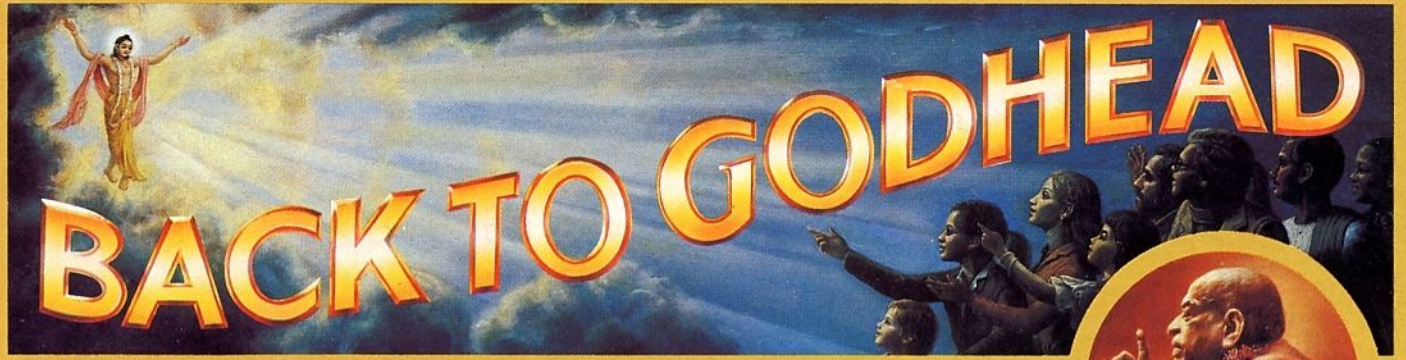


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

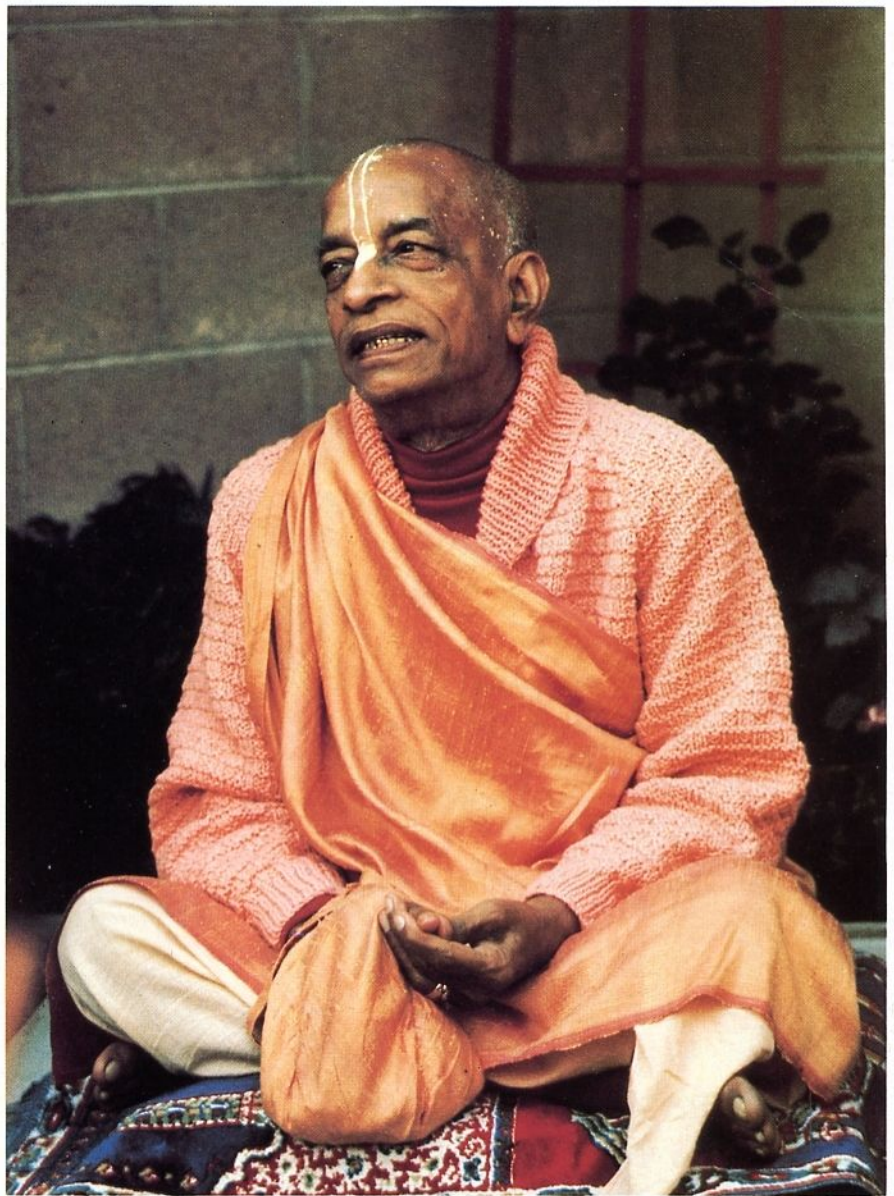


Vol.24 No.4

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta 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.

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

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

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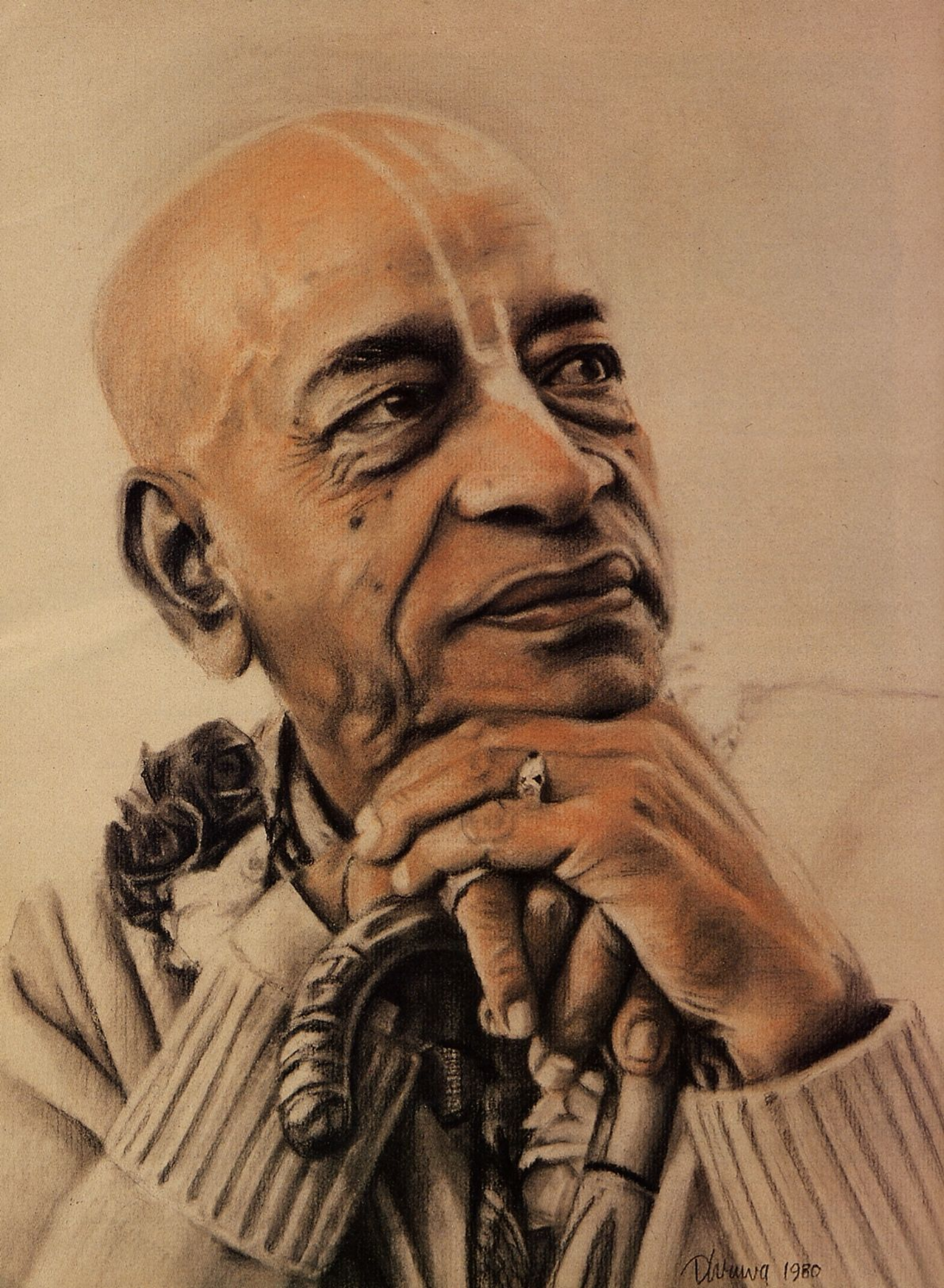
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COVER: Lord Balarāma is Lord Kṛṣṇa's first expansion. Like Kṛṣṇa, He is unlimited in all respects, and He is also known as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Once, when Lord Balarāma was enjoying His pastimes in Vṛndāvana, His eternal abode, He summoned the Yamunā River to come near. When she refused, the Lord became extremely angry and began dragging the river with the tip of His plow. The Yamunā River in person then came before the Lord to beg His forgiveness. (Painting by Parikṣit dāsa.)



Do modern achievements spell success
to the eyes of the enlightened?

FROM FOLLY TO DEFEAT

A lecture in Stockholm on September 10, 1973

by HIS DIVINE GRACE

A. C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*parābhavas tāvad abodha-jāto
yāvan na jijñāsata ātma-tattvam
yāvat kriyās tāvad idaṁ mano vai
karmātmakaṁ yena śarīra-bandhaḥ*

"As long as one does not inquire about the spiritual values of life, one is defeated and subjected to miseries arising from ignorance. Be it sinful or pious, *karma* has its resultant actions. If a person is engaged in any kind of *karma*, his mind is called *karmātmaka*, colored with fruitive activity. As long as the mind is impure, consciousness is unclear, and as long as one is absorbed in fruitive activity, he has to accept a material body."

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.5.5)

In the previous verse, Rṣabhadeva has said that madness after sense gratification and doing all kinds of sinful activity are not good. Those who are atheists may say, "Suppose we get a material body, and it's a little miserable. What is wrong with that? It will be finished. Then there will be no more pains and pleasures." That is also the Buddhist theory, that the body is a

combination of matter, and there are pains and pleasures. So make this body zero. Then there will be no more pains and pleasures.

So Rṣabhadeva answers this point: "No, this body will be finished, and you'll have to accept another body. And as long as you continue to accept one body after another, the miserable condition of material existence will continue."

In the beginning, Rṣabhadeva said that this human body is not to be misused simply for sense gratification like the dogs and hogs. So now he says, *parābhavas tāvad abodha-jāto yāvan na jijñāsata ātma-tattvam*: "These rascals do not know that for want of knowledge of the soul (*ātma-tattvam*)—in the bodily concept of life—whatever they are doing is defeat." They are thinking, "Now, by scientific advancement, we are able to go to the moon planet. This is our achievement." Of course, I do not know whether they can go. But at least they are attempting. But Rṣabhadeva says, "That is not your achievement. That is your defeat." Why? Because they cannot go to the moon planet or sun planet or any

DRAWING BY DHURVA MAHĀRĀJA DĀSA

other planet like that. They are simply wasting their time.

Just try to understand. Suppose you want to go to some foreign country, can you enter by force? Just like in England, some foreigners come by smuggling. So that is not allowed. Similarly, from the *śāstra* [scripture] we understand that nobody can go to the moon planet or any other planet unless he's fit. It is said in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *yānti deva-vratā devān*. These are the higher planetary systems. The demigods live there. So unless you are fit to live with the demigods, you cannot go there.

Similarly, unless you make yourself fit to enter into Kṛṣṇaloka, you cannot go there by force. That is not possible. To enter a foreign country, you have to have a visa, you have to have a passport, meet immigration requirements—then you'll be allowed to enter.

So even if you go to another planet, you'll be driven away. What is the use of such an attempt? You cannot stay there. Nor will you be allowed to enter. So this endeavor to go there by so-called scientific advancement is simply defeat. What have they achieved by these excursions? Nothing. No tangible achievement. But Russia and America have spent billions of dollars to go to the moon.

Even if you go there, you'll still have to die—you'll have to give up this body—and you do not know where you'll be placed after death. That is under nature's hand. You cannot dictate—"After death, I shall go to that planet or this planet." No. You are completely under nature's control.

Everyone is ambitious, but simply by becoming ambitious can one become a very rich man or a very respectable man? That is not possible. One must qualify himself. So these are futile attempts. You have to act according to the higher laws. But they do not believe that there is higher authority, that there is judgment. They blindly think they can do whatever they like. That is not good. *Parābhava*. This is called defeat. *Parābhavas tāvad abodha-jātaḥ*. And as long as one is not inquisitive to understand what he is (*yāvan na jijñā-sata*), that is defeat.

This is the condition. Nobody is interested to know his identity. This is the instruction we get from Sanātana Gosvāmī. When he first approached Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, his question was: '*ke āmi*', '*kene āmāya jāre tāpa-traya*.' This is a very nice question: "Kindly tell me what I am and why I am subjected to the threefold miseries of material existence. I do not want all these miserable conditions of life, but I am forced to accept them. Therefore, what is my position? Why am I forced to accept them?"

This is called *ātma-tattva jijñāsa*, in-

quiry: "What am I?" Nobody knows what he is. Everyone thinks, "I'm this body." Therefore he's *abodha-jātaḥ*: from the very birth he's a rascal. He does not know his identity. Someone's thinking, "I'm American." Someone's thinking, "I'm an Indian." Someone's thinking, "I'm a Russian." All these identifications are dog-gish identifications.

The dog is thinking, "I am this body." The cat is thinking, "I am this body." Similarly, if a human being thinks like that, then he remains in ignorance. And if you remain in ignorance, whatever you believe to be to your credit is not an achievement: it is defeat. This is to be understood.

One should be inquisitive. Sanātana Gosvāmī has set the example. He went to Caitanya Mahāprabhu and asked, "Sir, let me know what I am. In ordinary behavior, people say that I am a very

The dog is thinking, "I am this body." Similarly, if a human being thinks like that, he remains in ignorance. And if you remain in ignorance, whatever you believe to be to your credit is not an achievement: it is defeat.

learned man. They say, 'Paṇḍitī.' " The *brāhmaṇa* is addressed in India as "Paṇḍitī." *Paṇḍitī* means "very learned." So Sanātana Gosvāmī submitted, "The general people say I am very learned, but actually I do not know what I am." He admitted this.

Ask any so-called scholar, doctor, Ph.D if he knows what he is. Professor Kotovsky in Moscow said, "After finishing the body, everything is finished." He does not know what he is. This is the position. Therefore, the so-called scholars, learned men, whatever they are doing, they're being defeated because they do not know their identity. Unless you know your identity, then how can you work for the goal of your life? If your identity is mistaken, then whatever you are doing, that is your defeat.

Yāvat kriyās tāvad idaṁ mano vai karm-

āmakam yena śarīra-bandhaḥ. Everyone has a different type of mentality. *Karm-āmakam* refers to the general mentality that "I shall work very nicely, I shall get money, and I shall enjoy life." Those who are followers of Vedic ritualistic ceremonies are trying to enjoy in the next life also—by *punya kārya*, or "pious activities." But pious activities are also karmic activities. Therefore, according to our philosophy, not only are we uninterested in impious activities, we are not even interested in pious activities. This is our position.

By pious activities you can get birth in a very aristocratic or rich family. You can become a very learned scholar. You can become beautiful. You American or Western people are supposed to be very learned, advanced in material science. You are also good-looking and richer than other countries. This is due to your past pious activities.

Suppose you have received these opportunities for your pious activities, and somebody has taken birth in Greenland, where there is always snow and there are so many inconveniences. Or someone has taken birth somewhere in Africa where there are no facilities as you have. From the spiritual point of view, both these kinds of facility or inconvenience are one. In any birth, you have to enter within the womb of a mother to stay nine months in a packed-up condition. And nowadays they are killing the child within the womb. You cannot even come out. Before your coming out from the womb of your mother, you might be killed by your very mother or father. So either you are in the womb of a very rich mother or a poor mother, or in the womb of a black mother or white mother, or a learned mother or a foolish mother, the pains of staying within the mother are the same.

And as soon as you accept some material body, you'll have to suffer the bodily pains and pleasures. Then, at the time of death, the same painful condition is there for everyone. So it doesn't matter whether one is rich or poor, the material condition will cause one to suffer.

If you continue to absorb your mind in fruitive activities, and if you do not fulfill your desires, then nature will give you another body in your next life to fulfill those desires. This is going on. Therefore it is *parābhava*, defeat. Your business is to know that you are not this body; you are spirit soul, part and parcel of God, Kṛṣṇa. Your real business is to become Kṛṣṇa conscious, fully, and go back home, back to Godhead, to finish this business of repetition of birth and death. But who will understand this? Therefore it is said: *kṛṣṇa ye bhaje se bada catura*. One who has understood the meaning of the Kṛṣṇa

(continued on page 20)



"O Romeo, Romeo . . . what *happened*?"

