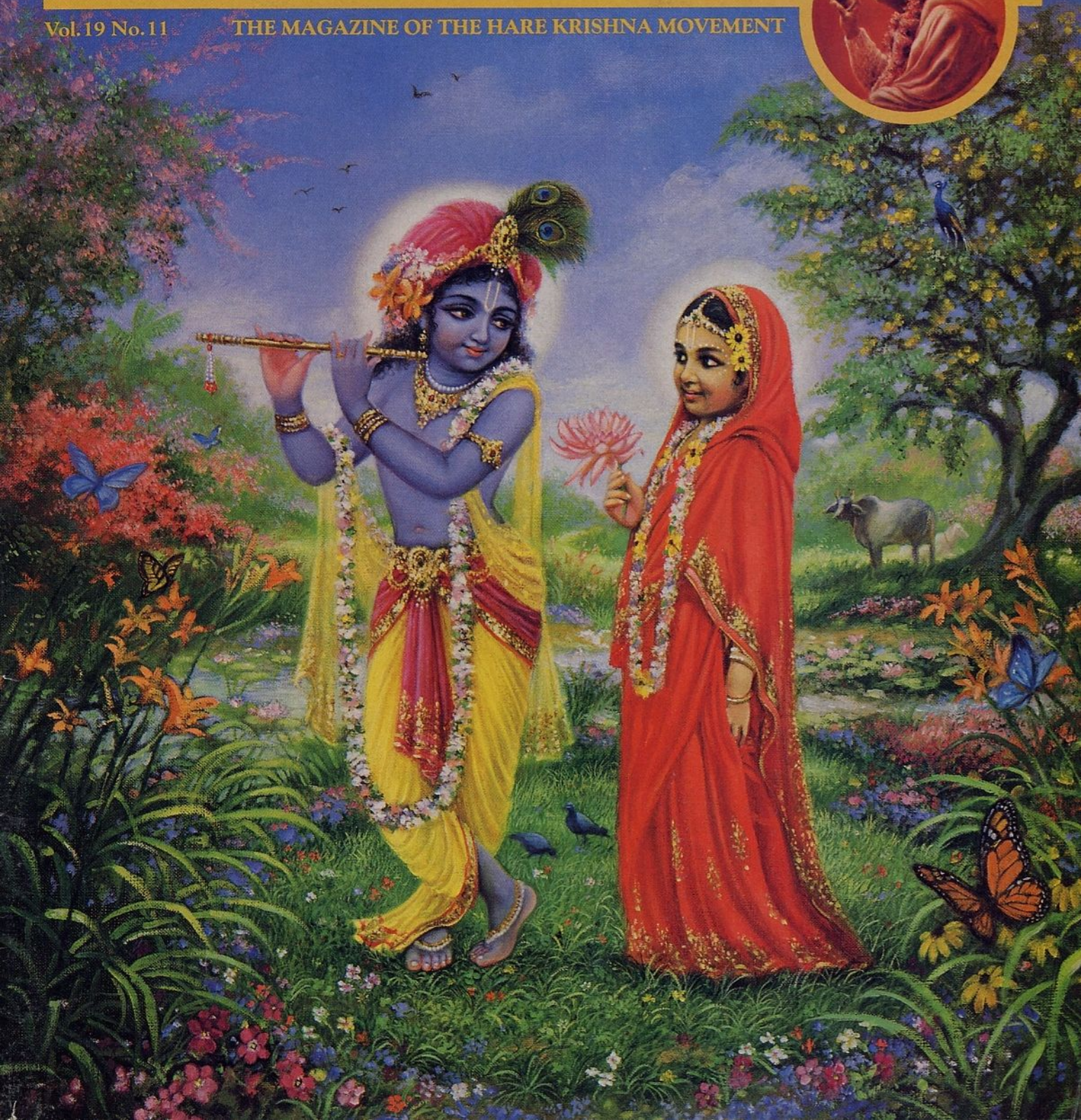


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

BACK TO GODHEAD

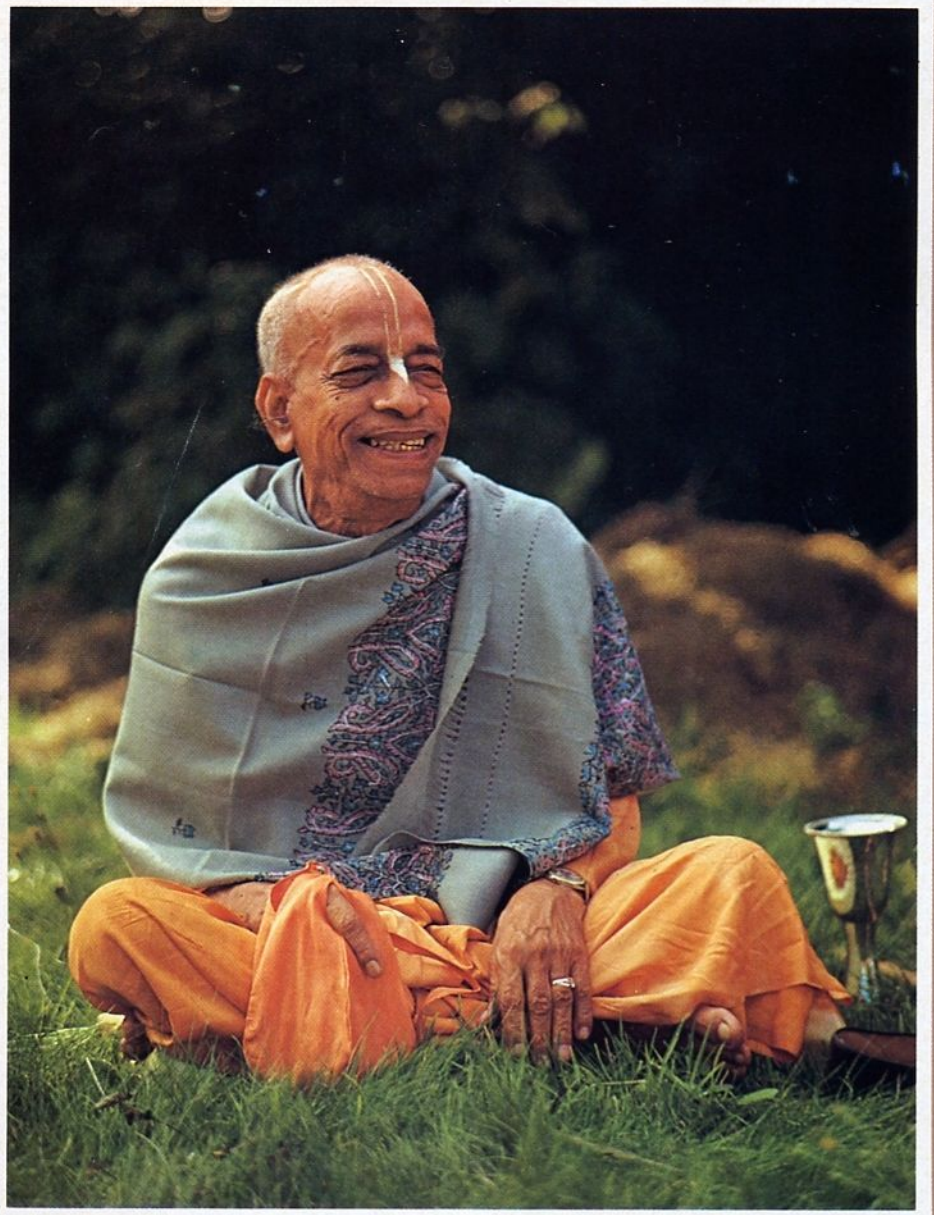
Vol. 19 No. 11

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,

Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, came to America in 1965, at age sixty-nine, to fulfill his spiritual master's request that he teach the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the English-speaking world. In a dozen years he published some seventy volumes of translation and commentary on India's Vedic literature, and these are now standard in universities 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. Advanced disciples throughout the world have been authorized to serve in the position of spiritual master, initiating disciples of their own. And these disciples, in turn, become linked with Śrīla Prabhupāda through the transcendental system of disciplic succession.



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 **r** in **rīm**, 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.

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THE SCIENTIFIC REALITY OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

A conversation between
His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness,
and Dr. S. P. Oliver, Rector of the University of Durban,
in Westville, South Africa, on October 10, 1975.

Dr. Oliver: We are left in this twentieth century, this last part of the century, with a new global search for the truth about the spiritual. We, of course, in the Western world, are not familiar with the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Our problem is basically, I think, the one that you raised in your lecture: How do we make the spiritual a scientific reality? And I think you were quite right. I think really few people get the point that you were trying to make—that this is a scientific matter.

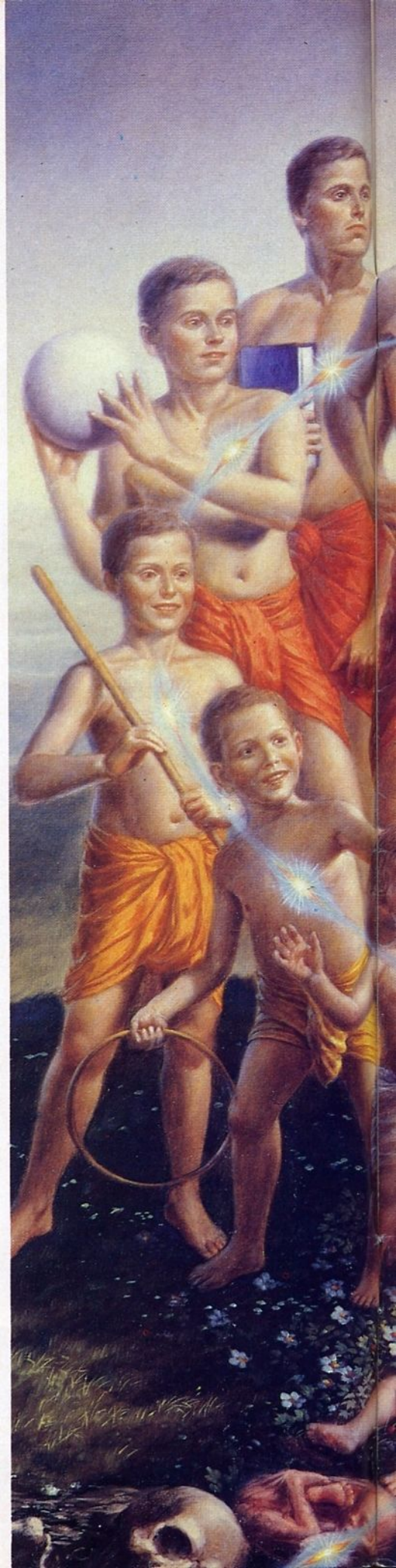
Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is the beginning of the *Bhagavad-gītā*—scientifically presenting spiritual knowledge. Therefore I raised the question: What is transmigration of the soul? Nobody could reply properly. We are changing bodies. There are so many varieties of bodies, and we may enter into any one of them after death. This is the real problem of life. *Prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ*: nature is working, providing us with material bodies. This body is a machine. This machine, just like a car, has been offered to us by material nature, by the order of God, Kṛṣṇa. So the real purpose of life is

to stop this perpetual transmigration from one body to another, one body to another, and revive our original, spiritual position so that we can live an eternal, blissful life of knowledge. That is the aim of life.

Dr. Oliver: The conception of transmigration is not, of course, in the Christian religion.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: It's not a question of religion. Religion is a kind of faith that develops according to time and circumstances. The reality is that we are spirit souls. By the laws of material nature, we are carried from one body to another. Sometimes we are happy, sometimes distressed; sometimes in the heavenly planets, sometimes in lower planets. And human life is meant for stopping this process of transmigration

The soul transmigrates at every moment as our body changes from childhood, to youth, and then to old age. When the body disintegrates at death, the soul starts another round of transmigration in a new body. For those who wish to break free of this painful cycle of repeated death and rebirth, the Vedic literature provides the method: Kṛṣṇa consciousness.





and reviving our original consciousness. We have to go back home, back to Godhead, and live eternally. This is the whole scheme of Vedic literature.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* gives the synopsis of how to act in this life. Therefore, through the teachings of the *Bhagavad-gītā* we can begin to understand the constitutional position of the soul.

First of all we have to understand what we are. Am I this body or something else? This is the first question. I was trying to answer this, but some people in my audience thought it was a kind of Hindu culture. It is not Hindu culture. It is a scientific conception. You are a child for some time. Then you become a boy. Then you become a young man, and then you become an old man. In this way you are always changing bodies. This is a fact. It is not a Hindu conception of religion. It applies to everyone.

*dehino 'smin yathā dehe
kaumāraṁ yauvanaṁ jarā
tathā dehāntara-prāptir
dhīras tatra na muhyati*

[To a devotee:] Find this verse.

Devotee: [reads] “As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. A sober person is not bewildered by such a change.” [Bg. 2.13]

Śrīla Prabhupāda: In the *Bhagavad-gītā* everything is explained very logically, very scientifically. It is not a sentimental explanation.

Dr. Oliver: The problem, as I see it, is how to get modern man to make an in-depth study of what is contained or outlined in this book, especially when he's caught up in an educational system that denies a place for this very concept or even the philosophy of it. There is either complete neutrality, or just a simple rejection of these truths.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: They do not accept the soul?

Dr. Oliver: They accept the soul. I think so. But they do not care to analyze what it means.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Without analyzing this, what is their situation? First of all, they should analyze the distinction between a dead body and a living body. The body is always dead, just like a motorcar without a driver. The car is always a lump of matter. Similarly, this body, with or without the soul, is a lump of matter.

Dr. Oliver: It isn't worth very much. I think around fifty-six cents.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But if one cannot distinguish between the car and the driver of the car, then he is just like a child. A child thinks the car is running automatically.

But that is his foolishness. There is a driver. The child may not know, but when he is grown up and has been educated and *still* he does not know, then what is the meaning of his education?

Dr. Oliver: In the Western world the whole range of education covers only primary, secondary, and tertiary education. There is no place for an in-depth study of the soul.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: I talked with one professor in Moscow. Maybe you know him—Professor Kotovsky. He teaches at the Soviet Academy of Sciences. I had a talk with him for about an hour. He said, “After this body is annihilated, everything is finished.” I was surprised that he told me this. He is known to be a very good scholar, and still he does not know about the soul.

Dr. Oliver: We have an Indology course here, given by a scholar from Vienna. But what he teaches, what kind of basic philosophy, I wouldn’t know. There are about forty students. In essence they ought to start by making a detailed study of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and use that as a basis for their whole philosophy.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So why not appoint someone to teach *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*? That is essential.

Dr. Oliver: Our university almost has an obligation to make a study of these points in depth.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: By thoroughly studying *Bhagavad-gītā*, one begins his spiritual education.

Dr. Oliver: Well, this is apparently what one needs. Our Hindu community here in South Africa seems to lack any fixed idea of what constitutes Hinduism. The young people especially are living in a complete vacuum. For various reasons, they do not want to accept religion, because this is what they see around them. They cannot identify with the Christian religion, the Islamic religion, or the Hindu religion. They are largely ignorant.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: They should be shown the right path. This is the original, authentic path.

Dr. Oliver: There were not very many great scholars in South Africa amongst our Indian community. The Indian people came, by and large, as workers on the sugar plantations—field workers. A few were jewelers and tailors and so on. Then for the last hundred years there was a political struggle, resisting transportation back to India. They were fighting to make a living and to find their own place in this country. As I see it, they must give meaning to the essence of their own beliefs and faith. I’ve been telling them that we are privileged to have them here in this country with their background, and that they mustn’t cut themselves away from it and drift into a vacuum.

But they don’t know to whom they should turn. So basically, they and myself and others want to know how we get this spirit into our own hearts, and how does this then issue out into everyday living?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is all explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: how to live peacefully in this world and how to go back home, back to Godhead.

Dr. Oliver: But how does one get modern man to voluntarily make this experiment? The real tragedy is we have wandered so far away from the spirit that we do not know where to start. And we can’t get a few dozen honest believers to sit down and try to find out how much God wants to give of His mind to our minds.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: God is giving Himself. We just have to accept Him. That requires

***The communists
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both the communists
and the capitalists are
taking care of the
external body, not
the eternal soul.***

a little advancement. Otherwise, everything is there. God says that the soul is eternal and the body is changing. It is a very simple example. A boy becomes a young man, and a young man becomes an old man. There is no denying this fact. I can understand it, and you can understand it. It is very simple. I remember that as a boy I was jumping, and I cannot do that now because I have a different body. So I am conscious that I possessed a body like that. Now I do not possess it. The body is changing, but I am the same person eternally. It requires a little intelligence to see this, that’s all. I am the owner of the body, and I am an eternal soul. The body is changing.

Dr. Oliver: Now, having accepted that, a further problem then arises: What are the implications?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. If I understand

that I am not this body, yet at the present moment I am engaged only to keep my body comfortable, without taking care of my *self*, that is wrong. For example, if I am cleansing this shirt and coat thrice daily, but I am hungry—that would be impractical. Similarly, this civilization is wrong in this basic way. If I take care of your shirt and coat, but I don’t give you anything to eat, then how long will you be satisfied? That is my point. That is the basic mistake. Material civilization means taking care of the body and bodily comforts. But the owner of the body, the spirit soul, gets no care. Therefore everyone is restless. They are changing the “ism” from capitalism to communism, but they do not know what the mistake is.

Dr. Oliver: There is very little difference. They are both material.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The communists think that if we take control of the government, everything will be adjusted. But the mistake is there—both the communists and the capitalists are taking care of the external body, not the eternal identity, the soul. The soul must be peaceful. Then everything will be peaceful.

*bhoktārāṇ yajña-tapasāṁ
sarva-loka-maheśvaram
suhṛdam sarva-bhūtānāṁ
jñātvā māṁ śāntim ṛcchati*

[To a devotee:] Read that verse.

Devotee: “A person in full consciousness of Me, knowing Me to be the ultimate beneficiary of all sacrifices and austerities, the Supreme Lord of all planets and demigods, and the benefactor and well-wisher of all living entities, attains peace from the pangs of material miseries.” [Bg. 5.29]

Śrīla Prabhupāda: This means that one must know what God is. Because you are part and parcel of God, you already have a very intimate relationship with Him. Our business is knowing God. So at the present moment, there is no information. People have no complete idea.

Dr. Oliver: Well, I believe that if a satellite in the sky can reveal what is happening from one pole to the other pole, then surely God can reveal His spirit and His mind to anyone who wants to obey Him, who wants to know Him, and who sincerely wants to follow Him.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, yes. So here in the *Bhagavad-gītā* God is explaining Himself. We have to take it by logic and reason. Then it will be a clear understanding of God.

Dr. Oliver: Yes, but how to get this across?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The teaching is there. We have to understand it by authoritative discussion.

Dr. Oliver: I think so. This is probably where one has to start. We have to sit

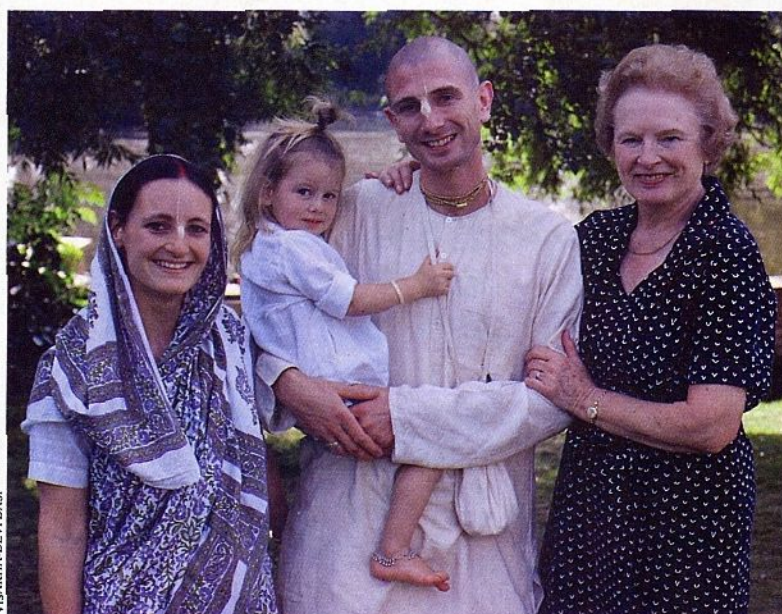
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Coming to Kṛṣṇa

Learning God's Way of Compassion

A London social worker undergoes a treacherous journey in his search for God's will.

by ROHIṆĪNANDANA DĀSA



Rohiṇīnandana dāsa, Rādhāpriyā-devī dāsī and their son Rādhānātha, and his mother, Pamela Housden, a Herefordshire district councilor and former mayor of Leominster.

