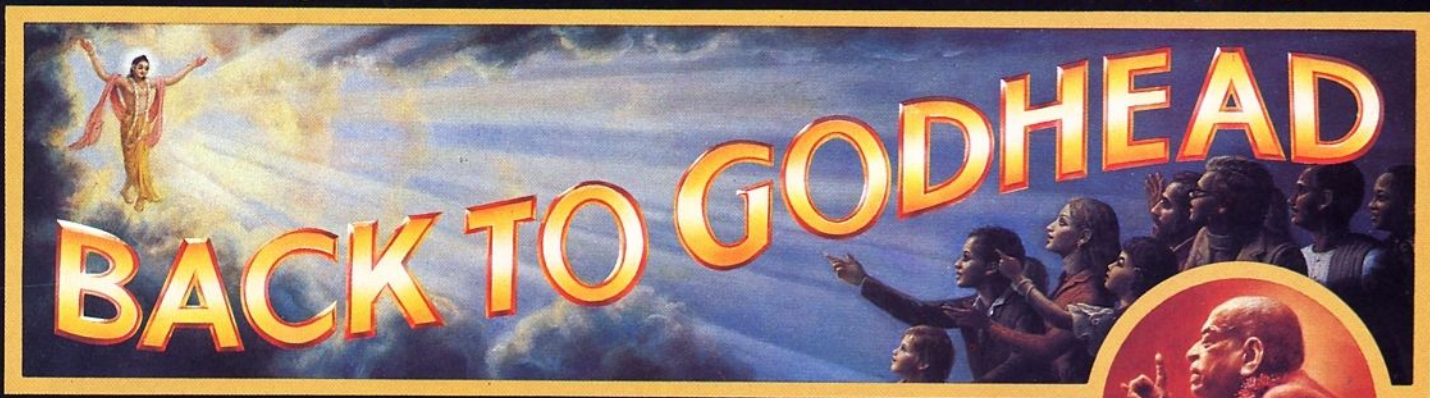
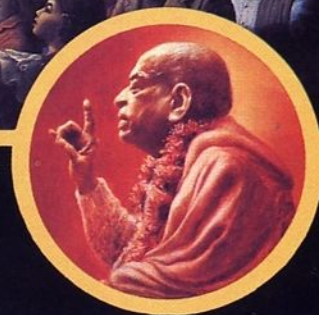


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

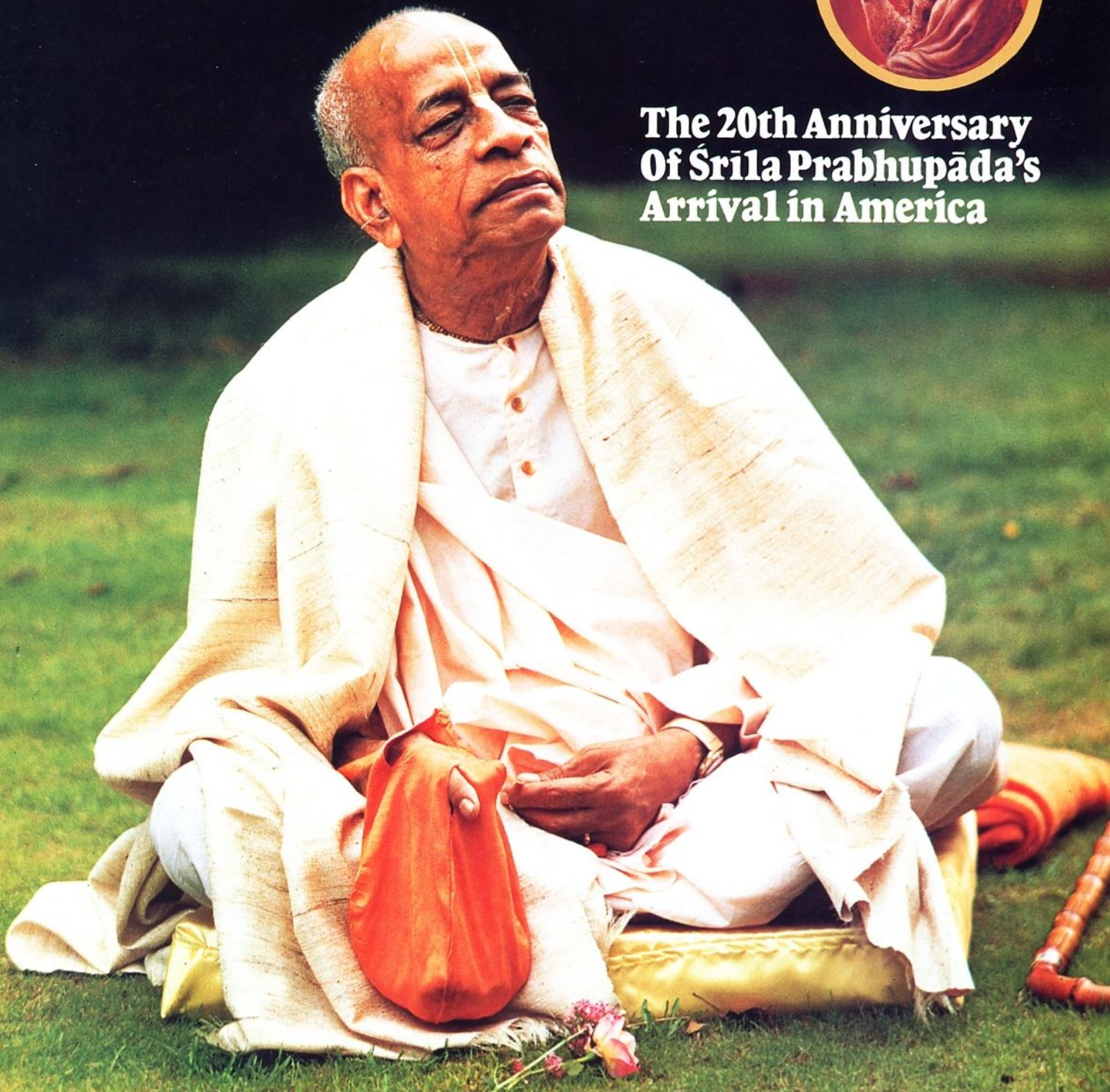


Vol.20 No.9

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

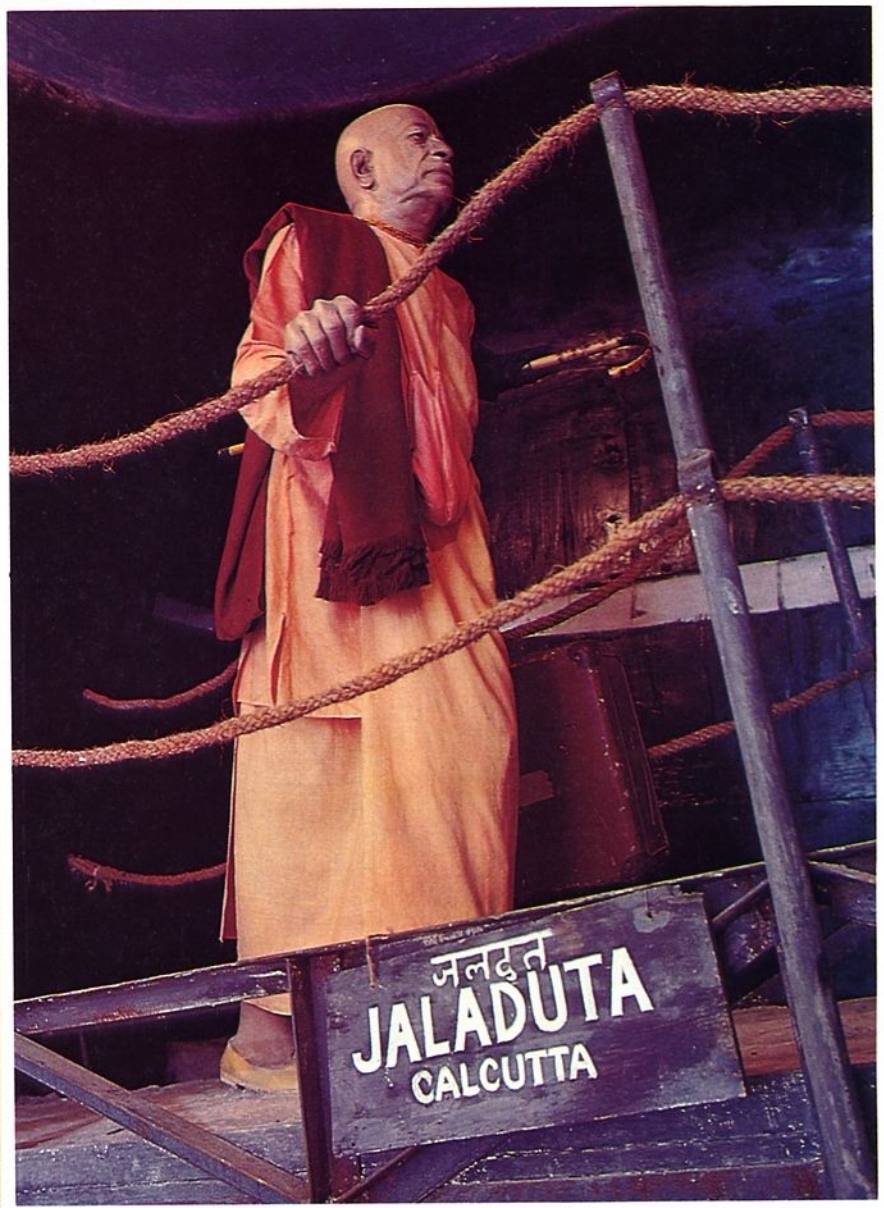


**The 20th Anniversary
Of Śrīla Prabhupāda's
Arrival in America**



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. (At right, a diorama depicts Śrīla Prabhupāda's departure from India.) In a dozen years he published some seventy volumes of translation and commentary on India's Vedic literature, and these are now standard in universities worldwide. Meanwhile, traveling almost nonstop, Śrīla Prabhupāda molded his international society into a worldwide confederation of āśramas, schools, temples, and farm communities. He passed away in 1977 in India's Vṛndāvana, the place most sacred to Lord Kṛṣṇa. His disciples are carrying forward the movement he started. Advanced disciples throughout the world have been authorized to serve in the position of spiritual master, initiating disciples of their own. And these disciples, in turn, become linked with Śrīla Prabhupāda through the transcendental system of disciplic succession.



DIORAMA BY BHAKTISIDDHANTA DASA

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 *sankīrtana* 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. 9 SEPTEMBER 1985 PRICE: \$1.50

FOUNDER

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

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda

EDITOR IN CHIEF Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami

MANAGING EDITOR Śeṣa dāsa

ASSOCIATE EDITORS Draviḍa dāsa,

Māndaleśvara dāsa, Mathureśa dāsa

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Druṭakarmā dāsa,

Kuṇḍali dāsa, Ravīndra-svarūpa dāsa, Viśākhā-devī dāsi

DESIGN Yamarāja dāsa

CIRCULATION Ādi-keśava dāsa

PRODUCTION MANAGER Rāmanātha-sukha dāsa

COMPOSITION Tattva-vit dāsa

PRODUCTION Bali Mahārāja dāsa

ILLUSTRATORS Dhruva Mahārāja dāsa, Puṣkara dāsa

PROOFREADER Ksamā-devī dāsi

SANSKRIT EDITOR Kuśakratha dāsa

ARCHIVES Nitya-triptā-devī dāsi, Parama-rūpa dāsa

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES Abhimanyu dāsa,

Caitanya-rūpa-devī dāsi, Janeśvarī-devī dāsi,

Kṛṣṇa-kṛpa dāsa, Vrajabhūmi-devī dāsi

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 e like the ch in chair. Pronounce the aspirated consonants (ch, jh, dh, etc.) as in staunch-heart, hedgehog, and red-hot. Finally, pronounce the sibilants ś and ṣ like sh. So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, and for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

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

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. Outside Canada and the U.S.A., contact the ISKCON center nearest you (see address list on pages 20-21) or add \$4.00 for surface mail, \$10.00 for airmail. Payments in U.S. funds must accompany foreign and Canadian orders for magazines to be mailed from the U.S. For a lifetime surface-mail subscription, send \$175; airmail, \$400 (U.S. funds).

When writing to change your address or clear up any questions about your subscription, write to **Circulation Dept., P.O. Box 133, Line Lexington, PA 18932-0133.** (Or call 215-822-0787.) We can answer your questions faster if you send us a recent mailing label or invoice. Please allow six weeks for changes to show up on your mailing label.

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



© 1985 BACK TO GODHEAD, Inc. All rights reserved. BACK TO GODHEAD (ISSN 0005-3643) is published monthly except March by BACK TO GODHEAD, Inc., 6664 Lincoln Drive, P.O. Box 18928, Philadelphia, PA 19119-0428. Second-class postage paid at Philadelphia, PA, and other additional mailing offices.

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

THE SOUL-KILLING CIVILIZATION 3

We should stress the spiritual side of life, Śrīla Prabhupāda explains, because spirit is life's active principle.

Lord Kṛṣṇa's Cuisine

PRISTINE PLEASURE OR PALATABLE POISON? 6

A new angle on the sweetest of controversies.

DEAR ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA 8

A homage to Śrīla Prabhupāda by one of his first disciples.

THE FLIGHT OF THE SOUL 11

Understanding death is the key to the mystery of life.

Book Section

ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM 15

The continuing presentation of India's great spiritual classic.

Translation and commentary by His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.

The Arts

A REVIVAL OF VEDIC ARTS 27

The devotional arts of India declined when modern building materials replaced earth and clay. But a revival is underway.

THE GLORIES OF LORD CAITANYA 33

Part 8: Entering the Renounced Order

Why did Lord Caitanya, a renowned scholar and an ideal son and husband, leave His career and family?

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT 14

FOR YOUR INFORMATION 22

EVERY TOWN AND VILLAGE 23

THE VEDIC OBSERVER 24

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR 36

COVER: Śrīla Prabhupāda (see his biographical sketch on the facing page) arrived in America—Boston, Massachusetts—twenty years ago this month aboard the steamship *Jaladuta*, with only a few dollars and a trunk of books. The anniversaries of his arrival in the West, his appearance day, and his passing away in 1977 continue to inspire commemorations among his disciples and granddisciples in Kṛṣṇa conscious communities around the world. Here he is pictured at Bhaktivedānta Manor, an estate near London donated by former Beatle George Harrison. (See article on page 10.)



The Soul-Killing Civilization

Too much stress on working for the body
and too little on acquiring spiritual knowledge
destroy the vitality of human society.

A lecture in New York in January 1967

by HIS DIVINE GRACE

A. C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*buddhir jñānam asammohaḥ
kṣamā satyaṁ damaḥ śamaḥ
sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ bhavo 'bhāvo
bhayaṁ cābhayaṁ eva ca*

*ahimsā samatā tuṣṭis
tapo dānaṁ yaśo 'yaśaḥ
bhavanti bhāvā bhūtānām
matta eva prthag-vidhāḥ*

“Intelligence, knowledge, freedom from doubt and delusion, forgiveness, truthfulness, control of the senses, control of the mind, happiness and distress, birth, death, fear, fearlessness, nonviolence, equanimity, satisfaction, austerity, charity, fame and infamy—all these various qualities of living beings are created by Me alone.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 10.4–5)

Lord Kṛṣṇa is the original cause of everything. Therefore He must be the cause of all good qualities, and also all bad qualities. When we see the things in this material world, we consider, “This is bad, and that is good.” We have divided everything according to our calculation. But actually, all the things in this world are a varied manifestation of Kṛṣṇa’s qualities.

Because the qualities mentioned in these verses are in Kṛṣṇa, they are also in the liv-

ing entities. We have all these qualities to some degree. Take, for example, *buddhi*, or intelligence. What is real intelligence? Real intelligence is to understand, “Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme, and I am part and parcel of Him.”

Suppose one is very intelligent in the matter of driving a car. That is material intelligence. Real intelligence is to understand the finer activities of material nature and its relationship to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Even on the material platform, a person is considered intelligent when he tries to understand how things are working. By his intelligence he wants to discover the active principles behind things. A child, however, will see a motorcar running in the street and think it is moving out of its own accord. That is foolishness.

For example, here we have a tape recorder and a microphone. Somebody may say, “Oh! How fine a discovery these are. They are working so nicely.” But an intelligent person will understand that this tape recorder and microphone cannot work for a single moment unless a spirit soul touches them. We should not simply be struck with wonder by seeing a machine; we should try to find out who is *working* the machine. That is intelligence.

One who sees grossly will say, “This scientist is living and working and writing books. How wonderful!” But when the soul leaves the scientist’s body—no more scientist. Can any scientist discover some substance and place it before his student and say, “When I die, inject this into my body, and I’ll live again”? Has any scientist discovered such a substance? No. If any scientist had discovered such a substance, there would be no scarcity of scientists. Sir Isaac Newton, Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose, Thomas Edison, Einstein, and so many other scientists all over the world would still be alive. We challenge, “You scientists have discovered so many wonderful things. Then, Mr. Scientist, why don’t you discover something that we can inject into your body when you die so you can live again and keep on working?”

Actually, the scientist and the philosopher are working not of their own accord but under the spell of material nature. As Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [3.27], *prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ*: “Everything is going on by nature’s law.” If, as the scientists say, everything is accidental, why are there so many differences between species? Here is a scientist, and there is a fool. Why this distinction? The distinction is made by *prakṛti*, by nature. And what is this *prakṛti*? Kṛṣṇa says, *mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ sūyate sa-carā-caram*: “Under My direction, nature is working.”

So nature is the agent, and Kṛṣṇa is the real worker. We are simply instruments; that is our position. If you are intelligent, you will understand that you are simply Kṛṣṇa’s instrument. We are like a hand in relationship to the owner of the hand. What is my hand? It is an instrument with which I can pick things up and work. So, I am working, not the hand.

But people do not understand that they are simply Kṛṣṇa’s agents. Why? *Ahāṅkāra-vimūḍhātmā*: They are bewildered by false ego. Therefore they think, “I am a scientist,” “I am a philosopher,” “I am a Rockefeller,” “I am a businessman,” or “I am a swami.” No. You are simply an instrument in the hands of Kṛṣṇa. So you should work as Kṛṣṇa desires. If you work in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, that is real intelligence, but if you work against Kṛṣṇa, that is foolishness.

The word *jñāna* means “knowledge.” Now, as far as material knowledge is concerned, just consider this key packet. If you want to conduct research into who has made this packet, what materials it is made of, in what country it was first introduced, and so on, you can write volumes of books. You can speculate on anything and write volumes of books. But that does not mean you are a man of knowledge.

I’ll give you a very nice example. This is practical. In my youth I was the manager

of a big chemical firm. Once there was a defect in a sulfuric acid chamber. In that chamber we would place sulfur and then fuse it, and then acid would come out. But the chamber was not working. So, many scientists were sitting, consulting books, trying to determine why it was not working. Then the managing director, Dr. Bose (he was a very intelligent man), went to another chemical firm. He knew an ordinary worker there who was very experienced. Dr. Bose called him at once and said, “Come to our firm and show us the defect in our sulfuric acid chamber.” The man came and manipulated some valves, and at once the sulfuric acid began coming out again. All the theoretical scientists were amazed.

So, this kind of knowledge you’ll find even in an ordinary man. Even in birds and animals you’ll find it. They all have some sort of special knowledge by which they can perform wonderful activities that

**Real knowledge
means to understand
what matter is and
what spirit is. And in
an actually advanced
civilization, people
have this knowledge.
They are not fools.**

we cannot perform. But that is not real knowledge. Real knowledge means to understand spirit and matter.

