

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

BACK TO GODHEAD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT No. 35





By His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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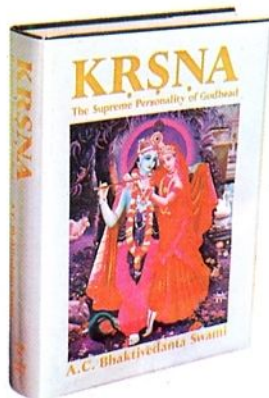
THE NECTAR OF DEVOTION

This book is especially intended for those who are engaged in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. The text is flooded with nectarean stories, philosophy and poetic verses about Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotees—all taken directly from the Vedic literatures. It is a summary study of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and it teaches us how to stimulate our original love for Kṛṣṇa so that we can enjoy our blissful life.

KṚṢṆA, The Supreme Personality of Godhead

The most comprehensive and authoritative Vedic scriptural literature is the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* ("The Beautiful Story of the Personality of Godhead"), the mature contribution of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the compiler of the *Vedas*. Of the twelve cantos of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the Tenth Canto is considered the most confidential, since it describes all the transcendental pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Kṛṣṇa* is a summary study of the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

The activities of Kṛṣṇa, which appear to be like those of an ordinary human being, can only be properly understood with the help of a bona fide spiritual master fully realized in the knowledge of their transcendental nature. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda is such a spiritual master.



—2—

ŚRĪMAD-BHAGAVATAM

The *Vedas* are compared to a desire-tree because they contain all things knowable by mankind about both mundane necessities and spiritual realization. *Śrīmad-Bhagavatam* is the mature ripened fruit of this tree. It narrates the transcendental pastimes of the transcendental Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

—3—

TEACHINGS OF LORD CAITANYA

Lord Caitanya, the most munificent incarnation of Godhead, appeared 500 years ago to demonstrate by example how to live the teachings of *Bhagavad-gītā* in the present age. *Teachings of Lord Caitanya* recounts the words and deeds of this great saint. Lord Caitanya was famous as a scholar and spoke authoritatively on the highest aspects of the science of love of Godhead. He is the divine origin of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement and distributed love of God simply by singing the holy names.

—4—

ŚRĪ ĪSOPANISAD

From the most authoritative sources, the famed 108 Upaniṣads of India, *Śrī Īsopaniṣad* supplies revealed evidence that the Personality of Godhead is the creator, maintainer and destroyer of everything that exists. The author's transparent commentaries reveal that the Supreme Lord is "unembodied" and "formless," since His form is not a material form which is subject to birth, disease, old age and death.

THE BHAGAVAD-GITĀ AS IT IS

Now, for the first time, this renowned scripture is being brought to the West as it is—as taught by Kṛṣṇa Himself and understood by His disciple Arjuna—in a unique translation and commentary. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the supreme authority on the *Gītā*, and He initially delivered the *Gītā* so that all persons could reach the perfection of life and be liberated from all suffering. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda is passing on Kṛṣṇa's mercy in its full potency, as it is, so that everyone can attain to his rightful position, full of bliss and knowledge.

From the Introduction: "The perplexities of life appear like a forest fire which takes place without being set by anyone. The man in material perplexities is he who does not understand the problems of life. Out of many many human beings, the *Bhagavad-gītā* is directed to the one who seeks to understand his position."

EASY JOURNEY TO OTHER PLANETS

This book is an authentic discussion on the techniques and practice of the *yoga* system by which one can leave this body for travel to anti-material planets where life is blissful, eternal and full of knowledge.

KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS: THE TOPMOST YOGA SYSTEM

This book presents the most authorized process of *yoga* practice in God realization, without any deviation from the original Vedic scriptural literature. In this present volume, the author forcefully exposes the speculative systems which depart from love of God as the ultimate goal of *yoga*.

THE FIRST STEP IN GOD REALIZATION

This book marks the continuation of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda's mighty task of translating all twelve cantos of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. *The First Step in God Realization* comprises the First Chapter of the Second Canto, in which the sage Śukadeva advises his disciple Mahārāja Parīkṣit to meditate on the universal form of God, in which the entire physical universes are seen as parts of the gigantic body of the Supreme Lord.

THE LORD IN THE HEART

The continuation of Sukadeva's teachings: He advises his disciple to go beyond meditation on the universal form, to meditation on the transcendental form of Paramātmā, the localized representation of the Lord who resides in the hearts of all living entities.

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement

BACK TO GODHEAD is the only magazine in the Western world to present the authorized, transcendental science of God realization known only to the saints of India's unbroken disciplic succession.

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WHAT IS THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS?

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness was formed in 1966 by Prabhupāda A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, who came from India on the order of his Spiritual Master to preach love of God to the people of the West. Prabhupāda is in a line of disciple succession going back directly 500 years to the time when Lord Caitanya appeared in India, and from there back still further—5000 years—to the time when Kṛṣṇa first spoke the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Kṛṣṇa Consciousness is experienced as a process of self purification. Its means and end are an open secret, and there is no financial charge for learning Kṛṣṇa Consciousness or receiving initiation into the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa. The gist of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is that one takes whatever capacity or talent he or she has and dovetails it with the interests of the Supreme Enjoyer, the Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The writer writes articles for Kṛṣṇa, and we publish periodicals in this way. The businessman does business in order to establish many temples across the country. The householders raise children in the science of God, and husband and wife live in mutual co-operation for spiritual progress. These activities are done under the sanction of the expert Spiritual Master, and in line with the Scriptures. Devotional service in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness means regular chanting in the temple, hearing talks about the Pastimes of Kṛṣṇa from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and taking foodstuffs prepared for and offered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

By books, literature and records, the Society is dedicated to awakening the worldwide public to the normal, ecstatic state of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, so that all may regain their eternal position of favorably serving the will of Kṛṣṇa. Saṅkīrtana—congregational chanting—is carried to the people: in public parks, schools, on t.v., in the theater, on the streets. Kṛṣṇa Consciousness is not an idler's philosophy. Rather by chanting and by engagement in the service of Kṛṣṇa, anyone who takes part will experience the state of "samādhi," ecstatic absorption in God-consciousness, 24 hours a day!

As the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness is non-sectarian, any man, Hindu or Christian, will become better in his faith by chanting the Holy Name of God and by hearing the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Without knowledge and realization and loving service to the One Supreme God, there can be no religion. Let everyone rejoice in the Saṅkīrtana Movement, and we may see the fulfillment of the prediction made by Lord Caitanya 500 years ago: that the chanting of the Holy Names of God, Hare Kṛṣṇa, would be carried to every town and village of the world. Only in this way can real peace prevail. It is sublime and easy.

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Śrīla Vyāsātīrtha appeared in the Fifteenth Century in India. His place in the disciplic succession of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is as follows: He was the guru of Lakṣmīpati, who was the guru of Mādhavendra Purī, who was the guru of Īśvara Purī, who was the guru of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who distributed love of Kṛṣṇa to all peoples everywhere through the process of chanting the holy name, Hare Kṛṣṇa. Vyāsātīrtha was a great writer, the author of many books, and has been called “the best of the knowers of the purpose of the Vedic scriptures.”

THE HIGHEST LOVE

by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

If one protects the tender creeper of devotional service nicely, then gradually it will produce the fruit of unalloyed love for God. Unalloyed love for God means love that is not tinged by desire for material benefit, for mere philosophical understanding, nor for fruitive results. Unalloyed love is to know, "God is great, I am His part and parcel, and therefore He is my supreme lovable object." This consciousness is the highest perfection of human life and the ultimate aim of all methods of self-realization. If one reaches this point—God is my only beloved, Kṛṣṇa is the only lovable object—then one's life is perfect. And when one tastes that transcendental relationship with Kṛṣṇa, then one feels real happiness. The devotional creeper will then be so strongly protected that just by catching it, one will be able to reach the supreme destination. If one climbs steadily up a tree, one eventually comes to the very top. Similarly, if one can achieve love of Godhead by catching that devotional creeper, there is no doubt that one will reach the transcendental abode of Kṛṣṇa and will associate with Him personally, just as we are associating here, face to face.

God is not fictional or imaginary. He is as real as we are. (Actually, we are under illusion; we are living as if this body were our factual self, although this body is not at all reality, but only a temporary manifestation.) We dare to presume that there is no God or that He has no form. This mental speculation is due to a poor fund of knowledge. Lord Kṛṣṇa and His abode exist, and one can go there, reach Him and associate with Him. That is a fact. Spiritual life means to be in association with the Supreme Lord and to exist in bliss and knowledge eternally. Such eternal association means to play with Kṛṣṇa, to dance with and love Kṛṣṇa. Or Kṛṣṇa can become your child—whatever you like.

HOW TO LOVE KṚṢṆA

There are five primary relationships with Kṛṣṇa: as a passive devotee, as a servant, as a friend, as a parent, and as a lover. The cows in Kṛṣṇa's abode are also liber-

ated souls. They are called *surabhi* cows. There are many popular pictures showing how Kṛṣṇa loves the cows, how He embraces and kisses them. That passive relationship with Kṛṣṇa is called *śānta*. Their perfect happiness is achieved when Kṛṣṇa comes and simply touches them.

Other devotees are inclined to actually give service. They think, "Kṛṣṇa wants to sit down. I will arrange a place for Him. Kṛṣṇa wants to eat. I will get Him some nice food." And they actually make these arrangements. Other devotees play with Kṛṣṇa as friends on equal terms. They do not know that Kṛṣṇa is God; to them, Kṛṣṇa is their lovable friend, and they cannot forget Him for a moment. All day and all night, they think of Kṛṣṇa. At night, when they are sleeping they think, "Oh, in the morning I shall go and play with Kṛṣṇa." And in the morning they go to Kṛṣṇa's house and stand by while Kṛṣṇa is decorated by His mother before going out to play with His friends in the fields. There is no other activity in Kṛṣṇaloka (Kṛṣṇa's abode). There is no industry, no rushing to the office or any such nonsense. There is sufficient milk and butter, and everyone eats plentifully. Kṛṣṇa is very fond of His friends, and sometimes He enjoys stealing butter for them. One can actually live this way, and that is the perfection of existence. We should hanker for that perfectional stage of life. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the process to attain it.

But as long as one has even a slight attachment for this material world, one has to remain here. Kṛṣṇa is very strict. He does not allow anyone to enter into His association who has any tinge of the material conception of life. *Bhakti* must be free from material contamination. Do not think, "I am a very learned scholar. I shall find out what is the Absolute Truth by mental speculation." That is nonsense; one can go on and on speculating and will never find the source of all sources. It is said in *Brahma-saṁhitā*, "One can go on speculating about the Absolute Truth for millions and millions of years, and still it will not be revealed." One can rot in this material world as he is and can go on speculating, but that is not the right process. Here is the process—*bhakti-yoga*.

Lord Caitanya says that to render devo-

tional service to Kṛṣṇa is the highest perfectional stage of life, and compared to this, other things for which people are hankering in this material world are like bubbles in the ocean. Generally, people are after rewards, and therefore they become religious. They say, "I am a Hindu," "I am a Christian," "I am Jew," "I am Mohamadan," "I am this, I am that, and therefore I cannot change my religion. I cannot accept Kṛṣṇa." This is called religiosity, *dharma*. With such a materialistic, sectarian idea of religion, they will rot in this material world, stuck to rituals and faith. They are under the impression that if they follow their religious principles, they will get material prosperity. Of course, if one sticks to any kind of religious faith, he will get facilities for material life. material life.

Why do people want this material prosperity? For sense gratification. They are thinking, "I shall have a very nice wife. I shall have very good children. I shall have a very good post. I shall become president. I shall become prime minister." This is sense gratification. And when one is frustrated and has seen that to be rich or to attain the presidency cannot give him happiness, after squeezing out all the taste of sex life, when he is completely frustrated, then perhaps he takes to LSD and tries to become one with the void. But this nonsense cannot give happiness. Here is happiness: one must approach Kṛṣṇa. Otherwise, it will end in LSD-confusion and roaming in impersonal void concepts. People are frustrated. They must be frustrated if they do not have genuine spiritual life because a person is spiritual by nature.

How can anyone be happy without Kṛṣṇa? Suppose one is thrown into the ocean. How can he be happy there? That is not for us. One may be a very good swimmer, but how long will he be able to swim? He eventually becomes tired and drowns. Similarly, we are spiritual by nature. How can we be happy in this material world? It is not possible. But men are trying to remain here, making so many temporary adjustments for survival. This patchwork is not happiness. If one really wants happiness, here is the process: one must attain love of Godhead. Unless one can love Kṛṣṇa, unless one finishes with love for cats, dogs, country, nation and society and instead concentrates his love on Kṛṣṇa, there is no question of happiness. Rūpa Gosvāmī has given a very nice example in this regard: There are many

drugs which saturate one with ideas or hallucinations. But Rūpa Gosvāmī says that unless one tastes that final drug of love of Godhead, *Kṛṣṇa-prema*, he will have to be captivated by meditation, impersonal monism, and so many other distractions.

KṚṢṆA'S DESIRE

Caitanya Mahāprabhu describes that to attain unalloyed love of Kṛṣṇa, one has to execute devotional service, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One has to engage oneself exclusively in serving Kṛṣṇa. The highest perfectional stage of unalloyed devotion is to be free from all material desires, all mental speculation and all fruitive activities. The basic principle of unalloyed devotion is that one cannot maintain any desire other than to become fully Kṛṣṇa conscious. Even if one knows that all other forms of God are also Kṛṣṇa, one should not worship any other form, but should concentrate on the Kṛṣṇa form. Kṛṣṇa has many forms, but one only has to worship Kṛṣṇa in His form with the flute as in the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deity. Simply concentrate on that form, and all mental speculation and fruitive activities will fall away. One has to cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness favorably, and that means to execute service by which Kṛṣṇa becomes satisfied. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not attained by manufacturing one's own way. I may think that I am doing something in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but who has sanctioned it? For instance, in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Arjuna hesitated to fight for certain moral reasons, but he was viewing the situation from the platform of fruitive activities, on which one has to enjoy or suffer the results. He was considering that if he killed his family members, he would then be subjected to many reactions. This conclusion, however, was not sanctioned by Kṛṣṇa. The law of action and reaction in the material world is called *karma*, but devotional service transcends *karma*.

Unalloyed love must be free of all tinges of fruitive activities (*karma*) and all tinges of mental speculation and material desire. That unalloyed devotional service should be favorably fixed on Kṛṣṇa. Favorably means in accordance with what He desires. Kṛṣṇa desired that the Battle of Kurukṣetra take place; it was all arranged by Him. Arjuna was told, "You are thinking in your own way, but even if you do not fight, rest assured that because it has been arranged by Me, none of these warriors

who are assembled here are going back to their homes. They will be killed here. It has already been arranged." God's desire is such that one cannot change it. Kṛṣṇa has two qualities: He can protect, and He can also kill. If He wants to kill someone, there is no power in the world that can protect him, and if He protects someone, there is no power in the world that can kill him. Kṛṣṇa's desire is supreme. Therefore, we have to dovetail our desires with Kṛṣṇa's. Whatever Kṛṣṇa desires, no one can make null and void because He is the Supreme Lord. Therefore, our duty is to dovetail our acts with Kṛṣṇa's desire, not to manufacture an action and then declare "I am doing this action in Kṛṣṇa consciousness." We have to be very careful to ascertain whether Kṛṣṇa actually wants it. Such authorized knowledge is instructed by the representative of Kṛṣṇa. In our prayers of praise to the spiritual we are singing daily, "If the spiritual master is satisfied, then God will be satisfied." And if one dissatisfies his spiritual master, then there is no way for him to please God.

Therefore, as far as possible, one has to execute the order of one's spiritual master. That will enable one to progress. That is the essence of the favorable execution of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In my old age, I have come to America, and I am trying to teach Kṛṣṇa consciousness because my spiritual master gave me an order that I must do it. It is my duty. I do not know whether I shall be a success or failure. It doesn't matter; my duty is completed if I can present before you whatever I have heard from my spiritual master. This is called the favorable execution of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Those who are actually serious should take the order of Kṛṣṇa through the representative of Kṛṣṇa as their entire life and soul. One who sticks to this principle is sure to progress. Caitanya Mahāprabhu spoke in that way, and my spiritual master used to say, "The spiritual master is the transparent *via media*." For example, I can see the letters of this book very nicely through these transparent eyeglasses, without which I cannot see because my eyes are defective. Similarly, our senses are all defective. We cannot see God with these eyes, we cannot hear Hare Kṛṣṇa with these ears, we cannot do anything without the *via media* of the spiritual master. Just as a defective eye cannot see without the *via media* of spectacles, so one cannot approach the Supreme Lord without the transparent *via media* of the spiritual mas-

ter. Transparent means that the *via media* must be free of contamination. If it is transparent, one can see through it.

In unalloyed love of Godhead we have to engage our senses—*sarvendriya*, all the senses. This means that sex is also to be engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The conception of God as a father or mother does not allow the engagement of one's sex in the service of the Lord because there is no sex relationship with the father and mother. But in the conception of God as a lover, there is sex engagement also. Therefore, Caitanya Mahāprabhu gave the most perfect information of our engagement with the Supreme Lord. In other religious conceptions of life, God is at the utmost taken as the father or mother. Many worshipers in India take goddess Kali to be the representation of God. Of course, that is not sanctioned, but the belief is there, and also in the Christian religion the conception of God is as a father. But Caitanya Mahāprabhu informs us that one can even have sex engagement with the Lord. This information is Caitanya Mahāprabhu's unique contribution. In this material world, sex engagement is considered to be the highest engagement, the greatest pleasure, although it exists only in a perverted form. No one, however, has conceived that there can be sex engagement in the spiritual world. There is not a single instance of such theology anywhere in the entire world. This information is given for the first time by Caitanya Mahāprabhu: one can have the Supreme Personality of Godhead as one's husband, as one's lover. This is possible in the worship of Radha and Kṛṣṇa, but no one, especially the impersonalists, can understand Radha-Kṛṣṇa. The impersonalists have no idea; they cannot even conceive that God has form. But Caitanya Mahāprabhu says that not only does God have form, but He has sex life also. This is the highest contribution of Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIPS

One can serve the Supreme Lord in various relationships, but in the material world those relationships exist only as perverted reflections. What is our engagement in relationship to this material world? What are our ideas of society, friendship and love? They are all based on the material conception of life. In our society, someone is engaged as a father or mother to a son, and others are engaged as husband and

wife, lover and beloved. There are other *rasas* (relationships) also, such as to be engaged with another as an enemy. There are twelve different relationships, out of which five are predominant. The other seven are indirect relationships, such as, for example, to be someone's enemy. There is usually a relationship between enemies, even between a murderer and the one he murders. As far as our relationship with Kṛṣṇa is concerned, however, even if one establishes a relationship as His enemy, then his life is successful. Therefore, when one engages his senses with Kṛṣṇa, a relationship can be established in one of twelve different varieties, of which five varieties are direct and seven are indirect.

