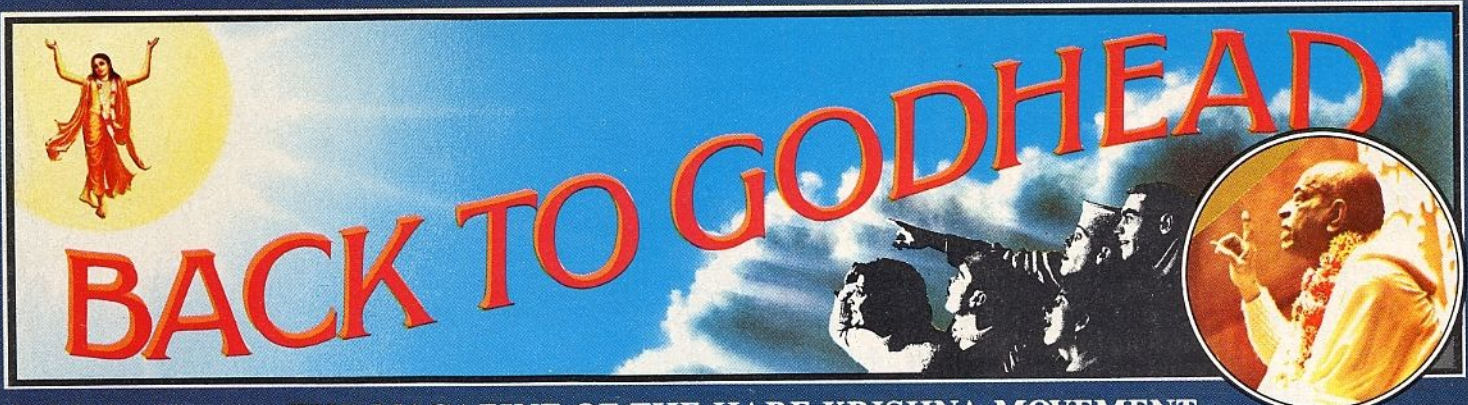
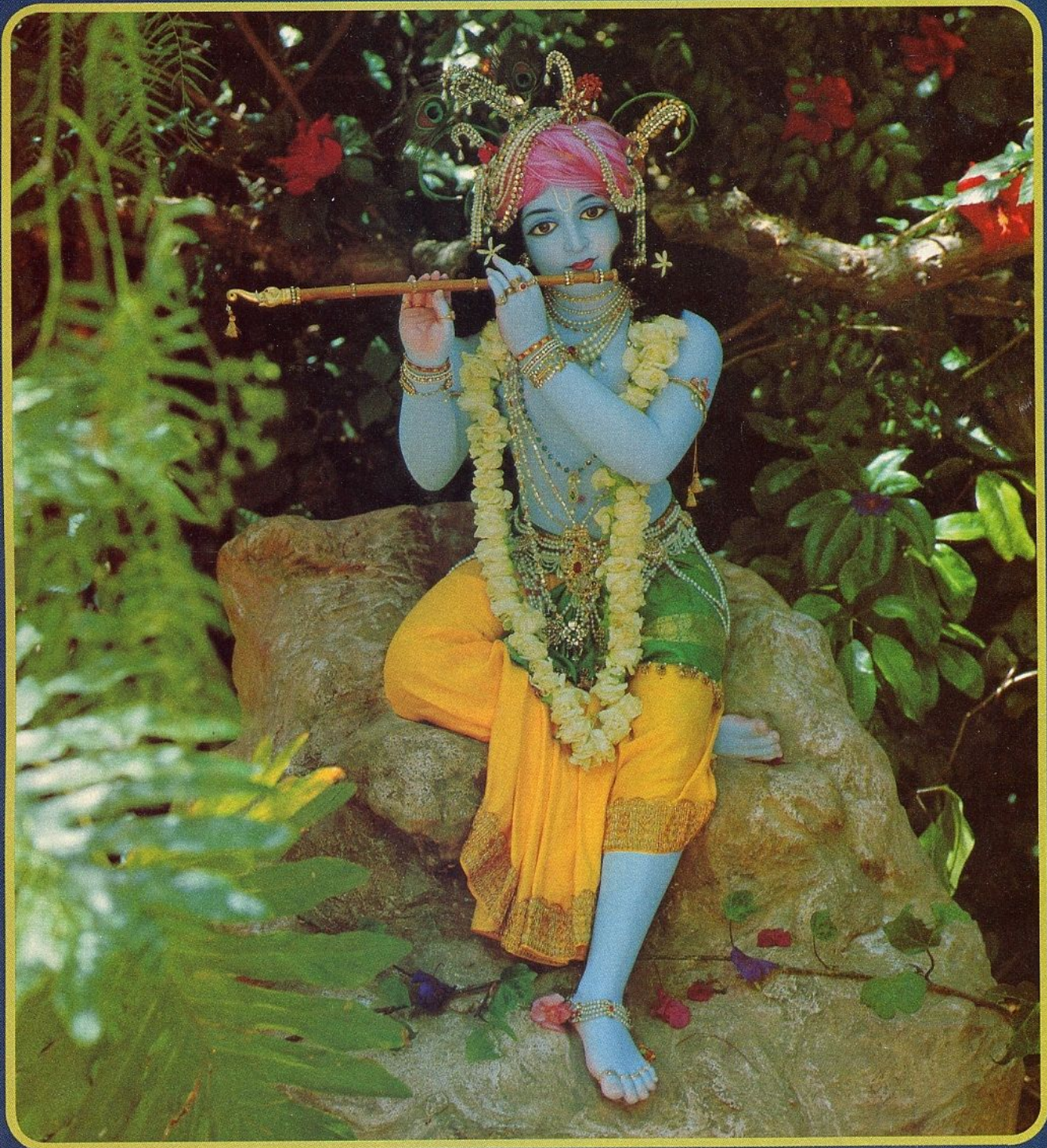


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



Vol.11 No.10

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



A short statement of the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) is a worldwide community of devotees practicing bhakti-yoga, the eternal science of loving service to God. The Society was founded in 1966 by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, a pure devotee of God representing an unbroken chain of spiritual masters originating with Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. The following eight principles are the basis of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

We invite all our readers to consider them with an open mind and then visit one of the ISKCON centers to see how they are being applied in everyday life.

1. By sincerely cultivating a bona fide spiritual science, we can be free from anxiety and come to a state of pure, unending, blissful consciousness in this lifetime.
2. We are not our bodies but eternal spirit souls, parts and parcels of God (Kṛṣṇa). As such, we are all brothers, and Kṛṣṇa is ultimately our common father.
3. Kṛṣṇa is the eternal, all-knowing, omnipresent, all-powerful, and all-attractive Personality of Godhead. He is the seed-giving father of all living beings, and He is the sustaining energy of the entire cosmic creation.
4. The Absolute Truth is contained in all the great scriptures of the world. However, the oldest known revealed scriptures in existence are the Vedic literatures, most notably the *Bhagavad-gītā*, which is the literal record of God's actual words.
5. We should learn the Vedic knowledge from a genuine spiritual master—one who has no selfish motives and whose mind is firmly fixed on Kṛṣṇa.
6. Before we eat, we should offer to the Lord the food that sustains us. Then Kṛṣṇa becomes the offering and purifies us.
7. We should perform all our actions as offerings to Kṛṣṇa and do nothing for our own sense gratification.
8. The recommended means for achieving the mature stage of love of God in this age of Kali, or quarrel, is to chant the holy names of the Lord. The easiest method for most people is to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*:
Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Pictured: Devotees outside the St. Louis center of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

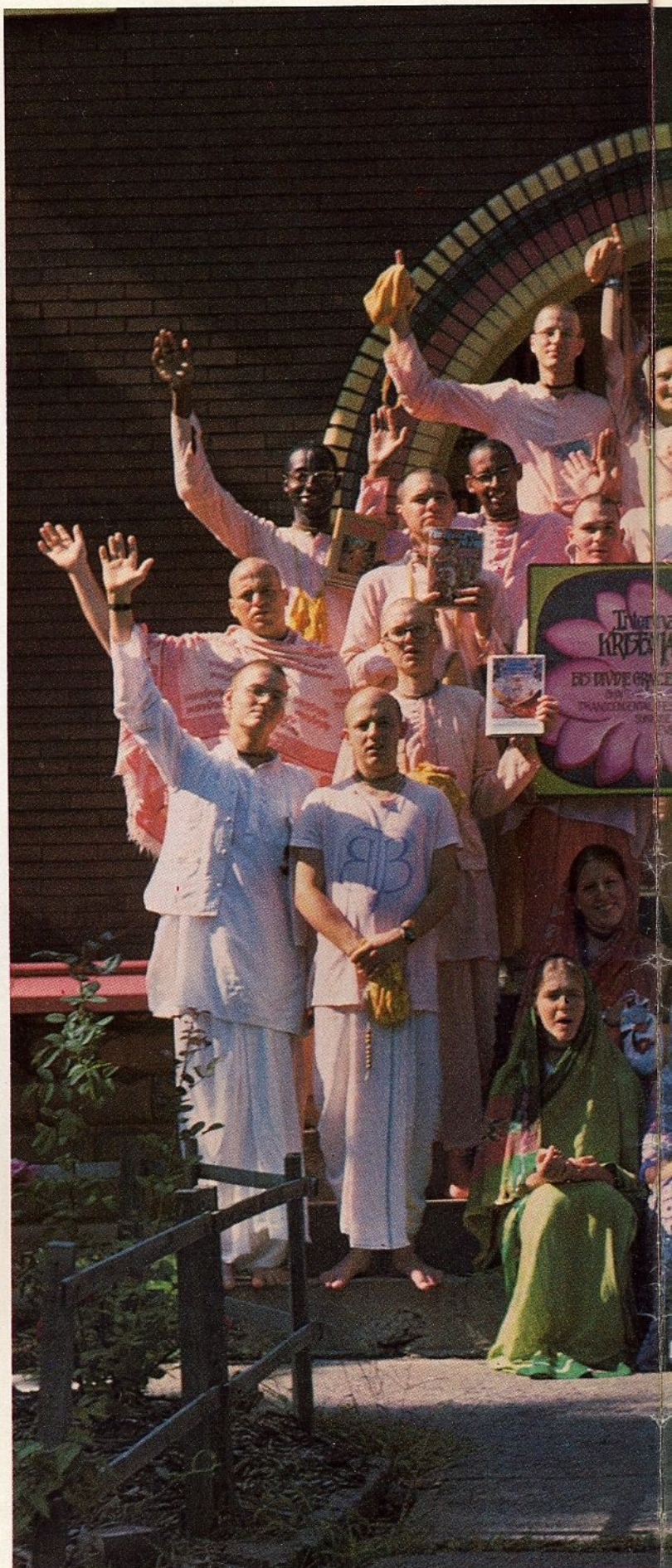


Photo: Muralivadana dāsa



Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

God has an unlimited variety of names. Some of them—Jehovah, Adonai, Buddha, and Allah—are familiar to us, while the names Kṛṣṇa and Rāma may be less so. However, whatever name of God we may accept, all scriptures enjoin us to chant it for spiritual purification.

Muhammad counseled, “Glorify the name of your Lord, the most high” (Koran 87.2). Saint Paul said, “Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved” (Romans 10:13). Lord Buddha declared, “All who sincerely call upon my name will come to me after death, and I will take them to Paradise” (*Vows of Amida Buddha* 18). King David preached, “From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised” (Psalms 113:3). And the world’s oldest scriptures, the *Vedas* of India, emphatically state, “Chant the holy name, chant the holy name, chant the holy name of the Lord. In this age of quarrel there is no other way, no other way, no other way to attain spiritual enlightenment” (*Bṛhan-nāradiya Purāna*).

The special design of the Hare Kṛṣṇa chant makes it easy to repeat and pleasant to hear. Spoken or sung, by yourself or in a group, *Hare Kṛṣṇa* invariably produces a joyful state of spiritual awareness—Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Find out more about Kṛṣṇa consciousness in this issue of BACK TO GODHEAD.

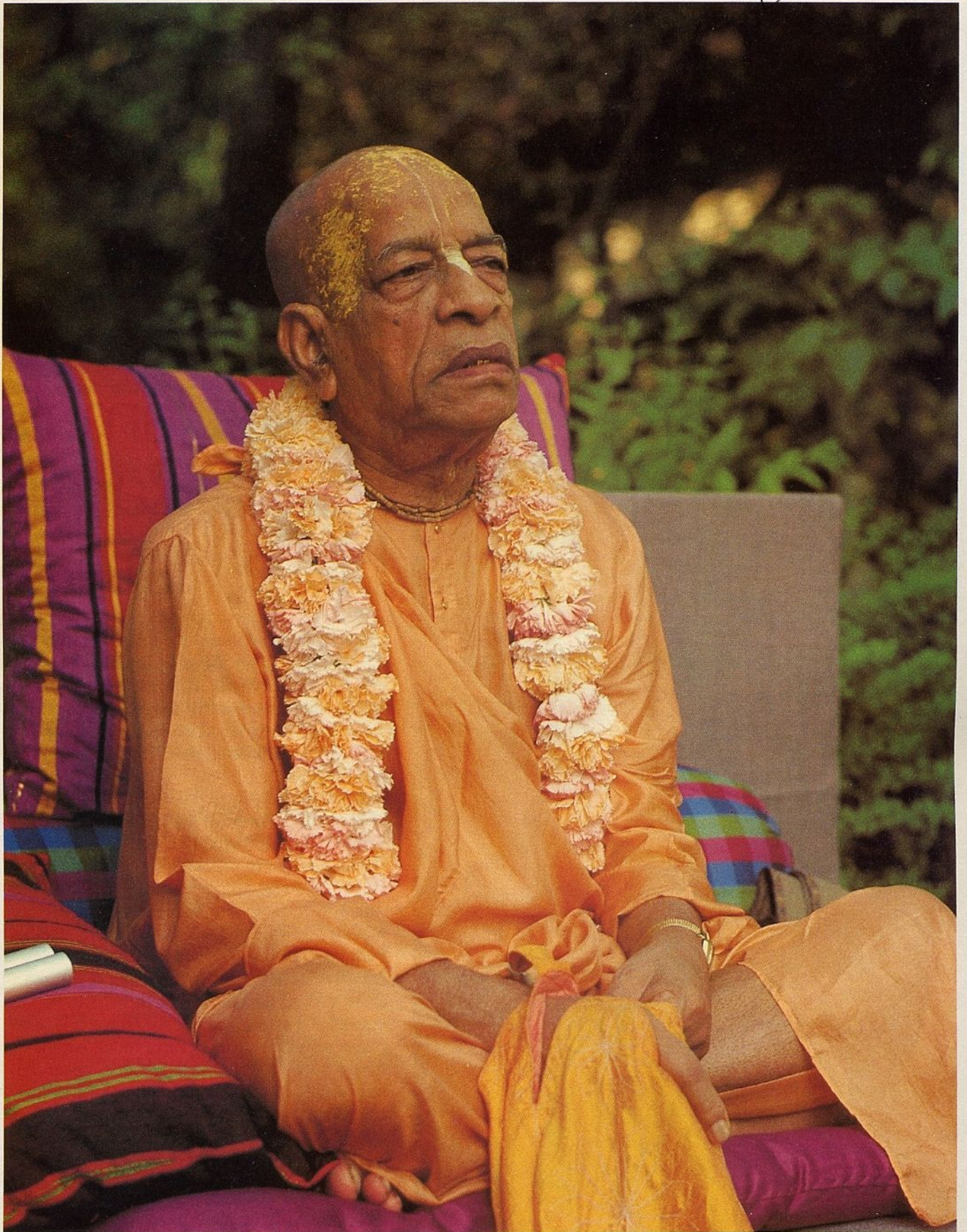


Photo: Viśākhā-devī dāśī (Detroit)

His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

FOUNDER

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

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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PRONUNCIATION OF SANSKRIT WORDS

Sanskrit words and names in BACK TO GODHEAD are spelled according to a system that scholars throughout the world use to show how to pronounce each word. Vowels in Sanskrit are pronounced almost as in Italian. The sound of the short *a* is like the *u* in *but*. The long *ā* is like the *a* in *far* and held twice as long as the short *a*, and *e* is like the *a* in *evade*. Long *ī* is like the *i* in *pique*. The vowel *ī* is pronounced like the *ri* in the English word *rim*. The *c* is pronounced as in the English word *chair*. The aspirated consonants (*ch*, *jh*, *dh*, etc.) are pronounced as in *staunch*-heart, *hedg*-hog and *red*-hot. The two spirants *ś* and *ṣ* are like the English *sh*, and *s* is like the *s* in *sun*. So pronounce *Kṛṣṇa* as KRISHNA and *Caitanya* as CHAITANYA.

◀ The founder and original editor of BACK TO GODHEAD is His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Śrīla Prabhupāda first came to the United States in September of 1965, and by July of 1966 he had begun the International Society for Krishna Consciousness in a small storefront in New York City.

From the beginning, BACK TO GODHEAD magazine was an integral part of ISKCON. In fact, it has often been called "the backbone of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement" by Śrīla Prabhupāda, who began writing, printing and distributing it himself in 1944. Over the years, BACK TO GODHEAD has changed in many ways, but its purpose has remained one: to present topics concerning Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, for the spiritual enlightenment of its readers.

BACK TO GODHEAD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

Vol. 11 No. 10

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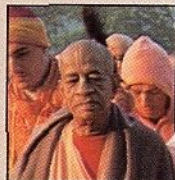
Kṛṣṇa, the Reservoir of Pleasure 5

In his book *The Decline of Pleasure*, critic Walter Kerr says what all sorts of people are now saying—that we're living shallow lives, with practically no pleasure. Here, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda talks about "the real level on which to have real pleasure."



Starting to See the Center of Things 11

"Ever since the Stone Age, people have come up with so many nonsensical ideas to explain the forces of nature." That's what my father would tell me when I was growing up." After years of searching for a sensible explanation, a young student gets his first glimpse. A personal account by Girirāja dāsa.



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Again this year, BACK TO GODHEAD recaps some of the memorable moments of Śrīla Prabhupāda's American summer tour. Los Angeles, Detroit, Toronto, Washington, D.C., New York—wherever he went, reporters, professors, and public officials came to see him.



The Child Who Challenged the Universe 24

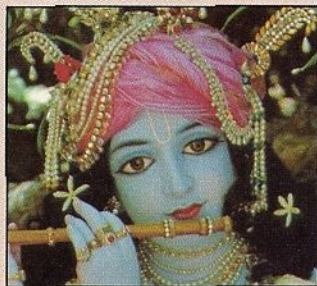
On account of his hardhearted stepmother, little Dhruva lost the right to his father's throne. Burning with grief and anger, the five-year-old vowed that he would get the highest post within the whole universe. (A narrative adapted from the five-thousand-year-old *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.)

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Special Center Section:

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

The continuing presentation of India's great spiritual classic. Translation and commentary by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.



ON THE COVER

Since God is everyone's father, does He ever grow old? We can understand that, being spiritual, He doesn't. Also, ancient India's Vedic literature gives us details about how He looks and acts. Among other things, the Supreme Lord is always young. He has a charming face, a complexion like a blue cloud, a peacock feather in His hair, and He plays a flute. His name, Kṛṣṇa, means "the reservoir of pleasure."—Diorama by the First American Theistic Exhibition (F.A.T.E.).



Kṛṣṇa

The Reservoir of Pleasure

How can we find pleasure that lasts? A talk by
His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Kṛṣṇa—this sound is transcendental. *Kṛṣṇa* means the highest pleasure. Each of us, every living being, seeks pleasure. But we do not know how to seek pleasure perfectly. With a materialistic concept of life, we are frustrated at every step in satisfying our desire for pleasure, because we have no information regarding the real level on which to have real pleasure. For the last few weeks we have been learning that we are not this body; we are consciousness. Not exactly consciousness, for consciousness is actually the symptom of our real identity: we are pure soul, now merged within this material body. Modern material science lays no stress on this; therefore, the scientists are sometimes misled in their understanding of spirit soul. But spirit soul is a fact, which anyone can understand by the presence of consciousness. Any child can understand that consciousness is the symptom of the spirit soul.

Even after the destruction of this body, our consciousness is not destroyed. Rather, our consciousness is transferred to another type of body and again makes us aware of the material conception of life. That is also described in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. At the time of death, if our consciousness is pure, we can be sure that our next life will not be material—our next life will be spiritual. If our consciousness is not pure at the point of death, then, after leaving this body, we shall have to take another material body. That is the process which is going on. That is nature's law.

The material body has two divisions:

the subtle body and the gross body. Just as we may cover ourselves with a shirt and coat, so the pure soul is covered by the "shirt and coat" of the subtle and gross bodies. Our bones, blood, flesh, and our different senses (like our eyes, ears, and skin) make up our gross body; and our mind, intelligence, and false ego make up our subtle body. False ego means the misconception that I am matter, that I am a product of this material world. This misconception makes me localized. For example, because I have taken my birth in India, I think myself Indian. Because I have taken my birth in America, I think myself American. But, as pure soul, I am neither Indian nor American. I am pure soul. These others are designations. American, or Indian, or German, or Englishman; cat or dog, or bee or bat, man or wife: all these are designations. In spiritual consciousness we become free from all such designations. That freedom is achieved when we are constantly in touch with the supreme spirit, Kṛṣṇa.

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness is simply intended to keep us in constant touch with Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa can be in constant companionship with us because He is omnipotent. Therefore, He can be fully in touch with us by His words. His words and He are not different. That is omnipotence. Omnipotence means that everything relating to Him has the same potency. For example, here in this material world, if we are thirsty and we want water, simply repeating "water, water, water, water," will not satisfy our thirst, be-

cause this word does not have the same potency as water itself. We require the water in substance. Then our thirst will be satisfied. But in the transcendental, absolute world, there is no such difference. Kṛṣṇa's name, Kṛṣṇa's quality, Kṛṣṇa's word—everything is Kṛṣṇa and provides the same satisfaction.

Some people argue that Arjuna was talking with Kṛṣṇa because Kṛṣṇa was present before him—whereas in my case Kṛṣṇa is not present, so how can I get directions? But that is not a fact. Kṛṣṇa is present by His words—the *Bhagavad-gītā*. In India, when we speak on the *Bhagavad-gītā* or *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, we regularly perform worship with flowers, or with other paraphernalia, as is required for worshiping. In the Sikh religion also, although they have no form of the Deity, they worship the book *Grantha Sāhab*. Perhaps some of you are acquainted with this Sikh community. They worship this *Grantha*. Similarly, the Muslims worship the Koran. Similarly, in the Christian world, the Bible is worshiped. It is a fact that Lord Jesus Christ is present by his words. Kṛṣṇa is also present by His words.

These personalities, either God or the Son of God, who come from the transcendental world, keep their transcendental identities without being contaminated by the material world. That is their omnipotence. We are in the habit of saying that God is omnipotent. Omnipotence means that He is not different from His name, from His quality, from His pastimes, from His instruction. Therefore, the discussion of *Bhagavad-*

gītā is as good as discussion with Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Kṛṣṇa is seated in your heart, and in my heart too. *Īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṃ hṛd-deśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati* (Bg. 18.61). God is situated in everyone's heart. God is not away from us. He is present. He is so friendly that He remains with us in our repeated change of births. He is waiting to see when we shall turn to Him. He is so kind that though we may forget Him, He never forgets us. Although a son may forget his father, a father never forgets his son. Similarly, God, the original father of everything, everybody, all living entities, will never forsake us. We may have different bodies, but they are our shirt-coats. That has nothing to do with our real identity. Our real identity is pure soul, and that pure soul is part and parcel of the Supreme Lord. There are 8,400,000 species of life. Even the biologist and the anthropologist cannot calculate this accurately, but from authoritative, revealed scripture we get this information. Human beings represent 400,000 species, and there are 8,000,000 other species. But Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, claims that all of them, whether beast, man, snake, god, semi-god, demigod—anything whatever—all of them are, in reality, His sons.

