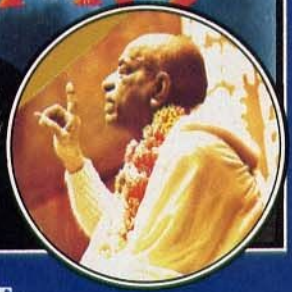


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



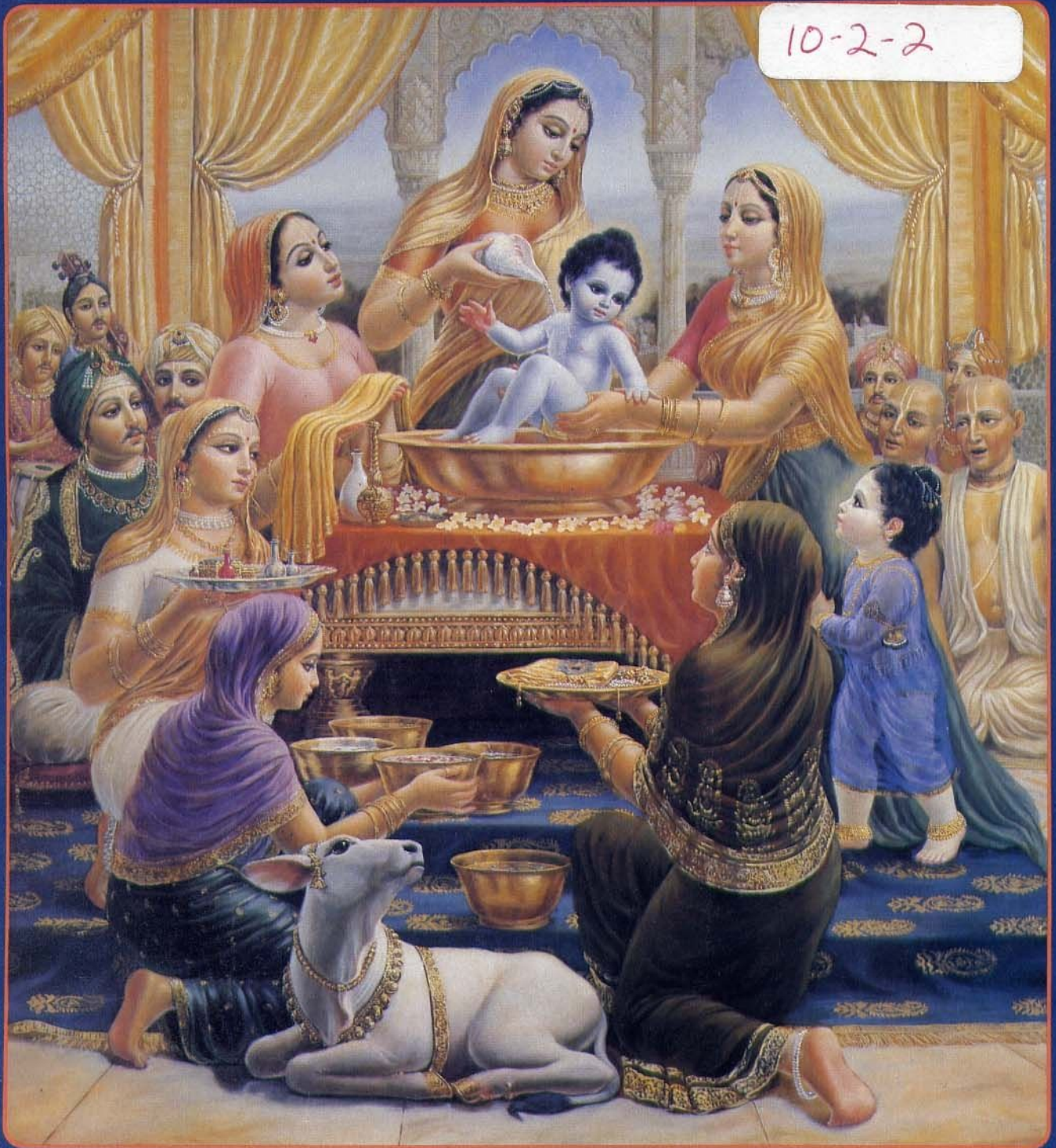
# BACK TO GODHEAD



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THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

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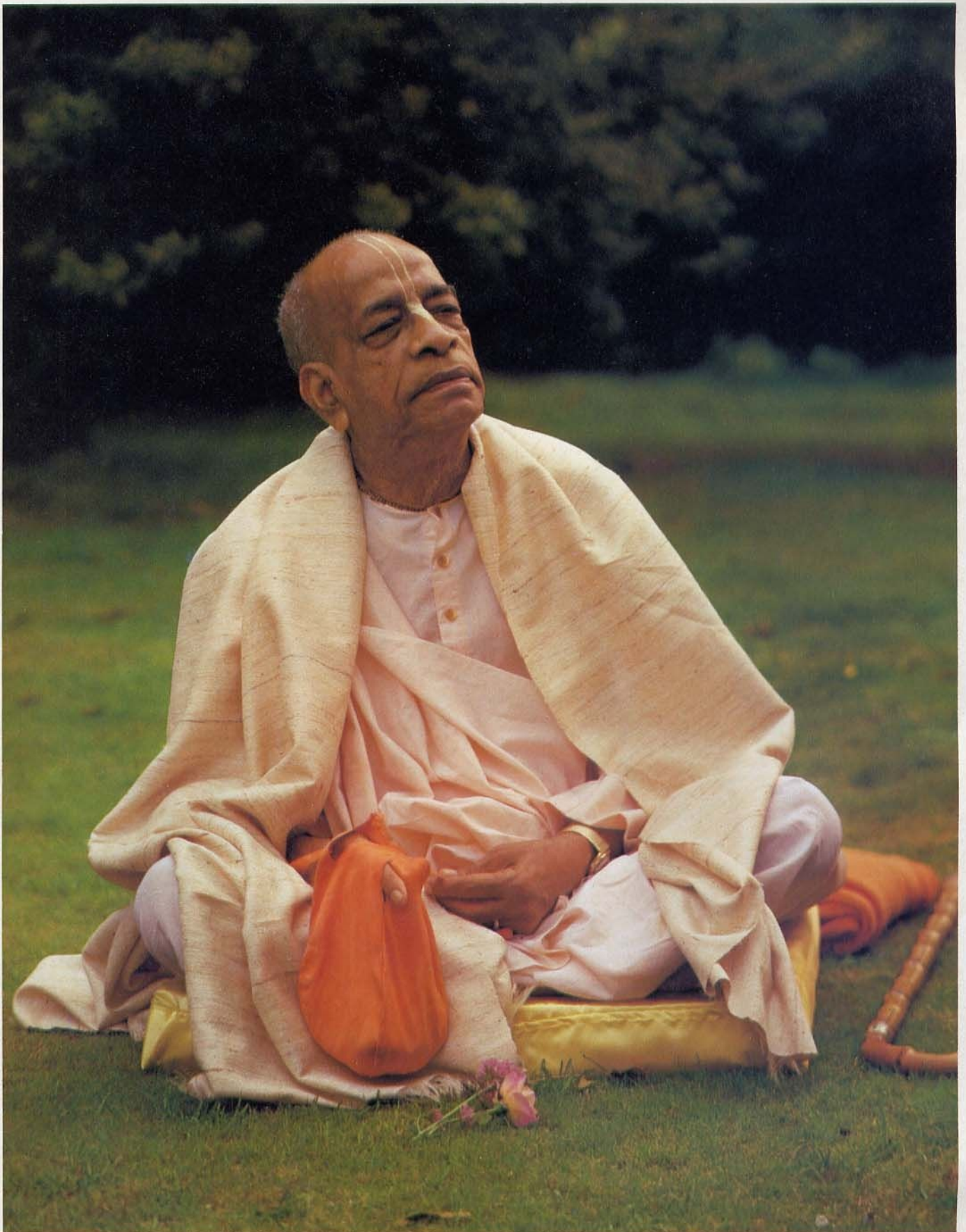


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His Divine Grace  
**A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda**  
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

# BACK TO GODHEAD

VOL. 13, NO. 8

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

FOUNDED 1944

## FOUNDER

(under the direction of His Divine Grace  
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda)  
**His Divine Grace**  
**A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda**

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PRONUNCIATION. Sanskrit words and names in BACK TO GODHEAD are spelled according to a scholarly 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 **ī** is like the **i** in **plique**. The vowel **ṛ** is pronounced like the **ri** in the English word **rim**. The **c** is pronounced as in **chair**. The aspirated consonants (**ch**, **jh**, **dh**, etc.) are pronounced as in **staunch-heart**, **hedge-hog** and **red-hot**. The two spirants **ś** and **ṣ** are like the English **sh**, and **s** is like the **s** in **sun**. So pronounce **Kṛṣṇa** as KRISHNA and **Chaitanya** as CHAITANYA.

◀ **His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda** came to America in 1965, at age 70, to fulfill his spiritual master's request that he teach Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the English-speaking world. In a dozen years he published some seventy volumes of translation and commentary on India's Vedic literatures, and these are now standard in universities worldwide. Meanwhile, traveling almost nonstop, Śrīla Prabhupāda molded his international society into a worldwide confederation of *āśramas*, schools, temples, and farm communities. He passed away in 1977 in India's Vṛndāvana, the holy place most sacred to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and his disciples are carrying forward the movement he started.

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**COVER:** When Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared in this world some fifty centuries ago, it was cause for celebration all over His homeland, India's Vṛndāvana. In the fall of 1896, on the day after Kṛṣṇa's appearance day, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda made his appearance, and throughout his life he broadcast the glories of Kṛṣṇa and Vṛndāvana all over the world. (See features, pages 6 and 25.) (Cover art: Parīkṣit dāsa.)

**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 knowledge by which nescience is destroyed, then his knowledge reveals everything, as the sun lights up everything in the daytime."

"I cannot be satisfied by serving something that is *not* me;  
I can be satisfied only by serving *me*. But that 'me' I do not know. . . ."

# Enlightened Self-Interest

by HIS DIVINE GRACE A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

This chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa is the process of *ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam*—to cleanse the material dust from the mirror of our mind. The whole process is to dust out the dirty things which we have accumulated by our material association, and thereby to revive our spiritual consciousness, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness. From *Bhagavad-gītā* we are studying about the process of life by which we can revive our Kṛṣṇa consciousness. There is no need of external help for reviving Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You have Kṛṣṇa consciousness dormant in your self. In fact, it is the *quality* of the self. So, we simply need to invoke it by this process of chanting.

*Nitya-siddha kṛṣṇa-prema 'sādhya' kabhu naya:* this Kṛṣṇa consciousness is an eternal fact. It is not that by this ISKCON organization we are imposing something extra upon you. No. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is within you. It is within every living entity—*every* living entity, never mind whether he's a human being or an animal. Once, when Lord Caitanya was passing through a jungle, He was singing Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, and the tigers, the elephants, the stags, and other forest animals joined in. *They joined in.* This chanting is such an attractive thing. Of course, this attraction depends on pure-hearted chanting. As we become advanced in this chanting method, our heart becomes freed from all the dirty things of material contact. Then even the animals can be captivated by this chanting—what to speak of human beings.

So, in *Bhagavad-gītā* [4.19] Kṛṣṇa advises us how to invoke this Kṛṣṇa consciousness in our practical life. He says,

*yasya sarve samārambhāḥ  
kāma-saṅkalpa-varjitāḥ  
jñānāgni-dagdha-karmāṇam  
tam āhuḥ paṇḍitam budhāḥ*

"One whose every act is devoid of desire for sense gratification is said to be in full knowledge. He is said by sages to be a worker whose fruitive action is burned up by the fire of perfect knowledge."

*Yasya sarve samārambhāḥ.* You are not forbidden to execute your duties. We are not for stopping the general process of material activities. That is not our mission. The whole thing is that we have to do everything in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is very easy to understand. We all have some vocation in our life. But what is our *consciousness*? Our consciousness is . . . "I am engaged in this business because I have to maintain my family," or "I have to maintain myself," or "I have to satisfy the government," or "I have to satisfy somebody else." This is our consciousness. And nobody is free from such consciousness. So, we simply need to change the consciousness only. Now we are doing everything with the idea that "I want to satisfy myself," or "I want to satisfy somebody else." This consciousness has to be changed into Kṛṣṇa consciousness, so that I think, "I want to satisfy Kṛṣṇa." That's all.

Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa says, *yasya sarve samārambhāḥ*: "Whatever activities you may be doing, continue to do them, but *kāma-saṅkalpa-varjitāḥ*—don't be carried away by *kāma*." *Kāma* means desire for our own satisfaction. The Sanskrit word *kāma* is used to mean "lust" or "desire for sense satisfaction." So, Lord Kṛṣṇa recommends, "Don't act for the satisfaction of your senses, for the satisfaction of your lust, or for the satisfaction of your desires." That is the whole thing. The whole teaching of *Bhagavad-gītā* is based on this principle. Arjuna wanted to satisfy his senses by not fighting with the opposite party, who were composed of his relatives—brothers and brothers-in-law and fathers-in-law and so many other relatives. Arjuna did not want to fight, and therefore he needed Kṛṣṇa's instruction

of *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Now, materially it appears very nice that Arjuna wanted to satisfy his relatives by giving up his claim to the kingdom. "Oh, he's a very good man," we might think. But Kṛṣṇa did not approve it. Why? Because the basic principle was that Arjuna decided to satisfy his own senses. Externally, it appears very nice. But anything which is done for the satisfaction of one's own senses—that is *kāma*, lust, desire. Here in this verse of *Bhagavad-gītā* it is prescribed that you can do anything. There is no harm. Whatever business, vocation, or occupation you are engaged in, that does not have to be changed. Simply your *consciousness* has to be changed. That's all.

Now, how can that consciousness be changed? *Jñānāgni-dagdha-karmāṇam*. Transferring our present self-interested consciousness to Kṛṣṇa consciousness requires knowledge. And what is that knowledge? That knowledge is knowing, "I am part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. I'm not different from Kṛṣṇa. I am the superior energy of Kṛṣṇa." This is knowledge. Real knowledge does not mean to understand how this tape recorder is manufactured. This kind of technical knowledge is not real knowledge. Of course, to execute our occupation we must have some technical knowledge, but that knowledge is temporary knowledge. Real knowledge comes when one understands, when one is *convinced*, that he is part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, or God. (When we say "Kṛṣṇa," you should understand that we mean the Supreme Lord, the Absolute Truth. *Kṛṣṇa* is a technical word which is meant to indicate "the Absolute Truth," "the Supreme Personality of Godhead," "the whole," "the whole pleasure," "the whole attraction." These are the meanings of *Kṛṣṇa*.)

So, we are all part and parcel of the supreme pleasure—Kṛṣṇa. And because I am part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, my pleasure, my happiness, is dependent on



**The self: the sparklike soul within.** A person who sees the Supreme Self sees his own self also—and his actual self-interest.

-serving Kṛṣṇa. It is just like my hand and my body. Now, my hand can take pleasure when it is attached to my body. My hand can take pleasure when it *serves* my body. It does not take pleasure by serving *your* body. My senses are satisfied when they are used for *my* purpose, not for *your* purpose. This is the whole philosophy: I cannot be satisfied by serving something that is *not* me; I can be satisfied only by serving *me*. But that “me” I do not know. That “me” is Kṛṣṇa. *That is Kṛṣṇa*—because we are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. Always remember: we are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. *Mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ*. In the Fifteenth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, you’ll find that Kṛṣṇa says, “All these living entities—they are My eternal parts and parcels. Now, by material contact, they are detached from Me.” [Bg. 15.7]

So, the whole purpose of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is to attach ourselves again to

Kṛṣṇa. Now we are detached, so we have to attach ourselves again. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is within you, because you are originally, eternally, part and parcel of the Supreme. Artificially, we are trying to forget this; we are trying to live independently. But that is not possible. We are *not* independent. If we try to live independently of Kṛṣṇa, that means we voluntarily become dependent on the influence of material nature. That’s all.

For example, if I think that I am independent of government regulations, then I become dependent on the police force. My dependence is either in this way or that way. So, this is our mistake: everyone is trying to become independent. And this is called *māyā*, or illusion. Nobody can be independent—individually, community-wise, society-wise, or nation-wise. Even universe-wise, nobody can be independent. We are all dependent. And when you come

to know, “I am dependent; I am not independent,” this is called knowledge.

In another place in *Bhagavad-gītā* [5.29], you’ll find that Kṛṣṇa says,

*bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasāṁ  
sarva-loka-maheśvaram  
suhṛdaṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ  
jñātvā mām śāntim ṛcchati*

“Knowing Me as the ultimate purpose of all sacrifices and austerities, the Supreme Lord of all planets and demigods, and the benefactor and well-wisher of all living entities, the sages attain peace from the pangs of material miseries.” People are planning for peace in the world, but they do not know the peace formula. The United Nations has been trying for the last twenty years or more for peace, but there is no actual peace in the world. The Vietnam War is going on because they do not know the peace formula in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

“This consciousness has to be invoked not only individually, but also community-wide, society-wide, nationwide, all over the world. Then there will be peace.”

Kṛṣṇa says, *bhoktāraṃ yajña-tapasāṃ sarva-loka-maheśvaram*: “I am the proprietor of everything. Whatever you are doing, I am the ultimate beneficiary. I take the result.” For example, a laborer may work in a factory, but who is the proprietor? The ultimate proprietor is the owner of the factory. Now we are thinking, “I am working, so I am the proprietor of this thing.” That is a misconception. When we understand that whatever we are doing, the ultimate proprietor is Kṛṣṇa, that is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That is the fire of perfect knowledge.

Or, take the example of many people working in an office. Hundreds of people may be working there, but everyone is conscious that whatever profit they are making belongs to the proprietor. Then there is peace. But as soon as the cashier thinks, “Oh, I have so much money; I am the proprietor,” then the trouble begins. Similarly, if we think, “I am a very rich man. I have such a big bank balance, and I can use it for my sense gratification,” that is *kāma*, lust. But if I understand that whatever I have, it belongs to Kṛṣṇa, then I am a liberated person. You’ll have the same money under your custody. It doesn’t matter. But as soon as you think, “I am the proprietor of this wealth,” you are under the influence of *māyā*. And as soon as you think, “Kṛṣṇa is the proprietor of all these things,” you are free. So, *kāma-saṅkalpa-varjitāḥ jñānāgni-dagdha-karmāṇam tam āhuḥ paṇḍitam budhāḥ*: one who knows that Kṛṣṇa is the proprietor of everything, who is situated in that consciousness, is *paṇḍitam*—he is learned; he’s actually a man of knowledge. This is the whole process.

Now, this consciousness has to be invoked not only individually, but also community-wide, society-wide, nationwide, all over the world. Then there will be peace. If you want real peace, you have to follow Kṛṣṇa’s instructions in *Bhagavad-gītā* [see previous reference for English translation]:

*bhoktāraṃ yajña-tapasāṃ  
sarva-loka-maheśvaram  
suhṛdaṃ sarva-bhūtānāṃ  
jñātvā mām śāntim ṛcchati*

Now we are trying to become the friend of our countrymen, of our society, of our family. But that is a wrong conception.

The real friend is Kṛṣṇa, and you should work on His behalf.

