

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

BACK TO GODHEAD

Vol.21 No.5

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



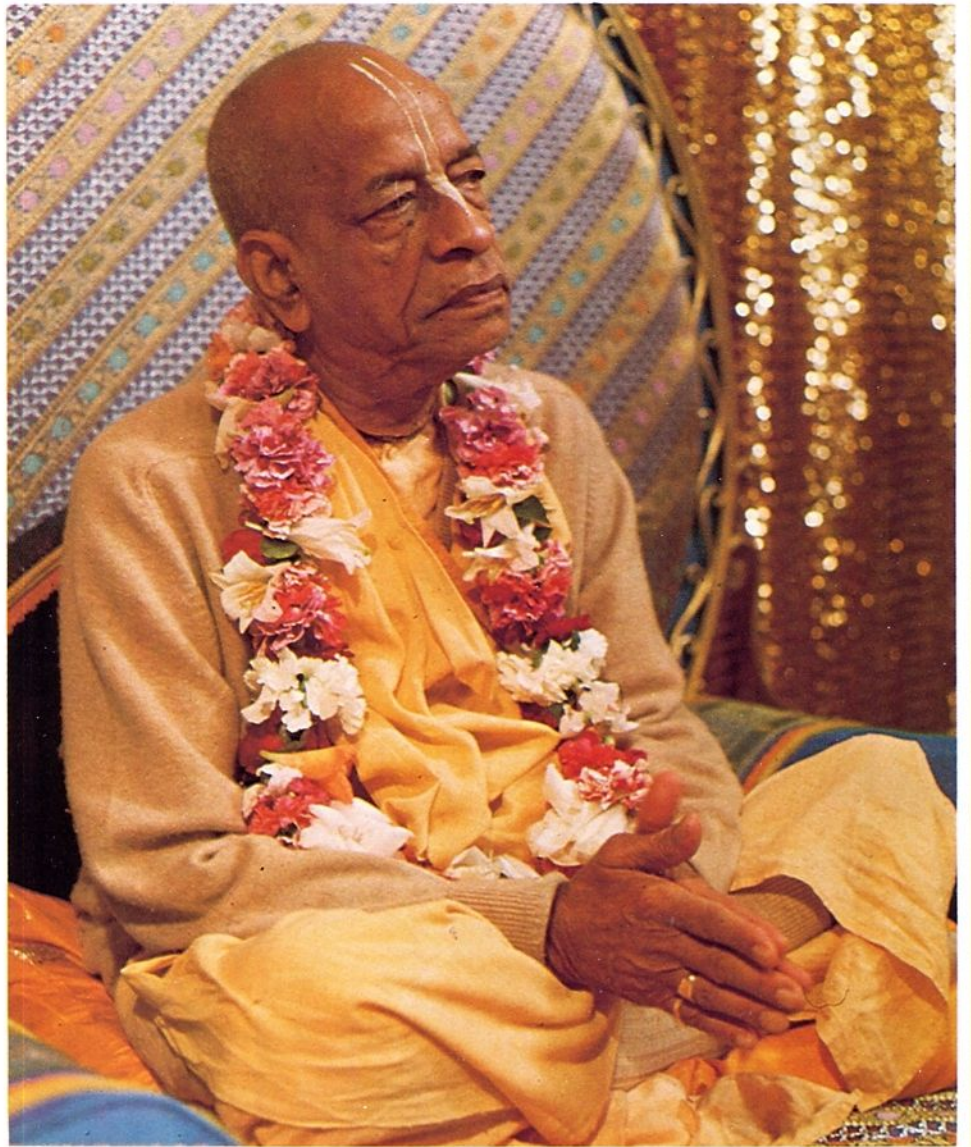
THE HYMNS OF BRAHMĀ



His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, came to America in 1965, at age sixty-nine, to fulfill his spiritual master's request that he teach the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the English-speaking world. In a dozen years he published some seventy volumes of translation and commentary on India's Vedic literature, and these are now standard in universities worldwide. Meanwhile, traveling almost nonstop, Śrīla Prabhupāda molded his international society into a worldwide confederation of *āśramas*, schools, temples, and farm communities. He passed away in 1977 in India's

Vṛndāvana, the place most sacred to Lord Kṛṣṇa. His disciples are carrying forward the movement he started. Advanced disciples throughout the world have been authorized to serve in the position of spiritual master, initiating disciples of their own. And these disciples, in turn, become linked with Śrīla Prabhupāda through the transcendental system of disciple succession.



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

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

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

His Divine Grace

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PRONUNCIATION. We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short a like the u in *but*, long ā like the a in *far* (and hold it twice as long as the short a). Pronounce e like the a in *evade*, long ī like the i in *pique*. Pronounce the vowel ṛ like the ri in *rim*, and 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* (*dāsī* for women), meaning "servant." For instance, the name *Kṛṣṇa dāsa* means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

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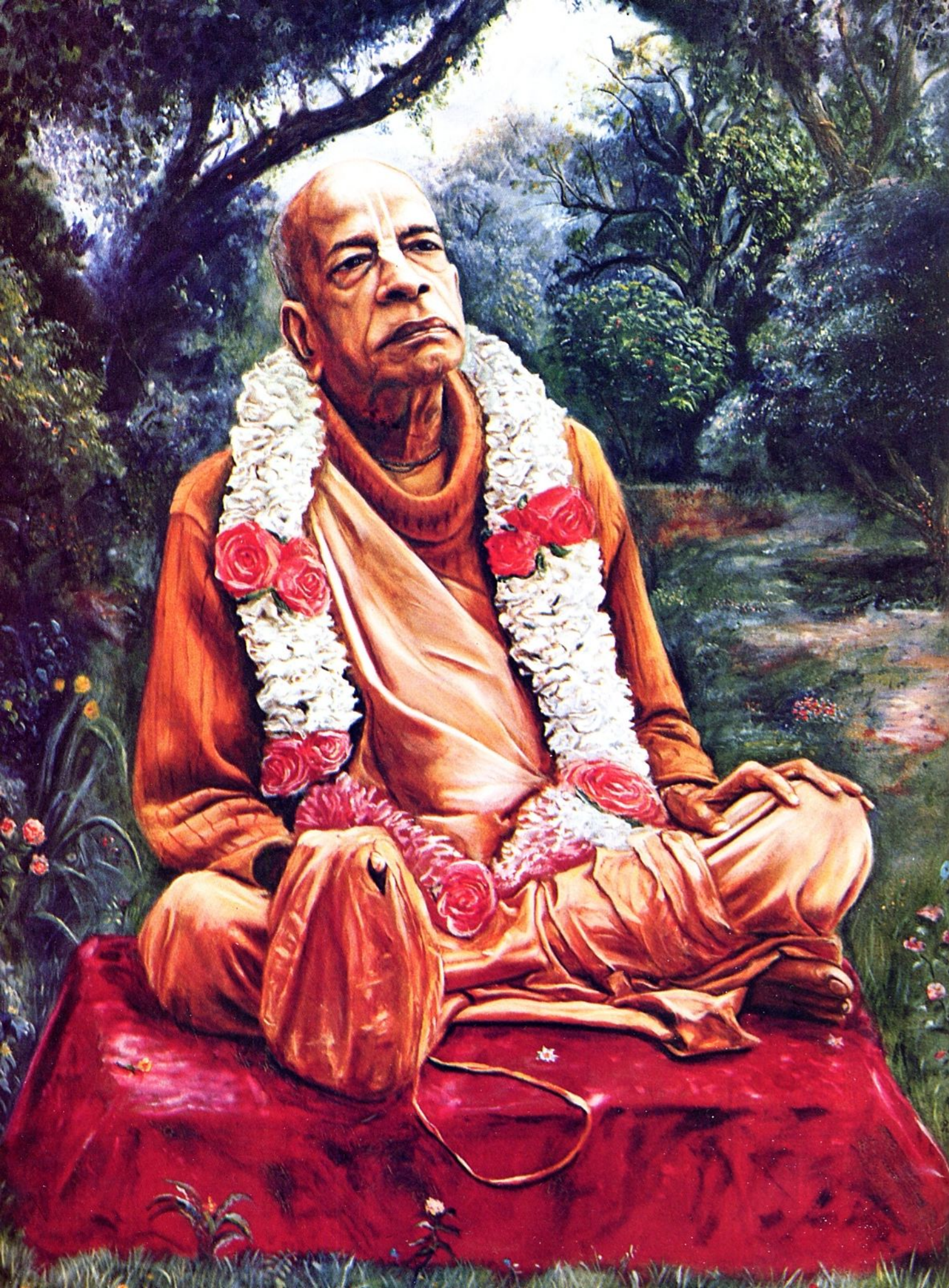
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COVER: The enlightenment of Brahmā by the sound of the flute of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, prompted Brahmā to compose extraordinarily beautiful prayers elucidating the content of his revelation. According to Vedic tradition, Brahmā, the first created being in the universe, recited or sang these hymns countless millennia ago, just before the creation of the material world. Please see the article on page 7. (Painting by Yadurāṇī-devī dāsī)



CHANGING OUR STANDARD OF HAPPINESS

Material happiness often takes the form of relieving distress.
Isn't human life meant for something more?

A lecture in Toronto in June 1976

by HIS DIVINE GRACE

A. C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*śrī-prahrāda uvāca
sukham aindriyakam daityā
deha-yogena dehinām
sarvatra labhyate daivād
yathā duḥkham ayatnataḥ*

“Prahāda Mahārāja said, ‘My dear friends born of demoniac families, the happiness of sensual pleasure can be obtained in any form of life, according to one’s past activities. We obtain such happiness, just as we obtain distress, automatically, without endeavor.’” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.6.3)

Every one of us is fully under the control of material nature. There is no question of independence. The scriptures say our condition is just like that of a horse or a bull bound by the nose. The animal has to move according to how the driver pulls on the rope; it has no independence.

So, our so-called declaration of independence—“There is no God, there is no controller; we can do whatever we like”—is all ignorance. And in ignorance we perform so much sinful activity. In other words, we irresponsibly do anything we like, and then we become entrapped in the karmic reactions and suffer.

As we have experienced in our ordinary life, ignorance is no excuse from punishment. Suppose a child touches fire. The fire will not excuse him because he is a child. No. Whether you are a child or a

grown-up man, when you touch fire it will burn. There is no excuse. Similarly, if we do something against the laws of God, knowingly or unknowingly, we have to be punished. Whether in adulthood or in childhood, whether knowingly or unknowingly, we must suffer.

Now, our suffering and enjoyment are due to the senses (*mātrā-sparśās tu kaunteya śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkha-dāḥ*). As long as we have this material body, with material senses, two things will be there: suffering and enjoyment. For example, take the sensation of touch. We touch many things with our skin. Sometimes this touching is painful, and sometimes it is pleasing, depending on different circumstances. Cold water is very pleasing to the skin if it is summer, but it is very painful to the skin if it is winter. The water is the same and my skin is the same, but due to seasonal changes, the same water is sometimes pleasing and sometimes displeasing. Therefore, as long as we remain in this material world, or as long as we continue in this material body, two things continue: happiness and distress. You cannot stop them. It is not possible.

Then Kṛṣṇa says, *āgamāpāyino ’nityāḥ*: This happiness and distress come and go; they are temporary. Therefore we should not be very much disturbed by distress, nor should we waste our valuable time seeking so-called happiness. Yet out of ig-

norance, everyone is working very hard for happiness and trying to avoid distress. This is the material world.

Sometimes we see a dog running from one side of the street to the other. He’s feeling some pleasure. Similarly, so-called civilized men are also “running” in their cars from this side to that side. It is simply a dog’s race. We are thinking that because we are driving a car, we are civilized, but our business is simply the dog’s race.

So Prahāda Mahārāja’s point is that we should try to understand the value of life. We should not waste our time in the dog’s race, whether on four legs or on four wheels. That is the point.

Here Prahāda Mahārāja addresses his friends as *daityas*. There are two classes: *daitya* and *devatā*, or demons and devotees. *Daityas* do not know anything; they are just like animals, simply after sense gratification. And the *devatās* are fully aware of the existence of God, of their relationship with God, and of their duty with reference to God. That is the difference between the *daityas* and the *devatās*.

Because Prahāda Mahārāja was to deliver the *daityas*, by the will of the Supreme Lord he circumstantially took his birth in a *daitya* family. Sometimes devotees appear in a certain family to deliver a particular community or society. Here Prahāda Mahārāja’s classmates were all *daityas*. They did not take their birth in

very enlightened families.

Next Prahlāda Mahārāja says, *deha-yogena dehinām*. *Deha* means “body,” and *dehī* means “the person who possesses the body.” In the modern age, in this so-called civilization, people do not understand the difference between *deha* and *dehī*, the body and the spirit soul. I think 99.9% are unable to understand the difference. They think the body is everything. But that is not the fact.

There are so many different types of bodies, and each and every body is possessed by a spirit soul. And when a spirit soul is within the encagement of a particular body, he experiences a standard of happiness and distress according to that body. For example, the hog has a particular type of body, and the human being has a particular type of body. Therefore the happiness of the spirit soul engaged in the hog’s body is different from the happiness of the soul in a man’s body. If you give a man nice *halavā* [a buttery toasted-grain dessert], he’ll be pleased. And if you give a hog fresh stool, he’ll be pleased. He’ll not protest; rather, he will like it: “Oh, this stool is very nice.” But a man will hate even to stand near it. Why this difference? *Deha-yogena dehinām*: The spirit soul (*dehī*) has a particular type of body (*deha*), and therefore he’s taking pleasure in a particular type of food. As it is said, “One man’s food is another man’s poison.”

So, every one of us is under the control of the laws of nature (*kāraṇam guṇa-saṅgo ’sya sad-asad-yoni-janmasu*). We are born in a particular family, under particular circumstances, with particular tastes. Why are there differences? *Kāraṇam guṇa-saṅgo ’sya*. The *kāraṇa*, the reason, is that we are associating with a particular combination of the modes of nature. For example, one person will be pleased to come here and understand *bhāgavata-dharma*, the science of devotional service, while another person will be pleased to go to a brothel or a liquor shop. Why? *Kāraṇam guṇa-saṅgo ’sya*: Each one is influenced by a particular combination of the modes of nature.

Now, *bhāgavata-dharma* is so nice that even if one is in the lowest stage, by association he can be raised to the highest stage. Therefore the practice of *bhāgavata-dharma* should begin in childhood. As Prahlāda Mahārāja said at the beginning of this chapter of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*kaumāra ācāret prājño
dharmān bhāgavatān iha
durlabham mānuṣam janma
tad apy adhruvam arthadam*

“An intelligent person should take up this *bhāgavata-dharma* from the early age of childhood. This human form of life is very rarely achieved, and it is also temporary, but it enables one to achieve the ultimate

purpose of life” [*Bhāg.* 7.6.1].

The word *artha* means “the purpose of life.” Those who are not taking part in *bhāgavata-dharma* have a different *artha* from those who are taking part. The goal of one who is practicing *bhāgavata-dharma* is to go back home, back to Godhead. And the goal of the materialist is sense gratification. This is the difference. Materialists do not know that there is life after death, that there is eternal life, that there is eternal happiness.

Actually, in this material world there is no happiness. Everything is distress. But on account of ignorance, we accept distress as happiness. That is *māyā*, illusion. The word *mā* means “not,” and *yā* means “that.” So when one is in *māyā*, he accepts something for what it is not. Again the example of the hog: He is feeling happiness

***Sex happiness is
no less for a dog
than for a human
being. In a dog’s
body or a man’s
body, the pleasure
is the same.
You can eat from
a golden pot or
an iron pot,
but the taste
will not change.***

by eating stool, but it is not happiness, actually. One who is not in *māyā*, who is not in the hog’s body, says, “Oh, what nasty food he’s eating!” Just in terms of food value, stool is very valuable. Scientists have analyzed it. But simply because it has very good food value, that does not mean human beings will agree to eat stool. In World War II, in the concentration camps, some human beings were obliged to eat their own stool. That is *karma*.

So, we must rectify our *karma*. And if you cultivate *bhāgavata-dharma*, your *karma* can be changed (*karmāṇi nirdahati kintu ca bhakti-bhājām*). Otherwise, it is not possible. Everyone is born with the reactions of his past *karma*. People in modern times also do not understand that—what is past, what is future, what is present. Simply animals. Like the animals, the cats and dogs, they cannot understand

what is the spirit soul or what is *karma*.

Human life should not be wasted living like the animals. As Lord Rṣabhadeva says, *nāyaṁ deho deha-bhājām nṛloke kaṣṭhān kāmān arhate vid-bhujām ye*: “Human beings should not waste their time working hard for sense gratification like the stool-eating hogs.”

Therefore, the state, the father, the elderly persons, the *guru*—they must all be very responsible. And what is that responsibility? They must see that every person under their care is trained up in such a way that he can be elevated to the highest position. How can this be done? By *bhāgavata-dharma*. Not otherwise. Not by *karma* [pious activities], *jñāna* [philosophical speculation], or *yoga* [mystic meditation]. No. Simply by acting in devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, *bhāgavata-dharma*, anyone can be raised to the highest position.

Even those who are leading a very abominable life can be raised to the highest perfection by practicing *bhāgavata-dharma*. As Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [9.3], *māṁ hi pārtha vyapāśritya ye ’pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayaḥ. Pāpa-yoni* means “sinful persons.” Civilized human beings, advanced human beings, are called Aryans, and those below that are *pāpa-yoni*.

In the Aryan society there is *varṇāśrama*, a system of dividing people into four social orders and four spiritual orders. The social orders are the *brāhmaṇas* [intellectuals], the *ksatriyas* [administrators and military men], the *vaiśyas* [merchants and farmers], and the *sūdras* [manual laborers]. The spiritual orders consist of the *brahmachārīs* [celibate students], *gṛhasthas* [householders], the *vānaprasthas* [retired persons], and the *saṁnyāsīs* [renunciants]. This is the real Vedic system.

Human life begins when one observes the *varṇāśrama* regulations, by which one can elevate oneself to spiritual consciousness, or God consciousness. But people in the modern age do not know this (*na te viduḥ svārtha-gatiṁ hi viṣṇum*). Because there is no *bhāgavata-dharma*, no education, people are kept completely in darkness. This is the modern civilization.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [1.1.10] describes the people of this age as follows:

*prāyeṇālpāyusaḥ sabhya
kalāv asmin yuge janāḥ
mandāḥ sumanda-matayo
manda-bhāgyā hy upadrutāḥ*

“In the present age of Kali men generally have a short duration of life. They are quarrelsome, lazy, misguided, unlucky, and, above all, always disturbed.”

