

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



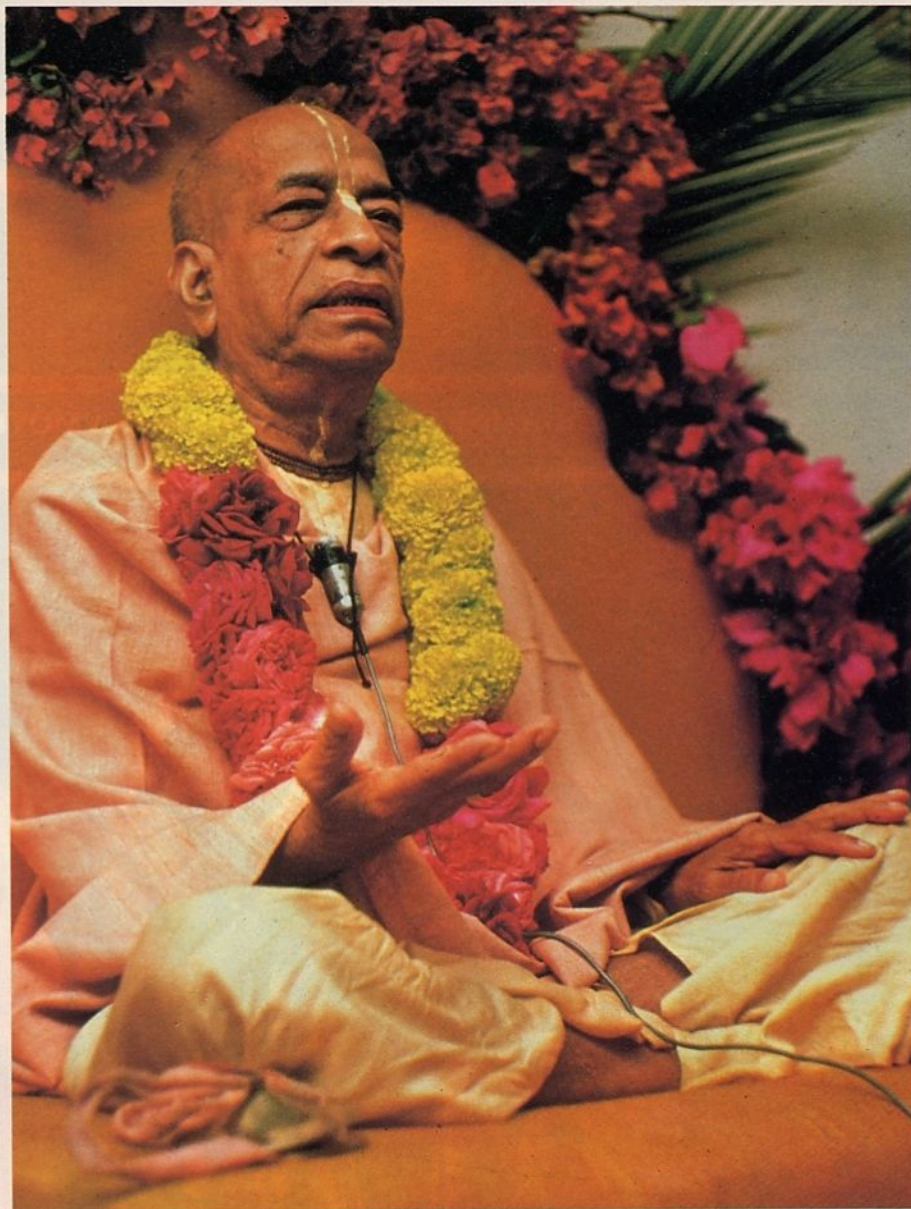
Vol.23 No.11

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT





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



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

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



# BACK TO GODHEAD

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

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### A Note to Our Subscribers

We'd like to apologize for the magazine's late arrival the past few months. We're working to insure that this inconvenience doesn't continue. *Back to Godhead* is in transition, and the changes are slowing us down a little. Although the magazine has been produced and printed in the United States for many years, we are now faced with costs that make it more reasonable for us to print overseas. This change has taken us some time. Although we regret the inconvenience this has caused you, we are hopeful that this transition will allow us to continue to produce the same high-quality magazine that has won us many loyal subscribers over the years.



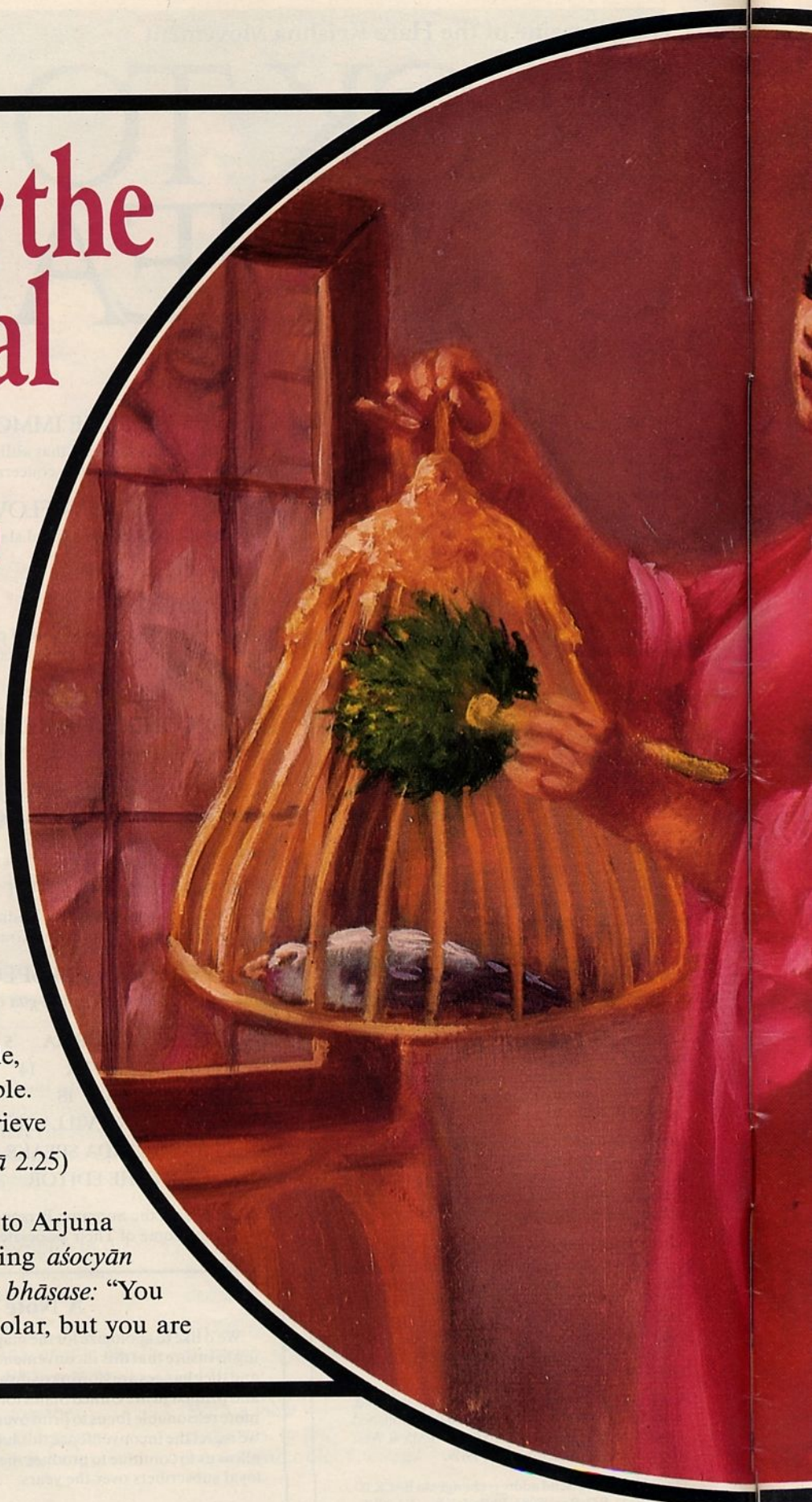
# Caring for the Immortal SOUL

A lecture in London, England, on  
August 28, 1973, by His Divine  
Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami  
Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of  
the International Society for  
Krishna Consciousness.

*avyakto 'yam acintyo 'yam  
avikāryo 'yam ucyate  
tasmād evaṁ viditvainam  
nānuśocitum arhasi*

“It is said that the soul is invisible,  
inconceivable, and immutable.  
Knowing this, you should not grieve  
for the body.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.25)

Lord Kṛṣṇa began His teachings to Arjuna  
in the *Bhagavad-gītā* by saying *aśocyān  
anvaśocas tvaṁ prajñā-vādāṁś ca bhāṣase*: “You  
are talking like a learned scholar, but you are



Text and painting ©The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust





lamenting for the body, which is not at all important” [Bg. 2.11]. Here He says the same thing: *nānu-śocitum arhasi*. “Do not take this body very seriously. The soul is the real subject matter to be considered.”

The modern civilization is concerned only with the body—just the opposite of what Kṛṣṇa says. We should understand the principle that the soul is immortal and the body is temporary. The real factor is the soul. We have to take care of the soul, not the body. So far as the body is concerned, there are pains and pleasures, which come and go like climatic changes. They are not permanent. So you have to learn how to tolerate these bodily pains and pleasures (*tāms titikṣasva*) and take care of the soul. But in the modern civilization people have no knowledge of the soul, what to speak of how to take care of it. Like animals, they are absorbed in the bodily concept of life, taking much care of the body but forgetting the soul. This is the lamentable condition of the modern civilization. Simply an animal civilization. The animals simply take care of the body but have no information of the soul. So this civilization is an animal civilization, full of *mūḍhas*. *Mūḍha* means “ass.”

Now, if we say this to the people in general, they’ll be



angry at us. But this is the actual situation. The *Bhāgavatam* says, *yasyātma-buddhiḥ kuṇape tri-dhātuke . . . sa eva go-kharaḥ*: "One who takes his body to be his self is no better than a cow or an ass." What is this body? Nothing but a bag of *kapha*, *pitta*, and *vāyu*—mucus, bile, and air—and their by-products.

Everything in this material world is like that—a combination of material elements. Take this house, for example. What is this house? *Tejo-vāri-mṛdām*: a combination of fire, water, and earth. You take some earth, you add water, and you mix them. Then you take the mixture and put it into a fire, and it becomes brick. If you powder it, it becomes cement. Then you combine the bricks and cement, and it becomes a skyscraper building.

So, everything in this material world is simply a combination of five ingredients: fire, water, and earth, plus air and sky for drying. Similarly, the body is also a combination of five elements. There is no essential difference. Because in the big skyscraper building there is no soul, it stands in one place. But the body has a soul, and therefore it moves. That is the difference. So the soul is the important thing.

In an airplane there is no soul, but the pilot becomes the "soul." He operates the controls, and therefore it moves. Without the pilot the plane would not move. Similarly, without the presence of the soul, nothing can move. Either the thing must have a soul, or some other soul must control it. Then it will move.

Therefore, the important thing is the soul, not this material body. So anyone who's accepting this material body as very important is fool number one. For example, the other day some rascals came here demanding food. They were very eager to feed the body. The said they were "starving." They didn't know that there is spiritual starvation. Physical starvation may be there, but actually that is not a problem, because there is sufficient arrangement for maintaining this material body. Real starvation is starvation of the soul. The soul is not getting spiritual food.

This meeting is meant for giving food to the starving spirit soul. And as soon as we get some spiritual food, we become happy (*yayātmā suprasīdati*). Unless we get spiritual food, we cannot be really satisfied. Suppose you have a bird within a cage, and you simply clean the cage very nicely and cover it and paint it, while the bird within the cage is crying out of starvation. Is that very intelligent? Similarly, as spirit souls we are encaged within this body, and although we are taking great care of the bodily cage, we are starving for lack of spiritual food. We are not happy being encaged in this body, and so our natural aspiration is to get free from this en-

cagement, as much as the bird struggles to get free from its cage.

Yesterday we learned from *Bhagavad-gītā* that the soul is *sarva-gataḥ*, "able to go anywhere." It has that freedom. Those who are advanced in yogic power can also move anywhere they like. There are still *yogīs* in India who early in the morning take a bath in four holy places—Hardwar, Jagannātha Purī, Rāmeśvaram, and Dvārakā. Within one hour they bathe in these four places. They dip into the water in one place, and by a yogic process they come out a few minutes later a thousand miles away in another holy body of water. It's as if you were to take a dip in the Thames River here in London, and when you came out you were in the Ganges at Calcutta. This is *sarva-gataḥ*, "going everywhere." The soul has so much freedom

**N**ow the scientists are trying to travel into outer space by machine. But there is no need of a machine. As a spirit soul you have your own power. You can move anywhere very fast. Now this power is being checked by the material body.

that he can go anywhere he likes.

It is only our body that is an impediment checking our freedom. But if you get rid of this material body and are situated in your spiritual body, you can go anywhere you like. For example, Nārada Muni can move anywhere. Sometimes he goes to Vaikuṇṭhaloka, the spiritual world, and sometimes he comes to this material world. Because he has a spiritual body, he's free to move anywhere.

Now the scientists are trying to travel into outer space by machine. But there is no need of a machine. As a spirit soul you have your own power. You can move anywhere very fast. Unfortunately, now this power is being checked by the material body.

Therefore, one should be very much concerned about getting the soul out of

this encagement of the material body. That should be our first concern. Those who are simply concerned with this body are no better than animals. So this so-called modern civilization, having no information of the soul, is simply a pack of animals. That's all.

Modern people do not care about the results of their activities; they do not care whether they perform pious or vicious activities. That is demonic civilization. As Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [16.7], *pravṛtīm ca nivṛtīm ca janā na vidur āsurāḥ*. The *asuras* are atheists, fools and rascals who do not know what is *pravṛtti* and what is *nivṛtti*. *Pravṛtti* means "subject matter we should take interest in," and *nivṛtti* means "subject matter we should not take interest in." The *asuras* do not know the difference.

Every living entity has two natures, spiritual and material. Materially, the inclination is toward sex enjoyment, meat-eating, and intoxication (*loke vyavāyā-miṣa-madya-sevā*). And the *Bhāgavatam* says, *nityā hi jantoḥ*: These are always the tendencies for the living entity in the material world. When one is in the material world he is called *jantu*, "animal." Although one is constitutionally a living entity, or *jīva* soul, he's not called "*jīva* soul" when he's in the material concept of life. He's called *jantu*. Anyone devoid of spiritual knowledge is called *jantu*, or "animal." This is the scriptural injunction.

So as long as we continue to change from one material body to another, we remain animals. And like any animal, we are forced to tolerate so much suffering. For example, a bullock yoked to a cart must undergo so much whipping. He has to tolerate it; he cannot get out of it. Similarly, when the cows are taken to the slaughterhouse to be killed, they have to tolerate it. There is no way out. This is the position of the *jantu*.

Anyone who has surrendered to the material nature has to suffer. There is no way out. As soon as you accept a material body, you must suffer (*kleśada āsa dehaḥ*). This material body means suffering. But people do not know this. They make so many arrangements and plans to become happy, to become peaceful without any miserable condition, but the rascals do not know that so long as you have a material body—whether a king's body or an ant's body—you must suffer.

