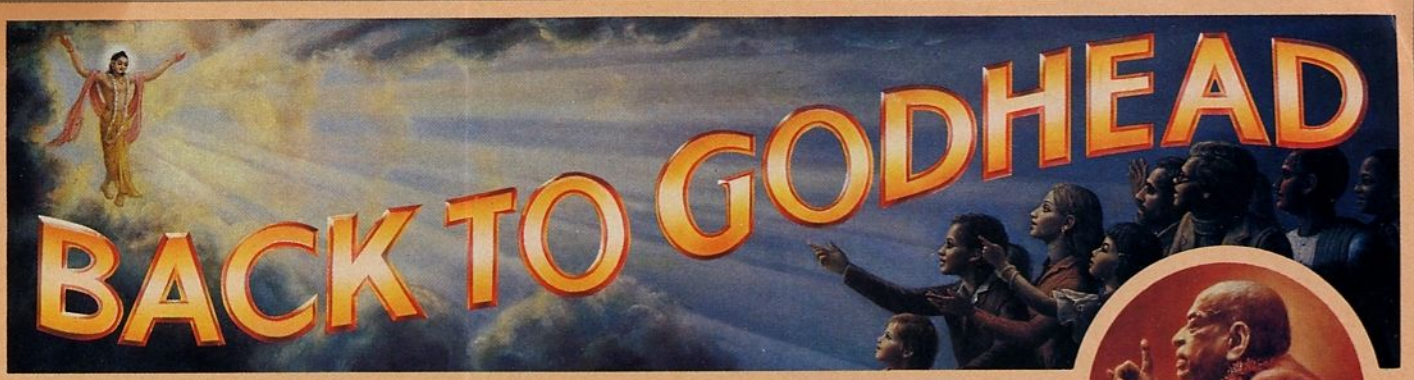


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



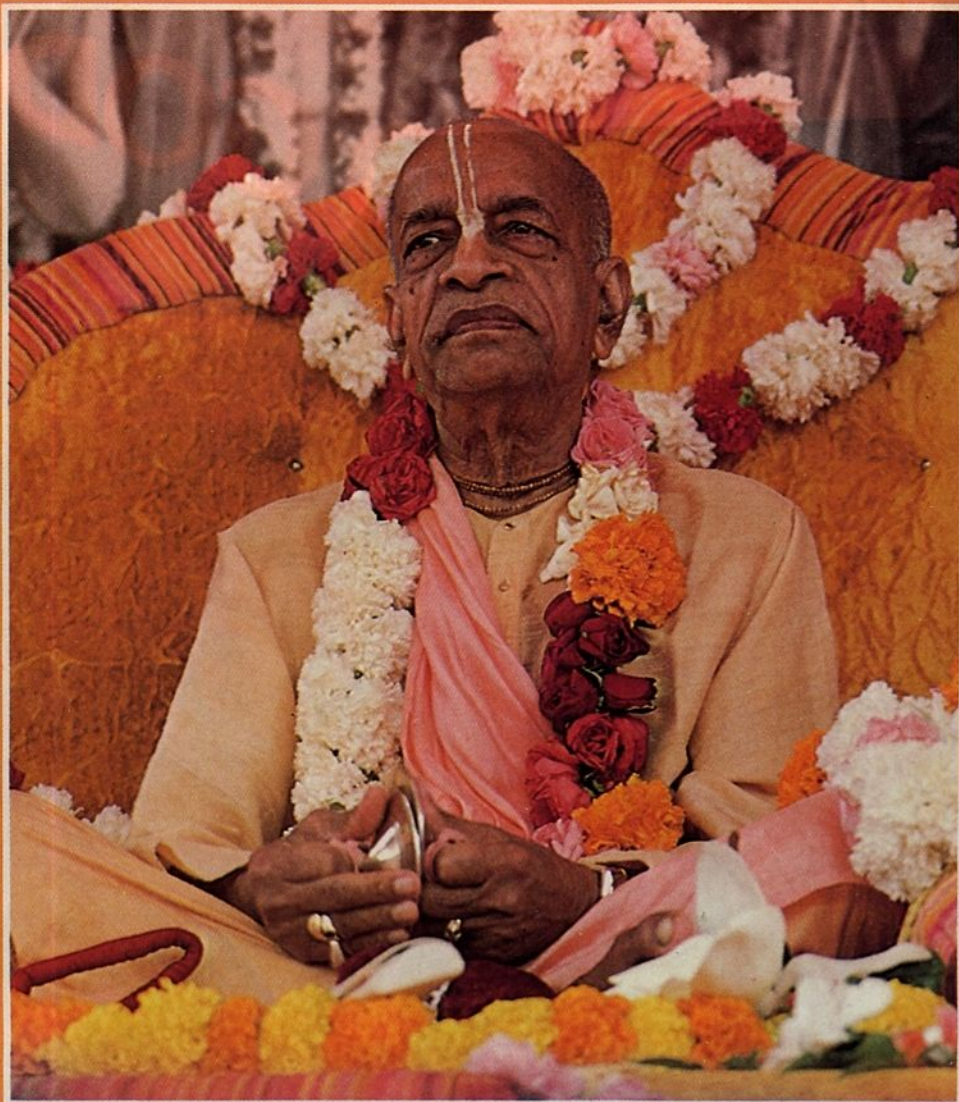
Vol. 19 No. 6

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



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. Advanced disciples throughout the world have been authorized to serve in the position of spiritual master, initiating disciples of their own. And these disciples, in turn, become linked with Śrīla Prabhupāda through the transcendental system of disciplic succession.



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 peoples 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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PRONUNCIATION. We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic 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**, **hedgehog**, and **red-hot**. Finally, pronounce the sibilants **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh**. 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* (*dāśī* for women), meaning "servant." For instance, the name *Kṛṣṇa dāsa* means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

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Five hundred years ago, Lord Caitanya predicted that the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa would be heard in every town and village in the world. Now, His birthplace in West Bengal is the home of an international spiritual movement.

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COVER: The Supreme Person is an ocean of captivating transcendental qualities, but His most endearing and exalted quality is His exquisite beauty. All beautiful and glorious manifestations in this world spring from but a spark of Kṛṣṇa's splendor. (Painting: Dhṛti-devī dāśī).

ILLUSIONS OF ENJOYMENT

The nature of the self is to be joyful.
Why do our attempts to secure happiness often result in misery?

A lecture given in Mauritius in 1975
by HIS DIVINE GRACE
A. C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*śrī-prahrāda uvāca
matir na kṛṣṇe parataḥ svato vā
mitho 'bhīpadyeta grha-vratānām
adānta-gobhir viśatām tamisraṁ
punaḥ punaś carvita-carvaṇānām*

“Prahāda Mahārāja said: Because of their uncontrolled senses, persons too addicted to materialistic life make progress toward hellish conditions and repeatedly chew that which has already been chewed. Their inclinations toward Kṛṣṇa are never aroused, either by the instructions of others, by their own efforts, or by a combination of both.” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 7.5.30)

We are trying to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but it is a very difficult task because people are so much addicted to material enjoyment. Generally, they do not like this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, although reviving our Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the ultimate goal of human life.

Kṛṣṇa is God. This is the verdict of the Vedic literature: *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*. After searching after God, making

great research work to find out what God is, all the ācāryas [spiritual masters] have concluded that Kṛṣṇa is God. Unfortunately, at the present moment in this Kali-yuga [the Age of Quarrel], most people are not interested in God. Why? That is stated by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [7.15]:

*na mām duṣkṛtino mūḍhāḥ
prapadyante narādhamāḥ
māyayāpahṛta-jñānā
āsurāṁ bhāvam āśritāḥ*

The word *duṣkṛtinaḥ* here means “one who always engages in sinful activities.” *Kṛtī* means “meritorious” or “very intelligent.” But *duṣkṛtī* means “utilizing one’s merit for sinful activities,” and those who do this are called *duṣkṛtinaḥ*. Such sinful people never surrender to Kṛṣṇa. They could use their good intelligence for making their lives perfect, but instead of doing that they engage in sinful activities. Sinful activities are activities of sense gratification. When one becomes addicted to sense gratification, he must act sinfully.

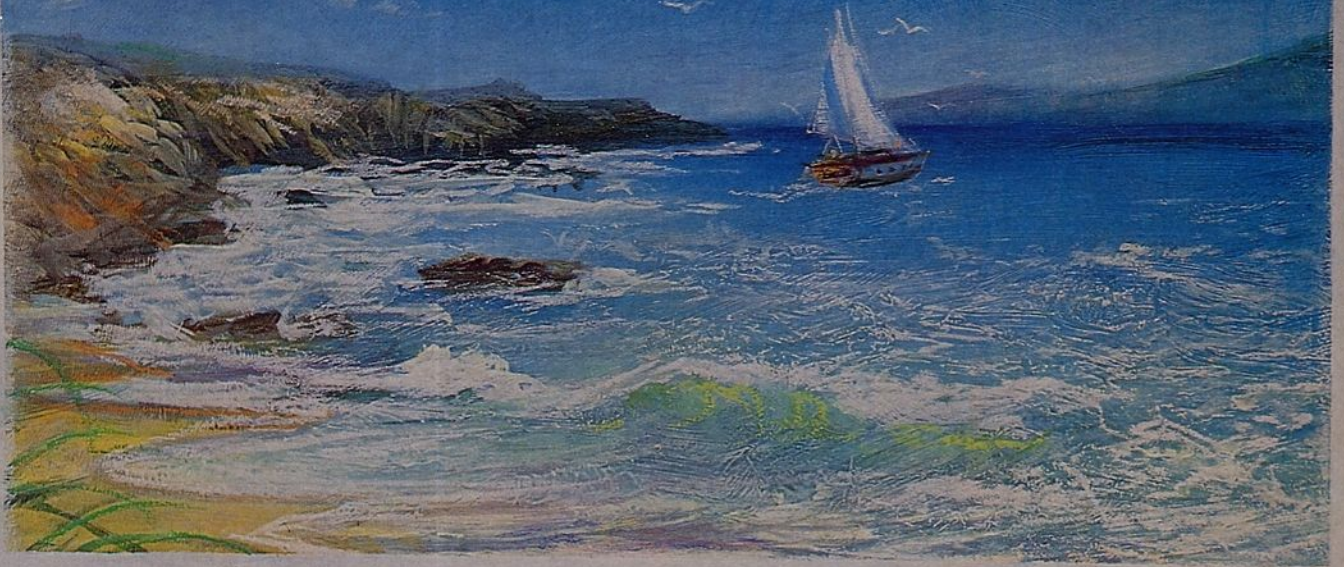
The symptoms of this addiction are very

prominent in this age. Everyone is working hard simply for sense gratification. And as soon as you accept a life of sense gratification, you are sure to commit sinful activities. For example, throughout the whole world there are so many distilleries manufacturing liquor. Especially in the Western countries you will find so many advertisements for liquor, whiskey, cigarettes . . . Not to speak of the thousands of slaughterhouses all over the world where innocent animals are unnecessarily killed.

People can live very nicely on food grains. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* [3.14] Kṛṣṇa says, *annād bhavanti bhūtāni*: “Simply by eating food grains, both men and animals can live very happily.” You can grow food grains very easily. I have seen in the Western countries how they grow food grains to feed the animals, and then the animals are eaten by man.

So, I see that on this island of Mauritius you have enough land to produce all your own food grains. But I understand that instead of growing food grains, you are growing sugar cane for export. Why? You are dependent on food grains—on rice,

Having a great time!



wheat, *dāl*—so why make this attempt to accumulate money instead of growing sufficient food? First of all grow your own eatables. Then if there is time and if your population has sufficient food grains, you can try to grow other things for export.

The first necessity is that you should be self-sufficient. That is God's arrangement. Not only in your country but everywhere there is abundant land for producing food grains. I have traveled all over the world—Africa, Australia, and America also—and I have seen much vacant land that if used to produce food grains could feed ten times as many people as at present.

There is no question of scarcity. The creation is so made by Kṛṣṇa that everything is *pūrṇam*, complete. In the *Īso-paniṣad* it is said, *pūrṇam adah pūrṇam idam pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate*: "The Personality of Godhead is perfect and complete, and therefore His creation is also complete." So, Kṛṣṇa has made a complete arrangement for everyone to live peacefully and happily, but if you don't produce food grains you will unnecessarily put men into scarcity, and that is sinful.

Every instruction in the Vedic scriptures is intended to teach us how to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and make our lives perfect. Unfortunately, we do not know what the perfect life is. Therefore Prahlāda Mahārāja says here, *punaḥ punaś carvita-carvaṇānām*: "These fools and rascals who are after sense gratification are simply chewing the chewed." So making our life perfect means stopping this business of chewing the chewed.

Now we have this human form of life, and by our pious activities we may be elevated to the higher planetary systems. But what shall we gain there? A higher standard of sense gratification, that's all. For example, sex pleasure is there in the society of the cats and dogs, it is there in human society, and it is there in the heavenly planets. The arrangement may be a little different, but the pleasure of sex is the same whether you enjoy it as a dog, as a human being, or as a demigod. The pleasure of sex is not different; it is the same.

So in this material world we are changing our body (*tathā dehāntara-prāptiḥ*) and enjoying varieties of sense gratification. That is described as *punaḥ punaś carvita-carvaṇānām*: chewing the chewed. We have tasted sense gratification in our last life, and again we are trying for it in this life. When we are disgusted with this business, that is called *vairāgya-vidyā*, detachment and knowledge. And that knowledge and that renunciation, or detachment, can be achieved only by Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa clearly states, *janma karma ca me divyam evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ*. If we simply understand Kṛṣṇa in truth, then, *tyāktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti mām eti so 'rjuna*: the result

will be that after giving up this present body we will not have to accept another material body, but we will go to Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world.

To accept another material body means to again be forced to engage in chewing the chewed. Whether I get a human body, an animal body, or a demigod body, the business is the same: *āhāra-nidrā-bhaya-maithunam ca*—eating, sleeping, defense, and sex. Don't think that the heavenly planets are very safe. We have information from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that Lord Indra is always being disturbed by so many demons, and fighting is going on.