How? If you actually want to do something good for your family, then try to make all the members of your family Kṛṣṇa conscious. Then your life will be successful. If you want to help them otherwise, without Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then you will not be serving them; you will be rendering them a *disservice*. Why? Because no amount of material knowledge will help your wife or children. No amount of material knowledge will solve their real problem. What is their real problem? That is what we do not know. The real problem is *janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhī*—birth, death, old age, and disease. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [5.5.18] says, *pitā na sa syāj janani na sāsyaṭ na mocayed yaḥ samupeta-mṛtyum*: “One should not become a father, nor should one become a mother, unless one is able to save one’s children from the grip of material nature.” How? By Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If you are a responsible father, and if you are completely in knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then your duty will be to think, “For these innocent creatures who are now playing in my home as my children, as my boys, this life should be the last installment of their transmigration from one body to another. I shall train these boys in such a way that after this life, they’ll no more have to go into the cycle of birth and death.” This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

And this means you have to make yourself expert. Then you can help your children, also. Then you can help your nation, also. Then you can help your society, also. If you yourself are ignorant, then *andhā yathāndhair upanīyamānāḥ te ’piśa-tantryām uru-dāmnī baddhāḥ* [*Bhāg.* 7.5.31]: if a person is tightly bound up, hands and feet, how can he free others? Suppose we are sitting here—some twenty-five gentlemen and ladies—and all our hands are tightly bound up by some ropes. Now, although I may want to make you free, if my hands are also tightly bound up, how is it possible? It is not possible. My hands must be free. Then I can untie your bindings. So, unless one is a free man, he cannot free others. And what is that freedom? One who is Kṛṣṇa conscious—he is a free man. Nobody else is a free man.

In the Seventh Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* [7.14], Kṛṣṇa says,

*daivī hy esa guṇamayī  
mama māyā duratyayā  
mām eva ye prapadyante  
māyām etāṃ taranti te*

“This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it.” Everyone is under the spell of the material influence, *māyā*. Nobody’s free. But *māyā* has nothing to do with one who has surrendered unto Kṛṣṇa, with one who has taken to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. *Māyā* cannot touch him. *Māyā* is like darkness, but there is no question of darkness if you place yourself in the sunlight. (Not this artificial light; this artificial light may be extinguished at any time. But sunlight is not like that.) So Kṛṣṇa is just like sunlight. As soon as you come in front of the sun, there is no darkness. And as soon as you become Kṛṣṇa conscious, there is no ignorance, there is no *māyā*, no illusion.

So, *jñānāgni-dagdha-karmāṇam tam āhuḥ paṇḍitam budhāḥ*. We have to become *budha*, or learned. And you’ll find in the Tenth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* [10.8] what Lord Kṛṣṇa says are the symptoms of a man who is *budha*:

*ahaṃ sarvasya prabhavo  
mattaḥ sarvaṃ pravartate  
iti matvā bhajante mām  
budhāḥ bhāva-samanvitāḥ*

“I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise, who know this perfectly, engage in My devotional service and worship Me with all their hearts.”

*Budhāḥ*: this very word is used again. So, one who is learned, one who actually has some sense, who is not nonsensical—he’s called *budha*. And what are his symptoms? The symptoms of a man who is *budha* are that he knows that Kṛṣṇa is the fountainhead of all emanations, of everything we see (*ahaṃ sarvasya prabhavaḥ*). Take, for example, this material world. The most prominent thing here is the attraction between man and woman. Now, one may inquire, “Wherefrom has this attraction between male and female come?” Not only in the human society, but also in the animal society, the bird society—in any society, every living being has this attraction for

“Now we are trying to become the friend of our countrymen, of our society, of our family. But that is a wrong conception. The real friend is Kṛṣṇa, and you should work on His behalf.”

the opposite sex. This is a fact. And where does this attraction come from? It comes from Kṛṣṇa. So, somebody who does not actually understand Kṛṣṇa may criticize, “Kṛṣṇa had so many girlfriends.” But unless the tendency is in Kṛṣṇa, where do we get this idea of having girlfriends? You can have nothing here in this material world unless it is also in Kṛṣṇa (*janmādy asya yataḥ*). But here sex is perverted; it is polluted. In Kṛṣṇa’s world it is in pure consciousness, purely spiritual. That is the difference.

So, these things have to be studied very scientifically from books like *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. And when one is perfectly learned, then his symptom is that he becomes a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa. *Ahaṁ sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate*: “I am the source, the fountainhead,” Kṛṣṇa says. “I am the source and fountainhead of everything. One who understands this scientifically takes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.” How? *Budhāḥ bhāva-samanvitāḥ*—with full knowledge. He becomes a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa similarly describes a *mahātmā* in *Bhagavad-gītā* (*mahātmā* means “great soul”):

*mahātmānas tu mām pārtha  
daivīm prakṛtiṁ āśritāḥ  
bhajanty ananya-manaso  
jñātvā bhūtādim avyayam*

“O Arjuna, son of Pṛthā, the great souls are those who are not deluded by My illusory, material energy. They are under the protection of the divine nature. They are fully engaged in devotional service, because they know Me as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, original and inexhaustible.” [Bg. 9.14]

Who is a *mahātmā*? Who is a great soul? A great soul is he who is under the influence of the superior nature. There are two kinds of nature: the superior nature and the inferior nature. Now we are under the influence of the inferior, material nature. But by practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness we shall be transferred to the superior nature. Just try to understand by an example: one person is in prison, another person is outside the prison. The government’s influence is present in both places—outside the prison and inside the prison. Outside the prison, the government’s rules and

regulations are considered superior. Inside, they are considered inferior. But in either case, the government’s influence is there. Similarly, wherever you are—either in the material world or in the spiritual world—you are under Kṛṣṇa’s influence. Your position is marginal. You can remain under the influence of Kṛṣṇa’s inferior nature, or you can transfer yourself into the influence of His superior nature. Because Kṛṣṇa is fully independent, and because you are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, you have the quality of independence. You can make your choice: whether to be under the influence of His inferior nature, or to come under the influence of His superior nature. But because we do not know what that superior nature is, we have no other alternative than to remain in this inferior nature. This is the whole problem.

Many philosophies inform us that there is no other nature but this material nature, which we are now experiencing and which is so troublesome. “Make an end of it and become void,” they say. But you cannot be void, because you are an eternal living entity. *Na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*: the end of your body does not mean that you are finished. No. You are continuing. *Vāsāṁsi jīrṇāni*: that I change my dress does not mean that I am finished. So, I am eternal. And if I want to finish my suffering, if I want to get out of the influence of material nature, then I have to seek my place in the superior, spiritual nature. But if we do not know of the superior nature, then we say, “All right, however bad it may be, let me remain here and rot.” So, *Bhagavad-gītā* [15.6] gives you information of the superior nature:

(continued on page 34)

## Hearing Is the Beginning Of Understanding

**Cassette Tape Subscription:** Each week you’ll receive fascinating recordings of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s earliest classes in America—the ones he gave back in 1966 in a small storefront on New York’s Lower East Side. Full of his unique blend of warmth, humor, and profound spiritual knowledge, these tapes will fully enlighten you about reincarnation, life after death, yoga, meditation, self-realization, and realization of God.



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# The Land Where Kṛṣṇa Lives

“My aversion to sentimentalism and blind faith went right to the core of my stonelike heart. Yet in Vṛndāvana we got our first inkling that there might be something higher than the mind, higher than arguments and speculation.”

by VIŚĀKHĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ



One evening in March of 1971, my husband John and I were sitting with His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda in his airy room in Bombay. It overlooked the city's modern skyline on one side and the Indian Ocean on the other.

"We want to do a photo essay on an Indian village," John ventured, disclosing a dream we'd had after reading *National Geographic* articles about beautiful, quaint places in far-off lands.

Śrīla Prabhupāda looked at us with what seemed a mixture of gravity and amusement. "Wherever you go," he said, "they will simply cheat you and steal your equipment. You don't even speak the language."

Somewhat stunned—no, crestfallen—we sat silent and still.

Śrīla Prabhupāda paused and continued. "Best that you go to Vṛndāvana and take your photographs there."

There were other guests in the room, and Prabhupāda turned his attention to

them. After a short while we excused ourselves and left.

I don't think I had heard of Vṛndāvana at that time, although John had. Vṛndāvana is a small village, with a population of some thirty thousand, and it's located ninety miles southeast of Delhi. Ancient Indian histories say that when Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, comes to our universe (once every 8.64 billion years), He comes there with His friends and associates.

At first, we weren't exactly enchanted with the idea of going to Vṛndāvana. Instead, we went to Nepal for a couple of months and trekked around in the Himalayas. At twelve thousand feet we found a small cowshed where for three or four days we read Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. Once back in India we wandered some more, meeting Prabhupāda's disciples now and then and reading another book of his, *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, as we went. When we finally reached New Delhi, we

boarded the Taj Express, got off at Mathurā Station, and late at night climbed into a typically rickety old bus that would take us to Vṛndāvana, seven miles to the south.

Fifty centuries ago Lord Kṛṣṇa had made a somewhat similar journey. He took His birth in Mathurā, and that night His father Vasudeva carried Him to Vṛndāvana through a raging storm. Of course, our journey between the towns was much less difficult. Normally the buses are packed with people, but because of the late hour we had plenty of room, even for our backpacks. It was July by now and the air was quite warm, though it was after midnight. I remember that the noisy bus roaring down the streets seemed incongruous in such a serene atmosphere. That first night we rested near the doorway of an *āśrama* that was locked, and by the next day we had rented a small three-story house at fifty rupees (about six dollars) for one month.





Vṛndāvana means "forest of tulasi trees" (Kṛṣṇa's favorite plants, top, foreground). It's also a forest of temples, including Aṣṭasakhi, in the distance, and Rādhā-ramaṇa (whose Kṛṣṇa Deity we see above).

If there was ever a turning point in our lives, this month in Vṛndāvana must have been it. John had always been neutral on spiritual matters, but I was an avid atheist, so much so that I had converted some of my friends to my way of thinking. My aversion to sentimentalism and blind faith went right to the core of my stonelike heart. Yet in Vṛndāvana we got our first inkling that there might be something higher than the mind, higher than arguments and speculation.

Every morning I would go to the market to get yogurt and fresh fruit for our breakfast. As I walked along snapping pictures in the sunny streets, people would greet me with *jaya rādhe* ("All glories to Rādhā"); Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, I found out, is Kṛṣṇa's dearest consort). The two-block walk took me past two of Vṛndāvana's seven major temples: Rādhā-Ramaṇa and Rādhā-Gopīnātha, each built by one of the renowned Six Gosvāmīs. At that hour the sound of temple bells filled the air, along with songs about Kṛṣṇa. The people hurried from one temple to another for *darśana* (the opportunity to see Kṛṣṇa's sculpted Deity form), while monkeys, famous as

Kṛṣṇa's pets, mischievously observed the goings-on and waited to steal any unguarded eatables.

In our daily walks John and I came upon thousands of temples—Vṛndāvana has no less than five thousand, and there's hardly a street without at least one. Kṛṣṇa's Deity forms were all over, not only in the temples but in the shops, which also specialized in pictures, murals, and Deity clothing and ornaments. Everywhere I saw Bengali widows who were spending their last days in Vṛndāvana. I used to photograph them, several hundred sitting together in the morning and chanting the *mahā-mantra* (Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare).

We visited the places where Kṛṣṇa once displayed His extraordinary pastimes: the bathing *ghāṭa* where He killed the Keśī demon, the tree from which He pounced on the Kāliya serpent, the forest alcove where He met the cowherd girls in the dead of night and danced with them. Not that we accepted these accounts or the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but Vṛndāvana definitely



PHOTO BHARGAVA DASA

Easily the world's most celebrated thief, Lord Kṛṣṇa (portrayed by the boy on the left, above) inspires plays recalling how He and His friends stole butter and yogurt from local pantries.



PHOTO BHARGAVA DASA

At Cira-ghāṭa (above), a bathing area on the Yamunā's bank, a Kṛṣṇa Deity sits in a tree with *sāris* like those once stolen from the *gopīs*, the cowherd maidens.

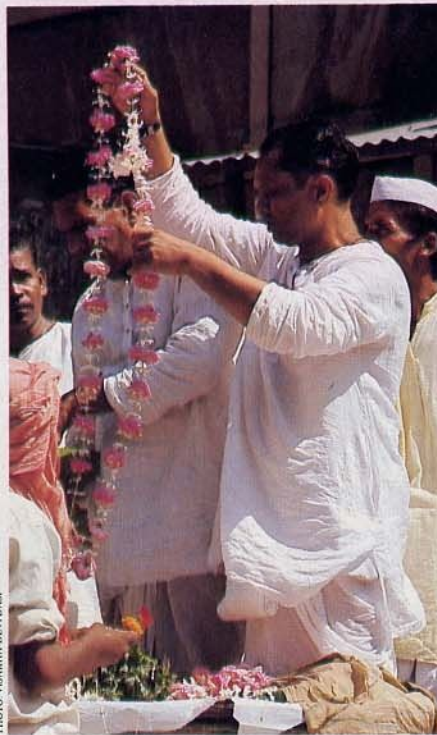


PHOTO VISWADEVIDAS

Villagers inspect a garland of mogra flowers and rose petals (above). If it measures up, they'll offer it to Kṛṣṇa in one of the area's more than five thousand temples.

had a different atmosphere. There was no way to get around it.

All these impressions influenced us, no doubt, but what had an even greater influence was meeting Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples who had come to the holy land on pilgrimage. Here were young, educated Americans who were sure that God exists and that Kṛṣṇa is God. I remember that John and I walked on the six-mile path around Vṛndāvana with Brahmānanda Svāmī, one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's first disciples, who spoke lovingly about his spiritual master. A devotee named Girirāja (now Girirāja Svāmī) was always talking about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes with great sensitivity and enthusiasm. And there was Yamunā-devī dāsī, one of the warmest, most friendly persons I'd ever met. One especially hot day, she and I sat up to our necks in the Yamunā River (the water buffalo do likewise), and we talked about Kṛṣṇa consciousness and the things Kṛṣṇa had done right there some fifty centuries earlier. After a while, I started seeing that I was an atheist mainly because my parents were atheists and no one had convinced me to be anything else. What Yamunā said was surprisingly simple. No, I'd never experienced a living thing coming from nonliving matter. No, I'd never seen any machine or building or plan of any kind that didn't have someone behind it, some person who had thought it out.

Yamunā didn't really care much for debating, though. I noticed that she preferred serving Kṛṣṇa and His devotees, and that she was very attracted to Deity worship. One day she humbly asked John if he would donate some money for purchasing beautiful brass Deities of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa that she had seen in a shop. I think she was as surprised as I when he smiled and said yes. She was overjoyed; she said now she could serve Kṛṣṇa better. And she explained that for God there's no difference between spiritual energy and material energy, because both energies come from Him. So, she said, since people in this world can't see Kṛṣṇa's original spiritual form, Kṛṣṇa comes before them as the Deity. Then they can express their love for Him by bathing, dressing, and ornamenting Him and offering Him food, just as a parent cares for a child or a lover cares for the beloved. Yamunā had been personally taught by Śrīla Prabhupāda in the art of Deity worship, and now she started caring for her Deities in that way.

There was something else about that first stay in Vṛndāvana that pushed John and me along in spiritual life—our suffering. We had contracted glaucoma,

an infection of the eyes that makes them itch and tear continuously. At a devotee's suggestion John bathed his eyes in the Yamunā River and got rid of it, but I decided to stay home, flat on my back on the second floor of our house, underneath a mosquito net (to protect me from the flies). The heat was intense, the tearing of my eyes made me blind, my hayfever had started up, and my nose was running in between sneezes. What a mess. I recalled that Śrīla Prabhupāda had written that this material world is miserable, and I could see clearly that it's hardly an ideal place to live in.

From April to October, 1971, Śrīla Prabhupāda went on a speaking tour through Europe and America. When he returned to Vṛndāvana, we came back from a visit to Calcutta and stayed with him in a large house that someone had lent to his disciples.

Every morning we attended *ārati* (a ceremony for greeting Kṛṣṇa with singing, dancing, and offerings of food), and later Śrīla Prabhupāda would lecture on the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. After breakfast each day we would climb into a big bus, and Prabhupāda would give all of us a tour of the holy places: Varṣāṇā, where Rādhā appeared; Govardhana, the hill that Kṛṣṇa lifted to protect the townspeople from a torrential rain; Nanda-grāma, where Kṛṣṇa grew up; and Brahma-ghāṭa, where Kṛṣṇa opened His mouth to prove to His mother that He had not eaten dirt. When Mother Yaśodā looked inside the Lord's mouth, she saw the entire creation, and when Prabhupāda related this pastime, his eyes opened amazingly wide.

Prabhupāda was so convinced: "If you accept God, then you have to accept the inconceivable potency of God. You can't make Him fit your limited ideas—if you do, that means you actually don't accept God. God can do as He likes, when He likes, and where He likes. Why can't Kṛṣṇa lift a hill or display the creation in His mouth? Because you can't He can't?"

In every way Prabhupāda made Vṛndāvana come alive. To be with him there made everything take on a new significance; his eyes were anointed with pure love for Kṛṣṇa. We could see that Prabhupāda worked eighteen or twenty hours a day for Kṛṣṇa, not *worked*, exactly, but *served* with love and devotion—preaching, writing, instructing. It was obvious he didn't want fame or profit; he didn't want any material enjoy-

**Just after the monsoon season** (right), here's the view from Varṣāṇā, where Kṛṣṇa's eternal consort Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī grew up, across to hilly Nanda-grāma, where Kṛṣṇa grew up.



PHOTO: VEAKHA/DEVIDASI



PHOTO: VISAKHA-DEVIDASI



PHOTO: VISAKHA-DEVIDASI

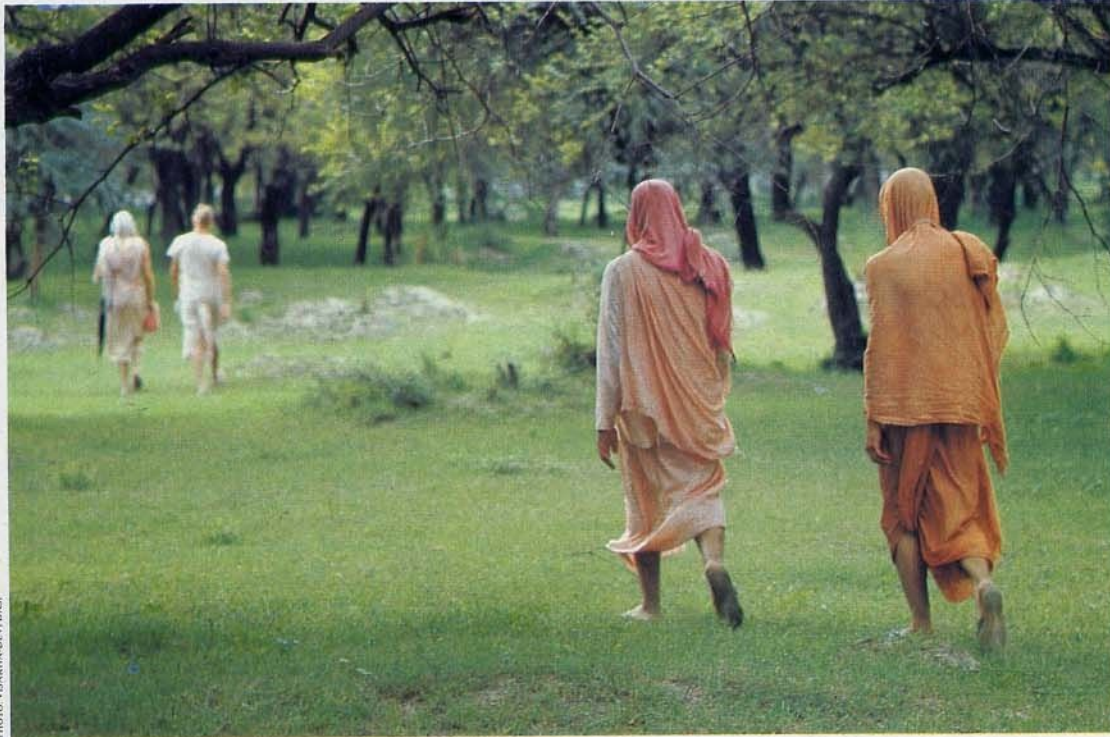


PHOTO: VISAKHA-DEVIDASI

**Kṛṣṇa's rāsa dance** (above left) is depicted in a courtyard in Vāṁśīvaṭa. By His mystic power Kṛṣṇa danced simultaneously with each of the many *gopīs*. In a palace at Kusuma-sarovara (above), we see Kṛṣṇa lifting Govardhana Hill to keep a deluge off the heads of the townspeople and cows. Near Govardhana (left) devotees visit a wood where Kṛṣṇa's cows still graze.

ments. He simply never saw anything that didn't remind him of Kṛṣṇa, so he was always enlivened and he always enlivened us, with his ready wit, his insight, his foresight, his profound realizations, his purity, his determination.

