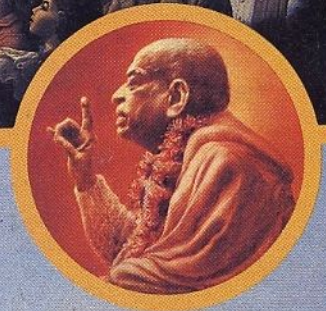


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

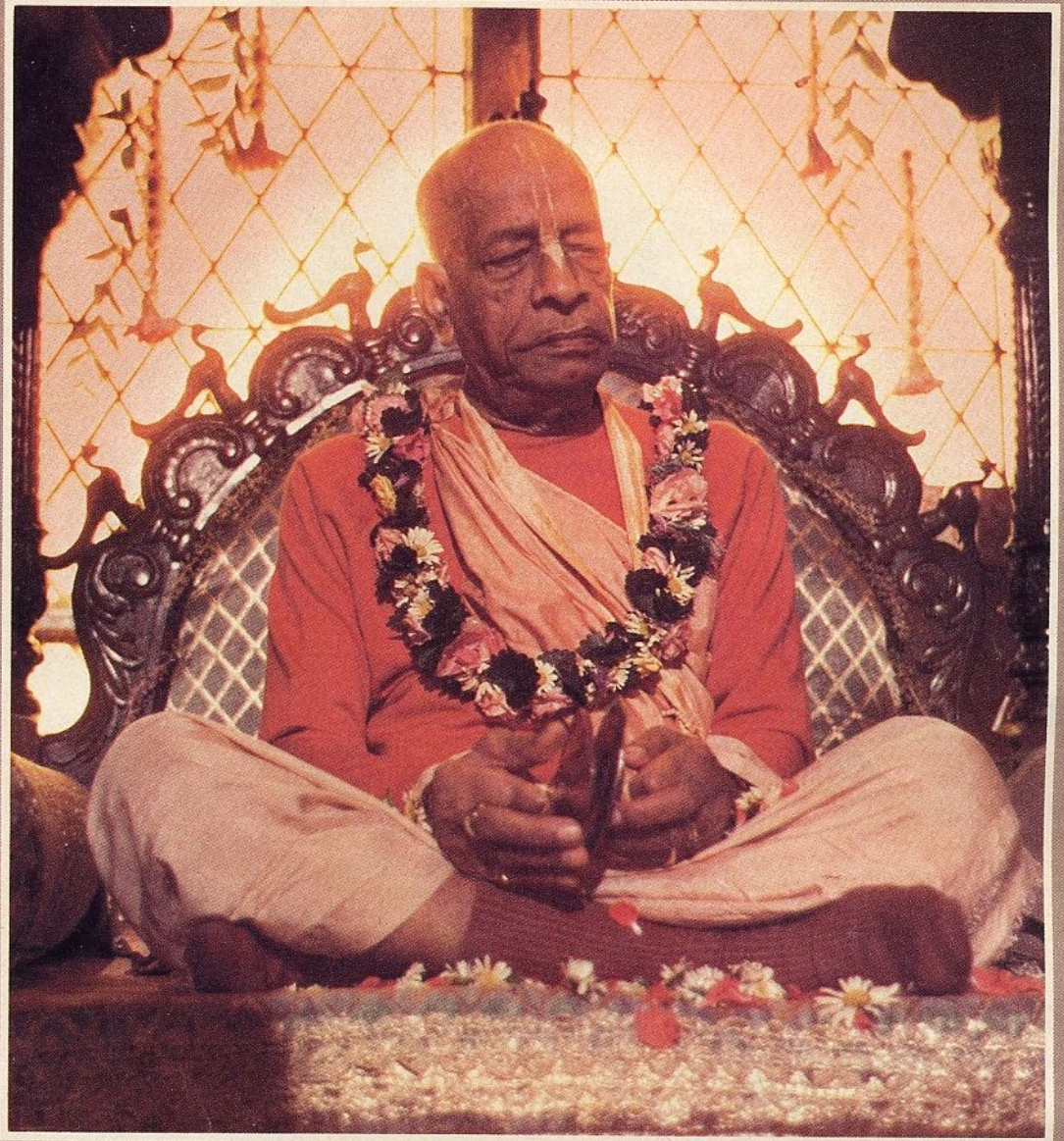
BACK TO GODHEAD

Vol. 18 No. 9

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



**His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedānta
Swami Prabhupāda,**
Founder-*Ācārya* of the
International Society
for Krishna Con-
sciousness, came to
America in 1965, at age
sixty-nine, to fulfill his
spiritual master's
request that he teach
the science of Kṛṣṇa
consciousness through-
out 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 worldwide.
Meanwhile, traveling
almost nonstop, Śrīla
Prabhupāda molded his
international society
into a worldwide
confederation
of *āśramas*, schools,
temples, and farm
communities. He
passed away in 1977 in
India's Vṛndāvana, the
place most sacred to
Lord Kṛṣṇa. 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.

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His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda

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PRONUNCIATION. We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic 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 *ri* in *rim*, and *ṛ* like the *ch* in *chair*. Pronounce the aspirated consonants (*ch*, *jh*, *dh*, etc.) as in *staunch*-heart, *hedg*-hog, 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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COVER: Kṛṣṇa, the Darling of Vṛndāvana. The infinitely powerful Supreme Personality of Godhead displays this infinitely lovable aspect only to His dearest devotees—those who always think of Him as the ineffably beautiful child told of in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and who serve Him in a mood of complete selflessness and spontaneous love. To others, Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself in other ways: as a stern lawgiver to the God-fearing worshiper, as unlimited, eternal light to the impersonalist, as cruel death to the atheist. "How one approaches Me determines how I respond to him," declares Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. And though Kṛṣṇa is impartial to all, He is ever inviting us to give up our hopeless efforts for happiness in this world of death and to return home, to the spiritual world, and join Him in His eternal pastimes of love. (Painting: Dhruva Mahārāja dāsa)

KUNḌALINĪ, REINCARNATION, THE ASTRAL WORLD, AND MORE

Questions and Answers On the Science of Transcendence

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

This conversation with guests took place at the Hare Kṛṣṇa center in Los Angeles in the late sixties.

Guest: What is the outcome of the continual chanting of *om*?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Like the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, *om* is a manifestation of the Supreme Lord in the form of sound vibration. That is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. So, Hare Kṛṣṇa and *om* have practically the same value, but chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is easier. Another reason we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa is that it was specifically chanted by Lord Caitanya.*

Om is generally chanted at the beginning of Vedic mantras: *om tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam sadā. . . om pūrṇam adah pūrṇam idam. Om* addresses the Lord, and Hare Kṛṣṇa also addresses the Lord. But chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is easier, and it is recommended for this age. Otherwise, transcendently, or spiritually, there is no difference.

Guest: What do you think of *kunḍalinī-yoga* and *rāja-yoga*?

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda: *Rāja-yoga* means “the king of *yogas*.” But we are practicing the emperor of *yogas*, *bhakti-yoga*, so *rāja-yoga* is included in it. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* [6.47], Lord Kṛṣṇa says,

*yoginām api sarveṣāṁ
mad-gateṅāntarātmanā
śraddhāvān bhajate yo māṁ
sa me yuktatamo mataḥ*

“Anyone who is always thinking of Me within himself is the topmost *yogī*.” Therefore a person who is in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness has surpassed all other kinds of yogic principles.

What is your understanding of *kunḍalinī-yoga*? Do you know what it is?

Guest: It’s very dangerous.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Why do you want to practice such a dangerous thing?

Guest: I just wanted to know what you thought of it.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: It is not possible to practice such a difficult process of *yoga* in this age. It is too difficult. So we recommend that you not waste your valuable time trying to follow something that is not possible for you. That is our recommendation.

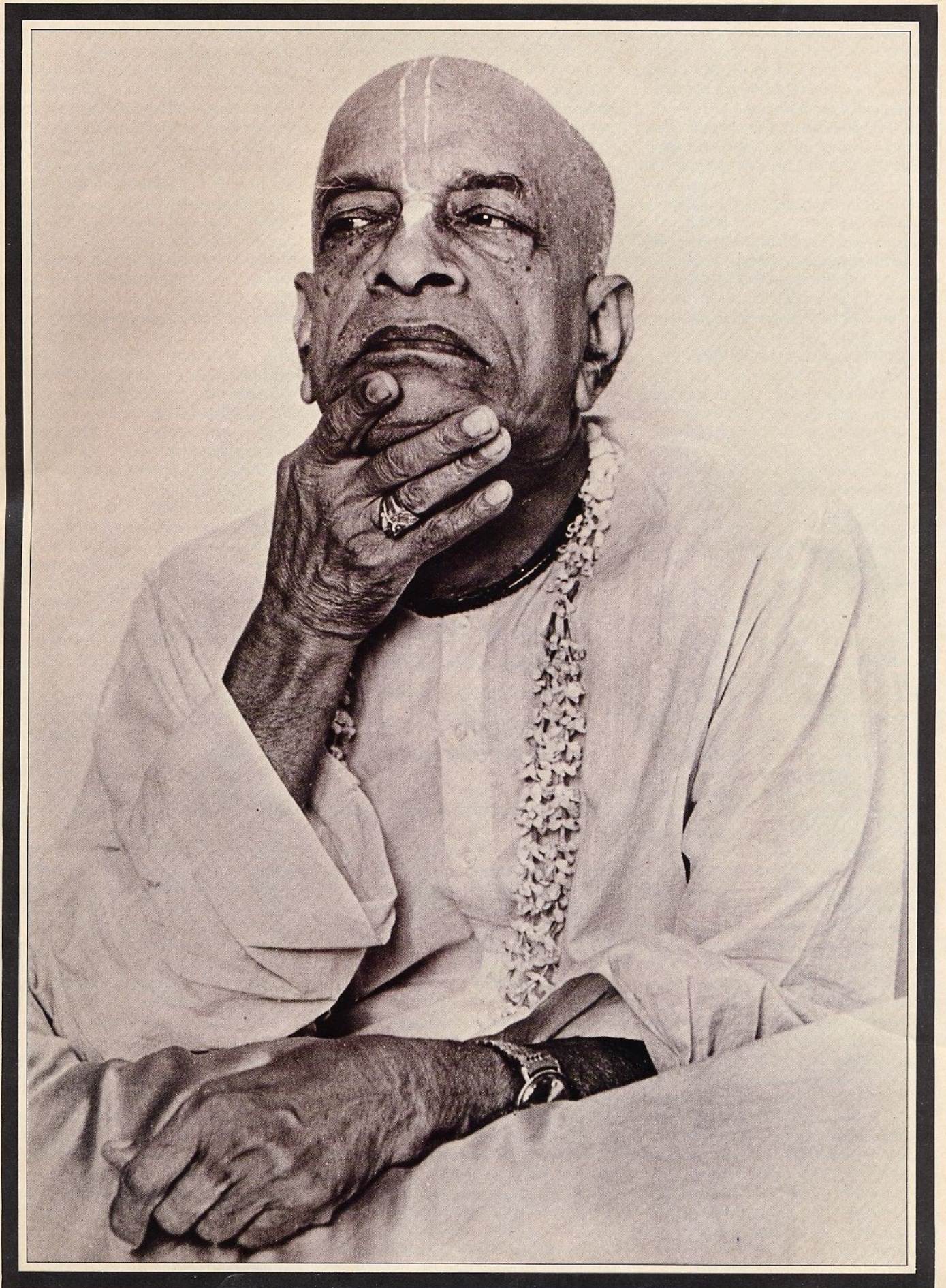
Of course, if you want to maintain some “*yoga* hobby,” that is a different thing. But you will never be successful, because *kunḍalinī-yoga* is very difficult to per-

form. In the present age, *bhakti-yoga*, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is recommended as the only possible way for self-realization. And it is very simple: Just chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Anyone can do it, in any part of the world. One may be of any age; it doesn’t matter whether you’re an old man or a child. The many children of our devotees are chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, and old men like me are also chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. And these young boys and girls, my disciples, are also chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. So it is universal.

My disciples are neither Hindus nor Indians, nor have they any knowledge of Sanskrit. But they have easily picked up this Hare Kṛṣṇa chant, and they are getting the result. So chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is the easiest, most universal method of self-realization in the present age. No other *yoga* practice will be successful. It will simply be a waste of time.

Guest: May I ask this, Swami: Have you yourself reached the superconscious state, or the Christ-conscious state?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: It is not very difficult. You can also do that. Just follow the easy process of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. What is Christ consciousness? What did Christ teach? That you surrender to God. Isn’t



this his essential teaching?

Guest: Well, the understanding I have of Christ consciousness is when one's mind reaches the state where it is within all the atoms and all the flowers—

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Kṛṣṇa is within your self, within your heart, within the atoms— everywhere. So if Christ taught that God is like that, then there is no difference between Christ consciousness and Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Guest: When I say Christ consciousness, I mean to get your mind on the same level as the atoms—actually, on a *higher* level, beyond the atoms, as pure spirit. These two levels of consciousness, in the atoms and beyond—

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Actually, there aren't two levels of consciousness. There is only one. Consciousness is like the sky, but when part of the sky is overcast with clouds, you divide it: "This is the friendly sky, and this is the unfriendly sky." The airlines like to advertise, "Fly in the friendly sky." Wherefrom has this "friendly sky" come? The sky is one, but the part of the sky that is covered with clouds we call "the unfriendly sky," and the part that is sunny we call "the friendly sky."

Similarly, everything, without exception, is spirit (*sarvaṁ khalv idam brahma*), but the portion of spirit that is covered by ignorance—by the cloud of ignorance—is called matter.

What is material civilization? All our usual activities, minus God. And as soon as we add God to all our activities, our civilization is spiritual. So, all activities minus God means trouble, and all activities plus God means the spiritual world, all-pleasing. Kṛṣṇa consciousness means all activities should be done with God in the center. That is the sum and substance of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

We are doing the same things as you. We are burning candles here, and you also burn candles at your home. This is an apartment, and you also have your apartment. What is the difference between this apartment and your apartment? Here there is a relationship to Kṛṣṇa. So, you make everything in your life related to Kṛṣṇa, and your life will become spiritual. That is the technique you learn in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Actually, there is nothing but Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We have artificially covered Kṛṣṇa consciousness with something else, which is called *māyā*, or illusion. You have to get out of this *māyā* consciousness and stand in your original Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Then your life is perfect. That is what we are teaching—nothing artificial or extraordinary. Nor is it very difficult. It is very plain and simple.

Guest: Is there a regression in your system

of reincarnation? In other words, after his body dies can a man regress and become an animal or an insect of some sort?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. There are 8,400,000 different kinds of bodies, and after this life we can enter any one of them.

As far as my constitutional position is concerned, I am not the body: I am a spirit soul. We are changing our body even at the present moment. When you were born from your mother's womb, your body was very small. Now it has grown. You were a small boy, now you are a young man, and soon you will become an old man like me. So, your body is changing; this is a simple fact. And Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*

***Your next body
will be determined
by the state of
your mind at
the time of your
death. If your mind
is God conscious,
you will get a body
like God's. And if
your mind is dog
conscious, you will
get the body of a dog.***

[2.13], *tathā dehāntara-prāptiḥ*: "After death you will pass into another body." That body may be a human body, a dog body, a cat body, a plant body—it all depends on your consciousness at the time of death.

Guest: What is it that you take with you?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: I will explain. Our change of body is taking place according to our mentality. For example, all these boys and girls and ladies and gentlemen sitting here in this room have different clothes, different bodily features, different modes of life. Why? Because of their different mentalities. Somebody likes to keep his hair dirty, somebody likes to cleanse it. Why? Because of a difference of mentality. Similarly, your next body will be determined by the state of your mind at the time of your death. If your mind is God conscious, you will get a body like God's. And if your mind is dog conscious, you will get the body of a dog.

So, it is a question of training your mind in such a way that at the point of death you can keep yourself Kṛṣṇa conscious. Then you will get a body as good as Kṛṣṇa's. This is the whole philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa's body is *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha*: full of bliss, full of knowledge, and eternal. We should hanker after an eternal, blissful body full of knowledge. That should be our aim. And to fulfill that aim, we should practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Guest: When we get our next body, does our mind retain much of what it learned in the life before? Or does it start all over again and gain its knowledge through that body?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Death means forgetfulness. It is something like sleep. Or, sleep is partial death. When you sleep you forget your day's activities, and you also sometimes think that you have a different body or that you are floating in the air or that you have gone somewhere you have never been before.

Similarly, as soon as your body changes, your mind also changes. The mind's functions are thinking, feeling, and willing. We think, feel, and will according to circumstances. For example, now you have an American body, so you are thinking like an American, and someone else has a Russian body, so he's thinking like a Russian. Similarly, a soul who has a dog's body thinks like a dog. So the mind changes according to the condition of the body.

Guest: In the supreme state of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is it possible to remember your previous life?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, it is possible. If you come to the supreme state of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, you can remember. There are instances in the scripture. King Bharata died thinking of a deer, so his next body was a deer's. But he remembered, "I was such-and-such a person." Sometimes even ordinary people can remember their past lives. Occasionally the newspaper reports that a child is saying, "I have my home in another town," and when the child goes there he says, "Such-and-such boy is my son. Here in this box I kept such-and-such a thing." There are many instances of this.

Guest: Could you tell me why I have so much trouble concentrating when I meditate on the astral world?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Because your mind is always disturbed, full of anxieties. Therefore you cannot concentrate. But the process of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa automatically lets you concentrate. When you chant or I chant loudly, you hear "Hare Kṛṣṇa," and your mind is immediately turned to Kṛṣṇa. That is meditation.

After all, meditation means to concen-

trate on the Supreme. The Supreme is Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa is nondifferent from His name. So when you hear the name Kṛṣṇa, you immediately remember the person Kṛṣṇa, and you associate with Kṛṣṇa.

What will you accomplish by silent meditation? You'll think of your office or your home or your dog or your cat. That's all. Therefore, even five thousand years ago this silent meditation was not recommended. When Kṛṣṇa advised Arjuna, "Take to this practice of silent meditation," Arjuna said, "Oh, it is not possible for me. I am a warrior. I have so many things to do. How can I concentrate my mind?" So Kṛṣṇa excused him and recommended that Arjuna simply surrender to Him. But we are trying to be more than Arjuna. This silent meditation is simply a waste of time; it is not possible. Chanting the holy name of God is the only process of meditation for the present age.

Guest: I have known some people who have meditated on the astral world, and they've contacted the discarnate souls there. And when the mind is left open, these discarnate souls, which are not good, will take over the mind of a person. How can one avoid this?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: By Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You can avoid all these rubbish things by simply keeping your consciousness on Kṛṣṇa. That's all. It is a very simple thing. As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *satatam kīrtayanto mām*: "The great souls always glorify the Lord." Then there is no opportunity for engaging the mind in nonsense.

We are teaching our students to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. They are becoming practiced at this. So even when they go onto the street, they chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and are in *samādhi* [full concentration on the Supreme]. They don't have to struggle to attain *samādhi*: the *samādhi* is going with them. They aren't practicing breathing exercises or sitting exercises. No. They are ordinary boys and girls. But simply by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, they are making spiritual progress. Their health, their character, their mode of living—everything is improving, developing.

