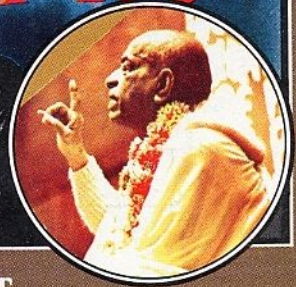


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

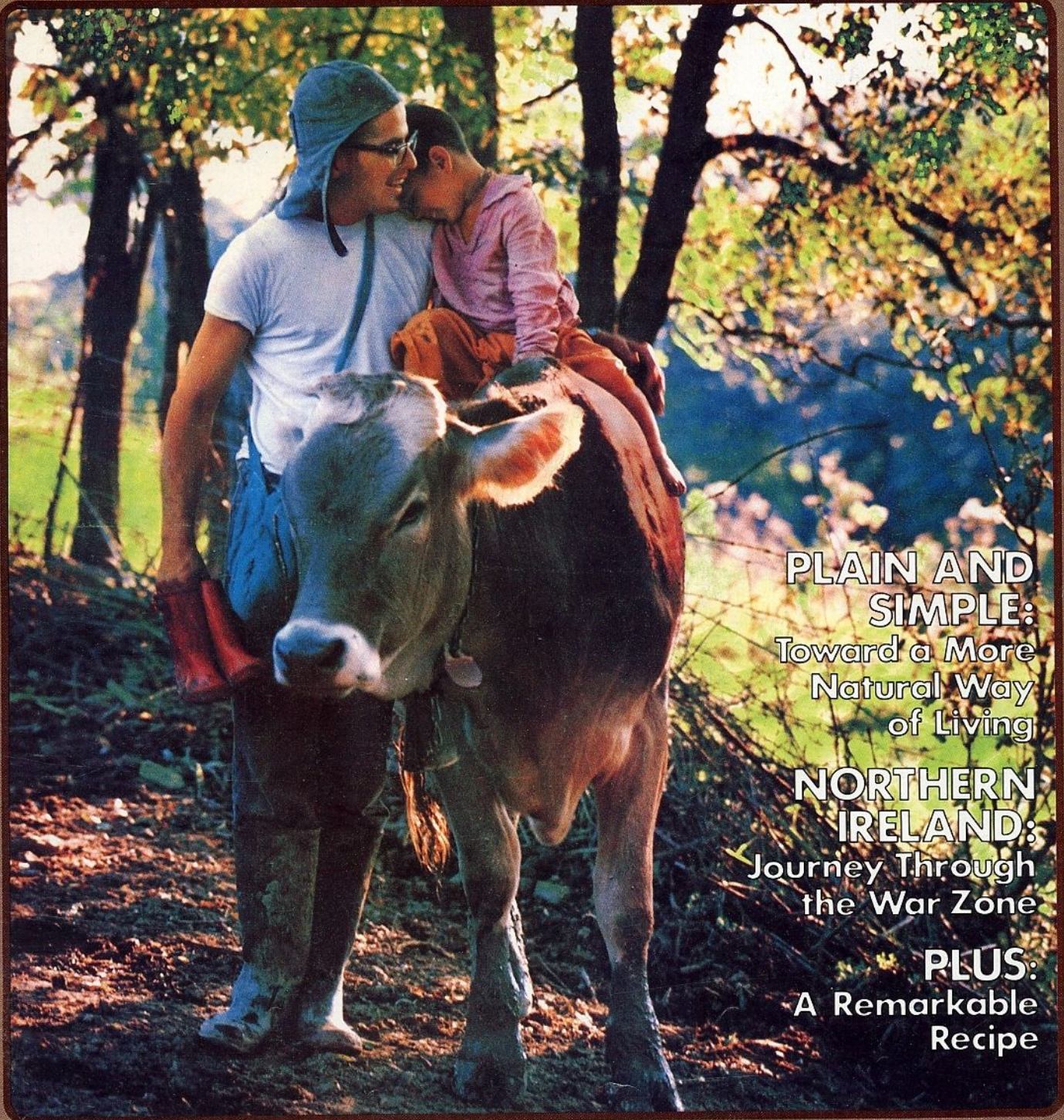


BACK TO GODHEAD



Vol. 12 No. 2

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



**PLAIN AND
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Toward a More
Natural Way
of Living

**NORTHERN
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Journey Through
the War Zone

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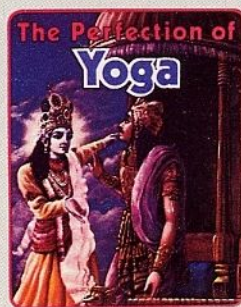
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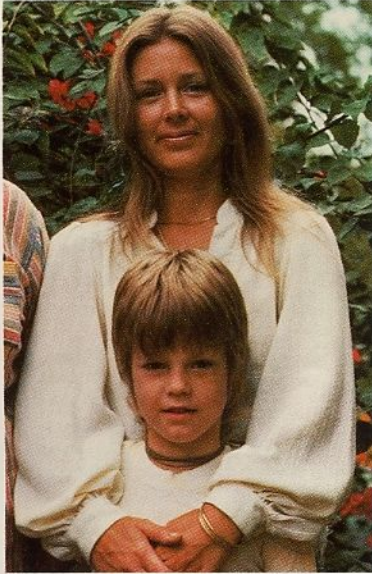
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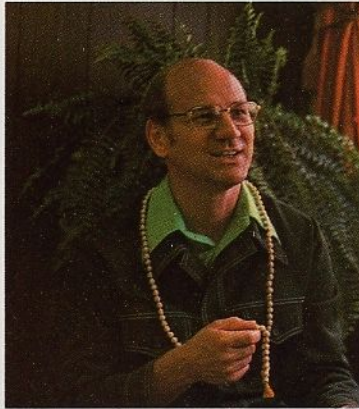
Jane Lahner, jewelry designer, with son Jason: "Chanting makes me more perceptive, more in harmony with everything and everyone around me."



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."



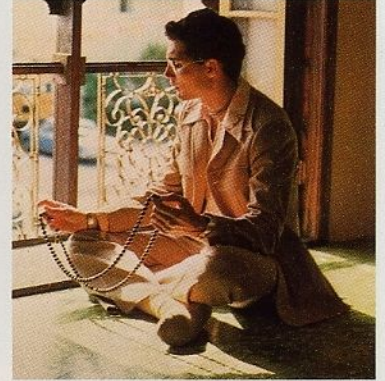
Mrs. Sally Raleigh, merchandiser: "When I'm nervous I find chanting very calming. I don't get shaken up at little things."



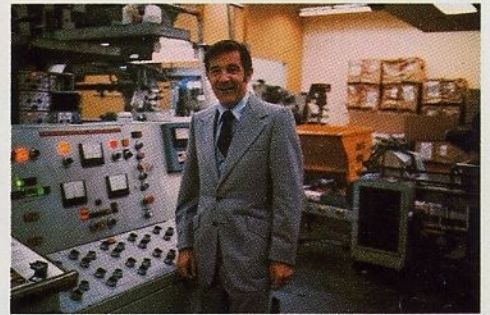
Dr. Donald R. Tuck, associate professor, Western Kentucky University: "I've noticed that as chanters progress from level to deeper level, they become more realistic, more tolerant."

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

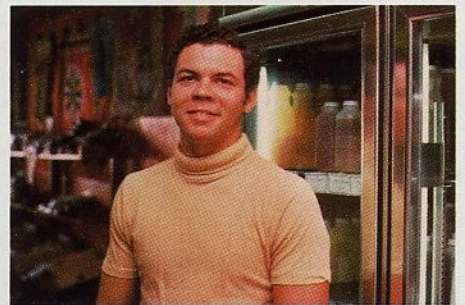
✓ Anyone can chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa (Huh-ray Krish-na) mantra, anytime, anywhere. The main thing is to listen closely to the sound. Whether you sing it or say it, alone or with others, the Hare Kṛṣṇa chant brings about joyful spiritual awareness.



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



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."



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."

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 Geneva, Switzerland, pictured at left). See last page for addresses.

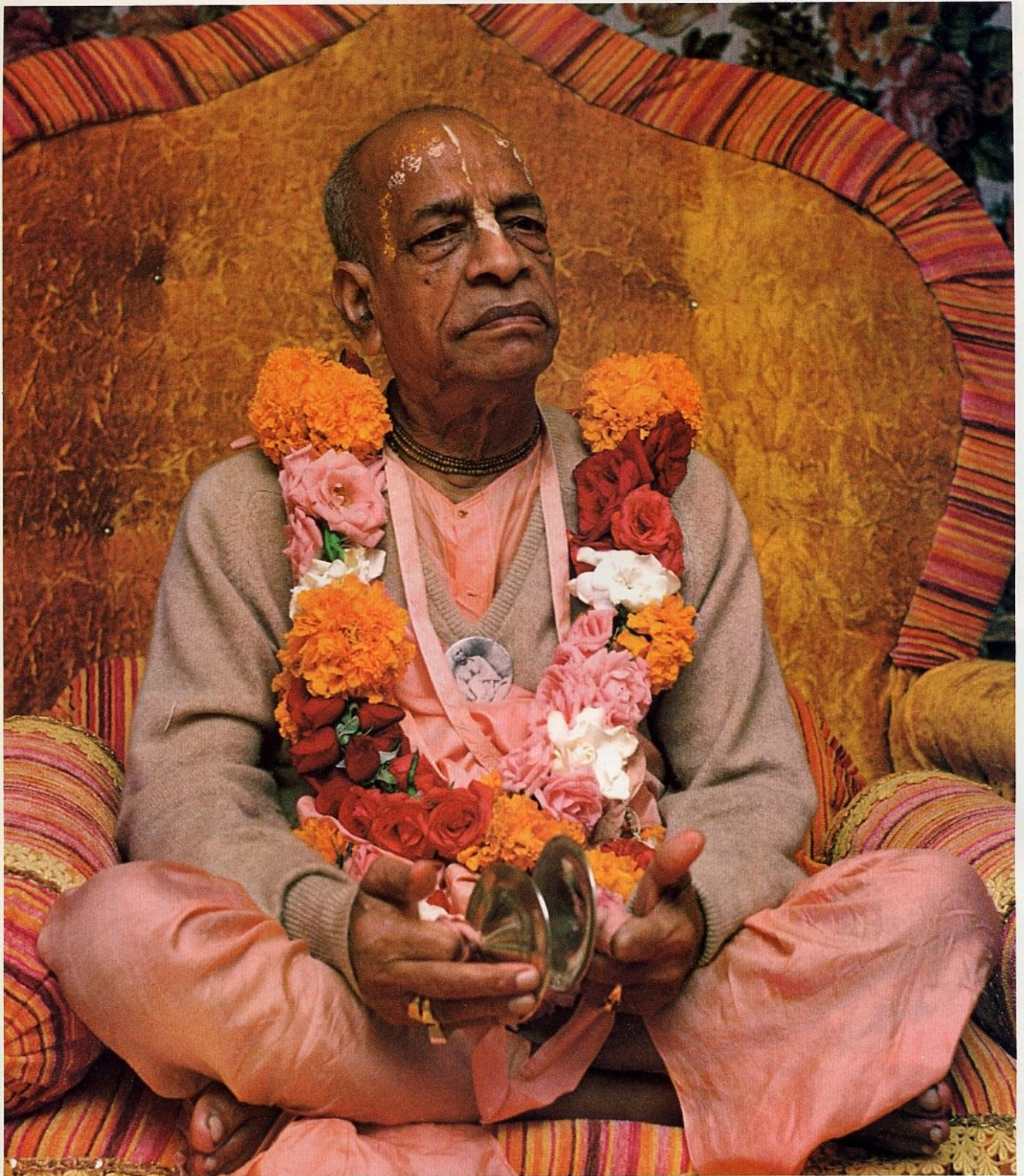


Photo: Viśākhā-devī dāśī (San Diego)

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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Sītā-devi dāsi

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, ending, 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 *ī* is pronounced like the *ri* in the English word *rim*. The *ci* 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. 12 No.2

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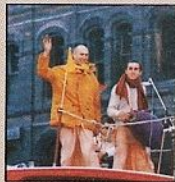
Who's the Brains Behind This Operation? 4

The source of everything "cannot have any name or form, because then it would be limited"—at any rate, that's what the Caracas Metaphysical Society says to start off this interview with His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. . . . He has other ideas.



Plain and Simple (Toward a More Natural Way of Living) 10

In one advertisement by a farm machinery manufacturer, we see a giant, modern tractor, replete with wraparound windshield, radio, air conditioning, and padded dash. What we don't see are thousands of people out of work, and thousands now heading "back to the land."



Notes from Northern Ireland 18

A former civil rights worker visited Belfast and other strife-ridden cities. He saw some amazing scenes and met "all kinds of people, some from the Ulster Defense Army, others from the I.R.A., still others from the peace movement, and occasionally a few from the bomb squad."



Life in the Villages . . . the Way It's Always Been 22

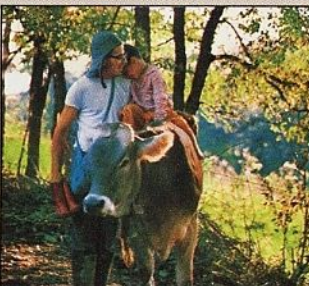
"Village life, as lived in present-day India," the Los Angeles *Herald-Examiner* noted recently, "could be the fate of our entire Western civilization." This pictorial (shot in West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh) raises a question: should the newspaper have said "fate" or "good fortune"?

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Special Center Section:

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

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



ON THE COVER

"I used to really be into city living. I never would have thought of living in a place like this," says Gaṇendra dāsa. "Anyway, my brother is a devotee, too, and he told me about spiritual life and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. I liked what he was saying, but what really attracted me was the chanting. I'd never felt so much bliss as when a lot of people were chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa together. So after a while my wife Dvijapriyā and I decided to come here to New Vrindavan [near Moundsville, West Virginia] and raise our son Pārtha-sārathi; he's four now. Another thing: Lord Kṛṣṇa took care of cows, so when you do the same you naturally remember Him. That way things can be plain and simple—you're always in a good mood."

People ask this question every day, about everyday things. But when it comes to things cosmic, should we ask "Who"—or "What"?

The Caracas Metaphysical Society interviews
His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

WHO'S THE BRAINS BEHIND THIS OPERATION?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Now let us discuss this: What is "limited"—and what is "unlimited"?

Metaphysical Society: This material world is a combination of many different elements—intelligence, mind, so on and so forth—and in the center of all this is the essence, which is eternal. And this eternal thing cannot have any name or any form, because then it would be limited. And that would be a contradiction.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. This material world is temporary, but spirit is eternal—that is clear understanding. The material elements are earth, water, fire, air, sky, mind, intelligence, and ego; and the spiritual element is utilizing these material elements. That is the distinction between matter and spirit.

For example, this microphone is a combination of earth, water, air, and fire, but a living being had to combine the material elements into this microphone—the combination of material elements was done by some living entity. Now, exactly like the microphone, the whole cosmic manifestation is a combination of material elements, and there is one living being—the supreme being—who has combined them. This is how the universe is working. Is that admitted?

Metaphysical Society: Yes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So that is the difference between "limited" and "unlimited." You and I are living beings, and we can create something limited, like this microphone or big airplanes. But there is another living being who has created innumerable planets that are floating in the air. Is it not so? We have taken the credit for becoming big scientists and creating the 747 airship, which can carry five hundred passengers. But how many have we created? Maybe several hundred or several thousand. But there

are millions and trillions of planets floating in the air, just like the 747s, and those planets contain many big mountains and oceans. So we can create limited things with our limited brains, but the supreme being can create unlimited things because He has an unlimited brain.

Metaphysical Society: Are you suggesting that God has a brain?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. And as soon as we understand that He has a brain, we know that He is a person. Therefore, God is a person, ultimately. Just as the government is impersonal, but the president is a person, similarly the energies working the cosmic manifestation are all impersonal, but the brain behind them is personal. That is the distinction between person and "impersonal."

Metaphysical Society: You said that God is a person, ultimately. What do you mean, "ultimately"?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: As I explained, in one sense the government is impersonal, but ultimately the president is a person. The government is going on under the order of the president. Therefore, the impersonal government is not as important as the personal president.

Another example: the sun, the sunshine, and the sun-god. The sunshine is impersonal, the sun globe is localized, and within the sun globe is the sun-god. So in one sense they are all one—they all manifest heat and light. But the sunshine is different from the sun globe and the sun-god. There is sunshine in this room, but that does not mean the sun globe is here. And the sun-god controls the sun globe. Therefore, the sunshine, the sun globe, and the sun-god are simultaneously one and different. Is it clear? Any question about this?

Metaphysical Society: Why do you say that God is more important than His energy?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: It is common sense. The sunshine is universally spread, and the sun globe situated in one place is the source of that sunshine. So which is more important—the sun globe or the sunshine? This lamp is situated in one place, and the illumination is spread throughout the room. What is more important—the illumination or the lamp? The fire is localized in one place, and the fire's light and heat are expanded for many feet. So which is more important—the fire or the heat and light? Similarly, God is a person (though He is not a person like you or me), and He expands His energy just as a fire expands heat and light. Whatever we see is the expansion of God's energy.

The situation is just like that of a big businessman and his factories. The man is a person, but he is conducting hundreds of factories over a large area. Are the factories more important, or is the man more important? If an ordinary person in this material world can become so important, you can just imagine how important a person God is, considering the unlimited expansion of this material world.

So the person is ultimately the most important. The impersonal feature is there—just like the impersonal feature of sunshine—but the sun globe is more important than the sunshine, and within the sun globe is the sun-god, who is the most important. So which do you think is the most important—the sun-god, the sun globe, or the sunshine? What is your idea?

Metaphysical Society: All of them are important.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: All of them. That's all right. But comparatively, since the sun-god is the source of all heat and light, he is the most important. Similarly, God is expanding His energy throughout all the universes. God is the *energetic*. Com-



paratively, although in one sense there is no difference between the energy and the energetic, the energetic is more important than the energy. So God and His energy are simultaneously one and different. That is our philosophy.

Metaphysical Society: You said that God expands Himself. But this implies that God modifies or changes Himself.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. God can expand Himself unlimitedly, and still He remains as He is. That is the meaning of “unlimited.” You may have a hundred dollars in your pocket, and if you spend one dollar, one dollar, one dollar, then ultimately you will have zero. But about God it is said, *pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate*: “Because God is the complete whole, even though so many complete units of energy emanate from Him He remains the complete balance” [*Īsopaniṣad*, Invocation]. For you, that would mean that you could take a hundred dollars and spend it, and still you would have the hundred dollars. God can actually do this. He can expand Himself into millions and millions of separate universes, and still He is the same individual. That is God. We shouldn’t think of God according to our own conception—that if I have a hundred dollars and then I spend a hundred dollars, I will have zero. God is not like that. God can expand Himself unlimitedly, and still He remains the same.

There is another nice example. Suppose you take a candle and light up another candle with it, then another candle, and another and another, up to millions of candles. The original candle remains as powerful as ever, and the other candles you lit up now have the same power as the original. But, for our understanding, we take the original candle to be the first candle, the next as the second candle, then the third, fourth, fifth, and so on. But each candle is equally powerful, and the *original* candle is still there. Similarly, by His expansions God does not diminish. That is the meaning of God, and that is also the meaning of “unlimited.”

Metaphysical Society: How can we understand the difference between God’s personality and individuality, and our own? If God expands Himself into everything, then He must be inside all of this creation.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. That is the difference between God and us: God is situated everywhere, but you are not situated everywhere. You are situated within your body, and I am situated

within my body. You cannot feel the pains and pleasures of my body, nor can I feel your pains and pleasures. But God is everywhere, and therefore He can understand what your pains and pleasures are, and what my pains and pleasures are. That is the difference between the *ātmā*, or individual soul, and the super-*ātmā*, or Supersoul. You are the *ātmā*, and God is the super-*ātmā*.

Metaphysical Society: But since God is pure spirit, or *ātmā*, and we are also pure spirit, can we not eventually evolve up to the level of God?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. We admit that God is spirit and you are spirit, but God’s power and your power are not equal. God said, “Let there be creation,” and there was creation. But if you say, “Let there be *capatī* [bread],” there will be no *capatī* unless you work. You have to work for it.

Metaphysical Society: God is the whole, and we are the parts, and we are evolving to integrate ourselves with that whole.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That’s all right, but you can never *become the whole*.

Metaphysical Society: But we are in evolution.