In 1969 I saw the devotees of Kṛṣṇa on the television program *Top of the Pops*. Disgusted by the shaved heads of the men, I turned to my mother, while indicating my own long hair, and exclaimed, "That's one thing you don't have to worry about! You'll never catch me joining that bunch."

While I was visiting Edinburgh at the time of the Arts Festival in 1970, a friend remarked to me, "There are some unusual people living just a few streets away. They shave their heads and wear robes, and they're very poor. They're some kind of monks. And whatever food they have they share with anyone who goes to their place." I was both awed and attracted just by hearing about these people, and I thought of my own miserly, anxious existence. Inside I wished that I was like them. It was not until later that I realized these were the same people who had disgusted me on TV.

A year later, in London, once more I felt attracted to the renunciation of the Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees. I was working with the Simon Community, a Catholic welfare society. Founded by a Bow Street probation officer, Anton Willich-Clifford, the Simon Community is named after Simon

the Cyrenean, who helped Jesus carry the cross. Anton founded the community as an alternative to inadequate governmental programs for the down-and-out. He lived with them in the squalor of their "squats" and "derries" (derelict houses) and tried to share the love of Lord Jesus with them by giving practical assistance.

I was living in a Simon night-shelter in north London when one night what appeared to be five shining beings from another world approached. Here, in this dirty, pitted urban wasteland, I was struck with wonder by their calm, bright faces, their beautifully clean robes, and their sweet words. They asked for a place to sleep that night with such natural dignity and detachment that I felt honored to host them. I quickly arranged for a room, and they simply lay on the floor and wrapped their wool shawls around themselves, refusing

my offers of mattresses and blankets.

I entreated the night watchman to wake me very early, at 5:30 A.M., so that I could speak with these unearthly people, whose ways I was becoming attracted to. But at 5:30 the next morning I was told that they had risen at 3:30 and disappeared back down the street into the night.

"Who are these people, and how can I meet them again?" I wondered as I went on my rounds at 8:00 A.M., waking all the inmates by placing a lighted Players No. 6 cigarette between their lips.

I was beginning to sense that my work with the Simon Community was of little significance. One night a man I was trying to help died, and I realized, as I gazed at his stiff body, that everything I'd tried to do for him was wasted. What was the point of so much effort? Simply to enable someone to die in the temporary comfort of a bed instead of on the street? And even if one were able to prolong someone's life for a few more years, what would be the use? What would be the value of a few extra years of fleeting pleasure mixed with suffering? Just suppose I did help a man back, but failed to change his mentality, and then he went out and killed someone.

Or, for instance, even if someone did stop a drinking habit, then what? Would he be happy by integrating himself back into a society that had caused his problem in the first place? What was the positive alternative? I had largely the same bad habits as the destitute people I was supposedly helping. And people outwardly normal sometimes turned out to be more unfortunate than those on skid row. How many middle-class people take drugs, get divorced, kill their unborn babies, or commit suicide?

If within the body there was some subtle element or soul that survived death, then what practical help were we offering for this? What exactly were we, and everyone else, trying to achieve? Was there a common goal for everyone? Stricken by doubt and confused by so many anomalies, I looked to Anton for a solution. He was a kindly, compassionate man, but he could not offer me clear personal guidance or an alternative way to live.

I had joined Anton shortly after my desire for Christ and spiritual peace had nearly suffered a death blow at school. I had always liked divinity lessons, but then one day I had asked the school chaplain, "What exactly is the soul, and what happens to the soul at death?" His reply had startled me. "That is a mystery. To find out you have to wait till you die." "But if we are eternal, why can't I know for sure—now?" I thought. And when I thought of the plausible explanations of life given in the biology classes, I became really despondent. Evolution and natural selection were obvious facts—why believe in God? He must be just some man-made myth. "Better to be a straightforward atheist," I thought.

But a few years later, as I studied, discussed, and thought, I began realizing that so-called scientific arguments were weak, that life was more than just the molecular activities of the body. And instinctively I began searching for a teacher, a perfect Christian. Apart from Jesus, I had no faith in any "holy man." Jesus was my model, my hero. I ruminated in my little London bedsit, "I wish I felt so strongly convinced about something that I'd be prepared to die for it, like Jesus." In Anton I had found some hope. Some people referred to him as a saint, but sometimes I saw him depressed and affected by circumstances. Although he was a great person compared to other modern leaders, still I felt hesitant to dedicate my whole life in his service.

So I used to visit St. Paul's cathedral and stand for long periods in front of a painting of Lord Jesus that hung above one of the side aisles. I felt the Lord's presence here more than anywhere else. "I am the light of the world, standing at the door of your heart. If you hear my call and answer me, allowing me in, we can exchange love with each another." This kindness of Jesus

touched my heart, and I felt I must follow him. At the same time I knew how unqualified I was. I was living a materialistic life, selfishly chasing the whims of the senses by smoking, drinking, eating junk foods, searching for sex, experimenting with drugs, going to the cinema, and listening to music that had no real purpose except to agitate the mind. Lord Jesus had kindly given me a glimpse of his glory, but now I knew I needed training, practice in being a proper Christian. Yet who would teach me? I prayed, "My dear Lord Jesus, please guide me to someone who perfectly practices your teachings."

One day a friend mentioned to me that at Belsize Hall, near Hampstead, a holy leader from India was giving a lecture, followed by a vegetarian feast. Since I was

Suddenly my friend Steve leaned forward in his seat and lit up a cigarette. Almost as soon as he struck the match, Śrīla Prabhupāda strongly admonished him, "Don't smoke in here!" It was uncanny how fast Prabhupāda dealt with Steve.

open at that point to various spiritual and religious experiences and had recently become a vegetarian, I decided to go over on my day off from the Simon Community. Accompanied by one of my social worker friends, I sat near the back of the large hall, straining my ears to understand what A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda was saying.

Suddenly my friend Steve leaned forward in his seat and lit up a cigarette. Almost as soon as he struck the match, Śrīla Prabhupāda strongly admonished him, "Don't smoke in here!" It was uncanny—the speed with which Śrīla Prabhupāda perceived this misdemeanor of one sitting at the back of a large audience, and the speed with which he dealt with Steve, who immediately extinguished his cigarette.

Soon Steve began to fidget, and he whispered, "Let's go. There's nothing for us here."

"No," I quickly replied. "I'm staying."

So Steve left and I stayed, amazed that what Prabhupāda was saying made so much sense. He explained that there is a distinct difference between matter and spirit; that the soul within remains constant throughout the many changes of the body and therefore is unaffected by death; that there is a common spiritual goal for all humanity, the absence of which renders human life ultimately meaningless; and that when there are no higher principles for people to strive toward, the entire society eventually becomes pandemonium. As he expounded further, he cleared all my doubts in such a simple and pure way that I began to realize, "Here is the person who is going to train me in spiritual life. Here is that perfect Christian I've been looking for."

I began visiting the temple on my day off, but I could not seriously entertain the idea of joining the society as a full-time monk. The devotees seemed a little too otherworldly. They were so austere, devotional, and spiritual that I couldn't relate to them. I was doing so much apparently practical welfare work, such as housing, clothing, and feeding the poor, helping persons with drug and alcohol problems and marital difficulties, and making referrals to many other organizations and charities for further help.

Gradually, however, as I participated in the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, associated with the devotees, and tasted their wonderful spiritual food, I realized that the soul within the body is the actual person. Unless one can reach and help the soul, then what is the use of all this supposed welfare work? The soul suffers because of being disconnected from the Supreme Soul, and here was a pure society of dedicated persons who had the solution. This Kṛṣṇa conscious way of life was the positive alternative for which I had been hankering. Moreover, everything the devotees did and said rested on a philosophy that, upon close inspection, proved flawless.

But still I persisted, attached to my old ways and my proud independence, and attached to the false pleasure I obtained from being a social worker who could help people, who was needed. I began to realize, "What a rascal I am. I want to serve God, but on my terms. I should be asking, 'What does God want me to do?' not 'What do I want to do for God?'" Immediately I thought of Śrīla Prabhupāda, his disciples, and his mission. "Yes, he is my teacher. I've already accepted him in my heart. Why don't I surrender and become a devotee?"

But it was a hard decision. What about my work, my career, for there was already the possibility of becoming a probation officer like Anton. But then what about

(continued on page 32)

CHANT!



Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare

What is a *mantra*? In Sanskrit, *man* means “mind” and *tra* means “freeing.” So a *mantra* is a combination of transcendental sounds that frees our minds from the anxieties of living in the material world.

Ancient India’s Vedic literatures single out one *mantra* as the *mahā* (supreme) *mantra*. The *Kali-santarāṇa Upaniṣad* explains, “These sixteen words—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—are especially meant for counteracting the ill effects of the present age of quarrel and anxiety.”

The *Nārada-pañcarātra* adds, “All *mantras*

and all processes for self-realization are compressed into the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*.”

Five centuries ago, while spreading the *mahā-mantra* throughout the Indian subcontinent, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu prayed, “O Supreme Personality of Godhead, in Your name You have invested all Your transcendental energies.”

The name *Kṛṣṇa* means “the all-attractive one,” the name *Rāma* means “the all-pleasing one,” and the name *Hare* is an address to the Lord’s devotional energy. So the *mahā-mantra* means, “O all-attractive, all-pleasing Lord, O energy of the Lord, please engage me in Your devotional service.” Chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and your life will be sublime.

PHOTO BY YAMARĀJA DĀSA

THE LION SHALL EAT STRAW LIKE THE OX

The Bible and Vegetarianism

by KENNETH ROSE

A traditional proof-text for Biblical vegetarians is Genesis 1:29, where God says,

Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. (Revised Standard Version)

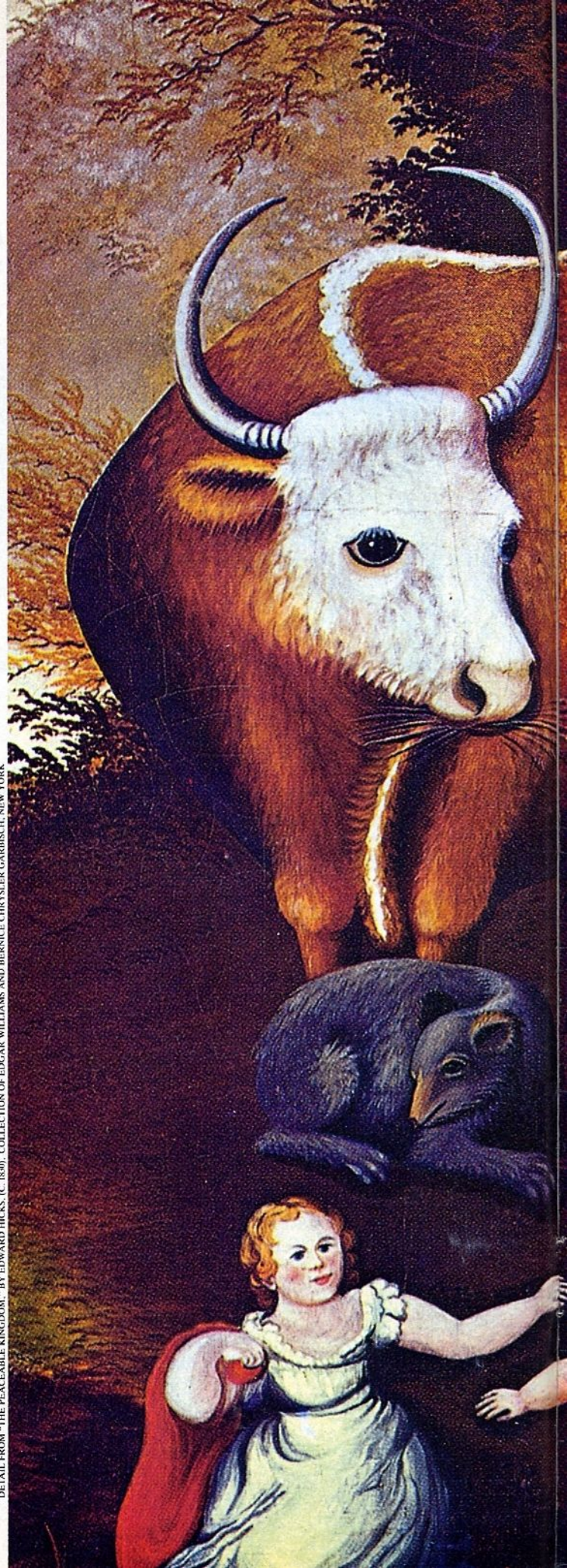
This was a universal vegetarianism, not limited to human beings, as the next verse (Gen. 1:30) indicates. In the beginning, when the Lord had created the heavens and the earth, the relationship of predator and prey did not exist. Flesh was not a lawful food for any creature. The careful student of the Bible, however, is aware that after the great flood, God revised His earlier prohibition against eating flesh. As the flood waters receded, God said to Noah and his offspring,

The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth. . . . Into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and as I gave you [in Genesis 1:29] the green plants, I give you everything. Only you shall not eat the flesh with its life, that is, its blood. (Gen. 9:2-4)

For the vegetarian looking to the Bible for guidance, this passage is a source of perplexity, whereas for the nonvegetarian, it is a divine warrant for eating meat. Both of these views, however, fail to comprehend the scope and complexity of the Bible's outlook on the history of human corruption and redemption.

According to the Bible, the disobedience of Adam and Eve destroyed the peace of the first human society, the Garden of Eden. Since God was, in the beginning, the central interest of all the inhabitants of the Garden of Eden, human beings and

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DETAIL FROM "THE PEACEABLE KINGDOM," BY EDWARD HICKS, (c. 1850). COLLECTION OF EDGAR WILLIAMS AND BERNICE CHRYSLER GARIBUSCHI, NEW YORK



animals could live at peace there. But true and lasting peace—whether individually or collectively—is possible only when there is no taint of selfishness. Therefore, when Adam and Eve broke God’s commandment against eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the peace of the garden was destroyed (Gen. 3:17). This was the beginning of the conflict between human beings and animals (Gen. 3:15).

After falling into sin, human society, which began rapidly growing, became increasingly violent. Animal sacrifice began (Gen. 4:4), the skins of animals began to be used as clothing (Gen. 3:21), and human beings began to murder one another (Gen. 4:8, 4:23). This violence increased to such a degree that God was sorry He had created humankind (Gen. 6:13, 6:16). So God decided to destroy the human race. God’s wrath, however, is always tempered by mercy, so He chose Noah and his family to survive the great flood (Gen. 6:8).

After the flood, God revised His original ban against eating flesh (Gen 9:3). Human beings since the fall into sin had proved incapable of obedience on this point. Since the consequence of disobedience to God’s will was death (Gen 2:17), and since God’s aim for human beings was their ultimate restoration to perfect obedience, God resorted to an expedient so that sin-weakened human beings might learn at least some degree of obedience. This expedient was a less stringent version of the original commandment. The amended commandment, though less strict, is still redemptive insofar as it is obeyed, for in obedience to God’s will does the ultimate welfare of human beings lie. But despite God’s lessening the rigor of the original commandment, His ultimate desire for peace between animals and human beings remained unchanged.

In other words, God allowed flesh-eating, but only as a temporary measure, to redeem humanity from the consequences of disobedience. Full obedience, however, will ultimately require full renunciation of the predatory principle. Until this occurs, the kingdom of God cannot be established. God has made known through the prophet Isaiah what this kingdom will be like:

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
and the calf and the lion and the fatling
together,
and a little child shall lead them.
The cow and the bear shall feed;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
The sucking child shall play over the hole
of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put his hand on
the adder’s den.
They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy
mountain;
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge

of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:6–9)

In that kingdom of perfect peace, where the knowledge of God will dissolve all evil, we won’t kill animals for food, because our food will be provided by God Himself. In the coming kingdom of divine peace, a river “bright as crystal” and carrying the water of eternal life will flow from the throne of God. On both sides of the river will grow “the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Revelations 22:1–2).

This peace will be based not upon human caprice, but upon God’s will; therefore, it will be universal and enduring. All of God’s creatures will be included in it:

And I will make for you a covenant on that day [when the Lord renews the earth] with

***People who take
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and nonviolence that
will prevail in
God’s kingdom.***

the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground; and I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land; and I will make you [all creatures] lie down in safety. And I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. (Hosea 2:18–19)

Despite the general human forgetfulness of God’s original desire for peace between humankind and the animal kingdom, some memory of it was maintained by Israel’s prophets. Animal sacrifice was a part of the ancient religion of Israel, but the prophet Isaiah reminded the Israelites of God’s ancient vision of justice and peace by vehemently criticizing these bloody acts of “worship”:

What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?
says the Lord;
I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams
and the fat of fed beasts;
I do not delight in the blood of bulls,
or of lambs, or of he-goats. (Isaiah 1:11)

And the prophet Amos speaks similarly:

I hate, I despise your feasts. . . .
The peace offerings of your fatted beasts
I will not look upon. . . .
But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing
stream. (Amos 5:21–24)

At present vegetarianism among those who base their lives on the Bible is quite rare. Nevertheless, vegetarianism remains God’s ultimate will. Through the practice of vegetarianism in obedience to God’s will as revealed in their scriptures, the devotees of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement are being true to a long-neglected aspect of Biblical revelation.

Since, according to the Bible, the goal of history is the transformation of the predatory principle into the principle of universal love, it seems reasonable to suppose that people who take the Bible seriously should strive to bring their lives into accordance with the righteousness and nonviolence that will prevail in God’s kingdom. Surely we can’t in this life fully escape the consequences of the Fall, but we can try, with God’s grace, to live in accordance with God’s perfect will as expressed in the above-quoted passages.

Some might challenge this view by citing the following passage from the New Testament:

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by giving heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, through the pretensions of liars whose consciences are seared, who forbid marriage and enjoin abstinence from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. (1 Timothy 4:1–2)*

To use this passage to discredit Christian vegetarianism, however, is really a misapplication of these verses, since the issue here is not food but Christian freedom.

Most Christians over the centuries have not believed that what they eat has any effect upon their salvation. They have believed that they are redeemed through faith in Jesus Christ, apart from the observance of any body of specific rules and regulations, such as the law of Moses (Ephesians 2:8). It would be an unusual Christian teacher indeed who insisted that what one eats or doesn’t eat affects one’s salvation (Colossians 2:16, Matthew 15:11), especially considering that, as we have already discussed, Genesis 9:3 indicates that God was willing to amend His original commandment regarding meat-eating to a lesser one, which human beings in their weakness have a better chance of obeying.

*It should be noted that this passage gives evidence that there were, at the time of its writing, groups of Christians who did not eat meat.

Nevertheless, no rational or scriptural reason can be discovered that would prohibit the teacher of Christian truth from encouraging believers to go beyond the concession to human weakness granted in Genesis 9:3 so that even now, before the full dawning of God's kingdom of peace, they may begin living according to the ethics of that kingdom. To live in this way must be considered as part of God's ultimate intention for humanity, for how else can one account for the fact that the Bible both begins and ends in a kingdom where the sound of slaughter is unknown?

Despite the certainty that this is God's ultimate plan, the fact remains that most of those who base their lives on the Bible are eaters of animal flesh. This, I think, is due to the ambiguity of the Bible on this issue. For just as the Bible reveals God's vision of a peaceable kingdom free from predators, so also does it contain justifications for continuing the practice of eating meat.

Vaiṣṇavism Points Beyond Biblical Ambiguity

Vaiṣṇava devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa find no ambiguity on this issue. They base their vegetarianism on the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.26), where Kṛṣṇa says,

If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit or water, I will accept it.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, speaking out of the Vaiṣṇava tradition, explains,

One who loves Kṛṣṇa will give Him whatever He wants, and he avoids offering anything which is undesirable or unasked. Thus meat, fish, and eggs should not be offered to Kṛṣṇa. If He desired such things as offerings, He would have said so. Instead He clearly requests that a leaf, fruit, flowers, and water be given to Him, and He says of this offering, "I will accept it." Therefore, we should understand that He will not accept meat, fish, and eggs. Vegetables, grains, fruits, milk, and water are the proper foods for human beings and are prescribed by Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's comments follow logically from a story in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, a scripture of central importance for Vaiṣṇavas. In Chapter Seventeen of the First Canto, a righteous king of ancient India, Parīkṣit Mahārāja, happens upon an evil king, Kali, who is beating a cow and a bull with a club on the bank of a sacred river. In this story, the cow stands for the earth (the giver of the necessities of physical existence), the bull for *dharma* (true religion), and Kali for the degradation (*adharma*) of our current age of slaughter—the Age of Kali.

