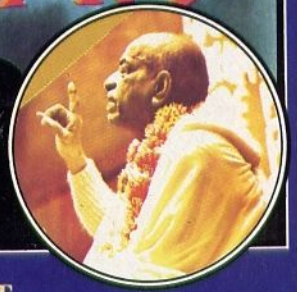


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



# BACK TO GODHEAD



Vol. 15, No. 1-2 THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



A Force for Unity in the U.K. (See page 22)

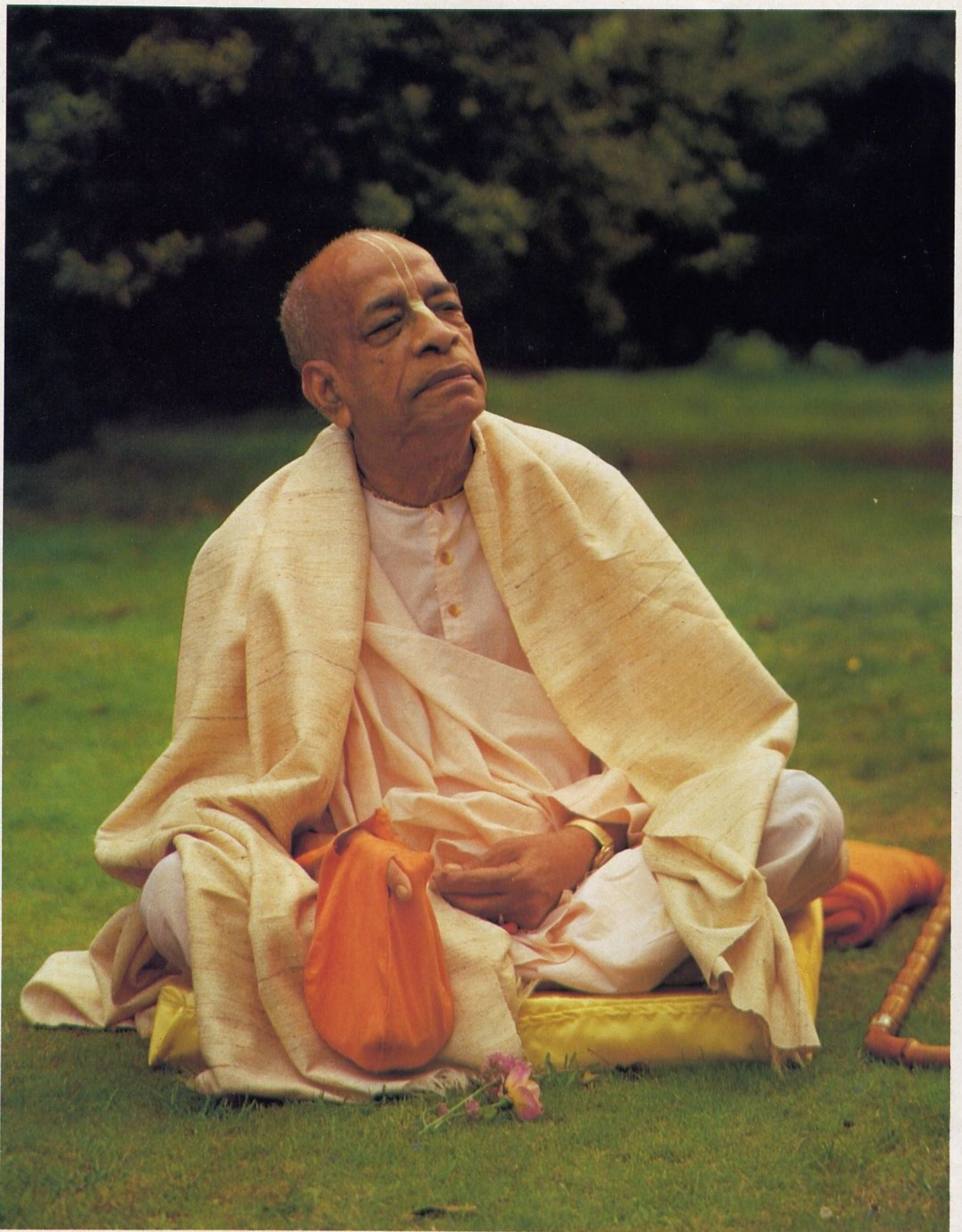


PHOTO: BHARGAVA DASA

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

# BACK TO GODHEAD

VOL. 15, NO. 1-2

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. Bhaktivedānta 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 **plique**. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **rl** in **rlm**, and **e**  
like the **ch** in **chair**. Pronounce the aspirated consonants  
(**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. Bhaktivedānta 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 standard in  
universities worldwide. Meanwhile, traveling almost  
nonstop, Śrīla Prabhupāda molded his international  
society into a worldwide confederation of *āśramas*,  
schools, temples, and farm communities. He passed  
away in 1977 in India's Vṛndāvana, the place most sacred  
to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and his disciples are carrying forward the  
movement he started.

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**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."

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**COVER: Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, the Divine Couple.** Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and Rādhā, His eternal consort and personified pleasure potency, stand on Their altar at Bhaktivedānta Manor, ISKCON's rural *āśrama* near London. Unlimited though He is, the Lord mercifully manifests Himself in His Deity form to attract us back to the spiritual world. (Cover photo: Muralīvadana dāsa.)



One truth ties all world religions together.

# THE AIM OF ALL FAITHS

A lecture by HIS DIVINE GRACE  
A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

The Lord says that the purpose of all Vedic instruction is to achieve the highest goal of life, to go back to Godhead. The aim of any scripture of any country—not only the *Bhagavad-gītā*, but any scripture—is simply to get us back to Godhead. That is the purpose. Take for example any of the great religious reformers, or *ācāryas*, of any country. In your country, Lord Jesus Christ—or Lord Buddha. Of course, Lord Buddha advented himself in India, but later on his philosophy was broadcast all over Asia. Then Śrīla Vyāsadeva, Muhammad—take any great representative of the Lord—none of them will tell you to make your best plans to live peacefully in this material world. That is a common factor. There may be some little differences in the scriptural injunctions according to the country, climate, and situation, but the main principle is that we are not meant to remain in this material world.

We have our real home in the spiritual world. That is accepted by everyone. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa says, *yogī paraṁ sthānam upaiti cādyam*. For the *yogī* the chief aim of life is to get into the spiritual kingdom. That is the highest ambition of the *yogī*, of the transcendentalist.

In the beginning of the Ninth Chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Personality of

Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is speaking: *śrī-bhagavān uvāca*. I have several times described what this word *bhagavān* means. *Bhaga* means “opulence,” and *vān* means “one who possesses.” *Bhagavān*. Everything has its definition. So in the Vedic scriptures we’ll find the definition of *God*. We have got some conception of *God*. But in the Vedic literatures we’ll find the definite description of what is meant by *God*. What we mean by *God* is described in one word: *bhagavan*, or “one who possesses opulence.”

What are the opulences? The Vedic literatures say,

*aiśvaryasya samagrasya  
vīryasya yaśasaḥ śrīyaḥ  
jñāna-vairāgyayoś caiva  
ṣaṅṅām bhaga itīṅgīṇā*

*Bhaga*: these are the opulences. *Aiśvarya* means “wealth.” *Vīryasya* means “strength.” *Yaśasaḥ* means “fame.” *Śrīyaḥ* means “beauty.” *Jñāna* means “knowledge.” And *vairāgya* means “renunciation.” When you find these six opulences presented in a personality in full, He is *God*. He is *God*. That is the description of *God*.

You have many rich men here in your New York City, but nobody can claim that he is the richest of all, that he has got all the riches of the world. Nobody can claim

that. But if you find somebody who actually owns all of the riches of the world or the universe, He’s *God*. He is *God*.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* you’ll find:

*bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasām  
sarva-loka-maheśvaram  
suhṛdaṁ sarva-bhūtānām  
jñātvā mām śāntim ṛcchati*

*Bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasām*: Lord Kṛṣṇa says that He is the supreme enjoyer of all kinds of activities. *Sarva-loka-maheśvaram*: He is the proprietor of all the planets. *Loka* means “planets.” We are the proprietor of a certain extent of land here, and we are very much proud. But *God* says, “I am the proprietor of all the planets.” And *suhṛdaṁ sarva-bhūtānām*: He is the friend of all living entities. *Jñātvā mām śāntim ṛcchati*: when a person understands that *God* is the proprietor of everything, that *God* is the friend of everyone, and that *God* is the enjoyer of everything—by knowing these three things, one becomes very peaceful. That is the peace formula.

You cannot become peaceful as long as you think, “I am the proprietor.” You are not actually the proprietor. You cannot claim proprietorship. Take, for example, this land of America. Say about four hundred years ago, the red Indians were the

proprietors of this country. Now you are the proprietors. And after four hundred years, or a thousand years, somebody else will come. They'll become the proprietors. So actually we are not the proprietors. The land is here, we come here, and we claim falsely, "I am the proprietor." Therefore, the *Īsopaniṣad* states, *tīṣāvāsyam idam sarvam*: "Everything belongs to God." Everything belongs to God. Nothing belongs to me. Actually, this is the fact. Therefore God is the richest person.

Nowadays you'll find, especially in India, that there are dozens of "incarnations of God." But if you ask one of them, "Are you the proprietor of everything?" oh, that is very difficult to answer. These are the checks—how you can understand who is God. God must be the proprietor of everything. And He must be more powerful than anyone. When Kṛṣṇa was present on this earth, nobody could conquer Him. There is not a single instance in which Kṛṣṇa was defeated. He belonged to the *kṣatriya* family; He identified Himself as a *kṣatriya*. The *kṣatriyas* are meant for giving protection to the poor, to the weak. So He belonged to the royal family. He fought so many adversaries while He remained on this earth, but in no fight was He defeated. Therefore He was the most powerful. As far as His opulence is concerned, from *Bhāgavatam* we find that He married 16,108 wives, and every wife had a different palace. He expanded Himself into 16,108 to live with each of His wives. These facts are recorded in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Therefore all the great *ācāryas*, the great scholars of India, have accepted this fact—that Kṛṣṇa is God, Bhagavān.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* was written by Śrīla Vyāsadeva, after being spoken by Lord Kṛṣṇa. What did the Lord say?

*idam tu te guhyatamaṁ  
pravakṣyāmy anasūyave  
jñānam vijñāna-sahitam  
yaj jñātvā mokṣyase 'śubhāt*

"My dear Arjuna, now I shall impart to you the topmost knowledge." *Idam tu te guhyatamaṁ*. *Guhyatamaṁ* means "most confidential." There are different grades of knowledge. But here the Lord says, "Just now I'm going to explain that which is the most confidential part of knowledge."

*Pravakṣyāmy anasūyave*. *Anasūyave*: this very word is used. *Anasūyave* means "one who does not envy." *Does not envy*. For instance, when the Lord says, "I am the proprietor of all planets," somebody may say, "Oh, Kṛṣṇa is claiming the proprietorship of everything. How is that?" This is because in the material world we are always envious. If somebody is in some way greater than us, we are envious. "Oh,

how has he progressed so much?" This is the disease of the material world—envy. So we are envious of God, also. When God says, "I am the proprietor," we disbelieve it. That is why this word is used—*anasūyave*. Arjuna is hearing from Lord Kṛṣṇa without any enviousness. He's accepting exactly what Kṛṣṇa says. This is the way of understanding. We cannot understand who God is by our mental speculation. We simply have to hear from authoritative sources and accept. Other-

---

If we accept,  
"God is great, let  
me surrender,"  
we can come to  
knowledge in a  
second. But now  
we are envious of  
any greatness,  
envious of God.

---

wise, there is no way to understand God.

So God says, "Because you are not envious, I shall speak to you about the most confidential part of knowledge." *Jñānam vijñāna-sahitam*. *Vijñāna-sahitam* means this knowledge is not theoretical, but is scientific. We should not think that whatever knowledge we get from *Bhagavad-gītā* is sentimentalism or fanaticism. No; it is all *vijñāna*, science. *Yaj jñātvā*: if you become well versed in this most confidential part of the knowledge, then the result will be *mokṣyase 'śubhāt*. *Aśubha* means "inauspicious." Our existence in this material world is *aśubha*—inauspicious, always miserable. But *mokṣyase*: you shall be liberated from this miserable life of material existence if you understand this knowledge.

So let us carefully understand what the Lord says to Arjuna about this knowledge. He says,

*rāja-vidyā rāja-guhyam  
pavitram idam uttamam  
pratyakṣāvagamam dharmyam  
susukham kartum avyayam*

"This knowledge is the king of education, the most secret of all secrets. It is the purest knowledge, and because it gives direct perception of the self by realization,

it is the perfection of religion. It is everlasting, and it is joyfully performed." [Bg. 9.2] This process of knowledge and purified activity which we are trying to propagate is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. "Topmost knowledge" means Kṛṣṇa consciousness, according to *Bhagavad-gītā*, because in the *Bhagavad-gītā* you'll find that the symptom of a person who is learned—who is actually in knowledge—will be that he has surrendered unto God. As long as we go on speculating about God but do not surrender, we will not achieve the perfection of knowledge.

The perfection of knowledge is *jñānavān mān prapadyate*: after many, many births of mental and philosophical speculation, when one actually understands God's position, one at once surrenders. As long as we do not surrender, we cannot understand God in truth. *Bahūnām janmanām ante*: the Lord says that one achieves real knowledge only after many, many births. Not all of a sudden. Of course, if we accept "God is great; let me surrender," then we can come to the platform of knowledge in a second. But our present position is to become envious of God. "Why shall I surrender unto God? I am independent. I shall work independently." Therefore, to rectify these misgivings we have to spend many lifetimes.

If there is any perfect name of God, that is "Kṛṣṇa." Why?

*kṛṣir bhū-vācakah śabdo  
naś ca nirvṛti-vācakah  
taylor aikyam param brahma  
kṛṣṇa ity abhidhīyate*

*Kṛṣ* means "repetition of birth," and *na* means "one who ends." The one who ends our repetition of birth is called *Kṛṣṇa*. Our repetition of birth can be ended only by God. Otherwise it is not possible. *Harim vinā naiva sṛtiṁ taranti*: one cannot stop one's repetition of birth and death without having the causeless mercy of God. Therefore, *Kṛṣṇa* is a scientific name of God. Of course, God has many names. For example, *Vāsudeva* means "all-pervading." So *vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ*: if after many, many births, one understands that Vāsudeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is everything, he has reached the perfection of knowledge, and at that time he surrenders. The whole *Bhagavad-gītā* teaches this science.

*Pratyakṣāvagamam dharmyam*. *Dharmyam* means the religious principles. *Susukham kartum avyayam*. *Susukham* means that it is very joyful to execute. The devotional service you perform will never cease to exist. It is permanent. We do many things which have no permanent effect. For instance, suppose we work in

(continued on page 30)

Good nutrition, a balanced budget,  
and a clean conscience are only the beginning . . .

# DIET FOR A SPIRITUAL PLANET

by RŪPĀNUGA DĀSA

When Lord Kṛṣṇa speaks in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, He clarifies the ultimate purpose of vegetarianism: "If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit, or water, I will accept it." (Bg. 9.26) In itself, vegetarianism basically means nonviolence, protecting the animals—but offering vegetarian foods to Kṛṣṇa and later accepting them as his mercy (*prasāda*) means a lot more: *bhakti-yoga*, or becoming conscious of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When combined with the chanting of the Supreme Lord's holy names—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—strict vegetarianism becomes more than a mere ethical principle or rational, humane way of life; it becomes the simplest, most pleasant means in the world for spiritual realization.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the spiritual reason for vegetarianism, includes all the other reasons—ethical, aesthetic, nutritional, economic, medical—in the same way that a five-hundred-dollar bill includes all the potencies of a hundred-dollar bill or a twenty-dollar bill or a ten- or five- or one-dollar bill. Only the freshest, most succulent, most nutritious, and most aesthetically pleasing kinds of foods are prepared and offered to Kṛṣṇa. Still, because we are scientifically minded, we should carefully analyze the many advantages of eating Kṛṣṇa *prasāda*—of being a strict, spiritually-minded vegetarian. We



PHOTO: VISAKHA-DEVIDASI

**Careful selection and combination** of vegetarian foods easily provides the minimum daily requirement of protein, vitamins, minerals, and other essential nutrients. And when such meals are prepared for and offered to the Lord with devotion, they become *prasāda* ("the Lord's mercy"), which is both healthful and spiritually purifying.

will also examine some of the more important objections to vegetarianism.

