

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

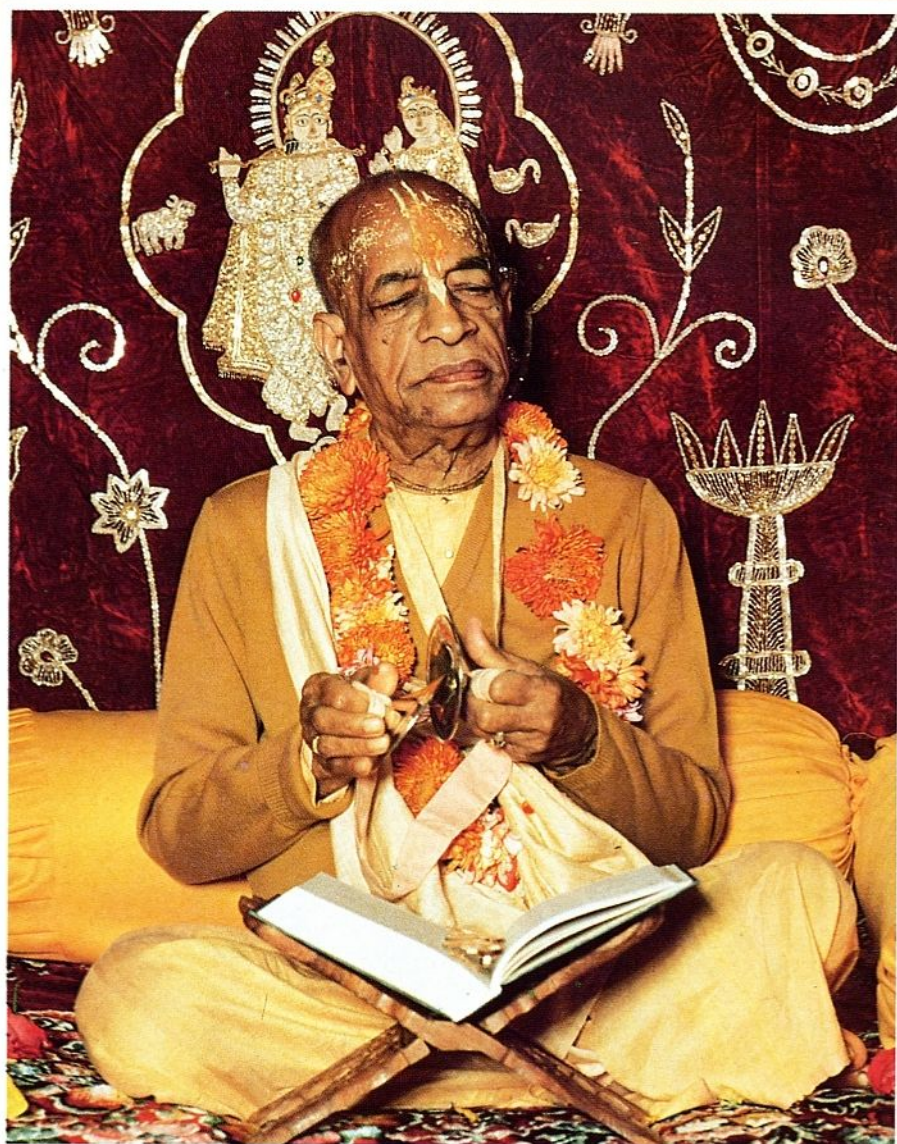
BACK TO GODHEAD

Vol.24 No.10

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



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



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

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

BACK TO GODHEAD

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PRONUNCIATION. We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in **but**, long **ā** like the **a** in **far** (and hold it twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in **evade**, long **ī** like the **i** in **pique**. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **r** in **rim**, and **ṛ** like the **ch** in **chair**. Pronounce the aspirated consonants (**ch**, **jh**, **dh**, etc.) as in **staunch**-heart, **hedge**-hog, and **red**-hot. 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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COVER: The Vedic literature describes in detail the creation of the material world. Although the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa, remains unchanged, He creates by expanding into many forms for carrying out the various functions of creation. One of Kṛṣṇa's expansions is Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, who lies on the water that fills half the universe. He rests on the thousand-headed snake Ananta-śeṣa Nāga, and is always served by Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune, His eternal consort. (Detail from a painting by Puṣkara dāsa.)



Just as the Yamadūtas, the servants of the lord of death, were snatching the soul from Ajāmila's body, the Viṣṇudūtas appeared there to stop them.

The remedy for the fact of life
most of us don't like to think about.

Saved From Death

A lecture in Los Angeles on January 4, 1974,
by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,
Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society
for Krishna Consciousness

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*kṣudrāyusām nṛṇām aṅga
martyānām ṛtam icchatām
ihopahūto bhagavān
mrtyuḥ śāmitra-karmaṇi*

“O Sūta Gosvāmī, some human beings, though short-lived, desire to learn the truth and attain eternal life. To save them from the slaughtering process, the controller of death, Yamarāja, has been called to this assembly.”

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.16.7)

The word *kṣudrāyusām* means “very short duration of life.” For example, an ant’s life or a germ’s life would be called *kṣudrāyusām*. They are living entities, but their duration of life is very short. There are many flies who live their whole lives in one night. They take birth in the evening, and the whole night they are busy eating, sleeping, begetting offspring, and fearing their enemies. In India they are called *diwali* insects. In the evening, before sunset, you will see one, two, or three of them. By midnight they have increased to thousands and millions. And in the morning, at the end of the night, you will find heaps of dead insects.

This material world is called *mrtyu-loka*, “the place where everyone dies.” But there are different durations of life. One creature lives for four minutes, another for ten minutes, another for a hundred minutes, another for a hundred days, and human beings for at most a hundred years. But on other planets there are higher living entities, demigods, who live much longer than human beings. For example, from the scriptures we understand that the people on the moon planet live up to ten thousand years, according to heavenly calculation. In each planet the calculation of time is different. On the moon, one day is equal to one of our years. So, since the living beings on the moon live for ten thousand of their years, just imagine how many of our years they live!

But Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa informs us that wherever you may go, Yamarāja, the controller of death, is ready. He is a representative of Kṛṣṇa, just as a magistrate is a representative of the government. So Yamarāja is ready to judge you as soon as you finish your term of life.

Generally, at the end of life people become disgusted. They do not wish to live anymore. The body is old, always diseased, rheumatic pains . . . there is no life. or an old man there is no material enjoyment. He wants to enjoy, but he cannot.

In this regard there is a nice story about a Mogul emperor who lived in India in the fifteenth century. He had very intelligent ministers, and they would reply to whatever inquiries he made of them. Once he inquired, “My dear minister, how long does sex desire last?”

The minister replied, “Up to the point of death.”

The emperor said, “No, no. How can it be?”

“Yes, an old man has sex desire, but he cannot satisfy it because his instrument has become dull and useless. But the desire is there.”

“I don’t believe it,” said the emperor. “I am not satisfied with this answer.”

“All right, sir, I will satisfy you.”

So, one day the minister came to the emperor and said, “Sir, please come with me immediately, and bring your young daughter with you.”

The emperor immediately prepared to go with the minister, taking his young daughter with him. He asked, “Where are we going?”

The minister said, “You will come to know.”

As they approached a house where a

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very old man was on his death bed, the minister requested the emperor, “While entering the room, kindly try to see the face of the dying man.” The emperor was very intelligent, and when he looked at the old man’s face, he noticed that the man was looking toward the young girl, not the emperor. So he said, “Yes, I have your answer.”

So, the desire to enjoy is the root cause of our coming to this material world. Enjoyment is there in the spiritual world, but there the enjoyer is Kṛṣṇa, and everyone else is enjoyed by Him. Here everyone wants to be the supreme enjoyer, and therefore they must come to this material world, *mrtyu-loka*, and suffer repeated birth and death. The aim of life is to stop this repetition of birth and death. But the so-called scientists do not know this.

Here it is said that human beings are *kṣudrāyusām*, “having a short duration of

life.” Although human beings have a short duration of life in comparison to that of beings on other planets, still they have a mission to fulfill in this life. In animal life the consciousness is not developed, but in the human form of life, although it is perishable (*adhruvam*), it is full of meaning (*arthadam*). As Prahlaḍa Mahārāja says,

*kaumāra ācāret prājño
dharmān bhāgavatān iha
durlabhaṁ mānuṣaṁ janma
tad apy adhruvam arthadam*

“From childhood one should practice *bhāgavat-dharma*, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That is the mission of this human form of life, which is very difficult to attain and temporary. Just become Kṛṣṇa conscious. Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.” Nārada Muni had taught Prahlaḍa Mahārāja, so he was convinced that his only business was to make advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

Prahlaḍa Mahārāja was the son of the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu. Hiraṇyakaśipu did not appoint any teacher to instruct Prahlaḍa Mahārāja about Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but when Prahlaḍa was in the womb of his mother, Nārada Muni instructed her about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. She had to live for some time in the care of Nārada Muni when her husband was out being defeated by the demigods. So the woman was in anxiety about when her husband would come back. At that time the child Prahlaḍa was within her womb, so she begged a benediction from Nārada: “Sir, kindly arrange it that as long as my husband is absent, I will not give birth to this child.” Nārada Muni said, “All right.” Then, although Nārada Muni taught her about Kṛṣṇa consciousness, her mind was absent because she was thinking of her husband. But the child within her womb heard the instructions. This is stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Later, a friend asked Prahlaḍa Mahārāja: “My dear Prahlaḍa, we are being taught by the same teachers as you are. Wherefrom have you learned all this nice instruction?” Prahlaḍa replied, “This instruction was given by Nārada to my mother, but since she is a woman, she has forgotten it. But I remember.”

So, people should be taught that the real problem of human life is how to stop *janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhī*—birth, death, old age, and disease. This is real education. For example, here we are speaking on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The subject matter is how one can transfer himself from this material world to the spiritual world and thereby stop birth, death, old age, and disease. This is the whole subject matter.

People should consider, “I do not wish
(continued on page 30)

“Śrīla Prabhupāda had an extraordinary ability to bring a spiritual vision into physical reality, to change a part of the material world into spiritual energy. . . .”

ISKCON AND ME

by SRI SITARAM DAGA

I have had the privilege to be associated with the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) almost since its inception. I am much impressed by the extensive religious activities undertaken by this organization, especially in spreading *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* in various ways: *nagar-saṅkīrtana* [chanting in the city streets], *bhajan*s and *kīrtan*s [songs and glorification of the Lord], distribution of religious books, distribution of *prasādam* [vegetarian food offered to the Lord], and enlightening discourses by erudite scholar-devotees. I consider myself fortunate to be associated with such an ideal international religious organization as a life member.

It all happened thus:

One day Śrī Tamāl Krishna Mahārāja, accompanied by some other devotees, called on me at my office with a request that I enroll as a life member of ISKCON. In the process of our conversation on spiritual and religious matters, I was highly absorbed in their religious fervor and in-depth spiritual knowledge, and I became a life member.

After that, in the evenings I was a regular visitor to the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple maintained by ISKCON on Albert Road in Calcutta. It was an exhilarating experience to the soul to have *darsana* [audience]



of the Deities so nicely decorated with colorful dresses, dazzling ornaments, and a variety of flowers. The scintillating Deities in the temple attract everybody and give one mental upliftment with an urge to go on sitting, gazing at the altar.

At the temple I met many devotees, and I came in direct association with His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, known as Śrīla Prabhupāda. It was an unforgettable experience.

In our very first meeting I was deeply attracted to him—there was some divine power that attracted people to him—and I had the pleasure of long discussions with him on religious matters in his room attached to the temple.

Śrīla Prabhupāda loved to talk in Bengali, and as I was also educated in the Bengali medium, it was a unique experience for me to talk with him in this sweet language.

His Divine Grace told me that the ceremony for laying the foundation stone of the Rādhā-Mādhava Temple and International Guesthouse at Māyāpur would be performed by him on Gaura Pūrṇimā day in February 1972, and he invited me to be present at this auspicious ceremony.

Accordingly, I motored down to Māyāpur and was fortunate enough to witness this ceremony so perfectly conducted, as laid down in the scriptures, with chanting of Vedic hymns and blowing of conches. It was really a colorful ceremony, one that would always linger in the minds of the devotees present.

Many devotees spoke on this auspicious occasion, praising their *gurudeva*, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the dedicated saintly person who in no time, by his eloquent discourses and pleasing manners, had attracted many foreigners to lead a religious life and had established many ISKCON centers all over the world.

Today Māyāpur has become a world center of ISKCON, where students from all over the world come for spiritual upliftment of their souls.

Śrīla Prabhupāda built another temple, in Vṇḍāvana, with three tall domes, and in this temple he installed the Deities of Gaurāṅga-Nitāi, Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma, and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. And alongside the temple he also built an international guesthouse.

Another temple, in the materialistic city of Bombay, was his next aim, and he succeeded in his mission. He had an extraordinary ability to bring a spiritual vision into physical reality, to change a part of the material world into spiritual energy so that even a common man could experience spirituality. Śrīla Prabhupāda's indomitable will, courage of conviction, and unswerving *bhakti* to Lord Kṛṣṇa enabled him to cross an ocean of trials and tribulations to construct the Rādhā-Rāsavihārī temple in Bombay.

Knowing the human psychology fully well, he made it a point that devotees should be given as much *prasādam* as they want, and this is an added attraction for spiritual aspirants.

He traveled through various countries of the world, in Australia, the Orient, North and South America, Africa, and Europe, his main thrust being in the United States of America, where he preached *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* and established the first foreign headquarters of ISKCON.

Thus Śrīla Prabhupāda established a spiritual empire throughout the world, with foreigners themselves as his staunch disciples. His approach to spirituality could be accepted by all, for he saw that everything material had the potential to be used in the service of the Lord. Following this principle, an ardent devotee, al-

Our country has produced a precious jewel in Śrīla Prabhupāda, whose approach to religion and spirituality made a tremendous impact on the present generation and is sure to have a great effect on the generations of the future.

though apparently in the material world, could always be in touch with spiritual energy.

Our country has produced a precious jewel in Śrīla Prabhupāda, whose approach to religion and spirituality made a tremendous impact on the present generation and is sure to have a great effect on the generations of the future. He is the embodiment of unalloyed truth and knowledge.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was a staunch devotee of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, whom he considered an *avatāra* of Kṛṣṇa and whose precepts he followed for spreading *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.

Since I knew something of politics, being an ex-member of the Rajya Sabha [the upper legislative house in the Indian government], Śrīla Prabhupāda used to

discuss Indian politics with me. Śrīla Prabhupāda had a low opinion of politicians because of the wrong policies followed by them. He used to say that our India is essentially an agricultural country and we should give priority to growing more food, protecting the mother cow, and maintaining and nourishing our forest wealth, instead of installing giant steel plants. The stress should be on farm output, not factory output.

Cow slaughter, he said, must be banned. So long after India's independence, why had this not been done? When Prabhupāda asked me this burning question, I simply said to him that politicians are responsible for this neglect, since they are bent upon protecting the interests of a few to achieve their selfish ends of vote-catching.

At this he was visibly annoyed and said that these politicians should know that our scriptures acclaim the cow "mother of the universe." Not only that, but the Lord of the universe is known as Gopālaka, "protector of cows."

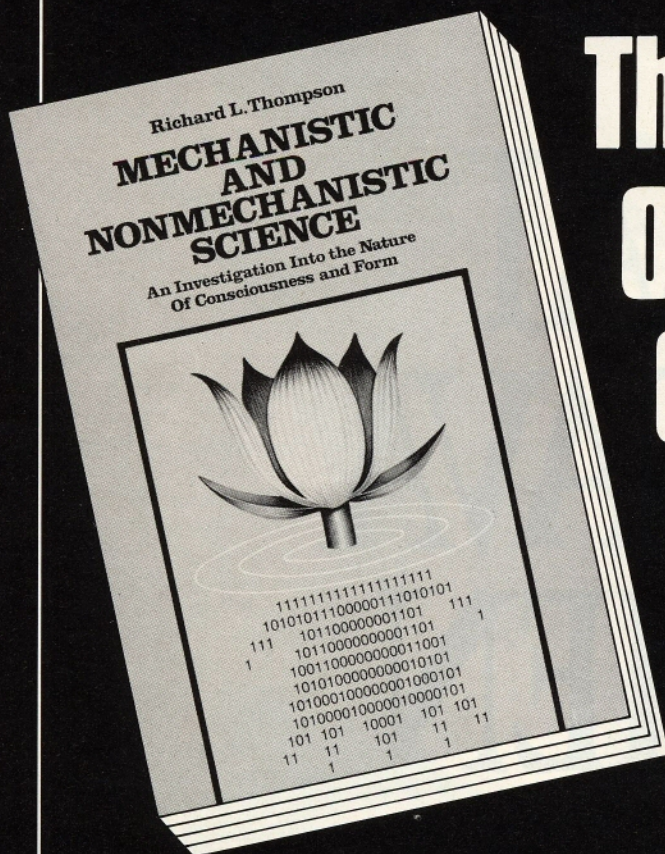
Followers of *sanātana-dharma*, he said, must condemn the atrocities perpetrated on the poor dumb animals that nourish us from birth till death. Even after their death the cows are useful, in that everything from the top of their horn to the bottom of their hoof comes to our utility, whereas the human body after the soul has passed away is of no use.

Such a cow—how dare you kill it? That was his question.

Śrīla Prabhupāda also said that with the present setup of the government, India will not be benefited until erudite scholars well versed in Vedic literature and the cultural heritage of India are inducted as parliamentarians, selected as ministers, and put at the helm of the administration. Otherwise our country would be facing untold miseries due to the present wrong policies propagated by politicians to meet their own personal ends.

