

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

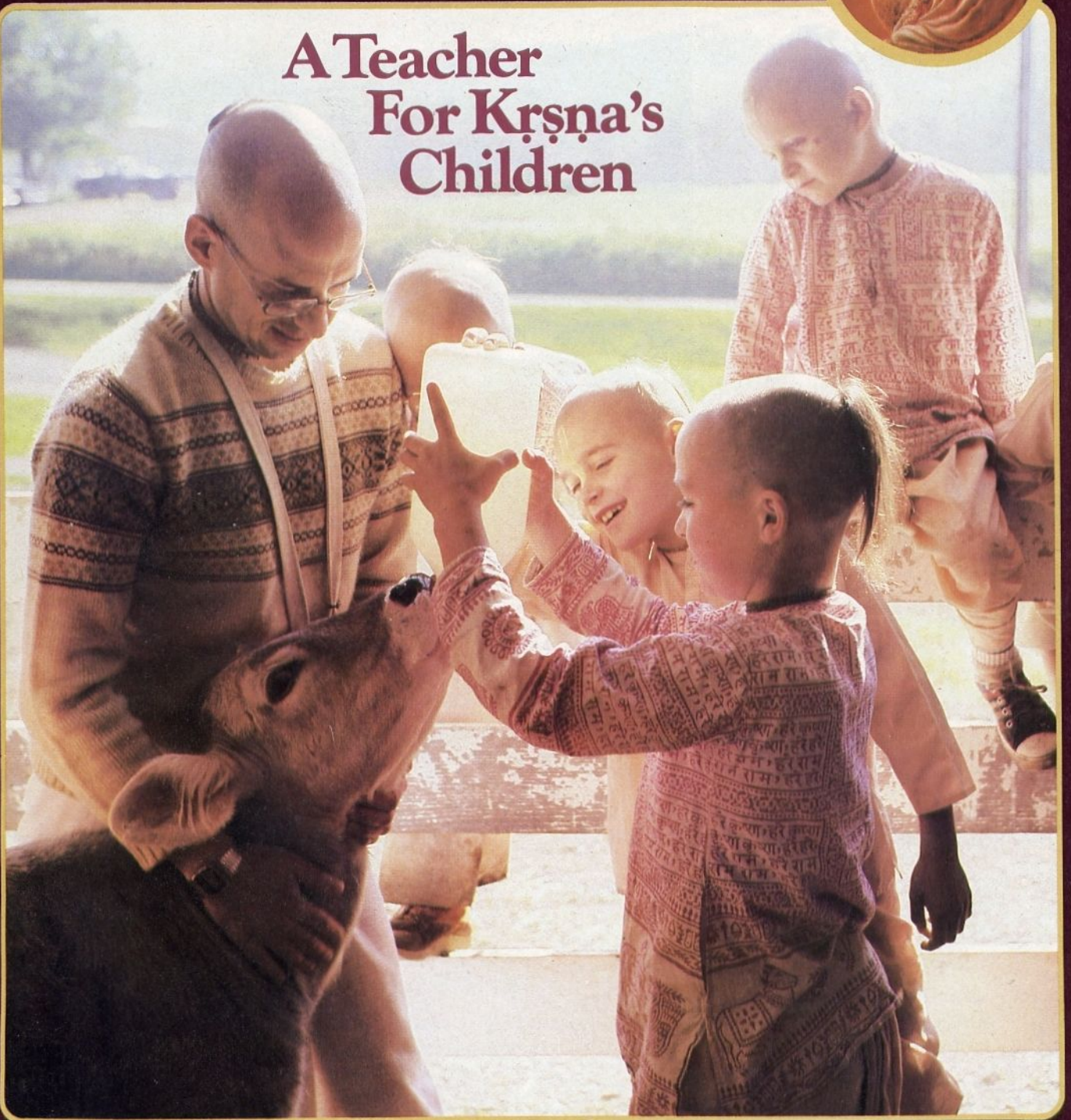
BACK TO GODHEAD



Vol.17 No.1 \$1.25 THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

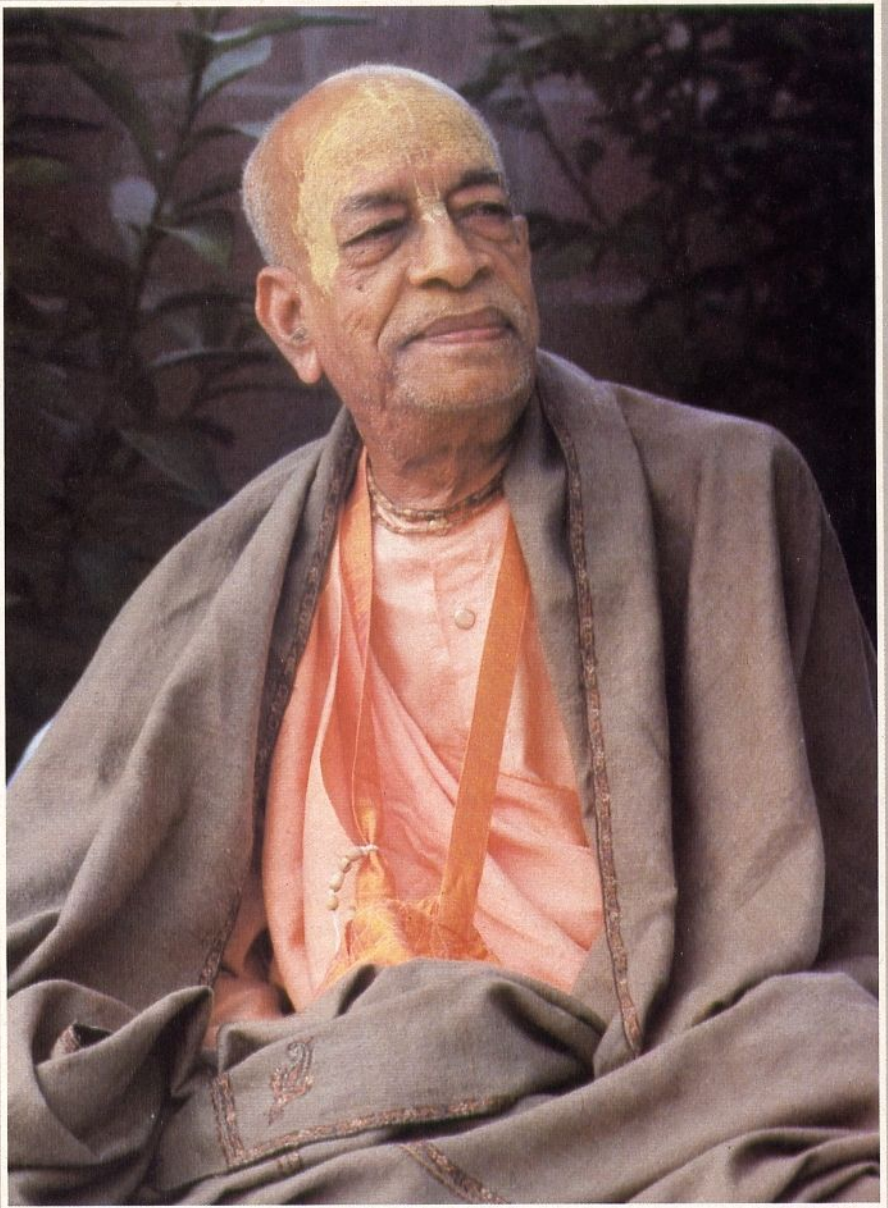


A Teacher For Kṛṣṇa's Children



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

Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, came to America in 1965, at age sixty-nine, 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 literature, 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. His disciples are carrying forward the movement he started.



BACK TO GODHEAD is the monthly journal of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. When Śrīla Prabhupāda began the Society (in New York City, in 1966), he put into writing the purposes he wanted it to achieve. They are as follows:

1. To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all people in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life and to achieve real unity and peace in the world.
2. To propagate a consciousness of Kṛṣṇa, as it is revealed in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.
3. To bring the members of the Society together with each other and nearer to Kṛṣṇa, the prime entity, thus developing the idea within the members, and humanity at large, that each soul is part and parcel of the quality of Godhead (Kṛṣṇa).
4. To teach and encourage the *saṅkīrtana* movement, congregational chanting of the holy names of God, as revealed in the teachings of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
5. To erect for the members and for society at large a holy place of transcendental pastimes dedicated to the personality of Kṛṣṇa.
6. To bring the members closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler, more natural way of life.
7. With a view toward achieving the aforementioned purposes, to publish and distribute periodicals, books, and other writings.

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Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda)
His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda

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SANSKRIT EDITOR Kuśakrathā dāsa

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PRONUNCIATION. We spell Sanskrit words and names by a scholarly system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in **but**, long **ā** like the **a** in **far** (and hold it twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in **evade**, long **ī** like the **i** in **pique**. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **rim**, and **ṛ** like the **ch** in **chair**. Pronounce the aspirated consonants (**ch**, **jh**, **dh**, etc.) as in **staunch-heart**, **hedge-hog**, and **red-hot**. Finally, pronounce the sibilants **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh**, and **s** like the **s** in **sun**. So for *Kṛṣṇa* say **KRISHNA**, and for *Caitanya* say **CHAITANYA**.

SPIRITUAL NAMES. Members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or His great devotees, combined with *dāsa* (*dāsi* for women), meaning "servant." For instance, the name *Kṛṣṇa dāsa* means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

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COVER: On the Hare Kṛṣṇa farm in central Pennsylvania's fertile Juniata county, Bhūrījāna dāsa, headmaster of the *gurukula* school there, integrates practical farm experience into the educational curriculum. Here the children help take care of a calf, part of the farm's prizewinning herd of Brown Swiss cows. For more on Bhūrījāna and his work, please turn to page 20. (Photo: Viśākhā-devī dāsi)

MEDITATION THROUGH TRANSCENDENTAL SOUND

In 1969, soon after “transcendental meditation” first caught the fancy of people in America, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, gave this talk at Boston’s Northeastern University.

My dear boys and girls, I thank you very much for attending this meeting. We are spreading this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement because there is a great need of this consciousness throughout the world. And the process is very easy—that is the advantage.

First of all, we must try to understand what the transcendental platform is. As far as our present condition is concerned, we are on various platforms. So we have to first of all stand on the transcendental platform; then there can be a question of transcendental meditation.

In the Third Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, you’ll find an explanation of the various statuses of conditioned life. The first is the bodily conception of life (*indriyāṇi parāṇy āhuḥ*). Everyone in this material world is under this bodily concept of life. Someone is thinking, “I am Indian.” You are thinking, “I am American.” Somebody’s thinking, “I am Russian.” Somebody’s thinking he is something else. So everyone is thinking, “I am the body.”

This bodily standard of conditioned life is called the sensual platform, because as long as we have a bodily conception of life we think happiness means sense gratification. That’s all. This bodily concept of life is very prominent at the present moment—not only at the present moment, but since the creation of this material world. That is the disease: “I am the body.”

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam says, *yasyātma-buddhiḥ kuṇape tri-dhātuke*: thinking we are the body means we have a concept of our self as a bag of skin and bones. The body is a bag of skin, bones, blood, urine, stool, and so many other nice things. So when we think, “I am the body,” we are actually thinking, “I am a bag of bones and skin and stool and urine. That is my beauty; that is my everything.” So this bodily concept of life is not very intelligent, and improvement of the body is not a right calculation of self-realization.

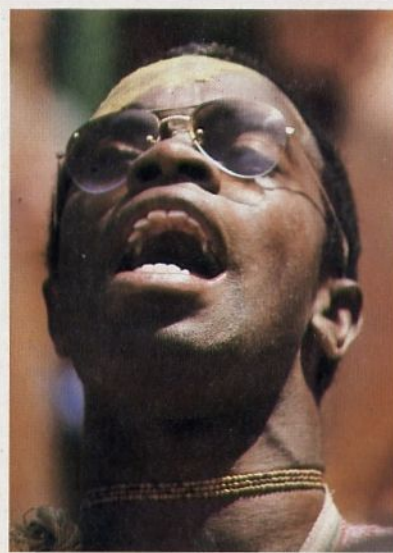
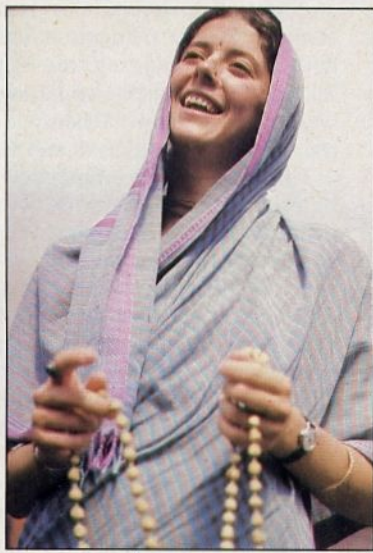
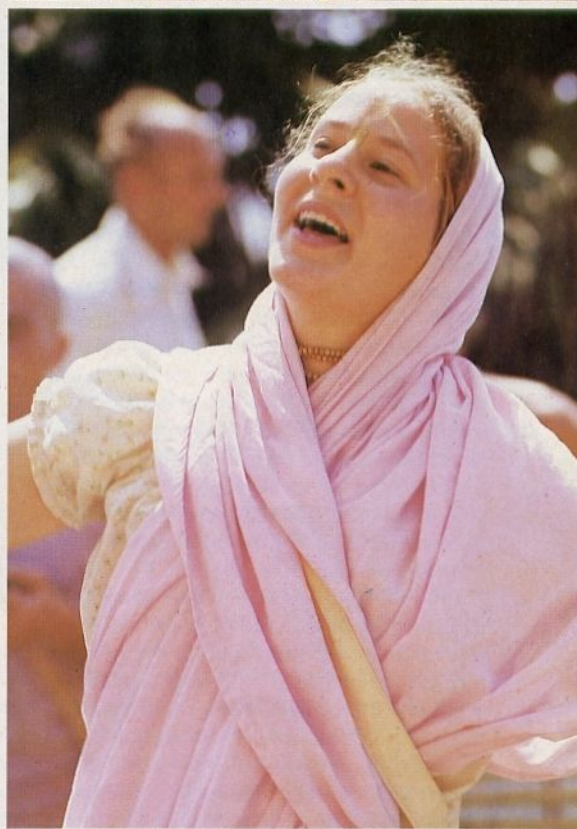
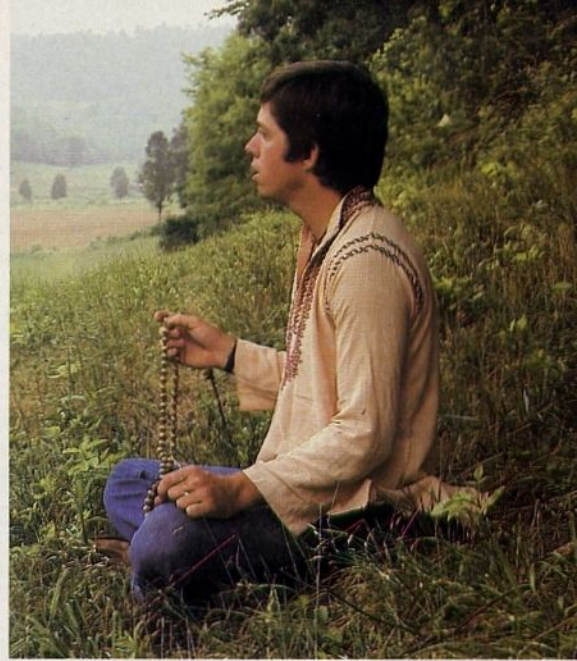
Those who are too engrossed with the bodily concept of life are recommended to practice the *dhyāna-yoga* system, the *yoga* of meditation. That is mentioned in the *Śrīmad-Bhagavad-gītā*. In the Sixth Chapter, verses 13 and 14, Kṛṣṇa explains, “One should hold one’s body, neck, and head erect in a straight line and stare steadily at the tip of the nose. Thus, with an unagitated, subdued mind, devoid of fear, completely free from sex life, one should meditate upon Me.”

Earlier Lord Kṛṣṇa gives preliminary instructions on how one should practice this transcendental meditation. One has to restrict sense gratification, especially sex. One has to select a very solitary place, a sacred place, and sit down alone. This meditation process is not practiced in a place like this, a big city, where many people are gathered. One must go to a soli-



tary place and practice alone. And then you have to carefully select your sitting place, you have to sit in a certain way . . . There are so many things. Of course, those things cannot be explained within a few minutes. If you are very much interested, you’ll find a full description in *Bhagavad-gītā*, in the chapter called “Dhyāna-yoga.”

So from the bodily concept of life one has to transcend to the spiritual platform. That is the goal of any process of self-realization. I began by saying that at first we are all thinking we are the body. *Indriyāṇi parāṇy āhuḥ*. Then, one who has transcended the bodily concept of life comes to



the platform of mind, *Indriyebhyaḥ param manah*. The word *manah* means "mind." Practically the whole population of the world is under the bodily concept of life, but above them are some people who are under the mental concept of life. They are thinking they are the mind. And a few people are on the intellectual platform: *manasas tu parā buddhiḥ*. *Buddhiḥ* means "intelligence." And when you transcend the intellectual platform also, then you come to the spiritual platform. That is the first realization required.

Before you practice transcendental meditation, you have to reach the transcendental platform. That transcendental platform

is called *brahma-bhūtaḥ*. Perhaps you have heard this word—Brahman. The transcendentalist thinks, "*Ahaṁ brahmāsmi*: I am not the body; I am not the mind; I am not the intelligence; I am spirit soul." This is the transcendental platform.

We are talking of transcendental meditation. So, by transcending the bodily concept of life, transcending the mental concept of life, and transcending the intellectual concept of life, you come to the real spiritual platform, which is called the *brahma-bhūtaḥ* stage. You cannot simply say some words—"Now I have realized Brahman." There are symptoms. Everything has symptoms, and how you can

know if someone has realized transcendence, Brahman, is explained in *Bhagavad-gītā* [18.54]: *brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā*. When one is on the transcendental platform, the *brahma-bhūtaḥ* stage, his symptom is that he's always joyful. There is no moroseness.

And what does *joyful* mean? That is also explained: *na śocati na kāṅkṣati*. Someone on the transcendental platform does not hanker after anything, nor does he lament. On the material platform we have two symptoms: hankering and lamenting. The things we do not possess we hanker after, and the things we have lost we lament for. These are the symptoms of

the bodily concept of life.

The whole material world is hankering after sex. That is the basic principle of hankering. *Pumsaḥ striyā mithunī-bhāvam etam. Mithunī-bhāvam* means sex. Whether you look at the human society or the animal society or the bird society or the insect society, everywhere you will find that sex is very prominent. That is the materialistic way of life. A boy is hankering after a girl, a girl is hankering after a boy; a man is hankering after a woman, a woman is hankering after a man. This is going on.

And as soon as the man and woman unite, the hard knot in the heart is tied. *Tayor mitho hrdaya-granthim āhuh.* They think, "I am matter, this body. This body belongs to me. This woman or man belongs to me. This country belongs to me. This world belongs to me." That is the hard knot. Instead of transcending the bodily concept of life, they become still more implicated. The situation becomes very difficult. Therefore Kṛṣṇa recommends in *Bhagavad-gītā* that if you are at all interested in practicing *yoga* and meditation, in trying to rise to the transcendental platform, you must cease from sex.

But in the present age that is not possible. So in our method, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we don't say, "Stop sex." We say, "Don't have illicit sex." Of course, what to speak of transcendental life, giving up illicit sex is a requirement of *civilized* life. In every civilized society there is a system of marriage, and if there is sex outside of marriage, that is called illicit sex. That is never allowed for people in any civilized society, what to speak of those trying for transcendental life. Transcendental life must be purified of all mental and bodily concepts of self.