We can define a "strict vegetarian" as someone who totally abstains from meat, fish, and eggs. Some vegetarians, called "vegans," abstain not only from meat but also from milk, because they fear pesticides and cholesterol. However, fruits, grains, and vegetables contain no cholesterol, so a vegetarian could drink a quart of milk and eat a few ounces of cheese

every day without topping the maximum recommended allowance of cholesterol. Without taking milk, one is doomed to consume piles of algae, seaweed, sesame seeds, or pills to obtain essential vitamin B-12 and calcium. As for pesticides, practically everything we eat has some, because of widespread use of chemical fertilizers. The so-called ovo-vegetarians cannot be accepted as strict vegetarians, because they eat eggs, which are, after all, simply calcium-covered flesh, artificially mass-produced under conditions not justifiable in view of the numerous other sources of protein. But the term *lacto* (milk-drinking) *vegetarian* is acceptable. Taking milk of cows that may later be slaughtered does not in any way condone cow-killing, and if we had the opportunity, we would close the slaughterhouses immediately.

## Objections by Nonvegetarians

One of the strongest objections nonvegetarians raise against vegetarianism is that vegetarians still have to kill plants, and that this is also violence. But it is nonsensical to equate fully sentient animals like cows with lowly vegetables. Besides, we really have to eat plants, fruits, grains, and so on, because the vitamins and minerals found only in these vegetarian foods are essential to keep body and soul together. Certainly, plants are as *alive* as cows; modern experiments prove that plants have feelings,<sup>1</sup> and the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the essence of all Vedic teachings, confirms that all life forms contain spirit souls qualitatively equal to one another. But still, we have to eat *something*, and the *Vedas* also say, *jīvo*

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*jīvasya jīvanam*: one living entity is food for another in the struggle for existence. So from a humane standpoint, the problem in choosing a diet is not how to avoid killing altogether—an impossible proposal—but how to cause the least suffering while meeting the nutritional needs of the body. A well-balanced diet of fruits, grains, vegetables, and milk products meets these criteria, and this diet is recommended in such scriptures as the *Bhagavad-gītā* as most truly human.

Another common objection to vegetarianism is, "Jesus Christ ate meat, so why shouldn't we?" But vegetarian Christians point out that the ancient Greek, from which the New Testament was translated, does not support the contention that Christ ate meat.<sup>2</sup> For example, Greek words like *brosimos*, *prosphegion*, and *trophe*, all of which mean simply "food" or "nourishment," were loosely translated as "meat" (except in the New English Bible). And, vegetarian Christians assert, where the Bible states that Christ was offered fish and a honeycomb and accepted "it" (singular), *it* means the honeycomb. In the Old Testament a verse predicts this of the youthful Christ: "He shall eat butter and honey, that he may know to refuse the evil and to choose the good." (Isaiah 7:15) The purport would seem to be that to behave otherwise would lead to a brutish mentality, which cannot be accepted in the character of Christ.

When we look for the reasons behind widespread meat-eating, we find that many people have been conditioned to it from

childhood ("Finish your plate, dear; there are people starving in India"), and they feel guilty if they don't indulge. In addition, myths about the necessity of flesh-eating persist, even in the face of volumes of scientific evidence to the contrary. Even the National Live Stock and Meat Board admits that a vegetarian diet can provide adequate nutrition.<sup>3</sup>

### Protein Percentages Compared

Meat-eaters argue, "But meat is a perfect, complete protein, while I'd have to spend hours purchasing, cooking, and combining the right vegetables to get enough protein every day."

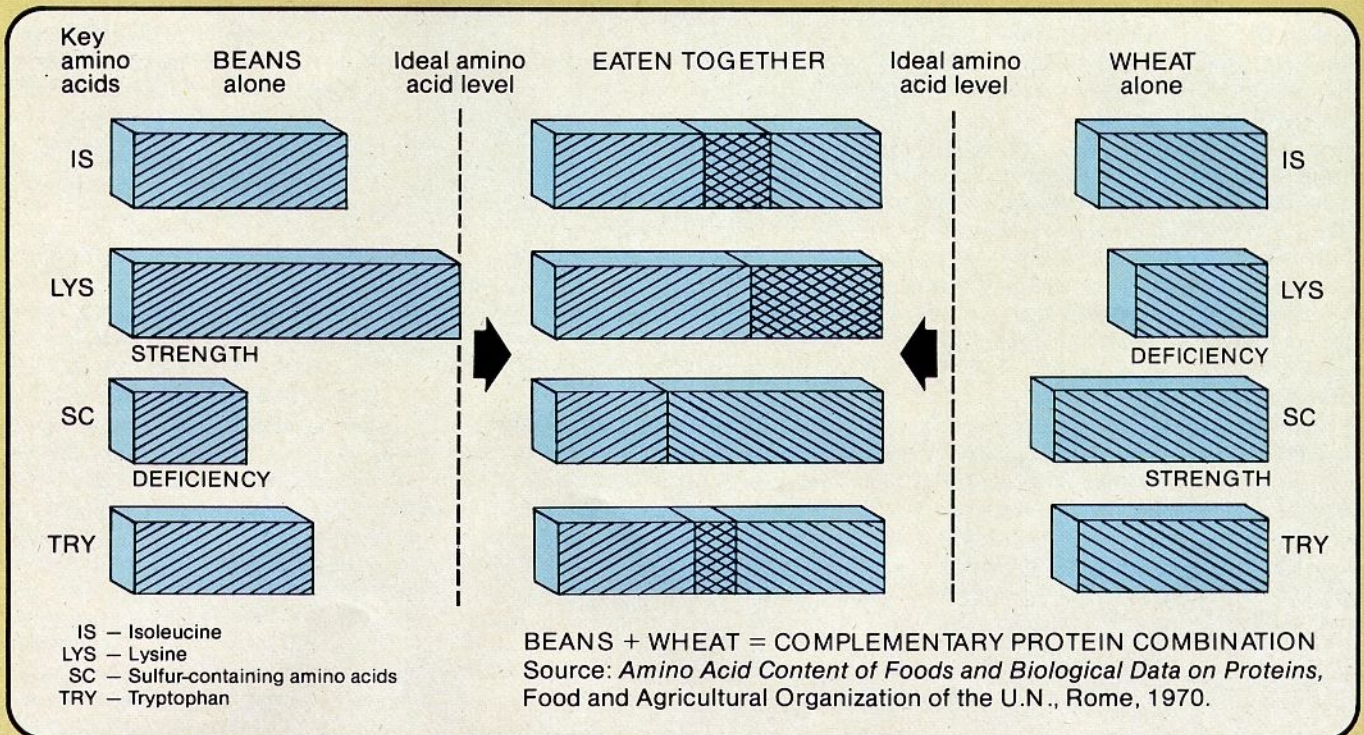
First of all, meat is not "pure" or "perfect" protein, but at best 25-30% protein. Its net protein utilization (NPU, the amount actually digested and absorbed by the body) is 67%, compared to 82% for milk, 70% for cheese, 67% for mung beans, and 60% for whole wheat.<sup>4</sup> By weight the above foodstuffs may have less protein than meat, but because their NPU is high, simply by eating more of them or combining them one can easily meet one's protein RDA (minimum recommended daily allowance). For example, milk is only 4 to 5% protein, but two cups give about 40% of the average usable protein RDA of 43.1 grams. A two-inch cube of cheese yields about 30%. And the objection that vegetarianism is too time-consuming is ridiculous. Complementarity, the right combination of foods, is as common-sense and natural as bread and butter, and it easily avoids dietary deficiencies. Furthermore,

complementarity increases the food value of the combined foods (see chart below). For example, the NPU of rice alone (60%) and beans alone (40%) increases by 43% when they are eaten together, and pairing milk with whole-wheat bread increases their combined NPU by 13%.

Besides, protein isn't everything. Essential nutrients like iron, potassium, magnesium, and calcium, as well as essential vitamins like C, A, riboflavin, niacin, and the B complex, are almost entirely absent in flesh foods. So vegetarian foods are absolutely necessary to maintain good health. What, then, is the reason for killing animals for food (besides habit, or a cultivated blood-lust), especially in American and European countries, which are rich in vegetarian foodstuffs? Even if some few insist upon eating cow carcasses, they need only wait for the animals to die naturally. Connoisseurs, who might object that such flesh would be too tough, should remember that slaughtered cow carcasses are far from fresh, since they are aged up to two weeks to dissipate and soften *rigor mortis*. Such purely aesthetic reasoning often produces vegetarians.

Many people are vegetarians for ethical reasons, believing that it is not at all possible to condone as "man's dominion" the slaughter of four billion animals each year.<sup>5</sup> Many others would no doubt take up vegetarianism if they visited a slaughterhouse, or if they themselves had to kill the animals they ate. Euphemisms like "sirloin," "brisket," or "cutlets" would then no longer hide the horror of cow butchery,

### Demonstrating Protein Complementarity





and the visiting shoppers would no longer agree to put the limbs or innards of cow bodies into their mouths. Such visits should be compulsory for all meat-eaters. Some may think, "So what? Who will punish me? The government makes no arrests for cow-killing." But they are mistaken: they will be punished, as we shall now see.

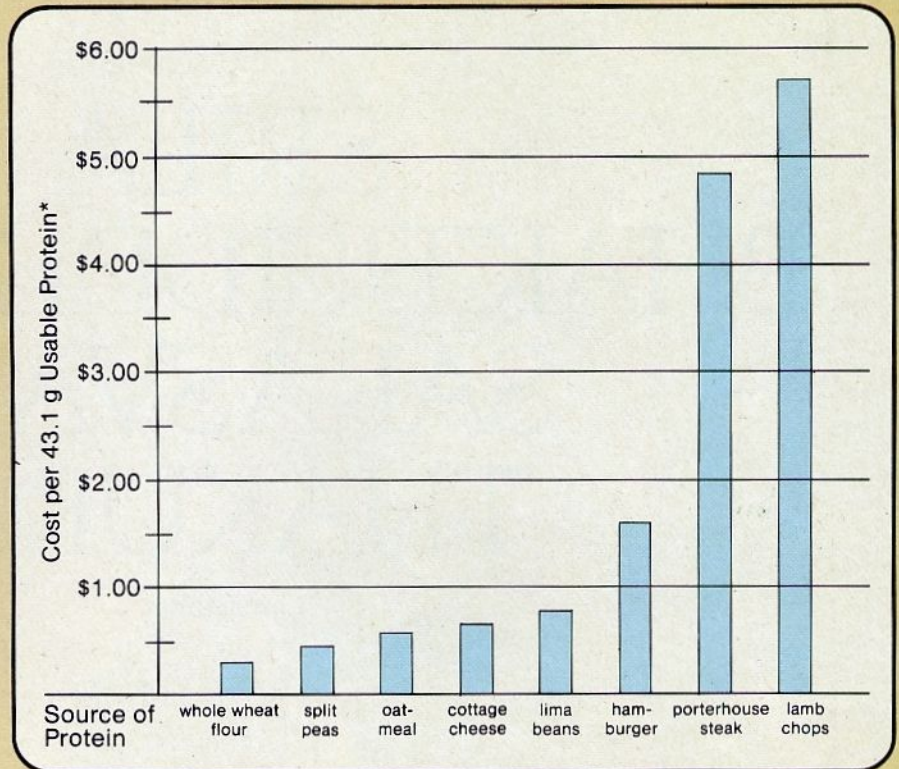
### Instant Karma, Insane Waste

The meat-rich American diet has been scientifically proven to cause disease. A few examples: Researchers have found that frying meat produces carcinogens, cancer-causing agents.<sup>6</sup> The breast milk of nonvegetarian women contains ten times as much pesticide as that of vegetarians. Many Americans, especially among the more well-to-do, eat almost twice as much protein as they need, and this often tends to leach calcium out of the bones into the bloodstream. This process can produce bone loss and brittleness around the age of forty. Evidence linking the American diet with cancer and other diseases prompted the U.S. Senate to call for an increase in vegetarian foodstuffs in the national diet.<sup>7</sup> Sodium nitrate, hormones, and antibiotics, given to animals in huge amounts to fatten and calm them, are passed on to the consumer and are thought by many researchers to be prime causes of disease.

Yet all these factors are not the original causes of disease, but are themselves manifestations of subtler causes—violations of the laws of nature. Humans are meant to eat vegetarian foods, but when their uncontrollable appetites drive them to eat flesh, they must suffer karmic reactions, which are shared equally by all those who participate in the slaughter—from cattlemen to butchers to shoppers to cooks to consumers. This is the real connection between diet and disease: instant *karma*! It may manifest immediately, as in the case of botulism, an often deadly poisoning, or later on, as in the case of bone loss; it may strike individually, as in the personal hell of cancer, or collectively, as in the mass slaughterhouse of the Bubonic Plague. But in any case, there is no escaping karmic reactions. We reap what we sow, in this life and the next, for nature has her justice above the state's.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* reveals how strict vegetarianism, when integrated with *bhakti-yoga*, can counteract *karma*: "Devotees are freed from karmic reactions because they first offer their food to the Lord, whereas others, who prepare food only for their personal sense gratification, eat only sin." (Bg. 3.13) In other words, anyone who dovetails his eating with the principles of *bhakti-yoga* becomes transcendental to all karmic reactions, while one who neglects to do so incurs bad

## Protein Cost Comparisons



\* 43.1 grams of usable protein is the recommended daily allowance for the average American male weighing 154 pounds.

Taken from *Diet for a Small Planet*, p. 359. Adjusted for Dec. 1979 prices.

*karma*. Moreover, one who acts without *karma* can dovetail his consciousness with God's and become aware of His personal presence at every step. This is the true benefit of *prasāda*.

Economically, the nonvegetarian diet has produced a tragedy. From 1950 to 1970, the grain output in the U.S. increased 50%.<sup>8</sup> But how was the grain distributed? Presently, livestock are given 85% of the edible corn, barley, oats, sorghum, and unexported soybeans produced in the U.S. In addition, Americans feed almost half as much wheat to animals as they eat themselves. A large portion of the U.S. continental land surface is used for the grazing of beef cattle—valuable land that might be used to cultivate grain. Most people would agree that wasting food is a sin, yet all this effort and energy produces only about one pound of meat protein for sixteen pounds of grain; the waste alone could cover 90% of the yearly protein deficit of the entire world.

On the other hand, for every pound of grain a cow eats, she produces one pint of milk, from which wholesome cheese, butter, and yogurt can be made. These foods will supply all essential nutrients for the human diet when intelligently combined with grains, fruits, and vegetables. There are at least forty kinds of vegetables, nine kinds of grains, twenty kinds of fruit,

twenty kinds of beans and peas, and twelve kinds of nuts available in the market, in addition to the cow's contribution. What, then, is the need for all the violence and disobedience to the higher laws of human-kind, nature, and God? Let us chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, live as strict vegetarians, and be happy in this life and the next!

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# ŚRĪLA BHAKTISIDDHĀNTA SARASVATĪ THĀKURA

A Meditation

by JAYĀDVAITA SWAMI

Today our Book Trust offices in New York received delivery of a new typesetting system to be used for publishing *Back to Godhead* and other Kṛṣṇa conscious literature. It's a sophisticated computerized arrangement with a video terminal, 32,000 bytes of electronic memory, on-line interfaces, and other wonders of modern microchip technology.

It will seem a little strange, perhaps, to see young American women in saris and shaved-headed men in orange robes sitting at the keyboard of such a device, absorbed in entering data or updating computer files. It may seem incongruous, unspiritual.

Yet we don't think it's strange at all, nor incongruous, nor unspiritual even in the least. In fact, we think it's delightful.

The man was here all day installing the thing—measuring electronic pulses, soldering wires, running diagnostics, and all the while nearly climbing the walls because the Hare Kṛṣṇa people don't let you smoke cigarettes in their building.

Now it's late in the evening, the man has gone home, the machine, we hope, is ready for action, the devotees in the building are retiring for the night. I have been unwinding a little, savoring the late-evening peacefulness by quietly chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa on my beads.

My thoughts are on my spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura. I have been planning to write a brief article about Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta for *Back to*

*Godhead*, but it has been difficult to decide just what to say. My ideas seem inadequate, my inspiration weak, my intellect just slightly too foggy and dull.

But the world of spiritual tradition and the world of technology seem to have touched one another just at the right moment, in a fortunate, enlightening way, for the computerization of our publishing offices makes sense to us only by the grace of this simple, austere, and scholarly spiritual teacher, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura.

Up until the time of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, devotees of Kṛṣṇa in India generally avoided having anything to do with the mechanized contrivances introduced under the British raj. Better to live simply and not divert one's mind from meditation on Kṛṣṇa, the supreme Absolute Truth. After all, what would ultimately be the benefit of modern gadgets and conveniences? Would they really make life happier or better? Life is meant for spiritual realization—why let one's attention be distracted?