When Kṛṣṇa appeared in the arena of Kāmsa, there were many big wrestlers prepared to kill Him. In fact, He was invited there to be killed. His enemy, Kāmsa thought, "Soon the boys will come. We have tried for sixteen years to kill them, but that boy Kṛṣṇa could not be killed. But now I have invited Him as a guest, and when He arrives He will fight with these wrestlers, and they will kill Him." The demoniac or atheistic people are always thinking of Kṛṣṇa or God in terms of killing Him. Therefore they present their theories that God is dead. They think that if God becomes dead, then they will be free to act however they please. But as far as their actual activities are concerned, God may be dead or alive, but God's agent, the material energy, is so strong that no one can do any wrong. As soon as anyone does something wrong, there is immediate punishment. It does not require the presence of God. God may be dead or alive, but the material energy is sufficient to punish anyone who violates the material laws, even to the slightest degree. God has set these conditions, but foolish people do not understand.

Lord Caitanya, however, speaks of favorably engaging all the senses in the service of Kṛṣṇa in pure devotional life. One should favorably engage one's senses and should do whatever Kṛṣṇa wants. Yet even if one engages one's senses against the will of Kṛṣṇa but still thinks of Kṛṣṇa, that is also advantageous. The demon Pūtanā, for example, thought of killing Kṛṣṇa. Just as the occupation of godly persons is to serve God, so the demons and atheists are always prepared to kill God. Pūtanā thought, "I shall kill Kṛṣṇa. He is only a child." This is another mistake of the demoniac. They think Kṛṣṇa or God to be an ordinary child

or man. So in this way Pūtanā was thinking: "Let me smear my breast with poison, and when the child goes to suck my milk, He will die." As we study this, we see that she approached Kṛṣṇa as His enemy, and yet He accepted her as a friend because He is so merciful. He did not take the demoniac portion of her mentality, but He accepted her. Every living entity is conditioned, but Kṛṣṇa is not. A doctor or psychiatrist treats madmen, but he does not become mad. Sometimes a patient may become angry with him or call him ill names, but the doctor is sober and simply treats him. Similarly, if someone treats Kṛṣṇa as his enemy, Kṛṣṇa does not become his enemy.

Pūtanā came to poison Kṛṣṇa, but He took it otherwise. He thought, "I have sucked her breast milk. Therefore she has become My mother." Kṛṣṇa treated her as His mother, and therefore she became liberated to the same position as Kṛṣṇa's real mother, Yaśodā. The conclusion is that the highest perfection is to establish a favorable relationship with Kṛṣṇa, but even if one engages himself unfavorably, Kṛṣṇa is so merciful that He at least gives one salvation. All the enemies killed by Kṛṣṇa were immediately liberated.

Two classes of men may merge into the impersonal *brahmajyoti*: he who is intentionally aspiring to merge into the impersonal *brahmajyoti* may enter, and those who are enemies of Kṛṣṇa and are killed by Him may also do so. Therefore, the devotee concludes, why should I accept a condition which is offered even to God's enemies?

Caitanya Mahāprabhu recommends pure devotional service. There should be no desire to fulfill one's own material desires, there should be no attempt to understand Kṛṣṇa by experimental philosophy, and there should be no fruitive activities to derive material benefits from Kṛṣṇa. The only desire should be to serve Him favorably, as He desires. If Kṛṣṇa wants something, then we should do it. Suppose I were to ask a disciple, "My dear student, please give me a glass of water." It is then his duty to give me a glass of water. If he thinks, "Prabhupada wants a glass of water, but why not give him something better? Why not a glass of hot milk?" that is not service. In his consideration, hot milk is very palatable and is better than water, yet because I have asked for water, he has to give me water, not milk. That is favorable service. One has to understand what Kṛṣṇa

wants. When there is that intimate relationship, then one can serve Kṛṣṇa most favorably. And as long as there is not that intimate relationship, one must take information of what Kṛṣṇa wants through the transparent media of the spiritual master.

A Vaiṣṇava never thinks that he has a direct relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Lord Caitanya says, "I am the servant of the servant of the servant of the servant—a hundred times the servant of the servant—of Kṛṣṇa." We have to agree to become the servant of the servant of the servant. This is the process of disciplic succession, and if one wants real transcendental love of God, then he has to adopt this process. Because people do not accept this process, they therefore do not develop real love of God. They speak of God, but actually they do not love God; because there is no cultivation of pure devotional service, they love dog.

SPIRITUAL SENSES

We may say, "love of God," but unless we adopt this principle, then we will have to love dog, not God. That is the mistake. Caitanya Mahāprabhu says that if one really wants love of God, then one has to follow the process of pure devotional service. It is not that Caitanya Mahāprabhu is speaking out of His own mental concoction, but His statements are confirmed in Vedic scriptures such as *Nārada-pañcarātra* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. These two books, and *Bhagavad-gītā*, are very authentic scriptures meant for devotees. Caitanya Mahāprabhu quotes from a verse in the *Nārada-pañcarātra*: *hṛṣīkena hṛṣīkeśa-sevanam bhaktir ucyate*. This is the definition of pure devotional service. *Hṛṣīkena hṛṣīkeśa-sevanam*. *Hṛṣīkena* means by one's senses. We have to engage our senses; it is not that we engage only our minds. If someone says, "I am always thinking of Kṛṣṇa," that is not pure devotional service. Meditation is thinking, but no one thinks of Kṛṣṇa; they think of void or of something impersonal. If someone is thinking of Kṛṣṇa or Nārāyaṇa or Viṣṇu, as is prescribed in the Vedic scriptures, that is real *yoga*; *yoga* meditation means to focus one's mind upon the Supersoul. The Supersoul is the representation of Kṛṣṇa in the form of four-handed Nārāyaṇa. Even Patañjali, an authority on the *yoga* system, prescribes meditation on Viṣṇu. But just as people are manufacturing bogus religious processes, so the so-called *yogīs* of today have manufactured their own way of thinking of something void.

But the *Nārada-pañcarātra* says, *hr̥ṣīkena hr̥ṣīkeśa-sevanam*: one must engage not only one's mind but one's senses. Engage the senses in the service of the master of the senses. These three Sanskrit words are very significant. *Hr̥ṣīkeśa* means the Lord of the senses. So *bhakti-yoga* means to serve with the senses the Lord of the senses. The Lord of the senses is Kṛṣṇa. We should always remember that we have our senses because we wanted to enjoy this material world, and therefore the Lord has given us a particular set of senses for our enjoyment. The hog has a particular type of body and senses because he wanted to enjoy eating stool. Similarly, a man has a particular type of body and senses because he wanted to enjoy something else. We have a particular set of conditioned senses with which to enjoy this material world, and this is what we have to purify. Our senses are original, but now they are covered by material desires. We have to cure ourselves and become free from such desires. When one's senses are no longer inclined toward material sense gratification, that is called pure devotion.

From this verse of the *Nārada-pañcarātra*, we can understand that the spirit soul has original senses. However small a body it may have entered, the spirit soul is not impersonal; it has senses. Perhaps one may find a bug on one's book. It is so small, smaller than a pinpoint, but still it moves; it has all the senses. The small bacteria also move, and they have their senses. Originally, all living entities have senses. It is not that the senses have developed under certain material conditions. The atheistic theory is that under material conditions we have developed senses, but in the spiritual condition there are no senses, and we are impersonal. By logic and reason, however, that cannot be so. A minute particle of spiritual force, even if it is smaller in size than an atom, has its senses. These senses, being covered by material elements, manifest themselves in a perverted way. We have to purify the senses, and when the senses are purified, we can engage them for the pleasure of the master of senses. Kṛṣṇa is the master and proprietor of the senses. Therefore, because we are part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, our senses are borrowed from Him; they are on rental. The best thing is to use the senses for His sense satisfaction, and not for our own. This is the process of pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

From the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Lord Caitanya gives an example of pure devo-

tion: it is said in the *Bhāgavatam* that Kṛṣṇa is situated in everyone's heart. Therefore, just as rivers flow and their natural tendency is to reach the sea or the ocean, so as soon as one hears the glories of the Lord, his soul is at once attracted toward the Supreme Lord. This is the beginning of pure devotional service. As soon as there is the chanting vibration, Hare Kṛṣṇa, immediately Kṛṣṇa's paraphernalia, Kṛṣṇa's name, Kṛṣṇa's fame, Kṛṣṇa's abode, Kṛṣṇa's associates—everything—all of a sudden become manifested within because He is present. This is the beginning of one's Kṛṣṇa consciousness. To remember by reference to a context means that as soon as one hears a code word, one at once remembers all the information behind that code. Similarly, when our minds are attracted to Kṛṣṇa and everything about Kṛṣṇa simply by hearing a little glorification of His qualities, that is the beginning of pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Then there is no more *gati*, or movement of the mind.

It was just that way with the *gopīs*: as soon as they heard the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute, they gave up everything. Some of them were lying down, some were working in their family affairs, some were taking care of their children, but as soon as they heard Kṛṣṇa's flute, they forgot everything and rushed to Him. Their husbands, their brothers and their fathers said, "Why are you going and leaving your duty?" But they did not care—they simply left. There is no impediment and no stumbling block in that merge of the mind with Kṛṣṇa. This is the beginning of pure devotion.

Puruṣottama means Kṛṣṇa. The word *puruṣa* means enjoyer. The conditioned living entities are false enjoyers, imitation enjoyers. Here in this material world, all living entities are acting as *puruṣas*. The more exact meaning of *puruṣa* is male. The male is considered to be the enjoyer, and the female is considered to be the enjoyed. In the material world, whether one has a male or a female body, everyone has the propensity to enjoy, and therefore they are called *puruṣa*. But actually the only *puruṣa* is the Supreme Lord. We living entities are His energy, and He is the supreme enjoyer. We are not *puruṣa*. Energies are employed for enjoyment, and we are energies, instruments of the Supreme Person. Therefore *Puruṣottama* is the supreme transcendental person, Kṛṣṇa. When our pure devotion for the Supreme Personality of Godhead is employed and there are no impediments or stumbling blocks, that is the symptom

of pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

PURITY OF KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS

There is no ambition or motive in pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Every other transcendental function or mode of worship is backed by a motive: someone wants salvation, someone wants material prosperity, someone wants to go to a higher planet, someone wants to go to Kṛṣṇaloka. These ambitions should not be there. A pure devotee has no such ambitions. A pure devotee does not even desire to go to the supreme abode of Kṛṣṇa. Of course, he goes, but he has no desire. He simply wants to engage himself fully in Kṛṣṇa's service.

There are different kinds of salvation. There is *sālokya* liberation, to live on the same planet as the Supreme Lord. The residents of the Vaikuṅṭha planets live on the same planet as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Sārṣṭi* liberation means to have almost the same opulence as Nārāyaṇa. The liberated individual soul can appear just like Nārāyaṇa, with four hands, the four emblems, almost the same bodily features, the same opulence, the same ornaments, the same buildings, everything. *Sārūpya* means to have the same form or features. *Sāmīpya* means never to be far away but always to be associated with the Supreme Lord. For example, just as we are sitting together, so one can associate with the Lord. This is called *sāmīpya-mukti*, the liberation of being nearer. Pure devotees, however, do not accept these various forms of liberation. They only want to be engaged in Kṛṣṇa's service. They are not concerned with any kind of liberation. Those who are actually Kṛṣṇa conscious achieve the association of the Supreme Lord, but they do not desire it; their only ambition is to be engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. The highest perfection of devotional service or Kṛṣṇa consciousness is exhibited when a devotee refuses to accept any benediction or profit from the Supreme Lord. Prahlāda Mahārāja was offered whatever he liked, he had only to ask for it, but he said, "My Lord, I am Your eternal servant. It is my duty to serve You, so how can I accept any benefit from it? Then I would not be Your servant; I would be a merchant." He replied in that way, and that is the sign of a pure person. Kṛṣṇa is so kind that He fulfills all the desires of a devotee, even if he wants material benedictions. If at the bottom of his heart there is some desire, He also fulfills that.

He is so kind. But the sublime position of *bhakti-yoga*, or devotional service, is that a pure devotee refuses to accept the five kinds of liberation, even if offered by the Supreme Lord.

If one has material desires or motives within himself, and for fulfillment of such desires he engages himself in devotional service, the result will be that he will never get pure love of God. If one is thinking, "I am engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, in Kṛṣṇa's devotional service, because I want such and such an opulence," that desire may be fulfilled, but he will never get such unalloyed love of Kṛṣṇa as the *gopīs* had. If one has a motive, even though he discharges his devotional duty, he still will not be able to reach the stage of pure love of Godhead. In a verse from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Rūpa Gosvāmī says, "As long as one desires some material benefit [*bhukti*], or even if he wants salvation [*mukti*], then he must take those ghostly representations." As long as that *māyā* exists within one's heart, how can one enjoy the spiritual bliss which is derived from pure love of Godhead? In other words, if one has material desires, or even a desire for salvation, he cannot attain pure love of Godhead. Pure devotion is devoid of all desires—it is simply to render loving service for its own sake.

There is a nice example in the life of Rūpa Gosvāmī. Rūpa Gosvāmī and his brother, Sanātana Gosvāmī, were living separately in Vṛndāvana and going on with their *bhajana*, devotional service. Rūpa was living in the forest, and there was no

facility for cooking nice food or begging from the village for a *capati* to eat. Rūpa Gosvāmī was the younger brother, and he thought, "If I could get some foodstuffs, then I could prepare nice dishes and offer them to Kṛṣṇa and invite my elder brother." He had that desire. The next moment, a nice girl about twelve years old came and delivered an abundance of foodstuffs—milk, flour, ghee, etc. That is the Vedic system; sometimes householders present foodstuffs to mendicants and sages in the renounced order of life. Rūpa Gosvāmī was very glad that Kṛṣṇa had sent so many things and that he could now prepare a feast. He prepared a feast and then invited his elder brother.

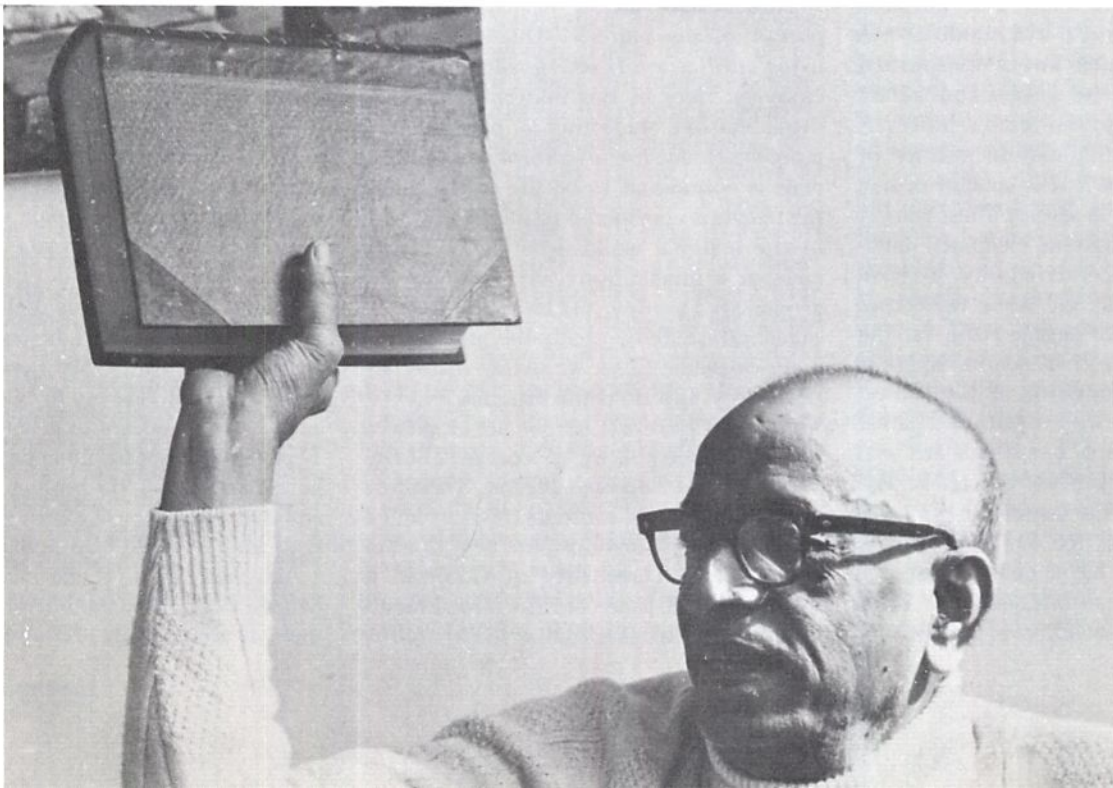
When Sanātana Gosvāmī came, he was astonished. "How have you secured such things? You have prepared such a nice feast in this forest. How is it possible?"

So Rūpa Gosvāmī explained, "In the morning I desired for it, and by chance Kṛṣṇa sent me all these things. A nice girl came, and she offered it to me." He was describing the girl: "A very nice girl."

Then Sanātana said, "This nice girl is Rādhārāṇī. You have taken service from Rādhārāṇī, the Lord's eternal consort. It is a great blunder." That is their philosophy. They would not accept service from the Lord. They simply wanted to render service. But Kṛṣṇa is so clever that He also wants to serve His devotee. He looks for an opportunity to serve His devotee. This is spiritual competition. A pure devotee does not want anything from Kṛṣṇa; he simply wants to serve Him. And Kṛṣṇa

also looks for the opportunity to serve His devotee. Kṛṣṇa is always as anxious to please His devotee as the devotee is to please Him.