Matter is working due to the touch of spirit; matter is dependent on spirit. This is knowledge—not to make matter prominent and neglect spirit. In the present educational system nearly all persons are devoid of actual knowledge because they have neglected the spiritual side of life. They understand only the material side. Therefore, according to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the present civilization is a civilization of fools. They are putting too much stress on the motorcar and not enough on the driver. The driver is being neglected—*man* is being neglected.

When I studied at Scottish Churches’ College, I read a magazine from your country. I think it is still current—*Scientific American*. Skyscrapers were just beginning at that time, and in the magazine I saw a picture of a man working very hard at building a skyscraper. So, for manufacturing something out of matter, he was kill-

ing the soul. You see? That is material civilization. People are putting too much stress on the material side and neglecting the spirit. That is not civilization. One should put more stress on the spiritual side because that is the active principle of life. So, a man is said to be in knowledge when he gives more importance to the spiritual side of life. He is called a *jñānī*. Otherwise, he is a fool.

Real knowledge means to understand what matter is and what spirit is. And in an actually advanced civilization, people have this knowledge. This is the Aryan civilization. The Sanskrit word *aryan* means “advanced.” And a person who is an Aryan is one who is advanced in real knowledge, one who is civilized. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, when Arjuna declines to fight, Kṛṣṇa criticizes him, “Oh, you are talking just like a non-Aryan.”

So, we all belong to the Aryan family, but most of us have become non-Aryans by not giving importance to the spiritual side of life. An Aryan gives importance to the spiritual side of life and sees how important human life is. Human life is important because in this form the spirit soul, although conditioned by his material encagement, has developed consciousness, which he has achieved by gradual evolution. The theory of evolution is explained in the *Padma Purāna*. The spirit soul evolves from the lower statuses of life, beginning from the aquatics and then moving up to plant life, then to germ life, then to bird life, then to human life, and finally to civilized human life.

Fortunately, we now have a civilized form of human life, but unfortunately most of us are using it in the matter of maintaining our bodies. *Āhāra-nidrā-bhaya-maitḥunam ca*: We are wasting the valuable human form of life by using it simply for eating, sleeping, defending, and sex. Now the spirit soul has the chance to liberate himself. By nature’s way, the evolutionary process has given the spirit soul the chance to get out of the material entanglement. But people are not giving importance to the spiritual side of life. Therefore, we find that there is overpopulation.

Why is there overpopulation? Suppose that in some school, students are being promoted from lower classes to higher classes. If they do not pass when they come to the final class, then that class becomes overcrowded. Similarly, in the present civilization there is sometimes overpopulation because people are not being promoted to higher life. They are being blocked. And nature’s way is that there must be some pestilence or war to decrease the population.

So, people are very proud, but they have no real intelligence, no real knowledge. God gives real knowledge. As explained here, *buddhir jñānam asammoḥa*: intel-

ligence, knowledge, freedom from bewilderment—all these are gifts of God. So we must utilize them properly. This human form is developed for using the gifts of God. God has given us nice foodstuffs, God has given us good intelligence, God has given us books of knowledge. He is personally speaking the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Why don't you utilize all these things? If you utilize them properly, you may call yourselves Aryans, or civilized human beings. But if you don't, you will simply follow your animal propensities; you will be like dogs going after female dogs or hogs going after female hogs.

This is not civilization. We must be sober. We must be distinct from the animals and properly utilize our human form of life. As stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [11.9.29]: *labdhvā su-durlabham idaṁ bahu-sambhāvānte*: This human body is achieved after many, many, many, many births—after millions and trillions of years. Don't think that all of a sudden, by accident, we have gotten this body. There are other bodies—cats, dogs, and so many others—and only after a long evolutionary process have we achieved this human form (*mānuṣya*). (From this Sanskrit word *mānuṣya* comes the English word *man*.) What is the value of this human form of life? *Arthadam*. You can attain the highest perfection; you can realize the actual substance of life. *Artha* means “money” or “substance.” So, now we are utilizing our life for making money, but we are missing the real substance.

Next this body is described as *anityam*, temporary. Although it can deliver the substance, it is not permanent. So the *Bhāgavatam* advises that you be *dhīra*—sober and intelligent. Then how should you utilize your human life? *Tūrṇaṁ yateta na pated anu-mṛtyu yāvan niḥśreyasāya*. You should try to use your human form of life to achieve the highest substance very soon. Why very soon? Because you do not know when death will come. Don't think, “I am a young man. Let me eat, drink, be merry, and enjoy.” No. You should not delay. While still in the womb, Prahlāda Mahārāja was instructed by Nārada Muni and became a very great devotee. And when Prahlāda was only five years old he instructed his classmates to take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness immediately.

So, there is no value in becoming a five-hundred-year-old tree or a five-million-year-old stone, but if you live to be only five years old and you understand transcendental knowledge, your life is perfect. This idea is very nicely discussed in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. “Oh, you are very proud of your long duration of life? You see that the cats and dogs die within ten or twenty years but that you live seventy or eighty years, and therefore you are very proud?” The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [2.3.18] answers, *taravaḥ kiṁ na jīvanti*: “Don't

you see the tree? It lives five hundred or a thousand years.”

“But a tree cannot breathe.”

Bhastrāḥ kiṁ na śvasanti: “Don't you see the bellows? It is simply a bag of skin, but it is breathing: ‘*Bhaass, bhaass, bhaass.*’ So why do you think your breathing is so wonderful?”

“Well, the bellows breathes, but it cannot eat and enjoy sex.”

Na khādanti na mehanti kiṁ grāme paśavo 'pare: “But do not the dogs and hogs enjoy sex? Do they not eat?” In this way the *Bhāgavatam* analyzes the foolish pride of the materialists. You should give up this false pride and take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That is the perfection of life.

Otherwise, you are cats and dogs. Don't take it that I am criticizing you; I am simply presenting the facts.

So, this human form of life should be utilized properly to achieve *buddhi, jñāna*, and *asammoha*—good intelligence, real knowledge, and freedom from bewilderment. If you study the *Bhagavad-gītā* nicely, analytically, with your intelligence and reason, you will become perfect. This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Take advantage of it; don't spoil your life. That is our request. The purpose of this Kṛṣṇa consciousness society is to give you this chance. We are not bluffing. No, here is something substantial. Try to understand it.

Thank you very much. Hare Kṛṣṇa. 🙏

Serious About Spiritual Life? Curious About Yoga? Meditation? Self-Realization?

Send for our free catalog of books.

You're sure to find what you're looking for in the publications of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust—the world's largest publisher of books on the philosophy, religion, and culture of spiritual India.

What do the ancient sages say about reincarnation? Karma? Life on other planets? What about meditation? Transcendence? Mystic powers? Here you'll find the same answers that have fascinated philosophers, writers, artists, and seekers of spiritual knowledge for thousands of years.

What is the source of the universe? Why am I here? Where did I come from, and where am I going? Is there life after death? And what is life ultimately for?

The world's oldest questions. And you'll find the world's oldest answers in the books of the BBT.

We publish complete, authoritative translations—with commentary—of original Sanskrit literature. Spiritual classics like *Bhagavad-gītā*. The *Upaniṣads*. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

And we also have readable summary studies and essays that make the most important ideas clear, easy to follow, easy to make part of your life.

We have records, tape cassettes, videos, children's books, cookbooks, calendars, posters—all sorts of things you can use to become more spiritually enlivened, more Kṛṣṇa conscious.

With books from the BBT, you'll get at the essence of India's ancient philosophy and culture. You'll have a way to stay on the spiritual platform, to stay in touch with the Supreme. And you'll be right in the middle of the most deep and exciting ideas your intellect has ever encountered.

So if you're serious—or even just curious—then send us the coupon below. Fill it in, clip it out, and put it in the mail today. We'll send you our latest catalog so you can learn more about the wonderful books we have to offer. It's entirely free. So do it now, and we'll send you a copy right away.

ISKCON Educational Services, 3764 Watseka Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90034

Yes! Please send me the latest catalog of books from the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. I understand that it's absolutely free.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____



Lord Kṛṣṇa's Cuisine

Pristine Pleasure or Palatable Poison?

Sugar, so much under attack these days, wasn't always a tainted, ultraprocessed substance.

Text and photo by
VIŚĀKHĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

"It has taken three hundred torturous years for medical science to rediscover the obvious and proclaim that the myriad symptoms of multiple diseases with multisyllable names are caused by sugar."¹

"Sugar is worse than nothing because it drains and leeches the body of precious vitamins and minerals through the demands its digestion, detoxification, and elimination make upon one's entire system."²

"The apparent increased incidence of

hyperinsulinism and of narcolepsy (abnormal attacks of drowsiness that can lead to serious accidents such as car crashes) during recent decades can be largely attributed to the consequences of an enormous rise in sugar consumption by a vulnerable population."³

If you believe what you read, sugar would appear to be the most harmful common ingredient in our food. Although in America since 1972 the average yearly consumption

of sugar in the form of sucrose has dropped from 103 pounds per person to 71 pounds, the use of corn sweetener (another simple sugar) has doubled, and soon the average consumption of high fructose corn syrup (a simple sugar manufactured by the chemical breakdown of cornstarch) may level off at 39 pounds per person. Nutritionists place the corn sweeteners in the same category as sucrose because, like sucrose, they contain about 115 calories per ounce but provide few, if any, nutrients. So when all the figures are in, we're back where we started: about 125 pounds of refined caloric sweeteners per person per year (that's around six hundred calories daily per person, or twenty-four percent of the total caloric intake per person).

But over the past ten or fifteen years, Americans have cut down on nutritious foods. We eat less of complex carbohydrates—pasta, potatoes, vegetables, rice, and cereals—that contain vitamins and minerals. And the average daily milk intake among teenagers has dropped from sixteen to twelve ounces. They're not going thirsty, though. Their daily intake of sugared soft drinks has shot from nine to nineteen ounces. Sugars comprise an increasing proportion of the calories we eat.

According to a yearly report in *Food Trade News* listing the two hundred best-selling grocery items (excluding fresh produce) in the Philadelphia area, of the top seven items sold, five are different kinds of soda. Item number eight is Heinz ketchup, containing corn sweetener. The first solid food on the list comes after an assortment of dog foods, cat litter, Miracle Whip dressing, mayonnaise, and so on. It's number thirty: Skippy peanut butter, containing dextrose (corn sugar) and sucrose.

It may well be that our undeniable predilection toward sweets is natural, as even newborns favor sweetened drinks over plain or sour ones. And as the statistics show, we just can't cut down on our sweetened foods, even after we're informed of their apparent evils.

If you've ever been to a Sunday Feast in one of the Hare Kṛṣṇa temples, or if you've been following these cuisine articles, you know that our diet includes plenty of complex carbohydrates, no canned or processed foods, and some dishes sweetened with either sugar or a natural sweetener.

The dishes in Lord Kṛṣṇa's cuisine come from a timeless tradition, from days when sugar was not the ultraprocessed, ubiquitous ingredient that we know today. Sugar-making has been known in India for thousands of years. (The word for sugar in Sanskrit, the original language of India, was *śarkarā*. This becomes *sukkar* in Arabic, *sakharon* in Greek, *zucchero* in Italian, *sucre* in French, and *sugar* in English.) In the agrarian Vedic society of ancient India, sugar cane was grown primarily for home

(Recipes by Yamunā-devī dāśī)

Apple Chutney (Seb Chatni)

Preparation time: 1 hour
Servings: 10

2 tablespoons ghee
¼ to 1 fresh hot green chili, seeded and cut into long, thin strips
1 to 3 teaspoons peeled fresh ginger root, minced fine
¾ teaspoon fennel seeds
1½ teaspoons cumin seeds
1 pound cored crab apples or tangy green cooking apples
¼ cup golden raisins
¼ cup dried ribbon coconut strips
1½ teaspoons cinnamon powder
1½ teaspoons nutmeg powder
1 teaspoon cardamom powder
1 teaspoon coriander powder
2 cups brown sugar
1 tablespoon lemon juice
¼ cup water

1. Heat the ghee in a 1-quart saucepan over a medium flame. Add the chilies, minced ginger root, fennel, and cumin seeds and fry until brown. Toss in the apples and fry for about five minutes. Reduce the flame to low.
2. Add the remaining ingredients, reserv-

ing 1 tablespoon of the coconut strips for garnishing. Cook, stirring occasionally for about 30 minutes, or until thick and dry. Offer to Kṛṣṇa warm or at room temperature, garnished with coconut ribbons.

Fresh Pineapple and Raisin Chutney (Ananas-Kishmish Chatni)

Preparation time: 1 hour
Servings: 16

2½ tablespoons ghee (clarified butter)
1 to 3 teaspoons fresh hot green chilies, seeded and minced fine
1 to 3 teaspoons peeled fresh ginger root, minced fine
1½ teaspoons cumin seeds
1½ pounds peeled and cored pineapple, cut into pieces 1-inch long and ½-inch thick
½ to ¾ cup brown sugar, packed
¼ cup golden raisins
½ tablespoon coriander powder
½ teaspoon cardamom powder
¼ teaspoon cinnamon powder
¼ teaspoon nutmeg powder

1. Heat the ghee in a 2-quart saucepan over a medium-high flame until a drop of water flicked into it instantly dances. Add the green chilies, ginger, and cumin seeds. Fry until the seasonings turn golden brown. Add the fresh pineapple and allow the juices to come to a boil.

2. Reduce the flame and gently boil, partly covered, until the pineapple is tender and the water has been cooked off. Allow the fruit to fry in the ghee. If necessary, raise the heat, remove the lid, and boil away the pineapple juice.

3. Add the brown sugar and raisins. Continue simmering until the chutney is thick and dry. Remove the pan from the flame, stir in the spice powders, and cool to room temperature before offering to Kṛṣṇa.

Cranberry Chutney (Topokul Chatni)

Preparation time: 30 minutes
Servings: 10

1 pound fresh cranberries, washed and stemmed
1½ cups brown sugar
⅛ teaspoon salt
2-inch cinnamon stick
½ teaspoon peeled ginger root, grated fine
1 cup water

1. Combine the sugar, salt, cinnamon stick, grated ginger root, and water in a saucepan, and boil on a medium flame for 3 to 5 minutes.
2. Add the cranberries, reduce the flame, and simmer for about 10 minutes, or until the cranberries pop and soften. Cool to room temperature or chill; then offer to Kṛṣṇa.

use. The tall, sturdy canes were not sent to industrialized mills, where lime, evaporators, vacuum pans, crystallizers, and centrifuges destroy the vitamins and minerals that occur naturally in sugar-cane juice.

Even today, as in former times, one can see Indian villagers patiently stirring large vats of sugar-cane juice (or, in some places, date-palm juice) until all the water has evaporated and what remains is the sticky, tan or brownish *gur*. *Gur* doesn't keep as well as refined sugar, but that doesn't matter to the villagers. Whatever they don't use at home they take to a nearby market to sell to their neighbors.

But in the West, we don't find tasty and nutritious varieties of *gur* in our neighborhood supermarket. What to do?

Those who shun sweetened food can prepare any number of the *dāls*, rices, breads, vegetables, *kiccharis*, savories, and snacks that we've presented on these pages over the years and eat a healthy, delicious, and diversified diet without ingesting sweeteners. This diet, you will find, is more satisfying and easier to follow than others. (As one former abstainer wrote in his autobiography: "I was unable to maintain the severe restrictions [of macrobiotic dieting] and would break my week-long fasts with ice cream and doughnuts."⁴)

America's excess sugar consumption has in reaction produced another extreme: the denunciation of sugar as poisonous. We

don't embrace either extreme, but suggest one can indulge moderately. Leading health and nutrition experts also advocate moderation and regulation. "Avoid too much sugar" (USDA Dietary Guidelines). "The best thing to do is to exercise care and common sense by eating a balanced diet from a wide variety of foods and by practicing moderation in eating any single food" (FDA Bureau of Foods).

These views are confirmed in the eternal, transcendental teachings of *Bhagavad-gītā*, where Lord Kṛṣṇa declares, "He who is regulated in his habits of eating, sleeping, recreation, and work can mitigate all material pains by practicing the *yoga* system" (Bg. 6.17).

An important part of the *yoga* system referred to by Lord Kṛṣṇa is to prepare food for the Lord's pleasure and to offer the food to Him with love. Lord Kṛṣṇa relishes all vegetarian dishes so offered—sweets included. Cooked chutneys, for example, like the ones in the photograph, are hot, spicy, and sweet and are ideal to offer to Kṛṣṇa.

Cooked chutneys are zesty and tongue-tempting. They will surprise you with their variety of unique flavors—some mild and refreshingly pungent, others pleasantly nippy and hot. Cooked chutneys are prepared from a wide range of ingredients. They may be pureed and thick or textured and fluffy. They may contain either whole

or powdered spices. Cooked chutneys complement the dishes they accompany and are always served in moderation—just a spoonful or two on each plate. Besides accompanying the main lunch or dinner, a dab of chutney goes especially well with hot deep- or shallow-fried bread, for breakfast, brunch, or an afternoon snack.

These chutney recipes call for nutritious ingredients, like fresh fruits and vegetables, and for either brown sugar or the natural sweetener of your choice. With love and devotion, we can offer these or other, unsweetened dishes to Lord Kṛṣṇa and then enjoy them ourselves. By this simple process, our meals will become satisfying, our minds and senses will become peaceful, and, as the *Gītā* declares, we will "mitigate all material pains." What other cuisine can accommodate both pro- and antisugar advocates and at the same time be sensible, balanced, delicious, and, most importantly, so elevating? 🍌

Notes

1. William Dufty, *Sugar Blues* (Randon, Pa.: Chilton Book Co., 1975), p. 53.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 101
3. Dr. H. J. Roberts, *The Causes, Ecology and Prevention of Traffic Accidents* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Pub. Co., 1971).
4. Tamal Krishna Goswami, *Servant of the Servant* (Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1984), p. 4.

DEAR ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA

In September of 1965, the founder and spiritual master
of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement arrived in America.
One of his first disciples commemorates this momentous occasion.

by RŪPĀNUGA DĀSA

Please accept my humble obeisances. One of my fondest recollections of you is of how you were always uncompromising. During the late 1960s, for example, many of the young people around you were influenced by antiwar sentiments. Nevertheless, you explained that war was not always bad. A pure devotee of the Lord, you said, knew that wars were sometimes necessary (like the Battle of Kurukṣetra) and that wars will always be with us, just as they always have been.

You also insisted that intoxicants could have no spiritual value. And you refused to grant dispensations about what we could eat: "Kṛṣṇa doesn't take any [chocolate], so we cannot offer it." You wouldn't accept less than sixteen rounds and four regulative principles from your initiated followers.* You presented the Fifth Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (which differs radically from modern scientific theories about the universe) unadulterated. And you admonished your unjustly accused disciples to go into a New York courtroom and speak so straightforwardly that we quickly won the case.

You got your own example from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. "For my part," you said, "I have taken up the policy of my spiritual master—no compromise. All these so-called scholars, scientists, and philosophers who do not accept Kṛṣṇa are nothing more than rascals, fools, and the lowest of mankind." You offered

*All initiated disciples take a life-long vow to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* daily. As they chant, they count each *mantra* on their strand of 108 "japa beads"—108 *mantras* equals "one round." They vow to chant a minimum of sixteen rounds. The devotees also vow to follow four regulative principles: no meat-eating, no illicit sex, no intoxication, and no gambling.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness exactly as it is, without watering it down to quickly win more followers.

