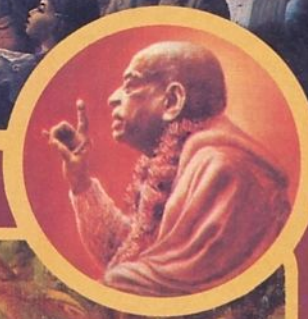


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

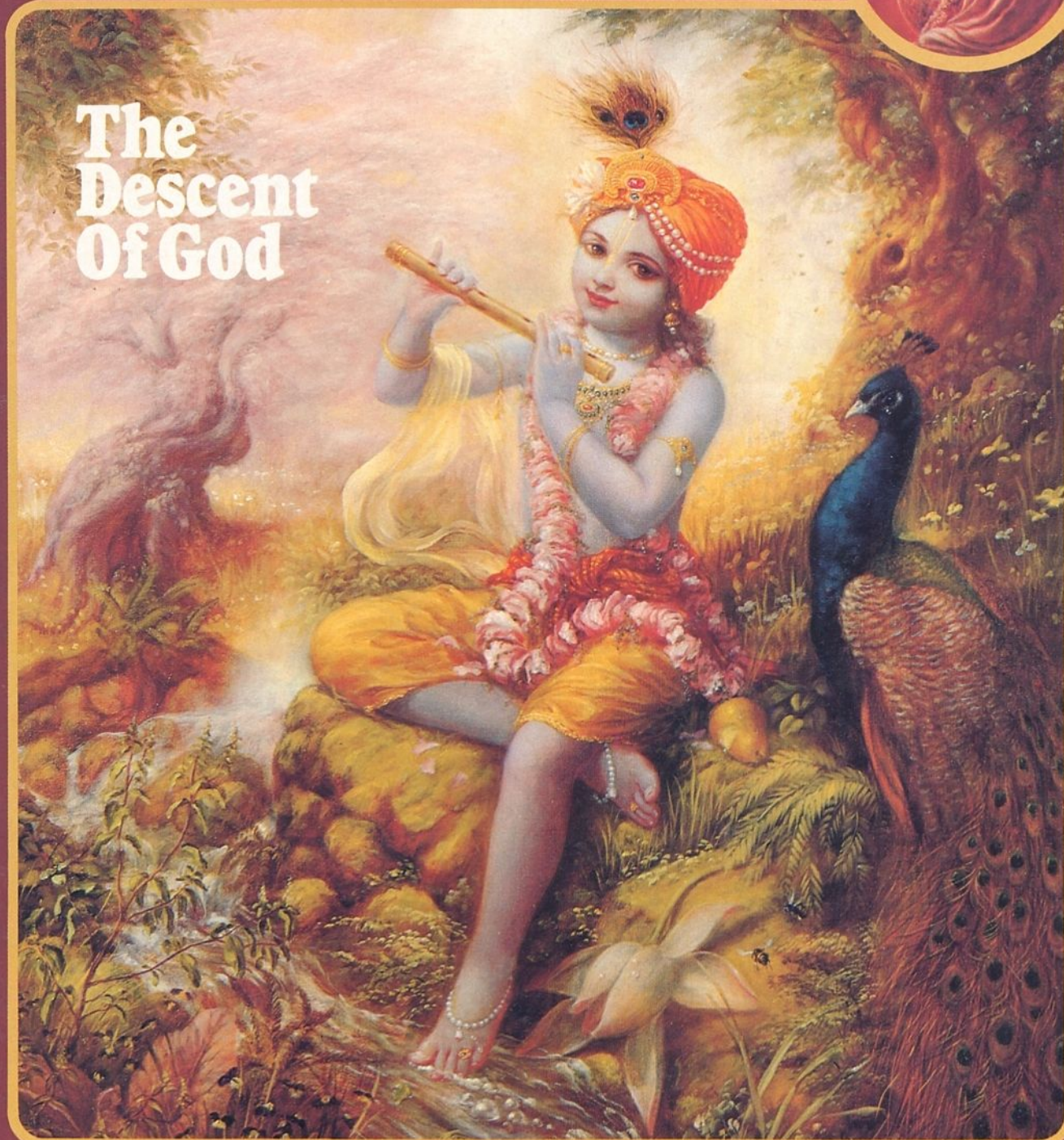
BACK TO GODHEAD

Vol.20 No.5

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

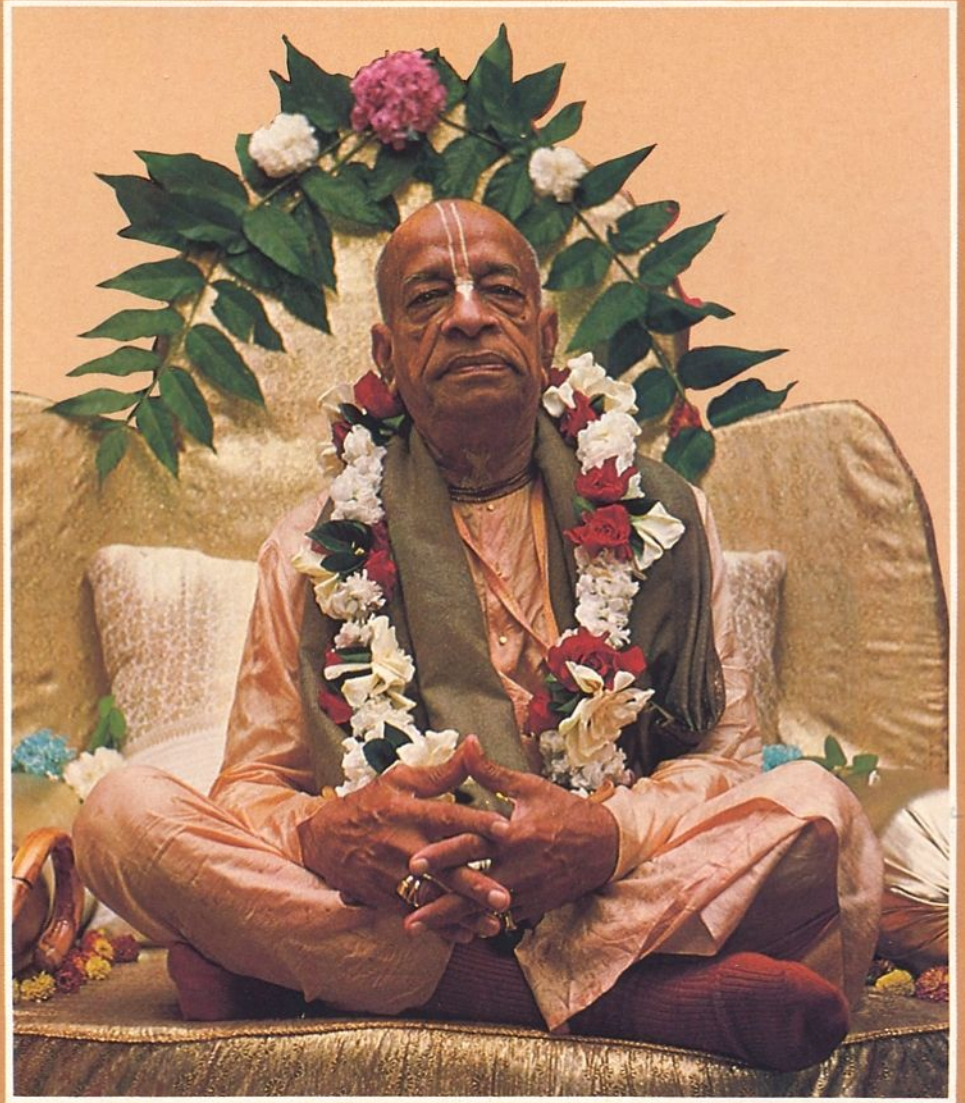


The Descent Of God



**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 disciple 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.

BACK TO GODHEAD

FOUNDED 1944 VOL. 20, NO. 5 MAY 1985 PRICE: \$1.50

FOUNDER

(under the direction of His Divine Grace
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda)
His Divine Grace
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ARCHIVES Nitya-trptā-devī dāśī, Parama-rūpa dāsa
SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES Abhimanyu dāsa,
Janeśvarī-devī dāśī, Kṛṣṇa-kṛpa dāsa, Nanda dāsa,
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PRINTING CONSULTANT Paul Bleier

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


SPIRITUAL NAMES. Members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or His great devotees, combined with *dāsa* (*dāśī* for women), meaning "servant." For instance, the name *Kṛṣṇa dāsa* means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

EDITORIAL OFFICES. Send editorial correspondence to BACK TO GODHEAD, 6664 Lincoln Drive, P.O. Box 18928, Philadelphia, PA 19119-0428. Phone: (215) 848-2350.

SUBSCRIPTIONS. BACK TO GODHEAD is published monthly except March. For a one-year subscription, send \$10.00 to BACK TO GODHEAD, P.O. Box 133, Line Lexington, PA 18932-0133. (For Canada, add \$2.00. Outside Canada and the U.S.A., add \$4.00 for surface mail, \$25.00 for airmail.) For a lifetime subscription (domestic and foreign surface mail), send \$175.

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BACK TO GODHEAD is available in microform from University Microforms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Dept. P.R., Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BACK TO GODHEAD, P.O. Box 133, Line Lexington, PA 18932-0133.

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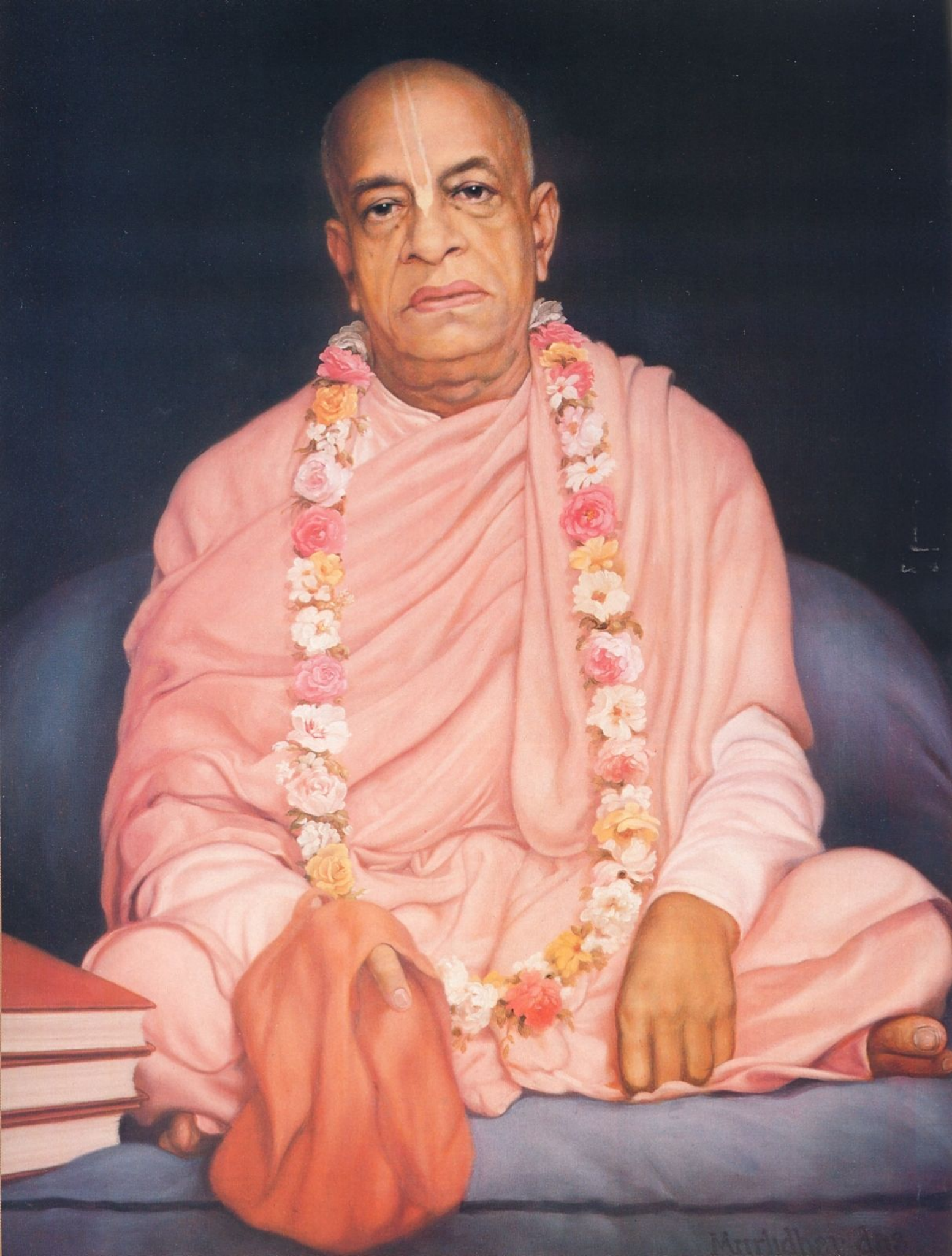
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COVER: "I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is adept at playing on His flute. His beautiful eyes are like lotus petals, and His head is bedecked with peacock feathers." The Vedic literature thus describes the transcendental features of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who descends to the material world in innumerable incarnations and reminds us of our eternal loving relationship with Him. Please see the article on page 7. (Painting by Rāmadāsa Abhirāma dāsa and Dhṛti-devī dāśī)



ACQUIRING PERFECT KNOWLEDGE

Logic and reason are useful in the search for the Absolute Truth.
But they're not enough. To obtain perfect knowledge,
we must overcome four basic human defects.

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

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you very much for coming here and participating in this great movement. This evening I shall present before you topics discussed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna.

I think most of you know the *Bhagavad-gītā*. It is a conversation between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna that took place on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra some five thousand years ago. Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, was acting as the driver of Arjuna's chariot; He played just like an ordinary human being as a friend of Arjuna's. Arjuna became a little disturbed because the battle was arranged between two parties of his cousin-brothers. When he saw among the other party all his relatives and family members, he hesitated to fight.

When Arjuna was greatly perplexed as to whether to fight or not, he accepted Kṛṣṇa as his spiritual master (*śiṣyas te 'haṁ sādhi māṁ tvāṁ prapannam*). "My dear Kṛṣṇa," Arjuna said, "just now we have been talking like friends, but this is a very important matter I have to decide. So now

I accept you as my spiritual master. Please give me the right instruction."

The whole *Bhagavad-gītā* is simply the conversation between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. Arjuna decided, "I am not going to fight with my kinsmen on the other side unless I am convinced that I have to do it." At that time he dropped his bow and arrows, said "My dear Kṛṣṇa, I am not going to fight," and became silent.

Then, as stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [2.10],

*tam uvāca hr̥ṣīkeśaḥ
prahasann iva bhārata
senayor ubhayor madhye
viṣḍantam idaṁ vacaḥ*

Kṛṣṇa was smiling, thinking, "How is it that Arjuna, My friend, who is so advanced, has been overcome by this temporary illusion? His duty is to fight, and the other party is ready to fight, but My friend Arjuna is declining to fight." So, Kṛṣṇa was a little astonished, and therefore the *Bhagavad-gītā* says, *prahasann iva*: "He was smiling." Kṛṣṇa was smiling because He thought how amazing it was that illu-

sion sometimes overtakes even great personalities like Arjuna.

Then the next verse begins with these words: *śrī bhagavān uvāca*, "the Supreme Personality of Godhead said." The word *bhagavān* is very significant. It means "the Supreme Personality of Godhead." *Bhaga* means "opulence," and *vān* means "the possessor." There are six kinds of opulence. First, wealth. If one is very rich, he is known as opulent, or if one is very powerful he is also known as opulent. Or if one is very wise, beautiful, famous, or renounced, he is also known as opulent. And when all these six kinds of opulence are possessed in full by somebody, He is called *bhagavān*. That is God.

We also have opulences. We have some riches, but no one can claim that he has all the riches. But God can claim that. A definition of God is given by Parāśara Muni in the Vedic literature:

*aīśvarasya samāgrasya
vīryasya yaśasaḥ śrīyah
jñāna-vairāgyayoś caiva
ṣaṅṅam bhāga itīṅgaṇa*

One may ask, Who is Bhagavān, who is God? This verse gives the answer: God is the person who possesses all riches, all strength, all fame, all beauty, all wisdom, and all renunciation. Nowadays it has become a fashion that so many “Bhagavāns” and “Gods” are coming. But here is the definition by which we can test who to accept as Bhagavān.

So, when Lord Kṛṣṇa was present, He actually showed by His activities that He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. For example, it may be unbelievable, but from the history of Kṛṣṇa we know that He married 16,108 wives. We cannot maintain even one wife, but He maintained 16,108, and each wife had a big palatial building. This is the description we find in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. So this means that as far as riches are concerned, Kṛṣṇa showed that there is no comparison to His wealth. In the whole history of the world, we will not find anyone who has maintained more than sixteen thousand wives, each one with a special palace. But this is how Kṛṣṇa is described in Vedic literature.

Therefore, Kṛṣṇa is accepted as the Supreme Personality of Godhead by all the authorities of Vedic knowledge. Formerly, during Kṛṣṇa’s time, such authorities as Vyāsadeva and Nārada accepted Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And you will find in the Tenth Chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā* [10.12] that Arjuna, after understanding who Kṛṣṇa is, expressed the same opinion: *paraṁ brahma paraṁ dhāma pavitraṁ paramaṁ bhavān/ puruṣaṁ śaśvataṁ divyam*. Arjuna accepted Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Absolute Truth Absolute Truth and the supreme abode, and also as the supreme pure and the eternal, original person. Then Arjuna said, “It may be said that since I am Your friend I am accepting You as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But I am not accepting You in that way. Great, stalwart authorities like Parāśara Muni, Vyāsadeva, Asita, Nārada, and Devala have also accepted You as the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” In this way Arjuna gave evidence for his conclusion.

So, as far as the Vedic literature is concerned, and as far as the *ācāryas* [spiritual authorities] are concerned, Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. More recently—within, say, the last two thousand years—such *ācāryas* as Śaṅkarācārya, Madhvācārya, Nimbārka, and Rāmānujācārya have all accepted Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And within the last five hundred years, Lord Caitanya has also accepted Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Therefore when Kṛṣṇa is speaking in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the words *śrī bhagavān uvāca* are used to indicate that it is the Supreme Personality of Godhead who is

speaking, not some ordinary man. The point is that we should receive knowledge of God from the highest, perfect person. Now our knowledge is imperfect because we have four defects. We have imperfect senses, we commit mistakes, we fall into illusion, and we have a tendency to cheat. Everyone commits mistakes. And because we commit mistakes we are sometimes illusioned. The greatest illusion is to think, “I am my body.” Everyone in the whole world is under the impression that he is his body. But I am not my body: I am a spirit soul. Kṛṣṇa explains this to Arjuna in the second chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*.

It is the spirit soul that makes the difference between a living body and a dead body. The difference between a living body and a dead body is that when the soul, the

***If you inquire
whether I am perfect
or whether my
disciples are perfect,
we will answer, “No,
we are not perfect.”
We accept that we
are imperfect. But
because we have
assimilated perfect
knowledge, what we
are teaching is perfect.***

living entity, is not in the body, the body is simply a lump of matter. If I call out, “Father!” then Father immediately replies, “Yes, my son.” But when the soul of my father is no longer in his body, then that body—which I was thinking *is* my father—cannot reply, although that body is lying there on the bed. So Kṛṣṇa is saying, “Arjuna, you are afraid of killing your kinsmen, but you are mistaken: the soul can never be killed.”