Spiritual advancement means that one always acts in the mode of goodness. A man who is spiritually advanced cannot do all kinds of nonsense. That is contradictory. How can a pure thing produce impurity? Can one who is addicted to all kinds of nonsensical habits be practicing meditation and elevating himself? Is it possible? All this is bogus. As soon as one becomes purified, his character and his mode of living will be purified. That is the test of spiritual advancement.

If you're cured of a disease, there is no

longer a fever; the temperature is at the normal point. You cannot say, "I'm cured, but my temperature is 105." Then your so-called cure is bogus.

Advancement in self-realization means purification from material contamination. That is real advancement. And Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a practical means of purification. In your country, smoking, drinking, keeping boyfriends and girlfriends, meat-eating—all these are common affairs. How are my disciples avoiding all these things? None of them has been associating with me for more than a year, yet just see their character! You cannot induce them to smoke even one cigarette. Kṛṣṇa conscious-

**Drugs are artificial.
Your situation is
already artificially
complicated by
your body, and
you want to make
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more complicated?
You have to get
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contamination,
not increase it.**

ness is so purifying.

We don't say, "Go on with all your nonsense, and at the same time you can become spiritually advanced." No. You must actually show that you are advanced in spiritual consciousness. *Yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā sarvair guṇais tatra samāstate surāḥ*: "All good qualities develop in a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa." So, developing good qualities is the evidence of spiritual advancement.

Of course, it may be that because of your past bad habits you sometimes commit mistakes and fall down. But Kṛṣṇa says, *kṣipraṁ bhavati dharmātmā*: Even if a devotee falls down out of ignorance, still he'll very soon become purified. The process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is so powerful. When a fan is running and you turn off the switch, the fan will continue to move. But you can rest assured that it will stop, because the switch is off. Similarly, a person who has taken to Kṛṣṇa consciousness

immediately turns off the switch of his material life. And even though we can see that some of his material activities continue, they will stop very soon.

Guest: Do you think that drugs can help one attain Kṛṣṇa consciousness?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, that is nonsense. They'll not help. We don't allow any kind of intoxication.

Guest: Do drugs interfere with the soul's advancement?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Drugs are artificial. Your situation is already artificially complicated by your body, and you want to make your situation *more* complicated? Do you mean to say that this is advancement? You have to get free of material contamination, not increase it.

Suppose you want to get free of a certain disease. You have to take the proper medicine and eat the proper diet. Similarly, to get free of material contamination you have to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, the proper medicine, and eat *kṛṣṇa-prasādam* [food offered to Kṛṣṇa], the proper diet. Then the disease of material contamination will be cured. This is the simple and practical method of purification.

When my disciples first came to me, what did I give them? A little fruit—*kṛṣṇa-prasādam*—and the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa. That was all. And now their faces, their activities, their habits, their character—everything has improved. What is the treatment? The medicine of Hare Kṛṣṇa and the diet of *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*. That's all. There is no surgical operation. You take to it and see the result.

Guest: What is the main qualification for attaining self-realization?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: To become a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. We are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, but we have forgotten this. So when we come again to the understanding that we are part and parcel of God, that is our greatest qualification.

What is the greatest qualification of a good citizen? When an American thinks, "I am an American citizen; therefore I have to look after the interests of the United States," that is the best qualification of good citizenship. Similarly, when you transcend all artificial designations—"I am American," "I am Indian," "I am this or that"—and you understand, "I am part and parcel of the Supreme," that is the greatest qualification for becoming self-realized.

Guest: When you surrender to Kṛṣṇa, do you still have any obligation to worldly affairs, to making the world a better place?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. My obligation is to give you an education in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That is the best service anyone can give to humanity. Why have I come to

(continued on page 30)

The Vedic Observer

BEHIND THE FACADE OF HEALTH CARE

Is the \$300-billion-a-year American health-care industry
curing us—or skewering us?

by MATHUREŚA DĀSA

Planning your budget for the coming year? You're probably worried about the rising cost of health care. And rightly so: Americans spent more than \$300 billion for health care in 1982. That's an average of nearly \$1,300 for every man, woman, and child in the United States.

To make matters worse, both the U.S. government and private health insurers, who in the past have paid a big chunk of the nation's health bill, are getting cold feet. With hospital costs increasing three times faster than the rate of inflation, public and private insurers are taking steps to put a ceiling on what they'll pay for any given category of health care. For example, under the proposed new Medicare system, if two patients entered a hospital with ruptured hernias, Medicaid would pay the same fixed rate for both patients even if one stayed three days and the other six. The idea is to give hospitals an incentive to reduce the cost of the treatment and send the patients home as soon as possible. But critics of the proposed system say that such penny-pinching will also reduce the quality of health care.

So our higher health costs may lead to poorer health.

But take heart. Spokesmen for the health-care industry assure us that the bitter pill of rising costs has a positive side effect: It is forcing thousands of hospitals and health clinics, which formerly thrived on the open-handed policies of public and private insurers, to compete for customers. Profits now lie in increasing the number of patients, not in padding their bills.

In Oakland, California, the programs for professional football and basketball games carry ads for Peralta Hospital's SHAPE fitness clinic. In Chicago, Bethesda Hospital touts its small size with the slogan "Large enough to care for you, small enough to care about you." And in Maywood, New Jersey, a dental clinic recently offered free ten-speed bicycles to new orthodontic patients.

Although most publicity campaigns are still low-key, some hospital directors believe advertising is only a prelude to all-out price wars featuring discounts, rebates, free bonuses, and other gimmicks. Already, Sunrise Hospital in Las Vegas has offered recuperative trips to exotic vacation resorts.

Just imagine! Enjoy pneumonia in a beach chair at Waikiki! Or how about bargain-basement radiation therapy for that malignant tumor in your liver? And if that doesn't catch your fancy, there's discount open-heart surgery.

Obviously, we need to stop and take a long look at today's health-care industry. Even if health care bargains do somehow alleviate our budget headaches, they aren't going to put an end to more essential afflictions: We'll still have to get sick, grow old, and die.

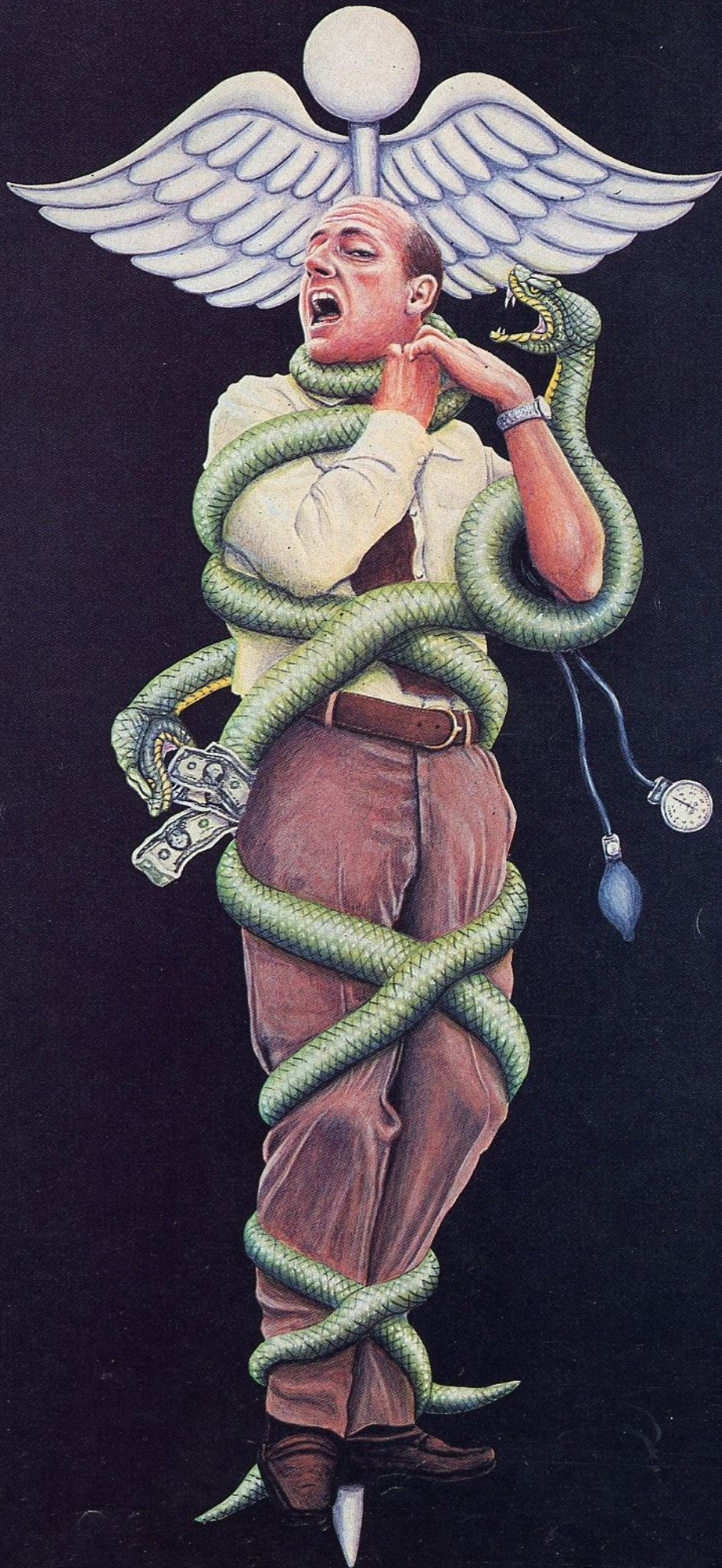
From the *Bhagavad-gītā* we learn that no matter how much or how little we spend for health care, we're guaranteed to suffer the miseries of birth, old age, disease, and death. Giving credit where credit is due, we can't deny that advances in medicine have largely eradicated typhoid, smallpox, and other dread diseases. But

knocking off a handful of enemy soldiers—at the expense of billions of dollars annually for research and treatment—doesn't mean we've won the war. Cancer still strikes two out of three families in the U.S. and is responsible for one death in five. Twenty-two million Americans (about one in ten) need treatment for arthritis. And the booming health-care industry itself is the most conclusive evidence that the miseries of material life are taking their toll now as much as ever. "Health care industry" is a misnomer. It is the disease industry, and the old-age, death, and birth industry.

At most, our hospitals keep misery out of sight, sandwiched between clean sheets in antiseptic wards, away from the mainstream of "normal" life outside. They bring birth, old age, disease, and death under one roof, but not under control. If they could do *that*, the health-care industry would go bankrupt.

What to speak of controlling disease and death, diagnosis and treatment are themselves often the *cause* of disease and death. Iatrogenic diseases, those caused by medical diagnoses and treatments, are an ever-present problem in modern health care. Infections developed during the course of treatment account for close to 300,000 deaths each year, and the total number of iatrogenic fatalities is nearly half a million.

Half of all iatrogenic complications are drug-related. The manufacturers of Butazolidin alka, a popular antiarthritis drug, warn that their product can cause headaches, vertigo, coma, hypertension, retinal



hemorrhage, hepatitis, leukemia, and death! And Valium, the much-acclaimed anti-anxiety drug, has as its side effects nausea, fatigue, jaundice, constipation, headache, slurred speech, insomnia and—you guessed it—*anxiety*.

Of course, modern medicine promises to bring our miseries under control in the future. In a speech to the American Pharmaceutical Society last January, Dr. James A. Halperin, an officer in the Food and Drug Administration, predicted that man will eliminate infectious diseases by 1994 and stop the aging process by 2023. C. Everett Koop, the United States surgeon general, asserts that disease and death rates are gradually decreasing. And we've all heard that test-tube babies will soon eliminate the necessity of pregnancy and childbirth.

Such utopian predictions are another aspect of the "out-of-sight" function of the health-care industry. To say that "the death rate is decreasing," for example, is a deceptive way of saying that the average life span is apparently increasing. Is there even one person, however, who won't eventually die? If not, the death rate is still one hundred percent. But hope springs eternal, and with our present suffering hidden behind hospital walls, we look at the future through the distorting lens of unwarranted optimism.

But the *Bhagavad-gītā* recommends that we keep the miseries of life constantly *in sight*, because until we correctly diagnose birth, old age, disease, and death as inherent features of the physical body, we can't discover the actual cure for them—spiritual rejuvenation.

The physical body is a covering for the real self—the spirit soul—which is eternal, individual, and part of the Supreme Person, Lord Kṛṣṇa. Like each of us, Kṛṣṇa is an individual person, but unlike us Kṛṣṇa is never encaged in a temporary, physical body. He is, rather, the creator and controller of the physical world. Both Kṛṣṇa's body and His abode, the spiritual world, are eternal, full of unending happiness, and without a trace of birth, old age, disease, and death. Since originally we reside in this deathless, spiritual world, it's quite natural that we yearn for a life free of disease and other miseries. But the health-care industry can't help us attain this kind of life, because it's impossible to live an eternal, deathless, disease-free life anywhere in the temporary, physical world. The health-care industry has its place, of course, but to exaggerate its benefits is self-deluding.

Since we are all parts of Kṛṣṇa, by our constitutional nature we're meant to serve Him, just as it is the nature of a finger, or any other part of the body, to serve the whole body. When we desire *not* to serve

Kṛṣṇa but to enjoy life on our own, Kṛṣṇa sends us to this temporary world and provides us with a physical body. In that sense the body itself is a disease—a disease caused by the "germ" of our unnatural desire to forget Kṛṣṇa.

The body gives us the chance to enjoy our external senses. But at the same time the temporary, limited nature of sense pleasures and the unavoidable miseries of birth, old age, disease, and death serve to remind us that this world is a foreign place for the eternal, pleasure-seeking soul.

To regain eternal life we must again take up our service to the Supreme Lord, following His instructions in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and other scriptures. "For one who worships Me," Kṛṣṇa says, "engaging in devotional service and always meditating

**Why do the same
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upon Me, I am the swift deliverer from the ocean of birth and death."

So, what are we going to do? Throw down our scalpels and stethoscopes, raise our hands to heaven, and forget all about our mortal bodies? Of course not. The human body, although temporary, should be kept as healthy as possible so that we can serve Kṛṣṇa and gain release from all suffering.

But are today's health-care customers really concerned with health? If so, then why do the same Americans who spend \$300 billion on health care also spend \$25 billion on cigarettes and \$46 billion on alcoholic beverages? According to Surgeon General Koop, smoking contributes to 30 percent of all cancer deaths and to 85 percent of lung-cancer deaths. Cancer is the number two killer in the U.S. Smokers are also more prone to other diseases, including heart disease, the number-one killer.

And the surgeon general also warns that regular consumption of alcohol increases the risk of disease of the liver, heart, stomach, and pancreas and is known to cause cancer of the mouth, larynx, and

colon. Drinking has also been linked to brain damage and birth defects.

So if Americans are so health conscious, why don't they quit drinking and smoking? And with gonorrhea, syphilis, herpes, and AIDS—all direct results of promiscuity—ruining millions of lives each year, why can't people who consider their mortal bodies all-important give up illicit, extra-marital sex?

Devotees of Kṛṣṇa, because of the transcendental satisfaction they experience in their service to Him, easily refrain from smoking, drinking, and illicit sex. In addition, they completely avoid eating meat, which has also been linked to cancer and other diseases. The Vedic scriptures state that intoxication, meat-eating, and illicit sex are detrimental to spiritual progress. They dampen our desire to serve Kṛṣṇa, block our return to the spiritual world, and thus delay our escape from birth, old age, disease, and death. In particular, the *Srīmad-Bhāgavatam* states that the only person completely incapable of spiritual advancement is the meat-eater.

Devotees are not under the illusion that they will be able to keep their bodies healthy forever, so the reason they give up intoxication, meat-eating, and illicit sex is not to preserve their physical health but to increase their spiritual awareness. Still, it is significant that the very activities the Vedic literatures single out as spiritually detrimental are also physically harmful. This is a clear indication that the human body is specifically designed for making a spiritual solution to suffering. As the *Vedānta-sūtra* proclaims, "Human life is meant for spiritual advancement."

There are many ways to handle your physical health-care expenses. You can sign up for Blue Cross/Blue Shield, join a health maintenance organization, or take advantage of Medicare, Medicaid, or your local free clinic. And with health-care advertising coming into style, you'll be getting new offers every time you open a newspaper or switch on the TV.

So why not consider a spiritual health-care plan? So far, the health-care industry has offered us an unrealistic, unattainable objective: eternal, misery-free life in the physical body. But the objective of the spiritual plan—eternal, misery-free life in the spiritual world—is available to anyone who practices devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. And devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is a most enjoyable cure. Ask any devotee. In addition, on the spiritual plan you'll be able to free yourself from all physically destructive habits, minimize your visits to the hospital, and see the inevitable miseries of birth, old age, disease, and death for what they really are—reminders that the physical world is not, and never will be, our eternal home.

HOW I CAME TO KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS

The unseen merciful hand of Lord Kṛṣṇa helps a determined young student become one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's first Indian disciples.

by LOKANĀTHA SWAMI



His Holiness Lokanātha Swami leads the chanting at the Hare Kṛṣṇa center in Hyderabad, India.

I was born in Aravade, a small village in the Indian state of Maharashtra that differs little from more than seven hundred thousand others in India. After I graduated from high school, my family sent me to Bombay to study chemistry in college. But my college career was not to be.

In the year 1971, in late March, something happened to prevent me from following the program my family had so carefully laid out for me. For the first time, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda was touring India with his foreign disciples. They had arrived in Bombay just before I had, and now they were going to have a *paṇḍāl* (a spiritual festival) at Cross Maidan.

The devotees publicized the *paṇḍāl* very widely, in newspapers and on billboards. In the advertisements, Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples were described as American, Canadian, European, African, and Japanese *sādhus* (saintly devotees). This was unprecedented. Previously, whenever the word *sādhu* had been applied to someone, it was understood that the person was In-

dian. There could be no other consideration. But these advertisements were talking about *sādhus* from all over the world. This was indeed a novelty for every Bombayite, and it especially fascinated me.

Intrigued, I went to the Hare Krishna Festival, which was quite well organized. The Hare Kṛṣṇa *sādhus* were the biggest attraction for me. I appreciated their singing, dancing, walking, and talking. In fact, I liked everything about them, and I attended the function practically every evening. I would simply watch and listen. Though I knew English, I wasn't fluent, and speaking with foreigners was too difficult for me. I purchased a few magazines and a few booklets with the little money I had.

Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke every evening. He discussed many issues relating to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and made many points. But the point that had the greatest impact on me, and which attracted me to him and his society more than anything else, was the simple point that if you serve Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, you

simultaneously serve everyone and everything else. Śrīla Prabhupāda gave the analogy of what happens when one waters a tree. Just by pouring water on the root of a tree, one automatically waters all the leaves, branches, fruits, and flowers on the tree.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had simplified my job. "Here is my chance," I thought. I had always wanted to serve others, and thus at different stages in my life I had contemplated becoming an engineer or a doctor or a lawyer. Whenever I thought of my future, I would think of how I could serve others. Yet although throughout all these years I had mainly thought of service, I didn't know where to begin, and I had practically no resources in my possession. But now Śrīla Prabhupāda had cleared my path by showing the easy way of serving the whole creation—through the simple medium of serving the Lord, the source of all that be. This idea greatly appealed to me.

