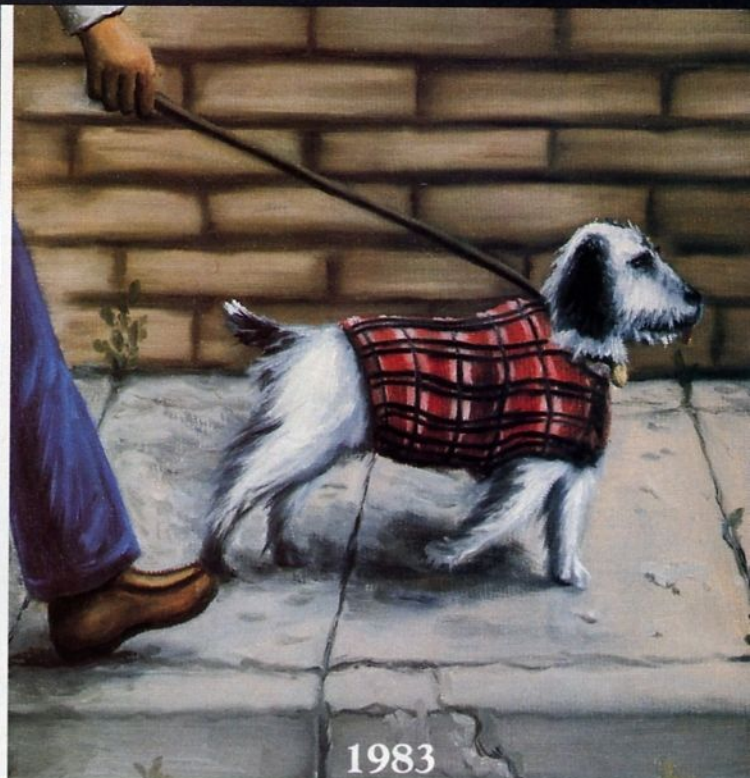
Here is a very good example of the ignorance that covers the living entity in the material world. When we dream, we forget everything about ourselves—that we are Mr. Such-and-Such, an inhabitant of such-and-such a place, with such-and-such bank balance. Everything is forgotten. And when we awaken, we forget about the dream. This is our daily experience. But whether we are in the wakened state or the dreaming state, we are seeing our own activities. In the dream we are the seer, and in the so-called awake condition we are also the seer. So we, the spirit soul, who is experiencing, remain the same, but the circumstances change and we forget.

Similarly, we cannot remember what we were in our previous life. Nor do we know what we are going to become in our next life. But it is a fact that, as spirit souls, we are eternal. We existed in the past, we exist at the present time, and we shall continue to exist in the future. Kṛṣṇa explains this in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [2.12]: “O Arjuna, you, I, and all these persons who have assembled on this battlefield have existed before, and we shall continue to exist in the future.” This is the preliminary understanding in spiritual life—knowing “I am eternal.”

As spirit souls, we do not take birth, nor do we die (*na jāyate mriyate vā kadācit*). We are not finished with the destruction of the material body (*na hanyate*



1982



1983

hanyamāne śarīre). The destruction of the body is going on already. Our childhood body is now destroyed; you cannot find that body. Our youthful body is also destroyed; we cannot find it anymore. And in the same way, our present body will also be destroyed, and we shall get another body (*tathā dehāntara-prāptih*).

When the soul transmigrates, the gross body is lost. The gross body is made of matter, and anything material will eventually be finished. That is the nature of matter. But the spirit soul is never finished.

So we are changing bodies, one after another. Why are there different types of bodies? Because the living entity, the spirit soul, is contacting various modes of material nature. And according to what modes are influencing him, the living entity develops a gross body.

So we have acquired our present body because of our past activities. *Karmaṇā daiva-netreṇa jantur dehōpapattaye*: One gets a particular type of body according to his past *karma*, or material activities. Nature acts automatically, according to our *karma*. Suppose you contract some disease. Nature will act: you will have to develop that disease and undergo some suffering. Similarly, when we come under the influence of the modes of material nature and perform karmic activities, we must transmigrate from body to body. Nature's law works so perfectly.

Now, when we come to the civilized human life, we should ask, "Why am I suffering?" The problem is that because we are under the spell of *māyā*, illusion, we take suffering to be enjoyment. *Māyā* means "that which is not." We are thinking we are enjoying, but actually we are suffering. In this material body we *have* to suffer. We suffer on account of the body. Pinching cold, scorching heat—we feel these things on account of the body. Under certain circumstances we feel pleasure. But in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [2.14] Kṛṣṇa advises,

*mātrā-sparśās tu kaunteya
śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkha-dāh
āgamāpāyino 'nityās
tāms titikṣasva bhārata*

"Material happiness and distress are caused by the body. They come and go just like seasonal changes. So do not be disturbed; try to tolerate them."

As long as we are in this material world, happiness and distress will come and go. So we should not be disturbed by them. Our real business is trying for self-realization. That must go on; it must not stop. Self-realization is the goal of human life. Suffering and so-called happiness will go on as long as we have a material body, but we must come to the knowledge that "I am not the body; I am a spirit soul. I have gotten this body because of my past

The ever-present self and its ever-changing bodies.

As day turns to night, the schoolboy becomes a baseball star, or the flunky becomes the boss. And in the course of a life the boy disappears, a young man comes on the scene, and soon an old man stands in his place.

Which of these identities is real? None of them.

Unchanging throughout all these changes, the self is eternally the same. But as the boy when asleep forgets his waking life and when awake forgets his dreams, in this life we forget our past lives and in the next life forget this one.

And as our thoughts and actions when we're awake carry us into our dreams, our thoughts and actions in this life carry us to the body we receive in the next.

activities.” That is knowledge.

Now, a sensible man should consider, “Since I am a spirit soul and my body is simply a covering, is it not possible to end this process of transmigration from body to body?” This is human life—inquiring how to stop the contamination of the material body.

Unfortunately, people in the modern so-called civilization do not ask this question. They are mad after gratifying the senses of the body, so they act irresponsibly. As explained in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [5.5.4],

*nūnaṁ pramattaḥ kurute vikarma
yad indriya-prītaya āpṛnoti
na sādhu manye yata ātmano 'yam
asann api kleśada āsa dehaḥ*

“People who act only for sense gratification are certainly mad, and they perform all kinds of abominable activities. In this way they insure their transmigration from body to body perpetually, and thus experience all kinds of miseries.”

We do not understand that the body is always *kleśada*—it always gives us pain. For the time being we may feel some pleasure, but actually the body is a reservoir of pain. Here is a good analogy in this connection: Formerly, when the government officers would want to punish a criminal, they would tie his hands, take him into the middle of a river, and push him down into the water. When he was almost drowned, they would draw him up from the water by his hair and give him a little rest. And then again they would push him down into the water. That was one system of punishment.

Similarly, whatever little pleasure we are feeling in this material world is exactly like the pleasure the criminal would feel when he was drawn up from the water. That’s all. Severe suffering with a few moments of relief—this is what the material world is like.

That is why Sanātana Gosvāmī, who had been a wealthy minister in the Moham-medan government in India, presented himself to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu* and asked, *ke āmi, kene āmāya jāre tāpa-traya*: “Who am I? And why am I suffering the threefold miseries?” This is intelligence. We are constantly undergoing some sort of distress, whether caused by the body and mind, inflicted by other living entities, or brought about by natural disturbances. We don’t want all these miseries, but they are forced upon us. So when one accepts a spiritual master, the first question should be, “Why am I suffering?”

But we have become so dull, like the

animals, that we never ask this question. The animals are suffering (everyone knows this), but they cannot ask why. When an animal is being taken to the slaughterhouse, he cannot ask, “Why am I being taken by force to the slaughterhouse?” But if you take a human being to be killed, he’ll make a great noise: “This man is taking me to be killed! Why am I being killed?” So one important distinction between human life and animal life is that only the human being can ask “Why am I suffering?”

Whether you are President Nixon or a man in the street, you are suffering. That’s a fact. You are suffering on account of your body, and you are doing something that will cause you to accept another material body. You are suffering because in

***Human life means
to give up looking
for happiness through
sense gratification,
which is just like
a mirage in the desert,
and to try for
spiritual happiness.***

your past life you indulged in sense gratification and got a body according to *karma*, and if you engage in sense gratification in this life and do not try to elevate yourself, you’ll again get a body and suffer. By nature’s way you’ll get another body according to the mentality you have at the time of death. And as soon as you get another body, your suffering will begin again. Even in the womb of the mother you will suffer. To remain in that compact bag for so many months, hands and legs all tied up, unable to move—this is suffering. And nowadays there is also a risk of being killed in the womb. And when you come out, more suffering. So we should be intelligent enough to ask, “Why am I suffering? And how can I stop this suffering?” And until we ask “Why am I suffering?” our human life has not begun. We remain animals.

Asking about the ultimate cause of our suffering is called *brahma-jijñāsā*, inquiry into the Absolute Truth. As it is said in the beginning of the *Vedānta-sūtra*, *athāto brahma-jijñāsā*: “Having gotten the human form of life, one should inquire into Brahman, the Absolute Truth.” So we should take advantage of the human

form of life. We should not live like animals, without any inquiry, without trying to find out how to stop our miserable material life.

Of course, we *are* actually trying to stop our own miseries, by working so hard in the struggle for existence. Why do we try to get money? Because we think, “If I get money, my distress will be mitigated.” So the struggle for existence is going on, and everyone is trying to become happy by getting sense gratification. But sense gratification is not real happiness. Real happiness is spiritual happiness, which comes from serving Kṛṣṇa. That is happiness. Material happiness is simply perverted happiness.

Material happiness is like the mirage of water in the desert. In the desert there is no water, but when a thirsty animal sees the mirage of water in the desert, he runs after it—and dies. We know that there is no water in the desert—that the “water” is just a reflection of the sunshine—but animals do not know this. Similarly, human life means to give up looking for happiness through sense gratification, which is just like a mirage in the desert, and to try for spiritual happiness.

We can awaken to this higher happiness simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is such a simple thing, yet it can relieve all our suffering in the material world.

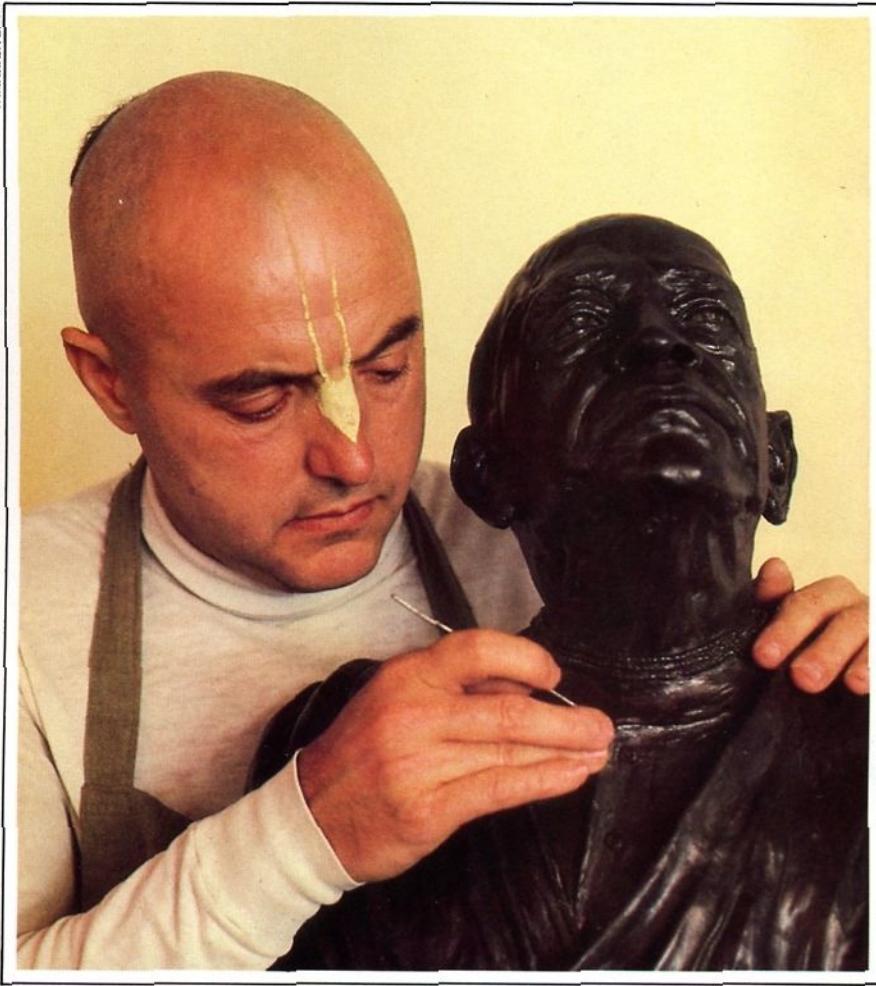
Our suffering is caused by the many dirty things within our heart. We are just like a criminal who has dirty things within his heart. He thinks, “If I get such-and-such thing, I’ll be happy.” And at the risk of his life he commits a crime. A burglar, a thief, knows that if he is captured by the police he’ll be punished, but still he goes and steals. Why? *Nūnaṁ pramattaḥ*: he has become mad after sense gratification. That’s all.

So we have to purify our hearts of our dirty desires, which are forcing us to act for sense gratification and suffer. And in this age the purification is very, very easy: Just chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. That’s all. This is Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s contribution. *Ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam bhava-mahā-dāv-āgni-nirvāpanam*. If you chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, you will be relieved of the suffering caused by transmigrating perpetually from body to body. Chanting is such a simple thing. There is no question of caste, creed, nationality, color, social position. No. By the grace of God, everyone has a tongue and ears. So everyone can chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Just chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and be happy.

Thank you very much.

* Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself in the role of His own devotee, appeared in Bengal, India, five hundred years ago to teach love of God through the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*.

YAMARAJA DĀSA



NOW HIS ART HAS MEANING

A gifted artist gives up a career on Madison Avenue
for a simple life of spiritual dedication.

by NANDARĀṆĪ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

In the spring of 1969, the *Today Show* ran a special on the paintings of Alfred Valerio, a Madison Avenue ad designer on his way to the top of the commercial art world. While most of his contemporaries starved in their studios, Alfred was selling his paintings for \$1,000 each and taking contracts for everything from corporate logos to city hall murals.

Thirteen years later, Alfred (now Bhaktisiddhānta dāsa) has no time for what he considers the meaningless art of the commercialized West. From his headquarters in Māyāpur, West Bengal, Bhaktisiddhānta oversees teams of sculptors, painters, and

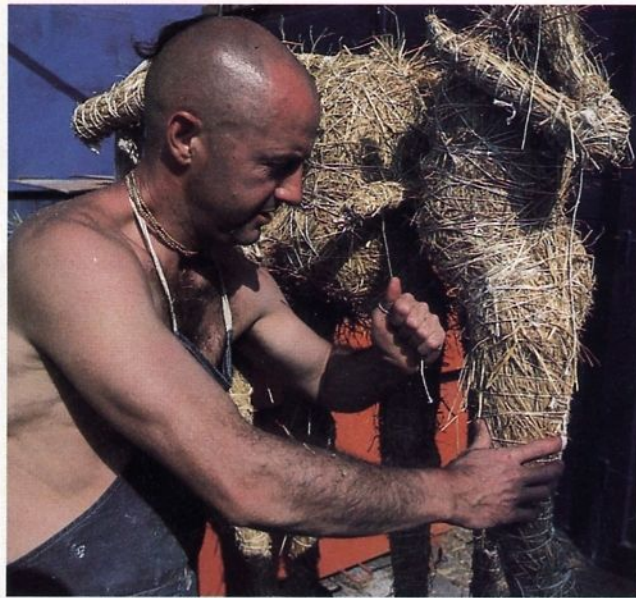
craftsmen as they erect a 160-foot-high memorial to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder and spiritual guide of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

Of course, back in 1969 Alfred couldn't have dreamed he'd soon be chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, living a simple life in an Indian village, and helping to build a masterpiece of classical Vedic architecture. His background was solidly in Western art. Trained by a host of commercial art and fine art professionals at the Los Angeles College of Art and Design, Alfred became the friend and protégé of Thomas Buechner,

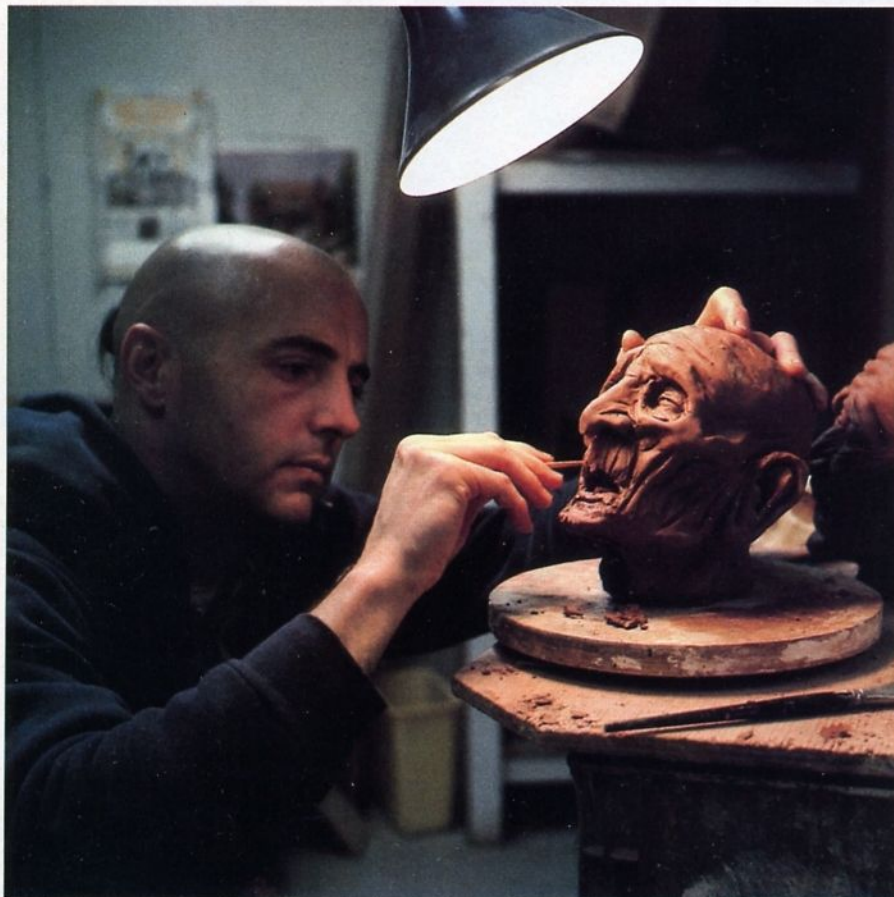
the director of the Brooklyn Museum. On a John F. and Analee Stacy fellowship for classical painting, he studied two years in Italy and produced more than seven hundred paintings.