But in this Age of Kali, where everyone is disturbed, always full of anxieties, and where life is very short, people are generally not interested in any transcendental subject matter. They are interested only in the bodily concept of life. When one is always disturbed by so many anxieties, how can he ascend to the platform of transcendental realization? It is very difficult in this age. It was difficult even five thousand years ago, when Arjuna took instruction on meditation from Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavad-gītā*. Arjuna was a royal prince; he was very much advanced in so many ways. Yet on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra he said, "My dear Kṛṣṇa, it is not possible for me to practice this transcendental meditation, this *dhyāna-yoga* process. I am a family man; I have come here to fight for my political interest. How can I practice this system, in which I have to go to a solitary place, I have to sit down, I have to cease from sex? It is not possible." Arjuna was so much more qualified than we are, yet he refused to practice this meditation process.

So reaching the transcendental platform by the *hatha-yoga* or *dhyāna-yoga* system is not at all possible in this age. And if somebody is trying to practice such so-called meditation, he is not actually practicing transcendental meditation. You cannot perform this transcendental meditation in the city. It is not possible. That is very clearly stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*. But you are living in the city, you are living with your family, you are living with your friends. It is not possible for you to go to the forest and find a secluded place. But Kṛṣṇa says you must do this to practice transcendental meditation.

**If you try to
understand what
this Kṛṣṇa
consciousness
movement is, you'll
understand how
transcendental
meditation
is possible.**

So here, in this age, if you want to rise to the transcendental platform, then you must follow the recommendations of the Vedic literature: *kalau tad dhari-kīrtanāt*. In this age, simply by chanting the holy name of God one can reach all perfection. We are not introducing this chanting system by our mental concoction, to make things very easy. No, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu introduced this process of transcendental meditation five hundred years ago. Also, the Vedic literature recommends it, and it is practical. You have seen that my disciples, these boys and girls, immediately experience a transcendental feeling as soon as they begin chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. If you practice, you will also see how you are rising to the transcendental platform. So chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare is the easiest process of transcendental meditation.

This transcendental sound vibration will immediately carry you to the transcendental platform, especially if you try to hear so that your mind is absorbed in the sound. This Hare Kṛṣṇa sound vibration is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa, because Kṛṣṇa is absolute. Since God is absolute, there is no difference between God's

name and God Himself. In the material world there is a difference between water and the word *water*, between a flower and the word *flower*. But in the spiritual world, in the absolute world, there is no such difference. Therefore, as soon as you vibrate Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, you immediately associate with the Supreme Lord and His energy.

The word *Hare* indicates the energy of the Supreme Lord. Everything is being done by the energy of the Supreme Lord. *Parasya brahmaṇaḥ śaktiḥ*. Just as the planets are a creation of the energy of the sun, so the whole material and spiritual manifestation is a creation of the energy of the Supreme Lord. So when we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa we are praying to the energy of the Supreme Lord and to the Supreme Lord Himself: "Please pick me up. Please pick me up. I am in the bodily concept of life. I am in this material existence. I am suffering. Please pick me up to the spiritual platform so that I will be happy."

You haven't got to change your situation. If you are a student, remain a student. If you are a businessman, remain a businessman. Woman, man, black, white—anyone can chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. It is a simple process, and there is no charge. We are not saying, "Give me so many dollars, and I shall give you this Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra." No, we are distributing it publicly. You simply have to catch it up and try it. You'll very quickly come to the transcendental platform. When you hear the chanting, that is transcendental meditation.

This process is recommended in all the scriptures of Vedic literature, it was taught by Lord Caitanya and followed by His disciple succession for the last five hundred years, and people are achieving good results from it today, not only in India but here also. If you try to understand what this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is, you'll understand how transcendental meditation is possible. We are not sentimentalists; we have many books: *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, *Īsopaniṣad*. And we have our magazine, BACK TO GOD-HEAD. It is not that we are sentimentalists. We are backed up by high philosophical thought. But if you take up this simple process—chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—you are immediately elevated to the transcendental platform, even without reading so much philosophical literature. This Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra is Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's gift to the conditioned souls of the present age, in accordance with the Vedic sanction.

So our request is that you give it a try. Simply chant, at home or anywhere. There is no restriction: "You have to chant

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A Letter From a Friend

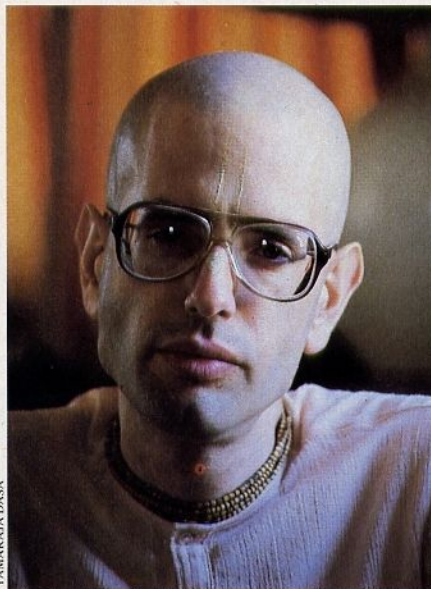
“Let us see this life in the context of eternity.”

Dear friends,
Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Prabhupāda dāsa, a name that means I am a servant of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder and spiritual guide of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. This Society is a unique worldwide federation of temples, farms, schools, and *āśramas* dedicated to the constant remembrance of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I myself have been a full-time member of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement for more than six years, and I am increasingly satisfied with my decision to become a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. Every day I follow the schedule of devotional activities that all members of the movement follow, and I have no separate, “private” life outside my service to the Lord.

You might be surprised to learn, then, that I am feeling a deep sense of sadness, a sadness that pertains to all of you. Kindly allow me to explain.

I am sad because I see that many millions of you are continuing to spend your most precious human lives without trying to come in touch with the Soul of souls, Lord Kṛṣṇa. I understand something of your mentality, for I used to think as you do and relish the same sensations you now place at the center of your life. But I am worried about how you will cope with death, the time when everyone has to leave the bodily vehicle. Will you be satisfied that you have loved enough? Will your loved ones follow you to your next destination, dark and unknown?

Now, perhaps you're just not interested in all this sort of talk. After all, you're probably working hard just to maintain your family in this era of inflation and recession. You see devotees like me with our robes and strangely shaven heads, our arms upraised as we dance in the streets



YAMARAIA DASA

or in front of the lavishly decorated Deity forms in the temple, always chanting the same prayer—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—and you can't even imagine becoming like us. It's all so strange!

But did it ever occur to you that we devotees are motivated in much the same way that you are? We are also hankering for blissful loving exchanges. But we are loving Kṛṣṇa, the eternal, all-attractive Personality of Godhead, and we are urging you to learn the art of loving Him as well. Unlike us pathetically limited human beings, He possesses infinite beauty, strength, wealth, fame, knowledge, and renunciation. But please, before you discount this description as some fantastic exaggeration, remember that we are talking about God. *Kṛṣṇa* is simply a most lovely name for God, a name that means “the all-attractive one.” So Kṛṣṇa consciousness means God consciousness, the

revival of our dormant love for God. What more valuable asset do we have than our ability to love? So don't be fooled; don't squander your love on someone or something that will be destroyed by the inexorable force of time.

Mundane romance, based on the sex impulse, is going on even among the squirrels and pigeons in the park. The science of the soul, explained in books like *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, teaches that such creatures have gotten where they are by remaining overly absorbed in sex during their previous human incarnation. Now that we have achieved the human form, we should apply our reason. We should not merely rationalize our inappropriate absorption in sense pleasure. Because our intelligence is greater than the animals', we have the responsibility to use it properly. In human life we know, for instance, that our term in the body is limited; we know death is coming. Therefore, societies guided by spiritual values have always had some program for gradually renouncing mundane attachments as death approaches. The total lack of such a program in our present society indicates a profound ignorance about spiritual matters. But individually we do not have to allow ourselves to become victims of such wasteful ignorance. If we do, our fate will merely be *increased* ignorance. Natural law, the law of *karma*, will compel us to become embodied as drastically limited creatures, akin to those that are now buzzing around our patios, crawling along the wall, flitting across the sky, or licking our fingers.

Kṛṣṇa, God, who is in our very heart, is simply waiting and watching, seeing what decision we will make in this highly responsible human form. While the beasts may absorb themselves wholly in looking for food or a mate, in fighting, fleeing, or

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The Biography of a Pure Devotee

A Childhood Chariot Festival

1902: Calcutta

Inspired by the huge chariot festival at Purī,
the young Śrīla Prabhupāda enlivened his family and friends
to stage a miniature Ratha-yātrā in his neighborhood.

by ŚRĪLA SATSVARŪPA DĀSA GOSWAMI

Śrīla Prabhupāda's childhood was a rich mixture of devotion, education, and adventure. His father, Gour Mohan De, tried to fulfill his every wish, and when the five-year-old child wanted to put on a miniature Ratha-yātrā chariot festival, Gour Mohan gladly helped him. Later the boy would live through local Hindu-Muslim riots and his own mother's premature death, all the while sustained by his father's strong character and his faith in Kṛṣṇa.

Abhay was enamored with the Ratha-yātrā festivals of Lord Jagannātha, held yearly in Calcutta. The biggest Calcutta Ratha-yātrā was the Mulliks', with three separate carts bearing the deities of Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā (Lord Kṛṣṇa, His brother, and His sister). Starting from the Rādhā-Govinda temple, the carts would proceed down Harrison Road for a short distance and then return. The Mulliks would distribute large quantities of Lord Jagannātha's *prasādam* (sanctified food) to the public on this day.

Ratha-yātrā was held in cities all over India, but the original, gigantic Ratha-yātrā, attended each year by millions of pilgrims, took place three hundred miles south of Calcutta at Jagannātha Purī. For centuries at Purī, three wooden carts forty-five feet high had been towed by the crowds along the two-mile parade route, in commemoration of one of Lord Kṛṣṇa's eternal pastimes. Abhay had heard how Lord Caitanya Himself, four hundred

years before, had danced and led ecstatic chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa at the Purī Ratha-yātrā festival. Abhay would sometimes look at the railway timetable or ask about how he could collect the money and go there.

Abhay wanted to have his own cart and to perform his own Ratha-yātrā, and naturally he turned to his father for help. Gour Mohan agreed, but there were difficulties. When he took his son to several carpenter shops, he found that he could not afford to have a cart made. On their way home, Abhay began crying, and an old Bengali woman approached and asked him what the matter was. Gour Mohan explained that the boy wanted a Ratha-yātrā cart but they couldn't afford to have one made. "Oh, I have a cart," the woman said, and she invited Gour Mohan and Abhay to her place and showed them the cart.

It looked old, but it was still operable, and it was just the right size, about three feet high. Gour Mohan purchased it and helped to restore and decorate it. Father and son together constructed sixteen supporting columns and placed a canopy on top, resembling as closely as possible the ones on the big carts at Purī. They also attached the traditional wooden horses and driver to the front of the cart. Abhay insisted that it must look authentic. Gour Mohan bought paints, and Abhay personally painted the cart, copying the Purī originals. His enthusiasm was great, and he became an insistent organizer of various aspects of the festival. But when he tried making fireworks for the occasion from a book that gave illustrated descrip-

tions of the process, his mother, Rajani, intervened.

Abhay engaged his playmates in helping him, especially his sister Bhavatarini, and he became their natural leader. Responding to his entreaties, amused mothers in the neighborhood agreed to cook special preparations so that he could distribute the *prasādam* at his Ratha-yātrā festival.

Like the festival at Purī, Abhay's Ratha-yātrā ran for eight consecutive days. His family members gathered, and the neighborhood children joined in a procession, pulling the cart, playing drums and hand cymbals, and chanting. Wearing a *dhoti* and no shirt in the heat of summer, Abhay led the children in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and in singing the appropriate Bengali *bhajana*, *Ki kara rāi kamalini*.

What are you doing, Śrīmatī Rādhārānī?
Please come out and see.
They are stealing Your dearest treasure—
Kṛṣṇa, the black gem.
If the young girl only knew!
The young boy Kṛṣṇa,
Treasure of Her heart,
Is now forsaking Her.

Abhay copied whatever he had seen at adult religious functions, including dressing the deities, offering the deities food, offering *ārati* with a ghee lamp and incense, and making prostrated obeisances. From Harrison Road the procession entered the circular road inside the courtyard of the Rādhā-Govinda temple and stood awhile before the Deities. Seeing the fun, Gour Mohan's friends approached him: "Why haven't you invited us? You are holding a big ceremony and

Excerpted from *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*,
by Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami. © 1981 by the
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you don't invite us? What is this?"

"They are just children playing," his father replied.

"Oh, children playing?" the men joked. "You are depriving us by saying this is only for children?"

While Abhay was ecstatically absorbed in the Ratha-yātrā processions, Gour Mohan spent money for eight consecutive days, and Rajani cooked various dishes to offer, along with flowers, to Lord Jagannātha. Although everything Abhay did was imitation, his inspiration and steady drive for holding the festival were genuine. His spontaneous spirit sustained the eight-day children's festival, and each successive year brought a new festival, which Abhay would observe in the same way.

* * *

When Abhay was about six years old, he asked his father for a Deity of his own to worship. Since infancy he had watched his father doing *pūjā* (formal worship) at home and had been regularly seeing the worship of Rādhā-Govinda and thinking, "When will I be able to worship Kṛṣṇa like this?" On Abhay's request, his father purchased a pair of little Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities and gave Them to him. From then on, whatever Abhay ate he would first offer to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and imitating his father and the priests of Rādhā-Govinda, he would offer his Deities a ghee lamp and put Them to rest at night.

Abhay and his sister Bhavatarini became dedicated worshippers of the little Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities, spending much of their time dressing and worshipping Them and sometimes singing *bhajanās*. Their brothers and sisters laughed, teasing Abhay and Bhavatarini by saying that because they were more interested in the Deity than in their education they would not live long. But Abhay replied that they didn't care.

In addition to the education Abhay received at the kindergarten, he also received private tutoring at home from his fifth year to his eighth. He learned to read Bengali and began learning Sanskrit. Then in 1904, when he was eight years old, Abhay entered the nearby Mutty Lall Seal Free School, on the corner of Harrison and Central roads.

Mutty Lall was a boys' school established in 1842 by a wealthy *suvarṇa-vaṇik* Vaiṣṇava (devotee of Kṛṣṇa). The building was stone, two stories, and surrounded by a stone wall. The teachers were Indian, and the students were Bengalis from local *suvarṇa-vaṇik* families. Dressed in their *dhotīs* and *kurtās*, the boys would leave their mothers and fathers in the morning and walk together in little groups, each boy carrying a few books and his *tiffin*, the Indian equivalent of a lunchbox. Inside the school compound, they would talk to-

gether and play until the clanging bell called them to their classes. The boys would enter the building, skipping through the halls, running up and down the stairs, coming out to the wide front veranda on the second floor, until the teachers gathered them all before their wooden desks and benches for lessons in math, science, history, geography, and their own Vaiṣṇava religion and culture.

Classes were disciplined and formal. Each long bench held four boys, who shared a common desk, with four inkwells. If a boy were naughty his teacher would order him to "stand up on the bench." A Bengali reader the boys studied

At the age of forty-six Abhay's mother suddenly died, abruptly lowering the curtain on the scenes of Abhay's tender childhood.

was the well-known *Folk Tales of Bengal*, a collection of traditional Bengali folk tales, stories a grandmother would tell local children—tales of witches, ghosts, Tantric spirits, talking animals, saintly *brāhmaṇas* (or sometimes wicked ones), heroic warriors, thieves, princes, princesses, spiritual renunciation, and virtuous marriage.

In their daily walks to and from school, Abhay and his friends came to recognize, at least from their childish viewpoint, all the people who regularly appeared in the Calcutta streets: their British superiors traveling about, usually in horse-drawn carriages; the hackney drivers; the *bhaṅgīs*, who cleaned the streets with straw brooms; and even the local pickpockets and prostitutes who stood on the street corners.

Abhay turned ten the same year the rails were laid for the electric tram on Harrison Road. He watched the workers lay the tracks, and when he first saw the trolley car's rod touching the overhead wire, it amazed him. He daydreamed of getting a stick, touching the wire himself, and running along by electricity. Although electric power was new in Calcutta and not widespread (only the wealthy could afford it in their homes), along with the electric tram came new electric streetlights—carbon-arc lamps—replacing the

old gaslights. Abhay and his friends used to go down the street looking on the ground for the old, used carbon tips, which the maintenance man would leave behind. When Abhay saw his first gramophone box, he thought an electric man or a ghost was inside the box singing.

Abhay liked to ride his bicycle down the busy Calcutta streets. Although when the soccer club had been formed at school he had requested the position of a goalie so that he wouldn't have to run, he was an avid cyclist. A favorite ride was to go south towards Dalhousie Square, with its large fountains spraying water into the air. That was near Raj Bhavan, the viceroy's mansion, which Abhay could glimpse through the gates. Riding further south, he would pass through the open arches of the Maidan, Calcutta's main public park, with its beautiful green flat land spanning out towards Chowranghee and the stately buildings and trees of the British quarter. The park also had exciting places to cycle past: the racetrack, Fort William, the stadium. The Maidan bordered the Ganges (known locally as the Hooghly), and sometimes Abhay would cycle home along its shores. Here he saw numerous bathing *ghāṭas*, with stone steps leading down into the Ganges and often with temples at the top of the steps. There was the burning-*ghāṭa*, where bodies were cremated, and, close to his home, a pontoon bridge that crossed the river into the city of Howrah.

At age twelve, though it made no deep impression on him, Abhay was initiated by a professional *guru*. The *guru* told him about his own master, a great *yogī*, who had once asked him, "What do you want to eat?"

Abhay's family *guru* had replied, "Fresh pomegranates from Afghanistan."

"All right," the *yogī* had replied. "Go into the next room." And there he had found a branch of pomegranates, ripe as if freshly taken from the tree. A *yogī* who came to see Abhay's father said that he had once sat down with his own master and touched him and had then been transported within moments to the city of Dvārakā by yogic power.

Gour Mohan did not have a high opinion of Bengal's growing number of so-called *sādhus*—the nondevotional impersonalist philosophers, the demigod worshippers, the *gañjā* smokers, the beggars—but he was so charitable that he would invite the charlatans into his home. Every day Abhay saw many so-called *sādhus*, as well as some who were genuine, coming to eat in his home as guests of his father, and from their words and activities Abhay became aware of many things, including the existence of yogic powers. At a circus he and his father once saw a *yogī* tied up hand and foot and put into a bag. The bag was sealed

and put into a box, which was then locked and sealed, but still the man came out. Abhay, however, did not give these things much importance compared with the devotional activities his father had taught him, his worship of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and his observance of Ratha-yātrā.

* * *

Hindus and Muslims lived peacefully together in Calcutta, and it was not unusual for them to attend one another's social and religious functions. They had their differences, but there had always been harmony. So when trouble started, Abhay's family understood it to be due to political agitation by the British. Abhay was about thirteen years old when the first Hindu-Muslim riot broke out. He did not understand exactly what it was, but somehow he found himself in the middle of it.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: *All around our neighborhood were Muhammadans. The Mullik house and our house were surrounded by what is called kasbā and bastī. So the riot was there, and I had gone to play. I did not know that the riot had taken place in Market Square. I was coming home, and one of my friends said, "Don't go to your house. That side is rioting now."*

We lived in the Muhammadan quarter, and the fighting between the two parties was going on. But I thought maybe it was something like two guṇḍās [hoodlums] fighting. I had seen one guṇḍā once stabbing another guṇḍā, and I had seen pick-pockets. They were our neighbors. So I thought it was like that: this is going on.