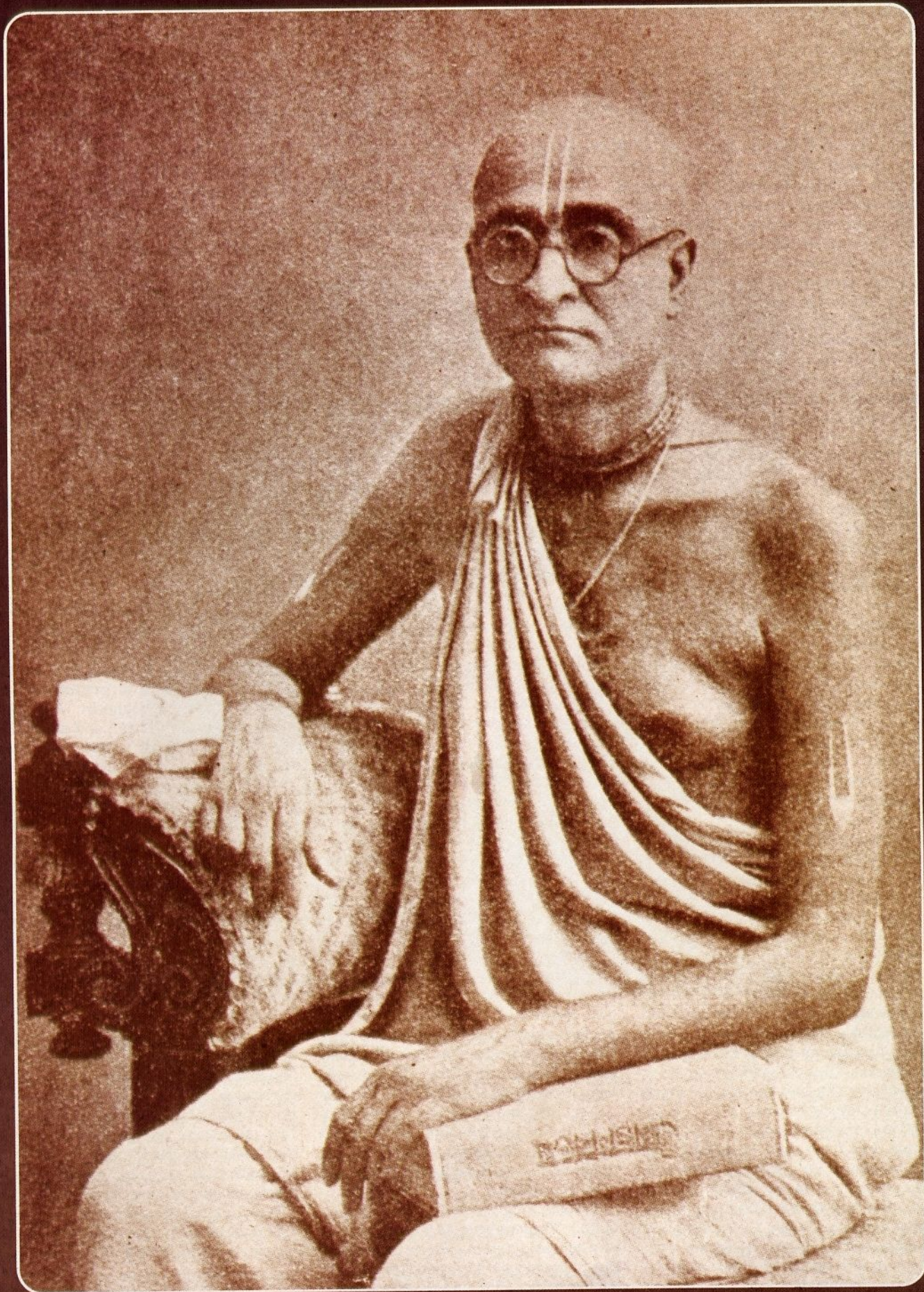
But Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta had a different idea, and a higher understanding of spirituality. He was a teacher in the line of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the great devotee and scholar who had written in medieval times,

*anāsaktasya viṣayān  
yathārham upayujjatah  
nirbandhaḥ kṛṣṇa-sambandhe  
yuktam vairāgyam ucyate*

“One is perfectly detached from all materialistic, worldly entanglements not when one gives up everything but when one employs everything properly for the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. This is understood to be perfect renunciation in *yoga*.”

If everything is God's energy, why should anything be given up? If God is good, then His energy is also good. If God is real, then this world and the things it contains are also real. It is only our misunderstanding and misuse of them that are false. Materialistic perplexities entangle us because we draw false lines of ownership and claim God's property as ours. We mistakenly believe that the things of this world are meant for *ourenjoyment*, not understanding that if they are God's property, we should use them only in the service of God. Puffed up by false egos, we think ourselves masters of all we survey, not appreciating our true nature as loving servants of God.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta, therefore, taught that devotees should willingly accept whatever will be of use in Kṛṣṇa's service. This is another principle of Kṛṣṇa consciousness—that one should accept whatever is favorable for the service of the Lord and reject whatever is unfavorable for that service. For example, devotees give up intoxication, meat-eating, illicit sex, and gambling, because although these too are part of the world, they are obstacles to progress in devotional service. But




anything that enhances devotional service one should accept.

According to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the best way to serve Kṛṣṇa is to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness for the benefit of others. This is also stated by Kṛṣṇa Himself in *Bhagavad-gītā*. Everyone is a part of Kṛṣṇa, the supreme Ultimate Reality, and therefore everyone should know the science of how to connect oneself with Kṛṣṇa in a natural, perfectly harmonious relationship of devotional love. Because we have forgotten this relationship, we are perplexed and suffering in this material world; by reviving it, we can be freed from illusion and misery and resume our natural life of eternal knowledge and bliss. Because Kṛṣṇa is the father of all living beings, He earnestly desires that we come to our senses and resume our loving relationship with Him and become happy.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta therefore taught that devotees should be eager to use everything possible for one central purpose: to broadcast the glories of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Simply by hearing about Kṛṣṇa or anything related to Kṛṣṇa, one gradually becomes enlightened. And this enlightenment can bring the highest welfare to all.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta especially emphasized the importance of the printing press, which he called "the big *mṛdaṅga*." The *mṛdaṅga* is a clay drum used to accompany *kīrtana*, or congregational chanting of the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. But although the *mṛdaṅga* may be heard for a long distance, the scientific knowledge in the Kṛṣṇa conscious literature produced by the "big *mṛdaṅga*" can enlighten people all over the world.

Our spiritual master, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, the author of more than seventy books of spiritual realization, was expert in playing this "big *mṛdaṅga*." Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had personally advised him to publish books about the science of Kṛṣṇa, and this was advice that Śrīla Prabhupāda diligently followed. Following in the footsteps of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Prabhupāda gladly used everything—printing presses, dictaphones, microphones, whatever—to broadcast the glories of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

So the day ends with meditation on Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who taught not only how to live amid modern technology but how to employ that technology perfectly, for the highest purpose, by offering it at the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. 

Hare Krishna! I am writing to you to express my deep appreciation for the good work you and all the ISKCON devotees are doing, especially in India. About five years ago, I began casually visiting the Bombay Radha-Rasabihari Temple. At first I was only impressed by the temple's cleanliness and tasteful floral decorations, but gradually the joyous yet peaceful atmosphere overcame me, and my feelings for the centre deepened. I began to regularly attend morning arati, and within a few years I became certain that ISKCON devotees were genuinely propagating our own Vedic dharma. In 1977 I requested the devotees to allow me to become a Life Member of ISKCON.

I was born into a strictly vegetarian, God conscious Hindu family, but I was not satisfied with many of the so-called exponents of our religion. Searching for a deeper understanding of things brought me into contact with many renowned swamis and teachers, but all of them failed to satisfy my inquisitive nature. In fact, most of the religious institutions I visited throughout India were steeped in pretentiousness and pettiness, and they appeared to be nothing more than places where simple God-fearing people are exploited by imitation "Gods." I shall narrate a few incidents from my own experiences which will clarify my statements.

In 1963 I visited a swami at his Rishikesh ashram, and I was most appalled by his rude behaviour. He personally would not allow me to stay in his ashram unless I could part with an exorbitant sum. Later, during a visit to Poona, I witnessed that the ashram of a so-called "Bhagavan" only caters to the needs of either wealthy Indians or foreigners searching for sensual

## LETTERS

enjoyment. This was another rude shock, since the disciples there pose as sannyasis, the order of life reserved for the most disciplined and ascetic Vedic monks. At an ashram in Ganeshpuri, I was amazed to see that a big fat elephant was stuffed with pounds of sweets, puris, and halava. Feeding an elephant with sweets while so many of our countrymen go to bed hungry each night seems like an empty show. I prefer the programme at Hare Krishna Land, where spiritual food (*prasada*) is freely and abundantly fed to the poor.

Such swamis as I have mentioned above may attract lots of cheap disciples, but to me they are just cheats or hypocrites disguised as holy men. In our Ramayana we have the example of Ravana dressing up as a sannyasi to abduct Sita, the wife of Lord Rama, and today the same phenomenon is plaguing India. Naturally, due to my past distasteful experiences I had my doubts or even suspicions about the Hare Krishna movement at first. Now, after many years of intimate friendship with devotees, I can say with pride that ISKCON devotees are genuine and disciplined followers of Lord Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. ISKCON is an authentic Vaishnava society, and my family and I have benefited so much from your association.

Reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, especially *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, has opened new dimensions for me. I now understand that *Bhagavad-gītā* is intended for the most intelligent men. Although the average man

may not be able to properly understand the Gita, he can easily learn to comprehend Krishna's teachings through chanting the Hare Krishna *mahā-mantra* and by receiving instructions from a bona fide spiritual master.

A case in point. My wife was greatly depressed several years ago, and even expensive regular visits to a psychiatrist proved to be of no value. Her actual problem was a lack of enthusiasm for cultivating material comfort. What she wanted was spiritual life, and simply by regularly attending the temple programme at Hare Krishna Land and by chanting Hare Krishna, she has become more enthusiastic and more happy about life than ever. This has been to me a stirring example of the absolute potency of Krishna consciousness. Whereas other swamis and gurus struck me as egotists mad after worship and money, the Krishna consciousness movement, unasked, has actually done a real service for my family and me. From talking with the other residents of Juhu, I have learned that everyone here appreciates Hare Krishna Land as a complete Vedic cultural centre.

We regularly visit the temple, the Vedic library, and the Sunday programme. My daughter is learning Bharata Natyam classical dancing at Bhakti Kala Kshetra, Hare Krishna Land's artistic wing. We of Juhu all extend our gratitude to Śrīla Prabhupāda and the devotees of ISKCON, who have given us an opportunity to be in touch with our religious heritage.

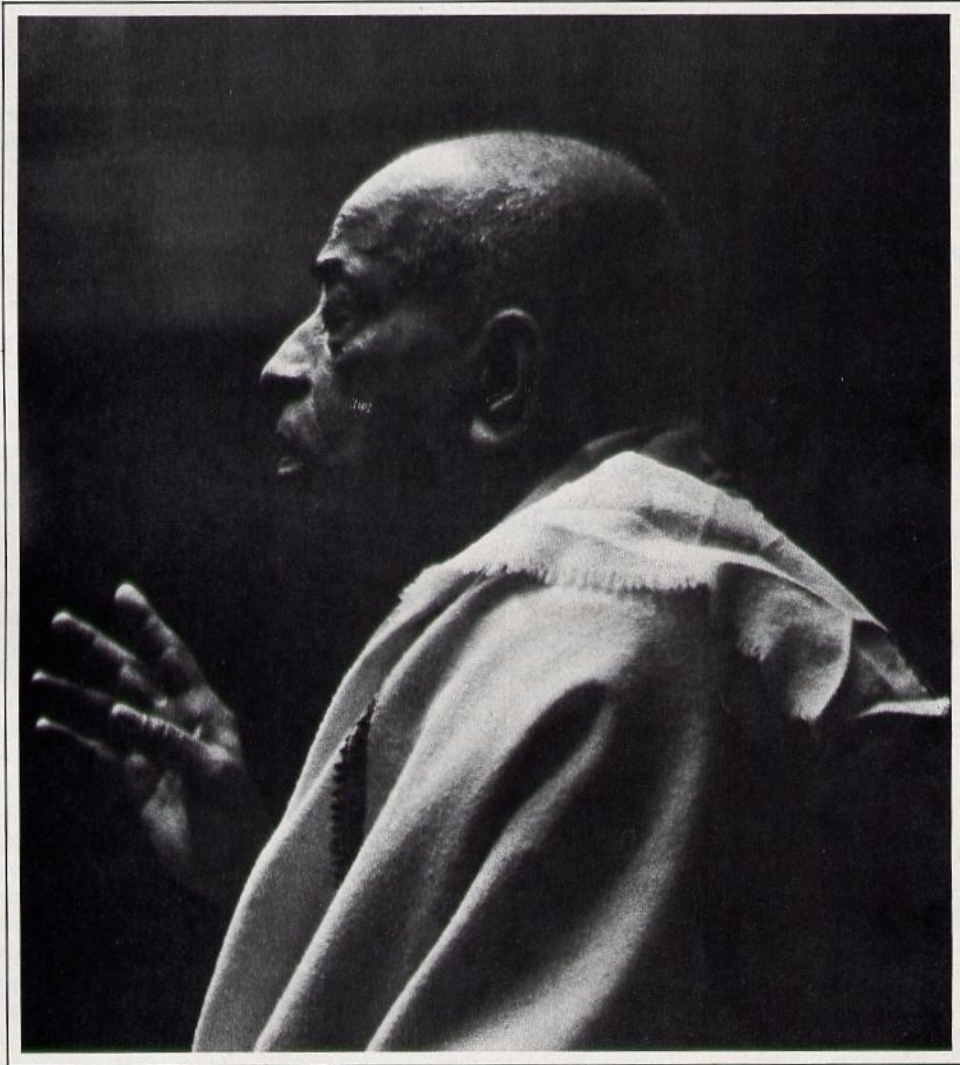
May Lord Krishna sustain the devotees' efforts to spread Krishna consciousness to the whole world. Hare Krishna.

N. D. Makker  
Bombay, India

The Biography of a Pure Devotee

# ENCOUNTERS AT 26 SECOND AVENUE

by ŚRĪLA SATSVARŪPA DĀSA GOSWAMI



*Now that Śrīla Prabhupāda's young friends had rented him a Lower East Side storefront (America's first Hare Kṛṣṇa temple), he started giving his lectures there. But the situation was anything but serene.*

*Now today we shall begin the Fourth Chapter—what Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna.*

His lecture is very basic and yet (for restless youth) heavily philosophical. Some can't take it, and they rise to leave. Some, upon hearing his first words, have already risen rudely, put on their shoes at the front

door, and returned to the street. Others left as soon as they saw the singing was over. Still, this is his best group yet. A few of the Bowery congregation are present. The boys from Mott Street are here, and they're specifically looking for a *guru*. Many in the group have already read *Bhagavad-gītā*—and they're not too proud to hear and admit that they didn't understand it.

It's another hot and noisy July evening outside his door. Children are on summer vacation, and they stay out on the street

until dark. Nearby, a big dog is barking—"RAU! RAU! RAU!" The traffic creates constant rumbling, just outside the window little girls are shrieking, and all this makes lecturing difficult. Yet despite the distraction of children, traffic, and dogs, he wants the door open. If it is closed he says, "Why is it closed? People may come in." He continues undaunted, quoting Sanskrit, holding his audience, and developing his urgent message, while the relentless cacophony rivals his every word. . . .

"RAU! RAU! RAU!"

"EEE EEE EEEK! YAA AAA AAAA!"  
Shrieking like little witches, the girls disturb the whole block. In the distance, a man shouts from his window: "Get outta here! Get outta here!"

Prabhupāda: *Ask them not to make noise.*

Roy (one of the boys in the temple): *The man is chasing the kids now.*

Prabhupāda: *Yes, yes, these children are making a disturbance. Ask them . . .*

Roy: *Yes, that's what . . . the man's chasing them right now.*

The man chases the children away, but they'll be back. You can't chase the children off the street—they live there. And the big dog never stops barking. And who can stop the cars? The cars are always there. Prabhupāda uses the cars to give an example. When a car momentarily comes into our vision on Second Avenue, we certainly don't think that it had no existence before we saw it or that it ceases to exist once it has passed from view; similarly, when Kṛṣṇa goes from this planet to another, it doesn't mean He no longer exists, although it may appear that way. Actually, He has only left our sight. Kṛṣṇa and His incarnations constantly appear and disappear on innumerable planets throughout the innumerable universes of the material creation.