To satisfy his interest in the philosophical side of life, he turned to Western religious sources. An Italian Catholic, he naturally looked to the Bible for spiritual direction as well as pictorial themes for his art. While in Florence, he painted murals for churches and seriously considered letting his beard grow, donning a long flowing robe, and joining the order of Capuchin monks. But he gave up that idea and

A figure takes shape (right) under the skillful hands of Bhaktisiddhānta dāsa, working here in Los Angeles in 1976. To create the figure, he uses the traditional Indian method of *puttala*, constructing a base of straw upon which he will mold the final form in clay. Below, he models one of the heads for the final diorama (far right), part of the First American Transcendental Exhibition at the Los Angeles Hare Kṛṣṇa center.



MURALIVADANA DĀSA



VIŚAKHĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ



returned to the States to begin his career. "I was frustrated as an artist," reflects Bhaktisiddhānta, "because I wanted to amalgamate truth and beauty. But the truths of life around us—birth, old age, disease, and death—are far from beautiful. And the beauty we do see is so temporary and insubstantial that it doesn't represent any lasting truth." Unable to find a satisfying solution to his dilemma, Bhaktisiddhānta had to content himself with producing ads for Jeeps, Tide, Ivory

Soap, and Duncan Hines cakes. Then Bhaktisiddhānta and his wife, now known as Vidyā-devī dāśī, paid their first visit to a Hare Kṛṣṇa temple, in Miami. "I was astounded," he remembers. "I was introduced to Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is simultaneously the Absolute Truth and the embodiment of Absolute Beauty. I knew immediately that Kṛṣṇa consciousness was what I'd been looking for." Joining the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement didn't slow down Bhaktisiddhānta's art

production in the least. In fact, it gave his artistic life new depth and direction. Now at last he had a worthy subject for the painting, sculpture, and architecture he'd mastered. Bhaktisiddhānta reflects on the first lecture he attended at the Hare Kṛṣṇa center in Miami: "The speaker described how Mahā-Viṣṇu, an expansion of Lord Kṛṣṇa, creates the cosmos by exhaling universes as He lies in the Causal Ocean. I anticipated with great excitement being able to



MURALIVADANA DASA

illustrate the actual creation in full detail.”

Even more exciting for Bhaktisiddhānta was discovering the personalistic theology taught in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, two basic books of Vedic knowledge. This theology encompassed the life and activities of a personal God, not an abstract, impersonal energy. Bhaktisiddhānta learned that God has form and personality along with an enchanting kingdom full of His friends and relatives and a variety of flowers, trees, birds, and ani-

mals. Moreover, Kṛṣṇa consciousness was exemplified by a self-realized master of the art of serving God—Śrīla Prabhupāda.

“To become a professional artist you must find an art master and study under him,” explains Bhaktisiddhānta. “So the idea of accepting a *guru* wasn’t new to me. I’d had many art ‘*gurus*’ who’d helped me shape my art style and professional techniques. But my *spiritual* master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, was able to improve my art in a more profound way, by giving it a

spiritual foundation.”

Now Bhaktisiddhānta is offering that spiritual art back to Śrīla Prabhupāda. His expertise in sculpture and painting is helping to produce a unique architectural masterpiece—Śrīla Prabhupāda’s *puṣpa-samādhi*, or memorial tomb, in Māyāpur. He described some of its features: “Around the dome of the *samādhi* will stand sixteen twelve-foot-high statues depicting devotional practices taught by Śrīla Prabhupāda, such as worship of the Deity in the

temple, protection of cows, Vedic education, and distribution of literature about Kṛṣṇa. Nine eight-foot-high statues will show various ways to serve Kṛṣṇa—hearing His instructions, chanting about Him, remembering Him, and so on. In addition, sixteen hundred feet of bas-relief panels will portray devotees chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa in chorus while hundreds of demigods shower flowers and benedictions upon them and Śrīla Prabhupāda.”

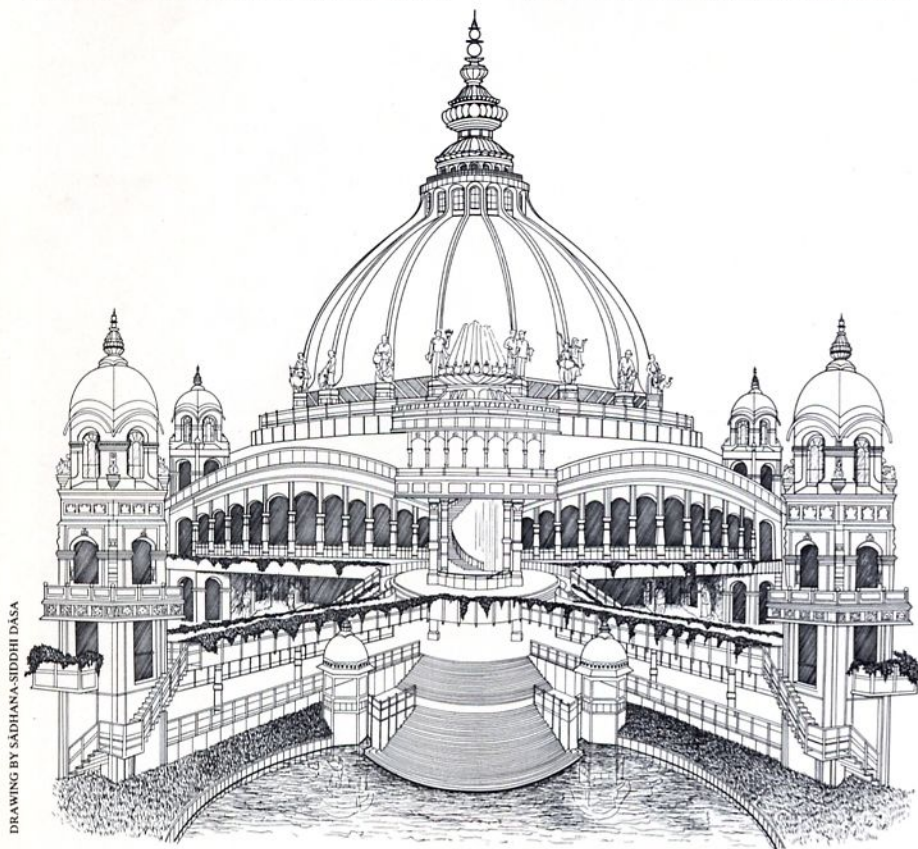
Working as an assistant to His Holiness Surabhīr-abhipālayantam Goswami, the chief architect for the Māyāpur project, Bhaktisiddhānta has designed all the figures that embellish the *samādhi*. He gives his drawings to sculptors, who carve the pieces and later cast them in cement or bronze under his direction. Bhaktisiddhānta

portraying Śrīla Prabhupāda’s life.

Bhaktisiddhānta’s work will by no means end with the completion of the *samādhis* in Māyāpur and Vṛndāvana. At that point he will simply turn his attention toward the greater task of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world through art.

“Architecture coupled with painting, sculpture, and dioramas is a potent way to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness,” says Bhaktisiddhānta. All major religions have glorified God by erecting magnificent buildings—temples, mosques, churches, cathedrals, synagogues. We want to affirm the permanence of Vedic culture through splendid architecture, and we also want to introduce the West to Kṛṣṇa, the pinnacle of artistic expression.

“Just as the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa con-



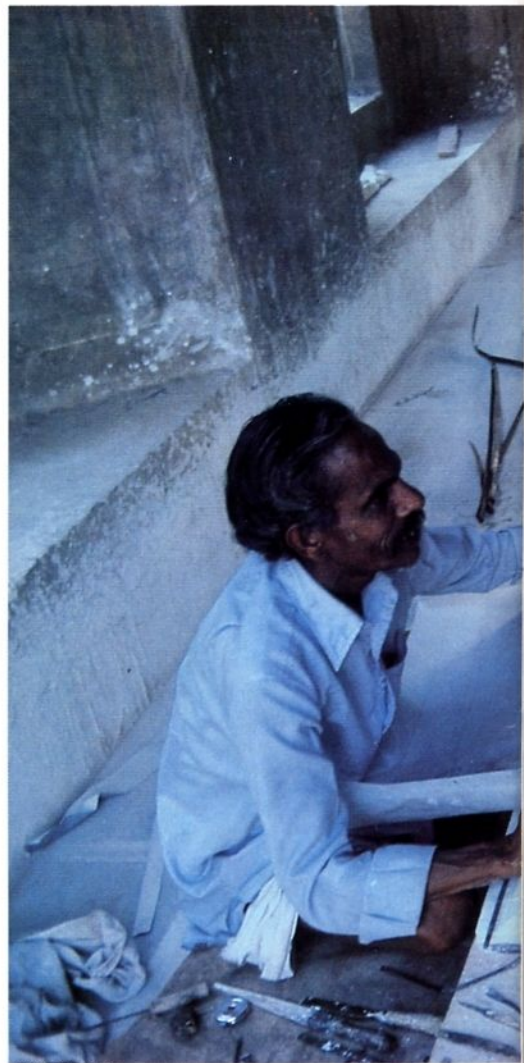
The Śrīla Prabhupāda memorial Bhaktisiddhānta dāsa is helping to build in Māyāpur, West Bengal.

is also preparing a larger-than-life-size statue of Śrīla Prabhupāda, which will sit in an ornate inner chamber four stories high. In addition, he plans more than a dozen three-quarter-size plaster dioramas that will encircle the eighty-foot-wide building and portray the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

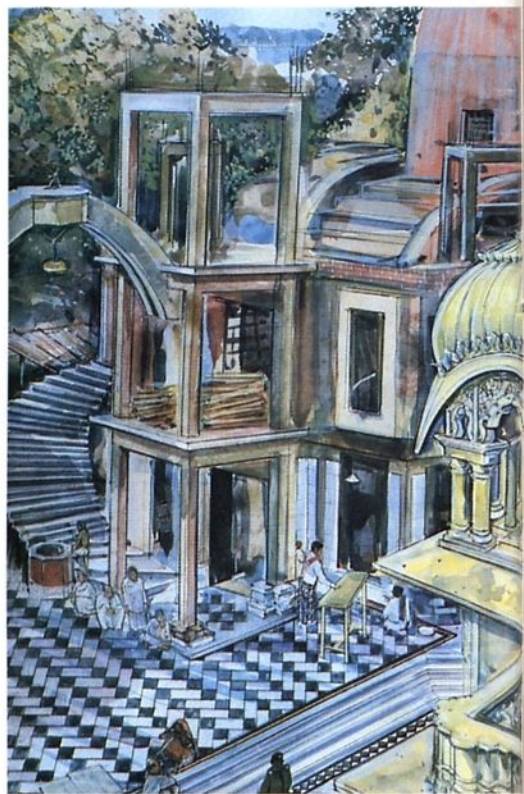
Simultaneously, Bhaktisiddhānta is helping to construct a traditional *samādhi* in Vṛndāvana, the town ninety miles south of Delhi where Kṛṣṇa enacted His childhood pastimes. This *samādhi*, which marks the actual resting place of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s body, will be finished in luminous white marble. It will house a museum of dioramas

consciousness is gradually bringing about a spiritual revolution in the field of Western philosophy, I believe the art of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement will cause a similar revolution in the art world. The philosophy is personal and the art is personal—nothing abstract about it. Abstract art typifies social alienation. But people don’t want to be alienated: they want meaningful personal relationships. Through our sculptures, paintings, and dioramas, people can learn the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and begin to reestablish their eternal relationship with the Supreme Person, Kṛṣṇa.”

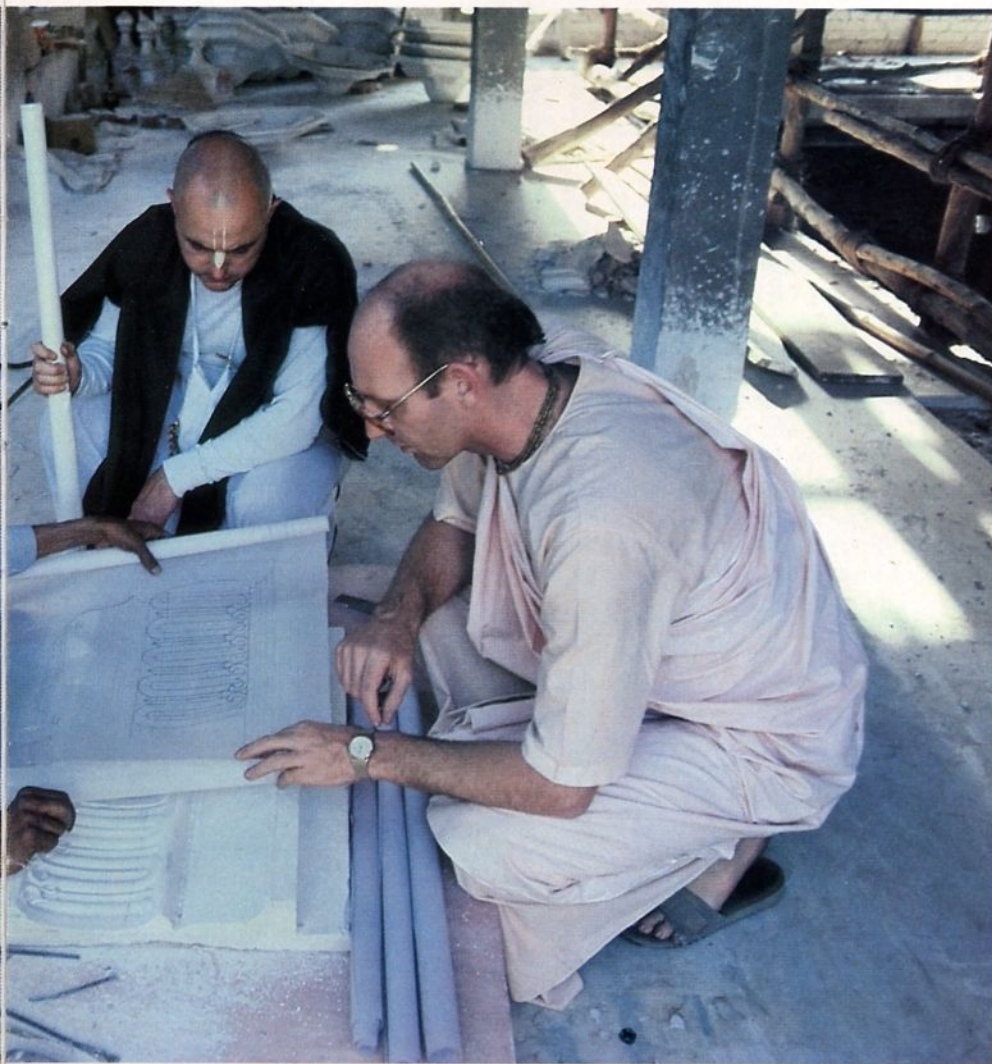
Many Hare Kṛṣṇa leaders agree with Bhaktisiddhānta that art and spreading



YAMARĀJA DĀSA



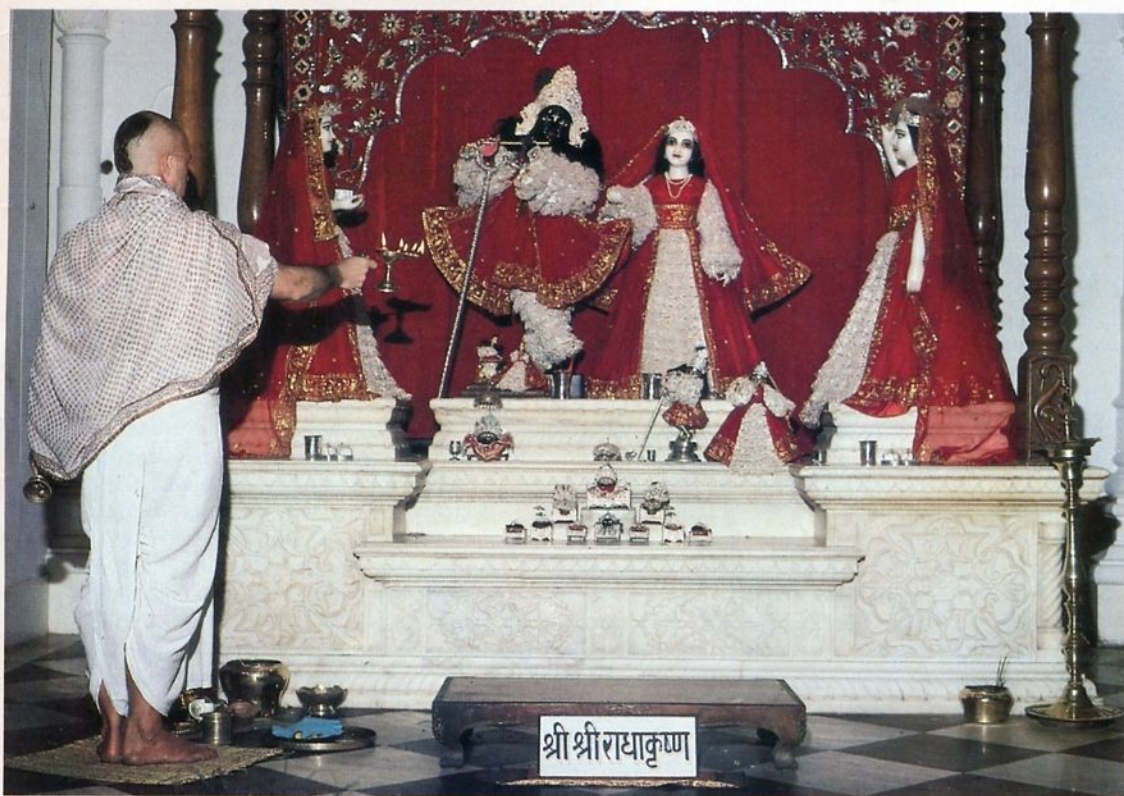
PAINTING BY BHAKTISIDDHĀNTA DĀSA



Kṛṣṇa consciousness go hand in hand. For example, the heads of the Hare Kṛṣṇa centers in Baroda and Bhubaneswar have requested dioramas for teaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Bhaktisiddhānta will design and direct the production of dioramas from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as well as the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*, two classical Vedic histories. And his team in Māyāpur will cast lightweight figures in bronze and aluminum for shipment to the West.

