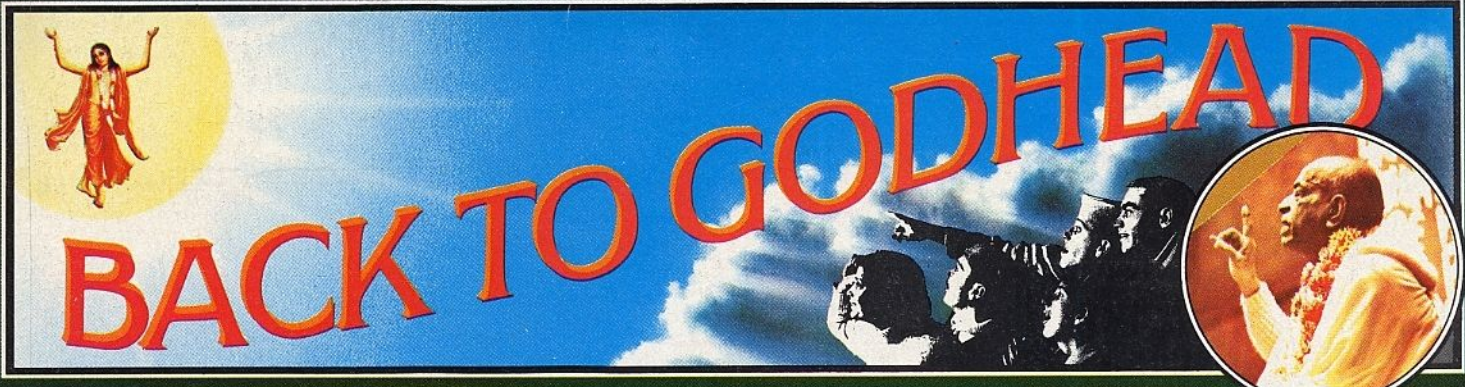


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



Vol.11 No.11

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 chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa in New York's Central Park.



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-nārādiya 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 magazine.

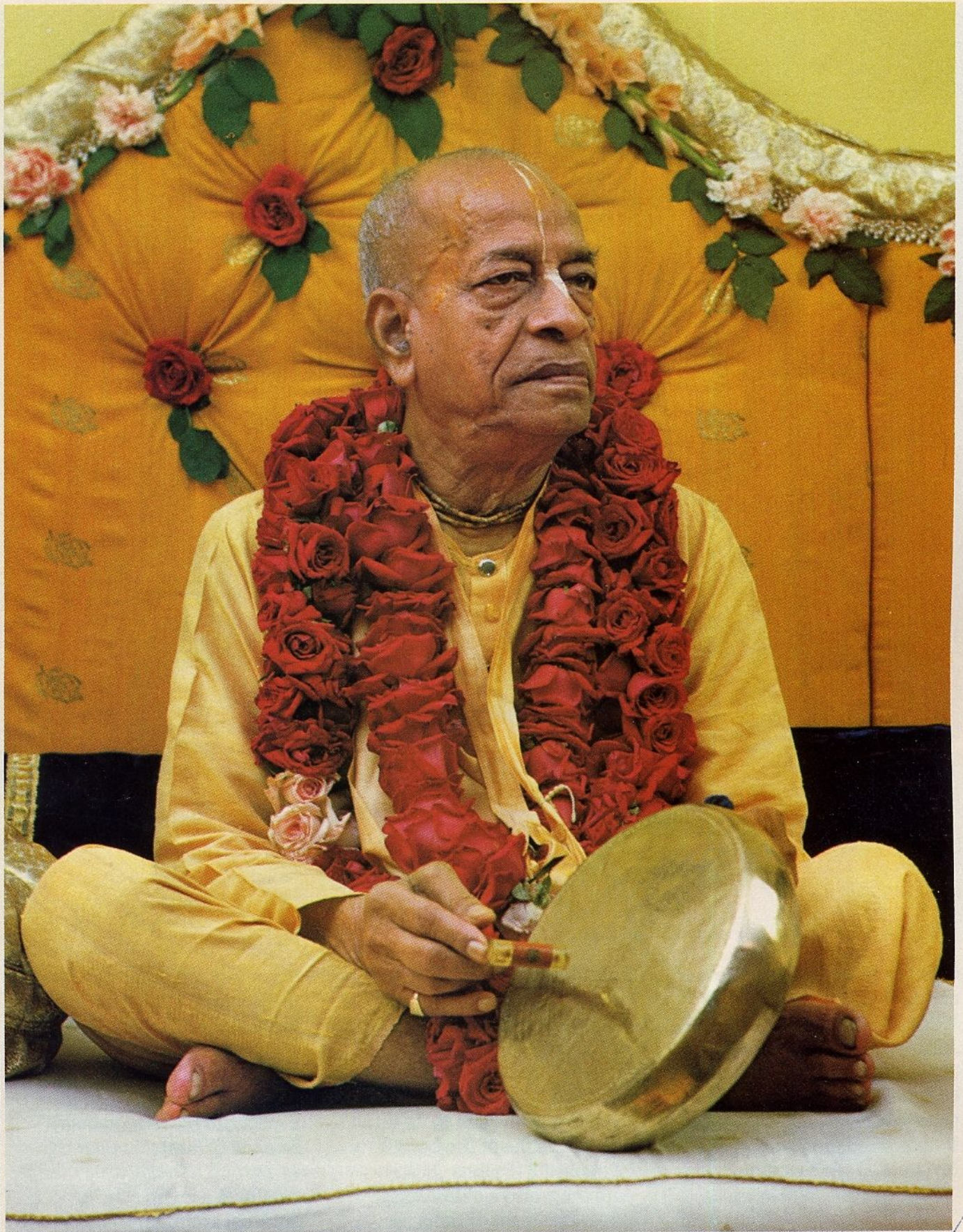


Photo (New York): Muralivadana dāsa

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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TECHNICIANS Gadāgrāja dāsa, Madhusūdana dāsa,
Rakṣovanda dāsa, Śirīheśvara dāsa, Yugala-kīśora dāsa

COPY EDITORS Candanācārya dāsa, Gopīparāṇadhana
dāsa, Śrīkānta dāsa

COMPOSITORS Balāī-devī dāsī, Pūrṇacandra-devī dāsī

Published monthly, \$7.00 per year (\$8.00 outside
USA), by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust,
3764 Watseka Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. 90034

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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 *prīque*. The vowel *ṛ* 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*, *hedge-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.

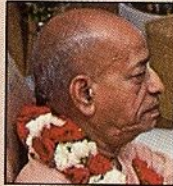
From the beginning, BACK TO GODHEAD magazine was an integral part of ISKCON. In fact, it has often been called "the backbone of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement" by Śrīla Prabhupāda, who began writing, printing and distributing it himself in 1944. Over the years, BACK TO GODHEAD has changed in many ways, 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

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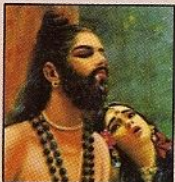
The Transcendental Trend in Science 10

As Theodore Roszak notes in *Where the Wasteland Ends*, one kind of scientist "dis-integrates the landscape, reduces it to bits and pieces, discovers how it works, but not what it means." Another kind of scientist studies not just "the action of the parts" but "the meaning of the whole."



A Spirited New Theater 16

During the filming of *Audrey Rose*, writer-producer Frank De Felitta remarked that today's audiences want something "more fulfilling" than the usual fare—yet good stories are scarce. Here's a glance at some young performers who've uncovered a treasure of fresh material.



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Aflame with lust, Diti begged her husband to give her sons. The sons she conceived were inconceivably fiendish. One of them knocked the earth out of orbit, and the Supreme Lord Himself came to the rescue. (An account 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

For those of us who wonder what it's like in the world beyond, paintings like this one follow the descriptions of the transcendental realm found in the Vedic literature. Here we see the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and His eternal consort, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. (Original oil painting by Jadurāṇī-devī dāsī, award winner in the 1974 *Print Magazine Poster U.S.A.* contest.)

IN ANY LANGUAGE

Kevin Lahart of *Newsday* interviews His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Mr. Lahart: I wonder if you could tell me how you came to found the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement here in the United States?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: I was ordered by my spiritual master to do this work, so on his order I came to the U.S. I came alone, with no help or money. Somehow or other I stayed.

Mr. Lahart: How did you attract followers? You landed in New York and—

Śrīla Prabhupāda: My attraction was this chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. That's all. I had no magic. Others had some sort of magic. I never showed any magic. At Tompkins Square Park I was chanting, and gradually some boys came. First a picture was published by the *New York Times*. Then we started a branch in San Francisco, later Montreal, Boston, then Los Angeles.

Mr. Lahart: You just chanted at Tompkins Square Park, and people came.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, I chanted under a tree. (I think that a picture was also published in the *East Village Other* in a very big article.) Naturally, some boys came and joined me and began to dance. That was the beginning.

Mr. Lahart: What did you have to offer them? You were chanting in the park, and they would come up to you and say, "What are you doing? What are you chanting?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda: I would tell them, "Chanting is for spiritual realization. You chant; then gradually you realize your self. You realize that you are a spiritual being and that you are not the body. Then your spiritual life begins." Actually, human life is meant for spiritual realization, but if one does not realize his spiritual identity, then he remains an animal. That is the difference between animals and man. Man is supposed to be spiritually realized.

Mr. Lahart: And how is that spiritual dimension realized?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: First one has to realize that he is not the body; he is spirit soul, and the spirit soul is within the body. The soul means consciousness. It is just like sunshine. The soul is a very small particle, but it is shining

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In any language, isn't communicating what we really care about? And in any spiritual process, isn't God consciousness all that really counts?

as consciousness. And after the annihilation of this body, the spirit soul is transferred to another body. There are 8,400,000 different forms of life, and at the time of death we have to transmigrate to one of these forms. So today I am in an American body or an Indian body, very comfortably situated, but at the time of death my particular mentality will transfer me to a particular type of body.

The material laws are very subtle. We, the spirit soul, are covered by a gross body and a subtle body. The gross body is made of earth, water, fire, air, and ether, and the subtle body is made of mind, intelligence, and ego. And the spirit soul is within these outward gross and subtle bodies. When the gross body is annihilated, the subtle body—the mind, intelligence, and ego—carries the soul to another body. What kind of body we get depends on what we are thinking at the time of death. An example is given in the scriptures: just as the air carries the aroma of a rose garden or the bad odor of a filthy place, similarly, the mind, intelligence, and ego carry me to a particular type of body according to the thought in which I am absorbed at the time of death.

Mr. Lahart: What are we, ultimately?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Ultimately you are spirit soul, but, being materially engrossed, you are creating various material situations, and you are being transferred to various material bodies.

Mr. Lahart: For what purpose? What is the final thing?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, unless you become spiritually realized, you cannot

know the final thing. The final thing is that we are part and parcel of God. Somehow or other we are entangled in this material atmosphere. So the final stage is to go back home, back to Godhead. Unless we know this and practice how to return back to Godhead, we have to remain within this material world, transmigrating from one body to another. Therefore, human intelligence is meant for understanding your spiritual identity and the goal of life, and acting accordingly. That is the purpose of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. It is an educational movement to bring people from gross ignorance to the highest enlightenment of spiritual understanding.

Mr. Lahart: Is the educational process internal or external?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: It is internal, but external behavior affects internal inclinations. If you associate with some bad company, then internally also you develop bad propensities, and if you associate with good company, then internally you develop good propensities. So internal and external are interrelated. By external behavior we influence the internal energy, and because of the internal atmosphere we receive our next external body.

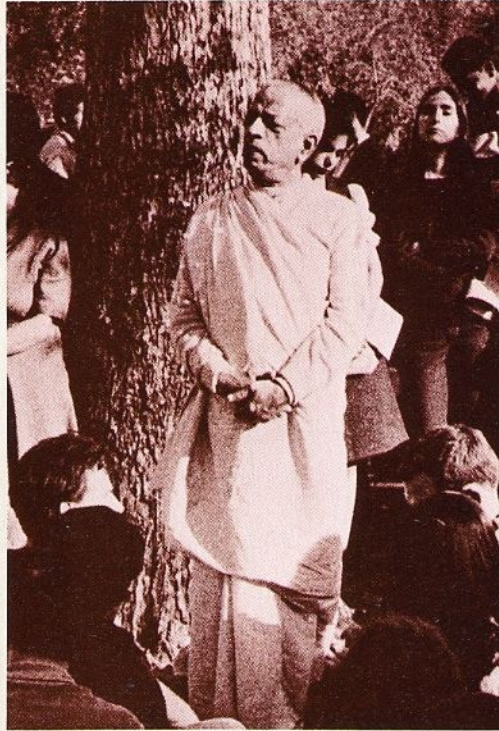
Mr. Lahart: You said that your movement brings people "to the highest enlightenment of spiritual understanding." How does that happen?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Their original, dormant Kṛṣṇa consciousness is awakened.

Mr. Lahart: So that consciousness is within us, and it needs to be brought out?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes.

"I would tell them,
'Chanting is for
spiritual realization.
You chant; then
gradually you re-
alize yourself. You
realize that you are
not the body. Then
your spiritual life
begins.'"



Mr. Lahart: And how is that brought out?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is brought out by this process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness—associating with devotees, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, eating *prasāda* [food offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa], and so forth. You have to undergo some process. A man who is unconscious can again become conscious by some process. If one becomes unconscious, then by another process you can bring him back to consciousness.

Mr. Lahart: Can I ask you a rather long question? Assuming that all human beings have an innate ability to speak, a child will learn Sanskrit, English, French, Chinese, or whatever, depending on the circumstances he finds himself in. Now, if I were Chinese, I would say that Chinese is the best language, while you, as an Indian, might take it differently. So, what is the best way to communicate? Now, in terms of your movement's bringing out God consciousness, which I would compare to the ability to speak, how is your path, your way, better than others?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: There is no question of one process being better or superior. Kṛṣṇa consciousness means God consciousness. So, whether you are Chinese, or English, or American, you have consciousness, and when that consciousness is purified, you become God conscious.

Mr. Lahart: But is your way the only way? I would think that there are many different ways to get to God consciousness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Because God is one,

God consciousness is one. Different ways there may be, but only if you actually come to God consciousness are the different ways approved. Otherwise, they are bogus. Whether you come to God consciousness through the Christian process or the Chinese process or the Indian process, it doesn't matter. But if you do not come to God consciousness, then it is all bogus.

Mr. Lahart: And how can you tell that someone has come to God consciousness?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: God consciousness means that you understand, "I am part and parcel of God; therefore I am a servant of God." Then the process is all right.

Mr. Lahart: Your movement has been criticized to some degree.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: How is it criticized?

Mr. Lahart: People have said that it works against the family and against Western society.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: [*He gestures to several disciples.*] Here is a family man. Here is a family man. How can you say our movement is against the family? There are so many families. And there are children. Have you seen our class in the morning? There are many family members—children, husband, wife. They are present there. How can you say we are against the family?

Mr. Lahart: But are your followers encouraged to visit with—

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Let's take your questions one by one. You say we are against the family, but this is wrong propaganda. There are so many families

in our society. It is a complete society. There are family members, there are *brahmācārīs* [celibate students], there are *sannyāsīs* [renounced monks], and there are *vānaprasthas* [devotees retired from family life]. Whatever situation is suitable for you, you can accept. And in any situation you can become God conscious.

It is wrong propaganda to say that we are against families. Here is a young man and his wife: they are a family. And there are many other families. Why do you say that we are against the family? It is wrong. You should note that this sort of criticism is especially envious. It is not proper. We invite all families to come and take Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Mr. Lahart: I've been approached by devotees at airports, on streets, and in other places, and asked to buy literature. Is that the way to God consciousness, by selling and soliciting? How does that fit in?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: If I sell you a book about Kṛṣṇa consciousness and you read it, you benefit by giving money to Kṛṣṇa and by reading about Kṛṣṇa.

Mr. Lahart: How does it benefit the person who works on the street selling the book?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: He is giving service to Kṛṣṇa without pay. That is a sign of love. In the material field, also, there are many philosophers, scientists, artists, who work out of love for the subject matter, not for a salary. That is love. But our devotees are also becoming spiritually purified. And the more service they give to God, the more they become spiritually advanced.

Mr. Lahart: What are some other sides to your movement? I see people selling books, but what else do your disciples do?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: If you stay in our temple for one whole day, from four o'clock in the morning to ten o'clock at night, you will see how we are engaged in many different practices: worshiping the Deity, chanting on beads, studying Vedic literatures, cleaning, cooking, and so many other things.

Mr. Lahart: You rise at four?

Rāmeśvara Svāmī: In this temple, at three or three-thirty.

Mr. Lahart: And chant?

Rāmeśvara Svāmī: Chant and study.

Mr. Lahart: What is the purpose of rising at four in the morning, chanting and studying?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: To become accustomed to spiritual life. In the beginning it is a little like military training: "You must do this at this time, this thing at that time." So any training means regulated life.

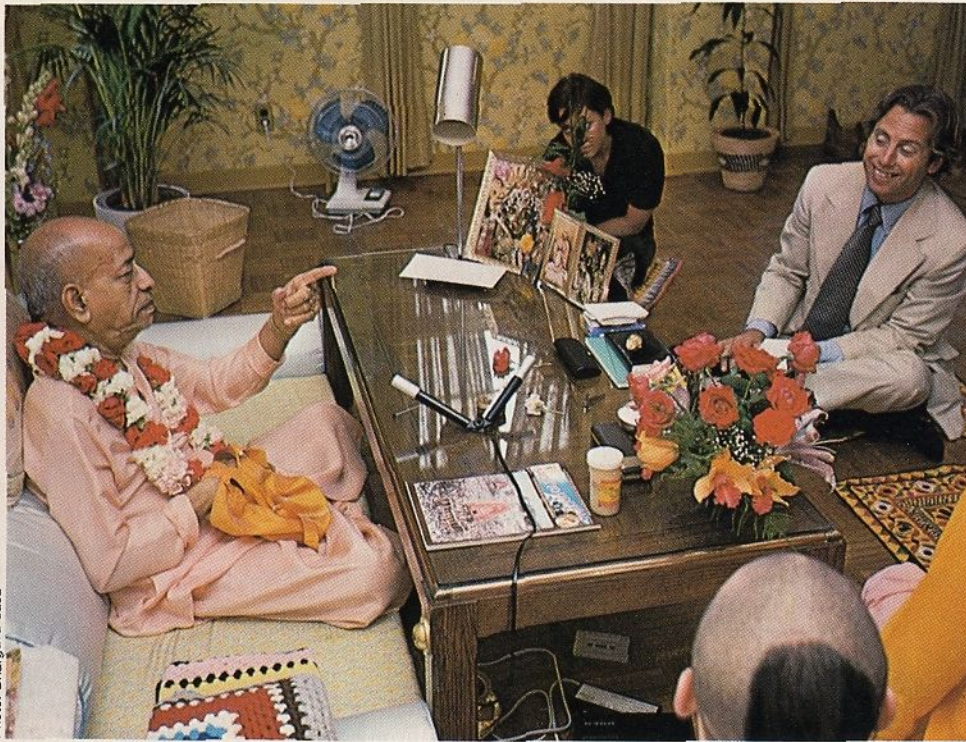


Photo: Bhārgava dāsa

“Whether you come through the Christian or Chinese or Indian process, it doesn’t matter. But if you do not come to God consciousness, then it is all bogus.”