Everyone is mistaken as to his real identity because of the four defects of conditioned life. As long as we are within the material body, we must live under certain conditions. But actually we are all spirit souls, part and parcel of God. As soon as we become free from the conditioned life, our real life will begin. That is called liberation.

The human form of life is meant for get-

ting liberation. We have achieved this human form of life only after passing for a long, long time through the evolutionary process. First we experienced aquatic life, then plant life, then tree life, then insect life, then bird life, then beast life, then human life, and finally civilized human life. This is the process of evolution. Now we are supposed to be civilized human beings, and therefore we should know that this human life is especially meant for getting out of the evolutionary process.

Evolution means transmigration of the soul from one body to another. We do not wish to die, but we have to accept death. This is our conditioned stage of life. We do not wish to take birth, but still we are forced by the laws of nature to go into the womb of a mother. After giving up one body, we must enter another body, and there is no certainty about what kind of body we shall get. It may be a human body, an animal body, or a tree body, or it may be a body better than a human being’s. There are three divisions: one division includes the demigods, or *devas*, who are highly advanced in knowledge; they are God conscious, Kṛṣṇa conscious. Another division includes the human beings, and the third division includes those lower than human beings.

So, perfect knowledge, knowledge of how to get out of the evolutionary process, is imparted by the perfect person, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, not by an ordinary man defective in the four ways I have already explained. The four defects are that our senses are imperfect, we commit mistakes, we become illusioned, and we have the propensity to cheat. Although sometimes we may not know a subject matter very clearly, still we speak of it like an authority. That is cheating.

We should not cheat in this way. If we want to give knowledge to people, we must give perfect knowledge. How can we give perfect knowledge? Perfect knowledge comes from the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is the process of acquiring perfect knowledge. *Evaṁ param-parā-prāptam imaṁ rājarṣayo viduḥ*: perfect knowledge comes from Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, through the disciplic succession. And if we are receiving that knowledge with a cool head and assimilating it, then our knowledge is perfect.

For example, we are teaching the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and this is perfect knowledge. Yet if you inquire whether I am perfect or whether my disciples are perfect, we will answer, “No, we are not perfect.” We accept that we are imperfect. But we are distributing perfect knowledge. Kindly try to understand. We may be imperfect, but because we have assimilated perfect knowledge, what we are

teaching is perfect.

I shall give you an example. Suppose a postman delivers you one hundred dollars. The postman is not a rich man; he cannot deliver you the hundred dollars on his own account. But the money is sent by one of your friends, and the postman is honestly carrying the money and delivering it to you. That is the postman's duty. Similarly, our duty is to receive perfect knowledge from Kṛṣṇa and distribute it. That is our perfection.

The knowledge we are distributing has not been created by our research work or by some other inductive process. No. Our knowledge is gained from the deductive process: Kṛṣṇa says something, and we accept it. This process of acquiring knowledge is the basis of our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. We may be imperfect, but Kṛṣṇa is perfect. Therefore, whatever Kṛṣṇa says, we accept. Now, we should not accept blindly; we can apply logic and argument to understand. Then our knowledge is perfect.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* [2.11], when Lord Kṛṣṇa saw that Arjuna was not willing to fight, He said,

*aśocyān anvaśocas tvam
prajñā-vādāmś ca bhāṣase
gatāsūn agatāsūmś ca
nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ*

Because Arjuna accepted Kṛṣṇa as His spiritual master, Kṛṣṇa said in a very gentle way, "My dear Arjuna, you are lamenting for something that should not be the subject of lamentation." Arjuna was hesitating to fight because he was absorbed in bodily relationships. He was thinking that he was his body and that his relatives on the other side—his brothers, his nephews, his grandfather—were also their bodies.

This bodily concept of life is animal life. A dog is in the bodily concept and cannot know anything else. He simply knows that he is the body. But by cultivating knowledge, by logic, by argument, a human being can understand, "I am not this body." Therefore, if you point to a child's finger and ask, "What is this?" the child will reply, "It is my finger." The child will never say, "I finger." He will say, "My finger." So everything is *mine*: my body, my head, my leg. But where is the *I*? That should be our inquiry. Every part of my body is mine, but where am I? As soon as we come to this point—asking where that *I* is—our human intelligence has developed. Otherwise, we are in the animal stage of life.

So, Kṛṣṇa is instructing Arjuna: "My dear Arjuna, you are lamenting for something that is not the real subject for lamentation." And *prajñā-vādāmś ca bhāṣase*: "At the same time you are speaking like a

very intelligent, learned scholar." In the previous chapter Arjuna had argued with Kṛṣṇa, giving evidences from the scripture to support the bodily concept of life. But Arjuna did not know that the scripture says that one who is in the bodily concept of life is no better than an ass or a cow. That he did not know.

Today there are so many big, big scholars who are in the bodily concept of life. I shall give you one instance. I once talked with a big professor in Moscow—Professor Kotofsky. He said, "Swamiji, after death everything is finished." That is the bodily concept of life. Even big, big scholars, big, big doctors, philosophers, and scientists, are all in this bodily concept of life. So Kṛṣṇa is first of all trying to remove Arjuna's bodily concept of life.

***The body is a
combination of blood,
bones, flesh, urine,
stool, nails, hair, and
so on. You cannot
combine these
ingredients and
manufacture a person.
That is not possible.
So, the bodily
concept of life is
simply ignorance.***

Therefore, Kṛṣṇa states, "My dear Arjuna, you are speaking like a very intelligent man, but you are lamenting for what is not at all lamentable." What is that? *Gatāsūn agatāsūmś ca nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ*. *Paṇḍitāḥ* means "a person who is learned." So Kṛṣṇa is saying that a highly intelligent man will not lament for the body, which is not the proper subject for lamentation, whether it is in the living condition or in the dead condition. This is the essential point in spiritual life—understanding that the body is actually dead already, and that it is moving and acting only because of the presence of the soul.

As long as the soul is in the body, the body moves. But the body is still a lump of dead matter. And when the soul leaves this body and accepts another body, this body remains a lump of matter. So at the

present moment the body is a lump of matter, and after death, after the soul has gone from the body, the body is the same lump of matter. Therefore, why should there be lamentation or jubilation over this body? This is the first understanding required in spiritual life.

Actually if you soberly analyze the body, what is it? It is a combination of bones, blood, flesh, urine, stool, nails, hair, and so on. What else can you find in it? Do you mean to say that by combining these ingredients—bones and flesh and urine and stool—you can manufacture a very learned scholar? If you think that these bodily ingredients are actually the living entity, then find a dead body, take all these ingredients, and manufacture a person. But that is not possible. So, the bodily concept of life is simply ignorance.

Therefore, Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna, "You are lamenting for a thing that is not at all lamentable." The body is dead matter and it will remain dead matter, just like this apartment. I am in this apartment, but I am not this apartment. When I vacate this apartment, I will go to another apartment, but this apartment will remain. Similarly, as Lord Kṛṣṇa will explain in a later verse [2.13],

*dehino 'smin yathā dehe
kaumāraṁ yauvanam jarā
tathā dehāntara-prāṭir
dhīras tatra na muhyati*


In this body (*asmin dehe*) there is the proprietor, the soul, and because the soul is in the body, the body changes. It changes from childhood to youth to old age. Similarly, the soul goes to another body when the present body dies.

Now, without the soul, the body does not change. Suppose a child is born dead. Then his body will never grow. You may apply any chemical or any science, but the body will remain the same. But as long as the soul is within the body, the body will grow from babyhood to youth. In this way the body will change.

We have changed so many bodies—each one of us. I remember that I once had a child's body. But that body is no longer existing. But *I* am existing. Therefore the conclusion is that as souls, you, I, and everyone are eternal. But our bodies are changing, and the body is our source of suffering. Because of the body, we must suffer birth, death, old age, and disease. As soon as you accept a material body, you are subjected to these four pangs of material nature. Accepting a body means you must also accept death, because anything that is born must eventually meet death. Birth, death, and in the interim old age and disease—these are the four pangs of material life.

(continued on page 13)





THE DESCENT OF GOD

The Supreme Being comes to earth many times and in many forms. India's ancient scriptures bring us startling news about these momentous events.

by RAVĪNDRA-SVARŪPA DĀSA

All over the world we find the kind of literature we call scripture. These works tell us a particular kind of tale. They report those extraordinary occasions on which the divine penetrated into our world, and our tiny space and time housed for a while the eternal and infinite. Witnesses to these incursions, utterly changed by what they had seen, found themselves compelled to pour into the world's indifferent and disbelieving ear their strange and powerful tales. And just because these witnesses were so changed, others listened, and they were changed in turn.

From these scriptural accounts we see that the divine descends in various ways. In the Pentateuch, for example, God intrudes into our world mainly through marvelous acts of di-

vine power: He plagues the Egyptians with frogs and flies, lice and locusts, turns their river to blood, and snuffs the lives of their first-born. He delivers His people by parting the Red Sea, and He sets before them a cloud of smoke by day and a pillar of fire by night as beacons to guide them through the wilderness.

On occasion God draws especially near, yet remains even then an awesome, elusive presence just beyond the phenomenal veil. His proximity causes nature to boil and erupt; it seems at any moment He might burst through the flimsy screen of nature and emerge fully on stage—but He never does. When God first comes before Moses, a bush burns fiercely and is not consumed, while Moses fearfully averts his gaze. When the Lord descends upon the top of Mount Sinai, the slopes quake, and a dense cloud, shot through with fire, roils and thunders about the hidden peak. Moses vanishes into that cloud to parley at length with God. Afterwards he reports catching only the most fleeting glimpse of the back of the departing Lord, never once seeing His face. Another celebrated entry of the

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the source of all other incarnations, descended to earth Himself five millennia ago. In this most sublime manifestation of divinity, Kṛṣṇa sets aside all His might and majesty to allow His full beauty to shine forth. Kṛṣṇa is known as Rasarāja—master of all feelings of love.

divine into our world is even more severely restrained: Muḥammad, son of ‘Abdullah, meditating during the heat of Ramaḍān on Mount Hirā outside of Mecca, hears the command of an awesome voice: “Read!” “I cannot read,” comes his terrified reply. Again: “Read!” Again the same reply. The voice, grown more terrible, commands a third time: “Read!” Muḥammad answers: “What can I read?” The voice says:

Read: In the name of thy Lord who createth. Createth man from a clot.

Read: And it is thy Lord the Most Bountiful, Who Teacheth by the pen, Teacheth man that which he knew not.

In this way the first of many such “readings” becomes manifest on earth. Together they constitute the Qur’ān (Koran), delivered to Muḥammad, the messenger of God, by Gabriel, the emissary of God, “who stood poised between heaven and earth, who approached and came as near or nearer than two bows’ length.” Their meetings form the conduit through which the uncreated Qur’ān, “preserved forever on the tablet of heaven,” descends to earth. In this case, God does not enter our mundane realm in person, but He comes in the form of His transcendent word that makes manifest His will.

Here the word of God descends as word. The New Testament, however, tells of a descent in which “the Word was made flesh.” The divine nature becomes embodied in the human person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Jesus declares, “I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me,” and confesses, “I can of my own self do nothing.” In this way Jesus reveals himself as an eternal servant of God, saying “my Father is greater than I.” But because he is surrendered to God without reservation, God becomes manifest to us in him: “The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.” Therefore the person of Jesus is itself the revelation of God: “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,” for “I and my Father are one.”

Because different scriptures report such vastly different divine descents and direct us toward surrender to God under different names—Jahweh, Allah, Jesus, and so on—and because the followers of one scripture tend to condemn the followers of all others as infidels or heathens or heretics, many people become perplexed or disgusted. And religion acquires a bad name. One wonders, “If there is one God, why should He manifest Himself in different ways and give different instructions?”

There is an answer to this question in yet another scripture, the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

This song (*gītā*) was sung by God (*bhagavān*) during His descent on earth five millennia ago. The Lord—known as Kṛṣṇa, “the all-attractive”—addresses His friend and disciple Arjuna: “As all surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly. Everyone follows My path in all respects, O son of Prthā” (Bg. 4.11).

Considered as an answer to the problem of religious diversity, this statement judiciously directs us between extremes. It avoids, on the one hand, those forms of sectarianism which grant some particular religious tradition exclusive franchise on God: “Everyone follows My path in all respects.” On the other hand, it rejects that sentimentality which uncritically endorses any and all forms of spirituality. Rather, Kṛṣṇa offers a principle by which we can discriminate among them: “As all surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly.”

The Sanskrit word translated here as “I reward”—*bhajāmi*—is pregnant with

***His proximity causes
nature to boil
and erupt; it seems
at any moment He
might burst through
the flimsy screen
of nature and emerge
fully on stage.***

meaning. It is formed from a word which fundamentally means “to distribute” or “to share with.” Most frequently, however, it means “to serve in love,” or, loosely, “to worship.” Thus we see that Kṛṣṇa is stating a principle of reciprocity. God reciprocates with us justly by distributing Himself—revealing Himself—to us exactly in proportion to the degree that we have surrendered ourselves to Him.

God’s “reward,” then, can be any of a hierarchy of responses along the progressive path of divine service. On the lower end of that path, for example, a person may faithfully serve God for the sake of material benediction. God reciprocates by awarding his desire. Although the worshiper enjoys only a temporary, material benefit (not an eternal, spiritual one), he accepts his reward as divine reciprocity—for him it is a revelation of God—and his reinforced faith keeps him on the path of devotion. As for those advanced devotees who desire nothing material or spiritual in return for their wholehearted

service, Kṛṣṇa rewards them differently: He discloses Himself fully, and in a sweet and intimate exchange He serves the devotee just as the devotee serves Him.

God declares, “Everyone follows My path.” For as there is one God, there is one religion: devotional service to God in full surrender. We should not be misled by sectarian designations. Although “Islām,” for example, is used to denote a sectarian community or its faith, the term *al islām* itself is not thus exclusive and particular, but means simply “the submission,” or “the surrender.” This one true, essential, and universal religion is also unerringly indicated by Jesus. When asked to cite the greatest commandment in the law, he replies, quoting the Pentateuch, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.”

Lord Kṛṣṇa likewise points to this essential religion at the end of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Having surveyed many spiritual processes—pious work, religious rituals, *yoga* meditation, worship of demigods, philosophical discrimination between matter and spirit—and having shown that they are but various steps on the path toward full devotion to God, Kṛṣṇa invites us conclusively to come directly to that point. “Abandon all varieties of religion,” He urges Arjuna, “and just surrender to Me” (Bg. 18.66).

But because we are to various degrees resistant to the divine call for full surrender, God allows for our gradual advancement, instructing us and revealing Himself to the extent our service disposition or—the same thing—our spiritual purity allows. In this way the element of relativity enters the divine-human interaction to give rise to varieties of religion. But in every case the founder of religion is God and no one else. As *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (a scripture we’ll consider later) tells us, *dharmān tu sākṣād bhagavat-praṇītam* (Bhag. 6.3.19): “The path of religion is established directly by the Supreme Lord Himself.”

For this purpose God descends many times. Kṛṣṇa announces the general principle governing His entry into this world: “Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, and a predominant rise of irreligion—at that time I descend. To deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of religion, I Myself appear, millennium after millennium” (Bg. 4.7–8).

No time and no place has a monopoly on God’s self-revelation. God comes as He is needed, with always the same mission: to repair and restore the time-ravaged path of religion, overgrown and eroded by neglect and abuse. Thus the Lord not only establishes religion on earth, but returns again

“The incarnations of the Lord are innumerable, like rivulets flowing from inexhaustible sources of water.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.26)



and again as its ceaseless maintainer.

So we need not be alarmed by the number and variety of God's appearances as recounted in the world's revealed scriptures. Responding gratefully to the divine bounty, we should aspire to an inclusive, broadminded perspective, understanding each particular descent of God according to the principle by which revelation is reciprocated for surrender.

We can turn for aid in this endeavor to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Both the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* were revealed on earth at the time of Kṛṣṇa's descent five thousand years ago, and together they hold a distinguished place in India's vast library of spiritual knowledge, the Vedic literature. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*—"the postgraduate scripture"—conveys the last word in Vedic knowledge, and the *Bhagavad-gītā* specifically delivers the instructions qualifying one for *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

The Vedic literature, in its catholicity, provides something for everyone's advancement on the spiritual path. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* compares the *Vedas* to a "desire tree"—the heavenly tree whose branches yield all varieties of fruit. When, in time, the followers of the *Vedas* became bewildered by this diversity and lost sight of the true purport of the Vedic teaching, the author of the *Vedas*—God Himself—descended and delivered His *Gītā*. There (as mentioned), He reviews all Vedic practices and authoritatively reestablishes the final Vedic conclusion: "Abandon all varieties of 'religion' and just surrender to Me."

Having accepted that instruction, we are eligible for *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*—as the prelude to that work indicates: "Completely rejecting all religious activities motivated by material desires, this *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* propounds the highest truth, which is understandable by those devotees who are fully pure in heart" (1.1.2). *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is, therefore, "the mature fruit of the desire tree of the *Vedas*" (1.1.3).

Śrīmad means "beautiful," "splendid," or "illustrious," and *Bhāgavatam* means "coming from or relating to God." This "Beautiful Book of God" is an encyclopedic compilation of the wondrous acts of God as He disported Himself on earth in multitudes of descents. Here God is revealed as a many-faceted hero without peer or rival, embarking again and again on astounding adventures. His pastimes—fully attesting to His inexhaustible inventiveness, His sheer exuberance—unfold before our wondering eyes breathtaking vistas of divinity at play. Having relished this ripe fruit of the Vedic tree of knowledge, one contracts the urge to fall before those barren-souled people who, in the aridity of their understanding, have lost all taste for God, and plead: "Read this beautiful book!"

Please, read this beautiful, beautiful book!"

Those comfortable with a more constricted idea of God might be startled by the sheer number and variety of God's appearances. In an early chapter of the *Bhāgavatam*, the saint Sūta Gosvāmī, speaking before an audience of sages, lists twenty-two incarnations (both past and future) and remarks: "O *brāhmanas*, the incarnations of the Lord are innumerable, like rivulets flowing from inexhaustible sources of water" (1.3.26). A later chapter (2.7), "Scheduled Incarnations with Specific Functions," contains an even more exhaustive compendium. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is largely devoted to detailed expositions of these incarnations, one after another, leading up to and preparing the reader for the ultimate narration, that of the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa Himself.

So we encounter God in many forms. He descends, for example, as Matsya, the leviathan who saved the *Vedas* from the

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God, and plead: "Read
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deluge even as He sported in the vast waters; as Varāha, the boar who lifted the fallen earth from the abyss and vanquished her violator in single combat; as the sage Nārada, the eternally wandering space traveler who migrates from planet to planet throughout the universe preaching and singing the glories of the Lord; as Nṛsiṃha, the prodigious man-lion who in an awesome epiphany of power succored His devotee, a boy of six, by slaying—spectacularly—his torturer, a God-hating interplanetary tyrant who was the boy's own father; as Vāmana, the beautiful dwarf who traversed the whole universe in three strides; as Paraśurāma, the axe-wielding scourge of kings who punished twenty-one generations of royalty for deviating from the principles of godly rule; as Lord Rāmacandra, the exemplar of godly rule, perfect king and personification of morality in office; and as many other awesome and unforgettable personalities who appeared to teach, shelter, lead, and inspire humanity.

