

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



BACK TO GODHEAD

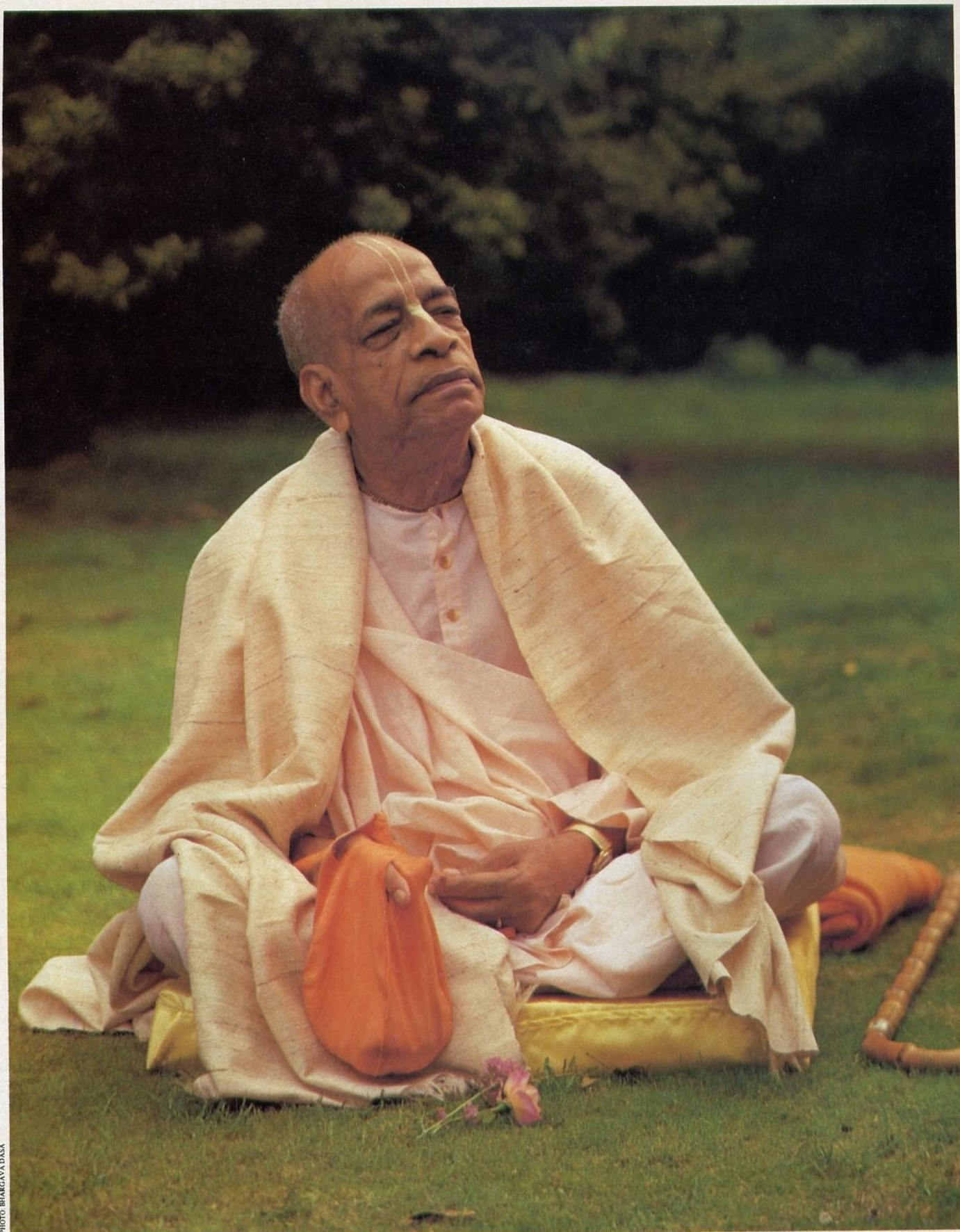


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THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



A Look at the Unlimited



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

BACK TO GODHEAD

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A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda

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SENIOR EDITOR Jayādvaita Svāmī

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COPY EDITORS Jitātula dāsa, Kṣamā-devī dāśī

SANSKRIT EDITOR Gopīparādhana dāsa

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ART Naranārāyaṇa dāsa, Parikṣit dāsa, Yadurāṇī-devī
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PRONUNCIATION. Sanskrit words and names in
BACK TO GODHEAD are spelled according to a scholar-
ly system that shows how to pronounce each word.
The sound of the short **a** is like the **u** in **but**. Long **ā** is
like the **a** in **far** and held twice as long as the short **a**,
and **e** is like the **a** in **evade**. Long **i** is like the **i** in **pique**.
The vowel **ṛ** is pronounced like the **ri** in the English
word **rim**. The **ṛ** is pronounced as in **chair**. The aspir-
ated consonants (**ch**, **jh**, **dh**, etc.) are pronounced as
in **staunch**-heart, **hedge**-hog and **red**-hot. The two
spirants **ś** and **ṣ** are like the English **sh**, and **s** is like the
s in **sun**. So pronounce **Kṛṣṇa** as **KRISHNA** and
Caitanya as **CHAITANYA**.

◀ His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami
Prabhupāda came to America in 1965, at age seventy,
to fulfill his spiritual master's request that he teach the
English-speaking world the science of Kṛṣṇa con-
sciousness. In a dozen years he published some sev-
enty volumes of translation and commentary on In-
dia's Vedic literatures, and these are now standard
course and reference books in universities worldwide.
Meanwhile, traveling almost nonstop, Śrīla Prabhu-
pāda molded his international society into a worldwide
confederation of *āśramas*, schools, temples, institutes,
and farm communities. He passed away at Lord
Kṛṣṇa's birthplace (Vṛndāvana, India) in 1977, and his
disciples are carrying on the movement he started.

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COVER: A Look at the Unlimited. During His most recent appearance on earth,
some fifty centuries ago, Lord Kṛṣṇa showed mother Yaśodā and His other devo-
tees that He is indeed unlimited—not just in greatness but in personal attractive-
ness. (See page 33.) (Cover art by Sulakṣmaṇa-devī dāśī.)

ABOUT BACK TO GODHEAD: "Godhead is light" has always been BACK TO GODHEAD's byword—"Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience." Godhead means the source of everything, and this journal is meant to assist readers in cultivating practical, scientific realization of Godhead. To this end BACK TO GODHEAD explores the ideas presented in ancient India's Vedic literatures, especially *Bhagavad-gītā*. As the *Gītā* itself informs us, "When one is enlightened with the knowl-
edge by which nescience is destroyed, then his knowledge reveals everything, as the sun lights up everything in the daytime."



... રલિગિયન, ત્રુથફુલનેદ્દ, તેદાનીનેદ્દ
લદલત્યુ ગોી ગોી વેદવેદાદ્દ

Fifty centuries ago a great sage looked into the future and told us just what to expect. . .

PREDICTIONS FOR THE AGE OF HYPOCRISY

An address based on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* of Kṛṣṇa-Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, given by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda in Los Angeles during the summer of 1974.

*tataś cānudināṁ dharmāḥ
satyaṁ śaucam kṣamā dayā
kālena balinā rājan
naṅkṣyaty āyur balaṁ smṛtiḥ*

“My dear King, with each day religion, truthfulness, cleanliness, forgiveness, mercy, duration of life, bodily strength, and memory will all decrease more and more by the mighty force of time.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 12.2.1)

This description of the Kali-yuga [the present Age of Quarrel and Hypocrisy] is given in the Twelfth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was written five thousand years ago, when the Kali-yuga was about to begin, and many things that would happen in the future are spoken of there. Therefore we accept *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as *śāstra* [revealed scripture]. The compiler of *śāstra* (the *śāstra-kāra*) must be a liber-

ated person so that he can describe past, present, and future.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* you will find many things which are foretold. There is mention of Lord Buddha’s appearance and Lord Kalki’s appearance. [Lord Kalki will appear at the end of the Kali-yuga.] There is also mention of Lord Caitanya’s appearance, although the *Bhāgavatam* was written five thousand years ago. *Tri-kāla-jñā*: the writer knew



past, present, and future.

So here Śukadeva Gosvāmī is describing the chief symptoms of this age. He says, *tataś cānudinam*: with the progress of this age (Kali-yuga), *dharma*, religious principles; *satyam*, truthfulness; *śaucam*, cleanliness; *kṣamā*, forgiveness; *dayā*, mercifulness; *āyur*, duration of life; *balam*, bodily strength; *smṛti*, memory—these eight things will gradually decrease to nil or almost nil.

Of course, there are other *yugas* besides Kali-yuga. During the Satya-yuga, which lasted eighteen hundred thousand years, human beings lived for one hundred thousand years. The duration of the next age, the Tretā-yuga, was twelve hundred thousand years, and the people of that age used to live for ten thousand years. In other words, the duration of life was ten times reduced. In the next age, Dvāpara-yuga, the life span was again ten times reduced—people used to live for one thousand years—and the duration of the Dvāpara Age was eight hundred thousand years. Then, in

the next age, this Kali-yuga, we can live up to one hundred years at the utmost. We are not living one hundred years, but still, the limit is one hundred years. So just see: from one hundred years the average duration of life has decreased to about seventy years. And it will eventually decrease to the point where if a man lives for twenty to thirty years, he will be considered a very old man.

Another symptom of the Kali-yuga predicted in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the decrease in memory (*smṛti*). We see nowadays that people do not have very sharp memories—they forget easily. They may hear something daily, yet still they forget it. Similarly, bodily strength (*balam*) is decreasing. You can all understand this, because you know that your father or grandfather was physically stronger than you are. So, bodily strength is decreasing, memory is decreasing, and the duration of life is decreasing—and all of this is predicted in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Another symptom of Kali-yuga is the

decrease in religion.

There is practically no question of religion in this age—it has almost decreased to nil. No one is interested in religion. The churches and temples are being closed, locked up. The building we are sitting in was once a church, but it was sold because no one was coming. Similarly, we are purchasing a very big church in Australia, and in London I have seen many hundreds of vacant churches—no one is going there. And not only churches: in India also, except for a few important temples, the ordinary, small temples are being closed. They have become the habitation of the dogs. So *dharma*, religion, is decreasing.

Truthfulness, cleanliness, and forgiveness are also decreasing. Formerly, if someone did something wrong, the other party would forgive him. For example, Arjuna was tortured by his

enemies, yet still, on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra he said, “Kṛṣṇa, let me leave. I don’t want to kill them.” This is forgiveness. But now, even for a small insult people will kill. This is going on. Also, there is now no mercifulness (*dayā*). Even if you see someone being killed in front of you, you will not take interest. These things are happening already. So, religion, truthfulness, cleanliness, forgiveness, mercifulness, duration of life, bodily strength, and memory—these eight things will decrease, decrease, decrease, decrease. When you see these symptoms, you should know the age of Kali is making progress.

Another symptom is *vittam eva kalau nṛṇām janmācāra-guṇodayaḥ*: “In Kali-yuga, a man’s qualities and social position will be calculated according to the extent of his wealth.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 12.2.2] Formerly a man’s position was calculated according to his spiritual understanding. For example, a *brāhmaṇa* was honored because he knew *brahma*—he was aware of the Supreme Spirit. But now in Kali-yuga there are actually no *brāhmaṇas*, because people are taking the title of *brāhmaṇa* simply by *janma*, or birthright. Previously there was also birthright, but one was actually known according to his behavior. If a man was born in a *brāhmaṇa* family or a *kṣatriya* [administrative or military] family, he had to behave like a *brāhmaṇa* or *kṣatriya*. And it was the king’s duty to see that no one was falsely representing himself. In other words, respectability was awarded according to culture and education. But nowadays, *vittam eva kalau nṛṇām*: if you get money somehow or other, then everything is available. You may be a third-class or a fourth-class or a tenth-class man, but if you get money somehow or other, then you are very much respected. There is no question of your culture or education or knowledge. This is Kali-yuga.

Another symptom of Kali-yuga: *dharma-nyāya-vyavasthāyām kāraṇam balaṁ eva hi*: “Religious principles and justice will be determined by a show of strength.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 12.2.2] If you have some influence, then everything will be decided in your favor. You may be the most irreligious person, but if you can bribe a priest he will certify that you are religious. So character will be decided by money, not by actual qualification. Next is *dāmpatyē bhiruciḥ hetur māyaiva vyāvahārike*: “Marriages will be arranged according to temporary affection, and to be a successful businessman one will have to cheat.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 12.2.3] The rela-

tionship between husband and wife will depend on *abhiruci*, their liking each other. If a girl likes a boy and a boy likes a girl, then they think, “All right, now let the marriage take place.” No one ever knows what the future of the girl and boy will be. Therefore everyone becomes unhappy. Six months after marriage—divorce. This is because the marriage took place simply on the basis of superficial liking, not deep understanding.

Formerly, at least in India during my time, marriages did not take place because the boy and girl liked each other. No. Marriages were decided by the parents. I married when I was a student, but I did not know who my wife would be; my parents arranged everything.

“ ‘Religious principles and justice will be determined by a show of strength.’ If you have some influence, then everything will be decided in your favor.”

Another example is Dr. Rajendra Prasada, the first president of India. In his biography he wrote that he married at the age of eight. Similarly, my father-in-law married when he was eleven years old, and my mother-in-law when she was seven. So the point is that formerly, in India, marriage took place only after an astrological calculation of past, present, and future had determined whether the couple would be happy in their life together. When marriage is thus sanctified, the man and the woman live peacefully and practice spiritual culture. Each one helps the other, so they live very happily and become advanced in spiritual life. And at last they go back home, back to Godhead. That is the system. Not that a grown-up girl and a grown-up boy mix together, and if he

likes her and she likes him they get married, and then he leaves or she leaves . . . This kind of marriage was not sanctioned. But of this Kali-yuga it is said, *dāmpatyē bhiruciḥ*: marriage will take place simply because of mutual liking, that’s all. Liking one moment means disliking the next moment. That is a fact. So a marriage based on mutual liking has no value.

The next symptoms of this age are *strīve pumṣve ca hi ratir vipratve sūtram eva hi*: a husband and wife will stay together only as long as there is sex attraction, and *brāhmaṇas* [saintly intellectuals], will be known only by their wearing a sacred thread.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 12.2.3] *Brāhmaṇas* are offered a sacred thread. So now people are thinking, “Now I have a sacred thread, so I have become a *brāhmaṇa*. I may act like a *caṇḍāla* [dog-eater], but it doesn’t matter.” This is going on. One doesn’t understand that as a *brāhmaṇa* he has so much responsibility. Simply because he has the two-cent sacred thread, he thinks he has become a *brāhmaṇa*. And *strīve pumṣve ca hi ratiḥ*: a husband and wife will remain together because they like each other, but as soon as there will be some sex difficulty, their affection will slacken.

Another symptom of Kali-yuga is *avṛtyā nyāya-daurbalyam pāṇḍitye cāpalam vacaḥ*: “Those without money will be unable to get justice, and anyone who can cleverly juggle words will be considered a scholar.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 12.2.4] If you have no money, then you will never get justice in court. This is Kali-yuga. Nowadays even the high-court judges are taking bribes to give you a favorable judgement. But if you have no money, then don’t go to court. And *pāṇḍitye cāpalam vacaḥ*. If a man can talk expertly—it doesn’t matter what he says, and nobody has to understand it—then he is a *pāṇḍita*. He is a learned scholar. [Imitating gibberish:] “Aban gulakslena bugavad tugalad kulela gundulas, by the latricism of wife . . .” Like this, if you go on speaking, no one will understand you [laughter], yet people will say, “Ah, see how learned he is.” [Laughter.] This is actually happening. There are so many rascals writing books, but if you ask one of them to explain what he has understood, he’ll say, “Oh, it is inexplicable.” These things are going on.

Next *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says,

*anāḍhyataivāsādhutve
sādhutve dambha eva tu
svikāra eva codvāhe
snānam eva prasādhanam*

“Lack of wealth will be looked on as dishonorable, while a proud person who can put on a show will be thought pious. Marriage will be based on arbitrary agreement, and simply taking a bath will be considered proper cleansing and decoration of the body.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 12.2.5]

First *anāḍhyatā*: if you are a poor man, then you are dishonorable. People will think that a man is not honorable because he does not know how to earn money by hook or crook. And *svikāra eva codvāhe*: marriages will take place by agreement. This is being experienced in your country, and in my country also. The government appoints a marriage magistrate, and any boy and girl who want to can simply go to him and get married. Maybe there is some fee. “Yes, we agree to marry,” they say, and he certifies that they are married. Formerly, the father and mother used to select the bride and bridegroom by consulting an astrologer who could see the future. Nowadays marriage is taking place according to *svikāra*, agreement.

Another symptom is *dūre vāry-ayanam tīrtham lāvanyam keśa-dhāraṇam* “Just going to some faraway river will be considered a proper pilgrimage, and a man will think he is beautiful if he has long hair.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 12.2.6] Just see how perfectly Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam predicts the future. “In Kali-yuga a man will think he has become very beautiful by keeping long hair.” You have very good experience of this in your country. Who could have known that people would be interested in keeping long hair? Yet that is stated in the *Bhāgavatam*: *keśa-dhāraṇam*. *Keśa* means “long hair” and *dhāraṇam* means “keeping.” Another symptom is *dūre vāry-ayanam tīrtham*: people will think that a place of pilgrimage must be far away. For example, the Ganges flows through Calcutta, but no one cares to take a bath in the Calcutta Ganges; they’d rather go to Hardwar. It is the same Ganges. The Ganges is coming from Hardwar down to the Bay of Bengal. But people would rather suffer so much hardship to go to Hardwar and take a bath there, because that has become a *tīrtha*, a place of pilgrimage. Every religion has a *tīrtha*. The Muslims have Mecca and Medina and the Christians have Golgotha. Similarly, the Hindus also think they must travel very far to find a *tīrtha*. But actually, *tīrthi-kurvanti tīrthāni*: a *tīrtha* is a place where there are saintly persons. That is a *tīrtha*. Not that one goes ten thousand miles and simply takes a dip in the water and then comes back.

The next symptoms are:

*udaram-bharatā svārthaḥ
satyatve dhārṣṭyam eva hi
dākṣyaṁ kuṭumba-bharaṇam
yaśo ’rthe dharma-sevanam*

“The purpose of life will consist simply of filling one’s stomach, and audacity will become equivalent to conclusive truth. If a man can even maintain his own family members, he will be honored as very expert, and religiosity will be measured by a person’s reputation for material accomplishments.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 12.2.6] So, if somehow one can eat very sumptuously, then he will think all his interests are fulfilled. People will be very hungry, with nothing to eat,

“... Another symptom of Kali-yuga: ‘Those without money will be unable to get justice, and anyone who can cleverly juggle words will be considered a scholar.’”

and therefore if they can eat very sumptuously on one day, that will be the fulfillment of all their desires. The next symptom is *satyatva dhārṣṭyam eva hi*: anyone who is expert at word jugglery will be considered very truthful. Another symptom: *dākṣyaṁ kuṭumba-bharaṇam*: one shall be considered very expert if he can maintain his family—his wife and children. In other words, this will become very difficult. In fact, it has already become difficult. To maintain a wife and two children is now a great burden. Therefore no one wants to marry.