So, our life is being spoiled by sense gratification, and it can be stopped only by

**These boys from
Europe and America
adopted spiritual life.
They stopped the
process of sense
gratification. Meat-
eating, intoxication,
gambling, and illicit
sex—this is
materialistic life.
These sinful practices
must be given up.**

Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But, as Prahlāda Mahārāja says here, "Kṛṣṇa consciousness cannot be achieved by the *gṛha-vratānām*." *Gṛha-vratānām* means "those who are too much interested in family life, or a life of sense gratification." For them it is very difficult to become Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Prahlāda is speaking with his father, Hiranyakaśipu. Prahlāda is a devotee and his father is a materialistic person interested in money and women. So Hiranyakaśipu was challenging his son: "Where did you learn this Kṛṣṇa consciousness?" Prahlāda flatly replied, *matir na kṛṣṇe parataḥ svato vā mitho 'bhipadyeta gṛha-vratānām*: "One who is addicted to the materialistic way of life cannot understand or be convinced about Kṛṣṇa consciousness, either by hearing from others, by his own speculation, or by meeting in big, big conferences." Also, in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [2.44] Kṛṣṇa says,

*bhogaiśvarya-prasaktānāṁ
tayāpahṛta-cetasām*

*vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ
samādhau na vidhīyate*

"Those who are too much attached to the materialistic way of life cannot become determined in Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

The materialistic way of life means sense gratification. What is the difference between spiritual life and material life? These boys from Europe and America have adopted the spiritual life, which means that they have stopped the process of sense gratification. Illicit sex, meat-eating, gambling, intoxication—this is the materialistic way of life. And those who practice spiritual life must give up these sinful practices.

If we stick to the materialistic way of life, it will be very, very difficult for us to understand Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Why? Because, as Prahlāda Mahārāja says here, *adānta-gobhiḥ*: "The materialist's senses are uncontrolled." This morning, while we were walking on the beach, we found so many things—Coca-cola bottles, cigarette butts, and so many other things. Now, what is the necessity of Coca-cola? You don't find all these things in our Society. We don't drink Coca-cola. We don't drink Pepsi. We don't smoke cigarettes. So many things are selling in the market in huge quantity because the advertisements are victimizing the poor customer. All these things are unnecessary. But because people cannot control their senses, the manufacturers of all these unnecessary things are making a big business.

So, if we really want spiritual life, if we really want to be free from the material clutches, we have to learn how to control the senses. That is the purpose of human life. Human life is not meant for imitating the life of cats and dogs and hogs.

This morning a press representative came to see us, to find out some information on this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Our first point was that we are spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness to bring people to the standard of human life from the standard of cat-and-dog life. Cat-and-dog life means *adānta-gobhiḥ*, uncontrolled senses. One female dog will be surrounded by a dozen male dogs. Why? *Adānta-gobhiḥ*: they cannot control their senses. On the street they are having sex.

Therefore, human life means to control the senses. That is human life. But if you remain like cats and dogs, without controlling the senses, then what is the difference between a dog and you? There is no difference. Actually, that idea is being accepted now. The modern so-called civilization says we should allow the senses to enjoy as far as possible. This is their advancement of civilization.

Once again, the perfect example is meat-eating. We can be very happy by
(continued on page 30)

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FAHRENHEIT 662?

A startling discovery
gets modern science into hot water.

by DEVĀMRṬA SWAMI

Up from the floor of the Pacific Ocean comes amazing scientific news. The pages of *Discover*, an American popular science magazine, describe the voyage of a research submarine that brings back irrefutable evidence that buoys Vedic science and capsizes modern biology.

While ordinary scientists recover from the shock and reconstruct their theories, detailing them in the pages of more staid scientific journals, professors of the eternal Kṛṣṇa science smile with amusement. Indeed, anyone who has mastered Lord Kṛṣṇa's discourses in the *Bhagavad-gītā* certainly has the right to condescendingly intone, "I told you so!"

Desiring luxuries and the softest possible existence, mankind eagerly ushered scientific and technological zeal to the forefront of human culture. Concurrently, however, strict *a priori* assumptions began governing our brains: life comes from matter; life *is* matter; consciousness is a material by-product; the universe arises from nothing. On and on the list goes.

Assumptions about the circumstances under which life can exist are no exception to the rigid canons of faith that prevail.

For example, when we contemplate whether life might occur on other planets, two chief prerequisites habitually march forth: water in a liquid state and a climate approximating Earth's. Mars flunked the test because of no water. Venus, owing to extreme heat, never fared any better.

But the frail speculations of mundane



intellects are one thing; the transcendental words of the Vedic spiritual texts another.

Lord Kṛṣṇa, the compiler and goal of the *Vedas*, is known as *apauruṣeya*, beyond the reach of experimental knowledge. Of course, atheistic savants will immediately challenge that because of Kṛṣṇa's inherent inscrutability He is not eligible to be anointed a scientific reality. Philosopher Karl Popper has argued for decades that the main criterion of science is the falsifiability of its theories. One must be able to envision experiments and observations that could disprove one's notions. Otherwise, in principle, a set of ideas unable to run the gamut of experimental negation cannot be deemed science.

Kṛṣṇa, however, by His own admission, is a problem for materialists. In the Vedic literature, He flatly declares His unavailability to those absorbed in His phantasmagoric material energy. He even goes as far as to say that through His illusory potency He actively works to bewilder mundaners so

that they will have no chance of perceiving Him. But, although research laboratories will never catch the Supreme or falsify Him, even materialistic scholars can immediately benefit from the perfect information divulged by that supremely intelligent, unlimited person.

Seeking to dispel illusions of false identification, Lord Kṛṣṇa describes the temporary and permanent characteristics of the living entity. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* He offers a startling detail about the phenomenon of life and its relationship to the uni-

verse. He says, *sarva-gata*: living entities are ubiquitous throughout the cosmos, regardless of environmental conditions. In other words, no situation is incapable of supporting life. The whole universe is alive in that life pervades "every nook and cranny."

In some places at the bottom of the ocean, where the earth's crust has split open, sea water spews up at temperatures of 662°F or higher. Because of the massive pressure exerted by the ocean, the water can remain a liquid despite the extreme temperature. No conventional scientist would ever seriously conceive that living entities could be present in 662-degree water at 265 atmospheres of pressure. But is conventional science everything?

Obtaining samples of the fiery water was not an insurmountable task for the crew of the submarine *Alvin*. And examining the samples under a microscope—employing stained glass slides that indicate the presence of microorganisms—is a junior-high science club operation. The only real barrier,

and a huge one, lay in the scientists' staunch preconceptions. What well-trained brain would be so heretical as to look for life in such a ridiculously uncongenial atmosphere?

Lewis Thomas, an ace contributor to America's popular science magazines and a best-selling author, honestly and eloquently revealed his victimization by academic conditioning. In *Discover* he writes, "I would have thought that to look for life in a sample of such water would just be a waste of glass slides and stain and time. I would have said, very well, we must keep our minds open for all sorts of possibilities, but not for things that are clearly impossibilities."

Nevertheless, the simple laboratory investigation confirmed the lectures of the Supreme Person in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Abundant communities of variegated living organisms appeared, differing among themselves enough to fit into classifications of several species. Eulogizing the intrepid daredevils at Oregon State University for their bold stroke, Thomas blessed them: "It is for that first step, taking a close look at what, in a rational world, ought to be nothing, that I hope Baross and his colleagues receive a generous prize some day." The best reward, for all intellects bound and gagged in "the rational world," would be a chance to learn from Lord Kṛṣṇa. Obviously, clearheaded scientists should applaud Kṛṣṇa in their journals and long to enroll in His classes.

Subsequent analysis of the perverse creatures revealed that they occupy a unique, private dimension in the ecosphere. When a sample of their water in a titanium syringe is heated within a pressurized chamber duplicating the pressure of their home at the sea bottom, and when their natural diet of basic nutrients is added, the population explodes. At 482°F, six hours is enough time for a thousandfold increase. But if the temperature drops below boiling, their reproduction stops completely.

Now high priests of the natural sciences have to overhaul their theories to account for entities who thrive luxuriantly at what are for us inconceivable, murderous temperatures. Somehow or other, their proteins avoid breaking down in the heat. Somehow or other, their enzymes remain active. Their lipids keep cell membranes intact. If this magazine were exposed to 662 degrees, it would immediately burst into flames.

As usual, nature is kicking our intellectual pride in the face, mockingly demonstrating that the basic truths of life in this world have never entered into our possession. The newly found creatures spell trouble not only for biology but for medical science as well. Hospitals place complete faith in their autoclaves—pressure-steam devices for exterminating bacteria.

But Śrīla Prabhupāda, the founder of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, never accepted this illusion. He held that, according to Vedic literature, sterilization by heat is a myth. He recorded his challenge to science in his books, which were published many years before the revolutionary organisms were discovered in temperatures three times as high as the autoclave's.

From the ancient Vedic text *Brahma-saṁhitā* one can learn that every type of living entity has certain peculiar attributes. These unique characteristics or abilities are technically referred to in Sanskrit as *vibhūti-bhinna*, individual talents. As even an uneducated child can observe, fish have the ability to exist underwater by breathing through their gills; birds can propel themselves through the sky by manipulat-

***After a century of
extreme academic
vigor, one gloomy
conclusion haunts
our think tanks: the
more knowledge we
seem to get, the more
knowledge we seem
to lack; whatever we
seem to know today,
tomorrow we will
throw away.***

ing their wings; and humans can read and comprehend a magazine article such as this one. We cannot make our natural habitat underwater, but does this mean that no living entity can? Similarly, shall we conclude that the air is devoid of life forms? In fact, the Vedic literature informs us that just as life permeates the earth, water, and air, so life also naturally exists in fire. In Chapter Four of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa unequivocally declares, "I spoke unchanging, flawless scientific knowledge to the chief of the entities who lives in fire."

Naturally, to those of us properly molded by *Discover* and *Time/Life, Inc.*, this assertion seems outrageous. Our well-trained brain automatically recoils in disbelief. How can living entities dwell in the flames of fire? the mind demands. And dare we believe they have intellectual prowess? At the root of our spontaneous objection lies

a twentieth-century disease: a total refusal to consider any knowledge not derived from an imperfect, limited entity. We absolutely reject the concept of absolute knowledge emanating from an absolute source.

Real knowledge, we believe, comes from the empirical process. First, we take in the world around us with our bare, unaided senses, or we employ technical devices that facilitate extended sensory investigations. Second, through the eyes and ears trickles a narrow flow of cosmic information. Third, these fuzzy inputs from our inadequate senses are reflected upon and distorted by the preprogrammed human intelligence. Finally, the tongue of the Ph.D. vibrates with torrents of articulately phrased yet inherently faulty speculations. The end result of this method is that our wealth of so-called knowledge expands. Owing to this artificial inflation, we feel securely insulated from any need to seek out the perfect knowledge taught by an infallible, unlimited source.

The pastimes of experimental scholarship are not confined just to biochemistry and the theories about the rarity of life. In all departments of man's intellectual pursuits, one will find the wreckage of a civilization shorn of its connection with a perfect source of knowledge. Today's men of letters prefer to cast themselves as alone in the universe, with no superior resources to rely on other than their laboratories and computers. They adamantly refuse to consider the possibility of a detailed, voluminous reservoir of flawless knowledge, outside the realm of human fallibility and limitation. Inhabitants of the twentieth century perceive their tiny brains to be supreme—and they are very proud of this bondage.

By pointing out man's intellectual mistake, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement would like to render the highest service to human society. Devotees of Kṛṣṇa are realists who know that if human society is to climb out of its current abyss, it must base its future on information free of error.

The recent decades have witnessed the most intense brain-thrashing in human history. Mighty armies of physical and social scientists have turned the whole world upside down, gallantly attempting to hack away at the massive layers of economic, political, ecological, and psychological problems that increase day by day. Needless to say, after almost a century of extreme academic vigor, one gloomy conclusion has begun to haunt our think tanks: the more knowledge we seem to get, the more knowledge we seem to lack; whatever we seem to know today, tomorrow we will throw away.

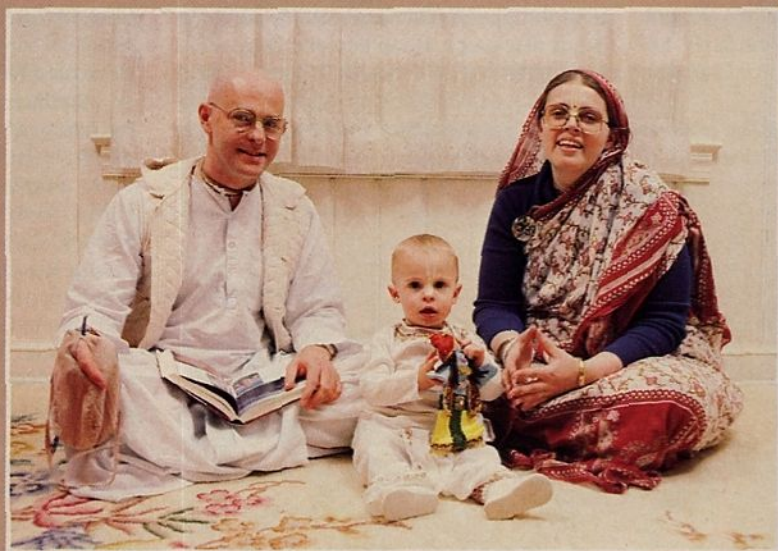
The plain truth of the huge quagmire called modern civilization is that mankind cannot and will not improve itself without
(continued on page 23)

Coming to Kṛṣṇa

A Lifetime of Service

Her search was not a sentimental one. She was looking for a pure spiritual process—a practical way of dedicating herself to God.

by ĀCĀRYA-DEVĪ DĀSĪ



Ācārya-devī dāsī with her husband, Tulasī dāsa, and their one-year-old son, Tulasya-ānanda, at home at the Hare Hare Kṛṣṇa center in Potomac, Maryland.

I grew up in the sixties, and like most of my friends, I more or less rejected my parents' philosophy of "getting ahead in life," although I had always been a good student. By my early teens, I tended to go more inside myself as I questioned, "What is the purpose of life? I'm training up to go and get a job in an office, but what for? There is more to life than this, but what is it? And where do I find it?"