Although busy with two large construction projects, Bhaktisiddhānta still finds time to use his illustrational talents. In Vṛndāvana, he often turns his attention to what he was first trained for—book illustration. His current project is *The Life of Śrīla Prabhupāda*, a 32-page illustrated booklet based on the *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*, a biography of Śrīla Prabhupāda by Śrīla Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami. In his illustrations, Bhaktisiddhānta has caught the mood of Śrīla Prabhupāda as he struggled with determination to spread love of God worldwide. Another book consists of on-site illustrations detailing the arduous task of building the *samādhis* in Māyāpur and Vṛndāvana.

For Bhaktisiddhānta, life in the Hare Kṛṣṇa art world is far more exciting and productive than life on Madison Avenue. “By the ingenuity of my spiritual master, I have found a satisfying way to put all those years of training and experience to use. My love for my work grows as I find newer and more potent means of achieving and teaching spiritual knowledge through art.”



Worshipping the Deities of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa every morning in the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple in Vṛndāvana (left) inspires Bhaktisiddhānta for his creative work. At far left is one of a series of watercolors he painted to show the stages in the construction of the Śrīla Prabhupāda memorial he is helping to build there. Above, he consults with His Holiness Surabhīr-ahhipālayantam Swami and a local craftsman at the Vṛndāvana construction site.

LETTERS

Some time this year I received by chance an issue of BACK TO GODHEAD. Being of an inquisitive nature, I took some time in reading it. A large proportion of it correlates with most religious dogma. That is, it rests on the basic assumption of the existence of some undefinable entity, in this case Kṛṣṇa. However, this is not what concerns me.

My mind was particularly stirred on reading an article entitled "Śrīla Prabhupāda Speaks Out—On Truth, Belief, and Science." My criticism is leveled at the arguments used by Śrīla Prabhupāda, which I believe to be fallacious, delusive, and uninformed.

For instance, Śrīla Prabhupāda argues that science is not scientific because it is upheld by belief rather than fact. The justification he cites is that science cannot prove its theory that life originates from chemicals.

Yet in 1953 Stanley Miller synthesized amino acids, which are the building blocks of proteins and hence life (since all life is composed of proteins). The experiment was performed using simple mixtures of gasses and an electric spark that simulated a shot of lightning hitting a primitive ocean some 3×10^9 years ago. Several further steps of successful protein synthesis have since been elucidated. So much for an inability to prove scientific theory.

If one cares to glance through a few scientific journals, ample proof exists of many such scientific theories.

Śrīla Prabhupāda goes on to make his second faux pas: "But if, as you say, life comes from matter, then you must demonstrate it by supplying the missing chemicals to make a dead body live again."

This statement reflects Śrīla Prabhupāda's basic misunderstanding and shallow comprehension of death. The process of death, akin to many chemical reactions, is a series of irreversible reactions. It does not just depend upon the presence of some miraculous chemical. When the brain is starved of oxygen, its components degenerate irreversibly. To produce life again would require a very speedy brain transplant.

Another fallacy I observed concerns a remark about the soul. Śrīla Prabhupāda states that consciousness is a symptom of the soul. I disagree. Surely it is the brain that is the cause of consciousness. Why? Well, remove or destroy the brain, and consciousness also disappears. Consciousness, then, is merely due to neural activity within the brain.

In conclusion, it is not so much the

problem under discussion that worries me, so much as the overtly transparent arguments proposed. I am not out to deny the existence of a soul or of a god by my criticisms but to point out the irrationalities of the arguments used. Obviously, however, by way of these criticisms my feelings are inadvertently expressed.

Nicholas Huggins
Melbourne, Australia

OUR REPLY (from Sadāpūta dāsa): A person who presumes to criticize the reasoning of others should certainly be capable of presenting logical arguments himself. Unfortunately, however, your letter contains some striking deficiencies in logic. For the sake of setting some minimal standards for rational argument, I will point out a few of these deficiencies.

1. You refer to Miller's synthesis of amino acids from simple molecules, and you say, "So much for an inability to prove scientific theory." Now, the theory in question maintains that all life has arisen from an original "primordial soup" by purely physical processes. Do you really think that Miller's synthesis of amino acids proves this? That's like saying, "Monkeys striking typewriters can produce English words. Shakespeare's plays are made of English words. Therefore monkeys striking typewriters can produce Shakespeare's plays." Your fallacy in logic is obvious, but nonetheless I will point it out explicitly: If A entails B and B is true, then it does not follow (as you seem to think) that A is necessarily true.

You also vaguely refer to the elucidation of other steps of protein synthesis. Now just what steps in abiogenetic protein synthesis have actually been demonstrated?

Are you perhaps referring to Sidney Fox's synthesis of proteins by the heating of amino acids? There the problem was that, contrary to Fox's early claims, the amino acid sequences of his proteins were highly chaotic and therefore not at all comparable to the highly organized sequences of biological proteins.

Thus far, in fact, no one has been able to show how purely physical processes could generate the complex but orderly structures of biological proteins from disordered molecular components. (Of course, it is possible to synthesize any protein by laboratory procedures, but this is obviously irrelevant. The question is: Could highly organized proteins arise in nature without the direction of an intelligent agent?)

I should note also that merely coming

up with protein molecules is not enough to enable matter to give rise to life. At the very least, what would have to arise would be a complex, spatially organized system of molecules that was capable of self-reproduction.

The system of self-reproduction in today's cells is incredibly complex, and it involves, among other things, the genetic code. This code correlates each of the twenty standard amino acids with an "anti-codon" made of three RNA bases. The code seems arbitrary, for it is not determined by any recognizable chemical relationship among the various molecules involved. But without a *consistent* code of this kind, the system of protein generation in living cells would not work.

How did this genetic code arise? What was the "original" self-reproducing machinery like? No scientist at present can even begin to answer these questions. If you did more than simply glance at a few scientific journals, you might be able to appreciate just how far scientists are from proving that life has arisen from chemicals.

2. You criticize Śrīla Prabhupāda for challenging scientists to supply the missing chemicals needed to restore life to a dead body. Here Śrīla Prabhupāda is simply giving a brief summary of the program many scientists propose.

If he had wanted to get into detail, he could have pointed out that the added chemicals might have to be organized in space in a systematic way and that unwanted chemicals (such as products of decay) might have to be removed. His challenge would still have been: "If you claim you can create or restore life in this way, then prove your claim by actually doing it. Don't call yourself a scientist and just make empty boasts."

A prominent biochemist recently informed me that if he were given the money now being spent on defense, he could build living cells from off-the-shelf chemicals in ten years, without having to discover any new scientific principles. His claim is that we can create life by adding chemicals together in the right way. Unfortunately, I don't think the government will call his bluff by giving him the defense budget.

3. You say that surely the brain is the cause of consciousness, because consciousness disappears when the brain is destroyed. Now, why do we say that it disappears? The reason we say this, of course, is that external symptoms of consciousness, such as speech and intelligence, disappear.

At this point, let us consider what happens when we communicate with someone using a radio transmitter. We observe that the radio produces intelligent answers in response to our questions. If the circuits in

(continued on page 14)

Doing Bhakti-Yoga in Your Home

MAKING A HOME ALTAR FOR LORD KṚṢṆA

Every place is God's place—and here's one way
to put that understanding into practice.

by MADHYAMĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ



We ran down the echoing, tiled hall with delighted shouts, all nine of us, released from Sunday school, our Sunday shoes clattering, our Sunday hair-ribbons flying. At the end of the hall we went leaping down the steps, then swung around the corner to the breezeway and almost made it out the door to freedom when—
“Children!”

Uh oh. Mrs. Gorensman.

“Children, we must always remember that this is *God's* house. We don't run and shout here. We always walk nicely and keep our voices down. All right?”

PHOTO BY YAMARĀJA DĀSA

(Chorus) "Yes, Mrs. Gorensman."

We managed decorum the last ten feet to the door, as I recall. But once out the door of God's house and onto the streets of God's world, any thoughts of God or Mrs. Gorensman were dissolved in the autumn sunshine as we ran the ten blocks home for lunch.

And really, this attitude of ours was founded on what Mrs. Gorensman had taught us. What she *meant* to instill in us was respect for God's house. But implicit in her admonition was a dichotomy: *God's* house was where we behaved nicely and got gold stars for remembering Bible verses; *our* house was where we threw our socks on the floor and watched Mickey Mouse (and remembered every commercial, gold stars or not). Religion had a place in our lives, of course. But it was a place apart. God was ten blocks away, from ten to eleven in the morning, on Sunday for the Protestants and Catholics, on Saturday for the Jewish kids.

As we grew older, though, and explored our varied religious traditions more intently, we began to understand, at least theoretically, that every place should be God's place, since this world is His creation. But theoretical knowledge didn't help us in our daily lives. Walking nicely and keeping our voices down was fine for church or temple, but what do you do at football games? In fact, what does a football game have to do with God? And how about dates?

The conflict between theory and practice led me to search for a more integrated way of life, a way of life in which every activity in every place could be directly related to God. This search ended when I learned about the process of *bhakti-yoga*, devotional service to God.

One important step in the process of becoming God conscious is to make *your* home *God's* home. Instead of going to visit Him only once a week, invite Him into your home through the process of Deity worship: by setting up and taking care of a home altar. By remembering Him and having His association daily, you'll naturally develop more love for Him.

Kṛṣṇa, or God, is the Supreme Person. He has unlimited powers. One of those powers is His ability to be present personally in any of His multifarious energies. We've already spoken, in previous articles, about how He appears, or incarnates, in the energy of sound vibrations. When you chant His holy names or read scriptures spoken by or about Him, He is personally present with you.

But that is not the only way He can appear. God's form, which is unlimited and spiritual, can also manifest in an apparently material medium, in a way just suit-

able for our seeing Him. And in this form, whether it be a picture or sculpture, He will also kindly accept our service. This is His special mercy on us. Because we are imprisoned in our material bodies, with material eyes, we can't see His spiritual form now. So He comes in a form that is apparently material, just to encourage us to remember and serve Him.

This doesn't mean that we can worship anything or anyone as God. *Bhakti-yoga* is not pantheistic. We can't worship a brick, a tree, or our 1981 BMW and expect to be in touch with God. Nor does it mean that we can "make unto ourselves idols," which are no more than artistic concoctions of our imagination (golden calves,

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Can you show me God?"
Such cynics will
never see God.
We cannot see God
by our own efforts,
but God has the power
to reveal Himself
to us if He likes.***

voodoo dolls, and so on). The Vedic scriptures are clear on this point. Only those forms carefully described by the authorized scriptures, and confirmed through the disciple succession of spiritual masters, are worshipable.

If you want to get a letter to its destination, you have to drop it into an authorized mailbox. You can't just build a box, paint it red and blue, and expect your letter to reach its destination when you drop it in. (And if someone catches you making phony mailboxes, you'll be in big trouble.)

Now, the Māyāvādīs, or impersonalists, say that God is not really a person but we pretend He's a person to focus our meditation, to make it easier for us to become "self-realized." At that point, the Māyāvādīs say, we will understand that *we* are God. Then we can throw away our altars—or, better yet, just climb up and sit on them ourselves!

It's clear that this theory is silly. God

never forgets that He's God, and He doesn't have to do *yoga* to remember. We are tiny parts of God. Because we are small, we have forgotten Him. But He is an eternal person, and so are we. And *bhakti-yoga*, loving devotional service to God, is the eternal activity we're meant to engage in. Our perfection is not to *become* God, but to become perfect *servants* of God. And in order to engage us in that service, even in this material world, He has given us the means to worship His form, which is nondifferent from Himself.

But although we are in the material world, we don't perform Deity worship for material, fruitive results. We don't offer the Lord water so that He will reciprocate by making it rain. We don't burn candles and pray to hit the jackpot in the state lottery. We don't give a tenth of our income as some kind of "seed," hoping to reap financial security in return.

Because God is the owner of everything, whatever we give Him is actually already His. He has no need of our offering. But if we give Him our service out of love for Him, He will make that love increase. Automatically, our love for materialistic, self-centered life will decrease. And when our last bit of selfish attachment is gone, we will have fully developed our spiritual vision, our spiritual eyes.

When our love for God has fully developed, our senses will be purified. As the *Brahma-saṁhitā* says: "The devotees whose eyes are smeared with the ointment of love of God see Him within their hearts twenty-four hours a day."

Atheists often challenge, "All right, if there's a God, why can't I see Him? Can you show me God?" Such cynics will never see God. We cannot see God by our own efforts, but God has the power to reveal Himself to us if He likes. Trying to see God by our own efforts is like trying to see the sun at night. We may foolishly scan the heavens with powerful searchlights, but our efforts will prove useless. In the morning, however, when the sun rises by its own will, we can easily see it. Similarly, we cannot see God by our own endeavors, because our material senses are imperfect. But *bhakti-yoga*, including Deity worship, helps us purify our senses. We simply have to purify our senses and wait for the time when God will be pleased to reveal Himself to us. By our loving service, we try to please God. This is the process of *bhakti-yoga*.

Having a home altar is part of this process. Every time you see it, you'll remember Kṛṣṇa. You'll have a focus for your chanting and reading, and active engagement for all your senses. As Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura, once said, "Don't try to see God. Rather, act in such a way that

God will want to see you.” When Lord Kṛṣṇa sees your sincere desire to serve, He’s sure to reciprocate.

Setting Up Your Altar

When you set up your altar, you’re inviting Lord Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotees into your home. If you keep in mind that they’re the most honored guests you will ever entertain, the rules of Deity worship will be easy for you to understand and apply.

Where should you set up the altar? Well, how would you seat a guest? An ideal place would be clean and well lit, and free from drafts and household disturbances. Your guest, of course, would need a comfortable chair, but for the picture you’ll be worshipping, a wall shelf, a mantelpiece, a corner table, or the top shelf of a bookcase will do. You wouldn’t seat a guest in your home and then ignore him; you’d provide a place for yourself to sit, too, where you could comfortably face him and enjoy his company. So don’t make your altar inaccessible.

What do you need for an altar? The essentials are as follows:

1. A picture of the spiritual master
2. A picture of Lord Caitanya and His associates

3. A picture of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa

You’ll also want an altar cloth and as many items for offering as you can procure. These include water cups (one for each picture), candles and candle holders, a special plate for offering food, a small bell, incense and an incense holder, and fresh flowers, which you may offer in vases or simply place at the feet of the person they’re being offered to.

Let’s explain the items one by one.

The first person we worship on a home altar is the spiritual master. The spiritual master is not God. Only God is God. But because the spiritual master is the dearest servant of God, he deserves the same respect and honor as that given to God. He links the disciple up with God and explains the process of *bhakti-yoga* to him.

