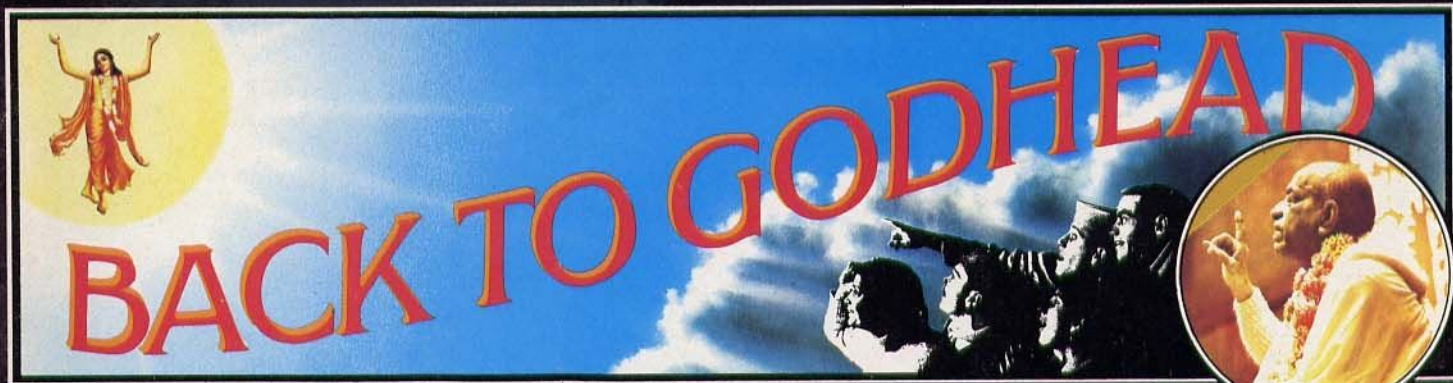


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



Vol. 13 No. 12

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

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Lord Kṛṣṇa and His  
Eternal Companions



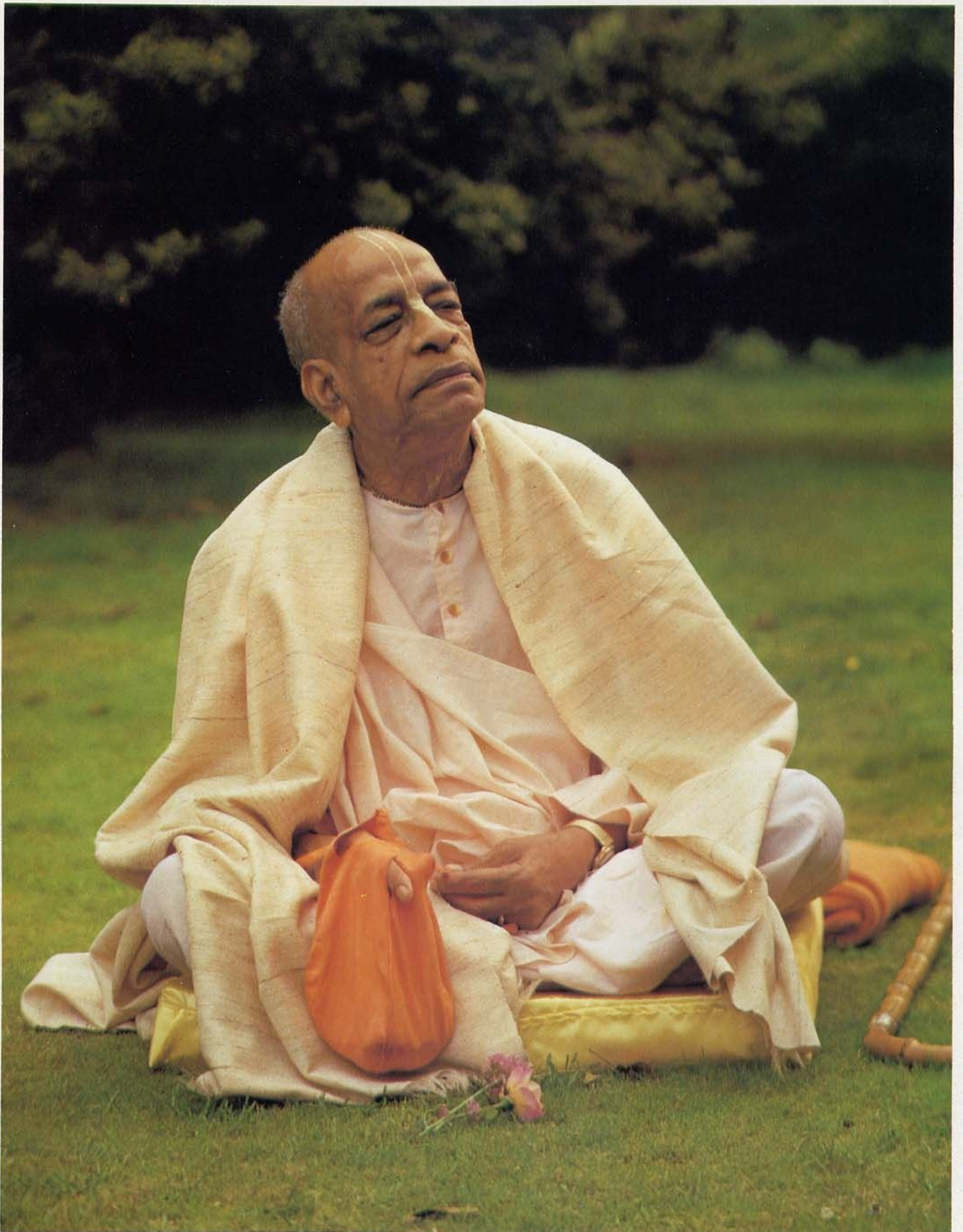


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His Divine Grace  
**A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda**  
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness



# BACK TO GODHEAD

VOL. 13, NO. 12

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 of Sanskrit words and names.  
BACK TO GODHEAD follows the international scholarly  
standard. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in **but**, long **ā**  
like the **a** in **far** (and hold it twice as long as the short **a**).  
Pronounce **e** like the **a** in **evade**, long **ī** like the **i** in  
**pique**. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **rim**, and **e**  
like the **ch** in **chair**. Pronounce the aspirated conson-  
nants (**ch**, **jh**, **dh**, etc.) as in **staunch-heart**,  
**hedge-hog**, and **red-hot**. Finally, pronounce sibilants **ś**  
and **ṣ** like **sh**, and **s** like the **s** in **sun**. So for *Kṛṣṇa* say  
KRISHNA, and for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

ABOUT SANSKRIT NAMES in by-lines, credits, and  
text. Members of the International Society for Krishna  
Consciousness receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or His  
great devotees, combined with *dāsa* (*dāsī* for women),  
meaning "servant." For instance, the name *Kṛṣṇa*  
*dāsa* means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

◀ His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami  
Prabhupāda came to America in 1965, at age seventy,  
to fulfill his spiritual master's request that he teach the  
science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout 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 stan-  
dard in universities worldwide. Meanwhile, traveling  
almost nonstop, Śrīla Prabhupāda molded his inter-  
national society into a worldwide confederation of  
*āśramas*, schools, temples, and farm communities. He  
passed away in 1977 in India's Vṛndāvana, the place  
most sacred to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and his disciples are carry-  
ing forward the movement he started.

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**COVER: Lord Kṛṣṇa and His Eternal Companions.** In the forest of Vṛndāvana,  
Lord Kṛṣṇa and His cowherd boyfriends enjoy a picnic lunch. The cowherd boys,  
having performed many pious activities in past lives, were able to laugh and play  
with the Supreme Lord as if He were an ordinary boy. (See page 31.) (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."







Where do nature's gifts come from? Not from factories or power plants.

# ORIGINS OF OPULENCE

## Mother Nature and the Glance of the Supreme

by HIS DIVINE GRACE A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

*Fifty centuries ago, the people of India enjoyed boundless natural prosperity. Queen Kuntī was always mindful of the gifts and their source.*

*ime jana-padāḥ svṛddhāḥ  
supakkaṣadhi-vīrudhāḥ  
vanādri-nady-udanvanto  
hy edhante tava vīkṣitaiḥ*

Queen Kuntī said: "All these cities and villages are flourishing in all respects because the herbs and grains are in abundance, the trees are full of fruits, the rivers are flowing, the hills are full of minerals, and the oceans full of wealth. And this is all due to Your glancing over them." [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.8.40]

Human prosperity flourishes by natural gifts and not by gigantic industrial enterprises. The gigantic industrial enterprises are products of a godless civilization, and they cause the destruction of the noble aims of human life. The more we increase such troublesome industries to squeeze out the vital energy of the human being, the more there will be dissatisfaction of the people in general, although a select few can live lavishly by exploitation.

The natural gifts such as grains and vegetables, fruits, rivers, the hills of jewels and minerals, and the seas full of pearls are supplied by the order of the Supreme, and as He desires, material nature produces them in abundance or restricts them at times. The natural law is

**In the beginning of creation, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, expands Himself as four-armed Mahā-Viṣṇu. While lying in the Causal Ocean, He glances over the goddess Durgā, the personified material energy, who in turn produces the varieties of cosmic manifestation.**

that the human being may take advantage of these godly gifts by nature and satisfactorily flourish on them without being captivated by the exploitative motive of lording it over material nature.

The more we attempt to exploit material nature according to our whims, the more we shall become entrapped by the reaction of such exploitative attempts. If we have sufficient grains, fruits, vegetables, and herbs, then what is the necessity of running a slaughterhouse and killing poor animals?

A man need not kill an animal if he has sufficient grains and vegetables to eat. The flow of river waters fertilizes the fields, and there is more than what we need. Minerals are produced in the hills, and the jewels in the ocean. If the human civilization has sufficient grains, minerals, jewels, water, milk, etc., then why should we hanker after terrible industrial enterprises at the cost of the labor of some unfortunate men?

But all these natural gifts are dependent on the mercy of the Lord. What we need, therefore, is to be obedient to the laws of the Lord and achieve the perfection of human life by devotional service. The indications by Kuntīdevī are just to the point. She desires that God's mercy be bestowed upon her and her sons so that natural prosperity be maintained by His grace.

### Pregnancy by Seeing

Kuntīdevī mentions that the grains are abundant, the trees full of fruits, the rivers flowing nicely, the hills full of minerals, and the oceans full of wealth, but she never mentions that industry and slaughterhouses are flourishing, for such things are nonsense that men have developed to create problems.

If we depend on God's creation, there will be no scarcity, but simply *ānanda*, bliss. God's creation provides sufficient grains and grass, and while we eat the grains and fruits, the animals like the cows will eat the grass. The bulls will help us produce grains, and they will take only a little, being satisfied with what we throw away. If we take fruit and throw away the skin, the animal will be satisfied with the skin. In this way, with Kṛṣṇa in the center, there can be full cooperation between the trees, animals, human beings, and all living entities. This is Vedic civilization, a civilization of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Kuntīdevī prays to the Lord, "This prosperity is due to Your glance." When we sit in the temple of Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa glances over us, and everything is nice. When sincere souls try to become Kṛṣṇa's devotees, Kṛṣṇa very kindly comes before them in His full opulence and glances upon them, and they become happy and beautiful.

Similarly, the whole material creation is due to Kṛṣṇa's glance (*sa aikṣata*). In the *Vedas* it is said that He glanced over matter, thus agitating it. A woman in touch with a man becomes agitated and becomes pregnant and then gives birth to children. The whole creation follows a similar process. Simply by Kṛṣṇa's glance, matter becomes agitated and then becomes pregnant and gives birth to the living entities. It is simply by His glance that plants, trees, animals, and all other living beings come forth. How is this possible? None of us can say, "Simply by glancing over my wife, I can make her pregnant." But although this is impossible for us, it is not impossible for Kṛṣṇa. The *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.32) says, *aṅgāni yasya sakalendriya-vṛttimanti*: every part of Kṛṣṇa's body has all the



“Nature has already given us everything. There is no need to become rich by starting some huge factory to produce auto bodies. By such industrial enterprises we have simply created troubles.”

capabilities of the other parts. With our eyes we can only see, but Kṛṣṇa, merely by seeing, can make others pregnant. There is no need of sex, for simply by glancing, Kṛṣṇa can create pregnancy.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.10) Lord Kṛṣṇa says, *mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ sūyate sa-carācaram*: “By My supervision, material nature gives birth to all moving and nonmoving beings.” The word *akṣa* means “eyes,” so *akṣeṇa* indicates that all living entities take birth because of the Lord’s glance. There are two kinds of living entities—the moving beings, like insects, animals, and human beings, and the nonmoving beings, like trees and plants. In Sanskrit these two kinds of living entities are called *sthavara-jaṅgama*, and they both come forth from material nature.

### Perfect Evidence

Of course, what comes from material nature is not the life, but the body. The living entities accept particular types of bodies from material nature, just as a child takes its body from its mother. For ten months the child’s body develops from the blood and nutrients of the mother’s body, but the child is a living entity, not matter. It is the living entity that has taken shelter in the womb of the mother, who then supplies the ingredients for that living entity’s body. This is nature’s way. The mother may not know how from her body another body has been created, but when the body of the child is fit, the child takes birth.

It is not that the living entity takes birth. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.20), *na jāyate mriyate vā*: the living entity neither takes birth nor dies. That which does not take birth does not die; death is meant for that which has been created, and that which is not created has no death. The *Gītā* says, *na jāyate mriyate vā kadācit*. The word *kadācit* means “at any time.” At no time does the living entity actually take birth. Although we may see that a child is born, actually it is not born. *Nityaḥ śāśvato ’yaṁ purāṇaḥ*. The living entity is eternal (*śāśvata*), always existing, and very, very old (*purāṇa*). *Na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*: don’t think that when the body is destroyed the living entity will be destroyed; no, the living entity will continue to exist.

A scientist friend was asking me, “What is the proof of eternity?” Kṛṣṇa

says, *na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*: “The soul is not killed when the body is killed.” This statement in itself is proof. This type of proof is called *śruti*, the proof established by that which is heard through the disciplic succession from the Supreme. One form of proof is proof by logic (*nyāya-prasthāna*). One can get knowledge by logic, arguments, and philosophical research. But another form of proof is *śruti*, proof established by hearing from authorities. A third form of proof is *smṛti*, proof established by statements derived from the *śruti*. The *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Purāṇas* are *smṛti*, the *Upaniṣads* are *śruti*, and the *Vedānta* is *nyāya*. Of these three the *śruti-prasthāna*, or the evidence from the *śruti*, is especially important.

*Pratyakṣa*, the process of receiving knowledge through direct perception, has no value, because our senses are all imperfect. For example, every day we see the sun to be just like a small disc, perhaps twelve inches in diameter, but in fact it is many times larger than the earth. So what is the value of our direct perception through our eyes? We have so many senses through which we can experience knowledge—the eyes, the ears, the nose, and so on—but because these senses are imperfect, whatever knowledge we get by exercising these senses is also imperfect. Because scientists try to understand things by exercising their imperfect senses, their conclusions are always imperfect. Svarūpa Dāmodara, a scientist among our disciples, inquired from a fellow scientist who says that life comes from matter, “If I give you the chemicals with which to produce life, will you be able to produce it?” The scientist replied, “That I do not know.” This is imperfect knowledge. If you do not know, then your knowledge is imperfect. Why then have you become a teacher? That is cheating. Our contention is that to become perfect one must take lessons from the perfect.

Kṛṣṇa is perfect, so we take knowledge from Him. Kṛṣṇa says, *na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*: “The soul does not die when the body dies.” Therefore this understanding that the soul is eternal is perfect.

### Nature’s Way

Kuntidevī says, *ime jana-padāḥ syrd-dhāḥ supakkausaḍhi-vīrudhaḥ*: “The

grains are abundant, the trees full of fruits, the rivers flowing, the hills full of minerals, and the ocean full of wealth.” What more should one want? The oyster produces pearls, and formerly people decorated their bodies with pearls, valuable stones, silk, gold, and silver. But where are those things now? Now, with the advancement of civilization, there are so many beautiful girls who have no ornaments of gold, pearls, or jewels, but only plastic bangles. So what is the use of industry and slaughterhouses?

By God’s arrangement one can have enough food grains, enough milk, enough fruits and vegetables, and nice clear river water. But now I have seen, while traveling in Europe, that all the rivers there have become nasty. In Germany, in France, and also in Russia and America I have seen that the rivers are nasty. By nature’s way the water in the ocean is kept clear like crystal, and the same water is transferred to the rivers, but without salt, so that one may take nice water from the river. This is nature’s way, and nature’s way means Kṛṣṇa’s way. So what is the use of constructing huge waterworks to supply water?

### Food for the Tiger

Nature has already given us everything. If we want wealth we may collect pearls and become rich; there is no need to become rich by starting some huge factory to produce auto bodies. By such industrial enterprises we have simply created troubles. Otherwise, we need only depend on Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, because by Kṛṣṇa’s glance (*tava vīkṣitaiḥ*), everything is set right. So if we simply plead for Kṛṣṇa’s glance, there will be no question of scarcity or need. Everything will be complete. The idea of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, therefore, is to depend on nature’s gifts and the grace of Kṛṣṇa.

People say that the population is increasing, and therefore they are checking this by artificial means. Why? The birds and bees are increasing their populations and have no contraceptives, but are they in need of food? Do we ever see birds or animals dying for want of food? Perhaps in the city, although not very often. But if we go to the jungle we shall see that all



“We simply have to depend on Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa does not say, ‘Yes, depend on Me, and also depend on your slaughterhouses and factories.’ No. He says, ‘Depend only on Me.’ ”

the elephants, lions, tigers, and other animals are very stout and strong. Who is supplying them food? Some of them are vegetarians, and some of them are nonvegetarians, but none of them are in want of food.

Of course, by nature’s way the tiger, being a nonvegetarian, does not get food every day. After all, who will face a tiger to become its food? Who will say to the tiger, “Sir, I am an altruist and have come to you to give you food, so take my body”? No one. Therefore the tiger has difficulty finding food. And as soon as the tiger is out, there is an animal that follows it and makes a sound like “fayo, fayo,” so that the other animals will know, “Now the tiger is out.” So by nature’s way the tiger has difficulty, but still Kṛṣṇa supplies it food. After about a week, the tiger will get the chance to catch an animal, and because it does not get fresh food daily, it will keep the carcass in some bush and eat a little at a time. Since the tiger is very powerful, people want to become like a lion or a tiger. But that is not a very good proposition, because if one actually becomes like a tiger one won’t get food daily, but will have to search for food with great labor. If one becomes a vegetarian, however, one will get food every day. The food for a vegetarian is available everywhere.

### No Question of Scarcity

Now in every city there are slaughterhouses, but does this mean that the slaughterhouses can supply enough so that one can live by eating only meat? No, there will not be an adequate supply. Even meat-eaters have to eat grains, fruits, and vegetables along with their slice of meat. Still, for that daily slice of meat they kill so many poor animals. How sinful this is. If people commit such sinful activities, how can they be happy? This killing should not be done, and therefore people are unhappy. But if one becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious and simply depends on Kṛṣṇa’s glance (*tava vikṣiptaiḥ*), Kṛṣṇa will supply everything, and there will be no question of scarcity.

Sometimes there appears to be scarcity, and sometimes we find that grains and fruits are produced in such a huge quantity that people cannot finish eating them. So this is a question of Kṛṣṇa’s

glance. If Kṛṣṇa likes, He can produce a huge quantity of grains, fruits, and vegetables, but if Kṛṣṇa desires to restrict the supply, what good will meat do? You may eat me, or I may eat you, but that will not solve the problem.

### The Account Is Squared

For real peace and tranquillity and a sufficient supply of milk, water, and everything else we need, we simply have to depend on Kṛṣṇa. This is what Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura teaches us when he says, *mārabi rākhabi—yo icchā tohārā*: “My dear Lord, I simply surrender unto You and depend on You. Now if You like You may kill me, or else You may give me protection.” And Kṛṣṇa says in reply, “Yes. *Sarva-dharmān parityajya*

*mām ekam śaraṇam vraja*: simply surrender exclusively unto Me.” He does not say, “Yes, depend on Me, and also depend on your slaughterhouses and factories.” No. He says, “Depend only on Me. *Ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi*: I will rescue you from the results of your sinful activities.”

Because we have lived so many years without being Kṛṣṇa conscious, we have lived only a sinful life, but Kṛṣṇa assures us that as soon as one surrenders to Him He immediately squares all accounts and puts an end to all one’s sinful activities so that one may begin a new life. When we initiate disciples we therefore tell them, “Now the account is squared. Now don’t commit sinful activities any more.”