In October Śrīla Prabhupāda initiated John as his disciple, but at that time I was still a little too doubtful. Yet on November 29th, 1971, my doubts ebbed enough for me to receive initiation, too. In front of Śrīla Prabhupāda and the Deities of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa (the same ones John had given Yamunā a few months before), I promised to abstain from meat-eating, illicit sex, intoxicants,

and gambling, and I promised to chant sixteen rounds of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* daily. (Devotees chant on wooden beads, and one "round" means once around the 108-bead string, with a *mantra* for each bead.) Prabhupāda looked at me and said, "Sixteen rounds is the minimum." In other words, I should always try to remember Kṛṣṇa by chanting His names, not forget Him after I'd finished the prescribed number of rounds.

For almost the entire next year, Śrīla Prabhupāda was away on a world speaking tour, but by October 1972 he had come back to Vṛndāvana. This time the

devotees lived in Keśi-ghāṭa palace, right on the bank of the Yamunā. Every morning at 3 A.M. a few of the more hearty women would rise and slip out the back door of the palace, down some steps, and into the calm water for our morning bath. Then we went back to the palace and had time to chant some rounds before the *ārati* celebration at 4 A.M.

By 4:30 the celebration was over, but our chanting and dancing continued. With *karatālas* (small cymbals) and *mṛdaṅga* drums in hand, we spilled out into the dark winding streets. Acyutānanda Svāmī, one of Prabhupāda's older disciples, led our predawn procession,

and at that hour it was a little treacherous—we couldn't even see where we were stepping. But soon the morning sun's first glimmer would light our path.

October-November in Vṛndāvana is harvest time, the most auspicious time of the year. It was during the month Kārttika, as it's called, that mother Yaśodā caught Lord Kṛṣṇa stealing butter and tied Him to a grinding mortar to restrain Him. A few years after this, Kṛṣṇa danced with the beautiful *gopīs*, the cowherd girls whose pure devotion for Him knew no bounds. Once Kṛṣṇa told a friend, "The most opportune time is the full-moon night in autumn, like tonight. The best place within the universe is Vṛndāvana, and the most beautiful girls are the *gopīs*. So, I think I should now take advantage of all these circumstances and engage in the transcendental *rāsa* dance."

We could appreciate why Kṛṣṇa enjoyed this time of year. As we played our instruments and chanted along the streets, we practically floated through the cool morning air. With the monsoon rains just past, the foliage was lush and deep green, and all around us we saw freshness and new life.

Each day we went to Ramaṇa-reti, on the outskirts of the town. *Ramaṇa* means "pleasurable," and *reti* means "sands." Śrīla Prabhupāda called Ramaṇa-reti "the shimmering silver sands" where the Lord enjoyed His pastimes as a cowherd boy. In this area someone had given Prabhupāda a plot of land, and construction was underway for the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple and International Guesthouse. A few devotees were living there and overseeing the construction, and each morning they would greet our small party warmly and show us how the work had progressed since the day before. (At that time there were just giant holes in the ground.) Then we would start back toward town, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa quietly as we walked along. By now we could hear the calls of the peacocks, and we could often see them perched in the trees or running about on their long legs. There were many other less spectacular birds, also, each with its unique song. And there were donkeys hauling huge loads, monkeys frittering away their time, camels eating thorny twigs, hogs acting as sewage disposal units, dogs fighting and whining, horses pulling carts, and hundreds of white cows strolling peacefully to pasture.

Seven o'clock found us seated in the courtyard of Rādhā-Damodara temple, which was founded by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī. A great scholar and philosopher, he proved through his brilliant



PHOTO: BHARGAVA DASA

Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī (above) smile on all who visit the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple (below right). The locale: "the shimmering silver sands" where Kṛṣṇa enjoyed His pastimes as a cowherd boy.

writings that ancient India's Vedic literatures point to Kṛṣṇa consciousness as life's ultimate goal. The Gosvāmīs used to sit together in the temple's courtyard to study and discuss the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Rūpa, the foremost Gosvāmī, had his *bhajāna-kuṭīra* (place of worship), in this courtyard, and his *samādhi* (tomb) is there as well. Perhaps more significant for us, Śrīla Prabhupāda had made this temple his headquarters from 1956 to 1965, before he left India to teach Kṛṣṇa consciousness in America. It was here that he started his masterpiece, his English translation and commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Śrīla Prabhupāda's room overlooked the courtyard where the Gosvāmīs used to sit, and he derived great inspiration from this sacred place.

Now, in 1972, Prabhupāda was again occupying his old rooms, and at 7 A.M. he would sit with us in the courtyard and lecture from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, First Canto, Second Chapter: "Divinity and Divine Service." This chapter summarizes the whole range of spiritual and material knowledge, and in a poetic way it presents all one needs to know to become fully happy and successful in this life. Prabhupāda would speak for forty-five minutes to an hour. The words that flowed from his lips were filled with devotion and wisdom and held us in rapt attention.

Afterward, there was a light breakfast (yogurt, puffed rice, and fruit), and then we set about our daily activities. Usually, I went with some other devotees to



PHOTO: MURALI VADANA DASA

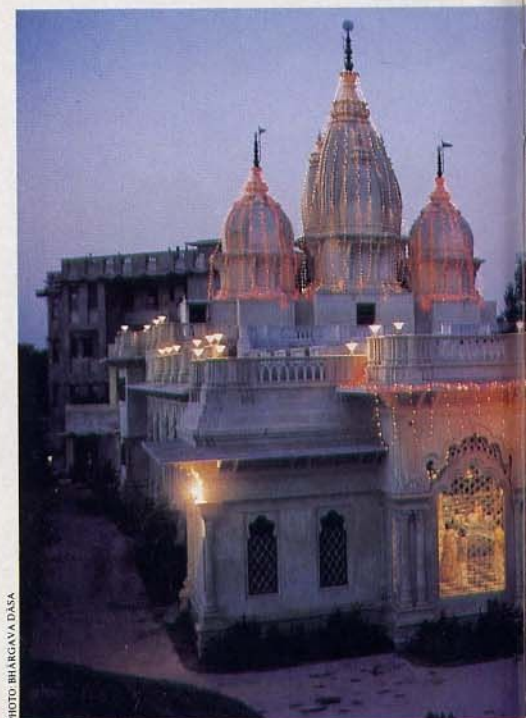
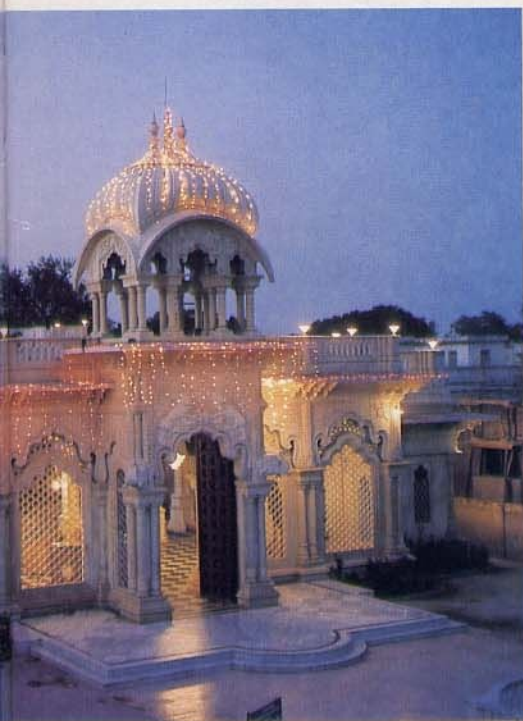


PHOTO: BHARGAVA DASA

photograph the local temples. By one o'clock we returned to Keśi-ghāṭa palace for a substantial meal: *capātīs* (unleavened whole wheat bread), *sabji* (spicy vegetable preparations), dahl (bean soup), rice, and milk sweets. Then there was time for some reading and discussions, and a nap. By five we had



A morning lecture at the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple (above): Śrīla Prabhupāda speaking on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (the Beautiful Story of the Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa).



reassembled in the courtyard for Prabhupāda's second lecture of the day, this time on *The Nectar of Devotion*, a book written by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in the sixteenth century. This book is especially for devotees. It describes the process of becoming a devotee, the effects of pure devotional service, and

the transcendental emotions devotees experience in relation to their Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

After this lecture, whoever wanted to could squeeze into Prabhupāda's small room to hear further discussions and ask questions. There was so much to learn. Prabhupāda could speak for hours, and we could listen for hours without feeling fatigued. "Kṛṣṇa is a person, the Supreme Person, and you are a spirit soul, part and parcel of Him. This material world is not our real home. Our real home is Vṛndāvana—the original Vṛndāvana, in the spiritual world. There we can eternally pass our time with Kṛṣṇa and His associates in a blissful, loving relationship." This was the essence of the philosophy, and there were innumerable ramifications.

Logic, we found, is like a cake which has been left out to become thoroughly dry and stale. My husband and I had passed our lives eating such dry cakes, but Prabhupāda made us drink the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's transcendental pastimes. By sending us to Vṛndāvana in 1971, Śrīla Prabhupāda had prepared us for entering a new life. And when we took initiation from him, our new life began. Now he was showing us how to extricate ourselves from our material attach-

ments. He was gently bringing us into an ever-fresh, ever-personal world where we had a fulfilling role to play, a world where all our desires were satisfied just by our cooperating with the Supreme Person who resided there, a world based on pure love.

And it worked—it was practical and immediate. Our small group in Vṛndāvana felt great harmony and unity of purpose. We simply let Kṛṣṇa be the center of our lives. We sang for Him, we heard about Him, we offered Him our food, we visited the places of His pastimes and remembered His activities. We felt united in serving Him, and very happy. Kṛṣṇa consciousness was not a utopian dream, not mythology, but something real and tangible.

The year 1975 found my husband and me in Vṛndāvana again, this time for the grand opening ceremony of the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple and International Guesthouse. When we'd come to Vṛndāvana four years earlier, we'd had no place to stay, no knowledge of the area, and no friends. Now Prabhupāda had provided all of that. And through his temples, his disciples, and his transcendental books, Śrīla Prabhupāda is introducing everyone to Vṛndāvana, just as he introduced us.

# ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

## On “Might Makes Right”

*This conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and one of his disciples took place in Paris during the summer of 1974.*

**Disciple:** Last night in your lecture you made the analogy that if people don't follow God's laws, they'll be punished by God, just as they're punished for disobeying the state laws. So the young people thought you must be a fascist.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** But this is actually happening all over the world. How can they deny it? Government today means, “Might makes right.” Somehow you take power, and then you are right. It is a question of which group gets the power.

**Disciple:** But they want to give the power to the people.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** How will it be possible? There are so many people and so many different opinions—you have your people, and someone else has his people. As soon as you want to give the power to your people, the others will oppose. This is human nature; you cannot change it. They're thinking that the power should be given to the people, but there are many other people who will disagree. This is the nature of the material world: everyone is envious of everyone else. But these rascals don't have the intelligence to understand this. In India there was Gandhi—a gentleman, a very nice politician—but he was killed. So you cannot stop this. It is the nature of the material world—everyone is envious of others. You'll never be able to find a group of materialistic men who are perfect. So why do they say, “Give the power to the people”? They are simply rascals. Therefore, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says, *paramo nirmatsarāṇām satām*: Kṛṣṇa consciousness is for the perfect, nonenvious person. Those who are not Kṛṣṇa conscious must be envious. Everywhere you'll find competition. Kṛṣṇa had enemies. Jesus Christ had enemies, or else why was he crucified? He had no fault; he was preaching God consciousness. Yet he was crucified. This is the material world. Even though one is perfect, still he'll have enemies. How can you stop it? They say, “Give the power to the people,” but as soon as there is one good group of people governing, another group will stand against it. They will say, “Give the



power to us.” So where is your perfection? This is not perfection. Therefore, we have to give up all connection with this material world—that is perfection.

**Disciple:** But how can you avoid anarchy and have good government if you give up all connection with this world?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, this is the point—you have to follow the perfect authority.

**Disciple:** And this was their contention—you advocate following a superior authority.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** If you want a perfect society, you must follow the perfect authority. You cannot find perfection through mundane politics. You have to follow the real, recognized authorities—the perfect, liberated souls. This was the system in the Vedic culture. The authority was Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Vedic literature, and society was directed by Manu [the forefather and lawgiver of mankind] and the *Manu-saṁhitā*. *Mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ*: to attain perfection, we must follow the *mahājanas*—perfect, self-realized authorities.

**Disciple:** But these young people said even spiritual authorities are imperfect.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** They may say that, but why should we accept their opinion—the opinion of imperfect rascals? Their only idea of authority is, “Might makes right.” For instance, that group yesterday was advocating “Power to the people.” So they have got some might, and they are pressuring, “You must ac-

cept this idea.” And this is going on all over the world—“Might makes right.” All the rascals are fighting with one another, and the one who is a little mightier becomes prominent. That's all.

**Disciple:** They say this is always the case—with *any* authority, it's just some leader who's pushed himself forward. So they've rejected all authorities.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, because all their so-called authorities have been imperfect. But there is a perfect authority also: Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And any authority who follows and teaches according to the instructions of Kṛṣṇa is also perfect. That is authority. We Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees are exactly following the authority of Kṛṣṇa. In presenting Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we are simply presenting the words of Kṛṣṇa and trying to convince people, “Here is the real authority; if you follow you'll be happy.” Kṛṣṇa says, “You surrender unto Me.” And we are saying, “Surrender to Kṛṣṇa.” We know that Kṛṣṇa is perfect and that to surrender unto Him is perfection. And whenever we speak, we always quote Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa's representatives.

**Disciple:** But in order for someone to surrender, doesn't he have to have faith in whoever is asking him to surrender?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, faith must be there. Therefore, in the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa first of all proves that He is the Absolute Truth; then He asks for you to surrender. But you need to have the intelligence to understand—“This is Kṛṣṇa”—then you surrender. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa does not say in the beginning, “You must surrender.” First He explains everything—the body, the soul, all forms of *yoga*, all different kinds of knowledge. Then He gives the most confidential knowledge: “Give up everything else, and just surrender unto Me.”

Everyone in this material world is imperfect. Without voluntary submission to a perfect person, everyone is imperfect. But one who has completely surrendered to Kṛṣṇa or His representative—he is perfect. But if you do not surrender to the perfect authority, then you remain an imperfect rascal. You may be Napoleon, or you may be a small ant, but we want to see whether you have surrendered to Kṛṣṇa or not. If not, then you're a rascal, that's all.



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 SEVENTEEN

#### Punishment and Reward of Kali

In this part of our continuing presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the saintly King Parīkṣit attempts to protect the bull and the cow (embodiments of religion and the earth, respectively) from further attack by Kali (the embodiment of evil). Finally, the king orders the offender to leave his kingdom.

#### TEXT 9

मा सौरभेयात्रशुचो व्येतु ते वृषलाद् भयम् ।  
मा रोदीरम्भ भद्रं ते खलानां मयि शास्त्रि ॥ ९ ॥

mā saurabheyātra śuca  
vyetu te vṛṣalād bhayam  
mā rodīr amba bhadrām te  
khalānām mayi śāstari

mā—do not; saurabheya—O son of Surabhi; atra—in my kingdom; śucaḥ—lamentation; vyetu—let there be; te—your; vṛṣalāt—by the śūdra; bhayam—cause of fear; mā—do not; rodīḥ—cry; amba—mother cow; bhadrām—all good; te—unto you; khalānām—of the envious; mayi—while I am living; śāstari—the ruler or subduer.

#### TRANSLATION

O son of Surabhi, you need lament no longer now. There is no need to fear this low-class śūdra. And, O mother cow, as long as I am living as the ruler and subduer of all envious men, there is no cause for you to cry. Everything will be good for you.

#### PURPORT

Protection of bulls and cows and all other animals can be possible only when there is a state ruled by an executive head like Mahārāja Parīkṣit. Mahārāja Parīkṣit addresses the cow as mother, for he is a cultured, twice-born, ksatriya king. Surabhi is the name of the cows which exist in the spiritual planets and are especially reared by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. As men are made after the form and features of the Supreme Lord, so also the cows are made after the form and features of the surabhi cows in the spiritual kingdom. In the material world the human society gives all protection to the human being, but there is no law to protect the descendants of Surabhi, who can give all protection to men by supplying the miracle food, milk. But Mahārāja Parīkṣit and the Pāṇḍavas were fully conscious of the importance of the cow and bull, and they were prepared

to punish the cow-killer with all chastisement, including death. There has sometimes been agitation for the protection of the cow, but for want of pious executive heads and suitable laws, the cow and the bull are not given protection. The human society should recognize the importance of the cow and the bull and thus give all protection to these important animals, following in the footsteps of Mahārāja Parīkṣit. For protecting the cows and brahminical culture, the Lord, who is very kind to the cow and the brāhmaṇas (go-brāhmaṇa-hitāya), will be pleased with us and will bestow upon us real peace.

#### TEXTS 10-11

यस्य राष्ट्रे प्रजाः सर्वान्स्वस्यन्ते साक्ष्यसाधुभिः ।  
तस्य मत्स्य नश्यन्ति कीर्तिरायुर्भगो गतिः ॥१०॥  
एष राज्ञां परो धर्मो द्यार्तानामार्तिनिग्रहः ।  
अत एनं वधिष्यामि भूतद्रुहमसत्तमम् ॥११॥

yasya rāṣṭre prajāḥ sarvāḥ  
trasyante sādhy asādhubhiḥ  
tasya mattasya naśyanti  
kīrtir āyur bhago gatiḥ

esa rājñām paro dharmo  
hy ārtānām ārti-nigrahaḥ  
ata enam vadhiṣyāmi  
bhūta-druham asattamam

yasya—one whose; rāṣṭre—in the state; prajāḥ—living beings; sarvāḥ—one and all; trasyante—are terrified; sādhy—O chaste one; asādhubhiḥ—by the miscreants; tasya—his; mattasya—of the illusioned; naśyanti—vanishes; kīrtiḥ—fame; āyur—duration of life; bhagaḥ—fortune; gatiḥ—good rebirth; eṣaḥ—these are; rājñām—of the kings; paraḥ—superior; dharmah—occupation; hi—certainly; ārtānām—of the sufferers; ārti—sufferings; nigrahaḥ—subduing; ataḥ—therefore; enam—this man; vadhiṣyāmi—I shall kill; bhūta-druham—revolter against other living beings; asat-tamam—the most wretched.

#### TRANSLATION

O chaste one, the king's good name, duration of life and good rebirth vanish when all kinds of living beings are terrified by miscreants in his kingdom. It is certainly the prime duty of the king to subdue first the sufferings of those who suffer. Therefore I must kill this most wretched man because he is violent against other living beings.

#### PURPORT

When there is some disturbance caused by wild animals in a village or town, the police or others take action to kill them. Similarly, it is the duty

of the government to kill at once all bad social elements such as thieves, dacoits and murderers. The same punishment is also due to animal-killers because the animals of the state are also the *prajā*. *Prajā* means one who has taken birth in the state, and this includes both men and animals. Any living being who takes birth in a state has the primary right to live under the protection of the king. The jungle animals are also subject to the king, and they also have a right to live. So what to speak of domestic animals like the cows and bulls.