Therefore Kṛṣṇa says here, "Take care of the soul. Just try to understand how important the soul is. Don't lament for the body. In this body you will get so much suffering, so much comfort; it is already settled up."

Now, one may ask, "Why does one living entity get a king's body and another get a pig's body? There are so many different types of bodies. Why this variety?" Kṛṣṇa



explains this variety in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [13.22]: *kāraṇam guṇa-saṅgo 'sya sad-asadyoni-janmasu*. "Because the living entity associates with different kinds of material qualities, he gets different types of bodies."

Therefore our business should be not to associate with the material qualities, even the quality of goodness, *sattva-guṇa*. One who is conducted by *sattva-guṇa* has brahminical qualities—self-control, tolerance, and so on—but devotional service to Kṛṣṇa makes one transcendental even to these good qualities. Even if somehow or other a person takes birth in a *brāhmaṇa* family and strictly executes his brahminical duties, he's still conditioned under the laws of material nature. And what to speak of others, those in the modes of passion and ignorance. Their position is most abominable. As Kṛṣṇa says, *ja-ghanya-guṇa-vṛtti-sthā adho gacchanti tām-asāḥ*: "Those in the mode of ignorance sink down to a very abominable condition."

In this age of Kali almost everyone is in the mode of ignorance. In other words, almost everyone is a *śūdra* (*kālu śūdra-sambhavaḥ*). This means they have no spiritual knowledge. One who knows, "I am a spirit soul; I am not this body" is a *brāhmaṇa*, and one who does not know this is a *śūdra*.

Here in our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement the students are trying to understand what spiritual life is, and if somehow or other one of them understands at least that he's a spirit soul, then he becomes a *brāhmaṇa*. But one who does not understand this is a *kṛpāna*. *Kṛpāna* means "miser." Why is he a miser? Because he is wasting his valuable human form of life. These are the śāstric injunctions.

So, first of all we have to become *brāhmaṇas*. A *brāhmaṇa* knows, *aham brahmāsmi*, "I am a spirit soul." And by such knowledge one is relieved of all anxiety (*brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā*). If there is a burden on your head and it is taken away, you feel relieved. Similarly, the ignorance of thinking that "I am this body" is a great burden, and when we get rid of this burden, we feel relieved.

When one understands that he is not this body but rather a spirit soul, he naturally asks, "Why am I working so hard to maintain this lump of matter? Let me try for my real necessity, spiritual life." That is a great relief. Then there is no more lamenting or hankering (*na śocati na kāṅkṣati*). This is the *brahma-bhūta* platform.

So, our actual business is to come to the *brahma-bhūta* platform. Then we will not be disturbed by bodily pains and pleasures. Actually, there is no pleasure. Simply pain. On the bodily platform pleasure means a little absence of pain. For example, suppose you have a boil. So, it is painful. But if by some medical application the

(continued on page 10)

# Cooking with KŪRMA



Anugha dāsa

Based on the videotape series *Cooking With Kūrma*, produced by ISKCON Television (ITV), this column features the gourmet recipes and authentic Indian techniques of ISKCON's famous Australian chef Kūrma dāsa.

## Mung Dāl

(Serves 5-6)

*Dāls* are rich, hearty soups made from whole or split legumes. They're rich in iron, B-vitamins, and vegetable protein. They combine well with vegetables, grains, nuts, seeds, and dairy products.

### Ingredients

¾ cup whole mung beans	2½ tablespoons lemon juice
1 tablespoon peeled minced fresh ginger	1 tablespoon brown sugar
½ teaspoon fresh minced green chilies	1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon turmeric	2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley
6 cups boiling water	2½ tablespoons ghee (clarified butter) or oil
1 cup chopped tomatoes	1 teaspoon cumin seeds
	½ teaspoon asafoetida

1. Wash and sort beans, being careful to remove any stones.
2. Add the beans, ginger, chilies, and turmeric to water in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil and simmer for about 45 minutes, until

the beans begin to break down.

3. Add the tomatoes, lemon juice, brown sugar, salt, and parsley. Stir. Continue to simmer uncovered.

4. Heat the ghee in a small pot or metal ladle for about one minute. Add the cumin seeds and fry until dark brown. Add the asafoetida and fry for 10 to 15 seconds. Add to the soup. Stir, then simmer for 5 more minutes. Offer to Kṛṣṇa hot.



Puruṣārtha dāsa





Roger Anney

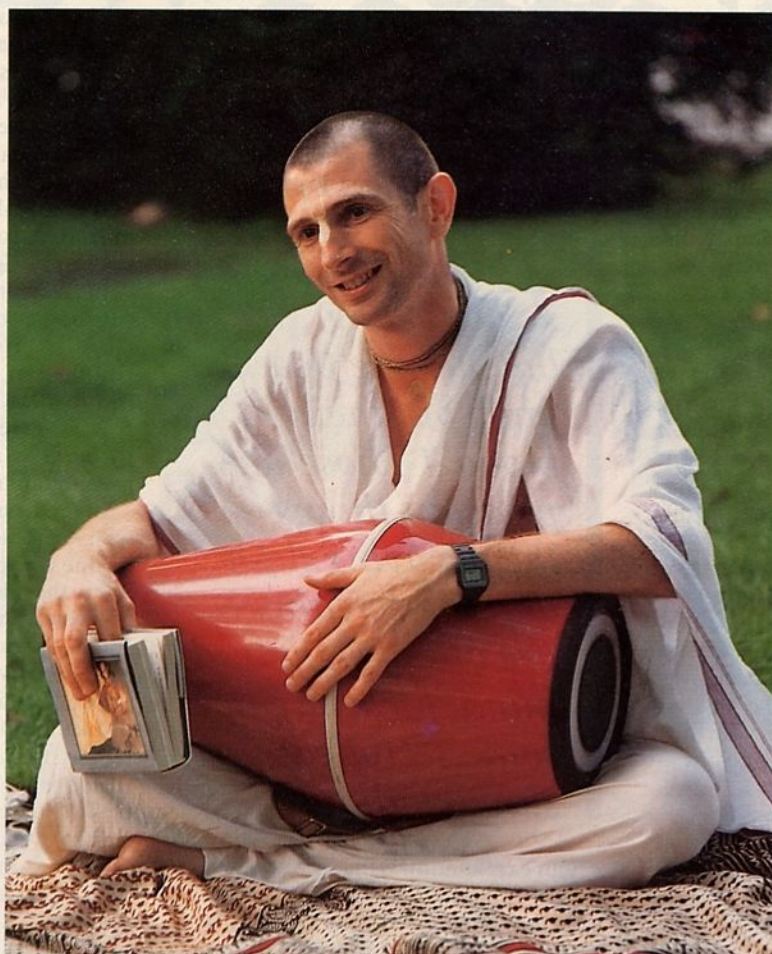


Vegetarians are just self-righteous vegetable-killers, some people say, and their milk-drinking implicates them in violence.

# A Leaf, A Fruit, A Flower

A Sunday Feast lecture in Detroit, Michigan, on February 8, 1987,

by ROHINĪNANDANA DĀSA



Bob Roberts

## PART II

Nowadays vegetarianism is becoming popular for various economic, health, and ethical reasons; but spiritual reasons are more difficult for people to comprehend. Some people ask, "What's the difference between being a vegetarian and being a meat-eater? An animal has a soul, and a plant has a soul, and if you've got to kill the plant, then why not kill an animal? It's the same. You just killed a carrot. The carrot's dead, and the animal's dead. So what's the difference?" Suppose you're trying to convince somebody to become a vegetarian, and he says that to you. What are you going to say? **Response:** There are spiritual reasons, and there are also material reasons. The spiritual reason is that you cannot offer meat to Kṛṣṇa, and materially, you can argue that



vegetables are not as developed.

**Rohiṇinandana dāsa:** Yes. The carrot has a less developed consciousness than an animal. So the amount of inconvenience you put a carrot through is considerably less than that of an animal. That's clear. You could also reply, "Well, why don't you eat a human child? If there's no difference between killing a carrot and killing a cow, then why not eat a human baby?"

Seriously, if you look at a small human baby, there is not much difference between it and an animal, is there? The animal feels a bit of pain, and the baby feels a bit of pain, so we might as well eat the human baby. But of course nobody wants to eat a human baby. "No, no, I couldn't eat a human baby. They're very different from animals. They've got different potential." So if there is such a great difference between a human baby and an animal, how much more is there between a cow and a blade of grass or a carrot? Obviously, then, there is a difference in consciousness.

The other reason is that we're "Kṛṣṇa-tarians." We eat only what we offer to Kṛṣṇa. We're not exactly vegetarians. We find out what Kṛṣṇa wants us to offer Him. He says He wants a leaf, a fruit, a flower, or water. This means that vegetables, fruits, nuts, milk, juice, and all kinds of produce can be offered to Him and then eaten.

**Question:** The Bible says you can offer meat to God.

**Rohiṇinandana dāsa:** Not always. In Isaiah 1:11, the Lord says, "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me? I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of your fed beasts; and I delighteth not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs or of goats. . . . Bring no more vain oblations. . . . Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hateth. . . . and when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide Mine eyes from you. Yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear, for your hands are full of blood." And in Isaiah 66:3: "He that killeth an ox is as he that slayeth a man. . . . Yea they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations."

You may cite other verses, where the Bible appears to recommend animal sacrifices, but could it not be that the Bible sanctions animal sacrifices for the di-hard flesh-eaters?

It's very clear, at least in the Vedic literatures, that God doesn't want us to offer Him flesh and blood, and even the Christians sense that, because if you go to church on Thanksgiving you'll see wheat, apples, oranges, grapes, and other produce. You never see decorations of intestines and sheep's heads on the altar. You never see that.

But why not? It means that they can't think animal-killing is really wonderful. People sing, "We plow the fields and scatter the good seed on the land." You go into

the church, and there are flowers and all kinds of pleasant things. People in church don't sing, "We butcher the beasts and spill their blood"! Those unpleasant things—the decaying flesh and the screams—are out of sight and mind, far away in some secluded slaughterhouse.

Now, somebody could say, "Well, you Hare Kṛṣṇa people are drinking milk, eating butter and cheese, and using ghee for cooking. In a factory farm, when the cow can't give milk anymore, she is slaughtered for her meat. By drinking milk you are supporting this system. Therefore you should become a vegan like me." What would you say then?

**Response:** To get the milk doesn't mean you have to kill the cow.

**Rohiṇinandana dāsa:** But the vegan will say, "The cow's milk is meant for her calf, and you're taking it." What do you say then?

*People in church  
Don't sing, "We  
butcher the beasts  
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blood"! Those un-  
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slaughterhouse.*

Our explanation is that if you offer that milk to God, the cow benefits spiritually, even though she's living on a factory farm. From the Vedic point of view, it is important for human beings to have animal protein, especially if you want to cultivate spiritual life. And that animal protein comes in the form of cow's milk. Milk is actually the blood of the cow miraculously transformed into milk. The cow eats grass, the grass becomes blood, then the blood becomes milk, which we can drink as it is or prepare in many different ways.

Milk is the most miraculous of all foods. According to the *Vedas*, milk is meant for consumption by human beings. In fact, the *Vedas* say that five thousand years ago, cows gave more milk than they do today. It's incorrect to think that our breeding practices have enabled cows to produce more milk. No, it's their nature to produce much milk. The calf needs perhaps a tenth of the milk in the udder. And cows can give eight to ten gallons of milk a day. That's a

lot of milk! This extra milk is meant for human consumption, to help develop fine brain tissue.

In Vedic society, every *brāhmaṇa* would have not only a cow but also a bull for plowing the land to produce grains. The cow is like a mother because she gives us milk. She should be protected and taken care of. In the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement we have farms, and we look after the cows with great care. In the summer we let them roam in the woods and pastures, and in the winter we house them in barns and take care of them. We don't kill them.

The *Vedas* describe the relationship between cows and humans. That relationship is God's arrangement for human society. If we try to figure things out for ourselves, we'll get so many imperfect solutions. What is the cow going to do if you don't milk her? She'll suffer great pain and eventually die, because she must be milked. A cow is actually dependent on human beings.

In the spiritual world, Kṛṣṇa is taking care of the cows. One of Kṛṣṇa's names is Gopāla, "He who protects the cows." Another of Kṛṣṇa's names, Govinda, means "He who gives pleasure to the cows." There is a natural relationship between God and the cows, and also between mankind and the cows.

In the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement we live in cities not because we want to, for no one who practices spiritual life likes to live in the middle of a city. We prefer to live in a very simple place, like the villages of India. At least I do! But the reason we're here is that we're trying to tell other people about Kṛṣṇa. And therefore we have to drink the milk that's coming to us from the factory farms. We don't agree with their methods at all, but we're using their products to help bring down materialistic selfishness. And we are confident that the poor cows are greatly blessed when their milk is offered to the beautiful Deities, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kuṇjabihārī [the Deities in the Detroit temple]. Does anyone have a question or a comment?

**Question:** Why not be vegans if we're living in the city?

**Rohiṇinandana dāsa:** That's a good point, but it's enough austerity just to live in these cities. We have to compromise in so many ways. Just to drive a car you've got to have tires, which are made with animal products. Practically speaking, even though you think that you're wearing vegetarian clothes, and that everything you have is vegetarian, if you analyze you will find that there are animal products in almost everything you have. The film in your camera is made from gelatin. Even vegetables are fertilized by animal bones. So there comes a point where you just have to not be too fanatical about it.

What we are basically trying to do is

(continued on page 16)

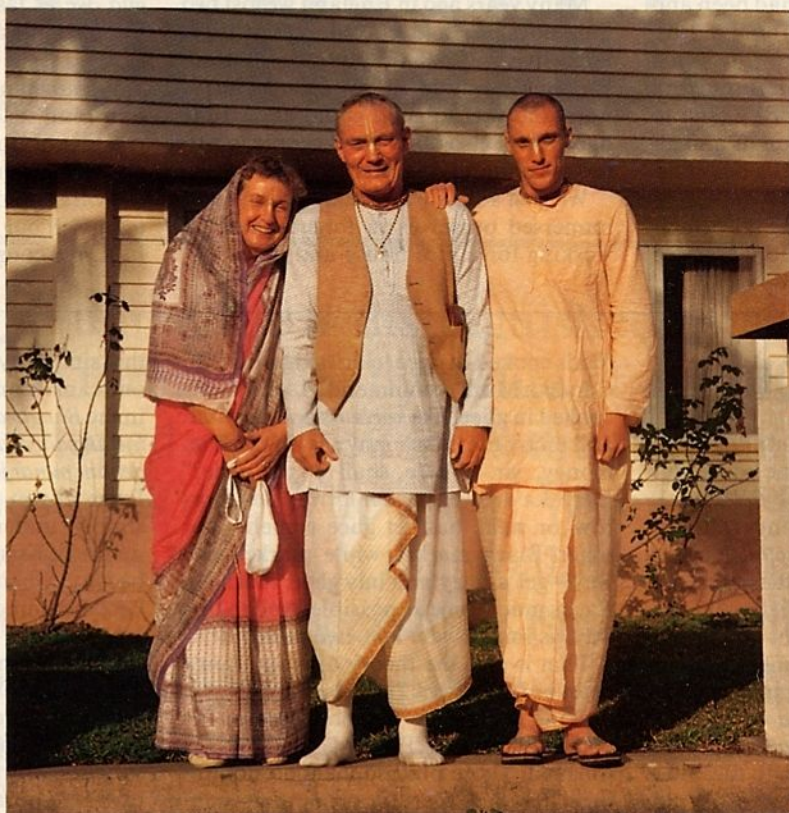


Coming to Kṛṣṇa

# NEW FRIENDS

“When we told our neighbors that our son was a Hare Kṛṣṇa, they were mildly interested. But when we told them that we, too, were following the principles . . .”

by LEN BURTON



*Len and Margaret Burton and their son Mahā-yajña dāsa*

**M**y wife and I are Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees. You can tell the world—but don't tell the neighbors. That just isn't on!