The next verse describes what will happen when all the people have been thus infected by the poison of Kali-yuga.

*evam prajābhir duṣṭābhir
ākīrṇe kṣiti-maṇḍale*

*brahma-viṭ-kṣatra-śūdrāṇām
yo balī bhavitā nṛpaḥ*

It won’t matter whether one is a *brāhmaṇa* [a learned and pure intellectual] or a *kṣatriya* [an administrator or soldier] or a *vaiśya* [a merchant or farmer] or a *śūdra* [a laborer] or a *caṇḍāla* [a dog-eater]. If one is powerful in getting votes, he will occupy the presidential or royal post. Formerly the system was that only a *kṣatriya* could occupy the royal throne, not a *brāhmaṇa*, *vaiśya*, or *śūdra*. But now, in the Kali-yuga, there is no such thing as a *kṣatriya* or a *brāhmaṇa*. Now we have democracy. Anyone who can get your votes by hook or crook can occupy the post of leader. He may be rascal number one, but he will be given the supreme, exalted, presidential post. The *Bhāgavatam* describes these leaders in the next verse:

*prajā hi lubdhai rājanyair
nirghṛṇair dasyu-dharmabhiḥ
ācchinna-dāra-draviṇā
yāsyanti giri-kānanam*

“The citizens will be so oppressed by merciless rogues in the guise of rulers that they will give up their spouses and property and flee to the hills and forests.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 12.2.8] So, the men who acquire a government post by vote are mostly *lubdhai rājanyaiḥ*, greedy government men. *Nirghṛṇair dasyu*: their business is plundering the public. And we actually see that every year the government men are exacting heavy taxes, and whatever money is received they divide among themselves, while the citizens’ condition remains the same. Every government is doing that. Gradually, all people will feel so much harassed that *ācchinna-dāra-draviṇāḥ*: they will want to give up their family life (their wife and their money) and go to the forest. This we have also seen.

So, *kalau doṣa-nidhe rājan*: the faults of this age are just like an ocean. If you were put into the Pacific Ocean, you would not know how to save your life. Even if you were a very expert swimmer, it would not be possible for you to cross the Pacific Ocean. Similarly, the Kali-yuga is described in the *Bhāgavatam* as an ocean of faults. It is infected with so many anomalies that there seems to be no way out. But there is one medicine: *kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya mukta-saṅgaḥ param vrajet*. The *Bhāgavatam* explains that if you chant the name of Kṛṣṇa—the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra—you will be relieved from the infection of this Kali-yuga.

Thank you very much.



"What is that force without which a living body becomes a dead body? That's the one thing the experts can't quite put their finger on."

by MANDALEŚVARA DĀSA

What is life? . . . A child is born. You can see his natural luster, feel the warmth of his body, hear his crying. All his vital functions are in order. Sometimes he is awake, sometimes asleep; he drinks his mother's milk and digests it. For the past nine months he has been in the womb of his mother, developing his small body. And now he is born. He will continue to grow, day by day. He will become larger and heavier. His features will change. He will grow stronger, more proportioned and coordinated. And one day his mother will say, "Why, he's so big! He's not a baby any more."

Living beings are born, and they die. And in the interim they grow, stay for some time, produce offspring, then dwindle—and the whole process ends in death.

And what is death? . . . Last night at 11:31 P.M., Mr. Gerald Smith died. His pulse and heartbeat stopped, his lungs collapsed, and his body temperature dropped. The on-duty physician did all he could. But, understanding that the patient's vital functions had ceased, he pronounced Mr. Smith dead.

"Living beings are born, and they die." What could be a more profound philosophical statement. Eleven years ago I was a college sophomore taking an introductory philosophy course. When I heard that statement from my professor, I was struck by its gravity and truth. For the first time in my life, I plainly saw: I am a living being, and I will soon die.

Some important questions came into my mind at that time—questions about death and about the purpose of life. Now, after studying *Bhagavad-gītā* (the philosophy course taught by the original teacher, Lord Kṛṣṇa), I'm finding the answers to these big questions. These questions and their answers must be just as important to you as they are to me, because they deal with something we have in common. We are all living beings destined to die.

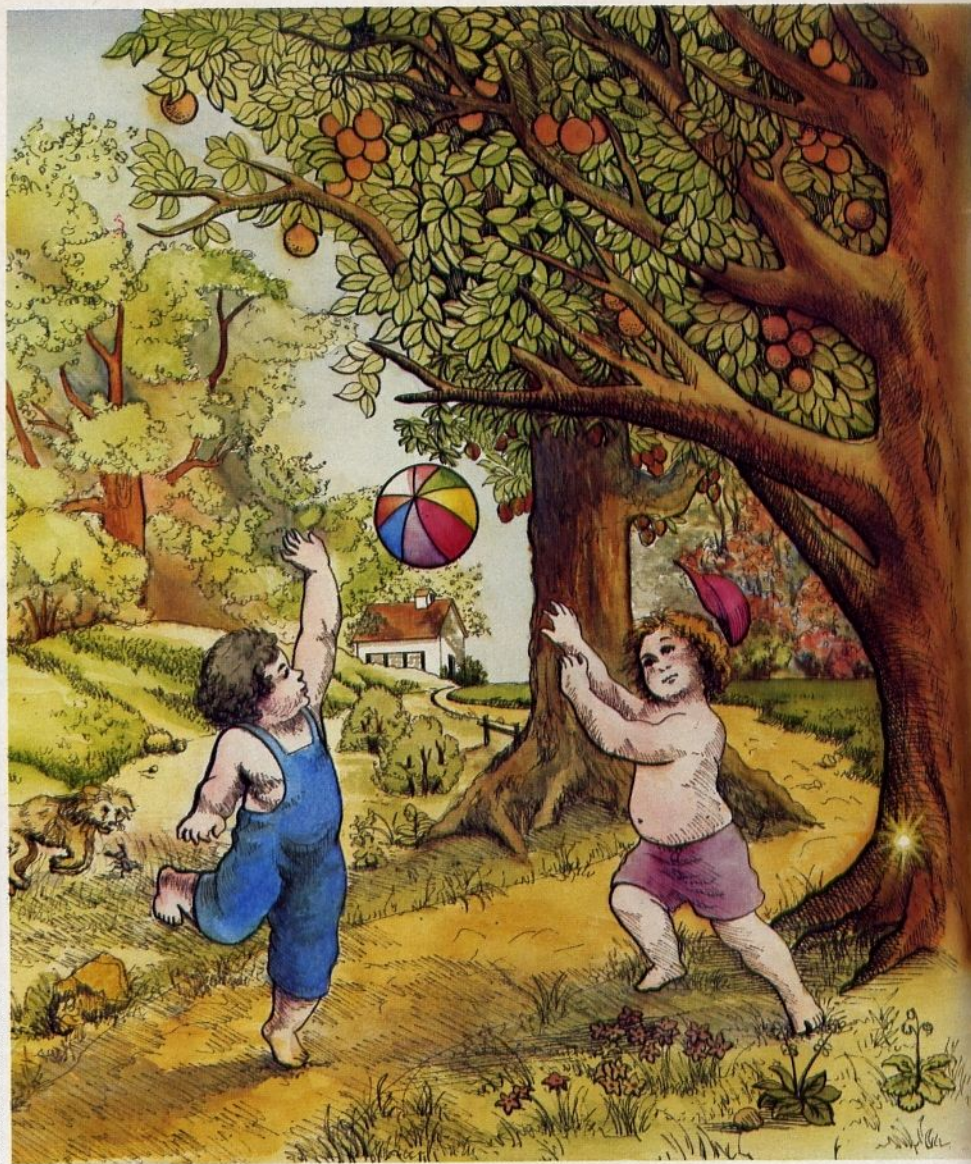


ILLUSTRATION: RAMANATHA DĀSA

LIFE AND

I'd like to present here the essential facts about life and death as I have understood them from the *Bhagavad-gītā*, under the guidance of my spiritual master, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Of course there's been scientific research and philosophical inquiry about life and death, but apparently no one really knows very much.

Suppose we open a dictionary to find out what "life" is. According to Webster's, it's "the principle or force by which animals and plants are maintained in the performance of their functions and

which distinguishes by its presence animate from inanimate matter." But just what is that "principle or force"? The encyclopedias offer all kinds of scholarly definitions, but most of these simply acknowledge that life is hard to define. "The chemical composition of protoplasm is known," notes one encyclopedia, "but what gives it the qualities of life is not known." Or sometimes the encyclopedias try to define life by listing its external symptoms: if a thing grows, reproduces, and so on, it's alive.

But again, what is that principle that



DEATH

brings about these characteristics like growth and reproduction? What is that force without which a living body becomes a dead body? That's the thing the experts can't quite put their finger on. They talk about life; they study its symptoms. But they can't figure out what it is. And if you or I were to ask a university professor, we would probably get the same sort of answer—one that hedges on the real issue. And we'd probably get lost in biochemical, metabolic, thermodynamic, or genetic jargon.

Sometimes the scientists claim that life is "a phenomenon that occurs in nature

when exactly the right chemicals combine under exactly the right conditions." Actually, this is the gist of most scientific theories about life, but just how scientific is it? The scientists' own methodology requires that they support each theory by experimentation and observation. But no scientist has ever observed life being generated spontaneously from chemicals. When you don't know something, that's one thing. When you don't know but pretend to, that's something else—cheating. It's cheating for these so-called scientific authorities to claim that life originates from matter.

Still, the scientists go on telling their story: "Once upon a time, a *long* time ago, life arose from a random chemical soup." And we're supposed to believe them. But ask them to go into the laboratory and come up with some clinical proof, and they say that life came into being ages and ages ago—*by accident*. Hmm. That certainly seems odd, but at least it squares conveniently with their theories. Today, of course, things don't happen that way. Anyone can see that (nowadays, at least) living beings come from other living beings. Yet our learned scientists keep trying to show us that conscious life comes from dead matter. But when they make a facsimile of the conditions that may have existed on earth x millions of years ago and try to create life . . . they fail. Sometimes they claim they've synthesized certain amino acids, "the building blocks of life." But that's not life. There's a big difference between an amino acid and a conscious living being.

"One day soon," they doggedly vow, "we'll create life from chemicals." But what we see every day is that life comes from life. Two bugs create more bugs, a scientist and his wife have children, and so on. But where do we see life coming from chemicals?

How can the scientists even *try* to prove by experimentation that life has arisen spontaneously from matter? Consider: they themselves are life—they're living beings—so all their attempts to show how life comes spontaneously from matter are self-contradictory, because the scientists themselves are conducting the experiments.

Who Plants the Seed?

Regardless how life may have begun within the universe, scientific evidence makes one thing clear: life could not have come about by accident, from chemical combination; an intelligent *living* being must have entered into the picture to conduct the experiment or combine the chemicals, to plant the seed or hatch the egg. So even if some scientist who wanted to prove that life comes from matter were to succeed in creating life (of course, this is impossible, but if, for the sake of argument, someone did it), he would actually be affirming that life is created by a very intelligent being

under controlled conditions. In other words, he would be proving that life must come from life, not from matter. And that's just what *Bhagavad-gītā* has been saying for thousands of years.

As *Bhagavad-gītā* explains, the origin of life is life: the supreme life, Kṛṣṇa. "I am the source of everything, material and spiritual," says Lord Kṛṣṇa. "Both the living, spiritual energy and the inanimate, material energy emanate from Me."

The material scientists would like us to accept the unfounded notion that life comes from matter (although where matter has come from they can't say). But *Bhagavad-gītā* tells us, "Lord Kṛṣṇa is the original life, the source of everything, whether living or material." In other words, everything (living or material) is coming from one living source. Life and matter are simply two different energies of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, just as light and heat are two energies of the sun.

What Makes the Difference?

It was back in 1968 that my spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke to an assembly of faculty and students at M.I.T. "Although you have so many departments of knowledge," he pointed out, "you have not found out what makes the difference between a living body and a dead body."

As anyone can see, something essential is missing from a dead body—something that distinguishes it from a living body. "Where is your educational department for finding that essential thing?" Śrīla Prabhupāda challenged. Unfortunately, despite their advanced knowledge of the physical body and its mechanical workings, our modern scientists have no knowledge of the living soul. Yet it is the soul that gives life to the body. Without the soul the wonderful material body becomes useless, fit for burning or burying.

Despite their claims and promises, today's scientists seem unable to tell us anything about life or birth or death. But ancient India's Vedic literatures are not so disappointing. In fact, they are perfectly scientific. Consider, for instance, the Vedic explanation of birth:

"Under the supervision of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, a living spirit soul enters a particle of semen and is then injected into the womb of the mother during sexual intercourse." If the conditions within the womb are favorable, the soul remains and there is an emulsification of the semen and the ovum. Then, due to the presence of the soul, the embryo develops. When the

body is fully developed (after about nine months), the baby comes out of his mother's womb—and this is called birth. *If there were no living soul, the embryo could not have grown and developed.* To put it simply, matter can't grow and develop without the living energy of the soul.

And what about death? ... When Mr. Smith died last night at 11:31 P.M., all his vital functions stopped. His pulse, heartbeat, and breathing stopped, and his life luster suddenly vanished. What happened? What happens at death?

"Death is the absence of life." The scientists are in agreement about that. But what *life* is they have no inkling of. So a fitting "scientific" definition of death would be, "Death is the absence of life (whatever that is)."

Undoubtedly, death is the absence of life. And from *Bhagavad-gītā* we get a clear understanding just what that means: "LIFE is the eternal soul. And when the soul leaves the body ... DEATH—the absence of life."

As I said, hardly anyone today knows the facts about life and death. But if we read *Bhagavad-gītā*, we'll get all the facts.

A Sudden Lack of Luster

Some members of the scientific community do accept the existence of the eternal living soul. For example, Dr. Wilfred G. Bigelow (a world-famous heart surgeon and chairman of cardiovascular surgery at the Toronto General Hospital) says, "My thirty-two years as a surgeon have left me no doubts that there is a soul."

Several years ago the *Montreal Gazette* quoted Dr. Bigelow as saying, "There are certain cases where you happen to be present at the moment when people pass from a living state to death, and some mysterious changes take place. One of the most noticeable is the sudden lack of luster to the eyes. They become opaque and literally lifeless. The central question is, Where is the soul and where does it come from?"

My spiritual master appreciated Dr. Bigelow's insight. In a letter to him, Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote,

"Undoubtedly the soul is present in the heart of the living entity, and it is the source of all the energies for maintaining the body. The energy of the soul is spread all over the body, and this is known as consciousness.

"The undertaking of 'soul research' would certainly mark the advancement of science. But the advancement of science will not be able to find the soul. The soul's presence can simply be accepted on circumstantial understanding.

You will find in the Vedic literature that the dimension of the soul is one ten-thousandth the size of a point. The material scientist cannot measure the length and breadth of a point. Therefore it is not possible for the material scientist to capture the soul. You can simply accept the soul's existence by taking it from Vedic authority. What the greatest scientists are finding, we've explained long ago."

High Priests

Modern scientists use circumstantial data to back up all sorts of theories about things they can't directly perceive (take atomic and subatomic particles, for instance). So why don't they accept the circumstantial evidence for the existence of the soul? We find a full explanation of the soul's existence in *Bhagavad-gītā*, and a full verification in our own everyday experience.

The so-called scientists, who claim that life comes from matter, that it arose by chance, and that it dies along with the body, defy not only Vedic authority but even common sense and their own practical experience. *Bhagavad-gītā* calls their philosophy demonic: "The demons say that there is no God in control, that everything in this world is a product of the random attraction of various material bodies." (Bg. 16.8) These demons in the guise of scientists want to undermine belief in God and the soul—"There is no God. There is no soul. Science is God, and we are the high priests."

On account of this godless philosophy, people have become more and more materialistic and faithless. We're starting to think, "So, there's no God and no soul and no life after death. That means there's no sin and no *karma*. When your body is finished, everything's finished. So you can do anything you like."

But as *Bhagavad-gītā* says, "Following such conclusions, the demonic engage in unbeneficial, horrible works meant to destroy the world. They believe that to gratify the senses unto the end of life is the prime necessity of human civilization. Thus there is no end to their anxiety." (Bg. 16.9,11)

We have another choice, of course. We can follow the *Bhagavad-gītā*'s teachings and understand the phenomenon of life and the process of birth and death. And at last we can become free from birth and death and enter into eternal life.

The choice is ours—whether we'll follow godless science or the science of the soul. So let's not make the wrong choice. It's a matter of life and death.



GOD IS LIGHT AND MUCH MORE

A talk given by Acyutānanda Svāmī in Los Angeles, March 1978.

Translation of a Sanskrit Verse (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.26.3)

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the Supreme Soul, and He has no beginning. He is transcendental to the material modes of nature and beyond the existence of this material world. He is perceivable everywhere because He is self-effulgent, and by His self-effulgent luster the entire creation is maintained.”

Purport

(by His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda)

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is described here. He is not a temporary person, nor does He have a beginning. He is without a cause, and He is the cause of all causes. *Paraḥ* means transcendental, beyond the creative en-

ergy. The Lord is the creator of the creative energy. We can see that there is a creative energy in the material world, but He is not under this energy. He is *prakṛti-para*, beyond this energy. He is not subjected to the threefold miseries created by the material energy because He is beyond it. The modes of material nature do not touch Him. It is explained here, *svayaṁ-jyoti*: He Himself is luminous. We have experience in the material world of one light's being a reflection of another, just as moonlight is a reflection of the sunlight. Sunlight is also a reflection of the *brahmajyoti*, or spiritual effulgence. Similarly, the *brahmajyoti* is a reflection of the body of the Supreme Lord. This is confirmed in the *Brahma-saṁhitā*: *yasya prabhā prabhavataḥ*. ‘The Brahman effulgence is the Lord's bodily luster.’”

Acyutānanda Svāmī Explains

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.8) Lord Kṛṣṇa says, “I am the light of the sun.” Three times a day when we chant the *brahma-gāyatrī mantra*, we invoke the sun as the first expression of Kṛṣṇa that we can perceive. So if we are Kṛṣṇa conscious, we can understand that the sun is reflecting Kṛṣṇa's effulgence.