The father gives the seed, and the mother receives the seed. The body is then formed, according to the mother's body. And when the body is completely formed, it comes out—either from cats, from dogs, or from man. That is the process of generation. The father gives the seed, and it is emulsified with two kinds of secretion in the womb of the mother, and on the first night the body is formed just like a pea. Then, gradually, it develops. There are nine holes that develop: two ears, two eyes, nostrils, a mouth, a navel, a penis, and an anus.

According to his last karma, or action, one gets this body to enjoy, or to suffer. That is the process of birth and death. And after finishing this life, again one dies, and again one enters into the womb of some mother. Another type of body then comes out. This is the process of reincarnation.

We should be very diligent as to how we can discontinue this process of repeated birth and death and change of body. That is the prerogative of the human form of life. We can stop this process of repeated birth and death. We can get our actual spiritual form again and be blissful and full of knowledge and have eternal life. That is the purpose of evolution. We should not miss this. The entire process of liberation begins just as we have now begun this chanting and hear-

ing. I wish to point out that this chanting of the holy name of God (Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare) and hearing the truths of the *Gītā* is as good as bodily association with Kṛṣṇa. That is stated in the *Gītā*. This process is called *kīrtana*. Even if one does not understand the language, still, just by hearing, he acquires some piety. His assets lead him to a pious life, even if he does not understand—it has such power.

There are two topics concerning Kṛṣṇa. Two kinds of topics, actually. One topic is this *Bhagavad-gītā*. It is spoken by Kṛṣṇa. And the other topic concerning Kṛṣṇa is *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. That is spoken about Kṛṣṇa. So there are two types of *kṛṣṇa-kathā* (topics), and both of them are equally potent because they are connected with Kṛṣṇa.

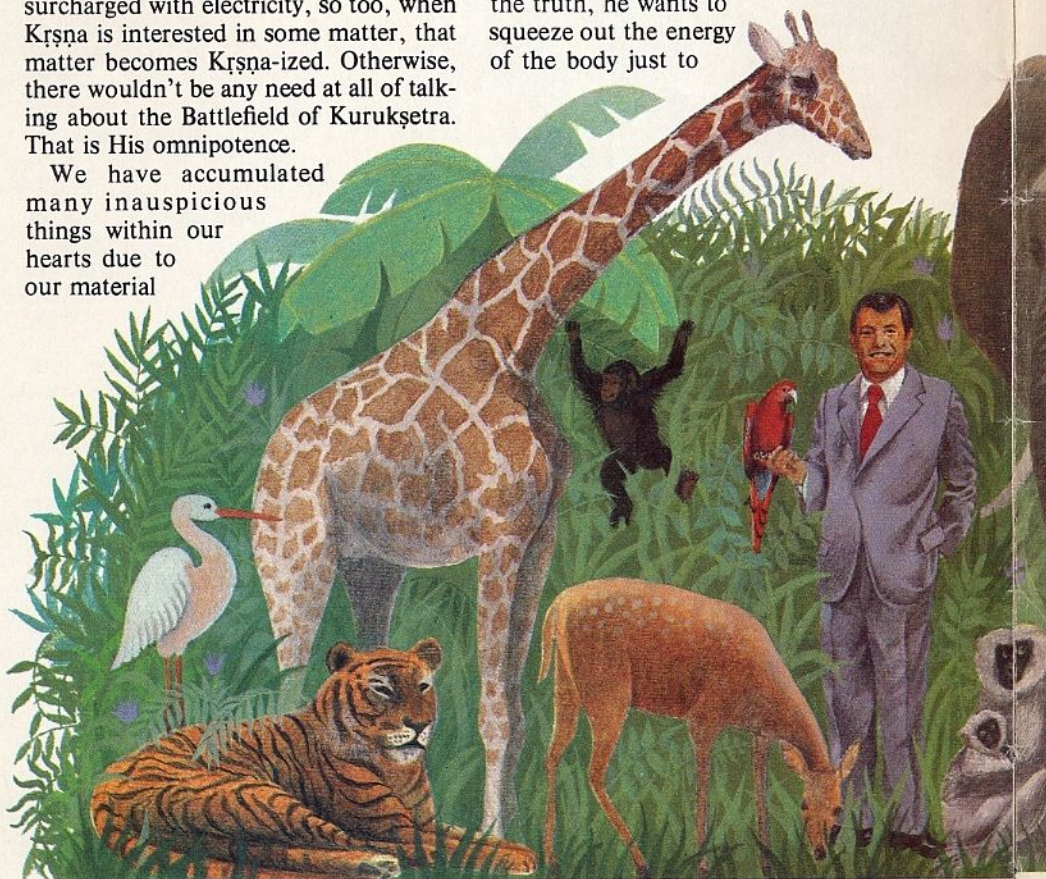
Because the *Bhagavad-gītā* is spoken on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, some people have asked what we have to do with the battlefield. We have nothing to do with any battlefield. We are after knowledge of the spiritual sphere. Then, why should we bother about this battlefield? Because Kṛṣṇa is on the battlefield, and therefore the whole battlefield has become Kṛṣṇa-ized. Just as when an electric current is passed into some metal, the whole metal becomes surcharged with electricity, so too, when Kṛṣṇa is interested in some matter, that matter becomes Kṛṣṇa-ized. Otherwise, there wouldn't be any need at all of talking about the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra. That is His omnipotence.

We have accumulated many inauspicious things within our hearts due to our material

contamination during the course of many, many births. Many, many births—not only this birth, but past births as well. So, when we search into our hearts with the *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, then the contamination we have accumulated will be washed off. Our hearts will be cleansed of all rubbish. And, as soon as all the rubbish is cleared off, then we are situated in pure consciousness.

It is very difficult to eradicate all the false designations from oneself. For example, I am Indian. It is not very easy to immediately think that I am not Indian, but pure soul. Similarly, it is not a very easy task for anyone to end his identification with these bodily designations. But still, if we continue hearing the *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, it will be very easy. Make an experiment. Make an experiment to see how easily you'll be able to free yourself from all these designations. Of course, it is not possible to clear out the rubbish from the mind all of a sudden, but by hearing *kṛṣṇa-kathā* we are immediately aware that the influence of the material nature becomes slackened.

The material nature is working in three modes—goodness, passion, and ignorance. Ignorance is hopeless life. Passion is materialistic. One who is influenced by the mode of passion wants this false enjoyment of material existence. Because he does not know the truth, he wants to squeeze out the energy of the body just to



There are 8,400,000 kinds of bodies that the soul can enter. In the human form

enjoy this matter. That is called the mode of passion. As for those in the mode of ignorance, they have neither passion nor goodness. They are in the deepest darkness of life. Situated in the mode of goodness, we can understand, at least theoretically, what I am, what this world is, what God is, and what our interrelationship is. This is the mode of goodness.

By hearing *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, we will be freed from the stages of ignorance and passion. We will be situated in the mode of goodness. At least we'll have the real knowledge—knowledge of what we are. Ignorance is like the animal existence. The animal's life is full of suffering, but the animal does not know that he is suffering. Take the case of a hog. Oh, how miserable his life is: living in a filthy place, eating stools, and always unclean. Yet the hog is very happy by eating stools, and having constant sexual intercourse with the she-hog and just getting fat. The hog gets very fat, because of the spirit of enjoyment which is there—although, for him, it is sensual enjoyment.

We should not be like the hog, falsely thinking that we are very happy. Working hard all day and night, then having some sex life—we think that in this way we are very happy. But this is not happiness. This has been described in the *Bhāgavatam* as a hog's happiness. Man's happiness is when he is situated in the

mode of goodness. Then he can understand what true happiness is.

In our daily routine, if we hear this *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, the result will be that all the dirty things in the heart, accumulated life after life, will be cleared out. As a matter of fact, we will see that we are no longer in ignorance or in passion, but are situated in the mode of goodness. What is that position?

We will find ourselves joyful in every circumstance of life. We will never feel morose. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* we find that this is our *brahma-bhūta* (highest stage of goodness) situation. The *Vedas* teach us that we are not this matter. We are Brahman. *Ahaṁ brahmāsmi*. Lord Śaṅkarācārya preached this gospel to the world. We are not this matter; we are Brahman, spirit. When spiritual realization is actually accomplished, then our symptoms will change. What are those symptoms? When one is situated in his own spiritual consciousness, then he will have no hankering and no lamentation. Lamentation is for loss, and hankering is for gain. Two diseases characterize this material world. What we do not possess, we hanker after: "If I get these things I'll be happy. I have no money, but if I get a million dollars, then I'll be happy." When we actually have a million dollars, somehow it will be lost, and we'll cry, "Oh, I have lost it!" So the second disease is lamentation. When we hanker for earning, that is a kind of distress. And when we suffer loss, that is also distress. But if we are situated in *brahma-bhūta*, we will neither lament nor will we hanker. We will view equally everyone and everything. Even if we are situated in the midst of fiery turbulence, we will not be disturbed. That is the mode of goodness.

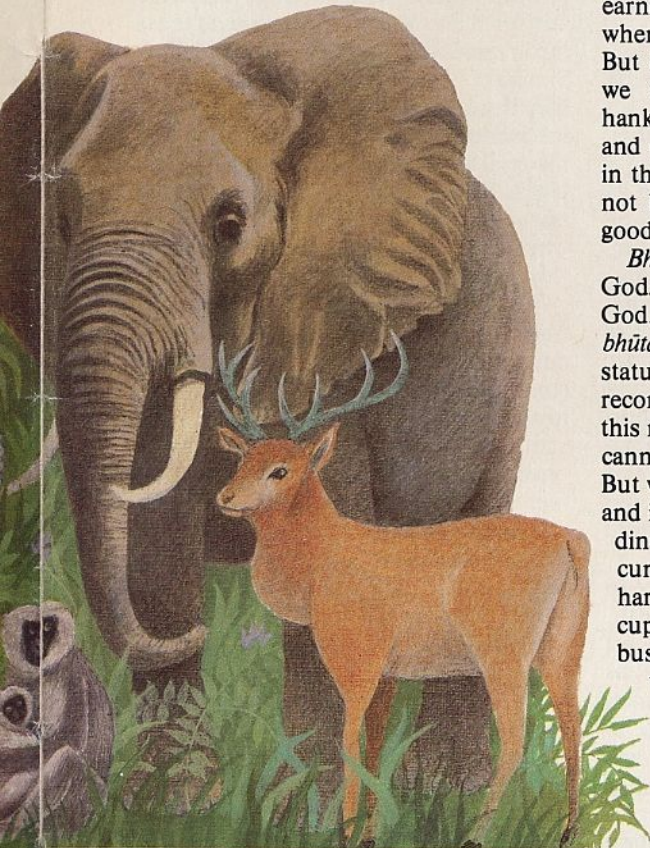
Bhāgavatam means "the science of God." If we persevere in the science of God, we will be situated in the *brahma-bhūta* status. From that *brahma-bhūta* status, we have to work, for work is recommended here. So long as we have this material body, we have to work. We cannot stop working; it is not possible. But we have to adopt the tactics of yoga, and in this way, even by doing some ordinary work which by destiny or circumstances we are put into, there is no harm. Suppose that, in one's own occupation, one must speak a lie or his business can't go on. Lying is not a very good thing, so one concludes that the business is not based on very moral principles and one should therefore give it up. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, however, we find instruction not to give it up. Even if we are put in such circumstances that our livelihood

cannot go on without some unfair practice, we should not give it up. But we should try to make it purified. How is it purified? We should not take the fruitive result of our work. That is meant for God.

Sukṛta means pious activities. And *duṣkṛta* means impious activities. On the material level we can be pious or impious. Either we are performing some pious activities, or we are performing some impious activities—or we have a mixture, pious and impious. Lord Kṛṣṇa advises that we should act with knowledge of, or devotion to, the Supreme. What does that knowledge mean? It means that I am the part and parcel of the supreme consciousness, or that I am not this body. If I identify myself as an American, as an Indian, or this or that, then I am on the material plane. We should identify ourselves as neither Americans nor Indians, but as pure consciousness. I am a subordinate consciousness of the supreme consciousness; in other words, I am the servant of God. God is the supreme consciousness, and I am His servant. So, for our present understanding, subordinate means servant.

We don't ordinarily carry out the work of a servant in relationship to God. Nobody wants to be a servant, but everyone wants to be the master, because to become a servant is not a very palatable thing. But to become the servant of God is not exactly like this. Sometimes the servant of God becomes the master of God. The real position of the living entity is to be the servant of God, but in the *Bhagavad-gītā* we can see that the master, Kṛṣṇa, became the servant of Arjuna. Arjuna is sitting in the chariot, and Kṛṣṇa is his driver. Arjuna is not the owner of the chariot, but in the spiritual relationship we should not cling to the concept of the material relationship. Although the whole relationship, just as we have experience of it in this world, is there in the spiritual world, that relationship is not contaminated by matter. Therefore, it is pure and transcendental. It is of a different nature. As we become advanced in the spiritual conception of life, we can understand what the actual position in the spiritual, transcendental world is.

Here the Lord instructs us in *buddhi-yoga*. *Buddhi-yoga* means that we have full consciousness of not being this body; if I act with this understanding, then I'm not body—I am consciousness. That is a fact. Now, if we act on the level of consciousness, then we can overcome the fruitive result of good work or bad work. It is a transcendental stage.



he can understand he is not the body.

It means that we are acting on another's account—on the Supreme's account. We are not liable to loss or gain. When there is gain, we should not be puffed up. We should think, "This gain is for the Lord." And when there is loss, we should know that this is not our responsibility. It is God's work—His. Then we will be happy. This we have to practice: everything on account of the Supreme. This transcendental nature we have to develop. This is the trick of doing work under these present circumstances. As soon as we work on the level of bodily consciousness, we become bound by the reaction of our work. But when we work through spiritual consciousness, we are not bound either by pious activities or by vicious activities. That is the technique.

working under the direction of the manager; therefore, they have no responsibility. They have only to discharge their duties. Either pious or impious duties—never mind. In the military line, too, the order of the captain or the commander is there. The soldier has to execute it. He does not consider whether it is pious or impious. That does not matter. He simply has to act; then he is a real soldier. He acts in that way and he gets his reward. He gets title and honor. He doesn't care. The commander says, "Just go and kill the enemy," and he is rewarded. Do you think that by killing one gets reward? No—it is for the duty discharged.

Similarly, here the situation is that Kṛṣṇa is instructing Arjuna. Kṛṣṇa is the supreme consciousness. I am conscious-

So here in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Lord says, *karma-jam buddhi-yuktā hi. Karma-jam* means whenever there is action there will be some reaction. If one acts in badness, there will be a bad reaction. But reaction, either good or bad, is, in the higher sense, all suffering. Suppose that by good action I get a good birth, fine bodily features, and a good education. All these good things I may have, but that does not mean that I am free from material pains. The material pains are birth, death, old age, and disease. Even if I am a rich man, a beautiful man, an educated man, born in an aristocratic family, and so on, I still cannot avoid death, old age, and disease.

So, we must not be concerned with pious activities or impious activities. We must be concerned with transcendental activities only. That will save us from this bondage of birth, death, old age, and disease. That should be our aim in life. We should not be hankering after good or bad things. For example, suppose one is suffering from some disease. He is lying in bed, eating, passing nature's call uncomfortably, and taking bitter medicines. He always has to be kept clean by the nurses; otherwise there is an obnoxious smell. While he is lying in this condition some friends come to him and ask how he is feeling. "Yes, I am feeling well." What is this "well"? Lying in bed uncomfortably, taking bitter medicine, and unable to move! Yet despite all these inconveniences he says, "I am well." Similarly, in our material conception of life, if we think, "I am happy," that is foolishness. There is no happiness in material life. It is impossible to have happiness here. In this condition, we do not know the meaning of happiness. That's why this very word is used, *manīṣiṇaḥ*—"thoughtful."

We seek happiness by some extraneous, artificial means, but how long does it last? It will not endure. We again come back to sorrow. Suppose, by intoxication, we feel happy. That is not our actual happiness. Suppose I am made unconscious by chloroform, and I don't feel the pain of an operation. That does not mean that I am not having an operation. This is artificial. Real pleasure, real life, exists.

As Śrī Kṛṣṇa commands in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the thoughtful give up the reaction of work, being situated on the level of pure consciousness. The result is that this bondage of birth and death, disease, and old age comes to an end. This end is in union with the true identity, Kṛṣṇa, the reservoir of pleasure and eternal bliss. There, indeed, is the true happiness for which we are intended.



We can see, "Oh, this is my finger, and this is my hand. But what am I?"

Manīṣiṇaḥ—this word is very significant. *Manīṣī* means "thoughtful." Unless one is thoughtful, he cannot understand that he is not this body. But if one is a little thoughtful he can understand, "Oh, I am not this body. I am consciousness." Sometimes, in our leisure time, we can see, "Oh, this is my finger, and this is my hand. This is my ear, and this is my nose. Everything is mine, but what am I, what am I?" I am feeling that this is mine, and that I am. Simply a little thought is required. Everything is mine—my eyes, my finger, my hand. My, my, my, and what is the I? The I is that consciousness, in which I am thinking, "This is mine."

Now, if I am not this body, then why should I act for this body? I should act for myself. Then, how can I work for myself? What is my position? I am consciousness. But what kind of consciousness? Subordinate consciousness—I am part of the supreme consciousness. Then, what will my activities be? My activities will be under the guidance of the supreme consciousness, just as in the office, the managing director is the supreme consciousness. For example, in the office everyone is

ness, the part and parcel of the supreme consciousness. So my duty is to act according to that supreme consciousness. For example, I consider my hand as a part of my body. Now, it is moving in its own way. "As I want, let my hand be moved. Let my legs be moved. Let my eyes be opened and see." So, I am dictating, and these parts are working. Similarly, we are parts and parcels of the Supreme. When we train ourselves to act in accordance with supreme consciousness, then we become transcendental to all these pious or impious activities. That is the technique. What will the result of this technique be? We become free from the bondage of birth and death. No more birth and death.

Modern scientists and philosophers do not think about these four things: birth, death, disease, and old age. They set them aside. "Oh, let us be happy. Let us enjoy this life." But human life is meant for finding a solution to this bondage of birth, death, disease, and old age. If any civilization has not found a solution to these four problems, then that is not a human civilization. Human civilization is meant for finding a solution to these things.

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Starting to See the Center of Things

What he said cleared things up for me. "If I throw a handful of stones into the water, the circles they make will overlap and clash. But if I could throw the stones all at one center point, the circles would never clash. In the same way, if I have my center of interest and you have your center of interest, our interests will clash. But if we find the perfect center, we'll have perfect harmony."

An account by Girirāja dāsa

"Ever since the Stone Age, people have come up with so many nonsensical ideas to explain the forces of nature." That's what my father, a Chicago lawyer, would tell me when I was growing up. "The idea of a God may give peace and inspire morality, but scientifically-minded people are beyond all that."

My seventh grade teacher showed me a different angle. He reasoned, "There are so many things we can't see. We can't see atoms or air or our own minds. Does that mean they don't exist? Just because we can't see God, does that mean He doesn't exist?"

That made sense to me, and I had a change of heart. I didn't exactly know who God was, but somehow I knew He was at the center of things.

Then, four years later (in my junior year of high school), a close friend laughed at my ideas. "The wonders of nature are just coincidences. You're just imagining that a God is doing these things." His strong personality and arguments persuaded me to set aside my belief for the time being.

Still, I wanted some kind of perfection in my life, and I thought I could find it by studying psychology. I read books like Eric Fromm's *The Art of Loving*, and finally I enrolled in Brandeis University's psychology department so that I could learn how to help people get along better. But

soon it became clear that most psychiatrists were themselves disturbed, and that their rate of suicide was surprisingly high. Besides, all the "experts" had different theories and rarely agreed on anything.

Dismayed at not being able to find any peace of mind, I turned to the East for spiritual wisdom and looked for a spiritual teacher. For a start, I read about Zen Buddhism and also attended a weekend meditation led by a well-known American Zen master. What an experience that was. All of us had to sit straight and stiff and play all kinds of mental games to empty our minds. We had to meditate on riddles like, "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" At times, when I fell asleep, a monitor would swat me on the shoulder with a stick. Needless to say, I felt uncomfortable. After the meditation, someone asked the master about Vedānta philosophy. He replied, "I have enough trouble keeping up with Zen. How can I think about Vedānta?" It seemed to me that a real spiritual teacher should know everything about spiritual life. So right then I knew that this man wasn't the teacher I was looking for.

Later, I studied the writings of a famous Indian whom many people had called an incarnation of God. I asked one of my friends how I could study under him, but my friend told

me that he didn't accept any students. I thought, "What kind of master is this? Without accepting students, how can he benefit anyone? So that he can be detached he's denying others the opportunity to be enlightened?" This didn't make much sense to me, so I gave up on him.

Next, I became interested in a group that offered a popular version of meditation. Their leading American representative had rented a big hall in Cambridge to demonstrate the technique. But when I went there I found out that I'd have to pay an initiation fee of thirty-five dollars and give up some kind of sense pleasure for one week. I wondered, "Thirty-five dollars—this is spiritual life? And if sense pleasure is bad, then why give it up for only one week?" It all sounded a little strange.

So it went. Whenever I found that a "swami" or "yogī" or "perfect master" or "realized soul" was anywhere within a thousand miles, I would rush to meet him. "This-ānanda," "That-ānanda"—so many ānandas I met, but I always came away disgusted.

Then, on April 18, 1969, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda came to the Brandeis campus to speak on the *Bhagavad-gītā*. My girl friend tried to persuade me not to go. "Why can't we be like other couples?" she asked tearfully. "Why do you always have to run to these swamis and yogīs? Why can't we be like everyone else?" I didn't want to disappoint her, and I actually tried to forget about the lecture, but from within I felt I had to go. Not wanting to hurt my girl friend's feelings, I reassured her, "Let me go to this one lecture, and this will be the last swami I visit."

When one of my classmates and I entered the hall, the lecture had just ended. We saw Śrīla Prabhupāda sitting on a magnificent chair in the middle of the stage. He was surrounded by chanting and dancing devotees. Satsvarūpa dāsa, (now Satsvarūpa Gosvāmī) the president of Boston's Kṛṣṇa temple, led the enthusiastic chanting. As the sound system boomed the transcendental vibrations off the bare brick walls, I felt like jumping up and joining in. When the chanting ended, the devotees bowed to offer their respects to Śrīla Prabhupāda. Then he left the stage, and a few disciples followed him.

Some of the devotees needed a ride to Harvard Square, so I gave them a lift in my station wagon. As we rode along, I mentioned that I'd been looking into Zen. "According to the Buddhists," I said, "this world is just an image; it's like a movie. And behind it all is nothing."

