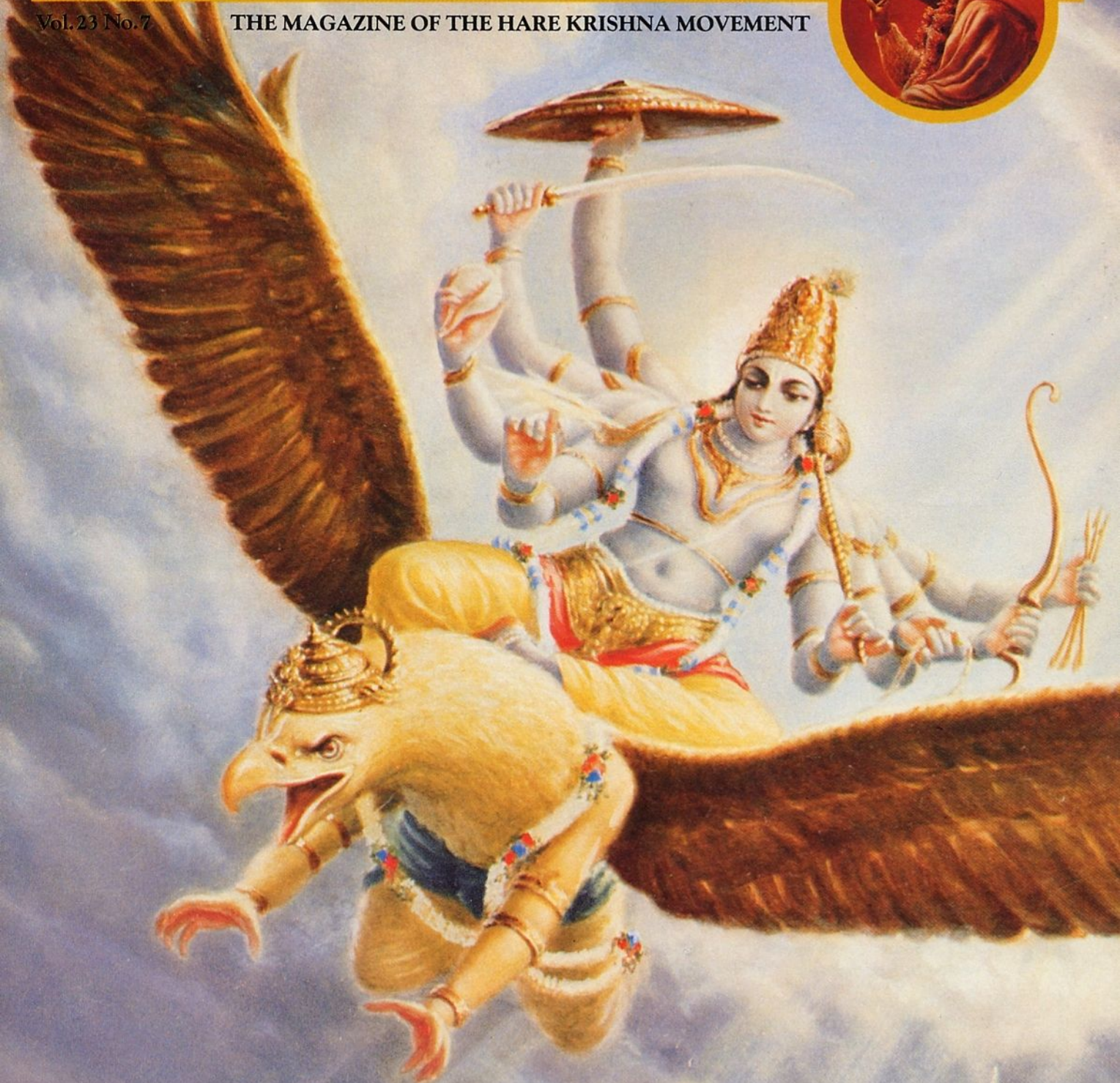


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

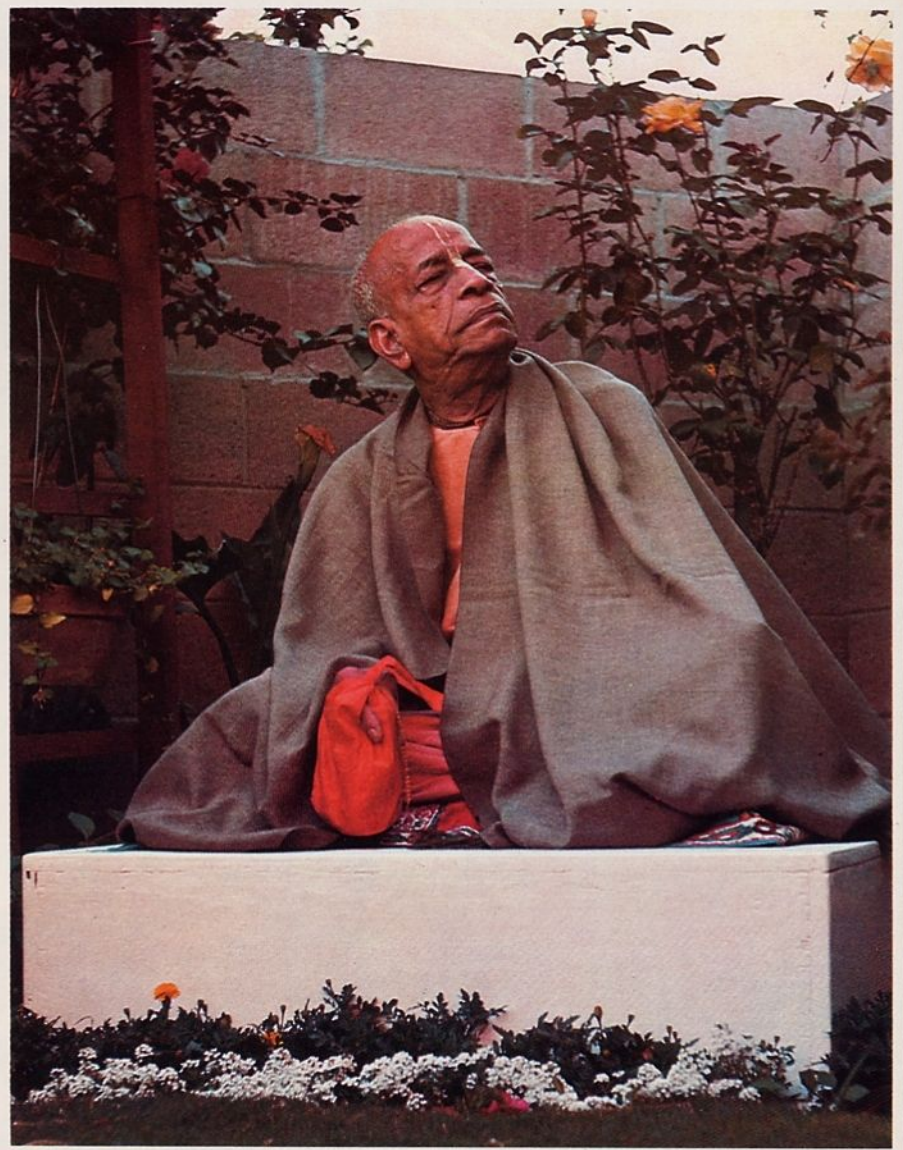
BACK TO GODHEAD

Vol. 23 No. 7

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



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



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

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

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement

BACK TO GODHEAD

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(under the direction of His Divine Grace
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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 *ique*. Pronounce the vowel *ṛ* like the *ri* in *rim*, and *ṛ* like the *ch* in *chair*. Pronounce the aspirated consonants (*ch*, *jh*, *dh*, etc.) as in *staunch*-heart, *hedge*-hog, and *red*-hot. Finally, pronounce the sibilants *ś* and *ṣ* like *sh*. So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, and for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

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

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Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that to understand the loving affairs of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa—which have nothing to do with the sexual affairs of this world—we must become calm, sober-minded, and free from lusty desires.

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COVER: Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, expands from Himself unlimited Viṣṇu, each of whom possesses the same omnipotence as Kṛṣṇa Himself. The Vedic literature describes many descents of Lord Viṣṇu for the protection of His devotees. Here, Lord Viṣṇu arrives at the scene of a battle on His winged carrier, Garuḍa. Though Lord Viṣṇu's eight-armed form may bewilder those who lack knowledge of God's opulences, His devotees know that He can display unlimited arms if He desires. Therefore, rather than doubt the statements of scripture regarding the Lord's forms, they worship Them and pray to be protected by the transcendental arms and weapons of Lord Viṣṇu. (Detail from painting by Muralidhara dāsa.)

LOVE AND ITS REFLECTION

The loving affairs of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are on the highest spiritual platform.
Our attempts to imitate them are on the lowest material one.

A lecture in Māyāpur, India, on March 29, 1975

by HIS DIVINE GRACE

A. C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*rādhā-kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtīr hlādinī
śaktir asmād
ekātmānav api bhuvi purā deha-
bhedaṁ gatau tau
caitanyākhyam prakāṣam adhunā tad-
dvayam caikyam āptam
rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-sualitam naumi
kṛṣṇa-svarūpam*

“The loving affairs of Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are transcendental manifestations of the Lord’s internal pleasure-giving potency. Although Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are one in Their identity, They separated Themselves eternally. Now these two transcendental identities have again united in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. I bow down to Him, who has manifested Himself with the sentiment and complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, although He is Kṛṣṇa Himself.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 1.5)

Here Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, the author of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, is describing another feature of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Previously, Lord Caitanya has been described as the ultimate Absolute Truth, Bhagavān. The Absolute Truth is realized in three phases, and the ultimate phase is Bhagavān, who is *ṣaḍ-aiśvaryaḥ pūrṇaḥ*, “full in six opulences.” Nowadays there are so many “Bhagavāns,” but they have no opulence. But the actual Bhagavān is full in six kinds of opu-

lence—beauty, wealth, strength, fame, knowledge, and renunciation.

So, Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, has descended as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu just to bestow the topmost understanding of loving affairs with Kṛṣṇa (*samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasām sva-bhakti-śrīyam*). In devotional service there are different stages, although spiritually there is no difference among them. There is ultimately no difference between a devotee in the mood of servitude (*dāsyarasa*) and one in the mood of conjugal love (*mādhurya-rasa*). But each devotee likes to serve the Supreme Lord according to his particular inclination. Someone wants to love Him in a neutral mood (*śānta-rasa*), someone wants to love Him in the mood of a servant, someone wants to love Him as a friend, another as a parent, and another as a conjugal lover. While there is no spiritual difference between these phases of loving affairs, great devotees and learned scholars have given their decision that the loving affairs with Kṛṣṇa in the conjugal mood—like those between husband and wife or, above those, between lover and beloved—are on the highest platform.

In the Western countries these affairs between boyfriend and girlfriend are very prominent, and in the spiritual world this relationship of lover and beloved, without marriage, is considered the highest. Whatever so-called loving affairs we see here

are a perverted reflection of the loving affairs between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* this perverted reflection is described as *ūrdhva-mūlam adhaḥ-sākham*: a tree with its roots up and its branches down. In other words, the material world is a reflection of the real, spiritual world. Unless this material world is a reflection, how could the roots be upward? There is a tree like this: a tree on the bank of a pond will be reflected with its roots upwards and its branches down.

This world is a reflection only, a shadow. The reality is in the spiritual world. There the topmost thing is the conjugal love between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and here the same thing, when pervertedly reflected as sexual affairs between a girl and a boy, is the lowest abomination. We should know this: In the spiritual world, for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa to remain as girlfriend and boyfriend is the topmost pleasure, while in the material world this same thing is most abominable.

We cannot imitate the loving affairs of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī. We have to understand the facts of Their relationship, as

Free of all traces of envy, the *gopīs* (cowherd girls) of Vṛndāvana, Lord Kṛṣṇa’s eternal home in the spiritual world, assist Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Their loving pastimes, which, like the services rendered by the *gopīs*, are devoid of selfish motives.



described here: *rādhā-kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛit hlādinī-śaktiḥ*. "The loving affairs of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are transcendental manifestations of the Lord's internal pleasure-giving potency."

The word *śakti* means "energy." From the *Vedas* we understand that the Lord, the Supreme Person, has many energies: *parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate*. When Arjuna requested Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā* "Kindly explain some of the energies You display," Kṛṣṇa listed His different energies, and at last He concluded,

*atha vā bahunaitena
kim jñātena tavārjuna
viṣṭabhyāham idam kṛtsnam
ekāmśena sthito jagat*

The words *idam kṛtsnam . . . jagat* mean "the entire material manifestation." There are many universes in the material manifestation. We see only one universe, but there are many millions of universes (*yasya prabhā prabhavato jagad-aṇḍa-koti*). So, Kṛṣṇa says that all these universes in the material world display only one-fourth of His energy (*ekāmśena*).

Just imagine what Kṛṣṇa's energy is! And we are trying to imitate Him. So many rascals declare they are Bhagavān, but they have no idea what Bhagavān is. Innumerable universes are coming out from the breathing of Mahā-Viṣṇu, who is just a part of a plenary part of Bhagavān, Lord Kṛṣṇa. When Mahā-Viṣṇu exhales, the universes come out, and when He inhales, everything goes within Him. This is Bhagavān.

This material creation is a partial exhibition of the energy of the Lord, one-fourth of His energy. This material world is made of His material energy, and we are His marginal energy. But the other three-fourths of His energies are in the spiritual world, where Kṛṣṇa exhibits only His spiritual energies. And when Kṛṣṇa wants to enjoy, He enjoys loving affairs like those between a man and a woman.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura explains that the mellow of the loving affairs between a man and a woman comes from the Supreme Person. Unless the loving propensity is there in the Supreme, how can it be reflected here? This material world is only a perverted reflection of the spiritual world, so the origin of the loving propensity must be there.

The impersonalistic, Māyāvādī philosophers cannot understand the spiritual loving affairs of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Because they have bitter experience of the so-called loving affairs in this material world, they think the ultimate goal must be without personality or varieties (*nir-viśeṣa*). Impersonalism and voidism are of the same nature. The voidists, the Buddhist philosophers, say that ultimately everything is zero, and the Māyāvādī

philosophers say, "No, not zero but impersonal." Both of them are wrong. The Absolute Truth is actually personal and full of variety, but because the philosophers with a poor fund of knowledge cannot understand, they make it out to be zero or variety-less.

To clear away these false ideas, Kavi-rāja Gosvāmī says that while *rādhā-kṛṣṇa-prema*, the loving affairs between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, are factual—they are not imagination—these affairs are different from the so-called loving affairs we experience in this world. That is to be understood. Don't be like the *sahajiyās*, who take *rādhā-kṛṣṇa-prema* to be just like ordinary lusty affairs in this material world. A verse in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* states that the loving affairs of the *gopīs* and Kṛṣṇa in the *rāsa-līlā* are not an ordinary thing, and that if one can hear of them from the

Unless the loving propensity is there in the Supreme, how can it be reflected here? This world is only a perverted reflection of the spiritual world, so the origin of the loving propensity must be there.

proper source and understand the real facts of the *rāsa-līlā*, then all the lusty desires in one's heart will vanish. There will be no more lusty desires. In other words, one will become *dhīra*, calm and sober-minded.

Here in this material world everyone is *adhīra*, agitated by lusty desires. But in the spiritual world everyone is *dhīra*. They are not agitated by lusty desires. As long as we are agitated by lusty desires, we are in the material world. That is the test. As Yamunācārya says,

*yad-avadhi mama cetah kṛṣṇa-pādāravinde
nava-nava-rasa-dhāmany udyatām
rantum āsīt
tad-avadhi bata nāri-saṅgame
smāyamāne
bhavati mukha-vikāraḥ suṣṭhu
niṣṭhivanam ca*

"Since I've been engaged in rendering more and more service to Kṛṣṇa and

getting spiritual pleasure, as soon as I think of sex life with a woman I immediately spit. I hate to think of it." This is the result of understanding the loving affairs between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Kavirāja Gosvāmī explains that these affairs are a transformation of Kṛṣṇa's *hlādinī śakti*, His pleasure potency. The Supreme Lord has three primary spiritual potencies: *sandhinī*, His existence potency; *samvit*, His knowledge potency; and *hlādinī*, His pleasure potency. The loving affairs of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are a transformation of His pleasure potency.

These loving affairs have nothing to do with the so-called loving affairs of this material world, because Kṛṣṇa is Parabrahman. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa is described as Parabrahman. Arjuna says to Kṛṣṇa, *param brahma param dhāma pavitraṁ paramam bhavān*: "You are the Supreme Brahman, the supreme abode and purifier." That is the declaration of Arjuna in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and we should accept it. This is the *paramparā* system, the system of disciplic succession.

The Māyāvādī philosophers are after *brahma-sukha*, the happiness of merging with Brahman. The source of *brahma-sukha* is Kṛṣṇa, but the Māyāvādīs cannot reach up to that point. There are two kinds of transcendentalists: one is the Brahma-vādī, or Māyāvādī impersonalist, and the other is the Vaiṣṇava, or devotee. The Vaiṣṇavas accept the philosophy that we are servants of Kṛṣṇa: *jīvera 'svarūpa' haya—kṛṣṇa nitya-dāsa*. And the Māyāvādī philosophers falsely think that they have become one with the Supreme, that they have become Nārāyaṇa. That's a misleading philosophy, and we should not accept it.

Now, Kṛṣṇa being Parabrahman, what will be the platform of His loving affairs? This is to be considered. To attain *brahma-sukha*, spiritual happiness, many saintly persons give up everything of this material world and take *sannyāsa*. *Sannyāsa* means giving up everything for the Supreme. So, simply to relish a little bit of *brahma-sukha*, great, great saintly persons give up everything and try to purify their existence. They try to find real happiness. Every one of us is after happiness, but we are seeking happiness in the perverted reflection, where it is not possible to find it. Therefore one has to give up this perverted happiness and come to the real fact.

Our point is that since great saintly persons give up all pleasures in this material world to find pleasure in Brahman, why should Kṛṣṇa, who is the Supreme Brahman, take pleasure in this material world? This is the argument. Therefore those who are thinking that Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with the *gopīs* as we enjoy in the company of many girls—such people are great fools. They have no knowledge. They're misled. Our

affairs, being a perverted reflection, appear like the loving affairs of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, but the reflection is different from the reality.

