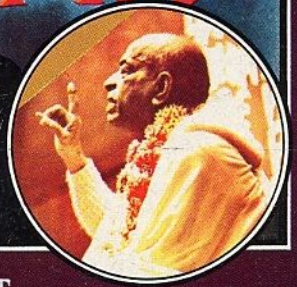


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

# BACK TO GODHEAD

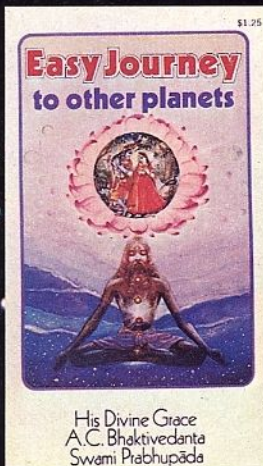


Vol. 11 No. 12

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



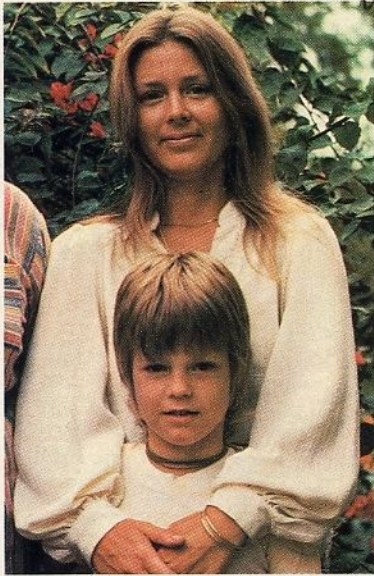
# Easy Journey to Other Planets



"For the perfect yogī who has attained success in leaving his body in perfect consciousness, transferring from one planet to another is as easy as an ordinary man's walking to the grocery store" (page 40).

For the inner secrets of yoga, read *Easy Journey to Other Planets*, by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Ninety-six pages, eight full-color plates. To order, use coupon inside back cover.

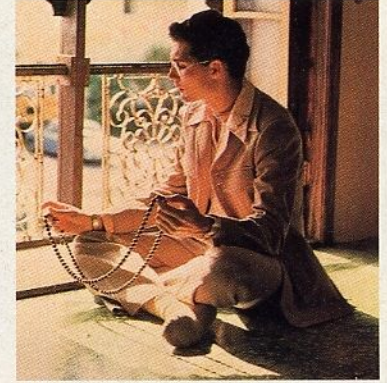
# Chant and be happy...



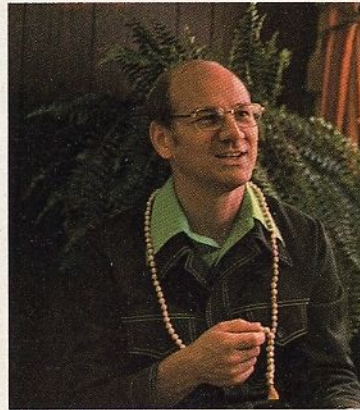
**June Lahner**, jewelry designer, with son Jason: "Chanting makes me more perceptive, more in harmony with everything and everyone around me."



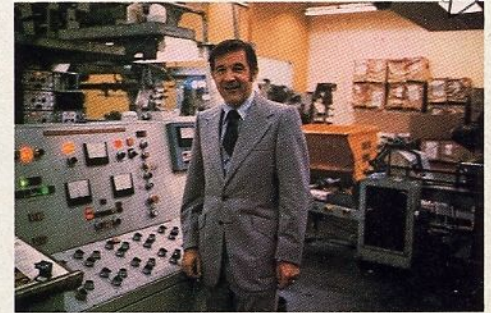
**Mrs. Sally Rawley**, merchandiser: "When I'm nervous I find chanting very calming. I don't get shaken up at little things."



**Bruce Kleinberg**, executive secretary: "Chanting helps you see things in perspective. My outlook is a lot brighter."



**Dr. Donald R. Tuck**, associate professor, Western Kentucky University: "I've noticed that as chanters progress from level to deeper level, they become more realistic, more tolerant."

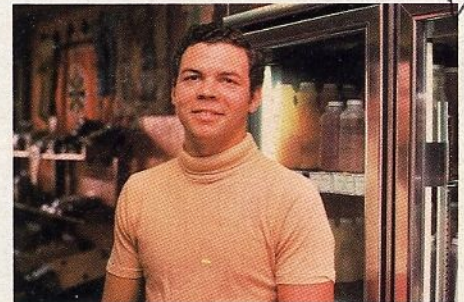


**Paul Bleier**, printing executive: "When there's pressure, I chant. It's the one thing that charges my batteries. It clears my mind and brings me back in focus."



**Mrs. Grace Acquistapace**, housewife: "I'm more openminded. Chanting has opened my eyes to things I never noticed. It's like beautiful music—a very peaceful feeling, very satisfying."

**Hare Krishna  
Hare Krishna  
Krishna Krishna  
Hare Hare  
Hare Rama  
Hare Rama  
Rama Rama  
Hare Hare**



**Stephen Farmer**, health food store owner: "If I start my day on a spiritual note by chanting Hare Krishna, I can make it through the day in a pleasant mood."



Anyone can chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa (Huh-ray Krish-na) mantra, anytime, anywhere. The main thing is to listen closely to the sound. Whether you sing it or say it, alone or with others, the Hare Kṛṣṇa chant brings about joyful spiritual awareness.

Chanting can work for everyone, and there's no fee or initiation. If you'd like to meet other people who chant, visit any of the more than 120 centers worldwide (like the one in Melbourne, Australia, pictured at left). See last page for addresses.

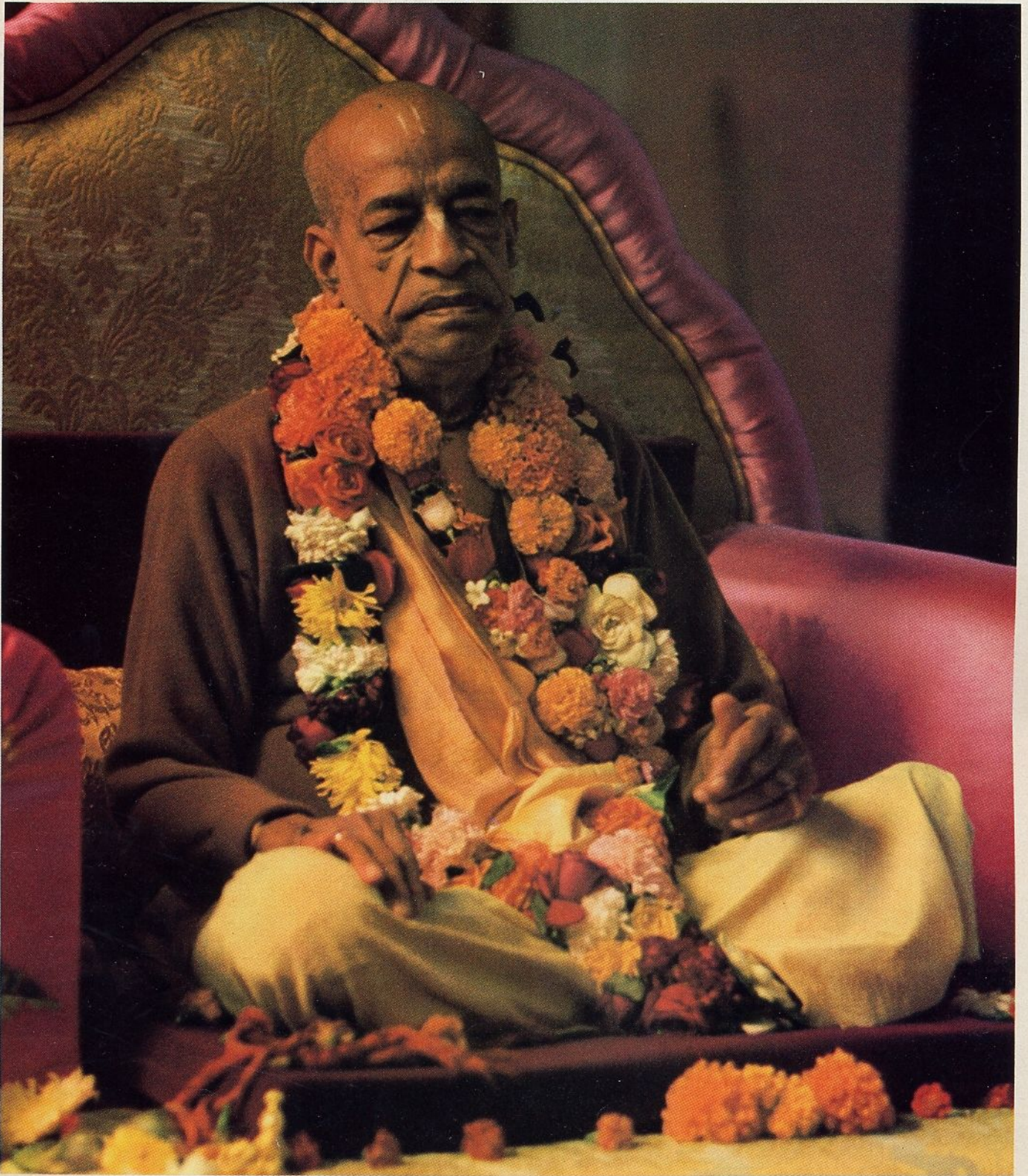


Photo: Muralivadana dāsa

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

*Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness*

The founder and original editor of BACK TO GODHEAD is His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. In September, 1965, Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived in the United States. In July, 1966, in a storefront in New York City, he began the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. And from those beginning days, BACK TO GODHEAD has been an integral part of ISKCON.

In fact, since 1944, when he started writing, editing, printing, and distributing BACK TO GODHEAD, Śrīla Prabhupāda has often called it “the backbone of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.” Although over the years it has changed in some ways, BACK TO GODHEAD remains, in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s words, “an instrument for training the mind and educating human nature to rise up to the plane of the soul spirit.”

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

His Divine Grace

**A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swamī Prabhupāda**

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## A Short Statement of the Philosophy of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

1. By cultivating a bona fide spiritual science, we can be free from anxiety and achieve pure, unending, blissful consciousness in this lifetime.
2. We are not our bodies but eternal spirit souls, parts and parcels of God (Kṛṣṇa).
3. Kṛṣṇa is the eternal, all-knowing, omnipresent, all-powerful, and all-attractive Personality of Godhead, the sustaining energy of the entire cosmic creation, and the seed-giving father of all living beings.
4. The Absolute Truth is present in all the world's great scriptures, particularly the ancient Vedic literatures, whose *Bhagavad-gītā* records 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 offer to Kṛṣṇa all that we do and do nothing for our own sense gratification.
8. The recommended way to achieve mature love of God in this age of Kali (quarrel) is to chant the Lord's holy names. For most people it is easiest to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*:  
Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare  
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

## PRONUNCIATION OF SANSKRIT WORDS

Sanskrit words and names in BACK TO GODHEAD are spelled according to a system that scholars throughout the world use to show how to pronounce each word. Vowels in Sanskrit are pronounced almost as in Italian. The sound of the short *a* is like the *u* in *but*. The long *ā* is like the *a* in *far* and held twice as long as the short *a*, and *e* is like the *a* in *evade*. Long *ī* is like the *i* in *pique*. The vowel *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.

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# BACK TO GODHEAD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

Vol. 11 No. 12

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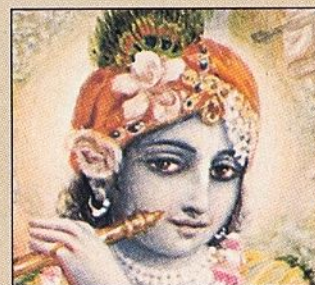
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### Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

The continuing presentation of India's great spiritual classic.

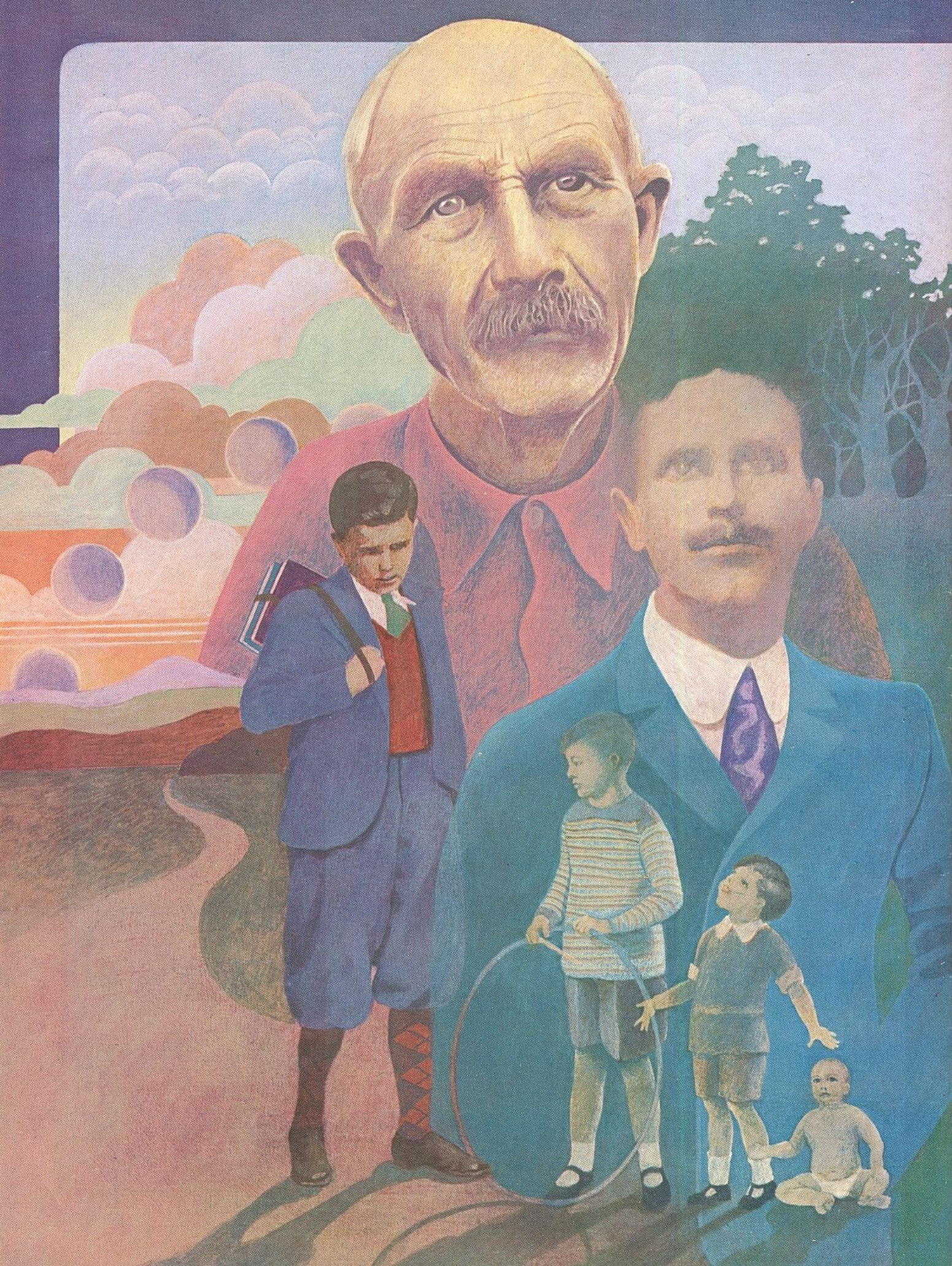
Translation and commentary

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swamī Prabhupāda.



## ON THE COVER

"One thing I feel from this painting," remarks artist Jadurāṇī-devī dāsī, "is that the Supreme Lord is totally likeable. He's the person who's easiest to like." She notes, "Kṛṣṇa and His cowherd boyfriends are coming back home at the end of the day, and the cowherd girls are looking on. It's really clear to me, you know. Being the Lord naturally means being completely likeable, or completely attractive—which makes sense, because the name *Kṛṣṇa* means 'the all-attractive one.'"



# Reincarnation and Beyond

"I can remember being a young man, a boy, a baby. What was I before that—what will I be next?"

Mike Robinson of London Broadcasting Company interviews His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

**Mike Robinson:** Can you tell me what you believe—what the philosophy of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement is?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not a question of belief; it is a science. The first step is to know the difference between a living body and a dead body. What is the difference? The difference is that when someone dies, the spirit soul, or the living force, leaves the body. And therefore the body is called "dead." So, there are two things: one, this body; and the other, the living force within the body. We speak of the living force within the body. That is the difference between the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which is spiritual, and ordinary material science. As such, in the beginning it is very, very difficult for an ordinary man to appreciate our movement. One must first understand that he is a soul, or something other than his body.

**Mike Robinson:** And when will we understand that?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** You can understand at any moment, but it requires a little intelligence. For example, as a child grows, he becomes a boy, the boy becomes a young man, the young man becomes an adult, and the adult becomes an old man. Throughout all this time, although his body is changing from a child to an old man, he still feels himself to be the same person, with the same identity. Just see: the body is changing, but the occupier of the body, the soul, is remaining the same. So we should logically conclude that when our present

body dies, we get another body. This is called transmigration of the soul.

**Mike Robinson:** So when people die it is just the physical body that dies?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. That is explained very elaborately in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [9.20]: *na jāyate mriyate vā kadācin. . . na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre.*

**Mike Robinson:** Do you often quote references?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, we quote many references. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a serious education, not an ordinary religion. [*To a devotee:*] Find that verse in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

**Disciple:**

*na jāyate mriyate vā kadācin  
nāyaṁ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ  
ajo nityaḥ śāsvato 'yaṁ purāṇo  
na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*

"For the soul, there is never birth nor death. Nor, having once been, does he ever cease to be. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, undying, and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain."

**Mike Robinson:** Thank you very much for reading that. So can you explain to me just a bit more? If the soul is undying, does everybody's soul go to be with God when they die?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Not necessarily. If one is qualified—if he qualifies himself in this life to go back home, back to Godhead—then he can go. If he does not qualify himself, then he gets another material body. And there are 8,400,000 different bodily forms. According to his desires and karma, the laws of nature

give him a suitable body. It is just like when a man contracts some disease and then develops that disease. Is that difficult to understand?

**Mike Robinson:** It's very difficult to understand all of it.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Suppose somebody has contracted smallpox. So, after seven days he develops the symptoms. What is that period called?

**Mike Robinson:** Incubation?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Incubation. So you cannot avoid it. If you have contracted some disease it will develop, by nature's law. Similarly, during this life you associate with various modes of material nature, and that association will decide what kind of body you are going to get in the next life. That is strictly under the laws of nature. Everyone is controlled by the laws of nature—they're completely dependent—but out of ignorance people think that they are free. They're not free; they're *imagining* that they're free, but they are completely under the laws of nature. So, your next birth will be decided according to your activities—sinful or pious, as the case may be.

**Mike Robinson:** Your Grace, could you go back over that just for a minute? You said that nobody is free. Are you saying that if we live a good life, we in some way determine a good future for ourselves?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes.

**Mike Robinson:** So we are free to choose what we believe to be important? Religion is important, because if we believe in God and lead a good life—

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** It is not a question

**“When your body is finished, you are not finished. You get another body, just as you may change your coat and shirt.”**

of belief. Do not bring in this question of belief. It is law. For instance, there is a government. You may believe or not believe, but if you break the law, you'll be punished by the government. Similarly, whether you believe or don't believe, there is a God. If you don't believe in God, and independently do whatever you like, then you'll be punished by the laws of nature.

**Mike Robinson:** I see. Does it matter what religion you believe? Would it matter if one was a devotee of Kṛṣṇa?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** It is not a question of religion. It is a question of science. You are a spiritual being, but because you are materially conditioned, you are under the laws of material nature. So you may believe in the Christian religion, and I may believe in the Hindu religion, but that does not mean that you are going to become an old man and I am not. We're talking of the science of growing old. This is natural law. It is not that because you are Christian you are becoming old, or because I am Hindu I am not becoming old. Everyone is becoming old. So, similarly, all the laws of nature are applicable to everyone. Whether you believe this religion or that religion, it doesn't matter.

**Mike Robinson:** So, you're saying that there's only one God controlling all of us?

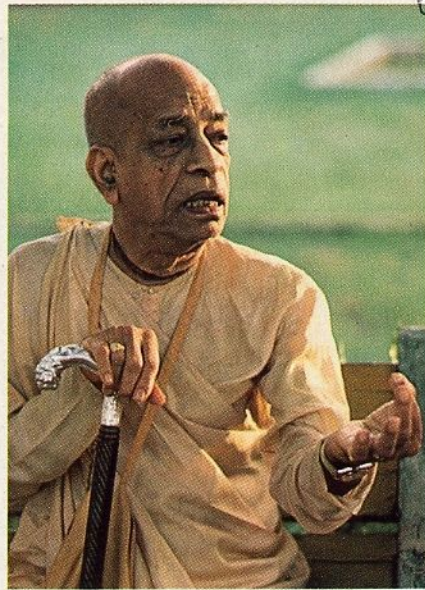
**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** There's one God, and one nature's law, and we are all under that nature's law. We are controlled by the Supreme. So if we think that we are free or that we can do anything, that is our foolishness.