Whenever Śrīla Prabhupāda happened to be in Calcutta, I used to visit and pay my respects to him. In the course of our discussions, he would recite verses from *Bhagavad-gītā* and explain them in a very lucid manner, citing examples of how one can conquer *māyā*, the cycle of birth, death, disease, and old age. He used to say that in this Kali-yuga [the present age] complete surrender to the lotus feet of the Lord and chanting of the *mahā-mantra*—"Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Rāma"—vibrating throughout the entire atmosphere, will emancipate one's soul from *māyā* and bring one to attain love of Godhead. ☑

Sri Sitaram Daga, a former member of the Indian Parliament, is the chairman and managing director of several engineering firms. He lives in Calcutta.



The Physics Of Higher Consciousness

MECHANISTIC AND NONMECHANISTIC SCIENCE:
An Investigation into the Nature of Consciousness and Form
by Richard L. Thompson
254 pages
Published by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1989.

"I like the third chapter of *Mechanistic and Nonmechanistic Science* very much. In particular it acquainted me some with the *Bhagavad-gītā*. I learned that the basic philosophical ideas of this on 'existence' are virtually identical with those which quantum mechanics leads me to."

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Nobel Prize for Physics (1963)

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Nobel Prize for Physics (1973)

VIDEOS:

*Human Evolution:
A Confrontation of Fact
and Theory, Part I*
30 Minutes

This video sheds new light on the modern theory of human evolution by presenting abundant examples of suppression and misrepresentation of evidence in the fields of archaeology and paleo-anthropology. It features animations involving extensive use of computer graphics.

Models of Natural Selection
30 Minutes

This video shows the need for clearly defined models in the neo-Darwinian theory of evolution. It shows how this theory fails for certain key models, and discusses the inadequacy of the theory in general. The video is based on a lecture delivered at a scientific conference on evolution in Budapest.

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GREAT VAIṢṆAVA WOMEN

An address to members of the
International Network of Women and Religion (INWAR)
at their headquarters in New York City.

by SATYARĀJA DĀSA

I'll begin by defining two words: *Vaiṣṇava* and *women*. A *Vaiṣṇava* is a devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, more personally known as Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa. In India this term is quite common, and there are millions who follow the path of Vaiṣṇavism. Ultimately, *Vaiṣṇava* refers to the natural state of the soul, since all living beings are constitutionally related to God in a mood of loving devotion.

The second word, although more familiar, is more difficult to define when used with the word *Vaiṣṇava*. The man/woman dichotomy relates to the body, whereas the "Vaiṣṇava" designation refers to the nature of the soul. In one sense, a *Vaiṣṇava* is not really a man or a woman, and

so reference to "women *Vaiṣṇavas*" or "male *Vaiṣṇavas*" is inaccurate.

For the sake of common parlance, however, it is practical—if not downright necessary—to acknowledge the bodily distinctions that exist within the material world. After all, a woman can serve God (i.e., act as a *Vaiṣṇava*) by having children, for example, whereas a man cannot. So while women and men are *spiritually* equal, they may serve God in different ways. Worldly differences can thus be

Lord Caitanya sits in the lap of His mother, His exalted devotee Śacīdevī, who was highly respected by the Lord's followers because of her intense love for Him.

ILLUSTRATION: DETAIL FROM A PAINTING BY YADURĀṆĪ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ
©The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust



acknowledged and should be used in divine service. In this sense, then, we may rightly speak of “women Vaiṣṇavas.”

Women in Vedic Culture

For a clear understanding of Vaiṣṇava women and the activities that led them to greatness, we look to ancient India's Vedic literature, the spiritual classics upon which Vaiṣṇava *dharma* rests. In the earliest Vedic texts, we find that the woman was mainly seen as the wife or mother. The emphasis was on her place in the home, and her work was given divine status. Her religious duty was to maintain the spiritual environment of the home and to raise children as devotees of the highest order. This she could do only if her own spiritual practices were strong and if her meditations were profound. Guidelines are given in the scriptures that can assure perfection on this path.

It might be asked why the woman rather than the man was given the service of homemaker. One answer offered by the Vedic texts is that since the child came from her body, she would naturally take very seriously the service of raising the child in God consciousness. She also could not bear to be away from her child—flesh of her flesh. The husband had a less difficult time going out—away from the child—and making a living. The wife, in general, felt more comfortable at home. It was natural and pleasing. Both parties, playing their respective roles, served to create a spiritual atmosphere within the household. Especially when they both learned to see their roles as service to Kṛṣṇa. In this sense, the roles are absolute—the roles they play are equal in that they are merely different ways to serve the Supreme.

The Vedic epic *Rāmāyaṇa* explains the social hierarchy that existed within the spiritual home: *strīṇām bhartā hi daivatam*. That is to say, the husband is the *guru* for the wife, even as the wife is the *guru* for the child and the spiritual master is the *guru* for the husband. In other words, in the Vedic household everyone had a spiritual authority, and in this way social sanity was maintained and everyone in the family could progress toward the ultimate goal of life: spiritual realization.

There were, however, exceptions to the traditional roles of men and women, and as we delineate the great Vaiṣṇava women throughout history, we will elucidate upon the ascetic tradition that made clear the spiritual equality between men and women.

It should be noted that the greatest Vaiṣṇava of all time is Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, who is female. She, of course, is also known as a manifestation of the Supreme and so does not really figure into our discussion.

Among the women described in the

Vedic literature, the most important for her representation of ideal womanhood is Sītādevī, the wife of Lord Rāmacandra. She embodies all of the qualities to be found in the ideal Vedic wife. Although goddesses such as Pārvatī and Lakṣmīdevī, and other heroines from the Vedic literature such as Sāvitrī and Damayanti, are also good examples, it is Sītā who is particularly remembered as the ideal in conventional Vedic womanhood. Indeed, even today one hears the Indian mother tell her daughter, “Be like Sītādevī.”

Great Women Vaiṣṇavas

Vedic culture gave rise to many great women. In addition to Sītādevī, there were the likes of Draupadī, Kuntī, and Gāndhārī. The great women of the Vedic period are often considered prehistorical personalities, many of them gracing the

In the Vedic household everyone had a spiritual authority, and in this way social sanity was maintained and everyone in the family could progress toward the ultimate goal of life: spiritual realization.

earth more than five thousand years ago. Since that period is now shrouded in antiquity, and since many of the stories surrounding their lives are often confused with mythological tales, I will restrict my discussion to women Vaiṣṇavas within the last five hundred years.

Śacīdevī

Śacīdevī appeared in Bengal in the mid-fifteenth century. Playing the role of the perfect mother and wife, she was glorified as the mother of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the wife of Jagannātha Miśra. Śrī Caitanya, the founder of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, is a combined manifestation of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Śacīdevī was the daughter of a well-known Bengali family that migrated from East Bengal (now Bangladesh) and settled in Navadvīpa. Her father, Nilambara Cakravartī, was a very influential man be-

cause of his knowledge of astrology and the Vedic scriptures.

After marrying Jagannātha Miśra, Śacīdevī went through great austerities as a mother. In fact, she lost eight female children during successive pregnancies, and she wept in anticipation of further offspring. Śacīdevī's next child was a boy—Viśvarūpa, who survived. Some years later, she gave birth to Śrī Caitanya. But while little Nimāi (as Caitanya was called in His youth) was still an infant, Viśvarūpa renounced the world and became an ascetic. This brought untold regret to Śacī, for now Viśvarūpa would no longer bring joy to the Miśra household. He would now wander the countryside, preaching and visiting temples in service to the Lord.

Jagannātha Miśra did not survive the trauma of Viśvarūpa's renunciation. Śacī, however, managed to carry on, and she resolved to raise little Nimāi to the best of her ability.

Because of the purity and intensity of her devotion, her aspirations for her last surviving child would be more than fulfilled. As Nimāi grew He developed exceptional features, profound scholarship, and a devotional attitude. His concealed divinity began to blossom, as the scriptures had predicted it would.

But Śacī's domestic happiness was short-lived, for at the age of twenty-four Śrī Caitanya, too, became a renunciant, following in the footsteps of His brother, Viśvarūpa. Despite this final blow to her hope of familial bliss, Śacī's perseverance as a devotee remained unscathed.

Śrī Caitanya, in fact, had asked for His mother's permission to lead the life of a renunciant in service to God. Although it was difficult for her, she nonetheless relented, the only stipulation being that He make His headquarters in nearby Jagannātha Purī, so she would regularly hear news of His activities.

Although Śrī Caitanya's renunciation is remembered as a pivotal event in the history of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, Śacīdevī's renunciation is glorified in the annals of Vaiṣṇava history as unbounded. For in allowing the Lord—her son—to live the life of an ascetic, she made the ultimate sacrifice. According to the Lord's desire, she agreed to worship Him in separation. Śacī thus experienced the highest, most esoteric relationship with the Lord, and Vaiṣṇavas throughout the world seek to emulate her uncompromising devotion.

Viṣṇupriyā

If Śacīdevī was the perfect mother, Viṣṇupriyā was the perfect wife. Lakṣmīdevī, Śrī Caitanya's first wife, died prematurely when she was bitten by a snake. Mother Śacī then pleaded with her divine son to remarry. He did, and the bride was Viṣṇupriyā, daughter of the aristocratic

Sanātana Miśra, a well-known politician.

When Śrī Caitanya soon left to pursue the life of an ascetic, Viṣṇupriya made the same commitment and sacrifice as did Śacīdevī. Viṣṇupriyā, however, also had to take care of Śacī, who was now becoming old and infirm.

Viṣṇupriyā spent as much time with the name of God as with her beloved mother-in-law, and her reputation soon grew as a prominent ascetic in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava line.

It is said that she would set aside one grain of rice each time she would chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* 108 times. When her utterances of the name were complete for a particular day, she would boil the accumulated rice and take that—and only that—as her daily meal.

As her austerities and exemplary behavior became known within the Vaiṣṇava community, she was glorified for being the model of a chaste wife and also for being an ascetic of the mystical tradition. This made her a leader in the Vaiṣṇava community.

Jāhnavādevī

Important women Vaiṣṇavas soon took leading roles in Lord Caitanya's movement and even assumed the position of *guru*. One of the more prominent woman *gurus* was Jāhnavādevī, wife of Nityānanda Prabhu, Śrī Caitanya's intimate associate and plenary expansion.

When Nityānanda Prabhu married the two daughters of Śārakhāla Sūryadāsa Paṇḍita, the entire Vaiṣṇava community was overcome with ecstasy, for the two girls were extremely pious and were known as great Vaiṣṇavas. The younger wife, Vasudhā, gave birth to two children: a boy, Virabhadra; and a girl, Gaṅgādevī.

The young Vasudhā soon passed away, however, and Jāhnavādevī resolved to raise her sister's children. In addition, she adopted a boy named Rāmacandra. So Jāhnavādevī spent much of her youth taking care of the three children, making sure they became great devotees.

Virabhadra, especially, grew to be a leader in the Vaiṣṇava community, and when he accepted Jāhnavādevī (his step-mother) as his *guru*, many prominent Vaiṣṇavas did so as well.

Much of Jāhnavādevī's fame began as a result of her relationship with Nityānanda Prabhu. But her activities soon revealed her greatness, and she was respected as a superlative Vaiṣṇava on her own merit.

Her devotion to the famous Gopinātha Deity of Lord Kṛṣṇa was so intense that this endeared her to the pious and impious alike. By her example she showed how to perform Deity worship and devote one's life to spiritual pursuits. She even presided over huge Vaiṣṇava festivals and

gave initiation to men and women alike. It was Jāhnavādevī, too, who had the insight to keep close contact with the Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana, Lord Caitanya's chief followers there. In this way she sought to keep solidarity and unification between the branches of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal and in Vṛndāvana (Uttar Pradesh). The cohesive form of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism that exists today is largely a result of her efforts.

One other phenomenon in the life of Jāhnavādevī is pertinent to our discussion. Devotion to her mission and purpose became so strong that in her own lifetime a deity was made of her, and this was to be placed alongside the Gopinātha Deity, who was the object of her veneration. A council was convened in Jaipur to decide the propriety of placing her deity next to Lord Gopinātha. The king of

The king of Purī was so taken by Gaṅgāmātā Gosvāmī's recitation of the Bhāgavatam and by her elaborate explanations that he became her disciple and encouraged much of Purī to do the same.

Jaipur and the assembled Vaiṣṇavas decided unanimously that the deity should be established, and it was indeed placed next to Gopinātha within Jāhnavādevī's lifetime. Such a distinguished honor is uncommon among Vaiṣṇava men and women alike.

Hemlatā and Gaṅgāmātā Gosvāmī

In the next generation after Śrī Caitanya and Nityānanda Prabhu (1600s or as late as the 1700s), many great female Vaiṣṇavas followed the example of Jāhnavādevī, two of the most prominent being Hemlatā and Gaṅgāmātā Gosvāmī.

Not much is known about Hemlatā Thākuraṇī. She was the eldest daughter of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya and had many disciples, both men and women. She was a mystic of the highest order and developed a profound sense of love for God.

Gaṅgāmātā Gosvāmī, on the other

hand, is written about quite often in the pages of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava history, especially in the historical records of the Nityānanda-varṇā (from which she descends). Her *guru* was Haridāsa Paṇḍita, a disciple of Anantācārya, who was a follower of Jāhnavādevī. In this way, her disciplic descent is traced to Nityānanda Prabhu.

She was the daughter of King Nareśa Nārāyaṇa of Puntāya, of the Rajsahi district of Bengal. Unlike most great women Vaiṣṇavas, even the mystics, Gaṅgāmātā never married, and so she was given the title "Gosvāmī" ("controller of the senses") for her strict celibacy and profound wisdom. She did not take formal *sannyāsa* (the renounced order of life in the Vedic social system), for she felt that the scriptures recommend *sannyāsa* solely for men. But in spirit she adopted this path and so received the title "Gosvāmī."

The Deity of her heart was Madana Gopāla, and she worshiped this form of Kṛṣṇa with great devotion. In her youth, she studied in Vṛndāvana, and after many years she moved to Jagannātha Purī, where she lived at the ruins of what was formerly the house of the great scholar Śārabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya. The Bhaṭṭācārya had been a prominent disciple of Śrī Caitanya, and although his house was now, almost two hundred years later, merely a run-down facsimile of its former self, Gaṅgāmātā stayed there for the spiritual inspiration it bestowed.

At that house she found the sacred Dāmodara-śīlā (a Deity of Kṛṣṇa in the form of a stone) once worshiped by Śārabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya himself. She worshiped this Deity with the same intensity with which she had worshiped Madana Gopāla in Vṛndāvana.

Mukundadeva Mahārāja, the king of Purī, once came to hear her recite *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the sacred scripture of the Vaiṣṇavas. He was so taken by her pure recitation and her elaborate explanations that he became her disciple and encouraged much of Purī to do the same. He financed a special temple to be built for her, and she became one of the prominent Vaiṣṇavas of Orissa.

Conclusion

I have given only some preliminary examples of great women Vaiṣṇavas. Nonetheless, we have seen examples of a great Vaiṣṇava mother, a wife, mystics, celibates, and *gurus*. In short, the Vaiṣṇava tradition has established precedents for women to assert themselves and distinguish themselves as outstanding Vaiṣṇavas, both in traditional roles more commonly ascribed to women and in very independent roles that would perhaps be the envy of men.

Great women Vaiṣṇavas have existed

throughout the ages, and they have demonstrated that the qualities of leadership, scholarship, intelligence, wisdom, and devotion are affairs of the heart and mind, irrespective of sex.

Thank you very much. Are there any questions?

Question: I enjoyed the lecture very much. But I feel that feminists in general will be slighted. You've described the positive elements in the milieu with which you're familiar—Vaiṣṇavism, the Hare Kṛṣṇa religion. But don't the women of even *that* tradition feel exploited? Aren't they still the product of a male-dominated society?

Satyarāja: There may very well be ample justification for the dissatisfaction of the feminists. Perhaps they have indeed been oppressed and exploited by a male-dominated society. Let us not forget, however, that it is a *materialistic* society in which this takes place. Exploitation is a symptom of selfishness. And selfishness is a symptom of the bodily concept of life. My contention is this: It is this bodily concept of life that is at the heart of materialistic thinking, and it is *this* rather than male domination that creates the exploitative mentality.

Q: I see.

S: Yes. If one identifies himself or herself as nothing more than a material body, the external self becomes of central interest—more important than the person within. Bodily differences are accentuated. Spiritual unity is overlooked. It would seem that the solution to exploitation—the major problem facing the feminists—is to obliterate materialism, not sexism. Sexist thinking is a symptom of the disease—the *disease* is materialism!

Q: OK, but the great women Vaiṣṇavas whom you've mentioned and, more important, the rank-and-file women who follow Vedic culture—how have they risen beyond exploitation?

S: I've explained that already: by rising beyond the bodily concept of life. Men and women will rise beyond exploitation to the degree that they rise beyond the bodily concept and become established in the self—the actual, spiritual self.

Q: But devotees do not live in a vacuum! They may rise beyond the bodily concept, but they are still subjected to the exploitation of those who haven't attained that level.

S: I see what you're getting at. It's actually a very good point. On the other hand, a woman who pursues spirituality is protected by her discipline and the strictures of her religious tradition. She can never be exploited—even by members of society still on a lower level—because she never engages in sinful activity. Especially if she's not engaging in illicit sex—who can exploit her?

Actually, she plays a leading and honored role within the social parameters of her family and community. In short, she avoids exploitation by being thoroughly devoted to God, Kṛṣṇa, and she thus sees a *spiritual* equality, not a contrived material one. She knows that she is spiritually equal.