But when I came to the crossing of Harrison Road and Holliday Street I saw one shop being plundered. I was only a child, a boy. I thought, "What is this happening?" In the meantime, my family, my father and mother, were at home frightened, thinking, "The child has not come." They became so disturbed they came out of the home expecting, "Wherefrom will the child come?"

So what could I do? When I saw the rioting I began to run towards our house, and one Muhammadan, he wanted to kill me. He took his knife and actually ran after me. But I passed somehow or other. I was saved. So as I came running before our gate, my parents got back their life.

So without speaking anything I went to the bedroom, and it was in the winter. So without saying anything, I laid down, wrapped myself with a quilt. Then later I was rising from bed, questioning, "Is it ended? The riot has ended?"

When Abhay was fifteen he was afflicted

with beriberi, and his mother, who was also stricken, regularly had to rub a powder of calcium chloride on his legs to reduce the swelling. Abhay soon recovered, and his mother, who had never stopped any of her duties, also recovered.

But only a year later, at the age of forty-six, his mother suddenly died. Her passing away was an abrupt lowering of the curtain, ending the scenes of his tender childhood: his mother's affectionate care, her prayers and *mantras* for his protection, her feeding and grooming him, her dutifully scolding him. Her passing affected his sisters even more than him, though it certainly turned him more towards the affectionate care of his father. He was already sixteen, but now he was forced to grow up and prepare to enter on his own into worldly responsibilities.

His father gave him solace. He instructed Abhay that there was nothing for which to lament: the soul is eternal, and everything happens by the will of Kṛṣṇa, so he should have faith and depend upon Kṛṣṇa. Abhay listened and understood. 🙏

The biography of Śrīla Prabhupāda continues next month with an account of his first meeting with his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura.

From a Friend

(continued from page 5)

sleeping, we are meant for much more important tasks. We must inquire, "What am I, beyond this temporary, changing body? What is the ultimate reality, in which I am an eternal participant?" Our God-given, natural gift of advanced intelligence includes the unique privilege to ask and understand on this level. An ancient Vedic text called the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* declares, "That man is a miser who quits his body like the cats and dogs, without understanding the science of self-realization and solving the problems of life [birth, old age, disease, and death]."

If we simply peer into the clear night sky, we can understand that much of reality must lie totally beyond our range of perception. We know that the animals' range of perception is minute, but then again, so is ours. Yet we are granted a broader perspective. We see the grand, natural order and can fathom, "There must be a supremely intelligent being who has created all of this." It is only the insidious preoccupation with superficial bodily sensations that makes us feel as if we are permanently at home in our bodies. It is this bodily fixation that dulls our sense of wonder, even to the point where we just brush aside as "chance occurrences" the miracles of nature, which irrefutably point to the existence of God. Then again the dumb com-

placency sets in, robbing our hours and years. Billion-dollar questions get pushed aside in favor of piddling concerns.

Let us snap out of all such complacent slumbers and meet the awesome challenge of knowing how tenuous, and at the same time how crucial, is the human span of life. Let us see this life in the context of eternity and resolve that we must not die without sufficiently understanding our eternal nature, our spiritual status in the eternal kingdom of God. No one can help us in this regard but Kṛṣṇa or His representative, the pure devotee. Kṛṣṇa advises that we become *yogīs*, controllers and transcendents of our senses. But we can do this only by His mercy. He is our guide toward Himself, and He is indeed the ultimate goal of our myriad lifetimes. Now that we have human life we can finally give Him our love; this is all He wants. As soon as we cease loving the phantom shapes formed by temporary configurations of dead matter, as soon as we earnestly begin directing our love toward Kṛṣṇa, He will be most pleased to swiftly deliver us from the ocean of birth and death.

I am therefore urging all of you to take up the responsibility and opportunity granted you by the vastly significant yet fragile human life. Please do not carelessly cultivate inappropriate "loves" of the kind that occupy our finny, feathered, or four-footed friends. I also request that you take up the simple process of chanting the

holy names of the Lord. Why not try it? Kṛṣṇa has arranged this most sublime process of self-realization specifically for the suffering souls in the present, difficult age. When we vibrate the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, we are calling out to Kṛṣṇa, "O my Lord, before I lose this valuable human life, please engage me in Your service and let me remain with You eternally. I don't want to forget You and have to enter another body to suffer in this material world." Such an earnest supplication at once invokes the full mercy of the Lord.

So, my dear fellow human beings, kindly relieve my sadness. When I see you continuing to direct your lives toward fleeting sensory contacts, despite countless frustrations, I deeply regret that you are remaining caught up in such illusory, wasteful pursuits. Therefore I vow that I will keep trying to induce you to serve Kṛṣṇa and obtain His mercy. You may engross yourselves in serving so many people, so many things, but I will still beg you to give even one percent of your time for serving Kṛṣṇa, for remembering Him as the Supreme Lord of everyone and everything, the Supreme Enjoyer, the Supreme Friend. I will keep begging you to take part in the chanting of the holy names of God, the only effective religious practice for this age, for I know it is the only way you can be eternally happy.

Your servant,
Prabhupāda dāsa 🙏

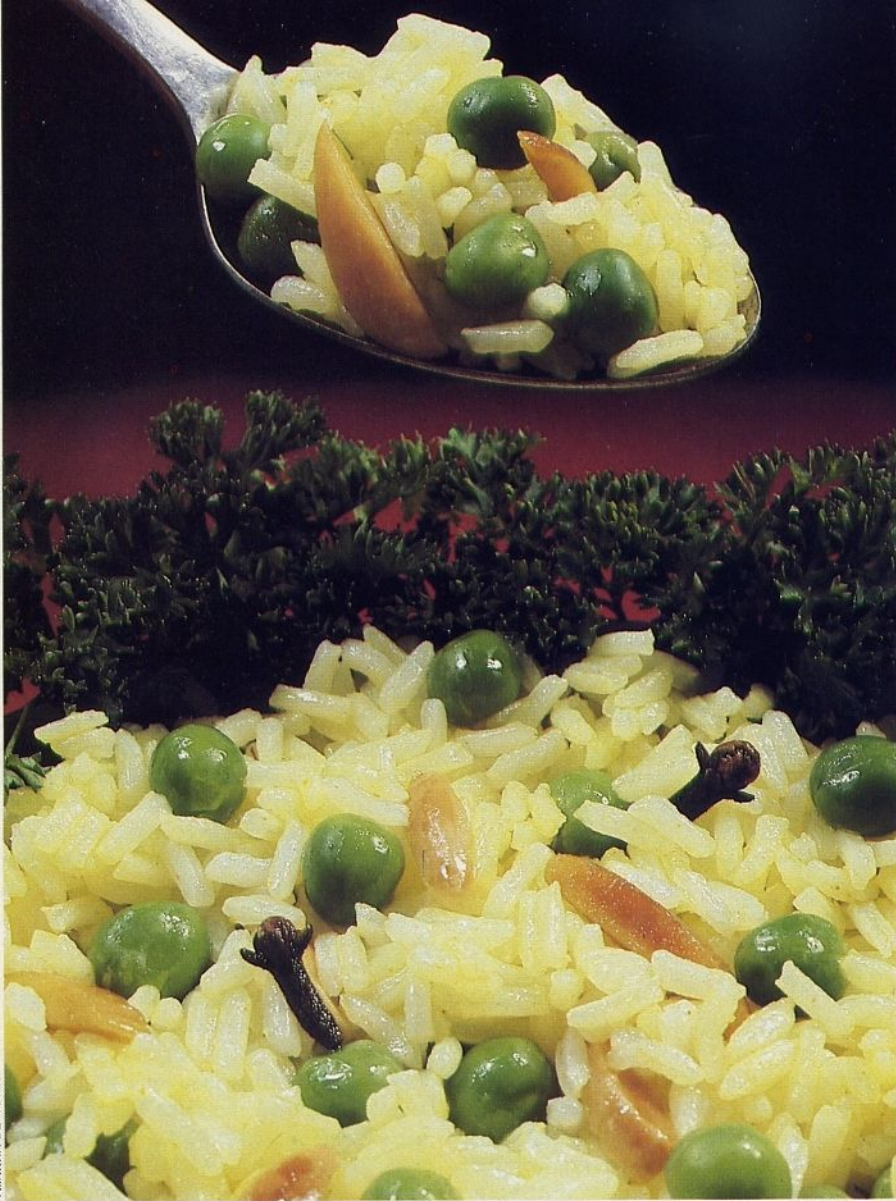
Rice

A Gift From Kṛṣṇa

by VIŚĀKHĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

Rice, one of the oldest grains known to man, has throughout history been a staple in the diet of nearly three fourths of the world's people, and it remains so today. Scientists have classified about seven thousand distinct varieties of rice, and they've analyzed how, when, and where the chief strains are best cultivated, how they benefit us nutritionally, and what elements they contain. Astonishingly, however, no scientist has ever been able to produce a single grain of it.

Why, despite having all the necessary chemicals in hand, can't the scientists produce rice, or, for that matter, any living organism? His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda often discussed this point in conversations with his disciple Dr. Thoudam D. Singh, an organic chemist. Śrīla Prabhupāda explained that scientists will never be able to produce life, because life comes not from matter but from life itself, and ultimately from God, or Kṛṣṇa. By analyzing the elements in, say, a grain of rice, scientists are starting from an intermediate point.



VIŚĀKHĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

(Recipes by Yamunā-devī dāsī)

Simple Rice and Green Pea Pilaff (Matar Pulau)

Servings: about 4
Preparation time: 10 minutes
Cooking time: 25 minutes

- 1 cup basmati or other good quality, uncooked long-grain white rice
- 2 black or 4 green cardamom pods, if available
- 3 tablespoons ghee or vegetable oil
- 6 whole cloves
- 1½-inch cinnamon stick
- ½ cup slivered or sliced raw almonds
- 1¾ to 2 cups water
- 1 cup fresh or frozen peas
- ½ to 1 teaspoon salt

1. Lightly tap each cardamom pod to partially crush.
2. Heat the ghee or vegetable oil in a heavy 1½-quart saucepan (nonstick cookware is ideal) over medium heat for 1 minute. Add the whole cloves, the cinnamon stick, the bruised cardamom pods, and the almonds and then stir-fry until the

almonds begin to turn pale golden brown.

3. Add the rice and stir-fry for about 4 minutes. Pour in the water, fresh peas, and salt. Stir, raise the heat to high, and bring the water to a full boil. Immediately reduce the heat to low, cover with a tight-fitting lid, and gently simmer, without stirring, for about 15 to 25 minutes (depending on the type of rice) or until all the water is absorbed and the rice is tender and flaky. (If you're using frozen peas, defrost them in a strainer under hot running water. After the rice has cooked for 10 to 20 minutes [depending on the type], remove the lid and quickly sprinkle the peas on top of the rice. Replace the cover and continue cooking for about 5 more minutes.)

Rice and Cauliflower Pilaff (Gobhi Pulau)

Servings: 6 to 8
Preparation time: 10 minutes
Cooking time: 35 to 45 minutes

Ingredients for preparing cauliflower:
10 ounces cauliflower, cut into flowerettes 1 inch long and ¾ inch wide and then washed and thoroughly dried

- ¼ cup fresh or dried grated coconut, lightly packed
- 1 tablespoon fresh, seeded, minced hot green chilies (use as desired)
- 1 tablespoon fresh, scraped, minced ginger root
- 2 tablespoons fresh minced parsley or coriander leaves
- ½ cup plain yogurt
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ⅓ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 3 tablespoons ghee or vegetable oil

Ingredients for preparing rice:

- 1 cup basmati or other good quality, uncooked long-grain white rice
- 1½ tablespoons ghee or vegetable oil
- 1 cassia or bay leaf
- 1½ teaspoons cumin seeds
- ½ teaspoon black mustard seeds
- 2 large black or 4 large green cardamom pods, slightly crushed
- 1¾ to 2 cups water
- 1 teaspoon sugar or equivalent sweetener
- 6 lemon or lime wedges or twists for garnish

To prepare the cauliflower:

Where do those elements come from? And where does the life *within* those elements come from? These questions remain unanswered by modern science, despite extensive research.

Devotees of Kṛṣṇa, on the other hand, understand that both matter and life come from Him, as He Himself says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.8): "I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything comes from Me." So scientists cannot create anything, animate or inanimate; they can simply manipulate the elements that Kṛṣṇa supplies them.

Everything we require for our maintenance has come from Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, out of a feeling of gratitude, we should offer our food to Him before we eat. Śrīla Prabhupāda perfectly showed this gratitude in his daily life. "In my childhood," he once told one of his disciples, "I was taught by my parents never to waste Kṛṣṇa's energy. They taught me that if even a small grain of rice was stuck between the floorboards, I should pick it up, touch it to my forehead, and eat it to save it from being wasted. I was taught how to see everything in relation to Kṛṣṇa. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

But, one may ask, if Kṛṣṇa is the source of everything, what is the point of offering our meager meals to Him? A similar question used to puzzle me when I was traveling in India some ten years ago, before I was a devotee. I used to see pilgrims bathing in the Ganges River and then taking palmfuls of water and offering them back to the Ganges. It struck me as odd that anyone would offer water to a river—especially water from that very same river!

Later I learned the principle behind of-

fering. When we offer something to Kṛṣṇa, we are not offering something that belongs to us, since everything already belongs to Him. What we offer Kṛṣṇa doesn't enrich His opulence in any way. But when we offer whatever we have, even if just a dish of rice, we develop our devotion to Kṛṣṇa, just as the pilgrims develop their devotion to the Ganges. Also, Kṛṣṇa has arranged nature so perfectly that when we offer Him our food and then eat to our full satisfaction, we are nourished both physically and spiritually and we progress peacefully on the path back to Godhead.

One of the most basic ingredients in Lord Kṛṣṇa's cuisine is rice, and it's used in limitless ways. Rice cooked with herbs, spices, seasonings, nuts, raisins, homemade cheese, dried beans, and succulent vegetables makes a consummate pilaff entrée. Cooled, seasoned rice with yogurt folded into it makes an ideal side dish for a hot summer's day. Rice simmered with seasonings, dried beans, and vegetables produces a delicious all-in-one meal. And rice boiled with milk and sweet spices makes a creamy, scrumptious pudding. You can grind rice down to a flour, heat it into puffs, or roast it into flakes to make pancakes, dumplings, sweetmeats, and snacks.

The first step in any rice recipe, of course, is choosing the best rice. Easy-to-cook, parboiled, precooked, and instant rices are out for all Vedic dishes. They lack both taste and nutrition. Besides, better to offer what you've cooked for Kṛṣṇa yourself. Most suitable is long-grain rice, of which there are three excellent varieties: North Indian Patna, American Carolina, and Dehradun *basmati* (most preferred).

The people who harvest, husk, and winnow basmati rice have shunned the bleaching, pearling, oiling, and powdering that produce a commercially appealing rice but diminish both its flavor and nutritional value. You can buy basmati rice in most Indian and Middle Eastern grocery stores, or in gourmet food shops. (In the same places, you'll find the spices called for in the recipes that follow.) Before you cook basmati rice you must first pick out any small pebbles or other foreign objects, wash it in several changes of cold water, and then soak it for ten minutes.

There is a specific, formal process for offering food to Kṛṣṇa that devotees follow in Kṛṣṇa's temples. For your offering at home, however, you can begin with a few simple procedures. First, while preparing the dish, try to remember that it is for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure. Second, never taste the preparation before offering it: Kṛṣṇa should enjoy it first. Third, when the preparation is done, place a portion before a picture of Kṛṣṇa; then chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and pray for the Lord to accept the offering.

The rice dishes described below should be offered steaming hot and garnished with a sprinkle of golden ghee, purified butter. (Use melted butter for now; we'll explain how to make ghee in our next column.) These dishes can form the center of innumerable luncheon and dinner plates that include *dāl* (a bean soup), vegetables, yogurt, relish, pickles, or salad. You'll be pleased to know that rice complements the protein in other foods: when you eat rice together with such foods as dried beans, nuts, or dairy products, the total food value increases by up to 45%—another perfect arrangement by Kṛṣṇa. 🍴

1. Combine the grated coconut, minced green chilies, minced ginger, minced coriander or parsley leaves, and yogurt in a blender. Cover and blend until smooth. Scrape into a small bowl and mix in the turmeric, salt, and pepper.

2. Heat 3 tablespoons of ghee or vegetable oil in a heavy 2-quart saucepan over medium-high heat for 1 minute. Drop in the cauliflower flowerettes and stir-fry for 5 or 6 minutes, or until the cauliflower has begun to brown. Pour in the yogurt mixture and stir well. Fry until the vegetable is dry and half-cooked.

3. Remove the pan from the heat and transfer the contents to a small bowl. Wipe the pan clean.

To cook the rice:

1. Heat 1 tablespoon ghee or vegetable oil in a heavy 2-quart saucepan over medium heat. Fry the cassia or bay leaves, cumin seeds, black mustard seeds, and crushed cardamom pods until the mustard seeds sputter and pop. Pour in the rice and stir-fry for 2 to 3 minutes.

2. Add the water and sugar, raise the heat to high, and bring the liquid to a full boil. Add the seasoned cauliflower, reduce the heat to low, cover with a tight-fitting lid, and simmer, without stirring, for 15 to 25 minutes (depending on the

type of rice) or until the liquid is absorbed and the rice is tender and flaky. Turn the heat off and let the rice sit, still covered, for 5 minutes to allow the fragile grains of rice to firm up. Just before offering the dish to Kṛṣṇa, remove the cover and fluff the piping hot rice with a fork. Garnish with a lemon or lime wedge or twist.

Lemon Rice (*Nimbu Bhat*)

Servings: 4

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 25 to 35 minutes

1 cup basmati or other good quality, uncooked long-grain white rice
1½ to 2 cups water
1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons ghee or vegetable oil
½ cup coarsely chopped or broken raw cashews
½ tablespoon split urad *dāl*
1 teaspoon black mustard seeds
½ teaspoon turmeric
½ cup fresh lemon juice
2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley or coriander leaves

¼ cup fresh or dried shredded coconut for garnish

1. Bring the water to a boil in a heavy 1½-quart saucepan. Stir in the rice, salt, and ½ tablespoon of the ghee or vegetable oil and cover with a tight-fitting lid. Reduce the heat to low and gently simmer, without stirring, for 15 to 25 minutes (depending on the type of rice) or until the rice is flaky and tender and the water is fully absorbed. Set aside, still covered.

2. Heat the remaining 1½ tablespoons of ghee or vegetable oil in a 2-quart saucepan over medium-low heat. Drop in the cashew nuts and fry until golden brown. Remove the nuts with a slotted spoon and pour them over the surface of the cooked rice. Cover the rice again.

3. Toss the urad *dāl* and the mustard seeds into the remaining ghee or vegetable oil and fry until the mustard seeds pop and crackle and the *dāl* is richly browned.

4. Gently spoon the cooked rice into the fried spices and sprinkle with turmeric powder, lemon juice, and fresh parsley or coriander leaves. Gently fold in all the ingredients until mixed.