A STORY OF MORE WOE

by RĀDHĀ KRṢṢṢA SWAMI

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is regarded around the world as a powerful example of true love. The play's magic deeply moves many who see or read it. Some people admire the lovers' determination to die rather than compromise their ideal love; others are struck by the tragic way lasting happiness eludes Romeo and Juliet; and many see reflected in the story hankerings and frustrations experienced in their own lives.

Whatever the cause of the story's appeal, it is interesting to imagine what might have happened if the story had ended in a different way.

After all, in romantic stories the hero and heroine often overcome all obstacles, marry, and live "happily ever after."

Let's suppose Friar Lawrence's plan to reunite Juliet with her exiled new husband had worked. His idea was to have her drink a sedative that would make her appear dead. He would then inform Romeo of the ruse and rescue Juliet, with Romeo's help, from the crypt where she would be lying. The couple would then go to the city of Mantua and start a new life together. No tragic endings, no untimely deaths, no irony of destiny.

Let's return to their home some twenty years

3-D ART BY KEŚISŪDANA DĀSA AND PATRICIA ALLARD

later to see how “ever after” has favored the fabled lovers.

Upon arriving, we learn that Romeo and Juliet recently had their eighth child, but the neighbors doubt they’ll stop there. Having so many kids has taken a toll on poor Juliet. She is no longer the exquisite beauty Romeo first met years ago. She looks tired and aged, and Romeo has begun calling her “Pumpkin.” Disposable diapers haven’t been invented, nor have canned baby food, coin laundries, or any other modern conveniences. “Happily ever after” has turned into “entanglement ever after.”

Juliet is thinking of talking to Romeo about her frustration with the kind of life they now have: their romance is long gone, the routine of everyday life is boring, and she’s discovered many defects in Romeo she’d overlooked when they were dating back in Verona, such as his table manners. And, if ignorance is bliss, Juliet is better off not knowing about a couple of love affairs he’s been trying to hide.

Romeo hasn’t fared that well either. After the Friar failed to get a pardon for him in Verona, the couple settled down in Mantua, where Romeo was unemployed for a while. Finally, he got a job as a town clerk, but that wasn’t much help: his wages weren’t enough to maintain their former aristocratic standard of living. And having been rejected by their families, he can’t expect any support from them.

Looking at himself in the mirror recently, Romeo noticed with dismay his receding hairline, his expanding waistline, and a few other lines—in his face. To make things worse, he’s been realizing that Juliet isn’t the bright angel he had originally thought she was, but rather a short-tempered, spoiled kid completely unprepared for real life. And now, with so many children and all those household chores, she doesn’t even have time for him anymore.

Both are going through an early mid-life crisis, and their future doesn’t look worth writing about, much less by the great Shakespeare. They are preoccupied with fearful thoughts of unfulfilled dreams, rebellious children, impending old age, inevitable diseases, and finally death.

If this had been the story of Romeo and Juliet, instead of the one in Shakespeare’s tragic play, they would never have become famous. Their story would have been just one more among the millions of trivial real-life “love stories” occurring daily around the world.

Now let us analyze Shakespeare’s version of the story of Romeo and Juliet from the unique perspective of the ancient wisdom of India. In the renowned *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.62, 63), Śrī Kṛṣṇa explains the cycle of entanglement in material life. He begins, “While contemplating the objects of

the senses, a person develops attachment for them.” Romeo fell hard for Juliet simply because he happened to see her at a party; otherwise, he could have gone on enchanted with his girlfriend Rosaline, or he might have found another young love. As Friar Lawrence put it, “Is Rosaline, whom thou didst love so dear, so soon forsaken? Young men’s love, then, lies not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.”

Furthermore, Kṛṣṇa says, “From such attachment lust develops.” Lust is an irresistible impulse to enjoy something, or someone, such as Romeo felt for Rosaline or Juliet. Influenced by lust, Romeo jumped over fences, climbed walls, risked being seen and killed by the Capulets, and arranged an elopement. In less passionate circumstances he himself would have regarded all this as zany behavior unbefitting a respectable Italian gentleman.

Then, “From lust, anger arises, from

The cycle of entanglement does not discriminate regarding one’s sex, religion, time in history, wealth, and so on, and thus it affects all of us when we develop a materialistic approach to happiness.

anger, complete delusion arises, and from delusion, bewilderment of memory.” Anger manifests because sense objects tend to let us down; either we become bored with them after a while, or our plans to enjoy them fail. In any case, we are unable to enjoy them forever. As for Romeo and Juliet, the dispute between their families prevented them from enjoying each other as they so ardently desired. Anger, delusion, and confusion thus quickly arose in their minds.

From there, “Intelligence is lost, and one falls again into the material pool.” Because of the many impediments to their happiness, Romeo and Juliet gradually lost their sense of discrimination, and this eventually led to their tragic deaths. To dispel the mystique of the outcome of the story, a modern youth counselor might add that their disregard for their own lives was the result of a combination of adolescent immaturity and a lack of communi-

cation at home, factors that lead to suffering or even death for many unfortunate young people today.

Seeing Shakespeare’s version of the story in the light of *Bhagavad-gītā*, we can conclude that what touches people is that destiny was unkind to Romeo and Juliet and pushed them too soon into the final stages of the above-mentioned cycle of material entanglement, without their even having enjoyed some of the “normal” pleasure found in the early stages of the cycle. Readers wouldn’t be moved by our modified and less exciting version of the story, because the same cycle took a more natural course.

The cycle of entanglement described in *Bhagavad-gītā* is universal, applying to everyone in material life under every circumstance. It would have applied to Romeo and Juliet as individuals even if they had never met each other, if they had gone their own ways after meeting, or if they had had a picture-perfect family life after getting married.

The cycle of entanglement does not discriminate regarding one’s sex, religion, time in history, wealth, and so on, and thus it affects all of us when we develop a materialistic approach to happiness. And it starts in a rather innocent way. In everyday life we can’t but contemplate other people’s appearance, possessions, and social life; we also see the slick new consumer products in the market; and we witness the romance and glitter of TV, cinema, and stories like *Romeo and Juliet*. We gradually become attached to these objects and begin selecting the ones we think will help us live happily ever after.

Full of energy, we then go out and try to make our dreams a reality. But things get complicated at this point because our narrow-minded optimism often overlooks the frustrating side effects that manifest along with our dreams. The ensuing entanglements often become the predominant factor in our lives. Or we achieve our dreams, only to find that they don’t bring us the happiness we thought they would, or that we are unable to hold on to them forever. By then we usually don’t have the energy or the direction to start all over again, and so we have to adjust our expectations and learn to live with the realities around us.

Since these are the results of our materialistic attempts to attain happiness, we need to look elsewhere to find lasting satisfaction. *Bhagavad-gītā* warns us that happiness in the material plane is always subjected to the cycle of entanglement in material life. *Bhagavad-gītā* offers us an alternative: finding happiness in a manner befitting our original, spiritual nature.

There is a way of life in which actions don’t entangle us further, but gradually

(continued on page 31)

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

LESSON FIVE: The Law of Karma

by PAVANEŚANA DĀSA

PART II: At this point we will answer some frequently-asked questions about *karma*.

Q: What is the practical effect of believing in *karma*?

A: Simply believing in *karma* without changing one's life so as to avoid undesirable reactions has no real effect. It's about as useful as believing in healthy living without changing one's bad dietary habits. In other words, believing is not enough. One should have a clear understanding of the science of *karma* and apply that understanding to one's life. Then one can live happily.

Q: What about people who don't believe in *karma*?

A: *Karma* is a fundamental mechanism of our

existence. It applies to everyone, regardless of belief. Anyone can understand the reasonableness of *karma*, and all great spiritual authorities have taught the principle of *karma*: that there are reactions to our actions. In the Bible, for example, we find the statement of Jesus Christ: "As you sow, so shall you reap."

Q: I'm quite happy the way I am. Why do I need to understand *karma*?

A: You may have a good life now, but if, being ignorant of the laws of *karma*, you act improperly, there is no guarantee that your next life will also be a happy one. For example, you might have to take birth in a poor country where you and your fellow countrymen can't even get enough to eat.

Q: I believe that wherever a person is born, with determination and hard work he can make a good life for himself. *Karma* has nothing to do with it.

A: This is an illusion. There are people working much harder than you who will never be successful. If your *karma* is not to be rich or happy, you can struggle as much as you want, but you won't get anywhere.

Q: How is it possible that bad and sinful people are enjoying life without any apparent effects of bad *karma*?

A: You could compare *karma* to a contagious disease. Sometimes there are symptoms right away, and other times there is a long incubation period. But once you are infected, it's just a question of time until the symptoms catch up with you.

Q: Is there any way of knowing how long good *karma* lasts?

A: Imagine you have a bank account. You are spending and spending, but you never get to see the balance sheet. One day there is no money left—and you're in trouble. That's what happens with good *karma*. If you're not accruing more good reactions, one day your good *karma* will run out.

In the material world everything is temporary. Both good and bad things end. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (5.22) it is stated:

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

Q: How do I avoid bad *karma*?

A: The first thing is to give up the four basic sinful activities: meat-eating, gambling, intoxication, and illicit sex life.

Q: This program doesn't seem to leave much room for enjoyment!

A: To the contrary, when you give up lower enjoyments, you can refine your senses and enjoy on a much higher level. It would not be reasonable to take your pleasure away and leave you with nothing. Activities in Kṛṣṇa consciousness not only replace your "loss," but they allow you to enjoy more than you ever did.

Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.59),

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

Unlike intoxication, meat-eating, gambling, and illicit sex, spiritual enjoyment doesn't cost you money or impair your health. You don't have to work in a factory for it, and you don't have to go anywhere for it. Spiritual enjoyment is within you; it is part of your spiritual nature. And once you have it, not only can you keep it permanently, but it increases all the time.

Q: What is the relationship between the soul, the body, and *karma*?

A: The *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.27) explains:

Spiritual enjoyment doesn't cost you money or impair your health. You don't have to work in a factory for it. It is within you. Once you have it, not only can you keep it permanently, but it increases all the time.

The spirit soul bewildered by the influence of false ego thinks himself the doer of activities that are in actuality carried out by the three modes of material nature.

The soul in ignorance of his relationship with Kṛṣṇa identifies with the body, its activities, and its karmic reactions. But when the spirit soul becomes aware of his actual position, he can see that he is distinct from the body and its activities. Then *karma* does not affect him any more.

Q: But I see that devotees of Kṛṣṇa still get sick. So how can they be free from *karma*?

A: When one is fully engaged in serving Kṛṣṇa under the guidance of the spiritual master, he does not incur karmic reaction. The results of his previous actions are still coming to him to some extent, but they are running out. We give the example of turning off a fan. When the switch is turned off, the fan will still run for a while, but because there is no more power, it's just a matter of time before it stands still.

Of course, the material body will always be subjected to miseries. It's not that because you are a devotee, the mosquitoes won't bite you any more, or that you can enter a tiger's cage without being eaten.

The difference is that the devotee does not identify with the body and its unavoidable problems. And at the time of death he goes back to Godhead, never to return in a material covering.

If you practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the soul stays aloof from all material turbulence, and all material problems greatly diminish because you have pulled the plug on the fan. There is an instructive verse in *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.70):

A person who is not disturbed by the incessant flow of desires—desires that enter like rivers into the ocean, which is ever being filled but is always still—can alone achieve peace, and not the man who strives to satisfy such desires.

Q: How would the activities of a person who does not incur *karma* differ from the activities of a materialist?

A: A devotee acts to please Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and thus he incurs no *karma*. A materialist, on the other hand, because he falsely identifies with his body, acts only to please himself or extensions of himself, such as his family or community. He doesn't know that he is actually not satisfying himself, but only his body.

The Vedic literature explains that by pleasing Kṛṣṇa, the source of all existence, you benefit, too, just as all the branches and leaves of a tree are nourished if you water its root. But if you try to gratify your own senses, that is like watering the leaves of the tree: it won't work.

Some examples of activities that incur no *karma* are studying books like the *Bhagavad-gītā*, chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, and eating only food that has first been offered to Kṛṣṇa. As Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.13),

The devotees of the Lord are released from all kinds of sins because they eat food which is first offered for sacrifice. Others, who prepare food for personal sense enjoyment, verily eat only sin.

Q: What is the right attitude for someone who does not want to get entangled in the cycle of *karma*?

A: The right attitude is the willingness to give up sinful activities and seek the guidance of a self-realized, saintly person. From him one can learn how to organize one's life in a spiritual way. This is not so much a change of activities, but rather a change of attitude or consciousness. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.47), Lord Kṛṣṇa says,

You have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you are not entitled to the
(continued on page 31)



Māyāpur, India, March 1988

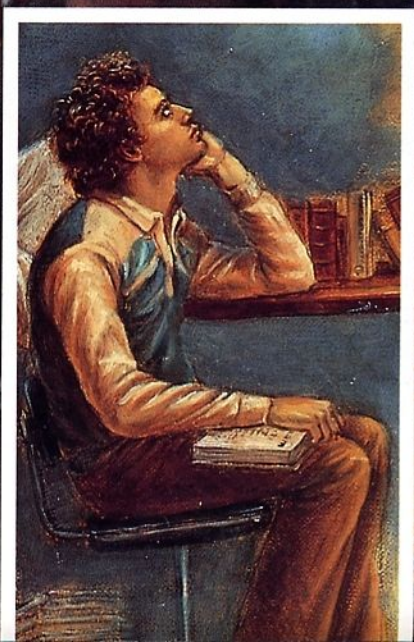
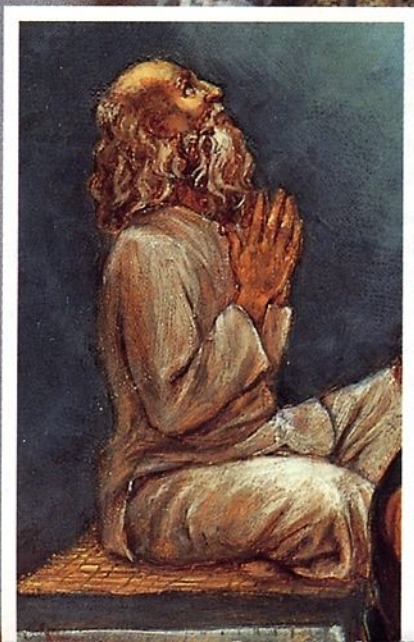
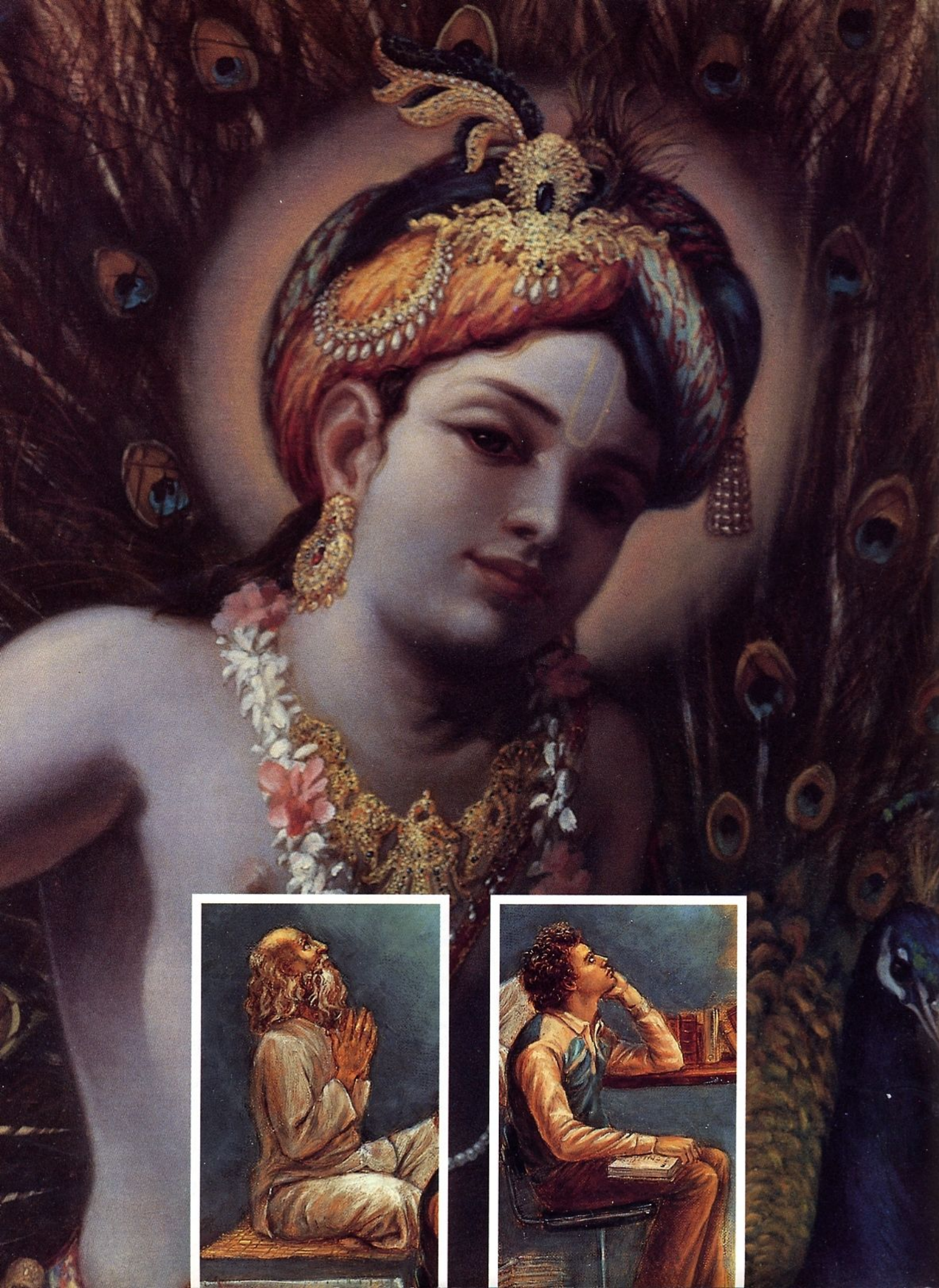
HARE KṚṢṆA, HARE KṚṢṆA, KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA, HARE HARE HARE RĀMA, HARE RĀMA, RĀMA RĀMA, HARE HARE

You might not think this picture shows people 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.