As scheduled, the Hare Krishna Festival ended after eleven days, and everything

went back to normal.

I continued going to college in Bombay. I shared a room with some people from my village, whom my family had asked to keep an eye on me. Once, several years before, I had left my studies and gone to join an *āśrama* in a town nearby my village. I had almost made it to the *āśrama*, but the unseen merciful hand of the Lord brought me back so that later I could join Śrīla Prabhupāda instead.

After this incident, my family had anticipated my going away somewhere, sometime, and that is why they asked the villagers to watch over me. But how much could they watch me? I had gone to the Hare Kṛṣṇa function practically every evening, and no one had noticed that. I would keep Hare Kṛṣṇa magazines and booklets inside my big fat chemistry books and read them for hours. My roommates would marvel at how seriously I was studying chemistry. They couldn't detect that instead of absorbing myself in analyzing chemical solutions, I was probing into the ultimate solution to the problems of life.

Whenever my roommates went out, I would bolt the door and, with my arms raised, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and dance to my full satisfaction. Having seen the devotees chanting and dancing onstage at the festival, I was trying to imitate them. Thus, in hiding, I was following the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness: chanting, dancing, and reading over and over again the few pieces of literature I had.

I knew that the Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees were living somewhere in Bombay, but after the function their small group had merged into the big city, and I was deprived of their association.

One year passed.

Then, in March 1972, ISKCON organized another festival, this time at Juhu Beach. During the course of the year, the devotees had purchased some land at Juhu, and the function was going to be held right on their premises. Once again, advertisements appeared in the newspapers and in other media, and news of the festival reached me by the causeless mercy of the Lord. I had been waiting for this news, and I was extremely happy to receive it.

Naturally, I attended the programs. I would go long before they began, borrow books, and read them. During the chanting I would join in wholeheartedly. The foreign devotees, in Indian *dhotis* and *kurtās*,* and the Indian student, in imported trousers and shirt, would dance together.

Occasionally, during *prasādam*** time,

**Dhotis* and *kurtās*: the wrap-around lower garments and shirtlike upper garments worn by millions of Indians.

***Prasādam* is vegetarian food prepared for Lord Kṛṣṇa and offered to Him with devotion.

when I happened to be near the gate, the devotees would invite me to come and take *prasādam* with them. I was eager to observe their life closely, so I would take advantage of the opportunity and join them. They were all nice devotees. On top of that, they were all foreigners, and I was duly impressed.

A few days after the festival at Juhu ended, I sat down and composed an application for membership in ISKCON (the International Society for Krishna Consciousness). I had decided to join the devotees, and to join any organization, I thought, one needed to fill out an application. I addressed my application to the president of ISKCON, Bombay. I wrote that I agreed to follow the four regulative

**My parents tried
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principles—no meat-eating, no intoxication, no illicit sex, and no gambling. I also stated that I liked their dazzling *āratis*, ecstatic *kīrtanas*,† and sumptuous *prasādam*. (I had picked up all these terms from their publicity handouts.) I went to a typing institute and had the application typed out. ISKCON was an international society, so I thought everything had to be formalized and just right.

Then I went to the Hare Kṛṣṇa *āśrama* at Juhu and asked who the president was. It wasn't difficult to get to see him. His name was Girirāja dāsa. He went through my letter-application, and on the spot he accepted me and embraced me. Not only that: he welcomed me in and immediately introduced me to all the *āśramites* as a new devotee.

I quickly adjusted to my new lifestyle. I had a new home, a new uniform, new associates, a new program—almost everything was new to me. Nonetheless, I immediately embraced all of it and liked it. Although the devotees were mostly foreign-

†*Ārati* is the formal worship of the Deity form of the Lord, and *kīrtana* is congregational chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa.

ers, I felt completely at home. I was determined to make this my life's commitment.

One week passed quickly. Then my elder brother arrived at the temple with one of my old roommates. Among the things I had left in my room was a handbill with the Hare Kṛṣṇa address at Juhu on it. That's how they'd found me. It was no big surprise to them that I'd joined the devotees. They had been expecting something like this for some time, and now all they had feared had come to pass.

My brother wanted me to visit my family, especially for the sake of my mother. If I wouldn't go she might die, he said. But he assured me my family had no objection to my returning after the visit. I had always respected my brother, and here he was practically begging me to return home, saying that it was a matter of life and death for my affectionate mother and that I could return soon. Finally, I asked permission from Girirāja and left, wearing my new uniform of *dhoti* and *kurtā*.

After I arrived in my village, people began saying that though I used to be such a nice boy, now something had gone wrong with me. The difference was that I was wearing a *dhoti* and *kurtā*, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, and avoiding the association of nondevotees. The townspeople considered all these things strange and abnormal.

My father requested me not to wear my new clothes and not to put on *tilaka*, even though he wore clothes similar to mine and occasionally wore *tilaka* himself. He was a devotee of Lord Viṭṭala, a form of Lord Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa, and devotees of Lord Viṭṭala apply *tilaka* in a way similar to that of the Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees. On special occasions my father would put on his *tilaka*, but he didn't want me to imitate him, because he was worried about what people would think. (If such is the reaction of Indian parents, I can hardly imagine the reaction of parents of devotees in other lands).

Thus my parents tried everything in their power to dissuade me from returning to the Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees. They even went to astrologers to learn some way to "cure" me or to find out how long I would continue living this "strange type of life." They were really concerned.

More than a week passed, yet no plans were made for my return to the devotees, as per the original agreement between my brother and me. My parents kept telling me that some relative or other still had to come see me and that it wouldn't be proper for me to leave without meeting him. My family planned to enlist the relatives as agents to somehow or other talk me out of this *sādhu* business. My parents tried everything on me, but my mind was fixed on going back to the Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees.

One day I saw my sister shedding tears.

When someone asked her what was wrong, she replied, "Just see how in our house all the other boys are nicely engaged in playing cards, but my brother Raghunatha isn't sitting with them." Such was the cause of her tears. She was feeling sorry that I wasn't playing cards with the other boys but was instead busy chanting the holy names of God on my beads.


When my family all realized I wouldn't give up the life I had embraced, they came up with the proposal that I could continue the life of a *sādhu* but that I should do it in our village. They promised to build a small temple so I could do my devotional practices there. I rejected this idea, too, however, because I wanted to associate with the devotees. There is no question of leading a spiritual life without proper association, without the association of devotees who are practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness full-time. I didn't want to be just another bogus *sādhu*. India was already overcrowded and overburdened with them. I

wanted to engage in the service of Kṛṣṇa in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. Śrīla Prabhupāda had already cleared my path. He had given me my life's mission, and I was fully satisfied once and for all with that.

I had sold my heart to Śrīla Prabhupāda and Lord Kṛṣṇa. So, finally, my family accepted the inevitable. I returned to Bombay after about a month and moved back into the *āśrama*. Since I had stayed in my village quite a long time, I wasn't sure how Girirāja and the other devotees would react to my return. When they saw me, however, I was surprised to find myself most welcome, just as before—and they were surprised to see me back in their midst. Their experience had been that many Indian devotees had come and gone, promising to return soon, but hardly any had actually returned. Thus they were surprised and pleased to see me. By the causeless mercy of my spiritual master, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa,

the Supreme Personality of Godhead, my return to the devotees became possible.

Postscript

Although it may appear that my joining ISKCON disrupted my family's life and caused a disturbance in my small village, these negative effects were only temporary. In the years since I joined ISKCON, I and many other devotees have often visited Aravade and taught the principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and now my family—and my whole village—embrace ISKCON as a genuine religious movement. There are seven full-time devotees from there, my sister has enrolled her son into the ISKCON *gurukula* school in Vṛndāvana, and whenever I see my father he asks me for *tilaka* and proudly decorates his forehead with it. Also, my family and many other families in Aravade regularly chant Hare Kṛṣṇa on beads. All in all, my whole village loves the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, and there is no disruption of any kind. 

We welcome your letters. Write to
BACK TO GODHEAD
51 West Allens Lane
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19119

LETTERS

I recently met some Hare Krishna devotees in Wellington, New Zealand. Now I attend their Sunday feast program, chant the Hare Krishna maha-mantra, and read Srila Prabhupada's books and BACK TO GODHEAD magazine, and I love it.

But I am a bit sad to hear how Srila Prabhupada and many of his disciples say that modern scientists are atheistic fools. I myself am a scientist and have studied seismology, plate tectonics, volcanism, etc., but I don't think that this has made me atheistic. Rather, I see how God is working within His own creation, and how He is the greatest artist and engineer.

I understand that the Hare Krishna movement is a genuine movement based on the teachings of the Bhagavad-gita. But the Gita states that the intelligent and educated people—like scientists, doctors, and engineers—are the leaders of society, the *brahmanas*. Why do you exclude them from your movement?

B.P. Jnanasindhu
Wellington, New Zealand

OUR REPLY: It is certainly true that in his books and lectures Śrīla Prabhupāda criticizes atheistic scientists who try to disprove the existence of God and the eternal soul. But there is good reason for this criticism. To explain the origin of the universe, these scientists put forward such ideas as the Big Bang theory, as if it were more sci-

entific to believe that an explosion rather than a supremely powerful person has created the universe. And to explain the origin of life and complex living forms, these scientists rely on the neo-Darwinian theory of evolution, which states that life is a product of matter and that complex biological form has developed by "natural selection," or, in other words, by chance. The theory of evolution directly opposes the teachings of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and other Vedic literatures, which emphatically state that life, or consciousness, is not a product of matter but a symptom of the eternal soul and that all form, complex or simple, has been created by God. (For a detailed explanation of the origin of life, the cosmos, and complex form, see *Mechanistic and Nonmechanistic Science*, by Dr. Richard L. Thompson [Sadāpūta dāsa].)

Since neither the Big Bang theory nor the theory of evolution have been conclusively proved—nor can they ever be proved—the "scientists" who adhere to such theories are not scientists at all: they're atheistic fools. Such fools misuse their intelligence to direct human society away from the path of God consciousness. Therefore, though they certainly are intelligent by mundane standards, they can't be called *brāhmaṇas*. According to the Vedic literature, a *brāhmaṇa* is one who knows Brahman, the Absolute Truth. And the highest conception of the Absolute

Truth is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa.


So rather than trying to deride God, modern scientists should use their intelligence, as you have, to understand how He is directing the phenomena of material nature. And beyond simply understanding how God is acting through nature, every scientist should glorify the Lord through his scientific specialty. This, says the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, is the true purpose of all learning.

* * *

Not long ago I had an opportunity to associate with a few devotees of the Hare Krishna movement. At first, being quite apprehensive, I decided that I would be safe from the clutches of these fallen souls as long as I maintained my distance and immersed myself in love of God and asked Jesus for assistance in delivering these unfortunate followers of this new-age cult.

To accomplish this, I knew that I must first delve into the heart of this movement and embrace just what I myself resisted most before I could ever raise a single soul. And so I exposed myself to these foreign teachings, knowing all too well that I might never return. But if I followed my heart, I knew, my love for Jesus would never lead me astray.

As our association became stronger, my doubts evaporated, and my apprehension was replaced by a love of God I had never before experienced within my own teachings.

Rev. Mark Shelley Kenzer
Laguna Beach 



Lord Kṛṣṇa's Cuisine

The Savory Samosā

Bursting with a harmony of flavors, this spicy vegetable-stuffed pastry is a classic favorite of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

Text and photo by
VIŚĀKHĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

After a long series of experiments, researchers at the Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco recently showed that the constituents of our food alter our moods and thoughts by changing the chemistry of the brain. Their statement: "The food that we eat has intimate effects on the brain, on our appetite, our mood, our ability to sleep and to think." A practical proof of this is that the students at schools in Fulton County, Georgia, where junk foods have been banned in favor of natural and nutritious meals, are reportedly learning quicker, staying healthier, and even behaving better.

Devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa eat only *prasādam* (vegetarian food that's been offered to Kṛṣṇa). What effect does *prasādam* have on the brain? Besides doing all the good things that any well-balanced vegetarian diet does, *prasādam* also gives us the ability to think clearly about the nature of matter, spirit, and God.

How? Not because it contains certain

vitamins and minerals, or complementary proteins, or just the right amount of the right kinds of carbohydrates. *Prasādam* has all these things, but that's not why it's spiritually potent. Since *prasādam* isn't material, we can't analyze its spiritual potency in material terms. Only by appreciating the value of offering our food to Kṛṣṇa can we understand how *prasādam* can make us spiritually intelligent—so intelligent, in fact, that we feel inclined to chant the holy names of God and dance in ecstasy.

Naturally, the average person will pooh-pooh this effect of *prasādam*, considering it the result of religious fanaticism, brainwashing, or mere sentimentality. But those with a little faith—the above-average—can take note of this statement from the foremost of all Vedic scriptures, the five-thousand-year-old *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: "In the present Age of Quarrel and Hypocrisy, those who are intelligent will worship God by performing congregational

chanting of His holy names."

Of course, one thing about *prasādam* that none of us needs any scriptural proof for is that it tastes great. And that's part of the meaning of *prasādam*—"the mercy of the Lord." Out of His mercy, Kṛṣṇa makes Himself available to us in the form of delicious spiritual food. We can all enjoy *prasādam* to our hearts' content, whether we know its spiritual potency or not. And even if we're unaware of its spiritual potency, *prasādam* makes us spiritually intelligent, just as nutritious food makes us healthy even if we don't know it's nutritious.

This month we're featuring one of the most popular of all *prasādam* preparations: the deep-fried, stuffed savory pastry called *samosā*.

When you bite into a warm *samosā*, the first thing you'll notice is its wonderfully tender, thin pastry crust, golden-brown from deep-frying. Inside are peas, potatoes, or small chunks of cauliflower, seasoned

(Recipe by Yamunā-devī dāśī)

Pastry with Cauliflower-and-Pea Stuffing (Gobi-Mattar Samosā)

Yield: about 20 pastries 2½ by 3½ inches
Preparation time: about 1½ hours

Ingredients for the pastry:

1½ cups unbleached white pastry flour or all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon salt
scant ¼ teaspoon baking powder
¾ cups ghee (clarified butter) or ¾ cups nut or vegetable oil and 2 tablespoons ghee
2 tablespoons plain yogurt
¼ cup cold water

Ingredients for the vegetable stuffing:

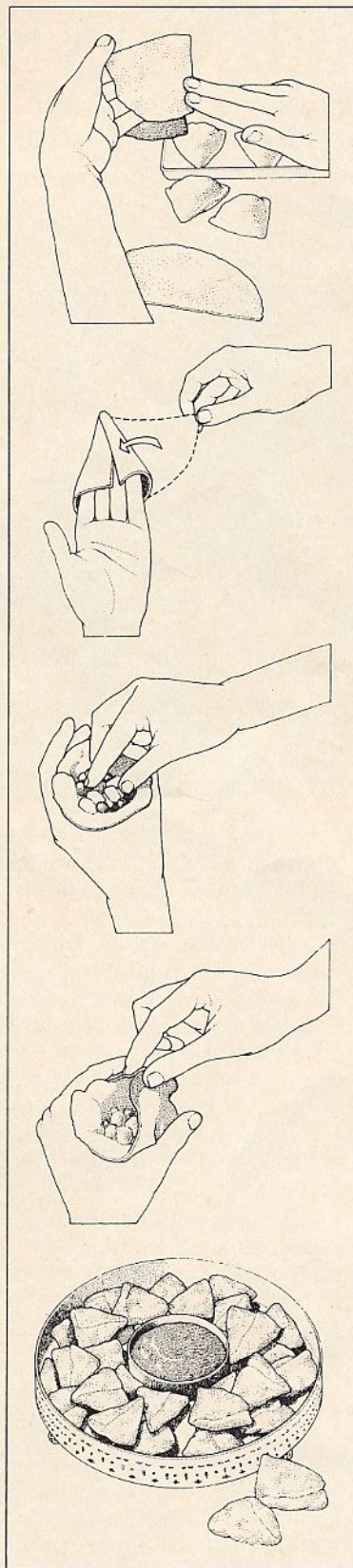
2 tablespoons ghee
2 teaspoons peeled ginger root, minced fine
1 to 3 teaspoons fresh green chilies, minced fine
1½ tablespoons cumin seeds
⅓ teaspoon mild asafetida (try an Indian grocery)
½ tablespoon white poppy seeds, if available
14 ounces cauliflower flowerettes
1¼ to 1½ cup fresh peas
1½ tablespoons coriander powder
½ teaspoon turmeric
½ teaspoon *garam masālā* (try an Indian grocery)
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon fresh coriander or parsley leaves, minced fine
1 tablespoon water

Equipment:

mixing bowl
2 small bowls
cookie sheet
aluminum foil or plastic wrap
10- to 12-inch wok or similar frying pan
slotted spoon
frying thermometer (optional)
11- by 14-inch baking dish

Procedure for making the pastry:

1. Mix the flour, salt, and baking powder in the mixing bowl.
2. Sprinkle warm ghee over the mixture and rub it between your fingertips until it's the consistency of dry oatmeal.
3. Make a depression in the center of the mixture, add the yogurt and ¼ cup water, quickly stir, and gather into a ball.
4. Adding ½ teaspoon at a time, sprinkle up to 2 more teaspoons of water to cause the mixture to cohere into a stiff pastry dough.
5. Knead the dough on a smooth surface for 8 to 10 minutes, or until it's uniform and elastic. Then shape the dough into a ball, place it into a bowl, and drape it with a moist towel. Let it sit while you prepare the cauliflower-and-pea stuffing.



Procedure for making the vegetable stuffing:

1. Steam the peas and cauliflower flowerettes until tender.
2. Over a medium-high flame, heat 2 tablespoons of ghee in a 10- to 12-inch frying pan until a drop of water flicked into the pan sputters instantly. Toss in the minced ginger, chilies, and cumin seeds, and when the seeds begin to darken add the asafetida and white poppy seeds. When the cumin seeds have turned dark brown, stir in the steamed cauliflower and peas.
3. Reduce the flame to low, add all the remaining seasonings, stir, cover, and cook for about 5 minutes. Remove the lid and fry, uncovered, until the vegetable is thoroughly dry. Remove, mash to a coarse consistency, and cool to room temperature. You'll need to mash the filling enough so that the vegetables are no longer so ragged that they can pierce through the thin pastry casings. If you mash the stuffing too much, however, there won't be enough to fill the 20 pastries. After a few practice runs you'll find the texture you like best, and you can adjust the amount of vegetable accordingly.
4. Divide the stuffing into 20 equal portions.

