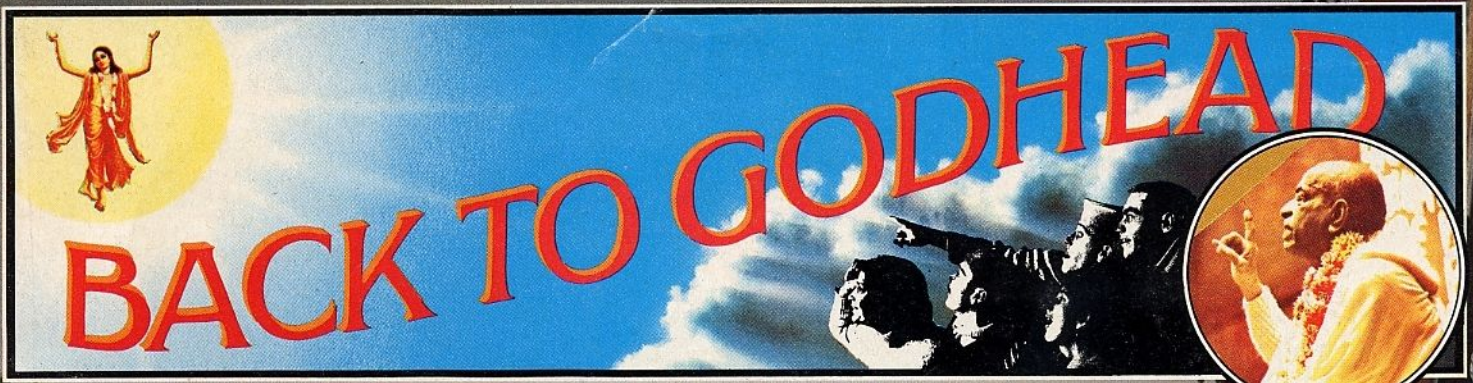
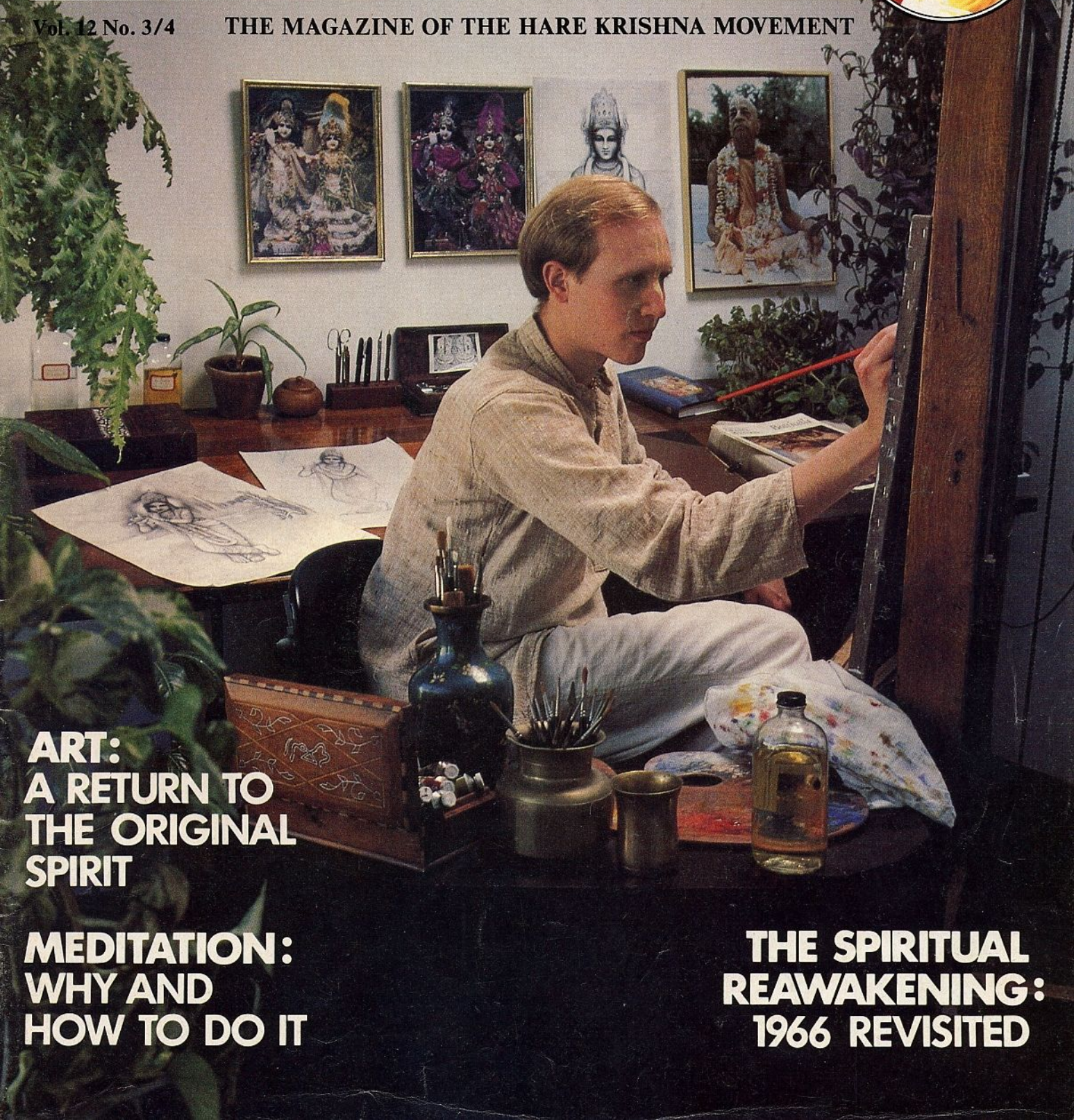


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



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THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

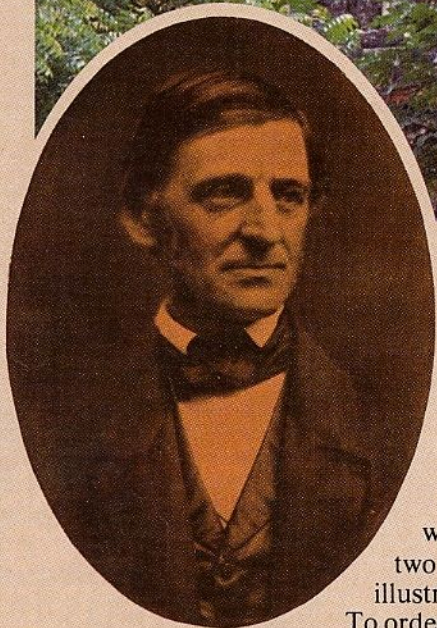


**ART:
A RETURN TO
THE ORIGINAL
SPIRIT**

**MEDITATION:
WHY AND
HOW TO DO IT**

**THE SPIRITUAL
REAWAKENING:
1966 REVISITED**

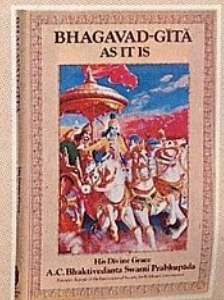
Yoga and Meditation: The Book that Started It All



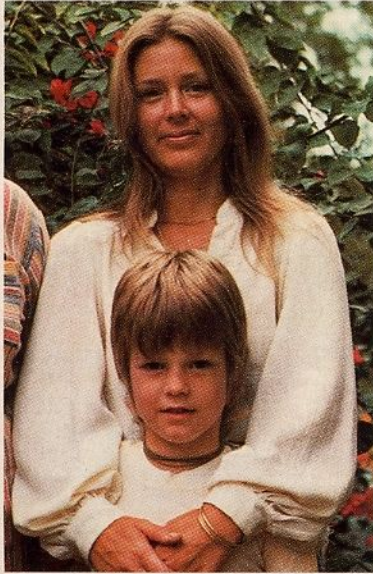
"*Bhagavad-gītā*—it was the first of books; it was as if an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an old intelligence which in another age and climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Journals*

Bhagavad-gītā As It Is, by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. The largest-selling, most widely-used edition of the *Gītā* in the Western world (more than two and one-half million copies in print). 330 pages, 55 full-color illustrations. Hardbound: \$5.95. Softbound: \$2.95.
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Chant and be happy...



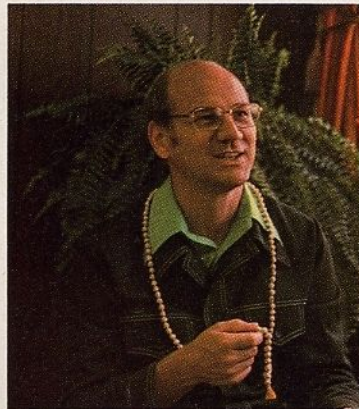
Jane Lahner, jewelry designer, with son Jason: "Chanting makes me more perceptive, more in harmony with everything and everyone around me."



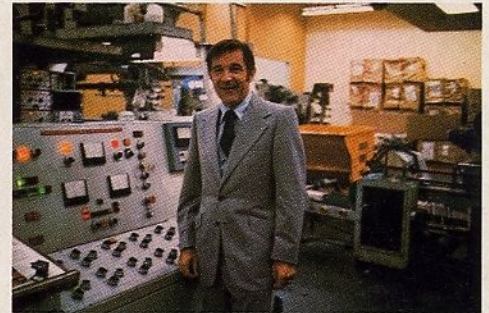
Mrs. Sally Raleigh, merchandiser: "When I'm nervous I find chanting very calming. I don't get shaken up at little things."



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



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



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



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

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



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



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

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

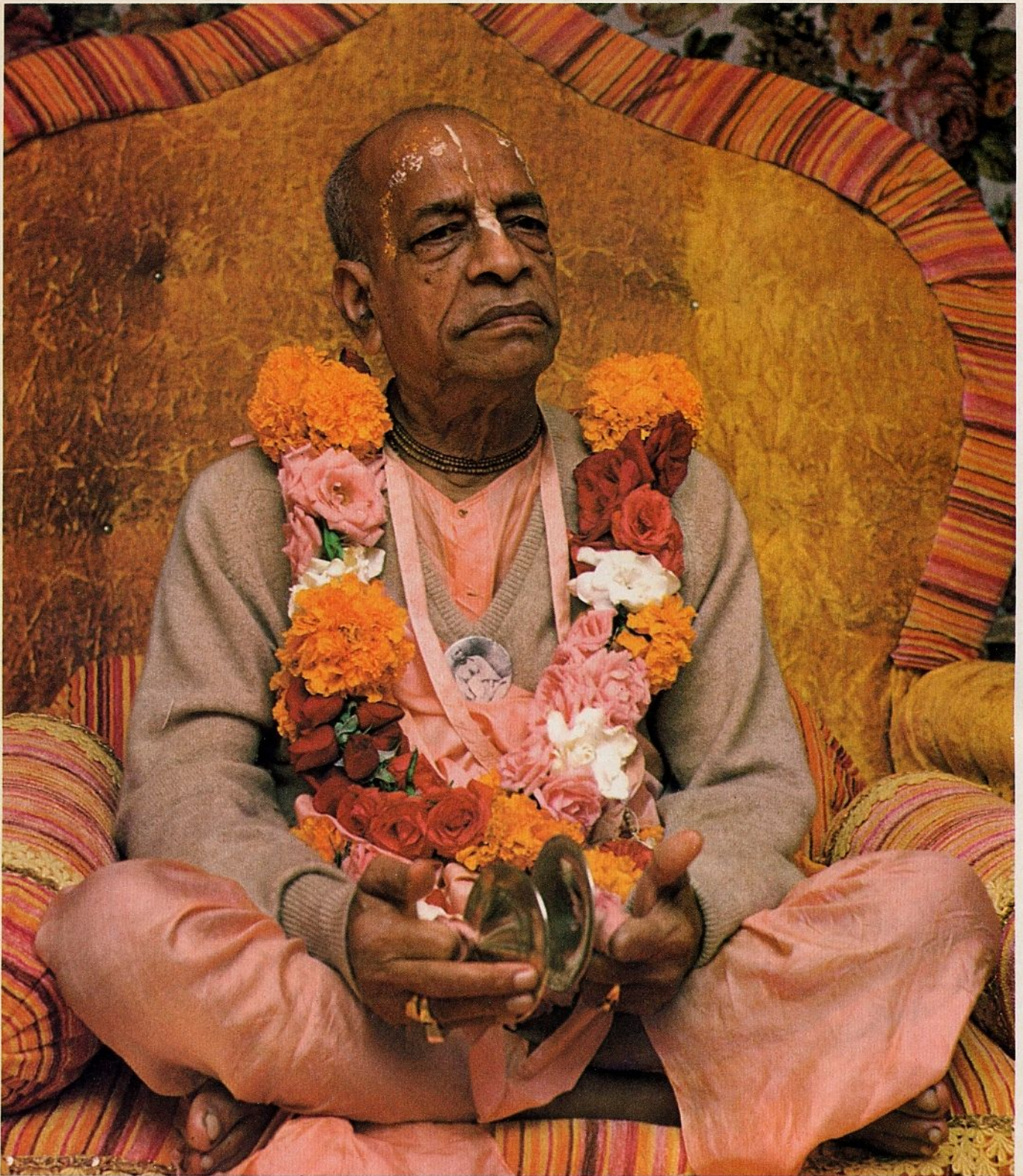


Photo: Bhārgava dāsa

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

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

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

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

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A Short Statement of the Philosophy of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

1. By cultivating a bona fide spiritual science, we can be free from anxiety and achieve pure, unending, blissful consciousness in this lifetime.
2. We are not our bodies but eternal spirit souls, parts and parcels of God (Kṛṣṇa).
3. Kṛṣṇa is the eternal, all-knowing, omnipresent, all-powerful, and all-attractive Personality of Godhead, the sustaining energy of the entire cosmic creation, and the seed-giving father of all living beings.
4. The Absolute Truth is present in all the world's great scriptures, particularly the ancient Vedic literatures, whose *Bhagavad-gītā* records God's actual words.
5. We should learn the Vedic knowledge from a genuine spiritual master—one who has no selfish motives and whose mind is firmly fixed on Kṛṣṇa.
6. Before we eat, we should offer to the Lord the food that sustains us. Then Kṛṣṇa becomes the offering and purifies us.
7. We should offer to Kṛṣṇa all that we do and do nothing for our own sense gratification.
8. The recommended way to achieve mature love of God in this age of Kali (quarrel) is to chant the Lord's holy names. For most people it is easiest to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra:
Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

PRONUNCIATION OF SANSKRIT WORDS

Sanskrit words and names in BACK TO GODHEAD are spelled according to a system that scholars throughout the world use to show how to pronounce each word. Vowels in Sanskrit are pronounced almost as in Italian. The sound of the short **a** is like the **u** in **but**. The long **ā** is like the **a** in **far** and held twice as long as the short **a**, and **e** is like the **a** in **evade**. Long **ī** is like the **i** in **pique**. The vowel **ṛ** is pronounced like the **ri** in the English word **rim**. The **ṛ** is pronounced as in the English word **chair**. The aspirated consonants (**ch**, **jh**, **dh**, etc.) are pronounced as in **staunch**, **hedgehog** 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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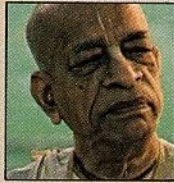
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BACK TO GODHEAD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

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"Human society has made rapid progress, but there is need of a clue as to how humanity can become one in peace, friendship, and prosperity. The Vedic literatures [ancient India's 'wisdom literatures'] will fill this need," says His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.



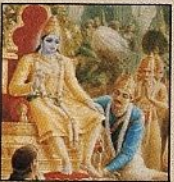
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New York, the Village, summer, 1966: a time and place for looking at life a little more deeply, asking bigger questions, and, if you were lucky, getting better answers. English professor Howard Wheeler recalls the start of the spiritual reawakening, America's and his own.



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Researchers like Dr. Daniel Goleman and Dr. Lawrence Le Shan are finding that "the ability to handle stress increases with practice in meditation" and that meditators enjoy "a greater efficiency and enthusiasm." In short, "It's like coming home," and author Daniel Maziarz shows us the way.



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For those of us who find it hard to follow the progression from da Vinci to Warhol, here's a look at where art has been—and where it's likely to be going. This pictorial features a new school of painters who want their art to glorify God rather than themselves. By Robert Talent.

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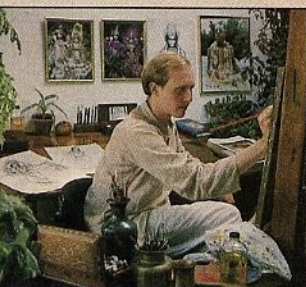
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Special Center Section:

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 don't care if I'm a 'great artist' or not," says John Swindler (Jayarāma dāsa). "I just want my art to point toward the mysteries and the beauties of the truth, that's all. Whether it comes into the context of being great or famous, that doesn't matter so much. If I feel that it evokes the desire to understand something higher and to appreciate a higher beauty, that's what I care about—because that's the experience I have with it, and that's the experience I would like to share. And if it becomes 'great,' fine; if it doesn't, fine. That doesn't matter, as long as I can somehow point toward that higher direction." See interview on page 25. Photograph by Charles Payne (Muralīvadana dāsa).

A TREASURY OF TIMELESS WISDOM

**Commentary by His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda on
the Vedic Literature of Ancient India.**

On matter and spirit . . .

Everything that exists is a product of matter and spirit. Spirit is the basic field of creation, and matter is created by spirit.

On the nature of the soul . . .

The individual particle of spirit soul is a spiritual atom smaller than the material atoms, and such atoms are innumerable. This very small spiritual spark is the basic principle of the material body, and the influence of such a spiritual spark is spread all over the body as the influence of the active principle of some medicine spreads throughout the body. This current of the spirit soul is felt all over the body as consciousness, and that is the proof of the presence of the soul.

On matter, spirit, and transmigration of the soul . . .

There is no endurance of the changing body. That the body is changing every moment by the actions and reactions of the different cells is admitted by modern medical science; and thus growth and old age are taking place in the body. But the spirit soul exists permanently, remaining the same despite all changes of the body and the mind. That is the difference between matter and spirit.

This individual soul finally leaves the body at death and transmigrates to another body. . . . The living being is eternal by nature, but due to his bondage in the material existence he has to change his body from one to another. This process is called transmigration of the soul.

On self-realization . . .

The basic principle of self-realization is knowledge that the living entity is not this material body but that he is different from it and that his happiness is in eternal life, bliss, and knowledge.

On regaining our spiritual identity . . .

One should always remember that as long as he has a material body, he must face the miseries of repeated birth, death, old age, and disease. There is no use in making plans to get rid of these miseries of the material body. The best thing is to find out the means by which one may regain his spiritual identity.

Excerpts from *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*, and *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (*The Nectar of Devotion*).



Illustration by Jan Steward



On the soul's need for freedom . . .

The self [soul] is beyond the gross body and subtle mind. He is the potent active principle of the body and mind. Without knowing the need of the dormant soul, one cannot be happy simply with emolument of the body and mind. The body and the mind are but superfluous outer coverings of the spirit soul. The spirit soul's needs must be fulfilled. Simply by cleansing the cage of the bird, one does not satisfy the bird. One must actually know the needs of the bird himself.