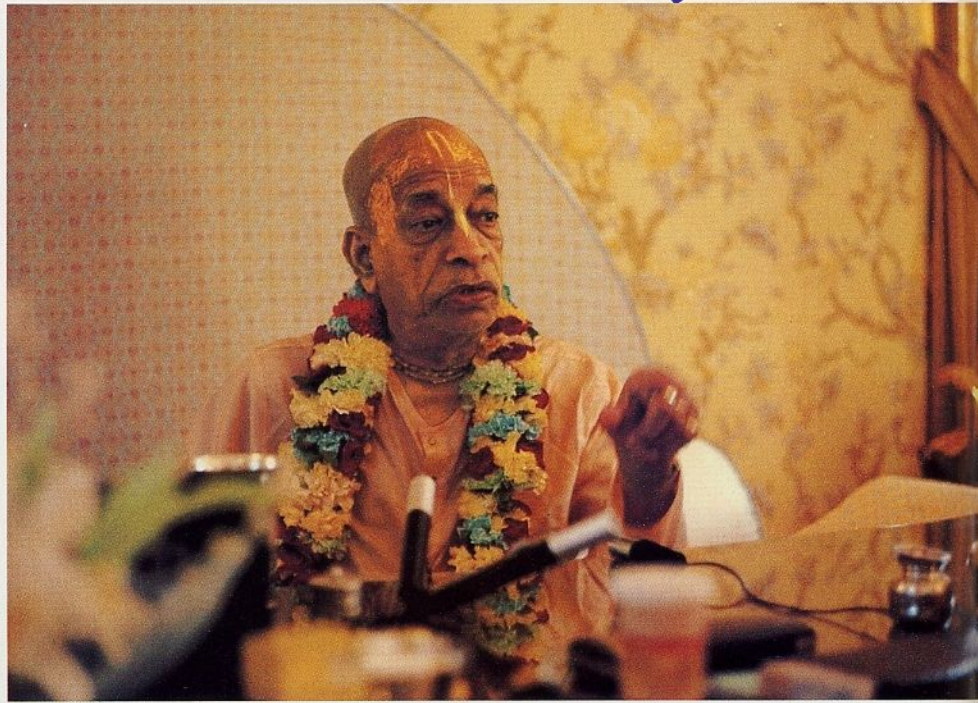
Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. The part is a part eternally, and the whole is the whole eternally.

Metaphysical Society: So one does not integrate himself with the whole when one becomes evolved?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. You are already in the whole.

Metaphysical Society: Therefore, we are all one.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: One and different—



that is our philosophy. We are just like one small screw in a machine. The screw is part of the machine, so in one sense the small screw and the machine are one. But the small screw is not equal to the whole machine, nor can the screw be called the whole machine.

Metaphysical Society: So we are forever a part of the whole?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. As Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [15.7], *mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ*: “The living entities in this conditioned world are My eternal, fragmental parts.”

Metaphysical Society: Can Kṛṣṇa consciousness be compared to the ultimate consciousness of Christ?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. There is no difference between consciousness of Christ and that of Kṛṣṇa, provided one follows Christ’s orders. Christ spoke as the son of God, and Kṛṣṇa is speaking as God, so there is no difference in their teachings. Whether the father speaks it or the son speaks it, the truth is the same.

Metaphysical Society: If this Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the highest state of the mind, could you explain to the people how one can achieve Kṛṣṇa consciousness while living in one’s own home? In other words, for those who are outside the temple, who have their jobs and live in their houses, how is it possible to achieve Kṛṣṇa consciousness?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: It is very easy. You simply chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Metaphysical Society: How do we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: As you have seen my disciples chant, and as I am chanting: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa,

“There are millions and trillions of planets floating in the air, just like the 747s. . . . So we can create limited things with our limited brains, but the supreme being can create unlimited things because He has an unlimited brain.”

Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Metaphysical Society: What is the meaning of this Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: *Hare* means “the energy of God,” and Kṛṣṇa and Rāma are names of God. So the mantra means, “Oh, God, I have fallen into this material world. Kindly accept me again.” That’s all.

Metaphysical Society: From my point of view, your repetition of this mantra over and over again is something like hypnotism. For example, some tribes also chant during various rituals.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is your opinion; you are not an authority.

Metaphysical Society: Please explain.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: This is the statement in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [9.14]:

*satataṁ kīrtayanto mām
yatantaś ca dṛḍha-vratāḥ
namasyantaś ca mām bhaktyā
nitya-yuktā upāsate*

“Always chanting my glories, endeavoring with great determination, bowing down before Me, these great souls perpetually worship Me with devotion.” So Kṛṣṇa says directly, *satataṁ kīrtayanto mām*: “Always chant My name.” It is not that we can chant *anything* and still receive the same benefit.

Metaphysical Society: I always understood from Indian philosophy that you cannot give God a name because that would be limiting God.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. We don’t give God a name. God has names according to His actions. Take the name *Kṛṣṇa*. *Kṛṣṇa* means “all-attractive.” That is a

quality of God—that He is all-attractive. Similarly, *Allah* means “great.” God is great; therefore he is called Allah. So actually God has no name, but according to His actions He has many names.

Metaphysical Society: You mentioned pain. What is the origin of pain, and what is the origin of pleasure?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: As soon as you come to the material world you must experience the duality of pain and pleasure. We can all appreciate this very easily. Take cold water, for example. Cold water is sometimes painful and sometimes pleasing, is it not? The water is the same, but in winter it is painful and in summer it is pleasing. How can the same thing be both pleasing and painful? Because of changing circumstances. The same thing is either pleasing or painful under different circumstances. Similarly, fire is also sometimes pleasing and sometimes painful. The fire is the same, but circumstantially it becomes painful or pleasing. In the winter season the fire is pleasing, and in the summer season the same fire is painful.

Now, these feelings of pain and pleasure are due to this material body. So if you get out of this material body, and if you remain in your spiritual body, then there will be no more duality of pain and pleasure. Try to understand: the origin of pain and pleasure is our attachment to this material body, but if we can somehow or other get out of this material body, then there will be no more duality of pain and pleasure, but simply eternal pleasure. The *Vedānta-sūtra* confirms this: *ānandamayo ’bhyāsāt*: “By nature the spirit soul is joyful.” And in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [18.54] it is said, *brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati*: as soon as you become spiritually self-realized, then there are no more flickering pains and pleasures.

Pleasure means “the absence of pain.” Since in your spiritual identity there is no pain, there is simply pleasure. So our endeavor should be how to again get our original spiritual body. Our spiritual body is already there, but it is covered by the material body, and therefore we are experiencing pain. But somehow or other, if you remove the covering of the material body, then you will simply be in pleasure. Therefore, our only attempt in this human body should be how to revive our spiritual body. That process is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If you simply understand Kṛṣṇa, then you will revive your spiritual body.

Metaphysical Society: You said that we

have a material body and also a spiritual body. Are the spirit and matter born simultaneously; or is matter born first, and then the spirit comes?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: From spirit, matter has come. God said, “Let there be creation.” God is spirit and creation is matter—so God was there, and material creation came later on.

Metaphysical Society: Why does the spiritual body become covered by the material body?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: When one goes to prison he has to put aside his usual dress and take the prison dress. Similarly, anyone who comes into this material world has to take a material body. This is the law. Unless you have this material body, how can you feel pleasure in material sense enjoyment? It is just like performing on stage: if you are going to play a certain part, you have to dress accordingly. Therefore, this material body is compared to a dress. For example, every lady and gentleman sitting here—every one of us—has a different dress.


But our dress is superficial. As human beings we are one. Similarly, each one of us has a different bodily dress, but spiritually we are one. And this is true of all living entities: they are in different bodily dresses only.

The dresses are calculated to total 8,400,000 different forms. In the water there are 900,000 different dresses, and there are 2,000,000 different types of trees and plants. There are 1,100,000 species of insects, 1,000,000 types of birds, 3,000,000 types of beasts, and 400,000 forms of human beings. In this way, the living entity is passing through different dresses.

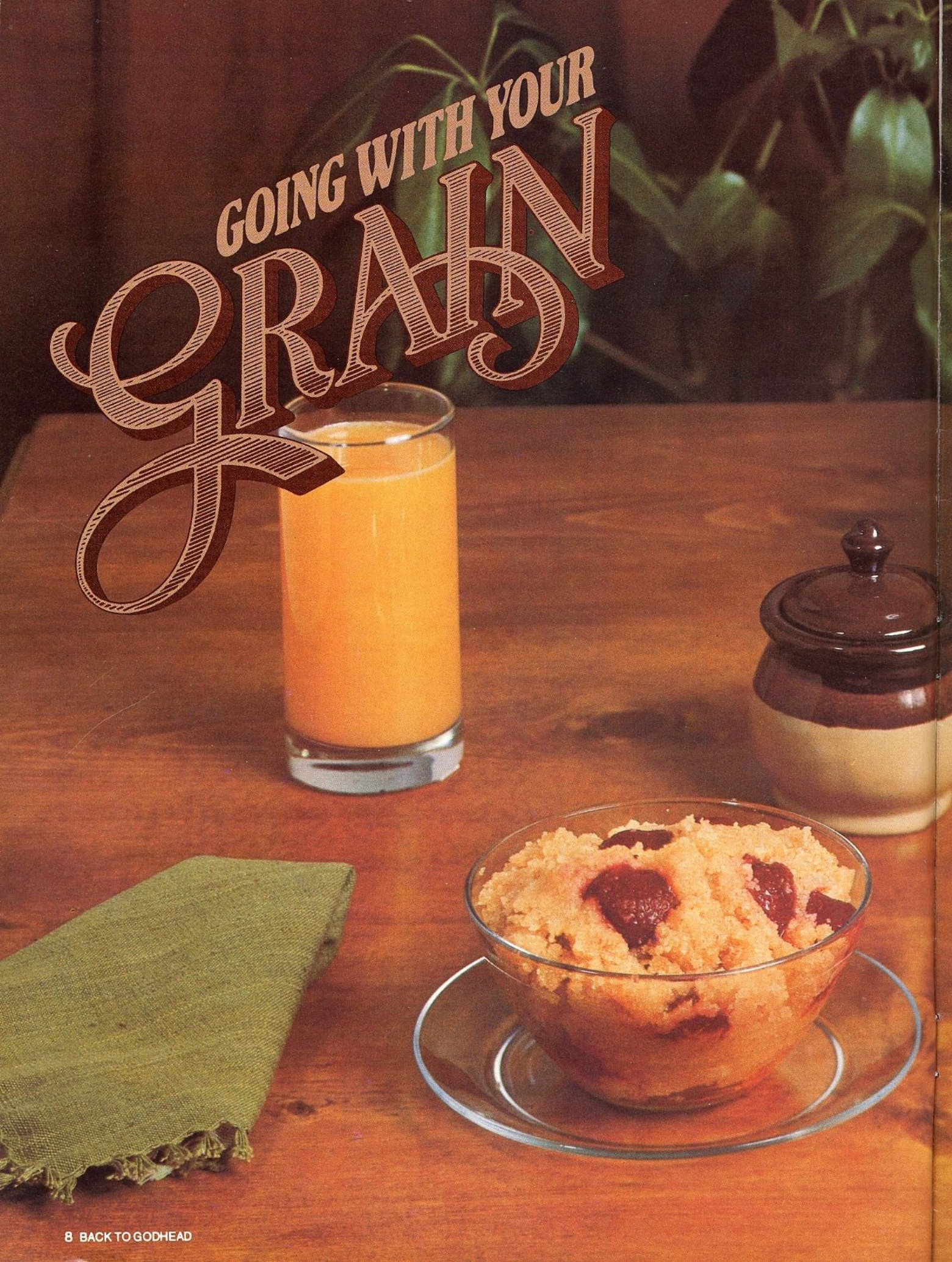
And the best dress is this human form, because in this dress you can understand what God is, what you are, and what your relationship with God is. Then you can act in that relationship and go back home, back to Godhead. In this human form of dress you have developed consciousness.

But if you miss this opportunity to understand God, then again you will be put into the cycle of the evolutionary process. We should not, therefore, misuse this human form. We should utilize it properly to understand the unlimited God and our relationship with Him, and to act on this knowledge. That is the perfection of life.

Metaphysical Society: Thank you very much for speaking with us.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Thank you for coming here. Hare Kṛṣṇa. 

GOING WITH YOUR
GRAIN





A heartwarming way to get you going on a chilly day (or any day)

When the frost is on the window, getting going may mean going against your grain. That's the time for an Old Indian surprise—*halavā*. Steaming hot and full of fruit, nuts, and buttery, wheaty goodness, *halavā* will fuel you through the morning in good style. So, whether you're going to climb the Himalayas or catch the 8:01, try going with your grain—*halavā*.

Here are the makings:

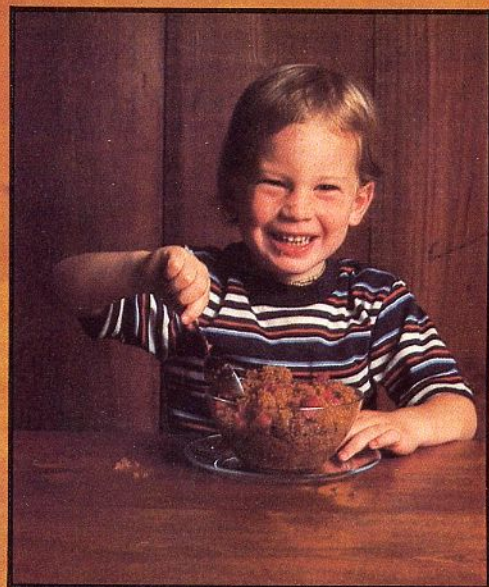
- 1 cup farina (or Cream of Wheat)
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 cups water
- 1/3 cup strawberries (and/or other fruit or nut bits)

Before you start cooking the grains, put the sugar and water into a one-quart saucepan and let the mixture simmer.

Next, melt the butter in a skillet, add the farina, and cook the grains on a low flame for twenty minutes, or until they turn golden brown. Stir constantly with a wooden spoon (don't burn!). Just as the grains are starting to turn golden brown, add the strawberries (or whatever you come up with).

Then, as soon as the grains are ready, bring the sugar-water mixture to a rapid boil and slowly add it to the grains. Keep the whole combination on a low flame for two minutes, stirring all the while.

Finally, take the pan off the flame and stir for one more minute. Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa (to bring out the best in *any* dish) and serve hot. (Makes four portions.)





PLAIN AND SIMPLE
TOWARD A MORE NATURAL WAY OF LIVING





Ecologists have long urged us to switch from heavy technology back to farming—“back to the land.” But, wouldn’t you know, certain other people insist farming depends on technology. . . . Where do we go from here?

by Rūpānuga dāsa

In a resurging interest in farm life, many people are taking to homesteading. For the most part, they seem motivated by desires for freedom from high-priced

food and public utilities, or perhaps by a desire for peace of mind and God consciousness (both customarily sought in the comparatively peaceful atmosphere of the country). People of all ages, especially young people, are investigating country life as a way around dependence upon oil and machinery and the health hazards of artificial fertilizers and insecticides. These new farmers are inclined toward “do-it-yourself” inventions and organic gardening. And the dozens of publications dedicated to these ideals give us some indication of just how popular they are becoming.

Ironically, though, while people are looking to the country for a simpler, more natural way of living, the owners of “agribusinesses” (sprawling farm complexes) and the manufacturers of farm equipment are convinced and trying to convince the rest of us that farming depends on technology.

One national advertisement by a farm machinery manufacturer depicts the historical development of farming techniques, leading up to the phenomenal modern harvests. The first illustration shows a single man in a corner of a field cutting small amounts of grain by hand

with a scythe. He represents the earliest, "primitive" farming methods. The second illustration shows a man driving a horse-drawn machine, indicating how much more could be accomplished using animals. The third illustration pictures an early tractor in operation, and the series ends with a photograph of a giant, modern tractor silhouetted against a blue sky and endless fields of perfectly cut



People whose parents worked in the fields with scythes, horses and oxen now depend on a few farmers using sophisticated machinery.

grain. The tractor is replete with a wrap-around windshield, radio, air conditioning, and padded dash.

But if the first illustration were expanded beyond the closeup of the lone man in one corner of the field, we would see a whole field of men working together with scythes, very much as they still gather bundles of grain in parts of India. In America the process of urbanization has brought nearly all the descendants of those people who formerly worked in the fields with scythes, horses, and oxen into an economic dependence upon a comparatively small number of farmers using sophisticated machinery. Unscrupulous business practices by food processing conglomerates, inflated living costs, a scarcity of honest labor, bad weather, an exodus of young people to the cities, and the high cost of machinery and artificial fertilizers have forced many owners of smaller farms to exploit the land for as much yield as possible, as soon as possible, as often as possible. Yet the numbers of farms going out of business indicate that it still costs too much to produce too little.

The latest federal Agriculture Depart-

ment figures show that between 1954 and 1974 the United States farm population dropped more than 50%—until today only about 10 million people (out of a nation of more than 200 million) live on farms. In addition, although the total farmland remained at about one billion acres, the *number* of farms dropped almost 42%. In fact, since the 1940s the number of farms has decreased by three million, and it continues to drop by two thousand per week. Clearly, "agribusiness" is gobbling up the small- and medium-size farms.

This "to-the-hilt" exploitation of land resources has brought the ecological movement of the 1970s down on automated, high-yield farming, the kind that depends almost entirely upon chemical fertilizers. One may argue that such chemicals are, after all, also a part of nature, and that scientists are simply using them in a more advantageous way. However, studies indicate that prolonged use of chemical fertilizers designed to increase soil nitrates creates an artificial dependence on the chemical itself: the chemical fertilizers kill the myriad microorganisms and earthworms in the soil that naturally produce such nitrates.

Initially there may be "bumper" crops, if climatic conditions are good; but eventually the soil loses fertility. And the long-range leaching effect can be disastrous. Wes Buchele, Professor of Agricultural Engineering at Iowa State University, describes the situation in no uncertain terms. "We've lost one-half of the country's topsoil since we started farming here." Perhaps the fledgling back-to-the-land movement is more than the desperate attempt of a few oversensitive malcontents to escape city life. Perhaps it's the first indication of an agricultural movement that can avert ecological catastrophe.

Let's look at the historical background of modern agricultural techniques:

Forshadowing the massive introduction of chemical fertilizers were the theories of nineteenth-century German chemist Baron Justus von Liebig, who in 1840 published an essay entitled "Chemistry in Its Application to Agriculture and Physiology." His idea was that when a living plant is incinerated and all its organic matter destroyed, the mineral salts remaining in the ashes will contain all that's required for its growth (basically potash, nitrates, and phosphates.) Other scientists and agriculturalists concluded that simply adding these chemicals to the soil would maintain its fertility.

Although this conclusion apparently

oversimplified ages of agricultural practice, the observable results were impressive. Artificial fertilizers composed of the above chemicals and calcium oxide (lime) produced good initial crops—which seemed to verify Liebig's experiments. This apparent breakthrough led to the astronomical fertilizer production now so lucrative for the chemical industry. Typically, whenever a farmer has a soil test made on his fields, if the laboratory report indicates deficiencies of phosphate, lime, and so on, he receives a formula of chemicals. He then adds them to the soil to correct the imbalance. Here we have the basis of the prevalent belief that "you get out of the soil what you put into it."

However, this conclusion came into question a few years ago, when the French agricultural bulletin "Nature et Progres" disclosed a startling experiment. A researcher reported that every month for one year, he had monitored two identical soils—one to which only fermented compost had been added, and one to which an organic mixture rich in phosphorus had been added. At the end of the year, the first sample contained one-third *more* phosphorus than the second sample, the one to which phosphorus had originally been added.

Thus, soil itself can produce phosphorus without any external supply of this mineral. The researcher called it "a miracle of the living soil!" One wonders where the phosphorus in the first sample came from, since none was added before or during the experiment. After all, chemists have learned that it's impossible to create new elements or transform one element into another (that is, to



A researcher found that the soil can nourish itself without any outside supply. He called it "a miracle of the living soil!"

alter an element's atomic structure) simply by chemical reactions. At the same time, many scientists still believe that all reactions occurring in nature are in fact simply chemical—or, in other words, that life comes from chemicals.

But this conviction came under fire from another chemist, Albrecht von Herzelee, who in 1873 performed some experiments that were subsequently ignored. Von Herzelee demonstrated that seeds sprouted in distilled water, with nothing added but air, increased their content of elements like sulphur, calcium, and magnesium (although the law of conservation of matter holds that this is impossible). This experiment proved that plants can continuously create matter as well as absorb matter from soil, water, and air. Von Herzelee claimed that plants could also transmute or change one element into another (such as phosphorus into sulphur, and so on).

In 1958, after ten years of experiments, Professor Pierre Baranger, director of organic chemistry at the École Polytechnique, in Paris, announced his verification of Herzelee's work to a distinguished gathering of scientists at Switzerland's Institut Genevois. By 1963 he had demonstrated that as leguminous seeds (like those producing common alfalfa and clover hay) grow in a manganese-salt solution, iron replaces the manganese. In time he explained more about such germinations, including the exact lunar phases that affected them. Baranger concluded that plants are constantly producing chemical transmutations of elements—without the enormous energy of modern "atom smashers," which till then had been the only known means for transmuting one chemical into another.