Procedure for shaping, filling, and frying the pastries (see illustrations):

1. Roll the dough into a cylinder 10 inches long, cut the cylinder into 10 equal pieces, and drape a moist cloth over them.
2. Take one piece of dough and make a smooth patty by pressing it under your palm. Dredge the patty with flour once on both sides and, with a rolling pin, flatten it into a thin, round disk 6½ inches across. Then cut the disk in half with a sharp paring knife.
3. Dip your finger into a bowl of water and moisten the straight edge of one semicircle. Now shape the semicircle into a cone, gently but firmly pressing the moistened edges together so they'll stay sealed.
4. Carefully place one portion of the vegetable stuffing into the pastry cone. Dip your finger into the bowl of water and moisten the inside top edges of the cone. Then firmly press the moistened edges together, thoroughly sealing the stuffing inside the triangular pastry casing. Now place the *samosā* on the cookie sheet, seam-side down. Finish rolling, stuffing, and shaping the remaining *samosās*.
5. Over a medium-high flame, heat the ghee or oil in the wok until it's about 365°F. (You can use a deep-frying thermometer if you have one.) Slip 4 or 5 *samosās* into the hot ghee or oil and fry for 3 to 6 minutes, or until the crust is crisp and an even golden brown. Transfer the *samosās* to a baking dish lined with a paper towel. Drain and offer to Kṛṣṇa immediately, or keep warm in an oven preheated to 250° while you're frying the remaining *samosās*.

not too little so that the *samosā's* bland, and not too much so that it's hot, but just enough to delight the palate. Many flavors harmonize as you taste the crust and filling together, all permeated by the rich, regal

flavor of the ghee (clarified butter) that the *samosā* was cooked in.

Even though they taste great, however, there's no point in relishing *samosās* unless they've been offered to Kṛṣṇa. That's

when they become *prasādam*. Then when we eat them, besides being delicious they'll draw our thoughts from matter to spirit—and that will be the perfection of our eating.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

The Senses: Gratification or Purification?

This exchange between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples took place in April 1975 during an early-morning walk in Māyāpur, India.

Devotee: Śrīla Prabhupāda, sometimes people argue that if there is no God, it doesn't matter what I do, and if there is a God, then He is controlling everything and it still doesn't matter what I do, because everything is predetermined anyway. In either case, I am free to do anything I like.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, but why do you suffer?

Devotee: Well, it's all God's plan. I suffer according to God's plan.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. It is not God's plan that you suffer; you suffer because you violate God's laws. He is controlling everything, but He has given you minute independence: you can either follow His laws or violate them. But you are so foolish that you do not understand you are suffering. Your position is like that of the cats and dogs, who also cannot understand that they are suffering.

Our point is that you are suffering because you have violated God's laws, and if you become obedient to God you will not suffer. But you are such a fool, such a rascal, that you do not even know that you are suffering.

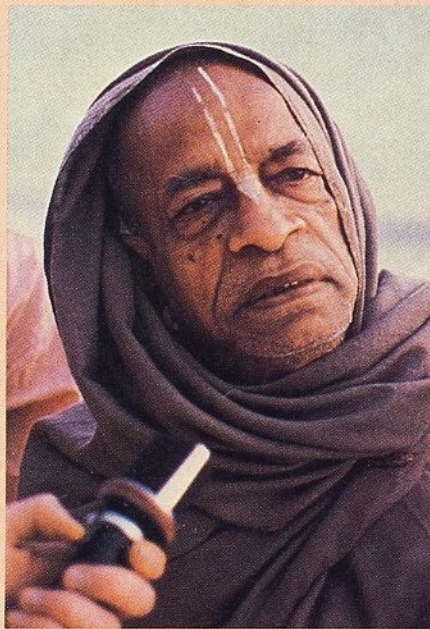
Devotee: But the devotees also seem to be suffering.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, but they are not suffering like the nondevotees. Material life, which is the cause of suffering, is like a disease, and devotees are giving up this diseased condition of life for Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If you are suffering from some disease, you cannot expect to be cured immediately. But one who is taking the medicine is very intelligent. His sufferings will soon be gone. But these nondevotee rascals will not even take the medicine—Kṛṣṇa consciousness—so they will continue to suffer.

And for the most part, devotees enjoy. Why are you always chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and dancing unless you are enjoying?

Devotee: Sometimes I get a sick stomach, too.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That's because you have a material body. But your suffering



is just like the movement of a fan that has been switched off. The fan is still moving, but the switch is off; so it will soon stop. Similarly, your suffering will soon stop, because you are acting on the spiritual platform. And after giving up this body, you will have a completely blissful life. As Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [4.9], *tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti*: "After giving up the body, a devotee doesn't take birth again in the material world." You are not going to get another material body, full of suffering. That is your advantage.

But these nondevotee rascals are going to continue getting body after body, all full of suffering. They will have to accept one body and suffer, and then again they'll have to give up that body and take another body and suffer. As long as one accepts a material body he will have to suffer, because having a material body means suffering. So those who are not Kṛṣṇa conscious will change bodies one after another and continue to suffer the threefold miseries [those caused by the body and mind, those caused by other living beings, and those caused by natural calamities].

But devotees, even if they appear to be undergoing some suffering, will eventually give up the material body and remain in their spiritual body, free from all suffering.

Devotee: [taking the position of a materialist] That is simply your faith.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: And it is your faith that you do not believe it. We are accepting the words of the *Bhagavad-gītā* on faith, so we have a chance of getting promoted to the spiritual world. But you have no faith, so you are sure to continue suffering in the material world. We are at least willing to take the chance, but you are so foolish that you are not willing to take the chance. So your suffering is sure to continue.

Devotee: Indians often say, "Well, I will take the chance when Kṛṣṇa wishes. His will is supreme, so whenever He wishes He will make me Kṛṣṇa conscious."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: In the *Bhagavad-gītā* [18.66], Kṛṣṇa says, *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*: "Give up all your nonsense and surrender unto Me. Become Kṛṣṇa conscious." So, Kṛṣṇa wishes that you surrender to Him. Why don't you obey His wish?

Devotee: Why does Kṛṣṇa arrange for the pleasures of sense gratification if they only bring us suffering?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Again, the same answer: Kṛṣṇa has given us minute independence—we can use our senses for either sense gratification or for serving Him, which is the *real* pleasure of the senses. The senses are meant for enjoyment, but if you try to enjoy your senses in a diseased way—by gratifying them—that is your misfortune, and you will have to suffer. You have to cure your disease by becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious. Then you will enjoy unlimitedly.

We are not like the Māyāvādīs [impersonalists], who want to destroy the senses and become senseless. That is not our program. We want to *purify* the senses (*sarvopādhi-vinirmuktam tat-paratvena nirmalam*). Suppose a man cannot see because he has glaucoma. The *māyāvāda* program is that if your eye is giving you trouble and you cannot see, pluck it out. That is not our program. We want to cure the disease so you can see very nicely. So, our senses should be cured of the material disease by our practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Then we will be able to enjoy real sense pleasure by using our senses in the service of Hṛṣīkeśa [Kṛṣṇa], the master of the senses.

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 *purāna*, 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.

Third Canto: “The Status Quo”

CHAPTER TWO Remembrance of Lord Kṛṣṇa

In this installment of our continuing presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Uddhava, one of Lord Kṛṣṇa's intimate associates, comes out of an ecstatic trance and informs the great devotee Vidura of the Lord's disappearance from the world. Then Uddhava begins recounting the Lord's pastimes.

TEXT 6

सनकैर्भगवल्लोकान्ब्रूलोकं पुनरागतः ।
विमृज्य नेत्रे विदुरं प्रीत्याहोद्धव उत्सयन् ॥ ६ ॥

*śanakair bhagaval-lokān
nṛlokam punar āgataḥ
vimṛjya netre viduram
prītyāhoddhava utsmayan*

śanakaiḥ—gradually; *bhagavat*—the Lord; *lokāt*—from the abode; *nṛlokam*—the planet of the human beings; *punaḥ āgataḥ*—coming again; *vimṛjya*—wiping; *netre*—eyes; *viduram*—unto Vidura; *prītyā*—in affection; *āha*—said; *uddhavaḥ*—Uddhava; *utsmayan*—by all those remembrances.

TRANSLATION

The great devotee Uddhava soon came back from the abode of the Lord to the human plane, and wiping his eyes, he awakened his reminiscence of the past and spoke to Vidura in a pleasing mood.

PURPORT

When Uddhava was fully absorbed in the transcendental ecstasy of love of God, he actually forgot all about the external world. The pure devotee lives constantly in the abode of the Supreme Lord, even in the present body, which apparently belongs to this world. The pure devotee is not exactly on the bodily plane, since he is absorbed in the transcendental thought of the Supreme. When Uddhava wanted to speak to Vidura, he came down from the abode of the Lord, Dvārakā, to the material plane of human beings. Even though a pure devotee is present on this mortal planet, he is here in relation to the Lord for engagement in transcendental loving service, and not for any material cause. A living entity can live either on the material plane or in the transcendental abode of the Lord, in accordance with his existential condition. The conditional changes of the living entity are explained in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* in the instructions given to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī by Lord Śrī Caitanya: “The living entities all over the universes are enjoying the effects of the respective fruitive results of their own work, life after life. Out of all of them, some may be influenced by the association of pure devotees and thus get the chance to execute devotional service by attainment of taste. This taste is the seed of devotional service, and one who is fortunate enough to have received such a seed is advised to sow it in the core of his

heart. As one cultivates a seed by pouring water to fructify it, the seed of devotional service sown in the heart of the devotee may be cultured by pouring water in the form of hearing and chanting of the holy name and pastimes of the Lord. The creeper of devotional service, so nourished, gradually grows, and the devotee, acting as a gardener, goes on pouring the water of constant hearing and chanting. The creeper of devotional service gradually grows so high that it passes through the entire material universe and enters into the spiritual sky, growing still higher and higher until it reaches the planet Goloka Vṛndāvana. The devotee-gardener is in touch with the abode of the Lord even from the material plane by dint of performing devotional service to the Lord simply by hearing and chanting. As a creeper takes shelter of another, stronger tree, similarly the creeper of devotional service, nourished by the devotee, takes shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord and thus becomes fixed. When the creeper is fixed, then the fruit of the creeper comes into existence, and the gardener who nourished it is able to enjoy this fruit of love, and his life becomes successful.” That Uddhava attained this stage is evident from his dealings. He could simultaneously reach the supreme planet and still appear in this world.

TEXT 7

उद्धव उवाच

कृष्णद्युमणिनिम्लोचे गीर्णेष्वजगरेण ह ।
किं नु नः कुशलं ब्रूयां गतश्रीषु गृहेष्वहम् ॥ ७ ॥

*uddhava uvāca
kṛṣṇa-dyumaṇi nimloce
gīrṇeṣu ajagareṇa ha
kiṁ nu naḥ kuśalam brūyāṁ
gata-śrīṣu gṛheṣu aham*

uddhavaḥ uvāca—Śrī Uddhava said; *kṛṣṇa-dyumaṇi*—the Kṛṣṇa sun; *nimloce*—having set; *gīrṇeṣu*—being swallowed; *ajagareṇa*—by the great snake; *ha*—in the past; *kiṁ*—what; *nu*—else; *naḥ*—our; *kuśalam*—welfare; *brūyāṁ*—may I say; *gata*—gone away; *śrīṣu gṛheṣu*—in the house; *aham*—I.

TRANSLATION

Śrī Uddhava said: My dear Vidura, the sun of the world, Lord Kṛṣṇa, has set, and our house has now been swallowed by the great snake of time. What can I say to you about our welfare?

PURPORT

The disappearance of the Kṛṣṇa sun may be explained as follows, according to the commentary of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura. Vidura was struck with great sorrow when he got the hint of the annihilation of the great Yadu dynasty as well as of his own family, the Kuru dynasty. Uddhava could understand the grief of Vidura, and therefore he first of all wanted to sympathize with him by saying that after the sunset everyone is in darkness. Since the entire world was merged in the darkness of grief, neither Vidura nor Uddhava nor anyone else could be

happy. Uddhava was as much aggrieved as Vidura, and there was nothing further to be said about their welfare.

The comparison of Kṛṣṇa to the sun is very appropriate. As soon as the sun sets, darkness automatically appears. But the darkness experienced by the common man does not affect the sun itself either at the time of sunrise or of sunset. Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance and disappearance are exactly like that of the sun. He appears and disappears in innumerable universes, and as long as He is present in a particular universe there is all transcendental light in that universe, but the universe from which He passes away is put into darkness. His pastimes, however, are everlasting. The Lord is always present in some universe, just as the sun is present in either the eastern or the western hemisphere. The sun is always present either in India or in America, but when the sun is present in India, the American land is in darkness, and when the sun is present in America, the Indian hemisphere is in darkness.

As the sun appears in the morning and gradually rises to the meridian and then again sets in one hemisphere while simultaneously rising in the other, so Lord Kṛṣṇa's disappearance in one universe and the beginning of His different pastimes in another take place simultaneously. As soon as one pastime is finished here, it is manifested in another universe. And thus His *nitya-līlā*, or eternal pastimes, are going on without ending. As the sunrise takes place once in twenty-four hours, similarly the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa take place in a universe once in a daytime of Brahmā, the account of which is given in the *Bhagavad-gītā* as 4,300,000,000 solar years. But wherever the Lord is present, all His different pastimes as described in the revealed scriptures take place at regular intervals.

As at sunset the snakes become powerful, thieves are encouraged, ghosts become active, the lotus becomes disfigured and the *cakravāki* laments, so with the disappearance of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the atheists feel enlivened, and the devotees become sorry.

TEXT 8

दुर्भगो बत लोकोऽयं यदवो नितरामपि ।
ये संवसन्तो न विदुर्हरिं मीना इवोडुपम् ॥ ८ ॥

*durbhago bata loko 'yaṁ
yadavo nitarām api
ye saṁvasanto na vidur
harim mīnā ivoḍupam*

durbhagaḥ—unfortunate; *bata*—certainly; *lokaḥ*—universe; *ayam*—this; *yadavaḥ*—the Yadu dynasty; *nitarām*—more specifically; *api*—also; *ye*—those; *saṁvasantaḥ*—living together; *na*—did not; *viduḥ*—understand; *harim*—the Personality of Godhead; *mīnāḥ*—the fishes; *ivoḍupam*—like the moon.

TRANSLATION

This universe with all its planets is most unfortunate. And even more unfortunate are the members of the Yadu dynasty because they could not identify Lord Hari as the Personality of Godhead, any more than the fish could identify the moon.

PURPORT

Uddhava lamented for the unfortunate persons of the world who could not recognize Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa in spite of seeing all His transcendental godly qualities. From the very beginning of His appearance within the prison bars of King Kaṁsa up to His *mausala-līlā*, although He exhibited His potencies as the Personality of Godhead in the six opulences of wealth, strength, fame, beauty, knowledge and renunciation, the foolish persons of the world could not understand that He was the Supreme Lord. Foolish persons might have thought Him an extraordinary historic figure because they had no intimate touch with the Lord, but more unfortunate were the family members of the Lord, the members of the Yadu dynasty, who were always in company with the Lord but were unable to recognize Him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Uddhava lamented his own fortune also because although he knew Kṛṣṇa to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he could not properly use the opportunity to render devotional service to the Lord. He regretted everyone's

misfortune, including his own. The pure devotee of the Lord thinks himself most unfortunate. That is due to excessive love for the Lord and is one of the transcendental perceptions of *viraha*, the suffering of separation.

It is learned from the revealed scriptures that the moon was born from the milk ocean. There is a milk ocean in the upper planets, and there Lord Viṣṇu, who controls the heart of every living being as Paramātmā (the Supersoul), resides as the Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. Those who do not believe in the existence of the ocean of milk because they have experience only of the salty water in the ocean should know that the world is also called the *go*, which means the cow. The urine of a cow is salty, and according to Āyur-vedic medicine the cow's urine is very effective in treating patients suffering from liver trouble. Such patients may not have any experience of the cow's milk because milk is never given to liver patients. But the liver patient may know that the cow has milk also, although he has never tasted it. Similarly, men who have experience only of this tiny planet where the saltwater ocean exists may take information from the revealed scriptures that there is also an ocean of milk, although we have never seen it. From this ocean of milk the moon was born, but the fish in the milk ocean could not recognize that the moon was not another fish and was different from them. The fish took the moon to be one of them or maybe something illuminating, but nothing more. The unfortunate persons who do not recognize Lord Kṛṣṇa are like such fish. They take Him to be one of them, although a little extraordinary in opulence, strength, etc. The *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.11) confirms such foolish persons to be most unfortunate: *avajānanti mām mūḍhā mānuṣīm tanum āśritam*.

TEXT 9

इङ्गितज्ञाः पुरुप्रौढा एकारामाश्च सात्वताः ।
सात्वतामृषभं सर्वे भूतावासममंसत ॥ ९ ॥

*ṅgita-jñāḥ puru-praudhā
ekārāmāś ca sātvatāḥ
sātvatām ṛṣabhaṁ sarve
bhūtāvāsam amaṁsata*

ṅgita-jñāḥ—expert in psychic study; *puru-praudhāḥ*—highly experienced; *eka*—one; *ārāmāḥ*—relaxation; *ca*—also; *sātvatāḥ*—devotees, or own men; *sātvatām ṛṣabham*—head of the family; *sarve*—all; *bhūta-āvāsam*—all-pervading; *amaṁsata*—could think.

TRANSLATION

The Yadus were all experienced devotees, learned and expert in psychic study. Over and above this, they were always with the Lord in all kinds of relaxations, and still they were only able to know Him as the one Supreme who dwells everywhere.

PURPORT

In the *Vedas* it is said that the Supreme Lord or the Paramātmā cannot be understood simply by the strength of one's erudition or power of mental speculation: *nāyam ātmā pravacanena labhyo na medhayā na bahunā śruteṇa* (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.2.23). He can be known only by one who has the mercy of the Lord. The Yādavas were all exceptionally learned and experienced, but in spite of their knowing the Lord as the one who lives in everyone's heart, they could not understand that He is the original Personality of Godhead. This lack of knowledge was not due to their insufficient erudition; it was due to their misfortune. In Vṛndāvana, however, the Lord was not even known as the Paramātmā because the residents of Vṛndāvana were pure unconventional devotees of the Lord and could think of Him only as their object of love. They did not know that He is the Personality of Godhead. The Yadus, or the residents of Dvārakā, however, could know Lord Kṛṣṇa as Vāsudeva, or the Supersoul living everywhere, but not as the Supreme Lord. As scholars of the *Vedas*, they verified the Vedic hymns: *eko devaḥ... sarva-bhūtādhivāsaḥ... antaryāmi... and vṛṣṇinām para-devatā...* The Yadus, therefore, accepted Lord Kṛṣṇa as the Supersoul incarnated in their family, and not more than that.

TEXT 10

देवस्य मायया स्पृष्टा ये चान्यदसदाश्रिताः ।
भ्राम्यते धीर्न तद्वाक्यैरात्मन्युत्सत्मानो हरौ ॥१०॥

*devasya māyayā spr̥ṣṭā
ye cānyad asad-āśritāḥ
bhrāmyate dhīr na tad-vākyaair
ātmany uptātmano harau*

devasya—of the Personality of Godhead; *māyayā*—by the influence of external energy; *spr̥ṣṭāḥ*—infected; *ye*—all those; *ca*—and; *anyat*—others; *asad*—illusory; *āśritāḥ*—being taken to; *bhrāmyate*—bewilder; *dhīḥ*—intelligence; *na*—not; *tad*—of them; *vākyaīḥ*—by those words; *ātmani*—in the Supreme Self; *upta-ātmanah*—surrendered souls; *harau*—unto the Lord.

TRANSLATION

Under no circumstances can the words of persons bewildered by the illusory energy of the Lord deviate the intelligence of those who are completely surrendered souls.