Seriously, that's how it is with our neighbors. Don't get us wrong; they're good people, willing to help in any household emergency, as you would expect good neighbors to.

When we moved into our present home [Brisbane, Australia] some eighteen years ago, they were quite helpful, and we found we had much in common, as we were from the same district in England. When we told them that our son Mahā-yajña was a Hare Kṛṣṇa, they were mildly interested, but



shortly after, when we informed them that we, too, were following the principles, the suggestion of not eating meat, taking intoxication, gambling, or having illicit sex must have sent a shock wave right through the street.

In the past, on festive occasions they would share a drink with us. Now they will not share a prayer. We used to pass the time of day over the fence nearly every day, but now we seldom see them at all, and when we do there is not the casual friendliness there used to be.

But no matter: we get all the friendliness we need and much more by our association with the devotees at the Brisbane temple. We have friends from the past, but we have seldom visited them. We were too busy working to pay off the house and fill it with many things we didn't really need. Since becoming devotees we have realized how futile our past life had been and how we neglected our spiritual needs. Now, after (in my own case) fifty-seven years of conditioning, we are trying to find the humility to ask dear Lord Kṛṣṇa to please bestow His mercy upon us and allow us to remain as part of His beautiful family.

To this aim, we are following the principles and trying to give devotional service

within our capabilities, though this is only a drop in the ocean. But while we are trying in our own small way to go back to Godhead, during the process we are feeling increased happiness and contentment in our lives.

Having a son who is a devotee, we would recommend to any parents who have young boys and girls who have joined or are considering joining the Hare Kṛṣṇas. Don't worry what the neighbors will think. But get down to the temple and see for yourselves what a beautiful, clean, healthy life they have. Balance this against the streets of booze, drugs, gambling, and sexual diseases, and have a mind completely free from anxiety, as we have.

My wife and I follow the old adage "Don't knock it until you've tried it." We're certainly glad we did.

Many years ago in England we lost two little boys. We had prayed to God to let them live, but our prayers were not answered. We wondered why a God who we were told was so good could allow little babies and also other good people to suffer, as so many do suffer in this world.

We just lost all spiritual feelings and immersed ourselves in forgetfulness by working for a nice house and other ma-

terial things. Then we moved again and again, striving to better our lives. We eventually emigrated to Australia and Brisbane, where by Kṛṣṇa's guiding hand we one day found ourselves at the Brisbane Hare Kṛṣṇa temple seeing for ourselves how our son Mahā-yajña was living and why he was so absorbed in love for a God we thought had let us down.

We came at first once a month to visit him, and we talked to other devotees, who were very open and answered all our questions fully. We also saw videos of the Hare Kṛṣṇa activities throughout the world. We became vegetarians and increased our visits to the temple.

Then Mahā-yajña went away on *saṅkīrtana* [traveling for preaching], but we still visited the temple regularly, because through associating with the devotees, watching videos, and reading *Bhagavad-gītā*, we at last understood why we had lost our little children, and why everyone suffers.

We now knew what *karma* means: actions and reactions. We now knew what real love of God means—not just kneeling and praying and saying, "I love you, God," but offering devotional service by dovetailing all our thoughts, words, and deeds in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. ❧

## Immortal Soul

(continued from page 5)

pain is a little relieved, you think, "Now I am feeling happiness." But the boil is still there, so how can you be happy? We think we have discovered so many counteractions to disease—medical science, pharmaceuticals—but none of these can let you live perpetually. No, you'll have to die, sir. The "boil" is there: death.

So there is really no happiness at all in the material world. As Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā* [13.13], *janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhī-duḥkha-doṣānudarśanam*: "Why are you feeling happy? You have to die, after all, and you also have to accept birth, old age, and disease. As a spirit soul you are eternal, but in the material world you have to accept these sufferings."

Therefore our real problem is to get free from birth, old age, disease, and death. But these rascal modern philosophers do not know this. They think, "Death is natural, and after death everything is finished. Now, so long as I am not dying, let me enjoy." As an Indian philosopher named Cārvāka Muni wrote, *ṇam kṛtvā gṛham pibet yāvaj jīvet sukhāṁ jīvet*: "As long as one lives, be happy by eating lots of ghee." According to our Indian system, enjoyment comes not from eating meat, as in the Western countries, but from eating

foods cooked in ghee [clarified butter]. So Cārvāka Muni recommended, "Eat foods cooked in ghee, like *kacauris* and *samosas*, and enjoy life." One may say, "I have no money, sir. Where shall I get ghee?" Cārvāka answers, *ṇam kṛtvā*, "Beg, borrow, or steal, but get ghee somehow or other. Black market, white market, any way—get money and buy ghee, that's all. Eat as much ghee as possible. And in this way, as long as you live, live merrily."

That is also the theory of many European philosophers: "Live merrily." But at the end of his life the philosopher becomes paralyzed. Then his merriness is finished. These philosophers do not understand that there is a supreme controller. You may theorize in so many ways about how to make life happy, but you cannot be happy, sir, so long as you have a material body. Why? Because you must suffer birth, old age, disease, and death.

Therefore intelligent persons should realize that our problem is not how to achieve material happiness but how to be reestablished on our eternal, spiritual platform. As spirit souls we are eternal, but somehow or other we have fallen into this material world. Therefore we have to accept birth and death. So our problem is how to again become eternal.

But the rascal atheists do not know that there is a possibility of becoming eternal,

that simply by trying to understand Kṛṣṇa one can become immortal. As Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [4.9], *janma karma ca me divyam evaṁ yo vetti-tattvataḥ/ tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti mām eti so 'rjuna*. Even if you don't serve Kṛṣṇa, if you simply understand the transcendental nature of Kṛṣṇa's birth and activities, you become liberated. In other words, you become immortal.

But no, the rascals will not try to philosophically understand Kṛṣṇa's position. They'll say, "We accept Kṛṣṇa as a great man, but we don't accept Him as God." All right, if you accept Kṛṣṇa as a great personality, why don't you accept His teachings? If you actually accept Kṛṣṇa as a great personality, at least you must try to follow His instructions. But no, that they'll not do.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says, "You are eternal. Your business is how to achieve that eternal position. So far as the body is concerned, it is destructible. So you should not take the body very seriously." This understanding is the distinction between Vedic and modern civilization. The modern civilization is based on the bodily concept of life, and Vedic civilization is based on the spiritual concept of life—how to make spiritual advancement. That is real civilization.

Thank you very much. Hare Kṛṣṇa. ❧



*This series systematically explains some of the important philosophical concepts that form the foundation of the Vedic culture and the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.*

# LESSON ONE: Our Real Identity

by PAVANEŚANA DĀSA

**H**uman life is distinguished from all other forms of life by virtue of a more developed consciousness that enables us to ask questions like Who am I? Where do I come from? and What is the goal of my life? Through the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness we can explore this human potential to the highest degree.

If we were to conduct a survey by asking the question “Who are you?” we would get answers such as “I am Mr. Smith,” “I am a man,” “I am a woman,” “I am an American,” “I am a Christian,” “I am a carpenter,” “I am black,” “I am a communist,” and so on. Though people identify themselves in many different ways, none of these responses answers the question



of who I am. Why? Because they refer only to the body.

We may look at our body and try to determine with which part we can identify. Are we our hands? Well, there are many people with amputated hands, and still they have retained their identity. The same holds true for arms, feet, and legs. Maybe we are the heart? But what about all the people who have received another heart? They seem to be the same person after the transplant. What about the brain? I know someone whose head was badly injured, and a good part of his skull and brain had to be removed—he is still the same person.

Now we are coming to a dead end with our research.

What is our real identity, that which distinguishes you and me so clearly from one another, even though we may look the same, have the same name, weight, height, and complexion?

Materialistic science has not come up with an answer to this question. But the world's oldest books of knowledge, the *Vedas*, define our identity in this way: *aham brahmāsmi*—I am spirit. I am an eternal spirit soul, distinct from matter or the body. The *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.20) explains:

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

This conclusion generally provokes arguments from hardcore materialists. Therefore we will deal with some common objections in the following hypothetical discussion.

**Challenge:** Isn't this just the obsolete opinion of some outdated books, the imagination of uneducated, primitive people?

**Reply:** All authentic scriptures—Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, Muslim—proclaim the eternality of the soul. And an objective analysis will reveal that the *Vedas* contain the most comprehensive knowledge of spiritual subject matters. The majority of the world's population still believes firmly in the existence of the soul.

**Challenge:** But nobody has ever seen the soul!

**Reply:** If you think that only things that can be seen exist, then how do you prove that you have intelligence, feelings, love, thoughts, and so on? These things can't be seen either.

**Challenge:** But they can be perceived through the activities they generate.

**Reply:** Yes, and the soul's existence can be perceived—through consciousness, the symptom of the soul. Dead matter has no consciousness and therefore no soul.

**Challenge:** But consciousness is simply

produced by the chemical reactions of the brain, and the evidence is that as soon as the brain stops functioning, there is no more consciousness.

**Reply:** This is a foolish argument. For example, if you watch a football game on TV and a power failure occurs, the game disappears from the screen. According to your logic, this is the evidence that the football game was produced by the TV. Actually, the machine simply transmitted the game that was going on independently of the TV. In the same way, consciousness is transmitted by the brain but not produced by it.

**Challenge:** But the idea of "soul" is completely unscientific.

**Reply:** What does science mean? You have a theory, you conduct experiments, and according to your results you prove or dis-

*If you want evidence for the soul, why don't you make an experiment with spiritual science? There are countless people who have obtained the result in the form of self-realization. So you too can verify the existence of the soul.*

prove your theory. If you want evidence for the soul, why don't you make an experiment with spiritual science? There are countless people who have obtained the result in the form of self-realization. So you too can verify the existence of the soul. But if you turn a theory down without even trying to verify it, then you are certainly most unscientific.

**Challenge:** But I just don't believe in the soul.

**Reply:** Well, you can certainly believe whatever you want, but don't pass your atheistic beliefs off as scientific truth. The existence of the soul can be verified through the proper process, and that is what Kṛṣṇa consciousness is all about.

We can observe that all bodily designations are constantly changing. For example, someone may identify himself as a

young male Christian carpenter with socialist ideals. But thirty years later that same person may identify himself as an old atheistic real estate agent with capitalistic ambitions. Even a person's sexual designation can change. Modern medical science can turn a man into a woman and vice versa. Besides, the cells in the body constantly change, so our physical identity changes from moment to moment. Therefore we cannot establish a real, permanent identity contingent on the physical body. Only one thing remains constant: the conscious observer in the body, who is aware of the physical changes.

This becomes even clearer by examining the way we talk about the body. We say "my body," "my arm," "my foot." But who is the "I," the owner and controller of the body? It is the conscious spirit soul.

The body is a machine made of matter. This is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.61):

The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone's heart, O Arjuna, and is directing the wanderings of all living entities, who are seated as on a machine made of the material energy.

In other words, the body is like a car, and the soul is its driver. An ignorant person may see a car from a distance and think it is driving by itself. But a knowledgeable person can understand that there has to be a driver.

Matter is by nature inert and requires superior, living energy to manipulate it. Every machine needs an operator. The body consists of chemicals and does not move without the presence of the soul. The best evidence for this is that when a person dies, all bodily functions stop.

Of course, someone may say that this is due to a lack of certain chemicals. But if someone is dead you can inject chemicals all day long and he will not wake up. Once the soul is gone, the chemicals start to disintegrate, and no scientist can stop this process.

Therefore the difference between a dead body and a living body is the presence of the soul.

Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence, and false ego—all together these eight constitute My separated material energies. Besides these, O mighty-armed Arjuna, there is another, superior energy of Mine, which comprises the living entities who are exploiting the resources of this material, inferior nature.

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.4, 5)

According to the Vedic science there are three bodies:

1. The gross body, consisting of earth, water, fire, air, and ether (space). These  
(continued on page 30)



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



Yamardja dāsa

**Y**ou 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 *haṭha-yoga*—that was practiced thousands of years ago. By practicing *haṭha-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 *haṭha-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.



# THE VEDIC

## Transcendental Comment

### WOMB POTATO

by Satyarāja dāsa  
(New York City)

Although it has long been known that a fetus may be affected by the mother's use of alcohol, drugs, or cigarettes, or her infection with diseases such as AIDS, the *Los Angeles Times* recently reported the story of a woman whose child became hooked on a popular TV show while in the womb. The woman watched *Ryan's Hope* five days a week during her pregnancy.

The child's addiction was noticed soon after birth. When cranky, the baby could be pacified only by watching the show with its mother, crying hysterically if the mother tried to calm it by any other means, such as holding her infant, singing, playing music, or rocking the baby's crib. These things may work for other kids, but not for mommy's prenatal TV junkie.

Actually, this phenomenon has been observed by researchers for over a year now. A British medical journal did a recent study with the babies of women who regularly watched a British soap—the

children had the same problem.

While new in the West, prenatal perceptions were documented thousands of years ago by the prophets of ancient India's Vedic culture. Prahlāda, one of the greatest devotees of Kṛṣṇa, is said to have attained enlightenment while still in his mother's womb by hearing the words of the saint Nārada Muni. Prahlāda was born a prodigy and became a great preacher of Kṛṣṇa consciousness even at the age of five. Śrīla Prabhupāda elaborates on this point (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.7.1, purport):

When he was in the womb of his mother, Prahlāda Mahārāja listened to the words of Nārada Muni. One cannot imagine how the baby in embryo could hear Nārada, but this is spiritual life; progress in spiritual life cannot be obstructed by any material condition. This is called *ahaituky apratihātā*. Reception of spiritual knowledge is never checked by any material condition. Thus Prahlāda Mahārāja, from his very childhood, spoke spiritual knowledge to his class friends, and certainly it was effective, although all of them were children.

Prahlāda is not an isolated case. There are many other examples in Vedic culture.

Arjuna's son Abhimanyu was born with knowledge of military science, the *Mahābhārata* says, because Arjuna had explained this science to Subhadrā, his wife, while Abhimanyu was still in her womb. And Śukadeva Gosvāmī had been an impersonalist philosopher in his previous life, but when his father, Vyāsadeva, narrated the secrets of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* while his son was yet unborn, the child came into this world as a great devotee and a preacher of the *Bhāgavatam* philosophy.

Having heard these histories, pregnant women in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement listen to tapes of their spiritual master and read aloud from the scriptures with the express purpose of influencing the child soon to take birth from their womb. They also try to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa more intensely, for the sound of the holy name, they know, will help their newborn on the path to pure devotion. How much greater hope there is for these children than for those whose mothers have hooked them on *Ryan's Hope*.