The need of the spirit soul is that he wants to get out of the limited sphere of material bondage and fulfill his desire for complete freedom. He wants to get out of the covered walls of the greater universe. He wants to see the free light and the spirit. That complete freedom is achieved when he meets the complete spirit, the Personality of Godhead. . . . The hankering soul must be satisfied by the perfect scientific process of perfect devotional service.

On diseased life vs. healthy life . . .

Material existence of the living being is a diseased condition of actual life. Actual life is spiritual existence, or *brahma-bhūta* existence, where life is eternal, blissful, and full of knowledge. Material existence is temporary, illusory, and full of miseries. There is no happiness at all. There is just the futile attempt to get rid of the miseries, and temporary cessation of misery is falsely called happiness. Therefore, the path of progressive material enjoyment, which is temporary, miserable, and illusory, is inferior. But devotional service of the Supreme Lord, which leads one to eternal, blissful, and all-cognizant life, is called the superior quality of occupation.

On breaking the chains of karma . . .

Since time immemorial each living entity has accumulated the various reactions of his good and bad work. As such, he is continuously ignorant of his real constitutional position. One's ignorance can be removed by the instruction of the

Bhagavad-gītā, which teaches one to surrender unto Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa in all respects and become liberated from the chained victimization of action, birth after birth.

On the purpose of human life . . .

Human life is especially meant for self-realization. That is to say, man should come to know what he is, what the world is, and what the Supreme Truth is.

On overcoming ignorance and attaining peace . . .

Ignorance is the cause of our bondage, and knowledge is the cause of our liberation. This knowledge is the mature fruit of devotional service, and when one is situated in transcendental knowledge, he need not search for peace elsewhere, for he enjoys peace within himself.

On the need for a bona fide spiritual master . . .

The path of spiritual realization is undoubtedly difficult. The Lord therefore advises us to approach a bona fide spiritual master in the line of disciplic succession from the Lord Himself. No one can be a bona fide spiritual master without following this principle of disciplic succession. The Lord is the original spiritual master, and a person in the disciplic succession can convey the message of the Lord as it is to the disciple. . . . Such a spiritual master should be accepted in full surrender, and one should serve the spiritual master like a menial servant, without false prestige. Satisfaction of the self-realized spiritual master is the secret of advancement in spiritual life. [And] inquiries and submission constitute the proper combination for spiritual understanding. . . .

The result of receiving knowledge from a self-realized soul, or one who knows things as they are, is learning that all living beings are parts and parcels of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. . . . The living entities, as separate parts and parcels of the Supreme, have a purpose to fulfill. Having forgotten that purpose since time immemorial they are situated in different bodies as men, animals, demigods, etc.

Such bodily differences arise from forgetfulness of the transcendental service of the Lord. But when one is engaged in transcendental service through Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one becomes at once liberated from this illusion.

On the futility of material life— and the way out . . .

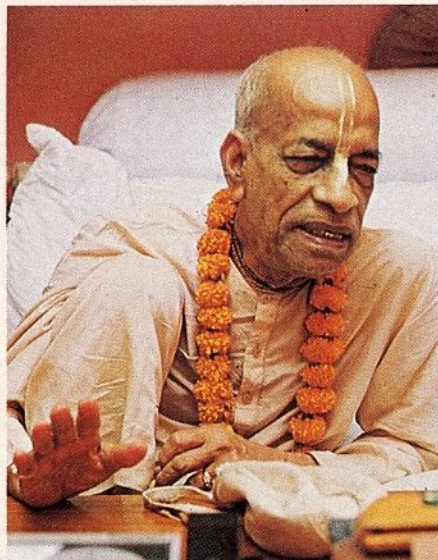
Owing to ignorance, one does not know that this material world is a miserable place where there are dangers at every step. Out of ignorance only, less intelligent persons try to adjust to the situation by fruitive activities, thinking that resultant actions will make them happy. They do not know that no kind of material body anywhere within the universe can give life without miseries. The miseries of life—namely birth, death, old age, and diseases—are present everywhere within the material world. But one who understands his real constitutional position as the eternal servitor of the Lord, and thus knows the position of the Personality of Godhead, engages himself in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. Consequently, he becomes qualified to enter into the Vaikuṅṭha planets, where there is neither material, miserable life, nor the influence of time and death.

On getting out of the material entanglement—permanently . . .

The living being is in the state of forgetfulness of his relationship with God due to his being overly attracted to material sense gratification from time immemorial. His struggle for existence in the material world is perpetual, and it is not possible for him to get out of it by making plans. If he at all wants to conquer this perpetual struggle for existence, he must reestablish his eternal relation with God. And one who wants to adopt such remedial measures must take shelter of literature such as the *Vedas* and the *Purānas*. . . . *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the spotless *Purāna*, and it is especially meant for those who are desirous to get out of the material entanglement permanently.

On the power of God's name . . .

The name of Kṛṣṇa is as powerful as Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. There is no difference at all. Anyone, therefore, can take advantage of the holy names of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa even in the midst of greatest dangers. The transcendental name of Kṛṣṇa, even though uttered unconsciously or by force of circumstances, can help one attain freedom from the hurdle of birth and death.



“Out of madness people frankly say that there is no need for self-realization, because they do not realize that this brief life is but a moment on our great journey toward self-realization.”

On making our life complete . . .

The completeness of human life can be realized only when the human form of life is engaged in the service of the complete whole. . . . Kṛṣṇa is the complete whole, and everything else is his part and parcel. The relation is one of the servant and the served, and it is transcendental and is completely distinguished from our experience in material existence. This relation of servant and the served is the most congenial form of intimacy. One can realize it as devotional service progresses. Everyone should engage himself in that transcendental loving service of the Lord, even in the present conditional state of material existence. That will gradually give one the clue to actual life and please him to complete satisfaction.

On faith and knowledge . . .

Men without faith in God and His revealed word find no good in this world, nor in the next. For them there is no happiness whatsoever. One should therefore follow the principles of revealed scriptures with faith and thereby be raised to the platform of knowledge. Only this knowledge will help one become promoted to the transcendental platform of spiritual understanding.

On the state of the world . . .

In this age, men are not only victims of different political creeds and parties, but also of many different types of sense-gratificatory diversions, namely cinemas, sports, gambling, clubs, mundane libraries, bad associations, smoking, drinking, cheating, pilfering, bickerings,

and so on. Their minds are always disturbed and full of anxieties due to so many different engagements. In this age, many unscrupulous men manufacture their own religious faiths, which are not based on any revealed scriptures, and very often people who are addicted to sense gratification are attracted by such institutions. Consequently, in the name of religion so many sinful acts are being carried on, and the people in general have neither peace of mind nor health of body.

On waking up to our relationship with the Supreme . . .

By pouring water on the root of a tree, all the parts of the tree are automatically nourished. Only those branches and leaves which are detached cannot be so satisfied. Detached branches and leaves dry up gradually, despite all watering attempts. Similarly, human society, when it is detached from the Personality of Godhead like detached branches and leaves, is not capable of being improved, and one attempting to do so is simply wasting his energy and resources.

The modern materialistic society is detached from its relation with the Supreme Lord. And all its plans which are being made by atheistic leaders are sure to be baffled in every step. Yet they do not wake up to this. In this age, the congregational chanting of the holy names of the Lord is the prescribed method for waking up.

On spiritual education . . .

Modern civilization is a patchwork of activities meant to cover the perpetual miseries of material existence. Such activities are targeted toward sense gratification, but above the senses there is the mind, and above the mind there is the intelligence, and above the intelligence there is the soul. Therefore, the aim of education should be self-realization, realization of the spiritual values of the soul.

On the dangerous age we live in . . .

The age of Kali is very dangerous for the human being. Human life is simply meant for self-realization, but due to this dangerous age, men have completely forgotten the aim of life. . . . Out of madness they frankly say that there is no need for self-realization because they do not realize that this brief life is but a moment on our great journey toward self-realization. The whole system of education is geared toward sense gratification, and if a learned man thinks it over, he sees that the children of this age are being intentionally sent to the slaughterhouses of so-called education.

On the responsibility of the world's leaders . . .

Human life is meant for cultivation of spiritual knowledge, in eternal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the executive heads of all states and all planets are obliged to impart this lesson to the citizens by education, culture, and devotion. In other words, the executive heads of all states are intended to spread the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness so that the people may take advantage of this great science and pursue a successful path, utilizing the opportunity of the human form of life.

On a simple way to bring about world peace and friendship . . .

"Who is there, desiring deliverance from the vices of the Age of Kali [the present age of quarrel and hypocrisy], who is not willing to hear the glories of the Lord?" (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.16)

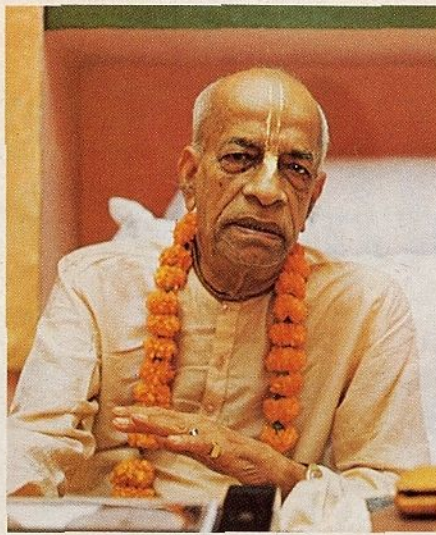
The leaders of the people are very much anxious to live in peace and friendship, but they have no information of the simple method of hearing the glories of the Lord. On the contrary, such leaders are opposed to the propagation of the glories of the Lord. In the name of a secular state, such leaders are enacting various plans every year. But by the insurmountable intricacies of the material nature of the Lord, all these plans for progress are being constantly frustrated. They have no eyes to see that their attempts at peace and friendship are failing. But here is the hint to get over the hurdle. If we want actual peace, we must open the road to understand the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa and glorify Him for His virtuous activities as they are depicted in the pages of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

On finding the center of enjoyment . . .

Here in the material world there is always a clash between different individual beings, because here the center of enjoyment is missed. The center of enjoyment is the Supreme Lord, who is the center of the sublime and spiritual *rāsa* dance. We are all meant for joining him, for enjoying life with one transcendental interest and without any clash. That is the high platform of spiritual interest, and as soon as such a perfect form of oneness is realized, there can be no question of illusion or lamentation.

On perfecting the human condition . . .

The Supreme Personality of Godhead expanded himself into many for His ever-increasing spiritual bliss, and the



“At the present moment the human society teaches one to love his country or family or his personal self, but there is no information where to repose the loving propensity so that everyone can become happy.”

living entities are parts and parcels of this spiritual bliss. They also have partial independence, but by misuse of their independence, when the service attitude is transformed into the propensity for sense enjoyment, they come under the sway of lust. . . .

Lust is only the perverted reflection of the love of God which is natural for every living entity. But if one is educated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness from the very beginning, that natural love of God cannot deteriorate into lust. When love of God deteriorates into lust, it is very difficult to return to the normal condition. Nonetheless, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is so powerful that even a late beginner can become a lover of God by following the regulative principles of devotional service.

So, from any stage of life, or from the time of understanding its urgency, one can begin regulating the senses in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, devotional service of the Lord, and turn the lust into love of Godhead—the highest perfectional stage of human life.

On attaining universal love . . .

The basic principle of the living condition is that we have a general propensity to love someone. No one can live without loving someone else. This propensity is present in every living being. Even an animal like a tiger has this loving propensity, at least in a dormant stage, and it is certainly present in the human beings. The missing point, however, is where to repose our love so that everyone can become happy.

At the present moment the human society teaches one to love his country or

family or his personal self, but there is no information where to repose the loving propensity so that everyone can become happy. That missing point is Kṛṣṇa, and the practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness teaches us how to stimulate our original love for Kṛṣṇa and how to be situated in that position where we can enjoy our blissful life.

In the primary stage a child loves his parents, then his brothers and sisters, and as he daily grows up he begins to love his family, society, community, country, nation, or even the whole human society. But the loving propensity is not satisfied even by loving all human society; that loving propensity remains imperfectly fulfilled until we know who is the Supreme Beloved. Our love can be fully satisfied only when it is reposed in Kṛṣṇa. This theme is the sum and substance of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which teaches us how to love Kṛṣṇa in five different transcendental mellows.

Our loving propensity expands just as a vibration of light or air expands, but we do not know where it ends. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the science of loving everyone of the living entities perfectly by the easy method of loving Kṛṣṇa. We have failed to create peace and harmony in human society, even by such great attempts as the United Nations, because we do not know the right method. The method is very simple, but one has to understand it with a cool head. Kṛṣṇa consciousness teaches all men how to perform the simple and natural method of loving Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. If we learn how to love Kṛṣṇa, then it is very easy to immediately and simultaneously love every living being.

It is like pouring water on the root of a tree or supplying food to one's stomach. The method of pouring water on the root of a tree or supplying foodstuffs to the stomach is universally scientific and practical, as every one of us has experienced. Everyone knows well that when we eat something, or in other words when we put foodstuffs in the stomach, the energy created by such action is immediately distributed throughout the whole body. Similarly, when we pour water on the root, the energy thus created is immediately distributed throughout the entirety of even the largest tree. It is not possible to water the tree part by part, nor is it possible to feed the various parts of the body separately. Kṛṣṇa consciousness will teach us how to turn the one switch that will immediately brighten everything, everywhere. One who does not know this method is missing the point of life.

The Best of Both Worlds...

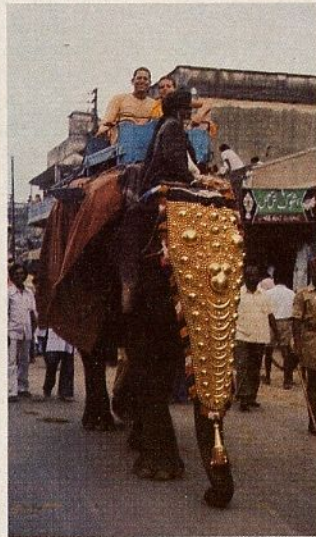


“Why have you come here?” they asked him. “Your America is so wealthy—why have you come here?” Yes, why had twenty-five-year-old Tracy Ladd adopted an ancient Indian life-style and ventured to the Southern Indian city of Hyderabad?

Says Ladd, “When people would come up to me on the street and ask me what I was doing here, why I’d left my rich country, I’d try to explain that I felt *their* country was rich in another way—rich in spiritual heritage. But still I felt a lot of people didn’t understand. They wanted so much to take after the American culture—they couldn’t understand why an American would want to take after their culture.”

One Hyderabad resident who could understand was G. Pulla Reddy, whose confectionery business had given him occasion to travel and see the West’s spiritual bankruptcy for himself. When Ladd (Śrīkara dāsa) and some other Kṛṣṇa-conscious devotees told Mr. Reddy that they had come to build a temple and help the people remember their spiritual culture, he offered them a piece of choice land right in the heart of the city.

“So,” Ladd says, “we started organizing the project right away. Mr. G. V. Reddy, the Minister of Town Planning, did the design for the



building, and many other people offered their skills, too. Ornamental craftsmen came all the way from Madras to do detailed work on the columns, archways, domes, and so forth. Even the little children helped out. Some of them served out lunch [from the temple’s temporary kitchen] to the hundreds of people who came each day.”

When the temple opened last summer, J. Vengal Rao, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh (India’s fifth-largest state), and seven other state ministers gave deep thanks to the American devotees and their spiritual master, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. (The center continues to offer daily seminars on the Vedic

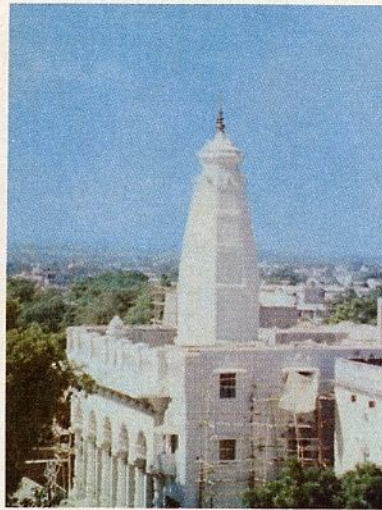


literatures and to distribute *prasāda*, spiritual food, to all who come. And at nearby colleges, factories, and business centers, the devotees hold seminars on practical spiritual living, including mantra meditation.) Chief Minister Rao remarked, “History is in reverse. Once, Indians tried to follow Western ways, but now the people of these countries are looking to India for spiritual direction. Thank you for reminding us of our culture.”

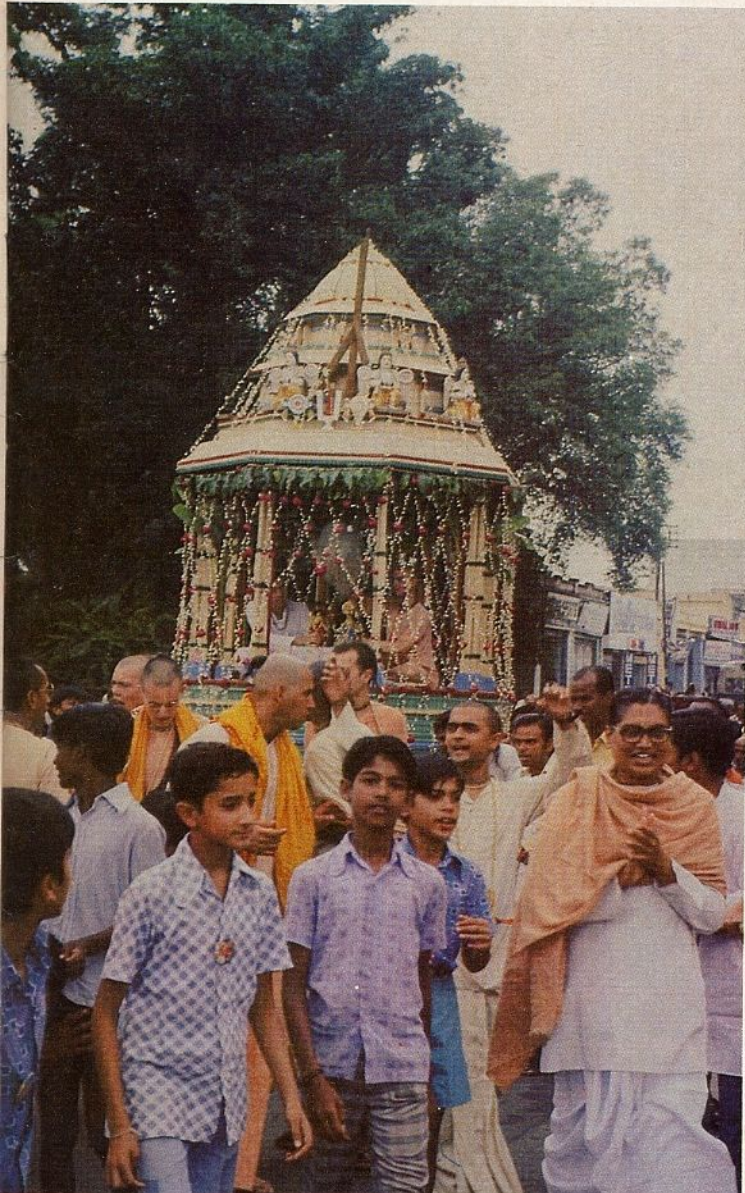
To make clear what was happening, Śrīla Prabhupāda told the State Ministers a little story. “Once there were two men,” he said. “One was

blind, and the other was lame. What could either one do alone? Both were useless. But when they combined together, everything was all right. The blind man could walk, so he took the lame man on his back. And the lame man could see, so he gave the blind man directions—‘Go this way. . . .’ In that way both men got their work done very nicely.