Mr. Lahart: What is the most important project?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The most important project is to become Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Mr. Lahart: What is the most important practice to come to that stage? Is one technique more important than the others?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: You cannot say that one thing is more important, and another is less important. But if someone can’t live in our temple, then we recommend to him, “At least chant Hare Kṛṣṇa in your home, take Kṛṣṇa prasāda, read my books, and follow the regulative principles, or, in other words, refrain from sinful life.” Rāmeśvara Svāmī, can you explain what sinful life is?

Rāmeśvara Svāmī: Illicit sex, meat-eating, intoxication, and gambling. We find that these activities disturb the body and mind. They are not conducive for spiritual practices.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: For example, if a diseased man wants to be cured, he goes to a doctor, who says, “Don’t do this. Don’t eat this.” The *sāstra* [scripture] also cures disease—the disease of the mind—by bringing the mind to the spiritual platform. And for this there is something to do, and something not to do. That’s all.

Mr. Lahart: I understand you came here ten or eleven years ago, and that you were almost seventy at the time?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, I came here at the age of seventy years.

Mr. Lahart: What were you doing previously?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: I was a family man. I

retired in 1954. Previously, when I was twenty-five years old, my *guru mahārāja*—my spiritual master—asked me to take seriously this task of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the West. So I was at that time a family man. I thought, “Let me adjust my family affairs; then I shall do it.” So that adjustment took me long years. I finally took it up seriously at the age of fifty-eight. And when I was seventy years old, I came to your country.

Mr. Lahart: Was it difficult for you to give up what you were doing in order to devote your full time to spiritual affairs?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: It is the Vedic system that after a certain age, one should give up family connections and completely devote oneself to God consciousness. In the beginning, until age twenty-five, one should learn about Kṛṣṇa consciousness from the guru. Then, if he is able to avoid family life, he does not become a family man. But if, due to circumstances, he is unable to remain celibate, he may become a family man. So he can remain a family man and then, at age fifty, give it up. He then retires from family life, but he travels to holy places with his wife. Sometimes he stays with her, and sometimes he stays alone. In this way, when by practice he can completely give up family attachment, the wife goes back home and remains under the care of her elderly children, and the man takes *sannyāsa* and remains alone. Then his only work is to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This is the Vedic system.

Rāmeśvara Svāmī: The Vedic system is

a traditional social system from ancient India.

Mr. Lahart: Is it better to do it the way you did it, or to remain single?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The Vedic system trains a *brahmacārī* not to enter into the entanglement of material life. That is the Vedic system. The basic principle is to avoid entanglement in material affairs. So at the early age, up to twenty-five years, one should be trained to continue as *brahmacārī* [celibate] if he can, and then he can take *sannyāsa*. But if he is unable to remain *brahmacārī*, then let him go step by step. Let him take to household life, then retired life, then *sannyāsa* at the end. But it is compulsory that he finally give up family life. Not that he waits for death to take him away. That is not the Vedic system.

Mr. Lahart: But young men tend not to possess a great deal of wisdom. How can they be fit for renounced life?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: They have to be trained. For example, here we have so many young men who are *sannyāsīs*. There is no injunction that a young man cannot become a *sannyāsī*. If he is able, he can take *sannyāsa* in the beginning. But if he is not able, let him enter household life and then remain a householder until the fiftieth year. Then he can retire and take *sannyāsa*. Nothing is forced. It is a gradual process. But the ultimate end is to become free from all material attachment and completely devote one’s life to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That is the ultimate. Human life is meant for that purpose—self-realization, or spiritual realization. That opportunity must be

“When a radio message is received, a foolish man thinks, ‘How is it speaking?’ So any common man will be astonished at how God can speak to you.”

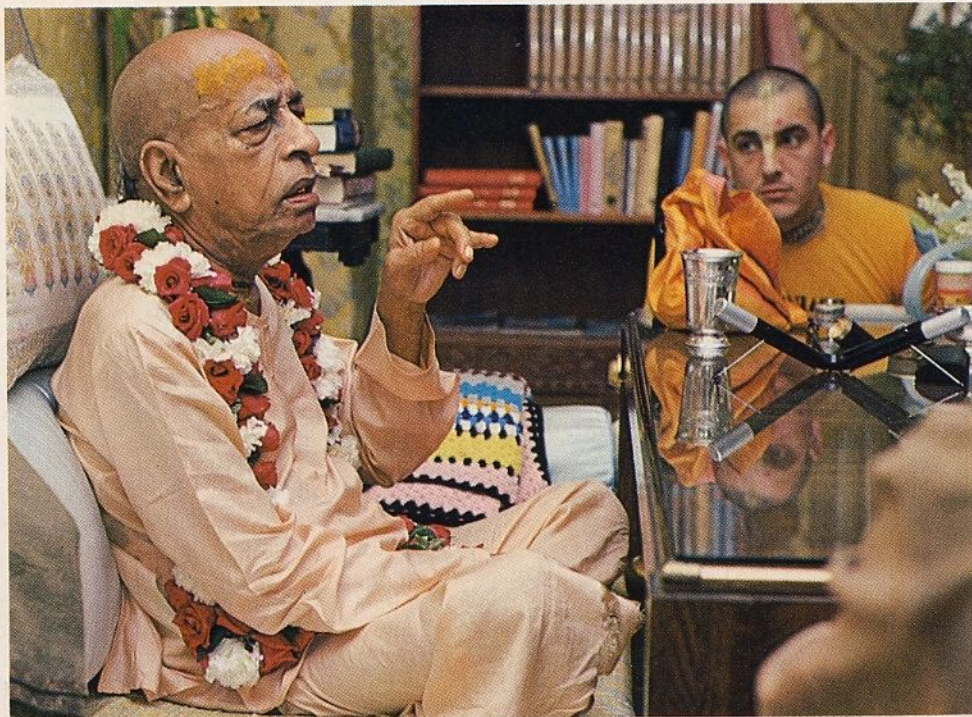


Photo: Bhargava dāsa

given to all human beings. Unfortunately, at the present moment civilization has no scope for spiritual realization. Men live like animals—eating, sleeping, mating, and defending. They do not know that there is another life, a spiritual life. Now we are trying to educate them.

Mr. Lahart: How important is it to look after physical life?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Physical life? You must keep yourself fit to execute Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is not our desire to become sick and not be able to chant. Our purpose is to chant, and we require the physical necessities just to keep ourselves fit. Not more than that. Eating is necessary. Without eating I will die. So we take *kṛṣṇa-prasāda*. We do not eat in the restaurant or hotel. No. We take nice vegetables, rice, grains, sugar, milk (full of vitamins). There is no deficiency of food, so it is unnecessary to kill animals.

Mr. Lahart: You run farms as well, do you not?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes.

Mr. Lahart: Are they working farms, producing farms?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. We have many farms in your country. Just now I am coming from New Vrindavan, in West Virginia. Many devotees are living there. If you go some time, you can see how they are living. And there are other farms—in New Orleans, for instance. Tomorrow we are going to our farm in Pennsylvania. So we get enough milk, enough food grains, enough fruits, and there is no economic problem. Our purpose is to save time from unnecessary labor for the necessities of life, and to

utilize the saved time for developing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As far as the body is concerned, we should have as much as is required to maintain ourselves, but no more. In general, the motto in all our temples and farms is “plain living and high thinking.”

Mr. Lahart: Is your Society open to everyone?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. We give all help to anyone who comes to our Society. We give shelter, we give food, we give instruction, we give dress—everything—without any condition. We invite everyone, “Please come and live with us.” We have 102 centers all over the world, and we invite everyone to come live with us very comfortably and practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Mr. Lahart: How many centers in the U.S.?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: About fifty, including the farms.

Mr. Lahart: How are they supported? Do they support themselves?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Kṛṣṇa supports them.

Mr. Lahart: Kṛṣṇa supports them?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa, and since Kṛṣṇa is within you, if Kṛṣṇa dictates, “Give the Kṛṣṇa temple three thousand dollars,” you give it. Actually, this is a fact. One man came and gave me a check for three thousand dollars. I never asked him for any money, but Kṛṣṇa sent money through him. We do not worry about what will happen tomorrow, but we are very nicely maintained by Kṛṣṇa. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* [9.22] Kṛṣṇa says,

*ananyās cintayanto mām
ye janāḥ paryupāsate
teṣāṃ nityābhiyuktānāṃ
yoga-kṣemaṃ vahāmy aham*

“To those who worship Me with devotion, meditating on My transcendental form, I carry what they lack and preserve what they have.”

Mr. Lahart: But you still have to go out and ask occasionally, don’t you?

Bali Mardana: Well, it is not that we sit back and wait for Kṛṣṇa to send things to us.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, we don’t sit down idly. We are not idle preachers. We are working very hard, harder than ordinary people.

Rāmeśvara Svāmī: The books we distribute are for educating people about their spiritual identity, and the people give donations to cover the cost of printing.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Now I am eighty years old. I am working twenty-one hours a day. I think I work more than my young disciples.

Rāmeśvara Svāmī: Oh, yes. It is hard to keep up with Śrīla Prabhupāda. We are publishing his books, and sometimes he is ahead of us by seventeen volumes.

Mr. Lahart: How do you spend your days? You do a lot of traveling, I understand.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. We travel throughout the world. Wherever I go, I translate and write books at night, and in the daytime I meet devotees and manage the affairs of the Society. My disciples ask me about many things, and they take my decisions as final. From all over the

world letters are coming. Although I have over twenty secretaries, still they consult me, and I give them advice.

Bali Mardan: In the evening Śrīla Prabhupāda goes to bed at ten o'clock and gets up at eleven-thirty to begin translating.

Mr. Lahart: You sleep just a couple of hours, then.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, one and a half hours.

Mr. Lahart: That's it?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Of course, in the daytime I take two hours of rest. So, in this way, altogether three to four hours' rest. Our philosophy is not that you sit idly and wait for God to send things. No. We know that God will send everything, but still we work. Without God's sanction, nothing can come, and we must work to become qualified to receive the favor of God.

Mr. Lahart: Are you surprised at the way the organization has prospered?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: I am not surprised. It is natural. For example, if you do business in a proper way, there will be profit. Similarly, if you act as enjoined in this book of knowledge, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, your endeavor will expand and prosper. Two plus two always equals four. It will never total three or five. So here the

Lord says, "For one who is engaged twenty-four hours a day in My service, I provide whatever he requires, and I protect whatever he has." Thus, if you actually serve Kṛṣṇa, whatever you need will come.

Mr. Lahart: Does God speak to you directly?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. God speaks to you when you are qualified. You cannot expect God to be an order supplier, but when He sees that you are qualified, then He will speak to you.

Rāmeśvara Svāmī: It is difficult for people to understand that God can speak to a man.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: People cannot understand many things. When a radio message is received, a foolish man cannot understand how the radio is playing. He thinks, "How is it speaking?" So any common man will be astonished at how God can speak to you. But that is foolishness. God says,

*teṣāṁ satata-yuktānāṁ
bhajatām prīti-pūrvakam
dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ
yena mām upayānti te*

"To those who are constantly devoted and worship Me with love, I give the

understanding by which they can come to Me" [Bg. 10.10]. God is situated in everyone's heart. As soon as He sees that a person is qualified, He gives him instruction.

Mr. Lahart: But you still must work to achieve whatever Kṛṣṇa is giving you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, you work for Kṛṣṇa. You have to work.

Mr. Lahart: I am curious about how Kṛṣṇa communicates—whether directly or indirectly.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, not indirectly. Kṛṣṇa communicates directly to His pure devotee. A pure devotee always consults Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa will tell him, "Do like this." Not figuratively. Directly.

Mr. Lahart: Does that apply to all kinds of decisions and activities?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Everything—because a devotee does not do anything without consulting Kṛṣṇa.

Mr. Lahart: But that applies only to a very greatly elevated soul?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Therefore, the minor devotees consult the spiritual master. That is our process.

Rāmeśvara Svāmī: Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Thank you for your coming.

Mr. Lahart: Thank you.



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The Transcendental Trend in Science

by Dāmodara dāsa and Jagajīvana dāsa

Sir Isaac Newton once made a remarkable model of the solar system. Thanks to a clever hand-cranking mechanism, all of the tiny spinning globes orbited a small "sun."

On entering Newton's study, one of his colleagues, a materialist, couldn't help noticing the model. He was flabbergasted.

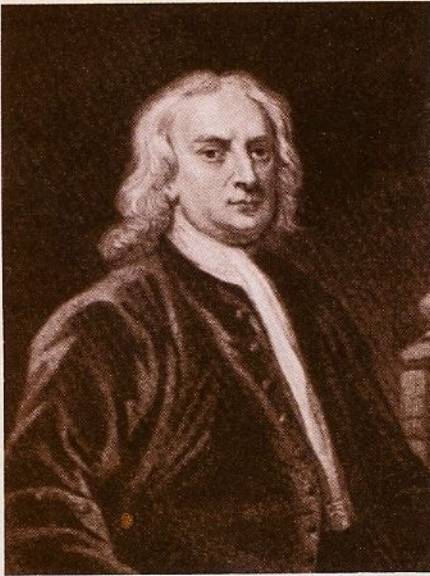
"Dr. Newton," the man stared, "who made this wonderful contraption? The planets move with utter precision, you know. Why, it's ingenious. Who made it?"

"No one," Newton replied. "One day last week it simply appeared here."

"Really, Dr. Newton, I think you've kept me in suspense quite long enough. Now kindly tell me: who made this solar system?"

"My dear Doctor," Newton said, "if you'll pardon my saying so, you're a fool. Just one look at this solar system and you demand to know who made it. But every evening you're looking at the real solar system. Why don't you ask who made that?"

While aware of how little he knew, Newton (along with most of his contemporaries) was sure of one thing: "This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets could only proceed from the counsel and



“Every evening you’re looking at the real solar system,” Newton once told a friend. “Why don’t you ask who made that?”

dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being.” Of course, that was in the seventeenth century.

Before long, God-conscious science sagged under the weighty mathematical apparatus that Newton himself had done so much to build. By 1874, John Tyndall could make this materialist-science manifesto:

The impregnable position of science may be described in a few words. We claim, and we shall wrest from theology, the entire domain of cosmological theory. All schemes and systems which thus infringe upon the domain of science must, insofar as they do this, submit to its control and relinquish all thought of controlling it. Acting otherwise proved always disastrous in the past, and it is simply fatuous today.

In Tyndall’s view, Newton’s God had gone into retirement. Perhaps it had been inevitable. In Newton’s own view, God had been little more than an old watchmaker who’d wound up the universe a long time ago and was letting it run on by itself. And now, for physicist Tyndall and others, even this idea of God had no appeal. Now man was in control. Or so they thought. The high-stepping march of materialist science got bogged down only fifty years later—right in physics, Tyndall’s own field.

By 1900, when Max Planck’s quantum theory gave the world an exact

unit of atomic energy, physics had become the cutting edge of materialist science’s slice into the universe. Chemists, biologists, even astronomers—all sought to reduce their data down to the physicist’s atomic or subatomic particles. Acids, muscle fibers, and galaxies weren’t necessarily real any more. Only atomic particles were real. If something was real, you could boil it down—“reduce” it—to its atomic particles. So in every field of science, the experts began thinking “reductionism.” For a while, as the materialist scientists were reducing matter to its smallest particles, many people wondered whether they were reducing science to absurdity.

As the physicists closed in and boiled things down, matter’s inner secret seemed only to get lost in the steam. In fact, by 1927 Werner Heisenberg had formulated his Uncertainty Principle. He showed that at the infinitesimal subatomic levels where “reductionism” takes us, it’s impossible to say *where* a particle is even if you know how it’s moving, and it’s impossible to say *how* it’s moving even if you know where it is.

Also, Heisenberg pointed out that the very beams of energy used to observe a particle disturb the particle observed, so you can’t really say

what it is, either. And the final blow: even the consciousness of the observer disturbs the particle. So the scientists ended up asking not just what, where, or how, but *who*. In other words, “reductionism”—the pillar of materialist precision—began to look a lot like a study in psychology.

Over the last fifty years, Nobel Prize winner Heisenberg and others have turned the scientific tide. As we’d expect, the materialist and reductionist scientists are still with us, but now a whole new wave of antimaterialist and transcendentalist scientists has emerged.

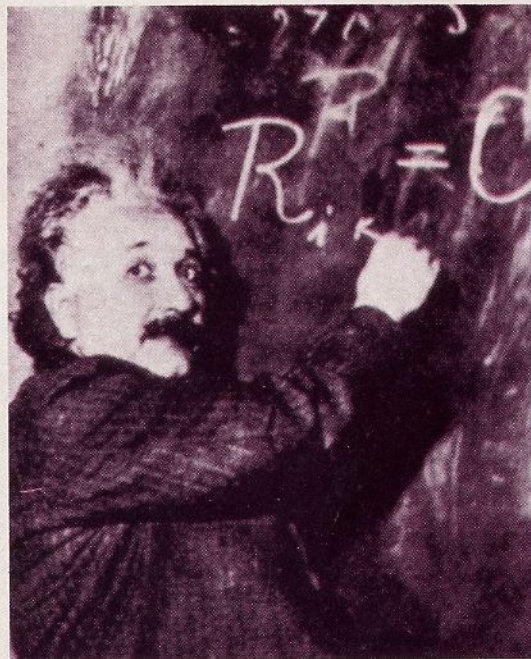
Another member of this wave, Nobel Prize winner Erwin Schrödinger, turned many heads when, in 1925, he wrote on “the profound rightness of the basic conviction” in the Vedic literature (such as *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*):

It is not possible that this unity of knowledge, feeling, and choice which you call *your own* should have sprung into being from nothingness. . . . [It is] essentially eternal and unchangeable and numerically *one* in all men, nay in all sensitive beings.