Although in the Kali-yuga one should live a hundred years, with the progress of this age the duration of life is decreasing. Nowadays almost nobody lives a hundred years. One who is eighty years old is

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KARMA AND THE ORIGIN OF EVIL

God's kindness and life's hardships are an unlikely match
unless we know the laws of nature.

by KUNDALĪ DĀSA

Once upon a time, a wicked man had a change of heart. Approaching a renowned saint, he asked, "O great saint, what shall I do to make myself worthy in the eyes of God?" The saint replied, "Be thou like thy Father in heaven." Returning home, the reformed sinner searched the scriptures diligently, then with fervor he petitioned the Lord with prayers for divine guidance that he, an uncommonly

sinful soul, might now live his life in the ways of the Lord. Following this, our hero pulled a prank on his wife, causing her to break her back and become a lifelong invalid. He cheated his own brother out of a fortune and left him destitute. He inoculated several of his children with crippling diseases and sold his eldest daughter to a brothel, where she contracted a fatal disease. He then told his saintly mentor of his

Evil (or suffering), symbolized above by the snake, is but the reaction to past sins, which are born of our desire to lord it over material nature.

ILLUSTRATION BY BHŪTA-BHĀVANA DĀSA

attempts to imitate the Lord in heaven. The saint severely chastised him for his misdeeds. When the man inquired as to how he had failed, the holy man was too disgusted to reply.

This odd story is adapted from Mark Twain's essay "Letters from the Earth," a diabolically witty satire on Western religion. In his essay, Twain challenges the existence of a God who is all-good, all-just, all-knowing, all-powerful, all-loving, all-merciful, and all-forgiving, yet who allows evil and suffering in His creation. Such a God, Twain implies, is but a whimsical product of man's mind. If God does exist, concludes Twain, He is certainly not the all-knowing, all-good, and all-powerful being His devoted fans would have us believe He is. In his personal life, Twain could not settle the issue to his satisfaction, so he opted for agnosticism: We will never know whether or not a Supreme Being exists.

Like Mark Twain (one of my childhood heroes), I too have pondered the problem of evil. My first conscious encounter with evil was at age nine, on the day we all went to a school assembly and they told us that John F. Kennedy, the President of the United States, the man who saved the Caribbean (where I lived) from dreaded communism, a man still in the prime of life, a "good" man, had been assassinated. I was stunned at first. Then I felt really rotten. Some of the kids were crying. That night my uncle pronounced judgment: JFK died "before his time." I was shocked. It seemed to be cruel in the extreme that someone should have to die "before his time."

As I grew older and my awareness of evil and justice increased, so also did my despair. What kind of Supreme Father, I wondered, stands passively by while war, murder, racism, disease, pestilence, and catastrophe plague His children? He even allows those devoted to Him to suffer martyrdom in His name!

I searched for answers to this mystery. I found none. The pious clergymen responsible for my Christian upbringing offered no adequate solution. At best, their answers implied that as a faithful believer in Jesus Christ I should be solaced that everlasting happiness in the afterlife was guaranteed for me, whereas countless others were fated to eternal damnation. I was advised to pity and pray for the miserable hell-bound souls.

Such advice wasn't much help. Once I got over the elation of having my salvation guaranteed, I did begin to feel sorry for those—many of them my own friends and relatives—whose path led to eternal punishment in the lake of fire. That thought rekindled my original doubt: How can an all-just God and eternal damnation fit

within the same reality?

By the time I was fifteen, my despair had turned to outrage. On the one hand, religion had failed to satisfy my philosophical inquiries. And on the other hand, I had grown disillusioned with those persons responsible for my spiritual guidance; they merely hid their ambition for acquisition and worldly enjoyment behind a thin veil of piety. Religion, I concluded, was no better than politics: a war of words, in which truth was irrelevant and the glib were victorious. I declared myself an atheist.

I felt relieved and free. Evil, you see, is only a problem for those who believe in a Supreme Being who is (1) omnipotent, (2) absolutely good and just, and (3) the creator of a world rife with evil. (The third

***If we reject
God as all-powerful,
why should we
consider Him all-
benevolent?
Why think of
Him as all anything?
Or, to cast
that another way,
why think of
Him as anything
at all?***

attribute is clearly incompatible with the first two.) As a nonbeliever I had no such contradiction to resolve; I simply accepted evil as inherent in nature and tried to make the best of it. I was quite pleased with my realization; it freed me from God's yoke in more ways than one.

Another Solution to Evil

These examples (Mark Twain and myself) show that evil is not just a concern of theologians and philosophers wrapped up in abstract theorizing about life. The recent popularity of Harold S. Kushner's book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* proves that tens of thousands of otherwise God-fearing people find evil in the world a bitter pill and are not satisfied with the standard explanation offered by their Western religious traditions. They want a solution.

The traditional explanation in the West holds that suffering is just deserts for moral improprieties, sins, acts that do not meet with the approval of our heavenly Father. But what moral improprieties have children and innocent infants committed? How are suffering infants getting their just deserts?

To say suffering is a consequence of the original sin of Adam simply adds to the confusion. Reason tells us that if infants' afflictions are retribution for the original sin of Adam, all infants should suffer equally. But misery is doled out selectively and unevenly. In any case, as Mark Twain points out, what kind of God elects to punish children "down through the ages through the end of time for the offenses of others"?

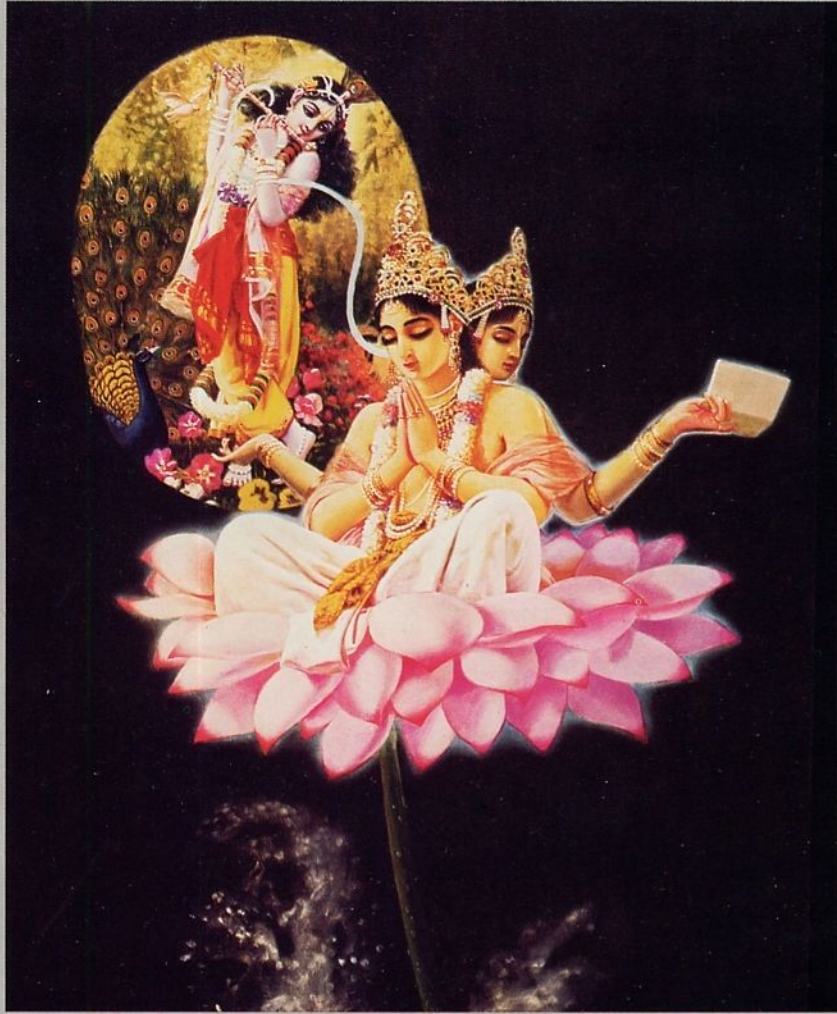
Directly addressing these questions, Rabbi Kushner proposes that we deny the traditional theistic assertion that God is all-powerful. We may worship, love, and serve this "God-the-not-almighty," he says, but we cannot hold Him responsible for evil, since it is beyond His control. If in a pinch He sometimes cannot help us, we should not hold that against Him. Struggling to thwart evil's assaults, He has a hard row to hoe.

Kushner's denial of God's omnipotence seems harmless enough. His proposal is not as portentous for us as denying God's all-benevolence, and it does solve the problem. Or does it? If we reject God as all-powerful, why should we consider Him all-benevolent? Once we begin diminishing or redefining God to explicate our pet peeves or to suit our private notions, what is there to stop us from negating His existence entirely? Why think of Him as all anything? Or, to cast that another way, why think of Him as anything at all?

Still, even if we muster the conviction to think of God as a finite, nonabsolute Supreme Being, we have to admit that complete surrender and devotion to a less-than-perfect Deity is not such an attractive proposal. It's hard to conceive of a finite God conferring on his devotees the same complete shelter, peace of mind, and inspiration to surrender that an infinite, all-powerful Deity could. Fear and anxiety would continue to lurk within the devotee's heart.

A religious consciousness without a tinge of fear and anxiety is possible only when there is no compromise about the infinitude of God. To be satisfactory, therefore, a solution to the problem of evil must comprehend God to be both all-powerful and all-good. That is to say, it should reconcile three universal elements: (1) God is omnipotent. (2) God is all-good and absolutely just. (3) God is the creator of a

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The Hymns of Brahmā

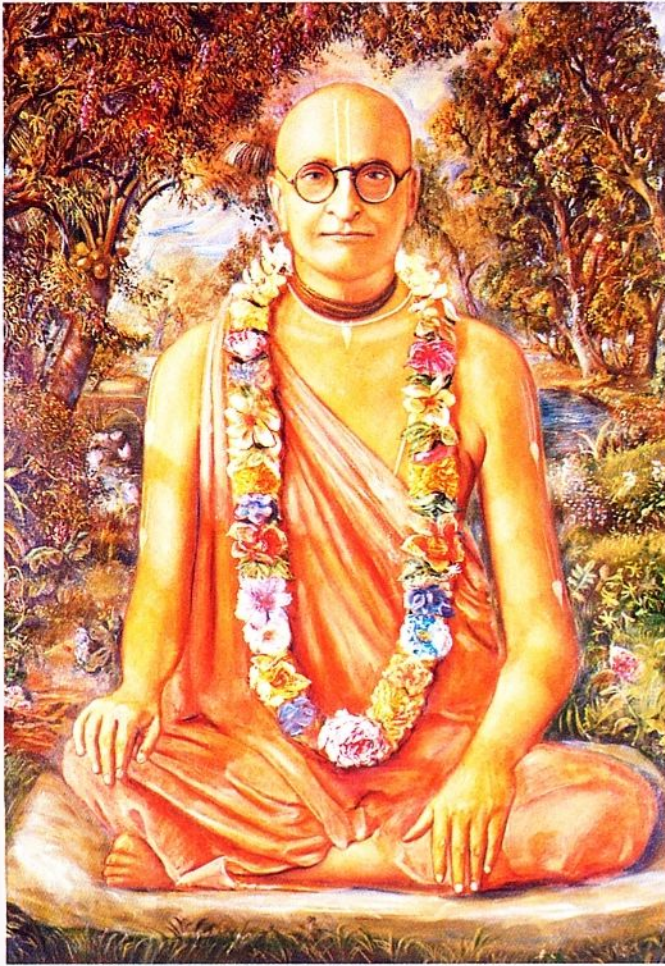
An ancient text offers us a vision of the spiritual world—a vibrant, transcendently variegated world of devotion to Kṛṣṇa.

by ŚUBHĀNANDA DĀSA

The article that follows is adapted from the Introduction to the recently published Bhaktivedanta Book Trust edition of Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā, a celebrated Vaiṣṇava text. This important new publication is an expanded edition of the first English-language version of Brahma-saṁhitā—published in India in 1932—featuring the translation and commentary of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī (1874–1937). Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta, a great Vaiṣṇava saint and scholar, was the guru of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder and spiritual master of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

The origins of the text known as *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* are lost in cosmic antiquity. According to Vedic tradition, these “Hymns of Brahmā” were recited or sung countless millennia ago by the first created being in the universe, just prior to the act of creation. The text surfaced and entered calculable history early in the

Śrīla
Bhaktisiddhānta
Sarasvatī
Gosvāmī,
founder of the
Gaudiya Math
and author of
the translation
and commentary
discussed
herein.



sixteenth century, when it was discovered by a pilgrim exploring the manuscript library of an ancient temple in what is now Kerala State in south India. Prior to the introduction of the printing press, texts like *Brahma-saṁhitā* existed only in manuscript form, painstakingly handwritten by scribes and kept under brahminical custodianship in temples, where often they were worshiped as *sāstra*-Deity, or God incarnate in holy scripture.

The pilgrim who rescued Śrī *Brahma-saṁhitā* from obscurity was no ordinary pilgrim, and His pilgrimage was meant not for self-purification, as is the custom, but for world-purification. He was Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu—saint, mystic, religious reformer, and full incarnation of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, descending into the present epoch for the salvation of all souls.

At the time of His discovery of the text, Śrī Caitanya was touring south India, preaching His message of love of Kṛṣṇa and promulgating the practice of *saṅkīrtana*, congregational singing of the holy names of God. Śrī Caitanya commenced this tour shortly after becoming a monk (*sannyāsī*), at age twenty-four, and the tour lasted approximately two years. After a southward journey from Purī (in Orissa State) to holy places such as Śrī Raṅga-

kṣetra, Setubandha, Rāmeśvaram, and finally Kanyākumārī (Cape Comorin). He turned northward and, traveling along the bank of the Payasvini River in Travancore State, reached the temple of Ādi-keśava in Trivandrum District.

Śrī Caitanya's principal biographer, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, writes in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā*, Ch. 9) that upon beholding the holy image of Ādi-keśava (Kṛṣṇa) in the temple, Śrī Caitanya swooned in spiritual ecstasy, offered fervent prayers, and chanted and danced in rapture, a wondrous sight that was beheld with astonished appreciation by the devotees present.

After discussing esoteric spiritual matters among some highly advanced devotees, Śrī Caitanya found "one chapter of the *Brahma-saṁhitā*." (What we now have as *Brahma-saṁhitā* is, according to tradition, only one of a hundred chapters composing an epic work lost to humanity.) Upon discovering the manuscript, Śrī Caitanya felt great ecstasy and fell into an intense mystic rapture that overflowed onto the physical realm, producing a profusion of tears, trembling, and perspiration. (We would search the literature of the world in vain to find a case in which the discovery of a lost book inspired such unearthly exhilaration!) Intuiting the Śrī *Brahma-*

saṁhitā to be "a most valuable jewel," Śrī Caitanya employed a scribe in hand-copying the manuscript and departed with the copy for His return journey north.

Upon His return to Purī (*Madhya-līlā*, Ch. 11), Śrī Caitanya presented *Brahma-saṁhitā* to appreciative followers like Rāmānanda Rāya and Vāsudeva Datta, for whom Caitanya arranged copies to be made. As word of the discovery of the text spread within the Vaiṣṇava community, "each and every Vaiṣṇava" copied it. Gradually, *Brahma-saṁhitā* was "broadcast everywhere" and became one of the major texts of the Gaudiya-Vaiṣṇava canon. "There is no scripture equal to the *Brahma-saṁhitā* as far as the final spiritual conclusion is concerned," exults Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja. "Indeed, that scripture is the supreme revelation of the glories of Lord Govinda, for it reveals the topmost knowledge about Him. Since all conclusions are briefly presented in *Brahma-saṁhitā*, it is essential among all the Vaiṣṇava literatures" (*Madhya-līlā* 9.239–240).

In spite of the seemingly topical complexity of the text, the essential core of the *Brahma-saṁhitā* consists of a brief description of the enlightenment of Lord Brahmā by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, followed by Brahmā's extraordinarily beautiful prayers elucidating the content of his revelation: an unearthly, beatific vision of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and His eternal, transcendental abode, Goloka Vṛndāvana, beyond the material cosmos. This core of the text stretches from verse twenty-nine through fifty-six, and a brief, subsequent exposition by Lord Kṛṣṇa on the path of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, love of God, brings the text to a close.

The *Brahma-saṁhitā*'s account of Lord Brahmā's enlightenment is quite interesting and can be summarized here. When Lord Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu desires to recreate the universe,* a divine golden lotus flower grows from His navel, and Brahmā is born from the lotus. As he is not born from parents, Brahmā is known as Svayambhū, "self-existent" or "unoriginated." Upon his emergence from the lotus, Lord Brahmā begins—in preparation for his role as secondary creator—to contemplate the act of cosmic creation† but, seeing

*According to the *Purāṇas*, the material cosmos is created and destroyed in a perpetual cycle through eternity, and so the act of creation is not a one-time affair but one that is repeated an infinite number of times.

†Once the physical universe and its constituent parts are brought into being by Lord Viṣṇu, Brahmā's role in the creation act is to evolve the multifarious types of bodily forms (species) to be inhabited by the innumerable conditioned living beings (*jīvas*) in accordance with their previous *karma*—actions performed by them during their existence in previous millennia.

The Ādi-keśava temple in southern India's Travancore State, where Lord Caitanya discovered the manuscript of Brahma-saṁhitā.



only darkness about, is bewildered in the performance of his duty. Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, appears before him and instructs him to meditate upon the *kāma-bīja mantra* (*klīm kṛṣṇāya govindāya gopijana-vallabhāya svāhā*), promising that

this *mantra* “will assuredly fulfill your heart’s desire.”

Lord Brahmā thus meditates upon Lord Kṛṣṇa in His spiritual realm and hears the divine sound of Kṛṣṇa’s flute. The *kāma-gāyatrī mantra* (*klīm kāmadvāya vidmahe*

puspa-bāṇāya dhīmahi tan no ’naṅgaḥ pracodayāt), the “mother of the Vedas,” is made manifest from the sound of Kṛṣṇa’s flute, and Brahmā, thus initiated by the supreme primal preceptor Himself, begins to chant the Gāyatrī. As Śrīla Prabhupāda puts it, “When the sound vibration of Kṛṣṇa’s flute is expressed through the mouth of Brahmā, it becomes *gāyatrī*” (*Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, p. 322).