Since childhood I had liked to write poetry and short stories. After school, on weekends, during summer vacation—I spent most of my free time writing, pouring out the innermost thoughts of my heart. I wanted to make a serious career of writing, although I wasn't thinking of writing as a way to "make a buck." Rather, it was part of my deep philosophical search, a challenge I had to meet so I could answer questions about the meaning of life. To write, I thought, a person had to be desperate to find answers to the ultimate questions; only in that way could one write prolifically.

I shared my inner feelings with some of my friends who were also using writing as a kind of spiritual quest, and we shared our ideas about the meaning of life. Once, one of my friends, upon being asked what her purpose was in living, replied reflectively, "I am living to try to find something to live for." It was a deep and desperate expression, one that we all shared: Who am I? Why am I here?

Drugs, of course, were an integral part of our search. By the age of fifteen I had

decided I was going to be part of the hip crowd, part of the new generation of self-styled spiritual seekers. (It was 1969, and the flower generation was in full swing.) But after less than a year the novelties of drugs and newfound friends faded. I had seen some of my friends "flip out," and I was too cautious to proceed with something that might irreparably damage my brain. I began to doubt that I would find happiness in any kind of drug, and by my senior year I had returned to my studies and the pursuit of good grades.

But the spirit of searching for that elusive "something" in life persisted, eventually leading to Europe in 1973. Awed by the many great artists, musicians, and philosophers who had hailed from this continent, I was certain that if I could visit countries with culture, with deep roots in the past, I could certainly trace out some meaning to my life. My father had told me of his early life in Switzerland, and I had been intrigued. I thought that by researching the heritage of my ancestors, by living in their culture and imbibing it, I could perhaps discover my true goal in life.

Europe was filled with thousands of hippies, most of them wandering aimlessly,

taking drugs, and having casual sex. Some were spiritual seekers, using drugs under the pretext of attaining "spiritual realizations," but they didn't seem to be finding any practical answers to the problems of life—only temporary hallucinatory euphorias. I had come such a long distance, hoping to imbibe some of the foreign cultures, but the

people I met were doing the same things I had just left behind. For years afterward, when people asked me what impelled me to go traveling around Europe, I was fond of quipping, "I went there looking for myself—but I wasn't there."

By the time I was twenty I had done pretty much everything I had wanted to do, and I thought incessantly about God. Although my family had never been particularly religious (they had stopped going to church when I was a child), because I was distressed about the meaning of life and wanted some direction, I did the instinctive thing: I prayed to God.

In the summer of 1974 a friend invited me to visit a Christian summer camp, and I eagerly welcomed the opportunity. I arrived on Saltspring Island, a fresh, beautiful, but sparsely inhabited island off the coast of British Columbia, with high expectations. I soon noticed, however, that very few of the young people there were interested in spiritual life. In fact, when I arrived, most of them were rushing off toward the beach or hiding in the bushes taking drugs or drinking. They spent little time participating in church activities; the only time everyone gathered together in

the church was for meals.

I was disappointed. I had come looking for some new friends who would be interested in discussing God and spiritual life, but all I met were people who were more interested in getting high than in finding God. The minister and his wife were young, pious Christians—good people—but they had obviously failed to turn their congregation toward a religious life.

Yet despite this disappointment, my interest in the spiritual side of things blossomed. At home again, I began reading the Bible, intrigued by the idea of developing a personal relationship with God. The Presbyterian church on the corner was open every morning for two hours of prayer and meditation, and I started regularly attending, praying fervently to God for direction.

At the same time, I also began psychiatric therapy to help me sort out my goals in life. And to relieve my frequent anxiety attacks, I began to use tranquilizers. After nine months of therapy, the doctor's conclusion—"All you need is a new boyfriend, new friends, and a new job"—catapulted me, disgruntled, out of individual therapy into group therapy.

I also attended the church's Sunday sermons, but somehow I always felt something was missing. Most of the congregation would sit through the sermon impassively. The Reverend W. often spoke of how Christ had died for our sins. I knew some of the members were not following the codes of God—there were couples who were "living in sin"—but it didn't appear that they had any intention of trying to reform their bad habits.

Although I was sincerely trying to understand God, these sermons failed to touch my heart. It seemed the minister was advocating an idealistic standard of behavior that no one was following. I thought that we should not only repent for our sins—as he was constantly urging—but also give up those sins once and for all. Hadn't Jesus, upon forgiving the prostitute for her sins, advised, "Now go and sin no more"?

Frustrated by these sermons, I thought to myself, "No, there's more than this! I know there's more than this!" I had almost come to feel foolish for wanting to find happiness and meaning in my life, as if I were struggling to attain something that simply didn't exist. But if it didn't exist, I asked myself, why did I want it so badly?

One day Reverend W., having noted my regular attendance at church, called me in to speak with him. In the course of our conversation I asked him what the difference was between his church and other churches—a question that had been puzzling me, since there were sixteen churches within a six-block radius of my apartment. I particularly wondered why some churches

allowed intoxication, whereas others did not. What was his policy?

"Well," replied the Reverend, "when I go home, I can have a drink. But we don't believe in becoming intoxicated." But why, I wondered, did he draw a line between having a drink and becoming intoxicated? Wasn't the aim of drinking to become intoxicated—even if just a little? I was confused, and I feared that venturing out to the other churches to ask my questions would only increase my bewilderment.

I wondered why I was suffering so much. Although out of fear of rejection I had always tried to maintain a facade of happiness, I was losing my motivation to play the game. Then one day I made another discovery: I had become dependent on tranquilizers; I couldn't start my day without them. After two years of psychotherapy, I had become bored with therapy groups and depressed by drugs.

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I began reading books on reincarnation and the occult, thinking this could give me a clue about the secrets of life. James Pike's *The Other Side* was an intriguing account of a bishop whose son had died; he felt his son was still communicating with him. I had often wondered what happened after death, and this book piqued my interest. It suggested many fascinating possibilities: Had I lived in other times, other places, doing other things? Would I live again?

In my own way, I was searching for God through my readings. My search, however, wasn't merely a sentimental one: I was looking for a pure, spiritual process that I could adopt in my everyday life. I recalled how in my childhood, adults had said to me, "Don't do as I *do*; do as I *say*." But the ideal teacher, I felt, would not only be able to tell me what to do but would also be pure and dedicated to his own teachings. Somehow, I wanted to find that teacher.

In February of 1977 a friend who had just spent a year in Asia came by to see

me. In Nepal he had met a *yogī* who told him, "You should read the *Bhagavad-gītā*." When my friend returned to Canada, he went to a hip bookstore on Vancouver's Fourth Avenue, looking for a copy.

"Sorry, we don't have the *Bhagavad-gītā* here," he was told, "but try the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple. They have it there." As it turned out, the temple was within walking distance. So he went there immediately, inquiring about the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Soon, he told me, he had been introduced to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement (which is based on the ancient teachings of the *Gītā*) and began regularly attending the temple functions. He was convinced that the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness taught a practical way of living a pure life totally dedicated to God. In fact, he had become so convinced about Kṛṣṇa consciousness by being with the devotees that he was about to move into the temple and become a devotee himself.

My first reaction was shock: Hare Kṛṣṇa?! I recalled how I had first begun seeing the Hare Kṛṣṇas on the streets of downtown Vancouver in 1969, a group of saffron-clad men who sang and danced on the streets. They struck me as odd, and I would always cross the street to avoid them. Now, however, I felt I was ready to hear what they had to say.

I paid my first visit to the Vancouver temple a week later. It was a Sunday afternoon, the day when Hare Kṛṣṇa temples all around the world traditionally hold a "Love Feast." Persons who want to learn more about Kṛṣṇa consciousness could come and hear the chanting and the philosophy and then take a multicourse vegetarian feast—all free of charge. I knew that this was something different from the things I had experienced before, and I wanted to learn more about it.

When I found out they had accommodations for guests, I asked if I could stay overnight and attend the early-morning meditation (*maṅgala-ārati*) and classes on the holy scripture. I was invited to stay in the women's living quarters. The room I slept in was devoid of all but the barest furnishings and several pictures of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His associates on the wall. I was immediately impressed with the simplicity of the devotees' lives. "This is what I've been looking for," I thought. The devotees used whatever was necessary for bodily maintenance but didn't become bogged down with unnecessary "conveniences." With their bodily concerns kept at a minimum, they were free to spend nearly all their time serving and glorifying God, or Kṛṣṇa. "Simple living and high thinking" was one of their mottos.

Over the next few months I began regularly visiting the temple and associating with the devotees, and they began teaching me what Kṛṣṇa consciousness meant. I

soon learned that the basic understanding of the *Bhagavad-gītā* was *aham brahmāsmi*: "I am not this body; I am a spirit soul."

I knew that the devotees followed four principles—no eating of meat, fish, or eggs; no taking of intoxicants; no illicit sex; and no gambling. These activities are considered sinful because they strongly promote body consciousness and thus keep one ensnared in the cycle of birth and death.

Although I was interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I doubted that I could follow the four regulative principles. I just couldn't see myself living the renounced life of a devotee. These habits were so deeply ingrained in me that to purify myself of them seemed impossible.

I confronted the devotees with my misgivings. They assured me that Lord Kṛṣṇa was present in His holy name and that if I called on the names of the Lord—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—Kṛṣṇa would hear my pleas, deliver me from the clutches of material existence, and situate me in loving service to Him.

I continued chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and reading about the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, both with the devotees and on my own. Slowly I was accepting Kṛṣṇa consciousness into my life. After each visit to the temple I'd come home, go through all my possessions, and say to myself, "I don't need this. I don't need that." Soon I found myself getting rid of many useless things. And my dependence on tranquilizers was gradually disappearing.

I started feeling lighter in mind and heart, knowing that I was giving up unnecessary habits for the higher goal of love of God. I was shedding my unwanted habits and emerging into freedom, like a butterfly emerges from its cocoon. I became more peaceful. I knew I had found what I was looking for, and everyone could see the change in me. I knew I had to become fully Kṛṣṇa conscious.

In September of 1977 I first met His Divine Grace Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami Gurupāda, who was soon to become my spiritual master. His personal example of Kṛṣṇa consciousness struck me with the most sublime impression: Here was a *guru* who practiced what he preached. After several months I became his initiated disciple and fully adopted the practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

At that time, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founding spiritual master of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, had recently left this mortal planet. My spiritual master (who was one of his first disciples) was writing his biography, and he needed someone to type it. With my secretarial background and with my strong desire to be connected

to a spiritual writing project, I began this work. Although for so many years I had worked at jobs using these skills, not until my spiritual master blessed me with Kṛṣṇa consciousness and the ability to use my skills in Lord Kṛṣṇa's service did I actually become happy.

Now the sixth and final volume of the biography (entitled *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*—"The Nectarean Pastimes of Śrīla Prabhupāda") has recently been published, and I can continue using my abilities in the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa. A common misconception is that to become a devotee of God one must give everything up. The only thing that needs to be given up, however, is the mentality of

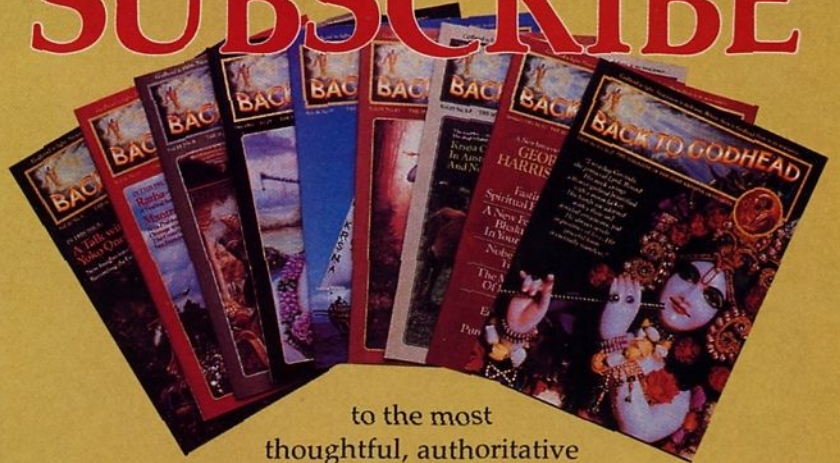
"everything belongs to me." Rather, everything is done as an offering to the Supreme Lord. Kṛṣṇa states in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi
yaj juhoṣi dadāsi yat
yat tapasyasi kaunteya
tat kuruṣva mad-arpanam*

"Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer or give away, and whatever austerities you perform—do that, O son of Kuntī, as an offering to Me." (Bg. 9.27)

Thus, far from giving anything up, I have rather gained immense benefit: a lifetime of service to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

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Lord Kṛṣṇa's Cuisine

Five Cuisines in One

A wide variety of cooking styles lend themselves to a single purpose—pleasing Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Text and photo by
VIŚĀKHĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

What we have been calling “Lord Kṛṣṇa’s Cuisine” on these pages actually includes five cuisines: western Indian (Maharashtrian and Marwari), eastern Indian (Bengali), southern (Madrasi), northwest central (Gujarati), and northern (Punjabi). These differ not so much in cooking techniques as in ingredients and spicing. In each region, the older generation has passed its cuisine on to the younger, thus keeping the traditions intact

through many centuries.

Śrīla Prabhupāda once said that the western Indian cuisine was unparalleled in quality. In this cuisine the cook emphasizes the natural flavors of the main ingredients, blending them with suggestive tastes of the subordinate ones. He or she evokes elusive to mild pungency in each dish through the use of judicious seasoning, and composes menus that artistically contrast, balance, and blend the textures,

shapes, colors, and sizes of the various dishes.

Eastern Indian cuisine is characterized by vivid, lively seasoning and a few unique ingredients. Black cumin, cumin, black mustard, fennel, fenugreek, cassia, and dried red chili pods are almost always present in various combinations, and bitter, sour, salty, and astringent dishes abound.