Any living being, if he terrifies other living beings, is a most wretched subject, and the king should at once kill such a disturbing element. As the wild animal is killed when it creates disturbances, similarly any man who unnecessarily kills or terrifies the jungle animals or other animals must be punished at once. By the law of the Supreme Lord, all living beings, in whatever shape they may be, are the sons of the Lord, and no one has any right to kill another animal, unless it is so ordered by the codes of natural law. The tiger can kill a lower animal for his subsistence, but a man cannot kill an animal for his subsistence. That is the law of God, who has created the law that a living being subsists by eating another living being. Thus the vegetarians are also living by eating other living beings. Therefore, the law is that one should live only by eating specific living beings, as ordained by the law of God. The *Īsopaniṣad* directs that one should live by the direction of the Lord and not at one's sweet will. A man can subsist on varieties of grains, fruits and milk ordained by God, and there is no need of animal food, save and except in particular cases.

The illusioned king or executive head, even though sometimes advertised as a great philosopher and learned scholar, will allow slaughterhouses in the state without knowing that torturing poor animals clears the way to hell for such foolish kings or executive heads. The executive head must always be alert to the safety of the *prajā*s, both man and animal, and inquire whether a particular living being is harassed at any place by another living being. The harassing living being must at once be caught and put to death, as shown by Mahārāja Parikṣit.

The people's government, or government by the people, should not allow killing of innocent animals by the sweet will of foolish government men. They must know the codes of God, as mentioned in the revealed scriptures. Mahārāja Parikṣit quotes here that according to the codes of God the irresponsible king or state executive jeopardizes his good name, duration of life, power and strength and ultimately his progressive march towards a better life and salvation after death. Such foolish men do not even believe in the existence of a next life.

While commenting on this particular verse, we have in our presence the statement of a great modern politician who has recently died and left his will, which discloses his poor fund of knowledge of the codes of God mentioned by Mahārāja Parikṣit. The politician was so ignorant of the codes of God that he writes: "I do not believe in any such ceremonies, and to submit to them, even as a matter of form, would be hypocrisy and an attempt to delude ourselves and others... I have no religious sentiment in the matter."

Contrasting these statements of a great politician in the modern age with those of Mahārāja Parikṣit, we find a vast difference. Mahārāja Parikṣit was pious according to the scriptural codes, whereas the modern politician goes by his personal belief and sentiments. Any great man of the material world is, after all, a conditioned soul. He is bound by his hands and feet by the ropes of material nature, and still the foolish conditioned soul thinks of himself as free to act by his whimsical sentiments. The conclusion is that people in the time of Mahārāja Parikṣit were happy, and the animals were given proper protection because the executive head was not whimsical or ignorant of God's law. Foolish, faithless creatures try to avoid the existence of the Lord and proclaim themselves secular at the cost of valuable human life. The human life is especially meant for knowing the science of God, but foolish creatures, especially in this age of Kali, instead of knowing God scientifically, make propaganda against religious belief as well as the existence of God, even though they are always bound by the laws of God by the symptoms of birth, death, old age and disease.

## TEXT 12

कोऽवृक्षत् तव पादांस्त्रीन् सौरभेय चतुष्पद ।  
मा भूवंस्त्वाद्याशा राष्ट्रे राज्ञां कृष्णानुवर्तिनाम् ॥१२॥

ko 'vr̥scat tava pādāṁs trīn  
saurabheya catus-pada  
mā bhūvaṁs tvādṛśā rāstre  
rājñām kṛṣṇānuvartinām

*kaḥ*—who is he; *avṛscat*—cut off; *tava*—your; *pādān*—legs; *trīn*—three; *saurabheya*—O son of Surabhi; *catus-pada*—you are four-legged; *mā*—never to be; *bhūvan*—it so happened; *tvādṛśā*—as yourself; *rāstre*—in the state; *rājñām*—of the kings; *kṛṣṇa-anuvartinām*—those who follow the codes of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

## TRANSLATION

He [Mahārāja Parikṣit] repeatedly addressed and questioned the bull thus: O son of Surabhi, who has cut off your three legs? In the state of the kings who are obedient to the laws of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, there is no one as unhappy as you.

## PURPORT

The kings or the executive heads of all states must know the codes of Lord Kṛṣṇa (generally *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*) and must act accordingly in order to fulfill the mission of human life, which is to make an end to all miseries of material conditions. One who knows the codes of Lord Kṛṣṇa can achieve this end without any difficulty. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, in a synopsis, we can understand the codes of Godhead, and in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* the same codes are explained further.

In a state where the codes of Kṛṣṇa are followed, no one is unhappy. Where such codes are not followed, the first sign is that three legs of the representative of religion are cut off, and thereby all miseries follow. When Kṛṣṇa was personally present, the codes of Kṛṣṇa were being followed without question, but in His absence such codes are presented in the pages of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* for the guidance of the blind persons who happen to be at the helm of all affairs.

## TEXT 13

आख्याहि वृष भद्रं वः साधूनामकृतागसाम् ।  
आत्मवैरूप्यकर्तारं पार्यानां कीर्तिदूषणम् ॥१३॥

ākhyāhi vṛṣa bhadraṁ vaḥ  
sādhūnām akṛtāgasām  
ātma-vairūpya-kartāraṁ  
pārthānām kīrti-dūṣaṇam

*ākhyāhi*—just let me know; *vṛṣa*—O bull; *bhadraṁ*—good; *vaḥ*—for you; *sādhūnām*—of the honest; *akṛtā-gasām*—of those who are offenseless; *ātma-vairūpya*—deformation of the self; *kartāraṁ*—the doer; *pārthānām*—of the sons of Pṛthā; *kīrti-dūṣaṇam*—blackmailing the reputation.

## TRANSLATION

O bull, you are offenseless and thoroughly honest; therefore I wish all good to you. Please tell me of the perpetrator of these mutilations, which blackmail the reputation of the sons of Pṛthā.

## PURPORT

The reputation of the reign of Mahārāja Rāmacandra and that of the kings who followed in the footsteps of Mahārāja Rāmacandra, like the Pāṇḍavas and their descendants, are never to be forgotten because in their kingdom offenseless and honest living beings were never in trouble. The bull and the cow are the symbols of the most offenseless living

beings because even the stool and urine of these animals are utilized to benefit human society. The descendants of the sons of Pṛthā, like Mahārāja Parikṣit, were afraid of losing their reputations, but in the modern days the leaders are not even afraid of killing such offenseless animals. Herein lies the difference between the reign of those pious kings and the modern states ruled by irresponsible executive heads without knowledge of the codes of God.

## TEXT 14

जनेऽनागस्यर्षं युञ्जन् सर्वतोऽस्य च मद्भयम् ।  
साधूनां मद्रमेव स्यादसाधुदमने कृते ॥१४॥

jane 'nāgasy agham yuñjan  
sarvato 'sya ca mad-bhayam  
sādhūnām bhadram eva syād  
asādhu-damane kṛte

jane—to the living beings; anāgasi—those who are offenseless; agham—sufferings; yuñjan—by applying; sarvataḥ—anywhere and everywhere; asya—of such offenders; ca—and; mat-bhayam—fear me; sādūnām—of the honest persons; bhadram—good fortune; eva—certainly; syāt—will take place; asādhu—dishonest miscreants; damane—curbed; kṛte—being so done.

## TRANSLATION

Whoever causes offenseless living beings to suffer must fear me anywhere and everywhere in the world. By curbing dishonest miscreants, one automatically benefits the offenseless.

## PURPORT

Dishonest miscreants flourish because of cowardly and impotent executive heads of state. But when the executive heads are strong enough to curb all sorts of dishonest miscreants, in any part of the state, certainly they cannot flourish. When the miscreants are punished in an exemplary manner, automatically all good fortune follows. As said before, it is the prime duty of the king or the executive head to give protection in all respects to the peaceful, offenseless citizens of the state. The devotees of the Lord are by nature peaceful and offenseless, and therefore it is the prime duty of the state to arrange to convert everyone to become a devotee of the Lord. Thus automatically there will be peaceful, offenseless citizens. Then the only duty of the king will be to curb the dishonest miscreants. That will bring about peace and harmony all over human society.

## TEXT 15

अनागःस्विह भूतेषु य आगस्कृभिरकुशः ।  
आहर्तास्मि भुजं साक्षदमर्त्यस्यापि साङ्गदम् ॥१५॥

anāgaḥsv iha bhūteṣu  
ya āgaḥ-kṛn niraṅkuśaḥ  
āhartāsmi bhujam sāksāt  
amartyasyāpi sāṅgadam

anāgaḥsv iha—to the offenseless; bhūteṣu—living beings; yaḥ—the person; āgaḥ-kṛt—commits offense; niraṅkuśaḥ—upstart; āhartāsmi—I shall bring forth; bhujam—arms; sāksāt—directly; amartyasya api—even one who is a demigod; sa-āṅgadam—with decorations and armor.

## TRANSLATION

An upstart living being who commits offenses by torturing those who are offenseless shall be directly uprooted by me, even though he be a denizen of heaven with armor and decorations.

## PURPORT

The denizens of the heavenly kingdom are called *amara*, or deathless, due to their possessing a long span of life, far greater than that of the human beings. For a human being, who has only a maximum one-hundred-year duration of life, a span of life spreading over millions of years is certainly considered to be deathless. For example, from the *Bhagavad-gītā* we learn that on the Brahmaloḥka planet the duration of one day is calculated to be 4,300,000 X 1,000 solar years. Similarly, in other heavenly planets one day is calculated to be six months of this planet, and the inhabitants get a life of ten million of their years. Therefore, in all higher planets, since the span of life is far greater than that of the human being, the denizens are called deathless by imagination, although actually no one within the material universe is deathless.

Mahārāja Parikṣit challenges even such denizens of heaven if they torture the offenseless. This means that the state executive head must be as strong as Mahārāja Parikṣit so that he may be determined to punish the strongest offenders. It should be the principle of a state executive head that the offender of the codes of God is always punished.

## TEXT 16

राज्ञो हि परमो धर्मः स्वधर्मस्थानुपालनम् ।  
शासतोऽन्यान् यथाशास्त्रमनापद्युत्पयानिह ॥१६॥

rājño hi paramo dharmah  
sva-dharma-sthānupālanam  
śāsato 'nyān yathā-sāstram  
anāpady utpathān iha

rājñah—of the king or the executive head; hi—certainly; paramah—supreme; dharmah—occupational duty; svadharma-stha—one who is faithful to his prescribed duty; anupālanam—giving protection always; śāsataḥ—while ruling; anyān—others; yathā—according to; sāstram—rulings of scriptures; anāpadi—without danger; utpathān—persons going astray; iha—as a matter of fact.

## TRANSLATION

The supreme duty of the ruling king is to give all protection to law-abiding persons and to chastise those who stray from the ordinances of the scriptures in ordinary times, when there is no emergency.

## PURPORT

In the scriptures there is mention of *āpad-dharma*, or occupational duty at times of extraordinary happenings. It is said that sometimes the great sage Viśvāmītra had to live on the flesh of dogs in some extraordinary dangerous position. In cases of emergency, one may be allowed to live on the flesh of animals of all description, but that does not mean that there should be regular slaughterhouses to feed the animal-eaters and that this system should be encouraged by the state. No one should try to live on flesh in ordinary times simply for the sake of the palate. If anyone does so, the king or the executive head should punish him for gross enjoyment.

There are regular scriptural injunctions for different persons engaged in different occupational duties, and one who follows them is called *svadharma-stha*, or faithful in one's prescribed duties. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.48) it is advised that one should not give up his occupational prescribed duties, even if they are not always flawless. Such *svadharma* might be violated in cases of emergency, if one is forced by circumstances, but they cannot be violated in ordinary times. The state executive head is to see that such *svadharma* is not changed by the follower, whatever it may be, and he should give all protection to the follower of *svadharma*. The violator is subject to punishment in terms of the *śāstra*, and the duty of the king is to see that everyone strictly follows his occupational duty, as prescribed in the scripture.

## TEXT 17

धर्म उवाच

एतद् वः पाण्डवेयानां युक्तमार्तमयं वचः ।  
येषां गुणगणैः कृष्णो दौत्यादौ भगवान् कृतः ॥१७॥

*dharmā uvāca*  
*etat vaḥ pāṇḍaveyānām*  
*yuktam ārtābhayaṁ vacaḥ*  
*yeṣāṁ guṇa-gaṇaiḥ kṛṣṇo*  
*dautyāḍau—bhagavān kṛtaḥ*

*dharmā uvāca*—the personality of religion said; *etat*—all these; *vaḥ*—by you; *pāṇḍaveyānām*—of those who are in the Pāṇḍava dynasty; *yuktam*—just befitting; *ārta*—the sufferer; *abhayaṁ*—freedom from all fears; *vacaḥ*—speeches; *yeṣām*—those; *guṇa-gaṇaiḥ*—by the qualifications; *kṛṣṇaḥ*—even Lord Kṛṣṇa; *dautyā-āḍau*—the duty of a messenger, etc.; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *kṛtaḥ*—performed.

## TRANSLATION

The personality of religion said: These words just spoken by you befit a person of the Pāṇḍava dynasty. Captivated by the devotional qualities of the Pāṇḍavas, even Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, performed duties as a messenger.

## PURPORT

The assurances and challenges made by Mahārāja Parikṣit are never exaggerations of his real power. The Mahārāja said that even the denizens of heaven could not escape his stringent government if they were violators of religious principles. He was not falsely proud, for a devotee of the Lord is equally as powerful as the Lord or sometimes more powerful by His grace, and any promise made by a devotee, though it may be ordinarily very difficult to fulfill, is properly executed by the grace of the Lord. The Pāṇḍavas, by their unalloyed devotional service and full surrender unto the Lord, made it possible for the Lord to become a chariot driver or sometimes their letter messenger. Such duties executed by the Lord for His devotee are always very pleasing to the Lord because the Lord wants to render service to His unalloyed devotee, whose life has no other engagement than to serve the Lord with full love and devotion. Mahārāja Parikṣit, grandson of Arjuna, the celebrated friendly servitor of the Lord, was a pure devotee of the Lord like his grandfather, and therefore the Lord was always with him, even from the time when he was helplessly lying in the womb of his mother and was attacked by the blazing *brahmāstra* weapon of Aśvatthāmā. A devotee is always under the protection of the Lord, and therefore the assurance of protection by Mahārāja Parikṣit could never be without meaning. The personality of religion accepted this fact and thus thanked the King for his being true to his exalted position.

## TEXT 18

न वयं क्लेशबीजानि यतः स्युः पुरुषर्षभ ।  
पुत्रं तं विजानीमो वाक्यभेदविमोहिताः ॥१८॥

*na vyaṁ kleśa-bijāni*  
*yataḥ syuḥ puruṣarṣabha*  
*puruṣaṁ taṁ vijānīmaḥ*  
*vākya-bheda-vimohitāḥ*

*na*—not; *vyaṁ*—we; *kleśa-bijāni*—the root cause of sufferings; *yataḥ*—wherefrom; *syuḥ*—it so happens; *puruṣa-ṛṣabha*—O greatest of all human beings; *puruṣaṁ*—the person; *taṁ*—that; *vijānīmaḥ*—know; *vākya-bheda*—difference of opinion; *vimohitāḥ*—bewildered by.

## TRANSLATION

O greatest among human beings, it is very difficult to ascertain the particular miscreant who has caused our sufferings, because we are bewildered by all the different opinions of theoretical philosophers.

## PURPORT

There are many theoretical philosophers in the world who put forward their own theories of cause and effect especially about the cause of suffering and its effect on different living beings. Generally there are six great philosophers: Kaṇāda, the author of Vaiśeṣika philosophy; Gautama, the author of logic; Patañjali, the author of mystic *yoga*; Kapila, the author of Sāṅkhya philosophy; Jaimini, the author of Karma-mīmāṃsā; and Vyāsadeva, the author of Vedānta-darśana.

Although the bull, or the personality of religion, and the cow, the personality of the earth, knew perfectly well that the personality of Kali was the direct cause of their sufferings, still, as devotees of the Lord, they knew well also that without the sanction of the Lord no one could inflict trouble upon them. According to the *Padma Purāṇa*, our present trouble is due to the fructifying of seedling sins, but even those seedling sins also gradually fade away by execution of pure devotional service. Thus even if the devotees see the mischief-mongers, they do not accuse them for the sufferings inflicted. They take it for granted that the mischief-monger is made to act by some indirect cause, and therefore they tolerate the sufferings, thinking them to be God-given in small doses, for otherwise the sufferings should have been greater.

Mahārāja Parikṣit wanted to get a statement of accusation against the direct mischief-monger, but they declined to give it on the above-mentioned grounds. Speculative philosophers, however, do not recognize the sanction of the Lord; they try to find out the cause of sufferings in their own way, as will be described in the following verses. According to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, such speculators are themselves bewildered, and thus they cannot know that the ultimate cause of all causes is the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead.

## TEXT 19

केचिद् विकल्पवसना आहुरात्मानमात्मनः ।  
देवमन्येऽपरे कर्म स्वभावमपरे प्रभुम् ॥१९॥

*kecid vikalpa-vasanā*  
*āhur ātmānam ātmanāḥ*  
*daivam anye 'pare karma*  
*svabhāvam apare prabhum*

*kecit*—some of them; *vikalpa-vasanāḥ*—those who deny all kinds of duality; *āhuḥ*—declare; *ātmānam*—own self; *ātmanāḥ*—of the self; *daivam*—superhuman; *anye*—others; *apare*—someone else; *karma*—activity; *svabhāvam*—material nature; *apare*—many other; *prabhum*—authorities.

## TRANSLATION

Some of the philosophers, who deny all sorts of duality, declare that one's own self is responsible for his personal happiness and distress. Others say that superhuman powers are responsible, while yet others say that activity is responsible, and the gross materialists maintain that nature is the ultimate cause.

## PURPORT

As referred to above, philosophers like Jaimini and his followers establish that fruitive activity is the root cause of all distress and happiness, and that even if there is a superior authority, some superhuman powerful God or gods, He or they are also under the influence of fruitive activity because they reward result according to one's action. They say that action is not independent because action is performed by some performer; therefore, the performer himself is the cause of his own happi-

ness or distress. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.5) also it is confirmed that by one's mind, freed from material affection, one can deliver himself from the sufferings of material pangs. So one should not entangle oneself in matter by the mind's material affections. Thus one's own mind is one's friend or enemy in one's material happiness and distress.

Atheistic, materialistic Sāṅkhyaites conclude that material nature is the cause of all causes. According to them, combinations of material elements are the causes of material happiness and distress, and disintegration of matter is the cause of freedom from all material pangs. Gautama and Kaṇāda find that atomic combination is the cause of everything, and impersonalists like Aṣṭāvakra discover that the spiritual effulgence of Brahman is the cause of all causes. But in the *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord Himself declares that He is the source of impersonal Brahman, and therefore He, the Personality of Godhead, is the ultimate cause of all causes. It is also confirmed in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate cause of all causes.

## TEXT 20

अप्रतर्क्यादनिर्देश्यादिति केष्वपि निश्चयः ।  
अत्रानुरूपं राजर्षे विमृश स्वमनीषया ॥२०॥

*apratarkyād anirdēśyād*  
*iti keṣv api niścayaḥ*  
*atrānurūpaṁ rājarṣe*  
*vimṛśa sva-manīṣayā*

*apratarkyāt*—beyond the power of reasoning; *anirdēśyāt*—beyond the power of thinking; *iti*—thus; *keṣu*—someone; *api*—also; *niścayaḥ*—definitely concluded; *atra*—herein; *anurūpaṁ*—which of them is right; *rāja-rṣe*—O sage amongst the kings; *vimṛśa*—judge yourself; *sva*—by your own; *manīṣayā*—power of intelligence.

## TRANSLATION

There are also some thinkers who believe that no one can ascertain the cause of distress by argumentation, nor know it by imagination, nor express it by words. O sage amongst kings, judge for yourself by thinking over all this with your own intelligence.