Enlightened by his meditation upon the holy Gāyatrī, Brahmā “became acquainted with the expanse of the ocean of truth.” Inspired by his profound and sublime realizations, his heart overflowing with devotion and transcendental insight, Lord Brahmā spontaneously begins to offer a series of poem-prayers to the source of his enlightenment and the object of his devotion, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. These exquisite verses form the heart of *Brahmā-saṁhitā*.

There is nothing vague about Brahmā’s description of the Lord and His abode. No dim, nihilistic nothingness, no blinding bright light, no wispy, dreamy visions of harps and clouds; rather, a vibrant, luminescent world in transcendental color, form, and sound— a sublimely variegated spiritual landscape populated by innumerable blissful, eternally liberated souls reveling in spiritual cognition, sensation, and emotion, all in relationship with the all-blissful, all-attractive Personality of Godhead. Here is a sample:

I worship Govinda [Kṛṣṇa], the primeval Lord, the first progenitor who is tending the cows, yielding all desire, in abodes built with spiritual gems, surrounded by millions of purpose trees, always served with great reverence and affection by hundreds of thousands of *lakṣmīs* or *gopīs*.

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is adept in playing on His flute, with blooming

Returning to Jagannātha Purī after a tour of south India, Lord Caitanya presented the manuscript of Brahma-saṁhitā to His principal followers and later arranged for them to receive copies of the text.



PAINTING BY MURALĪDHARA DĀSA

eyes like lotus petals, with head decked with peacock's feather, with the figure of beauty tinged with the hue of blue clouds, and His unique loveliness charming millions of Cupids. . . .

I worship [Goloka Vṛndāvana] . . . where every tree is a transcendental purpose tree; where the soil is the purpose gem, all water is nectar, every word is a song, every gait is a dance, the flute is the favorite attendant, . . . where numberless milk cows always emit transcendental oceans of milk.

The commentator* reminds us that in the transcendental region of Goloka are found the same elements as are found in the mundane worlds, but in their highest purity and beauty: “. . . trees and creepers, mountains, rivers and forests, water, movement, speech, music of the flute, the sun and the moon, tasted and taste . . .” Kṛṣṇa's divine abode, Goloka Vṛndāvana, is a world in the fullest and realest sense.

There are those who will have difficulty with Brahmā's highly graphic and personalistic depiction of the spiritual world and of the liberated state. Some, for instance, whose conception of transcendence is determined by a certain logical fallacy based on the arbitrary assumption that spirit is the literal opposite of matter (and thus that because matter has form and variety, spirit must necessarily be formless and unvariegated), conceive of ultimate reality as some sort of divine emptiness. However, any conception of transcendence that projects or analogizes from our limited sensory and cognitive experience within the material world is, by its very nature, limited and speculative and thus unreliable. No accumulated quantity of sense data within this world can bring us to

*Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.



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“Kṛṣṇa, who is known as Govinda, is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He has an eternal, blissful, spiritual body. He is the origin of all. He has no other origin, and He is the prime cause of all causes.” (Bs. 1)

knowledge of what lies beyond it. Residents of the material world cannot get even a clue of transcendence, argues our *Brahma-saṁhitā* commentator, “by moving heaven and earth through their organic senses.”

The *Brahma-saṁhitā* teaches that transcendence, truth, ultimate reality can be

apprehended only by the mercy of the supreme transcendent entity, the Absolute Truth Himself, and that perception of ultimate reality is a function not of speculative reason but of direct spiritual cognition through divine revelation. This revelation is evolved through *bhakti*, pure, selfless love of God. Only by such spiritual devo-

“I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, residing in His own realm, Goloka, with Rādhā, resembling His own spiritual figure, the embodiment of the ecstatic potency possessed of the sixty-four artistic activities.” (Bs. 37)



PAINTING BY RAMADASA ABHIRAMA DASA AND DHIRENDEVINDAS

tion can Kṛṣṇa be seen: “I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord . . . whom the pure devotees see in their heart of hearts with the eye of devotion tinged with the salve of love” (Bs. 38). Further, as our commentator explains, “the form of Kṛṣṇa is visible [to the eye of the pure spiritual self] in proportion to its purification by the practice of devotion.”

Bhakti as a state of consciousness, then, is attained through *bhakti* as a practice, a discipline. For this reason, Lord Kṛṣṇa, in His response to Brahmā at the end of the text, summarizes the path of *bhakti* in five aphorisms. This devotional discipline goes beyond conventional piety. It necessitates “constant endeavor for self-realization” (Bs. 59), involving both a turning from worldliness and sense gratification and an adherence to spiritual practices and behavior, under the guidance of authorized scripture. Through such practice, then, the materialist is soon purified of his tendency toward philosophical negation and comes to understand the nature of positive transcendence.

Others will find Lord Brahmā’s vision of the spiritual realm problematic for a related, but perhaps more subjective, emotional reason that goes to the heart of the human condition. There is a kind of ontological anxiety, a conscious or subconscious apprehension about beingness or existence itself, that goes along with embodied life-in-the-world—that accompanies the soul’s descent into the temporal, endlessly changing world of matter. Material bodies and minds are subjected to a huge variety of objective and subjective discomfitures, unpleasanties, and abject sufferings. Viewed philosophically, embodied personhood, false-self (*ahaṅkāra*), is, to a greater or lesser degree, innately a condition of suffering.

Because personal existence has been experienced by materialists as essentially painful, writes Śrīla Prabhupāda in his *Bhagavad-gītā* commentary, “the conception of retaining the personality after liberation from matter frightens them. When they are informed that spiritual life is also individual and personal, they become afraid of becoming persons again, and so they naturally prefer a kind of merging into the impersonal void” (Bg. 4.10, purport). Entering the path of *bhakti*, however, such persons can gradually begin to experience their real, spiritual selves and a release from egoistic anxiety. In that purified state, they become able to relish Brahmā’s vision of blissful, personal spiritual existence in Goloka.

Still others, however, might criticize *Brahma-saṁhitā* on the grounds that the text, being quite specific and concrete in its depiction, merely offers another limited, sectarian view of God and His abode—a view in conflict with other, similarly lim-

ited views. Such persons prefer a kind of genericized Deity who doesn’t offend variant theological views with definable, personal attributes. *Brahma-saṁhitā*, however, is not a polemic against “competing” conceptions of the Deity (except those, of course, which would deny His transcendental personhood). Vaiṣṇava tradition does not dismiss images of the Divine derived from authoritative scripture from beyond its own cultural and conceptual borders. It respects any sincere effort at serving the Supreme Person, although it holds its own texts as most comprehensive and authoritative. It promotes neither an arrogant sectarianism that would constrain transcendence to exclusive cultural, ideational, or linguistic forms (while burning a few heretics), nor a syncretistic ecumenism that would try to pacify all claimants on the truth by departicularizing it into bland vagary. Let the syncretists and the sectarians come together to appreciate, at least, the aesthetic magnificence of Lord Brahmā’s theistic epiphany.

What we are experiencing through Lord Brahmā in his *saṁhitā* is not mystic hallucination or quaint mythologizing or an exercise in pious wishful thinking. We are getting a glimpse, however dimmed by our own insensitivities, into the spiritual world as seen by one whose eyes are “tinged with the salve of love.” We are seeing, through Brahmā, an eternal, transcenden-

tal world, of which the present world is a mere reflection. Goloka is infinitely more real than the shadowy world we perceive daily through our narrow senses. Brahmā’s vision of the spiritual realm is not his alone. It is shared by all those who give themselves fully unto the loving service of Lord Kṛṣṇa—though Brahmā admits that Goloka is known “only to a very few self-realized souls in this world” (Bs. 56). We are asked not to accept Brahmā’s account of transcendence uncritically and dogmatically but to avail ourselves of the spiritual discipline, *bhakti-yoga*, that will gradually lead us to our own experiential understanding of this highest truth.

In his commentary to the twenty-eighth verse of the *Brahma-saṁhitā*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī writes that Lord Caitanya “taught this hymn to His favorite disciples inasmuch as it fully contains all the transcendental truths regarding Vaiṣṇava philosophy,” and he asks his readers to “study and try to enter into the spirit of this hymn with great care and attention, as a regular daily function.” Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta’s disciple Śrīla Prabhupāda was very fond of Brahmā’s prayers to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and there are several recordings of Śrīla Prabhupāda singing these prayers with intense devotion. We therefore invite readers to dive deeply into the sweet, transcendental ocean of Brahmā’s hymns as a daily meditation.



“I worship that transcendental seat, known as Śvetadvīpa, where as loving consorts the Lakṣmīs in their unalloyed spiritual essence practice the amorous service of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa as their only lover.” (Bs. 56)

PAINTING BY DHIRDEV DASI



ROGER ANNEY

Lord Kṛṣṇa's Cuisine

Plane Fare

The steward offered us "just vegetables,"
but we had a feast in our flight bag.

by VIŚĀKHĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

Last summer, when my husband, daughter, and I were flying to California to visit my in-laws, the steward dutifully brought our vegetarian meal: boiled potatoes, boiled carrots, and boiled corn, with salt and pepper on the side. Perhaps out of disbelief at the prisonlike meal, the woman sitting in front of us asked the steward, "What's your vegetarian menu?" With a slight shrug and a disinterested look, he answered, "Just vegetables."

We hadn't planned on eating the airplane meal anyway, so we unpacked the lunch we had brought from the temple: fried whole-wheat breads, fried and spiced fresh cheese, cauliflower and peas in sour cream sauce (*sabji*), stuffed vegetable savories (*samosās*, pictured above), mango pickles, and sweets (*sandeśa* and *ladḍus*). The ingredients for these dishes were simple, but a little know-how had transformed them into a delightful meal.

Am I a dreamer to expect United's menu planners to have sympathy for those vegetarian creatures who frequent their flights? They seem to think that vegetarians have renounced all palatable dishes.

Behind "Lord Kṛṣṇa's Cuisine," the spiritual vegetarianism that's presented on these pages each month, lies a vast culinary art that pleases vegetarians and nonvegetarians alike. Judiciously combined, spices, vegetables, fruits, grains, and milk products can produce the gamut of textures, colors, forms, aromas, and tastes that make a meal satisfying.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, who first brought Lord Kṛṣṇa's cuisine to the West, once explained, "Simply by expert cooking, hundreds of thousands of palatable dishes can be prepared from agricultural produce and milk products. Still today in India, in Jagannātha-kṣetra and other big temples, very palatable dishes are offered to the Deity, and *prasādam* [offered food] is distributed profusely to the public. Uncivilized men living in the jungle and being unqualified to produce food by agriculture and cow protection may eat animals, but a perfect human society advanced in knowledge must learn how to produce first-class food simply by agriculture and protection of cows."

Unlike the other passengers on the flight that afternoon, my family and I, as vegetarians, had a lot to be thankful for. We didn't have the overweight problem that plagues many who overconsume animal fats and underconsume the natural fibers found in whole grains and natural fruits and vegetables. We had ninety percent less risk of cancer and reduced chances of cardiovascular diseases. We knew we were doing our bit toward ending world hunger, as one acre of spinach, for example, produces twenty-six times more protein than an acre devoted to meat production. And we weren't hypocritically protecting some animals while eating others. (I remember how one of my relatives looked out her kitchen window and said, "Oh, there's that cat I don't like—he's the one that kills birds," and then continued stirring her chicken soup.)

And, although it may seem incredible to some, we were protecting our future. Śrīla Prabhupāda once explained, "The animal-eaters do not know that in the future the animal will have a body suitable to kill them. That is the law of nature. In human society, if one kills a man he has to be hanged. That is the law of the state. Because of ignorance, people do not see that there is a complete state controlled by the Supreme Lord. Every living creature is a son of the Supreme Lord, and He does not tolerate even an ant's being killed. One has to pay for it."

Our variegated vegetarian diet was also providing us with all nutrients—vitamins,

(Recipes from *The Hare Krishna Book of Vegetarian Cooking*, by Ādi-rāja dāsa)

Vegetable Turnovers (*Samosā*)

Preparation time: 1 hour and 15 minutes
Servings: 4–6

1 pound white flour
¼ teaspoon salt
4 ounces melted butter or ghee (clarified butter)
½ cup cold water
2 or 3 medium-size potatoes
1 small cauliflower, separated into flowerets
7 ounces fresh or frozen peas
4 tablespoons ghee or vegetable oil
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
½ teaspoon fenugreek seeds
½ teaspoon grated fresh ginger
½ teaspoon ground coriander
½ teaspoon asafetida
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 teaspoons salt
¼ teaspoon black pepper
ghee or vegetable oil for deep-frying

1. Put the white flour and salt in a bowl and slowly pour in the melted butter or ghee. Rub the butter or ghee into the flour with your fingertips until the mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs. Now slowly mix in the water and gather the flour together to make a dough. Knead vigorously for 5 minutes, until the dough is smooth and soft but doesn't stick to your fingers. Gather the dough into a ball, sprinkle with a few drops of water, and cover with a damp cloth.

2. Peel and dice the potatoes. Either grate the cauliflower flowerets through the largest holes of a metal grater or dice them like the potatoes. Boil the potatoes and cauliflower in salted water until tender, and then drain.

3. Place a large frying pan over a medium flame and fry the cumin and fenugreek seeds in 2 tablespoons of ghee or oil. When the seeds begin to darken, toss in the grated ginger and powdered spices and fry for a few seconds more. Now put in the potato cubes. Stir-fry for 3 or 4 minutes, then add the grated or chopped cauliflower. Stir-fry for another 3 or 4 minutes. Add the peas and 2 tablespoons of water, cover, and cook for about 5 minutes, until the vegetables are tender (watch closely to prevent burning). Season with the salt and black pepper, then spread the contents of the pan on a clean surface to cool.

4. Dust the rolling surface with flour. Form

the dough into 10 balls, roll out each ball to make a 6-inch disk, and cut each disk in half. Then take each half-disk and moisten its straight edge from the center to one end. Bring the two ends of the straight edge together to make a cone. Now firmly press the dry side over the wet side to seal the cone. Stuff the cone two-thirds full with filling. Then close the opening by pinching and folding the two edges together to form a pleated top.

5. Heat the ghee or oil in a deep-frying vessel over a medium flame. Fry a few *samosās* at a time (as many as will cover the surface of the ghee in one layer). Fry them for 10 to 15 minutes, turning them often until golden brown. Remove, drain, and offer to Kṛṣṇa.

Fried Spicy Potato Swirls (*Alu patra*)

Preparation and cooking time: 40 minutes
Servings: 4–6

4 medium-size potatoes
2 tablespoons grated coconut
2 teaspoons sesame seeds
2 teaspoons brown sugar
2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
2 fresh green chilies, minced
1 tablespoon fresh coriander leaves, minced
2 teaspoons *garam masālā*
1 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons lemon juice
7 ounces white flour
½ teaspoon turmeric
¼ teaspoon cayenne powder
2 teaspoons melted ghee
4 ounces water
ghee or vegetable oil for deep-frying

1. Boil the potatoes until they are soft, then rinse them under cold water and peel them. Use a fork to mash them in a bowl with the grated coconut and the next 8 ingredients. Now spread the mixture on a surface to cool.

2. Combine the flour, turmeric, and cayenne pepper in a large mixing bowl. Rub the melted ghee into the flour, then add the water slowly, while mixing with your hand, until a dough forms. Transfer the dough to a rolling surface and knead well till it becomes soft and elastic.

3. Flour the rolling surface liberally, and then roll out all the dough into a rectangle about ½ inch thick. Spread the potato mixture evenly on the surface. While dusting the dough with flour to prevent it from sticking to your fingers, roll it up to make a compact roll. Use a sharp serrated knife to cut the roll into slices ½ inch thick. Pat and form the slices so they

retain their shape. Place them on a platter.

4. Heat the ghee or oil in a shallow pot. The ghee is hot enough when a pinch of dough dropped into it rises immediately to the surface and sizzles. Put several slices into the ghee. Fry them for 3 to 5 minutes, turning them over once, till they're golden brown. Offer to Kṛṣṇa.

Deep-fried Savories (*Urad dāl kacauri*)

Soaking time: overnight
Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Servings: 4–6

14 ounces white flour
2 ounces butter or ghee
1 teaspoon salt
½ cup water
7 ounces *urad dāl*, washed and soaked overnight
1 tablespoon ghee
½ teaspoon cumin seeds
½ teaspoon ground anise seeds
½ teaspoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon grated fresh ginger
1 teaspoon turmeric
¼ teaspoon asafetida
1 teaspoon chopped fresh coriander leaves
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon salt

1. Put the flour and salt into a large mixing bowl. Blend the butter or ghee into the mixture with your fingertips. Slowly add the cold water and form a soft (not wet) dough. Knead the dough vigorously for 5 minutes, then cover with a moist cloth and set aside.

2. Drain the *dāl* and blend it in an electric blender (or a grinder) with just enough water to make a smooth paste. Heat the tablespoon of ghee in a small frying pan and fry the cumin seeds until brown (about 30 seconds). Then add the powdered spices and the pureed *dāl*. Stir-fry for several minutes until partially cooked. Mix in the chopped coriander leaves, lemon juice, and salt. Set aside to cool.

3. Form the dough into 10 balls and divide the *dāl* mixture into 10 parts. With your thumb, poke a hole in each ball. Now fill each hole with one part of the *dāl* mixture. Seal the hole, flatten the ball into a patty between your hands, and roll each one out quite thick. Put the ghee over a medium flame. After about five minutes, test the ghee by dropping a piece of dough into it. If the dough immediately rises to the surface and sizzles, the ghee is ready. Put in the *kacauris* and deep-fry them for about 10 minutes, until they are flaky and golden brown. Offer to Kṛṣṇa.

minerals, proteins, carbohydrates. And by eating *kṛṣṇa-prasādam* we were making spiritual progress. But being vegetarian was a disadvantage, too. We had to tolerate the odors of sirloins and lamb chops. We had to tolerate the sight of people witlessly increasing their suffering—physically, morally, and spiritually—with every bite. We had to tolerate our feelings of compassion for the defenseless cows and lambs who gave their lives for the satisfac-

tion of some traveler's taste buds. And we had to tolerate the misconceptions that people had about vegetarianism and the vegetarian cuisine.

I suppose the passengers who noticed us that afternoon must have thought us odd. First, instead of the much-advertised airplane fare, we'd gotten some dry vegetables. Then we'd pushed that aside and unwrapped a foreign-looking lunch.