“Now, I say that India is lame—it has no wealth—and America is blind—it has no spiritual culture. Let us combine together. Then we can give benefit to the whole human society.”



Far left: lavishly decorated elephant leads procession marking opening of ISKCON's Hyderabad Temple. Next right: at the temple's opening, the Chief Minister said, "History is in reverse. Once, Indians tried to follow Western ways, but now the people of these countries are looking to India for spiritual direction." Tall Tracy Ladd stands in the back, next to staff-carrying Yaśodānandana Swami. Left: the main dome of the new temple that the Americans and Indians built together.



Above: as soon as the American devotees started organizing the project, the Minister of Town Planning did the design for the building, and ornamental craftsmen did detailed work on the columns, archways, and domes. Left: especially endearing to all who visit the temple are the Deities, Lord Kṛṣṇa and His consort Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Left: a God-conscious festival. Said Śrīla Prabhupāda, "India is lame—it has no wealth—and America is blind—it has no spiritual direction. Let us combine together. Then we can give benefit to the whole human society."

by Howard Wheeler (Hayagrīva dāsa)

I walked around the corner with him, and he pointed out a small storefront building between First and Second Streets, next door to a Mobil filling station. It had been a curiosity shop, and someone had painted

Matchless Gifts

over the window. At the time I didn't realize how prophetic the words were.

When I first met my spiritual master, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, I felt that there was never a time when I did not know him. I never tire of telling of my first meeting with him on the streets of Lower East Side New York. At the time, I was hurrying from my Mott Street apartment, which had become a refuge for psychedeliacs, to a much quieter apartment on Fifth Street where I hoped to get some peace. I was walking down Houston Street and across Bowery, past the rushing traffic and stumbling derelicts, and after crossing Bowery, just before Second Avenue, I saw His Divine Grace jauntily strolling down the sidewalk, his head high in the air, his hand in a beadbag. He struck me like a famous actor in a very familiar movie. He seemed ageless, though later I found out that he was seventy years old. He was wearing the traditional saffron-colored robes of a *sannyāsī*, the renounced order, and quaint white shoes with points. Coming down Houston Street, he looked like the genie that popped out of Aladdin's lamp. I was fresh from a trip to India, and His Divine Grace reminded me of the many holy men I had recently seen walking the dirt roads of Hardwar and Hrishikesh and bathing in the Ganges. I had gone to India to look for a *guru* but had returned disappointed. It was on this bright July morning, when I was least expecting it, that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, out of His infinite mercy, sent *guru* to me. The old Vedic adage—by the grace of Kṛṣṇa you get *guru*, and by the grace of *guru* you get Kṛṣṇa—was justified. Afterwards, Śrīla Prabhupāda (as we were later to call him) often told me, "If you are sincere, you don't have to search out your *guru*. Kṛṣṇa will send him." So amid the hot clang and clamor of Houston and Bowery, *guru* had found me out.

We stopped simultaneously, and I asked the first question that popped into my mind—"Are you from India?"—and he smiled cordially. "Oh, yes, and you?" I told him no, but that I had just returned from India and that I was very interested in his country and Hindu philosophy. He then told me that he had come from Calcutta and had been in New York almost ten months. His eyes were as fresh and as cordial as a child's, and even standing before the trucks that roared and bumbled their way down Houston Street, he emanated a cool tranquility that was unshakably estab-



UNMATCHED ART





His cool tranquility was established in something far beyond the metropolis. . . .

lished in something far beyond the great metropolis that roared around us. He answered all my questions readily, as though speaking a dialogue he was well acquainted with. I told him about my India trip briefly, and he asked me if I had been to Vṛndāvana. "I didn't get a chance to," I told him. "I got sick on the food and had to leave."

He then informed me that he had a place around the corner where he was planning to hold some classes and that he had been wondering whether or not it was suitable. I walked around the corner with him, and he pointed out a small storefront building between First and Second Streets, next door to a Mobil filling station. It had been a curiosity shop, and someone had painted the words "Matchless Gifts" over the window. At the time I didn't realize how prophetic the words were. "This is a good area?" he asked me. I told him that I thought it was. I had no idea what he was going to offer in his "classes," but I knew that all my friends would be glad that an Indian swami was moving into the neighborhood. For the past two or three years, like so many downtown New Yorkers in their twenties, we had been reading books on Eastern philosophy and religion, burning lots of candles and incense and taking *gañjā*, peyote and LSD as aids to meditation. Actually it was more intoxication than meditation; meditation was a euphemism that somehow connected our highs with our readings. "I would like to hear your lectures," I told him, after reassuring him that the storefront was suitable. I noticed a placard in the window that read: "Lectures on *Bhagavad-gītā*. A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami. Mon. Wed. Fri. 7-9."

"You will bring your friends?" he asked.

"Yes," I promised. "Monday evening."

I forget the rest of the conversation, but I do remember afterwards telling everyone I knew about the *guru* who had inexplicably appeared in our midst.

I attended the first meeting in the little storefront with two of my friends who were later to be initiated as Kīrtanānanda and Umāpati. I was surprised to see half a dozen people there. The storefront was narrow and squalid. There was no rug on the wooden floors and no decorations save one painting in the window of Lord Caitanya dancing with His disciples. Years later I was to find out that this was painted by an artist who had been given a small picture by Śrīla Prabhupāda to use as a model for a larger canvas.

The only additions to the plain storefront were little straw mats for sitting. At the rear were two windows, a bathroom door and an unattractive sink. In the middle of the room a bare lightbulb hung from a cord. Umāpati, Kīrtanānanda and I sat in the middle of the room and looked around at a half dozen other young men who, like us, didn't know what to expect. We sat quietly and waited for about five minutes. Then the door opened and out came His Divine Grace. He deftly slid the white pointed shoes off his feet, sat down on one of the straw mats and looked out at his new audience. When he saw me he smiled. "You have brought your friends?" I said, "Yes." "Very good," he said and took out a pair of cymbals. He started to play them and sing, "*Vande 'ham'* and then Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma

Rāma, Hare Hare. He indicated that we were to answer the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, and slowly, awkwardly at first, we tried to follow. There were no other instruments—only the clanging of three pairs of cymbals. Eventually we started clapping, but no one got up to dance. I noticed that about a dozen people had gathered outside the window to watch. Śrīla Prabhupāda finally brought the chanting to a close and recited a prayer. Nobody bowed. Nobody knew what to do. We all simply sat in anticipation.

Then he began his lecture, using *Bhagavad-gītā*. I recall that in those early lectures he spoke mainly in terms of Absolute Truth to better communicate with us. No one had the slightest idea what "Kṛṣṇa" meant. I had read *Gītā* before, and so had my friends, but to us Kṛṣṇa, at most, was just a literary personification of the Divine, a characterization of Śaṅkarācārya's Self. At that first meeting I had some difficulty understanding what Śrīla Prabhupāda said, but his words nonetheless moved me, and I was interested to hear more. I noticed that my friends were also listening attentively, and most of the others seemed to show respect. Then, incredibly, midway through the lecture, an old white-haired begrizzled Bowery bum entered the storefront and walked right through the middle of the room, past all of us who sat in shocked silence, and on up towards Śrīla Prabhupāda, who sat beneath the back windows. I didn't know what he was about to do, but I noticed that he was carrying a package of paper hand-towels and a couple of rolls of toilet paper. He didn't say a word, but walked right past Śrīla Prabhupāda and carefully placed the hand-towels by the sink and the toilet paper on the floor under the sink. Then, clearing his throat and saying something incoherent, he turned around and walked out. No one knew what to say and no one knew whether or not Śrīla Prabhupāda had been insulted.

"Just see," Śrīla Prabhupāda suddenly said. "He has just begun his devotional service. That is the process. Whatever we have—it doesn't matter what—we must offer it for Kṛṣṇa's service."

He then concluded his lecture and led another chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa. The first chanting lasted forty-five minutes, his lecture lasted at least an hour, and the second chanting lasted around thirty minutes. A couple of people left after the lecture. Americans are simply not accustomed to sitting on the floor for over two hours. After the second *kīrtana*, Śrīla Prabhupāda sliced up an apple and passed it to us on a plate. While this was being distributed, he went out the side door and returned to his apartment in

the rear building. I noticed a basket on the front mat in which some people had put a little money. I contributed fifty cents, and then my friends and I left. On our way out one of the boys told us that the next meeting would be Wednesday at seven o'clock but that Śrīla Prabhupāda would also welcome people in his rear apartment during the day.

We attended the next meeting Wednesday night. It followed the same format as the first. After the last *kīrtana*, I went up to Śrīla Prabhupāda and began to question him.

"Have you ever heard of LSD?" I asked.

"No," he said.

"It's a psychedelic drug that comes like a pill, and if you take it you can get religious ecstasies. Do you think that that can help my spiritual life?"

"You don't need to take anything for your spiritual life," he told me. "Your spiritual life is already here."

I agreed with him immediately, although I would have never agreed with anyone else who would have said such a thing. I agreed mainly because he seemed so absolutely positive that there was no question of not agreeing. "Yes, my spiritual life is here," I thought to myself. I knew that he was in a state of exalted consciousness, and I was hoping that somehow he could teach the process to me.

The next morning I went around to his apartment to see him alone. He welcomed me in and told me that he needed help in spreading this philosophy. I noticed that he was typing, and I asked if I could be of any help there. I was a very good typist, and not knowing any other way to help, offered my services. He handed me the first chapter of the Second Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and asked if I could type it out. I set up a typewriter in his room and began to work.

I typed most of the morning and then told him that if there was any more typing he needed done, to let me know, that I would be glad to take it home. "Oh, I have lots more," he said, opening his closet door and pulling out two huge bundles of paper tied with saffron cloth. There were thousands of pages in the bundles. I was astounded. It looked like a lifetime of typing.

EARLY MORNING MEETINGS

The next week, which was the first week in a sultry New York August, a time when the air hangs so hot and heavy that it obscures the tops of buildings with a yellow mist, Śrīla Prabhupāda received a box of handbills which had been donated by a friend. There must

have been five thousand of them, and they read: "Practice the transcendental sound vibration Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. This chanting will cleanse the dust from the mirror of the mind." Then Śrīla Prabhupāda's name was given and the name of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, 26 Second Avenue, and the times of the meetings—7:00 A.M. daily and 7:00 P.M. Monday, Wednesday and Friday. At the bottom of the sheet was the invitation: "You are cordially invited to come and bring your friends." "There they are," Śrīla Prabhupāda told us. "Now you simply have to distribute." I took a handful of the bills. "You think they're all right?" he asked me. I told him I thought they were fine. "We will call our society ISKCON," he then told us, smiling.

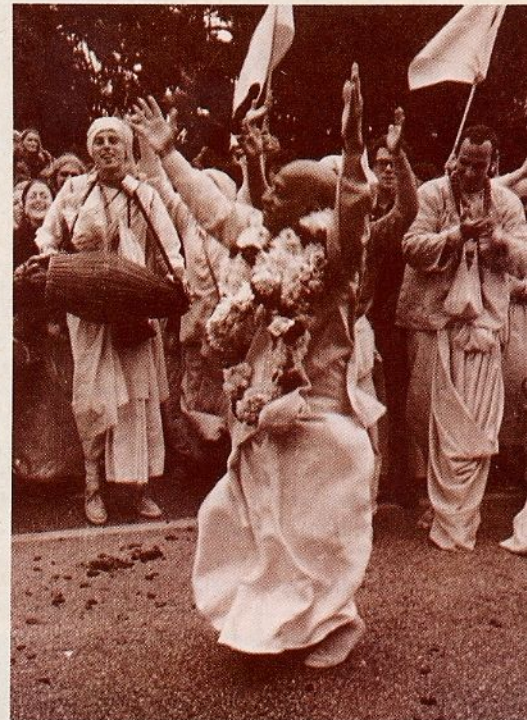
"What's that?" I asked.

"I-S-K-C-O-N," he spelled the letters out. "ISKCON—International Society for Krishna Consciousness." Then he laughed. He was obviously having fun.

It was also in early August that we began attending the early morning meetings. None of us had ever gotten up before ten or eleven in the morning, but the magnetism of Śrīla Prabhupāda drew us out of our dark Mott Street dens at 6:30 and down from fifth floor apartments into deserted Lower East Side streets. I would walk briskly over to Śrīla Prabhupāda's, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and feeling better than ever before. Miraculously the Lower East Side no longer looked drab. The sidewalks and buildings seemed to sparkle, and in the early morning, before the smog set in, the sky was red and golden. I would sing all the way to his front foyer then ring the buzzer marked A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, and the door would buzz and open, and I would go through the hallway on through the small patio between the back apartment and the storefront and up to his small second floor apartment, tip-toeing quietly in order not to awaken the neighbors.

Those early morning meetings were the most beautiful and most intimate. "Softly," he would say, just lightly touching the cymbals together, and we would barely touch our hands to clap. He would chant "*sāmsāra-dāvānala-līḍhaloka*" with his eyes closed and sit in the rays of sun that streamed through the windows in the early morning. We would listen, entranced, then join in response to Hare Kṛṣṇa. Afterwards he would give a copy of *Bhagavad-gītā* to one of us and would have us read the Sanskrit transliterations, correcting our mispronuncia-

tions, and then the text. Then he would begin to explain each verse thoroughly. There were only six or eight of us at these meetings, so we had ample opportunity to discuss the philosophy with him. Actually, by Kṛṣṇa's mercy, I had nothing else to do. I had returned from India with practically no money, and though I hadn't worked for over a year, I wasn't even interested in looking for a



Śrīla Prabhupāda requested that we chant in the streets and parks. Here, he shows us how. I'm behind and to his right, clapping.

job. I did have a feeling, however, that the *Bhagavad-gītā* was a key to a larger consciousness of which I could somehow partake. I desperately wanted a teacher to lead me into a world which I knew existed and which I felt was very near to me, yet somehow could not reach.

DIVINE INTOXICATION

Shortly after we distributed the handbills, Śrīla Prabhupāda informed us that he would like to go out into one of the parks to chant. This surprised us all, and after conferring we decided that Washington Square was the best place. It was on a Sunday, when Washington Square is most crowded, that we followed Śrīla Prabhupāda down the sidestreets of the Lower East Side to the park. There must have been about ten of us then, and I remember the stares Śrīla Prabhupāda's saffron robe, beaded bag and pointed white shoes received. It was almost like following a Martian down the street. Somehow he floated through it

all, seemingly unaware of the stares, comments and general sensation he was creating.

We walked through the Sunday crowds of Washington Square, and finally Śrīla Prabhupāda chose a place to sit down on the grass next to teenagers who were kissing and playing bongo drums. There was a sign that said "Keep Off the Grass," but everyone ignored it. Śrīla Prabhupāda pulled up his robes and sat comfortably and solidly upon the ground, and we followed suit self-consciously. He played a pair of cymbals and led us chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. By that time one of us had acquired a small drum and managed to follow Śrīla Prabhupāda's rhythm. We chanted about three minutes and immediately a crowd gathered around us. I remember one sailor who listened for a few seconds then threw his cigarette to the ground and huffed, "What the hell is this?" Very quickly the police swooped down on us, and one of the policemen asked who was in charge of our group. We could only indicate Śrīla Prabhupāda. The policeman turned to him and said, "Don't you see the sign?" Śrīla Prabhu-

pāda looked again at the "Keep Off the Grass" sign, then smiled charmingly and walked down onto the asphalt. We followed him and asked if he wanted someone to run back to the temple to get a rug, but he said "No," and once more sat down firmly, this time on the hot asphalt, and we sat in a circle around him. We chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa for about thirty minutes, and the crowd thickened. No one joined in the chant. They were all perplexed. It was the first time that *saṅkīrtana* had been held before the public in America. After the chanting, Śrīla Prabhupāda told me to read his preface to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to the people who had assembled. I remember reading the passage:

"Disparity in the human society is due to the basic principle of a godless civilization. There is God or the Almighty One from whom everything emanates and by whom everything is merged to rest. The material scientist is trying to find out the ultimate source of creation very insufficiently, but it is a fact that there is one ultimate source of everything that be. This ultimate source is explained rationally and authoritatively in the beautiful *Bhāgavatam* or *Srīmad-Bhāgavatam*."

When reading this passage, I did not recognize my own voice, for it seemed to me that a larger voice was speaking through me. The *kīrtana*, which was the first that any of us had ever attended in public, had a strangely exhilarating effect on us all. We felt divinely intoxicated, and I marvelled at the unusual power of the *mantra* when chanted publicly. Actually Lord Caitanya specifically recommended *saṅkīrtana*, or the public chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa amidst many people, for this age of chaos (Kali).

After the *kīrtana*, we asked Śrīla Prabhupāda whether he thought our public performance successful. He was so happy with it that he requested that we go out every afternoon and chant in the streets and parks. Following his request, about six or eight of us would walk around the Village in the afternoon and even up and down the narrow streets of Chinatown, playing a bongo drum and cymbals and chanting the magic *mantra*. We must have looked pretty ragged, and I'm sure we didn't make much of an impression, but there was lots of spirit. Despite our bumbling selves, Śrīla Prabhupāda had launched Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement in the Western world.

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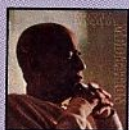
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First Canto "Creation"

CHAPTER TEN

Departure of Lord Kṛṣṇa for Dvārakā

(continued from previous issue)

TRANSLATION

The intelligent, who have understood the Supreme Lord in association with pure devotees and have become freed from bad materialistic association, can never avoid hearing the glories of the Lord, even though they have heard them only once. How, then, could the Pāṇḍavas tolerate His separation, for they had been intimately associated with His person, seeing Him face to face, touching Him, conversing with Him, and sleeping, sitting and dining with Him?

PURPORT

The living being's constitutional position is one of serving a superior. He is obliged to serve by force the dictates of illusory material energy in different phases of sense gratification. And in serving the senses he is never tired. Even though he may be tired, the illusory energy perpetually forces him to do so without being satisfied. There is no end to such sense gratificatory business, and the conditioned soul becomes entangled in such servitude without hope of release. The release is only effected by association with pure devotees. By such association one is gradually promoted to his transcendental consciousness. Thus he can know that his eternal position is to render service unto the Lord and not to the perverted senses in the capacity of lust, anger, desire to lord it over, etc. Material society, friendship and love are all different phases of lust. Home, country, family, society, wealth and all sorts of corollaries are all causes of bondage in the material world, where the threefold miseries of life are concomitant factors. By associating with pure devotees and by hearing them submissively, attachment for material enjoyment becomes slackened, and attraction for hearing about the transcendental activities of the Lord becomes prominent. Once they are, they will go on progressively without stoppage, like fire in gunpowder. It is said that Hari, the Personality of Godhead, is so transcendently attractive that even those who are self-satisfied by self-realization and are factually

liberated from all material bondage also become devotees of the Lord. Under the circumstances it is easily understood what must have been the position of the Pāṇḍavas, who were constant companions of the Lord. They could not even think of separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, since the attraction was more intense for them because of continuous personal contact. His remembrance by His form, quality, name, fame, pastimes, etc., is also attractive for the pure devotee, so much so that he forgets all forms, quality, name, fame and activities of the mundane world, and due to his mature association with pure devotees he is not out of contact with the Lord for a moment.