The cars are always passing, roaring and rumbling through every word Prabhupāda speaks. The door is open, and he is poised at the edge of a river of carbon monoxide, asphalt, rumbling tires, and constant waves of traffic. He has come a long way from the banks of his Yamunā and Vṛndāvana, where great saints and sages have gathered through the ages to discuss Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But his audience lives *here* amidst *this* scene, so he has come here, beside Second Avenue's river of traffic, to speak loudly the ageless message.

He is still stressing the same point: Whatever you do in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, however little it may be, is eternally good for you. Yet now, more than uptown or on the Bowery, he is calling his hearers to take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness *fully* and become devotees. But he encourages them. . . .

*Anyone can become a devotee and friend of Kṛṣṇa like Arjuna. You will be surprised that Lord Caitanya's principal disciples were all so-called fallen in society. He appointed Haridāsa Ṭhākura to the highest position in His spiritual mission, although he happened to take birth in a Muhammadan family. So there is no bar for anyone. Everyone can become spiritual master, provided he knows the science of Kṛṣṇa. This is the science of Kṛṣṇa, this Bhagavad-gītā. And if anyone knows it perfectly,*

*then he becomes a spiritual master.*

*And this transcendental vibration, Hare Kṛṣṇa, will help us by cleaning the dust from the mirror of our mind. On the mind we have accumulated material dust. Just like on the Second Avenue, due to the constant traffic of motorcars, there's always a creation of dust over everything. Similarly, by our manipulation of materialistic activities, there are some material dusts which are accumulated on the mind, and therefore we are unable to see things in true perspective. So this process, the*

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**A Bowery  
derelict enters,  
whistling and  
drunkenly  
shouting. The  
audience remains  
seated, not  
knowing what  
to make of it.**

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*vibration of the transcendental sound—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—will cleanse the dust. And as soon as the dust is cleared, then, as you see your nice face in the mirror, similarly you can see your real constitutional position as spirit soul. In Sanskrit language it is said, ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam. Lord Caitanya said that. Lord Caitanya's picture you have seen on the bookcase. He is dancing and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. So, it doesn't matter what a person was doing before, what sinful activities. A person may not be perfect at first, but if he is engaged in service, then he will be purified.*

Suddenly a Bowery derelict enters, whistling and drunkenly shouting. The audience remains seated, not knowing what to make of it.

Drunk: *How are ya? I'll be right back. I brought another thing.*

Prabhupāda: *Don't disturb. Sit down. We are talking seriously.*

Drunk: *I'll put it up there. In a church? All right. I'll be right back.*

The man is white-haired, with a short, grizzly beard and frowzy clothing. His odor reeks through the temple. But then he

suddenly careens out the door and is gone. Prabhupāda chuckles softly and returns immediately to his lecture.

*So it doesn't matter what a person is doing before, if he engages in Kṛṣṇa consciousness—chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and Bhagavad-gītā—it should be concluded that he is a saint. He is a saintly person. Api cet sudurācāro. Never mind if he may have some external immoral habit due to his past association. It doesn't matter. Some way or other, one should become Kṛṣṇa conscious, and then gradually he will become a saintly person as he goes on executing this process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.*

*There is a story about how habit is second nature. There was a thief, and he went on pilgrimage with some friends. So at night when the others were sleeping, because his habit was to steal at night, he got up and was taking someone's baggage. But then he was thinking, "Oh, I have come to this holy place of pilgrimage, but still I am committing theft by habit. No, I shall not do it."*

*So then he took someone's bag and put it in another's place, and for the whole night the poor fellow moved the bags of the pilgrims from here to there. But due to his conscience, because he was on a holy pilgrimage, he did not actually take anything. So in the morning when everyone got up, they looked around and said, "Where is my bag? I don't see it." And another man says, "I don't see my bag." And then someone says, "Oh, there is your bag." So there was some row, so they thought, "What is the matter? How has it so happened?"*

*Then the thief rose up and told all of the friends, "My dear gentlemen, I am a thief by occupation, and because I have that habit to steal at night, I couldn't stop myself. But I thought, 'I have come to this holy place, so I won't do it.' Therefore I placed one person's bag in another man's place. Please excuse me."*

*So this is habit. He doesn't want to, but he has a habit of doing it. He has decided not to commit theft anymore, but sometimes he does, habitually. So Kṛṣṇa says that in such conditions, when one has decided to stop all immoral habits and just take to this process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, if by chance he does something which is immoral in the face of society, that should not be taken account of. In the next verse Kṛṣṇa says, kṣipraṁ bhavati dharmātmā: because he has dovetailed himself in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, it is sure that he will be saintly very soon.*

Suddenly the old derelict returns, announcing his entrance: "How are ya?" He is carrying something. He maneuvers his way through the group, straight to the back of the temple, where Prabhupāda is

sitting. He opens the toilet room door, puts two rolls of bathroom tissue inside, closes the door, and then turns to the sink, sits some paper towels on top of it, and puts two more rolls of bathroom tissue and some more paper towels under the sink. He then stands and turns around toward the Swami and the audience. The Swami is looking at him and asks, "What is this?" The bum is silent now; he has done his work. Prabhupāda begins to laugh, thanking his visitor, who is now moving towards the door: "Thank you. Thank you very much." The bum exits. "Just see," Prabhupāda now addresses his congregation. "It is a natural tendency to give some service. Just see, he is not in order, but he thought that, 'Here is something. Let me get some service.' Just see how automatically it comes. This is natural."

The young men in the audience look at one another. This is really far out—first the chanting with the brass cymbals, the Swami looking like Buddha and talking about Kṛṣṇa and chanting, and now this crazy stuff with the bum. But the Swami stays cool, he's really cool, just sitting on the floor like he's not afraid of anything, just talking of his philosophy about the soul and us becoming saints and even the old drunk becoming a saint!

After almost an hour, the dog still barks, and the kids still squeal.

Prabhupāda is asking his hearers, who don't even qualify as laymen, to become totally dedicated preachers of Kṛṣṇa consciousness: "In the *Bhagavad-gītā* you will find that anyone who preaches the gospel of *Bhagavad-gītā* to the people of the world is the most dear, the dearest person to Kṛṣṇa. Therefore it is our duty to preach the principles of this *Bhagavad-gītā* to make people Kṛṣṇa conscious." It's as if he can't wait to tell them—even if they aren't ready. It's too urgent. The world needs Kṛṣṇa conscious preachers.

*People are suffering for want of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Therefore, each and every one of us should be engaged in the preaching work of Kṛṣṇa consciousness for the benefit of the whole world. Lord Caitanya, whose picture is in the front of our store, has very nicely preached the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The Lord says, 'Just take My orders, all of you, and become a spiritual master.' Lord Caitanya gives the order that in every country you go and preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So if we take up this missionary work to preach Bhagavad-gītā, without interpretation and without any material motives behind it—as it is—then Kṛṣṇa says it shall be done. We should not have any attraction for worldly activities, otherwise we can't have Kṛṣṇa. But it doesn't mean that we should be inimical to the people of the world. No, it is our duty to give them the highest*

*instruction, that you become Kṛṣṇa conscious and . . .*

A young man in the audience seems unable to contain himself and begins making his own incoherent speech.

Prabhupāda: *No. You cannot disturb just now.*

Man (standing up): *Now wait a minute, man. (A quarrel begins as others try to quiet him.)*

Prabhupāda: *No, no, no. No, no, no, no. Not just now. No, no, you cannot ask just now.*

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## The Lower East Side abates. The chanting begins: cymbals, Prabhupāda's voice carrying the melody, the audience responding.

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Man: *Well, I am trying to talk.*

Prabhupāda: *No, just now you cannot ask.*

Man: *But wait a minute, man. Wait.*

Prabhupāda: *Why do you interfere just now? We have a regular question time.*

Others in the audience: *Let the man finish. Yeah, let him talk. (The man has gained some supporters, who defend his right to speak. Others try to silence him.)*

Second Man: *I have just one question, please. How long is an individual allowed or expected to go on without any type of thought? How long?*

Prabhupāda: *I am not finished. We'll give question time after finishing the talk. (The parties go on quarreling.) All right, I am very glad you are curious, but please wait. Have some patience, because we have not finished. As soon as we finish, after five minutes, ten minutes, I will tend to your question. Don't be impatient. Sit down. (The audience quiets down, and Prabhupāda goes on with his talk.)*

After five minutes . . .

Prabhupāda: *All right. This gentleman is impatient. We shall stop here. Now what is your question, sir?*

Man: *Practically we tend to place emphasis on those we identify with the fact*

*itself. Many people are meant to explain the whyfores and the wherefores of the metaphysical truth, that I think, therefore I am.*

Prabhupāda: *What is your particular question?*

Man: *I have no answer to that question. Rather, but that I attempt, I move, I live, I breathe.*

Prabhupāda: *Yes.*

Man: *So ability—tell me why I have nothing to do with it. May I understand the whyfores and wheres?*

Prabhupāda: *That's all right.*

Man: *I have difficulty in you. I have difficulty in saying.*

Prabhupāda: *So long as we are in this material world there are so many problems.*

Man: *Not many problems. It is not many problems. This is the greatest fact. I have . . . I know . . .*

Prabhupāda: *Yes.*

Man: *I also know that the whys and wherefores of my particular . . .*

Prabhupāda: *Yes.*

Man: *I didn't come here . . . But let me explain my position. This isn't necessarily . . . I feel I must . . . I think the difference is to learn . . . You'll find it innumerable times, by the same token . . . Maybe we are able to reconcile the fact of individual being for a long time to find out why we are existing . . .*

Prabhupāda (turning to one of the boys): *Roy, can you answer his question? It is a general question. You can answer, yes?*

Roy turns sympathetically to the rambling questioner, and Śrīla Prabhupāda addresses his audience: "Enough questions." His voice now seems tired and resigned: "Let us have *kīrtana*." And the Lower East Side once again abates. The chanting begins: the brass cymbals, Prabhupāda's voice carrying the melody, and the audience responding. It goes for half an hour and then stops.

It is now 9:00. The audience sits before Prabhupāda while a boy brings him an apple, a small wooden bowl, and a knife. As most of the audience still sits and watches, gauging the aftereffects of the chanting as though it had been some new drug, Prabhupāda cuts the apple in half, then in fourths, then in eighths, until there are many pieces. He takes one himself and asks one of the boys to pass the bowl around. Prabhupāda holds back his head and deftly pops a slice of apple into his mouth, without touching his fingers to his lips. He chews a bit, ruminating, his lips closed.

The members of the congregation munch silently on little pieces of apple. Prabhupāda stands, slips into his shoes, and exits through the side door.

(To be continued.)

# ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

## “Why Do They Seem So Strange?”

*This exchange between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and reporters took place at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport.*

**Reporter:** Swamiji, what special message would you have for people who don't know anything about your movement and would like to know something about it?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** It is a little difficult to understand this movement, because it is a spiritual movement. Unfortunately, people have practically no information about what spirit is and what a spiritual movement is. They can simply understand that the body is there—but the body is a machine, and the driver of the machine is the spirit soul. So we are beginning our movement from this platform. People are very much engrossed with the machine only, but they have no information about who is driving the machine. That is what we are teaching.

**Reporter:** Swamiji, your movement has received much attention because many of your followers dress in what, for the West, is an odd fashion. Why have you asked your followers to dress in this fashion and play drums on the streets?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** This is our preaching method—somehow or other to draw people's attention, so that they may have the opportunity to revive their eternal relationship with God.

**Reporter:** I'm sure that you're aware that to many people in the West, your disciples seem strange because of the way they act on the streets. What about that?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, they *must* seem strange, because they are acting spiritually. To materialistic persons we are surely acting strangely.

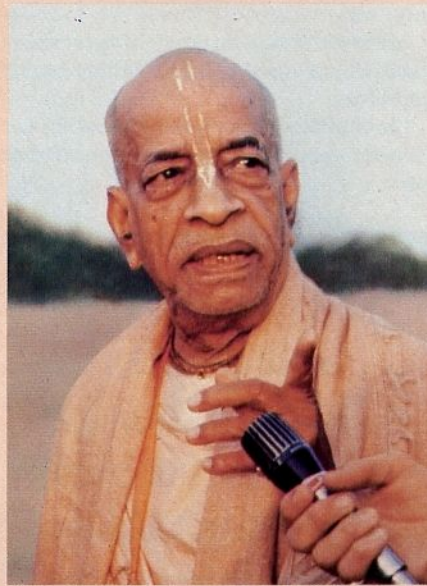
**Reporter:** Is this manifestation the only way to be spiritual?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** No, there is much more. For instance, we don't have any illicit sex; we don't have meat-eating; we have no intoxication; we have no gambling.

**Reporter:** But I mean, Swamiji, is this manifestation—dressing in this fashion, playing drums, and dancing in the streets—the only way to be spiritual?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** No. We have published about seventy books [Śrīla Prabhupāda's translations and commentaries on the Vedic literatures]. If you want to learn about this movement through science and philosophy, you have got our books. Have you not seen our books?

**Reporter:** Yes, I have, but—can't people



be spiritual without dressing in this fashion and dancing in the streets?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Oh, yes. Oh, yes. You can become spiritualized in the clothing you are wearing now. You simply have to learn about spiritual life from the books. Dress is not a very important thing. Still, in the material world one person is dressed in one way; another, another way.

**Reporter:** The way we ordinary people dress lets us move in all circles. But the way your disciples dress . . .

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** The thing is, to signify that one is performing a particular job, he may dress differently. For example, a policeman is differently dressed, so that others can understand that he is a policeman. Similarly, we are also differently dressed, so that everyone may understand that we are Hare Kṛṣṇa people.

**Second Reporter:** Swami, I saw a television program about your movement once, and they said that the men give the directions and the women follow. Is that true?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Not necessarily. We follow the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the directions of Lord Kṛṣṇa. That is applicable to both men and women.

**Second Reporter:** Are men regarded as superior to women, though?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, naturally. Naturally a woman requires protection by a man—in childhood she is protected by her father, later she is protected by her husband, and in old age she is protected by her eldest sons. That is natural.

**Second Reporter:** That goes against the thinking of a lot of people in America now.

Do you know that?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** In America, maybe. But this is the natural situation. Women require protection.

**Third Reporter:** Swamiji, is there a chance that all your followers can realize the highest truth?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** They already have.

**Third Reporter:** They already have?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Certainly, and I can deliver it to you, also, if you want. The highest truth is that God is a person, like you and me. Now, what is the difference between this one person and all the rest of us? It is this: He maintains all of us, and we are maintained by Him. But He is also a person, like you and me. Do you follow?

**Third Reporter:** Yes, I do.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** So my disciples have already realized the highest truth. Otherwise, why would they be following a teacher like me? I am a poor Indian man. Why are they following me? They are American—they are rich. So how could I have bribed them? These young people are educated, qualified. Why are they following me, unless they have already realized some higher knowledge?

**Fourth Reporter:** Swamiji, I have one more question for you, please. It seems to me, and I think to other sympathetic observers, that you have asked your spiritual children to go deep within the heart of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement to accomplish what you've set as their goal. But as far as I know, they do not work in, for instance, hospitals or perform service to the “outer world” other than offering free meals at the temple and preaching the word of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Many of my disciples work at ordinary professions, of course. But do you know what real service *is*?

**Fourth Reporter:** The answer should come from you and not from me.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Suppose you open a hospital. You can cure some disease for the time being, but can you give a patient any assurance that he will not die? Can you protect him from death? In spite of all your big hospitals, can you protect humanity from death, from birth, from old age, from disease? Can you?

**Fourth Reporter:** Physically, of course not. Only spiritually.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** So we are providing that—the process whereby one can return to the kingdom of God, where there is no more death, no more birth, no more old age, and no more disease.



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

## Second Canto: "The Cosmic Manifestation"

### CHAPTER FOUR

#### The Process of Creation

While offering prayers to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the learned Śukadeva has explained that even the most lowborn and sinful can be purified by seeking shelter from the Lord's devotees, because He is the supreme power. Here Śukadeva continues his prayers.