Louis Kervran, another French scientist, also contends that lunar phases are extremely important in the germination of crops, and that by transmutation, microorganisms maintain the balance of elements in the soil. He concludes that transmutation results from enzymes that act as catalysts for the reaction. Kervran points out that enzyme activities are biological in origin, not chemical (although the results may be chemical); thus, the classic laws of chemistry do not apply to these phenomena. In other words, he contradicts the assertion that life comes only from chemical combinations. Kervran notes in his "Biological Transmutations" (1962) "that matter has a property so far unexplained by modern science."

In his book *The Nature of Substance* (1968), Rudolf Hauschka further hints

that this property of matter is its dependence upon life, that chemicals constantly come from life, and that life comes from life (not from chemicals, not from matter). Having duplicated many of Herzelee's experiments, Hauschka concludes that life is not the result of a combination of elements, but that it precedes the elements: "It is logical to assume that life existed long before matter and originates in a preexistent spiritual cosmos."

The first Western scientist to demonstrate the real importance of life activities in agriculture was Sir Albert



A workable agricultural life-style would be based on the ecological balance between humans, animals, the land, and God.

Howard, who at the turn of the century was the imperial botanist to the Indian government. Beginning in Pusa, Bengal, and continuing for forty years in other parts of the subcontinent, Howard managed several experimental agricultural stations. His famous book *An Agricultural Testament* (1943) inspired a surgeon named J. I. Rodale to begin the organic farming movement in the United States, during the early 1940s. By following the ancient methods of Indian farmers—who regularly aerated the soil, used no artificial fertilizers or pesticides, and returned accumulated cow manure and compost to the land—Howard virtually eliminated disease from both soil and animals. Also, he managed dairy cows and kept oxen for plowing. He wrote, "With no chemical help from science, and by observation alone, he [the Indian farmer] has in the course of ages ad-

justed his methods of agriculture to the conservation of soil fertility in a most remarkable manner. . . . For countless ages he has been able to maintain the present standard of fertility."

In typical empiric fashion, Howard attributed the remarkable success of Indian farmers to their powers of observation. He did not study the origins of their technology—the Vedic literature, which prohibits artificial fertilizers, the growing of tobacco (Howard himself grew that) and other intoxicants, and the killing of cows and bulls. Cows, the basis of a balanced agriculture, provided milk products from the consumption of grasses, and bulls tilled the fields, provided transportation, and so on. And both cows and bulls provided ample organic fertilizer. The Vedas also indicate that the growth of vegetation relates directly to the phases of the moon.

Although he copied the technology of the Bengali farmers, Howard did not actually live among them. Their ancient life-style, called *iśāvāsya*—God-centered—was still prevalent when Howard conducted his experiments (although it had largely deteriorated into a vestigial "caste system" throughout most of India, on account of the prolonged Muhammadan and British occupations). The survival of the God-centered conception was due primarily to the powerful rejuvenation of Vedic culture by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. His influence was great throughout India, and especially in Bengal, some four hundred years before Howard's time.

This God-centered conception is relevant because it forms the basis for a workable agricultural life-style. Such a life-style includes a strict consideration of the ecological balance between humans, animals, the land, and God. Although sophisticated modern farmers might concede that the success of their endeavors, including their use of innovative machinery, depends in the end on "acts of Providence or God," or at least upon chance, the *iśāvāsya* (God-centered) farmer considers that long-range production and ecological balance require actual God consciousness. Therefore, even today in the Nadia district of Bengal, farmers make a point of gratefully offering God a portion of the crop in the form of *prasāda*, or vegetarian food preparations. These offerings are often part of community celebrations (called *kīrtana* parties) in which the members of the community or village meet, especially in the morning and evening, to chant God's holy names and dance.

This God-centered mentality shows us something—not about a “primitive” agrarian culture, as the British used to think (Howard had to caution his readers not to think in terms of “ignorant, backward villagers”), nor about some distant Indian sect, but about a life-style that’s in real harmony with the ideals of the modern American back-to-the-land movement. In fact, some of the most successful of the modern farm communities are based expressly upon *īśāvāsya* principles. Still more or less in the early stages, including locations in Missouri, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Mississippi, and Tennessee, these communities are nevertheless impressive—especially the fifteen-hundred-acre community in Moundsville, West Virginia. Needless to say, these projects draw their inspiration from the Vedic culture, especially from the teachings of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) say that these farm communities of theirs don’t use technological prowess to try to outwit natural laws. Rather, community members try to do their work in a God-conscious way. “Success cannot come by working at your own risk,” says Kīrtanānanda Svāmī, founder and director of the community in West Virginia

(called “New Vrindavan”). “You may get good results for a while, but lasting success depends on how conscious you are of your relationship with the actual proprietor of nature.”

Gradually, the community members are becoming aware that God is always present—in every place and at every moment. As they learn this art of being conscious of God’s presence, these people naturally develop a devotional, serving attitude toward everyone, including humans, plants, and animals. They see all living beings as spiritually equal, because all living beings are equally related with God. Thus, devotees can attest that returning to the land, to vegetarianism, to nonviolence, to herbal medicine, and to ecological concern—returning to nature—necessitates returning to God (Kṛṣṇa) consciousness, our natural consciousness. The age-old Vedic literatures describe that consciousness, in clear-cut, scientific terms.

In fact, in most instances the work of scientists like Howard, Kervran, Baranger, and Hauschka echoes these Vedic conclusions. Howard, for example, simply rediscovered ancient, biologically sound, and ecologically balanced agrarian practices based upon Vedic principles. And Hauschka’s assertion that life is not a combination of elements,

that instead it “precedes” matter and “originates in a preexistent spiritual cosmos,” tells us what the Vedic literatures said thousands of years ago. The *Bhagavad-gītā*, the essence of the *Vedas*, verifies that individual life is never created or destroyed, but that it is moving (transmigrating) among temporary bodies sustained by God (Kṛṣṇa), the original life.

The other scientists we’ve mentioned have introduced conceptions in chemistry and biology that forecast a reevaluation and expansion of modern science’s standard notions. The conceptions of these men reveal a new respect and appreciation for nature and a budding awareness of the ultimately transcendent quality of life itself. We may interpret these developments as a prologue to the imminent age of antimaterialism and spiritual enlightenment predicted in the fifteenth century by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. As the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (the Vedic literature specifically intended for this age) points out, chemistry, biology, psychology, economics, sociology, and other modern disciplines, when pursued objectively, are sure to arrive at the same absolute truth—consciousness of God, or Kṛṣṇa. And a simpler, more natural way of living will result.

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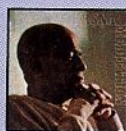
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First Canto "Creation"

CHAPTER NINE

The Passing Away of Bhīṣmadeva in the Presence of Lord Kṛṣṇa

(continued from previous issue)

PURPORT

After gaining victory in the Battle of Kurukṣetra, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, the Emperor of the world, performed the Rājasūya sacrificial ceremony. The emperor, in those days, upon his ascendance to the throne, would send a challenge horse all over the world to declare his supremacy, and any ruling prince or king was at liberty to accept the challenge and express his tacit willingness either to obey or to disobey the supremacy of the particular emperor. One who accepted the challenge had to fight with the emperor and establish his own supremacy by victory. The defeated challenger would have to sacrifice his life, making a place for another king or ruler. So Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira also dispatched such challenging horses all over the world, and every ruling prince and king all over the world accepted Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira's leadership as the Emperor of the world. After this, all rulers of the world under the regime of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira were invited to participate in the great sacrificial ceremony of Rājasūya. Such performances required hundreds of millions of dollars, and it was not an easy job for a petty king. Such a sacrificial ceremony, being too expensive and also difficult to perform under present circumstances, is now impossible in this age of Kali. Nor can anyone secure the required expert priesthood to take charge of the ceremony.

So, after being invited, all the kings and great learned sages of the world assembled in the capital of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. The learned society, including the great philosophers, religionists, physicians, scientists and all great sages, was invited. That is to say, the *brāhmaṇas* and the *ksatriyas* were the topmost leading men in society, and they were all invited to participate in the assembly. The *vaiśyas* and *sūdras* were unimportant elements in society, and they are not mentioned herein. Due to the change of social activities in the modern age, the importance of men has also changed in terms of occupational positions.

⁴So in that great assembly, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa was the cynosure of

neighboring eyes. Everyone wanted to see Lord Kṛṣṇa, and everyone wanted to pay his humble respects to the Lord. Bhīṣmadeva remembered all this and was glad that his worshipful Lord, the Personality of Godhead, was present before him in His actual formal presence. So to meditate on the Supreme Lord is to meditate on the activities, form, pastimes, name and fame of the Lord. That is easier than what is imagined as meditation on the impersonal feature of the Supreme. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (12.5) it is clearly stated that to meditate upon the impersonal feature of the Supreme is very difficult. It is practically no meditation or simply a waste of time because very seldom is the desired result obtained. The devotees, however, meditate upon the Lord's factual form and pastimes, and therefore the Lord is easily approachable by the devotees. This is also stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (12.9). The Lord is nondifferent from His transcendental activities. It is indicated also in this *śloka* that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, while actually present before human society, especially in connection with the Battle of Kurukṣetra, was accepted as the greatest personality of the time, although He might not have been recognized as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The propaganda that a very great man is worshiped as God after his death is misleading because a man after his death cannot be made into God. Nor can the Personality of Godhead be a human being, even when He is personally present. Both ideas are misconceptions. The idea of anthropomorphism cannot be applicable in the case of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

TEXT 42

तमिममहमजं शरीरभाजं
हृदि हृदि धिष्ठितमात्मकल्पितानाम् ।
प्रतिदृशमिव नैकघाकमेकं
समधिगतोऽस्मि विभूतभेदमोहः ॥४२॥

tam imam aham ajam śarīra-bhājām
hṛdi hṛdi dhiṣṭhitam ātma-kalpitanām
pratidṛśam iva naikadhārkam ekam
samadhi-gato 'smi vidhūta-bheda-mohah

tam—that Personality of Godhead; *imam*—now present before me; *aham*—I; *ajam*—the unborn; *śarīra-bhājām*—of the conditioned soul; *hṛdi*—in the heart; *hṛdi*—in the heart; *dhiṣṭhitam*—situated; *ātma*—the Supersoul; *kalpitānām*—of the speculators; *pratidṛśam*—in every direction; *iva*—like; *na ekadhā*—not one; *arkam*—the sun; *ekam*—one only; *samadhi-gatah asmi*—I have undergone trance in meditation; *vidhūta*—being freed from; *bheda-mohah*—misconception of duality.

TRANSLATION

Now I can meditate with full concentration upon that one Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, now present before me because now I have transcended

the misconceptions of duality in regard to His presence in everyone's heart, even in the hearts of the mental speculators. He is in everyone's heart. The sun may be perceived differently, but the sun is one.

PURPORT

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the one Absolute Supreme Personality of Godhead, but He has expanded Himself into His multiplicity of portions by His inconceivable energy. The conception of duality is due to ignorance of His inconceivable energy. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.11) the Lord says that only the foolish take Him to be a mere human being. Such foolish men are not aware of His inconceivable energies. By His inconceivable energy He is present in everyone's heart, as the sun is present before everyone all over the world. The Paramātmā feature of the Lord is an expansion of His plenary portions. He expands Himself as Paramātmā in everyone's heart by His inconceivable energy, and He also expands Himself as the glowing effulgence of *brahmajyoti* by expansion of His personal glow. It is stated in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* that the *brahmajyoti* is His personal glow. Therefore, there is no difference between Him and His personal glow, *brahmajyoti*, or His plenary portions as Paramātmā. Less intelligent persons who are not aware of this fact consider *brahmajyoti* and Paramātmā to be different from Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This misconception of duality is completely removed from the mind of Bhīṣmadeva, and he is now satisfied that it is Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa only who is all in all in everything. This enlightenment is attained by the great *mahātmās* or devotees, as it is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.19) that Vāsudeva is all in all in everything and that there is no existence of anything without Vāsudeva. Vāsudeva, or Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is the original Supreme Person, as now confirmed by a *mahājāna*, and therefore both the neophytes and the pure devotees must try to follow in his footsteps. That is the way of the devotional line.

The worshipable object of Bhīṣmadeva is Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa as Pārthasārathī, and that of the *gopīs* is the same Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana as the most attractive Śyāmasundara. Sometimes less intelligent scholars make a mistake and think that the Kṛṣṇa of Vṛndāvana and that of the Battle of Kurukṣetra are different personalities. But for Bhīṣmadeva this misconception is completely removed. Even the impersonalist's object of destination is Kṛṣṇa as the impersonal *jyoti*, and the *yogī's* destination of Paramātmā is also Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is both *brahmajyoti* and localized Paramātmā, but in *brahmajyoti* or Paramātmā there is no Kṛṣṇa or sweet relations with Kṛṣṇa. In His personal feature Kṛṣṇa is both Pārthasārathī and Śyāmasundara of Vṛndāvana, but in His impersonal feature He is neither in the *brahmajyoti* nor in the Paramātmā. Great *mahātmās* like Bhīṣmadeva realize all these different features of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and therefore they worship Lord Kṛṣṇa, knowing Him as the origin of all features.

TEXT 43

सूत उवाच

कृष्ण एवं भगवति मनोवाग्दृष्टिवृत्तिभिः ।
आत्मन्यात्मानमावेश्य सोऽन्तःश्वास उपारमत ॥४३॥

sūta uvāca
kṛṣṇa evaṁ bhagavati
mano-vāg-dṛṣṭi-vṛttibhiḥ
ātmany ātmānam āveśya
so 'ntaḥśvāsa upāramat

sūtaḥ uvāca—Sūta Gosvāmī said; *kṛṣṇe*—Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *evaṁ*—only; *bhagavati*—unto Him; *manah*—with mind; *vāk*—speech; *dṛṣṭi*—sight; *vṛttibhiḥ*—activities; *ātmani*—unto the Supersoul; *ātmānam*—the living being; *āveśya*—having merged in; *sah*—he; *antaḥśvāsaḥ*—inhaling; *upāramat*—became silent.

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: Thus Bhīṣmadeva merged himself in the Supersoul, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead,

with his mind, speech, sight and actions, and thus he became silent, and his breathing stopped.

PURPORT

The stage attained by Bhīṣmadeva while quitting his material body is called *nirvikalpa-samādhi* because he merged his self into thinking of the Lord and his mind into remembering His different activities. He chanted the glories of the Lord, and by his sight he began to see the Lord personally present before him, and thus all his activities became concentrated upon the Lord without deviation. This is the highest stage of perfection, and it is possible for everyone to attain this stage by practice of devotional service. The devotional service of the Lord consists of nine principles of service activities, and they are (1) hearing, (2) chanting, (3) remembering, (4) serving the lotus feet, (5) worshiping, (6) praying, (7) executing the orders, (8) fraternizing, and (9) fully surrendering. Any one of them or all of them are equally competent to award the desired result, but they require to be practiced persistently under the guidance of an expert devotee of the Lord. The first item, hearing, is the most important item of all, and therefore hearing of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and, later on, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is essential for the serious candidate who wants to attain the stage of Bhīṣmadeva at the end. The unique situation at Bhīṣmadeva's time of death can be attained, even though Lord Kṛṣṇa may not be personally present. His words of the *Bhagavad-gītā* or those of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are identical with the Lord. They are sound incarnations of the Lord, and one can fully utilize them to be entitled to attain the stage of Śrī Bhīṣmadeva, who was one of the eight Vasus. Every man or animal must die at a certain stage of life, but one who dies like Bhīṣmadeva attains perfection, and one who dies forced by the laws of nature dies like an animal. That is the difference between a man and an animal. The human form of life is especially meant for dying like Bhīṣmadeva.

TEXT 44

सम्पद्यमानमाज्ञाय भीष्मं ब्रह्मणि निष्कले ।
सर्वे बभूवुस्ते तूष्णीं वयांसीव दिनात्यये ॥४४॥

sampadyamānam ajñāya
bhīṣmaṁ brahmaṇi niṣkale
sarve babhūvus te tūṣṇīm
vayāṁsīva dinātyaye

sampadyamānam—having merged into; *ajñāya*—after knowing this; *bhīṣmaṁ*—about Śrī Bhīṣmadeva; *brahmaṇi*—into the Supreme Absolute; *niṣkale*—unlimited; *sarve*—all present; *babhūvuh te*—all of them became; *tūṣṇīm*—silent; *vayāṁsīva*—like birds; *dina-atyaye*—at the end of the day.

TRANSLATION

Knowing that Bhīṣmadeva had merged into the unlimited eternity of the Supreme Absolute, all present there became silent like birds at the end of the day.

PURPORT

To enter into or to become merged into the unlimited eternity of the Supreme Absolute means to enter the original home of the living being. The living beings are all component parts and parcels of the Absolute Personality of Godhead, and therefore they are eternally related with Him as the servitor and the served. The Lord is served by all His parts and parcels, as the complete machine is served by its parts and parcels. Any part of the machine removed from the whole is no longer important. Similarly, any part and parcel of the Absolute detached from the service of the Lord is useless. The living beings who are in the material world are all disintegrated parts and parcels of the supreme whole, and they are no longer as important as the original parts and parcels. There are, however, more integrated living beings who are eternally liberated. The

material energy of the Lord, called Durgā-śakti, or the superintendent of the prison house, takes charge of the disintegrated parts and parcels, and thus they undergo a conditioned life under the laws of material nature. When the living being becomes conscious of this fact, he tries to go back home, back to Godhead, and thus the spiritual urge of the living being begins. This spiritual urge is called *brahma-jijñāsā*, or inquiry about Brahman. Principally this *brahma-jijñāsā* is successful by knowledge, renunciation and devotional service to the Lord. *Jñāna*, or knowledge, means knowledge of everything of Brahman, the Supreme; renunciation means detachment of material affection, and devotional service is the revival by practice of the original position of the living being. The successful living beings who are eligible to enter into the realm of the Absolute are called the *jñānis*, the *yogis* and the *bhaktas*. The *jñānis* and *yogis* enter into the impersonal rays of the Supreme, but the *bhaktas* enter into the spiritual planets known as the Vaikuṅṭhas. In these spiritual planets the Supreme Lord as Nārāyaṇa predominates, and the healthy, unconditioned living beings live there by rendering loving service to the Lord in the capacity of servant, friend, parents and fiancée. There the unconditioned living beings enjoy life in full freedom with the Lord, whereas the impersonalist *jñānis* and *yogis* enter into the impersonal glowing effulgence of the Vaikuṅṭha planets. The Vaikuṅṭha planets are all self-illuminating like the sun, and the rays of the Vaikuṅṭha planets are called the *brahmajyoti*. The *brahmajyoti* is spread unlimitedly, and the material world is but a covered portion of an insignificant part of the same *brahmajyoti*. This covering is temporary, and therefore it is a sort of illusion.

Bhiṣmadeva, as a pure devotee of the Lord, entered the spiritual realm in one of the Vaikuṅṭha planets where the Lord in His eternal form of *Pārtha-sārathi* predominates over the unconditioned living beings who are constantly engaged in the service of the Lord. The love and affection which bind the Lord and devotee are exhibited in the case of Bhiṣmadeva. Bhiṣmadeva never forgot the Lord in His transcendental feature as the *Pārtha-sārathi*, and the Lord was present personally before Bhiṣmadeva while he was passing to the transcendental world. That is the highest perfection of life.

TEXT 45

तत्र दुन्दुभयो नेदुर्देवमानवादिताः ।
शशंसुः साधवो राज्ञां खात्पेतुः पुष्पवृष्टयः ॥४५॥

*tatra dundubhayo nedur
deva-mānava-vādītāḥ
śaśamsuḥ sādhave rājñām
khāt petuḥ puṣpa-vṛṣṭayah*

tatra—thereafter; *dundubhayāḥ*—drums; *neduḥ*—were sounded; *deva*—the demigods from other planets; *mānava*—men from all countries; *vādītāḥ*—beaten by; *śaśamsuḥ*—praised; *sādhavaḥ*—honest; *rājñām*—by the royal order; *khāt*—from the sky; *petuḥ*—began to fall; *puṣpa-vṛṣṭayah*—showers of flowers.

TRANSLATION

Thereafter, both men and demigods sounded drums in honor, and the honest royal order commenced demonstrations of honor and respect. And from the sky fell showers of flowers.

PURPORT

Bhiṣmadeva was respected both by the human beings and by the demigods. The human beings live on earth and similar other planets in the Bhūr and Bhuvār group of planets, but the demigods live in the Svar, or heavenly planets, and all of them knew Bhiṣmadeva as a great warrior and devotee of the Lord. As a *mahājana* (or authority) he was on the level of Brahmā, Nārada and Śiva, although he was a human being. Qualification on a par with the great demigods is possible only on attainment of spiritual perfection. Thus Bhiṣmadeva was known all over the

universes, and during his time interplanetary travel was effected by finer methods than the futile endeavors of mechanical spacecraft. When the distant planets were informed of the passing away of Bhiṣmadeva, all the inhabitants of the upper planets as well as of the earth dropped showers of flowers to show due respect to the departed great personality. This showering of flowers from heaven is a sign of recognition by great demigods, and it should never be compared to the decoration of a dead body. The body of Bhiṣmadeva lost its material effects due to being surcharged with spiritual realization, and thus the body was spiritualized as when iron becomes red-hot when in contact with fire. The body of a fully self-realized soul is not, therefore, accepted as material. Special ceremonies are observed for such spiritual bodies. The respect and recognition of Bhiṣmadeva are never to be imitated by artificial means, as it has become a fashion to observe the so-called *jayantī* ceremony for any and every common man. According to authorized *śāstras*, such a *jayantī* ceremony for an ordinary man, however exalted he may be materially, is an offense to the Lord because *jayantī* is reserved for the day when the Lord appears on the earth. Bhiṣmadeva was unique in his activities, and his passing away to the kingdom of God is also unique.