This is the transcendental world. On the absolute plane, there is no exploitation. Everyone wants to serve; no one wants to take service. In the transcendental world, everyone wants to give service. You want to give service to me, and I want to give service to you. This is such a nice attitude. This material world means that I want to pickpocket you, and you want to pickpocket me. That's all. This is the material world. We should try to understand it. In the material world, everyone wants to exploit his friend, his father, his mother, everyone. But in the transcendental world, everyone wants to serve. Everyone has Kṛṣṇa as the central point of serving, and all the devotees, either as friends or servants or parents or lovers of Kṛṣṇa, all want to serve Him. And at the same time, Kṛṣṇa also wants to serve them. This is a transcendental relationship; the main function is service, although there is no necessity of service, for everyone is full. There is no hunger, there is no necessity of eating, but still everyone offers nice things to eat. This is the transcendental world. Unless we attain the stage of simply serving Kṛṣṇa or His devotee, we cannot relish the transcendental pleasure of service. If we have any motive, then that sense will never be awakened. Without a motive, without desire for personal sense gratification, service should be rendered to the Supreme Lord and His devotees. END



KARMA-YOGA—PERFECTION THROUGH ACTION

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[This is the third in a series of eighteen articles on the eighteen chapters of *Bhagavad-gītā*. —Editor]

As Chapter Three opens, it is clear that Arjuna has not understood Kṛṣṇa very well. Not only has he not understood that the path of knowledge and the path of devotional service are ultimately the same because the goal is the same, but also he has not understood the difference between action with fruitive results and inaction, or action without fruitive results. Arjuna thus asked Kṛṣṇa, “Why do You urge me to engage in this ghastly warfare if You think that intelligence is better than fruitive work?” Arjuna’s memory is still clouded; therefore he is still in a state of confusion, and he frankly admits, “My intelligence is bewildered by Your equivocal instructions. Therefore, please tell me decisively what is most beneficial for me.”

Actually Kṛṣṇa’s instructions are never equivocal, as we can see from a detailed study of the Second Chapter. The instruction was not equivocal, but decisive; namely, Arjuna should fight for the sake of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa explained this both on basis of philosophy and *yoga*. The fact is that it is Arjuna’s mind that is equivocal. But Arjuna has one good qualification: he is placing the whole matter before the bona fide spiritual master. Actually Arjuna is eternally liberated and never forgetful of Kṛṣṇa’s instruction, but for our sake he is taking the part of the conditioned soul lost in forgetfulness. So he says, “Therefore, my dear Lord, please tell me decisively what is most beneficial for me.” If one is simply sincere and approaches a man in knowledge, he is sure to have all matters cleared up. After all, Kṛṣṇa is the loving father of all living entities, and if one sincerely approaches Him for some guidance He will surely give it to one’s full understanding.

In the Second Chapter Kṛṣṇa previewed many paths of self-realization: *sāṅkhya* philosophy, *karma-yoga*, work without fruitive results, devotional service, and many others. Now for the sake of His disciple, so that he will more clearly understand, He will give the instructions again, but in a more systematic and detailed way. In this Third Chapter He describes the

path commonly called *karma-yoga*. Four great topics are discussed here: action, sacrifice, surrender and lust. As Kṛṣṇa indicated in the Second Chapter, action is superior to inaction, and here again Kṛṣṇa is more elaborately explaining that one can never achieve perfection simply by abstaining from work; indeed no one can refrain from work, for all are driven helplessly by the modes of nature. Indeed, Kṛṣṇa says that one who makes a show of not working while the mind dwells on sense objects is merely a pretender and a hypocrite. One who can control the senses and the mind by engaging them in acts of service and devotion to the Supreme is said to be far superior. Therefore Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, “Perform your prescribed duty, which is better than not working. “A man cannot even maintain his physical body without work.”

It is significant that Kṛṣṇa chose Arjuna, a *kṣatriya* or warrior, a married man in householder life, to receive this transcendental message. If we keep in mind that Arjuna is the representative of all conditioned souls, we can see that Kṛṣṇa is saying that one need not be born of a high family, one need not have the best education, one need not have so many material qualifications in order to understand the science of *Bhagavad-gītā*. One must only follow in the footsteps of Arjuna. One first of all must surrender to the spiritual master by hearing and service. This means to follow his instructions. The world is full of religious pretenders, men who want religiosity simply to cheat the innocent public and solve their own economic problem. That is not recommended here by Lord Kṛṣṇa, for He is specifically discouraging his disciple from going off to the woods to meditate. He did not want him to become a pretender. He is therefore ordering him to do his prescribed duty. We may ask that if he is only performing his prescribed duty, how is he the example of religiosity? How is he any different from any other man who is taking care of wife and family and so many other mundane things? What is the difference between Arjuna’s duty and my so-called duty? Is religiosity merely duty? That is answered in the major portion of this Third Chapter under the topic of sacrifice. Verse nine

says: “Work done as a sacrifice for Viṣṇu [Kṛṣṇa] has to be performed, otherwise work binds one to this material world. Therefore, O son of Kunti, perform prescribed duties for His satisfaction, and in that way you will always remain unattached and free from bondage.”

According to Kṛṣṇa’s instruction, action or work is a foregone conclusion—everyone must work. But what work and how the work is performed are left to the living entity. That is his minute independence. Actually, we are all parts and parcels of Kṛṣṇa, and as such we have all the qualities of the Supreme, who is supremely independent, but being fragmental, we have the qualities in fragmental or minute portions. Therefore our independence is not complete but partial, and in this case we have no independence to say that we will not work—we are compelled by nature to work, but we have the choice of who we will work for, either Kṛṣṇa or the false ego of “I and mine.”

All living entities are active, for they cannot even maintain their physical bodies without action, by nature’s law, but who are they working for? That is their choice. Arjuna now has a choice. He can either do as Kṛṣṇa bids, or he can follow his own whims. One path will lead to elevation and happiness, and the other to further bewilderment and frustration. Therefore to carry out action in the spirit of sacrifice means to understand that everything is Kṛṣṇa’s.

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī describes the Lord as *prajāpati*, the Lord of all worlds, all living creatures and all beauty, the protector of everyone. Similarly, *Īsopaniṣad* says that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the proprietor of everything, that everything is His energy, and as such He is the supreme proprietor. This material world is meant simply to give a chance to the conditioned living soul to practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness to go back home, back to Godhead. That practice is called *yajña*, or sacrifice. If factually everything is Kṛṣṇa’s then ultimately we must come to that point where we want to present everything at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. Unfortunately we cannot do that all at once; it takes gradual development of consciousness, and that gradual development is made possible by means of *yajña* or sacrifice performed for Viṣṇu. *Yajña vai Viṣṇu* is the injunction of the *Vedas*. All sacrificial performances are meant for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa, so in the subsequent

verses it is explained that when the living entity follows this injunction and performs sacrifices for Viṣṇu, then all of his material needs are automatically taken care of and his consciousness is gradually elevated to the position of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. When every act of our daily lives, from sleeping to eating, becomes spiritualized by becoming a sacrifice to the Lord then that is the perfect stage of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda has written: "By performance of *yajña* one's eatables become sanctified, and by eating sanctified food-stuffs one's very existence becomes purified; by the purification of existence, finer tissues in the memory become sanctified; and when memory is sanctified, one can think of the path of liberation, and all these together lead to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the great necessity of present day society."

Actually the whole problem has arisen because of forgetfulness, because we have forgotten our original heritage as part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. From this forgetfulness, bewilderment has come about, and with bewilderment come frustration and anger and all the perplexities of material contamination. So if we want to remember our spiritual nature, we must perform *yajña* or sacrifice, and the proper sacrifice for the present age is *saṅkīrtana-yajña*, or the chanting of the holy names of the Lord. This process is specifically recommended in the *Vedas* for this present time, and it was introduced for the deliverance of all men some 500 years ago in India by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

SAṅKĪRTANA

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it says: "In this age of Kali people who are endowed with intelligence shall worship the Lord who is accompanied with His associates by the performance of *saṅkīrtana-yajña*." Lord Caitanya is Lord Kṛṣṇa appearing in devotional form, that is, as a devotee, and is accompanied by His associates Lord Nityānanda, Śrī Advaita, Gadādhara and Śrīvāsa. Other sacrifices as prescribed in the *Vedas* are not readily performable in the age of Kali, but *saṅkīrtana* or the chanting of the holy name is at once easy and sublime. Furthermore, the purpose of all other *yajñas* (namely the pleasure of Lord Viṣṇu) is automatically fulfilled. Just to link the conditioned soul back to Himself, the Lord accepts our humble sacrifice, and this is enough to revive the dormant

love of Kṛṣṇa which lies within all our hearts. So the *saṅkīrtana* movement of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare, Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, at once links the conditioned soul back to Kṛṣṇa, and at once one can feel the material dust of contamination being wiped from the mirror of the mind. Then one can see the dormant love of Godhead springing forth. This love of Kṛṣṇa is sometimes likened to a creeper that somehow or other breaks out of the hard shell of the human heart, and by the constant watering of Hare Kṛṣṇa it grows and grows until it pierces through the material sky and then through the spiritual sky and finally enters that supreme planet, Goloka Vṛndāvana, where it finds the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa and takes its eternal rest.

PURPOSE OF SACRIFICE

Thus all sacrifice is meant for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu, and as such it cannot be done whimsically, for verse fifteen says: "Activity (*karma*) arises from the *Vedas*, and the *Vedas* spring from the Supreme Godhead. Therefore, the all-pervading transcendence is eternally situated in acts of sacrifice." *Karma* means working according to the prescribed rules and regulations, or scriptural injunctions, and here it is asserted that such instructions are not different from the personality of Godhead. And elsewhere it is stated that "All the four *Vedas*—namely *Ṛg-veda*, *Yajur-veda*, *Sāma-veda*, and *Atharva-veda*—are emanations from the breathing of the great Personality of Godhead." Kṛṣṇa is so powerful that just by His breathing He can produce so many *Vedas*; factually His omnipotence means that He can do anything with any one of His senses, and that is confirmed in the *Brahma-saṁhitā*. *Bhagavad-gītā* says that He can impregnate with His eyes, for it says that He glanced over material nature and thus fathered all living entities. Out of His infinite mercy, the Supreme Lord, after impregnating the conditioned souls into material nature, gave directions how they could return home, back to Godhead, how they could revive their original Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The individual soul is conditioned in matter because he has a tendency to try to lord it over material nature, to desire the enjoyment of some portion of Kṛṣṇa's

inferior energy, matter. The Lord gives the conditioned soul a chance to fulfill his desire to be lord, but at the same time he instructs him to perform some *yajña*. In that way, while fulfilling his material desires, he can also progress back to Godhead. It is something like the little child who is pestering his mother while she is cooking: "Let me cook! Let me cook!" So the mother gives the child a little set of play cooking utensils and says, "Here, cook." While the child is amusing himself with his artificial "cooking," he is also being gradually trained up for the time when he can factually help mother with the real cooking. The conditioned soul is actually the servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa, but because he has forgotten his position as servant, he is put into this material bondage where he must learn to serve before he can return to the kingdom of God. But as soon as one actually comes to that platform of desiring to render transcendental loving service to the Lord, immediately he is a liberated man, even if apparently still in the material world. Verse eighteen says: "A self-realized man has no purpose to fulfill in the discharge of his prescribed duties, nor has he any reason not to perform such work. Nor has he any need to depend on any other living being." A self-realized man knows that he is the servant of Kṛṣṇa and knows that Kṛṣṇa is the proprietor of everything; therefore everything which is entrusted to him is Kṛṣṇa's. Certainly such a liberated soul has no duty to perform, but one will find that such a man is always performing his duty. Why? Because there is no reason not to do it, and because Kṛṣṇa has requested it. There is no reason not to do it because such a liberated man is no longer under the bodily conception of existence. Sometimes it appears to us too troublesome to do our duty because it may be a little inconvenient for the body. But for one who factually knows and has fully realized that he is not the body, there is no reason not to perform his prescribed duty. There is, rather, every reason to perform it. Kṛṣṇa states in verses twenty and twenty-one: "Therefore just for the sake of educating the people in general, you should perform your work. Whatever action is performed by a great man, common men will follow in his footsteps. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues." Kṛṣṇa Himself is following this example, for He says that he has no need to act personally

in any particular way, nothing to gain, nothing that He is in need of, yet He is never inactive.

THE REAL GURU

Lord Caitanya says that a teacher should behave properly even before beginning to teach others, and one who teaches in that way is called *ācārya* or ideal teacher. There is a Sanskrit phrase, *guru, sādhu, śāstra*, which means that the real teacher or *guru* is one who does not deviate from that which has been taught by other *sādhus* (holy men) or by scripture. These three, *guru, sādhu and śāstra*, form the standard of truth and are always in agreement. Therefore one need not be in ignorance as to whether he is following a bona fide system. Does the *guru* follow in the line of the great *ācāryas* and is his teaching in accord with the scriptures? Is the scripture and scriptural understanding confirmed by the *guru* and all other *sādhus*? In this way one can check the truth, and no one need be lead astray or cheated by a pretender.

Kṛṣṇa Himself, for our example, is following in the line of Vedic instructions, and instructing His disciple, "Just do your duty for My sake." Kṛṣṇa is urging Arjuna to do his duty, not because He needs it, but because this is the path of spiritual advancement—for everyone: "As the ignorant perform their duties with attachment to results, similarly, the learned may also act, but without attachment, for the sake of leading people on the right path." (3.25). That means that the wise man and the so-called ignorant man are asked to perform similar duties, but we should not assume that they are on the same platform. The consciousness is different. The ignorant is acting because he thinks that he is going to get something. He goes to church or gives some charity, but in the hope of getting something back, either material or spiritual. But the wise man is doing these same things for a different reason—because it is the desire of Kṛṣṇa. That is called devotional service. Therefore, the action is the culmination of surrender. Verse thirty says: "Therefore, O Arjuna, surrendering all your works unto Me, with mind intent on Me, and without desire for gain and free from egoism and lethargy—fight."

Sacrifice is not meant for satisfying anyone less than the Supreme, and when the Supreme is satisfied, all the part and

parcel subordinates like the demigods and living entities are automatically satisfied. The leaves of a tree are watered when the root is watered, and all the limbs of the body are nourished when the stomach is fed. Kṛṣṇa is in need of nothing, but as long as we are disconnected from the service of the Supreme, something is out of joint. So actually, sacrifice or surrender is simply for our own good. Therefore Kṛṣṇa is emphasizing the necessity for surrendering all work to "Me," for keeping the mind intent on "Me." Finally He tells him to fight enthusiastically without desire for gain and free from possessiveness. Everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa, including the result of the battle; therefore Arjuna must simply fight for the sake of fighting because Kṛṣṇa has requested it. That is the meaning of surrender and the real import of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Kṛṣṇa doesn't tell Arjuna to surrender preaching work or to surrender teaching work or charity or humanitarianism or so many other things. No, Kṛṣṇa says, "Surrender all your work to Me."

In the Vedic system there are so many occupations. Some of them are not very pleasant. Arjuna's was not very pleasant; he was a warrior, and he was being asked to kill his friends and relatives. If we, like Arjuna, surrender all work to Kṛṣṇa, certainly the next part will follow: the mind will be intent on Him. When the mind is intent upon the lover, the lover is never out of mind. There is always longing for the lover, always the feeling, "When can I see my beloved again?" or, "What is my lover doing now?" or, "How can I do something for my love?" Everything is revolving about the lover, and in such a state of mind the next stage automatically follows: freedom from desire for gain, from false egoism and from lethargy. If one is actually intent on Kṛṣṇa, he is always thinking of Kṛṣṇa, about His pastimes, about His devotees, His beauty, etc. Who can be thinking of anything so gross as material gain, some business calculation? If Kṛṣṇa is in mind, what loss could make one lament? Kṛṣṇa is full, absolute, so if Kṛṣṇa is in the mind, the mind must be full. That is fact. Therefore with great enthusiasm one can fight or do anything else Kṛṣṇa desires. One can fight anyone—father, mother, son, daughter. What are father and mother but the accidental circumstance for the appearance of the body? Kṛṣṇa is the real father and the real mother, and by love and service He will

become one's child and lover. We owe everything to Kṛṣṇa, so if Kṛṣṇa is bidding us to fight, how can we refuse?

For the person surrendering to Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa promises all good fortune: "One who executes his duties according to My injunctions and who follows this teaching faithfully becomes free from the bondage of fruitive actions. But those who, out of envy, disregard these teachings and do not practice them regularly, are to be considered bereft of all knowledge, befooled, and doomed to ignorance and bondage" (3.31-32). For one who surrenders to the feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa there is all good fortune; nothing can touch him, for he is protected by the Almighty Himself. But for the soul who refuses to take shelter of Mukunda, Kṛṣṇa, the giver of liberation, everything is inauspicious.

THE ENEMY—LUST

The symbol of ill fortune is bondage to lust. As was stated at the beginning, all conditioned souls are impelled to action, but how they will act is their fragmental independence. Now we see that the soul can either surrender to Kṛṣṇa or to lust, for in verse thirty-six Arjuna complains that he feels sometimes impelled to sin even against his will, and Kṛṣṇa says, "It is lust only, Arjuna, which is born of contact with the material modes of passion and later transformed into wrath, and which is the all-devouring, sinful enemy of this world." Actually this lust is a reflection of our dormant love for Kṛṣṇa, but because the individual soul has chosen not to cultivate that love for Kṛṣṇa, that same propensity is pervertedly exhibiting itself as lust. And that lust means sex enjoyment. Sex enjoyment is the bondage to the material world, for no man can do without it, and the more he gets the more tightly he becomes bound by material nature. The *Manu-smṛiti* tells us that lust cannot be satisfied by any amount of sense enjoyment, anymore than a fire can be put out by a constant supply of gasoline. In the state penitentiary criminals are kept in check by iron bars, and similarly, those who misuse their fragmental independence are tightly shackled by sex desire, which is forever binding them to material existence. Once having exerted his independence against the Lord, the conditioned soul has no further independence. So here Arjuna speaks of being impelled unwillingly, and

elsewhere Kṛṣṇa says that all living beings are working helplessly under the spell of His *māyā*.