(continued on page 24)

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# BUTLER, PENNSYLVANIA: THE FIRST TESTING GROUND

*The pure devotee's first month in the West. "Who would expect to meet a svāmī in someone's living room in Butler, Pennsylvania? It was just really tremendous. In the middle of middle-class America."*

Śrīla Prabhupāda was met at the dockside by a man from Travelers Aid who escorted him to the Port Authority Bus Terminal. New York's midtown streets were far more intense than the Boston pier. Assisted by the guide, Śrīla Prabhupāda got on the "Pittsburgh" bus. Travelers Aid paid the fare and was reimbursed by Mr. Gopal Agarwal.

The bus came swinging out of the terminal and rode in the shadows of skyscrapers through asphalt streets crowded with people, trucks, and automobiles. Then it entered the Lincoln Tunnel under the Hudson River and emerged on the Jersey side. Then down the Jersey Turnpike, past fields of huge oil drums, the Manhattan skyline visible on the left, while six lanes of traffic sped sixty miles an hour in each direction. Newark Airport came up close by on the right, with jets visible on the ground. Electric power lines spanned aloft between steel towers into the horizon.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had never seen anything like this in India. He could now understand by direct perception that America was a passionate culture. As described in *Bhagavad-gītā*, "The mode of passion is born of unlimited desires and longings, and because of this one is bound to material fruitive activity." For Śrīla Prabhupāda it was a scene of madness. What was the important business for which people were rushing north and south at breakneck speed? It was not for service to Kṛṣṇa, but for material sense gratification. He could see the goals of the people advertised on their billboards.

On the highway from Delhi to Vṛndāvana, there are comparatively few signs. One sees mostly the land, roadside streams, temples, and farmers working in the fields. Most people on the road

by SATSVARŪPA DĀSA GOSWAMI

travel by ox cart or on foot, and in Vṛndāvana even the ordinary passers-by greet each other by calling, "Jaya Rādhe," "Hare Kṛṣṇa." But here on the Jersey Turnpike there were fields full of factories and huge oil drums, and billboards everywhere. Of course, by 1965 there were already plenty of factories outside Delhi, but the cumulative effect did not pack anywhere near the materialistic punch of the route from New York to Pittsburgh.

We should not think that Śrīla Prabhupāda was simply an Indian citizen suffering from cultural shock. Coming from Vṛndāvana, which is virtually the spiritual world, he was immersed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. By his spiritual standards, these factories of the American Northeast were places of *ugra-karma*—bitter, unnecessary work that entangled passionate human beings and produced only hellish conditions. What Śrīla Prabhupāda saw proudly glamorized on mile after mile of billboards were the basic pillars of sinful life he had come to preach against—meat-eating, illicit sex, intoxication, and gambling. The signs promoted dozens of brands of liquor and cigarettes, roadside restaurants offered slaughtered cows in the form of hamburgers, and no matter what the product, it was usually advertised by the form of a woman to appeal to the appetite for sex. Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, had come to teach the opposite, to teach that happiness is not found in passionate endeavors, and that only when one becomes detached from the mode of passion, which leads to sinful acts, can one become eligible for the happiness the soul enjoys in relation to Kṛṣṇa.

Looking out the window of the bus, Śrīla Prabhupāda saw the advancement of degradation and ignorance of life's real purpose. Since he was a preacher of the *Bhāgavatam*, his thoughts while encountering these American scenes must

have resembled those expressed thousands of years ago by the pure devotee Prahlāda Mahārāja, who prayed to the Lord, "I see that there are many saintly persons indeed, but they are interested only in their own deliverance. Not caring for the big cities and towns, they go to the Himalayas or the forests to meditate with vows of silence. They are not interested in delivering others. As for me, however, I do not wish to be liberated alone, leaving aside all these poor fools and rascals. I know that without Kṛṣṇa consciousness, without taking shelter of Your lotus feet, one cannot be happy. Therefore I wish to bring them back to shelter at Your lotus feet."

After an hour or so, the scenery changed to the mountainous countryside of Pennsylvania, and the bus went through long tunnels in the mountains. After night arrived, the bus suddenly entered the heavily industrialized Pittsburgh area, on the shore of the Allegheny River. Śrīla Prabhupāda couldn't clearly see the structures or activity of the steel mills, but he could see their lights and occasionally their industrial fires or smokestacks. Millions of lights shone throughout the city's prevailing dinginess.

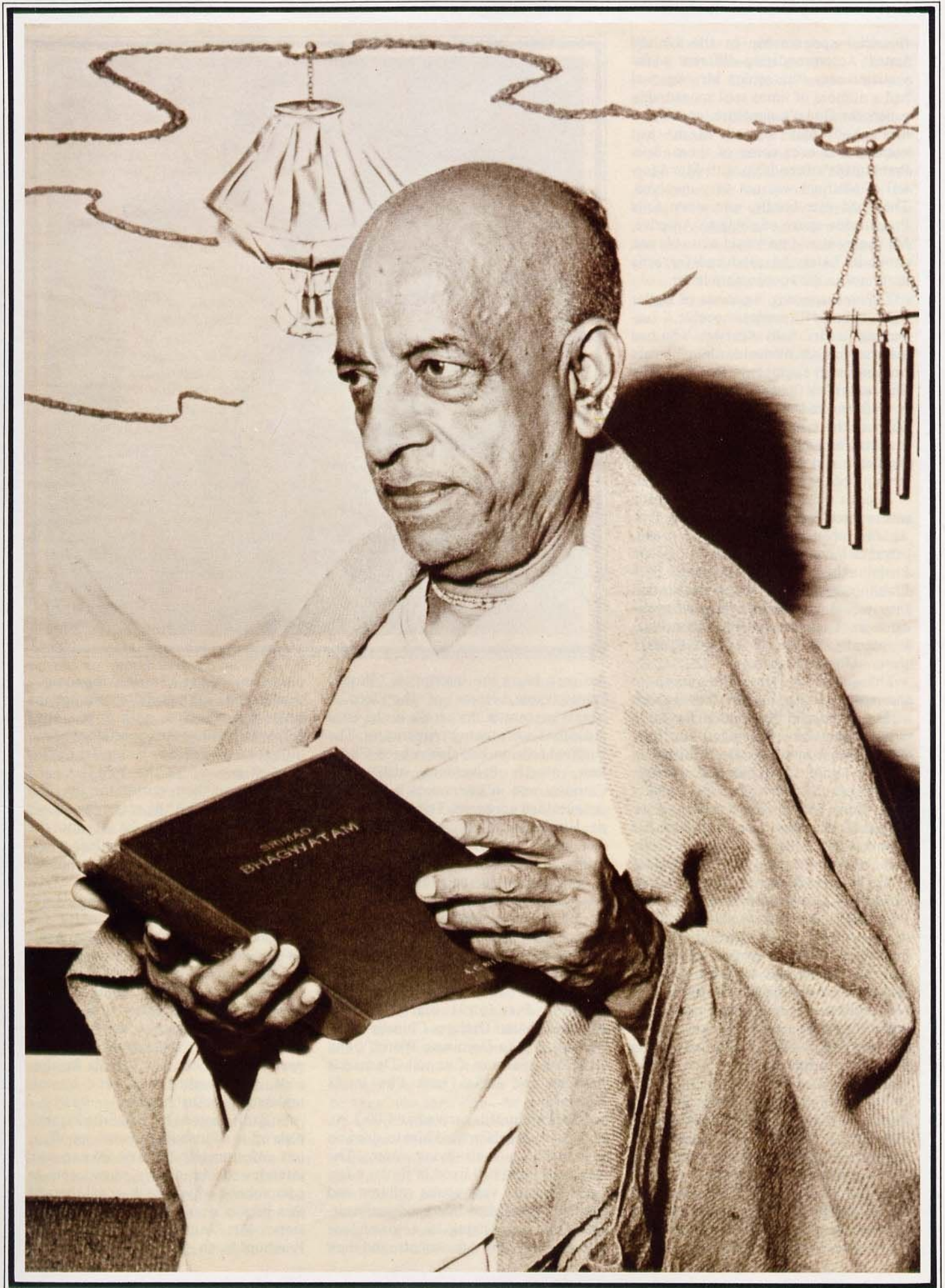
When Śrīla Prabhupāda's bus arrived at the terminal, it was past midnight. Mr. Gopal Agarwal, his sponsor, was waiting with the family's Volkswagen bus to drive him to Butler, about an hour north. To host Śrīla Prabhupāda in his home was not Gopal's idea; he had been requested to do so by his father, a businessman who lived in Mathurā, India, and who had a fondness for *sādhus* (saintly persons) and religious causes.

To visit America without assured employment, an Indian had to have proof of

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"Ambassador of Bhakti-yoga," said the caption for this first American news photo. The Butler Eagle called Śrīla Prabhupāda "a messenger from India to the peoples of the West."







financial sponsorship in the United States. Accommodating different *sādhu* acquaintances, the senior Mr. Agarwal had a number of times sent sponsorship papers for Gopal's signature, and Gopal had obediently signed them—but nothing had ever come of them. Śrīla Prabhupāda's friendship with Mr. Agarwal of Mathurā was not very involved. They had met briefly, and when Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke of going to America, Mr. Agarwal said he would write his son about it. Later, he produced for Śrīla Prabhupāda the sponsorship letter.

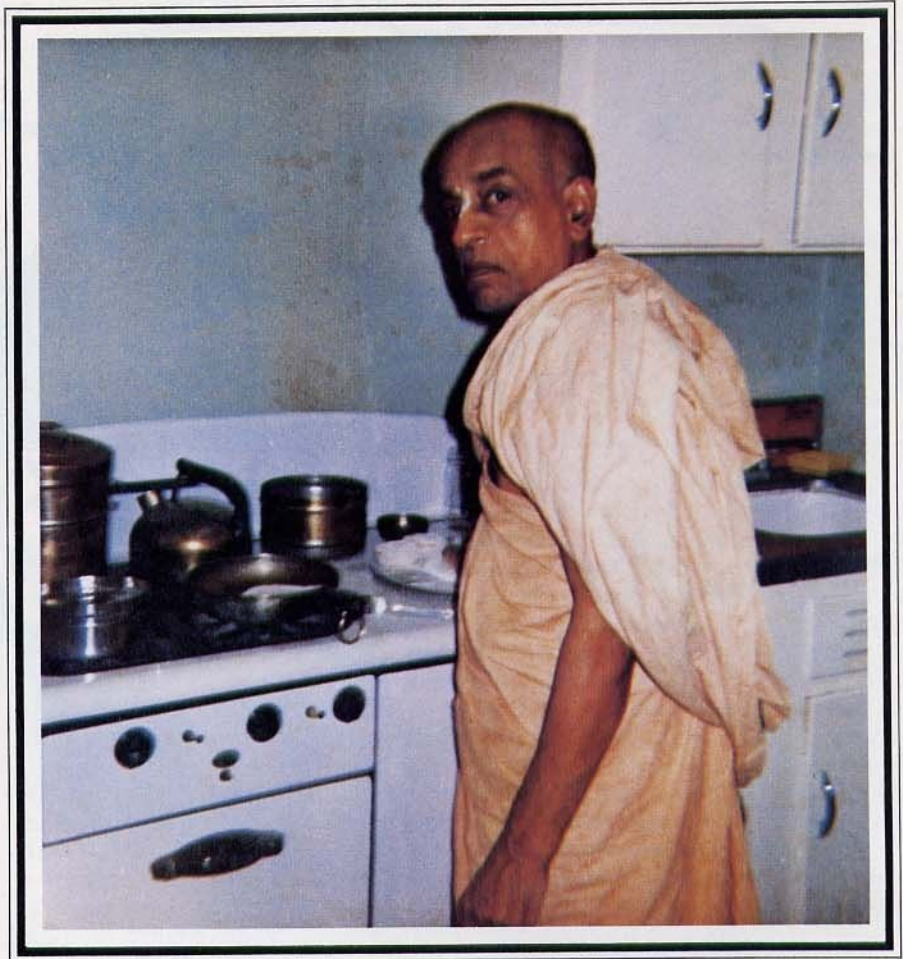
The unsuspecting Agarwals of Butler were "simple American people," according to Mrs. Sally Agarwal, who had met her Indian husband while he was working as an engineer in Pennsylvania. They sent back the sponsorship letter for A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami thinking that this was the last they would hear of it; they had no idea he would travel across the ocean and enter the country on the strength of their sponsorship.

About a week before Śrīla Prabhupāda was to reach Butler, a letter arrived. Mrs. Agarwal opened it and then, in alarm, called her husband. "Honey, sit down. Listen to this: the *svāmī* is coming." Śrīla Prabhupāda had sent his picture so that they would not mistake him when he came in. They thought the picture was frightening. "There'll be no mistake there," Gopal had said.

The whole event was quite a shock for the Agarwals. What would they do with an Indian *svāmī* in their home? But there was no question of *not* accepting him; they were bound by the request of Gopal's father. So Gopal had dutifully purchased Śrīla Prabhupāda's ticket from New York to Pittsburgh and arranged for the agent from Travelers Aid to meet him at the dock in New York. Later he drove to meet the strange *sādhu* at the Pittsburgh bus terminal.

Gopal's first impression of Śrīla Prabhupāda, he later recalled, was that he was not unusual. Although perhaps he had never met a Vaiṣṇava *sādhu* quite like this, Gopal had seen many, many *sādhus* before in India. But in any case he had certainly never received one in his home in America. It was about three in the morning when they started from Pittsburgh to Butler.

In 1965 the population of Butler was about twenty thousand. Butler is an industrial city located amid hills in an area rich with oil, coal, gas, and limestone. At the time, its industry consisted mainly of the manufacture of plate glass, railroad cars, refrigerators, oil equipment, and rubber goods. (Butler is also famous as the town where the U.S. Army Jeep was invented in 1940. A granite memorial in



the park bears the inscription "Butler, Pennsylvania, Home of the Jeep.") Ninety percent of the people in the local industries were native Americans. The nominal religion had always been Christian, mostly Protestant with some Catholic, and in later years a few synagogues had appeared. There was surely no Hindu community at that time. In fact, Gopal asserts he was the first Indian to move to Butler.

As Gopal Agarwal pulled into town with Śrīla Prabhupāda on the warm, humid morning of September 21, it was long before sunrise. The morning edition of the *Butler Eagle* was getting ready to go to the stands. The front page would carry three stories on India: "Red Chinese Fire on India," "Prime Minister Shastri Declares Chinese Communists Out to Dominate World," and "United Nations Council Demands Pakistan and India Cease Fire in 48 Hours."

Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived at 4:00 A.M., and the Agarwals invited him to sleep on the couch in their living room. The Agarwals, who had lived in Butler a few years, had two very young children and now felt established in a good social circle. They were living in a townhouse known as Sterling Apartments, and their

place consisted of a small living room, a dining room, a kitchenette, two upstairs bedrooms, and a bathroom. They decided that since their apartment had so little space, it would be better if the *svāmī* slept at a room at the Y.M.C.A. and came to visit them during the day. But living space wasn't the real difficulty—it was *him*. How would he fit into the Butler atmosphere? He was their guest, so they would have to *explain* him to their friends and neighbors.

It was a fact that Śrīla Prabhupāda was immediately a great curiosity for whoever saw him. In anxiety, Mrs. Agarwal decided that instead of having people speculate about the strange man in orange robes who was living at their house, it would be better to let everybody know about him from the newspapers. Mrs. Agarwal says that she openly related her plan to Śrīla Prabhupāda, who laughed with good humor, understanding that he didn't quite fit in.

So Sally Agarwal hurried Śrīla Prabhupāda off to a Pittsburgh newspaper office, but unfortunately the first woman who interviewed him simply wasn't able to comprehend why Mrs. Agarwal thought this person would make an interesting story. Mrs. Agarwal then took Śrīla Prabhupāda to the local *Butler Eagle*,



where he was interviewed more avidly.

On September 22 a feature article ran in the *Butler Eagle*. "In Fluent English," the headline read, "Devotee of Hindu Cult Explains Commission to Visit the West." A photographer had come to the Agarwals' apartment and taken a picture in the living room, showing Śrīla Prabhupāda standing in front of a wall plaque decorated with Chinese lanterns. In this first news photo in America he is holding an open volume of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and the caption reads, "Ambassador of Bhakti-yoga."

The article begins, "A slight brown man in faded orange drapes wearing white bathing shoes stepped out of a compact car yesterday and into the Butler Y.M.C.A. to attend a meeting. He is A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swamiji, a messenger from India to the peoples of the West." The reporter refers to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as "Biblical literature" and quotes Śrīla Prabhupāda as saying, "My mission is to revive people's God consciousness. God is the Father of all living beings, in thousands of different forms. Human life is a stage of perfection in evolution; if we miss the message, back we go through the process again."

The reporter describes Śrīla Prabhupāda's personal habits in some detail: "Bhaktivedanta lives as a monk, and permits no woman to touch his food. On a six-week ocean voyage and at the Agarwal apartment in Butler he prepares his meals in a brass pan with separate levels for steaming rice, vegetables and making 'bread' at the same time. He is a strict vegetarian, and is permitted to drink only milk, the 'miracle food for babies and old men,' he noted."

The article continues, "The Swamiji is equally philosophical about physical discomforts or wars: 'It's man's nature to fight,' he shrugs. 'We have to adjust to these things; currents come and go in life just as in an ocean.'" The article ends, "If Americans would give more attention to their spiritual life, they would be much happier, he says."

The Agarwals had their own opinion of why Śrīla Prabhupāda had come to America. They thought that it was just to finance his books, and that was all. They did not think he wanted to draw any devotees. He had no idea of starting a world movement and creating followers who would chant Hare Kṛṣṇa in public, they felt. They never saw him with *karatālas* (hand cymbals) or a drum, and they maintained the impression that he was hoping only to meet someone who could help him with the publication of his *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. At least they hoped he wouldn't do anything to attract

attention, and they felt that this was his mentality also. "He didn't create waves," Sally Agarwal says. "He didn't want any crowd. He didn't want anything. He only wanted to finance his books." Perhaps Śrīla Prabhupāda, seeing their nervousness, agreed to keep a low profile just out of consideration for his hosts.

At Śrīla Prabhupāda's request, however, Mr. Agarwal allowed an open house in his apartment every night from six to nine.

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**"It didn't take me long to realize that the food the svāmī was cooking we'd enjoy too, so he started cooking that noon meal for all of us. Oh, and we enjoyed it so much."**

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*It was quite an intellectual group that we were in (Sally Agarwal relates), and they were fascinated by him. They hardly knew what to ask him. They didn't know enough. This was just like a dream out of a book. Who would expect to meet a svāmī in someone's living room in Butler, Pennsylvania? It was just really tremendous. In the middle of middle-class America. My parents came from quite a distance to see him. We knew a lot of people in Pittsburgh, and they came up. This was a very unusual thing, having this man here. But the real interest shown in him was only as a curiosity.*

*He had a typewriter, which was one of his few possessions, and an umbrella. That was one of the things that caused a sensation, that he always carried an umbrella. And it was a little chilly and he was balding, so he always wore this hat someone had made for him, like a swimming cap. It was a kind of sensation. And he was so brilliant that when he saw someone in a car twice, he knew who they were—he remembered. He was a brilliant man. Or if he met them in our apartment and saw them in a car, he would remember their name, and he would wave and say their name. He was a brilliant man. All the people, they liked him. They were amazed at how intelligent he was. The thing that got them was the way he remembered their name. And his humorous way.*

*He looked so serious all the time, but he was a very humorous person. . . . He was forbidding in his looks, but he was very charming.*

*He was the easiest guest I have had in my life, because when I couldn't spend time with him he chanted and I knew he was perfectly happy. When I couldn't talk to him he'd chant. He was so easy, though, because I knew he was never bored. I never felt any pressure or tension about having him there. He was so easy that when I had to take care of the children he would just chant. It was so great. When I had to do things, he would just be happy chanting. He was a very good guest. When the people would come, they were also smoking cigarettes, but he would say, "Pay no attention. Think nothing of it." That's what he said. "Think nothing of it." Because he knew we were different. I didn't smoke in front of him, because I knew I wasn't supposed to smoke in front of Gopal's father so I sort of considered him the same. He didn't make any problems for anybody.*

Gopal remembers that at one evening meeting a guest asked Śrīla Prabhupāda, "What do you think of Jesus Christ?" And Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, "He is the son of God." Then he added that he himself was also a son of God. Everyone was interested to hear that he did not disagree that Jesus Christ was the son of God. "His intent was not to have you change your way of life," Gopal says. "He wasn't telling anybody they should be vegetarian or anything. All he wanted you to do was to follow what you are but be better. He didn't stress that we should give up many things."