A devotee commented, "Sure, this world *is* like a movie. But when you're watching a movie, you know that there's someone behind the whole show: a projectionist. So there's also someone behind this world—Kṛṣṇa." The more I listened to the devotees, the more I wanted to hear their guru. When I dropped them off in Harvard Square I asked a devotee named Patita-pāvana where the temple was. He told me how to find it and said that Śrīla Prabhupāda would be speaking there the next evening. I decided to go.

I spent the next day anticipating my visit to the Kṛṣṇa temple. Finally, about 6 P.M., I set out. The temple was in an out-of-the-way but pleasant part of Boston called Allston. At the given address, 95 Glenville Avenue, I found a small storefront. With anxiety and eagerness I rang the doorbell, and a pleasant young man opened the door and welcomed me in. The room was thick with the smoke and fragrance of incense. It was a smallish room, crowded and warm. I saw Śrīla Prabhupāda seated on the same chair as at the auditorium on campus. He was speaking, but I could hardly hear him. Yet I did catch one thing he said. He quoted a verse from the *Bhagavad-gītā*: "Out of many thousands among men, one may endeavor for perfection, and of those who have achieved perfection, hardly one knows Me in truth" (Bg. 7.3).

That struck me. I thought, "Spiritual life isn't cheap. That's one thing I've learned already."

After he finished speaking, Śrīla Prabhupāda asked for questions. A nicely dressed young man in the back of the room raised his hand. "Swamiji," he said, "How has Kṛṣṇa created *māyā* [illusion, or forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa]?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda gave a beautiful answer. He began, "*Māyā* is just like a cloud. Isn't the cloud produced by the sun?"

"Yes."

"And doesn't the cloud also cover the sun?"

"Yes."

"In this way Kṛṣṇa is also creating *māyā*, and due to *māyā*, Kṛṣṇa becomes covered. Actually Kṛṣṇa is not covered, but our vision is covered, so we are not able to see Kṛṣṇa."

Then I asked my question: "There are so many different processes of self-realization, like Zen Buddhism, *kriyā-yoga*, and others, and so many different teachers, with each one advocating his process as the best. How can we actually know what is the proper way?"

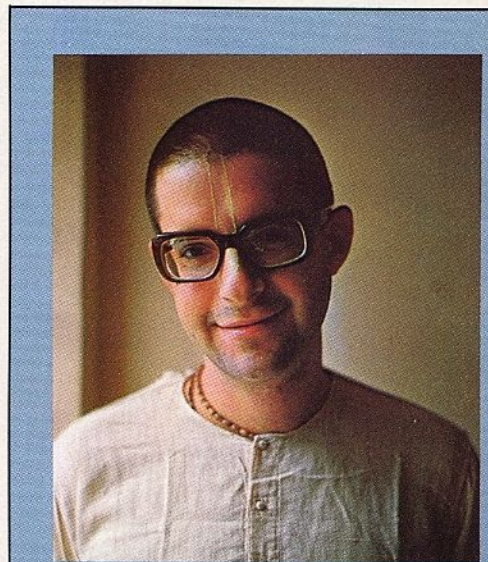
Śrīla Prabhupāda then questioned me. "First of all, what is your goal? Do you

want to serve God, or do you want to become God?"

I didn't know what to say.

"If you want to become God, that means that you are not God now. But how can somebody who is not God become God? God is God. He never has to become God by any mystic yoga process. He already *is* God. Kṛṣṇa is God when He is on the lap of His mother, Yaśodā; He is God when he is tending the cows with His friends; He is God when He is speaking the *Bhagavad-gītā* on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra. God is always God. Not that by some mystic yoga process He becomes God. You are not God, nor can you become God. God is in your heart, and if you surrender to Him you can become godly. He is ready to help you, but if you try to become God you are only cheating yourself. If you want to become God then why should God help the competition? But if you want to serve God then God will give you all facility. So what do you think—do you want to become God or do you want to serve God?"

As Śrīla Prabhupāda was speaking, I realized that actually I *had* wanted to become God. In fact, in my apartment I had painted a sign in bright, fancy letters; it said, "You Are God." Another



At the end of 1970, not long after he had come to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, Girirāja dāsa went along on Śrīla Prabhupāda's well-received return tour of India. Since that time, Girirāja has journeyed all over the subcontinent, encouraging the people to revive their Kṛṣṇa conscious culture.

Photos: Muralivadana dāsa

thing I realized as he was speaking was that Śrīla Prabhupāda was the spiritual teacher I'd been looking for, and that he could see right into my heart. I became ashamed, because I knew that Śrīla Prabhupāda was seeing all of my foolishness. Then he repeated, "What do you think—do you want to serve God, or do you want to become God?"

I hesitated. I had some inclination to serve God, but I admitted, "Actually, I see that I wanted to become God."

Śrīla Prabhupāda said emphatically, "Yes, that is right! But how can you become God? You cannot. God is in your heart, and if you water the seed of devotion by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, He will give you all the sunshine to make it grow."

Every vibration in Śrīla Prabhupāda's voice struck my ear and entered my heart. Meanwhile, Śrīla Prabhupāda asked the devotees to distribute *prasāda* (spiritual food, offered to Kṛṣṇa) to everyone. Earlier in the evening Śrīla Prabhupāda had initiated several new devotees, and now a feast would complete the occasion. One devotee brought a large platter with many varieties of *prasāda* and offered it to Śrīla Prabhupāda, who quipped, "I am not God; I cannot eat all this. Distribute it." Then

one joyful devotee approached me. "If you like," she said, "you can help distribute the *prasāda*." I was thankful for the chance to do some service.

After everyone else had begun eating, I sat down and looked at my plate. There were so many preparations that I'd never seen before; I didn't know which one to try first. I bit into a *pakora* (a breaded cauliflower chunk, zestfully spiced and deep-fried in pure butter). In all my life I had never tasted food so delicious. I looked at the devotees around me relishing their *prasāda*, and then I tried a *puri* (a light pastry, puffed in pure butter) and some eggplant and tomato with curd. Again the taste was extraordinary. One by one I tasted all the preparations, and each one was more wonderful than the last. I'd never experienced such pleasure in eating. I reflected that everything in Kṛṣṇa consciousness was that way. The philosophy, the *prasāda*, the chanting, the temple, the devotees, and their spiritual master—all were on a superior level.

The next evening I visited again. On alternate nights, instead of speaking at the temple, Śrīla Prabhupāda would speak at one of the nearby universities, and that night he was going to speak at Boston University. I came early so that I

could drive the devotees to the program in my station wagon. Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke clearly and simply and then opened the floor to questions. One person asked, "What can this movement do for the hungry people of the world?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, "If you give a bag of rice to the pigeons, one pigeon will take some grains and go away, another pigeon will take some grains and go away, and in this way all the pigeons will have enough. But if you put a bag of rice in a busy marketplace, the first man who sees it will take the whole bag and hoard it. So the real solution to the food problem is to change the greedy mentality in human society. Actually, there is no scarcity of anything; there is only a scarcity of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. God has provided for everybody. We simply have to accept what He has given and distribute it equally. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

After the questions and answers, with Śrīla Prabhupāda looking on, the devotees danced in a circle and chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa. When I joined them I began to sense that Lord Kṛṣṇa actually is present, as He says in *Bhagavad-gītā*, "within the hearts of all living beings." It was a bright moment in my spiritual life.

The next night, after Śrīla Prabhupāda's lecture at the temple, I asked a question (each time Prabhupāda spoke I would limit myself to just one carefully thought-out question): "What is the relationship between service to man and service to God?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, "If a hungry man comes to you and you feed him, in a few hours his hunger will return and he will have the same problem all over again. But if you give him Kṛṣṇa consciousness, all his problems will be solved permanently. If you give a man a million dollars, all of his ten-dollar problems will be solved. Similarly, if you give a man Kṛṣṇa consciousness, all of his little problems will be solved, including eating. And his problems will be solved permanently. He'll become completely satisfied."

A few nights later, after a lecture at Harvard, the students asked Śrīla Prabhupāda many challenging questions, but he easily answered all of them. One student said, "You're chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, but couldn't you just as well count from one to ten over and over again, and wouldn't that have the same results?" Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, "Yes, you can try counting, and when you finish counting, you can try chanting." Everyone laughed.

Another boy rambled on about how we need revolution. "This chanting has been going on for many years," he said.

In addition, since 1972 Girirāja has acted as president of ISKCON's Bombay branch, so he has centered most of his work in that city. Among his other responsibilities, Girirāja helps coordinate the Indian affairs of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust and ISKCON's life membership program.

Despite many hardships, from



the very beginning Girirāja has guided the construction of ISKCON's new guest house-

restaurant-temple complex in Bombay. Set to open in April of 1977, the new structure is both well-styled and well-located (just off Juhu, one of the world's most enchanting beaches). And with its



diorama display (highlighting great Vedic personalities and events) and its theater for transcendental cinema and drama, ISKCON's new Bombay complex promises to become a world cultural center.

"But now we have to take action, just like the Russian Revolution."

Śrīla Prabhupāda inquired, "Now you've had your Russian Revolution, but are the people in Russia happy?"

The boy replied, "Well, no."

Then Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "Then what is the value of this revolution? And even if the situation has improved, again it will get worse. Better to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and get the permanent solution."

After the question-and-answer period, the devotees chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa. Later, I lingered among the audience, noting how they'd appreciated Śrīla Prabhupāda and the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. A disciple told me what I'd already gathered: Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee can never be defeated.


I kept coming to hear Śrīla Prabhupāda speak, either at the temple or at a university. One night he said something that I found especially illuminating: "Our whole life is simply wasted in these two activities—hankering and lamenting. Either we are hankering after what we don't have, or we are lamenting over what we've lost." That pretty much summed up my life. Prabhupāda added, "The peace we are hankering for, life after life, moment after moment—we'll get it when our desires are purified and

dovetailed with the Lord's desires."

The next day Śrīla Prabhupāda gave a moving lecture at the Harvard University International Students Association. He said, "Our radius of love is always expanding. If you give a baby some food, he'll simply put it in his mouth; he thinks only of himself. But when he gets a little older, he may think of sharing the food with his mother, then with his father, and then with his brothers and sisters. If you give him food when he is still older, he might share it with his friends. When he is a young man, he may think of his community's welfare, and when still more mature he may think in terms of serving the society or the country, until finally he might come to the point of serving all humanity. But still his love is not all-encompassing. What about the cows? Are they not also sensitive living beings? Then why should we kill them? And what about the plants? We are cutting down so many trees and killing so many cows and other animals. Why should we not love all living entities?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda then gave a nice example. What he said cleared things up for me. "This is our defect: our love is not perfect. I have my area of interest, and you have your area of interest, but

mine overlaps and conflicts with yours. If I throw a handful of stones into the water, the circles they make will overlap and clash. But if I could throw the stones all at one center point, the circles would never clash. In the same way, if I have my center of interest and you have your center of interest, our interests will clash. But if we find the perfect center, we'll have perfect harmony. And what is that perfect center? That perfect center is God—Kṛṣṇa."

Although I was still living at my apartment, I liked the idea of working with Prabhupāda's disciples. But I was in doubt about whether I should move into the temple or stay where I was. One night, I got the opportunity to drive Śrīla Prabhupāda back to the temple after his lecture. Here was the chance to ask him something that had been on my mind for some time. "Śrīla Prabhupāda, what should I do with the rest of my life?" I was anxious, because I expected that he would ask me to move into the temple right away. But he replied, "Just study our books very thoroughly and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa." I was relieved that Śrīla Prabhupāda was so understanding. He'd already helped me to see that Kṛṣṇa is the center of things, and I could see that the rest would come naturally. 

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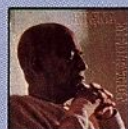
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CHAPTER EIGHT

Prayers by Queen Kuntī and Parikṣit Saved

TEXT 20

तथा परमहंसानां मुनीनाममलत्मानाम् ।
भक्तियोगविधानार्थं कथं पश्येम हि स्त्रियः ॥२०॥

*tathā parama-haṁsānām
munīnām amalātmanām
bhakti-yoga-vidhān-ārtham
katham paśyema hi striyaḥ*

tathā—besides that; *parama-haṁsānām*—of the advanced transcendentalists; *munīnām*—of the great philosophers or mental speculators; *amala-ātmanām*—those whose minds are competent to discern between spirit and matter; *bhakti-yoga*—the science of devotional service; *vidhān-ārtham*—for executing; *katham*—why; *paśyema*—can observe; *hi*—certainly; *striyaḥ*—women.

TRANSLATION

You Yourself descend to propagate the transcendental science of devotional service unto the hearts of the advanced transcendentalists and mental speculators who are purified by being able to discriminate between matter and spirit. How, then, can we women know You perfectly?

PURPORT

Even the greatest philosophical speculators cannot have access to the region of the Lord. It is said in the *Upaniṣads* that the Supreme Truth Absolute Personality of Godhead is beyond the range of the thinking power of the greatest philosopher. He is unknowable by great learning or by the greatest brain. He is only knowable by one who has His mercy. Others may go on thinking about Him for years together, yet He is unknowable. This very fact is corroborated by the Queen, and she is playing the part of an innocent woman. Women in general are unable to speculate like philosophers, but they are blessed by the Lord because they believe at once in the superiority and almightiness of the Lord, and thus they offer obeisances without reservation. The Lord is so kind that He does not only show special favor to one who is a great philosopher. He knows the sincerity of purpose. For this reason only, women generally assemble in great number in any sort of religious function. In every country and in every

sect of religion it appears that the women are more interested than the men. This simplicity of acceptance of the authority of the Lord is more effective than showy insincere religious fervor.

TEXT 21

कृष्णाय वासुदेवाय देवकीनन्दनाय च ।
नन्दगोपकुमाराय गोविन्दाय नमो नमः ॥२१॥

*kṛṣṇāya vāsudevāya
devakī-nandanāya ca
nanda-gopa-kumārāya
govindāya namo namaḥ*

kṛṣṇāya—the Supreme Lord; *vāsudevāya*—unto the son of Vasudeva; *devakī-nandanāya*—unto the son of Devakī; *ca*—and; *nanda-gopa*—Nanda and the cowherd men; *kumārāya*—unto their son; *govindāya*—unto the Personality of Godhead who enlivens the cows and the senses; *namaḥ*—respectful obeisances; *namaḥ*—obeisances.

TRANSLATION

Let me, therefore, offer my respectful obeisances unto the Lord who has become the son of Vasudeva, the pleasure of Devakī, the boy of Nanda and the other cowherd men of Vṛndāvana, and the enlivener of the cows and the senses.

PURPORT

The Lord, being thus unapproachable by any material assets, out of unbounded and causeless mercy descends on the earth as He is in order to show His special mercy upon His unalloyed devotees and to diminish the upsurges of the demoniac persons. Queen Kuntī specifically adores the incarnation or descent of Lord Kṛṣṇa above all other incarnations because in this particular incarnation He is more approachable. In the Rāma incarnation He remained a king's son from His very childhood, but in the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, although He was son of a king, He at once left the shelter of His real father and mother (King Vasudeva and Queen Devakī) just after His appearance and went to the lap of Yaśodāyāī to play the part of an ordinary cowherd boy in the blessed Vrajabhūmi, which is very sanctified because of His childhood pastimes. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa is more merciful than Lord Rāma. He was undoubtedly very kind to Kuntī's brother Vasudeva and the family. Had He not become the son of Vasudeva and Devakī, Queen Kuntī could not claim Him to be her nephew and thus address Kṛṣṇa in parental affection. But Nanda and Yaśodā are more fortunate because they could relish the Lord's childhood pastimes, which are more attractive than all other pastimes. There is no parallel to His childhood pastimes as exhibited at Vrajabhūmi, which are the prototypes of His eternal affairs in the original Kṛṣṇaloka described as the *cintāmaṇi-dhāma* in the *Brahma-saṁhitā*. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa descended Himself at Vrajabhūmi with all His transcendental entourage and paraphernalia. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu therefore confirmed that no one is as fortunate as the residents of Vrajabhūmi, and specifically the cowherd girls who dedicated their everything for the satisfaction of the Lord. His pastimes with Nanda and Yaśodā and His pastimes with the cowherd men and

especially with the cowerd boys and the cows have caused Him to be known as Govinda. Lord Kṛṣṇa as Govinda is more inclined to the *brāhmaṇas* and the cows, indicating thereby that human prosperity depends more on these two items, namely brahminical culture and cow protection. Lord Kṛṣṇa is never satisfied where these are lacking.

TEXT 22

नमः पङ्कजनाभाय नमः पङ्कजमालिने ।
नमः पङ्कजनेत्राय नमस्ते पङ्कजाङ्घ्रये ॥२२॥

namaḥ paṅkaja-nābhāya
namaḥ paṅkaja-māline
namaḥ paṅkaja-netrāya
namaste paṅkajāṅghraye

namaḥ—all respectful obeisances; *paṅkaja-nābhāya*—unto the Lord who has a specific depression resembling a lotus flower in the center of His abdomen; *paṅkaja-māline*—one who is always decorated with a garland of lotus flowers; *paṅkaja-netrāya*—one whose glance is as cooling as a lotus flower; *namaste*—respectful obeisances unto You; *paṅkaja-āṅghraye*—unto You, the soles of whose feet are engraved with lotus flowers (and who are therefore said to possess lotus feet).

TRANSLATION

My respectful obeisances are unto You, O Lord, whose abdomen is marked with a depression like a lotus flower, who is always decorated with garlands of lotus flowers, whose glance is as cool as the lotus and whose feet are engraved with lotuses.

PURPORT

Here are some of the specific symbolical marks on the spiritual body of the Personality of Godhead which distinguish His body from the bodies of all others. They are all special features of the body of the Lord. The Lord may appear as one of us, but He is always distinct by His specific bodily features. Śrīmatī Kuntī claims herself as unfit to see the Lord because of her being a woman. This is claimed because women, *sūdras* (the laborer class) and the *dvija-bandhus*, or the wretched descendants of the higher three classes, are unfit by intelligence to understand transcendental subject matter concerning the spiritual name, fame, attributes, forms, etc., of the Supreme Absolute Truth. Such persons, although they are unfit to enter into the spiritual affairs of the Lord, can see Him as the *arca-vigraha* who descends on the material world just to distribute favors to the fallen souls, including the above-mentioned women, *sūdras* and *dvija-bandhus*. Because such fallen souls cannot see anything beyond matter, the Lord condescends to enter into each and every one of the innumerable universes as the Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, who grows a lotus stem from the lotus-like depression in the center of His transcendental abdomen, and thus Brahmā, the first living being in the universe, is born. Therefore, the Lord is known as the Paṅkajanābhi. The Paṅkajanābhā Lord accepts the *arca-vigraha* (His transcendental form) in different elements, namely a form within the mind, a form made of wood, a form made of earth, a form made of metal, a form made of jewel, a form made of painting, a form drawn on sand, etc. All such forms of the Lord are always decorated with garlands of lotus flower, and there should be a soothing atmosphere in the temple of worship to attract the burning attention of the nondevotees always engaged in material wranglings. The meditators worship a form within the mind. Therefore, the Lord is merciful even to the women, *sūdras* and *dvija-bandhus*, provided they agree to visit the temple of worship in different forms made for them. Such temple visitors are not idolators, as alleged by some men with a poor fund of knowledge. All the great *ācāryas* established such temples of worship in all places just to favor the less intelligent, and one should not pose himself as transcending the stage of temple worship while one is actually in the category of the *sūdras* and the women or less. One should begin to see the Lord from His lotus feet, gradually rising to the thighs, waist, chest and face. One should not try to look at the face of the Lord without being accustomed to seeing the lotus feet of the Lord. Śrīmatī Kuntī, because of her being the aunt of the Lord, did not begin to see the Lord from the lotus feet because the Lord might feel ashamed, and

thus Kuntīdevī, just to save a painful situation for the Lord, began to see the Lord just above His lotus feet, i.e., from the waist of the Lord, gradually rising to the face, and then down to the lotus feet. In the round, everything there is in order.

TEXT 23

यथा हृषीकेश खलेन देवकी
कसेन रुद्धातिचिरं शुचार्यिता ।
विमोचिताहं च सहात्मजा विभो
त्वयैव नाथेन मुहुर्विपद्गणात् ॥२३॥

yathā hṛṣīkeśa khalena devakī
kaṁsena ruddhāticiraṁ śuścāryitā
vimocitāhaṁ ca sahātmajā vibho
tvayaiva nāthena muhuḥ vipadgaṇāt

yathā—as it were; *hṛṣīkeśa*—the master of the senses; *khalena*—by the envious; *devakī*—Devakī (the mother of Śrī Kṛṣṇa); *kaṁsena*—by King Kaṁsa; *ruddhā*—imprisoned; *aticiraṁ*—for a long time; *śuścāryitā*—distressed; *vimocitā*—released; *aham ca*—also myself; *sahātmajā*—along with my children; *vibho*—O great one; *tvayaiva*—by Your Lordship; *nāthena*—as the protector; *muhuḥ*—constantly; *vipadgaṇāt*—series of dangers.

TRANSLATION

O Hṛṣīkeśa, master of the senses and Lord of lords, You have released Your mother Devakī, who was long imprisoned and distressed by the envious King Kaṁsa, and myself and my children from a series of constant dangers.

PURPORT

Devakī, the mother of Kṛṣṇa and sister of King Kaṁsa, was put into prison along with her husband Vasudeva because the envious King was afraid of being killed by the eighth son (Kṛṣṇa) of Devakī. He therefore killed all the sons of Devakī who were born before Kṛṣṇa, but Kṛṣṇa escaped the danger of child-slaughter because He was transferred to the house of Nanda Mahārāja, Lord Kṛṣṇa's foster father. Kuntīdevī was also saved from a series of dangers along with her children. But Kuntīdevī was shown more favor because Lord Kṛṣṇa did not save the other children of Devakī, whereas He saved the children of Kuntīdevī. This was done because Devakī's husband, Vasudeva, was living, but Kuntīdevī was a widow, and there was none to help her except Kṛṣṇa. The conclusion is that Kṛṣṇa endows more favor to a devotee who is in greater dangers. Sometimes He puts His pure devotees in such dangers because in that condition of helplessness the devotee becomes more attached to the Lord. The more the attachment is there for the Lord, the more success is there for the devotee.

TEXT 24

विषान्महाग्नेः पुरुषाददर्शना-
दसत्समाया वनवासकृच्छ्रतः ।
मृधे मृधेऽनेकमहारथास्त्रतो
द्रौण्यस्त्रतश्चास्म हरेऽभिरक्षिताः ॥२४॥

viṣān mahāgneḥ puruṣāda-darśanād
asat sabhāyā vanavāsa-kṛcchrataḥ
mṛdhe mṛdhe'neka-mahā-rathāstrato
drauṇyastrataś cāsma hare'bhiraḥṣitāḥ

viṣāt—from poison; *mahā-agneḥ*—from the great fire; *puruṣāda*—the man-eaters; *darśanāt*—by combating; *asat*—vicious; *sabhāyāḥ*—assembly; *vanavāsa*—exiled to the forest; *kṛcchrataḥ*—sufferings; *mṛdhe mṛdhe*—again and again in battle; *aneka*—many; *mahā-ratha*—great generals; *astrataḥ*—weapons; *drauṇi*—the son of Droṇācārya; *astrataḥ*—from the weapons of; *ca*—and; *āsmāḥ*—indicating past tense; *hare*—by the Personality of Godhead; *abhiraḥṣitāḥ*—protected completely.