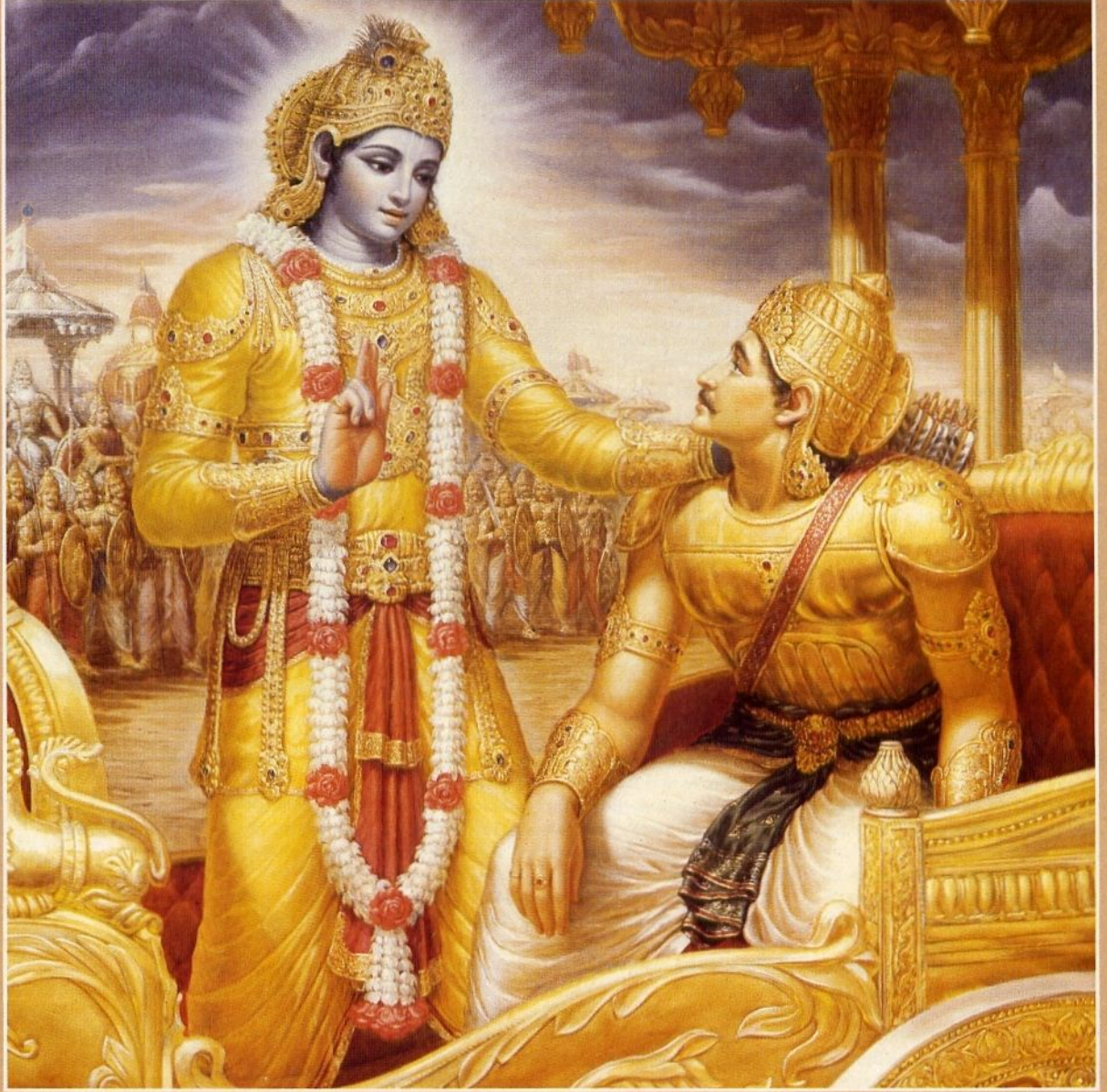
5. Remove from the heat and, before offering the dish to Kṛṣṇa, garnish with a sprinkle of shredded coconut.

अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते ।
इति मत्वा भजन्ते मां बुधा भावसमन्विताः ॥ ८ ॥

I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who know this perfectly engage in My devotional service and worship me with all their hearts. (Bhagavad-gītā 10.8)

मच्चित्ता मद्गतप्राणा बोधयन्तः परस्परम् ।
कथयन्तश्च मां नित्यं तुष्यन्ति च रमन्ति च ॥ ९ ॥

The thoughts of My pure devotees dwell in Me, their lives are surrendered to Me, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss enlightening one another and conversing about Me. (Bhagavad-gītā 10.9)



तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।
ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥ १० ॥

To those who are constantly devoted and worship Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me. (Bhagavad-gītā 10.10)

तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः ।
नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता ॥ ११ ॥

Out of compassion for them, I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy with the shining lamp of knowledge the darkness born of ignorance. (Bhagavad-gītā 10.11)

RECEIVING KṚṢṆA'S TEACHINGS AS THEY ARE

Is Lord Kṛṣṇa just a messenger for a higher, impersonal truth?

by DHRṢṬAKETU DĀSA

Bhagavad-gītā is the record of a conversation that took place between Lord Kṛṣṇa and the great warrior Arjuna in approximately 3,000 B.C. Kṛṣṇa, standing with Arjuna on a chariot between two massive armies poised for war, explained to him the details of spirit, matter, and the controller of both. For the past five thousand years scholars all over the world have struggled to understand the meaning of *Bhagavad-gītā*, but many have failed to grasp the key to this understanding: recognition that Kṛṣṇa, the original speaker of *Bhagavad-gītā*, is a person, the Supreme Person.

In common usage the word *person* refers to an individual being, distinct from others. A person has form, qualities, and a history by which others can identify and describe him. A person can express himself and understand the expressions of others; he has feelings and desires and can share relationships. In the context of *Bhagavad-gītā*, the word *person* refers not only to the limited mortals of this world but also to higher beings, such as demigods, and to God Himself.

It is on this issue of the personality of God that the two major classes of *Bhagavad-gītā* scholars divide. The impersonalists, or *māyāvādīs*, believe that God has no form, qualities, or activities. They conceive of Him as a shapeless, impersonal entity, often as an all-pervading white light. And since the *māyāvādīs* believe that God, or the Absolute Truth, is without varieties, they also maintain that all varieties are false, or illusory. According to the *māyāvādīs*, whatever form, color, sound, taste, smell, or touch we perceive is unreal, and thus personality

and personal relationships are also unreal. The impersonalists' ultimate goal is to lose all personal identity and merge with an impersonal God.

The personalistic *Bhagavad-gītā* scholars reject the idea that God is a formless entity. On the contrary, the personalists, or Vaiṣṇavas, maintain that God's personal form is the source of all others. Some varieties, they say, are temporary and in that sense illusory, but others are permanent and real. According to the Vaiṣṇavas, God and His abode possess eternal forms that can be realized and attained. Thus the ultimate goal of the personalists is to perfect their relationship with God through service and love.

When these two groups—the impersonalists and the personalists—approach *Bhagavad-gītā*, their conclusions naturally differ. The impersonalists believe that Kṛṣṇa, the speaker of the *Gītā*, is an ordinary man, a historical or even mythical figure. He is a mouthpiece, they say, for the higher, impersonal truth that is God. The impersonalists believe that the statements of the *Gītā* should not be taken literally; rather, they should be interpreted in one's own way. To them, *Bhagavad-gītā* is an allegory, a mere story containing hidden philosophical meanings, understandable by deliberation and interpretation.

Personalists, on the other hand, accept Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Godhead. Therefore they regard the statements in the *Gītā* as the Lord's direct instructions for our benefit. Rather than interpret the words of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the personalists understand them according to their literal meaning.

Objectively speaking, there is no need

to interpret the statements of *Bhagavad-gītā*, because interpretation only covers their authority. The verses of *Bhagavad-gītā* are as clear and bright as the sun, and interpretation is like a cloud that obscures their light. A statement needs interpretation when its meaning is unclear. For example, if I say, "The village is on the Ganges," someone may require an interpretation, because *on the Ganges* may mean either "on the bank of the Ganges" or (by some stretch of the imagination) "on the surface of the Ganges." In *Bhagavad-gītā*, however, the meaning is simple and clear. There is no interpretation required. Still, people interpret it. Why?

First, though the meaning is clear, persons confused about spiritual life cannot understand even the simple concepts presented in *Bhagavad-gītā*. Therefore they derive their own explanations of Kṛṣṇa's words. Second, many cheaters and hypocrites twist and distort the meaning of the *Gītā* to spread their own self-motivated doctrines. They know that *Bhagavad-gītā* has been popular for thousands of years. Taking advantage of this popularity, they hope to gain an audience for their views, which they pass off before the public as commentaries on the *Gītā*. Kṛṣṇa Himself, however, neither sanctions their ideas nor gives any conclusive evidence in *Bhagavad-gītā* to support them.

An interpretation of Kṛṣṇa's words that ascribes to them a meaning different from their original grammatical and semantic sense can only mislead the reader. Kṛṣṇa's teachings are meant for the enlightenment of anyone who hears them, but one must accept them as they are in order to receive their beneficial effect.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

Where Is Your Love For God?

The following conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples took place on an early-morning walk in April 1974 in Hyderabad, India.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: How do you instruct the people in general?

Devotee: I try to follow what Lord Caitanya taught, and what is taught in all Vedic literature: that people should understand their relationship with God, learn how to act in that relationship, and know that the goal of life is to come to the stage of pure love of God. So we acquaint people with the principles of devotional service and tell them how they can practice it.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But people will say, "We have not forgotten God. We go to church regularly. So how have we forgotten God?"

Devotee: Well, we don't encourage them to change their religion—

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. Your charge is that they have forgotten God. They will answer, "We have not forgotten God. We are going to church. How have we forgotten God?"

Devotee: Because they're not actively serving Him. We see that some people say they are theists but they don't do any practical service for God.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But what is the meaning of service?

Devotee: Service means acting in a relationship of love. But people are simply serving their stomachs—

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "But if I haven't got love for God, why am I coming to church?"

Devotee: We are educating them about who God is. They go to church, but they don't know who God actually is.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "Whatever He may be, when I offer my prayers I remember God. I don't have a clear idea, but I have my own conception of God." So, what is the answer?

Devotee: But there are symptoms of service to God. We don't discourage Christians from worshiping God in church, but if they're actually serving God they should show symptoms of developing love of God.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. That is already answered: "If I haven't got love for God,



why am I coming to church? I could use the time I spend in church to earn some money."

Devotee: But love is not based on sentimentality. Love is practical. We can judge how much a man is developing love for God by what his activities are.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "So what have you found in me that lets you conclude I have no love for God? What have you seen in me?"

Devotee: You go to church for only one hour all week.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "That may be—

Devotee: The rest of the time is not spent serving God.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "But that does not mean I do not love God."

Devotee: We are spreading love of God all over the world to people who have not developed that love, so if you have love for God you should willingly support this work.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But the Christians are also preaching. The Christian missionaries will say, "We are going all over the world. We have made so many Christians. So why do you say that you are better than us? We are doing the same thing as you."

Devotee: If a person has love of God, though, his love is not simply confined to his own work. God is one, so why not help us?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "No, no. We are already preaching Christianity all over the world. The number of Christians is great-

er than the number of Kṛṣṇa devotees. Our preaching is better than yours."

Devotee: We are only requesting you to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "That is only a process. You are requesting people to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa; we are requesting them to pray: 'Give us our daily bread.' Your process is chanting; ours is prayer. So, there is no difference."

Devotee: But when we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, we are praying to God, "Please let me serve You."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "That is already settled. We are also serving; we are preaching Christianity."

Devotee: But we are serving twenty-four hours a day.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "That may be. You may be engaged in serving God twenty-four hours a day, and I may be engaged eight hours a day. But that does not mean I have no love for God."

Devotee: It has already been predicted in the *śāstra*, the Vedic scriptures, that this method of chanting the holy name of God will be accepted by everyone.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "That may be in your *śāstra*, but we follow our Bible. We go to church and sing hymns."


Devotee: The fact is that you do not know who God is; you do not know how God works.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "No. I know in my own way."

Devotee: They may give all these arguments, but we see that most Christians do not even follow the teachings in their own Bible.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Here you have come to the real point. If you love God, then why do you disobey Him? Your disobedience means that you do not love God. Jesus Christ says, "Thou shalt not kill." Then why are you killing so many millions of cows in the slaughterhouses? This is the charge I give to the Christians.

Devotee: But they say, "We are allowed to kill animals. Besides, I accept Christ as my saviour; therefore I'm saved. I'm following Christianity closely."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, no. If you love God, then why are you disobeying His order? There is an open declaration by Jesus Christ: "Thou shalt not kill." But you are deliberately disobeying him. So where is your love for God? 

ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the “cream of the Vedic literatures” of ancient India. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa*, or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. The original Sanskrit text is presented here with transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Second Canto: “The Cosmic Manifestation”

CHAPTER EIGHT

Questions by King Parikṣit

In this installment of our serialized presentation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Lord Brahmā, the engineer of the universe, tells his son and disciple Nārada about some of the expansions of Kṛṣṇa, noting that they possess merely a fraction of Kṛṣṇa’s supreme potency. Then Brahmā begins recounting some of the activities of the pastime incarnations of the Lord.

TEXT 27

सूत उवाच

स उपामन्त्रितो राज्ञा कथायामिति सत्पतेः ।
ब्रह्मरातो भृशं प्रीतो विष्णुरातेन संसदि ॥२७॥

sūta uvāca

sa upāmantrito rājñā
kathāyām iti sat-pateḥ
brahmarāto bhṛśam prīto
viṣṇurātena saṁsadi

sūtaḥ uvāca—Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī said; *saḥ*—he (Śukadeva Gosvāmī); *upāmantritaḥ*—thus being inquired; *rājñā*—by the King; *kathāyām*—in the topics, *iti*—thus; *sat-pateḥ*—of the highest truth; *brahmarātaḥ*—Śukadeva Gosvāmī; *bhṛśam*—very much; *prītaḥ*—pleased; *viṣṇu-rātena*—by Mahārāja Parikṣit; *saṁsadi*—in the meeting.

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: Thus Śukadeva Gosvāmī, being invited by Mahārāja Parikṣit to speak on topics of the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa with the devotees, was very much pleased.

PURPORT

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam can be legitimately discussed only among the devotees of the Lord. As the *Bhagavad-gītā* was authoritatively discussed between Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna (the Lord and the devotee respectively), similarly *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is the postgraduate study of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, can also be discussed between the scholars and devotees like Śukadeva Gosvāmī and Mahārāja Parikṣit. Otherwise the real taste of the nectar cannot be relished. Śukadeva Gosvāmī was pleased with Mahārāja Parikṣit because he was not at all tired of hearing the topics of the Lord and was more and more anxious to hear them on and on with interest. Foolish interpreters unnecessarily tackle the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* when they have no access to the subject matter. There is no use in nondevotees’ meddling with the two topmost Vedic literatures, and therefore Śaṅkarācārya did not touch *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* for commentation. In his commentation on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya accepted Lord Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but later on he commented from the impersonalist’s view. But, being conscious of his position, he did not comment on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī was protected by Lord Kṛṣṇa (vide *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa*), and therefore he is known as Brahmārāta, and Śrīmān Parikṣit Mahārāja was protected by Viṣṇu, and thus he is known as Viṣṇurāta. As devotees of the Lord, they are always protected by the Lord. It is clear also in this connection that a Viṣṇurāta should hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from Brahmārāta and no one else because others misrepresent the transcendental knowledge and thus spoil one’s valuable time.

TEXT 28

प्राह भागवतं नाम पुराणं ब्रह्मसम्मितम् ।
ब्रह्मणे भगवत्प्रोक्तं ब्रह्मकल्प उपागते ॥२८॥

prāha bhāgavatam nāma
purāṇam brahma-sammitam
brahmaṇe bhagavat-proktam
brahma-kalpa upāgate

prāha—he said; *bhāgavatam*—the science of the Personality of Godhead; *nāma*—of the name; *purāṇam*—the supplement of the *Vedas*; *brahma-sammitam*—just in pursuance of the *Vedas*; *brahmaṇe*—unto Lord Brahmā; *bhagavat-proktam*—was spoken by the Personality of Godhead; *brahma-kalpe*—the millennium in which Brahmā was first generated; *upāgate*—just in the beginning.

TRANSLATION

He began to reply to the inquiries of Mahārāja Parikṣit by saying that the science of the Personality of Godhead was spoken first by the Lord Himself to Brahmā when he was first born. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the supplementary Vedic literature, and it is just in pursuance of the *Vedas*.

PURPORT

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the science of the Personality of Godhead. The impersonalist always tries to misrepresent the personal feature of the Lord, not knowing the science of this great knowledge, and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is in pursuance of the *Vedas* and scientific knowledge of the Personality of Godhead. To learn this science one should take shelter of the representative of Śrī Śukadeva and follow in the footsteps of Mahārāja Parikṣit without foolishly attempting to interpret, thereby committing a great offense at the feet of the Lord. The dangerous ways of interpretations by the nondevotee class of men have played havoc in understanding the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and the careful student should be always alert in this matter if he at all wants to learn the science of Godhead.

TEXT 29

यद् यत् परीक्षितपमः पाण्डूनामनुपुच्छति ।
अनुपूर्व्येण तत्सर्वमाख्यातुमुपचक्रमे ॥२९॥

yad yat parikṣid ṛṣabhah
pāṇḍūnām anupucchati
ānupūrvyeṇa tat sarvam
ākhyātam upacakrame

yat yat—whatsoever; *parikṣit*—the King; *ṛsabhaḥ*—the best; *pāṇḍunām*—in the dynasty of Pāṇḍu; *anupreçhati*—goes on inquiring; *ānupūrvyeṇa*—the beginning to the end; *tat*—all those; *sarvam*—fully; *ākhyātam*—to describe; *upacakrame*—he just prepared himself.

TRANSLATION

He also prepared himself to reply to all that King Parikṣit had inquired from him. Mahārāja Parikṣit was the best in the dynasty of the Pāṇḍus, and thus he was able to ask the right questions from the right person.

PURPORT

Mahārāja Parikṣit asked many questions, some of them very curiously, to know things as they are, but it is not necessary for the master to answer them in the order of the disciple's inquiries, one after the other. But Śukadeva Gosvāmī, experienced teacher that he was, answered all the questions in a systematic way as they were received from the chain of disciplic succession. And he answered all of them without exception.

Thus end the Bhaktivedanta purports of the Second Canto, Eighth Chapter, of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, entitled "Questions by King Parikṣit."

CHAPTER NINE

Answers by Citing the Lord's Version

TEXT 1

श्रीशुक उवाच

आत्ममायामृते राजन् परस्थानुभवत्त्मनः ।
न घटेतार्थसम्बन्धः स्वप्नद्रष्टुरिवाञ्जसा ॥ १ ॥

śrī-śuka uvāca
ātma-māyām rte rājan
parasyānubhavātmanah
na ghaṭetaṛtha-sambandhaḥ
svapna-draṣṭur ivāñjasā

śrī-śukaḥ uvāca—Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said; *ātma*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *māyām*—energy; *rte*—without; *rājan*—O King; *parasya*—of the pure soul; *anubhava-ātmanah*—of the purely conscious; *na*—never; *ghaṭeta*—it can so happen; *artha*—meaning; *sambandhaḥ*—relation with the material body; *svapna*—dream; *draṣṭuḥ*—of the seer; *iva*—like; *añjasā*—completely.

TRANSLATION

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King, unless one is influenced by the energy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, there is no meaning to the relationship of the pure soul in pure consciousness with the material body. That relationship is just like a dreamer's seeing his own body working.

PURPORT

Mahārāja Parikṣit's question as to how a living entity began his material life, although he is apart from the material body and mind, is perfectly answered. The spirit soul is distinct from the material conception of his life, but he is absorbed in such a material conception because of being influenced by the external energy of the Lord, called *ātma-māyā*. This has already been explained in the First Canto in connection with Vyāsadeva's realization of the Supreme Lord and His external energy. The external energy is controlled by the Lord, and the living en-

titles are controlled by the external energy—by the will of the Lord. Therefore, although the living entity is purely conscious in his pure state, he is subordinate to the will of the Lord in being influenced by the external energy of the Lord. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.15) also the same thing is confirmed; the Lord is present within the heart of every living entity, and all the living entity's consciousness and forgetfulness are influenced by the Lord.