SCIENCE AND RELIGION

The Quest for Synthesis

All human knowledge, be it "religious" or "scientific,"
must ascend toward the Absolute Truth.

by RAVĪNDRA-SVARŪPA DĀSA

The following is Part II of a paper presented at the World Congress for the Synthesis of Science and Religion, held January 9–12, 1986, in Bombay. The paper was originally entitled "The Contribution of Bhāgavata-dharma Toward a 'Scientific Religion' and a 'Religious Science.' "

INTRODUCTORY NOTE: This has been the argument so far: According to the analysis of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His followers, the Vedic literature presents the development of human knowledge, in its gradual ascent toward the Absolute Truth, as a process made of three steps or phases. These three phases exemplify the classical dialectical pattern of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis.

The first phase—called *karma*—embodies a culture of mastery of technique for the domination and control of nature. The second, antithetical phase—that of *jñāna*—embodies the rejection of the world and a turn toward a negative or void absolute. Although *jñāna* is a reaction against *karma*, it still shares common presuppositions with it; as a result, *jñāna* fails to attain the full Absolute. This fullness is realized in *bhakti*, the final phase, in which the Absolute becomes revealed as the Supreme Personality of

Godhead, possessing nonmundane name, form, qualities, and relations. The concept of the Absolute as having in a non-contradictory way simultaneous form and formlessness (i.e., spiritual form and no material form) synthesizes the affirmation of *karma* and the negation of *jñāna* by raising—sublating—both to a higher platform. Similarly, the phenomenal world, misused and misperceived in *karma*, rejected and denied in *jñāna*, returns in *bhakti*, radiantly revealed in its true feature as the divine energy of the Supreme.

This tripartite progression is not a feature of "religion" or "Hinduism" but of human knowledge as such; therefore it is exemplified in history, both Eastern and Western. In India the phase of *karma* found concrete historical embodiment in the culture of *yajña*, or sacrifice, whereby technical specialists sought through the mastery of their technique to gain control over material nature. The culture of Vedic *yajña* is thus recognizable to us as a form of science, even though the science is different from today's. In time, excesses and disappointments in the culture of *karma* engendered the antithetical stage of *jñāna* in the form of the Buddhist reaction.

Now we turn to the parallels in modern Western history.

ILLUSTRATION: DETAILS FROM PAINTINGS BY DHṚTI-DEVĪ DĀSĪ AND DRGHĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ.

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I would now like to put forward the thesis that what we are presently witnessing in the spiritual development of Western civilization is the transition—or, rather, the attempt at a transition—from *karma* to *jñāna*. On the one side, there is growing disappointment with the culture of technique. On the other side, science itself has encountered absolute limits to its knowledge and has been forced to admit the unknowable and incalculable—“absolute chance”—into its reckonings; has encountered at the origin of all things something beyond all thought and utterance, something of infinitesimal size and infinite mass; has penetrated to a region in which the phenomenal world dissolves into insubstantiality, flux, irreality.

The speculations of Eastern mysticism early intrigued physicists like Schroedinger, and now a whole library of popular literature, beginning with *The Tao of Physics*, surveys the void or negative absolute of *jñāna* as a possible meeting ground of science and religion, East and West. This development, according to my paradigm, is quite natural. In modern times a highly developed culture of technique encounters its own limits, turns against itself in disappointment and even disgust, and seeks to go to a higher phase. Such a culture will naturally find congenial the reflections of an older civilization where the same process had long ago taken place.

We must be aware, however, that our contemporary attempt at transition from *karma* to *jñāna* is not a brand-new endeavor even for the West. Rather, it has determined the agenda for most Western intellectual, cultural, and even political life for the last three centuries, and we have to see the present as a continuation of the past. In the eighteenth century, the culture of *karma*—its goals, its vision of man and his prospects, its view of nature and man's relation to nature, its program for the future—became established at the heart of European civilization. This, of course, is the Enlightenment. And the Enlightenment vision of man and nature as both fully intelligible and controllable by reason and rational activity has dominated Western culture to this day. But, as Isaiah Berlin has shown, there was an almost immediate reaction to this Enlightenment vision, a counter-Enlightenment, which matured into the Romantic movement. The Romantic revolt embodied an effort to move to the platform of *jñāna*, and a survey of the major components of the Romantic vision—idealism, mysticism, monism, relativism, organicism, anti-rationalism, etc.—will show the characteristics of the culture of *jñāna*.

The attempted transition from *karma* to *jñāna* of the last century failed disastrously, however, and we need now to examine the reasons for that failure and the

compelling lesson it has for us today.

The frustration and despair produced by disillusionment with the culture of *karma* will, if circumstances do not promote further growth, engender nihilism: the perception of a void that annihilates—renders meaningless—all endeavor and value. Here the culture of *karma* reaches its terminus. The very beginning of the culture of *jñāna*, on the other side, as presented in the most naturalistic of Buddhist traditions, is *sūnya*, void. This void also annihilates all worldly endeavor and value, but the former, the “profane void,” as it were, is a threat, and the latter, the “sacred void,” is a succor. Thus, transcendence becomes first intelligible to materially exhausted *karmīs* as *sūnya*, void—or as the cognitively identical *nir-veśeṣa* Brahman, i.e., the Absolute Truth void of all names, form, quality, activity, or relation.

The frustration produced by disillusionment with the culture of karma will, if circumstances do not promote further growth, engender nihilism: the perception of a void that annihilates all endeavor and value.

Progress occurs when people can somehow ford the gap between the profane and the sacred void. But in the European attempt of the last century, nihilism was never overcome. It remained a persistent factor. For this reason, transcendence was never fully trusted; indeed, it was significantly depicted in the literature of the time as manifesting a furious, demonic energy, as possessing a kind of mindless malevolence—as in Schopenhauer's Will and Melville's white whale.

Transcendence remained a threat, and the attempt at *jñāna* failed, simply because the European *jñāna* was not joined with *vairāgya*, renunciation. In this we see the most telling difference between the paradigms operating in the Vedic and Western environments. In the Vedic milieu the enjoyment of the goods of life was regulated within the culture of *karma*, so that the tendency to excess was held in re-

straint. The temperature of material life was not allowed to become feverish. As a result, when *jñāna* developed, the necessary accompanying *vairāgya*—the renunciation of material desires—was feasible.

In modern European civilization, on the other hand, the culture of *karma* embodied no internal mechanism to restrict and regulate desires. That task was assigned to “religion,” which the culture of *karma* itself rendered irrelevant. When the culture of *karma* encountered its limits, the voracity and tenacity of Western material aspirations put renunciation out of reach. Consequently, transcendence appeared as hostile and life-threatening, and nihilism remained as an insurmountable obstacle.

In these circumstances, the worst features of *karma* and *jñāna* combine to reinforce each other. Sometimes the “absolute” is manifest: terrible, malevolent, all-devouring, compelling one's abasement and debasement before it. Yet at the same time, emptiness looms everywhere, engendering ontological panic and terror. The insubstantial fabric of the unreal world floats without foundation or support, a myth or dream, but one is still driven by an unrelenting urge to master it and enjoy it. All truth is myth; reality itself is malleable to the imagination of the strong. The absolute erupts through everywhere, but only he who surrenders to its ferocious demands embodies in his own person its indomitable energies, and so becomes the master of the world.

In this way, the failed *jñāna* of the West breeds demonic forms of faith—the most outstanding instance, of course, being the Nazi movement in Germany.

Once again, the West is essaying the same transition. The sixties' counterculture in America was a dramatic irruption by the culture of *jñāna*. Nearly all of its central ideals and doctrines were expressed centuries ago in the original counter-Enlightenment. The counterculture has grown up and settled down to steady work in the so-called “Aquarian conspiracy,” and the secular humanist tradition, bearing the torch of the Enlightenment, has gone on the offensive. What is happening now is thus the continuation of an old cultural dynamic. Once again the void or undifferentiated absolute is being proffered as the solution to our difficulties.

I do not see much hope for progress, however. According to my analysis, if *jñāna* is to be successful, it must be accompanied by *vairāgya*, renunciation. Yet little, if any, renunciation seems to have been manifest in the counterculture and in those who continue its work. Indeed, the debased forms of *jñāna* inaugurated by the counterculture have already produced several notable instances of demonic faith. All the proponents of the

Modern Influences of The Enlightenment And Counter-Enlightenment

The "Enlightenment" denotes a broad European social and intellectual movement that coincided roughly with the eighteenth century, giving that period the name the "Age of Reason." It was centered in England and France, where groups of like-minded thinkers worked together on the task of freeing human society from what they saw as the accumulated errors and superstitions of the past, in order to recreate it entirely on a rational and scientific basis. Francis Hutcheson and David Hume, and later Edward Gibbon and Jeremy Bentham, developed Enlightenment ideas in Scotland and England. In France a group of thinkers known as the *philosophes*, of whom Voltaire and Rousseau are the most well known, united under the editorship of Diderot and D'Alembert to produce the *Encyclopédie* of 1751, the summa of Enlightenment ideas.

Enlightenment thinkers placed their faith in autonomous human reason. They believed that the method of Newtonian physics, based on measurement and mathematical operations, could alone give reliable knowledge. Profoundly inspired by the apparent success of Newton in opening nature to our understanding, they sought to extend his methods to all human concerns—but most of all to the ordering of human life in society. They thought that Newton's laws revealed a universe that was neat, orderly, regulated, and rational through and through—like a gigantic mechanical clock in which everything fit smoothly and intelligibly together with no loose ends. Human societies were embedded within nature and part of it, yet human society, as they experienced it, was not like the universe: it was unruly, disordered, conflicted, and irrational.

Run by priests and kings whose authority derived from revelation and tradition and not scientific observation, society was, in a word, unenlightened. To overhaul human society, they thought, we must extend Newton's method from inanimate nature to human beings and their moral, social, and political behavior. This program will uncover all the natural mechanisms that operate human beings and give us the same control over human nature that Newton's physics promised to give over inanimate nature.

In this way the Enlightenment propounded and initiated the cultural movement that enshrines the method of quantitative, empirical science as the only valid means of knowledge, seeks to extend the hegemony of science over all

phenomena, and dismisses anything not accessible to the method of mechanistic science as nonexistent or insignificant.

The "Counter-Enlightenment" refers to the effort of a number of thinkers, contemporary with the Enlightenment, to criticize and attack Enlightenment rationalism and scientism. The German theologian and philosopher J. G. Hamman, for example, began as a follower of the Enlightenment but turned into one of its most vigorous critics. Emphasizing feeling over abstract thinking, sympathetic participation over detached observation, inspiration over analytic reasoning, he was a forerunner of the attitudes that characterized the Romantic movement.

The Romanticism of the nineteenth century ran directly counter to the doctrines of the Enlightenment. The individual, the unique, and the exotic were valued over the universal, the uniform, and the familiar. The Middle Ages even returned to favor, and the Renaissance was viewed as a "second Fall." An interest in mysticism and mystical experience revived, and Oriental religions attracted students and admirers. Monistic, idealistic, and pantheistic philosophies proliferated. Nature was viewed as alive, as a seamlessly flowing organic whole. Science, with its piles of discrete measurement, could only destroy and misrepresent: "We murder to dissect," as Wordsworth wrote.

The forces of both the Enlightenment and Counter-Enlightenment are with us today. In the field of psychology, for example, the Enlightenment spirit is embodied in "behavioral psychology," which is dedicated to achieving reproducible results from controlled laboratory experiments on human and animal "subjects." It uses careful measurement to produce quantified data and subjects them to statistical analysis. But the spirit of the Counter-Enlightenment continues on in what is now called "humanistic psychology," which focuses on the emotional and spiritual concerns of people and is even open to recognizing religious experience as a major value in human life. Although both groups inhabit the field of psychology, they have little, if anything, to say to each other.

The unresolved conflict between these two cultural movements has determined much of the agenda of European history for the last three centuries. Both the Enlightenment and Counter-Enlightenment are very much with us, but the shortcomings of both of them make progress unlikely. The stalemate will have to be broken by forces beyond the conflict.

Eastern form of *jñāna* who have come proselytizing in the West have removed or minimized the demands of *vairāgya* to suit the palate of Western consumers. If my analysis is correct, this is practically a criminal act.

Therefore, there is not much prospect for real progress in the present culture of *jñāna* in the West. On the contrary, we are in great danger—mortal danger—of repeating the horrific mistakes of the past. Hope for progress must lie elsewhere.

According to the paradigm I am presenting, *jñāna* is not the ultimate but the penultimate stage of spiritual development. According to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, if *jñāna* is properly cultivated to maturity, it undergoes a further transformation into *bhakti* (Bg. 7.19). If we can understand this point, then perhaps we might see a way out of our impasse.

The stage of *jñāna* is not complete knowledge. It is a reactionary stage, antithetical to *karma*, and therefore bound to it, as the negation of a proposition is bound to the proposition. It seeks the absolute through negation of relative names, forms, qualities, and so on, yet these negations, being opposites, are themselves therefore relative and, as such, fall short of disclosing the absolute. In both thought and action, *jñāna* rejects the world of objects, names, senses, desires, and activities, but what is denied continues to haunt it like a familiar ghost—just as, in Śaṅkarācārya's metaphysics, the world, which strictly speaking does not exist, still haunts the ontology. Is discursive thought that denies the reality of discursive thought real or unreal?

For *jñāna* to be successful and attain the unitary knowledge it seeks, it must also overcome the opposition between affirmation and negation, between name and form, quality and relation, and the denial of them; between action and the cessation of action; between, indeed, *karma* and *jñāna*. There are statements to this effect in the literature of *jñāna* itself, but the solution is not explicated; it is usually presented as a final, mystifying, mind-blowing paradox, its resolution beyond any expressible content.

If, for example, the thesis (*karma*) is "form," then the antithesis (*jñāna*) is "formless." How do we overcome this duality, this opposition? What do we seek that has form and is formless at the same time?

The resolution is disclosed on the platform of *bhakti*. At this stage knowledge of the absolute attains completion, and beyond the undifferentiated light, there is revealed within transcendence a supreme entity of spiritual variegatedness—the manifest Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead. This disclosure of transcendental or spiritual form unites the

opposition of form and formlessness: there is form but no form, i.e., no material form.

Synthesis is achieved by dissolving the common assumption of the first two stages. For both the *karmī* and the *jñānī*, "form" means "material form," so that the locution "spiritual form" is perceived as self-contradictory. The assumption implicit in *jñāna* that name, form, attribute, relation, and activity are by definition material illustrates how *jñāna* is tied to the phenomenal world and united with *karma*.

Neither *karma* nor *jñāna* has access to transcendental form, for neither the perceptions of material senses nor the negation of them can apprehend it. But when, in relationship with the supreme person, spiritual senses are manifest by acting in devotion, transcendental form becomes cognizable.

Bhakti sublates both *karma* and *jñāna*, fusing action and inaction, form and formlessness. The world, denied in *jñāna*, returns in *bhakti*, but in a wholly transfigured manner; it is not the profane world enjoyed by the *karmī* or renounced by the *jñānī*. In both cases, the world is unrelated to the Supreme, but the *bhaktā* sees the world as intrinsically related, as energy to the energetic source, as one with God and yet different from Him at the same time. God and God's energies constitute the whole Absolute Truth, a unity that includes, not excludes, diversity.

A person on the platform of *jñāna* becomes eligible for *bhakti* if, by becoming sufficiently distanced from the world, he loses his material conceptions of form, activity, and individuality, and if, further, he gains humility, abandoning his own aspirations toward supremacy. Both *karma* and *jñāna* are averse to acknowledging personal subordination to a supreme individual. The philosophies of both remove God from the ontology, or at least demote Him, for a categorically supreme individual interferes with the aspirations of the practitioner.

Here I will end my presentation of the paradigm of *karma*, *jñāna*, and *bhakti*. I hope to have made at least a *prima facie* case for the plausibility of the paradigm. I am persuaded that this is what Kṛṣṇa meant when He said: *vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyah*. I have tried to show how, among those who let themselves be guided by the *Vedas*, the human aspiration toward knowledge and well-being follows the path from *karma* to *jñāna* to *bhakti*. Being fully cognizant of the entire process, the leaders of Vedic culture created an environment that fostered and encouraged such development.

Yet we see the same paradigm manifesting itself in the modern West, within the enterprise we call not religion but science. Since the identical paradigm is at work, we can see that our categorical

separation of religion and science, our secularized understanding, is inadequate to reality.