Mrs. Agarwal remembers that in speaking, Śrīla Prabhupāda would often tell funny stories, using animals like goats and pigs to illustrate philosophical points. She gradually developed a real friendship and admiration.

While Śrīla Prabhupāda was in Butler he followed a regulated daily schedule. Every morning he would walk the six or seven blocks from the Y.M.C.A. to the Sterling Apartments and arrive there about 7:00 A.M. (The Agarwals remember that when he first arrived from India he was carrying a large bundle of dried cereal that appeared like rolled oats. This supply was intended to last him for some time, and every day he would take some with milk for his breakfast.) About 7:45, Gopal would leave for work, and then Śrīla Prabhupāda would start to prepare his lunch in the kitchen. Without using a rolling pin, he would make *capātīs* (a kind of bread) by clapping the kneaded dough in his hands. He worked alone for two hours while Mrs. Agarwal did housework and took care of her children.

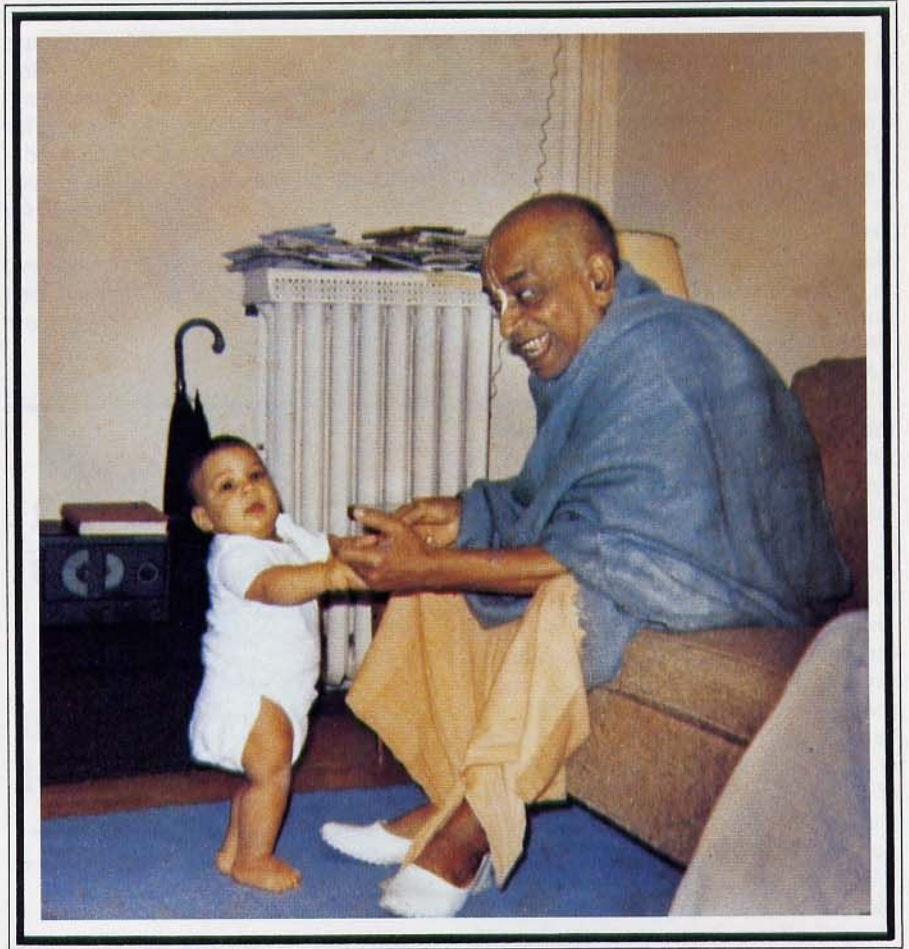


Śrīla Prabhupāda took his *prasāda* at 11:30.

*When he cooked he used only one burner (Mrs. Agarwal relates), and I asked him why he was cooking that way. He said, "Well, when one becomes a svāmī he gives up any contact with women." Since he was only cooking for himself, he only needed to use one fire. The bottom-level pot created the steam; he had the dāl [a kind of soup] on the bottom, and it created the steam to cook many other vegetables. So for about a week he was cooking this great big lunch, which was ready about 11:30, and Gopal always came home for lunch about twelve. I used to serve Gopal a sandwich, and then he would go back to work. But it didn't take me long to realize that the food the svāmī was cooking we'd enjoy too, so he started cooking that noon meal for all of us. Oh, and we enjoyed it so much.*

*Our fun with him was to show him what we knew of America, and he had never seen such things. It was such fun to take him to the supermarket. He loved opening the package of okra or frozen beans and he didn't have to clean them and cut them and do all those things. He opened the freezer every day and just chose his items. It was fun to watch him. He sat on the couch while I swept with the vacuum, and he was so interested in that, and we talked for a long time about that. He was so interesting. So every day he'd have this big feast, and everything was great fun. We really enjoyed it. I would help him cut the things. He would spice it, and we would laugh. He was the most enjoyable man, most enjoyable man. I really felt like a sort of daughter to him, even in such a short time. Like he was my father-in-law. He was a friend of my father-in-law, but I really felt very close to the man. He enjoyed everything. I liked the man. I thought he was tremendous.*

After his lunch Śrīla Prabhupāda would leave the house about 1:00 P.M. and walk to the Y.M.C.A., where the Agarwals figured he must have worked at his writing from one until five. He would come back to their apartment in the early evening, about six o'clock, after they had taken their meal. Since they ate meat, Mrs. Agarwal was careful to have it cleared away before he came. One night he came early, and she said to him, "Oh, Swamiji, we have just cooked meat, and the smell will be very disagreeable to you." But he said, "Oh, think nothing of it. Think nothing of it." In the evening Śrīla Prabhupāda would meet any guests who came to speak with him, and he would ask the Agarwals to prepare warm milk with sugar for him at 9:00 P.M. Even if the guests were taking coffee and other things, he would re-



quest a glass of warm milk. He would speak until nine thirty or ten, and then Mr. Agarwal would drive him back to the Y.M.C.A. So every day Śrīla Prabhupāda would walk between the Y.M.C.A. and the Agarwal home three times and ride back in their car in the evening.

Śrīla Prabhupāda would also do his own laundry every day, washing his clothes in the Agarwals' bathroom and hanging them up outside. He sometimes also went with the Agarwals to the laundromat and was interested to see how the people washed and dried their clothes there. "He was very interested in the American ways and the people," Mrs. Agarwal says.

*Our boy was six or seven months old when the svāmī came (Mrs. Agarwal relates). And the Indians love boys. The svāmī liked Brij. He was there when Brij first stood. The first time Brij made the attempt and actually succeeded, the svāmī stood up and clapped and clapped. It was a celebration. Another time our baby teethed on the svāmī's shoes. I thought, "Oh, those shoes. They have been all over India, and my kid is chewing on them." You know how a mother would feel.*

*Almost every night he used to sit in the next-door neighbor's back yard. We sat out*

*there sometimes with him. Or we stayed in the living room. In October the air got cool. (He arrived about the twentieth of September and stayed with us until the middle of October.) One time something happened with our little girl, Pamela, who was only three years old. I used to take her to Sunday school, and she learned about Jesus in Sunday school. Then when she would see Svāmījī with his robes on and everything, she called him Svāmī Jesus. And this one time when it first dawned on us what she was saying, she called him Svāmī Jesus, and Swami smiled and said, "And a little child shall lead them." It was so funny.*

While in Butler, Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke on Kṛṣṇa consciousness to various groups in the community. He addressed the Lions International, and the group presented him with a formal document dated October 6, 1965: "Be it known that A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami was a guest at the Lions Club of Butler, Pa., and as an expression of appreciation for services rendered the Club tenders this acknowledgement." He also gave a talk at the Y and at a small college in Herman, Pennsylvania, and he was always ready to speak to guests who came to visit him at the Agarwal home.

There are no available recordings of



any of the Butler talks, but we *know* what Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke. He spoke the same eternal message of *Bhagavad-gītā* that has come down in disciplic succession from Kṛṣṇa. As he had already informed the people of Butler through the *Butler Eagle*, "My mission is to revive people's God consciousness. God is the Father of all living beings in thousands of different forms. Human life is a stage of perfection in evolution; if we miss the message, back we go through the process again."

The lectures in Butler were valuable for Śrīla Prabhupāda because they gave him his first indication of how his message would be received in America. In his poem written at the Boston pier he had stated the principle by which he would become successful: "I am sure that when this transcendental message penetrates their hearts they will certainly feel gladdened and thus become liberated from all unhappy conditions of life." But now the principle was actually being tested in the field. Was it possible—would they be able to understand? Were they really interested? Would they surrender?

From all available evidence it appears Śrīla Prabhupāda was quite pleased with the results of his talks in Butler. It is difficult to know his thoughts, since he made no diary entries and as yet had no intimate disciples to share his meditations on preaching. The Agarwals, for all their kindness, did not share in his plans to create a worldwide Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Rather, they were convinced that Śrīla Prabhupāda had no intention of making followers.

A letter written by Śrīla Prabhupāda a month after he left Butler reveals some of his thoughts about his stay in the Pennsylvania town. He wrote to Sumati Morarjee, who had provided his passage to America, "By the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa the Americans are prosperous in every respect. They are not poverty-stricken like the Indians. The people in general are satisfied so far as their material needs are concerned, and they are spiritually inclined. When I was in Butler, Pennsylvania, about five hundred miles from New York City, I saw there many churches, and they were attending regularly. This shows that they are spiritually inclined. I was also invited by some churches, church-governed schools and colleges, and I spoke there, and they appreciated it and presented me some token rewards. When I was speaking to the students, they were very much eagerly hearing me about the principles of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Rather, the clergymen were cautious to allow [that is, about allowing] the students to hear

me so patiently. They thought that [they should be careful so that] the students may not be converted into Hindu ideas, as it is quite natural for any religious sect. But they do not know that devotional service of the Lord (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) is the common religion of everyone, including the aborigines and cannibals in the jungle."

This letter indicates that Śrīla Prabhupāda was quite hopeful. He had spoken, and the young people, especially, were receptive. The American people were

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**"Our boy was six or seven months old. The *svāmī* liked Brij. He was there when Brij first stood. The *svāmī* stood up and clapped and clapped. It was a celebration."**

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not so impoverished as to think only of economic development, and in fact they had an attitude of spiritual inquiry. "I give you my frank admission," Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote, "that when I was in India I was thinking the Americans may be a different type of people or they may be thinking in other ways. They may be different in so many ways. But here I see there is no difference at all. Only some bodily features. Your people are fair complexioned, your bodies are white, and they are also colored. In India also you will find varieties of color, beginning from the American, European color down to the black Negro color. Even when I study the pigeons, I see, 'Oh, these same pigeons are playing just like Indian pigeons.' Even I see the sparrow—there is no difference." The Americans, for all their advertised opulence and advancement, were the same materially conditioned souls found anywhere else in the universe. This Śrīla Prabhupāda discovered firsthand in Butler. If for nothing else, Butler was important to Śrīla Prabhupāda because it was the first testing ground for the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

Near the end of his stay in Butler, Śrīla Prabhupāda received a letter from Sumati Morarjee. Dated October 9 from

"Scindia House" in Bombay, the letter read as follows:

"Poojye [Respected] Swamiji,

I am in due receipt of your letter of the 24th ultimo. And glad to note that you have safely reached the U.S.A., after suffering from seasickness. I thank you for your greetings and blessings. I hope by now you must have recovered fully from the sickness and must be keeping good health. I was delighted to read that you have started your activities in the states and had already delivered some lectures. I pray to Lord Bal-Krishna to give you enough strength to enable you to carry the message of Sri Bhagavatam. I feel that you should stay there till you fully recover from your illness and return only after you have completed your mission.

Here everything is normal. With respects,

Yours sincerely,  
Sumati Morarjee"

Śrīla Prabhupāda regarded the last recommendation in this letter as being especially significant: his well-wisher was urging him to stay in America until he had completed his mission. When Śrīla Prabhupāda had first entered America and the immigration officials had asked him how long he intended to stay, Śrīla Prabhupāda had not yet made firm plans. "I have one month's sponsorship in Butler," he thought, "and then I have no support. So perhaps I can stay another month." So he had told the immigration officials he would stay in America for two months. Sumati Morarjee, however, was urging him to stay on, and it was a fact that the prospects of preaching to the Americans seemed good, although if he were to stay he would need support from India, from persons like Sumati Morarjee. There was no question of staying simply to sightsee; he wanted to do something wonderful. He had many plans. But now it was time to leave Butler.

Śrīla Prabhupāda decided to move to New York City, although he wanted first to visit Philadelphia, where a meeting had been arranged for him with a Sanskrit professor, Dr. Norman Brown, at the University of Pennsylvania.

Mrs. Agarwal was sorry to see him go.

*After a month I really loved the svāmī (Mrs. Agarwal relates). I felt kind of protective in a way, and he wanted to go to Philadelphia. But I couldn't imagine—I told him—I could not imagine this man going to Philadelphia for two days. He was going to speak there, and then to New York.*

(continued on page 24)



# THE CHARIOT OF THE BODY

How to Make It Take You  
Where You Really Want to Go

This grim scene is just an illustration, but it points up something that happens to all of us all too often. It shows how we set out for satisfaction and yet arrive at just the opposite.

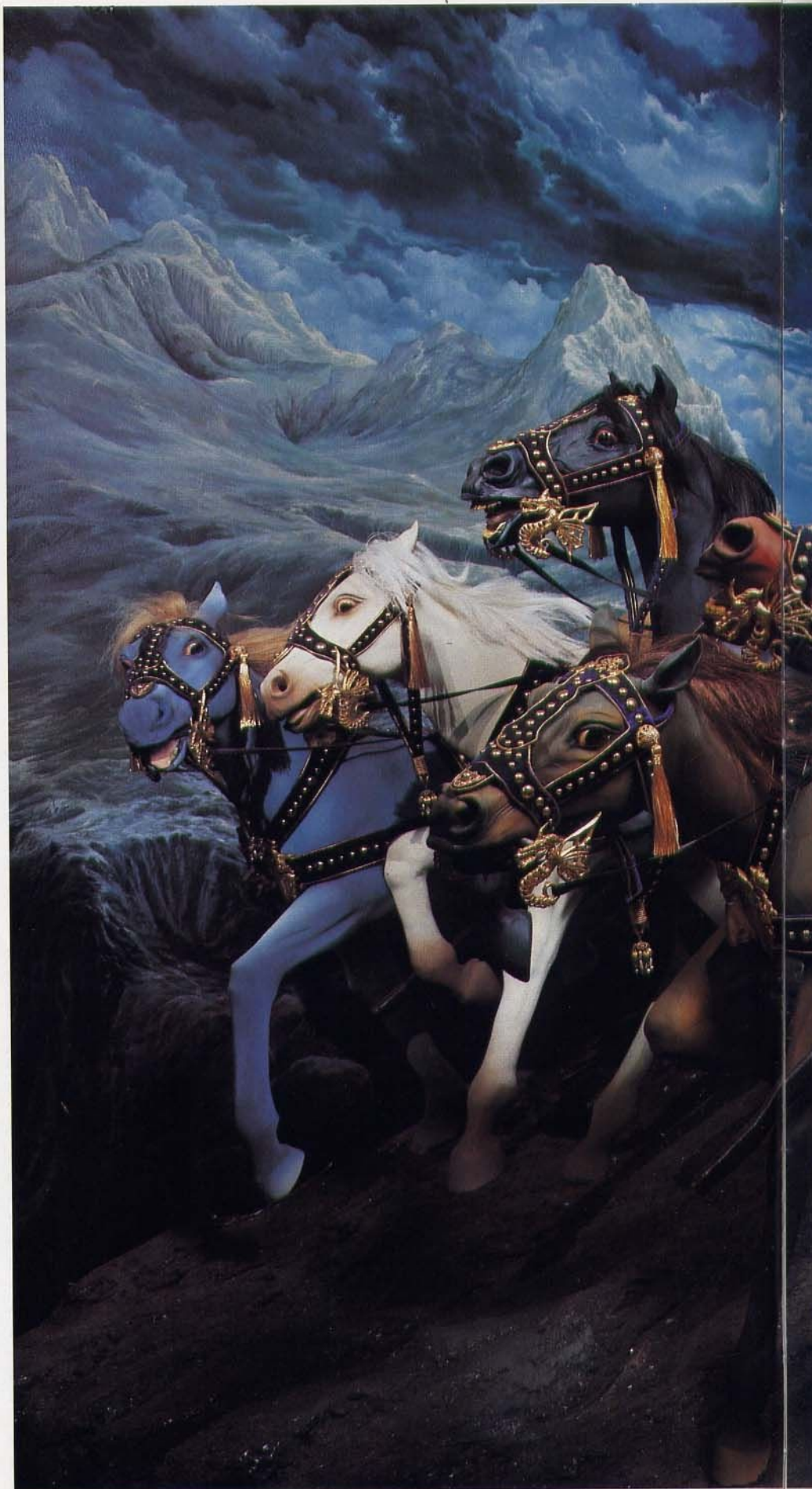
Our material body is a lot like a chariot. It has five horses (the senses of hearing, touch, sight, taste, and smell). Each of us is a spiritual soul riding within—we're the passenger. And to keep the horses on course, we have the reins (our mind) and the driver (our intelligence).

As we've all experienced, our sensory horses are always ready to bolt off after this or that, and their pulling creates anxiety in our mind. The problem is that we have no permanent goal to keep our mind on. Our body, our family, our community, our nation—all these things are changing and so not fully satisfying objects for our attention and affection.

Sometimes, out of frustration, we try to quiet our mind by stopping our senses and engaging in silent meditation. This may bring us some relief, but it doesn't last, because sooner or later our senses have to act. So the solution is to find a goal that's permanent and fully satisfying to our senses, mind, and intelligence. And that's why Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, recommends, "Dedicate your activities to Me, absorb your senses, mind, and intelligence in Me—and you will attain Me" (Kṛṣṇa's very name means "the highest satisfaction").

In this age the easiest and most effective way to absorb our senses, mind, and intelligence in Kṛṣṇa is to chant

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



DIORAMA BY FATE/ PHOTO: MURALIVADANA DASA







# ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

## We Cannot Remain in Tiger Consciousness

*This exchange between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and guests took place in December, 1968, at the Los Angeles Kṛṣṇa center.*

**Guest:** If man didn't eat animals, they'd probably just die of starvation or something.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Why are you so anxious about the animals' dying of starvation? You take care of yourself. Don't be altruistic—"Oh, they will starve. Let me eat them." What is this altruism? Kṛṣṇa is supplying food. If an animal dies of starvation, it is Kṛṣṇa's responsibility. Nobody dies of starvation. That is a false theory. Have you seen any animal dying of starvation? Have you got any experience? Have you seen any bird dying of starvation? There is no question of starvation in the kingdom of God. We are manufacturing these theories for our own sense satisfaction. . . . There are millions of elephants in the African jungle and Indian jungle. They require one hundred pounds at a time to eat. Who is supplying food? So there is no question of starvation in the kingdom of God. Starvation is for the so-called civilized man.

**Guest:** If man wasn't meant to eat meat, why in nature do the other animals kill meat?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Are you "another animal"?

**Guest:** Well, we're all animals.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** You count yourself among the animals? You classify yourself with the animals?

**Guest:** Well, we're all animals. . .

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** No, not all. *You* may be, but we are not. Do you like to be classified with the animals?

**Guest:** I don't feel that I am better than the animals. I have respect for all God's creatures.

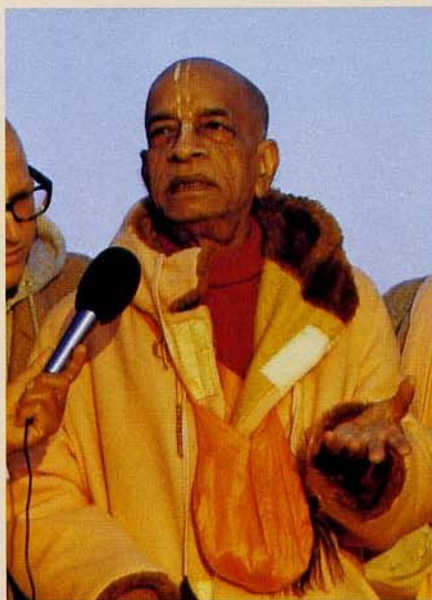
**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** You have respect for all, and you kill animals?

**Guest:** Well, why is it—if man is not meant to eat meat—that in nature the animals eat each other?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** When animals eat meat, they are following nature's law. When you eat meat, you are breaking nature's law.