**Mike Robinson:** I see. Can you explain to me what difference it makes, being a member of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement is meant for those who are serious about understanding this science. There's no question of our being some sectarian group. No. Anyone can join. Students in college can be admitted. You may be a Christian, you may be a Hindu, you may be a Muhammadan—it doesn't matter. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement admits anyone who wants to understand the science of God.

**Mike Robinson:** And what difference would it make to someone—being taught how to be a Hare Kṛṣṇa person?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** His real education would begin. The first thing is to understand that you are a spirit soul. And be-



cause you are a spirit soul, you are changing your body. This is the *ABC* of spiritual understanding. So, when your body is finished, annihilated, you are not finished. You get another body, just as you may change your coat and shirt. If you come to see me tomorrow wearing a different shirt and a different coat, does that mean you are a different person? No. Similarly, each time you die you change bodies, but *you*, the spirit soul within the body, remain the same. This point has to be understood; then one can make further progress in the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

**Mike Robinson:** I am beginning to understand, but what I'm finding difficult is how this ties in with the large numbers of your people we see handing out Hare Kṛṣṇa literature on Oxford Street.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** This literature is meant to convince people about the need for spiritual life.

**Mike Robinson:** And you're really not concerned whether or not they join the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** It doesn't matter. Our mission is to educate them. People are in ignorance; they are living in a fool's paradise, thinking that when their body is finished, everything is finished. That is foolishness.

**Mike Robinson:** And you are basically just concerned to tell them that there is a spiritual dimension to life?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Our first concern is to tell you that you are not this body,

that the body is your covering (your shirt and coat) and that within the body you are living.

**Mike Robinson:** Yes, I think I've got that now. If we could go on from there—you said that how you lived made a difference in your life after death, that there are natural laws that determine your next life. How does the process of transmigration work?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** The process is very subtle. The spirit soul is invisible to our material eyes. It is atomic in size. After the destruction of the gross body, which is made up of the senses, blood, bone, fat, and so forth, the subtle body of mind, intelligence, and ego goes on working. So at the time of death this subtle body carries the small spirit soul to another gross body. The process is just like air carrying a fragrance. Nobody can see where this rose fragrance is coming from, but we know that it is being carried by the air. You cannot see how, but it is being done. Similarly, the process of transmigration of the soul is very subtle. According to the condition of the mind at the time of death, the minute spirit soul enters into the womb of a particular mother through the semen of a father, and then the soul develops a particular type of body given by the mother. It may be a human being, it may be a cat, a dog, or anything.

**Mike Robinson:** Are you saying that we were something else before this life?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes.

**Mike Robinson:** And we keep coming back as something else the next time?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, because you are eternal. According to your work, you are simply changing bodies. Therefore, you should want to know how to stop this business, how you can remain in your original spiritual body. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

**Mike Robinson:** I see. So if I become Kṛṣṇa conscious, I wouldn't risk coming back as a dog?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** No. [To a devotee:] Find this verse: *janma karma ca me divyam...*

**Disciple:**

*janma karma ca me divyam  
evam yo vetti tattvataḥ  
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma  
naiti mām eti so 'rjuna*

“One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities



## “Everyone is simply washing the ‘coat and shirt’ of the body, but forget- ting about the soul within the body.”

does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna” [Bg. 4.9].

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** God is saying, “Anyone who understands Me is free from birth and death.” But one cannot understand God by materialistic speculation. That is not possible. One must first come to the spiritual platform. Then he gets the intelligence required to understand God. And when he understands God, he does not get any more material bodies. He goes back home, back to Godhead. He lives eternally; no more change of body.

**Mike Robinson:** I see. Now, you’ve read twice from your scriptures. Where do these scriptures come from? Can you briefly explain that?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Our scriptures are coming from Vedic literature, which has existed from the beginning of creation. Whenever there is some new material creation—like this microphone, for instance—there is also some literature explaining how to deal with it. Isn’t that so?

**Mike Robinson:** Yes, that’s right, there is.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** And that literature comes along with the creation of the microphone.

**Mike Robinson:** That’s right, yes.

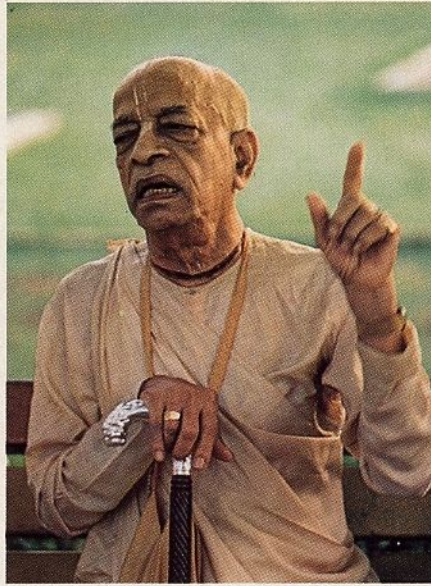
**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** So, similarly, the Vedic literature comes along with the cosmic creation, to explain how to deal with it.

**Mike Robinson:** I see. So, these scriptures have been in existence since the beginning of creation. Now, if we could move on to something I believe you feel very strongly about. What is the main difference between Kṛṣṇa consciousness and the other Eastern disciplines being taught in the West?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** The difference is that we are following the original literature, and they are manufacturing their own literature. That is the difference. When there is some question on spiritual matters, you must consult the original literature, not some literature issued by a bogus man.

**Mike Robinson:** What about the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa—

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is the easiest process to become purified, especially in this age, when people are so dull that they cannot very



easily understand spiritual knowledge. If one chants Hare Kṛṣṇa, then his brain becomes purified, and he can understand spiritual things.

**Mike Robinson:** Can you tell me how you are guided in what you do?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** We take guidance from the Vedic literature.

**Mike Robinson:** From the scriptures you quoted?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, it’s all in the literatures. We’re explaining them in English. But we’re not manufacturing anything. If we were to manufacture knowledge, then everything would be spoiled. The Vedic literature is something like the literature that explains how to set up this microphone. It says, “Do it like this: some of the screws should be on this side, around the metal.” You cannot make any change; then everything would be spoiled. Similarly, because we are not manufacturing anything, one simply has to read one of our books, and he receives real spiritual knowledge.

**Mike Robinson:** How can the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness affect the way people live?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** It can relieve people’s suffering. People are suffering because they are misunderstanding themselves to be the body. If you think that you are your coat and shirt, and you very carefully wash the coat and shirt but you forget to eat, will you be happy?

**Mike Robinson:** No, I wouldn’t.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Similarly, everyone

is simply washing the “coat and shirt” of the body, but forgetting about the soul within the body. They have no information about what is within the “coat and shirt” of the body. Ask anybody what he is, and he will say, “Yes, I am an Englishman,” or, “I am an Indian.” And if we say, “I can see you have an English or an Indian body, but what are you?”—that he cannot say.

**Mike Robinson:** I see.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** The whole modern civilization is operating on the misunderstanding that the body is the self (*dehātma-buddhi*). This is the mentality of the cats and dogs. Suppose I try to enter England, and you stop me at the border: “I am an Englishman,” you say, “but you are Indian. Why have you come here?” and the dog barks, “*Rau rau*, why are you coming?” So what is the difference in mentality? The dog is thinking he’s a dog and I’m a stranger, and you are thinking you are an Englishman and I am an Indian. There’s no difference in mentality. So if you keep people in the darkness of a dog’s mentality and declare that you are advancing in civilization, you are most misguided.

**Mike Robinson:** Now, moving on to another point, I gather the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement has some concern for areas of the world where there is suffering.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, we have the only concern. Others are simply avoiding the main problems: birth, old age, disease, and death. Others have no solutions to these problems; they are simply talking all kinds of nonsense. People are being misguided. They are being kept in darkness. Let us start to give them some light.

**Mike Robinson:** Yes, but apart from giving spiritual enlightenment, are you also concerned for people’s physical well-being?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Physical well-being automatically follows spiritual well-being.

**Mike Robinson:** And how does that work?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Suppose you have a car. So, naturally, you take care of the car as well as yourself. But you don’t identify yourself as the car. You don’t say, “I am this car.” That is nonsense. But this is what people are doing. They are taking too much care of the bodily “car,” thinking that the “car” is the self. They forget that they are different

**“As soon as the living force, the soul, is gone from the body, even the most beautiful body has no value.”**

from the “car,” that they are a spirit soul and have a different business. Just as no one can drink petrol and be satisfied, so no one can be satisfied with bodily activities. He must find out the proper food for the soul. If a man thinks, “I am a car, and I must drink this petrol,” he is considered insane. Similarly, one who thinks that he is this body, and who tries to become happy with bodily pleasures, is also insane.

**Mike Robinson:** There’s a quote here that I’d like you to comment on. I was given this literature by your people before I came, and one of the things you say here is that “Religion without a rational basis is just sentiment.” Can you explain that?

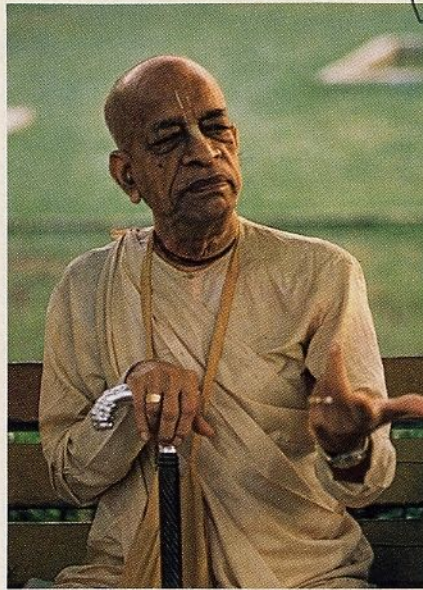
**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Most religious people say, “We believe. . .” But what is the value of this belief? You may believe something which is not actually correct. For instance, some of the Christian people say, “We believe that animals have no soul.” That is not correct. They believe animals have no soul because they want to eat the animals, but actually animals do have a soul.

**Mike Robinson:** How do you know that the animal has a soul?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** You can know, also. Here is the scientific proof: the animal eats, you eat; the animal sleeps, you sleep; the animal has sex, you have sex; the animal also defends, you also defend. Then what is the difference between you and the animal? How can you say that you have a soul but the animal doesn’t?

**Mike Robinson:** I can see that completely. But the Christian scriptures say—

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Don’t bring in any scriptures; this is a commonsense topic. Try to understand. The animal is eating, you are eating; the animal is sleeping, you are sleeping; the animal is defending, you are defending; the animal is having sex, you are having sex; the animals have children, you have children; they have a living place, you have a living place. If the animal’s body is cut, there is blood; if your body is cut, there is blood. So, all these similarities are there. Now, why do you deny this one similarity, the presence of the soul? This is not logical. You have studied logic? In logic there is something called analogy. Analogy means drawing a conclusion by finding many points of similarity. If there are so many points of similarity between



human beings and animals, why deny one similarity? That is not logic. That is not science.

**Mike Robinson:** But if you take that argument and use it the other way—

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** There is no other way. If you are not arguing on the basis of logic, then you are not rational.

**Mike Robinson:** Yes, OK, but let’s start from another hypothesis. Suppose we assume that a human being has no soul—

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Then you must explain the difference between a living body and a dead body. I have already explained this at the beginning. As soon as the living force, the soul, is gone from the body, even the most beautiful body has no value. No one cares for it; it’s thrown away. But now, if I touch your hair, there will be a fight. That is the distinction between a living body and a dead body. In a living body the soul is there, and in a dead body the soul is not there. As soon as the soul leaves the body, the body has no value. It is useless. This is very simple to understand, but even the biggest so-called scientists and philosophers are too dull-headed to understand it. Modern society is in a very abominable condition. There is no man with a real brain.

**Mike Robinson:** Are you referring to all the scientists who fail to understand the spiritual dimension in life?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. Real science means full knowledge of everything material and spiritual.

**Mike Robinson:** But you were a chemist in secular life, were you not?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, I was a chemist in my previous life. But it doesn’t require any great intelligence to become a chemist. Any commonsense man can do it.

**Mike Robinson:** But presumably you think that material science is also important, even if today’s scientists are dull-headed.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Material science is important just so far. It is not all-important.

**Mike Robinson:** I see. Can I come back to a question that I had from before? When we were differing a few minutes ago you were saying, “Don’t bring the scriptures in; just use common sense.”

But what part *do* the scriptures play in your religion? How important are they?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Our religion is a science. When we say that a child grows into a boy, it is science. It is not religion. Every child grows into a boy. What is the question of religion? Every man dies. What is the question of religion? And when a man dies, the body becomes useless. What is the question of religion? It is science. Whether you’re Christian or Hindu or Muslim, when you die your body becomes useless. This is science. When your relative dies, you cannot say,

“We are Christian; we believe he has not died.” No, he has died. Whether you are Christian or Hindu or Muslim, he has died. So when we speak, we speak on this basis: that the body is important only as long as the soul is in the body. When the soul is not there, it is useless. This science is applicable to everyone, and we are trying to educate people on this basis.

**Mike Robinson:** But if I understand you correctly, you seem to be educating people on a purely scientific basis. Where does religion come into it at all?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Religion also means science. People have wrongly taken religion to mean faith—“I believe.” [*To a devotee:*] Look up the word *religion* in the dictionary.

**Disciple:** Under *religion* the dictionary says, “recognition of superhuman control or power, and especially of a personal God entitled to obedience, and effecting such recognition with the proper mental attitude.”

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. Religion means learning how to obey the supreme controller. So, you may be Christian and I

**“The meaning of life is to enjoy. If you come to the real, spiritual platform of life, then you’ll enjoy.”**

may be Hindu; it doesn't matter. We must both accept that there is a supreme controller. Everyone has to accept that; that is real religion. Not this “We believe animals have no soul.” That is not religion. That is most unscientific. Religion means scientific understanding of the supreme controller: to understand the supreme controller and obey Him—that's all. In the state, the good citizen is he who understands the government and obeys the laws of the government. He is a good citizen. And the bad citizen is the one who doesn't care for the government. That is the bad citizen. So, if you become a bad citizen by ignoring God's government, then you are irreligious. And if you are a good citizen, then you are religious.

**Mike Robinson:** I see. Can you tell me what you believe to be the meaning of life? Why do we exist in the first place?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** The meaning of life is to enjoy. But now you are on a false


platform of life, and therefore you are suffering instead of enjoying. Everywhere we see the struggle for existence. Everyone is struggling, but what is their enjoyment in the end? They are simply suffering and dying. Therefore, although life means enjoyment, at the present moment your life is not enjoyment. But if you come to the real spiritual platform of life, then you'll enjoy.

**Mike Robinson:** Can you explain to me, finally, some of the stages you go through in spiritual life? What are the spiritual stages a new devotee of Kṛṣṇa goes through?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** The first stage is that you are inquisitive. “So,” you say, “what is this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement? Let me study it.” This is called *śraddhā*, or faith. This is the beginning. Then, if you are serious, you mix with those who are cultivating this knowledge. You try to understand how they are feeling. Then you'll feel, “Why

not become one of them?” And when you become one of them, then all your misgivings soon go away. You become more faithful, and then you get a real taste for Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Why aren't these boys going to see the cinema? Why don't they eat meat or go to the nightclub? Because their taste has changed. They hate all these things now. In this way, you make progress. First faith, then association with devotees, then removal of all misgivings, then firm faith, then taste, then God realization, and then love of God, the perfection. That is first-class religion. Not some ritualistic ceremony of “I believe, you believe.” That is not religion. That is cheating. Real religion means to develop your love for God. That is the perfection of religion.

**Mike Robinson:** Thank you very much for talking with me. It's been a pleasure talking to you.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Hare Kṛṣṇa. 

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# HEROES ANTI-HEROES AND ANTIDOTES

A former student of psychology traces his life, from childhood to now—from looking up to others to looking into himself.

by Dharmādhyaḡṣa dāsa

On June 17, 1959, with summer vacation just a few days away, I walked onto my grammar school playground in a lighthearted mood. Just then my best friend Billy rushed over to me with wide eyes. “Did you hear the news?!”

“What news?”

“This morning Superman killed himself! He shot himself in the head with a luger!”

At first I thought Billy was kidding, but soon I noticed that everyone in the yard was talking about the story—George Reeves, TV’s Superman, had committed suicide. I couldn’t believe it. A hero—how could a hero do that?

As Emerson said, “It is natural to believe in great men.” And in his book, *The Hero, American Style*, Marshall William Fishwick remarks that “people are ineffective without leaders. The search for paragons is inherent in human nature.” In an article in *Today’s Health* magazine, social critic Marya Mannes goes a little further. She says, “Unless we have some image of human greatness, of human excellence, to build on, we shall find it difficult to be animated by great dreams. We will be only moles burrowing in the darkness.”

For its part, modern psychology calls its equivalent of the hero or paragon the “ego ideal.” A person forms his ego ideal by picking out traits of parents, friends, and others in the society at large. Researchers are quick to point out that healthy models make for healthy people, while sick models, like Hitlers and Stalins, make for sick people and a sick world.

Social commentators are concerned about today’s shortage of inspiring, healthy models. “Where Have All the Heroes Gone?” asks Edward Hoagland in *The New York Times Magazine*, and *U.S. News & World Report* talks about “The Vanishing Hero.” So perhaps I was right, back there on the school playground, in feeling I’d been let down.

By the time I’d entered high school, most fictional heroes struck me as cardboard characters. I had to pass them by. Now, political leaders, past and present, replaced them. Then, in my freshman year of college, in 1965, the Watergate mood hit me early.

On the afternoon when Georgetown University played host to some members of Congress, I was one of the first students to trot up the worn steps of Harlan Hall. My mind was filled with anticipation. I wanted to get involved in government; it seemed a good way to work with people. During my first few months at school, I’d absorbed as much as I could of the theory and history of government, and now came a bonus—the chance to talk with the people who were making the history I was studying.

As I stood on the thick red carpet, the university’s past presidents stared down at me from their portraits on the old wood walls. Even their grave faces couldn’t douse my enthusiasm. In less than forty minutes I’d be sharing the room with the country’s leaders.

While I was thinking this way, a congressman dressed in a blue blazer bounded up the steps and walked hurriedly across the room. Several friends and I approached him and started asking questions, but he seemed totally intent on wherever he was going. He never slowed down.

“Boys,” he said, “I’m a Johnson Democrat. That answers *all* your questions. Now, where’s the bar?”

As we stood there openmouthed, the congressman glided past us and ordered a bourbon on the rocks.

My other brushes with politicians only reinforced this first bruised impression. With the world so much in need of unity and cooperation, I felt turned off by so much small-mindedness. It all seemed like a cheating, losing game, and I didn’t want to play it. So after my sophomore year I opted for a change—psychology.

At least psychology could tell you something about what was going on inside people. What surprised me was that all this inside knowledge of human nature just seemed to turn psychologists into pessimists. I’ll never forget the day when one of my best professors, Dr. M., compared human beings to lemmings.

“The lemming is a peculiar breed of rat that lives in Scandanavia,” said Dr. M. in his usual, intense way. “Every so often—it seems to happen without any rhyme or reason—one lemming



Photo: Yadubara dāsa



starts running frantically across the countryside. This 'running fever' spreads to the other rats, and soon a kind of mass hysteria infects them. For months and months they migrate, only to reach the coastline and a dead end.

"'Dead end'—that's really what it is. Without hesitating, the lead lemming leaps into the sea, and all the rest follow him. The few that survive produce some more, and then they go through the suicide sequence all over again.

"Maybe we're like the lemmings. World Wars I and II, Vietnam, the Middle East, . . . World War III—it's a frightening thought, but if you look at our record, . . . maybe that's the best we can do."

In his book *Motivation and Personality*, psychologist Abraham Maslow talked about this kind of thinking. He chided not only psychologists but also many others in the intellectual community for denying "the possibility of improving human nature and society, or of discovering intrinsic human values, or of being life-loving in general." During my college days I empathized with Maslow's criticisms. Yet even more appealing to me were his positive insights about human potential.

Early in his career, Maslow had become disgusted with modern psychology's obsession for studying mental disease. He felt that the study of sick and crippled persons could only produce a sick and crippled psychology. Maslow reversed this trend by researching the dynamics of health. He wrote,

If we want to know the possibilities for spiritual growth, or moral development in human beings, then I maintain that we can learn most by studying our most moral, ethical, or saintly people.