She feels that feminism betrays a narrow understanding of the purpose of existence, that it is predicated on competition between men and women. She knows that the only competition worth pursuing is between a person and his or her own conditioning. She has a role to play in her service to God, and it is *this* which concerns her—not some petty squabble about bodily differences.

So, in answer to your question, no, women who adhere to Vedic or Vaiṣṇava

A woman who pursues spirituality is protected by her discipline and the strictures of her religious tradition. She can never be exploited—even by members of society still on a lower level—because she never engages in sinful activity.

practice do not feel exploited. To the degree that they are accomplished in Kṛṣṇa conscious realization, they transcend the ability to be or feel exploited. In fact, they are *unable* to be exploited, because they give no room for exploitation. You must submit to materialistic life in order to be exploited. And a dedicated devotee will never do that.

Q: But do devotee women have equal positions? I mean, do they ever take service from men?

S: Not if they're advanced. You see, according to Manu's *Dharma-śāstra*, there is a hierarchy, and in Vedic culture all members happily followed the system for social sanity. Everyone played his or her role. Everyone had an authority, and everyone was subordinate to someone else. In this way, one learned submission,

culminating in submission to God. But the Vaiṣṇava tradition added something special, an underlying and esoteric message of the scriptures: the true devotee wishes to be the servant of the servant of the servant of Kṛṣṇa.

So, in actuality, you have material culture in reverse. Not "Who is serving me?" but "Who can I serve?" This is the devotees' motto. So advanced devotees desire to be the menial servant, not the master. And in this way they develop humility before God.

Incidentally, just so you don't think I'm simply skirting the issue with some abstract philosophy, I will tell you that advanced devotees *do* accept service from novices, and in this way a novice can make advancement on the spiritual path. This holds true for both men and women. Many of the great women I mentioned in my lecture were *gurus* of both men and women and consequently accepted service. You see, Vaiṣṇavism is not at all sexist. Not really. But you must get beyond superficiality. In the ultimate analysis it is not gender but spiritual advancement that is the criterion.

Q: Do you believe that men and women are inherently different? OK, granted men and women are spiritually equal, but you alluded to bodily differences, and this is certainly true. What about more subtle qualities, though? How are we different on the subtle level? For instance, do you give credence to the theory about the right and left sides of the brain?*

S: Why not? I think that the research in this area leaves a great deal to be desired, but the basic premise is reasonable. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, for example, it is said that speech, memory, intelligence, faithfulness, and patience are feminine qualities. Is this sexist? These are admirable qualities. And this information is being confirmed by research into the right and left sides of the brain. There is scientific evidence that certain subtle functions of the brain are more characteristic of women than of men.

Q: Oh, come on! Men and women are perfectly equal, at least mentally. We have the same potential. Bodily differences I can give you. But subtle, mental differences? That's going too far. It's just an old wives' tale. Or should I say an old men's tale. [Laughter.]

S: I can appreciate your concern. To acknowledge mental and intellectual differences can lead to exploitation. But don't misunderstand me. I am saying that our mental and intellectual *faculties* are equal,

(continued on page 34)

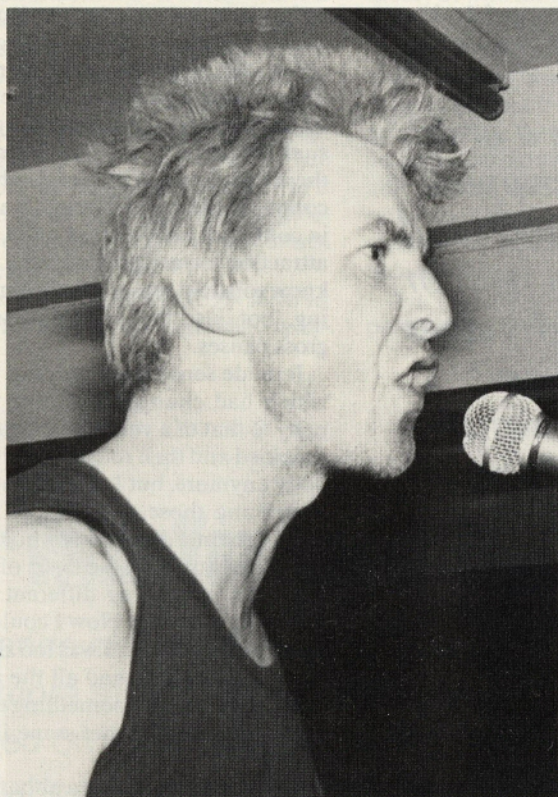
*This theory states that the rational, analytical side of the brain is more developed in men than in women, whereas the emotional, intuitive side is more developed in women than in men.

Coming to Kṛṣṇa

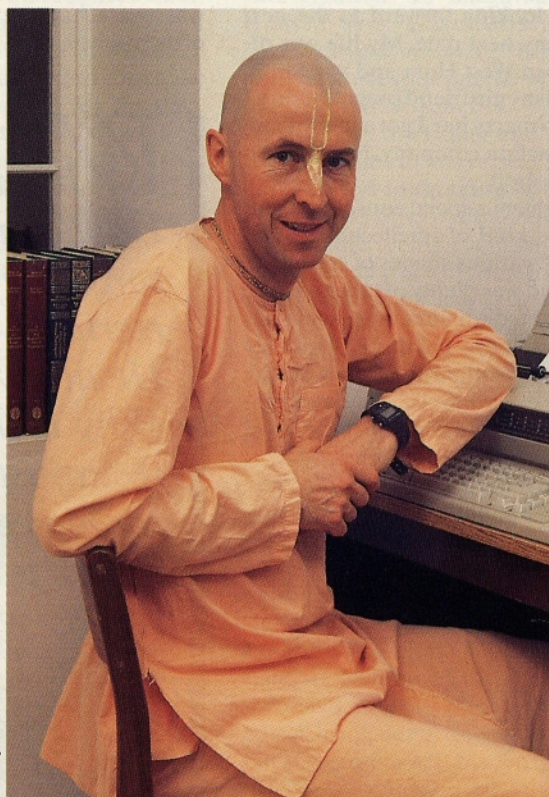
From Punk to Monk

“I couldn’t accept that I would be an engineer
for the rest of my life, settle down, lead a steady life, grow old.
I was bored. What was the point?”

by MADHUMAṄGALA DĀSA



Dave Clifford—Vox Magazine



Yamarāja dāsa

I missed a chance to see Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1969 when he spoke at Conway Hall in Red Lion Square, London. I happened to be there before his lecture, and I saw a number of devotees and many other people inside. I was curious to know what was going on. But as I was a skinhead and saw the devotees as hippies, I thought, “I’m not going to get mixed up with this lot.” I just turned around and walked out.

Shortly before that, I had seen a small group of devotees walking in single file down Oxford Street. I was thinking, “This is love and peace—I’ll show them.” And I kicked one of the devotees.

Around that time I heard the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* for the first time. A recording by the London devotees with George Harrison was played on the

television program "Top of the Pops," which features the successful records of the week. The devotees appeared on the program, but again I was thinking, "This is a bunch of hippies, and they're just interfering with my hearing the kind of music I like."

I was an avid supporter of West Ham United, my local football team in London. I would tolerate school waiting for the weekend. On Saturday mornings, I'd wake up, put on my skinhead gear, and hurry out the door to join up with the rest of the gang. We'd hang around until the match in the afternoon. Not caring for the finer arts of the game, I just wanted to see my team win.

Girlfriends also occupied my mind. I was always looking forward to the next dance and my next date. My life was divided between West Ham and women.

Then I got my girlfriend pregnant, and I left school to marry her. I got a job with an Irish construction company. Now I had a family to support.

I had a righteous social conscience and sought some kind of intellectual stimulation. I tried various shades of socialism, but all I found was plenty of talk and little action. I doubted whether these socialists would ever achieve anything. I quickly lost faith in the solidarity of the working classes. Like everyone else, they were motivated by greed, and when it came down to it, it was every man for himself.

I moved to Dublin and committed myself to Irish Republicanism. I was prepared to do whatever was necessary to free Ireland.

But I wasn't finding real satisfaction in my endeavors. Unite Ireland for what? Life's the same in Dublin or London. I couldn't accept that I would be an engineer for the rest of my life (or a businessman or a truck driver), settle down, lead a steady life, grow old. I was bored. What was the point?

I didn't even consider God. My parents had taught me to pray. I was taught that "God made us to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world and to be happy with Him in the next." But Christianity seemed so sentimental. If Jesus loves us, I thought, why is a child born crippled? How can God send someone to hell for eternity? Why does He allow wars? Why is the world so unjust? Why are some people born into a privileged society while others starve? I didn't want dogma; I wanted answers.

I'd become very cynical. Why should I trust anyone? People were motivated by their own selfish desires. I wasn't going to play the society game.

Then in 1976 came punk rock. Now I could shout my feelings. I dyed my hair green. I started a band (named The Threat), wrote my own songs, and told the

world how bored I was. Then I told them how boring they were. The band drew a good following in Dublin, and John Peel (a punk mentor) was plugging our first record on English national radio. Now I seemed to have a real goal in life—to sing songs saying life was pointless!

*I might just look around me
to see what I can do
to disrupt this monotony
and smash this quiet through.**

Then at an antinuclear festival, as a more broad-minded punk rather than a narrow-minded skinhead, I met devotees again. This time I was more inquisitive. I wanted to know who the "real me" was. I was aware that people put on false images of themselves, and I didn't want to relate to

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people on that platform. I wanted to be real.

I heard the *mahā-mantra* coming from across the fields. The devotees were sitting around a fire chanting. I was attracted. I sat down, listened, and joined in. I happened to be at the end of a frightening experience with LSD, and I felt safe joining in the chanting.

After the chanting, the devotees came around with *prasādam*. It was porridge, just plain porridge, and a lot of people were throwing it away and saying they didn't like it. But when I tasted it, I thought it was the most delicious food I'd ever eaten. I was used to a breakfast of tea or coffee, and for the rest of the day I'd just

eat chocolate biscuits and 7-Up. In the evening I might have some toast and cheese. Then I became a macrobiotic vegetarian, eating brown rice. So this porridge was heavenly. I devoured it. That night I went to sleep in my truck realizing I had just experienced something very special.

The next day I saw the devotees' exhibit that showed a man in different stages of life, the changing bodies diorama. I thought, "This is it," and, in the words of Ian Dury, "What a waste." I identified myself among the figures and saw that my life up to that point was meaningless. The later stages seemed even more useless and certainly less attractive.

I met some devotees and asked them questions. I found the philosophy interesting. I wanted to understand more about higher principles of life. I was convinced of the idea of mind over matter—that we live a kind of a gross life, but there's something beyond just acting on the gross, sensual platform. I could understand that there was a mental platform, which could control the lower platform. I wanted to be in control of my own body. So I had some attraction toward philosophy. I wanted to know spiritual reasons for things happening, not just the apparent, immediate gross causes.

It made sense that I was not this body, which had changed from the form of a baby to that of a youth and would end up wrinkled and then rot. I wasn't in a child's body anymore, but I could remember experiencing those early years; I was the same person. I'd spent my whole life relating to the world on the basis of my body, but I am something different. I'm consciousness, or soul! Now I could go on to find the real me. But I was too skeptical to think the devotees had all the answers. I left the festival with something to contemplate, thinking I'd met some interesting people.

My idea to learn more about the devotees faded as I made plans to write more songs, release another single, and tour Europe with my band. Then one day while I was driving my truck, I realized I was chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. It had been some time since I'd met the devotees, and I hadn't consciously tried to remember the *mantra*. It was as if I was chanting by higher dictate.

Then I met a devotee on O'Connell Bridge, and he gave me a *Path of Perfection*. I was still cynical, though, and when I noticed that the name "Kṛṣṇa" was written with three dots under it, I thought that maybe this was some form of advertising or maybe a subliminal trick to get the reader to remember Kṛṣṇa. [These are diacritics, pronunciation guides.] But then I thought, "So what? Even if it is,

*From "Bored & Frustrated," by The Threat, Dublin, 1978.

they're obviously into Kṛṣṇa, and everyone else is advertising themselves or their trip. Why shouldn't devotees stress His name?" Still, I made a mental note to be cautious.

In any case, the book interested me. In it Śrīla Prabhupāda quotes *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.7): "For one who has conquered the mind, the Supersoul is already reached, for he has attained tranquillity. To such a man happiness and distress, heat and cold, honor and dishonor are all the same." Here was an ancient book of knowledge telling me that not only can the *body* be controlled, but the *mind* can be conquered, and one can realize satisfaction and truth. Śrīla Prabhupāda talked about the shortcomings of trying to arrive at the Absolute Truth by rejecting untruth or relative truth. I'd been doing just that, and I had arrived at the negative conclusion that life was a waste of time. Now here was a positive alternative: through *bhakti-yoga* I could spiritualize my life and live on the higher, real platform I'd been looking for. Reading the book, I became more and more excited. I had to talk with these people again.

I decided to visit the ISKCON farm in southern Ireland. I was immediately at-

tracted by the devotees. Here were people practicing what they preached. They were trying to dedicate their whole life to serving God. Nobody was getting paid, but they were developing a farm where people could come and live peacefully and learn about God and themselves.

Studying *Bhagavad-gītā*, I found out that the real me, the spirit soul, is a servant of God. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes that we are all serving something or someone, so why not serve the best master—God?

I decided to confront my doubts. I spent some days wandering in the nearby woods, taking notes, trying to figure out for myself if there is a God.

I wasn't impressed by the Big Bang theory or with the idea that chance combinations led to the evolution of man. If you put all the components of a watch into a box, no matter how many times you shake the box the result won't tell you the time. Life forms are complex, and they work together in harmony. It seems more reasonable that this world was created by design rather than by chance. As for a bang, bigger small, who made it happen, and where did the ingredients for a bang come from?

Yes, I concluded, there is an eternal, supreme being: God, the creator. But how do

I know that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Person? The devotees were telling me He was, and obviously they were pushing their line. But I thought, "What if I went to a Christian community? They'd be telling me their way was the only way."

In the introduction to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Śrīla Prabhupāda says that if you just accept theoretically that Kṛṣṇa is God, then *Bhagavad-gītā* will make sense. So I said, "Yes, that's as far as I'm prepared to go. I'm not accepting Kṛṣṇa as God. But what Śrīla Prabhupāda says seems fair. I'll try it out. I'll assume that Kṛṣṇa is God while I'm studying *Bhagavad-gītā*."

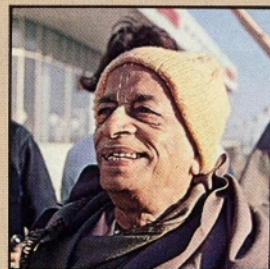
Jesus Christ refers to God as "our Father," and Mohammed calls God Allah, "the greatest." In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa Himself says, *aham sarvasya prabhavo mattah sarvaṁ pravartate*: "I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me." This qualifies Him as both the Father and the greatest.

Then I came to this verse: "Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, become My devotee, offer obeisances to Me, and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me." I realized I had come across the essence of

(continued on page 34)

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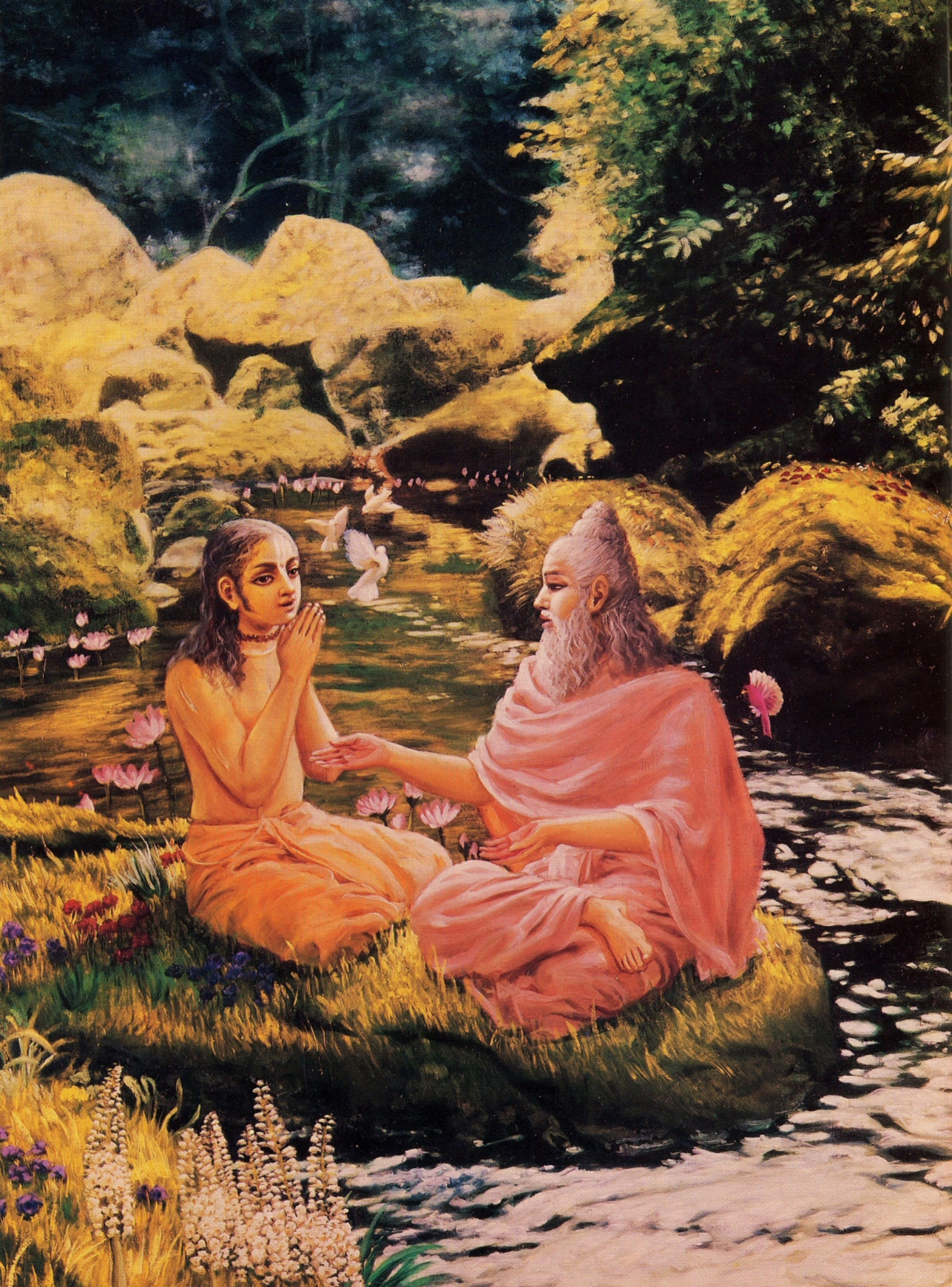
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ABLE GUIDANCE

There's an emphatic command in the Vedic texts
that no human being can afford to ignore.

by DHANURDHARA SWAMI

In West Bengal, India, in 1900, twenty-six-year-old Bimala Prasada Datta, an accomplished scholar in mathematics, astronomy, and theology, was requested by his father to seek spiritual initiation from Gaurakiśora dāsa Bābājī, a saintly yet illiterate mendicant. Hoping to avoid the distraction of an adoring public, the old saint was absorbed in chanting God's names next to the local cremation grounds.