## PURPORT

The Vaiṣṇavites, the devotees of the Lord, do believe, as above explained, that nothing can take place without the sanction of the Supreme Lord. He is the supreme director, for He confirms in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.15) that He, as all-pervading Paramātmā, stays in everyone's heart and keeps vigilance over all actions and witnesses all activities. The argument of the atheist that one cannot be punished for one's misdeeds unless proved before a qualified justice is refuted herein, for we accept the perpetual witness and constant companion of the living being. A living being may forget all that he might have done in his past or present life, but one must know that in the same tree of the material body, the individual soul and the Supreme Soul as Paramātmā are sitting like two birds. One of them, the living being, is enjoying the fruits of the tree, whereas the Supreme Being is there to witness the activities. Therefore the Paramātmā feature, the Supreme Soul, is actually the witness of all activities of the living being, and only by His direction can the living being remember or forget what he might have done in the past. He is, therefore, both the all-pervading impersonal Brahman and the localized Paramātmā in everyone's heart. He is the knower of all past, present and future, and nothing can be concealed from Him. The devotees know this truth, and therefore they discharge their duties sincerely, without being overly anxious for rewards. Besides that, one cannot estimate the Lord's reactions, either by speculation or by scholarship. Why does He put some into difficulty and not others? He is the supreme knower of the Vedic knowledge, and thus He is the factual Vedāntist. At

the same time He is the compiler of the *Vedānta*. No one is independent of Him, and everyone is engaged in His service in different ways. In the conditioned state, such services are rendered by the living being under force of the material nature, whereas in the liberated state the living being is helped by the spiritual nature in the voluntary loving service of the Lord. There is no incongruity or inebriety in His actions. All are on the path of Absolute Truth. Bṛhmadēva correctly estimated the inconceivable actions of the Lord. The conclusion is, therefore, that the sufferings of the representative of religion and the representative of the earth, as present before Mahārāja Parikṣit, were planned to prove that Mahārāja Parikṣit was the ideal executive head because he knew well how to give protection to the cows (the earth) and the *brāhmaṇas* (religious principles), the two pillars of spiritual advancement. Everyone is under the full control of the Lord. He is quite correct in His action when He desires something to be done by someone, irrespective of the consideration of the particular case. Mahārāja Parikṣit was thus put to test for his greatness. Now let us see how he solves it by his sagacious mind.

## TEXT 21

सूत उवाच  
एवं धर्मे प्रवदति स सम्राट् द्विजसत्तमाः ।  
समाहितेन मनसा विस्वेदः पर्यचष्ट तम् ॥२१॥

*sūta uvāca*  
*evam dharme pravadati*  
*sa samrāṭ dvija-sattamāḥ*  
*samāhitena manasā*  
*vikhedaḥ paryacṣṭa tam*

*sūtaḥ uvāca*—Sūta Gosvāmī said; *evam*—so; *dharme*—the personality of religion; *pravadati*—thus having spoken; *saḥ*—he; *samrāṭ*—the Emperor; *dvija-sattamāḥ*—O best among the *brāhmaṇas*; *samāhitena*—with proper attention; *manasā*—by the mind; *vikhedaḥ*—without any mistake; *paryacṣṭa*—counterreplied; *tam*—unto him.

## TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: O best among the *brāhmaṇas*, the Emperor Parikṣit, thus hearing the personality of religion speak, was fully satisfied, and without mistake or regret he gave his reply.

## PURPORT

The statement of the bull, the personality of religion, was full of philosophy and knowledge, and the King was satisfied, since he could understand that the suffering bull was not an ordinary one. Unless one is perfectly conversant with the law of the Supreme Lord, one cannot speak such things touching philosophical truths. The Emperor, being also on an equal level of sagacity, replied to the point, without doubts or mistakes.

## TEXT 22

राजोवाच  
धर्मं ब्रवीषि धर्मज्ञ धर्मोऽसि वृषरूपधृक् ।  
यदधर्मकृतः स्थानं सूचकस्यापि तद्भवेत् ॥२२॥

*rājovāca*  
*dharmam bravīṣi dharmajña*  
*dharmo 'si vṛṣa-rūpa-dhṛk*  
*yad adharmakṛtaḥ sthānam*  
*sūcakasyāpi tad bhavet*

*rājā uvāca*—the King said; *dharmam*—religion; *bravīṣi*—as you speak; *dharmajña*—O one who knows the codes of religion; *dharmah*—the personality of religion; *asi*—you are; *vṛṣa-rūpa-dhṛk*—in the

disguise of a bull; *yat*—whatever; *adharmakṛtāḥ*—one who acts irreligiously; *sthānam*—place; *sūcakasya*—of the identifier; *api*—also; *tat*—that; *bhavit*—becomes.

### TRANSLATION

The King said: O you, who are in the form of a bull! You know the truth of religion, and you are speaking according to the principle that the destination intended for the perpetrator of irreligious acts is also intended for one who identifies the perpetrator. You are no other than the personality of religion.

### PURPORT

A devotee's conclusion is that no one is directly responsible for being a benefactor or mischief-monger without the sanction of the Lord; therefore he does not consider anyone to be directly responsible for such action. But in both the cases he takes it for granted that either benefit or loss is God-sent, and thus it is His grace. In case of benefit, no one will deny that it is God-sent, but in case of loss or reverses one becomes doubtful about how the Lord could be so unkind to His devotee as to put him in great difficulty. Jesus Christ was seemingly put into such great difficulty, being crucified by the ignorant, but he was never angry at the mischief-mongers. That is the way of accepting a thing, either favorable or unfavorable. Thus for a devotee the identifier is equally a sinner, like the mischief-monger. By God's grace, the devotee tolerates all reverses. Mahārāja Parikṣit observed this, and therefore he could understand that the bull was no other than the personality of religion himself. In other words, a devotee has no suffering at all because so-called suffering is also God's grace for a devotee who sees God in everything. The cow and bull never placed any complaint before the King for being tortured by the personality of Kali, although everyone lodges such complaints before the state authorities. The extraordinary behavior of the bull made the King conclude that the bull was certainly the personality of religion, for no one else could understand the finer intricacies of the codes of religion.

### TEXT 23

अथवा देवमायाया नूनं गतिरगोचरा ।  
चेत्सो वचसश्चापि भूतानामिति निश्चयः ॥२३॥

*athavā deva-māyāyā*  
*nūnaṁ gatir agocarā*  
*cetaso vacasāś cāpi*  
*bhūtānām iti niścayaḥ*

*athavā*—alternatively; *deva*—the Lord; *māyāyāḥ*—energies; *nūnaṁ*—very little; *gatiḥ*—movement; *agocarā*—inconceivable; *cetasah*—either by the mind; *vacasah*—by words; *ca*—or; *api*—also; *bhūtānām*—of all living beings; *iti*—thus; *niścayaḥ*—concluded.

### TRANSLATION

Thus it is concluded that the Lord's energies are inconceivable. No one can estimate them by mental speculation or by word jugglery.

### PURPORT

A question may be raised as to why a devotee should refrain from identifying an actor, although he knows definitely that the Lord is the ultimate doer of everything. Knowing the ultimate doer, one should not pose himself as ignorant of the actual performer. To answer this doubt, the reply is that the Lord is also not directly responsible, for everything is done by His deputed *māyā-śakti*, or material energy. The material energy is always provoking doubts about the supreme authority of the Lord. The personality of religion knew perfectly well that nothing can take place without the sanction of the Supreme Lord, and still he was

put into doubts by the deluding energy, and thus he refrained from mentioning the supreme cause. This doubtfulness was due to the contamination of both Kali and the material energy. The whole atmosphere of the age of Kali is magnified by the deluding energy, and the proportion of measurement is inexplicable.

### TEXT 24

तपः शौचं दया सत्यमिति पादाः कृते कृताः ।  
अधर्माशैक्षयो मयाः समयसङ्गमदैस्त्व ॥२४॥

*tapah śaucam dayā satyam*  
*iti pādāḥ kṛte kṛtāḥ*  
*adharmāśaiḥ trayo bhagnāḥ*  
*smaya-saṅga-madais tava*

*tapah*—austerity; *śaucam*—cleanliness; *dayā*—mercy; *satyam*—truthfulness; *iti*—thus; *pādāḥ*—legs; *kṛte*—in the age of Satya; *kṛtāḥ*—established; *adharmā*—irreligiosity; *aiśaiḥ*—by the parts; *trayah*—three combined; *bhagnāḥ*—broken; *smaya*—pride; *saṅga*—too much association with women; *madaiḥ*—intoxication; *tava*—your.

### TRANSLATION

In the age of Satya [truthfulness] your four legs were established by the four principles of austerity, cleanliness, mercy and truthfulness. But it appears that three of your legs are broken due to rampant irreligion in the form of pride, lust for women, and intoxication.

### PURPORT

The deluding energy, or material nature, can act upon the living beings proportionately in terms of the living beings' falling prey to the deluding attraction of *māyā*. Moths are captivated by the glaring brightness of light, and thus they become prey to the fire. Similarly, the deluding energy is always captivating the conditioned souls to become prey to the fire of delusion, and the Vedic scriptures warn the conditioned souls not to become prey to delusion but to get rid of it. The *Vedas* warn us to go not to the darkness of ignorance but to the progressive path of light. The Lord Himself also warns that the deluding power of material energy is too powerful to overcome, but one who completely surrenders unto the Lord can easily do so. But to surrender unto the lotus feet of the Lord is also not very easy. Such surrender is possible by persons of austerity, cleanliness, mercy and truthfulness. These four principles of advanced civilization were remarkable features in the age of Satya. In that age, every human being was practically a qualified *brāhmaṇa* of the highest order, and in the social orders of life they were all *paramahamsas*, or the topmost in the renounced order. By cultural standing, the human beings were not at all subjected to the deluding energy. Such strong men of character were competent enough to get away from the clutches of *māyā*. But gradually, as the basic principles of brahminical culture, namely austerity, cleanliness, mercy and truthfulness, became curtailed by proportionate development of pride, attachment for women and intoxication, the path of salvation or the path of transcendental bliss retreated far, far away from human society. With the progression of the age of Kali, people are becoming very proud, and attached to women and intoxication. By the influence of the age of Kali, even a pauper is proud of his penny, the women are always dressed in an overly attractive fashion to victimize the minds of men, and the man is addicted to drinking wine, smoking, drinking tea and chewing tobacco, etc. All these habits, or so-called advancement of civilization, are the root causes of all irreligiosities, and therefore it is not possible to check corruption, bribery and nepotism. Man cannot check all these evils simply by statutory acts and police vigilance, but he can cure the disease of the mind by the proper medicine, namely advocating the principles of brahminical culture or the principles of austerity, cleanliness, mercy and

truthfulness. Modern civilization and economic development are creating a new situation of poverty and scarcity with the result of blackmailing the consumer's commodities. If the leaders and the rich men of the society spend fifty percent of their accumulated wealth mercifully for the misled mass of people and educate them in God consciousness, the knowledge of *Bhāgavatam*, certainly the age of Kali will be defeated in its attempt to entrap the conditioned souls. We must always remember that false pride, or too high an estimation of one's own values of life, undue attachment to women or association with them, and intoxication will divert human civilization from the path of peace, however much the people clamor for peace in the world. The preaching of the *Bhāgavatam* principles will automatically render all men austere, clean both inside and outside, merciful to the suffering, and truthful in daily behavior. That is the way of correcting the flaws of human society, which are very prominently exhibited at the present moment.

## TEXT 25

इदानीं घर्म पादस्ते सत्यं निर्वर्तयेद्यतः ।  
तं जिघृक्षत्यघर्मोऽयमनृतेनैधितः कलिः ॥२५॥

*idānīm dharmā pādāṣṭe satyam nirvartayed yataḥ  
tam jighṛkṣaty adharma 'yam  
anṛtenaidhitāḥ kalih*

*idānīm*—at the present moment; *dharmā*—O personality of religion; *pādāḥ*—leg; *te*—of you; *satyam*—truthfulness; *nirvartayet*—hobbling along somehow or other; *yataḥ*—whereby; *tam*—that; *jighṛkṣati*—trying to destroy; *adharmaḥ*—the personality of irreligion; *ayam*—this; *anṛtena*—by deceit; *edhitāḥ*—flourishing; *kalih*—quarrel personified.

## TRANSLATION

You are now standing on one leg only, which is your truthfulness, and you are somehow or other hobbling along. But quarrel personified [Kali], flourishing by deceit, is also trying to destroy that leg.

## PURPORT

The principles of religion do not stand on some dogmas or man-made formulas, but they stand on four primary regulative observances, namely austerity, cleanliness, mercy and truthfulness. The mass of people must be taught to practice these principles from childhood. Austerity means to accept voluntarily things which may not be very comfortable for the body but are conducive for spiritual realization, for example, fasting. Fasting twice or four times a month is a sort of austerity which may be voluntarily accepted for spiritual realization only, and not for any other purposes, political or otherwise. Fastings which are meant not for self-realization but for some other purposes are condemned in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (17.5-6). Similarly, cleanliness is necessary both for the mind and for the body. Simply bodily cleanliness may help to some extent, but cleanliness of the mind is necessary, and it is effected by glorifying the Supreme Lord. No one can cleanse the accumulated mental dust without glorifying the Supreme Lord. A godless civilization cannot cleanse the mind because it has no idea of God, and for this simple reason people under such a civilization cannot have good qualifications, however they may be materially equipped. We have to see things by their resultant action. The resultant action of human civilization in the age of Kali is dissatisfaction, so everyone is anxious to get peace of mind. This peace of mind was complete in the Satya age because of the existence of the above-mentioned attributes of the human beings. Gradually these attributes have diminished in the Tretā-yuga to three fourths, in the Dvāpara to half, and in this age of Kali to one fourth, which is also gradually diminishing on account of prevailing untruthfulness. By pride, either artificial or real, the resultant action of austerity is spoiled; by too

much affection for female association, cleanliness is spoiled; by too much addiction to intoxication, mercy is spoiled; and by too much lying propaganda, truthfulness is spoiled. The revival of *bhāgavata-dharma* can save human civilization from falling prey to evils of all description.

## TEXT 26

इयं च भूमिर्भगवता न्यासितोरुभरा सती ।  
श्रीमद्भित्तपदन्यासैः सर्वतः कृतकौतुका ॥२६॥

*iyam ca bhūmir bhagavatā  
nyāsitoru-bharā satī  
śrīmadbhis tat-pada-nyāsaiḥ  
sarvataḥ kṛta-kautukā*

*iyam*—this; *ca*—and; *bhūmiḥ*—surface of the earth; *bhagavatā*—by the Personality of Godhead; *nyāsita*—being performed personally as well as by others; *uru*—great; *bharā*—burden; *satī*—being so done; *śrīmadbhiḥ*—by the all-auspicious; *tat*—that; *pada-nyāsaiḥ*—footprints; *sarvataḥ*—all around; *kṛta*—done; *kautukā*—good fortune.

## TRANSLATION

The burden of the earth was certainly diminished by the Personality of Godhead and by others as well. When He was present as an incarnation, all good was performed because of His auspicious footprints.

## TEXT 27

शोचत्यश्रुकला साध्वी दुर्भगेवोज्जितासती ।  
अब्रह्मण्या नृपन्याजाः शूद्रा भोक्ष्यन्ति मामिति ॥ २७ ॥

*śocati āsru-kalā sādhvī  
durbhagevojjiṭā satī  
abrahmanyā nṛpa-vyājāḥ  
śūdrā bhokṣyanti mām iti*

*śocati*—lamenting; *āsru-kalā*—with tears in the eyes; *sādhvī*—the chaste; *durbhagā*—as if the most unfortunate; *iva*—like; *ujjhitā*—forlorn; *satī*—being so done; *abrahmanyāḥ*—devoid of brahminical culture; *nṛpa-vyājāḥ*—posed as the ruler; *śūdrāḥ*—lower class; *bhokṣyanti*—would enjoy; *mām*—me; *iti*—thus.

## TRANSLATION

Now she, the chaste one, being unfortunately forsaken by the Personality of Godhead, laments her future with tears in her eyes, for now she is being ruled and enjoyed by lower-class men who pose as rulers.

## PURPORT

The *kṣatriya*, or the man who is qualified to protect the sufferers, is meant to rule the state. Untrained lower-class men, or men without ambition to protect the sufferers, cannot be placed on the seat of an administrator. Unfortunately, in the age of Kali the lower-class men, without training, occupy the post of a ruler by strength of popular votes, and instead of protecting the sufferers, such men create a situation quite intolerable for everyone. Such rulers illegally gratify themselves at the cost of all comforts of the citizens, and thus the chaste mother earth cries to see the pitiable condition of her sons, both men and animals. That is the future of the world in the age of Kali, when irreligiosity prevails most prominently. And in the absence of a suitable king to curb irreligious tendencies, educating the people systematically in the teaching of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* will clear up the hazy atmosphere of corruption, bribery, blackmail, etc.

## TEXT 28

इति धर्मं महीं चैव सान्त्वयित्वा महारथः ।  
निशातमाददे खड्गं कलयेऽघर्महेतवे ॥२८॥

iti dharmam mahīm caiva  
sāntvayitvā mahā-rathaḥ  
nisātam ādade khadgam  
kalaye 'dharma-hetave

iti—thus; dharmam—the personality of religion; mahīm—the earth; ca—also; eva—as; sāntvayitvā—after pacifying; mahā-rathaḥ—the general who could fight alone with thousands of enemies; nisātam—sharp; ādade—took up; khadgam—sword; kalaye—to kill the personified Kali; adharma—irreligion; hetave—the root cause.

## TRANSLATION

Mahārāja Parikṣit, who could fight one thousand enemies singlehandedly, thus pacified the personality of religion and the earth. Then he took up his sharp sword to kill the personality of Kali, who is the cause of all irreligion.

## PURPORT

As described above, the personality of Kali is he who deliberately commits all kinds of sinful acts which are forbidden in the revealed scriptures. This age of Kali will certainly be full of all activities of Kali, but this does not mean that the leaders of society, the executive heads, the learned and intelligent men, or above all the devotees of the Lord should sit down tightly and become callous to the reactions of the age of Kali. In the rainy season certainly there will be profuse rainfalls, but that does not mean that men should not take means to protect themselves from the rains. It is the duty of the executive heads of state and others to take all necessary actions against the activities of Kali or the persons influenced by the age of Kali; and Mahārāja Parikṣit is the ideal executive head of the state, for at once he was ready to kill the personality of Kali with his sharp sword. The administrators should not simply pass resolutions for anticorruption steps, but they must be ready with sharp swords to kill the persons creating corruptions from the angle of vision of the recognized śāstras. The administrators cannot prevent corrupt activities by allowing wine shops. They must at once close all shops of intoxicating drugs and wine and force punishment even by death for those who indulge in habits of intoxication of all description. That is the way of stopping the activities of Kali, as exhibited herein by Mahārāja Parikṣit, the mahā-ratha.

## TEXT 29

तं जिघांसुमभिप्रेत्य विहाय नृपलाञ्छनम् ।  
वत्पादमूर्लं शिरसा समगाद् भयविह्वलः ॥२९॥

taṁ jighāmsuṁ abhipretya  
vihāya nṛpa-lāñchanam  
tat-pāda-mūlam śirasā  
samagād bhaya-vihvalaḥ

taṁ—him; jighāmsuṁ—willing to kill; abhipretya—knowing it well; vihāya—leaving aside; nṛpa-lāñchanam—the dress of a king; tat-pāda-mūlam—at his feet; śirasā—by the head; samagāt—fully surrendered; bhaya-vihvalaḥ—under pressure of fearfulness.

## TRANSLATION

When the personality of Kali understood that the King was willing to kill him, he at once abandoned the dress of a king and, under pressure of fear, completely surrendered to him, bowing his head.

## PURPORT

The royal dress of the personality of Kali is artificial. The royal dress is suitable for a king or kṣatriya, but when a lower-class man artificially dresses himself as a king, his real identity is disclosed by the challenge of a bona fide kṣatriya like Mahārāja Parikṣit. A real kṣatriya never surrenders. He accepts the challenge of his rival kṣatriya, and he fights either to die or to win. Surrender is unknown to a real kṣatriya. In the age of Kali there are so many pretenders dressed and posed like administrators or executive heads, but their real identity is disclosed when they are challenged by a real kṣatriya. Therefore when the artificially dressed personality of Kali saw that to fight Mahārāja Parikṣit was beyond his ability, he bowed down his head like a subordinate and gave up his royal dress.