And some thirty-five years later, in his introduction to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, His Divine Grace A. C.

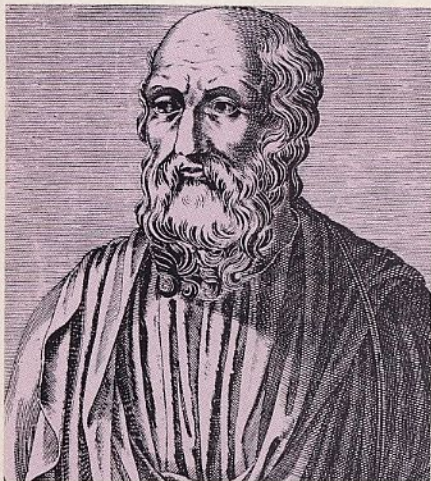
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda confirmed that spiritual understanding is “based more or less on the oneness of the entire human society, nay, on the entire energy of living beings.” We can observe in these two statements a sameness of world view, and even of words—a remarkable harmony between the transcendentalist and the physicist. More and more, science present is sounding like science past—the God-conscious science of Newton’s day and before.

With a special urgency, Schrödinger wanted to show that the human personality couldn’t just “have sprung into being



Einstein talked of a benevolent Being. “I refuse to believe that God plays dice with the world.”

from nothingness.” He argued for the existence of an eternal transcendental energy—in fact, an energy not only eternal, not only transcendental, but also personal. He disowned the impersonalism of many of his fellow scientists and lamented, “No personal God can form part of a world-model that has only become accessible at the cost of removing everything personal from it.”



Plato affirmed, “This world came to be, in very truth, through the providence of God—a living being with soul and intelligence.”

Again, Schrödinger echoes the five-thousand-year-old Vedic literature, which foresaw the bewilderment of materialist science [*Bhagavad-gītā* 12.5]:

For those whose minds are attached to the unmanifested, impersonal feature of the Supreme, advancement is very troublesome. To make progress in that discipline is always difficult for those who are embodied.

So even thousands of years ago there were people who thought that beyond the universe, everything is impersonal or even void. In fact, the ancient Greek Democritus once called all existence just “atoms and the void.” But just as Lord Kṛṣṇa had refuted the impersonalists of His day, Plato refuted Democritus. In his *Timaeus* Plato affirmed, “This world came to be, in very truth, through the providence of God—a living being with soul and intelligence.” Much later, in 1898, after John Tyndall had spoken up for the

voidists, B.P. Bowne wrote, “If, then, the idea of Being must include permanence as well as activity, we must say that only the personal truly is. All else is flow and process.”

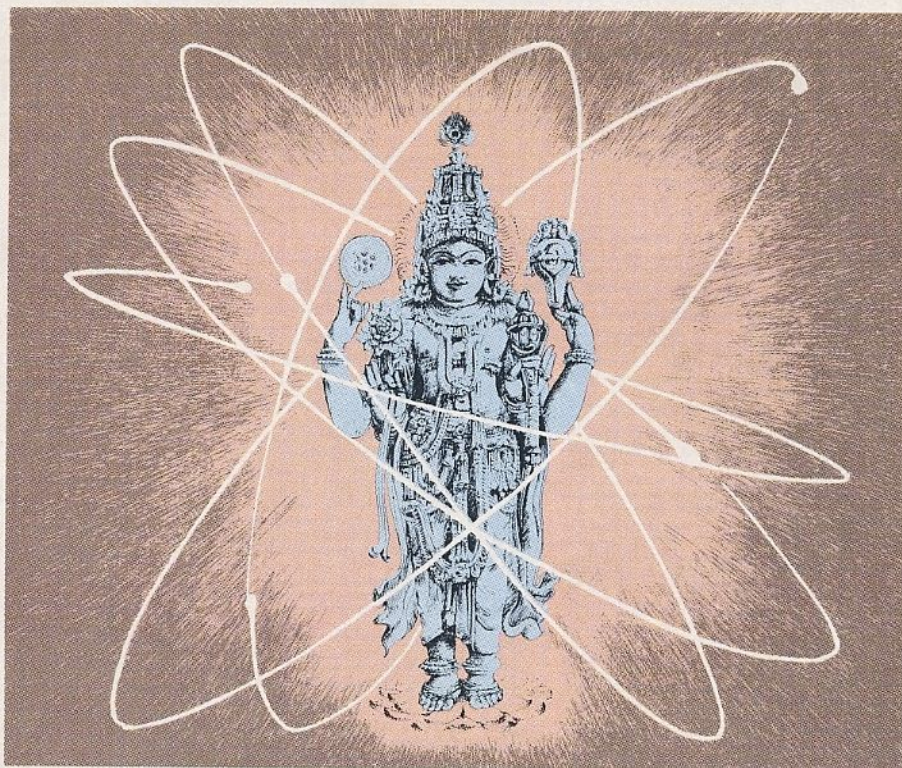
It’s clear that supporters of a God-conscious, personalist science have been with us all along, too. This transcendental tradition in scientific thought wends its way from the Vedic literature and sages to Westerners like Plato, Bowne, and Schrödinger, and, thanks to the translations of Śrīla Prabhupāda, to readers like ourselves.

In *Where the Wasteland Ends*, Theodore Roszak decries the so-called scientific vision that “dis-integrates the landscape, reduces it to bits and pieces, discovers how it works, but not what it means. The action of the parts blocks out the meaning of the whole.” He suggests “that the richest symbols in human culture come down to us from an early generation of supremely gifted visionaries,” and that progress for humanity is to find “the way back. To the source from which the adventure of human culture takes its beginning. It is *this* progress which the good society exists to facilitate for all its members.”

He calls the ideal the “Old Gnosis,” and holds that “we have nothing to add to the splendor of the Old Gnosis and can make no progress ‘beyond it.’ We can do no more than return to it, borrow from it, reshape it to suit the times.”

Recently, Dr. Roszak has confirmed that the Vedic literatures, “especially the *Upaniṣads* and a great work like the *Bhagavad-gītā*, are certainly expressions of the insights that are fundamental to culture, or to what I called the ‘Old Gnosis.’ Swami Bhaktivedanta’s version of the *Gītā*, is very good—a very fine work, nicely done with a literal translation.” Additionally, the studies of Dr. J. Stillson Judah have traced Śrīla Prabhupāda’s lineage back to what Roszak called “an early generation of gifted visionaries.”

For his part, Śrīla Prabhupāda has already begun to reshape the Old Gnosis to suit the times. In *Easy Journey to Other Planets*, Śrīla Prabhupāda explains the Vedic wisdom in the language of the latest discoveries in space science and physics. As he says, “It is enlivening to see the principles of the eternal religion of man from the viewpoint of the modern scientist.”



B.P. Bowne wrote, “only the personal truly is. All else is flow and process.”

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CHAPTER EIGHT

Prayers by Queen Kuntī and Parīkṣit Saved

(continued from previous issue)

TEXT 38

के वयं नामरूपाभ्यां यदुभिः सह पाण्डवाः ।
भवतोऽदर्शनं यद्दिं हृषीकाणामिवेशितुः ॥३८॥

*ke vayaṁ nāma-rūpābhyāṁ
yadubhiḥ saha pāṇḍavāḥ
bhavato 'darśanam yarhi
hr̥ṣīkāṇām iveśituh*

ke—who are; *vayaṁ*—we; *nāma-rūpābhyāṁ*—without fame and ability; *yadubhiḥ*—with the Yadus; *saha*—along with; *pāṇḍavāḥ*—and the Pāṇḍavas; *bhavataḥ*—Your; *adarśanam*—absence; *yarhi*—as if; *hr̥ṣīkāṇām*—of the senses; *iva*—like; *īśituh*—of the living being.

TRANSLATION

As the name and fame of a particular body is finished with the disappearance of the living spirit, similarly if You do not look upon us, all our fame and activities, along with the Pāṇḍavas and Yadus, will end at once.

PURPORT

Kuntidevī is quite aware that the existence of the Pāṇḍavas is due to Śrī Kṛṣṇa only. The Pāṇḍavas are undoubtedly well established in name and fame and are guided by the great King Yudhiṣṭhira, who is morality personified, and the Yadus are undoubtedly great allies, but without the guidance of Lord Kṛṣṇa all of them are nonentities, as much as the senses of the body are useless without the guidance of consciousness. No one should be proud of his prestige, power and fame without being guided by the favor of the Supreme Lord. The living beings are always dependent, and the ultimate dependable object is the Lord Himself. We may,

therefore, invent by our advancement of material knowledge all sorts of counteracting material resources, but without being guided by the Lord all such inventions end in fiasco, however strong and stout the reactionary elements may be.

TEXT 39

नेयं शोभिष्यते तत्र यथेदानीं गदाधर ।
त्वत्पदैरङ्किता माति खलक्षणविलक्षितैः ॥३९॥

*neyaṁ śobhiṣyate tatra
yathedānīm gadādhara
tvat-padair ankitā bhāti
sva-lakṣaṇa-vilakṣitaiḥ*

na—not; *iyam*—this land of our kingdom; *śobhiṣyate*—will appear beautiful; *tatra*—then; *yathā*—as it is now; *idānīm*—how; *gadādhara*—O Kṛṣṇa; *iva*—Your; *padair*—by the feet; *ankitā*—marked; *bhāti*—is dazzling; *sva-lakṣaṇa*—Your own marks; *vilakṣitaiḥ*—by the impressions.

TRANSLATION

O Gadādhara [Kṛṣṇa], our kingdom is now being marked by the impressions of Your feet, and therefore it appears beautiful. But when You leave, it will no longer be so.

PURPORT

There are certain particular marks on the feet of the Lord which distinguish the Lord from others. The marks of a flag, thunderbolt, and instrument to drive an elephant, umbrella, lotus, disc, etc., are on the bottom of the Lord's feet. These marks are impressed upon the soft dust of the land where the Lord traverses. The land of Hastināpura was thus marked while Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa was there with the Pāṇḍavas, and the kingdom of the Pāṇḍavas thus flourished by such auspicious signs. Kuntidevī pointed out these distinguished features and was afraid of ill luck in the absence of the Lord.

TEXT 40

इमे जनपदाः स्वद्धाः सुपक्कौषधिवीरुयः ।
वनान्द्रिनद्युदन्वन्तो खेयन्ते तव वीक्षितैः ॥४०॥

*ime jana-padāḥ svrddhāḥ
supakkaṁśadhi-virudhah
vanādri-nady-udanvanto
hy edhante tava vīkṣitaiḥ*

ime—all these; *jana-padāh*—cities and towns; *svṛddhāh*—flourished; *supakka*—nature; *auśadhi*—herbs; *virudhaḥ*—vegetables; *vana*—forests; *adri*—hills; *nadt*—rivers; *udavantaḥ*—seas; *hi*—certainly; *edhante*—increasing; *tava*—by You; *viśitaiḥ*—seen.

TRANSLATION

All these cities and villages are flourishing in all respects because the herbs and grains are in abundance, the trees are full of fruits, the rivers are flowing, the hills are full of minerals and the oceans full of wealth. And this is all due to Your glancing over them.

PURPORT

Human prosperity flourishes by natural gifts and not by gigantic industrial enterprises. The gigantic industrial enterprises are products of a godless civilization, and they cause the destruction of the noble aims of human life. The more we go on increasing such troublesome industries to squeeze out the vital energy of the human being, the more there will be unrest and dissatisfaction of the people in general, although a few only can live lavishly by exploitation. The natural gifts such as grains and vegetables, fruits, rivers, the hills of jewels and minerals, and the seas full of pearls are supplied by the order of the Supreme, and as He desires, material nature produces them in abundance or restricts them at times. The natural law is that the human being may take advantage of these godly gifts by nature and satisfactorily flourish on them without being captivated by the exploitative motive of lording it over material nature. The more we attempt to exploit material nature according to our whims of enjoyment, the more we shall become entrapped by the reaction of such exploitative attempts. If we have sufficient grains, fruits, vegetables and herbs, then what is the necessity of running a slaughterhouse and killing poor animals? A man need not kill an animal if he has sufficient grains and vegetables to eat. The flow of river waters fertilizes the fields, and there is more than what we need. Minerals are produced in the hills, and the jewels in the ocean. If the human civilization has sufficient grains, minerals, jewels, water, milk, etc., then why should it hanker after terrible industrial enterprises at the cost of the labor of some unfortunate men? But all these natural gifts are dependent on the mercy of the Lord. What we need, therefore, is to be obedient to the laws of the Lord and achieve the perfection of human life by devotional service. The indications by Kuntidevī are just to the point. She desires that God's mercy be bestowed upon them so that natural prosperity be maintained by His grace.

TEXT 41

अथ विन्वेश विश्वात्मन् विश्वमूर्ते स्वकेषु मे ।
स्नेहपाशमिमं छिन्धि ददं पाण्डुषु वृष्णिषु ॥४१॥

atha viśveṣa viśvātman
viśva-mūrte sva-keṣu me
sneha-pāśam imam chindhi
dr̥ḍham pāṇduṣu vṛṣṇiṣu

atha—therefore; *viśva-iśa*—O Lord of the universe; *viśva-ātman*—O soul of the universe; *viśva-mūrte*—O personality of the universal form; *sva-keṣu*—unto my own kinsmen; *me*—my; *sneha-pāśam*—tie of affection; *imam*—this; *chindhi*—cut off; *dr̥ḍham*—deep; *pāṇduṣu*—for the Pāṇḍavas; *vṛṣṇiṣu*—for the Vṛṣṇis also.

TRANSLATION

O Lord of the universe, soul of the universe, O personality of the form of the universe, please, therefore, sever my tie of affection for my kinsmen, the Pāṇḍavas and the Vṛṣṇis.

PURPORT

A pure devotee of the Lord is ashamed to ask anything in self-interest from the Lord. But the householders are sometimes obliged to ask favors

from the Lord, being bound by the tie of family affection. Śrīmatī Kuntidevī was conscious of this fact, and therefore she prayed to the Lord to cut off the affectionate tie from her own kinsmen, the Pāṇḍavas and the Vṛṣṇis. The Pāṇḍavas are her own sons, and the Vṛṣṇis are the members of her paternal family. Kṛṣṇa was equally related to both the families. Both the families required the Lord's help because both were dependent devotees of the Lord. Śrīmatī Kuntidevī wished Śrī Kṛṣṇa to remain with her sons the Pāṇḍavas, but by His doing so her paternal house would be bereft of the benefit. All these partialities troubled the mind of Kuntī, and therefore she desired to cut off the affectionate tie.

A pure devotee cuts off the limited ties of affection for his family and widens his activities of devotional service for all forgotten souls. The typical example is the band of six Gosvāmīs, who followed the path of Lord Caitanya. All of them belonged to the most enlightened and cultured rich families of the higher castes, but for the benefit of the mass of population they left their comfortable homes and became mendicants. To cut off all family affection means to broaden the field of activities. Without doing this, no one can be qualified as a *brāhmaṇa*, a king, a public leader or a devotee of the Lord. The Personality of Godhead, as an ideal king, showed this by example. Śrī Rāmacandra cut off the tie of affection for His beloved wife to manifest the qualities of an ideal king.

Such personalities as a *brāhmaṇa*, a devotee, a king or a public leader must be very broadminded in discharging their respective duties. Śrīmatī Kuntidevī was conscious of this fact, and being weak she prayed to be free from such bondage of family affection. The Lord is addressed as the Lord of the universe, or the Lord of the universal mind, indicating His all-powerful ability to cut the hard knot of family affection. Therefore, it is sometimes experienced that the Lord, out of His special affinity towards a weak devotee, breaks the family affection by force of circumstances arranged by His all-powerful energy. By doing so He causes the devotee to become completely dependent on Him and thus clears the path for his going back to Godhead.

TEXT 42

त्वयि मेऽनन्यविषया मतिर्मधुपतेऽसकृत् ।
रतिमुद्रहतादद्वा गङ्गैवौषमुदन्वति ॥४२॥

tvayi me 'nanya-viṣayā
matir madhu-pate 'sakṛt
ratim udvahaatād addhā
gaṅgevaugham udanvati

tvayi—unto You; *me*—my; *ananya-viṣayā*—unalloyed; *matiḥ*—attention; *madhu-pate*—O Lord of Madhu; *asakṛt*—continuously; *ratim*—attraction; *udvahaatāt*—may overflow; *addhā*—directly; *gaṅgā*—the Ganges; *iva*—like; *ogham*—flows; *udanvati*—down to the sea.

TRANSLATION

O Lord of Madhu, as the Ganges forever flows to the sea without hindrance, let my attraction be constantly drawn unto You without being diverted to anyone else.

PURPORT

Perfection of pure devotional service is attained when all attention is diverted towards the transcendental loving service of the Lord. To cut off the tie of all other affections does not mean complete negation of the finer elements, like affection for someone else. This is not possible. A living being, whoever he may be, must have this feeling of affection for others because this is a symptom of life. The symptoms of life, such as desire, anger, hankering, feelings of attraction, etc., cannot be annihilated. Only the objective has to be changed. Desire cannot be negated, but in devotional service the desire is changed only for the service of the Lord in place of desire for sense gratification. The so-called affection for family, society, country, etc., consists of different phases of sense gratification. When this desire is changed for the satisfaction of the Lord, it is called devotional service.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* we can see that Arjuna desired not to fight with his brothers and relations just to satisfy his own personal desires. But when he heard the message of the Lord, *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, he changed his decision and served the Lord. And for his doing so, he became a famous devotee of the Lord, for it is declared in all the scriptures that Arjuna attained spiritual perfection by devotional service to the Lord in friendship. The fighting was there, the friendship was there, Arjuna was there, and Kṛṣṇa was there, but Arjuna became a different person by devotional service. Therefore, the prayers of Kunti also indicate the same categorical changes in activities. Śrīmatī Kuntī wanted to serve the Lord without diversion, and that was her prayer. This unalloyed devotion is the ultimate goal of life. Our attention is usually diverted to the service of something which is nongodly or not in the program of the Lord. When the program is changed into the service of the Lord, that is to say when the senses are purified in relation with the service of the Lord, it is called pure unalloyed devotional service. Śrīmatī Kuntidevī wanted that perfection and prayed for it from the Lord.