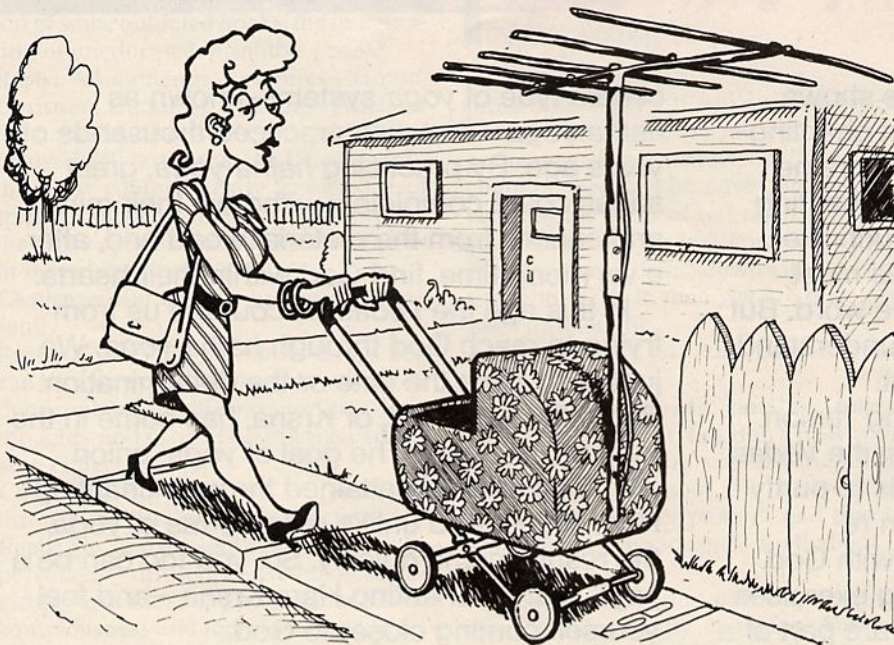
### OUT OF CONTROL

by Ekacakra dāsa  
(Lagos)

Fear that the earth is inching toward overpopulation has prompted the Nigerian government to promulgate a new national population policy emphasizing birth control. The policy was bound to generate some furor.

Most African societies believe that children are God's own bestowed wealth. In many Nigerian societies a man's worth is still measured by the number of wives he has and the number of male children. The new government policy aims at curtailing the number of children to four per mother. Women have interpreted the policy as a great disadvantage to them psychologically. "From the look of things," said one prominent woman leader, "men are already clapping their hands in triumph because the policy seems that while women can have only four children, men are free to marry as many women as possible."

The advocates and the opponents of the





# OBSERVER

ary on the Issues of the Day

policy agree on two points, however: the introduction of sex education in primary schools, and the use of contraception and other methods to escape pregnancy. As we would expect, neither side proposes decreasing the level of sexual activity. Each

one another, to their home, their money, and so on, thus perpetuating their material existence. They are described as *kṛpana*, or misers, because they want to enjoy sense gratification with all their strength, without recognizing that their

the forces of the material senses.

But, one may ask, if sex is that bad, why did God create it?

In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa says: "I am sex that is not contrary to religious principles." The Vedic injunction is that sex is exclusively meant for begetting children, and parents are responsible for giving their children a spiritual education. As the *Bhāgavatam* says, "You should not attempt to become a father or mother unless you can liberate your children from the grip of material nature." The parents should be Kṛṣṇa conscious and should be determined that the innocent children entrusted under their care will not have to undergo the painful cycle of birth and death again.

The Vedic literature never sanctions indiscriminate sex, because it creates unwanted pregnancies, which lead either to unwanted children or to abortions. The *Bhagavad-gītā* describes children born from illicit connection and those born from ungodly families as *varṇa-saṅkara*, unwanted progeny. This unwanted progeny makes the world uninhabitable.

The *Vedas* therefore recommend that instead of wasting our valuable human life seeking temporary material satisfaction, we should use it in the service of Kṛṣṇa. This is possible only when we take to devotional service by hearing and chanting the glories of the Lord and by associating with His devotees. This is the path toward the perfection of life, and the decision to follow this path is the ideal policy for the people of Nigeria—and the rest of the world.

## THE TOTAL STRATEGY

by Jagannātheśvarī-devī dāśī  
(Johannesburg)

On June 16, millions of black South Africans observed the anniversary of the 1976 Soweto uprising with a nationwide strike. Although technically illegal under the present government-declared state of emergency, the strike was a statement of full-scale black support for the cause of anti-apartheid. Even though the



just has its own idea how to overcome the problems that sex causes.

The *Vedas* describe that a society based on promoting sense gratification, of which sex is the pivot, is a civilization of fools, which ultimately ends in wars and scarcity. In such a society, the human energy is spoiled in a vain search after illusory happiness. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.5.8) says, "The attraction between male and female is the basic principle of material existence." The whole world is moving under the spell of sexual attraction. Although the *Bhāgavatam* compares the pleasure of sex to the insignificant pleasure obtained by rubbing one's hands together to relieve an itch, persons bereft of proper insight and spiritual knowledge consider this scratching the greatest happiness.

Generally, as soon as a man and a woman unite, they become attached to

bodies will deteriorate like old garments. They waste their lives sleeping and mating at night and making money during the day. Thus their whole life is spent without spiritual profit.

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.5.1), Lord Rṣabhadeva tells His sons:

My dear boys, of all the living entities who have accepted material bodies in this world, one who has been awarded this human form should not work hard day and night simply for sense gratification, which is available even for dogs and for hogs that eat stool. One should engage in penance and austerity to attain the divine position of devotional service. By such activity, one's heart is purified, and when one attains this position, he attains eternal, blissful life, which is transcendental to material happiness and which continues forever.

If a person wants to progress on the path of self-realization, he must try to control



white South African government, under both internal and external pressure, is beginning to grant certain concessions to the blacks (such as improved housing, schools, roads, and utilities), still the blacks' underlying frustration continues.

The government recently renewed its state-of-emergency restrictions for a third year. Now President Botha and his generals are embarked on an ambitious plan to keep their control. Known in official circles as the "total strategy," the three-stage campaign is designed first to crush opposition at any cost, then to set about "winning hearts and minds," and ultimately to bring blacks into a power-sharing arrangement that will forestall demands for one-man, one-vote majority rule.

With their total strategy, Botha and his associates may indeed win enough support to forestall for some time the white nightmare of being driven into the sea. But all the examples of history show that no repressive government can remain in power indefinitely. Ultimately the situation reverses, and those who were exploited become the next exploiters.

The problem of interracial strife has long been prevalent. From ancient Vedic history we learn that "To stop quarreling among different peoples, Mahārāja Priya-

vrata marked boundaries at rivers and at the edges of mountains and forests so that no one would trespass upon another's property" (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.1.40). Of course, Mahārāja Priyavrata is renowned in Indian history as a powerful and saintly king. We don't find anyone of his caliber in power these days. Influenced by greed and envy, leaders encourage their people to trespass on others' property, and passionate strife ensues. And the modern phenomenon of large communities of people shifting to foreign lands in search of economic betterment leads to internal friction within many nations.

If the present situation seems hopeless, there is still chance for a solution, as mentioned by Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda in his purport to the Vedic verse quoted above. "If men want to live in harmony and peace, they must take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, for they cannot achieve the highest standard while absorbed in the bodily concept of life."

Because of our deep-rooted identification with our bodies—our firm belief that we belong to a certain family, community, and nation—we become totally involved in political struggles, which stand on temporary, illusory concepts. When one understands that he is an eternal soul, full of

bliss and knowledge, there is no question of his wasting his life for futile political goals. In *Teachings of Queen Kuntī*, Śrīla Prabhupāda explains, "The children in a family all have the right to accept privileges from the father. Similarly, if everyone is part and parcel of God, if everyone is a child of God, then everyone has the right to use the property of the father."

Unfortunately, this axiomatic truth is not perceived by either the South African government or its opposition, and so the bitter struggle continues. Just as two thieves may fight over their haul, the two opposing elements are fighting over a land that does not belong to either of them. It is all the property of God. And just as one son may devise a scheme to control his brother's share of their father's inheritance, similarly Pretoria has its "total strategy" to subdue left-wing opposition.

But the real total strategy is in the hands of the supreme controller, and only a tiny part of the picture is being revealed to the politicians. Ultimately, whether they gain victory or suffer defeat, the only real and lasting victory lies in the hands of those who surrender to the creator of the complete total strategy, for they will conquer over birth and death and become eternally free from fear. ❧

## A Flower

(continued from page 8)

remove a thorn with a thorn. We're using modern technology to change modern technological society. So sometimes we have to compromise by drinking store-bought milk. But by our preaching in the cities, many people are becoming vegetarians, and therefore many cows are being saved. If you convince just one person to be a vegetarian, you're saving many animals every year.

How many animals and birds do you think an average American eats in a year? Let's say he eats twelve chickens. Does this sound reasonable? No? More? Double, then? OK. And how many pigs each year? Will he finish a whole pig? Probably. Let's say he gets through one pig. How many fish? Thirty? How many sheep? Two? How many cows? One whole cow? Two sheep, one pig, a couple of turkeys, twenty-four chickens, thirty fish, and one cow. And he may eat more bizarre things than that! Maybe you're also saving a few snails, a horse, some squirrels, and a monkey.

If by your influence someone becomes a vegetarian, in one year you've saved all these animals. What if that person stays a vegetarian for the next thirty years? How many creatures are being saved? To be really effective we've got to situate ourselves in the cities; otherwise, if we were tucked away in the country somewhere, we would only influence a few people. But

we do both. We're in the cities and also in the country. And vegetarianism is just one benefit of our work, because if a person is Kṛṣṇa conscious, he's automatically going to be kind and gentle and possess all good qualities.

**Question:** What's wrong with eggs?

**Rohiṇinandana dāsa:** Well, first, they're not the most pleasant things to eat when you think about what they are: female chickens' menstrual waste products. It's not such an edible food. Of course, modern nutritionists may say how wonderful eggs are, but eggs are not the most elevated food. And in their natural condition, they should be fertilized anyway. Go to one of these factory farms and see how the chickens are suffering. Sometimes the hens are so cramped in their cages that their claws just grow around the wire. When the "farmers" come to get them out of the cages, they find that their feet are firmly clamped to the wires. And they've got so many diseases; it's an abominable life. I used to work in a place like that. I tell you, it's abominable.

**Comment:** Some people call eggs "liquid flesh."

**Rohiṇinandana dāsa:** Yes. Of course, eating eggs is not as bad as eating flesh, but it's bad enough. I remember when I was giving up eggs, it was tough because I used to like omelets. I was camping on the side of a mountain, and I got down to my last egg. I thought, "Whew! What am I going to do?" I suddenly felt a surge of strength

coming—"I've got to give this up!"—and I took the egg and I slung it down the mountainside. And I've never eaten another egg since. I felt very pleased after that. If you try, Kṛṣṇa will help you. You'll get enough protein, you'll get enough strength, you'll be able to do it.

Especially nowadays, there are so many vegetarian cookbooks; there are so many ways of understanding good eating. How to mix your grains together—if you mix rice with *dal*, it increases the potency of both. It is a science. By eating meat and eggs, you get too much protein. Too much protein is bad for you.

Does that answer your question? You can't offer the egg to Kṛṣṇa. We're Kṛṣṇa-tarians; we offer Kṛṣṇa only what He wants us to eat. We're trying to awaken our love for Kṛṣṇa, which is really the important thing. It's not whether I'm a vegetarian—that's coincidental—but whether I am trying to serve God, to please God.

In the ultimate issue, if there's nothing else to eat, you can eat meat. If you're starving and there's an animal, you can kill the animal and eat it. This is stated in the *śāstras*, or lawbooks. Human life is actually more important than that of an animal, only because human life enables us to practice self-realization. Of course, if we're not practicing self-realization, then human life doesn't have any more importance than animal life.

Śrīla Prabhupāda would often say that  
(continued on page 22)



# Philosophical Vignettes

*In this feature of BACK TO GODHEAD, devotees succinctly express some of the realizations they have gained through service and devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa.*

## Kṛṣṇa's Sunrise

Pacing the weathered wooden porch in the cool stillness of the early morning, I meditate on the sound of the mystical, primeval name "Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa," as the blackness in the eastern sky slowly yields to shades of violet and soft rosy pink in the delicate light of the sun's first rays.

In the same natural way, the illusion-dark sky within my heart is blossoming in the glorious colors of transcendence from the presence of Kṛṣṇa rising beyond the horizon of my material conceptions. And though He is not yet fully manifest before me, the indications of His approach are clear and certain, just as the sun is surely soon to come.

—*Lalitā-Mādhava-devī-dāst*

## Shell Shock

The grisly scene in my fish tank was enough to convince me that the day I had been dreading was at hand. What just yesterday had been my pet hermit crab's legs—long, bone-hard, and equipped with mean sets of pincers that had on one notable occasion caused me to scream like a tomcat in an alley brawl—now lay inert on the gravel, as harmless as a dead rattlesnake. Various other parts of his anatomy, which I could not name, were scattered about in sludgy globs. His smooth, speckled shell, now uninhabited, looked merely ornamental.

"You'll have to buy an extra shell for your crab that's larger than the

one he's in now," the matronly petshop owner had informed me when I'd bought him, "because some day soon he'll get too big and have to move. About forty-eight hours after he moves, you'll see a little spot of pink in the bigger shell, and in two or three days your crab will become bigger and better than ever."

A chill had run down my spine. Something about this process seemed unnatural, almost ghoulish. Perhaps it was the picture of a blob of jelly, dispossessed of all it had once used to see and move, squirming in blind search for a larger dwelling. After all, isn't that the stuff of which horror movies are made?

It wasn't until I came to Kṛṣṇa consciousness that I realized that the process of birth and death we endure is eerily similar to the disquieting phenomenon the hermit crab goes through during its life, for all of us must eventually leave the shell of our bodies and, according to our needs, attach ourselves to new ones. "As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, the soul similarly accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones," Kṛṣṇa explains to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Until our hearts are totally purified by the practice of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, we will continue to exchange one unsuitable external dressing for another, never happy, never free, and never fulfilled.

To someone observing this pitiful situation from the spiritual world, material existence most likely seems as unhealthy and grotesque as the scene in my fish tank appeared to me. Fortunately, the advantage we have over hermit crabs is our ability to change our behavior and priorities. Through Śrīla Prabhupāda's mercy, we can chant

Kṛṣṇa's holy name, grow in self-realization, and eventually throw off this material covering.

—*Śucī-devī dāst*

## The Real Poverty

In the Vedic view, most modern men and women are spiritually poor. Raised in a society that fills them with materialistic goals, they have no idea that life's aim is spiritual realization.

Though people lament about material poverty, much of what is called poverty is miserable only to the degree that one identifies with it. There have been many saints who lived in poverty but were not at all miserable. They willingly embraced poverty. If we seriously cultivate spiritual life, we too can experience a joy that overwhelms the suffering of poverty.

Many persons living below the so-called poverty line have the basic necessities of life. Their suffering often comes from wanting things they cannot afford but that are actually unnecessary. If they had a wealth of spiritual assets, their desires for greater material assets would lessen, and they would be much happier.

The real solution to poverty, then, is devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, who will not let His devotee suffer for want of the necessities of life, and who will deliver a spiritual taste that will free the devotee from attachment to material enjoyment.