**Guest:** What?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** For instance, a tiger will never come to claim the grain—"Oh, you've got so much grain—give



me some." No. Even if there are hundreds of bags of grain, he doesn't care. But he'll pounce upon an animal. That is his natural instinct. But why do you take grain, fruit, milk, meat, and whatever you get? What is this? You are neither animal nor human being. You are misusing your humanity! You should think, "What is eatable for *me*?" A tiger may eat meat—he is a tiger. But I am not a tiger; I am a human. If I've got enough grain, fruit, vegetables, and other things God has given, why should I go to kill a poor animal? This is humanity.

You are animal *plus* human. If you forget your humanity, then you are an animal. [*A brief silence.*] So we are not simply animals. We are animal plus human. If we increase our quality of humanity, then our life is perfect. But if we remain in animality, then our life is imperfect. So we have to increase our human consciousness—that is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If you can live very peacefully, very nicely, in good health by eating so many varieties of foodstuffs given by Kṛṣṇa, why should you kill an animal?

Besides that, scientifically, your teeth are meant for eating vegetables. The tiger has teeth for eating meat. Nature has made it like that. He has to kill another animal; therefore he has nails, he has teeth, he has strength. But you have no such strength. You cannot kill a cow like that—pouncing like a tiger. You have to make a slaughterhouse and sit

down at your home. . . . If somebody else slaughters the cow, you can eat very nicely. . . . What is this? Do like the tiger! Pounce upon a cow and eat! . . . You cannot do that.

**Guest:** So you don't believe in nature's law. I believe nature's law applies equally to everybody.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** The tiger is made by nature's law in that way, so therefore he can do that. You cannot do it—your nature is different. You have discrimination, you have conscience, you are claiming to be a civilized human being—so you should utilize all this. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness, perfect consciousness. Human life is meant for raising oneself to the perfection of consciousness, and that is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We cannot remain in tiger consciousness. That is not humanity.

**Another Guest:** Have we fallen from higher to lower, or have we come up from plants and animals?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, naturally you have fallen from higher to lower—from the spiritual world to this material world, and then down to the lower species. Then you make progress, and you again come to this human form. If you utilize your higher consciousness, then you go still higher: you go to God. But if you don't use your higher consciousness, you again go down. So don't be misguided. Take to God consciousness, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and that will be proper use of this human form of life. Otherwise, if we indulge in meat-eating, like a tiger, we may get the body of a tiger in our next life, but what is the use? Suppose I become a very strong tiger in my next life. Is that a very good promotion? Do you know the life of a tiger? They cannot even eat daily. They pounce upon one animal and keep it secretly, and for a month they eat the decomposed flesh—because they don't always get the chance to kill an animal. God will not give that chance. It is natural: in the jungle wherever there is a tiger the other animals flee. Self-defense. So on rare occasions, when the tiger is too hungry, then God gives him a chance to pounce upon another animal. A tiger cannot get so many palatable dishes daily. It is in the human form of life that we have all these facilities. But if we misuse them, then . . . go to the tiger life. Be very strong, with full pouncing capacity. 🐾



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 NINETEEN

#### The Appearance of Śukadeva Gosvāmī

In this part of our continuing presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, King Parīkṣit, while repenting for having offended a brāhmaṇa, learns that the brāhmaṇa's son has cursed him to die in seven days. Accepting this curse as his good fortune, the King goes to the Ganges to fast and remain absorbed in thoughts of Lord Kṛṣṇa. From all over the universe, great personalities come to be with him until his passing.

#### TEXT 3

अद्यैव राज्यं बलमृद्धकोशं  
प्रकोपितब्रह्मकुलानलो मे ।  
दहत्वभद्रस्य पुनर्न मेऽभूत्  
पापीयसी धीर्द्विजदेवगोभ्यः ॥ ३ ॥

adyaiva rājyaṁ balam ṛddha-kośaṁ  
prakopita-brahma-kulānalo me  
dahatv abhadrasya punar na me 'bhūt  
pāpiyasī dhīr dvija-deva-gobhyaḥ

adya—this day; eva—on the very; rājyaṁ—kingdom; balam ṛddha—strength and riches; kośaṁ—treasury; prakopita—ignited by; brahma-kula—by the brāhmaṇa community; analaḥ—fire; me dahatu—let it burn me; abhadrasya—inauspiciousness; punaḥ—again; na—not; me—unto me; abhūt—may occur; pāpiyasī—sinful; dhīḥ—intelligence; dvija—brāhmaṇas; deva—the Supreme Lord; gobhyaḥ—and the cows.

#### TRANSLATION

I am uncivilized and sinful due to my neglect of brahminical culture, God consciousness and cow protection. Therefore I wish that my kingdom, strength and riches burn up immediately by the fire of the brāhmaṇa's wrath so that in the future I may not be guided by such inauspicious attitudes.

#### PURPORT

Progressive human civilization is based on brahminical culture, God consciousness and protection of cows. All economic development of the state by trade, commerce, agriculture and industries must be fully utilized in relation to the above principles, otherwise all so-called economic development becomes a source of degradation. Cow protection means feeding the brahminical culture, which leads towards God consciousness, and thus perfection of human civilization is achieved. The age of Kali aims at killing the higher principles of life, and although

Mahārāja Parīkṣit strongly resisted the domination of the personality of Kali within the world, the influence of the age of Kali came at an opportune moment, and even a strong king like Mahārāja Parīkṣit was induced to disregard the brahminical culture due to a slight provocation of hunger and thirst. Mahārāja Parīkṣit lamented the accidental incident, and he desired that all his kingdom, strength and accumulation of wealth would be burned up for not being engaged in brahminical culture, etc.

Where wealth and strength are not engaged in the advancement of brahminical culture, God consciousness and cow protection, the state and home are surely doomed by Providence. If we want peace and prosperity in the world, we should take lessons from this verse; every state and every home must endeavor to advance the cause of brahminical culture for self-purification, God consciousness for self-realization and cow protection for getting sufficient milk and the best food to continue a perfect civilization.

#### TEXT 4

स चिन्तयन्नित्थमथामृणोद् यथा  
मुनेः सुतोक्तो निर्धृतिस्तक्षकाख्यः ।  
स साधु मेने नचिरेण तक्षका-  
नलं प्रसक्तस्य विरक्तिकारणम् ॥ ४ ॥

sa cintayann itham athāśṛṇod yathā  
muneḥ sutokto nirṛtiḥ takṣakākhyah  
sa sādhu mene na cireṇa takṣaka-  
nalaṁ prasaktasya virakti-kāraṇam

saḥ—he, the King; cintayan—thinking; itham—like this; atha—now; aśṛṇod—heard; yathā—as; muneḥ—of the sage; suta-uktah—uttered by the son; nirṛtiḥ—death; takṣaka-ākhyah—in relation with the snake-bird; saḥ—he (the King); sādhu—well and good; mene—accepted; na—not; cireṇa—very long time; takṣaka—snake-bird; analam—fire; prasaktasya—for one who is too attached; virakti—in-difference; kāraṇam—cause.

#### TRANSLATION

While the King was thus repenting, he received news of his imminent death, which would be due to the bite of a snake-bird, occasioned by the curse spoken by the sage's son. The King accepted this as good news, for it would be the cause of his indifference toward worldly things.

#### PURPORT

Real happiness is achieved by spiritual existence or by cessation of the repetition of birth and death. One can stop the repetition of birth and death only by going back to Godhead. In the material world, even by attaining the topmost planet (Brahmaloka), one cannot get rid of the conditions of repeated birth and death, but still we do not accept the path of



attaining perfection. The path of perfection frees one from all material attachments, and thus one becomes fit to enter into the spiritual kingdom. Therefore, those who are materially poverty-stricken are better candidates than those who are materially prosperous. Mahārāja Parīkṣit was a great devotee of the Lord and a bona fide candidate for entering into the kingdom of God, but even though he was so, his material assets as the Emperor of the world were setbacks to perfect attainment of his rightful status as one of the associates of the Lord in the spiritual sky. As a devotee of the Lord, he could understand that the cursing of the *brāhmaṇa* boy, although unwise, was a blessing upon him, being the cause of detachment from worldly affairs, both political and social. Śāmika Muni also, after regretting the incident, conveyed the news to the King as a matter of duty so that the King would be able to prepare himself to go back to Godhead. Śāmika Muni sent news to the King that foolish Śrīngi, his son, although a powerful *brāhmaṇa* boy, unfortunately had misused his spiritual power by cursing the King unwarrantedly. The incident of the King's garlanding the *muni* was not sufficient cause for being cursed to death, but since there was no way to retract the curse, the King was informed to prepare for death within a week. Both Śāmika Muni and the King were self-realized souls. Śāmika Muni was a mystic, and Mahārāja Parīkṣit was a devotee. Therefore there was no difference between them in self-realization. Neither of them was afraid of meeting death. Mahārāja Parīkṣit could have gone to the *muni* to beg his pardon, but the news of imminent death was conveyed to the King with so much regret by the *muni* that the King did not want to shame the *muni* further by his presence there. He decided to prepare himself for his imminent death and find out the way to go back to Godhead.

The life of a human being is a chance to prepare oneself to go back to Godhead, or to get rid of the material existence, the repetition of birth and death. Thus in the system of *varṇāśrama-dharma* every man and woman is trained for this purpose. In other words, the system of *varṇāśrama-dharma* is known also as *sanātana-dharma*, or the eternal occupation. The system of *varṇāśrama-dharma* prepares a man for going back to Godhead, and thus a householder is ordered to go to the forest as *vānaprastha* to acquire complete knowledge and then to take *sannyāsa* prior to his inevitable death. Parīkṣit Mahārāja was fortunate to get a seven-day notice to meet his inevitable death. But for the common man there is no definite notice, although death is inevitable for all. Foolish men forget this sure fact of death and neglect the duty of preparing themselves for going back to Godhead. They spoil their lives in animal propensities to eat, drink, be merry and enjoy. Such an irresponsible life is adopted by the people in the age of Kali because of a sinful desire to condemn brahminical culture, God consciousness and cow protection, for which the state is responsible. The state must employ revenue to advance these three items and thus educate the populace to prepare for death. The state which does so is the real welfare state. The state of India should better follow the examples of Mahārāja Parīkṣit, the ideal executive head, than to imitate other materialistic states which have no idea of the kingdom of Godhead, the ultimate goal of human life. Deterioration of the ideals of Indian civilization has brought about the deterioration of civic life, not only in India but also abroad.

## TEXT 5

अथो विहायेमममुं च लोकं  
विमर्शितौ हेयतया पुरस्तात् ।  
कृष्णाङ्घ्रिसेवामधिमन्यमान  
उपाविशत् प्रायममर्त्यनद्यम् ॥ ५ ॥

atho vihāyemam amuṁ ca lokam  
vimarśitau heyatayā purastāt  
kṛṣṇāṅghri-sevām adhimanyamāna  
upāviśat prāyam amartya-nadyām

atho—thus; vihāya—giving up; imam—this; amum—and the next; ca—also; lokam—planets; vimarśitau—all of them being judged;

heyatayā—because of inferiority; purastāt—hereinbefore; kṛṣṇa-āṅghri—the lotus feet of the Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa; sevām—transcendental loving service; adhimanyamānaḥ—one who thinks of the greatest of all achievements; upāviśat—sat down firmly; prāyam—for fasting; amartya-nadyām—on the bank of the transcendental river (the Ganges or the Yamunā).

## TRANSLATION

Mahārāja Parīkṣit sat down firmly on the banks of the Ganges to concentrate his mind in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, rejecting all other practices of self-realization, because transcendental loving service to Kṛṣṇa is the greatest achievement, superseding all other methods.

## PURPORT

For a devotee like Mahārāja Parīkṣit, none of the material planets, even the topmost Brahmāloka, is as desirable as Goloka Vṛndāvana, the abode of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the primeval Lord and original Personality of Godhead. This earth is one of the innumerable material planets within the universe, and there are innumerable universes also within the compass of the *mahat-tattva*. The devotees are told by the Lord and His representatives, the spiritual masters or *ācāryas*, that not one of the planets within all the innumerable universes is suitable for the residential purposes of a devotee. The devotee always desires to go back home, back to Godhead, just to become one of the associates of the Lord in the capacity of servitor, friend, parent or conjugal lover of the Lord, either in one of the innumerable Vaikuṅṭha planets or in Goloka Vṛndāvana, the planet of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. All these planets are eternally situated in the spiritual sky, the *paravyoma*, which is on the other side of the Causal Ocean within the *mahat-tattva*. Mahārāja Parīkṣit was already aware of all this information due to his accumulated piety and birth in a high family of devotees, Vaiṣṇavas, and thus he was not at all interested in the material planets. Modern scientists are very eager to reach the moon by material arrangements, but they cannot conceive of the highest planet of this universe. But a devotee like Mahārāja Parīkṣit does not care a fig for the moon or, for that matter, any of the material planets. So when he was assured of his death on a fixed date, he became more determined in the transcendental loving service of Lord Kṛṣṇa by complete fasting on the bank of the transcendental River Yamunā, which flows down by the capital of Hastināpura (in the Delhi state). Both the Ganges and the Yamunā are *amartyā* (transcendental) rivers, and Yamunā is still more sanctified for the following reasons.

## TEXT 6

या वै लसच्छ्रीतुलसीविमिश्र-  
कृष्णाङ्घ्रिरेण्वभ्यधिकाम्बुनेत्री ।  
पुनाति लोकानुभयत्र सेशान्  
कर्ता न सेवेत मरिष्यमाणः ॥ ६ ॥

yā vai lasac-chrī-tulasī-vimīśra-  
kṛṣṇāṅghri-reṇv-abhyadhikāmbu-netrī  
punāti lokān ubhayatra seśān  
kaś tān na seveta marīṣyamāṇaḥ

yā—the river which; vai—always; lasat—floating with; śrī-tulasī—tulasī leaves; vimīśra—mixed; kṛṣṇa-āṅghri—the lotus feet of the Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa; reṇu—dust; abhyadhika—auspicious; ambu—water; netrī—that which is carrying; punāti—sanctifies; lokān—planets; ubhayatra—both the upper and lower or inside and outside; sa-īśān—along with Lord Śiva; kaḥ—who else; tān—that river; na—does not; seveta—worship; marīṣyamāṇaḥ—one who is to die at any moment.

## TRANSLATION

The river [Ganges, by which the King sat to fast] carries the most auspicious water, which is mixed with the dust of the lotus feet of the Lord and tulasī leaves. Therefore that water sanctifies



the three worlds inside and outside and even sanctifies Lord Śiva and other demigods. Consequently everyone who is destined to die must take shelter of this river.

### PURPORT

Mahārāja Parikṣit, just after receiving the news of his death within seven days, at once retired from family life and shifted himself to the sacred bank of the Yamunā River. Generally it is said that the King took shelter on the bank of the Ganges, but according to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmi, the King took shelter on the bank of the Yamunā. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmi's statement appears to be more accurate because of the geographical situation. Mahārāja Parikṣit resided in his capital Hastināpura, situated near present Delhi, and the River Yamunā flows down past the city. Naturally the King would take shelter of the River Yamunā because she was flowing past his palace door. And as far as sanctity is concerned, the River Yamunā is more directly connected with Lord Kṛṣṇa than the Ganges. The Lord sanctified the River Yamunā from the beginning of His transcendental pastimes in the world. While His father Vasudeva was crossing the Yamunā with the baby Lord Kṛṣṇa for a safe place at Gokula on the other bank of the river from Mathurā, the Lord fell down in the river, and by the dust of His lotus feet the river at once became sanctified. It is especially mentioned herein that Mahārāja Parikṣit took shelter of that particular river which is beautifully flowing, carrying the dust of the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa, mixed with *tulasī* leaves. Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet are always besmeared with the *tulasī* leaves, and thus as soon as His lotus feet contact the water of the Ganges and the Yamunā, the rivers become at once sanctified. The Lord, however, contacted the River Yamunā more than the Ganges. According to the *Varāha Purāna*, as quoted by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmi, there is no difference between the water of the Ganges and the Yamunā, but when the water of the Ganges is sanctified one hundred times, it is called the Yamunā. Similarly, it is said in the scriptures that one thousand names of Viṣṇu are equal to one name of Rāma, and three names of Lord Rāma are equal to one name of Kṛṣṇa.

### TEXT 7

इति व्यवच्छिद्य स पाण्डवेयः  
प्रायोपवेशं प्रति विष्णुपद्याम् ।  
दधौ मुकुन्दाङ्घ्रिमनन्धभावो  
मुनिव्रतो मुक्तसमस्तसङ्गः ॥ ७ ॥

iti vyavacchidya sa pāṇḍaveyaḥ  
prāyopaveśam prati viṣṇu-padyām  
dadhau mukundāṅghrim ananya-bhāvo  
muni-vrato mukta-samasta-saṅgaḥ

iti—thus; vyavacchidya—having decided; saḥ—the King; pāṇḍaveyaḥ—worthy descendant of the Pāṇḍavas; prāya-upaveśam—for fasting until death; prati—toward; viṣṇu-padyām—on the bank of the Ganges (emanating from the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu); dadhau—gave himself up; mukunda-aṅghrim—unto the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa; ananya—without deviation; bhāvaḥ—spirit; muni-vrataḥ—with the vows of a sage; mukta—liberated from; samasta—all kinds of; saṅgaḥ—association.

### TRANSLATION

Thus the King, the worthy descendant of the Pāṇḍavas, decided once and for all and sat on the Ganges' bank to fast until death and give himself up to the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa, who alone is able to award liberation. So, freeing himself from all kinds of associations and attachments, he accepted the vows of a sage.

### PURPORT

The water of the Ganges sanctifies all the three worlds, including the gods and the demigods, because it emanates from the lotus feet of the

Personality of Godhead Viṣṇu. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the fountainhead of the principle of *viṣṇu-tattva*, and therefore shelter of His lotus feet can deliver one from all sins, including an offense committed by a king unto a *brāhmaṇa*. Mahārāja Parikṣit, therefore, decided to meditate upon the lotus feet of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is Mukunda, or the giver of liberations of all description. The banks of the Ganges or the Yamunā give one a chance to remember the Lord continuously. Mahārāja Parikṣit freed himself from all sorts of material association and meditated upon the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and that is the way of liberation. To be free from all material association means to cease completely from committing any further sins. To meditate upon the lotus feet of the Lord means to become free from the effects of all previous sins. The conditions of the material world are so made that one has to commit sins willingly or unwillingly, and the best example is Mahārāja Parikṣit himself, who was a recognized sinless, pious king. But he also became a victim of an offense, even though he was ever unwilling to commit such a mistake. He was cursed also, but because he was a great devotee of the Lord, even such reverses of life became favorable. The principle is that one should not willingly commit any sin in his life and should constantly remember the lotus feet of the Lord without deviation. Only in such a mood will the Lord help the devotee make regular progress toward the path of liberation and thus attain the lotus feet of the Lord. Even if there are accidental sins committed by the devotee, the Lord saves the surrendered soul from all sins, as confirmed in all scriptures.

sva-pāda-mūlaṁ bhajataḥ priyasya  
tyaktāny abhāvasya hariḥ pareśaḥ  
vikarma yac cotpatitaṁ kathaṅcid  
dhunoti sarvaṁ hr̥di sanniviṣṭaḥ  
(Bhāg. 11.5.42)

### TEXT 8

तत्रोपजग्मुर्भुवनं पुनाना  
महानुभावा मुनयः सशिष्याः ।  
प्रायेण तीर्थाभिगमापदेशैः  
स्वयं हि तीर्थानि पुनन्ति सन्तः ॥ ८ ॥

tatropajagmur bhuvanam punāna  
mahānubhāvā munayaḥ sa-śiṣyāḥ  
prāyeṇa tīrthābhigamāpadeśaiḥ  
svayaṁ hi tīrthāni punanti santāḥ

tatra—there; upajagmuḥ—arrived; bhuvanam—the universe; punānāḥ—those who can sanctify; mahā-anubhāvāḥ—great minds; munayaḥ—thinkers; sa-śiṣyāḥ—along with their disciples; prāyeṇa—almost; tīrtha—place of pilgrimage; abhigama—journey; apadeśaiḥ—on the plea of; svayaṁ—personally; hi—certainly; tīrthāni—all the places of pilgrimage; punanti—sanctify; santāḥ—sages.

### TRANSLATION

At that time all the great minds and thinkers, accompanied by their disciples, and sages who could verily sanctify a place of pilgrimage just by their presence, arrived there on the plea of making a pilgrim's journey.