All this may be so amazing it commands

incredulity. Yet consider: Isn't God, by definition, the most amazing being of all? If so, our principle should be: the more amazing the report, the more open we should be to it. Why demand that God reduce Himself to fit the range of our pedestrian understanding? The more amazing He is, the more Godlike He is.

One can detect an unmistakable element of playfulness in many divine descents, and that may also cause misgivings. But that would be another case of unreasonably imposing restrictions on God. For God *is* playful: the Sanskrit term for divine activity is, in fact, *līlā*—play. By His inconceivable power God seamlessly unites in His descents very serious purpose (to save humanity) with sheer sport. Thus, as Matsya, He frolics in the waves of the deluge; as Varāha He enjoys a good fight. In all descents we see Him delighting in drawing out the possibilities of a particular role, a player in a play.

The idea of *līlā* captures a defining element of divine activity: it is unmotivated. All human acts spring from motives, desire for what we lack or fear we will lack. But God already has everything. He has nothing to gain or anything to lose. What is there, then, to impel Him into action?

"Nothing," say many speculators. And they conclude that God is static, inert. If this were true, God would indeed be impoverished! On the contrary, God is complete, and He acts precisely out of His completeness: He plays. Our notion of play partly conveys the right spirit: doing something for no reason other than the pure sport of it, for the joy of action for its own sake. So the divine *līlā*: God acts out of sheer, unmotivated exuberance; His divine fullness continually overflows in spontaneous creative expression, the ceaseless transcendental play of the spirit.

Frederick Nietzsche, the philosopher who brought Christendom the news that "God is dead," once remarked: "I would believe in a God who could dance." If so, his atheism might be the understandable reaction to some crabbed Teutonic image of divinity—modeled, perhaps, on some dour bourgeois patriarch whose solemnity excludes dance. Had Nietzsche known *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, he might have spared himself and others much grief: for its pages wonderfully describe the transcendental dancing of God, the most beautiful and graceful of all dancers.

Why should God be limited in any way? It is covert envy of God to forbid Him what we ourselves possess and enjoy. He is our categorical superior and outshines us in every field: that is the very meaning of *God*. Therefore we should understand that whatever we see here—all activities, all relationships, all enjoyments—have their fulfilled perfection in God.

(continued on page 29)

FALLING FOR FIDO

A sidewalk slip inspires some thoughts on our schizoid policy toward animals.

by MATHUREŚA DĀSA



Down the street from the house where I live, a tall hedge borders the sidewalk for twenty yards or so, creating a shady, sheltered stretch of pavement. Special things happen there. On warmer evenings you get occasional curbside parties—a carload of teenagers, voices raised above a blaring radio. And during the day, crews from the electric company, telephone company, or city department of streets sometimes pull their trucks over and take a snooze. But the primary function of the stretch, and the most important one to know about if you're a pedestrian, is to serve as a dumping ground for dog feces. Especially in the early evening, you see dog-owners walk their charges down to this piece of

sidewalk, turn the other way for a moment or two (scanning the sky for early stars and trying not to think of dinner), then jerk the leash and head home. I'd guess this twenty-yard area services most of the dogs within a four- or five-block radius.

Having to regularly pick my way past the hedge makes me wonder. Why, while they slaughter other animals by the millions every day, are men so devoted to dogs, to the point of patiently standing by while these creatures answer the call of nature? Dogs are faithful, obedient, and easily pleased, I know, so they provide a buffer, or a substitute, for less reliable human companionship. Pigs and cows just aren't as outgoing or affable, and even if they

were, you still wouldn't want them jumping into your lap. Perhaps, in addition, dogs aren't as tasty as some other animals. Perhaps they don't fatten as easily. Even if they did, we wouldn't kill them. When I was growing up in Cleveland, I had a beagle named Geronimo, who was fat as a barrel. I'd never have butchered Geronimo. He was a member of the family.

However, while we have practical reasons for singling dogs out for special treatment, the *Bhagavad-gītā* teaches us to see all living creatures equally. The *Gītā* says that each living being is an eternal spirit soul, part and parcel of the Supreme Soul, Lord Kṛṣṇa. All living beings, therefore, are members of Kṛṣṇa's family. Seeing equally doesn't

mean that we should shake hands with tigers or embrace rattlesnakes, but that we shouldn't give unnecessary trouble to any soul. Even though cows, pigs, and chickens don't make good house pets, they feel pain as much as dogs do. And by Kṛṣṇa's law of *karma*, whatever pain we give them we have to suffer in turn ourselves.

Each time I am obliged, because of inattention while ambling down the sidewalk, to hose off my shoes, I grow more curious about man's infatuation with canines. One morning last week, after slipping on a particularly large deposit and nearly falling, I resolved to look deeper into this infatuation. Later that day, while shopping at the local Acme supermarket, I visited the dog-food section—aisle five, about the middle of the store. Dog food occupied all four shelves on one side of the aisle for almost the entire length of the aisle. (Cat food and kitty litter took up the remaining space.) I recognized Geronimo's old favorites, Ken-I Ration and Gravy Train, and I counted almost a dozen other brands, both dried and canned. Most brands were adorned with dog portraits, similar in some ways to the kid portraits on cereal boxes a couple of aisles over—both dogs and kids were portrayed as bright-eyed junior members of the family.

Dogs *are* junior members of God's universal family, younger brothers to man, and therefore they are deserving of our care. But twelve brands of specially prepared food? Hugging a tiger is foolish, but so is spending so much for something that ends up on the sidewalk, or on the rug.

The dog-food aisle runs the full length of the store, where, set against the back wall, one finds an equally long display: the meat cooler. Chickens, turkeys, pigs, cows, and sheep. Why no portraits here? These are also family members—"children" of the Supreme Lord and man's younger brothers and sisters. Like us, they have heads, necks, legs, hearts, livers, tongues (right there in the cooler, wrapped in cellophane). Like us they enjoy eating, sleeping, mating, and taking care of their young. Like us they know fear and pain. And like us they are eternal, individual spirit souls, mired in by flesh and bone. The only difference is that they have less intelligence and are therefore helpless before our butcher's ax.

This wasn't the first time I had contemplated man's inconsistent policy toward animals, or the first time I'd seen how a supermarket exemplifies that policy. But on this supermarket visit, as I stood by the meat cooler, still vexed by my near fall on the sidewalk, I was militantly curious, asking myself, "How can people live with this and not go nuts?" On the human carnivore's mental landscape, the aisle for the glorification of dog (and the sidewalk for

the reception of his excrement) intersects with the aisle for the slaughter of other animals, yet the carnivore admits to no contradiction. Isn't that a denial of the plain facts, of reality? And isn't denial of reality bound to produce some kind of mental strain, or mental illness? Isn't it in fact indicative of mental illness?

"Come off it!" says the carnivore. "Those animals are meant to be eaten. They're meant to be killed. They're food animals."

"Meant by whom?" is the reply. "It's obvious that *you* mean to kill and eat them, but where is the evidence of an intention other than yours? 'Intend' indicates there is a person intending, so who, besides you, is that?" Hardened criminals feel fully justified in doing what they do: their victims are *meant* to be victimized. But *I* don't think animals are meant to be

The dog-food aisle runs the full length of the store, where, set against the back wall, one finds an equally long display: the meat cooler. Chickens, turkeys, pigs, cows, and sheep. Why no portraits here?

killed, and neither do the animals. Nor is the "meant to be" philosophy confirmed by any scriptural authority, although when the carnivores get their bloody hands on scripture, they naturally try to prove otherwise. The Vedic literatures say that flesh food is meant only for dogs and cats. So a man's appetite for a dog's food indicates that he's not only infatuated with dogs, he emulates them. Any dog would be in seventh heaven sniffing around the grocery meat department.

But the meat cooler is not the last word in man's schizoid policy toward his animal brothers. Walking down to the end of the meat section, I came to another cooler, this one running the length of the side wall and packed with milk and milk products. For the first five yards or so, gallon and half-gallon milk containers are stacked three high and four deep, and cream and

buttermilk fill the shelves above. Pint and half-pint containers—yogurt, sour cream, cottage cheese, and so on—fill the next section. After that there are butter and twenty kinds of cheese and, across the aisle, a freezer full of ice cream.

Now if the dog gets special treatment because he's sociable, faithful, and eager to defend home and master, then why doesn't the cow, who supplies the ingredient for this wealth of delicious food products, also receive special treatment? Not that we should keep one or two heifers at home and take them for walks around the block, or that our supermarkets should have an aisle of hay and oats. No. All we need do is stop cutting the cow's throat. If you have to eat cow's flesh, or any animal's flesh, be patient. They all die in time.

Westerners deride the apparently irrational respect afforded animals, cows in particular, by followers of India's Vedic literature. "Sacred cow" has come to indicate anything falsely held to be immune from reasonable criticism. It's true the Vedic literature asserts that the cow is sacred—in the sense that she is especially favored by the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa and that her care and protection by man lead to the development of higher, nobler qualities in human society. While this assertion is not immune from criticism, to prove it irrational we'd have to stop killing cows and observe for ourselves the effects of such a moratorium.

But sacredness aside for the moment, followers of the Vedic literature also point to the cow's undeniable contributions—to those coolers full of milk, butter, and cheese, those freezers full of ice cream. We've all been enjoying milk and milk products ever since we were weaned. My two-year-old son consumes a quart of cow milk a day. That must be at least as much as he used to suckle. The dog may be our best friend, but the cow is our second mother. How much more a member of the family could she be?

The *Vedas* teach us to give protection not only to the cow, but to all living things, including dogs and cats. The Vedic injunction is *māhimsyāt sarva-bhūtāni*: Do not harm any living thing. The *Vedas* even enjoin that as part of all great religious ceremonies, everyone in the community, including animals like cats and dogs, must be generously fed. Worship of God is complete only when all of His family members have been duly satisfied.

But the Vedic literature advises that we give special attention to the cow, because she nourishes us and because she assists us in spiritual advancement. She is useful in every respect. What to speak of milk, even cow dung has its uses—as fertilizer and in making fine incense, for example. That's a lot more than you can say for dog feces. 🐾

KNOWLEDGE

(continued from page 5)

So, the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness teaches that we are spirit souls, part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, and as the Supreme Lord is eternal, we are also eternal. We are as good as God—but only in quality, not in quantity. We are just like a drop of seawater in comparison to the whole sea. The drop is as good as the vast mass of seawater in quality. The mass of sea water is salty, and the drop is also salty. Similarly, we have the “chemical composition” of God’s qualities. Therefore, since God is eternal, we must also be eternal. That is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [2.20]: *na*

hanyate hanyamāne śarīre. “After destruction of the body, the spirit soul is not destroyed.”

So our real, constitutional position is eternal life, spiritual life. Then why have we accepted this changing process—birth, death, old age, and disease? Because we have accepted material life. We should understand what is material life and what is spiritual life. Spiritual life means *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha*. *Sat* means “eternal,” *cit* means “full of knowledge,” and *ānanda* means “full of jubilation, pleasure.” This is our constitutional position. This is God’s constitutional position, and this is also our constitutional position. The difference between God and us is that God never ac-

cepts a material body, but sometimes we, under certain circumstances, have to accept a material body. But never mind; although we have accepted this material body, we can get out of it. The process for getting out of it is the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is teaching people how to get out of the entanglement of birth, death, old age, and disease and become as good as God. It is a very scientific movement, an authoritative movement. And not only is it authoritative, but it is accepted by millions and millions of people in India. Also in the Western countries people have accepted this movement, because it is authorized and scientific.

So, our request is that you not think this movement is some sentimental, religious faith. No. It is a very scientific, educational movement. Take advantage of it. That is our request. You can understand this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement by reading our many books.

And in addition to the study of our books, we have an alternative method, which is very simple and easy: chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *māha-mantra*. If you chant this *mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—everything will gradually become clear. We are not selling this *mantra*; we do not ask any price for it. It is open for everyone. And there is no loss on your part if you chant it. So kindly take this *mantra* and chant.

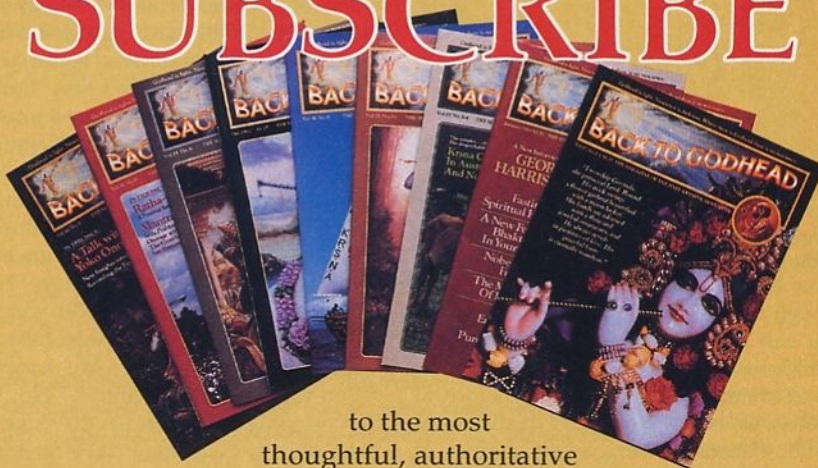
Begin chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, and the result will be that all the misgivings within your heart will gradually be cleansed away (*ceto darpaṇa mārjanam*). And as soon as your heart is cleansed, you will be able to understand you are not the material body but rather a spirit soul. The body is like a superficial shirt and coat, and as long as we work only for the maintenance of the body, we are simply wasting our time. One should not take care only of one’s shirt and coat. Of course, you should take adequate care of your shirt and coat, but you should not think that you *are* your shirt and coat.

So, the present civilization is a “shirt-and-coat” civilization. People do not know what is within the shirt-and-coat of the body. That they are missing. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is therefore very important, because it is presenting that missing point, the spirit soul. This movement is saying to everyone, “You are not the body. You are the spirit soul within the body. Just try to come out of the entanglement of birth, death, old age, and disease and go back home, back to Godhead.”

Thank you very much.



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ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

The Killing Civilization

The following conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples took place on May 30, 1974, during a morning walk in Rome.

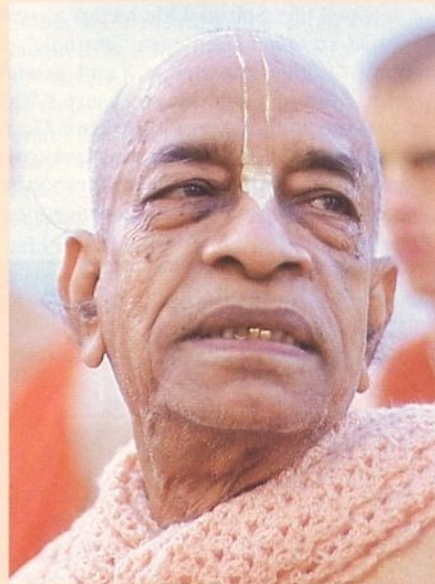
Śrīla Prabhupāda: If people do not want to approach the Lord's devotees for spiritual enlightenment, what can be done? Just see this sparrow. Sex is always available to him. At any time sex is ready for him. The pigeons, also. Any time they want sex, sex is ready. *Viṣayaḥ khalu sarvataḥ syāt:* our only attachment for this material world is *viṣaya*, material sense gratification. The whole world over, people are fighting simply to gratify their bodily senses. "I must have nice eating, I must have nice sleeping, I must have very good sex, and I should be defended by a big bank balance, by military soldiers, by a powerful police force, by atomic weapons." This is going on all over the world. Take defense: the rascal does not understand, "In spite of all these defensive measures, at the end of this lifetime I will have to change bodies and go on suffering. The same sense gratification will be available again, in a different way—and also the same suffering."

Take the tiny ants. They are very fond of intoxication. Did you know that? As soon as they get information, "At the top of this skyscraper, there is a grain of sugar," they will go. [Laughter.] Wine is made from sugar, molasses. So sugar has the potency for intoxication, and if you keep a grain of sugar out in this room, soon there will be thousands of ants. An ants' gold rush.

So study. Can you see any real difference between this so-called human civilization and the ant civilization, the dog civilization? No difference. It is only a matter of outward configuration.

Devotee: Yes. At the Sunday Feast we usually make sweetballs, and there's some sugar water left over. And the next day we find many drowned ants, because they went so wild for the sugar that they jumped into it and killed themselves.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The Vedic literatures advise, "My dear human being, please note: You have attained this human form of life after many, many births. You had to go through the various forms of the aquatic life, 900,000 species; and you had to go through the various forms of birds and trees and plants, two million species. Consider how much time you have spent in this



slow, painstaking evolution. Now you have come to the human form of life. And although it, too, is temporary, nonetheless you can achieve the highest perfection. You can evolve from life in this temporary world of misery to life in the eternal world of bliss. So before your next death in this world, become a very adept student of spiritual perfection—and achieve it."

Devotee: But people will say, "Then what about my sense enjoyment?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Don't worry. *Viṣayaḥ khalu sarvataḥ syāt:* Your sense enjoyment will be available in any species of life. But this human form of life—you spend it for this higher purpose. Don't waste it simply for sense enjoyment. This sense enjoyment you will get even if you become a cat or a dog. But in the cat's or dog's body, you have no opportunity to get out of this material existence.

Modern rascals are getting no education to understand this special chance they have in human life. Therefore we must give this education. We must induce them to read these transcendental books in their schools and colleges. Otherwise, these rascals have no books to read about this transcendental realization. They have only Freud's sex philosophy and Darwin's monkey theory. All rascaldom, simply rascaldom. So let them read these transcendental books.

Devotee: Ordinary people are accepting theories that promise them better enjoyment. People like to hear someone promising, "You'll get better sense gratification."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Politicians are promising, "You take this *-ism* or that *-ism*." But nobody knows what is actually happiness. *Na te viduḥ svārtha-gatiṁ hi viṣṇuṁ durāśayā ye bahir-artha-māninaḥ:* people are trying to be happy by sense enjoyment, the material body's enjoyment. But *durāśayāḥ:* it is simply a hope that will never be fulfilled. *Āśaya* means "hope," and *dur* means "very difficult." It is not going to happen.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is giving you everything in the right way, so that you can save your time, so that you do not waste your time dallying with material enjoyment and you can advance in spiritual consciousness. That is required. We don't say, "Stop eating." You eat. Take a little *kṛṣṇa-prasādam* [vegetarian food offered to Kṛṣṇa]. We don't say, "Don't sleep." No, you sleep, but you must rise early in the morning and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. This is our philosophy. Surely, we give proper place to eating, sleeping, and sex. We don't say, "No sex life." Yes, you have sex. Get yourself a bona fide wife and live peacefully. And defense, also, we have. We never say, "You forego all these things." No, this is not our philosophy. But at the same time, take only as much material enjoyment as you absolutely require, not more than that. The balance of your time—save it for spiritual advancement.

Unfortunately, today people are engaged simply for eating, sleeping, mating, and defending. They have no time for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, no time for spiritual consciousness. This condemned civilization must be stopped. It is a killing civilization—a killing civilization. Human beings have the option of getting out of this material bondage—chewing the chewed again and again—but they are not being given the chance to exercise this special human option. Instead, they are being engaged more and more for the animal life of sense gratification. This killing civilization is sending human beings down into repeated births and deaths in the animal species. But by the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness—by renunciation and spiritual knowledge—many people have become purified and have gone back home, back to Godhead, the spiritual world.