All Vaiṣṇavas agree on countering the mercilessness and violence of the Age of Kali, and so they practice strict vegeta-

rianism. Rather than succumb to the cruel dietary preferences of the age, they look to Kṛṣṇa, the restorer of true religion in times of religious decadence (Bg. 4.8), to instruct them concerning what to eat. As we have seen, Kṛṣṇa has clearly indicated the foods He will accept: vegetables, grains, fruit, milk products, and water.

Clearly, on this issue the Vaiṣṇava tradition does not suffer from the ambiguity that afflicts the Biblical tradition. So since the Supreme Lord of the universe speaks to the human race through all of the world's genuine religious traditions, perhaps we can overcome the Biblical ambiguity about eating meat by bringing the Biblical tradition into dialogue with the Vaiṣṇava tradition. Just such a dialogue took place in 1973 between Śrīla Prabhupāda and Jean Daniélou, a French cardinal [see BACK TO GODHEAD, Vol. 19, No. 10].

The issue of vegetarianism in the Bibli-

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cal tradition arises when Śrīla Prabhupāda charges that by killing animals, Christians are regularly disobeying Jesus's commandment "Thou shalt not kill" (see Matthew 5:21, where Jesus alludes to the Mosaic commandment stated in Exodus 20:13). Daniélou counters Śrīla Prabhupāda by asserting that only human life is sacred. But Śrīla Prabhupāda dismisses this interpretation and affirms that Jesus's words refer to all life. A few moments later, Daniélou claims that what one eats is not "an essential point. The important thing is to love God. The practical commandment can change from one religion to another." Śrīla Prabhupāda brushes this assertion aside: "In the Bible, God's practical commandment is that you cannot kill; therefore killing cows is a sin for you [that is, for all Christians]."

This disagreement over how broad is the scope of the commandment—whether it is limited to human beings or should extend to all living beings—finds its source

in the divergent values placed on life in the Biblical and Vaiṣṇava traditions. For most Jews and Christians, only human beings, who are created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26), share in the divine nature. Therefore, animals have no claim to the rights such as the right to life, accorded to beings made in God's image. Animals have value only insofar as they serve human interests (Gen. 1:28–29).

This is also Daniélou's view. He denies that animals have souls and asserts that human hunger justifies the eating of animal flesh. But Śrīla Prabhupāda cites a passage in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.5) that affirms a totally different view of the sacredness of life:

It should be understood that all species of life are made possible by birth in this material nature, and that I am the seed-giving father.

In this view, the parental care of God extends to all living beings, from the highest to the lowest. The seed of divine life has been placed in human beings and animals alike; to eat an animal, therefore, is no less sinful than to eat a fellow human being.

The argument between the cardinal and Śrīla Prabhupāda continues through a few more rounds. Ultimately, Daniélou tries to place the blame for meat-eating by humans on some fault in the creation, whereas Śrīla Prabhupāda sees meat-eating simply as our own moral failing. Daniélou argues that human beings may eat animals because some animals do so, but Śrīla Prabhupāda replies that if human beings want to act like carnivores, God will give them fangs and claws in another life to fulfill that desire. Śrīla Prabhupāda seems to be asking, How shall we act: like savage beasts or divine children of God? I feel that Śrīla Prabhupāda gets the better of the argument.

The primary result of this dialogue between the Biblical and Vaiṣṇava traditions is the insight that the scope of the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" should be widened to include *all* living beings. If we apply this insight to the Biblical tradition, then its ambiguity on the issue of vegetarianism will be transformed into loving concern for all life. For those of us who take the Bible seriously, our obedience to God will then become greater as it aspires to live out the vision of the peaceable kingdom the Bible points to. Then we will be strong enough to forsake the concession to human weakness granted in Genesis 9:3. To the degree that we stop slaughtering innocent creatures for food, to that degree we will nullify the predatory principle, a principle that structures the injustices characteristic of this fallen age. And seeing all creatures with equal vision (Bg. 5.18), we will enter more deeply into the kingdom of God.



Lord Kṛṣṇa's Cuisine

Exploring Spices

Grind them, dry-roast them, or fry them.
Combine them to create subtle flavors.

Text and photo by
VIŚĀKHĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

Perhaps more than any other cuisine in the world, Lord Kṛṣṇa's cuisine fully explores the six basic tastes—salty, sweet, sour, pungent, astringent, and bitter—in innumerable combinations. Just

as all colors come from the three primary ones—red, blue, and yellow—all tastes are combinations of these basic six.

Spicing is important. For example, the spice fenugreek can be used to create a

hint of bitterness—a taste that's practically unknown in Western cooking. But when properly prepared and served with complementary dishes, bitter tastes are welcome (some people even favor them).

Similarly, there are sweet spices, like cinnamon and cardamom, pungent ones like cayenne, and mixed tastes like cumin and coriander. Spices influence not only the taste of food, but also the appearance, texture, and aroma.

There are basically four main techniques in spicing. First, you can grind whole spices into fine, dry powders. Second, you can slowly dry-roast them to release their dormant savory strength and then roughly bruise them to produce coarse, robust powders. Third, you can grind spices with liquids into moist, smooth pastes. Finally, you can brown whole spices in small quantities of ghee or vegetable oil and add them to the dish while cooking.

You can also combine powdered spices in innumerable ways to make *garam masālā*, a versatile ingredient in this type of cooking. *Garam masālā* is a combination of from four to fourteen powdered spices and is welcome in many dishes—rices, *dāl* soups, chutneys, savorys, and snacks—to enhance the flavors of the other ingredients.

Please don't confuse *garam masālā* with curry powder. Curry powders usually have turmeric, red chili powder, and asafetida, ingredients hardly ever used in *garam masālā*. We don't use curry powder in cooking for Kṛṣṇa; it stamps dishes with a stereotyped golden color, a crude, hot flavor, and an overpowering aroma. By contrast, different *garam masālās* may be piquant, sweet, tangy, or peppery, but they're always a harmonious blend of subtle flavors to heighten—not smother—food's natural flavors.

As you cook for Kṛṣṇa, you'll want to become familiar with these spices and use them judiciously so that He'll be pleased by your sincerity and devotion. It's natural to want to serve Kṛṣṇa, because as spirit souls we are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. And the part serves the whole, just as the hand serves the body. Kṛṣṇa is eternal, the soul is eternal, and the devotional service we render to Kṛṣṇa is also eternal. When we die, we leave behind all our material assets. But our devotional assets we retain. And if we don't have an iota of material desire left, then we don't have to take birth again in this material world, but we'll go back home, back to Godhead, to enjoy our eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

As devotees of Kṛṣṇa we constantly try to engage our senses in devotional service. We're confident that spiritual life is real and attainable. And one of the important ways to attain it is by cooking, offering, and eating *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*.

(Recipes by Yamunā-devī dāsī)

Crushed Dry-Roasted Cumin Seeds (Jeera)

Used in seasoning a wide variety of vegetables, *dāls*, soups, salads, and savory rice dishes.

Preparation time: 45 minutes

Yield: 1¾ cups

2 cups whole cumin seeds

1. Pour 1 cup of seeds onto one end of a cookie sheet or metal tray and slowly move small portions of them across the surface, removing any foreign matter or hard kernels. Clean the remainder of the seeds in the same way.

2. Preheat a large iron frying pan over a low flame for 4 to 5 minutes. Pour in the seeds and dry-roast them for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. The seeds should be lightly toasted to release their bouquet, but not browned.

3. Measure 3 tablespoons at a time into a coffee mill. Grind the seeds with 3 short bursts of the mill. Partially crush the seeds, but don't powder them. Allow them to cool. Pour into a pint jar and finish the remaining seeds in the same way.

4. Seal the jar well; store in a cool, dry place.

Five-Spice Seasoning (Panch Puran)

This combination of five whole aromatic spices is frequently used in a finishing *chaunce* for Bengali-style vegetables, stews, and *dāls*. The first recipe is mild; the second, a little stronger.

Recipe I:

1 part fennel seeds
2 parts black mustard seeds
½ part fenugreek seeds
3 parts cumin seeds
1 part black cumin seeds

Recipe II:

1 part fennel seeds
1 part black mustard seeds
1 part fenugreek seeds
1 part cumin seeds
1 part black cumin seeds

1. Remove any foreign matter from the spices.

2. Spread the spices on a large cookie sheet or metal tray and set in the hot sun for 3 to 4 hours.

3. Mix well and store tightly sealed.

Simple Garam Masālā

There are only four ingredients in this well-balanced *masālā*. It's a little savory, a little sweet.

Preparation time: 1 hour

Yield: 2 cups

¾ cup coriander seeds

1 cup cumin seeds

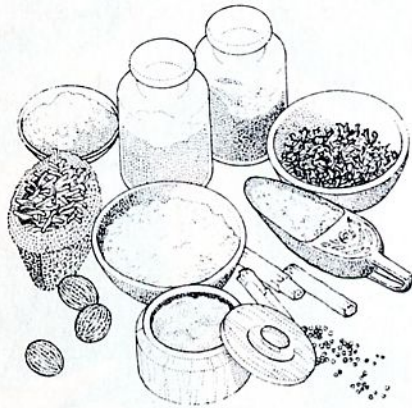
½ cup whole cloves

½ cup green or white cardamom pods

1. Preheat the oven to 200° F. Spread the ingredients on a cookie sheet or metal tray and bake for 30 minutes.

2. Combine the coriander seeds, cumin seeds, and whole cloves in a small bowl.

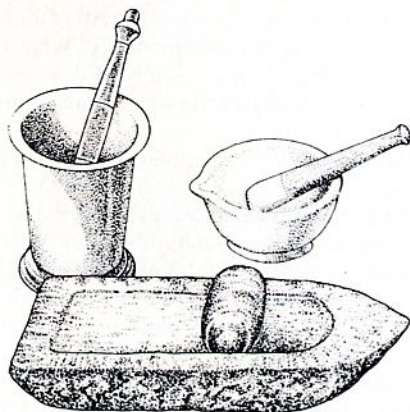
3. Place the cardamom pods on a stone mortar and gently tap the pods to break them



open. Pull apart each pod and shake out the seeds. Discard the pods. Add the seeds to the other spices and mix well.

4. Place ¼ cup of the spice mixture into an electric coffee mill and grind for approximately 1 minute. Empty the powder from the mill into a fine metal sieve and sift out the husks. Grind and sift the remaining spices.

5. Transfer the sifted powder to a 2-cup jar and seal tightly. Store in a cool, dry place.



Coriander Garam Masālā

A well-rounded, delightfully mild blend of spices.

Preparation time: 1 hour

Yield: 1½ cups

1½ cups coriander seeds

2 teaspoons black peppercorns

1 tablespoon whole cloves

1½ teaspoons dry red chilies, crushed coarse

¾ cup whole cumin seeds

3 five-inch cinnamon sticks

1. Preheat oven to 200° F. Spread the spices on a cookie sheet. Bake for 30 minutes and remove.

2. Combine the coriander seeds, peppercorns, cloves, red chilies, and cumin seeds in a bowl. Place the cinnamon sticks on a stone mortar and pulverize to a coarse powder. Add to the other spices and mix well.

3. Pour ¼ cup of the spice mixture into an electric coffee mill and grind for 45 to 60 seconds or until pulverized into a light, fluffy powder. Pour into a fine metal sieve and shake to sift the coarse husks from the powder. If desired, grind the coarse husks on a stone mortar and pestle until powdered.

4. Mix well, seal tightly in a jar, and store in a cool, dry place.

Chat Masālā

A fine-textured spice mixture with a salty, slightly sour flavor, this *masālā* is especially suited for seasoning sprouted bean dishes, dry chick-pea dishes, and selected dry vegetables. It is frequently used with fruit plates to provide a contrast with the sweetness of tropical fruits.

Preparation time: 1 hour

Yield: 1 cup

½ cup coriander seeds

¼ cup cumin seeds

2½ teaspoons red chili powder

2 teaspoons turmeric powder

2 large cassia leaves

2½ teaspoons whole cloves

½ tablespoon of seeds from green or white cardamom pods

6½ tablespoons mango powder

2 tablespoons ginger powder

½ cup fine granulated black salt

1. Preheat oven to 200° F. Spread the cassia leaves, cumin seeds, coriander seeds, whole cloves, and cardamom seeds on a cookie sheet and bake for 30 minutes.

2. Break the cassia leaves into small pieces and place them on a stone mortar. Pound and grind them to a coarse powder. Combine the roasted spices and roasted cassia leaves in a small bowl and mix well.

3. Place ½ cup of the roasted spice mixture in an electric coffee mill and grind for 1 minute, or until the mixture is pulverized to a very fine powder. Transfer the powder to a fine metal sieve and sift out the coarse ingredients. Repeat the grinding and sifting process with the remaining spices. Collect the coarse spice remnants and transfer to a stone mortar. Pulverize by hand.

4. Combine all of the roasted spice powder with the remaining powdered spices and black salt (available at Indo-Asian grocers). Mix all the ingredients together thoroughly.

5. Transfer to a small jar, seal well, and store in a cool, dry place.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

A Dog's Obstinacy

The following conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples took place in September 1975 on an early-morning walk in Vr̄ndāvana, India.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: People are trying simply for sense gratification. They do not even know the purpose of life. So our mission is to eradicate this ignorance. They are living under a wrong conception of life. Not a spiritual conception, but a material one.

Devotee: In Kathmandu I was asking people, "What kind of enjoyment is this from smoking cigarettes? You are coughing. *Intoxication—toxin—*means poison. So you are actually giving yourself poison. This is sanity? This is human life?" So these people usually told me, "Well, I'll give up cigarettes later."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: At least they admit the fault. Do they not?

Devotee: Yes, some people do. I reminded all these people about *karma*. You know: "According to your activity in this life, you're preparing your next life. If you live a spiritual life, you'll go to the spiritual world. If you live a materialistic life—animalistic—you'll stay in the material world and become an animal." And they all admitted, "Yes, I know about the law of *karma*." But when I said, "Why don't you serve Kṛṣṇa?" they said, "Later. Later."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Devotee: So, Śrīla Prabhupāda, can your instructions in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* stop these people's lust? Or do we have to hope that somehow they will be frustrated in their attempts to enjoy sense gratification?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: They are being frustrated. Who is successful in the material world? Can you name any instance in which someone has been really successful? [Laughs. A brief pause.] Then?

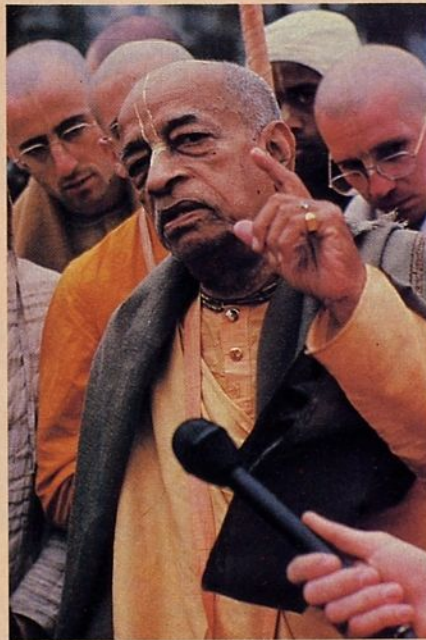
Devotee: Everywhere in this material world, people are miserable. In America, Amy Vanderbilt, the famous etiquette expert, jumped out of her window.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: There are many.

Devotee: Oh, yes. In San Diego and also in San Francisco, they have these fences so that when people jump off the bridges, they are caught by the fences.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: And I think in Berkeley they had to enclose the top of the clock tower with glass?

Devotee: Oh, yes, at the University of



California—to keep the students from jumping off.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: These are signs of how desperate people are, how disappointed with their life of materialism. They are always ready to commit suicide. Some thirty years ago, a man was sitting near me in a railway car—and all of a sudden, he jumped through the window. All of a sudden. He had been sitting nicely. What he was thinking I do not know. But he took the opportunity of the open window and jumped. I saw it.

Devotee: A kind of insanity overpowered him.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Insanity. Everyone is overpowered by insanity. Everyone who is trying to be happy in this material world—everyone is overpowered by insanity. They do not know the only solution is, as Kṛṣṇa says, *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja*: "Just surrender to Me." [Bg. 18.66] But that they'll not do. Anything but surrender to Kṛṣṇa.

Devotee: I was telling these Indian people that in America the big thing is they want to "raise the standard of living," but even those people who have raised the standard of living—they are also killing themselves. But many times these Indian people don't want to listen. "Our goal is economic development," they say. "That is the top priority."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Obstinacy. Dog's obstinacy. Now they are busy manufacturing

various types of religious systems so that one may not have to surrender to Kṛṣṇa. This is going on. Big, big swamis are saying, "Yes, whatever you manufacture, it is all right." *Yathā mata tathā patha*: "Whatever you concoct, that is all right." So people are content. If somebody said, "You surrender unto me," that would not be very palatable. When somebody says, "No, you can surrender to anyone," that is very palatable.

Devotee: Because that means no surrender. To surrender to anyone . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes.

Devotee: . . . means no surrender.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes.

Devotee: Sometimes people say, "When Kṛṣṇa wills it that I surrender to Him, then I will do it."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Such rascaldom. You think that Kṛṣṇa is not willing it, rascal, when He says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, "You must do this—you must surrender to Me"?

Devotee: Sometimes people say, "When Kṛṣṇa makes my heart open to Him, then I will surrender."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But you have no heart. You have simply stone. In the words of one devotional song: "My heart is harder than a stone. I know that chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa can melt even a stone, but it does not melt my heart. Therefore I think my heart must be harder than a stone."

Devotee: Some of these religious systems even say that it is offensive to say the name of God.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: What can I do? If these rascals say something like that, what can I do?

Devotee: Even when they write the word *God*, they don't write "G-o-d." They write "G, dash, d,"—so that they've indicated God, but they haven't said "God." It's too holy to pronounce. That's what they say.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: They might as well say, "G-zero-d." [Laughter.] That would nicely convey their idea of God.

Devotee: Zero signifies their love for Him.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Zero is controlling both sides, *G* and *d*. If you multiply something by zero, what does it become?

Devotee: Zero.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That's all. This kind of thinking is *sūnyavādi*, voidist. It is successful suicide. But we know life is not void, because God is not zero. 🙏

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 FIVE

Vidura’s Talks with Maitreya

As our serialized presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam continues, Vidura, an eternal associate of Lord Kṛṣṇa, hears further from the great sage Maitreya about the prayers offered to the Supreme Lord at the time of creation by the controlling deities of the physical elements of this universe.

TEXT 42

यच्छ्रद्धया श्रुतवत्या च भक्त्या
संमृज्यमाने हृदयेऽवधाय ।
ज्ञानेन वैराग्यबलेन धीरा
व्रजेम तत्तेऽङ्घ्रिसरोजपीठम् ॥४२॥

*yac chraddhayā śrutavatyā ca bhaktyā
sammṛjyamāne hṛdaye 'vadhāya
jñānena vairāgya-balena dhīrā
vrajema tat te 'nghri-saroja-pīṭham*

yat—that which; *śraddhayā*—by eagerness; *śrutavatyā*—simply by hearing; *ca*—also; *bhaktyā*—in devotion; *sammṛjyamāne*—being cleansed; *hṛdaye*—in the heart; *avadhāya*—meditation; *jñānena*—by knowledge; *vairāgya*—detachment; *balena*—by the strength of; *dhīrāḥ*—the pacified; *vrajema*—must go to; *tat*—that; *te*—Your; *aṅghri*—feet; *saroja-pīṭham*—lotus sanctuary.

TRANSLATION

Simply by hearing about Your lotus feet with eagerness and devotion and by meditating upon them within the heart, one at once becomes enlightened with knowledge, and on the strength of detachment one becomes pacified. We must therefore take shelter of the sanctuary of Your lotus feet.

