

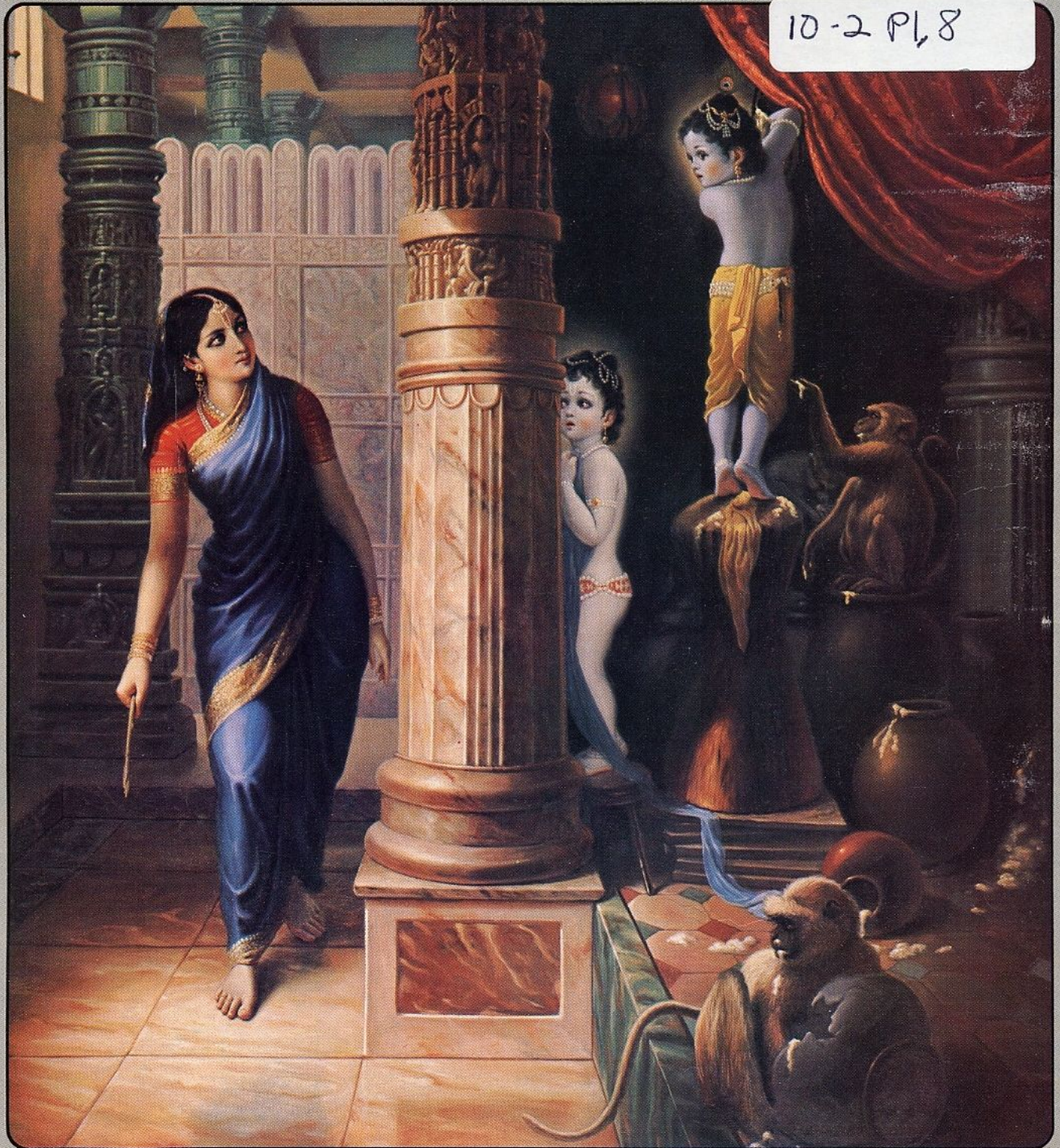
Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



Vol. 12 No.10

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

10-2 P, 8





Devotees chant Hare Kṛṣṇa in Laguna Beach, California.

Photo: Bhārgava dāsa

A short statement of the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

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

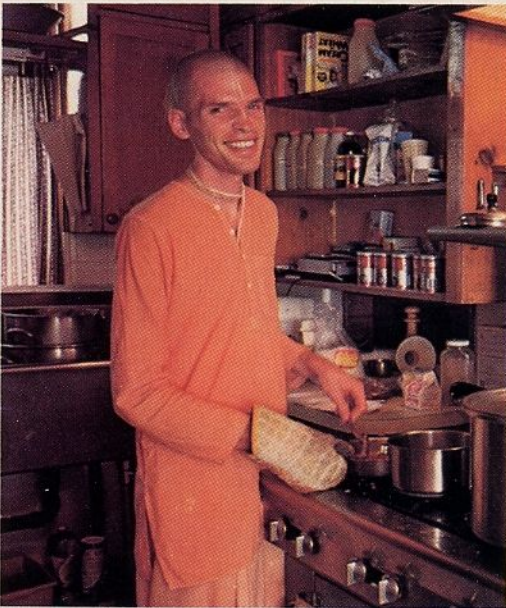
We invite all our readers to consider them with an open mind and then visit one of the ISKCON centers to see how they are being applied in everyday life.

1. By sincerely cultivating a bona fide spiritual science, we can be free from anxiety and come to a state of pure, unending, blissful consciousness in this lifetime.
2. We are not our bodies but eternal spirit souls, parts and parcels of God (Kṛṣṇa). As such, we are all brothers, and Kṛṣṇa is ultimately our common father.
3. Kṛṣṇa is the eternal, all-knowing, omnipresent, all-powerful, and all-attractive Personality of Godhead. He is the seed-giving father of all living beings, and He is the sustaining energy of the entire cosmic creation.
4. The Absolute Truth is contained in all the great scriptures of the world. However, the oldest known revealed scriptures in existence are the Vedic literatures, most notably the *Bhagavad-gītā*, which is the literal record of God's actual words.
5. We should learn the Vedic knowledge from a genuine spiritual master—one who has no selfish motives and whose mind is firmly fixed on Kṛṣṇa.
6. Before we eat, we should offer to the Lord the food that sustains us. Then Kṛṣṇa becomes the offering and purifies us.

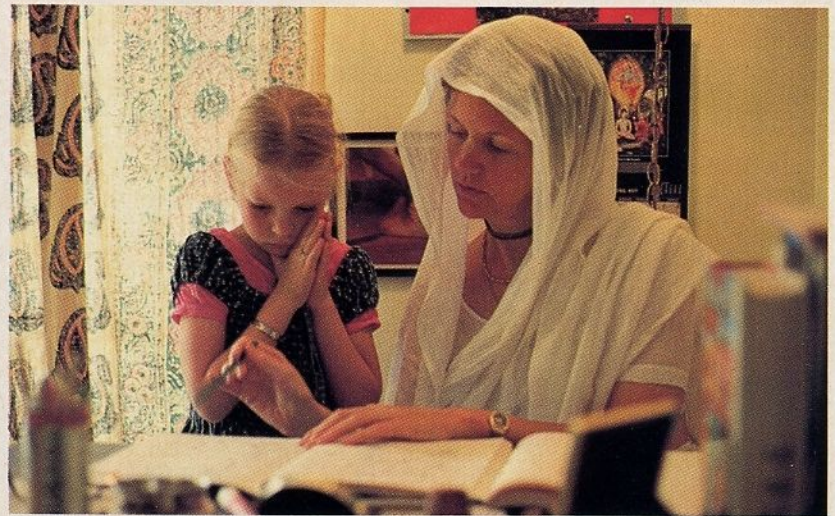
7. We should perform all our actions as offerings to Kṛṣṇa and do nothing for our own sense gratification.
8. The recommended means for achieving the mature stage of love of God in this age of Kali, or quarrel, is to chant the holy names of the Lord. The easiest method for most people is to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra:

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

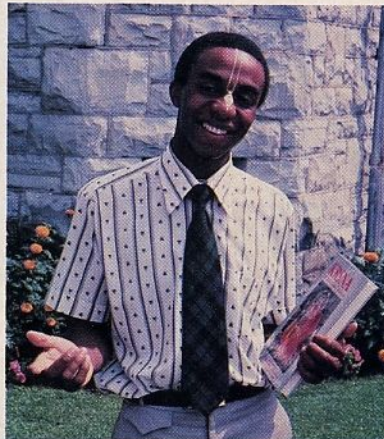
Chant and be happy...



Pavamāna dāsa, cook (Laguna Beach): "I've been chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa for five and a half years, and I've never found anything more pleasurable. A devotee once promised me, 'If you chant Hare Kṛṣṇa you'll be happy. Just try it for a week—you'll feel the difference if you chant just five minutes a day.' He pointed out that there would be no loss on my part, but if there was something to gain, why not give it a try? So I did. I chanted for a week and I had to admit that I felt a keen pleasure—very much different from anything I had felt before. The chanting didn't cost anything, and it was natural and easy to do. So now I know that there isn't anything better than chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, because it puts you in touch with the reservoir of all pleasure—Lord Kṛṣṇa."



Tuṣṭi-devī dāsi, teacher (Los Angeles): "I'd been teaching grammar school for eight years before I began chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Until then I had really nothing to give my students, because I didn't know what the goal of life was. By chanting and practicing *bhakti-yoga*, I'm now able to give my students, and myself, the perfection of life—Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

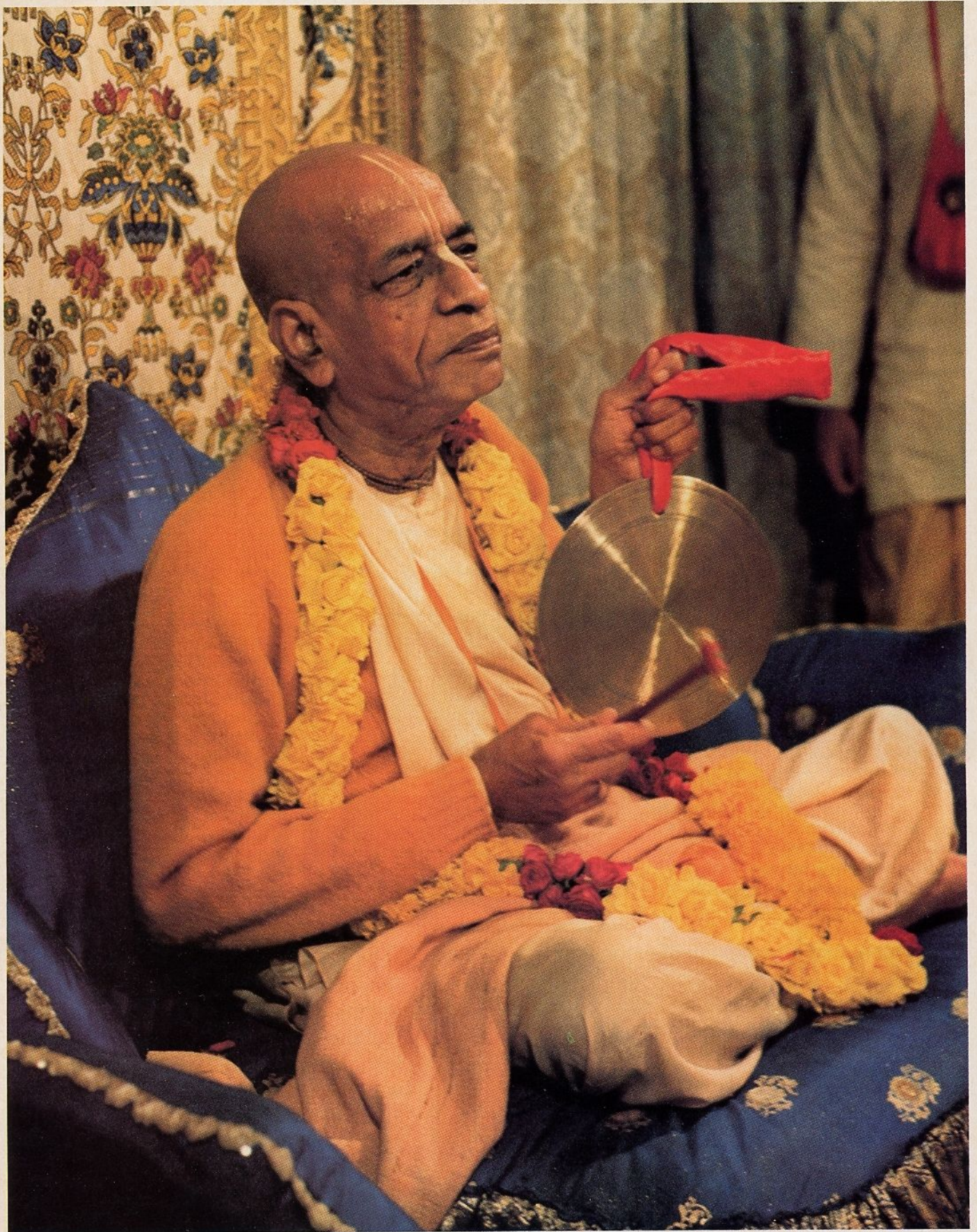


Ugreśa dāsa, book distributor (Toronto): "For over two years I've experienced the transcendental pleasure of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. And this transcendental pleasure increases when I tell other people about the chanting—by giving them books on the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So every day I go to the places where the most people are and pass out as many of these books as I can. The more people that hear about chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, the happier I feel."



Laguna Beach—vacationers visit this southern California haven to enjoy the sun, surf, and exotic shops. But the devotees at the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple there know a much better way you can enjoy yourself. Anytime you want to, and anywhere you happen to be, you can simply chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and dive into an ocean of transcendental pleasure.

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



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

BACK TO GODHEAD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

Vol. 12 No. 10

FOUNDER

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

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda

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PRONUNCIATION OF SANSKRIT WORDS

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

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◀ **The founder and original editor** of BACK TO GODHEAD is His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta 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.

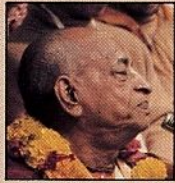
In fact, since 1944, when he started writing, editing, printing, and distributing BACK TO GODHEAD, Śrīla Prabhupāda has often called it "the backbone of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement." Although over the years it has changed in some ways, BACK TO GODHEAD remains, in Śrīla Prabhupāda's words, "an instrument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

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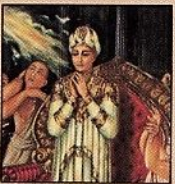
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"Most importantly, the very *cause* of the 'cult' phenomenon—the *spiritual void* plaguing human civilization, and especially young people—remains. Only bona fide religion can fill that void, so it is essential that we learn just what bona fide religion is and how to practice it." By Ravindra Svarūpa dāsa.



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Our schools don't teach the all-important science of the soul, but Lord Kṛṣṇa's age-old *Bhagavad-gītā* does: "As the embodied soul passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, so the same soul passes into another body at death. The self-realized soul is not bewildered by such a change." By Mandaleśwara dāsa.



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The yogi had mystic power so great he could travel all over the universe and even beyond, to the spiritual world. But when he offended King Ambarīṣa—Lord Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee—there wasn't anyone who could save him, except . . . A story adapted by Navayauvana dāsa from the ancient *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

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ON THE COVER

After five thousand years, people all over India still cherish the memory of Lord Kṛṣṇa stealing butter from the ladies of Vṛndāvana village. Here we see Mother Yaśodā about to catch Kṛṣṇa in the act. (See "Binding the Butter Thief," page 13.)

"Why would God steal?" we might wonder. "He's supposed to be perfect. Why would He do something like that?" But we learn from Vedic literatures like the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* ("The Beautiful Story of the Personality of Godhead") that everything comes from God—including stealing. Whatever we find in ourselves, including stealing, we'll find in Kṛṣṇa—except that Kṛṣṇa's stealing, like everything else about Him, is perfect.

Still, how can stealing be so obnoxious when we do it and so charming when Kṛṣṇa does it? For one thing, when we steal we're taking something that doesn't belong to us, but when the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa steals He's taking what is already His. And more importantly, while an ordinary thief brings only grief to the people he steals from, Kṛṣṇa steals just to bring pure transcendental pleasure to His devotees. And though the village ladies went to Mother Yaśodā and her son and lodged "complaints," they were actually bringing pure transcendental pleasure to Kṛṣṇa:

"Dear Mother Yaśodā, why don't you restrict your naughty Kṛṣṇa? He finds great pleasure in stealing our stock of yogurt and butter from wherever we keep it. Sometimes [as in this painting by Muralīdhara dāsa] Kṛṣṇa steals butter, yogurt, and milk and distributes them to the monkeys."



Photo: Nityatpat-devi dāsi

FROM DESPAIR TO LOVE

Part 1: Dealing With the Existential Dilemma

Hayagrīva dāsa: Sören Kierkegaard was a mid-nineteenth-century Danish philosopher who is generally regarded as the father of existentialism. A devout Christian, he believed that religious truth is not innate within man, and that man must therefore receive this truth from God. According to Kierkegaard, God would overawe us if He Himself came to teach, so He comes instead as His own servant in human form. For a Christian, this teacher is Jesus Christ.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Generally men are on the animal platform. But when a man's consciousness becomes a little advanced, he can be educated in the under-

standing of God through the teachings of spiritual authorities. That is the Vedic system. In the human form the living entity is sometimes very inquisitive and wants to understand God. That inquisitiveness is technically called *brahmajijñāsā*, interest in the Absolute, which is possible only in the human form of life.

Now, if one is actually anxious to know about God, he has to approach a guru, who is God's servant and His representative. Unless one approaches a bona fide guru, he cannot understand the nature of God, or man's relationship with Him. So accepting a guru is not a fashion but a necessity. However, a guru

is not a person who simply manufactures gold or juggles words just to attract foolish people and make money. An actual guru is one who is fully trained in the ocean of spiritual knowledge, or Vedic knowledge. Vedic words are not ordinary material sound vibrations. They are completely spiritual. The Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, for instance, is a purely spiritual sound. Once a person is fully trained in the ocean of spiritual sound, he becomes a guru and is no longer interested in material life. In fact, the definition of *guru* is "one who is no longer interested in material things." He has taken shelter of the Supreme Lord,

Sören Kierkegaard, “the father of existentialism,” said that at some point in life each of us has to deal with the “either/or” dilemma. It doesn’t matter so much what you choose, but how “passionately” you “turn inward” when you make your choice—you have to “choose yourself.” “But,” says His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, “without knowing yourself, how can you ‘choose yourself’? And how can you know yourself unless you go to one who knows the self and the Supreme Self perfectly?”



and his material desires have completely ceased. One should approach such a bona fide guru, surrender unto him, serve him, and then question him about God and our relationship with God.

Hayagrīva dāsa: Is Kierkegaard correct in maintaining that man would be overawed if God, as He is, came to teach? Didn’t Kṛṣṇa, as He is, come to teach the *Bhagavad-gītā*?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Kṛṣṇa came as He is, but people misunderstood Him because He appeared as a human being. Consequently, they could not surrender to Him. Therefore Kṛṣṇa came later as a devotee, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, to teach men how to approach God. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught the very same philosophy that Kṛṣṇa taught in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. However, instead of coming as Kṛṣṇa, Lord Caitanya came as Kṛṣṇa’s devotee. Rūpa Gosvāmī [an exalted devotee who in the sixteenth century wrote some of the most important

books on devotional yoga] appreciated Caitanya Mahāprabhu as the most munificent incarnation, because He gives not only Kṛṣṇa but also pure love of Kṛṣṇa (*namo mahā-vadānyāya kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te*). In exchange for Himself, Kṛṣṇa demands full surrender from the devotee. But Caitanya Mahāprabhu, without making any demands, gave pure love of Kṛṣṇa. Because we are all His sons, Kṛṣṇa the Supreme Lord is affectionate towards us. He sees us rotting in this material world, and He comes Himself—or He comes as His devotee—and leaves His instructions. Kṛṣṇa is always anxious to enlighten the human beings and show them how to return home, back to Godhead.

Hayagrīva dāsa: Kierkegaard thought that the ordinary man does not wish to have a personal relationship with God. Kierkegaard wrote, “The truth is that there are no longer men living who could bear the pressure and weight of having a personal God.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, a personal God makes demands, just as Kṛṣṇa demands in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [9.34],

*man-manā bhava mad-bhakto
mad-yāji mām namaskuru
mām evaiśyasi yuktvaivam
ātmanām mat-parāyaṇaḥ*

“Always think of Me and become My devotee. Worship Me and offer your homage unto Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me.” This is God’s demand. And if we carry it out we attain perfection. *Tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti mām eti:* Kṛṣṇa clearly states here that when a devotee gives up his material body, he does not accept another—he returns back to Godhead in his original spiritual body.