Southern cuisine is generally characterized by dishes containing rice and dried beans. These two ingredients form the basis of so many recipes that you could cook an entirely different rice and dried-bean dish every day for months. The cook soaks, drains, and grinds rice and dried beans into light, smooth batters or pastes. He then transforms these into spongy-moist dumplings, faintly sour crepes, or deep-fried savory donuts. Finally he complements these with liquid dishes like fresh chutneys, hot consommés, or vegetable-*dāl* soups. (This month we’ve featured recipes from this cuisine.)

Northwest central cuisine is notable for its mildness. The cook often integrates an elusive, sweet/sour flavor into many dishes and can make an exceptionally tasty array of between-meal snacks by contrasting textures and flavors.

Northern cuisine, on the other hand, has rich, full-bodied dishes. The distinctive flavor of ghee (clarified butter) plays a predominant role in a wide selection of fresh wheat breads, deep-fried savory pastries, and moist farina dishes called *halavās*. The cook brings out flavor in *dāl* by using *garam masālā* (a blend of powdered spices), and he evokes warm, robust flavor in milk puddings and milk fudges by adding saffron, rose essence, cardamom powder, or almond paste.

In one sense, then, there are five distinct regional cuisines within Lord Kṛṣṇa’s cuisine. But actually there’s only one: cooking for the pleasure of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Traditionally, throughout India the older generation taught the younger one not only how to cook the regional dishes but also how to offer these fine dishes to the Lord with love and devotion.

This devotional attitude is the essence of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s cuisine. Since Lord Kṛṣṇa is transcendental to all designations, His cuisine also transcends all regional differences and national boundaries. It is universally appealing. People from any lifestyle or ethnic background will at once be attracted to *kṛṣṇa-prasādam* (food offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa).

Since Lord Kṛṣṇa is the origin of all variety, His cuisine also offers unprecedented variegatedness. It includes recipes that lend themselves to nearly every occasion, nutritional requirement, budget, time of day, and season; it includes challenges for the accomplished cook as well as quick-and-

(Recipes by Yamunā-devī dāśī)

Rice and Urad Dāl Dosha Pancakes Stuffed with Seasoned Potatoes (Masālā Dosha)

Soaking time: 30 hours
Cooking time: 45 minutes
Servings: 10 to 12 stuffed pancakes

Ingredients for Potato Stuffing:

2 medium-size new potatoes (about 12 ounces), boiled, peeled, and diced into ½-inch cubes
½ tablespoon ghee (clarified butter) or vegetable oil
½ to 1 tablespoon scraped, fresh ginger root, minced fine
½ to 1 tablespoon scraped, hot green chilies, minced very fine
½ teaspoon black mustard seeds
6 to 8 fresh or dried curry leaves, if available
1 teaspoon coriander powder
½ teaspoon cumin powder
½ teaspoon *chat masālā*, if available
½ teaspoon turmeric
½ to ½ teaspoon salt
½ cup water
½ tablespoon lemon juice
2 tablespoons minced, fresh coriander or parsley leaves

Ingredients for Dosha Pancakes:

½ cup split *urad dāl*, without skins
1½ cups raw long-grain white rice
1½ teaspoons salt
about ½ cup ghee or vegetable oil, for frying

To Prepare the Potato Stuffing:

1. Heat the ghee or oil in a 10-inch frying pan over a medium flame until a drop of water flicked into it instantly dances. Drop in the minced chilies and ginger root and fry until they start to brown. Add the mustard seeds and fry until they sputter and pop. Immediately add the curry leaves, then the diced potatoes. Stir well.

2. Sprinkle in the four powdered spices and salt. Sauté for one minute. Pour in the water, lower the flame, and cook until the vegetable is dry (about 5 to 10 minutes).

3. Remove the pan from the flame and blend

in the lemon juice and fresh or dried coriander leaves.

To Prepare the Dosha Pancakes:

1. Sort through the *urad dāl* and remove any foreign matter. Wash the *dāl* in several changes of water by rubbing the grains between your palms, until the water is practically clear. Strain in a wire sieve. If *basmati* rice is used, repeat the same process for sorting, washing, and draining.

2. Place the rice and *dāl* in separate bowls, add 2½ cups cool water to each bowl, and soak for at least six hours, or even overnight. Then drain off the water.

3. Place the rice in an electric blender or food processor, add ¾ cup water, and blend at high speed until it is ground into a smooth batter. Pour the puréed rice into a 1½-quart bowl, scraping the sides of the blender jar or processor with a rubber spatula to remove all of the contents.

4. Place the drained *dāl* in the blender or processor, add ½ cup water, and blend at high speed until it is a smooth, fluffy batter. Add the puréed *dāl* to the rice batter, add salt, mix thoroughly, cover, and allow the batter to sit at room temperature (about 75°F) for 24 hours. Check to see if the batter has risen. If not, let the batter sit for 1 or 2 hours more.

5. Add about ½ cup water and gently stir. The batter should resemble a thick, heavy pancake batter with a smooth consistency.

6. Heat a 10- to 12-inch cast iron griddle or skillet on a medium flame. Lightly grease the surface with ghee or oil. Before cooking, sprinkle water on the cooking surface to test the temperature. If it's too hot, the water will vanish immediately. If it is not hot enough, the water will boil. When the surface is the right temperature, the water will dance and sputter, then vanish.

7. Using a large serving spoon, place 3 spoonfuls of batter on the griddle and immediately begin spreading it into a thin 8½-inch round or oval shape, starting from the center and spiraling outward. Try to use the right pressure and motion in a rhythm to yield an even, very thin pancake. Allow the *dosha* to cook for about 30 seconds, then sprinkle 1 teaspoon of melted ghee or oil around the edges and on top of the *dosha*.

8. After 1½ to 2 minutes of cooking, scrape

around the edges with a thin spatula to lift the pancake and check if the bottom is sufficiently browned. Simultaneously, on the surface, small holes will appear, and patches of brown will be visible through the pancake. When the bottom is brown, it is ready to turn. Slip the spatula around the edges and loosen the *dosha* from the pan. If your pancake is sticking, either the flame is too high or low, the batter consistency is wrong, or your pan isn't properly "seasoned." Cook to a light-brown color on the other side for about two minutes.

9. Remove the *dosha*, place about two tablespoons of the potato vegetable on one half of it, fold, and cover with the other half. If you cannot offer the *doshas* piping hot, place them in a preheated oven at 250°F. When ready to offer to Kṛṣṇa, cover with the moist coconut chutney featured in the next recipe.

Creamy Fresh Coconut Chutney (Nārikela Chutni)

Preparation time: 30 minutes

1½ cups fresh grated coconut, packed loose
1 cup plain yogurt, or ½ cup yogurt and ½ cup sour cream
1 tablespoon peeled, fresh ginger root, chopped fine
2 to 3 teaspoons seeded, hot green chilies, chopped fine
¼ teaspoon mild asafetida powder, if available
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
½ to ¾ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons ghee or light vegetable oil
½ tablespoon split *urad dāl*, if available
½ teaspoon cumin seeds
1 teaspoon black mustard seeds
10 to 12 curry leaves, fresh or dried, if available

1. Combine the coconut, yogurt, ginger root, chilies, asafetida, pepper, and salt in a 1-quart bowl.

2. Heat the ghee in a small saucepan. Fry the *urad dāl*, cumin, and black mustard seeds until the cumin and *urad dāl* brown and the mustard seeds sputter. Remove from flame, toss in the curry leaves, wait 10 seconds, and pour the spices into the 1-quart bowl. Mix well. Place over *dosha* pancakes and offer to Kṛṣṇa.

easy dishes for the beginner or for anyone pressed for time. On whatever level you approach Lord Kṛṣṇa's cuisine, you'll surely derive great pleasure and enjoyment.

What do you need to start? Nothing more than your desire: Whether your kitchen now reflects rural simplicity or stunning, copper-clad sophistication, you can prepare recipes from Lord Kṛṣṇa's cuisine. It isn't necessary to collect expensive-looking gadgets; for most recipes, basic equipment will suffice.

To maintain the spirit of this cuisine, external and internal cleanliness in the kitchen are a must. For external cleanliness, keep your kitchen shining clean—from the glis-

ten on the bottom of the saucepans to the floor beneath your feet. If you practice cleaning up as you go along, you'll save working space, eliminate clutter, improve your cooking, and increase your pleasure in cooking as well.

As for internal cleanliness, always think of Kṛṣṇa and never forget Him. You're not just making healthy, natural dishes that taste extraordinarily good; you're not just putting in a little extra measure to please yourself, your family, and your friends. No, you're doing the highest *yoga*—*bhakti-yoga*—by dedicating your efforts for Lord Kṛṣṇa's pleasure. This is not our imagination: in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.47) Kṛṣṇa

declares, "Of all *yogīs*, the one with great faith who always abides in Me, thinks of Me within himself, and renders transcendental loving service to Me—he is the most intimately united with Me in *yoga* and is the highest of all."

So, with your mind sincerely fixed on pleasing Kṛṣṇa, whatever pure vegetarian dishes you choose to make and offer—whether from the north, south, east, or west—will happily be accepted by the Lord as part of His cuisine. Then cooking and tasting will take on a new dimension for you, and after the experiencing, you'll know that there couldn't be any greater cuisine—anywhere.

THE VEDIC

Transcendental Comment

POLITICAL PIETY AND THE LAWS OF GOD

by Satyarāja dāsa

For nearly two hundred years, the U.S. Congress has begun its daily deliberations with prayer," states an article in *The Oregonian*. "Out of 100 Senators, perhaps five show up each morning. . . . In the House, where the proceedings are televised, the turnout is higher—maybe 20 out of 435. Of those who *do* show up, virtually none come for the prayer."

The article continues: "Congressional prayer—scorned in practice as a neu-

tered, meaningless exercise in piety—is endorsed piously by politicians as evidence of their virtue. The voters are supposed to fall for the logic once endorsed by [journalist] A. J. Liebling: 'Man go to church—good man, no lie. Man not go to church—bad man, lie.'"

While politics is not synonymous with atheism, religion *has* lost much of its credibility in the political arena. Aside from praying to win an election, most politicians have little interaction with God.

And yet nearly all of us would admit that the qualities promulgated by the religious way of life—be it Judaism, Christianity, Islam, or Hinduism—are indeed desirable. In fact, a brief mention of these qualities would convince most people that

they are valuable not only in the realm of politics but in every facet of life. Consider, for instance, the qualities of cleanliness, truthfulness, austerity, mercy, and devotion to God. These nonsectarian qualities are espoused by every religious system. If everyone were endeavoring to attain these attributes, the world would be a better, safer place. In other words, politics and God consciousness are not mutually exclusive but share many of the same goals.

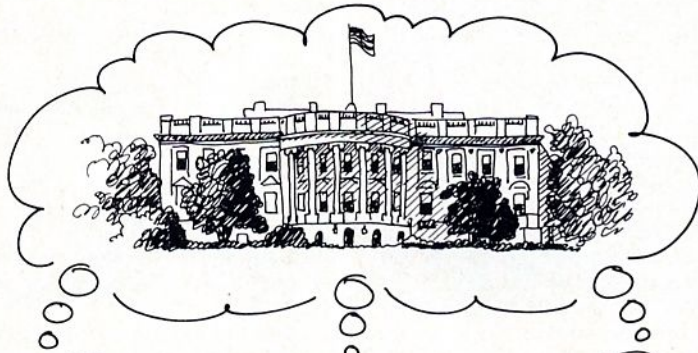
Modern politicians may understand this fact to some extent. Democratic presidential candidate Jesse Jackson is, after all, a reverend, and many leaders have given more than just lip service to the importance of religion. But nonsectarian religious principles should in fact have the most prominent place in every leader's administrative policy and in every candidate's campaign platform. According to the *Bhagavad-gītā* and other world scriptures, the Supreme Lord is the supreme leader. He is the proprietor of all planets and all lands. Just as in America, state leaders are obliged to enforce the laws of the federal government, so each and every leader on earth is obliged to promote and enforce the laws of God. If leaders don't do this there can be only chaos, just as there would be chaos if a state decided to secede from the Union.

It is right and proper to insist that our leaders refrain from propounding one religious tradition and discriminating against another. The purpose of separation of Church and State is to prevent such discrimination. But while it is correct to separate Church and State, we should clearly understand that there is no question of effective government without following the laws of God.

EXPLODING THE ARMS RACE

by Mathureśa dāsa

One familiar and morbidly ironic feature of the nuclear arms race is that both sides publicly claim they are building up their arsenals only to keep the peace—to keep the other side from attacking. "A



OBSERVER

ary on the Issues of the Day

nuclear war can never be won, and must never be fought," said President Reagan in a speech last fall, and the sentiment is echoed by leaders in the Kremlin. But each party, accusing the other of being an incurable aggressor, and following the logic that "the best defense is a good offense," continues to expand its nuclear stockpile.

Observing this apparently sincere desire of both the Soviet Union and the United States to avert a nuclear holocaust—and

nuclear face-off. Let us consider these principles and some of their implications.

The first principle is *aniśvaram*, which literally means "without a controller." Materialists do not believe there is a person who created the universe and controls its systematic movements. To them, the orbiting of the planets, the regular changing of the seasons, the intricate structure of living bodies—in short, the design evident in all corners of the visible world—

it is people, not explosions, that create. People create skyscrapers, cities, highways, toolsheds and so on. Therefore if we are to logically and scientifically formulate a theory of the creation of the universe, we should lean toward what we can call the Big Person theory, or the theory that God, the supreme person, is the creator.

The only difficulty with the Big Person theory is that it obliges us to recognize a person far greater—and therefore more worshipable—than ourselves. This is always too much to ask of a materialist.

The second principle of materialism described in the *Bhagavad-gītā* is *apraīṣṭham*, which means "without a foundation." Every structure has a foundation. A house, for example, rests upon a foundation of concrete, or upon the earth itself. Take away the foundation, and the structure can't stand.

According to the *Gītā*, the foundation of all living bodies is the eternal soul. The soul is like the driver inside a car, or like a man inside a suit of clothes. Take away the driver and the car stops. Take away the man and the suit of clothes has no life of its own. Similarly, a body without a soul is a dead body. The body alone has no life.

But materialists say that there is no soul, no foundation, and that life is no more than a combination of material elements.