There are two kinds of *gurus*: the instructing *guru* and the initiating *guru*. Everyone in the West who takes up the process of *bhakti-yoga* owes an immense debt to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Before Śrīla Prabhupāda came to the West, no one here knew anything about the practice of pure devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, everyone who has learned of the process through his books, his BACK TO GODHEAD magazine, his tapes, or his Hare Kṛṣṇa movement should offer respect to Śrīla Prabhupāda. As the founder and spiritual guide of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, he is the instructing *guru* of us all.

As you progress in *bhakti-yoga*, you will eventually want to accept initiation. Śrīla Prabhupāda, before he left this world in 1977, also provided for this. He set things up in such a way that senior devotees would carry on his work by initiating their own disciples in accordance with his orders. When you accept initiation, you’ll also worship a picture of your own initiating *guru* along with Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Another picture that should be on your altar is a picture of Lord Caitanya and His four associates, who are called (all together) the Pañca-tattva. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the incarnation of God for this age. He is Kṛṣṇa Himself, descended in the form of His own devotee to

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teach people how to surrender to Him, specifically by chanting His holy names and performing other activities of *bhakti-yoga*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the most merciful incarnation. His mercy is so great that even if we offend Him in our worship (by doing things wrong, or by not doing everything we should), He ignores our offenses.

And of course your altar should have a picture of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, with His eternal consort, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the internal potency of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. She is devotional service personified, and devotees always take shelter of Her to learn how to serve Kṛṣṇa.

Now that you have the place and the pictures, set up the pictures nicely on the cloth, and you can begin your worship. The simplest worship you can offer is to chant the holy names of the Lord before your altar. In fact, this chanting of Hare

Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare is something you should do *along with* any other kind of worship. The chanting of the holy names of the Lord is the basis of all other methods of *bhakti-yoga*, and it is the sacrifice intended for this age.

Besides the chanting, offer the other items daily. Each morning, you should carefully clean the altar. Cleanliness is essential in Deity worship. You wouldn’t neglect cleaning the room of an important guest in your house, remember. Rinse out the cups and put fresh water in them daily. Place them conveniently close to the pictures. You should take away the flowers as soon as they become a little wilted if they are in vases, or daily if you have offered them by putting them at the base of the pictures. You can offer fresh incense at least once a day, and you can have the candles lit when you are chanting before your altar.

Kṛṣṇa explains in *Bhagavad-gītā* that although He is in need of nothing, He accepts offerings of fruit, flowers, leaves, or water, *provided* those offerings are made with love. If you wish, you may offer Kṛṣṇa fruit (or other foods that do not contain meat, fish, or eggs) by placing a generous portion on a special plate, which should be used only for that purpose. Set the plate on your altar before the pictures, bow down before the Lord, and humbly ask Him to accept your offering. While offering your prayers, ring the small altar bell; others in your home will know that you’re making an offering and should not be disturbed.

Everything offered on your altar becomes *prasādam*, the mercy of the Lord. Flower remnants, incense, the water, and the food—everything you offer for the Lord’s pleasure becomes spiritualized. The Lord enters into the offerings, and the remnants of such offerings are directly the Lord Himself. Therefore, not only should you deeply respect the things you’ve offered to Him, but you should distribute them to others. This distribution of *prasādam*, the Lord’s mercy, is an essential part of Deity worship.

We’ve only barely touched the surface of Deity worship in this article. (If you’re interested in the more elaborate Deity worship that goes on at the Hare Kṛṣṇa temples, visit the one nearest you and ask to talk to the head priest, or *pūjāri*, or write to me at our editorial offices in Philadelphia.) Next time, we’ll discuss in more detail the proper way to cook and offer food to the Lord. Please try the things we’ve suggested so far. It’s very simple, really: if you try to love God, you’ll gradually awaken to the realization of how much He loves you. That’s the essence of *bhakti-yoga*.

LETTERS

(continued from page 10)

the radio are destroyed, then this phenomenon stops. Do we conclude that the radio was the cause of the intelligent speech? Certainly not. The logical fallacy here is: "If A causes B, when A is destroyed B will no longer appear. When A is destroyed, B no longer appears. Therefore A causes B." This is the error in your analysis of the brain and consciousness.

I note, by the way, that the existence of an entity is not *proven* by the presence of certain symptoms that might derive from it. Nonetheless, it is frequently (though not always) reasonable to infer the presence of an entity from its symptoms. This observation applies, for example, to electrons, which we never directly see but we infer to exist from their macroscopic effects. It also applies to the soul.

Inferences from our direct sensory perception are always fallible, even though we are always making practical use of them. But our ability to make proper inferences can be greatly enhanced when we are guided by higher knowledge that we may not be able to derive from our own experience.

For example, we may not be in a position to infer Maxwell's equations from our own observations, but if we accept them

from experts in physics, these equations can help us in, say, designing a radio. Similarly, we are not in a position to verify directly the spiritual knowledge of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, but this knowledge can be of great practical value if we study it under proper guidance.

This brings us to your far from inadvertent remarks to the effect that religion stands for meaningless dogma. There are many subjects one can learn and practically apply only after receiving instructions from someone who knows. For example, I doubt that anyone, except possibly some truly remarkable genius, could understand modern theoretical physics without the aid of extensive written or spoken instructions. The same thing is true of spiritual knowledge dealing with the nature of the soul and God.

Of course, an ignorant person can simply deny that such knowledge exists. You could also assert, for example, that quantum chromodynamics is bunk. But apart from accepting the authority of physicists or thoroughly studying quantum chromodynamics, what basis would you have for forming an opinion about it? Likewise, unless you intensively study spiritual knowledge under someone truly expert in this field, how can you know whether or not such knowledge is really of value?

* * *

I discovered the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement while stationed in Hawaii (I am in the Army). As of yet I haven't been fortunate enough to receive initiation from a bona fide spiritual master. However, I do study the *Bhagavad-gītā*, follow the regulative principles [no meat-eating, no sex outside marriage, no gambling, and no taking of intoxicants], and chant sixteen rounds daily of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. I understand that chanting the Lord's names brings me deliverance from many repeated births and deaths.

I move frequently from one base to another, and at times it's very difficult to reach devotees or a temple. But nevertheless my subscription to BACK TO GODHEAD keeps me informed of activities, events, and holy days to observe. In addition, BACK TO GODHEAD increases my devotion and my determination to practice the science of self-realization.

I would like to encourage other members of the armed forces in similar conditions to have faith and no fear in carrying out Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's prediction: "There will be chanting of the Lord's holy names in every town and village."

Edward D. Smith

Fort Bragg, North Carolina

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

Second Canto: "The Cosmic Manifestation"

CHAPTER TEN

Bhāgavatam Is the Answer to All Questions

As our serialized presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam continues, we reach the conclusion of the second canto and begin the third, in which the great saint Vidura will approach the sage Maitreya for spiritual instruction. Here Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the speaker of the Bhāgavatam, begins relating the prelude to their meeting.

TEXTS 49-50

क्षतुः कौशारवेस्तस्य संवादोऽध्यात्मसंश्रितः ।
यद्वा स भगवांस्तस्मै पृष्टस्तच्चमुवाच ह ॥४९॥
ब्रूहि नस्तदिदं सौम्य विदुरस्य विचेष्टितम् ।
बन्धुत्यागनिमित्तं च यथैवागतवान् पुनः ॥५०॥

*kṣattuh kauśāraṅveṣṭasya
sānvādo 'dhyātma-saṁśritaḥ
yad vā sa bhagavāṁs tasmai
pṛṣṭas tattvam uvāca ha*

*brūhi naś tad idam saumya
vidurasya viceṣṭitam
bandhu-tyāga-nimittam ca
yathāivāgatavān puṇaḥ*

kṣattuh—of Vidura; *kauśāraṅveṣ*—as that of Maitreya; *tasya*—their; *sānvādaḥ*—news; *adhyātma*—in the matter of transcendental knowledge; *saṁśritaḥ*—full of; *yad*—which; *vā*—anything else; *sah*—he; *bhagavān*—His Grace; *tasmai*—unto him; *pṛṣṭaḥ*—inquired; *tattvam*—the truth; *uvāca*—answered; *ha*—in the past; *brūhi*—please tell; *naḥ*—unto us; *tat*—those matters; *idam*—here; *saumya*—O gentle one; *vidurasya*—of Vidura; *viceṣṭitam*—activities; *bandhu-tyāga*—renouncing the friends; *nimittam*—the cause of; *ca*—also; *yathā*—as; *eva*—also; *āgatavān*—came back; *puṇaḥ*—again (at home).

TRANSLATION

Śaunaka Ṛṣi said: Let us know, please, what topics were discussed between Vidura and Maitreya, who talked on transcendental subjects, and what was inquired by Vidura and replied by Maitreya. Also please let us know the reason for Vidura's giving up the connection of his family members, and why he again came home. Please also let us know the activities of Vidura while he was in the places of pilgrimage.

PURPORT

Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī was narrating the topics of the creation and destruction of the material world, but it appears that the ṛṣis headed by Śaunaka were more inclined to hear of transcendental subjects, which are on a higher level than the physical. There are two classes of men, namely

those too addicted to the gross body and the material world, and others, on the higher level, who are interested more in transcendental knowledge. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam gives facility to everyone, both to the materialist and to the transcendentalist. By hearing Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in the matter of the Lord's glorious activities both in the material world and in the transcendental world, men can derive equal benefit. The materialists are more interested in the physical laws and how they are acting, and they see wonders in those physical glamors. Sometimes, due to physical glamors, they forget the glories of the Lord. They should know definitely that physical activities and their wonders are all initiated by the Lord. The rose in the garden gradually takes its shape and color to become beautiful and sweet not by a blind physical law, although it appears like that. Behind that physical law is the direction of the complete consciousness of the Supreme Lord, otherwise things cannot take shape so systematically. The artist draws a picture of a rose very nicely with all attention and artistic sense, and yet it does not become as perfect as the real rose. If that is the real fact, how can we say that the real rose has taken its shape without intelligence behind the beauty? This sort of conclusion is due to a poor fund of knowledge. One must know from the above description of creation and annihilation that the supreme consciousness, being omnipresent, can take care of everything with perfect attention. That is the fact of the omnipresence of the Supreme Lord. Persons, still more foolish than the gross materialists, however, claim to be transcendentalists and claim to have such supreme all-pervading consciousness, but offer no proof. Such foolish persons cannot know what is going on behind the next wall, yet they are falsely proud of possessing the cosmic, all-pervading consciousness of the Supreme Person. For them also, hearing of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is a great help. It will open their eyes to see that simply by claiming supreme consciousness one does not become supremely conscious. One has to prove in the physical world that he has such supreme consciousness. The ṛṣis of Naimiṣāranya, however, were above the gross materialists and the false transcendentalists, and thus they were always anxious to know the real truth in transcendental matters, as discussed by authorities.

TEXT 51

सूत उवाच

राज्ञा परीक्षिता पृष्टो यदवोचन्महामुनिः ।
तद्दोऽभिघास्ये शृणुत राज्ञः प्रश्नानुसारतः ॥५१॥

*sūta uvāca
rājñā parīkṣitā pṛṣṭo
yad avoca mahā-muniḥ
tat vo 'bhidhāsyē śṛṇuta
rājñāḥ praśnānusārataḥ*

sūtaḥ uvāca—Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī replied; *rājñā*—by the King; *parīkṣitā*—by Parīkṣit; *pṛṣṭaḥ*—as asked; *yad*—what; *avoca*—spoke; *mahā-muniḥ*—the great sage; *tat*—that very thing; *vaḥ*—unto you; *abhidhāsyē*—I shall explain; *śṛṇuta*—please hear; *rājñāḥ*—by the King; *praśna*—question; *anusārataḥ*—in accordance with.

TRANSLATION

Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī explained: I shall now explain to you the very subjects explained by the great sage in answer to King Parikṣit's inquiries. Please hear them attentively.

PURPORT

Any question that is put forward may be answered by quoting the authority, and that satisfies the saner section. That is the system even in the law court. The best lawyer gives evidence from the past judgment of the court without taking much trouble to establish his case. This is called the *paramparā* system, and learned authorities follow it without manufacturing rubbish interpretations.

*īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ
sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ
sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam
(Brahma-saṁhitā 5.1)*

Let us all obey the Supreme Lord, whose hand is in everything, without exception.

Thus end the Bhaktivedānta purports of the Second Canto, Tenth Chapter, of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, entitled "Bhāgavatam Is the Answer to All Questions."

END OF THE SECOND CANTO

Third Canto: "The Status Quo"

CHAPTER ONE

Questions by Vidura

TEXT 1

श्रीसुक उवाच

एवमेतत्पुरा पृष्टो मैत्रेयो भगवान् किल ।
क्षत्रावनं प्रविष्टेन त्यक्त्वा स्वगृहमृद्धिमत् ॥ १ ॥

*śrī-śuka uvāca
evam etat purā pṛṣṭo
maitreya bhagavān kila
kṣattrā vanam praviṣṭena
tyaktvā sva-gṛham ṛddhimat*

śrī-śukaḥ uvāca—Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said; *evam*—thus; *etat*—this; *purā*—formerly; *pṛṣṭah*—being asked; *maitreyaḥ*—the great sage Maitreya; *bhagavān*—His Grace; *kila*—certainly; *kṣattrā*—by Vidura; *vanam*—forest; *praviṣṭena*—entering; *tyaktvā*—renouncing; *sva-gṛham*—own house; *ṛddhimat*—prosperous.

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After renouncing his prosperous home and entering the forest, King Vidura, the great devotee, asked this question of His Grace Maitreya Ṛṣi.

TEXT 2

यद्वा अयं मन्त्रकृद्भो भगवानखिलेश्वरः ।
पौरवेन्द्रगृहं हित्वा प्रविवेशात्मसात्कृतम् ॥ २ ॥

*yad vā ayam mantra-kṛd vo
bhagavān akhileśvaraḥ
pauravendra-gṛham hitvā
praviveśātmāsāt kṛtam*

yat—the house; *vai*—what else is there to say; *ayam*—Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *mantra-kṛt*—minister; *vaḥ*—you people; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *akhila-īśvaraḥ*—the Lord of everything; *pauravendra*—Duryodhana; *gṛham*—house; *hitvā*—giving up; *praviveśa*—entered; *ātmāsāt*—identify with oneself; *kṛtam*—so accepted.

TRANSLATION

What else is there to say about the residential house of the Pāṇḍavas? Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of everything, acted as your minister. He used to enter that house as if it were His own, and He did not take any care of Duryodhana's house.

PURPORT

According to the Gauḍiya *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva* philosophy, anything which satisfies the senses of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is also Śrī Kṛṣṇa. For example, Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma is nondifferent from Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*tad-dhāma vṛndāvanam*) because at Vṛndāvana the Lord enjoys the transcendental bliss of His internal potency. Similarly, the house of the Pāṇḍavas was also the source of transcendental bliss for the Lord. It is mentioned here that the Lord identified the house with His own Self. Thus the house of the Pāṇḍavas was as good as Vṛndāvana, and Vidura should not have given up that place of transcendental bliss. Therefore the reason for his quitting the house was not exactly family misunderstanding; rather, Vidura took the opportunity to meet Ṛṣi Maitreya and discuss transcendental knowledge. For a saintly person like Vidura, any disturbance due to worldly affairs is insignificant. Such disturbances, however, are sometimes favorable for higher realization, and therefore Vidura took advantage of a family misunderstanding in order to meet Maitreya Ṛṣi.

TEXT 3

राजोवाच

कुत्र क्षतुर्भगवता मैत्रेयेणास सङ्गमः ।
कदा वा सह संवाद एतद्वर्णय नः प्रभो ॥ ३ ॥

*rājovāca
kutra kṣattur bhagavatā
maitreyaṇāsa saṅgamah
kadā vā saha-saṁvāda
etat varṇaya naḥ prabho*

rājā uvāca—the King said; *kutra*—wherein; *kṣattuh*—with Vidura; *bhagavatā*—and with His Grace; *maitreyaṇa*—with Maitreya; *asa*—there was; *saṅgamah*—meeting; *kadā*—when; *vā*—also; *saha*—with; *saṁvādah*—discussion; *etat*—this; *varṇaya*—describe; *naḥ*—unto me; *prabho*—O my lord.

TRANSLATION

The King asked Śukadeva Gosvāmī: Where and when did the meeting and discussion take place between Saint Vidura and His Grace Maitreya Muni? Kindly oblige, my lord, and describe this to us.

PURPORT

Exactly as Śaunaka Ṛṣi inquired of Sūta Gosvāmī and Sūta Gosvāmī replied, so Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī replied to King Parikṣit's inquiries. The King was very anxious to understand the meaningful discussion that took place between the two great souls.

TEXT 4

न ह्यल्पार्थोदयस्तस्य विदुरस्यामलात्मनः ।
तस्मिन् वरीयसि प्रश्नः साधुवादोपबृंहितः ॥ ४ ॥

na hy alpārthodayas tasya
vidurasyāmalātmanah
tasmin varīyasi praśnah
sādhu-vāadopabṛhītaḥ

na—never; hi—certainly; *alpa-ārtha*—small (unimportant) purpose; *udayaḥ*—raised; *tasya*—his; *vidurasya*—of Vidura; *amala-ātmanah*—of the saintly man; *tasmin*—in that; *varīyasi*—highly purposeful; *praśnah*—question; *sādhu-vāda*—things approved by saints and sages; *upabṛhītaḥ*—full with.

TRANSLATION

Saint Vidura was a great and pure devotee of the Lord, and therefore his questions to His Grace Ṛṣi Maitreya must have been very purposeful, on the highest level, and approved by learned circles.