Hayagrīva dāsa: Kierkegaard observed three basic stages in life: the aesthetic stage, the ethical stage, and the religious stage. In the first stage—the aesthetic stage—a person may be either a hedonist in search of sensual pleasure or an intellectual interested in philosophical speculation. Kierkegaard says that both are uncommitted. Neither has any ultimate goal in life.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: How can a philosopher have no ultimate goal?

Hayagrīva dāsa: Kierkegaard says that people on this platform are not really philosophers but simply mental speculators. They become bored with themselves, and their lives become empty of meaning and full of despair.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Despair is a result of impersonalism and voidism. Impersonalists and voidists must necessarily be overcome by despair—because they

are always disgusted with their lives, and because they do not know the goal of life. When one has no goal he becomes disappointed, and that disappointment is the cause of despair.

Hayagrīva dāsa: Kierkegaard sees this despair as the first stepping-stone towards self-realization. Understanding that the aesthetic life ends in despair, in hopelessness, a person abandons this type of life for the next stage.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: We agree with this. According to the *Vedānta-sūtra*, people begin to inquire about self-realization after they have worked very hard and still have not attained life’s goal. At this point people begin to think, “What is the purpose of life?” That is called *brahmajijñāsā*, inquiry into the ultimate truth of life. Such an inquiry is natural, and it is necessary for further development.

Hayagrīva dāsa: According to Kierkegaard, to attain self-realization we must confront certain choices—we must become aware that life is an “either/or” decision. Realizing this, we advance to the second stage—the ethical stage. At this point we take an active part in *dealing with* life rather than aimlessly taking pleasure from life. We may act piously or attempt humanitarian deeds.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But what is the ultimate goal of these decisions? Why should people become moral? Simply to feed the poor and open hospitals?

Hayagrīva dāsa: For Kierkegaard, the important thing is not so much what one chooses, but how one makes the choice. Through choosing one discovers his own integrity.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But it is not clear how a person can make the *right* decision. One man may choose to slaughter, and another man may choose to help others. Or a man may give charity to others and yet at the same time encourage killing animals. For instance, on the one hand Vivekānanda [an impersonalist yogi who came to America from India at the turn of the century and lectured widely here] was advocating feeding the poor, but on the other hand he was suggesting feeding them with Mother Kali’s *prasāda*—the flesh of bulls. So what kind of ethics is that? What is the value of ethics if it is based on imperfect knowledge?

Hayagrīva dāsa: Kierkegaard did not give so much importance to the basis of the decision.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But if one’s decision is not based on truth, what is its value? You must go further than the mere making of decisions. You must know which is the proper decision to make.

Hayagrīva dāsa: Kierkegaard would say that by turning inward you would

naturally make the proper decision. This “turning inward” entails self-knowledge

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But of what value is that inwardness? You may simply think, “I will protect my brother by killing someone.” What is the ethics involved? You must have some standard by which to make the right decision.

Hayagrīva dāsa: Kierkegaard’s standard would be “choose yourself.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But without *knowing* yourself, how can you *choose* yourself? And how can you know yourself unless you go to one who knows the self and the Supreme Self perfectly? That means you must go to a bona fide spiritual master. Most people think that they are their body. What kind of self-knowledge is this? *Yasyātma-buddhiḥ kuṇape tri-dhātuke:* “If one thinks he is his body, he is no better than an ass.” What is the value of an ass’s philosophy?

Hayagrīva dāsa: Kierkegaard’s philosophy emphasizes the *act* of deciding. The decision itself is not so important.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But unless we know the aim of life, how can we make the right decision? It is simply childish to say that by choosing either this or that we become enlightened. A child chooses this or that—sometimes he plays with one toy and sometimes with another—but where is his enlightenment? Animals also make their decisions. The ass decides to eat a morsel of grass and work all day carrying this or that. If the basis of our decision is not important, why not decide for unrestricted sense gratification?

Hayagrīva dāsa: Kierkegaard would say that unrestricted sense gratification leads to boredom, and ultimately to despair.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But if you think that sense gratification is the aim of life, then it is not boring to you. If you choose according to your whims, you can make any decision.

Hayagrīva dāsa: Kierkegaard would say that we should choose not by whim but by an inward, objective, passionate search. Then the truth will naturally emerge.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But a Bowery bum may make a passionate decision to purchase a bottle of whiskey as soon as he gets some money.

Hayagrīva dāsa: Kierkegaard would say that in his decision there is no commitment to a higher ethic. There is simply the desire for sense gratification. If his decision were made on the ethical level, he would take up a good cause and act on that basis.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But such “good causes” are relative. You may consider one thing to be a good cause, and I may



Illustration: Jadurajadevi dasi

consider another. Who will ultimately decide?

Hayagrīva dāsa: Kierkegaard believed that if we begin to anticipate death, we will make the right decisions. In other words, we should act in such a way that we consider each act to be our last. In this way, he believed, the truth will emerge.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Every man should think, “I do not wish to die, but death is overcoming me. What is the cause of this? What should I do?” No one wants to die, but death overcomes everyone. No one wants to be diseased, but diseases are inevitable. These are real human problems that cannot be solved simply by making some whimsical decision. We should decide, “I do not wish to suffer, but suffering is coming upon me. Now, I must find a solution to this problem.” This is the real decision we have to make. We must decide to put a permanent end to suffering—to birth,

old age, disease, and death. We should understand that the body exists for a few years and then is doomed to perish. We should also understand that the body is external and that we should not make our decisions on the basis of the body. Rather, we should make our decisions on the basis of the soul.

Hayagrīva dāsa: For Kierkegaard, the third and highest stage of life is the religious stage. On this platform a man submits himself to God and obeys God totally.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: In other words, this is the stage of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We agree that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the topmost stage of life.

Hayagrīva dāsa: Kierkegaard thought that in the religious stage, there is intense suffering—suffering comparable to that of Job.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Why is this? If one is Kṛṣṇa-conscious, why should he suffer?

Hayagrīva dāsa: Kierkegaard was a Christian, and he emphasized the importance of suffering. The Bible says that Christ suffered for our sins, and Kierkegaard believed that the process of overcoming sin involves suffering.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But that is a wrong theory. If Christ is God or the son of God, why should he suffer? What kind of God is subjected to suffering? Why should either God or man suffer? The whole point is that if there is suffering, you must put an end to it.

Hayagrīva dāsa: For Kierkegaard, religious commitment is epitomized by inward suffering.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. Suffering arises because we identify with the body. When a person's car is damaged in an automobile accident, he may not actually be injured, but because he identifies himself with matter—with his car—he suffers. Similarly, the spirit soul is riding within the car of the material body, and because the spirit soul identifies himself with the body, he suffers when the body is injured or becomes sick or dies. But because the Kṛṣṇa-conscious man is always in full knowledge and is always transcendental to the material world, he never suffers. Whether we suffer or not depends on our knowledge.

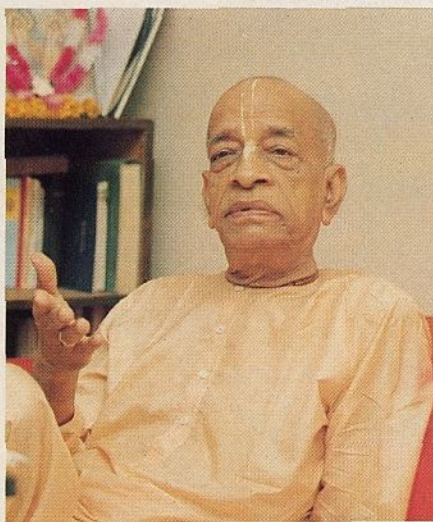
Hayagrīva dāsa: But don't penance and austerity involve suffering?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. For those who are advanced in knowledge, there is no suffering. Of course, there may be some bodily pain, but a person in knowledge understands that he is not the body. Therefore, why should he suffer? He thinks, "Let me do my duty. Hare Kṛṣṇa." That is the advanced stage of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Suffering is due to ignorance.

Hayagrīva dāsa: But don't we have to give up bodily comforts to serve God?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs were high government ministers, but they abandoned their material opulence to bestow mercy upon the common people. So they wore only loin cloths and slept under a different tree every night. Of course, foolish people might say that they were suffering, but actually they were merged in the ocean of transcendental bliss. They simply engaged their minds in thought of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes with the *gopīs*. And from day to day they wrote books about these pastimes. There was no question of their suffering, although a fool may think, "Oh, these men were ministers, high government officials, and they were so comfortable with their families and homes. Now they have no home, and they are going about in loin cloths, eating very little." A materialist would think

"We see examples of pure love in the Vedic descriptions of Vṛndāvana village. There the men, women, animals, fruits, flowers, water, and everything else exist only for the sake of loving Kṛṣṇa. They are not interested in any return from Kṛṣṇa. Now, that is real love."



the Gosvāmīs were suffering. But they were not suffering—they were enjoying.

Hayagrīva dāsa: Many of the Christian monks and ascetics emphasized suffering. They thought to abandon worldly life means to abandon pleasure and take on suffering.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: This shows that they have a poor fund of knowledge. They have developed this philosophy after the demise of Jesus Christ. It is more or less concocted.

Hayagrīva dāsa: Aside from suffering, Kierkegaard emphasized the importance of love in the religious life. In his book *Works of Love*, Kierkegaard considered God to be the hidden source of all love. He wrote: "A man must love God in unconditional obedience and in adoration. It would be ungodliness if any man dared to love himself in this way, or dared to permit another man to love him in this way. . . . You must love God in unconditional obedience even if that which He demands of you may seem injurious to you, . . . for God's wisdom is incompara-

ble with respect to our own. . . ."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is also the instruction of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. God demands that we give up all our plans, as well as the plans of others, and accept His plan:

*sarva-dharmān parityajya
mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvam sarva-pāpēbhyo
mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

"Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reaction. Do not fear" [Bg. 18.66]. If we fully depend on Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, He will guide us home.

Hayagrīva dāsa: In defining love, Kierkegaard said, "Love is a matter of conscience, and hence it is not a matter of impulse and inclination; nor is it a matter of emotion, nor a matter for intellectual calculation. . . . Christianity really knows only one kind of love: spiritual love. . . ."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, love in the material world is impossible, for in the material world, everyone is interested only in his own sense gratification. The love experienced between a man and a woman is not actually love but lust, because both parties are interested only in their own sense gratification. Love means that one does not think of his own sense gratification but of the sense gratification of his beloved. That is pure love. But that pure love is not possible in the material world. When we speak of love in the material world, we are actually misusing the word. Lustful desires take the place of real love.

However, we do see examples of pure love in the Vedic descriptions of Vṛndāvana village. There the men, women, animals, fruits, flowers, water, and everything else exist only for the sake of loving Kṛṣṇa. They are not interested in any return from Kṛṣṇa. Now, that is real love (*anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam*). On the other hand, if we love God with some motive, that is material love. Pure love means that we are simply interested in satisfying the desires of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Thus real love—individual, collective, or any other kind—applies only to God. Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the supreme object of love, and this love can be expressed through admiration, service, or friendship. Or we can love Him as our child or conjugal lover. There are five basic relationships expressing true love of Godhead.

Hayagrīva dāsa: For Kierkegaard, love of God is the decisive factor, and from it stems love of our neighbor. He wrote, (continued on page 14)

Madhvācārya (*ācārya* means “one who teaches by his life”) lived in thirteenth-century India and appeared in the Brahma-Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇava-sampradāya—the disciplic chain now represented by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. In this long disciplic chain of pure teachers, Madhvācārya is a most important link.

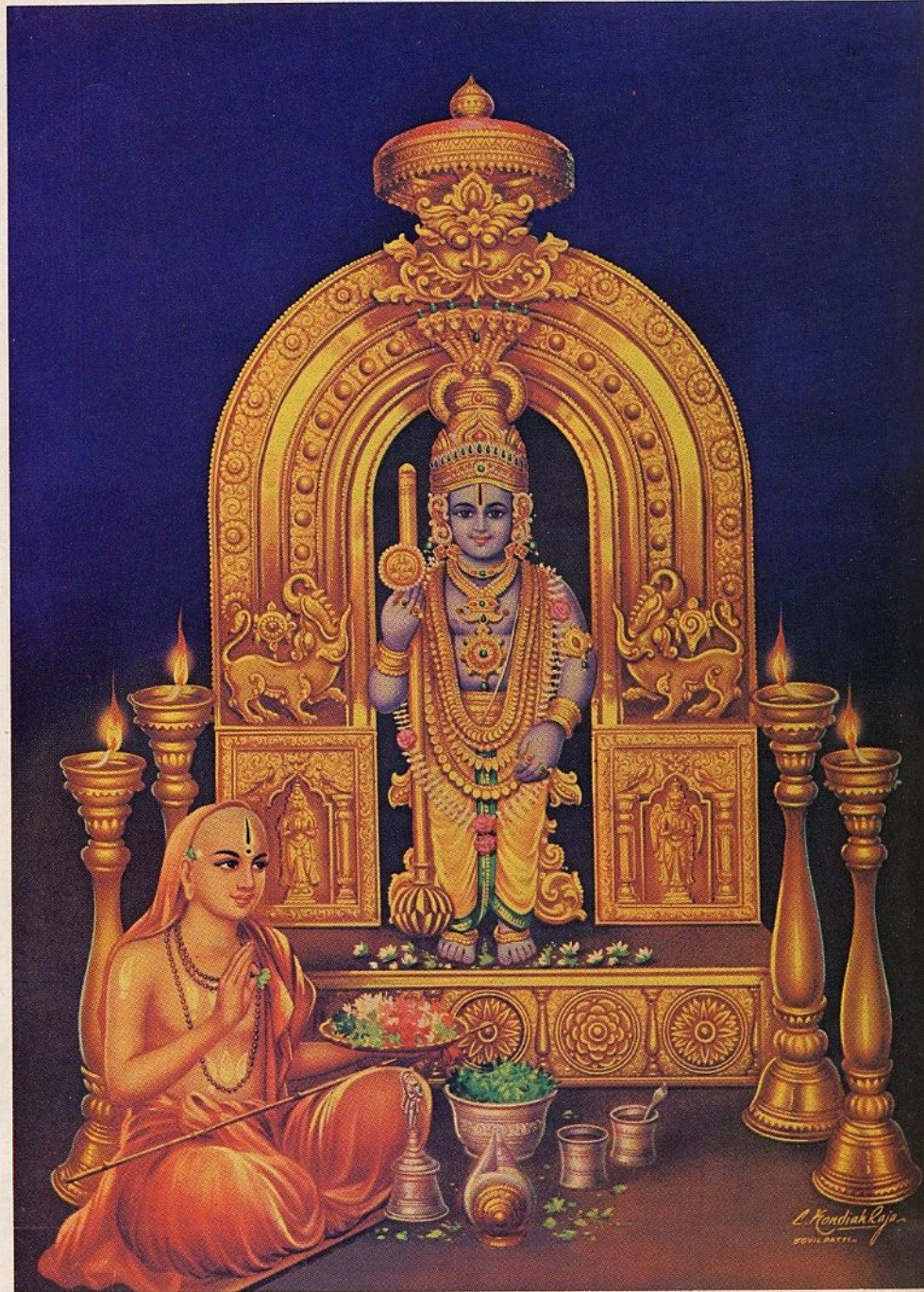
As Lord Kṛṣṇa stresses in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the essence of all Vedic knowledge is that God is a person: “By all the *Vedas* I am to be known.” But the spread of the Buddhist doctrine of ultimate voidness eclipsed this knowledge for a time, until the great teacher Śaṅkara (A.D. 788–820) drove Buddhism out of India. Instead of saying “All is nothing,” Śaṅkara said “All is one.” In other words, he upheld an all-pervasive spiritual reality, but said it was ultimately impersonal. Madhvācārya (and other Kṛṣṇa-conscious spiritual masters like Rāmānuja) soundly defeated this impersonalist view and at last reestablished that the Absolute Truth is Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Madhvācārya took his birth in a *brāhmana* (priestly) family at Uḍupī, a South Indian town on the Arabian Sea. There are some amazing stories surrounding Madhva’s early life. It is said that his father piled up many debts and that to pay them off, Madhva converted tamarind seeds into coins. It is also said that near Madhva’s house a demon named Maṇimān lived in the form of a snake. Madhva killed him with the big toe of his left foot. We are further told that whenever Madhva’s mother was feeling anxious, he would come before her in one jump—from wherever he happened to be playing.

Even as a young boy Madhva was renowned as a scholar. When he was only five he received spiritual initiation, and when he was twelve he accepted *san-nyāsa*, the most renounced order of spiritual life. At that tender age Madhva gave up all family ties to travel the length and breadth of India in quest of spiritual knowledge.

In the course of his travels Madhva visited Badarikāśrama, a place of pilgrimage high in the Himalayas. There he met the great sage Śrīla Vyāsadeva—Lord Kṛṣṇa’s literary incarnation and the author of the Vedic literatures. By studying under Śrīla Vyāsadeva, Madhva grew even greater in his scholarship.

After coming down from the Himalayas, Madhva at last returned to his birthplace, Uḍupī. Once, when he was sitting at the seashore and meditating on Lord Kṛṣṇa, Madhva saw a huge merchant ship in danger and signaled the



GREAT SPIRITUAL MASTERS THROUGHOUT HISTORY:

MADHVĀCĀRYA

(A.D. 1239-1319)

Knowledge of Lord Kṛṣṇa is a treasure that has come down through the ages—down through an unbroken chain of teachers and disciples that reaches back to Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. In this, the first in a series of articles on great Kṛṣṇa-conscious teachers, we will look at one of the greatest of all—Madhvācārya.

Madhvācārya's legacy: "Supreme" means "Supreme Person." Left: an artist's conception of Madhvācārya worshipping the Kṛṣṇa Deity that he found hidden within a chunk of clay. Right: each year the people of Uḍupī, Madhva's birthplace, take the Deity out in a beautiful procession featuring huge carts. Below: the priest attendant carries the Deity from the temple to the palanquin that will take Him to His waiting cart.

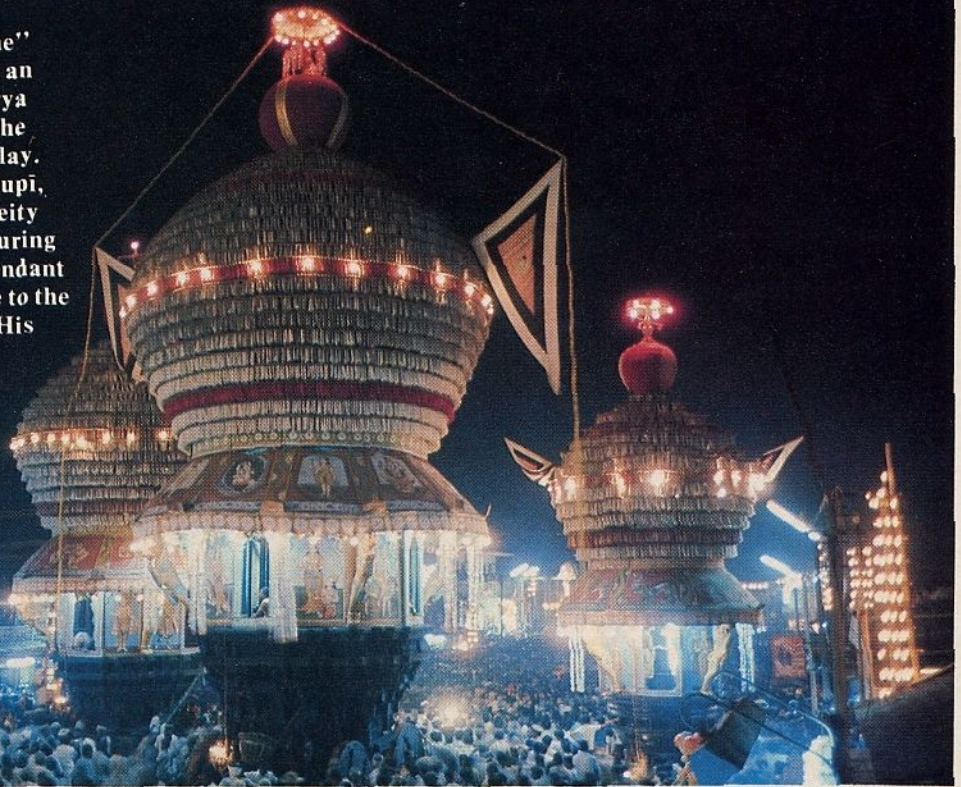


Photo: Bhāṅgavādāsa



Photo: Bhāṅgavādāsa

crew safely to shore. Since the boat's owners wanted to reward him, Madhva agreed to accept a chunk of *gopī-candana*, clay from Kṛṣṇa's land of Vṛndāvana. As the crew members were bringing the big chunk before him, it broke apart and revealed a Deity form of Lord Kṛṣṇa, with a stick in one hand and a lump of food in the other. At that moment Madhva composed a beautiful prayer to express his gratitude. Although the Deity was so heavy that not even thirty ordinary people could lift Him, Madhva carried Him back into town all alone. The people of Uḍupī still worship that Kṛṣṇa Deity in the way Madhva established [see above].