The theory of evolution, for example, is based on the idea that life arose from a random mixture of material elements in a "primordial soup." By chance this soup produced simple one-celled organisms, which in their turn evolved into plants, animals, apes, and finally human beings. And human society, according to this theory, has evolved from primitive, superstitious, and religion-oriented cultures to the modern cultures of the twentieth century. Coincidentally enough, the materialists who invented this elaborate theory place themselves—or modern man—at the top of the evolutionary ladder—as the most intelligent and civilized beings who have ever existed. In the *Gītā*, therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, explains that one of the primary characteristics of materialists is conceit.

The *apraīṣṭham* principle, in addition to
(continued on page 23)



strongly suspecting their equally apparent inability to do so—we should ask ourselves what it is that drives them on, keeping a meaningful and lasting arms agreement out of reach.

In answer to this question, the *Bhagavad-gītā* suggests that the nuclear arms race is a natural and predictable outcome of materialistic civilization. Materialists, the *Bhagavad-gītā* says, inevitably perform "unbeneficial, horrible works meant to destroy the world."

Sound apocalyptic? Maybe. But it is certainly not unreasonable to say that the arms race is horrible and unbeneficial. And the *Gītā*, to support its prophetic warning, enunciates the three basic principles of materialism that have fostered our modern

does not indicate a supreme designer.

One of the most popular materialistic theories of how the universe came to be is the Big Bang theory. According to this theory (or one version of it), a primordial explosion led somehow to the formation of hydrogen and helium, and gradually the entire universe took shape.

No one, of course, has ever observed an explosion create anything (except chaos). Whether you use a keg of gunpowder, a grenade, or an atom bomb, explosions only destroy. Proponents of the Big Bang, to be able to prove their theory, ought to be able to create something—even a simple structure like a toolshed—with explosives. But they can't.

At least within our practical experience,

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

“First Deserve, Then Desire”

What follows is a conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples. Recorded in July 1975 in Denver, it begins in an automobile and continues outside.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yesterday you were putting forward the idea that the body is no more than a machine. We also accept that. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said, *yantrārūdhāni*: “The body is a machine.” The word *yantra* means “machine.”

But at the same time you pointed out that the body is growing. Does a machine such as a car grow?

Devotee: Does a car grow? [Laughs] No, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But then there is a contradiction. The body is certainly a machine; that is accepted. Kṛṣṇa also says that, so it is undoubtedly true. The body is just a complicated machine. But at the same time the body grows. So how can it be a machine?

Devotee: Is the body compared to a machine in the *Bhagavad-gītā*?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that the body is a machine. He doesn't say it is compared to a machine. Actually, it is a machine.

Devotee: But then it cannot grow, because a machine doesn't grow.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But it does grow. So what is the solution?

Devotee: The answer, I think, is that the body is changing at every second.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Take, for example, this car we are riding in. It is simply a machine. Now, if I want a bigger car, I have to purchase another car. It is not that this car will grow. Or, suppose you have a big car and it is too costly to maintain. You want a smaller car. So, you cannot contract your sedan and make it into a smaller car. You require to purchase another car. Similarly, a child cannot have sex in his child's body. If he wants to enjoy sex, he must have another body, an adult's body. This is such a simple thing, but the rascals cannot understand how nature is supplying us with different machines, different bodies, at every moment.

Devotee: I think all of this is beyond the present level of scientific knowledge.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, because it is all happening automatically, by the inconceivable energy of Kṛṣṇa: *parāśya śaktir*



vididhaiva śrūyate svābhāviki jñāna-bala-kriyā ca. Kṛṣṇa's potencies are working so wonderfully and so swiftly that you cannot see how things are going on.

Concerning how our body is changing at every moment, the example of the movie spool is very appropriate. Each tiny picture is different, but when the movie is shown through a projector, you cannot understand that. It seems to be one smoothly running picture, but actually in the background there are many, many different pictures. In one picture you will find that the hand is here, in the next picture the hand is there, in the next it is here. . . . But when the pictures are all shown very rapidly, the hand seems to be moving. As soon as you stop the projector, however, the hand becomes fixed in one position.

So, if an ordinary cinema picture can create this illusion, how much greater is the illusion created by the subtle workings of nature and the bodily machine. People do not know that at each second they are being supplied a different body.

How can the rascals know this? They have no brain—all dull-headed materialistic *mūḍhas* [fools]. They cannot understand this. But this is the process that is going on. I want a certain thing, a certain kind of body, and nature supplies it.

Devotee: But it's true that sometimes we desire a certain kind of body, or let's say a certain ability—like playing music—yet we aren't ever able to do it.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. You have to be qualified by your *karma* to get a certain kind of body. Now, whatever Kṛṣṇa wants, He can do—but you are not independent like Him. You are dependent on nature, and your position is very insignificant. But Kṛṣṇa can, as soon as He wishes, immediately do anything. This is also mentioned in the Bible: “God said, ‘Let there be creation,’” and there was creation immediately. But you cannot do that. You may desire something, but nature will supply you according to what you deserve.

Devotee: The scientists say that every seven years the whole body changes—all the molecules are replaced in that time.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Not every seven years. From the medical point of view, the blood corpuscles are changing at every moment.

Devotee: They're totally different?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: New blood cells are constantly coming into being, and the old ones are being destroyed. So, you cannot say that the bodily machine is growing. That is fallacious. You are actually getting a new machine at every moment.

[Everyone gets out of the car.] Whatever you deserve, you will receive from the material nature. You may desire something, but at the same time you may deserve something else. So your desire will not be fulfilled. For example, the impersonalist rascals say, “I desire to become God.” But that kind of desire will never be fulfilled. So we say, “First deserve, then desire.”

Devotee: It all depends on our qualification, doesn't it?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Your position is very minute. So you can desire up to a certain limit. It is not that you can declare, “I will become the complete whole, the universal Absolute.” That is the defect of the *Māyāvāda* [impersonalistic] philosophers. Because we are all spirit (*aham brahmāsmi*) and the Supreme is also spirit (*para-brahman*), they declare, “I am qualitatively one with God, and therefore I am one with Him in every respect.” A drop of ocean water contains the same ingredients as the big Pacific Ocean—it is qualitatively one with the ocean. But if a drop of ocean water says, “I desire to become the ocean,” that is not possible. So, when we understand that we are qualitatively one and quantitatively minute in relation to the Supreme, that is our perfection. ❀

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 *purāna*, 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.

Third Canto: “The Status Quo”

CHAPTER FOUR

Vidura Approaches Maitreya

In this installment of our continuing presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Śukadeva Gosvāmī explains to King Parīkṣit that Lord Kṛṣṇa imparted knowledge about Himself to Uddhava, who later instructed Vidura. Then the self-realized soul Vidura met Maitreya.

TEXT 29

श्रीशुक उवाच

ब्रह्मशापापदेशेन कालेनामोषवाञ्छितः ।
संहृत्य स्वकुलं स्फूर्तं त्यक्ष्यन्देहमचिन्तयत् ॥२९॥

śrī-śuka uvāca
brahma-śāpāpadeśena
kālenāmogha-vāñchitaḥ
samhṛtya sva-kulam sphitam—
tyakṣyan deham acintayat

śrī-śukaḥ uvāca—Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said; *brahma-śāpa*—cursing y the *brāhmaṇas*; *apadeśena*—on the plea, by such a show; *kālena*—by the eternal time; *amogha*—unfailing; *vāñchitaḥ*—one who so desires; *samhṛtya*—closing; *sva-kulam*—own family; *sphitam*—excessively numerous; *tyakṣyan*—after giving up; *deham*—the universal form; *acintayat*—thought to Himself.

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī replied: My dear King, the cursing of the *brāhmaṇas* was only a plea, but the actual fact was the supreme desire of the Lord. He wanted to disappear from the face of the earth after dispatching His excessively numerous family members. He thought to Himself as follows.

PURPORT

In this verse the word *tyakṣyan* is very significant in relation to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s leaving His body. Since He is the eternal form of existence, knowledge and bliss, His body and His Self are identical. Therefore how is it possible that He would leave His body and then disappear from the vision of the world? There is a great controversy amongst the nondevotees or *Māyāvādīs* about the mysterious disappearance of the Lord, and the doubts of those men with a poor fund of knowledge have been very elaborately cleared by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī in his *Kṛṣṇa-sandarbha*.

According to *Brahma-samhitā*, the Lord has many forms. It is stated therein that the Lord has innumerable forms, and when He appears within the vision of the living entities, as Lord Kṛṣṇa actually appeared, all such forms amalgamate with Him. Besides all these infallible forms, He has His universal form, as manifested before Arjuna on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra. Here in this verse the word *sphitam* is also used, which indicates that He left His gigantic universal form called the *virāt-rūpa*, not His primeval, eternal form, because there is hardly any

possibility of His changing His form of *sac-cid-ānanda*. This simple understanding is at once realized by the devotees of the Lord, but those who are nondevotees, who perform hardly any devotional service to the Lord, either do not understand this simple fact or purposely raise a controversy to defeat the eternity of the transcendental body of the Lord. This is due to the defect called the cheating propensity of the imperfect living entities.

By practical experience also, it is seen, up to the present day, that the Lord’s transcendental form is worshiped by devotees in different temples, and all the devotees of the Lord factually realize that the form of the Deity in the temple is nondifferent from the form of the Lord. This inconceivable performance of the internal potency of the Lord is described in *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.25): *nāhaṁ prakāśaḥ sarvasya yogamāyā-samāvṛtaḥ*. The Lord reserves the right of not being exposed to everyone. In the *Padma Purāna* it is said, *ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ*. The name and form of the Lord cannot be perceived by the material senses, but when He appears within the vision of the mundane people He assumes the form of the *virāt-rūpa*. This is an additional material exhibition of form and is supported by the logic of a subject and its adjectives. In grammar, when an adjective is taken away from the subject, the subject it modifies does not change. Similarly, when the Lord quits His *virāt-rūpa*, His eternal form does not change, although there is no material difference between Himself and any one of His innumerable forms. In the Fifth Canto it will be seen how the Lord is worshiped in different planets in His different forms, even now, and how He is worshiped in different temples of this earth also.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura have very elaborately explained this incident of the Lord’s disappearance in their commentaries, quoting various authentic versions of Vedic literatures. We purposely do not include them all here to avoid an increase in the volume of this book. The entire matter is explained in *Bhagavad-gītā*, as quoted above: the Lord reserves the right of not being exposed to everyone. He always keeps Himself out of the vision of the nondevotees, who are devoid of love and devotion, and thus He puts them still further away from the Lord. The Lord appeared on the invitation of *Brahmā*, who prayed before the *Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu*, and therefore when the Lord appeared, all the forms of *Viṣṇu* amalgamated with Him, and when the mission was fulfilled, all of them disintegrated from Him in the usual course.

TEXT 30

अस्माल्लोकादुपरते मयि ज्ञानं मदाश्रयम् ।
अर्हत्युद्धव एवाद्वा सम्प्रत्यात्मवतां वरः ॥३०॥

asmāl lokād uparate
mayi jñānaṁ mad-āśrayam
arhaty uddhava evāddhā
sampraty ātmatvātām varaḥ

asmāt—from this (universe); *lokāt*—earth; *uparate*—having disappeared; *mayi*—of Myself; *jñānam*—knowledge; *mat-āśrayam*—concerning Myself; *arhati*—deserves; *uddhavaḥ*—Uddhava; *eva*—certainly; *addhā*—directly; *samprati*—at the present moment; *ātmatvātām*—of the devotees; *varaḥ*—foremost.

TRANSLATION

Now I shall leave the vision of this mundane world, and I see that Uddhava, the foremost of My devotees, is the only one who can be directly entrusted with knowledge about Me.

PURPORT

Jñānam mad-āśrayam is significant in this verse. Transcendental knowledge has three departmental divisions, namely knowledge of impersonal Brahman, knowledge of the all-pervading Supersoul and knowledge of the Personality of Godhead. Out of the three, transcendental knowledge of the Personality of Godhead has special significance and is known as *bhagavat-tattva-vijñāna*, specific knowledge of the Personality of Godhead. This specific knowledge is realized by pure devotional service and no other means. *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.55) confirms this: *bhaktiā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ*. "Only persons engaged in devotional service can factually know the transcendental position of the Lord." Uddhava was considered to be the best amongst all devotees of that time, and therefore he was directly instructed by the Lord's grace, so that people might take advantage of Uddhava's knowledge after the disappearance of the Lord from the vision of the world. This is one of the reasons why Uddhava was advised to go to Badarikāśrama, where the Lord is personally represented by the Nara-Nārāyaṇa Deity. One who is transcendently advanced can gain direct inspiration from the temple Deity, and thus a devotee of the Lord always takes shelter of a recognized temple of the Lord in order to make tangible advancement in transcendental knowledge by the grace of the Lord.

TEXT 31

नोद्धवोऽपि मन्व्यूनो यद्गुणैर्नादितः प्रभुः ।
अतो मद्भयुर्न लोकं ग्राहयन्निह तिष्ठतु ॥३१॥

*noddhavo 'nva api man-nyūno
yad guṇair nāditāḥ prabhuḥ
ato mad-vayunaṁ lokam
grāhayann iha tiṣṭhatu*

na—not; *uddhavaḥ*—Uddhava; *aṇu*—slightly; *api*—also; *mat*—to Myself; *nyūnaḥ*—inferior; *yat*—because; *guṇaiḥ*—by the modes of material nature; *na*—nor; *arditaḥ*—affected; *prabhuḥ*—master; *ataḥ*—therefore; *mat-vayunam*—knowledge of Me (the Personality of Godhead); *lokam*—the world; *grāhayann*—just to disseminate; *iha*—in this world; *tiṣṭhatu*—may remain.

TRANSLATION

Uddhava is not inferior to Me in any way because he is never affected by the modes of material nature. Therefore he may remain in this world in order to disseminate specific knowledge of the Personality of Godhead.