## TEXT 30

पतितं पादयोर्वीरः कृपया दीनवत्सलः ।  
शरण्यो नावधीच्छ्लोक्य आह चेदं हसन्निव ॥३०॥

patitaṁ pādayoḥ vīraḥ  
krpayā dīna-vatsalaḥ  
śaraṇyo nāvadhīc chlokya  
āha cedam hasann iva

patitam—fallen; pādayoḥ—at the feet; vīraḥ—the hero; krpayā—out of compassion; dīna-vatsalaḥ—kind to the poor; śaraṇyaḥ—one who is qualified to accept surrender; na—not; avadhīc—did kill; ślokyah—one who is worthy of being sung; āha—said; ca—also; idam—this; hasan—smiling; iva—like.

## TRANSLATION

Mahārāja Parikṣit, who was qualified to accept surrender and worthy of being sung in history, did not kill the poor surrendered and fallen Kali, but smiled compassionately, for he was kind to the poor.

## PURPORT

Even an ordinary kṣatriya does not kill a surrendered person, and what to speak of Mahārāja Parikṣit, who was by nature compassionate and kind to the poor. He was smiling because the artificially dressed Kali had disclosed his identity as a lower-class man, and he was thinking how ironic it was that although no one was saved from his sharp sword when he desired to kill, the poor lower-class Kali was spared by his timely surrender. Mahārāja Parikṣit's glory and kindness are therefore sung in history. He was a kind and compassionate emperor, fully worthy of accepting surrender even from his enemy. Thus the personality of Kali was saved by the will of Providence.

(continued in next issue)

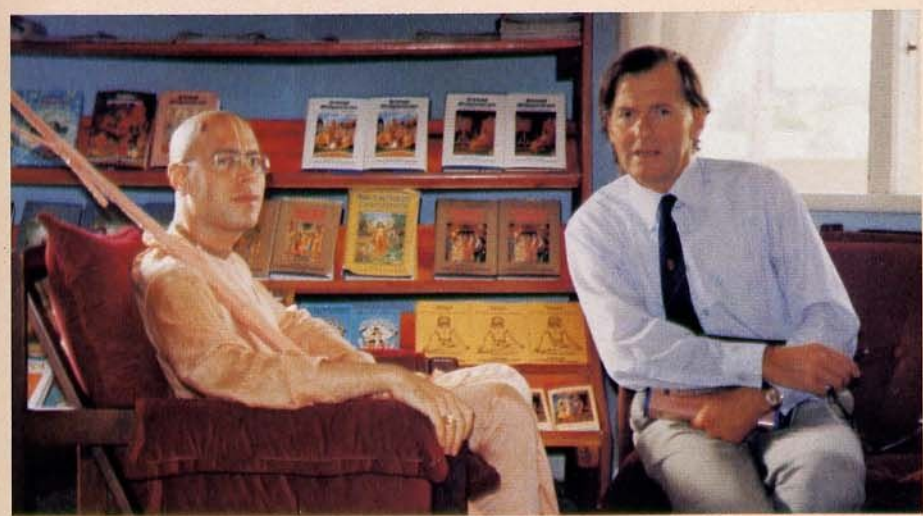




# Every Town and Village

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

## New Zealand: Spiritual Cure for Addiction



Drug clinic superintendent Dr. Fraser McDonald (right) meets with His Holiness Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī, one of ISKCON's eleven initiating gurus. "Expertise in a spiritual way of life."

Dr. Fraser McDonald, Medical Superintendent of the Parnell Drug Clinic in Auckland, New Zealand, noted recently that "the combination of our medical care and the spiritual care from the Hare Kṛṣṇa philosophy has resulted in a very powerful tool indeed for the treatment of drug addiction, and for this we are very grateful."

As Lord Kṛṣṇa explains in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, a person can give up bad habits only if he develops a higher, spiritual taste. When he experiences the superior pleasure that comes from within, he can easily give up the inferior pleasure that comes from external

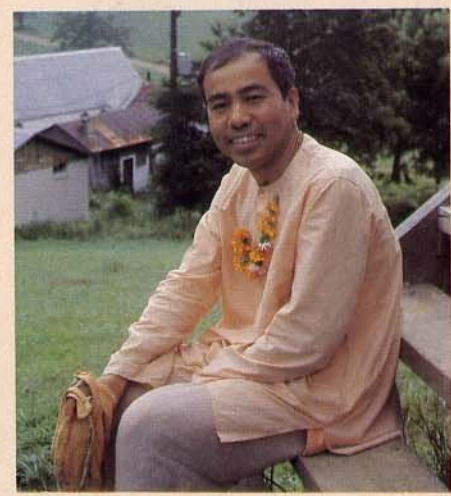
sources like drugs.

Said Dr. McDonald, "Medicine as it has been practiced in the West has concentrated far too much on the purely mechanical, physical aspects of medicine and has given... absolutely nothing to the religious or spiritual part of a person's being... We at the Drug Clinic have had to look around for people with expertise in a spiritual way of life, so that we could offer this to our recovering drug addicts, and the Hare Kṛṣṇa people gave us a very warm welcome, offering us facilities for long-term rehabilitation of patients in a spiritually harmonious atmosphere."

dants of Arjuna, Lord Kṛṣṇa's famous friend and disciple. After all these years, daily life still centers on Lord Kṛṣṇa. The radio stations regularly broadcast Vedic narrations of Kṛṣṇa's activities, and people often come together and chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, to the accompaniment of traditional hand cymbals and drums.

Coordinating ISKCON's new center in Manipur is Svarūpa Dāmodara dāsa, Ph.D., an American-educated chemist who is a native of the area. The local people have warmly welcomed him (as well as devotees from Italy, Brazil, and the U.S.), and they have been coming by the thousands to Kṛṣṇa conscious festivals and seminars.

"This is a very old and aristocratic Kṛṣṇa conscious kingdom," wrote His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. "If this kingdom is organized as a Kṛṣṇa conscious state, this revitalization will be a great success, because for five thousand years this state has maintained its identity. If the spirit of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is revived here, it will be a wonderful place, renowned throughout the world."



Coordinating new center in Manipur is native-born Svarūpa Dāmodara dāsa, Ph.D.

## North India: The Budding of A Kṛṣṇa Conscious State

Recently ISKCON opened a center in the north Indian state of Manipur, at the eastern end of the Himalayas. Manipur has a population of 1.5 million, a total area of 8,800 square miles, and world-renowned scenery (including hillsides covered with tropical fruit trees and waterways filled with lotuses and lilies that blossom after the monsoons).

Actually, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is nothing new to the citizens of Manipur. The fifty-centuries-old Vedic literatures recount that the royal family are descen-

### Hare Kṛṣṇa 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 493 Caitanya Era Vaiṣṇava month of Hṛjykeśa (August 19-September 16, 1978)		
August 26 (Hṛjykeśa 8)	August 27 (Hṛjykeśa 9)	August 29 (Hṛjykeśa 11)
Śrī Kṛṣṇa-janmāṣṭami, the Appearance Day of Lord Kṛṣṇa (fasting).	Śrī Nandotsava. Appearance of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.	Annada-ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).
September 7 (Hṛjykeśa 20)	September 9 (Hṛjykeśa 22)	September 13 (Hṛjykeśa 26)
Appearance of Śrī Itādevī, consort of Śrī Advaita Prabhu.	Appearance of Śrī Lalitā.	Pārsva-ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).
September 14 (Hṛjykeśa 27)	September 15 (Hṛjykeśa 28)	September 16 (Hṛjykeśa 29)
Appearance of Lord Vāmanadeva. Appearance of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī.	Appearance of Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivīnoda Thākura. Disappearance of Śrīla Haridāsa Thākura.	Śrī Viśvarūpa-mahotsava.

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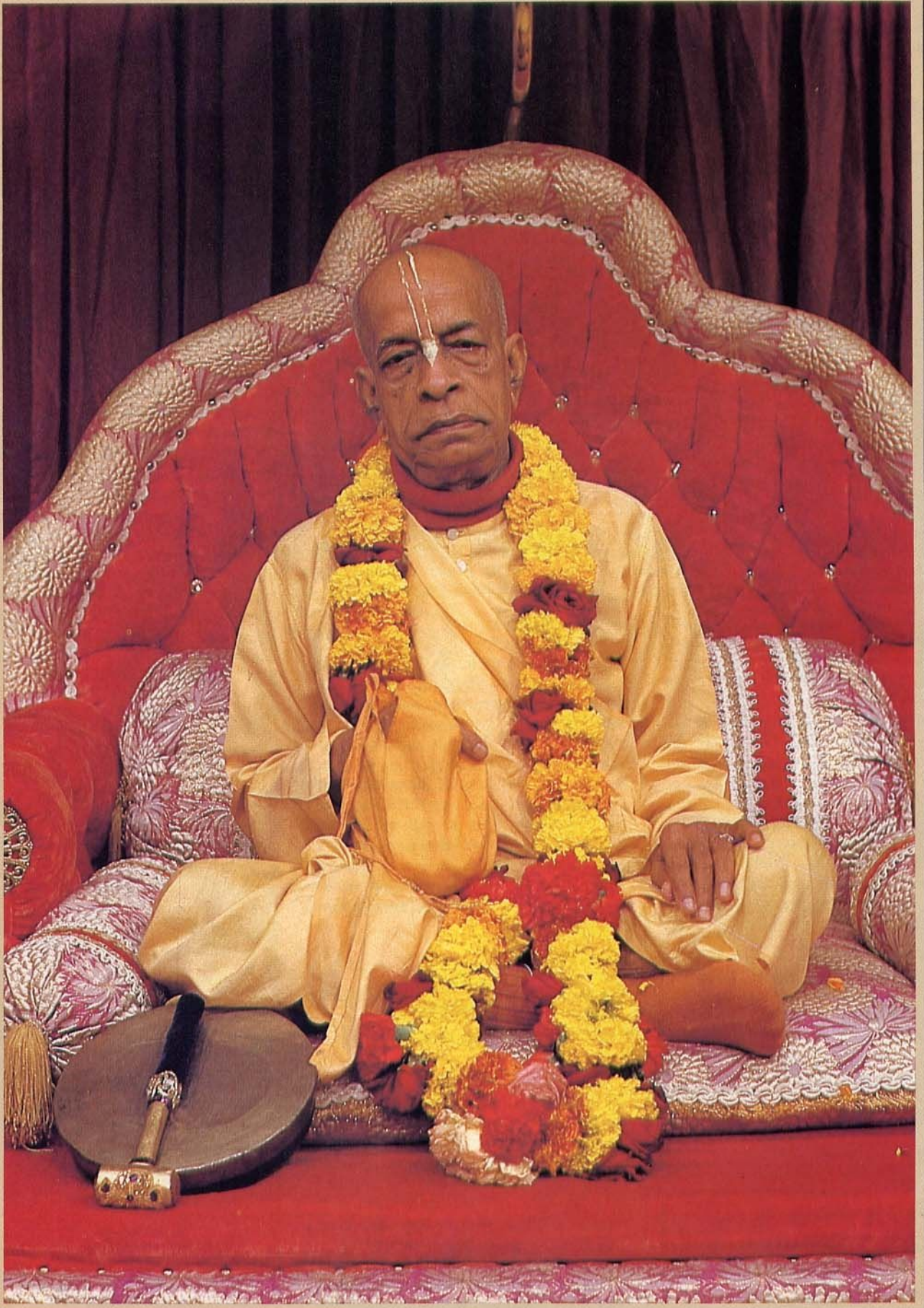


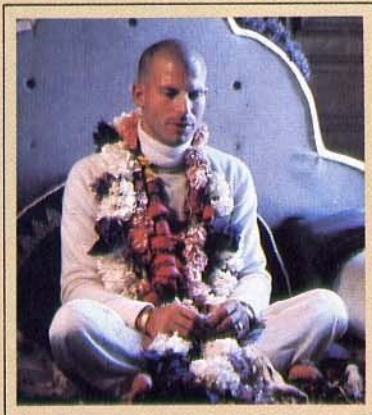
PHOTO: MIRALI PADANA DASA

# The Master At Whose Feet Other Masters Bow

Offerings to His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,  
Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness,  
On the Day He Appeared in This World

In the fall of 1896, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda made his appearance in this world, and each year at this time Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples offer their appreciation to him. The celebration is called Vyāsa-pūjā and gets its name from the great spiritual master Vyāsa, who fifty centuries ago put Lord Kṛṣṇa's teachings into writing. Śrīla Prabhupāda in his turn translated some seventy volumes of these Vedic literatures into English, and through his international movement he spread the science of self-realization and God consciousness throughout the world. Clearly, then, he is a supereminent successor to Vyāsa in the line of *gurus* that has come down through the centuries from Lord Kṛṣṇa. The offerings on these pages are from the eleven disciples Śrīla Prabhupāda chose to become *gurus* after him and so assist him in carrying forward his life's work.

## Bhagavān dāsa Mahārāja



sire to enjoy your loving association together with His other eternal associates in Goloka [the spiritual world]. Thus, along with the heavy weight of separation, the awesome re-

sponsibility of continuing the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement of Caitanya Mahāprabhu has come to rest upon us. Now, like a song which has captured the mind, your words resound day and night in my heart: "Just do as I am doing." But how is it possible to be like you—you who are the embodiment of truth, knowledge, and purity; the visible conclusion of the Vedic scriptures; the swan amongst men; the Supreme Personality of Servitor Godhead? As Lord Caitanya's confidential associate, you have delivered to us His supreme order—*āmāra ājñāya guru hañā tāra' ei deśa*: "Become a spiritual master and try to liberate everyone in this land!" This command, which we had always felt that only you could carry, has now been given by you to us. And because you have given us this order, it can be fulfilled by your mercy alone.

Some people may scorn and laugh at how the new *guru* is amusingly trying to imitate his father, just as a foolish child puts on his father's hat, coat, and shoes and tries to feel important. But such cynics do not believe in your inconceivable and causeless mercy upon the fallen souls. Therefore, I pray at your lotus feet that just as Kṛṣṇa Himself agrees to manifest in the Deity and thus give pleasure and strength to His devotees, you may also manifest yourself in my stonelike heart, so that I may give your disciples faith and encouragement to carry on the mission you have started.

The power of your separation is uprooting my attachments to this world, just as the hurricane uproots trees that have been standing for hundreds and thousands of years. I fall down at your lotus feet and beg again and again that you please continue to guide me to speak as you would speak, teach as you would teach, be bold as you were bold, and merciful as you were merciful. Due to my fallen condition I am feeling low in love of Godhead and remorseful at having hardly appreciated your association. In such a condition I am slowly crawling back to your lotus feet and have given up everything for you. Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, give me your shelter.

Bhagavān dāsa

## Bhavānanda Goswami



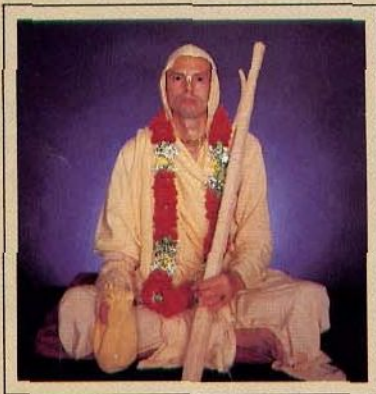
In 1977 in Bombay, Śrīla Prabhupāda was translating *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* when he called me to his desk and related to me that the years 1959 to 1968 were very, very difficult. There were so many obstacles in his path and so many materially difficult situations to face in establishing and founding his ISKCON society. Then he paused. Looking at me, he said, "Though I thought that those were difficult years then, now I realize that it was all Kṛṣṇa's asset. It was all Kṛṣṇa's gift to me."

There is no political leader, there is no social reformer, there is not even a modern religious leader who has done or could do what Śrīla Prabhupāda has accomplished in just a few years. He underwent so

many difficulties in setting the guidelines and goals for the entire human society to become sane and peaceful. Not only could no other so-called big personality do it—no other big personality in this world would even care to do it. No one else ever really cared for me; no one else ever spoke the truth to me; no one else even knew what the truth was. History will show that Śrīla Prabhupāda is just like the rising moon. And as the moon rises, all the glowworms (the so-called big, modern personalities) will diminish and disappear under the full shining light of Śrīla Prabhupāda's love for Lord Kṛṣṇa. He has changed the course of history. He has changed the course of science. He has altered the insane path of this modern civilization. And me: he has changed my life from one of despair and suffering into a full life of bliss and knowledge, and that is why I love him.

Bhavānanda Goswami

## Hamsadūta Swami



We stood by in helpless awe  
As you calmly departed amidst the  
roar  
Of faithful devotees who loved you more  
Than anyone has ever been loved  
before.

Now that you've departed from this  
place,

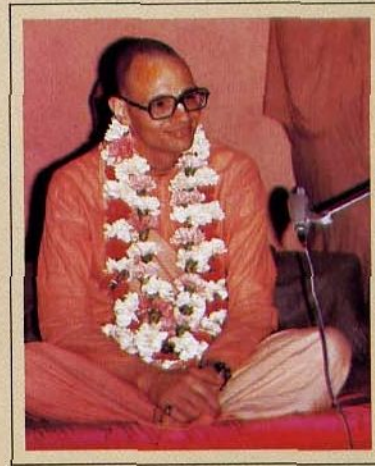
I always think of Your Divine Grace;  
How long till I'll exhaust my days,  
And meet you again face to face?  
I have no fear, I have no doubt,  
About your orders and carrying them  
out.

Up, down, east, west, north, and south,  
Preaching is life, the eternal bout.  
Constantly merged in the ocean of bliss,  
I repeatedly think, "How is this?"  
Perhaps your blessings have gone amiss,  
Like decorating a pig with a kiss.  
Wherever I preach I feel at home,  
Remembering how you did also roam;  
Never afraid of the strange or unknown,  
Repeating your words I am never  
alone.

This my offering, my prayer is done;  
Please allow me to beg your pardon  
For exhibiting myself so dumb,  
As one who with a candle tries to  
illuminate the sun.

Hamsadūta Swami

## Harikeśa Swami



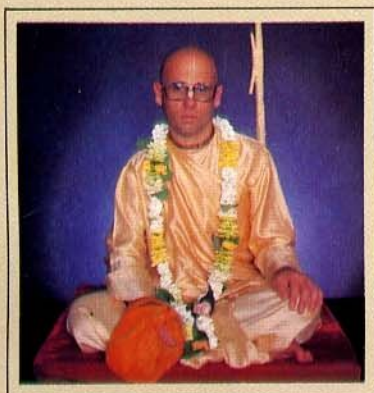
Human beings are factually insignificant in numbers when compared to the other living entities. There are 8,400,000 species of life, and only 400,000 of them are human species. The others are vast numbers of aquatics, reptiles, insects, birds, beasts, and plants. Rarely do we find human beings who are civilized to the degree that they can understand

higher states of consciousness beyond the everyday affairs of eating, sleeping, mating, and defending and whatever so-called recreations one wastes his time in. Fewer still have understood that they are not their bodies. It is very difficult to be unattached to this material body, but even more difficult is understanding one's actual position as an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. After many years of cultivating such understanding, a small handful become perfectly pure devotees, and of these only the most fortunate may receive a full dose of transcendental energy from the Supreme Lord. *Kṛṣṇa-śakti vinā nahe tāra pravartana*: those who are spreading this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement all over the world are not only pure devotees of the Supreme Lord, but are directly empowered by Him to create other devotees. Therefore Śrīla Prabhupāda is such a perfectly empowered preacher. Being completely controlled by Kṛṣṇa, he is completely free from the control of

*māyā* [the Lord's illusory, material energy]. Because he is the greatest proponent of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the Western world, he has not only spread Kṛṣṇa's name and words throughout human society, but he has empowered others to do so on his behalf. Therefore his opulences are expanding unlimitedly. One cannot properly offer him praise. It is said that Ananta-śeṣa has not been able to fully describe the glories of the Lord with his thousand mouths vibrating them since the creation of the universe, since the opulences of the Lord are ever expanding. We have also not seen the limits of Śrīla Prabhupāda's mercy. Rather, we are just beginning to understand its depth and magnitude, exactly as one cannot understand the greatness of the iceberg by seeing its tip protruding from the water. Therefore we can simply stand before him, humbly offering our praise and praying for his mercy upon us, since we have no other shelter than his lotus feet; they are offering shelter to the whole universe. We have fully surrendered unto those lotus feet, and we are firmly holding on to them. We pray that we may be worthy of expanding his glories more and more throughout the world.