(purport continued from last issue)

According to the cult of devotion, generally known as the Vaiṣṇava cult, there is no bar against anyone's advancing in the matter of God realization. A Vaiṣṇava is powerful enough to turn into a Vaiṣṇava even the Kirāta, etc., as above mentioned. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.32) it is said by the Lord that there is no bar to becoming a devotee of the Lord (even for those who are lowborn, or women, *śūdras* or *vaiśyas*), and by becoming a devotee everyone is eligible to return home, back to Godhead. The only qualification is that one take shelter of a pure devotee of the Lord who has thorough knowledge in the transcendental science of Kṛṣṇa (*Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*). Anyone from any part of the world who becomes well conversant in the science of Kṛṣṇa becomes a pure devotee and a spiritual master for the general mass of people and may reclaim them by purification of heart. Though a person be even the most sinful man, he can at once be purified by systematic contact with a pure Vaiṣṇava. A Vaiṣṇava, therefore, can accept a bona fide disciple from any part of the world without any consideration of caste and creed and promote him by regulative principles to the status of a pure Vaiṣṇava who is transcendental to brahminical culture. The system of caste, or *varṇāśrama-dharma*, is no longer regular even amongst the so-called followers of the system. Nor is it now possible to reestablish the institutional function in the present context of social, political and economic revolution. Without any reference to the particular custom of a country, one can be accepted to the Vaiṣṇava cult spiritually, and there is no hindrance in the transcendental process. So by the order of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the cult of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or the *Bhagavad-gītā* can be preached all over the world, reclaiming all persons willing to accept the transcendental cult. Such cultural propaganda by the devotees will certainly be accepted by all persons who are reasonable and inquisitive, without any particular bias for the custom of the country. The Vaiṣṇava never accepts another Vaiṣṇava on the basis of birthright, just as he never thinks of the Deity of the Lord in a temple as an idol. And to remove all doubts in this connection, Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī has invoked the blessings of the Lord, who is all-powerful (*prabhaviṣṇave namaḥ*). As the all-powerful Lord accepts the humble service of His devotee in devotional activities of the *arcana*, His form as the worshipable Deity in the temple, similarly the body of a pure Vaiṣṇava changes transcendently at once when he gives himself up to

the service of the Lord and is trained by a qualified Vaiṣṇava. The injunction of Vaiṣṇava regulation in this connection runs as follows: *arceya viṣṇau śilā-dhīr guruṣu nara-matir vaiṣṇave jāti-buddhiḥ śrī-viṣṇor nāmni śabda-sāmānya-buddhiḥ*, etc. "One should not consider the Deity of the Lord as worshiped in the temple to be an idol, nor should one consider the authorized spiritual master an ordinary man. Nor should one consider a pure Vaiṣṇava to belong to a particular caste, etc." (*Padma Purāna*)

The conclusion is that the Lord, being all-powerful, can, under any and every circumstance, accept anyone from any part of the world, either personally or through His bona fide manifestation as the spiritual master. Lord Caitanya accepted many devotees from communities other than the *varṇāśramites*, and He Himself declared, to teach us, that He does not belong to any caste or social order of life, but that He is the eternal servant of the servant of the Lord who maintains the damsels of Vṛndāvana (Lord Kṛṣṇa). That is the way of self-realization.

#### TEXT 19

स एष आत्मात्मवतामधीश्वर-  
स्त्रयीमयो धर्ममयस्तपोमयः ।  
गतव्यलीकैरजशङ्करादिभि-  
वितर्क्यलिङ्गो भगवान् प्रसीदताम् ॥१९॥

sa eṣa ātmātmavatām adhiśvaras  
trayīmayo dharmamayasa tapomayaḥ  
gata-vyālikair aja-śaṅkarādibhir  
vitarkya-liṅga bhagavān prasīdatām

*saḥ*—He; *eṣaḥ*—it is; *ātmā*—the Supersoul; *ātmavatām*—of the self-realized souls; *adhiśvaraḥ*—the Supreme Lord; *trayī-mayaḥ*—personified *Vedas*; *dharmamayasa*—personified religious scripture; *tapamayaḥ*—personified austerity; *gata-vyālikaiḥ*—by those who are above all pretensions; *aja*—Brahmājī; *śaṅkara-ādibhiḥ*—by Lord Śiva and others; *vitarkya-liṅgaḥ*—one who is observed with awe and veneration; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *prasīdatām*—be kind toward me.

#### TRANSLATION

He is the Supersoul and the Supreme Lord of all self-realized souls. He is the personification of the *Vedas*, religious scriptures and austerities. He is worshiped by Lord Brahmā and Śiva and all those who are transcendental to all pretensions. Being so revered with awe and veneration, may that Supreme Absolute be pleased with me.

#### PURPORT

The Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, although the Lord of all followers of different paths of self-realization, is knowable only by

those who are above all pretensions. Everyone is searching for eternal peace or eternal life, and with an aim to this destination everyone is either studying the Vedic scriptures or other religious scriptures or undergoing severe austerity as empiric philosophers, as mystics *yogīs* or as unalloyed devotees, etc. But the Supreme Lord is perfectly realized only by the devotees because they are above all pretensions. Those who are on the path of self-realization are generally classified as *karmīs*, *jñānīs*, *yogīs*, or devotees of the Lord. The *karmīs*, who are much attracted by the fruitive activities of the Vedic rituals, are called *bhukti-kāmī*, or those who desire material enjoyment. The *jñānīs*, who try to become one with the Supreme by mental speculation, are called *mukti-kāmī*, or those who desire liberation from material existence. The mystic *yogīs*, who practice different types of austerities for attainment of eight kinds of material perfection and who ultimately meet the Supersoul (Paramātmā) in trance, are called *siddhi-kāmī*, or those who desire the perfection of becoming finer than the finest, becoming heavier than the heaviest, getting everything desired, having control over everyone, creating everything liked, etc. All these are abilities of a powerful *yogī*. But the devotees of the Lord do not want anything like that for self-satisfaction. They want only to serve the Lord because the Lord is great and as living entities they are eternally subordinate parts and parcels of the Lord. This perfect realization of the self by the devotee helps him to become desireless, to desire nothing for his personal self, and thus the devotees are called *niṣkāmi*, without any desire. A living entity, by his constitutional position, cannot be void of all desires (the *bhukti-kāmī*, *mukti-kāmī* and *siddhi-kāmī* all desire something for personal satisfaction), but the *niṣkāmi* devotees of the Lord desire everything for the satisfaction of the Lord. They are completely dependent on the orders of the Lord and are always ready to discharge their duty for the satisfaction of the Lord.

In the beginning Arjuna placed himself as one of those who desire self-satisfaction, for he desired not to fight in the Battle of Kurukṣetra, but to make him desireless the Lord preached the *Bhagavad-gītā*, in which the ways of *karma-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, *haṭha-yoga* and also *bhakti-yoga* were explained. Because Arjuna was without any pretension, he changed his decision and satisfied the Lord by agreeing to fight (*karisyevacanāṁ tava*), and thus he became desireless.

The examples of Brahmā and Lord Śiva are specifically cited here because Brahmājī, Lord Śiva, Śrīmatī Lakṣmījī and the four Kumāras (Sanaka, Sanātana, etc.) are leaders of the four desireless Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas*. They are all freed from all pretensions. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī interprets the word *gata-vyālikaiḥ* as *projjhita-kaitavaiḥ*, or those who are freed from all pretensions (the unalloyed devotees only). In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 19.149) it is said:

*kṛṣṇa-bhakta—niṣkāma, ata eva 'śānta'*  
*bhukti-mukti-siddhi-kāmī, sakali 'aśānta'*

Those who are after fruitive results for their pious activities, those who desire salvation and identity with the Supreme, and those who desire material perfections of mystic power are all restless because they want something for themselves, but the devotee is completely peaceful because he has no demand for himself and is always ready to serve the desire of the Lord. The conclusion is, therefore, that the Lord is for everyone because no one can achieve the result of his respective desires without His sanction, but as stated by the Lord in *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.9), all such results are awarded by Him only, for the Lord is *adhīśvara* (the original controller) of everyone, namely the Vedāntists, the great *karmā-kāṇḍīyas*, the great religious leaders, the great performers of austerity and all who are striving for spiritual advancement. But ultimately He is realized by the pretensionless devotees only. Therefore special stress is given to the devotional service of the Lord by Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī.

#### TEXT 20

श्रियः पतिर्यज्ञपतिः प्रजापति-  
धिर्या पतिर्लोकपतिर्भूतपतिः ।

पतिर्गतिश्चान्धकवृष्णिशात्वतां  
प्रसीदतां मे भगवान् सतां पतिः ॥२०॥

*śriyaḥ patir yajña-patiḥ prajā-patiḥ*  
*dhiyām patir loka-patiḥ dharā-patiḥ*  
*patir gatiḥ cāndhaka-vṛṣṇi-sātvatām*  
*prasīdatām me bhagavān satām patiḥ*

*śriyaḥ*—all opulence; *patiḥ*—the owner; *yajña*—of sacrifice; *patiḥ*—the director; *prajā-patiḥ*—the leader of all living entities; *dhiyām*—of intelligence; *patiḥ*—the master; *loka-patiḥ*—the proprietor of all planets; *dharā*—earth; *patiḥ*—the supreme; *patiḥ*—head; *gatiḥ*—destination; *ca*—also; *andhaka*—one of the kings of the Yadu dynasty; *vṛṣṇi*—the first king of the Yadu dynasty; *sātvatām*—the Yadus; *prasīdatām*—be merciful; *me*—upon me; *bhagavān*—Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *satām*—of all devotees; *patiḥ*—the Lord.

#### TRANSLATION

May Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the worshipable Lord of all devotees, the protector and glory of all the kings like Andhaka and Vṛṣṇi of the Yadu dynasty, the husband of all goddesses of fortune, the director of all sacrifices and therefore the leader of all living entities, the controller of all intelligence, the proprietor of all planets, spiritual and material, and the supreme incarnation on the earth (the supreme all in all), be merciful upon me.

#### PURPORT

Since Śukadeva Gosvāmī is one of the prominent *gata-vyālikas*, who are freed from all misconceptions, he therefore expresses his own realized perception of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa as being the sum total of all perfection, the Personality of Godhead. Everyone is seeking the favor of the goddess of fortune, but people do not know that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the beloved husband of all goddesses of fortune. In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* it is said that the Lord, in His transcendental abode Goloka Vṛndāvana, is accustomed to herding the *surabhi* cows and is served there by hundreds of thousands of goddesses of fortune. All these goddesses of fortune are manifestations of His transcendental pleasure potency (*hlādinī-śakti*) in His internal energy, and when the Lord manifested Himself on this earth He partially displayed the activities of His pleasure potency in His *rāsātilā* just to attract the conditioned souls, who are all after the phantasmagoria pleasure potency in degraded sex enjoyment. The pure devotees of the Lord like Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who was completely detached from the abominable sex life of the material world, discussed this act of the Lord's pleasure potency certainly not in relation to sex, but to relish a transcendental taste inconceivable to the mundaners who are after sex life. Sex life in the mundane world is the root-cause of being conditioned by the shackles of illusion, and certainly Śukadeva Gosvāmī was never interested in the sex life of the mundane world. Nor does the manifestation of the Lord's pleasure potency have any connection with such degraded things. Lord Caitanya was a strict *sannyāsī*, so much so that He did not allow any woman to come near Him, not even to bow down and offer respects. He never even heard the prayers of the *deva-dāsīs* offered in the temple of Jagannātha because a *sannyāsī* is forbidden to hear songs sung by the fair sex. Yet even in the rigid position of a *sannyāsī* He recommended the mode of worship preferred by the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana as the topmost loving service possible to be rendered to the Lord. And Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the principal head of all such goddesses of fortune, and therefore She is the pleasure counterpart of the Lord and is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa.

In the Vedic rituals there are recommendations for performing different types of sacrifice in order to achieve the greatest benefit in life. Such benedictions as the results of performing great sacrifices are, after all, favors given by the goddess of fortune, and the Lord, being the husband or lover of the goddess of fortune, is factually the Lord of all sacrifices also. He is the final enjoyer of all kinds of *yajña*; therefore

Yajña-pati is another name of Lord Viṣṇu. It is recommended in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that everything be done for the Yajña-pati (*yajñārtāt karmaṇah*), for otherwise one's acts will be the cause of conditioning by the law of material nature. Those who are not freed from all misconceptions (*vyatikram*) perform sacrifices to please the minor demigods, but the devotees of the Lord know very well that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the supreme enjoyer of all performances of sacrifice; therefore they perform the *saṅkīrtana-yajña* (*śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ*), which is especially recommended in this age of Kali. In Kali-yuga, performance of other types of sacrifice is not feasible due to insufficient arrangements and inept priesthood.

We have information from the *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.10–11) that Lord Brahmā, after giving rebirth to the conditioned souls within the universe, instructed them to perform sacrifices and to lead a prosperous life. With such sacrificial performances the conditioned souls will never be in difficulty in keeping body and soul together. Ultimately they can purify their existence. They will find natural promotion into spiritual existence, the real identity of the living being. A conditioned soul should never give up the practice of sacrifice, charity and austerity, in any circumstances. The aim of all such sacrifices is to please the Yajña-pati, the Personality of Godhead; therefore the Lord is also Prajā-pati. According to the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, the one Lord is the leader of the innumerable living entities. The living entities are maintained by the Lord (*eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān*). The Lord is therefore called the supreme Bhūta-bhṛt, or maintainer of all living beings.

Living beings are proportionately endowed with intelligence in terms of their previous activities. All living beings are not equally endowed with the same quality of intelligence because behind such development of intelligence is the control of the Lord, as declared in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.15). As Paramātmā, Supersoul, the Lord is living in everyone's heart, and from Him only does one's power of remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness follow (*mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanam ca*). One person can sharply remember past activities by the grace of the Lord while others cannot. One is highly intelligent by the grace of the Lord, and one is a fool by the same control. Therefore the Lord is Dhīyām-pati, or the Lord of intelligence.

The conditioned souls strive to become lords of the material world. Everyone is trying to lord it over the material nature by applying his highest degree of intelligence. This misuse of intelligence by the conditioned soul is called madness. One's full intelligence should be applied to get free from the material clutches. But the conditioned soul, due to madness only, engages his full energy and intelligence in sense gratification, and to achieve this end of life he willfully commits all sorts of misdeeds. The result is that instead of attaining an unconditional life of full freedom, the mad conditioned soul is entangled again and again in different types of bondage in material bodies. Everything we see in the material manifestation is but the creation of the Lord. Therefore He is the real proprietor of everything in the universes. The conditioned soul can enjoy a fragment of this material creation under the control of the Lord, but not self-sufficiently. That is the instruction in the *Īsopaniṣad*. One should be satisfied with things awarded by the Lord of the universe. It is out of madness only that one tries to encroach upon another's share of material possessions.

The Lord of the universe, out of His causeless mercy upon the conditioned souls, descends by His own energy (*ātma-māyā*) to reestablish the eternal relation of the conditioned souls with Him. He instructs all to surrender unto Him instead of falsely claiming to be enjoyers for a certain limit under His control. When He so descends He proves how much greater is His ability to enjoy, and He exhibits His power of enjoyment by (for instance) marrying sixteen thousand wives at once. The conditioned soul is very proud of becoming the husband of even one wife, but the Lord laughs at this; the intelligent man can know who is the real husband. Factually, the Lord is the husband of all the women in His creation, but a conditioned soul under the control of the Lord feels proud to be the husband of one or two wives.

All these qualifications as the different types of *pati* mentioned in this

verse are meant for Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and Śukadeva Gosvāmī has therefore especially mentioned the *pati* and *gati* of the Yadu dynasty. The members of the Yadu dynasty knew that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is everything, and all of them intended to return to Lord Kṛṣṇa after He had finished His transcendental pastimes on the earth. The Yadu dynasty was annihilated by the will of the Lord because its members had to return home with the Lord. The annihilation of the Yadu dynasty was a material show created by the Supreme Lord; otherwise the Lord and the members of the Yadu dynasty are all eternal associates. The Lord is therefore the guide of all devotees, and as such, Śukadeva Gosvāmī offered Him due respects with love-laden feelings.

#### TEXT 21

यदङ्घ्रिभिर्घ्यानसमाधिधौतया

धियानुपश्यन्ति हि तच्चमात्मनः ।

वदन्ति चैतत् कवयो यथारुचं

स मे मुकुन्दो भगवान् प्रसीदताम् ॥२१॥

*yad-aṅghri-abhidhyāna-samādhi-dhautayā*  
*dhiyānupaśyanti hi tattvam ātmanaḥ*  
*vadanti caītat kavayo yathā-rucam*  
*sa me mukundo bhagavān prasīdatām*

*yat-aṅghri*—whose lotus feet; *abhidhyāna*—thinking of, at every second; *samādhi*—trance; *dhautayā*—being washed off; *dhiyā*—by such clean intelligence; *anupaśyanti*—does see by following authorities; *hi*—certainly; *tattvam*—the Absolute Truth; *ātmanaḥ*—of the Supreme Lord and of oneself; *vadanti*—they say; *ca*—also; *etat*—this; *kavayah*—philosophers or learned scholars; *yathā-rucam*—as he thinks; *saḥ*—He; *me*—mine; *mukundaḥ*—Lord Kṛṣṇa (who gives liberation); *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *prasīdatām*—be pleased with me.