So we should not be misled; we should follow the teachings of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. We should understand that the loving affairs between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are not like those between an ordinary boy and girl. And if we take Rādhā's and Kṛṣṇa's loving affairs to be ordinary, we will be misled. Therefore the *sahajiyās*, those who believe that Kṛṣṇa enjoys with ordinary girls, are very, very much misled.

We shouldn't be so foolish as to think we can be equal to Kṛṣṇa. There is no competition for Kṛṣṇa: *na tat-samaś cābhya-dhikaś ca drśyate*. Nobody can be equal with Him, nobody can be greater than Him. That is Parabrahman; that is Kṛṣṇa. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* also, Kṛṣṇa says, *mattaḥ parataram nānyat*: "There is no entity superior to Me."

We have to very carefully study Kṛṣṇa.

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is meant to give everyone a chance to understand Kṛṣṇa very scientifically. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not sentimentality. One must be very philosophically advanced to understand this scientific knowledge, or *vijñāna*.

Without understanding the science and philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, it is not possible to understand Kṛṣṇa. You may ask, "Do you think all the devotees are scientists and philosophers?" The answer is yes. They may not have degrees in science or philosophy, but they have been taught by Kṛṣṇa from within. If you want to learn science and philosophy, you have to approach some person who knows the subject. But the greatest scientist, the greatest philosopher, is Kṛṣṇa, who is within your heart: *īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṃ hṛd-deśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati*. And He says, *teṣāṃ satata-yuktānāṃ bhajatāṃ prīti-pūrvakam dadāmi buddhi-yogaṃ tam*. "To anyone who is a sincere devotee of Mine and al-

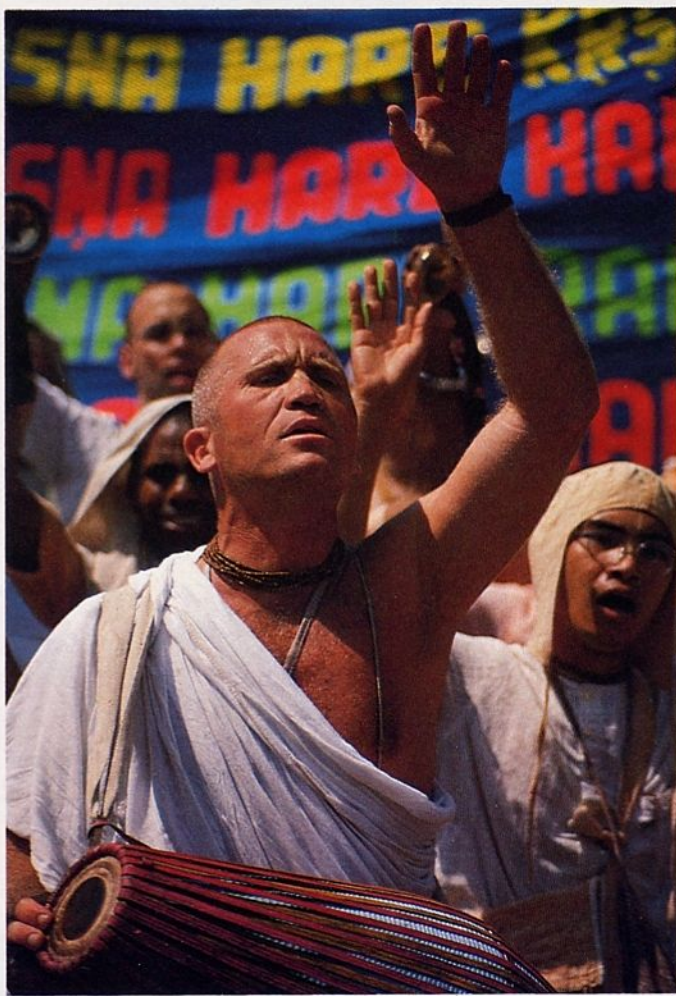
ways engages in My service, I give education and intelligence. I make him a scientist and a philosopher." That is the way of receiving *vijñāna*, scientific understanding of Kṛṣṇa.

You may ask, "Why does Kṛṣṇa reveal this knowledge only to His devotees and not to all? If the Supreme Lord is sitting in everyone's heart, why is He especially inclined toward those who engage twenty-four hours a day in His service? Why not to others?" That is His special mercy for the devotees:

*teṣāṃ evānukampārtham
aham ajñāna-jam tamaḥ
nāśayāmy ātma-bhāva-stho
jñāna-dīpena bhāsvatā*

"I live in everyone's heart, but out of special mercy for My devotees I destroy their ignorance with the lamp of transcendental knowledge."

This is the process of understanding
(continued on page 35)



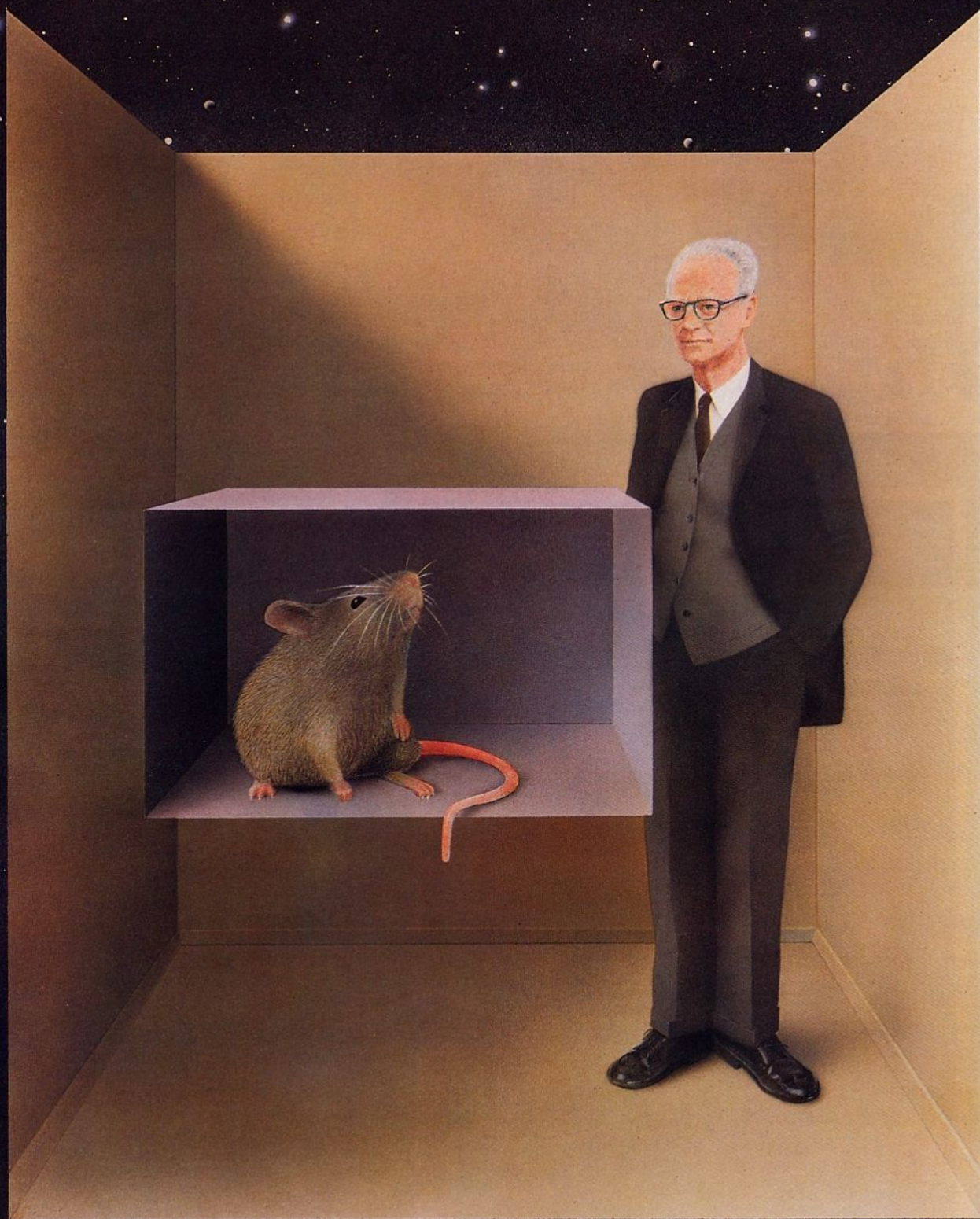
YAMARAJA DASA

HARE KṚṢṆA, HARE KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA, HARE HARE HARE RĀMA, HARE RĀMA RĀMA RĀMA, HARE HARE

You might not think this picture shows someone practicing yoga. But chanting the names of God is actually the supreme form of yoga. Of course, devotees chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa certainly don't look much like *yogīs*. At least not the kind of *yogīs* most people think of when they hear the word. But most people, it seems, have little understanding of what yoga is really all about.

Yoga is a Sanskrit word meaning "union." India's ancient Sanskrit literatures, the *Vedas*, explain that the purpose of yoga is to purify our consciousness so that we can re-establish our eternal relationship with God. The sitting postures and breathing exercises most people associate with yoga are part of a certain type of yoga system—known as *hatha-yoga*—that was practiced thousands of years ago. By practicing *hatha-yoga*, great sages could completely withdraw their mind and senses from the material world and, after a very long time, find God within their hearts.

In this age the *Vedas* discourage us from trying to reach God through *hatha-yoga*. We just don't have the time or the determination. But in this age God, or Kṛṣṇa, has come in the form of His name. The goal of yoga, union with God, is easily attained through chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. And unlike other forms of yoga, the results come quickly. So, you too can be a *yogī*. Just try chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa—and feel yourself coming closer to God.



Of Boxes, Modes, And the Freedom To Choose

Are we free? Or are we—like the
behavioural psychologist B. F. Skinner's rats—
simply products of our environmental cages?

by MATHUREŚA DĀSA

"Psyche," from the Greek word for soul, connotes an inner spirit as distinguished from its vehicle, the material body. In Greek mythology, Psyche, a personification of the soul, falls in love with Eros, the god of love. Eros later deserts her, and Psyche, brokenhearted, roams the world in search of him, performing difficult tasks until at last she becomes an immortal and rejoins him.

I was not acquainted with Psyche's story when I chose, as a college freshman, to major in psychology, her namesake science, but if I had been, her plight would have touched me and spirited my studies. Like Psyche, I had a romantic desire to roam the world searching for, in my case, something I felt was missing in my own self and in the self of all human beings, something that would make me whole and fill mankind with peace and love. Like Psyche, I was ready to work hard, patiently submitting to earthly trials to achieve my goal.

In fact, I had submitted to plenty of earthly trials already. I had, for instance, lived at home with my mother and teenage sister, while my father was usually away on business. My brother was in the Marines in Vietnam. My best friend, a twelve-year-old beagle, was gray and arthritic. These and countless other hardships had, I sensed, nurtured in me a natural intuitive genius, as yet untapped, for things psychological. Having paid my dues, I felt

ripe for union with my missing inner self. Sort of like Psyche. Too bad we hadn't met.

In my first semester, girded with intuition and away from home at last, I leafed through my course catalog and found a course description that went something like this: "B. F. Skinner and Behaviorism . . . for sophomores and other students who have completed their introductory studies in psychology and who want to begin a scientific analysis of behaviour."

Perfect. Whoever this B. F. Skinner was, my life experiences, I reasoned, would more than suffice for "introductory studies." And what to speak of sophomores, I was prepared to rub shoulders with the very best.

But B. F. Skinner, it so happened, though the very best in his field of behavioural psychology, was not, and still isn't, a beautiful maiden. Nor does his research into patterns of behaviour much resemble Psyche's search for her lover or my quest for an inner self. Skinner doesn't believe in an inner self, in a psyche as the Greeks conceived it. Skinner and other behaviourists say that the inner self and the mind, if they exist at all, are things we cannot study or measure scientifically. Only our behaviour is plainly visible. "The picture which emerges from a scientific analysis," Skinner contends, "is not of a body with a person inside, but of a body which is a person in the sense that it dis-

plays a complex repertoire of behaviour."

Skinner is famous for his experiments with caged animals. His cage, known now as a Skinner box, was equipped with a mechanism that automatically gave the animal food, water, or some other reward. A rat, for instance, might find himself in a cage with a lever and a dish, and when he pressed the lever a food pellet would fall into the dish. Using variations on this simple arrangement, Skinner was able to show how patterns of rewards and punishments control an organism's behaviour.

Skinner's idea, in short, is that we are products of our environment and consequently not responsible for our actions. We are not to blame for our failures, nor do we deserve credit for our achievements. All is done by the environment. In *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, his best-known work, Skinner argues that we possess neither freedom nor dignity in the ordinary sense of those words.

This is not what I wanted to hear. If the Skinner box was an experimental model of the world as Skinner perceived it, then in Skinner's eyes, I figured, I was little better than a rat, responding predictably to food, water, and other stimuli. What irked me further was that although we were all supposedly products of our environmental cages, Skinner and other "social engineers," as he called them, could step outside their cages to study and manipulate the rest of us. I hadn't the least desire to

join the ranks of the Skinnerian engineers, and besides, with my intuition flagging, I was nearly flunking the course.

Twenty years later I still disagree with much of the Skinnerian creed, but I can more easily admit that I have never been wholly free. I have my own family now, and the crying or laughter of my children, my wife's moods, the arrival of bills or checks in my mailbox, and a host of other stimuli, cause me to behave in quite predictable ways. Even if I wanted to break away, disappearing over the hill and into oblivion, wouldn't that only make me the servant of a different passion? Skinner quotes Voltaire: "When I can do what I want to do, there is my liberty, . . . but I can't help wanting what I do want."

So do I have any freedom? Or am I boxed?

In the Third Chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa confirms that the environment, or nature, controls behaviour: "The spirit soul bewildered by the influence of false ego thinks himself the doer of activities that are in actuality carried out by the three modes of material nature." Nature is so fully in control, in other words, that we could say that nature, not ourselves, behaves. When "nature," or the environment, is a Skinner box, we might therefore say that the box and its controller, B. F. Skinner, are acting, not the rat, although we would have to take into account that all three—the box, the rat, and Skinner—are under the influence of a larger controlling environment.

Unlike Skinner, however, Lord Kṛṣṇa makes a clear distinction between the body and the self, or the person, and between the mind, which is a subtle body, and the person. A human being, He asserts, is indeed a body with a person inside, and that person, or soul, is an eternal individual, an individual who exists both before and after the body's existence.

For the soul there is neither birth nor death at any time. . . . He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain.

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.20)

How do we perceive the soul? By consciousness. The consciousness that pervades our body is the soul's energy, just as sunlight is the energy of the sun.

That which pervades the entire body you should know to be indestructible. No one is able to destroy that imperishable soul.

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.17)

The material body and mind are temporary clothing for the eternal self, which does not mix with matter, just as oil and water do not mix. What nature controls is the gross body and subtle mind, since they are, after all, part of nature. Nature does not control our eternal self, which is part

of Kṛṣṇa's spiritual energy. But because we are bewildered, we, the eternal selves, identify with the material body and mind, thinking that when the body and mind act, we are acting. This is called false ego. Real ego is to think "I am an eternal person and a part of Kṛṣṇa." False ego is to think "I am this material body and mind."

Just as a reflection of the sun on a pool of water moves with the movements of the pool, so the soul whose consciousness is fixed on matter appears to move with matter. The fact is, however, that the soul is aloof and—as long as it identifies with matter—inert.

But we are not forever bound to inertia and false ego. As Skinner is the creator and controller of his boxes, Kṛṣṇa is the creator and controller of nature. "The material world is working under My direc-

Kṛṣṇa is the creator and controller of nature. The universe, therefore, is a Kṛṣṇa box, and Kṛṣṇa has kindly described how His box works and how to free ourselves from the false ego that renders us inert under the spell of material nature.

tion," He says in the Ninth Chapter of the *Gītā*. The universe, therefore, is a Kṛṣṇa box, and Lord Kṛṣṇa has kindly described how His box works and how to free ourselves from the false ego that renders us inert under the spell of material nature.

Kṛṣṇa explains that nature acts in three modes: goodness, passion, and ignorance. These modes force upon the soul a variety of insurmountable desires to enjoy and control nature. The mode of goodness is characterized by the development of knowledge, and by austerity, steady determination, and sense control. The mode of passion is characterized by the attraction between man and woman, by intense longings for sense enjoyment, and by hard work to acquire material wealth. The mode of ignorance, which Kṛṣṇa calls "the delusion of all embodied living

beings," is characterized by sleep, indolence, madness, and intoxication.

These three modes of nature compete for supremacy over our consciousness, and one mode or another is usually prominent in an individual's behaviour throughout life, although all three are always present. In the mode of goodness there is always at least a tinge of passion and ignorance. And even in the darkest ignorance, which is the predominant mode of the lower animals, there exists a degree of passion and goodness.

The modes direct us to various kinds of enjoyment in the material world, but none of them can bring us to a full understanding of our eternal self or a full realization of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Rather, the modes distract us from self-realization. This is because the modes are material while our selves and the supreme self are pure spirit situated in the spiritual mode of pure goodness. Pure goodness is transcendental, untouched and untouchable by the three material modes.

While the material nature is composed of three modes, the spiritual nature is composed entirely of unalloyed goodness. But the Vedic literature informs us that both natures are in fact one nature, one energy of Kṛṣṇa acting in different ways. When we want to forget Kṛṣṇa, His nature acts in three modes, both to assist us in that forgetfulness and to punish us with repeated birth and death, thus bringing us to our senses. When we want to remember Kṛṣṇa, however, the same nature acts to encourage and assist us in the activities of pure goodness.

Activity in the mode of pure goodness is called *bhakti*, or devotional service to the Supreme Person. *Bhakti* is both means and end. As the means, the practice of *bhakti* cleanses us of false ego and revives our pure consciousness that we are eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa. As the end, *bhakti* is the eternal activity of the liberated souls who are absorbed in love of God and have no other desire than to serve Him.