PURPORT

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead according to all the evidences of the *Vedas*. He is accepted by all *ācāryas*, including Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya. But when He was present in the world, different classes of men accepted Him differently, and therefore their calculations of the Lord were also different. Generally, persons who had faith in the revealed scriptures accepted the Lord as He is, and all of them merged into great bereavement when the Lord disappeared from the world. In the First Canto we have already discussed the lamentation of Arjuna and Yudhiṣṭhira, to whom the disappearance of Lord Kṛṣṇa was almost intolerable up to the end of their lives.

The Yādavas were only partially cognizant of the Lord, but they are also glorious because they had the opportunity to associate with the Lord, who acted as the head of their family, and they also rendered the Lord intimate service. The Yādavas and other devotees of the Lord are different from those who wrongly calculated Him to be an ordinary human personality. Such persons are certainly bewildered by the illusory energy. They are hellish and are envious of the Supreme Lord. The illusory energy acts very powerfully on them because in spite of their elevated mundane education, such persons are faithless and are infected by the mentality of atheism. They are always very eager to establish that Lord Kṛṣṇa was an ordinary man who was killed by a hunter due to His many impious acts in plotting to kill the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Jarāsandha, the demoniac kings of the earth. Such persons have no faith in the statement of the *Bhagavad-gītā* that the Lord is unaffected by the reactions of work: *na mān karmāṇi limpanti*. According to the atheistic point of view, Lord Kṛṣṇa's family, the Yadu dynasty, was vanquished due to being cursed by the *brāhmaṇas* for the sins committed by Kṛṣṇa in killing the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, etc. All these blasphemies do not touch the heart of the devotees of the Lord because they know perfectly well what is what. Their intelligence regarding the Lord is never disturbed. But those who are disturbed by the statements of the *asuras* are also condemned. That is what Uddhava meant in this verse.

TEXT 11

प्रदर्शयित्तपसामवितृप्तदृशां नृणाम् ।
आदायान्तरधाद्यस्तु स्वविम्बं लोकलोचनम् ॥११॥

*pradarśyātapta-tapasām
avitṛpta-dṛśām nṛṇām
ādāyāntar adhād yas tu
sva-bimbam loka-lochanam*

pradarśya—by exhibiting; *atapta*—without undergoing; *tapasām*—penances; *avitṛpta-dṛśām*—without fulfillment of vision; *nṛṇām*—of

persons; *ādāya*—taking; *antah*—disappearance; *adhāt*—performed; *yah*—He who; *tu*—but; *sva-bimbam*—His own form; *loka-lochanam*—public vision.

TRANSLATION

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who manifested His eternal form before the vision of all on the earth, performed His disappearance by removing His form from the sight of those who were unable to see Him [as He is] due to not executing required penance.

PURPORT

In this verse the word *avitṛpta-dṛśām* is most significant. The conditioned souls in the material world are all trying to satisfy their senses in various ways, but they have failed to do so because it is impossible to be satisfied by such efforts. The example of the fish on land is very appropriate. If one takes a fish from the water and puts in on the land, it cannot be made happy by any amount of offered pleasure. The spirit soul can be happy only in the association of the supreme living being, the Personality of Godhead, and nowhere else. The Lord, by His unlimited causeless mercy, has innumerable Vaikuṅṭha planets in the *brahmajyoti* sphere of the spiritual world, and in that transcendental world there is an unlimited arrangement for the unlimited pleasure of the living entities.

The Lord Himself comes to display His transcendental pastimes, typically represented at Vṛndāvana, Mathurā and Dvārakā. He appears just to attract the conditioned souls back to Godhead, back home to the eternal world. But for want of sufficient piety, the onlookers are not attracted by such pastimes of the Lord. In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said that only those who have completely surpassed the way of sinful reaction can engage themselves in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. The entire Vedic way of ritualistic performances is to put every conditioned soul on the path of piety. By strict adherence to the prescribed principles for all orders of social life, one can attain the qualities of truthfulness, control of the mind, control of the senses, forbearance, etc., and can be elevated to the plane of rendering pure devotional service to the Lord. Only by such a transcendental vision are one's material hankerings fully satisfied.

When the Lord was present, persons who were able to satisfy their material hankerings by seeing Him in true perspective were thus able to go back with Him to His kingdom. But those persons who were unable to see the Lord as He is remained attached to material hankerings and were not able to go back home, back to Godhead. When the Lord passed beyond the vision of all, He did so in His original eternal form, as stated in this verse. The Lord left in His own body; He did not leave His body as is generally misunderstood by the conditioned souls. This statement defeats the false propaganda of the faithless nondevotees that the Lord passed away like an ordinary conditioned soul. The Lord appeared in order to release the world from the undue burden of the nonbelieving *asuras*, and after doing this, He disappeared from the world's eyes.

TEXT 12

यन्मर्त्यलीलापयिकं स्वयोग-
मायाबलं दर्शयता गृहीतम् ।
विस्मापनं स्वस्य च सौभाग्यदं:
परं पदं भूषणभूषणाङ्गम् ॥१२॥

*yan martya-līlapayikam sva-yoga-
māyā-balam darśayatā gṛhītam
vismāpanam svasya ca saubhagarddheḥ
param padam bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣaṇāṅgam*

yat—His eternal form which; *martya*—mortal world; *līla-upayikam*—just suitable for the pastimes; *sva-yoga-māyā-balam*—potency of the internal energy; *darśayatā*—for manifestation; *gṛhītam*—discovered; *vismāpanam*—wonderful; *svasya*—of His own; *ca*—and; *saubhaga-rddheḥ*—of the opulent; *param*—supreme; *padam*—ultimate stand; *bhūṣaṇa*—ornament; *bhūṣaṇa-āṅgam*—of the ornaments.

TRANSLATION

The Lord appeared in the mortal world by His internal potency, *yoga-māyā*. He came in His eternal form, which is just suitable for His pastimes. These pastimes were wonderful for everyone, even for those proud of their own opulence, including the Lord Himself in His form as the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha. Thus His (Śrī Kṛṣṇa's) transcendental body is the ornament of all ornaments.

PURPORT

In conformity with the Vedic hymns (*nityo nityānām cetanās cetanānām*), the Personality of Godhead is more excellent than all other living beings within all the universes in the material world. He is the chief of all living entities; no one can surpass Him or be equal to Him in wealth, strength, fame, beauty, knowledge or renunciation. When Lord Kṛṣṇa was within this universe, He seemed to be a human being because He appeared in a manner just suitable for His pastimes in the mortal world. He did not appear in human society in His Vaikuṅṭha feature with four hands because that would not have been suitable for His pastimes. But in spite of His appearing as a human being, no one was or is equal to Him in any respect in any of the six different opulences. Everyone is more or less proud of his opulence in this world, but when Lord Kṛṣṇa was in human society, He excelled all His contemporaries within the universe.

When the Lord's pastimes are visible to the human eye, they are called *prakāṣa*, and when they are not visible they are called *aprakāṣa*. In fact, the Lord's pastimes never stop, just as the sun never leaves the sky. The sun is always in its right orbit in the sky, but it is sometimes visible and sometimes invisible to our limited vision. Similarly, the pastimes of the Lord are always current in one universe or another, and when Lord Kṛṣṇa disappeared from the transcendental abode of Dvārakā, it was simply a disappearance from the eyes of the people there. It should not be misunderstood that His transcendental body, which is just suitable for the pastimes in the mortal world, is in any way inferior to His different expansions in the Vaikuṅṭhalokas. His body manifested in the material world is transcendental par excellence in the sense that His pastimes in the mortal world excel His mercy displayed in the Vaikuṅṭhalokas. In the Vaikuṅṭhalokas the Lord is merciful toward the liberated or *nitya-mukta* living entities, but in His pastimes in the mortal world He is merciful even to the fallen souls who are *nitya-baddha*, or conditioned forever. The six excellent opulences which He displayed in the mortal world by the agency of His internal potency, *yoga-māyā*, are rare even in the Vaikuṅṭhalokas. All His pastimes were manifested not by the material energy but by His spiritual energy. The excellence of His *rāsa-līlā* at Vṛndāvana and His householder life with sixteen thousand wives is wonderful even for Nārāyaṇa in Vaikuṅṭha and is certainly so for other living entities within this mortal world. His pastimes are wonderful even for other incarnations of the Lord, such as Śrī Rāma, Nṛsiṁha and Varāha. His opulence was so superexcellent that His pastimes were adored even by the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha, who is not different from Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself.

TEXT 13

यद्धर्मसूनुर्वेत राजसूये
निरीक्ष्य द्रक्स्वस्त्ययनं त्रिलोकः ।
कात्स्न्येन चायेह गतं विधातु-
र्वाक्स्मुतौ कौशलमित्यमन्यत ॥१३॥

yad dharma-sūnoṛ bata rājasūye
nirīkṣya drk-svastyayanam tri-lokaḥ
kārtsnyena cāyeha gatam vidhātu-
arvāk-sṛtau kauśalam ity amanyata

yat—the form which; *dharma-sūnoḥ*—of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira; *bata*—certainly; *rājasūye*—in the arena of the *rājasūya* sacrifice; *nirīkṣya*—by observing; *drk*—sight; *svastyayanam*—pleasing; *tri-lokaḥ*—the three worlds; *kārtsnyena*—in sum total; *ca*—thus; *adya*—today; *iha*—within the universe; *gatam*—surpassed; *vidhātuḥ*—of the

creator (Brahmā); *arvāk*—recent mankind; *sṛtau*—in the material world; *kauśalam*—dexterity; *iti*—thus; *amanyata*—contemplated.

TRANSLATION

All the demigods from the upper, lower and middle universal planetary systems assembled at the altar of the *rājasūya* sacrifice performed by Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. After seeing the beautiful bodily features of Lord Kṛṣṇa, they all contemplated that He was the ultimate dexterous creation of Brahmā, the creator of human beings.

PURPORT

There was nothing comparable to the bodily features of Lord Kṛṣṇa when He was present in this world. The most beautiful object in the material world may be compared to the blue lotus flower or the full moon in the sky, but even the lotus flower and the moon were defeated by the beauty of the bodily features of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and this was certified by the demigods, the most beautiful living creatures in the universe. The demigods thought that Lord Kṛṣṇa, like themselves, was also created by Lord Brahmā, but in fact Brahmā was created by Lord Kṛṣṇa. It was not within the power of Brahmā to create the transcendental beauty of the Supreme Lord. No one is the creator of Kṛṣṇa; rather, He is the creator of everyone. As He says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.8), *ahaṁ sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate*.

TEXT 14

यस्यानुरागस्तुतहासरास-
लीलावलोकप्रतिलब्धमानाः ।
व्रजस्त्रियो दृग्भिरनुप्रवृत्त-
धियोऽवतस्थुः किल कृत्यदोषाः ॥१४॥

yasyānurāga-pluta-hāsa-rāsa-
līlāvaloka-pratīlabdha-mānāḥ
vraja-striyo drgbbhir anupravṛtta-
dhiyo 'avasthuḥ kila kṛtya-śeṣāḥ

yasya—whose; *anurāga*—attachment; *pluta*—enhanced by; *hāsa*—laughter; *rāsa*—humors; *līlā*—pastimes; *avaloka*—glancing; *pratīlabdha*—obtained thereof; *mānāḥ*—anguished; *vraja-striyaḥ*—damsels of Vraja; *drgbbhiḥ*—with the eyes; *anupravṛtta*—following; *dhiyaḥ*—by intelligence; *avasthuḥ*—sat silently; *kila*—indeed; *kṛtya-śeṣāḥ*—without finishing household duties.

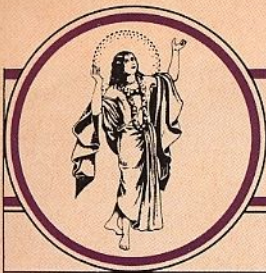
TRANSLATION

The damsels of Vraja, after pastimes of laughter, humor and exchanges of glances, were anguished when Kṛṣṇa left them. They used to follow Him with their eyes, and thus they sat down with stunned intelligence and could not finish their household duties.

PURPORT

In His boyhood at Vṛndāvana, Lord Kṛṣṇa was notorious as a teasing friend in transcendental love to all the girls His age. His love for them was so intense that there is no comparison to that ecstasy, and the damsels of Vraja were so much attached to Him that their affection excelled that of the great demigods like Brahmā and Śiva. Lord Kṛṣṇa finally admitted His defeat before the transcendental affection of the *gopīs* and declared that He was unable to repay them for their unalloyed affection. Although the *gopīs* were seemingly anguished by the Lord's teasing behavior, when Kṛṣṇa would leave them they could not tolerate the separation and used to follow Him with their eyes and minds. They were so stunned by the situation that they could not finish their household duties. No one could excel Him even in the dealing of love exchanged between boys and girls. It is said in the revealed scriptures that Lord Kṛṣṇa personally never goes beyond the boundary of Vṛndāvana. He remains there eternally because of the transcendental love of the inhabitants. Thus even though He is not visible at present, He is not away from Vṛndāvana for a moment.

(continued in next issue)



Every Town and Village

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

English Punk-Rocker Lora Logic Now Sings for Kṛṣṇa

London—Lora Logic, the English punk-rock singer and saxophonist, is now a full-time devotee in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. The twenty-two-year-old Ms. Logic (now Śyāmā-mañjari-devī dāśī) took formal initiation into Kṛṣṇa consciousness from Śrīla Bhagavān dāsa Goswami Gurudeva, one of the present spiritual masters in the Hare Krishna movement.

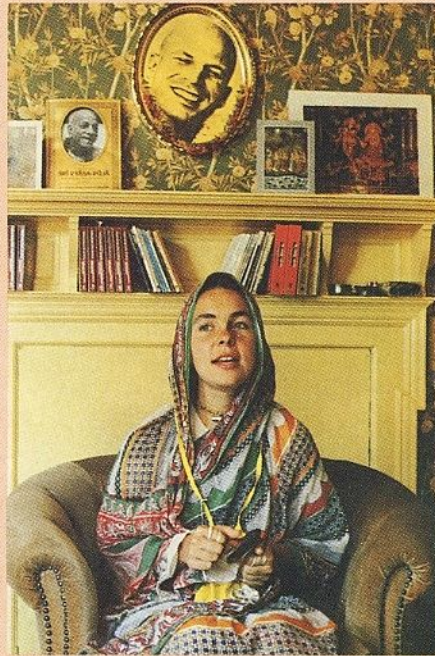
Commenting on her joining ISKCON, Śyāmā-mañjari said, "For the first twenty-one years of my life I was a devotee of *māyā* [illusion], giving my life to drugs and rock music. I don't have a taste for them anymore, and for me to be happy there's nothing like Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

Last June in Glastonbury, England, Śyāmā-mañjari joined with her old friend Poly Styrene and other devotees to give a taste of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to thirty thousand people gathered for the Glastonbury Fair, one of England's biggest rock festivals.

Devotee musicians flew in from around the world to perform, and, dressed in authentic Vedic costumes, Śyāmā-mañjari and Poly Styrene premiered their latest Kṛṣṇa conscious sound.

After one set, Śyāmā-mañjari commented, "Singing about Kṛṣṇa is completely opposite to singing about material attractions—and the energy increases as you go on." Poly Styrene added, "Singing songs for Kṛṣṇa is much nicer, because everyone's trying to serve Him and there's no false ego. It's just like being in the spiritual world."

His Holiness Dhṛṣṭadyumna Swami,



THE ISKCON WORLD REVIEW

Śyāmā-mañjari-devī dāśī (formerly the popular punk-rock singer-saxophonist Lora Logic) chants Hare Kṛṣṇa beneath a portrait of her spiritual master, Śrīla Bhagavān dāsa Goswami Gurudeva.

who organized ISKCON's participation in the festival, predicted that the spiritual energy generated there will inspire many who attended to become devotees. He may be right, judging by this comment from one young man: "I've just had the ultimate ecstatic experience! The Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees should take this festival over!"

Forty-three Editions of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Gītā* Shown at Conference

New Delhi—At a recent convention here on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, India's internationally renowned classic of spiritual science, ISKCON devotees displayed editions of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* in forty-three languages. New Delhi's National Television Network and news agencies enthusiastically noted the large number of editions, and many of the dignitaries at the conference recognized ISKCON as the foremost distributor of the *Gītā* throughout the world.

The head of ISKCON's delegation to the conference was His Holiness Lokanātha Swami, a regional secretary for India. Speaking strongly on the theme of unalloyed devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, he warned against the pseudoreligionists who misuse the Lord's teachings for ulterior purposes. Later Lokanātha Swami met with National Minister of Transport Z. R. Ansari, who, although a Muslim, holds the *Gītā* in high regard.

The five-day convention concluded with a sumptuous vegetarian feast of *kṛṣṇa-prasādam* (food offered to Kṛṣṇa) prepared by members of the New Delhi Hare Kṛṣṇa center.

New Television Series Reaches Out to Millions By Cable

Los Angeles—Cable television is making Kṛṣṇa consciousness available to millions of Americans in the form of *Inside Hare Kṛṣṇa*, a thirteen-part series produced by ISKCON TV under the direction of Nṛsiṁhānanda dāsa.

The host and hostess of the thirty-minute weekly talk show are Larry Laurent and Munya Surgi, professional broadcasters for the Cable News Network and friends of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. Each week they volunteer their time to interview guests and focus on a particular aspect of ISKCON. In southern California, the series can be seen in half a million homes.

On the East Coast, Bhaktivinoda dāsa is working to get *Inside Hare Kṛṣṇa* on the air. The show, playing on Group W Cable, can already reach one-and-a-half million homes in Manhattan, and Long Island and New Jersey are next.