Although the same paradigm is at work in the modern West, it is unfolding in an environment that does not foster and encourage development. This is the primary difference between Vedic culture and modern Western culture. Development in the West has been baffled in the past, with terrifying results, and there is every reason to believe the same pitfall lies before us.

According to my analysis, to rectify the Western situation, one would somehow have to introduce a powerful impetus to restraint in the practices of *karma*, and to austerity and renunciation in the practices of *jñāna*. That, to us, these elements strike the note of "religion" should not now be seen as a valid theoretical objection, but it is a serious practical one. The fact is that such a wholesale reformation

Kṛṣṇa offers in the *Bhagavad-gītā* the opportunity to come directly to *bhakti*—even if one is a failure at the proper execution of *karma* and *jñāna*. You may abandon all other *dharma*s, Kṛṣṇa says, and directly come to Me.

of society, working up from *karma* to *jñāna*, is impossible.

It is possible, however, to reform from the top down. That is the specific point Kṛṣṇa makes in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* recognizes that the natural spiritual development from *karma* to *jñāna* to *bhakti* is very slow and very difficult. There are many ways to become baffled and deviated from the course. Thus, Kṛṣṇa states that only after undergoing the trouble of many births does one who is actually wise—i.e., developed in *jñāna*—surrender unto Him, saying, "Vāsudeva [Kṛṣṇa] is everything." Such a great soul, Kṛṣṇa says, is very rare (Bg. 7.19). Indeed, we have noted how, even under the protective shelter of Vedic culture, *karma* and *jñāna* sometimes became spiritual dead ends.

Precisely for this reason, Kṛṣṇa offers in the *Bhagavad-gītā* the opportunity to come

directly to *bhakti*—even if one is a failure at the proper execution of *karma* and *jñāna*. You may abandon all other *dharma*s, Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna, and directly come to Me. This offer comes at the end of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, after Kṛṣṇa has demonstrated to Arjuna's satisfaction that all the *Vedas*, all knowledge, all science is just a seeking after Him. I have tried to give some reasons for recognizing the plausibility of Kṛṣṇa's analysis.

In short, if we cannot reform Western culture from the bottom up, the *Bhagavad-gītā* offers us the opportunity to do it from the top down. My own hope, therefore, for the prospects of humanity, is that sincere and thoughtful people, after giving serious reflection to the analysis of *dharma* in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, will accept, simply in principle, that all human endeavor aspires after *bhakti*. Such people will then be able to take advantage of Kṛṣṇa's offer in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, in spite of their bafflement in *karma* and *jñāna*. If *bhakti* is thus established, then as a matter of course, *karma* and *jñāna*, included as they are in *bhakti*, will be rectified and reformed.

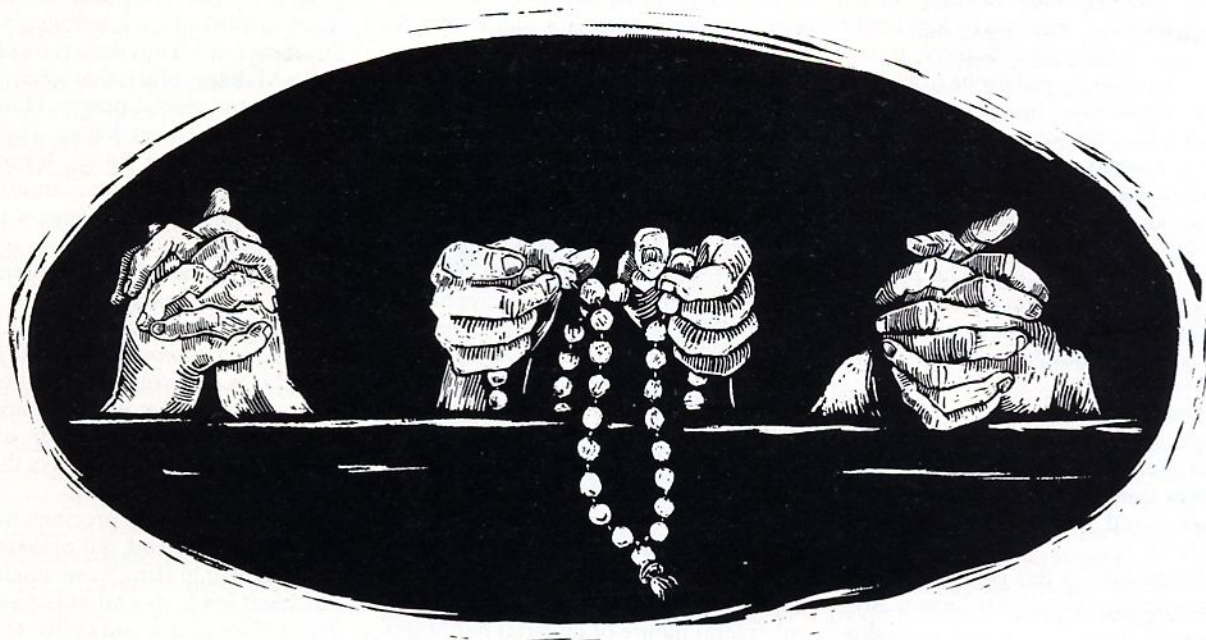
In the concluding paragraph of *Novum Organum*, Francis Bacon, that great harbinger of the Enlightenment, makes this pregnant comment: "Man, by the fall, lost at once his state of innocence, and his empire over creation, both of which can be partially recovered even in this life, the first by religion and faith, the second by the arts and sciences."

Defenders of Bacon are right when they say that Bacon did not envision the elimination of religion. Rather, as this statement shows, he saw the need for science and religion. Both are needed so that humanity may possess both power and innocence.

Bacon's hope was unfulfilled. Rather, we have seen that since Bacon's time humanity has purchased power at the expense of innocence, has established science by driving out religion. Indeed, the seed of this disaster was present in Bacon himself, who, for all his genuine piety, espoused the late medieval doctrine of double truth, i.e., one truth of science or natural reason, another truth of religion or scripture, neither related to the other. The process of secularization was founded upon this doctrine.

Science and religion were already estranged in Bacon, even though formal divorce proceedings had not been instigated. Yet the ideal of the union of power and innocence is compelling. That, precisely, is what is lacking in the modern world—full of power but devoid of all innocence, or, more insidiously, exercising power in one sphere and innocence in another. We see power and innocence as antithetical; how can we unite them?

(continued on page 31)



Is Anyone Listening?

We can pray as our heart leads us, but Lord Caitanya's special prayer will give us complete solace.

by DVĀRAKĀDHĪŚA-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

Nestled within the nucleus of a large suburban hospital is a room of a different color. Its decor departs from the chrome-and-tile motif that slinks throughout the hallways; this room is adorned with thick red draperies, mahogany benches, somber wallpaper. A perpetual hush hangs in the air, unbroken by nurses' chatter or clanging bed trays. Yet it is in this room that the most significant utterances in the hospital find their voice. The small placard outside the door reads simply "Chapel."

On any day herein you'll find heads bowed into clasped hands, a pose rarely adopted elsewhere under the relentless

scrutiny of fluorescent hospital lights. Here, tears flow without excuse, as victims of despair plead for one merciful last hope. And here, in the face of the uncontrollable, supreme will is acknowledged with poignant supplication.

My mother, who works in the hospital, confided to me that she sends people here when she senses that their human endurance has crumbled. "And you know, they always do find strength," she nods sagaciously, "when they put it in a prayer." Indeed, the solace of sincere prayer is the testament of every religious creed. Prayer draws forth with solemn clarity

DRAWING BY KEŚĪSŪDANA DĀSA

the essence of spiritual being. Some tremendous source of love and compassion is tapped, some sense of higher destiny revealed, if only for a brief glimpse, to the humble believer.

Now there's even scientific evidence to bolster my mother's recommendation. In an unusual study conducted by San Francisco cardiologist Dr. Randy Byrd, prayers seemed to benefit the health of the prayer's beneficiary. The 393 patients in a coronary care unit were split into equal groups of comparable age and degree of illness. Unbeknownst to both the patients and their doctors, members of one group were assigned to individuals who agreed to pray for them each day. The prayerpersons were asked to pray in any manner they chose, adding a prayer for the "beneficial healing and quick recovery" of their assigned patient.

The results showed that the health of the prayer recipients fared markedly better than that of the control group. They had fewer complications, required less antibiotics, and none of them required intubation.

Yet, interesting as this evidence might be, God is never compelled to answer anyone's prayer, however ardent, and so this "scientific" study presents a distorted image of God and prayer. The Supreme Lord is not like the genie in the lamp, awaiting our commands. After all, while these particular prayers were selfless and

beneficent, other equally heartfelt prayers are less so. Some people pray, for instance, for tickets to a rock concert. Others pray, quite earnestly, for sunshine on weekends or revenge on the neighborhood bully. And what happens when the objectives of two prayers collide, such as when soldiers' wives on both sides of a battle pray for their husbands' safe return? How can both be satisfied?

Ultimately, God's inscrutable will is shrouded to our puny calculations. Sometimes He seems to lavishly reward one person while remaining fiercely implacable to another. From scriptural descriptions, however, we can gain some understanding of His transcendental dealings, for, whatever the outcome, He always has the spiritual prosperity of the petitioner at heart. From His viewpoint, our physical bodies, our complicated lives, our burning hopes and fears all constitute but a flicker in the movement of infinite time. It all comes and goes so quickly that it's really inconsequential. His concern is for the beloved spirit soul encased in the body: how to awaken his spiritual consciousness? Sometimes that awakening requires some shocking insight into the ephemeral nature of material happiness, some great pain or loss that brings us to perceive reality. If through suffering we are driven to seek out the Lord's mercy, then we are brought closer to the permanent liberation of spiritual realization.

When we pray, therefore, we might consider forgoing requests for material boons, however altruistic, that will eventually vanish anyway. All material benedictions are but patchwork remedies for an underlying spiritual disease. Our best prayer, for ourselves and others, is one that will awaken our relationship with the Supreme Lord. Thus the advice of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is that we concentrate on one very special prayer: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. This prayer is translated, "O my dear Lord, please engage me in Your service."

Loving service to the Supreme Lord, guided by knowledge of Him, removes material illusions from the heart. Thus the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is the most powerful remedy for suffering, and it is the highest form of prayer. Yet it is so simple that it can be uttered again and again, under any circumstance, for it is always the appropriate prayer.

Since we all have a precious, unique relationship with God, our prayers are special and dear to Him. So we might pray as our heart leads us and at the same time chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and cultivate a higher understanding of spiritual existence. Gradually we can be drawn into a state of exalted consciousness, untroubled even at the prospect of suffering and death, secure in spiritual trust of Him. ❧

We welcome your letters. Write to
BACK TO GODHEAD
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Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19119

LETTERS

I lost my renewal notice, but I'm enclosing a check for renewing my subscription. I've canceled all my other magazine subscriptions, to *Smithsonian*, *Time*, *National Geographic*, *Guideposts*, etc., because I never have time to read them. They just keep piling up and making me frustrated. But your magazine is the only one I've always looked forward to and read cover to cover. Thanks!

Jack Focht
Bear Mountain, New York

* * *

I was reading the article "Election Scandal" [by Mathurēśa dāsa; Vol. 23, No. 9], and I was surprised to read in the last paragraph, "I'm all for the separation of church and state. . . ."

From Śrīla Prabhupāda's writings on *varṇāśrama* and the Vedic way, it would appear that this would be the last thing devotees would be for. The *brāhmaṇas* guide the society and disseminate Vedic knowledge, as well as train up the *kṣat-*

riyas, who are the administrators. The *brāhmaṇas* also try to focus the activities of the *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas*, and *śūdras* on Kṛṣṇa's service, unlike our separate church and state today.

The separation of church and state, in the United States and all over the world, appears to be a degradation of Kṛṣṇa's supreme plan. A church and a state—and never the twain shall meet! Kali-yuga society is in the hands of godless *śūdras*, who manage by speculation rather than *śāstra*.

Perhaps the author meant something else in his article. If so, please elaborate.

Amitā Cāra dāsa
Rougemont, North Carolina

MATHURĒŚA DĀSA REPLIES: Yes, it may sound odd to come out for separation of church and state, especially when we know that the Vedic state was supervised by *brāhmaṇas*. But Śrīla Prabhupāda emphasizes that while leaders of a state must not neglect religious *principles*—such as cleanliness, austerity, and so on—they

need not be partial to a particular faith, creed, or dogma. The principles of religion must be followed by any human being who claims to be more than an animal, but those principles are not the exclusive property of the Hindu or Muslim or Christian faiths. They are universal.

The First Canto, Part Three, of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is a good source of information on these points. Verses 1.17.25 and 1.17.32 in particular talk about the difference between dogma and principle. Nowadays, when many religious organizations openly support sinful activities such as gambling and meat-eating, the "church" as such really doesn't have much to offer in the way of guidance.

As members of ISKCON, we too have to remember that our strength and authority come from following and becoming well acquainted with the various principles of religion, so that we do not appear to the public, or to each other, as self-righteous dogmatists and fanatics.

In my article on the election, I was indicating that political leaders might avoid officially recognizing the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement or the *Bhagavad-gītā*, but they can't avoid recognizing the principle of sacrifice if they want to give their followers even material prosperity. ❧

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

Skyscraper Hell

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, rather than surrender to Kṛṣṇa, you want to do something else, Kṛṣṇa is so kind that He'll say, "All right, do it—see the effect." After all, without Kṛṣṇa's help, we cannot do anything.

Disciple: Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have said that today's leaders are followers of Hiranyakaśipu. Like that demon, they are devoted to the idea of becoming powerful and opulent—just devoted to becoming powerful and opulent.

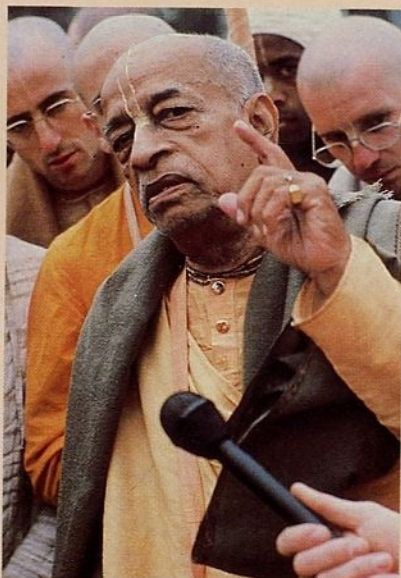
Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. The scriptures describe two kinds of men: *daiva āsura eva ca*—all over the universe, there are two groups, the godly and the ungodly. These two kinds of men and these two kinds of activities will go on. This is the nature of the material world. You will not find that cent percent of the men here are perfect. That is not possible. There are a class of men who are imperfect, bewildered.

But in the scriptures it is being described who is perfect and who is imperfect. That you have to distinguish. You cannot clear this material world of imperfect persons; that is not possible. But you must know who is perfect and who is imperfect. And you must make your choice—whether you want to remain imperfect or you want to make progress toward becoming perfect. That is up to you.

Disciple: Śrīla Prabhupāda, it seems almost like a contradiction, in one sense, when Kṛṣṇa says in this verse [*Bhagavad-gītā* 16.9], speaking of the demoniac, *prabhavanti*—that they are flourishing.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Materially—materially. It is just as when you go to a modern city and say, "Oh, how developed." *Prabhavanti*—a kind of flourishing is going on. But what kind of *prabhavanti*, what kind of flourishing? Kṛṣṇa explains this in His next words. *Kṣayāya jagato 'hitāḥ*: flourishing, yes—flourishing toward world destruction.

So the flourishing of the demoniac is in the wrong direction. That is not flourishing, actually. It is flourishing



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in the material sense, but what is the purpose, what is the end? *Kṣayāya jagato 'hitāḥ*—world destruction. In other words, there are two kinds of progress: to hell, to heaven.

Disciple: As you know, Śrīla Prabhupāda, starting around the turn of the century, people were thinking it was progress to build big skyscrapers. Now it's so hellish in the cities, everybody is moving out.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Yes. Actually, when there are so many skyscrapers, it is hell. The natural flow of air is obstructed. In Bombay, for instance, you'll see this unnatural situation. If you are on the top floor, you have got a little facility. If you are on the lower floors, it is hell. When you are in the midst of several skyscrapers and you are on the first or second floor, it is simply hell. No air. You have to run electric fans or air conditioning. You cannot see the sky, because the buildings are so tall. In fact, is that not why they are called skyscrapers?

Disciple: Yes, Śrīla Prabhupāda. They are so tall that they virtually touch the sky.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So you have touched the sky in such a way that I cannot see, even. And always I need to use electric lights.

But here in the country, we see the sky, the sun. How nice it is! This is life. We see the green. We see down and

up—clear sky, sun. This is life. We get rejuvenation in this atmosphere.

What is this nonsense—all skyscrapers, no air, no light? *Kṣayāya jagato 'hitāḥ*. The mind becomes crippled. Health deteriorates. Children cannot even see the sky. Everything is spoiled.

Disciple: Every day in the big cities, Śrīla Prabhupāda, an "air-quality management" bureau makes a report on the level of pollution. And on some days, it is not good for your health to leave your home. Now some people are even selling fresh air.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Fresh air? (*Laughter.*) Fresh water also.