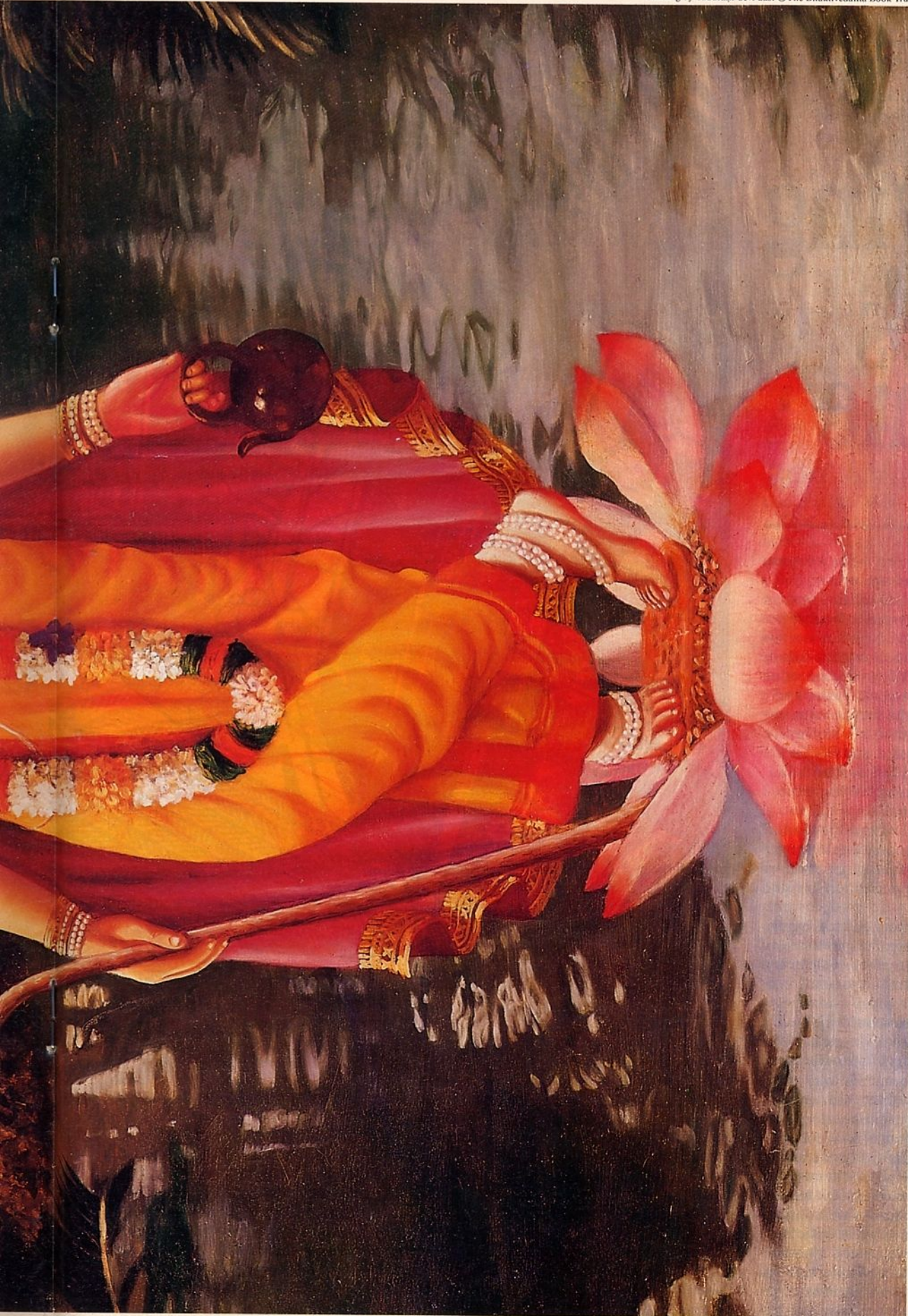
Modern society convinces us to feel that we need a certain standard of luxury to be happy. But a devotee is not attracted to the glare of material success. He knows that it is temporary and unsatisfying, and he feels satisfied in his relationship with Kṛṣṇa, the real necessity of life.

—*Nāgarāja dāsa*









## Śrī Śaḍ-bhuja

This six-armed form of the Supreme Lord was revealed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu during His presence on earth five hundred years ago. In two of His hands He holds a bow and arrow, the symbols of Lord Rāmacandra, who appeared more than one million years ago. Two hands hold a flute, the symbol of Lord Kṛṣṇa, who appeared five thousand years ago. And two hands hold a *daṇḍa* (the staff of a renunciant) and a waterpot, the symbols of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. By manifesting this form, Lord Caitanya conclusively proves that He is Bhagavān, the original Supreme Personality of Godhead.



We can't avoid it. But what about life's non-athletic, non-recreational business?

# Playing Life's Game

by MATHUREŚA DĀSA

I was only half correct when I began to suspect, around age twelve, that life didn't make any sense, and that although I dearly wanted to be distinguished and accomplished, any accomplishment or distinction was ultimately useless and stupid. What was the value of studying math, English, Latin, and science, of making the soccer team, or of practicing the piano? Mr. Shakespeare had already said that life "is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." What more could be said or done?

I hadn't yet heard that only *material life is an idiot's dream* and that there are activities of self-realization that are full of pleasure and meaning. So I said and did very little.

But I was ambitious, too, and by my second year in college the gap between my ambitions and my lack of determination to fulfill them had torn my ego with a pain that only sleep and other forms of forgetfulness could soothe.

My opposite number, or one of them, was a certain classmate who was both hero and nemesis to me. He was strong and handsome, an athlete and an honor student. At our preparatory school he won the most-likely-to-succeed award. In his enthusiasm and confidence many of his classmates detected a streak of conceit, but it was hard to fault him, because we admired him, and because an honest critic had to admit envy as well. Lately, after an interval of twenty years, I have seen his by-line in prestigious magazines.

One encounter in particular, one of



maybe a hundred in the six years of our distant camaraderie as classmates in a large school and a larger university, one casual exchange at lunch our sophomore year (my last year in college), remains in my memory, embalmed in liquid nostalgia.

We were sitting at a table in our dining hall with five or six other lunchers, bland food, and the ghost of midyear

doldrums, the talk turning in eddies of banter around professors and courses and examinations, with undercurrents of Are we learning anything? All this work to get a job? and Is it worthwhile? The conversation dwindled and began coming to a close as one luncher stood up with his tray and facetiously offered, as a conclusion, that life was but a game.





Illustration by Katsudana dasa

The remark pleased me, but my hero/nemesis, in one of the bursts of sobriety and assertiveness to which he was prone, even during bull sessions, responded, "Just because life is a game doesn't mean we shouldn't enjoy playing it." Although he didn't direct this response at me, I received it with embarrassment and despair. Here he was, a player, an athlete of life, and here I

was, a quitter.

It wasn't that bad, though. I valued life and had a sense of my self-worth, a sense that there was meaning if I could only find the right atmosphere for it. Nevertheless, the encounter set me thinking, and never a master of quick repartee, I gradually formulated and am still honing my answer to the "play life's game" challenge.

Here's what I should have said, given that I then knew nothing of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I agree that we ought to play the game of life. In fact, we can't avoid playing to some degree. Even catatonia is an activity of sorts on life's playing field. We must act.

But that's the problem. In a normal game there are time-outs, and the entire game is only a part of one's life or of one's day. After the competition you head for the locker room, doff your uniform, take a shower, slake your thirst, joke around with both your teammates and your opponents, go home and have dinner with your family, get on with life's non-recreational, non-athletic business.

If, however, life itself is a game, then where are the time-outs, the relaxation, the post-game festivities? I've been playing for too long and want to go home. Where is home? "Game" means there is also real life. How do we live it?

That's what I should have said. And here's how I now answer that last question.

We live a meaningful, individual, eternal life, the *Gītā* says, not by acting to please our bodies, our minds, or even our souls, but by serving the transcendental body and senses of the Supersoul. Lord Kṛṣṇa advises, "Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer or give away, and whatever austerities you perform—do that, O son of Kuntī, as an offering to Me."

This advice is for our benefit. The Supreme doesn't need our offerings. He is ever self-satisfied and independent.

We, on the other hand, as part of Him, can enjoy a meaningful life only by pleasing Him. Just as your finger receives nourishment by feeding your stomach, so the individual soul enjoys life by "feeding" Kṛṣṇa. Your finger has unlimited value when attached to the rest of your body, but if severed from your hand it is a useless piece of flesh and bone.

Life is truly meaningless when we sever our souls from the Supersoul, and truly meaningful when we link up with Him.

Originally, the only alternative I saw to life's meaningless activities was equally meaningless inactivity. But the true alternative is enthusiastic, confident activity in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In leaving college and joining the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, I did not shirk life's duties or avoid its challenges. On the contrary, having played enough, I headed for the locker room, doffed my uniform, took a shower, went home, and got down to business. ✱



# A Flower

(continued from page 16)

without rationality man is just an animal. But if the human being is trying to cultivate spiritual life, then his life is more valuable. If a tiger comes at you, you can certainly defend yourself; Kṛṣṇa consciousness is practical.

But here in the United States there's no food shortage. We grow so much grain every year. In her book *Diet for a Small Planet*, Francis Lappe, a nutritionist, gives amazing statistics about how much grain we grow each year to feed livestock. You have to give the animal thirty pounds of grain to get one pound of flesh. You could eat the thirty pounds of grain quite easily. So it's very practical. But in today's discussion we want to concentrate more on the spiritual side of vegetarianism.

Once Śrīla Prabhupāda took a *gulāb-jāmun* in his hand—*gulāb-jāmun*s are ball-like sweets made out of milk powder that are fried and then soaked in a solution of rose water and honey or sugar. They are very sweet. He popped it into his mouth and said, "We're eating our way back to Godhead." So by eating, anyone can make spiritual advancement. That's a fact.

So try to give all your friends some *prasādam* [food offered to Kṛṣṇa]. If you've got a grandmother who's dying in the hospital, take her a little *prasādam*, and make sure she eats it. It's said that whoever eats *prasādam* is guaranteed a human body in the next life. If somebody is destined to become an animal, he will get the opportunity of another human body.

And if you give an animal some *prasādam*, then that soul will be elevated very quickly through the different animal species back to human life again. If a soul loses his human form, it's very troublesome for him, because he must go through the different species, and it may be a long time before he gets back to human life. So if you have some leftover food, give it to the birds and other creatures in your backyard. Sometimes we take the water we've offered to Kṛṣṇa on the altar and pour it on the base of a tree so it will benefit.

People may think this is madness, but no, it is spiritual. For one in material consciousness, spirituality seems like ignorance, and for one who is spiritually awake, material consciousness is seen as ignorance. In simple words, they say we're crazy, and we say they're crazy. So the question is, "Who is crazy?" That's the question we have to ask—who is actually crazy? Kṛṣṇa says, "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."

People who don't offer their food to Kṛṣṇa have to accept karmic reaction, even if they just kill a carrot. Even if they're

vegetarian, when they kill a carrot they've inconvenienced that soul. Maybe in a minor way, but still there's some inconvenience. Therefore, they have to suffer a karmic reaction. That carrot was living. It had a right to live, and I killed it for my own sensual pleasure, so I'm simply eating a sinful reaction.

No one should be proud: "I'm a vegetarian; I'm OK." Even a monkey is a vegetarian.

Being a vegetarian is not the Absolute Truth. It doesn't even save you completely from *karma*. You will save yourself from a tremendous amount of *karma* by being a vegetarian, because you won't have to suffer a reaction for every hair on the cow's body, but there is still a small reaction for killing a carrot. Offer that carrot to Kṛṣṇa, however, and there's no reaction for you at all. The carrot benefits and everyone who eats your offering will benefit. Kṛṣṇa says,

*The tree also has  
a right to a  
little space to live, a  
little air and sun-  
light. Why kill  
anything unneces-  
sarily? And we cut  
down whole forests  
in Brazil just to get  
beef. Whole forests  
so we can print  
Playboy magazine.*

"Whatever reaction there is, I'll take it, because you're doing it under orders."

When a soldier kills in war there's no question of any penalty, because he acted under orders. He might even get a medal. Even if the fight was a mistake—the officer made a blunder—the soldier is not punished, because he acted under superior orders. This is an analogy. We are not saying that soldiers are free from *karma*, but they are free from the social consequence of their actions. But if a soldier kills somebody in peacetime, he must suffer the penalty, because he has taken the law into his own hands.

Similarly, if we act under Kṛṣṇa's direction, and eat only those things He recommends, there's no karmic reaction, and everyone benefits. Whereas if I start making up my own ideas, even if I'm a vegan trying to do the right thing, I'm still going to create *karma*. Even a vegan is still eating and therefore creating *karma*. He may not

be inconveniencing cows, but he's inconveniencing vegetables, which are also living beings. He may also indirectly support animal slaughter by buying food from a store or company that sells animal products. But a person who follows the Lord's direction by preparing his allotted quota of food and offering it to Kṛṣṇa benefits everyone.

Why stop at human beings or cows? If you're going to be humanitarian, why not think of the animals, why not think of the fish? If you're going to think of the fish, why not think of the plants? They're also living. They also feel pain. In India, if someone is building a wall and a tree stands in the way, it's quite common to build around it. In the West, we just mow anything and everything down. Isn't that right? If a tree is growing in front of our window and is blocking the sunlight, we just cut it down.

But in India, only uncivilized people do such a thing. Sometimes people build their houses around a tree. They make a courtyard for the tree with an open roof for it to get sunshine. The tree also has a right to a little space to live, a little air and sunlight. That's culture. Why kill anything unnecessarily? And we cut down whole forests in Brazil just to get beef. Whole forests so we can print *Playboy* magazine and *The New York Times*. And people chew half of a hamburger and read one or two pages of a fifty-page newspaper and just chuck it all away. No thought of any responsibility! Just by buying a materialistic magazine you're going to get a karmic reaction for all the trees that have been killed. But if you cut a tree down and you make a book about Kṛṣṇa, the soul in that tree will benefit, because its wood has been used in Kṛṣṇa's service.

And the book is kept. Very often in India, the books are wrapped in silk cloth and kept on the altar, and when people want to read they unwrap them very carefully and offer prayers before they begin reading. And those books are passed down from one generation to another.

Does this philosophy sound reasonable? It is reasonable. A religion without reason is just a sentimental thing—"Oh, you've got to believe in this. If you don't believe in this, you're going to burn." It becomes fanaticism. But religion must have some philosophy behind it.

Similarly, philosophy on its own is just mental speculation, as when you try to figure things out on your own and become a vegan. It's a speculation, not based on any scriptural evidence, and therefore it's not perfect. It may have some degree of truth—there's something good about most things—but if you want something to be absolutely perfect, then you've got to get it from a bona fide scripture, under the guidance of a bona fide guru. ☐



# Every Town

The worldwide activities of the International



# And Village

Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)

## ISKCON Ratha-yātrā Highlights Guyana's Immigration Day

**Guyana, South America**—ISKCON devotees here held their Ratha-yātrā festival to coincide with national Immigration Day, a holiday organized by the government marking 150 years since persons from India first immigrated to Guyana. The program was the largest ever organized by the government here for Indians, who make up fifty percent of the population.

The festival lasted several days, and the government brought a hundred dignitaries from India, including Vice-President F. D. Sharma. Festival officials requested ISKCON devotees to greet the vice-president when he arrived at the festival by helicopter. When Agrāṇi Swami, ISKCON Governing Body Commissioner for Guyana, introduced himself as a member of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, the vice-president clasped his hand and shook it enthusiastically.