The assistance rendered to us by the spiritual nature is nothing like the activities of the three modes, which force us to act contrary to our eternal constitutional identity as pure spiritual individuals. Because the three material modes are presently forcing us to serve material desires, we get a bad experience of servitude. We feel boxed. But service to Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world, assisted by the spiritual nature, is not forced service, because there we serve out of spontaneous love, and because there we are in full harmony with nature, which is as fully conscious and fully devoted to the Lord as we are.

So am I free? Or am I boxed?

I am free to choose to associate with the three modes of material nature or with the

(continued on page 35)



Kṛṣṇa, the Perfect Friend

The more we hear about God's unlimited qualities, the more we'll understand that nothing can satisfy like friendship with Him.

by AJITĀNANDA DĀSA

The desire for friendship is universal. It is based on our propensity to love someone. This propensity is thoughtfully explained by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda in *The Nectar of Devotion*, one of the philosophical cornerstones of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. In his Preface (p. xvi), Śrīla Prabhupāda writes,

The basic principle of the living condition is that we have a general propensity to love someone. No one can live without loving someone else. This propensity is present in every living being. Even an animal like a tiger has this loving propensity, at least in a dormant stage, and it is certainly present in the human beings. The missing point, however, is where to repose our love so that everyone can become happy. . . . That missing point is Kṛṣṇa, and *The Nectar of Devotion* teaches us how to stimulate our original love for Kṛṣṇa and how to be situated in that position where we can enjoy our blissful life.

The Vedic literature tells us that our original friend is Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In the material world, we mistakenly try to re-create our blissful, primeval relationship with Him through various temporal relationships, all of which fail to satisfy our perpetual longing for perfect friendship. Kṛṣṇa, or God, is the divine fountainhead of the loving sentiment that can be seen in all living beings.

(continued on page 26)

Rememberin

While finding cause for optimism in *glasnost*, a



g Darker Days

Soviet devotee of Kṛṣṇa tells of her imprisonment.



In the kitchen of her Moscow apartment, Premavati-devī dāśī (left) talks about practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the Soviet Union.

Premavati's altar (far left), like those found in the homes of devotees throughout the Soviet Union, reveals her devotion as well as her determination to practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness despite harassment from Soviet authorities.

The following interview with Premavati-devī dāśī, whose eleven-month-old daughter died in a Soviet labour camp, took place in Moscow in August, 1987.

Interviewer: Please tell us something about the practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the Soviet Union.

Premavati-devī dāśī: I have been a member of ISKCON in the Soviet Union for around ten years. It is very difficult to talk about the entire period while I was chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, the period when all the troubles were happening. Now we are at the beginning of a new period, when the new policy [glasnost] is becoming visible here. I am thinking that now we are meeting the new age of Hare Kṛṣṇa. Having the new bright period, now it is a little bit difficult to talk about the previous dark period.

Of course, the history must be known, and people must know the truth about

everything and especially about the people who were accused for nothing else except for chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra. Even now I think that the main thing against me was that I spoke with Hare Kṛṣṇa people in the West. No one ever accused me of anything else. I was the mother of two little children during that period, and I was chanting and reading and translating. I was very busy with my family and was not preaching so openly and widely.

Now we can preach openly on the streets; we sing on Arbat street, in the center of Moscow. We preach and sing and distribute prasādam in our houses, and now we see that Kṛṣṇa shows us that everything is temporary. For instance, the hard period is over. Of course, there are some people who think in another way, that this Gorbachev period is not the thing to believe in. Maybe I am a little bit gullible, but I believe in Kṛṣṇa and that He wants this

time to be good for everybody. I feel that this nice period will last and develop.

Interviewer: Can you tell us something about your personal difficulties?

Premavati: I was arrested in the end of August, 1983. It was very troublesome for me. I was three-months pregnant, and I gave the court a certificate stating that it was so. I was taken to a hospital in Estonia to be sure that I was pregnant. The doctors said that I was pregnant, and I went home, but in two weeks the authorities came with a paper that stated that I was arrested. They did not care about the certificates saying I was pregnant. I thought that pregnant women would not be put into the prison, but I was wrong.

When I was put into the prison, for the first nine days I was in a common cell with around sixty persons who had committed different kinds of crime, like not having a stamp on their passport indicating that they are assigned to live in some special place. It is considered to be breaking the law. Another very strange law is that if one does not work for two months, one can be put into prison. Many persons were there for breaking these laws—not working and not having proper stamps on passports. Of course, there were also murderers and thieves. During those nine days in that cell, I was chanting, singing, and even dancing, and I did not feel so very bad.

After that I was put into another cell where ten women were. It is difficult to say we were sitting in the prison, because we were lying down all the time. There was no place to sit or to go, only to lie down. There was very bad air there. Our place to lie down was about eighty-five centimetres wide, made of iron, with an imitation pillow, iron pillow. Of course, the mat that covered the iron bed was very thin, and sometimes I felt that I was right on the iron strips. While sleeping, if I turned, I would be breathing into the face of my neighbour.

Once a day we had our time to walk in the air, but the sky was covered with a cage. We could only see the sun through the cage, and the bars of the cage were very thick. It was difficult, and I exposed my belly to the sun to try to give some energy to my future child.

I received some parcels and money from my relatives, but sometimes I did not get them because the control is very strict in the prison. If your parents or relatives make any mistake with the parcel or money, if they do not write down your proper date of birth or something—if something is wrong—then you cannot receive the money that they send. For instance, my husband isn't Russian, and all the time he made mistakes and I could not receive money at all.

Of course, everyone can understand how nervous pregnant imprisoned women can be. They should not be imprisoned at all. For all of them it was very strange. They were very nervous and not polite to one another. It was even worse than in the cell with sixty people in it.

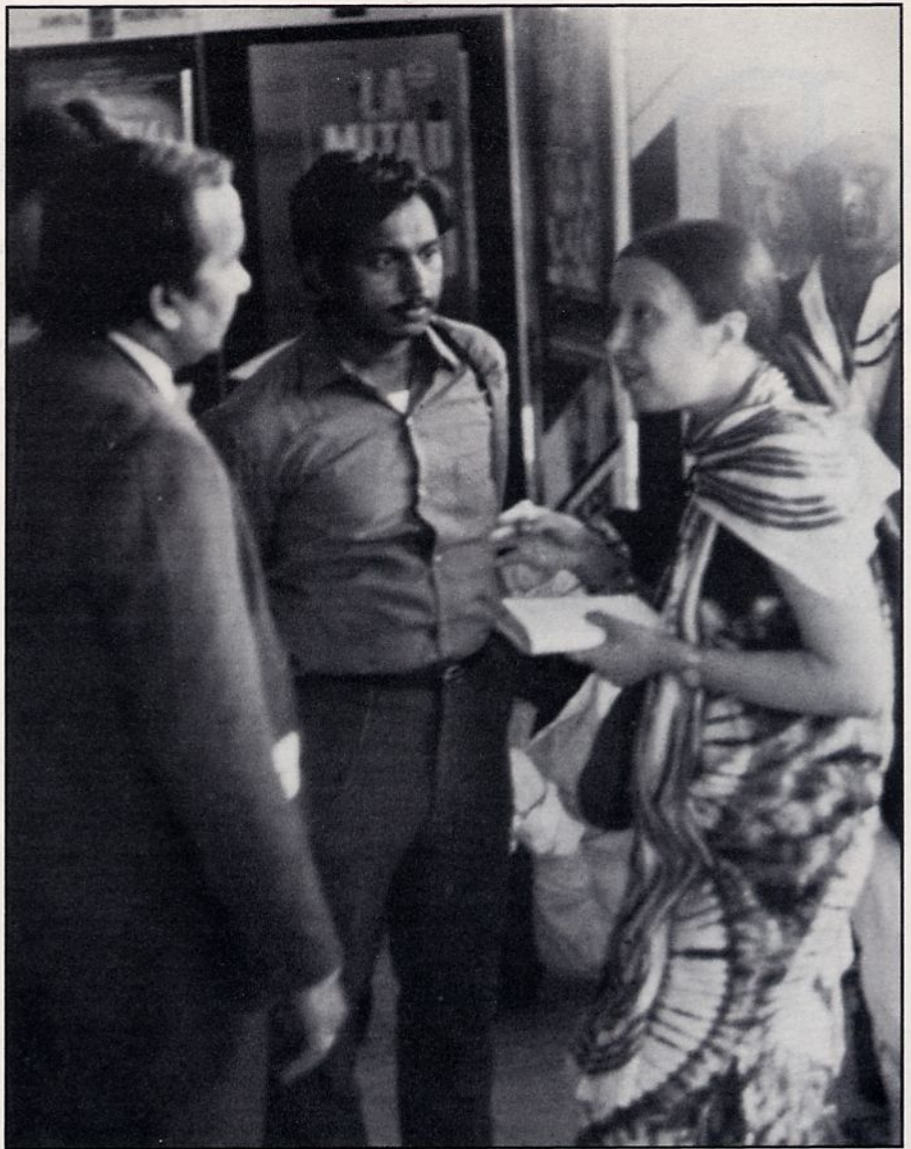
I think that this period in prison was the most difficult, and I understand that it was so because I was pregnant and with very nervous people. All the time the women were calling to ghosts, talking with Napoleon, Pushkin, asking them about their future. They scolded one another, sometimes slapped one another. All the time they wanted to eat, because they had no parcels. Some could not receive parcels.

Sometimes we had to give people our food. There was very little food, and we were hungry all the time. We received extra eggs and extra meat and pickle, but I was not eating meat or eggs, so I was very hungry.

Then I was transported to another prison. The first prison was called Butyrskaya prison, and the other prison was a special prison for men and pregnant women. If one was to have a child in two months, she was sent there, Matrosskaya prison. At this prison the interrogators asked me when I was to have my child, and I told them, so they scheduled the court trial for just before I was to have my child. Four days after the court ended, my daughter was born.

This court was very strange for me. I felt as if I were sitting at the theatre. Somebody was playing something on the stage, and I was also a member of this play, and I could not realize it as reality. Of course, everything in this world is *māyā*, illusion, but this court really seemed like an illusion to me. I felt it was an illusion in this great illusion of *māyā*.

My sister came to my trial. My mother had died during the third month of my imprisonment. My sister who lives in Nigeria was called, and she received permission to come to the Soviet Union immediately. So she had an opportunity to come to the court. She was crying all the time she was sitting there, because during the court I was nine months pregnant. I could not sit for a long time. I wanted to stand or change my position. It was difficult to be there for the whole day in the



Preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness during last year's Festival of India in Moscow.

courtroom, from ten in the morning to seven in the evening.

I was hungry in this new prison, and all the time I had to behave myself not the way I wanted to behave myself. Even the character analysis they gave about me during my ten months in the prison—they called me a silent person, not making contacts with people. But I consider myself just the opposite. I like to meet people, maybe speaking more than is needed. I like people. I like to speak about God, about how to come to God. I am not silent. At that time I had to make another character. I had to do it because the situation was like that.

Once I wrote a letter to another cell. That was a regular practice, because prisoners would ask each other questions. I answered the questions about my crimes, and then told them about the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. That letter somehow appeared not in the other cell but in the hands of the interrogator. After that I understood that I must be very, very silent. During the court

they said that while I was in prison I was preaching. Now I understand that if I go to prison again, I will be preaching one hundred percent of the time, not just trying to be silent. I think now that it was my mistake, because they said that I was preaching when in fact I wasn't. Now I think that I could do more if I am put into prison again.

Interviewer: Could you tell us about the time you spent in the labour camp?

Premavati: When my daughter was four months old, we went to a labour camp. She was very little, and it was not good to have to move her somewhere. We went there, and after the twenty-one-day period when the child can be with its mother, I was taken away from her, and I began to work. I saw my daughter once a day for about an hour. I could have a walk with her or sit in the house, but not more than an hour. It was very little time, and after awhile I began to see that my daughter did not feel like I was her mother. It caused me to feel bad, but I could not do anything about it.



Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa on the streets of Moscow.

The place where my daughter was is called the House of Mother and Child. In this house there were about one hundred children whose mothers were working in the camp.

The food for the children was not bad, but there was only one nurse who had to feed about twenty-four little eaters. The nurse moved with great speed, so sometimes the babies could not eat much. I cannot understand how they did it, because I remember when I was feeding my daughters, I spent very much time. How could they feed all those little babies in an hour and ten minutes?

The most unbearable thing was that the air in this room was very bad. The mothers could not stand it, but the babies lived there all the time. Of course, the nurses tried to make ventilation by opening the windows, but that didn't help; the air was unbearable. We could not do anything.

My daughter was very nice, of nice appearance, and even in prison the nurses said that she was one of the prettiest girls. I knit her a hat, boots, and a jersey from the thread of handkerchiefs. But when we came to the camp, the authorities said it was not permitted to have jersey and boots—only hat; everything else will be given by the authorities. Of course, they gave everything, but those things were not warm, and she had no warm jersey at all.

She died because she had a lung disease. Even now I do not know exactly what happened. Many times I asked what happened, and they told me, "Afterwards, afterwards, afterwards." They did not want to tell me. Everything was all right, but she was coughing. Then there was a stomach disease in every group of babies. She also had this stomach disease along with coughing. Then the doctors said it was her

lungs, pneumonia, and her heart would not work. They wanted to take her to the hospital from the nursery. When they took her, on the way to the hospital she died. They said that the last day of her life she said "Mother" for the first time. I was not there.

They made a little coffin for her. They allowed me to be before the coffin for ten minutes, and after that they did not let me stay there. The funeral was held without me. When I stood with her body, I said "Hare Kṛṣṇa" and prayed to Kṛṣṇa to take care of her.

Of course, it is strange that such things happen in such a great country as the Soviet Union. I think that such things as imprisoning pregnant women should not be done, not here or any place in the world,



Premavati's daughter Marika, who died in a Soviet labour camp at eleven months.

because children must have their mothers. This present period is the nicest period during my life. Everything is now so nice, but not for those babies still in prison. So I would like to appeal to all people to ask our authorities to stop imprisoning people who believe in God, who chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, which purifies themselves and the aura of the entire planet. It will be very helpful for those who are sitting in prison now.

Working in the labour camps is very hard, especially for people who are not accustomed to physical work. For intelligent people it is very difficult to be in the labour camp. There are many Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees who have very serious diseases, such as Vladimir Kustrya [Vṛndāvana dāsa], who has a lung disease and who also has no energy to work—low blood pressure. When I was in Moscow, I also had to work, and my blood pressure was very low. Once it was eighty over eighty-five. I was very exhausted during the period of working in the labour camp.

The most unbearable thing was that you could never be alone in prison. The Russian writer Dostoyevsky also wrote about this fact, that the most difficult thing is not being able to be alone. You can't even be five minutes alone. All the time you must be with people.

There are many strict rules which say that one must do this and not that, eat this and not that. From another point of view the austerity for one who is trying to be a *yogī* is really very nice. You understand that you can eat less, that you can wear less, you can sleep less, that the human being's energy and power is very great, much more than a person can imagine.

During this labour camp period it was difficult to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* because there was no time, no time at all. In that camp we worked very many hours. We worked ten hours, and after that I would visit the school for sewing, and then I had to do some work for the group I was with. I made some lectures about nice behaviour and similar themes. People who had higher education were asked to speak in order to bring less-educated people to a higher standard. So I was very busy and had no time to rest at all.

Now the time is turning for the better, as I mentioned earlier. We have *kīrtanas* in the center of Moscow, on the Arbat street, where very many people gather to sing or speak about something or do whatever they like. Painters make pictures of people. Poets are there. Hare Kṛṣṇa people are also there. We are part of this Arbat movement. We sing Hare Kṛṣṇa, and we answer questions.