Long before, in India in 1922, the words of your beloved spiritual master directed you on your life's mission. You humbly doubted whether you were fit to come to the West with the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness; you thought of yourself as a young householder with so many responsibilities. But you never compromised that order, never changed it, never forgot it. For a lifetime you prepared to carry it out. By its power you journeyed through the material world, untouched by materialism, "as a lotus leaf is untouched by water." By your uncompromising determination to carry out the order of your beloved spiritual master, you achieved the blessings of Lord Kṛṣṇa and in turn shared those blessings with everyone.

So it was that in 1965 you with your uncompromising spirit arrived upon our shores, eager to bring us the teachings of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The message you brought had already descended through five thousand years of disciple succession from Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the original compiler of the *Vedas*. And five hundred years ago that message had been personified by the life of Lord Caitanya, who inaugurated the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

Yet when you arrived in America, we had no way of knowing of that momentous occasion, or in great joy and anticipation we would have crowded that pier in Boston, tearfully welcoming you and thanking you for coming to save us, for we were already compromising our very lives on the altars of sensuality, speculative philosophy, and materialism. We didn't know you had come to fill the vacuums in our hearts: there was no announcement, no notice, no fanfare of fireworks, bands, and twenty-one-gun

salutes. (Even if there had been, it would still have been inadequate.)

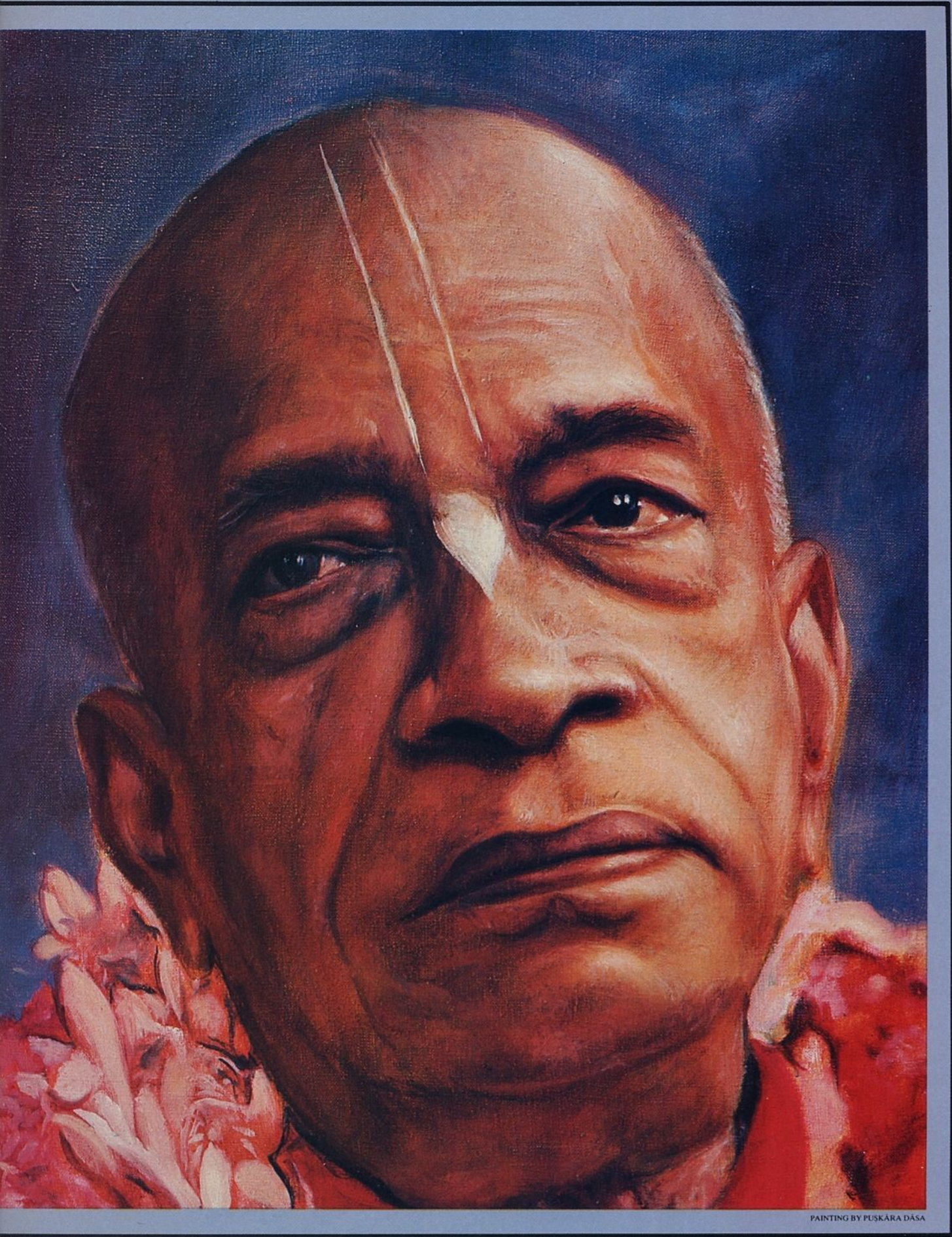
You arrived in a different splendor, clothed in glowing saffron robes, most unusual for the West. And your arrival went unnoticed by the spiritually sleeping giant, America, somehow chosen to be your unknowing host and the birthplace of a spiritual movement destined to command the course of history. Even you yourself did not know for certain the future of your mission.

In Boston, after a brief visit to U.S. Customs, you returned to that small cargo vessel, the *Jaladuta*, to continue the final leg of your journey to New York City. On board you wrote a prayer to Lord Kṛṣṇa, petitioning His mercy to make your words pure enough to penetrate our hearts with His transcendental message and to liberate us from all unhappy conditions of life.

Your prayers were all answered, Śrīla Prabhupāda. The uncompromising purity of your words is being understood all over the world, as we distribute your books and recordings and incessantly repeat what you have taught us. Your teachings constantly reverberate in the hearts of your followers as living conscience, inspiration, and shelter.

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, seated on the *vyāsāsana* (the seat of Vyāsadeva, the compiler of the Vedic literature), personally gave us Kṛṣṇa's purifying association in the form of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, illuminated by your Bhaktivedanta purports. We honor you, because you uncompromisingly represented Vyāsadeva. From the *vyāsāsana* you spoke only the Absolute Truth.

Thank you for teaching us not to be compromising, Śrīla Prabhupāda. By your incessant blessings, may we always remain uncompromisers, like you.



PAINTING BY PUSKARA DASA



THE FLIGHT OF THE SOUL

Through the ages Western man has alternately pondered or ignored death, the most persistent yet least understood fact of our existence.

by VICITRAVĪRYA DĀSA

In the year A.D. 138, the great Roman Emperor Hadrian lay dying in a villa overlooking the Bay of Naples. For many years he had been the mighty ruler of the Western world, governing an empire that stretched for thousands of miles. In the course of his eventful life as soldier/statesman, he encountered diverse peoples of many customs and faiths. From these people he had perhaps heard various ideas on the supreme challenge that now faced him as he gazed out onto the bay.

He was, of course, familiar with the civic cults of Rome and Greece and also with the metaphysical speculations of the Greek philosophers. He had seen how the religion of the Mediterranean peasant had eschewed such speculations in favor of the more immediate numina of the fields and hearth. He knew of the savage gods of the Germanic tribes to the north and west of the civilized world. He had had to face and forcibly solve the problems with the Jews, a people who, unlike the rest, were fiercely loyal to their jealous God. He must also have marked the spread within his empire of the new, secretive Christian sect, whose adherents worshiped as God a Galilean carpenter executed a century

earlier by a Roman procurator.

All of these faiths, though, were of no comfort to Hadrian now, as he lay tossing with pain and wrestling with his thoughts. Just before life slipped away, he took his pen and wrote a five-line poem. It is inscribed on a tablet in a ruined mausoleum in Rome, where the urn holding his ashes once stood:

*Animula vagula blandula,
Hospes comesque corporis,
Quae nunc abibis in loca
Pallidula, rigida, nudula
Nec ut soles dabis iocos!*

This celebrated poem, which became known as "Hadrian's Address to His Soul," has been translated hundreds of times. One version comes from the famous Romantic poet Byron:

Ah! gentle, fleeting, wav'ring sprite,
Friend and associate of this clay!
To what unknown region borne,
Wilt thou now wing thy distant flight?
No more with wanton humor gay,
But pallid, cheerless and forlorn.

With this mournful lament for his mortality, Hadrian voiced the dread and doubts

of everyman. We may live to old age, but all of us must confront death directly, first when it comes for our friends and relatives, finally when it comes for us. We can expect to grieve for loved ones, endure the devastation and emptiness of loss, and be progressively weakened by the assault of old age and infirmity, which prepare the ground for our eventual end.

All these crises of life raise questions that are not merely speculative but urgently practical and personal. Is my existence coming to a meaningless end? What is to become of my consciousness, through which I experience all my hopes, joys, and fears? Although in my mind I can span the universe looking for values and truths that transcend matter, am I after all nothing more than a temporary aggregate of material elements? What happens at that mysterious moment when life ceases? All these questions arise naturally in the mind of a thoughtful person facing death. They reflect an instinctive clutching for survival, a sense perhaps that there is a spiritual component whose nature is foreign to the decaying shell it inhabits.

There is something overwhelmingly appalling in the thought that the "I" upon

which my experience rests will no longer be. The sun will rise, my family will make new friends and think up new plans for enjoyment, the human drama will play inexorably on—but I won't be there. In the face of this looming certainty, all the efforts of life seem futile.

Consider the young mother who has painfully brought life into a dangerous world. She lovingly cares for her child and protects him from a host of dangers. The child is fed, clothed, and sheltered, vaccinated against disease, taught how to safely cross the street, and told not to talk to strangers. But even so, the mother's fragile charge can easily, instantly be destroyed. An automobile accident perhaps, when death screeches in and in one pitiless impact reduces to nothing all that loving care. Then the poor mother's attempts to delay death are revealed as just that and in a moment rendered meaningless.

Death yanks us out of a network of comforting relationships that, in some inscrutable way, give us a sense of protection from the inevitable. Bound up in thoughts of this world, in our endless aspirations for pleasure, we are never prepared for the unwelcome intruder. It taps on our shoulder when we are planning our next summer vacation or painting the extension to the kitchen. It ignores our pleas to finish incomplete business. It is deaf to our rage at the incomprehensible injustice we think has befallen us. It pays no heed to the putative advances of material science. It takes us from a place of apparent security to an unknown realm, the prospect of entering which, as the mournful Hadrian noted, leaves us "pallid, cheerless, and forlorn."

Death remains the greatest challenge to our understanding and enjoyment of life. Yet it is remarkable that, despite mankind's supposed development since the time of Hadrian, little progress has been made in solving this fundamental enigma. Indeed, the wistful agnosticism Hadrian displayed has generally been replaced by a kind of Epicurean philosophy, whose founding preceded Hadrian by hundreds of years. The followers of the Greek philosopher Epicurus scoffed at any pretensions to immortality and frequently adorned their graves with this brave epitaph: "I was not, I was, I am not, I care not."

Clearly, for the Epicureans life *now* is the all-important consideration. Useless speculations on immortality should not distract us from appreciating the only thing we can know for certain: that we are alive, that we exist now. This view increasingly prevails the more we come to believe that the body represents the sum total of our being. We then understand life and consciousness to be no more than results of complex chemical interactions, and we reject metaphysical yearnings for immor-

ality as aberrant biological phenomena. Once freed from the superstitions of less enlightened times, our evolving intellect can absorb itself in the only thing that matters: the pursuit of worldly goals.

These ideas, once held solely by an intellectual elite, are now the common property of all. They have even penetrated the great religious institutions, which now more than ever are joining forces with the giant edifice of scientific and liberal humanism. Humanism brazenly announces its ability to solve the problems of man while quietly fostering the hedonism at the problems' core. Humanists regard Hadrian's question as a relic of the fanciful myths to which the human race has too easily given credence in the past. The naive notion of the soul going forth somewhere is irrelevant to the social and ethical concerns of

***A gnawing pain
consumes his insides,
a pain that does
not respond to
treatment. Instead
of fading away after
the usual few days, it
grows to the point
where it dominates
his consciousness.***

human welfare and the progress of man.

The influential existentialist writer John Paul Sartre expressed this viewpoint, albeit from a slightly different perspective, in the following words: "It is absurd that we should be born, it is absurd that we shall die. Life, so long as it lasts, is pure and free of any death. For I can conceive of myself only as alive. Man is a being for life, not for death."

Do I hear you protest at this point, having detected a critical tone in my presentation? Are you perhaps saying, "Well, what's wrong with living life to the full? These thinkers have done a great service to humanity by liberating us from the stultifying, morbid preoccupation with questions that are impossible to answer. They have allowed us to concentrate on the real issues affecting us in the here and now."

Certainly, to want to lift the burden of humanity is a noble sentiment, but there is no denying that the greatest problem we face is death, which is an inescapable dash-

ing of all our hopes. Humanism proposes to solve all our problems by totally relying on the abilities of man, but its response to the greatest problem of all—death—is to ignore it, submerging its significance in the frenzied search for pleasure.

Direct results of this affectation of indifference toward death are the triumph of trivia and the virtual disappearance of death in a cloud of euphemism. The Belgian poet Maurice Maeterlinck lamented: "We deliver death into the dim hands of our instinct, and we grant it not one hour of our intelligence." No one dares speak its name. We now have "long illnesses," "tragic circumstances," and finally we just "pass away." The constant intrusions of death into our orderly existence are seen almost as a social gaffe—what another poet, Yeats, called "the discourtesy of death." But no matter what genteel urbanities we use, the horrifying reality remains.

Leo Tolstoy examined the psychology of a man facing death in his short masterpiece *The Death of Ivan Ilych*. Ivan Ilych, a judge who has lived his life with all regard to the conventions that befit his status, becomes ill. A gnawing pain consumes his insides, a pain unlike any other he has experienced in that it does not respond to treatment. Instead of fading away after the usual few days, it remains and grows to the point where it dominates his consciousness. It is no longer a question of treatment of diseased kidneys or intestines; it is a matter of life and death. *His* life and death.

For Ivan's family, his terminal illness is an awkward interruption in the ordinary course of their lives. Their reaction to the inconvenience of death is to simply pretend it is not happening, and thus they continue to make obligatory small talk with Ivan as though nothing has changed. No one is willing to recognize that Ivan is undergoing the most important and traumatic event of his life. Even his doctors are part of the quiet conspiracy, offering hope when no hope exists. His friends pay him polite visits and encourage him, yet secretly they are relieved it is not they who are dying and wonder about the prospects for promotion that Ivan's death will open up. Ivan, however, facing reality all alone, finds less and less meaning in the tedious demands of propriety that hitherto governed his life. Ultimately, it is the futility of a life that did not face up to the ultimate terror of death—as much as the terror itself—that frightens Ivan Ilych.

Modern medicine has added to the fatuity of our philosophy of death. It has moved death from the bedroom to the hospital room. There, already screened behind the language of unconsciousness, death is wrapped in the white sheet of clinical taboos. The medical establishment furiously attempts to make it disappear, as if

attacking a stubborn stain with a powerful detergent, and when all attempts fail death is consigned to statistical anonymity.

Does this kind of vacuous obscurantism afford any solution to the problem of death? It certainly didn't for Ivan Ilych, and I suspect it doesn't for anyone else. For Ivan, death was a final, impenetrable threat. He could not, to paraphrase yet another poet, Dylan Thomas, go gently into that night. But he raged, oh how he raged, against the dying of the light.

Why should we rage at the dissolution of the body? If we are just a conglomeration of material elements, why should we be terrified at the prospect of a transformation of state, or even the annihilation of our existence?

Some years back I worked as a research chemist. Often I would transform chemical compounds, combining one with another to form completely new substances. But I never heard them complain, and of course it is absurd to think that they could. And yet isn't it also absurd to think that these same compounds, when arranged in more complex combinations called human bodies, have somehow evolved the faculty to do just that? At what stage do these inert, unfeeling chemicals come alive, develop an awareness of their existence, and with that awareness attain the ability to cry in anguish at the imminence of their annihilation?

Despite great endeavors, those at the vanguard of the scientific revolution can offer no satisfactory answer to this question. Indeed, they offer no plausible explanation for the phenomena of consciousness, for life itself. Nobel Prize-winning scientist Albert Szent-györgi wrote, "In my search for the secret of life, I ended up with atoms and electrons, which have no life at all. Somewhere along the line, life has run out through my fingers."

Leaving aside Western attempts to explain life and death, let us turn our attention elsewhere. As Hadrian lay pondering the mysteries of his eternal fate, to the southeast of his empire there flourished a civilization that had from the very distant past lived with an understanding of death far in advance of Hadrian's and our own. Hadrian would likely have heard something of the religion of India—of ascetics, mysticism, and devotional sects—but he did not, apparently, come in contact with the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the great philosophical treatise that has for thousands of years shaped so much of Indian life and thought.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* does not offer vague speculations on death. Rather, it presents itself as the literal words of God, and as such it offers the most cogent explanation of that most significant human experience. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, explains that the vivifying principle in the body is

not the chance interaction of chemicals but an eternal spiritual particle, the soul. In a stroke, then, the mystery of the urge for immortality is explained. We, the souls, are eternal and are, in the words of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, "unborn and undying." We are "not slain when the body is slain."

This world of physical birth and death, where pleasure is ultimately drowned in the bile of impermanence, is foreign to our nature. Our great mistake comes when we assume that consciousness and life arise from matter and that we ourselves are thus temporary material bodies. We have held this misconception since time immemorial, and therefore knowledge of our true spiritual nature is now just a vague, almost buried, instinct. All that is left is a feeling of the futility of the transient and a grasping after the infinite.

***The Gītā explains
that a person's
thoughts and desires
at death determine
the nature of his next
body. Whatever
occupies one's
attention at that time
propels the soul
toward another body.***

If there never was a time when we did not exist, where do we come from? And if we never die, where do we go after the body disintegrates? The *Bhagavad-gītā* explains that the soul exists eternally as part and parcel of God, the supreme soul, just as the sun's rays exist eternally with the sun. Our constitutional position is to eternally enjoy our relationship with God, a relationship that is by nature full of happiness. Our part in the relationship, however, is one of servitude—not abject and unfeeling enslavement but a full, personal reciprocation with the source of all pleasure. Out of envy, however, we have rejected our subservient position. Thus we have taken birth within the world of matter and have forgotten our eternal, spiritual nature.

The material sphere gives the rebellious souls the opportunity to act out their independent desires. Therefore, a prominent characteristic of the material mentality is the desire to master one's surroundings.

But these plans all fail because we always remain in servitude. If we are not serving God willingly in love, we must become the slaves of material nature. And death is the ultimate proof of this. For no matter what relationships or plans we make, they are all terminated by death.

At the time of death, the soul who hankers after material pleasures is, according to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, reborn in another body. There he enjoys or suffers the results of actions performed in his previous lives and is again subjected to old age, disease, and death. The *Gītā* explains that it is the individual's consciousness at death which determines the nature of his next body. Whatever thoughts or desires occupy one's attention at that time propel the soul toward another gross body.

This weary wheel of metempsychosis can be stopped only by assiduous cultivation of God consciousness. The *Bhagavad-gītā* explains the method by which this consciousness can be achieved: the simple and sublime process of *bhakti-yoga*, or devotional service to God. *Bhakti-yoga* enables us to engage in purifying service to God so that the attitude of service, cognate with our original consciousness, becomes firmly established. In that consciousness we can directly perceive the truth of the *Bhagavad-gītā*'s statements regarding our actual nature, and thus we can face death fully absorbed in thoughts of God and not in thoughts of this world. We then gain release from the cycle of misery and fear and enter into the eternal atmosphere that is our constitutional position.