### PURPORT

When Mahārāja Parikṣit sat down on the bank of the Ganges, the news spread in all directions of the universe, and the great-minded sages, who could follow the importance of the occasion, all arrived there on the plea of pilgrimage. Actually they came to meet Mahārāja Parikṣit and not to take a bath of pilgrimage because all of them were competent enough to sanctify the places of pilgrimage. Common men go to pilgrimage sites to get themselves purified of all sins. Thus the places of pilgrimage become



overburdened with the sins of others. But when such sages visit overburdened places of pilgrimage, they sanctify the places by their presence. Therefore the sages who came to meet Mahārāja Parikṣit were not very much interested in getting themselves purified like common men, but on the plea of taking a bath in that place they came to meet Mahārāja Parikṣit because they could foresee that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* would be spoken by Śukadeva Gosvāmī. All of them wanted to take advantage of the great occasion.

## TEXTS 9-10

अत्रिर्वसिष्ठश्च्यवनः शरदा-  
नरिष्टनेमिर्भृगुर्ङ्गिराश्च ।  
पराशरो गाधिसुतोऽथ राम  
उत्थ्य इन्द्रप्रमदेभ्रवाहौ ॥ ९ ॥  
मेधातिथिर्देवल आष्टिषेणो  
भारद्वाजो गौतमः पिप्पलादः ।  
मैत्रेय और्वः कवषः कुम्भयोनि-  
द्वैपायनो भगवान्नारदश्च ॥ १० ॥

*atir vasisthas cyavanah saradvān  
ariṣṭanemir bhrgur aṅgirās ca  
parāśaro gādhi-suto 'tha rāma  
utathya indrapramadedhmvāhau*

*medhātithir devala ārṣiṣeṇo  
bhāradvājo gautamah pippalādah  
maitreya aurvaḥ kavaṣaḥ kumbhayonir  
dvaipāyano bhagavān nāradaś ca*

*atir to nārada*—all names of the different saintly personalities who arrived there from different parts of the universe.

## TRANSLATION

From different parts of the universe there arrived great sages like Atri, Cyavana, Śaradvān, Ariṣṭanemi, Bhṛgu, Vasiṣṭha, Parāśara, Viśvāmītra, Aṅgirā, Parāśurāma, Utathya, Indrapramada, Idhmavāhu, Medhātithi, Devala, Ārṣiṣeṇa, Bhāradvāja, Gautama, Pippalāda, Maitreya, Aurva, Kavaṣa, Kumbhayoni, Dvaipāyana and the great personality Nārada.

## PURPORT

*Cyavana*: A great sage and one of the sons of Bhṛgu Muni. He was born prematurely when his pregnant mother was kidnapped. Cyavana is one of the six sons of his father.

*Bhṛgu*: When Brahmāji was performing a great sacrifice on behalf of Varuṇa, Mahārṣi Bhṛgu was born from the sacrificial fire. He was a great sage, and his very dear wife was Pulomā. He could travel in space like Durvāsā, Nārada and others, and he used to visit all the planets of the universe. Before the Battle of Kurukṣetra, he tried to stop the battle. Sometimes he instructed Bhāradvāja Muni about astronomical evolution, and he is the author of the great *Bhṛgu-saṁhitā*, the great astrological calculation. He explained how air, fire, water and earth are generated from ether. He explained how the air in the stomach works and regulates the intestines. As a great philosopher, he logically established the eternity of the living entity (*Mahābhārata*). He was also a great anthropologist, and the theory of evolution was long ago explained by him. He was a scientific propounder of the four divisions and orders of human society known as the *varṇāśrama* institution. He converted the *kṣatriya* king Vītahavya into a *brāhmaṇa*.

*Vasiṣṭha*: See *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.9.6.

*Parāśara*: He is the grandson of Vasiṣṭha Muni and father of Vyāsadeva. He is the son of Mahārṣi Śakti, and his mother's name was

Adṛśyati. He was in the womb of his mother when she was only twelve years old. And from within the womb of his mother he learned the *Vedas*. His father was killed by a demon, Kalmāṣapāda, and to avenge this he wanted to annihilate the whole world. He was restrained, however, by his grandfather Vasiṣṭha. He then performed a Rākṣasa-killing *yajña*, but Mahārṣi Pulastya restrained him. He begot Vyāsadeva, being attracted by Satyavati, who was to become the wife of Mahārāja Śāntanu. By the blessings of Parāśara, Satyavati became fragrant for miles. He was present also during the time of Bhīṣma's death. He was spiritual master of Mahārāja Janaka and a great devotee of Lord Śiva. He is the author of many Vedic scriptures and sociological directions.

*Gādhi-suta*, or *Viśvāmītra*: A great sage of austerity and mystic power. He is famous as Gādhi-suta because his father was Gādhi, a powerful king of the province of Kanyākubja (part of Uttara Pradesh). Although he was a *kṣatriya* by birth, he became a *brāhmaṇa* in the very same body by the power of his spiritual achievements. He picked a quarrel with Vasiṣṭha Muni when he was a *kṣatriya* king and performed a great sacrifice in cooperation with Magaṅga Muni and thus was able to vanquish the sons of Vasiṣṭha. He became a great *yogī*, and yet he failed to check his senses and thus was obliged to become the father of Śakuntalā, the beauty queen of world history. Once, when he was a *kṣatriya* king, he visited the hermitage of Vasiṣṭha Muni, and he was given a royal reception. Viśvāmītra wanted from Vasiṣṭha a cow named Nandinī, and the Muni refused to deliver it. Viśvāmītra stole the cow, and thus there was a quarrel between the sage and the King. Viśvāmītra was defeated by the spiritual strength of Vasiṣṭha, and thus the King decided to become a *brāhmaṇa*. Before becoming a *brāhmaṇa* he underwent severe austerity on the bank of the Kauṣika. He was also one who tried to stop the Kurukṣetra war.

*Aṅgirā*: He is one of the six mental sons of Brahmā and the father of Bṛhaspati, the great learned priest of the demigods in the heavenly planets. He was born of the semen of Brahmāji given to a cinder of fire. Utathya and Saṁvarta are his sons. It is said that he is still performing austerity and chanting the holy name of the Lord at a place known as Alokānanda on the banks of the Ganges.

*Parāśurāma*: See *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.9.6.

*Utathya*: One of the three sons of Mahārṣi Aṅgirā. He was the spiritual master of Mahārāja Mandhātā. He married Bhadrā, the daughter of Soma (moon). Varuṇa kidnapped his wife Bhadrā, and to retaliate the offense of the god of water, he drank all the water of the world.

*Medhātithi*: An old sage of yore. An assembly member of the heavenly King Indradeva. His son was Kaṅva Muni, who brought up Śakuntalā in the forest. He was promoted to the heavenly planet by strictly following the principles of retired life (*vānaprastha*).

*Devala*: A great authority like Nārada Muni and Vyāsadeva. His good name is on the list of authorities mentioned in the *Bhagavad-gītā* when Arjuna acknowledged Lord Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He met Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira after the Battle of Kurukṣetra, and he was the elder brother of Dhaumya, the priest of the Pāṇḍava family. Like the *kṣatriyas*, he also allowed his daughter to select her own husband in a *svayamvara* meeting, and at that ceremony all the bachelor sons of the *rṣis* were invited. According to some, he is not Asita Devala.

*Bhāradvāja*: See *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.9.6.

*Gautama*: One of the seven great sages of the universe. Śaradvān Gautama was one of his sons. Persons in the Gautama-gotra (dynasty) today are either his family descendants or in his disciplic succession. The *brāhmaṇas* who profess Gautama-gotra are generally family descendants, and the *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas* who profess Gautama-gotra are all in the line of his disciplic succession. He was the husband of the famous Ahalyā who turned into stone when Indradeva, the King of the heaven, molested her. Ahalyā was delivered by Lord Rāmacandra. Gautama was the grandfather of Kṛpācārya, one of the heroes of the Battle of Kurukṣetra.

*Maitreya*: A great *rṣi* of yore. He was spiritual master of Vidura and a great religious authority. He advised Dhṛtarāṣṭra to keep good relations with the Pāṇḍavas. Duryodhana disagreed and thus was cursed by him. He met Vyāsadeva and had religious discourses with him.



## TEXT 11

अन्ने च देवर्षिब्रह्मर्षिवर्या  
 राजर्षिवर्या अरुणादयश्च ।  
 नानार्षेयप्रवरान् समेतान्  
 नभ्यर्च्य राजा शिरसा ववन्दे ॥११॥

*anye ca devarṣi-brahmarṣi-varyā  
 rājārṣi-varyā aruṇādayaś ca  
 nānārṣeya-pravarān sametān  
 abhyarcya rājā śirasā vavande*

*anye*—many others; *ca*—also; *devarṣi*—saintly demigods; *brahmarṣi*—saintly *brāhmaṇas*; *varyāh*—topmost; *rājārṣi-varyāh*—topmost saintly kings; *aruṇa-ādayaś*—a special rank of *rājārṣis*; *ca*—and; *nānā*—many others; *ārṣeya-pravarān*—chief amongst the dynasties of the sages; *sametān*—assembled together; *abhyarcya*—by worshipping; *rājā*—the Emperor; *śirasā*—bowed his head to the ground; *vavande*—welcomed.

## TRANSLATION

There were also many other saintly demigods, kings and special royal orders called *aruṇādayaś* [a special rank of *rājārṣis*] from different dynasties of sages. When they all assembled together to meet the Emperor [Parikṣit], he received them properly and bowed his head to the ground.

## PURPORT

The system of bowing the head to the ground to show respect to superiors is an excellent etiquette which obliges the honored guest deep into the heart. Even the first-grade offender is excused simply by this process, and Mahārāja Parikṣit, although honored by all the *ṛṣis* and kings, welcomed all the big men in that humble etiquette in order to be excused from any offenses. Generally at the last stage of one's life this humble method is adopted by every sensible man in order to be excused before departure. In this way Mahārāja Parikṣit implored everyone's good will for going back home, back to Godhead.

## TEXT 12

सुखोपविष्टेष्वथ तेषु भूयः  
 कृतप्रणामः स्वचिकीर्षितं यत् ।  
 विज्ञापयामास विविक्तचेता  
 उपस्थितोऽग्रेऽभिमृहीतपाणिः ॥१२॥

*sukhopaviṣṭeṣu atha teṣu bhūyaḥ  
 kṛta-praṇāmaḥ sva-cikīrṣitam yat  
 vijñāpayāmaśa vivikta-cetā  
 upasthito 'gre 'bhigrhīta-pāṇiḥ*

*sukha*—happily; *upaviṣṭeṣu*—all sitting down; *atha*—thereupon; *teṣu*—unto them (the visitors); *bhūyaḥ*—again; *kṛta-praṇāmaḥ*—having offered obeisances; *sva*—his own; *cikīrṣitam*—decision of fasting; *yat*—who; *vijñāpayāmaśa*—submitted; *vivikta-cetāḥ*—one whose mind is detached from worldly affairs; *upasthitaḥ*—being present; *agre*—before them; *abhigrhīta-pāṇiḥ*—humbly with folded hands.

## TRANSLATION

After all the *ṛṣis* and others had seated themselves comfortably, the King, humbly standing before them with folded hands, told them of his decision to fast until death.

## PURPORT

Although the King had already decided to fast until death on the bank of the Ganges, he humbly expressed his decision to elicit the opinions of

the great authorities present there. Any decision, however important, should be confirmed by some authority. That makes the matter perfect. This means that the monarchs who ruled the earth in those days were not irresponsible dictators. They scrupulously followed the authoritative decisions of the saints and sages in terms of Vedic injunction. Mahārāja Parikṣit, as a perfect king, followed the principles by consulting the authorities, even up to the last days of his life.

## TEXT 13

राजोवाच

अहो वयं धन्यतमा नृपाणां  
 महत्तमानुग्रहणीयशीलाः ।  
 राज्ञां कुलं ब्राह्मणपादशौचाद्  
 दूराद् विसृष्टं बत गर्हकर्म ॥१३॥

*rājovāca*

*aho vayaṁ dhanyatamā nṛpāṇāṁ  
 mahattamānugrahaṇīya-śilāḥ  
 rājñāṁ kulam brāhmaṇa-pāda-śaucāḍ  
 dūrād viśṛṣṭam bata garhya-karma*

*rājā uvāca*—the fortunate King said; *aho*—ah; *vayaṁ*—we; *dhanya-tamāḥ*—most thankful; *nṛpāṇām*—of all the kings; *mahat-tama*—of the great souls; *anugrahaṇīya-śilāḥ*—trained to get favors; *rājñām*—of the royal; *kulam*—orders; *brāhmaṇa-pāda*—feet of the *brāhmaṇas*; *śaucāt*—refuse after cleaning; *dūrāt*—at a distance; *viśṛṣṭam*—always left out; *bata*—on account of; *garhya*—condemnable; *karma*—activities.

## TRANSLATION

The fortunate King said: Indeed, we are the most grateful of all the kings who are trained to get favors from the great souls. Generally you [sages] consider royalty as refuse to be rejected and left in a distant place.

## PURPORT

According to religious principles, stool, urine, wash water, etc., must be left at a long distance. Attached bathrooms, urinals, etc. may be very convenient amenities of modern civilization, but they are ordered to be situated at a distance from residential quarters. That very example is cited herein in relation to the kingly order for those who are progressively marching back to Godhead. Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said that to be in intimate touch with dollars-and-cents men, or the kingly order, is worse than suicide for one who desires to go back to Godhead. In other words, the transcendentalists do not generally associate with men who are too enamored by the external beauty of God's creation. By advanced knowledge in spiritual realization, the transcendentalist knows that this beautiful material world is nothing but a shadowy reflection of the reality, the kingdom of God. They are not, therefore, very much captivated by royal opulence or anything like that. But in the case of Mahārāja Parikṣit, the situation was different. Apparently the King was condemned to death by an inexperienced *brāhmaṇa* boy, but factually he was called by the Lord to return to Him. Other transcendentalists, the great sages and mystics who assembled together because of Mahārāja Parikṣit's fasting unto death, were quite anxious to see him, for he was going back to Godhead. Mahārāja Parikṣit also could understand that the great sages who assembled there were all kind to his forefathers, the Pāṇḍavas, because of their devotional service to the Lord. He therefore felt grateful to the sages for being present there at the last stage of his life, and he felt that it was all due to the greatness of his late forefathers or grandfathers. He felt proud, therefore, that he happened to be the descendant of such great devotees. Such pride for the devotees of the Lord is certainly not equal to the puffed-up sense of vanity for material prosperity. The first is reality, whereas the other is false and vain.



## TEXT 14

तस्यैव मेऽघस्य परावरेणो  
व्यासक्तचित्तस्य गृहेष्वमीक्षणम् ।  
निर्वेदमूलो द्विजशापरूपो  
यत्र प्रसक्तो मयमाशु धरे ॥१४॥

*tasyaiva me 'ghasya parāvareṣo  
vyāsakta-cittasya grheṣv abhikṣṇam  
nirveda-mūlo dvija-śāpa-rūpo  
yatra prasakto bhayam āśu dhatte*

*tasya*—his; *eva*—certainly; *me*—mine; *aghasya*—of the sinful; *parā*—transcendental; *avara*—mundane; *iśaḥ*—controller, the Supreme Lord; *vyāsakta*—overly attached; *cittasya*—of the mind; *grheṣu*—to family affairs; *abhikṣṇam*—always; *nirveda-mūlah*—the source of detachment; *dvija-śāpa*—cursing by the *brāhmaṇa*; *rūpaḥ*—form of; *yatra*—whereupon; *prasaktaḥ*—one who is affected; *bhayam*—fearfulness; *āśu*—very soon; *dhatte*—take place.

## TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, the controller of both the transcendental and mundane worlds, has graciously overtaken me in the form of a *brāhmaṇa*'s curse. Due to my being too much attached to family life, the Lord, in order to save me, has appeared before me in such a way that only out of fear I will detach myself from the world.

## PURPORT

Mahārāja Parikṣit, although born in a family of great devotees, the Pāṇḍavas, and although securely trained in transcendental attachment for the association of the Lord, still found the allurements of mundane family life so strong that he had to be detached by a plan of the Lord. Such direct action is taken by the Lord in the case of a special devotee. Mahārāja Parikṣit could understand this by the presence of the topmost transcendentalists in the universe. The Lord resides with His devotees, and therefore the presence of the great saints indicated the presence of the Lord. The King therefore welcomed the presence of the great *ṛṣis* as a mark of favor of the Supreme Lord.

## TEXT 15

तं मोपयातं प्रतियन्तु विप्रा  
गङ्गा च देवी धृतचित्तमीशे ।  
द्विजोपसृष्टः कुहकस्तक्षको वा  
दाशत्वर्लं गायत विष्णुगाथाः ॥ १५ ॥

*taṁ mopayātaṁ pratiyantu viprā  
gaṅgā ca devī dhṛta-cittam īśe  
dvijopasrṣṭaḥ kuhakas takṣako vā  
daśatvaḥ alam gāyata viṣṇu-gāthāḥ*

*taṁ*—for that reason; *mā*—me; *upayātam*—taken shelter of; *pratiyantu*—just accept me; *viprāḥ*—O *brāhmaṇas*; *gaṅgā*—mother Ganges; *ca*—also; *devī*—direct representative of the Lord; *dhṛta*—taken into; *cittam*—heart; *īśe*—unto the Lord; *dvija-upasrṣṭaḥ*—created by the *brāhmaṇa*; *kuhakaḥ*—something magical; *takṣakaḥ*—the snake-bird; *vā*—either; *daśatu*—let it bite; *alam*—without further delay; *gāyata*—please go on singing; *viṣṇu-gāthāḥ*—narration of the deeds of Viṣṇu.

## TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇas*, just accept me as a completely surrendered soul, and let mother Ganges, the representative of the Lord, also accept me in that way, for I have already taken the lotus feet of the Lord into my heart. Let the snake-bird—or whatever magical thing the

*brāhmaṇa* created—bite me at once. I only desire that you all continue singing the deeds of Lord Viṣṇu.

## PURPORT

As soon as one is given up completely unto the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, he is not at all afraid of death. The atmosphere created by the presence of great devotees of the Lord on the bank of the Ganges and Mahārāja Parikṣit's complete acceptance of the Lord's lotus feet were sufficient guarantee to the King for going back to Godhead. He thus became absolutely free from all fear of death.

## TEXT 16

पुनश्च भूयाद्भगवत्यनन्ते  
रतिः प्रसङ्गश्च तदाश्रयेषु ।  
महत्सु यां यामुपयामि सृष्टिं  
मैत्र्यस्तु सर्वत्र नमो द्विजेभ्यः ॥१६॥

*punaś ca bhūyād bhagavaty anante  
ratih prasangaś ca tad-āśrayeṣu  
mahatsu yām yām upayāmi sṛṣṭim  
maitry astu sarvatra namo dvijebhyah*

*punaḥ*—again; *ca*—and; *bhūyāt*—let it be; *bhagavati*—unto Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *anante*—who has unlimited potency; *ratih*—attracting; *prasangaḥ*—association; *ca*—also; *taḥ*—His; *āśrayeṣu*—with those who are His devotees; *mahatsu*—within the material creation; *yām yām*—wherever; *upayāmi*—I may take; *sṛṣṭim*—my birth; *maitri*—friendly relation; *astu*—let it be; *sarvatra*—everywhere; *namah*—my obeisances; *dvijebhyah*—unto the *brāhmaṇas*.

## TRANSLATION

Again, offering obeisances unto all you *brāhmaṇas*, I pray that if I should again take my birth in the material world I will have complete attachment to the unlimited Lord Kṛṣṇa, association with His devotees and friendly relations with all living beings.

## PURPORT

That a devotee of the Lord is the only perfect living being is explained herein by Mahārāja Parikṣit. A devotee of the Lord is no one's enemy, although there may be many enemies of a devotee. A devotee of the Lord does not like to associate with nondevotees, although he has no enmity with them. He desires association with the devotees of the Lord. This is perfectly natural because birds of the same feather mix together. And the most important function of a devotee is to have complete attachment for Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the father of all living beings. As a good son of the father behaves in a friendly way with all his other brothers, so also the devotee of the Lord, being a good son of the supreme father, Lord Kṛṣṇa, sees all other living beings in relation with the supreme father. He tries to bring back the upstart sons of the father to a saner stage and to get them to accept the supreme fatherhood of God. Mahārāja Parikṣit was certainly going back to Godhead, but even if he were not to go back, he prayed for a pattern of life which is the most perfect way in the material world. A pure devotee does not desire the company of a personality as great as Brahṁā, but he prefers the association of a petty living being, provided he is a devotee of the Lord.