Madhva showed his overwhelming

physical and spiritual strength on still other occasions. While he was walking on the road a band of thugs attacked him, but he killed them all. Another time a tiger attacked Madhva's companion Satya Tirtha, but Madhva pulled the fierce animal off with his bare hands. People began to say his strength had no limit.

Madhvācārya's learning and devotion to Kṛṣṇa were famous throughout India. His life's mission was to defeat the views of the impersonalist philosophers. They say that God's form is simply illusion (*māyā*), and thus they are called Māyāvādīs. "Even if God was a person in the beginning," these people say, "He has distributed Himself throughout the

creation and thus lost His individual identity." Madhvācārya smashed this monistic ("all-is-one") idea with the philosophy of *śuddha-dvaita*—pure dualism. He proved logically that God is always a person and is always distinct from His creation. As anyone can see, the sun is producing volumes of energy but remains the same sun. Similarly, a tree may produce many fruits, but it remains the same tree. Likewise, Lord Kṛṣṇa produces the material world, but He Himself remains separate from it—He remains the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Here is the real teaching of the *Vedas*. Thus, Madhvācārya's teaching is called *tattva-vāda*—*tattva* means "truth," and *vāda* means "philosophy."

The Māyāvādīs go on to say that the soul's unique and individual identity is also an illusion—that in the end the soul will merge into an impersonal light. But Madhvācārya taught that the soul is actually the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa and that by practicing *bhakti-yoga*—devotional service—each of us can return to our original position in the spiritual world. Madhvācārya especially emphasized that even after the individual soul returns to the spiritual world, he and the Supreme Soul, Kṛṣṇa, retain their separate identities. They do not become "one."

In many ways Madhvācārya set the stage for the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. For instance, he stressed the

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If the religious "cult" phenomenon has proved anything, it's that the established religions aren't providing our young people with real spiritual life. Of course, this is not to say that the "cults" are. To be bona fide, any religion—new or old—must pass a rigorous nonsectarian test. . . .

RELIGION: SEPARATING THE BOGUS FROM THE BONA FIDE

BY RAVĪNDRA SVARŪPA DĀSA

The infamous "anticult" groups, who have attempted by kidnapping and "de-programming" to break members of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, have failed to enlist the support of either the government or the general public. But the issues raised by the "cult" controversy are still with us. Most importantly, the very *cause* of the "cult" phenomenon—the *spiritual void* plaguing human civilization, and especially young people—remains. Only bona fide religion can fill that void, so it is essential that we learn just what bona fide religion is and how to practice it. But who will say which religion is false and which genuine, which harmful and which beneficial? What we need is not someone's self-interested opinion but a reliable, nonsectarian standard for separating the bogus religions from the bona fide.

The problem of distinguishing true religion from false is not new. Some five thousand years ago the most learned sages in the world assembled in a sacred forest in India to solve just this problem. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is a record of their deliberations, which began with the question, "What is the essential or real religion?"

The chief sage in the assembly answered, "The essential religion for all people is that which brings a person to the point of pure, unalloyed devotional service to God. Such loving service, if it is to fully satisfy the self, must be both unmotivated and uninterrupted" (*Bhāg.* 1.2.6). Clearly, this definition of religion is nonsectarian. What Hindu, Muslim, Jew, or Christian would dispute that religion means to follow the orders of God and become His servant?

But the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* sets a high standard for this service. If we want to practice genuine religion, we must serve God without any desire for personal material gain, and without interruption. This statement of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* finds support in the Bible, which commands us to "love God with all thy



Photo: Muralivandana dāsa

The Vedic literatures teach that in this age the only way to revive our consciousness of God is to chant His names. Here His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda hands a new disciple the beads upon which he will chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra.

heart, all thy soul, and all thy mind."

So here is our practical standard by which we can test any purportedly religious group: Is it or is it not providing its members the opportunity to render pure loving service to the Lord?

Established Religions Fail the Test

Leaving aside for a moment the question of whether the *new* religions pass the test, we find that the *established, main-line* religions fail it miserably. Even the anticultists can see that the main-line religions must not be spiritually satisfying to their young people. Otherwise, why would so many be leaving to search out genuine spirituality elsewhere?

Louis Moore, religion writer for the *Houston Chronicle*, has observed that young people are joining these "cults" in reaction to "meaningless, dull ser-

mons," "the impersonalized nature of too many churches," and "archaic depersonalized forms of evangelism and pompous, largely ceremonial church worship."

Marc Silver and Barbara Pash of the *Baltimore Jewish Times* wrote, "The cults' popularity is a reflection of the ills and failings of modern Western society and of that society's established religions. Those religions, including Judaism, have to a large degree become sterile, arid, and very unspiritual. Over and over, Jewish cult members say that . . . they never thought it possible to find holiness within Judaism. That statement presents a tremendous challenge to the Jewish community." The newspaper goes on to castigate contemporary Judaism for selling out to "secular humanism, Americanism, and modernism." Significantly, the paper finds the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, unlike some

other groups, to be neither exploitative nor corrupt.

Recently a concerned Christian group made this assessment of main-line Christianity: "The ultimate spiritual counterfeit is a Christianity which has been squeezed so far into the world's mold that all distinguishing authenticity has been squeezed out of it—a Christianity which is culturally co-opted, socially irrelevant, doctrinally correct, and spiritually dead."

In *All God's Children*, Caroll Stoner and JoAnne Parke discuss at length the established churches' failure to fulfill "man's search for transcendental experience." They also attack American society as a whole for failing to provide ultimate values that young people can live by.

And finally, in a recently published book on the "cults," Ronald Enroth writes, "The spiritual quest of hundreds of thousands of American youth indicts our society as a whole, but it raises urgent questions for the church in particular. Young people are highly idealistic; many have rejected the materialistic sham that passes for the 'good life' in America. Is the church speaking to the gross materialism of Western society, or has it been co-opted? Young people are asking the big questions—but are the churches providing more than fun-and-games youth programs in response?"

Thus, a consensus seems to be forming that there are serious deficiencies both in our modern materialistic culture and in the main-line religions that have sold out to it. That this truth is widely acknowledged, even by many anti-cultists, is perhaps the first step toward a reconciliation of the "cult" issue.

But precisely what is it that the main-line religions fail to provide? According to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the Bible, it is the chance to render "pure, unalloyed, devotional service to God"—the chance to "love God with all thy heart, all thy soul, and all thy mind." So secular society and its secularized religions ultimately fail because they cannot fulfill the natural, inborn need of the soul—the need to serve the Supreme unreservedly. Religion, as we have seen, means to obey and to serve and to love God. Yet the hallmark of most followers of contemporary, main-line religions is that rather than trying to *serve God*, they try to have God *serve them*. This is the antithesis of religion.

Real religion does not aim at increasing *our* sense pleasure, but the pleasure of the Lord. A sincere servant of the Lord knows full well that since God is already maintaining every living crea-

ture, there is no need to petition Him for personal necessities or desires. Instead, a truly religious person simply trusts in God and puts all his energy into serving God. It is only the pseudoreligionists who believe life is meant for sense enjoyment and God is our order supplier—the servant of our senses.

Another kind of pseudoreligion says that each of us can become God. Especially today in the United States, many so-called gurus and swamis teach that they are God and that their disciples can also become God. Of course, to these pseudoreligionists the idea of becoming God's eternal servant is anathema.

Thus, a "cult" or bogus religion is one that aims at the practitioner's personal satisfaction—either by trying to make God the practitioner's servant or by trying to make the practitioner into God Himself. A religion is pure to the degree that it is free from such taints.

Some Suggestions for the Pseudoreligions

The main-line religions—which have now seriously deteriorated into full-fledged pseudoreligions—could conceivably revive their original purity. Unfortunately, so deeply rooted is their involvement with mundane concerns that their leaders cannot imagine how to return to real spiritual life. We would therefore like to offer a few suggestions. If the leaders of today's main-line religions take these suggestions to heart, then there is every chance that their groups will become pure religions.

First, *stop killing*.

Second, *glorify God by chanting His names*.

If the Christians and Jews take up these two practices, they can cleanse their minds and hearts of material desires and develop genuine love of God.

Lord Jesus Christ taught, "Thou shalt not kill." If the Christians actually love Lord Jesus, then they should obey his commandments and refrain from slaughtering innocent animals simply to gratify their own tongues.

Jewish scholars argue that the commandment not to kill is actually one not to *murder*—not to kill a human being. However, the Jewish scholars also admit that God originally instructed Adam to eat only vegetarian foods. People began eating meat only later (after the flood), because they had become corrupt. So, ultimately, the Jews agree that slaughtering animals for food is not good, and that God originally prohibited it.

In the Vedic literatures we learn that

all living creatures—not just humans—have souls. Since every soul is a spiritual particle of God (the Supreme Soul), all living creatures are God's children. Thus we are not meant to inflict pain on animals by slaughtering them. Rather, we should protect animals as our brothers. This is one of God's basic laws—and if we break it we can have no real religion.

The second requirement for practicing genuine religion is to chant the names of God. The Vedic literatures teach that in this age the only means of reviving God consciousness is to chant His names. Certainly no Christian or Jew can find any reason to object to the congregational glorification of God. The Bible is full of exhortations to glorify and praise the name of God. In Psalm 113 King David sings,

Praise ye the Lord. Praise, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord. Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore. From the rising of the sun until the going down of the same, the Lord's name is to be praised.

In the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement we chant the name *Kṛṣṇa*. *Kṛṣṇa* is not a sectarian name; it simply means "the all-attractive." By definition God must be all-attractive, since He surpasses all others in wealth, strength, beauty, knowledge, fame, and renunciation.

But we do not insist that everyone chant the name *Kṛṣṇa*. Other names, such as *Jesus Christ*, *Jehovah*, and so on, can be chanted. The Torah forbids the Jews to pronounce the Tetragrammaton (*Yahweh*), but they may chant many other names, like *Elochim* or *Addonai*. The Supreme Lord has an infinite number of wonderful attributes and activities—and for each of them He has a name, which anyone can chant to purify his heart and attain the perfection of God consciousness.

So there is nothing in the scriptures of the Western religions that would prevent their adherents either from abstaining from killing or from chanting the names of God. And it is certain that if the main-line religions of the West take up these two practices, then currents of real spirituality will once again begin to flow within their congregations.

The failure of the main-line religions has indeed left a terrible void in the life of the American people. In desperation many young people have turned to drugs and sex. Others have joined the new religions. Unfortunately, almost none of these groups are bona fide religions, and some are extremely harmful to their followers. But the anticultists are too

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Illustration: Muralidhara dāsa

Binding the Butter Thief

One of Lord Kṛṣṇa's most delightful pastimes occurred when Mother Yaśodā caught Him stealing butter and took a rope to bind Him. We may wonder, "Is it possible to bind the unlimited Supreme Personality of Godhead?" Yes, but a rope alone is not enough. . . . (From the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, translation and commentary by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.)

Once, seeing that her maidservants were engaged in various household duties, Mother Yaśodā personally took charge of churning butter. And while she churned, she sang the childhood pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and enjoyed thinking of her son. Her saffron sari was tightly wrapped around her broad hips, and on account of her intense love for her son, milk moistened her shaking breasts. The bangles and bracelets on her wrists tinkled as they touched each other, and her earrings shook as she labored very hard, churning with two hands. Drops of perspiration appeared on her face, and the *mālatī* flowers in her hair scattered here and there.

Before this picturesque sight child Kṛṣṇa appeared. He felt hungry, and just to increase Mother Yaśodā's transcendental pleasure, He caught hold of the churning rod to stop her from churning. He indicated that her first business was to let Him suck her breast. She could churn butter later.

So Mother Yaśodā took her son on her lap and pushed the nipple of her breast into His mouth. And while Kṛṣṇa was sucking the milk, she was smiling, enjoying the beauty of her child's face. Suddenly the milk on the oven began to boil over. Just to stop the milk from spilling, Mother Yaśodā at once put Kṛṣṇa aside and went to the oven. Left like that by His mother, Kṛṣṇa became very angry. His eyes red with rage, He bit His reddish lips, took up a stone, and broke the butter pot. With false tears in His eyes, Kṛṣṇa took some butter out of the pot and went to a secluded place to eat it.

Meanwhile, Mother Yaśodā had set the overflowing milk pan in order and returned to the churning spot. She saw the broken pot that had held the yogurt used for churning. Since she could not find her boy, she concluded that the broken pot was His work. She began to smile as she thought, "The child is very clever. After breaking the pot He has left this place, fearing punishment."

"Mother Yaśodā reached her naughty child and captured Him. She then thought she would bind Kṛṣṇa with a rope, to prevent Him from creating any more mischief." Especially during the month of November, people all over India fondly remember this scene.

By following Kṛṣṇa's tiny butter-smearred footprints, she finally found Him sitting upon a big upside-down grinding mortar. He was taking butter from a pot that hung from the ceiling on a swing, and He was feeding the butter to the monkeys. When Mother Yaśodā saw Kṛṣṇa looking anxiously this way and that, she could tell that He was afraid of her because He knew He had been naughty. With a stick in her hand, Mother Yaśodā very silently and cautiously approached Kṛṣṇa from behind. But Kṛṣṇa saw her coming, and He quickly got down from the grinding mortar and fled in fear.

Mother Yaśodā chased Kṛṣṇa to all corners, trying to capture the Supreme Personality of Godhead—Him whom even great yogis never approach in their meditations. But Mother Yaśodā could not easily catch her fast-running child, because her heavy breasts overburdened her thin waist and slowed her down. Still, she tried to follow Him as quickly as possible, and as she ran her hair loosened and the *mālatī* flowers in her hair fell to the ground.

Although she was tired, she somehow reached her naughty child and captured Him. Kṛṣṇa admitted to being an offender, and His eyes became restless from fear. He was just on the point of crying, and He rubbed His eyes, smearing His black eye ointment all over His face. Then, as Mother Yaśodā looked upon Kṛṣṇa with great love, she mildly chastised Him.

But Mother Yaśodā saw that Kṛṣṇa was unnecessarily afraid. Being the topmost well-wisher of her child, she thought, "If the child is too fearful of me, I don't know what will happen to Him." So Mother Yaśodā threw away her stick.

Then she thought she would bind Kṛṣṇa with a rope, to prevent Him from creating any more mischief. Of course, no one can actually bind the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who has neither inside nor outside, nor beginning nor end. He is unlimited and all-pervading. Indeed, He is Himself the whole cosmic manifestation. Still, Mother Yaśodā was thinking that Kṛṣṇa was her tiny child; she did not know that He had no limitation. Thus, although Kṛṣṇa is far beyond the reach of any restrictions, she endeavored to bind Him up to the wooden grinding mortar.

But when she tried to bind Him, she found that the rope she was using was too short—by two inches. Mother Yaśodā gathered more ropes from the house and added them, but again she found the same shortage. In this way she connected all the ropes available in the house, but when the final knot was added, she saw that the rope was still two inches too short! Astonished, Mother Yaśodā smiled and thought, "How is this happening!"

While attempting to bind her son, Mother Yaśodā became tired. Her whole body became covered with perspiration, and the remaining flowers in her hair fell to the ground. Seeing His mother's labor, and being compassionate toward her, Kṛṣṇa then allowed Himself to be bound up by the ropes.

In this way Lord Kṛṣṇa played as a human child in the land of Vṛndāvana, performing His own selected pastimes for the pleasure of His dear devotees like Mother Yaśodā—and showing the whole world that He can be bound only by the rope of His dear devotees' love. ❀

FROM DESPAIR TO LOVE

(continued from page 7)

"If you love God above all else, then you also love your neighbor, and in your neighbor every man. . . . To help another man to love God is truly to love the other man; to be helped by another man to love God is truly to be loved."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: This is the basis of our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. We are learning how to love God, and we are

teaching the same principle to the whole world. If love of God is taught by a religion, that religion should be considered first class—be it Christian, Hindu, Muslim, or whatever. The test of a religion is this: "Have the followers learned how to love God?" God is the center of love, and since everything is God's expansion, the lover of God is a lover of everyone. A lover of God does not discriminate by thinking only man should be loved and given service. No.

He is interested in all living entities, regardless of the forms in which they happen to be existing. A lover of God loves everyone, and his love reaches everyone. When you water the root of a tree, you are nourishing all the parts of the tree—the trunk, branches, twigs, and leaves. When you give food to the stomach, you are satisfying the entire body. And when you love God, you love everyone and everything.

[To be continued]

MADHVĀCĀRYA

(continued from page 9)

chanting of the holy names of Kṛṣṇa. Commenting on the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, he wrote that in the present age one can satisfy and worship Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, simply by chanting His holy names. Madhvācārya also wrote, "There are many lands, fields, mountains, and oceans throughout the creation, and everywhere the Supreme Personality of Godhead is worshiped by the chanting of His different names."

Specifically, Madhva prepared the way for Lord Caitanya, who appeared two

centuries later in the same line of spiritual masters. Lord Caitanya is the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa who spread the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra throughout India and ordered His followers to spread it to every town and village in the world. To fulfill this order, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda came to America in 1965 and founded the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Under his guidance we his disciples are carrying on this mission, but we must give all the credit to him and the other spiritual masters in the Brahma-Mādhva-Gauḍīya disciplic chain—including, of course, Madhvācārya.

RELIGION

(continued from page 11)

bewildered and too attached to their own rotting institutions to distinguish the true from the false. Thus they have quite mistakenly attacked the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement as a harmful "cult."

On the other hand, we have seen that even some of the harshest critics of the new religious groups (the *Jewish Times*, for instance) are acknowledging that the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is authentic. Clearly, no parents should object to their son or daughter's joining the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, for it is a fully authorized movement solidly based on the classical Vedic literatures and guided by a pure, selfless devotee of God—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Nonetheless, if you do not want your children to join the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, we don't mind—as long as you teach them in your own religious tradition how to serve God without motivation or interruption. Then their spiritual needs will be fully satisfied, you will "keep" your children, and we in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement will consider that our mission has been successful.

So the choice is simple. You can join us and learn to refrain from the sinful activities of meat eating, intoxication, illicit sex, and gambling—and you can also learn how to chant the names of God recommended in the Vedic literature, namely Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Or, if you find some insurmountable impediment to joining the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, then you can remain in your own faith—but begin following God's orders by becoming a vegetarian and chanting the names of God that appear in your own scripture. If you accept one of these alternatives, and if you engage your offspring in serving the Lord as well, then the problem of "pseudoreligious cults"—old or new—will be permanently solved.

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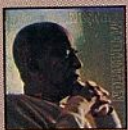


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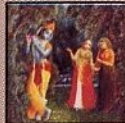
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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Dhṛtarāṣṭra Quits Home

(continued from previous issue)

TEXTS 3-4

तं बन्धुमागतं दृष्ट्वा धर्मपुत्रः सहानुजः ।
धृतराष्ट्रो युयुत्सुश्च सतः शारदतः पृथा ॥ ३ ॥
गान्धारी द्रौपदी ब्रह्मन् सुभद्रा चोचरा कृपी ।
अन्याश्च जामयः पाण्डोर्जातयः ससुताः स्त्रियः ॥ ४ ॥

*taṁ bandhum āgatam dṛṣṭvā
dharma-putrah sahanujah
dhṛtarāṣṭro yuyutsuś ca
sūtaḥ śāradvataḥ prthā*

*gāndhārī draupadī brahman
subhadrā cottarā kṛpī
anyāś ca jāmayah paṇḍor
jñātayah sasutāḥ striyah*

taṁ—him; *bandhum*—relative; *āgatam*—having arrived there; *dṛṣṭvā*—by seeing it; *dharma-putrah*—Yudhiṣṭhira; *saha-anujah*—along with his younger brothers; *dhṛtarāṣṭrah*—Dhṛtarāṣṭra; *yuyutsuh*—Sātyaki; *ca*—and; *sūtaḥ*—Sañjaya; *śāradvataḥ*—Kṛpācārya; *prthā*—Kuntī; *gāndhārī*—Gāndhārī; *draupadī*—Draupadī; *brahman*—O brāhmanas; *subhadrā*—Subhadrā; *ca*—and; *uttarā*—Uttarā; *kṛpī*—Kṛpī; *anyāḥ*—others; *ca*—and; *jāmayah*—wives of other family members; *paṇḍoh*—of the Pāṇḍavas; *jñātayah*—family members; *sasutāḥ*—along with their sons; *striyah*—the ladies.