PURPORT

The miracles of meditating on the lotus feet of the Lord with eagerness and devotion are so great that no other process can compare to it. The minds of materialistic persons are so disturbed that it is almost impossible for them to search after the Supreme Truth by personal regulative endeavors. But even such materialistic men, with a little eagerness for hearing about the transcendental name, fame, qualities, etc., can surpass all other methods of attaining knowledge and detachment. The conditioned soul is attached to the bodily conception of the self, and therefore he is in ignorance. Culture of self-knowledge can bring about detachment from material affection, and without such detachment there is no meaning to knowledge. The most stubborn attachment for material enjoyment is sex life. One who is attached to sex life is to be understood as devoid of knowledge. Knowledge must be followed by detachment. That is the way of self-realization. These two essentials for self-realization—knowledge and detachment—become manifest very quickly if one performs devotional service to the lotus feet of the Lord. The word *dhīra* is

very significant in this connection. A person who is not disturbed even in the presence of cause of disturbance is called *dhīra*. Śrī Yāmunācārya says, “Since my heart has been overwhelmed by the devotional service of Lord Kṛṣṇa, I cannot even think of sex life, and if thoughts of sex come upon me I at once feel disgust.” A devotee of the Lord becomes an elevated *dhīra* by the simple process of meditating in eagerness on the lotus feet of the Lord.

Devotional service entails being initiated by a bona fide spiritual master and following his instruction in regard to hearing about the Lord. Such a bona fide spiritual master is accepted by regularly hearing from him about the Lord. The improvement in knowledge and detachment can be perceived by devotees as an actual experience. Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu strongly recommended this process of hearing from a bona fide devotee, and by following this process one can achieve the highest result, conquering all other methods.

TEXT 43

विश्वस्य जन्मस्थितिसंयमारथे
कृतावतारस्य पदाम्बुजं ते ।
व्रजेम सर्वे शरणं यदीश
स्मृतं प्रयच्छत्यभयं स्वपुंसाम् ॥४३॥

*viśvasya janma-sthiti-saṁyamārthe
kṛtāvātārasya padāmbujam te
vrajema sarve śaraṇam yad īśa
smṛtam prayacchaty abhayaṁ sva-puṁsām*

viśvasya—of the cosmic universe; *janma*—creation; *sthiti*—maintenance; *saṁyama-arthe*—for the dissolution also; *kṛta*—accepted or assumed; *avatārasya*—of the incarnations; *pada-ambujam*—lotus feet; *te*—Your; *vrajema*—let us take shelter of; *sarve*—all of us; *śaraṇam*—shelter; *yat*—that which; *īśa*—O Lord; *smṛtam*—remembrance; *prayacchati*—awarding; *abhayaṁ*—courage; *sva-puṁsām*—of the devotees.

TRANSLATION

O Lord, You assume incarnations for the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the cosmic manifestation, and therefore we all take shelter of Your lotus feet because they always award remembrance and courage to Your devotees.

PURPORT

For the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the cosmic manifestations there are three incarnations: Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara (Lord Śiva). They are the controllers or masters of the three modes of material nature, which cause the phenomenal manifestation. Viṣṇu is the master of the mode of goodness, Brahmā is the master of the mode of passion, and Maheśvara is the master of the mode of ignorance. There are different kinds of devotees according to the modes of nature. Persons in the mode of goodness worship Lord Viṣṇu, those in the mode of passion worship Lord Brahmā, and those in the mode of ignorance worship Lord

Śiva. All three of these deities are incarnations of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa because He is the original Supreme Personality of Godhead. The demigods directly refer to the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord and not to the different incarnations. The incarnation of Viṣṇu in the material world is, however, directly worshiped by the demigods. It is learned from various scriptures that the demigods approach Lord Viṣṇu in the ocean of milk and submit their grievances whenever there is some difficulty in the administration of universal affairs. Although they are incarnations of the Lord, Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva worship Lord Viṣṇu, and thus they are also counted amongst the demigods and not as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Persons who worship Lord Viṣṇu are called demigods, and persons who do not do so are called *asuras*, or demons. Viṣṇu always takes the part of the demigods, but Brahmā and Śiva sometimes take the side of the demons; it is not that they become one in interest with them, but sometimes they do something in order to gain control over the demons.

TEXT 44

यत्सानुबन्धेऽसति देहगेहे
ममाहमित्युदुराग्रहाणाम्
पुंसां सुदूरं वसतोऽपि पुर्यां
भजेम तत्ते भगवन् पदाब्जम् ॥४४॥

*yat sānubandhe 'sati deha-gehe
mamāham ity ūḍha-durāgrahāṇām
puṁsāṁ sudūraṁ vasato 'pi puryāṁ
bhajema tat te bhagavan padābjam*

yat—because; *sa-anubandhe*—due to becoming entangled; *asati*—thus being; *deha*—the gross material body; *gehe*—in the home; *mama*—mine; *aham*—I; *iti*—thus; *ūḍha*—great, deep; *durāgrahāṇām*—undesirable eagerness; *puṁsām*—of persons; *su-dūram*—far away; *vasataḥ*—dwelling; *api*—although; *puryām*—within the body; *bhajema*—let us worship; *tat*—therefore; *te*—Your; *bhagavan*—O Lord; *pada-abjam*—lotus feet.

TRANSLATION

O Lord, persons who are entangled by undesirable eagerness for the temporary body and kinsmen, and who are bound by thoughts of “mine” and “I,” are unable to see Your lotus feet, although Your lotus feet are situated within their own bodies. But let us take shelter of Your lotus feet.

PURPORT

The whole Vedic philosophy of life is that one should get rid of the material engagement of gross and subtle bodies, which only cause one to continue in a condemned life of miseries. This material body continues as long as one is not detached from the false conception of lording it over material nature. The impetus for lording it over material nature is the sense of “mine” and “I.” “I am the lord of all that I survey. So many things I possess, and I shall possess more and more. Who can be richer than I in wealth and education? I am the master, and I am God. Who else is there but me?” All these ideas reflect the philosophy of *aham mama*, the conception that “I am everything.” Persons conducted by such a conception of life can never get liberation from material bondage. But even a person perpetually condemned to the miseries of material existence can get relief from bondage if he simply agrees to hear only *kṛṣṇa-kathā*. In this age of Kali, the process of hearing *kṛṣṇa-kathā* is the most effective means to gain release from unwanted family affection and thus find permanent freedom in life. The age of Kali is full of sinful reactions, and people are more and more addicted to the qualities of this age, but simply by hearing and chanting of *kṛṣṇa-kathā* one is sure to go back to Godhead. Therefore, people should be trained to hear only *kṛṣṇa-kathā*—by all means—in order to get relief from all miseries.

TEXT 45

तान् वै ह्यसद्वृत्तिभिरक्षिभिर्ये
पराहृतान्तर्मनसः परेश ।
अथो न पश्यन्त्युरुगाय नूनं
ये ते पदन्यासविलासलक्ष्याः ॥४५॥

*tān vai hy asad-vṛttibhir akṣibhir ye
parāhṛtāntar-manasaḥ pareśa
atho na paśyanti urugāya nūnaṁ
ye te padanyāsa-vilāsa-lakṣyāḥ*

tān—the lotus feet of the Lord; *vai*—certainly; *hi*—for; *asad*—materialistic; *vṛttibhiḥ*—by those who are influenced by external energy; *akṣibhiḥ*—by the senses; *ye*—those; *parāhṛta*—missing at a distance; *antaḥ-manasaḥ*—of the internal mind; *pareśa*—O Supreme; *atho*—therefore; *na*—never; *paśyanti*—can see; *urugāya*—O great; *nūnaṁ*—but; *ye*—those who; *te*—Your; *padanyāsa*—activities; *vilāsa*—transcendental enjoyment; *lakṣyāḥ*—those who see.

TRANSLATION

O great Supreme Lord, offensive persons whose internal vision has been too affected by external materialistic activities cannot see Your lotus feet, but they are seen by Your pure devotees, whose one and only aim is to transcendently enjoy Your activities.

PURPORT

As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.61), the Lord is situated in everyone's heart. It is natural that one should be able to see the Lord at least within himself. But that is not possible for those whose internal vision has been covered by external activities. The pure soul, which is symptomized by consciousness, can be easily perceived even by a common man because consciousness is spread all over the body. The *yoga* system as recommended in *Bhagavad-gītā* is to concentrate the mental activities internally and thus see the lotus feet of the Lord within oneself. But there are many so-called *yogīs* who have no concern with the Lord but are only concerned with consciousness, which they accept as the final realization. Such realization of consciousness is taught by *Bhagavad-gītā* within only a few minutes, whereas the so-called *yogīs* take continuous years to realize it because of their offenses at the lotus feet of the Lord. The greatest offense is to deny the existence of the Lord as separate from the individual souls or to accept the Lord and the individual soul as one and the same. The impersonalists misinterpret the theory of reflection, and thus they wrongly accept the individual consciousness as the supreme consciousness.

The theory of the reflection of the Supreme can be clearly understood without difficulty by any sincere common man. When there is a reflection of the sky on the water, both the sky and the stars are seen within the water, but it is understood that the sky and the stars are not to be accepted on the same level. The stars are parts of the sky, and therefore they cannot be equal to the whole. The sky is the whole, and the stars are parts. They cannot be one and the same. Transcendentalists who do not accept the supreme consciousness as separate from the individual consciousness are as offensive as the materialists who deny even the existence of the Lord.

Such offenders cannot actually see the lotus feet of the Lord within themselves, nor are they even able to see the devotees of the Lord. The devotees of the Lord are so kind that they roam to all places to enlighten people in God consciousness. The offenders, however, lose the chance to receive the Lord's devotees, although the offenseless common man is at once influenced by the devotees' presence. In this connection there is an interesting story of a hunter and Devarṣi Nārada. A hunter in the forest, although a great sinner, was not an intentional offender. He was at once influenced by the presence of Nārada, and he agreed to take the path of devotion, leaving aside his hearth and home. But the offenders

Nalakūvara and Manigrīva, even though living amongst the demigods, had to undergo the punishment of becoming trees in their next lives, although by the grace of a devotee they were later delivered by the Lord. Offenders have to wait until they receive the mercy of devotees, and then they can become eligible to see the lotus feet of the Lord within themselves. But due to their offenses and their extreme materialism, they cannot see even the devotees of the Lord. Engaged in external activities, they kill the internal vision. The Lord's devotees, however, do not mind the offenses of the foolish in their many gross and subtle bodily endeavors. The Lord's devotees continue to bestow the blessings of devotion upon all such offenders without hesitation. That is the nature of devotees.

TEXT 46

पानेन ते देव कथासुधायाः
प्रवृद्धभक्त्या विशदाशया ये ।
वैराग्यसारं प्रतिलभ्य बोधं
यथाज्ञसान्वीयुरकुण्ठधिष्यम् ॥४६॥

*pānena te deva kathā-sudhāyāḥ
pravṛddha-bhaktiā viśadāśayā ye
vairāgya-sāraṁ pratilabhya bodhaṁ
yathāñjasānvīyur akunṭha-dhiṣṇyam*

pānena—by drinking; *te*—of You; *deva*—O Lord; *kathā*—topics; *sudhāyāḥ*—of the nectar; *pravṛddha*—highly enlightened; *bhaktiā*—by devotional service; *viśadāśayāḥ*—with a greatly serious attitude; *ye*—those who; *vairāgya-sāraṁ*—the entire purport of renunciation; *pratilabhya*—achieving; *bodham*—intelligence; *yathā*—as much as; *añjasā*—quickly; *anvīyuh*—achieve; *akunṭha-dhiṣṇyam*—Vaikuṅṭhaloka in the spiritual sky.

TRANSLATION

O Lord, persons who, because of their serious attitude, attain the stage of enlightened devotional service achieve the complete meaning of renunciation and knowledge and attain the Vaikuṅṭhaloka in the spiritual sky simply by drinking the nectar of Your topics.

PURPORT

The difference between the impersonalistic mental speculators and the pure devotees of the Lord is that the former pass through a miserable understanding of the Absolute Truth at every stage, whereas the devotees enter into the kingdom of all pleasures even from the beginning of their attempt. The devotee has only to hear about devotional activities, which are as simple as anything in ordinary life, and he also acts very simply, whereas the mental speculator has to pass through a jugglery of words, which are partially facts and partially a make-show for the maintenance of an artificial impersonal status. In spite of his strenuous efforts to attain perfect knowledge, the impersonalist attains merging into the impersonal oneness of the *brahmajyoti* of the Lord, which is also attained by the enemies of the Lord simply because of their being killed by Him. The devotees, however, attain to the highest stage of knowledge and renunciation and achieve the Vaikuṅṭhalokas, the planets in the spiritual sky. The impersonalist attains only the sky, and does not achieve any tangible transcendental bliss, whereas the devotee attains to the planets where real spiritual life prevails. With a serious attitude, the devotee throws away all achievements like so much dust, and he accepts only devotional service, the transcendental culmination.

TEXT 47

तथापरे चात्मसमाधियोग-
बलेन जित्वा प्रकृतिं बलिष्ठाम् ।
त्वामेव धीराः पुरुषं विशन्ति
तेषां श्रमः स्यान्न तु सेवया ते ॥४७॥

*tathāpare cātma-samādhi-yoga-
balena jitvā prakṛtiṁ baliṣṭhām
tvām eva dhīrāḥ puruṣaṁ viśanti
teṣāṁ śramaḥ syān na tu sevayā te*

tathā—as far as; *apare*—others; *ca*—also; *ātma-samādhi*—transcendental self-realization; *yoga*—means; *balena*—by the strength of; *jitvā*—conquering; *prakṛtiṁ*—acquired nature or modes of nature; *baliṣṭhām*—very powerful; *tvām*—You; *eva*—only; *dhīrāḥ*—pacified; *puruṣam*—person; *viśanti*—enters into; *teṣāṁ*—for them; *śramaḥ*—much labor; *syāt*—has to be taken; *na*—never; *tu*—but; *sevayā*—by serving; *te*—of You.

TRANSLATION

Others, who are pacified by means of transcendental self-realization and have conquered over the modes of nature by dint of strong power and knowledge, also enter into You, but for them there is much pain, whereas the devotee simply discharges devotional service and thus feels no such pain.

PURPORT

In terms of a labor of love and its returns, the *bhaktas*, or devotees of the Lord, always have priority over persons who are addicted to the association of *jñānīs*, or impersonalists, and *yogīs*, or mystics. The word *apare* (others) is very significant in this connection. "Others" refers to the *jñānīs* and the *yogīs*, whose only hope is to merge into the existence of the impersonal *brahmajyoti*. Although their destination is not so important in comparison to the destination of the devotees, the labor of the nondevotees is far greater than that of the *bhaktas*. One may suggest that there is sufficient labor for the devotees also in the matter of discharging devotional service. But that labor is compensated by the enhancement of transcendental pleasure. The devotees derive more transcendental pleasure while engaged continuously in the service of the Lord than when they have no such engagement. In the family combination of a man and a woman there is much labor and responsibility for both of them, yet when they are single they feel more trouble for want of their united activities.

The union of the impersonalists and the union of the devotees are not on a par. The impersonalists try to fully stop their individuality by attaining *sāyujya-mukti*, or unification by merging into oneness, whereas the devotees keep their individuality to exchange feelings in relationship with the supreme individual Lord. Such reciprocation of feelings takes place in the transcendental Vaikuṅṭha planets, and therefore the liberation sought by the impersonalists is already achieved in devotional service. The devotees attain *mukti* automatically, while continuing the transcendental pleasure of maintaining individuality. As explained in the previous verse, the destination of the devotees is Vaikuṅṭha, or *akunṭha-dhiṣṇya*, the place where anxieties are completely eradicated. One should not mistake the destination of the devotees and that of the impersonalists to be one and the same. The destinations are distinctly different, and the transcendental pleasure derived by the devotee is also distinct from *cin-mātra*, or spiritual feelings alone.

TEXT 48

तत्ते वयं लोकसिसृक्षयाद्य
त्वयानुसृष्टास्त्रिभिरात्मभिः स ।
सर्वे वियुक्ताः स्वविहारतन्त्रं
न शकुमस्तत्प्रतिहर्तवे ते ॥४८॥

*tat te vyaṁ loka-sisṛkṣayādya
tvayānusṛṣṭās tribhir ātmabhiḥ sma
sarve viyuktāḥ sva-vihāra-tantraṁ
na śaknumas tat pratihartave te*

tat—therefore; *te*—Your; *vayaṁ*—all of us; *loka*—world; *sisṛkṣayā*—for the sake of creation; *ādya*—O Original Person; *tvayā*—by You; *anusṛṣṭāḥ*—being created one after another; *tribhiḥ*—by the three

modes of nature; *ātmabhiḥ*—by one's own; *smā*—in the past; *sarve*—all; *viyuktāḥ*—separated; *sva-vihāra-tantram*—the network of activities for one's own pleasure; *nā*—not; *śaknumaḥ*—could do it; *tat*—that; *pratihartave*—to award; *te*—unto Your.

TRANSLATION

O Original Person, we are therefore but Yours only. Although we are Your creatures, we are born one after another under the influence of the three modes of nature, and for this reason we are separated in action. Therefore, after the creation we could not act concertedly for Your transcendental pleasure.

PURPORT

The cosmic creation is working under the influence of the three modes of the external potency of the Lord. Different creatures are also under the same influence, and therefore they cannot act concertedly in satisfying the Lord. Because of this diverse activity, there cannot be any harmony in the material world. The best policy, therefore, is to act for the sake of the Lord. That will bring about the desired harmony.

TEXT 49

यावद्बलिं तेऽज हराम काले
यथा वयं चान्नमदाम यत्र ।
यथोभयेषां त इमे हि लोका
बलिं हरन्तोऽन्नमदन्यनूहाः ॥४९॥

yāvad balim te 'ja harāma kāle
yathā vyaṁ cānnaṁ adāma yatra
yathobhayeṣāṁ ta ime hi loka
balim haranto 'nnaṁ adanty anūhāḥ

yāvāt—as it may be; *balim*—offerings; *te*—Your; *aja*—O unborn one; *harāma*—shall offer; *kāle*—at the right time; *yathā*—as much as; *vayaṁ*—we; *ca*—also; *annaṁ*—food grains; *adāma*—shall partake; *yatra*—whereupon; *yathā*—as much as; *ubhayeṣāṁ*—both for You and for us; *te*—all; *ime*—these; *hi*—certainly; *lokāḥ*—living entities; *balim*—offerings; *harantaḥ*—while offering; *annaṁ*—grains; *adanti*—eat; *anūhāḥ*—without disturbance.

TRANSLATION

O unborn one, please enlighten us regarding the ways and means by which we can offer You all enjoyable grains and commodities so that both we and all other living entities in this world can maintain ourselves without disturbance and can easily accumulate the necessities of life both for You and for ourselves.

PURPORT

Developed consciousness begins from the human form of life and further increases in the forms of the demigods living in higher planets. The earth is situated almost in the middle of the universe, and the human form of life is the via medium between the life of the demigods and that of the demons. The planetary systems above the earth are especially meant for the higher intellectuals, called demigods. They are called demigods because although their standard of life is far more advanced in culture, enjoyment, luxury, beauty, education and duration of life, they are always fully God conscious. Such demigods are always ready to render service to the Supreme Lord because they are perfectly aware of the fact that every living entity is constitutionally an eternal subordinate servitor of the Lord. They also know that it is the Lord only who can

maintain all living entities with all the necessities of life. The Vedic hymns, *eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān, tā enam abruvann āyatanam naḥ prajānihi yasmin pratiṣṭhitā annam adāme*, etc., confirm this truth. In *Bhagavad-gītā* also, the Lord is mentioned as *bhūta-bhṛt*, or the maintainer of all living creatures.

The modern theory that starvation is due to an increase in population is not accepted by the demigods or the devotees of the Lord. The devotees or demigods are fully aware that the Lord can maintain any number of living entities, provided they are conscious of how to eat. If they want to eat like ordinary animals, who have no God consciousness, then they must live in starvation, poverty and want, like the jungle animals in the forest. The jungle animals are also maintained by the Lord with their respective foodstuffs, but they are not advanced in God consciousness. Similarly, human beings are provided with food grains, vegetables, fruits and milk by the grace of the Lord, but it is the duty of human beings to acknowledge the mercy of the Lord. As a matter of gratitude, they should feel obliged to the Lord for their supply of foodstuff, and they must first offer Him food in sacrifice and then partake of the remnants.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.13) it is confirmed that one who takes foodstuff after a performance of sacrifice eats real food for proper maintenance of the body and soul, but one who cooks for himself and does not perform any sacrifice eats only lumps of sin in the shape of foodstuffs. Such sinful eating can never make one happy or free from scarcity. Famine is not due to an increase in population, as less intelligent economists think. When human society is grateful to the Lord for all His gifts for the maintenance of the living entities, then there is certainly no scarcity or want in society. But when men are unaware of the intrinsic value of such gifts from the Lord, surely they are in want. A person who has no God consciousness may live in opulence for the time being due to his past virtuous acts, but if one forgets his relationship with the Lord, certainly he must await the stage of starvation by the law of the powerful material nature. One cannot escape the vigilance of the powerful material nature unless he leads a God conscious or devotional life.