TRANSLATION

My dear Kṛṣṇa, Your Lordship has protected us from a poisoned cake, from a great fire, from cannibals, from the vicious assembly, from sufferings during our exile in the forest and from the battle where great generals fought. And now You have saved us from the weapon of Aśvatthāmā.

PURPORT

The list of dangerous encounters is submitted herein. Devakī was once put into difficulty by her envious brother, otherwise she was well. But Kuntīdevī and her sons were put into one difficulty after another for years and years together. They were put into trouble by Duryodhana and party due to the kingdom, and each and every time the sons of Kuntī were saved by the Lord. Once Bhīma was administered poison in a cake form, once they were put into the house made of shellac and set afire, and once Draupadī was dragged out, and attempts were made to insult her by stripping her naked in the vicious assembly of the Kurus. The Lord saved Draupadī by supplying an immeasurable length of cloth, and Duryodhana's party failed to see her naked. Similarly, when they were exiled in the forest, Bhīma had to fight with the man-eater demon Hiḍimba rākṣasa, but the Lord saved him. So it was not finished there. After all these tribulations, there was the great Battle of Kuruksetra, and Arjuna had to meet such great generals as Droṇa, Bhīṣma, Karṇa, etc., all powerful fighters. And at last, even when everything was done away with, there was the *brahmāstra* released by the son of Droṇācārya within the womb of Uttarā, and so the Lord saved the only surviving descendant of the Kurus, Mahārāja Parīkṣit.

TEXT 25

विपदः सन्तु ताः शश्वत्त्र तत्र जगद्गुरो ।
भवतो दर्शनं यत्सादपुनर्भवदर्शनम् ॥२५॥

*vipadaḥ santu tāḥ śaśvat
tatra tatra jagad-guro
bhavato darśanam yat syād
apunar bhava-darśanam*

vipadaḥ—calamities; *santu*—let there be; *tāḥ*—all; *śaśvat*—again and again; *tatra*—there; *tatra*—and there; *jagad-guro*—O Lord of the universe; *bhavataḥ*—Your; *darśanam*—meeting; *yat*—that which; *syāt*—is; *apunaḥ*—not again; *bhava-darśanam*—seeing repetition of birth and death.

TRANSLATION

I wish that all those calamities would happen again and again so that we can see You again and again, for seeing You means that we will no longer see repeated births and deaths.

PURPORT

Generally the distressed, the needy, the intelligent and the inquisitive, who have performed some pious activities, worship or begin to worship the Lord. Others, who are thriving on misdeeds only, regardless of status, cannot approach the Supreme due to being misled by the illusory energy. Therefore, for a pious person if there is some calamity there is no other alternative than to take shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord. Constantly remembering the lotus feet of the Lord means preparing for liberation from birth and death. Therefore, even though there are so-called calamities, they are welcome because they give us opportunity to remember the Lord, which means liberation.

One who has taken shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord, which are accepted as the most suitable boat for crossing the ocean of nescience, can be liberated as easily as one leaps over the holes made by the hoofs of a calf. Such persons are meant to reside in the abode of the Lord, and they have nothing to do with a place where there is danger in every step.

This material world is certified by the Lord in the *Bhagavad-gītā* as a dangerous place full of calamities. Less intelligent persons prepare plans to adjust to those calamities without knowing that the nature of this place is

itself full of calamities. They have no information of the abode of the Lord, which is full of bliss and without trace of calamity. The duty of the same person is, therefore, not to be disturbed by the worldly calamities, which are sure to happen in all circumstances, but suffering all sorts of unavoidable misfortunes, one should make progress in spiritual realization, because that is the mission of human life. The spirit soul is transcendental to all material calamities; therefore, the so-called calamities are called false. A man may see a tiger swallowing him in a dream, and he may cry for this calamity. Actually there is no tiger and there is no suffering, but it is simply a case of dreams. In the same way, all calamities of life are said to be dreams. If someone is lucky enough to get in contact with the Lord by devotional service, it is all gain. Contact with the Lord by any one of the nine devotional services is always a forward step on the path of going back to Godhead.

TEXT 26

जन्मैश्वर्यश्रुतश्रीभिरेषमानमदः पुमान् ।
नैवार्हत्यभिधातुं वै त्वामकिञ्चनगोचरम् ॥२६॥

*janmaishvarya-śruta-śrībhir
edhamāna-madaḥ pumān
nairhaty abhidhātum vai
tvām akiñcana-gocaram*

janma—birth; *aiśvarya*—opulence; *śruta*—education; *śrībhir*—by the possession of beauty; *edhamāna*—progressively increasing; *madaḥ*—intoxication; *pumān*—the human being; *na*—never; *eva*—ever; *arhatī*—deserves; *abhidhātum*—address in feeling; *vai*—certainly; *tvām*—You; *akiñcana-gocaram*—one who is approached easily by the materially exhausted man.

TRANSLATION

My Lord, Your Lordship can easily be approached, but only by those who are materially exhausted. One who is on the path of [material] progress, trying to improve himself with respectable parentage, great opulence, high education and bodily beauty, cannot approach You with sincere feeling.

PURPORT

Being materially advanced means taking birth in an aristocratic family, possessing great wealth, an education and attractive personal beauty. All materialistic men are mad after possessing all these material opulences, and this is known as advancement of material civilization. But the result is that by possessing all these material assets one becomes artificially puffed up, intoxicated by such temporary possessions. Consequently, such materially puffed up persons are incapable of uttering the holy name of the Lord by addressing Him feelingly as "O Govinda, O Kṛṣṇa." It is said in the *śāstras* that by once uttering the holy name of the Lord, the sinner gets rid of a quantity of sins that he is unable to commit. Such is the power of uttering the holy name of the Lord. There is not the least exaggeration in this statement. Actually the Lord's holy name has such powerful potency. But there is a quality to such utterances also. It depends on the quality of feeling. A helpless man can feelingly utter the holy name of the Lord, whereas a man who utters the same holy name in great material satisfaction cannot be so sincere. Therefore, a materially puffed up person may utter the holy name of the Lord occasionally, but he is incapable of uttering the name in quality. Therefore, the four principles of material advancement, namely 1) high parentage, 2) good wealth, 3) high education, and 4) attractive beauty, etc., are, so to speak, disqualifications for progress on the path of spiritual advancement. Material covering of the pure spirit soul is an external feature, as much as fever is an external feature of the unhealthy body. The general process is to decrease the degree of the fever and not to aggravate it by maltreatment. Sometimes it is seen that spiritually advanced persons become materially impoverished. This is no discouragement. On the other hand, such impoverishment is a good sign as much as the falling of temperature is a good sign. The principle of life should be to decrease the degree of material intoxication which leads one to be more and more illusioned about the aim of life. Grossly illusioned persons are quite unfit for entrance into the kingdom of God.

TEXT 27

नमोऽकिंचनवित्ताय निवृत्तगुणवृत्तये ।
आत्मारामाय शान्ताय कैवल्यपतये नमः ॥२७॥

*namo 'kiñcana-vittāya
nivṛtta-guṇa-vṛttaye
ātmā-rāmāya śāntāya
kaivalya-pataye namaḥ*

namaḥ—all obeisances unto You; *akiñcana-vittāya*—unto the property of the materially impoverished; *nivṛtta*—completely transcendental to the actions of the material modes; *guṇa*—material modes; *vṛttaye*—affection; *ātmā-rāmāya*—one who is self-satisfied; *śāntāya*—the most gentle; *kaivalya-pataye*—unto the master of the monists; *namaḥ*—bowing down.

TRANSLATION

My obeisances are unto You, who are the property of the materially impoverished. You have nothing to do with the actions and reactions of the material modes of nature. You are self-satisfied, and therefore You are the most gentle and are master of the monists.

PURPORT

A living being is finished as soon as there is nothing to possess. Therefore a living being cannot be, in the real sense of the term, a renouncer. A living being renounces something for gaining something more valuable. A student sacrifices his childish proclivities to gain better education. A servant gives up his job for a better job. Similarly, a devotee renounces the material world not for nothing but for something tangible in spiritual value. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī and Śrīla Raghunātha Gosvāmī and others gave up their worldly pomp and prosperity for the sake of the service of the Lord. They were big men in the worldly sense. The Gosvāmīs were ministers in the government service of Bengal, and Śrīla Dāsa Gosvāmī was the son of a big *zamindar* of his time. But they left everything to gain something superior to what they previously possessed. The devotees are generally without material prosperity, but they have a very secret treasure house in the lotus feet of the Lord. There is a nice story about Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī. He had a touchstone with him, and this stone was left in a pile of refuse. A needy man took it, but later on wondered why the valuable stone was kept in such a neglected place. He therefore asked for the most valuable thing from him, and then he was given the holy name of the Lord. *Akiñcana* means one who has nothing to give materially. A factual devotee or the *mahātmā* does not give anything material to anyone because he has already left all material assets. He can, however, deliver the supreme asset, namely the Personality of Godhead, because He is the only property of a factual devotee. The touchstone of Sanātana Gosvāmī which was thrown in the rubbish was not the property of the Gosvāmī, otherwise it would not have been kept in such a place. This specific example is given for the neophyte devotees just to convince them that material hankerings and spiritual advancement go ill together. Unless one is able to see everything as spiritual in relation with the Supreme Lord, one must always distinguish between spirit and matter. A spiritual master like Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, although personally able to see everything as spiritual, set this example for us only because we have no such spiritual vision.

Advancement of material vision or material civilization is a great stumbling block for spiritual advancement. Such material advancement entangles the living being in the bondage of a material body followed by all sorts of material miseries. Such material advancement is called *anartha* or things not wanted. Actually this is so. In the present context of material advancement one uses lipstick at a cost of fifty cents and there are so many unwanted things which are all products of the material conception of life. By diverting attention to so many unwanted things, human energy is spoiled without achievement of spiritual realization, the prime necessity of human life. The attempt to reach the moon is another example of spoiling energy because even if the moon is reached, the problems of life will not be solved. The devotees of the Lord are called *akiñcanas* because they have practically no material assets. Such material assets are all products of the three modes of material nature. They foil spiritual energy,

and thus the less we possess such products of material nature, the more we have a good chance for spiritual progress.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead has no direct connection with material activities. All His acts and deeds, which are exhibited even in this material world, are spiritual and without affection of the modes of material nature. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord says that all His acts, even His appearance and disappearance in and out of the material world, are all transcendental, and one who knows this perfectly shall not take his birth again in this material world, but he will go back to Godhead.

The material disease is due to hankering after lording it over material nature. This hankering is due to an interaction of the three modes of nature, and both the Lord and the devotees have no attachment for such false enjoyment. Therefore, the Lord as well as the devotees are called *nivṛtta-guṇa-vṛtti*. The perfect *nivṛtta-guṇa-vṛtti* is the Supreme Lord because He never becomes attracted by the modes of material nature, whereas the living beings have such a tendency. Some of them are entrapped by the illusory attraction of material nature.

Because the Lord is the property of the devotees and the devotees are the property of the Lord, reciprocally the devotees are certainly transcendental to the modes of material nature. That is a natural conclusion. Such unalloyed devotees are distinct from the mixed devotees who approach the Lord for mitigation of miseries and poverty, inquisitiveness and speculation. The unalloyed devotees and the Lord are transcendently attached to one another. For others, the Lord has nothing to reciprocate, and therefore He is called *ātmārāma*, self-satisfied. Self-satisfied as He is, He is the master of all monists who seek to merge into the existence of the Lord. Such monists merge within the personal effulgence of the Lord called the *brahmajyoti*, but the devotees enter into the transcendental pastimes of the Lord, which are never to be misunderstood as material.

TEXT 28

मन्ये त्वां कालमीशानमनादिनिघनं विशुम् ।
समं चरन्तं सर्वत्र भूतानां यन्मिथः कलिः ॥२८॥

*manye tvām kālam īśānam
anādi-nidhanam vibhum
samam carantaṁ sarvatra
bhūtānāṁ yan mithaḥ kaliḥ*

manye—I consider it; *tvām*—Your Lordship; *kālam*—the eternal time; *īśānam*—the Supreme Lord; *anādi-nidhanam*—without beginning and end; *vibhum*—all-pervading; *samam*—equally merciful; *carantaṁ*—distributing; *sarvatra*—everywhere; *bhūtānām*—of the living beings; *yat mithaḥ*—by intercourse; *kaliḥ*—dissension.

TRANSLATION

My Lord, I consider Your Lordship to be eternal time, the supreme controller, without beginning and end, the all-pervasive one. In distributing Your mercy, you are equal to everyone. The dissensions between living beings are due to social intercourse.

PURPORT

Kuntīdevī knew that Kṛṣṇa was neither her nephew nor an ordinary family member of her paternal house. She knew perfectly well that Kṛṣṇa is the primeval Lord who lives in everyone's heart as the Supersoul Paramātmā. Another name of the Paramātmā feature of the Lord is *kāla*, or eternal time. Eternal time is the witness of all our actions good and bad, and thus resultant reactions are destined by Him. It is no use saying that we do not know why and for what we are suffering. We may forget the misdeed for which we may suffer at this present moment, but we must remember that Paramātmā is our constant companion, and therefore He knows everything, past, present, and future. And because the Paramātmā feature of Lord Kṛṣṇa destines all actions and reactions, He is the supreme controller also. Without His sanction not a blade of grass can move. The living beings are given as much freedom as they deserve, and misuse of that freedom is the cause of suffering. The devotees of the Lord do not misuse their freedom, and therefore they are the good sons of the Lord. Others

who misuse freedom, are put into miseries destined by the eternal *kāla*. The *kāla* offers the conditioned souls both happiness and miseries. It is all predestined by eternal time. As we have miseries uncalled-for, so we may have happiness also without being asked, for they are all predestined by *kāla*. No one is therefore either an enemy or friend of the Lord. Everyone is suffering and enjoying the result of his own destiny. This destiny is made by the living beings in course of social intercourse. Everyone wants here to lord it over the material nature, and thus everyone creates his own destiny under the supervision of the Supreme Lord. He is all-pervading, and therefore He can see everyone's activities. And because the Lord has no beginning or end, He is known also as the eternal time, *kāla*.

TEXT 29

न वेद कश्चिद्भगवन्धिकीर्षितं
तवेहमानस्य नृणां विडम्बनम् ।
न यस्य कश्चिद्वितोऽस्ति कर्हिचिद्
द्वेष्यश्च यस्मिन् विषमा मतिर्नृणाम् ॥२९॥

*na veda kaścid bhagavañś cikīrṣitañ
taveha-mānasya nṛṇāñ viḍambanam
na yasya kaścid dayito'sti karhicid
dveṣyaś ca yasmin viṣamā matir nṛṇām*

na—does not; *veda*—know; *kaścit*—anyone; *bhagavan*—O Lord; *cikīrṣitañ*—pastimes; *tava*—Your; *īha-mānasya*—like the worldly men; *nṛṇām*—of the people in general; *viḍambanam*—misleading; *na*—never; *yasya*—His; *kaścit*—anyone; *dayitaḥ*—object of specific favor; *asti*—there is; *karhicit*—anywhere; *dveṣyaḥ*—object of envy; *ca*—and; *yasmin*—unto Him; *viṣamā*—partiality; *matih*—conception; *nṛṇām*—of the people.

TRANSLATION

O Lord, no one can understand Your transcendental pastimes, which appear to be human and so are misleading. You have no specific object of favor, nor do You have any object of envy. People only imagine that You are partial.

PURPORT

The Lord's mercy upon the fallen souls is equally distributed. He has no one as the specific object of hostility. The very conception of the Personality of Godhead as a human being is misleading. His pastimes appear to be exactly like a human being's, but actually they are transcendental and without any tinge of material contamination. He is undoubtedly known as partial to His pure devotees, but in fact He is never partial, as much as the sun is never partial to anyone. By utilizing the sun rays, sometimes even the stones become valuable, whereas a blind man cannot see the sun, although there are enough sun rays before him. Darkness and light are two opposite conceptions, but this does not mean that the sun is partial in distributing its rays. The sun rays are open to everyone, but the capacities of the receptacles differ. Foolish people think that devotional service is flattering the Lord to get special mercy. Factually the pure devotees who are engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord are not a mercantile community. A mercantile house renders service to someone in exchange of values. The pure devotee does not render service unto the Lord for such exchange, and therefore the full mercy of the Lord is open for him. Suffering and needy men, inquisitive persons or the philosophers make temporary connections with the Lord to serve a particular purpose. When the purpose is served, there is no more relation with the Lord. A suffering man, if he is pious at all, prays to the Lord for his recovery. But as soon as the recovery is over, in most cases the suffering man no longer cares to keep any connection with the Lord. The mercy of the Lord is open for him, but he is reluctant to receive it. That is the difference between a pure devotee and a mixed devotee. Those who are completely against the service of the Lord are considered to be in abject darkness, those who ask for the Lord's favor only at the time of necessity are partial recipients of the mercy of the Lord, and those who are cent percent engaged in the service of the Lord are full recipients of the mercy of the Lord. Such partiality of receiving the Lord's mercy is relative to the recipient, and it is not due to the partiality of the all-merciful Lord.

When the Lord descends on this material world by His all-merciful energy, He plays like a human being, and therefore it appears that the Lord is partial to His devotees only, but that is not a fact. Despite such apparent manifestation of partiality, His mercy is equally distributed. In the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra all persons who died in the fight before the presence of the Lord got salvation without the necessary qualifications because death before the presence of the Lord purifies the passing soul from the effects of all sins, and therefore the dying man gets a place somewhere in the transcendental abode. Somehow or other if someone puts himself open in the sun rays, he is sure to get the requisite benefit both by heat and ultraviolet rays. Therefore, the conclusion is that the Lord is never partial. It is wrong for the people in general to think of Him as partial.

TEXT 30

जन्म कर्म च विश्वात्मन्नजस्याकर्तुरात्मनः ।
तिर्यङ्मुषिषु यादःसु तदत्यन्तविडम्बनम् ॥३०॥

*janma karma ca viśvātmanñ
ajasyākartur ātmanaḥ
tiryañ nṛṣiṣu yādaḥsu
tad atyanta-viḍambanam*

janma—birth; *karma*—activity; *ca*—and; *viśva-ātman*—O soul of the universe; *ajasya*—of the unborn; *akartuḥ*—of the inactive; *ātmanaḥ*—of the vital energy; *tiryak*—animal; *nṛ*—human being; *ṛṣiṣu*—in the sages; *yādaḥsu*—in the water; *tat*—that; *atyanta*—veritable; *viḍambanam*—bewildering.

TRANSLATION

Of course it is bewildering, O soul of the universe, that You work, though You are inactive, and that You take birth, though You are the vital force and the unborn. You Yourself descend amongst animals, men, sages and aquatics. Verily, this is bewildering.

PURPORT

The transcendental pastimes of the Lord are not only bewildering but also apparently contradictory. In other words, they are all inconceivable to the limited thinking power of the human being. The Lord is the all-prevailing Supersoul of all existence, and yet He appears in the form of boar amongst the animals, in the form of a human being as Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, etc., in the form of a *ṛṣi* like Nārāyaṇa, and in the form of an aquatic like a fish. Yet it is said that He is unborn, and He has nothing to do. In the *Śruti mantra* it is said that the Supreme Brahman has nothing to do. No one is equal to or greater than Him. He has manifold energies, and everything is performed by Him perfectly by automatic knowledge, strength and activity. All these prove without any question that the Lord's activities, forms and deeds are all inconceivable to our limited thinking power, but because He is inconceivably powerful, everything is possible in Him. Therefore no one can calculate Him exactly; every action of the Lord is bewildering to the common man. He cannot be understood by the Vedic knowledge, but He can be easily understood by the pure devotees because they are intimately related with Him. The devotees therefore know that although He appears amongst the animals, He is not an animal, nor a man, nor a *ṛṣi*, nor a fish. He is eternally the Supreme Lord in all circumstances.

TEXT 31

गोप्याददे त्वयि कृतागसि दाम तावद्
या ते दशाश्रुकलिलाञ्जनसम्भ्रमाक्षम् ।
वक्त्रं निनीय भयभावनया स्थितस्य
सामां विमोहयति भीरपि यस्मिभेति ॥३१॥

*gopy ādade tvayi kṛtāgasi dāma tāvad
yā te daśāśru-kalilāñjana-sambhramākṣam
vaktrañ ninīya bhaya-bhāvanayā sthitasya
sā māñ vimohayati bhīr api yad bibheti*

gopī—the cowherd lady (Yaśodā); *ādade*—took up; *tvayi*—on You; *kṛtāgasi*—creating disturbances (by breaking the butter pot); *dāma*—rope; *tāvat*—at that time; *yā*—that which; *te*—Your; *daśā*—situation; *āśru-kalīla*—overflooded with tears; *añjana*—ointment; *sambhrama*—perturbed; *akṣam*—eyes; *vaktram*—face; *niniya*—downwards; *bhaya-bhāvanayā*—by thoughts of fear; *sthitasya*—of the situation; *sā*—that; *mām*—me; *vimohayati*—bewilders; *bhūḥ api*—even fear personified; *yat*—whom; *bibheti*—be afraid of.

TRANSLATION

My dear Kṛṣṇa, Yaśodā took up a rope to bind You when You committed an offense, and Your perturbed eyes overflowed with tears, which washed the mascara from Your eyes. And You were afraid, though fear personified is afraid of You. This sight is bewildering to me.

PURPORT

Here is another explanation of the bewilderment created by the pastimes of the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Lord is the Supreme in all circumstances, as already explained. Here is a specific example of the Lord's being the Supreme and at the same time a plaything in the presence of His pure devotee. The Lord's pure devotee renders service unto the Lord out of unalloyed love only, and while discharging such devotional service the pure devotee forgets the position of the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Lord also accepts the loving service of His devotees more relishably when the service is rendered spontaneously out of pure affection without anything of reverential admiration. Generally the Lord is worshiped by the devotees in reverential attitude, but the Lord is meticulously pleased when the devotee, out of pure affection and love, considers the Lord to be less important than himself. The Lord's pastimes in the original abode of Goloka Vṛndāvana are exchanged in that spirit. The friends of Kṛṣṇa consider Him one of them. They do not consider Him to be of reverential importance. The parents of the Lord (who are all pure devotees) consider Him a child only. The Lord accepts chastisements of the parents more cheerfully than the prayers of the Vedic hymns. Similarly, He accepts the reproaches of His fiancées more palatably than the Vedic hymns. Lord Kṛṣṇa, when He was present in this material world to manifest His eternal pastimes in the transcendental realm of Goloka Vṛndāvana for an attraction of the people in general, displayed a unique picture of subordination before His foster mother Yaśodā. The Lord, in His natural childish playful activities, used to spoil the stocked butter of mother Yaśodā by breaking the pots and distributing the contents to His friends and playmates, including the celebrated monkeys of Vṛndāvana who took advantage of the Lord's munificence. Mother Yaśodā saw this, and out of her pure love she wanted to make a show of punishment for her transcendental child. She took a rope and threatened the Lord that she would tie Him up, as is generally done in the ordinary household. Seeing the rope in the hands of mother Yaśodā, the Lord bowed down His head and began to weep just like a child, and tears rolled down His cheeks, washing off the black ointment smeared about His beautiful eyes. This picture of the Lord is adored by Kuntīdevī because she is conscious of the Lord's supreme position. He is feared often by fear personified, yet He is afraid of His mother, who wanted to punish Him just in an ordinary manner. Kuntī was conscious of the exalted position of Kṛṣṇa, whereas Yaśodā was not. Therefore Yaśodā's position was more exalted than Kuntī's. Mother Yaśodā got the Lord as her child, and the Lord made her forget altogether that her child was the Lord Himself. If mother Yaśodā would have been conscious of the exalted position of the Lord, she would certainly have hesitated to punish the Lord. But she was made to forget this situation because the Lord wanted to make a complete gesture of childishness before the affectionate Yaśodā. This exchange of love between the mother and the son was performed in a natural way, and Kuntī, remembering the scene, was bewildered, and she could do nothing but praise the transcendental filial love. Indirectly Mother Yaśodā is praised for her unique position of love, for she could control even the all-powerful Lord as her beloved child.