#### TRANSLATION

It is the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa who gives liberation. By thinking of His lotus feet at every second, following in the footsteps of authorities, the devotee in trance can see the Absolute Truth. The learned mental speculators, however, think of Him according to their whims. May the Lord be pleased with me.

#### PURPORT

The mystic *yogis*, after a strenuous effort to control the senses, may be situated in a trance of *yoga* just to have a vision of the Supersoul within everyone, but the pure devotee, simply by remembering the Lord's lotus feet at every second, at once becomes established in real trance because by such realization his mind and intelligence are completely cleansed of the diseases of material enjoyment. The pure devotee thinks himself fallen into the ocean of birth and death and incessantly prays to the Lord to lift him up. He only aspires to become a speck of transcendental dust at the lotus feet of the Lord. The pure devotee, by the grace of the Lord, absolutely loses all attraction for material enjoyment, and to keep free from contamination he always thinks of the lotus feet of the Lord. King Kulaśekhara, a great devotee of the Lord, prayed:

*kṛṣṇa tvadiya-pada-paṅkaja-pañjarāntam*  
*adyaiva me viśatu mānasa-rāja-hamsaḥ*  
*prāṇa-prayāṇa-samaye kapha-vāta-pittaiḥ*  
*kaṅṭhāvarodhana-vidhau smaraṇam kutas te*

“My Lord Kṛṣṇa, I pray that the swan of my mind may immediately sink down to the stems of the lotus feet of Your Lordship and be locked in their network; otherwise at the time of my final breath, when my throat is choked up with cough, how will it be possible to think of You?”

There is an intimate relationship between the swan and the lotus stem. So the comparison is very appropriate: without becoming a swan, or *paramahansa*, one cannot enter into the network of the lotus feet of the

Lord. As stated in the *Brahma-saṁhitā*, the mental speculators, even by dint of learned scholarship, cannot even dream of the Absolute Truth by speculating over it for eternity. The Lord reserves the right of not being exposed to such mental speculators. And because they cannot enter into the network stem of the lotus feet of the Lord, all mental speculators differ in conclusions, and at the end they make a useless compromise by saying "as many conclusions, as many ways," according to one's own inclination (*yathā-rūcam*). But the Lord is not like a shopkeeper trying to please all sorts of customers in the mental speculator exchange. The Lord is what He is, the Absolute Personality of Godhead, and He demands absolute surrender unto Him only. The pure devotee, however, by following the ways of previous *ācāryas*, or authorities, can see the Supreme Lord through the transparent medium of a bona fide spiritual master (*anupaśyanti*). The pure devotee never tries to see the Lord by mental speculation, but by following in the footsteps of the *ācāryas* (*mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ*). Therefore there is no difference of conclusions amongst the Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* regarding the Lord and the devotees. Lord Caitanya asserts that the living entity (*jīva*) is eternally the servitor of the Lord and that he is simultaneously one with and different from the Lord. This *tattva* of Lord Caitanya's is shared by all four *sampradāyas* of the Vaiṣṇava school (all accepting eternal servitude to the Lord even after salvation), and there is no authorized Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* who may think of the Lord and himself as one.

This humbleness of the pure devotee, who is one hundred percent engaged in His service, puts the devotee of the Lord in a trance by which to realize everything, because to the sincere devotee of the Lord, the Lord reveals Himself, as stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.10). The Lord, being the Lord of intelligence in everyone (even in the nondevotee), favors His devotee with proper intelligence so that automatically the pure devotee is enlightened with the factual truth about the Lord and His different energies. The Lord is revealed not by one's speculative power or by one's verbal jugglery over the Absolute Truth. Rather, He reveals Himself to a devotee when He is fully satisfied by the devotee's service attitude. Śukadeva Gosvāmī is not a mental speculator or compromiser of the theory of "as many ways, as many conclusions." Rather, he prays to the Lord only, invoking His transcendental pleasure. That is the way of knowing the Lord.

#### TEXT 22

प्रचोदिता येन पुरा सरस्वती  
वितन्वताजस्य सतीं स्मृतिं हृदि ।  
स्वलक्षणा प्रादुरभूत् किलास्यतः  
स मे ऋषीणामृषभः प्रसीदताम् ॥२२॥

*pracoditā yena purā sarasvatī  
vitanvatājasya satīm smṛtiṁ hṛdi  
sva-lakṣaṇā prādurabhūt kilāsyataḥ  
sa me ṛṣīṇām ṛṣabhaḥ prasīdatām*

*pracoditā*—inspired; *yena*—by whom; *purā*—in the beginning of creation; *sarasvatī*—the goddess of learning; *vitanvatā*—amplified; *ajasya*—of Brahmā, the first created living being; *satīm smṛtiṁ*—potent memory; *hṛdi*—in the heart; *sva*—in his own; *lakṣaṇā*—aiming at; *prādurabhūt*—was generated; *kilā*—as if; *āsyaṭaḥ*—from the mouth; *saḥ*—he; *me*—unto me; *ṛṣīṇām*—of the teachers; *ṛṣabhaḥ*—the chief; *prasīdatām*—be pleased.

#### TRANSLATION

May the Lord, who in the beginning of the creation amplified the potent knowledge of Brahmā from within his heart and inspired him with full knowledge of creation and of His own Self, and who appeared to be generated from the mouth of Brahmā, be pleased with me.

#### PURPORT

As we have already discussed hereinbefore, the Lord, as the Supersoul of all living beings from Brahmā to the insignificant ant, endows all with the required knowledge potent in every living being. A living being is sufficiently potent to possess knowledge from the Lord in the proportion of fifty sixty-fourths, or seventy-eight percent of the full knowledge acquirable. Since the living being is constitutionally part and parcel of the Lord, he is unable to assimilate all the knowledge that the Lord possesses Himself. In the conditioned state, the living being is subject to forget everything after a change of body known as death. This potent knowledge is again inspired by the Lord from within the heart of every living being, and it is known as the awakening of knowledge, for it is comparable to awakening from sleep or unconsciousness. This awakening of knowledge is under the full control of the Lord, and therefore we find in the practical world different grades of knowledge in different persons. This awakening of knowledge is neither an automatic nor a material interaction. The supply source is the Lord Himself (*dhiyām patiḥ*), for even Brahmā is also subject to this regulation of the supreme creator. In the beginning of the creation, Brahmā is born first without any father and mother because before Brahmā there were no other living beings. Brahmā is born from the lotus which grows from the abdomen of the Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, and therefore he is known as Aja. This Brahmā, or Aja, is also a living being, part and parcel of the Lord, but being the most pious devotee of the Lord, Brahmā is inspired by the Lord to create, subsequent to the main creation by the Lord, through the agency of material nature. Therefore neither the material nature nor Brahmā is independent of the Lord. The material scientists can merely observe the reactions of the material nature without understanding the direction behind such activities, as a child can see the action of electricity without any knowledge of the powerhouse engineer. This imperfect knowledge of the material scientist is due to a poor fund of knowledge. The Vedic knowledge was therefore first impregnated within Brahmā, and it appears that Brahmā distributed the Vedic knowledge. Brahmā is undoubtedly the speaker of the Vedic knowledge, but actually he was inspired by the Lord to receive such transcendental knowledge, as it directly descends from the Lord. The *Vedas* are therefore called *apauruṣeya*, or not imparted by any created being. Before the creation the Lord was there (*nārāyaṇaḥ paro 'vyaktāḥ*), and therefore the words spoken by the Lord are vibrations of transcendental sound. There is a gulf of difference between the two qualities of sound, namely *prākṛta* and *apākṛta*. The physicist can deal only with the *prākṛta* sound, or sound vibrated in the material sky, and therefore we must know that the Vedic sounds recorded in symbolic expressions cannot be understood by anyone within the universe unless and until one is inspired by the vibration of supernatural (*apākṛta*) sound, which descends in the chain of disciplic succession from the Lord to Brahmā, from Brahmā to Nārada, from Nārada to Vyāsa and so on. No mundane scholar can translate or reveal the true import of the Vedic *mantras* (hymns). They cannot be understood unless one is inspired or initiated by the authorized spiritual master. The original spiritual master is the Lord Himself, and the succession comes down through the sources of *paramparā*, as clearly stated in the Fourth Chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. So unless one receives the transcendental knowledge from the authorized *paramparā*, one should be considered useless (*viphalā matāḥ*), even though one may be greatly qualified in the mundane advancements of arts or science.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī is praying from the Lord by dint of being inspired from within by the Lord so that he could rightly explain the facts and figures of creation as inquired by Mahārāja Parikṣit. A spiritual master is not a theoretical speculator, like the mundane scholar, but is *śrotṛiyam brahma-niṣṭham*.

(continued in next issue)

# CELIBACY

## Exquisite Torture, or a “Yes to God”?

by RAVĪNDRA SVARŪPA DĀSA

The visit of Pope John Paul II to America last fall may come to be remembered most for the strange contrast it presented between the overwhelming enthusiasm shown for the man and the decided lack of enthusiasm shown for what he had to say. Among the unpopular positions espoused by the Pope was his insistence on maintaining the celibacy of priests. On the evening of October 3 he reiterated this position before an audience of seminarians at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, a complex of imposing buildings of huge grey granite blocks, where the Diocese of Philadelphia trains its priests. The Pope's visit here particularly interested me, since a few years earlier I myself had spoken before the seminarians of St. Charles—and on the very same topic.

It is rare but not odd that a Pope should speak before American seminarians, but it is perhaps rare and odd that a Hare Kṛṣṇa devotee should do so. What the Pope had to say was not unexpected. He stressed the full commitment the life of a priest demands, urged prayer as necessary for priests “to remain in a state of continuous reaching out to God,” and praised celibacy for priests as the “concrete response in their lives to express the totality of the ‘yes’ they have spoken to the Lord.” Naturally he was received enthusiastically, and the seminarians were reportedly “touched” by his speech. My own reception was somewhat more subdued, though respectful. But it is interesting that the Pope did not hear the seminarians voice the protests against celibacy that I—a member of “another religion”—did.

I had been invited specifically to address a class on the topic of revelation. Fifty or so young men in black filled the lecture hall when I arrived. I had thought over carefully what I would say: it must be clear to them that I had no sectarian message. I could speak on the general principles of religion that ought to apply as much to their faith as to my own.

And I knew some of their problems. I knew that the Church was losing priests at

an alarming rate, and that there was agitation among the clergy for a married priesthood. Indeed, I had seen some of this turbulence at an appallingly close range: while doing graduate work in religion at Temple University, I had watched as one Catholic religious after another abandoned their vows to take up secular life. Some got married; others simply hit the streets.

I wrote the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* on the blackboard and then explained to the class that it was simultaneously a prayer and the prayer's fulfillment. As a prayer, it begs the divine energy that unites us to God to join us with Him through service, and at the same time it *is* that union, for by chanting we directly associate with God in the form of His divine names (Kṛṣṇa the person and “Kṛṣṇa” the sound are nondifferent). Then I taught the seminarians how to pronounce the words of the *mantra* and asked them to chant it with me in call-and-response fashion. And then, to my immense delight, we had a wonderful *kīrtana*, as fifty strong voices clearly and vigorously chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* with me. After years of lecturing, I could get just about any audience to chant, but this chanting was exceptional; it was robust, spirited, with none of the sectarian reluctance I had feared. It was alive. These were clearly not ordinary men.

After the *kīrtana*, I began to explain how chanting was related to the subject of revelation. Revelation is two-sided: there is the giver and the receiver, and then the receiver becomes the giver to another receiver, in turn. In Sanskrit this process is called *paramparā*, or disciplic succession. Since the All-perfect reveals Himself perfectly, His revelation must be passed down without any change or alteration. For God's revelation to be potent, it must be preserved intact, in all its original integrity.

How is this possible? The original giver, God, may be infallible, but the receiver is all too fallible. And yet, as I explained, we must understand that the divine revelation

is not merely a collection of sentences, not just propositional truth. Memorization and rote transmission are machinelike functions that do not in themselves suffice for transmitting the revelation. God's revelation—His word—like His names in the *mantra*, is absolute, and therefore God Himself is given in His word, in His own revelation. For this reason, the word of God possesses a concrete power. Just as a potent antibiotic injected into the bloodstream destroys the agents of infection, so the word of God, injected into the ears of a fully submissive receiver, destroys all his material contaminations, and he becomes transformed into a fitting receptacle, into an unsullied transparent medium. Such a person not only speaks the word of God; he lives it, and living it, becomes the word personified.

Thus the potency of God's revelation is exhibited through the devotees, who are living exemplars of the purifying power of God. The word that is in relation to God can be received as-it-is only from those persons who are in relation to God. They are the life in which the letter lives. The revelation of God becomes a dead letter, like a law without government, when there are no pure devotees living the life of the letter.

So far, I had their full attention. Now I began to explain the four regulative principles, which are absolutely necessary for a person to observe if he wants to transmit the revelation of God intact. I enumerated: no eating of animal flesh, no indulgence in illicit sex, no taking of intoxicants, and no gambling—and I saw that I was losing my audience. Feet shuffled, eyes wandered . . . and then the monsignor, their instructor, announced that it was time for a short break.

He and I sat down together. I wanted to talk with him about meat-eating, but before I could begin to offer reasons why a Christian ought to refrain from animal slaughter, he began to offer reasons why a Christian could indulge in alcohol. This was not an auspicious sign, to say the least,

and as I began the second part of my lecture, I was somewhat less sanguine about the spiritual chances of these wonderful chanters. The monsignor, after all, was their *teacher*.

I spent the second part of the lecture explaining the spiritual principle that it is possible to give up the material activities of the senses not by rigid nullifications or barren abnegations, but only by giving the senses superior engagements in divine service. It is first of all necessary to control the tongue, I explained; only then can the other senses (including the genitals) be controlled. In the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, I told them, we control the tongue by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* and by talking about the transcendental activities of the Lord and His devotees, and we eat only the sacred food called *prasāda* (or God's mercy), which is sanctified by having first been offered to the Lord. Similarly, the eyes, ears, nose, hands, and legs are all controlled by spiritual engagements in divine service. Our senses are not repressed by such engagements; rather, they become purified by being kept in contact with the divine through active service. And thus our mind, the hub of the senses, becomes fixed in constant remembrance of the Lord, and such recollection gradually reawakens our dormant love for God. When this original love is misdirected, it assumes the guise of material desire, of lust. This is why, when spiritual purity is restored, material desire is not present even in a repressed state, where it can break out at any time; rather, it has been wholly transmuted back into its original and natural form, pure love for God.

I answered a number of questions, mostly concerning the particular practices of Kṛṣṇa devotees, while they passed around the large bowl of sweetballs (*prasāda*) I had brought for them.

After the class was dismissed, about a dozen seminarians lingered behind, all very friendly and inquisitive, and began to question me, mostly about the four regulative principles. I saw that several of them had lit cigarettes.

In the course of our discussion, I finally asked one of the smokers, "Do you really find that impossible to give up?" I wasn't prepared for his answer—or for the vehemence of it.

"If I could just take a girl out on Saturday night," he exclaimed, "instead of having to sit around here, crawling up the walls, I might not have to smoke!" There were murmurs of assent. And with much bitterness and resentment, they began criticizing the celibacy rule.

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, of course, has married priests. (I'm one.) But I told them that even married couples restrict sexual intercourse to once a

month, and then only if they are trying to have a child. ("Rhythm" we regard as another form of cheating.) One of them said that it sounded *worse* than celibacy: they clearly didn't want marriage on those terms either.

I was appalled by the amount of sexual frustration these men were giving voice to. It was wrong. So I started to question them about their life in the seminary, and it soon became quite clear why they were having such immense difficulty. To begin

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**As I looked  
at their faces,  
still clearly  
marked by the  
purity of their  
calling, I could  
only think that  
they were being  
horribly betrayed.**

---

with, they had large stretches of idle time on their hands. And then, they freely read novels and magazines, habitually watched television. All these activities certainly agitated their senses. There was nothing spiritual about their eating habits. It was strictly for the tongue, and they were accustomed to drinking beer and smoking. They had lots of idle time, their senses were kept continuously under the bombardment of materialistic stimulation, and then—they were told to be celibate!