My husband and I understood. For

twenty-five years we had eaten whatever we were served, and we too had looked upon those who didn't as odd. But Śrīla Prabhupāda had provoked our thinking. He had made us reexamine our values, our lives, and our goals, and as a result he had transformed us into devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa. As devotees, our vegetarian menu isn't "just vegetables," it's a world of its own, where nothing is lacking—from nutrition, to taste, to transcendence.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

Number-One Nonsense

This is a continuation of a conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and a guest, Dr. Christian Hauser, a psychiatrist, that took place in Stockholm in September 1973.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So that Nobel-prize-winning scientist claimed life comes from four chemicals. But when he was offered these four chemicals and asked “Will you be able to produce life?” suddenly he was not certain. This is cheating.

Dr. Hauser: He’s jumping to conclusions, one can say. But not cheating.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, he is cheating. Because he cannot produce life—actually he cannot—but he’s lecturing as though he could produce life from chemicals.

Dr. Hauser: Well, he may have combined the proteins that life seems made of, though he may not have produced real life.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But we are concerned with real life. We are concerned with real life. Here is what I say to this great scientist: “If you can produce one real, living being—not even a human being, just one small ant—then I shall think you are successful. But that you cannot do. So why do you talk nonsense? ‘Life comes from these four chemicals.’ You are cheating.”

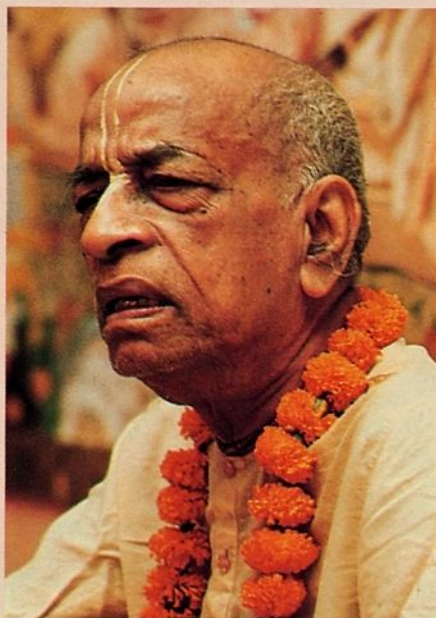
Why should the scientist have hedged—“That I cannot say”? He’s not confident that life comes from chemicals. That means cheating. Many of these so-called scientists are doing this. They’re not confident about their theories, and yet they go on giving long, long lectures. And people are such fools that they go on listening. *Andhā yathāndhair upanīyamānāḥ*: blind followers following blind leaders into the ditch.

Dr. Hauser: Hmm. Yes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But these so-called scientists will assert, “Well, as yet we have not produced life from chemicals—but we are trying, and we will do it in the future.” “In the future.” Anyone can promise the future. But you have heard the saying “Trust no future, however pleasant.”

How can these scientists dare talk about producing life in the future? There is no history that anyone has produced life from chemicals. In the past they could not do it. At present they cannot do it. So what is the guarantee that in the future they shall do it?

What do you think—that life is a product



of chemicals? Do you mean to say life is a product of mere chemicals?

Dr. Hauser: That is what I’ve been taught, yes. About the evolution of the earth and all the different stages of life.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Do you think that’s a fact?

Dr. Hauser: It’s not a fact. I don’t know whether it’s a fact. I . . . but that’s what I’ve been taught.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Then that means currently you are illusioned. You are not confident, but still you accept that theory. This is illusion.

Dr. Hauser: But . . . yes . . . but . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So you should apply your reason. From practical experience you should ask yourself, Is life produced from matter—or is matter produced from life?

Life cannot be produced from matter. In the *Vedānta-sūtra* it is said, *janmādy asya yataḥ*: “The Absolute Truth is that from whom, or from which, everything emanates.” Now, is this Absolute Truth a living being or a dead stone? The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* then informs us, *anvayād itarataś cārthesv abhijñāḥ*: “This Absolute Truth must be cognizant.” *Abhijñā*—cognizant. In other words, if I can say, “I have created all these things within this room,” that means I must be cognizant. And how can cognizance reside in dead matter? The creator must be a living being. The origin of

life must be a living being.

Where is the evidence that life has ever come from matter? Is there any evidence in history?

Dr. Hauser: No, but as we know, the evolution of life has gone through different stages of . . . how do you say . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Darwin’s theory. Are you referring to Darwin’s theory?

Dr. Hauser: Yes, yes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is all nonsense. Darwin was a number-one nonsense. Yes. A rascal. He has confused the whole world.

Dr. Hauser: Hmm. Why?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: His idea about the evolution of matter. Matter cannot evolve. That is not possible.

Dr. Hauser: But evolution of life . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda: What do you mean by “life”? Life is different from matter. Life is a different energy—spirit. That is what I am saying. Life is the origin of matter. So the evolution is not of the matter.

God, the original life, has already created all these many gradations of material species, or forms, from amoeba to ant to antelope to human. “Evolution” means simply this: Once we living souls fall into this material realm, then according to our *karma*—the way we act—nature awards us forms that are just suitable.

Act like a relatively civilized human, and you go on receiving human bodies. Act like a dog or a hog, and you receive the form of a dog or a hog. And yet even if you degrade yourself into those lower species, by God’s grace and nature’s law you then “evolve”: upward through the millions of species, lifetime after lifetime, millions of births and deaths, until at last you regain a human form.

This human form—such a rare opportunity. Only in this human form can you realize God. You can act godly—and then at life’s end go back to live with God. Only in the human form can you be done with this horrible process of devolving and evolving through the various material forms. So this is the real meaning of “evolution”: Regain your original, spiritual form. Go back home, back to Godhead, back to the spiritual world.

So the “evolution” is not of the matter, but of the life, the inner soul. That Darwin did not know. Therefore I call Darwin a number-one nonsense.

(To be continued.)

ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the “cream of the Vedic literatures” of ancient India. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa*, or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. The original Sanskrit text is presented here with transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Third Canto: “The Status Quo”

CHAPTER TWELVE

Creation of the Kumāras and Others

As our serialized presentation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* continues, the great sage Maitreya further describes to Vidura, a pure devotee of the Lord, the creation of the universe by Brahmā.

TEXT 22

मरीचिरत्र्यङ्गिरसौ पुलस्त्यः पुलहः क्रतुः ।
भृगुर्वसिष्ठो दक्षश्च दशमस्तत्र नारदः ॥२२॥

*marīcir atri-aṅgirasau
pulastyah pulahaḥ kratuḥ
bhrgur vasiṣṭho dakṣaś ca
daśamas tatra nāradaḥ*

marīciḥ, atri, aṅgirasau, pulastyah, pulahaḥ, kratuḥ, bhrguḥ, vasiṣṭhaḥ, dakṣaḥ—names of sons of Brahmā; *ca*—and; *daśamaḥ*—the tenth; *tatra*—there; *nāradaḥ*—Nārada.

TRANSLATION

Marīci, Atri, Aṅgirā, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Bhrgu, Vasiṣṭha, Dakṣa, and the tenth son, Nārada, were thus born.

PURPORT

The whole process of the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the cosmic manifestation is meant to give the conditioned souls a chance to go back home, back to Godhead. Brahmā created Rudra to help him in his creative endeavor, but from the very beginning Rudra began to devour the whole creation, and thus he had to be stopped from such devastating activities. Brahmā therefore created another set of good children, who were mostly in favor of worldly fruitive activities. He knew very well, however, that without devotional service to the Lord there is hardly any benefit for the conditioned souls, and therefore he at last created his worthy son Nārada, who is the supreme spiritual master of all transcendentalists. Without devotional service to the Lord one cannot make progress in any department of activity, although the path of devotional service is always independent of anything material. Only the transcendental loving service of the Lord can deliver the real goal of life, and thus the service rendered by Śrīman Nārada Muni is the highest among all the sons of Brahmā.

TEXT 23

उत्सङ्गाभारदो जज्ञे दक्षोऽङ्गुष्ठस्त्वयम्भुवः ।
प्राणाद्वसिष्ठः सञ्जातो भृगुस्त्वचि करात्क्रतुः ॥२३॥

*utsaṅgān nārado jajñe
dakṣo 'ṅguṣṭhāt svayambhuvaḥ*

*prāṇād vasiṣṭhaḥ sañjāto
bhrgus tvaci karāt kratuḥ*

utsaṅgāt—by transcendental deliberation; *nāradaḥ*—Mahāmuni Nārada; *jajñe*—was generated; *dakṣaḥ*—Dakṣa; *aṅguṣṭhāt*—from the thumb; *svayambhuvaḥ*—of Brahmā; *prāṇāt*—from the life air, or breathing; *vasiṣṭhaḥ*—Vasiṣṭha; *sañjātaḥ*—was born; *bhrguḥ*—the sage Bhrgu; *tvaci*—from the touch; *karāt*—from the hand; *kratuḥ*—the sage Kratu.

TRANSLATION

Nārada was born from the deliberation of Brahmā, which is the best part of his body. Vasiṣṭha was born from his breathing, Dakṣa from a thumb, Bhrgu from his touch, and Kratu from his hand.

PURPORT

Nārada was born from the best deliberation of Brahmā because Nārada was able to deliver the Supreme Lord to anyone he liked. The Supreme Personality of Godhead cannot be realized by any amount of Vedic knowledge or by any number of penances. But a pure devotee of the Lord like Nārada can deliver the Supreme Lord by his good will. The very name Nārada suggests that he can deliver the Supreme Lord. *Nāra* means the “Supreme Lord,” and *da* means “one who can deliver.” That he can deliver the Supreme Lord does not mean that the Lord is like a commodity that can be delivered to any person. But Nārada can deliver to anyone the transcendental loving service of the Lord as a servitor, friend, parent or lover, as one may desire out of one’s own transcendental love for the Lord. In other words, it is Nārada only who can deliver the path of *bhakti-yoga*, the highest mystic means for attainment of the Supreme Lord.

TEXT 24

पुलहो नाभितो जज्ञे पुलस्त्यः कर्णयोर्ऋषिः ।
अङ्गिरा मुखतोऽक्ष्णोऽत्रिर्मरीचिर्मनसोऽभवत् ॥२४॥

*pulaho nābhito jajñe
pulastyah karṇayor ṛṣiḥ
aṅgirā mukhato 'kṣṇo 'trir
marīcir manaso 'bhavat*

pulahaḥ—the sage Pulaha; *nābhitaḥ*—from the navel; *jajñe*—generated; *pulastyah*—the sage Pulastya; *karṇayor*—from the ears; *ṛṣiḥ*—the great sage; *aṅgirāḥ*—the sage Aṅgirā; *mukhataḥ*—from the mouth; *akṣṇaḥ*—from the eyes; *atriḥ*—the sage Atri; *marīciḥ*—the sage Marīci; *manasaḥ*—from the mind; *abhavat*—appeared.

TRANSLATION

Pulastya was generated from the ears, Aṅgirā from the mouth, Atri from the eyes, Marīci from the mind and Pulaha from the navel of Brahmā.

TEXT 25

धर्मः स्तनादक्षिणतो यत्र नारायणः स्वयम् ।
अधर्मः पृष्ठतो यस्मान्मृत्युर्लोकमयङ्करः ॥२५॥

*dharmah stanād dakṣiṇato
yatra nārāyaṇaḥ svayam
adharmah pṛṣṭhato yasmān
mṛtyur loka-bhayaṅkaraḥ*

dharmah—religion; *stanāt*—from the breast; *dakṣiṇataḥ*—on the right side; *yatra*—wherein; *nārāyaṇaḥ*—the Supreme Lord; *svayam*—personally; *adharmah*—irreligion; *pṛṣṭhataḥ*—from the back; *yasmāt*—from which; *mṛtyuḥ*—death; *loka*—to the living entity; *bhayaṅkaraḥ*—horrible.

TRANSLATION

Religion was manifested from the breast of Brahmā, wherein is seated the Supreme Personality of Godhead Nārāyaṇa, and irreligion appeared from his back, where horrible death takes place for the living entity.

PURPORT

That religion was manifested from the place where the Personality of Godhead is personally situated is very significant because religion means devotional service to the Personality of Godhead, as confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* as well as the *Bhāgavatam*. In *Bhagavad-gītā* the last instruction is to give up all other engagements in the name of religion and take shelter of the Personality of Godhead. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* also confirms that the highest perfection of religion is that which leads to the devotional service of the Lord, unmotivated and unhampered by material impediments. Religion in its perfect form is the devotional service of the Lord, and irreligion is just the opposite. The heart is the most important part of the body, whereas the back is the most neglected part. When one is attacked by an enemy one is apt to endure attacks from the back and protect himself carefully from all attacks on the chest. All types of irreligion spring from the back of Brahmā, whereas real religion, the devotional service of the Lord, is generated from the chest, the seat of Nārāyaṇa. Anything which does not lead to the devotional service of the Lord is irreligion, and anything which leads to the devotional service of the Lord is called religion.

TEXT 26

हृदि कामो भ्रुवः क्रोधो लोभश्चाधरदच्छदात् ।
आस्याद्वाक्सिन्धवो मेढान्निर्ऋतिः पायोरघाश्रयः ॥२६॥

*hṛdi kāmo bhruvaḥ krodho
lobhaś cādhara-dacchadāt
āsyād vāk sindhavo meḍhrān
nirṛtiḥ pāyor aghāśrayaḥ*

hṛdi—from the heart; *kāmaḥ*—lust; *bhruvaḥ*—from the eyebrows; *krodhaḥ*—anger; *lobhaḥ*—greed; *ca*—also; *adhara-dacchadāt*—from between the lips; *āsyāt*—from the mouth; *vāk*—speaking; *sindhavaḥ*—the seas; *meḍhrāt*—from the penis; *nirṛtiḥ*—low activities; *pāyoḥ*—from the anus; *agha-āśrayaḥ*—reservoir of all vices.

TRANSLATION

Lust and desire became manifested from the heart of Brahmā, anger from between his eyebrows, greed from between his lips, the power of speaking from his mouth, the ocean from his penis, and low and abominable activities from his anus, the source of all sins.

PURPORT

A conditioned soul is under the influence of mental speculation. However great one may be in the estimation of mundane education and learning, he cannot be free from the influence of psychic activities.

Therefore it is very difficult to give up lust and the desires for low activities until one is in the line of devotional service to the Lord. When one is frustrated in lust and low desires, anger is generated from the mind and expressed from between the eyebrows. Ordinary men are therefore advised to concentrate the mind by focusing on the place between the eyebrows, whereas the devotees of the Lord are already practiced to place the Supreme Personality of Godhead on the seat of their minds. The theory of becoming desireless is untenable because the mind cannot be made desireless. When it is recommended that one be desireless, it is understood that one should not desire things which are destructive to spiritual values. A devotee of the Lord always has the Lord in his mind, and thus he does not need to be desireless because all his desires are in relationship with the service of the Lord. The power of speaking is called Sarasvatī, or the goddess of learning, and the birthplace of the goddess of learning is the mouth of Brahmā. Even if a man is endowed with the favor of the goddess of learning, it is quite possible for his heart to be full of lust and material desire and his eyebrows to display symptoms of anger. One may be very learned in the mundane estimation, but that does not mean that he is free from all low activities of lust and anger. Good qualifications can be expected only from a pure devotee, who is always engaged in the thought of the Lord, or in *samādhi*, with faith.

TEXT 27

छायायाः कर्दमो जज्ञे देवहृत्याः पतिः प्रभुः ।
मनसो देहतश्चेदं जज्ञे विश्वकृतो जगत् ॥२७॥

*chāyāyāḥ kardamo jajñe
devahūtyāḥ patiḥ prabhuḥ
manaso dehataś cedam
jajñe viśva-kṛto jagat*

chāyāyāḥ—by the shadow; *kardamaḥ*—Kardama Muni; *jajñe*—became manifested; *devahūtyāḥ*—of Devahūti; *patiḥ*—husband; *prabhuḥ*—the master; *manasaḥ*—from the mind; *dehataḥ*—from the body; *ca*—also; *idam*—this; *jajñe*—developed; *viśva*—the universe; *kṛtaḥ*—of the creator; *jagat*—cosmic manifestation.

TRANSLATION

Sage Kardama, husband of the great Devahūti, was manifested from the shadow of Brahmā. Thus all became manifested from either the body or the mind of Brahmā.

PURPORT

Although one of the three modes of material nature is always prominent, they are never represented unalloyed by one another. Even in the most prominent existence of the two lower qualities, the modes of passion and ignorance, there is sometimes a tinge of the mode of goodness. Therefore all the sons generated from the body or the mind of Brahmā were in the modes of passion and ignorance, but some of them, like Kardama, were born in the mode of goodness. Nārada was born in the transcendental state of Brahmā.

TEXT 28

वाचं दुहितरं तन्वीं स्वयम्भूर्हृतीं मनः ।
अकामां चकमे क्षत्तः सकाम इति नः श्रुतम् ॥२८॥

*vācam duhitaram tanvīm
svayambhūr haratīm manaḥ
akāmām cakame kṣataḥ
sa-kāma iti naḥ śrutam*

vācam—Vāk; *duhitaram*—unto the daughter; *tanvīm*—born of his body; *svayambhūḥ*—Brahmā; *haratīm*—attracting; *manaḥ*—his mind;

akāmām—without being sexually inclined; *cakame*—desired; *kṣattah*—O Vidura; *sa-kāmah*—being sexually inclined; *iti*—thus; *nah*—we; *śrutam*—have heard.

TRANSLATION

O Vidura, we have heard that Brahmā had a daughter named Vāk who was born from his body and who attracted his mind toward sex, although she was not sexually inclined towards him.

PURPORT

Balavān indriya-grāmo vidvāmsam api karṣati (*Bhāg.* 9.19.17). It is said that the senses are so mad and strong that they can bewilder even the most sensible and learned man. Therefore it is advised that one should not indulge in living alone even with one's mother, sister or daughter. *Vidvāmsam api karṣati* means that even the most learned also become victims of the sensuous urge. Maitreya hesitated to state this anomaly on the part of Brahmā, who was sexually inclined to his own daughter, but still he mentioned it because sometimes it so happens, and the living example is Brahmā himself, although he is the primeval living being and the most learned within the whole universe. If Brahmā could be a victim of the sexual urge, then what of others, who are prone to so many mundane frailties? This extraordinary immorality on the part of Brahmā was heard to have occurred in some particular *kalpa*, but it could not have happened in the *kalpa* in which Brahmā heard directly from the Lord the four essential verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* because the Lord benedicted Brahmā, after giving him lessons on the *Bhāgavatam*, that he would never be bewildered in any *kalpa* whatsoever. This indicates that before the hearing of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* he might have fallen a victim to such sensuality, but after hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* directly from the Lord, there was no possibility of such failures.