TEXT 46

तस्य निर्हरणादीनि सम्परेतस्य भार्गव ।
युधिष्ठिरः कारयित्वा मुहूर्तं दुःखितोऽभवत् ॥४६॥

*tasya nirharanādīni
samparetasya bhārgava
yudhiṣṭhiraḥ kārayitvā
muhūrtam duḥkhito bhavat*

tasya—his; *nirharana-ādīni*—funeral ceremony; *samparetasya*—of the dead body; *bhārgava*—O descendant of Bhr̥gu; *yudhiṣṭhiraḥ*—Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira; *kārayitvā*—having performed it; *muhūrtam*—for a moment; *duḥkhitaḥ*—sorry; *abhavat*—became.

TRANSLATION

O descendant of Bhr̥gu [Śaunaka], after performing funeral rituals for the dead body of Bhiṣmadeva, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was momentarily overtaken with grief.

PURPORT

Bhiṣmadeva was not only a great family head of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, but also he was a great philosopher and friend to him, his brothers and his mother. Since Mahārāja Pāṇḍu, the father of the five brothers headed by Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, had died, Bhiṣmadeva was the most affectionate grandfather of the Pāṇḍavas and caretaker of the widow daughter-in-law Kuntidevī. Although Mahārāja Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the elder uncle of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, was there to look after them, his affection was more on the side of his hundred sons, headed by Duryodhana. Ultimately a colossal clique was fabricated to deprive the five fatherless brothers of the rightful claim of the kingdom of Hastināpura. There was great intrigue, common in imperial palaces, and the five brothers were exiled to the wilderness. But Bhiṣmadeva was always a sincerely sympathetic well-wisher, grandfather, friend and philosopher to Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, even up to the last moment of his life. He died very happily by seeing Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira to the throne, otherwise he would have long ago quitted his material body, instead of suffering agony over the undue sufferings of the Pāṇḍavas. He was simply waiting for the opportune moment because he was sure and certain that the sons of Pāṇḍu would come out victorious in the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, as His Lordship Śrī Kṛṣṇa was their protector. As a devotee of the Lord, he knew that the Lord's devotee cannot be vanquished at any time. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was quite aware of all these good wishes of Bhiṣmadeva, and therefore he must have been feeling the great separation. He was sorry for the separation of a great soul, and not for the material body which Bhiṣmadeva relinquished. The funeral ceremony was a necessary duty,

although Bhīṣmadeva was a liberated soul. Since Bhīṣmadeva was without issue, the eldest grandson, namely Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, was the rightful person to perform this ceremony. It was a great boon to Bhīṣmadeva that an equally great son of the family undertook the last rites of a great man.

TEXT 47

तुष्टुवुर्मुनयो हृष्टाः कृष्णं तद्गुह्यनामभिः ।
ततस्ते कृष्णहृदयाः स्वाश्रमान् प्रययुः पुनः ॥४७॥

*tuṣṭuvur munayo hr̥ṣṭāḥ
kṛṣṇam tad-guhyā-nāmaḥbhīḥ
tatas te kṛṣṇa-hṛdayāḥ
svāśramān prayayuh punaḥ*

tuṣṭuvuh—satisfied; *munayah*—the great sages, headed by Vyāsadeva, etc.; *hr̥ṣṭāḥ*—all in a happy mood; *kṛṣṇam*—unto Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead; *tat*—His; *guhya*—confidential; *nāmaḥbhīḥ*—by His holy name, etc.; *tataḥ*—thereafter; *te*—they; *kṛṣṇa-hṛdayāḥ*—persons who always bear Lord Kṛṣṇa in their hearts; *sva-āśramān*—to their respective hermitages; *prayayuh*—returned; *punaḥ*—again.

TRANSLATION

All the great sages then glorified Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who was present there, by confidential Vedic hymns. Then all of them returned to their respective hermitages, bearing always Lord Kṛṣṇa within their hearts.

PURPORT

The devotees of the Lord are always in the heart of the Lord, and the Lord is always in the hearts of the devotees. That is the sweet relation between the Lord and His devotees. Due to unalloyed love and devotion for the Lord, the devotees always see Him within themselves, and the Lord also, although He has nothing to do and nothing to aspire to, is always busy in attending to the welfare of His devotees. For the ordinary living beings the law of nature is there for all actions and reactions, but He is always anxious to put His devotees on the right path. The devotees, therefore, are under the direct care of the Lord. And the Lord also voluntarily puts Himself under the care of His devotees only. So all the sages, headed by Vyāsadeva, were devotees of the Lord, and therefore they chanted the Vedic hymns after the funeral ceremony just to please the Lord, who was present there personally. All the Vedic hymns are chanted to please Lord Kṛṣṇa. This is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.15). All the *Vedas*, *Upaniṣads*, *Vedānta*, etc., are seeking Him only, and all hymns are for glorifying Him only. The sages, therefore, performed the exact acts suitable for the purpose, and they happily departed for their respective hermitages.

TEXT 48

ततो युधिष्ठिरो गत्वा सहकृष्णो गजह्वयम् ।
पितरं सान्त्वयामास गान्धारीं च तपस्विनीम् ॥४८॥

*tato yudhiṣṭhiro gatvā
saha-kṛṣṇo gajāhvayam
pitaram sāntvayām āsā
gāndhārīm ca tapasvinīm*

tataḥ—thereafter; *yudhiṣṭhirah*—Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira; *gatvā*—going there; *saha*—with; *kṛṣṇah*—the Lord; *gajāhvayam*—in the capital named Gajāhvaya Hastināpura; *pitaram*—unto his uncle (Dhṛtarāṣṭra); *sāntvayām āsā*—consoled; *gāndhārīm*—the wife of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; *ca*—and; *tapasvinīm*—an ascetic lady.

TRANSLATION

Thereafter, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira at once went to his capital, Hastināpura, accompanied by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and there he consoled his uncle and aunt Gāndhārī, who was an ascetic.

PURPORT

Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Gāndhārī, the father and the mother of Duryodhana and his brothers, were the elder uncle and aunt of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. After the Battle of Kurukṣetra, the celebrated couple, having lost all their sons and grandsons, were under the care of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. They were passing their days in great agony over such a heavy loss of life and were practically living the life of ascetics. The death news of Bhīṣmadeva, uncle of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, was another great shock for the King and the Queen, and therefore they required solace from Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was conscious of his duty, and he at once hurried to the spot with Lord Kṛṣṇa and satisfied the bereaved Dhṛtarāṣṭra with kind words, from both himself and the Lord also.

Gāndhārī was a powerful ascetic, although she was living the life of a faithful wife and a kind mother. It is said that Gāndhārī also voluntarily closed her eyes because of the blindness of her husband. A wife's duty is to follow the husband cent percent. And Gāndhārī was so true to her husband that she followed him even in his perpetual blindness. Therefore in her actions she was a great ascetic. Besides that, the shock she suffered because of the wholesale killing of her one hundred sons and her grandsons also was certainly too much for a woman. But she suffered all this just like an ascetic. Gāndhārī, although a woman, is no less than Bhīṣmadeva in character. They are both remarkable personalities in the *Mahābhārata*.

TEXT 49

पित्रा चानुमतो राजा वासुदेवानुमोदितः ।
चकार राज्यं धर्मेण पितृपैतामहं विभुः ॥४९॥

*pitṛā cānumato rājā
vāsudevānumoditāḥ
cakāra rājyaṁ dharmeṇa
pitṛ-paitāmaḥam vibhuḥ*

pitṛā—by his uncle, Dhṛtarāṣṭra; *ca*—and; *anumataḥ*—with his approval; *rājā*—King Yudhiṣṭhira; *vāsudeva-anumoditāḥ*—confirmed by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *cakāra*—executed; *rājyam*—the kingdom; *dharmeṇa*—in compliance with the codes of royal principles; *pitṛ*—father; *paitāmaham*—forefather; *vibhuḥ*—as great as.

TRANSLATION

After this, the great religious King, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, executed the royal power in the kingdom strictly according to the codes and royal principles approved by his uncle and confirmed by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

PURPORT

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was not a mere tax collector. He was always conscious of his duty as a king, which is no less than that of a father or spiritual master. The king is to see to the welfare of the citizens from all angles of social, political, economic and spiritual upliftment. The king must know that human life is meant for liberating the encaged soul from the bondage of material conditions, and therefore his duty is to see that the citizens are properly looked after to attain this highest stage of perfection.

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira followed these principles strictly, as will be seen from the next chapter. Not only did he follow the principles, but he also got approval from his old uncle, who was experienced in political affairs, and that was also confirmed by Lord Kṛṣṇa, the speaker of the philosophy of *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira is the ideal monarch, and monarchy under a trained king like Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira is by far the most superior form of government, superior to modern republics or governments of the people, by the people. The mass of people, especially in this age of Kali, are all born *sūdras*, basically lowborn, ill-trained, unfortunate and badly associated. They themselves do not know the highest perfectional aim of life. Therefore, votes cast by them actually have no value, and thus persons elected by such irresponsible votes cannot be responsible representatives like Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira.

Thus end the Bhaktivedanta purports of the First Canto, Ninth Chapter, of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, entitled "The Passing Away of Bhīṣmadeva in the Presence of Lord Kṛṣṇa."

CHAPTER TEN

Departure of Lord Kṛṣṇa for Dvārakā

TEXT 1

शौनक उवाच

हत्वा स्वरिक्थस्पृध आततायिनो
युधिष्ठिरो धर्मभृतां वरिष्ठः ।
सहानुजैः प्रत्यवरुद्धभोजनः
कथं प्रवृत्तः किमकारषीत्ततः ॥ १ ॥

śaunaka uvāca

hatvā svariktha-sprdhā ātatāyino
yudhiṣṭhīro dharmabhṛtāṃ varīṣṭhaḥ
sahānujaih pratyavaruddha-bhojanaḥ
katham pravṛttaḥ kim akāraṣīt tataḥ

śaunakah uvāca—Śaunaka inquired; hatvā—after killing; svariktha—the legal inheritance; sprdhah—desiring to usurp; ātatāyinaḥ—the aggressor; yudhiṣṭhīrah—King Yudhiṣṭhira; dharmabhṛtām—of those who strictly follow religious principles; varīṣṭhaḥ—greatest; saha-anujaih—with his younger brothers; pratyavaruddha—restricted; bhojanaḥ—acceptance of necessities; katham—how; pravṛttaḥ—engaged; kim—what; akāraṣīt—executed; tataḥ—thereafter.

TRANSLATION

Śaunaka Muni asked: After killing his enemies who desired to usurp his rightful inheritance, how did the greatest of all religious men, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, assisted by his brothers, rule his subjects? Surely he could not freely enjoy his kingdom with unrestricted consciousness.

PURPORT

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was the greatest of all men of religion. Thus he was not at all inclined to fight with his cousins for the sake of enjoying the kingdom: he fought for the right cause because the kingdom of Hastināpura was his rightful inheritance and his cousins wanted to usurp it for themselves. He fought, therefore, for the right cause under the guidance of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but he could not enjoy the results of his victory because his cousins were all killed in the fight. He therefore ruled over the kingdom as a matter of duty, assisted by his younger brothers. The inquiry was important for Śaunaka Ṛṣi, who wanted to know about the behavior of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira when he was at ease to enjoy the kingdom.

TEXT 2

सूत उवाच

वंशं कुरोर्वंशदवाग्निनिर्हृतं
संरोहयित्वा भवभावनो हरिः ।
निवेशयित्वा निजराज्य ईश्वरो
युधिष्ठिरं प्रीतमना बभूव ह ॥ २ ॥

sūta uvāca

vaṁśaṁ kuror vaṁśa-davāgni-nirhṛtaṁ
saṁrohayitvā bhava-bhāvano hariḥ
niveśayitvā nija-rājya īśvaro
yudhiṣṭhiraṁ prīta-manā babhūva ha

sūtaḥ uvāca—Sūta Gosvāmī replied; vaṁśam—dynasty; kuroḥ—of King Kuru; vaṁśa-dava-agni—a forest fire set by the bamboos; nirhṛtaṁ—exhausted; saṁrohayitvā—seedling of the dynasty; bhava-bhāvanah—the maintainer of creation; hariḥ—the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa; niveśayitvā—having reestablished; nija-rājye—in his own kingdom; īśvarah—the Supreme Lord; yudhiṣṭhiraṁ—unto Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira; prīta-manāḥ—pleased in His mind; babhūva ha—became.

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the maintainer of the world, became pleased after reestablishing Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira in his own kingdom and after restoring the Kuru dynasty, which had been exhausted by the bamboo fire of anger.

PURPORT

This world is compared to a forest fire caused by the cohesion of bamboo bushes. Such a forest fire takes place automatically, for bamboo cohesion occurs without external cause. Similarly, in the material world the wrath of those who want to lord it over material nature interacts, and the fire of war takes place, exhausting the unwanted population. Such fires or wars take place, and the Lord has nothing to do with them. But because He wants to maintain the creation, He desires the mass of people to follow the right path of self-realization, which enables the living beings to enter into the kingdom of God. The Lord wants the suffering human beings to come back home, back to Him, and cease to suffer the threefold material pangs. The whole plan of creation is made in that way, and one who does not come to his senses suffers in the material world by pangs inflicted by the illusory energy of the Lord. The Lord therefore wants His bona fide representative to rule the world. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa descended to establish this sort of regime and to kill the unwanted persons who have nothing to do with His plan. The Battle of Kurukṣetra was fought according to the plan of the Lord so that undesirable persons could get out of the world and a peaceful kingdom under His devotee could be established. The Lord was therefore fully satisfied when King Yudhiṣṭhira was on the throne and the seedling of the dynasty of Kuru, in the person of Mahārāja Parikṣit, was saved.

TEXT 3

निशम्य भीष्मोक्तमथाच्युतोक्तं
प्रवृत्तविज्ञानविधूतविभ्रमः ।
शशास गामिन्द्र इवाजिताश्रयः
परिध्युपान्तामनुजानुवर्तितः ॥ ३ ॥

niśamya bhīṣmoktam athācyutoktam
pravṛtta-vijñāna-vidhūta-vibhramah
śaśāsa gāmiन्द्र इवाजिताश्रयः
paridhyupāntām anujānuvartitaḥ

niśāmya—after listening; *bhīṣma-uktam*—what was spoken by Bhīṣmadeva; *athā*—as also; *acyuta-uktam*—what was spoken by the infallible Lord Kṛṣṇa; *pravṛtta*—being engaged in; *vijñāna*—perfect knowledge; *vidhūta*—completely washed; *vibhramah*—all misgivings; *śāśāsa*—ruled over; *gām*—the earth; *indra*—the king of the heavenly planet; *iva*—like; *ajita-āśrayah*—protected by the invincible Lord; *paridhi-upāntām*—including the seas; *anuja*—the younger brothers; *anuvartitah*—being followed by them.

TRANSLATION

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, after being enlightened by what was spoken by Bhīṣmadeva and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the infallible, engaged himself in matters of perfect knowledge because all his misgivings were eradicated. Thus he ruled over the earth and seas and was followed by his younger brothers.

PURPORT

The modern English law of primogeniture, or the law of inheritance by the firstborn, was also prevalent in those days when Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira ruled the earth and seas. In those days the King of Hastināpura (now part of New Delhi) was the emperor of the world, including the seas, up to the time of Mahārāja Parikṣit, the grandson of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira's younger brothers were acting as his ministers and commanders of state, and there was full cooperation between the perfectly religious brothers of the King. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was the ideal king or representative of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa to rule over the kingdom of earth and was comparable to King Indra, the representative ruler of the heavenly planets. The demigods like Indra, Candra, Sūrya, Varuṇa and Vāyu are representative kings of different planets of the universe, and similarly Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was also one of them, ruling over the kingdom of the earth. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was not a typically unenlightened political leader of modern democracy. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was instructed by Bhīṣmadeva and the infallible Lord also, and therefore he had full knowledge of everything in perfection.

The modern elected executive head of a state is just like a puppet because he has no kingly power. Even if he is enlightened like Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, he cannot do anything out of his own good will due to his constitutional position. Therefore, there are so many states over the earth quarreling because of ideological differences or other selfish motives. But a king like Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira had no ideology of his own. He had but to follow the instructions of the infallible Lord and the Lord's representative and the authorized agent, Bhīṣmadeva. It is instructed in the *śāstras* that one should follow the great authority and the infallible Lord without any personal motive and manufactured ideology. Therefore, it was possible for Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira to rule the whole world, including the seas, because the principles were infallible and universally applicable to everyone. The conception of one world state can only be fulfilled if we can follow the infallible authority. An imperfect human being cannot create an ideology acceptable to everyone. Only the perfect and the infallible can create a program which is applicable at every place and can be followed by all in the world. It is the person who rules, and not the impersonal government. If the person is perfect, the government is perfect. If the person is a fool, the government is a fool's paradise. That is the law of nature. There are so many stories of imperfect kings or executive heads. Therefore, the executive head must be a trained person like Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, and he must have the full autocratic power to rule over the world. The conception of a world state can take shape only under the regime of a perfect king like Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. The world was happy in those days because there were kings like Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira to rule over the world.

TEXT 4

कामं ववर्ष पर्जन्यः सर्वकामदुधा मही ।
सिषिचुः स ब्रजान् गावः पयसोधस्वतीर्मुदा ॥ ४ ॥

kāmam vavarṣa parjanyaḥ
sarva-kāma-dughā mahī
siṣicuḥ sma vrajān gāvah
payasodhasvatīr mudā

kāmam—everything needed; *vavarṣa*—was showered; *parjanyaḥ*—rains; *sarva*—everything; *kāma*—necessities; *dughā*—producer; *mahī*—the land; *siṣicuḥ sma*—moisten; *vrajān*—pasturing grounds; *gāvah*—the cow; *payasā udhasvatīr*—due to swollen milk bags; *mudā*—because of a joyful attitude.

TRANSLATION

During the reign of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, the clouds showered all the water that people needed, and the earth produced all the necessities of man in profusion. Due to its fatty milk bag and cheerful attitude, the cow used to moisten the grazing ground with milk.

PURPORT

The basic principle of economic development is centered on *land* and *cows*. The necessities of human society are food grains, fruits, milk, minerals, clothing, wood, etc. One requires all these items to fulfill the material needs of the body. Certainly one does not require flesh and fish or iron tools and machinery. During the regime of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, all over the world there were regulated rainfalls. Rainfalls are not in the control of the human being. The heavenly King Indradeva is the controller of rains, and he is the servant of the Lord. When the Lord is obeyed by the king and the people under the king's administration, there are regulated rains from the horizon, and these rains are the causes of all varieties of production on the land. Not only do regulated rains help ample production of grains and fruits, but when they combine with astronomical influences there is ample production of valuable stones and pearls. Grains and vegetables can sumptuously feed a man and animals, and a fatty cow delivers enough milk to supply a man sumptuously with vigor and vitality. If there is enough milk, enough grains, enough fruit, enough cotton, enough silk and enough jewels, then why do the people need cinemas, houses of prostitution, slaughterhouses, etc.? What is the need of an artificial luxurious life of cinema, cars, radio, flesh and hotels? Has this civilization produced anything but quarreling individually and nationally? Has this civilization enhanced the cause of equality and fraternity by sending thousands of men into a hellish factory and the war fields at the whims of a particular man?

It is said here that the cows used to moisten the pasturing land with milk because their milk bags were fatty and the animals were joyful. Do they not require, therefore, proper protection for a joyful life by being fed with a sufficient quantity of grass in the field? Why should men kill cows for their selfish purposes? Why should man not be satisfied with grains, fruits and milk, which, combined together, can produce hundreds and thousands of palatable dishes. Why are there slaughterhouses all over the world to kill innocent animals? Mahārāja Parikṣit, grandson of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, while touring his vast kingdom, saw a black man attempting to kill a cow. The King at once arrested the butcher and chastised him sufficiently. Should not a king or executive head protect the lives of the poor animals who are unable to defend themselves? Is this humanity? Are not the animals of a country citizens also? Then why are they allowed to be butchered in organized slaughterhouses? Are these the signs of equality, fraternity and non-violence?

Therefore, in contrast with the modern, advanced, civilized form of government, an autocracy like Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira's is by far superior to a so-called democracy in which animals are killed and a man less than an animal is allowed to cast votes for another less-than-animal man.