Her affection for the Pāṇḍavas and the Vṛṣṇis is not out of the range of devotional service because the service of the Lord and the service of the devotees are identical. Sometimes service to the devotee is more valuable than service to the Lord. But here the affection of Kuntidevī for the Pāṇḍavas and the Vṛṣṇis was due to family relation. This tie of affection in terms of material relation is the relation of *māyā* because the relations of the body or the mind are due to the influence of the external energy. Relations of the soul, established in relation with the Supreme Soul, are factual relations. When Kuntidevī wanted to cut off the family relation, she meant to cut off the relation of the skin. The skin relation is the cause of material bondage, but the relation of the soul is the cause of freedom. This relation of the soul to the soul can be established by the via medium of the relation with the Supersoul. Seeing in the darkness is not seeing. But seeing by the light of the sun means to see the sun and everything else which was unseen in the darkness. That is the way of devotional service.

TEXT 43

श्रीकृष्ण कृष्णसख वृष्ण्युषमावनिधुग्
राजन्यवंशदहनानपवर्गवीर्ये ।
गोविन्द गोद्विजसुरार्तिहरावतार
योगेश्वराखिलगुरो भगवन्नमस्ते ॥४३॥

*śrī-kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa-sakha vṛṣṇya-ṛṣabhāvani-dhruḡ-
rājanya-varṇśa-dahanānapavarga-vīrya
govinda go-dvija-surārṭi-harāvātāra
yogेश्वarākhila-guro bhagavan namas te*

śrī-kṛṣṇa—O Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *kṛṣṇa-sakha*—O friend of Arjuna; *vṛṣṇi*—of descendants of Vṛṣṇi; *ṛṣabha*—O chief; *avani*—the earth; *dhruk*—rebellious; *rājanya-varṇśa*—dynasties of the kings; *dahana*—O annihilator; *anapavarga*—without deterioration of; *vīrya*—prowess; *govinda*—O proprietor of Golokadhāma; *go*—of the cows; *dvija*—the *brāhmaṇas*; *sura*—the demigods; *arti-hara*—to relieve distress; *avatāra*—O Lord who descends; *yoga-īvara*—O master of all mystic powers; *akhila*—universal; *guro*—O preceptor; *bhagavan*—O possessor of all opulences; *namaḥ te*—respectful obeisances unto You.

TRANSLATION

O Kṛṣṇa, O friend of Arjuna, O chief amongst the descendants of Vṛṣṇi, You are the destroyer of those political parties which are disturbing elements on this earth. Your prowess never deteriorates. You are the proprietor of the transcendental abode, and You descend to relieve the distresses of the cows, the *brāhmaṇas* and the devotees. You possess all mystic powers, and You are the preceptor of the entire universe. You are the almighty God, and I offer You my respectful obeisances.

PURPORT

A summary of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is made herein by Śrīmatī Kuntidevī. The almighty Lord has His eternal transcendental abode where He is engaged in keeping *surabhi* cows. He is served by hundreds and thousands of goddesses of fortune. He descends on the material world to reclaim His devotees and to annihilate the disturbing elements in groups of political parties and kings who are supposed to be in charge of administration work. He creates, maintains and annihilates by His unlimited energies, and still He is always full with prowess and does not deteriorate in potency. The cows, the *brāhmaṇas* and the devotees of the Lord are all objects of His special attention because they are very important factors for the general welfare of living beings.

TEXT 44

सूत उवाच

पृथयेत्थं क्लृपदैः परिणूताखिलोदयः ।
मन्दं जहास बैकुण्ठो मोहयन्निव मायया ॥४४॥

*sūta uvāca
pṛthayettham kala-padaiḥ
parinūṭākhilodayah
mandam jahāsa vaikunṭho
mohayann iva māyayā*

sūtaḥ uvāca—Sūta said; *pṛthayā*—by Pṛthā (Kuntī); *iṭham*—this; *kala-padaiḥ*—by chosen words; *parinūṭa*—being worshiped; *akhila*—universal; *udayah*—glories; *mandam*—mildly; *jahāsa*—smiled; *vaikunṭhaḥ*—the Lord; *mohayan*—captivating; *iva*—like; *māyayā*—His mystic power.

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: The Lord, thus hearing the prayers of Kuntidevī, composed in choice words for His glorification, mildly smiled. That smile was as enchanting as His mystic power.

PURPORT

Anything that is enchanting in the world is said to be a representation of the Lord. The conditioned souls, who are engaged in trying to lord it over the material world, are also enchanted by His mystic powers, but His devotees are enchanted in a different way by the glories of the Lord, and His merciful blessings are upon them. His energy is displayed in different ways, as electrical energy works in manifold capacities. Śrīmatī Kuntidevī has prayed to the Lord just to enunciate a fragment of His glories. All His devotees worship Him in that way, by chosen words, and therefore the Lord is known as Uttamaśloka. No amount of chosen words is sufficient to enumerate the Lord's glory, and yet He is satisfied by such prayers as the father is satisfied even by the broken linguistic attempts of the growing child. The word *māyā* is used both in the sense of delusion and mercy. Herein the word *māyā* is used in the sense of the Lord's mercy upon Kuntidevī.

TEXT 45

तां वाढमित्युपामन्त्र्य प्रविश्य गजसाह्वयम् ।
स्त्रियश्च स्वपुरं यास्यन् प्रेम्णा राज्ञा निवारितः ॥४५॥

*tām bādham ity upāmantrya
praviśya gajasāhvayam
striyaś ca sva-puraṁ yāsyann
premnā rājñā nivāriṭah*

tām—all those; *bādham*—accepted; *iti*—thus; *upāmantrya*—subsequently informed; *praviśya*—entering; *gajasāhvayam*—the palace of Hastināpura; *striyaḥ ca*—other ladies; *sva-puraṁ*—own residence; *yāsyann*—while starting for; *premnā*—with love; *rājñā*—by the King; *nivāriṭah*—stopped.

TRANSLATION

Thus accepting the prayers of Śrīmatī Kuntidevī, the Lord subsequently informed other ladies of His departure by entering the palace of Hastināpura. But upon preparing to leave, He was stopped by King Yudhiṣṭhira, who implored Him lovingly.

PURPORT

No one could make Lord Kṛṣṇa stay at Hastināpura when He decided to start for Dvārakā, but the simple request of King Yudhiṣṭhira that the Lord remain there for a few days more was immediately effective. This signifies that the power of King Yudhiṣṭhira was loving affection, which the Lord could not deny. The almighty God is thus conquered only by loving service and nothing else. He is fully independent in all His dealings, but He voluntarily accepts obligations by the loving affection of His pure devotees.

TEXT 46

व्यासाद्यैरीश्वरेहाज्ञैः कृष्णेनाद्भुतकर्मणा ।
प्रबोधितोऽपि तिहासैर्नाबुध्यत शुचार्पितः ॥४६॥

vyāsādyair īśvarehājñaiḥ
kṛṣṇenādbhuta-karmanā
prabodhito 'pītiḥāsair
nābudhyata śūcārpiṭaḥ

vyāsa-ādyaiḥ—by great sages headed by Vyāsa; īśvara—the almighty God; ihā—by the will of; jñaiḥ—by the learned; kṛṣṇena—by Kṛṣṇa Himself; adbhuta-karmanā—by one who performs all superhuman work; prabodhitaḥ—being solaced; api—although; ūtiḥāsaiḥ—by evidences from the histories; na—not; abudhyata—satisfied; śūcā arpiṭaḥ—distressed.

TRANSLATION

King Yudhiṣṭhira, who was much aggrieved, could not be convinced, despite instructions by great sages headed by Vyāsa and the Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, the performer of superhuman feats, and despite all historical evidence.

PURPORT

The pious King Yudhiṣṭhira was mortified because of the mass massacre of human beings in the Battle of Kurukṣetra, especially on his account. Duryodhana was there on the throne, and he was doing well in his administration, and in one sense there was no need of fighting. But on the principle of justice Yudhiṣṭhira was to replace him. The whole clique of politics centered around this point, and all the kings and residents of the whole world became involved in this fight between the rival brothers. Lord Kṛṣṇa was also there on the side of King Yudhiṣṭhira. It is said in the Mahābhārata, *Ādi-parva* (20) that 640,000,000 men were killed in the eighteen days of the Battle of Kurukṣetra, and some hundreds of thousands were missing. Practically this was the greatest battle in the world within five thousand years.

This mass killing simply to enthrone Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was too mortifying, so he tried to be convinced with evidences from histories by great sages like Vyāsa and the Lord Himself that the fight was just because the cause was just. But Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira would not be satisfied, even though he was instructed by the greatest personalities of the time. Kṛṣṇa is designated herein as the performer of superhuman actions, but in this particular instance neither He nor Vyāsa could convince King Yudhiṣṭhira. Does it mean that He failed to be a superhuman actor? No, certainly not. The interpretation is that the Lord as īśvara, or the Supersoul in the hearts of both King Yudhiṣṭhira and Vyāsa, performed still more superhuman action because the Lord desired it. As Supersoul of King Yudhiṣṭhira, He did not allow the King to be convinced by the words of Vyāsa and others, including Himself, because He desired that

the King hear instructions from the dying Bhīṣmadeva, who was another great devotee of the Lord. The Lord wanted that at the last stage of his material existence the great warrior Bhīṣmadeva see Him personally and see his beloved grandchildren, King Yudhiṣṭhira, etc., now situated on the throne, and thus pass away very peacefully. Bhīṣmadeva was not at all satisfied to fight against the Pāṇḍavas, who were his beloved fatherless grandchildren. But the *ksatriyas* are also very stern people, and therefore he was obliged to take the side of Duryodhana because he was maintained at the expense of Duryodhana. Besides this, the Lord also desired that King Yudhiṣṭhira be pacified by the words of Bhīṣmadeva so that the world could see that Bhīṣmadeva excelled all in knowledge, including the Lord Himself.

TEXT 47

आह राजा धर्ममुतश्चिन्तयन् सुहृदां वधम् ।
प्राकृतेनात्मना विप्राः स्नेहमोहवशं गतः ॥४७॥

āha rājā dharma-sutaḥ
cintayan suhṛdām vadham
prākṛtenātmanā viprāḥ
sneha-moha-vaśam gataḥ

āha—said; rājā—King Yudhiṣṭhira; dharma-sutaḥ—the son of Dharma (Yamarāja); cintayan—thinking of; suhṛdām—of the friends; vadham—killing; prākṛtena—by material conception only; ātmanā—by the self; viprāḥ—O brāhmaṇa; sneha—affection; moha—delusion; vaśam—being carried away by; gataḥ—having gone.

TRANSLATION

King Yudhiṣṭhira, son of Dharma, overwhelmed by the death of his friends, was aggrieved just like a common, materialistic man. O sages, thus deluded by affection, he began to speak.

PURPORT

King Yudhiṣṭhira, though he was not expected to become aggrieved like a common man, became deluded by worldly affection by the will of the Lord (just as Arjuna was apparently deluded). A man who sees knows well that the living entity is neither the body nor the mind, but is transcendental to the material conception of life. The common man thinks of violence and nonviolence in terms of the body, but that is a kind of delusion. Everyone is duty-bound according to one's occupational duties. A *ksatriya* is bound to fight for the right cause, regardless of the opposite party. In such discharge of duty, one should not be disturbed by annihilation of the material body, which is only an external dress of the living soul. All this was perfectly known to Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, but by the will of the Lord he became just like a common man because there was another great idea behind this delusion: the King would be instructed by Bhīṣma as Arjuna was instructed by the Lord Himself.

TEXT 48

अहो मे पश्यताज्ञानं हृदि रूढं दुरात्मनः ।
पारक्यस्यैव देहस्य बह्व्यो मेऽक्षौहिणीर्हताः ॥४८॥

aho me paśyatajñānam
hṛdi rūḍham durātmanaḥ
pāraḥasyaiva dehasya
bahvyo me 'kṣauhinīr hatāḥ

aho—O; me—my; paśyata—just see; ajñānam—ignorance; hṛdi—in the heart; rūḍham—situated in; durātmanaḥ—of the sinful; pāraḥasya—meant for others; eva—certainly; dehasya—of the body; bahvyah—many, many; me—by me; akṣauhinīḥ—combination of military phalanxes; hatāḥ—killed.

TRANSLATION

King Yudhiṣṭhira said: O my lot! I am the most sinful man! Just see my heart, which is full of ignorance! This body, which is ultimately meant for others, has killed many, many phalanxes of men.

PURPORT

A solid phalanx of 21,870 chariots, 21,870 elephants, 109,650 infantry and 65,600 cavalry is called an *akṣauhīni*. And many *akṣauhīnis* were killed on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, as the most pious king of the world, takes for himself the responsibility for killing such a huge number of living beings because the battle was fought to reinstate him on the throne. This body is, after all, meant for others. While there is life in the body, it is meant for the service of others, and when it is dead it is meant to be eaten by dogs and jackals or maggots. He is sorry because for such a temporary body such a huge massacre was committed.

TEXT 49

बालद्विजसुहृन्मित्रपितृभ्रातृगुरुद्रुहः ।
न मे स्यान्निरयान्मोक्षो ह्यपि वर्षायुतायुतैः ॥४९॥

*bāla-dvi-ja-suhr̥n-mitra-
pitṛ-bhrātr̥-guru-druhaḥ
na me syān nirayān mokṣo
hy api varṣāyutā-yutaiḥ*

bāla—boys; *dvi-ja*—the twice-born; *suhr̥t*—well-wishers; *mitra*—friends; *pitṛ*—parents; *bhrātr̥*—brothers; *guru*—preceptors; *druhaḥ*—one who has killed; *na*—never; *me*—my; *syāt*—there shall be; *nirayāt*—from hell; *mokṣah*—liberation; *hi*—certainly; *api*—although; *varṣa*—years; *ayutā*—millions; *yutaiḥ*—being added.

TRANSLATION

I have killed many boys, brāhmaṇas, well-wishers, friends, parents, preceptors and brothers. Though I live millions of years, I will not be relieved from the hell that awaits me for all these sins.

PURPORT

Whenever there is a war, there is certainly a massacre of many innocent living beings, such as boys, *brāhmaṇas* and women, whose killing is considered to be the greatest of sins. They are all innocent creatures, and in all circumstances killing of them is forbidden in the scriptures. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was aware of these mass killings. Similarly, there were friends, parents and preceptors also on both sides, and all of them were killed. It was simply horrible for him to think of such killing, and therefore he was thinking of residing in hell for millions and billions of years.

TEXT 50

नैनो राज्ञः प्रजामर्तुर्धर्मयुद्धे वधो द्विषाम् ।
इति मे न तु बोधाय कल्पते शासनं वचः ॥५०॥

*naino rājñah prajā-bhartur
dharma-yuddhe vadho dviṣām
iti me na tu bodhāya
kalpate śāsanam vacah*

na—never; *enaḥ*—sins; *rājñah*—of the king; *prajā-bhartuḥ*—of one who is engaged in the maintenance of the citizens; *dharma*—for the right cause; *yuddhe*—in the fight; *vadhah*—killing; *dviṣām*—of the enemies; *iti*—all these; *me*—for me; *na*—never; *tu*—but; *bodhāya*—for satisfaction; *kalpate*—they are meant for administration; *śāsanam*—injunction; *vacah*—words of.

TRANSLATION

There is no sin for a king who kills for the right cause, who is engaged in maintaining his citizens. But this injunction is not applicable to me.

PURPORT

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira thought that although he was not actually involved in the administration of the kingdom, which was being carried on well by Duryodhana without harm to the citizens, he caused the killing of so many living beings only for his personal gain of the kingdom from the hands of Duryodhana. The killing was committed not in the course of administration but for the sake of self-aggrandizement, and as such he thought himself responsible for all the sins.

TEXT 51

स्त्रीणां मद्गतबन्धूनां द्रोहो योऽसाविहोत्थितः ।
कर्मभिर्गृहमेधीयैर्नाहं कल्पो व्यपोहितुम् ॥५१॥

*strīṇām mad-dhata-bandhūnām
droho yo 'sāv ihothitah
karmabhir grhamedhiyair
nāhaṁ kalpo vyapohitum*

strīṇām—of the women; *mat*—by me; *hata-bandhūnām*—of the friends who are killed; *drohaḥ*—enmity; *yah*—that; *asau*—all those; *iha*—herewith; *utthitah*—has accrued; *karmabhiḥ*—by dint of work; *grhamedhiyaiḥ*—by persons engaged in material welfare; *na*—never; *aham*—I; *kalpah*—can expect; *vyapohitum*—undoing the same.

TRANSLATION

I have killed many friends of women, and I have thus caused enmity to such an extent that it is not possible to undo it by material welfare work.

PURPORT

The *grhamedhis* are those whose only business is to perform welfare work for the sake of material prosperity. Such material prosperity is sometimes hampered by sinful activities, for the materialist is sure to commit sins, even unintentionally, in the course of discharging material duties. To get relief from such sinful reactions, the *Vedas* prescribe several kinds of sacrifices. It is said in the *Vedas* that by performing the *āsvamedha yajña* (horse sacrifice) one can get relief from even *brahma-hatyā* (killing of a *brāhmaṇa*).

Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja performed this *āsvamedha yajña*, but he thinks that even by performing such *yajñas* it is not possible to get relief from the great sins committed. In war either the husband or the brother or even the father or sons go to fight. And when they are killed, a fresh enmity is created, and thus a chain of actions and reactions increases which is not possible to be counteracted even by thousands of *āsvamedha yajñas*.

The way of work (*karma*) is like that. It creates one action and another reaction simultaneously and thus increases the chain of material activities, binding the performer in material bondage. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (Bg. 9.27–28) the remedy is suggested that such actions and reactions of the path of work can be checked only when work is done on behalf of the Supreme Lord. The Battle of Kurukṣetra was actually fought by the will of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as it is evident from His version, and only by His will was Yudhiṣṭhira placed on the throne of Hastināpura. Therefore, factually no sin whatsoever touched the Pāṇḍavas, who were only the order carriers of the Lord. For others, who declare war out of personal interest, the whole responsibility lies on them.

TEXT 52

यथा पङ्केन पङ्काम्भः सुरया वा सुराकृतम् ।
भूतहत्यां तथैवैकां न यज्ञैर्मार्ष्टुर्महति ॥५२॥

yathā pañkena pañkāmbhaḥ
surayā vā surākṛtam
bhūta-hatyām tathaiḥvaikām
na yajñair mārṣṭum arhati

yathā—as much as; pañkena—by the mud; pañka-ambhaḥ—water mixed with mud; surayā—by wine; vā—either; surākṛtam—impurity caused by the slight touch of wine; bhūta-hatyām—killing of animals; tathā—like that; eva—certainly; ekām—one; na—never; yajñaiḥ—by the prescribed sacrifices; mārṣṭum—to counteract; arhati—is worthwhile.