But the materialistic scientists cannot explain the sun. I read in the newspaper that Russian scientists and American scientists recently had a conference. Their conclusion was, “We are no longer positive why the sun shines.” So that implies that at one time they *were* positive. No—they were never positive. How can such a gigantic ball of fire burn without smoke, without any apparent source of fuel—no intake, no exhaust, no

waste? The scientists' explanation is that the sun creates an ash and then "positivizes the neutrals." But ash cannot be made to burn again. The scientists do not understand how the sun shines.

The colors that we can see with our eyes are due to the diffraction of white light, as through a prism. White light is a combination of seven colors, and the source of that light is the sun. Within the sun is Vivasvān, the sun-god, who controls the sun. His world is made of colors that our eyes cannot understand. These colors are so intense that they glow as a pure white light that can be diffracted into the colors we can see. So just imagine the colors in the sun! And Vivasvān is nothing but a *jīva*—a single spiritual spark—one spark of the pure white light of Kṛṣṇa. Beyond this universe is infinite pure white light—the *brahmajyoti*—which is nothing but the effulgence of Kṛṣṇa. Imagine, then, the intense brilliance and color in Kṛṣṇa's world—Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, Kṛṣṇa's peacock, Kṛṣṇa's spiritual Goloka planet!

In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.40) it is said,

*yasya prabhā prabhavato jagad-aṇḍa-koṭi-
kotiṣv aśeṣa-vasudhādi-vibhūti-bhinnam
tad brahma niṣkalam anantam aśeṣa-bhūtaṁ
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

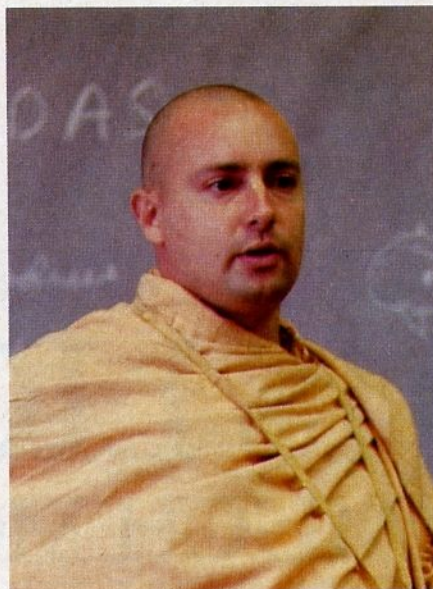
"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who possesses the greatest power. The glowing effulgence of His transcendental form is the impersonal Brahman, which is absolute, complete, and unlimited, and which displays the varieties of countless planets, with their various opulences, in millions and millions of universes."

So the *brahmajyoti*, or the Brahman effulgence, is due to Kṛṣṇa's bodily luster. Therefore it is said here, in this verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, that the Lord is *svayaṁ-jyoti*, self-effulgent. In all the *Upaniṣads*, the essential portion of the *Vedas*, God is described as *jyoti*, or luminous. The impersonal philosophers think that this effulgence is the ultimate truth. But simply by common sense we know that you never see a light without a source. Take the light in this room, for instance. It comes from a source, the light bulb (which has form). Then, too, the energy that produces the electricity that causes the light ultimately comes from the sun. So, in one sense, the light in this room is a "reflection" of the sun's light. Similarly, the sun reflects the light of the *brahmajyoti*, and the *brahmajyoti* is Kṛṣṇa's bodily effulgence. In this way you can understand Kṛṣṇa as the source of everything you see.

Also, the sun creates the cloud, which

covers our vision of the sun itself—but you can see the cloud only because there is sunlight. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa creates this material nature, which blocks Him from our vision—but the only reason you can even see the material nature is because Kṛṣṇa is giving you consciousness to see it, and giving it the existence to be seen. So everything is ultimately spirit: *sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma*. Everything is Brahman (spirit), but some things are the original Brahman and some things are the by-products of Brahman.

The different uses of electricity provide a good analogy. Although electricity itself is fiery hot, it can be made to run a refrigerator and produce a by-product—cold. Still, it's all part of the science of electricity. Similarly, when we speak of Kṛṣṇa we generally mean Kṛṣṇa's divine form in Goloka Vṛndāvana, where He is



Acyutanānda Svāmī: chipping away at the old cliché.

accompanied by His personal associates. But when Kṛṣṇa is mentioned in the *Upaniṣads* as Brahman or *tat*, *yat*, *iti*, the words refer to Kṛṣṇa and His various by-products, down to even the material speck. So Kṛṣṇa's energy includes everything.

Kṛṣṇa and His energies are also something like the sun and the sunshine. The sun produces sunshine, which makes trees grow. When the trees die, they are compressed into coal. From coal smoke one can make paint. So if you have "The Complete Book of the Sun," you'll need to have a chapter about paint—which comes from coal, which comes from trees, which come from the sunshine, which comes from the sun. But paint is not the sun—I don't get a sunburn from paint. (In fact, it has the opposite effect: if I paint my body, I won't get a sunburn.)

But still, paint should be included in "The Complete Book of the Sun." Similarly, "The Complete Book of Kṛṣṇa"—the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*—describes everything about Him, including how we can perceive Him even in this material world. But how much we'll perceive Kṛṣṇa depends on how much we have surrendered to Him.

Ye yathā mām prapadyante tāmṣ tathaiva bhajāmy ahaṁ (Bg. 4.11): depending on how much you have surrendered to Kṛṣṇa, that is how much you'll understand Him. If you have rebelled against Kṛṣṇa and become an animal, you may understand Kṛṣṇa only up to the point of appreciating the moonlight: night prowlers—they have understood Kṛṣṇa only to the point of coming out at night. Or, if you're a moth, you'll understand Kṛṣṇa in a flame or electric light.

Ye yathā mām prapadyante tāmṣ tathaiva bhajāmy ahaṁ means that according to your devotion, that is how Kṛṣṇa will face you. So those who are bugs can understand Kṛṣṇa in light—material light. Those who practice the Vedic rituals for elevation to the heavenly planets can live on the moon or the sun. Those who are *jñānīs* (impersonalists) can appreciate Kṛṣṇa's spiritual light. But those who are devotees can enter into Goloka Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa's own planet, where Kṛṣṇa displays His full personality. There the devotees enjoy eternal association with Kṛṣṇa.

What the materialists cannot understand is that Kṛṣṇa exists simultaneously in the spiritual and material worlds. The *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.37) confirms this: *goloka eva nivasaty akhilātmā-bhūtaḥ*: "He is living in Goloka, but He is still present all over the creation. He is the Supersoul of everything." When we forget Kṛṣṇa, we experience a limitation—there is no center to our lives. Everywhere we find limitation and purposelessness. But when we remember Kṛṣṇa, we find that His existence has no circumference and that the center of our lives—Kṛṣṇa—is everywhere. We feel no limitation. Even impersonalists can understand that there is no end to the existence of the *brahmajyoti*, the spiritual effulgence. But how can the center be everywhere? Again, *ye yathā mām prapadyante*: in proportion to our devotion, Kṛṣṇa will show Himself to us. But when and how He shows Himself is completely up to Him. He can appear to us in any way he likes—even from within a pillar, as He did for the great devotee Prahlaḍa. Prahlaḍa was praying to Kṛṣṇa in Goloka, but at one intense point of his devotion, he forgot about Goloka and prayed that the Lord appear from a pillar.

(continued on page 32)

Houston: The Roof's Not All That's Sliding

by JAYĀDVAITA SVĀMĪ

A short time back I spent a few days in Houston, Texas, and while there I visited a friend who lives near the Astrodome, Houston's multi-million-dollar ultra-sophisticated sliding-roofed stadium. Certainly impressive. But more striking than the Astrodome, I thought, were the places people went for entertainment nearby—a shining galaxy of bars, clubs, shops, and restaurants, all advertising one main attraction: naked human flesh.

They had it in all varieties—male, female, topless, bottomless, and best of all, the signs informed us, “Live Onstage, Completely Naked.” All this, of course, in addition to the “massage parlors” and “executive clubs” that seem to have become standard features of large cities throughout the nation.

Now, what's interesting about this, first of all, is that say ten years ago, before I joined the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, such places didn't exist—at least not so openly and boldly. Of course, there have always been places where vulgar entertainment has been available, but what's relatively new is that now these places seem to have gained an apparent respectability and found a niche as a legitimate part of modern American culture.

What does this say about American culture? Nothing good. Putting aside various intriguing but peripheral issues and getting down to the nitty-gritty, what this trend obviously tells us is that Americans are becoming more openly and boldly intent upon crude bodily pleasures. They are growing less concerned with noble pursuits and are turning instead to the pursuit of raw sensual enjoyment.

Now, our purpose here is not to work up a frenzy of prudish self-righteousness and call for a citizens' campaign to clean up America's morals. That would be to miss the point.

The point is that human life is meant

for self-realization, because such realization is the special prerogative of human beings that sets them apart from lower animals. After all, sex is easily available even in the lower species of life. Don't even common dogs and hogs enjoy the pleasures of sex?

But dogs and hogs don't have the intelligence to ask themselves what life is all about. The dog doesn't ask itself, “Who am I? Why am I here? What is the purpose of my life?” On the contrary, the dog is satisfied merely if it has enough food to eat, a place to sleep, protection from fear, and a good share of sexual enjoyment.

But modern men are so bewildered that although endowed with the ability to try to understand who they are and what life is really for, they waste their valuable time and energy by doing something that can only agitate their minds, distract them from self-inquiry, and leave them feeling empty, frustrated, cheated.

Although our modern civilization is supposedly becoming more advanced and progressive, in fact we are losing sight of the higher aim of human life—the pursuit of self-realization—and are developing a kind of sophisticated degradation, in which men become hardly better than polished animals.

Why is this so? According to the Vedic literature, one's individual temperament—and the temperament of society as a whole—is governed by three qualities: goodness, passion, and ignorance. When one is situated in goodness, he develops purity and knowledge and feels a natural sense of happiness. In passion, one develops strong, practically uncontrollable desires and attachments; in passion, one endeavors intensely for success, but inwardly feels unhappy. And in ignorance one becomes foolish, lazy, and mentally deranged. The problem, then, is that we have lost touch with how to live in goodness and pursue real knowledge, and therefore passion

and ignorance are gradually taking over our society, our cities, towns, and neighborhoods, and our very lives.

The massage parlors and naked clubs now doing a flourishing business in our cities are sure signs that the quality of passion is rapidly gaining ground. And passion quickly gives way to ignorance. Bewildered by passion and ignorance, men think that although they have their wives at home, by going to a naked club they will enjoy something *more*. So they spend their hard-earned money to drink liquor and see someone's daughter earn a living by revealing what they could have seen at home for free—and all they get more of is unsatisfied desire. How long can we expect people to go on this way before they become desperate, angry, wild, and violent? The Vedic literature warns us that if passion and ignorance grow too strong, men become less than animals, and the world becomes less than a jungle. As we sit in our homes with violence at our doorsteps and the leaders of the world snarling and barking at one another over our tv's, can we deny that this is true?

American culture—and human culture throughout the world—is sinking because it is increasingly dominated by passion and ignorance, and therefore by superficiality, unhappiness, greed, madness, and illusion, with no clear aim toward knowledge and self-realization. Without progress toward self-realization, what is the value of human society, or even human life itself? What is the use of a multi-million-dollar Astrodome full of men more interested in beer, football, and naked bodies than in understanding who they are?

Unless we change our priorities and turn our attention toward spiritual understanding, we can only expect the qualities of passion and ignorance to gain further ground for a world of anxiety, frustration, bewilderment, and violence.

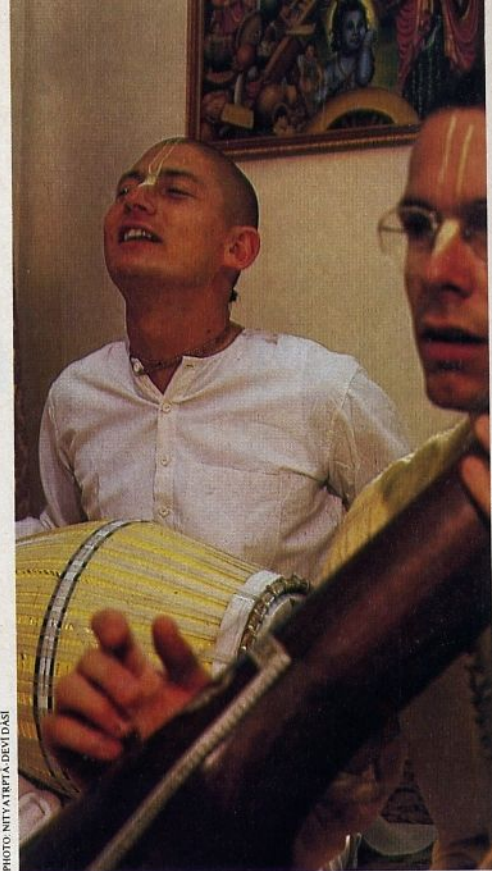
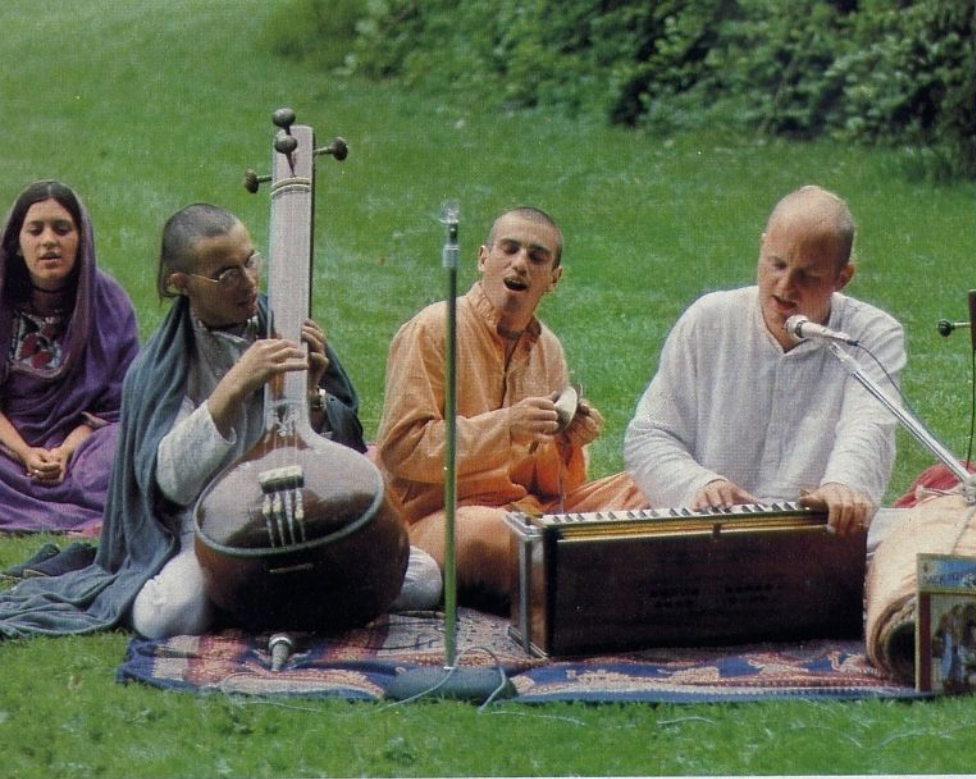


PHOTO: NITYATRIPTA.DEVIDASI

Questions People Ask About Chanting

HARE KṚṢṆA HARE KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA HARE HARE
HARE RĀMA HARE RĀMA RĀMA RĀMA HARE HARE

Q. *What's so special about the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra? Couldn't you get the same effect by chanting Coca-cola Coca-cola, or any other sound, over and over again?*

A. No. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the incarnation of God who inaugurated mass public chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa five hundred years ago in India, said this about the chanting of God's names: "My dear Lord, You have innumerable names, and in each name You have invested all Your transcendental energies." In other words, by chanting and hearing God's holy names we're in the presence of God Himself. And since Kṛṣṇa is the reservoir of all pleasure and purity, the more we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa the more we feel spiritual pleasure and cleanse our minds of material misconceptions. Could you chant *Coca-cola Coca-cola* for very long without becoming bored and disgusted? Hardly. But from morning till night you can chant

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, and you'll feel newer and newer spiritual pleasure every moment. How can this be?—the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is a unique kind of sound vibration: the *namāvātāra*, or God's incarnation in His holy names.

Q. *I've been to several yoga groups that chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Is there any difference between their chanting and yours?*

A. Yes. Many so-called *gurus* include the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa in a veritable smorgasbord of meditation techniques, all of which supposedly lead the meditator to a realization of God as Brahman, the impersonal "white light." But in *Bhagavad-gītā* God Himself emphatically denies this idea: "There is no truth superior to Me," says Lord Kṛṣṇa. "I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman. . . . Those who worship My personal form

are the most perfect." So nondevotional chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa is not really the way to reach life's ultimate goal—pure loving devotion to Kṛṣṇa, or God. There is an old saying: "Milk touched by the lips of a snake becomes poison." Beware of snakelike "*gurus*" who would use the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* for their own ends. The chanting should be heard from the lips of a devotee of the Lord.

The Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is actually a spiritual call for the Lord to engage us in His devotional service. The word *Hare* addresses God's spiritual energy, *Kṛṣṇa* means "the all-attractive Supreme Personality of Godhead," and *Rāma*, another name of God, means "the reservoir of the highest pleasure." In essence, when we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa we're saying, "O Lord, O Energy of the Lord, please let me serve You." So unless we hear the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* from the Lord's pure devotee, whose only motive is to serve



PHOTO: BHARGAVA DASA



Him with love, then the sound vibration will not have the desired effect.

Q. *How does chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa make you self-realized?*

A. Self-realization means finding out who we really are and acting accordingly. Now we're thinking "I'm an American" or "I'm an Englishman" or "I'm a white male ornithologist" or "I'm a black woman poet." All these physical and mental designations just cover our real identity as spiritual emanations from the Supreme Spirit, God. By chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa we lift away these coverings and begin to experience ourselves as pure spirit, or consciousness—transcendental to our body and mind and free from all material designations. The more we chant, the more we become attracted to Kṛṣṇa, and eventually we realize our eternal identity as His loving servant. This realization is self-realization in the highest sense.

Q. *Is chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa a kind of meditation? I thought meditation was something you did silently, sitting still in a quiet place.*

A. Yes, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is a kind of meditation—the easiest and most effective kind for the modern age. The Vedic scriptures advise, "Chant the holy name, chant the holy name, chant the holy name of God! There is no other way, no other way, no other way to achieve spiri-

tual perfection in the present age of quarrel and hypocrisy." Of course, silent meditation was possible thousands of years ago, when people lived much longer than we do and had much stronger bodies and keener minds than we do. But it's not at all possible today. Today we need the easy yet powerful meditation of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Anyone can chant Hare Kṛṣṇa—anytime, anyplace. Simply say the *mantra* over and over again, pronouncing it very distinctly and hearing it very attentively.