We are all creatures of material nature. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said that the Lord Himself is the seed-giving father and material nature is the mother of *all living beings in all shapes*. Thus mother material nature has enough foodstuff both for animals and for men, by the grace of the Father Almighty, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The human being is the elder brother of all other living beings. He is endowed with intelligence more powerful than

animals for realizing the course of nature and the indications of the Almighty Father. Human civilizations should depend on the production of material nature without artificially attempting economic development to turn the world into a chaos of artificial greed and power only for the purpose of artificial luxuries and sense gratification. This is but the life of dogs and hogs.

TEXT 5

नद्यः समुद्रा गिरयः सवनस्पतिवीरुधः ।
फलन्त्योषधयः सर्वाः काममन्वृत्तु तस्य वै ॥ ५ ॥

*nadyah samudrā girayah
savanaspati-vīrudhah
phalanty oṣadhayah sarvāḥ
kāmaṁ anvṛtu tasya vai*

nadyah—rivers; *samudrāḥ*—oceans; *girayah*—hills and mountains; *savanaspati*—vegetables; *vīrudhah*—creepers; *phalanti*—active; *oṣadhayah*—drugs; *sarvāḥ*—all; *kāmaṁ*—necessities; *anvṛtu*—seasonal; *tasya*—for the King; *vai*—certainly.

TRANSLATION

The rivers, oceans, hills, mountains, forests, creepers and active drugs, in every season, paid their tax quota to the King in profusion.

PURPORT

Since Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was under the protection of the *ajita*, the infallible Lord, as above mentioned, the properties of the Lord, namely the rivers, oceans, hills, forests, etc., were all pleased, and they used to supply their respective quota of taxes to the King. The secret to success is to take refuge under the protection of the Supreme Lord. Without His sanction, nothing can be possible. To make economic development by our own endeavors on the strength of tools and machinery is not all. The sanction of the Supreme Lord must be there, otherwise despite all instrumental arrangements everything will be unsuccessful. The ultimate cause of success is the *daiva*, the Supreme. Kings like Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira knew perfectly well that the king is the agent of the Supreme Lord to look after the welfare of the mass of people. Actually the state belongs to the Supreme Lord. The rivers, oceans, forests, hills, drugs, etc., are not creations of man. They are all creations of the Supreme Lord, and the living being is allowed to make use of the property of the Lord for the service of the Lord. Today's slogan is that everything is for the people, and therefore the government is for the people and by the people. But to produce a new species of humanity at the present moment on the basis of God consciousness and perfection of human life, the ideology of godly communism, the world has to again follow in the footsteps of kings like Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira or Parikṣit. There is enough of everything by the will of the Lord, and we can make proper use of things to live comfortably without enmity between men, or animal and man or nature. The control of the Lord is everywhere, and if the Lord is pleased, every part of nature will be pleased. The river will flow profusely to fertilize the land; the oceans will supply sufficient quantities of minerals, pearls and jewels; the forest will supply sufficient wood, drugs and vegetables, and the seasonal changes will effectively help produce fruits and flowers in profuse quantity. The artificial way of living depending on factories and tools can render so-called happiness only to a limited number at the cost of millions. Since the energy of the mass of people is engaged in factory production, the natural products are being hampered, and for this the mass is unhappy. Without being educated properly, the mass of people are following in the footsteps of the vested interests by exploiting natural reserves, and therefore there is acute competition between individual and individual and nation and nation. There is no control by the trained agent of the Lord. We must look into the defects of modern civilization by comparison here, and should follow

in the footsteps of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira to cleanse man and wipe out anachronisms.

TEXT 6

नाधयो व्याधयः क्लेशा दैवभूतात्महेतवः ।
अजातशत्रावभवन् जन्तूनां राज्ञि कर्हिचित् ॥ ६ ॥

*nādhayo vyādhayah kleśā
daiva-bhūta-ātma-hetavaḥ
ajāta-śatrāv abhavan
jantūnām rājñi karhicit*

na—never; *ādhyah*—anxieties; *vyādhayah*—diseases; *kleśāḥ*—trouble due to excessive heat and cold; *daiva-bhūta-ātma*—all due to the body, supernatural power and other living beings; *hetavaḥ*—due to the cause of; *ajāta-śatrau*—unto one who has no enemy; *abhavan*—happened; *jantūnām*—of the living beings; *rājñi*—unto the King; *karhicit*—at any time.

TRANSLATION

Because of the King's having no enemy, the living beings were not at any time disturbed by mental agonies, diseases, or excessive heat or cold.

PURPORT

To be nonviolent to human beings and to be a killer or enemy of the poor animals is Satan's philosophy. In this age there is enmity toward poor animals, and therefore the poor creatures are always anxious. The reaction of the poor animals is being forced on human society, and therefore there is always the strain of cold or hot war between men, individually, collectively or nationally. At the time of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, there were no different nations, although there were different subordinate states. The whole world was united, and the supreme head, being a trained king like Yudhiṣṭhira, kept all the inhabitants free from anxiety, diseases and excessive heat and cold. They were not only economically well-to-do, but also physically fit and undisturbed by supernatural power, by enmity from other living beings and by disturbance of bodily and mental agonies. There is a proverb in Bengali that a bad king spoils the kingdom and a bad housewife spoils the family. This truth is applicable here also. Because the King was pious and obedient to the Lord and sages, because he was no one's enemy and because he was a recognized agent of the Lord and therefore protected by Him, all the citizens under the King's protection were, so to speak, directly protected by the Lord and His authorized agents. Unless one is pious and recognized by the Lord, he cannot make others happy who are under his care. There is full cooperation between man and God and man and nature, and this conscious cooperation between man and God and man and nature, as exemplified by King Yudhiṣṭhira, can bring about happiness, peace and prosperity in the world. The attitude of exploiting one another, the custom of the day, will only bring misery.

TEXT 7

उषित्वा हास्तिनपुरे मासान् कतिपयान् हरिः ।
सुहृदां च विशोक्याय स्वसुश्च प्रियकाम्यया ॥ ७ ॥

*uṣitvā hāstinapure
māsān katipayān hariḥ
suhṛdām ca viśokāya
svasūḥ ca priya-kāmyayā*

uṣitvā—staying; *hāstinapure*—in the city of Hastināpura; *māsān*—months; *katipayān*—a few; *hariḥ*—Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *suhṛdām*—relatives; *ca*—also; *viśokāya*—for pacifying them; *svasūḥ*—the sister; *ca*—and; *priya-kāmyayā*—for pleasing.

TRANSLATION

Śrī Hari, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, resided at Hastināpura for a few months to pacify His relatives and please His own sister [Subhadrā].

PURPORT

Kṛṣṇa was to start for Dvārakā, His own kingdom, after the Battle of Kurukṣetra and Yudhiṣṭhira's being enthroned, but to oblige the request of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira and to show special mercy to Bhīṣmadeva, Lord Kṛṣṇa stopped at Hastināpura, the capital of the Pāṇḍavas. The Lord decided to stay especially to pacify the aggrieved King as well as to please Subhadrā, sister of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Subhadrā was especially to be pacified because she lost her only son, Abhimanyu, who was just married. The boy left his wife, Uttarā, mother of Mahārāja Parikṣit. The Lord is always pleased to satisfy His devotees in any capacity. Only His devotees can play the parts of His relatives. The Lord is absolute.

TEXT 8

आमन्त्र्य चाभ्यनुज्ञातः परिष्वज्याभिवाद्य तम् ।
आरूरोह रथं कैश्चित्परिष्वक्तोऽभिवादितः ॥ ८ ॥

āmantrya cābhyanuññātaḥ
pariṣvajyābhivādya tam
āruroha ratham kaiścit
pariṣvaktāḥ bhivāditaḥ

āmantrya—taking permission; ca—and; abhyanuññātaḥ—being permitted; pariṣvajya—embracing; abhivādya—bowing down at the feet; tam—unto Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira; āruroha—ascended; ratham—the chariot; kaiścit—by someone; pariṣvaktāḥ—being embraced; bhivāditaḥ—being offered obeisances.

TRANSLATION

Afterwards, when the Lord asked permission to depart and the King gave it, the Lord offered His respects to Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira by bowing down at his feet, and the King embraced Him. After this the Lord, being embraced by others and receiving their obeisances, got into His chariot.

PURPORT

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was the elder cousin of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and therefore while departing from him the Lord bowed down at the King's feet. The King embraced Him as a younger brother, although the King knew perfectly well that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Lord takes pleasure when some of His devotees accept Him as less important in terms of love. No one is greater than or equal to the Lord, but He takes pleasure in being treated as younger than His devotees. These are all transcendental pastimes of the Lord. The impersonalist cannot enter into the supernatural roles played by the devotee of the Lord. Thereafter Bhīma and Arjuna embraced the Lord because they were of the same age, but Nakula and Sahadeva bowed down before the Lord because they were younger than He.

TEXTS 9-10

सुभद्रा द्रौपदी कुन्ती विराटतनया तथा ।
गान्धारी धृतराष्ट्रश्च युयुत्सुर्गौतमो यमौ ॥ ९ ॥
वृकोदरश्च धौम्यश्च स्त्रियो मत्स्यसुतादयः ।
न सेहिरे विमुह्यन्तो विरहं शार्ङ्गधन्वनः ॥ १० ॥

subhadrā draupadī kuntī
virāṭa-tanayā tathā
gāndhārī dhṛtarāṣṭraś ca
yuyutsur gautamo yamau

vr̥kodaraś ca dhaumyaś ca
striyo matsya-sūtādayaḥ
na sehire vimuhyanto
virahaṁ śārṅga-dhanvanah

subhadrā—the sister of Kṛṣṇa; draupadī—the wife of the Pāṇḍavas; kuntī—the mother of the Pāṇḍavas; virāṭa-tanayā—the daughter of Virāṭa (Uttarā); tathā—also; gāndhārī—the mother of Duryodhana; dhṛtarāṣṭraḥ—the father of Duryodhana; ca—and; yuyutsuḥ—the son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra by his vaiśya wife; gautamaḥ—Kṛpācārya; yamau—the twin brothers Nakula and Sahadeva; vr̥kodaraḥ—Bhīma; ca—and; dhaumyaḥ—Dhaumya; ca—and; striyaḥ—also other ladies of the palace; matsya-sūtā-ādayaḥ—the daughter of a fisherman (Satyavati, Bhīṣma's stepmother); na—could not; sehire—tolerate; vimuhyantaḥ—almost fainting; virahaṁ—separation; śārṅga-dhanvanah—of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who bears a conch in His hand.

TRANSLATION

At that time Subhadrā, Draupadī, Kuntī, Uttarā, Gāndhārī, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Yuyutsu, Kṛpācārya, Nakula, Sahadeva, Bhīmasena, Dhaumya and Satyavati all nearly fainted because it was impossible for them to bear separation from Lord Kṛṣṇa.

PURPORT

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is so attractive for the living beings, especially for the devotees, that it is impossible for them to tolerate separation. The conditioned soul under the spell of illusory energy forgets the Lord, otherwise he cannot. The feeling of such separation cannot be described, but it can simply be imagined by devotees only. After His separation from Vṛndāvana and the innocent rural cowherd boys, girls, ladies and others, they all felt shock throughout their lives, and the separation of Rādhārāṇī, the most beloved cowherd girl, is beyond expression. Once they met at Kurukṣetra during a solar eclipse, and the feeling which was expressed by them is heartrending. There is, of course, a difference in the qualities of the transcendental devotees of the Lord, but none of them who have ever contacted the Lord by direct communion or otherwise can leave Him for a moment. That is the attitude of the pure devotee.

TEXTS 11-12

सत्सङ्गान्मुक्तदुःसङ्गो हातुं नोत्सहते बुधः ।
कीर्त्यमानं यासौ यस्य सकृदाकर्ण्य रोचनम् ॥ ११ ॥
तस्मिन्न्यस्तधियः पार्याः सहेरन् विरहं कथम् ।
दर्शनस्पर्शसंलापशयनासनभोजनैः ॥ १२ ॥

sat-saṅgān mukta-duḥsaṅgo
hātuṁ notsahate budhaḥ
kīrtiyamānaṁ yaśo yasya
sakṛd ākarṇya rocanam

tasmin nyasta-dhiyaḥ pārthāḥ
saheran virahaṁ katham
darśana-sparśa-samlāpa-
śayanāsana-bhojanaiḥ

sat-saṅgāt—by the association of pure devotees; mukta-duḥsaṅgaḥ—freed from bad materialistic association; hātuṁ—to give up; na utsahate—never attempts; budhaḥ—one who has understood the Lord; kīrtiyamānaṁ—glorifying; yaśaḥ—fame; yasya—whose; sakṛt—once only; ākarṇya—hearing only; rocanam—pleasing; tasmin—unto Him; nyasta-dhiyaḥ—one who has given his mind unto Him; pārthāḥ—the sons of Prthā; saheran—can tolerate; virahaṁ—separation; katham—how; darśana—seeing face to face; sparśa—touching; samlāpa—conversing; śayana—sleeping; āsana—sitting; bhojanaiḥ—dining together.

(continued in next issue)

Every Town and Village

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

Parents Proud of Kṛṣṇa Movement

Recently, a few people, including some elements of the news media, have leveled charges against ISKCON ranging from “brainwashing” to “kidnapping” to “false advertising.” Leading the attack are a few parents of devotees. To gauge the broad sentiment of our members’ parents, we did a survey and found the overwhelming majority favorable to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Here are two typical responses to our question, “How would you evaluate your child’s participation in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement?”

Mrs. Polly Perlmutter of Bloomfield, Connecticut, said this:

“My son Daniel (Śravaṇānanda dāsa) entered the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement almost five years ago. . . . I would say that the movement has given a discipline and deep meaning to my son’s life. I do not forget that this movement is not all things to all people, but to my son it is fulfilling and beautiful. In our minds (my husband’s and mine) we compare our son’s life to the life of a Catholic monk or a religious Jew in a Hassidic sect.

“Do I think that my son is brainwashed? I can best answer this by asking the question, ‘Is our very society not being brainwashed daily by the advertising media (liquor and cigarette ads) and pornographic movies and literature?’ And what about the children who are being ‘educated’ by the violence and killing on television? I prefer that my son is devoting his life to the love of God and the service of humanity—a rare endeavor in this age. And since I know that my son has voluntarily chosen the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement to exercise these rights, and that he can leave it whenever he wishes, I cannot see how the term ‘brainwashing’ can be applicable to this movement. I sincerely believe from my contacts with many devotees that they are happy and have found fulfillment by loving and serving Lord Kṛṣṇa (God). This may not be my wish for my life, but my son has chosen it for his, and I wholeheartedly respect it.”

Mrs. Loretta F. Senesi of Long Island, New York, had this to say:

“I have a son who has been in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement for six years, and



I can truly say that I have respect and admiration for him. He married in the movement and has a devoted wife and two lovely children. They live clean, spiritual lives and are happy. I have visited the temple many times and participated in their devotional services, spoken with many devotees, and seen their enthusiasm. They are all intelligent, honest, and sincere. My son has been free to visit at home with his family, and he has done so many times. I feel that the Kṛṣṇa movement has given my son a new purpose in life, and also a deep concern for his fellow man.

“The Bill of Rights guarantees freedom of religion. Where is this freedom when parents are allowed to kidnap their children and forcibly try to change their beliefs? These same parents should, I feel, love their children for what they are, and not for what they want them to be. What objection can there be to this movement, when the devotees are working for the Lord and all mankind, trying to spread God consciousness throughout the world? When you look around and

see how some people live, how they are wasting their lives, I say thank God for Kṛṣṇa consciousness.”

Meanwhile, on the West Coast, Mrs. Rose Forkash (left) of Carpenteria, California, has organized devotees’ parents to counteract the propaganda against ISKCON and to deepen the communication between devotees and their parents. Mrs. Forkash, the mother of Līlāsakti dāśī, knows many devotees personally. Her advice to others whose children are “Krishnas”: “I hope the parents will look into the hearts of their children and see what they’re seeing—and learn to love God, as they are.”

Linguist Lauds Bhagavad-gītā As It Is

Dr. William F. Shipley, professor of linguistics at the University of California (Santa Cruz), has this to say about the book widely known as “the essence of all Vedic knowledge”: “The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust edition of the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* [by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda] proves to be an inspiration and a delight. . . . This is a beautiful book, subtly combining excellent scholarship with a reverent sensitivity.”

We Want to Hear from You

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The Editors
BACK TO GODHEAD magazine
3764 Watseka Ave.
Los Angeles
California 90034

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.

Feb. 2	Feb. 4	Feb. 8	Feb. 14	Feb. 15	Feb. 17	Feb. 18
Appearance of Lord Nityānanda.	Appearance of Narottama dāsa Thākura. Madhurotsava of Lord Kṛṣṇa.	Disappearance of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura.	Vijaya Ekādśī (fasting from grains and beans).	Break-fast after sunrise.	Siva-trīti (optional fasting).	Break fast after sunrise.
Feb. 19	Feb. 22	March 1	March 2	March 3	March 5	March 6
Disappearance of Jagannātha dāsa Bīṣṇai and Rasikānanda Goswāmī.	Appearance of Puruṣottama Thākura.	Āmalakī Ekādśī (fasting from grains and beans).	Break fast after sunrise.	Disappearance of Mādhavendra Puri.	Gaura-pūrnīmā (appearance of Lord Caitanya). Dola-yātra of Rādhā-Mādhava begins.	Jagannātha-ānandotsava (birth ceremony for Lord Caitanya performed by Jagannātha Māra). Beginning of Year 491, Caitanya Era.

"Deprogramming"—Deep Trouble

"Meditation," says psychiatrist Wolfgang Kretschmer, "has a good chance of eventually becoming one of the leading therapeutic techniques." More and more psychologists, psychiatrists, and doctors from institutions like Harvard and UCLA are supporting this view. Their articles are appearing in *Science*, *Scientific American*, *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, the *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, and other publications.

In *Psychology Today*, Dr. Daniel Goleman says meditators can better handle stress, that they feel more in control of their lives, and that they have "fewer psychological or psychosomatic problems such as colds, headaches, and sleeplessness." In the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, Dr. John Heider says spiritual disciplines like meditation, yoga, and mantras [the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, for instance] are "as necessary to a life of growth as regular brushing is to dental hygiene."

Dr. Allan Gerson and Dr. Ronald Huff have conducted studies on the psychological effects of chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. They find chanters "are more keenly aware and have sharper mental cognitions." Also, "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." And Drs. Gerson and Huff describe Hare Kṛṣṇa meditators as "friendly, warm, and outgoing as a group, as well as individually."

Unfortunately, some parents of Hare Kṛṣṇa meditators have reacted unfavorably to their new life-style. In fact, some parents have even gone so far as to break the law, by hiring professionals to abduct their legal-age children. These abductors are euphemistically called "deprogrammers," and they employ intensive psychological and even physical abuse on Hare Kṛṣṇa meditators to make them renounce their new life-style.

Even more disturbing are the efforts of perhaps a dozen psychiatrists and psychologists to legitimize such illegal activity. Ignoring the previously mentioned body of scientific data, they label meditation and the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa as "brainwashing" and "mind control." They neglect to say that worldwide there are literally millions of Kṛṣṇa centers (including those in India), and that there are tens of millions of perfectly normal people who chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra for self-improvement. In other words, with unsubstantiated claims these people are trying to take

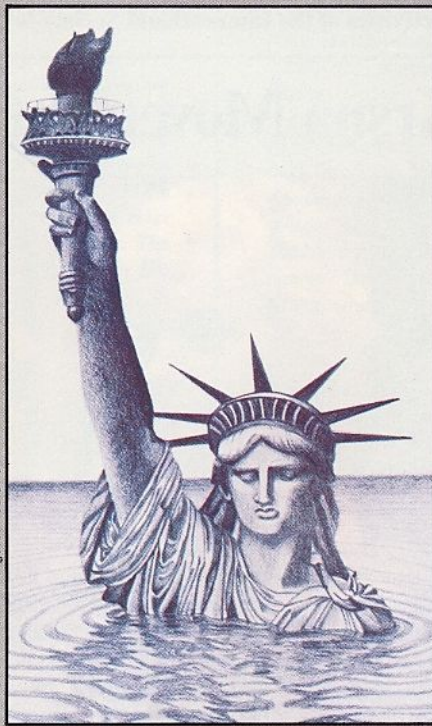


Illustration: Bhaktin Margaret Podlewski

In our age of Orwellian "Newspeak," Hitler called his death camps "Charitable Foundations for Institutional Care." Now, it seems, a small group would drown our personal freedoms and call that "deprogramming."

away fundamental American liberties—freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, freedom of association, and the simple freedom to live your own life as you see fit.