TEXT 32

केचिदाहुरजं ज.तं पुण्यश्लोकस्य कीर्तये ।
यदोः प्रियस्थान्वावाये मलयस्यैव चन्दनम् ॥३२॥

kecid āhur ajam jātam
puṇya-ślokasya kīrtaye
yadoḥ priyaśānāvāye
malasyasyeva candanam

kecit—someone; *āhuḥ*—says; *ajam*—the unborn; *jātam*—being born; *puṇya-ślokasya*—of the great pious king; *kīrtaye*—for glorifying; *yadoḥ*—of King Yadu; *priyaśāya*—of the dear; *anāvāye*—in the family of; *malasyasya*—Malaya hills; *iva*—as; *candanam*—sandalwood.

TRANSLATION

Some say that the Unborn is born for the glorification of pious kings, and others say that He is born to please King Yadu, one of Your dearest devotees. You appear in his family as sandalwood appears in the Malaya hills.

PURPORT

Because the Lord's appearance in this material world is bewildering, there are different opinions about the birth of the Unborn. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord says that He takes His birth in the material world, although He is the Lord of all creations and He is unborn. So there cannot be any denial of the birth of the Unborn because He Himself establishes the truth. But still there are different opinions as to why He takes His birth. That is also declared in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. He appears by His own internal potency to reestablish the principles of religion and to protect the pious and to annihilate the impious. That is the mission of the appearance of the Unborn. Still, it is said that the Lord is there to glorify the pious King Yudhiṣṭhira. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa certainly wanted to establish the kingdom of the Pāṇḍavas for the good of all in the world. When there is a pious king ruling over the world, the people are happy. When the ruler is impious, the people are unhappy. In the age of Kali in most cases the rulers are impious, and therefore the citizens are also continuously unhappy. But in the case of democracy, the impious citizens themselves send their representative to rule over them, and therefore they cannot blame anyone for their unhappiness. Mahārāja Nala was also celebrated as a great pious king, but he had no connection with Lord Kṛṣṇa. Therefore Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira is meant here to be glorified by Lord Kṛṣṇa. He had also glorified King Yadu, having taken His birth in the family. He is known as Yādava, Yaduvira, Yadunandana, etc., although the Lord is always independent of such obligation. It is just like the sandalwood that grows in the Malaya hills. Trees can grow anywhere and everywhere, yet because the sandalwood trees grow mostly in the area of the Malaya hills, the name sandalwood and the Malaya hills are interrelated. Therefore, the conclusion is that the Lord is ever unborn like the sun, and yet He appears as the sun rises on the eastern horizon. As the sun is never the sun of the eastern horizon, so the Lord is no one's son, but He is the father of everything that be.

TEXT 33

अपरे वसुदेवस्य देवक्यां याचितोऽभ्यगात् ।
अजस्त्वमस्य क्षेमाय वधाय च सुरद्विषाम् ॥३३॥

apare vasudevasya
devakyām yācito 'bhyagāt
ajas tvam asya kṣemāya
vadhāya ca sura-dviṣām

apare—others; *vasudevasya*—of Vasudeva; *devakyām*—of Devakī; *yācitaḥ*—being prayed for; *abhyagāt*—took birth; *ajam*—unborn; *tvam*—You are; *asya*—of him; *kṣemāya*—for the good; *vadhāya*—for the purpose of killing; *ca*—and; *sura-dviṣām*—of those who are envious of the demigods.

TRANSLATION

Others say that since both Vasudeva and Devakī prayed for You, You have taken Your birth as their son. Undoubtedly You are unborn, yet You take Your birth for their welfare and to kill those who are envious of the demigods.

PURPORT

It is also said that Vasudeva and Devakī, in their previous birth as Sutapa and Prēni, underwent a severe type of penance to get the Lord as their son, and as a result of such austerities the Lord appeared as their son. It is already declared in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that the Lord appears for the welfare of all people of the world and to vanquish the *asuras* or the materialistic atheists.

TEXT 34

मारावतारणायान्ये भ्रुवो नाव इवोदधौ ।
सिदन्त्या भूरिमारेण जातो ब्राम्हण्युवार्थितः ॥३४॥

bhāra-avatāraṇāyānye
bhruvo nāva ivodadhau
sīdantya bhūri-bhāreṇa
jāto hy ātmabhuvārthitaḥ

bhāra-avatāraṇāya—just to reduce the burden to the world; *anye*—others; *bhruvaḥ*—of the world; *nāvaḥ*—boat; *iva*—like that; *udadhau*—on the sea; *sīdantyaḥ*—aggrieved; *bhūri*—extremely; *bhāreṇa*—by the burden; *jātaḥ*—You are born; *hi*—for; *ātmabhuvā*—Brahmā; *arthitaḥ*—being prayed for.

TRANSLATION

Others say that the world, being overburdened like a boat at sea, is much aggrieved, and that Brahmā, who is Your son, prayed for You, and so You have appeared to diminish the trouble.

PURPORT

Brahmā, or the first living being born just after the creation, is the direct son of Nārāyaṇa. Nārāyaṇa, as Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, first of all entered the material universe. Without spiritual contact, matter cannot create. This principle was followed from the very beginning of the creation. The Supreme Spirit entered the universe, and the first living being, Brahmā, was born on a lotus flower grown out of the transcendental abdomen of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu is therefore known as Padmanabha. Brahmā is known as *ātma-bhū* because he was begotten directly from the father without any contact of mother Lakṣmījī. Lakṣmījī was present just before Nārāyaṇa, engaged in the service of the Lord, and still, without contact with Lakṣmījī, Nārāyaṇa begot Brahmā. That is the omnipotency of the Lord. One who foolishly considers Nārāyaṇa like other living beings should take a lesson from this. Nārāyaṇa is not an ordinary living being. He is the Personality of Godhead Himself, and He has all the potencies of all the senses in all parts of His transcendental body. An ordinary living being begets a child by the intercourse of sex, and he has no other means to beget a child other than the one designed for him. But Nārāyaṇa, being omnipotent, is not bound to any condition of energy. He is complete and independent to do anything and everything by His various potencies, very easily and perfectly. Brahmā is therefore directly the son of the father and was not put into the womb of a mother. Therefore he is known as *ātma-bhū*. This Brahmā is in charge of further creations in the universe, secondarily reflected by the potency of the Omnipotent. Within the halo of the universe there is a transcendental planet known as Śvetadvīpa, which is the abode of the Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, the Paramātmā feature of the Supreme Lord. Whenever there is trouble in the universe that cannot be solved by the administrative demigods, they approach Brahmājī for a solution, and if it is not to be solved even by Brahmājī then Brahmājī consults and prays to the Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu for an incarnation and solution to the problems. Such a problem arose when Kaṁsa and others were ruling over the earth and the earth became too much overburdened by the misdeeds of the *asuras*. Brahmājī, along with other demigods, prayed at the shore of the Kṣīrodaka Ocean, and they were advised of the descent of Kṛṣṇa as the son of Vasudeva and Devakī. So some people say that the Lord appeared because of the prayers of Brahmājī.

TEXT 35

मवेऽस्मिन् क्लिश्यमानानामविद्याकामकर्मभिः ।
भ्रवणसरगार्हाणि करिष्यन्ति केचन ॥३५॥

bhave'smin klišya-mānānām
avidyā-kāma-karmabhīḥ
śravaṇa-smaraṇārthāṇi
karīṣyann iti kecana

bhave—in the material creation; *asmin*—this; *klišya-mānānām*—of those who are suffering from; *avidyā*—nescience; *kāma*—desire; *karmabhīḥ*—by execution of fruitive work; *śravaṇa*—hearing; *smaraṇa*—remembering; *arthāṇi*—worshiping; *karīṣyan*—may perform; *iti*—thus; *kecana*—others.

TRANSLATION

And yet others say that You appeared to rejuvenate the devotional service of hearing, remembering, worshiping and so on in order that the conditioned souls suffering from material pangs might take advantage and gain liberation.

PURPORT

In the *Śrīmad-Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord asserts that He appears in every millennium just to reestablish the way of religion. The way of religion is made by the Supreme Lord. No one can manufacture a new path of religion, as is the fashion for certain ambitious persons. The factual way of religion is to accept the Lord as the supreme authority and thus render service unto Him in spontaneous love. A living being cannot help but render service because he is constitutionally made for that purpose. The only function of the living being is to render service to the Lord. The Lord is great, and living beings are subordinate to Him. Therefore, the duty of the living being is just to serve Him only. Unfortunately the illusioned living beings, out of misunderstanding only, become servants of the senses by material desire. This desire is called *avidyā*, or nescience. And out of such desire the living being makes different plans for material enjoyment centered about a perverted sex life. He therefore becomes entangled in the chain of birth and death by transmigrating into different bodies on different planets under the direction of the Supreme Lord. Unless, therefore, one is beyond the boundary of this nescience, one cannot get free from the threefold miseries of material life. That is the law of nature.

The Lord, however, out of His causeless mercy, because He is more merciful to the suffering living beings than they can expect, appears before them and renovates the principles of devotional service comprised of hearing, chanting, remembering, serving, worshiping, praying, cooperating and surrendering unto Him. Adoption of all the above-mentioned items, or any one of them, can help a conditioned soul get out of the tangle of nescience and thus become liberated from all material sufferings created by the living being illusioned by the external energy. This particular type of mercy is bestowed upon the living being by the Lord in the form of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

TEXT 36

शृण्वन्ति गायन्ति गृणन्त्यभीक्ष्णशः
सरन्ति नन्दन्ति तवेहितं जनाः ।
त एव पश्यन्त्यचिरेण तावकं
भवप्रवाहोपरमं पदाम्बुजम् ॥३६॥

śṛṇvanti gāyanti gṛṇanty abhīkṣṇaśaḥ
smaranti nandanti tavehitam janāḥ
ta eva paśyanty acireṇa tāvakam
bhava-pravāhōparamaṁ padāmbujam

śṛṇvanti—hear; *gāyanti*—chant; *gṛṇanti*—take; *abhīkṣṇaśaḥ*—continuously; *smaranti*—remembers; *nandanti*—takes pleasure; *tava*—Your; *ihitam*—activities; *janāḥ*—people in general; *ta*—that; *eva*—certainly; *paśyanti*—can see; *acireṇa*—very soon; *tāvakam*—Your; *bhava-pravāha*—the current of rebirth; *uparamam*—cessation; *pada-ambujam*—lotus feet.

TRANSLATION

O Kṛṣṇa, those who continuously hear, chant and repeat Your transcendental activities, or take pleasure in others' doing so, certainly see Your lotus feet, which alone can stop the repetition of birth and death.

PURPORT

The Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa cannot be seen by our present conditional vision. In order to see Him, the present vision has to be changed by developing a different condition of life full of spontaneous love of Godhead. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa was personally present on the face of the globe, not everyone could see Him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Materialists like Rāvaṇa, Hiraṇyakaśipu, Kaṁsa, Jarāsandha, Śiśupāla, etc., were highly qualified personalities by acquisition of material assets, but they were unable to appreciate the presence of the Lord. Therefore, even though the Lord may be present before our eyes, it is not possible to see Him unless we have the necessary vision. This necessary qualification is developed by the process of devotional service only, beginning with hearing about the Lord from the right sources. The *Bhagavad-gītā* is one of the popular literatures which is generally heard, chanted, repeated, etc., by the people in general, but in spite of such hearing, etc., sometimes it is experienced that the performer of such devotional service does not see the Lord eye to eye. The reason is that the first item, *śravaṇa*, is very important. If hearing is from the right sources, it acts very quickly. Generally people hear from unauthorized persons. Such unauthorized persons may be very learned by academic qualifications, but because they do not follow the principles of devotional service, hearing from them becomes a sheer waste of time. Sometimes the texts are interpreted fashionably to suit their own purposes. Therefore, first one should select a competent and bona fide speaker and then hear from him. When the hearing process is perfect and complete, the other processes become automatically perfect in their own way.

There are different transcendental activities of the Lord, and each and every one of them is competent to bestow the desired result, provided the hearing process is perfect. In the *Bhāgavatam* the activities of the Lord begin from His dealings with the Pāṇḍavas. There are many other pastimes of the Lord in connection with His dealings with the *asuras* and others. And in the Tenth Canto the sublime dealing with His conjugal associates the *gopīs*, as well as with His married wives at Dvārakā, are mentioned. Since the Lord is absolute, there is no difference in the transcendental nature of each and every dealing of the Lord. But sometimes people, in an unauthorized hearing process, take more interest in hearing about His dealings with the *gopīs*. Such an inclination indicates the lusty feelings of the hearer, so a bona fide speaker of the dealings of the Lord never indulges in such hearings. One must hear about the Lord from the very beginning, as in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or any other scriptures, and that will help the hearer attain perfection by progressive development. One should not, therefore, consider that His dealings with the Pāṇḍavas are less important than His dealings with the *gopīs*. We must always remember that the Lord is always transcendental to all mundane attachment. In all the above-mentioned dealings of the Lord, He is the hero in all circumstances, and hearing about Him or about His devotees or combatants is conducive to spiritual life. It is said that the *Vedas* and *Purāṇas*, etc., are all made to revive our lost relation with Him. Hearing of all these scriptures is essential.

TEXT 37

अप्यद्य नस्त्वं स्वकृतेहित प्रभो
जिहाससि खित्सुहृदोऽनुजीविनः ।
येषां न चान्यद्भवतः पदाम्बुजाद्
परायणं राजसु योजिताहसाम् ॥३७॥

apy adya na tvam̐ sva-kṛtehita prabho
jihāsasi svit suhṛdo 'nujīvinah
yeṣāṁ na cānyad bhavataḥ padāmbujāt
parāyaṇam̐ rājasu yojitām̐ hasām̐

api—if; adya—today; naḥ—us; tvam—You; sva-kṛta—self-executed; ihita—
all duties; prabho—O my Lord; jihāsasi—giving up; svit—possibly; suhṛdaḥ

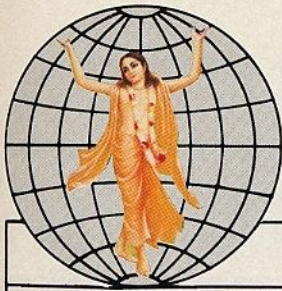
—intimate friends; *anujīvinah*—living at the mercy of; *yeṣām*—of whom; *na*—nor; *ca*—and; *anyat*—anyone else; *bhavataḥ*—Your; *pada-ambujāt*—from the lotus feet; *parāyaṇam*—dependent; *rājasu*—unto the kings; *yojitām*—engaged in; *hasām*—enmity.

TRANSLATION

O my Lord, You have executed all duties Yourself. Are you leaving us today, though we are completely dependent on Your mercy and have no one else to protect us now when all kings are at enmity with us?

PURPORT

The Pāṇḍavas are most fortunate because with all good luck they were entirely dependent on the mercy of the Lord. In the material world, to be dependent on the mercy of someone else is the utmost sign of misfortune, but in the case of our transcendental relation with the Lord, it is the most fortunate case when we can live completely dependent on Him. The material disease is due to thinking of becoming independent of everything. But the cruel material nature does not allow us to become independent. The false attempt to become independent of the stringent laws of nature is known as material advancement of experimental knowledge. The whole material world is moving on this false attempt of becoming independent of the laws of nature. Beginning from Rāvaṇa, who wanted to prepare a direct staircase to the planets of heaven, down to the present age, they are trying to overcome the laws of nature. They are trying now to approach distant planetary systems by electronic mechanical power. But the highest goal of human civilization is to work hard under the guidance of the Lord and become completely dependent on Him. The highest achievement of perfect civilization is to work with valor but at the same time depend completely on the Lord. The Pāṇḍavas were the ideal executors of this standard of civilization. Undoubtedly they were completely dependent on the good will of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but they were not idle parasites of the Lord. They were all highly qualified both by personal character and physical activities. Still they always looked for the mercy of the Lord because they knew that every living being is dependent by constitutional position. The perfection of life is, therefore, to become dependent on the will of the Lord, instead of becoming falsely independent in the material world. Those who try to become falsely independent of the Lord are called *anātha*, or without any guardian, whereas those who are completely dependent on the will of the Lord are called *sanātha*, or those having someone to protect them. Therefore we must try to be *sanātha* so that we can always be protected from the unfavorable condition of material existence. By the deluding power of the external material nature we forget that the material condition of life is the most undesirable perplexity. The *Bhagavad-gītā* therefore directs us (7.19) that after many, many births one fortunate person becomes aware of the fact that Vāsudeva is all in all and that the best way of leading one's life is to surrender unto Him completely. That is the sign of a *mahātmā*. All the members of the Pāṇḍava family were *mahātmās* in household life. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was the head of these *mahātmās*, and Queen Kuntīdevī was the mother. The lessons of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and all the *Purāṇas*, specifically the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, are therefore inevitably connected with the history of the Pāṇḍava *mahātmās*. For them, separation from the Lord was just like the separation of a fish from water. Śrīmatī Kuntīdevī, therefore, felt such separation like a thunderbolt, and the whole prayer of the Queen is to try to persuade the Lord to stay with them. After the Battle of Kurukṣetra, although the inimical kings were killed, their sons and grandsons were still there to deal with the Pāṇḍavas. It is not only the Pāṇḍavas who were put into the condition of enmity, but all of us are always in such a condition, and the best way of living is to become completely dependent on the will of the Lord and thereby overcome all difficulties of material existence. (continued in next issue)



ISKCON NEWS

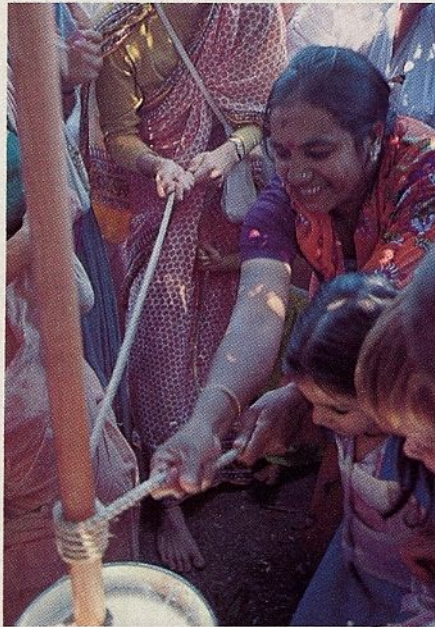
A look at the worldwide activities of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Birthday Celebration: Kṛṣṇa Takes the Cake

On August 18, thousands of Los Angeles residents saw Lord Kṛṣṇa's birthday celebration, both in person (at ISKCON's Los Angeles center) and on television. Three stations and the Los Angeles *Times* covered this commemoration of Kṛṣṇa's appearance on earth.

The event climaxed with a special gift to Lord Kṛṣṇa: a half-ton cake shaped like an ancient Indian palace, complete with domes and balconies, colored lights, nectar-showing fountains, and gingerbread elephants. (The edible edifice took five days to make and ten days to eat.) Aside from the cake, the devotees offered the Lord 745 dishes; so there was plenty for everyone.

Inside and outside the temple, transcendental bands played and sang the Lord's glories. Also, the festival featured a butter-churning contest (right) and exhibits of transcendental sculpture, paintings, and books. Similar celebrations took place at other ISKCON centers worldwide.



Spiritual Classic Now Available in Chinese

For the first time ever, the nearly one billion residents of China can read an authorized translation of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Śrīla Prabhupāda commented that the publication, on June 1, of the first six chapters of the Chinese *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* (translation from the English by Yaśomati-suta dāsa) was "a great triumph in the effort to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world." Distribution of the new book in Hong Kong and Taiwan has begun.

New ISKCON Center at Himalayan Foothills

ISKCON devotees have opened a new center in Candigarh, the capital city of the northwest Indian states of Punjab and Harayana, at the base of the Himalayan mountains. At present, the fledgling center boasts only five members (including president Caityaguru dāsa), all from India, England, and America. Despite this shortage of manpower, the residents have responded to Kṛṣṇa consciousness enthusiastically.

Both the Governor of Punjab and the Chief Minister of Harayana have declared publicly that they will assist the Kṛṣṇa conscious movement in every way possible.

Transcendental Safari Through African Northeast

Recently, Jagatguru Svāmī and several other devotees journeyed through the African states of Kenya, Ethiopia, Somaliland, French Afar, and Sudan to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and give classes on the

Bhagavad-gītā As It Is. The people of northern Sudan found Kṛṣṇa consciousness particularly attractive, and the devotees plan to return to that area soon.

Sociologists Speak Highly of Bhaktivedanta Book Trust Publications

Dr. Elwin H. Powell, Professor of Sociology at the State University of New York (Buffalo), recently made this evaluation of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*: "While I would not presume to assess the metaphysical validity of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, I would urge my fellow sociologists to examine the work as a possible key to understanding what Sorokin called 'ideational cultures.' This transcendental mysticism from the East is now taking root in the 'counter-cultures' of the West and providing, for many, a way out of the anomie—the wilderness—of a disintegrating civilization."

And Dr. C. L. Spreadbury, Professor of Sociology at Stephen F. Austin University, remarked, "The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Śrī Īsopaniṣad* provide insight into the culture of India in a way which ordinary textbooks cannot do for sociologists. These books provide insight into sociology of religion, stratification, and control without ever needing to use those particular words. The books are not only beautiful, but also relevant to our times as we as a nation search for new cultural patterns for our way of life."

Vedic Calendar

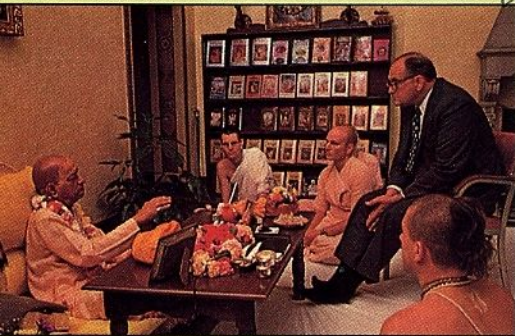
Year 490, Caitanya Era

Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees follow a spiritual calendar that divides the year into twelve months, each named for a different form of Kṛṣṇa. The year is full of Kṛṣṇa conscious festivals, and some of the upcoming ones are listed here. The devotees of the ISKCON center nearest you will gladly tell you about the meaning of these festivals.