Q. *What about the Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees I see chanting and dancing on the street? Is that also meditation?*

A. Yes. This public chanting is a special type of meditation called *saṅkīrtana*—the mass public chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. Of all kinds of meditation, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is the best, and of all ways to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, *saṅkīrtana* is the most joyous, easy, and quickly effective. "All glories to *saṅkīrtana*!" declared Lord Caitanya, and He encouraged His followers to chant together publicly as much as possible. Since the International Society for Krishna Consciousness is following directly in the disciplic succession from Lord Caitanya, *saṅkīrtana* is an important part of our activities. From such enthusiastic glorification of the Lord's holy names, both the chanters and the passersby derive immense spiritual benefit.

Q. *How did so many Americans take up the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa?*

A. Twelve years ago His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda journeyed from India to give Americans the teachings of Lord Caitanya. The Lord's essential teaching is that simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, anyone can reach the highest perfection of life—love of God, or Kṛṣṇa. With complete faith in the ultimate success of his mission, Śrīla Prabhupāda began chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa regularly in a small park on New York's Lower East Side. Gradually he attracted some young disciples and taught them how to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and perform other devotional services for the Lord. From this small beginning, the chanting has gradually spread to many millions of people both here and abroad.

Q. *What's the best way to start chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa?*

A. As Lord Caitanya said, "There are no restrictions of time and place for chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa." Just say the *mantra* over and over, and listen carefully. You can chant alone or with your family or friends—or you can visit the nearest Hare Kṛṣṇa center and chant with the devotees there. Each morning and evening the devotees get together and chant, and you're welcome to join in. But whatever way you do it, simply chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and your life will be sublime. 

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

On the “Scientific” Theory of Creation

The following conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples took place during an early morning walk at Venice Beach, Los Angeles.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Everything that we see has been created—how can these scientists claim there is no creator? They are also created. How can they say that there is no creator?

Devotee: They are trying to avoid their responsibility to the creator, so they say He doesn't exist.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: You can avoid the creator, but you cannot say He doesn't exist. Whether or not you accept the creator's authority is your business; but you cannot say there is no creator. For example, there are so many outlaws who say, “We don't want to obey the government.” If you don't like the government, that is your business. But there is a government—you can't deny that.

Devotee: It is just in the last few generations that the material scientists have received so much prestige and have been able to influence so many people with their propaganda.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Therefore we have to challenge all these rascal scientists.

Devotee: You are giving us the weapon—the transcendental knowledge in your books.

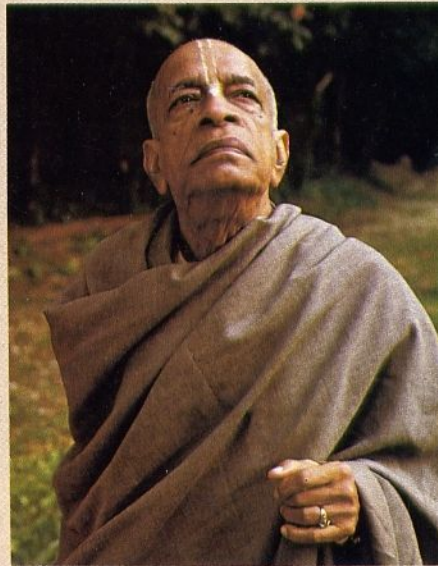
Śrīla Prabhupāda: If people are after real scientific knowledge, they have to accept Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They have been cheated by these so-called scientists. Now, if people are actually serious to know the truth, they'll accept this knowledge.

Devotee: The scientists say that the atom is the source of everything.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: And our reply is, “You rascal. You are not coming from an atom—you are coming from your father.”

Devotee: “Originally,” they say, “everything has come about from chance atomic—”

Śrīla Prabhupāda: “Originally!” You do not even know where *you* have come from. Why are you making theories about the origin? There is a story about a snake charmer. He couldn't even catch a harmless water snake, but he was trying to catch a cobra. This is the scientists' defect. The scientists are tiny, insignifi-



cant creatures, but they are saying such big things. This is the defect of modern science. They have no importance; still they are saying big things. Just like the story: the snake charmer cannot catch even a nonpoisonous snake, and he says, “I'll catch a cobra.” You have not even understood that you are created by your mother and father, so why do you try to understand the original creation? These scientists and philosophers—their only business is to defy God. All of them are demons.

Devotee: But they say that before the scientific revolution—

Śrīla Prabhupāda: It is *not* scientific—it is all a rascal revolution. The scientists cannot even answer this question: “You are created by your father, so why shouldn't there be an original creator? You have not dropped from the sky.”

Devotee: They say man came from the monkey, the monkey came from another animal, and originally everything came from an atom.

Śrīla Prabhupāda [addressing the scientists]: That's all right, but now come to the practical issue. You are created by your father—that you have to accept. Similarly, everything we see—these cars, the houses—everything was created by someone. So how can you say there is no creator? Everything within your experience is created by someone.

Devotee: But then who created the creator?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is something we

can discuss later—but at least you have to accept that there *is* a creator.

Devotee: Some scientists will agree that there is a creative energy, but they do not give one creator, one person, the credit.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, no. For instance, Mr. Ford manufactures a car, but he does not fashion it by his own hand. He has money—that's his energy—and he has to pay so many mechanics and supervisors to create the car. But ultimately Ford is the creator. Ford is not personally creating all his cars, but Ford's money, Ford's employees, and Ford's workers are creating them. Similarly, everything is being created by God. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.10) Kṛṣṇa says,

*mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ
sūyate sa-carācaram
hetunānena kaunteya
jagad viparivartate*

“This material nature is working under My direction, O son of Kuntī, and it is producing all the moving and unmoving beings. By its rule this manifestation is created and annihilated again and again.” Like Mr. Ford, Kṛṣṇa has so many working energies and assistants. The Vedic literatures say, *parasya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate*: God's multi-energies are doing everything automatically. But the creator is supervising. A child may not understand how this car is created, but we know it is created by a *person*. Everything is created by a person.

Devotee: So these scientists who don't accept the creator are like ignorant children.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That's all. They cannot imagine that the sky is created by a person, the water is created by a person. The scientists cannot do it, but that does not mean *no one* can do it. I cannot manufacture an automobile, but *some-one* can. Similarly, the whole gigantic cosmic manifestation—you cannot imagine how it was created, but someone has created it. We see in our practical experience that someone has less intelligence and someone else has more intelligence. So we can understand that God, the creator, has the ultimate intelligence—and that He has created everything.

The Beautiful Story of the Personality of Godhead

ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

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

First Canto: "Creation"

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Pāṇḍavas Retire Timely

In this episode of our continuing presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Arjuna (Lord Kṛṣṇa's friend and the hero of Bhagavad-gītā) revives his pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness and returns to the Lord's spiritual abode. Having heard of Lord Kṛṣṇa's departure from this world, King Yudhiṣṭhira, Queen Kuntī, and the other members of the royal family then renounce everything and follow Arjuna on the transcendental path back to Godhead.

TEXT 31

विशोको ब्रह्मसम्पत्त्या संछिन्नद्वैतसंशयः ।
लीनप्रकृतिर्नैर्गुण्यदलिङ्गत्वादसम्भवः ॥३१॥

viśoko brahma-sampattyā
sañchinna-dvāita-saṁśayaḥ
līna-prakṛti-nairguṇyād
alīṅgatvād asambhavaḥ

viśokaḥ—free from bereavement; brahma-sampattyā—by possession of spiritual assets; sañchinna—being completely cut off; dvāita-saṁśayaḥ—from the doubts of relativity; līna—merged in; prakṛti—material nature; nairguṇyāt—due to being in transcendence; alīṅgatvāt—because of being devoid of a material body; asambhavaḥ—free from birth and death.

TRANSLATION

Because of his possessing spiritual assets, the doubts of duality were completely cut off. Thus he was freed from the three modes of material nature and placed in transcendence. There was no longer any chance of his becoming entangled in birth and death, for he was freed from material form.

PURPORT

Doubts of duality begin from the misconception of the material body, which is accepted as the self by less intelligent persons. The most foolish part of our ignorance is our identifying this material body with the self. Everything in relation with the body is ignorantly accepted as our own. Doubts due to misconceptions of myself and mine—in other words, my body, my relatives, my property, my wife, my children, my wealth, my country, my community, and hundreds and thousands of similar illusory contemplations—cause bewilderment for the conditioned soul. By assimilating the instructions of the Bhagavad-gītā, one is sure to be released from such bewilderment because real knowledge is knowledge

that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva, Lord Kṛṣṇa, is everything, including one's self. Everything is a manifestation of His potency as part and parcel. The potency and the potent are nondifferent, so the conception of duality is at once mitigated by attainment of perfect knowledge. As soon as Arjuna took up the instructions of the Bhagavad-gītā, expert as he was, he could at once eradicate the material conception of Lord Kṛṣṇa, his eternal friend. He could realize that the Lord was still present before him by His instruction, by His form, by His pastimes, by His qualities and everything else related to Him. He could realize that Lord Kṛṣṇa, his friend, was still present before him by His transcendental presence in different nondual energies, and there was no question of attainment of the association of the Lord by another change of body under the influence of time and space. By attainment of absolute knowledge, one can be in association with the Lord constantly, even in this present life, simply by hearing, chanting, thinking of and worshiping the Supreme Lord. One can see Him, one can feel His presence even in this present life simply by understanding the advaya-jñāna Lord, or the Absolute Lord, through the process of devotional service, which begins with hearing about Him. Lord Caitanya says that simply by chanting the holy name of the Lord one can at once wash off the dust on the mirror of pure consciousness, and as soon as the dust is removed, one is at once freed from all material conditions. To become free from material conditions means to liberate the soul. As soon as one is, therefore, situated in absolute knowledge, his material conception of life is removed or emerges from a false conception of life. Thus the function of the pure soul is revived in spiritual realization. This practical realization of the living being is made possible due to his becoming free from the reaction of the three modes of material nature, namely goodness, passion and ignorance. By the grace of the Lord, a pure devotee is at once raised to the place of the Absolute, and there is no chance of the devotee's becoming materially entangled again in conditioned life. One is not able to feel the presence of the Lord in all circumstances until one is endowed with the required transcendental vision made possible by devotional service prescribed in the revealed scriptures. Arjuna had attained this stage long before on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, and when he apparently felt the absence of the Lord, he at once took shelter of the instructions of the Bhagavad-gītā, and thus again he was placed in his original position. This is the position of viśoka, or the stage of being freed from all grief and anxieties.

TEXT 32

निशम्य भगवन्मार्गं संस्थां यदुकुलस्य च ।
स्वःपथाय मतिं चक्रे निभृतात्मा युधिष्ठिरः ॥३२॥

niśamya bhagavan-mārgam
saṁsthān yadu-kulasya ca
svaḥ-pathāya matim cakre
nibhṛtātmā yudhiṣṭhiraḥ

nīśamya—deliberating; *bhagavat*—regarding the Lord; *mārgam*—the ways of His appearance and disappearance; *saṁsthām*—end; *yadukulasya*—of the dynasty of King Yadu; *ca*—also; *svaḥ*—the abode of the Lord; *pathāya*—on the way of; *matim*—desire; *cakre*—gave attention; *nibhṛta-ātmā*—lonely and alone; *yudhiṣṭhiraḥ*—King Yudhiṣṭhira.

TRANSLATION

Upon hearing of Lord Kṛṣṇa's returning to His abode, and upon understanding the end of the Yadu dynasty's earthly manifestation, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira decided to go back home, back to Godhead.

PURPORT

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira also turned his attention to the instructions of the *Bhagavad-gītā* after hearing about the Lord's departure from the vision of earthly people. He began to deliberate on the Lord's way of appearance and departure. The mission of the Lord's appearance and disappearance in the mortal universe is completely dependent on His supreme will. He is not forced to appear or disappear by any superior energy, as the living beings appear and disappear, being forced by the laws of nature. Whenever the Lord likes, He can appear Himself from anywhere and everywhere without disturbing His appearance and disappearance in any other place. He is like the sun. The sun appears and disappears on its own accord at any place without disturbing its presence in other places. The sun appears in the morning in India without disappearing from the western hemisphere. The sun is present everywhere and anywhere all over the solar system, but it so appears that in a particular place the sun appears in the morning and also disappears at some fixed time in the evening. The time limitation even of the sun is of no concern, and so what to speak of the Supreme Lord who is the creator and controller of the sun. Therefore, in the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is stated that anyone who factually understands the transcendental appearance and disappearance of the Lord by His inconceivable energy becomes liberated from the laws of birth and death and is placed in the eternal spiritual sky where the *Vaikuṇṭha* planets are. There such liberated persons can eternally live without the pangs of birth, death, old age and disease. In the spiritual sky the Lord and those who are eternally engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord are all eternally young because there is no old age and disease and there is no death. Because there is no death there is no birth. It is concluded, therefore, that simply by understanding the Lord's appearance and disappearance in truth, one can attain the perfectional stage of eternal life. Therefore, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira also began to consider going back to Godhead. The Lord appears on the earth or any other mortal planet along with His associates who live with Him eternally, and the members of the Yadu family who were engaged in supplementing the pastimes of the Lord are no other than His eternal associates, and so also Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers and mother, etc. Since the appearance and disappearance of the Lord and His eternal associates are transcendental, one should not be bewildered by the external features of appearance and disappearance.

TEXT 33

पृथग्यनुश्रुत्य धनञ्जयोदितं
नाशं यदनां भगवद्रति च ताम् ।
एकान्तभक्त्या भगवत्प्रयोजके
निवेशितात्मोपराम संसृतेः ॥३३॥

prthāpy anuśrutyā dhanāñjayoditam
nāśam yadūnām bhagavad-gatim ca tām
ekānta-bhaktiā bhagavatya adhokṣaje
niveśitātmoparāma saṁsṛteḥ

prthā—Kuntī; *api*—also; *anuśrutyā*—overhearing; *dhanāñjaya*—Arjuna; *uditam*—uttered by; *nāśam*—end; *yadūnām*—of the Yadu dynasty; *bhagavat*—of the Personality of Godhead; *gatim*—disap-

pearance; *ca*—also; *tām*—all those; *eka-anta*—unalloyed; *bhaktiā*—devotion; *bhagavati*—unto the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *adhokṣaje*—transcendence; *niveśita-ātmā*—with full attention; *upararāma*—became released from; *saṁsṛteḥ*—material existence.

TRANSLATION

Kuntī, after overhearing Arjuna's telling of the end of the Yadu dynasty and disappearance of Lord Kṛṣṇa, engaged in the devotional service of the transcendental Personality of Godhead with full attention and thus gained release from the course of material existence.

PURPORT

The setting of the sun does not mean the end of the sun. It means that the sun is out of our sight. Similarly, the end of the mission of the Lord on a particular planet or universe only means that He is out of our sight. The end of the Yadu dynasty also does not mean that it is annihilated. It disappears, along with the Lord, out of our sight. As Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira decided to prepare to go back to Godhead, so also Kuntī decided, and thus she fully engaged herself in the transcendental devotional service of the Lord which guarantees one a passport for going back to Godhead after quitting this present material body. The beginning of devotional service to the Lord is the beginning of spiritualizing the present body, and thus an unalloyed devotee of the Lord loses all material contact in the present body. The abode of the Lord is not a myth, as is thought by the unbelievers or ignorant people, but one cannot reach there by any material means like a sputnik or space capsule. But one can certainly reach there after leaving this present body, and one must prepare himself to go back to Godhead by practicing devotional service. That guarantees a passport for going back to Godhead, and Kuntī adopted it.

TEXT 34

ययाहरद् भुवो भारं तां तनुं विजहावजः ।
कण्टकं कण्टकेन द्वयं चापिशितुः समम् ॥३४॥

yayāharad bhuvo bhāraṁ
tām tanuṁ vijahāv ajah
kaṇṭakam kaṇṭakeneva
dvayam cāpiśituḥ samam

yayā—that by which; *aharat*—took away; *bhuvah*—of the world; *bhāram*—burden; *tām*—that; *tanuṁ*—body; *vijahau*—relinquished; *ajah*—the unborn; *kaṇṭakam*—thorn; *kaṇṭakena*—by the thorn; *iva*—like that; *dvayam*—both; *ca*—also; *api*—although; *śituḥ*—controlling; *samam*—equal.

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Unborn, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, caused the members of the Yadu dynasty to relinquish their bodies, and thus He relieved the burden of the world. This action was like picking out a thorn with a thorn, though both are the same to the controller.

PURPORT

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura suggests that the *ṛsis* like Śaunaka and others who were hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from Sūta Gosvāmī at Naimiṣāraṇya were not happy to hear about the Yadu's dying in the madness of intoxication. To give them relief from this mental agony, Sūta Gosvāmī assured them that the Lord caused the members of the Yadu dynasty to relinquish their bodies by which they had to take away the burden of the world. The Lord and His eternal associates appeared on earth to help the administrative demigods in eradicating the burden of the world. He therefore called for some of the confidential demigods to appear in the Yadu family and serve Him in His great mission. After the mission was fulfilled, the demigods, by the will of the Lord, relinquished their corporeal bodies by fighting amongst themselves in the madness of intoxication. The demigods are accustomed to drinking the *soma-rasa* beverage, and therefore the drinking of wine and intoxi-

cation are not unknown to them. Sometimes they were put into trouble for indulging in intoxication. Once the sons of Kuvera fell in the wrath of Nārada for being intoxicated, but afterwards they regained their original forms by the grace of the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. We shall find this story in the Tenth Canto. For the Supreme Lord, both the *asuras* and the demigods are equal, but the demigods are obedient to the Lord, whereas the *asuras* are not. Therefore, the example of picking out a thorn by another thorn is quite befitting. One thorn, which causes pinpricks on the leg of the Lord, is certainly disturbing to the Lord, and the other thorn, which takes out the disturbing elements, certainly gives service to the Lord. So although every living being is a part and parcel of the Lord, still one who is a pinprick to the Lord is called an *asura*, and one who is a voluntary servitor of the Lord is called a *devatā*, or demigod. In the material world the *devatās* and *asuras* are always contending, and the *devatās* are always saved from the hands of the *asuras* by the Lord. Both of them are under the control of the Lord. The world is full of two kinds of living beings, and the Lord's mission is always to protect the *devatās* and destroy the *asuras*, whenever there is such a need in the world, and to do good to both of them.