Yesterday we saw the KGB people come to our chanting place. First they listened to our *kīrtanas*, and then they

(continued on page 22)

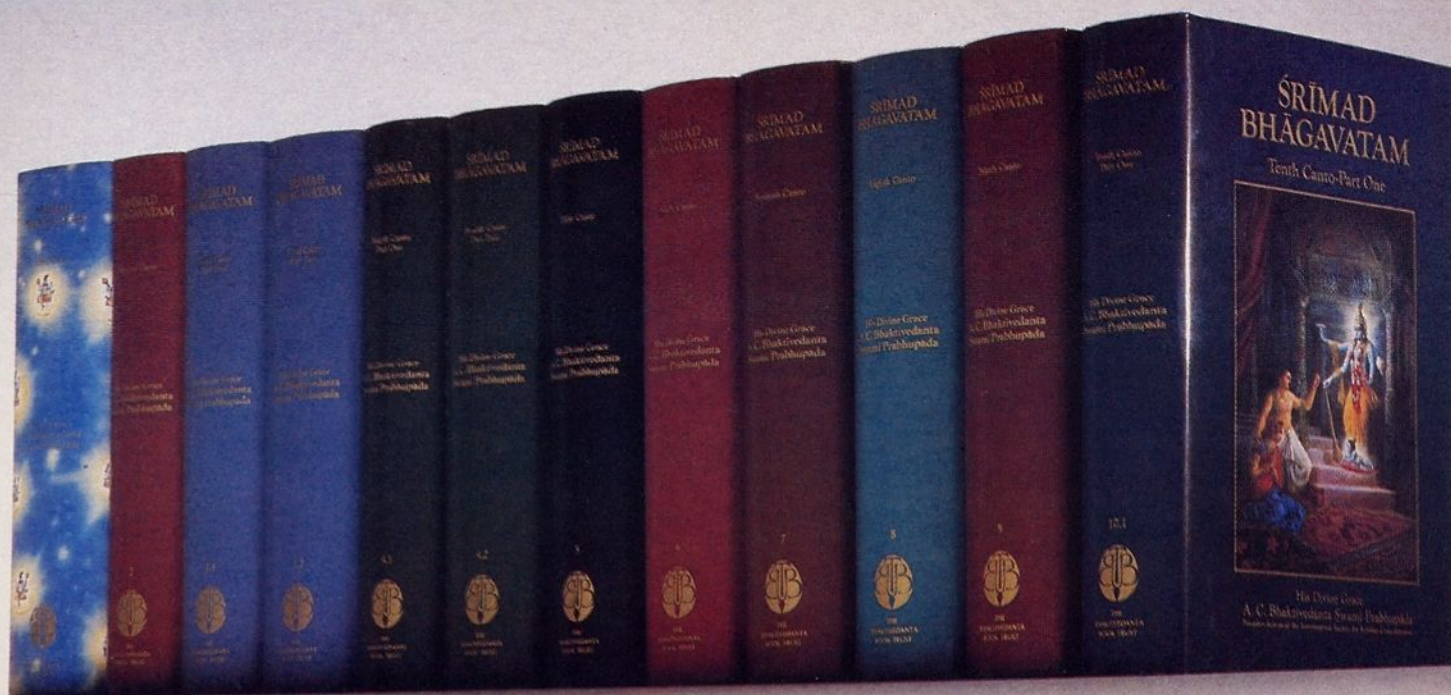
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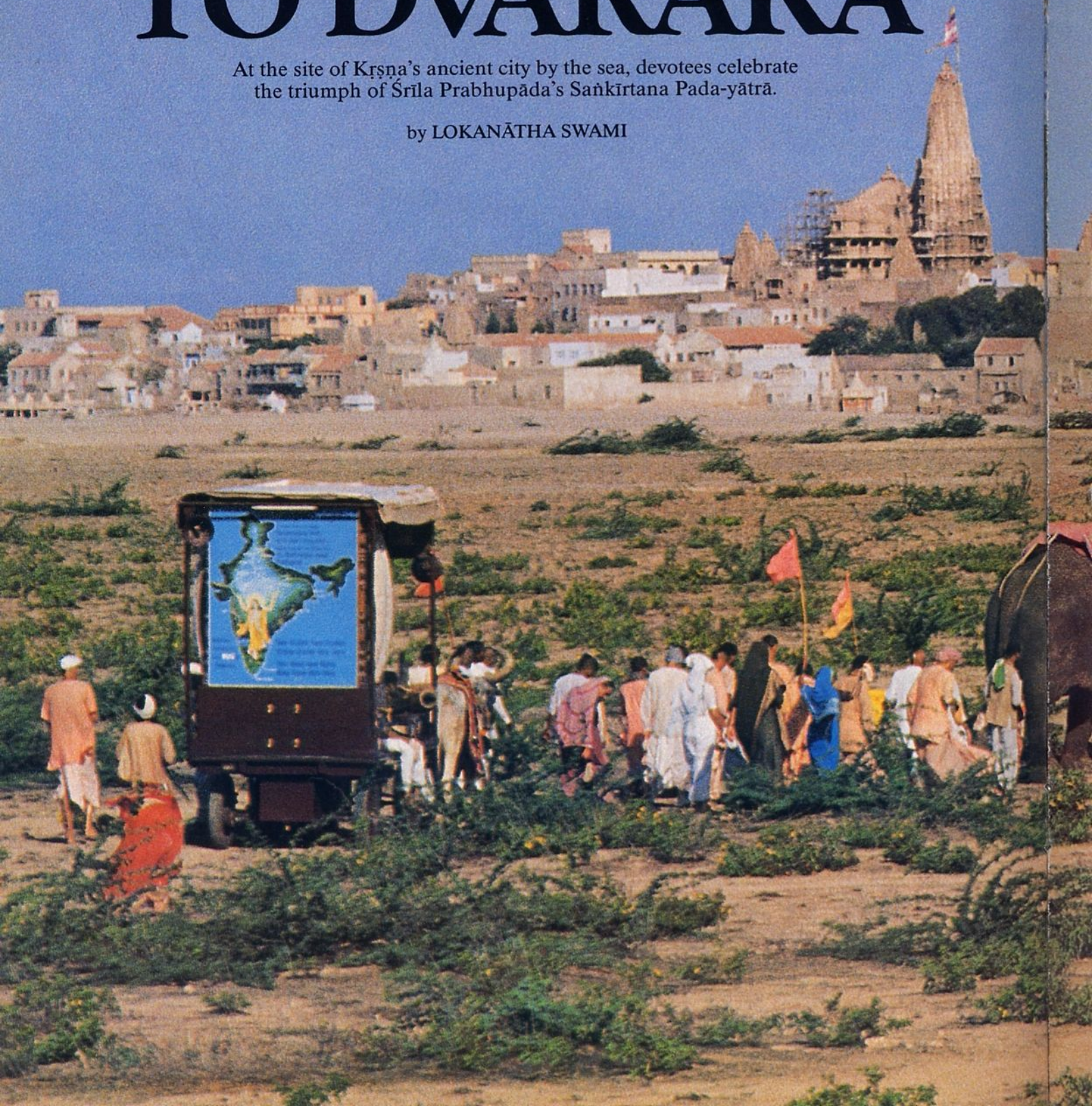
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On Pilgrimage

RETURN TO DVĀRAKĀ

At the site of Kṛṣṇa's ancient city by the sea, devotees celebrate
the triumph of Śrīla Prabhupāda's Saṅkīrtana Pada-yātrā.

by LOKANĀTHA SWAMI



Lokanātha Swami, a native of India's Maharashtra province, is the chief organiser of ISKCON's pada-yātrā, a walking pilgrimage throughout India that began in Dvārakā on September 2, 1984. Here Lokanātha Swami describes the pada-yātrā's triumphant return to Dvārakā three and a half years and fourteen thousand kilometres later.

March 17 Arrival

The *pada-yātrā* party has stopped at a small farm for breakfast and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class. Anticipation fills the air as we wait for the visiting devotees to arrive. More than one hundred devotees from all over the world are traveling from ISKCON's annual festival in Vṛndāvana to take part in the *pada-yātrā*'s "Return to Dvārakā" festival.

Two large buses pull up, and the highway suddenly becomes a sea of saffron and white as the devotees spill out of the buses to offer their obeisances to our *pada-yātrā* deities of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi (Cai-

tanya Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda) and Śrīla Prabhupāda. Newcomers to *pada-yātrā* are pleased to see the *pada-yātrā* cart, the bullock carts, and the *pada-yātrīs*—the devotees who have been walking on this pilgrimage through holy India. Those who have been with us before are feeling nostalgia, meeting again with *pada-yātrā* acquaintances and reminiscing about their *pada-yātrā* experiences.

With ecstatic *kīrtana*, we walk to the next village, where we are warmly received by the local people. Many devotees spend the night with the *pada-yātrā*, and the others travel by bus to Dvārakā, ending their two-day journey from Vṛndāvana.

Throughout the evening devotees pour into Dvārakā. The *pada-yātrā* organisers, having prepared for the arrival of two hundred devotees, are surprised to see the numbers swell to almost four hundred. The bazaars are teeming with ISKCON members from around the world.

Dvārakā is one of the most important

pilgrimage spots in India. Kṛṣṇa spent one hundred years here, longer than He spent in Vṛndāvana and Mathurā combined. While at Dvārakā He married 16,108 wives, each of whom lived in an extraordinarily opulent palace. Many of Kṛṣṇa's family members, feeling intense separation from Him after He left Mathurā, came to join Him in His new kingdom. To accommodate everyone, Lord Kṛṣṇa borrowed land from the sea to build more palaces.

Modern-day Dvārakā is a small city with an area of sixteen square miles and a population of around thirty thousand. Situated on the Arabian Sea, the city has a climate that is temperate and salubrious.

March 18

This morning, after a joyful *maṅgala-ārati* at the *dharma-śālā* hosting the visiting devotees, we make our way with *kīrtana* to the Samudra Nārāyaṇa temple, at the confluence of the Gomati River and





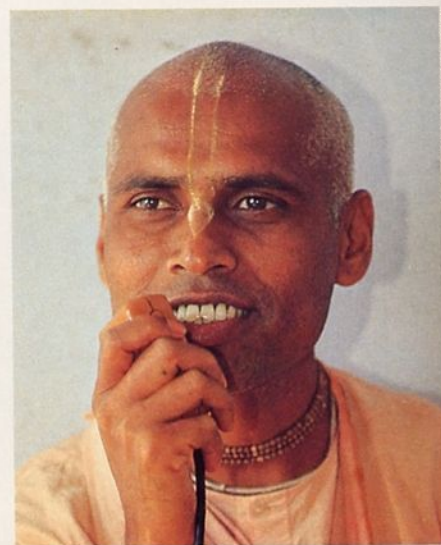
the Arabian Sea. There is a solar eclipse taking place. So, following Vedic custom, we bathe in these sacred waters before leaving to join the *pada-yātrā* party for the final eight-kilometre walk into Dvārakā.

The procession consists of about 150 devotees, Lakṣmī the elephant, the deities' cart, and three bullock carts. Everyone is chanting and dancing spontaneously. Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi are standing majestically on Their altar, and Śrīla Prabhupāda, seated on his *vyāsāsana*, looks like a glorious warrior returning home from victory, his foot soldiers marching alongside.

The atmosphere created by the procession reminds us of the description of Lord Caitanya's *kīrtana*, as described in Śrīla Bhaktivinoḍa Ṭhākura's "*Aruṇodaya-kīrtana*," a song usually sung in the early morning hours:

At the end of a long but rewarding journey (previous spread), ISKCON's *pada-yātrā* approaches Dvārakā. Above, Dvārakā residents and pilgrims join the *pada-yātrā* as it enters the city. At right, the author and *pada-yātrā* organiser Lokanātha Swami tells the crowd about the significance of Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement. Far right, the presiding Deity of Dvārakā, Lord Dvārakādhīśa.

When the eastern horizon became tinged with the red that heralds the rising of the sun, the jewel among the *brāhmaṇas*, Lord Gaurasundara, immediately awakened. Taking His devotees with Him, He journeyed through the towns and villages of Nadia. The *mṛdaṅgas* resounded "*tathāi, tathāi,*" and the *karatālas* in that *kīrtana* played in time. Lord Gaurāṅga's golden form slightly trembled in ecstatic love of Godhead, and His footbells jingled. Lord



JAGANNATHA KESAVA DASA



JAGANNĀTHA KRṢṆA DĀSA

friendly. We should treat them with respect and give them a good impression of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

Reception

The president of Dvārakā township, the head priest of the Dvārakādhīśa temple, groups of school children, school bands, and thousands of residents of Dvārakā greet us with an enthusiastic and heart-warming reception. The local people are wide-eyed to see the same devotees, with their elephant, oxen, and cart, returning to Dvārakā with the same enthusiasm with which they left three and a half years before. They treat us like family members. The local *brāhmaṇas* happily embrace our ISKCON *brāhmaṇas*. Seeing foreigners following the Vedic culture and worshipping the Deity just as they are doing inspires them in their own devotional life.



Gate Inaugural Ceremony

Within a sacrificial arena, Gaura Keśava dāsa performs a fire sacrifice to sanctify the ISKCON *pada-yātrā* gate at the entrance to Dvārakā. People are amazed to hear an Australian-born *brāhmaṇa* chanting Vedic *mantras* with such accuracy. At the end of the sacrifice, fire-crackers proclaim the triumphant return of Śrīla Prabhupāda's Saṅkīrtana *Pada-yātrā* to Dvārakā. *Kīrtana* surcharges the atmosphere as the procession passes through the newly opened arch.

The gate is sixty feet high and fifty feet wide. Spiral staircases inside both columns lead to viewing galleries on top. Panels depicting the life and teachings of Lord Caitanya and Śrīla Prabhupāda will be installed above the arch.

Awards Ceremony

A colourful *paṇḍāl* tent has been erected nearby. The *sannyāsīs*, GBCs, and *kīrtana*

party are seated on the stage, and the rest of the devotees mingle with the audience. Leaders of several Dvārakā institutions greet us with welcoming speeches, garlands, and *hari-nāma cādars* from the Dvārakādhīśa temple. Amid tumultuous applause, Shri Harsibhai Kanani, the president of Dvārakā township, presents me with a certificate of appreciation for the *pada-yātrā's* accomplishment.

Next we honour the seven *pada-yātrīs* who walked the entire fourteen thousand kilometres. One by one they are called onto the stage, garlanded, and presented with a framed certificate. These souls are very special. As anyone who has spent time on *pada-yātrā* knows, it is not easy to carry on day after day, year after year. It takes great determination.

News reporters and radio and television crews are present throughout the proceedings, reporting everything with sincerity and intensity.

The ceremonies completed, the devotees, feeling satisfaction, make their way to the *prasādam* hall for a sumptuous feast of *dokhlā*, *sabjīs*, *purīs*, rice, chutneys, *pakorās*, *śrīkhaṇḍa*, and more. Everyone is well fed and impressed with the delicious *prasādam* and the efficient service.

Dvārakādhīśa Darśana

In the evening we carry our small Gaura-Nitāi Deities to the famous Dvārakādhīśa temple. The seven-story-high temple is built on seventy-two pillars. From the temple dome waves an eighty-four-foot-long multicolored flag decorated with the symbols of the sun and moon.

We are welcomed heartily by the temple *pūjārīs*. They put our small Deities on the altar and offer *ārati* to Them. They garland the devotees, decorate their foreheads with a dot of bright red powder, and offer them *mahā-prasādam*.

After circumambulating the temple, we walk to the festival site for the evening programme. Several thousand people crowd around the stage, which is situated near a busy marketplace. Yaśomatī-nandana dāsa introduces the ISKCON devotees from around the world to the audience. Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami and other leaders speak on the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Jagattārīṇī-devī dāśī enthralls the children and the adults alike with her puppet show and ISKCON cinema.

March 19 Dvārakā-maṇḍala Parikrama

After *maṅgala-ārati* the devotees chant patiently on their beads while waiting to board the reserved buses that will take them to Island Dvārakā and Sri Gopī-tallava. Unfortunately, things don't run so smoothly, and some of the buses depart too soon, leaving many devotees stranded

Caitanya called out to the townsfolk, "Just fill your mouths with the holy names 'Mukunda!' 'Mādhava!' 'Yādava!' and 'Hari!'"

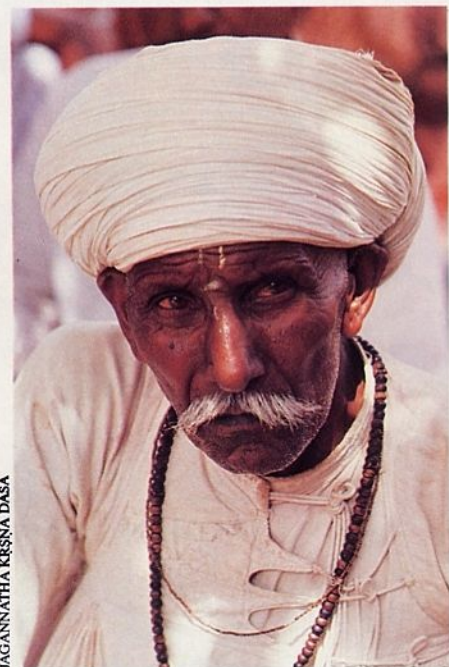
As the *pada-yātrā* procession moves toward the city of Dvārakā, its skyline predominated by the magnificent Dvārakādhīśa temple, devotees relish chanting and dancing in the fresh, cool morning air.

Near the city we stop at a small roadside temple for *prasādam*, which is served late because of the solar eclipse. The priests say that food cooked during an eclipse is considered inedible, so the cooking was delayed. While we wait for *prasādam*, Śrīdhara Swami speaks to us about the citizens of Dvārakā. No ordinary soul can live in Kṛṣṇa's land, he says. They are very special people, and they are warm and

and forcing them to take a government tourist bus. Consequently, devotees arrive on the island at different times.

Once we are all united again, we walk from the harbour up the hill toward the temple. The streets are lined with small shops selling painted shells, necklaces, postcards, framed pictures of the island and of Śrī Dvārakādhīśa, and other souvenirs. When we reach the temple, the priests request us to perform *kīrtana*. We begin chanting, and a local *tabla* player joins in, sitting right in the middle of our party. The devotees chant and dance to their hearts' content.

Sitting at the exact spot where Sudāmā brāhmaṇa met Lord Kṛṣṇa, I narrate some of the Lord's Dvārakā pastimes for the pleasure of the devotees.



JAGANNĀTHA KRṢṆA DĀSA

A pilgrim from Gujarat (above) wears the typical dress of the farmers of that province, where the city of Dvārakā is located. At right, devotees pose at the ISKCON *pada-yātrā* gate, commemorating the *pada-yātrā*'s return to Dvārakā.

In the temple courtyard, rows of devotees are served breakfast of Dvārakādhīśa *prasādam*. Then everyone returns to the harbour to catch the boat to the mainland.

The journey, in a large wooden motorboat, takes around twenty minutes. The Arabian Sea is calm and the breezes cooling. Devotees delight in feeding the flocks of healthy-looking sea gulls that follow the boats. Gazing out across the clear blue waters, we remember how in these depths lie the remains of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's own city of Dvārakā.