Some foolish people therefore conclude that Kṛṣṇa is the origin of sin and that the living being has not moral agency and responsibility, and therefore one may go on as he pleases. But that does not follow any more than that the prison warden is responsible for the acts of the criminals under his charge. As will be more elaborately explained in the Sixteenth Chapter, the living entity is being forced to act according to the modes of material nature, but still he is free. And what is that freedom? Freedom to become Kṛṣṇa conscious, freedom to

awaken from the slumber of forgetfulness induced by lust. "Therefore, O Arjuna, best of the Bharatas, in the very beginning curb the great symbol of sin (lust) by regulating the senses, and slay this destroyer of knowledge and self-realization" (3.41). So our choice is limited, and this is proof that we are fragments of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is the supreme independent; we have some independence, but we are not supremely independent. We can surrender to Kṛṣṇa or we can surrender to His inferior energy and be forever kicked like a football by the agents of material nature, lust and anger. So how can we complete our term of material nature and transform that lust into love? Both lust

and wrath can be turned into Kṛṣṇa consciousness by expert guidance, and that process is called *bhakti-yoga* or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and it is exemplified by Hanumān, who transformed wrath into service for Lord Rāma by visiting destruction on the demons of Lañkā for the satisfaction of the Lord. And by the grace of the *gopīs*, lust attained the highest perfection of love of Kṛṣṇa in the bowers of Vṛndāvana. So the great secret of success is Kṛṣṇa. Whatever is related to Him becomes perfect, and whatever is disjointed becomes useless and ugly. Acts performed for sense enjoyment are material; acts performed for the Lord are spiritual. Kṛṣṇa makes the difference.

END



LORD CAITANYA FESTIVAL

by Haridayānanda dāsa Brahmācārī (ISKCON Boston)

On March 29, 1970, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the golden *avatāra*, appeared on the streets of an American city, Berkeley, California. Lord Caitanya, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself, appeared just to please His devotees and to attract the minds of all living entities who are suffering from the pangs of material entanglement. Lord Caitanya is called Gaurāṅga, or "golden one." The appearance of the Supreme Lord in His golden form is very rare and auspicious and should be carefully studied and understood by everyone.

Gaurāṅga first advented Himself 484 years ago in Navadvīpa, India, and as a child He exhibited wonderful pastimes. As an infant, sometimes he would cry, and the women and girls of Navadvīpa would hurry over to see the beautiful golden baby. They would then clap their hands and sing the holy names, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Rāma, and immediately the infant would stop crying and would smile sweetly upon the women and girls. So even as a young child, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu began to propagate His mission of *sankīrtana-yajña*, or congregational chanting of the holy names, as the most effective means in this age for deliverance from the ocean of material miseries.

In Vedic literature, the present age is called Kali-yuga, or the age of quarrel and hypocrisy. It is said that in this age, it is very difficult for a common man to successfully complete the eightfold path of mystic *yoga*, which normally requires many thousands of years of full-time endeavor, and thus in order to make liberation from all material suffering possible in this degraded age, the Supreme Lord kindly appeared in His golden form and propagated the chanting of the holy names. Lord Caitanya, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself in the guise of His own devotee, reaffirmed the same principles taught by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa 5,000 years ago, when the Lord spoke *Bhagavad-gītā* to His friend and disciple Arjuna. *Sarva-dharmān parityajya, mām ekam śaraṇam vraja*. This is the final instruction of *Bhagavad-gītā*, and it means that one should just try to give up all varieties of religiosity, *yoga* and philosophical speculation and should simply surrender unto Kṛṣṇa. That is the perfectional stage. Lord Caitanya taught that in this age it is very easy and simple to achieve

this: just sing for Kṛṣṇa and dance for Kṛṣṇa and feast upon *prasādam*, or food-stuffs offered to Kṛṣṇa.

Just as in a boat, there is a captain, so it is natural that one striving for perfection should be guided by a spiritual master so that his devotional activity becomes perfect. To set this example, Lord Caitanya also accepted a spiritual master in the authorized chain of spiritual masters. Such a chain is authorized because it begins with the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, and passes down perfect knowledge by perfect hearing and repetition, not relying on mental speculation and interpretation. Lord Caitanya explained that hearing from a bona fide member of the disciplic succession is as good as hearing from the Lord Himself; there is no difference. Although Lord Caitanya is the Supreme Lord, He nevertheless followed this system to set an example, and we should accept His instruction as it is; that is the meaning of surrender.

Sometimes, as a young boy, Lord Caitanya would run along the banks of the Ganges River, and He would splash water on all the *yogīs* who were sitting staring at the tips of their noses and meditating upon the impersonal effulgence of the Lord. He would tell them, "Just get up and dance for Kṛṣṇa and praise Him by His holy names. Then you will be the greatest *yogī*." This is the version of all the *Vedas*. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa says, *imaṁ vivasvate yogaṁ proktavān aham avyayam*: "Originally I spoke this ancient science of *yoga* to the presiding sun-deity, Vivasvān." So the science of *yoga* is originally spoken by the Lord. And in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we can find, *vāsudeva-parā yogāḥ*: "The supreme goal of *yoga* is to know Kṛṣṇa." This was the message of Lord Caitanya, who came just to rouse the sleeping human society. The highest goal of life is to know Kṛṣṇa, and in this age, one can know Him just by chanting His holy names. Thus one can very easily go back home, back to Godhead, surpassing the stringent material laws of birth, old age, disease and death. That is the kindness of the Lord. The Lord offers everyone this opportunity of supreme liberation, regardless of condition of life.

In order to spread this glorious mission of Lord Caitanya, the devotees of Kṛṣṇa

in Berkeley staged a giant festival to glorify the golden Kṛṣṇa and to distribute His causeless mercy freely to everyone. Lord Caitanya has declared, "In every town and village, I will be known by the chanting of the holy name," and the devotees act just to fulfill this predicton. When Gaurāṅga first appeared on this planet, He was always seen to dance in ecstasy, His arms upraised, His chest decorated with fragrant garlands of flowers, and His eyes and cheeks smeared with tears of love of God. Therefore, on the 484th anniversary of His appearance, it was decided to hold a large transcendental festival to glorify Lord Gaurāṅga and attract the minds of all men.

The first step was to construct a large form of Lord Caitanya, rising over twenty feet into the sky. Sometimes less intelligent persons mistake such forms of the Lord to be ordinary statues or idols. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, however, it is stated, *vadanti tat tattva-vidas, tattvaṁ yad-jñānam advayam*: "Those who are actually learned scholars say that the Lord exists beyond all duality." He is absolute, and no relativity can exist within Him. Therefore there is no difference between the Supreme Lord Himself and His transcendental name, fame, quality, form, pastimes, etc. They are all absolute and identical. This absolute nature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead can never be understood by philosophical word jugglers nor by those who are materially attached to the temporary things of this world. The ordinary materialist, with his severely limited senses, finds it difficult to understand how the Lord can appear in a constructed form, supposedly fashioned of material elements. Such persons are under the jurisdiction of the deluding energy of the Lord, called *māyā*. Due to their illusion, they do not properly utilize their intelligence in the transcendental loving service of the Lord, but instead they use this God-given intelligence to decry the Personality of Godhead. Thus they can never appreciate the unlimited potencies of the Lord. The devotees, however, whose eyes have been opened by the grace of the Lord, correctly perceive the Lord's factual presence in His name, form, etc.

Therefore, all of the devotees in Berkeley were swept up in a mood of anticipation and expectation. As elaborate preparations were underway, feelings of bliss predominated, and all conversation centered around the wonderful pastimes of the Lord in His

munificent golden form. Concerning the planning of the festival, it should be noted that a devotee never artificially puts forward a so-called creation, but tries to the best of his ability to take direction from Kṛṣṇa within his heart. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa says, "I am seated in everyone's heart, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness." Material life means to falsely take credit for our activities, and Kṛṣṇa consciousness means to understand that actually all credit goes to Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, when a devotee is seen to be always talking about Kṛṣṇa, this should not be mistaken for mere sentiment.

By Kṛṣṇa's grace, the Berkeley police commissioner agreed to shut down Telegraph Avenue for the festival. When the devotees heard of this decision, preparations were swung into full gear, and everywhere around the Bay Area, the blissful news began to spread that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the cause of the entire cosmic situation, would manifest Himself on the 29th of March, on the streets of Berkeley, California, on the anniversary of His original appearance day. And to receive the Lord, who is the reservoir of beauty and strength, a big transcendental parade would be held straight down Telegraph Avenue, with all mundane traffic shut off. The parade would culminate at Willard Park, on Telegraph Avenue and Derby Street, and there the Lord's festival would be fully celebrated.

Days before the festival, the streets of Berkeley and San Francisco were bedecked with glittering golden posters foretelling the appearance of the Lord. Finally the day arrived. All of the devotees from the Bay Area gathered early in the morning in the Berkeley center, and there were many duties to perform. Some devotees swept the temple, others washed the temple, last minute cooking had to be finished, instructive lectures were delivered, etc.

At 1:00, approximately fifteen devotees walked down to the University of Berkeley campus, carrying sacred *mṛdaṅga* drums and sweet *kartāls*. They were greeted by a swelling crowd of over one thousand people, who had come from many different places to attend the festival. Immediately *saṅkīrtana* was started. *Saṅkīrtana* means congregational chanting of the holy name. This *saṅkīrtana* was introduced by Lord Caitanya, and so it was just proper for the occasion. In all circumstances, the Lord is to be glorified. This is the practical



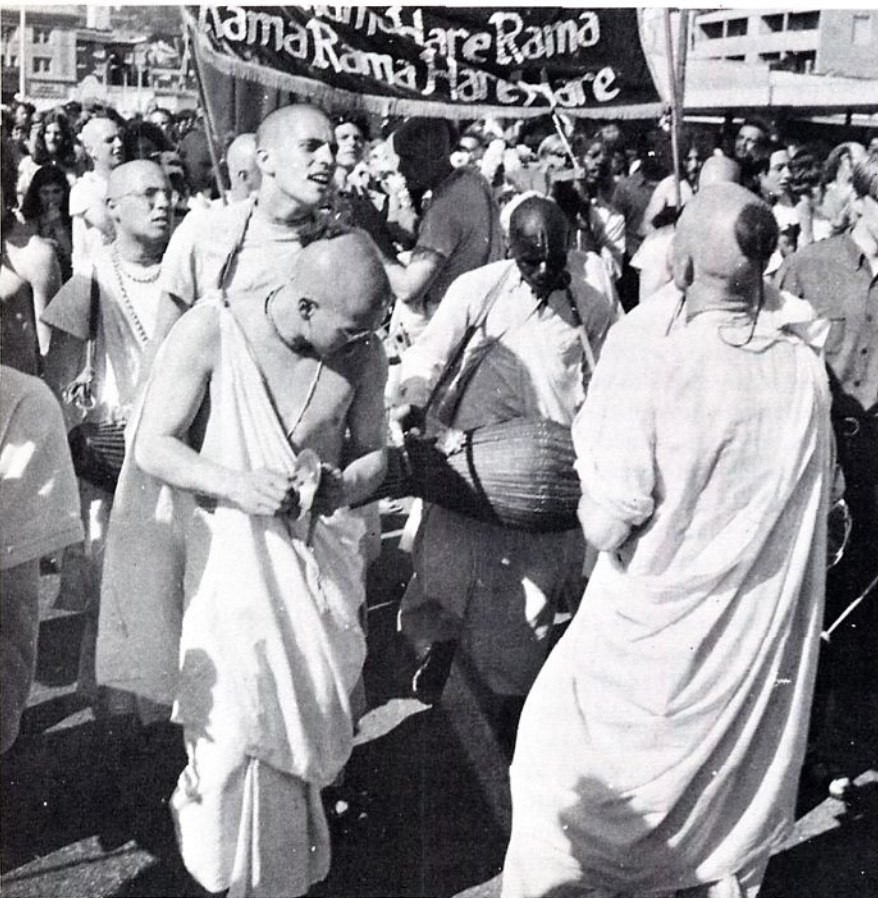


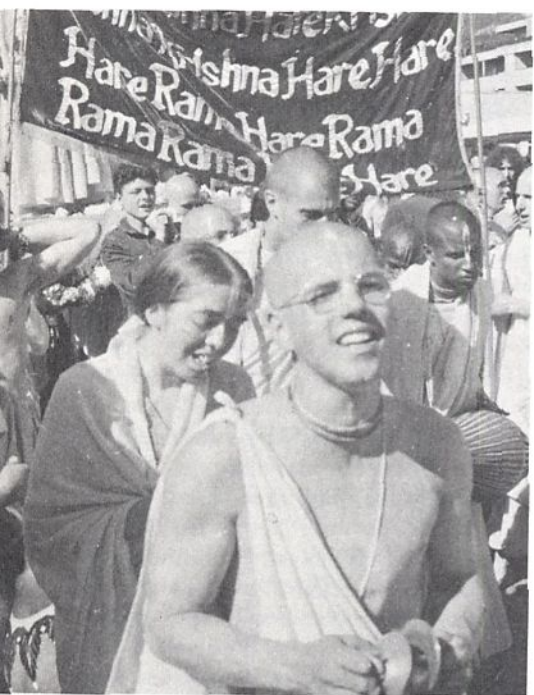
perfection of any activity. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is stated that any activity which does not involve glorification of the Lord is simply useless labor.

Everyone joined the chanting, and the vibration established was like the blissful roar of transcendental lions. The combined sound of the drums, bells, and the holy name was so sweet and relishable that everyone began to raise their arms and dance in ecstasy. This is the effect produced by the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa. After each *kīrtana*, a devotee spoke briefly about the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and because the words described the unlimited glories of devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, everyone was satisfied at heart and felt as if there were no greater happiness. If this extreme sense of happiness can be felt simply by once chanting the holy names of Kṛṣṇa and hearing about the wonderful transcendental qualities of the Lord, then what to speak of the happiness of the pure devotee, who is one hundred percent immersed in the ocean of love of God. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī once prayed, "O my Lord, I am like a bee, and Your lotus feet are the sweetest honey. Therefore, the bees have left the fields and are simply engaged in following You, and I have no desire but to remain at Your lotus feet."

The chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa should never be mistaken for ordinary singing because it is actually the most exalted activity of the living entity, and it brings the highest pleasure obtainable anywhere in the three planetary systems. Therefore the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa was especially appropriate for the Appearance Day Festival of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The chanting continued, and soon great waves of transcendental ecstasy began to wash over the crowd. As the chanting grew increasingly blissful, and as thousands of conditioned souls were overcome with transcendental pleasure, suddenly two golden lotus-like hands could be seen reaching high above the trees. In a matter of seconds, the Supreme Personality of Godhead was fully visible dancing in supreme ecstasy, tears of love falling from his lotus-petal eyes, and everyone's heart began to melt, just as butter melts very quickly when placed on a hot fire.

It is said that a mountain of gold, when seen beneath the brilliant sun, is very bright indeed. But the transcendental brilliance of the Supreme Lord, appearing in His original, eternal form of bliss and





knowledge, was like millions of suns and hundreds of millions of gold mountains. It is said that the lotus flower which floats upon the surface of the lake is delicate, but the two lotus-petal eyes of the Lord, delicately shedding ecstatic tears of love of God, derided the lotus flower.

The Lord was dancing in ecstasy, and His arms were raised high in the sky. His weeping lotus-petal eyes were fixed in a longing gaze toward the transcendental land of Vṛndāvana, which is the abode of the Lord in His original form of Kṛṣṇa, Govinda. Around the body of the Lord was wrapped a flowing golden robe, and His chest was bare. The chest of the Lord was like the purest molten gold and was decorated with fragrant flower garlands, which swung, multicolored, from His golden neck. The Lord's long hair, brilliant and black, played with the wind.

Overcome by the sight of the Lord, the devotees fell to their knees and offered repeated obeisances. Some members of the gathered crowd, which now numbered several thousand, also fell to their knees, and others became silent and shy in the presence of the Lord. After proper respects had been offered, *kīrtana* began, more ecstatic than before, and thousands of spirit souls danced blissfully around the Lord, who is the supreme dancer, and whose lotus feet are the only shelter in all the three worlds.

How could any man hope to describe the happiness that was felt? The conditioned soul has been transmigrating, since time immemorial, through 8,400,000 species of life, and now the Lord had come personally, just to bring the fallen souls back home, back to Godhead, in full knowledge of their relationship with Him as His parts and parcels.

Lord Caitanya was carried on a platform which rested upon the shoulders of His devotees, and at His command, the festivities moved into the street, and the glorious transcendental parade began. This scene of the Lord being carried by His devotees nicely illustrates our actual position. The Lord states in *Bhagavad-gītā* that although He is self-sufficient in every respect, He will accept our service if it is rendered in a devotional mood. The example is given of the father who is pleased to accept the offering of his child. Sometimes at the dinner table the child will take some morsel of food and offer it to his father. The father feels no hunger, and he has originally supplied the food to his son, but still the father relishes the loving attitude of the child. Similarly, Lord Caitanya is so kind that He allows His devotees to serve Him by helping to propagate





this chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa all over the world, and anyone who joins this great mission will also receive the causeless mercy of Lord Caitanya. Anyone who refuses the mercy of Lord Caitanya is considered most unfortunate and is said to be bewildered about the purpose of human life.

With the aim of spreading the mercy of the golden Lord, the procession proceeded to Telegraph Avenue, which was now closed to ordinary traffic. The sounds of *kīrtana*, of drums and bells couching the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, vibrated uproariously in the sky and on land. The devotees appeared like dancing angels, and everyone felt overcome by transcendental pleasure. Lord Caitanya was like the sun, and His sun-like face was the unlimited drinking pot of all eyes. The procession continued, and the large crowd continued to grow until the parade filled all lanes of the street and spilled onto the sidewalk. Thousands of flowers were distributed, and everyone began to lovingly shower these flowers upon the chest and head of the Lord. The Lord became surrounded by moving rainbows of flowers, and at every moment His beauty increased. Many people along the avenue opened their windows and stared at the transcendental parade, startled to see thousands of boys, girls, men and women dancing in full-fledged transcendental ecstasy, and similarly, many shopkeepers rushed into the street and simply stared at the Supreme Lord as He made His way toward the park.