Disciple: In Tokyo there are special machines from which you can purchase clean air and clean water.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "Clean water"—by treating sewage and cleaning urine. Now people are doing that. Clean water by cleaning urine. During the last war, the German people derived fat from stool. Fat extracted from stool. Scientifically. You can use it as butter very nicely on your bread. This kind of thing is going on.

Disciple: Śrīla Prabhupāda, some of these materialists argue that their modern techniques are not totally unbeneficial. For example, they have developed the tractor, which, they say, enables them to produce bountiful harvests. So much so that they can feed practically the entire world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Why do they not?

Disciple: Because their mentality is very abominable.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But if they can feed so many people, they should do that. There are so many starving people, and in America alone, so much land is lying fallow.

Disciple: Yes, and so many people are unemployed. Better to put people to work in the fields than in factories. If they are going to work, let them grow grain and milk the cows.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Then they will live very happily.

"But," say the leaders, "that we will not do."

Kṣayāya jagato 'hitāḥ: they are bent upon world destruction. *Kṣayāya* means "total ruination." So save these people from ruination.

(*To be continued.*)





Chariot of the Body

The individual living entity, the soul, is the passenger in the chariot of the material body, and intelligence is the driver. Mind is the driving instrument, or the reins, and the five senses are the horses. The self is thus the enjoyer or sufferer in the association of the mind and senses. Intelligence is supposed to direct the mind, which is superior to the senses. But the mind and senses are so strong that they often overcome the intelligence. All *yoga* systems are meant for controlling the mind and senses. The *yoga* system recommended for this age is the chanting of the *mahā-mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. If we chant this "great *mantra* for deliverance" in all humility, our mind and senses will be controlled, being fully engaged in Kṛṣṇa.

NOTES

(continued from page 36)

and are now fully engaged in worshipping and serving Kṛṣṇa and spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Most regular readers of BTG demand that we keep this standard. Although Jamie may have been irritated that the article on Dānavira seemed to show an all-or-nothing attitude, another reader complained that we had given too much attention to sports. He wrote, "Why

the full-page picture of a man playing volleyball? If I want sports pictures, I'll buy *Sports Illustrated*!"

Editors can't please everyone. While we'll take the good advice not to try to portray devotees as angels who never have the slightest material desire or suffering, still, it's not our duty to show slack, standard behavior. Because Kṛṣṇa consciousness is so attractive, there are actually thousands of devotees around the world who are quite satisfied to engage themselves full-time in the type of devotional

activities we normally depict in the pages of *Back to Godhead*. As Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:

The seekers of the Absolute Truth are never allured by unnecessary engagements in sense gratification, because the serious students seeking the Absolute Truth are always overwhelmed with the work of researching the truth . . . and that sort of engagement will make everyone happy because they will be less engaged in varieties of sense gratification.

—SDG

DEFEAT

(continued from page 4)

consciousness movement must be very intelligent. Without being intelligent, nobody can understand the basic principle of this movement.

The basic principle of this movement is to understand Kṛṣṇa. And if you understand Kṛṣṇa, then after giving up this body, you go to Kṛṣṇa. This devotional service—worshipping Kṛṣṇa in the temple, dressing Him, and so on—all these occupational duties will help you understand Kṛṣṇa. Although it is very difficult to understand Kṛṣṇa, if you engage yourself in Kṛṣṇa's service as prescribed in the *śāstras* or by the spiritual master, then Kṛṣṇa will reveal to you what He is. And that is wanted. That is the perfection of your life. As soon as you understand Kṛṣṇa, then you become fit to go back home, back to Godhead and finish this business of repeated birth and death.

People do not know this secret of success. Nor can they understand. They're not fortunate enough. But it is our duty to push on this movement by superior order. Anyone who will take advantage of this movement will be saved from the repetition of birth and death.

Rṣabhadeva says that as long as one's mind is absorbed in the conception that "I shall work, and I shall enjoy," then one is defeated. As people are doing here—industry, trade, so many things. The real purpose is to gratify their senses. But without understanding Kṛṣṇa consciousness, without being Kṛṣṇa conscious, if one simply wastes his time for these fruitive activities, then he is defeated. *Parābhavaṣ tāvad abodha-jātaḥ*.

In the next verse, Lord Rṣabhadeva says:

*evam manaḥ karma-vaśaṁ prayuṅkte
avidyayātmāny upadhiyamane
prītir na yāvan mayi vāsudeve
na mucyate deha-yogena tāvat*

"When the living entity is covered by the

mode of ignorance, he does not understand the individual living being and the supreme living being, and his mind is subjugated to fruitive activity. Therefore, until one has love for Lord Vāsudeva, who is none other than Myself, he is certainly not delivered from having to accept a material body again and again."

So everyone is under this impression, this wrong conception of life. But he can be saved if he somehow or other becomes a devotee of Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa. *Prītir na yāvan mayi vāsudeve*. Rṣabhadeva is an incarnation of Vāsudeva. In this entanglement of birth and death, if someone comes in contact with a devotee and gets the seed of devotional service, that is the beginning of his being saved from the repetition of birth and death. We are giving opportunities to the people in general. We are opening centers in different parts of the world. What is the purpose? The purpose is to give the chance for everyone to become a devotee of Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa. Then he will be saved.

People are struggling, working hard and getting the result for sense gratification and the repetition of birth and death. In this struggle for existence, if somehow or other one gets the seed of devotional service to Vāsudeva, then he's saved. Unless one becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious, his repetition of birth and death—contacting one body after another—will continue. This understanding is the basic principle of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Do not misunderstand that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a kind of religious faith. It is a science: how to get release from the repetition of birth and death. This is the science. It is not a system of religion, as people accept some type of religion. Somebody's a Hindu; somebody's a Muslim; somebody's a Christian. It is not that. It is a science. We are teaching, "Somehow or other, enhance your love for God. Then you are saved." And how do we enhance that love of Godhead? By our activities: rising early in the morning, offering *maṅgala-ārati*, dressing the Deity, offering Him nice foodstuff, observing festivals, writing books, distributing them. These

activities in devotional service will save us from the repetition of birth and death. Otherwise, we are doomed. We'll have to continue this repetition of birth and death.

This is *avidyā*. By *avidyā*, ignorance, sometimes we are human beings, sometimes cats, sometimes dogs, sometimes demigods. This is going on. Caitanya Mahāprabhu says: *brahmāṇḍa bhrāmīte*. We are wandering throughout the universe from one body to another, one planet to another. But if somebody comes in contact with this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement and tries to understand Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he's fortunate, because he'll be saved from the repetition of birth and death.

Therefore Kṛṣṇa personally comes, and He says, *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*. That is for your interest. Kṛṣṇa says, "Surrender unto Me." It is not Kṛṣṇa's interest. If you don't surrender, Kṛṣṇa does not lose anything. He's omnipotent. He can create millions of devotees like you by His desire. He's not canvassing: "You become My devotee, and I shall be very rich." No. It is for your interest. If you become a devotee of Vāsudeva, then you are saved from the repetition of birth and death.

It is Kṛṣṇa's interest in this way: because we are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, we are His sons. The rich father does not like to see his son become a crazy fellow loitering in the street. But if his son does not come home, there is no loss for the father. And if the son comes back to the home of his rich father, it is in the son's interest.

So Kṛṣṇa is canvassing: "Surrender unto Me." Those who are fortunate will accept this offer of Kṛṣṇa's. And when we actually love Kṛṣṇa, that is called *prīti*. We love our beloved—our child or husband or wife—but that is not real love. That is a temporary sentiment. Actual love is possible only with Kṛṣṇa. Once you love Kṛṣṇa, that love cannot be broken at any time. Therefore, somehow or other we have to engage ourselves in loving Kṛṣṇa. That is the success of life.

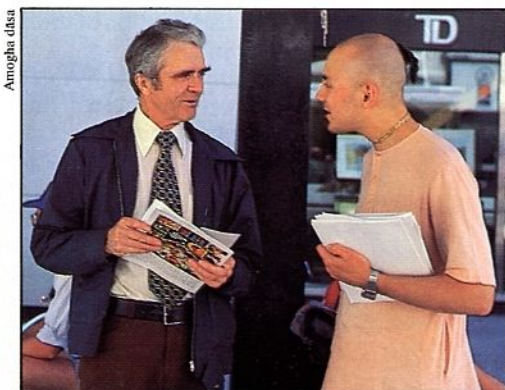
Thank you very much.



Close Encounters

From apprehension to confidence to bliss—a devotee's first day distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda's books.

by VANAMĀLĪ DĀSA



Being a devotee of Kṛṣṇa and a follower of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda brings with it certain responsibilities: rising early, bathing regularly, maintaining regulative principles (including abstinence from meat-eating, illicit sex, intoxication, and gambling), and of course daily chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. But as well as these basic principles of spiritual life, Śrīla Prabhupāda's followers have inherited a great mission, a mission that has been handed down throughout the millennia in

our line of disciplic succession. That mission, which epitomizes the mercy and compassion of Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotees, is the respiration of a godless society.

Śrīla Prabhupāda showed by his own example how to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and he left countless instructions on how to do it. Most important, he told us that his books—translations of Vedic literature with his commentary—could revolutionize human thought. He encouraged his followers to distribute his books profusely in order to redirect people's attention from materialistic endeavors to spiritual life, or service to the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Desiring to assist in Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission, I find myself on a cold and blustery winter morning in Sydney rather nervously picking up a box of books and making my way to the van and the awaiting devotees. This is my first attempt to

distribute Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, and my mind is a kaleidoscope of thoughts and emotions as I take my place in the back with the other men.

There is Bhakta Richard, a strong but gentle young man from Tonga. He left the simple life of his tropical-island home and came to Australia looking for the pleasures of a technologically advanced society. He found only frustrated and disappointed persons who had all the modern conveniences but had lost touch with their spiritual dimension. Then one day he read one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and found Kṛṣṇa, the reservoir of all pleasure.

Then there's Bhakta Brett, a fresh-faced university student who found the answers to the really important questions of life at the Hare Kṛṣṇa club on campus. Now, with freshly shaven head and rosy cheeks, he looks like the picture of innocence and vitality.

Our driver and party leader is Kṛtā-gama dāsa from Germany. He was traveling around the world when he stumbled upon a Hare Kṛṣṇa restaurant, and his spiritual life began.

I settle back to chant on my beads as we wind through the early-morning traffic. Praying for strength and purity of purpose, I find solace from the pangs of apprehension I'm feeling on my first day with the book-selling team. In a somber state of mind, I reflect on the present condition of "humanity"—a strangely alien term when compared with the activities I know are going on around me: abortion, drug abuse, prostitution, murder, rape, cow slaughter, and so on. It's a civilization gone awry, forgetful of its spiritual identity and its responsibility to obey the laws of God, spiraling downward into the dark abyss of atheistic, materialistic doom.

I remember the words of Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: "This *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is as brilliant as the sun, and it has arisen just after the departure of Lord Kṛṣṇa to His own abode, accompanied by religion, knowledge, etc. Persons who have lost their vision due to the dense darkness of ignorance in the age of Kali shall get light from this *Purāṇa*." Fortified by this knowledge, I wait peacefully as we park the van. I then set off with humble confidence and determination.

Sam is a barber who for the last forty years has conversed with clients on every conceivable topic of public interest from the opening of the harbor bridge to the World Expo. His conclusion: "God don't exist. Science and hard work—that's the answer to all our world problems these days. It helped us in the past, and it will help us in the future. We don't need any belief in God."

He likes me, though, because I'm smiling

and I seem to be working hard. So I get a chance to explain to him that although science has made many changes in the world, it hasn't eradicated the problems of birth, death, old age, and disease. We suffer from these problems today just as others did in the past, and we will continue to suffer from them into the future. Though scientists claim they'll solve these problems in time, they never will, because science can't change the powerful laws of God that control the universe.

I show him the *Bhagavad-gītā* and explain how it gives real scientific knowledge for understanding our eternal, spiritual nature, and how our suffering is due only to misidentification with the body as the self. I explain that actions on the spiritual platform don't create bad reactions, and so they reduce our suffering. This can be confirmed, I explain, by anyone who seriously practices spiritual life.

*I settle back to
chant on my
beads as we wind
through the early-
morning traffic.
Praying for strength
and purity, I find
solace from the
pangs of apprehen-
sion on my first
day with the book-
selling team.*

He likes the philosophy but doesn't buy a *Gītā*. He takes a *Back to Godhead* magazine, though, and an invitation to our restaurant. He says he'll bring his wife along for a "fancy Hare Kṛṣṇa meal." As I leave, he waves and wishes me well in my endeavor.

Sally and Joan are bank tellers. I find them two floors up in their morning tea room. I introduce myself and the books. Joan tells me she's had a long interest in vegetarian cooking, and she takes a cookbook and starts to look through it. Sally's father has an interest in reincarnation, and Sally is full of questions as she leafs through the *Bhagavad-gītā*. They are pleased to meet a Hare Kṛṣṇa devotee, and they inquire at length into the way devotees live.

Eventually Joan decides our cookbook is just what she needs to revitalize her diet, and Sally is convinced that the *Gītā* is the

most authoritative book on reincarnation. They each buy a book and agree to come to our next Sunday Feast.


Down the street I enter a locksmith shop. The two men behind the counter are a little shocked to see a Hare Kṛṣṇa devotee—complete with shaved head and robes—right there in their premises. I tell them I'm presenting *Bhagavad-gītā*, the oldest and most comprehensive spiritual guide known to man. It contains complete information on the soul, God, *karma*, and reincarnation.

They look more stunned now and begin to slowly shake their heads, indicating that they have no real interest in such things. Before I can counter with our vegetarian cookbook—which strikes a little closer to home with most people—a voice from behind me says, "What's that you said about reincarnation?" I turn around and see a small man in his late fifties sitting on an old safe in the corner. I show him the *Bhagavad-gītā* and explain some of the sublime knowledge contained within it, especially that pertaining to the transmigration of the soul from one body to another.

He is extremely interested and asks me to walk outside with him. We exit, passing the two storekeepers, who are still staring blankly in shocked disbelief. He tells me that last year he suffered a major stroke and was taken to the hospital, where the doctors worked for several hours to keep his heart beating. On three occasions during that time, he felt himself to be floating in the room, looking down on the scene of doctors and nurses trying to revive his malfunctioning body.

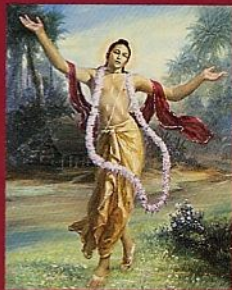
This profound experience started him on a voyage of discovery, to unearth the true nature of the self. So far his questions had not met with satisfactory answers, but now, in the presence of the glowing knowledge of the *Gītā*, he is feeling that his journey in search of the truth has ended. Obviously experiencing great emotional relief, he buys a copy of the *Gītā* and gives me his name and address. I promise to visit, and we sit and talk until it's time for me to go back to the van.

As we drive back to the temple, we relate our experiences. We are all happy, feeling satisfaction in our small attempt to fulfill Śrīla Prabhupāda's pure desire to eradicate nescience from human society.

Yes, being a devotee of Kṛṣṇa brings responsibility, but that responsibility brings transcendental bliss, which is not available in even the most exalted material posts. When a devotee goes to sleep at night, he is not plagued by memories of a trouble-filled day. Rather, he is filled with great confidence in his chosen mission of life, and he knows there can be only one thing better than the day he has just spent, and that's tomorrow. 

Every Town

The worldwide activities of the International



And Village

Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)

Devotees Tour The Land of Kṛṣṇa

Vṛndāvana, India—On the first day of the auspicious month of Kārtika (October–November), more than eighty devotees from twenty countries left from ISKCON's Krishna Balaram Mandir here for a traditional thirty-day, 168-mile walking pilgrimage through the holy land of Kṛṣṇa. The pilgrimage was organized by the ISKCON Pada-yātrā, under the management of Lokanātha Swami and Mahānidhi Swami. It is known as the "Vraja-maṇḍala Parikāma."

before the deities of Lord Caitanya, Lord Nityānanda, and Śrīla Prabhupāda. Devotees distributed Śrīla Prabhupāda's books to interested persons along the way.

Walking barefoot, the pilgrims visited the holy places associated with Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and heard the transcendental glories of Vṛndāvana as described in the Vedic literature. Morning and evening they would gather to worship the deities, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, and offer ghee lamps to Lord Kṛṣṇa, as prescribed during the month of Kārtika.

in the Himalayas are expansions of these original holy places in Vraja.

The devotees completed the pilgrimage by bathing at Viśrama-ghāṭa on the full-moon day that marks the end of the month of Kārtika.

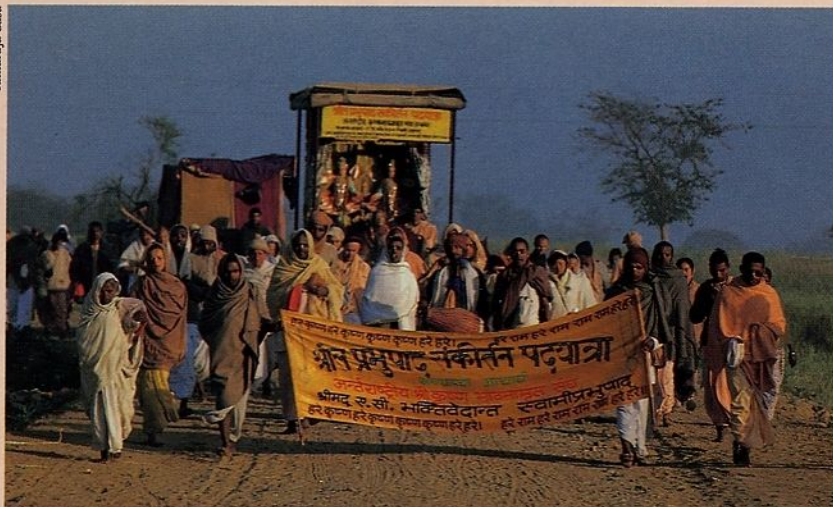
Conference on Reincarnation

Basle, Switzerland—Bhakti Cāru Swami, a member of ISKCON's Governing Body Commission, was one of fifteen hundred theologians, philosophers, psychologists, and para-psychologists from ten countries and four continents who met for four days here for the Sixth Congress on Interdisciplinary Discussion of Border Area Problems of Science.