PURPORT

Questions and answers among different classes of men have different value. Inquiries by mercantile men in a business exchange cannot be expected to be highly purposeful in spiritual values. Questions and answers by different classes of men can be guessed by the caliber of the persons concerned. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, the discussion was between Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, the Supreme Person and the supreme devotee respectively. The Lord admitted Arjuna to be His devotee and friend (Bg. 4.3), and therefore any sane man can guess that the discussion was on the topic of the *bhakti-yoga* system. Actually the whole *Bhagavad-gītā* is based on the principle of *bhakti-yoga*. There is a difference between *karma* and *karma-yoga*. *Karma* is regulated action for the enjoyment of the fruit by the performer, but *karma-yoga* is action performed by the devotee for the satisfaction of the Lord. *Karma-yoga* is based on *bhakti*, or pleasing the Lord, whereas *karma* is based on pleasing the senses of the performer himself. According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, one is advised to approach a bona fide spiritual master when one is actually inclined to question from an elevated level of spiritual understanding. A common man who has no interest in spiritual values has no need to approach a spiritual master just as a matter of following fashion.

As a student, Mahārāja Parikṣit was serious about learning the science of God, and Śukadeva Gosvāmī was a bona fide spiritual master in the transcendental science. Both of them knew that the topics discussed by Vidura and Ṛṣi Maitreya were elevated, and thus Mahārāja Parikṣit was very interested in learning from the bona fide spiritual master.

TEXT 5

सूत उवाच

स एवमुषिवर्योऽयं पृष्टो राज्ञा परीक्षिता ।
प्रत्याह तं सुबहुवित्प्रीतात्मा श्रूयतामिति ॥ ५ ॥

sūta uvāca
sa evam ṛṣi-varyo 'yaṁ
pṛṣṭo rājñā parīkṣitā
praty āha taṁ subahu-vit
pṛitātmā śrūyatām iti

sūtaḥ uvāca—Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī said; *saḥ*—he; *evam*—thus; *ṛṣi-varyah*—the great ṛṣi; *ayaṁ*—Śukadeva Gosvāmī; *pṛṣṭah*—being questioned; *rājñā*—by the King; *parīkṣitā*—Mahārāja Parikṣit; *prati-*to; *āha*—replied; *taṁ*—unto the King; *su-bahu-vit*—highly experienced; *pṛitātmā*—fully satisfied; *śrūyatām*—please hear me; *iti*—thus.

TRANSLATION

Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī said: The great sage Śukadeva Gosvāmī was highly experienced and was pleased with the King. Thus being questioned by the King, he said to him, "Please hear the topics attentively."

TEXT 6

श्रीशुक उवाच

यदा तु राजा स्वसुतानसाधून्
पुष्पान्नघर्मेण विनष्टदृष्टिः ।
आतुर्यविष्टस्य सुतान् विबन्धून्
प्रवेश्य लाक्षामवने ददाह ॥ ६ ॥

śrī-śuka uvāca
yadā tu rājā sva-sutān asādhūn
puṣṇan na dharmeṇa vinaṣṭa-dṛṣṭiḥ
bhṛātur yaviṣṭhasya sutān vibandhūn
praveśya lākṣā-bhavane dadāha

śrī-śukaḥ uvāca—Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said; *yadā*—when; *tu*—but; *rājā*—King Dhṛtarāṣṭra; *sva-sutān*—his own sons; *asādhūn*—dishonest; *puṣṇan*—nourishing; *na*—never; *dharmeṇa*—on the right path; *vinaṣṭa-dṛṣṭiḥ*—one who has lost his insight; *bhṛātuḥ*—of his brother; *yaviṣṭhasya*—younger; *sutān*—sons; *vibandhūn*—having no guardian (father); *praveśya*—made to enter; *lākṣā*—lacquer; *bhavane*—in the house; *dadāha*—set on fire.

TRANSLATION

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: King Dhṛtarāṣṭra became blind under the influence of impious desires to nourish his dishonest sons, and thus he set fire to the lacquer house to burn his fatherless nephews, the Pāṇḍavas.

PURPORT

Dhṛtarāṣṭra was blind from birth, but his blindness in committing impious activities to support his dishonest sons was a greater blindness than his physical lack of eyesight. The physical lack of sight does not bar one from spiritual progress. But when one is blind spiritually, even though physically fit, that blindness is dangerously detrimental to the progressive path of human life.

TEXT 7

यदा सभायां कुरुदेवदेव्याः
केशामिर्मर्शं सुतकर्म गर्भम् ।
न वारयामास नृपः स्नुषायाः
स्वास्त्रैर्हरन्त्याः कुचकुङ्कुमानि ॥ ७ ॥

yadā sabhāyām kuru-deva-devyāḥ
keśābhimarśaṁ suta-karma garhyam
na vārayām āsa nṛpaḥ snuṣāyāḥ
svāsrair harantyāḥ kuca-kuṅkumāni

yadā—when; *sabhāyām*—the assembly; *kuru-deva-devyāḥ*—of Draupadī, the wife of godly Yudhiṣṭhira; *keśa-abhimarśam*—insult by grabbing her hair; *suta-karma*—action taken by his son; *garhyam*—which was abominable; *na*—did not; *vārayām āsa*—forbid; *nṛpaḥ*—the King; *snuṣāyāḥ*—of his daughter-in-law; *svāsrāiḥ*—by her tears; *harantyāḥ*—of she who was washing; *kuca-kuṅkumāni*—red dust on her breast.

TRANSLATION

The King did not forbid his son Duṣṣāsana's abominable action of grabbing the hair of Draupadī, the wife of the godly King Yudhiṣṭhira, even though her tears washed the red dust on her breast.

TEXT 8

द्यूते त्वधर्मेण जितस्य साधोः
सत्यावलम्बस्य वनं गतस्य ।
न याचतोऽदात्समयेन दायं
तमोजुषाणो यदजातशत्रोः ॥ ८ ॥

*dyūte tv adharmeṇa jitasya sādhoḥ
satyāvalambasya vanam gatasya
na yācato 'dāt samayena dāyam
tamo-juṣāṇo yad ajāta-śatroḥ*

dyūte—by means of gambling; *tu*—but; *adharmeṇa*—by unfair tricks; *jitasya*—of the vanquished; *sādhoḥ*—a saintly person; *satya-avalambasya*—one who embraced truth as shelter; *vanam*—forest; *gatasya*—of the goer; *na*—never; *yācataḥ*—when asked for; *adāt*—delivered; *samayena*—in due course; *dāyam*—right share; *tamaḥ-juṣāṇaḥ*—overwhelmed by illusion; *yat*—as much as; *ajāta-śatroḥ*—of one who had no enemy.

TRANSLATION

Yudhiṣṭhira, who was born without any enemy, was unfairly defeated in gambling. But because he had taken the vow of truthfulness, he went off to the forest. When he came back in due course and begged the return of his rightful share of the kingdom, he was refused by Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who was overwhelmed by illusion.

PURPORT

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was the rightful heir to his father's kingdom. But just to favor his own sons, headed by Duryodhana, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira's uncle, adopted various unfair means to cheat his nephews of their rightful share of the kingdom. At last the Pāṇḍavas demanded only five villages, one for each of the five brothers, but that was also refused by the usurpers. This incident led to the War of Kurukṣetra. The Battle of Kurukṣetra, therefore, was induced by the Kurus, and not the Pāṇḍavas.

As *kṣatriyas*, the proper livelihood of the Pāṇḍavas was only to rule, and not to accept any other occupation. A *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya* or *vaiśya* will not accept employment for his livelihood under any circumstances.

TEXT 9

यदा च पार्थप्रहितः सभायां
जगद्गुरुयानि जगाद कृष्णः ।
न तानि पुंसाममृतायनानि
राजोरु मेने क्षतपुण्यलेशः ॥ ९ ॥

*yadā ca pārtha-prahitaḥ sabhāyām
jagad-gurur yāni jagāda kṛṣṇaḥ
na tāni puṁsām amṛtāyanāni
rājoru mene kṣata-punya-leśaḥ*

yadā—when; *ca*—also; *pārtha-prahitaḥ*—being advised by Arjuna; *sabhāyām*—in the assembly; *jagat-guruḥ*—of the teacher of the world; *yāni*—those; *jagāda*—went; *kṛṣṇaḥ*—Lord Kṛṣṇa; *na*—never; *tāni*—such words; *puṁsām*—of all men of sense; *amṛta-ayanāni*—as good as nectar; *rājā*—the King (Dhṛtarāṣṭra or Duryodhana); *uru*—very important; *mene*—did consider; *kṣata*—dwindling; *punya-leśaḥ*—fragment of pious acts.

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa was sent by Arjuna into the assembly as the spiritual master of the whole world, and although His words were heard by some [like Bhīṣma] as pure nectar, it was not so for the others, who were completely bereft of the last farthing of past pious works. The King [Dhṛtarāṣṭra or Duryodhana] did not take the words of Lord Kṛṣṇa very seriously.

PURPORT

Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is the spiritual master of the entire universe, accepted the duty of a messenger, and, deputed by Arjuna, went to the assembly of King Dhṛtarāṣṭra on a peace mission. Kṛṣṇa is everyone's Lord, yet because He was the transcendental friend of Arjuna, He gladly accepted the role of messenger, exactly like an ordinary friend. That is the beauty of the Lord's behavior with His pure devotees. He reached the assembly and spoke about peace, and the message was relished by Bhīṣma and other great leaders because it was spoken by the Lord Himself. But due to the exhaustion of the pious results of their past deeds, Duryodhana, or his father, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, did not take the message very seriously. That is the way of persons who have no credit of pious deeds. By past pious deeds, one may become the king of a country, but because the results of the pious acts of Duryodhana and company were dwindling, it became evident from their actions that they were sure to lose the kingdom to the Pāṇḍavas. The message of Godhead is always like nectar to the devotees, but it is just the opposite to the nondevotees. Sugar candy is always sweet to a healthy man, but it tastes very bitter to persons suffering from jaundice.

TEXT 10

यदोपहृतो भवनं प्रविष्टो
मन्त्राय पृष्टः किल पूर्वजेन ।
अथाह तन्मन्त्रदृशां वरीयान्
यन्मन्त्रिणो वैदुरिकं वदन्ति ॥ १० ॥

*yadopahūto bhavanam praviṣṭo
mantrāya pṛṣṭaḥ kila pūrvajena
athāha tan mantra-dṛśāṁ varīyān
yan mantriṇo vaidurikaṁ vadanti*

yadā—when; *upahūtaḥ*—was called by; *bhavanam*—the palace; *praviṣṭaḥ*—entered; *mantrāya*—for consultation; *pṛṣṭaḥ*—asked by; *kila*—of course; *pūrvajena*—by the elder brother; *atha*—thus; *āha*—said; *tat*—that; *mantra*—advice; *dṛśām*—just suitable; *varīyān*—excellent; *yat*—that which; *mantriṇaḥ*—the ministers of state, or expert politicians; *vaidurikam*—instructions by Vidura; *vadanti*—do they say.

TRANSLATION

When Vidura was invited by his elder brother [Dhṛtarāṣṭra] for consultation, he entered the house and gave instructions which were exactly to the point. His advice is well known, and instructions by Vidura are approved by expert ministers of state.

PURPORT

Political suggestions by Vidura are known as expert, just as, in modern times, Paṇḍita Cāṇakya is considered the authority in good counsel in both political and moral instructions.

(continued in next issue)



Every Town and Village

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

Govinda's Restaurant Opens in Tirupati



In Tirupati, along the seven-mile-long mountain path to the temple of Lord Venkateśvara (a form of Lord Kṛṣṇa), pilgrims stop for rest and refreshment at the newly opened Govinda's Restaurant.

Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, India—Every week more than 200,000 pilgrims walk up the steep seven-mile footpath here to pay homage to Lord Venkateśvara (a Deity form of Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa) in His magnificent Tirumala temple. For years, many of them stopped off for refreshment at the temple-run snack bar along the way. Now that snack bar has become Govinda's, a restaurant run by Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees that serves only *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*, vegetarian food offered to Lord Venkateśvara.

Śrī G. Kumaraswamy Reddy, executive officer of the Tirumala temple, was re-

sponsible for the establishment of Govinda's here. It was his warm appreciation for the work of the Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees in Tirupati, headed by Śrīla Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodara Swami, that inspired him to donate the restaurant to the movement. He has also given the devotees a large piece of land and \$20,000 to build a temple-and-*āśrama* complex. That, along with the restaurant and the ongoing educational efforts of the devotees (see **BACK TO GODHEAD**, Vol. 17, No. 11), promises to make this popular place of pilgrimage even more spiritually attractive.

Spiritual Food Relief in New Orleans

New Orleans—For twenty-eight years now the Ozanam Inn, a branch of the worldwide Saint Vincent de Paul Society, has ministered to the homeless people of this city. The largest free organization of its kind in New Orleans, the Inn houses one hundred men a night and serves 24,000 free meals a month. Lately, a significant number of those meals have been *prasādam*, food offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa, which has provided spiritual as well as physical sustenance. What follows is a letter of appreciation from Brother Phillip Street, director of the Inn, to Vṛkodara dāsa, president of the New Orleans Hare Kṛṣṇa center, which regularly donates the *prasādam*.

"Prayerful greetings to you. I just wanted to write a personal note of heartfelt thanks to you on behalf of not only we brothers but also the men, women, and children who come here to Ozanam Inn seeking help, for your continued donations of prepared food. This will help immensely in our efforts to care for our destitute brethren.

"As you no doubt know, we rely on the Providence of God and the generosity of men and women such as yourself to supply the needs for our work. . . . Thank you once again for your help, and may our dear lord bless you and all those who are dear to you."

Major Publisher Releases Book on the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement

New York—Grove Press has announced the publication of *Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna: Five Distinguished Scholars on the Krishna Movement in the West*, edited by Steven J. Gelberg, a senior editor of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. The book consists of five lively, revealing, and highly instructive dialogues between the editor (a Hare Kṛṣṇa devotee known within the movement as Śubhānanda dāsa) and five noted scholars of religion: Harvey Cox, the well-known Harvard theologian; A. L. Basham, the eminent Indologist; and Thomas J. Hopkins, Larry D. Shinn, and Shrivatsa Goswami, three specialists in devotional Hinduism. Together, these dialogues shed much light on relevant historical, sociological, psychological, and theological issues surrounding the movement.

"My main reason for doing this book," explains Śubhānanda, "was simply to provide the public with an opportunity to look beyond the popular distortions and myths about the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement and to get an in-depth view of the movement through the eyes of some unbiased and highly perceptive and articulate scholars."

Prepublication reviews highly praise the work. Diana Eck of Harvard writes, "This is a substantial and welcome contribution to our understanding of one of the most vibrant devotional traditions in India and its meaning and significance in the contemporary West. . . . A sensible and open discussion of many of the questions one has always wanted to ask about the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement and of the issues it has raised for the religious life of the West. . . . A rich source of information for scholars, students, and lay readers." Ninian Smart, one of the world's most respected scholars of comparative religion, writes, "This book will help us to understand the logic and appeal of the Kṛṣṇa movement and its roots in Indian spirituality. Its approach is both learned and human, for it engages a number of knowledgeable people—including eminent scholars both of Hinduism and Christianity—in dialogue. The results are illuminating."

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna will be available from Hare Kṛṣṇa centers and from regular commercial bookstores.

YAMARAJA DĀSA



Paramānanda dāsa, leader of the Gītā-nāgarī farm, with one of the prize-winning Brown Swiss.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Cows Win Commendation

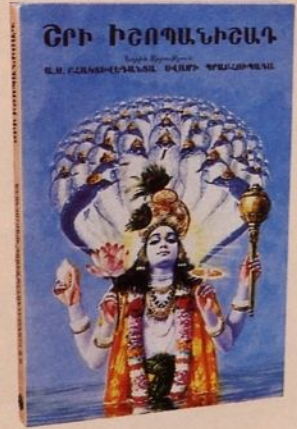
Port Royal, Pennsylvania—The Pennsylvania Dairymen's Association has commended the Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees at the Gītā-nāgarī farm community here for having the best herd of Brown Swiss cows in the state. At the dairymen's annual banquet near Harrisburg, Dave Roth, president of the association, and Penrose Hollowell, Pennsylvania's secretary of agriculture, praised the Gītā-nāgarī community for its contribution to the state's dairy industry, the fifth largest in the United States.

Gītā-nāgarī's display table at the banquet attracted scores of dairymen. They stopped by to admire the photos of cows and oxen, sample the all-milk confections

offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and find out from Paramānanda dāsa, the leader of the Gītā-nāgarī community, why the cows at the farm give so much milk (each one an average of 15,953 pounds of milk with 664 pounds of butterfat for the 1981-82 testing year).

"In the *Bhagavad-gītā*," Paramānanda explained, "Lord Kṛṣṇa says that the main duty of farmers is to protect the cows. This means treating them like we would our mother—with affection and respect. Our cows know they won't be sent off to the slaughterhouse when their milk bags run dry, so they're happy. And happy cows give the most, and richest, milk."