TEXT 50

त्वं नः सुराणामसि सान्वयानां
कूटस्थ आद्यः पुरुषः पुराणः ।
त्वं देव शक्त्यां गुणकर्मयोर्नौ
रेतस्त्वजायां कविमादधेऽजः ॥५०॥

tvam naḥ surānām asi sāvayānām
kūṭa-stha ādyaḥ puruṣaḥ purāṇaḥ
tvam deva śaktyāṁ guṇa-karma-yonau
retas tv ajāyām kavim ādadhe 'jaḥ

tvam—Your Lordship; *naḥ*—of us; *surānām*—of the demigods; *asi*—You are; *sa-anvayānām*—with different gradations; *kūṭa-sthaḥ*—one who is unchanged; *ādyaḥ*—without any superior; *puruṣaḥ*—the founder person; *purāṇaḥ*—the oldest, who has no other founder; *tvam*—You; *deva*—O Lord; *śaktyām*—unto the energy; *guṇa-karma-yonau*—unto the cause of the material modes and activities; *retas*—semen of birth; *tu*—indeed; *ajāyām*—for begetting; *kavim*—the total living entities; *ādadhe*—initiated; *ajaḥ*—one who is unborn.

TRANSLATION

You are the original personal founder of all the demigods and the orders of different gradations, yet You are the oldest and are unchanged. O Lord, You have no source or superior. You have impregnated the external energy with the semen of the total living entities, yet You are unborn.

PURPORT

The Lord, the Original Person, is the father of all other living entities,

beginning from Brahmā, the personality from whom all other living entities in different gradations of species are generated. Yet the supreme father has no other father. Every one of the living entities of all grades, up to Brahmā, the original creature of the universe, is begotten by a father, but He, the Lord, has no father. When He descends on the material plane, out of His causeless mercy He accepts one of His great devotees as His father to keep pace with the rules of the material world. But since He is the Lord, He is always independent in choosing who will become His father. For example, the Lord came out of a pillar in His incarnation as Nṛsīnhadeva, and by the Lord's causeless mercy, Ahalyā came out of a stone by the touch of the lotus feet of His incarnation as Lord Śrī Rāma. He is also the companion of every living entity as the Supersoul, but He is unchanged. The living entity changes his body in the material world, but even when the Lord is in the material world, He is ever unchanged. That is His prerogative.

As confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.3), the Lord impregnates the external or material energy, and thus the total living entities later come out in different gradations, beginning from Brahmā, the first demigod, down to the insignificant ant. All gradations of living entities are manifested by Brahmā and the external energy, but the Lord is the original father of everyone. The relationship of every living being with the Supreme Lord is certainly one of son and father and not one of equality. Sometimes in love the son is more than the father, but the relationship of father and son is one of the superior and the subordinate. Every living entity, however great he may be, even up to demigods like Brahmā and Indra, is an eternally subordinate servitor of the supreme father. The *mahat-tattva* principle is the generating source of all the modes of material nature, and the living entities take birth in the material world in bodies supplied by the mother, material nature, in terms of their previous work. The body is a gift of material nature, but the soul is originally part and parcel of the Supreme Lord.

TEXT 51

ततो वयं मत्प्रमुखा यदर्थे
 बभूविमात्मन् करवाम किं ते ।
 त्वं नः स्वचक्षुः परिदेहि शक्त्या
 देव क्रियार्थे यदनुग्रहाणाम् ॥५१॥

*tato vayaṁ mat-pramukhā yad-arthe
 babhūvimātman karavāma kiṁ te
 tvam naḥ sva-cakṣuḥ paridehi śaktyā
 deva kriyārthe yad-anugrahāṇām*

tataḥ—therefore; *vayaṁ*—all of us; *mat-pramukhāḥ*—coming from the total cosmos, the *mahat-tattva*; *yad-arthe*—for the purpose of which; *babhūvima*—created; *ātman*—O Supreme Self; *karavāma*—shall do; *kiṁ*—what; *te*—Your service; *tvam*—Yourself; *naḥ*—to us; *sva-cakṣuḥ*—personal plan; *paridehi*—specifically grant us; *śaktyā*—with potency to work; *deva*—O Lord; *kriyā-arthe*—for acting; *yad*—from which; *anugrahāṇām*—of those who are specifically favored.

TRANSLATION

O Supreme Self, please give us, who are created in the beginning from the mahat-tattva, the total cosmic energy, Your kind directions on how we shall act. Kindly award us Your perfect knowledge and potency so that we can render You service in the different departments of subsequent creation.

PURPORT

The Lord creates this material world and impregnates the material energy with the living entities who will act in the material world. All these

actions have a divine plan behind them. The plan is to give the conditioned souls who so desire a chance to enjoy sense gratification. But there is another plan behind the creation: to help the living entities realize that they are created for the transcendental sense gratification of the Lord and not for their individual sense gratification. This is the constitutional position of the living entities. The Lord is one without a second, and He expands Himself into many for His transcendental pleasure. All the expansions—the *viṣṇu-tattvas*, the *jīva-tattvas* and the *śakti-tattvas* (the Personalities of Godhead, the living entities and the different potential energies)—are different offshoots from the same one Supreme Lord. The *jīva-tattvas* are separated expansions of the *viṣṇu-tattvas*, and although there are potential differences between them, they are all meant for the transcendental sense gratification of the Supreme Lord. Some of the *jīvas*, however, wanted to lord it over material nature in imitation of the lordship of the Personality of Godhead. Regarding when and why such propensities overcame the pure living entities, it can only be explained that the *jīva-tattvas* have infinitesimal independence and that due to misuse of this independence some of the living entities have become implicated in the conditions of cosmic creation and are therefore called *nitya-baddhas*, or eternally conditioned souls.

The expansions of Vedic wisdom also give the *nitya-baddhas*, the conditioned living entities, a chance to improve, and those who take advantage of such transcendental knowledge gradually regain their lost consciousness of rendering transcendental loving service to the Lord. The demigods are amongst the conditioned souls who have developed this pure consciousness of service to the Lord but who at the same time continue to desire to lord it over the material energy. Such mixed consciousness puts a conditioned soul in the position of managing the affairs of this creation. The demigods are entrusted leaders of the conditioned souls. As some of the old prisoners in government jails are entrusted with some responsible work of prison management, so the demigods are improved conditioned souls acting as representatives of the Lord in the material creation. Such demigods are devotees of the Lord in the material world, and when completely free from all material desire to lord it over the material energy they become pure devotees and have no desire but to serve the Lord. Therefore any living entity who desires a position in the material world may desire so in the service of the Lord and may seek power and intelligence from the Lord, as exemplified by the demigods in this particular verse. One cannot do anything unless he is enlightened and empowered by the Lord. The Lord says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.15), *mataḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanam ca*. All recollections, knowledge, etc., as well as all forgetfulness, are engineered by the Lord, who is sitting within the heart of everyone. The intelligent man seeks the help of the Lord, and the Lord helps the sincere devotees engaged in His multifarious services.

The demigods are entrusted by the Lord to create different species of living entities according to their past deeds. They are herein asking the favor of the Lord for the intelligence and power to carry out their task. Similarly, any conditioned soul may also engage in the service of the Lord under the guidance of an expert spiritual master and thus gradually become freed from the entanglement of material existence. The spiritual master is the manifested representative of the Lord, and anyone who puts himself under the guidance of a spiritual master and acts accordingly is said to be acting in terms of *buddhi-yoga*, as explained in *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.41):

*vyavasāyātmikā buddhir
 ekeha kuru-nandana
 bahu-śākhā hy anantās ca
 buddhayo 'vyavasāyīnām*

Thus end the Bhaktivedanta purports of the Third Canto, Fifth Chapter, of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, entitled "Vidura's Talks with Maitreya."

(continued in next issue)

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Quartre Bornes, Mauritius)/ 46804

Mombasa, Kenya—Hare Krishna House, Sauti Ya Kenya and Kisumu Rds. (mail: P.O. Box 82224,
Mombasa)/ 312248

Monrovia, Liberia—Rivoli Building, Broad St. (mail: P.O. Box 050, Paynesville)/ 221623

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Nairobi, Kenya—Muhuroni Close, off West Nagara Rd. (mail: P.O. Box 28946, Nairobi)/ 744365

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(mail: P.O. Box 4429, Trans Amadi)

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ASIA

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360 003)

Bangalore, Karnataka—34/A, 9th 'B' Cross, West of Chord Rd., Mahalaxmi Layout,
560 086 (mail: P.O. Box 5181)/ 80418

Baroda, Gujarat—18, Sujata Society, Gotri Rd., 390 015/ 66499

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Bombay, Maharashtra—Hare Krishna Land, Juhu 400 054/ 626-860

Calcutta, W. Bengal—3, Albert Rd., 700 017/ 443757

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Chhaygharia (Haridaspur), W. Bengal—Thakur Haridas Sripatbari Sevashram, P.O.
Chhaygharia, P.S. Bongaon, Dist. 24 Parganas

Gauhati, Assam—Post Bag No. 127, 781 001

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Imphal, Manipur—Hare Krishna Land, Airport Road, 795 001

Madras, Tamil Nadu—232 Kilpaik Garden Road, Madras 600 010/ 662286

Mâyâpur, W. Bengal—Shree Mâyâpur Chandrodya Mandir, P.O. Shree Mâyâpur Dham (Dist. Nadia)

New Delhi—M-119 Greater Kailash I, 110 048/ 642058

Pandharpur, Maharashtra—Hare Kṛṣṇa Āśrama, across Chandrabhaga River, Dist. Sholapur, 413304

Pune—4 Tarapur Rd.

Silchar, Assam—Mahaprabhu Colony, Malugram, Cachar District, 788002

Surat, Gujarat—Rander Rd., Jahangirpura, Surat, 395005/ 84215

Tirupati, A.P.—No. 37, B Type, T. T. D. Qrs., Vinayaka Nagar, K. T. Rd., 517501/ 2285

Trivandrum, Kerala—P. B. No. 5098, Fort Post Office, 695023

Vrindāvan, U.P.—Krishna-Balarām Mandir, Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg, Raman Reti, Mathurā/ 178

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Bangkok, Thailand—139, Soi Putha-Ooth, New Road/ 233-2488

Hong Kong—5 Homantin St., Flat 23, Kowloon/ 3-7122630

Jakarta, Indonesia—Yayasan Kesadaran Kṛṣṇa Indonesia, J.L. Kamboja 10-12, Tomang Raya/ 599 301

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Fortaleza, CE—Rua José Lourenço, 2114, Aldeota

Manaus, AM—Rua Leopoldo Neves, 387

Pôrto Alegre, RS—Rua Tomás Flores, 327, Bonfim/ 27-3078

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Salvador, BA—Rua Alvaro Adorno, 17, Brotas 40.000/ (071) 244-1072

São Luiz, MA—Rua Deputado José Maria, 93-Fatima

São Paulo, SP—Rua Bom Pastor, 798 (mail: Caixa Postal 4855-01000)/ 279-7836

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Mexico City—Gob. Tiburcio Montiel 45, San Miguel Chapultepec, Mexico, D.F. 18/ (905) 271-0132

Monterrey—General Albino Espinoza, 345 Pte., Zona Centro, Monterrey, N.L./ 42-67-66

Morelia—Ticatem No. 52 pte., Col. Selix Ireta 58070, Morelia, Mich.

Puebla—Rio Nazas 5016, Col. San Manuel/ 459047

Vera Cruz—Calle 3, Carebelas No. 784, Fraccionamiento Reforma/ 50759

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Cuzco—Calle Plaza San Francisco No. 360 (altos)

Chosica—Jr. Chile 136

Huancayo—Av. Giralder 652

Lima—Avenida San Martín 135/ 670405

Miraflores—Av. Schell 630/ 442505

Trujillo—Jr. Bolívar 768

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Gauranga Sevak—Bellavista, Hvallaga, San Martín

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Barranco—Av. Grav 137

Cuzco—Calle Espáderos 128 (near Plaza de Armas)

Lima—Jr. Azangaro 149

Miraflores—Av. Schell 603

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Buenos Aires, Argentina—Centro Bhaktivedanta, Andonaegui 2054, (1431) Buenos Aires

Cali, Colombia—Avenida 9 Norte, 17-33/ 621688

Caracas, Venezuela—Calle Luis Roche 61, Colinas de los Chaguramos/ 751-3026

Cochabamba, Bolivia—P.O. Box 3988/ 46441

Concepción, Chile—Nongüen, 588/ 23150

Córdoba, Argentina—Ramirez de Arellano 680, (5000) Alta Córdoba

Crabwood Creek, Guyana—Grant 1803, Sec. D, Corentyne, Berbice

Georgetown, Guyana—24 Uitvlugt Front, West Coast Demerara

Guayaquil, Ecuador—V. E. Estrada 110, Circunvalacion Norte/ 382439

La Paz, Bolivia—Avenida Herando Siles 6239 (mail: Casilla 10278 Obrajes)/ 785023

Medellin, Columbia—Calle 56 (Bolivia), Parque de Bolívar

Montevideo, Uruguay—Casilla 10,531, Suc. Plana

Panama, Republic of Panama—Via las Cumbres, entrada Villa Zaita, frente a INPSA No. 10
(mail: P.O. Box 6-29-54, Panama)/ 681070

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San Jose, Costa Rica—100 mtrs. sureste de aptos Torre Blanca Urbanización Carmil, Montes
de Oca, Casa No. 49 (mail: P.O. Box 166, Paseo Estudiantes, Z-1002)

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Santiago, Chile—Estudiantes, 150

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic—Calle Cayetano Rodríguez No. 254/ (809) 688-7242

Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies—Prabhupada Ave., Longdeville, Chaguanas

FARM COMMUNITIES

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Guyana—Seawell Village, Corentyne, East Berbice

San Salvador, El Salvador—Carretera a Santa Ana, Km. 34, Canton Los Indios, Zapotitán,
Dpto. de La Libertad

RESTAURANTS

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Guayaquil, Ecuador—Govinda's (at ISKCON Guayaquil)

Quito, Ecuador—Govinda's, Esmeracoas 853 y Venezuela/ 511083

San José, Costa Rica—50 metros al este de la casa amarilla, Avenida 7, No. 1325

San Salvador, El Salvador—Govinda's, 7^a Calle Oriente No. 155/ 218035

Santiago, Chile—Govinda's (at ISKCON Santiago)

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 Dāmodara (October 10–November 8)

November 1—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīnīvāsa Ācārya, a great follower of the six *gōsvāmīs* of Vṛndāvana.

November 4—Utthānā Ekādaśī. Also, disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gaurakiśora dāsa Bābājī, spiritual master of Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura (total fasting till noon; fasting all day from grains and beans).

November 8—Lord Kṛṣṇa's Rāsa Dance. Also, last day of Dāmodara-vrata and Cāturmāsya-vrata.

Month of Keśava (November 9–December 8)

November 19—Utpannā Ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans). Also, appearance anniversary of Śrīla Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami Gurupāda, one of the present spiritual masters in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

November 28—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodara Swami Śrīpāda, one of the present spiritual masters in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

December 4—Mokṣadā Ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).

Month of Nārāyaṇa (December 9–January 7)

December 12—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda (fasting till noon).

December 18—Saphalā Ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).

RESOURCES

Plain living, high thinking. Get out of the city—away from the noise, pollution, and the anxiety and madness of city life. Come back to a simpler, more natural way of life. Live

close to the earth, close to God. The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement has thirty-four farm communities throughout the world. These are sacred places where your spirit can unfold. And at the same time, they're realistic, practical places, where you can build a sane, stable life for yourself, and, if you're married, for your family.

To find out more, get in touch with the ISKCON farm community nearest you (you'll find them in the list of centers on pages 20–21 of this magazine).

Or write or call Paramānanda dāsa, who is the ISKCON Minister for Farm Communities. His address is the Gītā-nāgarī Farm, R.D. No. 1, Box 839, Port Royal, Pennsylvania 17082; phone: (717) 527-4101.

Own a full set of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books.

Now you can have a full library of the Vedic classics in your home. Translated and explained by the world's foremost scholar and devotee, these books open up new realms of spiritual life. Each book is a deluxe, beautifully illustrated hardbound volume. And now we make it far easier for you than ever before to get a full set of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. For details, write ISKCON Educational Services, 3764 Watseka Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90034.

For life membership service inquiries and reports, please correspond with the International Life Membership Trust, 230A Kenton Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 8BY, United Kingdom. The International Life Membership Trust is the coordinating body for life membership in ISKCON and operates under the auspices of the International Life Membership Committee, a committee of the Governing Body Commission of ISKCON.

Going to Bombay?

Visit the ISKCON cultural center—Hare Krishna Land, in beautiful Juhu Beach. A short ride from the Bombay airports, Hare Kṛṣṇa Land features a gorgeous traditional Kṛṣṇa temple, together with a multistory modern guesthouse, Govinda's pure vegetarian *prasādam* restaurant, musical and theatrical performances in the 425-seat auditorium, and a sublime atmosphere of spiritual realization in the association of Kṛṣṇa's devotees.

For further information, inquire at your local ISKCON center or get directly in touch with ISKCON in Bombay.

Kṛṣṇa Conscious Tape Cassettes

In the *yoga* system of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the most important method of spiritual advancement is to hear the transcendental sound of Kṛṣṇa's holy name and teachings. By hearing this sound from a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, you can make strong and steady progress on the path back to Godhead.

ISKCON Educational Services offers a treasure of recordings on high-quality C-60 and C-90 cassettes: Śrīla Prabhupāda leading the congregational chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Prabhupāda singing traditional songs of God realization and explaining their meaning, Śrīla Prabhupāda's classes on *Bhagavad-gītā* and

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, his conversations about transcendental enlightenment with devotees and guests.

For a current catalog, write to ISKCON Educational Services, 3764 Watseka Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90034.

Prepare your child to go back to Godhead.

ISKCON now has more than twenty primary and secondary schools worldwide, and some of these schools are now prepared to accept students from outside their local communities. Here's your opportunity to give your child a strong spiritual foundation, in addition to standard academic knowledge.

For more information, write to Śrī Rāma dāsa, ISKCON Gurukula Education Office, P.O. Box 388, Lake Huntington, N.Y. 12752.

Now your television can bring you closer to Kṛṣṇa. Videocassettes from ITV (ISKCON Television) bring the spiritual vision of Kṛṣṇa into your home.

See the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Rāma . . . Visit the centers of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement around the world . . . Attend classes given by Śrīla Prabhupāda himself . . . Relish the life story of Śrīla Prabhupāda in *Your Ever Well-Wisher*.

Almost 100 shows to choose from. Top-quality, low-priced videocassettes. Available in 1/2-inch, 3/4-inch, NTSC (American), and PAL (overseas).

For a free, full-color catalog, write to ITV, 3764 Watseka Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90034.

If you're a scientific person, apply your mind to the science of self-realization.

Read *Mechanistic and Nonmechanistic Science*, an investigation into the nature of consciousness and form by Richard L. Thompson, Ph.D. (Sadāpūta dāsa).

In this book, Dr. Thompson shows how physics breaks down when it tries to deal with consciousness. He examines how biology runs in circles when it tries to account for complex forms of life. For scientists seeking a unified view of the world, he suggests looking beyond theories that boil everything down to impersonal arrangements of numbers. And he gives some revolutionary ideas of what science has yet to find. Includes rigorous technical sections you can read if they're for you, or skip over without hindrance if they're not.

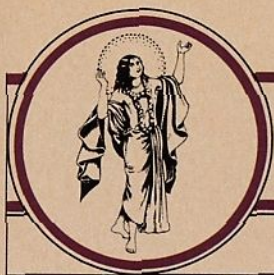
245 pages, softbound.

For your copy, send \$6.60 (\$7.00 in Canada) to ISKCON Educational Services, 3764 Watseka Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90034.