TRANSLATION

When they saw Vidura return to the palace, all the inhabitants—Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, his younger brothers, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Sātyaki,

Sañjaya, Kṛpācārya, Kuntī, Gāndhārī, Draupadī, Subhadrā, Uttarā, Kṛpī, many other wives of the Kauravas, and other ladies with children—all hurried to him in great delight. It so appeared that they had regained their consciousness after a long period.

PURPORT

Gāndhārī: The ideal chaste lady in the history of the world. She was the daughter of Mahārāja Subala, the King of Gāndhāra (now Kandahar in Kabul), and in her maiden state she worshiped Lord Śiva. Lord Śiva is generally worshiped by Hindu maidens to get a good husband. Gāndhārī satisfied Lord Śiva, and by his benediction to obtain one hundred sons, she was betrothed to Dhṛtarāṣṭra, despite his being blind forever. When Gāndhārī came to know that her would-be husband was a blind man, to follow her life companion she decided to become voluntarily blind. So she wrapped up her eyes with many silk linens, and she was married to Dhṛtarāṣṭra under the guidance of her elder brother Śakuni. She was the most beautiful girl of her time, and she was equally qualified by her womanly qualities, which endeared every member of the Kaurava court. But despite all her good qualities, she had the natural frailties of a woman, and she was envious of Kuntī when the latter gave birth to a male child. Both the queens were pregnant, but Kuntī first gave birth to a male child. Thus Gāndhārī became angry and gave a blow to her own abdomen. As a result, she gave birth to a lump of flesh only, but since she was a devotee of Vyāsadeva, by the instruction of Vyāsadeva the lump was divided into one hundred parts, and each part gradually developed to become a male child. Thus her ambition to become the mother of one hundred sons was fulfilled, and she began to nourish all the children according to her exalted position. When the intrigue of the Battle of Kurukṣetra was going on, she was not in favor of fighting with the Pāṇḍavas; rather, she blamed Dhṛtarāṣṭra, her husband, for such a fratricidal war. She desired that the state be divided into two parts, for the sons of Pāṇḍu and her own. She was very affected when all her sons died in the Battle of Kurukṣetra, and she wanted to curse Bhīmasena and Yudhiṣṭhira, but she was checked by Vyāsadeva. Her mourning over the death of Duryodhana and Duḥśāsana before Lord Kṛṣṇa was very pitiful, and Lord Kṛṣṇa pacified her by transcendental messages. She was equally aggrieved on the death of Karṇa, and she described to Lord Kṛṣṇa the countries of the world. She was married with the Pāṇḍavas during their exile in the forest, but when they went back home Mahārāja Drupada gave them immense wealth as a dowry. She was well received by all the daughters-in-law of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. When she was lost in a gambling game, she was forcibly dragged into the assembly hall, and an attempt was made by Duḥśāsana to see her naked beauty, even though there were elderly persons like Bhīṣma and Droṇa present. She was a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and by her praying, the Lord Himself became an

unlimited garment to save her from the insult. A demon of the name Jātāsura kidnapped her, but her second husband, Bhīmasena, killed the demon and saved her. She saved the Pāṇḍavas from the curse of Mahārṣi Durvāsā by the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa. When the Pāṇḍavas lived incognito in the palace of Virāṭa, Kīcaka was attracted by her exquisite beauty, and by arrangement with Bhīma the devil was killed and she was saved. She was very much aggrieved when her five sons were killed by Aśvatthāmā. At the last stage, she accompanied her husband Yudhiṣṭhira and others and fell on the way. The cause of her falling was explained by Yudhiṣṭhira, but when Yudhiṣṭhira entered the heavenly planet he saw Draupadī gloriously present there as the goddess of fortune in the heavenly planet.

Subhadrā: Daughter of Vasudeva and sister of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. She was not only a very dear daughter of Vasudeva, but also a very dear sister to both Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva. The two brothers and sister are represented in the famous Jagannātha temple of Purī, and the temple is still visited by thousands of pilgrims daily. This temple is in remembrance of the Lord's visit at Kurukṣetra during an occasion of solar eclipse and His subsequent meeting with the residents of Vṛndāvana. The meeting of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa during this occasion is a very pathetic story, and Lord Śrī Caitanya, in the ecstasy of Rādhārāṇī, always pined for Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa at Jagannātha Purī. While Arjuna was at Dvārakā, he wanted to have Subhadrā as his queen, and he expressed his desire to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa knew that His elder brother, Lord Baladeva, was arranging her marriage elsewhere, and since He did not dare to go against the arrangement of Baladeva, He advised Arjuna to kidnap Subhadrā. So when all of them were on a pleasure trip on the Raivata Hill, Arjuna managed to kidnap Subhadrā according to the plan of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Baladeva was very angry at Arjuna, and He wanted to kill him, but Lord Kṛṣṇa implored His brother to excuse Arjuna. Then Subhadrā was duly married with Arjuna, and Abhimanyu was born of Subhadrā. At the premature death of Abhimanyu, Subhadrā was very mortified, but on the birth of Parīkṣit she was happy and solaced.

TEXT 5

प्रत्युज्जग्मुः प्रहर्षेण प्राणं तन्व इवागतम् ।
अभिसंगम्य विधिवत् परिष्वङ्गाभिवादनैः ॥ ५ ॥

*pratyujjagmuḥ praharṣeṇa
prāṇam tanva ivāgatam
abhisangamya vidhivat
pariṣvaṅgābhivādanaiḥ*

prati—towards; *ujjagmuḥ*—went; *praharṣeṇa*—with great delight; *prāṇam*—life; *tanvah*—of the body; *iva*—like; *āgatam*—returned; *abhisangamya*—approaching; *vidhi-vat*—in due form; *pariṣvaṅga*—embracing; *abhivādanaiḥ*—by obeisances.

TRANSLATION

With great delight they all approached him, as if life had returned to their bodies. They exchanged obeisances and welcomed each other with embraces.

PURPORT

In the absence of consciousness, the limbs of the body remain inactive. But when consciousness returns, the limbs and senses become active, and existence itself becomes delightful. Vidura was so dear to the members of the Kaurava family that his long absence from the palace was comparable to inactivity. All of them were feeling acute separation from Vidura, and therefore his return to the palace was joyful for all.

TEXT 6

मुमुचुः प्रेमवाष्पौघं विरहौत्कण्ठ्यकातराः ।
राजा तमर्हयाञ्चक्रे कृतासनपरिग्रहम् ॥ ६ ॥

*mumucuḥ prema-bāspaugham
virahautkaṅṭhya-kātarāḥ
rājā tam arhayām cakre
kṛtāsana-parigraham*

mumucuḥ—emanated; *prema*—affectionate; *bāspa-ogham*—emotional tears; *viraha*—separation; *autkaṅṭhya*—anxiousness; *kātarāḥ*—being aggrieved; *rājā*—King Yudhiṣṭhira; *tam*—unto him (Vidura); *arhayām cakre*—offered; *kṛta*—performance of; *āsana*—sitting accommodations; *parigraham*—arrangement of.

TRANSLATION

Due to anxieties and long separation, they all cried out of affection. King Yudhiṣṭhira then arranged to offer sitting accommodations and a reception.

TEXT 7

तं भुक्तवन्तं विश्रान्तमासीनं सुखमासने ।
प्रश्रयावनतो राजा ग्राह तेषां च शृण्वताम् ॥ ७ ॥

*taṁ bhuktavantam viśrāntam
āsinam sukham āsane
praśrayāvanato rājā
prāha teṣām ca śṛṇvatām*

taṁ—him (Vidura); *bhuktavantam*—after feeding him sumptuously; *viśrāntam*—and having taken rest; *āsinam*—being seated; *sukham āsane*—on a comfortable seat; *praśraya-avanataḥ*—naturally very gentle and meek; *rājā*—King Yudhiṣṭhira; *prāha*—began to speak; *teṣām ca*—and by them; *śṛṇvatām*—being heard.

TRANSLATION

After Vidura ate sumptuously and took sufficient rest, he was comfortably seated. Then the King began to speak to him, and all who were present there listened.

PURPORT

King Yudhiṣṭhira was expert in reception also, even in the case of his family members. Vidura was well received by all the family members by exchange of embraces and obeisances. After that, bathing and arrangements for a sumptuous dinner were made, and then he was given sufficient rest. After finishing his rest, he was offered a comfortable place to sit, and then the King began to talk about all happenings, both family and otherwise. That is the proper way to receive a beloved friend, or even an enemy. According to Indian moral codes, even an enemy received at home should be so well received that he will not feel any fearful situation. An enemy is always afraid of his enemy, but this should not be so when he is received at home by his enemy. This means that a person, when received at home, should be treated as a relative, so what to speak of a family member like Vidura, who was a well-wisher for all the members of the family. Thus Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja began to speak in the presence of all the other members.

TEXT 8

युधिष्ठिर उवाच
अपि स्मरथ नो युष्मत्पक्षच्छायासमेधितान् ।
विपद्गणाद्विषाग्न्यादेर्मोचिता यत्समानुक्ताः ॥ ८ ॥

*yudhiṣṭhira uvāca
api smaratha no yuṣmat-
pakṣac-chāyā-samedhitān
vipad-gaṇād viṣāgnyāde-
mociṭā yat samātrkāḥ*

yudhiṣṭhirah uvāca—Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira said; *api*—whether; *smaratha*—you remember; *naḥ*—us; *yuṣmat*—from you; *pakṣat*—partiality towards us like the wings of a bird; *chāyā*—protection; *samedhitān*—we who were brought up by you; *vipat-gaṇāt*—from various types of calamities; *viṣa*—by administration of poison; *agnī-ādeḥ*—by setting on fire; *mocitāḥ*—released from; *yat*—what you have done; *sa*—along with; *mātrkāḥ*—our mother.

TRANSLATION

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira said: My uncle, do you remember how you always protected us, along with our mother, from all sorts of calamities? Your partiality, like the wings of a bird, saved us from poisoning and arson.

PURPORT

Due to Pāṇḍu's death at an early age, his minor children and widow were the object of special care by all the elderly members of the family, especially Bhīṣmadeva and Mahātmā Vidura. Vidura was more or less partial to the Pāṇḍavas due to their political position. Although Dhṛtarāṣṭra was equally careful for the minor children of Mahārāja Pāṇḍu, he was one of the intriguing parties who wanted to wash away the descendants of Pāṇḍu and replace them by raising his own sons to become the rulers of the kingdom. Mahātmā Vidura could follow this intrigue of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and company, and therefore, even though he was a faithful servitor of his eldest brother, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, he did not like his political ambition for the sake of his own sons. He was therefore very careful about the protection of the Pāṇḍavas and their widow mother. Thus he was, so to speak, partial to the Pāṇḍavas, preferring them to the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, although both of them were equally affectionate in his ordinary eyes. He was equally affectionate to both the camps of nephews in the sense that he always chastised Duryodhana for his intriguing policy against his cousins. He always criticized his elder brother for his policy of encouragement to his sons, and at the same time he was always alert in giving special protection to the Pāṇḍavas. All these different activities of Vidura within the palace politics made him well-known as partial to the Pāṇḍavas. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira has referred to the past history of Vidura before his going away from home for a prolonged pilgrim's journey. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira reminded him that he was equally kind and partial to his grown-up nephews, even after the Battle of Kurukṣetra, a great family disaster.

Before the Battle of Kurukṣetra, Dhṛtarāṣṭra's policy was peaceful annihilation of his nephews, and therefore he ordered Purocana to build a house at Vāraṇāvata, and when the building was finished Dhṛtarāṣṭra desired that his brother's family live there for some time. When the Pāṇḍavas were going there in the presence of all the members of the royal family, Vidura tactfully gave instructions to the Pāṇḍavas about the future plan of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. This is specifically described in the *Mahābhārata* (*Ādi-parva* 114). He indirectly hinted, "A weapon not made of steel or any other material element can be more than sharp to kill an enemy, and he who knows this is never killed." That is to say, he hinted that the party of the Pāṇḍavas was being sent to Vāraṇāvata to be killed, and thus he warned Yudhiṣṭhira to be very careful in their new residential palace. He also gave indications of fire and said that fire cannot extinguish the soul but can annihilate the material body. But one who protects the soul can live. Kuntī could not follow such indirect conversations between Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira and Vidura, and thus when she inquired from her son about the purport of the conversation, Yudhiṣṭhira replied that from the talks of Vidura it was understood that there was a hint of fire in the house where they were proceeding. Later on, Vidura came in disguise to the Pāṇḍavas and informed them that the house-keeper was going to set fire to the house on the fourteenth night of the waning moon. It was an intrigue of Dhṛtarāṣṭra that the Pāṇḍavas might die all together with their mother. And by his warning the Pāṇḍavas escaped through a tunnel underneath the earth so that their escape was also unknown to Dhṛtarāṣṭra, so much so that after setting the fire, the

Kauravas were so certain of the death of the Pāṇḍavas that Dhṛtarāṣṭra performed the last rites of death with great cheerfulness. And during the mourning period all the members of the palace became overwhelmed with lamentation, but Vidura did not become so, because of his knowledge that the Pāṇḍavas were alive somewhere. There are many such instances of calamities, and in each of them Vidura gave protection to the Pāṇḍavas on one hand, and on the other he tried to restrain his brother Dhṛtarāṣṭra from such intriguing policies. Therefore, he was always partial to the Pāṇḍavas, just as a bird protects its eggs by its wing.

TEXT 9

क्या वृत्त्या वर्तितं वश्रद्विः क्षितिमण्डलम् ।
तीर्थानि क्षेत्रमुख्यानि सेवितानीह भूतले ॥ ९ ॥

kayā vṛtīyā vartitān vaś
caradbhiḥ kṣiti-maṇḍalam
tīrthāni kṣetra-mukhyāni
sevītāniha bhūtale

kayā—by which; *vṛtīyā*—means; *vartitam*—maintained your livelihood; *vaś*—your good self; *caradbhiḥ*—while traveling; *kṣiti-maṇḍalam*—on the surface of the earth; *tīrthāni*—places of pilgrimage; *kṣetra-mukhyāni*—the principal holy places; *sevītāni*—served by you; *iha*—in this world; *bhūtale*—on this planet.

TRANSLATION

While traveling on the surface of the earth, how did you maintain your livelihood? At which holy places and pilgrimage sites did you render service?

PURPORT

Vidura went out from the palace to detach himself from household affairs, especially political intrigues. As referred to hereinbefore, he was practically insulted by Duryodhana's calling him a son of a *sūdrānī*, although it was not out of place to talk loosely in the case of one's grandmother. Vidura's mother, although a *sūdrānī*, was the grandmother of Duryodhana, and funny talks are sometimes allowed between grandmother and grandchildren. But because the remark was an actual fact, it was unpalatable talk to Vidura, and it was accepted as a direct insult. He therefore decided to quit his paternal house and prepare for the renounced order of life. This preparatory stage is called *vānaprasthā-āśrama*, or retired life for traveling and visiting the holy places on the surface of the earth. In the holy places of India, like Vṛndāvana, Haridwar, Jagannātha Purī, and Prayāga, there are many great devotees, and there are still free kitchen houses for persons who desire to advance spiritually. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was inquisitive to learn whether Vidura maintained himself by the mercy of the free kitchen houses (*chatras*).

TEXT 10

भवद्विधा भागवतास्तीर्थमृताः स्वयं विभो ।
तीर्थीकुर्वन्ति तीर्थानि स्वान्तःस्थेन गदाभृता ॥ १० ॥

bhavat-vidhā bhāgavatās
tīrtha-bhūtāḥ svayam vibho
tīrthi-kurvanti tīrthāni
svāntaḥ-sthena gadābhṛtā

bhavat—your good self; *vidhāḥ*—like; *bhāgavatāḥ*—devotees; *tīrtha*—the holy places of pilgrimage; *bhūtāḥ*—converted into; *svayam*—personally; *vibho*—O powerful one; *tīrthi-kurvanti*—make into a holy place of pilgrimage; *tīrthāni*—the holy places; *svāntaḥ-sthena*—having been situated in the heart; *gadā-bhṛtā*—the Personality of Godhead.

TRANSLATION

My Lord, devotees like your good self are verily holy places personified. Because you carry the Personality of Godhead within your heart, you turn all places into places of pilgrimage.

PURPORT

The Personality of Godhead is omnipresent by His diverse potencies everywhere, just as the power of electricity is distributed everywhere within space. Similarly, the Lord's omnipresence is perceived and manifested by His unalloyed devotees like Vidura, just as electricity is manifested in an electric bulb. A pure devotee like Vidura always feels the presence of the Lord everywhere. He sees everything in the potency of the Lord and the Lord in everything. The holy places all over the earth are meant for purifying the polluted consciousness of the human being by an atmosphere surcharged with the presence of the Lord's unalloyed devotees. If anyone visits a holy place, he must search out the pure devotees residing in such holy places, take lessons from them, try to apply such instructions in practical life and thus gradually prepare oneself for the ultimate salvation, going back to Godhead. To go to some holy place of pilgrimage does not mean only to take a bath in the Ganges or Yamunā or to visit the temples situated in those places. One should also find representatives of Vidura who have no desire in life save and except to serve the Personality of Godhead. The Personality of Godhead is always with such pure devotees because of their unalloyed service, which is without any tinge of fruitive action or utopian speculation. They are in the actual service of the Lord, specifically by the process of hearing and chanting. The pure devotees hear from the authorities and chant, sing and write of the glories of the Lord. Mahāmuni Vyāsadeva heard from Nārada, and then he chanted in writing; Śukadeva Gosvāmī studied from his father, and he described it to Parikṣit; that is the way of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. So by their actions the pure devotees of the Lord can render any place into a place of pilgrimage, and the holy places are worth the name only on their account. Such pure devotees are able to rectify the polluted atmosphere of any place, and what to speak of a holy place rendered unholy by the questionable actions of interested persons who try to adopt a professional life at the cost of the reputation of a holy place.

TEXT 11

अपि नः सुहृदस्तात बान्धवाः कृष्णदेवताः ।
दृष्टाः श्रुता वा यदवः स्वपुर्यां सुखमासते ॥११॥

*api naḥ suhṛdaḥ tāta
bāndhavāḥ kṛṣṇa-devatāḥ
dṛṣṭāḥ śrutā vā yadavaḥ
sva-puryām sukhamaśate*

api—whether; *naḥ*—our; *suhṛdaḥ*—well-wishers; *tāta*—O my uncle; *bāndhavāḥ*—friends; *kṛṣṇa-devatāḥ*—those who are always rapt in the service of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *dṛṣṭāḥ*—by seeing them; *śrutāḥ*—or by hearing about them; *vā*—either; *yadavaḥ*—the descendants of Yadu; *sva-puryām*—along with their residential place; *sukham aśate*—if they are all happy.

TRANSLATION

My uncle, you must have visited Dvārakā. In that holy place are our friends and well-wishers, the descendants of Yadu, who are always rapt in the service of the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. You might have seen them or heard about them. Are they all living happily in their abodes?

PURPORT

The particular word *kṛṣṇa-devatāḥ*, i.e., those who are always rapt in the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa, is significant. The Yādavas and the Pāṇḍavas, who were always rapt in the thought of the Lord Kṛṣṇa and His different transcendental activities, were all pure devotees of the Lord like Vidura.

Vidura left home in order to devote himself completely to the service of the Lord, but the Pāṇḍavas and the Yādavas were always rapt in the thought of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Thus there is no difference in their pure devotional qualities. Either remaining at home or leaving home, the real qualification of a pure devotee is to become rapt in the thought of Kṛṣṇa favorably, i.e., knowing well that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute Personality of Godhead. Kāmsa, Jarāsandha, Śiśupāla and other demons like them were also always rapt in the thought of Lord Kṛṣṇa, but they were absorbed in a different way, namely unfavorably, or thinking Him to be a powerful man only. Therefore, Kāmsa and Śiśupāla are not on the same level as pure devotees like Vidura, the Pāṇḍavas and the Yādavas.