Although the intellectual young aspirant was sincere in his request for initiation, the ascetic refused. Rebuked by his father for his repeated failure to win the favor of the great saint, a determined Bimala Prasada went to Gaurakiśora dāsa Bābājī again: "If I do not receive your mercy, I see no need in holding on to life." Seeing the sincerity of the young man, Gaura-

kiśora dāsa Bābājī accepted him as his only disciple.

Although Bimala Prasada's action may seem drastic, it was not done in ignorance. According to the *Padma Purāṇa* there are 8,400,000 species of life through which the soul evolves. Only at the juncture of human life does the living entity have the ability to achieve perfection by inquiring from a spiritual master. The *guru* is therefore not a fad or luxury but a dire necessity. Throughout the Vedic literature the same basic message is found: "Any person who seriously desires to achieve real happiness must seek out a bona fide spiritual master and take shelter of him."

The necessity of accepting a *guru* is perfectly illustrated by the illusion and consequent enlightenment of Arjuna as described in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Despite all effort to the contrary, Arjuna found himself in the unenviable predicament of a fratricidal

In the role of an ideal disciple, Vidura, an intimate associate of Lord Kṛṣṇa, inquires from Maitreya about the science of God.

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Cooking with KŪRMA



Anagha dāsa

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.

Potatoes Gauranga

(Serves 4)

Ingredients

8 medium potatoes, sliced	1 teaspoon paprika
1 tablespoon ghee	½ cup melted butter
¼ teaspoon asafetida	½ teaspoon black pepper
½ cup water	¼ teaspoon ground rosemary
½ teaspoon turmeric	2 tablespoons parsely
2 teaspoons salt	3 cups sour cream

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.
2. Boil the potatoes till three-quarters done.
3. Heat the ghee over a medium flame. Add the asafetida and fry for a few seconds. Add the water, turmeric, salt, paprika, butter, pepper, rosemary, and parsely. Add the sour cream, stir, and remove from the flame.
4. Combine the potatoes and the sauce, place in the oven, and bake for thirty minutes.
5. Offer to Kṛṣṇa.

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



Puruṣārtha dāsa

war. He became overwhelmed with anxiety because in good conscience he was unable to either renounce his duty as a *kṣatriya* or fight against his relatives.

Fortunately, his frustrations led him to seek a solution by surrendering to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme spiritual master. "Now I am Your disciple and a soul surrendered unto You. Please instruct me."

As a result, Arjuna attentively heard Lord Kṛṣṇa's instructions and at the conclusion felt a new hope and direction in life: "My dear Kṛṣṇa, my illusion is now gone. I have regained my memory by Your mercy. I am now free from doubt."

Arjuna's predicament is not unique. Everyone is faced with difficulties that happen without his desire. The *Vedas*, therefore, comparing the world situation to a forest fire that somehow blazes without being set, enjoin that one should not remain in material perplexities but should approach a spiritual master.

Another analogy commonly used in the *Vedas* to help us understand the need for accepting a *guru* is the comparison between the spiritual master and the captain of a ship. The insurmountable ocean of material existence can be crossed by the boat of human life, which is aided by the favorable winds of the *Vedas* and directed by the able guidance of the spiritual master.

To fully appreciate the urgency of accepting a *guru*, one needs to understand something about the source of the *guru*'s knowledge. The *guru* carries a message that has been passed down in an unbroken chain of spiritual preceptors originating from the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Himself. These disciplic successions are described in the *Padma Purāṇa*. There are four of them: the Brahma-sampradāya, through Śrī Madhvācārya; the Lakṣmī-sampradāya, through Śrī Rāmānujācārya; the Rudra-sampradāya, through Śrī Viṣṇu-svāmī; and the Kumāra-sampradāya, through Śrī Nimbārkācārya.

A disciple in a bona fide disciplic succession receives from his *guru* not a sermon of philosophical speculation but a potent recitation of standard knowledge, not different from the Lord's original instruction to His first disciple. The term *guru* therefore literally means "heavy," because of the weight of the message the *guru* carries.

Perfect understanding of any subject is received through authorized sources. A new lawyer becomes an apprentice to an experienced lawyer, and a young doctor becomes the intern of a licensed practitioner. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* thus concludes, "To learn the science of God, one must approach a spiritual master."

By Lord Kṛṣṇa's method of presenting *Bhagavad-gītā*, He also highlights the
(continued on page 34)

THE VEDIC OBSERVER

Transcendental Commentary on the Issues of the Day

PRO-CHOICE SPROUTS

by Mathureśa dāsa
Port Royal, Pennsylvania

The abortion debate has grown tedious, as flavorless as hour-old bubble gum. Pro-lifers march on Washington, demanding the overturn of *Roe v. Wade*, wailing that abortion is murder. Pro-choicers counter-march, equally emotional about a woman's right to control her own body. It's all so predictable. The standoff needs new life.

There's some hope in the pro-lifers' recent acts of civil disobedience, some excitement in seeing demonstrators carted

waste of time, a petty, rear-guard action. Pro-choicers need to take the offensive.

As Jonathan Swift hinted more than two hundred fifty years ago in *A Modest Proposal*, unwanted pregnancies can have their uses. If veal is the tenderest of all cow flesh, how tender a fetus must be. Get fetal flesh into the American diet—as fetus burgers, say—and Americans would be far less inclined to protest abortion. Why do the animal rights people make so much more noise about cruelty to seals, minks, cats, dogs, and rabbits than about cruelty to chickens, pigs, and cows? Because everyone, including some animal rights people, eats chickens, pigs, and cows. So get everyone munching on fetus and you pull the rug right out from under the pro-lifers.

smear it on our skin, surely we can put it in our mouths.

As Swift so eloquently proposed, this creative use of children, or, in the modern context, fetuses, would also serve to increase a man's affection for his wife, and for women in general, since everyone knows that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. A fetus industry would also provide a steady source of income for unwed mothers, thus greatly decreasing welfare rolls.

In any case, let's not dally around debating "murder" with the pro-lifers. Take the initiative, as they have. Go to jail, if necessary, as they have. Demonstrate to the world the depth of your conviction that the fetus isn't human, and that eating fetus is therefore no more unusual than eating veal and sprouts.

A FARCE OF FATE

by Dhīra Govinda dāsa
Tel Aviv

The doctor was a genial, cultured man. He had just given a donation in exchange for some of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. I was in Sakhnine, a small Muslim village nestled in the hills of northern Israel. As I was leaving his office, I noticed in the waiting room a large calendar displaying a photo of a teenage Palestinian boy gracefully posed like a little league pitcher about to deliver strike three. His hand didn't clasp a baseball, however, but a sizable rock. And his target wasn't the catcher's glove of a playmate, but the vulnerable body of an Israeli soldier, who for him represented the enemy that had been oppressing him and his family for many years.

It's the Middle East. As devotees of Kṛṣṇa in this part of the world, we interact extensively with many peoples—Jew, Muslim, Christian, Israeli, and Palestinian. In each of these groups, we meet many good people, such as the doctor, who are sincerely concerned about the distressing situation in which they're living. So why all the difficulty?

According to the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the cause of the difficulty is the bodily conception of life. A person is

(continued on page 33)



off to jail. At least they've raised the conflict to a new level: they're acting on the premise that America's million-plus annual abortions are murder.

To increase the excitement, pro-choicers ought to up the ante too. If the fetus isn't a human being, or even a living being, they should take that to heart. If, as they say, the religious talk about pregnancy being sacred (the *Bhāgavatam*, for instance, says that the individual person, or soul—the living force in every body, fetal and full-grown—enters the womb at the time of conception!) is just that, talk, then answering "murder" charges is a

Fetus cuisine has great potential. Think of what it could do to revitalize the hamburger industry, or any sector of the food industry. Health food specialists rave about the nutritive value of wheat sprouts, and what is a fetus but a comparably germinal ball of flesh?

Why worry? Most of us make no moral distinction between eating sprouts and eating animal flesh, so why distinguish between animal and fetus barbecues? Advances have already been made in the medical use of fetal products, and the Europeans, we hear, already have fetal-based cosmetics on the market. If we can



Perplexed by Kṛṣṇa's urging Arjuna to fight,
some students of the *Gītā* accuse Kṛṣṇa of being immoral.

BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

A Book of Violence?

by ROHINĪNANDANA DĀSA

Bhagavad-gītā is famous as a harbinger of peace and good fortune. Mohandas K. Gandhi wrote, "The *Gītā* has always been my source of comfort. Whenever I was unable to perceive a silver lining on the horizon, I opened the *Gītā* and found a verse that gave me new hope."

Yet even Gandhi, a great advocate of *ahimsā*, or nonviolence, found some of the *Gītā*'s verses puzzling and disagreeable. Lord Kṛṣṇa explains that killing can be perfectly religious and a form of *yoga*: "One who is not motivated by false ego, whose intelligence is not entangled, though he kills men in this world, does not kill. Nor is he bound by his actions" (Bg. 18.17). Gandhi comments in his *Anāsakti Yoga*, "The meaning of these verses of the *Bhagavad-gītā* seems to depend upon an imaginary ideal which one cannot find a practical example of in this world."

What should we make of this? If Kṛṣṇa's words, or some of them, do indeed depend upon imaginary ideals that are impractical for life today, we might wonder about Kṛṣṇa's overall authority as the "perfect, infallible Supreme Person" (Bg. 15.18). We might consider that Kṛṣṇa's opinion carries only relative importance, like Gandhi's or anyone else's, and so why should we base our lives upon the *Gītā*'s doctrines?

Fighting on Kṛṣṇa's order, Arjuna aims his arrow at mighty grandfather Bhīṣma.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's purport to the verse in question (18.17) endorses Kṛṣṇa's statement. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes,

One who knows the instrument of work, himself as the worker, and the Supreme Lord as the supreme sanctioner is perfect in doing everything. Such a person is never in illusion. Personal activity and responsibility arise from false ego and godlessness, or a lack of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Anyone who is acting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness under the direction of the Supersoul or the Supreme Personality of Godhead, even though killing, does not kill. Nor is he ever affected by the reaction of such killing. When a soldier kills under the command of a superior officer, he is not subject to be judged. But if a soldier kills on his own personal account, then he is certainly judged by a court of law.

As a fellow countryman and contemporary of Gandhi, Śrīla Prabhupāda knew well the pros and cons of Gandhi's peaceful noncooperation ideals. He also knew of his American followers' pacifistic ideals during the Vietnam war. But still he always stuck firmly to Kṛṣṇa's words, convinced that they contain the highest morality and gentility and will remain absolutely true for all time.

Those attached to their own sense of morality will certainly doubt Kṛṣṇa's conclusions. So let us objectively pursue the issue of violence and non-violence and see whether or not Kṛṣṇa is giving

imaginary and impractical advice.

In our changing world it is not surprising that Kṛṣṇa's words often challenge some people's conceptions. Clinging to whatever threads of peace remain today, they write of Kṛṣṇa as unethical and immoral in persuading the reluctant Arjuna to fight. They commend Arjuna's pacifism and condemn Kṛṣṇa's bellicosity. But perhaps such opinions arise from an incomplete understanding.

For instance, if Kṛṣṇa is actually a bellicose advocate of killing, war, and violence, why does He glorify *ahimsā* as "an exalted, divine quality stemming from proper knowledge" at least three times in the *Gītā* (Bg. 10.5, 13.8, and 16.2)? Kṛṣṇa fully supports the Vedic injunction *ahimsyāt sarva-bhūtānām*: "Do not commit violence to any living being."

We should also note that although Kṛṣṇa's words and arguments are for everyone, His direction to kill is specifically meant for Arjuna. Not that someone can justify his crimes by pulling out of context a few sentences like "The self slays not nor is slain."

Duty is the real principle determining what constitutes violence and non-violence. Perhaps it was Arjuna who was proposing violence in the name of nonviolence—out of a mistaken sense of duty. Let us examine his apparent non-violent refusal to fight.

At first glance it appears that Arjuna had substantial reasons for not participating in the war. Friends and relatives opposed him, even his beloved grandfather, Bhīṣma, and his *guru*, Droṇa. If he won the war, he would be miserable without his friends, and he would suffer the sting of retribution from their wives and families. He foresaw that the women, bereft of their husbands and fathers, would be unprotected, and their bastard children would wreak havoc, the reactions to their sins resting upon his head. He reasoned that war is always wrong for those who see, and that blind men cannot be blamed. Why should he fight? Better the "nonviolent" path.

Lord Kṛṣṇa gave a piercing reply to Arjuna's arguments: "You try to speak so well, but you don't know the truth of the soul. You're forgetting your duty, and your heart is weak. Armed with *yoga*, arise and fight!"

Arjuna had a sacred duty to perform. As a soldier he was bound to protect the citizens from aggressors. The very word *kṣatriya* (soldier) means "one who protects from harm." Duryodhana, the main cause of the war, was an aggressor worthy of punishment. The Vedic scriptures describe six kinds of aggressors who should be checked and sufficiently punished, even by death: (1) one who gives poison,

(2) one who sets fire to another's house, (3) one who attacks with deadly weapons, (4) one who plunders riches, (5) one who occupies another's land, and (6) one who kidnaps another's wife.

Duryodhana had committed all six of these offenses. He had poisoned Bhīma, Arjuna's brother. He had tried to burn to death all five brothers with their mother, Kuntī, his own aunt. He had usurped the Pāṇḍavas' land and property and had tried to steal their wife, Draupadī, and make her his slave. And now he was attacking the Pāṇḍavas with all the force he could muster. He was a violent man in every sense.

A dictionary definition of *violence* is "an outrage or injury; an unlawful exercise of force." And *outrage* is defined as "a forcible violation of others' rights or sentiments, or an infringement on morality."

Duryodhana's violence was not confined only to the physical platform but ex-

In the monarchical system then existing, the people had a right to expect the king to represent God and give them full opportunity to develop their spirituality and God consciousness.

tended to a violation of the spiritual rights of the citizens. In the monarchical system then existing, the people had a right to expect the king to represent God and give them full opportunity to develop their spirituality and God consciousness.

Arjuna's duty was clear, and Kṛṣṇa, far from being bellicose, was impartially removing the misconceptions preventing its execution. As a soft-hearted devotee, Arjuna hesitated to kill, but Kṛṣṇa reminded him of the reality of the soul, which never dies in any circumstance. Certainly the souls present before them could never be touched by any of Arjuna's powerful weapons. Only their bodies would fall. Such dull material bodies are always, in a sense, dead, whether or not they are occupied by a soul. How could Arjuna think his own "dead" body could be violent to others' dead bodies? Furthermore, Arjuna would enable

aging heroes like Bhīṣma and Droṇa to gain fresh, new bodies and so revive their depleted energy.

Someone may still complain: "Arjuna's retaliation and punishment of Duryodhana is in itself an act of violence and is therefore censurable."

But does force or even killing always mean violence? And does apparently friendly behavior always mean nonviolence? A doctor *appears* to be causing injury by cutting off a limb, and a layman may jump to the wrong conclusion—"What a cruel and violent act!" Yet the doctor's act is both lawful (because he is authorized) and protective of health. His actions are an exhibition of mercy.

A person may be trying to give up smoking, and if in the name of friendship I attempt to cajole him into accepting a cigarette, my apparent friendly gesture actually shrouds a violent attitude. Apart from causing injury to his health, I am also, perhaps unwittingly, interfering with his right of free choice.

Or suppose a policeman refrains from violence when duty dictates that he defend a person from attack? His apparent nonviolence is in fact a criminal violation of the right of a citizen to be protected by the state.

A child suffering from typhoid may be crying for food, but his doctor refuses to mitigate his hunger pangs. Giving food to the child would be an act of violence.

Without knowledge of an absolute standard, however, it is sometimes difficult for us to determine what is right.