Maslow's research reached its height in his description of the fully healthy or "self-actualized" person. In *Towards a Psychology of Being*, he wrote, "In these healthy people we find duty and pleasure to be the same thing, as is also work and play, self-interest and altruism." In an earlier essay he had pointed out,

For such people virtue is its own reward. . . . They spontaneously tend to do right because that is what they *want* to do, what they *need* to do, what they enjoy, and what they will continue to enjoy.

The self-actualized displayed clearer perception of reality, more openness to experience, greater spontaneity, and a firmer sense of identity. They also possessed greater creativity, treated different kinds of people equally, and had a greater ability to love. They valued justice, simplicity, beauty, individuality, joy, and honesty.

The more I read about self-actualization, the more I liked it. But there was one hitch. Maslow didn't know how the self-actualized got that way:

We simply do not have available today enough reliable knowledge to proceed to the construction of the One Good World. We do not even have enough knowledge to teach *individuals* how to love each other.

I still wanted self-actualization, but naturally I didn't know how to get there either.

By this time I was in my senior year. Most of my classmates (even those who shared my feelings) kept themselves busy by applying to graduate schools or jockeying for a job. I could have forgotten my predicament that way and buried myself in some institutional cubbyhole, but something inside me refused to allow it. "You can't fool yourself. You'll never be happy by doing that." With mixed emotions, I kept to that conclusion.

In other words, in so many ways this was a frightening decision to make. There were so many nagging questions. "Will I become an oddball and cut myself off from my family and friends?" "How will I support myself?" "Will I get into something worthwhile, or will I just wind up getting nowhere fast?"

At the same time, I knew that something was missing, from my life and from the lives of most people. I wanted to ferret out that "something."

## Searching

I climbed the stairs out of the dungeonlike subway, not far from the West Village. It was October 16, 1969. After jogging four blocks, I arrived at 735 Spring Street. I tried to open the door, but it was bolted shut. I rang the bell, and soon someone was peering through the peephole. "What's your name?" said the muffled voice. I replied (as I'd been instructed), "Danny the Red." The door creaked open, and a smiling Brunette with glasses and a collegiate sweater greeted me. Behind her stood three men with baseball bats. She continued the interrogation.

"Who sent you?"

"I met Mark Folsom up at Columbia, and he suggested that I come down and check things out."

At the mention of "Mark" the three men dispersed and the girl's smile widened.

"Good. My name's Andrea. Let me introduce you to Ted Gold."

Blotched mimeograph paper, crumpled coffee cups, pop bottles, and hundreds of crushed cigarette butts littered the brick floor of Ted Gold's office. The walls were plastered with posters of the revolutionary masses and the pantheon of armed struggle—Lenin, Mao, Castro, and Ché Guevara. Ted Gold himself had reddish hair, thick glasses, and an energetic though ruffled air about him.

"What do you know about communism?" he asked. No pleasantries.

"Just what I've learned in college and from a few books I've read."

Gold's line of vision sank to the floor, then honed back in on me.

"Communism means violent revolution," he said. "There's no redeeming value in this capitalistic society—none."

"None?"

"None! Insurance, welfare, social security—these are all stopgap measures designed to tranquilize the masses and prevent them from rising up and smashing their oppressors. There's nothing of value in this society—NOTHING! Our job is clear. We must tear this rotten structure down—brick by brick—until nothing can stop the revolution."

Since the main purpose of my visit was to hear about the radical movement's vision of the perfect society, I asked, "After you've torn everything down, what will you replace it with?"

Gold fidgeted. It appeared I'd asked the wrong question.

"We don't have time to worry about things like that. All we have to do is rip this society apart. What happens after the revolution will take care of itself."

"That's all you can tell me?"

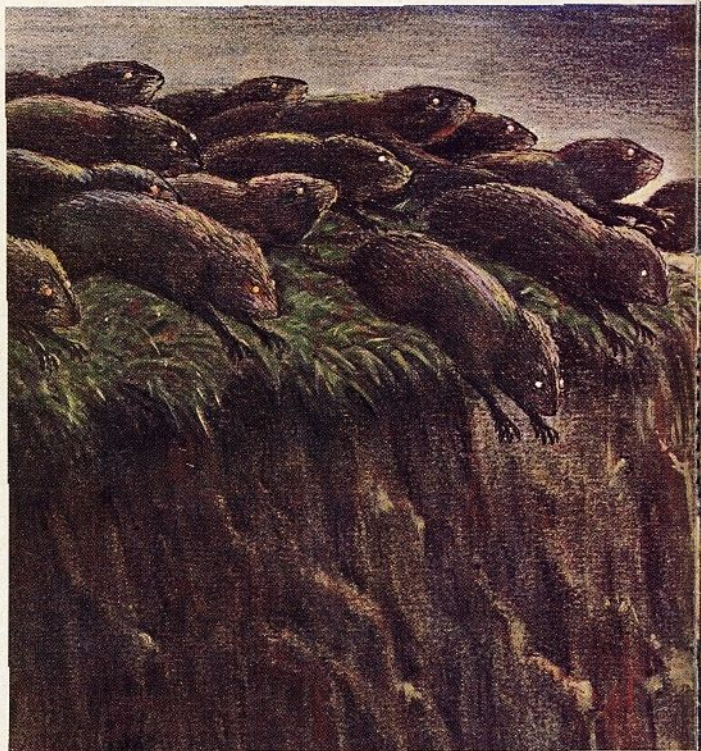
"So you'll help us tear it down?"

"I don't know. Let me think about it."

He didn't care for my answer, and I hadn't cared for his. Since he wouldn't or couldn't tell me any more, I left.

Almost five months later, on March 7, 1970, a headline in the *New York Times* read, "Townhouse Razed by Blast and Fire; Man's Body Found." The firemen theorized that a gas leak had triggered the blast, but the man's body was too disfigured for immediate identification. Then, two days later, the *Times* ran Ted Gold's picture and tagged him as the disaster's victim. Familiar with Gold's radical background, the police decided to keep sifting through the debris. Finally, on March 11, the *Times* front page said, "Bombs, Dynamite, and Woman's Body Found in Ruins of 11th St. Townhouse." According to Chief Inspector Albert Seedment, "The people in the house were obviously putting together the component parts of a bomb, and they did something wrong."

For two years I'd been searching for a workable solution to the problematic life



*"The lead lemming leaps into the sea, and the rest follow. Maybe we're like the lemmings. World Wars I and II... World War III— maybe that's the best we can do."*

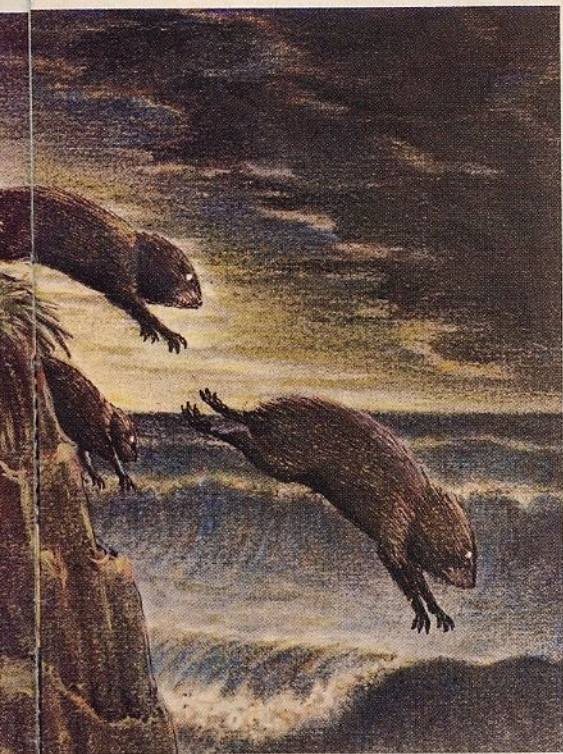
I saw all around me—but without much success. I was beginning to sense that, though billed as a haven of peace and love, the so-called counterculture harbored about as much narrow-mindedness as there was anywhere else.

The first real light appeared in the spring of 1971, when I started investigating Eastern meditation. The descriptions of enlightened meditators closely matched Maslow's ideal of the self-actualized person, and there was a practical way to get there.

The cultural difference didn't really bother me much. Although I wasn't a very religious person, I'd sometimes thought, "I don't know what truth is, and I don't care if a red, white, black, yellow, or brown man speaks it—or if it comes from the north, south, east, or west. All I know is, I want it."

From the start, I sensed the power of turning inward, the power of meditation. At one and the same time, I was becoming more aware of my inner self and more aware of the people and events around me. Yet I noticed that many spiritualists, including big teachers, became not so much self-realized as self-serving.

For instance, after you had gained a little spiritual power, the next step—the "in" thing to do—was to admit that you were really God, posing for now as a mere mortal. It got to be sort of dizzying, meeting all these yogis who were actually God. Then gradually it began to make sense. If you were God you could



pretty much get what you wanted. God doesn't have to ask twice. But, to be fair, these divine debauchees provided some of the best comedy I'd ever seen.

For example, one day during the summer of 1972, at a green-lawned country retreat, I was sitting in on a verbal meditation. The Great One said, in a sonorous voice, "Feel that you are that same power that has manifested innumerable suns, moons, and stars. . . . Feel yourself creating and maintaining innumerable. . . owwwWWWWW!!" All at once a severe toothache jolted the Great One's jaw. The meditation seemed to be ending a little sooner than the supreme will had ordained, but perhaps toothaches were just a divine entertainment. His other pastimes included phobias for mosquitoes, airplanes, and death. And, to make matters worse, the Great One was in constant anxiety about whether the United States government would grant him immigration status.

Nonetheless, I stayed convinced that meditation could awaken the self. All I had to do was find a way to practice it purely. I carried on as well as I could. Then, one day in the spring of 1973, I was walking through the Port Authority Bus Terminal, on 40th Street, to catch a Greyhound to the Catskill Mountains. The noise level at the terminal was high—hundreds of arriving and departing buses, honking taxicabs, and bustling travelers.

Suddenly, above the tumult, I heard a woman's voice call out, "Hey, yogi!"

I stopped dead in my tracks. You didn't have to be clairvoyant to tell that I was interested in yoga and meditation. My white pants and Indian shirt were

giveaways. Still, I couldn't help thinking, "Who cares about yoga in the Port Authority?" I turned around and saw a smiling young American woman dressed in an Indian sari. She had a travel bag across her shoulder.

"Hare Kṛṣṇa," she said, folding her hands together in a traditional, prayerlike greeting.

"Hare Kṛṣṇa," I replied.

"My name's Daiva Śakti. What's yours?"

"Daniel."

During our pleasant conversation, I told her that two years ago I'd married a girl who also meditated.

"Do you have any children?"

"Yes, a baby boy named Maitreya."

When Daiva Śakti heard that name, her face lit up in near ecstasy.

"Maitreya!" she said, reaching into her travel bag. "Have a look at this book. It's about the great Vedic sage Maitreya."

"Maitreya was a Vedic sage? But don't the Buddhists consider him to be the coming Buddha [enlightened one]?"

Daiva Śakti smiled. "Twenty-five hundred years before Lord Buddha appeared, the sage Maitreya lived in India, and this book has his teachings."

This revelation whetted my curiosity so much that I offered to buy the book. I handed her a ten-dollar bill, said "Thank you," and rushed off to catch my bus. As soon as I'd settled into my recliner, I absorbed myself in reading. This book was so attractive that it took me only three days to finish.

To my delight, the book told about the irrationality of trying to be God. "God is conscious of everything past, present, and future, and also of each and every corner of His manifestations, both material and spiritual." But as for the ordinary person, he "does not even know what is happening within his own personal body. He eats his food but does not know how this food is transformed into energy or how it sustains the body."

The author, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, recommended *bhakti-yoga* (unselfish loving service) as the sure cure for all forms of egotism. My college friends and I had joked that newspaper headlines should herald the big ego as public enemy number one. Now the idea of conquering the big ego by *bhakti-yoga* captivated my mind. Śrīla Prabhupāda said that this service attitude was "dormant in everyone . . . the natural inclination of every living being, . . . the highest perfection in life."

I recalled how I'd enrolled in college with the idea of landing a job in public service. All my life I'd been serving someone or something—my parents, my teachers, my friends (even my car). Śrīla Prabhupāda pointed out how big businessmen had to serve their cus-

tomers and the president had to serve his country. It seemed that no matter what I did, it would be some sort of service. And, as Śrīla Prabhupāda said, you could reach the ultimate state of consciousness by directing your service toward the complete whole, or Kṛṣṇa.

I was able to pick up the logic of practically everything Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote. His students, who were making Kṛṣṇa consciousness available in such hectic places as the bus terminal, also impressed me. Nonetheless, my experiences with counterfeit groups made me reluctant to get involved. It was only after several months of thinking and reading Kṛṣṇa conscious books that I decided, in the winter of 1973, to check into this process more closely.

## Practicing Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

According to the ancient Vedic literature (which the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement publishes, in English) your personality depends on the kind of sound you hear. Loving, truthful, spiritual sound creates a loving, truthful, spiritual personality; self-motivated, materialistic sound creates a self-motivated, materialistic personality. When I thought about it, I realized that perhaps I'd never heard a spiritual sound in my life.

Generally, spiritual sound is called *mantra*. *Man* means "mind," and *tra* means "release." A mantra, then, is a sound vibration that can release the mind from self-centered, material thought processes. Chanting mantras was nothing new to me; for more than four years I had chanted all kinds of mantras. Yet chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—gave me astonishing results. I wanted to cleanse and refresh my mind and heart, and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa was like taking a shower on the inside.

Also, I observed how the benefits of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa carried over into the everyday lives of other chanters. And my own experience was similar to that of my friend Howard Resnick, who said, "I didn't follow any particular leader. I just saw that chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa was a bona fide process, and that people who practiced it were becoming happy."

After I started chanting, my personality started developing rapidly. Having chanters as friends helped. Instead of wasting time in small talk, they were thinking about "Who am I?" and "What's the best thing I can do with my life?" The all-embracing scope of Kṛṣṇa consciousness especially pleased me.

At least seven years earlier, I'd seen how pettiness and the party spirit cause most of the world's conflicts. Now, by

chanting I experienced each person as part of a harmonious whole (God). Deep inside I felt the same as everyone else, and at the same time completely unique. I felt more united with other people, and, paradoxically, more of an individual. Instead of being at loggerheads, in Kṛṣṇa consciousness the group and individual enhanced each other. And I saw that simply by chanting, thousands of people were realizing this ideal in their own lives.

Already, I'd found that almost every theme sounded by progressive thinkers (like Maslow) came in for full development in the techniques and literature of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I wanted to share my realizations, so I started lecturing about Kṛṣṇa consciousness in grammar schools, high schools, and colleges. At first, many of the listeners had their doubts, but after an explanation, the majority found Kṛṣṇa conscious methods and goals agreeable. Many teachers told me that their students had reacted with more interest to my presentation than to any other class in the semester. Gradually I realized that I was touching upon that missing "something" I'd felt the need for during my own college years.

I asked many teachers to assess the current student mood. They said, almost without exception, that the students of the mid-1970s had turned apathetic. Apparently the questioning, questing spirit of the '60s had gone away. But how could anyone blame the students? Who could they look to—unstable movie and TV stars, unprincipled politicians, unsure teachers, self-destructive revolutionaries, self-indulgent saviors? Old or new, the heroes were tarnished. Still, when I talked with the students about the pleasure of spiritual living, glimmers of excitement played on their faces.

By 1975 I was ready to fill out my personal observations about Kṛṣṇa consciousness with scientific evidence. Psychology seemed like a natural approach to take, so I invited several psychologists with no prior experience of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to study the effects of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. The findings of Drs. Allen Gerson and Ronald Huff, along with interviews I conducted, confirmed my impression that chanting produces a state of human health that modern psychology is just beginning to imagine.

Here are some highlights of the research. Dr. Gerson, a practicing clinical psychologist who also specializes in psychological testing, reports that chanters "are more keenly aware and have sharper mental cognitions." Richard Arthur, an instructor of English at Rutgers University, brought to mind Maslow's self-actualized person when he told me, "Chanting makes me more aware of what to do and what not to do. And now, I naturally feel happy about doing the right thing."

In addition, the psychologists found chanters brimming with self-confidence. Art director Nathan Zakheim affirmed to me, "After years of being a closed-in person and trying to protect myself from experiences, now I'm really different. Chanting makes me so exuberant that I sail through situations that used to stymie me." Dr. Gerson notes that chanters are seldom if ever bored, but "are always in a state of discovery that allows them to see things more vividly."

Also, Dr. Gerson detected that chanting promotes creativity in all spheres of life. "I'm astounded," he said, "with the percentage of creative people among chanters." Daniel Clark, a thirty-five-year old filmmaker who has been chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa for ten years, told me how chanting affected his creativity. Clark said, "Before I started chanting, I thought myself limited to films, but now I see that I have a talent for writing, lecturing, acting. You can do anything, in a sense. You don't become a superman, but all your hang-ups go away. Then you find that your capabilities as a spiritual person are very great."

Robert Grant, a successful young publishing executive, says that chanting even improves business aptitude. "Now I'm doing all kinds of things—management, publishing, working with artists—things I've never done or displayed any skill for. I find that chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa gives me the insight on how to do it."

As housewives like Mrs. Stephanie Lindberg have found, chanting inspires people to give their daily routines a creative touch. Mrs. Lindberg related to me, "Now my mind is bubbling with new ideas. By chanting I experience a freedom that makes my life more creative and stimulates me to use my talents in ways I never thought of before." Mr. Grant reported a similar feeling to me when he said, "I feel some connection with God that makes me do things in a spontaneous, joyful, uninhibited way." It's interesting to note how these experiences recall those of the ancient sages. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Dhruva Mahārāja delights, "Kṛṣṇa, You have enlivened all my sleeping senses—my hands, legs, ears, touch sensation, life force, and especially my speech."

The psychologists verify that chanters enjoy a strong sense of identity and uniqueness. Dr. Ronald Huff (a clinician with an extensive background in bio-feedback) notes "greater individuality in the way chanters relate to the external experience, indicating greater uniqueness." After more than fifty case studies, Dr. Gerson concludes, "Chanters have a clear sense of identity. They know who they are in relationship to the universe, where they're going, and how they can improve themselves and the world around them."

A secretary, Heather Payne, disclosed

to me that chanting allows her "to overcome any prejudices I may have felt toward people." Here, both psychologists score the Kṛṣṇa conscious process highly. Says Dr. Gerson, "The democratic character structure [the ability to treat people fairly] comes through strongly in chanters."

With this greater tolerance, chanters naturally have more ability to love. Richard Arthur told me that in his better moments of chanting, "I relate to people on the basis of love, and I can feel them pick up on it." Judy Guarino, an illustrator in her early thirties, remarked, "I experience affection for people I've never known before. Now I'm able to be a better friend." According to Dr. Huff, "Parents who chant enjoy more expressions of mature and meaningful affection with their children." Dr. Gerson describes chanters as "open, friendly, warm, and outgoing as a group, as well as individually."

In fact, chanters report that their love approaches what Daniel Clark called "cosmic—a love of the whole world with all its human beings, animals, and plants, and ultimately for God."

So research shows chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra to be a scientific, effective means for liberating human potential. Chanting works for men and women, young and old, rich and poor, black and white, Oriental and Westerner. Also, as the record demonstrates, chanting has brought people self-realization for thousands of years.

What's been so convincing for me is that whereas other processes always turned stale, the Kṛṣṇa conscious experience keeps getting fresher and fresher. Every other process I tried seemed to yield results at first, but I always reached a point where I couldn't or wouldn't go any further.

In Kṛṣṇa consciousness the progress has been steady without any signs of stopping. Kṛṣṇa consciousness has given me a deep feeling of self-satisfaction and contentment. Often I check my progress, and it always amazes me how well my body, my emotions, my mind, my intelligence, my soul, all of me—feels about chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

If you find something good, you want to share it. And Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the best thing I've found. Of course, as Śrīla Prabhupāda says, it's inevitable for mankind to evolve to higher consciousness. Yet, as he also says,

Why do others have to wait for thousands and thousands of years to attain these heights? Why not give them the information immediately in a systematic way, so that they may save time and energy?

That makes sense to me. And, as progressive thinkers past and present have discovered, giving yourself to this kind of work is sheer pleasure. ❀



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## First Canto "Creation"

### CHAPTER NINE

#### The Passing Away of Bhīṣmadeva in the Presence of Lord Kṛṣṇa

##### PURPORT

(continued from previous issue)

*Asita*: There was a king of the same name, but herein the Asita mentioned is the Asita Devala Ṛṣi, a great powerful sage of the time. He explained to his father 1,500,000 verses from the *Mahābhārata*. He was one of the members in the snake sacrifice of Mahārāja Janamejaya. He was also present during the coronation ceremony of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira along with other great ṛṣis. He also gave Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira instructions while he was on the Añjana Hill. He was also one of the devotees of Lord Śiva.