No one could be celibate under those circumstances. They were being cruelly, exquisitely tortured. Then I remembered the monsignor with his perverse syllogism: "Everything God has made is good. God has made alcohol. . . ." (He made arsenic, too, but you don't ingest that!) I became angry. It was criminal to do this. These seminarians were not ordinary men: they wanted, and wanted very badly, to dedicate their lives fully to God. But nobody was showing them how. They were living in a way to agitate all their senses, and then commanded to be celibate! Of course they were always falling down, always laboring under a huge load of guilt. No wonder they were so cynical, so bitter and resentful. I wondered why nobody was teaching them. They didn't even know the

practical ABCs of spiritual life. They were being criminally betrayed.

It was so frustrating for me. I had told them what to do—but could they do it in the context of the Church? To chant God's names and dance with His devotees, to eat the sumptuous feasts of His mercy, to hear and read the always-fresh stories of His activities and pastimes, which fill volume after volume, to let their eyes feast on the gorgeous form of the Lord in the temple . . . could they do things like these? I had an overwhelming urge to take these men, right now, out onto the streets to chant. Then, I knew, they would be all right, they would be safe. They wanted a pure life (a rare thing), they wanted to surrender fully to God, they wanted to overcome the powerful "law of the flesh"—and I knew how they could do it.

But here they were, all in black. As we began walking down the long corridor, I asked one of them if there were some spiritually advanced person here he could follow. He shrugged.

"I don't know." He turned to his friend: "What d'you think?"

"I don't know." Silence for a few paces.

"Hey!" another suddenly exclaimed.

"What about Holy Joe!"

"Hey, yeah! Holy Joe!"

They began to laugh.

My depression deepened. We walked through the high, deserted halls, our footsteps ringing in the emptiness. The massive stone of the seminary loomed over us.

We stopped at the entrance to the chapel (the one where the Pope would speak a few years later). They wanted me to see it. They were proud of it. But it was huge, dark, and cold. Walls of bone-white marble shone dully. It was like a sepulcher. I shivered and mumbled something polite.

Before I left I told them that I had not come to criticize their religion. But as I looked at their faces, still clearly marked by the purity of their calling, I could only think that they were being horribly betrayed. I do not want to criticize their religion now, either, but I can only honestly report that I did not see there the spiritual energy that the word of God bears when lived by his pure devotees.

With John Paul II there has come hope. He is young, energetic, and is said to have charisma. But the sign of real renewal will not be the protestations of affection, the big turnouts, the cheers, and the applause. It will be when those seminarians embrace their vows not with bitterness and resentment but with joy, enthusiasm, and confidence.

You may not believe such a thing is possible, but I have seen it. I have been blessed to meet a pure devotee of God. Some of us have not been betrayed.



# Every Town and Village

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



## Royal Dwelling Now Yoga Academy

**Croome, U.K.**—The International Society for Krishna Consciousness recently inaugurated the British Bhakti-yoga Academy at Croome Court, twenty-five miles south of Birmingham and a 2½-hour drive from central London.

Croome Court has been the home of British nobility for generations; it was built in 1752 by the first Earl of Coventry. The nearly 175,000 square feet of buildings were the residence of the Queen of Hol-

land during World War II. Now the estate will house elementary and secondary school children, plus a variety of academic and artistic workshops, including ones in graphic design, painting, gardening, traditional Vedic cookery, and classical Eastern music.

Stone lions guard the ornate entry, and twelve-foot-high Vandyke portraits of Lords and Ladies of Coventry line the main reception hall.

## Indonesians Are on the Way to Kṛṣṇa

**Jakarta**—The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust has just released an Indonesian translation of *On the Way to Kṛṣṇa*, a book originally written in English by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Rendered into Bahasa Indonesian by Gaura-maṇḍala-bhūmi dāsa, an Australian devotee of Kṛṣṇa, *On the Way to Kṛṣṇa* has won warm praise from Indonesia's Central Body of Hindu Dharma. Tjorkorda Rai Sudharta, a spokesman for the organization, made this comment:

"Having read the translation, we consider this a book that should be read diligently, especially by the followers of the Hindu faith all over Indonesia, because its contents are completely based on the teachings of the scripture *Bhagavad-*

*gītā*. . . By reading this book one immediately gets a deep understanding of the teachings and philosophy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa—an understanding which brings mankind towards the Supreme Lord."

And Dr. I. B. Mantra, Governor of the Indonesian island of Bali, offered the following appreciation of the Book Trust in general:

"The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust is performing an important service to humanity by publishing the great philosophical texts of India's ancient Vedic civilization. . . . It is a great joy to see that these writings are now being made available to scholars and students all over the world, and I hope the Book Trust will continue to bring out such high-quality publications."



**A Life Member** of ISKCON, Prime Minister Ramgooram is entitled to all publications. Here presenting him with several new books are Navayogendra Swami and Shree Sewoopaul, ISKCON Patron Member.

## Prime Minister Gives Support

**Mauritius**—This small island nation in the Indian Ocean has hundreds of Life Members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Among them is the Prime Minister, the Hon. Sir Sewasegoor Ramgooram. Recently Sir Sewasegoor underscored his support of ISKCON's programs, which include the restoration of the Vedic land-based, spiritually oriented culture.

"If we can restore the Vedic culture," he said to ISKCON's Navayogendra Swami, "it will be by your blessing."

## 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 494 Caitanya Era—Month of Mādhava		
		February 1
		Appearance of Śrīa Nārottama dāsa Ṭhākura.
Month of Govinda		
	February 6	February 12
	Appearance of Śrīa Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja.	Vijayā-ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).
February 15	February 17	February 20
Śrī Śivarātri-vrata.	Disappearance of Śrīa Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja and Śrīa Rāṣṭhānanda oṅva Gosvāmī.	Appearance of Śrīa Puruṣottama Ṭhākura.
February 26	March 1	March 2
Āmalakī-ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).	Appearance day of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu (fasting). Dola-yātrā (swing festival) of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.	Ānandotsava of Śrī Jagannātha Miśra—a joyous festival upon the birth of his son, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

## KRṢṂA CULTURE

# A FORCE FOR UNITY IN THE U.K.

by YOGEŚVARA DĀSA

Horace walked on stage, found a bottle, and rubbed it. Out popped a malicious genie who demanded to be constantly engaged. Horace commanded him to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, an engagement without beginning and without end. The children of Letchmore Heath loved the performance by the devotee troupe, and so did the local papers. They featured the children's-day open house at Bhaktivedanta Manor, Hare Kṛṣṇa headquarters for the United Kingdom, and noted that devotees had become "an accepted part of life in the village."

Devotees have in fact become an accepted part of life throughout the U.K., where Commonwealth citizens from Dover to Glasgow are joining in the program and practices of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Nicholas Davies, forty-one, lives in London with his wife and two daughters. He is a fruits-and-vegetables trader. Elizabeth Loehning is seventy-seven, an accomplished linguist, and retired. Maganbhai Bhimjiyani, born in Uganda in 1922, is president of a pharmaceutical products company and head of Britain's Lohana families community. Like thousands of others, they have become Life Members of ISKCON U.K.

"Life Members are the Kṛṣṇa devotees people don't see chanting on the streets," explains Akhaṇḍadhī dāsa, ISKCON Life Membership Director for the U.K. "They are business people, students, professionals, people who have embraced the Kṛṣṇa consciousness

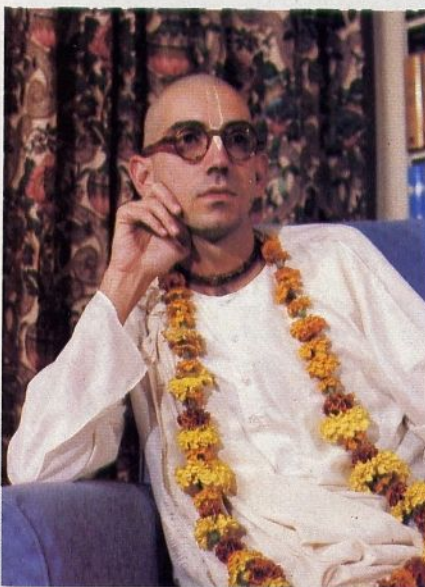


PHOTO: YOGEŚVARA DĀSA

**Initiating guru for the United Kingdom,** His Divine Grace Jayatīrtha Mahārāja (above) directs the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement's multifaceted projects from Bhaktivedanta Manor (right), in the Hertfordshire countryside, near London. The estate was donated by George Harrison.

ideals while retaining their place in the secular world."

Full-time devotees number three hundred in Britain and Life Members and other supporters tally in the tens of thousands. They have, for the most part, come in contact with devotees through daily street chanting parties and ISKCON publications.

"My eyebrows used to go up like everybody else's on Oxford Street," Elizabeth Loehning explains, "but when



PHOTO: BHĀRGAVA DĀSA

my interest in spiritual thought turned to the East, someone suggested I try the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple. I had read many books on Eastern philosophy, but I found the *Bhagavad-gītā* by Śrīla Prabhupāda clearer and more concise than the others. The teachings have brought me great peace. I chant every day.

"Most people I know look on devotees with mild wonderment and not a glimpse of understanding. Older people





especially are victims of their habits and can't be bothered to change or learn new lessons in life. They're too tired. But you never know when the understanding will come. I'm seventy-seven now and disabled, but I became a Life Member, and it's brought me happiness and fulfillment."

Full-time devotees qualify for initiation into Kṛṣṇa consciousness by following four basic regulations: no intoxication, no illicit sex, no meat-

eating, and no gambling. Life Members do not always seek initiation, but demonstrate their support by attending temple ceremonies, reading Kṛṣṇa literature, and donating funds or services to ISKCON temples.

#### **Working with Asian Youth**

The majority of ISKCON Life Members in the U.K. are Asians, who look to Kṛṣṇa temples as their home away from home. Most Asians in the

U.K. emigrated in the 1950's and 1960's, when postwar England was developing rapidly and required a large labor force. By 1968 there were more than a million and a half immigrants in Britain, searching after better material comforts than those they had known at home. Finally the British government called a halt to the influx, stopped the unrestricted entry, and thus set off a rush to establish residency. In less than one year an additional 230,000 Asians had



PHOTO: BHISAGVADA SA

**“Kṛṣṇa consciousness is our culture,”** says Maganbhai Bhimjiyani (above). At home, Kṛṣṇodakaśāyī dāsa and family (right) perform the same traditional early morning services seen in Kṛṣṇa conscious temples.

entered the U.K. Then, in the early 1970’s, an Asian exodus from Uganda pushed the number of immigrants over the two million mark, nearly three percent of the total British population.

A large number of Asians came alone, hoping they could save enough to call their families later. They soon realized that their plans had to be revised. Immigrants were generally limited to low-paying jobs with little chance for promotion; the government often took two or three years to grant entry visas. After many years, traditions were exchanged for those of British culture. The children became more and more Anglicized. Britain was their home, and the traditional culture of India a relic of past generations.

“The second-generation Asian is critical of his parents’ orthodoxy and is seeking liberalization of family customs—especially those related to sex,” explains Dr. Bhikhu Parekh, Senior Lecturer in Politics at the University of Hull. “Often the dominant white culture encourages an immigrant child, by subtle and not so subtle means, to despise his own culture. Many such cases are extremely tragic: youths ashamed to be seen walking on the streets with their parents, children struggling to wash themselves white, persuading their mothers not to wear saris, asking parents to be given a new name, and the like. The situation cannot be solved unless Britain recognizes itself

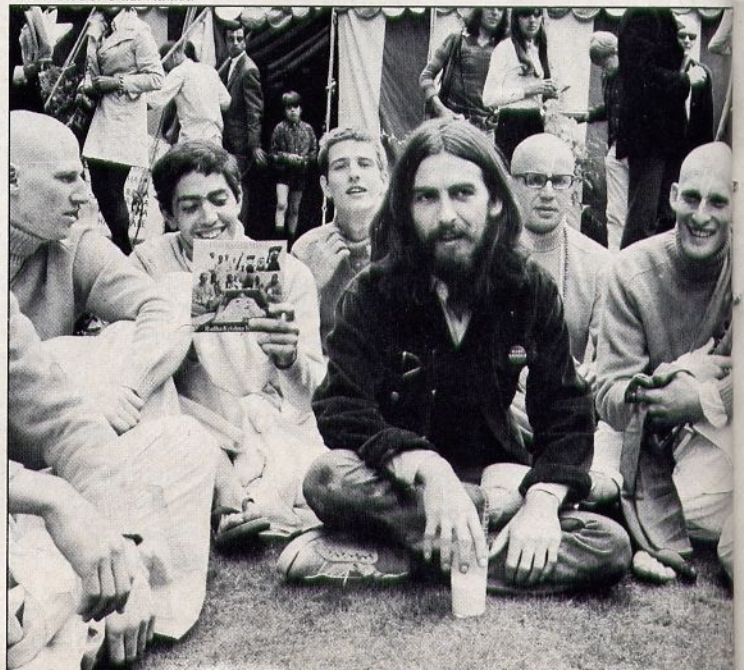


PHOTO: BHISAGVADA SA

**Appreciation for the Kṛṣṇa culture** takes many forms.

George Harrison (right) meditates on the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. The Chief of Police of Harrow (far right) offers words of praise at the opening of the ISKCON Youth Club, Harrow branch.

PHOTO: LONDON DAILY MIRROR





as a multicultural society and takes firm steps to encourage a sense of positive identity in its cultural minorities.”

In many ways, the lifestyle of devotees and that of orthodox Hindus run parallel, and devotees often find themselves regarded as emissaries of Indian tradition. Local authorities and community leaders frequently approach ISKCON to help resolve cultural conflicts between British and Asian youths. Devotees respond by organizing school lecture programs, clubs, and summer camps for young people, and by teaching young people to transcend cultural differences by realizing their common spiritual nature.

“The problem among Asian youth is generally described as a lack of material self-esteem,” explains Vicitravīrya dāsa, Assistant Governing Body Commissioner for ISKCON U.K. “Actually, this is a shortsighted explanation. There is truth to

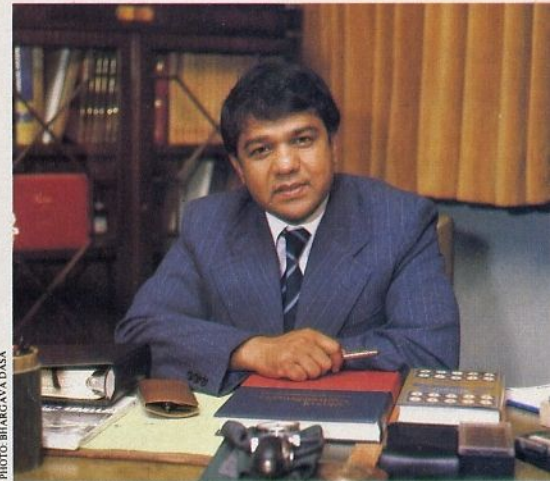


PHOTO: BHARGAVA DASA

**“For Indians outside their homeland, ISKCON offers cultural and spiritual shelter,”** says Dr. Sisir K. Dutta, a London gynecologist.



descriptions of racial prejudice, children torn by pressures at home to be Asian and pressures outside to be Western; but the real solution is not to reinforce temporary religious or national identity. ‘I am Hindu’ and ‘I am Christian’ are both bodily designations. The real self within the body is eternally a servant of God, and any identification with place of birth, religion, or caste is a misconception devoid of any redeeming benefits.

“Even from a material point of view, what value is there in trying to encourage nationalist sentiment? India is technologically retarded, and Britain is spiritually anemic. There is as much incidence, if not more, of children leaving home among the British as among the Asians. Encouraging pride as





'Asian' or 'English' won't be effective in increasing the stability of young people. Real progress can be made by teaching that God is the proprietor of all countries, and that our common heritage is service to Him."

### Helping Teachers Teach

The British were the first to popularize knowledge of Indian culture, albeit through a veil of Christian condescension. Colonial zeal to convert "Hindoo heathens" has subsided, for the most part. Nonetheless, ignorance of the Vedic culture's true spirit pervades English schools. The British Community Relations Commission reports that a majority of teachers do not think their education has adequately prepared them for working in multiracial schools. "I was completely ignorant of these children's culture, religion, and background," a Bristol teacher admits. "I had no real knowledge of their lives and found it extremely difficult to begin teaching." Life after death, arranged marriages, vegetarianism, and unfamiliar religious practices are some of the concepts teachers must somehow comprehend and accommodate without prior training.

Partly impelled by necessity and partly inspired by the numerous school programs initiated by devotees, teachers in the U.K. have begun looking to ISKCON for insights into the thoughts and beliefs of Asian students.

"Devotees are uniquely situated," says Ramesh Solanki, head of the Gujarati Arya Youth Program of Harrow. "They are multinational and therefore not seen as representing exclusively one or another of the various Indian religions—Sikh, Jain, Parsee, Hindu, and so on. They can, in this sense, effectively explain the universality of Vedic philosophy."