Now the next question automatically made will be why the Lord influences the living entity to such consciousness and forgetfulness. The answer is that the Lord clearly wishes that every living entity be in his pure consciousness as a part and parcel of the Lord and thus be engaged in the loving service of the Lord as he is constitutionally made; but because the living entity is partially independent also, he may not be willing to serve the Lord, but may try to become as independent as the Lord is. All the nondevotee living entities are desirous of becoming equally as powerful as the Lord, although they are not fit to become so. The living entities are illusioned by the will of the Lord because they wanted to become like Him. Like a person who thinks of becoming a king without possessing the necessary qualification, when the living entity desires to become the Lord Himself, he is put in a condition of dreaming that he is a king. Therefore the first sinful will of the living entity is to become the Lord, and the consequent will of the Lord is that the living entity forget his factual life and thus dream of the land of utopia where he may become one like the Lord. The child cries to have the moon from the mother, and the mother gives the child a mirror to satisfy the crying and disturbing child with the reflection of the moon. Similarly, the crying child of the Lord is given over to the reflection, the material world, to lord it over as *karmī* and to give this up in frustration to become one with the Lord. Both these stages are dreaming illusions only. There is no necessity of tracing out the history of when the living entity desired this. But the fact is that as soon as he desired it, he was put under the control of *ātma-māyā* by the direction of the Lord. Therefore the living entity in his material condition is dreaming falsely that this is "mine" and this is "I." The dream is that the conditioned soul thinks of his material body as "I" or falsely thinks that he is the Lord and that everything in connection with that material body is "mine." Thus only in dream does the misconception of "I" and "mine" persist life after life. This continues life after life, as long as the living entity is not purely conscious of his identity as the subordinate part and parcel of the Lord.

In his pure consciousness, however, there is no such misconceived dream, and in that pure conscious state the living entity does not forget that he is never the Lord, but that he is eternally the servitor of the Lord in transcendental love.

TEXT 2

बहुरूप इवामाति मायया बहुरूपया ।
रममाणो गुणेष्वस्या ममाहमिति मन्यते ॥ २ ॥

bahu-rūpa ivābhāti
māyayā bahu-rūpayā
ramamāṇo guṇeṣv asyā
manāham iti manyate

bahu-rūpaḥ—multiforms; *iva*—as it were; *abhāti*—manifested; *māyayā*—by the influence of the exterior energy; *bahu-rūpayā*—in multifarious forms; *ramamāṇaḥ*—enjoying as it were; *guṇeṣu*—in the modes of different qualities; *asyāḥ*—of the external energy; *mama*—mine; *aham*—I; *iti*—thus; *manyate*—thinks.

TRANSLATION

The illusioned living entity appears in so many forms offered by the external energy of the Lord. While enjoying in the modes of material nature, the engaged living entity misconceives, thinking in terms of "I" and "mine."

PURPORT

The different forms of the living entities are different dresses offered by the illusory, external energy of the Lord according to the modes of

nature the living being desires to enjoy. The external, material energy is represented by her three modes, namely goodness, passion and ignorance. So even in the material nature there is a chance of an independent choice by the living entity, and according to his choice the material energy offers him different varieties of material bodies. There are 900,000 varieties of material bodies in the water, 2,000,000 vegetable bodies, 1,100,000 worms and reptiles, 1,000,000 forms of birds, 3,000,000 different bodies of beasts, and 400,000 human forms. Altogether there are 8,400,000 varieties of bodies in different planets of the universe, and the living entity is traveling by so many transmigrations according to different modes of enjoying spirit within himself. Even in one particular body the living entity changes from childhood to boyhood, from boyhood to youth, from youth to old age and from old age to another body created by his own action. The living entity creates his own body by his personal desires, and the external energy of the Lord supplies him the exact form by which he can enjoy his desires to the fullest extent. The tiger wanted to enjoy the blood of another animal, and therefore, by the grace of the Lord, the material energy supplied him the body of the tiger with facilities for enjoying blood from another animal. Similarly, a living entity desiring to get the body of a demigod in a higher planet can also get it by the grace of the Lord. And if he is intelligent enough, he can desire to get a spiritual body to enjoy the company of the Lord, and he will get it. So the minute freedom of the living entity can be fully utilized, and the Lord is so kind that He will award the living entity the same type of body he desires. The living entity's desiring is like dreaming of a golden mountain. A person knows what a mountain is, and he knows also what gold is. Out of his desire only, he dreams of a golden mountain, and when the dream is over he sees something else in his presence. He finds in his awakened state that there is neither gold nor a mountain, and what to speak of a golden mountain.

The different positions of the living entities in the material world under multifarious manifestations of bodies are due to the misconception of "mine" and "I." The *karmī* thinks of this world as "mine," and the *jñānī* thinks "I am" everything. The whole material conception of politics, sociology, philanthropy, altruism, etc., conceived by the conditioned souls is on the basis of this misconceived "I" and "mine," which are products of a strong desire to enjoy material life. Identification with the body and the place where the body is obtained under different conceptions of socialism, nationalism, family affection, and so on and so forth is all due to forgetfulness of the real nature of the living entity, and the whole misconception of the bewildered living entity can be removed by the association of Śukadeva Gosvāmī and Mahārāja Parīkṣit, as all this is explained in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

TEXT 3

यहि वाव महिम्नि स्वे परस्मिन् कालमाययोः ।
रमेत गतसम्मोहस्त्यक्त्वोदास्ते तदोभयम् ॥ ३ ॥

yarhi vāva mahimni sve
parasmin kāla-māyayoh
rameta gata-sammohas
tyaktvōdāste tadobhayam

yarhi—at any time; vāva—certainly; mahimni—in the glory; sve—of himself; parasmin—in the Supreme; kāla—time; māyayoh—of the material energy; rameta—enjoys; gata-sammohah—being freed from the misconception; tyaktvā—giving up; udāste—in fullness; tadā—then; ubhayam—both (the misconceptions of I and mine).

TRANSLATION

As soon as the living entity becomes situated in his constitutional glory and begins to enjoy the transcendence beyond time and material energy, he at once gives up the two misconceptions of life [I and mine] and thus becomes fully manifested as the pure self.

PURPORT

The two misconceptions of life, namely "I" and "mine," are verily manifested in two classes of men. In the lower state the conception of "mine" is very prominent, and in the higher state the misconception of "I" is prominent. In the animal state of life the misconception of "mine" is perceivable even in the category of cats and dogs, who fight with one another with the same misconception of "mine." In the lower stage of human life the same misconception is also prominent in the shape of "It is my body," "It is my house," "It is my family," "It is my caste," "It is my nation," "It is my country," and so on. And in the higher stage of speculative knowledge, the same misconception of "mine" is transformed into "I am," or "It is all I am," etc. There are many classes of men comprehending the same misconception of "I" and "mine" in different colors. But the real significance of "I" can be realized only when one is situated in the consciousness of "*I am the eternal servitor of the Lord*." This is pure consciousness, and the whole Vedic literatures teach us this conception of life.

The misconception of "I am the Lord," or "I am the Supreme," is more dangerous than the misconception of "mine." Although there are sometimes directions in the Vedic literatures to think oneself one with the Lord, that does not mean that one becomes identical with the Lord in every respect. Undoubtedly there is oneness of the living entity with the Lord in many respects, but ultimately the living entity is subordinate to the Lord, and he is constitutionally meant for satisfying the senses of the Lord. The Lord therefore asks the conditioned souls to surrender unto Him. Had the living entities not been subordinate to the supreme will, why would the living entity be asked to surrender? Had the living being been equal in all respects, then why was he put under the influence of *māyā*? We have already discussed many times that the material energy is controlled by the Lord. The *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.10) confirms this controlling power of the Lord over the material nature. Can a living entity who claims to be as good as the Supreme Being control the material nature? The foolish "I" would reply that he will do so in the future. Even accepting that in the future one will be as good a controller of material nature as the Supreme Being, then why is one now under the control of material nature? The *Bhagavad-gītā* says that one can be freed from the control of the material nature by surrendering unto the Supreme Lord, but if there is no surrender, then the living entity will never be able to control the material nature. So one must also give up this misconception of "I" by practicing the way of devotional service or firmly being situated in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. A poor man without any employment or occupation may undergo so many troubles in life, but if by chance the same man gets a good service under the government, he at once becomes happy. There is no profit in denying the supremacy of the Lord, who is the controller of all energies, but one should be constitutionally situated in one's own glory, namely to be situated in the pure consciousness of being the eternal servitor of the Lord. In his conditional life the living entity is servant of the illusory *māyā*, and in his liberated state he is the pure, unqualified servant of the Lord. To become untinged by the modes of material nature is the qualification for entering into the service of the Lord. As long as one is a servant of mental concoctions, one cannot be completely free from the disease of "I" and "mine."

The Supreme Truth is uncontaminated by the illusory energy because He is the controller of that energy. The relative truths are apt to be engrossed in illusory energy. The best purpose is served, however, when one is directly facing the Supreme Truth, as when one faces the sun. The sun overhead in the sky is full of light, but when the sun is not in the visible sky, all is in darkness. Similarly, when one is face to face with the Supreme Lord, he is freed from all illusions, and one who is not so is in the darkness of illusory *māyā*. The *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.26) confirms this as follows:

mām ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa
bhakti-yogena sevate
sa guṇān samatīyaitān
brahma-bhūyāya kalpate

So the science of *bhakti-yoga*, of worshiping the Lord, glorifying the Lord, hearing the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from the right sources (not from

the professional man but from a person who is *Bhāgavatam* in life) and being always in the association of pure devotees, should be adopted in earnestness. One should not be misled by misconceptions of “I” and “mine.” The *karmīs* are fond of the conception of “mine,” the *jñānīs* are fond of the conception of “I,” and both of them are unqualified to be free from the bondage of the illusory energy. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and, primarily, the *Bhagavad-gītā* are both meant for delivering a person from the misconception of “I” and “mine,” and Śrīla Vyāsadeva transcribed them for the deliverance of the fallen souls. The living entity has to be situated in the transcendental position where there is no more influence of time nor of the material energy. In conditioned life the living entity is subjected to the influence of time in the dream of past, present and future. The mental speculator tries to conquer the influence of time by future speculations of becoming Vāsudeva or the Supreme Lord himself by means of culturing knowledge and conquering over ego. But the process is not perfect. The perfect process is to accept Lord Vāsudeva as the Supreme in everything, and the best perfection in culturing knowledge is to surrender unto Him because He is the source of everything. Only in that conception can one get rid of the misconception of I and mine. Both *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* confirm it. Śrīla Vyāsadeva has specifically contributed to the illusioned living entities the science of God and the process of *bhakti-yoga* in his great literature *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and the conditioned soul should fully take advantage of this great science.

TEXT 4

आत्मतत्त्वविशुद्धयर्थं यदाह भगवानुत्तम् ।
ब्रह्मणे दर्शयन् रूपमव्यलीकव्रताहतः ॥ ४ ॥

ātma-tattva-viśuddhy-artham
yad āha bhagavān ṛtam
brahmaṇe darśayan rūpam
avyalīka-vratādr̥taḥ

ātma-tattva—the science of God or that of the living entity; *viśuddhi*—purification; *artham*—goal; *yad*—that which; *āha*—said; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *ṛtam*—in reality; *brahmaṇe*—unto Lord Brahmā; *darśayan*—by showing; *rūpam*—eternal form; *avyalīka*—without any deceptive motive; *vrata*—vow; *ādr̥taḥ*—worshiped.

TRANSLATION

O King, the Personality of Godhead, being very much pleased with Lord Brahmā because of his nondeceptive penance in *bhakti-yoga*, presented His eternal and transcendental form before Brahmā. And that is the objective goal for purifying the conditioned soul.

PURPORT

Ātma-tattva is the science of both God and the living entity. Both the Supreme Lord and the living entity are known as *ātmā*. The Supreme Lord is called *Paramātmā*, and the living entity is called the *ātmā*, the *brahma* or the *jīva*. Both the *Paramātmā* and the *jīvātmā*, being transcendental to the material energy, are called *ātmā*. So Śukadeva Gosvāmī explains this verse with the aim of purifying the truth of both the *Paramātmā* and the *jīvātmā*. Generally people have many wrong conceptions about both of them. The wrong conception of the *jīvātmā* is to identify the material body with the pure soul, and the wrong conception of *Paramātmā* is to think Him on an equal level with the living entity. But both misconceptions can be removed by one stroke of *bhakti-yoga*, just as in the sunlight both the sun and the world and everything within the sunlight are properly seen. In the darkness one cannot see the sun, nor himself, nor the world. But in the sunlight one can see the sun, himself and the world around him. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī therefore says that for purification of both wrong conceptions, the Lord presented His eternal form before Brahmājī, being fully satisfied by Brahmā's nondecep-

tive vow of discharging *bhakti-yoga*. Except for *bhakti-yoga*, any method for realization of *ātma-tattva*, or the science of *ātmā*, will prove deceptive in the long run.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Lord says that only by *bhakti-yoga* can one know Him perfectly, and then one can enter into the science of God. Brahmājī undertook great penance in performing *bhakti-yoga*, and thus he was able to see the transcendental form of the Lord. His transcendental form is one hundred percent spiritual, and one can see Him only by spiritualized vision after proper discharge of *tapasya* or penance, in pure *bhakti-yoga*. The form of the Lord manifested before Brahmā is not one of the forms with which we have experience in the material world. Brahmājī did not perform such severe types of penance just to see a form of material production. Therefore the question by Mahārāja Parikṣit about the form of the Lord is answered. The form of the Lord is *sac-cid-ānanda*, or eternal, full of knowledge and full of bliss. But the material form of the living being is neither eternal, nor full of knowledge, nor blissful. That is the distinction between the form of the Lord and that of the conditioned soul. The conditioned soul, however, can regain his form of eternal knowledge and bliss simply by seeing the Lord by means of *bhakti-yoga*.

The summary is that due to ignorance the conditioned soul is engaged in the temporary varieties of material forms. But the Supreme Lord has no such temporary form like the conditioned souls. He is always possessed of an eternal form of knowledge and bliss, and that is the difference between the Lord and the living entity. One can understand this difference by the process of *bhakti-yoga*. Brahmā was then told by the Lord the gist of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in four original verses. Thus *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is not a creation of the mental speculators. The sound of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is transcendental, and the resonance of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is as good as that of the *Vedas*. Thus the topic of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the science of both the Lord and the living entity. Regular reading or hearing of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is also performance of *bhakti-yoga*, and one can attain the highest perfection simply by the association of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Both Śukadeva Gosvāmī and Mahārāja Parikṣit attained perfection through the medium of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

TEXT 5

स आदिदेवो जगतां परो गुरुः
स्वधिष्ण्यमास्थाय सिमुक्षयैक्षत ।
तां नाध्यगच्छद् दृशमत्र सम्मतां
प्रपञ्चनिर्माणविधिर्यया भवेत् ॥ ५ ॥

sa ādi-devo jagatām paro guruḥ
svadhiṣṇyam āsthāya sisṛkṣayaikṣata
tām nādhyagacchat dṛṣam atra sammatām
prapañca-nirmāṇa-vidhir yayā bhavet

saḥ—he; *ādi-devaḥ*—the first demigod; *jagatām*—of the universe; *paraḥ*—supreme; *guruḥ*—spiritual master; *svadhiṣṇyam*—his lotus seat; *āsthāya*—to find the source of it; *sisṛkṣayā*—for the matter of creating the universal affairs; *aikṣata*—began to think; *tām*—in that matter; *na*—could not; *adhyagacchat*—understand; *dṛṣam*—the direction; *atra*—therein; *sammataḥ*—just the proper way; *prapañca*—material; *nirmāṇa*—construction; *vidhiḥ*—process; *yayā*—as much as; *bhavet*—should be.

TRANSLATION

Lord Brahmā, the first spiritual master, supreme in the universe, could not trace out the source of his lotus seat, and while thinking of creating the material world, he could not understand the proper direction for such creative work, nor could he find out the process for such creation.

(continued in next issue)



Every Town and Village

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



GOREFREY SCOTT BAKER/MONTGOMERY SENTINEL

In a ceremony traditional throughout India, devotees and guests at a recent gathering in Washington, D.C., destroy an effigy of Ravana, a demon who personifies evil in the Vedic epic *Rāmāyana*.

Rāvaṇa Killed, Rāma Reigns in Washington

Potomac, Maryland—More than 1,500 devotees and guests gathered here recently to celebrate the installation of deity forms of Lord Rāmacandra, His consort Sītā, His brother Lakṣmaṇa, and His servant Hanumān. For the United States this was the first formal installation of a Deity of Rāma, an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa who

personifies perfect government leadership. The event included a bathing ceremony for the deities, a play, and a feast, and the climax came when everyone joined in burning an effigy of Rāvaṇa, a demon who once kidnapped Sītā and perished at the hands of Rāma. (For more on the ceremony, please see page 32.)

A New Farm in Australia: 15,000 Acres



Horses are ideal for getting around vast new Australian farm.

Riverina, Australia—The Australasian division of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement has acquired a spectacular farm in southeastern Australia. Lying on the Murray River about two hundred miles east of Adelaide, the farm has 15,000 acres (all of it arable), housing for fifty, and the largest shearing shed in south Australia (it's made of foot-thick solid oak beams and can hold five hundred to six hundred sheep).

The farm is virtually a gift to

the movement from a wealthy businessman, who had originally intended to develop it himself as a self-sufficient community, a refuge from a world he saw heading for war and economic collapse. But his plans failed to materialize, and he began looking for some people who could develop the kind of community he had in mind. Then one day he saw an energetic group of devotees chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa in downtown Melbourne. Struck by their enthusiasm and purity, and recalling an impressive chance encounter with Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1976 on a flight from Melbourne to Auckland, the businessman began to think the devotees might be the ones to develop his farm. After a few meetings with some leading Australian devotees, he was convinced.

Under the guidance of His Holiness Prabhupāda-krpa Gosvāmī, who oversees the movement's affairs in Australasia, the new farm promises to grow into a thriving center of spiritual life in a natural setting.