## TEXT 17

इति स राजाभ्यवसाययुक्तः  
प्राचीनमूलेषु कुशेषु धीरः ।  
उदङ्मुखो दक्षिणकूल आस्ते  
समुद्रपत्न्याः स्वसुतन्यस्तभारः ॥१७॥



iti sma rājādhivasāya-yuktah  
prācīna-mūleṣu kuṣeṣu dhīraḥ  
udañ-mukho dakṣiṇa-kūla āste  
samudra-patnyāḥ sva-suta-nyasta-bhārah

iti—thus; sma—as in the past; rājā—the King; adhyavasāya—perseverance; yuktah—being engaged; prācīna—eastern; mūleṣu—with the root; kuṣeṣu—on a seat made of kuṣa straw; dhīraḥ—self-controlled; udak-mukhaḥ—facing the northern side; dakṣiṇa—on the southern; kūle—bank; āste—situated; samudra—the sea; patnyāḥ—wife of (the Ganges); sva—own; suta—son; nyasta—given over; bhārah—the charge of administration.

## TRANSLATION

In perfect self-control, Mahārāja Parikṣit sat down on a seat of straw, with straw-roots facing the east, placed on the southern bank of the Ganges, and he himself faced the north. Just previously he had given charge of his kingdom over to his son.

## PURPORT

The River Ganges is celebrated as the wife of the sea. The seat of kuṣa straw is considered to be sanctified if the straw is taken out of the earth complete with root, and if the root is pointed toward the east it is considered to be auspicious. Facing the north is still more favorable for attaining spiritual success. Mahārāja Parikṣit handed over the charge of administration to his son before leaving home. He was thus fully equipped for all favorable conditions.

## TEXT 18

एवं च तस्मिन्नरदेवदेवे  
प्रायोपविष्टे दिवि देवसङ्घाः ।  
प्रशस्य भूमौ न्यकिरन् प्रसूनै-  
र्मुदा मुहुर्दुन्दुमयश्च नेदुः ॥१८॥

evam ca tasmin nara-deva-deve  
prāyopaviṣṭe divi deva-saṅghāḥ  
praśasya bhūmau vyakiran prasūnair  
mudā muhur dundubhayaś ca neduh

evam—thus; ca—and; tasmin—in that; nara-deva-deve—upon the King's; prāya-upaviṣṭe—being engaged in fasting to death; divi—in the sky; deva—demigods; saṅghāḥ—all of them; praśasya—having praised the action; bhūmau—on the earth; vyakiran—scattered; prasūnair—with flowers; mudā—in pleasure; muhuḥ—continually; dundubhayaḥ—celestial drums; ca—also; neduh—beaten.

## TRANSLATION

Thus the King, Mahārāja Parikṣit, sat to fast until death. All the demigods of the higher planets praised the King's actions and in pleasure continually scattered flowers over the earth and beat celestial drums.

## PURPORT

Even up to the time of Mahārāja Parikṣit there were interplanetary communications, and the news of Mahārāja Parikṣit's fasting unto death to attain salvation reached the higher planets in the sky where the intelligent demigods live. The demigods are more luxurious than human beings, but all of them are obedient to the orders of the Supreme Lord. There is no one in the heavenly planets who is an atheist or nonbeliever. Thus any devotee of the Lord on the surface of the earth is always praised by them, and in the case of Mahārāja Parikṣit they were greatly delighted and thus gave tokens of honor by scattering flowers over the earth and by beating celestial drums. A demigod takes pleasure in seeing someone go back to Godhead. He is always pleased with a devotee of the

Lord, so much so that by his adhidaivic powers he may help the devotees in all respects. And by their actions, the Lord is pleased with them. There is an invisible chain of complete cooperation between the Lord, the demigods and the devotee of the Lord on earth.

## TEXT 19

महर्षयो वै समुपागता ये  
प्रशस्य साध्वित्यनुमोदमानाः ।  
ऊचुः प्रजानुग्रहशीलसारा  
यदुत्तमश्लोकगुणाभिरूपम् ॥१९॥

maharṣayo vai samupāgatā ye  
praśasya sādhu ity anumodamānāḥ  
ūcuḥ prajānugraha-śīla-sārā  
yad uttama-śloka-guṇābhirūpam

maharṣayah—the great sages; vai—as a matter of course; samupāgatāḥ—assembled there; ye—those who; praśasya—by praising; sādhu—quite all right; iti—thus; anumodamānāḥ—all approving; ūcuḥ—said; prajā-anugraha—doing good to the living being; śīla-sārāḥ—qualitatively powerful; yat—because; uttama-śloka—one who is praised by selected poems; guṇa-abhirūpam—as beautiful as godly qualities.

## TRANSLATION

All the great sages who were assembled there also praised the decision of Mahārāja Parikṣit and they expressed their approval by saying, "Very good." Naturally the sages are inclined to do good to common men, for they have all the qualitative powers of the Supreme Lord. Therefore they were very much pleased to see Mahārāja Parikṣit, a devotee of the Lord, and they spoke as follows.

## PURPORT

The natural beauty of a living being is enhanced by rising up to the platform of devotional service. Mahārāja Parikṣit was absorbed in attachment for Lord Kṛṣṇa. Seeing this, the great sages assembled were very pleased, and they expressed their approval by saying, "Very good." Such sages are naturally inclined to do good to the common man, and when they see a personality like Mahārāja Parikṣit advance in devotional service, their pleasure knows no bounds, and they offer all blessings in their power. The devotional service of the Lord is so auspicious that all demigods and sages, up to the Lord Himself, became pleased with the devotee, and therefore the devotee finds everything auspicious. All inauspicious matters are removed from the path of a progressive devotee. Meeting all the great sages at the time of death was certainly auspicious for Mahārāja Parikṣit, and thus he was blessed by the so-called curse of a brāhmana's boy.

## TEXT 20

न वा इदं राजर्षिर्वयं चित्रं  
भवत्सु कृष्णं समनुव्रतेषु ।  
येऽध्यासनं राजकिरीटजुष्टं  
सद्यो जहुरुर्भगवत्पार्श्वकामाः ॥२०॥

na vā idam rājarṣi-varya citram  
bhavatsu kṛṣṇam samanuvrateṣu  
ye 'dhyāsanam rāja-kirīṭa-juṣṭam  
sadyo jahuru bhagavat-pārśva-kāmāḥ

na—neither; vā—like this; idam—this; rājarṣi—saintly king; varya—the chief; citram—astonishing; bhavatsu—unto all of you; kṛṣṇam—Lord Kṛṣṇa; samanuvrateṣu—unto those who are strictly in the line of; ye—who; adhyāsanam—seated on the throne; rāja-kirīṭa—helmets of kings; juṣṭam—decorated; sadyaḥ—immediately; jahuru—



gave up; *bhagavat*—the Personality of Godhead; *pārśva-kāmāh*—desiring to achieve association.

### TRANSLATION

[The sages said:] O chief of all the saintly kings of the Pāṇḍu dynasty who are strictly in the line of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa! It is not at all astonishing that you give up your throne, which is decorated with the helmets of many kings, to achieve eternal association with the Personality of Godhead.

### PURPORT

Foolish politicians who hold political administrative posts think that the temporary posts they occupy are the highest material gain of life, and therefore they stick to those posts even up to the last moment of life, without knowing that achievement of liberation as one of the associates of the Lord in His eternal abode is the highest gain of life. The human life is meant for achieving this end. The Lord has assured us in the *Bhagavad-gītā* many times that going back to Godhead, His eternal abode, is the highest achievement. Prahlāda Mahārāja, while praying to Lord Nṛsimha, said, “O my Lord, I am very much afraid of the materialistic way of life, and I am not the least afraid of Your present ghastly ferocious feature as Nṛsimhadeva. This materialistic way of life is something like a grinding stone, and we are being crushed by it. We have fallen into this horrible whirlpool of the tossing waves of life, and thus, my Lord, I pray at Your lotus feet to call me back to Your eternal abode as one of Your servitors. This is the summit liberation of this materialistic way of life. I have very bitter experience of the materialistic way of life. In whichever species of life I have taken birth, compelled by the force of my own activities, I have very painfully experienced two things, namely separation from my beloved and meeting with what is not wanted. And to counteract them, the remedies which I undertook were more dangerous than the disease itself. So I drift from one point to another birth after birth, and I pray to You therefore to give me a shelter at Your lotus feet.”

The Pāṇḍava kings, who are more than many saints of the world, knew the bitter results of the materialistic way of life. They were never captivated by the glare of the imperial throne they occupied, and they sought always the opportunity of being called by the Lord to associate with Him eternally. Mahārāja Parīkṣit was the worthy grandson of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira gave up the imperial throne to his grandson, and similarly Mahārāja Parīkṣit, the grandson of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, gave up the imperial throne to his son Janamejaya. That is the way of all the kings in the dynasty because they are all strictly in the line of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Thus the devotees of the Lord are never enchanted by the glare of materialistic life, and they live impartially, unattached to the objects of the false, illusory materialistic way of life.

### TEXT 21

सर्वे वयं तावदिहास्महेऽथ  
कलेवरं यावदसौ विहाय ।  
लोकं परं विरजस्कं विशोकं  
यास्यत्ययं मागवतप्रधानः ॥ २१ ॥

*sarve vayaṁ tāvad ihāsmāhe 'tha  
kalevaram yāvad asau vihāya  
lokaṁ param virajaskam viśokam  
yāsyaty ayam bhāgavata-pradhānaḥ*

*sarve*—all; *vayaṁ*—of us; *tāvat*—as long as; *iha*—at this place; *āsmāhe*—shall stay; *atha*—hereafter; *kalevaram*—the body; *yāvata*—so long; *asau*—the King; *vihāya*—giving up; *lokaṁ*—the planet; *param*—the supreme; *virajaskam*—completely free from mundane contamination; *viśokam*—completely freed from all kinds of lamentation; *yāsyati*—returns; *ayam*—this; *bhāgavata*—devotee; *pradhānaḥ*—the foremost.

### TRANSLATION

We shall all wait here until the foremost devotee of the Lord, Mahārāja Parīkṣit, returns to the supreme planet, which is completely free from all mundane contamination and all kinds of lamentation.

### PURPORT

Beyond the limitation of the material creation, which is compared to the cloud in the sky, there is the *paravyoma*, or the spiritual sky, full of planets called Vaikuṅṭhas. Such Vaikuṅṭha planets are also differently known as the Puruṣottamaloka, Acyutaloka, Trivikramaloka, Hṛṣīkeśaloka, Keśavaloka, Aniruddhaloka, Mādhaloka, Pradyumnaloka, Saṅkarṣaṇaloka, Śrīdharaḥaloka, Vāsudevaloka, Ayodhyāloka, Dvārakāloka and many other millions of spiritual *lokas* wherein the Personality of Godhead predominates; all the living entities there are liberated souls with spiritual bodies as good as that of the Lord. There is no material contamination; everything there is spiritual, and therefore there is nothing objectively lamentable. They are full of transcendental bliss, and are without birth, death, old age and disease. And amongst all the above-mentioned Vaikuṅṭhalokas, there is one supreme *loka* called Goloka Vṛndāvana, which is the abode of the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His specific associates. Mahārāja Parīkṣit was destined to achieve this particular *loka*, and the great ṛṣis assembled there could foresee this. All of them consulted among themselves about the great departure of the great King, and they wanted to see him up to the last moment because they would no more be able to see such a great devotee of the Lord. When a great devotee of the Lord passes away, there is nothing to be lamented because the devotee is destined to enter into the kingdom of God. But the sorry plight is that such great devotees leave our sight, and therefore there is every reason to be sorry. As the Lord is rarely to be seen by our present eyes, so also are the great devotees. The great ṛṣis, therefore, correctly decided to remain on the spot till the last moment.

### TEXT 22

आश्रुत्य तद्विगणवचः परीक्षित  
समं मधुच्युद गुरु चान्यलीकम् ।  
आभाषतैनानभिनन्द्य युक्तान्  
शुश्रूषमाणश्चरितानि विष्णोः ॥ २२ ॥

*āśrutya tad ṛṣi-gaṇa-vacaḥ parīkṣit  
samam madhu-cyud guru cānyalikam  
ābhāṣatainān abhinandya yuktān  
śuśrūṣamāṇaś caritāni viṣṇoḥ*

*āśrutya*—just after hearing; *tat*—that; *ṛṣi-gaṇa*—the sages assembled; *vacaḥ*—speaking; *parīkṣit*—Mahārāja Parīkṣit; *samam*—impartial; *madhu-cyut*—sweet to hear; *guru*—grave; *ca*—also; *anyalikam*—perfectly true; *ābhāṣata*—said; *enān*—all of them; *abhinandya*—congratulated; *yuktān*—appropriately presented; *śuśrūṣamāṇaḥ*—being desirous to hear; *caritāni*—activities of; *viṣṇoḥ*—the Personality of Godhead.

### TRANSLATION

All that was spoken by the great sages was very sweet to hear, full of meaning and appropriately presented as perfectly true. So after hearing them, Mahārāja Parīkṣit, desiring to hear of the activities of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, congratulated the great sages.

(continued in next issue)



# Every Town and Village

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



Health Minister Premila Tople (center) of Maharashtra state encouraged her fellow citizens to make use of the new clinic. For starters, she offered to treat any patients on hand.

## Health Minister Inaugurates ISKCON Free Clinic

**Bombay, India**—Not long ago Dr. Premila Tople, Minister for Health and Family Welfare in Maharashtra state, presided at the inaugural ceremonies for ISKCON's new free clinic and dispensary, the Bhaktivedant Institute.

Primarily, the facility will serve the health needs of the area's low-income people. It's staff includes two eminent Bombay physicians, Dr. Kumari R. Manusukhani and Dr. Sureshchandra Chaturvedi.

## New Demand for Śrīla Prabhupāda's Books

Thousands of Americans are purchasing complete sets of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, reports the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust's home sales office in Dallas.

For many years the academic world had supplied most of the customers for *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (a five-thousand-year-old Sanskrit classic about the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa) and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (a five-hundred-year-old biography of Lord Caitanya, the greatest teacher of Kṛṣṇa consciousness). More than twenty-five hundred college professors and university and public libraries have ordered full sets thus far.

But now, with the new interest in reincarnation, *karma*, and self-realization, the books are appealing to an ever-widening audience. Here's a sampling of the response from people who have ordered recently:

"I enjoy the books very much. I am pleased, honored, and blessed that I have the opportunity to share the sacred teachings of a great spiritual master. Again, thank you."

—Helene Svoboda  
Chicago, Illinois

"I am enjoying the books very much. I just wish I had more time to read them. I'll just have to make more time, because these books are very informative and very enlightening. I thank you for leading me to such wonderful reading."

—J. Bromberg  
St. Louis, Missouri

In 1977 Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "I want that every respectable person have a full set of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* in his home."

For full details readers may write the Bhaktivedanta Book Distribution office at 5430 Gurley Avenue, Dallas, Texas 75223.

## Editorial Correspondence

Address letters to

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

## Sanskrit Scholar Reviews Bhāgavatam

Dr. D. Arkasomayaji, one of India's leading Sanskrit scholars, said this about His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda's English translation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (the narrative of

Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes):

"What is most thrilling about this particular edition is that His Divine Grace (whom I look upon as an *avātara* of Godhead born into this world to cleanse it of its profane subhuman outlook) wields a pen which seems as though monitored by Bhagavan Vyāsa, the *Bhāgavatam*'s ancient author. This monumental work will surely survive millenniums, just as the very Sanskrit *Bhāgavatam* has survived to this day, overcoming all ravages of time. What thrills me further is that His Divine Grace puts fire into his pen and writes as if to pour molten lead over the heads of the nations of the world, which are doomed to disaster if they do not heed the message contained in these volumes. Schools, colleges, and universities of the world should not fail to acquire these volumes, since they are capable of floodlighting the dark caves of the hearts of present-day students. Students are coming for bread and are being treated with stones in the educational institutes nowadays. Be they of science or humanities, there are no books comparable with this edition of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*."

## 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 492 Caitanya Era Vaiṣṇava month of Nārāyaṇa (December 15, 1978-January 13, 1979)		
Dec. 18 (Nārāyaṇa 4)	Dec. 26 (Nārāyaṇa 12)	Dec. 27 (Nārāyaṇa 13)
Disappearance of Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja Prabhupāda.	Saphalā-ekādāśī (fasting from grains and beans).	Disappearance of Śrī Devānanda Paṇḍita.
Dec. 28 (Nārāyaṇa 14)	Jan. 1 (Nārāyaṇa 18)	Jan. 9 (Nārāyaṇa 26)
Disappearance of Śrīla Uddhāraṇa Datta Thākura and Śrīla Mahēsa Paṇḍita.	Disappearance of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and Śrī Jagadīśa Paṇḍita.	Putrāśī-ekādāśī (fasting from grains and beans).
Jan. 13 (Nārāyaṇa 30)		
Puṣyābhīṣeka-yātrā of Lord Kṛṣṇa.		



## TESTING GROUND

(continued from page 11)

But he knew no one in New York. If the thing didn't pan out in Philadelphia, he was just going to New York, and then there was no one. I just could not imagine that man... it made me sick. I remember the night he was leaving, about two in the morning. I remember sitting there as long as he could wait before Gopal took him to Pittsburgh to get on that bus. Gopal got a handful of change, and I remember telling him how to put the money in the slot so that he could go up to the bus station to take a bath, because he was supposed to take a bath a few times a day. And Gopal told him how to do that, and told him about the automat in New York. He told him what he could eat and what he could not eat, and he gave these coins in a sock, and that's all the man left us with.

Praying to be the puppet of Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Prabhupāda was now moving on, not exactly under his own direction. Why had he gone to Butler? Why was he going to New York? He could see it was not merely his own decision; it was happening by Kṛṣṇa's grace. As Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee, he wished to be merely an instrument, in the Lord's hands, for distributing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As a *san-nāsi*, of course, he was quite ac-

customed to picking up and leaving one place for another. As a mendicant preacher he had no remorse about leaving behind the quiet life of walking to and from the Butler Y.M.C.A., nor any attachment for the domestic habitat where he would cook and talk with Sally Agarwal about vacuum cleaners, frozen foods, and American ways.

Now it was necessary that he go more on his own and try to preach in one of the biggest cities in the world. His stay in Butler helped him get his first idea of America and gave him confidence that his health was strong and his message communicable. He was glad to see that America had practically everything necessary for his Indian vegetarian diet, and that people could understand his English. He had learned that the program of giving casual one-time lectures here and there was very limited, and he had also found that although there would be opposition from the established religions, people individually were very interested in what he had to say. Now he had to go and find out more of what Kṛṣṇa had in mind for him.

"He was a very happy man," Mrs. Agarwal remembers. "Very happy. If he'd had any idea of what the future was, he would not have believed it. That's what I think. He was a very humble, modest man. I think he had no idea."

## OPULENCE

(continued from page 5)

One should not think that because the holy name of Kṛṣṇa can nullify sinful activities, one may commit a little sinful activity and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa to nullify it. That is the greatest offense (*nāmno balād yasya hi pāpa-buddhiḥ*). The members of some religious orders go to church and confess their sins, but then they again commit the same sinful activities. What, then, is the value of their confession? One may confess, "My Lord, out of my ignorance I committed this sin." But one should not plan, "I shall commit sinful activities and then go to church and confess them, and then the sins will be nullified, and I can begin a new chapter of sinful life." Similarly, one should not knowingly take advantage of the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* to nullify sinful activities so that one may then begin sinful acts again. We should be very careful. Before taking initiation, one promises to have no illicit sex, no intoxicants, no gambling, and no meat-eating, and this vow one should strictly follow. Then one will be clean. If one keeps oneself clean in this way and always engages in devotional service, his life will be a success, and there will be no scarcity of anything he wants.

Dear Sirs:

I am very confused about the pronunciation of the Hare Kṛṣṇa maha-mantra. If you could properly instruct me on the correct pronunciation, I would very much appreciate that. Also, I am curious about the importance of correct pronunciation.

Daniel R. Eastwood  
Deep River, Connecticut

In the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—the three seeds are the names *Hare*, *Kṛṣṇa*, and *Rāma*. The word *Hare* is pronounced *huh-ray*. The word *Kṛṣṇa* is pronounced *krish-na*. And *Rāma* rhymes with "comma."

Success in chanting the *mahā-mantra* doesn't depend on the "correctness" of one's pronunciation. Rather, it depends on one's sincerity and devotion. The chanting of a Sanskrit scholar who can pronounce each word with perfect correctness will not be effective without devotion, whereas even though one's chanting may be faulty to the ear of a scholar, it will be accepted by the Supreme Lord Himself if one chants with sincere devotion. Sincere chanting

## LETTERS

and hearing is the essence of the process. As Śrīla Prabhupāda once instructed a disciple, "Just try to hear yourself chanting sincerely."

Also, to taste the mature fruit of love of God that is available by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, it is necessary that one receive initiation from a spiritual master in the disciplic succession that comes from the Lord Himself. In the *Padma Purāna* it is said that unless one receives initiation from such a bona fide spiritual master, one will not be able to obtain the desired result from chanting the *mantra*.