PURPORT

The specific qualification for becoming the representative of the Lord is to be unaffected by the material modes of nature. The highest qualification of a person in the material world is to be a *brāhmaṇa*. But since a *brāhmaṇa* is in the mode of goodness, to be a *brāhmaṇa* is not sufficient for becoming a representative of the Lord. One has to transcend the mode of goodness also and be situated in unalloyed goodness, unaffected by any of the qualities of material nature. This stage of transcendental qualification is called *śuddha-sattva*, or *vasudeva*, and in this stage the science of God can be realized. As the Lord is not affected by the modes of material nature, so a pure devotee of the Lord is also not affected by the modes of nature. That is the primary qualification for being one with the Lord. A person who is able to attain this transcendental qualification is called *jīvan-mukta*, or liberated, even though he is apparently in material conditions. This liberation is achieved by one who constantly engages in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.187) it is stated:

*ihā yasya harer dāsyē
karmanā manasā girā
nikhilāsv apy avasthāsu
jīvan-muktaḥ sa ucyaते*

"Anyone who, by his actions, mind and words, lives only for the transcendental loving service of the Lord, is certainly a liberated soul, even though he may appear to be in a condition of material existence." Uddhava was in such a transcendental position, and thus he was selected to be the factual representative of the Lord in His bodily absence from the vision of the world. Such a devotee of the Lord is never affected by material strength, intelligence or even renunciation. Such a devotee of the Lord can withstand all onslaughts of material nature, and therefore he is known as *gōsvāmī*. Only such *gōsvāmīs* can penetrate the mysteries of the Lord's transcendental loving relationships.

TEXT 32

एवं त्रिलोकगुरुणा सन्दिष्टः शब्दयोनिना ।
वदर्याश्रममासाद्य हरिमीजे समाधिना ॥३२॥

*evam tri-loka-guruṇā
sandiṣṭaḥ śabda-yoninā
badaryāśramam āśādyā
harim ije samādhinā*

evam—thus; *tri-loka*—three worlds; *guruṇā*—by the spiritual master; *sandiṣṭaḥ*—being perfectly taught; *śabda-yoninā*—by one who is the source of all Vedic knowledge; *badaryāśramam*—in the pilgrimage site of Badarikāśrama; *āśādyā*—reaching; *harim*—unto the Lord; *ije*—satisfied; *samādhinā*—by trance.

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī informed the King that Uddhava, being thus instructed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the source of all Vedic knowledge and the spiritual master of the three worlds, reached the pilgrimage site of Badarikāśrama and engaged himself there in trance to satisfy the Lord.

PURPORT

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is factually the spiritual master of the three worlds, and He is the original source of all Vedic knowledge. It is very difficult, however, to understand the personal feature of the Absolute Truth, even from the *Vedas*. His personal instructions are needed in order to understand the Personality of Godhead as the Supreme Absolute Truth. *Bhagavad-gītā* is the evidence of such transcendental knowledge in gist. One cannot know the Supreme Lord unless one is graced by the Lord Himself. Lord Kṛṣṇa exhibited this specific mercy towards Arjuna and Uddhava while He was in the material world.

Undoubtedly *Bhagavad-gītā* was spoken by the Lord on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra just to encourage Arjuna to fight, and yet to complete the transcendental knowledge of *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Lord instructed Uddhava. The Lord wanted Uddhava to fulfill His mission and disseminate knowledge which He had not spoken even in *Bhagavad-gītā*. Persons who are attached to the words of the *Vedas* may also know from this verse that the Lord is the source of all Vedic knowledge. One who is unable to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead by going through the pages of the *Vedas* may take shelter of one of the Lord's devotees, such as Uddhava, in order to advance further in knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The *Brahma-saṁhitā* says that it is very difficult to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead from the *Vedas*, but He is easily understood from a pure devotee like Uddhava. Taking mercy on the great sages who lived at Badarikāśrama, the Lord authorized Uddhava to speak on His behalf. Unless one has such authorization, one cannot understand or preach the devotional service of the Lord.

While present on this earth, the Lord executed many uncommon activities, even traveling in space to bring down the *parijāta* from heaven

and recovering the son of His teacher (Sāndīpani Muni) from the regions of death. Uddhava was certainly informed of the conditions of life on other planets, and all the sages were anxious to know of them, just as we are anxious to know about the planets in space. Uddhava was particularly deputed to carry a message to Badarikāśrama, not only to the sages of that place of pilgrimage but also to the Nara-Nārāyaṇa Deities. Such a message must have been more confidential than the knowledge described in the pages of the *Vedas*.

The Lord is undoubtedly the source of all knowledge, and the messages dispatched through Uddhava to Nara-Nārāyaṇa and other sages were also part of the Vedic knowledge, but they were more confidential and could be sent or understood only through such a pure devotee as Uddhava. Since such confidential knowledge was known only to the Lord and Uddhava, it is said that Uddhava was as good as the Lord Himself. Every living entity can, like Uddhava, also become a confidential messenger on the same level as the Lord, provided he becomes confidential himself by dint of loving devotional service. Such confidential knowledge is entrusted, as confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā*, only to pure devotees like Uddhava and Arjuna, and one has to learn the mystery through them, and not otherwise. One cannot understand *Bhagavad-gītā* or *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* without the help of such confidential devotees of the Lord. According to Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, that confidential message must have concerned the mystery of His departure and the annihilation of His dynasty after the end of His appearance in the mundane world for one hundred years. Everyone must have been very anxious to know about the mystery of the annihilation of the Yadu dynasty, and that message must have been explained by the Lord to Uddhava and dispatched to Badarikāśrama for the information of Nara-Nārāyaṇa and other pure devotees of the Lord.

TEXT 33

विदु रोऽप्युद्धवाच्छ्रुत्वा कृष्णस्य परमात्मनः ।
क्रीडयोपात्तदेहस्य कर्माणि श्लाघितानि च ॥३३॥

viduro 'py uddhavāc chrutvā
kṛṣṇasya paramātmānaḥ
kṛīḍayopāṭṭa-dehasya
karmāṇi ślāghitāni ca

viduraḥ—Vidura; *api*—also; *uddhavāt*—from the source of Uddhava; *śrutvā*—having heard; *kṛṣṇasya*—of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *paramātmānaḥ*—of the Supersoul; *kṛīḍayā*—for the sake of pastimes in the mortal world; *upāṭṭa*—extraordinarily accepted; *dehasya*—of the body; *karmāṇi*—transcendental activities; *ślāghitāni*—most glorious; *ca*—also.

TRANSLATION

Vidura also heard from Uddhava about the appearance and disappearance of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supersoul, in the mortal world, which is a subject matter sought after with great perseverance by the great sages.

PURPORT

The subject matter of the appearance and disappearance of the Supersoul, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is a mystery even for the great sages. The word *paramātmānaḥ* is significant in this verse. An ordinary living being is generally called the *ātmā*, but Lord Kṛṣṇa is never an ordinary living being because He is *paramātmā*, the Supersoul. Yet His appearance as one of the human beings and His disappearance again from the mortal world are subject matters for the research workers who execute research work with great perseverance. Such subject matters are certainly of increasing interest because the researchers have to search out the transcendental abode of the Lord, which He enters after finishing His pastimes in the mortal world. But even the great sages have no information that beyond the material sky is the spiritual sky where Śrī Kṛṣṇa eternally resides with His associates, although at the same time He exhibits His pastimes in the mortal world in all the universes one after another. This fact is confirmed in *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.37): *goloka eva nivasaty*

akhilātma-bhūtaḥ, “The Lord, by His inconceivable potency, resides in His eternal abode, Goloka, yet at the same time, as the Supersoul, He is present everywhere—in both the spiritual and material skies—by His multivarieties of manifestation.” Therefore His appearance and disappearance are simultaneously going on, and no one can say definitely which of them is the beginning and which is the end. His eternal pastimes have no beginning or end, and one has to learn of them from the pure devotee only and not waste valuable time in so-called research work.

TEXT 34

देहन्यासं च तस्मैव धीराणां धैर्यवर्धनम् ।
अन्येषां दुष्करतरं पशूनां विकृवात्मनाम् ॥३४॥

dehā-nyāsaṁ ca tasyaivaṁ
dhīrāṇām dhairya-varḍhanam
anyeṣāṁ duṣkarataram
puśūnām viklavātmanām

deha-nyāsam—entering the body; *ca*—also; *tasya*—His; *evam*—also; *dhīrāṇām*—of great sages; *dhairya*—perseverance; *varḍhanam*—increasing; *anyeṣām*—for others; *duṣkara-taram*—very difficult to ascertain; *puśūnām*—of the beasts; *viklava*—disturbed; *ātmanām*—of such a mind.

TRANSLATION

The Lord's glorious acts and His acceptance of various transcendental forms for the performance of extraordinary pastimes in the mortal world are very difficult for anyone other than His devotees to understand, and for the beasts they are simply a mental disturbance.

PURPORT

The transcendental forms and pastimes of the Lord, as described in *Bhagavad-gītā*, are difficult subject matters for those who are not devotees to understand. The Lord never reveals Himself to persons like the *jñānis* and *yogis*. And there are others who, because of their envying the Lord from the bottom of their hearts, are classified amongst the beasts, and for such envious beasts the subject matter of the Lord's appearance and disappearance is simply a mental disturbance. As confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.15), the miscreants who are simply concerned with material enjoyment, who work very hard like beasts of burden, can hardly know the Personality of Godhead at any stage due to *āsurika-bhāva*, or a spirit of revolt against the Supreme Lord.

The transcendental bodily expansions manifested by the Lord for His pastimes in the mortal world, and the appearance and disappearance of such transcendental expansions, are difficult subject matters, and those who are not devotees are advised not to discuss the Lord's appearance and disappearance, lest they commit further offenses at the lotus feet of the Lord. The more they discuss the transcendental appearance and disappearance of the Lord in the asuric spirit, the more they enter into the darkest region of hell, as stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (16.20). Anyone who is against the transcendental loving service of the Lord is more or less a beastly creature, as confirmed in this verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

TEXT 35

आत्मानं च कुरुश्रेष्ठ कृष्णेन मनसेक्षितम् ।
ध्यायन् गते भागवते रुरोद प्रेमविह्वलः ॥३५॥

ātmānaṁ ca kuru-śreṣṭha
kṛṣṇena manasekṣitam
dhyāyan gate bhāgavate
rurōda prema-vihvalaḥ

ātmānam—himself; *ca*—also; *kuru-śreṣṭha*—O best amongst the Kurus; *kṛṣṇena*—by Kṛṣṇa; *manasā*—by the mind; *ikṣitam*—remembered; *dhyāyan*—thus thinking of; *gate*—having gone; *bhāgavate*—of the devotee; *ruroda*—cried loudly; *prema-vihvalaḥ*—overwhelmed by the ecstasy of love.

TRANSLATION

Understanding that he was remembered by Lord Kṛṣṇa [while quitting this world], Vidura began to cry loudly, overwhelmed by the ecstasy of love.

PURPORT

Vidura was overwhelmed by the ecstasy of love when he understood that Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, thought of him at the last moment. Although he thought of himself as insignificant, he was remembered by the Lord, by His causeless mercy. Vidura accepted this as a great favor, and thus he cried. This crying is the last word in the progressive path of devotional service. One who can cry for the Lord in love is certainly successful in the line of devotional service.

TEXT 36

कालिन्याः कतिभिः सिद्ध अहोभिर्भरतर्षभ ।
प्रापद्यत स्वःसरितं यत्र मित्रासुतो मुनिः ॥३६॥

kālinyāḥ katibhiḥ siddha
ahobhir bharatarṣabha
prāpadyata svah-saritam
yatra mitrā-suto muniḥ

kālinyāḥ—on the bank of the Yamunā; *katibhiḥ*—a few; *siddhe*—being so passed; *ahobhiḥ*—days; *bharata-rṣabha*—O best of the Bharata dynasty; *prāpadyata*—reached; *svah-saritam*—the celestial water of the Ganges; *yatra*—where; *mitrā-sutaḥ*—the son of Mitrā; *muniḥ*—sage.

TRANSLATION

After passing a few days on the bank of the River Yamunā, Vidura, the self-realized soul, reached the bank of the Ganges, where the great sage Maitreya was situated.

Thus end the Bhaktivedanta purports of the Fourth Chapter, Third Canto, of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, entitled "Vidura Approaches Maitreya."

CHAPTER FIVE

Vidura's Talks with Maitreya

TEXT 1

श्रीशुक उवाच

द्वारि धुनद्या ऋषभः कुरूणां
मैत्रेयमासीनमगाधबोधम् ।
क्षत्तोपस्त्याच्युतभावसिद्धः
प्रपच्छ सौशील्यगुणाभिवृत्तः ॥ १ ॥

śrī-śukaḥ uvāca—Śukadeva Gosvāmī said; *dvāri*—at the source of; *dyu-nadyāḥ*—the celestial River Ganges; *rṣabhaḥ*—the best of the Kurus; *kurūnām*—of the Kurus; *maitreya*—unto Maitreya; *āsinam*—sitting; *agādha-bodham*—of unfathomed knowledge; *kṣattā*—Vidura; *upasṛtya*—having approached nearer; *acyuta*—the infallible Lord; *bhāva*—character; *siddhaḥ*—perfect; *papraccha*—inquired; *sausīlya*—gentleness; *guṇa-abhīrptaḥ*—satisfied in transcendental qualities.

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Vidura, the best amongst the Kuru dynasty, who was perfect in devotional service to the Lord, thus reached the source of the celestial Ganges River [Hardwar], where Maitreya, the great, fathomless learned sage of the world, was seated. Vidura, who was perfect in gentleness and satisfied in transcendence, inquired from him.

PURPORT

Vidura was already perfect due to his unalloyed devotion to the infallible Lord. The Lord and the living entities are all qualitatively the same by nature, but the Lord is quantitatively much greater than any individual living entity. He is ever infallible, whereas the living entities are prone to fall under the illusory energy. Vidura had already surpassed the fallible nature of the living entity in conditional life due to his being *acyuta-bhāva*, or legitimately absorbed in the devotional service of the Lord. This stage of life is called *acyuta-bhāva-siddha*, or perfection by dint of devotional service. Anyone, therefore, who is absorbed in the devotional service of the Lord is a liberated soul and has all admirable qualities. The learned sage Maitreya was sitting in a solitary place on the bank of the Ganges at Hardwar, and Vidura, who was a perfect devotee of the Lord and possessed all good transcendental qualities, approached him for inquiry.