Enjoy the writings of Śrīla Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami Gurupāda,

one of the present spiritual masters in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. The author of a six-volume biography of Śrīla Prabhupāda, he continues to produce essays and poems for everyone interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. For a brochure, write to The Gītā-nāgarī Press, P.O. Box 18928, Phila., PA 19119.

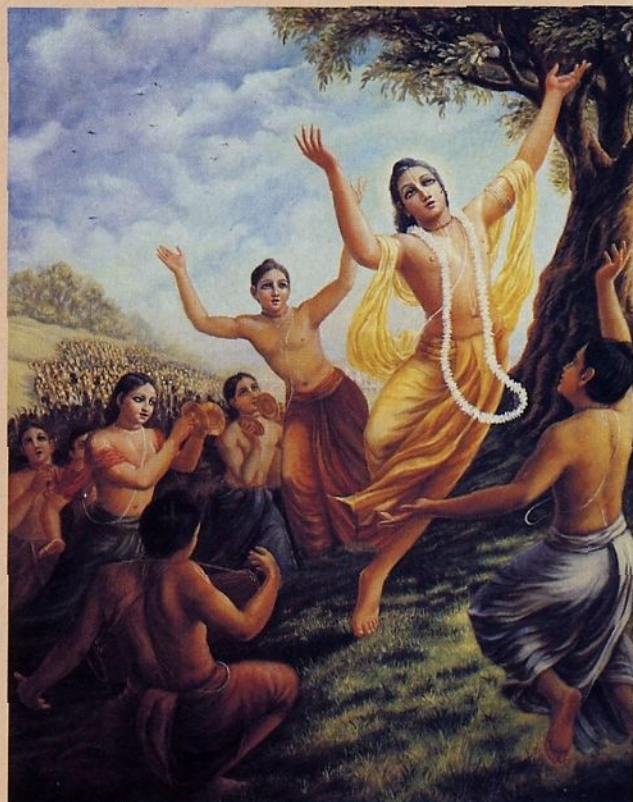
Note to Subscribers. Planning to move? Let us know when and where so we can keep your BACK TO GODHEAD coming without a break.



Every Town and Village

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

ISKCON Begins 4,000-Mile Pilgrimage



PAINTING BY RAMA DASA, AIRBHAMA DASA

Lord Caitanya (wearing yellow dhoti) predicted that the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa would spread to every town and village in the world.

Delhi, India—To commemorate the five-hundredth anniversary of the appearance of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, ISKCON devotees from all over the world have arrived in India to participate in the most extensive festival program they have ever undertaken.

The eighteen-month-long festival, known as a *pāda-yātrā*, or “walking festival,” is traveling a four-thousand-mile pilgrimage route, passing through all the holy places Lord Caitanya visited on His South Indian tour. The pilgrimage began on September 2 in Dvārakā, a holy town on India’s northwest coast. The devotees walk about twenty miles each day, arriving by midday at appointed festival sites in villages and towns along the way. There they are met by a caravan of trucks carrying tents and other supplies, and by evening they have organized a celebration—music, chanting, *prasādam* (food offered first to Lord Kṛṣṇa), and displays showing how

Lord Caitanya is currently being worshiped in all ISKCON centers worldwide. The *pāda-yātrā* will culminate at Lord Caitanya’s birthplace, Māyāpur, West Bengal, in March 1986, the five-hundredth anniversary of Lord Caitanya’s appearance.

Lord Caitanya is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa Himself, appearing in the role of His own devotee to teach everyone how to best engage in devotional service. Lord Caitanya taught that, since God is absolute, we associate with Him directly by chanting His names; thus we cleanse our hearts and reawaken our eternal loving relationship with Him.

Five hundred years ago, while traveling throughout India, Lord Caitanya established *saṅkīrtana*—the practice of congregationally chanting and glorifying the names of God—as the prime means of God realization in this age of quarrel. Lord Caitanya predicted that the congregational chanting of the holy names would spread to every city, town, and village in the world, and by traveling on foot from village to village, He set the example of how to implement this prediction.

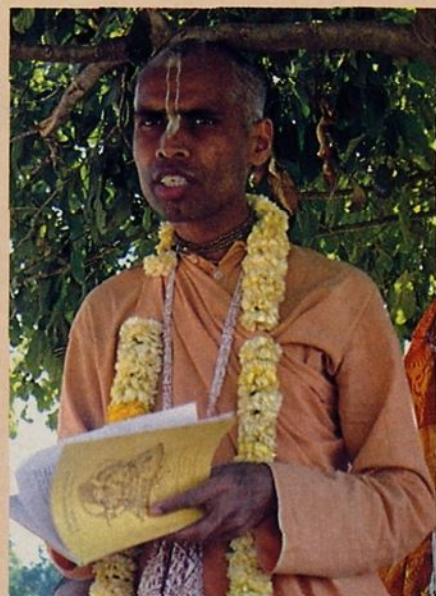
By the grace of Śrīla Prabhupāda, the founder and spiritual master of ISKCON, Lord Caitanya’s *saṅkīrtana* movement is now active and growing on five continents. The inspiration for the *pāda-yātrā* came largely from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s English translation of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, a sixteenth-century Bengali text by Kṛṣṇa-dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, which contains extensive descriptions of Lord Caitanya’s travels throughout India. In his commentaries on this book, Śrīla Prabhupāda provides further, present-day information about the exact locations and the histori-

cal significance of the villages and temples visited by Lord Caitanya, often explaining how to reach these places by train and on foot. These detailed descriptions have created an intense interest in Lord Caitanya’s life, and thus devotees and other interested persons from all over the world will join the *pāda-yātrā* to retrace Lord Caitanya’s footsteps.

In India, where *saṅkīrtana* has been practiced for centuries, the international pilgrimage is expected to create excitement, since most villagers are as yet unaware that Westerners have adopted the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa. In addition, ISKCON public affairs offices will broadcast the progress of the *pāda-yātrā* to the international media.

Says His Holiness Lokanātha Swami, festival organizer and a native of India: “By witnessing this grand festival, the local people will gain renewed enthusiasm for chanting the names of God. People in the villages will see that the chanting is also being practiced by people from affluent Western countries.

“ISKCON devotees are active followers of Śrī Caitanya, and the purpose of the *pāda-yātrā* is to freely distribute the gift of Lord Caitanya, inviting everyone to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and be happy.”



J. MANIARAJA DASA

Lokanātha Swami, an organizer of the year-and-a-half-long *pāda-yātrā*, or “walking festival.”



FATE, FREE WILL AND YOU

Are we pawns in the hands of fate,
architects of our own fortune, or both?

by KUNḌALĪ DĀSA

James Oliver Huberty was a pent-up, out-of-work gun nut with a grudge against the world. Finally he snapped. One day last July, Huberty armed himself and went "hunting humans." Storming into a McDonald's restaurant in San Ysidro, California, he opened fire. By the time a police marksman dropped him seventy-five minutes later, he had killed twenty-one people and wounded eighteen others. News of Huberty's rampage shocked the nation. It was the worst one-day, one-man massacre in U.S. history. For days afterward, across America, the golden arches—symbol of the McDonald's restaurants—stood as a grim reminder of the tragedy in San Ysidro.

The morning after the massacre, three passengers seated near me on a train into Philadelphia were discussing the incident. One of them defended Huberty, saying he had been a victim of circumstances beyond his control, "a pawn in the hands of fate." It had been his destiny to kill. The other two disagreed. Huberty, they said, had had the freedom to do otherwise. He didn't have to commit murder. Both sides were giving reasons to support their views. Before I could decide whether to break into their conversation, however, all three got off the train, leaving me to ponder over this problem and to reflect on the

Kṛṣṇa conscious solution.

The philosophical question of fate versus free will is an old one. Are our thoughts and actions completely determined by forces over which we have no control? Or, are we free to decide for ourselves, to be the captains of our fate? Most of us are inclined to think we are free. The idea that our subjective sense of choice might be illusory, we find hard to accept. It goes against the grain of our instinctive consciousness, against our sense of human dignity, and against our sense of morality. Nevertheless, there is strong evidence in favor of determinism, and the question of fate versus free will remains a controversial issue.

Many theories, along with their various supporting arguments, exist in favor of both free will and determinism. Consider determinism. For hundreds of years, the main argument in favor of this view was religious. God, being all-powerful and all-knowing, was considered to have predetermined all that would happen in the future. He knew every choice we would ever make. Everything, therefore, must be predetermined by His prior knowledge and prior decisions.

Another argument for determinism, called the metaphysical argument, is based on the maxim "Every event must have a

cause." The idea here is that inasmuch as the belief is widely held that all physical events must have a cause, there is no justifiable reason why the same should not apply to mental events. Acceptance of physical determinism and rejection of mental determinism would be arbitrary. For one who accepts this maxim, it stands to reason that determinism is irrefutable.

In the modern day, however, the strongest argument in favor of determinism comes from science. Discoveries in the fields of psychology, physiology, neurology, and pharmacology indicate that the determinist's dream of being able to predict all facets of human behavior may soon come true. Behavioral scientists anticipate a time when an examination of the biological and psychological characteristics of an infant will enable them to write his life's story before he lives it. In short, the evidence available today regarding human motivation and how human attitudes are affected makes a strong case for determinism.

Still others argue in favor of free will. William James, in his essay "The Dilemma of Determinism," points out that we undeniably have attitudes and experiences that make sense only if we are free agents. For example, our feelings of regret or remorse make no sense if our lives are strictly determined. Determinism puts us

in a “curious logical predicament,” James writes, wherein murder and other heinous acts are no longer sinful or immoral and regret for things we have done becomes an absurdity and an error. For what is the use of regret or remorse if abominable acts absolutely cannot be avoided?

Apart from feelings of remorse and regret being meaningless, legal and ethical judgments also become meaningless, James points out. As Huberty’s protagonist on the train was arguing, we cannot attribute responsibility to criminals for their crimes if they have no choice. If we are merely pawns in the hands of fate, how can we be punishable for doing what we couldn’t possibly have avoided? If we say, “Well, punishment is also predetermined,” then punishment loses all moral significance. If we then claim that punishment is useful because it can alter the factors that determine a criminal’s behavior, then we must assume the judges are free agents in their decision to punish. This simply proves that for morality to be meaningful, someone must be assumed free.

Finally, an argument that is sometimes made in favor of free will is that if determinism is true, those who believe in free will are determined to be that way. In that case, what is the use of discussing fate and free will? Discussion implies freedom to decide the matter one way or the other. The very fact that determinists bother to argue the question shows their implicit acceptance that some free will exists. Or they must agree that they have been engaged by fate to waste their time arguing, another “curious logical predicament.”

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness philosophy, I’m happy to say, can reconcile the two poles of the fate-and-free-will controversy. This may startle some of our readers. Generally, those who have only a cursory knowledge of the Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophical system assume it is deterministic, because it embraces the idea of *karma*. According to the popular conception of the law of *karma*, all human actions are the result of some previous action. This is clearly a deterministic concept. Naturally, therefore, some of our readers may wonder where free will fits into the Kṛṣṇa conscious scheme.

We get our understanding of the reconciliation between fate and free will from the *Bhagavad-gītā*. The first relevant bit of information given in the *Gītā* is that we are not our material bodies; we are eternal spirit souls who occupy material bodies. Once this is at least theoretically accepted, we can go on to understand the extent to which we are determined and the extent to which we have free will.

As spiritual beings, we are all part and parcel of the original and supreme spiritual person, God. That means we are quali-

tatively of the same nature as God. Just as a tiny gold nugget contains, in minute degree, all the chemical properties of the huge gold mine, so we, the individual spiritual entities, have all the spiritual qualities of God in minute quantity. *Qualitatively* we are one with God, but *quantitatively* we are not. God is infinite, and we are infinitesimal. We can never be equal to Him.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* informs us that God’s identity is Kṛṣṇa. He is the possessor of all opulences—wealth, beauty, knowledge, strength, fame, and renunciation—without limit. We, being part and parcel of Him, have these same opulences, but to a far lesser degree. God is the supreme creator, and we too have some creative ability. God is the supreme independent

***A person in the mode
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In the modern day,
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enjoy his senses.***

person, and we too have minute independence, or free will. Because of our finite nature, however, our natural condition is to be dependent on God. In other words, although we have free will, still, because of our minuteness, our highest beatitude is to be sheltered and controlled by God. Our minute free will is manifest, however, in the form of our prerogative to choose between staying under Kṛṣṇa’s control in the spiritual world, His abode, or coming to the material world and trying to enjoy apart from Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa creates the material world to facilitate those souls who choose to leave the spiritual world. Since the material sense objects and our spiritual senses do not interact, material nature awards us material bodies equipped with material senses so we can try to lord it over nature and enjoy. At the same time, nature conditions us to

forget our original identity and characteristics. This condition is called *māyā*, illusion. Because of this illusion, we try our utmost to squeeze out pleasure and happiness from this material world.

Actually, we cannot control the material energy of God. Our material bodies are mechanisms produced by nature and are completely subject to the laws governing matter. All we are free to do is desire according to our conceptions of material enjoyment. And the material nature, acting as God’s agent, fulfills our desires. Bewildered by our misidentification with the body as our true self, we foolishly think ourselves the doers of activities in this world. In actuality these activities are carried out by the material nature as conducted by its three modes: goodness, passion, and ignorance.

Goodness, passion, and ignorance are the three phases in which material nature operates. A person in the mode of goodness is wiser than persons in the other modes. He has greater knowledge and is less affected by the material miseries. He likes clean surroundings and has few vices. The representative type of this mode is the poet or philosopher.

The mode of passion is symptomized by attraction between male and female. This attraction leads to intense longings for sense gratification and motivates one to seek honor in society, acquire many possessions, and become entangled in family affairs. A person in the mode of passion must struggle and work very hard to please his spouse and maintain his prestige. In the modern day, the mode of passion is considered the standard of happiness. Everyone feverishly tries to enjoy his senses at virtually any cost, the net result being greater and greater illusion. Gradually the illusion becomes so deep that the mode of passion is transformed into the mode of ignorance.

The mode of ignorance is the opposite of the mode of goodness. A person in this mode is degraded to the lowest status of human life, and even lower, into the animal species. His intelligence becomes so covered that he loses all interest in cultivating knowledge. He is unclean, lazy, and dull. He is not interested in spiritual understanding; rather, he is addicted to intoxication and too much sleep. Such unfortunate persons populate the skid rows of the world. They are virtually unable to do anything to benefit themselves. Ultimately the mode of ignorance leads to madness.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa explains how every activity in this material world is associated with one of these three modes. For example, there is faith in the mode of goodness, in the mode of passion, and in the mode of ignorance. The same is true of food, knowledge, acts of charity, work,

understanding, determination, and even happiness. At every moment our bodies are under the influence of these modes. When we sleep or take intoxicants, that's the mode of ignorance. When we indulge in sex, that's the mode of passion. And when we philosophize about life's meaning, that's the mode of goodness.

Whenever we choose a particular course of action in terms of our desire for material enjoyment, we are in fact agreeing, knowingly or unknowingly, to become influenced by the mode associated with that particular choice. In other words, our free will in this material world is limited only to choices within the modes of nature. In our original condition we are transcendental to these modes, but upon coming to this material world, we lose our freedom to act outside of their influence.

Material nature, although allowing us only a limited choice, deludes us into thinking we are completely free. But our freedom is like that of a prisoner who has the privilege to choose between a first-, second-, or third-class prison cell. He has three choices, but in all cases he is still in prison. Like a prison, the three modes of nature restrict our original free will. The instinctive sense of free will that we now feel is factual, but it is only partially realized.

Our destiny in this material world is determined by a combination of our partial free will and the three modes of material nature. According to our previous *karma*, we are destined to face certain situations in this life. In those situations we have a certain amount of freedom to choose how we want to react. Once we choose, we come under the control of the mode associated with our choice, and we are obliged to accept the consequences, be they happy or miserable.

Huberty, for example, was destined to lose his job and to have a generally hard life. He reacted to all this by going beserk and killing, which is in the mode of ignorance. He could have slept it off, or he could have sought help through religion, or even psychiatry. But blinded by his frustrated desire to lord it over the material world, he came under the influence of the mode of passion, which later became transformed into wrath (ignorance). Then he was locked in. He felt compelled to go hunting humans. In his heart he knew better, but he could not surmount the conditioning influence of the mode of ignorance.

Conditioning by the modes of nature is so strong that we tend to make the same choices again and again, even when we know our choice is detrimental to our

long-range self-interest. This conditioning also accounts for why determinists are able to gather so much scientific data in support of their theory. As we all know, force of habit is extremely difficult to break. We have our partial free will, but even then we become so conditioned that our partial free will is scarcely used. We just make the same choices again and again. Thus, for a given set of circumstances our choices and actions become predictable.

Fate and free will, as described in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, are analogous to the relationship between the state, the law-abiding citizen, and the criminals in prison. A citizen is considered free only if he obeys the laws of the state. If he breaks the law, he goes to jail. A prisoner may enjoy limited freedom to choose between reading a book or writing a letter; between Jell-O or ice-cream for dessert; between work in the barber shop or in the kitchen. But he is not free to abandon the prison altogether. By comparison, the free citizen is in a better position, but both are controlled by the law. Practically, the only unconditioned exercise of their free will is in their decision to choose between being a good citizen or a criminal.

Similarly, as eternal spirit souls, we are forever free to choose between being a
(continued on page 34)

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Transcendental Commentaries

OVERPOPULATION— A POPULAR MYTH

by Mathureśa dāsa

Social scientists from around the world gathered in Mexico City last August to discuss the alarming growth of the world's population. The conference, sponsored by the United Nations, couldn't have met in a more appropriate place. With a population estimated to reach eighteen million by 1985, Mexico City will soon surpass Tokyo as the world's largest urban center.

Mexico City's problems are similar to those found in other major urban areas. Three million cars, seven thousand diesel buses, and 130,000 factories spew eleven thousand tons of pollutants into the air daily. Some estimates put unemployment at forty percent, and burglary and theft have risen thirty-five percent in the past year.

But these problems, experts say, are only symptomatic. The one problem that underlies all the others—not only in Mexico City but in urban areas around the world—is overpopulation. Mexico City, from a count of two million just after World War II, grew to nine million by 1970, and city officials predict thirty million by the year 2000. And by 2025, world population, which now stands at 4.7 billion, will reach 8.3 billion.

How will we ever feed, clothe, house, and educate all those people? The conclusion of most social scientists and economists is that we can't and that the solution to overpopulation is family planning, or (less euphemistically) abortion or contraception.

But a Kṛṣṇa conscious person will take issue not only with this "solution"—the mass murder of millions of unborn children each year—but also with the almost universally held assumption that population growth is the number-one culprit, and even with the assumption it's a culprit at all.

The Vedic literature asserts that Lord Kṛṣṇa, the eternal Supreme Person, has been supplying the necessities of life to all living beings since the beginning of creation. All living things are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa; they are His children. And since He is all-powerful, He can support an un-

limited number of children.

Sound simplistic? Fanatically religious? Consider the facts. Even though many of the planet's five billion inhabitants are hungry, there is enough food to feed everyone. A report published by the Economics Research Institute shows that only a fraction of the annual U.S. food surpluses could end hunger in all the world's poorest nations. Even though the U.S. government—like many other governments—pays farmers to restrict the size of their crops, still U.S. surpluses are more than sufficient to end starvation.