To get the full benefit of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, one should hear the chanting from the lips of a pure devotee of the Lord. The insincere chanting of non-devotees should be avoided; it is compared to milk touched by the lips of a serpent, because it has a poisonous effect on one's spiritual life.

Authorities confirm that the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* is the most recommended method for spiritual

realization in the present age. If one searches through the entire Vedic literature, one will find no method of spiritual advancement superior to the chanting of the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

\* \* \*

Dear Editors:

In an old copy of *The World Book Encyclopedia* there are approximately 170 different religions listed in the United States. (There are many more today, I would imagine.) I have often wondered why we find such division within Christianity, since the Bible is the basis of the Christian religion. How is one to know which religion is the true religion?

(Mrs.) Margaret Knight  
Lansing, Michigan

Not only among Christians but also among Hindus, Muslims, Jains, and adherents to all the other religious sects of the world, we find so many differences of opinion. Here is Śrīla Prabhupāda's explanation of why this is so and what

(continued on page 35)



WEST BENGAL, INDIA

# FLOOD DIARY

by NANDARĀṆĪ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

*The flood last fall was devastating. One of the districts hardest hit was Nadia, where ISKCON's center stands. Here one of the devotees relates how she and others survived, and how they worked to bring relief to the villagers.*

September 26:

The rain began last night. This morning the gardens were flooded and the unsheltered animals were running nervously up and down the high road. We didn't know how long the rains would last, but we let the older boys out of class. They yoked the oxen and began to move the wood and grain surplus to the big buildings. Others built rafts from toppled banana trees and carried passengers from one building to another. Bhavananda Maharaja began to move around the land, checking the kitchen, the handlooms, the dispensary and the school—arranging for everyone to move to the upper floors of the new buildings. By nightfall, the high road was under 2 feet of water.

September 27:

This morning the water on the road measured 5 feet. The rain and winds are destroying everything around us. From the roof of the guesthouse we watched the cowherd men as they moved our herd through the rushing floodwaters to

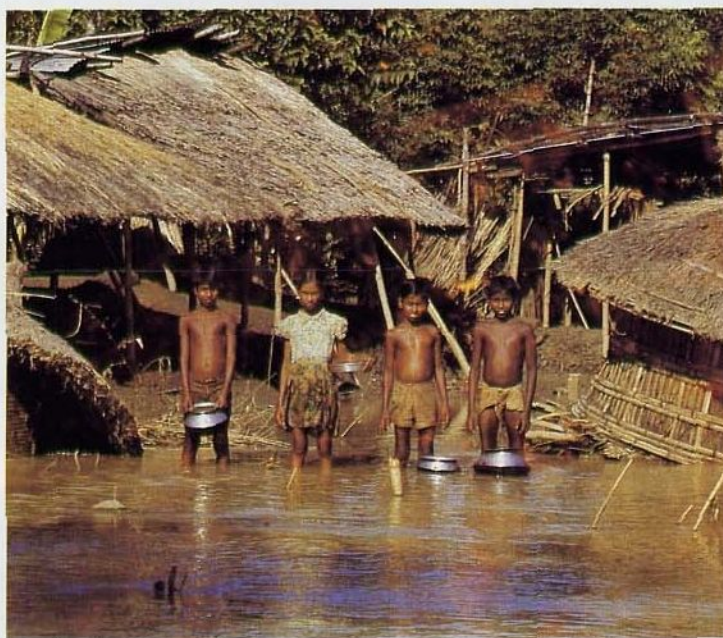


PHOTO: FANCIKALYA DASA

higher land. The frightened animals battled the strong currents and tremendous winds for hours before reaching shelter.

We built an emergency rooftop kitchen and began cooking huge pots of kichari [a soup of lentils and rice]. Throughout the day the villagers arrived, begging shelter. As their straw houses floated past, they unloaded their salvaged possessions and their families on the first floors of our biggest buildings.

September 28:

The rain has not stopped; the water on the road is 10 feet deep. As we look from our roof we see only water and destruction in all directions. The villages to the north and east are demolished. Last night we rescued two cows, some

buffaloes and a mongoose from the flood. The villagers are still arriving by boatload. They speak about whole settlements that have been swept away, along with their residents and livestock.

The most amazing phenomenon is that on every side of us there are calamities, but we never see an anxious look on the face of a devotee nor hear a nervous word. From Bhagavad-gita we learn that this material world has three types of miseries—those caused by other living entities, those caused by nature, and those

caused by one's own mind and body. For the people of Bengal this flood has certainly intensified all their miseries, but the devotees remain untouched by it. Because they know something of the plan of the Lord they can easily tolerate all miseries.

September 29:

The rain stopped early this morning but the water is steadily rising. The flood basement and first floors on the buildings are submerged and everyone has moved to the top floor and roof. The biggest danger is snakes, but the village boys keep guard on the verandas.

After surveying the flood damage, Bhavananda Maharaja began to speak: "Human life means plain living and high





The flood swept through dwellings and strewed branches and debris in its wake (above). On a tiny boat (right) devotees battled the Ganges for 8 hours to deliver 4000 kilos of rice.

thinking. Therefore, we should not be excessively attached to our land, buildings or families. They can all be taken away in a moment. Because we are devotees we work hard to maintain these buildings for Krishna, knowing that everything belongs to Him. As long as we have a kitchen, we will cook prasada, offer it to Krishna and give it out to the people. As long as we have buildings we will give shelter. But if these buildings are swept away by this flood, does that mean we will not be able to give relief? No. At that time we will all board boats and go out to preach. Practicing service to Krishna and teaching that same service to others brings permanent relief from all the miseries of life.”







PHOTO BHARAVANA DASA

maneuvered their overladen boat through the narrow streets and finally battled the raging Ganges for 8 hours in order to bring the rice to Mayapur. By a special arrangement Nitai Chand got enough rice to feed the people sheltered in our buildings and to begin our relief work in the surrounding areas.

October 3:

The skies have been clear for two days. Everyone seems lighthearted, despite



PHOTO MAHARAJA DASA

**Serving out lentil-rice soup** are His Holiness Jayapatākā Svāmī and Rasa-parāyaṇa dāsa (at left and right, above). "They came toward us like a tidal wave, surrounding the boat, begging for food" (left).



PHOTO MAHARAJA DASA

September 30:

Nitai Chand and a group of Bengali men left early this morning for Navadvipa [a small city across the Ganges], in hopes of getting supplies from the district government. After 14 hours they returned on a tiny wooden country boat with 4000 kilos of rice and a fantastic report of how they fought off looters,

the ocean on all sides of us. Shortly after lunch we heard the unmistakable voice of Jayapataka Maharaja on a megaphone: HARE KRISHNA, HARE KRISHNA, KRISHNA KRISHNA, HARE HARE/ HARE RAMA, HARE RAMA, RAMA RAMA, HARE HARE. We ran to the south side of the building. He was there—coming through the floodwaters on a country boat laden with rice, wheat, chickpeas, vegetables, milk powder and fuel. A great cheer rang out from the devotees and villagers in all the buildings. After inspecting the conditions of the land and the devotees, Maharaja began to outline his emergency flood relief program. He said, "We should

understand that we cannot actually give relief to anyone. A man suffers in this life because of sins committed in his previous life. We can fill his belly today, but tomorrow he will be hungry again. Similarly, we can alleviate one misery now, but if a man is sinful he will immediately get some other misery. Therefore, we should go to every village and give prasada [food purified by being offered to Lord Krishna]. Krishna promises in Bhagavad-gita that those who eat prasada are freed from all of their sins. Therefore, our prasada food relief program will have a double impact: it will fill the bellies of the hungry village people and simultaneously begin to alleviate the miseries each man bears because of his sins."

Some people approached Maharaja and tried to discourage him from the flood relief project. Their points were valid. The floodwaters were 30 feet deep, and the swift currents could not be challenged by our 15-foot motor launch nor by the country boats. In addition, just below the surface of the waters lay hidden dangers—fallen poles with electric wires, trees, walls and fences, etc. Not only that, but we had all heard stories of looting and even murder for food. After weighing the pros and cons, Maharaja selected his crew and set the flood relief program into action.

October 4:

By 8:00 this morning the small launch was loaded with 400 kilos of flat rice mixed with soy oil, roasted chickpeas, salt and spices (a favorite village preparation). A loudspeaker was mounted on the top of the boat and connected to a tape recorder and microphone inside. With great faith we boarded the boat and headed south to Phukitala, a large settlement across the Sarasvati River. As we approached the high land we turned on the tape recorder and loudspeaker. The sound of the Hare Krishna mantra filled the air, and hundreds of villagers ran to the edge of the floodwater. It was just the sound they wanted to hear—the sound of relief.

Jayapataka Maharaja's voice boomed out on the megaphone, calling for the village leaders and instructing the people to sit in lines with their bowls. Strong organization was imperative to avoid a frantic upheaval by the hungry people. At last they were seated, but the desperate latecomers lined up almost on top of them. Chaos broke loose, and again Maharaja called for the leaders to organize and control the crowd. At last the distribution began. Every child, woman and man got a full bowl of prasada. Some laughed, some cried and all chanted





Hare Krishna, Hare Rama along with the loudspeaker.

October 6:

By 8:00 our boatful of prasada was heading north across an ocean of devastated houses, fields and roads. The heavy southeast current made our progress slow. Meanwhile, another team of devotees loaded fuel, uncooked rice, and lentils on a country boat and returned to Phukitala to set up a free kitchen for the stranded villagers.

Not more than 2 miles north of our temple we approached a half-submerged

forest. Through his binoculars Jayapataka Maharaja spotted some rooftops, so at a snail's pace we began to make our way through the trees and lush overgrowth. In a small clearing in the center there was enough high land to shelter about 100 people. They were completely cut off from the world outside their island of safety and had not seen any boats, planes, people or relief food since the flood began. The village was Muslim, and three-fourths of the people were women and children. The men had built temporary shelters for their families and cows. When they

heard the sound of the Hare Krishna mantra they ran to the water's edge. Some waded out and helped us maneuver the launch through the trees. Maharaja spoke briefly to them, saying that we had brought prasada, and that we would distribute it freely as soon as everyone was seated. To our surprise, all the children got their bowls and formed orderly rows with their mothers standing behind. The village men helped us unload the boat and everyone ate well.

October 7:

The launch was heavily loaded this





morning and we set out north again. From the beginning we were slowed by cross-current and loose vines and wires in the water. One mile out we cut a course between two submerged jute fields. Yesterday we had passed the same way successfully, but today the current baffled us. The boat was heavy and there was every chance of getting bound up in the jute. By some fortune we skirted the jute field and gave the engine full power to head straight out. In a moment we hit a high road lying just beneath the water. The rudder stuck fast in the sand, the engine died, and the current swung the launch to the side and tipped it up at an 80 degree angle. Maharaja and Mayesvara (the photographer) jumped off to level the boat, while the other men assisted in freeing the rudder from the sand. Once we were off the road, the current swept us south—back toward the jute field. Rasaparayana tried to start the engine, but it was damaged. We grabbed the bamboo poles and sunk them deep in the mud, forcing the boat into open waters. At last we anchored. For two hours afterwards we floated in the flood waters, chanting Hare Krishna softly on our beads while Rasaparayana repaired the engine.

By 12:00 we were heading east toward Mayapur. We swung around and approached the village on the south side. There were no trees, but we cut our way through the ruins of what had been a prosperous village. We turned on the Hare Krishna loudspeaker, and Maharaja announced our program to the men on the shore. Suddenly people began to emerge from every corner of what remained of the village. They came toward us like a tidal wave, surrounding the boat, begging for food. Small children stuck their bowls in the boat windows and older boys tried to climb on board. The shoreline was jammed with women and babies, and faces peered out from each hut. Maharaja called for the village leader while our men held the crowd away from the boat. How could six of us organize and feed such an uncontrolled mass? Finally we came up with a plan. The village leader called for the head of each family by name. Each received 2 kilos of rice. The names were recorded, and each man waited his turn as we distributed from the front of the boat.

October 9:

The water level has dropped to about 10 feet in most areas. As the water recedes, our boat travel becomes more difficult. Every morning now we load three country boats with rice, lentils, wheat and fuel. One goes to Phukitala for

*(continued on page 34)*

PHOTO: BHARGAVA DASA

**Powdered milk** for the people of Bamanpukar. Prabhāsa dāsa (shown top and left) and other devotees run a flood relief kitchen. "They build a fire, cook 200 kilos of kichari, offer it to Krishna and distribute freely."





# The Stealing Of the Boys and Calves

With the sudden disappearance of the cowherd boys and calves, Lord Kṛṣṇa made sure no one — not even their parents — would know they were missing.

Fifty centuries ago Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, appeared on earth in the village of Vṛndāvana, in northern India, and displayed His transcendental pastimes as a cowherd boy.

One day Lord Kṛṣṇa brought His friends to the Yamunā River and said, “Just see how this riverbank is extremely beautiful because of its pleasing atmosphere. And just see how the blooming lotuses are attracting bees and birds by their aroma. The humming and chirping of the bees and birds is echoing throughout the beautiful trees in the forest. Also, here the sands are clean and soft. Therefore, this must be considered the best place for our sporting and pastimes.”

This description of Vṛndāvana forest was spoken by Kṛṣṇa five thousand years ago, and the same sounds and atmosphere still prevail. Vṛndāvana forest is always filled with the chirping and cooing of birds like cuckoos, ducks, cranes, and peacocks, and everyone who visits there is pleased to hear these sounds.

Kṛṣṇa then said, “I think we should take our lunch here, since we are already hungry because the time is very late. Here the calves may drink water and go slowly here and there and eat the grass.”

Accepting Lord Kṛṣṇa’s proposal, the cowherd boys allowed the calves to drink water from the river and then tied them to trees where there was green, tender grass. Then the boys opened their baskets of food and began eating with Kṛṣṇa in great transcendental pleasure.

Like the whorl of a lotus flower surrounded by petals and leaves, Kṛṣṇa sat in the center, encircled by His friends, who all looked very beautiful. Every one of them was trying to look toward Kṛṣṇa, thinking that Kṛṣṇa might look toward him. In this way they all enjoyed their

lunch in the forest. If we, too, can keep Kṛṣṇa in the center, all our activities will automatically become beautiful and blissful.

Among the cowherd boys, some placed their lunch on flowers; some on leaves, fruits, or bunches of leaves, some actually in their baskets; some on the bark of trees; and some on rocks.

Sometimes one friend would say, “Kṛṣṇa, see how relishable my food is,” and Kṛṣṇa would take some and laugh. In this way the friends very jubilantly began to eat.

Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is *yajña-bhuk*—that is, He eats only offerings of *yajña* (sacrifice)—but to exhibit His childhood pastimes, He now sat with His flute tucked between His waist and His tight cloth on His right side and with His horn bugle and cow-driving stick on His left. Holding in His hand a very nice preparation of yogurt and rice, with pieces of suitable fruit between His fingers, He sat like the whorl of a lotus flower, looking forward toward all His friends, personally joking with them, and creating jubilant laughter among them as He ate. The inhabitants of the higher planets were astonished at how the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who eats only when *yajña* is offered, was now eating like an ordinary child with His friends in the forest.

While the cowherd boys, who knew nothing within the core of their hearts but Kṛṣṇa, were thus engaged in eating their lunch, the calves went far away, deep into the forest, being allured by green grass.

When Kṛṣṇa saw that His friends the cowherd boys were frightened, He (the fierce controller of fear itself) said, just to mitigate their fear, “My dear friends, do not stop eating. I shall bring your calves back to this spot by personally going after them Myself.”

In the presence of Kṛṣṇa’s friendship, a devotee cannot have any fear. Kṛṣṇa is the supreme controller, the controller even of death, which is supposed to be the ultimate fear in this material world. Therefore, everyone should take shelter of the Supreme Person, who is the source of fearlessness, and thus be secure.

“Let Me go and search for the calves,” Kṛṣṇa said. “Don’t disturb your enjoyment.” Then, carrying His yogurt and rice in His hand, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, immediately went out to search for the calves. To please His friends, He began searching through all the mountains, mountain caves, bushes, and narrow passages.

The *Vedas* assert that the Supreme Personality of Godhead has nothing to do personally, because He is doing everything—creating, maintaining, and destroying millions of universes—through His energies and potencies. Nonetheless, here we see that He took personal care to find the calves of His friends. This was Kṛṣṇa’s causeless mercy.

All this time the great demigod Brahmā, the appointed supervisor of this particular universe, had been watching Kṛṣṇa. Brahmā decided to show some of his own power and test the power of Kṛṣṇa, who was engaged in His childhood pastimes. Therefore, in Kṛṣṇa’s absence Brahmā took all the boys and calves to another place. Thus he became entangled, for in the very near future he would see how powerful Kṛṣṇa was. Even the demigods cannot understand Kṛṣṇa. Everyone, from Brahmā down to

Lord Balarāma (right) asked His brother Kṛṣṇa why the cows and cowherd men had become so unusually affectionate toward their offspring.



10-3-2





the small insect, must take lessons from Kṛṣṇa.

Thereafter, when Kṛṣṇa was unable to find the calves, He returned to the bank of the river, but there He was also unable to see the cowherd boys. Kṛṣṇa could immediately understand that Brahmā had taken away both the calves and the boys, but as an innocent child He searched here and there, so that Brahmā could not understand His mind. This was all a dramatic performance. A player knows everything, but still he plays on the stage in such a way that others do not understand him. Brahmā was already bewildered by Kṛṣṇa's activities as an innocent child, and now he would be further bewildered. This pastime is thus called *brahma-vimohana*, the bewilderment of Brahmā.

Thereafter, just to create pleasure both for Brahmā and for the mothers of the calves and cowherd boys, Kṛṣṇa, the creator of the entire cosmic manifestation, expanded Himself as calves and boys. Thus Kṛṣṇa reestablished the lunch pastimes in the forest, replacing all the calves and boys just as they had appeared before. According to the *Vedas*, the Personality of Godhead can become many, many millions upon millions of calves and cowherd boys, as He did to bewilder Brahmā more and more.

At once Kṛṣṇa expanded Himself into the exact number of missing cowherd boys and calves, with their exact bodily features, their particular types of hands, legs and other limbs, their sticks, bugles and flutes, their lunch bags, their particular types of dress and ornaments placed in various ways, their names, ages and forms, and their special activities and qualities. By expanding Himself in this way, beautiful Kṛṣṇa proved the statement *samagra-jagat viṣṇu-mayā*, "Lord Viṣṇu is all-pervading."

**K**ṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the beginning of everything. He is the ever-youthful original person. He can expand Himself in more forms than one can imagine, yet He does not fall down from His original form as Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa thus proved that He is everything, that He can become everything, but that still He is personally different from everything. This is explained by different Kṛṣṇa conscious spiritual masters (*ācāryas*). Therefore one must learn about Kṛṣṇa from the *ācāryas*. *Ācāryavān puruṣo veda*: one who follows the path of the *ācāryas* knows things as they are. Such a person can know Kṛṣṇa as He is, at least to some extent, and as soon as one understands Kṛṣṇa, one is liberated from material bondage.

Now expanding Himself so as to appear as all the calves and cowherd boys, all of them as they were, and at the same time appearing as their leader, Kṛṣṇa entered the land of Vṛndāvana, just as He usually did. He was ordering His friends to do this and that, and He was controlling the calves and going into the forest to search for them when they went astray, allured by new grass. But these calves and boys were He Himself. This was Kṛṣṇa's inconceivable potency.

Kṛṣṇa, who had divided Himself as different calves and also as different cowherd boys, entered different cow sheds as the calves and then different homes as different boys. Kṛṣṇa had many friends, of whom Śrīdāmā, Sudāmā, and Subala were prominent. Thus Kṛṣṇa Himself became Śrīdāmā, Sudāmā, and Subala and entered their respective houses with their respective calves.

The mothers of the boys, upon hearing the sounds of the flutes and bugles being played by their sons, immediately rose from their household tasks, lifted their boys onto their laps, embraced them with both arms, and began to feed them with their breast milk, which flowed forth because of extreme love specifically for Kṛṣṇa. Although the elderly cowherd women (*gopīs*) knew that Kṛṣṇa was the son of mother Yaśodā, they still desired, "If Kṛṣṇa had become my son, I would also have taken care of Him like mother Yaśodā." This was their inner ambition. Now, in order to please them, Kṛṣṇa personally took the role of their sons and fulfilled their desire. They enhanced their special love for Kṛṣṇa by embracing Him and feeding Him, and Kṛṣṇa tasted their breast milk to be just like a nectarean beverage. While thus bewildering Brahmā, He enjoyed the special transcendental pleasure created between all the mothers and Himself. The mothers took care of the boys by massaging them with oil, bathing them, smearing their bodies with sandalwood pulp, decorating them with ornaments, chanting protective *mantras*, and giving them food. In this way, the mothers enjoyed serving Kṛṣṇa personally.