The *Vedas* are the essential texts of India, compiled about five thousand years ago. They prescribe various methods of worship, according to one's degree of detachment from material affections. Contrary to popular belief, however, the *Vedas* are not polytheistic. There is a Supreme Godhead, called Kṛṣṇa, who is worshiped and adored by scores of lesser beings: Śiva, Durgā, Indra, Brahmā. Kṛṣṇa (literally the "all-attractive one") is the same God of creation recognized in all revealed scriptures of the world, and devotees of Kṛṣṇa therefore do not consider

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**Upwards of forty thousand people**, both Asians and Britons, regularly come to Bhaktivedanta Manor for festivals like this one, the celebration of the day Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared in this world.



PHOTO BHARAVADA DASA



Classical Gujarati dance (top) and plays (right) from the Vedic literatures highlight a Kṛṣṇa festival at Bhaktivedanta Manor. Kṛṣṇa conscious summer camps (above) offer instruction in spiritual music, philosophy, and the Vedic way of life.



PHOTO VANDANA JAIN

themselves to belong to one religion among many. Rather, Kṛṣṇa consciousness (technically called *bhakti-yoga*) invokes a vision of all living beings as parts and parcels of God, beyond designations such as Hindu or Christian.

#### Working with the Government

One of the hotbeds of racial violence in England is Southall, a densely populated Asian community in South London. Riots broke out recently there between members of the extremist

British Nationalist Front and loosely organized Hindu radicals. Three youths were killed. Less than a week later, devotees had mobilized dozens of Southall young people into an ISKCON youth club. Working with local authorities, they went door to door, campaigning for a *kṛṣṇa-krānti* ("Kṛṣṇa revolution") to offset racial tension.

The initiative of devotees in Southall prompted Suhail Aziz, Director of General Services for the government-sponsored Committee for Racial

Equality, to address the crowd gathered for the club's official inauguration.

"ISKCON is making an unparalleled contribution to racial harmony in this country," he said, and he emphasized the importance of local support for the devotees' effort in areas of Asian concentration. Six ISKCON youth clubs are presently operative in England.

Responding to Mr. Aziz's comments, Śrīla Jayatīrtha Mahārāja, initiating *guru* for ISKCON U.K., declared, "As long as we remain lodged in a bodily concept of

ourselves—'I am American' or 'British' or 'Hindu'—such uprisings as those we saw here last week are inevitable. Material consciousness is a diseased condition, but it can be cured by reviving our dormant Kṛṣṇa or God consciousness. Actually, we are related spiritually; but these artificial divisions oblige us to war and violence. Therefore we are presenting Kṛṣṇa consciousness not just here but around the world as the peace formula, the solution to the prejudices of mankind everywhere."

Devotees do not consider themselves social workers. They view the problems of the world as essentially spiritual. If there is too little food, it is not an economic problem but a spiritual one, since men and governments refuse to see their obligation to share equally the property of the Lord. If there is racial unrest, it is also due to spiritual

shortsightedness, to accepting the body and not the eternal soul as the real self. In the minds of people still unfamiliar with the meaning of Kṛṣṇa consciousness programs, devotees are enigmatic, strangely garbed remnants of an ancient culture somehow transplanted to the West. But for thousands in the U.K. and elsewhere, Kṛṣṇa consciousness offers a broad vision of the world as it some day may be—unified by knowledge of the self, beyond cultural and racial differences. ❁



**A familiar sound in London streets** is the chanting of the Lord's holy names (Hare Kṛṣṇa). It draws together people of all religious and ethnic backgrounds in a movement for world peace.

# FAITHS

(continued from page 4)

this material world for some perfection in education or perfection in business. We may amass a vast amount of money, but that is not *avyayam*, eternal. As soon as your body is finished, everything is finished—your education is finished, your M.A. degree is finished, your bank balance

is finished, your family is finished. Everything is finished. Now begin a new life. *Vāsāmsi jīrnāni yathā vihāya*: "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." [Bg. 2.22] Therefore, whatever you are doing in this material world is not *avyayam*, not eternal. It is all temporary. But transcendental knowledge is not like that.

*Svalpam apy asya dharmasya trāyate*

*mahato bhayāt*. Kṛṣṇa conscious knowledge is so perfect that even if you learn one percent of it, then it can help to protect you from the greatest danger. Suppose in this life I perform work in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, say, twenty-five percent of the time—I am not perfect. Then in my next life I will begin from the twenty-sixth point. So whatever realization I have acquired in this life is not lost. These are the formulas we get from authoritative scripture. But because material achievement pertains to this body, this temporary designation, it is finished with the finish of this designation.

In this body we're thinking, "I am American," "I am Indian." All of these are simply our designations. Yet the designation will finish, and there is no certainty what sort of body we will have in our next life. But devotional service to the Lord—knowledge and action in Kṛṣṇa consciousness—will be permanent, whatever you do. If you can do it perfectly in this very life, then you get entrance into the kingdom of God. But even if you are not able to execute it perfectly, whatever you do will go with you, because you are a spirit soul. So your spiritual activities will be with you. But because the material body will remain in this material world, any work or assessment of this material body will also remain in this material world. This is natural.

Now we can actually understand how Kṛṣṇa consciousness, devotional service, is joyfully performed. Take, for example, what we are doing here. We are singing, we are dancing, we are taking nice *prasāda* [spiritual food offered to Kṛṣṇa with love and devotion], and we are discussing the philosophy of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. These are the processes. We are not meant for any artificial austerities or gymnastics or breath control—so many things that are now being advertised and performed by so many different *yoga* societies. Here it is very easily and happily done. Everyone wants to dance, everyone wants to sing, everyone wants to eat nice foodstuffs. Through this formula—dancing, singing, eating Kṛṣṇa *prasāda*, and hearing philosophical discussion (transcendental topics from *Bhagavad-gītā*)—don't you think it is very joyful? And whatever knowledge you acquire, that is permanent. That is not going to be finished with the finish of your body.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is such a nice thing; therefore we are trying to impart this philosophy in your country, and we invite your cooperation. *Vijñānam*: it is scientific. It is not sentimentality or fanaticism. It is scientific. So try to understand this philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness from *Bhagavad-gītā*, and help yourself, help your countrymen, help the world. Then there will be peace and prosperity.

## Enhance Your Spiritual Life

For spiritual realization, all you really need is the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra. But to enhance your spiritual life, you may want to add the items listed below.

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# NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

## An Energy Alternative: The Resources Within

The world's energy supply is limited—everyone knows—and the supply is being depleted by ravenous, irresponsible consumption. These are well-known facts. And everyone is aware that Americans, especially, seem unable to voluntarily reduce their consumption of energy, despite the inevitable future.

Humberto Berti, Venezuela's Minister of Energy, said recently, "Americans have to control consumption. You have to make a real conservation effort. Forget about the big cars, the air-conditioned shopping centers."

According to Sheik Yamani, the Oil Minister of Saudi Arabia, "The United States should ration oil. They must take drastic action to conserve oil in order to forestall large price increases when OPEC nations meet."

President Carter has lamented that America's reaction to the energy problem has ranged from "panic" to "almost absolute apathy." Americans can no longer avoid saving energy, he says. "There are ways to have a good life, even a better life, without our wasting so much."

Already we have experienced inconvenience and even panic over temporary shortages of gasoline. Yet despite our own experience, the warnings of experts, and the President's call for restraint, Americans have no idea how to start living more simply. And the mad rate of consumption gets madder. Obviously, we are not seriously considering reduced consumption. "If you strip away the rhetoric," said one energy analyst, "the real American energy policy since 1973 has been to import *more* oil."

Why are we unable to reduce our consumption of energy? The reason is, we are addicted to sense gratification. Of course, the body is made of senses, and a certain level of sense gratification is necessary. But when increasing sense gratification becomes the nation's sole and final goal, then American society becomes increasingly greedy, and the entire planet, with all its natural resources, living beings, and nations,

becomes exploited, victimized.

True, the animals live a life of sense gratification, but human society is meant for something more. Even among the animals there is natural conservation, imposed by instinct and the laws of nature. If some bags of grain were left lying on the road, a bird would take only what it needs and go away, but a human being would probably grab all the bags—more than he needs—and then sell them. The human being has more intelligence than the animals, but when he misuses it—simply for increasing his sense gratification—he creates a disturbance in God's creation. His higher intelligence should be used for controlling his senses and for executing his higher, human mission of life.

American life, however, has evolved to one of strict hedonism: enjoy as much as possible for as long as possible. Americans are only five percent of the world's population, and yet we are now consuming forty percent of the world's natural energy . . . for sense gratification. Despite America's nominal Judeo-Christian background, our actions show that we do not honor the fact that everything in the universe belongs to God, and that we should take only what we need, according to our quota.

In order to satisfy our senses on as high a standard as possible, we have to deprive and exploit less fortunate people all over the world. We regularly resort to killing innocent animals and killing babies in the womb, just so that there will be no check on our sense gratification, either for the tongue or the genitals. But we have not created the world, with its ecological balance, its natural controls, and its limit of energy resources. God has created it. And His law cannot be defied for long. We have violated the laws of nature for a season, but our hedonistic, wasteful life is coming to an end, by nature's law.

What we need is a regulated life of controlled sense gratification and reduced consumption. But who is actually willing and able to give up sense

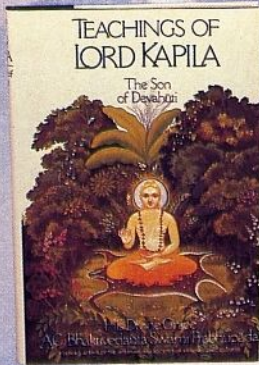
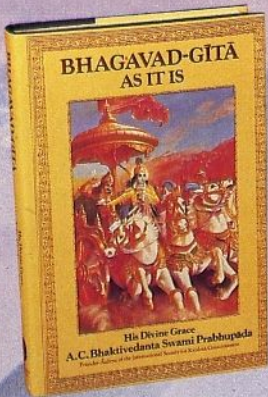
gratification? To a hedonist, sense gratification means happiness, and to most Americans, conservation means giving up life's pleasures. So patriotic speeches calling on Americans to become moderate will not work. Truckers, for instance, are prepared to fight farmers over limited supplies of gasoline, and before Californians would ration gasoline, they just might watch their countrymen in the Northeast freeze. But if American society—which is now on a path of hedonism and waste—would turn to the path of self-realization, the problem of controlling consumption would be solved automatically. If our nation of pleasure-seekers is to adjust to a simpler life, we must first experience satisfaction on a higher level. The *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.59) teaches this principle analytically: "Although the embodied soul may be restricted from sense enjoyment, the taste for sense objects remains. But ceasing such engagements by experiencing a higher taste, one is fixed in consciousness." Unfortunately, at present America has no scientific understanding of how a person can feel happiness beyond gross sense gratification.

Those who are following the path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, however, are experiencing this way of life—simple living and high thinking—and they offer it for serious consideration to persons concerned with the American energy dilemma. Experiencing the higher taste is something we can all explore as an energy alternative. Today, when the government is casting around for any kind of energy alternative, they would do well to investigate the subtle but realistic principle of the *Bhagavad-gītā*: experiencing the higher taste, in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Only when we Americans can find a deeper satisfaction in our lives, a higher happiness than sense gratification, will we be able to live peacefully, without absolute dependence on cars, color TV, air conditioning, and so on. Only then will it be possible for us to tap the unlimited energy resources that lie within each of us. —SDG

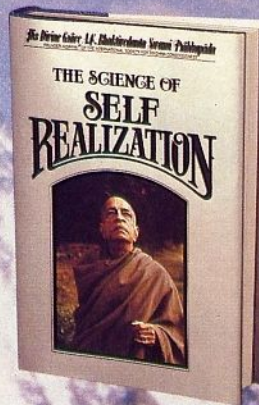
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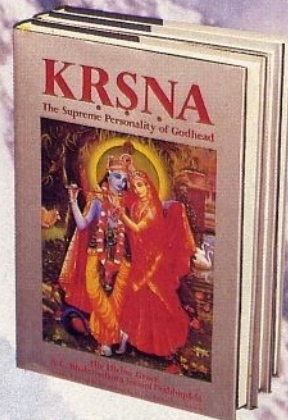
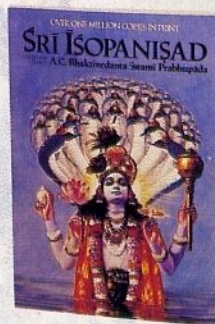
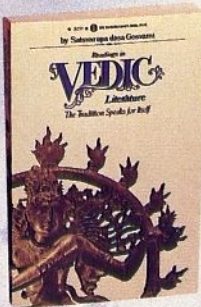
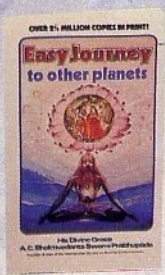
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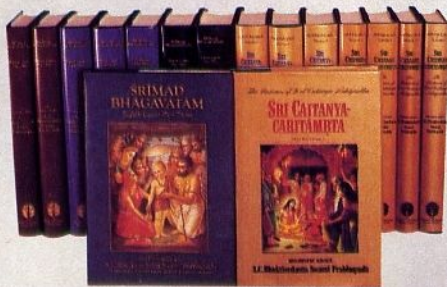
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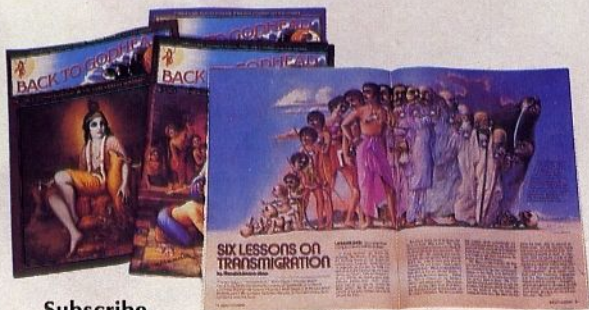


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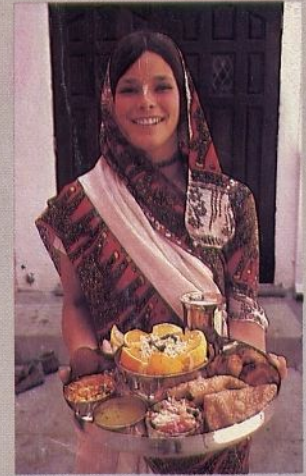
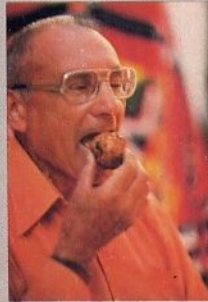
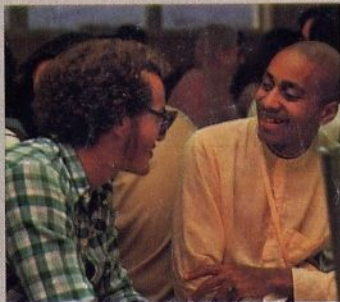
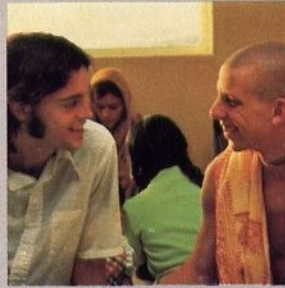
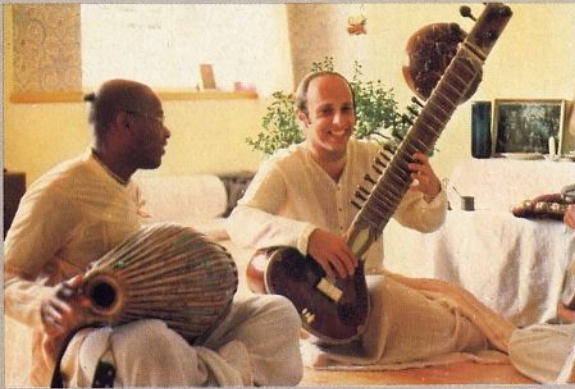
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# THE TASTE OF ANOTHER WORLD



Delicious, traditional Vedic cuisine was part of the legacy Kṛṣṇa consciousness brought to Western shores. Eating, like everything else for Kṛṣṇa devotees, is a part of the complete spiritual experience of life. Sunday sees the doors swung open and hundreds of friends—regulars as well as newcomers—sharing hearty plates of savories, vegetable extravaganzas, sweets, and nectar drinks. Come by, Sunday or any day, and experience the taste of the world's oldest culinary tradition. See page 31 for the center nearest you.

**THE BHAKTIVEDANTA BOOK TRUST**  
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