During the Immigration Day program, which looked like a typical ISKCON Ratha-yātrā festival, the vice-president repeatedly complimented the devotees for their beautiful Ratha-yātrā cart.

## Hare Kṛṣṇa Caters Hong Kong

**Hong Kong**—Devotees at the ISKCON temple here, which had its grand opening in October 1987, have opened an exclusive catering service—"The Higher Taste Vegetarian Dining Club." The temple is in the heart of the city's commercial district, and soon after opening the catering service, the devotees were swamped with orders for *prasādam* (food offered to Kṛṣṇa) in the form of spring rolls, steamed buns, sweet-and-sour dishes, and other selections from their menu of authentic Chinese cuisine. The *prasādam* is prepared in a kitchen at the back of the temple.

In the reception area, customers watch ISKCON Television's documentary on vegetarianism, *Healthy, Wealthy, and Wise*, dubbed into Cantonese. They also browse through or purchase some of the cookbooks produced by ISKCON devotees, especially the popular Chinese edition of *The Higher Taste*.

Customers often hear about the catering service from the devotees who go out every day in traditional Vaiṣṇava dress to distribute Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. Many books have already been translated into Chinese, including *Bhagavad-gītā*; *Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*; *Light of the Bhāgavata*; and *The Science of Self-Realization*. A chanting party of Chinese devotees goes out twice a week into the streets of this city of six million.

## Devotees Visit U.S. Federal Prison

**Memphis, Tennessee**—Four devotees, headed by Saṅkarṣaṇa dāsa of ISKCON Dallas, recently held a program at the Federal Correctional Institution here. They were hosted by inmate Stephen Szili, who has followed the principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in prison for the past three years. Stephen holds regular meetings of inmates interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The program lasted from 1:00 P.M. until 7:00 P.M., with forty inmates in attendance. After an enthusiastic chanting session led by Gāyatrī dāsa (playing the inmates' *mṛdaṅga* drum), Saṅkarṣaṇa dāsa spoke on the *Bhagavad-gītā* and answered questions. Everyone then enjoyed a feast of *prasādam* that had been cooked by Stephen and his friends and offered to Stephen's Deities of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda. Many of the inmates expressed their appreciation for the joyful chanting and the interesting and authoritative explanation of the Vedic philosophy.



Agrāṇi Swami (right) greets India's vice-president at Guyana's Immigration Day celebrations.



## NEWS BRIEFS

Kamala-mālā dāsa, a devotee from the Soviet Union, spoke with British prime minister Margaret Thatcher on a BBC call-in radio show. He thanked the prime minister for her defense of human rights in his country. Kamala-mālā was formerly incarcerated in a Soviet psychiatric hospital because of his practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He reminded Mrs. Thatcher that six Soviet devotees remain prisoners despite Gorbachev's reforms.

The local chapter of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, headed by Sri Chuniabhai C. Patel, an ISKCON life member, played an active role in organizing this year's Rathayātrā in Baroda, Gujarat, helping with the publicity and engaging a hundred volunteers. As has become the tradition in Baroda, the mayor, Dr. Rajendrashih Rathod (also an ISKCON life member) swept the road before the cart. Local religious leaders, including a delegation of Sikhs, garlanded Lord Jagannātha. All the main newspapers of Baroda ran front-page photos of the preparations for the parade. Special guest Śrīman Aniruddhācārya Venkāṭācārya, 85-year-old head of the Rāmānujācārya Sampradāya Matha in Baroda, joined the procession from beginning to end.

After spending the sacred month of Kārtika (October 25–November 23) walking through the twelve forests of Vṛndāvana, Śrīla Prabhupāda's Saṅkīrtana Padayātrā (ISKCON's walking pilgrimage of holy India) will head for the Kumbha-melā in Allahabad, the site of the confluence of the Ganges and Yamunā rivers. Held in January, the Kumbha-melā is the largest religious festival in the world.

Devotees were on hand at the beginning and at the end of Sydney's annual "City to Surf" six-mile run, which draws more than 37,000 contestants from around the world. Running past the party of chanting devotees at the beginning

of the course, they waved and shouted friendly greetings. At the end of the course, devotees presented garlands to the winners of different categories, and

thousands of runners received Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, *Back to Godhead* magazines, and—with great appreciation—*prasādam* in the form of oranges and drinks.

## 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 Mādhava (January 22–February 20)

**February 2**—Śaṭ-tīlā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

**February 10**—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura, a Vaiṣṇava ācārya and author who appeared in the seventeenth century. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Viṣṇupriyā-devī, consort of Lord Caitanya.

**February 12**—Appearance anniversary of Śrī Advaita Ācārya, an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa's expansion Mahā-Viṣṇu and a close associate of Lord Caitanya. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

**February 14**—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīpāda Madhvācārya, a famous Vaiṣṇava philosopher and spiritual master who appeared in the thirteenth century.

**February 15**—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Rāmānujācārya, a famous eleventh-century philosopher and spiritual master.

**February 16**—Bhaimī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. (Fasting for the appearance of Lord Varāha.)

**February 17**—Appearance anniversary of Lord Varāha, Lord Kṛṣṇa's boar incarnation. Feast at noon.

**February 18**—Appearance anniversary of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu, a close associate of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and an incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa's elder brother, Lord Balarāma. Fasting till noon, then feasting.

**February 20**—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Narottama dāsa Thākura, a famous spiritual master in the disciplic line from Lord Caitanya who composed many devotional songs in Bengali.

## RESOURCES

### Going to Bombay?

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

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

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

To find out more, get in touch with the ISKCON farm community nearest you.

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



## 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. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

## Third Canto: “The Status Quo”

### CHAPTER TWENTY

#### Conversation Between Maitreya and Vidura

In this installment of our continuing presentation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the sage Maitreya describes to Vidura, a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, some incidents that occurred during Lord Brahmā's creation of the material world, including the demons' becoming bewildered by the female form of twilight.

#### TEXT 34

कासि कस्यासि रम्भोरु को वार्थस्तेऽत्र भामिनि।  
रूपद्रविणपण्येन दुर्भगाभो विबाधसे ॥३४॥

kāsi kasyāsi rambhoru  
ko vārthas te 'tra bhāmini  
rūpa-draviṇa-paṇyena  
durbhagān no vibādhasē

kā—who; asi—are you; kasya—belonging to whom; asi—are you; rambhoru—O pretty one; kaḥ—what; vā—or; arthah—object; te—your; atra—here; bhāmini—O passionate lady; rūpa—beauty; dra-  
viṇa—priceless; paṇyena—with the commodity; durbhagān—unfortunate; naḥ—us; vibādhasē—you tantalize.

#### TRANSLATION

Who are you, O pretty girl? Whose wife or daughter are you, and what can be the object of your appearing before us? Why do you tantalize us, unfortunate as we are, with the priceless commodity of your beauty?

#### PURPORT

The mentality of the demons in being enamored by the false beauty of this material world is expressed herein. The demoniac can pay any price for the skin beauty of this material world. They work very hard all day and night, but the purpose of their hard work is to enjoy sex life. Sometimes they misrepresent themselves as *karma-yogīs*, not knowing the meaning of the word *yoga*. *Yoga* means to link up with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, or to act in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. A person who works very hard, no matter in what occupation, and who offers the result of the work to the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is called a *karma-yogi*.

#### TEXT 35

या वा काचित्त्वमबले दिष्टया सन्दर्शनं तव।  
उत्सुनोषीक्षमाणानां कन्दुकक्रीडया मनः ॥३५॥

yā vā kācit tvam abale  
diṣṭyā sandarśanam tava  
utsunoṣīkṣamānānāṁ  
kanduka-kṛīḍayā manaḥ

yā—whosoever; vā—or; kācit—anyone; tvam—you; abale—O beautiful girl; diṣṭyā—by fortune; sandarśanam—seeing; tava—of

you; utsunoṣi—you agitate; iṣṣamānānām—of the onlookers; kan-  
duka—with a ball; kṛīḍayā—by play; manaḥ—the mind.

#### TRANSLATION

Whosoever you may be, O beautiful girl, we are fortunate in being able to see you. While playing with a ball, you have agitated the minds of all onlookers.

#### PURPORT

Demons arrange many kinds of performances to see the glaring beauty of a beautiful woman. Here it is stated that they saw the girl playing with a ball. Sometimes the demoniac arrange for so-called sports, like tennis, with the opposite sex. The purpose of such sporting is to see the bodily construction of the beautiful girl and enjoy a subtle sex mentality. This demoniac sex mentality of material enjoyment is sometimes encouraged by so-called *yogīs* who encourage the public to enjoy sex life in different varieties and at the same time advertise that if one meditates on a certain manufactured *mantra* one can become God within six months. The public wants to be cheated, and Kṛṣṇa therefore creates such cheaters to misrepresent and delude. These so-called *yogīs* are actually enjoyers of the world garbed as *yogīs*. *Bhāgavad-gītā*, however, recommends that if one wants to enjoy life, then it cannot be with these gross senses. A patient is advised by the experienced physician to refrain from ordinary enjoyment while in the diseased condition. A diseased person cannot enjoy anything; he has to restrain his enjoyment in order to get rid of the disease. Similarly, our material condition is a diseased condition. If one wants to enjoy real sense enjoyment, then one must get free of the entanglement of material existence. In spiritual life we can enjoy sense enjoyment which has no end. The difference between material and spiritual enjoyment is that material enjoyment is limited. Even if a man engages in material sex enjoyment, he cannot enjoy it for long. But when the sex enjoyment is given up, then one can enter spiritual life, which is unending. In the *Bhāgavatam* (5.5.1) it is stated that *brahma-saukhyā*, spiritual happiness, is *ananta*, unending. Foolish creatures are enamored by the beauty of matter and think that the enjoyment it offers is real, but actually that is not real enjoyment.

#### TEXT 36

नैकत्र ते जयति शालिनि पादपद्मं  
घ्नन्त्या मुहुः करतलेन पतत्पतङ्गम्।  
मयं विषीदति बृहत्स्तनभारभरीतं  
शान्तेव दृष्टिरमला सुशिखासमूहः ॥३६॥

naikatra te jayati śālīni pāda-padmaṁ  
ghnantiā muhuḥ kara-talena patat-pataṅgam  
madhyam viṣīdati brhat-stana-bhāra-bhītam  
śānteva dṛṣṭir amalā suśikhā-samūhaḥ

na—not; ekatra—in one place; te—your; jayati—stay; śālīni—O beautiful woman; pāda-padmaṁ—lotus feet; ghnantiāḥ—striking; muhuḥ—again and again; kara-talena—by the palm of the hand; patat—bouncing; pataṅgam—the ball; madhyam—waist; viṣīdati—



gets fatigued; *brhat*—full grown; *stana*—of your breasts; *bhāra*—by the weight; *bhitam*—oppressed; *śāntā iva*—as if fatigued; *dṛṣṭiḥ*—vision; *amalā*—clear; *su*—beautiful; *sikhā*—your hair; *samūhaḥ*—bunch.

#### TRANSLATION

O beautiful woman, when you strike the bouncing ball against the ground with your hand again and again, your lotus feet do not stay in one place. Oppressed by the weight of your full-grown breasts, your waist becomes fatigued, and your clear vision grows dull, as it were. Pray braid your comely hair.

#### PURPORT

The demons observed beautiful gestures in the woman's every step. Here they praise her full-grown breasts, her scattered hair and her movements in stepping forward and backward while playing with the ball. In every step they enjoy her womanly beauty, and while they enjoy her beauty their minds become agitated by sex desire. As moths at night surround a fire and are killed, so the demons become victims of the movements of the ball-like breasts of a beautiful woman. The scattered hair of a beautiful woman also afflicts the heart of a lusty demon.

#### TEXT 37

इति सायन्तनीं सन्ध्यामसुराः प्रमदायतीम् ।  
प्रलोभयन्तीं जग्धुर्मुत्वा मूढधियः स्त्रियम् ॥३७॥

iti sāyantaniṁ sandhyām  
asurāḥ pramadāyatīm  
pralobhayanti jagdhur  
matvā mūḍha-dhiyaḥ striyam

iti—in this way; *sāyantaniṁ*—the evening; *sandhyām*—twilight; *asurāḥ*—the demons; *pramadāyatīm*—behaving like a wanton woman; *pralobhayanti*—alluring; *jagdhur*—seized; *matvā*—thinking to be; *mūḍha-dhiyaḥ*—unintelligent; *striyam*—a woman.

#### TRANSLATION

The asuras, clouded in their understanding, took the evening twilight to be a beautiful woman showing herself in her alluring form, and they seized her.

#### PURPORT

The asuras are described here as *mūḍha-dhiyaḥ*, meaning that they are captivated by ignorance, just like the ass. The demons were captivated by the false, glaring beauty of this material form, and thus they embraced her.

#### TEXT 38

प्रहस्य भावगम्भीरं जिघ्रन्त्यात्मानमात्मना ।  
कान्त्या ससर्ज भगवान् गन्धर्वाप्सरसां गणान् ॥३८॥

prahasya bhāva-gambhīraṁ  
jighrantyātmanā ātmanā  
kāntyā sasarja bhagavān  
gandharvāpsarasāṁ gaṇān

prahasya—smiling; *bhāva-gambhīraṁ*—with a deep purpose; *jighrantyā*—understanding; *ātmanā*—himself; *ātmanā*—by himself; *kāntyā*—by his loveliness; *sasarja*—created; *bhagavān*—the worshipful Lord Brahmā; *gandharva*—the celestial musicians; *apsarasām*—and of the heavenly dancing girls; *gaṇān*—the hosts of.

#### TRANSLATION

With a laugh full of deep significance, the worshipful Brahmā then evolved by his own loveliness, which seemed to enjoy itself by itself, the hosts of Gandharvas and Apsarās.

#### PURPORT

The musicians in the upper planetary systems are called Gandharvas, and the dancing girls are called Apsarās. After being attacked by the

demons and evolving a form of a beautiful woman in the twilight, Brahmā next created Gandharvas and Apsarās. Music and dancing employed in sense gratification are to be accepted as demonic, but the same music and dancing, when employed in glorifying the Supreme Lord as *kīrtana*, are transcendental, and they bring about a life completely fit for spiritual enjoyment.

#### TEXT 39

विसर्ज्य तनुं तां वैज्योत्स्नां कान्तिमतीं प्रियाम् ।  
त एव चाददुः प्रीत्या विश्वावसुपुरोगमाः ॥३९॥

visasarja tanuṁ tām vai  
jyotsnām kāntimatīm priyām  
ta eva cādaduḥ prītyā  
viśvāvasu-purogamāḥ

visasarja—gave up; *tanu*—form; *tām*—that; *vai*—in fact; *jyotsnām*—moonlight; *kānti-matīm*—shining; *priyām*—beloved; *te*—the Gandharvas; *eva*—certainly; *ca*—and; *ādaduḥ*—took possession; *prītyā*—gladly; *viśvāvasu-purāḥ-gamāḥ*—headed by Viśvāvasu.

#### TRANSLATION

After that, Brahmā gave up that shining and beloved form of moonlight. Viśvāvasu and other Gandharvas gladly took possession of it.