Greek *Īsopaniṣad*, *Bhagavad-gītā* Published

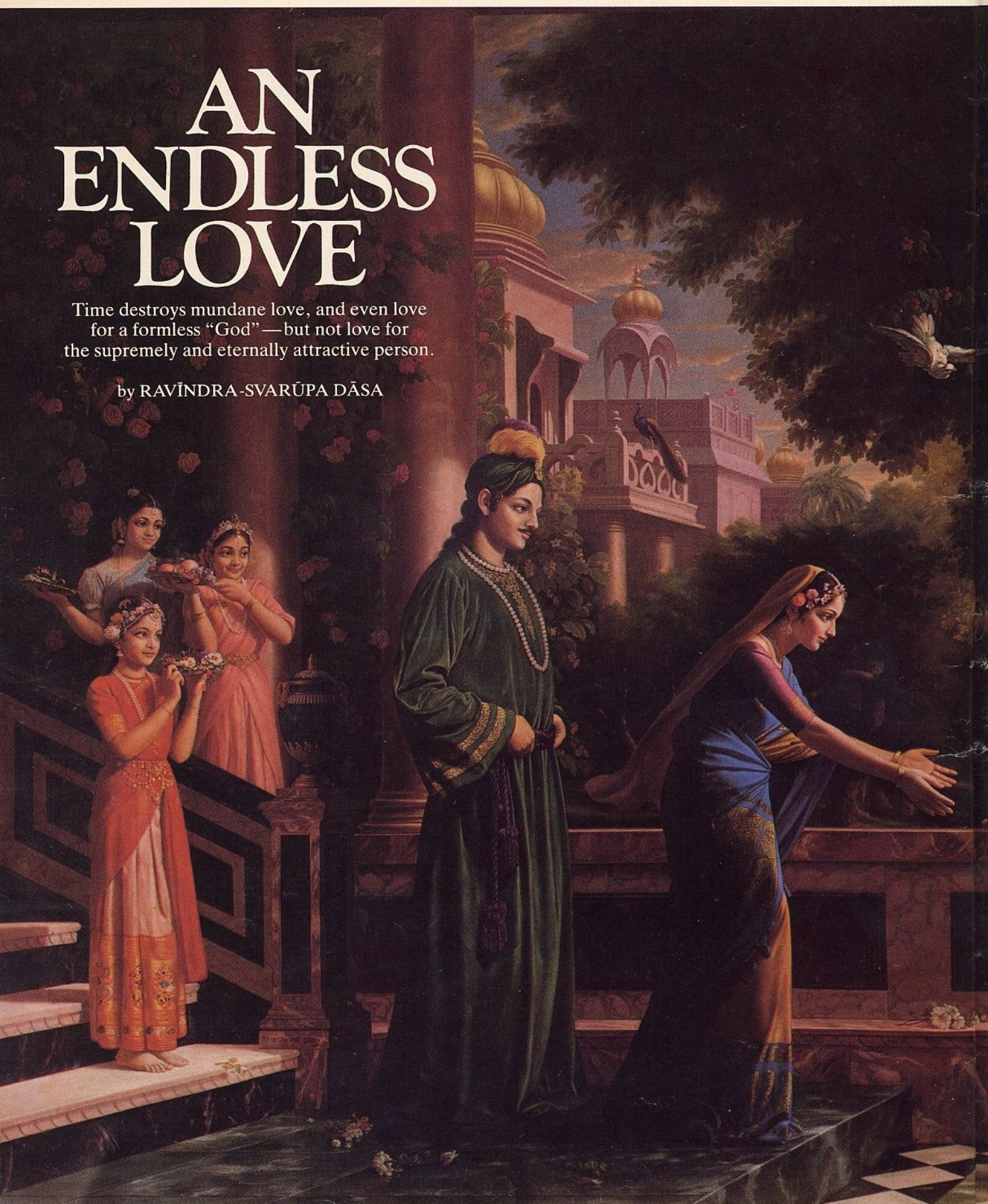
Athens—For the first time, Greeks can read Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* in their native tongue. The Greek branch of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust has printed one hundred thousand copies of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*—Śrīla Prabhupāda's most widely read work—along with an equal number of his *Śrī Īsopaniṣads*. Said Citraka dāsa, president of the Athens Hare Kṛṣṇa center: "Authentic Vedic information is finally becoming available here. This is a cause for jubilation!"



AN ENDLESS LOVE

Time destroys mundane love, and even love for a formless "God"—but not love for the supremely and eternally attractive person.

by RAVĪNDRA-SVARŪPA DĀSA





PAINTING BY MURALIDHARA DĀSA

Because my family frequently moved when I was a child, I attended a succession of Sunday schools and vacation Bible schools. Consequently, I had occasion to ask a number of religious instructors a question that had me genuinely puzzled. I knew that God was so great and powerful that it cost Him virtually no effort at all to maintain and control this vast creation. He could do it with the tip of His little finger, so to speak. So, I wanted to know, what did God do with his time? How did He occupy Himself in His heavenly kingdom?

I kept on asking this question because no one could answer it. My teachers would first be startled—as though the question had never occurred to them—and then frankly nonplussed. After a while, of course, I stopped asking. It seemed to me that God must be sitting up there on His throne, just as bored in heaven as I was in Sunday school.

And there was this related question: What did *we* do in paradise? What made it such a desirable place to be? Here I was offered a variety of answers, but the dominant image of the kingdom of God I retained from childhood is of a sort of perpetual suburban Saturday spent on the back patio in an interminable family reunion with pious resurrected relatives, while Jesus wanders in white robes from house to house through the back yards. I did not find this a particularly attractive prospect for eternity.

In my teens, I encountered a more sophisticated notion of paradise: Our beatitude there arises from our perpetual vision of God. This idea is enshrined at the conclusion of *The Divine Comedy*. When Dante at last comes directly before God in paradise, he encounters an awesome “Eternal Light” surrounded by nine concentric circles of circumnavigating angels. Dante became “wholly rapt” before this light and could only gaze upon it, “fixed, motionless, and intent.”

This account had its interest for me, but staring at a bright light was nowhere near as alluring as the variety of relationships I was beginning to explore in the world around me. God and His kingdom were simply not attractive enough to compete with the offerings of the material world.

Yet obviously that must be wrong. For God, by definition, is the greatest and best of all. Consequently, He must be the

Kṛṣṇa rushes to embrace His mother, Yaśodā, and His father, Nanda, after a day of playing in the forests and fields of Vṛndāvana. Kṛṣṇa being the ultimate object of all affection, the loving relationships between Him and His parents, companions, and girlfriends are inconceivably blissful and, best of all, eternal.

supremely lovable being, the most attractive and alluring of all persons. Similarly, His kingdom must be the most excellent and most desirable of all neighborhoods. It follows, then, that if we really knew what God was like, and really knew what our relationship with Him in His own abode was to be, no other persons and no other relationships would claim our interest.

Just for that reason, God has in fact revealed to the world the intimate and confidential details concerning Himself, His own residence, and the relationships He pursues with His pure devotees there. This supreme revelation of Kṛṣṇa—God in His highest and most attractive feature—is recorded in the Sanskrit text called *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

It is established practice for experts in every field to organize knowledge of their subject into levels of increasing mastery and to compose textbooks for each grade, from the most elementary to the most advanced. So it is for knowledge of God, and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is among the most advanced texts in that science. It begins where the more widely known *Bhagavad-gītā* leaves off.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* establishes that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, that there is no truth higher than He, and that all different paths of religion are just a seeking after Him. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa's final instruction in the *Bhagavad-gītā* is that one should "abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me" (18.66). The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* opens with the statement that it is intended for those who have complied with Kṛṣṇa's order, and it identifies the "religion" Kṛṣṇa tells us to abandon as *kāitava-dharma*—religion contaminated by various sorts of material ambitions. Pure religion, according to the *Bhāgavatam*, is service rendered to God without interruption or selfish motivation, and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* itself is specifically intended for those who are serving God in this way. Such pure devotees are the most advanced students in the science of God. It is no wonder, then, that in the text meant for them we find the most complete disclosures of God.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.11), Kṛṣṇa states the principle by which He discloses Himself to us. "All of them—as they surrender unto Me—I reward accordingly. Everyone follows my path in all respects." While all people on the path of religion may be progressing toward God, they are considered more or less advanced according to their degree of surrender to Him. And according to that degree of surrender, God reveals Himself.

For example, let us consider a level of spiritual advancement known as *karma-kāṇḍa*. A person on this platform (called a *karmī*) is allowed restricted material en-

joyment according to the regulations given by God in scripture. The *karmī* is given to know that if he piously follows these regulations he will earn the reward of future enjoyment and that disobedience will bring him punishment. Thus it is a system of rewards and punishments that impels the *karmī* to follow God's orders. Such a person will make some spiritual advancement, because at least he acknowledges the supremacy of God and is restricted in his sense gratification.

Karma-kāṇḍa religion, in fact, was precisely the sort of religion I learned in Sunday school. We understood God mostly as the cosmic fulfiller of our needs and de-

***We thought of God
as a voice issuing
from on high,
ordering, cajoling,
and threatening. He
was a benevolent but
stern parent, remote
but still attentive,
toward whom we, His
children, should feel
both gratitude and fear.***

sires and as the supreme judge, whose great power over us inspired proper awe, veneration, and fear of disobedience. We envisioned God's kingdom as a place of uninterrupted (if somewhat dispassionate) material enjoyment, a reward for our good behavior. And we thought of God Himself as a voice issuing from on high, ordering, cajoling, and threatening. He was a benevolent but stern parent, remote but still attentive, toward whom we, His children, should feel both gratitude and fear.

Certainly, one sometimes comes across more advanced understandings in Judeo-Christian traditions, but the form of religion I have just described is by far the most common. And it is this sort of religion—religion contaminated by material desires—that we have to abandon if we are to approach closer to God and ultimately meet Him in His supremely attractive personal form, Kṛṣṇa.

What Westerners find most startling about the revelation of God as Kṛṣṇa is that Kṛṣṇa has a humanlike form. They

find it hard to believe that this is an advanced realization of God, since they have been taught that God is formless, featureless spirit, and they take Kṛṣṇa to be an anthropomorphic fantasy. Furthermore, they see that Kṛṣṇa disports Himself as a beautiful, youthful cowherd boy surrounded by a simple village community of relatives and friends. Where, then, is the power and majesty that properly belong to God? Where is the controller of the cosmos, the mighty judge of the living and the dead? How can a simple, charming cowherd boy inspire the fear, trembling, and sense of creaturliness that we should feel before God?

To be sure, the first lesson in religion is to appreciate the infinite greatness of God and to realize that we are only His infinitesimally small creatures. Unfortunately, this lesson can be very hard for us to learn, because we have come to this material world in rebellion against God. We do not wish to remain subordinate to God. Those who are the most envious of God deny His existence. There are others who acknowledge God's greatness, even though the tendency to be independent remains within their hearts. Their lack of complete surrender to God is shown by their engagement in materially motivated religion, and God reveals Himself to those in this early stage of spiritual advancement only in His might and majesty. Although they may know theoretically that God is a person, God keeps His personal features hidden from them. He remains aloof, inscrutable, inaccessible. In this way, God exacts the proper respect and veneration from those who still have the inclination to disobey Him.

But it is also part of God's greatness that He enters into more intimate and familiar relationships with those devotees who have become completely pure in heart and who serve Him solely out of love, without any expectation of return. To them He reveals His supreme personal form. Because this form resembles ours, the ignorant will call it anthropomorphic. But the truth is that our human body is theomorphic. We are made in the image of God. Of course, our copy of God's body is a temporary, material replica, while God's own body is spiritual and eternal. Speculators may think that a body, as such, is a bad thing and thus deny that God has form, but only a material form that grows old, becomes diseased, and dies should be rejected. The eternal, ever-youthful body of Kṛṣṇa is not subject to those conditions. To reject God's form on the grounds that if God had a body it would be a material body like ours is to be guilty of anthropomorphism.

Kṛṣṇa is reluctant to reveal Himself to everyone. For Kṛṣṇa sets aside all lordliness and signs of dominion, allows His

beauty to completely overpower His majesty, and simply engages in developing pastimes of love with His devotees. To facilitate intimate relationships, Kṛṣṇa causes His devotees to forget that the beautiful, exquisitely charming object of their love is God. And so He dwells in His eternal abode, playing as a simple village cowherd boy, ever increasing the unending bliss of His devotees.

Pure devotees most appreciate God in this confidential, all-attractive feature, but others, seeing Kṛṣṇa in His human form, react differently. Kṛṣṇa mentions this in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.11): “Fools deride Me when I descend in the human form. They do not know My transcendental nature and My supreme dominion over all that be.” Out of envy, they will claim either that Kṛṣṇa is an ordinary human being or that ordinary human beings are God.

In spite of this danger, Kṛṣṇa Himself descended onto this planet five thousand years ago, bringing with Him His eternal associates, and for a time displayed His most confidential and intimate pastimes at the tract of land known as Gokula Vṛndāvana. More than anything else, God wants the fallen souls suffering in the material world to come back to Him, and therefore He decided to show the unparalleled sweetness of the limitlessly variegated loving relationships that He and His devotees enjoy without end in His supreme abode. The world already knew God as all-mighty and all-seeing; now it would know Him as all-attractive.

Learned devotees have carefully studied these pastimes of Kṛṣṇa as they are recorded in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other texts, and they have discovered five principal kinds of relationships devotees have with God. Each of these relationships has a particular taste that the devotee relishes. In Sanskrit that taste is called *rasa*. The five principal *rasas*, listed in order of increasing intimacy, are neutrality, or passive adoration, servitorship, fraternal love, parental love, and conjugal love.

In the *rasa* of neutrality the devotee is so overwhelmingly conscious of God’s greatness that He can only adore Him passively. The devotee feels no impetus to render service, because he thinks that God is so great that there is nothing he can do for Him. Dante’s description of the Beatific Vision as producing stunned, enraptured awe before God suggests that neutrality is his highest conception of a relationship with God. In the *rasa* of servitorship there are also feelings of subordination, but they are not so extreme as to prevent the devotee from actively serving his Lord. In the fraternal *rasa* the devotee associates with Kṛṣṇa on an equal level, as a friend of the same age and sex. And in the parental

rasa Kṛṣṇa enjoys having His devotee act as His superior. Kṛṣṇa becomes the child, and His devotee loves and serves Him in the position of His mother or father. Finally, the most intimate *rasa* is conjugal love; here, the devotee regards Kṛṣṇa as husband or lover.

Just as Kṛṣṇa’s body is the prototype of our material body, so Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental relationships are the prototypes of material relationships, which are perverted reflections of the originals. Accordingly, we should not project the quality of material affairs onto the spiritual *rasas*. The sublime exchange of ecstatic emotions in spiritual bodies that takes place between

***Out of boundless
compassion for us,
Kṛṣṇa reveals
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friend, child, and lover.***

Kṛṣṇa and the cowherd girls of Vṛndāvana cannot be compared with the gross features of material sex. Moreover, the relationships with Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world never grow stale or come to an end like the relationships in this world. In the spiritual world, all *rasas* continue for eternity.

Here in the material world we find reflections of these relationships, and because we are always interested in tasting *rasas*, we constantly enter into them and try to perpetuate them. Our problem, however, is that we do not find the satisfaction we seek. We are inevitably disappointed. For all *rasas* in the material world are eclipsed. Here everything is changing, unstable, and temporary. We form relationships with our heroes, our friends, our children, and our lovers or spouses, and we start off with vast hope and great expectations. We all remember—ruefully—that intoxicating promise of endless love our first adolescent infatuation brought. And what can match the boundless hope a mother feels when she first holds her newborn? Yet none of these relationships deliver what they

promise. As we grow older, we become “mature” by learning how to live with dead *rasas*, failed relationships, broken hearts. And, having discovered that my hero has feet of clay, or that my best friend has betrayed my trust, or having seen what was once the sweetest girl of my dreams stare at me over a lawyer’s table with murderous hate, or having stood over the small grave of my child, I will find it hard, or even impossible, to love as I once hoped I could.

Our propensity to love tends naturally to expand without limit, yet in this world it meets with repeated impediments. The baffling of our urge to love becomes one of the most tragic features of life. The crux of the problem is that although we want to love, we are never more vulnerable than when we do. As soon as we love someone, we open ourselves to rejection, betrayal, separation, loss, and all the attending anguish and pain. Experience of these things has filled the world with bitter and disappointed people, cynics and misanthropes.

But even before we have suffered the pains of thwarted love, we aren’t able to love fully and unconditionally. There is an essential incompatibility between what we are and what we can love in this world, and in our hearts we know it. Our desire to love without limit and without end is a clear indication that we are ourselves eternal, spiritual beings. At the same time, whatever we can love in this world is temporary and material. Consequently, we cannot love without fear, and, consciously or unconsciously, from the outset we cannot help but withhold the full investment of our love.

A frequent theme in literature concerns a hero or heroine who loves recklessly and without restraint, inevitably undergoes the most intense sort of suffering, and finally meets with a tragic or pitiful death. We may take these stories as cautionary tales. Yet we really don’t need them to remind us of the constant frustration of our being. There is no adequate object for our love in this world.

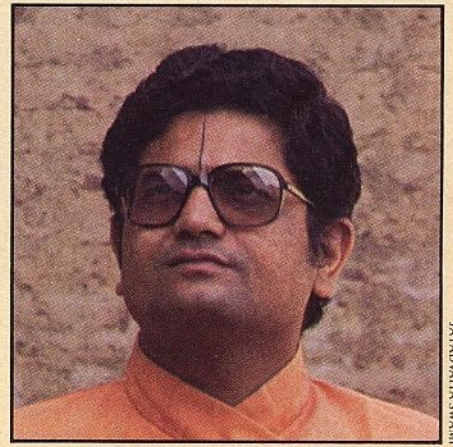
Therefore, out of boundless compassion for us, Kṛṣṇa reveals His kingdom of transcendental, unrestricted love, in which He is eternally manifest as the ultimate object of affection—the most perfect hero, master, friend, child, and lover. His beauty is unrivaled, and His personality, expressed in infinitely varied exchanges of love, is ceaselessly fascinating. When we turn to Kṛṣṇa, our loving propensity breaks loose at last from the tight confines of matter and opens up into an ever-expanding flow that never meets any resistance. That is why Kṛṣṇa is perpetually inviting us to come to Him in His eternal abode and enjoy with Him forever the delights of an endless love.

Interview

BHAKTI FLOWS WEST

Śrī Caitanya's Children in America

An Indian scholar and devotee traces out the roots of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in India and assesses the significance of its spread to the West.



JAYADVAITA SWAMI

Shrivatsa Goswami belongs to a centuries-old lineage of Vaiṣṇava priests connected with the famous temple of Rādhā-ramaṇa in Vṛndāvana, India. He is the founder and director of the Shree Caitanya Prema Sansthana, a Vaiṣṇava academic and cultural institute located in Vṛndāvana, and is a member of the Board of Editors of the Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies.

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This is a condensation of an interview with Mr. Goswami conducted in Vrndāvana in March, 1982. The full interview appears in Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna: Five Distinguished Scholars on the Krishna Movement in the West, a book recently published by Grove Press (paper, \$7.95). The interviewer, and the book's editor, is Steven J. Gelberg, a senior editor of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust who is known within the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement as Śubhānanda dāsa.

Bhakti Tradition: Its Origins And Historical Development

Śubhānanda dāsa: As we know, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is rooted in the concept of *bhakti*, love of God, specifically *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is understood as the original and supreme form of Godhead. Let's look at the concept of *bhakti* in a broad religious context. *Bhakti* usually is taken to be a subdivision of Hinduism—as a specific, localized aspect of Indian religious tradition. Should *bhakti* be viewed in this way—as a sectarian or culture-specific phenomenon—or

can it be understood in broader, more universal terms?

Shrivatsa Goswami: If I could answer your question in one sentence, I would say that we can translate the term *religion* as *bhakti*. By religion, I mean the human quest for realization of the Divine. That quest presupposes a relation of man to God. In the religious quest one is, in one manner or another, trying to relate himself to God. That relating to God is itself *bhakti*, and the religious experience itself is *bhakti*. You can call it "Hindu *bhakti*" or "Christian *bhakti*" or "Islamic *bhakti*." Any religious quest for God is, in essence, *bhakti*.

The highest mode of spiritual life is where no other motive remains except love. If you attain the sublime state of divine love, where there is no other guiding force, no other motive except love for the sake of love, then you have attained the realization of God as Bhagavān—Śrī Kṛṣṇa. That is the highest religious attainment.

Śubhānanda dāsa: What about *bhakti* as a historical phenomenon? To what point in the religious history of India can we trace *bhakti* religion? As you know, many contemporary historians tend to describe *bhakti*

tradition as an almost exclusively medieval phenomenon. Could you comment on that view?