*Kakṣivān*: One of the sons of Gautama Muni and the father of the great sage Candakausika. He was one of the members of Parliament of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira.

*Atri*: Atri Muni was a great *brāhmaṇa* sage and was one of the mental sons of Brahmājī. Brahmājī is so powerful that simply by thinking of a son he can have it. These sons are known as *mānasa-putras*. Out of seven *mānasa-putras* of Brahmājī and out of the seven great *brāhmaṇa* sages, Atri was one. In his family the great *Pracetās* were also born. Atri Muni had two *kṣatriya* sons who became kings. King Arthama is one of them. He is counted as one of the twenty-one *prajāpatīs*. His wife's name was Anasūyā, and he helped Mahārāja Parīkṣit in his great sacrifices.

*Kauśika*: One of the permanent *ṛṣi* members in the royal assembly of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. He sometimes met Lord Kṛṣṇa. There are several other sages of the same name.

*Sudarśana*: This wheel which is accepted by the Personality of Godhead (Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa) as His personal weapon is the most powerful weapon, greater than the *brahmāstras* or similar other disastrous weapons. In some of the Vedic literatures it is said that Agnideva, the fire-god, presented this weapon to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but factually this weapon is eternally carried by the Lord. Agnideva presented this weapon to Kṛṣṇa in the same way that Rukmiṇī was given by Mahārāja Rukma to the Lord. The Lord accepts such presentations from His devotees, even

though such presentations are eternally His property. There is an elaborate description of this weapon in the *Ādi-parva* of the *Mahābhārata*. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa used this weapon to kill Śiśupāla, a rival of the Lord. He also killed Śālva by this weapon, and sometimes He wanted His friend Arjuna to use it to kill his enemies (*Mahābhārata, Virāṭa-parva* 56.3).

##### TEXT 8

अन्ये च मुनयो ब्रह्मन् ब्रह्मरातादयोऽमलाः ।  
शिष्यैरुपेता आजग्मुः कश्यपाङ्गिरसादयः ॥ ८ ॥

*anye ca munayo brahman  
brahmarātādayo 'malāḥ  
śiṣyair upetā ājagmuḥ  
kaśyapāṅgirasādayaḥ*

*anye*—many others; *ca*—also; *munayaḥ*—sages; *brahman*—O *brāhmaṇas*; *brahmarāta*—Śukadeva Gosvāmī; *ādayaḥ*—and such others; *amalāḥ*—completely purified; *śiṣyair*—by the disciples; *upetāḥ*—accompanied; *ājagmuḥ*—arrived; *kaśyapa*—Kaśyapa; *āṅgīrasa*—Āṅgīrasa; *ādayaḥ*—others.

##### TRANSLATION

And many others like Śukadeva Gosvāmī and other purified souls, Kaśyapa and Āṅgīrasa and others, all accompanied by their respective disciples, arrived there.

##### PURPORT

*Śukadeva Gosvāmī (Brahmarāta)*: The famous son and disciple of Śrī Vyāsadeva, who taught him first the *Mahābhārata* and then *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Śukadeva Gosvāmī recited 1,400,000 verses of the *Mahābhārata* in the councils of the Gandharvas, Yakṣas and Rākṣasas, and he recited *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* for the first time in the presence of Mahārāja Parīkṣit. He thoroughly studied all the Vedic literatures from his great father. Thus he was a completely purified soul by dint of his extensive knowledge in the principles of religion. From *Mahābhārata, Sabhā-parva* (4.11) it is understood that he was also present in the royal assembly of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira and at the fasting of Mahārāja Parīkṣit. As a bona fide disciple of Śrī Vyāsadeva, he inquired from his father very extensively about religious principles and spiritual values, and his great father also satisfied him by teaching him the *yoga* system by which one can attain the spiritual kingdom, the difference between fruitive work and empiric knowledge, the ways and means of attaining spiritual realization, the four *āśramas* (namely the student life, the householder's life, the retired life and the renounced life), the sublime

position of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the process of seeing Him eye to eye, the bona fide candidate for receiving knowledge, the consideration of the five elements, the unique position of intelligence, the consciousness of the material nature and the living entity, the symptoms of the self-realized soul, the working principles of the material body, the symptoms of the influential modes of nature, the tree of perpetual desire, and psychic activities. Sometimes he went to the sun planet with the permission of his father and Nāradaḥ. Descriptions of his travel in space are given in the *Śānti-parva* of the *Mahābhārata* (332). At last he attained the transcendental realm. He is known by different names like Araṇeya, Aruṇisuta, Vaiyāsaki and Vyāsātmaja.

*Kaśyapa*: One of the *prajāpatis*, the son of Marīci and one of the sons-in-law of Prajāpati Dakṣa. He is the father of the gigantic bird Garuḍa, who was given elephants and tortoises as eatables. He married thirteen daughters of Prajāpati Dakṣa, and their names are Aditi, Diti, Danu, Kāsthā, Ariṣṭā, Surasā, Ilā, Muni, Krodhavaśā, Tāmrā, Surabhi, Saramā and Timi. He begot many children, both demigods and demons, by those wives. From his first wife, Aditi, all the twelve Ādityas were born; one of them is Vāmana, the incarnation of Godhead. This great sage, Kaśyapa, was also present at the time of Arjuna's birth. He received a presentation of the whole world from Paraśurāma, and later on he asked Paraśurāma to go out of the world. His other name is Ariṣṭanemi. He lives on the northern side of the universe.

*Āngirasa*: He is the son of Maharṣi Āngirā and is known as Bṛhaspati, the priest of the demigods. It is said that Droṇācārya was his partial incarnation. Śukrācārya was the spiritual master of the demons, and Bṛhaspati challenged him. His son is Kaca, and he delivered the fire weapon first to Bharadvāja Muni. He begot six sons (like the fire-god) by his wife Candramāsi, one of the reputed stars. He could travel in space, and therefore he could present himself even in the planets of Brahmāloka and Indraloka. He advised the King of heaven, Indra, about conquering the demons. Once he cursed Indra, who thus had to become a hog on the earth and was unwilling to return to heaven. Such is the power of the attraction of the illusory energy. Even a hog does not wish to part with its earthly possessions in exchange for a heavenly kingdom. He was the religious preceptor of the natives of different planets.

## TEXT 9

तान् समेतान् महाभागानुपलभ्य वसुत्तमः ।  
पूजयामास धर्मज्ञो देशकालविभागवित् ॥ ९ ॥

tān sametān mahā-bhāgān  
upalabhya vasu-uttamaḥ  
pūjayām āsa dharma-jño  
deśa-kāla-vibhāgavit

tān—all of them; sametān—assembled together; mahā-bhāgān—all greatly powerful; upalabhya—having received; vasu-uttamaḥ—the best among the Vasus (Bhīṣmadeva); pūjayām āsa—welcomed; dharma-jñah—one who knows religious principles; deśa—place; kāla—time; vibhāgavit—one who knows the adjustment of place and time.

## TRANSLATION

Bhīṣmadeva, who was the best amongst the eight Vasus, received and welcomed all the great and powerful ṛṣis who were assembled there, for he knew perfectly all the religious principles according to time and place.

## PURPORT

Expert religionists know perfectly well how to adjust religious principles in terms of time and place. All the great ācāryas or religious preachers or reformers of the world executed their mission by adjustment of religious principles in terms of time and place. There are different climates and situations in different parts of the world, and if one has to discharge his duties to preach the message of the Lord, he must be expert in adjusting things in terms of the time and place. Bhīṣmadeva

was one of the twelve great authorities in preaching this cult of devotional service, and therefore he could receive and welcome all the powerful sages assembled there at his deathbed from all parts of the universe. He was certainly unable at that time to welcome and receive them physically because he was neither at his home nor in a normal healthy condition. But he was quite fit by the activities of his sound mind, and therefore he could utter sweet words with hearty expressions, and all of them were well received. One can perform one's duty by physical work, by mind and by words. And he knew well how to utilize them in the proper place, and therefore there was no difficulty for him to receive them, although physically unfit.

## TEXT 10

कृष्णं च तत्प्रभावज्ञ आसीन् जगदीश्वरम् ।  
हृदिस्थं पूजयामास माययोपात्तविग्रहम् ॥ १० ॥

kṛṣṇam ca tat-prabhāva-jñā  
āsinam jagad-īśvaram  
hṛdi-stham pūjayām āsa  
māyayopātta-vigraham

kṛṣṇam—unto Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa; ca—also; tat—of Him; prabhāva-jñāh—the knower of the glories (Bhīṣma); āsinam—sitting; jagat-īśvaram—the Lord of the universe; hṛdi-stham—situated in the heart; pūjayām āsa—worshiped; māyayā—by internal potency; upātta—manifested; vigraham—a form.

## TRANSLATION

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is situated in everyone's heart, yet He manifests His transcendental form by His internal potency. This very Lord was sitting before Bhīṣmadeva, and since Bhīṣmadeva knew of His glories, he worshiped Him duly.

## PURPORT

The Lord's omnipotency is displayed by His simultaneous presence in every place. He is present always in His eternal abode Goloka Vṛndāvana, and still He is present in everyone's heart and even within every invisible atom. When He manifests His eternal transcendental form in the material world, He does so by His internal potency. The external potency, or the material energy, has nothing to do with His eternal form. All these truths were known to Śrī Bhīṣmadeva, who worshiped Him accordingly.

## TEXT 11

पाण्डुपुत्रानुपासीनान् प्रश्रयप्रेमसङ्गतान् ।  
अभ्याचष्टानुरागाश्रैरन्धीभूतेन चक्षुषा ॥ ११ ॥

pāṇḍu-putrān upāsīnān  
praśraya-prema-saṅgatān  
abhyācāṣṭānūrāgāśrair  
andhībhūtena cakṣuṣā

pāṇḍu—the late father of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers; putrān—the sons of; upāsīnān—sitting silently nearby; praśraya—being overtaken; prema—in feelings of love; saṅgatān—having gathered; abhyācāṣṭa—congratulated; anūrāga—feelingly; āśraiḥ—by tears of ecstasy; andhībhūtena—overwhelmed; cakṣuṣā—with his eyes.

## TRANSLATION

The sons of Mahārāja Paṇḍu were sitting silently nearby, overtaken with affection for their dying grandfather. Seeing this, Bhīṣmadeva congratulated them with feeling. There were tears of ecstasy in his eyes, for he was overwhelmed by love and affection.

## PURPORT

When Mahārāja Pāṇḍu died, his sons were all small children, and naturally they were brought up under the affection of elderly members of the royal family, specifically by Bhīṣmadeva. Later on, when the Pāṇḍavas were grown up, they were cheated by cunning Duryodhana and company, and Bhīṣmadeva, although he knew that the Pāṇḍavas were innocent and were unnecessarily put into trouble, could not take the side of the Pāṇḍavas for political reasons. At the last stage of his life, when Bhīṣmadeva saw his most exalted grandsons, headed by Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, sitting very gently at his side, the great warrior-grandfather could not check his loving tears, which were automatically flowing from his eyes. He remembered the great tribulations suffered by his most pious grandsons. Certainly he was the most satisfied man because of Yudhiṣṭhira's being enthroned in place of Duryodhana, and thus he began to congratulate them.

## TEXT 12

अहो कष्टमहोऽन्याय्यं यद्युयं धर्मनन्दनाः ।  
जीवितुं नार्हथ क्लिष्टं विप्रधर्माच्युताश्रयाः ॥१२॥

aho kaṣṭam aho 'nyāyāṃ  
yat yūyam dharmā-nandanāḥ  
jīvitum nārhatḥa kṣiṣṭam  
vipra-dharmācyutāśrayāḥ

aho—oh; kaṣṭam—what terrible sufferings; aho—oh; anyāyāṃ—what terrible injustice; yat—because; yūyam—all of you good souls; dharmā-nandanāḥ—sons of religion personified; jīvitum—to remain alive; na—never; arhatḥa—deserve; kṣiṣṭam—suffering; vipra-brāhmaṇas; dharmā—piety; acyuta—God; āśrayāḥ—being protected by.

## TRANSLATION

Bhīṣmadeva said: Oh, what terrible sufferings and what terrible injustices you good souls suffer for being the sons of religion personified. You did not deserve to remain alive under those tribulations, yet you were protected by the brāhmaṇas, God and religion.

## PURPORT

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was disturbed due to the great massacre in the Battle of Kurukṣetra. Bhīṣmadeva could understand this, and therefore he spoke first of the terrible sufferings of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. He was put into difficulty by injustice only, and the Battle of Kurukṣetra was fought just to counteract this injustice. Therefore, he should not regret the great massacre. He wanted to point out particularly that they were always protected by the brāhmaṇas, the Lord and religious principles. As long as they were protected by these three important items, there was no cause of disappointment. Thus Bhīṣmadeva encouraged Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira to dissipate his despondency. As long as a person is fully in cooperation with the wishes of the Lord, guided by the bona fide brāhmaṇas and Vaiṣṇavas and strictly following religious principles, one has no cause for despondency, however trying the circumstances of life. Bhīṣmadeva, as one of the authorities in the line, wanted to impress this point upon the Pāṇḍavas.

## TEXT 13

संस्थितेऽतिरथे पाण्डौ पृथा बालप्रजा वधूः ।  
युष्मत्कृते बहून् क्लेशान् प्राप्ता तोकवती मुहुः ॥१३॥

saṁsthite 'tirathe pāṇḍau  
prthā bāla-prajā vadhūḥ  
yuṣmat-kṛte bahūn kleśān  
prāptā tokavatī muhuḥ

saṁsthite—after the demise; ati-rathe—of the great general; pāṇḍau—Pāṇḍu; prthā—Kuntī; bāla-prajā—having young children; vadhūḥ—my daughter-in-law; yuṣmat-kṛte—on your account; bahūn—

multifarious; kleśān—afflictions; prāptā—underwent; toka-vatī—in spite of having grown-up boys; muhuḥ—constantly.

## TRANSLATION

As far as my daughter-in-law Kuntī is concerned, upon the great General Pāṇḍu's death, she became a widow with many children, and therefore she suffered greatly. And when you were grown up she suffered a great deal also because of your actions.

## PURPORT

The sufferings of Kuntidevī are doubly lamented. She suffered greatly because of early widowhood and to get her minor children brought up in the royal family. And when her children were grown up, she continued to suffer because of her sons' actions. So her sufferings continued. This means that she was destined to suffer by providence, and this one has to tolerate without being disturbed.

## TEXT 14

सर्वं कालकृतं मन्ये भवतां च यदप्रियम् ।  
सपालो यदशे लोको वायोरिव घनावलिः ॥१४॥

sarvaṃ kāla-kṛtaṃ manye  
bhavatāṃ ca yad-apriyam  
sapālo yad-vaśe loko  
vāyor iva ghanāvaliḥ

sarvaṃ—all this; kāla-kṛtaṃ—done by inevitable time; manye—I think; bhavatāṃ ca—for you also; yat—whatever; apriyam—detestable; sa-pālah—with the rulers; yat-vaśe—under the control of that time; lokah—everyone in every planet; vayoḥ—the wind carries; iva—as; ghana-āvaliḥ—a line of clouds.

## TRANSLATION

In my opinion, this is all due to inevitable time, under whose control everyone in every planet is carried, just as the clouds are carried by the wind.

## PURPORT

There is control by time all over the space within the universe, as there is control by time all over the planets. All the big gigantic planets, including the sun, are being controlled by the force of air, as the clouds are carried by the force of air. Similarly, the inevitable kāla, or time, controls even the action of the air and other elements. Everything, therefore, is controlled by the supreme kāla, a forceful representative of the Lord within the material world. Thus Yudhiṣṭhira should not be sorry for the inconceivable action of time. Everyone has to bear the actions and reactions of time as long as one is within the conditions of the material world. Yudhiṣṭhira should not think that he had committed sins in his previous birth and is suffering the consequence. Even the most pious has to suffer the condition of material nature. But a pious man is faithful to the Lord, for he is guided by the bona fide brāhmaṇa and Vaiṣṇava following the religious principles. These three guiding principles should be the aim of life. One should not be disturbed by the tricks of eternal time. Even the great controller of the universe, Brahmājī, is also under the control of that time; therefore, one should not grudge being thus controlled by time despite being a true follower of religious principles.

## TEXT 15

यत्र धर्मसुतो राजा गदापाणिवृकोदरः ।  
कृष्णोऽस्त्री गाण्डिवं चापं मुहुः कृष्णस्ततो विपत् ॥१५॥

yatra dharmā-suto rājā  
gadā-pāṇir vṛkodarah  
kṛṣṇo 'strī gāṇḍivam cāpaṃ  
suhṛt kṛṣṇas tato vipat

यत्र—where

कृष्णो—dark

सुतो—son

राजा—king

गदापाणि—

वृकोदरः—

कृष्णो—dark

स्त्री—woman

गाण्डिवं—

चापं—bow

मुहुः—

कृष्णस्ततो—

विपत्—

*yatra*—where there is; *dharma-sutaḥ*—the son of Dharmarāja; *rājā*—the King; *gadā-pāṇih*—with his mighty club in hand; *vrkodaraḥ*—Bhīma; *kṛṣṇaḥ*—Arjuna; *astri*—carrier of the weapon; *gāṇḍivam*—Gāṇḍiva; *cāpam*—bow; *suhṛt*—well-wisher; *kṛṣṇaḥ*—Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead; *tataḥ*—thereof; *vipat*—reverse.

## TRANSLATION

O how wonderful is the influence of inevitable time. It is irreversible—otherwise, how can there be reverses in the presence of King Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of the demigod controlling religion; Bhīma, the great fighter with a club; the great bowman Arjuna with his mighty weapon Gāṇḍiva; and above all, the Lord, the direct well-wisher of the Pāṇḍavas?

## PURPORT

As far as the material or spiritual resources were required, there was no scarcity in the case of the Pāṇḍavas. Materially they were well equipped because two great warriors, namely Bhīma and Arjuna, were there. Spiritually the King himself was the symbol of religion, and above all of them the Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, was personally concerned with their affairs as the well-wisher. And yet there were so many reverses on the side of the Pāṇḍavas. Despite the power of pious acts, the power of personalities, the power of expert management and the power of weapons under the direct supervision of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Pāṇḍavas suffered so many practical reverses, which can only be explained as due to the influence of *kāla*, inevitable time. *Kāla* is identical with the Lord Himself, and therefore the influence of *kāla* indicates the inexplicable wish of the Lord Himself. There is nothing to be lamented when a matter is beyond the control of any human being.

## TEXT 16

न ह्यस्य कर्हिचिद्राजन् पुमान् वेद विधिस्सितम् ।  
यद्विजिज्ञासया युक्ता मुह्यन्ति कवयोऽपि हि ॥१६॥

*na hy asya karhicid rājan  
pumān veda vidhīṣitam  
yad vijijñāsayā yuktā  
muhyanti kavayo 'pi hi*

*na*—never; *hi*—certainly; *asya*—His; *karhicit*—whatsoever; *rājan*—O King; *pumān*—anyone; *veda*—knows; *vidhīṣitam*—plan; *yat*—which; *vijijñāsayā*—with exhaustive inquiries; *yuktāḥ*—being engaged; *muhyanti*—bewildered; *kavayaḥ*—great philosophers; *api*—even; *hi*—certainly.

## TRANSLATION

O King, no one can know the plan of the Lord [Śrī Kṛṣṇa]. Even though great philosophers inquire exhaustively, they are bewildered.

## PURPORT

The bewilderment of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira over his past sinful acts and the resultant sufferings, etc., is completely negated by the great authority Bhīṣma (one of the twelve authorized persons). Bhīṣma wanted to impress upon Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira that since time immemorial no one, including such demigods as Śiva and Brahmā, could ascertain the real plan of the Lord. So what can we understand about it? It is useless also to inquire about it. Even the exhaustive philosophical inquiries of sages cannot ascertain the plan of the Lord. The best policy is simply to abide by the orders of the Lord without argument. The sufferings of the Pāṇḍavas were never due to their past deeds. The Lord had to execute the plan of establishing the kingdom of virtue, and therefore His own devotees suffered temporarily in order to establish the conquest of virtue. Bhīṣmadeva was certainly satisfied by seeing the triumph of virtue, and he was glad to see King Yudhiṣṭhira on the throne, although he

himself fought against him. Even a great fighter like Bhīṣma could not win the Battle of Kurukṣetra because the Lord wanted to show that vice cannot conquer virtue, regardless of who tries to execute it. Bhīṣmadeva was a great devotee of the Lord, but he chose to fight against the Pāṇḍavas by the will of the Lord because the Lord wanted to show that a fighter like Bhīṣma cannot win on the wrong side.