Two More Books In Nepalese

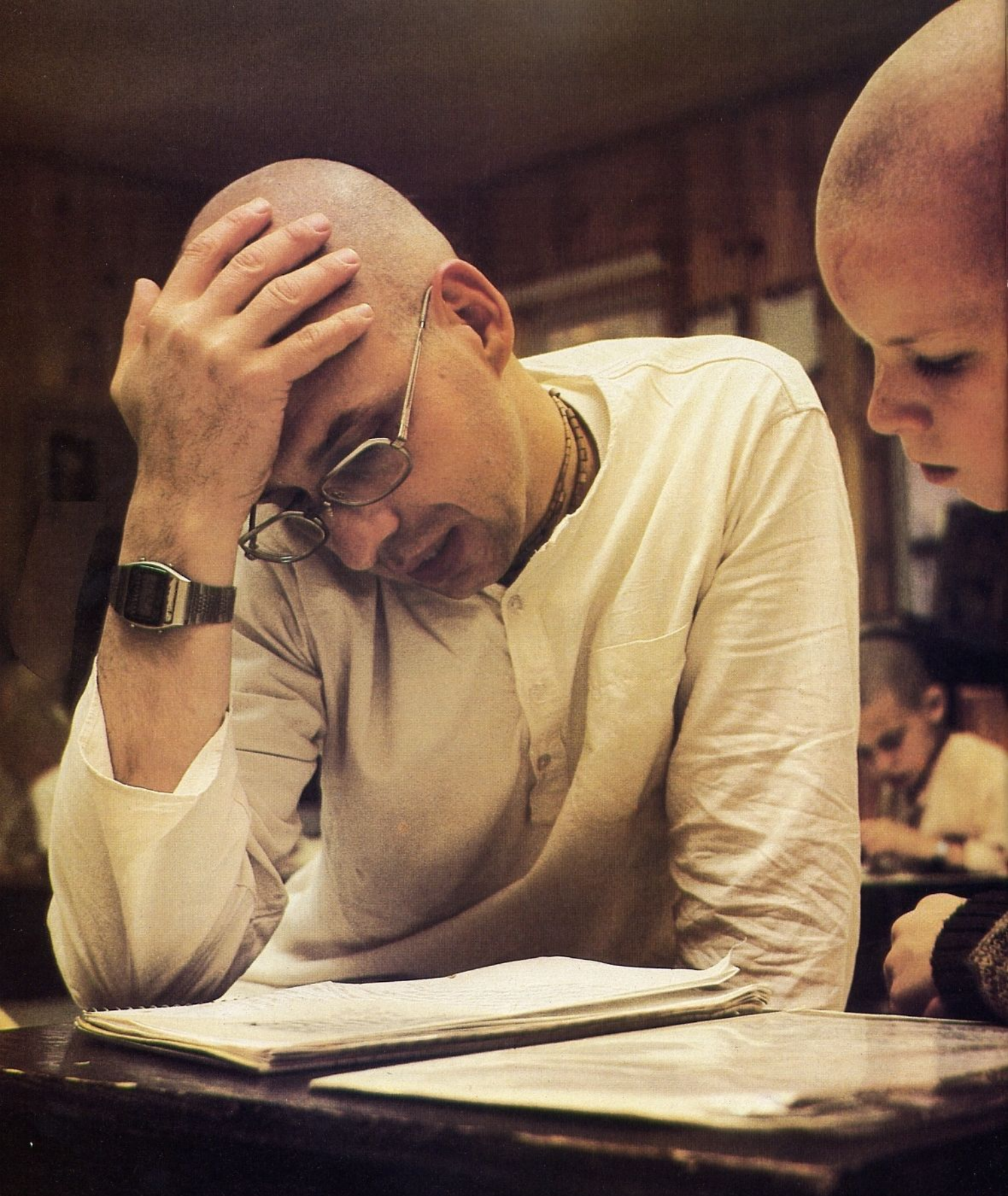
Kathmandu, Nepal—The devotees in the Kathmandu branch of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness now have two more books by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda to distribute to the people of Nepal. The books are *Śrī Iṣopaniṣad* (one of the 108 Vedic writings known as the *Upaniṣads*), which Śrīla Prabhupāda translated from the original Sanskrit and explained with extensive purports, and *Beyond Birth and Death*, a book comprising a series of lectures. The books, translated into Nepalese by Bhaktisiddhānta dāsa, have won enthusiastic approval from the friends of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in Nepal—chief of whom are the king and the royal family.

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 495 Caitanya Era—Month of Mādhava

January 14	January 15	January 17
Appearance of Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī.	Disappearance of Śrīla Jayadeva Gosvāmī.	Disappearance of Śrīla Locana dāsa Thākura.
January 20	January 30	
Sat-ṅhā Ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).	Appearance of Śrīmatī Viṣṇupriyā-devī. Appearance of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī. Disappearance of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura.	



Personal instruction and a close student-teacher relationship are the cornerstones of education at *gurukula* schools. Here Bhūrijana dāsa evaluates an essay by Yudhiṣṭhira, the author's eleven-year-old son.



People

A Teacher for Kṛṣṇa's Children

Bhūrijana dāsa develops a school in Pennsylvania for the first generation of Kṛṣṇa conscious children in the West.

by RAVĪNDRA-SVARŪPA DĀSA

I often make the three-hour drive from Philadelphia to Gītā-nāgarī, the Kṛṣṇa conscious farm community in the fertile Juniata Valley, about fifty miles north of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Two of my children board at the school there. But the visit is a great pleasure for many reasons. Gītā-nāgarī has become a place of pilgrimage for me, a source of spiritual restoration. Coming out of the hard-surfaced city, that monstrous machine for making money and ragging the senses, where devotion to God hangs in as a tenuous and frail anomaly, I enter a complete community where the devotional spirit sustains and pervades every part of it. This, a peaceful rural village, is the natural setting for Kṛṣṇa consciousness. From here the play of light over forested hills rising in steps to the sky and the vast moving composition of clouds are all redolent of Kṛṣṇa. Here I see people living as people are meant to live. Gītā-nāgarī is the homeland of the soul.

To me Gītā-nāgarī is also the future. I become acutely aware of this when I visit the school to see how the first generation of Americans born into Kṛṣṇa consciousness are being brought up in devotional service. And here I can fulfill one of the main objectives of

I first met Bhūrijana and his wife Jagat-tāraṇī in 1976, when my wife Saudāmanī and I took our five-year-old son Yudhiṣṭhira to enroll in the school for boys at Gītā-nāgarī. It had only recently opened, starting from scratch with ten children, but we were happy to have a school close by where we could keep our eyes on Yudhiṣṭhira and watch what was happening. For although my wife and I were both fully committed to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement and willing to follow the direction of Śrīla Prabhupāda, our spiritual master, in the matter of raising and educating our children, we still had large misgivings about what the school might be like.

We were convinced of the need to set up a whole alternative school system for devotee children, but we also recognized that the beginnings of such an enterprise were bound to be difficult, full of false starts and mistakes. Most devotees were rather young and inexperienced, and trial and error was the only way to build a working system.

my pilgrimage: to spend time with a devotee who is fully absorbed in creating that future, the headmaster of the school my children attend, Bhūrijana dāsa.

So although I immediately liked Bhūri-

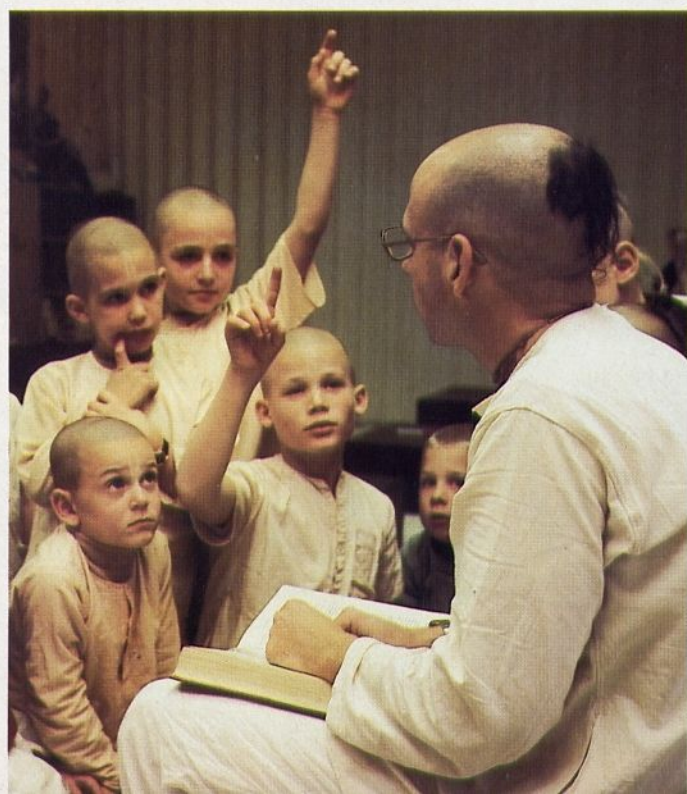
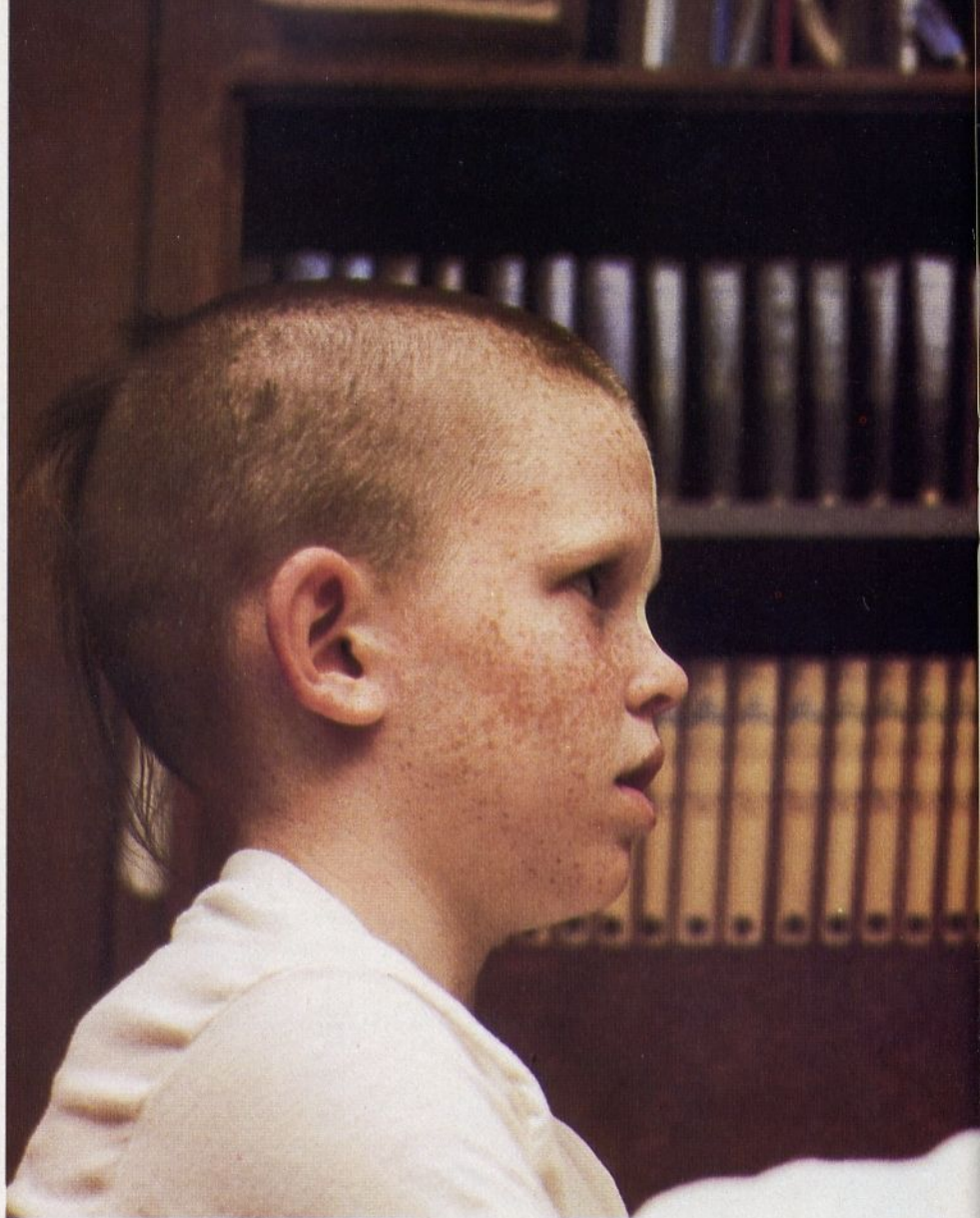
jana, one part of me measured him in a more dispassionate and critical light. After all, I was turning my own child over to him.

Still, Saudāmanī and I quickly established close relations with Bhūrijana and Jagattāraṇī. At that time the boys' school was in a small two-story building with one big classroom, two smaller rooms with child-sized bunk-beds, and one room for Bhūrijana, Jagattāraṇī, and their two-year-old daughter, Vṛndāvana-līlā. The school was modeled on the Vedic *gurukula* system, in which boys at five years go to live in the house of their *guru*, or spiritual master. As a representative of Śrīla Prabhupāda, Bhūrijana was much more than the boys' academic instructor; he was their constant companion and exemplar, living closely with them to guide the formation of their character.

Character formation is one of the main goals of the *gurukula* system, and it requires that the students have continuous and intimate association with a teacher who instructs them by the example of his own conduct. This system naturally demanded a high standard of behavior from the teachers in Gītā-nāgarī—not just from Bhūrijana but also from Jagattāraṇī, who saw to it that the boys were properly bathed, clothed, fed, rested, and so on. In effect, Bhūrijana and Jagattāraṇī had taken on a family of ten boys, and I was fairly awed by the heroic self-sacrifice they were rather cheerfully undertaking. While the *gurukula* style of education is immeasurably superior to the sort of American factory schooling I had been subjected to, I could see that it must be rough on the teacher, even if he's a saint. "You stay with ten boys all day long?" I asked Bhūrijana in amazement on one visit. "How do you stand it?" "Some days," he said, "they drive me up the wall." I could believe it.

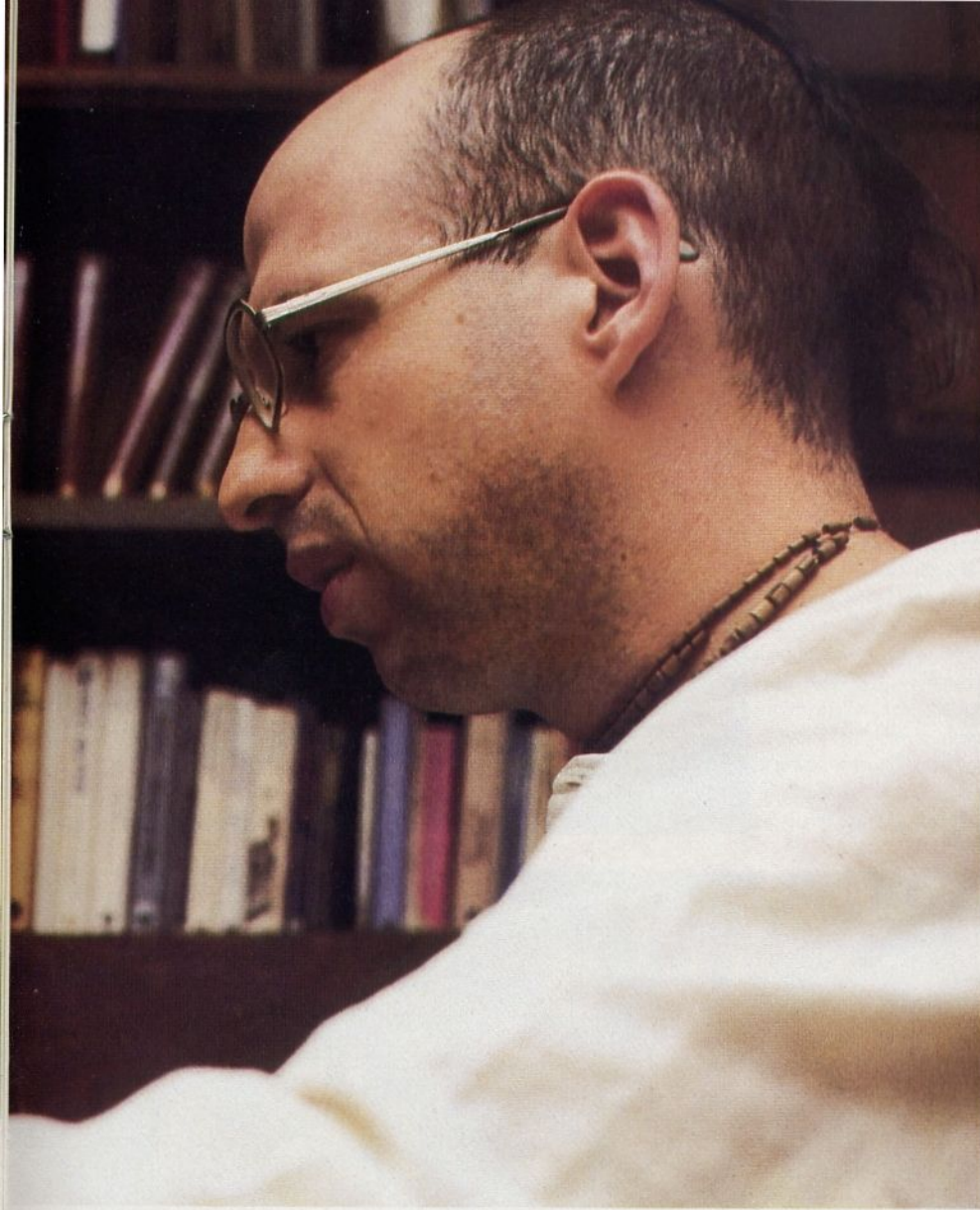
Bhūrijana still speaks with the accent of his native Brooklyn, and as he entertained me with some remarkably funny descriptions of a few of the boys' antics and habits of mind, I could place his humor as the kind that has been called New York City's greatest cultural contribution to America, combining as it does a warm-hearted sympathy for its subject with the extremes of exacerbation. Bhūrijana is very funny, and I could see how his sense of humor contributes to his composure. He is also a compulsive maker of outrageous puns. This gives his students no end of delight, and my son Yudhiṣṭhira can now spiel off a whole collection of "Bhūrijana jokes."

"I joke around a lot," Bhūrijana told me. "The hardest thing about being a teacher is that the children follow your example. So when one of the boys in geography class asked, 'If the people from Portugal are called Portuguese, then is a person

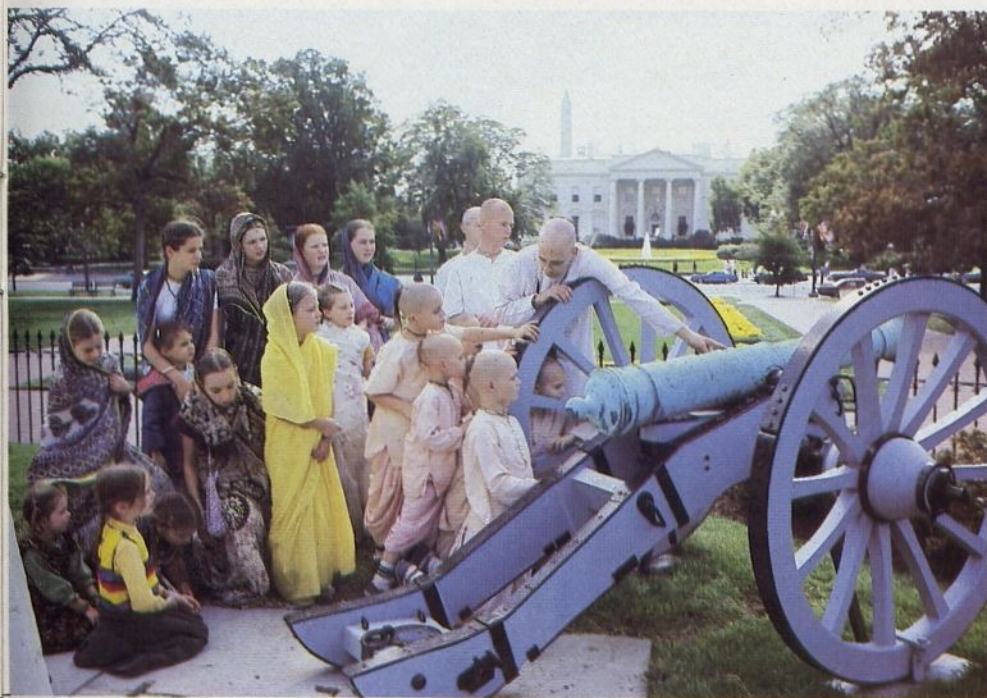
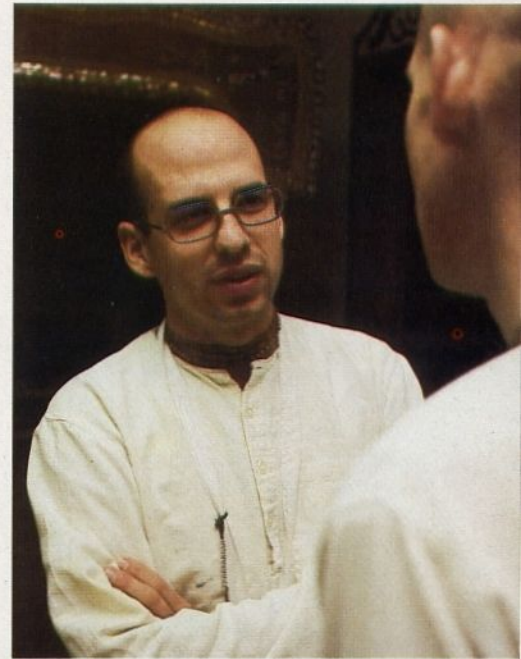


With skillfully formulated questions,

Bhūrijana holds the attention of children on various grade levels (right)—a necessity for a one-room schoolhouse. At far right, Gītā-nāgarī students learn American history on a field trip to the nation's capital.