TEXT 2

विदुर उवाच

सुखाय कर्माणि करोति लोको
न तैः सुखं वान्यदुपारमं वा ।
विन्देत भूयस्तत एव दुःखं
यदत्र युक्तं भगवान् वदेन्नः ॥ २ ॥

vidura uvāca
sukhāya karmāṇi karoti loko
na taiḥ sukhaṁ vānyad-upāramam vā
vindeta bhūyas tata eva duḥkham
yad atra yuktam bhagavān vaden naḥ

viduraḥ uvāca—Vidura said; *sukhāya*—for attaining happiness; *karmāṇi*—fruitive activities; *karoti*—everyone does so; *lokaḥ*—in this world; *na*—never; *taiḥ*—by those activities; *sukham*—any happiness; *vā*—or; *anyat*—differently; *upāramam*—satiation; *vā*—either; *vindeta*—achieves; *bhūyaḥ*—on the contrary; *tataḥ*—by such activities; *eva*—certainly; *duḥkham*—miseries; *yat*—that which; *atra*—under the circumstances; *yuktam*—right course; *bhagavān*—O great one; *vadet*—may kindly enlighten; *naḥ*—us.

TRANSLATION

Vidura said: O great sage, everyone in this world engages in fruitive activities to attain happiness, but one finds neither satiation nor the mitigation of distress. On the contrary, one is only aggravated by such activities. Please, therefore, give us directions on how one should live for real happiness.

(continued in next issue)



Every Town and Village

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

Elegant Restaurant Opens in Milan



The entire family can enjoy a multicourse dinner of *kṛṣṇa-prasādam* at the sparkling new Govinda restaurant in Milan, Italy.

Milan, Italy—The Govinda restaurant recently opened here, just off the famous Via Torino, and surely ranks as ISKCON's most elegant dining place. Designed by decorator-turned-devotee Marco Ferrini, Govinda shows off Indian culture with European flair.

The downstairs area of the restaurant seats forty and includes a boutique featuring Indian paintings and crafts. Upstairs, there are two VIP dining rooms. There is even a recording studio on the premises for Radio Kṛṣṇa Centrale, Italy's fast-growing Kṛṣṇa conscious radio network.

Operating as a private club, Govinda had over 1,500 members, including the mayor of Milan, only two months after opening. Each Monday evening the restaurant hosts conferences on *yoga*, reincarnation, Indian culture, and various themes from the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Many guests purchase Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and invite devotees to their homes to learn more about Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Govinda in Milan is one of more than thirty ISKCON restaurants around the world that promote the cause of vege-

tarianism by serving delicious *prasādam*—food offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa. In addition to opening restaurants, ISKCON devotees have, since 1966, served out over 150 million nourishing free multicourse dinners, founded over thirty vegetarian farm communities, provided vegetarian food relief to the hungry in Asia, Africa, and the West, and widely publicized the value of a spiritual, vegetarian diet through books, magazines, and films. Also, many devotees of Kṛṣṇa have begun *prasādam* businesses, producing a wide variety of natural, nutritious, vegetarian foods.

All this makes ISKCON a very strong and well-organized force for vegetarianism. Scott Smith, the associate editor of *Vegetarian Times*, has written, "The International Society for Krishna Consciousness is doing a superb job of letting people know that vegetarian food is healthful, delicious, and pleasing to the eye. . . . They [the devotees] are master cooks, their food is stunningly delicious, and they cannot be praised enough for their success in promoting the cause of vegetarianism worldwide."

Sanskrit Scholar Praises Śrīla Prabhupāda's Books

Calcutta—The head of the department of Sanskrit at Calcutta University, Krishna Gopal Goswami, has written the following warm appreciation of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* series:

"It is gratifying to note that Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda took upon himself the magnificent task of editing this monumental scripture, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, with transliteration, a lucid translation, and a very illuminating exposition in the form of English purports, written with sympathetic understanding. . . . Its abiding values and ennobling spiritual thoughts can give correct leadership to mankind in the midst of sickening contemporary problems."

Gandhi Accepts *Bhāgavatam*

New Delhi, India—While attending the Sixth International Book Fair here, Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi visited the booth of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT), ISKCON's publishing arm. There she saw a large photograph of herself accepting a set of BBT books from Śrīla Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami Bhāgavatapāda, one of ISKCON's present spiritual masters, and Lokanātha Swami, a regional secretary of ISKCON in India.

"Hare Kṛṣṇa," the prime minister said, and Haridāsa dāsa, the first Muslim to become a Hare Kṛṣṇa devotee in India, presented her with part three of the First Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, a Vedic classic. In this volume His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON, writes about the duties of a head of state.





THE QUEST FOR CERTAINTY

Ignoring a most important avenue of knowledge,
Western philosophers have left us with
a hazy conception of the Absolute Truth.

by KUNḌALĪ DĀSA

A frequent criticism of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness philosophical tradition is that it places too much emphasis on authority. This is not surprising, seeing as how philosophy in the modern world is based on a revolt against authority. And yet we gain a considerable amount of our worldly knowledge from authorities—the media, schools, libraries, doctors, lawyers, and other experts. Devotees of Kṛṣṇa consider this inconsistency between philosophical ideal and practical experience absurd. If authority is a valued source of our worldly knowledge, then how much more essential it must be in matters of a supra-sensory nature. From the *Vedas* we learn that without authority there is no real possibility of our penetrating the maze of relative truths in this world and reaching the Absolute Truth in the transcendental world. And it is precisely this Absolute Truth that we desire so much in our quest for certainty.

Our quest for certainty is part of the age-old effort to transcend belief. As the seventeenth-century French philosopher Blaise Pascal observed, we are not satisfied arbitrarily accepting any system of dogma to live by. We want to justify to ourselves and to others why we adhere to this or that particular set of values. We

crave certainty. We want Truth—the kind of Truth that Pascal described as “invincible to all skepticism.”

Yet ironically, despite our yearning for Absolute Truth, most of us limit ourselves to two sources of knowledge that for centuries philosophers and scientists have known yield results that are far from “invincible to all skepticism.” These sources are sense perception and inferential logic. Both rely on our sense organs, which are defective and unreliable. All of us have had the experience of being deceived by our senses. Perhaps we saw a mirage, or a stick that appeared bent because it was half immersed in water. There are many similar examples. And the process of inference, because it relies on our faulty sense perceptions, is also unreliable as a source of certain knowledge.

In support of the above conclusions, the *Vedas* list four characteristic defects that vitiate the reliability of all knowledge gained by perception and inference. First, we all make mistakes—“To err is human.” Second, we are all subject to illusion. Third, everyone has limited senses. Finally, everyone has the propensity to cheat. By their very nature, therefore, perception and inference fail to provide us access to the Absolute Truth. If we rely only on them,

our quest for certainty is at a formidable impasse.

Some philosophers see this impasse, and being unaware of any alternative to sense perception and inference, they conclude that indubitable knowledge is impossible. These skeptics argue that even if there is a metaphysical truth underlying physical reality—an ultimate cause of existence—it is unknowable in any factual or verifiable sense because we have no access to it here in the world of phenomena. Therefore all metaphysical pursuits are futile. At best we can only conceptualize the Absolute in terms of our human experiences. But the Absolute may be entirely different from our human notions, and since we can never verify our speculations one way or the other, it is far more pragmatic to work cooperatively for the realization of humanistic ideals.

A good many people are taken in by this argument, but it has a serious flaw. The skeptics’ declaration that we can never acquire knowledge is an example of the very thing they attempt to deny: an assertion of certain knowledge. In other words, it would take perfect knowledge to know there is no perfect knowledge. This is patently absurd, and thus extreme skepticism refutes itself. We can conclude only that

some sort of indubitable knowledge is possible. Our task, then, is to investigate further for a source of knowledge more reliable than perception or inference.

To date in the Western world, a plausible alternative to these has not been devised. The Vedic literature, however, recommends a third source of knowledge: *śabda-brahma*, hearing from transcendental authority. The *Vedas* consider *śabda-brahma* more reliable than perception or inference because it conveys knowledge free of all defects. Please note, however, that the *Vedas* do not dispense entirely with reason and experience. What they question is the validity of these methods in matters that do not fall within the range of reason and experience.

Some of the premises of the *Vedas*' theory of knowledge are as follows: The Absolute Truth is that from which all else emanates; the Absolute Truth is inconceivable; that which is inconceivable can't be understood by any amount of mental speculation; the Absolute Truth can be understood only if it chooses to reveal itself. Now, keeping in mind that *absolute* means unlimited, unconditional, complete, perfect, unadulterated, and so on, let us carefully try to understand how one can realize the suprasensory Absolute Truth by the process of *śabda-brahma*.

The *Vedas* explain that because the Absolute Truth is the source of everything, all qualities, attributes, and varieties found in this world must innately exist in it. Otherwise, it could not be defined as complete, unlimited, and so forth. If everything originates from and inheres in the Absolute Truth, then personhood—or personality—must also be among its innumerable features. And since the Absolute Truth is transcendental, its personal feature must be a transcendental person.

Of course, a suprasensory Absolute Person is completely inconceivable in terms of our present mundane experience. But the consequence of denying the possibility of His existence is extremely grave. We are obliged to allow, at least theoretically, that a transcendental Absolute Person can exist—just to fulfill the literal meaning of the term “absolute.” The moment we deny personhood to the Absolute Truth, we immediately try to impose limitations on the Unlimited. We try to make the Inconceivable conceivable, the Complete incomplete.

A great many thinkers have difficulty coping with the *Vedas*' assertion that the Absolute Truth is a person. Though they readily agree that *absolute* means “unlimited,” “complete,” and so on, they somehow retain a limited conception of the Absolute. They speculate that the Absolute must be some sort of all-pervading, infinite, undifferentiated, impersonal, metaphysical substance—a “Oneness” devoid

of any personal characteristics.

These impersonalists, as they are called, generally derive their conception of the Absolute in response to the variegated nature of this world. Metaphysical reality, they reason, must be the complete opposite of physical reality. Therefore it must be formless, homogeneous, subjective, and impersonal.

The *Vedas*, however, explain that the complete Absolute includes both the personal and the impersonal aspects. By way of analogy, consider the sun. The sun is like the personal feature of the Absolute, the sunlight like the impersonal feature. Both exist simultaneously as the energetic source and the energy, but one is localized, the other expansive and all-pervasive.

Kṛṣṇa doesn't have a material body. Thus He is never afflicted by any of the four human defects. He is absolute, and His words are absolute. For this reason, the scriptures given by Him are authoritative and perfect—absolute knowledge.

Similarly, the Absolute Person exists simultaneously with the impersonal Absolute. This is necessarily true, although paradoxical, because the source of all emanations must simultaneously contain and reconcile all contradictory notions.

The *Vedas* give numerous details about the name, form, qualities, pastimes, and entourage of the Absolute Person. His name, we are told, is Kṛṣṇa, the All-Attractive One. His transcendental body is made of eternity, knowledge, and bliss. No one is equal to Kṛṣṇa or greater than Him. He is the prime cause of all causes. His transcendental abode in the spiritual realm is far, far beyond the material realm. There Kṛṣṇa always revels in transcendental loving exchanges with His pure devotees. These relationships are untainted by mundane feelings such as envy, hate, anger, fear, illusion, and lust.

From time to time, Kṛṣṇa manifests Himself within the physical world and

enacts many wonderful, incomparable pastimes. He also delivers to human society knowledge of the Absolute Truth unavailable from any other source. Kṛṣṇa does not have a material body. Thus He is never afflicted by any of the four human defects. He is absolute, and His words are absolute. For this reason, His devotees accept the scriptures spoken by Kṛṣṇa, such as *Bhagavad-gītā*, as authoritative and perfect—absolute knowledge. Hence the basis of scriptural authority for Kṛṣṇa conscious persons is the Absolute Truth Himself.

Since I used the *Vedas* as the reference to establish the personhood of the Absolute Truth and the authority of *Bhagavad-gītā*, one may naturally wonder about the basis of the authority of the *Vedas*. The *Vedas* themselves explain that they emanated from the Absolute Truth. They are not man-made. And in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.15) Kṛṣṇa says, “By all the *Vedas*, I am to be known. Indeed, I am the compiler of *Vedānta*, and I am the knower of the *Vedas*.”

Still, some philosophers try to discredit the *Vedas*' claim that they rest on the authority of the Absolute Truth. These thinkers sometimes cite the fallacy of *circulus in probando*, circular reasoning, to refute the *Vedas*' claim. They object to the fact that the *Vedas* refer to themselves to give evidence for their authority. The argument looks something like this:

A: Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute Truth.

B: How do you know this is true?

A: It is stated in the *Vedas* and the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

B: How do you know they are reliable?

A: Because Kṛṣṇa spoke them.

In logic this type of reasoning is not admissible evidence. But when the discussion is about evidence for the Absolute Truth, this argument is valid. Logical reasoning dictates that there can be no source of verification for the Absolute Truth but the Absolute Truth Himself. Furthermore, these philosophers overlook that the *Vedas*' claim—albeit an astounding one—is completely consistent with the premise of its theory of knowledge: that knowledge of the suprasensory Absolute can come only from the Absolute Himself. In this particular instance, therefore, the fallacy of *circulus in probando* does not apply.

There is another important reason why the fallacy of circular reasoning is not applicable in this case. The Vedic literature gives a scientific methodology whereby one can test its theory of knowledge. All sages and saintly persons who followed the *Vedas*' recommendations to the point of mature transcendental realization—such as Nārada Muni, Madhva, Rāmānuja, Śrī Caitanya, and His Divine Grace A. C.

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ARMS RACE

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denying the existence of the soul in each living body, denies God, the Supreme Soul, as well. Since the universe works under the direction of the supreme person, it is, in one sense, His body. Just as the individual soul is the foundation of the various bodies within the universe, the Supreme Soul is the foundation of the universal body. But the materialist denies both the soul and the Supreme Soul.