## TEXT 17

तस्मादिदं दैवतन्त्रं व्यवस्य भरतर्षभ ।  
तस्यानुविहितोऽनाथा नाथ पाहि प्रजाः प्रभो ॥१७॥

*tasmād idam daiva-tantram  
vyavasya bhāratarṣabha  
tasyānuvihito 'nāthā  
nātha pāhi prajāḥ prabho*

*tasmāt*—therefore; *idam*—this; *daiva-tantram*—enchantment of providence only; *vyavasya*—ascertaining; *bhārata-rṣabha*—O best among the descendants of Bharata; *tasya*—by Him; *anuvihitaḥ*—as desired; *anāthāḥ*—helpless; *nātha*—O master; *pāhi*—just take care of; *prajāḥ*—of the subjects; *prabho*—O Lord.

## TRANSLATION

O best among the descendants of Bharata [Yudhiṣṭhira], I maintain, therefore, that all this is within the plan of the Lord. Accepting the inconceivable plan of the Lord, you must follow it. You are now the appointed administrative head, and, my lord, you should now take care of those subjects who are now rendered helpless.

## PURPORT

The popular saying is that a housewife teaches the daughter-in-law by teaching the daughter. Similarly, the Lord teaches the world by teaching the devotee. The devotee does not have to learn anything new from the Lord because the Lord teaches the sincere devotee always from within. Whenever, therefore, a show is made to teach the devotee, as in the case of the teachings of *Bhagavad-gītā*, it is for teaching the less intelligent men. A devotee's duty, therefore, is to ungrudgingly accept tribulations from the Lord as a benediction. The Pāṇḍavas were advised by Bhīṣmadeva to accept the responsibility of administration without hesitation. The poor subjects were without protection due to the Battle of Kurukṣetra, and they were awaiting the assumption of power by Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. A pure devotee of the Lord accepts tribulations as favors from the Lord. Since the Lord is absolute, there is no mundane difference between the two.

## TEXT 18

एष वै भगवान् साक्षादाद्यो नारायणः पुमान् ।  
मोहयन्मायया लोकं गूढश्रुति वृष्णिषु ॥१८॥

*eṣa vai bhagavān sāksād  
ādyo nārāyaṇaḥ pumān  
mohayan māyayā lokam  
gūḍhaś carati vṛṣṇiṣu*

*eṣaḥ*—this; *vai*—positively; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *sāksāt*—original; *ādyah*—the first; *nārāyaṇaḥ*—the Supreme Lord (who lies down on the water); *pumān*—the supreme enjoyer; *mohayan*—bewildering; *māyayā*—by His self-created energy; *lokam*—the planets; *gūḍhaḥ*—who is inconceivable; *carati*—moves; *vṛṣṇiṣu*—among the Vṛṣṇi family.

## TRANSLATION

This Śrī Kṛṣṇa is no other than the inconceivable, original Personality of Godhead. He is the first Nārāyaṇa, the supreme enjoyer. But He is moving amongst the descendants of King Vṛṣṇi just like one of us and He is bewildering us with His self-created energy.

## PURPORT

The Vedic system of acquiring knowledge is the deductive process. The Vedic knowledge is received perfectly by disciplic succession from authorities. Such knowledge is never dogmatic, as ill conceived by less intelligent persons. The mother is the authority to verify the identity of the father. She is the authority for such confidential knowledge. Therefore, authority is not dogmatic. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* this truth is confirmed in the Fourth Chapter (Bg. 4.2), and the perfect system of learning is to receive it from authority. The very same system is accepted universally as truth, but only the false arguer speaks against it. For example, modern spacecraft fly in the sky, and when scientists say that they travel to the other side of the moon, men believe these stories blindly because they have accepted the modern scientists as authorities. The authorities speak, and the people in general believe them. But in the case of Vedic truths, they have been taught not to believe. Even if they accept them they give a different interpretation. Each and every man wants a direct perception of Vedic knowledge, but foolishly they deny it. This means that the misguided man can believe one authority, the scientist, but will reject the authority of the *Vedas*. The result is that people have degenerated.

Here is an authority speaking about Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the original Personality of Godhead and the first Nārāyaṇa. Even such an impersonalist as Ācārya Śaṅkara has said in the beginning of his commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā* that Nārāyaṇa, the Personality of Godhead, is beyond the material creation.\* The universe is one of the material creations, but Nārāyaṇa is transcendental to such material paraphernalia.

Bhīṣmadeva is one of the twelve *mahājānas* who know the principles of transcendental knowledge. His confirmation of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa's being the original Personality of Godhead is also corroborated by the impersonalist Śaṅkara. All other *ācāryas* have also confirmed this statement, and thus there is no chance of not accepting Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the original Personality of Godhead. Bhīṣmadeva says that He is the first Nārāyaṇa. This is also confirmed by Brahmājī in the *Bhāgavatam* (10.14.14). Kṛṣṇa is the first Nārāyaṇa. In the spiritual world (Vaikuṅṭha) there are unlimited numbers of Nārāyaṇas, who are all the same Personality of Godhead and are considered to be the plenary expansions of the original Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The first form of the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa first expands Himself as the form of Baladeva, and Baladeva expands in so many other forms, such as Saṅkarsaṇa, Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Vāsudeva, Nārāyaṇa, Puruṣa, Rāma and Nṛsimha. All these expansions are one and the same *viṣṇu-tattva*, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original source of all the plenary expansions. He is therefore the direct Personality of Godhead. He is the creator of the material world, and He is the predominating Deity known as Nārāyaṇa in all the Vaikuṅṭha planets. Therefore, His movements amongst human beings is another sort of bewilderment. The Lord therefore says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that foolish persons consider Him to be one of the human beings without knowing the intricacies of His movements.

The bewilderment regarding Śrī Kṛṣṇa is due to the action of His two-fold internal and external energies upon the third one, called marginal energy. The living entities are expansions of His marginal energy, and thus they are sometimes bewildered by the internal energy and sometimes by the external energy. By internal energetic bewilderment, Śrī Kṛṣṇa expands Himself into unlimited numbers of Nārāyaṇas and exchanges or accepts transcendental loving service from the living entities in the transcendental world. And by His external energetic expansions, He incarnates Himself in the material world amongst the men, animals or demigods to reestablish His forgotten relation with the living entities in different species of life. Great authorities like Bhīṣma, however, escape His bewilderment by the mercy of the Lord.

\*nārāyaṇaḥ paro 'vyaktād  
anāṁ avyakta-sambhavam  
anāṁśyāntas tv ime lokāḥ  
sapta dvīpā ca medinī  
(Bg. Bhāṣya of Śaṅkara)

## TEXT 19

अस्यानुभावं भगवान् वेद गुह्यतमं शिवः ।  
देवर्षिर्नारदः साक्षाद्भगवान् कपिलो नृप ॥१९॥

asyānubhāvaṁ bhagavān  
veda guhyatamaṁ śivaḥ  
devaṛṣir nāradaḥ sāksād  
bhagavān kapilo nṛpa

asya—of Him; anubhāvaṁ—glories; bhagavān—the most powerful; veda—knows; guhya-tamaṁ—very confidentially; śivaḥ—Lord Śiva; deva-ṛṣiḥ—the great sage among the demigods; nāradaḥ—Nārada; sāksāt—directly; bhagavān—the Personality of Godhead; kapilaḥ—Kapila; nṛpa—O King.

## TRANSLATION

O King, Lord Śiva, Nārada the sage amongst the demigods, and Kapila, the incarnation of Godhead, all know very confidentially about His glories through direct contact.

## PURPORT

Pure devotees of the Lord are all *bhāvas*, or persons who know the glories of the Lord in different transcendental loving services. As the Lord has innumerable expansions of His plenary form, there are innumerable pure devotees of the Lord, who are engaged in the exchange of service of different humors. Ordinarily there are twelve great devotees of the Lord, namely Brahmā, Nārada, Śiva, Kumāra, Kapila, Manu, Prahlāda, Bhīṣma, Janaka, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Bali Mahārāja and Yamarāja. Bhīṣmadeva, although one of them, has mentioned only three important names of the twelve who know the glories of the Lord. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, one of the great *ācāryas* in the modern age, explains that *anubhāva*, or the glory of the Lord, is first appreciated by the devotee in ecstasy manifesting the symptoms of perspiring, trembling, weeping, bodily eruptions, etc., which are further enhanced by steady understanding of the glories of the Lord. Such different understandings of *bhāvas* are exchanged between Yaśodā and the Lord (binding the Lord by ropes) and in the chariot driving by the Lord in the exchange of love with Arjuna. These glories of the Lord are exhibited in His being subordinated before His devotees, and that is another feature of the glories of the Lord. Śukadeva Gosvāmī and the Kumāras, although situated in the transcendental position, became converted by another feature of *bhāva* and turned into pure devotees of the Lord. Tribulations imposed upon the devotees by the Lord constitute another exchange of transcendental *bhāva* between the Lord and the devotees. The Lord says "I put My devotee into difficulty, and thus the devotee becomes more purified in exchanging transcendental *bhāva* with Me." Placing the devotee into material troubles necessitates delivering him from the illusory material relations. The material relations are based on reciprocation of material enjoyment, which depends mainly on material resources. Therefore, when material resources are withdrawn by the Lord, the devotee is cent percent attracted toward the transcendental loving service of the Lord. Thus the Lord snatches the fallen soul from the mire of material existence. Tribulations offered by the Lord to His devotee are different from the tribulations resulting from vicious action. All these glories of the Lord are especially known to the great *mahājānas* like Brahmā, Śiva, Nārada, Kapila, Kumāra and Bhīṣma, as mentioned above, and one is able to grasp it by their grace.

## TEXT 20

यं मन्यसे मातुलेयं प्रियं मित्रं सुहृत्तमम् ।  
अकरोः सचिवं दूतं सौहृदादथ सारथिम् ॥२०॥

yaṁ manyase mātuleyaṁ  
priyaṁ mitraṁ suhṛttamaṁ

akaroḥ sacivaṁ dūtaṁ  
sauhrdād atha sārathim

yam—the person; manyase—you think; mātuleyam—maternal cousin; priyam—very dear; mitram—friend; suhṛt-tamam—ardent well-wisher; akaroḥ—executed; sacivam—counsel; dūtam—messenger; sauhrdāt—by good will; atha—thereupon; sārathim—charioteer.

#### TRANSLATION

O King, that personality whom, out of ignorance only, you thought to be your maternal cousin, your very dear friend, well-wisher, counselor, messenger, benefactor, etc., is that very Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

#### PURPORT

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, although acting as the cousin, brother, friend, well-wisher, counselor, messenger, benefactor, etc., of the Pāṇḍavas, was still the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Out of His causeless mercy and favor upon His unalloyed devotees, He performs all kinds of service, but that does not mean that He has changed His position as the Absolute Person. To think of Him as an ordinary man is the grossest type of ignorance.

#### TEXT 21

सर्वात्मनः समदृशो ह्यद्वयस्यानहङ्कृतेः ।  
तत्कृतं मतिवैषम्यं निरवद्यस्य न क्वचित् ॥२१॥

sarvātmanah sama-dṛśo  
hy advayasyānahaṅkṛteḥ  
tat-kṛtaṁ mati vaiṣamyam  
niravadyasya na kvacit

sarva-ātmanah—of one who is present in everyone's heart; sama-dṛśah—of one who is equally kind to one and all; hi—certainly; advayasya—of the Absolute; anahaṅkṛteḥ—free from all material identity of false ego; tat-kṛtam—everything done by Him; mati—consciousness; vaiṣamyam—differentiation; niravadyasya—freed from all attachment; na—never; kvacit—at any stage.

#### TRANSLATION

Being the Absolute Personality of Godhead, He is present in everyone's heart. He is equally kind to everyone, and He is free from the false ego of differentiation. Therefore whatever He does is free from material inebriety. He is equilibrated.

#### PURPORT

Because He is absolute, there is nothing different from Him. He is *kaivalya*; there is nothing except Himself. Everything and everyone is the manifestation of His energy, and thus He is present everywhere by His energy, being nondifferent from it. The sun is identified with every inch of the sun rays and every molecular particle of the rays. Similarly, the Lord is distributed by His different energies. He is Paramātmā, or the Supersoul, present in everyone as the supreme guidance, and therefore He is already the chariot driver and counsel of all living beings. When He, therefore, exhibits Himself as chariot driver of Arjuna, there is no change in His exalted position. It is the power of devotional service only that demonstrates Him as the chariot driver or the messenger. Since He has nothing to do with the material conception of life because He is absolute spiritual identity, there is for Him no superior or inferior action. Being the Absolute Personality of Godhead, He has no false ego, and so He does not identify Himself with anything different from Him. The material conception of ego is equilibrated in Him. He does not feel, therefore, inferior by becoming the chariot driver of His pure devotee. It is the glory of the pure devotee that only he can bring about service from the affectionate Lord.

#### TEXT 22

तथाप्येकान्तभक्तेषु पश्य भूपानुकम्पितम् ।  
यन्मेऽहंस्त्यजतः साक्षात्कृष्णो दर्शनमागतः ॥२२॥

tathāpy ekānta-bhakteṣu  
paśya bhūpānukampitam  
yan me 'sūmḥ tyajataḥ sākṣāt  
kṛṣṇo darśanam āgataḥ

tathāpi—still; ekānta—unflinching; bhakteṣu—unto the devotees; paśya—see here; bhū-pa—O King; anukampitam—how sympathetic; yat—for which; me—my; asūn—life; tyajataḥ—ending; sākṣāt—directly; kṛṣṇah—the Personality of Godhead; darśanam—in my view; āgataḥ—has kindly come.

#### TRANSLATION

Yet, despite His being equally kind to everyone, He has graciously come before me while I am ending my life, for I am His unflinching servitor.

#### PURPORT

The Supreme Lord, the Absolute Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, although equal to everyone, is still more inclined to His unflinching devotee who is completely surrendered and knows no one else as his protector and master. Having unflinching faith in the Supreme Lord as one's protector, friend and master is the natural condition of eternal life. A living entity is so made by the will of the Almighty that he is most happy when placing himself in a condition of absolute dependence.

The opposite tendency is the cause of falldown. The living entity has this tendency of falling down by dint of misidentifying himself as fully independent to lord it over the material world. The root cause of all troubles is there in false egotism. One must draw towards the Lord in all circumstances.

The appearance of Lord Kṛṣṇa at the deathbed of Bhīṣmajī is due to his being an unflinching devotee of the Lord. Arjuna had some bodily relation with Kṛṣṇa because the Lord happened to be his maternal cousin. But Bhīṣma had no such bodily relation. Therefore the cause of attraction was due to the intimate relation of the soul. Yet because the relation of the body is very pleasing and natural, the Lord is more pleased when He is addressed as the son of Mahārāja Nanda, the son of Yaśodā, the lover of Rādhārāṇī. This affinity by bodily relation with the Lord is another feature of reciprocating loving service with the Lord. Bhīṣmadeva is conscious of this sweetness of transcendental humor, and therefore he likes to address the Lord as Vijaya Sakhe, Pārtha Sakhe, etc., exactly like Nandanandana or Yaśodā-nandana. The best way to establish our relation in transcendental sweetness is to approach Him through His recognized devotees. One should not try to establish the relation directly; there must be a via medium which is transparent and competent to lead us to the right path.

#### TEXT 23

भक्त्यावेश्य मनो यस्मिन् वाचा यन्नाम कीर्तयन् ।  
त्यजन् कलेवरं योगी मुच्यते कामकर्मभिः ॥२३॥

bhaktya-aveśya mano yasmin  
vācā yan-nāma kīrtayan  
tyajan kalevaram yogī  
mucyate kāma-karmabhiḥ

bhaktiyā—with devout attention; aveśya—meditating; manah—mind; yasmin—in whose; vācā—by words; yat—Kṛṣṇa; nāma—holly name; kīrtayan—by chanting; tyajan—quitting; kalevaram—this material body; yogī—the devotee; mucyate—gets release; kāma-karmabhiḥ—from fruitive activities.

## TRANSLATION

The Personality of Godhead, who appears in the mind of the devotee by attentive devotion and meditation and by chanting of the holy name, releases the devotee from the bondage of fruitive activities at the time of his quitting the material body.

## PURPORT

*Yoga* means concentration of the mind detached from all other subject matter. And actually such concentration is *samādhi*, or cent percent engagement in the service of the Lord. And one who concentrates his attention in that manner is called a *yogī*. Such a *yogī* devotee of the Lord engages himself twenty-four hours daily in the service of the Lord so that his whole attention is engrossed with the thoughts of the Lord in ninefold devotional service, namely hearing, chanting, remembering, worshiping, praying, becoming a voluntary servant, carrying out orders, establishing a friendly relationship, or offering all that one may possess, in the service of the Lord. By such practice of *yoga*, or linking up in the service of the Lord, one is recognized by the Lord Himself, as it is explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā* concerning the highest perfectional stage of *samādhi*. The Lord calls such a rare devotee the best amongst all the *yogīs*. Such a perfect *yogī* is enabled by the divine grace of the Lord to concentrate his mind upon the Lord with a perfect sense of consciousness, and thus by chanting His holy name before quitting the body the *yogī* is at once transferred by the internal energy of the Lord to one of the eternal planets where there is no question of material life and its concomitant factors. In material existence a living being has to endure the material conditions of threefold miseries, life after life, according to his fruitive work. Such material life is produced by material desires only. Devotional service to the Lord does not kill the natural desires of the living being, but they are applied in the right cause of devotional service. This qualifies the desire to be transferred to the spiritual sky. General Bhiṣmadeva is referring to a particular type of *yoga* called *bhakti-yoga*, and he was fortunate enough to have the Lord directly in his presence before he quitted his material body. He therefore desired that the Lord stay before his view in the following verses.

## TEXT 24

स देवदेवो भगवान् प्रतीक्षतां  
कलेवरं यावदिदं हिनोम्यहम् ।  
प्रसन्नासारुणलोचनोल्लस-  
न्मुखाम्बुजो ध्यानपथश्चतुर्भुजः ॥२४॥

*sa deva-devo bhagavān pratīkṣatām  
kalevaram yāvat idam hinomy aham  
prasanna-hāsarūṇa-locanollasan-  
mukhāmbujō dhyāna-pathaś catur-bhujah*

*saḥ*—He; *deva-devah*—the Supreme Lord of the lords; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *pratīkṣatām*—may kindly wait; *kalevaram*—body; *yāvat*—as long as; *idam*—this (material body); *hinomi*—may quit; *aham*—I; *prasanna*—cheerful; *hāsa*—smiling; *aruṇa-locana*—eyes red like the morning sun; *ullasat*—beautifully decorated; *mukha-ambujah*—the lotus flower of His face; *dhyāna-pathah*—in the path of my meditation; *catur-bhujah*—the four-handed form of Nārāyaṇa (the worshipable Deity of Bhiṣmadeva).

## TRANSLATION

May my Lord, who is four-handed and whose beautifully decorated lotus face, with eyes as red as the rising sun, is smiling, kindly await me at that moment when I quit this material body.

## PURPORT

Bhiṣmadeva knew well that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the original Nārāyaṇa. His worshipable Deity was four-handed Nārāyaṇa, but he knew that four-

handed Nārāyaṇa is a plenary expansion of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Indirectly he desired Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa to manifest Himself in His four-handed feature of Nārāyaṇa. A Vaiṣṇava is always humble in his behavior. Although it was cent percent certain that Bhiṣmadeva was approaching *Vaikunṭha-dhāma* just after leaving his material body, still as a humble Vaiṣṇava he desired to see the beautiful face of the Lord, for after quitting the present body he might not be in a position to see the Lord any more. A Vaiṣṇava is not puffed up, although the Lord guarantees His pure devotee entrance into His abode. Here Bhiṣmadeva says, “as long as I do not quit this body.” This means that the great General would quit the body by his own will; he was not being forced by the laws of nature. He was so powerful that he could stay in his body as long as he desired. He got this benediction from his father. He desired that the Lord stay before him in His four-handed Nārāyaṇa feature so that he might concentrate upon Him and thus be in trance in that meditation. Then his mind might be sanctified with thinking of the Lord. Thus he did not mind wherever he might go. A pure devotee is never very anxious to go back to the kingdom of God. He entirely depends on the good will of the Lord. He is equally satisfied even if the Lord desires him to go to hell. The only desire that a pure devotee entertains is that he may always be in rapt attention with thinking of the lotus feet of the Lord, regardless. Bhiṣmadeva wanted this much only: that his mind be absorbed in thinking of the Lord and that he pass away thus. That is the highest ambition of a pure devotee.