TRANSLATION

As it is not possible to filter muddy water through mud, or purify a wine-stained pot with wine, it is not possible to counteract the killing of men by sacrificing animals.

PURPORT

Āśvamedha yajñas or gomedha yajñas, sacrifices in which a horse or a bull is sacrificed, were not, of course, for the purpose of killing the animals. Lord Caitanya said that such animals sacrificed on the altar of yajña were rejuvenated and a new life was given to them. It was just to prove the efficacy of the hymns of the Vedas. By recitation of the hymns of the Vedas in the proper way, certainly the performer gets relief from the reactions of sins, but in case of such sacrifices improperly done under inexpert management, surely one has to become responsible for animal sacrifice. In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy there is no possibility of performing the yajñas perfectly for want of expert brāhmaṇas who are able to conduct such yajñas. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira therefore gives a hint to performing sacrifices in the age of Kali. In the Kali-yuga the only sacrifice recommended is the performance of hari-nāma-yajña inaugurated by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. But one should not indulge in animal killing and counteract it by performing the hari-nāma yajña. Those who are devotees of the Lord never kill an animal for self-interest, and (as the Lord ordered Arjuna) they do not refrain from performing the duty of a kṣatriya. The whole purpose, therefore, is served when everything is done for the will of the Lord. This is possible only for the devotees.

Thus end the Bhaktivedānta purports of the First Canto, Eighth Chapter, of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, entitled "Prayers by Queen Kuntī and Parīkṣit Saved."

CHAPTER NINE

The Passing Away of Bhīṣmadeva in the Presence of Lord Kṛṣṇa

TEXT 1

सूत उवाच

इति भीतः प्रजाद्रोहात्सर्वधर्मविविक्तया ।
ततो विनशनं प्रागाद् यत्र देवव्रतोऽपतत् ॥ १ ॥

sūta uvāca
iti bhītaḥ prajā-drohāt
sarva-dharma-vivikṭayā
tato vinaśanam prāgād
yatra deva-vrato 'patat

sūtaḥ uvāca—Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī said; iti—thus; bhītaḥ—being afraid of; prajā-drohāt—because of killing the subjects; sarva—all; dharma—acts of religion; vivikṭayā—for understanding; tataḥ—thereafter;

vinaśanam—the place where the fight was held; prāgāt—he went; yatra—where; deva-vrataḥ—Bhīṣmadeva; apatat—lay down for passing away.

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: Being afraid for having killed so many subjects on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira went to the scene of the massacre. There, Bhīṣmadeva was lying on a bed of arrows, about to pass away.

PURPORT

In this Ninth Chapter, as it is willed by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Bhīṣmadeva will impart instructions to King Yudhiṣṭhira on the subject of occupational duties. Bhīṣmadeva will also offer his last prayer to the Lord on the verge of passing away from this mortal world and thus become liberated from the bondage of further material engagements. Bhīṣmadeva was endowed with the power of leaving his material body at will, and his lying down on the bed of arrows was his own choice. This passing away of the great warrior attracted the attention of all the contemporary elites, and all of them assembled there to show their feelings of love, respect and affection for the great soul.

TEXT 2

तदा ते भ्रातरः सर्वे सदश्वैः स्वर्णभूषितैः ।
अन्वगच्छन् रथैर्विप्रा व्यासधौम्यादयस्तथा ॥ २ ॥

tadā te bhrātarāḥ sarve
sadaśvaiḥ svarṇa-bhūṣitaiḥ
anvagacchan rathair viprā
vyāsa-dhaumyādāyasa tathā

tadā—at that time; te—all of them; bhrātarāḥ—the brothers; sarve—all together; sat-aśvaiḥ—drawn by first-class horses; svarṇa—gold; bhūṣitaiḥ—being decorated with; anvagacchan—followed one after another; rathaiḥ—on the chariots; viprāḥ—O brāhmaṇas; vyāsa—the sage Vyāsa; dhaumya—Dhaumya; ādayaḥ—and others; tathā—also.

TRANSLATION

At that time all his brothers followed him on beautiful chariots drawn by first-class horses decorated with gold ornaments. With them were Vyāsa and ṛṣis like Dhaumya [the learned priest of the Pāṇḍavas] and others.

TEXT 3

भगवानपि विप्रर्षे रथेन सधनञ्जयः ।
स तैर्व्यरोचत नृपः कुबेर इव गुह्यकैः ॥ ३ ॥

bhagavān api vipraṛṣe
rathena sa-dhanañjayaḥ
sa tair vyarocata nṛpaḥ
kuvera iva guhyakaiḥ

bhagavān—the Personality of Godhead (Śrī Kṛṣṇa); api—also; vipra-ṛṣe—O sage among the brāhmaṇas; rathena—on the chariot; sa-dhanañjayaḥ—with Dhanañjaya (Arjuna); saḥ—He; taiḥ—by them; vyarocata—appeared to be highly aristocratic; nṛpaḥ—the King (Yudhiṣṭhira); kuvera—Kuvera, the treasurer of the demigods; iva—as; guhyakaiḥ—companions known as Guhyakas.

TRANSLATION

O sage amongst the brāhmaṇas, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, also followed, seated on a chariot with Arjuna. Thus King Yudhiṣṭhira appeared very aristocratic, like Kuvera surrounded by his companions [the Guhyakas].

PURPORT

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa wanted the Pāṇḍavas to be present before Bhiṣmadeva in the most aristocratic order so that he might be pleased to see them happy at the time of his death. Kuvera is the richest of all the demigods, and herein King Yudhiṣṭhira appeared like him (Kuvera), for the procession along with Śrī Kṛṣṇa was quite appropriate to the royalty of King Yudhiṣṭhira.

TEXT 4

दृष्ट्वा निपतितं भूमौ दिवश्च्युतमिवामरम् ।
प्रणेमुः पाण्डवा भीष्मं सानुगाः सह चक्रिणा ॥ ४ ॥

*dr̥ṣṭvā nipatitam bhūmau
divaś cyutam ivāmaram
pranemuh pāṇḍavā bhiṣmaṁ
sānugāḥ saha cakriṇā*

dr̥ṣṭvā—thus seeing; *nipatitam*—lying down; *bhūmau*—on the ground; *divaś*—from the sky; *cyutam*—fallen; *iva*—like; *amaram*—demigod; *pranemuh*—bowed down; *pāṇḍavāḥ*—the sons of Pāṇḍu; *bhiṣmam*—unto Bhiṣma; *sa-anugāḥ*—with the younger brothers; *saha*—also with; *cakriṇā*—the Lord (carrying the disc).

TRANSLATION

Seeing him [Bhiṣma] lying on the ground, like a demigod fallen from the sky, the Pāṇḍava King Yudhiṣṭhira, along with his younger brothers and Lord Kṛṣṇa, bowed down before him.

PURPORT

Lord Kṛṣṇa was also a younger cousin of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira as well as the intimate friend of Arjuna. But all the family members of the Pāṇḍavas knew Lord Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Lord, although conscious of His supreme position, always behaved in a humanly custom, and so He also bowed down before the dying Bhiṣmadeva as if He were one of the younger brothers of King Yudhiṣṭhira.

TEXT 5

तत्र ब्रह्मर्षयः सर्वे देवर्षयश्च सत्तम ।
राजर्षयश्च तत्रासन् द्रष्टुं भरतपुङ्गवम् ॥ ५ ॥

*tatra brahmaṛṣayaḥ sarve
devaṛṣayaś ca sattama
rājaṛṣayaś ca tatrāsan
draṣṭum bharata-puṅgavam*

tatra—there; *brahma-ṛṣayaḥ*—ṛṣis among the *brāhmaṇas*; *sarve*—all; *deva-ṛṣayaḥ*—ṛṣis among the demigods; *ca*—and; *sattama*—situated in the quality of goodness; *rāja-ṛṣayaḥ*—ṛṣis among the kings; *ca*—and; *tatra*—in that place; *āsan*—were present; *draṣṭum*—just to see; *bharata*—the descendants of King Bharata; *puṅgavam*—the chief of.

TRANSLATION

Just to see the chief of the descendants of King Bharata [Bhiṣma], all the great souls in the universe, namely the ṛṣis amongst the demigods, brāhmaṇas and kings, all situated in the quality of goodness, were assembled there.

PURPORT

The ṛṣis are those who have attained perfection by spiritual achievements. Such spiritual achievements can be earned by all, whether one is a king or a mendicant. Bhiṣmadeva himself was also one of the *brahmaṛṣis* and the chief of the descendants of King Bharata. All ṛṣis are situated in

the quality of goodness. All of them assembled there on hearing the news of the great warrior's impending death.

TEXTS 6-7

पर्वतो नारदो धौम्यो भगवान् बादरायणः ।
बृहदश्वो भरद्वाजः सशिष्यो रेणुकासुतः ॥ ६ ॥
वसिष्ठ इन्द्रप्रमदखितो गुत्समदोऽसितः ।
कक्षीवान् गौतमोऽत्रिश्च कौशिकोऽथ सुदर्शनः ॥ ७ ॥

*parvato nārado dhaumyo
bhagavān bādarāyaṇaḥ
brhadaśvo bharadvājaḥ
saśiṣyo reṇukā-sutaḥ*

*vasiṣṭha indrapramadaś
trito gr̥tsamado 'sitaḥ
kākṣivān gautamo 'triś ca
kauśiko 'tha sudarśanaḥ*

parvataḥ—Parvata Muni; *nāradaḥ*—Nārada Muni; *dhaumyaḥ*—Dhaumya; *bhagavān*—incarnation of Godhead; *bādarāyaṇaḥ*—Vyāsadeva; *brhadaśvaḥ*—Bṛhadaśva; *bharadvājaḥ*—Bharadvāja; *saśiṣyaḥ*—along with disciples; *reṇukā-sutaḥ*—Paraśurāma; *vasiṣṭhaḥ*—Vasiṣṭha; *indrapramadaḥ*—Indrapramada; *tritaḥ*—Trita; *gr̥tsamadaḥ*—Gr̥tsamada; *asitaḥ*—Asita; *kākṣivān*—Kakṣivān; *gautamaḥ*—Gautama; *atriḥ*—Atri; *ca*—and; *kauśikaḥ*—Kauśika; *atha*—as well as; *sudarśanaḥ*—Sudarśana.

TRANSLATION

All the sages like Parvata Muni, Nārada, Dhaumya, Vyāsa the incarnation of God, Bṛhadaśva, Bharadvāja and Paraśurāma and disciples, Vasiṣṭha, Indrapramada, Trita, Gr̥tsamada, Asita, Kakṣivān, Gautama, Atri, Kauśika and Sudarśana were present.

PURPORT

Parvata Muni is considered to be one of the oldest sages. He is almost always a constant companion of Nārada Muni. They are also spacemen competent to travel in the air without the help of any material vehicle. Parvata Muni is also a *devarṣi*, or a great sage amongst the demigods, like Nārada. He was present along with Nārada at the sacrificial ceremony of Mahārāja Janamejaya, son of Mahārāja Parikṣit. In this sacrifice all the snakes of the world were to be killed. Parvata Muni and Nārada Muni are called Gandharvas also because they can travel in the air singing the glories of the Lord. Since they can travel in the air, they observed Draupadī's *svayamvara* ceremony (selecting of her own husband) from the air. Like Nārada Muni, Parvata Muni also used to visit the royal assembly in the heaven of King Indra. As a Gandharva, sometimes he visited the royal assembly of Kuvera, one of the important demigods. Both Nārada and Parvata were once in trouble with the daughter of Mahārāja Sr̥ṅjaya. Mahārāja Sr̥ṅjaya got the benediction of a son by Parvata Muni.

Nārada Muni is inevitably associated with the narrations of the *Purānas*. He is described in the *Bhāgavatam*. In his previous life he was the son of a maidservant, but by good association with pure devotees he became enlightened in devotional service, and in the next life he became a perfect man comparable with himself only. In the *Mahābhārata* his name is mentioned in many places. He is the principle *devarṣi*, or the chief sage amongst the demigods. He is the son and disciple of Brahmāji, and from him the disciplic succession in the line of Brahmā has been spread. He initiated Prahlāda Mahārāja, Dhruva Mahārāja and many celebrated devotees of the Lord. He initiated even Vyāsadeva, the author of the Vedic literatures, and from Vyāsadeva, Madhvācārya was initiated, and thus the Madhva-sampradāya, in which the Gauḍiya-sampradāya is also included, has spread all over the universe. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

belonged to this Madhva-sampradāya; therefore, Brahmājī, Nārada, Vyāsa, down to Madhva, Caitanya and the Gosvāmīs all belonged to the same line of disciple succession. Nāradaḥ has instructed many kings from time immemorial. In the *Bhāgavatam* we can see that he instructed Prahlāda Mahārāja while he was in the womb of his mother, and he instructed Vasudeva, father of Kṛṣṇa, as well as Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira.

Dhaumya: A great sage who practiced severe penances at Utkocaka Tirtha and was appointed royal priest of the Pāṇḍava kings. He acted as the priest in many religious functions of the Pāṇḍavas (*samskāra*), and also each of the Pāṇḍavas was attended by him at the betrothal of Draupadī. He was present even during the exile of the Pāṇḍavas and used to advise them in circumstances when they were perplexed. He instructed them how to live incognito for one year, and his instructions were strictly followed by the Pāṇḍavas during that time. His name is mentioned also when the general funeral ceremony was performed after the Battle of Kurukṣetra. In the *Anuśāsana-parva* of *Mahābhārata* (127.15-16), he gave religious instructions very elaborately to Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. He was actually the right type of priest of a householder, for he could guide the Pāṇḍavas on the right path of religion. A priest is meant for guiding the householder progressively in the right path of *āśrama-dharma*, or the occupational duty of a particular caste. There is practically no difference between the family priest and the spiritual master. The sages, saints and *brāhmaṇas* were especially meant for such functions.

Bādarāyaṇa (Vyāsadeva): He is known as Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana, Dvaipāyana, Satyavati-suta, Pārāśarya, Parāśarātmaja, Bādarāyaṇa, Vedavyāsa, etc. He was the son of Mahāmuni Parāśara in the womb of Satyavati prior to her betrothal with Mahārāja Śantanu, the father of the great general Grandfather Bhīṣmadeva. He is a powerful incarnation of Nārāyaṇa, and he broadcasts the Vedic wisdom to the world. As such, Vyāsadeva is offered respects before one chants the Vedic literature, especially the *Purāṇas*. Śukadeva Gosvāmī was his son, and ṛṣis like Vaiśampāyana were his disciples for different branches of the *Vedas*. He is the author of the great epic *Mahābhārata* and the great transcendental literature *Bhāgavatam*. The *Brahma-sūtras*—the *Vedānta-sūtras*, or *Bādarāyaṇa-sūtras*—were compiled by him. Amongst sages he is the most respected author by dint of severe penances. When he wanted to record the great epic *Mahābhārata* for the welfare of all people in the age of Kali, he was feeling the necessity of a powerful writer who could take up his dictation. By the order of Brahmājī, Śrī Gaṇeśajī took up the charge of noting down the dictation on the condition that Vyāsadeva would not stop dictation for a moment. The *Mahābhārata* was thus compiled by the joint endeavor of Vyāsa and Gaṇeśa.

By the order of his mother, Satyavati, who was later married to Mahārāja Śantanu, and by the request of Bhīṣmadeva, the eldest son of Mahārāja Śantanu by his first wife, the Ganges, he begot three brilliant sons, whose names are Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Pāṇḍu and Vidura. The *Mahābhārata* was compiled by Vyāsadeva after the Battle of Kurukṣetra and after the death of all the heroes of *Mahābhārata*. It was first spoken in the royal assembly of Mahārāja Janamejaya, the son of Mahārāja Parikṣit.

Bṛhadāśva: An ancient sage who used to meet Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira now and then. First of all he met Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira at Kāmyavana. This sage narrated the history of Mahārāja Nala. There is another Bṛhadāśva, who is the son of the Ikṣvāku dynasty (*Mahābhārata, Vana-parva* 209.4-5).

Bharadvāja: He is one of the seven great ṛṣis and was present at the time of the birth ceremony of Arjuna. The powerful ṛṣi sometimes undertook severe penances on the shore of the Ganges, and his *āśrama* is still celebrated at Prayāgadhāma. It is learned that this ṛṣi, while taking bath in the Ganges, happened to meet Chitrācī, one of the beautiful society girls of heaven, and thus he discharged semen, which was kept and preserved in an earthen pot and from which Droṇa was born. So Droṇācārya is the son of Bharadvāja Muni. Others say that Bharadvāja

the father of Droṇa is a different person from Maharṣi Bharadvāja. He was a great devotee of Brahmā. Once he approached Droṇācārya and requested him to stop the Battle of Kurukṣetra.

Paraśurāma, or Reṇukāsuta: He is the son of Maharṣi Jamadagni and Śrīmatī Reṇukā. Thus he is also known as Reṇukāsuta. He is one of the powerful incarnations of God, and he killed the *kṣatriya* community as a whole twenty-one times. With the blood of the *kṣatriyas* he pleased the souls of his forefathers. Later on he underwent severe penances at the Mahendra Parvata. After taking the whole earth from the *kṣatriyas*, he gave it in charity to Kaśyapa Muni. Paraśurāma instructed the *Dhanur-veda*, or the science of fighting, to Droṇācārya because he happened to be a *brāhmaṇa*. He was present during the coronation of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, and he celebrated the function along with other great ṛṣis.

Paraśurāma is so old that he met both Rāma and Kṛṣṇa at different times. He fought with Rāma, but he accepted Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He also praised Arjuna when he saw him with Kṛṣṇa. When Bhīṣma refused to marry Ambā, who wanted him to become her husband, Ambā met Paraśurāma, and by her request only, he asked Bhīṣmadeva to accept her as his wife. Bhīṣma refused to obey his order, although he was one of the spiritual masters of Bhīṣmadeva. Paraśurāma fought with Bhīṣmadeva when Bhīṣma neglected his warning. Both of them fought very severely, and at last Paraśurāma was pleased with Bhīṣma and gave him the benediction of becoming the greatest fighter in the world.