Yet there is an Absolute Truth, in which all relative conceptions can be satisfied. According to the Vedic literature, Lord Kṛṣṇa is the supreme lawmaker, and His laws are meant to be followed by everyone, in every time, place, and circumstance, for the immediate and ultimate good of all. "Unlawful" therefore means to break His laws. One who acts unlawfully, however kind and friendly he may appear, can hardly be called a good person, any more than a criminal can be called a good citizen. Thieves may talk about dividing up their loot honestly, but how can there be honesty among thieves, when the basis of their dealings is dishonest? Real honesty, morality, and goodness come from following the Lord's laws, which are transcendent and therefore higher than any man-made edict.

A study of *Bhagavad-gītā* under the guidance of Kṛṣṇa's representative, the bona fide *guru*, will reveal the universal relevance of God's laws. For instance, as a soldier Arjuna was duty bound to defend the principles of religion, so grievously outraged by Duryodhana. And the Supreme Lord was requesting him to fight.

(continued on page 33)

Every Town

The worldwide activities of the International

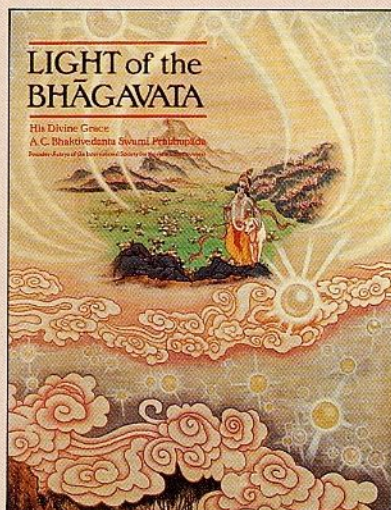


And Village

Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)

President Bush Gets *Light of the Bhāgavata*

Washington, D.C.—At the Smithsonian Institute's unveiling of a large scale-model of the White House recently, Jāgara dāsa, who works for the Smithsonian and helped build the exhibit, presented President George Bush with a copy



of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Light of the Bhāgavata* and a letter from Jāgara's twelve-year-old son, Sītā-Rāma dāsa.

In his letter, Sītā-Rāma introduced himself as a student of the Vaiṣṇava Academy in Alachua, Florida, and said that *Light of the Bhāgavata* "shows, in a simple, beautiful way, a little about the Vedic philosophy we study." He reminded Mr. Bush that as President he had a great responsibility to uphold the high moral standards the United States was founded on.

Sītā-Rāma encouraged the President to work for world peace and the protection of human rights in other countries. He also spoke out against abortion: "All great religious traditions teach that the soul and the body are different and

that they come together at the time of conception. Therefore, the child within the womb has just as much right to live as anyone else."

Sītā-Rāma invited Mr. Bush to visit the Vaiṣṇava Academy, located on a 127-acre farm. "We have cows and oxen. The students get to milk the cows by hand and work the oxen in the field."

A couple of weeks after the opening of the exhibit, Sītā-Rāma received a reply from the President, signed in his own hand: "Thank you for the letter and the book. . . . It is always good hearing from young people, and I appreciate sharing in the opinions of you and your classmates on important issues. . . . Your invitation meant a lot, and I'm glad to send you and your fellow students my best wishes for an exciting future."

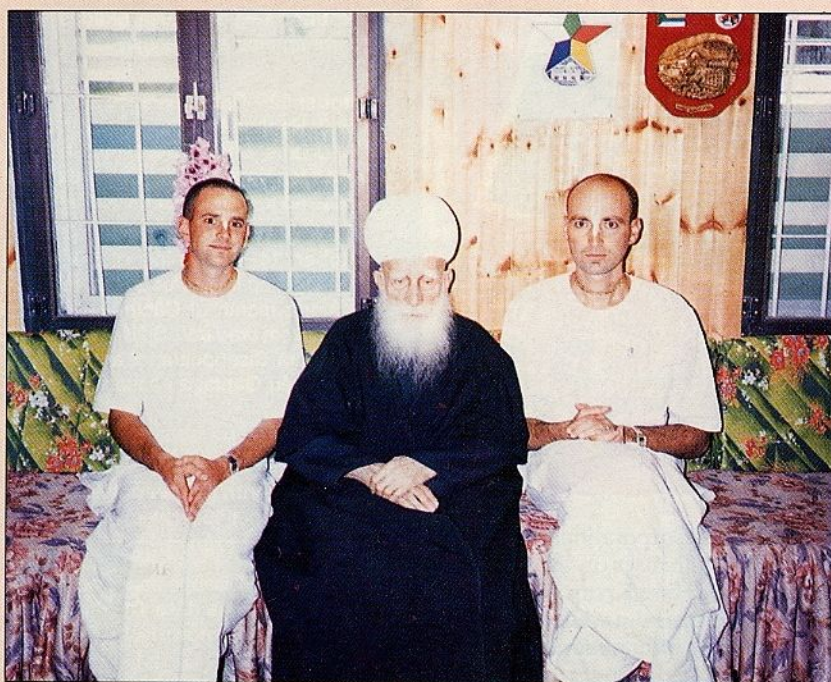
Sītā-Rāma says, "It's wonderful that the chief executive of the land has only to go to his bookshelf to have contact with Kṛṣṇa conscious knowledge."

Israeli Arabs Eager for Prabhupāda's Books

Tel Aviv, Israel—Sheik Tarif Amin, spiritual leader for the seventy-five thousand Druze in Israel and respected by the millions of Druze worldwide, recently met with members of ISKCON in Israel. The Sheik expressed great appreciation for ISKCON's activities, especially the distribution of spiritual literature for bringing about a peaceful, God-centered society.

Dhīra Govinda dāsa presented Sheik Amin with a copy of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* in Hebrew. The Sheik was happy to hear that many members of the Druze community are enthusiastically placing sets of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books in their homes and educational institutions.

Elsewhere in Israel, the Muslim population is providing stiff competition to the Druze for being the biggest supporters of book



Sheik Tarif Amin with Dhīra Govinda dāsa (left) and Īśvara Kṛṣṇa dāsa.

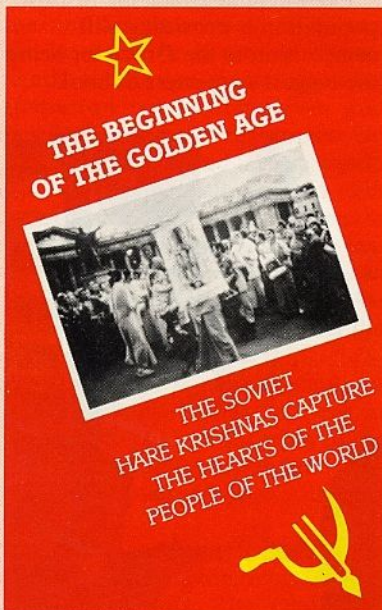
distribution in the country. Since last February, devotees have had great success in selling Śrīla Prabhupāda's books to intellectuals in the Muslim villages. More than forty school and public libraries have taken the set of six Hebrew books, and hundreds of lawyers, doctors, and other leaders of the Muslim community have taken the books.

Leaders of the village of Kabul invited the devotees to give a program on Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the local residents. More than fifty intellectual, religious, and cultural leaders of the community enjoyed an evening of philosophy, *kīrtana*, and *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*.

The devotees in Israel are eagerly awaiting the arrival of Arabic books so that they will be able to distribute transcendental literature to the common people, most of whom are not fluent in Hebrew.

RESOURCES

The Beginning of the Golden Age, the success story of the Campaign to Free Soviet Hare Krishnas, is now available on videocassette. Narrated by Rod Young, television newsreader for the Australian



Broadcasting Corporation, the documentary focuses on the efforts of a group of Hare Kṛṣṇa school-children in Australia whose plea for the release of imprisoned Soviet devotees sparked a powerful campaign in Australia. To order, send

\$19.95 (U.S. dollars) to ISKCON, P.O. Box 83, Indooroopilly 4068, Q.L.D., Australia.

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Festivals & Calendar

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

Month of Padmanābha (September 16–October 15)

October 10—Rāmacandra-vijayotsava, the anniversary of Lord Rāmacandra's victory over the demon Rāvaṇa. Also, appearance anniversary of Śrīla Madhvācārya, a great teacher of devotional service.

October 11—Pāśāṅkuṣā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

October 12—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, great associates and followers of Lord Caitanya.

October 14—Beginning of Dāmodara-vrata. Offering lamps for one month. Also, the fourth month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from *urad dāl*). Śrī Kṛṣṇa Śaradiya Rāsa-yātrā. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Murāri Gupta, an associate of Lord Caitanya.

Month of Dāmodara (October 15–November 13)

October 19—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa known for his Bengali devotional songs.

October 25—Rāmā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

October 29—Diwali (the festival of illuminating Kṛṣṇa's temples with lamps). Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa center for details.

October 30—Govardhana Pūjā, the festival commemorating the worship of Govardhana Hill by the residents of Vṛndāvana and Kṛṣṇa's lifting the hill. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa center for details.

November 2—Disappearance anniversary of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Devotees observe this day with personal remembrances of Śrīla Prabhupāda, readings from his biography, and fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

November 6—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, a great follower of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

November 9—Uthānā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. Also, disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gaurakiśora dāsa Bābājī, the spiritual master of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who was the spiritual master of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Fasting till noon.

November 13—Last day of Dāmodara-vrata and Cāturmāsya.

Book Section

ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

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

Third Canto: “The Status Quo”

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The Marriage of Kardama Muni and Devahūti

In this installment of our continuing presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the sage Maitreya, speaking to Vidura, a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, tells of Kardama Muni's accepting Devahūti, the daughter of Emperor Svāyam-bhuva Manu, as his wife, in the mood of service to the Supreme Lord.

TEXT 20

यतोऽभवद्विश्वमिदं विचित्रं
संस्थास्यते यत्र च वावतिष्ठते ।
प्रजापतीनां पतिरेष मह्यं
परं प्रमाणं भगवाननन्तः ॥२०॥

yato 'bhavad viśvam idaṁ vicitrāṁ
saṁsthāsyate yatra ca vāvatiṣṭhate
prajāpatīnāṁ patir eṣa mahyaṁ
paraṁ pramāṇaṁ bhagavān anantaḥ

yataḥ—from whom; abhavat—emanated; viśvam—creation; idaṁ—this; vicitrāṁ—wonderful; saṁsthāsyate—will dissolve; yatra—in whom; ca—and; vā—or; avatiṣṭhate—presently exists; prajā-patī-nām—of the Prajāpatīs; patiḥ—the Lord; eṣaḥ—this; mahyaṁ—to me; param—highest; pramāṇam—authority; bhagavān—Supreme Lord; anantaḥ—unlimited.

TRANSLATION

The highest authority for me is the unlimited Supreme Personality of Godhead, from whom this wonderful creation emanates and in whom its sustenance and dissolution rest. He is the origin of all Prajāpatīs, the personalities meant to produce living entities in this world.

PURPORT

Kardama Muni was ordered by his father, Prajāpati, to produce children. In the beginning of creation the Prajāpatīs were meant to produce the large population which was to reside in the planets of the gigantic universe. But Kardama Muni said that although his father was Prajāpati, who desired him to produce children, actually his origin was the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu, because Viṣṇu is the origin of everything; He is the actual creator of this universe, He is the actual maintainer, and when everything is annihilated, it rests in Him only. That is the conclusion of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. For creation, maintenance and annihilation there are the three deities Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Mahēśvara (Śiva), but Brahmā and Mahēśvara are qualitative expansions of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu is the central figure. Viṣṇu, therefore, takes charge of maintenance. No one can maintain the whole creation but He. There are innumerable entities, and they have innumerable demands; no one but Viṣṇu can fulfill the unnumerable demands of all the innumerable living entities. Brahmā is ordered to create, and Śiva is ordered to annihilate. The middle function, maintenance, is taken charge of by Viṣṇu. Kardama Muni knew very well, by his power in progressive spiritual life,

that Viṣṇu, the Personality of Godhead, was his worshipable Deity. Whatever Viṣṇu desired was his duty, and nothing else. He was not prepared to beget a number of children. He would beget only one child, who would help the mission of Viṣṇu. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, whenever there is a discrepancy in the discharge of religious principles, the Lord descends on the surface of the earth to protect religious principles and to annihilate the miscreants.

Marrying and begetting a child is considered to liquidate one's debts to the family in which one is born. There are many debts which are imposed upon a child just after his birth. There are debts to the family in which one is born, debts to the demigods, debts to the Pitās, debts to the ṛṣis, etc. But if someone engages only in the service of the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, who is actually worshipable, then even without trying to liquidate other debts, one becomes free from all obligations. Kardama Muni preferred to devote his life as a servant of the Lord in *paramahansa* knowledge and to beget a child only for that purpose, not to beget numberless children to fill up the vacancies in the universe.

TEXT 21

मैत्रेय उवाच
स उग्रधन्वन्भियदेवावभाषे
आसीच्च तूष्णीमरविन्दनाभम् ।
धियोपगृह्णन् सितशोभितेन
मुखेन चेतो लुलुभे देवहृत्याः ॥२१॥

maitreya uvāca
sa ugra-dhanvann iyad evābhaṣe
āśic ca tūṣṇim aravinda-nābham
dhiyopagṛhṇan smita-śobhitena
mukhena ceto lulubhe devahūtyāḥ

maitreyaḥ—the great sage Maitreya; uvāca—said; saḥ—he (Kardama); ugra-dhanvan—O great warrior Vidura; iyat—this much; eva—only; ābhaṣe—spoke; āśit—became; ca—and; tūṣṇim—silent; aravinda-nābham—Lord Viṣṇu (whose navel is adorned by a lotus); dhiyā—by thought; upagṛhṇan—seizing; smita-śobhitena—beautified by his smile; mukhena—by his face; cetaḥ—the mind; lulubhe—was captivated; devahūtyāḥ—of Devahūti.

TRANSLATION

Śrī Maitreya said: O great warrior Vidura, the sage Kardama said this much only and then became silent, thinking of his worshipable Lord Viṣṇu, who has a lotus on His navel. As he silently smiled, his face captured the mind of Devahūti, who began to meditate upon the great sage.

PURPORT

It appears that Kardama Muni was fully absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness because as soon as he became silent, he at once began to think of Lord Viṣṇu. That is the way of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Pure devotees are so absorbed in thought of Kṛṣṇa that they have no other engagement; although they may seem to think or act otherwise, they are always thinking

of Kṛṣṇa. The smile of such a Kṛṣṇa conscious person is so attractive that simply by smiling he wins so many admirers, disciples and followers.

TEXT 22

सोऽनुज्ञात्वा व्यवसितं महिष्या दुहितुः स्फुटम् ।
तस्मै गुणगणाढ्याय ददौ तुल्यां प्रहर्षितः ॥२२॥

so 'nu jñātvā vyavasitam
mahisyā duhituh sphuṭam
tasmai guṇa-gaṇāḍhyāya
dadau tulyāṁ praharṣitaḥ

saḥ—he (Emperor Manu); *anu*—afterward; *jñātvā*—having known; *vyavasitam*—the fixed decision; *mahisyā*—of the Queen; *duhituh*—of his daughter; *sphuṭam*—clearly; *tasmai*—to him; *guṇa-gaṇā-ḍhyāya*—who was endowed with a host of virtues; *dadau*—gave away; *tulyāṁ*—who was equal (in good qualities); *praharṣitaḥ*—extremely pleased.

TRANSLATION

After having unmistakably known the decision of the Queen, as well as that of Devahūti, the Emperor most gladly gave his daughter to the sage, whose host of virtues was equaled by hers.

TEXT 23

शतरूपा महाराज्ञी पारिवर्हन्महाधनान् ।
दम्पत्योः पर्यदात्मीत्या भूषावासः परिच्छदान् ॥२३॥

śatarūpā mahā-rājñī
pāribarhān mahā-dhanān
dampatyoh paryadāt prītyā
bhūṣā-vāsaḥ paricchadān

śatarūpā—Empress Śatarūpā; *mahā-rājñī*—the Empress; *pāribarhān*—dowry; *mahā-dhanān*—valuable presents; *dam-patyoh*—to the bride and bridegroom; *paryadāt*—gave; *prītyā*—out of affection; *bhūṣā*—ornaments; *vāsaḥ*—clothes; *paricchadān*—articles for household use.

TRANSLATION

Empress Śatarūpā lovingly gave most valuable presents, suitable for the occasion, such as jewelry, clothes and household articles, in dowry to the bride and bridegroom.

PURPORT

The custom of giving one's daughter in charity with a dowry is still current in India. The gifts are given according to the position of the father of the bride. *Pāribarhān mahā-dhanān* means the dowry which must be awarded to the bridegroom at the time of marriage. Here *mahā-dhanān* means greatly valuable gifts befitting the dowry of an empress. The words *bhūṣā-vāsaḥ paricchadān* also appear here. *Bhūṣā* means "ornaments," *vāsaḥ* means "clothing," and *paricchadān* means "various household articles." All things befitting the marriage ceremony of an emperor's daughter were awarded to Kardama Muni, who was until now observing celibacy as a *brahmācārī*. The bride, Devahūti, was very richly dressed with ornaments and clothing.

In this way Kardama Muni was married with full opulence to a qualified wife and was endowed with the necessary paraphernalia for household life. In the Vedic way of marriage such a dowry is still given to the bridegroom by the father of the bride; even in poverty-stricken India there are marriages where hundreds and thousands of rupees are spent for a dowry. The dowry system is not illegal, as some have tried to prove. The dowry is a gift given to the daughter by the father to show good will, and it is compulsory. In rare cases where the father is completely unable to give a dowry, it is enjoined that he must at least give a fruit and a flower. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, God can also be pleased even by a fruit and a flower. When there is financial inability and no question of accumulating a dowry by another means, one can give a fruit and flower for the satisfaction of the bridegroom.