Harikeśa Swami

## Hṛdayānanda dāsa Goswami



**D**ear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most respectful obeisances at your lotus feet.

You have made me a Vaiṣṇava *guru*. And how much more I now appreciate your vast and wonderful Kṛṣṇa consciousness! I have accepted many disciples, and the weight of this burden of love has

broken my youthful energy. The weight has crushed, like helpless birds, my power to enjoy this world.

*Guru* means "heavy." The weight of the responsibility you have given me is like a colossal anchor dragging my mind inward to Kṛṣṇa.

As I struggle, with tears in my eyes, to serve you, how I marvel at what *you* did, at what *you* are!

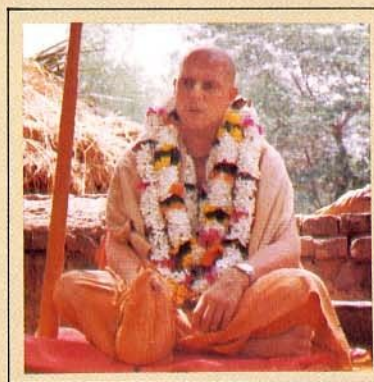
How perfect was your life on earth! How powerfully you preached Kṛṣṇa's message! How enchanting were the depths of your singing voice! And how awesome and brilliant was your voice as you revealed the inescapable network of *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*!

How gracefully you devastated the enemies of God! How mercifully you cared for us as we huddled under your tender wing!

O limitless Jagad-guru! O most perfect spiritual master! Be even more kind to me now. I am a broken animal who lovingly yet pathetically struggles to pull his master's carriage. Pull me into the world of Kṛṣṇa! And place me as an atom at your lotus feet.

Your fallen servant,  
Hṛdayānanda dāsa Goswami

## Jayapatāka Swami



**T**he great tidal wave of love of Kṛṣṇa (started by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Lord Nityānanda Prabhu nearly 492 years ago in Śrī Māyāpur) was kept in a reservoir within India waiting for you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, to break the dam! Now that you've released the divine flood-

waters, there is no restraining their forward progress. Just as in the great universal inundation gradually everything is submerged, so the ocean of ecstatic chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is swelling, and already the creatures of the dry land are being drowned. Only a few birdlike persons are hovering stranded on the mental plane, but soon they will also have no place to land except within these ecstatic waters. Your Divine Grace has brought to this dark, cold, and misdirected world unparalleled good fortune, eternal knowledge, and transcendental bliss. Your sacred message and divine personality are self-illuminating and "brilliant as the sun"! Therefore, I beg to offer my respectful obeisances unto your divine lotus feet on this holy Vyāsa-pūjā day.

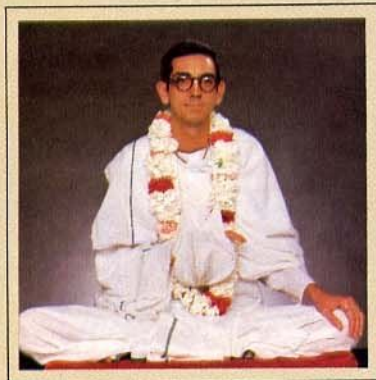
Queen Rukmiṇī of Dvārakā, while talking with her female confidantes, appreciated her great fortune. Unlike other women, who have ordinary husbands with bodies made of skin, bone, blood, stool, mucus, hair, and pus, Rukmiṇīdevī had as her eternal husband Lord Kṛṣṇa, who has a transcendental body of eternal blissful knowledge and beauty. Śrīla Prabhupāda, how will we ever be able to repay you for bringing us under the shelter of our real and eternal friends: Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and Their eternal associates?

The Golden Āvatāra, Lord Caitanya, has manifested Himself as a gigantic tree; this tree is the tree of love of God. Simultaneously, Lord Caitanya has also become the gardener. ISKCON is one of the massive branches of this divine tree. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have revealed that ISKCON is non-different from your body. As gardener, Lord Caitanya wanted to distribute the fruits to everyone, but single-handedly how many fruits could He give? Seeing Lord Caitanya's anxiety and wanting to relieve it, Your Divine Grace has profusely distributed the fruits of the tree of love of God. And you have enjoined everyone to eat those fruits of love of Kṛṣṇa to their full satisfaction and to also distribute them to everyone they meet. These fruits have neither skin nor pit; rather, they are pure nectar! Being handed down intact in disciplic succession by the devotees of Lord Caitanya, their sweetness is ever-increasing. These fruits are coming along with the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* from Goloka Vṛndāvana, the highest planet in the spiritual sky, which is far, far beyond this material universe. Those who are tasting these fruits of love of God are recognizable because they are always chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and trying to help others. Thus, Śrīla Prabhupāda, in offering you respects we worship ISKCON and your devotees as your divine extensions. Your Divine Grace has proven yourself the greatest benefactor to the fallen and deluded souls in this modern age. We love you for what you are, and hankering for your eternal

service and association, we bow our heads down at your divine lotus feet. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Jayapatāka Swami

## Jayatīrtha dāsa Mahārāja



Submitted with an attitude of great awe and reverence to the lotus feet of my eternal spiritual guide and preceptor, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, on his most glorious appearance day.

O spiritual master, all living entities are born into this material

world in dark ignorance and are overcome by desire and hate. They do not know from where they have come or for what reason they have taken birth. Neither do they see the purpose of life, and they are in fear of what will become of them at death. Wanting to find happiness and avoid distress, they labor hard, but with no good result. Seeking help, they attach themselves to leaders who promise salvation but are themselves in delusion. Thus the blind follow the blind, and all of them fall deeper into the dark well of material existence.

You, O spiritual master, are an eternal resident of the spiritual universe, which is filled with bliss and knowledge. Out of mercy for us fallen souls you descended to deliver the message of Lord Kṛṣṇa, to ignite the torchlight of knowledge in the hearts of everyone so that they could see the truth and understand themselves to be eternal spiritual souls, the wayward sons of God. On coming to the Western world, you found us technologically advanced but spiritually dead. You taught us to call out the names of God with devotion and to reform our sinful habits. You breathed life into our hearts and enlivened us. You began a revolution in consciousness, and you trained us how to carry it forward. And then one day last November you departed.

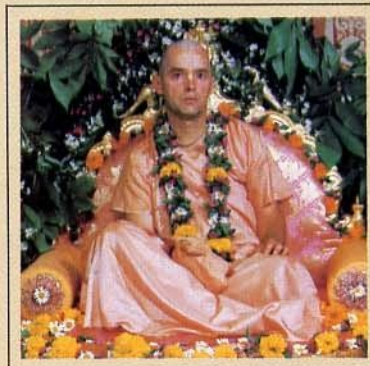
O spiritual master, overwhelmed with grief out of separation from you, we took solace in your instructions, and in your words we found the strength to continue. Although the materialists will not understand this, we feel your presence with us now even more than before, and we hear you giving us guidance from within our hearts. Your mission was a mission of kindness, and now we want to show to others the kindness that you showed to us. It was a mission of enlightenment, and now we wish to enlighten others with the knowledge that you have given us. Your mission was authorized by Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, and now you have authorized us to continue it.

O Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this, the first anniversary of your appearance to be celebrated after your departure, we pause; and with a great seriousness and depth of commitment we pledge ourselves to continue with your work. The light which came into the world with your birth has not departed. With it you have lighted tens of thousands of others, and you have left us the secret of how to light more and more. And by your grace we will do so, until the darkness of this age is just a bitter memory and the pain of ignorance is felt no more.

Praying for your mercy, I remain,

Your humble servant,  
Jayatīrtha dāsa

## Kīrtanānanda Swami



When a person receives a very nice present, he sometimes says, "I don't know how I can thank you enough." Who, then, can even estimate the debt of gratitude we owe to you? You have given us Kṛṣṇa—the beginning, middle, and end of everything there is.

How can we repay you for this matchless gift?

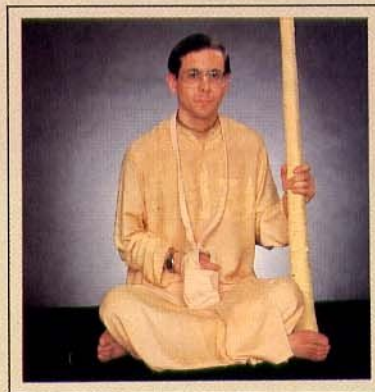
Materialists are amazed that we have "given up" everything. They don't know that we have actually *gained* everything by obtaining Kṛṣṇa. No one in the material world can possess anything. It is all controlled by Kṛṣṇa. It is all taken away at the time of death. But all the nice engagements you have given us—chanting, dancing, feasting, and philosophy—cannot be diminished by time or stolen by death.

You have made us immortal. Although the greatest materialists—big scientific brains and sovereign kings—try to escape death, they are always defeated. But we who are most insignificant have been blessed with eternity, knowledge, and unlimited happiness, all due to Your Divine Grace.

No, we can never repay you. But we can always continue to glorify you, broadcast your mission, and hold your remembrance within the core of our hearts. As long as we do so, you will be pleased with us and we will also be happy. This type of debt, in which both parties remain satisfied, is truly very nice. Please continue to accept our obeisances again and again.

Your humble servant,  
Kīrtanānanda Swami

## Rāmeśvara Swami



Before I met you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I had no life. My heart was like stone, covered by dust accumulated over many, many births. Without awakening my original consciousness of love of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, I remained asleep in the darkness of condi-

tional life, suffering repeated birth and death. When I began to follow your instructions, I found them to be like a torch which caused the stonelike dirt in my consciousness to melt, and I began to feel real life.

Now you have left us to carry out your instructions, but I know that you are still with us. You reside eternally in the hearts of all your disciples. If we go on following your instructions carefully, we will certainly see you protecting us and showing us how to distribute your mercy and love all over the world. Thus, all living entities will float in the ocean of love of Kṛṣṇa that you have brought to the Western world.

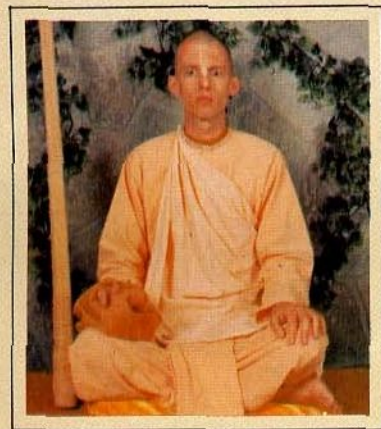
Therefore, my humble offering on your appearance day is that you take complete charge of me and let your mission be my entire life and soul. You specifically instructed me as follows: "We are the only hope for the human society to receive real knowledge. And our books are the only real thing. So it may take some time, but one day all this rubbish culture of slaughterhouses and brothels and this rubbish philosophy that God is dead and life comes from matter can be replaced."

You said your only ambition is that everyone may become enlightened, though they are now deprived of that chance. You assured me, "In the future there will be a history of how Vedic culture was brought to America. We are introducing a new style of life and civilization. Everything should be ideal. Others have never dreamt of such a civilization: free life, happy life, no anxiety, and hope—great hope, that we are going back home, back to Godhead. Through increased distribution of our books, America and then the whole world will become Kṛṣṇa conscious. All the world is in darkness. The scientists like Darwin and Freud are all in darkness. One day the whole world will appreciate how we have changed the face of the world from darkness to light."

Kindly allow this transcendental message to be firmly fixed in my mind and heart, and engage me in helping you spread Lord Caitanya's movement to every town and village throughout the world.

Your insignificant servant,  
Rāmeśvara Swami

### Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami



The spiritual master is the sum total of all the demigods. The whole world pays homage unto you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

When I first met Your Divine Grace in 1966, I was lost and fallen. It was my inestimable good fortune that I became your disciple. I did your typing tasks, donated my salary,

and brought you a daily mango. You preached in the park and in your room and in the temple. Before long, I knew you were the representative of Kṛṣṇa. You dealt with us with so much affection. Love—the kind not given by any mother, father, sister, brother, daughter, son, friend, or so-called lover. But you gave it—because you gave us back our lost relationship with the Supreme Beloved of all living beings, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

And not just to me or just to a few, but you gave it to millions—pure love of God. Kṛṣṇa empowered you to deliver the whole world. You traveled all over the world, so humbly arriving at each place, grave and simple—but always carrying in your heart and voice the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

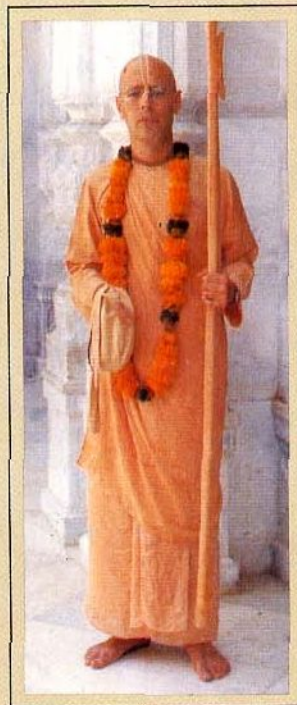
The world desperately needs obedience to God, service to God, love of God. When you were here it was clear that only you in the entire world were delivering unalloyed love of God. This isn't said whimsically, but after examining the evidence. You severely chastised atheists, whether they were Nobel-Prize-winning scientists, powerful politicians, or world-

esteemed humanitarians. "Whoever denies God is a fool and a rascal." In your books you have given the foundation for a Kṛṣṇa conscious world order.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I know you are still preaching and living, and I'm praying that you will always protect and guide us and continuously manifest your mercy in the world. Let us continue working on your behalf in this kingdom of *māyā* (illusion), saving the lost souls from repeated sufferings of birth and death. Let us bring them love of Kṛṣṇa, as you so kindly brought it to us.

Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami

### Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami



Powerful those forces  
Which lay within,  
Causing the minister  
Repeatedly to sin.

But not so powerful  
As the seed you have sown,  
And with your care,  
The plant that has grown.  
Arrogant, proud,  
A wayward minister,  
But by your influence,  
No longer sinister.

Evil forces  
Tried to attack,  
But with your knowledge  
You forced them back.  
False prestige and pride  
Cut by your sword,  
I seek your shelter,  
O merciful lord.

Stripped of illusions,  
A naked soul,  
I wish to fulfill  
Life's cherished goal.  
Please take my hand  
And guide me true.  
In exchange my life  
I consign to you.

The *sāstra*\*\* proclaims you  
As "servitor Lord,"  
Free of false motives,  
Serving without reward.  
Austerity is your wealth,  
*Bhakti* your rule.  
Now I surrender,  
Please make me your tool.

To heaven or hell,  
By your order I shall go,  
To preach the glories  
Of the eternal soul.  
Eastward-bound  
To a God-forgetting land,  
Departing with your order,  
Beneath your blessing hand.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami

Omerciful master,  
Timely you came,  
Freely distributing  
The Lord's holy name.  
The pious, the sinful,  
You made no distinction,  
Their material existence  
Cast into extinction.

Mahāprabhu's mission  
In your hands was placed,  
To offer the whole world  
Kṛṣṇa's sweet name to taste.  
Within the heart  
Selfish desires ceasing,  
*Kṛṣṇa-bhakti*\*  
Ever increasing.

Enter a minister  
With lust, anger, and greed,  
But in his heart  
You have planted a seed.

\* *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*: devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

\*\* *sāstra*: revealed scripture; specifically, ancient India's Vedic literature.

# Questions People Ask About Chanting

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

**Q.** *I want to get back in harmony with nature. Can chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa help me do that?*

**A.** For sure. Say you're walking along a forest path at 6 A.M. As you notice the sandy floor under your feet, the stream flowing nearby, the sun on the horizon, the cool breeze, and the sounds of the birds, you're experiencing what the *Bhagavad-gītā* singles out as the five basic natural elements: earth, water, fire, air, and ether. Beyond these five are subtler elements like your mind (which takes in all these experiences) and your intelligence (which sorts them out). As the *Gītā* also explains, the source of all these natural elements is Lord Kṛṣṇa. So when you chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, you're in harmony with nature, because you're in harmony with nature's source.

**Q.** *Can't I harmonize with nature by backpacking, jogging, or surfing?*

**A.** Perhaps, in some limited sense. But we also have to realize that no matter how much we harmonize with nature, she'll finally stop the music. We'll all have to get old and diseased and die, and then our backpacking, jogging, and surfing days will be over. But in Lord Kṛṣṇa's transcendental world everyone lives in lasting harmony, and by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* we can go there. That way we'll never have to come

back to this world of birth and death. (Otherwise, by the law of *karma*, a backpacker might come back as a mountain goat, a jogger as a terrier, a surfer as a shark.)

**Q.** *Can chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa help me to see God in nature?*

**A.** Yes. Of course, even without chanting, you can still get something of a glimpse of Him. For instance, in the *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "Of bodies of water, I am the ocean. . . I am the light of the sun and moon. . . I am the pure taste of water." So whether you chant or not, the ocean shows you something about His greatness; the sun and moon, His brilliance; and the taste of water, His purity. And when you chant the *mahā-mantra*, the more you'll see Kṛṣṇa's presence in all these things. And what's more, when you chant you'll experience Kṛṣṇa's full personality, because the Lord is fully present in His names.

**Q.** *Can chanting help me get in harmony with my inner self? If so, how?*

**A.** Yes, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa can also

help you do that. As we were saying earlier, all the basic natural elements (the elements that make up our surroundings and our bodies) come from Lord Kṛṣṇa. And so does the spiritual or conscious element—the inner self. The inner self is the soul, which animates the body with consciousness. Most people aren't aware of the inner self. They think the self is the body, and they try to satisfy the body instead of the real self within. But when you chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, you feel harmony with your inner self, because your inner self is in harmony with Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Self.

**Q.** *I've read that if I chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, I'll become self-realized. But I've also read that if I chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, I'll become God-realized. Which is it?*

**A.** It's both. Say you want to look at



yourself, but you're out in the countryside on a pitch-black night; you'll have to wait till you see the sun coming up. In the same way, if you want to realize your self, you'll have to realize Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Self: when the Kṛṣṇa sun comes up, your darkness about self-realization will disappear. When you chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, you're becoming both God-realized and self-realized.

**Q.** *How long will it take me to become self-realized by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa?*

**A.** Why not right away? The Vedic literatures give many examples of people who have taken up the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa and have quickly achieved the highest level of self-realization. Generally, of course, self-realization is a gradual process. It may not happen all at once. But if you chant sincerely and patiently, then Kṛṣṇa will disclose everything to you, even in this one lifetime.

**Q.** *What if you chant Hare Kṛṣṇa but don't achieve full realization in this life?*

**A.** In case you don't complete the process in this lifetime, you'll get a chance in your next lifetime to take up where you left off. As the *Bhagavad-gītā*


assures, you'll be born in a rich or scholarly family, so that you'll have facility for completing your self-realization. This is one of the great benefits of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa even a little bit, because if someone doesn't chant at all, his *karma* will likely carry him to a lifetime as a plant or animal.