Our approach to the problem of death, then, has direct implications for how we lead our lives. Therefore contemplating the mystery of death is not an unnecessary and regressive fascination; rather it is a natural function of human intelligence and so cannot be abjured. It is in the best sense a life-enhancing philosophy because it directs us toward a God-centered life that is both fulfilling now and conducive to our ultimate liberation. Indeed, the routinization of death and the consequent ignorance surrounding it constitute a great tragedy for us because they prevent us from coming to terms with the most persistent fact of our existence. Death should not be separated from life because it cannot be. It is never a matter of just death; it is always life and death.

We cannot pretend to understand life or to live our lives properly if we ignore life's most obstinate corollary. Rather, we should realize that an understanding of death is the key that opens the door to the mystery of life itself. Whether our life is memorable, like that of Hadrian, or apparently mundane, like the lives of the millions who encounter death even as you read, if we live it in spiritual awareness it will gain infinitely in significance.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

Feeding the World

The following exchange took place after a talk by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda before the World Health Organization, in Geneva, on June 6, 1974.

W.H.O. member: Your Divine Grace, do you have any suggestions for solving the worldwide problem of food shortages?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. My suggestion is that people should utilize all this vacant land for crops. I have seen so much land lying dormant. For instance, in Australia and also in America, there is so much land lying dormant. The people are not utilizing it.

And whatever produce they get, sometimes they dump tons of it into the ocean to keep the prices high. And I have heard here in Geneva that when there was excess milk production, some of the people wanted to slaughter twenty thousand cows just to reduce the milk production.

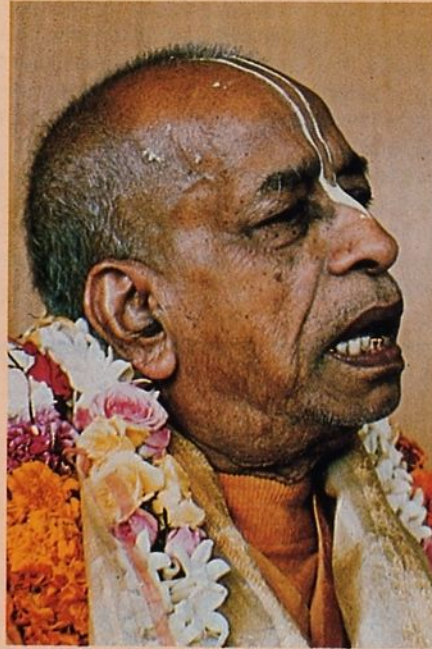
This is what is going on in people's brains. Actually, they have no brains. So if they want to get some brains, they should read these authentic Vedic literatures, and they should take spiritual guidance. And that guidance is simple: produce your food—all the food the world needs—by properly utilizing the land.

But today people will not utilize the land. Rather, they have left their villages and farmlands and let themselves be drawn into the cities for producing nuts and bolts. All right. Now eat nuts and bolts.

Mahatma Gandhi's basic program was to revive the natural, God-given way of life. Simple villages and farms. This can solve India's—and the whole world's—food problems. But our big Pandit Nehru topsy-turved everything. He wanted more industrialization.

Gandhi's program was very nice: you organize yourselves into small farming villages and produce your own food. Live free from cities and factories. This way, you can work only three months and still you get your produce for the whole year.

Three months' work for the whole



year's produce. And the rest of the time, the time you save, you can use for chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Sing the Lord's glories and develop your original God consciousness. This is our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Be spiritually advanced—be a human being.

Otherwise, the life you are leading is risky. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said, *tathā dehāntara-prāptir dhīras tatra na muhyati*: however big a plan we may make, someday we will have to give up this plan, because someday we will have to give up this body. And there is no guarantee what kind of body we are going to get next time.

Suppose that this time, this life, I am very busily constructing a big skyscraper. Next time, next life, I may have to live in that skyscraper in the body of a cat or dog, because I have developed the grossly selfish, body-centered consciousness of a cat or dog. And at that time who will care about my so-called title to the skyscraper?

These are the facts. Because nobody can change nature's law. Nature's law is exactly like an infectious disease—expose yourself to it, and it takes hold of you, that's all. *Kāraṇam guṇa-saṅgo 'sya sad-asad-yoni-janmasu*: one gets

born into a nice or nasty situation because of his prior actions and because of nature's inexorable reactions. This is nature's law.

But now, many people do not even believe that there is a life after death. In Moscow a big professor named Kotovsky told me, "Swamiji, after death there is nothing." You see? He's a big professor. And yet he has no knowledge of the soul. A big professor—just see. This kind of nonsense is going on.

So as this godless civilization drags on, by nature's law there will be more and more problems. As predicted in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, there will be *anāvṛṣṭi*, insufficient rain; and as a result, *durbhikṣā*, insufficient food production. Of course, these problems have already begun.

And on the plea of providing relief from the drought and famine, the government will crush the people with excessive taxation. And consequently, *ācchina-dāra-draviṇā yāsyanti giri-kānam*: the people will be so disturbed that they will give up their hearth and home and go to the forest. They will feel utterly harassed—by scarcity of rainfall, by scarcity of food, and by the government's excessive taxation.

In such a predicament, how can one keep his brain in equilibrium? He will become mad. Unless we take the instruction of the scriptures, all these tragedies are guaranteed to befall us. So we should immediately take this instruction of the *Bhagavad-gītā* to heart:

*annād bhavanti bhūtāni
parjanyaś anna-sambhavaḥ
yajñād bhavati parjanyo
yajñaḥ karma-samudbhavaḥ*

"All living bodies subsist on food grains, which are produced from rains. And rains are produced by sacrifice."

This is why we have introduced this movement, this chanting of the names of the Lord. This is sacrifice. And in this age of confusion, this unfortunate age, this sacrifice alone is possible. This is the remedy, the solution for all the world's problems. But people will not take the remedy. They have got their own remedy.

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 NINE

Brahmā’s Prayers for Creative Energy

In this installment of our continuing presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Brahmā, the first created being and the demigod who creates this cosmic world, continues to offer his prayers to Lord Viṣṇu, an eternal expansion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

PURPORT

(continued from last issue)

ye 'nye 'ravindākṣa vimukta-māninaḥ
tvayy asta-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ
āruhya krcchreṇa param padaṁ tataḥ
patanty adho 'nāḍṛta-yusmad-aṅghrayaḥ

“Persons who are falsely under the impression of being liberated, without devotional service to the Lord, may reach the goal of the *brahmajyoti*, but because of their impure consciousness and for want of shelter in the *Vaikunthalokas*, such so-called liberated persons again fall down into material existence.” (*Bhāg.* 10.2.32)

Therefore, no one can manufacture any system of religion without the principle of devotional service to the Lord. As we find in the Sixth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the initiator of religious principles is the Lord Himself. In *Bhagavad-gītā* also we find that the Lord condemns all forms of religion other than that which entails the process of surrendering unto the Supreme. Any system which leads one to the devotional service of the Lord, and nothing else, is actually religion or philosophy. In the Sixth Canto we find the following statements of Yamarāja, the controller of all unfaithful living entities:

dharmam tu sāksād bhagavat-praṇitam
na vai vidur ṛṣayo nāpi devāḥ
na siddha-mukhyā asurā manuṣyāḥ
kuto nu vidyādhara-cāraṇādayaḥ

svayambhūr nāradaḥ śambhuḥ
kumāraḥ kapilo manuḥ
prahlādo janako bhīṣmo
balir vaiyāsakir vayam

dvādaśaite vijānīmo
dharmam bhāgavatam bhaṭāḥ
guhyaṁ viśuddham durbodham
yam jñātvāmṛtam aśnute

“The principles of religion are initiated by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and no one else, including the sages and demigods, can manufacture any such principles. Since even great sages and demigods are unauthorized to inaugurate such principles of religion, what to speak of others—the so-called mystics, demons, human beings, *Vidyādhara*s and *Cāraṇa*s living in the lower planets? Twelve personalities—*Brahmā*,

Nārada, Lord *Śiva*, *Kumāra*, *Kapila*, *Manu*, *Prahlāda Mahārāja*, *Janaka Mahārāja*, *Bhīṣma*, *Bali*, *Śukadeva Gosvāmī* and *Yamarāja*—are agents of the Lord authorized to speak and propagate the principles of religion.” (*Bhāg.* 6.3.19–21)

The principles of religion are not open to any ordinary living entity. They are just to bring the human being onto the platform of morality. Nonviolence, etc., are necessary for misguided persons because unless one is moral and nonviolent one cannot understand the principles of religion. To understand what is actually religion is very difficult even if one is situated in the principles of morality and nonviolence. It is very confidential because as soon as one is conversant with the real principles of religion, he is at once liberated to the eternal life of bliss and knowledge. Therefore, one who is not situated in the principles of devotional service to the Lord should not pose himself as a religious leader of the innocent public. The *Īsopaniṣad* emphatically forbids this nonsense in the following mantra:

andham tamaḥ praviśanti
ye 'sambhūtim upāsate
tato bhūya iva te tamo
ya u sambhūtyām rataḥ
(*Īsopaniṣad* 12)

A person in ignorance of the principles of religion who therefore does nothing in the matter of religion is far better than a person who misguides others in the name of religion without reference to the factual religious principles of devotional service. Such so-called leaders of religion are sure to be condemned by *Brahmā* and other great authorities.

TEXT 11

त्वं भक्तियोगपरिभाषितहृत्सरोज
आस्से श्रुतेक्षितपथो ननु नाथ पुंसाम् ।
यद्यद्विया त उरुगाय विभावयन्ति
तत्तद्रपुः प्रणयसे सदनुग्रहाय ॥११॥

tvam bhakti-yoga-paribhāvita-hṛt-saroja
āsse śrutekṣita-patho nanu nātha puṁsām
yat-yat-dhiyā ta urugāya vibhāvayanti
tat-tad-vapuḥ praṇayase sad-anugrahāya

tvam—unto You; *bhakti-yoga*—in devotional service; *paribhāvita*—being one hundred percent engaged; *hṛt*—of the heart; *saroje*—on the lotus; *āsse*—You reside; *śruta-ikṣita*—seen through the ear; *pathaḥ*—the path; *nanu*—now; *nātha*—O my Lord; *puṁsām*—of the devotees; *yat-yat*—whichever; *dhiyā*—by meditating; *te*—Your; *urugāya*—O multiglorious; *vibhāvayanti*—they specifically think of; *tat-tat*—the very same; *vapuḥ*—transcendental form; *praṇayase*—do You manifest; *sat-anugrahāya*—to show Your causeless mercy.

TRANSLATION

O my Lord, Your devotees can see You through the ears by the process of bona fide hearing, and thus their hearts become

cleansed, and You take Your seat there. You are so merciful to Your devotees that You manifest Yourself in the particular eternal form of transcendence in which they always think of You.

PURPORT

The statement here that the Lord manifests Himself before the devotee in the form in which the devotee likes to worship Him indicates that the Lord becomes subordinate to the desire of the devotee—so much so that He manifests His particular form as the devotee demands. This demand of the devotee is satisfied by the Lord because He is pliable in terms of the transcendental loving service of the devotee. This is also confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.11): *ye yathā mān prapadyante tāms tathaiva bhajāmy aham*. We should note, however, that the Lord is never the order supplier of the devotee. Here in this verse it is particularly mentioned: *tvam bhakti-yoga-paribhāvita*. This indicates the efficiency achieved through execution of matured devotional service, or *premā*, love of Godhead. This state of *premā* is achieved by the gradual process of development from faith to love. On faith one associates with bona fide devotees, and by such association one can become engaged in bona fide devotional service, which includes proper initiation and the execution of the primary devotional duties prescribed in the revealed scriptures. This is clearly indicated herein by the word *śrutekṣita*. The *śrutekṣita* path is to hear from bona fide devotees who are conversant with Vedic wisdom, free from mundane sentiment. By this bona fide hearing process, the neophyte devotee becomes cleansed of all material rubbish, and thus he becomes attached to one of the many transcendental forms of the Lord, as described in the *Vedas*.

This attachment of the devotee to a particular form of the Lord is due to natural inclination. Each and every living entity is originally attached to a particular type of transcendental service because he is eternally the servitor of the Lord. Lord Caitanya says that the living entity is eternally a servitor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, every living entity has a particular type of service relationship with the Lord, eternally. This particular attachment is invoked by practice of regulative devotional service to the Lord, and thus the devotee becomes attached to the eternal form of the Lord, exactly like one who is already eternally attached. This attachment for a particular form of the Lord is called *svarūpa-siddhi*. The Lord sits on the lotus heart of the devotee in the eternal form the pure devotee desires, and thus the Lord does not part from the devotee, as confirmed in the previous verse. The Lord, however, does not disclose Himself to a casual or inauthentic worshiper to be exploited. This is confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.25): *nāhaṁ prakāśaḥ sarvasya yoga-māyā-samāvṛtaḥ*. Rather, by *yoga-māyā*, the Lord remains concealed to the nondevotees or casual devotees who are serving their sense gratification. The Lord is never visible to the pseudodevotees who worship the demigods in charge of universal affairs. The conclusion is that the Lord cannot become the order supplier of a pseudodevotee, but He is always prepared to respond to the desires of a pure, unconditional devotee, who is free from all tinges of material infection.

TEXT 12

नातिप्रसीदति तथोपचितोपचारै-
राराधितः सुरगणैर्हृदिबद्धकामैः ।
यत्सर्वभूतदययासदलभ्ययैको
नानाजनेष्ववहितः सुहृदन्तरात्मा ॥१२॥

nātiprasīdati tathopacitopacārair
ārādhitāḥ sura-gaṇair hṛdi baddha-kāmair
yat sarva-bhūta-dayāśad-alabhyayai
nānā-janeṣu avahitaḥ suhr̥d antar-ātmā

na—never; *ati*—very much; *prasīdati*—become satisfied; *tathā*—as much as; *upacita*—by pompous arrangement; *upacārair*—with much worshipable paraphernalia; *ārādhitāḥ*—being worshiped; *sura-gaṇair*—by the celestial demigods; *hṛdi baddha-kāmair*—with hearts full of all sorts of material desires; *yat*—that which; *sarva*—all; *bhūta*—

living entities; *dayayā*—to show them causeless mercy; *asat*—non-devotee; *alabhyayā*—not being achieved; *ekaḥ*—one without a second; *nānā*—various; *janeṣu*—in living entities; *avahitaḥ*—perceived; *suhṛt*—well-wishing friend; *antaḥ*—within; *ātmā*—Supersoul.

TRANSLATION

My Lord, You are not very much satisfied by the worship of the demigods, who arrange for Your worship very pompously, with various paraphernalia, but who are full of material hankerings. You are situated in everyone's heart as the Supersoul just to show Your causeless mercy, and You are the eternal well-wisher, but You are unavailable for the nondevotee.

PURPORT

The demigods in the celestial heavenly planets, who are appointed administrators of the material affairs, are also devotees of the Lord. But, at the same time, they have desires for material opulence and sense gratification. The Lord is so kind that He awards them all sorts of material happiness, more than they can desire, but He is not satisfied with them because they are not pure devotees. The Lord does not want any one of His innumerable sons (the living entities) to remain in the material world of threefold miseries to perpetually suffer the material pangs of birth, death, old age and disease. The demigods in the heavenly planets, and many devotees on this planet also, want to remain in the material world as devotees of the Lord and take advantage of material happiness. They do so at a risk of falling down to the lower status of existence, and this makes the Lord dissatisfied with them.

Pure devotees are not desirous of any material enjoyment, nor are they averse to it. They completely dovetail their desires with the desires of the Lord and perform nothing on their personal account. Arjuna is a good example. On his own sentiment, due to family affection, Arjuna did not want to fight, but finally, after hearing *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, he agreed to fight in the interests of the Lord. Therefore, the Lord is very much satisfied with pure devotees because they do not act for sense gratification but only in terms of the Lord's desire. As *Paramātmā*, or Supersoul, He is situated in everyone's heart, always giving everyone the chance of good counsel. Thus everyone should take the opportunity and render transcendental loving service to Him wholly and solely.

The nondevotees, however, are neither like the demigods nor like the pure devotees, but are averse to the transcendental relationship with the Lord. They have revolted against the Lord and must perpetually undergo the reactions of their own activities.

Bhagavad-gītā (4.11) states: *ye yathā mān prapadyante tāms tathaiva bhajāmy aham*. "Although the Lord is equally kind to every living being, the living beings, for their own part, are able to please the Lord to either a greater or lesser extent." The demigods are called *sakāma* devotees, or devotees with material desires in mind, while the pure devotees are called *niṣkāma* devotees because they have no desires for their personal interests. The *sakāma* devotees are self-interested because they do not think of others, and therefore they are not able to satisfy the Lord perfectly, whereas the pure devotees take the missionary responsibility of turning nondevotees into devotees, and they are therefore able to satisfy the Lord more than the demigods. The Lord is unmindful of the nondevotees, although He is sitting within everyone's heart as well-wisher and Supersoul. However, He also gives them the chance to receive His mercy through His pure devotees who are engaged in missionary activities. Sometimes the Lord Himself descends for missionary activities, as He did in the form of Lord Caitanya, but mostly He sends His bona fide representatives, and thus He shows His causeless mercy towards the nondevotees. The Lord is so satisfied with His pure devotees that He wants to give them the credit for missionary success, although He could do the work personally. This is the sign of His satisfaction with His pure, *niṣkāma* devotees, compared to the *sakāma* devotees. By such transcendental activities the Lord simultaneously becomes free from the charge of partiality and exhibits His pleasure with the devotees.

Now a question arises: If the Lord is sitting in the hearts of non-devotees, why are they not moved to become devotees? It may be

answered that the stubborn nondevotees are like the barren land or alkaline field, where no agricultural activities can be successful. As part and parcel of the Lord, every individual living entity has a minute quantity of independence, and by misuse of this minute independence, the nondevotees commit offense after offense, to both the Lord and His pure devotees engaged in missionary work. As a result of such acts, they become as barren as an alkaline field, where there is no strength to produce.

TEXT 13

पुंसामतो विविधकर्मभिरध्वराद्यै-
र्दानेन चोग्रतपसा परिचर्यथा च ।
आराधनं भगवतस्तव सत्क्रियार्थो
धर्मोऽर्पितः कर्हिचिद्म्रियते न यत्र ॥१३॥

*puṁsām ato vividha-karmabhir adhvarādyair
dānena cogra-tapasā paricaryayā ca
ārāḍhanam bhagavatas tava sat-kriyārtho
dharma 'rpiṭaḥ karhicid mriyate na yatra*

puṁsām—of the people; *ataḥ*—therefore; *vividha-karmabhiḥ*—by various fruitive activities; *adhvara-ādyaiḥ*—by performance of Vedic rituals; *dānena*—by charities; *ca*—and; *ugra*—very hard; *tapasā*—austerity; *paricaryayā*—by transcendental service; *ca*—also; *ārāḍhanam*—worship; *bhagavataḥ*—of the Personality of Godhead; *tava*—Your; *sat-kriyā-arthāḥ*—simply for pleasing Your Lordship; *dharmaḥ*—religion; *arpitaḥ*—so offered; *karhicit*—at any time; *mriyate*—vanquishes; *na*—never; *yatra*—there.