Furthermore, hundreds of millions of acres on this planet are used to grow non-essential crops like coffee and tobacco. Millions more are used to grow the grains and other products needed to produce meat, wine, beer, and liquor. Coffee, tobacco, meat, and liquor are not necessities. Human society is at present addicted to these things because of a lack of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

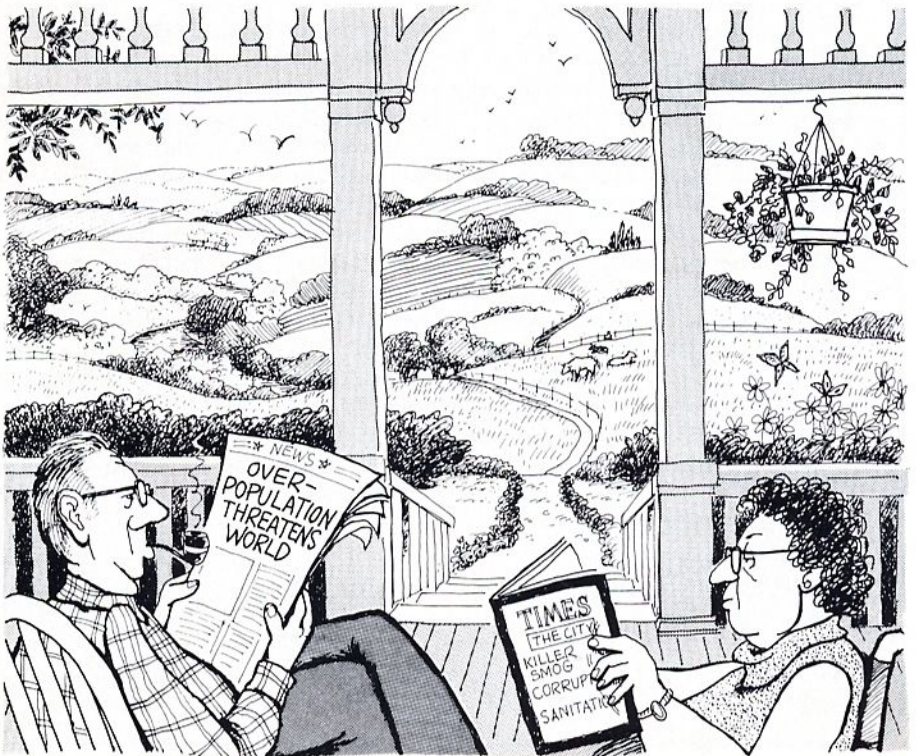
Another problem supposedly related to overpopulation is unemployment. Mexico City's unemployment rate is already soar-

ing, and with thousands of peasants pouring in from the countryside each week, the problem grows worse.

But why not pin the blame for hunger and unemployment on mismanagement rather than on population growth? By Kṛṣṇa's arrangement a man can live comfortably by cultivating an acre or two of land and keeping a cow. If the energy tied up in Mexico City's 130,000 factories were put into irrigating the Mexican countryside and into intelligently dividing the land, Mexico's unemployment problem would cease to exist. And the labor force would have some independence and dignity, rather than having to depend on the ups and downs of an industrial economy.

Another related problem in Mexico City is pollution. In addition to air pollution, the city produces fourteen thousand tons of garbage a day, only eight thousand of which is processed. This too, experts say, is caused by too many people living too close together.

That may be. But why should millions crowd into a few square miles when they can live much more sanely and comfortably



OBSERVER

ry on the Issues of the Day

in the country? Population alone doesn't produce thousands of tons of waste paper, waste metal, waste plastic, and so on. Nor are these wastes the product of man's only essential occupation: agriculture. Waste—not only metal and plastic, but millions of tons of deadly chemicals—is primarily a product of modern industrial economics. The same industries that make a few people wealthy and provide a few more with jobs also dump their wastes at our cities' doorsteps.

So it is not at all simplistic or fanatical to say that Kṛṣṇa can provide more than enough for everyone, now and in the future. It is a fact. There is enough for everyone now, and by Kṛṣṇa's grace, the earth has the potential to provide for many billions more. There is no such thing as overpopulation. The world is suffering only from a lack of competent, God-conscious leadership.

COCAINE KARMA

by Draṇidā dāsa

The Use of Cocaine Is Escalating With Frightening Rapidity," screamed a recent eight-column headline in *The New York Times*. The article went on to say an estimated twenty-five million Americans have tried the drug, and five to six million use it every month. Perhaps 1.5 million have a serious cocaine dependency. And five thousand people try it for the first time every day. As New York State Senator Roy M. Goodman recently said, "[Cocaine use] must now be viewed as an epidemic threat to society."

Cocaine is the most potent of all natural stimulants. A person high on the drug feels smarter and sexier, more alive and competent, than ever before. "With cocaine," explained one user, "you're indestructible, perfect, the giant of your dreams." Another addict, who squandered his inheritance and nearly destroyed the delicate membranes in his nose, said he nevertheless "felt powerful, in control. Cocaine is ego food. It feeds the ego like nothing I've ever seen in my life." The illusion of infallibility and indestructibility lasts for maybe twenty or thirty minutes, and then there's the inevitable crash. Anxi-

ety and, for the heavily addicted, paranoia close in, followed by the frantic search for more cocaine—or for barbiturates or heroin to dull the anguish.

Recognizing the threat that burgeoning cocaine abuse poses for American society, President Reagan has mounted a massive law-enforcement effort in South Florida, where most of the potent white powder enters the country from Colombia. But

and always in flux.

Along with this concept of the eternal soul in an ephemeral body, Kṛṣṇa naturally teaches the concept of reincarnation: "As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death" (Bg. 2.13). Like an old coat, the old and decrepit body is discarded when we die, and the soul enters a



the profits are too great (\$20 to \$30 billion a year) and the organized criminals too wily for the antismuggling effort. As one veteran official from the federal Drug Enforcement Administration said, "The only way to stop the [cocaine] trade is to stop the production or stop the demand. And we can't stop the source."

Let's take a look at the demand aspect. Here's where the teachings of Kṛṣṇa consciousness can help.

The first principle of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, as Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself teaches in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, is the radical dichotomy between the soul and the body. The soul (the self, or *jīvātmā*) is pure spirit, an infinitesimal particle of consciousness, whereas the body is nothing but a hunk of lifeless matter that seems alive only because the soul is within it. The soul is unborn and eternal, unchanging and indestructible—the body is impermanent

new body to repeat the process of birth, growth, activity, aging, disease, and death. Each of us—each soul—has gone through this trauma of reincarnation countless times, in countless varieties of bodies, and now in this human form, says Kṛṣṇa, we should end this painful cycle. Originally possessed of eternal life and limitless bliss and knowledge, the glorious spirit soul is not meant for suffering ignominiously in this world of matter. He's meant for the spiritual world, the kingdom of God.

The problem, of course, is that we've forgotten all this. Instead of identifying ourselves as spirit souls, particles of the Supreme Spirit—God, or Kṛṣṇa—we identify ourselves with our material bodies and their extensions: family, community, nation, race, religion, social station, and so on. And this false identification, known in Sanskrit as *ahaṅkāra*, "the false ego," keeps us in ignorance and tightly bound up

in the complexities of the material world.

The science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the perfect antidote for the false ego. Instead of serving the endless demands of the body for pleasure, we learn to serve the Lord and His representative, the *guru*. Instead of surrendering to our bad habits and self-destructive addictions, we follow four regulative principles that prohibit not only intoxication but also illicit sex, gambling, and meat-eating. By following these principles of service and self-restraint, we transform the false ego into the real ego—the understanding that we are each an eternal loving servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Now, in recalling our discussion of cocaine's effects, we can see that the drug greatly strengthens the false ego. Indeed, it is certified "ego food"! In a remarkable section of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa gives a perfect description of how the cocaine addict thinks: "I am the lord of everything. I am the enjoyer. I am perfect, powerful, and happy. . . . There is no one so powerful and happy as I am." In this way such persons are deluded by ignorance. Perplexed by various anxieties and

bound by a network of illusions, they become too strongly attached to sense enjoyment and fall down into hell."

Who is Kṛṣṇa speaking of in this passage? The demons, the enemies of God. The hard fact is that the more we try to enjoy intense sensual pleasures—whether through drugs or through sex or by any other means—the more we violate God's laws, the more we cover our innate spiritual knowledge, and the more we suffer.

We each have within us both the divine and the demonic natures. It's just a question of which qualities we want to cultivate. If we lead a life according to God's laws, a life of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then our divine nature—which, after all, is our real nature—predominates. Such a life is full of peace and spiritual happiness, and it leads us out of the clutches of the material world and back to the eternal kingdom of God. But if we cultivate the demonic qualities, basing our life on the pleasures of the senses, we must suffer. Even a life of so-called wholesome pleasures that rejects cocaine and other drugs is also sinful. The "crash" may take a little longer to mani-

fest—as disease, old age, and death—but it's no less painful.

The desire to reach out for pleasure is natural in every embodied being, because the embodied condition is ontologically one of lack, of separation from our blissful home in God's kingdom. But if in our attempt to attain greater happiness we abuse the body with drugs, then we are simply deepening our ignorance and our false identification with matter, which is what has caused our embodied condition in the first place. And the agonizing reactions are plain for all to see.

On the other hand, when we direct our attempts for greater happiness toward increasing our awareness of Kṛṣṇa and of our eternal relationship with Him, there is no comedown, no crash. There is only a progressive awakening of spiritual bliss and knowledge. If the government is really serious about halting the spread of cocaine use and getting present addicts off the drug, it should help the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement spread the science of devotion to God, which alone can destroy the root of the crisis. ❁

We welcome your letters. Write to
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LETTERS

Thank you for sending us BACK TO GODHEAD magazine. We enjoy reading it, as it keeps us well informed of the worldwide activities of ISKCON. May Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa give you all more and more strength to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Sanjay and Jayant Vaitha
Tanzania

* * *

When I read Kuṇḍalī dāsa's article on *gurukula* [19/9], I got an idea. I am a *gurukula* student (age thirteen), and in English class we have writing assignments. So I asked my teacher if I could write this letter to the editors.

I have often heard the comment "Hare Kṛṣṇa children do not receive a proper education." I have heard this from aunts, uncles, parents, grandparents, guests who come to the Sunday love feasts at the temple, and new devotees.

I always explain that we are still pioneers. This way of teaching, based on the fact that we are not our bodies, has never before been attempted in the English language. We want to teach from the proper perspective, we want to teach from the vantage point that we are not our bodies, we are spirit souls, there is a God, He has a personality, a form, and we have a relationship with Him. All this is taught along

with academics. This is the foundation of a *gurukula* education. This process teaches one how to have a peaceful life.

Besides, our academic standard is high. In the year of 1983, several reporters, professors, and other visitors came to the *gurukula* in Gītā-nāgarī and were impressed by how the children were peaceful and so enthusiastic to study. In the public schools the children do not always find enjoyment in their studies, and therefore the classroom becomes disrupted because of the children's misbehavior. The educational system for the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement is the only proper education.

At Gītā-nāgarī we are taught tutorially. Śrīla Prabhupāda (the founder-*ācārya* of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement) said that teaching tutorially is the best method of teaching. Tutorially means that in one classroom each child is progressing at his own rate. The children in the class I attend are academically progressing at their own pace. Some are two grades ahead. I like this system, because if you are having difficulty with some subject matter, you are allowed time to gain a proper understanding of the subject without fear of falling behind in your class. If you're ahead and you comprehend the subject properly, you don't have to wait for the others to catch up.

Every child in our school is excited to go

to a Hare Kṛṣṇa school, because it offers real knowledge. You are taught why you have come here to this material world, where you will go at death, and what to do while you are here. We are studying the basic subjects, such as math, English, social studies, geography, history, and so on, but on the proper basis. God is always the center of our activities. In other schools, God is not discussed. He is intentionally left out. Therefore, our education is not based on falsehood.

Uttarā dāsi
Port Royal, Pennsylvania

* * *

The following is an excerpt from a letter written to Mahādyuti dāsa, a devotee in London, by his mother.

I do like the articles in the magazine relating to everyday questions and problems. Even if I don't necessarily always agree with your points of view, I certainly continue to understand them more and find them helpful in talking to other people.

I feel I owe it to you to tell you that I no longer only defend your way of life, but I speak of it in such a positive and proud way (because I know you are devoting yourself to the welfare of others) that I know you would be happy about it.

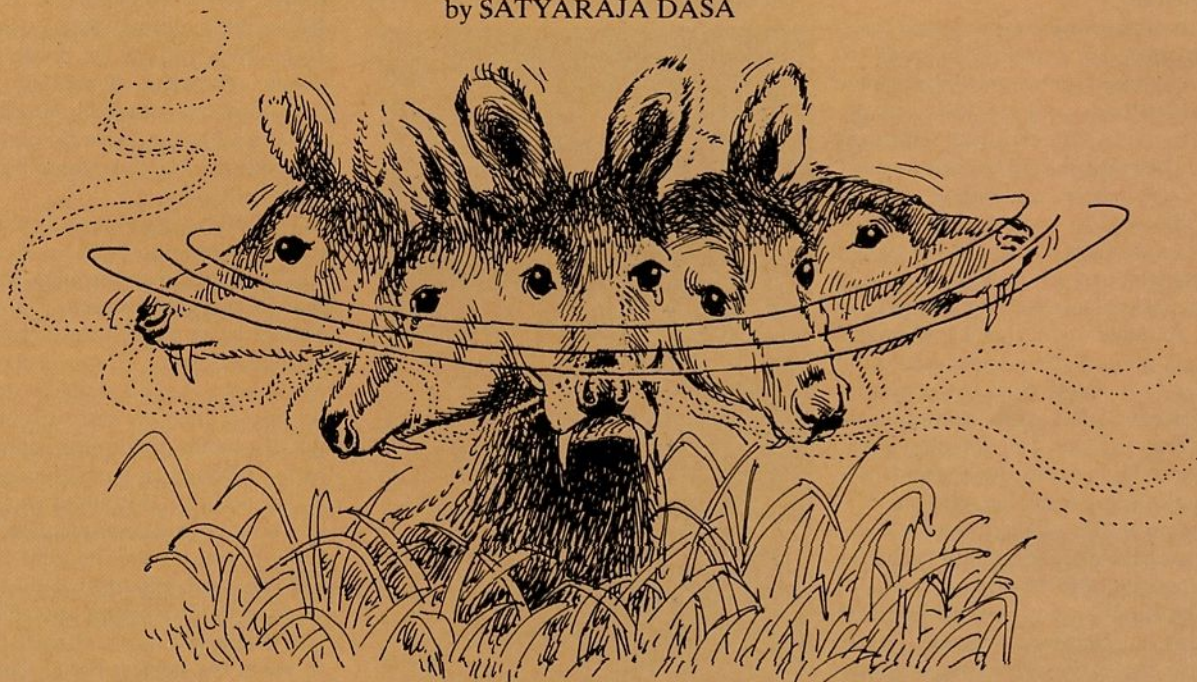
I'm not sure if you're encouraged to be proud, but I feel proud of you, your life, and your accomplishments.

Mrs. S. N. Kesten
New York, N. Y.

The Scent Of Happiness

A lesson in pleasure-seeking.

by SATYARĀJA DĀSA



The search for happiness is natural, because it is the constitutional position of the spirit soul to be eternally joyful. But our search for happiness in the external, physical world is always frustrated; we look everywhere, never realizing permanent pleasure.

The musk deer, an animal native to Central Asia, gives us a hint to the solution of this predicament. The musk deer is famous for the scent produced from a glandular sac beneath the skin of the male's abdomen. Not only is the reddish-brown secretion from this sac much sought after by human beings, who use it as a base for many perfumes, but according to the Vedic tradition, the musk deer himself some-

times goes mad over the powerful fragrance. In his madness he runs wildly about, looking everywhere for the intense scent. Everywhere, that is, except within himself.

Are you about to hear some facile pronouncement about "the happiness within"? Well, yes and no. Yes, the devotees of Kṛṣṇa will tell you that by serving Kṛṣṇa one feels happiness within—happiness independent of the fleeting pains and pleasures of the physical body. No, their statement is not facile; it is based on experience, and on a realized understanding of our spiritual identity.

Every living entity is a spirit soul—part and parcel of the Supreme Soul, Kṛṣṇa—and entitled

to the unlimited spiritual pleasure derived from satisfying Kṛṣṇa's transcendental senses. The temporary physical body is only a covering over the soul, just as a shirt or coat is only a covering over the body. In comparison to even a drop of the transcendental happiness of serving Lord Kṛṣṇa, the greatest pleasures of the physical world appear meager.

We just instinctively follow the "scent" of happiness, but if that scent leads us to gratify our bodily senses, rather than to serve and please Lord Kṛṣṇa, we have been fooled. Like the musk deer, we'll search vainly in the external world, never experiencing the happiness within.

Learning God's Way

(continued from page 6)

Lord Kṛṣṇa? Was He not my Lord? What did He want? Yes, I knew He wanted me and was calling me, but my independence, long hair, and romances held me in their grip. I was bursting with indecision.

To put the entire situation in perspective, I decided to walk across the Pyrenean Mountains, from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean. I would study the *Bhagavad-gītā*, pray to Lord Kṛṣṇa by chanting His holy names, and think of what to do with my life. My journey would also provide an opportunity for me to work at becoming free from a few remaining meaningless habits, such as eating eggs, drinking coffee, and smoking.

The mountains were much bigger than I had anticipated or prepared for, and I felt humbled by their grandeur. Still, I wanted to conquer them, and my mind was disturbed by pride. After six weeks of steady hiking, I lost my way and became anxious. I was tired, lonely, and thirsty. This inhospitable land of rock did not offer so much as a drink of water. As I struggled along the scree of one mountainous ridge eight thousand feet up, I began to lose my nerve. To make up for this, I told myself, "I'm not afraid!" No sooner had these words left my mouth than I stepped on a large piece of rock that immediately broke loose. The rock and I plummeted down. My fall was broken only fifteen feet below, by a small table-sized ledge. With my head hanging over the edge, I watched as a minor landslide flowed speedily to the valley, thousands of feet below.

My thoughts rushed back to England, my home, my family and friends. But the awesome realization struck me—neither they nor anyone else could help me. "I'm all alone. Who can help me? . . . Kṛṣṇa! My dear Lord! How could I have forgotten You? You're accompanying me in my heart—yes, and I am Your servant." I checked my limbs, and to my surprise there were no broken bones. Thirst caused great pain, but nothing could be done.

Now where to go? I couldn't go back, because of the small, newly created chasm. Both upward and downward were too steep, so I realized I had to go on. I continued walking on the loose rocks, and as I chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa, I felt relieved of much pride. After some time the scree turned into smooth rock, at about a forty-five-degree angle. I couldn't go on. Downward was much too treacherous, so I had to go up.

I started climbing, and as the grade became steeper and steeper, my thirty-pound pack became an encumbrance. I thought of abandoning it, but I knew I needed it to survive, for the nights were extremely

cold. The rock face became almost vertical, and my strength was waning. Then a new danger beset me. The chunks of rock to which I clung were loose; they began to wobble in my clutching fingers. I was terrified.

At that moment, as if called for, Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared in my mind in the form of a verse from the *Bhagavad-gītā*: Do thou fight for the sake of fighting, without considering loss or gain, happiness or distress, victory or defeat."

"Yes, I'll climb for Kṛṣṇa! If He wants me to live, I will, and if He wants me to die now, then what can I do?" So I climbed for Kṛṣṇa, without considering loss or gain, and I was immediately freed of all fear. Thereafter, whenever I forgot Kṛṣṇa, I felt myself beginning to fall, and as soon as

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clutching fingers. I
was terrified.**

I remembered Him, I climbed fearlessly. Was Lord Kṛṣṇa creating this situation to force me to surrender to Him? In my heart I knew it must be so. I felt ashamed that the Lord had done this just for me, and ashamed that I was only climbing for Him to save my neck. I climbed higher and higher, with renewed energy now, until finally I arrived at the summit of that crumbling old pile of rocks called Mount Sarraera, 8,600 feet up.

Sitting down on the small six-foot-square summit, I looked off into the distance at the stark mountain ranges receding in the evening light. I felt tiny and afraid. Aimlessly, I reached into my pack, pulled out my only book, *Bhagavad-gītā*, and read a few lines. Then I knew what to do—"I climbed up for Kṛṣṇa by His mercy, so I'll climb down for Him and stay in His service forever."

Surprisingly carefree, I started back, and sliding down the snow-covered northern slope, I finally came to rest on some flattish grassland. There, a small stream trickled down from the snow and rock, and suddenly I realized I was parched. I filled up the water bottle and was just about to drink when another verse from the *Gītā* flashed into my mind: "If someone offers Me with love and devotion a flower, a leaf, a fruit, or some water, I will accept it."

I'd been offering my food to Kṛṣṇa, but it seemed silly to offer water. This time, however, I immediately placed the untouched bottle on the ground, bowed down, and prayed, "My dear Lord, please accept this humble offering." Then I chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Now I lifted the bottle and drank deeply. The water flowed into me like a river of nectar—soothing, healing, quenching all my burning thirst for material life. I felt embraced by the infinite kindness and mercy of God.

The following day, hardly able to move a muscle, I had to lie in my sleeping bag. As I peered up at the magnificent peak that I'd just encountered, I thought, "I'm completely dependent on Kṛṣṇa alone for my maintenance, safety, and protection, as He has so vividly demonstrated to me. So now I must go and surrender myself into the hands of His pure representative, Śrīla Prabhupāda, so that I can be trained in His service." My mind was now clear and positive, my determination steady and firm. I realized the inherent freedom of the soul and felt thrilled by the joyous surge of spiritual energy spreading through me. There was now a straight path ahead to serve the perfect social worker, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who was able to deliver the conditioned souls from the sufferings of repeated birth and death. I was confident I had found the way to render the best benefit both to myself and to the entire human society.