One should, however, take serious note of this incident. The human being is a social animal, and his unrestricted mixing with the fair sex leads to downfall. Such social freedom of man and woman, especially among the younger section, is certainly a great stumbling block on the path of spiritual progress. Material bondage is due only to sexual bondage, and therefore unrestricted association of man and woman is surely a great impediment. Maitreya cited this example on the part of Brahmā just to bring to our notice this great danger.

TEXT 29

तमधर्मे कृतमतिं विलोक्य पितरं सुताः ।
मरीचिमुख्या मुनयो विश्रम्भात्प्रत्यबोधयन् ॥२९॥

*tam adharme kṛta-matiṁ
vilokya pitaram sūtāḥ
marīci-mukhyā munayo
viśrambhāt pratyabodhayan*

tam—unto him; *adharme*—in the matter of immorality; *kṛta-matiṁ*—the mind being so given; *vilokya*—seeing thus; *pitaram*—unto the father; *sūtāḥ*—sons; *marīci-mukhyāḥ*—headed by Marīci; *munayaḥ*—sages; *viśrambhāt*—with due respect; *pratyabodhayan*—submitted as follows.

TRANSLATION

Thus, finding their father so deluded in an act of immorality, the sages headed by Marīci, all sons of Brahmā, spoke as follows with great respect.

PURPORT

The sages like Marīci were not in the wrong in submitting their protests against the acts of their great father. They knew very well that even though their father committed a mistake, there must have been some great purpose behind the show, otherwise such a great personality could not have committed such a mistake. It might be that Brahmā wanted to warn his subordinates about human frailties in their dealings with

women. This is always very dangerous for persons who are on the path of self-realization. Therefore, great personalities like Brahmā, even when in the wrong, should not be neglected, nor could the great sages headed by Marīci show any disrespect because of his extraordinary behavior.

TEXT 30

नैतत्पूर्वैः कृतं त्वद्ये न करिष्यन्ति चापरे ।
यत्त्वं दुहितरं गच्छेरनिगृह्णाज्जं प्रभुः ॥३०॥

*naitat pūrvaiḥ kṛtam tvadye na karisyanti cāpare
yas tvam duhitarāṁ gaccher
anigrhyāṅgajam prabhuḥ*

na—never; *etat*—such a thing; *pūrvaiḥ*—by any other Brahmā, or yourself in any previous *kalpa*; *kṛtam*—performed; *tvat*—by you; *ye*—that which; *na*—nor; *karisyanti*—will do; *cā*—also; *apare*—anyone else; *yaḥ*—that which; *tvam*—you; *duhitarām*—unto the daughter; *gaccheḥ*—would go; *anigrhya*—without controlling; *anigajam*—sex desire; *prabhuḥ*—O father.

TRANSLATION

O father, this performance in which you are endeavoring to complicate yourself was never attempted by any other Brahmā, nor by anyone else, nor by you in previous kalpas, nor will anyone dare to attempt it in the future. You are the supreme being in the universe, so how is it that you want to have sex with your daughter and cannot control your desire?

PURPORT

The post of Brahmā is the supermost post in the universe, and it appears that there are many Brahmās and many universes besides the one in which we are situated. One who fills this post must be ideal in behavior, for Brahmā sets the example for all living entities. Brahmā, the living entity who is the most pious and spiritually elevated, is entrusted with a post next to that of the Personality of Godhead.

TEXT 31

तेजीयसामपि ह्येतन्न सुश्लोक्यं जगद्गुरो ।
यद्बृहत्तमनुतिष्ठन् वै लोकः क्षेमाय कल्पते ॥३१॥

*tejīyasām api hy etan
na suślokyam jagad-guro
yad-vṛttam anutiṣṭhan vai
lokaḥ kṣemāya kalpate*

tejīyasām—of the most powerful; *api*—also; *hi*—certainly; *etat*—such an act; *na*—not suitable; *su-ślokyam*—good behavior; *jagad-guro*—O spiritual master of the universe; *yat*—whose; *vṛttam*—character; *anutiṣṭhan*—following; *vai*—certainly; *lokaḥ*—the world; *kṣemāya*—for prosperity; *kalpate*—becomes eligible.

TRANSLATION

Even though you are the most powerful being, this act does not suit you because your character is followed for spiritual improvement by people in general.

PURPORT

It is said that a supremely powerful living entity can do anything and everything he likes and such acts do not affect him in any way. For example, the sun, the most powerful fiery planet in the universe, can evaporate water from anywhere and still remain as powerful. The sun evaporates water from filthy places and yet is not infected with the quality of the filth. Similarly, Brahmā remains unimpeachable in all conditions. But still, since he is the spiritual master of all living entities, his behavior and character should be so ideal that people will follow such

sublime behavior and derive the highest spiritual benefit. Therefore, he should not have acted as he did.

TEXT 32

तस्मै नमो भगवते य इदं स्वेन रोचिषा ।
आत्मस्थं व्यञ्जयामास स धर्मं पातुमर्हति ॥३२॥

*tasmai namo bhagavate
ya idam svena rociṣā
ātma-stham vyañjayāṁ āsa
sa dharmam pātum arhati*

tasmai—unto Him; *namaḥ*—obeisances; *bhagavate*—unto the Personality of Godhead; *yaḥ*—who; *idam*—this; *svena*—by His own; *rociṣā*—effulgence; *ātma-stham*—situated in Himself; *vyañjayāṁ āsa*—has manifested; *saḥ*—He; *dharmam*—religion; *pātum*—for protection; *arhati*—may kindly do so.

TRANSLATION

Let us offer our respectful obeisances unto the Personality of Godhead, who, by His own effulgence, while situated in Himself, has manifested this cosmos. May He also protect religion for all goodness.

PURPORT

Lust for sexual intercourse is so strong that it appears herein that Brahmā could not be dissuaded from his determination in spite of the appeal by his great sons like Marīci. Therefore, the great sons began to pray to the Supreme Lord for the good sense of Brahmā. It is only by the grace of the Supreme Lord that one can be protected from the allurements of lusty material desires. The Lord gives protection to devotees who are always engaged in His transcendental loving service, and by His causeless mercy He forgives the accidental fall of a devotee. Therefore, sages like Marīci prayed for the mercy of the Lord, and their prayer was fruitful.

TEXT 33

स इत्थं गृणतः पुत्रान् पुरो दृष्ट्वा प्रजापतीन् ।
प्रजापतिपतिस्तन्वं तत्याज ब्रीडितस्तदा ।
तां दिशो जगृह्वोरां नीहारं यद्विदुस्तमः ॥३३॥

*sa itham gṛṇataḥ putrān
puro dṛṣtvā prajāpatīn
prajāpati-patis tanvaṁ
tatyāja vṛḍitaḥ tadā
tām diśo jagṛhūr ghorām
nihāraṁ yad vidus tamaḥ*

saḥ—he (Brahmā); *itham*—thus; *gṛṇataḥ*—speaking; *putrān*—sons; *purāḥ*—before; *dṛṣtvā*—seeing; *prajā-patīn*—all the progenitors of living entities; *prajāpati-patiḥ*—the father of all of them (Brahmā); *tanvaṁ*—body; *tatyāja*—quit; *vṛḍitaḥ*—ashamed; *tadā*—at that time; *tām*—that body; *diśaḥ*—all directions; *jagṛhūr*—accepted; *ghorām*—blamable; *nihāraṁ*—fog; *yat*—which; *viduḥ*—they know as; *tamaḥ*—darkness.

TRANSLATION

The father of all Prajāpatis, Brahmā, thus seeing all his Prajāpati sons speaking in that way, became very much ashamed and at once gave up the body he had accepted. Later that body appeared in all directions as the dangerous fog in darkness.

PURPORT

The best way to compensate for one's sinful acts is to give up one's body at once, and Brahmā, the leader of the living entities, showed this by his personal example. Brahmā has a fabulous duration of life, but he was obliged to give up his body due to his grievous sin, even though he had merely contemplated it in his mind without having actually done it.

This is a lesson for the living entities, showing how sinful an act it is to indulge in unrestricted sex life. Even to think of abominable sex life is sinful, and to compensate for such sinful acts, one has to give up his body. In other words, one's duration of life, blessings, opulence, etc., are decreased by sinful acts, and the most dangerous type of sinful act is unrestricted sex.

Ignorance is the cause of sinful life, or sinful life is the cause of gross ignorance. The feature of ignorance is darkness or fog. Darkness or fog still covers the whole universe, and the sun is the only counteracting principle. One who takes shelter of the Lord, the perpetual light, has no fear of being annihilated in the darkness of fog or ignorance.

TEXT 34

कदाचिद् घ्यायतः स्रष्टुर्वेदा आसंश्चतुर्मुखात् ।
कथं स्रक्ष्याम्यहं लोकान् समवेतान् यथा पुरा ॥३४॥

*kadācid dhyāyataḥ sraṣṭur
vedā āsarāś catur-mukhāt
katham sraṣyāmy ahaṁ lokān
samavetaṁ yathā purā*

kadācit—once upon a time; *dhyāyataḥ*—while contemplating; *sraṣṭur*—of Brahmā; *vedāḥ*—the Vedic literature; *āsan*—became manifested; *catur-mukhāt*—from the four mouths; *katham sraṣyāmi*—how shall I create; *ahaṁ*—myself; *lokān*—all these worlds; *samavetaṁ*—assembled; *yathā*—as they were; *purā*—in the past.

TRANSLATION

Once upon a time, when Brahmā was thinking of how to create the worlds as in the past millennium, the four Vedas, which contain all varieties of knowledge, became manifested from his four mouths.

PURPORT

As a fire can consume anything and everything without being contaminated, so, by the grace of the Lord, the fire of Brahmā's greatness consumed his desire for the sinful act of sex with his daughter. The Vedas are the source of all knowledge, and they were first revealed to Brahmā by the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead while Brahmā was thinking of re-creating the material world. Brahmā is powerful by dint of his devotional service unto the Lord, and the Lord is always ready to forgive His devotee if by chance he falls down from the noble path of devotional service. The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.5.42) confirms this as follows:

*sva-pāda-mūlaṁ bhajataḥ priyasya
tyaktvānya-bhāvasya hariḥ pareśaḥ
vikarma yac cotpatitaṁ kathaṁ-cid
dhunoti sarvaṁ ḥṛdi sanniviṣṭaḥ*

“Any person who is engaged one hundred percent in the transcendental loving service of the Lord, at His lotus feet, is very dear to the Personality of Godhead Hari, and the Lord, being situated in the heart of the devotee, excuses all kinds of sins committed by chance.” It was never expected that a great personality like Brahmā would ever think of sex indulgence with his daughter. The example shown by Brahmā only suggests that the power of material nature is so strong that it can act upon everyone, even Brahmā. Brahmā was saved by the mercy of the Lord with a little punishment, but by the grace of the Lord he did not lose his prestige as the great Brahmā.

TEXT 35

चातुर्होत्रं कर्मतन्त्रमुपवेदनयैः सह ।
धर्मस्य पादाश्चत्वारस्तथैवाश्रमवृत्तयः ॥३५॥

*cātur-hotraṁ karma-tantram
upaveda-nayaiḥ saha*

*dharmasya pādās catvāras
tathāivāśrama-vṛttayah*

cātuḥ—four; *hotram*—paraphernalia for sacrifice; *karma*—action; *tantram*—expansions of such activities; *upaveda*—supplementary to the *Vedas*; *nayaiḥ*—by logical conclusions; *saha*—along with; *dharmasya*—of religiosity; *pādāḥ*—principles; *catvārah*—four; *tathā eva*—in the same way; *āśrama*—social orders; *vṛttayah*—occupations.

TRANSLATION

The four kinds of paraphernalia for conducting the fire sacrifice became manifest: the performer [the chanter], the offerer, the fire, and the action performed in terms of the supplementary *Vedas*. Also the four principles of religiosity [truth, austerity, mercy and cleanliness] and the duties in the four social orders all became manifest.

PURPORT

Eating, sleeping, defending and mating are the four principles of material bodily demands which are common to both the animals and human society. To distinguish human society from the animals there is the performance of religious activities in terms of the social statuses and orders of life. They are all clearly mentioned in the Vedic literatures and were manifested by Brahmā when the four *Vedas* were generated from his four mouths. Thus the duties of humankind in terms of the statuses and social orders were established to be observed by the civilized man. Those who traditionally follow these principles are called Āryans, or progressive human beings.

TEXT 38

विदुर उवाच

स वै विश्वसृजामीशो वेदादीन् सुखतोऽसृजत् ।
यद् यद् येनासृजद् देवस्तन्मे ब्रूहि तपोधन ॥३६॥

vidura uvāca
sa vai viśva-sṛjām īśo
vedādīn mukhato 'sṛjat
yad yad yena'sṛjad devas
tan me brūhi tapo-dhana

viduraḥ uvāca—Vidura said; *śaḥ*—he (Brahmā); *vai*—certainly; *viśva*—the universe; *sṛjām*—of those who created; *īśaḥ*—the controller; *veda-ādīn*—the *Vedas*, etc.; *mukhataḥ*—from the mouth; *asṛjat*—established; *yat*—that; *yat*—which; *yena*—by which; *asṛjat*—created; *devaḥ*—the god; *tat*—that; *me*—unto me; *brūhi*—please explain; *tapo-dhana*—O sage whose only wealth is penance.

TRANSLATION

Vidura said: O great sage whose only wealth is penance, kindly explain to me how and with whose help Brahmā established the Vedic knowledge which emanated from his mouth.

TEXT 39

मैत्रेय उवाच

ऋग्यजुःसामाथर्वान्व्यान् वेदान् पूर्वादिभिर्मुखाः ।
शास्त्रमिज्यां स्तुतिस्तोमं प्रायश्चित्तं व्यधात्क्रमात् ॥३७॥

maitreya uvāca
ṛg-yajuh-sāmātharvākyān
vedān pūrvādibhir mukhaiḥ
śāstram iḥyām stuti-stomam
prāyaścittam vyadhāt kramāt

maitreyaḥ uvāca—Maitreya said; *ṛg-yajuh-sāma-atharva*—the four *Vedas*; *ākhyān*—of the name; *vedān*—Vedic literatures; *pūrvā-ādibhiḥ*—beginning with the front; *mukhaiḥ*—by the mouths; *śāstram*—Vedic hymns not pronounced before; *iḥyām*—priestly rituals;

stuti-stomam—the subject matter of the reciters; *prāyaścittam*—transcendental activities; *vyadhāt*—established; *kramāt*—one after another.

TRANSLATION

Maitreya said: Beginning from the front face of Brahmā, gradually the four *Vedas*—Rk, Yajur, Sāma and Atharva—became manifest. Thereafter, Vedic hymns which had not been pronounced before, priestly rituals, the subject matters of the recitation, and transcendental activities were all established, one after another.

TEXT 38

आयुर्वेदं धनुर्वेदं गान्धर्वं वेदमात्मनः ।
स्थापत्यं चासृजद् वेदं क्रमात्पूर्वादिभिर्मुखाः ॥३८॥

āyur-vedam dhanur-vedam
gāndharvam vedam ātmanah
sthāpatyam cāsṛjad vedam
kramāt pūrvādibhir mukhaiḥ

āyur-vedam—medical science; *dhanur-vedam*—military science; *gāndharvam*—musical art; *vedam*—they are all Vedic knowledge; *ātmanah*—of his own; *sthāpatyam*—architectural; *ca*—also; *asṛjat*—created; *vedam*—knowledge; *kramāt*—respectively; *pūrvā-ādibhiḥ*—beginning from the front face; *mukhaiḥ*—by the mouths.

TRANSLATION

He also created the medical science, military art, musical art and architectural science, all from the *Vedas*. They all emanated one after another, beginning from the front face.

PURPORT

The *Vedas* contain perfect knowledge, which includes all kinds of knowledge necessary for the human society, not only on this particular planet but on other planets as well. It is understood that military art is also necessary knowledge for the upkeep of social order, as is the art of music. All these groups of knowledge are called the *Upapurāṇa*, or supplements of the *Vedas*. Spiritual knowledge is the main topic of the *Vedas*, but to help the human being's spiritual pursuit of knowledge, the other information, as above mentioned, forms necessary branches of the Vedic knowledge.

TEXT 39

इतिहासपुराणानि पञ्चमं वेदमीश्वरः ।
सर्वेभ्य एव वक्त्रेभ्यः ससृजे सर्वदर्शनः ॥३९॥

itihāsa-purāṇāni
pañcamam vedam īśvaraḥ
sarvebhya eva vaktrebhyaḥ
sasṛje sarva-darśanaḥ

itihāsa—histories; *purāṇāni*—the *Purāṇas* (supplementary *Vedas*); *pañcamam*—the fifth; *vedam*—the Vedic literature; *īśvaraḥ*—the Lord; *sarvebhyaḥ*—all together; *eva*—certainly; *vaktrebhyaḥ*—from his mouths; *sasṛje*—created; *sarva*—all around; *darśanaḥ*—one who can see all time.

TRANSLATION

Then he created the fifth Veda—the *Purāṇas* and the histories—from all his mouths, since he could see all the past, present and future.

PURPORT

There are histories of particular countries and nations and of the world, but the *Purāṇas* are the histories of the universe, not only in one millennium, but in many *kalpas*. Brahmā has knowledge of those historical facts, and therefore all the *Purāṇas* are histories. As originally composed by Brahmā, they are part of the *Vedas* and are called the fifth *Veda*.

(continued in next issue)

For Your Information

RESOURCES

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

For more information, write to Śrī Rāma dāsa, ISKCON Gurukula Education Office, Almviks Gärd, 15300 Järna, Sweden.

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

276 pages, softbound.

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

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

Plain living, high thinking. Get out of the city—away from the noise, pollution, and the anxiety and madness of city life. Come back to a simpler, more natural way of life. Live close to the earth, close to God. The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement has thirty-four farm communities throughout the world. These are sacred places where your spirit can unfold. And at the same time, they're realistic, practical places, where you can build a sane, stable life for yourself and, if you're married, for your family.