Shrivatsa Goswami: *Bhakti* is an eternal human tendency; it is not merely some kind of historical movement arising out of peculiar social and cultural circumstances. Whenever or wherever there have been human beings, there has been *bhakti* in some form or another. *Bhakti* is like a river that takes different forms, sometimes widening, sometimes narrowing, and that moves this way and that way at different places and times. Sometimes it is fully manifested, and at other times it is eclipsed or subdued by various historical and cultural forces. It is like language. Sanskrit before Pāṇini is different from Sanskrit after Pāṇini. Words change, grammar and diction change. Fifteenth century English is not the same as twentieth century English, although the language is the same. So even language flows. It is a question of continuity and change. *Bhakti* is the same continuing stream, but it appears in different forms and degrees in different periods.

There are any number of scriptural, literary, architectural, and archeological

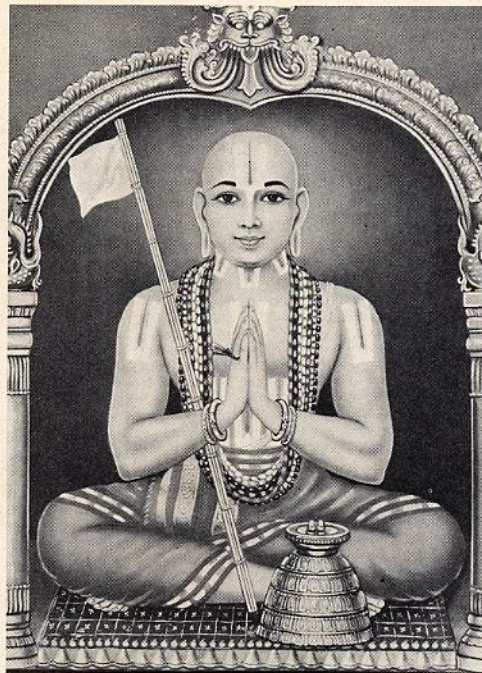
evidences for the antiquity of *bhakti*. But if we view Indian religious history over the past two or three thousand years, it becomes apparent that *bhakti* tradition was strongest and most widespread in the medieval centuries—let's say from the eleventh century onward, beginning with the appearance of the great Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* [spiritual teachers] like Rāmānuja and Madhva. Many ancient *bhakti* strains crystallized into the medieval *bhakti* movement. **Śubhānanda dāsa:** To what extent was the medieval *bhakti* movement a popular reaction against an elitist, brahminical Hinduism?

Shrivatsa Goswami: The *bhakti* movement can be seen in some sense as a revolt against the ritualistic “high” tradition, the brahminical, scholastic tradition. We have to bear in mind, however, that this kind of revolt was natural. Religion is a process, a historical process; it is never stagnant. What was good for the Vedic period was not necessarily good for the fifteenth century. The tradition had to be brought into the present. Metaphysical realities, religious concepts, are eternal. But those primeval concepts have to be worked out, from age to age, in the form of practical religious life. You need timely expressions of ancient tradition. In order to accomplish this, you have to constantly review your religious practices.

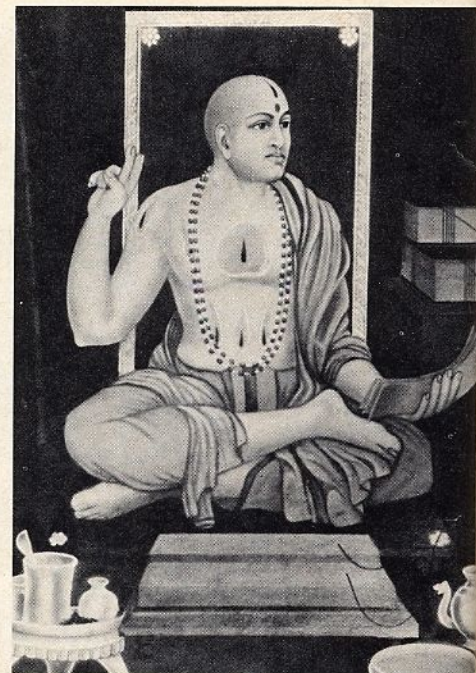
So, at this time, there was oppression from the brahminical ritualistic tradition. It had become overly ritualistic, intellectual, and exclusivistic. But with the revival of *bhakti* and the dispensing of ritualistic formality, God became, so to speak, more accessible and immediate. The *bhakti* movement was democratic. It provided, you might say, equal opportunity for all people to work out their salvation. That was not possible in the stagnant brahminical tradition. In this sense the *bhakti* movement was a great revolution. It opened the gates of salvation to everybody. This was the great and unique contribution of *bhakti*, religiously and sociologically.

Śubhānanda dāsa: Shrivatsa, could you now describe the development of the *bhakti* movement—or conglomeration of *bhakti* movements—from roughly the eleventh to the eighteenth centuries? Who were the major figures and what were the important movements during this devotional renaissance?

Shrivatsa Goswami: The medieval *bhakti* movement took birth in South India with the Dravidian saints, the Ālvārs and so on. Then a little later, Rāmānuja, the first systematic philosopher of *bhakti*, appeared in the Tamil country. He was the first major *ācārya* to declare *bhakti*, aside from *jñāna* [philosophical speculation], a legitimate path to realize God. After Rāmānuja, the next great devotional thinker was Madhva, who was born in Karnataka at



Śrīla Rāmānujācārya (A.D. 1017–1137)



Śrīpāda Madhvācārya (A.D. 1239–1319)



PAINTING BY PANDU DASA

The Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana (16th century A.D.)

the end of the twelfth century. After that, the movement got a big boost from different saints who appeared throughout India, including Maharashtra, during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. These centuries were very crucial for the growth of the *bhakti* movement.

Śubhānanda dāsa: What were some of the distinctive religious practices and forms of worship within the devotional movements?

Shrivatsa Goswami: In general, the *bhakti* movements attempted to spiritualize, to make sacred, ordinary worldly activities. Take eating, for example. Eating is a common human activity. Everybody eats. But the eating of food was transformed into a religious activity by first offering the food in devotion to the Lord. The food thus became sanctified as *prasādam*, the mercy of

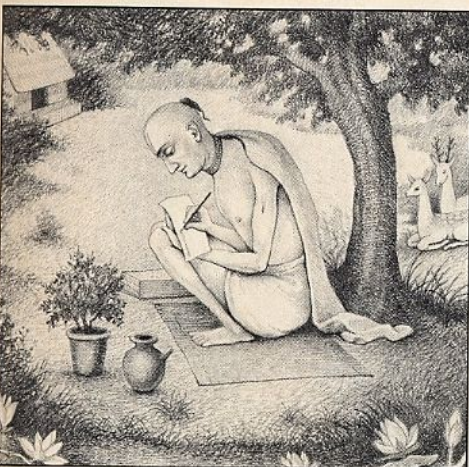
God. Aesthetic values were made religious. Poetry, art, dance, song, and drama: all were dedicated to glorifying God by depicting His divine form, attributes, and activities. Artistic pursuits all became saturated with *bhakti*. So the whole of human existence became refined into spiritual existence. The dichotomy between the phenomenal and the spiritual was broken down, or, rather, these two realms were brought closer together.

Śubhānanda dāsa: What about *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, congregational chanting of the names of God? In the Caitanya movement, of course, *nāma-saṅkīrtana* was the principal form of worship. Was this also the case with other *bhakti* movements?

Shrivatsa Goswami: *Nāma-saṅkīrtana* was definitely widespread, and music has al-



Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu (A.D. 1486–1534)



Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī
(16th–17th centuries A.D.)

ways definitely been an important part of Vaiṣṇava traditions. Almost all of these saints wrote and sang songs and hymns and wandered from place to place singing and preaching. I would say that singing was *the* mode of worship. You could say it was a “musical revolution.”

The Caitanya Movement

Śubhānanda dāsa: Of all the individual *bhakti* movements that appeared during this era, none, perhaps, was as widespread as Caitanya’s *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* movement, and none appears to have so successfully survived into the present. First of all, who was Śrī Caitanya?

Shrivatsa Goswami: When we try to understand the personality of Caitanya, we can

look at Him from many angles. If we wish to understand Him from a theological perspective, then we have to deal, first, with the concept of *avatāra* [incarnation] in Indian philosophy. This concept is very basic to the religious history and life of India. You’re familiar with the theological importance of the concept of *avatāra*, so we don’t need to speak about that in detail here, except to say that there are two worlds: the spiritual world and this material world, and for any religious purpose there has to be a point of contact, or a meeting ground, between the two. That contact or meeting ground is expressed through many concepts in Hinduism, such as *avatāra*, *śāstra* (scripture), *mantra*, and *guru*.

Caitanya was the *Kali-yuga pāvana-avatāra*, the supreme *avatāra* of the age, the dual incarnation of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa who came to purify the world. In Indian theological matters, the *pramāna*, or proof, for anything is scripture. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, being the scripture par excellence—the culmination of the scriptural tradition—gives proof about the avatarhood of Caitanya. There are many direct and indirect references to Caitanya-*avatāra* in scripture—references not only in works by Caitanya’s biographers but in much earlier texts, especially the *Bhāgavatam*.

Caitanya’s movement actually started in the closed courtyard of Śrīvāsa, in Navadvīpa. Caitanya, Śrīvāsa, Advaita Ācārya, Nityānanda, and several other Navadvīpa residents who were all great devotees of Kṛṣṇa would gather together and dance and chant, day and night, in the closed courtyard of Śrīvāsa. Eventually, their spiritual ecstasy could not be confined to the courtyard of Śrīvāsa. It burst out of the courtyard and into the streets of Navadvīpa.

So, first the chanting was confined to the house of Śrīvāsa, then it pervaded the town of Navadvīpa, then it spread throughout the whole state of Bengal, and then it spread into Orissa and beyond. Wherever Caitanya went, *nāma-saṅkīrtana* spread like wildfire.

Śubhānanda dāsa: Some modern students of Hinduism claim that Śrī Caitanya was always so engrossed in devotional fervor and mystical ecstasy that He didn’t get around to, or wasn’t able to, formulate a systematic philosophy or articulate it to others.

Shrivatsa Goswami: This is one of the modern misconceptions about Caitanya, put forward by people who possess a very superficial understanding of Caitanya and His tradition. The main reason that Caitanya’s role as philosopher and theologian is doubted is because Caitanya did not personally write out His system. From the traditional Indian point of view, it is not necessary for a religious or philosophical

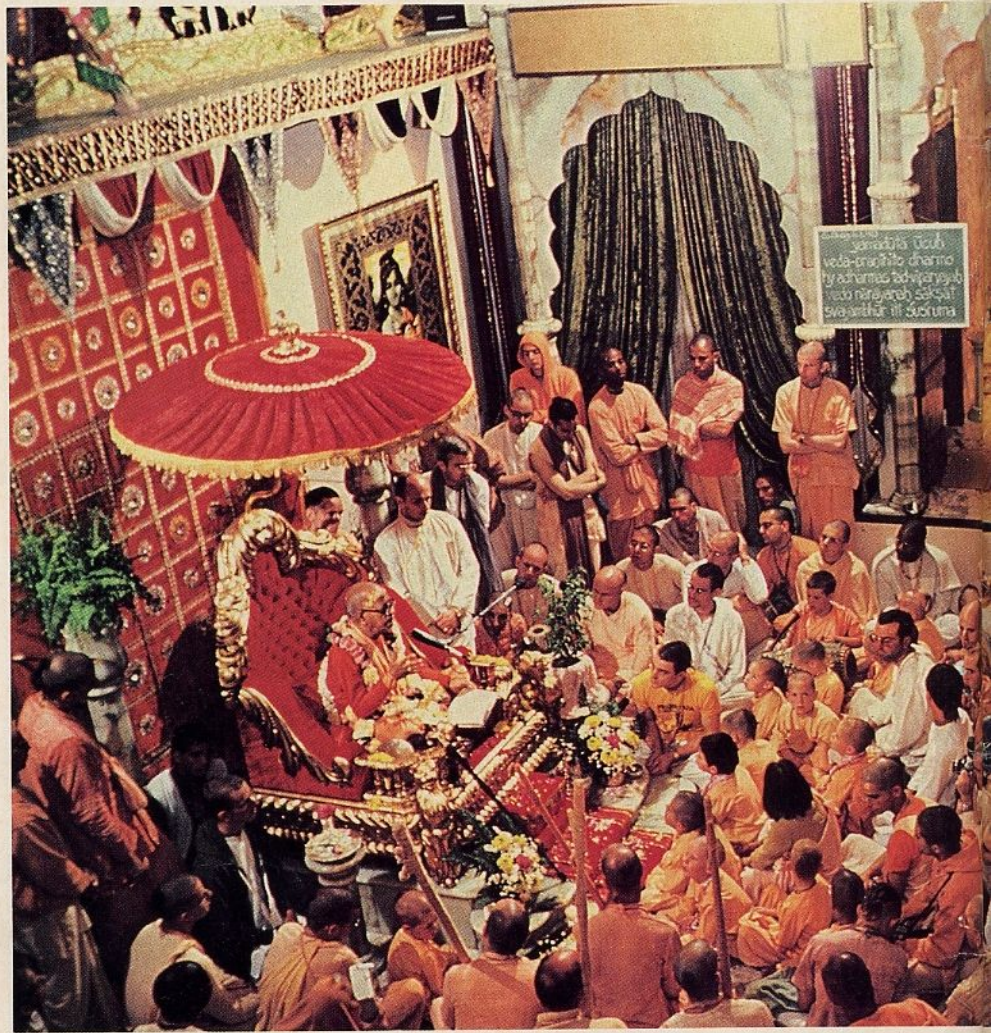
system to be written. The *Vedas* existed for thousands of years before they were compiled in written form. They were presented through oral tradition and transmitted from *guru* to disciple. In ancient India, people had the mental capacity for memorization and total recall of scripture. Oral transmission was *the* system of religious and philosophical education.

So, although Caitanya did not write philosophical treatises, He did evolve a philosophical and theological system, and He revealed it through lengthy discourses with Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya and Rāmānanda Rāya, with Sanātana Gosvāmī in Benares, with Rūpa Gosvāmī in Allahabad, and in shorter discussions in South India with Venkaṭa Bhaṭṭa, the Tattva-vādīs [followers of Madhva], some Buddhist monks, and so on. All of these dialogues are recorded in Caitanya's biographies. The six Gosvāmīs heard, gathered, assimilated, systematized, and then wrote Caitanya's teachings in their many philosophical, theological, poetic, dramatic, and instructional writings.

So the whole Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava system is based upon Caitanya's teachings, which evolved from His own experience. You cannot isolate philosophical thought from personal experience. There can be no "neutral" philosophy, just as there can be no "neutral" religion. Philosophy must have its roots in experience. What we have to understand at this point is that what we translate as "philosophy" is actually *darśana*. *Darśana* literally means "seeing." According to Sanskrit etymology, we can define *darśana* in two ways: the act, itself, of seeing or that *by which* we see, the process by which we come to the point of seeing. So, philosophy is an experience, a "seeing," an immediate realization, or direct encounter with something—and that something is ultimate reality, or God.

In the Western tradition, philosophy is a kind of armchair game having little to do directly with life or experience itself. Originally, this was not so. But as the philosophical systems evolved, philosophy moved away from its spiritual moorings. In the West, a philosophical system must be a systematic written treatment of a well-defined Weltanschauung, with logical treatises and so on.

But in Indian tradition it is the direct, intuitive experience that is primary and crucial. The Buddha did not write a single word. What teachings we have, we get only from his disciples; yet he has a very strong and well-developed philosophical system. It is the claim of spiritual experience that is important. One glimpse of Caitanya's experience ignited a series of explosions, and those explosions were the writings of the Gosvāmīs.



Bhakti Abroad: Caitanya's Children in America

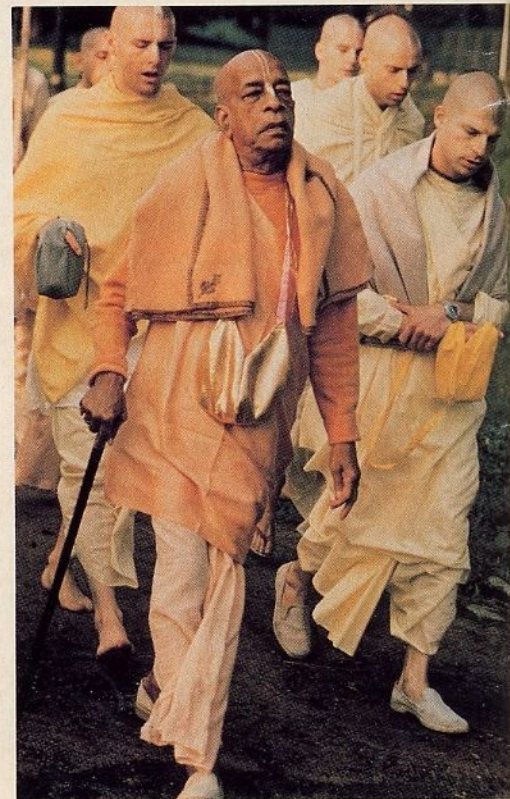
Śubhānanda dāsa: Shrivatsa, as a Caitanyaite and an observer of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, how do you view the significance, historical and cultural, of the spread of the Caitanya tradition to the West?

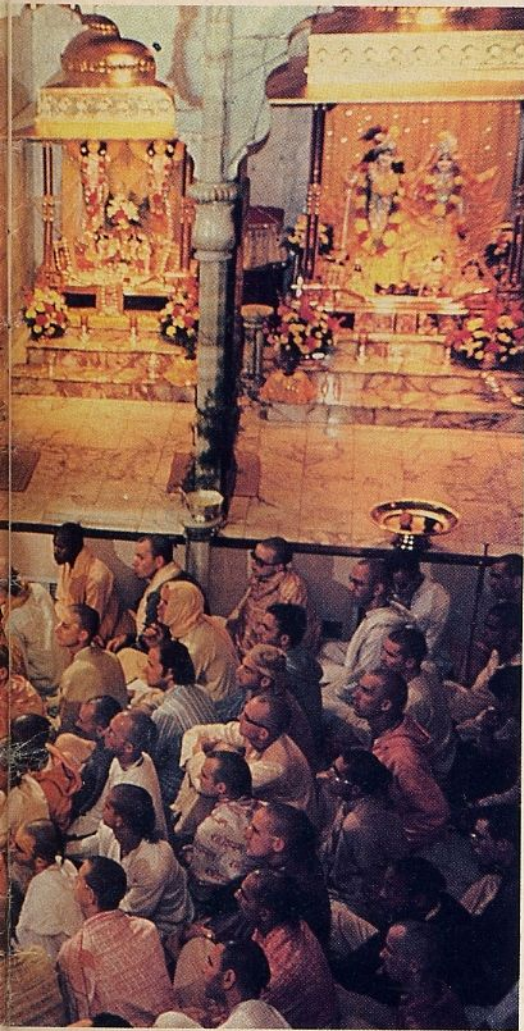
Shrivatsa Goswami: When I reflect on Śrīla Prabhupāda's achievement, I become sort of a Hindu chauvinist. It is a great political achievement.