Vasiṣṭha: The great celebrated sage among the *brāhmaṇas*, well known as the Brahmaṛṣi Vasiṣṭhadeva. He is a prominent figure in both the *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata* periods. He celebrated the coronation ceremony of the Personality of Godhead Śrī Rāma. He was present also on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra. He could approach all the higher and lower planets, and his name is also connected with the history of Hiranyakaśipu. There was a great tension between him and Viśvāmitra, who wanted his *kāmadhenu*, wish-fulfilling cow. Vasiṣṭha Muni refused to spare his *kāmadhenu*, and for this Viśvāmitra killed his one hundred sons. As a perfect *brāhmaṇa* he tolerated all the taunts of Viśvāmitra. Once he tried to commit suicide on account of Viśvāmitra's torture, but all his attempts were unsuccessful. He jumped from a hill, but the stones on which he fell became a stack of cotton, and thus he was saved. He jumped into the ocean, but the waves washed him ashore. He jumped into the river, but the river also washed him ashore. Thus all his suicide attempts were unsuccessful. He is also one of the seven ṛṣis and husband of Arundhati, the famous star.

Indrapramada: Another celebrated ṛṣi.

Trita: One of the three sons of Prajāpati Gautama. He was the third son, and his other two brothers were known as Ekāt and Dvita. All the brothers were great sages and strict followers of the principles of religion. By dint of severe penances they were promoted to Brahmāloka (the planet where Brahmājī lives). Once Trita Muni fell into a well. He was an organizing worker of many sacrifices, and as one of the great sages he also came to show respect to Bhīṣmajī at his deathbed. He was one of the seven sages in the Varuṇaloka. He hailed from the Western countries of the world. As such, most probably he belonged to the European countries. At that time the whole world was under one Vedic culture.

Gṛtsamada: One of the sages of the heavenly kingdom. He was a close friend of Indra, the King of heaven, and was as great as Bṛhaspati. He used to visit the royal assembly of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, and he also visited the place where Bhīṣmadeva breathed his last. Sometimes he explained the glories of Lord Śiva before Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. He was the son of Vitahavya, and he resembled in features the body of Indra. Sometimes the enemies of Indra mistook him to be Indra and arrested him. He was a great scholar of the *Rg-veda*, and thus he was highly respected by the *brāhmaṇa* community. He lived a life of celibacy and was powerful in every respect.

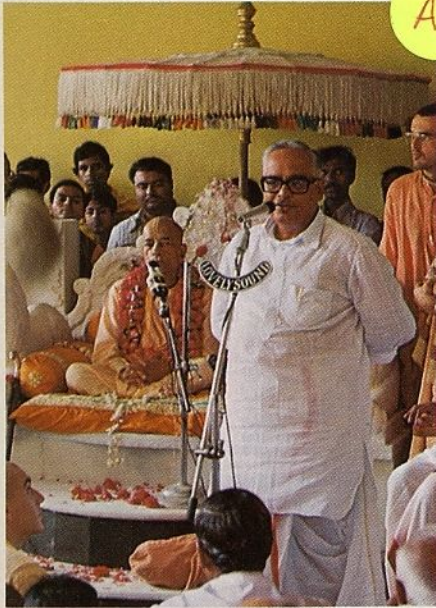
(continued in next issue)



ISKCON NEWS

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

A New ISKCON Center for Hyderabad, India



Chief minister J. Vengal Rao addresses crowd at opening ceremony.

A On August 18th (Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance day), an estimated 150,000 people celebrated the grand opening of ISKCON's new center in Hyderabad, South India. Just two years ago, leading Indian confectioner G. Pulla Reddy donated a prime downtown site, and, under the guidance of Mahātmā Svāmī, work began on the splendid new temple. Generous contributions from many ISKCON life members financed the project. Chief Minister J. Vengal Rao and Endowments Minister Sagi Suryanarayana Raju praised Śrīla Prabhupāda for reminding the Indian people of their cultural heritage.

The center will offer daily seminars on the Vedic literatures, mainly the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Also, at nearby colleges, factories, and business centers, the devotees will hold seminars on practical spiritual living.

English Professor Eulogizes Bhagavad-gītā As It Is

A.G. Medlicott, Jr., professor of English at the University of Connecticut, recently made this appraisal of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*:

"Now, through the auspices of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust of Los Angeles, students of the American Transcendentalist Period can benefit from a superbly translated and edited edition of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Concepts of the self, duty, personal attainment, and self-reliance—all facets of a world germane to Emerson and Thoreau and their contemporaries—now become clear in this rich edition. Chapter Four, entitled 'Transcendental Knowledge,' is particularly useful in drawing parallels between Emerson's essays on transcendental thought and the concepts of Eastern thinkers.

"The publishers of this volume are to be complimented in making such a definitive book available to so many for such a nominal cost. For students of American literature, especially, having the *Bhagavad-gītā* at hand will prove invaluable."

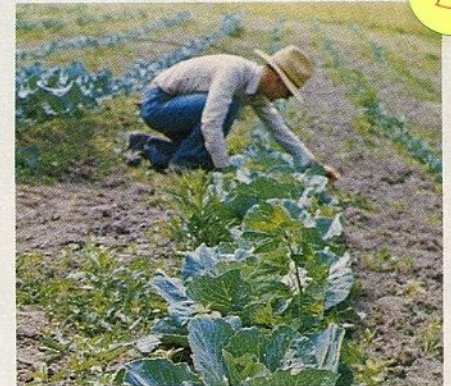
Ozark Farm Supplies St. Louis Center

DIXON, MO.—ISKCON's new farm in the Ozarks (125 miles southwest of St. Louis) does more than look rustic. True, it includes thirty-five acres of rolling woodlands. At the same time it boasts forty acres of grazing land (for oxen and cows) and one hundred acres of crop-

land. In fact, the farm has a lot to do with the creamy milk products and luscious vegetable dishes served at the St. Louis center's Sunday love feast.

The farm's combination of hard-working devotees and fertile soil keeps the St. Louis center brimming with cabbages, cucumbers, lettuce, peas, spinach, and squash, as well as cauliflowers, potatoes, and tomatoes (and more). And the soil promises to stay fertile. The Maries River feeds into a creek, four natural springs, and five ponds, so there's water all around. Perhaps that explains the farm's name—New Godruma, after a sacred Indian island.

Plans for the future include bee colonies, an orchard, a temple, more houses (built largely of rocks from the farm's riverbeds), a greenhouse, and, naturally, plenty of milk and vegetables for the St. Louis center.



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.

Nov. 2	Nov. 3	Nov. 5	Nov. 6	Nov. 7	Nov. 11
Uthāna Ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans). Disappearance of Gaurakīṣora dāsa Bābājī.	Break-fast after sunrise, before 9:29 A.M. End of the Cāturmāsya that began on Śayanā Ekādaśī (July 8). End of Ūja-vrata.	Disappearance of Bhūgarbha Gosvāmī and Kāśīvara Paṇḍita.	End of the Cāturmāsya that began on full moon (July 11). Haimantikā Rāsa-yātrā of Lord Kṛṣṇa.	Beginning of the Kātyāyanī-vrata of the gopīs.	End of the Cāturmāsya that began on July 16.
Nov. 16	Nov. 18	Nov. 19	Nov. 27	Nov. 29	Dec. 2
End of Kārtika-vrata.	Utpannā Ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).	Break-fast after sunrise, before 9:33 A.M. Disappearance of Kāliya Kṛṣṇadāsa Ṭhākura.	Oḍana-śaṣṭhi of Lord Jagannātha.	Disappearance of Madhusodana dāsa Bābājī.	Mokṣadā Ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).
Dec. 3	Dec. 6	Dec. 10	Dec. 17	Dec. 18	
Break-fast after sunrise, before 9:39 A.M.	End of Kātyāyanī-vrata of the gopīs.	Disappearance of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.	Saphalā Ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans). Disappearance of Devānanda Paṇḍita.	Break-fast after sunrise, before 9:47 A.M.	



A Spirited New Theater

Many filmmakers and playwrights say that lately, fresh material has been awfully hard to find. Enter a young theatrical troupe, their material so ancient it's brand-new.

by Dharmādhyakṣa dāsa,
photographs by Muralivadana dāsa

In New York City the news is getting around: a group of yoga students have formed an acting troupe and are entering the professional theater world.

Early in 1976, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness purchased a twelve-story building on Manhattan's West 55th Street (in the off-Broadway theater district). When the devotees told Śrīla Prabhupāda that the center had a good-sized auditorium, his face brightened. Śrīla Prabhupāda then called for Sudāmā Svāmī, the most experienced actor in the movement.

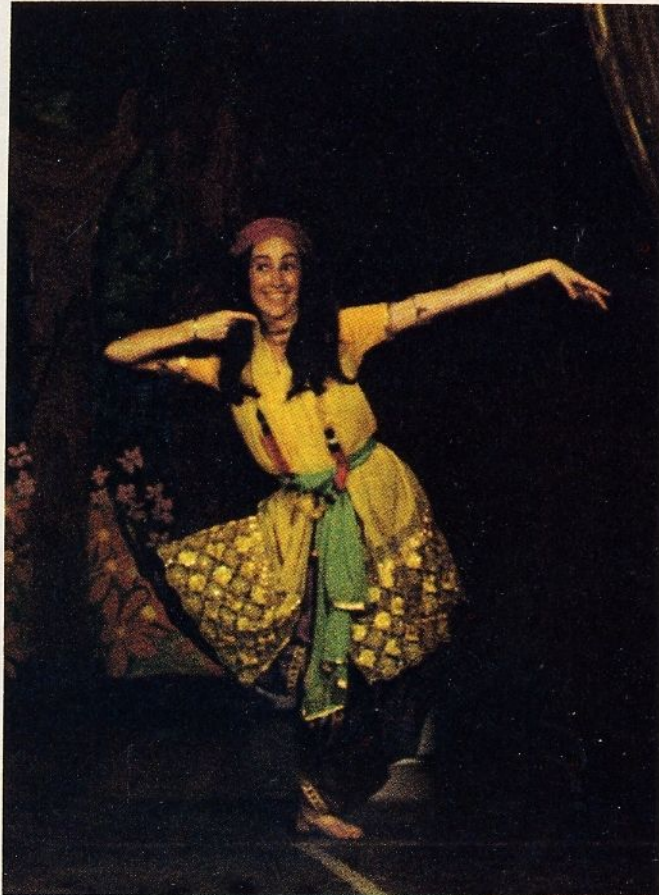
"Why don't you organize a theater in New York?"

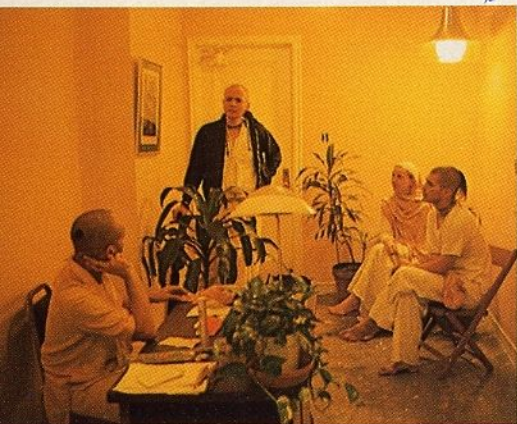
Sudāmā Svāmī recalled that the subject of theater had come up at his first meeting with Śrīla Prabhupāda, back in 1967. At that time, Śrīla Prabhupāda had asked, "What do you do?"

"I love to sing and dance. I've done it ever since I was a young boy," Sudāmā Svāmī had replied.

"Very good. You can go all over the world and present Kṛṣṇa conscious theater."

Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual potency had so impressed Sudāmā Svāmī that he soon joined the movement. However, as a beginner in spiritual life, he wanted to get a deeper understanding of his new life-style before bringing theater into it. Now, after eight years, there seemed to be another obstacle.





After a performance, Sudāmā Svāmī discusses stage strategy with the players.

“Now that I’m a *sannyāsī* [renounced monk],” Sudāmā Svāmī asked Śrīla Prabhupāda, “will this acting and dancing be considered a proper thing for me to do?”

“That is your *sannyāsa* [renunciation],” said Śrīla Prabhupāda. “Lord Caitanya Himself used to play in drama.”*

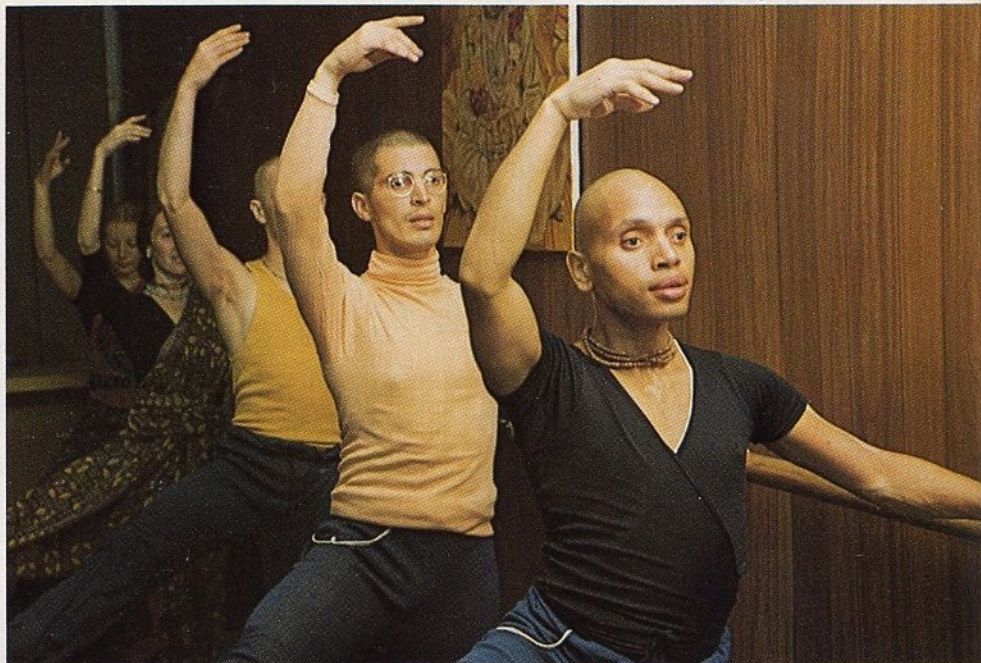
This answer encouraged Sudāmā Svāmī. He remembered the many times that Śrīla Prabhupāda had spoken vigorously against the idea that spiritual life requires a person to become inactive or to renounce his occupation. To support this point, Śrīla Prabhupāda often quoted the verse in the *Bhagavad-gītā* which says that a person who unselfishly performs his occupation “is in the renounced order of life, and he is the true mystic: not he who lights no fire and performs no work” (Bg. 6.1).

Śrīla Prabhupāda acknowledged people’s backgrounds. In the spirit of the *Bhagavad-gītā* he would say, “Let him sing,” “Let him paint,” “Let him dance,” “Let him do business. . . .” “Yes, engineering—construct temples. . . .” “These talents are not to be taken lightly. They should not be wasted. They are actually the result of austerities performed in previous lives and should be used in Kṛṣṇa’s service.”

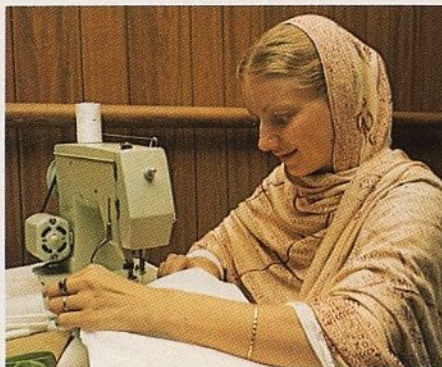
Sudāmā Svāmī’s doubts were dispelled. To please his spiritual master, he would put together a professional theater company in New York.

In every nook and cranny of 340 West 55th Street, Sudāmā Svāmī could see the signs of new life. The drab, institutional colors on the walls (the building had been a hospital) had given way to bright reds, yellows, greens, blues, and oranges. The three hundred rooms, for-

*Lord Caitanya is an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa who appeared in India five hundred years ago to popularize the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa.



Plenty of exercise like this helps make difficult dance movements appear effortless.

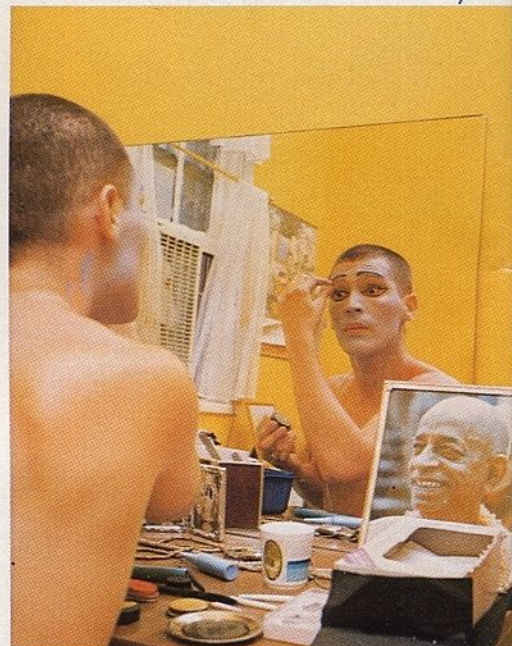


When she’s not rehearsing or performing, Rasajñā dāsī spends her time making costumes.

merly filled with the dying, now housed energetic spiritual students who sang the Lord’s glories, and the entire building vibrated with happiness and hope.

For Sudāmā Svāmī, the new center also meant the rebirth of a promising career that he had set aside ten years earlier. A strong theatrical streak ran in his family. His grandfather and grandmother, Willie and Bo Bo Covain, had choreographed several of Shirley Temple’s movies and also had worked closely with Bill “Bojangles” Robinson, the master of tap dance. At age eleven, Sudāmā Svāmī had played in his first movie, *Porgy and Bess*. His work in James Baldwin’s *Amen Corner* had nearly won him a part in *West Side Story*, on Broadway. By his sixteenth year he had earned a reputation as one of the most promising actors in Los Angeles.

“But in spite of my success,” Sudāmā Svāmī said, “I lost my motivation. I was



“Patience is a virtue.” Making up as Kṛṣṇa takes Lohitākṣa dāsa over two and a half hours.

feeling frustrated. I wasn’t frustrated materially—I was well off—but artistically speaking, I didn’t have much depth.” He dropped his acting to search for meaning. His search took him to San Francisco, where he lived for a year and a half with the Grateful Dead rock band, as a member of their “family.” Still dissatisfied, he retreated to Ken Kesey’s farm to reflect on his life. There he found and read three volumes of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which moved him so much that in 1967



Battlefield backdrop scene comes to life. Artists paint on special paper that rolls up for easy storage.