TEXT 24

प्रतां दुहितरं सम्राट् सट्क्षाय गतव्यथः ।
उपगुह्य च बाहुभ्यामौत्कण्ठ्योन्मथिताशयः ॥२४॥

prattām duhitaram samrāt
sadrkṣāya gata-vyathāḥ
upaguhyā ca bāhubhyām
autkaṇṭhyonmathitāśayaḥ

prattām—who was given; *duhitaram*—daughter; *samrāt*—the Emperor (Manu); *sadrkṣāya*—unto a suitable person; *gata-vyathāḥ*—relieved of his responsibility; *upaguhyā*—embracing; *ca*—and; *bāhubhyām*—with his two arms; *autkaṇṭhya-unmathita-āśayaḥ*—having an anxious and agitated mind.

TRANSLATION

Thus relieved of his responsibility by handing over his daughter to a suitable man, Svāyambhuva Manu, his mind agitated by feelings of separation, embraced his affectionate daughter with both his arms.

PURPORT

A father always remains in anxiety until he can hand over his grown-up daughter to a suitable boy. A father and mother's responsibility for children continues until they marry them to suitable spouses; when the father is able to perform that duty, he is relieved of his responsibility.

TEXT 25

अशक्नुवंस्तद्विरहं मुञ्चन् बाष्पकलां मुहुः ।
आसिञ्चदम्ब वत्सेति नेत्रोदैर्दुहितुः शिखाः ॥२५॥

asaknuvams tad-viraham
muñcan bāṣpa-kalām muhuḥ
āsiñcat ambā vatseti
netrodair duhituh śikhāḥ

asaknuvan—being unable to bear; *tad-viraham*—separation from her; *muñcan*—shedding; *bāṣpa-kalām*—tears; *muhuḥ*—again and again; *āsiñcat*—he drenched; *ambā*—my dear mother; *vatsa*—my dear daughter; *iti*—thus; *netra-udaiḥ*—by the water from his eyes; *duhituh*—of his daughter; *śikhāḥ*—the locks of hair.

TRANSLATION

The Emperor was unable to bear the separation of his daughter. Therefore tears poured from his eyes again and again, drenching his daughter's head as he cried, "My dear mother! My dear daughter!"

PURPORT

The word *ambā* is significant. A father sometimes addresses his daughter in affection as "mother" and sometimes as "my darling." The feeling of separation occurs because until the daughter is married she remains the daughter of the father, but after her marriage she is no longer claimed as a daughter in the family; she must go to the husband's house, for after marriage she becomes the property of the husband. According to *Manu-saṁhitā*, a woman is never independent. She must remain the property of the father while she is not married, and she must remain the property of the husband until she is elderly and has grown-up children of her own. In old age, when the husband has taken *sannyāsa* and left home, she remains the property of the sons. A woman is always dependent, either upon the father, husband or elderly sons. That will be exhibited in the life of Devahūti. Devahūti's father handed over responsibility for her to the husband, Kardama Muni, and in the same way, Kardama Muni also left home, giving the responsibility to his son, Kapiladeva. This narration will describe these events one after another.

TEXTS 26-27

आमन्त्र्य तं मुनिवरमनुज्ञातः सदानुगः ।
प्रतस्थे रथमारुह्य समार्यः खपुर् नृपः ॥२६॥
उमयोर्धृषिकुल्यायाः सरस्वत्याः सुरोधसोः ।
ऋषीणां पुत्रान्तानां पश्यन्नाश्रमसम्पदः ॥२७॥

āmantrya taṁ muni-varam
anujñātaḥ saḥānugah

*pratathe ratham āruhya
sabhāryaḥ sva-puram nṛpaḥ

ubhayor ṛṣi-kulyāyāḥ
sarasvatyāḥ surodhasoḥ
ṛṣinām upaśāntānām
paśyann āśrama-sampadaḥ*

āmantrya—taking permission to go; *tam*—from him (Kardama); *muni-varam*—from the best of sages; *anuñātāḥ*—being permitted to leave; *saha-anugaḥ*—along with his retinue; *pratathe*—started for; *ratham āruhya*—mounting his chariot; *sa-bhāryaḥ*—along with his wife; *sva-puram*—his own capital; *nṛpaḥ*—the Emperor; *ubhayor*—on both; *ṛṣi-kulyāyāḥ*—agreeable to the sages; *sarasvatyāḥ*—of the River Sarasvatī; *su-rodhasoḥ*—the charming banks; *ṛṣinām*—of the great sages; *upaśāntānām*—tranquil; *paśyan*—seeing; *āśrama-sampadaḥ*—the prosperity of the beautiful hermitages.

TRANSLATION

After asking and obtaining the great sage's permission to leave, the monarch mounted his chariot with his wife and started for his capital, followed by his retinue. Along the way he saw the prosperity of the tranquil seers' beautiful hermitages on both the charming banks of the Sarasvatī, the river so agreeable to saintly persons.

PURPORT

As cities are constructed in the modern age with great engineering and architectural craftsmanship, so in days gone by there were neighborhoods called *ṛṣi-kulas*, where great saintly persons resided. In India there are still many magnificent places for spiritual understanding; there are many *ṛṣis* and saintly persons living in nice cottages on the banks of the Ganges and Yamunā for purposes of spiritual cultivation. While passing through the *ṛṣi-kulas* the King and his party were very much satisfied with the beauty of the cottages and hermitages. It is stated here, *paśyann āśrama-sampadaḥ*. The great sages had no skyscrapers, but the hermitages were so beautiful that the King was very much pleased at the sight.

TEXT 28

तमायान्तमभिप्रेत्य ब्रह्मवर्तारजः पतिम् ।
गीतस्तुतिवादित्रैः प्रत्युदीयुः प्रहर्षिताः ॥२८॥

*tam āyāntam abhipretya
brahmāvartāt prajāḥ patim
gīta-saṁstuti-vāditraiḥ
pratyudīyuh praharṣitāḥ*

tam—him; *āyāntam*—who was arriving; *abhipretya*—knowing of; *brahmāvartāt*—from Brahmāvarta; *prajāḥ*—his subjects; *patim*—their lord; *gīta-saṁstuti-vāditraiḥ*—with songs, praise and instrumental music; *pratyudīyuh*—came forward to greet; *praharṣitāḥ*—overjoyed.

TRANSLATION

Overjoyed to know of his arrival, his subjects came forth from Brahmāvarta to greet their returning lord with songs, prayers and musical instruments.

PURPORT

It is the custom of the citizens of a kingdom's capital to receive the king when he returns from a tour. There is a similar description when Kṛṣṇa returned to Dvārakā after the Battle of Kurukṣetra. At that time He was received by all classes of citizens at the gate of the city. Formerly, capital cities were surrounded by walls, and there were different gates for regular entrance. Even in Delhi today there are old gates, and some other old cities have such gates where citizens would gather to receive the king. Here also the citizens of Barhiṣmati, the capital of Brahmāvarta, the kingdom of Svāyambhuva, came nicely dressed to receive the Emperor with decorations and musical instruments.

TEXTS 29-30

बर्हिष्मती नाम पुरी सर्वसम्पत्समन्विता ।
न्यपतन् यत्र रोमाणि यज्ञस्याङ्गं विधुन्वतः ॥२९॥
कुशाः काशास्त एवासन् सश्वद्वरितवर्चसः ।
ऋषयो यैः पराभाव्य यज्ञघ्नान् यज्ञमीजिरे ॥३०॥

*barhiṣmati nāma purī
sarva-sampat-samanvitā
nyapatan yatra romāṇi
yajñasyāṅgaṁ vidhunvataḥ

kuśāḥ kāsāḥ ta evāsan
śaśvad-dharita-varcasah
ṛṣayo yaiḥ parābhāvya
yajña-ghnān yajñam ijire*

barhiṣmati—Barhiṣmati; *nāma*—named; *purī*—city; *sarva-sampat*—all kinds of wealth; *samanvitā*—full of; *nyapatan*—fell down; *yatra*—where; *romāṇi*—the hairs; *yajñasya*—of Lord Boar; *āṅgaṁ*—His body; *vidhunvataḥ*—shaking; *kuśāḥ*—kuśa grass; *kāsāḥ*—kāśa grass; *te*—they; *eva*—certainly; *āsan*—became; *śaśvad-dharita*—of evergreen; *varcasah*—having the color; *ṛṣayaḥ*—the sages; *yaiḥ*—by which; *parābhāvya*—defeating; *yajña-ghnān*—the disturbers of the sacrificial performances; *yajñam*—Lord Viṣṇu; *ijire*—they worshiped.

TRANSLATION

The city of Barhiṣmati, rich in all kinds of wealth, was so called because Lord Viṣṇu's hair dropped there from His body when He manifested Himself as Lord Boar. As He shook His body, this very hair fell and turned into blades of evergreen kuśa grass and kāśa [another kind of grass used for mats], by means of which the sages worshiped Lord Viṣṇu after defeating the demons who had interfered with the performance of their sacrifices.

PURPORT

Any place directly connected with the Supreme Lord is called *pīṭha-sthāna*. Barhiṣmati, the capital of Svāyambhuva Manu, was exalted not because the city was very rich in wealth and opulence, but because the hairs of Lord Varāha fell at this very spot. These hairs of the Lord later grew as green grass, and the sages used to worship the Lord with that grass after the time when the Lord killed the demon Hiranyākṣa. *Yajña* means Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, *karma* is described as *yajñārtha*. *Yajñārtha-karma* means "work done only for the satisfaction of Viṣṇu." If something is done for sense gratification or any other purpose, it will be binding upon the worker. If one wants to be freed from the reaction of his work, he must perform everything for the satisfaction of Viṣṇu, or Yajña. In the capital of Svāyambhuva Manu, Barhiṣmati, these particular functions were being performed by the great sages and saintly persons.

TEXT 31

कुशकाशमयं बहिरास्तीर्य भगवान्मनुः ।
अयजद्यज्ञपुरुषं लब्धा स्थानं यतो भुवम् ॥३१॥

*kuśa-kāśamayam barhiḥ
āstīrya bhagavān manuḥ
ayajat yajña-puruṣam
labdhā sthānam yato bhuvam*

kuśa—of kuśa grass; *kāśa*—and of kāśa grass; *mayam*—made; *barhiḥ*—a seat; *āstīrya*—having spread; *bhagavān*—the greatly fortunate; *manuḥ*—Svāyambhuva Manu; *ayajat*—worshiped; *yajña-puruṣam*—Lord Viṣṇu; *labdhā*—had achieved; *sthānam*—the abode; *yataḥ*—from whom; *bhuvam*—the earth.

TRANSLATION

Manu spread a seat of kuśa and kāśa and worshiped the Lord, the Personality of Godhead, by whose grace he had obtained the rule of the terrestrial globe.

(continued in next issue)

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Göthenburg, Sweden—Hare Krishna Center, Grimmeredsvägen 103, 42169 Västra Frölunda/ Tel. 031-290966
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 Cebu, Philippines (Hare Krishna Paradise)—231 Pagsabungan Rd., Basak, Mandaue City/ Tel. 83254

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Saved From Death

(continued from page 4)

to die. Why is death forced upon me?" This is the question of an intelligent man. People do not like to think of death, but sometimes they are forced to. Suppose there is some natural disturbance. I have experience: recently when I was in the front room, there was a little trembling of an earthquake. People were crying; especially the ladies were screaming. And as soon as there will be a big earthquake, everyone will become afraid: "Oh, now we are going to die! We have to die!" Everyone is afraid of death, but nobody thinks about how to make a solution to the problem of death.

Here in the present verse it is said that Yamarāja was called in order to save the persons present in the assembly from death. But ordinarily, only those who are sinful see Yamarāja at the time of death, after the body is finished. Yamarāja is there when we are sinful; he is not for the devotees.

In this regard there is an account in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* concerning Ajāmila. Ajāmila was a greatly sinful man, but he was fond of his youngest child, who was named Nārāyaṇa. At the time of death Ajāmila saw four very fierce and odd-looking creatures. They were the Yamadūtas, messengers of Yamarāja. Ajāmila was very much afraid: "Who are they!" And because he was very affectionate to his youngest child, he called out, "Nārāyaṇa, please come here! I am very much afraid!"

Immediately, four messengers of Nārāyaṇa came and stopped the Yamadūtas. Just see the power of chanting the name of Nārāyaṇa! Ajāmila immediately became eligible to go to Vaikuṇṭha. Apparently, he did not even mean Lord Nārāyaṇa when he chanted the name of his son. But Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, with reference to the context, comments that Ajāmila must have remembered Lord Nārāyaṇa when he called out the name of his child.

In his boyhood, Ajāmila was a very sincere devotee of Lord Nārāyaṇa, being the son of a *brāhmaṇa*. But he fell under the clutches of a prostitute. And after mixing with the prostitute, all his spiritual activities stopped. That is natural. He became a drunkard, a thief, a gambler, a meat-eater, and a debauchee. All these qualifications he acquired by the association of one prostitute. In the present age people's only business is to mix with prostitutes. Just see their position! How fallen they are! There is an open market for prostitution. This is modern civilization.

So, Ajāmila was a *brāhmaṇa*'s son, very regulated, following all the rules and regu-

lations. But as soon as he associated with a prostitute, he became fallen. Still, at the time of death this man remembered Lord Nārāyaṇa. According to Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, if he had simply called the name of his son, that wouldn't have been sufficient. He actually remembered Lord Nārāyaṇa. But according to *śāstra* [scripture], even if one chants the holy name of the Lord neglectfully, one gets the chance of being liberated. That's a fact.

The *śāstra* tells how once a Mohammedan was attacked by a wild boar. While the boar was killing the Mohammedan with its tusk, the man uttered, "Hārāma! Hārāma!" *Hārāma* is an Urdu word that means "condemned" or "abominable." The Mohammedans do not eat the flesh of pigs, just as the Hindus do not eat the flesh of cows. To the Mohammedans, pigs are *hārāma*, condemned. So when the man cried out "Hārāma!" he meant "This boar

There are hundreds and thousands of names of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and if you chant any of them you will get the result. That is the instruction of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

is condemned!" Still he got the result of chanting *hā rāma, hā rāma*, "O my Lord Rāmacandra!"

There are hundreds and thousands of names of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and if you chant any of them you will get the result. That is the instruction of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu: *nām-nām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śakti tatārpiṭā niyamitah smaraṇe na kālah*. The Supreme Personality of Godhead and His name are identical. That is Kṛṣṇa's absolute nature. Kṛṣṇa and His form are also nondifferent. Kṛṣṇa's form on the altar can give you the same result as you would get if He were personally present. That is Kṛṣṇa's absolute nature. So in the name of Kṛṣṇa there is complete potency, just as there is in Kṛṣṇa personally. Therefore it is so important to chant His name.

In this age, we are so fallen that it is not

possible to associate with Kṛṣṇa as He is. But if we associate with Kṛṣṇa's name, then that is also association with Kṛṣṇa. This is the advantage of chanting His name. And as you associate with Kṛṣṇa in His sound form, you become purified: *śṛṇvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ/hṛdy antaḥ stho hy abhadrāṇi vidhunoti suhṛt-satām*. This is the advantage of chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa.

Therefore everyone's duty is to solve this birth-and-death problem by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. That is the primary duty of human life. And this should be taught from the very beginning of life. Just see these pious children who are dancing here, taking part in this meeting. This path of Kṛṣṇa-realization is so nice that even a child can take part in it. These young children have no education, they have no knowledge, but the method is so nice that they can also take part. They can enjoy dancing and chanting with their fathers and mothers. There are many *yoga* systems, but this *bhakti-yoga* system is so perfect that both the grandfather of the child and the child himself can take part in it. The children are dancing here, and sometimes they are chanting, and all these things are going to their spiritual credit.