Although everyone was thinking that there could be no greater happiness, when the procession reached the park, the mercy of Lord Gaurāṅga was felt even more strongly than before. The whole atmosphere became surcharged with bliss, like that of Vaiṅkuṅṭha. Vaiṅkuṅṭha means free from anxiety, and it is also the name for the innumerable spiritual planets which are floating in the self-effulgent antimaterial sky. The topmost planet in that self-effulgent sky is Kṛṣṇaloka, known as Goloka Vṛndāvana, which is the most confidential abode of the Supreme Lord. This transcendental kingdom of God is not a product of the imagination, but it is forever sealed off from the eyes of materialistic men, whose stock in trade in life is sense gratification only, and who therefore constantly seek to exploit the resources of the material nature in accordance with particular desires. This supreme abode of the Lord, in which there is no need of sunlight or moonlight or electricity, is easily obtained, however, by the unalloyed devotees of the Lord, whose only desire is to render transcendental loving service unto the Lord. The Lord Caitanya Festival



was planned by Lord Caitanya just to give the conditioned souls a small taste of the nectar of devotion. If such blissful, all-auspicious activities can occur within the confines of the material world, among ordinary people, then one can hardly imagine the transcendental pastimes of the Lord and His pure devotees which are eternally manifest in the spiritual sky. No one can enter the spiritual sky on the strength of dry philosophical speculation and argumentation. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa advises that only by unalloyed devotion can the Supreme Personality of Godhead be known as He is.

Everyone accompanied the Lord into the park, and the youthful Lord, overcome with transcendental love, danced upon the grass, and His youthful children danced around Him, holding hands, tossing flowers, and bathing their minds in the sacred waters of the holy name. The wind blew the Lord's long black hair. On top of His head was a wreath of flowers, formed of red, white and yellow blossoms, and His face was streaked with tears.

After *kīrtana*, the devotees introduced transcendental theatre. Transcendental theatre means plays and skits exclusively about the Lord and His pure devotees, who are qualitatively on an equal level, although quantitatively different. The first play was entitled, "The Big Fish and the Little Fish," and the second was entitled "The Saga of Liquid Beauty." These plays were filled with the Lord's presence, and thus they were filled with humor, knowledge and transcendental pleasure. Throughout the festival, the devotees remembered the lotus feet of their spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa instructs, *tad viddhi praṇi-pātena pari-praśnena sevayā/upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*: In order to learn this transcendental science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and become steadily situated on

the transcendental platform of eternal bliss and knowledge, one must, in a humble state of mind, approach a bona fide spiritual master. It is suggested here that one make intelligent inquiries and that one be prepared to render unflinching service unto the spiritual master. In return, the spiritual master benedicts the sincere student with perfect transcendental knowledge. Therefore it is through the causeless mercy of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is the most confidential servant of the Lord, that the activities of Kṛṣṇa consciousness are able to transform the face of the earth.

After the transcendental dramatizations had enlivened the hearts of all, a giant transcendental feast was served. The menu included spiced fancy *kitterie*, which is a nourishing vegetable preparation, heart-melting *luglu* sesame seed balls, packed with crumbly flavor, crisp, tasty poppers, great lakes of lemonade *prasādam*, and unlimited reservoirs of super-fruitsalad-



buttermilk nectar, which overflowed and purified the senses of everyone. In this way, the contaminated senses of the conditioned souls can be naturally purified, not by artificial cessation of sensory engagements but by engagement of the senses with transcendental sense objects.

Lord Caitanya's festival, a transcendental birthday party for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, was all-successful, all-victorious and all-blissful. This was because Kṛṣṇa is the husband of the goddess of fortune. Everyone in material life is eager for fortune, but the goddess of fortune is restless, and no one can always be fortunate within the material world. But if one is surrendered unto the husband of the goddess of fortune, then his success is assured, for the goddess of fortune never leaves the chest of the Personality of Godhead. Therefore, these activities were able to continue for long hours, but no one felt fatigue or satiation. The hearts of thou-



sands were gently plowed by the causeless glancing of The Lord, and the seed of love of Kṛṣṇa was implanted.

Finally, when the sun gave way to a cool twilight sky, Lord Caitanya decided to return to His temple, at 2710 Durant Avenue, and so He was borne upon the backs of His tireless devotees, and He began to move through the quiet streets. As the night grew late, the devotees reluctantly took rest, and as they looked into the yard, beneath their blankets they could see that the Lord was continuing to dance in ecstasy and that there was no cessation of tears gliding from His two gorgeous eyes. As the devotees were overcome by sleep, the golden Lord danced all through the night. Therefore, who will not join in the glorious mission of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu?

The readers of this article are requested to sit down, or stand, and clap their hands and repeat the holy names delivered by Lord Caitanya:

*Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa,
Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma,
Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.*

Certainly no one should be envious of Lord Caitanya, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself, nor doubt the power of His mission, which cannot be checked by any force. Everyone is humbly invited to join immediately this glorious, transcendental movement and to abandon the darkness and ignorance of dry mental speculation. All glories to Lord Caitanya, the unrivaled beauty, whose blooming lotus-petal eyes are constantly decorated with tears of transcendental love, who is the fountainhead of transcendental mercy, the reservoir of unlimited seeds of devotion to God, and the core of the heart of the pure devotee. **END**



THE HIDDEN GOD

by Hayagrīva dāsa Adhikārī (ISKCON New Vr̥ndāvana)

“For one who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, I am never lost, nor is he ever lost to Me.” (*Gītā* 6.30)

Even the philosophers of the modern churches are declaring that God is dead. In one sense this is true, for in the societies of the modern world God remains an obscure mystery which most people prefer to forget. He is considered dead because He has been buried beneath tomes of speculative philosophy.

In recent years there have been many philosophies based around the premise of the nonexistence of God. One such philosophy, existentialism, which emerged in a shattered France during World War II, maintains that the universe is purposeless and that there is no supreme controller. The existentialists assert that man has free will to struggle against purposelessness, but they give no information as to how the exercise of this will can give life real purpose. Out of a rather bleak and antiquated philosophy synthesized by Jean-Paul Satre emerged the philosophy of *l'absurde* popularized by Albert Camus. This philosophy appealed to the post-War mentality by dint of its rather simple but unabashed assertion that all life is absurd. As is often the case, Camus was half right, for mundane materialistic life is absurd. It is absurd that man bears his burden of sense gratification like an ass bearing a burden of stones. Camus' most famous essay, “The Myth of Sisyphus,” which summarizes the philosophy of *l'absurde*, utilizes the ancient Greek myth about the shrewd and greedy King of Corinth, Sisyphus, who was forever doomed in Hades to roll uphill a heavy stone which always rolled down again. Camus equates the absurdity of Sisyphus' position with that of all men. He sees man as condemned to roll the heavy ball of material conditioned life to the top of some unknown hill where it simply rolls down again and forces him to repeat the drudgery. This is a sort of eternal position. Camus concludes from this that, “The only philosophical problem is the problem of suicide.” It is to his credit that he has the insight to perceive the futility of mundane existence, yet he poses no positive solutions outside of encouraging men to recognize the absurdity of their position and seek refuge in a humanistic “solidarity.”

The popularity of this philosophy in America was almost inevitable, and it was picked up about five years later by the Beat movement. And its transformation was also inevitable: if life is absurd, then let us enjoy our gross senses as much as possible. This is also the hedonistic philosophy of Hippyism. Initially, at any rate, this hedonism, which is grounded in aspiritualism and pessimism, grew out of the refuse of the Christian church just as mushrooms grow out of dung.

Kierkegaard and Nietzsche were the forerunners of this movement, Sartre and Camus were the popularizers, and the masses were the dupes. Suddenly every major writer from Homer to Chaucer to Shakespeare to Melville to T.S. Eliot was analyzed as an “existentialist.” Books entitled *Existential Thought in Wordsworth and Coleridge* were placed on front counters in book stores while the *Bhagavad-gītā* was placed in the occult section.

THE GUISE OF MĀYĀ

The *Gītā* still remains in the occult section and will evidently for years to come. The word “occult” comes from the Latin word *occulere* meaning to cover over, conceal, and no doubt it is only right for a society that so methodically conceals the Divine to place the words of the Divine on an occult shelf. God in this age remains hidden, obscure, mystical (from Greek *mystikos*, referring to secret rites). In this age of technological chaos, the guise of *māyā* is very heavy, and when the Divine appears, He seems only to be a vaporous apparition subject to vanish quickly

Then with inviolate curve forsake
our eyes,

As apparitional as sails that cross
Some page of figures to be filed away—
Till elevators drop us from our day.
(Hart Crane, “Proem” to *The Bridge*)

In this age, the vision of God is as elusive as the seagulls that glide and dip in New York Harbor. One may then appropriately question how it is that Kṛṣṇa, who is the totality of everything, remains unseen. Because no one knows Him, mankind concludes that He is either nonexistent or dead.

In the *Gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa concludes the

situation. “I am never manifest to the foolish and unintelligent. For them I am covered by My eternal creative potency [*māyā*]; and so the deluded world knows Me not who am unborn and infallible.” (*Gītā* 7.25) In this Age of Iron, practically the totality of mankind is deluded. “All living entities are born into delusion, overcome by the dualities of desire and hate.” (*Gītā* 7.27) Man is born into this material world because he desired material enjoyment, and when his material desires are frustrated he becomes angry and so directs his hatred to animals, to other men, and to God. Being in such passion, his senses are bewildered, and thus he cannot perceive the resplendent Godhead who is everywhere about him. For him Kṛṣṇa is never manifest, for He is covered by *māyā*, which, for the living entity, is forgetfulness. Consequently Kṛṣṇa, who is the infallible Lord, remains unknown. “I know all living entities, but Me no one knows.” (*Gītā* 7.26) Because no one knows Kṛṣṇa, no one knows His song, *Bhagavad-gītā*, and therefore it is placed aside on bookshelves marked occult.

The sun, moon and stars may be obscured by clouds, but this does not mean that they are actually covered. It is the vision of the earth that is covered. If we but travel a mile or two high we would rise above the clouds and see the stars and the moon and sun in all their glory. It is not that we have to travel very far. But we at least have to make the effort. Similarly, there is a speck covering our eyes which makes us see this universe as purposeless. But once that speck is removed, everything will appear as it is—the boundless glory of Kṛṣṇa.

God's appearance and disappearance in this world are continuous and eternal, but common men cannot understand this. The owl says that there is no sun because he doesn't see or wish to see it. No amount of speculation or discussion can bring about realization of the Absolute Truth, but one to whom Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself can understand immediately. The best process is to execute devotional service and wait for His mercy. Just as the sun sterilizes a contaminated place, He purifies the soul before He enters. The appearances of Kṛṣṇa are unlimited and eternal, and in the *Gītā* He says that one who knows the nature of His appearance and disappearance is a wise, liberated soul and is not born again in this material world. Actual knowledge

of the appearance of Kṛṣṇa in the world is neither occult nor difficult. All the informations are given in Vedic literatures, and they are available to everyone. Unfortunately, being under delusion, man considers such literatures to be occult and so does not take them very seriously.

The philosophy of atheistic existentialism and its grandchild, that of Hippyism, would balk at the philosophy underlying *Bhagavad-gītā*. Existentialism would never admit of an Absolute which makes existence meaningful. The existential conception of man's freedom as the only philosophical possibility in a senseless universe would be threatened by the absolutism of Kṛṣṇa. In the *Gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa says that nature is working under His direction, which means that the universe is not purposeless but has a meaning known to its controller. Again, Kṛṣṇa says that millennium after millennium He sends forth all of these various created beings who are helpless under the sway of His *māyā*. This precludes any absolute freedom from the point of view of man, for this makes man dependant on an exterior creative, maintaining and annihilating force.

BLEAK PHILOSOPHIES

In Sartre's best known novel, *Nausea*, the main character suffers from fear, queasiness and nausea due to a heightened sense of the mutability of phenomena. He sees objects and people changing before his very eyes and experiences existence itself as sticky, syrupy, fluid. Psychedelic drugs can give similar hallucinatory experiences through which the flux of the creation, or the unreality or instability of *māyā*, can be intensely perceived. Sartre's character takes refuge in the stability of an old American jazz record which he listens to over and over. The improvisations of the saxophone give him a feeling of freedom, yet the repetitiveness of the recording makes him feel that there is some stability and security in the universe. Unfortunately, he does not take refuge in the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, which would give him freedom by liberating him from the bonds of material consciousness and would stabilize him in the divine service of Kṛṣṇa. Sartre, however, would consider that listening to the phonograph record and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa are both in "bad faith" because he would never

acknowledge the absolutism of Kṛṣṇa. There is a similar passage in Camus in which the main character, while observing a common citizen talking in a telephone booth, suddenly realizes that he is watching an absurd pantomime. This is not faulty perception because Lord Kṛṣṇa says that men function as though "mounted on a machine made of the material energy." The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone's heart, O Arjuna, and is directing the wandering of all living entities, who are seated as on a machine, made of the material energy." (*Gītā* 18.61) But *l'absurde* philosophers could never accept Kṛṣṇa because once Kṛṣṇa is accepted, life ceases to be absurd.

Whereas the existentialist refuses to accept the philosophy of the *Gītā* on philosophical grounds, Hippyism would reject it because it is anti-sensual and advocates a life dedicated to *tapasya* (penance) in order to attain the Supreme. In either case, the absolutism of Kṛṣṇa is rejected due to conceit. On the one hand the existentialists would not compromise the idol of man's personal freedom, and on the other hand the hippies would not compromise the idol of the almighty psychedelic priapus. Today the philosophy of Hippyism has superseded existentialism because no one wants to take time away from sex and drugs to read long philosophical treatises by sullen Frenchmen. Nonetheless, atheistic existentialism is the precursor of contemporary hedonism, and the Sartrean derelicts who float from cafe table to cafe table in a drunken haze are the ancestor of today's hippies.

One is bound to be thus entangled by materialistic life as long as Kṛṣṇa is veiled to one's sight. Man cannot continue to live by thinking that life has no meaning. He will give it the meaning of sense enjoyment if no other is available. "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." This means that death is inevitable and life has no meaning, so let's squeeze out as much sense gratification as possible in our brief sixty of seventy years. But according to *Bhagavad-gītā*, the man who lives only for the senses lives in vain. "An intelligent person does not take part in the sources of misery, which are due to contact with the material senses. O son of Kuntī, such pleasures have a beginning and an end, and so the wise man does not delight in them." (*Gītā* 5.22) It is said that the

wise dwell in the world like the lotus leaf on water. The leaf of the lotus, although on the water, remains dry, and in the same way the wise man, though in the world of the senses, is unattached to them. He witnesses the flux of existence but is not carried away by it, for he is established in the divine consciousness. Consequently he does not experience nausea or fear even in the midst of the most terrifying calamities, for his consciousness is nonmaterial. Those who delight only in the senses are constantly in a state of anxiety. "Their belief is that to gratify the senses unto the end of life is the prime necessity of human civilization. Thus there is no measurement of their anxiety." (*Gītā* 16.11) And those who say that life is absurd and meaningless, that there is no Absolute in control, and that the universe results simply from a chance combination of material elements are declared in the *Gītā* to be demonic in nature. "Those who are of demoniac quality...say that this world is unreal, that there is neither any foundation, nor any God in control. They say that it is produced of sex desire and has no other cause than lust." (*Gītā* 16.8) Thus being under delusion, men are unaware of the purpose of life, which is to extricate oneself from the material desires causing conditioned existence and to enter into a relationship with the Divine who bestows total spiritual freedom upon the individual.

Although atheistic existential philosophers maintain that man has personal freedom, they cannot account for the fact that man is bound by the rigid laws of nature, that he is forced to take birth, forced to eat, forced to work in order to acquire food, forced to breathe, forced to sleep, forced into the bondage of sex, forced to defend himself, forced to grow old, catch some disease and die. Yet, they claim that he is free. This is the grossest type of delusion. Man is a prisoner in this world and is constantly being kicked by the modes of material nature. His only freedom lies in his willingness to surrender unto Kṛṣṇa, who reveals Himself to such a surrendered soul. In this way he can enter into the unlimited freedom of spiritual life which is beyond all material qualification and which is deathless and ever blissful.