**Q.** *To chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, do I have to be a vegetarian?*

**A.** No, but it helps. If you're eating flesh, it's not possible to experience the full benefit of chanting Kṛṣṇa's names. It's best to eat *prasāda*, "the Lord's mercy," vegetarian foods that have been offered to Kṛṣṇa with love. By eating this spiritual food you'll purify your body and mind, and then the chanting will act more powerfully for you. Amazingly, self-realization begins with the tongue:

you taste spiritual food and chant Kṛṣṇa's names. If you do these two things as often as you can, you'll experience an ever-increasing spiritual pleasure.

**Q.** *How can I be sure I'll see Kṛṣṇa just by chanting His name?*

**A.** As with practically everything else you do, you have to start out with a little faith. Suppose you go to a travel agent, and he says he can give you a ticket to fly to Paris. Now, if you're not going to believe him, then what's the sense in going to him? You have to have a little faith that if you get the ticket and board the plane, you'll get to Paris. In the same way, you'll need a little faith to take up the process of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. But if you do take it up, you're sure to see Kṛṣṇa in the end. 



10-2-15



# The Killing Of the Great Python

With His friends well on their way into the mouth of the python,  
Kṛṣṇa wondered how He could kill him yet save them.

**F**ive thousand years ago Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, played as a cowherd boy in the north Indian village of Vṛndāvana. One day Kṛṣṇa wanted to go to the forest with all His cowherd boyfriends and have a picnic. As soon as He got up from bed, Kṛṣṇa blew His buffalo horn and called all His friends together. Then, keeping their calves just ahead of them, all the boys started for the forest.

Kṛṣṇa had thousands of cowherd boyfriends, and each one was taking care of thousands of calves. Kṛṣṇa's own calves were innumerable. We may talk of hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands, millions, billions, trillions, and tens of trillions of calves, but Kṛṣṇa had inconceivably more calves than that. Our tiny brains may not be able to comprehend this, but the Supreme Lord is never limited by our conceptions. Nothing is impossible for Him.

For ornaments all the boys were wearing quartz crystals, small conchshells, pearls, and gold. And when they went into the forest, they also playfully decorated themselves with green leaves, bunches of beautiful flowers, peacock feathers, and colorful minerals such as red clay. Each boy also carried a stick, a flute, a buffalo horn, and a lunch bag.

While the boys were walking through the forest, one of them would steal another's lunch bag and pass it to a third. And when the boy whose lunch was stolen tried to get it back, the boy who had it would throw it to someone else. All the other boys would laugh, but when the owner became disheartened and started to cry, they would give his lunch bag back to him.

Sometimes Kṛṣṇa went ahead to a distant place to view an especially beautiful part of the forest. Then all the cowherd

boys tried to run and catch up and be the first to touch Him. One boy would shout, "I'll be the first to touch Kṛṣṇa!" And another boy would say, "Oh no, you won't! I'll touch Kṛṣṇa first!"

The cowherd boys would play in all sorts of ways. Some played their flutes or blew their buffalo horns, others imitated the buzzing of the bees, and still others imitated the sound of the cuckoos. The boys danced along after the peacocks or imitated the graceful movements of the swans or sat silently with the ducks. They also ran after birds' shadows along the ground and tried to follow their exact courses. Some of the boys caught monkeys by the tail and played with them, and when the monkeys jumped up into the trees, the boys followed them. If a monkey made a face and showed its teeth, the boys would do the same. A number of boys went to the waterfalls and crossed the river Yamunā. Often they played with the frogs on the bank, and when the frogs jumped in the water, the boys dove in after them. When the boys came out, they would look at their own reflections in the water and stand mimicking and laughing. They would also go to an empty well and make loud sounds. Then when the echo came back, they would call it names and make fun of it. . . . After stocking up pious activities in many previous lives, the cowherd boys were seeing Kṛṣṇa face to face and playing with Him as a friend.

Just then the demon Aghāsura appeared before Kṛṣṇa and the cowherd boys. Aghāsura happened to be the younger brother of Pūtanā and Bakāsura, two demons who had previously tried to harm Kṛṣṇa. Aghāsura thought, "This Kṛṣṇa has killed my brother and sister—now I shall kill Him and His friends and calves. That way all their

mothers and fathers will also die, because these children are their life and soul. When the children die, their parents will die of grief."

Through his mystic power Aghāsura took the form of an eight-mile-long python. At first, the boys thought the demon was just a statue. But then one boy said, "Just see—isn't this more like a big serpent lying down in the road and widening his mouth to eat all of us?"

Another boy said, "Yes, what you say is true. The mouth of this animal appears to be like a big dark cave; his teeth are like mountain peaks, and his tongue is like a long highway. This hot fiery wind is his breath, and because of all the dead bodies he has eaten, it smells like burning flesh."

After talking about him this way and that way, the cowherd boys decided to walk right into the demon's mouth. "How can he swallow us all at once?" they reasoned. "And even if this python did swallow us all, he could not swallow Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa would kill him, just as He killed Bakāsura." All the boys looked at the beautiful lotuslike face of Kṛṣṇa and began to clap and smile. Now they marched along with their calves toward the gigantic serpent's open jaws.

Kṛṣṇa could see that the big snake was actually a great demon, but while He was planning how to save His friends, they entered Aghāsura's mouth and walked right into his cavernous belly. Yet Aghāsura didn't devour them. He was thinking, "Everyone has entered except Kṛṣṇa, who has killed my brother and sister."

When Kṛṣṇa saw that His dearest friends were out of His hands and were within the belly of Aghāsura, He wondered for a moment just what He would do—how He could kill the demon and at

the same time save the cowherd boys and calves. Finally, Kṛṣṇa went into the demon's mouth.

All the demigods had gathered in the clouds to watch, and they cried, "Alas! Alas!" At the same time, Aghāsura's friends, who were all eaters of flesh and blood, became very happy.

While Aghāsura was trying to smash Kṛṣṇa and His companions, the Lord expanded Himself within the demon's throat. To counter, Aghāsura expanded his own body, but still he found himself choking. His big eyes rolled violently, and he quickly suffocated. His life air could not come out, but finally it burst out of a hole in the upper part of his

skull. Aghāsura's spirit soul came out like a dazzling light, illuminating all directions, and it hovered in the sky.

After the demon's body had dropped dead, Kṛṣṇa brought all the cowherd boys and calves back to consciousness with His transcendental glance, and then He led them out of the demon's mouth. At that moment Aghāsura's glittering soul merged into Kṛṣṇa's body. Aghāsura was certainly very sinful, and generally it is impossible for the sinful to merge into the existence of the Absolute Truth. But in this particular case, because the all-pure Lord Himself had entered Aghāsura's body, the demon became fully cleansed of all sinful con-

tamination. Aghāsura received a spiritual body and returned to the spiritual world. Here is proof that the Supreme Lord always does good to everyone. Even when Kṛṣṇa kills someone, that person is liberated.

On seeing Lord Kṛṣṇa and the cowherd boys and calves coming out of Aghāsura's mouth, the demigods in the sky felt overwhelmed with joy and at once showered flowers. The celestial dancing girls began to dance, and the Gandharvas, who are famed for their singing, offered songs of prayer. Drummers beat their kettledrums, the *brāhmaṇa* priests recited Vedic hymns, and all Lord Kṛṣṇa's devotees chanted, "Jaya! Jaya! All glories to the Supreme Personality of Godhead!"

The gigantic mouth of Aghāsura stayed open for some time before gradually drying up. For many days it remained a favorite place where Kṛṣṇa and His cowherd boyfriends enjoyed their pleasure pastimes.

[Adapted by Drutakarmā dāsa from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, translation and commentary by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.]

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## Self-Interest

(continued from page 5)

*na tad bhāsayate sūryo  
na śaśāṅko na pāvakaḥ  
yad gatvā na nivartante  
tad dhāma paramam mama*

"My abode is not illumined by the sun or moon, or by electricity. One who reaches it never returns to this material world."

So, we have to become Kṛṣṇa conscious by scrutinizingly studying this authoritative book, *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, without creating a fashionable interpretation. We have to hear it *as it is*. What Kṛṣṇa says, He says for all time. It does not change. Take the verse which we are just now discussing. He says that it does not matter what occupation you are in; you simply have to change your consciousness. You are now guided by the consciousness of self-interest, of sense gratification. Not exactly self-interest, because we do not know what our self-interest is. Rather, *sense* interest—not *self*-interest, but *sense* interest. Whatever we are doing we are doing to satisfy our senses. This consciousness has to change. We have to satisfy Kṛṣṇa. If this Kṛṣṇa consciousness is invoked, then our life will be successful. Thank you very much.

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## KNOWLEDGE

a poem by Citraketu dāsa

*There's nothing  
so sublime and pure  
As knowledge  
of the soul  
And loving service  
to the Lord  
As part  
unto the whole.*

*Of knowledge  
'tis the ripened fruit  
For which  
the mystics long.  
Whoever tastes it  
finds a joy  
Which makes  
the spirit strong.*

*The faithful man  
who is absorbed  
In knowledge  
such as this  
Can conquer  
over lust and hate*

*To taste  
the highest bliss.*

*The doubting soul  
can find no joy  
In this world  
or the next,  
The faithless man  
fore'er remains  
Bewildered  
and perplexed.*

*But one  
who is a friend to God  
And lives  
for Him alone  
Can feel  
a special joy within,*

*To others  
quite unknown.*

*Illusion spawned  
these fev'rish doubts  
Which in your heart  
arise.*

*With sword of knowledge  
firm in hand  
Defeat*

*her cunning lies.*

*Thus armed with knowledge  
stand and fight,*

*O conqueror  
of the foe,  
And God  
will give you victory  
Wherever  
you may go.*

# NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

## How To Tell the Difference Between the Cheaters and the Teachers

There have always been cheaters posing as *gurus*. Many thousands of years ago, the demon Rāvaṇa dressed himself as a *svāmī* to win an audience with Sītā, the wife of Lord Rāmacandra (an incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa). Rāvaṇa kidnapped Sītā, but Lord Rāmacandra killed him. Five thousand years ago, when the Lord appeared in the world in His original form as Kṛṣṇa, He dealt with another cheater: King Pauṇḍraka donned an extra set of arms, in imitation of Lord Kṛṣṇa's four-armed Viṣṇu form, and demanded that Kṛṣṇa worship him. Again, the Lord did away with the cheater personally.

The current age presents a special dilemma. To begin with, as the ancient *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* predicts, most people are spiritually lazy and ignorant. And what's more, when they finally bring themselves to search for a *guru*, they find thousands of latter-day Rāvaṇas and Pauṇḍrakas. Granted, today's cheaters are insignificant next to those personally dispatched by Lord Kṛṣṇa, but they're running unchecked. There are no laws against pretending to be a great *guru* or even God Himself. So it's extremely difficult to stop the cheating "gurus" and "incarnations." But Vaiṣṇavas (devotees of the Lord) have to try, at least, to expose them.

Nowadays, the cheaters are so brazen that even when caught in the most scandalous behavior, they matter-of-factly admit they're cheating—because they know their followers will go on worshipping them anyway. One famous "guru" had an affair and tried to pass his consort off as the divine mother of the universe. After the divine union broke up, he simply said his mate was no longer the divine mother, and the "disciples" went along with it. Other so-called *gurus* make drastic doctrinal shifts whenever it seems their popularity is slipping. After all, next year's meditational techniques may make this year's eternal truths look passé. So the cheater may have to change his act, much like a popular entertainer. And how many times have thousands of people paid millions of dollars, only to discover that they all received the same "secret" *mantra*? But still the cheated come forward and pay even higher fees for new "secrets," like levitation. It makes you wonder: what's the use of telling people they're being cheated when they already know?

One positive note—the recent wide distribution of authentic translations of ancient India's Vedic literatures. Though the cheaters often say they base their teachings on these books, the books themselves draw a clear line between the cheaters and the genuine teachers:

The pseudo *svāmīs* and *yogīs* and man-made gods do not believe in the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and thus they are known as *pāśandīs*, offenders. They themselves are fallen and cheated, because they do not know the real path of spiritual advancement, and whoever goes to them is certainly cheated in his turn. When one is thus cheated, he sometimes takes shelter of the real followers of Vedic principles, who teach everyone to worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead according to the directions of the Vedic literatures.

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.14.30)

In other words, if you want to find a bona fide *guru*, you have to consult the standard literatures (the Vedic literatures) and the standard spiritual masters, who come in disciplic succession (*paramparā*) from Lord Kṛṣṇa. Five thousand years ago the Vedic literatures were put into written form by an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa named Vyāsadeva, and even today the spiritual master's chair is called a *vyāsāsana*. To sit there, a *guru* has to teach exactly what Vyāsa did, and he has to be a disciple of a spiritual master who comes in succession from Vyāsa. Another symptom: the *guru's* life must show that he is personally convinced of the message the Vedic literatures set forth—namely, "Worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

It's much in vogue today to say that all teachings are the same. "Take any path you want," the cheaters say. "They all lead to the same place." But common sense says that if you buy an airline ticket to New York, you'd better not try to hop a plane to L.A. And the *Upaniṣads* say, "One result is obtained by worshipping the supreme cause of all causes, and another is obtained by worshipping that which is not supreme." Different forms of worship or meditation will lead you to different goals, and only through devotional service to the Supreme Godhead can you transcend the cycle of repeated birth and death and attain eternity, bliss, and knowledge in the kingdom of God.

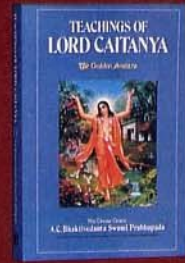
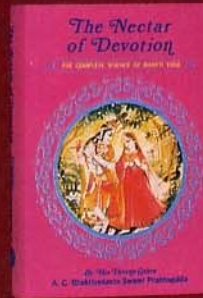
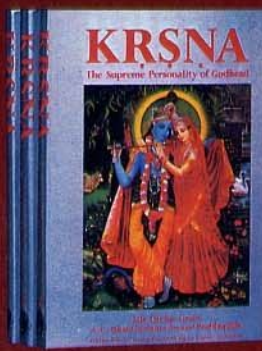
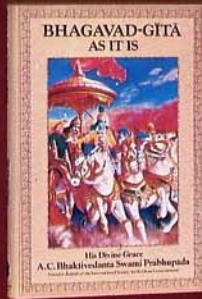
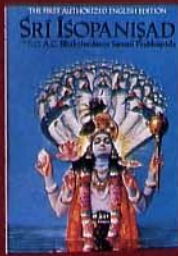
Nor can a genuine *guru* be a debauchee or a "New Age" hero given to

mundane psychology, frivolous sports, rock music, or other whimsical games and speculations. Even self-realized persons have to follow basic standards of morality. Avoidance of illicit sex, meat-eating, gambling, and intoxication is prerequisite not just for some people but for anyone interested in actual spiritual life. Anyone who claims to be above these standards is following in the footsteps of Rāvaṇa, and his followers will join him in ruin. A real *guru* has to be a humble representative of the Supreme, a servant of God.

We have attempted to give a public warning about the cheaters who take the name of *svāmīs* and "god-men." The whole purpose for going to a spiritual teacher is to find the genuine path of God-realization and self-realization. But if we go to a cheater, we're only cheating ourselves; we'll have to stay within the cycle of repeated birth and death. Yet even as we issue this warning, we know that it won't stop the moths from entering the fire of the false *gurus*. So we're interested more in the innocent—and in the cynics. Anyone who is actually sincere about finding the genuine path shouldn't conclude that all spiritual life is a fraud, even in the midst of this bad age. There's an old story about a man whose dishes were stolen—he decided that from then on, he'd eat off the floor. No, even though one may have been cheated once—or twice—he has to go on with the business of life, striving to find the truth.

The human form of life is meant for self-realization, so we have to take guidance from a genuine spiritual master. As the Vedic literatures inform us, God is within each person's heart, and when someone is actually sincere about finding the genuine path back to Godhead, the Lord will guide him from within. When he meets a pure devotee of the Lord, the Lord will confirm it from within: "Yes, you can inquire from this *guru*." By sincerely inquiring and hearing from a bona fide spiritual master, we will reawaken our natural, eternal, joyous relationship with God. What we need first of all is sincerity. That will help us avoid sensational, concocted paths, and it will lead us to real knowledge and advancement in spiritual life, no matter how bizarrely the fools carry on in their caricature of spirituality.

—SDG



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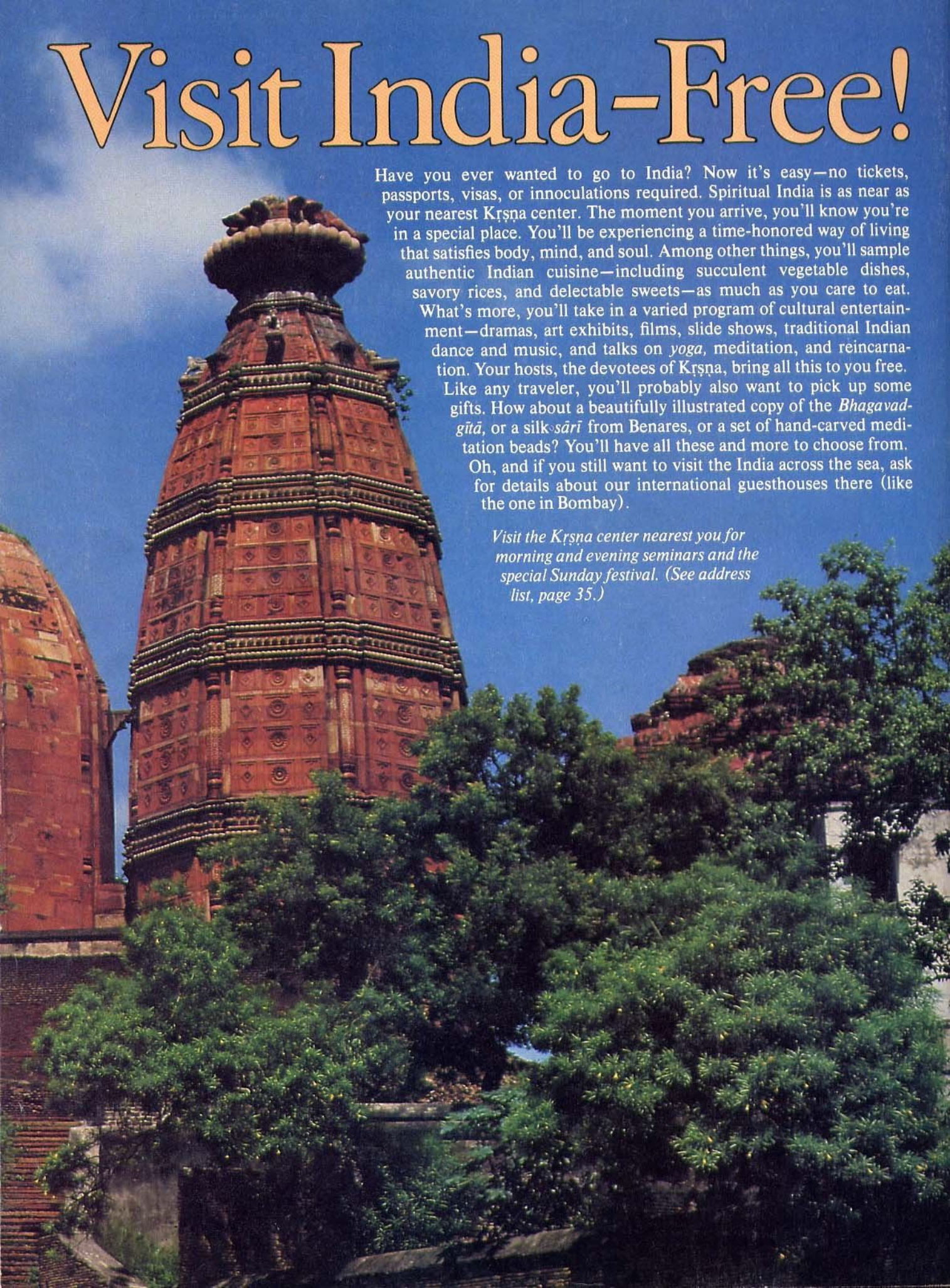
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