#### TEXT 40

सृष्ट्वा भूतपिशाचांश्च भगवानात्मतन्दिना ।  
दिग्वाससो मुक्तकेशान् वीक्ष्य चामीलयद् दृशौ ॥४०॥

sṛṣṭvā bhūta-piśācānś ca  
bhagavān ātma-tandriṇā  
dig-vāsaso mukta-keśān  
vikṣya cāmilayat dṛṣau

sṛṣṭvā—having created; *bhūta*—ghosts; *piśācān*—fiends; *ca*—and; *bhagavān*—Lord Brahmā; *ātma*—his; *tandriṇā*—from laziness; *dik-vāsasaḥ*—naked; *mukta*—disheveled; *keśān*—hair; *vikṣya*—seeing; *ca*—and; *cāmilayat*—closed; *dṛṣau*—two eyes.

#### TRANSLATION

The glorious Brahmā next evolved from his sloth the ghosts and fiends, but he closed his eyes when he saw them stand naked with their hair scattered.

#### PURPORT

Ghosts and mischievous hobgoblins are also the creation of Brahmā; they are not false. All of them are meant for putting the conditioned soul into various miseries. They are understood to be the creation of Brahmā under the direction of the Supreme Lord.

#### TEXT 41

जग्धुस्तद्विस्तृष्टां तां जृम्भणाख्यां तनुं प्रभोः ।  
निद्रामिन्द्रियविक्लेदो यया भूतेषु दृश्यते ।  
येनोच्छिष्टान्धर्षयन्ति तमुन्मादं प्रचक्षते ॥४१॥

jagdhur tat-viśṛṣṭāṁ tām  
jṛmbhaṇākhyāṁ tanuṁ prabhoḥ  
nidrām indriya-vikledo  
yayā bhūteṣu dṛśyate  
yenocchiṣṭān dharṣayanti  
tam unmādaṁ pracakṣate

jagdhur—took possession; *tat-viśṛṣṭāṁ*—thrown off by him; *tām*—that; *jṛmbhaṇa-ākhyāṁ*—known as yawning; *tanu*—the body; *prabhoḥ*—of Lord Brahmā; *nidrām*—sleep; *indriya-vikledaḥ*—drooling; *yayā*—by which; *bhūteṣu*—among the living beings; *dṛśyate*—is observed; *yena*—by which; *ucchiṣṭān*—smeared with stool and urine; *dharṣayanti*—bewilder; *tam*—that; *unmādaṁ*—madness; *pracakṣate*—is spoken of.



## TRANSLATION

The ghosts and hobgoblins took possession of the body thrown off in the form of yawning by Brahmā, the creator of the living entities. This is also known as the sleep which causes drooling. The hobgoblins and ghosts attack men who are impure, and their attack is spoken of as insanity.

## PURPORT

The disease of insanity or being haunted by ghosts takes place in an unclean state of existence. Here it is clearly stated that when a man is fast asleep and saliva flows from his mouth and he remains unclean, ghosts then take advantage of his unclean state and haunt his body. In other words, those who drool while sleeping are considered unclean and are subject to be haunted by ghosts or to go insane.

## TEXT 42

ऊर्जस्वन्तं मन्यमान आत्मानं भगवानजः ।  
साध्यान् गणान् पितृगणान् परोक्षेणासृजत्प्रभुः ॥४२॥

ūrjasvantam manyamāna  
ātmānaṁ bhagavān ajaḥ  
sādhyaṁ gaṇān pitr-gaṇān  
parokṣeṇāsrjat prabhuḥ

ūrjaḥ-vantam—full of energy; manyamānaḥ—recognizing; ātmānam—himself; bhagavān—the most worshipful; ajaḥ—Brahmā; sādhyaṁ—the demigods; gaṇān—hosts; pitr-gaṇān—and the Pitās; parokṣeṇa—from his invisible form; asrjat—created; prabhuḥ—the lord of beings.

## TRANSLATION

Recognizing himself to be full of desire and energy, the worshipful Brahmā, the creator of the living entities, evolved from his own invisible form, from his navel, the hosts of Sādhya and Pitās.

## PURPORT

The Sādhya and Pitās are invisible forms of departed souls, and they are also created by Brahmā.

## TEXT 43

त आत्मसर्गं तं कायं पितरः प्रतिपेदिरे ।  
साध्येभ्यश्च पितृभ्यश्च कवयो यद्वितन्वते ॥४३॥

ta ātma-sargaṁ taṁ kāyaṁ  
pitarāḥ pratipedire  
sādhyaebhyaś ca pitr̥bhyaś ca  
kavayo yad vitanvate

te—they; ātma-sargaṁ—source of their existence; tam—that; kāyaṁ—body; pitarāḥ—the Pitās; pratipedire—accepted; sādhyaebhyaḥ—to the Sādhya; ca—and; pitr̥bhyaḥ—to the Pitās; ca—also; kavayaḥ—those well versed in rituals; yat—through which; vitanvate—offer oblations.

## TRANSLATION

The Pitās themselves took possession of the invisible body, the source of their existence. It is through the medium of this invisible body that those well versed in the rituals offer oblations to the Sādhya and Pitās [in the form of their departed ancestors] on the occasion of śrāddha.

## PURPORT

Śrāddha is a ritualistic performance observed by the followers of the Vedas. There is a yearly occasion of fifteen days when ritualistic religionists follow the principle of offering oblations to departed souls. Thus those fathers and ancestors who, by freaks of nature, might not have a gross body for material enjoyment can again gain such bodies due to the offering of śrāddha oblations by their descendants. The performance of śrāddha, or offering oblations with prasāda, is still current in India, especially at Gayā, where oblations are offered at the lotus feet of

Viṣṇu in a celebrated temple. Because the Lord is thus pleased with the devotional service of the descendants, by His grace He liberates the condemned souls of forefathers who do not have gross bodies, and He favors them to again receive a gross body for development of spiritual advancement.

Unfortunately, by the influence of māyā, the conditioned soul employs the body he gets for sense gratification, forgetting that such an occupation may lead him to return to an invisible body. The devotee of the Lord, or one who is in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, however, does not need to perform such ritualistic ceremonies as śrāddha because he is always pleasing the Supreme Lord; therefore his fathers and ancestors who might have been in difficulty are automatically relieved. The vivid example is Prahlāda Mahārāja. Prahlāda Mahārāja requested Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva to deliver his sinful father, who had so many times offended the lotus feet of the Lord. The Lord replied that in a family where a Vaiṣṇava like Prahlāda is born, not only his father but his father's father and their fathers—up to the fourteenth father back—are all automatically delivered. The conclusion, therefore, is that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the sum total of all good work for the family, for society and for all living entities. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* the author says that a person fully conversant with Kṛṣṇa consciousness does not perform any rituals because he knows that simply by serving Kṛṣṇa in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness, all rituals are automatically performed.

## TEXT 44

सिद्धान् विद्याधरांश्चैव तिरोधानेन सोऽसृजत् ।  
तेभ्योऽदत्तमात्मानमन्तर्धानाख्यमद्भुतम् ॥४४॥

siddhān vidyādharaṁś caiva  
tirodhānena so 'srjat  
tebhyo 'dadāt tam ātmānam  
antardhānākhyam adbhutam

siddhān—the Siddhas; vidyādharaṁ—Vidyādhara; ca eva—and also; tirodhānena—by the faculty of remaining hidden from vision; saḥ—Lord Brahmā; asrjat—created; tebhyaḥ—to them; adadāt—gave; tam ātmānam—that form of his; antardhāna-ākhyam—known as the Antardhāna; adbhutam—wonderful.

## TRANSLATION

Then Lord Brahmā, by his ability to be hidden from vision, created the Siddhas and Vidyādhara and gave them that wonderful form of his known as the Antardhāna.

## PURPORT

Antardhāna means that these living creatures can be perceived to be present, but they cannot be seen by vision.

## TEXT 45

स किन्नरान् किम्पुरुषान् प्रत्यात्म्येनासृजत्प्रभुः ।  
मानयन्मात्मानमात्मानमासं विलोकयन् ॥४५॥

sa kinnarān kimpuruṣān  
pratyātmyeṇāsrjat prabhuḥ  
mānayan ātmānātmānam  
ātmābhāsam vilokayan

saḥ—Lord Brahmā; kinnarān—the Kinnaras; kimpuruṣān—the Kimpuruṣas; pratyātmyeṇa—from his reflection (in water); asrjat—created; prabhuḥ—the lord of the living beings (Brahmā); mānayan—admiring; ātmānā ātmānam—himself by himself; ātma-ābhāsam—his reflection; vilokayan—seeing.

## TRANSLATION

One day, Brahmā, the creator of the living entities, beheld his own reflection in the water, and admiring himself, he evolved Kimpuruṣas as well as Kinnaras out of that reflection.

(continued in next issue)







# Prosperity In Perspective

Kṛṣṇa encourages us to work for a living and, at the same time, to work on solving life's real problems.

by DHANURDHARA SWAMI

Once, in South India, a reporter asked Śrīla Prabhupāda, "Sir, are you a monist or a dualist?" Sensing his pseudo intellectual tone, Śrīla Prabhupāda responded quickly with reference to *Bhagavad-gītā*, "What is the point of discussing such things? . . . Kṛṣṇa says, *annād bhavanti bhūtāni*. *Anna* means 'grains.' The people have no grains. Grains are produced from the rains, and rains from sacrifice. So perform sacrifice." The point: Even while pursuing self-realization, we must solve our economic problems.

In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa encourages Arjuna to fight as a *kṣatriya* (soldier) as part of Lord Kṛṣṇa's system of *yajña*, or sacrifice. Lord Kṛṣṇa then describes sacrifice as *anena prasaviṣyadhvam*, "making one more and more prosperous," and *eṣa vo' sty iṣṭa-kāma-dhuk*, "bestowing upon you everything desirable for living happily and achieving liberation."

Though *dharma*, one's occupation as prescribed in the *Vedas*, brings prosperity, without spiritual guidance we tend to see economic development alone as life's goal. As Jesus Christ warns, "What profiteth a man if he gains the whole world but loses his eternal soul?"

The limitations of the happiness we

attain by economic, social, or political adjustment become even more clear when we understand the real problems of our life. For example, one Indian friend of mine became preoccupied with immigrating to America. Seeing his chances to be slim, he became distracted from his business. So I asked him to read the verse from *Bhagavad-gītā* in which Lord Kṛṣṇa says, *janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhī-duḥkha-doṣānudarśanam*: "The man in knowledge sees that the real problems in life are birth, death, old age, and disease." I then asked him to think about these questions: Will living in America make you immune from heart disease and cancer? Don't Americans also grow old and die? Later in the week he confided to me how silly it was for him to have thought that a geographical adjustment could actually solve his *real* problems.

But the solutions to those real problems are not so easily discerned. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Arjuna faces a great dilemma: if he fights to win the kingdom, he must vanquish those loved ones with whom he wishes to enjoy his royalty, but if he renounces the war, he not only forfeits his income but neglects his religious duty as a *kṣatriya*. The depressing prospects give him an important realization: "I can find no means



to drive away this grief which is drying up my senses. I will not be able to dispel it even if I win a prosperous, unrivaled kingdom on earth with sovereignty like the demigods in heaven." In response, Lord Kṛṣṇa speaks *Bhagavad-gītā* to show that the perplexities of life can be dispelled by transcendental knowledge.

Any one of us, like Arjuna, can be led from perplexity to enlightenment by the guidance of *Bhagavad-gītā*, while those guided only by economic ambitions are led to illusion. The Vedic histories are full of examples of men living under such illusion, and modern life gives us more examples every day. My youth brings two instances to mind.

While visiting my family during my third year at the university, I heard a news report about the industrialist Howard Hughes, America's wealthiest man. He had mysteriously isolated himself from public view for more than ten years. Fearful of disease, he had confined himself to a small suite of sterile rooms in his mansion, touching the outside world only through his servant, who, dressed in white clothes and surgical gloves, brought Mr. Hughes his carefully cooked meals three times a day. But now Mr. Hughes had died

of influenza. Somehow the wry comments of the newscaster revealed that he, too, realized how foolish were Mr. Hughes's efforts to conquer disease and thwart death.

The other incident took place while I was living at our Hare Kṛṣṇa center in Dallas, Texas. One day I went with another devotee to the nearby estate of the oil baron H. L. Hunt to offer him our edition of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. But his security arrangements were elaborate, and although our intentions were good, his guards rebuffed us at the gate. Unfortunately, his security men could not rebuff death. He died unexpectedly one week later.

But riches aren't necessarily evil, for utility alone determines value. For example, a knife can be used as a deadly weapon or as a craftsman's tool. Similarly, our busy activities may now distract us from spirituality, but *Bhagavad-gītā* teaches us how to channel those same activities so that they help us solve the problems of life. Lord Kṛṣṇa therefore instructs Arjuna, "Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer or give away, and whatever austerities you perform—do that, O son of Kuntī, as an offer-

ing to Me. In this way you will be freed from bondage to work and its auspicious and inauspicious results."

Here's how material resources can assist spiritual development: A blind man can't see, and a lame man can't walk. But the blind man can carry the lame man on his back, and together they can see and walk. Similarly, we can best solve the problems of life, both individual and collective, when our material assets are guided by spiritual eyes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda described India as lame, for although she has great spiritual vision, she is economically weak. On the other hand, the more developed countries are blind because although wealthy, they lack guidance and vision. Śrīla Prabhupāda preached, therefore, that the resources of the industrialized countries, used according to the spiritual insights of India, could solve the problems of the world.

He also put this principle into practice. With funds from his Western disciples, Śrīla Prabhupāda organized the printing of more than 100 million copies of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* in forty languages and arranged to distribute these books of wisdom all over the world. ❧

## Our Real Identity

(continued from page 12)

elements combine to form blood, flesh, bone, skin, and so on.

2. The subtle body, consisting of mind, intelligence, and false ego. Its functions are thinking, feeling, and willing (mind); decision-making and evaluating sense objects (intelligence); and illusory identification with matter (false ego).

The subtle body can be experienced in our emotions, such as love, hate, attraction and repulsion, or in our dreams, which are nothing but the subtle body acting instead of the gross body.

3. The spiritual body, or the soul, consisting of eternity, knowledge, and bliss—*sac-cid-ānanda*. It is unmanifested, or in seed form, while encaged in a material body.

The soul is the cause of life in the sense that it makes the gross body appear alive, but actually the soul is the life itself, and the body is never alive. A hammer, for example, can perform very useful tasks and move around in so many ways, but only when it is held by the hand. In the same way, the body moves only because of the presence of the soul.

The relationship between matter, body, mind, and soul is described in *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.42):

The working senses are superior to dull matter; mind is higher than the senses; intelligence is still higher than the mind; and he

[the soul] is even higher than the intelligence.

*Bhagavad-gītā* describes enjoyment on the physical platform as much inferior to enjoyment on the level of the pure self, the soul. From the following verses we can see that understanding our real self and the difference between matter and spirit is not merely a philosophical issue but can affect our life in a very practical way:

An intelligent person does not take part in the sources of misery, which are due to contact with the material senses. O son of Kuntī, such pleasures have a beginning and an end, and so the wise man does not delight in them.