## TEXT 25

सूत उवाच

युधिष्ठिरस्तदाकर्ण्य शयानं शरपञ्जरे ।  
अपृच्छद्विविधान्यर्मानृषीणां चानुश्रुष्वताम् ॥२५॥

*sūta uvāca  
yudhiṣṭhiras tad ākarnya  
śayānam śara-pañjare  
apṛcchat vividhān dharmān  
ṛṣīnām cānuśṛvatām*

*sūtaḥ uvāca*—Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī said; *yudhiṣṭhirah*—King Yudhiṣṭhira; *tat*—that; *ākarnya*—hearing; *śayānam*—lying down; *śara-pañjare*—on the bed of arrows; *apṛcchat*—asked; *vividhān*—multifarious; *dharmān*—duties; *ṛṣīnām*—of the ṛṣis; *ca*—and; *anuśṛvatām*—hearing after.

## TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, after hearing Bhiṣmadeva speak in that appealing tone, asked him, in the presence of all the great ṛṣis, about the essential principles of various religious duties.

## PURPORT

Bhiṣmadeva, speaking in that appealing tone, convinced Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira that he was very soon passing away. And Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was inspired by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa to ask him of the principles of religion. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa inspired Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira to ask Bhiṣmadeva in the presence of many great sages, indicating thereby that the Lord's devotee like Bhiṣmadeva, although apparently living as a worldly man, is far superior to many great sages, even Vyāsadeva. Another point is that Bhiṣmadeva at that time was not only lying on a deathbed of arrows, but was greatly aggrieved because of that state. One should not have asked him any question at that time, but Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa wanted to prove that His pure devotees are always sound in body and mind by dint of spiritual enlightenment, and thus in any circumstances a devotee of the Lord is in perfect order to speak of the right way of life. Yudhiṣṭhira also preferred to solve his problematic questions by asking Bhiṣmadeva rather than ask anyone else present there who was seemingly more learned than Bhiṣmadeva. This is all due to the arrangement of the great wheel-carrier Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who establishes the glories of His devotee. The father likes to see the son become more famous

than himself. The Lord declares very emphatically that worship of His devotee is more valuable than the worship of the Lord Himself.

### TEXT 26

पुरुषस्वभावविहितान् यथावर्णं यथाश्रमम् ।  
वैराग्यरागोपाधिभ्यामाम्नातोभयलक्षणान् ॥२६॥

*puruṣa-sva-bhāva-vihitān*  
*yathā-varṇaṁ yathāśramam*  
*vairāgya-rāgopādhibhyām*  
*āmnātobhaya-lakṣaṇān*

*puruṣa*—the human being; *sva-bhāva*—by his own acquired qualities; *vihitān*—prescribed; *yathā*—according to; *varṇam*—classification of castes; *yathā*—according to; *śramam*—orders of life; *vairāgya*—detachment; *rāga*—attachment; *upādhibhyām*—out of such designations; *āmnāta*—systematically; *ubhaya*—both; *lakṣaṇān*—symptoms.

### TRANSLATION

At Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira's inquiry, Bhīṣmadeva first defined all the classifications of castes and orders of life in terms of the individual's qualifications. Then he systematically, in twofold divisions, described counteraction by detachment and interaction by attachment.

### PURPORT

The conception of four castes and four orders of life, as planned by the Lord Himself (Bg. 4.13), is to accelerate transcendental qualities of the individual person so that he may gradually realize his spiritual identity and thus act accordingly to get free from material bondage, or conditional life. In almost all the *Purāṇas* the subject matter is described in the same spirit, and so also in the *Mahābhārata* it is more elaborately described by Bhīṣmadeva in the *Sānti-parva*, beginning from the sixtieth chapter.

The *varṇāśrama-dharma* is prescribed for the civilized human being just to train him to successfully terminate human life. Self-realization is distinguished from the life of the lower animals engaged in eating, sleeping, fearing and mating. Bhīṣmadeva advised for all human beings nine qualifications: (1) not to become angry, (2) not to lie, (3) to equally distribute wealth, (4) to forgive, (5) to beget children only by one's legitimate wife, (6) to be pure in mind and hygienic in body, (7) not to be inimical toward anyone, (8) to be simple, and (9) to support servants or subordinates. One cannot be called a civilized person without acquiring the above-mentioned preliminary qualities. Besides these, the *brāhmaṇas* (the intelligent men), the administrative men, the mercantile community and the laborer class must acquire special qualities in terms of occupational duties mentioned in all the Vedic scriptures. For the intelligent men, controlling the senses is the most essential qualification. It is the basis of morality. Sex indulgence even with a legitimate wife must also be controlled, and thereby family control will automatically follow. An intelligent man abuses his great qualifications if he does not follow the Vedic way of life. This means he must seriously make a study of the Vedic literatures, especially of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the *Bhagavad-gītā*. For learning Vedic knowledge, one must approach a person who is cent percent engaged in devotional service. He must not do things which are forbidden in the *sāstras*. A person cannot be a teacher if he drinks or smokes. In the modern system of education the teacher's academic qualification is taken into consideration without evaluation of his moral life. Therefore, the result of education is misuse of high intelligence in so many ways.

The *kṣatriya*, the member of the administrative class, is especially advised to give charity and not to accept charity in any circumstances. Modern administrators raise subscriptions for some political functions, but never give charity to the citizens in any state function. It is just the reverse in the injunctions of the *sāstras*. The administrative class must be well versed in the *sāstras*, but must not take to the profession of teachers.

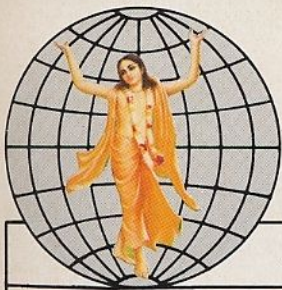
The administrators should never pretend to become nonviolent and thereby go to hell. When Arjuna wanted to become a nonviolent coward on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, he was severely chastised by Lord Kṛṣṇa. The Lord degraded Arjuna at that time to the status of an uncivilized man for his avowed acceptance of the cult of nonviolence. The administrative class must be personally trained in military education. Cowards should not be elevated to the presidential throne by dint of numerical votes only. The monarchs were all chivalrous personalities, and therefore monarchy should be maintained provided the monarch is regularly trained in the occupational duties of a king. In fighting, the king or the president should never return home without being hurt by the enemy. The so-called king of today never visits the warfield. He is very much expert in artificially encouraging the fighting strength in the hope of false national prestige. As soon as the administrative class is turned into a gang of mercantile and laborer men, the whole machinery of government becomes polluted.

The *vaiśyas*, the members of the mercantile communities, are especially advised to protect the cows. Cow protection means increasing the milk productions, namely curd and butter. Agriculture and distribution of the foodstuff are the primary duties of the mercantile community backed by education in Vedic knowledge and trained to give in charity. As the *kṣatriyas* were given charge of the protection of the citizens, *vaiśyas* were given the charge of the protection of animals. Animals are never meant to be killed. Killing of animals is a symptom of barbarian society. For a human being, agricultural produce, fruits and milk are sufficient and compatible foodstuffs. The human society should give more attention to animal protection. The productive energy of the laborer is misused when he is occupied by industrial enterprises. Industry of various types cannot produce the essential needs of man, namely rice, wheat, grains, milk, fruits and vegetables. The production of machines and machine tools increases the artificial living fashion of a class of vested interests and keeps thousands of men in starvation and unrest. This should not be the standard of civilization.

The *śūdra* class is less intelligent and should have no independence. They are meant for rendering sincere service to the three higher sections of the society. The *śūdra* class can attain all comforts of life simply by rendering service to the higher classes. It is especially enjoined that a *śūdra* should never bank money. As soon as the *śūdras* accumulate wealth, it will be misused for sinful activities in wine, women and gambling. *Wine, women and gambling indicate that the population is degraded to less than śūdra quality.* The higher castes should always look after the maintenance of the *śūdras*, and they should provide them with old and used garments. A *śūdra* should not leave his master when the master is old and invalid, and the master should keep the servants satisfied in all respects. The *śūdras* must first of all be satisfied by sumptuous food and clothing before any sacrifice is performed. In this age so many functions are held by spending millions, but the poor laborer is not sumptuously fed or given charity, clothing, etc. The laborers are thus dissatisfied, and so they make agitation.

The *varṇas* are, so to speak, classifications of different occupations, and *āśrama-dharma* is gradual progress on the path of self-realization. Both are interrelated, and one is dependent on the other. The main purpose of *āśrama-dharma* is to awaken knowledge and detachment. The *brahmacārī āśrama* is the training ground for the prospective candidates. In this *āśrama* it is instructed that this material world is not actually the home of the living being. The conditioned souls under material bondage are prisoners of matter, and therefore self-realization is the ultimate aim of life. The whole system of *āśrama-dharma* is a means to detachment. One who fails to assimilate this spirit of detachment is allowed to enter into family life with the same spirit of detachment. Therefore, one who attains detachment may at once adopt the fourth order, namely, renounced, and thus live on charity only, not to accumulate wealth, but just to keep body and soul together for ultimate realization. Household life is for one who is attached, and the *vānaprastha* and *sannyāsa* orders of life are for those who are detached from material life. The *brahmacārī-āśrama* is especially meant for training both the attached and detached. (continued in next issue)

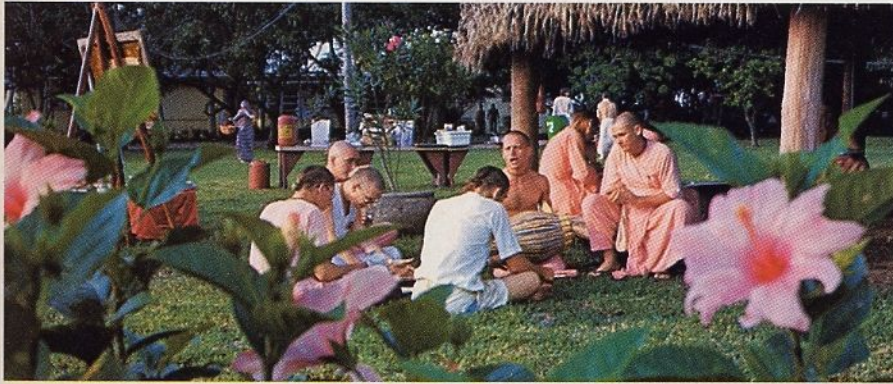




# ISKCON NEWS

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

## Floridians Feel Good About ISKCON's Farm



Even the residents of South Florida, who are long familiar with exotic tropical vegetation, have never heard of the Jobaticaba tree (which produces grapes directly from its bark) or the star apple tree (whose fruit tastes just like a blueberry sundae). Yet there they are, right on an 8.5-acre estate that fifty hardworking devotees have transformed into a tropical paradise.

And there is much more at New Naimiṣāraṇya Forest (named after a pilgrimage site in India) to delight the people of semisuburban Coral Way, near the Everglades. The devotees have put in over five hundred banana trees (including special Mysore and Rajapuris imported from India), three hundred rose bushes, fifty dwarf Puerto Rican plantain trees, a full three acres of stunning yellow and orange marigolds, plus pink and yellow frangipani, super-fragrant night-blooming jasmine, gardenias, and hibiscus. They have also planted stands of litchi nut, lime, and pineapple trees, as well as papaya, fig, eucalyptus, tamarind, and others too numerous to mention.

Perhaps the most popular features, though, are the thirty-eight beehives and the mango orchard. With an abundance of flowers to choose from, the bees are busy all year round. The devotees bottle the flood of honey, put their own New Naimiṣāraṇya Forest label on the bottles, and sell or give most of the bounty to neighbors or guests. Even more popular are the delicious mangoes, which the devotees harvested by the hundreds this year.

When devotees first began developing the farm, under the guidance of temple president Narahari dāsa, the neighbors were pleased to see the wonderful transformation of the abandoned estate. They eagerly offered various kinds of help, such as plowing up the future marigold field with a tractor-pulled disk and advising the devotees on planting techniques. Now many local children love to visit "the Hare Kṛṣṇa farm." They come, mostly on horses or ponies, to swim in the lake and get refreshments.

The neighbors also appreciated that the devotees helped to keep a proposed shopping center out of the area. At a critical meeting of the local civic association, of which New Naimiṣāraṇya Forest is now an honorary member, a representative of the prospective developer contended that not a single landowner on Coral Way opposed the shopping center. At that point the neighborhood representative literally jumped out of her seat with a letter from the devotees saying

that they were one of the biggest landholders on Coral Way, and that they were strongly opposed to the shopping center.

The plans were shelved, to the great glee of the neighbors, and now they're supporting the devotees' effort to get a rezoning for widening the farm's programs. Said Terry Skinner, president of the civic association, "The devotees are doing a wonderful job developing and beautifying their property, which is becoming a great asset to the community."

### Historian Hails Śrī Īsopaniṣad

Dr. Thomas N. Pappas, professor of history at Anderson College, has this to say about the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust edition of *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*:

"The first available English edition of *Śrī Īsopaniṣad* makes this most significant publication accessible to a broader public of students and scholars. This spiritual lawbook, with a most useful introduction by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, is a necessary supplement to any serious study of Vedic culture. The Sanskrit diacritical equivalents and the glossary are most useful guides to further study and deeper understanding of ancient spiritual law and Vedic culture.

"I recommend this volume to any student or scholar of Vedic thought. To the generalist and specialist alike it will generate considerable provocation and understanding. It is an indispensable addition to any serious library collection."

### 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.

Dec. 2	Dec. 3	Dec. 6	Dec. 10	Dec. 17	Dec. 18	Dec. 19
Mokṣadāi Ekādāśī (fasting from grains and beans).	Break-fast after sunrise, before 9:39 A.M.	End of Kātyāyani-vrata of the gopīs.	Disappearance of Śrīa Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura.	Saphalā Ekādāśī (fasting from grains and beans). Disappearance of Devānanda Paṇḍita.	Break-fast after sunrise, before 9:47 A.M.	Disappearance of Mahēsa Paṇḍita and Uddhāraṇa Datta Thākura.
Dec. 23	Jan. 5	Jan. 10	Jan. 11	Jan. 13	Jan. 16	Jan. 17
Disappearance of Jīva Gosvāmi and Jagadīśa Paṇḍita.	Putpābhīṣeka-yātrā (flower-bathing festival) of Lord Kṛṣṇa.	Appearance of Gopālā Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmi. Disappearance of Rāmacandra Kavīṭja.	Disappearance of Jayadeva Gosvāmi.	Disappearance of Locana dāsa Thākura.	Ṣaṭ-tilā Ekādāśī (fasting from grains and beans).	Break-fast after sunrise, before 9:59 A.M.

# Our Sense of Wonder

“Alienation,” social scientists say, is our inability to relate meaningfully to others, to nature, and to ourselves. As Dr. Urie Bronfenbrenner reports in *Scientific American*, alienation is growing at an alarming and unprecedented rate. This trend appears to result from a radically different life view imposed upon the past few generations.

Not so many years ago, most people saw in human events and the things of nature the hand of a purposeful God. But today, many scientists, such as the late Nobel Prize winner Jacques Monod, regard God, meaning, and an intelligence behind the universe as childish concepts. In Monod’s words, man must awaken to

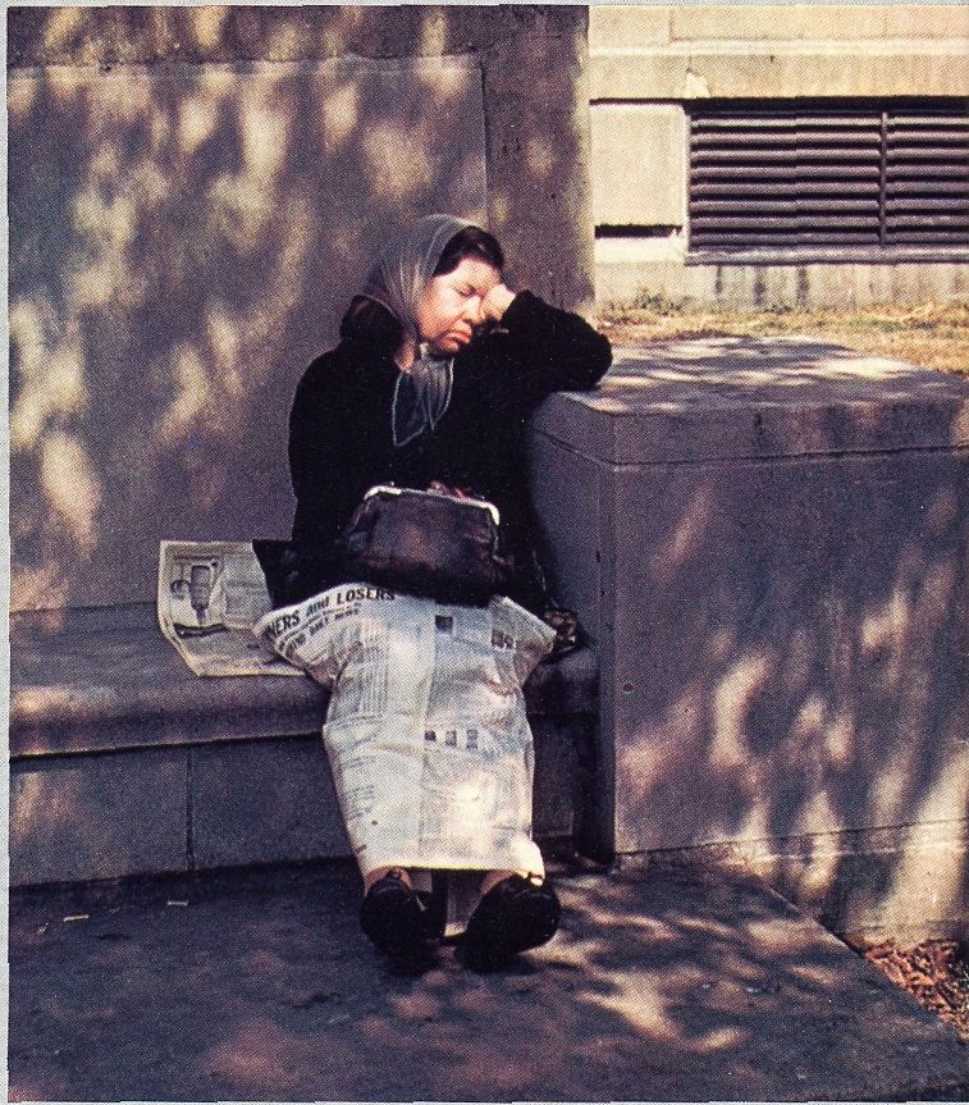
his fundamental isolation. Now does he at last realize that, like a gypsy, he lives on the boundary of an alien world. A world that is deaf to his music, just as indifferent to his hopes as it is to his suffering or his crimes.

God no longer holds “the whole world in His hands.” Now emptiness, the void, accounts for everything, and mankind—long accustomed to living in a world full of meaning—grapples with how to adjust to this revolutionary change.

It hasn’t been easy, nor the results encouraging. As historian Theodore Roszak observes, twentieth century society has projected “a nihilistic imagery unparalleled in human history.” The main themes of the century stand out as disillusionment, pessimism, and the lure of destruction.

Clearly, Monod was no maverick. Nobel laureate Francis Crick (co-unraveller of the DNA code) has said, “I myself, like many scientists, believe that the soul is imaginary.” In schools all over the world, students learn that man is a “naked ape,” or, as one textbook puts it, “nothing but a complex biochemical mechanism powered by a combustion system which energizes computers with prodigious storage facilities for retaining encoded information.”

This main theme in modern science—“reductionism”—has drawn much criticism. Dr. Roszak, for instance, depicts reductionism as “the effort to turn what is alive into a mere thing.” Psychiatrists and social commentators like Dr. Viktor E. Frankl feel that the society spawned



by reductionism is wearing away humanity’s psychological health. Recently, an international congress of psychoanalysts concluded that “ever more patients are suffering from a lack of life content.”

In the layman’s language, “lack of life content” means anxiety, stress, boredom, apathy, despair, meaninglessness, cynicism—in a word, alienation. As playwright Eugene Ionesco writes, “Cut off from religion, metaphysics, and roots, man is lost. His actions become senseless, useless, *absurd*.”