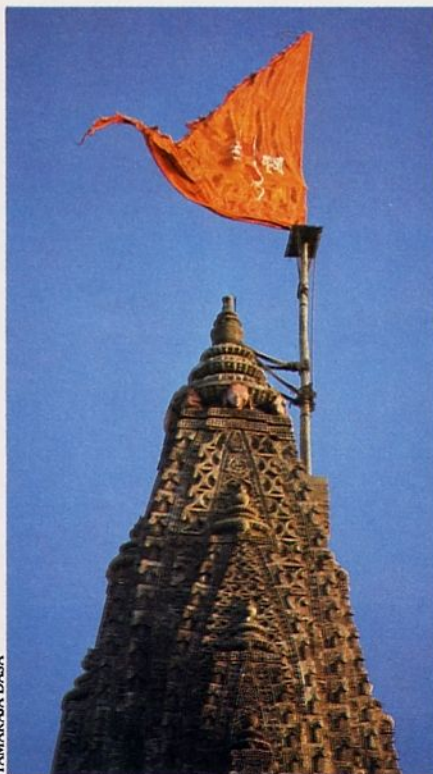
The gardens and parks were full of various flowers of different colors and orchards that

JAGANNĀTHA KRṢṆA DĀSA

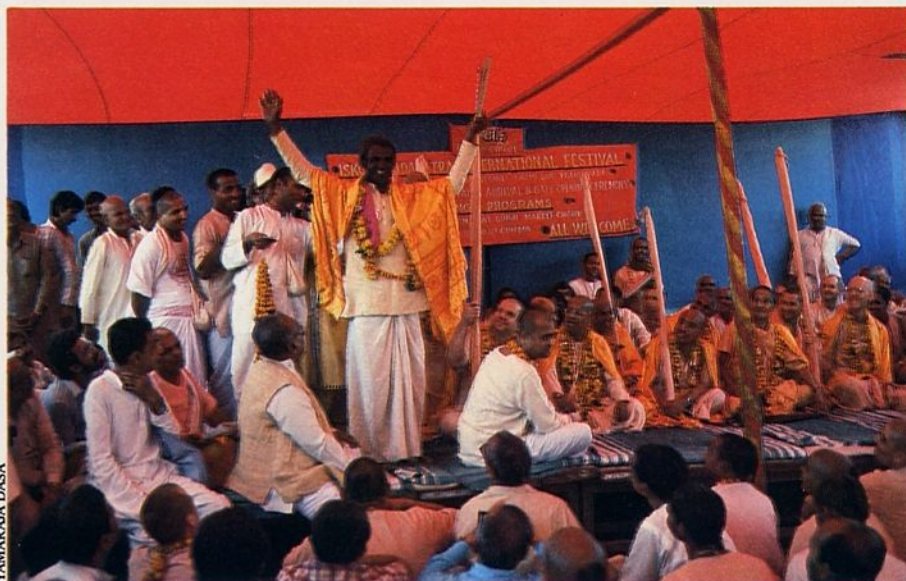




YAMARAJA DASA



YAMARAJA DASA



were overloaded with a variety of fruits. Beautiful birds were chirping, and peacocks were delightfully crowing. There were tanks and ponds full of blue and red lotus flowers, and some of these sites were filled with varieties of lilies. The lakes were full of nice swans and cranes whose voices resounded everywhere. In the city there were as many as 900,000 great palaces built of first-class marble with gates and doors made of silver. The posts of the houses and palaces were bedecked with jewels such as touchstone, sapphires, and emeralds, and the floors gave off a beautiful luster. The highways, lanes and streets, crossings, and marketplaces were all beautifully decorated. The whole city was full of residential homes, assembly houses, and temples, all of

different architectural beauty. All of this made Dvārakā a glowing city.

(*Kṛṣṇa*, Vol. 2, p. 242)

India's recent marine archaeological expeditions have "discovered many unknown features of the historic city. . . . The inner and outer gateways of the proto-historic Dvārakā were flanked by circular bastions built of massive blocks of sandstone. . . . It can be said that Dvārakā was the largest port of the second millennium" (Dr. S. R. Rao, National Institute of Oceanography). While some persons choose to neglect evidence that supports the existence of Kṛṣṇa's capital city, others use the evidence to increase their faith in the scriptures that describe Dvārakā. They don't reject the scriptures as mythology.

After landing in Okha Port, we cram into the waiting buses (there never seem to

The spire of the Dvārakādhīśa temple (left) flies the ISKCON *pada-yātrā* flag. Below, the *pada-yātrā*'s elephant driver, one of seven *pada-yātrīs* who completed the entire 14,000-kilometre pilgrimage, displays his plaque.

be enough of them), devotees piling onto the roofs and hanging out of the doors and windows. We stop at Sri Gopitallava, where Kṛṣṇa met the *gopīs* when they came from Vṛndāvana to see Him. Everyone gets a chance to dig out a piece of *gopīcandana* (clay for decorating the forehead with the *tilaka* sign) to take home. We then head back to the city for evening *prasādam*, highlighted by tonight's pièce de résistance: *ladḍus* the size of tennis balls. There are more than enough for everyone.

Flag-Hoisting Ceremony

This evening we hold a flag-hoisting ceremony at the Dvārakādhīśa temple. In

(continued on page 26)

Darker Days

(continued from page 13)

mingled with the crowd. There were many people listening to us preach about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The KGB began to preach just the opposite: "Why are you listening to these religious speeches? Nowadays we must not believe in God." Sometimes they argued with us. I told them that I was not going to argue with them at all. My feeling is that arguments are only a waste of time. I am only telling the views of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. It is Vedic knowledge, and it is not my opinion. It was a real battle between us.

Another person I had seen with the KGB came up and said, "I am a weightlifter. For fifteen years I have lifted weights. How can I be a vegetarian?" I said, "No, it is not true. You are not a weightlifter. You are with the KGB! I am sure. I know it!" Nevertheless, they were not very aggressive. It is democracy, so we are preaching and they are preaching. Yesterday it was vivid that we have the same rights to preach as they have.

It is very nice that here in Moscow we have such an opportunity, but some very sad news came from Kiev. In Kiev several devotees went on the street to have *kīrtana* and were imprisoned for fifteen days. One mother of two little boys, whose husband was imprisoned, came to Moscow yesterday. She demonstrated, protesting to let her husband free. After that he was released, but the other people were not. They are imprisoned for what we have been doing in Moscow now for over a month. We are singing *kīrtanas* every day, but in Kiev democracy is not so real.

Yesterday, someone returned from the beach of the Black Sea, from one little town called Kerch. He said that he was at the houses of three devotees and that they had nice altars. He said that about a week ago those houses with the altars were burned down by the militia men while the devotees were working or away. This is very bad news, militia men fighting against the Vaiṣṇavas without any court or trial.

Now we can see that very many people are coming to be Vaiṣṇavas, and it is very nice. We understand that these people chant and sing Hare Kṛṣṇa. Anybody who does it, even a little bit, can purify himself, and it will be so nice if everybody will simply try to do it. Then if you understand the essence of the *mahā-mantra*, if you understand that Kṛṣṇa Himself comes in those sounds, you will understand God Himself, and you will feel God and you will have an opportunity to see God, really, with your own eyes. And it will be so nice for everybody, because I think everybody is eager to see God. You have an opportunity. Please chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. ❧

The Persecution Continues

November 7, 1987, marked the seventieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. Authorities in the Soviet Union had announced in June that they would grant amnesty to or improve the situation of political and religious prisoners. Although the Soviet devotees of Kṛṣṇa who were being held in psychiatric hospitals were released, none of the devotees in labour camps was given unconditional amnesty. Either they completed their sentences, or they were conditionally released from labour camps to compulsory labour in remote Soviet territories. They were affected by the "amnesty" only because of the worldwide campaign to broadcast their plight. It appears that the Soviets used the anniversary of the Russian Revolution to release or improve the condition of prisoners who have caused them embarrassment from people supporting their causes from abroad. In the November 1987 issue of *Back to Godhead*, we published an article entitled "23 Who Are Not Free," which told of the devotees of Kṛṣṇa imprisoned in the Soviet Union. The following is an update on the status of those twenty-three devotees.

Vladimir Kritsky (Viśvāmītra dāsa) was released on December 26, 1987. We had received incorrect information about his sentence. It was five and a half years (instead of eight), and he served every day of it.

Nugzar Chagaziya was conditionally released from a labour camp to compulsory labor.

Gagik Buniatyan (Sarvabhāvana dāsa) completed his sentence in January.

Alexander Levin is now free.

Ashot Shaglamdzian (Vrakreśvara Paṇḍita dāsa) was conditionally released from a labour camp to compulsory labour. He was sent to the Soviet Far East—the Khabarovsk Territory—seven thousand kilometres away from his family and friends.

Aleksei Musatov (Āśutoṣa dāsa) was released from the Special Psychiatric Hospital in Smolensk.

Agyan Arutyunyan (Advaita Ācārya dāsa) was conditionally released from a labour camp to compulsory labour. He was sent far away from his native Armenia to the Primorskaya Territory, near Vladivostok.

Oleg Stepanyan served his full two-and-a-half-year sentence. He is now free.

Yuri Fedchenko (Japa dāsa) was conditionally released from a labour camp to compulsory labour to complete his sentence. He is now free.

Armen Saakyan (Ātmānanda dāsa) was released from a psychiatric hospital.

Yevgeny Lyubinsky (Amala-bhakta dāsa) is still in a labour camp serving a four-year sentence.

Sarkis Ogadzhanyan (Śacīsūta dāsa) died in a labour camp in December. (See last month's issue of *Back to Godhead*.)

Anatoli Samoilov was released from a labour camp to compulsory labour. In July 1987 his wife, Valentina, completed a two-year sentence in a labour camp for her involvement in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

Karen Saakyan (Kamalamālā dāsa) was released from an Armenian psychiatric hospital in December 1987.

Otar Nacchebiya (Ambarīṣa dāsa) was conditionally released from a labour camp to compulsory labour. He is serving a three-year sentence. He was sent to the Khabarovsk Territory, far away from his native Georgia.

Sergei Priborov (Sanātana-kumāra dāsa) was released from a labour camp in March 1988 after completing a four-year sentence.

Rafael Dzhnashvili was released from a psychiatric hospital in February 1988.

Suren Karapetyan (Sannyāsa dāsa) was released from a psychiatric hospital in Armenia in January 1988.

Jakov Dzidzhevadze (Yamarāja dāsa) completed his two-and-a-half-year sentence in a labour camp and was released in January 1988.

Oleg Mkrtchyan does not exist. We received this name in error.

Vladimir Kustrya (Vṛndāvana dāsa) is serving a five-year sentence in a strict regime labour camp. He previously served a one-year sentence from November 1982 to November 1983. His health is very bad, and he spends much time in isolation punishment cells.

Anatoli Pinyayev (Ananta-śānti dāsa) was released in December from the Oryol Special Psychiatric Hospital.

Olga Kiseleva (Premavati-devī dāsi) was released from compulsory labour.

What You Can Do to Help Free the Soviet Hare Krishnas

ISKCON's Committee to Free Soviet Hare Krishnas has established a membership program that helps publicise the persecution of the Soviet devotees. From the privacy of your own home here in the free world, you can help bring international pressure to bear against the injustices endured by Soviet Hare Kṛṣṇa followers. Please join the Committee to Free Soviet Hare Krishnas.

Plan A

Send \$21. You'll receive the famous *Hare Krishna in the USSR* cassette tape, a 2½-inch "Free the Soviet Hare Krishnas" button, and two photos of the Soviet devotees. You will also receive protest postcards with pictures of the imprisoned devotees to mail to Soviet authorities.

Plan B

Send \$51. In addition to receiving the items in Plan A, you will sponsor one of the imprisoned devotees. You'll receive regular and updated information about the devotee's case, and about how you can campaign on his or her behalf.

**Send your membership contribution, for Plan A or B, along with your name and address, to:
The Committee to Free Soviet Hare Krishnas, Almviks Gärd, 15300 Järna, Sweden.
Even if you don't become a member of the committee,
please fill out the petition below and mail it to the above address.**

PETITION

I, the undersigned, present the following statement to Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev, general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and to Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze, the foreign minister:

I deeply deplore the inhuman treatment and conditions that members of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in the USSR are being subjected to. They are being denied the basic human rights to which they are entitled under the provisions of the Soviet Constitution, as well as all the international agreements and treaties that the Soviet Union has endorsed.

I request the Soviet government to allow the members of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement to register their religion as an official state religion. I also implore the authorities to arrange the immediate release of the following Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees, who are imprisoned in labour camps or have been sentenced to compulsory labour, and following their release, to permit their emigration from the Soviet Union, along with their immediate family:

Agvan Arutyunyan	Otari S. Nacchebiya
Nugzar A. Chargaziya	Anatoli I. Samoilov
Vladimir A. Kustrya	Ashot S. Shaglomdzyan
Yevgeny N. Lyubinsky	

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Country _____

Mail petition to: The Committee to Free Soviet Hare Krishnas, Almviks Gärd, 15300 Järna, Sweden.

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for Krishna Consciousness

UNDER THE WORLD

by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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Perfect Friend

(continued from page 9)

The *Vedas* explain that God created us out of His inexhaustible desire for loving exchanges. Thus friendship with Him is the original state of the soul.

Since we are eternally part of Kṛṣṇa, there is a natural intimacy between Him and us. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* we learn that He is residing within our hearts as the Supersoul, graciously accompanying us as we wander throughout the universe, life after life, in search of lasting happiness. Unlike us, God possesses a spiritual vision that is never dimmed by material contact, and thus He is perfectly aware of our folly. As our true friend, He exhibits His kindness upon us by allowing us to learn through our own experience the futility of our efforts, and He lovingly deflects our attention back to Himself, the abode of all happiness.

Because Lord Kṛṣṇa is supremely pure, His friendship is never contaminated with the selfish motives that stain material relationships. In the material world, everyone is ultimately concerned with his or her own interest. Even our friendships are part of our plan for our own enjoyment.

Lord Kṛṣṇa, by contrast, is always anxious for our ultimate well-being. Although we have turned away from Him, driven by our envy of His position as the supreme enjoyer, He continues to provide all our necessities. The air, the sun, our inherent abilities, and countless other gifts are all clear indications of His good will. And Kṛṣṇa's greatest expression of friendship is His association, which He generously offers us through the revealed scriptures, saints, and spiritual masters, who regularly appear throughout the millenniums to invite us back to the spiritual world.

The attractive, dynamic qualities of the soul tend to remain static in the material world because of the soul's marriage with inert matter. As a result, the thrill of material relationships diminishes quickly.

We grow bored seeing the same faces day in and day out. But Kṛṣṇa is never boring, for His transcendental qualities are ever fresh and ever expanding.

In the *Vedas* it is stated that even if the scientists could count all the grains of sand on a beach or all the atoms in the universe, they could never estimate even one drop of God's blissful, all-attractive features. *The Nectar of Devotion* offers an illuminating summary of Lord Kṛṣṇa's spiritual qualities. By studying this great work in a spirit of devotion, we can enhance our appreciation for the Lord and thus develop the desire to know His sublime friendship.

For example, *The Nectar of Devotion* explains that no one is more appreciative or reciprocative than Lord Kṛṣṇa, as shown in His dealings with His friends. Once, a poor *brāhmaṇa* named Sudāmā offered Kṛṣṇa a few grains of rice. Because Sudāmā was penniless, he was unable to present his Lord with a valuable gift, as was his desire, but because his humble offering was saturated with love, Kṛṣṇa eagerly accepted it and ate it with great delight. Out of deep gratitude, Kṛṣṇa reciprocated with Sudāmā by giving him more opulence than can be imagined even by the wealthiest person in this world, and in the end Sudāmā was granted entrance into Kṛṣṇa's spiritual abode. Hearing of Kṛṣṇa's limitless capacity for appreciating and reciprocating the love of His devotees can inspire us to rekindle our friendship with Him.

Lord Kṛṣṇa is also the most faithful and considerate friend. He will never abandon us or allow us to feel neglected. Although His propensity to love is so great that He desires to interact with countless living beings simultaneously, He can do so without neglecting even one of them. When Kṛṣṇa was in Dvārakā, He expanded Himself, by His supreme mystic power, into many Kṛṣṇas, giving spiritual bliss to each one of His sixteen thousand queens, each of whom thought that Kṛṣṇa

was residing with her alone.

Another reason that God's friendship is the most desirable relationship is that it is eternal. In the material world we may sometimes form a relationship with another person that seems to be of sterling quality, but even that soon fades like a dream. At the time of death, the *karma* of both friends carries them far apart from one another, as strands of seaweed, meeting momentarily on the crest of a wave, are separated forever when the wave breaks to shore.

Happily, this is not the case if we befriend Kṛṣṇa. The exchange between God and the living entity is never checked. Even if one begins the attempt to realize Kṛṣṇa in this life and is not completely successful in his spiritual development, he begins in his next life from where he left off, until at last he achieves perfection.

Since we are all Kṛṣṇa's servants, it is important for us to remember that any attempt to approach Him must be attended by a serving attitude. Just as the Lord, out of His kindness, is always busy making arrangements for His devotees' happiness, we must also try to act for His pleasure. This is the beginning of real love. And there is no loss for us if we agree to cultivate our devotional sentiments. In fact, serving Kṛṣṇa is so relishable that Kṛṣṇa Himself appeared in the form of a devotee, as Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, to taste this pleasure and to show us, by practical example, that there is no greater aspiration for the living being than to achieve Lord Kṛṣṇa's friendship.

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is in the direct line descending from Lord Caitanya. It was established by Śrīla Prabhupāda to assist those seriously interested in reviving their dormant love for God. Its doors are open to everyone. Persons who aspire for perfect friendship will certainly embrace this rare and wonderful opportunity to find lasting spiritual happiness in the eternal company of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the perfect friend. ❧

DVĀRAKĀ

(continued from page 21)

the courtyard, special *mantras* are chanted as a priest climbs the temple dome—flag emblazoned with “Hare Krishna” in hand—watched intently by all the devotees. The flag unfurls to the sound of uproarious cheering and tumultuous *kīrtana*. A devotee turns to me and says, “This is the *pada-yātrā's jaya-patāka* [victory flag].”

March 20, 21

Most of the visiting devotees are preparing to leave—making train or bus reservations, packing luggage, shopping, saying

good-bys, packing leftover *laḍḍus* for the journey. Our group gradually diminishes to just the main *pada-yātrā* party and a handful of others who want to stay for another day or two. When we hold a meeting to discuss plans for the future of *pada-yātrā*, I am pleased to see some new faces of people who are interested to join us for a while.

March 22

After *maṅgala-ārati*, the luggage carts are loaded, the oxen decorated and hitched up, and Lakṣmī the elephant stirred into action. The *kīrtana* party accompanies Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi to the Dvārakadhīśa temple for a last *darśana*. Then they rejoin the

main *pada-yātrā* procession, which proceeds along the streets, through the ISKCON *pada-yātrā* gate, and out to the main highway. The *pada-yātrā* is back on the road again, heading to its next destination—Allahabad, for the Kumbha-melā in January 1989.

As we leave Dvārakā for the second time, there are fifty devotees walking with the party. It is inspiring to see that those same seven *pada-yātrīs* who walked the entire fourteen thousand kilometres are still with us today. Giving testimony to the transcendental nature of the *pada-yātrā*, these seasoned *pada-yātrīs* have not become tired of walking, but are even more enthusiastic and keen to carry on. ❧

Every Town

The worldwide activities of the International



And Village

Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)

Soviet Devotee Speaks at White House Conference

Washington, D.C.—Vedavyāsa dāsa, a member of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in the Soviet Union, and Kīrtirāja dāsa, director of the Committee to Free Soviet Hare Krishnas (CFSHK), were invited to attend a conference held at the White House on "Religious Rights in the Soviet Union." President Ronald Reagan opened the conference with an address to the three hundred participants, including members of the White House staff, state department and other government officials, and representatives of various human rights groups and religious organizations with membership in the Soviet Union. Everyone listened with interest when Vedavyāsa—one of around ten participants selected to address the assembly—gave details of the persecution of Soviet devotees of Kṛṣṇa.