Armenian Īsopaniṣad, Other Books Published



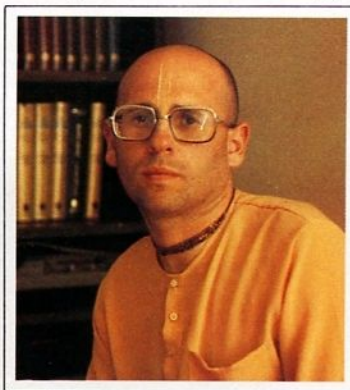
Paris—The eight million Armenians living in various countries throughout the world now have a chance to read a book on Kṛṣṇa consciousness in their mother tongue. The book is Śrīla Prabhupāda's translation, with commentary, of *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*, a work from the *Vedas* that helps establish the personalistic conception of the Supreme.

Hari-vilāsa dāsa, president of Spiritual Sky Scented Products, Inc., in Europe, funded the publication, and Keram Chahinian, an Armenian friend of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, translated it. Future Armenian publications will include *The Science of Self-Realization* (a compendium of Śrīla Prabhupāda's articles from *BACK TO GODHEAD* magazine) and his *Easy Journey to Other Planets*.

Elsewhere overseas, the German branch of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust has just completed publishing the German editions of all of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books—some seventy volumes in the original English. Working under the guidance of Śrīla Harikeśa Swami, who oversees the affairs of the movement in northern Europe, several devotees contributed to the translation effort over more than a decade.

In other publishing news, the Los Angeles branch of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust has released the fourth volume of *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*, the seven-volume biography of Śrīla Prabhupāda by Śrīla Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami; the second and third volumes of the Eleventh Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, a joint effort of translation and commentary by Śrīla Hridayananda dāsa Goswami and Gopiparāṇadhana dāsa; and *Chant and Be Happy*, a paperback book on the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* based on the teachings of Śrīla Prabhupāda and featuring an interview with former Beatle George Harrison.

A Spiritual Challenge



The Logic of the Absolute

Given proof of God, would a materialist know how to read it?

by ŚRĪLA HRIDAYANANDA DĀSA GOSWAMI

People often ask us, “Can you prove the existence of God?” Proof indicates a conclusive demonstration that establishes the validity of an assertion, in this case the assertion that God exists.

But as soon as we speak of a demonstration, the next question is “To whom shall we demonstrate?” If we speak of evidence or data, we must know who will see and hear it. In other words, who will judge the results of a particular experiment, test, or trial.

Consider a hypothetical example. Doctor Waterport, the famous scientist, has just discovered a sophisticated formula that solves a technical mathematical problem. He proudly calls his colleagues together and presents them with thirty pages of ultratechnical symbols. His fellow scientists pore over the pages and conclude, “Yes, this is the answer we’re looking for.” If Dr. Waterport were to show the proof to an ordinary person on the street, the person wouldn’t even know how to hold the pages right side up. Because he’s not trained in mathematics, the proof would be meaningless to him. Conclusion: Proof demands a qualified audience.

Certainly, any valid proof must be logical. But how we apply logic depends on our previous experience. For example, suppose an apple tree is growing outside your window. One morning you hear a sound like that of an apple hitting the ground, and when you look outside you see a ripe apple lying beneath the tree. Logically, you conclude, the apple has just fallen from the tree.

Your logical statement rests on your previous observation that the apple tree produces apples, that the apples fall to the ground, and that they make a certain

sound when this occurs. And your statement appears logical to those with similar experience.

So we apply logic in terms of our experience. Therefore, how can we expect to make God logical to a person who has had no spiritual experience? How can God appear logical to a person to whom the very terminology of the science of God is unintelligible? Thus it is ludicrous when those who are spiritually blind, deaf, and dumb demand that God be made “logical” to them and that His existence be “proved.”

In general, it is illogical for a person untrained in some field of knowledge to demand that a particular fact pertaining to that field of knowledge be logically demonstrated to him. For example, if someone who has no idea what a number is demands that I logically demonstrate that two plus two equals four, I can’t do it. Similarly, if a spiritual ignoramus demands that God be logically demonstrated to him, his very request is illogical. So how can the illogical demands of atheists be met?

We can easily provide innumerable proofs of God—provided we are free to stipulate that the judge of the data be a person who is spiritually trained. Devotees of the Lord who are advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can logically, evidentially, and demonstratively deal with the reality of the soul and God. But materialistic fools demand that God, a nonmaterial being, be reduced to a material formula.

It is patently absurd to demand material proof for a nonmaterial entity. Mathematical or physical laws describe predictable ways in which material things interact. God and the soul are not material and thus cannot be reduced to material descriptions.

This does not mean, however, that the soul is outside the jurisdiction of logical discussion. Consciousness itself is spiritual, not material, and thus the study of consciousness, or spirit, is not beyond the scope of human beings.

In fact, all fields of knowledge depend on tangible perception of the soul, since all sciences depend on a conscious scientist who works with consciousness, which is spiritual, not material. In other words, spiritual awareness is intrinsic to all types of awareness, although materialistic people do not recognize that consciousness is spiritual.

So there is no lack of data to prove the existence of spirit, since consciousness itself is spiritual. The problem is that foolish intellectuals whimsically designate consciousness a material, not a spiritual, entity. But as soon as we accept the simple truth that consciousness itself is spiritual, we find that in every stage of awareness and in every field of knowledge our perception of all manner of data is resting on a spiritual experience—the experience of being conscious. And when consciousness studies itself, it reaches the stage called spiritual consciousness, or self-realization. Ultimately, when the self-realized person fixes his consciousness on the source of all consciousness, he reaches the realization of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

For one who has not perceived the superior pleasure of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, it will seem illogical to restrict his material enjoyment. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person, however, perceives that spiritual consciousness is far more pleasurable and satisfying than material consciousness. He

(continued on page 31)

Pure Love Through Transcendental Sound

Sounds can change history—and hearts.

by SATYARĀJA DĀSA

We should never underestimate the power of words. A few properly chosen words, spoken or sung, can change history. *La Marseillaise* inflamed mobs during the French Revolution. Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" inspired the Yankees to continue giving "the last full measure of devotion." The *Horst Wessel Song* fueled the dictatorship of Nazi Germany. *We Shall Overcome* unified the civil rights movement. And the songs of Bob Dylan and the Beatles helped create an entire counterculture.

But all these words, powerful as they were, couldn't solve the real problems of existence—repeated birth, old age, disease, and death. Time passed, the impact of these songs and pronouncements faded, people forgot. And the inexorable problems of life in the material world continued unabated.

To solve these problems we need to hear and vibrate words that are supramundane, words that can inspire us at the deepest spiritual level. Such words do exist, and they are described in ancient India's Vedic literature as *śabda-brahman*, "the Absolute Truth in the form of words, or sound."

For thousands of years the sacred texts of the *Vedas* have taught that one can extricate himself from the bonds of material life by hearing and chanting transcendental sounds. The common, unenlightened person is in a sleeplike state, oblivious of his real nature as a spiritual being and of

Hearts filled with love for Kṛṣṇa, Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His followers spread the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* through the towns and villages of West Bengal, India, some five hundred years ago. A chant that's formed of holy names of God, the *mantra* invokes the presence of God Himself through transcendental sound. According to Vedic scriptures, Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself came to this world as Lord Caitanya to teach this chanting as the sublime way to revive our dormant love for God. And now, people all over the world are chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

his relationship to the Supreme Being. The *Vedas* say, "Wake up! Having attained the human form of life, achieve self-realization and break out of the bonds of repeated birth and death."

According to the Vedic literatures, *śabda-brahman* can awaken us from our materialistic slumber. But this spiritual sound must be received from those adept at the process of *bhakti-yoga*, devotional service to the Supreme Lord. In other words, these sounds may be given to the common man, asleep to spiritual life, by one who is awake and fully cognizant of his spiritual nature. Such an initiator into the truths of spiritual sound is called a *guru*, or spiritual master.



The Vedic literature asserts that the nonpareil of all spiritual sounds is the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, the Great Chant for Deliverance—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Chanting these sixteen words is the best way to awaken to our spiritual life. The word *Kṛṣṇa* is a name of God meaning "the all-attractive one," *Rāma* means "the all-pleasing one," and *Hare* is an invocation to Harā, Kṛṣṇa's internal spiritual energy. Thus the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is a prayer to the Lord and His energy for the privilege of engaging in His service. If we regularly hear and chant this sound vibration, we will become pure, en-



lightened, and awake to our eternal life of bliss and knowledge in the service of the Lord.

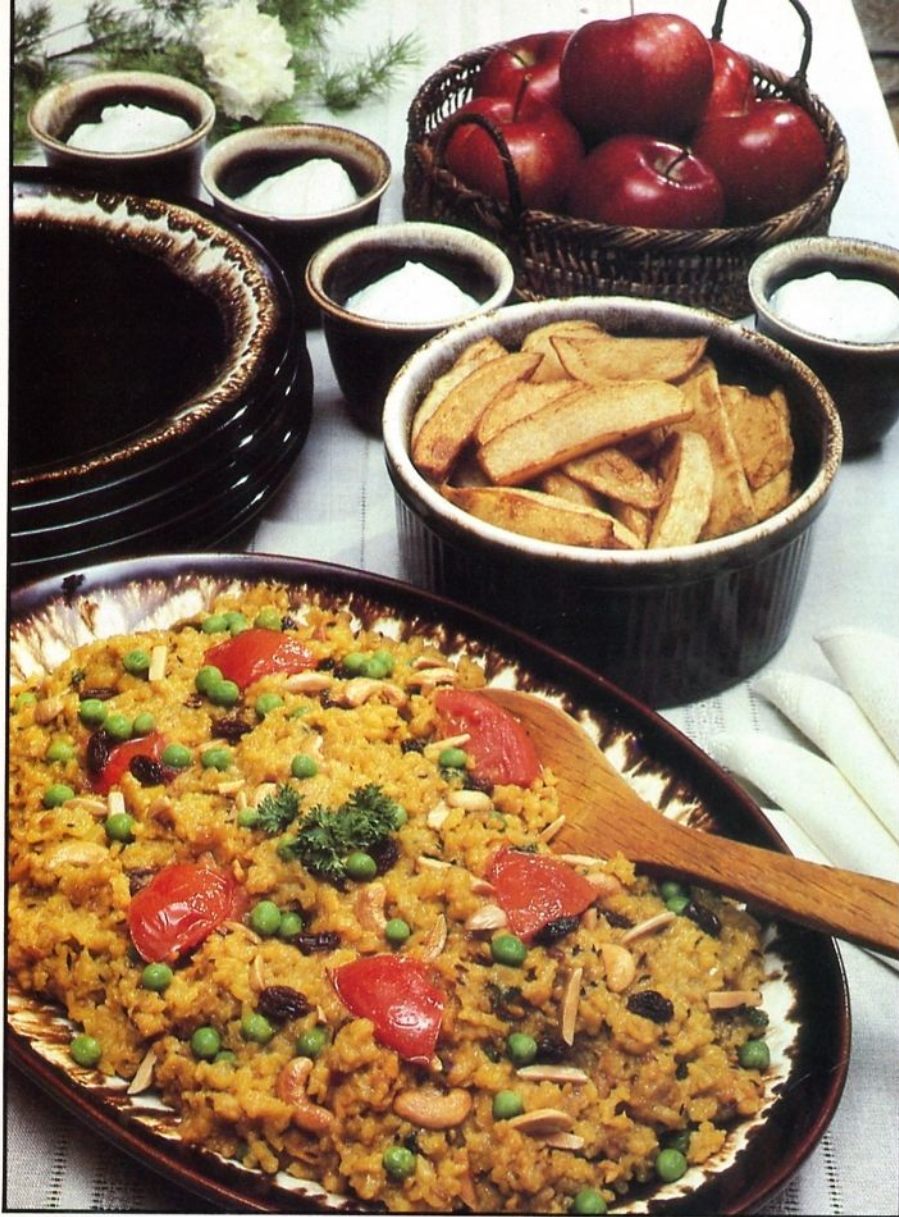
Although anyone can start chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa at any time and make definite spiritual progress, there is an art and science to chanting. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Kṛṣṇa Himself in the role of His own devotee, appeared in Bengal, India, five hundred years ago to teach that art and science. Lord Caitanya based His teachings on authoritative Vedic texts like *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He taught that the name of the Lord is His sound incarnation and that since the Lord is absolute there is no difference between His name and Him personally. Thus, by

chanting the holy name of God, we can directly associate with Kṛṣṇa through sound.

As we become adept at chanting and hearing the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, we pass through three stages: the offensive stage, the clearing stage, and the perfected stage. In the offensive stage we still desire various kinds of sense pleasure, but we are struggling to become pure. In the second stage we clear off all material contamination and begin to taste the real nectar of the name. And in the perfected stage we attain the most coveted goal—pure love of God. Lord Caitanya taught that love of God is the highest goal of all living beings, the very essence of authentic spirituality.

The mission of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement is to follow, realize, and propagate the teachings of Lord Caitanya.

The information in the Vedic literature about sound vibration and man's relationship with God is extremely confidential. Nonetheless, by the mercy of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who first propagated the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* outside India, everyone can now enter into the mysteries of these divine truths simply by chanting the transcendental names of God—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. These are truly the words that are changing history. ❀



Lord Kṛṣṇa's Cuisine

A Poor Man's Feast

These dishes prepared for Lord Kṛṣṇa offer a simple way to enjoy plenty.

Text and photo by
VIŚĀKHĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

A poor man's feast fit for a king." That's what Śrīla Prabhupāda, my spiritual master, called the meal in this photograph—*khicari*, fried potatoes, yogurt, and fresh fruit.

Feast? Where are the cocktails, the hors d'oeuvres, the entrée, or at least the dessert?

No, this feast is not an extravaganza. But whether you're rich or poor, it will give you great pleasure and satisfaction, and without much cost. In this feast there's a range of taste, texture, and color, without unneeded calories but with

enough bulk to satisfy you. You won't feel the urge to overeat. And when you feast on *khicari*, you'll get half the protein you need in a day for only \$.40. (If you "feast" on a steak instead, you'll have to spend \$1.10 to get the same amount of protein.)

This feast is for poor men in another way, also. No doubt a man is poor if he must eat *khicari* because he can't pay the extra \$.70 for a steak. But a poor man is also one who has no spiritual knowledge. In this sense, most of us are embarrassingly poverty-stricken. And for us these

dishes are a genuine feast.

The ingredients for this *khicari* feast were gathered, prepared, and offered to the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, in a mood of love and devotion. Since the cook was thinking of Kṛṣṇa when she made it, she didn't use any ingredients He wouldn't accept: no meat, no fish, no eggs. And since she understood that Kṛṣṇa had kindly provided her with the ingredients, the fire, and the intelligence she needed to cook, she offered the dishes to Him with sincere humility. "My dear Lord," she thought, "I have nothing to offer You; everything is Yours already. But I have made this meal for Your pleasure. Now please accept it."

When we hear this simple prayer, the skeptic within us immediately judges it a pathetic display of sentimentality: "Is God so hungry that He needs to eat? And if He eats, why is the food lying there after the offering?" But if we look into the matter, we'll find satisfying answers to such objections.

First, if we accept that God exists, we must also accept that He's omnipotent. (By definition, God is unlimited: a limited God makes as much sense as cold heat.) From the Vedic scriptures we learn that one of the ways God is omnipotent is that each of His senses can perform the functions of all the others. So simply by seeing the devotees' offering, or by hearing their words of love as they offer the food, Kṛṣṇa actually tastes the dishes. And Kṛṣṇa, unlike us, can taste them without having to consume them. He can taste everything and then leave it all for us to enjoy. Actually, Kṛṣṇa is hungry not for our food, but for our love.

All food, whether or not offered to Kṛṣṇa, is produced by His natural arrangement. But once He tastes our offering, the quality of the food changes completely. It becomes spiritualized, Kṛṣṇa-ized, and just by eating it we become spiritually wealthy. To explain how, Śrīla Prabhupāda would relate a simple analogy. Sometimes over-indulgence in milk will cause an illness, but milk is also the cure for that illness when it is taken in another form, yogurt. Yogurt is nothing but milk transformed by the addition of a culture, yet its effect is therapeutic.

Similarly, *prasadam* is food that has been transformed from matter to spirit by the touch of the Supreme Lord. Therefore, although we are implicated in material life by eating ordinary food, we are liberated by eating *prasadam*. Lord Kṛṣṇa states this in *Bhagavad-gītā*: "The devotees of the Lord are released from all kinds of sins because they eat food that is first offered for sacrifice. Others, who prepare food for personal sense enjoyment, eat only sin" (Bg. 3.13).

Śrīla Prabhupāda further elaborated on this point in a letter to one of my God-

brothers: “Regarding your question ‘What is meant by an object regaining its spiritual quality?’ the answer is that in our conditioned state we take it for granted that everything is separated from Kṛṣṇa. But actually, nothing can be separate from Kṛṣṇa, because everything is resting on His energy. Therefore, things which we now consider matter regain their spiritual quality when dovetailed for the cause of the Absolute Truth, Kṛṣṇa.

“For example, when we cook food for ourselves, it is a different thing from the food which is prepared and offered to

Kṛṣṇa. The same *dāl* [bean soup] and rice are material for one purpose but become spiritual when offered to Kṛṣṇa. So on the higher platform, there is nothing material when everything is accepted in relationship with Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Spirit.”

Medicine will act, whether taken knowingly or unknowingly. Similarly *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*. And you don’t have to live in a Hare Kṛṣṇa temple to feel the spiritual effects of *prasādam*. You can cook, offer, and partake of *prasādam* alone or with your family and friends, and you’re sure to get tangible spiritual benefit.