By defining man as a machine and affording him no more dignity than a stone or a piece of broken glass, reductionism has cut deep. Our sense of

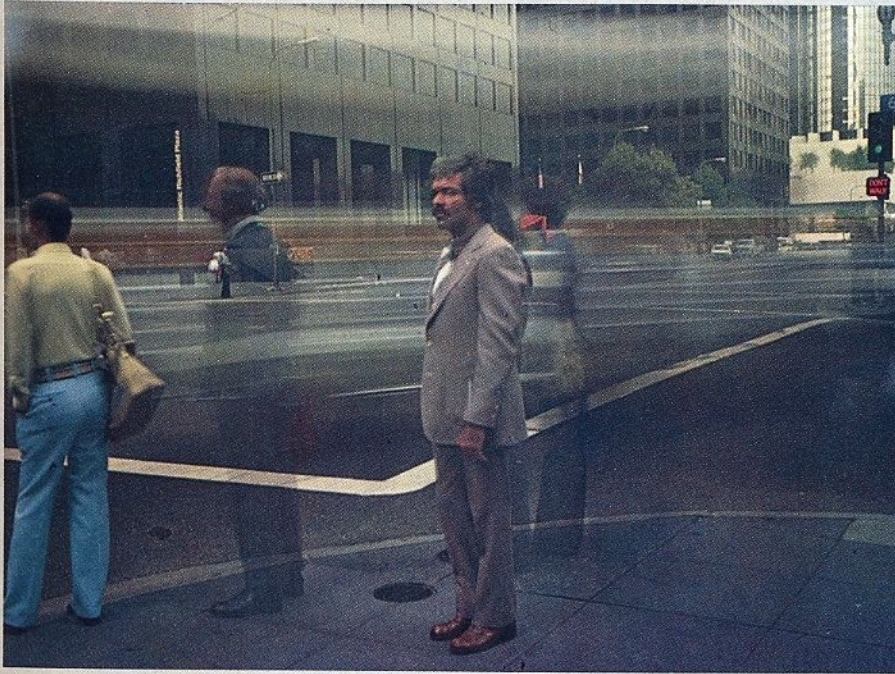
wonder, our ability to appreciate life’s everyday beauties—the sun, the moon, the fragrance of the earth—has come into question and grown dull.

## A Return to the Root

The effects of reductionism are prompting many people to reexplore the spiritual dimension. English novelist J.B. Priestly, for one, visited the Colorado River and observed how it had carved out the Grand Canyon. He said, “You feel when you are there that God gave the river its instructions.”

Dr. Roszak asks, “Why, one wonders, should it be thought crude or rudimentary to find divinity brightly present in the world where others find only dead

# Gone Under?



Now that scientists like Jacques Monod have helped us toward “an anxious quest in a frozen universe of solitude,” here are some time-tested secrets for rediscovering the warm and the wonderful.



matter or an inferior order of being?”

In their textbook *Psychology*, Lindzey, Hall, and Thompson confirm, “All human cultures from the dawn of history have valued the mystical or religious experience. Man always seems to be searching for some higher form of consciousness or awareness.” This statement returns us to the crux of the problem: twentieth century man has deviated from this search and is paying the price—alienation.

In the past, people solved alienation by experiencing what we might call “the divine presence,” both within themselves and in the people and things around them. But simply wiping the dust off old catechisms and relearning their

formulas by rote won’t help us. The emphasis of numerous religious groups on memorizing doctrines rather than on experiencing God has only weakened people’s convictions—and has helped (or even started) the process of alienation.

Despite its obvious shortcomings, modern science has taught us at least one thing: we should test a truth before we accept it. And thousands of years ago, sages and yogīs had the same idea. They advised their students not to dwell in doctrines but to link themselves with the living world around them. By following the sages’ directions for meditating on nature, the students experienced truth for themselves.

Appropriately, the handbook of spiritual education, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, deals extensively with alienation and its cure. At the beginning, Arjuna suffers from intense alienation. “My mind is reeling. . . . Now I am confused about my duty and have lost all composure because of weakness. . . . I can find no means to drive away this grief which is drying up my senses.” The Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, instructs Arjuna on how to rediscover his ability to live in a meaningful, God-conscious way.

About halfway through the work, Arjuna asks, “How should I meditate on

You? In what various forms are You to be contemplated, O Blessed Lord?” (Bg. 10.17). In reply, the Lord suggests ways to realize His presence in the happenings of this world. His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda comments that since it is difficult to perceive God directly, “One is advised to concentrate the mind on physical things in order to see how Kṛṣṇa [God] is manifested by physical representations.”

This process is like appreciating an artist through his art. When we see a masterpiece, we naturally admire the talent and skill of its creator. The yogīs and sages report that by looking upon the universe with this same sense of wonder, we can experience *samādhi* (blissful immersion in God consciousness), or what today’s psychologists call a “peak experience.” Alienation vanishes, and we feel reconnected to the root of existence—Kṛṣṇa.

On the pages that follow, the reader will find some of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s suggestions, accompanied by short meditations—all in all, “enough to make you wonder.” As Śrīla Prabhupāda has remarked, by reawakening this sense of wonder “one becomes increasingly enlightened, and he enjoys life with a thrill, not only for some time, but at every moment.”



**“Of lights I am the radiant sun.”**

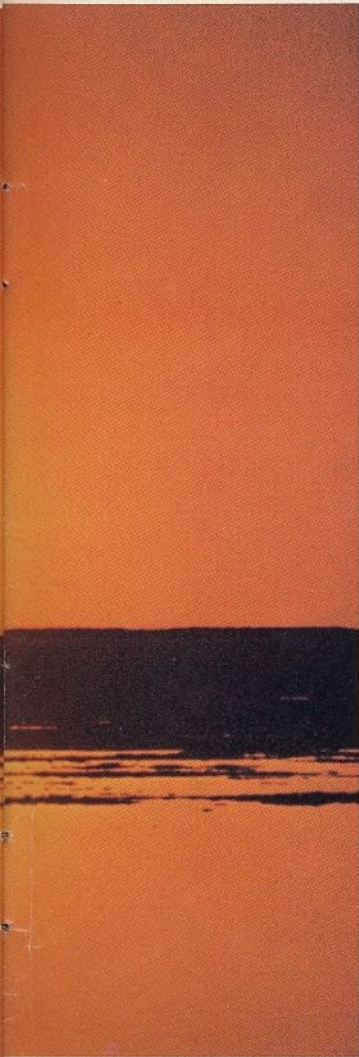
As scientists have discovered, the sun gives out more energy in one second than all the earth’s people could use in millions of years. Also, the sun is the light of our lives; without it the entire world would be dark. Even our light bulbs are simply reservoirs of the sun’s rays. And, as we learn from the Vedic literature, the sun itself is but a tiny reservoir of the Lord’s glowing effulgence.



**“Of purifiers I am the wind.”**

Most people have experienced the zestfulness of a breezy day, or, in winter, those gusts that simply “go right through you.” The wind, whooshing all around, seems to wash us even more smoothly and swiftly than water (and it even sounds clean). The wind, then, suggests the all-pervasive, all-purifying Lord.





**“Of bodies of water I am the ocean.”**

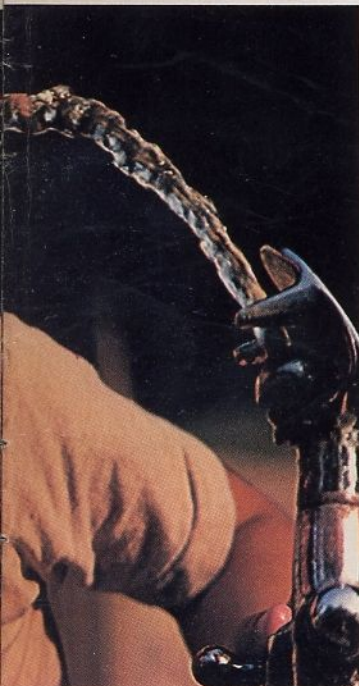
Of all bodies of water, the ocean runs the deepest and stretches the farthest. In fact, for sheer greatness, practically nothing else in the world can compare to it. So the ocean reminds us of the Lord’s greatness.

**“I am the original fragrance of the earth.”**

Everything in this world has a certain flavor or fragrance, as the fragrance of a pine tree, a lemon, or a rose. This pure, original flavor in everything is Kṛṣṇa.

**“I am the taste of water.”**

Most of us have had the experience (say, after driving through a desert) of walking right past the soft drink dispenser to the water fountain. When you’re really thirsty, nothing satisfies like water—the pure taste of water, which is one of the energies of the Lord.



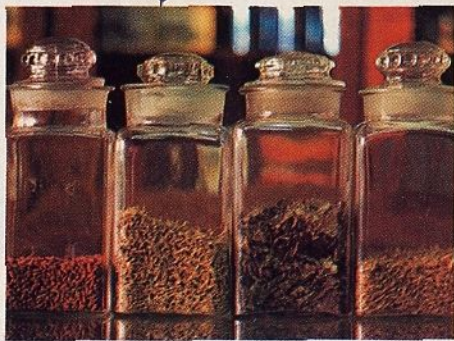


**“I am the heat in fire.”**

We need fire for our factories, our furnaces, and our frying pans. As we’ve already seen, fire comes from the sun, and the sun comes from Kṛṣṇa. So the fire and the heat of the fire are Kṛṣṇa.

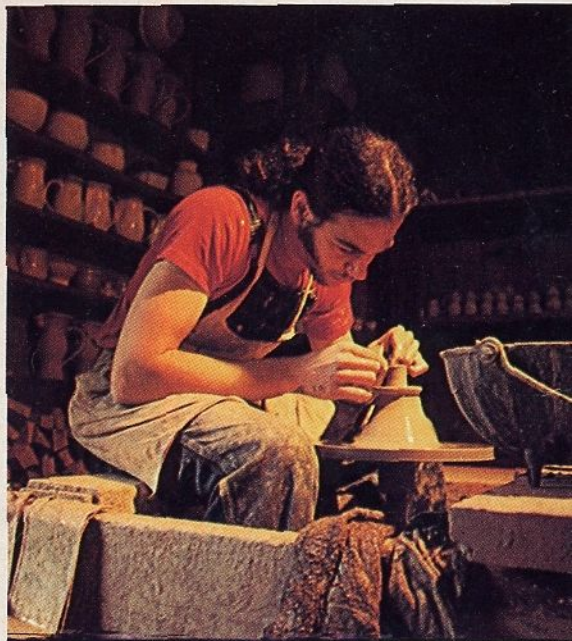
**“I am the healing herb.”**

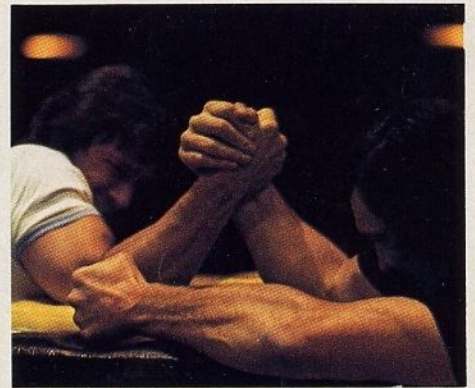
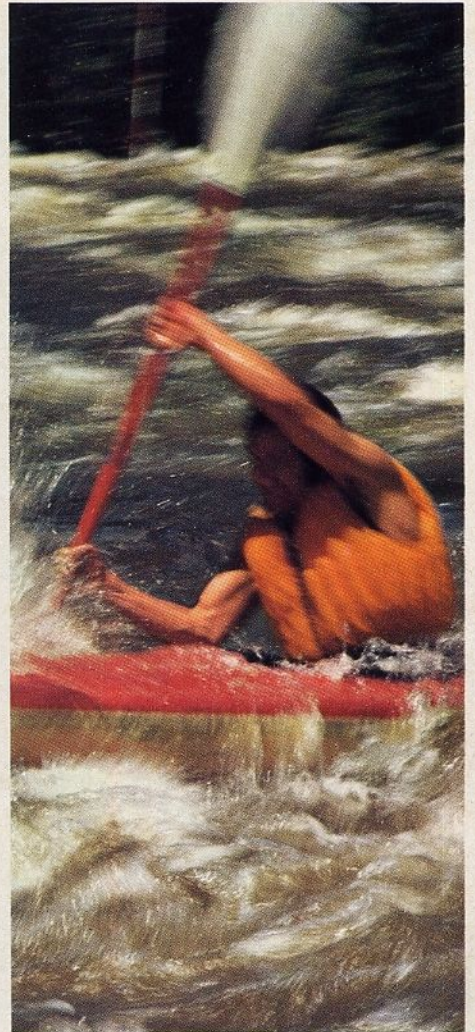
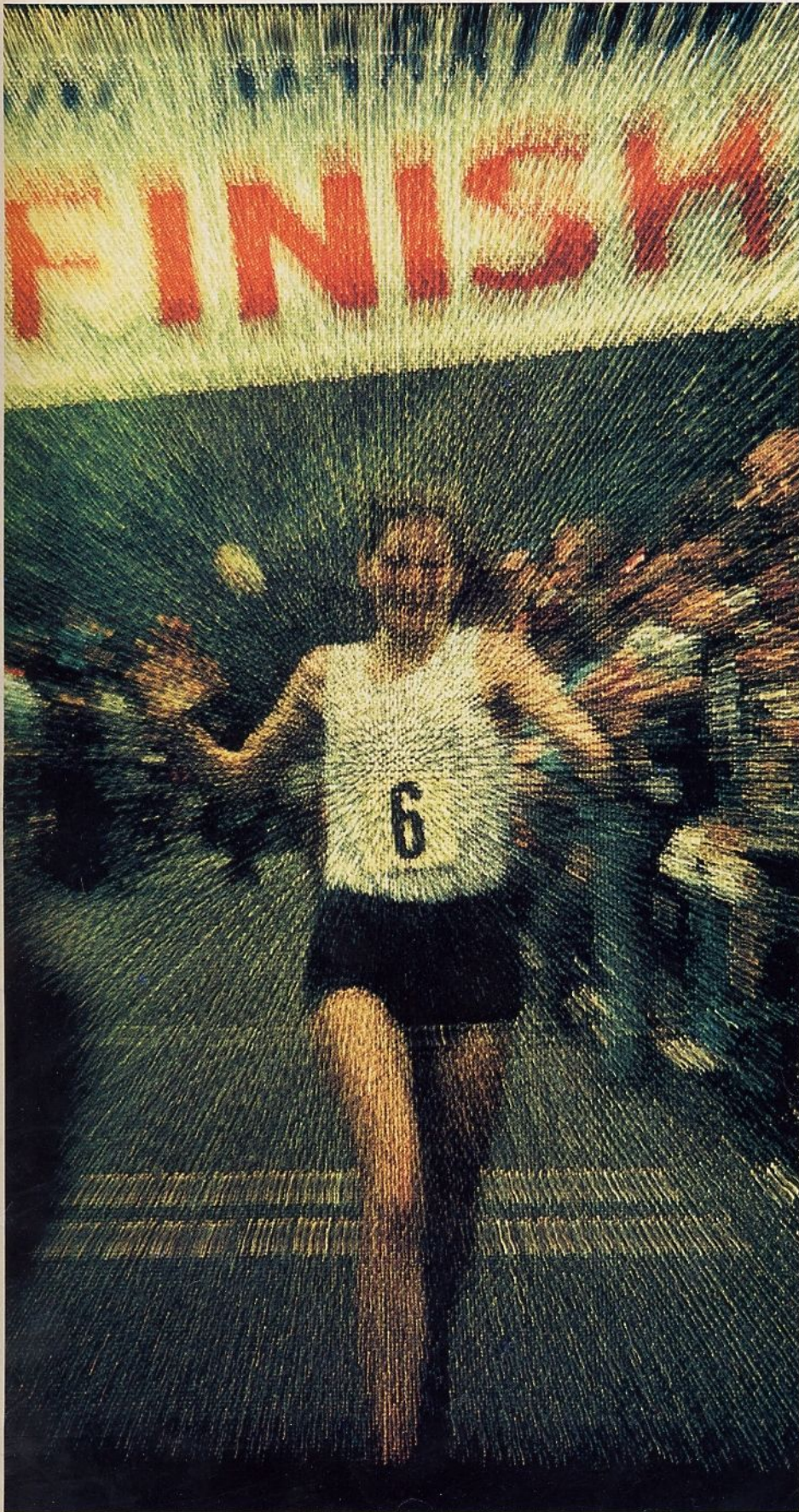
How could it be that things that grow in the ground provide just the right remedies for worrisome diseases? When man-made “wonder drugs” come about only after much care and concentration, do these natural wonder drugs come about, as scientists say, by chance—or by the Lord’s kindness?



**“I am the ability in man.”**

How can a master musician or artist do with ease what most of us couldn’t do with the greatest effort? What makes the difference between “all thumbs” and “all-star”? The answer is Kṛṣṇa.





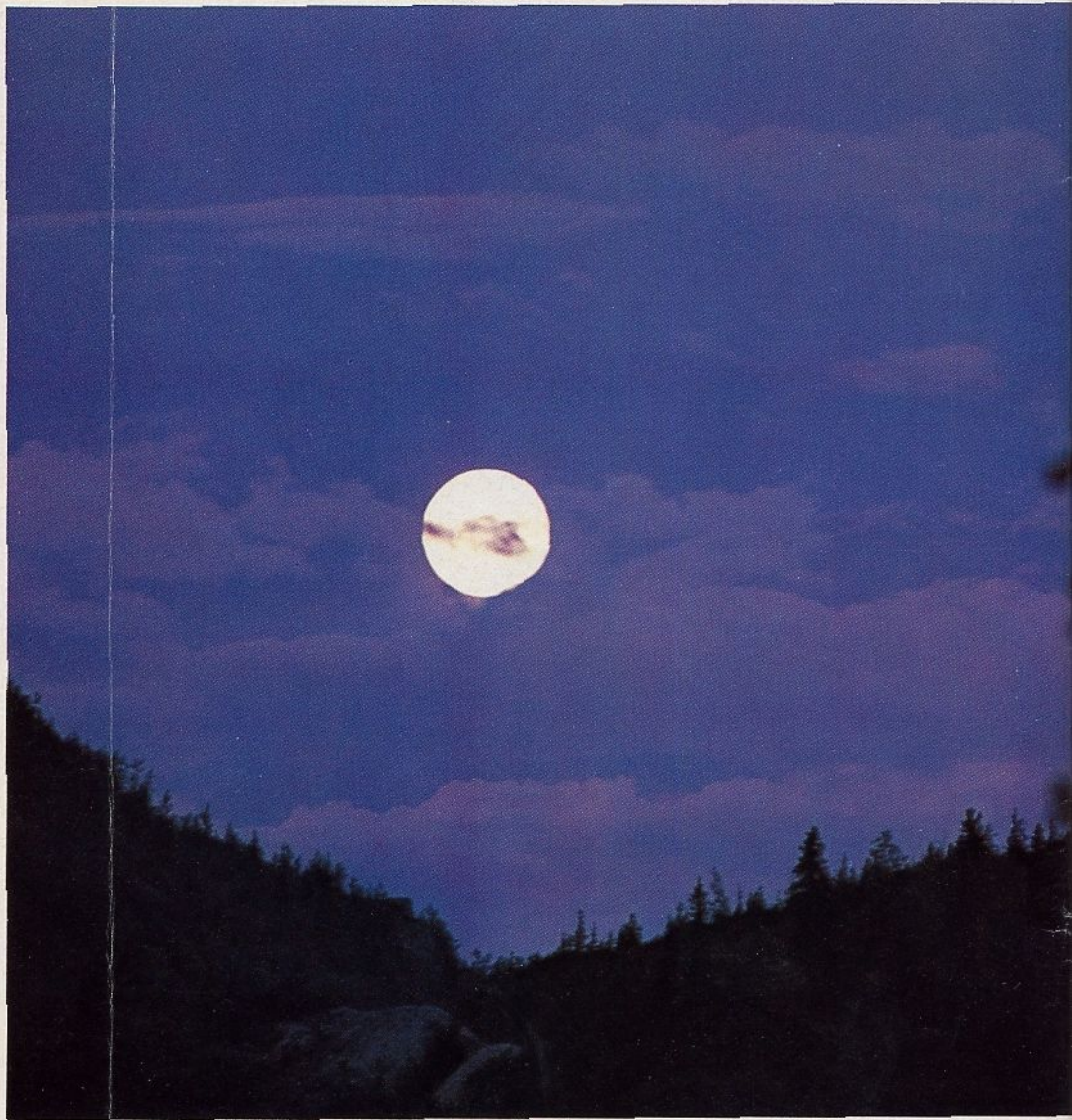
**“I am victory, I am adventure, and I am the strength of the strong.”**  
Conquest and the questing spirit, even the questing capacity—all come from Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

**“Among the stars I am the moon.”**

When the moon fills the night with its cool light, people feel refreshed. And the moon’s light makes vegetables grow and become succulent. Thus, the moon brings to mind the cooling and soothing face of the Lord.

**“Among subduers I am time.”**

“The glory that was Rome” — and the glory that was anything else—just couldn’t outlast eternal time, by which Lord Kṛṣṇa gets the best of everything and everyone.