TRANSLATION

But the pious activities of the people, such as performance of Vedic rituals, charity, austere penances, and transcendental service, performed with a view to worship You and satisfy You by offering You the fruitive results, are also beneficial. Such acts of religion never go in vain.

PURPORT

Absolute devotional service, conducted in nine different spiritual activities—hearing, chanting, remembering, worshiping, praying, etc.—does not always appeal to people with a pompous nature; they are more attracted by the Vedic superficial rituals and other costly performances of social religious shows. But the process according to the Vedic injunctions is that the fruits of all pious activities should be offered to the Supreme Lord. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.27), the Lord demands that whatever one may do in one's daily activities, such as worship, sacrifice, and offering charity, all the results should be offered to Him only. This offering of the results of pious acts unto the Supreme Lord is a sign of devotional service to the Lord and is of permanent value, whereas enjoying the same results for oneself is only temporary. Anything done on account of the Lord is a permanent asset and accumulates in the form of unseen piety for gradual promotion to the unalloyed devotional service of the Lord. These undetected pious activities will one day result in full-fledged devotional service by the grace of the Supreme Lord. Therefore, any pious act done on account of the Supreme Lord is also recommended here for those who are not pure devotees.

TEXT 14

शश्वत्स्वरूपमहसैव निपीतभेद-
मोहाय बोधधिषणाय नमः परस्मै ।
विश्वोद्भवस्थितिलयेषु निमित्तलीला-
रासाय ते नम इदं चकृमेश्वराय ॥१४॥

*śaśvat svarūpa-mahaśaiva nipīta-bheda-
mohāya bodha-dhiṣṇāya namaḥ parasmai*

śaśvat—eternally; *svarūpa*—transcendental form; *mahaśā*—by the glories; *eva*—certainly; *nipīta*—distinguished; *bheda*—differentiation; *mohāya*—unto the illusory conception; *bodha*—self-knowledge; *dhiṣṇāya*—intelligence; *namaḥ*—obeisances; *parasmai*—unto the Transcendence; *viśva-udbhava*—creation of the cosmic manifestation; *sthiti*—maintenance; *layeṣu*—also destruction; *nimitta*—for the matter of; *lilā*—by such pastimes; *rāsāya*—for enjoyment; *te*—unto You; *namaḥ*—obeisances; *idam*—this; *cakṛma*—do I perform; *īśvarāya*—unto the Supreme.

TRANSLATION

Let me offer my obeisances unto the Supreme Transcendence, who is eternally distinguished by His internal potency. His indistinguishable impersonal feature is realized by intelligence for self-realization. I offer my obeisances unto Him who by His pastimes enjoys the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the cosmic manifestation.

PURPORT

The Supreme Lord is eternally distinguished from the living entities by His internal potency, although He is also understood in His impersonal feature by self-realized intelligence. Devotees of the Lord, therefore, offer all respectful obeisances unto the impersonal feature of the Lord. The word *rāsa* is significant herein. The *rāsa* dance is performed by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the company of the cowherd damsels at Vṛndāvana, and the Personality of Godhead Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu is also engaged in *rāsa* enjoyment with His external potency, by which He creates, maintains and dissolves the entire material manifestation. Indirectly, Lord Brahmā offers his respectful obeisances unto Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is factually ever engaged in *rāsa* enjoyment with the *gopīs*, as confirmed in the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* in the following words: *parārdhānte so 'budhyata gopa-veśo me puruṣaḥ purastād āvirabbhūva*. The distinction between the Lord and the living entity is definitely experienced when there is sufficient intelligence to understand His internal potency, as distinguished from the external potency by which He makes possible the material manifestation.

TEXT 15

यस्यावतारगुणकर्मविडम्बनानि
नामानि येऽसुविगमे विवशा गृणन्ति ।
तेऽनैकजन्मशमलं सहसैव हित्वा
संयान्त्यपावृतामृतं तमजं प्रपद्ये ॥१५॥

*yasyāvatāra-guṇa-karma-vidambanāni
nāmāni ye 'su-vigame vivaśā gṛṇanti
te 'naika-janma-śamalam sahasaiva hitvā
saṁyānty apāvṛtamṛtam tam ajam prapadye*

yasya—whose; *avatāra*—incarnations; *guṇa*—transcendental qualities; *karma*—activities; *vidambanāni*—all mysterious; *nāmāni*—transcendental names; *ye*—those; *asu-vigame*—while quitting this life; *vivaśāḥ*—automatically; *gṛṇanti*—invoke; *te*—they; *anaika*—many; *janma*—births; *śamalam*—accumulated sins; *sahasā*—immediately; *eva*—certainly; *hitvā*—giving up; *saṁyānti*—obtain; *apāvṛta*—open; *amṛtam*—immortality; *tam*—Him; *ajam*—the unborn; *prapadye*—I take shelter.

TRANSLATION

Let me take shelter of the lotus feet of Him whose incarnations, qualities and activities are mysterious imitations of worldly affairs. One who invokes His transcendental names, even unconsciously, at the time he quits this life, is certainly washed immediately of the sins of many, many births and attains Him without fail.

PURPORT

The activities of the incarnations of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are a kind of imitation of the activities going on in the material world. He is just like an actor on a stage. An actor imitates the activities of a king on stage, although actually he is not the king. Similarly, when the Lord incarnates, He imitates parts with which He has nothing to do. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.14), it is said that the Lord has nothing to do with the activities in which He is supposedly engaged: *na mām karmāṇi lipanti na me karma-phale sprhā*. The Lord is omnipotent; simply by His will He can perform anything and everything. When the Lord appeared as Lord Kṛṣṇa, He played the part of the son of Yaśodā and Nanda, and He lifted the Govardhana Hill, although lifting a hill is not His concern. He can lift millions of Govardhana Hills by His simple desire; He does not need to lift it with His hand. But He imitates the ordinary living entity by this lifting, and at the same time He exhibits His supernatural power. Thus His name is chanted as the lifter of Govardhana Hill, or Śrī Govardhanadhārī. Therefore, His acts in His incarnations and His partiality to the devotees are all imitations only, just like the stage makeup of an expert dramatical player. His acts in that capacity, however, are all omnipotent, and the remembrance of such activities of the incarnations of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is as powerful as the Lord Himself. Ajāmila remembered the holy name of the Lord, Nārāyaṇa, by merely calling the name of his son Nārāyaṇa, and that gave him a complete opportunity to achieve the highest perfection of life.

TEXT 16

यो वा अहं च गिरिशश्च विभुः स्वयं च
स्थित्युद्भवप्रलयहेतव आत्ममूलम् ।
भित्त्वा त्रिपादवृध्द एक उरुप्ररोह-
स्तस्मै नमो भगवते भुवनद्रुमाय ॥१६॥

*yo vā ahaṁ ca giriśaś ca vibhuḥ svayaṁ ca
sthity-udbhava-pralaya-hetava ātma-mūlam
bhittvā tri-pād vaurdha eka uru-prarohas
tasmai namo bhagavate bhuvana-drumāya*

yaḥ—one who; *vai*—certainly; *ahaṁ ca*—also I; *giriśaś ca*—also Śiva; *vibhuḥ*—the Almighty; *svayaṁ*—personality (as Viṣṇu); *ca*—and; *sthiti*—maintenance; *udbhava*—creation; *pralaya*—dissolution; *hetavaḥ*—the causes; *ātma-mūlam*—self-rooted; *bhittvā*—having penetrated; *tri-pād*—three trunks; *vaurdhe*—grew; *ekah*—one without a second; *uru*—many; *prarohaḥ*—branches; *tasmai*—unto Him; *namaḥ*—obeisances; *bhagavate*—unto the Personality of Godhead; *bhuvana-drumāya*—unto the tree of the planetary system.

TRANSLATION

Your Lordship is the prime root of the tree of the planetary systems. This tree has grown by first penetrating the material nature in three trunks—as me, Śiva and You, the Almighty—for creation, maintenance and dissolution, and we three have grown with many branches. Therefore I offer my obeisances unto You, the tree of the cosmic manifestation.

PURPORT

The cosmic manifestation is grossly divided into three worlds, the upper, lower and middle planetary systems, and then it broadens into the cosmos of fourteen planetary systems, with the manifestation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the supreme root. Material nature, which appears to be the cause of the cosmic manifestation, is only the agency or energy of the Lord. This is confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.10): *mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ sūyate sa-carācaram*. “Only under the superintendence of the Supreme Lord does material nature appear to be the cause of all creation, maintenance and dissolution.” The Lord expands Himself into three—Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva—for maintenance, creation and destruction respectively. Of the three principal

agents controlling the three modes of material nature, Viṣṇu is the Almighty; even though He is within material nature for the purpose of maintenance, He is not controlled by the laws of material nature. The other two, Brahmā and Śiva, although almost as greatly powerful as Viṣṇu, are within the control of the material energy of the Supreme Lord. The conception of many gods controlling the many departments of material nature is ill conceived of by the foolish pantheist. God is one without a second, and He is the primal cause of all causes. As there are many departmental heads of governmental affairs, so there are many heads of management of the universal affairs.

Due to a poor fund of knowledge, the impersonalist does not believe in the personal management of things as they are. But in this verse it is clearly explained that everything is personal and nothing is impersonal. We have already discussed this point in the Introduction, and it is confirmed here in this verse. The tree of the material manifestation is described in the Fifteenth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* as an *aśvattha* tree whose root is upward. We have actual experience of such a tree when we see the shadow of a tree on the bank of a reservoir of water. The reflection of the tree on the water appears to hang down from its upward roots. The tree of creation described here is only a shadow of the reality which is Parabrahman, Viṣṇu. In the internal potential manifestation of the Vaikuṇṭhalokas, the actual tree exists, and the tree reflected in the material nature is only the shadow of this actual tree. The impersonalists' theory that Brahman is void of all variegatedness is false because the shadow-tree described in *Bhagavad-gītā* cannot exist without being the reflection of a real tree. The real tree is situated in the eternal existence of spiritual nature, full of transcendental varieties, and Lord Viṣṇu is the root of that tree also. The root is the same—the Lord—both for the real tree and the false, but the false tree is only the perverted reflection of the real tree. The Lord, being the real tree, is here offered obeisances by Brahmā on his own behalf and also on behalf of Lord Śiva.

TEXT 17

लोको विकर्मनिरतः कुशले प्रमत्तः
कर्मण्ययं त्वदुदिते भवदर्चने स्वे ।
यस्तावदस्य बलवानिह जीविताशं
सद्यश्छिनत्त्यनिमिषाय नमोऽस्तु तस्मै ॥१७॥

*loko vikarma-nirataḥ kuśale pramattaḥ
karmaṇy ayam tvad-udite bhavad-arcane sve
yas tāvad asya balavān iha jivitāśaṁ
sadyaś chinatty animiṣāya namo 'stu tasmai*

lokaḥ—people in general; *vikarma*—work without sense; *nirataḥ*—engaged in; *kuśale*—in beneficial activity; *pramattaḥ*—negligent; *karmaṇi*—in activity; *ayam*—this; *tvat*—by You; *udite*—enunciated; *bhavat*—of You; *arcane*—in worship; *sve*—their own; *yaḥ*—who; *tāvat*—as long as; *asya*—of the people in general; *balavān*—very strong; *iha*—this; *jivita-āśaṁ*—struggle for existence; *sadyaḥ*—directly; *chinatti*—is cut to pieces; *animiṣāya*—by the eternal time; *namaḥ*—my obeisances; *astu*—let there be; *tasmai*—unto Him.

TRANSLATION

People in general all engage in foolish acts, not in the really beneficial activities enunciated directly by You for their guidance. As long as their tendency for foolish work remains powerful, all their plans in the struggle for existence will be cut to pieces. I therefore offer my obeisances unto Him who acts as eternal time.

PURPORT

People in general are all engaged in senseless work. They are systematically unmindful of the real beneficial work, which is the devotional service of the Lord, technically called the *arcana* regulations. The *arcana* regulations are directly instructed by the Lord in the *Nārada-pañcarātra* and are strictly followed by the intelligent men, who know

well that the highest perfectional goal of life is to reach Lord Viṣṇu, who is the root of the tree called the cosmic manifestation. Also, in the *Bhāgavatam* and in *Bhagavad-gītā* such regulative activities are clearly mentioned. Foolish people do not know that their self-interest is in realization of Viṣṇu. The *Bhāgavatam* (7.5.30–32) says:

*matir na kṛṣṇe parataḥ svato vā
mitho 'bhipadyeta gr̥ha-vratānām
adānta-gobhir viśatām tamisraṁ
punaḥ punaś carvita-carvaṇānām*

*na te viduḥ svārtha-gatir̥ hi viṣṇuṁ
durāśayā ye bahir-ārtha-māninaḥ
andhā yathāndhair upanīyamānās
te 'pīṣa-tantryām uru-dāmnī baddhāḥ*

*naiṣām matis tāvad urukramāṅghriṁ
spr̥ṣaty anarthāpagamo yad-ārthaḥ
mahīyasām pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekaṁ
niṣkiñcanānām na vṛṇīta yāvat*

“Persons who are determined to totally rot in false, material happiness cannot become Kṛṣṇa-minded either by instructions from teachers, by self-realization or by parliamentary discussions. They are dragged by the unbridled senses into the darkest region of ignorance, and thus they madly engage in what is called ‘chewing the chewed.’

“Because of their foolish activities, they are unaware that the ultimate goal of human life is to achieve Viṣṇu, the Lord of the cosmic manifestation, and so their struggle for existence is in the wrong direction of material civilization, which is under the external energy. They are led by similar foolish persons, just as one blind man is led by another blind man and both fall in the ditch.

“Such foolish men cannot be attracted towards the activities of the Supreme Powerful, who is actually the neutralizing measure for their foolish activities, unless and until they have the good sense to be guided by the great souls who are completely freed from material attachment.”

In *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord asks everyone to give up all other occupational duties and absolutely engage in *arcanā* activities, or in pleasing the Lord. But almost no one is attracted to such *arcanā* activity. Everyone is more or less attracted by activities which are conditions of rebellion against the Supreme Lord. The systems of *jñāna* and *yoga* are also indirectly rebellious acts against the Lord. There is no auspicious activity except *arcanā* of the Lord. *Jñāna* and *yoga* are sometimes accepted within the purview of *arcanā* when the ultimate aim is Viṣṇu, and not otherwise. The conclusion is that only the devotees of the Lord are bona fide human beings eligible for salvation. Others are vainly struggling for existence without any actual benefit.

TEXT 18

यस्माद्विभेम्यहमपि द्विपरार्धधिष्य-

मध्यासितः सकललोकनमस्कृतं यत् ।

तेपे तपो बहुसवोऽवरुत्समान-

स्तस्मै नमो भगवतेऽधिभवाय तुभ्यम् ॥१८॥

*yasmād bibhemy aham api dviparārdha-dhiṣṇyam
adhyāsitaḥ sakala-loka-namaskṛtaṁ yat
tepe tapo bahu-savo 'varurutsamānas
tasmai namo bhagavate 'dhimakhāya tubhyam*

yasmāt—from whom; *bibhemi*—fear; *aham*—I; *api*—also; *dvi-para-ardha*—up to the limit of 4,300,000,000 × 2 × 30 × 12 × 100 solar years; *dhiṣṇyam*—place; *adhyāsitaḥ*—situated in; *sakala-loka*—all other planets; *namaskṛtam*—honored by; *yat*—that; *tepe*—underwent; *tapah*—penances; *bahu-savaḥ*—many, many years; *avarurutsamānaḥ*—desiring to obtain You; *tasmai*—unto Him; *namaḥ*—I do offer my obeisances; *bhagavate*—unto the Supreme Personality of God-

head; *dhimakhāya*—unto Him who is the enjoyer of all sacrifices; *tubhyam*—unto Your Lordship.

TRANSLATION

Your Lordship, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You who are indefatigable time and the enjoyer of all sacrifices. Although I am situated in an abode which will continue to exist for a time duration of two parārthas, although I am the leader of all other planets in the universe, and although I have undergone many, many years of penance for self-realization, still I offer my respects unto You.

PURPORT

Brahmā is the greatest personality in the universe because he has the longest duration of life. He is the most respectable personality because of his penance, influence, prestige, etc., and still he has to offer his respectful obeisances unto the Lord. Therefore, it is incumbent upon all others, who are far, far below the standard of Brahmā, to do as he did and offer respects as a matter of duty.

TEXT 19

तिर्यङ्मनुष्यविवुधादिषु जीवयोनि-

ष्वात्मेच्छयात्मकृतसेतुपरीप्सया यः ।

रेमे निरस्तविषयोऽप्यवरुद्धदेह-

स्तस्मै नमो भगवते पुरुषोत्तमाय ॥१९॥

*tiryak-manuṣya-vibudhādiṣu jīva-yoniṣu
ātmecchayātma-kṛta-setu-parīpsayā yaḥ
reme nirasta-viṣayo 'py avaruddha-dehas
tasmai namo bhagavate puruṣottamāya*

tiryak—animals lower than human beings; *manuṣya*—human beings, etc.; *vibudha-ādiṣu*—amongst the demigods; *jīva-yoniṣu*—in different species of life; *ātma*—self; *icchayā*—by the will; *ātma-kṛta*—self-created; *setu*—obligations; *parīpsayā*—desiring to preserve; *yaḥ*—who; *reme*—performing transcendental pastimes; *nirasta*—not being affected; *viṣayaḥ*—material contamination; *api*—certainly; *avaruddha*—manifested; *dehaḥ*—transcendental body; *tasmai*—unto Him; *namaḥ*—my obeisances; *bhagavate*—unto the Personality of Godhead; *puruṣottamāya*—the primeval Lord.

TRANSLATION

O my Lord, by Your own will You appear in the various species of living entities, among animals lower than human beings as well as among the demigods, to perform Your transcendental pastimes. You are not affected by material contamination. You come just to fulfill the obligations of Your own principles of religion, and therefore, O Supreme Personality, I offer my obeisances unto You for manifesting such different forms.

PURPORT

The Lord's incarnations in different species of life are all transcendental. He appears as a human being in His incarnations of Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, etc., but He is not a human being. Anyone who mistakes Him for an ordinary human being is certainly not very intelligent, as confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.11): *avajānanti mām mūḍhā mānuṣiṁ tanum āśritam*. The same principle is applicable when He appears as the hog or fish incarnations. They are transcendental forms of the Lord and are manifested under certain necessities of His own pleasure and pastimes. Such manifestations of the transcendental forms of the Lord are accepted by Him mostly to enliven His devotees. All His incarnations are manifested whenever there is a need to deliver His devotees and maintain His own principles.

(continued in next issue)

For Your Information

RESOURCES

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 for information on obtaining a subscription, check with the Hare Kṛṣṇa center nearest you.

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 autumn, 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 and fall 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.

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.

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/ (215) 822-0787. Please send a recent mailing label or invoice.

FESTIVALS & CALENDAR

Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees follow a spiritual calendar that divides the year into twelve months, each named for a different form of Kṛṣṇa. The devotees at the Hare Kṛṣṇa center nearest you will gladly tell you more about the meaning of the festivals listed here.

Month of Hṛṣīkeśa (August 31–September 29)

September 7—Śrī Kṛṣṇa-janmāṣṭamī-vrata, the appearance anniversary of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Fasting till midnight. Devotees celebrate by recounting Kṛṣṇa's glories and presenting Him gifts. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa center for details.

September 8—Appearance anniversary of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the Inter-

national Society for Krishna Consciousness. Fasting till noon. Devotees mark this day with personal remembrances.