TEXT 35

यथा मत्स्यादिरूपाणि धत्ते जह्याद् यथा नटः ।

भूमारः क्षपितो येन जहौ तच्च कलेवरम् ॥३५॥

yathā matsyādi-rūpāṇi
dhatte jahyād yathā naṭaḥ
bhū-bhārah kṣapito yena
jahau tac ca kalevaram

yathā—as much as; *matsya-ādi*—incarnation as a fish, etc.; *rūpāṇi*—forms; *dhatte*—eternally accepts; *jahyāt*—apparently relinquishes; *yathā*—exactly like; *naṭaḥ*—magician; *bhū-bhārah*—burden of the world; *kṣapitaḥ*—relieved; *yena*—by which; *jahau*—let go; *tat*—that; *ca*—also; *kalevaram*—body.

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord relinquished the body which He manifested to diminish the burden of the earth. Just like a magician, He relinquishes one body to accept different ones, like the fish incarnation and others.

PURPORT

The Supreme Lord Personality of Godhead is neither impersonal nor formless, but His body is nondifferent from Him, and therefore He is known as the embodiment of eternity, knowledge and bliss. In the *Bṛhad-vaishṇava Tantra* it is clearly mentioned that anyone who considers the form of Lord Kṛṣṇa to be made of material energy must be ostracized by all means. And if by chance the face of such an infidel is seen, one must clean himself by jumping in the river with his clothing. The Lord is described as *amṛta*, or deathless, because He has no material body. Under the circumstances, the Lord's dying or quitting His body is like the jugglery of a magician. The magician shows by his tricks that he is cut to pieces, burnt to ashes or made unconscious by hypnotic influences, but all are false shows only. Factually the magician himself is neither burnt to ashes nor cut to pieces, nor is he dead or unconscious at any stage of his magical demonstration. Similarly, the Lord has His eternal forms of unlimited variety, of which the fish incarnation, as was exhibited within this universe, is also one. Because there are innumerable universes, somewhere or other the fish incarnation must be manifesting His pastimes without cessation. In this verse, the particular word *dhatte*, eternally accepted, (and not the word *dhatvā*, accepted for the occasion) is used. The idea is that the Lord does not create the fish incarnation; He eternally has such a form, and the appearance and disappearance of such an incarnation serves particular purposes. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.24–25) the Lord says, "The impersonalists think that

I have no form, that I am formless, but that at present I have accepted a form to serve a purpose, and now I am manifested. But such speculators are factually without sharp intelligence. Though they may be good scholars in the Vedic literatures, they are practically ignorant of My inconceivable energies and My eternal forms of personality. The reason is that I reserve the power of not being exposed to the nondevotees by My mystic curtain. The less intelligent fools are therefore unaware of My eternal form, which is never to be vanquished and is unborn." In the *Padma Purāṇa* it is said that those who are envious and always angry at the Lord are unfit to know the actual and eternal form of the Lord. In the *Bhāgavatam* also it is said that the Lord appeared like a thunderbolt to those who were wrestlers. Śiśupāla, at the time of being killed by the Lord, could not see Him as Kṛṣṇa, being dazzled by the glare of the *brahmajyoti*. Therefore, the temporary manifestation of the Lord as a thunderbolt to the wrestlers appointed by Kāṁsa, or the glaring appearance of the Lord before Śiśupāla, was relinquished by the Lord, but the Lord as a magician is eternally existent and is never vanquished in any circumstance. Such forms are temporarily shown to the *asuras* only, and when such exhibitions are withdrawn, the *asuras* think that the Lord is no more existent, just as the foolish audience thinks the magician to be burnt to ashes or cut to pieces. The conclusion is that the Lord has no material body, and therefore He is never to be killed or changed by His transcendental body.

TEXT 36

यदा मुकुन्दो भगवानिमां महौ
जहौ स्वतन्वा श्रवणीयसत्कयः ।

तदाहरेवाप्रतिबुद्धचेतसा-

ममद्रहेतुः कलिरन्ववर्तत ॥३६॥

yadā mukundo bhagavān imāṁ mahīm
jahau sva-tanvā śravaṇīya-sat-kataḥ
tadāhar evāprati-buddha-cetasām
abhadra-hetuḥ kalir anvavartata

yadā—when; *mukundaḥ*—Lord Kṛṣṇa; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *imām*—this; *mahīm*—earth; *jahau*—left; *sva-tanvā*—with His selfsame body; *śravaṇīya-sat-kataḥ*—hearing about Him is worthwhile; *tadā*—at that time; *ahaḥ eva*—from the very day; *apra-ti-buddha-cetasām*—of those whose minds are not sufficiently developed; *abhadra-hetuḥ*—cause of all ill fortune; *kalir anvavartata*—Kali fully manifested.

TRANSLATION

When the Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa, left this earthly planet in His selfsame form, from that very day Kali, who had already partially appeared, became fully manifest to create inauspicious conditions for those who are endowed with a poor fund of knowledge.

PURPORT

The influence of Kali can be enforced only upon those who are not fully developed in God consciousness. One can neutralize the effects of Kali by keeping oneself fully under the supreme care of the Personality of Godhead. The age of Kali ensued just after the Battle of Kurukṣetra, but it could not exert its influence because of the presence of the Lord. The Lord, however, left this earthly planet in His own transcendental body, and as soon as He left, the symptoms of the Kali-yuga, as were envisioned by Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira prior to Arjuna's arrival from Dvārakā, began to manifest, and Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira rightly conjectured on the departure of the Lord from the earth. As we have already explained, the Lord left our sight just as when the sun sets it is out of our sight.

TEXT 37

युधिष्ठिरस्तत्परिर्षणं बुधः
पुरे च राष्ट्रे च गृहे तथात्मनि ।

विभाव्य लोमानृतजिह्वहिंसना-
द्यधर्मचक्रं गमनाय पर्यधात् ॥३७॥

*yudhiṣṭhīras tat parisarpaṇam budhaḥ
pure ca rāṣṭre ca gr̥he tathātmani
vibhāvya lobhāṇṛta-jihma-himsanādy-
adharma-cakram gamanāya paryadhāt*

yudhiṣṭhīrah—Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira; *tat*—that; *parisarpaṇam*—expansion; *budhaḥ*—thoroughly experienced; *pure*—in the capital; *ca*—as also; *rāṣṭre*—in the state; *ca*—and; *gr̥he*—at home; *tathā*—as also; *ātmani*—in person; *vibhāvya*—observing; *lobha*—avarice; *anṛta*—untruth; *jihma*—diplomacy; *himsana-ādi*—violence, envy; *adharma*—irreligion; *cakram*—a vicious circle; *gamanāya*—for departure; *paryadhāt*—dressed himself accordingly.

TRANSLATION

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was intelligent enough to understand the influence of the age of Kali, characterized by increasing avarice, falsehood, cheating and violence throughout the capital, state, home and among individuals. So he wisely prepared himself to leave home, and he dressed accordingly.

PURPORT

The present age is influenced by the specific qualities of Kali. Since the days of the Battle of Kurukṣetra, about 5,000 years ago, the influence of the age of Kali began manifesting, and from authentic scriptures it is learned that the age of Kali is still to run on for 427,000 years. The symptoms of the Kali-yuga, as mentioned above, namely avarice, falsehood, diplomacy, cheating, nepotism, violence and all such things, are already in vogue, and no one can imagine what is going to happen gradually with further increase of the influence of Kali till the day of annihilation. We have already come to know that the influence of the age of Kali is meant for godless so-called civilized man; those who are under the protection of the Lord have nothing to fear from this horrible age. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was a great devotee of the Lord, and there was no necessity of his being afraid of the age of Kali, but he preferred to retire from active household life and prepare himself to go back home, back to Godhead. The Pāṇḍavas are eternal companions of the Lord, and therefore they are more interested in the company of the Lord than anything else. Besides that, being an ideal king, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira wanted to retire just to set an example for others. As soon as there is some young fellow to look after the household affairs, one should at once retire from family life to uplift oneself to spiritual realization. One should not rot in the dark well of household life till one is dragged out by the will of Yamarāja. Modern politicians should take lessons from Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira about voluntary retirement from active life and should make room for the younger generation. Also retired old gentlemen should take lessons from him and leave home for spiritual realization before forcefully dragged away to meet death.

TEXT 38

खराट् पौत्रं विनयिनमात्मनः सुसमं गुणैः ।
तोयनीव्याः पतिं भूमेरभ्यषिञ्चद्गजाह्वये ॥३८॥

*sva-rāṭ pautram vinayinam
ātmanah susamaṁ guṇaiḥ
toya-nīvyāḥ patim bhūmer
abhyasiñcat gajāhvaye*

sva-rāṭ—the emperor; *pautram*—unto the grandson; *vinayinam*—properly trained; *ātmanah*—his own self; *su-sama*—equal in all respects; *guṇaiḥ*—by the qualities; *toya-nīvyāḥ*—bordered by the

seas; *patim*—master; *bhūmeḥ*—of the land; *abhyasiñcat*—enthroned; *gajāhvaye*—in the capital of Hastināpura.

TRANSLATION

Thereafter, in the capital of Hastināpura, he enthroned his grandson, who was trained and equally qualified, as the emperor and master of all land bordered by the seas.

PURPORT

The total land on the earth bordered by the seas was under the subjugation of the King of Hastināpura. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira trained his grandson, Mahārāja Parikṣit, who was equally qualified, in state administration in terms of the king's obligation to the citizens. Thus Parikṣit was enthroned on the seat of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira prior to his departure back to Godhead. Concerning Mahārāja Parikṣit, the specific word used, *vinayinam*, is significant. Why was the King of Hastināpura, at least till the time of Mahārāja Parikṣit, accepted as the Emperor of the world? The only reason is that the people of the world were happy because of the good administration of the Emperor. The happiness of the citizens was due to the ample production of natural produce such as grains, fruits, milk, herbs, valuable stones, minerals and everything that the people needed. They were even free from all bodily miseries, anxieties of mind, and disturbances caused by natural phenomena and other living beings. Because everyone was happy in all respects, there was no resentment, although there were sometimes battles between the state kings for political reasons and supremacy. Everyone was trained to attain the highest goal of life, and therefore the people were also enlightened enough not to quarrel over trivialities. The influence of the age of Kali gradually infiltrated the good qualities of both the kings and the citizens, and therefore a tense situation developed between the ruler and the ruled, but still even in this age of disparity between the ruler and the ruled, there can be spiritual emolument and God consciousness. That is a special prerogative.

TEXT 39

मथुरायां तथा वज्रं शूरसेनपतिं ततः ।
प्राजापत्यां निरूप्येष्टिमग्निपिबदीश्वरः ॥३९॥

*mathurāyām tathā vajram
śūrasena-patim tataḥ
prajāpatyām nirūpyeṣṭim
agnin apibat īśvaraḥ*

mathurāyām—at Mathurā; *tathā*—also; *vajram*—Vajra; *śūrasena-patim*—King of the Śūrasenas; *tataḥ*—thereafter; *prajāpatyām*—Prajāpatya sacrifice; *nirūpya*—having performed; *iṣṭim*—goal; *agnin*—fire; *apibat*—placed in himself; *īśvaraḥ*—capable.

TRANSLATION

Then he posted Vajra, the son of Aniruddha [grandson of Lord Kṛṣṇa], at Mathurā as the King of Śūrasena. Afterwards Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira performed a Prajāpatya sacrifice and placed in himself the fire for quitting household life.

PURPORT

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, after placing Mahārāja Parikṣit on the imperial throne of Hastināpura, and after posting Vajra, the great-grandson of Lord Kṛṣṇa, as the King of Mathurā, accepted the renounced order of life. The system of four orders of life and four castes in terms of quality and work, known as *varṇāśrama-dharma*, is the beginning of real human life, and Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, as the protector of this system of human activities, timely retired from active life as a *sannyāsī*, handing over the charge of the administration to a trained prince, Mahārāja Parikṣit. The scientific system of *varṇāśrama-dharma* divides the human life into four divisions of occupation and four orders of life. The

four orders of life as *brahmacārī*, *grhastha*, *vānaprastha* and *sannyāsi* are to be followed by all, irrespective of the occupational division. Modern politicians do not wish to retire from active life, even if they are old enough, but Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja, as an ideal king, voluntarily retired from active administrative life to prepare himself for the next life. Everyone's life must be so arranged that the last stage of life, say at least the last fifteen to twenty years prior to death, can be absolutely devoted to the devotional service of the Lord to attain the highest perfection of life. It is really foolishness to engage oneself all the days of one's life in material enjoyment and fruitive activities, because as long as the mind remains absorbed in fruitive work for material enjoyment, there is no chance of getting out from conditioned life, or material bondage. No one should follow the suicidal policy of neglecting one's supreme task of attaining the highest perfection of life, namely going back home, back to Godhead.

TEXT 40

विमुज्य तत्र तत् सर्वं दुकूलवलयदिकम् ।
निर्ममो निरहंकारः संछिन्नाशेषबन्धनः ॥४०॥

*visrjya tatra tat sarvaṁ
dukūla-valayādikam
nirmamo nirahāṅkāraḥ
sañchinnāśeṣa-bandhanah*

visrjya—relinquishing; *tatra*—all those; *tat*—that; *sarvaṁ*—everything; *dukūla*—belt; *valaya-ādikam*—and bangles; *nirmamaḥ*—uninterested; *nirahāṅkāraḥ*—unattached; *sañchinnā*—perfectly cut off; *āśeṣa-bandhanah*—unlimited attachment.

TRANSLATION

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira at once relinquished all his garments, belt and ornaments of the royal order and became completely disinterested and unattached to everything.

PURPORT

To become purified of material contamination is the necessary qualification for becoming one of the associates of the Lord. No one can become an associate of the Lord or can go back to Godhead without such purification. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, therefore, to become spiritually pure, at once gave up his royal opulence, relinquishing his royal dress and garments. The *kaṣāya*, or saffron loincloth of a *sannyāsi*, indicates freedom from all attractive material garments, and thus he changed his dress accordingly. He became disinterested in his kingdom and family and thus became free from all material contamination, or material designation. People are generally attached to various kinds of designations—the designations of family, society, country, occupation, wealth, position and many others. As long as one is attached to such designations, he is considered materially impure. The so-called leaders of men in the modern age are attached by national consciousness, but they do not know that such false consciousness is also another designation of the materially conditioned soul; one has to relinquish such designations before one can become eligible to go back to Godhead. Foolish people adore such men who die in national consciousness, but here is an example of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, a royal king who prepared himself to leave this world without such national consciousness. And yet he is remembered even today because he was a great pious king, almost on the same level with the Personality of Godhead Śrī Rāma. And because people of the world were dominated by such pious kings, they were happy in all respects, and it was quite possible for such great emperors to rule the world.

TEXT 41

वार्चं जुहाव मनसि तत्प्राण इतरे च तम् ।
मृत्वावपानं सोत्सर्गं तं पञ्चत्वे ह्यजोहवीत् ॥४१॥

*vācam juhāva manasi
tat prāṇa itare ca tam
mṛtyāv apānam sotsargam
taṁ pañcatve hy ajohavit*

vācam—speeches; *juhāva*—relinquished; *manasi*—into the mind; *tat prāṇa*—mind into breathing; *itare ca*—other senses also; *tam*—into that; *mṛtyau*—into death; *apānam*—breathing; *sa-utsargam*—with all dedication; *taṁ*—that; *pañcatve*—into the body made of five elements; *hi*—certainly; *ajohavit*—amalgamated it.

TRANSLATION

Then he amalgamated all the sense organs into the mind, then the mind into life, life into breathing, his total existence into the embodiment of the five elements, and his body into death. Then, as pure self, he became free from the material conception of life.

PURPORT

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, like his brother Arjuna, began to concentrate and gradually became freed from all material bondage. First he concentrated all the actions of the senses and amalgamated them into the mind, or in other words he turned his mind toward the transcendental service of the Lord. He prayed that since all material activities are performed by the mind in terms of actions and reactions of the material senses, and since he was going back to Godhead, the mind would wind up its material activities and be turned towards the transcendental service to the Lord. There was no longer a need for material activities. Actually the activities of the mind cannot be stopped, for they are the reflection of the eternal soul, but the quality of the activities can be changed from matter to the transcendental service of the Lord. The material color of the mind is changed when one washes it from contaminations of life-breathing and thereby frees it from the contamination of repeated births and deaths and situates it in pure spiritual life. All is manifested by the temporary embodiment of the material body, which is a production of the mind at the time of death, and if the mind is purified by practice of transcendental loving service to the Lord and is constantly engaged in the service of the lotus feet of the Lord, there is no more chance of the mind's producing another material body after death. It will be freed from absorption in material contamination. The pure soul will be able to return home, back to Godhead.

TEXT 42

त्रित्वे हुत्वा च पञ्चत्वं तच्चैकत्वेऽजुहोन्मुनिः ।
सर्वमात्मन्यजुहवीद्ब्रह्मण्यात्मानमव्यये ॥४२॥

*tritve hutvā ca pañcatvaṁ
tac caikatve 'juhon munih
sarvaṁ ātmany ajuhavit
brahmaṇy ātmānam avyaye*

tritve—into the three qualities; *hutvā*—having offered; *ca*—also; *pañcatvaṁ*—five elements; *tat*—that; *ca*—also; *ekatve*—in one nescience; *ajuhot*—amalgamated; *munih*—the thoughtful; *sarvaṁ*—the sum total; *ātmani*—in the soul; *ajuhavit*—fixed; *brahmaṇi*—unto the spirit; *ātmānam*—the soul; *avyaye*—unto the inexhaustible.

TRANSLATION

Thus annihilating the gross body of five elements into the three qualitative modes of material nature, he merged them in one nescience and then absorbed that nescience in the self, Brahman, which is inexhaustible in all circumstances.

PURPORT

All that is manifested in the material world is the product of the *mahat-tattva-avyakta*, and things that are visible in our material vision

are nothing but combinations and permutations of such variegated material products. But the living entity is different from such material products. It is due to the living entity's forgetfulness of his eternal nature as eternal servitor of the Lord, and his false conception of being a so-called lord of the material nature, that he is obliged to enter into the existence of false sense enjoyment. Thus a concomitant generation of material energies is the principal cause of the mind's being materially affected. Thus the gross body of five elements is produced. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira reversed the action and merged the five elements of the body in the three modes of material nature. The qualitative distinction of the body as being good, bad or mediocre is extinguished, and again the qualitative manifestations become merged in the material energy, which is produced from a false sense of the pure living being. When one is thus inclined to become an associate of the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, in one of the innumerable planets of the spiritual sky, especially in Goloka Vṛndāvana, one has to think always that he is different from the material energy; he has nothing to do with it, and he has to realize himself as pure spirit, Brahman, qualitatively equal with the Supreme Brahman (Parameśvara). Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, after distributing his kingdom to Parīkṣit and Vajra, did not think himself Emperor of the world or head of the Kuru dynasty. This sense of freedom from material relations, as well as freedom from the material encagement of the gross and subtle encirclement, makes one free to act as the servitor of the Lord, even though one is in the material world. This stage is called the *jīvanmukta* stage, or the liberated stage, even in the material world. That is the process of ending material existence. One must not only think that he is Brahman, but must act like Brahman. One who only thinks himself Brahman is an impersonalist. And one who acts like Brahman is the pure devotee.