The obscuration of God by *māyā* is a problem for contemporary civilization. One may question why God reveals Him-

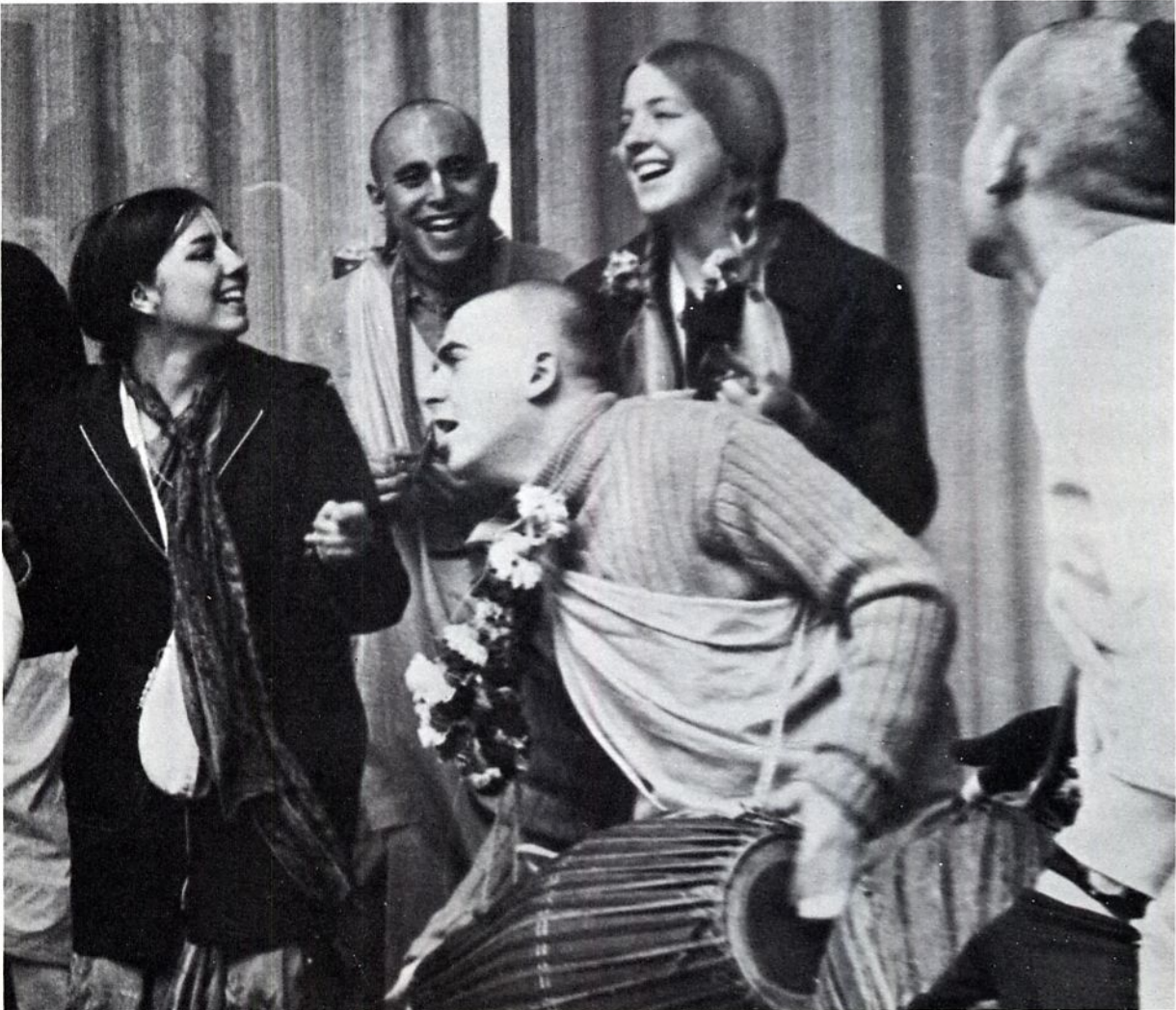
self to some and yet remains an explicable myth to others. It is the Divine's prerogative to reveal Himself and to hide Himself. Therefore it is stated in scriptures that God neither hates anyone nor likes anyone but that He seems to. In the *Gītā* Arjuna says, "I see all people entering with full speed into Your mouths, as the moth hurries into the blazing fire." (*Gītā* 11.29) From the point of view of the father, all of his sons are the same because they are his sons, yet the ungrateful son who leaves home expressing no concern for his father is not as beloved as a son who carefully obeys his father's wishes. The goodness of the father may be revealed to one son and not to another. For the son who has left home his father might as well be dead for all he knows or cares, but although the son may forget the father, the father never forgets the son. He will always welcome the son home. Similarly, all the conditioned souls on

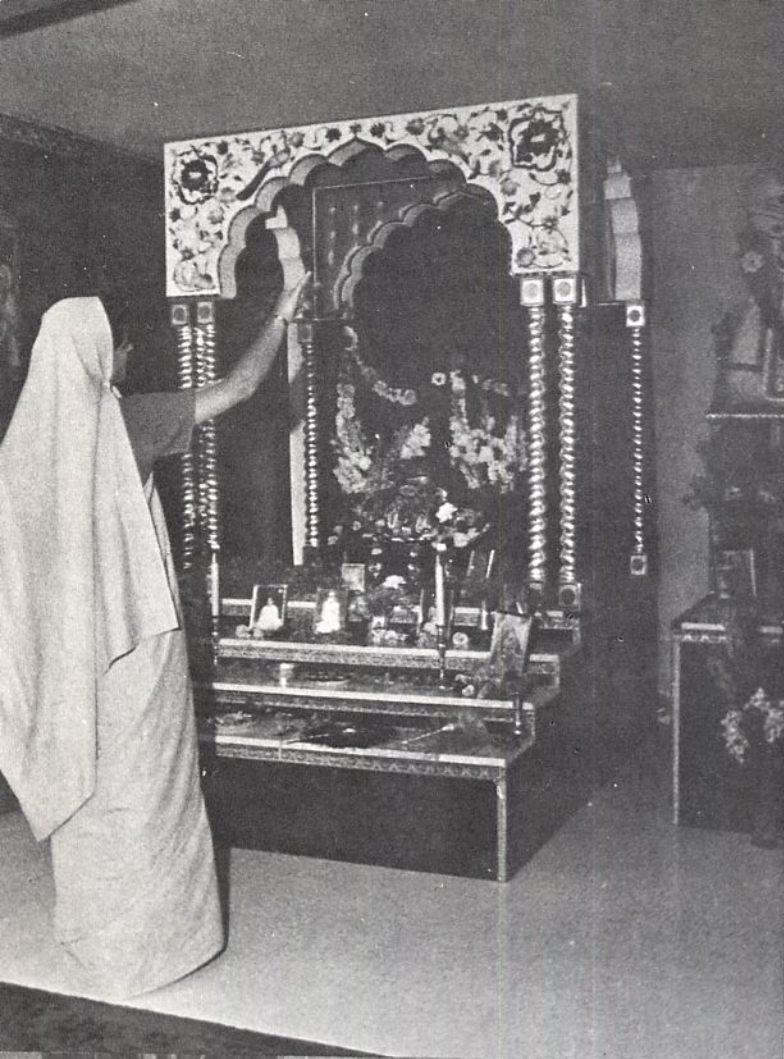
earth have left their home, which is Kṛṣṇa's spiritual abode, and have wandered into a dream world where they become entangled in enjoying things of the dream. Some may even recognize it as a dream. Yet instead of acquiring knowledge to awake, they become more implicated. But Kṛṣṇa always gives the living entity the opportunity to awake and return to Him. It is said that at least in every millennium every conditioned being gets an opportunity to revive his latent Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is important to understand that Kṛṣṇa does not want the individual soul deluded, yet He gives him the minute independence to choose between a life of awareness and a life of forgetfulness.

God is always veiled to eyes that are smeared with desire and hate and is always revealed to eyes smeared with surrender and love. The quickest and most sublime process whereby civilization

can awake to the fact of God's existence is the process of invoking His names. When one has lost a friend he immediately tries to find him by calling his name and asking where he is. This is also the quickest way to find Kṛṣṇa. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the great propagator of this process, always had the names of Kṛṣṇa on his lips, and He would journey from town to town crying, "O Kṛṣṇa, why have You hid Yourself from me? Have mercy on me, O Lord, for in Your absence, a moment seems to last for years. When shall my eyes be decorated with tears of love flowing constantly while chanting Your holy name? I do not know anyone but Kṛṣṇa as my Lord. He shall always remain as such, even if he makes me brokenhearted by not being present before me."

The quickest way, then, to find a hidden God is to desire sincerely to find Him. END



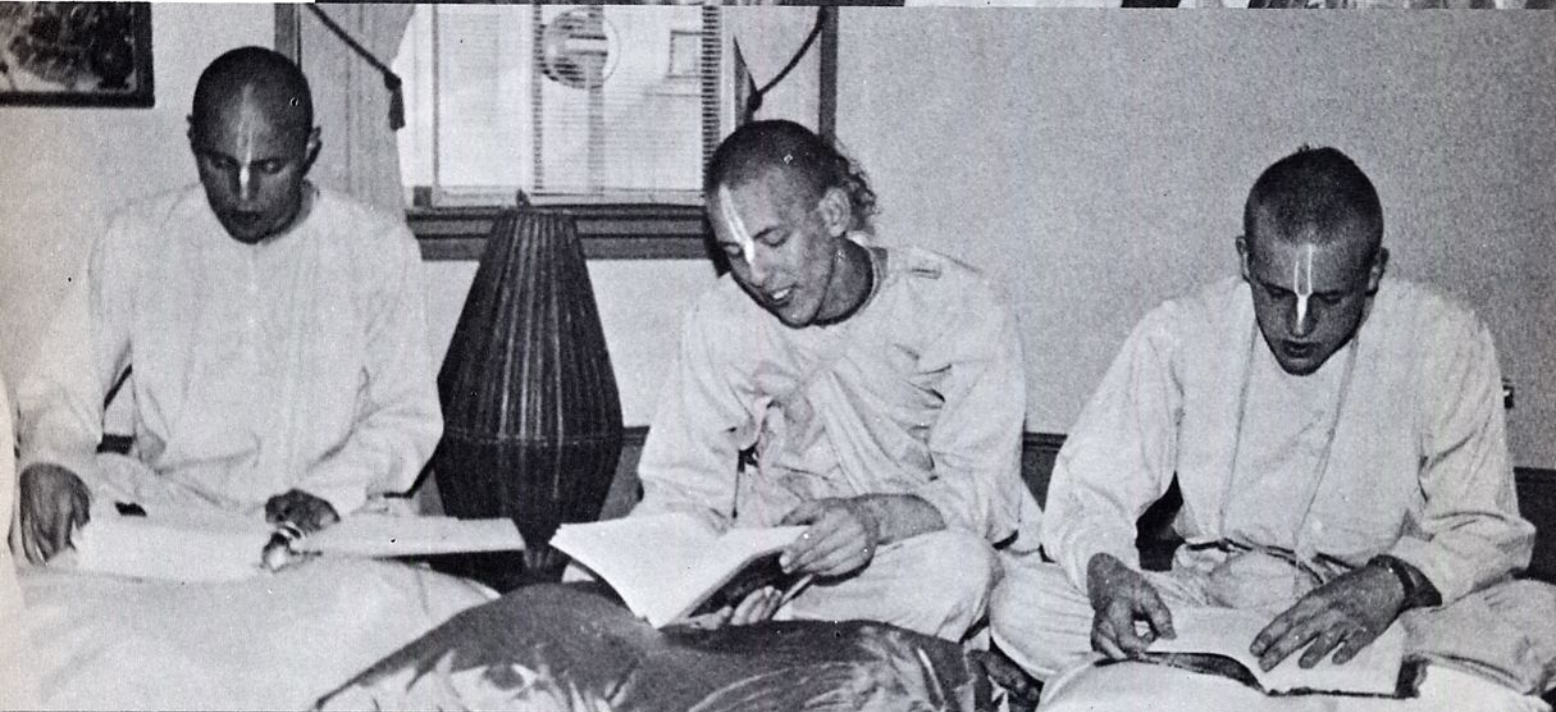


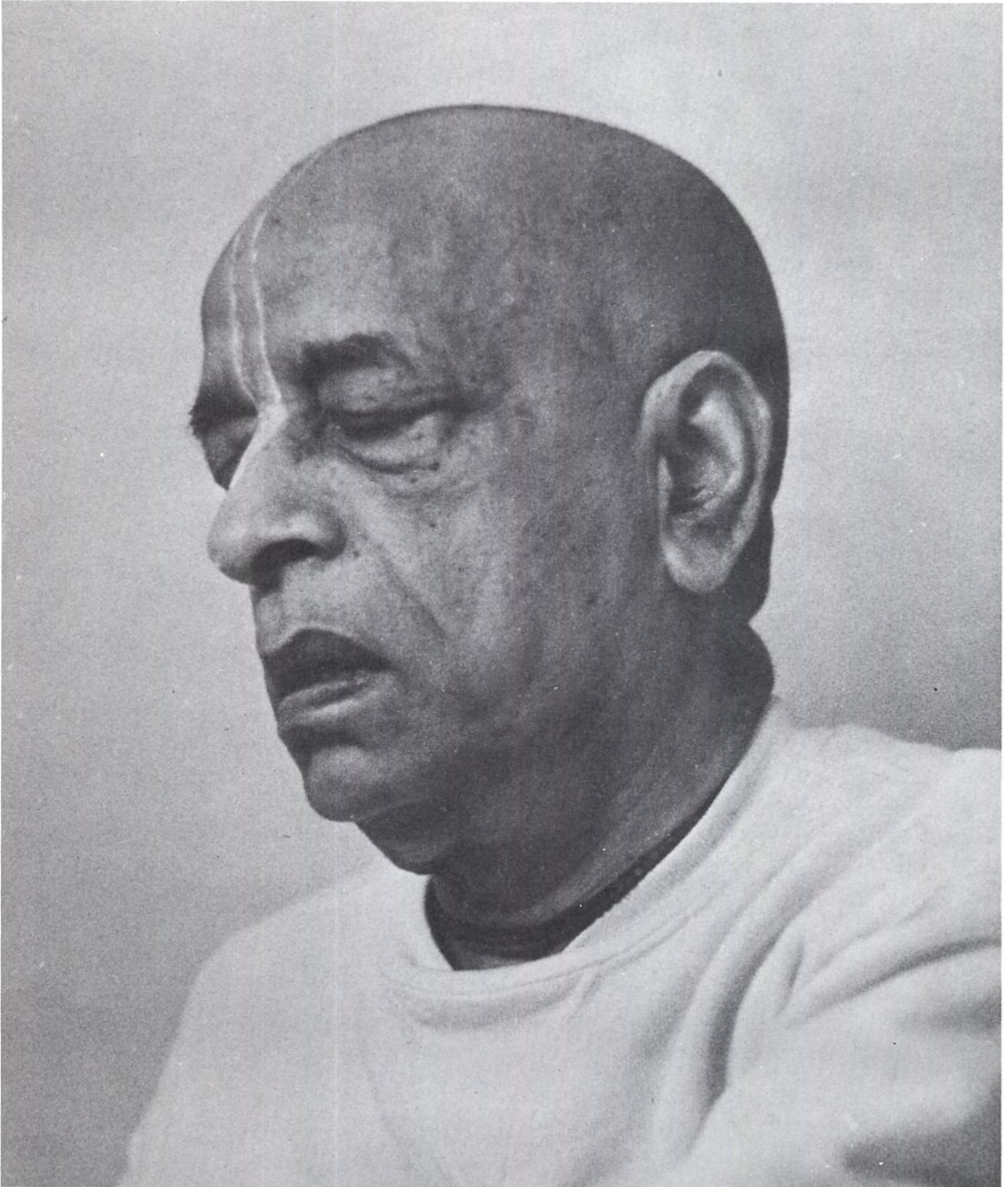
A Kṛṣṇa conscious wedding is performed according to an authorized devotional procedure thousands of years old. The marriage is sanctioned by the spiritual master, the marriage vows are taken in the temple, before the Deities of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and the couple vows that there will be no separation or divorce. In Kṛṣṇa consciousness, marriage is meant for cooperation in executing spiritual life, and not for sense gratification.

Generally the association of woman is very restricted for any man who wishes to seriously make spiritual progress. According to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, however, restriction of association with woman may be slackened in Kṛṣṇa conscious marriage: "If a man or woman's attachment is not to each other but to Kṛṣṇa, then both of them are equally eligible to get out of the material entanglement and reach the abode of Kṛṣṇa." (Bhaktivedanta Purports of the Third Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*)

Pictures: upper left, *Pūjāri* offers incense to the Deities; above, priest seated before ceremonial preparations; lower left, groom marks the bride's forehead with vermilion, indicating that she is now married; upper right, grains are passed for offering into the sacrificial fire; right middle, three *brāhmaṇas* read simultaneously from different scriptures; lower right, the father of the groom smilingly approves his son's wedding in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

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

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

“The spiritual master is receiving benediction from the ocean of mercy. Just as a cloud pours water on a forest fire to extinguish it, so the spiritual master extinguishes the blazing fire of material existence. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of such a spiritual master.”

Verse 1, from the *Gurv-aṣṭakam* by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura



Bottom and top right,
ISKCON Los Angeles

Left and top left,
ISKCON San Francisco



KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS, THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY FOR MANKIND IN THIS AGE

by Jananivas dāsa Brahmācārī (ISKCON Columbus)

This article is a continuation of "Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, the Absolute Necessity for Mankind in This Age," which appeared in BTG No. 34.

What is devotional service? In Chapter Five of *Bhagavad-gītā*, verse 23, Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "Before giving up this present body, if one is able to tolerate the urges of the material senses and check the force of desire and anger, he is a *yogī* and is happy in this world." Then in Chapter Six, verse 2, He says, "What is called renunciation is the same as *yoga*, or linking oneself with the Supreme, for no one can become a *yogī* unless he renounces the desire for sense gratification." Then in verses 10-12, the Lord says, "A transcendentalist should always try to concentrate his mind on the Supreme Self; he should live alone in a secluded place and should always carefully control his mind. He should be free from desires and possessiveness. To practice *yoga*, one should go to a secluded place and should lay *kuśa*-grass on the ground and then cover it with a deerskin and a soft cloth. The seat should neither be too high nor too low and should be situated in a sacred place. The *yogī* should then sit on it very firmly and should practice *yoga* by controlling the mind and the senses, purifying the heart and fixing the mind on one point."

The purport here reads as follows: "sacred place" refers to places of pilgrimage. In India, the *yogīs*, the transcendentalists or the devotees all leave home and reside in sacred places such as Prayāg, Mathurā, Vṛndāvana, Hardwār and practice *yoga* there. A sacred place is where the sacred rivers like the Yamunā and the Ganges flow. Any bank on the rivers Ganges or Yamunā naturally has to be sacred. One should select a place which is secluded and undisturbed. The so-called *yoga* societies in big cities may be successful in earning material benefit, but they are not at all suitable for the actual practices of *yoga*. One who is not self-controlled and whose mind is not undisturbed cannot practice meditation. Therefore, in the *Bṛhan-Nārāḍīya Purāṇa* it is said that in the Kali-yuga (the present age), when people in general are short-living, slow in spiritual realization

and always disturbed by various anxieties, the best means of spiritual realization is to chant the holy name of the Lord. In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy the only means of deliverance is to chant the holy name of the Lord. There is no other way to success."

The chanting of the holy names of Kṛṣṇa is the recommended authoritative method for attaining God realization in this age. Performing devotional service under the expert guidance of a bona fide spiritual master who is in the disciplic succession is the highest *yoga* practice and is recommended for this age.

YOGA TECHNIQUE

The Supreme Lord continues His description of the *yoga* process in verses 13-15. "One should hold one's body, neck, and head erect in a straight line and stare steadily at the tip of the nose. Thus, with an unagitated, subdued mind, devoid of fear, completely free from sex life, one should meditate upon Me within the heart and make Me the ultimate goal of life. By meditating in this manner, always controlling the body, mind and activities, the mystic transcendentalist attains to peace, the supreme *nirvāṇa* which abides in Me."

We can clearly see that the *yoga* process is one of renunciation of material activity. It is a spiritual process and must be followed per prescription if one is to reach the goal. The prescription is given in *Bhagavad-gītā*. Nowadays, many are taking to the *yoga* process seeking improvement in their health or a stronger body. They are simply wasting their valuable time because they still must grow old, get sick and die. No living entity in the material universes escapes birth, death, old age and diseases. Even the demigods who administer these universes according to Kṛṣṇa's supervision and energy must die. It is obvious fact that the great majority of time we have in this life is spent suffering. If I do not investigate the cause of this cosmic manifestation and the reason for this suffering and devote all my time to self-realization to transcend this material platform of existence, then I have wasted my life.