Dancers practice on the roof of New York's Hare Krishna Building.

he set off for India to learn directly from the author. But his journey ended in San Francisco. There he met some devotees, who asked him where he was going.

"To India," he told them.

"Why?"

"To meet the man who wrote this book."

"That's our teacher. He's staying right here in San Francisco." Śrīla Prabhupāda and some of his early disciples had just opened a temple, and before long, the young actor decided to stay a while.

"When the devotees started doing drama," Sudāmā Svāmī recalled, "it was fairly amateurish." But in 1971 Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote to one of the actors, "One day, very soon, your dreams will come true and you will be acting our Kṛṣṇa conscious dramas on Broadway." If Śrīla Prabhupāda said that the players would make Broadway, then Sudāmā Svāmī was convinced that it would happen—through spiritual purity, perfect technique, and tons of practice. He reassembled a workable company in New York before the end of April.

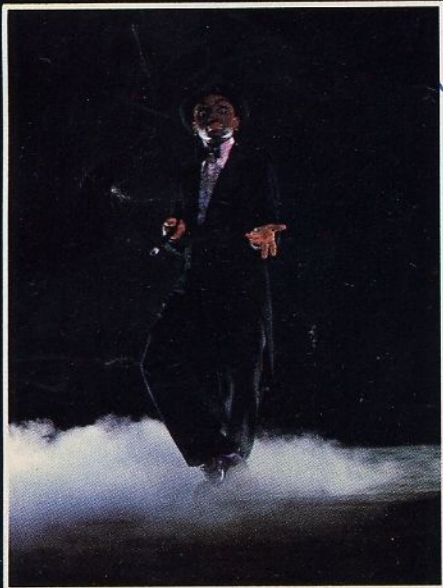
Returning from India with Sudāmā Svāmī were a husband-and-wife team, Lohitākṣa dāsa and Rasajñā-devī dāsī. Their experience before taking up Kṛṣṇa consciousness was like that of the other players. They had studied their art intensely; then, after becoming professionally involved, they had found nothing meaningful to express. At this point, they had opened their minds to new possibilities. After coming in touch with the Kṛṣṇa consciousness move-

ment, they had decided to join.

Lohitākṣa dāsa's forte is ballet. He studied with Alfredo Corvino, the American Ballet Theater, and Ballet Arts and then danced professionally with the New Jersey Ballet Company. To him the essence of theater always seemed to be spiritual. "But in my work," he said, "the spiritual side never manifested itself to me."

His wife, Rasajñā, studied acting with a group called the Player's Workshop and performed with them more than seven years, in both Germany and New York. She was branching out into films and a part with the Metropolitan Opera when she and her husband first visited the Hare Kṛṣṇa center. By acting she gained some insight into reincarnation. "I didn't know exactly what it was," she said, "but I had some idea that I had been through many, many lifetimes. The tip-off was that I could play certain characters almost at once, without any prior experience of them in this lifetime."

In reminiscing about his first exposure to Kṛṣṇa conscious theater, Lohitākṣa dāsa said, "It wasn't much technically, but the material was so fantastic. I thought, 'This is for me.' I wanted to do theater that elevated people and allowed



them to transcend time and space and their bodies, and this theater seemed to do just that." His wife agreed, and six weeks later they moved into the center.

By the time rehearsals began, in April, there were ten members: eight actors and actresses (four of whom had done work in dance) and two stagehands. "To get the company on its feet," said Sudāmā Svāmī, "I worked everyone from nine in the morning to nine at night. Many of the players balked. They couldn't imagine that it required so much time and energy, but I was firm and soon everyone came around."

The company is developing a wide repertoire that ranges from street theater to straight drama, and from musical comedy to pure dance. On a typical day, not only do the players sharpen their acting and dancing skills, but also they

rehearse as many as three pieces.

The main dancers, Lohitākṣa dāsa and Śatarūpā-devī dāsī, attend professional dance classes daily, mostly at Maggie Black's. "The classes are intense," said Śatarūpā-devī dāsī. "They often last two and a half hours. You start with slow stretching exercises, work your way up to fast footwork, then to small jumps, and finally you're running, leaping, and jumping across the room."

Before and after the classes, many of the top dancing stars ask Śatarūpā-devī dāsī about her experiences in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Often she tells them about the similarities between dance and spiritual life. "Dance is such a discipline—forcing your body into the various postures. Your body—and even your mind—tires, but you keep going. Spiritual life demands the same discipline

(Left) A scene from *The Age of Kali*. *Personified Lust, Anger, and Greed* meet with *Kali, personified Evil* (seated), in the court of *Sin*. *Sudāmā Svāmī* plays *Kali*. (opposite page, bottom).

Street Theater

You're walking down crowded Fifth Avenue. The urban tension grips your shoulders and you daydream about getting away from it all for a few days. Suddenly, over the traffic's roar you hear a man screaming. "Help! Help! Help! I'm drowning! Help!"

Drowning on Fifth Avenue?

You turn your head, and your feet, toward whatever's going on.

"Oh, no! Marvin! Someone help! Please! My husband's drowning!" cries a tall blonde, her face distorted by grief.

By now you are part of a sizable crowd, all eyes and ears fixed on the unfolding drama.

An official-looking man in an olive suit struggles out from among the onlookers.

"Don't worry, ma'am," he says. "I'll save that poor guy! I'm a social worker! Saving people is my business! Look. The hungriest come to *me*. If they need a shirt on their back, they come to *me*. If the sheriff throws them out on the street, they come to *me*. If they need a—"

"Please hurry—or it'll be too late!" pleads the blonde.

The social worker tears off his jacket and "dives" into the imaginary lake. He swims to the drowning man, grabs him, then starts pulling him back to the shore. The victim struggles, and, reluctantly, the social worker subdues him with a punch. At this point, the drowning man slips out of his jacket. Then the social worker strokes his way back to land.

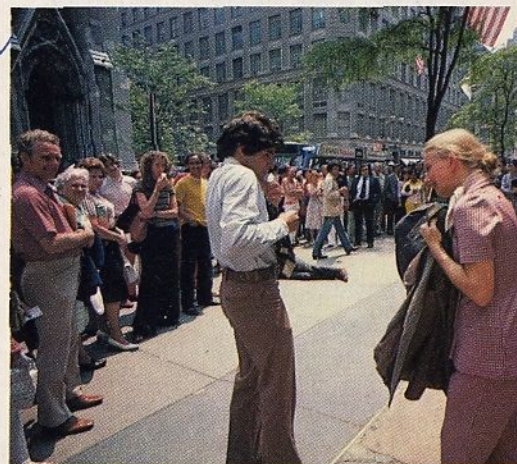
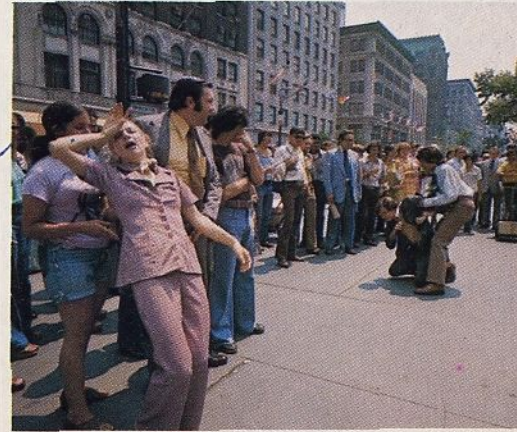
He yells, "Everything's OK! I told you I'd take care of him! Here he is, ma'am! I told you! I told you I'd save him!"

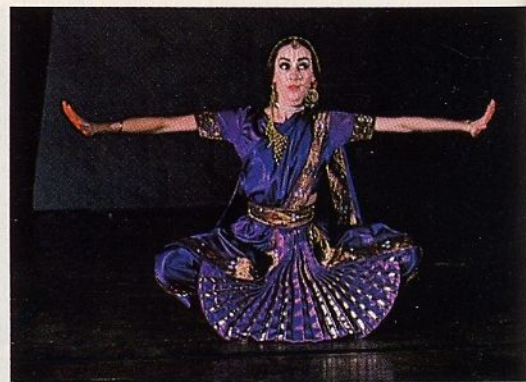
"Marvin? . . . AAAAAAAAAAHHH!! You fool! You didn't save Marvin! You saved his coat!"

Now another member of the company steps up and says, "The moral of this story is that while a social worker can alleviate a person's material problems (or save his coat), he can't begin to help the real person living inside the body (or the soul). Only by taking up a spiritual process can we do that. And in this age, the easiest and most recommended process is to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare."

and dedication. Our bodies and minds are lazy. They cling to their selfish ways, so you have to coax them. And when you perfect your discipline—in dance your movements assume a natural beauty and grace, and in Kṛṣṇa consciousness you attain inner happiness and peace."

Because of the company's small size, the players don't confine themselves to working on stage. Sudāmā Svāmī serves as overall producer and coordinator. Rasajñā designs and makes the costumes. Lohitākṣa doubles as the acting coach. Prajāpati dāsa (who along with Śatarūpā forms the company's second husband-wife team) acts, directs, and designs the sets. "There are no stars here," said Prajāpati dāsa. "Everyone pitches in on whatever needs to be done."





In classic Indian style, Śatarūpā dāsī uses flowing dance movements and hand gestures to tell the story and express emotions.

When the company performs *The Drowning Man*, people clap and shout “More! More!” “Many people think that street theater started with the anti-war skits during the sixties,” Sudāmā Svāmī noted. “But actually, if you study the history book of Indian drama, you’ll discover that street theater originated five hundred years ago in Bengal, with Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He wanted to show people about spiritual life and help them remember God—Kṛṣṇa.”

The Age of Quarrel

In May the company completed its first stage piece, *The Age of Kali*, penned by Girish Candra Ghosh, the “Shakespeare of Bengal.” “He was a brilliant author,” says Sudāmā Svāmī. “He’d sit with a secretary on either side and dictate two plays at once.” *The Age of Kali* closely resembles a medieval morality play, and perhaps a little amazingly, it is the company’s most popular work.

Prajāpati dāsa explained, “Kali is the personification of evil. He destroys everyone’s good qualities. In the Western world the closest thing to Kali is the devil, but Kali isn’t some ghoul with pointed horns. He looks quite respectable—dressed in high style, and so forth. In this day and age, he’s the trendsetter.”

Sudāmā Svāmī plays Kali. He paces onto the stage through an eerie fog, and “Sin” (Rasajñā-devī dāsī) accompanies him. This is Kali’s age to rule, and he and Sin talk over their strategy.

Kali: With perverted desires will I flood their minds. They’ll be vultures for pleasure, but only torment find.

Sin: Sexual perversions will be in vogue. Oh, Kali, Kali, you’re such a rogue.

Sin is Kali’s faithful servant.

Sin: What would you like for dinner, dear? Some freshly killed cow, chicken,



Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna brace themselves for battle in stage version of Bhagavad-gītā.

or deer? Government-inspected turkey, rabbit, or lamb?

Kali: No, tonight I’ll eat my fellow man! *Kali signals the decline of God-consciousness.*

Kali: Worship of God? Ha! There’ll hardly be any. But even the pauper will worship his penny.

Kali and Sin conclude the first act by confronting the audience.

Kali and Sin: We’re plannin’ all the trouble the world’s gonna be put in.

Kali: For I’m Kali.

Sin: And I’m his consort Sin.

Kali and Sin: This is the age that’ll do you all in!

The rest of the play takes place in Sin’s court, where she is surrounded by her cohorts Lust, Anger, and Greed. A depressed Kali trudges in with sad news: Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu has incar-

nated and is spreading the chanting of God’s holy names in every town and village. Now their corrupt regime is doomed. Sin is outraged and vows to fight right down to her last vice. But from offstage the audience hears the sound of chanting grow louder and louder.

Playwright Diane Richards is so intrigued with *Kali* she has offered to turn it into a full-length musical. “We haven’t reached anywhere near perfection yet,” admitted Sudāmā Svāmī, “but the reaction from the rest of the theatrical community is very encouraging.” He accounts for *Kali*’s popularity in this way: “*The Age of Kali* has beautiful effects—fog, strobes, colored wheels, flamboyant costumes—and dance and upbeat music. And *Kali* fits right into this whole ‘Exorcist’ trend.



In their off-Broadway theater, the players bow to thunderous applause. Every Sunday evening they play to capacity crowds.



Reenacting Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Here, mother Yaśodā scolds child Kṛṣṇa for stealing butter.

There's lust. There's anger. There's greed. These are real forces that bewilder everybody. In *Kali* they come to life, and the audience feels relief to see them subdued."

The troupe performs *The Age of Kali* in rotation with other works adopted from the classical Vedic literatures of India. From the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* they enact dramas and dance pieces depicting the pastimes of the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa. They combine dance and drama in their portrayal of the world-famous *Bhagavad-gītā*. Most recently, they're working on a full-length production from the epic *Rāmāyaṇa*.

These plays provide relief from a modern theater addicted to anti-heroes, alienation, and commercial fluff. They portray great personalities who meet tremendous challenges with spiritual strength. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa slashes away the doubts of his disciple

Arjuna with the weapon of transcendental knowledge. In the series about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, the youthful heroes Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma do away with demons such as the kidnapper Pralambāsura.

"These plays both entertain and present spiritual life in a pleasing way," said Rasajñā dāsī. "It's a natural form of enlightenment both for the players and the audience, and for me that's the perfection of theater."

Does Sudāmā Svāmī have a timetable for the company's debut on Broadway?

"We're in no hurry," he said. "After all, by uniting Vedic and Western theater the troupe is creating a new art form—and that's not something you do overnight. Besides, I quit my career ten years ago, and then Kṛṣṇa (through Śrīla Prabhupāda) gave me another chance. So I've learned one thing—it's Kṛṣṇa's timetable, not mine."



Illustration: Parikshit dāsa

THE BOAR WHO BATTLED FOR PLANET EARTH

It was evening. The sun was setting on the forest cottage of the great sage Kaśyapa Muni. As the sage sat in ecstatic trance, meditating on Lord Kṛṣṇa deep within his heart, his beautiful wife Diti approached him in a lusty mood.

"O learned one," she said, "Cupid is forcibly distressing me with his arrows tonight, just as a mad elephant troubles a banana tree. I want to have sons, like your other wives, so please lay with me and pacify my anxiety."

"O afflicted one," said Kaśyapa, "I shall certainly satisfy you forthwith, but you must wait just a few moments. This particular time of day is most inauspicious, for at this time Lord Śiva, the king of the ghosts, travels throughout the land on the back of his bull, accompanied by his horrible, ghostly companions. Lord Śiva's body is reddish and is covered with ashes, and his hair is dusted with the whirlwind dust of the burning crematorium. Of course, his devilish appearance is misleading, for his personal qualities are beyond reproach. Indeed, he controls the material energy. Considering all these things, we should wait until a more auspicious time so as not to offend him."

But Diti felt pressed by Cupid, and she caught hold of Kaśyapa's clothing, just like a shameless prostitute. Unable to dissuade his wife, Kaśyapa resigned himself to his fate and lay with Diti in a secluded place.

Afterward, Kaśyapa bathed himself and meditated on the Supreme Lord's eternal effulgence, silently chanting sacred hymns. When he had finished, Diti approached him, her face lowered in shame.

◀ "The earth belongs to the residents of the lower regions," the demon told the boar, "and You cannot take it without being punished by me."

**The lady was lusty
and wanted sons. Little did
she know that her children
would be demons,
and that the Lord Himself
would have to come and kill them.**

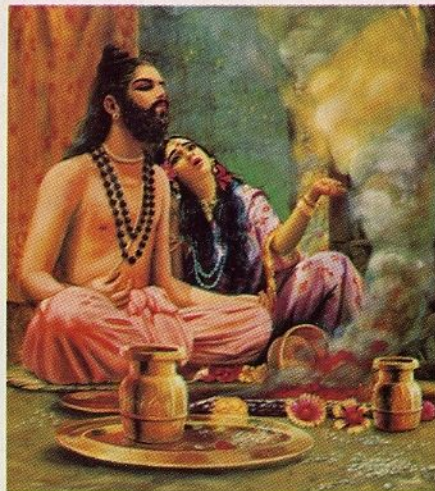


Illustration: Jandurani-devi (dasi)

She said, "My dear *brāhmaṇa*, please see that Lord Śiva does not kill my embryo because of the great offense I have committed against him. He is forgiving, but his anger can move him to chastise others. Since he is the husband of my sister Satī, I pray that he will forgive me."

Diti trembled with fear as Kaśyapa answered her: "Because your mind was polluted, because you defiled the evening hour, because you neglected my directions, and because you ignored the demigods, everything was inauspicious.

O haughty one, you will therefore bear two contemptuous sons from your condemned womb. O unlucky woman, they will bring constant lamentation to all the three worlds! They will kill poor and faultless creatures, torture women, and enrage great souls. At that time the Supreme Lord of the universe, the well-wisher of all, will descend and kill them, just as Indra smashes mountains with his thunderbolts."

Diti was terribly disturbed, but after some time she became pacified. "After all," she said, "it is very good that the all-merciful Lord will kill my sons and in that way liberate them from material bondage."

Since she knew that her sons would cause nothing but grief all over the universe, Diti tried to hold them within her womb. During this time the sun dimmed, and the demigods went to Lord Brahmā to ask his help. Brahmā explained that the Supreme Lord wanted to exercise His fighting spirit: He had arranged that two demigods take birth as His demoniac opponents. Finally, after a full hundred years' pregnancy, Diti brought forth her twin sons.

Upon the two demons' birth, many fearful things happened throughout the heavenly and earthly planets. Earthquakes shook the land, and many foreboding planets like Saturn appeared in the sky. Comets, meteors, and thunderbolts disturbed the atmosphere. Darkness reigned everywhere, and cows grew so terrified that they yielded not milk but blood. Clouds rained pus, and, without the slightest wind, trees came crashing down. The end of the universe seemed at hand.

Soon Diti's sons began to exhibit uncommon bodily features. Their steellike frames grew as large as two mountains, and the crests of their gold crowns seemed to touch the sky. Wherever they went they blocked the sun, and with

their every step the earth shook. Kaśyapa saw the demoniac nature of his twin sons and named them accordingly.