TEXT 43

चीरवासा निराहारो बद्धवाङ् मुक्तमूर्धजः ।
दर्शयन्नात्मनो रूपं जडोन्मत्तपिशाचवत् ।
अवेक्षमाणो निरगादशृण्वन् बधिरो यथा ॥४३॥

*cīra-vāsā nirāhāro
baddha-vāṅ mukta-mūrdhajaḥ
darśayan ātmano rūpaṁ
jaḍonmatta-piśācavat
anavekṣamāṇo niragād
aśṛṇvan badhiro yathā*

cīra-vāsā—accepted torn clothing; *nirāhāraḥ*—gave up all solid foodstuff; *baddha-vāṅ*—stopped talking; *mukta-mūrdhajaḥ*—untied his hair; *darśayan*—began to show; *ātmanaḥ*—of himself; *rūpaṁ*—bodily features; *jaḍa*—inert; *unmatta*—mad; *piśāca-vat*—just like an urchin; *anavekṣamāṇaḥ*—without waiting for; *niragāt*—was situated; *aśṛṇvan*—without hearing; *badhiraḥ*—just like a deaf man; *yathā*—as if.

TRANSLATION

After that, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira dressed himself in torn clothing, gave up eating all solid foods, voluntarily became dumb and let his hair hang loose. All this combined to make him look like an urchin or madman with no occupation. He did not depend on his brothers for anything. And, just like a deaf man, he heard nothing.

PURPORT

Thus being freed from all external affairs, he had nothing to do with imperial life or family prestige, and for all practical purposes he posed himself exactly like an inert mad urchin and did not speak of material affairs. He had no dependence on his brothers, who had all along been helping him. This stage of complete independence from everything is also called the purified stage of fearlessness.

TEXT 44

उदीचीं प्रविवेशाशां गतपूर्वा महात्मभिः ।
हृदि ब्रह्म परं ध्यायन्नावर्तेत यतो गतः ॥४४॥

*udicīm praviveśāśāṁ
gata-pūrvām mahātmabhiḥ
hr̥di brahma param dhyāyan
nāvarteta yato gataḥ*

udicīm—the northern side; *praviveśa-āśāṁ*—those who wanted to enter there; *gata-pūrvām*—the path accepted by his forefathers; *mahā-ātmabhiḥ*—by the broad-minded; *hr̥di*—within the heart; *brahma*—the Supreme; *param*—Godhead; *dhyāyan*—constantly thinking of; *nāvarteta*—passed his days; *yataḥ*—wherever; *gataḥ*—went.

TRANSLATION

He then started towards the North, treading the path accepted by his forefathers and great men, to devote himself completely to the thought of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And he lived in that way wherever he went.

PURPORT

It is understood from this verse that Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira followed in the footsteps of his forefathers and the great devotees of the Lord. We have discussed many times before that the system of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, as it was strictly followed by the inhabitants of the world, specifically by those who inhabited the Āryāvarta province of the world, emphasizes the importance of leaving all household connections at a certain stage of life. The training and education was so imparted, and thus a respectable person like Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira had to leave all family connection for self-realization and going back to Godhead. No king or respectable gentleman would continue family life till the end, because that was considered suicidal and against the interest of the perfection of human life. In order to be free from all family encumbrances and devote oneself cent percent in the devotional service of Lord Kṛṣṇa, this system is always recommended for everyone because it is the path of authority. The Lord instructs in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.62) that one must become a devotee of the Lord at least at the last stage of one's life. A sincere soul of the Lord like Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira must abide by this instruction of the Lord for his own interest.

The specific words *brahma param* indicate Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This is corroborated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.13) by Arjuna with reference to great authorities like Asita, Devala, Nārada and Vyāsa. Thus Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, while leaving home for the North, constantly remembered Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa within himself, following in the footsteps of his forefathers as well as the great devotees of all times.

TEXT 45

सर्वे तमनुनिर्जग्मुर्भ्रातरः कृतनिश्चयाः ।
कलिनाधर्ममित्रेण दृष्टा स्पृष्टाः प्रजा भुवि ॥४५॥

*sarve tam anunirjagmur
bhrātaraḥ kṛta-niścayāḥ
kalinādharmā-mitreṇa
dr̥ṣṭvā spr̥ṣṭāḥ prajā bhuvi*

sarve—all his younger brothers; *tam*—him; *anunirjagmur*—left home by following the elder; *bhrātaraḥ*—brothers; *kṛta-niścayāḥ*—decidedly; *kalinā*—by the age of Kali; *adharmā*—principle of irreligion; *mitreṇa*—by the friend; *dr̥ṣṭvā*—observing; *spr̥ṣṭāḥ*—having overtaken; *prajāḥ*—all citizens; *bhuvi*—on the earth.

TRANSLATION

The younger brothers of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira observed that the age of Kali had already arrived throughout the world and that

the citizens of the kingdom were already affected by irreligious practice. Therefore they decided to follow in the footsteps of their elder brother.

PURPORT

The younger brothers of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira were already obedient followers of the great Emperor, and they had sufficiently been trained to know the ultimate goal of life. They therefore decidedly followed their eldest brother in rendering devotional service to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. According to the principles of *sanātana-dharma*, one must retire from family life after half the duration of life is finished and must engage himself in self-realization. But the question of engaging oneself is not always decided. Sometimes retired men are bewildered about how to engage themselves for the last days of life. Here is a decision by authorities like the Pāṇḍavas. All of them engaged themselves in favorably culturing the devotional service of the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. According to Svāmī Śrīdhara, *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*, or fruitive activities, philosophical speculations and salvation, as conceived by several persons, are not the ultimate goal of life. They are more or less practiced by persons who have no information of the ultimate goal of life. The ultimate goal of life is already indicated by the Lord Himself in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.64), and the Pāṇḍavas were intelligent enough to follow it without hesitation.

TEXT 46

ते साधुकृतसर्वार्थाज्ञात्वात्यन्तिकमात्मनः ।
मनसा धारयामासुर्वैकुण्ठचरणाम्बुजम् ॥४६॥

*te sādhu-kṛta-sarvārthā
jñātvātyantikam ātmanah
manasā dhārayām āsuh
vaikuṇṭha-araṇāmbujam*

te—all of them; *sādhu-kṛta*—having performed everything worthy of a saint; *sarva-arthāḥ*—that which includes everything worthy; *jñātvā*—knowing it well; *ātyantikam*—the ultimate; *ātmanah*—of the living being; *manasā*—within the mind; *dhārayām āsuh*—sustained; *vaikuṇṭha*—the Lord of the spiritual sky; *araṇāmbujam*—the lotus feet.

TRANSLATION

They all had performed all the principles of religion and as a result rightly decided that the lotus feet of the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa are the supreme goal of all. Therefore they meditated upon His feet without interruption.

PURPORT

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.28) the Lord says that only those who have done pious deeds in previous lives and have become freed from the results of all impious acts can concentrate upon the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The Pāṇḍavas, not only in this life but also in their previous lives, had always performed the supreme pious work, and thus they are ever free from all the reactions of impious work. It is quite reasonable, therefore, that they concentrated their minds upon the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. According to Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī, *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* principles are accepted by persons who are not free from the results of impious action. Such persons affected with the contaminations of the above four principles cannot at once accept the lotus feet of the Lord in the spiritual sky. The Vaikuṇṭha world is situated far beyond the material sky. The material sky is under the management of Durgā Devī, or the material energy of the Lord, but the Vaikuṇṭha world is managed by the personal energy of the Lord.

TEXTS 47-48

तद्वयानोद्विक्त्या भक्त्या विशुद्धिषणाः परे ।
तस्मिन् नारायणपदे एकान्तमतयो गतिम् ॥४७॥

अवापुर्दुरवापां ते असद्भिर्विषयात्मभिः ।
विभूतकल्मषा स्थानं विरजेनात्मनैव हि ॥४८॥

*tad-dhyānodriktayā bhaktyā
viśuddha-dhīṣaṇāḥ pare
tasmin nārāyaṇa-pade
ekānta-matayo gatim*

*avāpur duravāpām te
asadbhir viṣayātmabhiḥ
vidhūta-kalmaṣā sthānam
virajenātmanaiva hi*

tat—that; *dhyāna*—positive meditation; *utrikṭayā*—being freed from; *bhaktyā*—by a devotional attitude; *viśuddha*—purified; *dhīṣaṇāḥ*—by intelligence; *pare*—unto the transcendence; *tasmin*—in that; *nārāyaṇa*—the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *pade*—unto the lotus feet; *ekānta-matayaḥ*—of those who are fixed in the Supreme, who is one; *gatim*—destination; *avāpuḥ*—attained; *duravāpām*—very difficult to obtain; *te*—by them; *asadbhiḥ*—by the materialists; *viṣaya-ātmabhiḥ*—absorbed in material needs; *vidhūta*—washed off; *kalmaṣāḥ*—material contaminations; *sthānam*—abode; *virajena*—without material passion; *ātmanā eva*—by the selfsame body; *hi*—certainly.

TRANSLATION

Thus by pure consciousness due to constant devotional remembrance, they attained the spiritual sky, which is ruled over by the Supreme Nārāyaṇa, Lord Kṛṣṇa. This is attained only by those who meditate upon the one Supreme Lord without deviation. This abode of the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, known as Goloka Vṛndāvana, cannot be attained by persons who are absorbed in the material conception of life. But the Pāṇḍavas, being completely washed of all material contamination, attained that abode in their very same bodies.

PURPORT

According to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, a person freed from the three modes of material qualities, namely goodness, passion and ignorance, and situated in transcendence can reach the highest perfection of life without change of body. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī in his *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* says that a person, whatever he may be, can attain the perfection of a twice-born *brāhmaṇa* by undergoing the spiritual disciplinary actions under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master, exactly as a chemist can turn gun metal into gold by chemical manipulation. It is therefore the actual guidance that matters in the process of becoming a *brāhmaṇa*, even without change of body, or in going back to Godhead without change of body. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī remarks that the word “*hi*” used in this connection positively affirms this truth, and there is no doubt about this factual position. The *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.26) also affirms this statement of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī when the Lord says that anyone who executes devotional service systematically without deviation can attain the perfection of Brahman by surpassing the contamination of the three modes of material nature, and when the Brahman perfection is still more advanced by the selfsame execution of devotional service, there is no doubt at all that one can attain the supreme spiritual planet, Goloka Vṛndāvana, without change of body, as we have already discussed in connection with the Lord’s returning to His abode without a change of body.

TEXT 49

विदुरोऽपि परित्यज्य प्रभासे देहमात्मनः ।
कृष्णावेशेन तच्चित्तः पितृभिः स्वक्षयं ययौ ॥४९॥

*viduro 'pi parityajya
prabhāse deham ātmanah*

*kṛṣṇāveśena tac-cittāḥ
pitṛbhiḥ sva-kṣayam yayau*

viduraḥ—Vidura (the uncle of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira); *api*—also; *parityajya*—after quitting the body; *prabhāse*—in the place of pilgrimage at Prabhāsa; *deham ātmanah*—his body; *kṛṣṇa*—the Personality of Godhead; *āveśena*—being absorbed in that thought; *tat*—his; *cittāḥ*—thoughts and actions; *pitṛbhiḥ*—along with the residents of Pitṛloka; *sva-kṣayam*—his own abode; *yayau*—departed.

TRANSLATION

Vidura, while on pilgrimage, left his body at Prabhāsa. Because he was absorbed in thought of Lord Kṛṣṇa, he was received by the denizens of Pitṛloka planet, where he returned to his original post.

PURPORT

The difference between the Pāṇḍavas and Vidura is that the Pāṇḍavas are eternal associates of the Lord, the Personality of Godhead, whereas Vidura is one of the administrative demigods in charge of the Pitṛloka planet and is known as Yamarāja. Men are afraid of Yamarāja because it is he only who awards punishment to the miscreants of the material world, but those who are devotees of the Lord have nothing to fear from him. To the devotees he is a cordial friend, but to the nondevotees he is fear personified. As we have already discussed, it is understood that Yamarāja was cursed by Maṇḍūkā Muni to be degraded as a *śūdra*, and therefore Vidura was an incarnation of Yamarāja. As an eternal servitor of the Lord, he displayed his devotional activities very ardently and lived a life of a pious man, so much so that a materialistic man like Dhṛtarāṣṭra also got salvation by his instruction. So by his pious activities in the devotional service of the Lord he was able to always remember the lotus feet of the Lord, and thus he became washed of all contamination of a *śūdra*-born life. At the end he was again received by the denizens of Pitṛloka and posted in his original position. The demigods are also associates of the Lord without personal touch, whereas the direct associates of the Lord are in constant personal touch with Him. The Lord and His personal associates incarnate in many universes without cessation. The Lord remembers them all, whereas the associates forget due to their being very minute parts and parcels of the Lord; they are apt to forget such incidents due to being infinitesimal. This is corroborated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.5).

TEXT 50

द्रौपदी च तदाज्ञाय पतीनामनपेक्षताम् ।
वासुदेवे भगवति ह्येकान्तमतिराप तम् ॥५०॥

*draupadī ca tadājñāya
patinām anapekṣatām
vāsudeve bhagavati
hy ekānta-matir āpa tam*

draupadī—Draupadī (the wife of the Pāṇḍavas); *ca*—and; *tadā*—at that time; *ājñāya*—knowing Lord Kṛṣṇa fully well; *patinām*—of the husbands; *anapekṣatām*—who did not care for her; *vāsudeve*—unto Lord Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa); *bhagavati*—the Personality of Godhead; *hi*—exactly; *eka-anta*—absolutely; *matih*—concentration; *āpa*—got; *tam*—Him (the Lord).

TRANSLATION

Draupadī also saw that her husbands, without caring for her, were leaving home. She knew well about Lord Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead. Both she and Subhadrā became absorbed in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa and attained the same results as their husbands.

PURPORT

When flying an airplane, one cannot take care of other planes. Everyone has to take care of his own plane, and if there is any danger, no other plane can help another in that condition. Similarly, at the end of life, when one has to go back home, back to Godhead, everyone has to take care of himself without help rendered by another. The help is, however, offered on the ground before flying in space. Similarly, the spiritual master, the father, the mother, the relatives, the husband and others can all render help during one's lifetime, but while crossing the sea one has to take care of himself and utilize the instructions formerly received. Draupadī had five husbands, and no one asked Draupadī to come; Draupadī had to take care of herself without waiting for her great husbands. And because she was already trained, she at once took to concentration upon the lotus feet of Lord Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead. The wives also got the same result as their husbands, in the same manner; that is to say, without changing their bodies they reached the destination of Godhead. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura suggests that both Draupadī and Subhadrā, although her name is not mentioned herein, got the same result. None of them had to quit the body.

TEXT 51

यः श्रद्धयैतद् भगवत्प्रियाणां
पाण्डोः सुतानामिति सम्प्रयाणम् ।
शृणोत्यलं स्वस्त्ययनं पवित्रं
लब्ध्वा हरौ भक्तिमुपैति सिद्धिम् ॥५१॥

*yaḥ śraddhayaitad bhagavat-priyāṇām
pāṇḍoḥ sūtānām iti samprayaṇam
śṛṇoty alam svastyayanam pavitraṁ
labdhvā harau bhaktim upaiti siddhim*

yaḥ—anyone who; *śraddhayā*—with devotion; *etat*—this; *bhagavat-priyāṇām*—of those who are very dear to the Personality of Godhead; *pāṇḍoḥ*—of Pāṇḍu; *sūtānām*—of the sons; *iti*—thus; *samprayaṇam*—departure for the ultimate goal; *śṛṇoti*—hears; *alam*—only; *svastyayanam*—good fortune; *pavitraṁ*—perfectly pure; *labdhvā*—by obtaining; *harau*—unto the Supreme Lord; *bhaktim*—devotional service; *upaiti*—gains; *siddhim*—perfection.

TRANSLATION

The subject of the departure of the sons of Pāṇḍu for the ultimate goal of life, back to Godhead, is fully auspicious and is perfectly pure. Therefore anyone who hears this narration with devotional faith certainly gains the devotional service of the Lord, the highest perfection of life.

PURPORT

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is a narration about the Personality of Godhead and the devotees of the Lord like the Pāṇḍavas. The narration of the Personality of Godhead and His devotees is absolute in itself, and thus to hear it with a devotional attitude is to associate with the Lord and constant companions of the Lord. By the process of hearing Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam one can attain the highest perfection of life, namely going back home, back to Godhead, without failure.

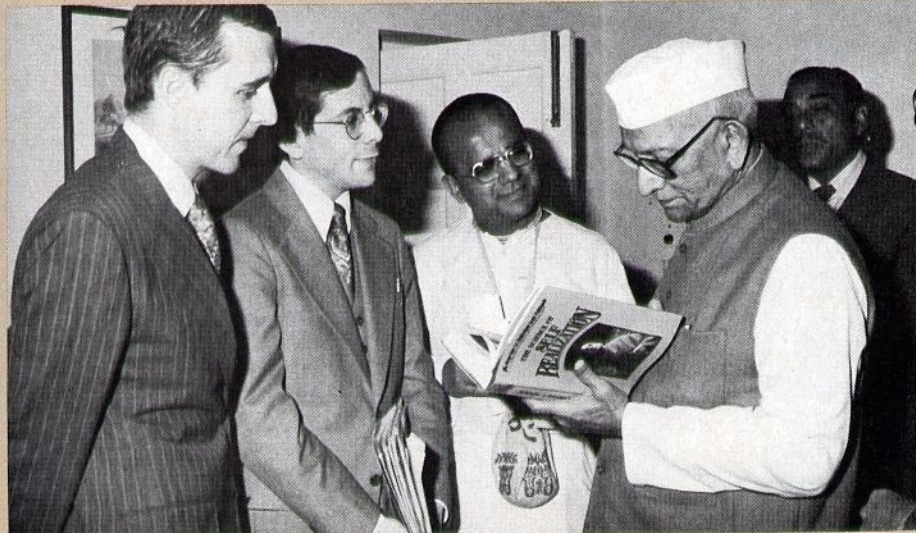
Thus end the Bhaktivedanta purports of the Fifteenth Chapter, First Canto, of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, entitled "The Pāṇḍavas Retire Timely."