September 11—Annadā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. Also, appearance anniversary of Śrīla Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī Bhāgavatapāda, one of the present spiritual masters in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

September 17—Anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's arrival in the United States in 1965. Also, the appearance anniversary of Śrīla Kīrtanānanda Swami Bhaktipāda, one of the present spiritual masters in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

September 19—Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Sitādevī, consort of Śrī Advaita Ācārya.

September 20—Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Lalitā-devī, foremost of the cowherd girl friends of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

September 21—Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī, the appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Lord Kṛṣṇa's eternal consort. Fasting till noon.

September 25—Pakṣa-vardhinī Mahādvādaśī. Also appearance anniversary of Lord Vāmana-deva, the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa as a dwarf *brāhmaṇa*. Fasting till noon; fasting all day from grains and beans. Also, appearance anniversary of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, the chief philosophical follower of Lord Caitanya.

September 26—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, the pioneer of modern-day Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Fasting till noon.

September 27—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the foremost teacher of the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*.

September 28—The start of the third month of Cāturmāsya. Fasting from milk.

Month of Padmanābha (September 30–October 28)

October 10—Indirā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

October 17—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhavānanda Goswami Viṣṇupāda, one of the present spiritual masters in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

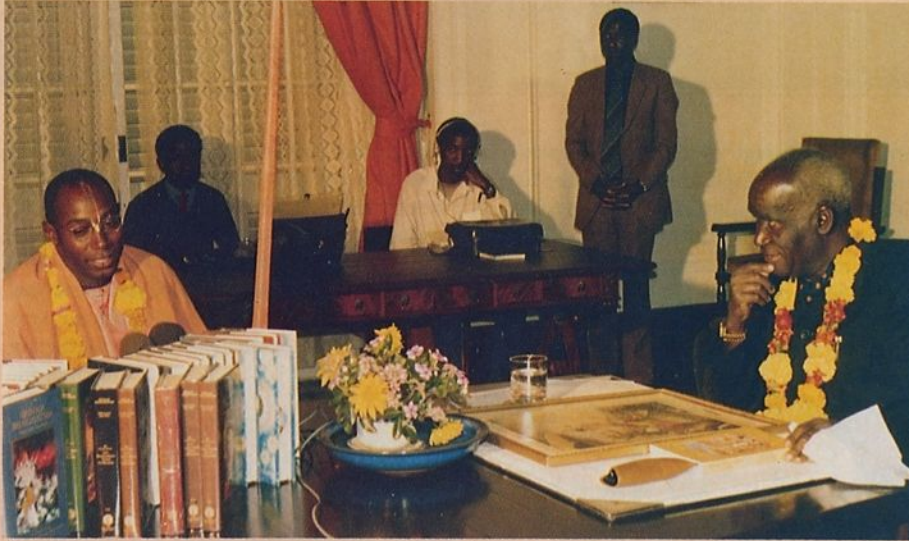
October 23—Śrī Rāma-vijayotsava (festival celebrating Lord Rāma's victory over the demon Rāvaṇa). Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa center for schedule of events. Also, appearance anniversary of Śrīla Madhvācārya, a great teacher of devotional service.

October 24—Pāśāṅkuṣā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.



Every Town and Village

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



Śrīla Bhaktīrtha Swami presents the sixty-volume *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, India's great spiritual classic, to His Excellency Kenneth Kaunda, President of Zambia, at the state house in Lusaka.

President of Zambia Honors ISKCON Guru

Lusaka, Zambia—President Kenneth Kaunda recently held a dinner here in honor of Śrīla Bhaktīrtha Swami Kṛṣṇa-pāda, one of ISKCON's spiritual masters who oversee the movement in Africa. President Kaunda, a vegetarian and an admirer of Mahatma Gandhi, heard of Śrīla Bhaktīrtha through Justice Aiyadurai Shivanandan, a life member of ISKCON. Justice Shivanandan had also previously arranged for Śrīla Bhaktīrtha to meet with Zambia's chief justice and several other judges.

During the dinner at the State House, President Kaunda expressed appreciation for the Kṛṣṇa consciousness philosophy,

which stresses the spiritual identity of all living creatures, not superficial, sectarian differences based on race, language, religion, and so on. Zambia is a neighbor of South Africa and is much affected by the conflict there.

The President was particularly interested in the idea that the soul lives on after the body, and in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement's emphasis on self-sufficiency. Śrīla Bhaktīrtha outlined ISKCON's plans to develop farm communities and cottage industries throughout the country.

President Kaunda received an honorary ISKCON life membership, with guest privileges at temples and restaurants worldwide.

Major Tamil Nadu Temples Welcome Pāda-yātrā

Tanjore, Tamil Nadu—The four-thousand-mile *pāda-yātrā*, celebrating the five-hundredth-advent anniversary of Lord Caitanya, recently brought Lord Caitanya's teachings here, with a festival of *saṅkīrtana* and spiritual discourses held on the grounds of the Bṛhad Īśvara temple.

Lord Caitanya taught that the best means of spiritual realization in Kali-yuga, our present troubled age of quarrel and hypocrisy, is *harināma saṅkīrtana*, the congregational chanting of the holy names of God. Spreading this message, Lord Caitanya traveled widely in Tamil Nadu. The *pāda-yātrā* is following in His footsteps,

visiting places He visited 475 years ago.

The *pāda-yātrā* began from Dvārakā (Gujarat) on September 2, 1984, and reached Kanyā-kumārī on April 23, 1985. From Kanyā-kumārī the *pāda-yātrā* proceeded to Rāmeśvaram, and from there to Madurai, where the priests of the ancient Mīnākṣī temple greeted the *pāda-yātrā* with the temple elephant and offered a *pūrṇa-kumbha* reception. More than three thousand guests attended the *pāda-yātrā*'s evening program within the walls of the Mīnākṣī temple compound.

After Madurai, the *pāda-yātrā* traveled to Śrī Raṅgam, where Lord Caitanya had

spent the four months of the rainy season in the year 1510. Here the priests and the chief executive officer of the temple offered the *pāda-yātrā* an especially warm and festive welcome. The priests, strict followers of the great *ācārya* Śrī Rāmānuja, escorted the *pāda-yātrā* devotees into the sanctum sanctorum for a special close *darśana* (viewing) of the Raṅganātha Deity and offered them garlands and *prasādam* of the Deity. From Śrī Raṅgam the *pāda-yātrā* came to Tanjavur.

The *pāda-yātrā* devotees are members of ISKCON; thus they are devout followers of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, ISKCON's founder and spiritual master, who spread the teachings of Lord Caitanya and the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa all over the world. Although many members of the Society are non-Indians born in non-Hindu families, temple priests throughout South India welcome them as respected followers of the Caitanya Vaiṣṇavite tradition.

From Tanjore, the *pāda-yātrā* will go on to Kāñcīpuram, Madras, Tirupati, Jagannātha Purī, and finally Śrīdhāma Māyāpur, the birthplace of Lord Caitanya, in West Bengal. There, in March 1986, the *pāda-yātrā* members will gather together with thousands of devotees from around the world and an estimated half million Indians to celebrate Lord Caitanya's glories on the five-hundredth anniversary day of His appearance.



Śrī Raṅgam temple leaders greet the ISKCON *pāda-yātrā* with a traditional *pūrṇa-kumbha* reception—leaves and flowers in a pot. From left to right: *pāda-yātrā* leaders Jayādvaita Swami and Lokanātha Swami; Sri Thirumalai Iyengar, head of the temple priests; Sri N. Rangaraja Bhattar, member of the temple advisory committee, formerly chief priest for forty years; and Dr. Gopinatha Rao, the temple's chief administrator.

THE VEDIC

Transcendental Comment

THINKING ABOUT GOD FOR A CHANGE

by Rasaprada dāsa

“Despite the current conservative movement, images of God are in flux,” says Wade Clark Roof, a sociologist at the University of Massachusetts. After a recent study conducted by the National Opinion Research Center, Roof analyzed the results of a survey concerning people’s images, or concepts, of God. Respondents were presented with twelve images—creator, father, judge, king, master, liberator, redeemer, friend, lover, healer, mother, and spouse—and asked, “When you think of God, how likely are each of these images to come into your mind?”

From his analysis, Roof found that traditional, parental, and authoritative images were the ones most often selected. Creator was the most prominent image, chosen by eighty-two percent of the more than fifteen hundred respondents. Yet Roof believes that people’s images of God are becoming “more individual, intimate, and softer.” The image of God as friend was indicated by sixty-two percent, and almost half of the respondents said they sometimes imagine God as lover.

“People are reaching out for more personal images of God,” says Roof. And from the viewpoint of the Vedic scriptures of India, this inclination can be considered quite natural. Since we are all persons, we require personal relationships. And a personal relationship with God provides one with an eternal and unbreakable companionship, one that continues forever, under any circumstance.

Surprisingly to Roof, many conventionally religious persons chose “more personal, less traditional, and softer” images of God. Obviously, this implies that traditional images of God are not “soft.” But a Kṛṣṇa conscious person recognizes that any understanding of God that does not include His personality, or “softness,” is incomplete. An impersonal, limited image of God will never satisfy the mind of one who is truly religious.

From the Vedic scriptures we learn that

the actual image of God is complete in every respect. God is not a concept subject to our imagination. Nor is He bound by any of the inebrieties that accompany every mortal’s capacity to conceive of Him. Yet He is a person—the supreme person. Quite clearly, the roles of creator, liberator, and so forth directly imply an intelli-

inform us of the innumerable functions and aspects of the personality of Godhead. They teach us that there is, so to speak, a feature of God for everyone. For those who desire to visualize God as friend, Kṛṣṇa is *suhṛdam sarva-bhūtānām*, the best friend of everyone. For those who prefer to see God in a parental role, Kṛṣṇa



gent person who is performing these roles. But who is God, and which roles does He perform?

The *Vedas* assert that God, being omnipotent, manifests Himself through an unlimited variety of roles and activities. Yet although He executes all the functions of universal administrator, He remains situated above the universe. The universal manifestation springs from His creative potency, yet He remains separate from this manifestation as the Supreme Potent. And in His topmost feature as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, He engages in a countless variety of loving relationships with His pure devotees.

The Vedic literatures, specifically the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*,

explains, *aham bīja-pradaḥ pitā*: “I am the seed-giving father of all living beings.” And for anyone who, upon hearing these descriptions, comes to understand the actual truth of God’s glory, Kṛṣṇa promises, “He does not take his birth again in this material world but attains to My eternal, spiritual abode.”

CAN KARMA BE KILLED?

by Mahānidhi Swami

Roswell Gilbert’s wife was seventy-three and suffering from Alzheimer’s disease. One day Mr. Gilbert ended his

OBSERVER

ary on the Issues of the Day

wife's life by firing two nine-millimeter bullets through her brain. Now seventy-five-year-old Gilbert has a new problem. A Florida jury gave him a one-way ticket to the state penitentiary. He'll be eligible for parole after his one-hundredth birthday.

Some people are outraged that Gilbert was sentenced. They claim that he simply abbreviated his wife's suffering. Why should he not go free and thus further reduce the suffering in the world? Others, however, worry about the potential abuse of mercy killings for motives of selfishness or convenience.

What are the Vedic answers to the questions posed by euthanasia? Why was Mrs. Gilbert suffering in the first place? Did death end her suffering? What is the just reward or punishment for Mr. Gilbert's deed? How can suffering be avoided or stopped?

The real cause of suffering was described thousands of years ago by sages such as Mahārāja R̥sabhadeva and Śrī Prabuddha. They explained that people who consider material enjoyment to be the goal of life perform all kinds of sins. Their desire is to enjoy, but ultimately they suffer.

People don't realize that their past sins have created their present suffering. They constantly endeavor to eliminate their unhappiness and to increase their pleasure, but due to ignorance they invariably obtain the opposite result. Their happiness vanishes, and as they grow older, their suffering increases.

Suffering is the just reaction to our past misdeeds. We know that when a person breaks the law, he is subject to punishment. So it is also when one breaks God's laws. Although it is sometimes possible to avoid the laws of man, no one can escape the laws of God.

Mrs. Gilbert was suffering from "bad *karma*" created by previous sins. Mr. Gilbert's intention was to end his wife's suffering, but instead he simply caused her suffering to be postponed until her next birth. Because of ignorance, the net result of Mr. Gilbert's action was an immediate increase in his own misery, with worse to come. Ignorance of the stringent laws of *karma* always results in suffering.

Intelligent persons should learn about

karma and how to escape it through studying the science of *bhakti-yoga*, or devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. Devotional service not only destroys the reactions due to because of our past sins, but it uproots the selfish, material desires that would ordinarily implicate us in future sufferings. This is the art of *karma*-free living and the eternal path of liberation from the bondage of suffering and repeated birth and death.

THE KILLING FIELD

by Baṭu Gopāla dāsa

The tragic violence that left nearly forty dead at last spring's European Cup soccer final in Brussels stands to remind us of the powerful control material nature exerts over us. In the fourteenth chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa describes how material nature's three features, or modes (goodness, passion, and ignorance), bind and control us.

Highest is the mode of goodness (*sattva-guṇa*). Its characteristics are knowledge,



peacefulness, purity, and freedom from material desire. Next is the mode of passion (*rajo-guṇa*), which exhibits the characteristics of attachment, uncontrollable desire, hankering, and intense endeavor for prosperity and sense gratification. And last is the mode of ignorance (*tamo-guṇa*), characterized by madness, indolence, and sleep. This mode is very dangerous, because it can rob us of the ability to dis-

criminate or to comprehend the results of our actions.

Considering all this, it becomes obvious that the Liverpool and Juventus supporters had not come to the Heizerstadion to celebrate the mode of goodness. No! Passion ruled the day.

The fans had traveled a long way and had paid a lot of money. They wanted their team to win. They felt powerful in their numbers. The rival team and its supporters were the enemy. The enemy had to be defeated.

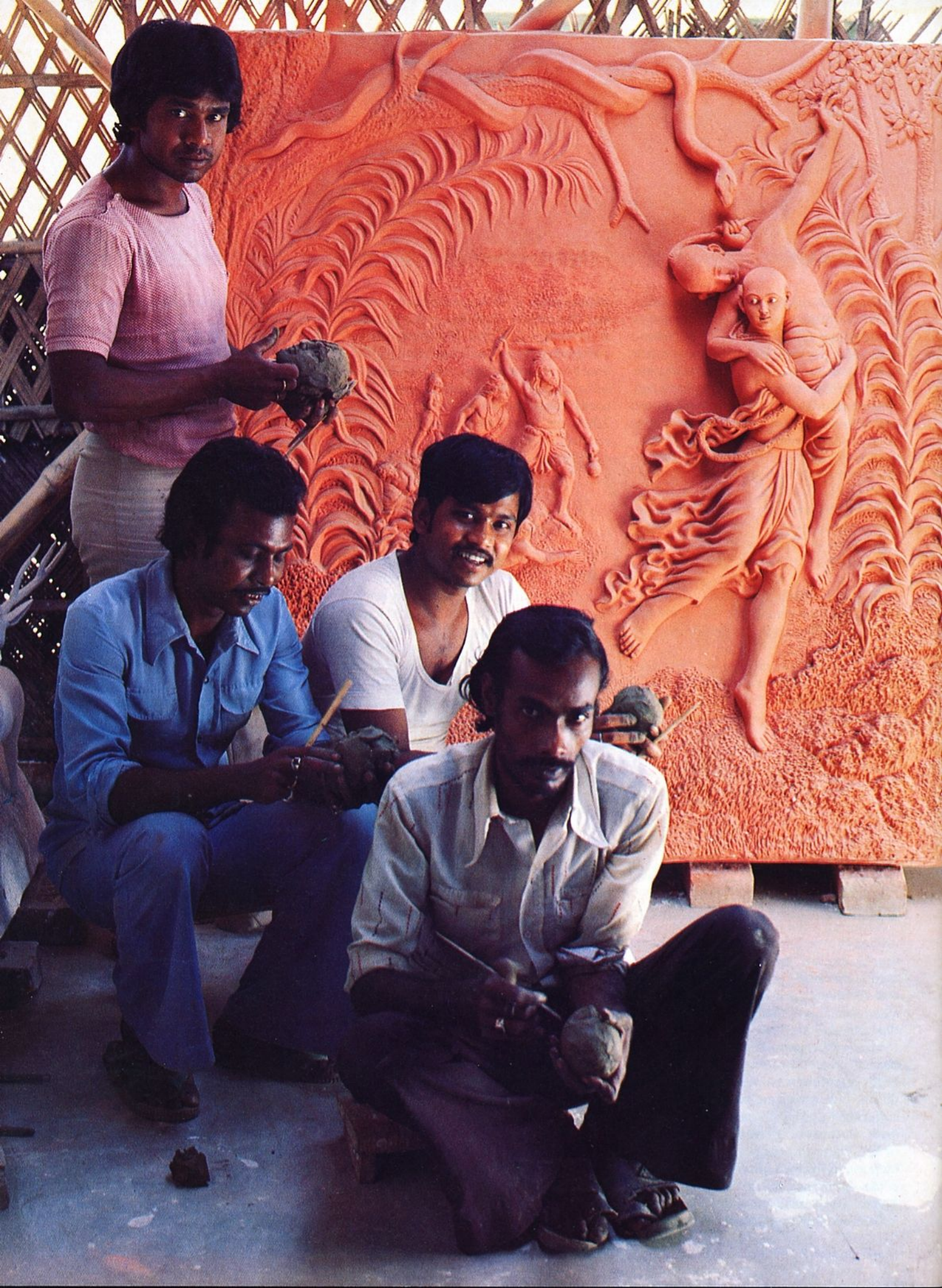
Now, the mode of passion is not always bad. After all, men influenced by this mode have built beautiful cities and have made many wonderful discoveries and inventions. They have produced masterpieces of art and music and have done so many great things. But the mode of passion does tend to be unstable. It could be compared to a high-pressure boiler. As long as certain control valves are working properly, the expansive heat and pressure can be contained and directed toward useful work. But if the control system breaks down, the result can be explosive. Similarly, unchecked passion is a frightening thing. The mode of passion, therefore, should always be kept under the control of a higher mode.

For example, in the ideal Vedic society, the kings, soldiers, and other passionate men were always submissive to the instructions of the *brāhmaṇas*, who were situated in the mode of goodness. Since the *brāhmaṇas* were endowed with foresight, forbearance, and transcendental knowledge, they could counterbalance the impulsiveness and passion of the martial class. Thus they guided the ambitious rulers of society to channel their passionate natures for the good of everyone.

But when the mode of passion is allowed to fall under the influence of the mode of ignorance, the result is always disastrous. Consider again the scene at that soccer match.

What happened? Simple. *Tamo-guṇa*, the mode of ignorance, descended on the crowd. Since uncontrolled passion is intense, aggressive, and full of attachment, it can easily develop into its most volatile form: anger. A spark of the mode of

(continued on page 35)



The Arts

A REVIVAL OF VEDIC ARTS

From the rustic beauty of terra cotta wall reliefs to the grandeur of temple architecture, India's ancient culture and art bring us to spiritual self-awareness.

Text and photos by
VIŚĀKHĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

It had seemed like a castle in the sky. For so long I'd been hearing the devotees in the Hare Kṛṣṇa center in Māyāpur, West Bengal, talk about terra cotta panels, terra cotta tiles, terra cotta bas-reliefs, terra cotta statues, terra cotta this, terra cotta that. After seven years I'd developed a kind of apathetic I'll-believe-it-when-I-see-it attitude.