TEXT 13

सर्वे तेऽनिमिषैरक्षैस्तमनुदुतचेतसः ।
वीक्षन्तः स्नेहसम्बद्धा विचेलुस्तत्र तत्र ह ॥१३॥

*sarve te 'nimiṣair akṣaiḥ
tam anu druta-cetasah
vikṣantaḥ sneha-sambaddhā
vicelus tatra tatra ha*

sarve—all; *te*—they; *animiṣaiḥ*—without twinkling of the eyes; *akṣaiḥ*—by the eye; *tam anu*—after Him; *druta-cetasah*—melted heart; *vikṣantaḥ*—looking upon Him; *sneha-sambaddhāḥ*—bound by pure affection; *vicelus*—began to move; *tatra tatra*—here and there; *ha*—so they did.

TRANSLATION

All their hearts were melting for Him on the pot of attraction. They looked at Him without blinking their eyes, and they moved hither and thither in perplexity.

PURPORT

Kṛṣṇa is naturally attractive for all living beings because He is the chief eternal amongst all eternals. He alone is the maintainer of the many eternals. This is stated in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, and thus one can obtain permanent peace and prosperity by revival of one's eternal relation with Him, now forgotten under the spell of *māyā*, the illusory energy of the Lord. Once this relation is slightly revived, the conditioned soul at once becomes freed from the illusion of material energy and becomes mad after the association of the Lord. This association is made possible not only by personal contact with the Lord, but also by association with His name, fame, form and quality. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* trains the conditioned soul to this stage of perfection by submissive hearing from the pure devotee.

TEXT 14

न्यरुन्धनुद्रलद्वाष्पमौत्कण्ड्यादेवकीसुते ।
निर्यात्यगारान्नोऽभद्रमिति स्याद्बान्धवस्त्रियः ॥१४॥

*nyarundhann udgalad bāspam
autkaṅṭhyād devakī-sute
niryāty agārān no 'bhadram
iti syād bāndhava-striyah*

nyarundhan—checking with great difficulty; *udgalat*—overflowing; *bāspam*—tears; *autkaṅṭhyāt*—because of great anxiety; *devakī-sute*—unto the son of Devakī; *niryāti*—having come out; *agārāt*—from the palace; *naḥ*—not; *abhadram*—inauspiciousness; *iti*—thus; *syāt*—may happen; *bāndhava*—relative; *striyah*—ladies.

TRANSLATION

The female relatives, whose eyes were flooded with tears out of anxiety for Kṛṣṇa, came out of the palace. They could stop their tears only with great difficulty. They feared that tears would cause misfortune at the time of departure.

PURPORT

There were hundreds of ladies in the palace of Hastināpura. All of them were affectionate to Kṛṣṇa. All of them were relatives also. When they saw that Kṛṣṇa was going away from the palace for His native place, they were very anxious for Him, and as usual tears began to roll down their cheeks. They thought, at the same time, that tears at that moment might be a cause of misfortune for Kṛṣṇa; therefore they wanted to check them. This was very difficult for them because the tears could not be checked. Therefore, they smeared their tears in their eyes, and their hearts throbbed. Therefore ladies who were the wives and daughters-in-law of those who died in the battlefield never came in direct contact with Kṛṣṇa. But all of them heard of Him and His great activities, and thus they thought of Him, talked of Him, His name, fame, etc., and became affectionate also, like those who were in direct contact. Therefore directly or indirectly anyone who thinks of Kṛṣṇa, talks of Kṛṣṇa or worships Kṛṣṇa becomes attached to Him. Because Kṛṣṇa is absolute, there is no difference between His name, form, quality, etc. Our intimate relation with Kṛṣṇa can be confidentially revived by our talking of, hearing of, or remembering Him. It is so done due to spiritual potency.

TEXT 15

मृदङ्गशङ्खभेर्यश्च वीणापणवगोमुरवाः ।
धुन्धुर्यानकघण्टाद्या नेदुर्दुन्दुभयस्तथा ॥१५॥

*mṛdaṅga-śaṅkha-bheryaś ca
vīṇā-panava-gomukhāḥ
dhundhuryānaka-ghaṅṭādyā
nedur dundubhayas tathā*

mṛdaṅga—sweet sounding drum; *śaṅkha*—conchshell; *bheryaḥ*—brass band; *ca*—and; *vīṇā*—string band; *panava*—a kind of flute; *gomukhāḥ*—another flute; *dhundhuri*—another drum; *ānaka*—kettle; *ghaṅṭā*—bell; *ādyāḥ*—others; *neduḥ*—sounded; *dundubhayah*—other different types of drums; *tathā*—at that time.

TRANSLATION

While the Lord was departing from the palace of Hastināpura, different types of drums—like the *mṛdaṅga*, *dhola*, *nagra*, *dhundhuri* and *dundubhi*—and flutes of different types, the *vīṇā*, *gomukha* and *bheri*, all sounded together to show Him honor.

TEXT 16

प्रासादशिवरारूढाः कुरुनार्यो दिदृक्षया ।
वद्वृषुः कुसुमैः कृष्णं प्रेमव्रीडास्मितेक्षणाः ॥१६॥

*prāsāda-śikharārūdhāḥ
kuru-nāryo didṛkṣayā
vavṛṣuḥ kusumaiḥ kṛṣṇam
prema-vṛiḍā-smitekṣaṇāḥ*

prāsāda—palace; *śikhara*—the roof; *ārūdhāḥ*—ascending; *kuru-nāryah*—the ladies of the Kuru royalty; *didṛkṣayā*—seeing; *vavṛṣuḥ*—showered; *kusumaiḥ*—by flowers; *kṛṣṇam*—upon Lord Kṛṣṇa; *prema*—out of affection and love; *vṛiḍā-smita-ikṣaṇāḥ*—glancing with shy smiles.

TRANSLATION

Out of a loving desire to see the Lord, the royal ladies of the Kurus got up on top of the palace, and smiling with affection and shyness, they showered flowers upon the Lord.

PURPORT

Shyness is a particular extra-natural beauty of the fair sex, and it commands respect from the opposite sex. This custom was observed even during the days of the *Mahābhārata*, i.e., more than five thousand years ago. It is only the less intelligent persons not well versed in the history of the world who say that observance of separation of female from male is an introduction of the Mohammedan period in India. This incident from the *Mahābhārata* period proves definitely that the ladies of the palace observed strict *pardā* (restricted association with men), and instead of coming down in the open air where Lord Kṛṣṇa and others were assembled, the ladies of the palace went up on the top of the palace and from there paid their respects to Lord Kṛṣṇa by showers of flowers. It is definitely stated here that the ladies were smiling there on the top of the palace, checked by shyness. This shyness is a gift of nature to the fair sex, and it enhances their beauty and prestige, even if they are of a less important family or even if they are less attractive. We have practical experience of this fact. A sweeper woman commanded the respect of many respectable gentlemen simply by manifesting a lady's shyness. Half-naked ladies in the street do not command any respect, but a shy sweeper's wife commands respect from all.

Human civilization, as conceived of by the sages of India, is to help one free himself from the clutches of illusion. The material beauty of a woman is an illusion because actually the body is made of earth, water, fire, air, etc. But because there is the association of the living spark with matter, it appears to be beautiful. No one is attracted by an earthen doll, even if it is most perfectly prepared to attract the attention of others. The dead body has no beauty because no one will accept the dead body of a so-called beautiful woman. Therefore, the conclusion is that the spirit spark is beautiful, and because of the soul's beauty one is attracted by the beauty of the outward body. The Vedic wisdom, therefore, forbids us to be attracted by false beauty. But because we are now in the darkness of ignorance, the Vedic civilization allows very restricted mixing of woman and man. They say that the woman is considered to be the fire, and the man is considered to be the butter. The butter must melt in association with fire, and therefore they may be brought together only when it is necessary. And shyness is a check to the unrestricted mixing. It is nature's gift, and it must be utilized.

TEXT 17

सितातपत्रं जग्राह मुक्तादामविभूषितम् ।
रत्नदण्डं गुडाकेशः प्रियः प्रियतमस्य ह ॥१७॥

*sitātapatram jagrāha
muktādāma-vibhūṣitam*

*ratna-daṇḍam guḍākeśaḥ
priyaḥ priyatamasya ha*

sita-āpatram—soothing umbrella; *jagrāha*—took up; *muktā-dāma*—decorated with laces and pearls; *vibhūṣitam*—embroidered; *ratna-daṇḍam*—with a handle of jewels; *guḍākeśaḥ*—Arjuna, the expert warrior, or one who has conquered sleep; *priyaḥ*—most beloved; *priyatamasya*—of the most beloved; *ha*—so he did.

TRANSLATION

At that time Arjuna, the great warrior and conqueror of sleep, who is the intimate friend of the most beloved Supreme Lord, took up an umbrella which had a handle of jewels and was embroidered with lace and pearls.

PURPORT

Gold, jewels, pearls and valuable stones were used in the luxurious royal ceremonies. They are all nature's gifts and are produced by the hills, oceans, etc., by the order of the Lord, when man does not waste his valuable time in producing unwanted things in the name of necessities. By so-called development of industrial enterprises, they are now using pots of gutta-percha instead of metals like gold, silver, brass and copper. They are using margarine instead of purified butter, and one fourth of the city population has no shelter.

TEXT 18

उद्धवः सात्यकिश्चैव व्यजने परमाद्भुते ।
विकीर्यमाणः कुसुमै रेजे मधुपतिः पथि ॥१८॥

*uddhavaḥ sātyakiś caiva
vyajane paramādbhute
vikīryamaṇaḥ kusumai
reje madhu-patiḥ pathi*

uddhavaḥ—a cousin-brother of Kṛṣṇa's; *sātyakiḥ*—His driver; *ca*—and; *eva*—certainly; *vyajane*—engaged in fanning; *parama-adbhute*—decorative; *vikīryamaṇaḥ*—seated on scattered; *kusumaiḥ*—flowers all around; *reje*—commanded; *madhu-patiḥ*—the master of Madhu (Kṛṣṇa); *pathi*—on the road.

TRANSLATION

Uddhava and Sātyaki began to fan the Lord with decorated fans, and the Lord, as the master of Madhu, seated on scattered flowers, commanded them along the road.

TEXT 19

अश्रूयन्ताशिषः सत्यास्तत्र द्विजेरिताः ।
नानुरूपानुरूपश्च निर्गुणस्य गुणात्मनः ॥१९॥

*āśrūyantaśiṣaḥ satyāś
tatra tatra dvijeritāḥ
nānurūpānurūpāś ca
nirguṇasya guṇātmanaḥ*

āśrūyanta—being heard; *āśiṣaḥ*—benediction; *satyāḥ*—all truths; *tatra*—here; *tatra*—there; *dvija-iritāḥ*—sounded by learned *brāhmaṇas*; *na*—not; *anurūpa*—befitting; *anurūpāḥ*—fitting; *ca*—also; *nirguṇasya*—of the Absolute; *guṇa-ātmanaḥ*—playing the role of a human being.

TRANSLATION

It was being heard here and there that the benedictions being paid to Kṛṣṇa were neither befitting nor unbecoming because they were all for the Absolute, who was now playing the part of a human being.

PURPORT

At places there were sounds of Vedic benediction aiming at the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The benedictions were fitting in the sense that the Lord was playing the part of a human being, as if a cousin of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, but they were also unfitting because the Lord is absolute and has nothing to do with any kind of material relativities. He is *nirguṇa*, or there are no material qualities in Him, but He is full of transcendental qualities. In the transcendental world there is nothing contradictory, whereas in the relative world everything has its opposite. In the relative world white is the opposite conception of black, but in the transcendental world there is no distinction between white and black. Therefore the sounds of benedictions uttered by the learned *brāhmaṇas* here and there appear to be contradictory in relation with the Absolute Person, but when they are applied to the Absolute Person they lose all contradiction and become transcendental. One example may clear this idea. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is sometimes described as a thief. He is very famous amongst His pure devotees as the Mākhana-cora. He used to steal butter from the houses of neighbors at Vṛndāvana in His early age. Since then He is famous as a thief. But in spite of His being famous as a thief, He is worshiped as a thief, whereas in the mundane world a thief is punished and is never praised. Since He is the Absolute Personality of Godhead, everything is applicable to Him, and still in spite of all contradictions He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

TEXT 20

अन्योन्यमासीत्संजल्प उत्तमश्लोकचेतसाम् ।
कौरवेन्द्रपुरस्त्रीणां सर्वश्रुतिमनोहरः ॥२०॥

*anyonyam āsīt sañjalpa
uttama-śloka-cetasām
kauravendra-pura-strīṇāṃ
sarva-śruti-mano-haraḥ*

anyonyam—among each other; *āsīt*—there was; *sañjalpaḥ*—talking; *uttama-śloka*—the Supreme, who is praised by selected poetry; *cetasām*—of those whose hearts are absorbed in that way; *kaurava-indra*—the king of the Kurus; *pura*—capital; *strīṇām*—all the ladies; *sarva*—all; *śruti*—the Vedas; *manaḥ-haraḥ*—attractive to the mind.

TRANSLATION

Absorbed in the thought of the transcendental qualities of the Lord, who is sung in select poetry, the ladies on the roofs of all the houses of Hastināpura began to talk of Him. This talk was more attractive than the hymns of the Vedas.

PURPORT

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said that in all the Vedic literatures the goal is the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Factually the glories of the Lord are depicted in such literature as the Vedas, *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata*. And in the *Bhāgavatam* they are specifically mentioned in respect to the Supreme Lord. Therefore, while the ladies on the tops of the houses in the capital of the kings of the Kuru dynasty were talking about the Lord, their talk was more pleasing than the Vedic hymns. Anything sung in the praise of the Lord is *śruti-mantra*. There are songs of Ṭhākura Narottama dāsa, one of the *ācāryas* in the Gauḍiya-sampradāya, composed in simple Bengali language. But Ṭhākura Viśvanātha Cakravartī, another very learned *ācārya* of the same *sampradāya*, has approved the songs by Ṭhākura Narottama dāsa to be as good as Vedic *mantras*. And this is so because of the subject matter. The language is immaterial, but the subject matter is important. The ladies, who were all absorbed in the thought and actions of the Lord, developed the consciousness of Vedic wisdom by the grace of the Lord. And therefore although such ladies might not have been very learned scholars in Sanskrit or otherwise, still whatever they spoke was more attractive than the

Vedic hymns. The Vedic hymns in the *Upanisads* are sometimes indirectly directed to the Supreme Lord. But the talks of the ladies were directly spoken of the Lord, and thus they were more pleasing to the heart. The ladies' talks appeared to be more valuable than the learned *brāhmaṇas'* benedictions.

TEXT 21

स वै किलार्यं पुरुषः पुरातनो
य एक आसीदविशेष आत्मनि ।
अग्रे गुणेभ्यो जगदात्मनीश्वरे
निमीलितात्मनिशि सुप्तशक्तिषु ॥२१॥

*sa vai kilāyaṁ puruṣaḥ purātano
ya eka āsīd aviśeṣa ātmani
agre guṇebhyo jagad-ātmanīśvare
nimilitātman niśi supta-śaktiṣu*

saḥ—He (Kṛṣṇa); *vai*—as I remember; *kila*—definitely; *ayam*—this; *puruṣaḥ*—Personality of Godhead; *purātanaḥ*—the original; *yaḥ*—who; *ekaḥ*—only one; *āsīt*—existed; *aviśeṣaḥ*—materially unmanifested; *ātmani*—own self; *agre*—before creation; *guṇebhyaḥ*—of the modes of nature; *jagad-ātmani*—unto the Supersoul; *īśvare*—unto the Supreme Lord; *nimilita*—merged into; *ātman*—the living entity; *niśi supta*—inactive at night; *śaktiṣu*—of the energies.

TRANSLATION

They said: Here He is, the original Personality of Godhead as we definitely remember Him. He alone existed before the manifested creation of the modes of nature, and in Him only, because He is the Supreme Lord, all living beings merge, as if sleeping at night, their energy suspended.

PURPORT

There are two types of dissolution of the manifested cosmos. At the end of every 4,320,000,000 solar years, when Brahmā, the lord of one particular universe, goes to sleep, there is one annihilation. And at the end of Lord Brahmā's life, which takes place at the end of Brahmā's one hundred years of age, in our calculation at the end of 8,640,000,000 x 30 x 12 x 100 solar years, there is complete annihilation of the entire universe, and in both the periods both the material energy called the *mahat-tattva* and the marginal energy called *jīva-tattva* merge in the person of the Supreme Lord. The living beings remain asleep within the body of the Lord until there is another creation of the material world, and that is the way of the creation, maintenance and annihilation of the material manifestation.

The material creation is effected by the interaction of the three modes of material nature set in action by the Lord, and therefore it is said here that the Lord existed before the modes of material nature were set in motion. In the *Śruti-mantra* it is said that only Viṣṇu, the Supreme Lord, existed before the creation, and there was no Brahmā, Śiva or other demigods. Viṣṇu means the Mahā-Viṣṇu, who is lying on the Causal Ocean. By His breathing only all the universes are generated in seeds and gradually develop into gigantic forms with innumerable planets within each and every universe. The seeds of universes develop into gigantic forms in the way seeds of a banyan tree develop into numberless banyan trees.

This Mahā-Viṣṇu is the plenary portion of the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is mentioned in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* as follows:

“Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto the original Personality of Godhead, Govinda, whose plenary portion is the Mahā-Viṣṇu. All the Brahmās, the heads of the universes, live only for the period of His exhaling, after the universes are generated from the pores of His transcendental body.” (*Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.58)

Thus Govinda, or Lord Kṛṣṇa, is the cause of Mahā-Viṣṇu also. The ladies talking about this Vedic truth must have heard it from authorita-

tive sources. An authoritative source is the only means of knowing about transcendental subject matter definitely. There is no alternative.

The merging of the living beings into the body of Mahā-Viṣṇu takes place automatically at the end of Brahmā's one hundred years. But that does not mean that the individual living being loses his identity. The identity is there, and as soon as there is another creation by the supreme will of the Lord, all the sleeping, inactive living beings are again let loose to begin their activities in the continuation of past different spheres of life. It is called *suptoṭthita naya*, or awakening from sleep and again engaging in one's respective continuous duty. When a man is asleep at night, he forgets himself, what he is, what his duty is and everything of his waking state. But as soon as he awakens from slumber, he remembers all that he has to do and thus engages himself again in his prescribed activities. The living beings also remain merged in the body of Mahā-Viṣṇu during the period of annihilation, but as soon as there is another creation they arise to take up their unfinished work. This is also confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.18-20).

The Lord existed before the creative energy was set in action. The Lord is not a product of the material energy. His body is completely spiritual, and there is no difference between His body and Himself. Before creation the Lord remained in His abode, which is absolute and one.