Working through a rough moment, Bhūrijana teaches Īvara Purī to deal with problems through Kṛṣṇa consciousness (left). Below, Bhūrijana confers with a member of his staff.



from Portugal a Portuguese?’ I realized I had gone too far.”

Saudāmanī and I soon felt sufficiently at ease with Bhūrijana to be frank about our misgivings concerning *gurukula* education. These were mostly about academics. My wife and I had between us garnered a large store of educational experience. We were both university graduates, and I had gone on to graduate school. She had taught in elementary school; I had taught college students as well as preschool children. With our dreadful experience of the low and ever-sinking standard of literacy in American schools, we thought that almost anything would be an improvement, but we were still concerned about the inexperience of devotee teachers and possessed by a nagging worry that the emphasis on spiritual development and character-building would lead to a neglect of academic learning. Moreover, I had already begun to formulate plans for our movement’s own university. What kind of students would the lower schools be sending us?

Bhūrījāna straightforwardly confessed that he had almost no curriculum and few books. He was planning his lessons one step ahead of the students, developing curricula as he went along. Yet two features of the school particularly impressed me as so intelligently conceived that most of my apprehensions were set to rest. The first was the adoption of the old-fashioned method of the one-room schoolhouse, in which a single teacher can instruct children of all different grades. The students get individual assignments from their teacher, prepare their lessons at their desks, and then one by one bring their completed work to the teacher, who corrects it, instructs them, and sends them back with new assignments. Not only is this an eminently practical method for a small school, but it also frees each student to work at his own pace, without being slowed or rushed by the demands of mass instruction.

The second impressive feature was the method adopted for teaching the children to read. Before coming to Gītā-nāgarī, Bhūrījāna, together with Jagadīśa dāsa, the superintendent for all the *gurukula* schools, had investigated various programs for teaching reading. They discovered a reading series written by Clarence Barnhart, of dictionary fame, and Leonard Bloomfield, one of the most respected linguists of the century. Bhūrījāna was enthusiastic: the children learned to read quickly and effortlessly.

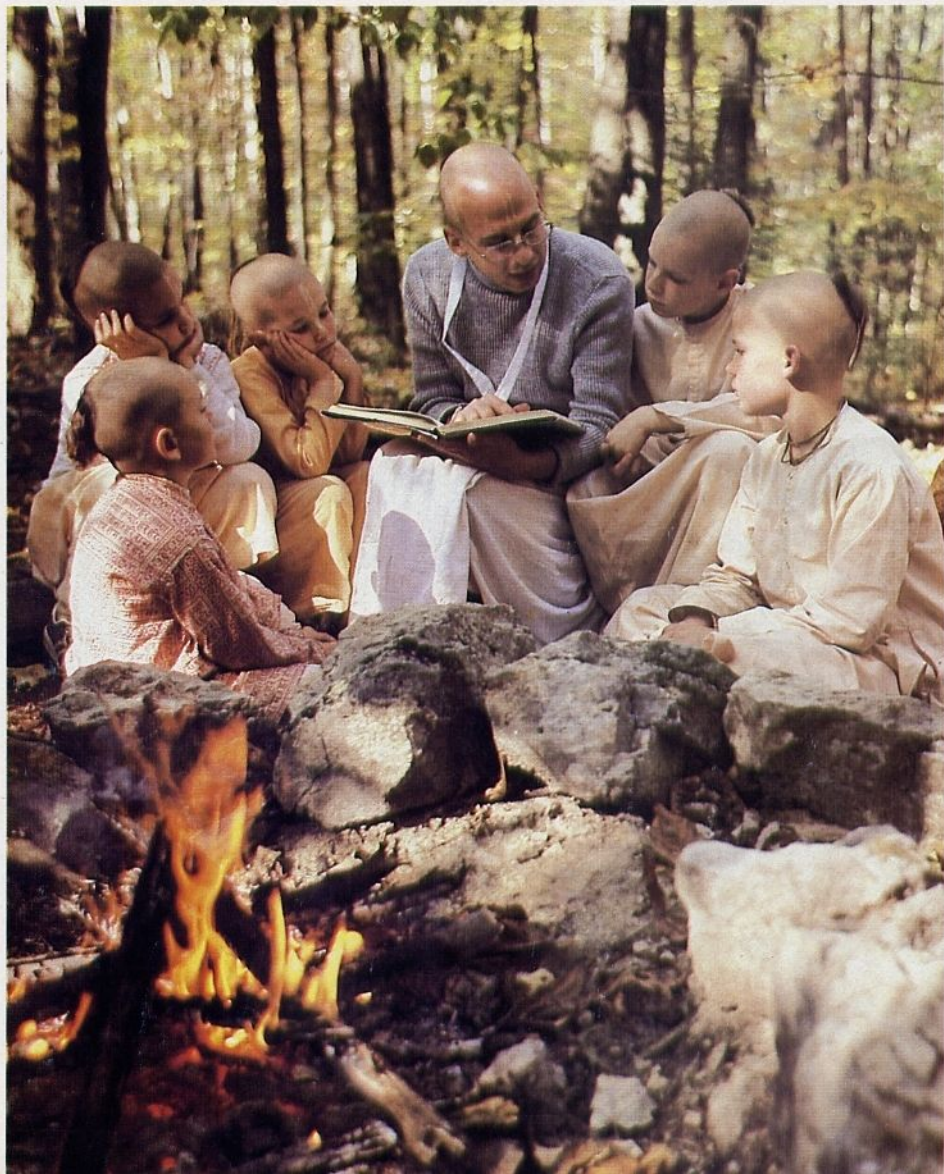
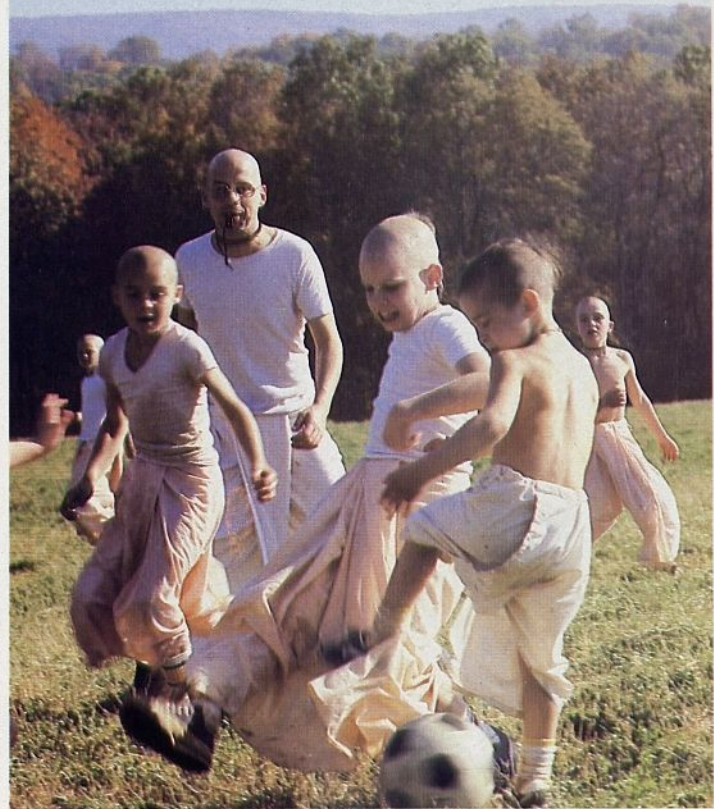
"You don't have *any* trouble teaching the kids to read?"

"Not only don't *I* have any trouble teaching the kids to read," he replied, "but the *kids* don't have any trouble teaching the kids to read." Because the system was so logically constructed and simple to use, Bhūrījāna could assign an older child to lead a younger through the course of exercises. All Bhūrījāna needed to do was check the progress. The children made excellent reading teachers, Bhūrījāna said. Endlessly patient, they were not frustrated by slow learners. This tutorial system has become his standard practice; by now my own son has taught half a dozen children to read. By the end of the first grade, every *gurukula* student can read an adult book like *Kṛṣṇa* or *The Nectar of Devotion*. In this, *gurukula* has far surpassed public education. "After using this simple system," Bhūrījāna recently told me, "you wonder what the whole big fuss is about teaching children to read."

Over the years I grew close to Bhūrījāna, coming to know him as the teacher of my child, a colleague in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and in spiritual education, an exemplar of a wholly dedicated devotee, and a friend.

Bhūrījāna and I had both gone through

Bhūrījāna blows the whistle during a high point of competition in the Gītā-nāgarī fields (right). Below, he and the boys enjoy a story about Kṛṣṇa playing in the woods with His cowherd friends. At far right, a race through the forest.



college during the turmoil of the sixties, both majored in philosophy; we even turned out to have had a migrating professor in common. In 1964 Bhūrijana, then Warren Weinstein, had found himself at the University of Buffalo, a freshman on state scholarship going through the motions of school, wondering what for. But in his sophomore year everything changed: the San Francisco Mime Troupe, psychedelic missionaries, visited campus; Bhūrijana pilgrimaged westward with friends to the hippie holy lands; his hair grew longer; he bought a motorcycle. None of this helped his grades.

For Bhūrijana the ensuing year was turbulent. There were more treks west, and Bhūrijana and his cohorts turned U.B. inside out while everyone tried to figure out what was happening. It was also the time of the Great Spiritual Quest. Since childhood Bhūrijana had been attracted to religion and to the feelings worship would awaken in him, yet his milieu could offer no direction for his spiritual strivings. Or in his words, "I was never materialistically inclined: I spent a lot of time at the beach."

evenings in his attic apartment, and when he returned for the next class he considered himself a devotee. His spiritual advancement had been moving at a pathetic crawl, if at all; now he found himself aboard a speeding train.

So Bhūrijana became a double dropout: from straight society into the counterculture, from the counterculture into Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And, in a strange way, by going further out, he came back in: he gave up drugs, his hair became shorter and shorter, and by the time his head was completely shaven—save for the distinctive tuft in the back—he was on the Dean's List.

In the spring of 1968 he hitched through the melting snow into New York City and spent the weekend at the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple, seeing Śrīla Prabhupāda for the first time. He wrote about this trip for a course on utopian fiction. The students had been assigned to create their own utopia, but Bhūrijana began his paper: "This utopia is different from other utopias because it is real." In Montreal he became Śrīla Prabhupāda's initiated disciple, and repeating the name "Bhūrijana" to himself, he hitched his way back to Buf-

name for herself in Australian film and television. But she had become increasingly uncomfortable in the roles she played and in the lubricious and meretricious atmosphere of film society. A growing desire for spiritual wholeness led her to visit regularly the small Kṛṣṇa temple in Sydney; she loved its pure atmosphere. She would do her singing exercises with the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. Then she got a starring role opposite Mick Jagger in a film about an Australian outlaw named Ned Kelly. This was a major production, and on her way to London for its premier she stopped off in Hollywood, staying in the house of one of the Beach Boys. In Hollywood she saw big-time film life, and when she visited the Los Angeles Kṛṣṇa temple, its purity was a welcome refuge. She asked to stay for a week, and the day *Ned Kelly* opened with fanfare in London, she moved into the temple for good.

Four months later she was told about a good young devotee about to start a center in Hong Kong who wanted to get married. Would she consider going to serve there, so she could get to know him and, if things worked out, marry him? Her visa was



But then in the heady days of the flower children, when the divine became something you could encounter, his early religious feelings came back to life. By his senior year the counterculture had become institutionalized in the U.B. Experimental College. When it offered a course on meditation, Bhūrijana signed up, and sitting on the carpet in the back of a crowded room in the student union, he chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa with Rūpānuga dāsa, the instructor, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, the Swami whom Allen Ginsberg used to chant with on the Lower East Side. Bhūrijana kept on chanting mornings and

falo for his last semester. He graduated wearing the twin lines of *tilaka* on his forehead.

Somewhat later, on New Year's Day of 1970, we find Bhūrijana arriving, to his surprise, in Tokyo, a missionary going to a lonely outpost. In November he left to open a temple in Hong Kong, and by then he had decided he wanted a wife, a devotee wife. This request went back to the large Kṛṣṇa community in Los Angeles, where, as it happened, a rising young Australian actress had recently cut short her career to join the temple. Jagattāraṇī, known then as Janne Wesly, had made a

about to expire anyway, so she decided to try it. The day before she left, an Australian reporter came to interview her at the temple. A few months later in Hong Kong she received from her mother a clipping out of Australia's most popular tabloid: WEIRD CULT FORCES FAMOUS ACTRESS TO MARRY JAPANESE MONK. It was her last press notice. By then she was Bhūrijana's wife.

Now, ten years later, when I visit Bhūrijana and Jagattāraṇī in Gītā-nāgarī, I am enlivened to see how fully they express their talents and aptitudes in devotional service. I generally find Jagattāraṇī



surrounded by a tumult of busy children, calmly sewing the ornate and intricate costumes for the children's plays she puts on, all the while directing the multitude of kids through a variety of simultaneous tasks, dominating the scene with striking stage presence, a star surrounded by bit players. Her room is heaped with beautiful hand puppets in various stages of completion. She and her husband put on elaborate puppet versions of scriptural stories, with lavish changes of scenery, rich sound effects, strobe lights, and smoke bombs. Jagattāraṇī creates the puppets and the sets, and Bhūrijana writes the scripts. Bhūrijana frequently introduces the plays with two popular comic puppets, the sweetly naive Rasgulla and the cynical and gloomy Skurd, who comments on local affairs and members of the audience

and brings down the house.

Bhūrijana's responsibilities have steadily increased since I first brought my son to his school. He has a teaching staff of five; forty students, both boys and girls; one more of my children; and a large new schoolhouse. He regularly visits half a dozen *gurukulas* on the East Coast, overseeing and advising, and a constant stream of teachers visit Gītā-nāgarī to watch and learn. Bhūrijana heads up the curriculum committee for the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement's international system of twenty-two *gurukulas*. In fact, curriculum development has become his real love. "I have such a rare opportunity—the opportunity to build a curriculum from the bottom up and test it at every step. It is an educator's dream. Kṛṣṇa fulfills your desires better than you could ever imagine. So many educators

would give their very soul, even half their retirement fund, to have my situation."

Bhūrijana has instituted a course of learning for the children that includes intensive *Bhagavad-gītā* study, geography, history, mathematics, nature study, music, current events, Sanskrit, and English. His English curriculum is most interesting; it has developed remarkably, and the clever methods he has adopted to teach composition delight the children. They begin writing essays in the first grade and continue to write at every step. They learn how to observe, organize their impressions and ideas, structure paragraphs, expound thought logically; they learn how to generate ideas by directed free-writing, how to refine and polish their work by rewriting and editing. Bhūrijana is training them to come out supremely literate and articulate, to



become experts in understanding and in expounding the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

For Kṛṣṇa is the context and the goal of all study, all work, all play. Bhūrijana continues to teach this daily by his own example. He still lives with the boys, rises early in the morning with them, and remains with them throughout the community's morning devotions in the temple. He has also built a camp for them in the woods, he takes them swimming and hiking, and he shows them the workings of the farm. "I have the idea," he says, "that they should remember their childhood as fun." Thus Bhūrijana is creating a special childhood for these children. They are growing up happy, strong, intelligent, self-disciplined, and imbued with the spirit of devotion to Kṛṣṇa. 🌸

Singing to glorify Kṛṣṇa, Bhūrijana and the children accompany themselves with traditional Indian instruments (far left). Above, Bhūrijana's wife, Jagattāraṇī, entertains two children with her puppets. Offering obeisances before Kṛṣṇa in the temple (left), the boys learn to think of themselves as eternal servants of the Lord.

MEDITATION

(continued from page 4)

this Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* in such-and-such a place, in such-and-such a condition." No. *Niyamitaḥ smarāṇe na kālaḥ*. There is no restriction of time, circumstances, or atmosphere. Anywhere, at any time, you can meditate by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. No other meditation is possible while you are walking on the street, but *this* meditation is possible. You are working with your hands? You can chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. It is so nice.

Kṛṣṇa is the perfect name for God. The Sanskrit word *kṛṣṇa* means "all-attractive." And *rāma* means "the supreme pleasure." So if God is not all-attractive and full of supreme pleasure, then what is the meaning of God? God must be the source of supreme pleasure; otherwise how could you be satisfied with Him? Your heart is hankering after so many pleasures. If God cannot satisfy you with all pleasures, then how can He be God? And He must also be all-attractive. If God is not attractive to every person, how can He be God? But Kṛṣṇa actually is all-attractive.

So the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is not sectarian. Because we are chanting these three names—*Hare*, *Kṛṣṇa*, and *Rāma*—someone may think, "These are Hindu names. Why should we chant these Hindu names?" There are some sectarian people who may think like that. But Lord Caitanya says, "It doesn't matter. If you have some other bona fide name of God, you can chant that. But chant God's name." That is the instruction of this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. So do not think that this movement is trying to convert you from Christian to Hindu. Remain a Christian, a Jew, a Muslim. It doesn't matter. But if you really want to perfect your life, then try to develop your dormant love for God. That is the perfection of life.

Sa vai pumsāṁ paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje. You may profess any religion, but to test whether your religion is perfect, or whether you are perfect, you have to see whether you have developed your love for God. Now we are distributing our love among so many things. But when all this love is concentrated simply on God, that is the perfection of love. Our love is there, but because we have forgotten our relationship with God, we are directing our love toward dogs. That is our disease. We have to transfer our love from so many dogs to God. That is the perfection of life.

So we are not teaching any particular type of religion. We are simply teaching that you should learn to love God. And this is possible by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*.

THE YOGA DICTIONARY

The Sanskrit language is rich in words to communicate ideas about spiritual life, yoga, and God realization. This dictionary, appearing by installments in BACK TO GODHEAD, will focus upon the most important of these words (and, occasionally, upon relevant English terms) and explain what they mean. (For a guide to proper pronunciation, please see page 1.)

Bharata. The Vedic histories tell of three prominent kings who bore the name Bharata. One was the younger brother of Lord Rāmacandra, the incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as a perfect king. During the fourteen years that Lord Rāmacandra was in exile in the forest of Daṇḍakāraṇya, this Bharata, acting as a fully devoted brother, ruled the kingdom on Rāmacandra's behalf. He refused, however, to sit on the throne, which he reserved for the shoes of Lord Rāmacandra. The sage Vālmiki has described these pastimes in the epic *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Another Bharata was the son of King Duṣyanta (or Duṣmanta) and the famous beauty Śakuntalā. He is fully described in the *Mahābhārata (Ādi-parva)*. This Bharata became the king of the entire world, performed great sacrifices for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord, and abundantly provided everything necessary for the welfare of his subjects. Although opulent beyond imagination, Bharata eventually retired from the throne to pursue a life of self-realization. It is from this Bharata that the Kuru dynasty descended, and therefore the members of this dynasty (including the Pāṇḍavas) are sometimes addressed as Bhārata ("descendant of Bharata").