Bhakti Cāru Swami and some of the other participants were later interviewed on Swiss Radio International (SRI) in Bern. Professor Alex Schneider, president of the Swiss Society of Parapsychology, explained, "In parapsychology you'll find all the subjects that the normal science doesn't want, and so reincarnation landed in parapsychology. I'm convinced that something exists—what we call *reincarnation*—but I can't say what it is, really. We felt that it's now time to discuss this problem. I think we know only ten percent of the truth."

"To gain understanding of the doctrine of reincarnation," the interviewer for SRI said, "the participants were taken back to the first writings on the subject—three thousand years before Christ." Bhakti Cāru Swami, citing several verses from the *Bhagavad-gītā*, then explained that the soul is eternal and that reincarnation is simply the rejection of an old body and the acceptance of a new one. "It's like vacating a dilapidated house," he said.

One of the important aspects of the conference was to discuss what



ISKCON's Pada-yātrā (walking pilgrimage) travels through Vṛndāvana.

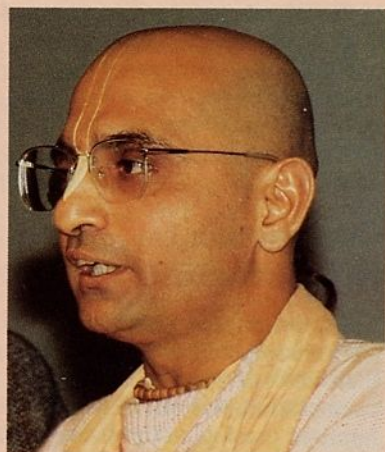
The *parikrama* (pilgrimage) path winds through the twelve major forests of Vṛndāvana, where Lord Kṛṣṇa enacted His transcendental pastimes five thousand years ago. The path was established by Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, a follower of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana, Lord Caitanya's chief associates.

Following tradition, the devotees first bathed in the Yamunā River at Viśrama-ghāṭa, in the holy city of Mathurā. The procession was led by the Pada-yātrā elephant, Lakṣmī, who was followed by devotees chanting and dancing

One particularly memorable event was the midnight bathing ceremony honoring the appearance of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, a pond that is especially dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Joining throngs of pilgrims, the devotees joyfully bathed in the sacred waters.

This was the second Vraja-maṇḍala Parikrama organized by ISKCON's Pada-yātrā. This year's *parikrama* included special visits to Javat, the home of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's relatives, and Badarikāśrama and Kedarnātha in Vraja (Vṛndāvana). The holy sites of Badarikāśrama and Kedarnātha

elements of traditional Eastern philosophy apply to Western religion and philosophy. Geddes MacGregor, professor of Christian Theology at UCLA, spoke on reincarnation and Christianity: "I would say this is the most confused aspect of Christian teaching; therefore, I'm inclined to treat



Bhakti Cāru Swami

reincarnation as aligned with the resurrection, and also with the concept of purgatory. This is done in various treatises within Christianity, including the writings of St. Catherine of Genoa and St. Thomas. The implication is that reincarnation is to be taken as normal, something which is part of the Christian outlook."

Dr. Jamuna Prasad, an Indian psychologist who takes a modern, scientific approach to the study of reincarnation, has conducted reincarnation research with children. He says, "There is so much evidence that we cannot brush it aside and say it is all nonsense. The implications of these findings are far-reaching for man in general. Ideals regarding creed, nationality, etc., will change, and we can move closer to universal brotherhood and peace."

RESOURCES

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ISKCON Education. There are now two newsletters to help you keep up with education in ISKCON: *ISKCON Gurukula Newsletter* (practical information about teaching for schools, teachers, and parents; three or four issues a year), and *ISKCON Educational Journal* (a forum for

exchange of ideas, opinions, and news about education and *varṇāśrama* in ISKCON; two or three issues a year). Subscribe to either or both for \$5.00 for four issues. Write to the ISKCON Board of Education, 3764 Watseka Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90034.

Join the festival! Padayatra America

ISKCON's walking festival in the U. S. will hold its inaugural festivities on May 28, 1989, at the Berkeley, California, temple. After a journey to Sacramento, the state capital, devotees will walk down the California coast from San Francisco to Tijuana. You're invited! For information, call (213) 839-1992.

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 Viṣṇu (March 23-April 21)

April 2—Pāpamocanī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

April 10—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Rāmānujācārya, a famous eleventh-century philosopher and spiritual master.

April 14—Śrī Rāma Navami. The appearance anniversary of Lord Rāmacandra. Fasting till 2:00 P.M., then feasting.

April 16—Kāmadā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

April 21—Śrī Kṛṣṇa Vasanta Rāsa. Śrī Balarāma Rāsa-yatra.

Month of Madhusūdana (April 22-May 20)

May 1—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura, author of *Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata*, a famous biography of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

May 2—Trisprśā Mahā-dvādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

May 5—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla

Gadādhara Paṇḍita, a close associate of Lord Caitanya.

May 8—Beginning of Candana-yātrā, the festival of anointing Lord Jagannātha with sandalwood pulp for twenty-one days.

May 14—Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Sītā-devī, the consort of Lord Rāmacandra. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Jāhnavā-devī, the consort of Lord Nityānanda. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Madhu Paṇḍita, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya.

May 16—Mohinī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

May 18—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jayānanda Prabhu.

May 19—Nṛsimha Caturdaśī, the appearance anniversary of Lord Nṛsimhadeva, the half-man, half-lion incarnation. Fasting till 2:00 P.M., followed by feasting.

May 20—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, the spiritual master of Lord Caitanya's spiritual master. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, one of the principal associates of Lord Caitanya. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Parameśvara Purī, an associate of Lord Caitanya.

Book Section

ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

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

Third Canto: “The Status Quo”

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Conversation Between Manu and Kardama

In this installment of our continuing presentation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the sage Maitreya describes to Vidura, a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Kardama Muni's offering of prayers to the Supreme Lord, who is present before him.

TEXT 19

एकः स्वयं सज्जगतः सिसृक्षया-
द्वितीययात्मनः प्रियोगमायया ।
सृजत्यदः पासि पुनर्ग्रेसिष्यसे
यथोर्णनाभिर्भगवन् स्वशक्तिभिः ॥१९॥

ekah svayaṁ sañ jagataḥ sisṛkṣayā-
dviṭīyayātmann adhi-yogamāyayā
srjasy adaḥ pāsi punar grasiṣyase
yathorṇa-nābhir bhagavan sva-śaktibhiḥ

ekah—one; svayaṁ—Yourself; sañ—being; jagataḥ—the universes; sisṛkṣayā—with a desire to create; adviṭīyayā—without a second; ātman—in Yourself; adhi—controlling; yoga-māyayā—by yogamāyā; srjasi—You create; adaḥ—those universes; pāsi—You maintain; punaḥ—again; grasiṣyase—You will wind up; yathā—like; ūṇa-nābhiḥ—a spider; bhagavan—O Lord; sva-śaktibhiḥ—by its own energy.

TRANSLATION

My dear Lord, You alone create the universes. O Personality of Godhead, desiring to create these universes, You create them, maintain them and again wind them up by Your own energies, which are under the control of Your second energy, called yogamāyā, just as a spider creates a cobweb by its own energy and again winds it up.

PURPORT

In this verse two important words nullify the impersonalist theory that everything is God. Here Kardama says, “O Personality of Godhead, You are alone, but You have various energies.” The example of the spider is very significant also. The spider is an individual living entity, and by its energy it creates a cobweb and plays on it, and whenever it likes it winds up the cobweb, thus ending the play. When the cobweb is manufactured by the saliva of the spider, the spider does not become impersonal. Similarly, the creation and manifestation of the material or spiritual energy does not render the creator impersonal. Here the very prayer suggests that God is sentient and can hear the prayers and fulfill the desires of the devotee. Therefore, He is *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha*, the form of bliss, knowledge and eternity.

TEXT 20

नैतद्भताधीश पदं तवेस्तितं
यन्मायया नस्तनुषे भूतक्षमम् ।
अनुग्रहायास्त्वपि यद्दि मायया
लसत्तुलसा भगवान् विलक्षितः ॥२०॥

naitad batādhiśa padam tavepsitam
yan māyayā na tanuṣe bhūta-sūkṣmam
anugrahāyāstv api yarhi māyayā
lasat-tulasā bhagavān vilakṣitaḥ

na—not; etat—this; bata—indeed; adhiśa—O Lord; padam—material world; tava—Your; īpsitam—desire; yat—which; māyayā—by Your external energy; naḥ—for us; tanuṣe—You manifest; bhūta-sūkṣmam—the elements, gross and subtle; anugrahāyā—for bestowing mercy; astu—let it be; api—also; yarhi—when; māyayā—through Your causeless mercy; lasat—splendid; tulasā—with a wreath of tulasi leaves; bhagavān—the Supreme Personality of Godhead; vilakṣitaḥ—is perceived.

TRANSLATION

My dear Lord, although it is not Your desire, You manifest this creation of gross and subtle elements just for our sensual satisfaction. Let Your causeless mercy be upon us, for You have appeared before us in Your eternal form, adorned with a splendid wreath of tulasi leaves.

PURPORT

It is clearly stated here that the material world is not created by the personal will of the Supreme Lord; it is created by His external energy because the living entities want to enjoy it. This material world is not created for those who do not want to enjoy sense gratification, who constantly remain in transcendental loving service and who are eternally Kṛṣṇa conscious. For them, the spiritual world is eternally existing, and they enjoy there. Elsewhere in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is stated that for those who have taken shelter of the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, this material world is useless; because this material world is full of danger at every step, it is not meant for the devotees but for living entities who want to lord it over the material energy at their own risk. Kṛṣṇa is so kind that He allows the sense-enjoying living entities a separate world created by Him to enjoy as they like, yet at the same time He appears in His personal form. The Lord unwillingly creates this material world, but He descends in His personal form or sends one of His reliable sons or a servant or a reliable author like Vyāsadeva to give instruction. He Himself also instructs in His speeches of *Bhagavad-gītā*. This propaganda work goes on side by side with the creation to convince the misguided living entities who are rotting in this material world to come back to Him and surrender unto Him. Therefore the last instruction of *Bhagavad-gītā* is this: “Give up all your manufactured engagements in the material world and just surrender unto Me. I shall protect you from all sinful reactions.”

TEXT 21

तं त्वानुभूत्योपरतक्रियार्थं
स्वमायया वर्तितलोकतन्त्रम् ।
नमाम्यभीक्ष्णं नमनीयपाद-
सरोजमल्पीयसि कामवर्षम् ॥२१॥

taṁ tvānubhūtyoparata-kriyārthaṁ
sva-māyayā vartita-loka-tantram

namāmy abhikṣṇam namaniya-pāda-
sarojam alpiyasi kāma-varṣam

am—that; *tvā*—You; *anubhūtyā*—by realizing; *uparata*—disregarded; *kriyā*—enjoyment of fruitive activities; *artham*—in order that; *sva-māyayā*—by Your own energy; *varita*—brought about; *loka-tantram*—the material worlds; *namāmi*—I offer obeisances; *abhikṣṇam*—continuously; *namaniya*—worshipable; *pāda-sarojam*—lotus feet; *alpiyasi*—on the insignificant; *kāma*—desires; *varṣam*—showering.

TRANSLATION

I continuously offer my respectful obeisances unto Your lotus feet, of which it is worthy to take shelter, because You shower all benedictions on the insignificant. To give all living entities detachment from fruitive activity by realizing You, You have expanded these material worlds by Your own energy.

PURPORT

Everyone, therefore, whether he desires material enjoyment, liberation or the transcendental loving service of the Lord, should engage himself, offering obeisances unto the Supreme Lord, because the Lord can award everyone his desired benediction. In *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord affirms, *ye yathā māṁ prapadyante*: anyone who desires to be a successful enjoyer in this material world is awarded that benediction by the Lord, anyone who wants to be liberated from the entanglement of this material world is given liberation by the Lord, and anyone who desires to constantly engage in His service in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness is awarded that benediction by the Lord. For material enjoyment He has prescribed so many ritualistic sacrificial performances in the *Vedas*, and thus people may take advantage of those instructions and enjoy material life in higher planets or in a noble aristocratic family. These processes are mentioned in the *Vedas*, and one can take advantage of them. It is similar with those who want to be liberated from this material world.

Unless one is disgusted with the enjoyment of this material world, he cannot aspire for liberation. Liberation is for one who is disgusted with material enjoyment. *Vedānta-sūtra* says, therefore, *athāto brahma-jijñāsā*: those who have given up the attempt to be happy in this material world can inquire about the Absolute Truth. For those who want to know the Absolute Truth, the *Vedānta-sūtra* is available, as is *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the actual explanation of *Vedānta-sūtra*. Since *Bhagavad-gītā* is also *Vedānta-sūtra*, by understanding *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Vedānta-sūtra* or *Bhagavad-gītā* one can obtain real knowledge. When one obtains real knowledge, he becomes theoretically one with the Supreme, and when he actually begins the service of Brahman, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he is not only liberated but situated in his spiritual life. Similarly, for those who want to lord it over material nature, there are so many departments of material enjoyment; material knowledge and material science are available, and the Lord provides for persons who want to enjoy them. The conclusion is that one should worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead for any benediction. The word *kāma-varṣam* is very significant, for it indicates that He satisfies the desires of anyone who approaches Him. But one who sincerely loves Kṛṣṇa and yet wants material enjoyment is in perplexity. Kṛṣṇa, being very kind toward him, gives him an opportunity to engage in the transcendental loving service of the Lord, and so he gradually forgets the hallucination.

TEXT 22

ऋषिरुवाच

इत्यव्यलीकं प्रणुतोऽब्जनाभ-

स्तमावभाषे वचसाऽमृतेन ।

सुपर्णपक्षोपरि रोचमानः

प्रेमसितोद्गीक्षणविभ्रमद्वन्द्वः ॥२२॥

ṛṣir uvāca

ity avyalikam praṇuto 'bja-nābhas

tam ābābhāṣe vacasāmṛtena

suparṇa-pakṣopari rocamānaḥ

prema-smītodvīkṣaṇa-vibhramad-bhrūḥ

ṛṣir uvāca—the great sage Maitreya said; *iti*—thus; *avyalikam*—sincerely; *praṇutaḥ*—having been praised; *abja-nābhaḥ*—Lord Viṣṇu; *tam*—to Kardama Muni; *ābābhāṣe*—replied; *vacasā*—with words; *am-*

ṛtena—as sweet as nectar; *suparṇa*—of Garuḍa; *pakṣa*—the shoulders; *upari*—upon; *rocamānaḥ*—shining; *prema*—of affection; *smita*—with a smile; *udvīkṣaṇa*—looking; *vibhramat*—gracefully moving; *bhrūḥ*—eyebrows.

TRANSLATION

Maitreya resumed: Sincerely extolled in these words, Lord Viṣṇu, shining very beautifully on the shoulders of Garuḍa, replied with words as sweet as nectar. His eyebrows moved gracefully as He looked at the sage with a smile full of affection.

PURPORT

The word *vacasāmṛtena* is significant. Whenever the Lord speaks, He speaks from the transcendental world. He does not speak from the material world. Since He is transcendental, His speech is also transcendental, as is His activity; everything in relation to Him is transcendental. The word *amṛta* refers to one who does not meet with death. The words and activities of the Lord are deathless; therefore they are not manufactured of this material world. The sound of this material world and that of the spiritual world are completely different. The sound of the spiritual world is nectarean and eternal, whereas the sound of the material world is hackneyed and subject to end. The sound of the holy name—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare—everlastingly increases the enthusiasm of the chanter. If one repeats monotonous material words, he will feel exhausted, but if he chants Hare Kṛṣṇa twenty-four hours a day, he will never feel exhausted; rather, he will feel encouraged to continue chanting more and more. When the Lord replied to the sage Kardama, the word *vacasāmṛtena* is specifically mentioned, since He spoke from the transcendental world. He replied in transcendental words, and when He spoke His eyebrows moved with great affection. When a devotee praises the glories of the Lord, the Lord is very satisfied, and He bestows His transcendental benediction upon the devotee without reservation because He is always causelessly merciful toward His devotee.