Oct. 3	Oct. 4	Oct. 5	Oct. 8	Oct. 13	Oct. 16	Oct. 17
Rāmacandra-vijayotsava (the celebration of Rāma's victory over Rāvana). Appearance of Madhvacārya.	Pīpītkūśh Ekādāśī (fasting from grains and beans). Beginning of Kārtika-vrata.	Break-fast after sunrise, before 9:07 A.M. Disappearance of Raghunātha dāsa. Raghunātha Bhajja, and Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī.	Śāradīyā Rāsa-yātrā of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Disappearance of Murdī Gupta. Full moon.	Disappearance of Narottama dāsa Thākura.	Bathing festival at Rādhā-kūṇḍa Bahulāṣṭamī.	Appearance of Vṛcandira Gosvāmī. Beginning of Ūja-vrata.
Oct. 19	Oct. 20	Oct. 23	Oct. 24	Oct. 25	Oct. 30	Nov. 2
Rāmā Ekādāśī (fasting from grains and beans). Disappearance of Naraṇa Sarakīra Thākura.	Break-fast after sunrise, before 9:27 A.M.	Solar eclipse at Kurukṣetra.	Covardhana-pōjā. Annakūṭa Mahotsava. Appearance of Rāmakānda Gosvāmī.	Disappearance of Vāṇudeva Chosa.	Gopāṣṭamī. Disappearance of Śrīnivāśīcārya. Dīkṣābhāya Paṇḍita, and Gadādhara dāsa Gosvāmī.	Uttānā Ekādāśī (fasting from grains and beans). Disappearance of Gaurakīṣora dāsa Bābājī.
Nov. 3	Nov. 5	Nov. 6	Nov. 7	Nov. 11		
Break-fast after sunrise, before 9:29 A.M. End of the Cāturmāsya that began on Sayana Ekādāśī (July 8). End of Ūja-vrata.	Disappearance of Bhūgarbha Gosvāmī and Kāśīśvara Paṇḍita.	End of the Cāturmāsya that began on full moon (July 11). Haimantikā Rāsa-yātrā of Lord Kṛṣṇa.	Beginning of the Kāṭyāyāni-vrata of the gopis.	End of the Cāturmāsya that began on July 16.		

SUMMER

In the last eleven years, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda (center) has circled the globe thirteen times to talk on Kṛṣṇa consciousness with disciples, reporters, professors, and public officials. What follows is a sampling of highlights from Śrīla Prabhupāda's tour of America this summer.



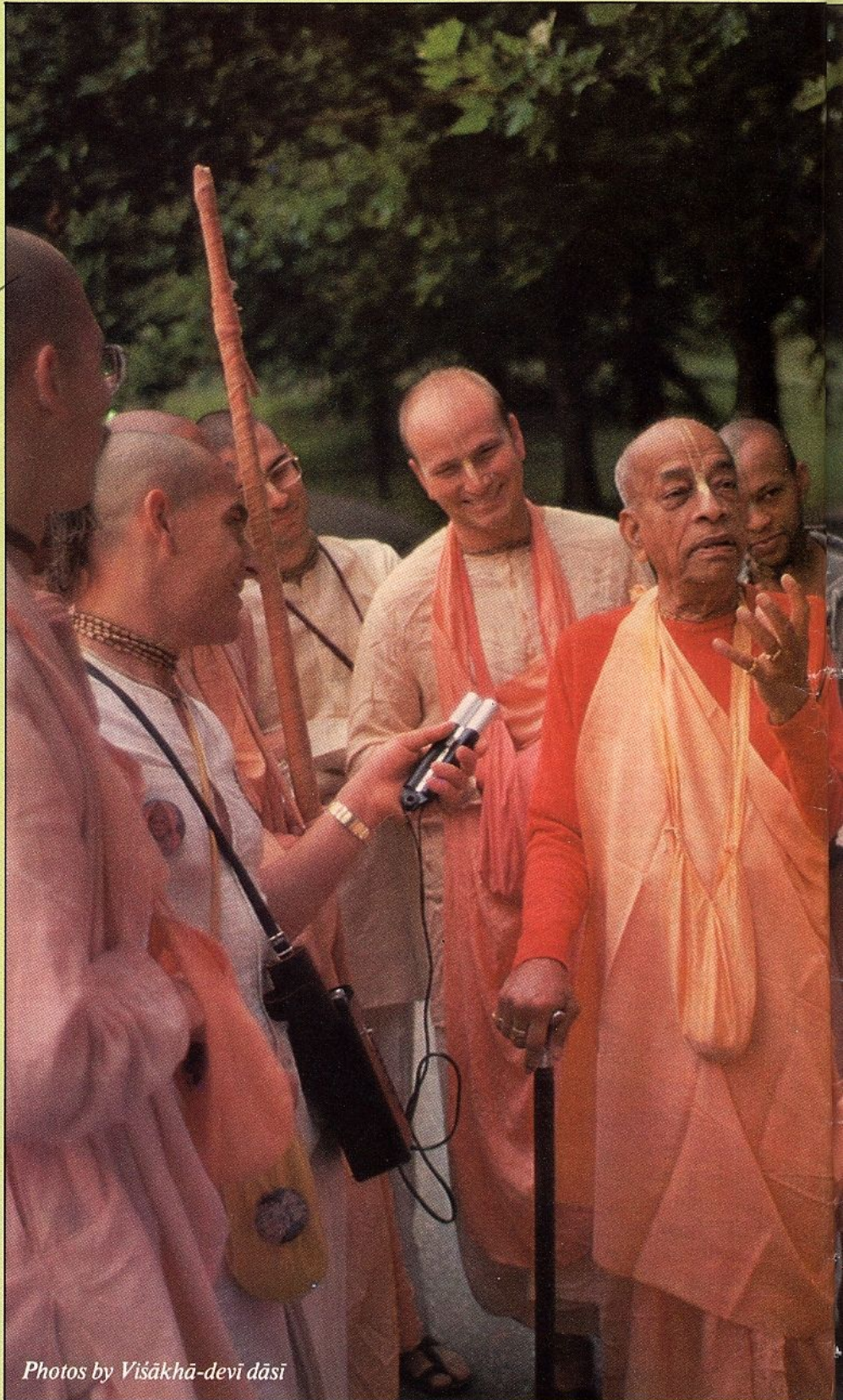
On June 1 Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived in Los Angeles, and he spent ten days at ISKCON's world headquarters there before flying to Detroit. At Detroit's ISKCON center he met with Mr. George Gullen, president of Wayne State University.

Mr. Gullen: I think we are terribly caught up in things not of the spirit.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Material things, like your body or my body, are temporary. They will not last. The body has taken birth at a certain date, it will endure for a certain number of years, and then it will be finished. But the spirit—that will continue. It will accept another body. Just as I gave up my childhood body and accepted the body of a boy, then gave up my boyhood body and accepted the body of a young man, similarly, my present body (I am now an old man) will soon be finished, and I will accept another body. So the spirit soul is eternal and the body is temporary. We are taking care of the body very much, and that is required, but what about the spirit soul? This education is lacking.

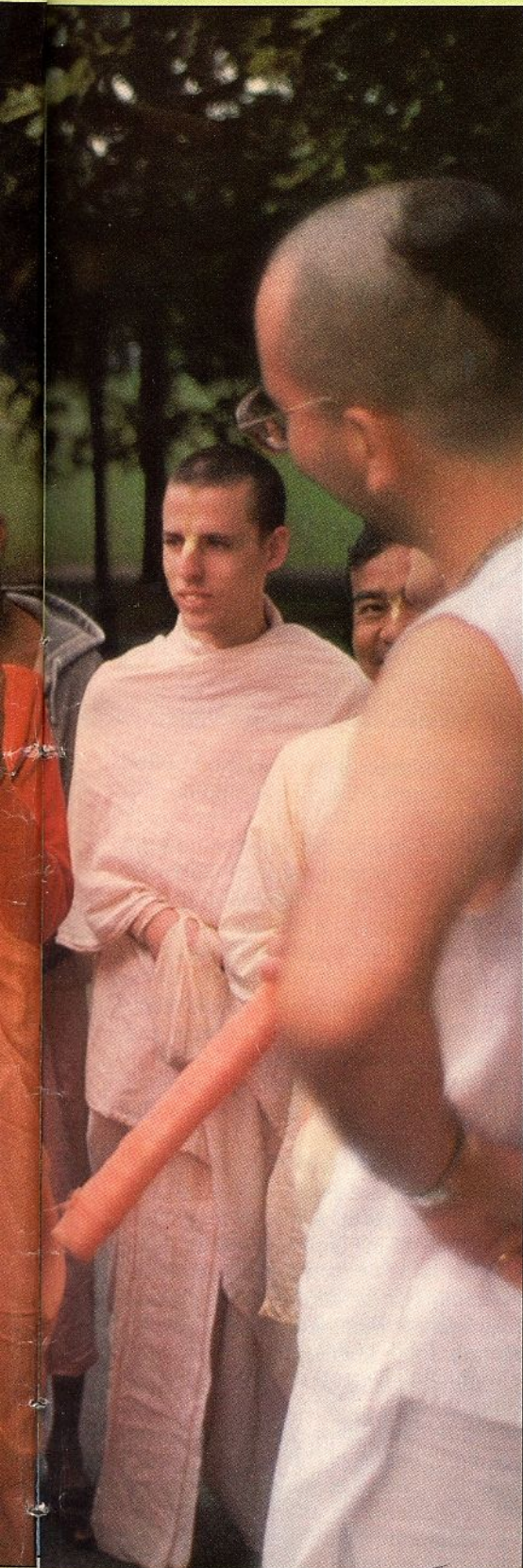
Mr. Gullen: Yes, this is true.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The human body is especially important because, unlike the cats and dogs, it has complete consciousness by which we can understand



Photos by Viśākhā-devī dāśī

R SESSIONS



God. Therefore, if we do not use this developed consciousness for understanding God and our relationship with Him, then we are no better than cats and dogs. The distinction between animals and man is that we can be educated about God. But modern education is keeping people in ignorance about God. It is keeping them on the level of cats and dogs. And how can you have peace among cats and dogs? If you bring all the dogs of your city together, will they sit down peacefully? No, it is not possible. So, if we keep our citizens on the level of cats and dogs, how can we expect peace? The leaders of society must take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or God consciousness, if they are serious about the advancement of civilization.

Mr. Gullen: We do not teach these things in public schools because we do not know about them.

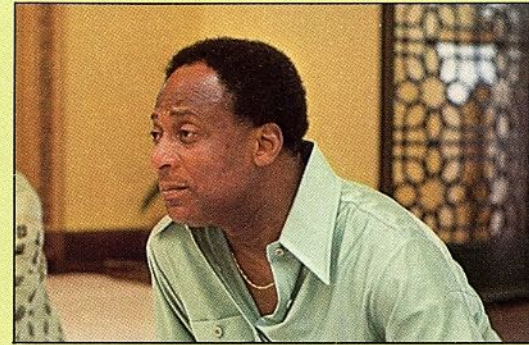
Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Now you must decide whether to remain in ignorance or learn this science and teach it. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not sectarian; it is a science for the whole human society.

Mr. Gullen: Personally, I would like to learn more. I think this is good for the whole world. It is needed.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, the opportunity of the human form of life must be utilized for self-realization. There is no alternative; otherwise, human life will be spoiled. Suppose a person is due to receive his father's money. If someone checks him so that he does not get it, that's a heinous act. The actual inheritor must get it; that is justice. Similarly, in this human form of life one can receive education about God. If it is lacking, then one misses the opportunity to fulfill the mission of human life. Then, after death, there is a chance of falling down into the lower species of life. Although anyone can see that the body is changing at every moment, even highly educated men don't believe the soul continues after death. If one does not understand this simple truth, he is not even a gentleman, what to speak of a learned scholar.

Mr. Gullen: Thank you.

June 12. Michigan state congressman Jackie Vaughn works in Detroit's inner city to improve relationships between blacks and whites. He talked with Śrīla Prabhupāda about some of the city's social problems.



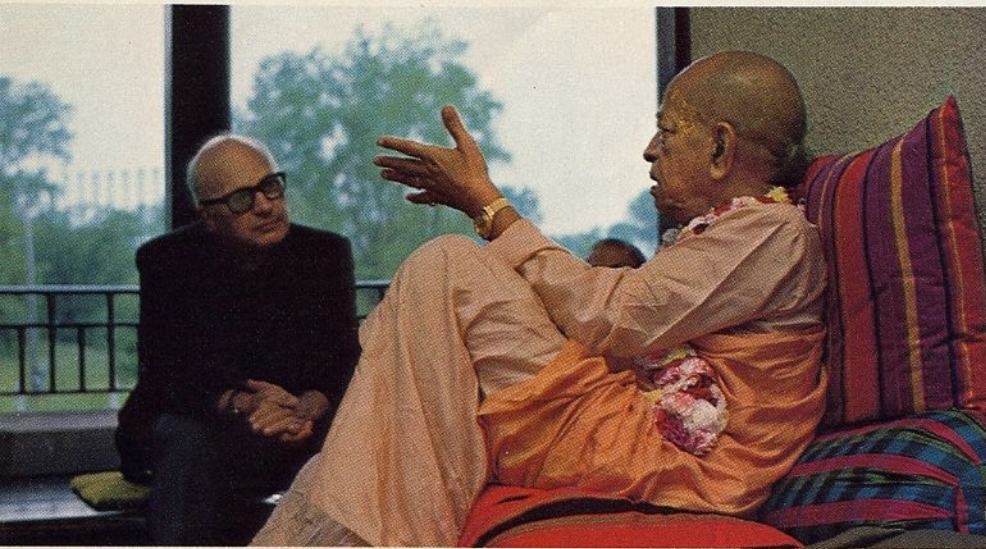
Congressman Vaughn: I have been trying to do good to people, especially poor people.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Everyone tries to help others. The cat is anxious to give protection to her kittens. The birds bring food to their offspring, and the little ones are so engaddened when the mother comes: "Here is food! Here is food!" So this sentiment of doing good is also there in the animals, but these are not actual welfare activities. Animals are interested only in their body, while humans are interested in the extensions of their body—wife, children, society, community, or the whole nation. When there is some national crisis, the separate communities forget their small interests and lay down their lives for the nation. In this way there is progress, but this progress is not perfection. If you water the branches of a tree, someone else waters the leaves, someone the fruits, someone the twigs—it is all imperfect. One who waters the root is perfect. And the root is God. Otherwise, all partial endeavors are a failure. The history of the world shows different nations trying for their separate interests, and all unsuccessful in the end.

Congressman Vaughn: It appears that progress is slow in improving black-and-white relationships. I guess it's because we're not taking first things first.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That means we're acting in ignorance. We do not know what is the first thing. But if we pour water on the root, that is, if we make God the center of our activities, then everything is all right. Otherwise, it is a failure.

In America a common slogan is "In God we trust." But unless we know scientifically how God is the only trustworthy person, how can we trust in Him? If I do not know what God is, how can I trust in Him? So everything should



be understood scientifically. We should study what God is and how we should put our faith and trust in Him. Kṛṣṇa consciousness teaches this science of God. The government should cooperate with us in teaching the people the science of God.

June 15. Today, Śrīla Prabhupāda received a visit from Monsignor Clement Kern and Rev. Edward L. Scheuerman. The priests expressed their concern about the worldwide lack of God consciousness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: People in general are out of God consciousness. Is this not so?

Msgr. Kern: Yes, I would agree. Consciousness of God is definitely on the wane. It is difficult even to speak about God. There is no willingness to listen.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Why have people come to this condition? They are not prepared even to hear about God. A priest in Boston said to me, "Your disciples come from Christian and Jewish families. Yet they were not coming to our church. They never inquired about God. But now the same boys and girls are mad after God." In Los Angeles we purchased a big church. It was vacant; no one was coming. But now, although the church is the same and the people are the same (residents of Los Angeles), it is always packed.

Msgr. Kern: Hopefully, that is a sign that young people are seeking to change their lives for the better.

Devotee: The reason why Kṛṣṇa consciousness attracts us, whereas Western religion did not, is that Śrīla Prabhupāda is giving specific information about the Supreme Person—not just that God is great, but how God is great, what His name is, what His form is. Generally, this information is lacking. But the Vedic

books give specific information about God.

Msgr. Kern: God reveals Himself to us in many ways, but many people do not wish to see Him.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: There is one verse in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [7.28] which says that those who are addicted to sinful life cannot understand God. Therefore, sinful activities must be stopped. If you allow people to continue their sinful activities, how can you expect them to understand God? How can you expect that God will be revealed to them? It is not possible.

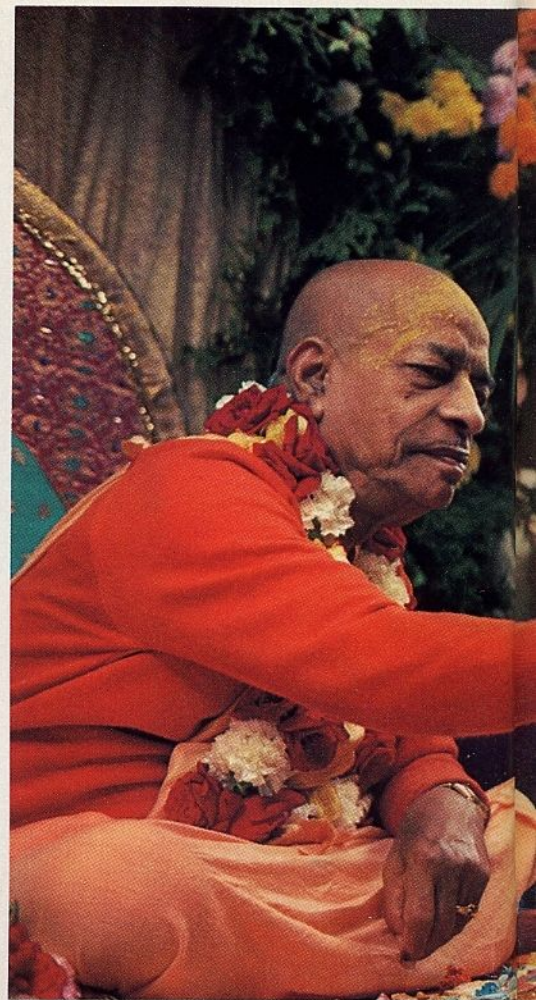
Father Scheuerman: Yes, I agree. We, too, see sin as that which separates us from God.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, because people are entangled in sinful activities, they are unable to understand God. And one of the worst sins in human society is animal killing. There is a verse in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [10.1.4] that states, "The glorification of the Lord is done by the liberated person. Such glorification is so sublime. Therefore, who except the animal killer can refrain from glorification of the Lord?"

So human beings should stop killing animals and learn to cooperate with each other. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa orders that human society must be divided into four divisions, and that they should cooperate to understand God. Just as in our body we have the head, the arms, the belly, and the legs, and all the parts cooperate for maintaining the body, so society should also have a "head," "arms," and so forth.

Father Scheuerman: So, you are seeking to train the intelligent men to be first-class so that they can teach others?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Here are the qualities of a first-class man: peacefulness, self-control, austerity, purity, tolerance, honesty, wisdom, knowledge,



and religiousness [Bg. 18.42].

Father Scheuerman: Yes, these are worthy goals.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So where is the institution that is teaching this? Most institutions teach technology. But if there are no first-class men—no brain in society—who will guide the others, the hands and legs?

Father Scheuerman: Yes. Jesus said, "Seek first the kingdom of heaven, and all other things will be added."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: If the first-class man is at the head of society, everything will be done properly.

Father Scheuerman: What about the downtrodden, the poor?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: A man is really poor when he is in ignorance. The food problem can be solved. In America, Australia, Africa there is so much land lying vacant. Men are not engaged in growing food grains, but are instead brought to Detroit to manufacture automobiles.

Father Scheuerman: You want to correct the problems of the world by the indirect approach—by training men who will be qualified to execute a solution. We believe in direct, person-to-person help—feeding the hungry.



Śrīla Prabhupāda: In Bengal we are daily supplying at least one thousand people with food. Here in Detroit, and at all our other centers, we feed everyone who comes.

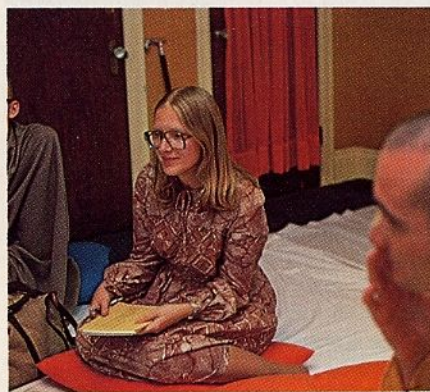
Father Scheurman: So you utilize the direct approach as well.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Anyone who comes is getting not only food and shelter but also spiritual education. We are teaching people to be first-class, how to avoid being implicated in sinful activity. I have not imported these boys and girls from India. They are all recruited here.

Father Scheurman: Your Eastern program seems to have great appeal for young people.

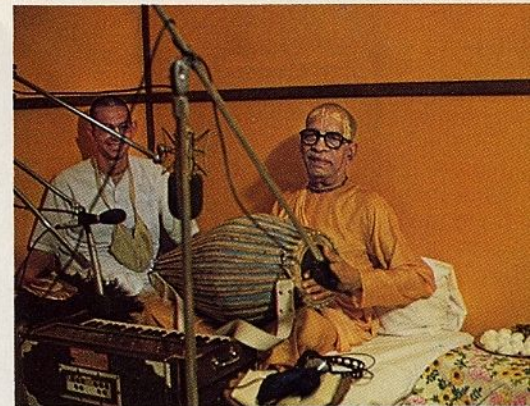
Śrīla Prabhupāda: It is not Eastern or Western. To become peaceful—is that Eastern or Western? Peaceful is peaceful. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is meant for everyone.

June 16. Śrīla Prabhupāda flew to Toronto, where his disciples gave him a warm reception at the airport. The following day, Kathy Kerr of the Toronto Star asked Śrīla Prabhupāda to explain what the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is.



Kathy Kerr: I understand that your movement is an extension of the Hindu religion.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, that is not correct. You will not even find the word *Hindu* in the Vedic scriptures. Real religion, or *dharma*, is not a kind of faith. It is the eternal characteristic of all living entities. It is compared to a chemical composition. For example, the chemical composition of sugar makes it sweet. If something is pungent, you can know for sure that it is not sugar. Similarly, the eternal characteristic of all living entities is the same—to serve the Supreme Lord—and the Vedic system is meant to



train human beings to come to this ultimate goal of life. That system is called the *varṇāśrama-dharma*, which gradually trains one how to be a perfect human being and understand the goal of life. It is not for a particular sect or nation, but for the whole human society.

Kathy Kerr: How do you teach people to become perfect?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The first thing is to understand our spiritual identification—we are not this body. But at present everyone all over the world is under the bodily concept of life. This misconception is the defect of modern civilization. They are taking care of the body but have no information of the soul, the living force within the body. The whole human society is going on in ignorance, so we are trying to give knowledge. Our books are being well received; we are printing and distributing millions. This is our service, and it is meant for all human beings, not just Hindus or Christians or Muslims. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a science meant for everyone. I have not come to preach Hinduism. What is the use of changing Christians to Hindus? We want to make all human beings perfect in knowledge.

Kathy Kerr: Is there more than one way to do this?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: There is only one way: to realize our spiritual identity. A spirit soul is within you and within me. Your skin may be white and mine may be colored, but within, the soul is the same.

Are young people starting to change their lives for the better? Śrīla Prabhupāda discusses the question with Reverend Edward L. Scheurman (opposite page).

At the Toronto temple, disciples look on as Śrīla Prabhupāda distributes cookies to the children (center).

At Golden Avatar recording studios, in Los Angeles, Prabhupāda plays the mṛdaṅga and chants the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra (above).



God is the protector. That is a fact. You cannot live a moment without His protection. Therefore, your real identification is that you are the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa.