All this information is available. But people are not educated. Therefore the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is meant for educating them. That's all.

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 SIX Creation of the Universal Form

*yatropagīyate nityam
deva-devo janārdanaḥ*

In this installment of our continuing presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the great sage Maitreya is asked by Vidura, an eternal associate of Lord Kṛṣṇa, about the creative function of the Supreme Lord and the different divisions of universal affairs.

durāpā—rarely obtainable; *hi*—certainly; *alpa-tapasaḥ*—of one whose austerity is meager; *sevā*—service; *vaikuṅṭha*—the transcendental kingdom of God; *vartmasu*—on the path of; *yatra*—wherein; *upagīyate*—is glorified; *nityam*—always; *deva*—of the demigods; *devaḥ*—the Lord; *jana-ardanaḥ*—the controller of the living entities.

TEXT 19

यत्सेवया भगवतः कूटस्थस्य मधुद्विषः ।
रतिरासो भवेत्तीव्रः पादयोर्व्यसनार्दनः ॥१९॥

*yat-sevayā bhagavataḥ
kūṭa-sthasya madhu-dviṣaḥ
rati-rāso bhavet tīvraḥ
pādayor vyasanārdanaḥ*

yat—to whom; *sevayā*—by service; *bhagavataḥ*—of the Personality of Godhead; *kūṭa-sthasya*—of the unchangeable; *madhu-dviṣaḥ*—the enemy of the Madhu asura; *rati-rāsaḥ*—attachment in different relationships; *bhavet*—develops; *tīvraḥ*—highly ecstatic; *pādayor*—of the feet; *vyasana*—distresses; *ardanaḥ*—vanquishing.

TRANSLATION

By serving the feet of the spiritual master, one is enabled to develop transcendental ecstasy in the service of the Personality of Godhead, who is the unchangeable enemy of the Madhu demon and whose service vanquishes one's material distresses.

PURPORT

The association of a bona fide spiritual master like the sage Maitreya can be of absolute help in achieving transcendental attachment for the direct service of the Lord. The Lord is the enemy of the Madhu demon, or in other words He is the enemy of the sufferings of His pure devotee. The word *rati-rāsaḥ* is significant in this verse. Service to the Lord is rendered in different transcendental mellows (relationships): neutral, active, friendly, parental and nuptial. A living entity in the liberated position of transcendental service to the Lord becomes attracted to one of the above-mentioned mellows, and when one is engaged in transcendental loving service to the Lord, one's service attachment in the material world is automatically vanquished. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.59), *rasa-varjam raso 'py asya param dṛṣṭvā nivartate*.

TEXT 20

दुरापा ह्यल्पतपसः सेवा वैकुण्ठवर्त्मसु ।
यत्रोपगीयते नित्यं देवदेवो जनार्दनः ॥२०॥

*durāpā hy alpa-tapasaḥ
sevā vaikuṅṭha-vartmasu*

TRANSLATION

Persons whose austerity is meager can hardly obtain the service of the pure devotees who are progressing on the path back to the kingdom of Godhead, the Vaikuṅṭhas. Pure devotees engage one hundred percent in glorifying the Supreme Lord, who is the Lord of the demigods and the controller of all living entities.

PURPORT

The path of liberation, as recommended by all authorities, is to serve the *mahātmā* transcendentalists. As far as *Bhagavad-gītā* is concerned, the *mahātmās* are the pure devotees who are on the path to Vaikuṅṭha, the kingdom of God, and who always chant and hear the glories of the Lord rather than talk of dry, profitless philosophy. This system of association has been recommended since time immemorial, but in this age of quarrel and hypocrisy it is especially recommended by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Even if one has no assets of favorable austerity, if he nevertheless takes shelter of the *mahātmās*, who are engaged in chanting and hearing the glories of the Lord, he is sure to make progress on the path back home, back to Godhead.

TEXT 21

सृष्ट्वाग्रे महदादीनि सविकाराण्यनुक्रमात् ।
तेभ्यो विराजमुद्भृत्य तमनु प्राविशद्विभुः ॥२१॥

*sṛṣṭvāgre mahad-ādīni
sa-vikārāṇy anukramāt
tebhyo virājam uddhṛtya
tam anu prāviśat vibhuḥ*

sṛṣṭvā—after creating; *agre*—in the beginning; *mahat-ādīni*—the total material energy; *sa-vikārāṇi*—along with the sense organs; *anukramāt*—by a gradual process of differentiation; *tebhyah*—out of that; *virājam*—the gigantic universal form; *uddhṛtya*—manifesting; *tam*—unto that; *anu*—later; *prāviśat*—entered; *vibhuḥ*—the Supreme.

TRANSLATION

After creating the total material energy, the mahat-tattva, and thereby manifesting the gigantic universal form with senses and sense organs, the Supreme Lord entered within it.

PURPORT

Fully satisfied by the answers of the sage Maitreya, Vidura wanted to understand the remaining portions of the creative function of the Lord, and he took the clue from the previous topics.

TEXT 22

यमाहुराद्यं पुरुषं सहस्राङ्घ्र्यूरुबाहुकम् ।
यत्र विश्व इमे लोकाः सविकाशं त आसते ॥२२॥

*yam āhur ādyam puruṣam
sahasraṅghry-ūru-bāhukam
yatra viśva ime lokāḥ
sa-vikāśam ta āsate*

yam—who; *āhuḥ*—is called; *ādyam*—original; *puruṣam*—incarnation for cosmic manifestation; *sahasra*—thousand; *aṅghri*—legs; *ūru*—thighs; *bāhukam*—hands; *yatra*—wherein; *viśvaḥ*—the universe; *ime*—all these; *lokāḥ*—planets; *sa-vikāśam*—with respective developments; *te*—all of them; *āsate*—living.

TRANSLATION

The *puruṣa* incarnation lying on the Causal Ocean is called the original *puruṣa* in the material creations, and in His *virāṭ* form, in whom all the planets and their inhabitants live, He has many thousands of legs and hands.

PURPORT

The first *puruṣa* is Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, the second *puruṣa* is Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, and the third *puruṣa* is Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, in whom is contemplated the *virāṭ-puruṣa*, the gigantic form in which all the planets with their different developments and inhabitants are floating.

TEXT 23

यस्मिन् दशविधः प्राणः सेन्द्रियार्थेन्द्रियद्विवृत् ।
त्वयेरितो यतो वर्णास्तद्विभूतीर्वदस्व नः ॥२३॥

*yasmin daśa-vidhaḥ prāṇaḥ
sēndriyārthēndriyas tri-vṛt
tvayerito yato varṇāḥ
tat-vibhūtir vadāsva naḥ*

yasmin—in which; *daśa-vidhaḥ*—ten kinds of; *prāṇaḥ*—air of life; *sa*—with; *indriya*—senses; *artha*—interest; *indriyaḥ*—of the senses; *tri-vṛt*—three kinds of life vigor; *tvayā*—by you; *iritaḥ*—explained; *yataḥ*—wherefrom; *varṇāḥ*—four specific divisions; *tat-vibhūtiḥ*—prowess; *vadāsva*—please describe; *naḥ*—unto me.

TRANSLATION

O great *brāhmaṇa*, you have told me that the gigantic *virāṭ* form and His senses, sense objects and ten kinds of life air exist with three kinds of life vigor. Now, if you will, kindly explain to me the different powers of the specific divisions.

TEXT 24

यत्र पुत्रैश्च पौत्रैश्च नप्तृभिः सह गोत्रजैः ।
प्रजा विचित्राकृतय आसन् याभिरिदं ततम् ॥२४॥

*yatra putraiś ca pautraiś ca
napṭṛbhiḥ saha gotrajaiḥ
prajā vicitrākṛtaya
āsan yābhir idam tatam*

yatra—wherein; *putraiḥ*—along with sons; *ca*—and; *pautraiḥ*—along with grandsons; *ca*—also; *napṭṛbhiḥ*—with grandsons from

daughters; *saha*—along with; *gotra-jaiḥ*—of the same family; *prajāḥ*—generations; *vicitra*—of different kinds; *ākṛtayaḥ*—so done; *āsan*—exist; *yābhiḥ*—by whom; *idam*—all these planets; *tatam*—spread.

TRANSLATION

O my lord, I think that the prowess manifest in the forms of sons, grandsons and family members has spread all over the universe in different varieties and species.

TEXT 25

प्रजापतीनां स पतिश्चकल्पे कान् प्रजापतीन् ।
सर्गाश्चैवानुसर्गाश्च मनुन्मन्वन्तराधिपान् ॥२५॥

*prajāpatīnām sa patiś
cakalpe kān prajāpatīn
sargāś caivānusargāś ca
manūn manvantarādhipān*

prajā-patīnām—of the demigods like *Brahmā* and others; *saḥ*—he; *patiḥ*—leader; *cakalpe*—decided; *kān*—whomsoever; *prajāpatīn*—fathers of the living entities; *sargān*—generations; *ca*—also; *eva*—certainly; *anusargān*—later generations; *ca*—and; *manuḥ*—the Manus; *manvantara-adhipān*—and the changes of such.

TRANSLATION

O learned *brāhmaṇa*, please describe how the leader of all the demigods, namely *Prajāpati*, *Brahmā*, decided to establish the various Manus, the heads of the ages. Please describe the Manus also, and please describe the descendants of those Manus.

PURPORT

The human race, or *manuṣya-sara*, descends from the Manus, sons and grandsons of the *Prajāpati*, *Brahmā*. The descendants of Manu reside in all the different planets and rule all the universe.

TEXT 26

उपर्यधश्च ये लोका भूमेर्मित्रात्मजासते ।
तेषां संस्थां प्रमाणं च भूर्लोकस्य च वर्णय ॥२६॥

*upary adhaś ca ye lokā
bhūmer mītrātmajāsate
teṣāṁ saṁsthāṁ pramāṇam ca
bhūr-lokasya ca varṇaya*

upari—on the head; *adhaḥ*—underneath; *ca*—also; *ye*—which; *lokāḥ*—planets; *bhūmeḥ*—of the earth; *mītra-ātmaja*—O son of *Mitrā* (*Maitreya Muni*); *āsate*—do exist; *teṣāṁ*—their; *saṁsthāṁ*—situation; *pramāṇam ca*—also their measurement; *bhūr-lokasya*—of the earthly planets; *ca*—also; *varṇaya*—please describe.

TRANSLATION

O son of *Mitrā*, kindly describe how the planets are situated above the earth as well as underneath it, and also please mention their measurement as well as that of the earthly planets.

PURPORT

Yasmin vijñāte sarvam evam vijñātam bhavati. This Vedic hymn declares emphatically that the devotee of the Lord knows everything material and spiritual in relationship with the Lord. Devotees are not simply emotional, as is ill conceived by certain less intelligent men. Their direction is practical. They know everything that is and all the details of the Lord's domination over the different creations.

TEXT 27

तिर्यङ्मानुषदेवानां सरीसृपपतन्त्रिणाम् ।
वद नः सर्गसंव्यूहं गार्भस्वेदद्विजोद्भिदाम् ॥२७॥

tiryak-mānuṣa-devānām
sarīsrpa-patattriṇām
vada naḥ sarga-saṁvūhaṁ
gārbha-sveda-dvijodbhidām

tiryak—subhuman; *mānuṣa*—human beings; *devānām*—of the superhuman beings, or demigods; *sarīsrpa*—reptiles; *patattriṇām*—of the birds; *vada*—kindly describe; *naḥ*—unto me; *sarga*—generation; *saṁvūham*—specific divisions; *gārbha*—embryonic; *sveda*—perspiration; *dvija*—twice-born; *udbhidām*—of the planets, etc.

TRANSLATION

Also please describe the living beings under different classifications: subhumans, humans, those born of the embryo, those born of perspiration, those who are twice-born [birds], and the plants and vegetables. Kindly describe their generations and subdivisions also.

TEXT 28

गुणावतारैर्विश्वस्य सर्गस्थित्यप्ययाश्रयम् ।
सुजतः श्रीनिवासस्य व्याचक्ष्वोदारविक्रमम् ॥२८॥

guṇāvatārair viśvasya
sarga-sthity-apyayāśrayam
srjataḥ śrīnivāsasya
vyākṣva-udāra-vikramam

guṇa—modes of material nature; *avatāraiḥ*—of the incarnations; *viśvasya*—of the universe; *sarga*—creation; *sthiti*—maintenance; *apyaya*—destruction; *āśrayam*—and ultimate rest; *srjataḥ*—of the one who creates; *śrīnivāsasya*—of the Personality of Godhead; *vyākṣva*—kindly describe; *udāra*—magnanimous; *vikramam*—specific activities.

TRANSLATION

Please also describe the incarnations of the material modes of nature—Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara—and please describe the incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and His magnanimous activities.

PURPORT

Although Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara, the three incarnations of the material modes of nature, are the principal deities for the creation, maintenance and destruction of the cosmic manifestation, they are not the final authority. The Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate goal, the cause of all causes. He is the *āśraya*, or the final rest of everything.

TEXT 29

वर्णाश्रमविभागांश्च रूपशीलस्वभावतः ।
ऋषीणां जन्मकर्माणि वेदस्य च विकर्षणम् ॥२९॥

varṇāśrama-vibhāgāṁś ca
rūpa-śīla-svabhāvataḥ
ṛṣīṇāṁ janma-karmāṇi
vedasya ca vikarṣaṇam

varṇa-āśrama—the four divisions of social statuses and orders of spiritual culture; *vibhāgān*—respective divisions; *ca*—also; *rūpa*—personal features; *śīla-svabhāvataḥ*—personal character; *ṛṣīṇām*—of the sages; *janma*—birth; *karmāṇi*—activities; *vedasya*—of the Vedas; *ca*—and; *vikarṣaṇam*—categorical divisions.

TRANSLATION

O great sage, kindly describe the divisions and orders of human society in terms of symptoms, behavior and the characteristics of mental equilibrium and sense control. Also please describe the births of the great sages and the categorical divisions of the Vedas.

PURPORT

The four statuses and orders of human society—*brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas* and *śūdras*, as well as *brahmacāris*, *gṛhasthas*, *vānaprasthas* and *sannyāsīs*—are all divisions of quality, education, culture and spiritual advancement attained by practicing control of the mind and the senses. All these divisions are based on the particular nature of each individual person, not on the principle of birth. Birth is not mentioned in this verse because birth is immaterial. Vidura is famous in history as born of a *sūdrāṇi* mother, yet he is more than a *brāhmaṇa* by qualification because he is seen here to be the disciple of a great sage, Maitreya Muni. Unless one achieves at least the brahminical qualifications, one cannot understand the Vedic hymns. *Mahābhārata* is also a division of the Vedas, but it is meant for women, *sūdras* and *dvija-bandhus*, the worthless children of the higher section. The less intelligent section of society can avail themselves of the Vedic instructions simply by studying the *Mahābhārata*.

TEXT 30

यज्ञस्य च वितानानि योगस्य च पथः प्रभो ।
नैष्कर्म्यस्य च सांख्यस्य तन्त्रं वा भगवत्स्मृतम् ॥३०॥

yajñasya ca vitānāni
yogasya ca pathaḥ prabho
naiṣkarmyasya ca sāṅkhyasya
tantram vā bhagavat-smṛtam

yajñasya—of sacrifices; *ca*—also; *vitānāni*—expansions; *yogasya*—of the mystic powers; *ca*—also; *pathaḥ*—ways; *prabho*—O my lord; *naiṣkarmyasya*—of knowledge; *ca*—and; *sāṅkhyasya*—of analytical studies; *tantram*—the path of devotional service; *vā*—as well as; *bhagavat*—in relation with the Personality of Godhead; *smṛtam*—regulative principles.

TRANSLATION

Please also describe the expansions of different sacrifices and the paths of mystic powers, analytical study of knowledge, and devotional service, all with their respective regulations.

PURPORT

The word *tantram* is significant herein. Sometimes *tantram* is misunderstood to be the black spiritual science of materialistic persons engaged in sense gratification, but here *tantram* means the science of devotional service compiled by Śrīla Nārada Muni. One can take advantage of such regulative explanations of the path of devotional service and make progressive advancement in the devotional service of the Lord. Sāṅkhya philosophy is the basic principle of acquiring knowledge, as will be explained by the sage Maitreya. The Sāṅkhya philosophy enunciated by Kapiladeva, the son of Devahūti, is the real source of knowledge about the Supreme Truth. Knowledge not based on the Sāṅkhya philosophy is mental speculation and can yield no tangible profit.

TEXT 31

पापण्डपथवैषम्यं प्रतिलोमनिवेशनम् ।
जीवस्य गतयो याश्च यावतीर्गुणकर्मजाः ॥३१॥

pāpaṇḍapathavaiṣamyaṁ
pratiloma-niveśanam
jīvasya gatayo yāś ca
yāvatīr guṇa-karmajāḥ

pāṣaṇḍa-patha—the path of the faithless; *vaiṣamyam*—imperfection by contradiction; *pratiloma*—crossbreeding; *niveśanam*—situation; *jīvasya*—of the living entities; *gatayaḥ*—movements; *yāḥ*—as they are; *ca*—also; *yāvatīḥ*—as many as; *guṇa*—modes of material nature; *karma-jāḥ*—generated by different work.

TRANSLATION

Please also describe the imperfections and contradictions of the faithless atheists, the situation of crossbreeding, and the movements of the living entities in various species of life according to their particular modes of nature and work.

PURPORT

The combination of living entities in different modes of material nature is called crossbreeding. The faithless atheists do not believe in the existence of God, and thus their paths of philosophy are contradictory. Atheistic philosophies never agree with one another. Different species of life are evidence of varieties of mixtures of the modes of material nature.

TEXT 32

धर्मार्थकाममोक्षाणां निमित्तान्यविरोधतः ।
वार्ताया दण्डनीतेश्च श्रुतस्य च विधिं पृथक् ॥३२॥

dharmārtha-kāma-mokṣāṇāṃ
nimittāny avirodhataḥ
vārtāyā daṇḍa-nīteś ca
śrutasya ca vidhiṃ pṛthak

dharma—religiosity; *artha*—economic development; *kāma*—sense gratification; *mokṣāṇām*—salvation; *nimittāni*—causes; *avirodhataḥ*—without being contradictory; *vārtāyāḥ*—on the principles of the means of livelihood; *daṇḍa-nīteḥ*—of law and order; *ca*—also; *śrutasya*—of the codes of scriptures; *ca*—also; *vidhiṃ*—regulations; *pṛthak*—different.

TRANSLATION

You may also describe the noncontradictory causes of religiosity, economic development, sense gratification and salvation and also the different means of livelihood and different processes of law and order as mentioned in the revealed scriptures.

TEXT 33

श्राद्धस्य च विधिं ब्रह्मन् पितॄणां सर्गमेव च ।
ग्रहनक्षत्रताराणां कालवियवसंस्थितिम् ॥३३॥

śrāddhasya ca vidhiṃ brahman
pitṛṇām sargam eva ca
graha-nakṣatra-tārāṇām
kālāvayava-samsthitim

śrāddhasya—of the periodical offerings of respects; *ca*—also; *vidhiṃ*—regulations; *brahman*—O *brāhmaṇa*; *pitṛṇām*—of the forefathers; *sargam*—creation; *eva*—as; *ca*—also; *graha*—planetary system; *nakṣatra*—the stars; *tārāṇām*—luminaries; *kāla*—time; *avayava*—duration; *samsthitim*—situations.