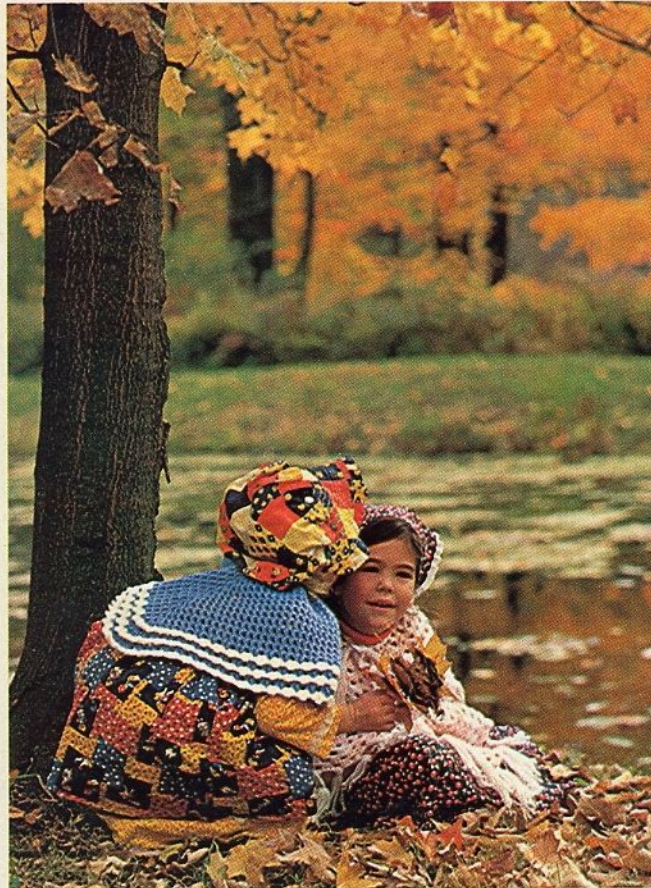






**“Of seasons I am the flower-bearing spring.”**

Everyone likes spring. It’s neither too hot nor too cold, the flowers and trees blossom, the grass comes alive, and everything flourishes. The greens and pinks and blues and yellows, the fresh-smelling breezes, the sun-filled evenings—as with any other work of art, these masterstrokes tell us something about the artist. The most joyful of all seasons, spring reminds us of the most joyful of all persons, Kṛṣṇa.

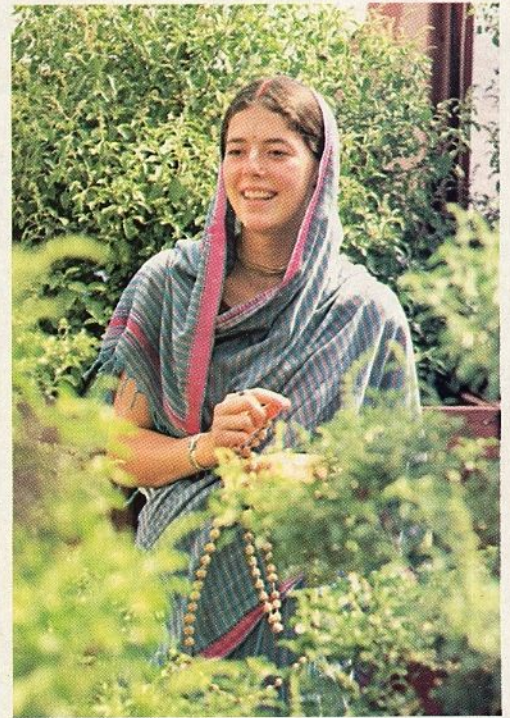


**“Of secret things I am silence.”**

Our ability to hold forth on some topic, or to hear about it, or to hush up about it, comes from the Lord.

**“Of weapons I am the thunderbolt.”**

The thunderbolt, the ultimate shocker, gives us some idea of the Lord’s power.



**“Of sacrifices I am the chanting of the holy names (japa).”**

Everybody is giving his time and energy to get something he can enjoy. The father works hard all day so that he can enjoy the happiness of his wife and children. The politician spends long hours in meetings and masterminding sessions so that he can have a satisfied constituency. Everybody is taking pains to please somebody. Yet there’s a way to please everybody, and it’s pleasing in itself—chanting the Lord’s holy names.



# The Prince Passed On Too Soon

There's a saying that parents live on through their children. How often we hear, for instance, about a father telling his son, "You'll be greater than I was," or, "You should finish what I started." But, ages ago, the great King Citraketu felt like dying—he could not have a son.

Otherwise, while King Citraketu ruled the earth everything went beautifully. Fruit trees hung low with their juicy yield, luscious vegetables crowded the fields, the mountains were generous with their gems and minerals, and the seas provided pearls. For his own part, the king seemed to have everything that anybody could want: youth, good looks, intelligence, wealth. And he had many queens, all of them with lovely faces and enchanting eyes—and all of them barren.

Yes, Citraketu had everything, except what he wanted most. A son would not only carry on the dynasty but also offer sacrifices to the demigods and insure his parents' heavenly reward. As Citraketu looked to the future, he was brokenhearted. Not one of his other blessings could make him happy.

Then, one day, the king's life took a strange turn. The great sage Aṅgirā was traveling through the universe, and by his sweet will he came to the royal palace.

When Aṅgirā walked into the throne room, Citraketu got up from his throne and bowed. The king knew that his visitor was a great guru. He praised Aṅgirā with well-chosen words, washed his feet, and fed him with the finest foods. Citraketu served the holy man personally, performing his duty as a humble host to a guest of the highest spiritual wisdom. When Aṅgirā had finished eating and was relaxing on a richly decorated seat, the king humbly sat at his feet. Then Aṅgirā began to speak.

"My dear king," he said, "I hope that your kingdom is peaceful and that all

**The king had many wives, but, strangely, he couldn't have a son. What happened when he finally got one was even more strange.**

your people are feeling well. But I can see that you are not happy yourself. Your face tells me that you are not satisfied with your life; there is a goal that you desire but have not yet reached. Who is to blame? Are you at fault, or have others kept you from success? Please tell me—your pale face reflects a deep anxiety in your heart."

"O Aṅgirā, great master," King Citraketu answered, "you can understand everything about people who are bound by the laws of this material world. So you must also know why I am brokenhearted. You have perfect vision because you are so determined and pure. Still, you have asked me to tell you why I am anxious. Since you have asked, I will answer.

"Yes, I have fallen short of my life's goal. Just as a hungry person cannot feel satisfied by being garlanded with flowers, I cannot feel satisfied by having a great empire and many possessions. My misery is this: I have no son. Please, O high-minded sage, save me and save my family. Please do something so that I may have a son."

The transcendentalist Aṅgirā had no business fulfilling ordinary material desires, but out of his kindness he did not turn the king away. Drawing on his mystic power, he took some rice boiled in milk and sugar, offered it in a ritual to a demigod named Tvaṣṭā, and then gave it to Citraketu's favorite queen—Kṛtadyuti.

"Now," the sage told the king, "you will have a son—a son who will bring you both joy and sadness." Without waiting

for an answer, Aṅgirā left the palace.

Trusting the sage's word, Citraketu conceived a child in the womb of Kṛtadyuti. And, to everyone's amazement, in time she gave birth to a son. When they heard the news, all the citizens were overjoyed for their king.

After bathing and dressing himself in gorgeously ornamented robes, Citraketu asked the royal priests to bless the newborn child and perform the birth ceremony as the holy scriptures directed. Then, rejoicing, he gave gifts to the priests—gold, silver, clothing, jewels, villages, horses, elephants, and cows. Finally, just as a rain cloud freely waters everything (even the mountains and the oceans), the king lavished his riches upon everyone present. In that way he hoped to spread the good name of the new prince.

With the king's hopes now fulfilled after so much frustration, his love for the little child grew day by day. And, naturally, his love for the boy's mother Queen Kṛtadyuti also grew.

Not surprisingly, as Kṛtadyuti became more and more happy, the other queens became more and more hateful. As time went by, the king hardly cared about them, and they burned with envy. They, too, wanted to have sons, but they couldn't. Only Kṛtadyuti had gotten the sage's blessing, and the other queens cried bitterly to each other.

"If a wife has no sons, she has nothing but sadness."

"Her husband neglects her."

"Her co-wives insult her and treat her like a maidservant."

"Such a woman is condemned in every way."

"Even the husband's maidservants receive his compliments; they have nothing to regret. But we are now the maidservants of the maidservants—we are the most wretched."



Illustration: Dhrti-devi dāsi

Unable to stand their pain, the queens lost all common sense. They went mad, and at last they plotted to murder the baby. One day, when the mother and the nurse were both out of the baby's room, some of the queens entered silently and put poison into his mouth.

In another wing of the palace, Queen Kṛtadyuti called out, "Nurse, bring the young prince to me. I think he's been sleeping long enough."

When the nurse went to the child's room and approached his bed, she saw that his eyes were turned upward. Shocked, she looked closer and saw that he wasn't breathing, that his heartbeat had stopped, that he was dead. "I am doomed!" she cried, striking her bosom with both hands and sobbing loudly.

When the queen heard the shrieking, she ran in. The nurse, struck with grief, was lying by the bed. As Kṛtadyuti neared her child, her dress and hair and mind were in disarray. On seeing the upturned eyes and the lifeless limbs, she fainted and fell next to the nurse.

Many others in the palace heard the screams, and they came to the prince's



*"How can I accept these two people as my parents?"*

bedroom—some hastily, others hesitantly. At the sight of the dead baby, none of them could hold back their tears. Even the murderous queens made their way through the door; they made a show of weeping along with the others.

When someone told the king what had happened, he nearly went blind. Grief set his mind aflame, and he stumbled through the palace hallways toward his son's room, slipping and falling countless times along the way. Half-delirious, he lurched through the crowded doorway to the tragic scene. Surrounded by his ministers, royal officers, and priests, he got a glimpse of his dead boy and could not contain himself any longer. Shaking and disheveled, he fell unconscious at the child's feet.

Shortly, Citraketu regained his senses. He tried to speak, but he was breathing too heavily for the words to come out.

Through his tears he saw Queen Kṛtadyuti next to him, leaning against the bed. The garland of flowers that had decorated her hair was slipping down to the floor. Tears mixed with mascara traced gray lines down her face and stained her dress. She refused to leave her dead child, and as she looked at the baby's body she cried like a sad songbird. Then, growing bitter, she raised her eyes upward and screamed.

"O God! You are useless! You have a law that a son can die only after his father dies. Yet You have let my son die while his father is still living. You may say that You don't remember that law, and You may say that birth and death take place on account of our own activities. But I say that out of cruelty You have broken Your own law! If we are so powerful that we can bring on birth and death, then who needs God?!"

"Or if You say that there must be a God because there must be someone to run things, I am not impressed. You may be God, but You are not intelligent—You make parents love their child so that they will raise him nicely, but then You take away the child. Now everyone will neglect their children. You are not very smart!"

Trembling, the queen turned again to her son's bed and spoke to the corpse in a heart-rending way.

"Little one! I am helpless and full of grief. Please don't go away. Just look at your father. We are helpless now. You are our only hope. Please don't go

away with Death any farther. Come back to us."

Giving up all sanity, she indulged herself in impossibilities.

"My baby, you have slept a long time. Now please get up. You must be very hungry, so get up and suck my breast. Please dry our tears."

"My dear son, I am the most unlucky person. I can no longer see your gentle smile. You have closed your eyes forever. You've been taken away from this planet, and you will never return. I shall never hear your voice again."

Hearing Kṛtadyuti carrying on so pathetically, the king poured out his despair in long, loud wails. All the king's followers gave in to the deepest depression; crying unashamedly, they all but passed out.

Far away, Aṅgirā heard of the tragedy. Along with the sage Nārada, he traveled

at once to the palace of Citraketu and made his way to the prince's fateful bedroom. There he saw the king lying on the floor like another dead body. Forgetting formalities, Aṅgirā addressed the king—not with sentimental words of pity, but with the uncompromising words of transcendental wisdom.

"O King," Aṅgirā said, "what kinship does that dead body have with you? Or you with it? As for the soul who lived inside it, you may say he is your son, but was he your son before he lived there? Or will he be your son tomorrow? Just as the waves of the ocean push together and pull apart grains of sand, so the waves of time cause people to meet and separate. It is nature's law, and no amount of lamentation can stop it.

"Seeds sown in the ground sometimes grow and sometimes do not. That is natural. Fathers sometimes get sons, and sometimes they do not. That is also natural. So you should not weep or suffer so much over the death of your son. What we think of as 'kinship' comes about only because the Supreme Lord arranges it for us.

"From the father's body and the mother's body comes a child's body. The atoms of those bodies are eternal, and the souls who manifest themselves through the atoms are also eternal. The distinctions we make between people on the basis of family or country are imaginary. We make these distinctions only out of a lack of knowledge."

Enlightened by these instructions, King Citraketu regained his hope in life. Wiping his haggard face with his hand, he spoke to Aṅgirā.

"Of all men, you are the most praiseworthy. You know everything. You wander all over the world just to do good to materialists like us, who are always attached to sense gratification. I am as foolish as a village animal like a pig or a dog. Please ignite the torch of knowledge. Save me."

Aṅgirā replied, "My dear King, when you wanted to have a son, I came to you. I could have given you the supreme transcendental knowledge at that time. But when I saw that your mind was absorbed in material things, I gave you a son—who, as I had warned you, caused you both happiness and misery. Now you are experiencing the sadness of family life. Your family, and indeed your whole kingdom, are all causes of distress. Because they are not permanent, they are no better than dreams for you.

"O King Citraketu, try to understand whether you are body, mind, or soul. Consider where you have come from, where you are going after you give up this body, and why you are under the



*As soon as Citraketu saw the Lord, he cried tears of love; his voice choked up.*

control of the material nature. If you come to understand your real position, you will be able to give up your attachment to illusory things, such as these material forms. And you will also be able to give up your belief that material kinship lasts forever."

When Aṅgirā had finished speaking to the king, the great sage Nārada exercised his mystic power and brought the dead son into the vision of all the lamenting relatives. "O soul," Nārada said, "all good fortune unto you! Look—your father and mother and all your friends and relatives are stricken because you have passed away. You died at such an early age, and the rest of your life still remains. So go back into your body. Enjoy the rest of your life with your friends and relatives. Take the royal throne—and all the wealth your father will give you."

By Nārada's mystic power, the soul returned to the dead body. Then he spoke, as everyone gaped.

"I transmigrate," he said, "from one body to another, according to the quality of my past activities. Sometimes I go to the species of the demigods, sometimes to the lower animals, sometimes to the plants, and sometimes to the humans.

"In which birth were these people my mother and father? Actually, no one is my mother and no one is my father. How can I accept these two people as my parents?"

"Just as gold and other commodities travel from one place to another in the course of purchase and sale, so, as a result of his activities, the living soul wanders throughout the entire universe, being injected into one kind of body after another by one kind of father after another.

"The spirit soul is eternal and imperishable. He has no beginning or end. He never takes birth and he never dies. Being part and parcel of the Lord, he possesses the Lord's qualities in a minute quantity. So you should not lament for him."

Having finished speaking, the soul left the infant body and disappeared from the palace.

Citraketu and all the other relatives of the dead son were amazed. The words of the spirit soul had wiped away their grief. They felt free of the dilemmas of material attachment. In this mood, they performed their duties of holding the proper funeral ceremonies and burning the body.

The queens who had poisoned the boy felt disgusted at what they had done, and they had lost all their bodily luster. They gave up their ambition to bear children and went to the holy River Yamunā to bathe and do penance for their sinful activities.

Leaving his palace and his royal position, Citraketu also went to the Yamunā River, bathed there, and offered water to the demigods and his forefathers. Aṅgirā and Nārada accompanied him, and he offered them his respects. The king had decided to dedicate the rest of his life to gaining spiritual awareness. Nārada then accepted Citraketu as his disciple and gave him a prayer for reaching the stage of perfection. After Nārada and Aṅgirā had left, Citraketu fasted, drank only water, and chanted the prayer. Within several days he saw, face to face, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa.

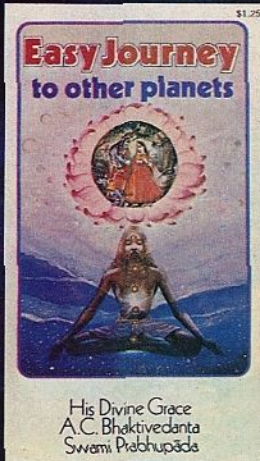
The Lord was as white as the white fibers of a lotus flower and dressed in bluish garments. Surrounded by saintly persons and adorned with a sparkling helmet, armlets, and belt, He was smiling. As soon as Citraketu saw the Lord, tears of love flowed from his eyes, and he bowed down at the Lord's lotus feet. On account of his ecstasy, Citraketu's voice choked up, and at first he had difficulty saying anything. But soon he was able to offer the Lord prayers that came from deep within his heart.

Thoroughly pleased, Lord Kṛṣṇa told Citraketu how he could make his devotion perfect. Since he had followed the sages' instructions so well, Kṛṣṇa asked him to rule Vidyādhara-loka, a heavenly planet. There, in the valleys of Sumeru Mountain, his body and senses stayed fresh, and for millions of years he enjoyed chanting the Lord's glories.

Citraketu had seen his way past the short-lived kinship of this world. Finally, he went back to the spiritual world—to his lasting kinship, with Kṛṣṇa. 🌸

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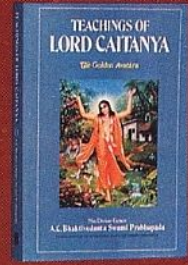
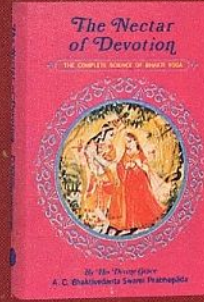
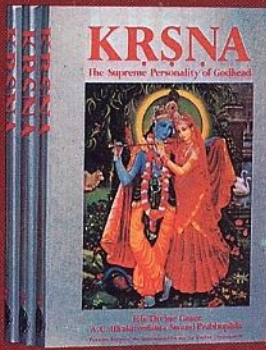
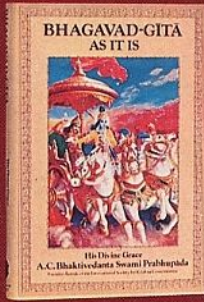
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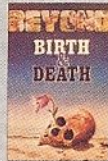
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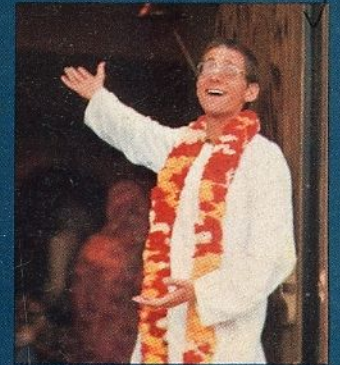
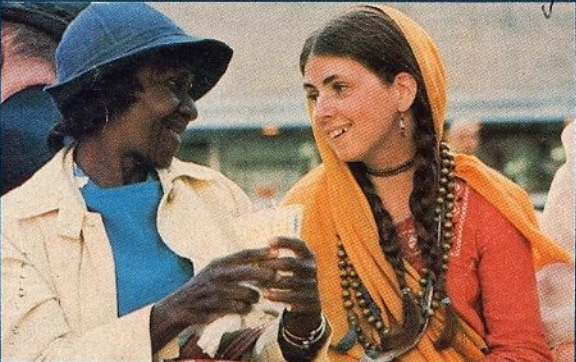
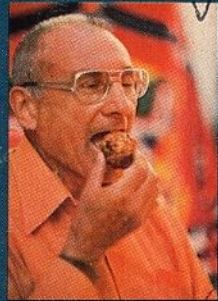
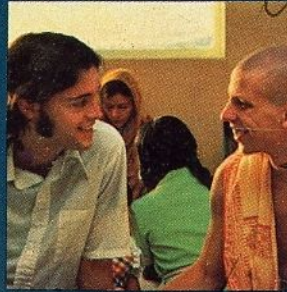
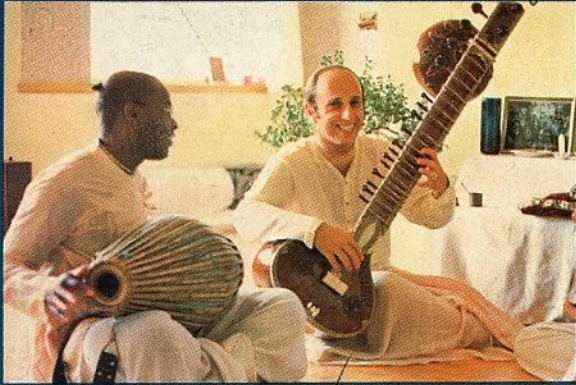
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