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

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

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

"At present, it seems the more 'educated' one becomes, the less he believes in God, in God's law, and in the next life. . . . Thus modern education prepares men to become animals. If there is no education to teach a human being whether or not he is this body, he remains no better than an ass." Read the complete compilation of Śrīla Prabhupāda's words on *gurukula*, the Kṛṣṇa conscious educational system. *Śrīla Prabhupāda on Gurukula* is available from the ISKCON Ministry of Education, P.O. Box 11093, Dallas, TX 75223 \$3.50 plus \$1 postage; \$2 overseas postage.

Enjoy the writings of Śrīla Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami, one of the present spiritual masters in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. The author of a six-volume biography of Śrīla Prabhupāda, he continues to produce essays, poems, and other writings for everyone interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. For a list of publications, write The Gītā-nāgarī Press, P.O. Box 149, Line Lexington, PA 18932.

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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 Madhusūdana (April 25-May 23)

April 30—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Abhirāma Ṭhākura.

May 3—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura.

May 4—Varūthini Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

May 8—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita Gosvāmī.

May 12—Candana-yātrā (ceremony to anoint Lord Jagannātha with sandalwood pulp).

May 18—Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Jāhnavī-devī, the consort of Lord Nityānanda. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Sitā-devī, the consort of Lord Rāmacandra. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Madhu Paṇḍita, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya.

May 20—Mohini Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

May 21—Rukmiṇī mahā-dvādaśī.

May 23—Śrī Nṛsiṃha-caturdaśī, the appearance anniversary of Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva, the half-man, half-lion incarnation. Fasting til dusk, followed by feasting. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī and Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Acārya. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Parameśvarī dāsa.

Month of Trivikrama (May 24-June 22)

May 28—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya, an intimate associate of Lord Caitanya.

June 3—Aparā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

June 4—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura, author of *Caitanya Bhāgavata*.

June 17—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa.

June 18—Pāṇḍava-nirjalā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

June 20—Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's chipped-rice-and-yogurt festival at Pānīhāṭī.

June 22—Snāna-yātrā, the bathing festival of Lord Jagannātha. Disappearance anniversaries of Śrīla Mukunda Datta and Śrīla Śrīdhara Paṇḍita.



Every Town and Village

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



Srila Tamal Krishna Goswami Gurudeva offers Fiji Prime Minister Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara a gift of Fiji's famous Hare Kṛṣṇa sweets.

ISKCON Guru Tours Fiji, Meets Leaders

Suva, Fiji—The Right Honorable Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, prime minister of Fiji, and several government ministers recently met with one of ISKCON's present spiritual masters, Śrīla Tamal Krishna Goswami Gurudeva, at the home of Khur Ram Latchan, a member of Parliament. Mr. Latchan hosted a special evening reception at his home in Wainibokasi, to which he had invited government leaders to welcome Śrīla Gurudeva.

Śrīla Gurudeva often visits Fiji, where he has a number of disciples. In his address to the prime minister and five hundred other guests, Śrīla Gurudeva explained ISKCON's standing as a bona fide, non-sectarian religion. He described the Society's plans for developing a *gurukula* (a Kṛṣṇa conscious school) in Lautoka by January 1988. He also said that ISKCON plans to open an orphanage, a temple complex with an adjoining guesthouse, and another restaurant—Fiji's third—that serves *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*, vegetarian dishes offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Prime Minister Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara responded to Śrīla Gurudeva's talk by saying, "I am delighted to hear of the Society's future plans." Also present at the reception were Minister for Primary Industries Charles Walker and Minister of State of Forests Ratu Sir Josia Tavaia. Śrīla

Tamal Krishna Goswami garlanded them with flowers offered to the Deity of Lord Kṛṣṇa and presented the prime minister with *The Hare Krishna Book of Vegetarian Cooking*. The prime minister maintains a vegetarian diet, according to the *Fiji Sun*.

Besides meeting some of Fiji's leaders, Śrīla Tamal Krishna Goswami delivered public discourses on Kṛṣṇa consciousness during his visit to Fiji. He lectured in Lautoka, Lambasa, Ba, as well as at the Civic Center here. At these programs the local Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees performed *sai-kīrtana*, the congregational chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. They also served *prasādam* to the guests and distributed books on Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in Fiji has a following of twenty thousand devotees, and Vāsudeva dāsa oversees the movement's affairs here.

Śrīla Gurudeva told one of his audiences: "Many think that the well-being of the body is the equivalent of the well-being of the soul. Even the diseased and dying are still attached to the body. Yet the body is the cause of our suffering. Each of us is a spirit soul with its own form and personality. We can realize our real self in this life."

ISKCON Moves to New Temple in Bangalore, India

Bangalore, India—A Deity installation followed by a Ratha-yātrā parade and a three-day festival recently made front-page news and heralded the opening of ISKCON's new temple building in Upper Palace Orchards, a residential area here.

The new Deities of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma come from the holy city of Uḍupī, which is located on the west coast of southern India. Uḍupī is famous as a place of pilgrimage because of the temple Śrī Kṛṣṇa Maṭha, which was founded by Śrīla Madhvācārya in the thirteenth century (See BACK TO GODHEAD, Vol. 20, No. 6). Before Their Lordships Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were flown to ISKCON's new Bangalore temple, His Holiness Viśveśa Tīrtha Swami and His Holiness Śrī Pejvara Mutt, priests at Śrī Kṛṣṇa Maṭha, performed elaborate Vedic ceremonies to invoke auspiciousness.

When the Deities arrived at Their new home, Śrīla Jayapatāka Swami, one of the present spiritual masters in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, installed Them in the ISKCON temple during a fire sacrifice and bathing ceremony. Later, the local devotees distributed *prasādam* for six hours.

The next day, the Deities were taken on procession in Ratha-yātrā carts exactly resembling those used in Uḍupī. Carts of this design have been a tradition in that city for seven hundred years. The ISKCON carts were designed and built by Rasanātha dāsa.

His Holiness Vibhudeśa Tīrtha Swami, a prominent spiritual leader in Uḍupī, inaugurated the procession, while Minister of Tourism and Youth Services Dr. Jeevaraj Alva and Minister of Labor Sri D. Manjunatha swept the road before the carts with golden brooms. Elephants, folk dancers, chanters, and floats led the gala procession.

Minister of Health Dr. Timme Gowda, Mayor Sri B.K.M. Gowda, and Minister of Public Works Sri Deve Gowda also attended the festival.

At the three-day festival in Bangalore's largest auditorium, Śrīla Jayapatāka Swami chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa, lectured, and took written vows from hundreds of participants that stated they would chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* one hundred and eight times daily.

THE VEDIC

Transcendental Commentaries

WHOLESALE SLAUGHTER

by Drutakarmā dāsa

Striking meat-packers and their supporters blockaded the Geo. A. Hormel & Co. plant Monday, and Gov. Rudy Perpich called out the National Guard to prevent violence as workers crossed the picket lines.—Associated Press, Jan. 21, 1986

Governor Rudy Perpich is certainly to be commended for using the forces at his command to prevent violence at the Hormel meat-packing plant in Austin, Minnesota; however, the human-to-human violence outside the plant's gates was insignificant compared to the usual human-to-animal violence within.

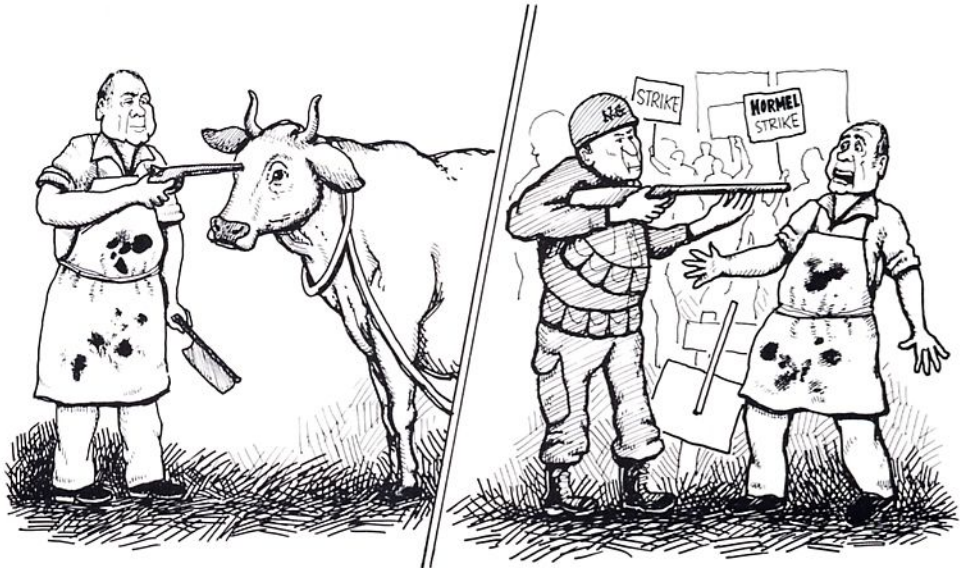
Governor Perpich did nothing to prevent this violence. A government leader trained in Vedic philosophy, however, would have acted differently. He would have used the National Guard troops to shut down the meat-packing plant altogether. Such a leader would see not only human beings but also the animals as *prajā*, or citizens. In his commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Prabhupāda explains, "The word *prajā* refers to one who has taken birth within the jurisdiction of the government. All living beings, whether human, animal, or lower than animal, should be given protection."

Stopping the killing of the animals is not merely an act of compassion toward the animals. According to the law of *karma*, the acts of violence being carried out against the animals in the meat-packing plant will eventually generate reactions affecting humans, individually and collectively. Śrīla Prabhupāda states, "If one kills many thousands of animals in a professional way so that other people can purchase the meat to eat, one must be ready to be killed in a similar way in his next life and in life after life. . . . According to Judeo-Christian scriptures, it is clearly said, 'Thou shalt not kill.' Nonetheless, giving all kinds of excuses, even the heads of religion indulge in killing animals while trying to pass as saintly persons. This

mockery and hypocrisy in human society bring about unlimited calamities; therefore occasionally there are great wars. Masses of such people go out onto the battlefields and kill one another. At present they have discovered the atomic bomb, which is now simply awaiting wholesale destruction."

Considering the law of *karma* and its possible effects, we can see that protecting

Of course, it is not very likely that any of today's government leaders will act to stop animal slaughter. But then it's also not very likely that we're going to see an end to needless violence in human society, either. That's the price of ignorance about the laws of *karma*. The only remedy is to educate the people about these things. And that's what the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is trying to do.



animals from slaughter is equivalent to protecting human beings. Labor consultant Ray Rodgers said to the strikers, "I think you should make it clear that if they want to call out the National Guard, they should call out the National Guard against the company to protect the people of Austin from what this company is doing to the city and to the people." Of course, Mr. Rodgers was saying that the National Guard should be used to force the company to accede to the demands of the striking workers so they could continue packing the bloody harvest of animal slaughter. But a consultant who understood the law of *karma* and what the activities of the company were really "doing to the city and its people" would have advised a different kind of protection—shutting down the plant entirely and saving the animals.

THE UNNECESSITIES OF LIFE

by Mathureśa dāsa

The bulbs I purchased on sale last fall and planted in my tiny sidewalk flower bed bloomed profusely this spring in almost weekly waves of yellow or violet or red. April showers bring May flowers, and from right after the snows' melt I've had modest yet elegant clusters of buttercups, daffodils, and tulips. It was so easy. A few minutes to dig the bed and bury the bulbs was all.

Out beyond my own sidewalk cropland, the state of agriculture grows complex and dismal for many. The Farmers Home Administration says that 27,000 farms are

OBSERVER

ary on the Issues of the Day

nearing bankruptcy. The total American farm debt is \$213 billion.

It seems particularly cruel that farmers, who have chosen such a simple, honest way of life, and who have such direct access to a very real, tangible kind of wealth, should suffer poverty. Plowing and cultivating the land, living close to nature, working with the sun and rain—farmers produce all our necessities. Wheat and rice, fruits and vegetables, milk and butter—is there any wealth more valuable than agricultural wealth? We can survive—prosper!—without stock markets, paper money, gold and silver, even without cars and factories and air pollution. But what would we do without farms and orchards and dairies?

The Vedic literature therefore strongly asserts that real wealth is measured not in dollars and cents but in land and cows. The land yields grains, cotton, wood, and other products for our food, clothing, and shelter. The cows produce milk and butter. The bulls can be harnessed to plow our fields and haul our loads. Just try to envision an imaginary landscape where the fields produce luxury cars, televisions, and other gadgets, where money grows on bushes, and where cows give bucketfuls of gas and oil. Paradise? No, just the opposite. There is a Vedic saying that the trees in hell are made of solid gold.

In 1964, while commenting on the first canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote:

If there is enough milk, enough grains, enough fruit, enough cotton, enough silk, and enough jewels, then why do the people need houses of prostitution, slaughterhouses, cinemas, and so on? What is the need of an artificial luxurious life of cinema, cars, radio, flesh [meat], and hotels? Has this civilization produced anything but quarreling individually and nationally? Has this civilization enhanced the cause of equality and fraternity by sending thousands of men into a hellish factory and the war fields at the whims of a particular man? (*Bhāg.* 1.10.5, purport)

An especially disturbing aspect of the farm crisis is the suicides that have accompanied the despair of bankruptcy, foreclosure, and farm auctions. While these

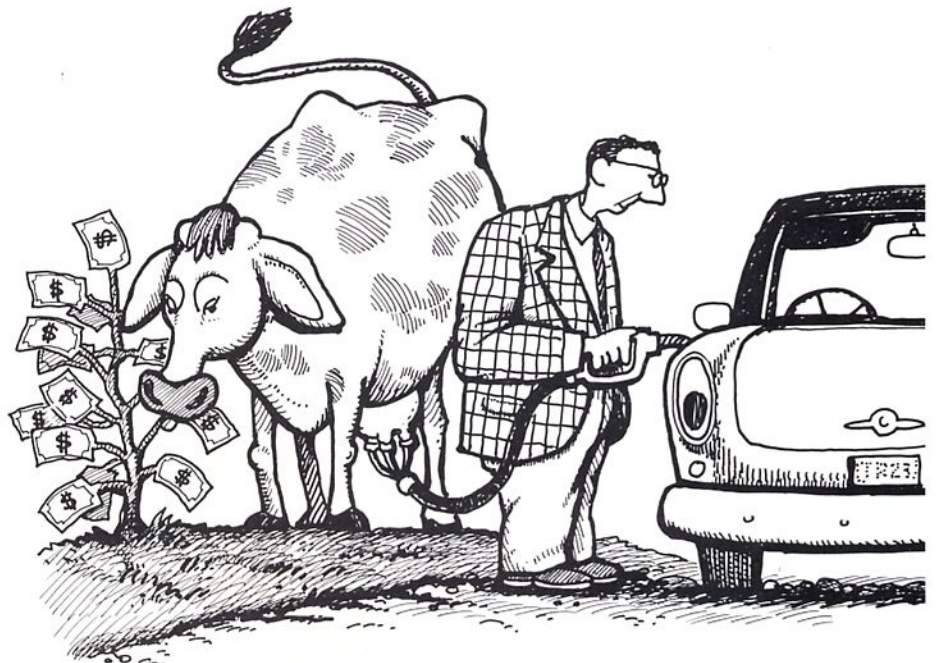
deaths are too few and far between to be statistically significant, they nonetheless indicate how dedication and attachment to a piece of land and a noble, age-old way of life can run deep—deeper in many ways than dedication to an ordinary job or business. That these few suicides drew national attention indicates that farming and farmers are still close to the heart of urbanized man. The farmer's vocation is itself a kind of wealth—one that, again, we cannot simply measure in dollars and cents.

The poverty of today's farmers is an outgrowth of the poverty of modern civilized man in his attraction to the "unnecessities" of life—rapid transportation and communication, leisure activities and entertainment, home automation, and so on. Such materialistic trappings add little to our satisfaction and nothing to our spiritual advancement. Spiritual advancement, or increased devotion to the Supreme Person, is the purpose of human life, the only objective that can give us happiness. Agriculture and cow protection are the two principal features of a timeless, God-given economic system, one that is designed to

support a society based on spiritual values.

Land and cows will generously and peacefully sustain a life-style centered on God realization, but not a life of mechanization, exaggerated sense gratification, and materialism. This is as true for the lone farmer as it is for society in general. The farmer bereft of spiritual values and goals may find himself buried in debt, while his wealth of grains and milk products piles up in silos and warehouses, too plentifully supplied by the Supreme Lord to garner a good price on the open market. Materialistic society—farmers included—is finding itself buried under a pile of technological gadgets, industrial wastes, and broken lives. Meanwhile, the simple agrarian life, with its natural counterpart, the endeavor for spiritual advancement, is becoming an anachronism.

As a city slicker and daffodil-grower, I'm not the ideal person to fire off a manifesto on agrarian life. But a manifesto isn't what's needed anyway. What we need is clear thinking about wealth and about priorities, thinking based on the revealed scriptures, which give reliable directions for material and spiritual prosperity. 🌻



ORIGIN OF EVIL

(continued from page 6)

world rife with evil.

Furthermore, an adequate solution to the problem of evil should be logical and reasonable. It should confront the reality of human suffering and not minimize it. It should include an appropriate explanation of the need for moral conduct. And it should include an appropriate explanation for religious faith.

Such a solution I found in *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. I read it a few years after my proclaimed atheism and discovered that Kṛṣṇa's teachings answered my questions and doubts about God and evil, as well as many other queries I had about spiritual life. I learned that service and surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead is not at all incompatible with the existence of evil—that evil is, in fact, a deliberate part of God's scheme.

Kṛṣṇa's Solution

Suffering is an insurmountable law of nature. It comes upon us, whether individually or collectively, as the reaction for some evil we inflicted in our past. This retributive law of *karma* gives us repeated opportunities to suffer or enjoy the fruits of our actions, from one life to the next. Caught up in an almost unending cycle of action and reaction, souls fallen from the spiritual world reincarnate—lifetime after lifetime, species after species, in different sexes, cultures, and circumstances, each in exact accordance with the good and bad activities performed during previous lives.

Under this system of retributive law, each soul is responsible for his own vices and virtues and their concomitant joys and sorrows. Accordingly, divine justice is perfectly meted out; no one suffers or prospers undeservedly. God's boundless mercy is matched by His infinite patience, and every soul gets repeated chances to rehabilitate and redeem himself. Through the process of suffering and atonement over many births, fallen souls eventually become frustrated with the pursuit of material desires and with the rigors of repeated birth and death: sometimes in a heavenly situation, sometimes in a hellish one. Gradually, one comes to realize that material life is largely a life of immediate suffering or of anxiety in anticipation of suffering.