TRANSLATION

Please also explain the regulations for offering respects to the forefathers, the creation of the Pitṛloka, the time schedule in the planets, stars and luminaries, and their respective situations.

PURPORT

The time durations of day and night as well as months and years are different in the different planets, stars and luminaries. The higher planets like the moon and Venus have time measurements different from those of the earth. It is said that six months of this planet earth equal one day of the higher planets. In *Bhagavad-gītā* the duration of one day in Brahmaloка is measured to be 1,000 times the four *yugas*, or 4,300,000

years multiplied by 1,000. And the month and year in Brahmaloка are calculated in that measure.

TEXT 34

दानस्य तपसो वापि यच्चेष्टापृतेयोः फलम् ।
प्रवासस्यस्य यो धर्मो यश्च पुंस उतापदि ॥३४॥

dānasya tapaso vāpi
yac ceṣṭā-pūrtayoḥ phalam
pravāsa-sthasya yo dharmo
yaś ca puṁsa utāpadi

dānasya—of charity; *tapasaḥ*—of penance; *vāpi*—lake; *yat*—that which; *ca*—and; *iṣṭā*—endeavor; *pūrtayoḥ*—of reservoirs of water; *phalam*—fruitive result; *pravāsa-sthasya*—one who is away from home; *yaḥ*—that which; *dharmah*—duty; *yaḥ ca*—and which; *puṁsaḥ*—of man; *uta*—described; *āpadi*—in danger.

TRANSLATION

Please also describe the fruitive results of charity and penance and of digging reservoirs of water. Please describe the situation of persons who are away from home and also the duty of a man in an awkward position.

PURPORT

The digging of reservoirs of water for public use is a great work of charity, and retiring from family life after fifty years of age is a great act of penance performed by the sober human being.

TEXT 35

येन वा भगवांस्तुष्येद्धर्मयोनिर्जनादनः ।
सम्प्रसीदति वा येषामेतदाख्याहि मेऽनघ ॥३५॥

yena vā bhagavāns tuṣyed
dharma-yoniḥ janārdanaḥ
samprasīdati vā yeṣām
etaḍ ākhyāhi me 'nagha

yena—by which; *vā*—either; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *tuṣyēt*—is satisfied; *dharma-yoniḥ*—the father of all religion; *janārdanaḥ*—the controller of all living beings; *samprasīdati*—completely satisfied; *vā*—either, or; *yeṣām*—of those; *etaḍ*—all these; *ākhyāhi*—kindly describe; *me*—unto me; *anagha*—O sinless one.

TRANSLATION

O sinless one, because the Personality of Godhead, the controller of all living entities, is the father of all religion and all those who are candidates for religious activities, kindly describe how He can be completely satisfied.

PURPORT

All religious activities are meant ultimately to satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Lord is the father of all religious principles. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.16), four kinds of pious men—the needy, the distressed, the enlightened and the inquisitive—approach the Lord in devotional service, and their devotion is mixed with material affection. But above them are the pure devotees, whose devotion is not tainted by any material tinges of fruitive work or speculative knowledge. Those who are only miscreants throughout their lives are compared to demons (Bg. 7.15). They are bereft of all knowledge, in spite of any academic educational career they may pursue. Such miscreants are never candidates for satisfying the Lord.

TEXT 36

अनुव्रतानां शिष्याणां पुत्राणां च द्विजोत्तम ।
अनाष्टमपि ब्रूयुर्गुरवो दीनवत्सलाः ॥३६॥

*anuvratānām śiṣyāṇām
putrāṇām ca dvijottama
anāpṛṣtam api brūyur
guravo dina-vatsalāḥ*

anuvratānām—the followers; *śiṣyāṇām*—of the disciples; *putrāṇām*—of the sons; *ca*—also; *dvija-uttama*—O best amongst the *brāhmaṇas*; *anāpṛṣtam*—that which is not asked for; *api*—in spite of; *brūyuh*—please describe; *guravaḥ*—the spiritual masters; *dina-vatsalāḥ*—who are kind to the needy.

TRANSLATION

O best among the *brāhmaṇas*, those who are spiritual masters are very kind to the needy. They are always kind to their followers, disciples and sons, and without being asked by them, the spiritual master describes all that is knowledge.

PURPORT

There are many subjects to be known from the bona fide spiritual master. The followers, disciples and sons are all on one level for the bona fide spiritual master, and he is always kind to them and always speaks to them on transcendental subjects, even though he is not asked by them. That is the nature of the bona fide spiritual master. Vidura appealed to Maitreya Muni to speak on subjects about which he might not have asked.

TEXT 37

तत्त्वानां भगवन्स्तेषां कतिधा प्रतिसंक्रमः ।
तत्रेमं क उपासीरन् क उ खिदनुशेरते ॥३७॥

*tattvānām bhagavaṁś teṣāṁ
katidhā pratisaṅkramaḥ
tatremam ka upāsīran
ka u svīd anuśerate*

tattvānām—of the elements of nature; *bhagavan*—O great sage; *teṣām*—of them; *katidhā*—how many; *pratisaṅkramaḥ*—dissolutions; *tatra*—thereupon; *imam*—unto the Supreme Lord; *ke*—who are they; *upāsīran*—being saved; *ke*—who are they; *u*—who; *svit*—may; *anuśerate*—serve the Lord while He sleeps.

TRANSLATION

Please describe how many dissolutions there are for the elements of material nature and who survives after the dissolutions to serve the Lord while He is asleep.

PURPORT

In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.47-48) it is said that all the material manifestations with innumerable universes appear and disappear with the breathing of Mahā-Viṣṇu lying in *yoga-nidrā*, or mystic sleep.

*yah kāraṇārṇava-jale bhajati sma yoga-
nidrām ananta-jagad-aṅḍa-saroma-kūpaḥ
ādhāra-śaktim avalambya parām sva-mūrtim
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

*yasyaika-niśvasita-kālam athāvalambya
jīvanti loma-vilajā jagad-aṅḍa-nāthāḥ
viṣṇur mahān sa iha yasya kalā-viśeṣo
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

“Govinda, the ultimate and Supreme Personality of Godhead [Lord Kṛṣṇa], lies sleeping unlimitedly on the Causal Ocean in order to create unlimited numbers of universes during that sleep. He lies on the water by His own internal potency, and I worship that original Supreme Godhead.

“Due to His breathing, innumerable universes come into existence, and when He withdraws His breath there occurs the dissolution of all the lords of the universes. That plenary portion of the Supreme Lord is called Mahā-Viṣṇu, and He is a part of the part of Lord Kṛṣṇa. I worship Govinda, the original Lord.”

After the dissolution of the material manifestations, the Lord and His kingdom beyond the Causal Ocean do not disappear, nor do the inhabitants, the Lord’s associates. The associates of the Lord are far more numerous than the living entities who have forgotten the Lord due to material association. The impersonalist’s explanation of the word *aham* in the four verses of the original *Bhāgavatam*—*aham evāsam evāgre* etc.—is refuted here. The Lord and His eternal associates remain after the dissolution. Vidura’s inquiry about such persons is a clear indication of the existence of all the paraphernalia of the Lord. This is also confirmed in the *Kāśī-khaṇḍa*, as quoted by both Jīva Gosvāmī and Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī, who follow in the footsteps of Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī.

*na cyavante hi yad-bhaktā
mahatyām pralayāpadi
ato 'cyuto 'khile loka
sa ekaḥ sarva-go 'vyayaḥ*

“The devotees of the Lord never annihilate their individual existences even after the dissolution of the entire cosmic manifestation. The Lord and the devotees who associate with Him are always eternal, in both the material and spiritual worlds.”

TEXT 38

पुरुषस्य च संस्थानं स्वरूपं वा परस्य च ।
ज्ञानं च नैगमं यत्तद्गुरुशिष्यप्रयोजनम् ॥३८॥

*puruṣasya ca saṁsthānam
svarūpaṁ vā parasya ca
jñānam ca naigamaṁ yat tad
guru-śiṣya-prayojanam*

puruṣasya—of the living entity; *ca*—also; *saṁsthānam*—existence; *svārūpam*—identity; *vā*—either, or; *parasya*—of the Supreme; *ca*—also; *jñānam*—knowledge; *ca*—also; *naigamaṁ*—in the matter of the *Upaniṣads*; *yat*—that; *tad*—the same; *guru*—spiritual master; *śiṣya*—disciple; *prayojanam*—necessity.

TRANSLATION

What are the truths regarding the living entities and the Supreme Personality of Godhead? What are their identities? What are the specific values in the knowledge in the Vedas, and what are the necessities for the spiritual master and his disciples?

PURPORT

The living entities are constitutionally servitors of the Lord, who can accept all kinds of service from everyone. It is clearly declared (Bg. 5.29) that the Lord is the supreme enjoyer of the benefits of all sacrifices and penances, the proprietor of all that is manifested and the friend of all living entities. That is His real identity. Therefore, when the living entity accepts this supreme proprietorship of the Lord and acts in that attitude, he resumes his real identity. In order to elevate the living entity to this standard of knowledge, there is the necessity of spiritual association. The bona fide spiritual master desires that his disciples know the process of rendering transcendental service to the Lord, and the disciples also know that they have to learn about the eternal relationship between God and the living entity from a self-realized soul. To disseminate transcendental knowledge one must retire from mundane activities on the strength of enlightenment in knowledge in terms of Vedic wisdom. That is the sum and substance of all the questions in this verse.

(continued in next issue)

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Mombasa, Kenya—Hare Krishna House, Sauti Ya Kenya and Kisumu Rds. (mail: P.O. Box 82224,
Mombasa/ 312248)
Nkawakaw, Ghana—P.O. Box 329, Nkawakaw
Nairobi, Kenya—Muhuroni Close, off West Nagara Rd. (mail: P.O. Box 28946, Nairobi/ 744365)
Port Harcourt, Nigeria—2 Eligham Rd. (corner of Obana Obhan St.), G.R.A. II
(mail: P.O. Box 4429, Trans Amadi)
Takoradi, Ghana—64 Windy Ridge (mail: P.O. Box 328)

FARM COMMUNITY

Mauritius (ISKCON Vedic Farm)—Beau Bois, Bon Accueil

ASIA

INDIA

Ahmedabad, Gujarat—7, Kailas Society, Ashram Rd., 380 009/ 449935
Bamanore, Gujarat—N.H. 8-B, Surendranagar (city office: 32 Ananta Nagar, Kalavad Rd.,
Rajkot 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
Bhubaneswar, Orissa—National Highway No. 5, Nayapali, 751 001/ 53125
Bombay, Maharashtra—Hare Krishna Land, Juhu 400 054/ 626-860
Calcutta, W. Bengal—3 Albert Rd., 700 017/ 443757
Chandigarh, Punjab—Hare Krishna Land, Dakshin Marg, Sector 36-B, 160 036/ 44634
Chhaygharia (Haridaspur), W. Bengal—Thakur Haridas Sripatbari Sevashram, P.O. Chhaygharia,
P.S. Bongaon, Dist. 24 Pargonas
Gauhati, Assam—Post Bag No. 127, 781 001
Hyderabad, A.P.—Hare Krishna Land, Nampally Station Rd., 500 001/ 51018
Imphal, Manipur—Hare Krishna Land, Airport Road, 795 001
Madras, Tamil Nadu—232 Kilpauk 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, Maharashtra—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—TC2241485, W/C Hospital Rd., Thycaud, 695014/ 68197
Vrindavan, U.P.—Krishna-Balarām Mandir, Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg, Raman Reti, Mathurā/ 178

FARM COMMUNITIES

Hyderabad, A.P.—P.O. Dabilpur Village, Medchal Taluk, Hyderabad District, 501 401
Mâyâpur, W. Bengal—(contact Mâyâpur)

RESTAURANTS

Bombay—Govinda's (at Hare Krishna Land)
Vrindavan—Krishna-Balarām Mandir Guesthouse

OTHER COUNTRIES

Bali, Indonesia—Jalan Sagamona 17, Renon, Denpasar
Bangkok, Thailand—139, Soi Puttha-Osoth, New Road/ 233-2488
Hong Kong—5 Homantin St., Flat 23, Kowloon/ 3-7122630
Jakarta, Indonesia—Yayasan Kesadaran Kṛṣṇa Indonesia, Jl. Kamboja 10-12, Tomang Raya/ 599 301
Kathmandu, Nepal—Śrī Kunj, Kamaladi
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia—Lot. 23 Jalan 18/22, Taman Katapouram, Petaling Jaya
Manila, Philippines—170 R. Fernandez, San Juan, Metro Manila, P.I.
Taipei, Taiwan—(mail: c/o ISKCON Hong Kong)
Tehran, Iran—Keshavarz, Dehkedeh Ave., Kamran St., No. 58
Tel Aviv, Israel—P.O. Box 48163, Tel Aviv 61480
Tokyo, Japan—2-41-12 Izumi, Suginami-ku, Tokyo TI68/ (3) 327-1541

FARM COMMUNITY

Cebu, Philippines (Hare Kṛṣṇa Paradise)—231 Pagsabungan Rd., Basak, Mandaue City/ 83254

RESTAURANT

Cebu, Philippines—Govinda's, 26 Sanchiango St.

LÁTIN AMERICA

BRAZIL

Belem, PA—Av. Gentil Bitencourt, Passagem McDowell, 96 (entre Dr. Moraes e Benj. Constant)
Belo Horizonte, MG—Av. Getúlio Vargas, 167, Funcionários/ 223-2776
Brasília, DF—MSPW Quadra 13, conj. 6, Casa 8/ 553-1173
Campo Grande, MS—Av. Julio de Castilhos, 1762, Santo Amaro
Curitiba, PR—Av. Sete de Setembro, 1594, Alto da Rua Quinze
Florianópolis, SC—Rua Ivo Reis Montenegro, 421, Itaguaçu
Fortaleza, CE—Rua José Lourenço, 2114, Aldeota
Manaus, AM—Rua Leopoldo Neves, 387, B. São Raimundo
Pôrto Alegre, RS—Rua Tomas Flores, 327, Bonfim/ 27-3078
Recife, PE—Av. Parnamirim, 329, Parnamirim/ (081) 268-1908
Ribeirão Preto, SP—Rua Campos Sales, 542, Centro
Rio de Janeiro, RJ—Ladeira da Glória, 98, Glória/ 285-5643
Salvador, BA—Rua Álvaro Adorno, 17, Brotas/ (071) 244-1072
Santos, SP—C. P. 2125, Gonzaga
São Luís, MA—Av. Casemiro Junior, 564, Anil
São Paulo, SP—Rua Bom Pastor, 798, Ipiranga (mail: C. P. 4855-01000/ 63-1674)
São Paulo, SP—Rua Paraíso, 642, Paraíso
Teresópolis, RJ—Vrajabhumi/ 742-3011
Vitória, ES—Rua César Helal, 288, Bento Ferreira

FARM COMMUNITY

Pindamonhangaba, SP (New Gokula)—Ribeirão Grande (mail: C. P. 108, 12.400 Pinda)

MEXICO

Guadalajara—Morelos No. 1514 Sector Hildago, Jalisco/ 26-12-78
Mexico City—Gov. Tiburcio Montiel 45, San Miguel Chapultepec, Mexico, D.F. 18/ (905) 271-0132
Mexico City—Govinda's Cultural Center, Insurgentes Sur 2384-1, Mexico City 01000 D.F./ 548-9323
Monterrey—General Albino Espinoza, 345 Pre., Zona Centro, Monterrey, N.L./ 42-67-66
Morelia—Ticatemé No. 52 pte., Col. Selix Ireta 58070, Morelia, Mich.
Puebla—Rio Nazas 5016, Col. San Manuel/ 459047
Tulancingo, Hidalgo (Nueva Gauda-Manáda Bhūmi)—(contact Mexico City)
Vera Cruz—Calle 3, Cerebolas No. 784, Fraccionamiento Reforma/ 50759

PERU

Arequipa—Jerusalem 402/ 229523
Cuzco—Calle Plaza San Francisco No. 360 (altos)
Chosica—Jr. Chile 136
Huancayo—Av. Giraldez 652
Lima—Avenida San Martín 135/ 670405
Miraflores—Av. Schell 630/ 442505
Trajillo—Jr. Bolívar 768

FARM COMMUNITY

Gauranga Sevak—Bellavista, Hvallaga, San Martín

RESTAURANTS

Arequipa—(at ISKCON Arequipa)
Barranco—Av. Grav 137
Cuzco—Calle Espáderos 128 (near Plaza de Armas)
Lima—Jr. Azangaro 149
Miraflores—Av. Schell 603

OTHER COUNTRIES

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 Chaguaramos/ 751-3026
Cochabamba, Bolivia—P.O. Box 3988/ 46441
Concepción, Chile—Nonguen, 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, Circunvalación Norte/ 382439
La Paz, Bolivia—Avenida Herando Siles 6239 (mail: Casilla 10278 Obrajays/ 785023)
Medellín, Colombia—Calle 56 (Bolivia), Parque de Bolívar
Montevideo, Uruguay—Casilla 10,531, Suc. Pluna
Panama, Republic of Panama—Via las Cumbres, entrada Villa Zaita, frente a INPSA No. 10
(mail: P.O. Box 6-29-54, Panama/ 681070)
Quito, Ecuador—Carrón 641 Amazonas/ 520466
San Jose, Costa Rica—100 mtrs. sureste de aptos Torre Blanca Urbanización Carniol, Montes
de Oca, Casa No. 49 (mail: P.O. Box 166, Paseo Estudiantes, Z-1002)
San Salvador, El Salvador—67 Avenida Sur No. 15, Colonia Escalón
Santiago, Chile—Estudiantes, 150
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic—Calle Cayetano Rodríguez No. 254/ (809) 688-7242
Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies—Prabhupada Ave., Longdenville, Chaguanas

FARM COMMUNITIES

Guayaquil, Ecuador (Nuevo Nilácala)—(contact Guayaquil)
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

Buenos Aires, Argentina—Madre Tierra, Mendoza 2320, (1428) Buenos Aires
Guayaquil, Ecuador—Govinda's (contact Guayaquil)
Quito, Ecuador—Govinda's, Esmeraldas 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, 7ª Calle Oriente No. 155/ 218035
Santiago, Chile—Govinda's (contact Santiago)

For Your Information

RESOURCES

Radio KHQN, ISKCON's Utah station, offers taped, serialized programs. Each series consists of from thirty to one hundred half-hour programs and is based on ISKCON publications and the Vedic literature. Programs include such topics as Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Prabhupāda, *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, plus programs on diet, reincarnation, science, abortion, and issues of the day. A demo is available for \$1.50 that includes samples of each series. Cost is \$3.00 per sixty-minute tape (postage paid in U.S. only). Write KHQN, P.O. Box 379, Spanish Fork, UT 84660, or call (801) 798-3559.

Enjoy the writings of Śrīla Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami, 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, poems, and other writings for everyone interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. For a list of publications, write The Gītā-nāgarī Press, Lexington Ridge Farm, Hilltown Pike, Line Lexington, PA 18932.

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.

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.

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.

The Bhaktivedanta Tape Ministry 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 current selections or information about obtaining a subscription, check with the Hare Kṛṣṇa center nearest you.

Going to Bombay?

Visit the ISKCON cultural center—Hare Krishna Land, in beautiful Juhu Beach. A short ride from the Bombay airports, Hare Krishna 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.