The relationship between God and us is like the relationship between a father and his children. The father's duty is to maintain the children, and the children's duty is to remain obedient to the father. That is *bhakti*. Then the family is peaceful. Modern civilization is missing the father. They see only the children and the mother, the material nature. The root cause of all problems is that we are missing the father. Our research work cannot help us understand the father. One must take knowledge through the *Vedas* to understand. Here in the *Bhagavad-gītā* the Supreme Father personally comes to teach. Kṛṣṇa says, "I am the Supreme Father."

June 21. Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived in New Vrindavan, ISKCON's thousand-acre farm in Moundsville, West Virginia. Here are some of his opening words to the devotees there:

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The prominent trend in modern civilization is to improve the economic condition—in other words, to improve the standard of sense gratification. Lower grades of life, like aquatics, insects, birds, and beasts, are only interested in sense enjoyment—eating, sleeping, sex, and defense. And we mistakenly think that our standard of happiness is higher than that of these other living entities. But in any kind of sex life, whether between dogs or between human beings, the pleasure is the same. Don't think that when the dogs enjoy sex life on the public street, their pleasure is any less than ours when we have sex life in a luxurious apartment. No. The pleasure is the same. We think that our pleasure in eating nice food is greater than the pig's pleasure in eating stool. But no, the pig is also getting the same pleasure. So economic development cannot improve the quality of pleasure. That is not possible.

Therefore, economic development is unnecessary. By God's arrangement everything is provided for. As anyone can see, He is providing for all the animals, from the ant to the elephant; and they are not endeavoring for economic development. So does that mean we don't have to work? No. We must work, but not for eating, sleeping, sex life, and defense. Rather, we must work for Kṛṣṇa and try to understand Kṛṣṇa. The human being's business is to understand Kṛṣṇa. If you don't try to understand Kṛṣṇa but simply try to improve your eating, this is not civilization.

And there is a process to understand the soul. It is very simple: you were once a child, but now that body is gone. So where is that child's body? You have changed bodies, but *you* are the same. Why can't people understand this simple truth? Suppose I see you in this dress, and the next day I see you in another dress. If I know you, I will not be confused; I will know that you have simply changed your dress. Similarly, we are changing our bodily "dress" from child to youth to adult. Medical science confirms that our body is changing at every moment.

Kathy Kerr: Does that mean you deny your body?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. Your dress is not unimportant, but you are more important than your dress.

Kathy Kerr: Would you say that your movement is more educational than religious?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, it is educational. It is also a religion, but not a man-made religion. As I have explained, the

soul is the same everywhere, just as sugar is the same whether you are in Europe or America. The soul is suffering because of the material body. We are teaching everyone how to get out of the material body and stay in the original, spiritual body.

Kathy Kerr: Why is there so much attraction to this movement?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Because we are giving the real spiritual facts. We do not bluff by saying "Meditate and become God." Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the science of how to understand God, how to understand yourself, and how to re-establish your relationship with God.

June 18. Professor Sivaraman of McMaster University asked Śrīla Prabhupāda, "Do you think that bhakti [devotion to God] is the solution to the problems of the world?" Here is Prabhupāda's answer:

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. *Bhakti* is your natural position. You are protected, and

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is presenting a new life for civilization: how to become a servant of Kṛṣṇa. After that, everything else will come automatically.

June 30. Mike Darby of the Wheeling Intelligencer talked with Śrīla Prabhupāda about religionists who don't believe in God, and about scientists who believe that life comes from chemicals.



Mike Darby: I understand that your movement is trying to educate people.

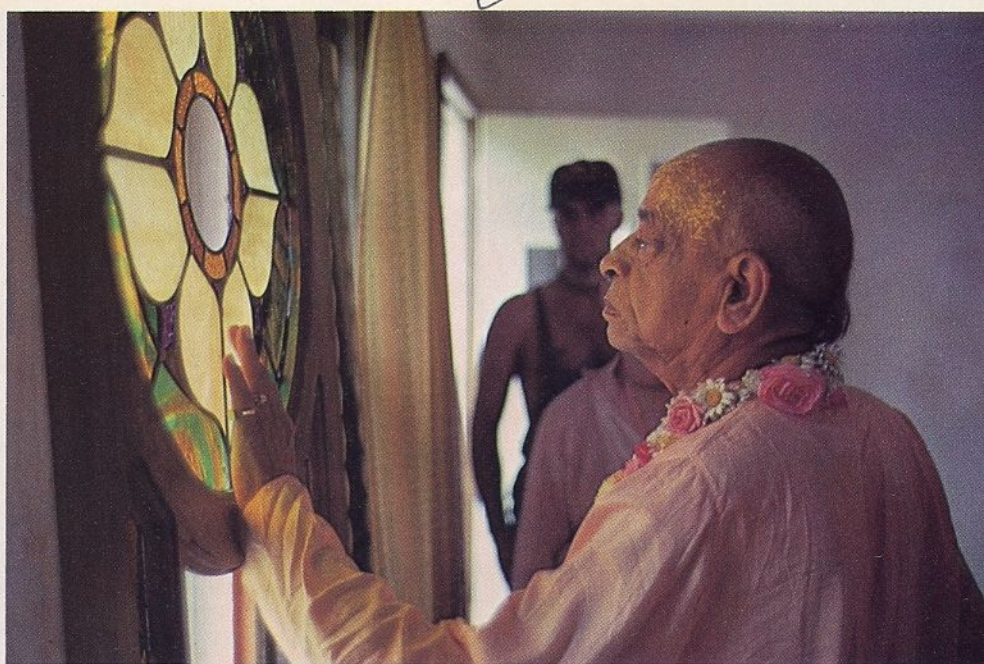
Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. We are just coming from Detroit. They have so many factories there for automobiles, but nothing to educate people to the right path.

Mike Darby: Aren't the Christians also trying to guide people along the spiritual path?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The Christians are passing resolutions according to time and circumstances, and they are changing the instructions of the Bible. How can they be called followers of Christ? For example, the Bible states, "Thou shalt not kill." But the Christians are killing; they are maintaining slaughterhouses. Why? It is clearly stated in the Commandments, "Thou shalt not kill." So what is their qualification? If they are violating the law themselves, how can they guide anyone?

Mike Darby: I have met people who call themselves Christians, but who deny the existence of God.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Not only Christians, but the whole world is now denying God. Religion has become a subject for laughter, and if someone is God conscious, he is considered fool number one—not very advanced. The rascal scientists think in this way, and they bluff you into believing that life is produced from chemicals. But when we challenge them, "Can you make an egg with chemicals and put it in the incubator until a chicken hatches?" they will not answer. Anyone can see the composition of an egg—a little white and



yellow substance. There are many chemicals that are white, and many that are yellow. We challenge the scientists to combine the right ones into an egg, put a shell around it, and produce a chicken. They cannot do this, and they will never be able to do it. But still they assert that life is coming from chemicals, and people accept this bluff.

Mike Darby: The scientists say life comes from chemicals, but they haven't begun to prove it.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Actually, any sane man can understand that life is not produced from chemicals. He simply has to analyze his body to try to find out the source of life. The first analysis is the breathing. Suppose a man has just died. Someone may say, "Because his breathing has stopped, he is dead." But what is this breathing? Simply air. With a machine you can make air pass through his lungs, but will that bring him back to life? Similarly, you can analyze anything—the blood, the skin, the muscles, the bone, the stool, the urine—but you will fail to find the source of life. Then why do the scientists say life is a combination of chemicals? Can they take all the elements of the body and produce another body? They are talking nonsense, and foolish people are accepting. And they are being paid a high salary for this at the cost of the taxpayer.

Now they claim to have gone to the moon. Whether they have actually gone is doubtful, but in any case, why are they coming back again? That is our challenge. If they have gone to the moon, they should colonize there. Why come back to the earth? Why not live there? Then the overpopulation problem will be solved, and they can start their in-

dustry, drill for oil, and so on. Why do they not do that? They simply spend billions of dollars and bluff people into thinking that they have gone to the moon. And the people are so satisfied that now they are paying for another excursion to Mars.

Mike Darby: Scientists say the moon's atmosphere is unsuitable for life.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Then why do the rascals spend so much money to go there?

Mike Darby: To impress the people.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That means they are bluffers, and people are so foolish that they do not challenge them. Now they are going to Mars to bring back some more dust and rock at the taxpayers' expense. They are spending so much money for nothing! If one tenth of the money was given to us to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness, not a single penny would be wasted. But no, they would rather spend millions of dollars to bring back some dust. Is that a very sane government? Why don't the people challenge the government? They have this power. When they found that they had been cheated by Nixon—that he had captured the presidential post for his own satisfaction—they agitated and got him down. The people are blind, and they are being led by blind leaders. The result is catastrophe.

Residents of the New Vrindavan farm community greet Śrīla Prabhupāda during an early morning walk (opposite page).

At a New Vrindavan construction site, Śrīla Prabhupāda looks at a stained glass window (above).



July 3. After a short flight, Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived at the ISKCON center in Washington, D.C. In his quarters there he talked again about scientists, this time with Sadāpūta dāsa, one of his Ph.D.-holding disciples.

Sadāpūta dāsa: Many scientists claim that life comes from the molecules of a primordial chemical soup made of water, ammonia, and hydrocarbons, and influenced by ultraviolet radiation. After the radiation has bombarded the chemicals for a long time, amino acids, then proteins, form by chance. In other words, the scientists say life is the result of chance molecular forces acting over a long time span.

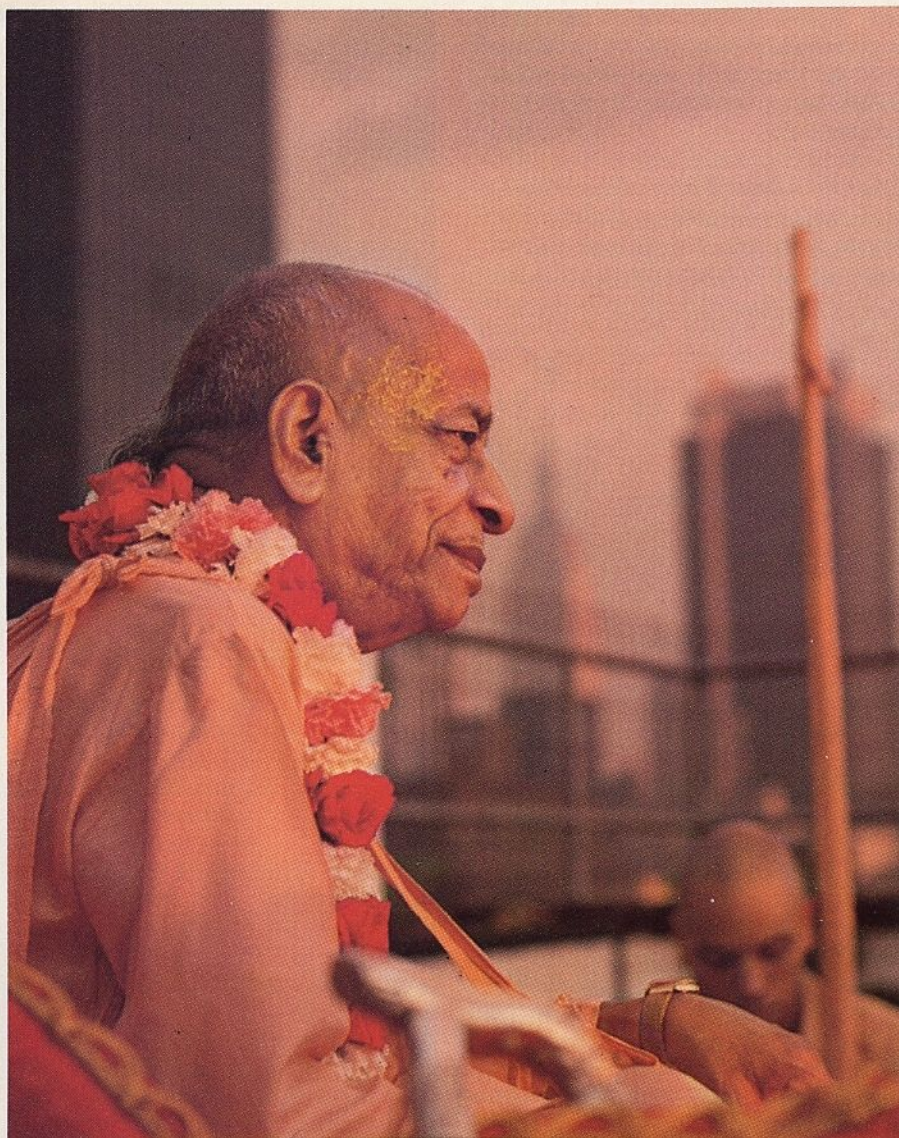
Śrīla Prabhupāda: They would have us wait millions of years before life comes. But I can see practically that after a bird lays an egg, life comes within a week. A bird can create life within a week, but a scientist will say, "Oh, no, it takes millions of years."

Sadāpūta dāsa: Yes. This theory—that life comes from molecules—makes life appear meaningless, and therefore we feel it is the root cause of the moral breakdown we are experiencing in society today.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: We don't condemn the scientists. We say, "Take credit for as much as you like, but do not deny the existence of God. You have created the 747 jet. All right, take the credit. But you can't create a mosquito. A mosquito is nothing but a small airplane, with a pilot. So just admit that there is a supreme creator. You cannot see Him, but He exists nonetheless."

July 5. Mr. David Loomis, Presbyterian minister and chaplain at the University of Maryland, came to see Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Our philosophy is that endeavors for material happiness result in loss of time and energy, with no actual profit. But endeavor for Kṛṣṇa consciousness results in self-realization, the highest goal of life. In Indian civilization there are so many books of knowledge, vast libraries—but there is no



instruction for starting factories and industries. This drinking, gambling, meat-eating, and prostitution only help us to forget the real business of life.

Mr. Loomis: I see that this room is pleasing. It is tastefully decorated. So, when is sense gratification helpful?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Only when it is absolutely necessary. Take sleeping, for instance. Sleeping is required because the material body must rest. But sleeping is a waste of time: as long as you sleep, you cannot do any work. Therefore, sleep should be minimized. That is austerity: to voluntarily accept some hardship for the advancement of spiritual life. Eating, sleeping, sex, and defense should all be minimized by practice. And the more we minimize these, the more we can advance in spiritual life.

Mr. Loomis: Why is it better to have a human body than a dog's body?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Because you can utilize the human body for a higher purpose. Since you have a human body, you are sitting here and listening to me. A

dog cannot hear about spiritual life. Therefore, the human body should be engaged in inquiring about the Absolute Truth. Unfortunately, in the modern civilization people are only interested in the comforts of the body.

July 7. Author Bill Sauber and Dr. Dinesh Sharma, of the National Institute of Art, talked with Śrīla Prabhupāda about travel to other planets.

Bill Sauber: I met your disciples in the airport, and I found the things they said interesting. I agree with you that human society has to adopt a life-style that is a little simpler. We cannot use our material resources unnecessarily. Also, I spoke to the devotees about going to other planets. This, I think, is very important.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, it is possible to go to other planets. You can go to the higher planets, where the duration of life is very long. Our six months is equal to one day there. And everyone there lives

ten thousand years composed of such days. But they also die; life is not permanent there, either. Although the standard of life is very high, there is still birth, death, old age, and disease. But if you transfer yourself to the spiritual world, then you do not get another material body. You do not die.

Bill Sauber: Don't you have to carry your material body to other planets?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is in the material world. But we each have a spiritual body, without any material covering. With it you can transfer to the spiritual world. Everything in the material world will be destroyed, but there is another nature, a spiritual world, where you don't require this material body. There you remain in your spiritual body.

[At this point Drs. Sharma and Sauber began a short discussion of their ideas and philosophies.]

Do not try to understand the inconceivable by argument. In whatever way we go on arguing, we cannot come to a conclusion. In Kṛṣṇa consciousness our process is to take knowledge from the authority. The modern scientists and philosophers argue, but they come to no conclusion. They are just like two lawyers arguing in court: no conclusion is reached until the decision is given by the authority, the judge. And his decision they have to accept. It is final. So we accept the authority of Kṛṣṇa, who is accepted as the authority by all the *ācāryas* [spiritual teachers] and the *sāstras* [scriptures]. His authority is confirmed, and if we take His conclusions then we benefit. Otherwise, if we go on arguing with our limited knowledge, we cannot understand the conclusion. If you are perplexed, you should accept the proper authority. And that is Kṛṣṇa.

Before leaving the United States for ISKCON's European headquarters, near London, Śrīla Prabhupāda stopped to visit the Hare Krishna Building, in New York. On July 16, George Orwell of Associated Press came to do an interview.

Mr. Orwell: Are you saying that this material life is like an evil prison, and that the real goal is another life?

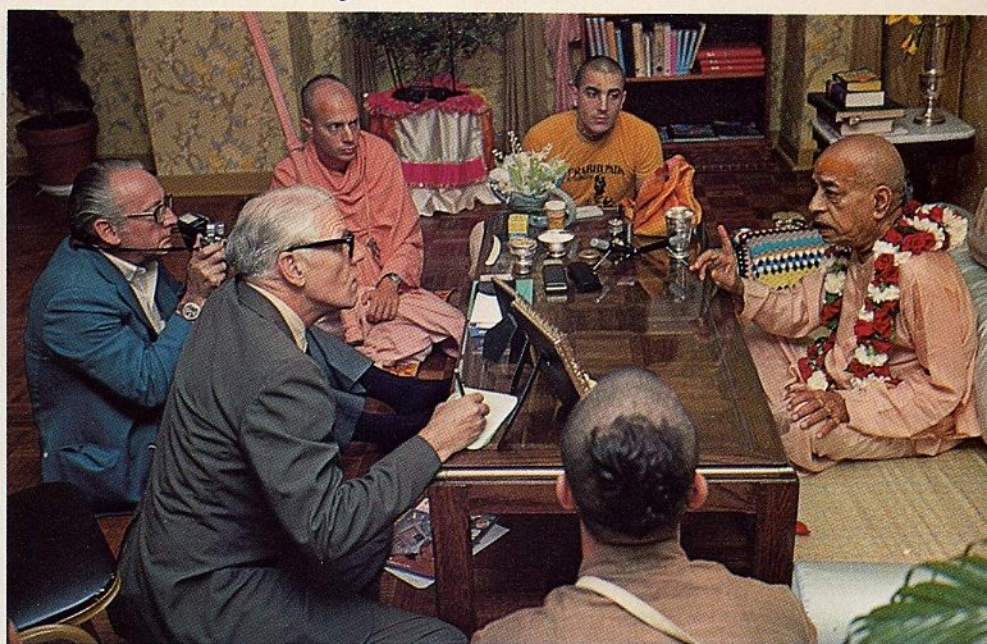
Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Now you have understood. This material life, with its repeated birth, disease, old age, and death, is not a desirable life. To live in this jail is not desirable.

Mr. Orwell: In other words, in a sense, one should repudiate this life, this world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Not repudiate—understand.

Mr. Orwell: That it is not a good life?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That it is not a good



life. The material world means false identification of the body with the self.

Mr. Orwell: Well, isn't it important to try to improve this life so it won't be a prison?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, and to improve it means to understand that I am not a person of the jail; I am a person of freedom. The trouble is that, after living in the jail for a long time, one tends to think, "Outside the jail I cannot live."

Mr. Orwell: Well, I hope we all get out of it somehow, some way.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, and that is why we are trying to educate the prisoners: "Your life is not perfect within the jail. Your perfect life is outside the jail." This is our education.

Mr. Orwell: Life cannot be perfect in the jail?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, but when we try to instruct them, the persons in the jail are thinking, "What is this? He is not working to improve the jail life?" They are such fools and rascals that they cannot understand that one can live outside the jail.

Mr. Orwell: If you are not working for the jail life, why are you here?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Suppose a man has gone to jail and he becomes reformed. He may take up the task of giving education to the prisoners: "My dear brothers, this life is not good. Become honest. Then you will be released from jail and not have to return." So the other prisoners are working hard. They are hammering bricks. But instead of taking his advice, they resent him: "This man is not hammering bricks. He is only talking."

Mr. Orwell: In other words, you think people should get away from what they are doing in the world?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, don't mis-

understand. As long as you are in the jail, you have to work according to the principles of the jail. But you must know that jail life is not good, that it is not all in all.

Mr. Orwell: Well, when you get through instructing the men hammering the bricks, are they going to lay down their hammers, too?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, they don't need to. Try to understand. They may continue hammering, but their knowledge will be complete. At least they must know, "This hammering is not our real business; it is our punishment." That is knowledge.

Mr. Orwell: Isn't that a rather negative way to look at it?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Why negative? That is a *positive* understanding. If you are suffering, and I say, "Don't suffer," is that negative, or is that positive?

Mr. Orwell: Why is work in the world necessarily suffering? It is a mixture of pain and joy. It seems negative to look upon it as all punishment.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is why people are envious of Kṛṣṇa conscious men. People say, "These men are not hammering like us. They must think there is no value in our hammering." In this way, most people think hammering is the real business of life. So, our business is to educate them: "Your hammering is not your real business. Freedom is your real business." ❀

Atop New York's Hare Krishna Building, Śrīla Prabhupāda talks with some of his disciples (opposite page).

George Orwell of Associated Press notes down Prabhupāda's remarks during an interview (above).

Turned away by his father King Uttānapāda, five-year-old Dhruva craved an even greater kingdom: “My only desire is to occupy a post within this universe more exalted than that yet achieved by anyone else.”

THE CHILD WHO CHALLENGED THE UNIVERSE

It was millions of years ago, just after the creation of the universe. Uttānapāda, the king of the earth, was relaxing in the royal chambers with Suruci, his favorite of two queens. Suddenly Suruci's little son Uttama climbed onto the king's lap, and the king patted him with fatherly affection. Just then another young boy tried to climb onto the king's lap. He was Dhruva, the son of Sunīti, the other queen. Although the king loved his sons equally, just to please Queen Suruci he refused to welcome Dhruva. Then, with great pride and malice, Queen Suruci rebuked Dhruva in the very presence of the king.

“My dear child,” she said to Dhruva, “although surely you are also the king's son, because you are not born of my womb you do not deserve to sit on the king's lap, nor on the royal throne. If you desire the throne, you must first satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead Vāsudeva [another name for Kṛṣṇa, meaning “the owner of everything”] by undergoing severe austerities. Then, when He favors you, you shall still have to die and take birth in my womb before being crowned emperor of the world.”

Just as a snake breathes heavily when hit by a stick, so Dhruva, stricken by the strong words of his stepmother, was breathing heavily out of great anger. When he saw that his father was silent and did not protest, Dhruva immediately left the palace and went to his real mother, Queen Sunīti.

When Dhruva reached his mother, his

lips were trembling in anger, and he was crying grievously. Queen Sunīti lifted her son onto her lap and listened attentively as the palace residents, who had heard Suruci's harsh words, related everything to her. Sunīti quickly lost her composure and became like a leaf burning in the forest fire of grief.

Lamenting and breathing heavily, Sunīti addressed Dhruva. “My dear son, don't become vengeful, for if you inflict pain on others, you yourself will suffer from that pain. What Suruci said is true. Your father is ashamed of me. He doesn't consider me his wife, or even his maidservant. It's a fact—you took birth in the womb of an unfortunate woman. Suruci told you to worship the lotus feet of Lord Vāsudeva. So, if you want to sit on the same throne as your stepbrother Uttama, you must immediately execute Queen Suruci's instructions. Take shelter of Lord Vāsudeva, who is very kind to His devotees, and worship Him. Lord Vāsudeva is so kind to His devotees that if you go to Him, then the combined kindness of millions of mothers like me would be surpassed by His affectionate and tender dealings. When everything else fails, Vāsudeva is able to help His devotee. I can see that only He can mitigate your distress.”