Once again in Māyāpur, on my annual winter pilgrimage, I took an early-morning walk around our grounds to see what had developed while I was away. The air was crisp, and as I approached Śrīla Prabhupāda's partially completed memorial shrine, I saw kingfishers diving from low branches into the deep green waters of the ornamental lake. I rounded a corner, passed a huge cement statue, and suddenly, to the left of the pathway, caught my first glimpse of a terra cotta panel, splendidly illumined by the rising sun. As I drew closer, my eyes feasted upon the panel's magnitude, and my mind was transported to centuries past, when, throughout ancient India, entire communities of master artists had worked with intense devotion to decorate temples and shrines.

As I stood there feeling ashamed for having doubted the Māyāpur devotees, a sudden voice scattered my thoughts.

"Well, how do you like it?"

I turned around and was surprised to see Surabhī Swami, the minister of archi-



Reviving an ancient tradition, four qualified and devotional artists in ISKCON's Māyāpur center (left) are creating a series of bas-reliefs that illustrate events in the life of Lord Caitanya, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself in the role of His own devotee and who appeared five hundred years ago in West Bengal. Above, one of the reliefs, following painting and glazing.

ture for the International Society for Krishna Consciousness and chief architect of Śrīla Prabhupāda's shrine.

"Well, yes. I mean, it's fantastic," I stammered. Surabhī was surrounded by a group of young Western men and women—art students, I later learned, studying the project. Surabhī was explaining the overall artistic concept of the building and of future projects. Thinking it a good opportunity for me to find out more, I joined the group.

"We could have used any number of mediums to decorate the *samādhi* [shrine]," Surabhī was saying, "but we decided on terra cotta over all others because it's tra-

ditional. We're presenting a traditional message, so we thought it fitting to use the traditional medium."

"How old is terra cotta?" someone in the group asked.

"It's as old as civilization. In the Bankura district they've discovered a terra cotta figure from the second century B.C. But that's nothing. Terra cotta was used during Lord Kṛṣṇa's time, thirty centuries B.C., and Lord Rāma's time, millions of years before that!"

Terra cotta literally means "baked earth"; it's a hard ceramic clay used in pottery and construction. Now, as I walked through the artists' work area with Surabhī Swami and the others, I saw it used in fifteen-foot-square, ten-foot-square, and seven-foot-square bas-relief panels depicting pastimes from the Vedic scriptures *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and

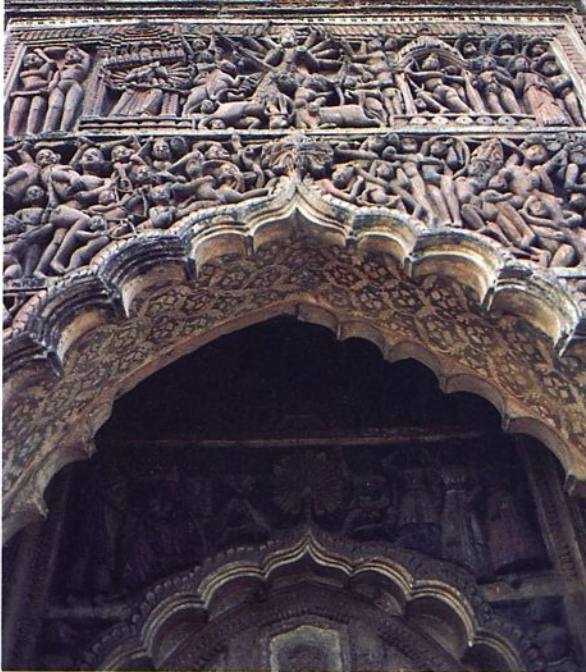
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.

"Dr. George Michell has done a detailed study of the temples and terra cotta of Bengal," Surabhī Swami said, "and he explains that here in Bengal in the sixteenth century there was a religious revival because of Lord Caitanya and His followers. At that time the upper classes—nobility, landed gentry, intellectuals—were giving their wealth for constructing temples and were spending much of their time hearing about and discussing Lord Caitanya and His teachings. The result was a remarkable development in Bengali religious literature.

"The sculptural decorations on Bengal's

Surabhi Swami, minister of architecture for ISKCON, explains a patterned formation of terra cotta brickwork on one of the old temples at Kalna, West Bengal (far right). A detail from a temple in Kalna, built in 1849 (right).

Below, joyous festivities during Lord Caitanya's appearance-day celebration five hundred years ago, as painted by Dinesh, a full-time devotee-artist.



many temples paralleled this development in religious literature. The temple sculpture, generally in terra cotta, served as a kind of permanent record of the dramas, songs, poems, and narratives.

"In the second half of the nineteenth century, temple patronage in Bengal declined as the Indian middle class became Westernized and Calcutta became the capital of British India. Artisans found themselves without work and were forced to turn to other crafts, like wood carving. New materials, like concrete and steel, dealt a final blow to the brick and terra cotta tradition. So for us to use terra cotta here is to revive an important art form."

By now we had paused before three shabbily dressed Indians who were working on a relief of Lakṣmī-devī, the goddess of fortune, being offered presentations by

various demigods and goddesses gathered around her throne.

"Not only did we revive the art form," Surabhī said, "we also reinstated the integrity of the message. When terra cotta was widely used in temple decorations, the terra cotta artists, like the majority of Bengalis, were illiterate. So they could not become familiar with the Sanskrit scriptures that delineated the pastimes they were depicting. Instead, they took the word of the local Bengali poets and dramatists. The problem was that these authors didn't hesitate to introduce new episodes and add their own interpretations. So oftentimes the artwork isn't true to the original.

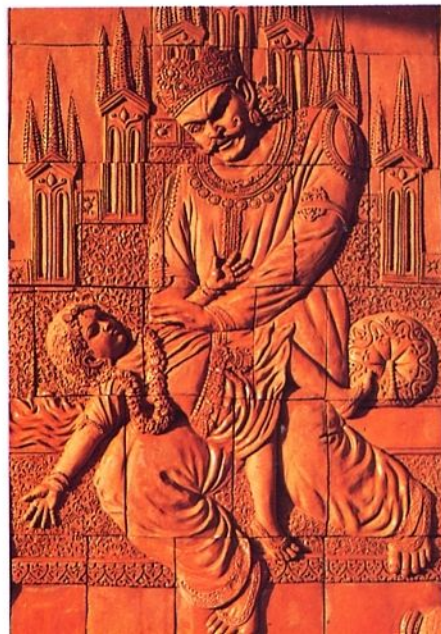
"But all the art we do," Surabhī said with a wave of his hand, to indicate the many reliefs in the workshop, "and all that we *will* do are based on the original

pastimes described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. No one here adds any interpretations or new episodes. That's how we're maintaining the purity and spiritual potency of this art."

As Surabhī Swami spoke, I watched the men in front of us work. Judging from their appearance, you might think they were ordinary laborers, yet they were fashioning such a beautiful relief of Lakṣmī-devī. Immediately, I wanted to find out more about these artists, but being an uninvited newcomer, I kept quiet. Then, as we were about to move on, another woman asked the question I had in mind.

"Where are your artists from?" she said, looking at three men who had stopped their work to observe us.

This time, Ānakadundubhī dāsa, the art director in Māyāpūr, answered. "We found



To make the terra cotta bas-relief panels, devotee-artists first cover a seven-foot by seven-foot area with clay taken from their own ISKCON Māyāpur land. They then form it into a relief depicting a pastime from the Vedic scriptures, in this case the account of a proud sage who is pursued by a deadly disc weapon (far left). The artists cut each relief into sections and bake them in a kiln. Then the sections are reassembled, as here (left) on the wall of Śrīla Prabhupāda's memorial shrine in Māyāpur. This relief depicts the confrontation between the boy-devotee Prahlaḍa and his demonic father. In the final step, an artist will fill in the spaces between the sections with clay.



one family of five talented brothers, and we've commissioned them to do this work. This is the eldest and most qualified of them." He indicated one of the three, a fortyish man in a worn green sweater who had curly, unkempt hair and several days' growth of beard. "He and two of his brothers do the reliefs from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The other two brothers work on *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* reliefs.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted us to employ local talent," Ānakadundubhī continued, "and this man, the eldest, met Prabhupāda here in Māyāpur in 1972. Prabhupāda told him, 'You are like my artist disciple. Please work here with us and teach these boys and girls [Prabhupāda's Western disciples].'"

Looking from these men to their work and back again, I impressed upon myself that you can't tell a man by his looks. For here, hiding behind a common appearance, were three qualified and devotional artists.

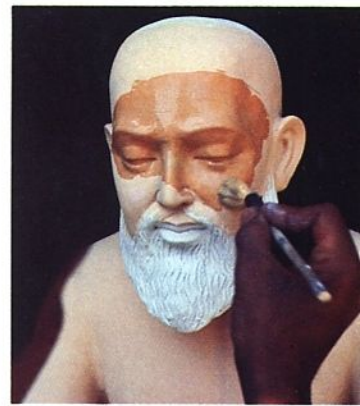
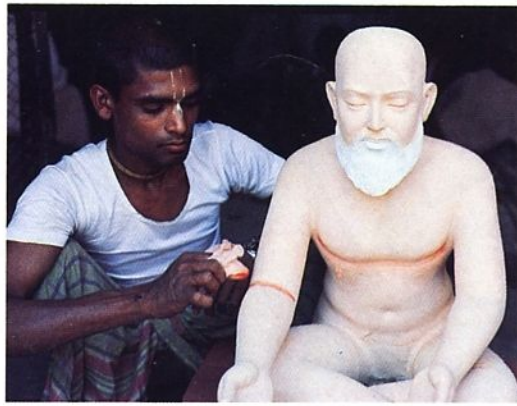
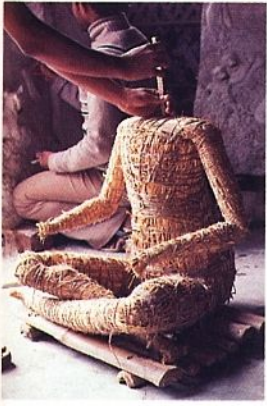
It was time for lunch, and as the group dispersed, I walked up to Surabhī Swami.

The holy land of Māyāpur,

with its verdant fields, forms the backdrop for figurines of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the cowherd girls to receive finishing touches of paint from Ānakadundubhī dāsa, the art director for the Māyāpur Project (above).

In a grimmer mood, the figures at right depict a scene from the Vedic scripture *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: the conflict between the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa as a boar and the great demon Hiranyākṣa.





From the simplest materials—straw, string, wood, clay, and paints—a devotee fashions a lifelike form of Advaita Ācārya, an incarnation of God who appeared in Bengal five hundred years ago (above). On His appearance-day anniversary, Advaita Ācārya is worshiped (left) along with Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, Deities of the Supreme Lord.



Looking at him, I remembered when I first met him—practically bumped into him—a tall, lanky Dutchman who was strolling around our ISKCON land in Bombay in 1972. He had introduced himself to me as “Hans” and said that his wife and brother were devotees and that he’d been to our temple in Amsterdam. The day after our meeting, he had met Prabhupāda, and before long Śrīla Prabhupāda had had him sitting in the room connected to his own, drawing plans for our Bombay temple. That’s where I had seen him for days, sitting at a small round table next to Prabhupāda’s door, designing a temple. Eventually he had been initiated. To date he has completed not only the Bombay temple but also the ISKCON Vṛndāvana temple. (Śrīla Prabhupāda was pleased and declared that as long as these temples stood, Surabhī’s Kṛṣṇa consciousness would also stand.)

Before I could speak, Surabhī Swami spoke to me, noting how the three artists

had immediately gone back to work. “You can tell the artists from the laborers,” he said, “because the artists are absorbed in their work. With the laborers, you have to push them, watch them, and as soon as time’s up, they’re off to their homes. But the artists have pride in their work. They’ll go day and night hardly noticing that the time has passed.”

Surabhī spoke more generally about art. He said that spiritual art, more than being decorative, more than being an expression of artists’ feelings or experiences, was a way to meditate on higher beings—ultimately to invoke the presence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and His incarnations and expansions.

Later I saw a book that Surabhī had referred to: *The Hindu Temple*, by the world-renowned specialist in ancient Indian art and architecture Stella Kramrisch. She quotes Vedic scriptures, like the *Bṛhasaṁhitā*, which describe in detail specific proportions and features of the incarna-

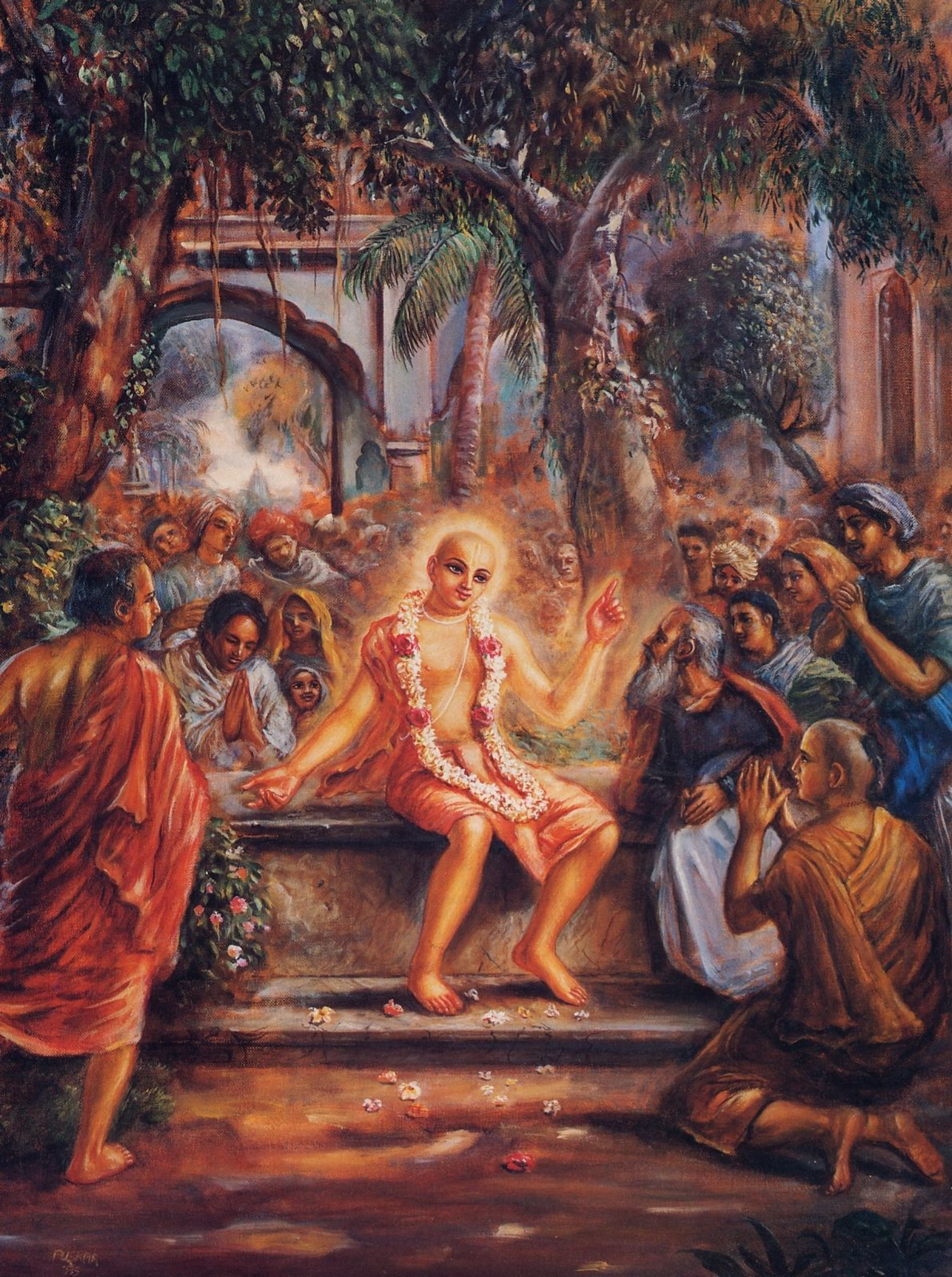
tions of the Supreme Lord. These texts guide the sculptors, who fashion statues and reliefs that directly convey divinity to the beholder.

Śrīla Prabhupāda has often explained how God is present everywhere by virtue of His diverse energies. In His Deity forms in the temples, however, He is present personally. Pure devotees not only see Him there, they also have conversations and pastimes with Him. (Several of these are recorded in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.) Hearing Surabhī Swami speak and having read of the exactitudes in Deity sculpturing, I became awestruck by the potency and contribution of Vedic art in society: the artists, by their art, were ushering their viewers into the divine presence of God.

The next day, when Surabhī Swami invited me to go with the group to a nearby terra cotta temple, I happily accepted. It turned out to be not one temple but three grouped together. The first, built in 1849, was small, single-domed, and covered with intricate and detailed figures in terra cotta. The next two temples were a century older, both with twenty-five domes and less-refined terra cotta work. Surabhī Swami pointed out that the bricks must have been molded while they were still wet, then baked and set in a complex, patterned formation to make the temple walls.

During the jarring two-hour drive back to Māyāpur, over innumerable potholes and worn-out roads, we discussed what Vedic art means. “Vedic art,” Surabhī pointed out, “comes from the Vedic culture, which flourished in India five thousand years ago, when society had four social divisions [intellectuals, administrators,

(continued on page 35)



The Glories of LORD CAITANYA

Part 8: Entering the Renounced Order

Lord Caitanya, eager to extend His mercy
to all classes of men, left His family to dedicate Himself to
the greater family of the world.

by KUṆḌALĪ 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.

At the age of twenty-four, Lord Caitanya took *sannyāsa*, the vow of renunciation. Nimāi Paṇḍita (as the Lord was known before *sannyāsa*) had become the most popular and influential person in Navadvīpa, Bengal, and He was widely renowned for His scholarship and for His great devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He had a lovely, devoted wife, the goddess of fortune herself, and a widowed mother who loved Him more than her own life and depended completely upon Him. Why, then, did He leave His household responsibilities to enter the renounced order?

In the Lord's biography *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī describes how Lord Caitanya appeared in this age of quarrel and hypocrisy to elevate the fallen souls above the duality of happiness and distress and bring them to

the highest level of spiritual realization, unalloyed love of God, and that the Lord's entering the renounced order—in which one vows to curtail all association with women, end all involvement in worldly affairs, and live as a mendicant—was one method the Lord employed to accomplish His mission.

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta describes that even before Lord Caitanya took *sannyāsa*, He and His associates, out of their intense desire to relieve others from the suffering of material life, "broke into and plundered the storehouse of love of God." After becoming utterly intoxicated with divine love, they distributed love of God, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, freely in all directions, irrespective of the recipients' caste or creed.

The Lord and His associates, being completely free from material attachments and illusion, were uninhibited by social conventions. They congregationally chanted the holy names of the Supreme Lord—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—publicly in all parts of Navadvīpa, crying, laughing, and dancing in great ecstasy, appearing to the unenlightened just like madmen. Thus they inundated all of Bengal and its neighboring areas with *prema-vanyā*, a flood of love of God. Young men, old men, women, and children were swept up in that flood of

spiritual ecstasy. And the Lord and His associates, seeing the amazing effects of Kṛṣṇa's divine name on the fallen souls, became filled with transcendental pleasure.

There were, however, exceptions. Certain groups of persons were very expert at avoiding the Lord's flood of mercy. One such group was the impersonalistic monists, who eschew any expression of devotion for God. Rather than consider themselves servants of the Lord and His devotees, they proudly claim to be as good as God. Another group was the selfish materialists, who think life is meant for gratifying the senses. There were also the false logicians, persons who use their intelligence to justify aims in life other than the pursuit of self-realization. And there were blasphemers, nondevotees, and the arrogant members of the student community. All these rascals somehow managed to avoid the inundation of love for Kṛṣṇa.