TEXT 23

श्रीभगवानुवाच

विदित्वा तव चैत्यं मे पुरैव समयोजि तत् ।

यदर्थमात्मनियमैस्त्वयैवाहं समर्चितः ॥२३॥

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

viditvā tava caityam me

puraiva samayoji tat

yad-artham ātma-niyamais

tvayaiivāhaṁ samarcitaḥ

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—the Supreme Lord said; *viditvā*—understanding; *tava*—your; *caityam*—mental condition; *me*—by Me; *purā*—previously; *eva*—certainly; *sayayoji*—was arranged; *tat*—that; *yad-artham*—for the sake of which; *ātma*—of the mind and senses; *niyamaiḥ*—by discipline; *tvayā*—by you; *eva*—only; *aham*—I; *samar-citaḥ*—have been worshiped.

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: Having come to know what was in your mind, I have already arranged for that for which you have worshiped Me well through your mental and sensory discipline.

PURPORT

The Supreme Personality of Godhead in His Paramātmā feature is situated in everyone's heart. He knows, therefore, the past, present and future of every individual person as well as his desires, activities and everything about him. It is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* that He is seated in the heart as a witness. The Personality of Godhead knew the heart's desire of Kardama Muni, and He had already arranged for the fulfillment of his desires. He never disappoints a sincere devotee, regardless of what he wants, but He never allows anything which will be detrimental to the individual's devotional service.

TEXT 24

न वै जातु मयैव स्यात्प्रजाप्यक्ष मदहंम् ।

भवद्विधेयवृत्तितरां मयि संवृत्तितात्मनाम् ॥२४॥

na vai jātu mṛṣaiva syāt
prajādhyaṁśa mad-arhaṇam
bhavad-vidheṣu atitarāṁ
mayi saṅgrbhātmanām

na—not; vai—indeed; jātu—ever; mṛṣā—useless; eva—only; syāt—it may be; prajā—of the living entities; adhyaṁśa—O leader; mat-arhaṇam—worship of Me; bhavad-vidheṣu—unto persons like you; atitarāṁ—entirely; mayi—on Me; saṅgrbhita—are fixed; ātmanām—of those whose minds.

TRANSLATION

The Lord continued: My dear ṛṣi, O leader of the living entities, for those who serve Me in devotion by worshipping Me, especially persons like you who have given up everything unto Me, there is never any question of frustration.

PURPORT

Even if he has some desires, one engaged in the service of the Lord is never frustrated. Those engaged in His service are called *sakāma* and *akāma*. Those who approach the Supreme Personality of Godhead with desires for material enjoyment are called *sakāma*, and those devotees who have no material desires for sense gratification but serve the Supreme Lord out of spontaneous love for Him are called *akāma*. *Sakāma* devotees are divided into four classes—those in distress, those in need of money, the inquisitive and the wise. Someone worships the Supreme Lord because of bodily or mental distress, someone else worships the Supreme Lord because he is in need of money, someone else worships the Lord out of inquisitiveness to know Him as He is, and someone wants to know the Lord as a philosopher can know Him, by the research work of his wisdom. There is no frustration for any of these four classes of men; each is endowed with the desired result of his worship.

TEXT 25

प्रजापतिसुतः सप्तार्णवविख्यातमङ्गलः ।
ब्रह्मावर्तं योऽधिवासन् शान्तिं सप्तार्णवां महिम् ॥२५॥

prajāpati-sutaḥ samrāt
manur vikhyāta-maṅgalaḥ
brahmāvartam yo 'dhiwasan
śāntiḥ saptāṛṇavān mahim

prajāpati-sutaḥ—the son of Lord Brahmā; samrāt—the Emperor; manuḥ—Svāyambhuva Manu; vikhyāta—well known; maṅgalaḥ—whose righteous acts; brahmāvartam—Brahmāvarta; yaḥ—he who; adhiwasan—living in; śāntiḥ—rules; saptā—seven; āṛṇavām—oceans; mahim—the earth.

TRANSLATION

The Emperor Svāyambhuva Manu, the son of Lord Brahmā, who is well known for his righteous acts, has his seat in Brahmāvarta and rules over the earth with its seven oceans.

PURPORT

Sometimes it is stated that Brahmāvarta is a part of Kurukṣetra or that Kurukṣetra itself is situated in Brahmāvarta, because the demigods are recommended to perform spiritual ritualistic performances in Kurukṣetra. But in others' opinion, Brahmāvarta is a place in Brahmāloka, where Svāyambhuva ruled. There are many places on the surface of this earth which are also known in the higher planetary systems; we have places on this planet like Vṛndāvana, Dvārakā and Mathurā, but they are also eternally situated in Kṛṣṇaloka. There are many similar names on the surface of the earth, and it may be that in the Boar age Svāyambhuva Manu ruled this planet, as stated here. The word *maṅgalaḥ* is significant. *Maṅgala* means one who is elevated in every respect in the opulences of religious performances, ruling power, cleanliness and all other good qualities. *Vikhyāta* means "celebrated." Svāyambhuva Manu was celebrated for all good qualities and opulences.

TEXT 26

स चेह विप्र राजर्षिर्महिष्या शतरूपया ।
आयास्यति दिदृक्षुस्त्वां परश्चो धर्मकोविदः ॥२६॥

sa ceha vipra rājarṣir
mahīṣyā śatarūpayā
āyāsyati didṛkṣus tvām
paraśvo dharma-kovidah

saḥ—Svāyambhuva Manu; ca—and; iha—here; vipra—O holy brāhmaṇa; rāja-ṛṣiḥ—the saintly king; mahīṣyā—along with his queen; śatarūpayā—called Śatarūpā; āyāsyati—will come; didṛkṣuḥ—desiring to see; tvām—you; paraśvaḥ—the day after tomorrow; dharma—in religious activities; kovidah—expert.

TRANSLATION

The day after tomorrow, O brāhmaṇa, that celebrated emperor, who is expert in religious activities, will come here with his queen, Śatarūpā, wishing to see you.

TEXT 27

आत्मजामसितापाङ्गीं वयःशीलमुष्णान्विताम् ।
मृगयन्तीं पतिं दास्यत्यनुरूपया ते प्रभो ॥२७॥

ātma-jām asitāpāṅgīm
vayaḥ-śīla-guṇānvitām
mṛgayantīm patim dāsyati
anurūpāya te prabho

ātma-jām—his own daughter; asita—black; apāṅgīm—eyes; vayaḥ—grown-up age; śīla—with character; guṇa—with good qualities; anvitām—endowed; mṛgayantīm—searching for; patim—a husband; dāsyati—he will give; anurūpāya—who are suitable; te—unto you; prabho—My dear sir.

TRANSLATION

He has a grown-up daughter whose eyes are black. She is ready for marriage, and she has good character and all good qualities. She is also searching for a good husband. My dear sir, her parents will come to see you, who are exactly suitable for her, just to deliver their daughter as your wife.

PURPORT

The selection of a good husband for a good girl was always entrusted to the parents. Here it is clearly stated that Manu and his wife were coming to see Kardama Muni to offer their daughter because the daughter was well qualified and the parents were searching out a similarly qualified man. This is the duty of parents. Girls are never thrown into the public street to search out their husband, for when girls are grown up and are searching after a boy, they forget to consider whether the boy they select is actually suitable for them. Out of the urge of sex desire, a girl may accept anyone, but if the husband is chosen by the parents, they can consider who is to be selected and who is not. According to the Vedic system, therefore, the girl is given over to a suitable boy by the parents; she is never allowed to select her own husband independently.

TEXT 28

समाहितं ते हृदयं यन्नेमान् परिवत्सरान् ।
सा त्वां ब्रह्मन्तृपवधूः काममाशु भजिष्यति ॥२८॥

samāhitam te hṛdayam
yatremān parivatsarān
sā tvām brahman nṛpa-vadhūḥ
kāmaṁ āśu bhajīṣyati

samāhitam—has been fixed; te—your; hṛdayam—heart; yatra—on whom; imān—for all these; parivatsarān—years; sā—she; tvām—you; brahman—O brāhmaṇa; nṛpa-vadhūḥ—the princess; kāmaṁ—as you desire; āśu—very soon; bhajīṣyati—will serve.

TRANSLATION

That princess, O holy sage, will be just the type you have been thinking of in your heart for all these long years. She will soon be yours and will serve you to your heart's content.

(continued in next issue)

What has science revealed,
perhaps unwittingly, about
the existence of the soul?

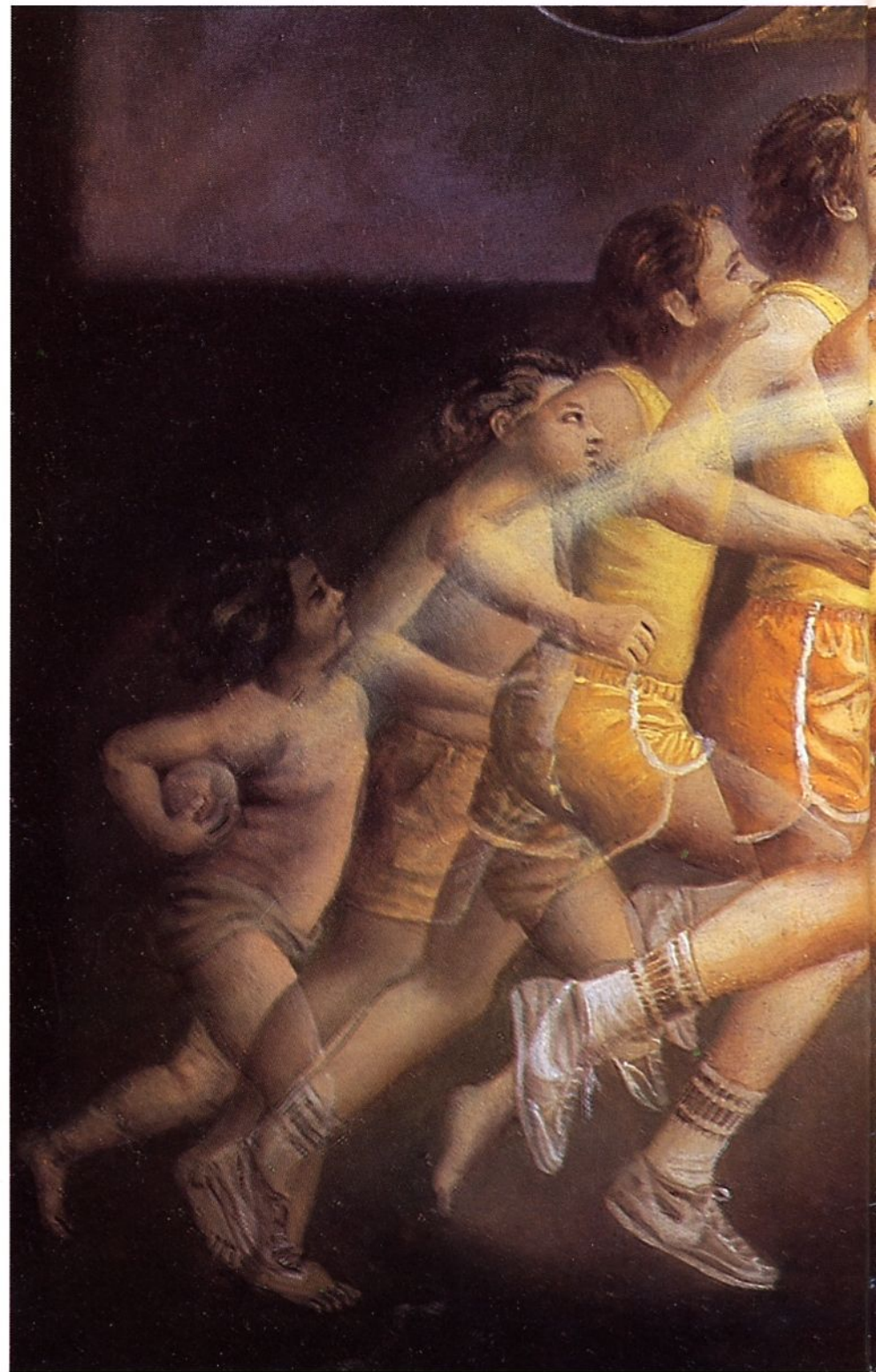
SEEING THE SOUL

by DHANURDHARA SWAMI

Five thousand years ago, on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, was astonished when His distinguished friend Arjuna revealed his ignorance of life's most basic truth—the eternity of the soul—by lamenting the inevitable death of his relatives. “My dear Arjuna,” the Lord exclaimed, “how have these impurities come upon you? They are not at all befitting a man who knows the value of life.” To enlighten Arjuna, Lord Kṛṣṇa then took the role of his teacher. Using strong reason and clear evidence to prove the existence of the soul, Kṛṣṇa began speaking the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Like Arjuna, most people accept the body as the self. To prove the existence of the soul means to first show that the self is distinct from and superior to the body. Lord Kṛṣṇa reasons thus: “As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. A sober person is not bewildered by such a change.”

We can consider in this way: Formerly we had a child's body. As that body no



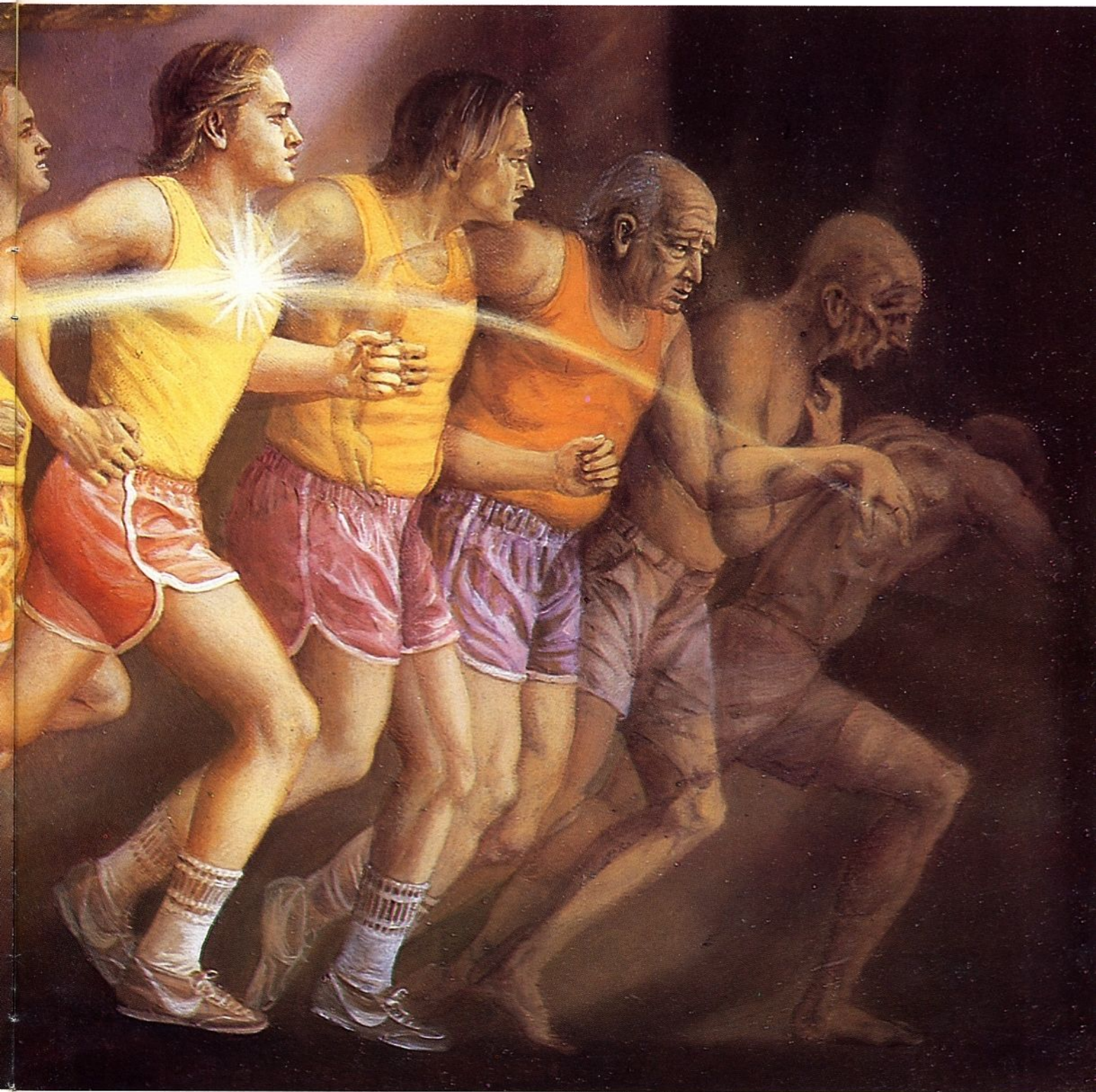
Detail from a painting by Jadurāṅg-devī dāst. ©The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.

longer exists, we must be in a different body. Similarly, in the future we will have an old body on the verge of death, and the body we now occupy will be gone. Lord Kṛṣṇa's reasoning is clear: Even within this life our soul is transmigrating through different bodies; therefore our conscious self has the quality of permanence: it has survived even though our different bodies in this lifetime have been destroyed.

One might argue that we are not accept-

ing different bodies within our lifetime; our body is just growing. Yet even modern science supports the Lord's claim by recognizing that the cells of our body are constantly changing, and therefore our body is different even from one moment to the next. And after a certain period, the whole body has changed.

In fact, according to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the body can even be considered “non-existent.” Like the waves of the ocean, it



has no enduring identity, and in time it disappears. Lord Kṛṣṇa thus asks Arjuna to consider the obvious difference between the soul and the body: "Of the nonexistent [the body] there is no endurance, and of the existent [the soul] there is no change."