The human form, Kṛṣṇa explains, is a rare opportunity for us to end all suffering and anxiety by unconditionally surrendering to Him, to awaken our dormant love for Him. Kṛṣṇa assures us that once we reach this stage of perfection, upon giving up our present body—which is nothing but a sheath of flesh and bones covering

the eternal, luminous soul—we do not take birth in this material world again, but we join Lord Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world.

In the spiritual world, evil is conspicuous by its absence. Unfortunately, people either doubt that such a nonmaterial reality exists, or they mistake it to be devoid of variety, “perfection” fraught with idleness and boredom. But the descriptions of the spiritual kingdom of God given in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* give many details barely hinted at in other scriptures. They describe a spiritual plane that is variegated and dynamic.

We learn, for instance, that the transcendental kingdom of Kṛṣṇa is filled with innumerable spiritual planets, with pastures, forests, rivers, fruits, flowers, and

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First objection: Why
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our past lives?*

abodes built with spiritual gems. Here Lord Kṛṣṇa expands Himself into unlimited forms to live on each planet among His innumerable pure devotees, who reside there with eternal, spiritual bodies replete with spiritual senses. Just as in this material world our enjoyment is variegated, so in the spiritual world the activities and enjoyments are endlessly variegated and pleasurable, unsullied by envy, false pride, malice, disease, and death. According to Kṛṣṇa's plan, these evils are necessary here because they provide the impetus for us to desire to return back home, back to Godhead.

Point by point, Kṛṣṇa's explanation of evil satisfies the minimal criteria I listed earlier. It changed my views considerably, for I could not remain an atheist in the face of a consistent resolution to all my questions.

Some Objections

In my attempts to propagate Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I frequently meet people driven to faithlessness. Why driven? Because of their inability to reconcile an all-loving, almighty God with a world of suffering and evil. One man told me he'd become an atheist “because Hitler killed six million Jews.” A relative of mine (Sue) turned from God because as a little girl she had lost her mother, a good and pious lady, to cancer. Evil cut too close for Sue, and no amount of explaining can mollify her. Like many others I've spoken with, she has objections to Lord Kṛṣṇa's explanation of evil.

First objection: Why don't we remember our past lives? In fact, a growing number of people do claim to remember their past lives, but in any case the absence of such recollections by no means disproves past lives. We have forgotten so much even of this present life, especially of our infancy, what to speak of previous lives.

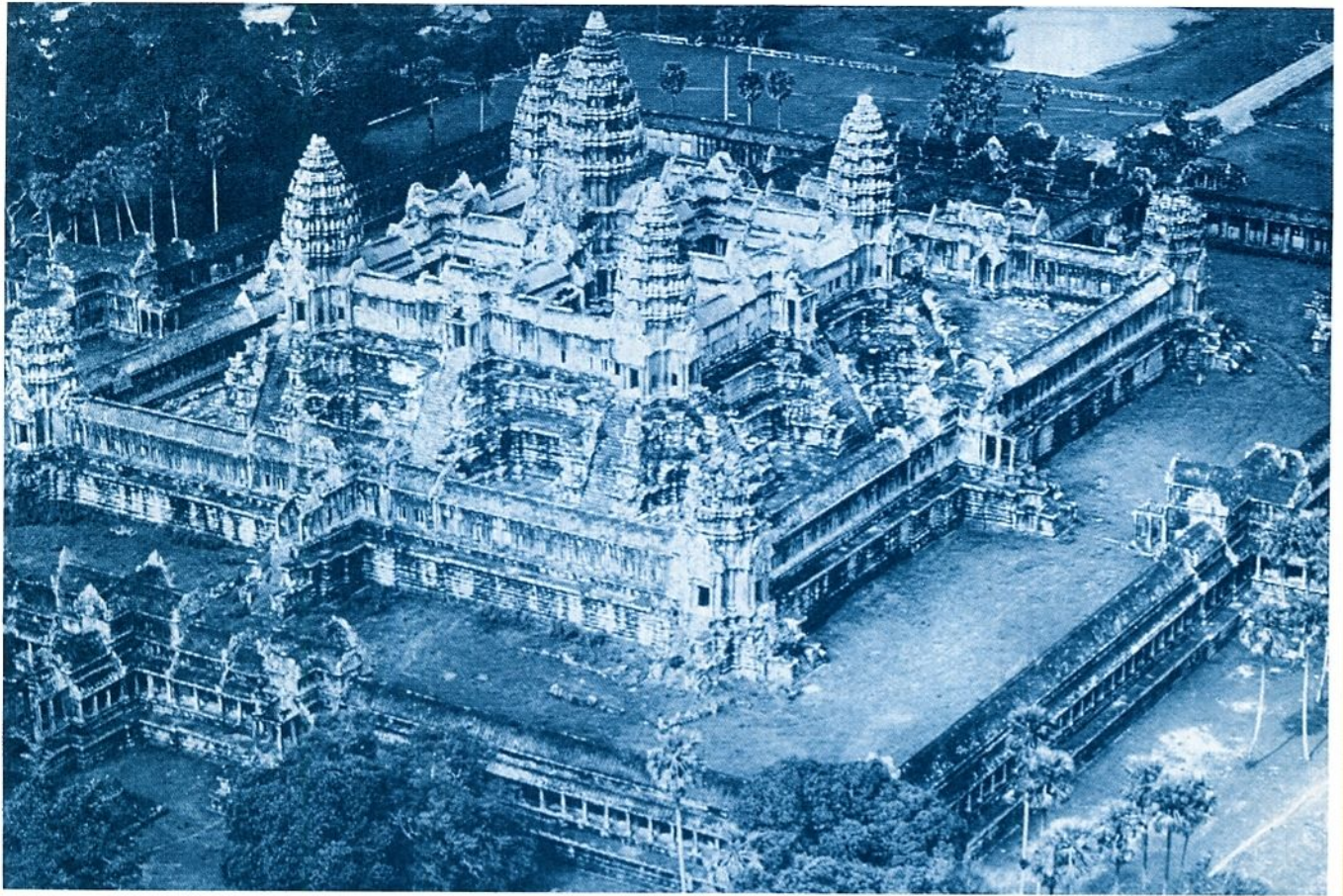
Second objection: To be punished for deeds we no longer remember would be pointless.

According to Kṛṣṇa, however, the law of *karma* is not pointless and involves no caprice. The joys and sorrows we incur are proportionate to the joys and sorrows we have caused. Even without our seeing the connection between present suffering and past sins, the system of karmic retribution is nonetheless effective: it slackens our materialistic grip and stimulates our latent desires for permanence and transcendence. As we know from psychology, impressions from infancy and childhood affect the actions of the adult—even when we “forget” those impressions or they become unrecognizable to the conscious mind. Likewise, Kṛṣṇa explains that knowledge stored within the unconscious from previous lives helps pry the eternal soul from his self-defeating attachment to an existence of repeated birth, disease, old age, death, and other miseries.

Third objection: Our innate abilities are already explained by heredity. Doesn't that detract from the idea that *karma* and reincarnation explain an individual's talents and inclinations?

Actually, while Lord Kṛṣṇa's doctrine of *karma* includes phenomena we usually attribute to heredity, it has the additional merit of accounting for things that heredity cannot explain; for example, vicious persons born into families of virtue, geniuses born into families of average intellect, and idiots born into families of high intellect. None of these are satisfactorily explained by heredity. The retributive law of *karma*, however, explains that due to some past vice or virtue, an individual has

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Jewel in Kampuchea

“Does it shock you that Vedic culture existed outside India so long ago?” Ta asked me. “No,” I said. “*Veda* means knowledge, and true knowledge is everybody’s birthright.”

by SATYARĀJA DĀSA

While viewing a recent exhibit at New York’s Asia Society, I met an extremely interesting fellow named Ta Khan, a Cambodian war refugee. Although Ta was familiar with Eastern religion, his knowledge of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement was minimal. He had heard about *Vedānta*, *yoga*, *sanātana-dharma*, and so on, but like most people who frequent the Asia Society, he had only a theoretical knowledge of these things. And he was completely unaware that thousands of Westerners had adopted the Kṛṣṇa conscious life-style.

I was standing before a beautiful painting from Akbar’s court when Ta approached



Satyarāja dāsa



Ta Khan

me. “Are you a devotee of Kṛṣṇa?” he asked. But before I could answer, he stammered, “Ohh! Y-you’re American!”

“Devotion to Kṛṣṇa is the eternal function of the soul,” I assured him, “and it transcends cultural designations.” We continued to look at the exhibit together. Soon he turned again to me, obviously anxious to speak, but he seemed unsure of where to start.

Hoping to make it easy for him, I explained, “Kṛṣṇa is God. Actually, there is one God, but He is revealed by different prophets according to the intellectual and spiritual capacities of a given culture.” I could see he was attentive and eager to hear more.

“No matter where you are born,” I continued, “God can come to you. It’s not that Kṛṣṇa can come only to a Hindu. If

Angkor Wat is the largest Viṣṇu temple on earth. A shining emblem of Asia’s original Vedic culture, the temple complex covers seventy-five square miles.

you're sincere, He'll search you out. He will either come personally, or He'll send His pure representative." I concluded my little sermon: "When His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda came to Western shores in 1965, he brought Kṛṣṇa with him."

Ta seemed pleased. "I know exactly what you mean," he ventured. Then with increased confidence he said, "Kṛṣṇa came to me in Cambodia."

I thought he was referring to the local concept of God in his country, and I asked, "What form did the Lord come in? What's His name in your land?"

"Oh, He came as Kṛṣṇa and also as Rāma. He came in the form of the world's largest Viṣṇu temple." Now he had caught my interest.

"Wait a minute," I protested. "The largest Viṣṇu temple is in Śrī Raṅgam, in south India."

"That's the largest in India," he corrected me, laughing, "but the largest in the world is called Angkor Wat, and that is in Cambodia."

"Angkor what?"

"You may like to joke," Ta said, his face set with gravity, "but when I was a child my father took me to this massive Viṣṇu temple, and I have never forgotten the experience. We prayed to leave Cambodia"—he looked at me earnestly. "Life there was so hard. I made a vow before Viṣṇu that if I ever got out, I would search for His devotees and learn how to worship Him."

As Ta spoke, tears came to his eyes. It occurred to me that here was a genuine recipient of Lord Viṣṇu's mercy. For that matter, so was I. America, for all its opulence, is as unlikely a place to find devotion to Kṛṣṇa as Kampuchea (Cambodia).

We went to sit in the Asia Society cafeteria. I was completely fascinated by Ta's experience at Angkor Wat. I wanted to know more. I shared my lunch of *kṛṣṇa-prasādam* with him. He shared his past with me.

A member of the Asia Society overheard

bits of our conversation and suggested we go through their private book collection; he was certain he had once encountered some literature on Angkor Wat. And sure enough, we were excited to find quite a bit of literature on the subject.

Ta had told me that the name Angkor Wat means, roughly, "the new place," and we read that "the new place" used to be called, of all things, Yaśodāpura. I was familiar with the name Yaśodā. It's the name of Kṛṣṇa's mother. It seems the temple was constructed in her honor. I had to know more.

As we read on, we learned that south India's Śrī Raṅgam is indeed considered the largest Viṣṇu temple in India—but Angkor Wat is bigger still. Ta smiled, proud of his country. "Viṣṇu is still worshiped in Śrī Raṅgam," I said, trying once again to defend India's sanctity, "but Angkor Wat has long since become a Buddhist shrine." But I knew my defense was insubstantial and irrelevant—Angkor Wat still stands as one of the world's most monumental offerings to God.

The massive Viṣṇu temple apparently was constructed by the Palava dynasty under King Sūryavarman II's patronage. The Palavas were mostly Vaiṣṇavas, Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees, and with their great missionary spirit brought Vedic culture from India to many lands.

Angkor Wat, the crown jewel of Palava masterworks, dominates the plain where the Khmer empire—heir to the kingdoms of Funan and Chenla—flourished from the ninth century A.D. Built over a span of some forty years, the temple is one of the world's most elaborate religious masterpieces, surpassing even the most elegant Christian cathedrals in splendor and magnitude. Worship of Viṣṇu engaged thousands under its roof until the fall of the Palava dynasty in the fifteenth century, at which time, with the transferral of culture, it became a tribute to Lord Buddha. Today, the temple is being partly protected from its most lethal enemy, water,


by a network of hidden drains emplaced there in the 1960s.

As Ta read the description of Angkor, it brought back memories of his homeland and of his vow to search out the devotees of Viṣṇu.

"Its epic symmetries," he read to me, "begin with the outer gallery, which runs in a circumference of half a mile. Within the gallery, sculptures in bas relief retell the pastimes of Viṣṇu and Rāma." What Ta and I were most happy to read, however, is that Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are also depicted on the walls of the great structure. As we read this in an old copy of *National Geographic* (Vol. 161, No. 5, May 1982), we began to feel closer, as if his background in Kampuchea and my involvement with the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement were interrelated. Somehow, they were.

"Does it shock you that your Vedic culture existed outside India so long ago?" Ta asked me.

"No," I confessed. "I can understand that Vedic culture is our birthright. *Veda* means 'knowledge,' and true knowledge is everybody's birthright. If something is indeed true, it must be true everywhere and for everyone—just like the sun. There's no question of a Cambodian sun or an American sun—the sun is the sun. Vedic knowledge is like that. It is true for everyone. It is the Absolute Truth.

It was getting late. Ta was reflective. Although we had only met earlier that day, we were already old friends. He repeated his story to me; he spoke of his ordeal in Kampuchea; he reminisced about his visit to the Viṣṇu temple. His prayers did not go unanswered, he told me. Not only was he able to flee Kampuchea with his life, but he was led to Viṣṇu's devotees. I was embarrassed. I realized that he was referring to me. And I, in turn, became even more grateful to Śrīla Prabhupāda, who spread the teachings of Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world so that I could be led to Viṣṇu's devotees. 

HAPPINESS

(continued from page 4)

considered an old man. But the time will come when one who is twenty years old will be considered a very old man. That time is gradually coming. This is the effect of the Kali-yuga.

The duration of life, bodily strength, mercy, memory—these things will decrease gradually. Nowadays you won't find many people with a very fertile brain, nor are people very strong physically. And mercy? There is no question of it. If somebody sees you being killed on the street, he doesn't care; he'll go on walking. There is no mercy. Even the *mother* has no

mercy—killing her child in the womb. This is the Kali-yuga.

So there is a great necessity for preaching this *bhāgavata-dharma*. And this is what Prahāda Mahārāja is preaching to his *daiṭya* classmates. The *daiṭyas*, or demons, do not understand that human life is meant for cultivating Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They do not understand the value of human life. Therefore Prahāda Mahārāja is teaching them about *bhāgavata-dharma*.

He says that sense gratification is not our goal in life. He describes sense gratification as *deha-yogena dehinām*, "happiness in reference to the body." Another meaning of *deha-yogena dehinām* is "sex." One *deha* [body] is embracing another

deha; they're kissing, they're having sexual intercourse. That is the ultimate happiness in the material world.

Prahāda Mahārāja says that you can get this kind of happiness everywhere, whether you are in a human body or a dog's body or a hog's body. Don't think that sex happiness is less for a dog than for a human being. No. Whether one is in a hog's body or a dog's body or a man's body, the pleasure of sex is the same. For example, if you take something eatable from a golden pot and put it into an iron pot, the taste will not change. The taste is the same. It is only our misconception that if I put it into a golden pot the taste will improve. It's not a fact.

So, we are trying to become an advanced civilization by changing the “pot.” That’s all. But that will not change the quality of our activities. The quality will remain the same. We have to go beyond *āhāra-nidrā-bhaya-māithunam*—eating, sleeping, defense, and sex. These are necessary as far as the body is concerned, but these are also there in the lives of the dogs and cats and hogs. We have to go further. That is *bhāgavata-dharma*. *Deha-dharma*, bodily activities, are the same for the cats, dogs, and human beings, but *bhāgavata-dharma*, activities of self-realization, are for the human beings alone.

Therefore Prahlāda Mahārāja declares, *kaumāra ācaret prājñāḥ*: “From the very beginning of life a human being should practice *bhāgavata-dharma*.” Here we see these children coming to the temple. It is very good. They are associating with devotees and offering respect to the Deity and the *guru*. This will not go in vain. It is all recorded, and one day they’ll become pure devotees. That is *bhāgavata-dharma*.

Prahlāda Mahārāja is stressing that we shouldn’t try very hard for sense enjoyment because it is available in any condition of life, without any effort. By superior arrangement, *daiva*, everyone gets a certain type of sense gratification. The hog, because he has been given the body of a hog, must eat stool. That is *daiva*. Similarly, cows, goats, and other four-legged animals eat grass. They’ll never touch meat. But tigers, dogs, and cats will not even touch grass. They want meat. Their standard of eating, their standard of happiness, is already fixed up. It cannot be changed.

But in the human form of life we can change our standard of happiness if we take to *bhāgavata-dharma*. For example, here are these European and American boys. They have changed their habits. How is it possible? Because they have taken to *bhāgavata-dharma*. That is the only way. Otherwise, it is not possible. In America, the authorities admitted, “We are spending so many millions of dollars, but we cannot stop the intoxication habit, the LSD habit. How is it that this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is stopping it?” Yes, as soon as one joins our movement sincerely, he can very easily give up these four abominable things: illicit sex, meat-eating, intoxication, and gambling. How? Because he’s taking to *bhāgavata-dharma*, Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

So if you want to change the mentality of the people in the modern civilization, which at present is the dog’s mentality, you cannot do it by passing resolutions in the United Nations assembly. No. You must take to *bhāgavata-dharma*. Then everything will be all right. Otherwise, it is not possible.

Thank you very much. Hare Kṛṣṇa. 🙏

CHANT!

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

Chanting these sixteen words gradually destroys all the ill effects of this age of quarrel and hypocrisy. “Kṛṣṇa” and “Rāma” are names of God. “Hare” is the most intimate and effective way of addressing or invoking God. And since God is absolute, He and His names are one, so you’re in His company whenever you chant. Try it—alone or with friends. Silently or at the top of your lungs. Chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. It’s free. It works.