In this time of confusion, *prasādam* can be a pleasant introduction to spiritual life. Just by eating some, a person who is otherwise uninterested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness may become curious—“What are these dishes? How were they made? Why were they offered?”—and from that point progress spiritually.

As Śrīla Prabhupāda once remarked, “*Prasādam* is our secret weapon”—not a weapon to harm, but a weapon to end our spiritual poverty and make each of us rich, eternally. Why eat a feast that does anything less? ❀

(Recipes by Yamunā-devī dāsi)

Cauliflower, Green-Pea, and Mung-Bean Stew (Mung Khicari)

This dish is superbly composed and is satisfying as a meal in itself. Śrīla Prabhupāda once commented, “A bowl of this *khicari*, a small portion of plain yogurt, and a dry fried-potato dish is a poor man’s feast fit for a king.”

Preparation time: About 1 hour
Servings: 4 to 6

1 cup *bāsmatī* rice or other good quality long-grain white rice
 2/3 cup split mung beans, without skins
 1 small cauliflower
 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon *asafetida*
 5 tablespoons *ghee* (clarified butter) or, if *ghee* is unavailable, 4 tablespoons vegetable oil and 1 tablespoon butter
 1/2 tablespoon fresh ginger root, scraped and minced
 1/2 to 1 tablespoon seeded, minced fresh hot green chilies (use as desired)
 1 tablespoon cumin seeds
 2/3 cup fresh or frozen green peas
 7 cups water
 1 1/4 teaspoons turmeric
 2 1/2 teaspoons salt

- Sort out any stones from the split mung beans and wash and drain the beans.
- Wash the cauliflower and trim it into florets 2 inches long by 3/4 inch thick, and then rinse and dry them. Keep the cauliflower and *asafetida* next to the stove.
- Over a high flame, heat 4 tablespoons of *ghee* or vegetable oil in a heavy 3- or 4-quart saucepan for 15 seconds. Stir in the minced ginger root, seeded green chilies, and cumin seeds and fry for 5 to 15 seconds, or until the cumin seeds turn golden brown.
- Quickly add the *asafetida* and then immediately drop in the cauliflower. Turn the florets constantly with a spoon, frying them for about 4 or 5 minutes, until slightly browned and partially cooked. Stir in the rice and mung beans and fry for 1 minute.
- Pour in the green peas, water, and turmeric and bring to a full boil over a high flame. Reduce flame to low, partially cover, and simmer (stirring occasionally) for about 45 to 55 minutes, or until the rice and mung

beans are soft and fully cooked and the vegetables are succulent. Stir in the salt and 1 tablespoon of butter or *ghee* before offering to Kṛṣṇa.

Rice—and-Split-Pea Stew with Fried Cashews (Pongali Khicari)

This juicy, thick, and mildly seasoned south Indian stew is an ideal way to combine the complementary proteins of split peas and rice. When you eat peas and rice together, you get 43 percent more protein than you’d get if you ate them separately. What’s more, this easy-to-prepare dish is also easy to digest, and it tastes great.

Preparation time: about 1 hour
Servings: 5 or 6

1/2 cup green or yellow split peas
 1 cup *bāsmatī* or other good quality uncooked long-grain white rice
 7 1/2 cups water
 5 1/2 tablespoons *ghee* or vegetable oil
 2 tablespoons fresh ginger root, scraped and minced
 2 teaspoons cumin seeds
 6 whole cloves
 1/4 teaspoon *asafetida*
 1 teaspoon turmeric
 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
 1/2 cup raw cashews, chopped or broken coarse
 5 or 6 pats of butter, if desired
 5 or 6 sprigs parsley

- Soak the split peas for 1 hour and drain. If you’re using *bāsmatī* rice, clean, wash soak, and drain it.
- Partially cook the split peas by rapidly boiling them for 15 minutes in 3 cups of water. Pour into a strainer and drain.
- Over a medium to medium-high flame, heat 3 tablespoons of *ghee* or vegetable oil for 30 to 60 seconds in a heavy 3-quart saucepan (nonstick cookware is ideal). Stir in the minced ginger, cumin seeds, and cloves, and fry for about 30 to 45 seconds, or until the cumin seeds turn golden brown.
- Add the *asafetida* and then immediately stir in the rice; fry for about 2 or 3 minutes. Pour in 4 cups of water, the turmeric, black pepper, and salt, and rapidly bring to a full boil. Stir in the parboiled split peas. Now

cover with a tight-fitting lid, reduce the flame to low, and simmer for about 30 minutes or until the stew is tender. If the mixture is too thick, stir in part or all of the remaining 1/2 cup water. Remove from the flame.

5. Heat the remaining *ghee* or oil in a small frying pan over a low flame. Stir-fry the cashew bits until golden brown, and then fold into the stew. Place the stew over a medium-low flame and simmer for 1 or 2 minutes. Now garnish each serving with a pat of butter and a sprig of parsley, and offer the first one to Kṛṣṇa.

Simple Rice-and-Mung Stew with Braised Tomatoes (Gili Mung-Ki Khicari)

Warming, nourishing, and tasty, this stew is exceptionally easy to digest and an excellent source of nutrition.

Preparation time: About 1 hour
Servings: 5 or 6

3/4 cup *bāsmatī* or other good quality long-grain white rice
 3/4 cup split mung beans, without skins
 1 teaspoon turmeric
 1/2 teaspoon *garam masālā* (try an Indian grocery)
 3 tablespoons *ghee* or vegetable oil
 2 teaspoons cumin seeds
 1/8 to 1/2 dried red chili pepper (use as desired)
 1/4 teaspoon *asafetida*
 2 medium-size tomatoes

- Wash the tomatoes and cut each of them into eight wedges.
- Place the rice, mung beans, water, turmeric, and *garam masālā* in a heavy saucepan and bring to a full boil. Reduce the flame to low, partially cover, and gently simmer for about 45 minutes to an hour, or until the ingredients are tender and the liquid is absorbed. Remove from the flame.
- Over a medium to medium-high flame, heat the *ghee* or vegetable oil in a small saucepan over a medium to medium-high flame for about 1 minute. Stir in the cumin seeds and dried red chili, and fry for about 30 to 45 seconds, or until the cumin seeds are golden brown. Then sprinkle in the *asafetida* and immediately add the tomato wedges. Fry for 2 to 3 minutes, or until the tomatoes soften and glisten with *ghee* or oil. Now pour the fried seasoning into the *khicari*, stir in the salt, and offer to Kṛṣṇa.



JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS

The Philosophy of Dr. Frog

A look at the limitations of our mind and senses.

by DRUTAKARMĀ DĀSA

There was once a community of frogs living in a well near the Atlantic Ocean. None of them had ever been out of the well, so they knew nothing of the outside world.

Then one day a particularly athletic young frog managed to leap out of the well. He began to explore. When he came to the beach and saw the ocean, he was astonished. He'd never seen anything like it, and he rushed back to the well to report his discovery.

Back in the well, the young frog excitedly asked to see the most learned frog in the community. This senior frog knew all there was to know about the sociology, history, and geography of the world-in-a-well. He was a veritable repository of frogish knowledge. Let's call him Dr. Frog.

"Where have you been?" asked Dr. Frog of the young explorer. "What did you see?"

"I saw a vast body of water," replied the young frog.

"How vast? Was it twice the size of our well?" And Dr. Frog puffed himself up a little in appreciation of such a huge body of water.

"No, no, sir. It's much larger than that. You see—"

"Was it four times the size of our well?" Dr. Frog puffed himself up some more.

"No, no, sir. Much, *much* larger."

"Ten times the size of our well?" Dr.

Frog puffed prodigiously.

"No, no, you don't understand."

And with that Dr. Frog puffed himself up a little more—and burst.

* * *

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder and spiritual guide of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, would sometimes tell this story to illustrate the limitations of the scientific method when applied to ultimate questions such as the origin of the universe or the existence and nature of God.

And scientists themselves admit these limitations. In 1980, Kenneth E. Boulding, president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, said this during an address to the organization's annual convention: "Cosmology . . . is likely to be very insecure, simply because it studies a very large universe with a very small and biased sample. We have only been looking at it carefully for a very small fraction of its total time span, and we know intimately an even smaller fraction of its total span in space."

Śrīla Prabhupāda's criticism of material knowledge echoes that found in the Vedic literature, India's large body of philosophical writings. Thousands of years ago the Vedic sages analyzed the reasons why knowledge acquired through the material senses and mind is defective. First of all,

the senses themselves are limited and imperfect. Second, we easily become illusioned. Third, we make mistakes. And fourth, we have a tendency to cheat, to claim possession of the truth when the foundations of our knowledge are shaky.

Let's take a closer look at these impediments to materially acquired knowledge.

Imperfect Senses

The first problem we face when trying to get accurate information about the external world is that our senses have physiological limits, or "thresholds of perception." Take the eyes, for example. We can see only a tiny fraction of the total electromagnetic spectrum. An electromagnetic wave can range from one quadrillionth of a meter up to 100 million meters in length. And of this immense array of energy, we can see only the waves between 400 and 750 millimicrons long. (A millimicron is a billionth of a meter.) Violet falls around the 400 millimicron range, blue around 450, green around 500, yellow around 600, and red around 700. Anything outside this thin band is invisible to us.

Our hearing is limited in the same way. Sound waves are measured in hertz, or cycles per second. Human hearing extends from 20 hertz up to 20,000 hertz. We're deaf to any vibration above or below this range.

If we examine each of our remaining

senses, we'll find them similarly limited.

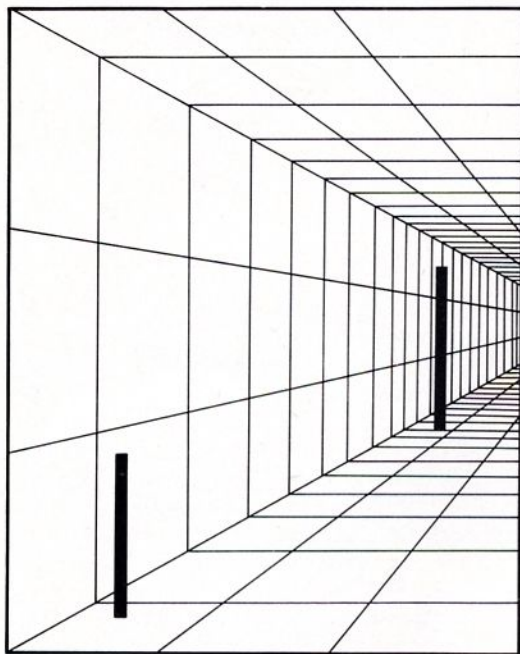
So our senses are imperfect. But what of scientific instruments? Can't they help us get more perfect knowledge? Not really. They merely complicate things. Nobel-Prize-winning physicist Eugene Wigner points out, "Even if we photograph the stars, we must eventually 'take in' by our senses what the photograph shows. Furthermore, without our senses, we could not handle a photographic camera. Clearly, all knowledge comes to us ultimately through our senses."

So even if amplified or refined by instruments, whatever knowledge we base on sense perception is no more perfect than our imperfect senses.

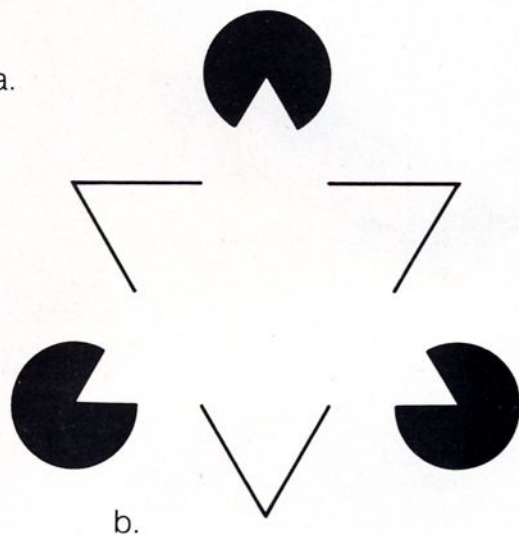
Illusion

Our second defect is that we're subject to illusion. Many of us have had the ex-

Our eyes often play tricks on us. The two bars in figure a. are of equal height. The white triangle in figure b. isn't really there. The drawing of the "trident" in figure c. befuddles our mind and eye with its impossible perspective. And the diagonal lines in figure d. are parallel.



a.



b.

perience of driving down the highway on a hot day and seeing what looks like water up ahead, only to discover that none is actually there. So even if Dr. Frog could have gotten out of his well and seen the ocean, his perceptual problems wouldn't have been over. "It is possible that I am wrong that the wet-looking blue patch apparently over there is the sea," says Dr. R.L. Gregory, director of the Brain and Perception Laboratory at the University of Bristol, England. "I might possibly be dreaming or drugged. This may be unlikely, but it is possible; so my perceptions are not certain."

Psychologists and other students of perception have done much research into illusion, particularly in the realm of vision. (See illustrations above.)

The sense of touch is also highly suscep-

tible to illusion. If our hand has been warmed sufficiently, "warm" water will feel cool. If the hand has been cooled, "cool" water will feel warm. This phenomenon leads to situations in which we can perceive the same water as simultaneously cool and warm! If we taste an orange after tasting sugar, the orange tastes sour. But after a lemon, an orange tastes sweet. Auditory illusions are also common, as the art of ventriloquism clearly demonstrates.

But there is another way in which ordinary perception puts us into illusion: The objects of our senses are constantly changing from moment to moment. They aren't stable features of reality. This difficulty becomes particularly evident when we try to label these objects. In *The Social and Psychological Distortion of Information*, Charles K. West, professor of educational psychology at the University of Illinois, says, "To name an object as 'paper' is to

give it a permanence that somewhat masks the fact that it is a temporary appearance, temporarily existing in time and space."

The same observation was made fifty centuries ago in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, a classic Vedic philosophical treatise. The *Bhāgavatam* describes the cosmic manifestation as "the world of names." In his commentary on this passage, Śrīla Prabhupāda explains, "The whole material creation is a jugglery of names only; in fact, it is nothing but a bewildering creation of matter like earth, water, and fire. The buildings, furniture, cars, bungalows, mills, factories, industries, peace, war, or even the highest perfection of material science, namely atomic energy and electronics, are all simply bewildering names of the material elements with their concomitant reactions."

Mistakes

Yet another difficulty with sense perception is that we all make mistakes. Dr. Gregory (the brain specialist from Bristol) says, "Science, with all its dramatic successes, has from its beginnings also generated wildly incorrect accounts: stars as pinpricks in a crystal globe, electricity and heat as fluids, the brain as an organ to cool the blood. . . . These are dramatic deviations from what we now see as truth; and when invented they were deviations from what then appeared true."

One recent example of such a mistake concerns the brontosaurus, best known of the dinosaurs, usually pictured as a snub-nosed, blunt-toothed giant. Speaking of the skeleton at the Carnegie Institute, assistant curator David Berman admits, "He's got the wrong head. There are four

other museums that have brontosaurus skeletons on exhibit, and they all have the wrong heads."

It turns out the brontosaurus actually had a long snout and pointed teeth. The confusion apparently began in 1881 when a respected Yale paleontologist used the skeleton of a brontosaurus excavated in Colorado to put together the first picture of the huge reptile. Berman says, "He actually used a head that was found three or four miles away from the skeleton, but no one knew." Berman's colleague, Wesleyan University professor John McIntosh, says, "He guessed. He usually guessed right in things like this, but this time he didn't."

In another instance, three astronomers recently discovered a significant mistake in the Hubble Constant, an equation used as a cosmic yardstick to measure enormous distances in the universe. The Hubble Constant—named after astronomer Edwin

P. Hubble—has undergone so many corrections since he first formulated it that many astronomers now laughingly call it “the Hubble Variable.”

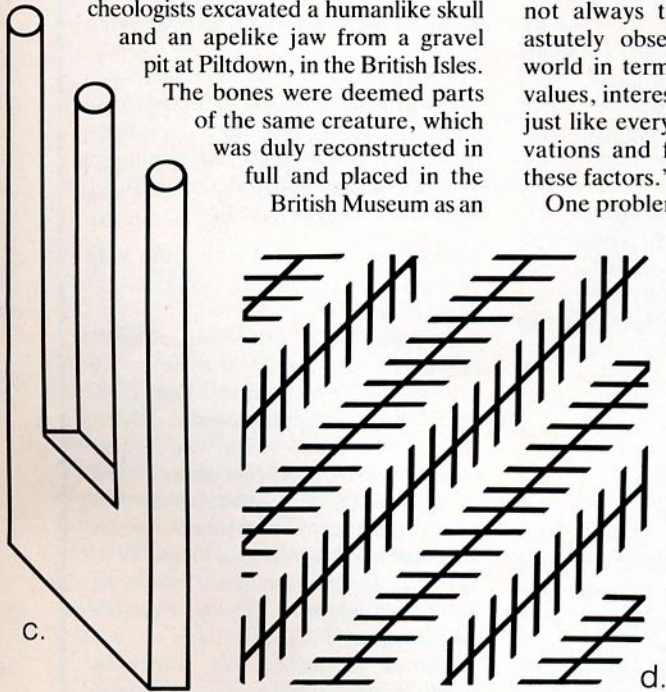
Clearly, with our imperfect senses and our illusion-prone mind, mistakes are inevitable.