History offers us grim examples of similar abuses. Hitler used psychology and psychiatry as justifications for his extermination campaigns. The Soviet Union also uses these professions to repress critics and minority lifestyles. *Clearly, this misuse of the psychological sciences endangers American freedom.*

On the legal front, the battle is reaching its peak in New York. On October 14, a grand jury in Queens County indicted the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement and two of its members on an unprecedented charge of "illegal imprisonment by mind control." The case grew out of the attempts of two families to have their legal-age offspring removed from the Hare Kṛṣṇa center in New York and "deprogrammed." When the "de-

programming" failed and the two members—a man, twenty-two, and a woman, twenty-four—returned to the group, the frustrated parents gained the cooperation of a judge, a district attorney, and a grand jury. And they had two Hare Kṛṣṇa leaders indicted.

The District Attorney's office then had the man and woman sequestered as "material witnesses" and sought to have them committed to mental institutions for "treatment." In fact, the court did commit the young man. After two weeks he was released—a court-appointed team of psychiatrists who had examined him for a week testified that he was perfectly sane and competent. However, an avid supporter of "deprogramming," psychiatrist John G. Clark, Jr., felt that the young man's ability to conceal his symptoms was "proof" of the depth of the brainwashing he had undergone. The doctor and the young man's parents urged that he be put into isolation and subjected to "stress tests" ("deprogramming") to break the alleged mind control. But the hospital psychiatrists said that such tactics would "raise serious questions about the patient's legal rights and about ethical considerations in the practice of medicine."

The hospital psychiatrists gave the young man a clean bill of health. How seriously, then, can anyone take Dr. Clark's diagnosis? Whether tests show a problem or not, whether other professionals see a problem or not, people like Dr. Clark insist that there is a problem. And, what is really frightening, Dr. Clark feels that to deal with the "problem," he should have the right to drastically interfere with another person's freedom. Before individuals like Dr. Clark involve everyone in a senseless witch-hunt, they might first submit *themselves* for psychological testing.

Happily, the judge sensed that the attempts to commit the woman were what he called "a ploy," and he released her.

WHAT IS BRAINWASHING?

Originally, the term "brainwashing" referred to a Chinese Communist method of ideological persuasion through extreme psychological and often physical coercion. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines brainwashing as "a colloquial term . . . applied to any technique designed to manipulate human thought or action against the desire, will, or knowledge of the individual." In popular usage it becomes an imprecise, all-encompassing, and pejorative term for

describing any kind of persuasion or behavior that we disagree with.

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is a bona fide religious and cultural organization based upon the ancient spiritual tradition of India. Its founder and spiritual leader, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, is a distinguished scholar and religious leader of international repute. His authoritative translations and commentaries on India's ancient religious and philosophical classics are studied in universities throughout the world.

The ways in which people join the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement are quite informal (talking with members, reading books, using Kṛṣṇa consciousness meditation techniques, and so forth). A member of the movement is free to increase or decrease his involvement as he or she sees fit. Also, an intensive psychological study of more than fifty members conducted in 1975 by Dr. Allan Gerson produced not the slightest sign of "brainwashing." In fact, Dr. Gerson was surprised by the members' above-average mental health.

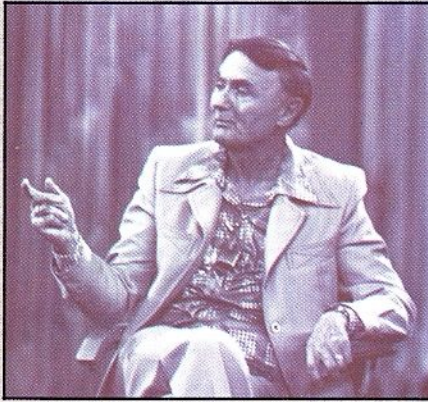
"DEPROGRAMMING"— REALITY-INDUCING THERAPY?

Parents sometimes make up their own minds to hire deprogrammers. More often, however, the deprogrammers actively persuade parents that their sons and daughters have been "brainwashed" by the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement or are under its "mind control." Some parents have hired vigilantes like Ted Patrick (who is now serving a one-year jail sentence, in Orange County, California, for false imprisonment of a Kṛṣṇa member). Such "deprogramming" amounts to nothing less than extreme psychological and often physical intimidation aimed at inducing a person to renounce his or her life-style. Usually, the "deprogrammers" isolate and restrain the victim. Then they confiscate and destroy religious apparel and possessions (books, holy pictures, and so forth), and they vilify the person's beliefs through hours of shouting. In one case, they physically beat a pregnant mother. In another case, a Hare Kṛṣṇa member refused to stop reciting prayers, and they filled his mouth with ice and gagged him. Such "deprogramming" often lasts for several weeks—all this to get the "brainwashed" person back to a "normal" state, in which he can again make "free choices." That these torture sessions have been euphemistically called "stress tests," "intensive therapy," and "reality-inducing therapy" should not, perhaps, strike us as unusual. In our age of Orwellian "Newspeak," Hitler named

his death camps "Charitable Foundations for Institutional Care."

THE THREAT TO YOU

"Deprogrammers" are a ruthless bunch. William Willoughby, religion editor of the Washington *Star*, revealed the mercenary side of "deprogramming" when he wrote, "The fees they're charging run \$3,000.00 or more for the kidnappings and brainwashing (pardon me, deprogramming). . . ." Frighteningly, "deprogramming" groups have gotten police, judges, and district attorneys to bend the law in assisting "deprogrammings." And, because of their mercenary motives, "deprogrammers" have ab-



Dr. Stillson Judah, a professor and Librarian Emeritus at Berkeley's Graduate Theological Union, speaks out against "deprogramming." *Church & State* magazine says, "Let us bury it before it buries our liberties."

ducted not only Hare Kṛṣṇa members but also Catholics and Protestants, among others. In *Human Behavior* magazine Wayne Sage reports, "The deprogrammers say, privately, that they would like to use their techniques against Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses." If "deprogrammers" and their academic accomplices succeed in getting legal cover for their crimes, any American who lives a life contrary to their standards will face abduction and torture. Judge Logan Moore said to Ted Patrick on the day of his sentencing, "This country never functioned well under vigilantes. Your efforts are such, and if we ruled in your favor, it wouldn't stop with anyone. We would have condemned religious freedom."

The National Council of Churches and other organizations have looked into the issue. The Council found no evidence of brainwashing among the religions, but plenty of evidence to condemn the deprogrammers. The Council's Governing Board said, "... kidnapping to compel religious deconversion is criminal." The world's leading expert on brainwashing, Dr. William Sargant, said in

Britain's *Guardian* (October 4, 1976) that "deprogramming" "is the sort of thing Charles Manson used on people and very much the sort of thing that was done to Patty Hearst." Dr. Sargant concluded by saying that he would be "dreadfully horrified" if "deprogramming" came into use in Britain.

In another recent editorial, *Church & State* magazine said, "For the state through the police and courts to allow and thereby encourage religious kidnapping is for the state itself to blast gaping holes through the constitutional shields of our most basic rights which the police and courts exist to defend. . . . Law enforcement officials must protect the rights of all persons to believe as they please and must restrain the deprogrammers. . . . Let us bury it ["deprogramming"] before it buries our liberties."

What disturbs us most is the mistrust that "deprogrammers" are planting in the public's mind about meditation, yoga, and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Science is proving the effectiveness of these techniques in advancing the cause of personal and social health. And, in December, 1976, Governor Edmund Brown, Jr., urged the sending of "priests, nuns, ministers, and Hare Kṛṣṇa followers" into California's mental hospitals to help improve patient conditions. Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra meditation is helping thousands of Americans to raise their consciousness to higher and happier levels. It seems tragic that this good work is being maligned.

PLEASE HELP US CORRECT THIS SITUATION

There is a threat to our basic human rights, and the time for action is now. We urge all Americans of conscience to take a stand against criminal "deprogramming"—please contact the press and radio and television stations and the police, the courts, and other government agencies in your local area. We especially urge psychiatrists, psychologists, and doctors to speak out against the misuse of their professions. To help in the New York case, write a letter (protesting the absurd and unprecedented charge of "illegal imprisonment by mind control") to

Nicholas Ferraro
District Attorney, Queens County
125-01 Queens Boulevard
Kew Gardens, New York 11415

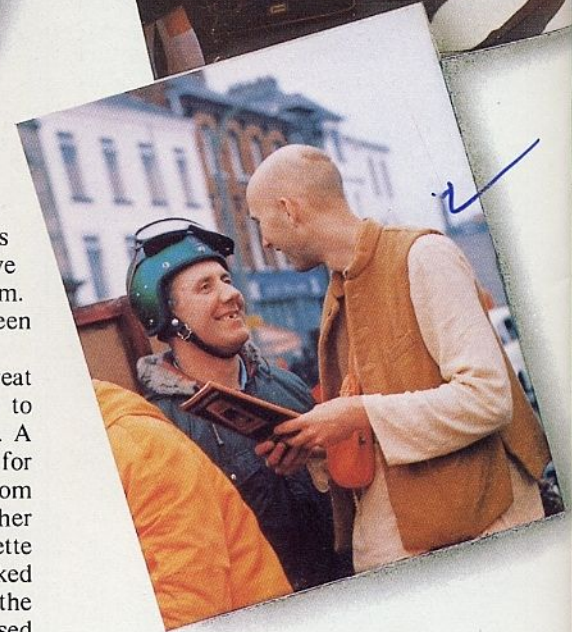
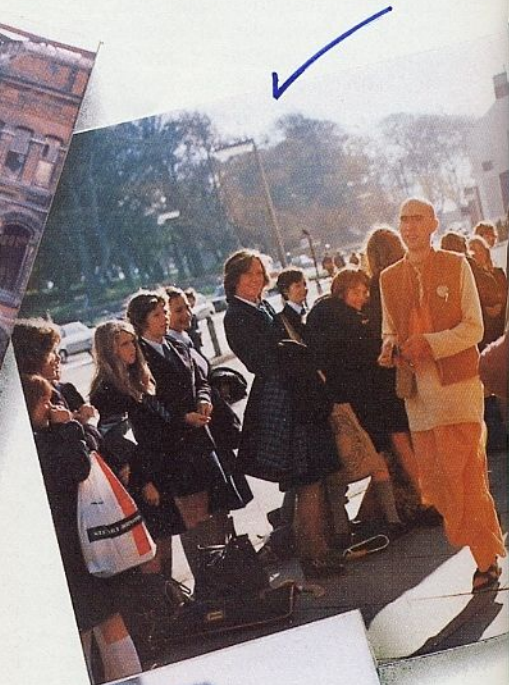
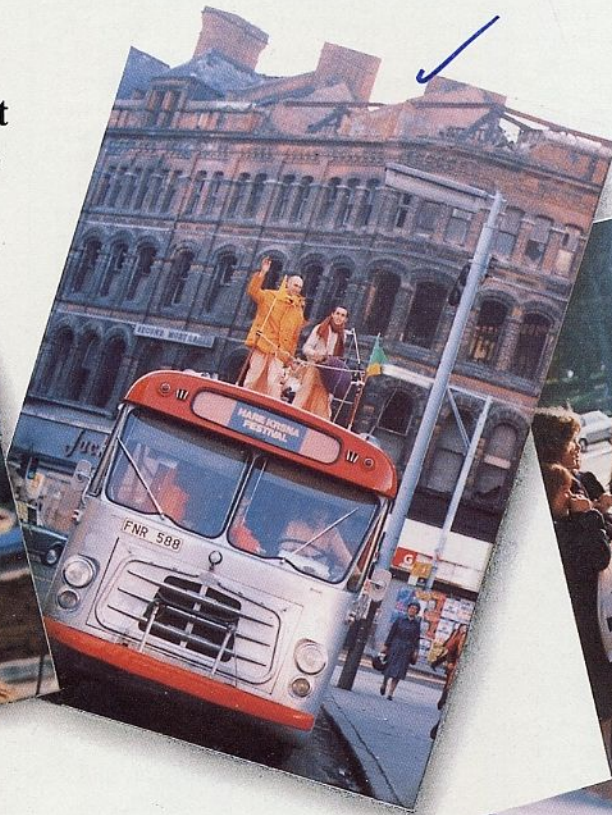
If you want more information on how you can help, or if you are a professional (doctor, lawyer, psychologist) and can give us advice or assistance, please write to

Michael A. Grant
3764 Watseka Ave.
L.A. CA 90034

Notes from Northern Ireland

A former civil rights worker went to the war-torn island with an ancient peace formula. It was disarmingly simple.

by Gurudāsa Swami



“Civil War in Northern Ireland.” “Bomb Scare in Hotel Europa—Three Die in Terrorist Attack.” The headlines screamed across the world from the tiny island.

“Control Zone—Unattended Vehicles Will Be Towed Away,” the yellow signs shouted, and they seemed to be everywhere. At first we couldn’t figure out the reason for the signs, but we soon learned: terrorists put a bomb in a stolen car, drive the car-bomb up to a target, then run and let the bomb go off. Usually, the target is a pub; more casualties that way. We also saw plenty of oil drums filled with cement and connected by thick iron bars, looking like so many fat folk dancers with their arms on one another’s shoulders. These drums keep car-bombs from coming up past the curbs and next to the buildings.

A man with one leg, another with a patch over an eye, a maimed child—all were common sights. At the infamous junction of the Falls and Shankhill roads (the scene of much of Belfast’s violence), we met a man from the bomb squad, which is called “Felix” because they need nine lives and then some. Whenever there’s a bomb scare or an unattended package or car, they come to

investigate and, if necessary, to deactivate. “Our job isn’t easy,” the man explained, “because these bombs have devices that explode if you move them or even shine a flashlight on them. Quite a few of my friends have been blown up.”

One day we saw and heard two great explosions and two buildings blown to the ground. Rubble was everywhere. A blackish cloud hung over the area for hours, and human limbs stuck out from between the wood and stone. Another day we were on the way to a launderette with large bundles of clothes. We asked directions, and when we reached the spot where the launderette was supposed to be, there was nothing left. Most times when we went to use a phone box, we’d find it bomb-gutted.

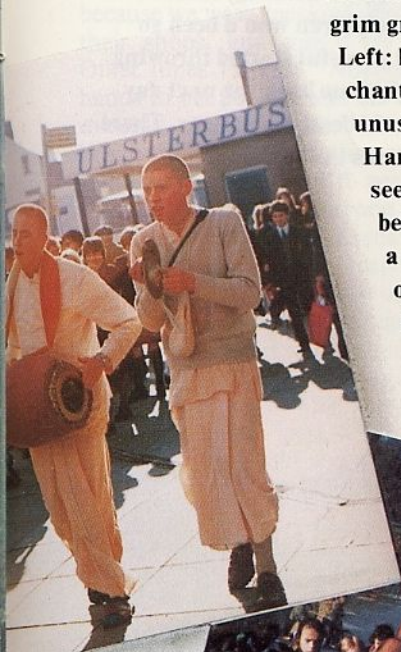
By asking a few questions, we learned that the terrorists start their training at age five and their vandalism at age six. In fact, a six-year-old’s first duty is setting bombs off. As a result, bands of youngsters roam the streets, and bombs may explode at any moment. One day we noticed that except for a few smouldering scraps, a huge gasoline storage tank had disappeared.

On every street we saw the remnants

of houses that may once have been the whole world to the people who lived in them. The illusion was gone now, of course. Here was bare-faced evidence of how the material world changes and decays. You just couldn’t get around it—something once quite solid now destroyed, someone once quite alive now dead, someone once quite happy now heartbroken. You could say this for Belfast: the old adage “Here today, gone tomorrow” really hit home.

The people’s character seemed just

Far left: here I am, leading the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa on a grim gray day in the town square of Lurgan, near Belfast. Left: here, atop a refurbished old Swedish bus, we're chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa in downtown Belfast. Middle: on an unusually sunny morning in Bangor, three devotees chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Nearby, some school girls waiting for a bus seem to be enjoying what they're hearing. Middle, below: a motorcyclist in Lurgan talks with a devotee. In a town called either Derry or Londonderry (depending on your point of view), a man told us, "No one comes here anymore—they're too afraid." Below: the dramas and the chanting were highlights of our festivals. (This one took place at Woodvale Park, on Belfast's Shankhill Road.)



about as changeable—a strange mixture of piety and mischief, peace and violence, happiness and sadness, mysticism and cynicism, friendliness and suspicion. Very rarely did anyone walk alone; they were more likely to stay in groups, almost like herds of animals leery of attack. Younger children told me that they didn't go out after dark, for fear of being shot. Anxiety appeared to be the watchword.

One man who visited our mobile bus-temple said it seemed like "a portable oasis." It was a small oasis, to be sure, but anyone could come in off the street and take in the peaceful feeling of the little temple room and its library of age-old Vedic literatures, English renderings by my spiritual master, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Our advance man, Bhaumadeva dāsa, would go ahead of the bus to see

professors, community leaders, terrorist leaders, police spokesmen, youth groups, and newspaper and t.v. reporters, and he set up a good number of festival programs for our group. A number of people were so glad we were coming that they gave us an honorarium. In a town called either Derry or Londonderry (depending on your point of view), one man was crying. "We thank you so much!" he said. "No one comes here anymore—they're too afraid. They won't even come for money, what to speak of for an idea or belief, as you people have."

In Belfast we saw hundreds of bombed-out houses, with windows broken and roofs charred—blackish skele-

tons that used to be brownstone shelters. Soldiers carrying machine guns were a common sight. But life went on, the soldiers mixing with the shoppers, even though at any moment violence could break out. The people stepped over and through rubble as if it didn't exist.

On the day we arrived, television, radio, and newspaper interviewers came to talk with us. One man asked, "What can you suggest that would put an end to the fighting between the Catholics and the Protestants?"

"We can overcome this sectarianism," I said, "if we can understand what's *inside our bodies*—if we can relate on a loving basis of soul to soul. This fighting because of 'Catholicism' or 'Protestantism' or any 'ism' is artificial. Love of God is for everybody; it's not 'Catholic' or protestant.' Would we say, 'He's Mr. Green Coat; he's Mr. Orange Shirt'?

Then why should we say 'He's Catholic; he's Protestant'? What is the historical or geographical beginning of love of God? It has no beginning or end. So the alternative to this problem of sectarianism is to understand that we are not these material bodies, with all their labels. We're spiritual persons; we all have the same spiritual father."

In a slightly challenging tone, a t.v. announcer asked, "Do you think that Northern Ireland can use another religion? Do you think another religion will help?"

I answered, "This is not exactly a religion; it's a way of life. Northern Ireland and the world could surely use another way of life." The man ended his interview with "Thank you" and a thoughtful "Hmmm."

Many people would approach us as we went around the country. Sometimes they'd say, "If there were more like you, this would be a better place." Apparently they wanted to hear us, because they made room for us right in the middle of their towns. So, surrounded by soldiers, barricades, and barbed wire, we put on festivals. The first day in Lurgan a huge crowd of people came.

Of course, at night we always made it a point to stay outside the cities, because of the possible violence. In Lurgan, for instance, we stayed near a big lake. In Lisburne, we found a little country lane.

In Bangor, a port town, the people gave us permission to stay at Pickie Pool Marina, a natural seawater pool.

We put on festivals in Bangor (on the coast) for three days. Each one of our programs included chanting and explaining the *mahā-mantra* (Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare), a short talk with questions and answers, a drama, a film, and vegetarian *prasāda* (spiritual food). The people were really receptive.

One of the highlights, we found, was the drama. We put on two street plays, *The Boatman and the Scholar* and *The Genie in the Bottle*. The latter depicted a genie who came out of the bottle warning that if he didn't get something to do, he'd kill the person who'd set him free. The idea was that if you don't engage your mind in something useful, your mind will do away with its master, your intelligence. Bhaumadeva, our advance man, made a delightful genie—with green cheeks, purple lips, wide, bulging eyes, and so on. He'd spring out of the "bottle" (a blanket) right there on the street. In the towns and villages we did this play many times, and the people would get amazingly involved.

At first the king (who had liberated the genie) would say, "I want you to repair and wash all the broken windows in Belfast." That's a lot of broken windows, but the genie would make a noise, run off, and be back practically in no time.

"It's done, master."

Next the king would ask the genie, "Trim all the hedges in my kingdom," and the genie would run off and come back again almost before the king could turn around.

Finally, with sword flashing, the genie would say, "Give me something else to do—or I'll kill you!"

When the king couldn't think of anything else to keep the genie busy, he'd muse to himself, "Ah! The genie should chant Hare Kṛṣṇa—that's one thing you can do forever!"

At that point, the king encouraged the whole crowd to help the genie in chanting, and the people would join in the chanting to help keep the genie satisfied. A young girl said, "This is the third time I've seen this play; I like the genie."

Many times we'd talk with people on the street—all kinds of people, some from the Ulster Defense Army (the U.D.A.), others from the I.R.A., still others from the peace movement, and occasionally a few from "Felix," the bomb squad.

In Belfast, almost daily we went into the City Centre and through the bar-

ricades of the Control Zone, where we put on a street drama, gave an address, and chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa. The people received us quite well. Once, when a drunken man tried to disrupt the play, the audience shouted him away.