TEXT 22

स एव भूयो निजवीर्यचोदितां
स्वजीवमायां प्रकृतिं सिमुक्षतीम् ।
अनामरूपात्मनि रूपनामनी
विधित्समानोऽनुससार शास्त्रकृत् ॥२२॥

*sa eva bhūyo nija-vīrya-coditāṁ
sva-jīva-māyāṁ prakṛtiṁ simukṣatīm
anāma-rūpātmani rūpa-nāmanī
vidhītsamāno 'nusaasāra śāstra-kṛt*

saḥ—He; *eva*—thus; *bhūyaḥ*—again; *nija*—own personal; *vīrya*—potency; *coditām*—performance of; *sva*—own; *jīva*—living being; *māyām*—external energy; *prakṛtiṁ*—unto material nature; *simukṣatīm*—while re-creating; *anāma*—without mundane designation; *rūpa-ātmani*—forms of the soul; *rūpa-nāmanī*—forms and names; *vidhītsamānaḥ*—desiring to award; *anusaasāra*—entrusted; *śāstra-kṛt*—the compiler of revealed scripture.

TRANSLATION

The Personality of Godhead, again desiring to give names and forms to His parts and parcels, the living entities, placed them under the guidance of material nature. By His own potency, material nature is empowered to re-create.

PURPORT

The living entities are parts and parcels of the Lord. They are of two varieties, namely *nitya-mukta* and *nitya-baddha*. The *nitya-muktas* are eternally liberated souls, and they are eternally engaged in the reciprocation of transcendental loving service with the Lord in His eternal abode beyond the manifested mundane creations. But the *nitya-baddha*, or eternally conditioned souls, are entrusted to His external energy, *māyā*, for rectification of their rebellious attitude toward the Supreme Father. *Nitya-baddhas* are eternally forgetful of their relation with the Lord as parts and parcels. They are bewildered by the illusory energy as products of matter, and thus they are very busy in making plans in the material world for becoming happy. They go on merrily with plans, but by the will of the Lord both the planmakers and the plans are annihilated at the end of a certain period, as above mentioned. This is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* as follows: “O son of Kuntī, at the end of the millennium all the living entities merge into My nature, and again when the time of

creation is ripe, I begin creation by the agency of My external energy.” (Bg. 9.7)

The word *bhūyah* indicates again and again, that is to say the process of creation, maintenance and annihilation is going on perpetually by the external energy of the Lord. He is the cause of everything. But the living beings, who are constitutionally the parts and parcels of the Lord and are forgetful of the sweet relation, are given a chance again to get rid of the clutches of the external energy. And to revive his (the living being's) consciousness, the revealed scriptures are also created by the Lord. Vedic literatures are the guiding directions for the conditioned souls so they can get free from the repetition of creation and annihilation of the material world and the material body.

The Lord says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, “This created world and material energy are under My control. Under the influence of *prakṛti*, automatically they are created again and again, and this is done by Me through the agency of My external energy.”

Actually the spiritual spark living entities have no material names or forms. But in order to fulfill their desire to lord it over the material energy of material forms and names, they are given a chance for such false enjoyment, and at the same time they are given a chance to understand the real position through the revealed scriptures. The foolish and forgetful living being is always busy with false forms and false names. Modern nationalism is the culmination of such false names and false forms. Men are mad after false name and form. The form of body obtained under certain conditions is taken up as factual, and the name also taken bewilders the conditioned soul into misusing the energy in the name of so many “isms.” The scriptures, however, supply the clue for understanding the real position, but men are reluctant to take lessons from the scriptures created by the Lord for different places and times. For example, the *Bhagavad-gītā* is the guiding principle for every human being, but by the spell of material energy they do not take care to carry out the programs of life in terms of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the post-graduate study of knowledge for one who has thoroughly understood the principles of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Unfortunately people have no taste for them, and therefore they are under the clutches of *māyā* for repetition of birth and death.

TEXT 23

स वा अयं यत्पदमत्र सूरयो
जितेन्द्रिया निजितमातरिश्चनः ।
पश्यन्ति भक्त्युत्कलितामलात्मना
नन्वेष सत्त्वं परिमार्द्धमर्हति ॥२३॥

sa vā ayam yat padam atra sūrayo
jitendriyā nijīta-mātarīśvanah
paśyanti bhakty-utkalitāmalātmanā
nanv eṣa sattvaṁ parimārṣṭum arhati

sah—He; *vai*—by providence; *ayam*—this; *yat*—that which; *padam atra*—here is the same Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *sūrayaḥ*—great devotees; *jīta-indriyāḥ*—who have overcome the influence of the senses; *nijīta*—thoroughly controlled; *mātarīśvanah*—life; *paśyanti*—can see; *bhakti*—by dint of devotional service; *utkalita*—developed; *amala-ātmanā*—those whose minds are thoroughly cleansed; *nanv eṣaḥ*—certainly by this only; *sattvam*—existence; *parimārṣṭum*—for purifying the mind completely; *arhati*—deserve.

TRANSLATION

Here is the same Supreme Personality of Godhead whose transcendental form is experienced by the great devotees who are completely cleansed of material consciousness by dint of rigid devotional service and full control of life and the senses. And that is the only way to purify existence.

PURPORT

As it is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Lord can be known in His real nature by dint of pure devotional service only. So it is stated here that only the great devotees of the Lord who are able to clear the mind of all material dust by rigid devotional service can experience the Lord as He is. *Jitendriya* means one who has full control over the senses. The senses are active parts of the body, and their activities cannot be stopped. The artificial means of the yogic processes to make the senses inactive has proved to be abject failure, even in the case of great *yogīs* like Viśvāmītra Muni. Viśvāmītra Muni controlled the senses by yogic trance, but when he happened to meet Menakā (a heavenly society woman), he became a victim of sex, and the artificial way of controlling the senses failed. But in the case of a pure devotee, the senses are not at all artificially stopped from doing anything, but they are given different good engagements. When the senses are engaged in more attractive activities, there is no chance of their being attracted by any inferior engagements. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said that *the senses can be controlled only by better engagements*. Devotional service necessitates purifying the senses or engaging them in the activities of devotional service. Devotional service is not inaction. Anything done in the service of the Lord becomes at once purified of its material nature. The material conception is due to ignorance only. There is nothing beyond Vāsudeva. The Vāsudeva conception gradually develops in the heart of the learned after a prolonged acceleration of the receptive organs. But the process ends in the knowledge of accepting Vāsudeva as all in all. In the case of devotional service, this very same method is accepted from the very beginning, and by the grace of the Lord all factual knowledge becomes revealed in the heart of a devotee due to dictation by the Lord from within. Therefore controlling the senses by devotional service is the only and easiest means.

TEXT 24

स वा अयं सख्यनुगीतसत्कथो
वेदेषु गुह्येषु च गुह्यवादिभिः ।
य एक ईशो जगदात्मलीलय
सृजत्यवत्यत्ति न तत्र सज्जते ॥२४॥

sa vā ayam sakhy anugīta-sat-katho
vedeṣu guhyeṣu ca guhyavādibhiḥ
ya eka īśo jagad-ātmā-līlayā
sṛjaty avaty atti na tatra sajjate

sah—He; *vai*—also; *ayam*—this; *sakhi*—O my friend; *anugīta*—described; *sat-kathāḥ*—the excellent pastimes; *vedeṣu*—in the Vedic literatures; *guhyeṣu*—confidentially; *ca*—as also; *guhyava-ādibhiḥ*—by the confidential devotees; *yaḥ*—one who; *ekaḥ*—one only; *īśaḥ*—the supreme controller; *jagat*—of the complete creation; *ātmā*—Supersoul; *līlayā*—by manifestation of pastimes; *sṛjati*—creates; *avaty atti*—also maintains and annihilates; *na*—never; *tatra*—there; *sajjate*—becomes attached to it.

TRANSLATION

O dear friends, here is that very Personality of Godhead whose attractive and confidential pastimes are described in the confidential parts of Vedic literature by His great devotees. It is He only who creates, maintains and annihilates the material world and yet remains unaffected.

PURPORT

As it is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, all the Vedic literatures are glorifying the greatness of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Here it is confirmed in the *Bhāgavatam* also. The *Vedas* are expanded by many branches and sub-branches by great devotees and empowered incarnations of the Lord like Vyāsa, Nārada, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the Kumāras, Kapila, Prahāda, Janaka, Bali and Yamarāja, but in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* especially, the confidential parts of His activities are described by the confidential devotee Śukadeva Gosvāmī. In the *Vedānta-sūtras* or *Upaniṣads* there is

only a hint of the confidential parts of His pastimes. In such Vedic literatures as the *Upaniṣads*, the Lord has expressively been distinguished from the mundane conception of His existence. His identity being fully spiritual, His form, name, quality, and paraphernalia, etc., have been elaborately distinguished from matter, and therefore He is sometimes misunderstood by less intelligent persons as impersonal. But factually He is the Supreme Person, Bhagavān, and He is partially represented as Paramātmā or impersonal Brahman.

TEXT 25

यदा ह्यधर्मेण तमोधिो नृपा
जीवन्ति तत्रैष हि सत्त्वतः किल ।
घत्ते भगं सत्यमृतं दयां यशो
भवाय रूपाणि दधद्युगे युगे ॥२५॥

*yadā hy adharmaṇa tamo-dhiyo nṛpā
jīvanti tatraiṣa hi sattvataḥ kila
dhatte bhagaṁ satyam ṛtaṁ dayāṁ yaśo
bhavāya rūpāṇi dadhat yuge yuge*

yadā—whenever; *hi*—assuredly; *adharmaṇa*—against the principles of God's will; *tamaḥ-dhiyaḥ*—persons in the lowest material modes; *nṛpāḥ*—kings and administrators; *jīvanti*—live like animals; *tatra*—thereupon; *eṣaḥ*—He; *hi*—only; *sattvataḥ*—transcendental; *kila*—certainly; *dhatte*—is manifested; *bhagam*—supreme power; *satyam*—truth; *ṛtaṁ*—positiveness; *dayāṁ*—mercy; *yaśaḥ*—wonderful activities; *bhavāya*—for the maintenance; *rūpāṇi*—in various forms; *dadhat*—manifested; *yuge*—different periods; *yuge*—and ages.

TRANSLATION

Whenever there are kings and administrators living like animals in the lowest modes of existence, the Lord in His transcendental form manifests His supreme power, the Truth Positive, shows special mercy to the faithful, performs wonderful activities and manifests various transcendental forms as is necessary in different periods and ages.

PURPORT

As mentioned above, the cosmic creation is the property of the Supreme Lord. This is the basic philosophy of *Īsopaniṣad*: everything is the property of the Supreme Being. No one should encroach upon the property of the Supreme Lord. One should accept only what is kindly awarded by Him. Therefore, the earth or any other planet or universe is the absolute property of the Lord. The living beings are certainly His parts and parcels, or sons, and thus every one of them has a right to live at the mercy of the Lord to execute his prescribed work. No one, therefore, can encroach upon the right of another individual man or animal without being so sanctioned by the Lord. The king or the administrator is the representative of the Lord to look after the management of the Lord's will. He must therefore be a recognized person like Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira or Parikṣit. Such kings have full responsibility and knowledge from authorities about the administration of the world. But at times, due to the influence of the ignorance mode of material nature (*tamo-guṇa*), the lowest of the material modes, kings and administrators come into power without knowledge and responsibility, and such foolish administrators live like animals for the sake of their own personal interest. The result is that the whole atmosphere becomes surcharged with anarchy and vicious elements. Nepotism, bribery, cheating, aggression and, therefore, famine, epidemic, war and similar other disturbing features become prominent in human society. And the devotees of the Lord or the faithful are persecuted by all means. All these symptoms indicate the time of an incarnation of the Lord to reestablish the principles of religion and to vanquish the maladministrators. This is also confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

The Lord then appears in His transcendental form without any tinge of material qualities. He descends just to keep the state of His creation in a normal condition. The normal condition is that the Lord has provided each and every planet with all the needs of the native living beings. They can happily live and execute their predestined occupations to attain salvation at the end, following the rules and regulations mentioned in the revealed scriptures. The material world is created to satisfy the whims of the *nitya-baddha*, or everlasting conditioned souls, just as naughty boys are provided with playing cradles. Otherwise, there was no need of the material world. But when they become intoxicated with the power of material science to exploit the resources unlawfully without the sanction of the Lord, and that also only for sense gratification, there is necessity of the Lord's incarnation to chastise the rebellious and to protect the faithful.

When He descends, He exhibits superhuman acts just to prove His supreme right, and materialists like Rāvaṇa, Hiranyakaśipu and Kaṁsa are sufficiently punished. He acts in a manner which no one can imitate. For example, the Lord, when He appeared as Rāma, bridged the Indian Ocean. When He appeared as Kṛṣṇa, from His very childhood He showed superhuman activities by killing Pūtanā, Aghāsura, Śakaṭāsura, Kāliya, etc., and then His maternal uncle Kaṁsa. When He was at Dvārakā He married 16,108 queens, and all of them were blessed with a sufficient number of children. The sum total of His personal family members amounted to about 100,000, popularly known as the Yadu-varṁśa. And again, during His lifetime, He managed to vanquish them all. He is famous as the Govardhana-dhārī Hari because He lifted at the age of only seven the hill known as Govardhana. The Lord killed many undesirable kings in His time, and as *kṣatriya* He fought chivalrously. He is famous as the *asamaurda*, unparalleled. No one is equal to or greater than Him.

TEXT 26

अहो अलं श्लाघ्यतमं यदोः कुल-
महो अलं पुण्यतमं मधोर्वनम् ।
यदेष पुंसामृषभः श्रियः पतिः
स्वजन्मना चङ्क्रमणेन चाञ्चति ॥२६॥

*aho alam ślāghyatamaṁ yadoḥ kulam
aho alam puṇyatamaṁ madhorvanam
yad eṣa puṁsām ṛṣabhāḥ śriyaḥ patiḥ
sva-janmanā caṅkramaṇena cāñcati*

aho—oh; *alam*—verily; *ślāghya-tamam*—supremely glorified; *yadoḥ*—of King Yadu; *kulam*—dynasty; *aho*—oh; *alam*—verily; *puṇya-tamam*—supremely virtuous; *madhorvanam*—the land of Mathurā; *yat*—because; *eṣaḥ*—this; *puṁsām*—of all the living beings; *ṛṣabhāḥ*—supreme leader; *śriyaḥ*—of the goddess of fortune; *patiḥ*—husband; *sva-janmanā*—by His appearance; *caṅkramaṇena*—by crawling; *ca añcati*—glories.

TRANSLATION

Oh, how supremely glorified is the dynasty of King Yadu, and how virtuous is the land of Mathurā, where the supreme leader of all living beings, the husband of the goddess of fortune, has taken His birth and wandered in His childhood.

PURPORT

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa has expressively given a description of His transcendental appearance, disappearance and activities. The Lord appears in a particular family or place by His inconceivable potency. He does not take His birth as a conditioned soul quits his body and accepts another body. His birth is like the appearance and disappearance of the sun. The sun arises on the eastern horizon, but that does not mean that the eastern horizon is the parent of the sun. The sun is existent in every part of the solar system, but he be-

comes visible at a scheduled time and so also becomes invisible at another scheduled time. Similarly, the Lord appears in this universe like the sun and again leaves our sight at another time. He exists at all times and at every place, but by His causeless mercy when He appears before us we take it for granted that He has taken His birth. Anyone who can understand this truth, in terms of the statements of revealed scriptures, certainly becomes liberated just after quitting the present body. Liberation is obtainable after many births and after great endeavor in patience and perseverance, in knowledge and renunciation. But simply by knowing in truth about the Lord's transcendental births and activities, one can get liberation at once. That is the verdict of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. But those who are in the darkness of ignorance conclude that the Lord's birth and activities in the material world are similar to those of the ordinary living being. Such imperfect conclusions cannot give anyone liberation. His birth, therefore, in the family of King Yadu as the son of King Vasudeva and His transfer into the family of Nanda Mahārāja in the land of Mathurā are all transcendental arrangements made by the internal potency of the Lord. The fortunes of the Yadu dynasty and that of the inhabitants of the land of Mathurā cannot be materially estimated. If simply by knowing the transcendental nature of the birth and activities of the Lord one can get liberation easily, we can just imagine what is in store for those who actually enjoyed the company of the Lord in person as a family member or as a neighbor. All those who were fortunate enough to associate with the Lord, the husband of the goddess of fortune, certainly obtained something *more than what is known as liberation*. Therefore, rightly, the dynasty and the land are both ever glorious by the grace of the Lord.

TEXT 27

अहो बत स्वर्यशसस्तिरस्करी
कुशस्थली पुण्ययशस्करी भुवः ।
पश्यन्ति नित्यं यदनुग्रहेषितं
सितावलोकं स्वपतिं स यत्प्रजाः ॥२७॥

*aho bata svar-yaśasaś tiraskarī
kuśasthālī puṇya-yaśaskarī bhuvah
paśyanti nityam yad anugraheṣitam
smitāvalokam sva-patim sma yat-prajāḥ*

aho bata—how wonderful this is; *svaḥ-yaśasaś*—the glories of the heavenly planets; *tiraskarī*—that which defeats; *kuśasthālī*—Dvārakā; *puṇya*—virtue; *yaśaskarī*—famous; *bhuvah*—the planet earth; *paśyanti*—see; *nityam*—constantly; *yat*—that which; *anugraha-ṣitam*—to bestow benediction; *smita-avalokam*—glance with the favor of sweet smiling; *sva-patim*—unto the soul of the living being (Kṛṣṇa); *sma*—used to; *yat-prajāḥ*—the inhabitants of the place.

TRANSLATION

Undoubtedly it is wonderful that Dvārakā has defeated the glories of the heavenly planets and has enhanced the celebrity of the earth. The inhabitants of Dvārakā are always seeing the soul of all living beings [Kṛṣṇa] in His loving feature. He glances at them and favors them with sweet smiles.

PURPORT

The heavenly planets are inhabited by demigods like Indra, Candra, Varuṇa and Vāyu and the pious souls reach there after performance of many virtuous acts on earth. Modern scientists agree that the timing arrangement in higher planetary systems is different from that of the earth. Thus it is understood from the revealed scriptures that the duration of life there is ten thousand years (by our calculation). Six months on earth is equal to one day on the heavenly planets. Facilities of enjoyment are also similarly enhanced, and the beauty of the inhabitants is legendary. Common men on the earth are very much fond of reaching

the heavenly planets because they have heard that comforts of life are far greater there than on the earth. They are now trying to reach the moon by spacecraft. Considering all this, the heavenly planets are more celebrated than the earth. But the celebrity of earth has defeated that of the heavenly planets because of Dvārakā, where Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa reigned as King. Three places, namely Vṛndāvana, Mathurā and Dvārakā, are more important than the famous planets within the universe. These places are perpetually sanctified because whenever the Lord descends on earth He displays His transcendental activities particularly in these three places. They are perpetually the holy lands of the Lord, and the inhabitants still take advantage of the holy places, even though the Lord is now out of their sight. The Lord is the soul of all living beings, and He desires always to have all the living beings, in their *svarūpa*, in their constitutional position, to participate in transcendental life in His association. His attractive features and sweet smiles go deep into the heart of everyone, and once it is so done the living being is admitted into the kingdom of God, from which no one returns. This is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

The heavenly planets may be very famous for offering better facilities of material enjoyment, but as we learn from the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.20–21), one has to come back again to the earth planet as soon as the acquired virtue is finished. Dvārakā is certainly more important than the heavenly planets because whoever has been favored with the smiling glance of the Lord shall never come back again to this rotten earth, which is certified by the Lord Himself as a place of misery. Not only this earth but also all the planets of the universes are places of misery because in none of the planets within the universe is there eternal life, eternal bliss and eternal knowledge. Any person engaged in the devotional service of the Lord is recommended to live in one of the above-mentioned three places, namely Dvārakā, Mathurā or Vṛndāvana. Because devotional service in these three places is magnified, those who go there to follow the principles in terms of instructions imparted in the revealed scriptures surely achieve the same result as obtained during the presence of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. His abode and He Himself are identical, and a pure devotee under the guidance of another experienced devotee can obtain all the results, even at present.