Some of these inimical persons formed a coalition and leveled trumped-up accusations against Nimāi Paṇḍita. The Lord could understand that their envy and sectarianism were keeping them from appreciating Kṛṣṇa consciousness, what to speak of taking it up. As long as He remained within a particular family or community, He concluded, people prone to envy and sectarianism would think Him sectarian

When the news spread that Lord Caitanya had left His home and family affairs and come to the house of one of His intimate associates in Śāntīpura, hundreds of townspeople came to see Him.

also, and His mission of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness would not be completely successful. Thinking in this way, He resolved to renounce His family, His wife and elderly mother, and dedicate Himself to the good of the greater family of the world.

In other words, although one generally enters the renounced order late in life, Lord Caitanya did so at age twenty-four, just to facilitate His mission of delivering the fallen. He lived in a cultured society, one in which persons who could control their senses, give up sex desire, and restrain the feverish spirit of material enjoyment were admired, respected, and honored by those who were attached to material life. Knowing that He lived in such a society, the Lord decided to trick the ones who were evading His mercy by taking the vow of renunciation.

Leaving home before sunrise one morning, Nīmāi Paṇḍita journeyed to Katwa, where Keśava Bhārati, an ascetic in that town, initiated Him into the *sannyāsa* order, giving Him the name Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. As a result of His ploy, the Lord attracted the attention and gained the respect of those who had been inimical to Him. Thus He drew them all into the ocean of love of Kṛṣṇa, and they too joined in the congregational glorification of the Lord's divine names, diving and surfacing in an ocean of transcendental bliss.

The members of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, the modern followers of Lord Caitanya, are sometimes criticized for their renunciation of mundane family life and materialistic values. These critics consider mundane morality, achievements of mundane distinction, and the accumulation of material goods and facilities to be essential for keeping one's prestige and credibility as a responsible member of society. Indeed, they consider such things to be the topmost goal of human life. One of their strongest criticisms, rooted in a long-standing fundamental dichotomy between spiritualists and materialists, is that Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees are not concerned enough about humanistic values and ameliorating the plight of humankind.

Materialistic people usually consider the practitioners of Kṛṣṇa consciousness weak-minded sentimentalists who opt for spiritual life as a means of escaping from, rather than coping with, life's responsibilities. It is very rare, therefore, for a materialist to appreciate that Lord Caitanya was extremely concerned about the problem of human suffering. Yet that concern is the very reason He chose to appear as *mahā-vadānya avatāra*, the most merciful incarnation of God. He wanted to teach a positive alternative to disease, old age, and death, and all the other horrors of this material world, to which even the most powerful and successful materialists must sooner or later succumb.

The person who takes the time to study the life and precepts of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu will learn that He specifically took to the renounced order not to escape responsibility but to fulfill the most vital responsibility of alleviating the suffering of humanity. He taught that the only source of unhappiness for an advanced devotee in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is to see the suffering and anxiety of others. The Lord wanted, therefore, to teach by His example that we should completely dedicate our lives to *para-upakāra*, working selflessly for the benefit of others. Thus, by His vow, He formally declared that He had no ambition to fulfill but to seek the well-being of others. And He instructed all His followers to adopt this same mentality.

Like any true devotee of God, Caitanya Mahāprabhu did not prescribe material solutions to the problems of life; He knew they would never work. Unlike the human-

The frustrations and anxieties of life are primarily due to our futile search for lasting satisfaction within the ever-changing, temporary material world.

ists, He had no sentimental notions about making a permanent arrangement for happiness in this material world. He taught that this material world is, by its very nature, temporary. Consequently no problem, no solution, no war, no peace, no happiness, no distress, no ideology, no nation—nothing in this world can last forever. This is the insurmountable law of nature. But the immaterial soul within the body is eternal and by constitutional nature blissful. The frustrations and anxieties of life are primarily due to our futile search for permanent satisfaction within the ever-changing, temporary material world.

Out of His mercy, the Lord wanted to give the frustrated souls of this world a permanent solution to the problems of life. He wanted to give them an eternal body, eternal senses, an eternal abode, and eternal, blissful relationships with Himself and His pure devotees. He wanted all the fallen souls to join Him in the spiritual kingdom of God, and toward that end He prescribed the simple and sublime life of

Kṛṣṇa consciousness, especially the congregational chanting of the holy names of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. This practice purifies the heart and liberates the soul from the illusion of accepting the body as the self. It awakens the soul to his forgotten identity as the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa and brings freedom from the cycle of repeated birth and death.

No material solution to life's miseries, therefore, is comparable to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, because no material solution is permanent.

Vain materialists do not realize that there is no other lasting solution to life's problems and trials. Their futile attempts to end the recurring social, political, and economic problems of the world, as well as their efforts to stop disease, old age, death, and natural disasters, are like blowing on a boil to stop it from hurting. The blowing soothes temporarily, but it does not cure. The cure is to lance the boil and squeeze out the infection.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught that the solution to the manifold sufferings of humanity isn't the "boil-blowing," patchwork schemes of various social, economic, and political ideologies. The solution is to extricate ourselves from the material world altogether and return back home to Godhead. This is the realistic teaching of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and it was to teach this practical message that He took the vow of renunciation.

Though in retrospect we can appreciate Lord Caitanya's kindness, at the time, His wife and mother and many of His friends were greatly saddened to see Him leave home. The same was true about Lord Jesus Christ, who left home at the age of twelve to fulfill his life's mission. Similarly, there are numerous instances throughout history of great devotees who met with opposition when they wanted to renounce the world and dedicate themselves completely to the devotional service of God. From Lord Caitanya's example we can learn that, regardless of how much we may achieve in this material world and regardless of how much opposition we meet from family and friends, we must eventually leave it all behind and fully embrace the greater family of man by preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

After the Lord renounced His home and social status, He went to Śāntipura, near Navadvīpa, to the house of one of His intimate associates, Advaita Acārya. When the news spread that Nīmāi Paṇḍita had taken *sannyāsa*, hundreds of friends and admirers came to see Him. He was dressed in the garb of a *sannyāsī*, a loincloth and a simple outer covering. His head was clean shaven, and in His hands He carried a *sannyāsa* stick (*daṇḍa*), a symbol of His vow, and a *kamaṇḍalu* (a mendicant's waterpot).

Śacīdevī, the Lord's mother, also came to Śāntipura to see Him for what she was certain would be the last time. Upon seeing her beloved son in the simple dress of a renunciant, she felt mixed emotions of pain and pleasure. Falling at Śacī's feet,

the Lord begged her permission to go to the holy land of Vṛndāvana. After consulting with Advaita Ācārya, Śacī requested her son to go instead to Jagannātha Purī, in the neighboring state of Orissa, because she would more easily get news of Him

from the devotees going back and forth to that holy town. The Lord agreed, and a few days later He traveled on foot to Purī, from where He headed His mission for the remaining twenty-four years of His manifest pastimes on earth.

THE KILLING FIELD

(continued from page 25)

ignorance can then touch off an explosion, for this lowest mode is characterized by irrationality and madness. Under the influence of the mode of ignorance, one scarcely knows or cares what he or she is doing.

Many of the spectators at the game had been drinking. And of all the routes into the dark depths of ignorance, intoxication is perhaps the quickest and easiest. Passion thus turned into fury, and many ordinary people began behaving like madmen. Deadly missiles were hurled. Iron railings were torn down and used as clubs. One "spectator" was even photographed firing a pistol into the crowd.

If the mode of passion mixed with the mode of ignorance can create such mindless violence over a simple soccer match, imagine the kind of violence people are capable of over larger issues.

The nations of the world are now armed to the teeth, and matters far more serious than a European Cup final are at stake. Unless people learn how to avoid the lower modes of nature, especially the mode of ignorance, we will surely have disaster on a scale that we can now scarcely imagine.

The magnitude of the task of educating and elevating human society is obviously enormous, but the means are within our grasp. The main footholds of the mode of ignorance—intoxication, animal killing, perversion, indolence, and so on—have

to be eradicated. And at the same time, the principles of goodness—such as sense control, cleanliness, and truthfulness—should be promoted. Human beings must understand that the aim of their lives is to become Kṛṣṇa conscious and go back to Godhead.

For a society to become free from the degrading and dangerous influences of passion and ignorance is definitely not easy. But the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *mahā-mantra* (Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare) are there to help us. We must shake free of the degrading influence of the lower modes of nature and give spiritual realization a chance.

VEDIC ARTS

(continued from page 31)

merchants and farmers, and laborers] and four spiritual divisions [celibate students, householders, retired men, and renounced monks]. These are natural divisions, just as my head, arms, stomach, and legs are natural divisions of my body. As the parts of the body work harmoniously, so the Vedic society was known for its harmony. Everyone worked according to his propensity and was able to fully develop his individuality while progressing toward life's highest goal—love of God.

"Vedic art reflected this highly evolved culture. The ultimate goal of this art was to please the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa. And the artists accomplished that by attracting people to Kṛṣṇa, by heightening people's awareness of God.

"But over the centuries, Vedic culture and art declined, until Lord Caitanya's renaissance, which resulted in temples springing up in all parts of India, like the ones we saw today. After Lord Caitanya, the Vedic culture declined once more. Now, inspired and directed by Śrīla Prabhupāda, we're offering it again in the form of Kṛṣṇa conscious culture and art—writing, photography, architecture, sculpture, painting, cinema, music—all meant to bring us to spiritual self-awareness."

I suddenly realized why going to a Kṛṣṇa temple in India was so different from going to one in the West. In both cases, the Deities are installed and are the center of the temple and the reason for it. And in both cases the temple vibrates with the sounds of the holy names of the Lord. And

in both cases the Lord is worshiped with flowers, incense, ghee lamps, art, drama, ceremonies, and discourses. But in the West, most temples are converted houses or apartments, while in India the temples are designed and built specifically as temples, and the potency of Vedic art is enshrined within them. Often the temple dome will be visible for miles around, and just by seeing it one remembers the Lord. While seeing a temple, we view sacred architecture. While walking through a temple's halls, we are enclosed in a dim, soothing atmosphere caressing the mind and eye after the fierce daylight and hectic pace outside.

The temple atmosphere derives greatly from the architecture and carvings, which create a harmony of height, breadth, and depth measured by rhythms of graded light and darkness. At first, more than recognizing the identity of the pastimes in relief on the walls, ceiling, and capitals, and more than admiring the perfection of the workmanship, one communes with the images simply through their lyrical grace.

The monument as a whole is dynamic, and as we circumambulate it, taking time to gaze at and identify the art piece by piece, we find a freshness to our devotion and realization. At every turn the ultimate meaning of the temple is brought near to us, and the figures on the walls form the basis of our onward journey beyond the manifested world and toward the massive doors before the altar, where we will greet the Deity. When we are in the presence of the Deity, the power and impact of all the other figures seem to increase.

Before the Deity we halt, our eyes tak-

ing in the presence of the Supreme Lord. Having already been impressed by the many transcendental visions within the temple, our minds are arrested by the immortality of God's form and are moved afresh by the beauty of the Divinity. Such an experience, repeated daily and regularly, cannot but have a lasting effect on us, what to speak of on the artists.

But now the local people have forgotten all this. And as a result the temples are dilapidated, dirty, and poorly attended. Comparing what once was with what now is, I felt a sinking feeling.

Yet, returning to the ISKCON Māyāpur project that afternoon and seeing the temple bustling with guests, I took heart to see Śrīla Prabhupāda's influence in reviving and repopularizing Vedic culture. In addition to the terra cotta work I had already seen, I also saw the art the devotees were doing for Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, as well as the murals they were executing throughout ISKCON's Māyāpur community. Other devotees were making jewelry, ornaments, crowns, and elaborately embroidered garments for ISKCON Māyāpur's worshipable Deities. I saw devotees manufacturing *karatālas* and *mṛdaṅgas* (hand cymbals and clay drums), traditional instruments to accompany devotional chanting. Perhaps it's not big enough to be called a renaissance, but it is big enough to create a spiritual revival in the lives of thousands throughout the world—who've found, through Kṛṣṇa conscious art, literature, philosophy, and practice, a meaning and purpose to life. Previously, for me at least, such lofty ideals were nothing more than a castle in the sky.

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Danger at Every Step

In light of so much terrorism these days and the constant threat of war, many people would probably agree with the Vedic literature's statement that this world is fraught with "danger at every step." When asked to comment upon a recent terrorist skyjacking, one American expressed his fear of air travel: "With terrorists everywhere, I wouldn't fly out of this country for anything."

Dangers abound in today's fast-paced world, and the familiar shelters of home and family can collapse around one with sudden and staggering swiftness. As a relative of one skyjacking victim attested, "We're in a state of shock to think that terrorism could reach down into a small town in Illinois. This makes you realize how small the world is nowadays."

Considering our precarious position in a dangerous world, it isn't surprising that many people seek an escape. And among escapes, sex and intoxication are proverbial favorites. As one rock fan asserted, "When we constantly hear that the U.S. and the Soviet Union have enough missiles to blow up the world fifty times over, listening to 'Relax' by Frankie Goes to Hollywood seems a whole lot better than dying." This response to the problems of material life calls to mind the case of the rabbit, which closes its eyes when faced with death. But trying to forget our problems by resorting to sense gratification can actually bring death closer—through drug overdose, AIDS, and other tragedies of sex and drug indulgence.

"But," somebody might ask, "what about those of us who do not abuse drugs or chase after sex? Don't our homes and families protect us from many dangers you mentioned?" The *Statistical Abstract of the United States* says no.

In America between 1971 and 1980, more catastrophic accidents (defined as those in which five or more persons were killed) took place due to fires and explosions in the home than occurred in motor vehicles and airplanes. More than twice as many people suffered nonfatal injuries at home than at work, and more than five times as many people incurred such injuries at home than on the high-

way. Thus, even in the relative peace and quiet of one's home, unobtrusive dangers abound.

Nevertheless, the view persists that "a man's home is his castle," and some seek to make their "castles" bastions against all calamity. Consider the case of the late Howard Hughes. To escape death via germs, pollution, radiation, and the world outside in general, Hughes holed himself up in a hermetically sealed hotel suite in Las Vegas and had his servants carefully sterilize literally everything he touched. Unfortunately, his precautions went in vain, which, of course, should come as no surprise. Nobody can escape death, for we are living in *martya-loka*, "the world of death."

Certainly many laudable efforts are being made by sober-minded social planners to combat the disturbances created by the irresponsible proliferation of nuclear weapons, the neglect of common-sense safety standards, international terrorism, and so on. But we should not lose sight of the fundamental limitations of these measures against inevitable disease, old age, and death. These measures are superficial at best and do not touch the most fundamental problem of mortal existence. Moreover, we see that even a country as powerful and wealthy as the United States cannot protect its citizens from the activities of a relatively small number of political extremists.

This helplessness symbolizes our more far-reaching helplessness at counteracting old age, disease, and death. Therefore, after facing the bitter truths of mortal suffering and death, some individuals seek a more radical solution: suicide.

On the surface, suicide seems to provide a truly fundamental escape from extreme suffering. By simply taking one's own life, one can apparently avoid intolerable mental and physical agonies. Certain existentialist philosophers even consider suicide the one great human freedom. But according to the Vedic literature, suicide solves none of the problems of living in this material world. This is because the suicide victim must again take a mortal birth. And because suicide is inherently sinful, that birth in-

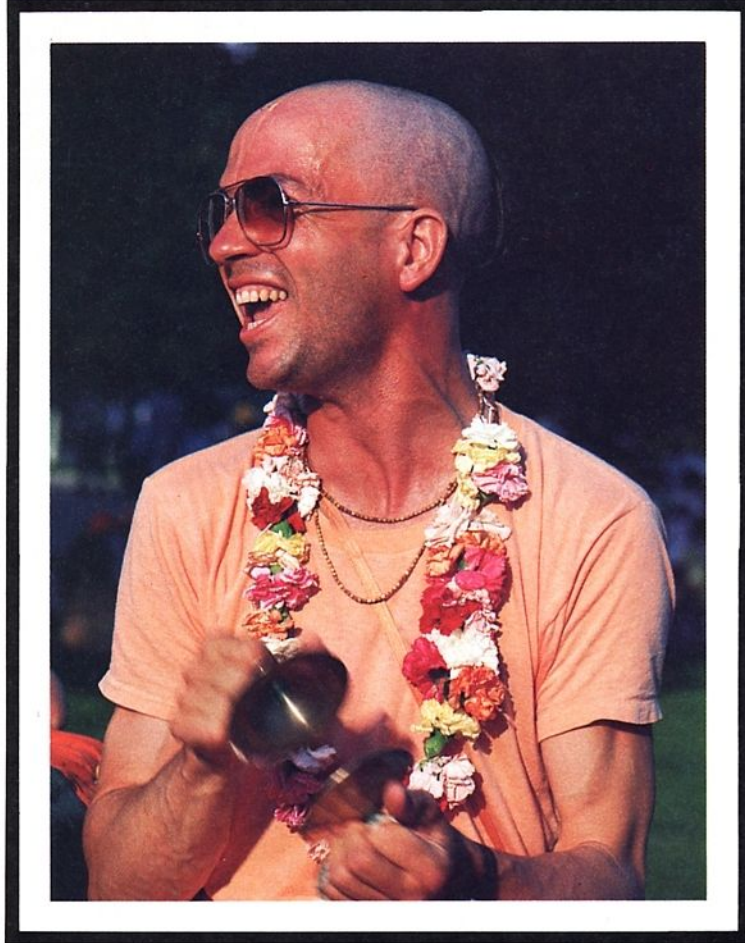
evitably places the unfortunate victim in even more dire circumstances than he previously faced. Thus, instead of escaping from his unbearable ordeal or reducing it, the suicide victim merely compounds it. To actually escape the dangers of material life, one must understand the origin of those dangers: accepting the material body to be oneself.

Within the heart of every living entity in this material world dwells the spirit soul. To know oneself to be not the material body but the spirit soul is to become liberated from temporary happiness and distress and to enjoy eternal bliss in full knowledge of one's relationship with Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The process for acquiring this knowledge is given in the Vedic literature. By practicing *bhakti-yoga*, we can prepare ourselves to go to the eternal, spiritual world at the end of this life. Even during this life we can become free from the fears and anxieties that always accompany material consciousness. Only by becoming fully conscious of our eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa will we gain ultimate security from the fear of old age, disease, and death.

Great sages such as Bhīṣmadeva and Mahārāja Parīkṣit could, because of their spiritual realization, face death with perfect equanimity and mental composure. By following in their footsteps, we too can attain spiritual perfection.

So, when confronted by death, we need not feel undue anxiety or panic and abandon our duties. Rather, we should simply inquire into this process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and make our lives successful. This is a sure process for anyone who sincerely desires to acquire ultimate safety and security for oneself and others in this mortal world. As the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* states: "For one who has accepted the boat of the lotus feet of the Lord, who is the shelter of the cosmic manifestation and is famous as Mukunda, the giver of liberation, the ocean of the material world is like the water contained in a calf's hoof-print. The spiritual world of Vaikuṅṭha, the place where there are no miseries, is his goal, not the place where there is danger at every step of life." —SDG

CHANT!



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NATURALLY DELICIOUS!



Simple ingredients—fruits, vegetables, grains, beans, milk, and spices. But when devotees combine them with care and devotion for Lord Kṛṣṇa's pleasure, you won't believe the variety of tastes, the array of sumptuous dishes. Come sample for yourself. Every Sunday at every ISKCON center.