(continued in next issue)



Every Town and Village

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



Prime Minister Desai accepts gift from ISKCON representatives (from left) Balavanta dāsa, Rāmeśvara Swami, and Gopāla-kṛṣṇa dāsa.

India's Desai Confers with ISKCON Leaders

In March three members of ISKCON's governing board met with India's Prime Minister Morarji Desai at his official residence in New Delhi.

The ISKCON leaders and Mr. Desai agreed that there are many problems facing the world now that spiritual life and God consciousness have declined, and they discussed how ISKCON is trying to turn back this trend by disseminating the practical wisdom found in ancient India's Vedic literatures. The prime minister noted the popularity of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* (over three million copies sold since 1976) and said that he had obtained his personal copy at

the recent Third World Book Fair, in New Delhi. Mr. Desai suggested that people are developing a fondness for Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā* because they now understand that progress should be not only material but also spiritual.

Prime Minister Desai was also glad to receive a copy of the latest Bhaktivedanta Book Trust publication, Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Science of Self-Realization*. In addition, he was interested to note that a leading Indian economist had urged the government to study ISKCON's programs for worldwide rural development and food relief.

Editorial Correspondence

Address letters to

The Editors
BACK TO GODHEAD
3764 Watseka Avenue
Los Angeles
California 90034

Stately New Home For ISKCON Philadelphia

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness has moved its Philadelphia center to a recently-acquired wooded estate in the city's historic Mt. Airy district. Four stately buildings provide ample space for a temple, offices, and living quarters. Remarked a television commentator at the grand opening, "It looks like the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement is here to stay. . . ."

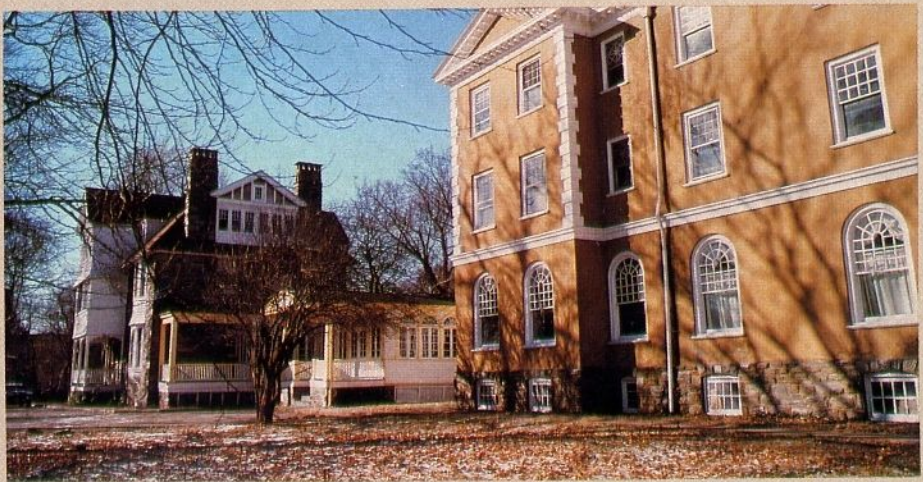
Since 1971 Ravindra Svarūpa dāsa, a Ph.D. candidate at Temple University, has coordinated ISKCON's work in the area, including *yoga* classes and discussion groups at Temple, the University of Pennsylvania, Swarthmore, Bryn Mawr, and Haverford. "Śrīla Prabhupāda was always encouraging us to teach the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness on the nation's campuses," said Ravindra Svarūpa, "and now, with our expanded facilities, we'll be able to increase our college programs."

Among other things, the new Philadelphia headquarters also serves as a cultural and religious center for the city's fifteen thousand Indian residents.

Vaiṣṇava Calendar

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

Year 492 Caitanya Era Vaiṣṇava month of Trivikrama (May 23-June 20, 1978)		
May 27 (Trivikrama 5)	June 1 (Trivikrama 10)	June 2 (Trivikrama 11)
Disappearance of Śrīla Rāmananda Rāya.	Aparā-ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).	Appearance of Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Thākura.
June 16 (Trivikrama 25)	June 17 (Trivikrama 26)	June 20 (Trivikrama 29)
Appearance of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhōṣaṇa.	Pāṇḍava-nirjālā-ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).	Snāna-yātrā of Lord Jagannātha. Disappearance of Śrīla Mukunda Datta and Śrīla Śrīdhara Paṇḍita.



Philadelphia's new ISKCON center: "The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement is here to stay."



by AMOGHA DĀSA

I can see my body, and in a way I
can see my mind and intelligence. Now then, what
about the “I” who’s doing all this seeing? Can I see the “I”?

THE EYES TO SEE THE “I”

As we all know, the organ for seeing is the eye. The eye catches the light rays reflected by whatever is around us and focuses these rays on its retina. Then it sends images to the brain via the optic nerves. And that, pretty much, is how we see things.

Of course, there are some things we can’t see with our unaided eyes. Some things are too small, so we have to use a microscope. Other things are too far away, so we have to use a telescope. Still other things (like ultraviolet, infrared, or television waves) are too subtle, but we can see them if we have the right instruments.

So despite our limited seeing power, in



ILLUSTRATION: RUBEN VIRAMONTES

With our unaided eyes we can't see things that are too far away, too small, or too subtle. But we can see them through the right instruments, or through knowledge. Says *Bhagavad-gītā*, the "I" (accompanied by Kṛṣṇa in His four-armed form as Supersoul) resides in the heart and outshines thousands of suns.

thought patterns and intelligence in astute judgments.

Now then, just who or what is doing all this perceiving?

You are—the living soul within your body. All of us are spiritual souls—subtler than the subtlest material element. Naturally we can't see the soul with our gross material eyes. But just because we can't see it, that doesn't mean it doesn't exist. If someone argued, "I can't see the atom, so I don't think it exists," that wouldn't sway anyone who knew how tiny the atom actually is.

And the soul is tinier than the atom. As the Vedic literatures inform us, its size is one ten-thousandth the tip of a hair. No wonder we can't see the soul. Yet there is a way to *perceive* it. Just as a physicist perceives the atom through a certain process, so we can perceive the soul through the process of transcendental knowledge. And what is transcendental knowledge? Lord Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā* that transcendental knowledge means understanding the difference between the soul and matter.

As Kṛṣṇa explains, the soul is conscious but matter is unconscious. Each of us can understand that "I am a conscious living being," yet if any part of our body were amputated, that part would not be conscious. So we can understand that the body itself has no consciousness; it gets its consciousness from the soul. Nor can we generate consciousness by combining unconscious elements. Consciousness is the symptom of the soul, and the soul is the subtlest of the elements.

Kṛṣṇa also points out that the soul stays the same but matter changes: "As the embodied soul continually passes from boyhood to youth and from youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. The self-realized soul is not bewildered by such a change." (Bg. 2.13) Now that I'm a young man, I can remember when I was

a small boy and when I was a teenager. And when I'm an old man, I'll remember when I was a middle-aged man. My material body is constantly changing. But somehow I'm still the same person—so I see that I am not the body but the soul within the body. And after I've passed away, the body will go right on changing, but I—the soul—will remain the same. As Lord Kṛṣṇa explains, a person who has transcendental knowledge is not at all puzzled by this transmigration of the soul. Because he has perfect knowledge of the soul and matter and the difference between them, he sees everything perfectly.

Even a person who just has material knowledge can see better than someone whose eyes are clouded over by ignorance. For instance, when a watchmaker looks inside your watch, he can see what's wrong with it. But you can't see, because you don't have the knowledge. A harbor pilot looks at the harbor, and you look at the harbor. But the pilot knows how to take the ship into the harbor safely; you don't. Both of you are looking at the harbor, but one has knowledge and the other doesn't. So the one who has knowledge can actually see. We have to learn from a person who has knowledge if we want to expand our vision and see perfectly.

One morning in Perth, Australia, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda was walking along the beach. "You want to judge everything by what you can see with your eyes," he said. "But can you see India? I have just come from India. It is across this ocean, but you cannot see it. Does that mean there is no India? No. If you want knowledge, you have to learn from someone who has already seen."

Bhāgavad-gītā puts it very simply: "Just try to learn the truth by approaching a bona fide spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The spiritual master can impart transcendental knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth." In *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, Śrīla Prabhupāda shows us how to gain transcendental knowledge and see the soul perfectly. Just as we can see microbes through a microscope and stars through a telescope, so we can see the soul through *Bhagavad-gītā*—the "soul scope." 🌸

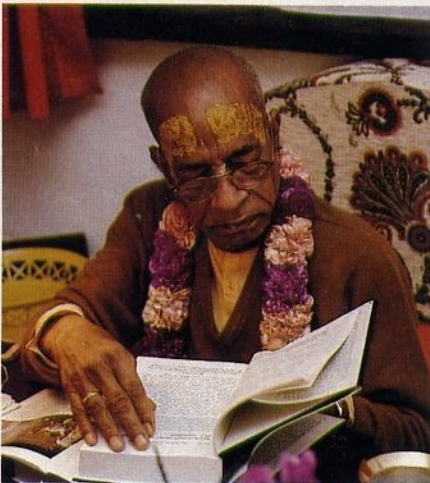
one way or another we can perceive the world's gross and subtle elements. Ancient India's Vedic literatures catalog these elements for us as solid matter, liquid, radiant energy, gas, ether, mind, intelligence, and ego. Each element is progressively subtler. Liquid is subtler than solid matter, radiant energy subtler than liquid, gas subtler than radiant energy, and so on. We can see solid matter, of course, and liquid and radiant energy as well, but we can't see gas or ether. Yet we can perceive gas in inflated balloons and ether in radio and television transmissions. Then, too, we can't see the subtler elements mind and intelligence. Yet we can perceive mind in

BBT

A QUICK LOOK AT THE BHAKTIVEDANTA BOOK TRUST

The World's Largest Publisher of Books on Indian
Philosophy, Religion, and Culture

PHOTOS BY BHĀRGAVA DĀSA



Books. Sixty-six million of them in print—all designed to meet the highest professional standards, and all filled with the essential science of self-realization and realization of God. This is what the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust is all about.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda started the BBT—a strictly nonprofit publishing house—to make known to the world the teachings of India's vast and ancient Vedic literatures. Śrīla Prabhupāda knew that

philosophers and intellectuals around the world had long admired the spiritual wisdom of Vedic writings like the *Upaniṣads* and *Bhagavad-gītā*. But he could also see that in practically every case the commentator had used the Vedic writings to present his own philosophy without touching the original spirit of the texts. In other words, the Vedic writings had never really gotten a chance to speak for themselves, so we readers had never gotten a chance to know what they have to tell us. That's why Śrīla Prabhupāda decided to present the Vedic literature "as it is."

To get the Vedic message across, Śrīla Prabhupāda translated original texts like *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* into clearly understandable English, and he wrote scholarly explanations for each verse. Thus, for the first time, the real meaning of the Vedic literature came through. What's more, once the BBT got started, these English translations (and the BBT foreign editions that followed them) generated unprecedented interest in scholarly circles and soon gained tens of millions of readers. Since 1966 the BBT has printed sixty-six million copies of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. Thus it has





THE BHAKTIVEDANTA BOOK TRUST

FOUNDER-ÂCARYA: HIS DIVINE GRACE A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPÂDA



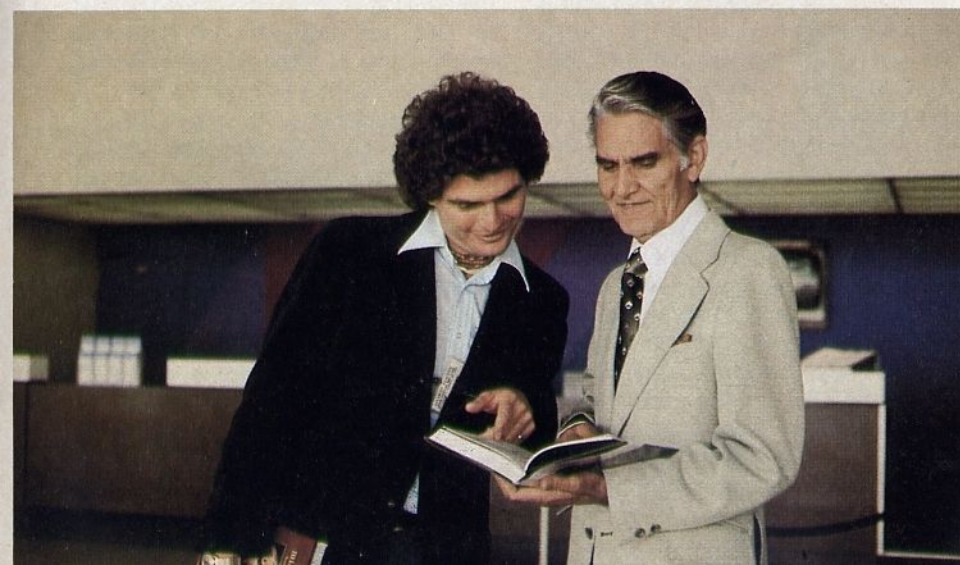


The BBT Success Formula (above): award-winning formats and minimal price. Even pocket-size paperbacks are illustrated with at least eight full-color plates. Comparable books usually sell for two or three times as much.

The warehouse is humming (right). Sales are so brisk that in 1977 the BBT ordered what may be the largest printing ever of a hard-bound book: one and one-half million copies of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.



"...someone buys a BBT book every 5 seconds."



started a renaissance of Vedic culture all over the world.

The first to appreciate BBT books were scholars, professors, and librarians. They became genuinely enthusiastic. Dr. John L. Mish, chief of the Oriental Division of the New York Public Library, said this: "The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust editions of the famous religious classics of India with new translations and commentaries are an important addition to our expanding knowledge of spiritual India." Dr. Garry Gelade of Oxford University gave another tribute: "These books are to be treasured. No one of whatever faith or philosophical persuasion who reads these books with an open mind can fail to be moved and impressed." Hundreds of reviews like these have come in from scholars all around the world. In fact, in America and Europe it's nearly impossible to find a college or university library that hasn't purchased at least one BBT book. And more than twenty-five hundred scholars and librarians have ordered complete sets.

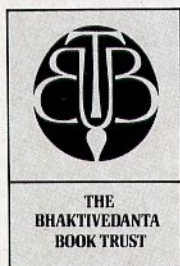
Aside from libraries and bookstores, the BBT's largest customer is ISKCON, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, which sells the books to the public at a nominal cost. Since ISKCON members are disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda, they study his books daily, and thus they are particularly well-qualified to approach people and convince them that these books are worth having and reading. Because of the sincerity and dedication of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples, BBT books have won places in millions of homes throughout the world. In America alone, someone buys a BBT book every five seconds.

If the BBT sold all its books through stores, the sales figures would easily place them on the best-seller list. Sales are so brisk, in fact, that last year the BBT ordered one and one-half million hardbound copies of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. (The company that prints the books—Tennessee's Kingsport Press—checked their records, spoke to old-timers on their staff, and called other printers also, but they were

Distributing is a pleasure for ISKCON members (at left side in each picture this page). They study BBT books daily, and their sincerity and dedication have won the books a place in millions of homes around the world.



Books printed per year (above): from 1,000 in 1966 to 13 million in 1977. If the BBT sold all the books through stores, the sales figures would easily place them on the best-seller list.



unable to find anyone who could remember ever having printed such a large run of a single hardbound book. Yet BBT trustees estimate that the books will soon be gone and that the *Gītā* will have to be reprinted by the end of this year.)

The BBT has made history by publishing scholarly books in award-winning formats and distributing them profusely at a minimal cost. Comparable books usually sell for two or three times as much. By making these books available to professors, libraries, and general readers, the BBT is doing a genuine service to the literary world.

The BBT also publishes a unique line of paperbacks—concise books through

which people may gain an introduction to the Vedic literature. And all of them—right down to fifty-page pocket-size books—are illustrated with at least eight full-color plates. In the softbound publishing industry, such a high standard is practically unheard of. Recently, the BBT has also produced a wide range of audiovisual materials meant to increase the academic community's appreciation of ancient India's great spiritual culture.

The spreading of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement has sparked a worldwide interest in Vedic literature. A short while after BBT books appeared in English, they began to appear in French, German, and Spanish. Portuguese, Italian, and Swedish followed, and today BBT books are available in twenty-eight languages, including Arabic, Japanese, Russian, and Swahili.

Especially noteworthy is the appearance of BBT books in the languages of India. Of course, the classical Vedic scriptures published by the BBT are already available and universally known in every Indian language. But the depth and clarity of Śrīla Prabhupāda's commentary—and his ability to relate the ancient writings to modern times—have made his books tremendously popular throughout India. Like their American and European counterparts, Indian scholars, professors, and librarians deeply appreciate Śrīla Prabhupāda's books.

In India, as in other parts of the world, general readers are purchasing Śrīla Prabhupāda's books in great numbers. For example, many years ago Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote a long Bengali poem called *Geetār-gan*. This small book presents the gist of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Of course, the people of Bengal learn *Bhagavad-gītā* from an early age as a natural part of their religious and cultural life. Yet somehow Prabhupāda's *Geetār-gan* is extraordinarily popular. Everyone appreciates its spiritual clarity. In fact, the managers of ISKCON's headquarters in Māyāpur, West Bengal, say that villagers come from miles away just to get a copy.

So, in a sense, the BBT has come full circle. Having introduced India's ancient books of spiritual wisdom to the people of the West, it has now returned to India to re-enliven the people of that ancient land with the literature of their own original spiritual culture.

In this way, through the book trust he started, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda continues to spread the Vedic science of self-realization—and to benefit the people of India and the world.

What the Scholars Say About BBT Books

"The philosophical and religious works published by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust provide a golden opportunity to Western philosophers, scholars, and people in general to drink deep at the celestial fountain of ancient Indian philosophical and spiritual wisdom."

Dr. L. S. Varshneya
Chairman, Department of Hindi
Dean, Faculty of Arts
Allahabad University
Allahabad, India

"We are well aware of the scholarly reputation of the works on Vedic and Bhaktic literature published by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, particularly the translations and commentaries, and feel that they meet, without doubt, the requirements of our Academy library, which have to do, above all, with authenticity. Our students are all deeply involved in comparative philosophical and religious studies, and have need of works which are not only of the highest scholarly standards, but also represent the traditions themselves, rather than only scholarly opinion about traditions. From this point of view, we... find the Bhaktivedanta publications of great value."

Peter Lamborn Wilson
Librarian
Imperial Iranian Academy
of Philosophy
Editor, Sophia Perennis

"The books of A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda are not only beautiful, but also relevant to our times, as we as a nation search for new cultural patterns for our way of life."