TEXT 28

नूनं व्रतस्नानहुतादिनेश्वरः
समर्चितो ह्यस्य गृहीतपाणिभिः ।
पिबन्ति याः सख्यधरामृतं मुहु-
र्व्रजस्त्रियः सम्मुमुहुर्दशयाः ॥२८॥

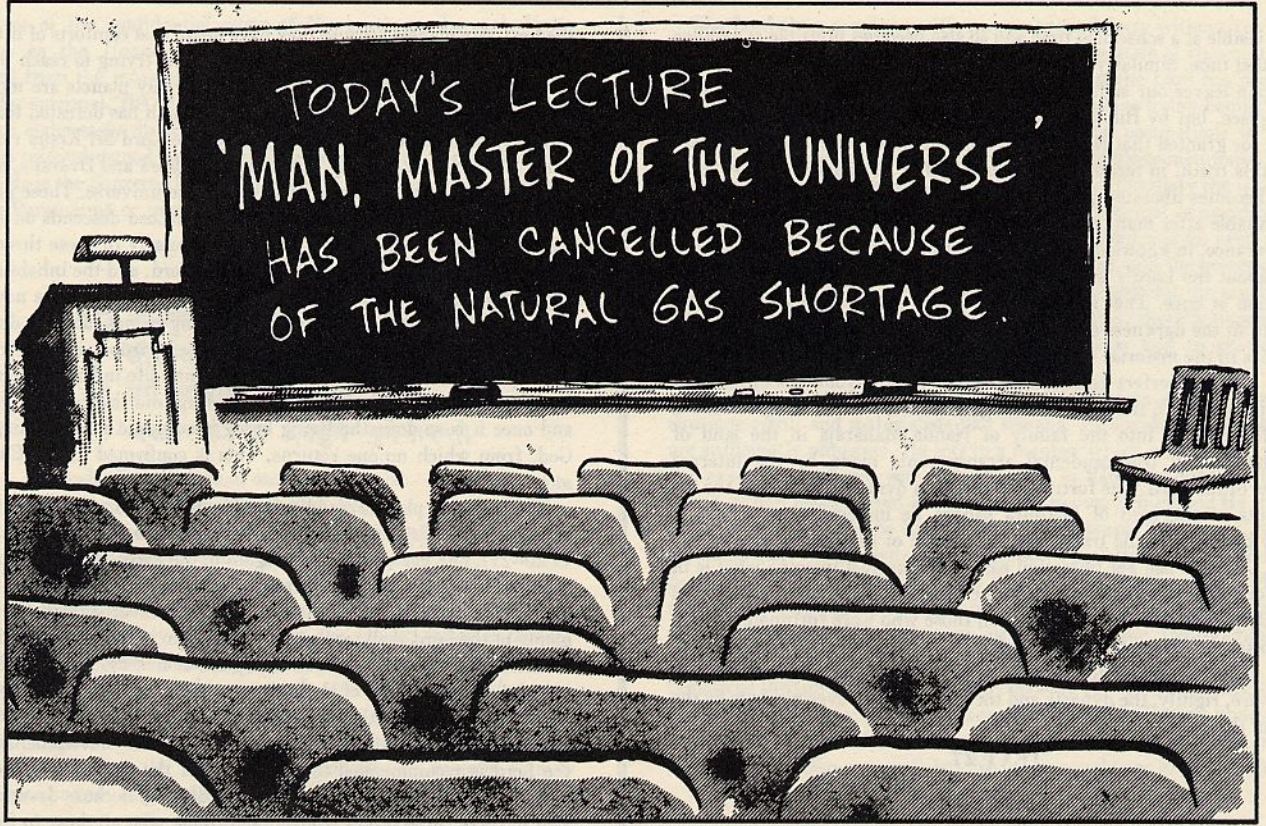
*nūnam vrata-snāna-hutādīneśvaraḥ
samarcito hy asya grhīta-pāṇibhiḥ
pibanti yāḥ sakhyadharamṛtam muhur
vraja-striyaḥ sammumuhur yad-āśayāḥ*

nūnam—certainly in the previous birth; *vrata*—vow; *snāna*—bath; *huta*—sacrifice in the fire; *ādīnā*—by all these; *īśvaraḥ*—the Personality of Godhead; *samarcitaḥ*—perfectly worshiped; *hi*—certainly; *asya*—His; *grhīta-pāṇibhiḥ*—by the married wives; *pibanti*—relishes; *yāḥ*—those who; *sakhi*—O friend; *adhara-amṛtam*—the nectar from His lips; *muhuh*—again and again; *vraja-striyaḥ*—the damsels of Vrajabhūmi; *sammu-muhuh*—often fainted; *yat-āśayāḥ*—expecting to be favored in that way.

TRANSLATION

O friends, just think of His wives, whose hands He has accepted. How they must have undergone vows, baths, fire sacrifices and perfect worship of the Lord of the universe to constantly relish now the nectar from His lips [by kissing]. The damsels of Vrajabhūmi would often faint just by expecting such favors.

(continued in next issue)



Auth in Philadelphia Inquirer

ORPHANED BY MOTHER NATURE?

Can we discern any pattern in the recent earthquakes, bitter cold, and scarcities of water, petroleum, and natural gas? Perhaps Mother Nature is telling us a little secret about our obligations to God.

Five thousand years ago, Queen Kuntī said it well, as she spoke to the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. . . .

CANTO 1, CHAPTER 8, TEXT 40

(From *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*—Translation and Commentary by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda)

इमे जनपदाः स्वद्धाः सुपक्वौषधिवीरुहः ।
वनाद्रिनद्युदन्वन्तो ह्येधन्ते तव वीक्षितैः ॥४०॥

*ime jana-padāḥ svṛddhāḥ
supakkaṁśadhi-vīrudhāḥ
vanādrī-nady-udanvantō
hy edhante tava vīkṣitaiḥ*

ime—all these; *jana-padāḥ*—cities and towns; *svṛddhāḥ*—flourished; *supakka*—nature; *śadhi*—herbs; *vīrudhāḥ*—vegetables; *vana*—forests; *adri*—hills; *nady*—rivers; *udanvantāḥ*—seas; *hi*—certainly; *edhante*—increasing; *tava*—by You; *vīkṣitaiḥ*—seen.

TRANSLATION

All these cities and villages are flourishing in all respects because the herbs and grains are in abundance, the trees are full of

fruits, the rivers are flowing, the hills are full of minerals and the oceans full of wealth. And this is all due to Your glancing over them.

PURPORT

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

Every Town and Village

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

India's "Nightingale" Sings for Kṛṣṇa

Lata Mangeshkar, the world's most prolific recording artist (with more than twenty thousand songs to her credit), recently went on a rare concert tour of North America.

Known as "the nightingale of India," the humble Miss Mangeshkar has won the Padma Bushan, India's highest national award, and so many "Filmfare" awards (her country's equivalent of the Oscar) that she's had to declare herself ineligible for more. *Time* magazine called her "the indisputable and indispensable queen of India's playback singers."

When she went on stage last January 30 at Los Angeles' Shrine Auditorium, Miss Mangeshkar told her audience, "I'm giving this concert as a benefit program for the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. The proceeds are going to a cultural theater they're building in Bombay." She then captivated her fans with a three-hour concert beginning with the *Bhagavad-gītā* and going on to the popular songs that have made her India's most famous vocalist.

"I began singing at age five," she said

Devotees Delight Indian Villagers

During the last few weeks the residents of over forty villages along the holy Yamunā and Ganges Rivers have been startled—and delighted—by an unusual sight: a lively group of ISKCON devotees riding into town in a bullock cart. Dressed in flowing saffron robes and loudly playing drums and small cymbals, the devotees quickly draw a crowd with their enthusiastic chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa and then liberally distribute free, sanctified food (*prasāda*) and Kṛṣṇa-conscious literature written in the local language.

Srīla Prabhupāda recently requested a few of his disciples to begin this ancient, Vedic method of *saṅkīrtana* (spreading the glories of the Lord), and under the guidance of His Holiness Lokanātha Swami the program is meeting with great success in the simple villages of rural India.



after the concert. "My father taught me our classical music—*rāgas* from the *Vedas*. When I was a child, I learned to sing only for God." And why the benefit concert? "My whole family are members of the Hare Kṛṣṇa society. . . . When I sing for Lord Kṛṣṇa, everything is complete."

We Want to Hear from You

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

Alice Coltrane: A New Album

Just arrived in the stores is a new release by Alice Coltrane, wife of the late master saxophonist John Coltrane. The current Warner LP, *Radha-Kṛṣṇa Nama Sankīrtana* ("singing the names of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa"), features Arjuna John Coltrane, Jr., on drums and Alice (Turiyasangitananda) on keyboards and harp. "The Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra," she says about one cut, "is the Mahamantra—Maha: great—of all the mantras. . . . It is a liberating mantra because it contains three of the most powerful names of the Supreme."

Religion Professor Praises ISKCON

Is the International Society for Krishna Consciousness a pseudo-religious "cult" or a genuine religious culture? Here's what Dr. George Bond, Assistant Professor of Religion at Chicago's Northwestern University, said recently about ISKCON:

"The Krishna Society represents a Western outgrowth of a living religious movement in India which goes back over two thousand years. Since my field of study is Eastern religions, I have been interested to observe many of the Eastern religious movements which have arisen in the U.S. and to compare them with the beliefs and practices of the religions of Asia. If you make this comparison, you will find that in every respect the Krishna Society reflects the authentic teachings of Hinduism. Their religion centers around the ideas of one of the main Indian holy books, *Bhagavad-gītā*, the book which Mahatma Gandhi read daily as his chief inspiration. They follow a peaceful philosophy stressing the unity of all beings and God's love for humanity. They have brought this religion, which is followed by millions of Indians, and established it in the West as an alternative and a complement to Western religions.

"Their books represent translations of some of the most important Hindu scriptures as well as commentaries upon Indian philosophy. These books exemplify the highest ideals of Indian thought. To quote but one opinion of these books, Dr. John L. Mish, head of the Oriental Division of the New York Public Library, has said, 'The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust editions of famous religious classics of India, with new translations and commentaries, are an important addition to our expanding knowledge of spiritual India.'

"The founder of the Krishna Society, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, stands in the best tradition of Indian religion. Describing this man's writings, Professor J. Bruce Long of Cornell University has said, 'A. C. Bhaktivedanta has combined a healthy mixture of the devotion and aesthetic sensitivity of a believer, and the intellectual rigor of a textual scholar.'"

Why and How to Meditate

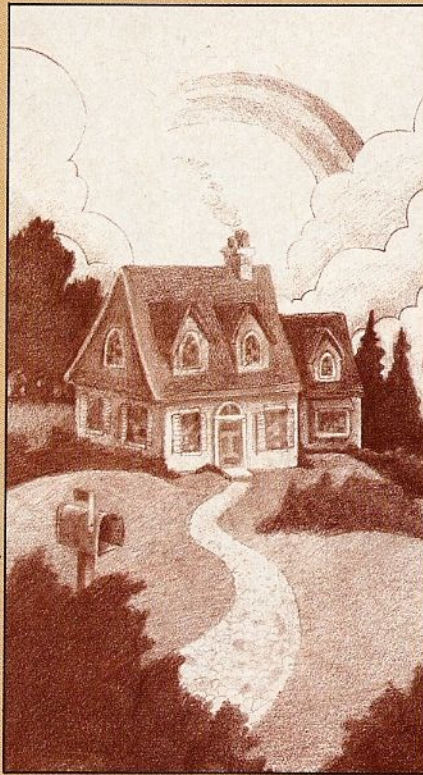
Why is meditation becoming so popular these days? What does a person feel while meditating that is so enjoyable? To answer these questions, psychologist Lawrence Le Shan interviewed many meditators. To Le Shan, the comment that best summed up the meditation experience was, "It's like coming home."

"Home," of course, is a secure and happy place where we feel that we belong and are loved for being our real selves. Home is filled with relatives and friends who support us. Home protects us from the world's dangers, while allowing us to learn of that very same world's opportunities for our happiness. But today, unfortunately, the feeling of being "at home" is an increasingly rare one.

Philosophers, psychologists, and politicians describe our times with words like "anxiety," "despair," "conflict," "hot war," "cold war," and "future shock." Social commentators tell us that our society is growing more and more mechanical, impersonal, and unsympathetic to human needs. Even in wealthy and relatively secure countries like the United States, families incessantly move from one neighborhood or apartment to another, and if by chance one has physical security, there still remains a pervasive feeling of psychological homelessness. People don't know where, amid society's constant change and crass commercialism, to put their allegiance, where to rest their hearts. Finally, even the simplest life functions (drinking water, eating, and breathing) can now cause us anxiety because of the threat of pollution.

It's natural for us to want to feel at home. Yet, as we see, our uptight, breakneck-speed civilization fails to give us that homey feeling. In fact, modern civilization often frightens us, sends our blood pressure soaring, makes our adrenalin flow, and forces us to seek strong relief. Some people fight their fear with drink, drugs, and/or television. Still, this type of relief is temporary, superficial, and hardly pleasing. Dulling the awareness of a problem doesn't solve it.

In seeking a more permanent and satisfactory solution to these problems, many people (including doctors and psychologists) have now turned towards meditation and have gotten impressive results. Dr. Daniel Goleman reports that "the ability to handle stress increases



Illustrations by Rādhā-Gopinātha dāsa

If "Home is where the heart is," then it's little wonder—in our uptight, breakneck-speed (not to say heartless) civilization—that so many of us feel homeless. But meditation, some say, is "like coming home."

with practice in meditation." Scientists are discovering that meditation can significantly improve a person's physical and mental health. Dr. Le Shan notes "a greater efficiency and enthusiasm in the everyday life [of meditators]." And meditation achieves all this without any harmful side effects.

What's more, when we read time-tested manuals of meditation (the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, for instance), we find that peace of mind and relief from stress are only pleasant by-products associated with the meditator's attainment of an even higher goal.

For one thing, as the *Bhagavad-gītā* explains, meditation clears away a person's ignorance and unhealthy habits naturally, without harmful repressions, by allowing him to experience a *higher pleasure*. For example, people smoke cig-

arettes and indulge in alcohol and drugs because they derive a certain pleasure from them. However, during the practice of meditation, the meditator gradually experiences greater and greater degrees of an *internal* pleasure that supplants his desire for unhealthy substances. This same principle works to remedy harmful psychological reactions like anxiety, stress, or unwarranted anger. Meditation permits the individual to contact the healthy psychological tendencies already existing within himself. This experience of health is so intrinsically rewarding that the meditator naturally begins to gravitate towards these healthy tendencies in everyday life.

The source of this higher pleasure experienced in meditation is an unfettered and enlightened self. Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that this enlightened state "is characterized by one's ability to see the self by the pure mind and to relish and rejoice in the self." The *Gītā* also explains that when a meditator links his individual consciousness in a loving, reciprocal relationship with the Supreme Being (God, or Kṛṣṇa), the experience of enlightenment develops to its highest potential and becomes permanent. "Being situated in such a position," says the *Gītā*, "one is never shaken, even in the midst of the greatest difficulty. This indeed is actual freedom from all miseries. . . ."

While moving towards this goal, the meditator literally has the feeling of "going back home," as His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda describes it. "Home," in this context, means that the individual realizes his true identity and is able to act on it. Meditation, then, not only relieves distress, but also promotes the fullest possible expression of the human spirit.

Or, as the saying goes, the best defense is a good offense. The best way to defend ourselves from stress, alienation, and the feeling of homelessness, is to adopt a practice that will move us in the positive direction of going "back home," back to our real selves and a loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa, or God.

THE TECHNIQUE OF MEDITATION

As Geraldine Coster says in *Yoga and Western Psychology*, "Modern religion does not stress the search for self-awareness sufficiently to appeal to the scien-

tific or even to the critically intelligent mind.” Coster feels that meditation *does* appeal to this type of person, because meditation is a practical technique whose beneficial results the meditator experiences for himself.

To achieve the beneficial effects of meditation doesn't require any mental or intellectual adjustments, as, for instance, the prior acceptance of a set of beliefs. The very practice of meditation enlightens consciousness to the point where the individual experiences truth, experiences reality, by direct perception. In other words, meditation embodies the scientific and nonsectarian spirit that so attracts modern people.

The question now arises, What meditational technique is best suited for our times? The amazing proliferation of “consciousness-raising” techniques has confused many people, but if we again consult classical authorities on the subject, we find reassuring unanimity: both respected teachers and books strongly recommend *oral mantra meditation* as the best means of experiencing self-realization and higher pleasure in this day and age. And modern psychologists like Dr. John Heider (in the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*) are quick to agree. Meditation and mantras are, in Heider's words, “as necessary to a life of growth as regular brushing is to dental hygiene.”

Dr. Abraham Maslow explains that a person can know whether or not a process is working for him if “...it feels better subjectively than any other alternative. The new experience validates itself... It is self-justifying, self-validating.” The practice of mantra meditation quickly proves itself to be the kind of self-justifying, self-validating experience that Maslow is talking about here.

Oral mantra meditation is easy to learn and pleasant to practice. After you read the following instructions, you can immediately start to practice meditation in your own home, without incurring costly initiation fees.

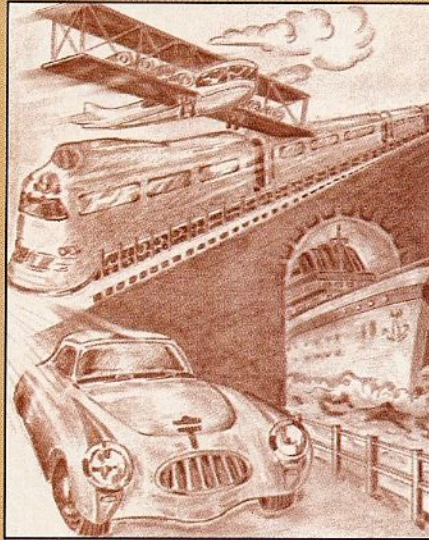
MAHAMANTRA MEDITATION

Five hundred years ago, in India, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu ushered in the modern age of mantra meditation by freely initiating everyone—regardless of race, religion, or social status—into the chanting of the most effective mantra of all, the once-secret Hare Kṛṣṇa [“Huh-ray Krish-na”] Mahamantra.

Maha means “great,” *man* means “mind,” and *tra* means “release.” *Mahamantra*, then, means “the great sound vibration to release the mind from undesirable conditions.” In the *Psychology of Consciousness* Dr. Robert E. Ornstein says, “Actually, the ‘magic’

lies in the *sound* of the words, which are designed to have a certain effect on consciousness.” By simply hearing the sound of a mantra, a person clears his mind of unfavorable psychological qualities and simultaneously cultivates favorable qualities.