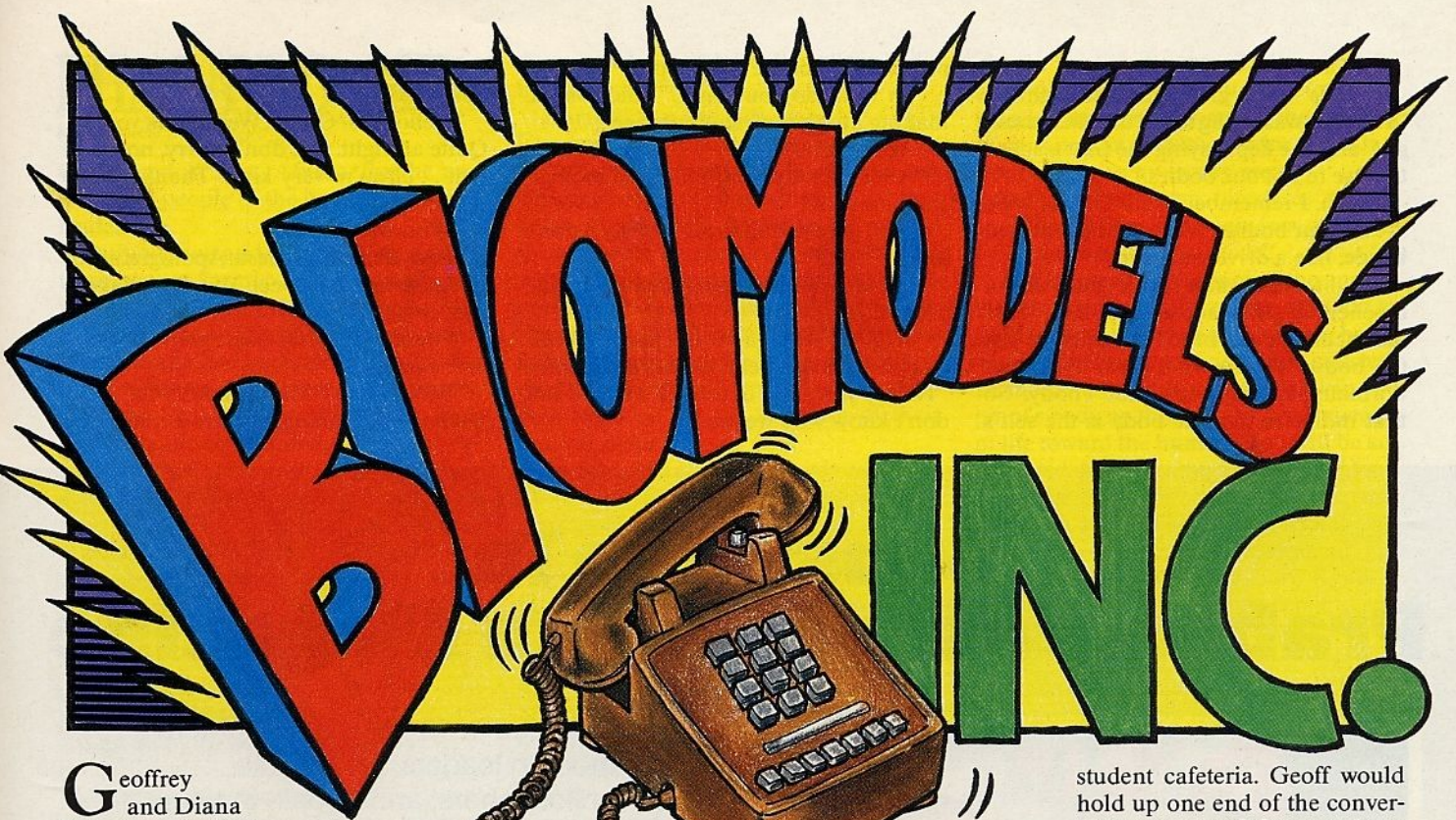
The Deity worship has been introduced for the general public. Anyone can come and see the Deity, chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, dance a little, play the *karatālas*—some way or other, if somebody engages in Kṛṣṇa's service, that will be credited to his account. Kṛṣṇa will consider, "Yes, this living entity has advanced so much." Therefore, in the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says, *svalpam apy asya dharmasya trāyate mahato-bhayāt*: "Even if you do very little of this process of *bhakti-yoga*, it can save you from the greatest danger in life."

The perfect example is Ajāmila. In the beginning of his life Ajāmila executed some service to the Lord under the instructions of his father. That was to his credit. So when he became a first-class sinful man and was dying, somehow or other he chanted the name of Nārāyaṇa and was saved. As soon as he uttered the name Nārāyaṇa, he became eligible to be transported to Vaikuṇṭha. Immediately Nārāyaṇa sent his men, the Viṣṇudūtas, saying "Go and save this man. He is being harassed by the Yamadūtas." The Yamadūtas were taking Ajāmila away, but the messengers from Vaikuṇṭha said, "No, you cannot take this man."

The Yamadūtas were surprised: "Oh, who are these beautiful persons?" The Yamadūtas were very odd-looking, and they had never seen such fine-looking men. The Viṣṇudūtas had four arms and looked very nice. In Vaikuṇṭha the people look exactly like Nārāyaṇa. We find a perverted reflection in this world: just as the

(continued on page 33)

BIOMODELS INC.



Geoffrey and Diana Eckert checked into a Holiday Inn near the Orlando airport one Friday afternoon. They were in town to choose a site for a Florida branch of Biomodels, Inc., the agribusiness research firm they founded in 1974. Beginning Saturday morning, and for the next several days, they traversed Orange and Lake counties in a rented BMW, meeting realtors and inspecting possible locations.

It was Tuesday evening, after returning dog-tired to their hotel room, while watching the six o'clock news, that they received a call from the front desk.

"Mr. Eckert?" came a sharp voice.

"Speaking."

"I'm . . . uh . . . sorry, but our records show you checked out this morning."

"Checked out? I didn't check out."

"Well, I guess there's been some mistake. Next time you come downstairs, would you please sign in again?"

"All right, sure." Geoff hung up and turned to Diana.

"That's weird," he snorted. "The records say we checked out, and she *guesses* it's a mistake. I have to check in again. Makes me feel like I don't exist."

"Maybe you *don't*," said Diana playfully, looking up from the TV with a

by MATHUREŚA DĀSA

**TUESDAY, TEN AFTER SIX PM:
A CALL FROM THE FRONT DESK**

**SORRY, BUT OUR RECORDS
SHOW YOU CHECKED OUT THIS
MORNING.**



mysterious grin.

"Ha!" Geoff's face lit up with a grin. "Remember that? In the student lounge after dinner?"

Geoff and Diana had attended the University of Chicago together, he majoring in biology, she in English. There had been a period during their junior year when they had developed, along with some mutual friends, a half-serious we-don't-really-exist doctrine after dinner at the

student cafeteria. Geoff would hold up one end of the conversation by describing people as short-lived biological machines, and Diana would contribute a mixture of theories from one of her philosophy courses.

"Remember?" said Geoff.

"We'd try to look at everyone as biological automata. Spooky."

"Fun game for a while," said Diana, "but it didn't last long. Too bleak."

They stopped talking to watch a news clip on Japan's rice farmers. When the clip was over, Diana switched off the set.

"Let's go to dinner," she announced in a loud voice and with a wave of her arm.

"Good idea," said Geoff, reaching for his jacket. "You know, I'm not sure we think so differently now."

"About what?"

"About being biological automata."

"We don't think much now, period," said Diana flippantly, adjusting an earring. "No time."

"Tch, tch," Geoff scolded, shaking a finger. "We're getting old and stodgy."

Looking in the mirror, Diana decided she needed lipstick, so Geoff sat down on the edge of the bed to wait.

"Remember that girl we met in the L.A. airport on our way to Hawaii that one year?" he said.

"You mean the one with the red and white shawl, selling books?"

"Yeah, the Hare Kṛṣṇa."

"What about her?"

Geoff's voice grew more thoughtful. "Well, she was trying to sell us a *Bhagavad-gītā*, and she kept saying the *Gītā* teaches that we're not our bodies."

"Yeah, I remember," said Diana. "We are not our bodies. We're the eternal soul inside, like a driver in a car."

"Right. And when she heard I was a biochemist, she made a big point of how the chemicals and blood and guts are just the bodily vehicle. She said, 'Everyone normally says "mybody," not "Ibody." So that indicates that the body is the self's

possession, not the self proper.'"

"So what do you think?" said Diana, making another mysterious face.

"About what?"

"About 'I body'/'my body' and biological automata."

Geoff gave a long shrug. "Golly, I don't know."

"We must be having an identity crisis," said Diana.

"Right! How awful," said Geoff, slapping his forehead melodramatically. "Twenty years out of school, and we still don't know who we are."

The phone rang. This time Diana answered.

"Hello? Yes? Oh . . . Well, thank you . . . Quite all right. Oh, don't worry, no problem . . . You're very kind. Thank you so much. B'bye."

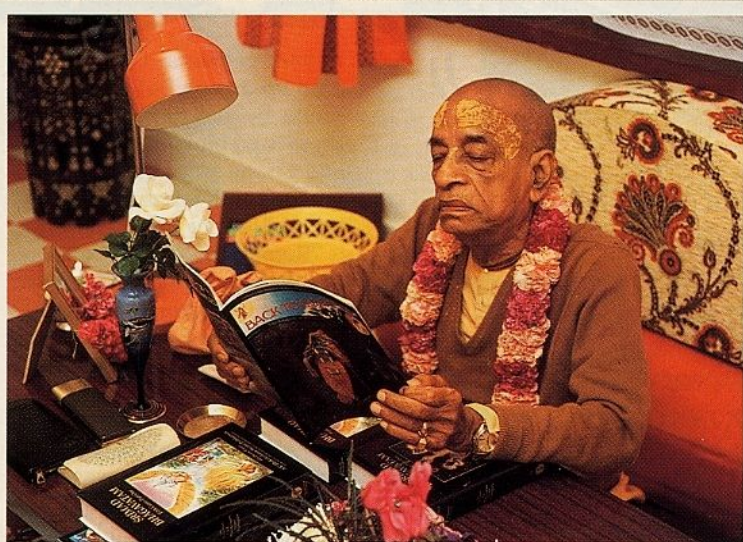
"Who was that?"

"Lady at the front desk. Apologizing for the mistake. Very sweet. You don't have to sign in again."

"Great! I feel like I exist again . . . Whoever I am."

"Well, I don't know about you," said Diana, "but I'm hungry. On to dinner!" ❧

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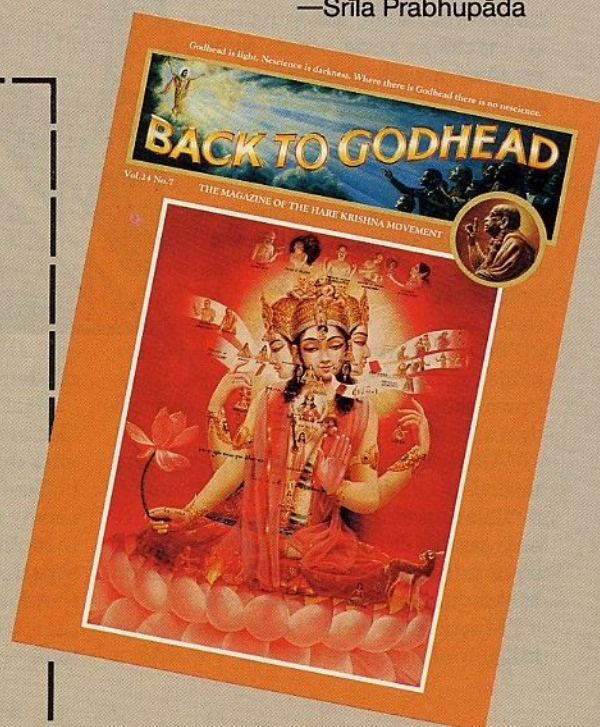
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BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ

(continued from page 22)

Convinced at last, Arjuna fought and saved the people of the world from blind leadership.

Duryodhana and company were saved from severe karmic reactions and prevented from committing further sinful deeds. Everyone associating closely with Duryodhana had been influenced by his lust for power, his greed, anger, vanity, and envy. Thus, like Duryodhana's, their own mentalities were also polluted. By destroying their bodies in battle, Arjuna acted like a doctor removing a limb to save the patient. His treatment was so effective that the soldiers killed in Kṛṣṇa's presence were liberated from all reactions to their sins. By removing such politically motivated aggressors, Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa created a favorable social condition for the progressive march of civilization toward spiritual perfection.

The quest for such perfection is everyone's highest duty. Śrīla Prabhupāda once defined violence as "impeding a person in the performance of duty." Duties possess different degrees of importance. Consequently the severity of a man's violent offenses will also vary. Duryodhana, already an aggressor, made the fatal mistake of standing in the way of the spiritual right and duty of the citizens to practice self-realization under the protection of the self-realized king Yudhiṣṭhira, who, apart from being the rightful heir to the

throne, had minutely studied all the Vedic truths.

Duryodhana did not care that God's laws exist in this world to facilitate everyone's spiritual progress. Souls who occupy the bodies of beasts, birds, and other creatures gradually evolve to the human form, where they should be offered all facility for continuing their spiritual development. If a leader is unqualified to help liberate a soul but instead acts to bind his followers further to the cycle of birth and death, he should be corrected and if necessary removed for his violation of their natural rights.

As there are clear standards today for examining the proficiency of such public services as medicine and catering, in the Vedic literature clear standards exist for every facet of individual and social behavior, both spiritual and material.

Take eating, for instance. We learn from the *Gītā* and other Vedic literature that in this material world one living being is food for another. When an animal kills, it does not interfere with its victim's spiritual evolution through different species, because all its activities are within the parameters of God's laws.

When a soul is awarded a human body, however, he can make a conscious choice whether to cooperate with these laws or reject them. If he whimsically kills another creature, the soul in that creature is prevented from living out his term of imprisonment in that body and must take birth again in the same species before moving on to the next. If he kills a cow, for exam-

ple, the soul in the cow will have to take birth again in a cow's body before progressing to the next stage, the human form. A person with knowledge of this law decides to give up eating meat.

Eating plants also interferes with a soul's evolution, although less dramatically. So what should we do?

The *Bhagavad-gītā* supplies the answer by explaining that if we offer our food to the Lord, neither we nor the living being within the plant will be adversely affected. In fact, the evolution of the soul in the plant's body up through the lower species of life toward the human form will be accelerated. And by eating such offered food (*prasādam*), we will be purified of karmic reactions, and our inherent spiritual consciousness will gradually awaken. Far from advocating violence, Lord Kṛṣṇa is concerned that the smallest detail of our lives be pervaded with sensitivity.

Kṛṣṇa's purpose is to free us from all ignorance and confusion. The world today is so dominated by violence, often even under the guise of spiritual life, that to save us the Lord comprehensively presents the highest principle of nonviolence, culminating in one clear course of action: "Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear" (Bg. 18.66). By acting according to Kṛṣṇa's direction, we will always be situated correctly. We should not think, "Here is yet another opinion." When we fully accept Kṛṣṇa as God, we will discover His advice to be perfect for everyone. ❧

FARCE OF FATE

(continued from page 19)

the spiritual spark, or soul, within the body, and has no inherent connection with the body or its designations. The soul is eternally a servant of God, Kṛṣṇa. From the *Bhagavad-gītā* we learn that the body is a temporary covering of the soul. We are not Arab or Israeli, communist or capitalist; we are God's eternal servants who are foolishly playing different roles in different dresses in this material world.

In the north of Israel live the Druze, a religious sect that accepts the concept of transmigration of the soul, or reincarnation. As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, "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." Many Druze claim to remember their previous lives. One of them might say, "Yes, my father died a few years back; now he's a four-year-old boy in Yanook [a nearby village]." Some Druze even claim to remember that their previous death occurred while fighting against the Israeli army in a country such as Syria. If this is true, just imagine the irony! A man who previously fought against the Israelis now proudly wears the uniform of the Israeli military forces.

According to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, "Whatever state of being one remembers when

he quits his body, that state he will attain without fail." Thus, the rock-throwing Palestinian youth who is stopped by a bullet might take birth in suburban Tel Aviv, as his concentration at the time of death was on an Israeli soldier. And at the age of eighteen, his army commander will instruct him to guard his zone against "those vicious Palestinian boys."

The situation is obviously farcical, but because we take these bodily designations so seriously, the results are tragic. We are pleading with the citizens of this part of the world to understand the nonsectarian, transcendental philosophy Lord Kṛṣṇa speaks in the *Bhagavad-gītā* as the way to bring peace to the Middle East. ❧

Saved From Death

(continued from page 30)

president has two arms, we also have two arms. In Vaikuṇṭha the "president" is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And since He has four arms, the inhabitants there all have four arms and other bodily

features similar to His.

So, the Yamadūtas were surprised. They said, "You look so gentle, so nice. Why are you stopping us from performing our duty? This man is sinful. It is our duty to take him to Yamarāja, Mṛtyu." There was an argument, and the Yamadūtas' attempt was foiled by the Viṣṇudūtas.

When the Yamadūtas returned to their

master, Yamarāja, they were disappointed. They said, "This is the first time that somebody has taken from our hands a person who was meant to be brought here. Is there some personality greater than you?"

Yamarāja explained, "Yes, I am a servant of Nārāyaṇa." Then Yamarāja advised them, "Never go to a devotee. It is not your jurisdiction." Just as the duty of the

police is to arrest criminals, not gentlemen, so the duty of Yamarāja's servants is to take only sinful men to his jurisdiction, not devotees. Those who are devotees are naturally sinless. That is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [7.28]: *yeṣāṁ tv anta-gaṭaṁ pāpaṁ janānāṁ puṇya-karmanām/ te dvandva-moha-nirmuktā bhajante mām dṛḍha-vrtāḥ*. "Without becoming sinless, one cannot completely devote himself to Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

In other words, a person can be com-

pletely engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness only if he is sinless. Of course, even if there is a little tinge of sin, if one becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious it is gradually eliminated. But one should be very alert to avoid sinful activities. It is not that one should think, "Because I am Kṛṣṇa conscious, there is no chance that I will sin. After all, by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra I am getting out of the jurisdiction of sinful activities." One should never think like this. We should be very alert to avoid sin,

because Māyā [illusion] is very strong. As soon as she gets the opportunity, she immediately captures us.

Therefore one should try strenuously to avoid sinful activities if one actually wants relief from the cycle of birth and death. One must seriously execute Kṛṣṇa consciousness by following the rules and regulations and chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. If one follows this simple process, one will be saved from Mr̥tyu, Yamarāja.

Thank you very much. ❧

VAIṢṆAVA WOMEN

(continued from page 12)

but that our mental and intellectual *forte* may vary from body to body. Just the *forte*. Just our point of emphasis. *This* can be and is heavily influenced by the kind of body we have.

I'm not merely giving you some dogmatic rhetoric. These ideas have been substantiated by some of the leading physicists and psychoanalysts in the world. For example, Dr. Georgene Seward, professor emeritus at Columbia University, has written two fascinating books on this subject: *Sex and the Social Order*

and *Psychotherapy and Culture Conflict*. Have you seen these books?

Q: No.