Thereafter, all the cows entered their different sheds and began mooing loudly, calling for their respective calves. When the calves arrived, the mothers began licking the calves' bodies again and again and profusely feeding them with the milk flowing from their milk bags. All the dealings between the calves and their respective mothers taking care of them were enacted by Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Although the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, the cowherd men and cowherd

women, previously had more affection for Kṛṣṇa than for their own children, now, for one year, their affection for their own sons continuously increased, for Kṛṣṇa had now become their sons. Every day they found new inspiration for loving their children as much as they loved Kṛṣṇa. In this way Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, having Himself become the cowherd boys and groups of calves, maintained Himself by Himself. Thus He continued His pastimes, both in Vṛndāvana and in the forest, for one year.

**O**ne day, five or six nights before the completion of the year, Kṛṣṇa, tending the calves, entered the forest along with His brother Balarāma. Up to this time even Balarāma was captivated by the bewilderment that covered Brahmā. Even Balarāma did not know that all the calves and cowherd boys were expansions of Kṛṣṇa or that He Himself was also an expansion of Kṛṣṇa.

While pasturing atop Govardhana Hill, the cows looked down to find some green grass and saw their calves pasturing near Vṛndāvana, not very far away. Generally, the calves and cows are pastured separately. The elderly men take care of the cows, and the small children see to the calves. This time, however, the cows immediately forgot their position as soon as they saw the calves below Govardhana Hill, and they ran with great force, their tails erect and their front and hind legs joined, until they reached their calves.

The cows had given birth to new calves, but while coming down from Govardhana Hill, the cows, because of increased affection for their older calves, allowed the older calves to drink milk from their milk bags and then began licking the calves' bodies in anxiety, as if wanting to swallow them.

The cowherd men, having been unable to check the cows from going to their older calves, felt simultaneously ashamed and angry. They crossed the rough road with great difficulty, but when they came down and saw their own sons, they were overwhelmed by great affection. Their anger completely disappearing, they lifted their sons and embraced them in their arms. Because the boys were actually Kṛṣṇa's expansions, the cowherd men were especially attracted to them. Thereafter, the elderly cowherd men, having obtained great feeling from embracing their sons, gradually and with great difficulty and reluctance ceased embracing them and returned to the forest. But as the men remembered their sons, tears began to roll down from their eyes.

These surprising events were taking



place by the manipulation of Kṛṣṇa's spiritual energy, *yogamāyā*. There are two *māyās*, or energies, working under the direction of Kṛṣṇa—*mahāmāyā*, the energy of the material world, and *yogamāyā*, the energy of the spiritual world. These uncommon events were taking place because of the influence of *yogamāyā*. From the very day on which Brahmā stole the calves and boys, *yogamāyā* acted in such a way that the residents of Vṛndāvana, including even Lord Balarāma, could not understand how *yogamāyā* was working and causing such uncommon things to happen. But as *yogamāyā* gradually acted, Balarāma in particular was able to understand what was happening, and therefore He began to consider as follows.

“What is this wonderful phenomenon? The affection of all the inhabitants of Vraja, including Me, toward these boys and calves is now increasing as never before, just like our affection for Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supersoul of all living entities.”

Balarāma was astonished to see all the residents of Vṛndāvana so affectionate for their own children, exactly as they had been for Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, the cows had grown affectionate for their calves—as much as for Kṛṣṇa. Balarāma was surprised to see the actions of *yogamāyā*. Therefore He inquired from Kṛṣṇa, “What is happening here? What is this

mystery?”

Balarāma was surprised. This extraordinary show of affection, He thought, was something mystical, performed either by the demigods or by some wonderful man. Otherwise, how could this wonderful change take place? “This *māyā* might be some *rākṣasī-māyā* [illusory energy of a demoness],” He thought, “but how can *rākṣasī-māyā* have any influence upon Me? This is not possible. [Lord Balarāma is as powerful as Lord Kṛṣṇa.] Therefore it must be the *māyā* of Kṛṣṇa.” Thus Balarāma understood that all these boys and calves were only expansions of Kṛṣṇa.

Thinking in this way, Lord Balarāma was able to see, with the eye of transcendental knowledge, that all these calves and Kṛṣṇa's friends were expansions of the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In daily life we see that every individual is different. There are even differences between twin brothers. Yet when Kṛṣṇa expanded Himself as the boys and calves, each boy and each calf appeared in his own original feature, with the same individual way of acting, the same tendencies, the same color, the same dress, and so on, for Kṛṣṇa manifested Himself with all these differences. This was Kṛṣṇa's opulence.

Inquiring from Kṛṣṇa about the actual

situation, Lord Balarāma said, “My dear Kṛṣṇa, in the beginning I thought that all these cows, calves, and cowherd boys were either great sages and saintly persons or demigods, but at the present it appears that they are actually Your expansions. They are all You; You Yourself are playing as the calves and cows and boys. What is the mystery of this situation? Where have those other calves and cows and boys gone? And why are You expanding Yourself as the cows, calves, and boys? Will You kindly tell Me what is the cause?”

At the request of Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa briefly explained the whole situation: how the calves and boys were stolen by Brahmā and how He was concealing the incident by expanding Himself so that people would not know that the original cows, calves, and boys were missing. Balarāma understood, therefore, that this was not *māyā* but Kṛṣṇa's opulence. Kṛṣṇa has all opulences, and this was but another opulence of Kṛṣṇa. According to the Vedic version, *eko bahu syāma*: Kṛṣṇa can expand Himself into many thousands and millions but still remain one.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE

[Adapted from the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, translation and commentary by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.]



## Relief for the Hungry

This fall, severe floods devastated much of West Bengal. In the hard-hit district of Nadia, ISKCON devotees used boats to reach isolated villagers with food—vegetarian meals cooked with devotion and offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa. After the waters receded, the devotees fed up to 20,000 people a day.

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# FLOOD DIARY

(continued from page 29)

the free kitchen. The others go to Balaudigi and Bamanpukar, two other settlements where the devotees run flood relief kitchens. They build a fire, cook 200 kilos of kichari, offer it to Krishna and distribute freely.

This morning the launch was loaded

with a huge drum of cooked wheat and towed a country boat behind it with another 8 drums. We headed northeast toward the Muslim settlement of Needaya. When the course was too difficult for the launch, we anchored and went slowly through the trees and overgrowth on the country boat. By the time we got to the main settlement, 1000 people were gathered on the water's edge. Jayapataka Maharaja called for the

village leaders and once again we distributed prasada from the boat. Afterwards we inspected the temporary huts, the sanitation arrangement, and the livestock facility. We talked with the leaders about the needs of the settlement, and the number of homeless people. When the water subsides we will begin village redevelopment.

October 13:

This is the tenth day of the emergency food relief program. We have been working day and night. While some devotees cook, others load boats, and others remain in the village to staff the free kitchen. Supplies are coming daily from Calcutta, and donations are coming in from the West.

This morning a representative from CARE and newsmen from NBC, ABC, BBC and the local media came with us to the launch. We headed west to Indrakpur, a spread-out settlement of more than 3000 cowherds and their livestock. We anchored the launch at a distance from the village and tried to proceed in the wooden boat. The flood had subsided there and we moved slowly through the thick mud and water, struggling with the fallen trees and overgrowth. Several boys spotted us and came close. We sent them to call the people from all sides of the settlement because the boat could go no further. Soon they came—wading through the swampy fields with their children and their bowls. "Hare Krishna! Hare Rama!" they shouted as we distributed hundreds of kilos of wheat. With their help we pushed the boat back to deep water and then we returned to the temple.

October 14:

The temple grounds are still flooded but most of the northern villages are dry. The free kitchens are running successfully, but our village-to-village emergency work can no longer be done by boat. Now we will change to jeep or buffalo cart. The roads and railways are destroyed. The stagnant floodwaters breed cholera, smallpox and typhoid. The homeless people lie on the bare ground, completely dependent on God and His servants. Their crops are destroyed, their livestock drowned.

Now we will turn our attention toward rebuilding the villages. First there must be houses; then there must be looms. The weavers will work in co-ops and the village men will join to reconstruct the residences and the places of worship. At last the land must be cleared and planted. With Lord Kṛṣṇa's help, the devastated land of Bengal will again produce food for its people.

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## LETTERS

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true religion is:

“Unless one comes to the Absolute Truth, there is no possibility of agreement. *Nāsāv ṛṣir yasya matam na bhinnam*: it is said that a great learned scholar or sage cannot be exalted unless he disagrees. On the material platform, there is no possibility of agreement; therefore there are different kinds of religious systems. However, the Absolute Truth is one, and when one is situated in the Absolute Truth, there is no disagreement. On that absolute platform the Supreme Personality of Godhead is worshipable, as stated in *Bhagavad-gītā (bhakti-yā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ)*. On the absolute platform, the worshipable Deity is one, and the process of worship is also one. That process is *bhakti* (devotional service).

“There are many different religions throughout the world because they are not all on the absolute platform of devotional service. As confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā (18.66)*, *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekam śaraṇam vraja*. The word *ekam* means ‘one,’ *Kṛṣṇa*. On this platform [the platform of devotional service to the Supreme Lord, or *Kṛṣṇa*], there are no different religious systems. According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.1.2)*, *dharmāḥ projjhita-kaitavo 'tra*. On the material platform, religious systems are different. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes them from the very beginning as *dharmāḥ kaitavaḥ*, cheating religions. None of these religions are actually genuine. The genuine religious system is that which enables one to become a lover of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In the words of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.6)*:

*sa vai pumsām paro dharmo  
yato bhaktir adhokṣaje  
ahaituky apratihātā  
yayātmā suprasidati*

“The supreme occupation [for religious principle] for all humanity is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendent Lord. Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted in order to completely satisfy the self.”

“On this platform there is nothing but the service of the Lord. When a person has no ulterior motive, there is certainly oneness and agreement of principles. Since everyone has a different body and mind, different types of religions are needed. But when one is situated on the spiritual platform, there are no bodily and mental differences. So on the absolute platform there is oneness in religion.”



# NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

## Plastic Surgery: Facing the Facts

“Across the nation last week,” *Time* noted recently, “surgery offices were under siege by callers who had seen the results of a notable example of cosmetic surgery, evident in before-and-after pictures of the former First Lady in the Sunday newspapers. . . . There is a growing national tendency to regard cosmetic surgery as a badge of sophistication rather than of vanity.”

Yet we can't help being reminded of the words of Ecclesiastes: “Vanity of vanities. All is vanity.” We are also struck that Americans are so willing to undergo great hardships for temporary, material happiness. A materialist may argue, “If a face-lift makes someone happy, then what's the objection?” Here's the objection—no one can find real happiness in a face-lift.

Both the materialist and the Kṛṣṇa devotee claim that their goal is happiness. But they disagree totally on how to obtain it. For the devotee, face-lifting is an utter waste of time. “But,” the materialist points out, “it works!” “The woman looks absolutely spectacular!” said newsmen who saw Betty Ford after her operation. Yet they admitted, “If all goes well, the face-lift will last from four to eight years.” That means her “absolutely spectacular” face is an illusion. The wrinkles will reappear; the chin and neck will sag again. Time waits for no plastic surgeon. Before-and-after photos may convince fools to get face-lifts, but it's only sleight of hand, an illusion.

Besides, even normal, non-surgically-simulated youth is temporary, another deception. Does youth really give people happiness? It doesn't seem so. Happiness lies much deeper than skin-deep. It means much more than becoming “youth-oriented.” In fact, people who run after temporary solutions are indirectly admitting that material life is not a natural state of happiness. But if they can just hold off this ever-present feeling of frustration, at least momentarily—either by surgery or by drugs, alcohol, music, clothes, travel, anything—then they look upon this temporary holding action as happiness.

So? Where is the proof that happiness has ever been anything but temporary? That proof is available for whoever will sincerely inquire. Since time immemorial, whoever has taken the authorized path of self-realization has found the

bliss that the spirit soul enjoys in relation to Kṛṣṇa. Unfortunately, though, many people never take up the path of self-realization; without any serious examination, they discount the importance of the soul.

The reason people don't inquire into spiritual life is that they have already taken a vow to pursue the path of material sense gratification. Thousands of years ago the great devotee Prahāda Mahārāja analyzed the situation: “Because of their uncontrolled senses, persons too addicted to materialistic life make progress toward hellish conditions and repeatedly chew that which has already been chewed. Their inclinations toward Kṛṣṇa are never aroused, either by the instructions of others, by their own efforts, or by a combination of both.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.5.30)

Although champions of cosmetic surgery would like to ignore the laws of nature and the Supreme, they have inadvertently reached some of the same conclusions. For example, Lord Kṛṣṇa declares, “As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, similarly, the soul accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones.” (*Bhāgavad-gītā* 2.22) And there is a similar meaning in Betty Ford's statement, “I'm sixty years old and I wanted a nice new face to go with my beautiful new life.” Both Lord Kṛṣṇa and Betty Ford understand that although the body is changing, the self remains the same. The assumption in plastic surgery is that the body should be treated just like clothing: if your clothing wears out, there's nothing wrong with replacing it. But the surgeons don't have the knowledge or power to bring their clients any lasting bodily improvement.

As Kṛṣṇa goes on to explain, not just the face but the entire body will be lifted at the time of death, by a delicate operation which is ultimately in His hands. “As the embodied soul continually passes in this body from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. The self-realized soul is not bewildered by such a change.” (Bg. 2.13) Those who are flocking to the surgeons seem to have some small awareness that their real self is different from their body. They seem to know that however they may change their face, their inner iden-

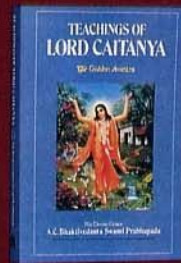
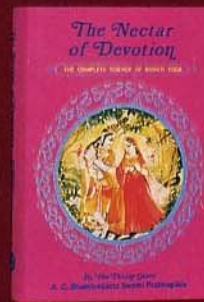
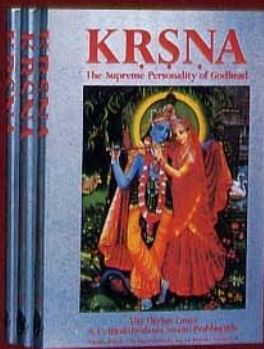
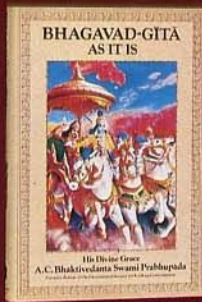
tity will remain. But precisely because cosmetic surgery is no more than a superficial meddling, it brings no real happiness to the permanent inner self. A prominent plastic surgeon, Dr. Lawrence Robbins, has admitted, “We can't change what they are.”

At the time of death, *karma*—nature's reactions to the actions we perform in this body—will carry the inner self to another body. This is transmigration, the ultimate face-lift. And just as the plastic surgeons admit “some faces are changed for the worse,” so by nature's way if we misuse our present body, our next one may be a change for the worse. We all want to be happy and youthful, but if we go counter to the codes of God, especially by neglecting self-realization and committing sinful acts, then the law of *karma* will force us to take our next body in a lower species.

A plastic surgeon named Dr. Peter McKinney partially recognized this fact when he warned that face-lifting has its risks: “If you buy a bum toaster, you can take it back. You can't take your face back.” He might have added that if you waste your human body (with its refined facial features), in your next life you may have to make do with the face of a dog or a mouse, with no chance of going to the plastic surgeon. A person who has gotten himself into an animal body has to live millions of lives in lower species, until he can fully evolve again to the human form of life. So the human form of life is not meant to be wasted in vanities. It has a relatively short duration, and it's intended for developing self-realization, culminating in love of God. If someone fails to achieve love of God in his human lifetime, this is the greatest tragedy.

Behind the fad of face-lifting is the inner desire to be permanently happy and youthful. This is the soul's constitutional nature, and it's quite normal for us to want these things, but people are going about it in the wrong way. We have to investigate how we can revive our spiritual knowledge. The Kṛṣṇa conscious process of chanting the holy names of God (the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*) involves no loss or risk. Sainly persons and scriptures have recommended this treatment for thousands of years. By chanting the names of God we can purify our hearts and attain to the eternally youthful and blissful spiritual existence. —SDG





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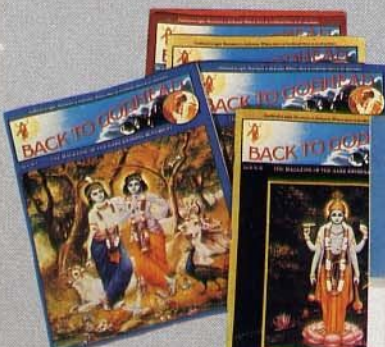
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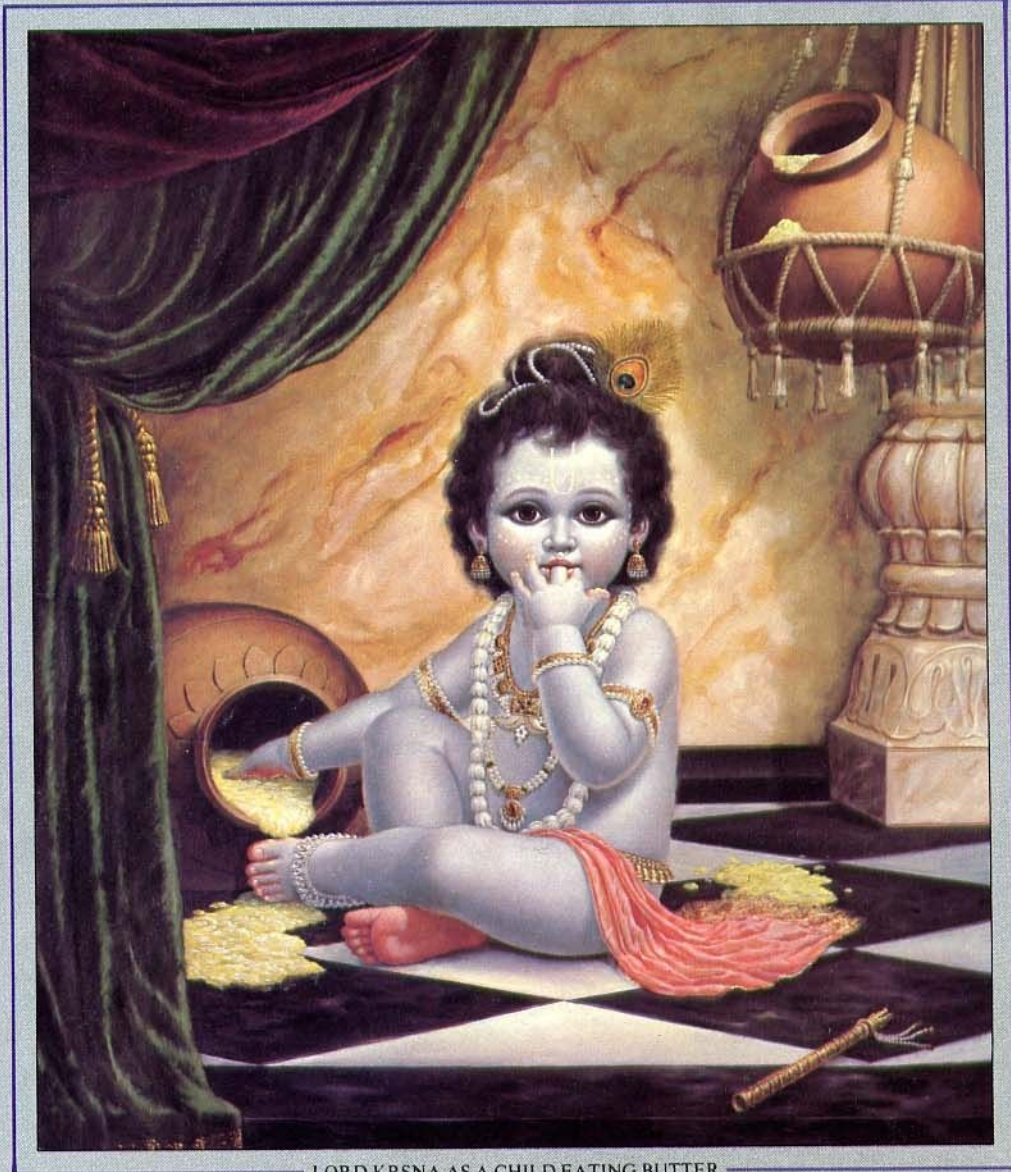
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