Śubhānanda dāsa: How is it a great political achievement?

Shrivatsa Goswami: In that Indian spiritual culture has been spread throughout the world. What the Muslims could do only by the tremendous sword, and the Christians could do only with great financial resources and state power, has been done by one solitary man, without any ill effects.

Śubhānanda dāsa: It's often taken for granted that Hinduism, in contradistinction to Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism, is not a missionary religion. Yet isn't it a fact that Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism has always been a missionary tradition? Didn't Cai-





Two ways that Śrīla Prabhupāda instilled faith into his disciples were by speaking daily on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (above) and on a wide range of transcendental topics during early-morning walks (left). Comments Shrivatsa Goswami: "The criteria of the authenticity of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement will be the faith, steadfastness, and total commitment of its members."

tanya Mahāprabhu directly instruct His followers to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness?

Shrivatsa Goswami: Yes. Any truth is for spreading. Not only Caitanya, but look at Śaṅkarācārya. What did he do? All his life he traveled throughout India and spread his message. The Buddha did the same. Rāmānuja, Madhva—all the Vaiṣṇava theologians and saints were missionaries like Caitanya. In addition to preaching Himself, Caitanya instructed His followers to preach the message of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* from door to door and from village to village. Caitanya said,

*yāre dekha, tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa
āmāra ājñāya guru hañā tāra' ei deśa*

"Whomever you meet, teach him about Kṛṣṇa. Become a *guru* and liberate everyone in this land."

Śubhānanda dāsa: Is there anything unique about ISKCON's missionary activities in the West, in light of this Caitanyaite preaching tradition?

Shrivatsa Goswami: One significant difference between historical Caitanyaism and ISKCON is that you have to deal with people who are not even in the broad category of Hinduism. Historically, the Caitanyaitees were preaching to people who were already Hindus, even Vaiṣṇavas. Most of those to whom they preached were already worshipping Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu, and they even studied the same scriptures as the Caitanyaitees. Their preaching was mostly a matter of "polishing." But you ISKCON devotees have to deal with people who are completely "raw." That is a big difference. Śrīla Prabhupāda's going to the West to preach *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* was a very bold move. He was very courageous.

Śrīla Prabhupāda also faced a unique twentieth-century situation in that materialism had become so predominant. In such a materialistic culture, what Prabhupāda achieved was remarkable. He had remarkable results: he spread the spiritual message of Caitanya even in a culture that had no grounding in Hindu culture and that was so steeped in materialism.

Śubhānanda dāsa: Why do you think he was so successful?

Shrivatsa Goswami: If you study the situation in detail, you have to take into account the American social and political situation, which might have created a favorable climate for his teachings. But these were auxiliary factors. They were not the primary factors. The primary factors that brought about this kind of revolution were the strong personal convictions and personality of Śrīla Prabhupāda and the great spiritual philosophy he preached. These were unique. *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti* is a universal phenomenon, and so it is only natural that it should travel throughout the entire world. And this long-awaited journey was made possible by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Śubhānanda dāsa: Can you comment, Shrivatsa, on Śrīla Prabhupāda's choice of texts to translate and make available in the West?

Shrivatsa Goswami: There is no doubt that he made a wise selection of texts to translate and comment upon. As for the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, we've already discussed its importance to some degree. The *Bhāgavatam* is of central importance not only for the Caitanya-*sampradāya* [sect], but for the whole Vaiṣṇava and Hindu tradition.

Śubhānanda dāsa: The importance of the *Bhagavad-gītā* is, of course, understood.

Shrivatsa Goswami: Yes, the importance of the *Gītā* is already widely known. As for the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*—as a student of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, when I consider

the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* I bow down to the genius of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, because he shows his mastery not only in presenting the life of Caitanya but in presenting a beautiful, consummate philosophical summary of all the works of the Gosvāmīs. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* one can find brilliant crystallizations of philosophical treatises, theological treatises, aesthetics, and poetry from the works of the Gosvāmīs. He provides hundreds of quotes from the works of the Gosvāmīs. So, through the nectar of Caitanya's life, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja presents a full compendium of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition. Śrīla Prabhupāda has done a great service for all Vaiṣṇavas, as well as for scholars, by translating and commenting on *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

What is significant is that for the first time these devotional texts are being made so widely available. If these texts are not available, what effect will they have? Making these Vaiṣṇava texts available is one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's greatest contributions. Apart from the masses, his books have also reached well into academic circles and have spurred academic interest in the Caitanya tradition. There's no escaping that. That is another positive effect of his writings.

The significance of making these texts available is not merely academic or cultural; it is spiritual. *Jñāna*, knowledge, is spread, proper doctrines are made known, people come closer to reality. All problems arise from ignorance. If ignorance is destroyed, all problems are solved. That's why it is stated in so many philosophies, like that of Jīva Gosvāmī, that ignorance, *ajñāna*, is the greatest enemy.

And that is the purpose of Lord and *guru*: to destroy ignorance. I don't mean *jñāna* and *ajñāna* in the technical Śaṅkarite sense, but in the broadest metaphysical sense. That *ajñāna*, most fundamentally, is ignorance of the Lord, of Kṛṣṇa. That is the greatest *ajñāna*. If you don't know Kṛṣṇa, then how will you know anything? Kṛṣṇa is everything; everything is related to Him. And by knowing Him, you come to love Him. If you don't love Him, you will love this material world, which is *duḥkhālayam*, a place of misery, and *aśāsvatam*, temporary. So, to spread knowledge, as Śrīla Prabhupāda has, is to make a definite contribution toward human happiness.

Śubhānanda dāsa: Unlike most interpreters of the Indian tradition, who in their writings have highlighted the theoretical, philosophical component of the tradition, Śrīla Prabhupāda draws the reader into the experiential dimension of Vaiṣṇava spirituality. Not only did he generate interest, but he actually transformed lives.

Shrivatsa Goswami: That is true. In the Indian tradition there is no clear dichotomy,

as there generally is in the West, between the intellectual/religious sphere and the practical sphere of life. So what Śrīla Prabhupāda did was more reflective of the Indian tradition. His approach was more natural. Religion is not a “subject”; it is not an academic discipline like physics or chemistry. When I was in America, I used to tell university people that in India there are no academic departments of religion, except those very recently begun by Christian missionaries. In America, there are divinity schools everywhere, but in a religious country like India there is no “Department of Religion.” Why is that? Because in traditional Indian culture, everything is religion.

Even linguistically, in Indian languages there is no separate word for “religion.” Religion is not a separate category. The mode of being is itself religious. Religious conceptions dominate and pervade all dimensions of human life: family, business, statecraft—everything. The human being is intrinsically religious: *homo religiosus*. Śrīla Prabhupāda did not try to turn Vaiṣṇava tradition into an intellectual curiosity. He presented the tradition as it is—a spiritual mode of existence. His practical, experiential approach to the Vaiṣṇava texts was the proper approach.

Subhānanda dāsa: Do you think there is anything in the Western culture or mentality that can significantly hinder the Western ISKCON devotees from attaining the highest spiritual goals?

Shrivatsa Goswami: I do not feel that the Western Vaiṣṇavas are handicapped by their own cultural or ethnic backgrounds.


There is nothing to prevent them from following on the path of Caitanya and achieving the highest goals. They are fully entitled to that through having adopted the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava path and through having come under the guidance of Śrīla Prabhupāda and the present *gurus* as well, if they are teaching truly according to the highest spiritual goals. The emphasis should always be on the purity of the philosophical and spiritual side of the tradition. The externalities ultimately are not so important. The emphasis should be on the spiritual side of the movement. This is the crucial thing.

Subhānanda dāsa: Ultimately, then, the real test of the authenticity of ISKCON is the spiritual authenticity of its members.

Shrivatsa Goswami: Yes, the criteria should be spiritual. The evidence of the legitimacy of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement is that it has established the Caitanya tradition in the West, in a part of the world where formerly it had not existed. The criterion of fidelity is how well it will be able to establish its authority in the West. The question of authenticity, or fidelity, doesn’t concern the Caitanyaites in India. The question doesn’t arise for us. It arises only in that place where the tradition has not yet been established.

Any new movement that arises—even if it arises within a familiar cultural background—will face opposition, as you see at the beginnings of the Caitanya movement in India. It faced very stiff opposition: intellectual, social, and political. Obstacles were faced by Caitanya Himself, what to speak of ISKCON.

So the real criteria of fidelity, or authenticity, of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement will be the faith, steadfastness, and total commitment of its members. Its religious and spiritual authenticity will be proved only by its strength. You may write a hundred books on the legitimacy and authoritativeness of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, but that may not prove very much. But if there are ten devout Caitanyaites in the West, the movement is legitimate and authoritative. The number is insignificant. But the integrity, the sincerity, and the faithfulness of the devotees is the only proof, and sufficient proof, of the movement’s authenticity.

When, in the West, someone comes to know that I am a Caitanyaite, he immediately asks me what I think of ISKCON. It is a question that I have to deal with any number of times. I consistently answer with one remark: the strength of the movement is not that they’ve published and sold nearly a hundred million copies of the Hīndu scriptures, or that they have magnificent temples throughout the world, or that they have attracted ten thousand or a hundred thousand devotees to the movement worldwide. But even if there is one sincere devotee in the movement, the movement is very significant and important. And I sincerely believe that in this movement there are many sincere devotees, some very sincere devotees. And because of their force the movement is existing. It is not surviving due to money or power. It is the spiritual power and the spiritual existence of those sincere devotees that is sustaining the movement. That is my strong belief. 

KUNḌALINĪ

(continued from page 5)

your country? I am an old man, but just to fulfill my obligation to my spiritual master, I have come here to teach Kṛṣṇa consciousness. When one becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious, he feels a very extensive obligation to humanity. Such a person is called *mahātmā*, or “broadminded.” He’s not cripple-minded.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness makes your mind broader. You become a *mahātmā*. As Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [7.19],

*bahūnām janmanām ante
jñānavān mām prapadyate
vāsudevaḥ sarvaṃ iti
sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ*

“After many lives of cultivating knowledge, one comes to the point of understanding that Vāsudeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is everything—that He is the cause of all causes. Then one surrenders unto Him. But such a surrendered soul, such a *mahātmā*, is very rare.”

We do not expect that everyone can join this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. But it is to be understood that anyone who does join has completed his cultivation of knowledge in his previous lives. Otherwise, he could not surrender to Kṛṣṇa.

But there is another way to understand this verse. The verse says, *bahūnām janmanām ante jñānavān mām prapadyate*: “One who has become wise after many, many births of cultivating spiritual knowledge—he surrenders to Vāsudeva, or Kṛṣṇa.” So, you don’t know whether you cultivated knowledge in your past life, but if it is a fact that surrendering to Kṛṣṇa is the result of many, many births of cultivating knowledge, why not surrender immediately and become the most learned man? Take the opportunity.


Suppose you are accumulating, say, ten million dollars by depositing money in the bank little by little. Then somebody offers, “All right, immediately take ten million dollars.” Would you refuse it? Therefore, if it is a fact that one comes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness after many, many births,

why not take to it immediately? Using a little intelligence, we should think, “Even if I did not cultivate knowledge in my past life, let me take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness immediately.”

This is the opportunity we are offering. Take Kṛṣṇa consciousness. There is no tax. There is no loss. But everything is gained. Try it. At least make an experiment for a week or a fortnight. It is not difficult. You must simply be willing. That’s all. Every one of us is independent—not fully, but a little. So, we can use our independence properly, or we can misuse it. Here is the offering: Take up Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Now it is your choice. If you take it up, that will be good for you. If you don’t, that is your misfortune.

Is there any difficulty in accepting our formula? I ask all of you, is there any difficulty? You have asked so many questions of me. Now I am asking, Is there any difficulty in accepting this formula?

All: No.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So why don’t you take it? Thank you. 

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 Hṛṣīkeśa

(August 24–September 22)

September 1—Appearance anniversary of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Devotees mark this day with personal remembrances of Śrīla Prabhupāda, readings from his biography, and fasting till noon, followed by feasting. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa center for details.

September 3—Annadā Ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).

September 11—Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Sītādevī, the consort of Śrī Advaita Ācārya.

September 12—Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Lalitā-devī, the foremost of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's *gopī* friends.

September 14—Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī, the appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Lord Kṛṣṇa's eternal consort. (Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.)

September 17—Pārsvā Ekādaśī (fasting for Lord Vāmanadeva's appearance anniversary). Also, anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's arrival in the United States in 1965.

September 18—Appearance anniversary of Lord Vāmanadeva, the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa as a dwarf *brāhmaṇa*. Also the appearance anniversary of Śrīla Jayadeva Gosvāmī, the great Kṛṣṇa conscious poet who wrote the *Gīta-govinda*.

September 20—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktivīnoda Ṭhākura, the pioneer of modern-day Kṛṣṇa consciousness (fasting till noon, followed by feasting and celebration.)

September 21—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the foremost teacher of the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*.

September 22—Third month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from milk).

Month of Padmanābha

(September 23–October 21)

October 3—Indirā Ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).

October 10—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhavānanda Goswami Viṣṇupāda, one of the present spiritual masters in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

October 16—Rāma-vijayotsava, festival celebrating Lord Rāmacandra's victory over the demon Rāvaṇa. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa center for schedule of events. Also the appearance anniversary of Śrīpāda Madhvācārya, a great teacher of the science of devotional service.

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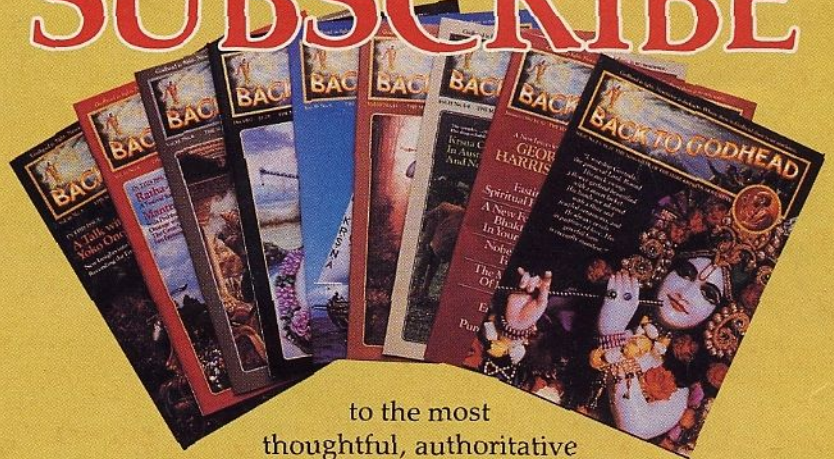
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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Bhagavad-gītā: A Great Book, East and West

While reading Mortimer Adler and Carl Van Doren's classic, *How to Read a Book*, I was disappointed to note that the authors omitted the *Bhagavad-gītā* from their long list of recommended Great Books for Reading. The reason for the omission: the *Bhagavad-gītā* is not a book of the Western world.

"We are not particularly knowledgeable outside of the Western literary tradition," admit Adler and Van Doren, "and our recommendations would carry very little weight. . . . There is also something to be said for knowing your own tradition before trying to understand that of other parts of the world." The authors even go so far as to issue a warning. "Many persons who today attempt to read such books as the *Bhagavad-gītā*," they say, "are baffled."

While this attitude is not unusual for Western scholars, I see it as narrow-minded and prejudiced. If the goal in reading great books is to gain understanding, why should we shun perhaps the greatest book of all merely because it's "Eastern"? Actually, one who is advanced in knowledge realizes that the concept of "West and East" is artificial and ultimately invalid. The *Bhagavad-gītā* is meant specifically to enlighten us with knowledge beyond the "West-East" limitations.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* educates us about the self beyond the body. Whether Eastern or Western, black or white, male or female, the body is an external covering of the real self, the eternal spiritual soul. The *Bhagavad-gītā*'s clear explanation of the individual soul and his relationship to the Supreme Soul led Henry David Thoreau to exclaim, "In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical philosophy of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, in comparison to which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial." Ralph Waldo Emerson, another Westerner bold enough to go beyond his tradition, wrote:

I owed a magnificent day to the *Bhagavad-gītā*. It was the first of books; it was as if an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an old intelligence which in an-

other age and climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us.

Not only rare individuals like Thoreau and Emerson, but millions have transcended the narrow material identification in pursuit of better knowledge. For example, people from all over the world come to America for a technological education. Certainly such persons aren't thinking they must confine their education to their own traditions. Similarly, vacationers, students of art, connoisseurs of cooking, purchasers of automobiles, and many others feel no difficulty in going from West to East or East to West or North to South—to wherever the prospects are better. Certainly in seeking the Absolute Truth, the most important and universal experience of all, we should not bypass the *Bhagavad-gītā*, thinking, "It's not in my tradition," or that it is "baffling."

Adler and Van Doren's caution about the *Bhagavad-gītā* is, in one sense, commendable. They admit that they are not authorities on the *Bhagavad-gītā* and that one can be misled "because of the inherent difficulty of such works." But that does not mean that there are no able guides who can unlock the mysteries of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Because the *Bhagavad-gītā* is widely read and respected both in India and in the West, sometimes persons who are uninformed and unscrupulous take advantage of the *Gītā*'s popularity to push their own philosophies, thus misleading innocent readers. His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, therefore, has presented *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. Śrīla Prabhupāda's commentaries faithfully draw from the great devotee-scholars of the past, and since Prabhupāda is himself a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* allows Lord Kṛṣṇa's message to shine forth, untainted by mundane interpretation. Received in its pure form, the *Bhagavad-gītā* is not difficult, baffling, or in any way inappropriate for the Western mind.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* explains that we transmigrate from one body to another,

life after life; we may be born in the West or in the East, in the human species or in the animal species. And in whatever material body we find ourselves, we always incur suffering from material nature. As long as we continue to identify ourselves as belonging to a particular culture based on our bodily designation, we will continue to transmigrate and suffer within the material nature. Only when we realize our transcendental self in relation to God, or Kṛṣṇa, can we be free from all suffering. Thinking of oneself as a Westerner (or Easterner), therefore, is a dangerous misconception.

Once, Śrīla Prabhupāda was invited to speak before a group of academicians on the topic "East and West." Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, disdained the topic, explaining that in the realm of Absolute Truth such distinctions are inapplicable. The sun, for example, cannot be said to be Western or Eastern; the sun is the sun, wherever it appears. Similarly, gold is gold, whether it is mined in America or India. And certainly the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the God of all living beings, regardless of their culture or tradition.

Śrīla Prabhupāda did acknowledge one significant difference between East and West. From his own experience, he said, he had found that in the West even a university professor knew nothing about the science of life after death, whereas in India, even the common man was aware that his present life is due to his past *karma* and that his present actions determine his next life.

This knowledge—the knowledge of *Bhagavad-gītā*—is universal. Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke to all humanity; He never said He was instructing only Hindus or only Easterners. Of course, the *Bhagavad-gītā* was first introduced in India, and so that culture is enriched with a tradition familiar with the philosophy of the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Yet *Bhagavad-gītā* is for all people. Humbly, we should put aside our Western chauvinism and exclusive Great Books lists and accept the timeless wisdom of Lord Kṛṣṇa's *Bhagavad-gītā*. —SDG

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