S: I suggest you research your subject before you discuss it. These books were the landmark scientific publications that proved once and for all that "cerebral asymmetry" definitely exists between men and women. Dr. Seward, by the way, is a woman. So I don't think you can call this "an old men's tale." [Laughter.]

You see, in our search for perfect egalitarianism, we are terribly afraid to admit that there are differences between sexes, or races, or nationalities, or living beings of any group at all. Somehow the possibility that physical or psychological dif-

ferences of any sort exist strikes fear that this will be equated with superiority or inferiority of certain groups. But the denial that differences exist, whether biological or otherwise, only leads to absurdities. Indeed, it is the denial of our own humanity. We cannot respect differences among people unless we first admit them. This is not sexism or racism—it is merely common sense. ❧

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Prema-vilāsa, Nityānanda dāsa.

Punk to Monk

(continued from page 15)

religion, the same teaching I had learned in my childhood: "God made us to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world and to be happy with Him in the next."

I thought how I'd served my family, West Ham, women, Socialism, Irish Republicanism, punk, and so on. And I'd been selfishly serving myself. I felt that what Śrīla Prabhupāda was saying was

right: Why not serve the greatest master, God? I decided to commit myself to the practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Having resolved to give up material life, I prayed, "Dear Lord, please forgive me for my past mistakes. I now want to serve You. Please guide me. You may have other servants elsewhere, but I can see that these devotees are serving You here. Please let me join them."

Practicing *bhakti-yoga*, I have gained realizations of the reality of spiritual life, and I have come to learn more about Śrīla Prabhupāda, who formed this interna-

tional society of devotees. Reading his teachings and life story, I am convinced that he is a great saint. Śrīla Prabhupāda spent his whole life as a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. He knows God and he loves Him. I want to learn from him.

I never met Śrīla Prabhupāda, but I have greatly benefited from his plan to spread the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, from his *prasādam* distribution, from his teachings, and particularly from his *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, which convinced me to try to become a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. I am eternally indebted to him. ❧

GUIDANCE

(continued from page 18)

necessity of accepting knowledge from the proper authority. Although He is the original spiritual preceptor, He still supports His statements to Arjuna by informing him that "the supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession."

The principle of accepting a spiritual master is essential, and in Vedic history we find no one becoming enlightened without the mercy of a preceptor. Even the Supreme Lord accepts a *guru* when He appears, just to teach how to accept knowl-

edge from the right source. Thus Lord Rāmacandra, Lord Ṛṣabhadeva, Lord Kṛṣṇa, and Lord Caitanya all accepted *gurus*.

When Bimala Prasada expressed his feeling that he could not live without the blessings of the great saint Gaurakiśora dāsa Bābājī, he demonstrated the importance of accepting a bona fide spiritual master for enlightenment. Human life is specifically meant for self-realization, without which life has no profit.

Not only did Bimala Prasada, later known as Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, apparently achieve perfection by the mercy of Gaurakiśora, but by carrying the message of his *guru* perfectly, he became

the thirty-first preceptor of the Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya-sampradāya.

Furthermore, on his direct order, his disciple Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda carried the message of the disciplic succession throughout the world. We are all indebted to the young Bimala Prasada, for because of his resolve to attain the mercy of a bona fide *guru*, the most important instruction of the *Bhagavad-gītā* was made available to people of all countries: "Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth."

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

The Function of the Soul

This exchange between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples took place in Seattle, Washington, on October 10, 1968.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: How is the body growing? On account of the presence of that small particle, the soul. Take, for example, this boy. This boy has got a small stature of body. Now, this boy will grow a very stout and strong body in his young manhood, say by the age of twenty-four years. Then that young-man body will go; another body will come.

How is it all becoming possible? On account of the presence of the small particle, the soul. But if that particle of soul is taken away or if it goes away, this body will no longer grow or change.

These are the subject matters of meditation. But when you come to the point of understanding that “I am not this body—I am spirit soul,” then the next stage will be “What is the function of the soul?”

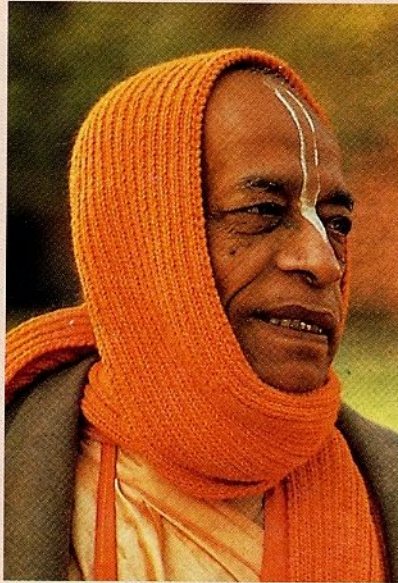
That function of the soul is Kṛṣṇa consciousness, working in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So in the present age, one has to take directly to the function of the soul. Then other understandings will automatically come.

It is not possible at present that you can go to a secluded place and peacefully sit there and meditate. It is not possible in this age. It is impossible. If you try artificially, it will be a failure.

Therefore, you have to take to this process: *harer nāma harer nāma harer nāma eva kevalam/ kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā*—“In this age of Kali, there is no alternative for self-realization but this chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, chanting of the Lord’s holy name.” That is the practical, real fact.

Disciple: Śrīla Prabhupāda, is there any way for a Christian in this age—without the help of a spiritual master—to reach the spiritual sky through reading the words of Jesus Christ in the Bible and trying to follow his teachings?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: When you read the Bible, you are following the spiritual master. How can you say “without a spiritual master”? As soon as you read the Bible, that means you are following the instruction of Lord Jesus Christ.



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That means you are following the spiritual master. So where is the opportunity of being without the spiritual master?

Disciple: I was referring to a living spiritual master.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: There is no question of whether the spiritual master is “living.” The spiritual master is eternal.

Now, your question was what to do “without the spiritual master.” Without the spiritual master you cannot be, at any stage of your life. You may accept this spiritual master or that spiritual master. That is a different thing. But you have to accept.

When you say “reading the Bible,” that means you are following the spiritual master, represented by some priest or some clergyman in the line of Lord Jesus Christ.

So in any case, you have to follow the spiritual master. There cannot be the question of “without the spiritual master.” Is that clear?

Disciple: I mean, for instance, we couldn’t understand the teachings of *Bhagavad-gītā* without your help, Śrīla Prabhupāda, without your presentation.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Similarly, you have to understand the Bible with the help of Christ and the priest in the church.

Disciple: Yes, but is the priest receiving a good interpretation from his disciplic succession or his bishop? Because there seems to be some kind of discrepancy in the interpretation of the

Bible. There are many different sects of Christianity that interpret the Bible in different ways.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Of course, there cannot be any interpretation of the Bible. Then the Bible itself has no authority. It is just like the old saying, “Call a spade a spade.” Now, if someone calls it something else, that is another thing. He’s not a spiritual master.

For instance, this is a watch. Everybody has called it a watch. But if I called it a spectacle, then what is the value of my being a so-called spiritual master? I’m misleading. [Laughter.] “It is a watch.” That I must say.

So when someone makes some misrepresentation, he’s not a bona fide spiritual master. Reject such a spiritual master immediately.

That intelligence you must have: Who is a pseudo spiritual master, and who is a real spiritual master? Otherwise, you’ll be cheated. And that is being done. Everyone is interpreting in his own way.

The *Bhagavad-gītā*—there are thousands of editions, and all of them have tried to interpret in their own way. All nonsense. They should all be thrown away. Simply you have to read *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is. Then you’ll understand.

There is no question of interpretation. Then the authority is gone. As soon as you interpret, there is no authority.

Take a law book. Do you mean to say that in court, if you say before the judge, “My dear lord, I interpret this passage in this way,” it will be accepted?

The judge will at once say, “Who are you to interpret? You have no right.”

After all, then what would be the authority of the law book if everyone came and said, “I interpret in this way?”

When is interpretation required? When a thing is not understood. If I say “This is a watch” and everyone understands that “This is a watch, yes,” then where is the opportunity of interpreting that “This is a spectacle?”

So unnecessary interpretation is not required, and that is not bona fide. And those who are interpreting unnecessarily—they should be rejected immediately, without any consideration.

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

The Art of Dying

According to "The Lost Art of Dying," an article in the *Sunday Telegraph* of London, people nowadays are trying to avoid the thought of death. One proof of this is that the dying are no longer cared for at home. Whereas a century ago only five percent of the British population died in a hospital, today more than seventy percent do. And the more people seek to keep death at arm's length, the more perfunctory its rituals have become. Supposedly, there is very little weeping, and seventy-five percent of those who die in England go without any church ceremony.

Surviving relatives are also getting less sympathy these days. A medical director of a prominent London hospital says, "How do we treat the bereaved? By crossing the road and walking down the other side of the street." The reason people cross the road, he says, is that they don't know what to say. "There is no longer any language of religious consolation in our society."

The cold-hearted attitude toward death provides a contrast between present-day society and the ancient Vedic society. According to Vedic histories, people often went to the other extreme and fell into great grief and bewilderment when a beloved relative died. Today people send a dying relative to the hospital so that he won't die in their home. In contrast, formerly husbands and wives would sometimes stay with a dead person and have to be torn away so that the funeral could take place:

The time was appropriate for the body to be burned, but the queens, not allowing it to be taken away, continued lamenting for the dead body, which they kept on their laps.

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.2.35

It was to such bereaved relatives that great sages like Nārada used to appear, consoling them with transcendental knowledge. The sages would speak about the inevitability of death, about the unalterable temporality of our bodies, and most important, about the eternal nature of the soul. While the real purpose of the sages' teachings was to give spiritual enlightenment, their humane purpose was to give

solace to the bereaved.

But if nowadays people aren't made thoughtful by death, that makes it much more difficult to impart eternal knowledge. At least many are pretending not to be affected, as they show a "business as usual" face to the world.

Of course, sensitive people continue to take a humane and philosophical attitude toward death. The *Telegraph* quotes John Baker, Bishop of Salisbury, who is saddened that as a society we try to hide death: "We should think about death far more, because it sharpens one's priorities as very few other stimuli can. It makes you say, 'What are the really important things I should be doing with my life, not just selfishly but also for other people?' What we are doing by pushing the thought of death away is robbing ourselves of the power to make our lives what they are meant to be."

Vedic teaching probes deeply into the meaning of death—and beyond. When Lord Kṛṣṇa found His friend Arjuna aggrieved over the future deaths of his relatives, Kṛṣṇa gave a two-hour course in dying, death, and life after death.

Lord Kṛṣṇa began, "Those who are wise lament neither for the living nor for the dead." He then taught Arjuna that there was never a time "when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings; nor in the future shall any of us cease to be."

According to the knowledge of transmigration of the soul, as given by enlightened sages in Vedic scriptures, we can understand that the real self, the real person, is different from the perishable body. The body dies, but the soul goes on to take another body according to its deeds (or *karma*) in this life. Because the soul is eternal, we should not overly lament the death of our friends, or our own death.

The modern attempt to put death out of sight and out of mind is not only inhuman, but impossible. Fear and grief will overtake us all, despite our attempt to distance ourselves from them. Therefore, just as the excessively grieving relatives in the old days needed counsel, so do we need it today.

The immortality of the self, as taught

in literatures like *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, is not a religious sentiment, but is analyzed in a scientific way, with logic and evidence. The first lesson—to understand that the self in our body is different from the physical body—is not an esoteric idea; it is common experience. If we happen to be in the presence of some old-fashioned bereaving relatives at a funeral, we might hear them cry, "Oh, he's gone!" and yet the body of the deceased person is lying right there in the coffin, perfectly whole.

So why the lamentation? The bereaved relatives will say, "This is only the body—the real person is gone!" By this admission, which everyone observes to be true, we are actually admitting that the real person is different from the body. We are also admitting that we never really knew the real person during his lifetime but always mistook him for his physical body.

During a lifetime the body changes but the real self remains the same. Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa reasons by analogy that the same process continues after life: "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" (*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.13).

The Vedic literature teaches the science of eternality in many stages. The individual soul and its relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, how to live in this life to ensure a better next life, how to act at the very moment of death, the ultimate perfection of life after death—all these are discussed reasonably and from the vantage of perfect, transcendental knowledge.

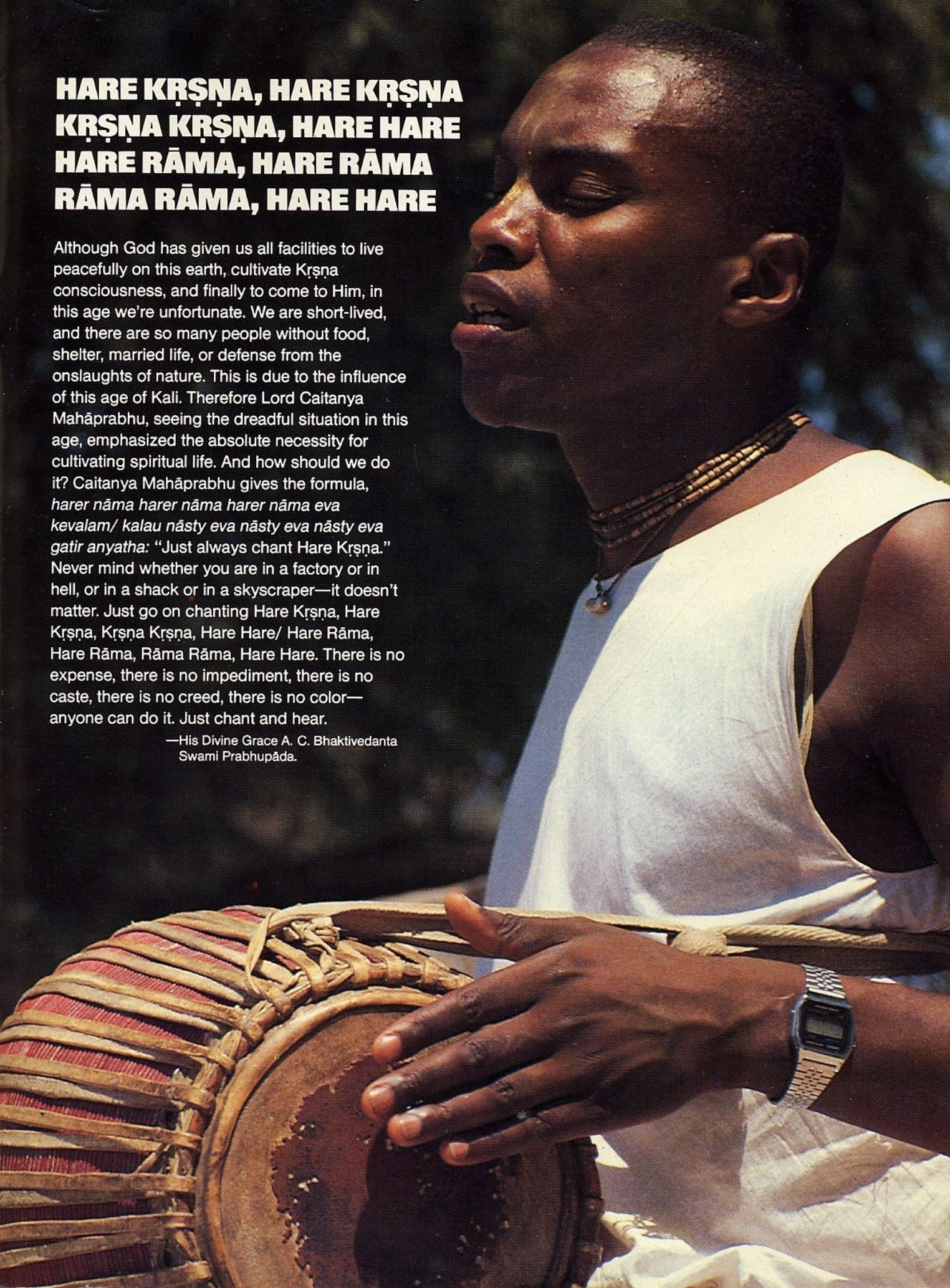
It may be that we have lost the art of dying nowadays, and that people pretend they don't care about it. But in any case, whether we turn away from death or weep too much because of it, our death is sure.

Faced with this powerful reality, a civilized human being should become as informed as possible about it. In the opening chapters of *Bhagavad-gītā*, you can find out everything you will ever need to know.—SDG

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

Although God has given us all facilities to live peacefully on this earth, cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and finally to come to Him, in this age we're unfortunate. We are short-lived, and there are so many people without food, shelter, married life, or defense from the onslaughts of nature. This is due to the influence of this age of Kali. Therefore Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, seeing the dreadful situation in this age, emphasized the absolute necessity for cultivating spiritual life. And how should we do it? Caitanya Mahāprabhu gives the formula, *harer nāma harer nāma harer nāma eva kevalam/ kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyatha*: "Just always chant Hare Kṛṣṇa." Never mind whether you are in a factory or in hell, or in a shack or in a skyscraper—it doesn't matter. Just go on chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. There is no expense, there is no impediment, there is no caste, there is no creed, there is no color—anyone can do it. Just chant and hear.

—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupāda.



Soul Food.

At the Sunday Feast, you'll enjoy a delicious meal that's nourishing to the body *and* the soul. Every Sunday at hundreds of Hare Kṛṣṇa centers all over the world, devotees prepare an opulent vegetarian feast for the pleasure of the Supreme Lord. Fresh grains, fruits, vegetables, and choice spices are cooked with devotion and offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa—and then to you. Because this *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*, or mercy of the Lord, is spiritual, it's sure to uplift your spirit. Come to the Sunday Feast—for a taste of real food for the soul. See address list inside for the center nearest you.