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was also always rapt in the thought of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His associates at Dvārakā. Otherwise he could not have asked all about them from Vidura. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was therefore on the same level of devotion as Vidura, although engaged in the state affairs of the kingdom of the world.

TEXT 12

इत्युक्तो धर्मराजेन सर्वं तत् समवर्णयत् ।
यथानुभूतं क्रमशो विना यदुकुलक्षयम् ॥१२॥

*ity ukto dharmarājena
sarvaṁ tat samavarṇayat
yathānubhūtaṁ kramaśo
vinā yadu-kula-kṣayam*

iti—thus; *uktaḥ*—being asked; *dharmarājena*—by King Yudhiṣṭhira; *sarvaṁ*—all; *tat*—that; *samavarṇayat*—properly described; *yathā-anubhūtam*—as he experienced; *kramaśah*—one after another; *vinā*—without; *yadu-kula-kṣayam*—annihilation of the Yadu dynasty.

TRANSLATION

Thus being questioned by Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, Mahātmā Vidura gradually described everything he had personally experienced, except news of the annihilation of the Yadu dynasty.

TEXT 13

नन्वप्रियं दुर्विषहं नृणां स्वयमुपस्थितम् ।
नावेदयत् सकरुणो दुःखितान् द्रष्टुमक्षमः ॥१३॥

*nanv apriyaṁ durviṣaḥaṁ
nṛṇāṁ svayam upasthitam
nāvedayat sakaruṇo
duḥkhitān draṣṭum akṣamaḥ*

nanu—as a matter of fact; *apriyam*—unpalatable; *durviṣaḥam*—unbearable; *nṛṇām*—of humankind; *svayam*—in its own way; *upasthitam*—appearance; *na*—did not; *āvedayat*—expressed; *sakaruṇaḥ*—compassionate; *duḥkhitān*—distressed; *draṣṭum*—to see; *akṣamaḥ*—unable.

TRANSLATION

Compassionate Mahātmā Vidura could not stand to see the Pāṇḍavas distressed at any time. Therefore he did not disclose this unpalatable and unbearable incident because calamities come of their own accord.

PURPORT

According to *Nīti-śāstra* (civic laws) one should not speak an unpalatable truth to cause distress to others. Distress comes upon us in its own way by the laws of nature, so one should not aggravate it by propaganda. For a compassionate soul like Vidura, especially in his dealings with the beloved Pāṇḍavas, it was almost impossible to disclose an unpalatable piece of news like the annihilation of the Yadu dynasty. Therefore he purposely refrained from it.

TEXT 14

कञ्चित्कालमथावात्सीत्सुकृतो देवत्वसुखम् ।
भ्रातृज्येष्ठस्य श्रेयस्कृतसर्वेषां सुखमावहन् ॥१४॥

kañcit kālam athāvātsī
sat-kṛto devavat sukham
bhrātūr jyeṣṭhasya śreyas-kṛt
sarveṣāṃ sukham āvahan

kañcit—for a few days; kālam—time; atha—thus; avātsī—resided; sat-kṛtaḥ—being well treated; deva-vat—just like a godly personality; sukham—amenities; bhrātuḥ—of the brother; jyeṣṭhasya—of the elder; śreyas-kṛt—for doing good to him; sarveṣāṃ—all others; sukham—happiness; āvahan—made it possible.

TRANSLATION

Thus Mahātmā Vidura, being treated just like a godly person by his kinsmen, remained there for a certain period just to rectify the mentality of his eldest brother and in this way bring happiness to all the others.

PURPORT

Saintly persons like Vidura must be treated as well as a denizen from heaven. In those days denizens of heavenly planets used to visit homes like that of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, and sometimes persons like Arjuna and others used to visit higher planets. Nārada is a spaceman who can travel unrestrictedly, not only within the material universes but also in the spiritual universes. Even Nārada used to visit the palace of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira and what to speak of other celestial demigods. It is only the spiritual culture of the people concerned that makes interplanetary travel possible, even in the present body. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira therefore received Vidura in the manner of reception offered to the demigods.

Mahātmā Vidura had already adopted the renounced order of life, and therefore he did not return to his paternal palace to enjoy some material comforts. He accepted out of his own mercy what was offered to him by Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, but the purpose of living in the palace was to deliver his elder brother, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who was too much materially attached. Dhṛtarāṣṭra lost all his state and descendants in the fight with Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, and still, due to his sense of helplessness, he did not feel ashamed to accept the charity and hospitality of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. On the part of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, it was quite in order to maintain his uncle in a befitting manner, but acceptance of such magnanimous hospitality by Dhṛtarāṣṭra was not at all desirable. He accepted it because he thought that there was no alternative. Vidura particularly came to enlighten Dhṛtarāṣṭra and to give him a lift to the higher status of spiritual cognition. It is the duty of enlightened souls to deliver the fallen ones, and Vidura came for that reason. But talks of spiritual enlightenment are so refreshing that while instructing Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Vidura attracted the attention of all the members of the family, and all of them took pleasure in hearing him patiently. This is the way of spiritual realization. The message should be heard attentively, and if spoken by a realized soul, it will act on the dormant heart of the conditioned soul. And by continuously hearing, one can attain the perfect stage of self-realization.

TEXT 15

अभिभ्रदर्यमा दण्डं यथावदवकारिषु ।
यावदधार शूद्रत्वं शापाद्वर्षशतं यमः ॥१५॥

abibhrad aryamā daṇḍam
yathāvad agha-kāriṣu
yāvad dadhāra śūdratvam
śāpād varṣa-śatam yamaḥ

abibhrat—administered; aryamā—Aryamā; daṇḍam—punishment; yathāvat—as it was suitable; agha-kāriṣu—unto persons who had committed sins; yāvat—as long as; dadhāra—accepted; śūdratvam—the tabernacle of a śūdra; śāpāt—as the result of a curse; varṣa-śatam—for one hundred years; yamaḥ—Yamarāja.

TRANSLATION

As long as Vidura played the part of a śūdra, being cursed by Maṇḍuka Muni, Aryamā officiated at the post of Yamarāja to punish those who committed sinful acts.

PURPORT

Vidura, born in the womb of a śūdra woman, was forbidden even to be a party of royal heritage along with his brothers Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Pāṇḍu. Then how could he occupy the post of a preacher to instruct such learned kings and kṣatriyas as Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira? The first answer is that even though it is accepted that he was a śūdra by birth, because he renounced the world for spiritual enlightenment by the authority of Ṛṣi Maitreya and was thoroughly educated by him in transcendental knowledge, he was quite competent to occupy the post of an ācārya, or spiritual preceptor. According to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, anyone who is conversant in the transcendental knowledge, or the science of Godhead, be he a brāhmaṇa or a śūdra, a householder or a sannyāsi, is eligible to become a spiritual master. Even in the ordinary moral codes (maintained by Cānakya Paṇḍita, the great politician and moralist) there is no harm in taking lessons from a person who may be by birth less than a śūdra. This is one part of the answer. The other is that Vidura was not actually a śūdra. He was to play the part of a so-called śūdra for one hundred years, being cursed by Maṇḍuka Muni. He was the incarnation of Yamarāja, one of the twelve mahājanas, on the level with such exalted personalities as Brahmā, Nārada, Śiva, Kapila, Bhiṣma, Prahlāda, etc. Being a mahājana, it is the duty of Yamarāja to preach the cult of devotion to the people of the world, as Nārada, Brahmā, and other mahājanas do. But Yamarāja is always busy in his plutonic kingdom punishing the doers of sinful acts. Yamarāja is deputed by the Lord to a particular planet, some hundreds of thousands of miles away from the planet of earth, to take away the corrupt souls after death and convict them in accordance with their respective sinful activities. Thus Yamarāja has very little time to take leave from his responsible office of punishing the wrongdoers. There are more wrongdoers than righteous men. Therefore Yamarāja has to do more work than other demigods who are also authorized agents of the Supreme Lord. But he wanted to preach the glories of the Lord, and therefore by the will of the Lord he was cursed by Maṇḍuka Muni to come into the world in the incarnation of Vidura and work very hard as a great devotee. Such a devotee is neither a śūdra nor a brāhmaṇa. He is transcendental to such divisions of mundane society, just as the Personality of Godhead assumes His incarnation as a hog, but He is neither a hog nor a Brahmā. He is above all mundane creatures. The Lord and His different authorized devotees sometimes have to play the role of many lower creatures to claim the conditioned souls, but both the Lord and His pure devotees are always in the transcendental position. When Yamarāja thus incarnated himself as Vidura, his post was officiated by Aryamā, one of the many sons of Kaśyapa and Aditi. The Ādityas are sons of Aditi, and there are twelve Ādityas. Aryamā is one of the twelve Ādityas, and therefore it was quite possible for him to take charge of the office of Yamarāja during his one hundred years' absence in the form of Vidura. The conclusion is that Vidura was never a śūdra, but was greater than the purest type of brāhmaṇa.

TEXT 16

युधिष्ठिरो लब्धराज्यो ह्यग्रा पौत्रं कुलधरम् ।
भ्रातृमिलोकपालाभैर्मुमुक्षुदे परया श्रिया ॥१६॥

*yudhiṣṭhiro labdha-rājya
 dr̥ṣṭvā pautraṁ kulān-dharam
 bhrātr̥bhīr loka-pālābhair
 mumude parayā śrīyā*

yudhiṣṭhiraḥ—Yudhiṣṭhira; *labdha-rājyaḥ*—possessing his paternal kingdom; *dr̥ṣṭvā*—by seeing; *pautraṁ*—the grandson; *kulam-dharam*—just suitable for the dynasty; *bhrātr̥bhīḥ*—by the brothers; *loka-pālābhair*—who were all expert administrators; *mumude*—enjoyed life; *parayā*—uncommon; *śrīyā*—opulence.

TRANSLATION

Having won his kingdom and observed the birth of one grandson competent to continue the noble tradition of his family, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira reigned peacefully and enjoyed uncommon opulence in cooperation with his younger brothers, who were all expert administrators to the common people.

PURPORT

Both Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira and Arjuna were unhappy from the beginning of the Battle of Kurukṣetra, but even though they were unwilling to kill their own men in the fight, it had to be done as a matter of duty, for it was planned by the supreme will of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. After the battle, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was unhappy over such mass killings. Practically blind to the passing of eternal time. Our duration of life is measured, and no one is able to enhance it even by a second against the scheduled time ordained by the supreme will. Such valuable time, especially for the human being, should be cautiously spent because even a second passed away imperceptibly cannot be replaced, even in exchange for thousands of golden coins amassed by hard labor. Every second of human life is meant for making an ultimate solution to the problems of life, i.e. repetition of birth and death and revolving in the cycle of 8,400,000 different species of life. The material body, which is subject to birth and death, diseases and old age, is the cause of all sufferings of the living being, otherwise the living being is eternal; he is never born, nor does he ever die. Foolish persons forget this problem. They do not know at all how to solve the problems of life, but become engrossed in temporary family affairs not knowing that eternal time is passing away imperceptibly and that their measured duration of life is diminishing every second, without any solution to the big problem, namely repetition of birth and death, disease and old age. This is called illusion.

But such illusion cannot work on one who is awake in the devotional service of the Lord. Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja and his brothers the Pāṇḍavas were all engaged in the service of the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and they had very little attraction for the illusory happiness of this material world. As we have discussed previously, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was fixed in the service of the Lord Mukunda (the Lord, who can award salvation), and therefore he had no attraction even for such comforts of life as are available in the kingdom of heaven, because even the happiness obtained on the planet Brahmāloka is also temporary and illusory. Because the living being is eternal, he can be happy only in the eternal abode of the kingdom of God (*paravyoma*), from which no one returns to this region of repeated birth and death, disease and old age. Therefore, any comfort of life or any material happiness which does not warrant an eternal life is but illusion for the eternal living being. One who understands this factually is learned, and such a learned person can sacrifice any amount of material happiness to achieve the desired goal known as *brahma-sukham*, or absolute happiness. Real transcendentalists are hungry for this happiness, and as a hungry man cannot be made happy by all comforts of life minus foodstuff, so the man hungry for eternal absolute happiness cannot be satisfied by any amount of material happiness. Therefore, the instruction there was none to continue the Kuru dynasty after them, the Pāṇḍavas. The only remaining hope was the child in the womb of his daughter-in-law, Uttarā, and he was also attacked by Aśvatthāmā, but by the grace of the Lord the child was saved. So after the settlement of all disturbing conditions and reestablishment of the peaceful order of the state, and

after seeing the surviving child, Parikṣit, well satisfied, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira felt some relief as a human being, although he had very little attraction for material happiness, which is always illusory and temporary.

TEXT 17

एवं गृहेषु सक्तानां प्रमत्तानां तदीहया ।
 अत्यक्रामदविज्ञातः कालः परमदुस्तरः ॥१७॥

*evaṁ gr̥heṣu saktānām
 pramattānām tad-ihayā
 atyākramat avijñātaḥ
 kālaḥ parama-dustaraḥ*

evaṁ—thus; *gr̥heṣu*—in the family affairs; *saktānām*—of persons who are too attached; *pramattānām*—insanely attached; *tad-ihayā*—engrossed in such thoughts; *atyākramat*—surpassed; *avijñātaḥ*—imperceptibly; *kālaḥ*—eternal time; *parama*—supremely; *dustaraḥ*—insurmountable.

TRANSLATION

Insurmountable, eternal time imperceptibly overcomes those who are too much attached to family affairs and are always engrossed in their thought.

PURPORT

“I am now happy; I have everything in order; my bank balance is quite enough; I can now give my children enough estate; I am now successful; the poor beggar *sannyāsis* depend on God, but they come to beg from me; therefore I am more than the Supreme God.” These are some of the thoughts which engross the insanely attached householder who is described in this verse cannot be applied to Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira or his brothers and mother. It was meant for persons like Dhṛtarāṣṭra, for whom Vidura came especially to impart lessons.

TEXT 18

विदुरस्तदभिप्रेत्य दृतराष्ट्रमाषत ।
 राजन्निर्गम्यतां शीघ्रं पश्येदं भयमागतम् ॥१८॥

*viduras tad abhipretya
 dhṛtarāṣṭram abhāṣata
 rājan nirgamyatām śighram
 paśyedaṁ bhayam āgatam*

viduraḥ—Mahātmā Vidura; *tad*—that; *abhipretya*—knowing it well; *dhṛtarāṣṭram*—unto Dhṛtarāṣṭra; *abhāṣata*—said; *rājan*—O King; *nirgamyatām*—please get out immediately; *śighram*—without the least delay; *paśya*—just see; *idam*—this; *bhayam*—fear; *āgatam*—already arrived.

TRANSLATION

Mahātmā Vidura knew all this, and therefore he addressed Dhṛtarāṣṭra, saying: My dear King, please get out of here immediately. Do not delay. Just see how fear has overtaken you.

PURPORT

Cruel death cares for none, be he Dhṛtarāṣṭra or even Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira; therefore spiritual instruction, as was given to old Dhṛtarāṣṭra, was equally applicable to younger Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. As a matter of fact, everyone in the royal palace, including the King and his brothers and mother, was raptly attending the lectures. But it was known to Vidura that his instructions were especially meant for Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who was too materialistic. The word *rājan* is especially addressed to

Dhṛtarāṣṭra significantly. Dhṛtarāṣṭra was the eldest son of his father, and therefore according to law he was to be installed on the throne of Hastināpura. But because he was blind from birth, he was disqualified from his rightful claim. But he could not forget the bereavement, and his disappointment was somewhat compensated after the death of Pāṇḍu, his younger brother. His younger brother left behind him some minor children, and Dhṛtarāṣṭra became the natural guardian of them, but at heart he wanted to become the factual King and hand the kingdom over to his own sons, headed by Duryodhana. With all these imperial ambitions, Dhṛtarāṣṭra wanted to become a king, and he contrived all sorts of intrigues in consultation with his brother-in-law Śakuni. But everything failed by the will of the Lord, and at the last stage, even after losing everything, men and money, he wanted to remain as King, being the eldest uncle of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, as a matter of duty, maintained Dhṛtarāṣṭra in royal honor, and Dhṛtarāṣṭra was happily passing away his numbered days in the illusion of being a king or the royal uncle of King Yudhiṣṭhira. Vidura, as a saint and as the duty-bound affectionate youngest brother of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, wanted to awaken Dhṛtarāṣṭra from his slumber of disease and old age. Vidura therefore sarcastically addressed Dhṛtarāṣṭra as the "King," which he was actually not. Everyone is the servant of eternal time, and therefore no one can be king in this material world. King means the person who can order. The celebrated English king wanted to order time and tide, but the time and tide refused to obey his order. Therefore one is a false king in the material world, and Dhṛtarāṣṭra was particularly reminded of this false position and of the factual fearful happenings which had already approached him at that time. Vidura asked him to get out immediately, if he wanted to be saved from the fearful situation which was approaching him fast. He did not ask Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira in that way because he knew that a king like Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira is aware of all the fearful situations of this flimsy world and would take care of himself, in due course, even though Vidura might not be present at that time.

TEXT 19

प्रतिक्रिया न यस्येह कुतश्चित्कर्हिचित्प्रभो ।
स एष भगवान् कालः सर्वेषां नः समागतः ॥१९॥

*pratīkriyā na yasyeha
kutaścit karhicit prabho
sa eṣa bhagavān kālah
sarveṣāṃ naḥ samāgataḥ*

pratīkriyā—remedial measure; *na*—there is none; *yasya*—of which; *iha*—in this material world; *kutaścit*—by any means; *karhicit*—or by anyone; *prabho*—O my lord; *saḥ*—that; *eṣaḥ*—positively; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *kālah*—eternal time; *sarveṣāṃ*—of all; *naḥ*—of us; *samāgataḥ*—arrived.

TRANSLATION

This frightful situation cannot be remedied by any person in this material world. My lord, it is the Supreme Personality of Godhead as eternal time [kāla] that has approached us all.

PURPORT

There is no superior power which can check the cruel hands of death. No one wants to die, however acute the source of bodily sufferings may be. Even in the days of so-called scientific advancement of knowledge, there is no remedial measure either for old age or for death. Old age is the notice of the arrival of death served by cruel time, and no one can refuse to accept either summon calls or the supreme judgment of eternal time. This is explained before Dhṛtarāṣṭra because he might ask Vidura to find out some remedial measure for the imminent fearful situation, as he had ordered many times before. Before ordering, however, Vidura informed Dhṛtarāṣṭra that there was no remedial measure by anyone or from any source in this material world. And because there is no such

thing in the material world, death is identical with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as it is said by the Lord Himself in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.34).

Death cannot be checked by anyone or from any source within this material world. Hiraṇyakaśipu wanted to be immortal and underwent a severe type of penance by which the whole universe trembled, and Brahmā himself approached him to dissuade Hiraṇyakaśipu from such a severe type of penance. Hiraṇyakaśipu asked Brahmā to award him the blessings of immortality, but Brahmā said that he himself was subject to death, even in the topmost planet, so how could he award him the benediction of immortality? So there is death even in the topmost planet of this universe, and what to speak of other planets, which are far, far inferior in quality to Brahmāloka, the residing planet of Brahmā. Wherever there is the influence of eternal time, there is this set of tribulations, namely birth, disease, old age and death, and all of them are invincible.

TEXT 20

येन चैवाभिपन्नोऽयं प्राणैः प्रियतमैरपि ।
जनः सद्यो वियुज्येत कियुतान्यैर्धनादिभिः ॥२०॥

*yena caivābhīpanno 'yaṃ
prāṇaiḥ priyatamair api
janaḥ sadyo viyujyeta
kim utānyair dhanādibhiḥ*

yena—pulled by such time; *ca*—and; *eva*—certainly; *abhīpannaḥ*—overtaken; *ayam*—this; *prāṇaiḥ*—with life; *priya-tamair*—which is most dear to everyone; *api*—even though; *janaḥ*—person; *sadyaḥ*—forthwith; *viyujyeta*—do give up; *kim uta anyaiḥ*—what to speak of any other thing; *dhanā-ādibhiḥ*—such as wealth, honor, children, land and house.

TRANSLATION

Whoever is under the influence of supreme kāla [eternal time] must surrender his most dear life, and and what to speak of other things, such as wealth, honor, children, land and home.