Dr. Peter Reddaway, director of the Kennan Institute here and an authority on dissent, repression, and psychiatric abuse in the Soviet Union, also mentioned the plight of the Soviet devotees in his talk.

The CFSHK prepared a special thirty-two-page report that was distributed at the conference. The report includes the latest information about the persecuted devotees and letters of appeal from the Soviet devotees to President and Mrs. Reagan. The letter to Mrs. Reagan was signed by the wives of three imprisoned devotees. For a copy of the report send \$5.00 to CFSHK, Almviks Gard, 15300 Jarna, Sweden.

Kṛṣṇa Comics Have Arrived

Miami Beach—The Cultural Institute for the Vedic Arts (CIVA) has announced the publication of "The Advent," a thirty-two-page full-

color comic book, the first in a series of comic books recounting the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa as described in the Vedic literature and presented in the writings of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. "The Advent" relates the history of Lord Kṛṣṇa's descent to earth fifty centuries ago. The episode concludes in "The Confrontation," the second volume in the series, which will be out soon.

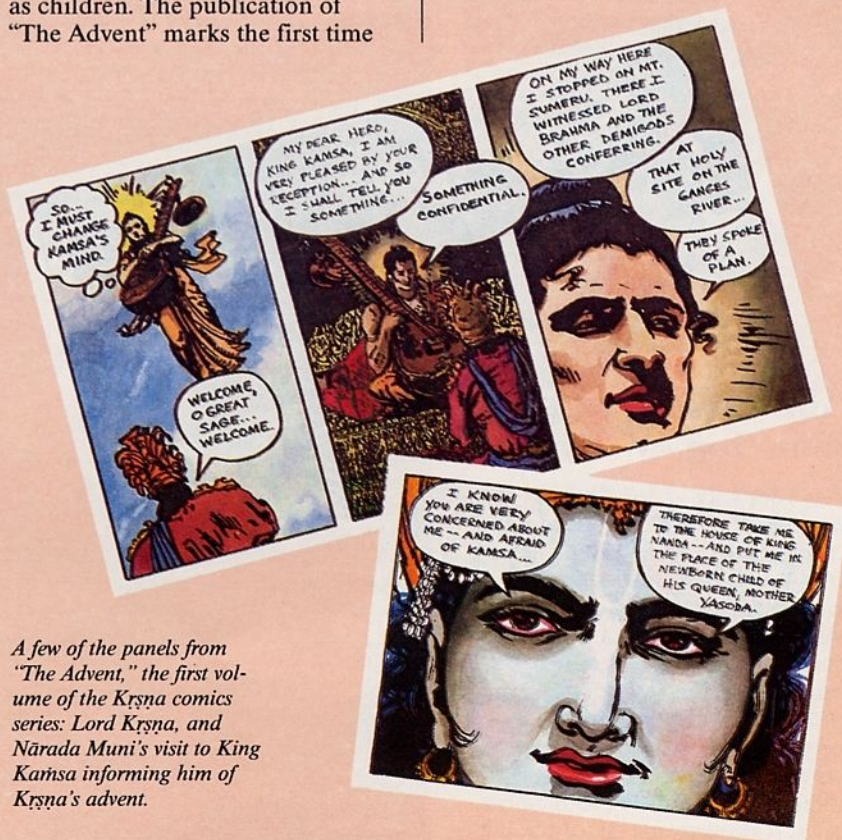
CIVA founder Yadurāṇī-devī dāsī, the illustrator for the Kṛṣṇa comics project, has done oil paintings for Śrīla Prabhupāda's books for twenty years, and her paintings have been exhibited and appreciated across the United States. The quality of her art is evident on the pages of "The Advent," which she hopes will appeal to adults as well as children. The publication of "The Advent" marks the first time

that comics on the Vedic literature have been produced in the West. For more information write or call CIVA, 2445 Collins Ave., Miami Beach, FL 33140/ (305) 532-5042.

New Book on Lord Caitanya

Brooklyn, New York—Satyarāja dāsa (Steven Rosen), a frequent contributor to *Back to Godhead*, has written a book about Lord Caitanya entitled *India's Spiritual Renaissance: The Life and Times of Lord Caitanya*. The book recounts the life of Lord Caitanya and shows the practicality and efficacy of *saṅkīrtana* for reviving one's innate spiritual consciousness.

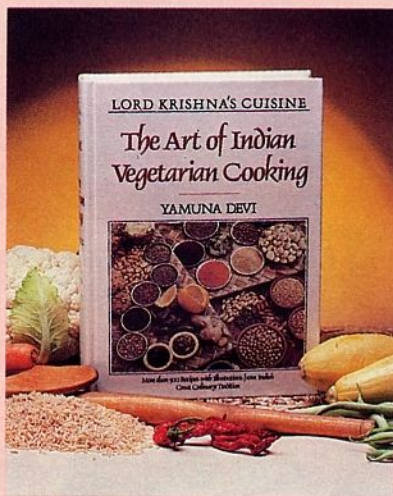
Dr. Thomas J. Hopkins, chairman and professor of the department of religious studies at



A few of the panels from "The Advent," the first volume of the Kṛṣṇa comics series: Lord Kṛṣṇa, and Nārada Muni's visit to King Kamsa informing him of Kṛṣṇa's advent.

Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, says the book is "an excellent synopsis of the career and teachings of one of the world's greatest spiritual leaders, based on traditional devotional biographies and supplemented by views of modern scholars. . . . The result is a very accessible introduction to Chaitanya and his message that should inspire readers to explore the rich resources so temptingly summarized in this volume."

The book has won Satyarāja dāsa an invitation to speak at a class in medieval Sanskrit poetry at Yale University. The class's professor is considering making the book required reading next term for all his students. Esoterica, the largest New Age bookstore in New York City, recently had Satyarāja do a double book-signing—for *India's Spiritual Renaissance* and his last book, *Food for the Spirit*. To obtain a copy of *India's Spiritual Renaissance*, write to FOLK Books, P.O. Box 400716, Brooklyn, NY 11240.



Lord Krishna's Cuisine Wins Top Award

New York City—*Lord Krishna's Cuisine: The Art of Indian Vegetarian Cooking*, by Yamuna Devi, one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's first disciples, won the highest award at the IACP/Seagram Awards for the outstanding food and beverage books published in the United States in 1987. The selection was made by forty-six top food and beverage writers, editors, and cooking authorities from the 1,200-member IACP (International Association of Cooking Professionals). The IACP/

Seagram Awards is the only major awards program in the U.S. for books on food and beverages.

The judges reviewed nearly two

hundred entries before selecting *Lord Krishna's Cuisine* as the winner of the Asian Cooking category, one of thirteen categories, and then as the best cookbook of the year for all categories. It is the first time in the twelve-year history of the awards that a book on Asian cooking has won the top award. And it is especially significant that it is a vegetarian cookbook.

Lord Krishna's Cuisine was published by Bala Books and is being distributed in the United States by E. P. Dutton and Company and in Great Britain by Angus and Robertson, Limited.

RESOURCES

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

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

Almost 100 shows to choose from. Top-quality, low-priced videocassettes. Available in ½-inch, ¾-inch, NTSC (American), and PAL (overseas).

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

Enjoy the writings of Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami, 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 12380, Philadelphia, PA 19119.

Become trained in brahminical knowledge, qualities, and skills. The Vṛndāvana Institute for Higher Education is offering courses in studying Śrīla Prabhupāda's books; clear thinking, speaking, and writing; Vaiṣṇava etiquette; Sanskrit for preachers; and more. For information write The Vṛndāvana Institute for Higher Education, c/o ISKCON Ministry of Education, P.O. Box 400767, Brooklyn, NY 11240.

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 Vāmana (June 30–July 29)

July 9—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, one of the principal associates of Lord Caitanya.

July 10—Yoginī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

July 13—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita, one of the principal associates of Lord Caitanya. Also, disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura. Fasting till noon.

July 14—Guṇḍicā-marjana. Festival of the cleansing of the Guṇḍicā temple.

July 15—Lord Jagannātha's Ratha-yātrā in Puri, India. Also, disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī and Śrīla Śivānanda Sena, intimate associates of Lord Caitanya.

July 25—Śayanā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

July 29—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. First month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from spinach).

Month of Śrīdhara (July 30–August 27)

August 2—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

August 5—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Lokanātha Gosvāmī, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya.

August 8—Kāmikā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

August 16—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Raghunandana Thākura and Śrīla Vamśīdāsa Bābājī, great devotees of Lord Caitanya.

Book Section

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. Bhaktivedānta Swamī Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Third Canto: “The Status Quo”

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The Killing of the Demon Hiranyākṣa

In this installment of our continuing presentation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the sage Maitreya, speaking to Vidura, a great devotee of the Lord, concludes his narration of the descent of Lord Viṣṇu in His boar incarnation.

TEXT 31

मैत्रेय उवाच

एवं हिरण्याक्षमसहविक्रमं
स सादयित्वा हरिरादिभिरुक्तः ।
जगाम लोकं स्वमखण्डितोत्सवं
समीडितः पुष्करविष्टरादिभिः ॥३१॥

maitreya uvāca

evam hiranyākṣam asahya-vikramam
sa sādāyitvā harir ādi-sūkarah
jagāma lokam svam akhaṇḍitotsavam
samīditah puṣkara-viṣṭarādibhiḥ

maitreyaḥ uvāca—Śrī Maitreya said; *evam*—thus; *hiranyākṣam*—Hiranyākṣa; *asahya-vikramam*—very powerful; *saḥ*—the Lord; *sādāyitvā*—after killing; *harir*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *ādi-sūkarah*—the origin of the boar species; *jagāma*—returned; *lokam*—to His abode; *svam*—own; *akhaṇḍita*—uninterrupted; *utsavam*—festival; *samīditah*—being praised; *puṣkara-viṣṭara*—lotus seat (by Lord Brahmā, whose seat is a lotus); *ādibhiḥ*—and the others.

TRANSLATION

Śrī Maitreya continued: After thus killing the most formidable demon Hiranyākṣa, the Supreme Lord Hari, the origin of the boar species, returned to His own abode, where there is always an uninterrupted festival. The Lord was praised by all the demigods, headed by Brahmā.

PURPORT

The Lord is spoken of herewith as the origin of the boar species. As stated in the *Vedānta-sūtra* (1.1.2), the Absolute Truth is the origin of everything. Therefore it is to be understood that all 8,400,000 species of bodily forms originate from the Lord, who is always *ādi*, or the beginning. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Arjuna addresses the Lord as *ādyam*, or the original. Similarly, in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* the Lord is addressed as *ādi-puruṣam*, the original person. Indeed, in *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.8) the Lord Himself declares, *mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate*: “From Me everything proceeds.”

In this situation the Lord assumed the shape of a boar to kill the demon Hiranyākṣa and pick up the earth from the Garbha Ocean. Thus He became *ādi-sūkara*, the original boar. In the material world a boar or pig is considered most abominable, but the *ādi-sūkara*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, was not treated as an ordinary boar. Even Lord Brahmā and the other demigods praised the Lord’s form as a boar.

This verse confirms the statement in *Bhagavad-gītā* that the Lord ap-

pears as He is from His transcendental abode for the sake of killing the miscreants and saving the devotees. By killing the demon Hiranyākṣa He fulfilled His promise to kill the demons and always protect the demigods headed by Brahmā. The statement that the Lord returned to His own abode indicates that He has His own particular transcendental residence. Since He is full of all energies, He is all-pervasive in spite of His residing in Goloka Vṛndāvana, just as the sun, although situated in a particular place within the universe, is present by its sunshine throughout the universe.

Although the Lord has His particular abode in which to reside, He is all-pervasive. The impersonalists accept one aspect of the Lord’s features, the all-pervasive aspect, but they cannot understand His localized situation in His transcendental abode, where He always engages in fully transcendental pastimes. Especially mentioned in this verse is the word *akhaṇḍitotsavam*. *Utsava* means “pleasure.” Whenever some function takes place to express happiness, it is called *utsava*. *Utsava*, the expression of complete happiness, is always present in the Vaikuṇṭhalokas, the abode of the Lord, who is worshipable even by demigods like Brahmā, to say nothing of other, less important entities such as human beings.

The Lord descends from His abode to this world, and therefore He is called *avatāra*, which means “one who descends.” Sometimes *avatāra* is understood to refer to an incarnation who assumes a material form of flesh and bone, but actually *avatāra* refers to one who descends from higher regions. The Lord’s abode is situated far above this material sky, and He descends from that higher position; thus He is called *avatāra*.

TEXT 32

मया यथानूक्तमवादि ते हरेः
कृतावतारस्य सुमित्र चेष्टितम् ।
यथा हिरण्याक्ष उदारविक्रमो
महामृधे क्रीडनवन्निराकृतः ॥३२॥

mayā yathānūktam avādi te hareḥ
kṛtāvatārasya sumitra cheṣṭitam
yathā hiranyākṣa udāra-vikramo
mahā-mṛdhe kṛīḍanavan nirākṛtaḥ

mayā—by me; *yathā*—as; *anūktam*—told; *avādi*—was explained; *te*—to you; *hareḥ*—of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *kṛtāvatārasya*—who assumed the incarnation; *sumitra*—O dear Vidura; *cheṣṭitam*—the activities; *yathā*—as; *hiranyākṣaḥ*—Hiranyākṣa; *udāra*—very extensive; *vikramah*—prowess; *mahā-mṛdhe*—in a great fight; *kṛīḍana-vat*—like a plaything; *nirākṛtaḥ*—was killed.

TRANSLATION

Maitreya continued: My dear Vidura, I have explained to you the Personality of Godhead’s coming down as the first boar incarnation and killing in a great fight a demon of unprecedented prowess as if he were just a plaything. This has been narrated by me as I heard it from my predecessor spiritual master.

PURPORT

Here the sage Maitreya admits that he explained the incident of the killing of Hiranyākṣa by the Supreme Personality of Godhead as a straight narration; he did not manufacture anything or add interpretation, but explained whatever he had heard from his spiritual master. Thus he accepted as bona fide the system of *paramparā*, or receiving the transcendental message in disciplic succession. Unless received by this bona fide process of hearing from a spiritual master, the statement of an *ācārya* or preceptor cannot be valid.

It is also stated here that although the demon Hiranyākṣa was unlimited in prowess, he was just like a doll for the Lord. A child breaks so many dolls without real endeavor. Similarly, although a demon may be very powerful and extraordinary in the eyes of an ordinary man in the material world, to the Lord, killing such a demon is no difficulty. He can kill millions of demons as simply as a child plays with dolls and breaks them.

TEXT 33

सूत उवाच

इति कौषारवाक्यातामाश्रुत्य भगवत्कथाम् ।
क्षत्तानन्दं परं लेभे महामागवतो द्विज ॥३३॥

sūta uvāca
iti kauṣāravākhyātām
āśrūtya bhagavat-kathām
kṣattānandam param lebhe
mahā-bhāgavato dvija

sūtaḥ—Sūta Gosvāmī; uvāca—said; iti—thus; kauṣārava—from Maitreya (son of Kuṣāru); ākhyātām—told; āśrūtya—having heard; bhagavat-kathām—the narration about the Lord; kṣattā—Vidura; ānandam—bliss; param—transcendental; lebhe—achieved; mahā-bhāgavataḥ—the great devotee; dvija—O brāhmaṇa (Śaunaka).

TRANSLATION

Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī continued: My dear brāhmaṇa, Kṣattā [Vidura] the great devotee of the Lord achieved transcendental bliss by hearing the narration of the pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead from the authoritative source of the sage Kauṣārava [Maitreya], and he was very pleased.

PURPORT

If anyone wants to derive transcendental pleasure by hearing the pastimes of the Lord, he must hear from the authoritative source, as explained here. Maitreya heard the narration from his bona fide spiritual master, and Vidura also heard from Maitreya. One becomes an authority simply by presenting whatever he has heard from his spiritual master, and one who does not accept a bona fide spiritual master cannot be an authority. This is clearly explained here. If one wants to have transcendental pleasure, he must find a person with authority. It is also stated in the *Bhāgavatam* that simply by hearing from an authoritative source, with the ear and the heart, one can relish the pastimes of the Lord, otherwise it is not possible. Śaṅkara Gosvāmī, therefore, has especially warned that one should not hear anything about the personality of the Lord from the lips of a nondevotee. Nondevotees are considered to be like serpents; as milk is poisoned by a serpent's touch, so, although the narration of the pastimes of the Lord is as pure as milk, when administered by serpentlike nondevotees it becomes poisonous. Not only does it have no effect in transcendental pleasure, but it is dangerous also. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu has warned that no description of the pastimes of the Lord should be heard from the Māyāvāda, or impersonalist, school. He has clearly said, *māyāvādi-bhāṣya śunile haya sarva nāśa*: if anyone hears the Māyāvādīs' interpretation of the pastimes of the Lord, or their interpretation of *Bhāgavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or any other Vedic literature, then he is doomed. Once one is associated with impersonalists, he can never understand the personal feature of the Lord and His transcendental pastimes.

Sūta Gosvāmī was speaking to the sages headed by Śaunaka, and therefore he addressed them in this verse as *dvija*, twice-born. The sages assembled in Naimiṣāranya hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from Sūta Gosvāmī were all brāhmaṇas, but to acquire the qualifications of a brāhmaṇa is not everything. Merely to be twice-born is not perfection. Perfection is attained when one hears the pastimes and activities of the Lord from a bona fide source.