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.

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, check with the gift store at the Hare Kṛṣṇa center nearest you.

This summer, visit Prabhupāda's Palace of Gold. You'll find peace and inspiration in this spiritual place of pilgrimage. Tour the gardens, the gilded walkways, the marble halls and rooms. See the inspired works of devotee-painters, sculptors, and craftsmen. And enjoy delicious *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*, spiritual food, in the Palace of Gold Restaurant.

It's at New Vrindaban, the 3,000-acre Hare Kṛṣṇa community in the scenic West Virginia hills. Kṛṣṇa's devotees are here to welcome you, and we have a comfortable guesthouse where you can stay overnight.

The Palace of Gold is open throughout the

year, with special festivals during the summer months. A schedule of festivals and events is available.

For more information, write to Prabhupāda's Palace of Gold, Hare Kṛṣṇa Ridge, New Vrindaban, West Virginia 26041. Or call (304) 843-1600.

Tired of media stereotypes of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement? Want to understand who the Hare Kṛṣṇa people really are and what they're about? Then read *Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna: Five Distinguished Scholars on the Krishna Movement in the West*, a collection of interviews with Harvey Cox, Larry Shinn, Thomas Hopkins, A. L. Basham, and Srivatsa Goswami conducted by the book's editor, Steven J. Gelberg, the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement's director for interreligious affairs. Together, these dialogues shed much light on relevant historical, sociological, psychological, and theological issues surrounding the movement. This book will help you understand the logic and appeal of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

276 pages, softbound.

Order from a bookstore or check the gift shop of the Hare Kṛṣṇa center nearest you.

For life membership service inquiries and reports, please correspond with your local temple or 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.

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.

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, check with the Hare Kṛṣṇa center nearest you.

Note to Subscribers. Planning to move? Let us know when and where so we can keep your BACK TO GODHEAD coming without a break. Write Circulation Dept., P.O. Box 133, Line Lexington, PA 18932-0133. Please send a recent mailing label or invoice.



Every Town and Village

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



RAJHARAKRISHNA DASA

Ādirāja dāsa, co-director of the French Food for Life program, uses an army-surplus mobile kitchen.



New Student Center Opens in Mexico

Mexico City—ISKCON recently opened a learning center near the National University of Mexico. The center offers morning and afternoon classes on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, a nourishing lunch of *kṛṣṇa-prasādam* (vegetarian food offered to Kṛṣṇa), a cooking class, a class on Indian dance, and a weekly series of discourses on contemporary issues. In addition, a devotee on the staff gives guest lectures at the university. The new facility includes an auditorium, a video room, and a library containing transcendental literature. Vrajavāsī dāsa, the director, plans to translate and publish certain books that have not yet appeared in Spanish, such as Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*.

ISKCON Increases Book Distribution in 1984

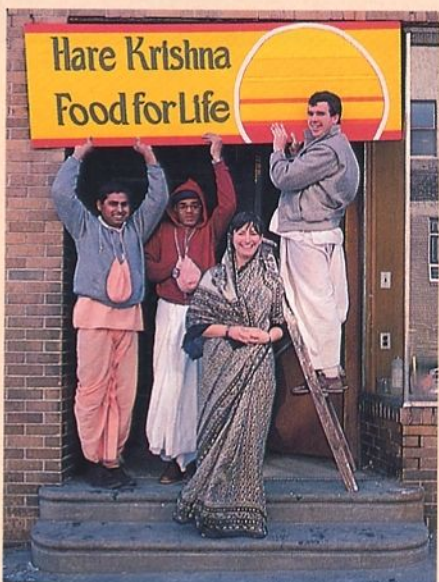
Los Angeles—The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT) report for 1984 shows a continuing worldwide increase in the distribution of Śrīla Prabhupāda's transcendental books. Remittances by ISKCON temples to the BBT were double the largest total received in any year before Śrīla Prabhupāda passed away in 1977. The greatest increases were in Norway, Denmark, Finland, Indonesia, Japan, and Malaysia. In overall distribution, ISKCON's Southern European division topped all others.

Governments Aid Devotees' Welfare Activities

A new Hare Kṛṣṇa Food for Life program in Paris is distributing one thousand meals daily, and a proposal was recently made to increase the distribution to three thousand meals to meet the high demand. More than six million French people live below the poverty level, and the government is anxious to remedy the situation. The devotees, therefore, receive free government surplus food and subsidized discounts on milk products, and a government volunteer association provides manpower when needed.

Elsewhere, renovation is almost complete on the new, three-story Hare Kṛṣṇa Food for Life building in Philadelphia. The top two floors will become a fully-licensed shelter for the homeless, and a free lunch program will operate out of the storefront at ground level. Government officials have praised this program, and the shelter received public funds for emergency use last winter. Once the shelter is licensed, the Department of Welfare will refer homeless people and then reimburse the program under the purchase-of-service agreement it maintains with private shelters. The devotees plan to hold a grand opening and intend to invite Mayor Wilson Goode to a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Candrikā-devī

dāsī, one of the program directors, met the mayor at a committee hearing of the state legislature, where she testified on homelessness in Philadelphia.



YAMARAJA DASA

Moving into the new Philadelphia Hare Kṛṣṇa Food for Life building are (left to right) Bhakta Revanna, Viṣṇor-ārādhanaṁ dāsa, Candrikā-devī dāsī, and Rūpa-manohara dāsa.



Lord Kṛṣṇa's Cuisine

Werkies: A Culinary Challenge

These delicious deep-fried pastries are tricky to make, but the extra effort makes them extra pleasing to Kṛṣṇa.

Text and photo by
VIŚĀKHĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

There's a particular spot in Old Delhi, a confined area compact with wall-to-wall stalls, that's always crowded with people eating breakfast, brunch, lunch, a snack, or dinner. And you can always smell the natural goodness of fresh whole-wheat breads sizzling in clarified butter on flat iron griddles. This is "Paratha Gully," famous for its outdoor *paratha* stands. These unleavened, shallow-fried flat breads, served plain, stuffed, or sweetened, are fa-

vorites one can enjoy any time of the day. They're especially good for traveling, as they keep well without refrigeration.

Śrīla Prabhupāda thoroughly enjoyed well-cooked, flaky *parathas*, and he often included them in his travel menu, along with nuts and fresh fruits, hot milk or juice, and a dab of chutney or jam. Knowing of Śrīla Prabhupāda's fondness for *parathas*, one of his cooks, Yamunā-devī dāsī (she writes the recipes for Kṛṣṇa's

Cuisine), visited Paratha Gully to observe the masters. There she saw family-trained specialists from eight to eighty sitting hour after hour making nothing but *parathas* for locals and tourists alike. So the next time Yamunā made *parathas* for Śrīla Prabhupāda, she followed their technique.

"Where did you learn to make *parathas* like this?" Śrīla Prabhupāda asked her after he had taken a few bites.

"I learned in Paratha Gully, Śrīla Prabhupāda," Yamunā replied.

"Oh, yes, I also have seen them making *parathas*. An observant cook can learn simply by watching and hearing. Even as a child I learned to cook by watching my mother, maternal aunt, and the street vendors."

But even if you go to Paratha Gully in Old Delhi, you may not see them making the kind of *parathas* we're featuring this month. This *paratha*, called *werkie*, is the Bengali version of the age-old favorite.

Unlike others, *werkie parathas* are deep-fried, so they turn out more like a pastry than a flat bread. They're multilayered and have a rich, buttery flavor that goes well with either sweets or savories. They're ideal as a breakfast treat or an afternoon snack. But *werkies* are for those who want a culinary challenge: they're tricky to make.

The first *parathas* I ever had were not *werkies* but regular ones. It was during the summer of 1971, in Vṛndāvana, the small town ninety miles from Delhi where Kṛṣṇa enacted His childhood pastimes. My husband and I had rented a house there for a month so we could take pictures of the town, and we became friends with an old man who lived across the street. Each night he invited us upstairs to his veranda, where he treated us to hot milk, ripe mangoes, and fresh, warm *parathas* he had just cooked. We still occasionally remember those evenings, when we sat under the stars as the heat of the day yielded to night's welcome coolness, the air gently vibrating with the sounds of distant temple bells ringing and devotees chanting, while we relished that wonderful combination.

At that time I was interested only in photography, not cooking, so it wasn't until six years later that I learned how to make *parathas*—from Yamunā-devī. Although I'm lazy when it comes to cooking, *parathas* are so good that even I can muster the energy to make them, especially when we travel.

Now, ordinarily *werkies* are harder to make than regular *parathas*, but Yamunā has made the recipe so clear and easy to follow, with numbered instructions and diagrams, that they're an approachable—and rewarding—dish to prepare and offer to Kṛṣṇa.

As we've mentioned before in this column, since Lord Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate proprietor and enjoyer of everything, He

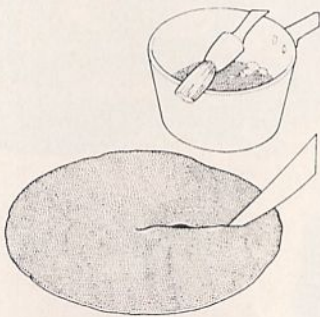
(Recipes by Yamunā-devī dāsī)

Deep-Fried Spiraled Flat Breads (*Werkie Parathas*)

Preparation time: 1½ hours
Servings: 8

Parathas, whether plain, sweetened, or stuffed, are best when cooked in ghee, or clarified butter. *Parathas* drink in the flavor of this delicate, distinctively sweet oil. If you must substitute, try using equal quantities of ghee and oil before resorting to plain oil. As a rule, *parathas* are served for breakfast or as a late-afternoon snack. When they are stuffed with potatoes, cauliflower, or other vegetables, they are filling and make good traveling companions.

Ingredients for the dough:
2½ cups white pastry flour
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon sugar



2½ tablespoons ghee or vegetable oil
½ cup plus 1½ tablespoons water

Ingredients for the butter paste:
2½ tablespoons melted butter or ghee
1½ tablespoons white flour

To prepare the dough:

1. Combine the flour, salt, and sugar in a large bowl and mix well. Using your fingertips, rub in 2 tablespoons ghee until the mixture resembles dry oatmeal.

2. Pour ¾ cup water into the flour mixture and vigorously work the dough with the hands until it begins to hold together. Add as much additional water as is necessary to prepare medium-soft, pliable dough.

3. Knead for about ten minutes, form into a smooth, compact ball, and cover the surface with a film of ghee. Cover with a damp cloth for ½ hour.

To prepare the spiraled *parathas*:

1. Knead the dough on a smooth surface for 2 or 3 minutes. Divide into 8 pieces and roll each piece into a smooth ball.

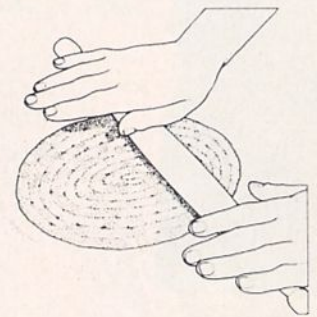
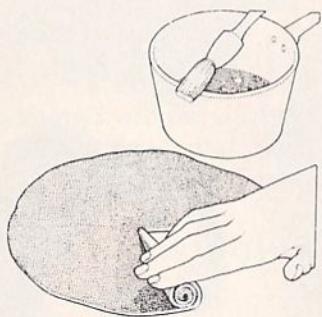
2. Flatten each ball slightly, dip both sides in flour, and use a rolling pin to roll it into a round, flat disc about 6 inches in diameter. Smear one teaspoon of the butter paste over the surface. With a sharp knife, make a cut from the center of the disc to the outside edge. Roll, from the cut, to shape a cone.

3. Place the small end of the cone up and press the tip down to form a patty. Dip both sides in flour and roll into a 6 inch disc. Shape remaining cones the same way.

To fry the *parathas*:

1. Pour ½-inch of ghee into an 8-inch frying pan. Heat over a medium flame.

2. Gently slip a rolled *paratha* into the hot ghee and immediately begin to gently press the hot surface of the bread with a slotted frying spoon. As it cooks, the *paratha* will try to surface and balloon. The downward pressure of the spoon encourages the *paratha* to swell.



Fry for 2 minutes on each side, or until the *paratha* is reddish gold. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on absorbent paper. Offer to Kṛṣṇa immediately, or keep warm in a 250°F oven.

Cauliflower Parathas (*Gobi Parathas*)

Preparation time: 1½ hours
Servings: 8

Ingredients for the dough:

4 cups fine whole-wheat flour
1½ teaspoons salt
¾–1 cup ghee
1½–2½ cups water

Prepare dough as in previous recipe.

Ingredients for the cauliflower stuffing:

3 tablespoons ghee
½ tablespoon peeled ginger root, minced fine
1 teaspoon green chilies, minced fine

1 teaspoon black mustard seeds
3 cups shredded cauliflower
1 teaspoon turmeric powder
2 teaspoons coriander powder
1 teaspoon cumin powder
¼ teaspoon cayenne
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon sugar

To prepare the stuffing:

1. Heat ghee over medium flame in a 12-inch frying pan. Stir in minced ginger, chilies, and black mustard seeds, and fry until seeds pop and sputter.

2. Add the cauliflower, turmeric, coriander, cumin, cayenne, and salt, and stir-fry for 3 minutes.

3. Add the sugar, reduce flame, cover, and cook for 10 minutes, or until the cauliflower is tender. Remove from flame, cool to room temperature, and divide into 8 portions.

To assemble and cook:

1. Knead the dough for 2 minutes and di-

vide into 16 even-sized pieces. Roll the pieces into smooth balls and cover with a damp towel.

2. Flatten one of the balls into a patty, dip in flour, and roll into a round disc 6 inches in diameter. Roll another disc in the same way.

3. Spread a portion of the filling evenly on the surface of one disc, leaving a ½-inch border around the edge. Using your finger, brush a light film of water around the clean edge, then lay the second rolled disc directly over the disc with the stuffing. Gently press the edges to seal them.

4. Preheat a griddle or frying pan over a medium flame. Brush the surface of the pan with ghee, and carefully slide a stuffed *paratha* into the pan. Cook for ½ minute, then drizzle 2 teaspoons of ghee around the edges of the *paratha* and cook for another minute. Turn the *paratha* with a spatula, again drizzle with ghee, and cook for another minute or so. Both sides should be reddish gold. Offer to Kṛṣṇa hot.

asks us to offer our vegetarian dishes to Him before we eat. Thus a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, to awaken and express his love for the Lord, will meditate on Him as he cooks his food and offer it to Him before partaking himself. Such an offering, made with a mood of devotion and service, is the means to approach God. It's not necessary to be rich, learned, intellectual, or aristocratic. All that's required is love. If an offering is

made with love, the Lord will accept even simple things—fruits, flowers, water, even steamed vegetables.

If you're like me, when you hear this you'll immediately ask, "If the Lord will accept simple dishes, why struggle with *parathas*, what to speak of *werkie parathas*?" But there are good reasons why. For one, *werkies* are a delightful change from the norm. Also they're delicious. And that

they're a challenge is also in their favor, since to spend a little more time and effort cooking for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure is a sign of love for Him—a sign that will not go unnoticed, for He notices everything.

To cook with Kṛṣṇa in mind, to offer the food for His pleasure, and then to taste the offering while remembering Him—that is Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the perfection of life.



The Glories of LORD CAITANYA

Part 4: Childhood Pastimes

The seemingly ordinary activities of Lord Caitanya as a child are entirely transcendental. Who would have thought that a child at play could topple the bastions of monism and pantheism?

by MATHUREŚA DĀSA

Continuing a special series of articles commemorating the five-hundredth anniversary of Lord Caitanya's appearance in Māyāpur, West Bengal. By His life and teachings, He inaugurated the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

One day shortly after He learned to walk, Lord Caitanya was playing with other small neighborhood children when His mother, Śrīmatī Śacīdevī, brought Him a dish filled with rice and sweets. After asking her child to sit down and eat, mother Śacī went about her household duties. But as soon as she left, Lord Caitanya began to eat dirt instead of the lovingly prepared food. Upon returning, mother Śacī was greatly surprised. "What is this!" she exclaimed.

This was one of Lord Caitanya's childhood pastimes when He appeared on earth five hundred years ago. Yet at first hearing, it hardly seems to confirm Lord Caitanya as the same Supreme Personality of Godhead described in the ancient Vedic literature. The *Bhagavad-gītā* does assert that to establish universal religious principles the Supreme Lord regularly appears within the material creation, playing the part of a human being. Thus, although He is the oldest of all, He exhibits many un-

common pastimes as a child.

But what's so uncommon or divine about eating dirt? Every one-year-old tends to think that anything visible is also edible. How is Lord Caitanya's dirt-eating any different? And how does it serve to establish universal religious principles? Let's return to the scene of the Lord's childhood misdemeanor and find out.

Upon being asked by mother Śacī to account for His behavior, the Lord replied in a surprisingly philosophical way. "Why are you angry?" He said. "You gave Me dirt, so how am I to blame? Rice and sweets, or anything edible, is all but a transformation of dirt. You gave Me dirt—and I ate dirt. Why do you object?" Lord Caitanya argued that since all food comes originally from the earth, it is but a transformation of dirt. So eating sweets or eating dirt, what's the difference?

Lord Caitanya's childish reply parodies the philosophy of monism espoused by the Māyāvāda philosophers, who hold that the one and only reality is all-pervading, eternal, undifferentiated spiritual existence, or Brahman. Thus, as the popular Māyāvāda slogan goes, "All is one." In other words, despite appearances, you and I are not separate individuals, but we are one in

all respects with the impersonal Brahman. Or, to get right down to it, each of us is God—if we could only realize it. And this material universe—with all its variety—is, they say, false, an illusion.

In eating dirt Lord Caitanya was taking the "All is one" philosophy to its logical conclusion. "Dirt is illusion, and sweets are illusion," He was implying. "So what's the difference between eating dirt and eating sweets?"

Mother Śacī was no pundit, yet her stern reply to Lord Caitanya shatters the foolish subterfuge of Māyāvāda scholars. "Who taught You this philosophy that justifies eating dirt?" she asked. "If everything is one, why do people in general eat not dirt but the food grains produced from the dirt?"

Thus mother Śacī exposed the impracticality of Māyāvāda philosophy and showed the commonsense Vaiṣṇava* viewpoint. "My dear boy," she said, "if we eat dirt transformed into grains, our body is nourished, and it becomes strong. But if we eat dirt in its crude state, the body becomes diseased instead of nourished, and thus it

*A Vaiṣṇava is a devotee of Lord Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa.

unfortunately is soon destroyed.

“In a waterpot, which is a transformation of dirt, I can bring water very easily. But if I poured water on a lump of dirt, the lump would soak up the water, and my labor would be useless.”

Unlike the Māyāvādīs, Vaiṣṇavas, as mother Śacī explained, have a very practical, workable realization of spiritual truth. They accept that all is one, but only in the sense that everything is the energy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This material world, being His inferior energy, is one with Him. But the varieties within that energy, although temporary, are not illusion. And as for ourselves, we are eternal, individual manifestations of the Lord’s superior, spiritual energy. Thus we are one with God in *quality*. But to argue, as the Māyāvādīs do, that we are all God would be a gross oversimplification.