PURPORT

A great Indian scientist, busy in the planmaking business, was suddenly called by invincible eternal time while going to attend a very important meeting of the planning commission, and he had to surrender his life, wife, children, house, land, wealth, etc. During the political upsurge in India and its division into Pakistan and Hindustan, so many rich and influential Indians had to surrender life, property and honor due to the influence of time, and there are hundreds and thousands of examples like that all over the world, all over the universe, which are all effects of the influence of time. Therefore, the conclusion is that there is no powerful living being within the universe who can overcome the influence of time. Many poets have written verses lamenting the influence of time. Many devastations have taken place over the universes due to the influence of time, and no one could check them by any means. Even in our daily life, so many things come and go in which we have no hand, but we have to suffer or tolerate them without remedial measure. That is the result of time.

TEXT 21

पितृभ्रातृसुहृत्पुत्रा हतास्ते विगतं वयम् ।
आत्मा च जरया ग्रस्तः परगेह्युपाससे ॥२१॥

*pitṛ-bhrāṭṛ-suhṛt-putrā
hatās te vigataṃ vayam
ātmā ca jarayā grasthaḥ
para-geham upāsase*

pitṛ—father; *bhrāṭṛ*—brother; *suhṛt*—well-wishers; *putrāḥ*—sons; *hatāḥ*—all dead; *te*—yours; *vigatam*—expended; *vayam*—age; *ātmā*—

the body; *ca*—also; *jarayā*—by invalidity; *grastah*—overcome; *para-geham*—another's home; *upāsase*—you do live.

TRANSLATION

Your father, brother, well-wishers and sons are all dead and passed away. You yourself have expended the major portion of your life, your body is now overtaken by invalidity, and you are living in the home of another.

PURPORT

The King is reminded of his precarious condition, influenced by cruel time, and by his past experience he should have been more intelligent to see what was going to happen to his own life. His father, Vicitravīrya, died long ago, when he and his younger brothers were all little children, and it was due to the care and kindness of Bhīṣmadeva that they were properly brought up. Then again his brother Pāṇḍu died also. Then in the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra his one hundred sons and his grandsons all died, along with all other well-wishers like Bhīṣmadeva, Droṇācārya, Karṇa and many other kings and friends. So he had lost all men and money, and now he was living at the mercy of his nephew, whom he had put into troubles of various types. And despite all these reverses, he thought that he would prolong his life more and more. Vidura wanted to point out to Dhṛtarāṣṭra that everyone has to protect himself by his action and the grace of the Lord. One has to execute his duty faithfully, depending for the result on the supreme authority. No friend, no children, no father, no brother, no state and no one else can protect a person who is not protected by the Supreme Lord. One should, therefore, seek the protection of the Supreme Lord, for the human form of life is meant for seeking that protection. He was warned of his precarious conditions more and more by the following words.

TEXT 22

अन्धः पुरैव वधिरो मन्दब्रज्जाश्च साम्प्रतं ।
विशीर्णदन्तो मन्दाग्निः सरागः कफमुद्ग्रहन् ॥२२॥

*andhaḥ puraiva vadhiro
manda-prajñāś ca sāmpratam
viśirṇa-danto mandāgniḥ
sarāgaḥ kapham udvahan*

andhaḥ—blind; *purā*—from the beginning; *eva*—certainly; *vadhiraḥ*—hard of hearing; *manda-prajñāḥ*—memory shortened; *ca*—and; *sāmpratam*—recently; *viśirṇa*—loosened; *dantaḥ*—teeth; *manda-agniḥ*—liver action decreased; *sa-rāgaḥ*—with sound; *kapham*—coughing much mucus; *udvahan*—coming out.

TRANSLATION

You have been blind from your very birth, and recently you have become hard of hearing. Your memory is shortened, and your intelligence is disturbed. Your teeth are loose, your liver is defective, and you are coughing up mucus.

PURPORT

The symptoms of old age, which had already developed in Dhṛtarāṣṭra, were all one after another pointed out to him as warning that death was nearing very quickly, and still he was foolishly carefree about his future. The signs pointed out by Vidura in the body of Dhṛtarāṣṭra were signs of *apakṣaya*, or dwindling of the material body before the last stroke of death. The body is born, it develops, stays, creates other bodies, dwindles and then vanishes. But foolish men want to make a permanent settlement of the perishable body and think that their estate, children, society,

country, etc., will give them protection. With such foolish ideas, they become overtaken by such temporary engagements and forget altogether that they must give up this temporary body and take a new one, again to arrange for another term of society, friendship and love, again to perish ultimately. They forget their permanent identity and become foolishly active for impermanent occupations, forgetting altogether their prime duty. Saints and sages like Vidura approach such foolish men to awaken them to the real situation, but they take such *sādhus* and saints as parasites of society, and almost all of them refuse to hear the words of such *sādhus* and saints, although they welcome show-bottle *sādhus* and so-called saints who can satisfy their senses. Vidura was not a *sādhu* to satisfy the ill-gotten sentiment of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. He was correctly pointing out the real situation of life, and how one can save oneself from such catastrophes.

TEXT 23

अहो महीयसी जन्तोर्जीविताशा यथा मवान् ।
मीमापवर्जितं पिण्डमादत्ते गृहपालवत् ॥२३॥

*aho mahiyasī jantor
jivitāśā yathā bhavān
bhīmāpavarjitaṁ piṇḍam
ādatte gr̥ha-pālavat*

aho—alas; *mahiyasī*—powerful; *jantor*—of the living beings; *jivitāśā*—hope for life; *yathā*—as much as; *bhavān*—you are; *bhīma*—of Bhīmasena (a brother of Yudhiṣṭhira's); *apavarjitaṁ*—remnants; *piṇḍam*—foodstuff; *ādatte*—eaten by; *gr̥ha-pāla-vat*—like a household dog.

TRANSLATION

Alas, how powerful are the hopes of a living being to continue his life. Verily, you are living just like a household dog and are eating remnants of food given by Bhīma.

(continued in next issue)

Vaiṣṇava Calendar

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

Year 491, Caitanya Era Vaiṣṇava month of Dāmodara (October 27– November 25)			
Nov 3 (Dāmodara 8)	Nov 4 (Dāmodara 9)	Nov 5 (Dāmodara 10)	Nov 7 (Dāmodara 12)
Disappearance of Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura.	Snāna-dānādi-mahotsava at Śrī Rādhākūṇḍa.	Appearance of Śrīla Vīracandra Prabhu. From today, until November 15, place lamps.	Śrī Ramā-ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).
Nov 8 (Dāmodara 13)	Nov 9 (Dāmodara 14)	Nov 11 (Dāmodara 16)	Nov 12 (Dāmodara 17)
Ekādaśī break-fast after sunrise before 9:30 A.M. Disappearance of Śrī Narahari Sarakāra Ṭhākura.	Yama-dīpa-dāna.	Go-kriḍā and Go-pūjā.	Śrī Govardhana-pūjā. Annakūta-mahotsava. Bali-dāitya-rāja-pūjā. Appearance of Śrīla Rasikānanda Prabhu.
Nov 13 (Dāmodara 18)	Nov 18 (Dāmodara 23)		
Disappearance of Śrīla Vāsudeva Ghoṣa Ṭhākura.	Gopāṣṭami and Goṣṭhāṣṭami. Disappearance of Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Acārya, Śrīla Dhanañjaya Paṇḍita and Śrīla Gadādhara Ṭhākura.		



Every Town and Village

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

Fiji Welcomes A Dancing Kṛṣṇa



Main Deity: Kṛṣṇa dances upon the heads of the Kāliya serpent, whom history relates He banished to Fiji.

There's a striking new landmark in Lautoka, the second largest city in the Fiji Islands. It's the Kṛṣṇa-Kāliya temple, opened last August 28 by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. With three glittering, gold-plated spires atop huge white domes, the new building is the largest Kṛṣṇa temple in the South Pacific—and the first in Fiji. The temple has three spacious altars, in which thirteen exquisite Deities receive worship. ISKCON craftsmen at the Los Angeles center designed and molded the Deities and then shipped them fifty-five hundred miles to the Fiji temple. The main Deity is Kṛṣṇa, who dances upon the heads of a serpent named Kāliya.

The new temple will serve as a cultural and religious center for the three-hundred thousand Fijians of Indian descent, who make up more than half the nation's population and play a prominent role in its social, economic, and political life. Of course, the temple will also attract many non-Indians as well. In fact, the Fiji *Sun* reported that Fijians of all races participated in the opening ceremonies in huge numbers.

About the new temple His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda has written this: "Everyone in Fiji should take advantage of this human life by regularly visiting this tem-

ple and making his life perfect. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not at all difficult. Everyone can come and offer obeisances to Kṛṣṇa, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, and take Kṛṣṇa *prasāda* [vegetarian food offered to Kṛṣṇa]. The temple is open to all."

The temple's main sponsor is local businessman Deoji Punja (Vāsudeva dāsa), whom Śrīla Prabhupāda initiated as his disciple in 1976. While visiting Australia early in 1974, Mr. Punja had dropped in at the ISKCON's Sydney temple and had come away deeply impressed with the devotees—especially with their authentic Deity worship and their strict adherence to the Vedic way of life. Later in 1974 Mr. Punja had met Śrīla Prabhupāda in Fiji and promised to organize the construction of an ISKCON temple there. Mr. Punja had long felt an urgent need to restore the fast-fading Vedic culture among Fiji's Indian population. He concluded that this would be possible only with the help of Śrīla Prabhupāda—the world's foremost representative of India's Kṛṣṇa-conscious heritage. Recently Mr. Punja pointed out that in the past many unscrupulous so-called swamis and gurus "came from India and went so quickly—as soon as they had collected their money from our pockets they were gone, and no one was any better."

Mr. Punja donated a choice site in Lautoka, and the local Indians united to build the temple there. In May of 1976 Śrīla Prabhupāda himself came to



Traditional sacrifice: Yaśodānandana Swami (second from left) leads a sacrifice inaugurating the Fiji temple.

Lautoka to lay the foundation stone. Now completed, Fiji's first Kṛṣṇa temple is already functioning as the focal point of the revival of Vedic culture in Fiji. The local ISKCON devotees are popularizing

the reading of Kṛṣṇa-conscious literatures such as the *Bhagavad-gītā* in all of the island's major languages. The devotees are also building a school to train children of all races in the principles of God-conscious spiritual life, and they are organizing a Vedic farm community to counter the trend toward materialistic, over-urbanized civilization. In addition, the devotees are distributing thousands of strings of chanting beads—to make chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa a national pastime.

The Kṛṣṇa-Kāliya temple gets its name from a famous encounter between Lord Kṛṣṇa and the hundred-headed serpent Kāliya, in Vṛndāvana, India. Kāliya once entered the waters of the River Yamunā and began to kill the people and cows with his poisonous fumes. Kṛṣṇa defeated the serpent by dancing on his heads, and as history relates, He banished him to Ramanik—present-day Fiji. Interestingly, the natives of Fiji have long told of a huge multiheaded serpent hiding in a lake in the island's interior.

German Ph.D. Acclaims Bhagavad-gītā As It Is

Dr. Parameshwara Aithal of the University of Heidelberg's Institute of South Asian Studies recently sent us this assessment of the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.

"For a proper understanding of India's spiritual heritage, the *Bhagavad-gītā* has been well recognized as the authoritative and authentic source book. Although there exist innumerable editions of the *Bhagavad-gītā*—in both Indian and Western languages—few of them satisfy the needs of a modern, seriously inquiring reader, particularly of the West. Most are too superficial, failing to impart the profound knowledge hidden in the text. Having taught the *Bhagavad-gītā* over the last twenty years, I have always felt the necessity of a more satisfactory edition. I am glad to note that A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda's edition of the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* completely fills this need. I am sure that this valuable edition will prove to be of great help in imparting to any reader the transcendental knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and of India's past. I would recommend to it anyone who seeks truth and spiritual knowledge."

Śrīla Prabhupāda Speaks Out

On Darwinian Evolution

What follows is a conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and one of his disciples, Dr. Thoudam Damodar Singh. It took place during an early morning walk on Los Angeles's Venice Beach.

Dr. Singh: Your Divine Grace, are all the species of life created simultaneously?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. The species already exist, and the living entity simply transfers himself from one womb to the next, just as a man transfers himself from one apartment to another. Suppose a person comes from a lower-class apartment to a first-class apartment. The person is the same, but now, according to his capacity for payment—according to his *karma*—he is able to occupy a higher-class apartment. Evolution does not mean physical development, but development of consciousness. Do you follow?

Dr. Singh: I think so. Do you mean that evolution is actually the soul's transmigration from the lower species of life up to the higher species?

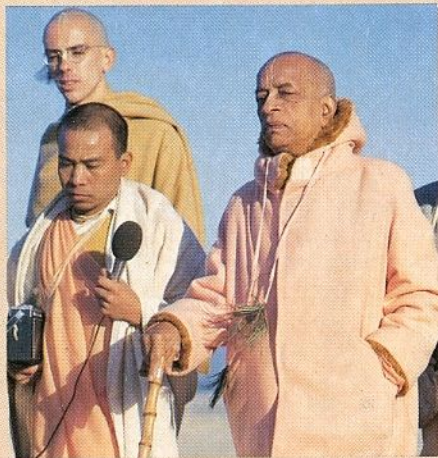
Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. As you get more money you can move to a better apartment. Similarly, as your consciousness develops, you move up to a higher species of life. The species already exist, however. It is not that the lower species become higher species—that is Darwin's nonsensical theory.

Dr. Singh: And each living entity is made to live in a particular type of body according to his desires?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. God knows the various desires of all the living entities in the material world. Therefore, to accommodate all the conditioned souls, He creates the 8,400,000 species of life from the very beginning.

Dr. Singh: Śrīla Prabhupāda, what is the difference between the transmigration of souls in animal bodies and the transmigration of human souls?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Animals transmigrate only in one direction—upward—but human beings can transmigrate to either a higher or a lower form of life. By nature's law, the lower species are coming up from animal forms to the higher, human forms. But once you come to the human form, if you don't cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness, you may return to



the body of a cat or dog.

Dr. Singh: The scientists have no information that evolution can operate in either direction.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Therefore, I say they are fools and rascals. They have no knowledge, yet they still claim to be scientists.

Dr. Singh: One of the prominent scientific arguments is that before Darwin's biophysical type of evolution could take place, there had to be something they call "prebiotic chemistry," or "chemical evolution."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But from what have the chemicals evolved? The term "chemical evolution" implies that chemicals have an origin. And we know from the Vedic science that the origin is spirit, or life. For example, a lemon tree produces citric acid. Also, our bodies produce many chemicals through our urine, blood, and bodily secretions. So there are many examples of how life produces chemicals, but there are no instances where chemicals have produced life.

Dr. Singh: A Russian biologist in 1920 developed the idea of chemical evolution. He demonstrated that before biochemical evolution, the earth's atmosphere was composed mostly of hydrogen, with very little oxygen. Then, in due course . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda: This is a side study. First of all, where did the hydrogen come from? The scientists simply study the middle of the process—they do not study the origin. You must know the beginning. There is an airplane [Śrīla Prabhupāda points to an airplane appearing on

the horizon]. Would you say the origin of that machine is the sea? A foolish person might say that all of a sudden a light appeared in the sea, and that's how the airplane was created. But is that a scientific explanation? The scientists' theories are just like that. They say, "This existed, and then all of a sudden, simply by chance, that occurred." This is not real science. Real science must explain the original cause.

Dr. Singh: What you have been saying completely contradicts Darwin's theory of evolution. Darwin and his supporters say that life started from matter and evolved from unicellular organisms to multicellular organisms. They believe higher species like animals and men didn't exist at the beginning of creation.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Darwin and his followers are rascals. If the higher species have evolved from the lower species, then why do the lower species still exist? At the present moment we see both the human species, with its advanced intelligence, and the foolish ass. Why do both these entities exist simultaneously? Why hasn't the ass form simply evolved into a higher species and thus become extinct? Darwin thought that human beings evolved from the monkeys. But why do we never see a monkey giving birth to a human being?

The Darwinists' theory that human life began in such-and-such an era is nonsense. The *Bhagavad-gītā* says that on leaving this present body you can directly transmigrate to any species of life, according to your karma. Sometimes I travel to America, sometimes to Australia, and sometimes to Africa. The countries already exist; I am simply traveling through them. It is not that because I have come to America I have created or become America. And there are many countries I have not yet seen. Does that mean they do not exist? Any scientist who supports Darwin is unintelligent. The *Bhagavad-gītā* clearly says that all the species of life exist simultaneously, and that you can go to any of them—that will depend on your consciousness at the time of death. If you become Kṛṣṇa conscious, you can even go up to the kingdom of God. Lord Kṛṣṇa explains all this very clearly in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Disciple Speaks Out

On Life After Death

To whom it may concern,

This letter is in reply to an article by Dr. Abraham Koor published recently in the Colombo *Sunday Times* (Sri Lanka). In this article (a reaction to a lecture I had given a week earlier in Colombo's Rāma-Kṛṣṇa Mission Hall) Dr. Koor argued against the existence of the soul, and against life after death. Surely Dr. Koor and other men of his stamp stand proudly on their platform of knowledge. But the innocent public, who are not so expert in sophistry and word jugglery, should know that these self-styled guardians of logic, reason, and the advancement of science are sailing on a sinking ship when they unceremoniously meddle in matters which lie beyond the purview of their limited senses—namely “life after death.”

The very first line of Dr. Koor's article, “I do not hold the view that my life is located in a particular spot in my body,” betrays the flimsiness of the platform upon which he stands. Throughout the article Dr. Koor gives his views, beliefs, and opinions about a subject completely beyond his power of observation, and he tries to pass these imaginative speculations off as scientific truths.

With all due respect to Dr. Koor, I beg to point out that the process of direct sense perception, the basis for his many statements about “life after death,” is utterly limited and imperfect. Take, for example, our eyes. They function only under certain conditions. If there is no light, we cannot even see our hands in front of our face. We cannot see the nearest object, the eyelid; nor can we see what is farthest away, the outskirts of the universe. Clearly, the eyes are imperfect. And the senses of touch, taste, smell, and hearing are likewise limited. The mind is also imperfect. If one is asked to remember what he was doing fifteen years earlier on a given date, he will surely fail the test—most people would be hard-pressed to recall exactly what they were doing even fifteen *minutes* previously. Therefore, since our mind and senses are imperfect, any knowledge based on mental speculation and sensual perception must also be imperfect.

Now the reader may ask, “If knowledge of the soul is beyond the limited reach of our mind and senses, then how can we acquire this knowledge?” The

answer is that we must look to the revealed Vedic scriptures, which are *not* the product of imperfect human minds, but which are spoken by either God Himself or by perfectly self-realized souls, who are transcendental to our limitations. For example, in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, which learned men all over the world accept as the essence of Vedic knowledge, Lord Kṛṣṇa declares that there is the soul, and the rebirth of the soul, and there is the supreme soul, God. Kṛṣṇa also describes the spiritual science by which we can perceive the soul and God. Just as we have a material science, which deals with material phenomena, so there is a spiritual science, which allows the practitioner to penetrate the wall of gross and subtle matter and directly experience and realize the soul, its rebirth, and its relationship with God, the supreme soul.

A true scientist would never prematurely declare, “I do not believe that I have a soul or spirit that survives my death.” Rather, if he really wished to perceive the soul, or self, he would embrace the process of self-realization Lord Kṛṣṇa outlines in the *Bhagavad-gītā*—a process accepted as standard by men recognized in the field of spiritual science. Such a sincere seeker of truth (the true scientist) would then submit himself to that process, and only after perfectly applying all its techniques to himself, under the guidance of an authorized professor of spiritual science (the spiritual master), would he dare speak on the matter in question. Theory, practice, and observation—that is the true process of science, and it applies equally to both material and spiritual science.

We must know the right technique for probing into the subject matter. If I want to recognize diamonds, rubies, sapphires, or pearls, I have to be trained in the techniques for testing such gems; otherwise, I may accept glass for diamonds and be cheated. For want of the spiritual techniques described in the ancient Vedic scriptures, we are foolishly accepting the body as the self and missing the real point—the soul. Therefore, on the basis of revealed scriptures and under the guidance of an authorized teacher, anyone who wants to speak on spiritual subject matters should learn

spiritual science and become qualified to distinguish matter from spirit.

All the Vedic scriptures teach that life is not generated from a combination of chemicals, as men like Dr. Koor would have us believe, but that life comes only from life. The living combination of man and woman in sexual intercourse generates a living child. A dead man and a dead woman have no power to generate a child. A living tree can bear fruit; a dead tree, however, has no such power. The difference between life and death is the soul, which the *Bhagavad-gītā* describes as superior energy (*parā-prakṛti*). It is this superior energy which manifests all material phenomena within our experience.