TEXT 34

अन्येषां पुण्यश्लोकानामुद्दामयशसां सताम् ।
उपश्रुत्य भवेन्मोदः श्रीवत्साङ्कस्य किं पुनः ॥३४॥

anyeṣāṃ puṇya-ślokanām
uddāma-yaśasāṃ satām
upaśrūtya bhaven modah
śrīvatsaṅkasya kim punaḥ

anyeṣāṃ—of others; puṇya-ślokanām—of pious reputation; ud-dāma-yaśasāṃ—whose fame is spread everywhere; satām—of the devotees; upaśrūtya—by hearing; bhavet—may arise; modah—pleasure; śrīvatsa-āṅkasya—of the Lord, who bears the mark Śrīvatsa; kim punaḥ—what to speak of.

TRANSLATION

What to speak of hearing the pastimes of the Lord, whose chest is marked with Śrīvatsa, people may take transcendental pleasure even in hearing of the works and deeds of the devotees, whose fame is immortal.

PURPORT

Bhāgavatam literally means the pastimes of the Lord and the Lord's devotees. For example, there are pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and narrations of devotees like Prahlāda, Dhruva and Mahārāja Ambarīṣa. Both pastimes pertain to the Supreme Personality of Godhead because the devotees' pastimes are in relation with Him. The *Mahābhārata*, for example, the history of the Pāṇḍavas and their activities, is sacred because the Pāṇḍavas had a direct relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

TEXT 35

यो गजेन्द्रं झपप्रस्तं ध्यायन्तं चरणाम्बुजम् ।
क्रोशन्तीनां करेणूनां कृच्छ्रतोऽमोचयद् द्रुतम् ॥३५॥

yo gajendram jhaṣa-grastam
dhyāyantam caraṇāmbujam
krośantīnāṃ kareṇūnām
kṛcchrato 'mocayad drutam

yaḥ—He who; gaja-indram—the king of elephants; jhaṣa—an alligator; grastam—attacked by; dhyāyantam—meditating upon; caraṇa—feet; ambujam—lotus; krośantīnām—while crying; kareṇūnām—the female elephants; kṛcchrataḥ—from danger; amocayat—delivered; drutam—quickly.

TRANSLATION

The Personality of Godhead delivered the king of the elephants, who was attacked by an alligator and who meditated upon the lotus feet of the Lord. At that time the female elephants who accompanied him were crying, and the Lord saved them from the impending danger.

PURPORT

The example of the elephant in danger who was saved by the Supreme Lord is especially cited here because even if one is an animal he can approach the Personality of Godhead in devotional service, whereas even a demigod cannot approach the Supreme Person unless he is a devotee.

TEXT 36

तं सुखराध्यमृजुभिरनन्यशरणैर्नृभिः ।
कृतज्ञः को न सेवेत दुराराध्यमसाधुभिः ॥३६॥

taṁ sukhārādhyaṁ ṛjubhir
ananya-śaraṇair nṛbhiḥ
kṛtajñaḥ ko na seveta
durārādhyaṁ asādhubhiḥ

taṁ—unto Him; sukha—easily; ārādhyaṁ—worshiped; ṛjubhiḥ—by the unpretentious; ananya—no other; śaraṇaiḥ—who take shelter; nṛbhiḥ—by men; kṛta-jñaḥ—grateful soul; kaḥ—what; na—not; seveta—would render service; durārādhyaṁ—impossible to be worshiped; asādhubhiḥ—by the nondevotees.

TRANSLATION

What grateful soul is there who would not render his loving service to such a great master as the Personality of Godhead? The Lord can be easily pleased by spotless devotees who resort exclusively to Him for protection, though the unrighteous man finds it difficult to propitiate Him.

PURPORT

Every living entity, especially persons in the human race, must feel grateful for the benedictions offered by the grace of the Supreme Lord. Anyone, therefore, with a simple heart of gratefulness must be Kṛṣṇa conscious and offer devotional service to the Lord. Those who are actually thieves and rogues do not recognize or acknowledge the benedictions offered to them by the Supreme Lord, and they cannot render Him devotional service. Ungrateful persons are those who do not understand how much benefit they are deriving by the arrangement of the Lord. They enjoy the sunshine and moonshine, and they get water free of charge, yet they do not feel grateful, but simply go on enjoying these gifts of the Lord. Therefore, they must be called thieves and rogues.

TEXT 37

यो वै हिरण्यक्षवधं महाद्भुतं
विक्रीडितं कारणक्षरात्मनः ।
शृणोति गायत्यनुमोदतेऽञ्जसा
विमुच्यते ब्रह्मवधादपि द्विजाः ॥३७॥

yo vai hiraṇyākṣa-vadhaṁ mahādbhutam
vikrīḍitaṁ kāraṇa-kṣarātmāṇaḥ
śṛṇoti gāyaty anumodate 'ñjasā
vimucyate brahma-vadhāt api dvijāḥ

yaḥ—he who; vai—indeed; hiraṇyākṣa-vadham—of the killing of Hiraṇyākṣa; mahā-adbhutam—most wonderful; vikrīḍitam—pastime; kāraṇa—for reasons like raising the earth from the ocean; sūkara—appearing in the form of a boar; ātmanah—of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; śṛṇoti—hears; gāyati—chants; anumodate—takes pleasure; añjasā—at once; vimucyate—becomes freed; brahma-vadhāt—from the sin of killing a brāhmaṇa; api—even; dvijāḥ—O brāhmaṇas.

TRANSLATION

O brāhmaṇas, anyone who hears, chants, or takes pleasure in the wonderful narration of the killing of the Hiraṇyākṣa demon by the Lord, who appeared as the first boar in order to deliver the world, is at once relieved of the results of sinful activities, even the killing of a brāhmaṇa.

PURPORT

Since the Personality of Godhead is in the absolute position, there is no difference between His pastimes and His personality. Anyone who hears about the pastimes of the Lord associates with the Lord directly, and one who associates directly with the Lord is certainly freed from all sinful activities, even to the extent of the killing of a brāhmaṇa, which is considered the most sinful activity in the material world. One should be very eager to hear about the activities of the Lord from the bona fide source, the pure devotee. If one simply gives aural reception to the narration and accepts the glories of the Lord, then he is qualified. The impersonalist philosophers cannot understand the activities of the Lord. They think that all His activities are māyā; therefore they are called Māyāvādis. Since everything to them is māyā, these narrations are not for them. Some impersonalists are reluctant to hear Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, although many of them are now taking an interest in it just for monetary gain. Actually, however, they have no faith. On the contrary, they describe it in their own way. We should not hear, therefore, from the Māyāvādis. We have to hear from Sūta Gosvāmī or Maitreya, who actually present the narrations as they are, and only then can we relish the pastimes of the Lord; otherwise the effects on the neophyte audience will be poisonous.

TEXT 38

एतन्महापुण्यमलं पवित्रं
धन्यं यशस्यं पदमापुराशिषाम् ।

प्राणेन्द्रियाणां युधि शौर्यवर्धनं
नारायणोऽन्ते गतिरङ्गं शृण्वताम् ॥३८॥

etat mahā-puṇyam alam pavitram
dhanyam yaśasyam padam āyur-āśiṣam
prāṇendriyāṇāṁ yudhi śaurya-varধানam
nārāyaṇo 'nte gatiṁ aṅga śṛṇvatām

etat—this narrative; mahā-puṇyam—conferring great merit; alam—very; pavitram—sacred; dhanyam—conferring wealth; yaśasyam—bearing fame; padam—the receptacle; āyur—of longevity; āśiṣam—of the objects of one's desire; prāṇa—of the vital organs; indriyāṇām—of the organs of action; yudhi—on the field of battle; śaurya—the strength; vardhanam—increasing; nārāyaṇaḥ—Lord Nārāyaṇa; ante—at the end of life; gatiḥ—shelter; aṅga—O dear Śaunaka; śṛṇvatām—of those who listen.

TRANSLATION

This most sacred narrative confers extraordinary merit, wealth, fame, longevity, and all the objects of one's desire. On the field of battle it promotes the strength of one's vital organs and organs of action. One who listens to it at the last moment of his life is transferred to the supreme abode of the Lord, O dear Śaunaka.

PURPORT

Devotees are generally attracted by the narratives of the pastimes of the Lord, and even though they do not prosecute austerities or meditation, this very process of hearing attentively about the pastimes of the Lord will endow them with innumerable benefits, such as wealth, fame, longevity and other desirable aims of life. If one continues to hear Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which is full of narratives of the pastimes of the Lord, at the end of this life, one is sure to be transferred to the eternal, transcendental abode of the Lord. Thus hearers are benefited both ultimately and for as long as they are in the material world. That is the supreme, sublime result of engaging in devotional service. The beginning of devotional service is to spare some time and listen to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam from the right source. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu also recommended five items of devotional service, namely to serve the devotees of the Lord, to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, to hear Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, to worship the Deity of the Lord and to live in a place of pilgrimage. Just performing these five activities can deliver one from the miserable condition of material life.

Thus end the Bhaktivedanta purports of the Third Canto, Nineteenth Chapter, of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, entitled "The Killing of the Demon Hiraṇyākṣa."

CHAPTER TWENTY

Conversation Between Maitreya and Vidura

TEXT 1

शौनक उवाच

महीं प्रतिष्ठाप्यस्व सौते स्वायम्भुवो मनुः ।
कान्यन्वतिष्ठद्द्वाराणि मार्गायावरजन्मनाम् ॥ १ ॥

śaunaka uvāca
mahīm pratiṣṭhām adhyasya
saute svāyambhuvo manuḥ
kāny anvatīṣṭhaḍ dvārāṇi
mārgāyāvara-janmanām

śaunakaḥ—Śaunaka; uvāca—said; mahīm—the earth; pratiṣṭhām—situated; adhyasya—having secured; saute—O Sūta Gosvāmī; svāyambhuvaḥ—Svāyambhuva; manuḥ—Manu; kāni—what; anvatīṣṭhaḍ—performed; dvārāṇi—ways; mārgāya—to get out; avara—later; janmanām—of those to be born.

TRANSLATION

Śrī Śaunaka inquired: O Sūta Gosvāmī, after the earth was again situated in its orbit, what did Svāyambhuva Manu do to show the path of liberation to persons who were to take birth later on?

(continued in next issue)

THE VEDIC

Transcendental Commemoration

REPEAL DRUG PROHIBITION?

by Mathureśa dāsa

Loosely organized gangs of youths in their teens and twenties are running multi-million-dollar businesses in North American cities. They're selling heroin, marijuana, PCP, hallucinogens, and, especially, crack cocaine. Gang leaders, some of whom deal directly with Columbian producers and smugglers, can buy a kilo of cocaine for \$10,000. That kilo yields 10,000 bags of crack, and a bag of crack sells on the street for \$25.

The profits are enormous, but so is the danger. In Los Angeles, which has thousands of gangs and an estimated 70,000 gang members, there were close to four hundred gang murders in 1987. Uzis, AK-47 assault rifles, and other military and paramilitary weapons are common in gang arsenals.

The drug gangs are thus often better financed than the police assigned to combat them. Law enforcement officials around the country are admitting that massive attempts to suppress the drug trade have been ineffective, and many experts are likening the rise of drug gangs to the rise of the Mafia during the Prohibition, the principal difference being that the Mafia was far less violent.

The comparison to Prohibition is telling, because it hints that officials don't believe suppression will ever work. The demand for illicit drugs today is as great as or greater than the demand for illicit alcohol during Prohibition, and history tells us that the smuggling of alcohol continued until Prohibition was repealed. So although no one has come right out and said it, the message is clear: the solution to the illegal drug trade may be to repeal drug prohibition and put drug sales under government control.

The repeal of Prohibition is not the only precedent for this kind of if-you-can't-beat-'em-join-'em course of action. The lotteries now promoted by many state governments were originally introduced, at least in part, as a solution to numbers rackets and other illegal gambling. Pro-

ceeds from state lotteries now go to worthy causes like medical care for the elderly and public education instead of into the pockets of criminals. So it could be argued that state-run drug sales would put violent gangs out of business, and that the proceeds from drug sales could go toward arming the police instead of the gangs.

Vedic authorities would agree that suppression alone is rarely successful. Because we are eternal souls, part of God, or Kṛṣṇa, who is the supreme soul and the reservoir of pleasure, it is our nature to seek ever-increasing enjoyment. When, in illusion, we identify with our material

ization is meant to restrict and ultimately eliminate the activity in question.

Giving even limited sanction to harmful activities is a dangerous business. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* records that Nārada, a great Vedic sage, strongly reprimanded Vyāsadeva, the compiler of the Vedic literature, for giving too much attention to regulated, or legalized, sense enjoyment. Nārada told Vyāsadeva:

The people in general are naturally inclined to [bodily enjoyment], and you have encouraged them in that way in the name of religion. This is verily condemned and is quite unreasonable. . . . They will accept such activities in the name of religion and will hardly care for the prohibitions.

Legalization alone, whether by Vedic authority or by current state governments, is really no better than suppression alone, because in the long run legalization will be taken as a stamp of approval for activities that are in fact criminal. State lotteries may benefit schoolchildren and the elderly, but they also infect everyone, including schoolchildren and the elderly, with gambling fever. The legalization of drugs would cut the bottom out of the gang-based drug market, but could also create an Orwellian nightmare—an entire society in drugged stupor.

But although legalization of drugs would by itself spell government-sponsored degradation, the principal culprit in such degradation would not be a demonic Big Brother state, as Orwell would have it, but rather our own extreme poverty of spiritual knowledge and spiritual pleasure. While reprimanding Vyāsadeva, Nārada further instructed him:

You have not actually broadcast the sublime and spotless glories of the Personality of Godhead. That philosophy which does not satisfy the transcendental senses of the Lord is worthless.

On the other hand, that literature which is full of descriptions of the transcendental glories of the . . . unlimited Supreme Lord [will bring about] a revolution in the impious lives of the world's misdirected civilization.

So according to Nārada, the missing factor in both the prohibition and legalization of sense enjoyment is the glorifica-



bodies, which are only temporary vehicles for the soul, we mistakenly look for that unlimited pleasure in our bodies. To this end, the illusioned soul has among his tendencies a predilection for four kinds of bodily activities: intoxication, sex, meat-eating, and gambling.

Because pleasure-seeking itself is impossible to suppress, the Vedic literature "legalizes" these four activities, though to a very limited degree. But because these apparently pleasurable pursuits put the soul further into bodily illusion, and thus further from the unlimited pleasures of self-realization, Vedic legalization should never be construed as encouragement or approval. On the contrary, so-called legali-

OBSERVER

ary on the Issues of the Day

tion of the Supreme Lord, the satisfaction of *His* senses, which is the most pleasurable of all activities. Vyāsadeva therefore responded to Nārada's instructions by writing the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, a work dedicated entirely to describing the glories of the Supreme Lord.

Vedic regulations, unlike current drug prohibition, are never meant as ends in themselves, but only as means to decrease our illusion and awaken us to higher spiritual pleasure. The *Bhagavad-gītā* explains:

Though the embodied soul may be restricted from sense enjoyment, the taste for sense enjoyment remains. But, ceasing such engagements by experiencing a higher taste, he is fixed in consciousness.

We may impose restrictions on sense enjoyment, in this case on intoxication, but those restrictions do not dull our desire, or taste, for sense pleasure. Our desires are changed, revolutionized, only when we experience a higher taste.

That the higher taste exists in the practice of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is evident from the fact that thousands of Western Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees easily accept the highest levels of Vedic regulations, which forbid intoxication of any sort, including even coffee, tea, or cigarettes. This is not a case of suppression. Devotees have experienced a superior pleasure and thus readily follow scriptural laws against intoxication to eliminate their former bad habits and increase their spiritual enjoyment.

But whether or not one accepts that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the higher taste, the principle remains that suppression of drugs is futile, and legalization harmful, if you have nothing better to offer. So you may prohibit or you may sanction, but to phase out drug use altogether, you have to offer drug users and dealers a superior form of enjoyment.

THE MAHĀBHĀRATA ON-STAGE—BUT OFF

by Nayanābhīrāma dāsa

The great Sanskrit epic *Mahābhārata* is the longest book in world litera-

ture, longer than the Bible, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Tales of King Arthur* combined. Because the *Mahābhārata* revolves around Kṛṣṇa, for years we devotees of Kṛṣṇa used to fantasize: "If only Hollywood could make a movie of the *Mahābhārata*—how wonderful it would be!" We thought Steven Spielberg could direct and arrange for special effects. Devotees even prompted the actress Hayley Mills to present the famed director with a copy of the *Mahābhārata*. And an actor who knew of our idea told Spielberg that the Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees would like him to direct a movie of one of their stories. But the kitsch



"What is night for all beings is the time of awakening for the self-controlled; and the time of awakening for all beings is night for the introspective sage."

—Lord Kṛṣṇa (Bhagavad-gītā 2.69)

meister clearly wasn't interested, replying that he knew we'd been after him for years, but that he had his own stories in his head. So much for that dream.

Although the *Mahābhārata* still hasn't made it to Hollywood, it has made its appearance in Western theatre in a big way with the nine-hour production by Peter Brook and Jean-Claude Carrière. Unfortunately, despite the grandeur of the production, it lacks the essential ingredient of devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa. For devotees,

therefore, it is a disappointment.

The *Mahābhārata* is a compendium of Vedic philosophy and history. Centering on the global battle between the Pāṇḍava brothers and their cousins the Kuru, the *Mahābhārata* is basically a struggle between the forces of good and evil. At the core of the epic lies the *Bhagavad-gītā*, a pre-battle dialogue between Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotee the warrior Arjuna.

The *Gītā* contains the essence of the *Vedas*, or transcendental knowledge. And although interpreters of the *Gītā* often reduce its message to a homily to perform one's duty, its actual, essential message is to render loving service (*bhakti*) unto Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The nine-hour stage adaptation of the *Mahābhārata* by Peter Brook and Jean-Claude Carrière is a prominent example of missing this essential point. Of course, this is not surprising, since in the *Gītā* itself Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that its most confidential message cannot be understood by those who are not devoted to Him. Although both Brook and Carrière are eminently qualified dramatists, being nondevotees they could not penetrate into the mysteries of the *Gītā* and, hence, the *Mahābhārata* as a whole. By their own admission, they could not comprehend the transcendental position of Kṛṣṇa.