Considering his mother's instructions carefully, Dhruva immediately fixed his determination and left the palace to seek out God.

Soon the news of Dhruva's quest reached the wandering sage Nārada, a

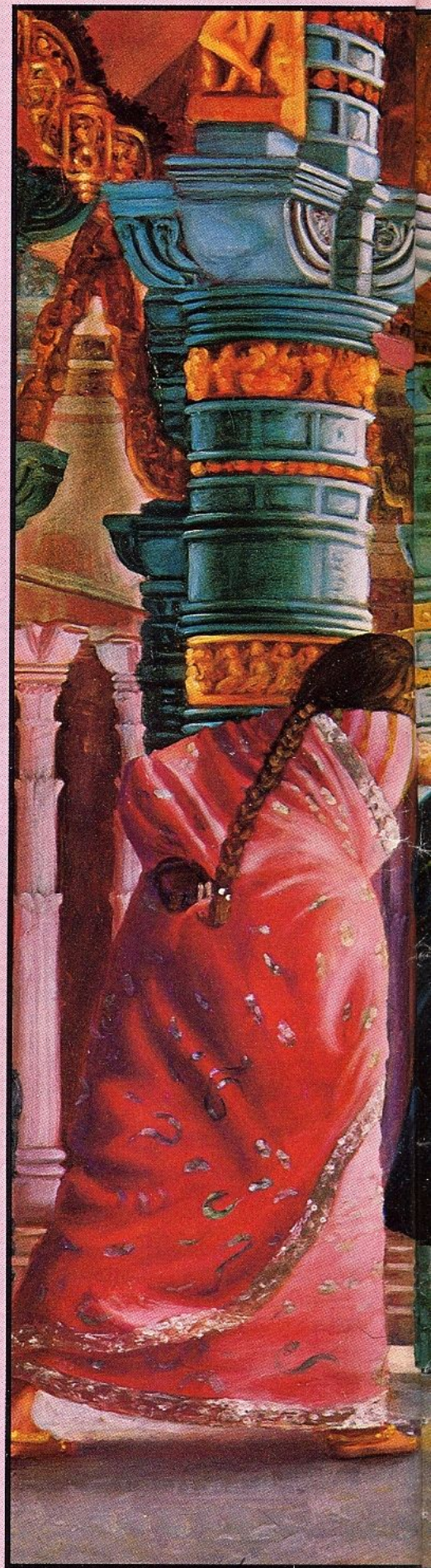


Illustration: Jadurāṅgi-devi dāsi



pure devotee of the Lord. He was struck with wonder at the young lad's fierce determination, but he wanted to test Dhruva's strength of purpose for himself. So Nārada went to Dhruva, touched the boy's head with his all-virtuous hand, and spoke to him.

"My dear boy," Nārada said, "you are only a child, attached to sports and other frivolities. Why are you so affected by words insulting your honor? Don't be dissatisfied. The ways of Lord Kṛṣṇa are very wonderful. Therefore, an intelligent person accepts his destiny and is satisfied with whatever comes, be it favorable or unfavorable. Besides, the process of yoga you have chosen to perform is very difficult, even for experienced mystics. It is better that you go home."

But Dhruva could not accept the words of the saint. "My dear lordship," he said, "you have kindly explained how to attain peace of mind. It is a good instruction. But I am covered by ignorance, and that kind of philosophy does not touch my heart. I know I am very impudent to reject your advice, but it isn't my fault. It is because I was born in a family of warriors. With the arrows of her harsh words my stepmother has pierced my heart, so your valuable instructions cannot stay there. My only desire is to occupy a post within this universe more exalted than that yet achieved by anyone else. Therefore, O learned sage, please tell me of an honest path I may follow to achieve the goal of my life."

Dhruva's words pleased Nārada and evoked his compassion. The saint said, "Your mother's instruction to serve Lord Vāsudeva with devotion is actually just suitable for you. You should completely absorb yourself in His service in the following way. First, go to the bank of the Yamunā River, in the forest of Madhuvana, for there it will be very easy for you to become purified. Bathe thrice daily, and after each bath sit calmly and practice the three kinds of breathing exercises. Then meditate patiently on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Vāsudeva.

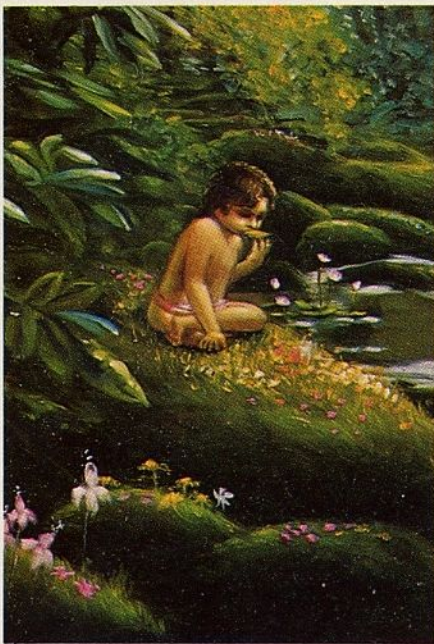
"The Lord's face is very beautiful and pleasing in its attitude. He never looks displeased, and He always awards benedictions to His devotees. His eyes, nicely decorated eyebrows, raised nose, and broad forehead are all very beautiful. His entire body is decorated, and He wears a valuable jeweled helmet and yellow silk garments. Indeed, in every way the Lord is very pleasing to the eyes and mind of the beholder."

When Nārada finished speaking, Dhruva accepted the sage as his spiritual master and bowed down at his feet. Then he went to Madhuvana forest by the

bank of the Yamunā to execute devotional service. Meanwhile, Nārada went to the palace of King Uttānapāda and assured Dhruva's father, who was distraught at the disappearance of his son, that the boy was under the protection of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Hearing this, the king gave up all his duties and simply thought of his son Dhruva.

In the forest, Dhruva began to worship the Lord just as Nārada had instructed. During the first month, Dhruva ate only fruits and berries every third day—just enough to keep his body and soul together. In the second month, he ate only dry grass and leaves every sixth day, and he continued his worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa. During the third month, he remained completely in trance, meditating on the form of Lord Vāsudeva and chanting the prescribed mantra. In this month his only food was water—and that only every ninth day. In the fourth month, having become a complete master of the yogic breathing exercises, Dhruva lived only on air. Every twelfth day he would inhale and exhale, and this was how he sustained himself. Finally, by the fifth month, Dhruva had controlled his breathing so perfectly that he was able to stand motionless on one leg and concentrate his mind fully on the Supreme.

Illustration: Jadurāṅgi-devī dāśī



✓ Dhruva meditated on the Lord and ate only grass and leaves every sixth day.

When Dhruva thus captured in his heart the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the refuge of the total material creation and the master of all living entities, the universe began to tremble. Just as when hundreds of people are sitting in a flying airplane, they each share in the total force of the airplane, so when

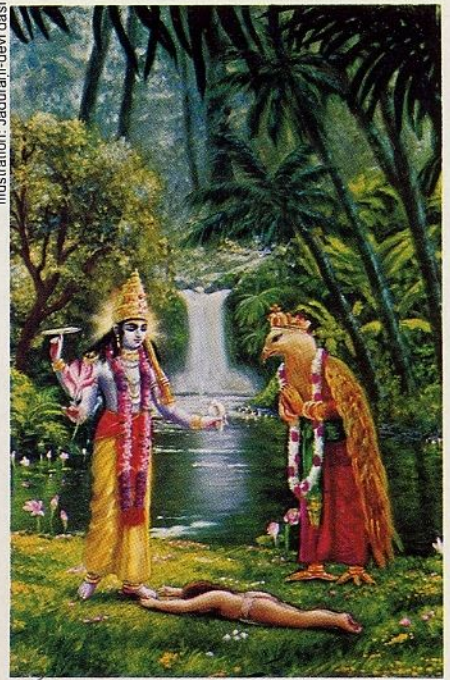
Dhruva's minute energy was perfectly identified with the Lord's through pure devotional service, his energy became as powerful as the total cosmic energy. Thus, the pressure of Dhruva's big toe pushed down half the earth, just as an elephant being carried on a boat rocks the boat left and right with his every step. Also, Dhruva's severely restricted breathing choked the cosmic breathing process. At this time all the demigods became greatly dismayed and prayed to Lord Kṛṣṇa for help.

After reassuring the demigods, the Lord traveled to the Madhuvana forest on the back of His great winged carrier, Garuḍa. When the Lord arrived, Dhruva was standing there in meditation. He could not at first perceive the Lord externally, for he was deeply absorbed in contemplating the Lord's form within his mind. Suddenly, Dhruva could no longer see the Lord in his heart. The lad became perturbed, and his meditation broke. But as soon as he opened his eyes he saw the Supreme Personality of Godhead before him, just as he had been seeing Him in his heart. Overwhelmed with divine ecstasy, Dhruva fell prostrate at the Lord's feet. Dhruva wanted to glorify the Lord with suitable prayers, although, being a small boy, he did not know how. Knowing Dhruva's desire, the Lord touched His conchshell to the boy's forehead and imparted to him the transcendental inspiration known as *brahma-maya*. Thereupon, Dhruva understood the Absolute Truth and His relationship with all living beings, and he offered Lord Kṛṣṇa his deliberate and conclusive prayers.

"My Lord, by Your unbroken transcendental glance You are the Supreme witness of all intellectual activities. You are eternally liberated, You exist in the state of pure goodness as the changeless Supersoul, You are the original Personality of Godhead (full with six opulences), and You are eternally the master of the three modes of material nature. Thus, You are always different from the ordinary living entities. As Lord Viṣṇu, You maintain all the affairs of the entire universe, yet You stand aloof and enjoy the results of all sacrifices."

Hearing the sincere praise of Dhruva, Lord Kṛṣṇa said to him, "My dear Dhruva, son of King Uttānapāda, you have piously executed your vows. I know the desire within your heart. It is an ambitious desire, very difficult to achieve, yet I shall favor you with its fulfillment. After you depart from your present body, I shall award you the glowing planet known as the Pole Star, which outlasts even the universal dissolution at the end of each millenium. Until then,

Illustration: Jadurāṅgi-devī dāśī



✓ Overwhelmed with divine ecstasy, Dhruva fell prostrate at the Lord's feet.

you will rule this earthly planet for thirty-six thousand years after your father goes to the forest in his old age. During all that time, your senses will stay as strong as they are now; you will never grow old. You will enjoy the blessings of material happiness in this life, and at the time of your death you will remember Me and come to Me, never to return to this material world."

Having bestowed these benedictions upon Dhruva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead left the Madhuvana forest on the back of Garuḍa and returned to His own abode.

However, Dhruva was not very happy. He was ashamed of the material demands he had held in his mind when the Lord appeared before him. "Alas!" he thought. "Just see how unfortunate I am! I approached the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, who can cut the chain of repetition of birth and death—but still, out of foolishness, I prayed for perishable things. With my materialistic vision of duality, I saw my brother as my enemy, and I lamented within my heart. I am like the ignorant pauper who begged the emperor for a few broken grains of husked rice, even after the emperor had offered him anything he wanted." Thinking in this way, Dhruva made his way back to his father's palace.

King Uttānapāda, who had feared that Dhruva was dead, considered himself the most wretched person for having rebuffed his son. So, when a messenger came from Nārada to inform him of Dhruva's imminent return, the king could hardly believe the news. Very

eager to see the face of his lost son, he mounted a chariot, gathered a procession of his family and attendants, and left the city to greet Dhruva. On seeing the boy approaching from a distance, the king got down from his chariot in great haste and went to meet him. Breathing heavily, King Uttānapāda at last embraced Dhruva. But Dhruva had changed; now he was completely sanctified by the spiritual touch of Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

Then Dhruva's mother and brother welcomed him back with tears of ecstasy. Even his stepmother Suruci appreciated his innocence. With tears of sincere feeling, she blessed him. "My dear boy, long may you live!"

As Dhruva entered the capital city, the residents praised him jubilantly. They had decorated the entire city with columns of banana and betel nut trees, as well as bunches of fruits and flowers. At every gate there were burning lamps and large water pots adorned with multi-colored cloths, strings of pearls, flower garlands, and hanging mango leaves. The domes of the city's palaces glittered, as did the domes of the beautiful airplanes hovering over the capital.

In time, King Uttānapāda enthroned Dhruva as emperor of the world. Then the old king detached himself from worldly affairs and entered the forest. Soon Dhruva Mahārāja and his two queens, Bhrami and Ilā, raised a very beautiful family. But tragedy struck when Dhruva Mahārāja's brother Uttama met his death in the Himalayan mountains, at the hands of a Yakṣa tribesman. Soon afterward, Suruci went to search out her missing son, but she died in a forest fire.

When he heard of his brother's death, Dhruva Mahārāja was overwhelmed with grief and anger. Desiring revenge, he mounted his invincible chariot and set out single-handed for the Yakṣas' city Alākāpurī, in the Himalayas. As soon as he reached Alākāpurī he blew his conchshell. The sound reverberated in all directions, and the wives of the Yakṣas became terribly frightened.

Unable to stand the resounding vibration of Dhruva's conchshell, the ferocious Yakṣa warriors

came forth from their city and attacked Dhruva. When Dhruva began to kill them by shooting three arrows at a time, the Yakṣas—130,000 strong—countered by shooting six arrows at a time. Then they began to shower Dhruva, his chariot, and his chariot driver with feathered arrows, iron bludgeons, swords, tridents, lances, pikes, spears, and other weapons. Just as incessant rain covers a mountain, so an incessant shower of weapons covered Dhruva Mahārāja.

The sun of King Dhruva seemed to have set within the ocean of Yakṣas. But just as the sun suddenly breaks through the fog, so Dhruva's chariot suddenly appeared from within the armies of the Yakṣas. When Dhruva's wonderful bow twanged and his arrows hissed, the hearts of his enemies filled with grief. His arrows first scattered their countless weapons, just as a blast of wind scatters clouds; then his arrows pierced the shields and bodies of the enemy, just as thunderbolts pierce mountains. Those Yakṣas who somehow survived began fleeing. None of the enemy soldiers stayed in martial formation.

Dhruva Mahārāja then desired to see the city of Alākāpurī, but he thought to himself, "No one knows the plans of the mystic Yakṣas." He waited and talked with his charioteer.

Soon they heard a tremendous sound,

as if the entire ocean were rushing upon them, and they saw a great dust storm coming at them from all sides. Within a moment the entire sky became overcast with dense clouds. They heard thunder and saw dazzling lightning, and then a severe rainfall started. But it was not an ordinary rain: falling through the sky were blood, mucus, pus, feces, urine, marrow, and trunks of bodies.

Next, a huge mountain fell from the sky, and from all sides rained hailstones, lances, clubs, swords, and enormous chunks of stone. Dhruva Mahārāja also saw groups of mad elephants, lions, and tigers, along with many large, angry-eyed serpents vomiting fire—all coming to devour him.

Finally, as if the end of the universe were at hand, a fierce ocean with foaming waves and great roaring sounds came rushing toward him. Just at that moment, when he was completely overpowered by the illusions that the demoniac Yakṣas had conjured up, a company of great sages appeared before Dhruva to encourage him.

"Our dear Dhruva," they said, "may the all-powerful Lord slay all your formidable enemies. You have nothing to fear, for you are a soul surrendered to Him, and you have chanted His holy name: *om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya*. Simply by chanting and hearing the Lord's holy name, anyone can be fully protected from fierce death. Therefore, the all-merciful Lord has already saved you, His dearest devotee."

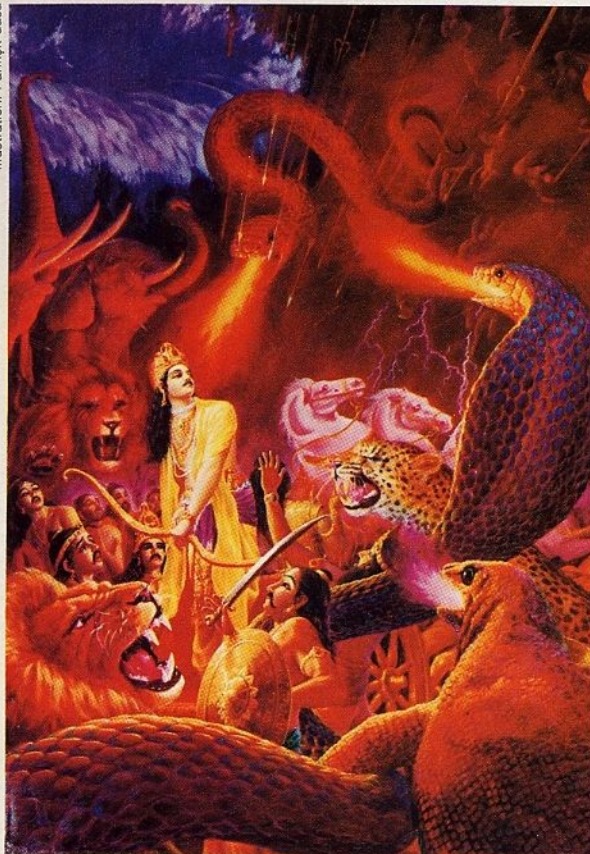
Encouraged by the sages' words, Dhruva Mahārāja sanctified himself by touching water and then took up a special arrow made by Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. As soon as Dhruva joined this arrow to his bow, the apparitions created by the Yakṣas disappeared, and golden-shafted arrows with feathers like a swan's wings flew out from his bow. The arrows entered the bodies of the Yakṣas with a great hissing sound, just as peacocks enter a forest with tumultuous crowing.

Those sharp arrows dismayed the enemy soldiers; they became almost unconscious. But a few Yakṣas managed to collect their forces, and in a great rage they again attacked Dhruva with up-raised weapons. But Dhruva Mahārāja saw the Yakṣas coming and cut them to pieces with his arrows.

At this time, Dhruva's grandfather, the wise and powerful Manu, saw that his grandson was killing many innocent Yakṣas who had had nothing to do with his brother Uttama's death. Out of compassion, Manu approached Dhruva to give him good instruction.

"My dear son," Manu said, "please stop. To become unnecessarily angry is

Illustration: Parikṣit dāsa



Dhruva saw fierce animals coming to devour him.

not good, for this is the path to hellish life. Now you have gone beyond the limit by killing many offenseless Yakṣas. Furthermore, you have angered the demigod Kuvera, who is related with the Yakṣas. For these reasons, please stop this killing.”

Dhruva Mahārāja took his grandfather’s kind words to heart and returned to his capital city.

During the rest of his 36,000-year reign, Dhruva rendered devotional service unto Lord Kṛṣṇa with unrelenting energy. He possessed all godly qualities—he was respectful to the Lord’s devotees, very kind to the poor and the innocent, vigilant to uphold religious principles—and thus all the citizens regarded him as their father. In this way, over many, many years, Dhruva favorably executed the duties of a king.

Finally, he handed over the charge of the royal throne to his son. Dhruva realized that the Supreme Lord has created this cosmic manifestation just to bewilder the living entities as a dream or a phantasmagoria would bewilder them. So he left his kingdom, considering his body, his treasury, palaces, and pleasure grounds, his army, friends, wives, and children to be creations of the Lord’s illusory energy. Thus, in due course of time he retired to the forest known as Badarikāśrama in the Himalayas.

In Badarikāśrama King Dhruva fully

purified his senses by bathing regularly in the crystal-clear water. Fixing himself in a sitting position, he controlled his breathing and completely withdrew his senses from all external stimuli. Then he concentrated his mind on the form of the Lord and entered into trance.

Because of Dhruva’s transcendental bliss, tears flowed incessantly from his eyes, his heart melted, his limbs shivered, and the hairs all over his body stood on end. Transformed by this state of divine ecstasy, Dhruva Mahārāja completely forgot about his bodily existence and became liberated from material bondage.

Just then Dhruva saw an exquisite airplane, as big as a house, descending from the sky. It looked as if the full moon were approaching him, illuminating all ten directions. Two beautiful associates of Lord Kṛṣṇa were in the plane, and seeing that they were personal servants of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Dhruva Mahārāja immediately stood up, offered them his respects with folded hands, and chanted the holy names of God.

The two servants of Kṛṣṇa (named Nanda and Sunanda) addressed Dhruva Mahārāja in unison: “Our Lord has deputed us to take you to the spiritual world, where even great sages and demigods cannot go. Please come with us and live there eternally.”

To Dhruva these words were as sweet as pouring honey, and he immediately offered his obeisances to the servants of Kṛṣṇa. Then Dhruva worshiped the airplane, and while he did so he became as brilliant and illuminating as molten gold. Just as Dhruva was boarding the wonderful airplane, death personified approached him. Completely unafraid, however, Dhruva put his feet on the head of death and then boarded the plane.

From the sky, drums sounded and voices sang, and the demigods showered Dhruva with flowers. However, just as the transcendental airplane was about to leave the earth, Dhruva remembered his mother Sunīti. He thought, “How can I go to the spiritual world and leave my poor mother behind?” But Nanda and Sunanda understood his mind, and they showed him that Sunīti was going forward in another plane.

While Dhruva was passing through space, he saw all the planets of the solar system. Then he passed beyond the seven planetary systems of the great sages, and finally he reached the self-effulgent planets of the spiritual world. Thus, as he had desired, Dhruva had obtained the most exalted post within this universe, the Pole Star. And at last, because of his unflinching service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, he went back home, back to Godhead.

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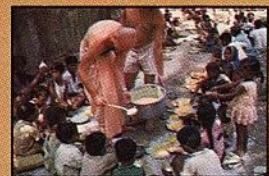
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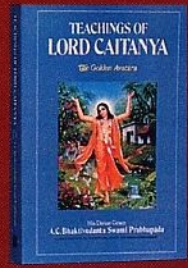
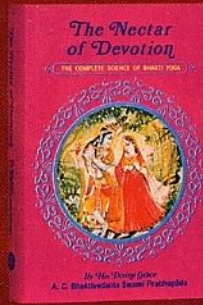
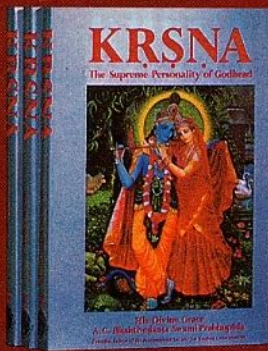
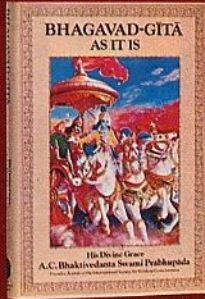
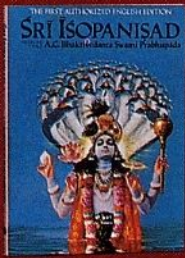


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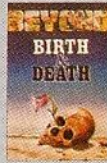
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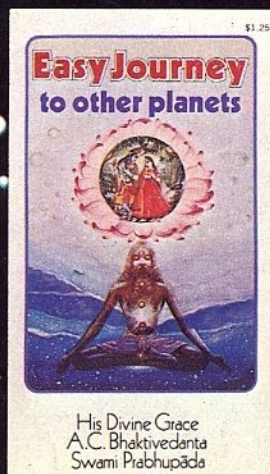
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