Even the radio and television spread the word when we were getting ready to go into the two big trouble areas, the Shankhill and Falls roads. One was a Protestant stronghold, the other a Catholic stronghold; fighting would break out at the junction. And these people weren't just squabbling or name-calling. They meant business and shot to

Below: here we are on the Falls Road, in Belfast. A few devotees are giving these children candy and invitations to come to a festival in a nearby park. Just when we were preparing to leave and had stopped chanting, some of these same children who'd been so joyous and peaceful started throwing stones. (We came back the next day and put on the festival anyway. There were no stones in the park.)



kill, and, as I say, their children were taking after them. Yet many from both sides would ask us "When are you coming? When you do, our house is the green one on the right" (or whatever). Once the car battery ran out, and I asked a gentleman to help. He did, and he asked me what we were doing in Northern Ireland. When I told him he said, "If there's anything you need—anything—just come to my house and ask me. Day or night—just ask."

On top of the bus we mounted a platform that held six to eight devotees. Then we installed a run-around railing and a public-address system, complete with two microphones and some sturdy speakers. All over Northern Ireland's towns and villages, most people were both friendly and eager to share our festive mood. Sometimes they'd dance in the street or give us "thumbs up" from their windows. Policemen and soldiers grinned. One trooper put his gun down and took a photo as we passed. The children ran out of holes in the battered

walls. Old people smiled and hobbled along after us, and many swayed their heads to one side (their silent way of saying, "That's nice"). Some of the kids jumped up and down when we went by, and many of them climbed onto the bus and joined us. Others just waved, and we waved back. Once, through open windows, what looked like a whole schoolhouseful of hands and faces waved and smiled.

People encouraged us in so many ways. They were especially friendly when we rode on the top of the bus like that. In a grand procession we'd go along the Falls Road, chanting and dancing on top of the bus. At the same time I'd announce that we were going to come to a specific park the next day and give out spiritual food. Then Bhaumadeva—the genie—would get out of the bus and pass out leaflets and candy. A million kids would follow him, as though he were handing out gold. They were chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and skipping and following the bus down the street.

Also, I'd talk to the people through the public-address system and encourage them to chant. Sometimes, when I saw people standing before their shops, I'd say something like, "Everyone in Nelly's Knitting Store should chant Hare Kṛṣṇa." They would be all excited because we were speaking about them in their shops, and they'd try to chant. Other times I'd say, "Anyone with his hands in his pockets and his front teeth missing should chant Hare Kṛṣṇa." When they realized that we were speaking about them, they'd perk up and chant. Or I'd say, "Anyone walking a dog should chant Hare Kṛṣṇa," or "All patients in the Royal Hospital should chant Hare Kṛṣṇa," and so on.

One very interesting thing happened in the Falls Road. Just when we were preparing to leave and had stopped chanting, some of the same children who'd been so joyous and peaceful reverted to their old ways. They started

on hearing it. Sometimes they'd come up, pretend to be interested, and suddenly start jeering. And sometimes young people would throw stones. Usually, though, the people were beautiful.

Take the Senior Citizens Club of Coleraine, for instance. The festival we put on for them was much like other festivals (including ones at the Overseas Students Club, the Baha'i hall, a girl's school called Fort Hill Intermediate, Ulster College, Queens College, and Londonderry Technical School).

"We're members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness," I began. "This isn't a new movement. It's been going on for thousands and thousands of years. In fact, the Vedic culture is as old as the planet. We're dedicated to simple living, with God as the goal and God as the center of all that we do. This life-style is also known as *bhakti-yoga*, the yoga of devotion.

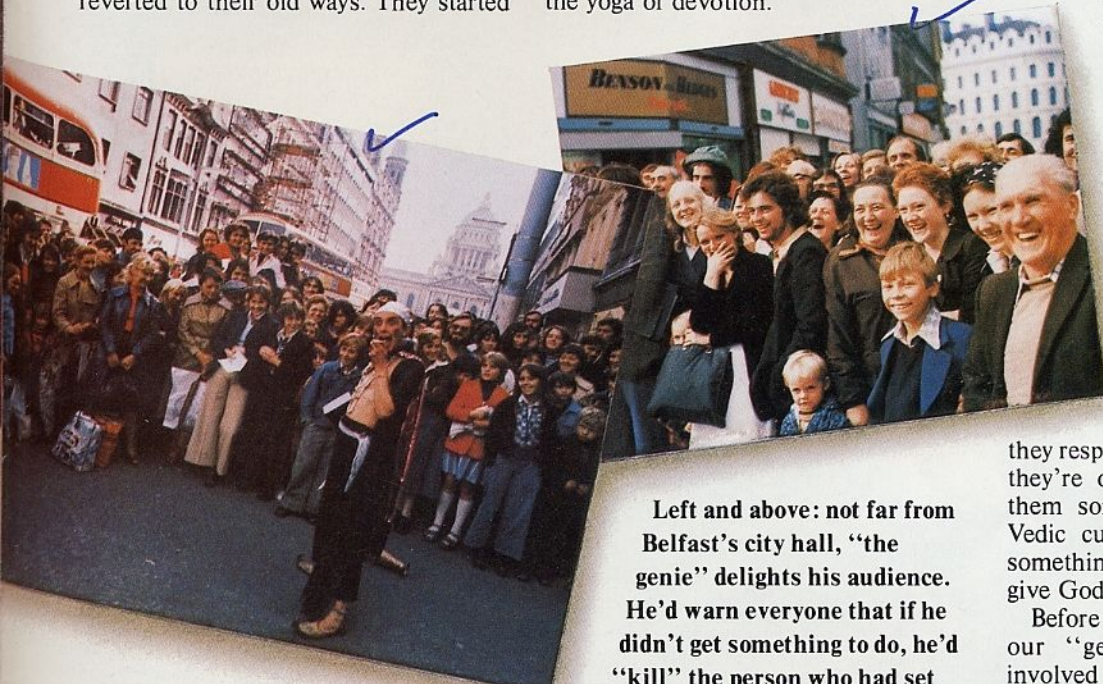
people said it after me.

"Now I'd like to introduce these ancient instruments. These little hand cymbals are called *karatālas*; they're made from old guns—certainly a nice alternative for Northern Ireland. This is the basic rhythm—one-two-three, one-two-three, one-two-three—and you can follow it by clapping your hands. Then I'd introduce the *mṛdaṅga* (an oblong clay drum whose small end makes a bell-like sound and whose big end makes a long, low sound) and the harmonium (a small, hand-pumped Indian "organ"). While everyone was clapping, I explained that chanting is a spiritual conversation. "First you hear the leader sing, and then you sing while he listens. So let's try it." The senior citizens got into the chanting easily and seemed to be really enjoying themselves. You'd have sworn they had done this before.

Then I spoke a little bit about the "old-age problem." "In the Vedic culture," I said, "people who were old and experienced in living were honored rather than neglected. Even if an older person couldn't walk far, people would come to hear him. This is called *sannyāsa*, the renounced stage of life. At that point all the knowledge, all the training, all the experience, all the practice that you've gained you give to others. Not that the very people you once supported now reject you—instead, they respect you all the more. Nowadays, they're only waiting for you to leave them something in your will. In the Vedic culture, the elderly really give something to the whole society—they give God consciousness."

Before the festival ended we put on our "genie" drama—everyone got involved in it—and again we had a question-and-answer session, feasting, and chanting. During the last chant the senior citizens got up and raised their arms "toward Kṛṣṇa" (I showed them, naturally), and we did "the swami step" (one foot crossing the other, back and forth—Śrīla Prabhupāda showed this to his first American students, back in 1966). So all of us chanted and danced together. When it was time to leave, these kind people said the festival had been "one of the best moments of our lives. Now, what more can we do for Kṛṣṇa?"

"If you and your children and grandchildren keep chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa," I said, "you'll see what more Kṛṣṇa can do for you. For one thing, you'll have peace here in Northern Ireland." 🙏



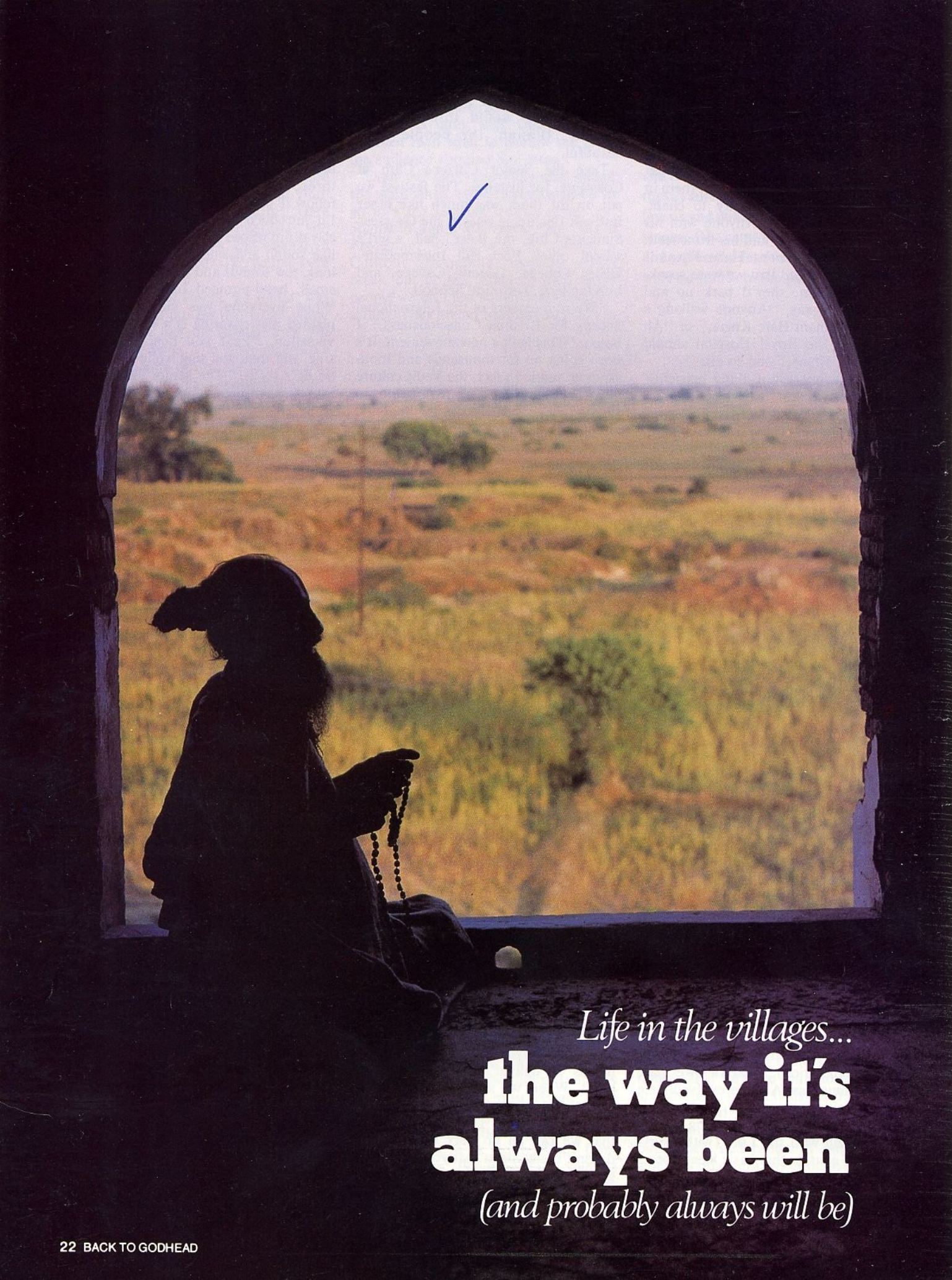
Left and above: not far from Belfast's city hall, "the genie" delights his audience. He'd warn everyone that if he didn't get something to do, he'd "kill" the person who had set him free. Many people would

follow us around the city to see the play again. A few said, "We haven't seen so many smiles here in a long time."

picking up stones and throwing them at us on top of the bus, and we had to leave rather hurriedly. It seemed that as soon as the chanting stopped, the genie of the mind wanted to go on a killing spree again and block out the natural good feelings for Kṛṣṇa and everybody else.

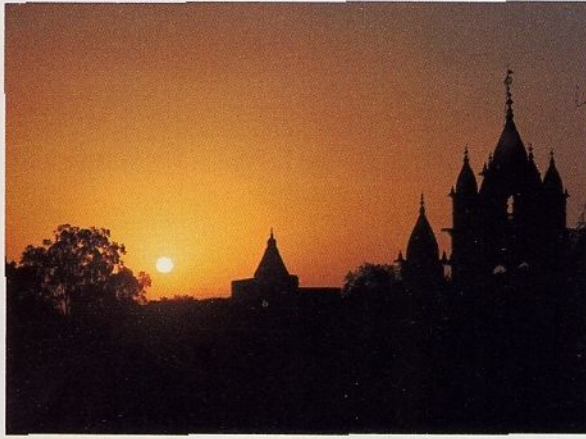
It was becoming clear. When someone is thinking "I'm Irish," "I'm American," "I'm African," that's a lower state of consciousness. A more evolved state of consciousness would be, "I'm a spiritual individual; I have a lasting, loving relationship with the Lord, with everyone." Of course, that basic idea appears in all the scriptures of the world. You'd think it would have sunk in by now, but some of these people weren't too keen

"The backbone of this yoga process is chanting or singing the holy name of the Lord. This chanting is called a *mantra*. The word *manas* means 'mind,' and *tr* means 'to deliver'—a cleansing of the mind. When we sing Hare Kṛṣṇa, we cleanse the mind of all the dust that has accumulated there. This is a yoga process that we can all do very simply. Yoga doesn't really mean that you have to do gymnastics or push your nose; it means that you link up with God, Kṛṣṇa." Then I said the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, and the



Life in the villages...
**the way it's
always been**
(and probably always will be)

Photographs by Bhārgava dāsa
and Muralīvadana dāsa



Sunset casts a soft glow over sublime architecture (left). In these villages we find fields, flowers, lakes, trees, buildings, and pathways that satisfy our yearning for beauty. The boy and his cow (below) and the sage chanting mantras on his beads (left page) remind us what civilization is about. The cow provides milk, butter, yogurt, and cheese, the bull pulls the plow, and the man of learning offers wisdom—he guides people toward their life's fulfillment.

Reportedly someone once asked Gandhi, “What do you think of Western civilization?”

He quipped, “I think it would be a good idea.”

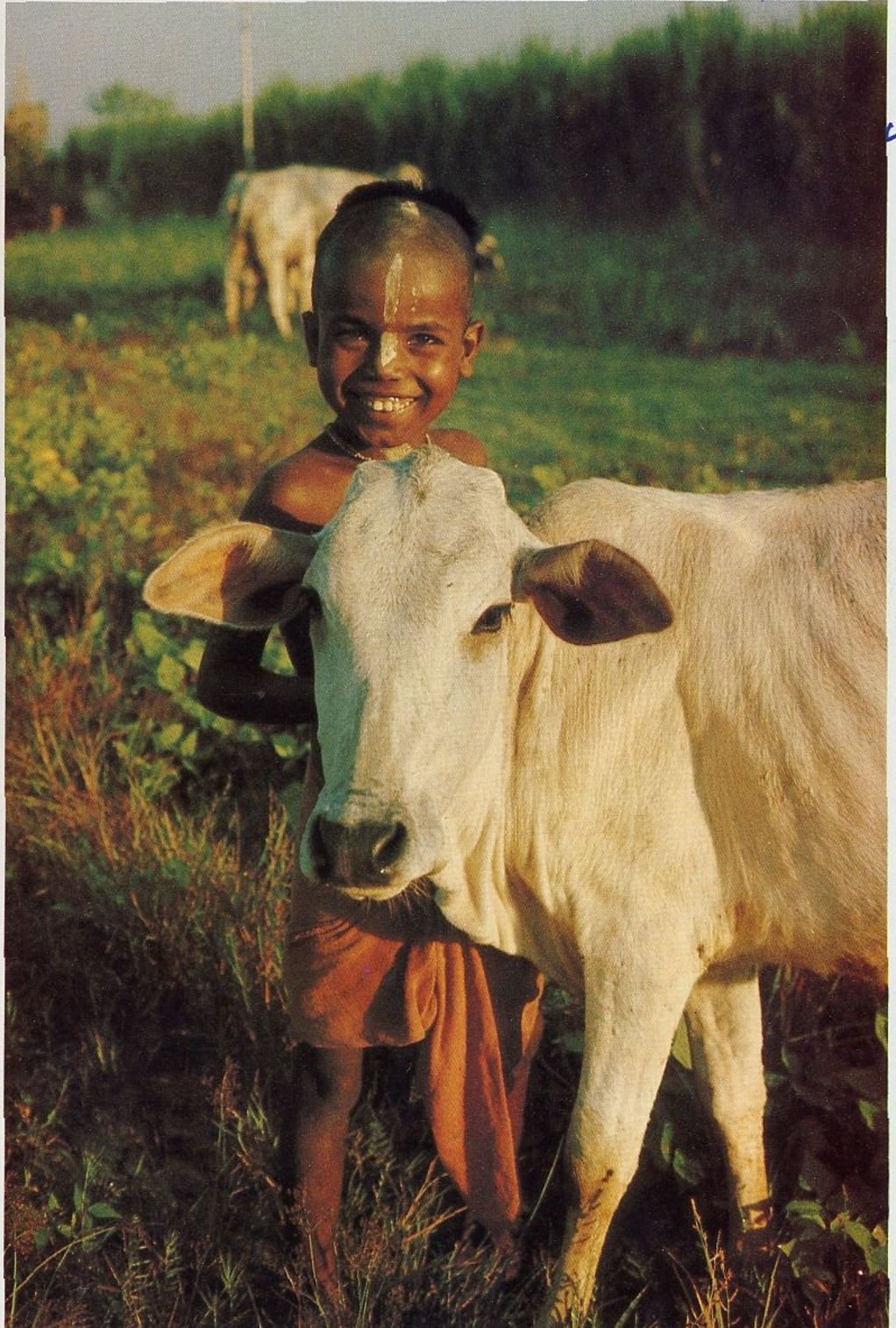
Another time he observed, “The real strength of India [of the age-old Vedic civilization] lies in her villages.”

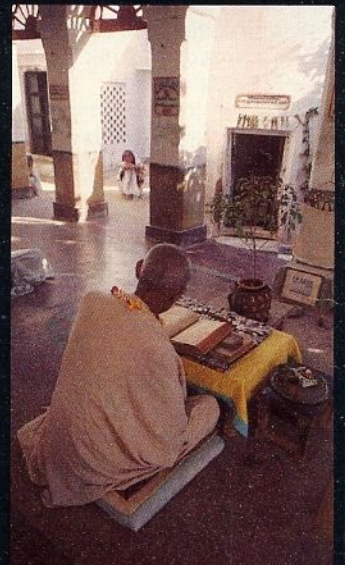
It used to be easy for us New Yorkers and Londoners and Chicagoans and Parisians to shrug off remarks like these. (“What do those people know, anyway?”)

It used to be easy, until people like Dr. Theodore Roszak and E.F. Schumacher (a British economist, no less) pointed to corruption and pollution and started writing books like *Where the Waste-land Ends* and *Small Is Beautiful*—telling us what those people knew all along.

“The cultivation and expansion of needs,” says Schumacher, “is the antithesis of wisdom. . . the antithesis of freedom and peace. Every increase of needs tends to increase one’s dependence on outside forces over which one cannot have control, and therefore increases existential fear. Only by a reduction of needs can one promote a genuine reduction in those tensions which are the ultimate cause of strife and war.”