After naming the elder son Hiraṇyakaśipu, “one whose only concern is gold and soft bedding,” Kaśyapa called the younger son Hiraṇyākṣa, “one who hunts for gold everywhere.” In fact, Hiraṇyākṣa would excavate so much gold from the earth as to upset the planet’s equilibrium and plunge her into the Garbhodaka Ocean, at the universe’s bottom. To lift the earth out of the muck beneath the Garbhodaka Ocean, the Supreme Lord would incarnate as Varāha, the giant boar. With its long tusks, a boar can pick things up from filthy places; so the Lord would appear as the giant boar Varāha to rescue the earth.

Meanwhile, Hiraṇyakaśipu was undergoing severe austerities to get a benediction from Brahmā. When Brahmā granted his desire, Hiraṇyakaśipu thought that he had become immortal. So he became extremely haughty and vicious, and he brought all three planetary systems under his control.

Always eager to fight for his elder brother, Hiraṇyākṣa took a huge club on his shoulder and traveled all over the universe. With golden anklets that clanged on his feet, a gigantic garland that swayed around his neck, and a fierce temper that flared for even the slightest reason, Hiraṇyākṣa traversed the heavenly planets. His enormous mental and bodily strength (he shared Brahmā’s boon upon Hiraṇyakaśipu) made him very proud. He feared death at the hands of no one, and there was no checking him. Seized with fear at the very sight of him, the demigods fled to their heavenly abodes. When he could not find Indra and the other demigods who had previously been proud of their power, Hiraṇyākṣa roared with cruel laughter.

After returning from the heavenly kingdom, the mighty Hiraṇyākṣa dove deep into the Garbhodaka Ocean, just as a wrathful elephant might dive into a river. He moved about in the ocean for many years and smote the gigantic wind-tossed waves again and again with his iron mace; thus, he terrified all the sea’s inhabitants. Finally, he reached the city of Vibhāvārī, which lies within the watery kingdom. It is the capital of the demigod Varuṇa, lord of the aquatics.

Hiraṇyākṣa fell at Varuṇa’s feet in false humility. Smiling with contempt, the demon asked, “Give me battle, O supreme lord! You are the guardian of an entire sphere and a ruler of wide fame. Having crushed the might of many arrogant and conceited warriors, O lord, you are fit to be worshiped by the rare

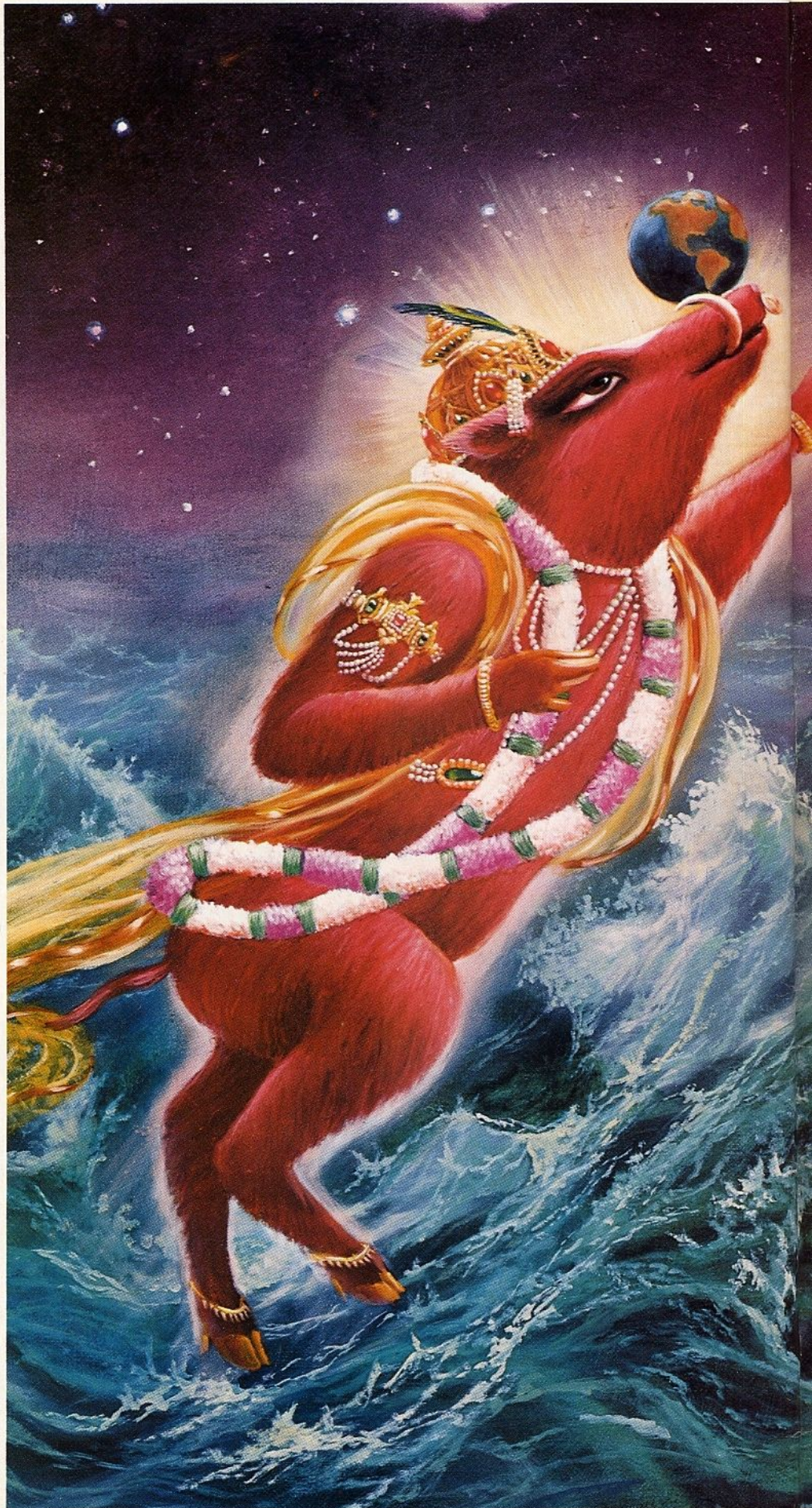
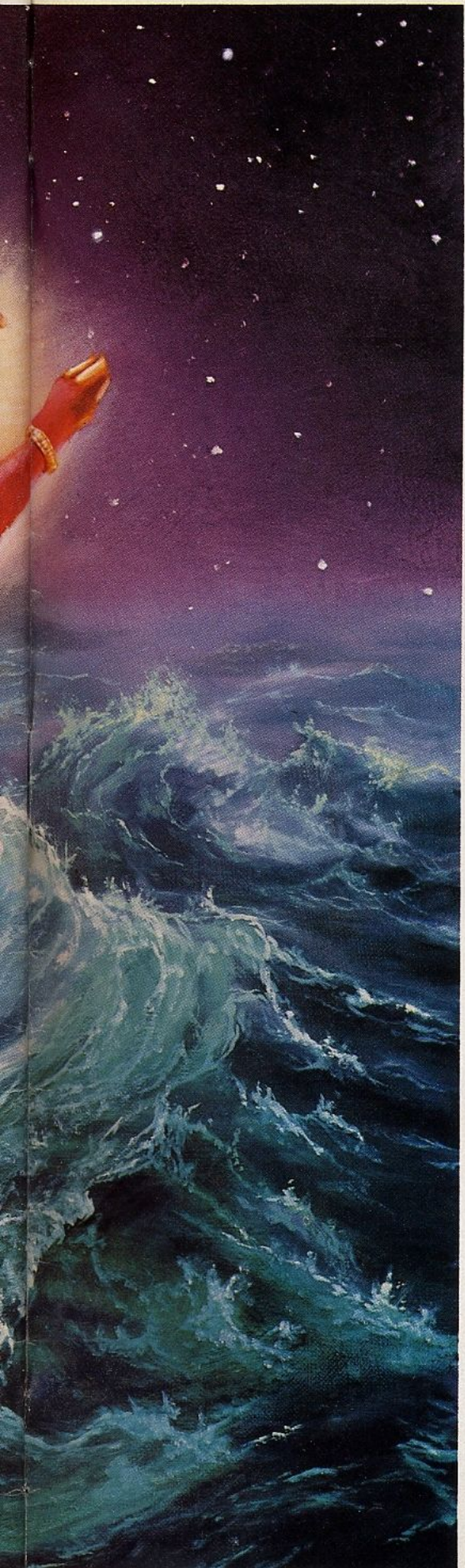


Illustration: Parikṣit dāsa



and lavish Rājasūya sacrifice!”

Thus mocked by an enemy whose vanity knew no bounds, the lord of the waters grew extremely angry. But by the strength of his reason, Varuṇa curbed his anger and coolly replied: “O dear one, we have now desisted from warfare, having grown too old for combat. Besides, you are so skilled in the arts of war that I do not see anyone but Lord Viṣṇu who is worthy to meet you in battle. Therefore, you should seek Him out without delay. I am sure that you will then be rid of your pride at once and will lie down on the battlefield, surrounded by dogs, for eternal sleep. Just to exterminate wicked fellows like you and show His grace to the virtuous, the Lord assumes various incarnations, such as Varāha, the divine boar.”

Recklessly ignoring Varuṇa’s prediction, Hiraṇyākṣa dove deep into the ocean to search out Lord Varāha. The Lord had just then descended into the depths to rescue the earth, and Hiraṇyākṣa came upon Him as he was bearing the globe upward on the ends of His massive tusks.

The demon laughed. “Oh, an amphibious beast! O fool, O lowest of the demigods in the form of a boar, just listen to me. This earth planet is entrusted to us, the residents of the lower regions, and You cannot take it from my presence without being punished by me. You rascal, You have been nourished by our enemies just to kill us, and You have managed to kill a few demons by remaining invisible. But Your power is only a sham, O fool, so today I shall enliven my kinsmen by smashing Your skull with my mace!”

Although Hiraṇyākṣa’s shaftlike words pained Lord Varāha, He tolerated the pain without reacting, for He saw that the earth on the end of His tusks was frightened of falling. Instead of fighting at once, Lord Varāha rose out of the water—just as a bull elephant emerges from the river with his she-elephant when assailed by a crocodile.

As the Lord rose out of the water, the demon chased Him, roaring like thunder. “Are you not ashamed to flee a challenging adversary? But then again, what could shame a shameless wretch like You?!”

Lord Varāha placed the earth within His sight on the surface of the water and transferred His own energy to her so that she could float. While the enraged Hiraṇyākṣa looked on, Brahmā sang the Lord’s praises, and the other demigods showered flowers upon Him.

With the earth now safe, the Lord turned to Hiraṇyākṣa, laughed mockingly, and began to vent His own terrible anger. “O mischievous one, I am indeed an amphibious beast, and I am seeking to kill hunting dogs like you. I have no fear from your loose talk, for you are bound up by the laws of death. You are said to be the commander of many soldiers, so now you can take prompt steps to conquer Me. Give up all your foolish talk and slay Me. A proud man is but an ass if he fails to fulfill his promised word.”

Thus challenged by Lord Varāha, Hiraṇyākṣa trembled in anger. Like a cobra he hissed, all his senses shaken by wrath. Now the demon sprang upon the Lord and struck His chest with his huge mace. But the Lord easily dodged the blow. Again and again the demon rushed the Lord, brandishing his mace and biting his lip in rage. Then with His own mace the Lord struck the enemy’s right temple. But, also an expert fighter, the demon used his mace to block the blow.

In this way, the demon Hiraṇyākṣa and Lord Varāha struck each other with their huge maces, each enraged and each intent on winning. Their rivalry was keen, and both sustained many injuries from the maces’ sharp points. With each new injury, they became more enraged at the smell of the blood smeared over their bodies. Both were great fighters, and with the earth floating helplessly nearby, they looked like two bulls battling for a cow.

After some time, Brahmā and his associates came to see Lord Varāha’s fight for the earth. Brahmā said, “My dear Lord, this demon Hiraṇyākṣa has harassed and terrorized the demigods, the *brāhmaṇas*, the cows, and innocent people whose only refuge is Your lotus feet. Since I awarded him a boon, he has simply wandered throughout the universe looking for a worthy opponent. My dear Lord, please do not play with this most wicked and arrogant serpent any longer, for he is very skilled at conjuring up tricks. My dear Lord, You are unconquerable, so please kill him immediately, before the demoniac hour arrives and he presents some new approach favorable to him. The dark evening is fast approaching. Therefore, since You are the Soul of all souls, kindly kill Him quickly by Your divine energy and win victory for the demigods.”

When he heard Brahmā’s anxious words, Lord Varāha laughed heartily and accepted his prayer with a glance laden with love. Hiraṇyākṣa was stalking

◀ *With its long tusks, a boar can pick things up from filthy places; so the Lord appeared as the giant boar Varāha to rescue the earth.*

fearlessly before Him, so the Lord sprang at the demon and aimed His mace at his chin. But the demon knocked the mace from the Lord's hand, sending the splendid weapon whirling into the sea. A cry of alarm arose from the assembled crowd of demigods and sages. But their worst fears proved ill-founded, for although Hiraṇyākṣa had an excellent chance to strike the Lord, the demon respected the law of one-to-one combat and put aside his own mace. This further kindled the fury of the Lord, who then invoked His Sudarśana disk, the supreme weapon.

As the Sudarśana disk whirled in the Lord's hands, and as the Lord confronted Hiraṇyākṣa, the onlookers cried, "May You win the victory! Please finish him!" When the demon saw the Lord standing before him with His Sudarśana disk, his anger exploded. Again he hissed like a serpent and bit his lip hatefully. For some time he stared at the Lord with burning eyes. Then, suddenly, he took up his mace once more and hurled it at the Lord, screaming, "You are slain!" But the Lord playfully knocked the mace down with His left foot, even though it had come upon Him with the force of a tempest.

Then the Lord told the demon, coolly, "Take up your weapon and try again, eager as you are to conquer Me." Hiraṇyākṣa retrieved his mace and with a loud roar hurled it at the Lord. But the Lord stood His ground firmly and caught the mace with the ease of a large hawk snatching a mouse.

His valor frustrated and his pride destroyed, Hiraṇyākṣa was reluctant to take up the mace for a third time. Instead, he came forth with his fearsome trident, flaming like fire, and hurled it at the Lord with all his strength. But the Lord tore it to pieces with the razor-sharp rim of His Sudarśana disk. Now even more enraged and roaring loudly, the demon rushed at the Lord and pounded His broad chest with fists as strong as thunderbolts. The demon's blows could have pulverized mountains, yet they caused not even a tremor in any part of the Lord's body—any more than a wreath of flowers would shake an elephant. Defeated, Hiraṇyākṣa suddenly disappeared.

The demon then used such wizardry against Lord Varāha that the onlookers filled with alarm. In an instant, fierce winds blew from all directions and spread dust and darkness everywhere. Stones came in volleys from every corner, as if thrown by machine guns. Lightning- and thunder-filled clouds covered over the luminaries in the sky, and pus, hair, blood, feces, urine, and

bones rained down. Mountains discharged all kinds of weapons. Naked, loose-haired demonesses appeared with raised tridents. But once again the Lord released His Sudarśana disk and dispersed all the demon's magical forces.

When Hiraṇyākṣa saw all his apparitions dispelled, he came once again before Lord Varāha. This time he put his arms around the Lord to crush Him, but to his amazement he found the Lord standing outside his clasp. Finally, the demon struck the Lord with his stonelike fists, and at that time the Lord slapped him at the root of the ear. Though the Lord had struck him indifferently, Hiraṇyākṣa's body wheeled, his eyeballs

bulged out of their sockets, his arms and legs shattered, and he fell down dead, like a gigantic tree uprooted by the wind. Having enjoyed himself in the great battle, the Lord ended the terror of Hiraṇyākṣa for the great pleasure of the saints and demigods.

The demigods were overjoyed. "All obeisances unto You! You have assumed the form of a boar to maintain the world, and fortunately for us, You have slain this demon Hiraṇyākṣa, who was a torment to the three worlds. Now, O Lord we have become happy under the shelter of Your lotus feet. We know that You will always protect those who are devoted to You."



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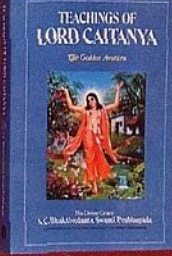
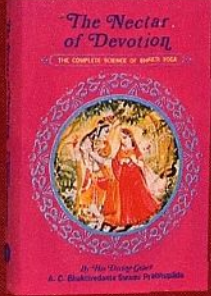
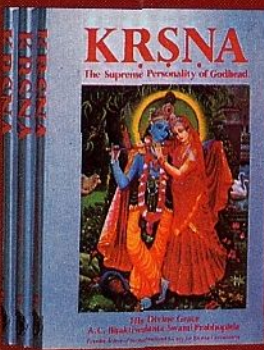
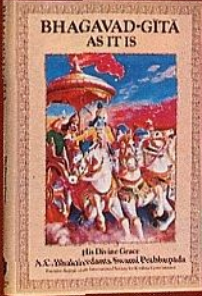
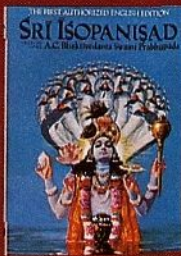
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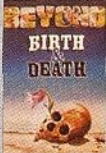
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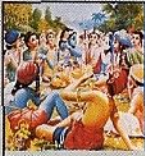
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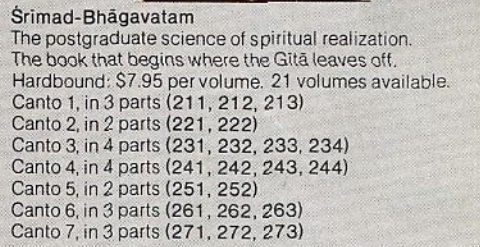
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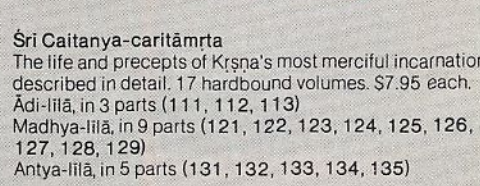
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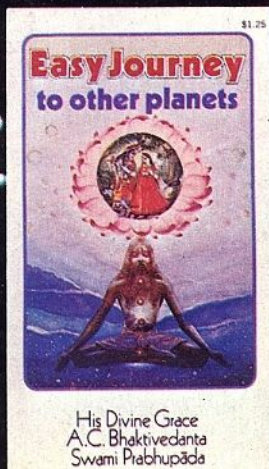
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