There is no need for a private mantra. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu democratized meditation by making the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra available on the most liberal terms to everyone. He taught, “There are no hard and fast rules for chanting...” A person can chant the Hare



Social commentators tell us our society is growing more and more mechanical, impersonal, and unsympathetic to human needs. In other words, it's getting harder and harder for us to have that “homey” feeling.

Kṛṣṇa mantra anywhere, at any time, either to relieve distress or to advance in self-realization. However, the early morning is an especially favorable time for meditating. Also, the practice of Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra meditation proceeds more smoothly when you set aside a specific amount of time per day for meditating. Set aside a convenient amount of time that fits into your schedule, and, if possible, gradually increase your practice up to an hour or more. You can arrange your practice in two or more sessions during the day or evening.

To chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, assume any comfortable position, except a slouching or reclining one (you'll just become drowsy). You can chant while sitting, while standing, or while walking. You can keep your eyes open or closed, or you can alternate between open and closed eyes. Repeat the mantra (Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare) audibly to yourself for as long a time as you intend to meditate. (Make sure that you move your lips

and jaw as in pronouncing ordinary words.) You can chant as loudly or as softly as you like. You can vary your pitch and inflection, too. Remember, “There are no hard and fast rules.” Meditation is a personal science, and people aren't machines. There's no mechanical way to develop your potential. If a meditational technique is to succeed, then it has to be as natural, free, and expressive as you yourself are. Rather than stifling your personal, self-expressive tendencies, the Hare Kṛṣṇa technique works with these tendencies to stimulate natural, flowing meditation.

While you're chanting, simply fix your mind on *hearing the sound of the mantra*. When you talk, it's natural for you to listen to your voice. During meditation, direct this natural attentiveness to hearing the mantra. The quality of your meditation will depend on how well you do this.

It's true that in the course of a meditation your mind may wander or day-dream. When this happens, don't fight it; just bring your attention back to hearing the mantra. As Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.26), “From whatever and wherever the mind wanders due to its flickering and unsteady nature, one must certainly withdraw it and bring it back under the control of the self.” Śrīla Prabhupāda explains, “The mind is naturally restless, ... but it can rest in the sound vibration of Kṛṣṇa.” The mind is seeking knowledge and pleasure, and because the mind finds these things in the sound of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, it becomes peaceful and satisfied.

The words of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra come from the ancient Sanskrit language. *Hare* means “one who takes away all mental disturbances” and “one who awakens all healthy qualities.” *Hare* also means “the energy or pleasure potency of God.” *Kṛṣṇa* and *Rāma* are personal names for God. *Kṛṣṇa* means “all-attractive.” *Rāma* means “reservoir of pleasure.” When a meditator repeats these sounds, the mantra gradually unfolds its meaning to him and enhances his personal development.

You now have everything that you need to start practicing meditation in your own home. Simply repeat the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and listen to the sound. Progress will follow automatically. One last hint—your rate of progress will also depend on the sincerity of your feeling while you chant. Again, meditation is a *personal science*.

If you encounter any difficulties or have any questions about Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra meditation or about meditation in general, get in touch with your nearest Kṛṣṇa center (listed on page 28) or write me, Daniel Maziarz, care of BACK TO GODHEAD magazine. And have a gentle, pleasant journey “back home.”



Above: early morning sunlight illuminates an artist's easel. The painting employs classical techniques to illustrate a timeless account of divine love. Right: Judy Guarino (Jadurāṇī-devī dāsī) blends paints to find the appropriate hue. She was the first Western artist to do extensive illustration of the ancient Vedic texts.

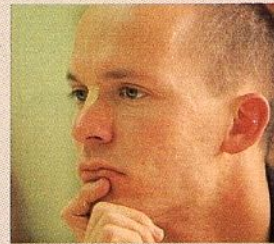
CART: A RETURN TO THE ORIGINAL SPIRIT



If it's been some years since you last visited an art exhibit, you may be in for a surprise. Far from a da Vinci or Michelangelo rendering of a pastoral scene or the *Pieta*, you're likely to see an oversized ceramic cigarette butt, or maybe a 7,200-meter line (drawn on paper and rolled into a chrome-plated can for display), or perhaps a couple of realistic vinyl eyeballs, or an empty canvas, or . . . nothing at all—the artist's statement may be to lock you out of the gallery.

Art critic and lecturer Peter Hawkins says, "One New York artist did his *pièce de résistance* by going into the Museum of Modern Art and spraying Picasso's *Guernica* with dayglow paint. They put him in jail, but he got reviews in all the art magazines. Now his work is in great demand."

Says Hawkins, an associate of London's Royal College of Art, "What's been happening is that people have been using art to sell their products, and now art itself has become just another product. For an artist in a money-oriented society, the most important thing is selling. His bread and butter depends on whether someone's going to buy his



Below: Miriam Briks (Dhṛti-devī dāsi) refers to a book on Flemish artists to get technical hints for her painting. Bottom Left: academy director Nathan Zakheim (far left in photo) consults with three other artists on a preliminary sketch for a new painting. Bottom Right: Amendola Dominique (Dṛghā-devī dāsi) studied art in her native Paris. "With Kṛṣṇa consciousness," she says, "I discovered art could have another dimension."

painting. So if he's going to survive as an artist, he's forced to come up with the unusual, the bizarre. He ends up literally battling with other artists for recognition. He has to sacrifice something—his integrity—to attract attention to himself."

According to Hawkins, artists haven't always been in such a plight. "If we look back into our history as far as we can see," he says, "art was an expression of an inner vision, it was a kind of sacrifice to the divine. The ancient Greeks worshiped and honored Athena in their artwork. The early Christian artists, up to the Renaissance, painted exclusively

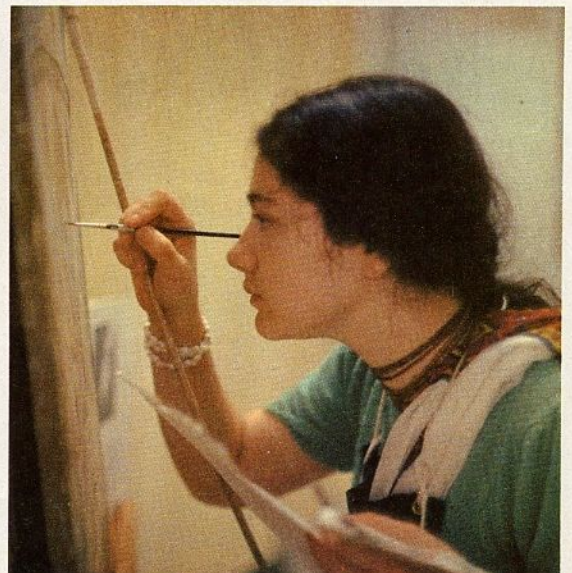
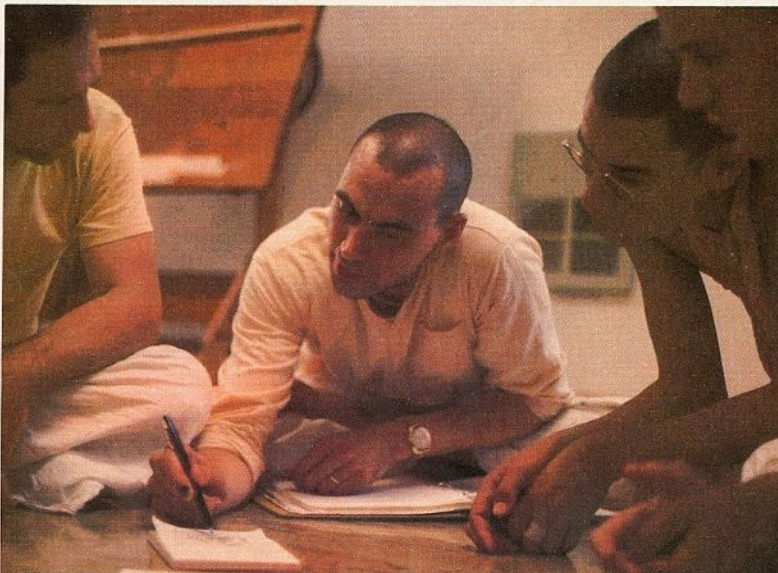
about Christ. When people came to see their work painted on a church wall, they became enthralled with devotion. Even during the Renaissance, when artists like Da Vinci became scientists, they used their discoveries of new techniques to evoke a sense of devotion in their viewers. As soon as the Florentine artists discovered perspective in painting, they used it to depict the life of Christ more realistically. Techniques were never ends in themselves. Wherever you look before the Renaissance, you'll find that artists were painting with devotion. Instead of attracting attention to themselves, they attracted attention to God."

Nathan Zakheim, art consultant for the University of California and the city of San Francisco, claims that the devotional spirit in art is still alive. "We have an Athens here," says an enthusiastic Zakheim about the art academy he directs in a palm-lined section of West Los Angeles. "We're trying to have that open forum where our work flows naturally from our purpose in living. All the artists here paint from a spirit of devotion that's continually expanding."

Zakheim (Nara-nārāyaṇa dāsa) agrees with critic Hawkins that traditionally, art was mystical and austere. "But gradually," he says, "artists started flattering and catering to their patrons. Fine art lost its devotional and mystical quality when artists started trying just to satisfy their wealthy patrons. So in terms of art history, our academy is harking back to that original concept—painting to express a higher reality and to bring out the natural sense of devotion in the person who sees it."

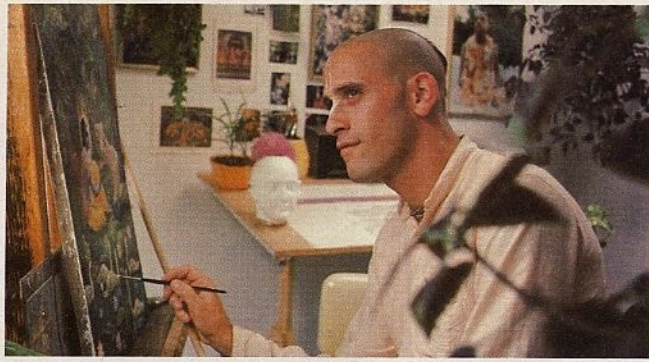
The academy Zakheim directs began in the late sixties, when His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

(continued on page 23)



Right: Matthew Goldman (Puṣkara dāsa), in a reflective mood. Below: “During my college years, I spent all my summers painting,” says Mark Missman (Muralidhara dāsa). “I realized then that painting in itself wasn’t totally fulfilling.

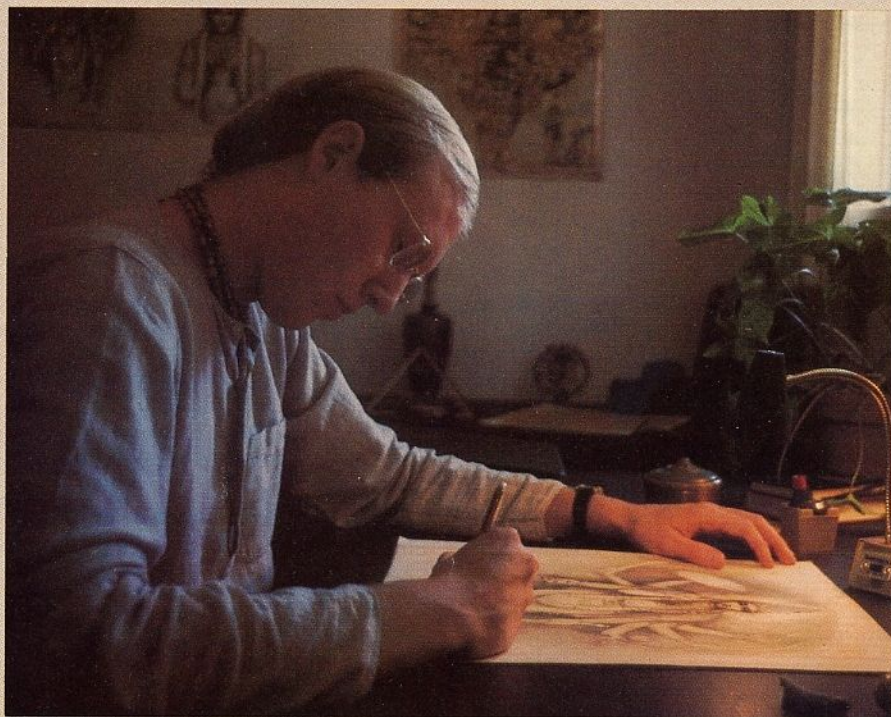
So I read all the books I could get on meditation and inquired about how I could learn to meditate. Someone gave me a list of meditation centers, with the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Temple on top. Since then my painting’s become truly meaningful and much more satisfying.”



CREATIVITY IN KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS AN ARTIST SPEAKS

Navayauvana: What is your background as an artist?

Jayarāma: I can say that my painting started off with music, because as a child I studied music more than I studied art. I spent most of my time practicing and playing the piano. When I reached sixteen or seventeen I started to become more interested in visual arts, and I began drawing quite a bit. Then I went to study drawing at Washington University, in St. Louis, at the school of fine arts there. I studied under one teacher for two years, and in my third year I was majoring in painting. A lot of problems came up, because my idea of painting and the idea of the teachers was entirely different. They were into very contemporary trends, and I guess they thought of me as a reactionary, because all my paintings were full of detail and mostly visionary. They thought my work was too insubstantial; it wasn't outrageous enough. So I spent my whole third year in college fighting it out with these teachers. Finally I just left, about six weeks before the end of that year, and I went to Europe to see the museums and all the great paintings that I'd been studying for years. Then I came back and kept painting. I went to live in an isolated little spot in Arkansas for awhile, so that I could paint in a more peaceful atmosphere. Then I went back to St. Louis, where I started finding out about Kṛṣṇa consciousness—going to the temple now and then, and learning about Kṛṣṇa. I was always looking for beauty in art, truth in art, and I always appreciated art that pointed in a high direction. I was looking for beautiful form, and when I started to hear about Kṛṣṇa, His form was something I naturally became interested in. So I read the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and got to know a few devotees. It was all very attractive. It made a lot of sense to me, and I turned toward Kṛṣṇa conscious-



ness for inspiration in my art work.

Navayauvana: Previous to this, were there any influences in your art work?

Jayarāma: I've always been influenced by Leonardo da Vinci. Leonardo's work—the more I study it, the more real it becomes to me. His landscapes are so endlessly deep and mysterious. They're full of a vital, creative energy that's always pulling upwards. Also, Fra Angelico, as far as devotional painters go—to me he's the greatest. He said that before he would even pick up a paintbrush he'd pray, and as he was painting the face of Christ he would be crying. For him Christ was a very real experience. That devotion he felt for Christ can be seen in his compositions. Everything he painted was glowing with devotion and simplicity. It's the sort of simplicity that reflects higher truths, right in the line and right in the color. Also, I've always liked Indian sculpture, because it's the finest example of perfect form and ideal beauty. Then, too, there's always the symmetry of a leaf, or the color of the sky. . . . All these things influence me as an artist.

Navayauvana: Now that you're painting for Kṛṣṇa, do you find any difference in your role as an artist?

Jayarāma: I've always felt a kind of need to glorify God in my work, because painting is something He's given me. And now I have that desire even more. I'm mostly interested in trying to show how beautiful Kṛṣṇa is. He's great and

He's beautiful; He's kind and He's compassionate. I just want to try to remind people that God is actually a very beautiful and kind person. Whether it takes me ten years to do a painting or ten days, I have to glorify Kṛṣṇa the best I can. Anything less than that I consider very unsatisfactory and very frustrating.

Navayauvana: Did you ever want to become a great artist?

Jayarāma: I don't care if I'm a 'great artist' or not. I just want my art to point toward the mysteries and the beauties of the truth, that's all. Whether it comes into the context of being great or famous, that doesn't matter so much. If I feel that it evokes the desire to understand something higher and to appreciate a higher beauty, that's what I care about—because that's the experience I have with it, and that's the experience I would like to share. And if it becomes 'great,' fine; if it doesn't, fine. That doesn't matter, as long as I can somehow point toward that higher direction.

Navayauvana: How has chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa affected your work?

Jayarāma: Well, I can just follow my own progression. My conception of form, my standards of beauty—they've all become so much higher since I've taken chanting seriously.

Navayauvana: Specifically, I'd like to know how the chanting affects your creativity.

Jayarāma: I guess a lot of people think that it limits individuality and kind

of groups everyone together, right? Because everyone's chanting in the same place, doing the same thing, externally it seems very uninteresting. But, internally, I know if you take it seriously... I mean, I don't take chanting nearly as seriously as I should... but when I do take it seriously, there's nothing but very positive results. Chanting is a link with God, and we're eternally individual parts of God—whole, complete parts. When you chant, your completeness, your individuality, becomes more manifest. And as your individual personality begins to come out, your higher perceptions begin to open up. It's a spiritual vibration, so naturally spiritual vibrations are going to open up all those higher channels of consciousness. And chanting can also manifest itself in form. Not that I've experienced this directly myself, but indirectly I've experienced it within my work—a spiritual sense of beauty, color, and form. Chanting opens a new spiritual dimension.

Navayauvana: In other words, rather than restricting your creativity, chanting does just the opposite.

Jayarāma: Oh, definitely. Anyone who can think that chanting is restricting creativity doesn't know anything about chanting.

Navayauvana: So overall, creativity seems to have an important role in your devotional life.

Jayarāma: I think creativity should be there in all aspects of life. Why be uncreative? Kṛṣṇa is the *most* creative person, and we all come from Him. So why *not* be creative? We can create beautiful things and give them back to Kṛṣṇa.

Navayauvana: In what ways do you think Kṛṣṇa-conscious art is unique?

Jayarāma: It's unique in that it's presenting a clear understanding of what truth is, a clear understanding of the original person, Kṛṣṇa—what He looks like, what He does, how He relates to people... When we talk about truth, until we talk about Kṛṣṇa we're missing so much. Even if Kṛṣṇa is not mentioned, there are still high forms of art. But art remains incomplete until it contains an awareness of Kṛṣṇa. Then art can express the highest aspects of truth.

Navayauvana: Do you have any personal goals as an artist?

Jayarāma: Oh, yes. I just want to become more honest and sincere in my work. Hopefully, that will give some pleasure to my spiritual master and anyone else who sees it.



Prabhupāda came to America to introduce ancient India's Vedic culture—the wisdom of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. While still in India preparing for his task, Śrīla Prabhupāda had called for “a cultural presentation for the re-spiritualization of the entire human society. ... There is a need,” he wrote, “for a spiritual atmosphere, ... a clue as to how humanity can become one in peace, friendship and prosperity with a common cause.”