The Vaiṣṇava knows material varieties have practical value in devotional service to the Supreme Person. With a waterpot we can bring water to wash the Lord’s temple, church, or mosque (or in mother Śacī’s case, to bathe the Lord Himself). And with rice and other foods we can prepare varieties of dishes, offer them to the Lord, and use the spiritualized remnants of those offerings to nourish our bodies and thus strengthen them for engaging in the unlimited variety of pure devotional activities.

Māyāvādīs, on the other hand, consider devotional service to be an occupation only for the ignorant. “Why serve God?” they say. “You *are* God.” To them water, earth, food, our physical bodies, and all other material manifestations are illusion and therefore of no practical value. Since they see all form and personality as illusion, they consider the Supreme Lord Himself to be illusion. Everything is illusion, they claim, except their own idiot philosophy.

In the simple childish act of eating dirt—and defending it—Lord Caitanya parodied, and allowed His mother to defeat, a philosophical doctrine of monism that poses a serious threat to anyone of any religious faith who aspires for a loving relationship with God. Māyāvāda philosophy, Lord Caitanya would later teach, is worse than atheism, because in the guise of a spiritual teaching it denies the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the eternal value of devotion to Him.

All of Lord Caitanya’s childhood pastimes have similar deep imports. When He was a little older, He would go to the nearby bank of the Ganges and tease the young girls assembled there. According to Vedic custom, girls ten to twelve years old worship Lord Śiva, praying that in the future they’ll have good husbands. Lord Śiva is the powerful demigod in charge of the ultimate dissolution of the universe,

yet he is also a peaceful devotee of the Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa. So the girls on the bank of the Ganges were praying to Lord Śiva for a husband who was, like him, both peaceful and powerful.

Lord Caitanya would sit down with the girls and interrupt their worship, snatching up the flower garlands, sandalwood pulp, fruits, and sweets they were offering to Lord Śiva. “Worship Me,” He demanded, “and I will give you good husbands and other benedictions. Lord Śiva and his wife, the goddess Durgā, are My menial servants.”

In His youthful playfulness Lord Caitanya was making an important point. There is a misconception among some students of Eastern religions that the Vedic tradition is polytheistic and therefore that followers of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness move-

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ment worship many gods. But this is not a fact. According to the Vedic literature, everyone is a servant of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa. Within the universe, some of the Lord’s most elevated servants have been empowered to look after the universal administration, and these powerful living entities are known as demigods. Lord Śiva, as we have already mentioned, is in charge of destruction, Lord Brahmā directs the creation, and millions of other demigods manage such universal resources as sunlight, water, fire, wind, and rain. The demigods are all great devotees of the Lord, working under His supervision. They are controllers, just as we are all to some degree, but they aren’t equal to the supreme controller.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa asserts that those who worship the demigods have lost their intelligence. Although it is a fact

that the demigods can award material benedictions to their worshipers—Lord Śiva, for example, can be worshiped for a good husband—these benedictions must ultimately be sanctioned by Kṛṣṇa Himself. So why not worship Kṛṣṇa directly? That is the intelligent thing to do. That is what the Vedic literatures direct us to do, and that is what the Supreme Lord Himself was demanding, not only of the young girls on the bank of the Ganges, but of all of us.

All living entities, including the demigods, are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, and therefore it is our constitutional position to serve and worship Him. By doing so, we gradually attain eternal, blissful life in Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental abode. That is a benediction even the demigods aspire for, and one they cannot award their own worshipers.

In comparison to the demigods, who control important aspects of the cosmic manifestation, human beings are insignificant and powerless, and therefore it is in one sense natural for men to worship demigods. We worship powerful and wealthy personalities even on this planet, so why not the demigods? But in comparison to Lord Kṛṣṇa, even great demigods like Lord Śiva are insignificant, since they derive all their power from Him. If you have only one dollar, a thousand dollars seems like a lot of money, but to a multimillionaire a thousand dollars is small change. Similarly, in comparison to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the demigods, what to speak of powerful men on this planet, are small change.

So yes, followers of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement believe in the demigods, and they offer the demigods due respect. In fact, they offer respect to all living beings, seeing them all as servants of Lord Kṛṣṇa. But they worship and love only the Supreme Person, following His instructions in the *Bhagavad-gītā* to give up all varieties of worship and just surrender to Him.

As with His pastime of eating dirt, Lord Caitanya, by teasing the young girls, established a religious principle that applies to everyone who desires to please the Supreme Lord and develop a loving relationship with Him. Lord Caitanya did not favor one religion over another; rather, He taught the eternal nonsectarian science of God realization. As the study of ordinary sciences is open to any person, regardless of his or her nationality or religious upbringing, so the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness taught by Lord Caitanya and His followers is open to anyone. And it can work for anyone. Two plus two equals four, no matter what your geographical, philosophical, or religious background.

Lord Caitanya is not, therefore, a sectarian figure. He is, as the Vedic literatures
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DESCENT OF GOD

(continued from page 10)

For God is the Absolute Truth, the one and only source of everything. Everything that exists is, so to speak, cloned from Him. Our fleeting world is a dim, washed-out reflection of His eternal world; our society, of His society; our relations, of His relations. We ourselves, being made in the divine image, are small samples of Him. Consequently, by studying ourselves and our world we can understand something about God and His world. We see, for instance, that people are endowed with the disposition to fight. Therefore, we can understand that the disposition exists in God. Similarly, we see in our world sexual attraction between males and females. That attraction, therefore, must also be resident in God. For God is complete, and, far from being less a person than we are, is vastly more fully personal.

Therefore He fights and He makes love, and the reason speculators want to deny these activities to Him is they think that His fighting and loving would be attended by the hate and lust that accompany ours. This is a mistake. God's activities, like His name and His form, are not material. They are fully spiritual. Although there may be a family resemblance between God's form and activities and our own, we should take care not to attribute to Him the defects and debilities of ours; there is a qualitative difference.

We need to understand that difference intelligently. Consider the attribute *variety*. As we have seen, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* discloses overwhelming variety in divinity. God exhibits, for example, a multitude of forms. Yet isn't absolute unity an attribute of spirit? Isn't God one? That is true, but unity or oneness that merely excludes or negates diversity is material, mundane oneness. We can see that such unity would be unworthy of God, for it would deprive Him of something of value. (And there is variety *here*; where does it come from if not from God?) Therefore God's unity must be transcendent: it must include—not exclude—variety. Nor is His variety achieved at the expense of unity. That is the power of transcendence: to reconcile the one and the many in a higher synthesis. Although this spiritual unity may elude the comprehension of mundane intelligence, it is well within the ambit of the inscrutable power of God.

The principle of transcendent diversity-in-unity also helps us grasp the spiritual nature of God's body. Although God descends in a form resembling ours, that form is eternal and spiritual—nondifferent, in fact, from God Himself. For God, there is no division—as there is for us—of soul and body. And God's form is so transcendently unified that each and every organ

possesses in itself the functions of all the others. Though Kṛṣṇa may be limbed, each limb is the whole person. (And because His form is spiritual, it remains eternally at the peak of youth.)

The same principle explains why God can appear in so many diverse forms and yet remain one and absolute. The pure devotee, by spiritual perception, can grasp this wholly, and He appreciates the unfathomable depth of God's personhood through its multifaceted expression. The various personalities of the one Godhead are manifest in the context of different relationships. We see the same phenomenon at work in human personality. An individual man will show different facets of his personality in different contexts: as, say, a judge in black robes on the bench, as a host at a formal reception, as a husband

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relaxing alone with his wife, as a father romping with his children, as a son on a visit with his parents, as a teacher instructing his students, as a friend clowning with his companions, and so on.

So it is characteristic of persons to exhibit many facets, and the more "well-integrated" a person is, the greater the variety of roles and relations he can sustain without loss of integrity. The same principle applies, then, to the Supreme Person, but in His case personal integrity and variety of relations are both taken, as it were, to the limit.

For God enters into personal relationships with unlimited souls, all of whom are created and sustained by Him to that very end. To facilitate these relationships, He expands Himself in different forms, showing Himself to His pure devotees in various ways, in response to the ways in which they approach Him. All these transcen-

dent forms are eternally manifest in God's spiritual abode. And, from time to time, one or another of Them will descend to show Himself in the darkness of the material world, lighting the way back home.

The verdict of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is that of all descents of God, Kṛṣṇa is the topmost. Sūta Gosvāmī, after concluding his survey of incarnations, declares, *ete cānśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*: "All of the above-mentioned incarnations are either plenary portions or portions of the plenary portions of the Lord, but Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original Personality of Godhead."

For this reason, the centerpiece of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is an extensive narration of Lord Kṛṣṇa's advent on earth. The whole of the Tenth Canto is devoted to this, and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* builds up to it by recounting many other divine descents, in this way introducing us further and further to God, and so preparing us for the ultimate disclosure in divinity.

This ultimate disclosure is conveyed in Kṛṣṇa's pastimes of childhood and youth in the cowherd village of Vṛndāvana. What would be a paradox to mundane eyes is clear to purified vision: that here in this little hamlet had descended to earth not only God in His most exalted manifestation, but the entire of His highest abode as well. For the Lord is inseparable from His devotees and His abode, and when Kṛṣṇa descends, all descend with Him. Separate from these there is no manifest Kṛṣṇa, and to reveal Himself, Kṛṣṇa must necessarily reveal His intimate devotees, His relations with them, and the places of their activities together.

Our idea of the Supreme Godhead is usually bound up with notions of power and might and majesty—"It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain . . ."—and rightly so. For all scripture calls us to acknowledge our subordination to Him. But when we have fully done so, we become eligible to receive God's revelation of another, more sublime facet of Himself, in which He sets forth, unimpeded, a lure for feelings. This is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, who in Vṛndāvana enters intimate relationships of love so as to develop unheard-of intensities of feeling. For the appetite of the Supreme Lord for love is infinite: He is called Rasarāja, the master of feelings of love. In these confidential exchanges of love, some devotees love Him with parental emotions, and the Lord reciprocates by playing as a charming and mischievous child; other devotees adore Him with fraternal feeling, and the Lord sports with them, boy among boys, as their good-hearted companion and witty sidekick;

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THE VEDIC

Transcendental Comment

CRIME IS THE PUNISHMENT

by Bhūtāmā dāsa

Commenting on the prevalence of crime-related stories in the media, *Boston Globe* editor Thomas Winship recently wrote that violent crime in America has become “such an overpowering, tragic fact of life today that I’m not sure the media can overplay it.”

In a 1981 *New York Times* public opinion poll, New Yorkers cited crime as the most serious problem facing their city—more serious than inflation, unemployment, housing, transportation, taxes, schools, and the environment combined. Figures from the U.S. Department of Justice show violent crime in the U.S. increased sixty percent in the seventies. And the eighties are offering no hope of respite.

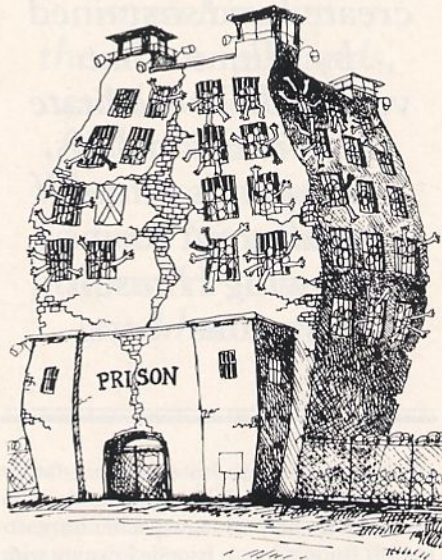
Concerned critics often propose tighter security and stiffer sentences, along with greater job opportunities for the young and the disadvantaged. But while such reforms would certainly help, a genuine solution must reach deeper. Ultimately, if we are to effect a lasting change, we must repair or even reconstruct the moral and spiritual foundation of our society. As Harvard professor James Wilson, a national authority on crime, pointed out in his article “Thinking about Crime,” “If we hope to find in some combination of swift and certain penalties and abundant economic opportunities a substitute for discordant homes, secularized churches, intimidated schools, and an ethos of individual self-expression, we are not likely to succeed.”

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, explained that only a spiritual remedy can cure the modern epidemic of crime and violence. Society must learn the techniques for bringing forth the natural goodness within the hearts of all its citizens.

In July 1975, in a conversation* with Lieu-

tenant David Mozee of the Chicago police department, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “The difference between the pious man and the criminal is that one is pure in heart and the other is dirty. This dirt is like a disease in the form of uncontrollable lust and greed in the heart of the criminal. Today people in general are in this diseased condition, and thus crime is very widespread. When people become purified of these dirty things, crime will disappear. . . .

“The only way to permanently change the criminal habit is to change the heart of the criminal. As you well know, many thieves are arrested numerous times and



put into jail. Although they know that if they commit theft they will go to jail, still they are forced to steal because of their unclean hearts. Therefore without cleansing the heart of the criminal, you cannot stop crime simply by more stringent law enforcement. The thief and the murderer already know the law, yet they still commit violent crimes due to their unclean hearts. So our process is to cleanse the heart.”

In a spiritually centered society, citizens are taught from childhood how to purify their consciousness and thus attain freedom from the disturbing influences of lust and greed. And such a society recognizes

this purification as the central aim of human life. By contrast, the chief goal of today’s materialistic societies is economic development, and thus everyone learns to act selfishly for sense gratification. This prevailing mood agitates lust, anger, and greed, and then society must suffer the crime that springs from these negative emotions. A materialistic society, by attempting to exploit nature’s resources for sense enjoyment, also generates excessive competition among its citizens. This inevitably leads to social inequality and corruption, which further inflame the anger and frustrations of many potential or practicing criminals.

Although citizens of both a materially oriented and a spiritually oriented society seek pleasure, those in a spiritual culture enjoy the gradual realization of their eternal, blissful, spiritual consciousness and of their sublime relationship with God. The members of a materialistic society, however, aiming no higher than the fulfillment of bodily and mental demands, neglect self-realization and therefore feel profound discontent.

A materialistic society stifles its citizens’ spirituality and virtue by exaggerating their bodily propensities for eating, sleeping, mating, and defending—propensities we share with the animals. Thus people do all kinds of atrocious things in the name of sense gratification and the fulfillment of these basic needs.

A genuine religious process purifies the heart, mind, and senses of one who follows it, gradually raising him to the level of God consciousness. Any religious system unable to do so is impotent; it has no more value than a boat that cannot float. By giving us a direct experience of the supreme pleasure potency within the soul, the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness effectively liberates the mind from lust, anger, greed, and the false, bodily conception of life. As explained in the great spiritual classic *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.19–20), “By practicing *bhakti-yoga* [devotional service to Kṛṣṇa] one becomes freed from the modes of passion and ignorance, and thus lust and avarice are diminished. When these impurities are wiped away, one remains

*This conversation originally appeared in BACK TO GODHEAD 11.1 and is reprinted in *The Science of Self-Realization*.

OBSERVER

ary on the Issues of the Day

steady in his position of pure goodness and becomes joyful.”

Only when our leaders will embrace universal religious principles, such as those of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, will violent crime decrease. Otherwise, spiritual deterioration will go on unchecked, and more and more people will be compelled by uncontrollable lust, anger, and greed to prey on their fellow citizens.

IN INDIA, A MAD RACE FOR MATERIALISM

by Tattva-vit dāsa

Indians in this century, victimized by the propaganda that urban industrial development will bring them well-being and prosperity, have neglected the Vedic principles of God consciousness. The British established factories and introduced materialism, and Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of independent India, simply followed this policy, although his spiritually inclined mentor, Mahatma Gandhi, was opposed to it.

After independence, in the 1950s, thousands of poor Indians found employment in the nation's developing steel mills. But were they any happier or more advanced for having abandoned their God-conscious agricultural life in the villages? The cities became one of the most heavily industrialized areas in the world, and living conditions worsened.

Soviet propaganda would have us believe that industrialization is making India prosperous. According to *Pravda* (11/10/84), “India, a country that until recently knew only the wooden plow, is now among the world's top ten industrial producers. . . . India's pride—the state steel mills at Bhilai, Bokaro, Durgapur, and Raurkela—substantially increased their output [in 1984] and made it possible to reduce steel imports by one million tons. These and other economic successes of India are directly linked to cooperation with Socialist countries.”

Economic success, however, means that people have enough food and other basic

necessities. India's poor factory workers can't eat nuts and bolts produced in the factories. They, and all of us, must rely on what is produced in the fields by the mercy of the Supreme Lord. So to measure prosperity in terms of industrial production is foolish.

In fact, industrialization thrives at the cost of human lives, a matter the Indian government has apparently chosen to ignore. Said *U.S. News & World Report* (1/14/85), a “sign of improved [U.S.-Indian] relations has been the official reaction to the Union Carbide chemical spill at Bhopal that killed at least 2,000. The government, which wants more foreign investment, has discouraged criticism of the



U.S. for the accident at the American-owned plant.”

Thirty years ago, concerned that India's leaders were rejecting their country's spiritual heritage for Western standards, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the founder of BACK TO GODHEAD magazine, was writing articles calling for a return to India's spiritual culture. Moreover, that culture must not only be revived, he said, but it must be distributed throughout the world. Telephones, automobiles, and radios, he would argue, are not emblems of prosperity. Real prosperity lies in spiritual understanding, real poverty in ignorance. Since all suffering is ultimately caused by ignorance, poverty

and misery can be eliminated not by industrializing but by cultivating spiritual knowledge. Śrīla Prabhupāda's articles would argue that even if people have all the facilities and amenities of modern material advancement, their unhappiness and unrest would continue until they attained spiritual satisfaction. He would remind his readers that the West had seen only materialism and had therefore never known peace. If India followed the West, the only results would be strife and war—a harsh prediction that time has borne out.

The most significant strife recently has been the unrest of the Sikhs who are demanding total political independence from India. This schismatic movement had a part in the assassination of Indira Gandhi (Nehru's daughter), after which India experienced a week of fratricidal conflict. Such internal danger arises out of the prevalent lack of spiritual understanding. Historically, India's castes and religious groups have lived together peacefully. But as Indians reject the Vedic culture, ignorance and unrest have naturally ensued. Thus the real danger in India is not economic stagnation. Whenever India has had problems with minorities, it has not been just because there was an economic problem.

It is to be hoped that by the start of the next century, India's drift away from things spiritual and her unswerving dedication to economic development will have been altered under Rajiv Gandhi's leadership. If this course isn't followed, it looks like India will be out to lead the world in the mad race for materialism.

STARVING FOR KNOWLEDGE: A GREATER FAMINE

by Drutakarmā dāsa

While the world's major powers have developed the ability to deliver megatons of nuclear destructive power to any spot on earth within minutes, they have proved remarkably ineffective in delivering tons of life-saving grain to millions of people on the verge of starvation in
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“I Can Accept The Law of Karma, but ...”

by KUNḌALĪ DĀSA

The Sanskrit word *karma* is now at home in the English language. It's in the dictionary, and most of us are familiar with it. But what does it mean? In many cases people have only a vague idea. Whenever I've seen *karma* discussed in print, the explanations have usually distorted the original meaning of the word as described by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Karma (literally “action”) has four specific applications in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: (1) work in general, (2) work for Kṛṣṇa's satisfaction, (3) work for personal gain, and (4) destiny. This last definition is the most commonly used today. It refers to the intricate sequence of actions and reactions in human affairs.