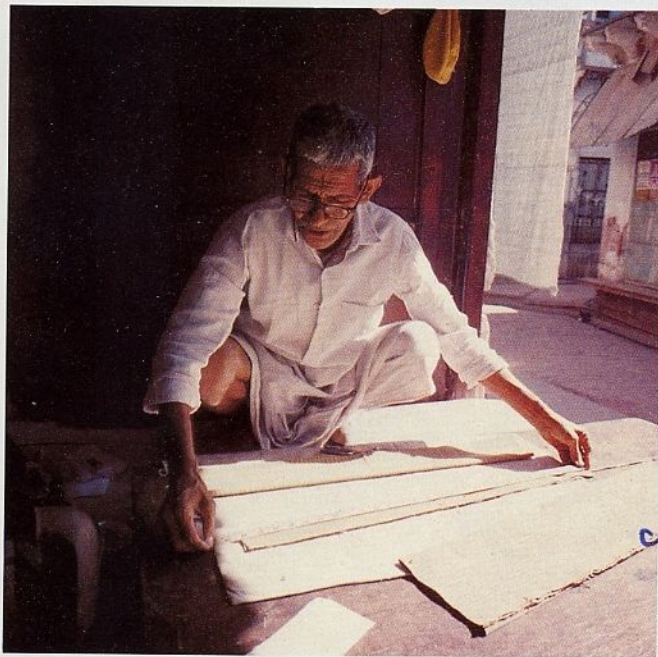
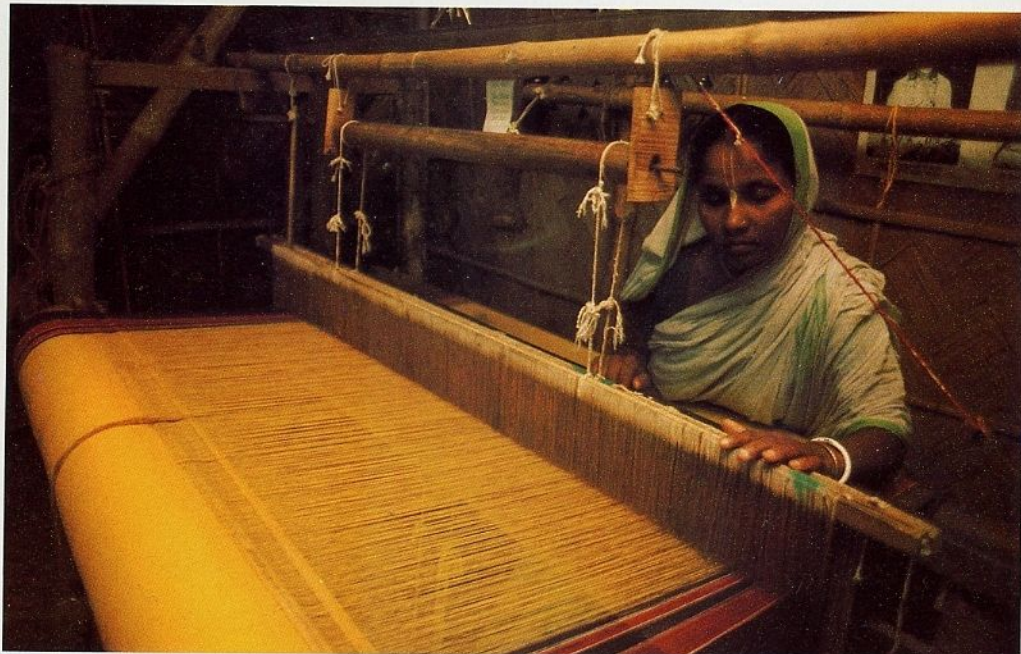
The people on these pages make use of simple technology—things that really save time and labor. They just don’t care for technology that saves you little and enslaves you a lot. They have enough of everything, but over profit margins and migraine headaches they prefer peace of mind and freedom of soul.





This man (left) runs only one store (not a chain of them), and he just does what he can to keep it well stocked with grapes, mangoes, persimmons, oranges, and other things for his village's people. Mother Nature does the rest (and seems to be doing fairly well). Perhaps this abundance isn't so surprising, since from childhood to old age these people absorb themselves in God-conscious culture. The young lad (top) is holding an ektar, a one-stringed gourd instrument. During his lifetime he'll have all kinds of cultural experiences, from drum playing and drawing to study and self-realization. When he's as old as the old gentleman (above), his life will still be unfolding.

These people sometimes use simple gadgets; it's just that they don't let the gadgets use *them*. With his spinning wheel (below, left) this man makes raw cotton, wool, or silk into thread. With her handloom (right) this lady makes thread into fabric. (Here, in fact, she's fashioning a sari. The decorative borders call for exquisite craftsmanship.) Finally, the tailor (below, right) takes the fabric plus his tape measure, pencil, scissors, and needle and thread (maybe a sewing machine, too) and makes you a custom shirt or jacket, or whatever. All this without smokestacks or punch clocks or shutdowns or markups. Things are plain and simple, and peaceful.

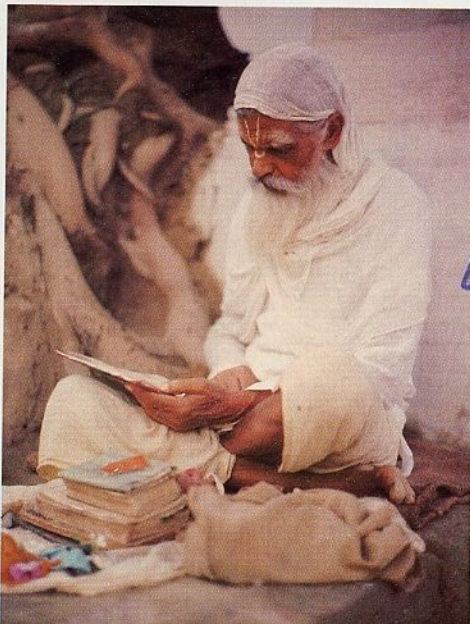


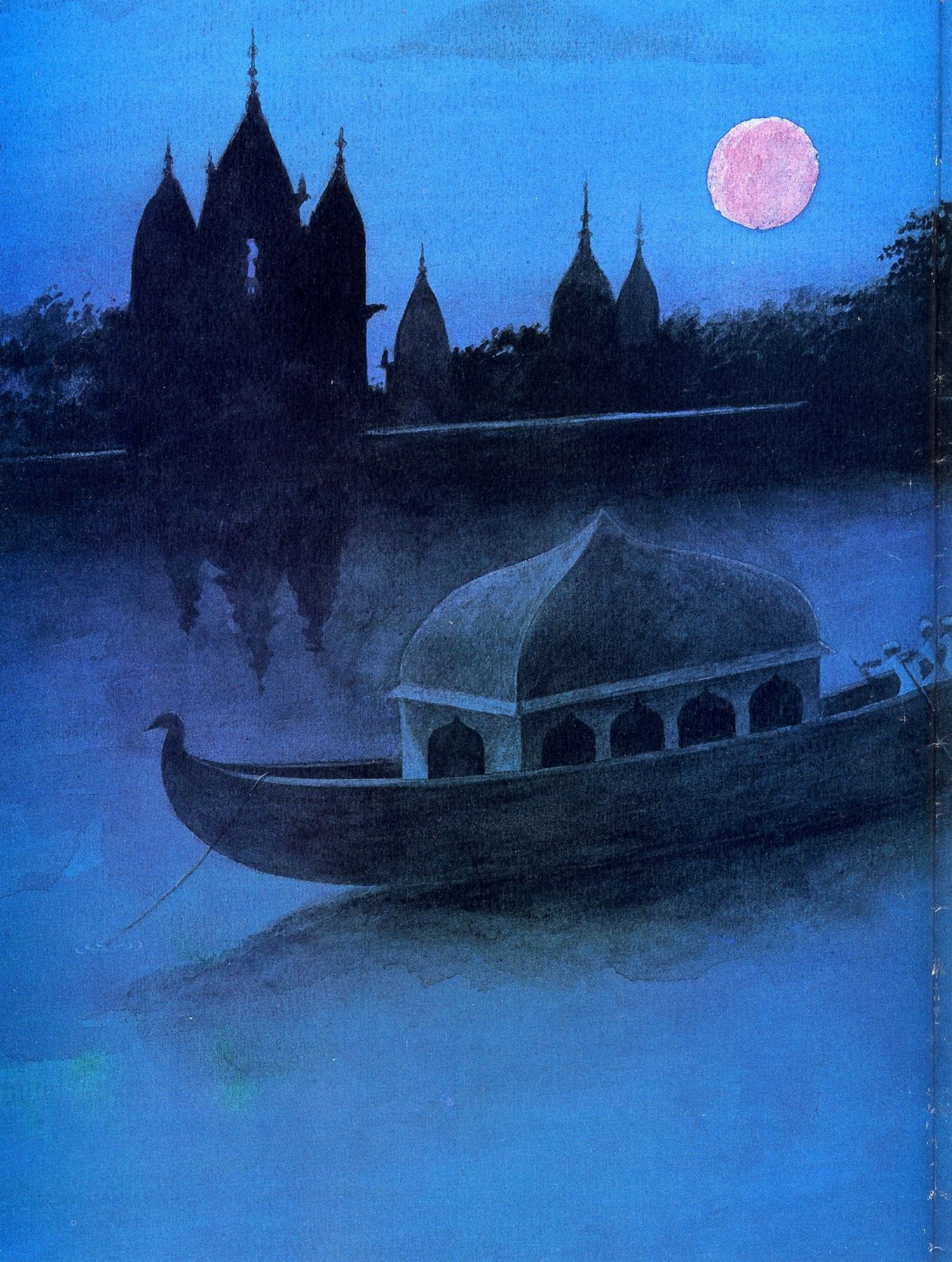
This man (right) is an intellectual, though he may or may not be able to tell you about Newtonian physics. He studies the ancient Vedic literatures, which answer questions like "Who are we really?" "Why are we here?" and "Where are we going when we leave?"

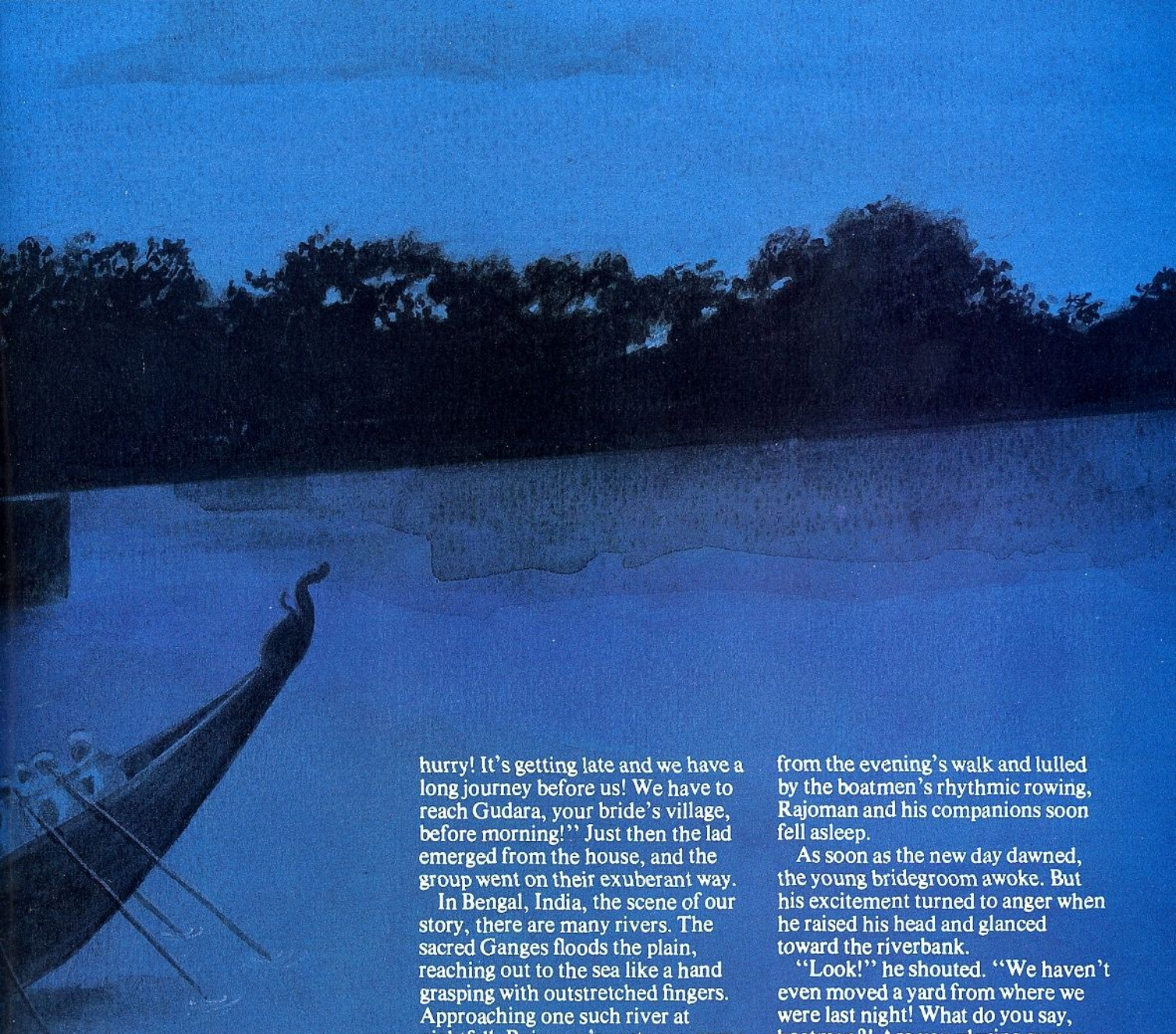
As we've seen, the Vedic civilization (the "wisdom civilization") rests upon the cow and bull (rather than the slaughterhouse and factory) and upon the real intellectual (the man of wisdom). Here Mr. Schumacher makes a comment: "The neglect, indeed the rejection, of wisdom has gone so far that most of our intellectuals have not

even the faintest idea what the term could mean. As a result, they always tend to try and cure a disease by intensifying its causes. The diseases having been caused by allowing cleverness to displace wisdom, no amount of clever research is likely to produce a cure. . . . Wisdom can be *found* only inside oneself. . . . We are suffering from a metaphysical disease, and the cure must therefore be metaphysical."

People like the one pictured here can tell us the cure. They and the Vedic literatures they study recommend chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and living simply—for freedom, peace, and wisdom. 🙏







THE WEDDING VOYAGE

It was the eve of Rajoman's wedding day. In joyful anticipation he put on his finest silk turban, tunic, and robes, and then his most precious jeweled ornaments. As he rushed to join his father and friends, he heard them calling, "Rajoman! Please

hurry! It's getting late and we have a long journey before us! We have to reach Gudara, your bride's village, before morning!" Just then the lad emerged from the house, and the group went on their exuberant way.

In Bengal, India, the scene of our story, there are many rivers. The sacred Ganges floods the plain, reaching out to the sea like a hand grasping with outstretched fingers. Approaching one such river at nightfall, Rajoman's party saw some boatmen clustered around a campfire.

"Ho! Boatmen!" Rajoman's father called out. "Take us to the village of Gudara and you'll earn a week's wages in one night!"

The head boatman looked over the well-dressed group and said, "You're going to a wedding?"

"Certainly! Can't you see how my son has become a great lord today? But tomorrow," the father laughed, "he shall become the slave of the beautiful maiden Opal!"

"Ha ha! Well, climb aboard, you happy people! We'll get you to Gudara by morning, for we have a fair wind to help us, and strong backs as well!"

Now the marriage party boarded the simple but sturdy craft. Tired

from the evening's walk and lulled by the boatmen's rhythmic rowing, Rajoman and his companions soon fell asleep.

As soon as the new day dawned, the young bridegroom awoke. But his excitement turned to anger when he raised his head and glanced toward the riverbank.

"Look!" he shouted. "We haven't even moved a yard from where we were last night! What do you say, boatman?! Are you playing games with me?! If so, you're in for trouble!"

"Now hold on!" the boatman replied. "Don't forget that we've been working hard all night long—while you slept. I'm as perplexed about this as you are!"

Then, from the stern of the boat, Rajoman's father cried out, "Look here! I've solved the mystery! All this time the anchor's been sunk into the riverbed!"

Our human body is like a boat, and the success of our voyage depends on how we use our mind—as an anchor, or a rudder. If we keep our mind sunk into self-serving, we'll stay moored here in this world, lifetime after lifetime. If we keep our mind engaged in serving the Supreme Lord, then we'll have smooth sailing to spiritual enlightenment.

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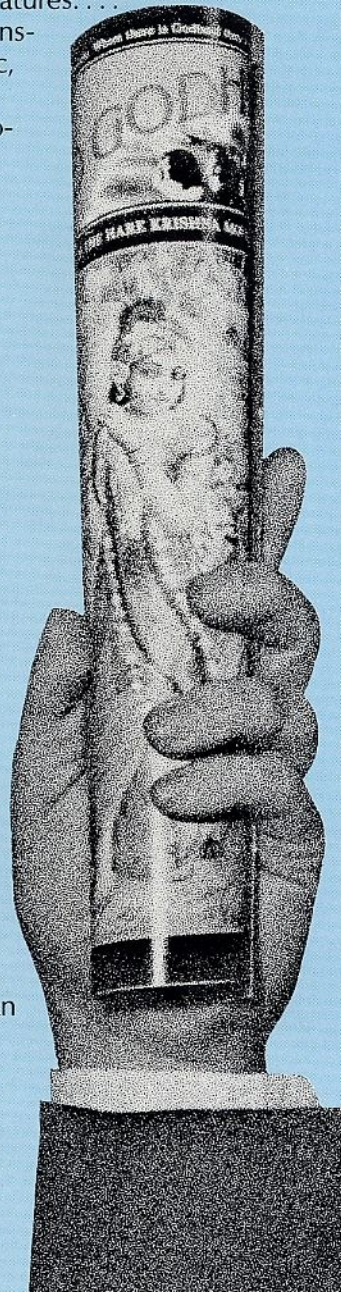
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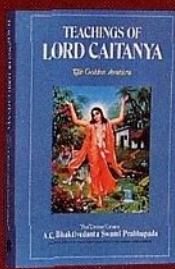
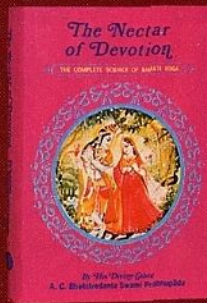
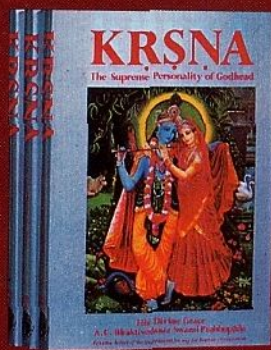
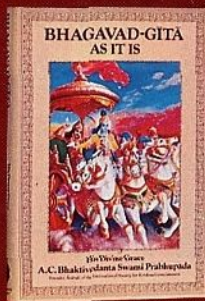
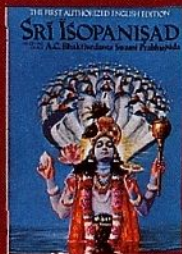
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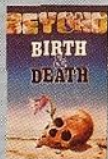
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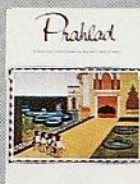
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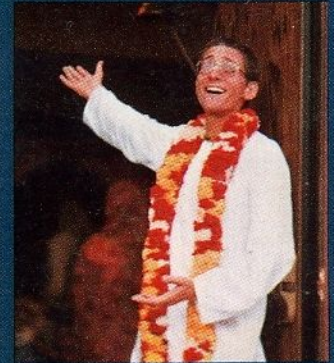
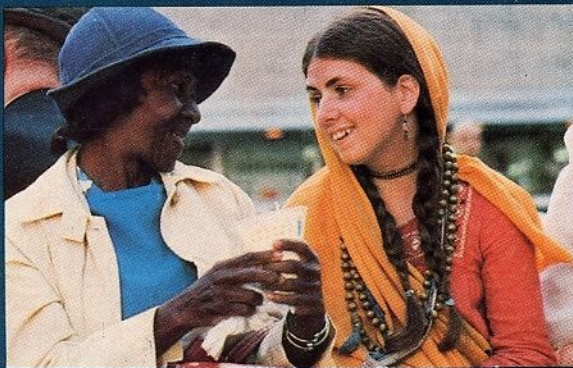
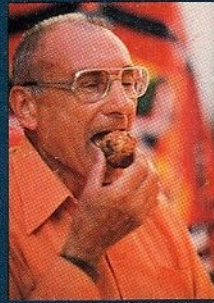
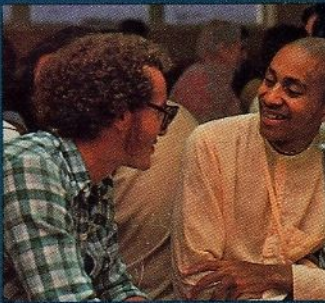
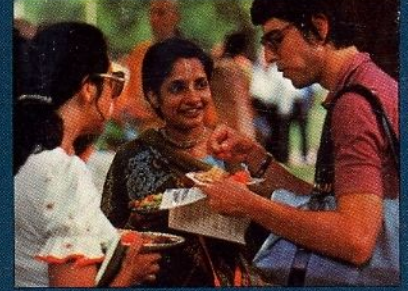
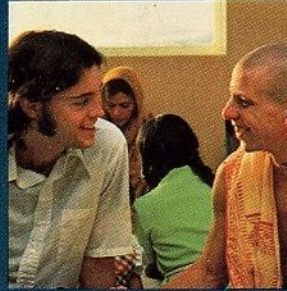
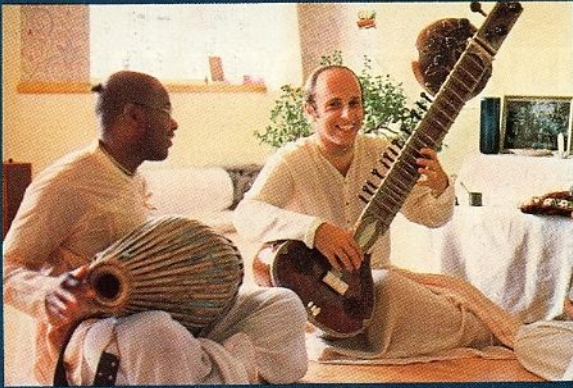
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