In the introduction of the published script, Carrière reveals his bewilderment. He confesses, "Kṛṣṇa presented us with a special problem . . . man or god? It is obviously not up to us to decide. Any theological truth, controversial by its very nature, is closed to us—our aim is a certain dramatic truth." Although admitting his ignorance of Kṛṣṇa, he did not realize that by not understanding the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa, he missed out on the dramatic truth as well. Without understanding Kṛṣṇa's position as the prime mover of the *Mahābhārata* (what to speak of His being the primal cause of all causes), and without understanding the great bond of love between Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa, one cannot understand the *Mahābhārata*.

What spoils the Brook/Carrière production is precisely this, that Kṛṣṇa is depicted as an ordinary mortal—not only is He not given any special costume or

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

Getting the Picture of God

This is a continuation of a conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and reporters in Melbourne, Australia, on June 29, 1974.

Reporter 2: Your Divine Grace, the various scriptures I've read refer often to the life breath. They say the breath comes directly from God, so one path of *yoga* is to concentrate on the breath and then on God.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. There are various kinds of air within the body, and the soul is within the heart, floating on those airs. So one preliminary form of *yoga* has to do with controlling those airs. At the time of death, the idea is to elevate the soul from the heart to the *brahma-randhra*, a small opening at the top of the head. From there the soul goes out to any planet he desires. Naturally he'll desire to go to a spiritual planet, where he can live without material miseries and in association with God. That is the goal of *yoga*. But here in your country, *yoga* means a certain type of physical exercise. Yes.

Reporter 3: And this path of devotional *yoga* or *bhakti-yoga* that you teach—this is the path for this time, this age?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. *Bhakti-yoga* is the real *yoga*. You'll find in *Bhagavad-gītā* that when the Lord describes the *yoga* system, He says, *yoginām api sarveṣāṁ mad-gaṇāntar-ātmānā/ śraddhāvān bhajate yo māṁ sa me yuktatamo mataḥ*: "The first-class *yogī* is he who is always thinking of Me [Kṛṣṇa] within himself and rendering transcendental loving service to Me." The *bhakti-yogī* is the first-class *yogī*. So these students of ours are being taught how to think of Kṛṣṇa always, twenty-four hours a day, without any stop. And that is first-class *yoga*.

Reporter 3: To think about something, don't you first have to see it?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes.

Reporter 3: Well, are you showing your disciples Kṛṣṇa?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Oh, yes. Certainly.

Reporter 3: Then what is Kṛṣṇa?

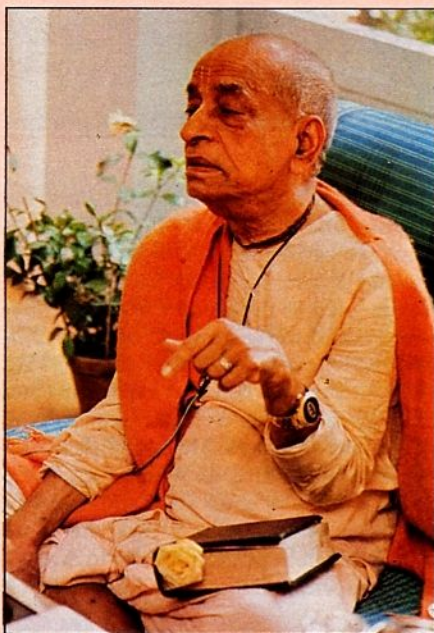
Śrīla Prabhupāda: Ask my disciples. They have already seen Kṛṣṇa. Ask them. They'll tell you what Kṛṣṇa is. But let me ask you, as before: if they give realized information about Kṛṣṇa, will you accept it?

Reporter 3: Yes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda [motioning]: Then see. Here is Kṛṣṇa.

Reporter 3: But that's a painting.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is a painting. Sup-



pose a painting of you were there. Could I not say, "Here is Mr. Such-and-such"?

Reporter 3: Yes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Then what is the wrong there?

Reporter 3: Well, to paint me, the artist would have to see me.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, first of all, are you in your picture or not?

Reporter 3: Yes, I am.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa is in His picture. But the difference is that people cannot talk with your picture, but we can talk with Kṛṣṇa's picture. That is the difference.

Reporter 3: But some of these pictures of Kṛṣṇa seem a bit different.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. We are speaking of the basic principle. Kṛṣṇa's blackish-bluish colour is there. Kṛṣṇa's flute is there. Kṛṣṇa's peacock feather is there. These things are described in the *sāstra*, the scripture. So these paintings follow the actual form of Kṛṣṇa described in the scripture.

Now, take even a painting of yourself. One man may paint your face a little differently from the way another man paints it. But on the whole, your form is the same, and of course, it does not depend on the painter's conception. So Kṛṣṇa's form is not dependent on the painter's conception but on the description of His features given in the scripture. Since Kṛṣṇa is absolute, He and His picture are nondifferent.

Reporter 3: But if a painter were to paint a

picture of me or anybody else, first he'd directly study the subject—a living subject.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. In this case, also, the subject is living. Kṛṣṇa is living, and in the scripture He is described: "Kṛṣṇa's colour is bluish. In His hand Kṛṣṇa has got a flute. Kṛṣṇa has got a peacock feather on His head." And *tri-bhaṅga-lalitām*: "Kṛṣṇa stands gracefully, His form curving in three places." *Tri-bhaṅga* means that when He stands, in three places His form curves. You see. *Śyāmāṁ tri-bhaṅga-lalitām niyata-prakāśam*: "Kṛṣṇa's graceful dark-bluish, threefold-bending form is eternally manifest." These are the descriptions given in the *Vedas*. And for instance, from these descriptions my students have painted so many pictures. From these descriptions I have simply given hints that "This picture should be like this." So they take note and make the pictures, and people very much appreciate our pictures. So you can paint pictures by consulting the scriptural authority—the *Vedas*—and those who have studied the *Vedas*. That is what we are doing. If you are intelligent, you can make genuine pictures of God like that.

Reporter 3: But still, somebody must have seen Kṛṣṇa to actually paint Him.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. People have seen Kṛṣṇa. For instance, when Kṛṣṇa was present on this earth, so many people saw Him. Ever since then, people have built so many temples. And by worshiping the Deity in their temples, they are regularly worshiping Kṛṣṇa's form—just as it is described in the Vedic literature and as the people centuries ago saw personally.

Reporter 3: But has anybody now actually seen Kṛṣṇa? Now?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: How can someone see Kṛṣṇa now? One has to see through the *paramparā*, the disciplic succession that began with those who saw Kṛṣṇa. You may not have seen your grandfather. How do you know what he was like? How do you know? Your grandfather and his father you have not seen. How do you know anything about them?

Reporter 3: By your parents' telling you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Your father has seen your grandfather. Although you may not have seen him, still, your father can describe all about your grandfather. "My father was like this, like this, and like this." What is the difficulty? So therefore, you have to receive knowledge from the authorities, the disciplic succession. ☐

(To be continued.)

make-up to differentiate Him from the other actors, but He is portrayed as a cunning and unscrupulous partisan. Granted, Kṛṣṇa does sometimes display trickery, but it must be understood in the context of His transcendental position as the Supreme Lord. Whereas the *Gītā* reveals Kṛṣṇa as the summum bonum, and the highest morality as acting to please Him, in the Brook/Carriere stage version of the *Mahābhārata*, Kṛṣṇa is just another mysterious character.

Queen Kuṇṭī, Kṛṣṇa's aunt and the mother of the Pāṇḍavas, spoke of the common man's misunderstanding of Kṛṣṇa in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.8.19, 29):

You are invisible to the foolish observer, exactly as an actor dressed as a player is not recognized. . . . O Lord, no one can understand Your transcendental pastimes, which appear to be human and are so misleading. You have no specific object of favor, nor do You have any object of envy. People only imagine that You are partial.

Brook, like the "foolish observer" of Kuṇṭī's prayer, was also unable to recognize Kṛṣṇa, and thus he had the Lord dressed as an ordinary man.

In his introduction to the published script, Brook credits his initial interest in the *Mahābhārata* to his having attended a demonstration of Kathakālī dance in Paris. He found the enactment of the episodes from the *Mahābhārata* so strange that "I could only guess at something mythical and remote, from another culture, nothing to do with my life."

Fascinated by the story nonetheless, Brook was inspired to adapt it for the stage. But he never tried to understand the inner meaning of the *Mahābhārata*. Rather, in an effort to make the story relevant to his own life—and, by implication, to modern man—Brook reduced the *Mahābhārata* to a parable about nuclear

weapons and the fate of the human race.

True, there is some similarity between the nuclear weaponry of our day and the *brahmāstra* weapons described in the *Mahābhārata*. But there is also a great difference. The *brahmāstra* would affect only a predetermined, individual target. It would not indiscriminately annihilate millions of innocent civilians. The etiquette of the Vedic martial class (*kṣatriyas*) was such that only other warriors could be killed, and only during daylight. No itchy fingers could surreptitiously "press the button." And the *brahmāstra* could be released only by one who was qualified by being thoroughly versed in the subtle science of sound.

According to the accounts of the *Mahābhārata* itself, 640 million soldiers died in the eighteen-day Battle of Kurukṣetra. Yet however shocking such an incomprehensible mortality statistic may be, what Brook, Carriere, and other nonbelievers fail to appreciate is that the whole battle was arranged by Lord Kṛṣṇa just to rid the earth of demonic kings and to establish the righteous as the rulers of the world.

Kṛṣṇa takes great pains in the *Gītā* to explain to Arjuna how such "killing" on the battlefield was inevitable and not at all lamentable. The eternal soul can never be killed, Kṛṣṇa explained; only the temporary, changing body is killed. Brook and Carriere, along with most people in the materialistic West, apparently have no understanding of this fundamental truth. Of course, Kṛṣṇa's encouraging Arjuna to fight on the battlefield should never be taken as justification for killing. Even the unnecessary killing of an ant is forbidden in the Vedic literature.

By attempting to relate the Battle of Kurukṣetra to the plight of modern man, Brook has misconstrued the important message of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Mahābhārata*. Yet *Bhagavad-gītā* is rele-

vant to modern man—because its message, though spoken to a particular person at a particular time in a particular place, is universal and timeless. The message spoken by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is that we should return to our original, constitutional position as His devotees. He wants everyone to love Him, worship Him, and serve Him by whatever God-given talents he or she may possess. In other words, if Peter Brook wants to make *Bhagavad-gītā* relevant to his life, he should produce plays that glorify God and deal with man's relationship with Him.

One drama critic has suggested that one should not go to the Brook/Carriere production of the *Mahābhārata* seeking spiritual enlightenment, just as one would not watch Cecil B. de Mille's movie *The Ten Commandments* to learn about the Bible. But that needn't be the case. Even if the audience doesn't share in the values and beliefs presented onstage, if the performers believe and are committed to raising the consciousness of the audience, their performances can produce that effect.

Brook himself admits the shortcomings of his production. As he once said in an interview, "The pinnacle of the *Mahābhārata* is the *Bhagavad-gītā*, but in our production we don't present it or have it spoken—we just have Kṛṣṇa whisper it to Arjuna. You don't get cured in a theatre! But if you want to go further, there is the *Gītā* . . . and the whole rest of your life to continue your search."

Bravo! But, I ask, why not get cured in the theatre? Why not get cured of the illusory bodily conception of life? Theatre has traditionally been a place for enlightenment, instruction, and purification. Why not bring theatre back to its roots? If the masses will not read the *Gītā* or cannot understand it, why not put its real message on stage, video, and cinema screens? ☐

FREEDOM

(continued from page 8)

spiritual mode of pure goodness. Within the three modes, I also have some freedom to choose the mode I prefer. I can, by practice, develop in my life the mode of goodness, the mode of passion, or the mode of ignorance.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* describes the differ-

ent kinds of work, knowledge, determination, happiness, food, charity, faith, and so on characteristic of each mode. So we have some freedom, in other words, to choose which mode will dictate our desires. And if we like, we can take credit for our successes in fulfilling those dictated desires. But in any case, if I choose to maintain my false ego, I must serve the modes within the cycle of birth and death.

I may also, however, choose to develop the mode of pure goodness through the practice of *bhakti* in the association of pure devotees of Kṛṣṇa. If I thus choose to revive my original Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then I gradually regain my pure status as an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, free to render Him varieties of devotional service with the full cooperation of His deathless spiritual nature. ☐

REFLECTION

(continued from page 5)

God. You cannot understand God, or Kṛṣṇa, without being His faithful servant. This is the secret. If we become His faithful servant under the guidance of a proper spiritual master, we can understand Kṛṣṇa and His loving affairs with Rādhārāṇī,

and we can understand Lord Caitanya. These things will all be revealed.

This knowledge is not acquired by mundane efforts. That is not possible. *Svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*: Kṛṣṇa will reveal Himself when He is pleased with your service. Suppose it is dark outside and you want the sunshine. That is not possible. But in the morning, when the sun comes

out automatically, the darkness is dissipated. Similarly, knowledge of Kṛṣṇa will automatically be revealed to us if we serve Him faithfully. So we should always remain faithful servants of Kṛṣṇa, and when He is pleased by our service He will reveal Himself to us. Otherwise, it is not possible to understand Him.

Thank you very much. ☐

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

“Save Earth Now!”

For as long as there has been civilization on this planet, human beings have been abusing the earth. Thinking themselves lords over all they survey, they have taken without restriction whatever they desire for sense gratification, without considering that in the future there may be nothing left. Whole species have been killed, rivers and seas ruined, and the air polluted with poisonous waste. It seems only a matter of time before mankind destroys its habitat and that of all other creatures.

Śrī *Īsopaniṣad* describes man's proper relationship to the earth: “Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one should not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong.” Clearly, this philosophy must be applied not only to individuals but also to governments. In the purport to this verse, Śrīla Prabhupāda says that there can be no peace if countries claim proprietorship over the resources of nature. “If they do not recognize the proprietorship of the Supreme Lord, all the property they claim as their own is stolen. Consequently, they are liable to punishment by the laws of nature.” The possible agents of punishment are innumerable. The earth can be destroyed by nuclear bombs, or slowly choked to death by fumes.

The earth, which is God's energy, supplies all creatures, each taking from it according to his particular body. But among the species, human beings have a responsibility toward the earth. Man is the big brother of all other creatures. As it states in the Bible, man has “dominion” over all the animals. Although many persons take this to mean that they can kill other species, a devotee of Kṛṣṇa understands that “dominion” means that man has the responsibility to protect all life on earth and to allow the different creatures to take from the earth what they need. If everyone takes only what is needed, this will guarantee the proper relationship between the planet and those who dwell on it. By Lord Kṛṣṇa's grace, there is enough for everyone, but when there is misuse and the balance is disturbed, everyone's life is endangered.

We can find few modern examples of peoples who live in a healthy relationship with the earth. Native Americans,

as they lived prior to the invasion of the white man, are among those who maintained a sane relationship with nature. They did not consider themselves proprietors of the land, for they believed that the land belonged to the Great Spirit, who provided it for their use. They were religious and believed that all things in nature were regulated by gods. Their religion was primitive in the sense that they prayed for material things, such as rain. A relationship with God based on personal maintenance is not the highest form of religion. But at least the native Americans lived in harmony with their environment, in a God conscious way.

The Kṛṣṇa conscious devotee, concerned for all living entities, naturally advocates a proper relationship with the earth. Although devotees are transcendentalists and aspire to go back to the eternal kingdom of God, a spiritual planet, they still care about the earth. It is here that we must develop our God consciousness. And unless we live here peacefully, we will not be able to pursue spiritual life.

To prosecute God consciousness on earth, as well as to attain ecological balance, devotees recommend living simply. The *Bhagavad-gītā* states, *annād bhavanti bhūtāni parjanyaśchanna-sambhavaḥ*: All living beings subsist on food grains, and food grains come from the rain. According to Vedic knowledge, grains grow because of rain, and rain comes from *yajña*, or sacrifice performed in the course of executing one's duties as taught in the *Vedas*. Certainly, everyone lives on the earth and takes his foodstuffs from the earth. Even meat-eaters depend on food grains, since the animals they eat live off the grains. Therefore industry is not as important as growing food. Man can actually solve his economic needs just by living on a little land and keeping cows. Living simply in relation with the land creates a natural balance between ourselves and the earth and encourages us to take only what we need.

The principle of *yajña*, sacrifice, points up another relationship the Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees have to the earth. The first major newspaper coverage of Śrīla Prabhupāda and the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in America appeared in a New York City newspaper, the *East Village Other*, with the headline “SAVE EARTH NOW!” A photo with the article showed Śrīla Prabhupāda and the

devotees chanting in Tompkins Square Park, New York. The editors, whether they meant it seriously or in fun, were saying that Prabhupāda had come to preach a message to save the world.

In fact, by performing *kīrtana* (the chanting of God's names), which is the prescribed *yajña* for this age, the earth can be saved. As Śrīla Prabhupāda has written in a *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* purport, “Ultimately, we have to depend on the production of the field and not on the production of the big factory. The field production is due to sufficient rain. *Saṅkīrtana-yajña* must therefore be performed to save us at least from scarcity of food supply.”

Chanting the holy names of God is the best method of serving Kṛṣṇa and pleasing ourselves. As food comes by *yajña*, so by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa people are getting food. We still must plow the earth, but if the earth is plowed and there is no God consciousness, there will be scarcity. By the public chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, which is *saṅkīrtana-yajña*, devotees are trying to safeguard the population from hunger and other difficulty.

The atheist will scoff at the idea that there is a relation between praise of God and natural production, but when there is a severe drought, the atheist can bring hundreds of tractors into the field, and he can bring forth all modern technology, but he cannot produce food. And when leaders lack God consciousness and deny that all creatures are God's offspring, they do not allow for fair distribution of food among the people of the earth.

Saṅkīrtana-yajña also means distribution of knowledge. By this *yajña*, devotees are performing the most important welfare activity. Some people think that the Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees would be doing better if they worked in some other way to help the social condition. But pleasing God is the most important thing, and if everyone did it, so many problems would be solved.

People are taking unnecessarily from the earth and upsetting its natural balance. They should learn from Kṛṣṇa what their quota is, and they should not take more than they need. Although the situation on earth is already critical, it is still not too late, provided we turn to a sane and spiritual relationship with the earth and among human beings. The current mismanagement of earth's resources will only end in ruin. —SDG



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—From *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.1.2, purport)
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