The third Bharata was the son of Mahārāja Rṣabhadeva. This Bharata also became king of the world, and it is because of him that the world became known as Bhārata-varṣa. This Bharata was a highly exalted soul who attained the stage of ecstatic devotion to the Supreme Lord. Nonetheless, while living a renounced life of meditation in the forest (for he too gave up his opulent kingdom to pursue self-realization) he developed a fondness for a deer cub whose mother had died. Because of this affection, he thought of the deer at the time of his own death. As *Bhagavad-gītā* explains, one's thoughts at death carry one to the next body. Thus Mahārāja Bharata, absorbed in thinking of the deer, had to take his next life as a deer.

Although born as a deer, the former King Bharata was able to remember his past life, by the grace of the Lord. Conscious of his mistake, he was careful to associate only with great sages. Thus when his life as a deer ended he was born as a

spiritually advanced human being. In this human life he was known as Jaḍa Bharata ("dull Bharata") because although extremely elevated in spiritual realization he outwardly behaved as though a great fool. Jaḍa Bharata revealed his exalted spiritual understanding, however, when he instructed King Rahūgaṇa in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The history of this Bharata—from his life as the son of Rṣabhadeva, to his life as a deer, and finally to his life of perfection as Jaḍa Bharata—is described in the Fifth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Bhārata-varṣa. The present nation of India is known to its own people as Bhārata, or Bhārata-varṣa. From the Vedic histories, however, we understand that the kingdom of Bhārata-varṣa formerly extended throughout the entire world. Its capital, Hastināpura, was located at the site of the present city of Delhi.

Bhīma—One of the five heroic Pāṇḍava brothers, whose deeds are celebrated in the *Mahābhārata*, the ancient epic history of India. Bhīma is known for his herculean strength, voracious appetite, courage in battle, and pure devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Bhīṣma—Another hero of the *Mahābhārata*. Bhīṣma is one of twelve great authorities on the science of devotional service. Born the son of King Śāntanu and the goddess of the River Ganges, he was to have inherited the throne of the world, but in his youth, for the sake of his father, he renounced the right to the throne and accepted a vow of lifelong celibacy. Despite his deep affection for the Pāṇḍava brothers, for whom he acted like a grandfather, his duty obliged him to serve as a general for the opposing army in the Battle of Kurukṣetra. When Grandfather Bhīṣma fell in battle and lay wounded on a bed formed by the arrows piercing his body, exalted persons from throughout the universe, including the Pāṇḍavas, great demigods and sages, and even Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, gathered at his side. After speaking at length for the enlightenment of all present, Bhīṣma, a perfect *yogi*, fixed his mind upon Lord Kṛṣṇa and then passed away at a time of his own choosing. Bhīṣma's prayers to Lord Kṛṣṇa appear in the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

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LETTERS

You guys are really sad. For millennia religious sects have claimed to have the only way to God, and they have always been wrong. So are you wrong. As Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan says, "The ways to God are numberless as the grains of sand, unceasing as the rains of Dharma."

It's too bad that you close your minds to everything except what your Almighty Guru tells you. For example, I read in BACK TO GODHEAD Vol. 16, No. 6 (and elsewhere ad nauseum in ISKCON literature) that the practice of Raja Yoga is "unsuitable for the present age." Well, it's not. Just a little of the Raja Yoga practices can lead to advancement, as I can attest.

In your unthinking and bigoted narrow-mindedness you are as bad as Bible-beaters who still believe in the myths of Creation as presented in Genesis. The old beliefs are outdated. Why do you accept so blindly?

Sirs, you are correct that self-realization is the purpose of human life. But narrow-minded bigotry is not the most effective way to get there, nor is blind acceptance.

AUM. SHANTI.

Richard L. Miller

Wilmington, Delaware

OUR REPLY (from Jayādvaita Swami, Senior Editor): If we understand you correctly, your idea is that everyone's path to God is equally valid. From this it would follow (if we are to avoid being narrow-minded and bigoted) that our own path—that of Kṛṣṇa consciousness—must also be valid. And since part of the understanding we have gained on our path is that some paths are more suitable than others, and that some are utterly useless, this too must be valid. This, of course, leads to the conclusion that your original idea is invalid.

Now, to set matters straight, the devotees of Kṛṣṇa, far from insisting that ours is the only path to God, agree that there are many, indeed innumerable, paths.

That the paths to God are innumerable, however, in no way implies that all paths are equal. Although numberless medicines may be available, a diseased person ought not to think that whatever medicine he takes will be as good as any other. Some medicines are good only for particular patients under particular circumstances, some are effective but slow, some have undesirable side effects, and some are just utterly worthless. That medicines are numberless hardly means that cough drops, eye drops, or snake oil are just as good for treating diabetes as insulin. Among the numberless

medicines, one has to take the particular medicine that qualified physicians prescribe for one's particular disease.

Karma-yoga, *hatha-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, and *bhakti-yoga*—these and several other paths are set forth in *Bhagavad-gītā*, which is spoken by Kṛṣṇa Himself. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is therefore renowned as Yogeśvara, "the master of all *yoga*."

Rāja-yoga, or *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, is also described in *Bhagavad-gītā* by Kṛṣṇa Himself, and devotees of Kṛṣṇa therefore accept it as a legitimate path to God. Yet the requirements of this *yoga* are stringent—so stringent, in fact, that Arjuna, the original recipient of *Bhagavad-gītā*, rejected the entire system as too difficult for him to practice. Arjuna lived in Dvāpara-yuga, an age more conducive to self-realization than the age we live in now. An intimate friend of Kṛṣṇa Himself, Arjuna was a prince of exceptional saintliness. Yet even he professed his inability to follow this system. How then can ordinary people like us expect to be able to follow it now?

What does *rāja-yoga* require? In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa tells us only its barest essentials, yet even these are most likely well beyond our abilities. For example, one must retire to a sacred place, like the pilgrimage sites in the Himalayas or on the banks of the Ganges, practice absolute celibacy, live in total seclusion, and absorb one's mind in unceasing meditation. The last time I sped through Wilmington on Amtrak, past the office buildings and factory smokestacks, it hardly seemed the sort of sacred, secluded place that *rāja-yoga* requires. I can just imagine a *rāja-yogī* in Wilmington, emerging from meditation only long enough to drop by the post office and send testimony of his advancement to BACK TO GODHEAD. Considering the spirit of your letter, this is testimony we shall be careful not to accept blindly.

Nor do we recommend that you accept Kṛṣṇa consciousness blindly. For thoughtful, cautious souls who wish to examine and question philosophical ideas thoroughly before accepting them, we have published more than sixty large books through which to investigate what Kṛṣṇa consciousness is.

Although we never insist that ours is the only way, it is the way the Vedic sages most emphatically recommend for the present age. The same *Bhagavad-gītā* that sets forth the many paths of *yoga* recommends one path above all—the path of *bhakti-yoga*, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In a former age, Satya-yuga, *rāja-yoga* was the ideal means to attain perfection—but that was more than two million years ago. In

contrast, *bhakti-yoga*—and, in particular, the chanting of God's names—is the method the Vedic sages prescribe as the only truly effective means of spiritual realization during our present age, the difficult time known as Kali-yuga, the Age of Quarrel and Hypocrisy. We are hopeful that broadminded souls, eyes fully open, will carefully examine it and then accept it.

* * *

I picked up your magazine just by chance on my way from lectures. For the fun of it I got it from the man who was distributing them to the students. When I was back in my room I dropped it on the table and forgot it until this morning. When I was cleaning my table, I saw it. Flipping through it, I read the replies of Śrīla Prabhupāda "On Education and the Good Life." In the Vedic understanding of four pillars of sinful life there is intoxication, a sin I commit every time I am under pressure (emotions and other psychological factors). I have been trying to cure it for years without success. The first paragraph of page 14, Vol. 16, No. 10 [in which Śrīla Prabhupāda argues against intoxication, gambling, meat-eating, and illicit sex] has performed the miracle.

Thanks a lot. Continue to spread your Vedic understanding. The knowledge will cure so many people.

Michael Robins Alcanbi
Pennsylvania State University

* * *

I just wanted you to know how glad I am that you're finally going to put some recipes in BACK TO GODHEAD. I've been reading your magazine for years (since 1974, in fact), but I've always wondered why you don't give any recipes in the magazine for those incredible dishes you serve at the Sunday feasts at your temples. I'm a photographer, and I travel a lot, so whenever I'm in Chicago or Los Angeles or New York I make it a point to visit the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple on Sundays. I'm not a vegetarian, but I could easily see becoming one if I could learn how to cook like that! What's the secret ingredient?

Sandy Marcy
Phoenix, Arizona

OUR REPLY: The secret behind the cooking at Hare Kṛṣṇa temples is that everything is done to please Kṛṣṇa. Since Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā* that He accepts only vegetarian dishes prepared and offered with love, devotees try to please Him by meeting this standard. Of course, there is a "secret ingredient" too: ghee, purified butter. Ghee is the cooking medium par excellence—but we don't have room to go into detail about it here. See our "Kṛṣṇa's Cuisine" feature next month for a description of the glories of ghee, and how to prepare it and use it in your own kitchen. 🍴

RLD

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

WHAT IS A MANTRA? In Sanskrit, *man* means "mind" and *tra* means "freeing." So a *mantra* is a combination of transcendental sounds that frees our minds from anxiety.

Ancient India's Vedic literature singles out one *mantra* as the *mahā* (supreme) *mantra*. The *Kali-santarāna Upaniṣad* explains, "These sixteen words—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—are especially meant for counteracting the present age of quarrel and anxiety."

Five centuries ago, while spreading the

mahā-mantra throughout India, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu prayed, "O Supreme Lord, in Your name You have invested all Your transcendental energies."

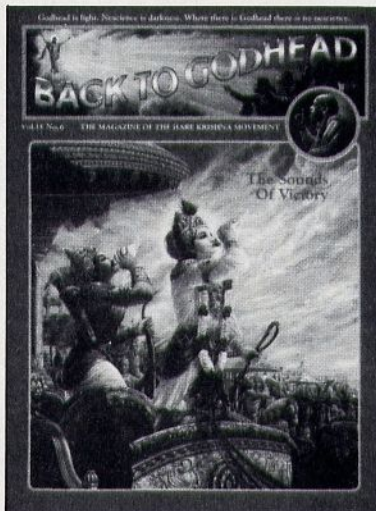
The name *Kṛṣṇa* means "the all-attractive one," the name *Rāma* means "the all-pleasing one," and the name *Hare* is an address to the Lord's devotional energy. So the *mahā-mantra* means, "O all-attractive, all-pleasing Lord, O energy of the Lord, please engage me in Your devotional service." Chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and your life will be sublime.

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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

The Ideal King Reigns in Washington

From time to time God incarnates on earth to impart His instructions and enact His pastimes. One incarnation is Lord Rāmacandra, who appeared in India millions of years ago as the ideal king. His purpose was to teach us perfect government—God-centered government—and thus His moral, political, and religious teachings and activities were meant to instruct humanity and provide ideals to emulate. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is responsible for propagating these instructions and ideals in an effort to lead humanity toward God consciousness in every sphere of life, including government. There is much to be learned from Lord Rāma about good government.

Last October, in a grand ceremony, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness began worshiping the Deity form of Lord Rāma in Washington, D.C. The Montgomery County *Sentinel* reported the event as follows:

“Accompanied by the rhythmic pounding of drums and ringing of cymbals, this timeless mantra of India’s ancient Vedic culture [Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare] resounds throughout the Potomac temple of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Three hundred devotees and observers somehow have squeezed themselves into the temple to watch the bathing of the deities, the first rite of the ancient festival. Light from crystal-decked chandeliers shines down on the crowd. Below, the smoke of sandalwood incense floats upward under the pandal, a multicolored tent hanging high over bowls of libations—among them honey, yogurt, and clarified butter—that would soon be spread on the marble incarnations of Lord Ramachandra, his consort Sita, his brother Laksmana and Lord Rama’s monkey servant, Hanuman. This is the first installation of the deity form of Lord Rama in the United States.”

The inspiration for worshiping Lord Rāma in Washington, D.C., came from our spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who wrote in a letter to the devotees there in 1976, “As for your desire to have Sītā-Rāma Deities, it is a very good idea. Rāma is the ideal king, and it would be very suitable that He reign over the capital of America.”

The actual day of the ceremony was *vijayotsava*, the anniversary of the day Lord Rāma killed the great demon Rāvaṇa. The *Rāmāyaṇa*, an ancient Vedic epic, describes how Rāvaṇa provoked the wrath

of Lord Rāma by kidnapping His chaste wife, Sītā. (Please see *BACK TO GODHEAD*, Vol. 16, No. 9.)

His Holiness Acyutānanda Swami spoke about Rāvaṇa in a morning class:

“It is sometimes said that the people want the kingdom of God without God. Such an aspiration, however, is never to be fulfilled. That was Rāvaṇa’s idea, also. He wanted Sītā without Rāma. Sītā is the energy of the Lord, His personified opulence, and Rāvaṇa or demons like him want to enjoy all the opulence of the Lord without serving the Lord Himself. But they cannot enjoy such wealth for long, because fortune is fickle. You may know that when people acquire money by illegal means, that money is often taken away and they are put in jail. But even if such criminals are not caught by the police, because they have accumulated more wealth than their quota they cannot enjoy that money.

“Big millionaire and billionaire industrialists who get money by cheating and by creating factories for unnecessary commodities, and who advertise to the foolish, uneducated people that they should buy these commodities—such men are full of troubles themselves. For instance, they have to face so many court cases. One of the results of bad *karma* is to constantly be going to court. Wealthy people often face this disturbing nuisance; they know that they may lose their money at any moment. Because Rāvaṇa did not use his wealth in the service of God, he was doomed. Similarly, any Rāvaṇa-like person today will ultimately meet with defeat before Providence.”

I also got a chance to speak before the guests and devotees:

“Just as Rāvaṇa was defeated by Rāma and His devotees, so today’s demons will be defeated by the grace of the Lord and the Lord’s devotees. We will see victory, certainly. As Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, ‘My devotee will never suffer defeat; he will never be vanquished.’ The devotees become triumphant because they become eternal: they go back to Godhead. And the demon gets defeated and returns to this world again and again. There is always this contest between the devotee and the demon, but the conclusion is always that the demon is vanquished. Although it may temporarily appear otherwise, the devotee is always victorious in the end. At present, in this age of quarrel and hypocrisy (the Kali-yuga), the devotees have no political power. Yet we are worshiping Rāma and spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Therefore we are sure, as Kṛṣṇa

says, that the devotees will be victorious, not only over the demons but over death—over the whole material universe.”

The climax of the day was the burning of Rāvaṇa in effigy, a tradition throughout India on *vijayotsava*. The *Sentinel* described this event as follows:

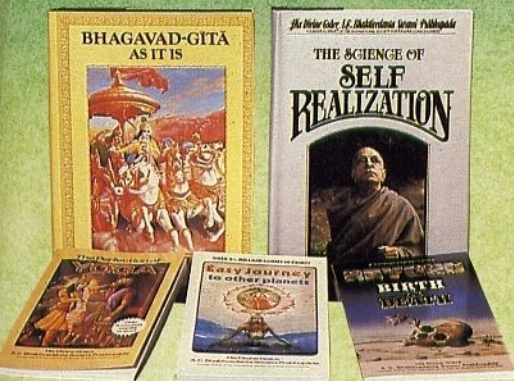
“Everyone assembled at the outdoor theatre on top of a hill overlooking the temple. They sat on logs resting on a carpet of gold, yellow, orange and brown leaves. Overhead, green- and yellow-leaved trees shielded the audience from a grey sky. To the alternately delighted cheers and awed silence of the audience, Lord Ramachandra, painted an effervescent green, conquered the plotting king Ravana. While the play progressed, Krishna devotees below prepared a 30-foot effigy of Ravana to be shot by a flaming arrow and then beaten with sticks by members of the audience. Just as the effigy was doused with kerosene, the stick-bearing crowd came whooping down the hill screaming ‘Kill the demon!’ Then the figure of Rama from the play took a bow and flaming arrow and struck the evil effigy. Suddenly, in the near darkness, Ravana burst into flame and devotees rushed to strike his brilliant figure. Shouts of ‘Ravana is dead!’ filled the air, and dancing and singing resumed as people clasped hands and moved back toward the temple.”

Several film and TV crews were on hand to record the event. Said Cecilia Domeyko, a camerawoman working with a free-lance filming company called Documentary One, “I liked the burning of the effigy a lot. I thought it was great fun. The effigy was a symbol of the demoniac, and you were burning it. I think most people took it like that, because the fire is a universal symbol for purity, and so by burning the effigy you were burning evil.”

All day and evening there were chanting of the holy names of God and feasting. Everyone enjoyed the festival, but devotees especially felt the auspicious possibilities of a new era.

I got another chance to speak at the conclusion of the evening: “We are going to worship the genuine king, Rāma. And when we purify our hearts, the demoniac influence within us will be slain and religious principles will be introduced. The people will have to do it themselves—to install the Lord and the Lord’s representative in the actual seat of government. Otherwise, the people will go on being misled and victimized by Rāvaṇa-like men who, as the *Bhagavad-gītā* describes, perform horrible works of destruction among mankind.” —SDG

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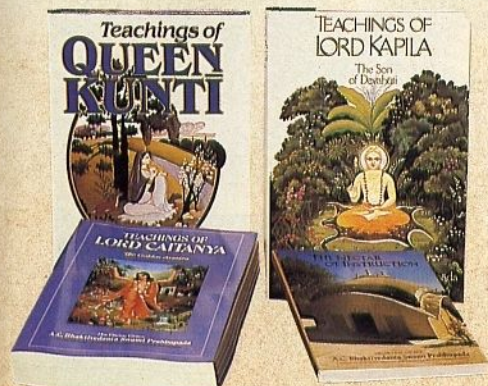
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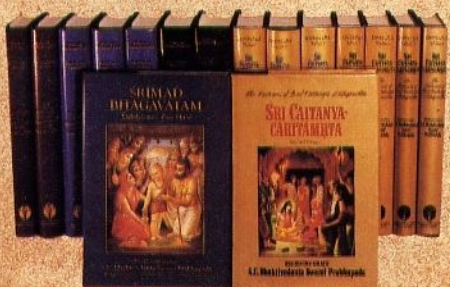
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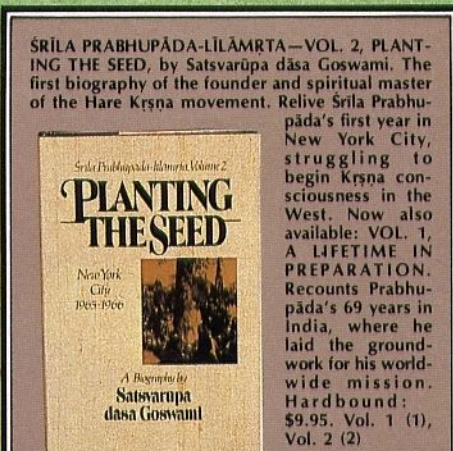
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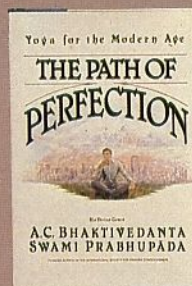
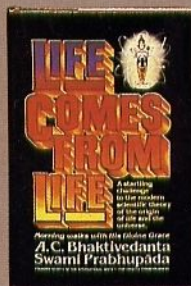
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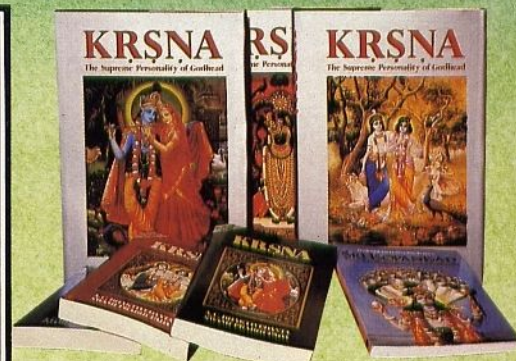


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