If life were a product of chemical combination only, as material scientists suggest, then why don't they inject the “life-giving chemical” into dead bodies and make men live forever? Or if we give the scientists the chemical ingredients of the material body, can they combine them and bring them to life? When confronted with these questions, material scientists can only answer, “We are trying, we will do it in the future.” But this is not science—this is bluffing.

So here is my challenge to Dr. Koor and his fellow scientists: Let them take a dead body and inject into it the appropriate chemical to bring it back to life. However, since they obviously find this task too difficult, perhaps they could just produce a simple form of life like a mosquito or a bedbug. Of course, it may well be that their so-called science is “not yet ready” to produce a finished product of life, so perhaps they could make a synthetic eggshell, inject yellow and white chemicals into it, incubate the whole business, and thereby produce a chicken. Still, this task may be a little too difficult for them. So, if they could just produce a drop of milk or a grain of rice by chemical combination, we could perhaps begin to take them a little seriously. But until they do, we must conclude that Dr. Koor and other men like him are simply ignorant bluffers, and that they are totally incompetent to speak on subjects like the nature of life, life after death, the soul, and God.

Respectfully,
Hamsadūta Swami



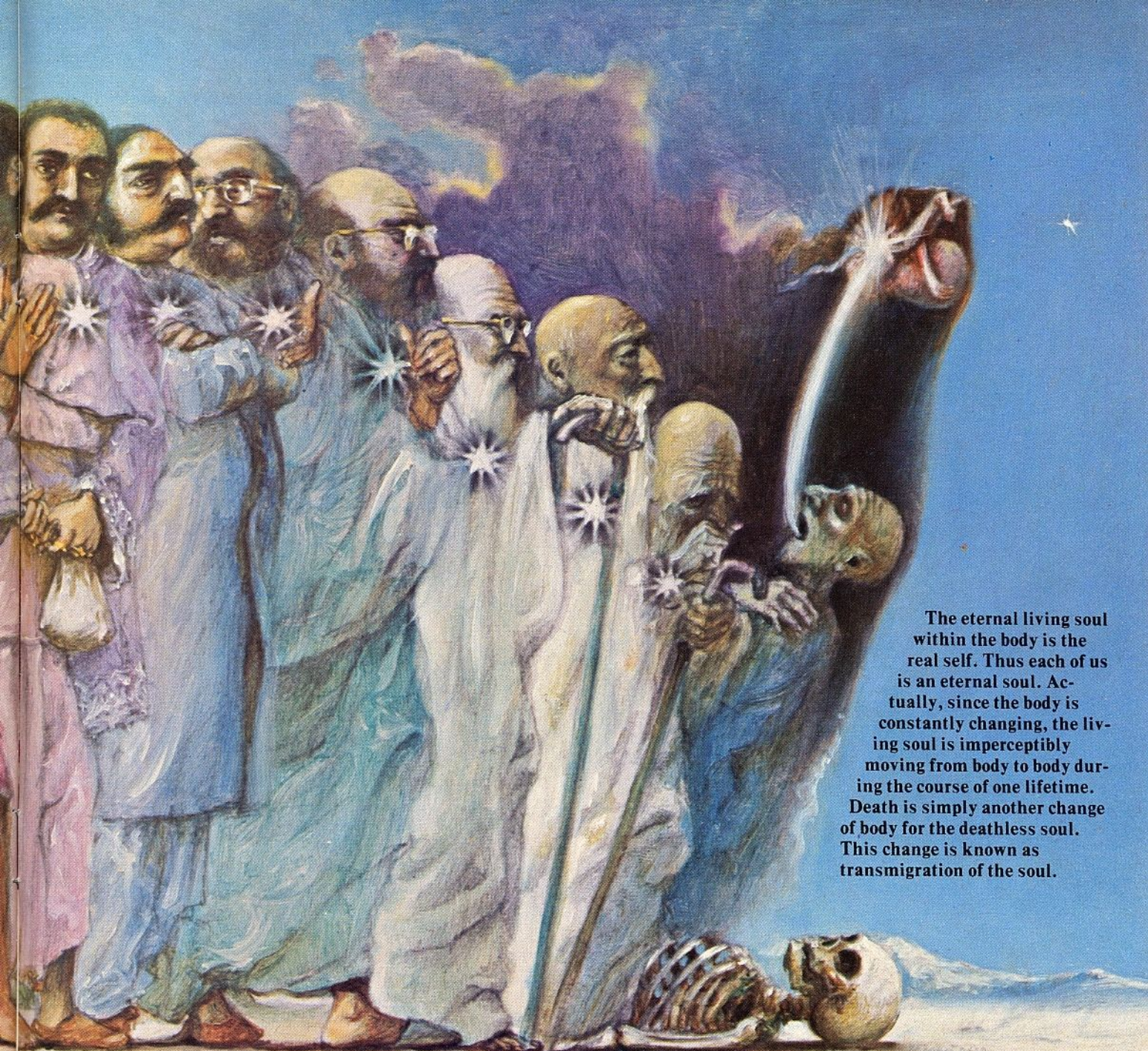
SIX LESSONS ON TRANSMIGRATION

by Mandaleśwara dāsa

“Transmigration,” “reincarnation,” “astral travel,” “life after death”—topics once hardly mentioned but now much talked about. Is there a soul? Can the soul live outside the body? What happens to the soul when the body dies? Many people have their theories, but ancient India’s Vedic literatures have the facts.

LESSON ONE: Each of Us Is a Living Soul Within a Material Body.

At every moment our bodies are changing. The billions of cells that are the building blocks of our bodies are continuously dying and being replaced by new cells. In this way the body that each of us had a few years ago no longer exists—our present body has replaced it. In one lifetime we actually have many different bodies—baby, child, youth, adult, and so on—but we remain the same person. We do not change our identity as the body changes, because we are not the body.



The eternal living soul within the body is the real self. Thus each of us is an eternal soul. Actually, since the body is constantly changing, the living soul is imperceptibly moving from body to body during the course of one lifetime. Death is simply another change of body for the deathless soul. This change is known as transmigration of the soul.

Illustration: Baradrāja dāsa

But almost every one of us thinks that he is his body. Why is that? The Vedic literatures explain that there is a spark of life within the body that animates it. This spark of life—the spiritual soul—is the real self, the real person. When encased within, say, a white male body born in America, the self thinks, “I am a white American man.” When in a black female body born in Europe, the self thinks, “I am a black European woman.” And so on. This is illusion or (in Sanskrit) *māyā*—“that which is not.” This illusion is very strong—right from birth everyone identifies himself with his body—so we require education. We have to learn

that science which comprehends not only the material body but also the soul within the body. Although such a science is not taught in any Western university, it is taught in the Vedic literatures, especially in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* explains the first concept of Vedic science in this way: “As the embodied living soul continuously passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, so the same soul passes into another body at death” (Bg. 2.13). Our bodies grow and change because the living soul is present within the heart—it’s that spark of life, the soul, that makes the body alive. But when the soul

leaves the body, then all physical activities cease, and the eternally living soul transmigrates to another body. This experience is known as death. In other words, even during the course of one lifetime the eternally living soul is imperceptibly moving from body to body, and “death” is simply another move—a “transmigration” to a totally new body—for the deathless, changeless soul. The *Bhagavad-gītā* explains transmigration with an analogy: “As a person puts on new garments, giving up the old ones, similarly, the soul accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones” (Bg. 2.22).

LESSON TWO: The Living Souls Are Evolving Through the Species.

The Vedic literatures describe 8,400,000 species of life: aquatics, trees and plants, insects and reptiles, birds, four-legged beasts, and human beings. The spiritual soul transmigrates from one species to the next, evolving up through the 8,400,000 forms of life until he attains a human body. The human form of life has a special significance, for only in the human form is the soul's consciousness developed enough to understand that the body is just his encagement, and that there's a way to free himself from that encagement. Now let's examine

how the spirit soul's consciousness evolves and how he manifests his consciousness in various bodies.

Consciousness, an often used but rarely understood term, is actually the symptom of the spiritual soul. Or, in other words, consciousness is spiritual energy radiating from the soul—just as sunshine is material energy (heat and light) emanating from the sun. Just as the sun's heat and light pervades the entire solar system, so the consciousness radiating from the spiritual soul within the heart pervades the entire material body. But until the soul evolves up to the human form, his consciousness is so covered that he has very little chance for

self-realization—realization that the self is not the material body but the living soul within.

Here we have the actual explanation of evolution. God creates the 8,400,000 species simultaneously, and as each spiritual soul transmigrates from lower to higher species, his consciousness progressively develops. Finally he attains a human body, with keen human intelligence. So evolution does exist, but it's an evolution of *consciousness*—not of species, as the Darwinists theorize.

However, just as there is *evolution* of consciousness, there is also *devolution* of consciousness. If, having evolved up to the human species, a spiritual soul

The living soul transmigrates from one species to the next, evolving up through the millions of different life forms until he attains a human body. This is real evolution. It is an evolution of the soul—not of species, as the Darwinists theorize.



misuses his human faculties, he must descend again into the lower species. Although the soul in the human form of life still identifies with his body, he can also glimpse his spiritual identity. This spiritual consciousness is like a small flame covered by a cloud of smoke. If we fan that flame by cultivating spiritual knowledge, we can rekindle the fire of pure consciousness—Kṛṣṇa consciousness. To put it simply, the human form of life is a crossroads for the spiritual soul: he is free either to descend again into the darkness of lower species, or to end his torturous sojourn through repeated births and deaths by rekindling the full fire of his Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

LESSON THREE: Actions We Perform in the Human Body Determine Our Future Bodies.

This vast universe is filled with untold billions of eternally living spiritual souls, or sparks of life, and all of them are transmigrating from one body to the next. From the tiny one-celled amoeba to the great blue whale, from the smallest *bacillus* to the giant sequoia—all living organisms within our vast universe consist of two basic components: the material body and the spiritual soul. The material body is a lifeless yet complex arrangement of physical elements, and the spiritual soul is actually a spark of life—a spark of the supreme life, God. Though only one ten-thousandth the tip of a hair in size, the soul animates one body after another. In some species he remains for only a few seconds, in others for as long as several thousand years. When a particular body is no longer fit for habitation, the soul leaves it and enters a seed, egg, or womb to begin developing his next body.

Does the soul's transmigration from body to body take place in a random way, or does some higher authority supervise? In one lifetime the spiritual soul may enjoy as the lusty rogue, and in the next lifetime he may be kicked as the neighborhood dog. What determines a particular soul's next body?

One answer given in the *Bhagavad-gītā* is that each soul receives punishment or reward for the sinful or pious acts he per-

forms during his human lifetime. This is known as the law of karma. Every act a human being performs is either in accord with the universal laws that God gives in the revealed scriptures, or it is contrary to those laws. God's scriptural laws govern only those souls in the human form, because unlike the dull creatures in the lower species, the human being has sufficient intelligence to freely obey—or reject—the Lord's scriptural instructions. However, along with that freedom comes accountability. Thus a sinful soul—one who breaks God's laws—may be born as a dog in his next life, a pious soul may take his next birth as an aristocrat, and a self-realized soul may break free from the bonds of karma altogether and enter into the deathless spiritual world.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* further explains that a living soul receives a particular kind of body according to his particular desires. For example, if my heart is filled with animalistic desires, then although I now possess a human body, my next body will be an animal body.

So we may think of the body either as the soul's vehicle for expressing his material desires, or as the end result of good or bad acts the soul performed in his last human birth. Both concepts are correct. But in either case, we see that there must be a witness and controller who fulfills the particular desires of each spiritual soul, and who rewards or punishes each soul as he deserves. That witness, controller, and judge is the Supersoul.



Illustration: Baradrāja dāsa and Śāstramāyī-devī dāśī

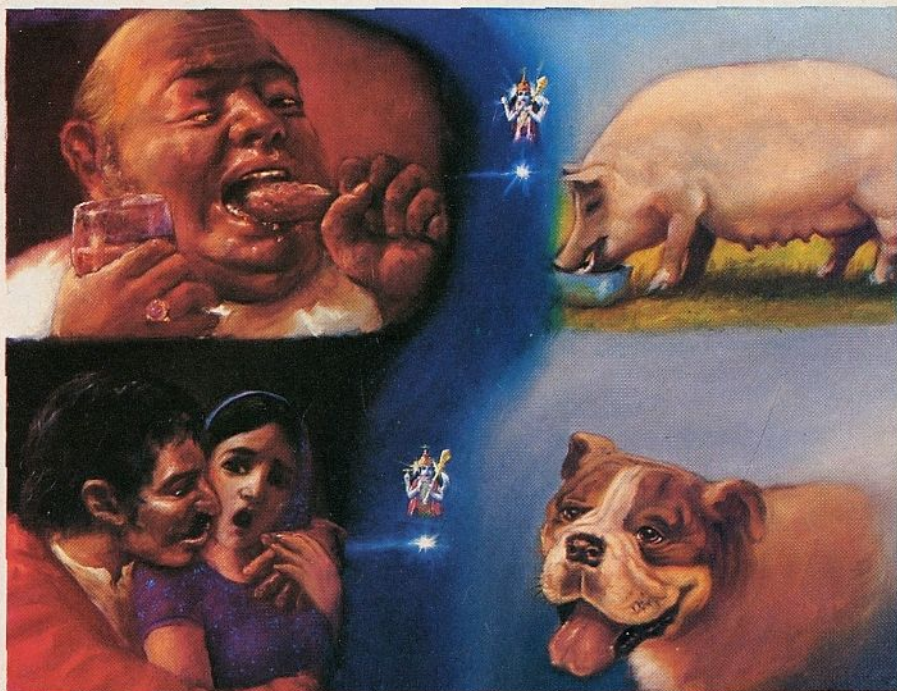


Illustration: Baradrāja dāsa

Each soul receives punishment or reward for the sinful or pious acts he performs during his lifetime as a human being. So in his next life a sinful soul may be born as a hog or other abominable species.



Illustration: Jashwanth-dewi-dasi

Within each body there are two souls—the individual soul and the Supersoul. The Supersoul is the personal expansion of God. There are an unlimited number of individual atomic souls, but there is only one Supersoul.

LESSON FOUR: In the Human Body the Soul Can Discover the Supersoul.

Who is the Supersoul? The *Bhagavad-gītā* says, “Besides the atomic spiritual soul, in this body there is another enjoyer—a transcendental enjoyer—who is the Lord. He is the supreme proprietor, overseer, and permitter, and He is known as the Supersoul” (Bg. 13.23). In other words, within each body there are two souls—the atomic soul (the individual spark of life) and the Supersoul (the supreme source of all life). The atomic soul and the Supersoul reside together within the heart of each and every body throughout the universe, and at the time of death the Supersoul accompanies the atomic soul to his next body. But the Supersoul is not an ordinary living entity. Only by the Supersoul’s arrangement does each atomic soul receive his proper body; only by the Supersoul’s sanction can the atomic soul fulfill his desires for happiness; and only by the Supersoul’s grace can the atomic soul think, feel, and act.

The Supersoul is the personal expansion

of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Whereas the atomic souls are expansions of Kṛṣṇa’s spiritual energy, the Supersoul is an expansion of Kṛṣṇa Himself. The atomic soul dwells within the material body, and he suffers and enjoys the various pains and pleasures arising from his particular body. But the Supersoul, although fully aware of these pains and pleasures, is aloof from them. And because He is always aloof from the changing body, the Supersoul always stays in the same situation—transcendence par excellence—whether He accompanies the atomic soul within his insect body, his dog body, or his human body.

Now, when we hear that the Supersoul is present along with the atomic soul in each body, we should not assume that there must be many millions of Supersouls. There are an unlimited number of atomic souls, but there is only one Supersoul. The *Bhagavad-gītā* explains: “Although the Supersoul appears to be divided, He is never divided. He is situated as one” (Bg. 13.17). A good analogy is the sun with its reflections: there is one sun in the sky, but if we



Illustration: Barurajā-dāsa

This is an analogy from the Upaniṣads: one bird (the soul) is struggling hard to enjoy the fruits of the tree (the body), but he becomes satisfied only when he finally accepts the guidance of the friendly witnessing bird (the Supersoul, Kṛṣṇa).

place thousands of waterpots on the ground, the sun will at once appear within each waterpot. Similarly, the Supersoul is a single transcendental entity, but He can expand Himself into the hearts of all living creatures.

As the constant companion of each individual atomic soul, the Supersoul fulfills the desires and awards the particular material bodies of every living entity. And He accompanies them on their course of birth, old age, disease, and death—life after life. Lord Kṛṣṇa explains in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: “One who sees the Supersoul accompanying the individual soul in all bodies, and who understands that neither the soul nor the Supersoul is every destroyed—he actually sees” (Bg. 13.28).

Now, this may seem surprising: the Supersoul—God—is always with the individual atomic souls, yet they are suffering. Why doesn’t the Lord in the heart divert the atomic souls from their suicidal course of repeated birth and death? If the Supersoul is actually our well-wisher, why doesn’t He end our suffering? The *Upaniṣads* answer with the analogy of the two birds in the tree.

LESSON FIVE: The Soul and the Supersoul Are like Two Birds in the Tree of the Body.

The *Upaniṣads* compare the body to a tree and the soul and Supersoul to two friendly birds sitting within the tree. The first bird (representing the atomic soul) is eating the tree's fruits, which are of two kinds—happiness and distress. The second bird (representing the Supersoul) is self-satisfied, so He doesn't bother with the fruits. He simply watches His friend, the first bird. Although these two birds have similar qualities and could enjoy the most pleasurable spiritual friendship, the first bird is captivated by the fruits of the tree, so he ignores the second bird. Meanwhile, the second bird is simply witnessing the activities of His friend. Though they are friends, still one is the master and the other is the servant. Because of forgetfulness of this relationship, the first bird (the atomic soul) must change from one tree to another, or from one body to another. The atomic soul is struggling very hard on the tree of the material body, but as soon as he agrees to accept the guidance of the Supersoul (represented by the friendly witnessing bird), he becomes fulfilled and free from suffering.

Unfortunately, very few souls within this material universe desire to serve the Supersoul, break free from the bonds of karma, and return home, back to the spiritual world. Although this material world is always miserable and dangerous, most people's hearts are filled with so many desires to enjoy this world that they doom themselves to stay here. Everyone has this freedom, and the Supersoul within the heart, perceiving each spiritual soul's desires, helps him try to enjoy the material world as he wishes, birth after birth.

LESSON SIX: The Evolution of the Soul Culminates in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness.

As we can clearly see, the Supersoul is our dearest friend. And since the Supersoul is but an expansion of Lord Kṛṣṇa, that means Kṛṣṇa is our dearest friend. However, although Kṛṣṇa always wants us to return to Him—to get free from the suffering we've been going through in one material body after another—He will not interfere with our minute free will. Without that freedom, we can't develop any real love for Kṛṣṇa, and without developing love for Kṛṣṇa, we can't break our attachment to things of this world and go back to the spiritual world.

It is only by surrendering to Lord Kṛṣṇa and accepting His instructions

that the spiritual soul can evolve to the highest state of existence—pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness, pure love of God. The *Bhagavad-gītā* explains that the soul who has attained love for Kṛṣṇa does not again take birth in this material world after leaving his present body. Such a pure soul attains a spiritual body in the spiritual world.

Covered by illusion, we have been desiring and obtaining body after body in this miserable material world. Now, if we awaken our spiritual desires, our love for Kṛṣṇa, He will award us an eternal spiritual body in the spiritual world. The spiritual world has none of the disappointment, despair, fear, and pain that

plague this world. That's because in the spiritual world every soul is engaged in his eternal, natural activity—rendering loving devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Unlike the so-called loving relationships of this material world, which are mere shadow relationships, our loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world is our original, eternal relationship, and it is the only real satisfaction and solace for the soul. Having now attained a human body, we should all take up the process of developing our love for Kṛṣṇa as our most important task—and reach the pinnacle of evolution within this lifetime.