The soul's quality of permanence, distinct from the changing body, can also be verified by our own experience. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "The soul does not at

any time become old, as the body does. The so-called old man therefore feels himself to be in the same spirit as in his childhood or youth."

Although reason and even physiological experience can help us understand the soul, the strongest evidence for any imperceptible reality is its influence or symptoms. For example, on a cloudy day we may not see the sun, but we can know of its presence by the sunlight. A strong medi-

cine taken unknowingly can be identified by its influence, which pervades the body. Similarly, the infinitesimal spirit soul, which according to the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* is smaller than the atom, can be perceived by its influence, which pervades the body as consciousness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda states in his commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, "Anyone can understand what is spread all over the body: it is consciousness. Everyone is

conscious of the pains and pleasures of the body in part or as a whole. This spreading of consciousness is limited within one's body. The pains and pleasures of one body are unknown to another. Therefore every body is the embodiment of an individual soul, and the symptom of the soul's presence is perceived as individual consciousness."

The phenomenon of death also reveals that the soul is the active principle within the body. Upon losing a loved one, even an atheist will exclaim, "My mother is gone" or "My father is gone," although the body, with all its parts and chemicals, is still before him. Anyone can see that the body is useless when devoid of its active principle. Furthermore, because consciousness cannot be revived at death by any mechanical adjustment or scientific expertise, we can reasonably conclude that consciousness is due to a nonmaterial phenomenon: the eternal soul.

Modern science indirectly supports Lord Kṛṣṇa's analysis of the soul by its failure to explain the conscious self through physical laws. Many great scientists, such as Einstein and Neils Bohr, have stated that consciousness is beyond the realm of physical phenomena. In the same spirit, Nobel Laureate in physiological medicine Albert Szent-Györgyi lamented, "In my search for the secret of life I ended up with atoms and electrons, which have no life at all. Somewhere along the line, life has run out through my fingers. So, in my old age, I am now retracing my steps."

The presence of the soul can even be understood by the anatomical fact that the heart, which according to the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* is the seat of the soul, is the source of the body's animation. It is due to the soul that the red blood corpuscles, which carry oxygen from the lungs, become energized in the heart. Therefore the blood-generating fusion ceases when the soul leaves the body at death. Although medical scientists have not discovered the source of the body's energy, by ascertaining the region of power to be the heart they indirectly support the Vedic version mentioned above: that the source of the energy is the soul.

Finally, our instinctive awareness of the presence of the soul is reflected even in our common speech. We say, "This is my finger," and not "I finger," because we can innately distinguish between the knower, or possessor, of the body and the body itself.

Lord Kṛṣṇa's first instruction to Arjuna was the most basic and important fact of life: "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." ❖

Cooking with KŪRMA



Anugraha dasa

Based on the three-part 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.

Stuffed Tomatoes

(Serves 4)

Ingredients

1 cup basmati rice	2 cups water
2 whole cardamom pods	1 cup green peas
5 tablespoons ghee (clarified butter) or oil	1½ teaspoons salt
6 whole cloves	4 medium-size tomatoes
1 cinnamon stick, 1½ inches long	½ tablespoon fresh ginger, peeled and minced
½ cup slivered almonds	1 teaspoon turmeric

1. Wash and drain the rice. Partially crush the cardamom pods.
2. In a medium-size pot, heat 4 tablespoons of ghee on a medium flame. Add the cloves, cinnamon, and cardamom. Fry for 30 seconds. Add the rice and almonds and stir for 4 minutes.
3. Bring the water to a boil in a separate pot. Add the peas and salt and then add to the rice. Simmer with the lid on for 15 to 20 minutes.
4. Preheat the oven to 350 °F. Cut off the top of each tomato and scoop out the seeds and pulp. Blend and strain the rice.
5. Heat 1 tablespoon of ghee in a saucepan. Fry the ginger till brown and add the tomato pulp and turmeric. Stir-fry to make a thick sauce and put aside.
6. Stuff the tomatoes with the blended rice and add 1 teaspoon of sauce on top of each one. Cover with the tomato lids. Bake the tomatoes in a covered casserole dish for 10 to 15 minutes. Offer to Kṛṣṇa.

*For information on ITV, see Resources on page 24.



Purnagita dasa

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

(continued from page 14)

In terms of my paradigm, *karma* epitomizes power, and *jñāna* innocence, the one controlling the world, the other withdrawing from it. As long as they remain in opposition or tension, we fail to reach our desired aim. For this reason, the state of *jñāna*, even if obtained, is no solution to the problem. In *bhakti*, however, *karma* and *jñāna* are synthesized, and action in the world by people wholly empty of desire or ambition, wholly renounced and yet immersed in social and natural commerce, is possible.

"I am situated in everyone's heart," Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna. The soul of the universe is the Supersoul in the heart of every living being. "From Me comes knowledge," He continues (Bg. 15.15). Thus the *Bhagavad-gītā* explains how, through *bhakti*, the intelligence of the embodied individual can receive direct guidance and instruction in all activities from the supreme intelligence within. The possibilities for science are immense, for that instructor is the one who lures us on as the single, unified elegant principle that contains and explains everything. If we are innocent, then—and only then—can we become truly powerful.

Bhakti teaches that in order to receive such knowledge and power, we must be-

come humble, for the Supreme bestows these gifts only upon those who have become His innocent servants. As practitioners of *karma* and *jñāna*, we have pursued mastery, seeking great achievement by our own efforts, in which we take much pride. Hence, we have acquired an aversion to servitude; we hesitate to recognize another as our categorical superior, and, admitting our failures, accept help from His hands. Yet we should reflect on how all our own great achievements in power and knowledge have brought us to the brink of our own destruction. Our situation could hardly be more critical. At this point, we should be grateful to accept any help we can get. ☐

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The Law of Karma

(continued from page 8)

fruits of action. Never consider yourself to be the cause of the results of your activities, and never be attached to not doing your duty.

Now let's review our two-part lesson on *karma*.

Knowing the law of *karma*, we can understand that no one is really innocent. Although we appear innocent at birth, the consequences of our past deeds reveal themselves in time. In fact, the material body itself is a symptom of the living entity's entanglement in karmic reactions, just as fever is a symptom of disease.

Yet there is always a chance to break

free from the cycle of birth and death, which is propelled by *karma*. There is no eternal hell. We come to the material world to exercise our independence from God, but He has given us the Vedic literature, an instruction manual explaining how to return back to Godhead.

Rabbi Kushner couldn't reconcile the suffering of an apparently good person with the existence of an all-powerful and all-merciful God. Well, life is like a long movie of hundreds of thousands of individual pictures. In one scene the hero is laughing, and in another one he is crying. But the spectators know the movie is not real. After the movie, only the screen remains.

Similarly, the only real, permanent fac-

tor in the drama of our existence is the soul, which passes through the various scenes of different bodies. Rabbi Kushner couldn't see beyond the scene of one lifetime and therefore didn't know that the "good" person had received ample opportunity to cause his own suffering.

Without knowledge of *karma*, we become more and more entangled in the network of actions and reactions, like a fly caught in a spider's web. But the practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness can bring our material existence to a happy end.

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

MORE WOE

(continued from page 6)

liberate us; a way of life in which the world is seen as it really is, and not as it appears to be; a way of life in which we use time to accomplish a higher goal, not just pass it until it's used up; and a way of life in which the pleasures come from within, and not from our interaction with matter. That

way of life is a means to self-realization and begins with chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

For all Romeos, Juliets, and other seekers, we offer a word of advice from Śrīla Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement: "Material sense pleasures are due to the contact of the material senses with their objects. These pleasures are all temporary because the body itself is temporary. A

liberated soul is not interested in anything which is temporary. Knowing well the joys of transcendental pleasures, how can a liberated soul agree to enjoy false pleasure? Those who are true *yogīs* or learned transcendentalists are not attracted by sense pleasures, which are the causes of continuous material existence. The more one is addicted to material pleasures, the more he is entrapped by material miseries." ☐

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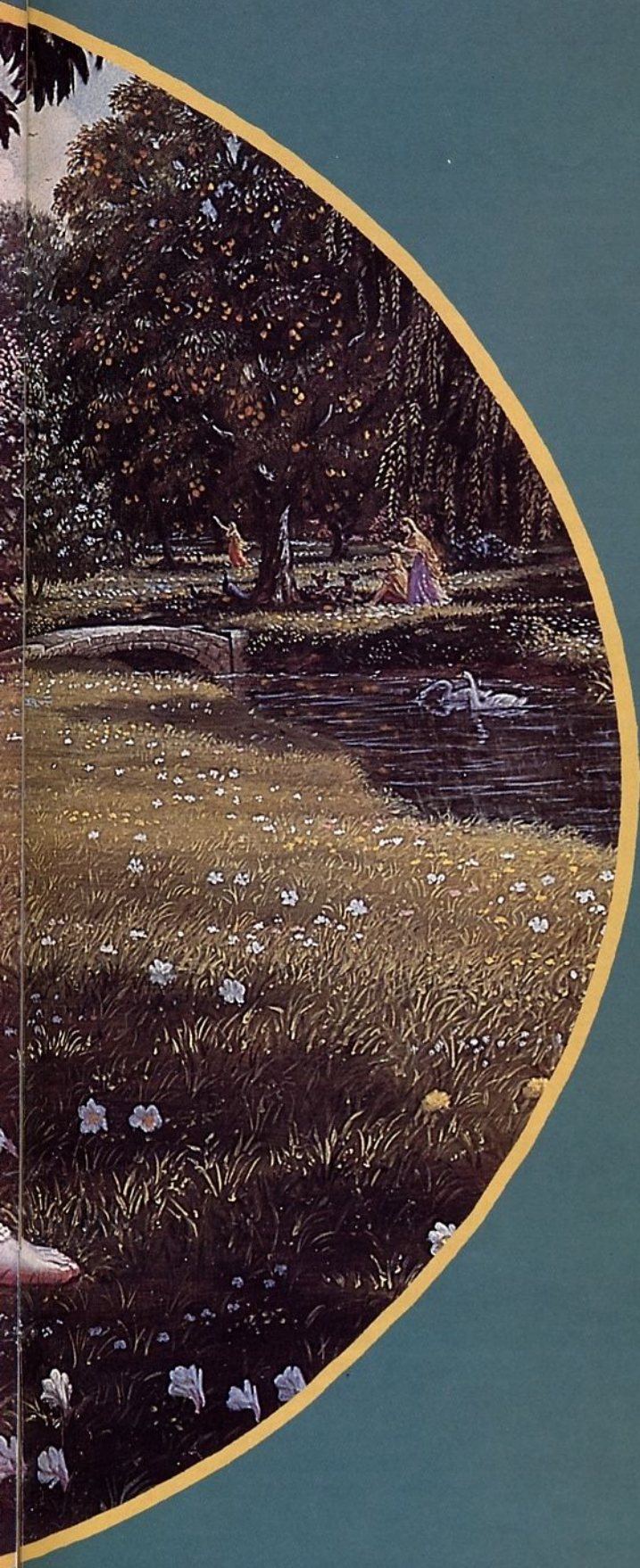
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Kṛṣṇa Meditation

Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Absolute Truth. We conditioned souls in this material world think that Kṛṣṇa is like us, however, and we take His pastimes with His devotees in the spiritual world to be like ordinary love affairs. There is nothing sexual in the Lord's exchanges with His devotees. Kṛṣṇa is Bhagavān, "the possessor of all opulences in full," and therefore He is fully satisfied in Himself. His eternal associates are expansions of His very self, and so there can be no question of impropriety when He wishes to enjoy with them.

Once, when Kṛṣṇa was enjoying with His girlfriends, the *gopīs*, He left their company and thus exhibited His quality of renunciation. Kṛṣṇa's renouncing the company of the *gopīs* confirms His total nonattachment. He is always self-sufficient and is not dependent on anything. This is the platform on which His transcendental pastimes are enacted.

While Kṛṣṇa was exhibiting His renunciation, He was simultaneously increasing the spiritual ecstasy of the *gopīs* by deepening their attachment in separation from Him. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu has taught that of all the devotees of Kṛṣṇa, the *gopīs* are the best. And the best way to increase our love for Kṛṣṇa is to long for His association as the *gopīs* do, in the mood of wanting only to satisfy Him.



NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Let's Be Realistic

Our regular readers may remember the article "Saved from the Clutches of Māyā," which appeared in Volume 23, No. 8. It told of a devotee, Dānavīra dāsa, who had formerly been a star volleyball player at UCLA, and of how he had given up his sports career for the life of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The article was accompanied by a full-page photo of Dānavīra in action on the volleyball court in 1970, and another photo showed him as he is nowadays, in his devotee garb. One reader was moved to write to us as follows:

I've been reading BTG for quite a while, and I still don't understand what the big deal is to play a little sports or to be a basketball player and preach Kṛṣṇa's philosophy at the same time. I work, offer my food, and give a donation to the temple when I come. I do my best, and I'm always enlivened and encouraged by devotees.

But what irritates me about a lot of articles, because I know devotees, is that it makes it seem as if once you're a devotee you never have problems, you never desire to play volleyball or other sports. It sounds very dogmatic to me. To me, it's fine if the writer wants to lead his life in that way, but I've been visiting temples for over ten years, and although I love and respect devotees, most of them I have observed are *unable* to not play an innocent game or exercise.

Everything isn't just a waste of time if you're not chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, so long as you have the right attitude. Please let's be more realistic. Maybe if you had articles admitting deficiency, you would attract more people who wouldn't be scared off by your demand of perfectionism. You may think this sort of article attracts people, but my friends are definitely scared off by the all-or-nothing attitude.

Your friend,
Jamie Reed
Doylestown, Pennsylvania

First of all, I will admit that *Back to Godhead* magazine sometimes misses its intended mark. It is not our policy to show devotees as completely perfect. If the image comes across as "we think we're perfect," that is due to our lack of expertise in the art of preaching, or our lack of self-realization.

In defense of BTG, however, there have been essays and pictures that do convey the "realistic," warts-and-all image that Jamie Reed would like to see more of. It's not uncommon for a writer to strike a sincere self-effacing tone, as

we often see in the pieces by Mathurēśa dāsa and others. It's true that our staff photographer, Yamarāja dāsa, is always trying to capture a photo of devotees chanting when there are no unshaven faces, sourpusses, crazy looks, mismatched socks, and so on. But the pictures don't lie. The all-too-human nature of the devotee is there for all to see in the photos, which are usually of very standard Kṛṣṇa conscious activities.

This brings us to the point that there is a standard for followers of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and the purpose of *Back to Godhead* magazine is to portray it. It's "The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement," intended to espouse the philosophy of the Vedic scriptures, which is the philosophy of the contemporary movement formed by Śrīla Prabhupāda, known as the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

To be an initiated member in ISKCON, one has to agree to follow four rules: no illicit sex, no intoxication, no meat-eating, and no gambling. In addition, the initiate agrees to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* for about two hours daily on beads. Furthermore, a sincere devotee tries to fully engage his time in service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. A person who cannot accept such a commitment should not become initiated. And if one is initiated and later falls below that standard, he or she can't be considered a genuine standard-bearer of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

So the standard should be clear. If a person is below that standard, he is certainly not to be condemned or even unnecessarily criticized, but slack or frivolous behavior cannot be accepted as the standard in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

We would agree there is no "big deal" in a devotee's exercising to keep healthy and fit. Lord Caitanya, who inaugurated the movement of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa five hundred years ago in India, used to bathe daily in the ocean, and sometimes He and His devotees would play water sports in the lakes. Unlike us, of course, Lord Caitanya and His associates were always merged in ecstatic love of God. Whatever they did, they never forgot Kṛṣṇa for a moment.

It's also a fact that most full-time members of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement

don't have the time or inclination to participate in or watch sports contests. Granted, Jamie may know some folks who chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and play sports, but there comes a point when a devotee's serious commitment tends to preclude spending time in anything outside of direct service to Kṛṣṇa.

Practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not just a matter of temporary life-style. According to Vedic knowledge, all souls in this material world are trapped in the cycle of repeated birth and death, undergoing uncountable miseries. The special purpose of human life is to awaken our spiritual consciousness, practice *bhakti-yoga*, and finally reach the goal of spontaneous love of God. Only in the perfected state can a soul attain liberation, break the bonds of repeated birth and death, and go back to the eternal, spiritual world for a life of eternity, bliss, and knowledge. Lord Kṛṣṇa states in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.28):

Persons who have acted piously in previous lives and in this life and whose sinful actions are completely eradicated are freed from the dualities of delusion, and they engage themselves in My service with determination.

Until we become completely absorbed in love of God, we have to remain in the material world to enact our different material desires or *karma*. So what's the big deal if someone wants to give up volleyball and instead accept service to God, as by chanting His name, hearing His glories, and preaching His teachings?

As Śrīla Prabhupāda saw it, there is, especially in the present civilization, an imbalance between the emphasis placed on spiritual and material values. Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master used to say, "The only shortage in this world is of Kṛṣṇa consciousness." Plenty of attention is given to business and sports and entertainment, but there exists very little genuine pure devotion to God. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, therefore, was formed to help correct the imbalance.

The job of *Back to Godhead* magazine is not to show that some devotees play volleyball or golf. Although some may do that, it is not the highest standard. It is also a fact that persons like Dānavīra decided to give up former occupations

(continued on page 20)



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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