When we are sick with a 107 degree

fever, the process of cure is not to reduce this to 104 degrees, or to 101 degrees, or to 99 degrees. The cure is to be 98.6 degrees all the time. So one should find this out. We are all sick in material existence. Our nature is pure consciousness, pure spirit soul, blissful and full of knowledge, but we are preoccupied, mind and body, with lustful contamination, bondage to material energy. And the more we are bound to bodily attachment, the more there is pain. It is as though we are drowning under the huge waves of the ocean. Now those who are practicing the *yoga* exercises are only temporarily relieving the heavy deluge. They think they are enjoying themselves, but this is not true, for they are still in the middle of the ocean, stranded, and the waves are pounding a little less hard, that's all. This is not enjoyment, for they are still bound by their condition. So in the next lifetime, or the next, or whenever, this will catch up with them, and they will have to work off more and more sinful reaction.

Where is the sin? The sin is that the *yoga* process is given by Kṛṣṇa for realizing Him. It should be executed properly. He tells us that a *yogī* must renounce sense gratification. But the *yogīs* of today are practicing it primarily to sharpen their senses for enjoyment. The materially contaminated senses of the gross body form the network that will bring the soul farther and farther into misery, farther down the evolutionary ladder in his later lifetimes. Forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa is sinful activity.

Therefore, everyone is urged to overcome the desire for personal sense gratification by working in transcendental devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. Such a state is always blissful. The more we want merely to gratify this body and mind (subtle body), then the more we are becoming contaminated with lust, which is like an itch, and the more we scratch, the more we itch. It is insatiable. One day we will realize the corrupt nature of the material consciousness, and we will endeavor to come out of that sick state.

After Kṛṣṇa describes the *sāṅkhya-yoga* system of renunciation and control of the mind through solitary meditation upon Him, Arjuna says, "O Madhusūdana, the system of *yoga* which you have summarized appears impractical and unendurable to me, for the mind is restless and unsteady." (*Gītā* 6.33) His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda points out here that Arjuna, although favorably

endowed in many ways, “belonged to the royal family and was highly elevated in terms of numerous qualities. He was a great warrior, he had great longevity, and above all he was the most intimate friend of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Arjuna had much better facilities than we do, yet he refused this system of *yoga*.”

The quality of man has degenerated so much since then that but for one of two great, great souls, no one should seek spiritual advancement through such *yoga* processes, for he will simply be wasting his valuable time which could be much better spent in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Five thousand years ago, 700,000,000 men fought on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra. Arjuna was one of the greatest generals. The leaders of each side mastered armies of 300,000,000 and 400,000,000 men. They were stationing each man, and the positions of all these men were contained in their minds. We must often strain to remember what we did one hour ago, we could never consider positioning such massive armies. The reason men are becoming so corrupt in this age is due to the features of the Kali age. Material energy is becoming more and more attractive. It is an age of rapid spiritual decline. What is the binding force in Kali-yuga?

In the Third Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord says, “It is lust only, Arjuna, which is born of contact with the material modes of passion and later transformed into wrath, and which is the all-devouring sinful enemy of this world.

“As a fire is covered by smoke, as a mirror is covered by dust, or as the embryo is covered by the womb, similarly the living entity is covered by different degrees of lust.

“Thus, a man’s pure consciousness is covered by his eternal enemy in the form of lust, which is never satisfied and which burns like fire.

“The senses, the mind, and the intelligence are the sitting places of this lust, which veils the real knowledge of the living entity and bewilders him.”

So the lust is veiling the real knowledge (*cit*) of the soul, which is pure and knows Kṛṣṇa in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If the mind is too caught up in this lust, it is bewildered. But by transcending the material platform of consciousness, one can burn lust away. Then the true, eternal reality, in all its bliss and knowledge, will shine throughout. How can this transcendence be achieved? Become a perfect *yogī*.

Who is the perfect *yogī*? In Chapter Six, the Supreme Lord says, “And of all *yogīs*, he who always abides in Me with great faith, worshiping Me in transcendental loving service, is most intimately united with Me in *yoga* and is the highest of all.”

Prabhupada writes in his purport that this verse clearly indicates the *bhakta* or devotee. The *bhakti-yogī* is higher than all the other *yogīs*, including those who work without fruitive result for themselves (*karma-yogīs*), those who engage the mind in philosophical speculation (*jñāna yogīs*), those who meditate on the *om* syllable (*rāja-yogīs*), and those who meditate on the Supersoul expansion of Kṛṣṇa, *Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu*, within the heart and who are following the eightfold system of classic *yoga* (*aṣṭāṅga-yogīs*). The *bhakta* is not only in a more ecstatic state of trance, but he is also a more highly realized *yogī*. This is because he understands his eternal position of rendering transcendental loving service to the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa.

THE DEVOTEE AS YOGĪ

The *aṣṭāṅga-yogī* can meditate for hours and days at length. He can create a planet. He can die at will and can move astrally anywhere in the material universe. But he cannot approach the tip of the toe of the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord. The neophyte *bhakti* is more purely realized because the *aṣṭāṅgī* is still tainted. He is still wanting to be God. Lust, anger and greed. If I open slaughterhouses or I want to be a pseudo *yogī*, what is the difference? I still am trying to exercise my powers over others in a perverted godlike fashion. For this I must only build up sinful reactions which will follow my soul through all the ensuing bodies I take until they are cleansed away. How can I cleanse reactions? By working in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

In Chapter Three, Lord Kṛṣṇa tell us, “All men are forced to act helplessly, according to the impulses born of the modes of material nature; therefore, no one can refrain from doing something, not even for a moment.” And Prabhupada’s purport reads: “This is not a question of embodied life; it is the nature of the soul itself to be always active. The proof is that without the presence of the spirit soul there is no movement of the material body. The body is only a dead vehicle to be worked by the spirit soul, and therefore it is to be understood that the soul is always active and cannot stop even for

a moment. As such, the spirit soul has to be engaged in the good work of Kṛṣṇa consciousness; otherwise it will be engaged in the occupations dictated by the illusory energy.” This last sentence is very important. We understand that our nature is spirit soul, full of bliss, eternity and knowledge, and that the soul is always active and eternally part and parcel of the Supreme Soul. And now we see that, “As such, the soul must be engaged in the good work of Kṛṣṇa consciousness; otherwise it will be engaged in the occupations dictated by the illusory energy.”

Illusory energy—this is called *māyā*. In Chapter Seven the Blessed Lord tells Arjuna, “Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence, and false ego—altogether these eight comprise My separated material energies.” False ego is due to identification with the body with the mind.

In the following verse He says, “Besides this inferior nature, O Arjuna, there is a superior energy of Mine which contains all living entities who are struggling with material nature and which sustains the universe.” So earth, air, water, fire, mind, ether, intelligence and false ego are the inferior potency of the Lord. The superior potency of the Lord is the spiritual potency, the souls. Here we can clearly see that our bodies and minds are composed of the inferior energies, namely earth, air, water, fire, mind, intelligence, ether and false ego. And what is supplying these dead things with life is the living entity situated within, the individual soul or *jīva*.

In the material conception of life, we are identifying ourselves with these inferior forms which are not actually even alive. This is known as *māyā*, or lust. The way to escape from this predicament is to realize that the soul within is eternal and that its real relationship is with Kṛṣṇa and to know that due to our eternal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the soul always remains transcendental to the eight manifestations of material energy. Yet if we confuse the soul’s energy with false ego, then we think that we are a temporary manifestation, this body (actually dead), and then lustful situations develop. Then we want to enjoy independently of Kṛṣṇa, but constitutionally, we cannot. Therefore, we must engage in devotional service to the Supreme Lord in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness in order to transcend this mundane affair.

Kṛṣṇa says in Chapter Two: “While con-

templating the objects of the senses, a person develops attachment for them, and from such attachment lust develops, and from lust anger arises. From anger, delusion arises and from delusion bewilderment of memory. When memory is bewildered, intelligence is lost, and when intelligence is lost one falls down again into the material pool.”

Therefore we must always live transcendental to this material ocean of birth and death, lust, old age and disease. It is clearly understood that the living entity is eternal spirit soul, part and parcel of God. We also have established that this soul is foreign to the material body in which it is lodged. Although a fish is taken out of water and made to live on land and given all the things he would need to be happy on land, he cannot live free of pain. Similarly, we are spirit soul but are conditioned in the material universe by a temporary body. The object, then, is to return to spiritual life. This can be done best through the *bhakti-yoga* process.

The common *yogī* cannot be ultimately successful, and his liberation is only temporary. Because he is not fully realized in love of Godhead, he can merge in the *brahmajyoti*, that is, the effulgence of Lord Kṛṣṇa, but he cannot remain there for more than some few millennia. Then he must return to some planet like the earth where he will take an advanced birth in a *brāhmaṇa* family so that he can become a *bhakta* or a devotee. Only the devotee can be ultimately liberated and attain to the spiritual kingdom of which Kṛṣṇa says in Chapter Eight: “That supreme status is called unmanifested and infallible and is the highest destination. Going there, no one ever returns from that, My supreme abode.”

HIS PIOUS DEEDS EXHAUSTED

Now that abode is not to be thought of as heaven. “Heaven” refers to the higher, more subtle planets of this material world. In heaven the living entities are all very pious and the enjoyment very fine, but still they are subject to the desire to enjoy for themselves, so they also return to the lower earth-like planets, when their reactions for pious deeds must expire. These souls are travelling always about the universe where there are planets and civilizations established through each of the eight material elements, earth, air, water, fire, ether, etc. The earth, for example is a water planet where most of the planet’s surface is water, the bodies are mostly

water, etc. But the supreme abode of the Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is described in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* as the *cin-tāmaṇi-dhāma*. “That abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, known as Goloka Vṛndāvana, is full of palaces made of touchstone. There the trees are called desire-trees, and the cows are called *surabhi*. The Lord is being served by hundreds and thousands of goddesses of fortune—He whose name is Govinda, the Primal Lord and the cause of all causes. There the Lord plays His flute: His eyes are like lotus petals and the color of His body like a beautiful cloud. On His head there is a peacock feather. He is so attractive that He excels thousands of cupids.”

Here something of the infinitely beautiful form of the Lord has been described. It is not a fanciful creation of the imagination formed after visualizing the beautiful things of this world. This is the all-attractive blissful body of Lord Kṛṣṇa as He is eternally. In another place in *Bhagavad-gītā*, at the conclusion of Chapter Six, Prabhupada’s purport concludes, “The ideal *yogī* concentrates his attention on Kṛṣṇa, who is called Śyāmasundara and is beautifully colored like a cloud. His lotus-like face is as effulgent as the sun, and His dress is brilliant. He wears earrings, and His body is flower-garlanded. Illuminating all sides is His gorgeous luster, which is called the *brahmajyoti*. He incarnates in so many different forms, such as Rāma, Nṛsiṁha, Varāha, and Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead; and He descends like a human being, as the son of mother Yaśodā; and He is known as Kṛṣṇa, Govinda and Vāsudeva. He is the perfect child, husband, friend and master, and He is full with all opulences and transcendental qualities.”

The form of the Lord which has been described is, again, no imagined concoction. Rather, this is how the Personality of Godhead is eternally manifest. We are well acquainted with this form because we all know Him as our living, eternal father. The soul has this knowledge, but due to our lust we have been bound in this material ocean for millions of births in different bodies. Some births have been on high, heavenly planets. Some have been on low, hellish planets. Many have been on earth-like, middle planets. Still all have been material, temporary, unreal. The unreality is due to our false ego’s attachment to bodily lust. This lust causes us to become bewildered. Bewilderment results in delusion and loss of memory. Thus we have forgotten the all-blissful Personality of

Godhead due to our wanting personal selfish sense gratification. That’s all.

In the real, eternal world, spiritual abode, which is located beyond the reach of the material senses, everything is full of knowledge. Everything is always blissful. Everything is conscious. The Lord is present there, and He is surrounded by so many individual living entities who are serving Him in love. In this material world where we are exercising our lustful potential in different capacities, we are serving our senses and are deluded by these senses, this body, to act as God. We demand service from everything surrounding us, and we are totally out of contact with the real, eternally existing truth. So this world is the antithesis of the spiritual sky. Here is pain. There is pleasure. Here is temporality. There is eternity. Here, misery. There—bliss. Here God is not manifest to our senses. There, God is directly manifest to the transcendental senses of the spiritual body. The material world is but a perverted reflection of that spiritual sky. It is as if there were a river reflecting a tree on the bank. This world is all illusory energy, just like the illusory tree. The form is there, but it is temporary. If we try to hold it, we cannot be satisfied with it because its nature is ultimately mutable. When there is no sunlight, there is no more tree.

Many people, notably impersonalists, say that God has no form, but clearly we can see the fault is not with form but the nature of the form. Forms are healthy, alive, blissful, eternal, real, etc., or sick, temporary, ultimately dead, endlessly mutable, etc. That is the trouble. The impersonalists just have a poor fund of knowledge. But there are so many revealed scriptures and eternally realized spiritual masters who are completely illumined by the mercy of the Lord, and these realized souls are associating with Him in blissful pastimes. So they can teach others this knowledge. And they state that the Absolute is ultimately a person.

So far, the situation, that we are eternal spirit soul living entities, part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, the original Supreme Personality of Godhead, has been explained. And the problem, that we are in a contaminated atmosphere of material illusion where lust is God, completely alien to our real, eternal life of knowledge, and bliss, has been made apparent. The solution which Kṛṣṇa consciousness teaches is Kṛṣṇa consciousness itself. It is giving direction how to return home, back to Godhead.

END

INSTRUCTIONS BY VIDURA

by Satsvarūpa dāsa Adhikārī (ISKCON Boston)

A transcendentalist is generally not interested in mundane topics such as history and politics, but when the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared in human society 5,000 years ago, the history and politics in which He took part became spiritualized. The transcendental devotees of the Lord take great pleasure in hearing such narratives. The *Mahābhārata*, an important Vedic literature, is such a spiritualized history, and it is accepted by the disciplic succession of spiritual masters as the actual history of Bhāratavarṣa, the ancient land which is now called India. The *Mahābhārata* deals chiefly with the struggles of the Pāṇḍava brothers, great warriors and pious rulers to whom Kṛṣṇa was related as a cousin. Kṛṣṇa's devotees are inseparably one in interest with the Lord, and therefore their activities are also taken to be as good as those of the Lord Himself. There is a famous palace intrigue related in the *Mahābhārata* in which Kṛṣṇa sent one of his pure devotees, Vidura, a brilliant political moralist, to stop an impending war between the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas. For the purification of all readers, we here present a short transcendental history of Kṛṣṇa and His associates, as related in *Mahābhārata* and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

King Dhṛtarāṣṭra, blind from birth, was ruling the kingdom of the world. He is described as being blind both in material and spiritual vision. Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, appeared in the King's court and pleaded for the return of some land which was the rightful property of His powerful but exiled relatives, the Pāṇḍava brothers. Every word Kṛṣṇa speaks, as recorded in scriptures like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Bhagavad-gītā* is relished like nectar by those who are not so entangled in matter that they cannot appreciate the transcendental vibration. But when Kṛṣṇa addressed the assembly of King Dhṛtarāṣṭra and pleaded for a peaceful settlement, the message was not taken very seriously by the King and his one hundred sons, led by Duryodhana. These rulers were thinking themselves independent of the Personality of Godhead and His laws, and they were intent on their own course of destroying the Pāṇḍavas. Due to losing their kingdom in a gambling match, the Pāṇḍavas, the rightful hereditary heirs to the throne, were

exiled for a term of thirteen years. When the period of exile was over, they returned to the kingdom which was rightfully theirs, but were refused even so much as the rule of a single village. In fact, Duryodhana, the leader of the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, said that if the Pāṇḍavas wanted even as much land as can fit under the point of a pin, they would have to fight for it.

IMPENDING WAR

After the rejection of Lord Kṛṣṇa's peace offering, the battle loomed like a large black cloud in the sky. At that late, ominous hour, with the armies already making preparations for battle, King Dhṛtarāṣṭra invited in his elder brother Vidura for consultation. Vidura was an expert minister and politician. His instructions are well known in Vedic literature; just the phrase "instructions by Vidura" indicates policies approved by experts in political and moral principles. Therefore, Dhṛtarāṣṭra expected his words to be exactly to the point.

Vidura came into the presence of King Dhṛtarāṣṭra and his one hundred sons, headed by Duryodhana and Duḥśāsana. The hall was silent, and everyone pressed forward to hear Vidura. Vidura was known by those present to be partial to the Pāṇḍavas, who from the time of their birth had to undergo many attempts on their lives by Dhṛtarāṣṭra. Actually, when the Pāṇḍavas were just babies, Dhṛtarāṣṭra acted as their affectionate and protective uncle, but as soon as they began to grow into strong, competent youths, Dhṛtarāṣṭra realized that these boys, and not his own, would take the throne. He then turned to unfair means in order to dispose of them. According to the Vedic system, after the retirement of the previous king, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, as the eldest son, should have been heir to the throne, but he was disqualified by blindness. Therefore, the next in line was Dhṛtarāṣṭra's brother, Pāṇḍu, who duly reigned. After the early death of King Pāṇḍu, his five sons, the Pāṇḍava brothers, led by Yudhiṣṭhira, the oldest, came in rightful line. But Dhṛtarāṣṭra was determined that his sons, and not the sons of Pāṇḍu, should rule. Due to this illegitimate desire, he had many times tried to kill Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers, Arjuna, Bhīma, Nakula and Sahadeva. Vidura,

however, the younger brother of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, took it upon himself to guard the Pāṇḍavas, just as a bird protects her eggs with her wing.