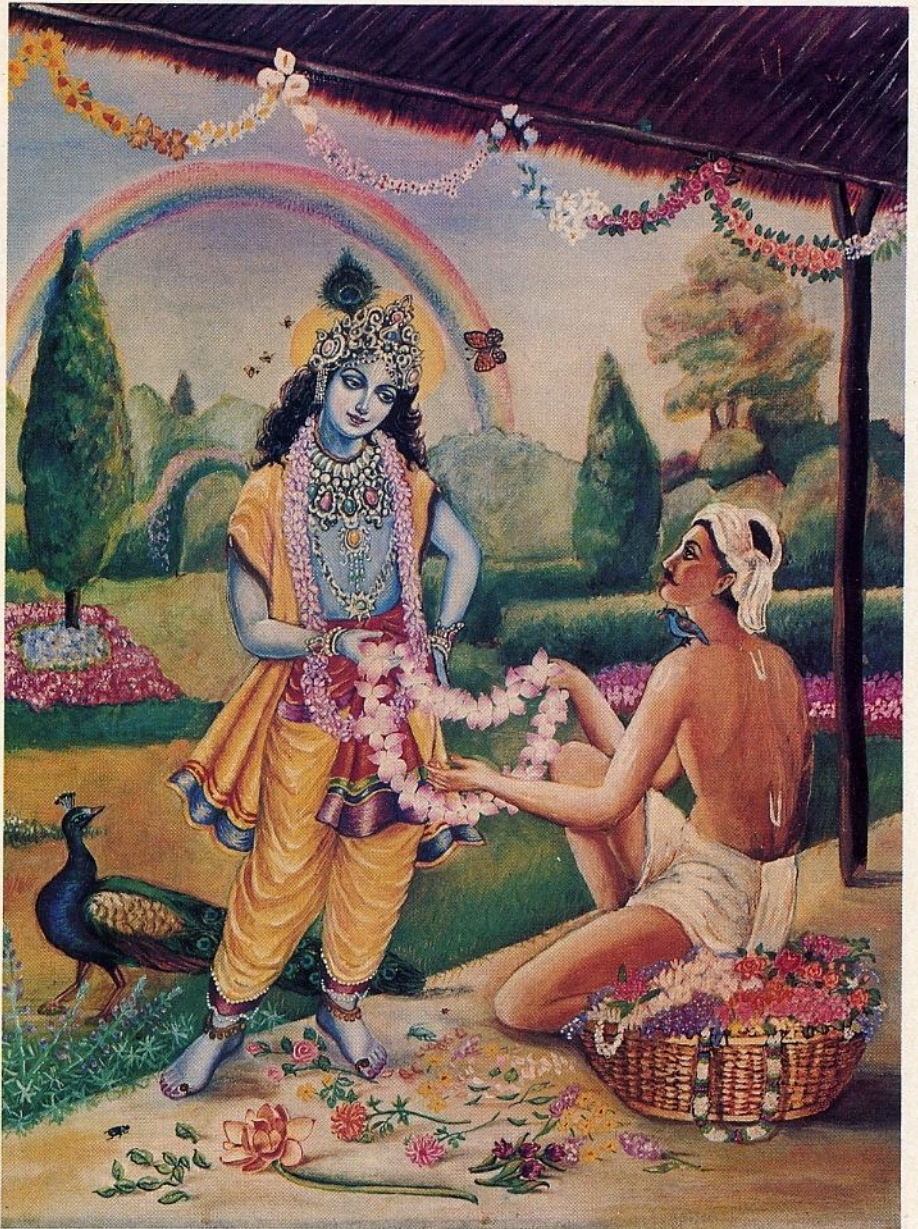


Illustration: Devanuj-devi dasi

By surrendering to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the soul evolves to the pinnacle of consciousness—pure love of God. After leaving his present body he never again takes birth in this material world. Instead, he attains a spiritual body in the spiritual world, where he renders loving devotional service in his eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

Pure Devotion Versus Mystic Magic

King Ambarīṣa And the Great Yogi

From the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, translation and commentary by
His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda
(Adapted by Navayauvana dāsa)

King Ambarīṣa was famous as a pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. "But why," Durvāsā Muni wondered, "should people respect him more than a great mystic yogi like me? I will teach him a lesson. . . ."

King Ambarīṣa was a greatly celebrated *rājarsi* (saintly monarch) who lived millions of years ago, during the Age of Truth. He presided over a royal household with many wives, children, friends, and relatives. He also possessed many elephants, chariots, horses, jewels, ornaments, garments, and an inexhaustible treasury. Yet amazingly, he was not the least bit attached to all these opulences—because he had completely given up the desire to use temporary material things for flickering sense enjoyment. So rather than abandon his opulences, he accepted everything for serving Lord Kṛṣṇa in devotion.

For generations devotees have celebrated how King Ambarīṣa absorbed all the activities of his body and mind in Kṛṣṇa's service. He always engaged his mind in meditating upon the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, his words in describing the glories of Kṛṣṇa, his hands in cleaning the temple of Kṛṣṇa, and his ears in hearing the words spoken by Kṛṣṇa or about Kṛṣṇa. He engaged his eyes in seeing the Deity of Kṛṣṇa, the temple of Kṛṣṇa, and places connected with Kṛṣṇa, like Vṛndāvana. He engaged his sense of touch in touching the bodies of the devotees of Kṛṣṇa, his sense of smell in smelling the flowers offered to Kṛṣṇa, and his tongue in tasting the spiritual food offered to Kṛṣṇa. He engaged his legs in walking to holy places and temples of Kṛṣṇa, his head in bowing down to Kṛṣṇa, and all his desires in serving

Kṛṣṇa, twenty-four hours a day.

Yet despite his full absorption in transcendence, King Ambarīṣa did not neglect his worldly royal duties. Rather, he acted as an ideal God-conscious head of state and never issued a single order for his own selfish enjoyment. He saw Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as the ultimate enjoyer of all his endeavors—political, social, economic, cultural, and religious—and he always offered the results of his activities to Kṛṣṇa. A perfect devotee, the king acted with full knowledge of Lord Kṛṣṇa's words—and full faith in them. And since King Ambarīṣa's subjects followed his example of hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa, everyone was naturally peaceful and prosperous. To satisfy the Lord even further, the king organized huge Vedic sacrifices and offered Him the best of everything. As a result, climatic conditions were ideal. Rain was plentiful, and even desert areas flourished.

Just to satisfy the Lord, King Ambarīṣa and one of his queens once observed a year-long vow of austerity. After observing that vow for the prescribed year, King Ambarīṣa fasted for three days and bathed in the River Yamunā. Then, with great attention and care, he worshiped the Deity of Kṛṣṇa with fine incense, flowers, flaming lamps, and other items. Finally, he gave gifts in charity to satisfy all the guests who arrived at his palace. To the *brāhmaṇas* he gave innumerable cows with gold-plated horns and silver-plated hooves. Afterward the king sumptuously fed all the *brāhmaṇas*, and when they were fully satisfied, he prepared himself to end his year of austerities by breaking his fast.

Just then the great and powerful mystic Durvāsā Muni unexpectedly

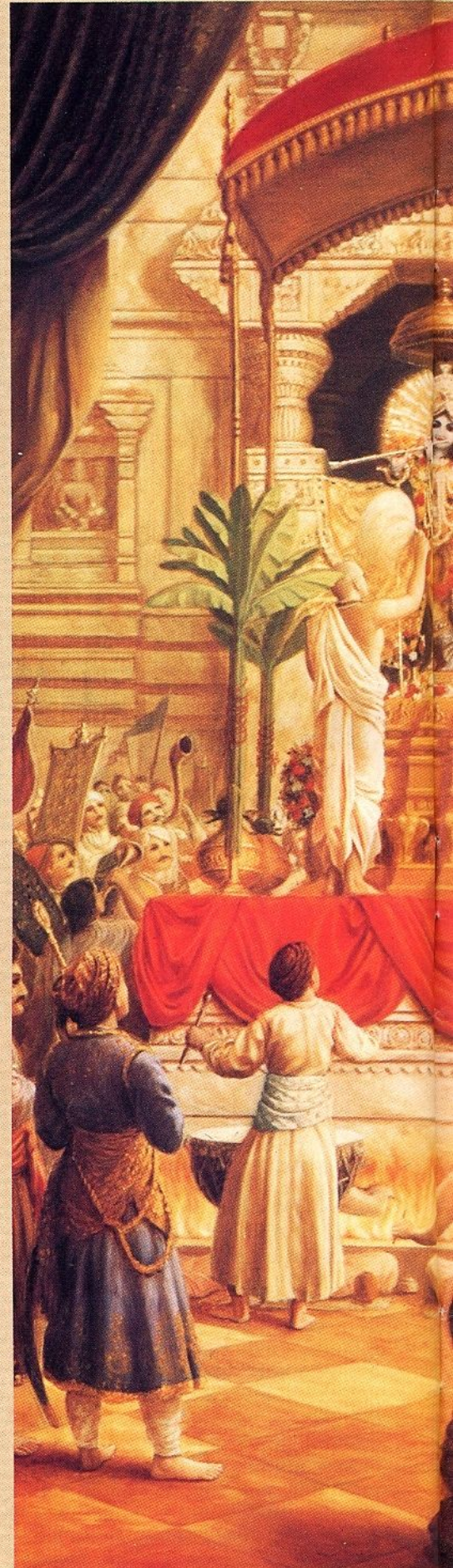


Illustration: Muralidhara dāsa

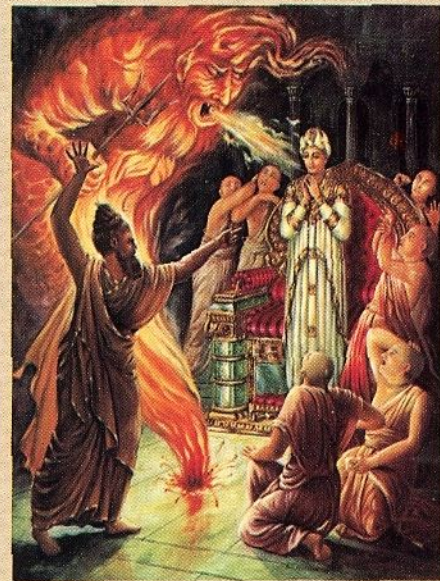


Illustration: Rāma dāsa Abhirāma dāsa

appeared on the scene. After standing up to receive him, King Ambariṣa offered him a nice seat and humbly requested him to dine. Durvāsā gladly accepted, but he first wanted to bathe in the River Yamunā. There he waded into the water and became absorbed in trance.

Meanwhile, only a few minutes remained before the auspicious time for King Ambariṣa to break his fast would elapse. The king became anxious. On the one hand, he knew that if he didn't break his fast during the prescribed period, the vow's effects would be lost. But on the other hand, he also knew he would commit a great offense if he ate before Durvāsā returned. To resolve this dilemma, King Ambariṣa quickly consulted his learned *brāhmaṇa* advisors and reached a decision: he would break his fast by drinking a little water only—since drinking water may be accepted as both eating and not eating.

After sipping some water, the king meditated on the Supreme Personality of Godhead within his heart and awaited Durvāsā Muni's return. When Durvāsā returned from the river he could understand by his mystic powers that King Ambariṣa had drunk water without his permission. Hungry and trembling in anger, Durvāsā Muni chastised the king, who stood before him with folded hands.

“Alas, just see the behavior of this

Left: with great attention and care, the king worshiped the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities. Above: his face flushed and twisted, the yogi conjured up a demon to kill the king.



Illustration: Subhakaradevi dasi

As the blazing flames of a forest fire pursue a snake, the disc of the Supreme Personality of Godhead began following the yogi.

cruel man—considering himself God, he has transgressed the laws of religion! King Ambariṣa, you have invited me to eat as a guest, but instead of feeding me, you yourself have eaten first! Because of your misbehavior, I shall create something to punish you!”

Suddenly, with his face flushed and fiercely twisted, Durvāsā uprooted a tuft of hair from his head and created a demon resembling the blazing fire of devastation. That frightful creature carried a trident in his hand and shook the surface of the earth with his footsteps, and now he was coming before the king to kill him! But King Ambariṣa remained supremely placid and did not move even slightly. He was totally unafraid of death, for he was simply absorbed in thinking of Kṛṣṇa in the core of his heart. The king didn’t even consider asking the Lord for protection. But Lord Kṛṣṇa well knows how to protect his devotees. Immediately He sent His personal weapon, the Sudarśana disc, to rescue the king. And as a forest fire quickly burns an angry snake to ashes, so the blazing Sudarśana disc did away with the demon.

Upon seeing that his attempt to kill King Ambariṣa had failed—and that the

Lord’s Sudarśana disc was rapidly moving toward him—Durvāsā Muni became very frightened and fled. By his mystic powers he fled everywhere—to the sky, to caves, to the ocean, even to the heavenly planets—but wherever he went he felt the unbearably hot Sudarśana disc following close behind him. Finally, by an inconceivable yogic perfection he crossed beyond the covering of the material universe and entered one of the planets in the self-effulgent spiritual sky. Still feeling the Sudarśana disc’s scorching heat, Durvāsā Muni fell at the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, Nārāyaṇa (Nārāyaṇa means “Kṛṣṇa, the shelter of all living beings”).

As he spoke Durvāsā once again trembled—this time in great fear: “O infallible, unlimited Lord! O protector of the universe, I am a great offender. Please give me protection.”

However, Lord Nārāyaṇa told him, “O *brāhmaṇa*, I cannot act independently, for I am completely under the control of my pure devotees. Since they give up their homes, wives, children, relatives, riches, and even their very lives simply to serve Me, how can I ever give them up? The pure devotee is al-

ways within the core of My heart, and I am always in the core of My pure devotee’s heart. Indeed, My devotees do not know anything but Me, and I do not know anyone but them.

“O *brāhmaṇa*,” the Lord continued, “now let Me advise you what to do to escape danger. Please listen closely. When employed against My devotee, one’s so-called prowess inevitably harms him who employs it—so by offending King Ambariṣa you have acted against your own best interest. Therefore, you should immediately go to the king and beg his forgiveness. Do not delay even a second! If you can pacify him, then there will be peace for you.”

Still feeling very much harassed by the Sudarśana disc, Durvāsā Muni immediately left Lord Nārāyaṇa and retraced his flight back to earth. Upon reaching King Ambariṣa’s palace, he quickly entered the main hall, fell down, and clasped the king’s lotus feet. When Durvāsā touched his feet, King Ambariṣa felt ashamed and aggrieved, and out of deep compassion for the sage he began praying to the great weapon of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

“O Sudarśana disc, I offer my obeisances unto you. You are fire, you are the most powerful sun, and you are the moon, the master of all luminaries. You are religion, you are truth, you are the maintainer of the entire universe, and you are the supreme transcendental prowess in the hands of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Your very name—Sudarśana—indicates that you serve as the Lord’s auspicious vision. You have created everything by your activities, and therefore you are all-pervasive. O protector of the universe, the Lord has engaged you as His all-powerful weapon in killing the envious enemies. Yet, for the benefit of our entire dynasty, I pray that you kindly favor this poor *brāhmaṇa*. If the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is one without a second, who is the reservoir of all transcendental qualities, and who is the life and soul of all living entities—if that Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa be pleased with us, we wish that you free the suffering Durvāsā Muni from your searing heat.”

The king’s humble prayer pacified the Sudarśana disc, and he stopped burning Durvāsā Muni. Deeply grateful, Durvāsā began to praise King Ambariṣa: “My dear king, today I have experienced the greatness of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s devotees—for although I greatly offended you, out of mercy you have overlooked my offense and prayed for my good fortune. O king, I am very much obliged to you.”

While awaiting the return of Durvāsā Muni, the king had not taken any food,



Very much harassed by the Sudarśana disc, the yogī retraced his flight back to earth. Upon reaching King Ambariṣa's palace, he quickly entered the main hall, fell down, and clasped the king's lotus feet.

but had maintained himself simply by drinking water for one whole year. Now the king *still* did not eat. Instead, he fell at Durvāsā's feet and fed him all varieties of delicious food. After eating, Durvāsā Muni was so satisfied that with great affection he requested the king to eat also. "Please take your meal," said Durvāsā. "I am very pleased with you, my dear king. At first I thought of you as an ordinary human being and accepted your hospitality, but now I see that you are the most exalted devotee of the Lord. Therefore, simply by seeing you, touching your feet, and talking with you,

I have been pleased and have become obliged to you. All the people of this world will continuously chant the glories of your spotless character."

In this way Durvāsā redeemed himself. True, his mystic perfection was like a valuable jewel, but he had misjudged the position of Kṛṣṇa's devotee and had acted enviously. Durvāsā Muni was like a snake—and a snake with a valuable jewel on its head is just as dangerous as one without such a jewel. But in the end Durvāsā came to realize the true position of the Lord's devotees and praised both them and Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. Thus he

became fortunate.

Like Durvāsā Muni, many of the present-day opponents and critics of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement have high qualifications (learning, beauty, wealth, influence). But they are just like serpents with jewels on their heads—because they misjudge the position of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees and act enviously. Yet if, like Durvāsā, these people at last use their high qualifications in Kṛṣṇa's service, they too will become glorious. If they refuse, no power on earth will be able to save them from ultimate destruction.

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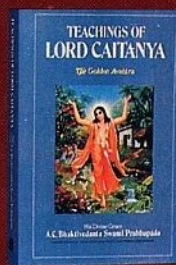
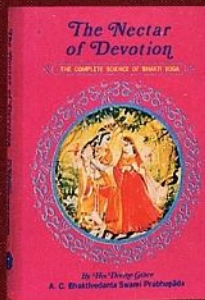
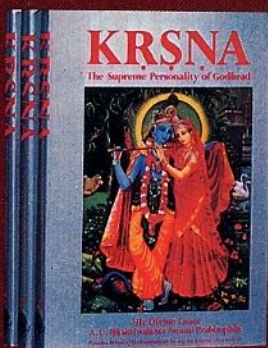
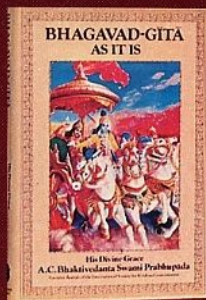
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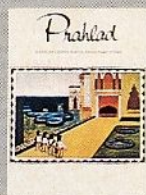
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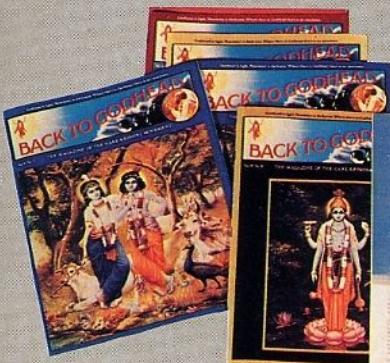
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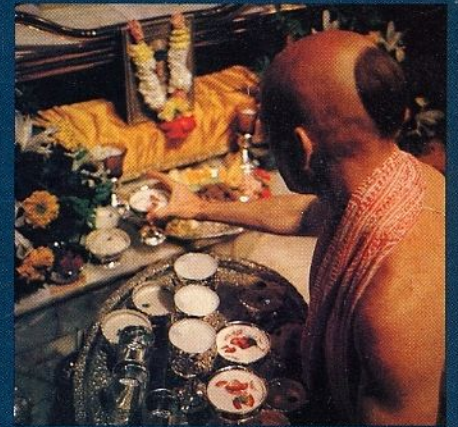
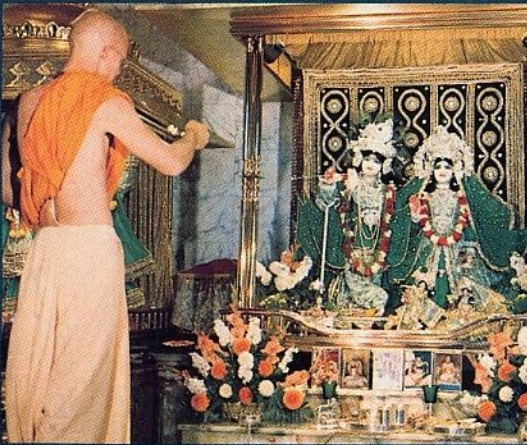
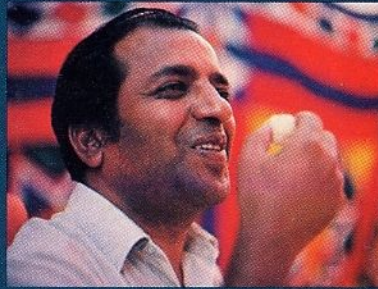
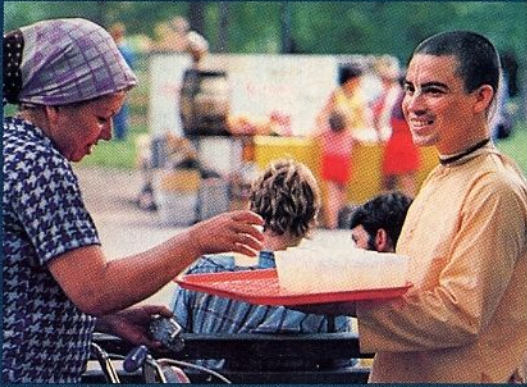
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