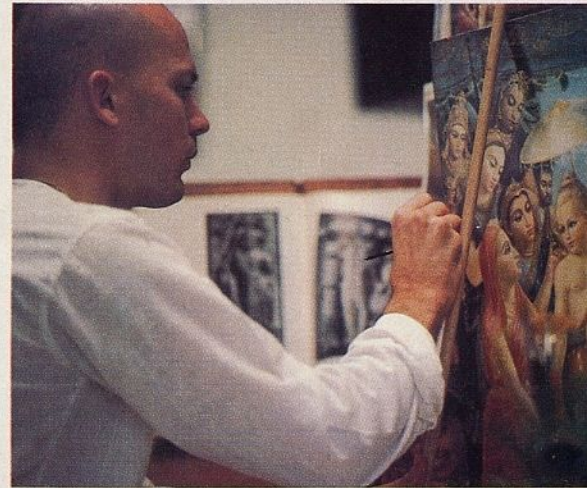
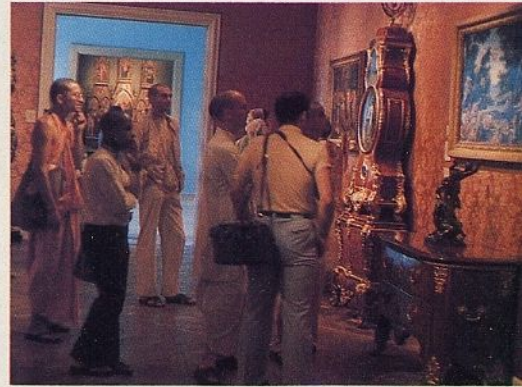
“Śrīla Prabhupāda founded the art academy,” says Zakheim, “upon that spirit of a ‘common cause.’ What’s unique here is that all of us who paint see our work as part of a greater art—practicing the yoga of devotion. We paint from a desire to understand our higher selves, our spiritual selves, and to relate to others on that higher level. So our artwork stays free from the kind of nihilistic imagery that assaults you when you walk into a gallery today. We’re trying to produce an art that is positive, creative, and inspirational.”

Five hundred years ago, Michelangelo expressed a similar thought. “True artistic inspiration,” he said, “is not derived from the material world. The visible world has value only in reflecting the divine idea.”

The artists at the academy are currently painting passages from an ancient 18,000-verse epic called *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (*The Beautiful Story of the Personality of Godhead*). Written in Sanskrit and translated into English by Śrīla Prabhupāda, the *Bhāgavatam* is India's greatest spiritual classic. It describes the all-attractive personal nature of the absolute, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the highly evolved spiritual life-styles that attraction for Kṛṣṇa inspired in people. “If you're sensitive to the sublime personal relationships found in the *Bhāgavatam*,” Zakheim says, “you'll expand your own awareness thousands of times. As artists, we're trying to paint these historical personalities in a way that's as authentic as possible. By illustrating their spotless character and way of living, we're trying to show them some respect. That in itself will be sufficiently evocative.”

Whether the academy's paintings create a significant impact in the art world remains to be seen. Already, however, a few critics have spoken highly of them. After viewing some of the paintings, Professor John La Plante of Stanford University termed them “works of art of a higher visual order. They have,” he said, “a remarkable sense of realism. They're not painted in the symbolic

Below: the academy artists carefully research classical painting techniques. Here they tour the Getty Museum, studying compositions of the “old masters.” Later they met with the museum's curator, who found their work “quite impressive.” Bottom: Douglas Ball (Parīkṣit dāsa) puts finishing touches on his composition “The Appearance of Vāmana.”



manner that's common in Indian paintings; rather, they contain a visual precision which is amazing. The images are so convincing that they quit being symbols and become reality.”

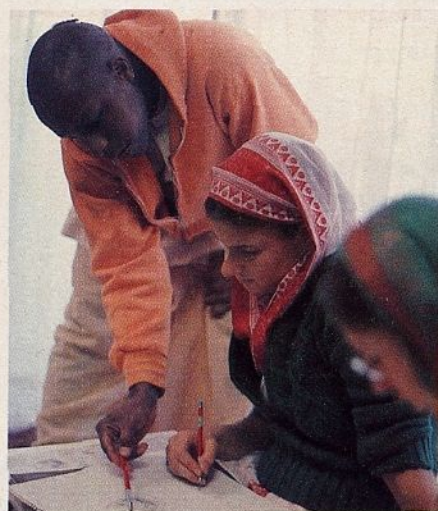
Mr. Burton Frederickson, the curator of California's J. Paul Getty Museum, found the academy's paintings “fascinating. I am impressed that the artists are reviving traditional techniques similar to those used by classical artists. The traditional aspects of the craft are pretty much forgotten today, and the academy's efforts to revive them are very commendable.”

Royal College associate Peter Hawkins observes that the paintings are “saturated with devotion. The quality of devo-



tion seems to vibrate in them.” Hawkins compares them with the works of Fra Angelico, whose frescos depicting the life of Christ are world-renowned. For Hawkins, the academy’s paintings “need to be felt within the heart rather than directly perceived with the eye. I feel that I’m looking into a purely spiritual space. With each viewing I’m learning something new.”

With techniques that have been all but forgotten, and imagery that is startlingly new to Western viewers, the academy’s art promises to create quite a stir. “Some will say we’re turning the clock back a hundred years,” says Zakheim, “while others will call it the most progressive art movement of the day. That’s not so important to us. We’re not trying to make popular images. What we are trying to do is get a kind of introspection and inspiration from God, who we hope will guide us to a clearer and clearer understanding of how to paint. If somehow we have that inspiration, naturally people who see our work will also become inspired. They’ll see that all over the world we need a spiritual standard of living to free us from our malaise. And when that happens, there will be a Renaissance to end all renaissances!”



Above: artists at the academy dispel a popular myth—the artist as an egocentric loner. Kevin Yee (Rāmadāsa Abhirāma dāsa) points out a fine detail in Mark Missman’s painting, while Douglas Ball experiments with color shading. **Above Right:** Howard Sewell (Haravapu dāsa) points out a drawing technique to Sandra Griffis (Sañjayā-devi dāsī), an art graduate from Goddard College. **Right:** an artist meditates on the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra before he begins a day of painting.



“The Appearance of Vāmana”

18 x 24 inches
Douglas Ball (Parīkṣit dāsa)

“The Cursing of Upabarhaṇa”

18 x 24 inches
Miriam Briks (Dhṛti-devī dāsī)

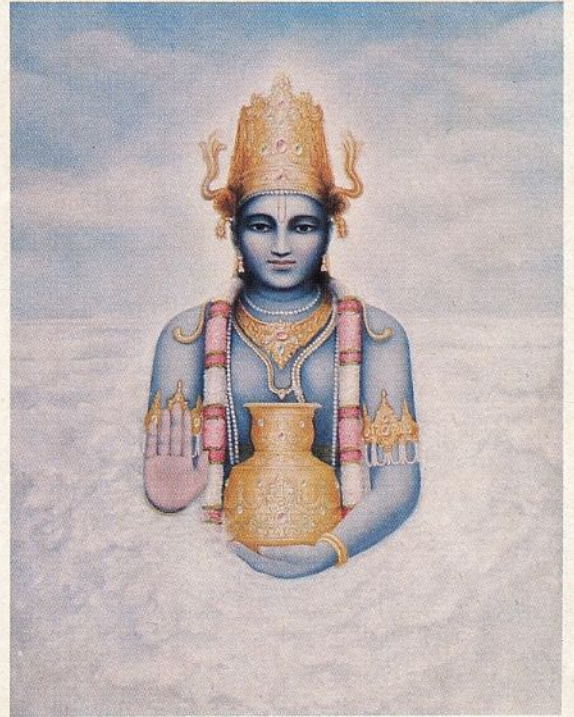


“The Incarnation of Dhanvantari”

12 x 16 inches
John C. Swindler (Jayarāma dāsa)

“The Rājasūya Sacrifice”

24 x 30 inches
Mark Missman (Muralīdhara dāsa)



The Scholar and the Boatman

Though a mass of gray was moving in across the northwest sky, the sun was still shining. As he ambled down the shrubby slope to the beachfront below, the man felt a chilly breeze coming through the trees. He turned up his collar and made his way more quickly to the little boat dock, with its slats of soggy old wood.

"Boatman! Take me across!"

"Yessir—climb aboard!"

Professor Perkins wasn't what you'd call an old man—graying, to be sure; but still sprightly, even athletic-looking. In the subcontinent's academic circles, he had long been a man to watch. There was perhaps no one who could match his fertile wit, his sweeping command and instant recall in practically every field of higher learning.

The boatman had seen better days (not that they'd really been much better, of course). His body bent from thousands of hours' paddling in the sun, he was carrying on to keep his family fed and a roof over their heads. As the scholar leaped lithely onto the deck and sat himself down beneath the hooped cabin roof, the boatman bowed from the waist. He recalled an old adage: a king is respected in his own realm, but a learned man is respected all over the world.

"Boatman," the scholar opened, "the water is becoming rather choppy. While you're out here have you ever thought about the relationship between total torque and crosscurrent impact?"

"No, sir, I can't say that I have."

"For one thing, a more streamlined apparatus should likely yield a greater mechanical advantage. But then, I don't suppose you've studied much about physics, have you?"

"None at all, sir. I just row this boat across the bay."

"Mmmm. Boatman, it appears that you've wasted twenty-five percent of your life."

A little later, the scholar asked, "Boatman, have you ever looked into statistics and probability?—I'm thinking here of Gaussian or possibly Poisson distribution. With all these dark clouds coming in over us, do you have any idea what a graph of storm probability would look like?"

"No, sir, I never have studied whatever it is you're talking about. I don't know what you mean."

"You mean you've never studied advanced mathematics? Ah, then, my dear fellow, you should know that you've surely wasted fifty percent of your life."

"You're probably right, sir. I just row this boat across the bay. By the way, there seems to be a big storm coming."

As the boat began to heave and the sky took on a dark glow, the scholar said, "Tell me, boatman, do you know anything about gauging deviations from the STP—standard temperature and pressure—to forecast wind velocity in a storm center?"

"I'm sorry, sir. I really don't."

"You're a bit dense, boatman, aren't you? Are you telling me that you've never learned anything about meteorology?"

"I guess I haven't, sir."

"Well, then, you've wasted a full seventy-five percent of your life! What do you have to say for yourself?!"

"I just row this boat across the bay—

say, hold on tight! It's really raining and blowing hard!"

Just then the boat capsized. While the boatman floated and readied himself to finish the crossing, the scholar flailed out from within his waterlogged suitcoat, as if to hook the sky with his umbrella handle.

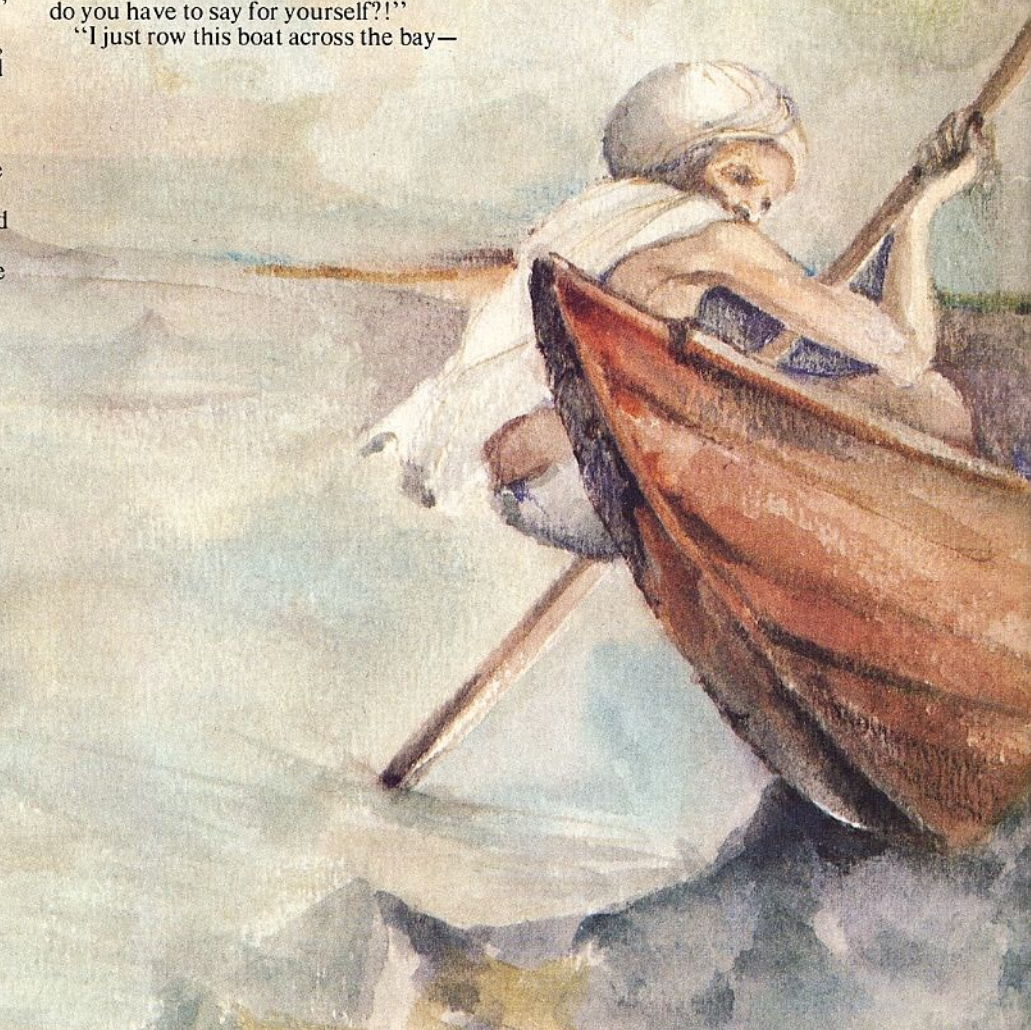
"Boatman!"

"Sir! We'll have to swim the rest of the way!"

"But . . . I can't swim!"

"Then it looks as though you've wasted a hundred percent of your life! . . ."

Whatever else we may learn in our life's voyage, there's one thing we all need to know: how—when death "capsizes" our material body—to cross safely to the spiritual world. So, while the West's technological science can make our voyage more comfortable, we need the East's spiritual science to make it successful.





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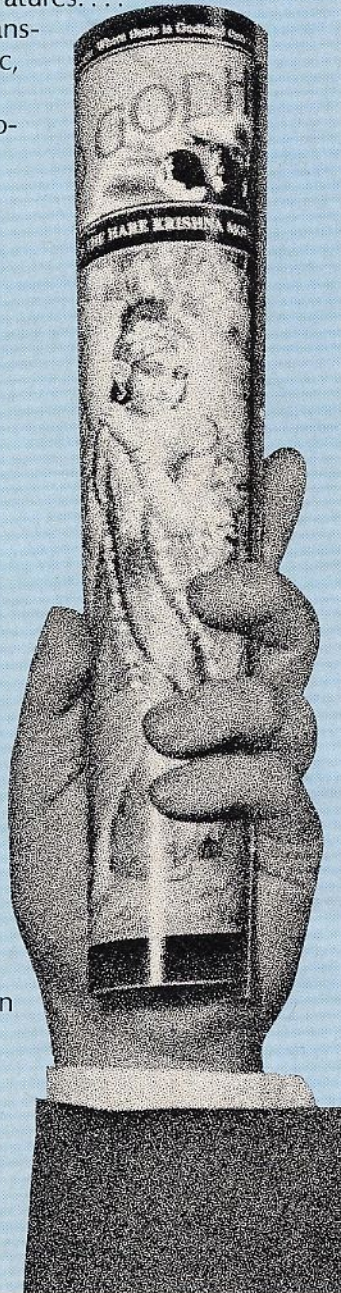
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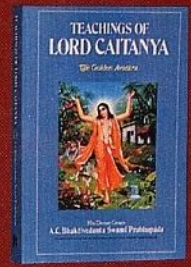
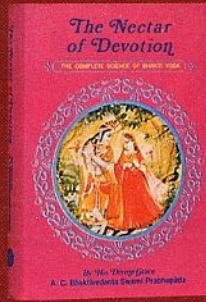
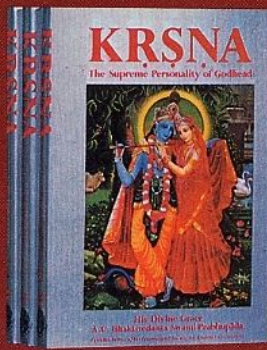
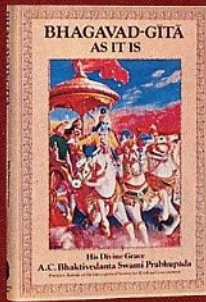
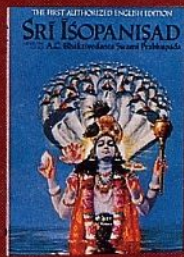
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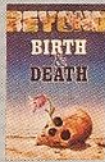
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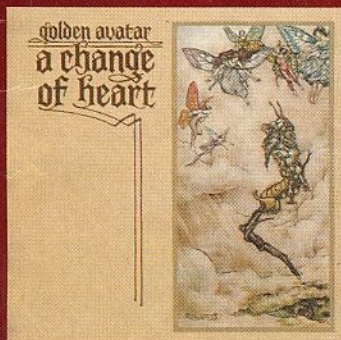


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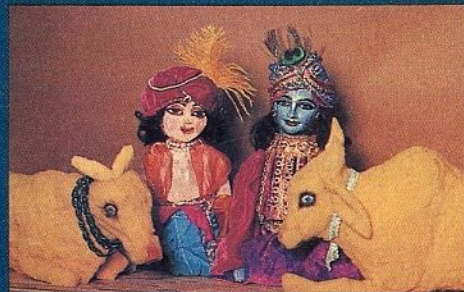
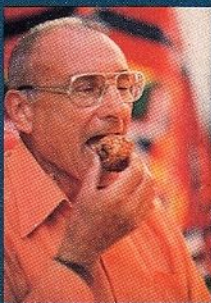
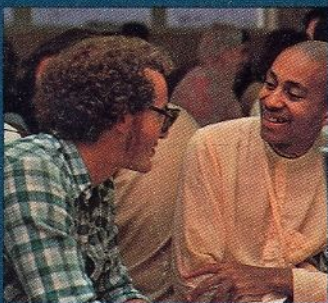
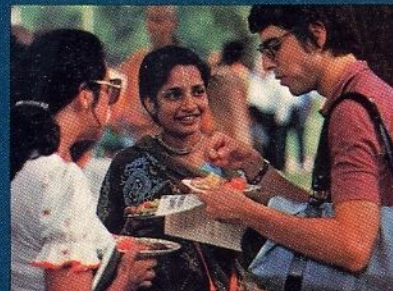
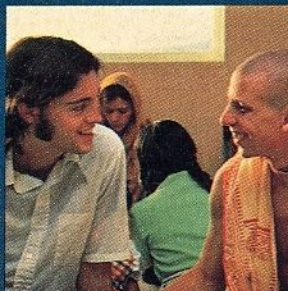
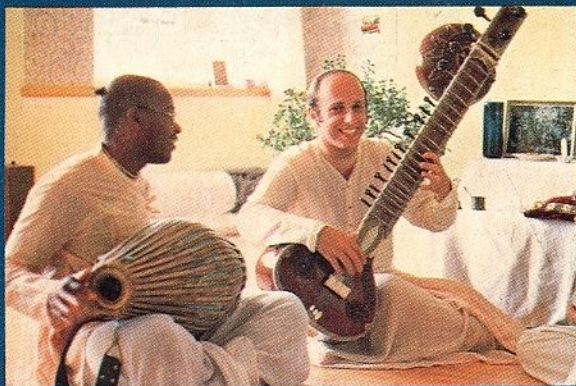
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