That our actions in the present help to determine our future, no one can deny. If a runner doesn't train or if a student doesn't study, we can hardly expect him to succeed. And we hardly expect a truly virtuous and pious man to go unrewarded or a sinner to go unpunished. This idea of *karma* was expressed by the modern poet John G. Whittier:

*We shape ourselves the joy or fear
Of which the coming life is made,
And fill our future atmosphere
With sunshine or with shade.*

*The tissues of the life to be
We weave with colors all our own,
And in the field of destiny
We reap as we have sown.*

The idea that “we reap as we have sown” is very general, and one may question just how far the principle applies. For example, I've met persons who accept the principle of *karma*, but who stridently object to the idea conveyed on the opposite page—a man becoming a pig because of his past *karma*. That's going too far, they say.

But *karma* is not dependent on whether we choose to accept it or to reject it. It's not under our control, something we can have made to order. It's a law of nature, just like the law of gravity. And to change its workings is completely beyond us. We can ignore it, we can try to defy it, but we can't change it.

According to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, taking birth as a hog or any other animal is not at all difficult. Our thoughts, our desires, our actions all go toward determining our next birth. All a person has to do is make sure to nurture the consciousness of a hog, and in the next life . . . presto!

In the fifteenth chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa tells how the pure spirit soul, while covered by a material body, gets carried by his different conceptions of life from one body to another, just as the air carries aromas. When air wafts over a rose garden, it carries the fragrance of roses. When the same air passes over a cesspool, it carries foul smells. Similarly, when a conditioned soul gives up his present body at death, he carries his material conceptions from this life into the next.

Being forgetful of his factual identity, a conditioned soul strongly identifies with his material body, whatever it may be, taking it to be his true self. In actuality, his material body is only a combination of lifeless material elements activated by the presence of the spirit soul. But because the body is out-

fitted with sense organs, the bewildered soul, who by nature wants to enjoy, tries to find pleasure in material objects. When a soul reaches the human platform, the quest for material pleasure drives him to perform varieties of pious and sinful acts, which mold his mentality in a certain way. That determines the gender and species of body he'll deserve in his next life.

The living entity, thus taking another gross body, obtains a certain type of ear, eye, tongue, nose, and sense of touch, which are grouped around the mind. He thus enjoys a particular set of sense objects. (Bg. 15.19)

As the above verse indicates (and as anyone can see), the standard of enjoyment is different for different species. Take hogs. They don't crave salads, pastries, and sweetmeats. They can't appreciate the scent and feel of clean linen. They don't yearn to see the Russian ballet or to hear Bach and Mozart. Humans, on the other hand, can't appreciate the fouler things in life: rolling in the mud and filth, eating feces and other refuse, indulging in indiscriminate sex, even with parents and siblings. We are disgusted by the hog's standard of enjoyment.

Nevertheless, if, by our actions and desires, we cultivate a piglike mentality, we can take a hog's birth next life. Such a birth comes both as the ultimate outcome of our animalistic desires and as the just punishment for our sins.

There are, however, exceptions to the law of *karma*. Transcendentalists, or *yogīs* who follow the path of pure devotional service to God, are exempted from its influence. Lord Kṛṣṇa describes them in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

After attaining Me, the great souls, who are *yogīs* in devotion, never return to this temporary world, which is full of miseries, because they have attained the highest perfection. (Bg. 8.15)

Devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa, “*yogīs* in devotion,” are not under the influence of the law of *karma*, because they perform *kṛṣṇa-karma*. Rather than working for their personal aggrandizement and sense pleasure, they work with the sole aim of pleasing Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Kṛṣṇa-karma* is the best type of action, because it purifies the consciousness of the conditioned soul. Thus one gradually becomes free from ignorance and from entanglement in the otherwise endless chain of karmic reactions.

The simplest way to immediately and continually engage in *kṛṣṇa-karma* is to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. These names of God, like God Himself, are transcendental and absolute. Chanting them does not produce karmic reaction. Sincere chanting gradually dismantles the illusion built up around the embodied soul, and he comes to realize directly his eternal, spiritual relationship with the Personality of Godhead. A sincere and dutiful chanter ultimately develops his dormant love for God and returns to Lord Kṛṣṇa's spiritual abode, where the law of *karma* has no influence. There everyone spontaneously serves Kṛṣṇa out of pure love for Him, without any other motive. Attainment of this perfection through *kṛṣṇa-karma* is the only guarantee that one will never go to the hogs in a future life.

Childhood Pastimes

(continued from page 28)

indicate, the Supreme Personality of Godhead playing the part of His own devotee, to teach us love of God. He is like the elementary-school teacher, who, to instruct new students, sits down with them and pretends to be learning to write the letters of the alphabet.

Perhaps the easiest way to understand the nonsectarian nature of Lord Caitanya's teachings is to examine His primary teaching, that the most effective way to worship God in this age of confusion and quarrel is to chant His holy names. Lord Caitanya especially chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*,

but He taught that all of the Lord's names mentioned in the world's great scriptures will have the same purifying and liberating effect on the sincere chanter. Who could object to such a sublime, nonsectarian instruction? Persons of any religious faith, even while executing their ordinary household or business responsibilities, can perfect their human lives by constantly and steadfastly singing or chanting in devotion the particular names of God with which they are familiar.

As a child, Lord Caitanya managed to teach this foremost principle to His family and neighbors, even before He could crawl or walk. Like all children, He would cry and have to be given constant atten-

tion. The attention the Lord demanded, however, was a little unusual. No matter what His mother or the other ladies of the neighborhood did to appease Him, He would continue to cry—until He heard the chanting of Kṛṣṇa's names. As soon as the ladies chanted, He would quiet down and look upon them pleasingly with His beautiful eyes. Taking this clue, the ladies were constantly chanting and clapping their hands, making the Lord's house and the entire neighborhood the site of an ongoing festival of transcendental sounds. Like Lord Caitanya's neighbors, we can all take up the chanting of God's holy names and relish the Lord's pleasing glance upon us.

GREATER FAMINE

(continued from page 31)

Ethiopia and other drought-stricken regions of Africa.

Ethiopia's chief ally, the Soviet Union, has apparently been of little help in the present crisis. Most of the food aid arriving in the country is coming from Europe and America.

But in the eyes of many of the relief workers who have been pleading for assistance for over a year, the Western response, although welcome, is too little and too late. And they fear that the required sense of urgency will not be sustained when (as always seems to happen) the public tires of the images of pain and suffering and media coverage about the famine dwindle.

Even the Ethiopian government is without blame in the current crisis. According to reports in *Newsweek*, the military government ignored early warnings of the impending food shortages and continued spending almost half of the national budget purchasing Soviet-Bloc weapons. As in many other nations, production of traditional food crops has declined as more and more land is planted with cash crops for export.

Similar neglect in other African nations recently prompted Hilary Ng'Weno, editor of Nairobi's *Weekly Review*, to comment, "Many of the leaders mismanaged economies, squandered national wealth, and literally threw away the future as they jostled with one another for personal power and gain. When it was not greed that motivated them, it was folly and gullibility."

Why so much lack of concern for the sufferings of others? Isn't it simply that our compassion has been blunted by the selfishness fostered by today's rampant, widespread materialism? This problem was noted by Pope John Paul II, who said in a speech given in November of 1979 to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, "Hunger in the world does not al-

ways just come from geographic, climatic, or unfavorable agricultural circumstances, those that you are trying little by little to improve. . . . It comes also from man himself." The human factor in the hunger problem has led many religious leaders to urge a fundamental redirection of human energies away from greed, selfishness, and the pursuit of artificial "necessities."

If we are to solve the problem of hunger we must return to genuine spiritual values. Understanding that the real self is not the body but the conscious self within the body automatically reduces greed and conflict. A human being with such knowledge is satisfied with the natural, comfortable necessities of life and does not strive to increase his needs or to induce others to increase theirs. When spiritual goals replace material goals, qualities such as compassion and concern for others automatically replace the material qualities of greed and selfishness.

A greater sense of world community is another important consequence of replacing material goals with spiritual ones. At present the human race is divided into thousands of national, racial, religious, cultural, sexual, and economic groupings. The bodily concept of life is the root cause of this splintering. A person who is free from identifying with the material body does not see others primarily in terms of their physical, bodily natures. He sees the conscious selves within all bodies as essentially identical and equal. Seeing humanity as one family, such a person naturally responds more quickly and effectively to the sufferings of others.

At present the world has enough grain surpluses to provide minimum relief to the world's worst crisis spots, such as Ethiopia. But in order to deal effectively with the total problem of world hunger we must search for ways to dramatically increase the world's available supply of food. Many food experts have concluded that this can be done only by shifting away from the

meat-based diet now prevalent in the developed countries of the world and moving toward a vegetarian diet.

In America, for example, about ninety percent of all the harvested grain is fed to animals that are eventually slaughtered for meat. Yet information from the U.S. Department of Agriculture reveals that for every seven pounds of grain fed to animals raised for slaughter, we receive only one pound of meat in return. In *Diet for a Small Planet*, Francis Moore Lappé points out that in America alone, 120 million tons of grain out of the total of 145 million tons fed to animals is thus lost for the purpose of human consumption. To convey what this means in human terms, she explains that 120 million tons would provide every man, woman, and child on earth with a portion of one cup of cooked grain every day of the year.

So if the world's political and religious leaders would truly like to demonstrate their concern for the victims of hunger, they should adopt a vegetarian diet and urge others to do so as well. The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement is one of the world's leading promoters of a vegetarian diet as a long-range solution to the problem of world hunger. And to relieve the immediate effects of hunger, the Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees are feeding disaster victims, the homeless, the unemployed, and the hungry through the Hare Kṛṣṇa Food for Life program.

But looking beyond this, a person conversant with Vedic knowledge and trained in the Vedic system of self-realization sees that all human beings are caught in the sufferings of disease, old age, and death, to which even the richest and most well-fed among us must eventually succumb. Therefore the members of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement work not only to relieve the sufferings of the external body, but also to alleviate the sufferings of the soul. They accomplish this by widely disseminating the transcendental knowledge contained in the Vedic scriptures.

DESCENT OF GOD

(continued from page 29)

and still others worship Kṛṣṇa with the fervent ardor of conjugal love, and in response He courts and dallies with them as their enchanting suitor and the breaker of their hearts.

We recognize such feelings in the material world, of course, but in Vṛndāvana dwell the original and real spiritual emotions, as manifest in the transcendent kingdom of God through exchanges of love in spiritual bodies. Material relations and emotions cannot help us comprehend these transcendent feelings. For material loves are flickering, wavering, and fading; they are vitiated by hesitancy and doubt, and shot through with fear and dread. They are unwholesome, and time and change despoil them all. But the love directed toward Kṛṣṇa never dies; His ever-new beauty and His eternal reciprocation draw out that love endlessly; its intensity increases without limit. All these immortal Vṛndāvana feelings, each with its own medley of moods, are varieties of ecstasy. They are transcendent superemotions, rendering our most cherished earthly feelings thin and dry and flat by comparison.

Kṛṣṇa means "all-attractive," and in fulfillment of His name He revealed Himself to incite us to revive our lost relation with Him and enter with Him into these eternal pastimes of love. In this way, He shows us what it fully means to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind. Yet most of us cannot perceive and directly experience the spiritual quality of these transcendent pastimes and feelings. They are revealed, they are made available, yet we do not apprehend them as they are. We might be looking at spirit, but we see only matter.

Here it becomes necessary to touch on a delicate point.

God reveals Himself to us *as we surrender to Him*. To surrender to God means to withdraw our interest and our desire from everything that is not God. Full surrender means to have God, and God alone, as our end and our means. We must devote to Him *all* our heart, soul, and mind. Such purity is required.

Of course, God also allows for partial surrender, in hopes of gradual advancement. In every religious tradition there is scripturally sanctioned material enjoyment—that is, involvement in things other than God. Since this materialism is restricted and regulated, it is, in that respect, good. But ultimately, it too must be given up: "Abandon all materially motivated religion and surrender unto Me." To resist this request on the grounds that our materialism is scripturally sanctioned is to make the good the enemy of the best. We simply retard our progress on the spiritual path and remain more or less unacquainted

with the Personality of Godhead.

That purity of heart needed to see God may seem beyond our reach, but not so. For Kṛṣṇa *did* truly reveal Himself: The same scripture that transmits that revelation to the world—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*—conveys at the same time the process to purify us so we can receive the revelation of Kṛṣṇa. That process is the practice of devotional service centered on hearing the pure narration of the glorious pastimes of God. In other words, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* itself, when it is spoken by one who is pure, purifies us—"It cleanses desire for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee" (1.3.17)—so that we ourselves

can come to perceive Kṛṣṇa as He is. Although Kṛṣṇa descended five thousand years ago, He remains fully accessible to us in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The revelation awaits only us.

Those wishing to read more about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes will enjoy Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, a summary study of the Tenth Canto of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. In addition, The Nectar of Devotion, by the same author, presents an analysis of all the Vṛndāvana relationships and emotions, with many examples. These books, as well as Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam itself, are available at your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple.

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.

1 Mantra Meditation Beads: a string of 108 hand-carved "japa beads"—chanters use them as an aid to concentration during meditation on the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra. Each string of beads comes with a cotton carrying bag and an instruction pamphlet. \$4.95.

2 Bhagavad-gītā As It Is by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. The largest-selling, most widely used edition of the *Bhagavad-gītā* in the Western world. Complete edition. Revised and enlarged, with the original Sanskrit text, Roman transliterations, and English equivalents. \$9.95.

3 Mr̥daṅga Drum: lightweight, double-headed Indian-style drum used in chanting the mahā-mantra. Unbreakable. Comes with an instruction book and cassette instruction tape. \$149.85.

4 Deity Poster: a full-color photo of the beautiful Deities at the Los Angeles Hare Kṛṣṇa center. Poster-size. \$2.50.

5 SPECIAL: The original Hare Kṛṣṇa Meditation Album. In 1966 Śrīla Prabhupāda made this unique recording with his first disciples. On it Prabhupāda explains the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, and he and his disciples chant. A historic recording. C-60 cassette. \$4.00.

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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Satisfaction Guaranteed

While on a recent walk with a young devotee through downtown Boston, I found myself standing before the offices of the *Atlantic Monthly* magazine. The sight of the building evoked in me fond memories of a time fifteen years earlier when, as a missionary for my spiritual master, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, I had first come to the city to open a temple.

I turned to the devotee standing beside me. "I once spoke with an editor who worked in this building," I said, remembering how naive and brash I had been, expecting the publishers to agree to print an article about the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

"The *Atlantic Monthly* does not provide religious coverage," the editor had said. "It's not our editorial policy."

"Well, why not?" I had countered. "This is an important movement. An intellectual magazine should want to cover it." I then offered to write an article myself. Politely, the editor told me that if I expected to publish an article in the *Atlantic*, I would first have to become a famous author. I didn't pursue the matter further.

"I wonder what would happen if you were to go back there today?" my young companion asked. And I recognized in his question a brashness similar to that of my own youth.

"You mean because I've written Śrīla Prabhupāda's biography and other books, the editors might accept me as a famous writer?" I asked. "No. They're still not concerned with Kṛṣṇa consciousness or with a Kṛṣṇa conscious author."

Despite the fact that the doors of the *Atlantic Monthly* remain shut to me, I am satisfied in my work. To know that I am appreciated by my spiritual master and by Kṛṣṇa is enough. Rather than trying to become a popular author and satisfy the public at large, I have sought to satisfy my spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa, and that has given me the greatest satisfaction.

The satisfaction derived from serving Kṛṣṇa is exemplified fully in the life of my spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the founder and spiritual master of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. In 1922, when Śrīla Prabhupāda was but twenty-six years old, his spiritual master instructed him to spread Kṛṣṇa

consciousness throughout the world. Despite the fact that his family neither appreciated his life's mission nor offered him support, Śrīla Prabhupāda absorbed himself in thoughts of how to carry out this task.

In 1944, he published and personally distributed the first issue of BACK TO GODHEAD magazine. In 1954, he retired from family life, and from then until 1965, when he journeyed to America to found the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, he struggled in India without assistance to disseminate the teachings of the Vedic literature to whoever would listen. During those eleven years, he continued to publish—though intermittently because of lack of funds—his BACK TO GODHEAD magazine. And in the summer of 1962 he began the principal literary contribution of his life, translating and commenting on the sixty-volume *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Late that year, the first volume of the First Canto went to press.

No one was eager to see him writing prolifically, and no one demanded that it be printed. Even when the sales slowed to a trickle, the managers of O.K. Press were not distressed; . . . the pressure was on him to go out and sell as many copies of the first volume as possible. (*Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta, A Lifetime in Preparation*, p. 267)

Despite hardships and the lack of assistance and appreciation, Śrīla Prabhupāda had only an increasing desire to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness over the years. How, we might ask, is such determination possible? The answer is that his spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa were reciprocating with his unflinching struggle to do as he had been instructed.

Bhaktivedanta Swami, by his full engagement in producing the *Bhāgavatam*, felt bliss and assurance that Kṛṣṇa was pleased. He did not, however, intend for the *Bhāgavatam* to be his private affair. . . . Yet he was alone, and he felt exclusive pleasure and satisfaction in serving his *guru* and Lord Kṛṣṇa. Thus his transcendental frustration and pleasure mingled, his will strengthened, and he continued alone. (*A Lifetime in Preparation*, p. 267)

Years later, Śrīla Prabhupāda said that those times he spent struggling alone in India and during his first year in America

were actually the best times, because during that period he had no recourse but to depend on Kṛṣṇa. By depending exclusively on the Lord, one discovers true self-satisfaction, whereas those who constantly need others to reassure them that they are appreciated and are doing well will always meet with frustration and loneliness.

From the life of Śrīla Prabhupāda, we may surmise that to satisfy Kṛṣṇa is not an easy thing, yet one's efforts to serve Him never go unappreciated. The proper way to render devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is to surrender fully to the instructions of Kṛṣṇa's pure representative, the spiritual master. And even when the spiritual master is no longer physically present, the faithful disciple knows in his heart that the spiritual master is pleased and is satisfied by his sincere servant's efforts. As Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote upon completing his translation of the seventeen-volume *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*,

If [my spiritual master] were physically present at this time, it would have been a great occasion for jubilation. But even though he is not physically present, I am confident that he is very pleased by this work of translation. (Cc., *Antya-līlā*, Vol. 5, pp. 320–321)

Lord Kṛṣṇa is seated in our hearts as our best friend. He knows the many sufferings we have undergone and which no else can either understand or care about, and He sympathizes with us in those sufferings. He appreciates us, and He knows how nice we are. To appreciate Kṛṣṇa in return and to please Him is the greatest happiness in life, and it is the greatest source of personal satisfaction. One who has realized this satisfaction is said to be *ātmārāma*, self-satisfied. Such a person needs no further support in this world.

The young devotee accompanying me through Boston's streets certainly misjudged the *Atlantic's* editors. No, the editors at the *Atlantic Monthly* are not likely to appreciate the work of the devotees of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Nevertheless, I am satisfied in knowing that my efforts are being appreciated by my spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa, and that as a result, others are also coming to experience the complete satisfaction of satisfying the Supreme Personality of Godhead. —SDG

CHANT!



1984 Festival of the Chariots, Los Angeles

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.

“Oh, boy! The Sunday Feast!”



We think you'll smile too when you taste the vegetarian dishes we serve every Sunday at the Hare Kṛṣṇa Center. And there's music, theater, philosophy, and dance. It's a festival of Vedic India. And it's free! For our phone number and address, please see pages 20–21.