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 5.22)

In the stage of perfection called trance, or *samādhi*, one's mind is completely restrained from material mental activities by practice of *yoga*. This perfection is characterized by one's ability to see the self by the pure mind and to relish and rejoice in the self. In that joyous state, one is situated in boundless transcendental happiness, realized through transcendental senses. Established thus, one never departs from the truth, and upon gaining this he thinks there is no greater gain. Being situated in such a position, one is never shaken, even in the midst of greatest difficulty. This indeed is actual freedom from all miseries arising from material contact.

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 6.20-23)

Just as the body requires material food, so the soul requires spiritual food. As long

as people are starving their soul, they will have to tolerate the consequences in the form of anger, frustration, envy, lust, greed, and hatred. These are all symptoms of bodily identification.

If the driver always fills the tank of the car, checks the oil, polishes and cleans the car nicely, but neglects to eat, soon all his efforts in relation to the car will be useless. What good is a car without a driver? Both the car and the driver have to be maintained nicely. But out of the two, the driver is more important. Unfortunately, not only does our materialistic society fail to maintain the driver properly—it doesn't even know he exists!

From the spiritual point of view, a so-called normal person who identifies with his material body is as crazy as a mentally deranged person who imagines himself to be Napoleon or Hitler. Neither of them knows who he is.

The only sane person is the one who understands his real identity as spirit soul and who can see the difference between matter and spirit. The knowledge of our real self is already there. It is an inherent part of the soul. Therefore we do not have to acquire it from somewhere else. We simply have to uncover it from within ourselves, just as one would clean a dusty mirror to see himself again. Self-realization can be accomplished by the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. By cultivating knowledge of our real self, we realize the wonderful qualities of the soul and become happy and peaceful. ❧



# ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

## Training for Transcendence

*This is the continuation of a conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples in New Vrindaban, West Virginia, on June 26, 1976.*

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** If you scrutinizingly examine all these various godly qualities that constitute advancement of life, modern man has no idea. That is being explained in the Sixteenth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*. There is no such education in godly qualities, nor are people interested. Now higher art classes in the colleges, universities—no students will join. They are simply learning technological processes.

[To disciple:] Go on reading.

**Disciple:** “Those who are situated in the transcendental nature make progress on the path of liberation. For those who are acting in the modes of passion and ignorance, on the other hand, there is no possibility of liberation.”

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** People say, “What do we care about liberation? It is all troublesome. You have to sacrifice so many things. We don’t want liberation. It is nonsensical. You keep your liberation. We don’t want it.”

This is the problem. As you said earlier, to these people “liberation” means “Whatever I like I will do.” But actually, one cannot do that. Still, one is thinking that he’s liberated:

“Can you do that—whatever you like?”

“No, not actually.”

But still he’s thinking he’s liberated. Therefore—rascal. Dog’s life.

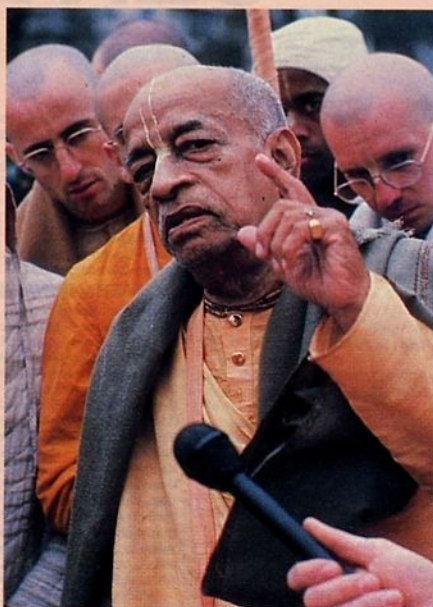
The dog is jumping, barking that “I’m free now.” But he forgets that soon the master will call and chain him. The master will do it. But still the dog is thinking that “I’m liberated.”

This is the problem. What is modern man’s “liberation”? He does not know what liberation is.

**Disciple** [continuing the reading of the *Bhagavad-gītā*]: “Either they will have to remain in this material world as human beings, or they will descend among the species of the animals or even lower life forms.”

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** “Ah,” people will say, “—all bogus. This life is all. After this life, everything is finished. I am free.” This is the problem. This is their position.

**Disciple:** When we speak at schools and colleges, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we find that



people cannot defeat what you are saying. They have to admit, “Yes, our society does have many shortcomings. We don’t seem to know how to organize things properly, so that all our citizens can become happy.”

And people also have to admit, “Yes there probably is life after death, and transmigration of the soul. And our society has this great shortcoming—that it teaches us nothing spiritual, nothing about preparing for the life after death.”

Even when they reach the college level, people have quite a bit of difficulty really understanding the basic idea that “I am not this material body—I’m a spiritual being.”

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** They’ll understand. I’m just pointing out the difficulties of your preaching. You’ll have to face all these difficulties. In the materialistic society, people have become like cats and dogs. Therefore, the business of preaching is somewhat a hard job. You have to deal with cats and dogs. But still there is hope, because they have got this human form of life.

There is hope. It is not hopeless. Don’t be discouraged. But this is the job. You have to meet with cats and dogs. That is my point. When you go to preach, you must know that “I’ve come to preach among the cats and dogs, and I have to deal with them carefully. Otherwise, they will bark.”

That was why, upon arriving in your country, I wrote a poem with an apparent

air of disappointment. The idea was, “What will these people be able to understand about this sublime spiritual philosophy?”

Hm. [To disciple:] Go on reading.

**Disciple:** “In this Sixteenth Chapter the Lord explains both the transcendental nature and its attendant qualities and the demoniac nature and its qualities. He also explains the advantages and disadvantages of these qualities.

“The word *abhijātsya* in reference to one born of transcendental qualities or godly tendencies is very significant. To beget a child in a godly atmosphere is known in the Vedic scriptures as *Garbhādhāna-saṁskāra*. If the parents want a child in the godly qualities, they should follow the ten principles recommended for the social life of the human being. In *Bhagavad-gītā* we have studied also before that sex life for begetting a good child is Kṛṣṇa Himself. Sex life is not condemned, provided the process is used in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Those who are in Kṛṣṇa consciousness at least should not beget children like cats and dogs but should beget them so that they may become Kṛṣṇa conscious after birth. That should be the advantage of children born of a father and mother absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

“The social institution known as *varṇāśrama-dharma*—the institution dividing society into four divisions of social life and four occupational divisions or castes—is not meant to divide society according to birth. Such divisions are in terms of educational qualifications. They are to keep the society in a state of peace and prosperity. The qualities mentioned herein are explained as transcendental qualities meant for making a person progress in spiritual understanding so that he can get liberated from the material world.”

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** So where is that institution for training people to acquire these transcendental qualities? There is no such institution. We are attempting to train people in transcendental qualities. This is the only institution. Other than our International Society, where is the institution for training people in transcendental qualities? I don’t think throughout the whole world there is any institution for training the students in transcendental qualities. Who cares about transcendental qualities?

(To be continued.)



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# KṚṢṆA MEDITATION

While Kṛṣṇa was living at Dvārakā, He sent a message to the *gopīs*, His cowherd girlfriends in Vṛndāvana, who were always lamenting in separation from Him. The message was delivered by Kṛṣṇa's cousin Uddhava, because Kṛṣṇa wanted Uddhava to witness the pinnacle of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the *gopīs'* expressions of love for Him.

When Uddhava met with the *gopīs* in a secluded place, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Kṛṣṇa's favorite *gopī*, became so absorbed in thoughts of Him that She began talking with a bumblebee as if he were Kṛṣṇa's messenger.

"Your master Kṛṣṇa is exactly of your quality," Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī said. "You sit down on a flower, and after taking a little honey you immediately fly away and sit in another flower and taste. Kṛṣṇa only once gave Me the chance to enjoy with Him, but now He has left Me altogether."

Rādhārāṇī's talks in separation from Kṛṣṇa are symptoms of the highest transcendental ecstasy, called *mahā-bhāva*, which is possible only in the persons of Rādhārāṇī and Her associates. In Rādhārāṇī are found the signs of the brightest jewel of love of God.

On seeing how Rādhārāṇī and

the other *gopīs* were accustomed to think of Kṛṣṇa constantly in the topmost ecstasy of love, Uddhava told them, "My dear *gopīs*, the mentality you have developed in relationship with Kṛṣṇa is very, very difficult to attain, even for great sages and saintly persons, You have attained the highest perfectional stage of life. It is a great boon for you that you have fixed your minds upon Kṛṣṇa and have decided to have Kṛṣṇa only. Because your minds are now fully absorbed in Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Soul, universal love has automatically developed in you. I think myself very fortunate that I have been favored, by your grace, to see you in this situation."

Uddhava then read Kṛṣṇa's message: "My dear *gopīs*, please know that separation between ourselves is impossible at any time, at any place, or under any circumstances, because I am all-pervading. Transcendental knowledge of the Absolute is no longer necessary for you. You were accustomed to love Me from the very beginning of your lives. My dear *gopīs*, to increase your superexcellent love for Me, I have purposely separated Myself from you so that you may be in constant meditation on Me." ❧







# NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

## Do I Have Time to Chant the Names of God?

We know from letters we receive at *Back to Godhead* that many of our readers have an interest in chanting the holy names. Lord Caitanya's example of ecstatic chanting and the explanations of God's names as given in the scriptures and Śrīla Prabhupāda's purports have not gone in vain. All over the world, people are practicing *mantra* meditation, especially by chanting the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. But finding time to chant each day is sometimes very difficult. We would like, therefore, to offer words of encouragement to those who are interested in chanting and, by pointing out the ease and the importance of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, to try moving those who are not yet interested.

In virtually any discipline, from meditation to golf, stress is laid on the necessity for regular practice. Chanting is no exception. We may already be self-disciplined to give a half hour daily to physical exercise, and of course we have to spend many hours earning a living. So if we regard spiritual progress as important, we simply have to give it some time.

The chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* has been handed down by previous spiritual masters to the people of this age, because assiduous, prolonged spiritual practices are no longer possible. But chanting is easy. We simply have to give a little time and attention: chant the *mantra* and hear.

If we start by giving a little time daily to chanting, it will soon become interesting and tasteful. Although there are no rigid rules in chanting, the best time for culture of the holy name is during the early-morning hours, especially before sunrise. If we chant with attention, we will find ourselves chanting more and more at different times of the day, even while driving the car, cleaning, and so on.

Those who don't agree that spiritual life is important will hardly see the need to give any time for even an easy spiritual practice. When Śrīla Prabhupāda was just beginning the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, he used to distribute his newspaper, *Back to Godhead*, on the streets of New Delhi, and he often met with people who told him they had "no time." Prompted by

this resistance, Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote the article "NO TIME, A Chronic Disease of the Common Man." He wrote: "They say they are too busy in earning money for maintaining the body and soul together. But when we ask them what do they mean by the 'soul,' they have nothing to reply."

In the article, Śrīla Prabhupāda cited the examples of several scientists and politicians who had died suddenly. Death is awaiting every one of us, he explained, so even a busy, ambitious man should calculate for this. But according to the scripture *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, most people are very foolish, and even though they pretend to be experts in managing time and money, they make a great miscalculation.

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.6.14) states:

One who is too attached cannot understand that he is wasting his valuable life with the maintenance of his family. He also fails to understand that the purpose of human life, a life suitable for realization of the Absolute Truth, is being imperceptibly spoiled. However, he is very cleverly attentive to seeing that not a single farthing is lost by mismanagement.

As Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in his "No Time" essay:

The busy man should try to know as to whither he is going. This life is but a spot in his longest sojourn, and the sane person should not be busy with a spot only. Nobody says that the body should not be maintained—but everyone should know from *Bhagavad-gītā* that the body is the outward dress and the "soul" is the real person who puts on the dress. So if the dress is taken care of only, without any care of the real person—it is sheer foolishness and a waste of time.

Although the chanting is simple, it is a serious practice, and therefore has to be done with mental concentration. The basic requirements are that one enunciate the sound of God's names and hear with attention. If one does not practice the *mantra* with attention, he receives only a shadow of the holy name. The full, pure name can be chanted only by one who chants with devotion. Yet according to the scriptures, even a shadow of the name can liberate one from material suffering.

In chanting the holy name one

should strive to avoid the following offenses:

1. To vilify the great devotees who have preached about the glories of the Lord.
2. To see the holy names of the Lord in terms of worldly distinction. (God is addressed by different names in different parts of the world, and all these names should be honored.)
3. To neglect the orders of the authorized *ācāryas*, or spiritual masters.
4. To vilify scriptures of Vedic knowledge.
5. To define the holy name of the Lord in terms of one's mundane calculation.
6. To interpret the holy name.
7. To commit sins intentionally on the strength of the holy name.
8. To consider the chanting of the holy name to be equal to some auspicious material activity.
9. To instruct those who are not interested in chanting the holy name of the Lord about the transcendental nature of the holy name.
10. To become uninterested in the holy name of the Lord even after hearing of the transcendental nature of the holy name.

It is recommended that one associate with persons who are practicing the chanting and that one read authorized literature describing the glories of the holy name.

Even random reading from the Vedic scriptures will make it clear that chanting is the religious practice for the present age of Kali (the age of quarrel and hypocrisy). As stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (12.3.51), "My dear king, although Kali-yuga is full of faults, there is still one good quality about this age. It is that simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, one can become free from material bondage and be promoted to the transcendental kingdom."

Hearing the glories of the holy name may remind us of the importance of chanting. But it remains up to each one of us to budget our time and give our attention to this important "commodity." Only by our choice can we avoid the ultimate embarrassment of reaching the end of life only to discover that we had "no time" for God—in which case we will have lost everything. Why not begin today by making a modest plan to try chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*?—SDG





# Godhead Is Light.

"The process of going back home, back to Godhead, is to hear about the Supreme Lord and His name, form, attributes, pastimes, paraphernalia, and variegatedness. Foolish people do not know this. They want to hear something about the name, form, etc., of everything temporary, and they do not know how to utilize this propensity of hearing for the ultimate good."

—From *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.1.2, purport)  
by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami  
Prabhupāda

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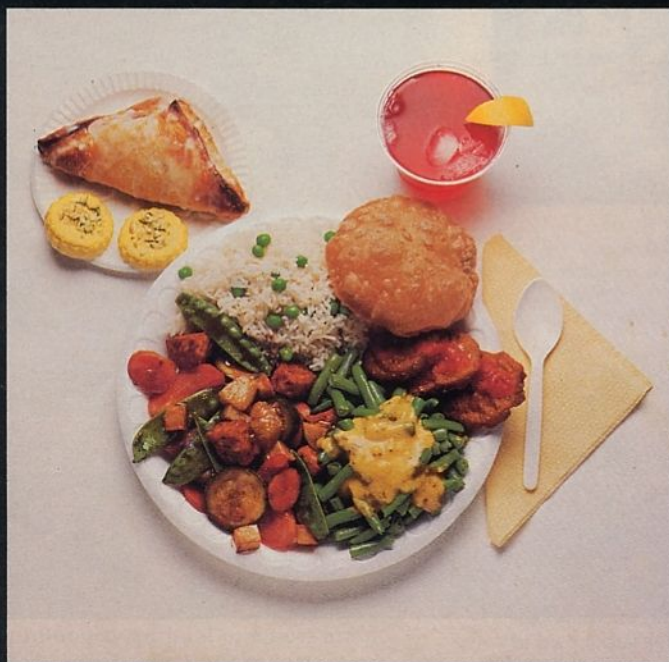
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