Since then, Lord Kṛṣṇa has given me many practical opportunities to realize the great efficacy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in solving the personal and social maladies that afflict almost everyone in this age. Over the past decade, after being trained as a *brāhmaṇa*, or spiritual counsellor, I have been working directly with thousands of people from all kinds of backgrounds, their common problems being confusion and emptiness. All were caught up in various brands of materialism, mistaking the body to be the self. Repeatedly I have seen how such people have discovered a real friend in Kṛṣṇa, the kind master to whom they could direct their energy and love; and this has strengthened

(continued on page 34)

Perfect Question Perfect Answer

An Indian Army General inquires from Girirāja Swami,
a leader in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, about the purpose of life.

When His Holiness Girirāja Swami visited Pune, India, recently to open a new center of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, he addressed a well-attended gathering at the city's main hall, Nehru Memorial. While the divisional commissioner, K. S. Sidhu, and Maharashtra legislator Atul Sangtani sat on the dais with Girirāja Swami, and while Bhari B. R. Malhotra, prominent industrialist and life member of ISKCON, introduced the Hare Krishna movement, Lt. General T. S. Oberoi, in charge of the Southern Command of the Indian Army, humbly took his seat in the audience. (The Southern Command is the largest command in India and covers eight states.) After hearing Girirāja Swami speak and answer questions from the floor, General Oberoi rose. . . .

General Oberoi: Your Holiness, I know you are short of time, but may I ask you a question?

Girirāja Swami: Oh, yes.

General Oberoi: There has been a personal conflict in my mind as to what is the aim for which we are born, what is the aim of our life. It certainly could not be the aim to amass some wealth and ultimately die, or to make a building and then die, or to marry and procreate and then die.

For our minor activities in life we have the aims set first, before we get going to achieve them. When we train our people in the army—whatever they have got to do—we first tell them what is the aim. And once they are clear what is the aim, then we decide what means we have got to adopt to achieve that. And invariably we don't go wrong.

Now here it is, my whole life is going to waste, to my mind—I am still not very clear what is the aim of my life. A lot of people have been benefited by this great movement [ISKCON], by chanting, but I still feel that this is all the means to the end. But only once you are very clear what the aim is can you decide whether chanting



Girirāja Swami

is the only answer. Would you kindly, Your Holiness, enlighten us about the aim of life, so that thereafter we can be very, very clear as to what we have got to do to achieve that aim?

Girirāja Swami: Your question is glorious, because it deals with the Absolute Truth and is therefore beneficial for everyone. This same question was asked by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.* Sanātana Gosvāmī had been a very highly placed government servant—prime minister to the Nawab Hussain Shah—but he resigned from his government service to join the mission of Śrī

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

Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

So when Sanātana Gosvāmī met Lord Caitanya at Prayag—Allahabad—he said to Him, “My Lord, people flatter me that I am a very great man, a very learned scholar, but actually I am a great fool. And I'm such a fool that when they say I am learned, I believe them, even though I do not even know who I am or what is the purpose of my life. So can you please enlighten me as to who I am and what is the ultimate goal of life?”

In reply, Lord Caitanya explained that the living entity is the eternal servant of the Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and that the ultimate goal of life is to develop love for Kṛṣṇa: *premā pum-artho mahān*.

As spiritual souls, we are part and parcel of God. And the natural function of the part is to serve the whole. The hand is part of the body, so its natural function is to serve the body. If the hand is not serving the body, it is diseased or dead. In the same way, our natural function is to serve God. And if we are not serving Him, it is to be understood that we are in a diseased condition, that we are spiritually dead. We must serve God.

Now, how to serve God? If we understand we are eternal servants of God, or Kṛṣṇa, we have to act in our constitutional position. In other words, in addition to theoretical understanding, we have to engage in the practical activity of serving Kṛṣṇa. So how to serve Kṛṣṇa?

Lord Caitanya has instructed that the highest standard of service to the Lord is that of the *gopīs* [cowherd girls] of Vṛndāvana.† How is that? Once Lord Kṛṣṇa said that He had a headache and that the only thing that could cure Him would be dust from the feet of His devotee. So His messenger went and announced that Kṛṣṇa had a headache and that He could be

† The *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana are renowned in the Vedic literature as the greatest of all devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

cured only by the dust from His devotee's feet. He approached many, but everyone said, "Oh, if the dust from my feet touches the head of the Lord, it will be a great offense. I will go to hell. I'm not going to give dust from my feet for the Lord's head." So the messenger became very discouraged. But Kṛṣṇa advised him, "Now you go to Vṛndāvana, and see what happens there."

So the messenger went to Vṛndāvana, and immediately all the *gopīs* surrounded him. "Oh, you've come from Lord Kṛṣṇa!

How is our Lord? Please tell us, how is He doing?"

The messenger replied, "The Lord has a headache."

"Oh, no! The Lord has a headache. Oh, no! What can we do?"

"The only thing that will cure Him is the dust from His devotee's feet."

Immediately they replied, "Oh, yes, yes! Take it, take it all. Take as much as you want. Take everything."

The messenger said, "Don't you know

that you could go to hell for this?"

"We don't care if we go to hell, as long as Kṛṣṇa's headache is cured."

So this is love—pure, selfless love of God. And this should be the aim of life. This love can be achieved simply by chanting the holy names of the Lord: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

General Oberoi: I thank you, Your Holiness, you have answered my question. 🙏

FATE, FREE WILL

(continued from page 27)

free citizen of the spiritual world or an imprisoned citizen in the material world. The choice is entirely up to us. In the spiritual world we voluntarily agree to be controlled by Kṛṣṇa, in love. As a result, we relish perpetual transcendental bliss in the association of the pure devotees of God. In the material world we are controlled by Kṛṣṇa also, but through His agent material nature in the form of the three modes. Here we must undergo repeated birth, old age, disease, and death, as well as other concomitant physical and mental miseries.

From the above description, it is clear that Huberty was responsible for his shooting spree. After all, he chose to come to the material world, and of all possible choices, he made the decision that obliged

him to mow down twenty-one people. He could have done otherwise, but he didn't.

Furthermore, we can understand that in spite of the law of *karma*, moral and legal judgments are still relevant, because we do have some limited choice to react morally or immorally to the various situations we encounter due to our past *karma*. And because we have choices, our feelings of regret and remorse are also valid.

Please note, however, that from a purely spiritual point of view, the exercise of our limited free will in this material world is of relatively little significance. It simply isn't our natural position to be here in the first place. A liberated soul, a free citizen of the spiritual world, understands that all aspects of life in the material world—whether in goodness, passion, or ignorance, whether moral or immoral—are unnatural and undesirable for the soul.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* further informs us that we need not remain here; we can be liberated. By proper understanding of our spiritual position, the nature of this material world, the nature of the spiritual world, and the nature of Kṛṣṇa, we can become enlightened and free from entanglement in the three modes of nature.

We can gain this understanding by a careful study of the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. There the process of liberation, called *bhakti-yoga*, the path of pure devotional service, is also given. Devotional service is transcendental to the stringent rule of the three modes of nature. The decision to perform devotional service is, therefore, the best use of our free will. Similarly, your reading BACK TO GODHEAD magazine is a liberating, devotional activity. It is not under the jurisdiction of nature's modes. It is an act of your original free will. 🙏

Learning God's Way

(continued from page 32)

my conviction about the value of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in our modern society.

To see people break free of doubt and delusion, to see them illuminated with spiritual knowledge, and to see them free their character of weakness and bad habits are the ultimate reward for a social worker. We must judge something by its result. A London welfare worker told me recently

that, in all honesty, he doesn't think he has really changed one person over his last eight years of running his project. And this is no surprise to me. After all, he doesn't have knowledge of who those people actually are, of what will give them happiness, of how to engage their energy in the best way, of the purpose of human life. Anyone who is serious about helping others should carefully study Kṛṣṇa consciousness and come to the realization that on our own we cannot help anyone or be

anyone's friend. Lord Kṛṣṇa alone is in a position to help others and be their friend. We can be but instruments of His divine will.

So if we cherish any genuine desire to serve the interests of others, we must become purified of all selfishness and humbly work under the direction of one who is already fully surrendered to the Lord. We must place ourselves in Kṛṣṇa's hands and allow Him to use us in whatever way He sees fit. 🙏

SPIRITUAL LIFE

(continued from page 4)

down and discuss this, much the same as some professors would discuss any scientific experiment.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The process for understanding is described here:

*tad viddhi praṇipātena
paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānam
jñāninas tattva-darśinam*

[To a devotee:] Find out that verse.

Devotee: "Just try to learn the truth by ap-

proaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth." [Bg. 4.34]

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Read the purport.

Devotee: "The path of spiritual realization is undoubtedly difficult. The Lord therefore advises us to approach a bona fide spiritual master in the line of disciplic succession from the Lord Himself. No one can be a bona fide spiritual master without following this principle of disciplic succession. The Lord is the original spiritual master, and a person in the disciplic succession can convey the Lord's message as

it is, to the disciple.

"No one can be spiritually realized by manufacturing his own process, as is the fashion of the foolish pretenders. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.3.19) says, *dharmaṁ tu sāṅśād bhagavat-praṇitam*: the path of religion is directly enunciated by the Lord. Therefore, mental speculation or dry arguments cannot help lead one to the right path. Nor by independent study of books of knowledge can one progress in spiritual life.

"One has to approach a bona fide spiritual master to receive the knowledge. Such a spiritual master should be accepted in full surrender, and one should serve the

spiritual master like a menial servant, without false prestige. Satisfaction of the self-realized spiritual master is the secret of advancement in spiritual life. Inquiries and submission constitute the proper combination for spiritual understanding. Unless there is submission and service, inquiries from the learned spiritual master will not be effective. One must be able to pass the test of the spiritual master, and when he sees the genuine desire of the disciple, he automatically blesses the disciple with genuine spiritual understanding.

"In this verse, both blind following and absurd inquiries are condemned. Not only should one hear submissively from the spiritual master, but one must also get a clear understanding from him, in submission and service and inquiries. A bona fide spiritual master is by nature very kind toward the disciple. Therefore when the student is submissive and is always ready to render service, the reciprocation of knowledge and inquiries becomes perfect."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The practical example is here. These European and American boys are coming from well-to-do families. Why are they serving me? I am Indian, coming from a poor country. I cannot pay them. When I came to the West, I had no money. I brought only forty rupees. That was only an hour's expenditure in America. So their soul is to carry out my instruction. And therefore they are making progress. *Pranipātena pariprasnena*—they are asking questions. I am trying to reply to them, and they have all got full faith. They are serving like menial servants. This is the process.

If the spiritual master is bona fide and the disciple is very sincere, then the knowledge will be there. This is the secret. *Yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau*—Vedic knowledge is revealed unto those who have faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master. Therefore in Vedic society, the students are automatically sent to the *gurukula* [the place of the spiritual master], regardless of whether one is a king's son or from some other background. Even Kṛṣṇa had to go to *gurukula*.

There is a story that once Kṛṣṇa went with a classmate to the forest to collect dry wood for His spiritual master. Suddenly there was a heavy rain storm, and they could not get out of the forest. The whole night they remained in the forest with great difficulty. There were torrents of rain. The next morning, the *guru*, their teacher, along with other students, came to the forest and found them. So even Kṛṣṇa, whom we accept as the Supreme Lord, had to go to *gurukula* and serve the spiritual master as a menial servant.

So all of the students at the *gurukula* learn how to be very submissive and how to live only for the benefit of the *guru*.

They are trained from the very beginning to be first-class submissive students. Then the *guru*, out of affection and with an open heart, teaches the boys all he knows. This is the process. There is no question of money. It is all done on the basis of love and education.

Dr. Oliver: I might have difficulty accepting parts of what you've indicated here, simply because I don't know. But basically I accept that God lives in us and that when we leave things to Him, He knows how to direct these things. The challenge is living life so that He will be satisfied. This is where the difficulty comes in: you need the inspiration to be disciplined. This will

only become a reality in one's life if one practices it. And practices it with others who share this commitment.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Therefore we have this International Society for Krishna Consciousness—showing how to live a life of dedication to God. That is required. Without practical life in God consciousness, it remains simply theoretical. That may help, but it takes longer. My students are being trained up in practical spiritual life, and they are established.

Dr. Oliver: I want to thank you very much, and I pray that God will bless your visit to our country and our people here.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Hare Kṛṣṇa. 

Enhance Your Spiritual Life

For spiritual realization, all you really need is the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra. But to enhance your spiritual life, you may want to add the items listed below.

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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Religion's Ultimate Goal

Recently, at the ISKCON centers in West Virginia and Washington, D. C., I witnessed with pleasure thousands of Indians coming to visit. And I know the same phenomenon is occurring at dozens of other ISKCON centers throughout North America and Europe, wherever there is a large Indian population. In India, an average of one thousand persons daily and five thousand on Sunday visit the ISKCON temple in Bombay. And ISKCON's centers at the sacred sites of Vṛndāvana and Māyāpur draw similarly large crowds. Unlike other visitors to ISKCON centers, who are encountering Kṛṣṇa consciousness for the first time, Indians recognize this as their traditional culture, as something they have learned from their parents and should continue to uphold. Visiting Lord Kṛṣṇa's temple, they feel, is a pious act, a religious duty. The temple also provides an amiable atmosphere for families and friends to socialize. But beyond these personal reasons for coming to the temple, is there a higher motive?

Generally, people execute religious duties for material ends. That is, they pray, perform rituals, and so on, in hopes of attaining temporary goals: better health, a good marriage, success in business. But in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, advises that those who practice religious life by seeking material boons are missing the real point. Material life is always temporary and filled with unhappy reverses. The real goal of spiritual life is to attain pure love of God (*bhakti*), which alone enables us to transcend the inevitable sufferings of material existence. By keeping this transcendental goal in mind, we can attain the highest spiritual result from our visits to a Kṛṣṇa conscious temple.

Some Hindus customarily follow the religious practices of *yajña* (sacrifice), *dāna* (charity), and *tapasya* (austerity). Indeed, the *Bhagavad-gītā* recommends that one never give up these practices. One should not, however, perform them blindly, but in a way that helps develop devotion to Kṛṣṇa.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* informs us that, because of a lack of wealth and qualified worshipers in the present age of faithlessness, (Kali-yuga), many sacrifices of former ages are not possible. For this age, the *saṅkīrtana-yajña*, or the congregational chanting of the holy names of God, is the recommended form of religious sacrifice.

To come into a congregation of devotees and chant the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—and at the same time to view the Deities of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa or Sīta-Rāma, is certainly easy and pleasant. Yet the spiritual results it brings are greater than those gained from any other method of *yajña*. Of course, one may chant Hare Kṛṣṇa in any place or circumstance, but by chanting in the temple with others, one becomes inspired and determined to chant more regularly and seriously.

As for *dāna* (charity), in India pious Hindus often perform such publicly charitable acts as establishing schools and hospitals, digging wells and planting trees in public places, and making public parks. It's also popular for a father to give charity at the birth and marriage of his children. But if charity is given with a motive to increase one's own name and fame as a benefactor, or if it is given only in support of projects of temporary value, then neither the donor nor the recipients benefit spiritually. Charity should be for pleasing Kṛṣṇa; therefore, one should contribute to the maintenance and expansion of a Kṛṣṇa conscious temple or to the cause of spreading transcendental knowledge through projects such as the printing and distribution of spiritual literature.

Some people may think that the practice of *tapasya*, or austerity, was only for a past age when *yogīs* performed penances in the Himalayan Mountains. Or some people perform the austerity of fasting on certain days, although such austerity is usually for some material end and can hardly be considered a pure devotional practice. The appropriate spiritual austerity, however, is to refrain from bad habits like illicit sex, meat-eating, and intoxication. This austerity will help us quickly advance in spiritual life. By visiting the temple and taking the pure food offered to Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-prasādam*) and by hearing the purifying words of Lord Kṛṣṇa from the *Bhagavad-gītā*, one avoids indulging in unnecessary vices. And through the association of devotees one can find the personal resolve to gradually adopt these austerities in one's own life.

Although Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared in India, Kṛṣṇa consciousness should not be viewed in a sectarian way as an "Indian religion," just as Christianity should not be viewed

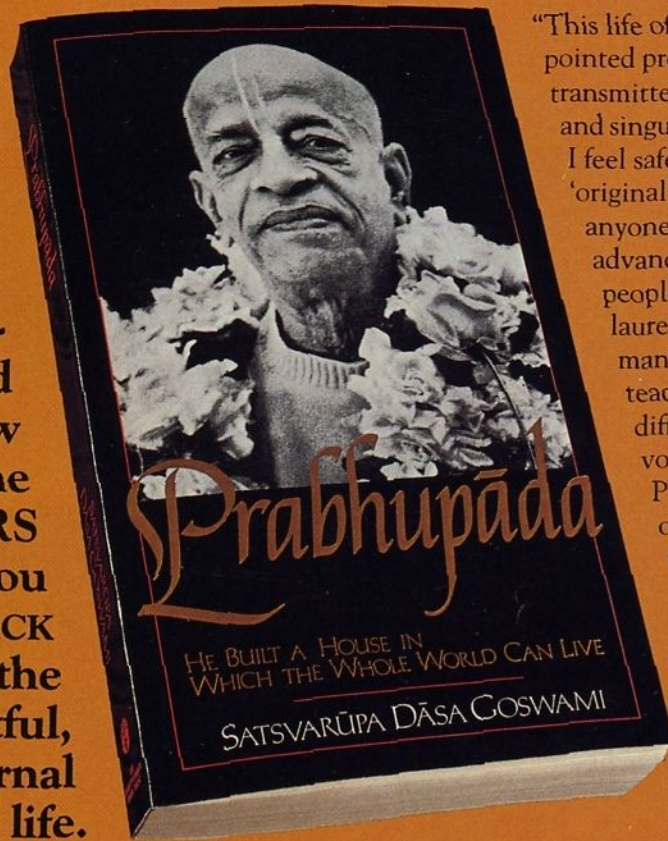
as a "Mideastern religion." Spiritual values are universal and are transcendental to all designations of nation, race, or sectarian creed. But because the Vedic culture flourished in India for so long, the people of India today still evince the vestiges of that advanced spiritual culture, a culture that should be shared with the world. Because of centuries of foreign rule as well as the mad chase after materialism, India is drifting away from these original values. Some Indians are even ashamed of their original culture, as if it were primitive or in other ways inferior to other cultures. The fact is, however, that India never flourished so much as when Vedic culture was fully intact; and even today she can make the most glorious contribution to world culture by rediscovering the roots of her Kṛṣṇa conscious culture.

The scriptures state, "Those born in the land of Bhārata-varṣa (India) have the special responsibility to help others by distributing spiritual knowledge." (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā* 9.41) Although this responsibility is shared by all Indians, few have taken it seriously. Most notably, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda humbly came forward with Kṛṣṇa's pure message, journeying to the West in 1966 to single-handedly spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is only because of his work in forming the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement that the authorized process of *bhakti-yoga* is now established within the cultures of all of the different nations of the world. Now, people the world over can avail themselves of India's rare gift of spiritual culture.

Life in the present age is very demanding, and just to eke out a living in today's precarious economy takes a person's full endeavor. It may appear, therefore, that to visit a temple or to take up spiritual practice is a luxury or a waste of money and endeavor. But to think that way is a mistake. Even if you're struggling full-time with worldly responsibilities, still it is wise to take the time to visit an ISKCON center. And if you feel unable to fully surrender to Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, you can still chant His holy names, hear His immortal words, and honor His *prasādam*. And if you learn how to make even a brief visit to the Kṛṣṇa conscious temple a visit of pure devotion, then Lord Kṛṣṇa, by His inconceivable grace, may bring you close to Him sooner than you imagine. —SDG

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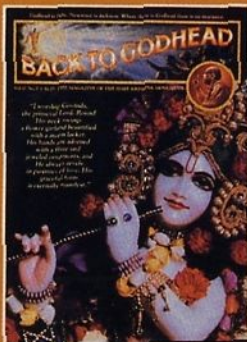
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—Harvey Cox
Professor of Divinity
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