Vidura was filled with compassion by remembering the continual sufferings caused by Dhṛtarāṣṭra to the Pāṇḍava brothers and their mother, Kuntī. But at the same time, he was a great court philosopher and a true friend to Dhṛtarāṣṭra. There was no doubt of his faithfulness to his brother; even Duryodhana knew this to be so. (Ultimately, after the last miseries of the war, it was shown that Vidura was Dhṛtarāṣṭra's only true friend in the entire royal court.) Called in on the verge of war, Vidura stood in the hall and offered his advice to the blind King. He could not help remembering, however, that this was the same royal hall wherein Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers had lost their kingdom and their wife in a rigged gambling match. Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons, led by Duḥśāsana, had at that time tried to insult the Pāṇḍavas' wife, Draupadī, by first loosening her long hair and then trying to strip her naked in the presence of a large gathering. At that time, Kṛṣṇa, the infinite Lord, had answered the helpless cries of Draupadī, his pure devotee and cousin, and had become her infinite sari. The more the brothers unraveled her sari, the more sari was supplied by Kṛṣṇa, and she was never disrobed. Another time, Dhṛtarāṣṭra ordered a house built, and when the building was finished, he invited his brother's family to live there. But Vidura gave a hint in the presence of all of the members of the royal family that even a weapon not made of steel or any other material element can be the most sharp for killing. Thus he hinted that the Pāṇḍavas were being sent to the house to be killed and that they should be alert. Later he came disguised as a *brāhmaṇa* and directly warned the Pāṇḍavas that on a certain night the house was to be set on fire. Thus the Pāṇḍavas were able to make a timely escape through a tunnel under the earth. Vidura could remember many such plots, and in each case he had given protection to the Pāṇḍavas, while at the same time trying to restrain his brother, Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

Vidura, however, was not about to be influenced by attachment to the Pāṇḍavas; he had the good of his brother at heart, and he spoke in direct words which made him famous among expert ministers in Vedic history as the giver of the keenest political and moral instruction. This is

recorded in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Vidura said, “You have asked me, brother, to come for consultation at this dangerous hour. I say that you must now return the legitimate property of Yudhiṣṭhira, who has no enemy and who has been forebearing through untold sufferings due to your offenses. He is waiting with his younger brothers, among whom is Bhīma, breathing heavily like a snake—surely you are afraid of him.” Vidura offered good counsel, but at his first words, Duryodhana’s face turned with rage. But Vidura spoke on: “Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, has accepted the sons of Pṛthā as His kinsmen, and all the kings of the world are with Lord Kṛṣṇa. He is residing at home with His family members, the royal order of the Yadu dynasty, who have conquered unlimited numbers of rulers. He is their Lord.” Palatably or unpalatably, Vidura wanted to impress on his elder brother that to fight against the Pāṇḍavas would be ruinous for him because they were supported by Lord Kṛṣṇa. Vidura, being saintly, could recognize that Lord Kṛṣṇa was the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, enacting His pastimes upon the earth. The Lord had conquered many powerful demons, even in His childhood, and the Pāṇḍavas themselves, prior to their exile, had won their wives by conquering all the rulers of the world. With Kṛṣṇa as their intimate relative, the Pāṇḍavas had all universal power behind them. Such was Vidura’s advice.

According to the law of *karma*, that Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Duryodhana were born in the royal family and had reached a position of wealth and power indicates that in past lives they had performed pious deeds. But because they could not hear Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself when He spoke sensibly to them on important topics in a grave hour, it is to be understood that the benefits of their past piety were completely exhausted. There was no way now but downward if they refused to accept the Personality of Godhead or the words of His bona fide representative. Vidura was on a welfare mission to save them from the wrong choice. But by now, hearing Vidura, Duryodhana was angry, and he was cursing. It is said that good counsel given to a foolish person causes the fool to become angry, just as feeding milk to a snake only increases its venomous poison. But Vidura gave these final instructions in an attempt to deliver Dhṛtarāṣṭra from the clutches of death:

“You are maintaining offense personi-

fied, Duryodhana, as your infallible son, but he is envious of Lord Kṛṣṇa. And because you are maintaining a nondevotee of Kṛṣṇa, you are devoid of all auspicious qualities. Free yourself from this inauspicious condition as soon as possible, for the good of your entire family.”

Duryodhana could stand it no longer, and he delivered a direct insult, like an arrow to the ears of the famous minister, Vidura: “Who asked him to come here, this son of a kept-mistress? He is so crooked that he spys in the interest of the enemy, against those upon whose support he has grown up. Get him out of here immediately. Take all he has, cane him and leave him with only his breath!”

The actual facts behind this slanderous attack by Duryodhana were as follows. When getting married, the kings in Vedic society would take on several other young girls along with the married princess. By intimate association with the king, these girls, called *dāsīs*, would have sons. Such sons had no royal claim, but they were raised with all the facilities of princes. Vidura was such a son of a *dāsī*. Duryodhana not only attacked his birth, but he called him a spy because he seemed to support the cause of Yudhiṣṭhira, whom Duryodhana took to be his enemy. Duryodhana actually knew well that Vidura was a great soul and was Dhṛtarāṣṭra’s well-wisher, but, caught up in political intrigue, Duryodhana had become blind to the actual situation. Therefore he slandered his uncle Vidura and threatened to drive him from the palace. Dhṛtarāṣṭra had always been affectionate to his younger brother, Vidura, but he tolerated the insults by Duryodhana because he and his sons were set on wiping out the pious Pāṇḍavas once and for all.

KṚṢṆA’S ADVICE REJECTED

Duryodhana is understood from the first verses of *Bhagavad-gītā* to be a brilliant administrator and political leader. But the most important thing he didn’t know. Absorbed in false ego, Duryodhana thought that he was doing everything by himself. Actually, Duryodhana, like every conditioned soul in the material world, is under the direct control of God. In the Bhaktivedanta Purports to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is stated: “The external energy of the Lord, or the material nature, is fully under the control of the Supreme Lord, and the conditioned soul is fully under the grip of the external energy.

Therefore, the conditioned soul is fully under the control of the law of the Lord. But, illusioned, he thinks that he is independent in his activities.”

Duryodhana refused the instructions of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and plotted his own destiny in terms of removing Vidura and warring against the Pāṇḍavas. We can understand that only the first act—rejecting the personal instructions of God—was factually performed freely, of his own volition. According to the revealed scriptural sources, our minute amount of free will can be exercised in choosing either to follow the dictation of God or to follow the dictation of His material energy, *māyā*. There is no other choice. Once one refuses God, one must follow His material energy. Whatever one’s personal philosophy may be, one must grow old, one must be subjected to diseases and material miseries (miseries caused by the body and mind, miseries caused by other living entities, and miseries caused by natural disturbances like earthquakes, droughts, etc.), and eventually one must die. And after death, one must go wherever nature sends one. By the law of *karma*, action is necessarily followed by reaction, and all actions in the world take place under mixed modes of goodness, passion and ignorance. The Vedic understanding is that God is transcendental to the material laws and conditions—He is their master. He is eternal, free and unlimited in knowledge and pleasure, and when we, the infinitesimal individual souls, dovetail our own small amount of free will with His, then we can directly experience those same qualities of bliss, eternity and knowledge. By that dovetailing process, we can be freed from the misgivings of the body, mind and intelligence and can be situated on the transcendental plane. But when, instead, we come to this material world due to forgetfulness of the Supreme Person, then our plight (from which only the pure devotees of Godhead are excluded) is that we suffer a covering of our eternally pleasurable qualitative oneness with the Supreme Spirit.

We think, “I am this body,” but actually the real person is still spirit soul; due to contacting a material body, however, the spirit soul finds himself frustrated by an incompatible situation, like a fish on land. The example given by the spiritual masters is that the spirit can be compared to electric force. Electricity is unlimited in the tasks it can perform—it can heat, cool, drive

giant machines, etc.—but once the unlimited electricity is put into one limited appliance, it can perform only a limited function. For example, the electricity in a toaster can do nothing else but make toast. The electricity has become limited or conditioned in its expression due to the vehicle in which it is confined. Similarly, thinking that we are this body, we are forced to react in terms of goodness, passion and ignorance within the material world, under the control of the inferior material energy. In material consciousness, we are no more free than a cow tied to the end of a rope: even if the rope is long, the cow is still not free.

When God or His pure devotee speaks, that is direct, superior, spiritual energy; by following His will directly, one can return to one's original, eternal, happy state of consciousness, both immediately, in this body, as well as in the next life, after the demise of the body. The atheist or materialist who misuses his free will and derides the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, must nevertheless come under the strict superintendence of the material energy. Thus, one may think oneself the almighty supreme enjoyer, the benefactor and proprietor of all, but despite these grand illusions, one must be limited by God's material laws. Duryodhana is the typical materialist of the present civilization of Kali-yuga (the age of quarrel). He had just heard Vidura criticize him for being a nondevotee of Kṛṣṇa, and he at once affirmed this status by insulting and threatening bodily harm to Vidura. This is the height of rascaldom, adopted here by Duryodhana; he wants to beat Vidura, whose only offense is that he is speaking the truth, that God is great and we are small. The Kali-yuga materialists in today's godless civilization are also intent on destroying the brahminical culture and denying the advice of the bona fide spiritual teachers. "Why should I listen to God? Who is God? I am God! I shall enjoy as I like." These are materialists' symptomatic responses to brahminical or spiritual guidance. It will be seen in the case of Duryodhana that thinking himself to be God Almighty did not prevent him from being broken to pieces on the battlefield and ruining all his allies.

Under the illusion of material energy, he could not see the best course for his people, and therefore he led them into war. But even the present-day peacemakers who are trying to secure peace without authoritative spiritual guidance are finding

no success. They are trying to establish Utopia—the kingdom of God without God—but it cannot be. As the expert politician Vidura said, a path without God is inauspicious for the state, the society, the family, and the individual. We can get no profit by saying that we are God or by trying to conquer the material nature, but we can gain all good fortune in this world if we can be directly led by the superior, spiritual energy of Godhead, which comes in the form of guidance from the pure devotees of the Absolute Truth. In his materialistic folly, thinking he was independent, Duryodhana was the dreamer, off in the clouds. In contrast, Vidura shrewdly offered Dhṛtarāṣṭra the key to success.

But the Battle of Kurukṣetra was not avoided. As for Vidura, he took the opportunity of Duryodhana's insult as a blessing in disguise. He saw that Duryodhana was on the path of ruin. As a devotee, he also saw that the Lord's internal energy was helping him to come back to Godhead. A devotee is always in a temperament of renunciation because the worldly attractions can never satisfy him. Vidura had never been attracted by the royal palace of his brother, and now he had the opportunity, by the grace of Duryodhana, to quit the place and devote himself completely to the transcendental loving service of the Lord. Instead of being sorry, he thanked Duryodhana from within because he had given him the chance to live alone in a holy place and thus be fully engaged in the cultivation of spiritual life. Also, he saw no more hope in defending his brother, so he left the palace without Duryodhana's taking physical steps for his removal.

Srīmad-Bhāgavatam describes the fate of General Duryodhana on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra: "Duryodhana lost his good fortune, as well as his life, because of the intricacy of ill advice given by Karṇa, Duḥśāsana, etc. Although he was very powerful, he finally lay on the ground, his thighs broken, and his followers were with him." It is described that Kṛṣṇa is harder than a thunderbolt to the wrongdoers and softer than a rose to the devotees. Duryodhana was misled by bad associates and ill advice, contrary to the established principles of the Lord's order, and so he became subject to punishment.

Of course, ultimately, anyone who can be so fortunate as to associate directly

with the Personality of Godhead when He appears in this universe to enact His pastimes is liberated as a final result. In this way, all the soldiers and sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra who were able to see the Lord at the time of their death and could appreciate the beauty of His face and features were transferred, in their original spiritual forms, to the spiritual sky, beyond the material universes which are limited by death and pain. That is the version of the Vedic texts.

As previously stated, the banished saint Vidura turned out to be the only true friend of King Dhṛtarāṣṭra. After the war, the defeated, blind Dhṛtarāṣṭra, whose sons had all been killed, wanted to remain as King in the palace. As a matter of duty, King Yudhiṣṭhira, the leader of the victorious Pāṇḍavas, maintained Dhṛtarāṣṭra in royal honor. Dhṛtarāṣṭra, therefore, was happily passing away his numbered days in the illusion that he was the royal uncle of King Yudhiṣṭhira. At that time, Vidura returned from traveling to holy places all over the earth and especially from inquiring on transcendental topics from the great sage Maitreya. Vidura had of course been thoroughly involved in court politics, but after being thrown out of the palace by Dhṛtarāṣṭra and his son Duryodhana, he had taken full advantage of existing conditions and had become fully Kṛṣṇa conscious, fixed in loving service to the Supreme Lord, by taking instructions from a great devotee-sage. He was therefore received as a godly person on his return to the palace. The court personalities and his kinsmen like Yudhiṣṭhira and the Pāṇḍavas, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Kuntī, Draupadī and many others with their wives and children, in a tearful post-war reunion, all rushed to hear and see him. The *Bhāgavatam* says that when the court family saw Vidura again after the long separation, it was as if their lost consciousness was revived. They gathered around him like students sitting before a teacher. They were very eager to hear spiritual instructions from him, and they listened with rapt attention. Vidura spoke for the welfare of all, but he especially directed himself to his oldest brother, Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

Vidura knew the situation of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, and he addressed him as follows: "My dear King, please get out immediately. Do not delay in the least. Just see how fearfulness has overtaken you. You are very old, and there is no remedial measure for your death. My

brother, please understand that death is identical with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and it is approaching for all of us. Your father, sons and well-wishers are all dead, your body is overtaken by invalidity, and here at the last stage you are living in another's home. You have been blind from birth, and recently you have become hard of hearing. Your teeth are loosened, your liver is diseased, and you are coughing with mucus."

Vidura's words cut to pieces the network of illusion in which he found his brother rotting. Vidura addressed him as King because actually he was not the King. Overtaken by foolish ideas, Dhṛtarāṣṭra was living for temporary comforts and was trying to make a permanent settlement for his perishable body. Vidura's sharp but compassionate words were to wake up his brother so that, before it was too late, he could make progress for the welfare of his real self, his eternal soul.

Vidura said: "Alas! So powerful is the living being's hope to continue life indefinitely. You are living just like a household dog and taking scraps of food from the warrior who killed your son Duryodhana!" Vidura did not avoid the naked truth of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's humiliating position. Dhṛtarāṣṭra was living at the house of the Pāṇḍavas because he wanted to continue his comfortable life, even at the cost of being humiliated. Vidura pointed out to him that the whole *raison d'être* of the human form of life is to get a chance to wake up to self-realization and to go back to Godhead, where life is eternal and from where, once going, no one comes back to this material world. "There is no necessity of living a degraded life," Vidura

continued, "subsisting on the charity of those whom you tried to kill. In spite of your desires, your body will certainly dwindle and die, like an old, deteriorated garment."

Wakened in no uncertain terms by his well-wishing brother, Dhṛtarāṣṭra left the palace without saying anything, and under the guidance of Vidura, he sat on the bank of the Ganges and engaged in the beginning of *yoga* practice. He took regular baths, performed special sacrifices and fasted by drinking only water. This helped him to control his mind and senses and to free himself from thoughts of family affection. Due to his offenses at the feet of pure devotees, the Pāṇḍavas, Dhṛtarāṣṭra was not able to become a pure devotee of the Personality of Godhead, but by the grace of Vidura, and to the astonishment of all the court, Dhṛtarāṣṭra was able to cut himself off from all external sense attraction and concentrate on his pure being. The *Bhāgavatam* describes, "He had to amalgamate his pure identity with intelligence and then, with knowledge of being qualitatively one with the supreme eternal living entity, merge into the impersonal aspect of the Supreme Being. Thus he rescued his consciousness from the clutches of the five elements and realized his qualitative identity with the eternal Supersoul who is sitting in everyone's heart." Practicing under the instructions of Vidura, Dhṛtarāṣṭra achieved the impersonal perfection of liberation from his body, and after many such liberated births, he transcended the material sky to become engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. Despite Dhṛtarāṣṭra's many offenses, the Lord's mercy was bestowed

on him by his contact with Vidura, and he was able to attain the perfectional stage. He quit his body by turning it into ashes in a self-made fire of mystic power.

LIBERATION

Vidura was sorry that he could not turn his brother into a pure devotee in one lifetime, but he was most liberal in his benediction, and so Dhṛtarāṣṭra's time before reaching the topmost perfection was shortened. Ultimately the result depends on the will of the Supreme Lord, and in one lifetime Dhṛtarāṣṭra attained liberation from the material conception of bodily consciousness. Only after achieving such a liberated state can one attain to devotional service.

The conditioned entities are suffering under the illusion that the body is the self and that the temporary world is permanent. Although they have no information of God or eternal pleasure, they can become engaged in the eternal, blissful activities of devotional service to the Supreme Lord by becoming wholly dependent on the instructions of pure devotees like Vidura. One should not only inquire but should render loving service to pure devotees and surrender to them. Only then is inquiry meaningful and fruitful. In no other way can one gain real knowledge of one's position. That is the secret of spiritual knowledge or knowledge of God or Kṛṣṇa: it is revealed from within the heart after serving a pure devotee and receiving instruction from him.

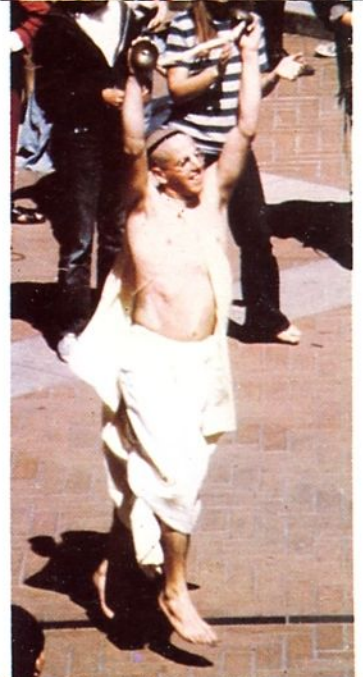
END

On the front cover: Going beyond the reverent worship of God as the almighty controller, the pure devotees of Godhead exchange intimate love with the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa in His eternal loving pastimes in Kṛṣṇaloka, the topmost spiritual abode in the kingdom of God. There Kṛṣṇa is loved as a friend, a child, and as the lover of the *gopīs*. He engages in natural pastimes in the forests of Vṛndāvana and is here shown with His brother Balarāma, tending the transcendental cows.

On the back cover: Kṛṣṇa and His cowherd friends are seen returning home at sunset after a day of tending the cows, playing, and killing great demons sent by Kṛṣṇa's enemy Kaṁsa. Mother Yaśodā and Kṛṣṇa's father are greeting him at the door. In *The Nectar of Devotion* by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Nanda, Kṛṣṇa's father, is quoted as saying, "My dear Yaśodā, just look at your offspring Kṛṣṇa. See His blackish bodily luster, His eyes tinged with red color, His broad chest and His nice golden necklace. How wonderful He looks, and how He is increasing my transcendental pleasure more and more!"



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