Cheating

To err is human, the saying goes, but unfortunately humans sometimes go beyond innocent error and deliberately propagate untruths. Scientists are not immune to this shortcoming.

For many years, textbooks on evolution routinely cited the Piltdown Man as evidence that human beings have descended from an apelike ancestor. In 1912, archaeologists excavated a humanlike skull and an apelike jaw from a gravel pit at Piltdown, in the British Isles.

The bones were deemed parts of the same creature, which was duly reconstructed in full and placed in the British Museum as an



example of a transitional phase between ancient ape and modern man. In 1953, however, investigators discovered that the jawbone of the Piltdown Man was actually of very recent origin and had simply been stained to look like a fossil. In addition, someone had filed the teeth down to change their appearance. In other words, the Piltdown Man was a fraud, apparently engineered by one of the original discoverers.

More recently, U.S. congressional committees have been investigating allegations that scientists working under federal research grants routinely falsify experimental data to keep the grant money coming. The *Los Angeles Times* reported, “In one of the congressional sessions, Dr. John Long admitted in sworn testimony that he had falsified research results in an experiment he conducted on Hodgkin’s Disease at the renowned Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. He also admitted concealing from his co-workers

findings that cells he had been describing for years as human cancer cells were in fact cells from a squirrel monkey.”

Such incidents are causing great consternation among leaders of the scientific community, who fear that growing public mistrust will result in funding cutbacks. Nevertheless, scientists still seem to enjoy quite a substantial reservoir of public confidence. In his book on the distortion of information, Dr. Charles West says, “Scientific information is thought not to be affected by the intellectual and emotional pitfalls which influence ordinary persons. Just to use the word *scientific* means to many people that the information is highly significant, indisputable, dispassionate, objective, beyond reproach, free from dogma, and highly rational.” But such is not always the case. As Dr. West so astutely observes, “Scientists view the world in terms of their needs, attitudes, values, interests, concepts, and structures just like everybody else, and their observations and findings are influenced by these factors.”

One problem is that nearly all scientists are employed by large institutions, usually a major university, a big corporation, or the government. So in addition to being hampered by all the imperfections of sensory perception, the scientist is under constant pressure to modify his findings to meet the needs of the institution he’s working for. As Dr. West notes, “The controls operate throughout the stages of research, which include problem selection, problem articulation, data analysis, hypothesis formation, and solution, or articulation of findings.”

Perfect Knowledge

Taking all this into consideration, we should be highly doubtful about the picture of the universe given us by natural science, what to speak of its ideas about ultimate questions like the origin of life and the existence of God.

Does this mean, however, that we can never hope for answers to such questions? No, but it does mean that we have to find another method of getting them.

According to the Vedic literature, the way to receive perfect knowledge about such ultimate questions is called the *avaroḥa-panthā*, the descending path of knowledge. It stands in contrast to the ascending path of material science, the method of speculative research with the imperfect

mind and senses. As we have seen, this ascending path can never lead to certain knowledge. But on the descending path, we accept knowledge from a perfect source, one beyond the four defects. Only in this way can we circumvent these impediments and attain knowledge of God.

Consider the predicament of a man who doesn’t know who his father is because the father left home before he was born. How can the son know his father’s identity for sure? One alternative would be for the son to personally interview millions of men—obviously a tedious and most likely fruitless endeavor. This is the ascending path of knowledge. Another alternative is for the man to approach his mother and ask her who his father is. This method, the only method with any hope of certainty, is the descending path of knowledge.

The problem, of course, is finding a source of perfect knowledge—a source not subject to the four defects outlined above. Such a source is especially needed when we are searching for answers to questions about the origin of life and matter or the existence and nature of God—in other words, the Absolute Truth.

Devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa recognize the Vedic literature as the primary source of perfect knowledge about the Absolute Truth. Admittedly, a certain amount of faith is needed to embark on the process of realizing the truth contained in the Vedic knowledge, a process known as *bhakti-yoga*, or devotional service. But this faith is no different from the faith a freshman in a college chemistry course must have to begin his studies. He can’t be sure that the experiments will work or that the information in the textbooks is accurate (indeed, as we have seen, some of it probably isn’t), but he has faith in his professor, an expert in chemistry, and in all those who have gone before him, completed the course, and confirmed to their own satisfaction that the corpus of standard knowledge is true. Similarly, when someone takes up devotional service, he comes under the tutelage of a spiritual master, an expert in devotional service who teaches the knowledge contained in the Vedic literature and who has personally realized the Absolute Truth. The neophyte devotee also meets others who are further on in the course of *bhakti-yoga* and who have realized the Absolute Truth to some extent. And he himself begins to realize transcendental knowledge as he continues serving the Lord.

So the knowledge derived from the practice of *bhakti-yoga*, though outside the purview of the material senses and mind, is as scientific—or more so—than what we commonly accept as scientific fact.

The Vedic literature tells us that perfect knowledge originates with the Supreme

Personality of Godhead, who is the creator and controller of the entire material manifestation. If we wish to understand the ultimate meaning of a painting, we should approach the artist who painted it. He's the best source of knowledge about his own creation. Similarly, the Supreme Lord is the best source of knowledge about the universe. He is not hampered by the defects of ordinary human beings. His senses are perfect and unlimited, and He is completely free from the propensity to become illusioned, make mistakes, and cheat.

At the beginning of creation, Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke the perfect Vedic knowledge to Brahmā, the first created being in the universe. Brahmā then repeated the same perfect knowledge to his son and disciple Nārada. Nārada in turn spoke it to the sage Vyāsa, who repeated it to his son and disciple Śukadeva Gosvāmī. And in the same way the Vedic knowledge has come down to the present day through a chain of disciplic succession. At a certain point, the Vedic teachings were committed to writing.

The most essential Vedic texts, such as *Bhagavad-gītā*, contain the direct words of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In contrast to other scriptures, which give only the most rudimentary accounts of creation, the Vedic literature gives detailed accounts of the origin of the cosmic manifestation, from the atom to the varieties of planetary systems.

The best way to attain perfect knowledge, then, is to approach a genuine spiritual master in the line of disciplic succession descending from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and to study the Vedic literature under his direction. The *Bhagavad-gītā* advises, "Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth." And the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* states, "To learn the transcendental science, one must approach a spiritual master who is part of a genuine disciplic succession and who is fixed in the Absolute Truth." The link with the spiritual master is so important that the disciple traditionally prays, "I offer my respectful obeisances unto my spiritual master, who, with the torchlight of knowledge, has opened my eyes, which were blinded by the darkness of ignorance."

So by accepting the transcendental knowledge that comes down through the chain of pure devotees of Kṛṣṇa, one can rise above the defects of the material mind and senses and reach a scientific understanding of the Absolute Truth. The alternative is Dr. Frog's philosophy—which is ultimately a bust.

THE YOGA DICTIONARY

The Sanskrit language is rich in words to communicate ideas about spiritual life, yoga, and God realization. This dictionary, appearing by installments in BACK TO GODHEAD, focuses upon the most important of these words (and, occasionally, upon relevant English terms) and explains what they mean. (For a guide to proper pronunciation, please see page 1.)

Dhāma—A holy place of pilgrimage, usually a site of the Lord's pastimes.

The Vedic scriptures tell us that one can reduce the reactions to his past sinful activities by visiting a *dhāma* and bathing in the holy waters there. That's why millions of pilgrims visit the *dhāmas* in India each year.

But the importance of a *dhāma* goes beyond the ritual bathing in the holy waters. If one wants to get the full benefit of the *dhāma*, he should hear spiritual topics from the self-realized souls who reside there. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says that if one travels to a *dhāma* just to bathe but neglects to hear from realized persons, he is no better than a cow or an ass.

India is full of *dhāmas*. In northern India there are Vṛndāvana, where Lord Kṛṣṇa enacted His childhood pastimes five thousand years ago; Hardwar, situated on the Ganges where it flows out of the foothills of the Himalayas; Ayodhyā, the site of Lord Rāmacandra's pastimes and the capital of His kingdom; and also Benares and Prayāga. Near Calcutta in Bengal is Māyāpur, where Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared five hundred years ago. On the eastern coast of India is Purī, where the Ratha-yātrā chariot festival of Lord Jagannātha annually draws more than a million pilgrims, and on the western coast is Dvārakā, where Lord Kṛṣṇa enacted His later pastimes. And there are many more.

In the broader sense, any place connected with Lord Kṛṣṇa or His devotees is a *dhāma*. Thus the many temples of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness are also *dhāmas*, and anyone who wants spiritual purification but can't travel to India can take advantage of them.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra—the head of the Kuru dynasty, which instigated the fratricidal War of Kurukṣetra five thousand years ago.

Blind from birth, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, goaded on by his eldest son, Duryodhana, disenfranchised his nephews, the five Pāṇḍavas, and tried to have them murdered.

The plot failed, however, and all of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons perished in the Kurukṣetra War. Afterward Dhṛtarāṣṭra was taken in by King Yudhiṣṭhira, the eldest Pāṇḍava, and given a place of honor in his palace. Dhṛtarāṣṭra had truly become

a pitiful figure, for he was living in the palace of those whom he had tried to murder and who had brought about the death of his sons.

At this time, Dhṛtarāṣṭra's wise and saintly brother, Vidura, returned from pilgrimage and rebuked Dhṛtarāṣṭra for his humiliating dependence on the Pāṇḍavas. Vidura told Dhṛtarāṣṭra that he should leave the palace immediately, go to the forest, and prepare for impending death.

Vidura's instructions were just what Dhṛtarāṣṭra needed, and he retired to the forest to practice yogic meditation. Soon Dhṛtarāṣṭra achieved liberation from the bondage of matter and merged with the impersonal feature of the Lord.

Dhruva—the son of the great king Uttānapāda, who ruled the world millions of years ago.

Because Dhruva's stepmother had insulted him, Dhruva left home at the age of five and went to the forest to seek God. On the way, he met his spiritual master, Nārada Muni, who taught him how to realize God by practicing austerity and meditation. Dhruva was determined to achieve a kingdom better than that of his father or even his great-grandfather, Lord Brahmā, the creator of the universe. So Dhruva diligently followed Nārada's instructions.

Dhruva intensified his austerities month by month until he was standing on one leg and taking only one breath of air every twelve days. By his deep meditation on the Supreme Lord, Dhruva pleased Him, and He appeared before Dhruva in His four-armed form.

When Dhruva saw his beloved Lord, he was so elated that he no longer wanted the kingdom he had strived for. In ecstasy, Dhruva said, "Now that I am seeing You, who are like the most beautiful gem, the valuable kingdom I wanted seems just like a piece of broken glass."

Yet the Lord fulfilled all of Dhruva's desires. He awarded him dominion over the polestar, which is a spiritual planet within the material universe. Like all spiritual planets, the polestar is eternal. So Dhruva won a kingdom greater than that of his great-grandfather—and still went back to Godhead.

The full history of Dhruva appears in the Fourth Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Logic

(continued from page 21)

further perceives that sinful activities—activities against the laws of God—harm that consciousness. Thus it is entirely logical for a Kṛṣṇa conscious person to obey the laws of God, just as it is logical for an ordinary citizen to obey the laws of the state.

Ultimately, we must come to the stage of absolute logic, which refers to absolute perception, a perception of things with eternally recognizable properties and eternally established relationships. For example, God is the supreme master and enjoyer and we are His eternal servants. Thus it is absolutely logical for us to serve Him, for we are then situated in our natural, constitutional position. To serve a mundane employer may be logical, but it is not *absolutely* logical, since after the employer's death, or upon his bankruptcy, serving him is illogical.

In conclusion, logic is a secondary process that follows the primary process of consciousness. We are conscious, for example, that numbers have particular values and properties, and based on this perception, we can state that a particular mathematical equation is either logical or illogical. Similarly, by purifying our existence through the practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we can perceive the values and properties of God, and thus we can discern that a particular statement about God is either logical or illogical. By confirming our analysis with the Vedic literatures, which are standard reference works of spiritual science compiled by realized devotees, we can perfectly understand the science of God in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. ❀

FESTIVALS

and the 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 Hare Kṛṣṇa center nearest you will gladly tell you more about the meaning of the festivals listed here.

Month of Viṣṇu
(March 29–April 27)

April 19—Pāpa-mocanī Ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).

Month of Madhusūdana
(April 28–May 26)

May 5—Disappearance of Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Thākura, sixteenth-century author of *Caitanya-Bhāgavata*, one of the main biographies of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

May 8—Varūthinī Ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).

RESOURCES

Pictures for your home altar. Framed 8 x 10 color prints: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Lord Caitanya and His associates, and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. \$3.00 each. ISKCON Educational Services, 3764 Watsoka Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90034.

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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Are Devotees of Kṛṣṇa “Holier-Than-Thou”?

“The Hare Kṛṣṇas have a holier-than-thou attitude,” some people say. And whenever I hear that kind of talk, I start to reflect on why someone would think that. True, the devotees strongly condemn things most people think normal: illicit sex, meat-eating, intoxication, and gambling. That’s bound to cause a reaction. And one reaction may well be to label us “holier-than-thou.” This charge, however, is unfair, and I would like to explain why.

First of all, from studying the Vedic scriptures and the lives of great saints, devotees learn to respect and aspire for the quality of humility. So although a devotee understands that what he’s doing—serving the Supreme Lord—is the best activity a person can perform, he doesn’t think himself superior to others. When Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared as Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach the science of devotional service, He advised every devotee “to think himself lower than the grass, to be more tolerant than a tree, and to expect no personal honor but always to give all respect to others.”

A devotee is humble because he understands his position as an eternal spirit soul who, as a result of false pride, has fallen from his original home in the eternal, spiritual world. Rebelling against God, he has chosen to come into this material world to try to enjoy apart from Him. Now, by the grace of God and the spiritual master, he has again taken up his spiritual activities of devotional service. So he is very grateful. Understanding that he is a fallen soul, saved by the Lord’s causeless mercy, he remains humble.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (5.18), Lord Kṛṣṇa explains that a devotee sees all living entities equally: “The humble sages, by virtue of true knowledge, see with equal vision a learned and gentle *brāhmaṇa*, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and a dog-eater.” This vision frees the devotee of prejudices based on race, sex, nationality, or social status. The devotee cannot consider himself superior, because he sees that all living beings are equal in spiritual identity.

The virtues of humility and equal vision are certainly exalted, and only a few devotees attain them to the highest degree. Nevertheless, all devotees in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement strive to develop these virtues. So they never look disdainfully on any creature—man, woman, devotee, nondevotee, animal, plant. How, then, can a devotee be labeled “holier-than-thou”?

Of course, a sincere devotee of God will strongly condemn materialistic life. Yet even while condemning, he “hates the sin, not the sinner.” A devotee doesn’t have to abandon humility to decry godlessness. It is his duty to speak out against illusion, blindness, and deceit—not to demean others but to uplift them. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.5.7) enjoins every devotee who is truly merciful to try to enlighten those who are ignorant of spiritual science and addicted to the path of materialism. “If a blind man is walking down the wrong path,” the *Bhāgavatam* says, “how can a gentleman allow him to continue on his way to danger? No wise or kind man can allow this.”

Sometimes a devotee is blasphemed or even physically attacked while trying to spread God consciousness. (Jesus Christ is the perfect example.) Still, many devotees have gladly taken the risk and done God’s work. A holier-than-thou attitude could hardly sustain such a person. An uncompromising teacher of God consciousness must have real conviction, humility, tolerance, and faith in the ultimate protection of the Lord.

And he must also have knowledge. He must know that since each spirit soul has free will, one person cannot force another to take up Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is a matter of love, not force. So the devotee sees everyone as part and parcel of his beloved Lord, approaches as many people as possible, and attempts to introduce them to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Some people argue that the missionary spirit itself is a holier-than-thou attitude. They say that people should be allowed to do as they like, without being

bothered by any preaching or proselytizing. Of course, such critics are themselves “preaching” by putting forward their hedonistic ethic.

Every intelligent person wants the best for himself and for society, and simply wanting to improve society doesn’t necessarily mean one is arrogant or prideful. The real question should be, Who has the best program for improving society? Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, a great devotional saint and scholar of the sixteenth century, answered this question by declaring that Lord Caitanya is the most munificent person because He distributed love of God freely to society at large.

The devotees of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement share this view. Whereas other programs may partially or temporarily relieve the sufferings of humanity, Lord Caitanya’s gift—pure love of Kṛṣṇa—is best because it gives complete relief, for eternity.

The root cause of suffering is material life itself, which we have brought on ourselves by turning away from God. The best welfare work, therefore, is to inform people of their spiritual nature, their relationship with God, and how to act in that relationship so they can return to their eternal home in the spiritual world. When people are God conscious, this material world is like the spiritual world: free from anxiety.

The devotees of Kṛṣṇa are convinced that they have the real solution to the problems of the world. Following the lead of great devotees since time immemorial, they accept the Vedic conclusion that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and that serving Him with devotion is the best activity for all mankind. They are ready to discuss these views with others on the basis of philosophy, logic, and scripture. Because they see every living being equally and because they understand that forgetfulness of God is the root of all suffering, they work selflessly to educate humanity.

Holier-than-thou? No. The devotees of Kṛṣṇa are serving the best interests of everyone. —SDG

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(continued from the back cover)

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(This list of worldwide Hare Kṛṣṇa centers continues on the inside back cover.)