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Dr. Judith M. Tyberg
Founder and Director
East-West Cultural Center
Los Angeles, California

(continued from page 10)

The Lord is on His own planet, but when someone expresses supreme devotion for Him, then He can manifest His original form *anywhere*.

Later in his purport Śrīla Prabhupāda explains, "The Lord is the Supersoul of everything, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and He has innumerable transcendental qualities. It is also concluded that although He is undoubtedly a person, He is not a person of this material world. Impersonal philosophers cannot understand that beyond this material world there can be a person; therefore they are incomplete in knowledge. But it is explained nicely here that the Personality of Godhead is beyond material existence."

Those who have had a bad experience with variety and personality in this material world are afraid of the variety and personality in Kṛṣṇa's spiritual world. These people are like the cow that escaped from a burning barn. After that, every time the cow saw red she would think, "Here is fire again!" and she would run away. Similarly, when the impersonalists see that in Kṛṣṇa consciousness there are form, sound, smell, taste, and touch—in short, personality—they think, "Oh! Here is the material world again!" and they run away. They don't understand Kṛṣṇa's actual position, because they don't have a proper *guru* to explain the scriptures.

Here the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes Kṛṣṇa as *nirguṇa prakṛteḥ*, above the material nature. So Kṛṣṇa's form, sounds, and so forth are not material but spiritual. If you worship a "material Kṛṣṇa," that's not really Kṛṣṇa. But that's just what the impersonalists do. They say that God is formless, but that He takes a material form when He appears in the material world. This is self-contradictory. How can "He" be formless? The pronoun *He* implies a person, and where is there a formless person? Besides, in *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.8) Kṛṣṇa says, *paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām*: "To save the devotees and to destroy the miscreants, I come to the material world." So God sees when His devotees are suffering at the hands of the demons, and then He incarnates. But how can something formless or impersonal feel the compassion to want to take form? An impersonal nonentity cannot feel anything. The impersonalists' idea is self-contradictory.

The main point, though, of this conception of a formless God is that it allows the impersonalists to neglect the form of Kṛṣṇa. "If God is formless," they think, "then why should I worship Kṛṣṇa, who is less than God? If Kṛṣṇa's form is only a temporary, material expression of the impersonal Absolute, why should I worship Him?" Because of these ideas, sometimes you will see rich people coming to a temple in India and throwing two

cents at the Deity's feet . . . because they don't really believe in Kṛṣṇa. They don't believe that He is God. They think, "God is formless, and the self is God, so I am greater than Kṛṣṇa."

This impersonal concept kills *bhakti*, or devotional service to the Lord. Also, in the West there are many impersonalistic *yoga* groups that chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. The "*gurus*" say, "See? I also chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. We are doing the same thing." No. Their chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa is *not* the same as ours. Theirs is not devotional service; it is a counterfeit.

Suppose we have a big meeting and invite Governor Jerry Brown. If I introduce him as "Mr. Jerry Brown, the chief of police," he'll be insulted. He'll walk out. I may protest, "But the chief of police is very powerful. He can arrest anybody. Why are you insulted?"

"Because I am the Governor! Why are you calling me less than what I am?"

So the impersonalists may stand in front of Kṛṣṇa and pray, "O Kṛṣṇa this, Kṛṣṇa that," but all the time they're thinking, "Actually, You're material." With every word they're insulting Kṛṣṇa more than if they'd simply ignored Him.

You can see how cunning the impersonal philosophy can get—and how deadly. It is atheism in its most deadly form. That is why we cannot tolerate impersonalism, and take such great pains to convince everyone of its dangers.

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ILLUSTRATION: SULAKSMAN DEVIDASI

The Transcendental Pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa

DISPLAYING THE UNIVERSAL FORM

Had little Kṛṣṇa really put dirt in His mouth? Mother Yaśodā decided she'd find out for herself.

by DRUTAKARMĀ DĀSA

Mother Yaśodā loved Kṛṣṇa intensely—so much so that she would feed and dress Him and send Him out to play with His friends just as though He were an ordinary boy. Yaśodā couldn't see that Kṛṣṇa was really the Supreme Personality of Godhead. She saw Him only as her beloved son.

One day some of Kṛṣṇa's playmates came to mother Yaśodā and told her,

"Kṛṣṇa has eaten dirt!" On hearing this, she went and found Him and picked Him up in her arms. She wanted to inspect His mouth and see whether He had eaten anything dangerous.

"My dear Kṛṣṇa," Yaśodā scolded, "why have You eaten dirt in a solitary place?" She couldn't understand why He would do such a thing when their home was full of sweetmeats. "Just

see—all Your friends are complaining about You."

"My dear mother," Kṛṣṇa replied, "all these boys are telling lies about Me. I have never eaten dirt. While we were playing, My brother Balarāma became upset with Me. He got together with all My friends to tell you these stories, just so that you would be angry and punish Me. Actually, I have not done this—take My words as true. But if you think that they are telling the truth, then look inside My mouth and see for yourself whether I have eaten dirt."

When Kṛṣṇa opened His mouth, mother Yaśodā looked inside and saw outer space spreading before her in all directions, with all its stars and planets. She saw the oceans, mountains, islands, and seas that cover the earth's surface. She saw fire, light, and the blowing wind. She saw the bodies of all kinds of living things. She could even see universal time. And in the midst of everything, Yaśodā also saw herself taking little Kṛṣṇa on her lap and letting Him suck her breast very peacefully.

Yaśodā was awestruck that these things could be appearing within her son's mouth. "Is this a dream?" she wondered. "Oh, but my eyes are wide open. I'm not dreaming. I'm actually seeing all of this." Then she thought she had gone mad, but soon she reconsidered. "I'm in good health; I'm not diseased. I don't think my brain is deranged, for ordinarily I think quite clearly. My child must have attained some cosmic mystic power," she concluded. "That's why I'm so perplexed by these visions within His mouth."

Although mother Yaśodā didn't know it, Kṛṣṇa is the source of everything, and it was easy for Him to make the whole creation appear within His mouth. But mother Yaśodā was simplehearted. She couldn't understand what was really going on; she became afraid out of maternal affection and prayed, "Let me offer obeisances unto the Supreme Lord, for He is beyond my contemplation, speculation, and meditation. It is only by the influence of His illusory energy that I am wrongly thinking that Nanda Mahārāja is my husband and Kṛṣṇa is my child. Just because I am Nanda's queen, I also falsely think that his wealth, cows, and calves all belong to me and that all the cowherd men and women in Vṛndāvana are my subjects."

Like a self-realized sage, mother Yaśodā could see that whatever she possessed had actually come from the Supreme Lord. She wanted to give up her attachment to "my house," "my husband," "my son." The Lord had

(continued on page 36)

REMEMBERING ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA

Some personal recollections by his disciples.

In January or February of 1971, Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote us from India. He said that in April he would be coming back to America and would visit our Boston temple, where I was president. So we booked a beautiful suite for him in the Sheraton-Boston Hotel and cleaned the place ourselves. We had rented the hotel suite because we didn't think the temple was very suitable. In that old building we did have two rooms Śrīla Prabhupāda could use, but in many ways they weren't adequate.

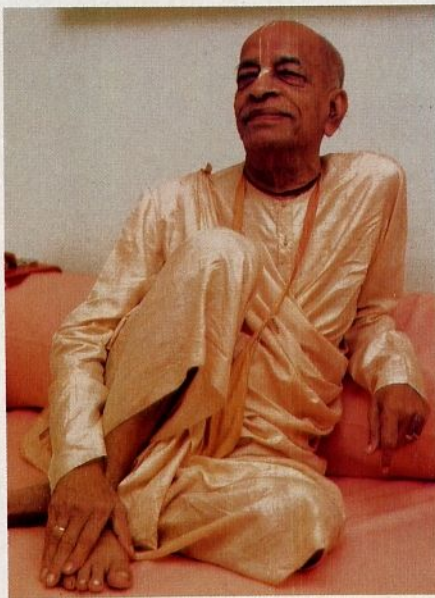
Surprisingly, when Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived and heard that we wanted him to stay in a hotel he refused. "I would rather stay in the temple," he said. "A hotel is like a brothel." And he explained, "If you live in such a place, you are living in the mode of ignorance. Generally, though, living in the city is in the mode of passion, and living in the country is in the mode of goodness—but if you live in the temple of the Lord, you are living in the spiritual world."

Śrīla Prabhupāda accepted his quarters in our old place and assured us he didn't find them inconvenient. He was glad, he said, to be in the temple. Of course, he made us glad, too—by gracing our temple with his presence and giving it more prestige than the Sheraton-Boston.

Satsvarūpa dāsa Gosvāmī

In the early days of our movement—in the little storefront temple at 26 Second Avenue in the East Village—Śrīla Prabhupāda would lecture in the evening and then retire to his upstairs apartment. All of us would be very eager to accompany him, in hopes of getting some personal advice or just hearing him talk more informally. As an excuse to go upstairs, each of us would carry up one of the things Śrīla Prabhupāda had used during the lecture—the watch he'd kept before him on the dais, the Sanskrit *Bhāgavatam* volume he'd read from, or the *mṛdaṅga* drum he'd played during the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa.

I would bring the *mṛdaṅga* drum upstairs to the outer room of Śrīla Prabhupāda's apartment and wait before his door, hoping he would see me and call me in. Sometimes he could call my name: "Madhusūdana..." Then, my desire fulfilled, I would enter his room. He was always concerned in a very personal way about me, and he would ask me how my parents were. (At that



time I was rather young, just eighteen, and although I was already his disciple, I was still living at home.) "They're all right," I would tell him.

Then one night Śrīla Prabhupāda said something that took me a while to comprehend. "Actually," he said, "you are the parent of your parents. The parent is the one who brings the child to life, the one who gives birth to the child. So you have come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness first, and therefore you are giving your parents birth into spiritual life, which means eternal life. Actually, you are the real parent." Around that time, as if to help me understand what he had said that night, Śrīla Prabhupāda would often mention in his lectures that if a person becomes a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, then the Lord will give spiritual liberation to his relatives for ten generations before and ten generations to come.

Madhusūdana dāsa

This story still amazes me. It happened in England in 1969, when we were just opening the London temple (in Bloomsbury, near the British Museum). Śrīla Prabhupāda had come, and he was talking with the more experienced devotees and confirming their projects. "Yes," he would say—"do it very nicely," and "Very good—make it first class." For instance, Mukunda was to continue his efforts in public relations and another devotee was to carry on his work in renovating the building.

So I said, "Śrīla Prabhupāda, every-

one seems to have something to do—can you give me something to do?"

"No," he said, gently but firmly. "What would *you* like to do for Kṛṣṇa?"

"I don't know, Śrīla Prabhupāda," I said. "I've never thought about it. But can't you give me something to do anyway?"

"No," he told me again. "Just try to understand our Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy: you should decide what *you* want to do for Kṛṣṇa."

I felt really thickheaded. All my life I'd been taught not to think about God at all, or to think about what I wanted Him to do for me. But somehow, a long while later, I got an idea.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda, I was thinking that I'd like to make a synthetic version of the clay drums we play when we're chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. We could even mass-produce them."

He smiled at me warmly and chuckled. "Yes. That is a good idea. But you must make them unbreakable. Otherwise these Western devotees will simply throw them down like clay pots."

Śrīla Prabhupāda advised that I go to West Bengal, India, and learn the traditional drum-making art firsthand. Then I could return to the West and develop my manufacturing plan.

Several years later, after I had made several hundred of these drums, I realized, "Śrīla Prabhupāda has helped me discover what I always wanted to do for Kṛṣṇa."

Isāna dāsa

I had the good fortune to be in Śrīla Prabhupāda's room when he was visiting the Mexico City temple in 1974. At that time a disciple who had strayed away had returned and was asking Śrīla Prabhupāda to forgive him. He said he was afraid that Śrīla Prabhupāda might have rejected him forever. The entire room fell silent. Śrīla Prabhupāda lowered his head thoughtfully for a moment. Then he looked up and said, "Kṛṣṇa is God, and if He likes He can spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world in a second, without the help of anyone. But I am not God. I am simply a servant of God, so I require assistance. If someone helps me even a little, I am eternally indebted to him. You have helped me very much, so how can I reject you?" We were all moved by Śrīla Prabhupāda's humility and forgiveness.

Sītā devī-dāśī

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

India and America: the Lame and the Blind and the Ties That Bind

This year we have witnessed a strengthening of diplomatic ties between India and America. And as the leaders of both nations have pointed out, this closeness reflects even deeper spiritual ties.

Said President Carter during his recent tour, "At the heart of the friendship between India and the U. S. is our determination that the moral values of our people must guide the actions of our states. . . . Neither the rich nor the poor will feel satisfied without being fed in body and spirit. . . . There is a sense in the world that moral leadership derives from the Indian people in a direct and continuing fashion."

And at a recent meeting with leaders of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Prime Minister Morarji Desai asserted that spiritual India and technological America can help each other and the world. (See "Every Town and Village," page 23.)

President Carter also said during his tour that he felt particularly impressed with *Bhagavad-gītā*, India's source book on self-realization and realization of God. After one of his many early-morning reading sessions he noted, "One passage from that great book stood out in my mind. I can't quite quote it exactly and I can't interpret it well, but it said when a country is flooded, the reservoirs become superfluous. Kṛṣṇa went on to explain what He meant in this passage: that when one's heart is filled completely with an awareness or love of God, the other considerations in life seem incidental and one need not worry about the outcome of an action, but one should worry on a momentary basis about the purposes and the attitudes in one's relation to the eternal. . . ."

This, in a nutshell, is India's spiritual vision: we can have peace and prosperity only when we see God as the real owner of all lands and

wealth, and when we see "the other considerations in life" as secondary to self-realization and realization of God. Actually, *Bhagavad-gītā* is meant for the Carters and Desais of the world, because as Kṛṣṇa explains, whatever the leaders do the rest of the people will follow. So if Mr. Carter and Mr. Desai work together to balance the "other considerations" and the eternal—the technological and the spiritual—the whole world will follow and the whole world will benefit.

It's only common sense, really, that when India the spiritual leader and America the technological leader share their assets, everybody will come out ahead. As His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda used to say, India is like a lame man and America is like a blind man—so they should help each other. India is blessed with spiritual vision but cursed with technological lameness. America, on the other hand, is blessed with technological vigor but cursed with spiritual blindness. (After barely two centuries, "In God We Trust" and the Golden Rule have given way to abortion, slaughterhouses, pornography, and other vision-robbing disorders.) How can the lame man and the blind man live full, happy lives? By working together. The blind man should take the lame man on his shoulders. That way the lame man can do the seeing and keep the pair on a safe path, and the blind man can do the walking and get them where they have to go.

So there are ties that bind the lame and the blind, India and America. The problem is that neither Prime Minister Desai nor President Carter seems ready to do much about it, at least for now. And this is where the International Society for Krishna Consciousness comes in. ISKCON is following directly in disciplic succession from India's most far-sighted

saint, who five hundred years ago introduced an ingenious way for India to share her spiritual vision with the West. Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu showed from *Bhagavad-gītā* and other Vedic literatures that the whole world can become peaceful and prosperous and self-realized and God-realized through *saṅkīrtana*—mass public chanting of God's names. This simple process of chanting God's names and hearing about the science of God from *Bhagavad-gītā* is what Śrīla Prabhupāda gave America when he founded ISKCON a dozen years ago.

And the next dozen years can be even brighter, if our leaders will just take the lead. Mr. P. N. Luthra, formerly of UNESCO and now a minister of India's central government, makes this assessment of the situation: "The very fact that you have established ISKCON in the U.S.A. within the last decade is in itself indicative of America's open mind to receive new ideas. America is realizing that it does not hold the ultimate key to all problems. Insofar as spiritual matters are concerned, I think that America also appreciates that something can be gained from others. ISKCON itself is a living, convincing example that spiritual values prevail and that these alone can give ultimate happiness. We must consider the question of why we've taken birth here on this earth. I think that your organization is a very powerful force, and that it will play an important role in the years to come in transmitting the spiritual message of India."

For our part, we in ISKCON are not taking these words of India's and America's leaders lightly. We hope these people will come forward to work with us—because both they and we know that American vigor and Indian vision can uplift and enlighten the whole world.

—SDG

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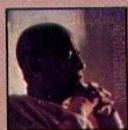


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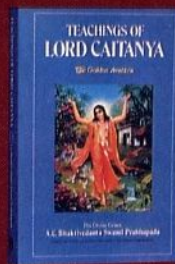
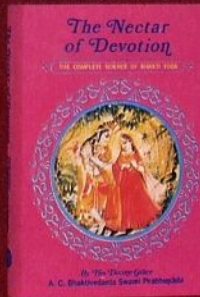
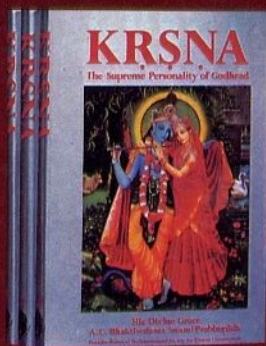
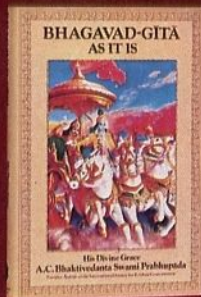
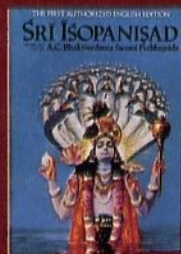
(continued from page 33)

given all these things to her, she reflected, and He could also take them away.

While mother Yaśodā was thinking in this high, philosophical way, Kṛṣṇa suddenly expanded His spiritual energy. Instantly Yaśodā forgot the mystifying vision she had seen within her child's mouth. Once again she felt her natural motherly affection for Kṛṣṇa and took Him on her lap. "Here is my son," she thought. "Let me kiss Him."

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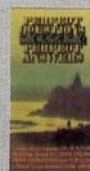


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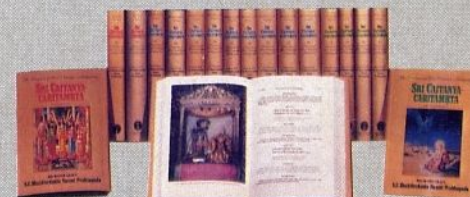


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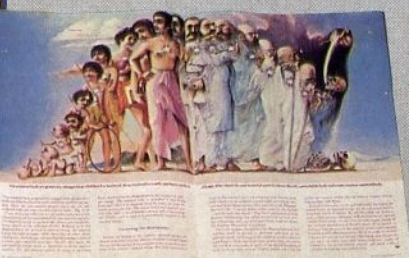


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