ORIGIN OF EVIL

(continued from page 26)

certain setbacks or talents, or takes birth in a certain family to make further progress on the path of moral and spiritual evolution.

Furthermore, heredity can be compatible with *karma*. Souls are fated to be born into families and situations where they are most likely to inherit the qualities due them from their past conduct. Thus character in this life is due to a combination of factors: the influence of the present family plus the character of the individual’s previous life. This is clearly indicated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, where Kṛṣṇa explains that by virtue of the divine consciousness cultured in their previous life, fallen devotees take birth in the families of transcendentalists, wherein they continue to progress toward complete success in self-realization.

It should be noted that to understand *karma* is to remove the most formidable obstacle evil poses to theism: the suffering of the innocent. Simply stated, the innocent suffer because they are not innocent. In previous lives they performed wicked

deeds that have now come to fruition. Without Kṛṣṇa’s explanations of *karma*, therefore, we would have to chalk up the suffering of, say, infants to God’s caprice, or to resort to the fatuous idea that God must not be all-powerful. Or we would have to choose atheism outright.

And what of the popular view that the soul has no rebirth and thus no *karma*—that the soul goes around once, faces judgment, then it’s off to heaven or hell? By this belief, God awards felicity to a scant few, while the rest suffer eternally—a harsh line from one believed to be the embodiment of goodness and mercy.

The *Gītā* reconciles these anomalies. Proclaiming God’s goodness and justice, it describes endless opportunities for the fallen souls. Accept the *Gītā*’s solution to evil, and God’s seeming partiality and limitations, as well as the apparent chaos and injustice of life—all become a systematic plan of perfect justice. It would surely be beneficial for the Sues, Mark Twains, and Rabbi Kushners of the world to study Lord Kṛṣṇa’s teachings in the *Gītā*; they offer a viable solution to an otherwise disconcerting problem. 🙏



A RARE BIRTH

“An unsuccessful *yogī* may be born in a family of transcendentalists who are great in wisdom. Certainly such a birth is rare in this world.” — *Bhagavad-gītā*

Text and photos by
VIŚĀKHĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ



This verse, spoken by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa, gives assurance that the *yogī* is never overcome by inauspiciousness. Even if he falls from the yogic path, still he is fortunate, for in his next life he will enter a family of transcendentalists, or devotees. Such a birth, the Lord says, is certainly rare.

But devotees of Kṛṣṇa should not let this statement go to their heads. “I don’t think of my children as special any more than any other mother,” Nirupamā, a devotee for fifteen years and mother of seven, told me. Her first child was born before she and her husband had heard of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and the child gave her parents cause for deep introspection. The day after the child’s birth, Nirupamā’s husband spent several hours standing at the nur-



A fresh start. Newborn Nīla Mādhava’s parents and sister (left) will help him to develop love of God. Dr. Benjamin Spock said that the children of parents with strong religious faith “can realize their potential for idealism, creativity, and spirituality.” Above, devotee children in nursery school in Vancouver.

sery window, looking at his newborn. He went to Nirupamā. “What are we going to do now?” he asked. “We must give her something more than we’ve been able to find. We’ve got no meaningful way of life to offer her.”

Nirupamā agreed. She’d been teaching in public school and was so disillusioned by the experience that she’d decided never to expose her children to such an educational system.

When their first daughter was just six weeks old, Nirupamā and her husband met a devotee and began chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. Soon after that they were initiated, and Nirupamā’s husband, Bahūḍaka dāsa, became president of the Hare Kṛṣṇa center in Vancouver. For years the first children had few playmates. But gradually the community developed. Today the



Playtime is all the time. Above, ebullient puppet-show practice by the nursery school children. At right, two tykes play hide-and-seek in the temple playground.

temple boasts a fully staffed private elementary school for fifty students on eight acres of woody land in an area called Burnaby, eleven miles from downtown Vancouver.

“We think our kids are fortunate because they’ve had devotional training from the beginning of their lives,” Nirupamā said. “And they’re attending our devotee-run school. So they’ve got a solid, secure foundation to develop love of God.

“But we don’t want them to become proud, thinking that they’re something special,” she continued, “because although they’re fortunate now, they can always become unfortunate by losing their desire for spiritual life. We feel responsible not just for their well-being, not just for their academic and moral training, but also for seeing that their aspirations are not mundane but spiritual.”

Some people think that devotee children, far from being fortunate, are actually unfortunate: they’re indoctrinated, or “brain-washed,” with spirituality before they can





Understanding the equality of all souls, a young devotee (above) experiences feline felicity at the devotees' farm in British Columbia. At left, a devotee from France, Amala-purāṇa, with his daughter Kṛṣṇakāntā. Each day Amala's wife teaches nursery school in their home.

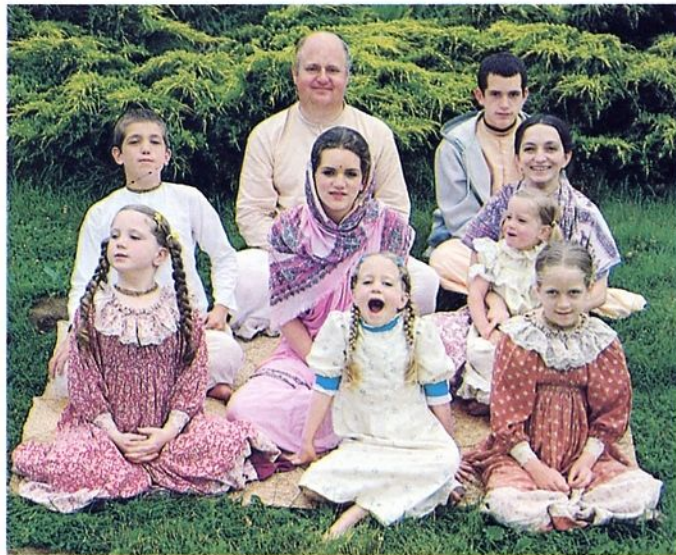
choose the path of life they want.

Others, like Dr. Benjamin Spock, author of the international bestseller *Baby and Child Care*, disagree. In his book Dr. Spock writes that formerly—before the authority of religion was superseded by that of science—people felt that their main function was to serve God, carrying out His supreme purposes as revealed by religion. "Fortunate are the parents with a

strong religious faith," Dr. Spock declares. "They are supported by a sense of conviction and serenity in all their activities." The children of such parents don't have the idea that life is meant for fulfilling mundane desires. Rather, they are exhorted to overcome their base nature and thus become pleasing in the eyes of God.

"The capacity for idealism, creativity, and spirituality is latent in all children," Spock says. "Whether they will realize them all will depend on their parents. If parents have aspirations, then their offspring will continue to be inspired by their pattern. . . . If, on the other hand, parents have no interests beyond their bodily needs, their children's estimate of them will gradually shrink and they won't try to go beyond their parents' level."





Even at her young age, Gāndharvikā, wrapped in the loving arms of her mother, Lilāśuka (far left), knows of her parents' conviction and serenity. Above, Prabhu dāsa, "grandfather" for all the children in the Vancouver center, with one of his many "grandsons." At left, Bahūḍaka dāsa, Nirupamā-devī dāsī, and their children.

Spock also points out that people today who don't have faith in religion are doubly deprived, because they don't have much faith in man, either. Parents with such doubts flounder along with their children in disillusionment and disenchantment.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness, however, offers both children and adults the highest aspirations, along with a practical process for attaining them. Since devotee parents are striving to reach the noblest of goals, their children are inspired by their conviction. Thus the "idealism, creativity, and spirituality" Dr. Spock describes as latent in all children can blossom.

Although devotee parents may not emphasize that their children have a rare birth, others sometimes see it. Two devotee teachers in Vancouver, for instance, told me that when they take their students

to a nearby park to play, inevitably a few people will come up to them and make favorable remarks about the radiance and happiness of the children.

Children born into a family of devotees are fortunate. Not only do they have the opulence of wise and devoted parents, but they also have the brightest of futures:

On taking such a birth the unsuccessful *yogī* revives the divine consciousness of his previous life, and he again tries to make further progress in order to achieve complete success. By virtue of the divine consciousness of his previous life, he automatically becomes attracted to the yogic principles — even without seeking them. And when the *yogī* engages himself with sincere endeavor in making further progress, being washed of all contaminations, then he attains the supreme goal." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 6.43-45)

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

The Blight at the End of the Chunnel

The political heads of England and France recently announced their sanction of “the biggest construction job of the century,” the building of a railroad tunnel beneath the English Channel to link the Continent with Britain. The new tunnel, or “chunnel,” as it is called, will be at least ten years in construction and will cost \$7.5 billion. It will reduce travel time between London and Paris from four hours to three hours and fifteen minutes.

The concept is not a new one. More than a century ago Henry David Thoreau, writing in *Walden*, gave his views on the subject of international chunnelling:

We are eager to tunnel under the Atlantic and bring the Old World some weeks nearer to the New, but perchance the first news that will leak through the broad flapping American ear will be that Princess Adelaide has the whooping cough . . .

There is an illusion about modern improvements. Our inventions are wont to be pretty toys, which distract our attention from serious things. They are but improved means to an unimproved end, an end which was already but too easy to arrive at.

The English Chunnel promises to be yet another distractingly pretty toy. We pursue material happiness while neglecting self-realization. But we should think, Do technological breakthroughs really improve the quality of life? Is driving my car underneath the English Channel that big of a deal? Or are such diversions just distracting me from serious things?—like solving the problems of repeated birth and death and suffering. Better to become Kṛṣṇa conscious and realize our eternal identity as servants of God. By acting in our original positions as the servants of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, each of us will find the perfect happiness that has for so long eluded us.

Material development and Kṛṣṇa consciousness are compatible—provided one endeavors only for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa. To build a great temple or cathedral to glorify the Supreme is as spiritual as prayer and meditation. And if express-

ways and tunnels can be used to facilitate the distribution of transcendental knowledge, so much the better. But our priorities should be clear, our lives sane and balanced. We should not pursue material development with such blind ferocity that we find ourselves with neither the time nor the energy to understand the goal of life.

Ideally, economic development should proceed as a by-product of our increasing spiritual awareness. As the great sage Prahlāda Mahārāja once said, “Endeavors merely for sense gratification, material happiness, or economic development are not to be performed, for they result only in a loss of time and energy with no actual profits. If one’s endeavors are directed toward the development of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one can surely attain the spiritual platform of self-realization. There’s no such benefit from engaging oneself just in economic development.”

It is our leaders’ responsibility to provide the citizens of the world with facility to become Kṛṣṇa conscious. In former ages, government leaders lived up to this responsibility and provided for the citizens both materially and spiritually. This is balanced government, and the Vedic classic *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* gives many accounts of heads of state who knew how to maintain that balance. According to Vedic vision, balanced government is imperative. And any government that promotes material advancement at the cost of spiritual realization is unbalanced. A life devoid of spiritual discipline, spiritual values, and the cultivation of spiritual knowledge is so stunted and onesided as to be regarded by the Vedic literature as subhuman. Today’s materialistic societies, therefore, despite apparent progress, are a conglomeration of so many stultified lives misled by shortsighted leaders into unfulfilling materialistic pursuits.

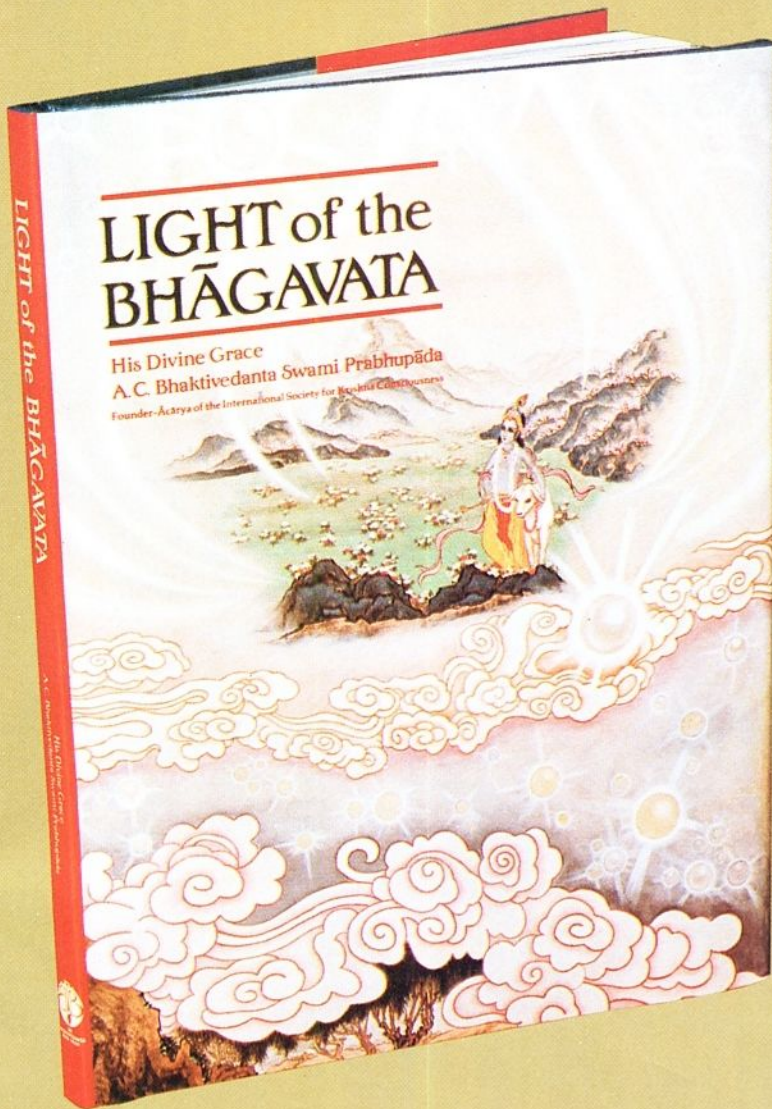
A spokesman for the Channel Tunneling Group said the ambition of the tunnel’s financiers is “to make billions.” And, of course, the political ramifications should be exhilarating for opportunists in both England and France. The

Chunnel’s champions, lacking spiritual realization, are content to shuttle the citizenry back and forth at high speeds in the darkness of ignorance. They encourage the people to live like animals, oblivious to life’s spiritual essence, and to enter yet another life of suffering. Like Rāvaṇa’s efforts to erect a staircase to heaven, the grandiose plan of the politicians and financiers to build the English Chunnel epitomizes society’s wasteful pursuit of a material happiness it will never find.

Rather than inviting private corporations to bid for the rights to construct this tunnel, government leaders should invite authorities on spiritual knowledge to discuss the goal of life and the process for freeing oneself from death. In this way the citizens will be protected from unscrupulous exploitation and will be able to take advantage of the human form of life.

The human birth is very rare. Out of all the species of life, the human form offers the full opportunity to understand matter and spirit and to develop one’s innate love of Lord Kṛṣṇa. We should not waste our valuable opportunity. A human being should not be a royal edition of a beast, nor should our cities be places where people rush about like cats and dogs merely to eat, sleep, mate, and defend. Our time would be better spent in hearing about Kṛṣṇa, in reading Kṛṣṇa conscious books, in talking about Kṛṣṇa, in working for Kṛṣṇa, in worshiping Kṛṣṇa, and in chanting His holy name: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

The frenetic bustle of contemporary culture leaves us with little time and no direction for spiritual life. On the other hand, “plain living and high thinking,” in the words of the English poet William Wordsworth, are conducive to a satisfying life of spiritual development. And at the conclusion of a life of spiritual endeavor one can become free of the temporary material body and its miseries and return to the spiritual world to serve Lord Kṛṣṇa eternally in bliss and knowledge. —SDG



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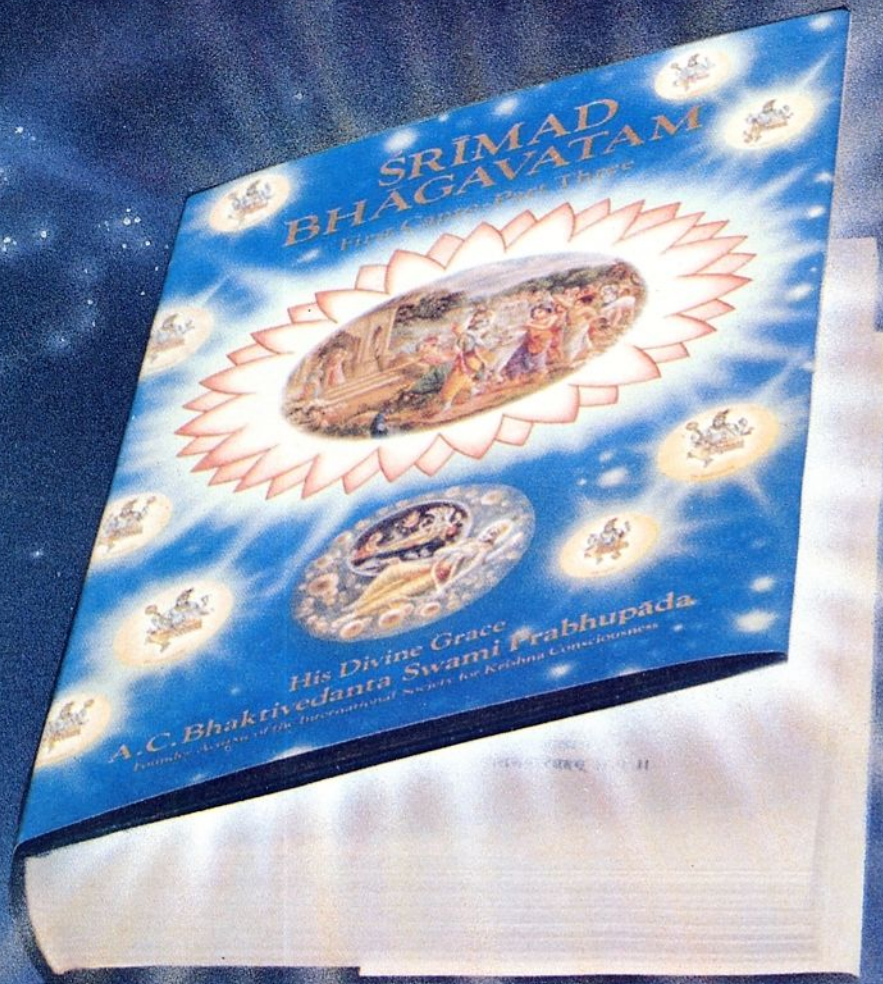
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