The third principle of materialism is *asatyam*, which means "unreal." This final principle follows from the previous two. In reality, every structure has both a creator and a foundation. In asserting that the universe has neither, the materialist is saying, in essence, that it is unreal. From the materialistic viewpoint, the entire world is ultimately a phantasmagoria, a moving dreamland without any reason or purpose, in which we may do as we like without any fear of consequences. Since there is no soul, we need only enjoy this life without worrying about a future one. And since there is no God, or supreme authority, who can punish us for even the most atrocious acts?

But although the materialists ultimately say that the world has no meaning or purpose, *their* purpose is clear: to enjoy without restriction. "They believe," the *Gītā* says, "that to enjoy the senses is the prime necessity of human civilization." In fact, the purpose of all three fundamental materialistic principles is to clear the way for unrestricted, animalistic sense enjoyment.

"Well and good," says the materialist. "What's wrong with that?" But the consequences of materialism are disastrous. Driven by the desire for sense gratification, materialistic men can rationalize anything. Abortion, for example, is prominent all over the world because the materialist denies that the soul is present in the womb from the moment of conception, causing the fetus to grow. If life is just a combination of material elements, then why not kill the child in the womb—or even when it is newly born?

Pursuing a materialistic line of reasoning, we could also conclude that the loss of human life from, say, the firing of a few hundred nuclear missiles is not more significant than the destruction of the missiles themselves. If both the missiles and the human beings are but different combinations of the material elements, then why

should anyone be upset if we use one to destroy the other?

In fact, if we strictly adhere to the principles of materialism, we are forced to conclude that law, religion, morality, and justice are only so many arbitrary standards, created by various individuals who are themselves only random mixtures of the material elements. In other words, materialism renders meaningless all standards of human behavior. Lord Kṛṣṇa, therefore, describes the materialist as "demonic."

Demonic people grow more and more violent as they compete for the resources of nature. Thinking that at the time of death everything is finished, they have no qualms about violence, and therefore there is constant threat of war between demonic nations. Those in favor of nuclear build-up insist that the continued manufacturing of nuclear weapons will result in a balance of power. And this balance of power, they say, will in turn serve as the foundation for a peaceful and prosperous world. So at both ends, it seems—from their primordial Big Bang to their twentieth-century arms race—the demonic are devout believers in explosions and explosives and have no faith in Kṛṣṇa and His instructions in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. ❧

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superior information from a superior source. Kṛṣṇa, the fount of all Vedic knowledge, presents His qualifications: "I know everything past, present, and future. I also know about everyone, but no one knows about Me. . . . Scholars and researchers can't understand My origin, for in every

respect, I am their origin."

There is a spiritual process for scientifically understanding Lord Kṛṣṇa in full, but Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees don't expect every learned person to be advanced enough to undergo it. But it is possible for an unbiased mundaner to at least appreciate the unparalleled and supremely beneficial knowledge delivered by Lord Kṛṣṇa. Scientists, sociologists, or educated persons in general

can at once realize the value of Kṛṣṇa's flawless counsel by applying His instructions in their daily attempts to comprehend the world and to save it. Without principles and details from the omniscient, we remain with the bitter axiom of philosopher Søren Kierkegaard: "Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards." Aren't future generations meant for something better? ❧

We welcome your letters. Write to
BACK TO GODHEAD
51 West Allens Lane
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19119

LETTERS

I've just read the article by Mrs. Debarati Datta (19/4), "The Magic of a Real *Guru*," and I greatly appreciate her analysis. I have two questions, however. First of all, how would you suggest that Westerners find a bona fide way of inquiring into the Vedic tradition? And secondly, have the teachings of the "liberal *gurus*" actually had any bad effects on Indian society today?

Dave Trivedi
Orlando, Florida

which she has found sufficient to answer all her questions about spiritual life.

As for the effect of "liberal *gurus*," Mrs. Datta's article stresses more the overwhelmingly positive effect of Śrīla Prabhupāda's life and teachings. But she strongly implies, of course, that a mere show of magic tricks, while temporarily impressive, won't help anyone fulfill the all-important human mission of cultivating knowledge of God and developing love for Him.

* * *

OUR REPLY: Mrs. Datta directly answers your first question in her article. She says that she refers all her Western acquaintances to the books of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,

I just want to express my gratitude to the devotees of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. After becoming friends with the devotees, my whole outlook on life has changed for

the better. If people would just try to become friends with the devotees there would be a drastic change for the good of society. I am not saying this out of sentiment—it's a fact. Everyone on this planet is looking for happiness and peace. After reading your books and BACK TO GODHEAD magazine, I think they will find it in your movement.

Clyde Chisolm
Long Island, N. Y.

* * *

We like BACK TO GODHEAD very much because it gives us so much information about the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, as well as practical advice on how to handle day-to-day problems. We have lost interest in all other magazines, which only waste time and money, and tell you nothing interesting. So we thank you very much, and look forward to getting the next issue.

Karin and Carlos Kukahn
Denver, Colorado

Spiritual Places

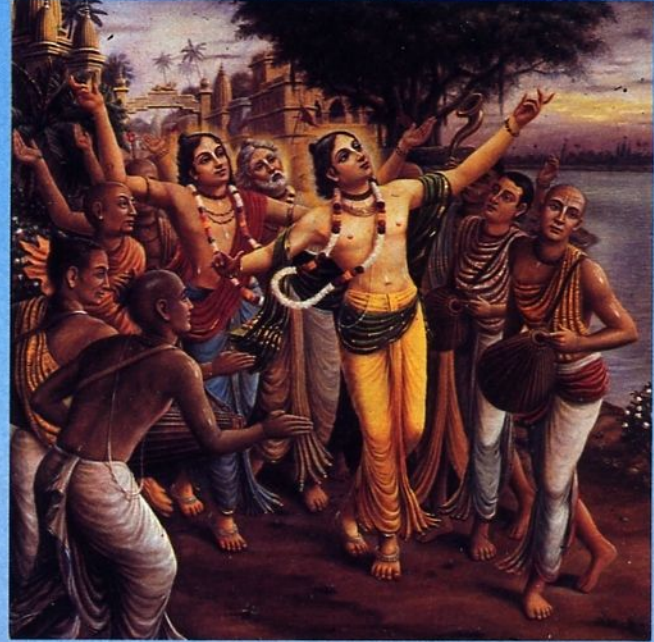
The Miracle of Māyāpur

The annual meeting of Kṛṣṇa devotees at Lord Caitanya's birthsite serves as an inspiration for the spiritual rejuvenation of human society.

by MATHUREŚA DĀSA

PHOTOS BY YAMARĀJA DĀSA

Each Spring hundreds of ISKCON devotees from around the world gather at ISKCON's center in Māyāpur, West Bengal, to celebrate the birth of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Lord Caitanya, who appeared in Māyāpur in A.D. 1486, is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa Himself, playing the part of His own devotee; thus He teaches us that the pleasure of serving Kṛṣṇa is so great that Kṛṣṇa Himself desires to experience it. In this Age of Kali (quarrel and hypocrisy), when many ordinary men claim to be incarnations of God and exhort their followers to aspire to become God, the Supreme Person presents Himself as a humble servant of the Lord. Lord Caitanya stressed the chanting of God's holy names as the most effective means of self-realization in this age, and He predicted that the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa would spread from the land of India—where He personally traveled and preached—to every city,





On the Ganges plain ninety miles north of Calcutta, the world headquarters of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) rises in Mâyāpur, the land of Lord Caitanya's birth. The beautiful gardens and the first buildings of the Mâyāpur project (below) provide a warm welcome for visitors. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, danced and chanted throughout Mâyāpur (far left) and the surrounding areas. Accompanied by His many followers, Lord Caitanya invited everyone to join the chanting of the holy names. Following exactly in Lord Caitanya's footsteps, ISKCON devotees (left) gather each year to chant, dance, and visit the places associated with the Lord's pastimes.



Not ordinary sightseeing, visiting the sites of Lord Caitanya's pastimes in and around Māyāpur (right and below) strengthens the devotees' understanding of the eternal, blissful nature of Lord Caitanya's movement. Whether by bus or on foot, the daily outings are a transcendental experience.

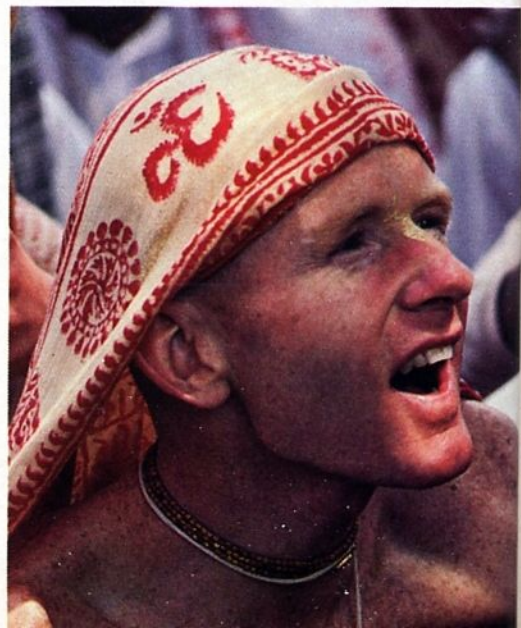


town, and village in the world. Four hundred years later Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya, prophesied that people from all corners of the globe would gather in Māyāpur to chant *Jaya Śacī-nandana! Jaya Śacī-nandana!*: "All glories to Lord Caitanya, the son of mother Śacī."

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder and spiritual master of ISKCON, fulfilled both predictions—by spreading the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement to the West, and by arranging for his followers to come to Māyāpur each year. Śrīla Prabhupāda envisioned a thriving spiritual city, centered on the world's largest temple, rising from the Māyāpur farmlands. Māyāpur, he explained, would be famous, both as an international center

for spiritual education and as the capital of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. Before passing away in 1977, Prabhupāda initiated the practical fulfillment of his vision by seeing to the construction of two large, modern guesthouses to accommodate Western visitors. These two buildings, along with the elegant memorial to Śrīla Prabhupāda now being built by his disciples, dominate the beautiful Māyāpur countryside today.

ISKCON members come to the annual festival not only to visit this most sacred place of pilgrimage but also to make plans for expanding the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in the year ahead. At this time, ISKCON's Governing Body Commission (G.B.C.) meets to discuss such important matters as the printing (in some forty



languages) and distributing of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, the construction of new temples, and the coordination of ISKCON's Food for Life program. At this year's meetings the G.B.C. devoted considerable time to preparations for the celebration of the 500th anniversary (coming up in 1986) of Lord Caitanya's appearance. At that time, many additional Western guests and reporters, along with dignitaries from both local and foreign governments, are expected to visit ISKCON's Māyāpur project. As part of the publicity campaign for that festival, devotees representing thirty nations will tour India on foot, carrying the flags of their respective countries.

Another feature of the yearly festival is workshops and seminars on all aspects of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

Devotees from five continents gather to exchange ideas and to share their experience in devotional cooking, magazine publication, Deity worship, temple management, and in presenting Kṛṣṇa consciousness to students, government officials, the press, and people in general.

These workshops—and the Māyāpur festival as a whole—confirm Śrīla Prabhupāda's frequent assertion that ISKCON is succeeding where the United Nations has failed. Since the founding of the United Nations, international conflicts have actually increased, because no one has yet found a platform of common interest for all peoples. Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, offered everyone the nonsectarian spiritual science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which can help people of any nationality

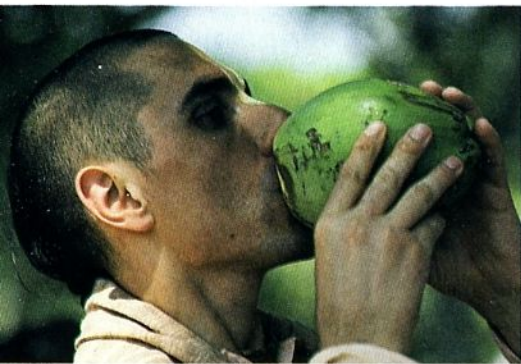
or religious faith reestablish their eternal, loving relationship with the Supreme Lord. It is on the basis of this science that men and women from a wide variety of backgrounds gather at Māyāpur and confer on a unified strategy for the spiritual rejuvenation of human society.

Throughout the festival thousands of pilgrims from India and Bengal flock to the ISKCON center to see the temple and gardens and to meet the Western devotees. They are surprised and delighted to hear that India's Vedic culture has taken root abroad. Although India has long been famous as the land of religion and spiritual culture, never before have so many Westerners understood and accepted the essence of the Vedic teachings: surrender to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme



At the birthsite of Lord Caitanya (left), devotees listen attentively to a discourse on the Lord's mission in the material world. The tree under which Lord Caitanya took birth is in the background. After the discourse, a devotee (far left) joins the ecstatic chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa.'

The sound of mṛdaṅga drums and hand cymbals fills the air as devotees from East and West join Śrīla Rameśvara Swami (center) and Śrīla Harikeśa Swami (with hat), two of ISKCON's present spiritual masters, in a joyous *kīrtana*. All the singing and dancing calls for refreshments, and the devotee below slakes his thirst with Māyāpur's favorite drink—fresh coconut milk.



Personality of Godhead. Śrīla Prabhupāda would often say that although Eastern and Western culture are in some ways different, their combination through Lord Caitanya's movement would produce some wonderful results. Visitors happily observe some of those results in Māyāpur—both in the temple grounds and in the many hundreds of foreign devotees.

ISKCON devotees are in their turn delighted to see firsthand how the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement has not only a long history in India but also an overwhelming following among the Indian people today. Devotees preaching in their own countries find that most of their countrymen have never heard of Lord Kṛṣṇa or Lord Caitanya, have little understanding of the simple, spiritual way of life, and sometimes greet Kṛṣṇa devotees with apprehension. But in Māyāpur the Western devotees meet many Indians who have practiced Kṛṣṇa consciousness since early childhood, and who are glad to see Westerners adopt the Vedic culture. Devotees greet the steady flow of guests with books and magazines in Hindi and Bengali, and with generous distribution of sumptuous *kṛṣṇa-prasādam* (food offered to Kṛṣṇa). As the birthday of Lord Caitanya approaches, the crowds swell to half a million a day, and the joyful meeting of East and West continues throughout the evening and into the night.

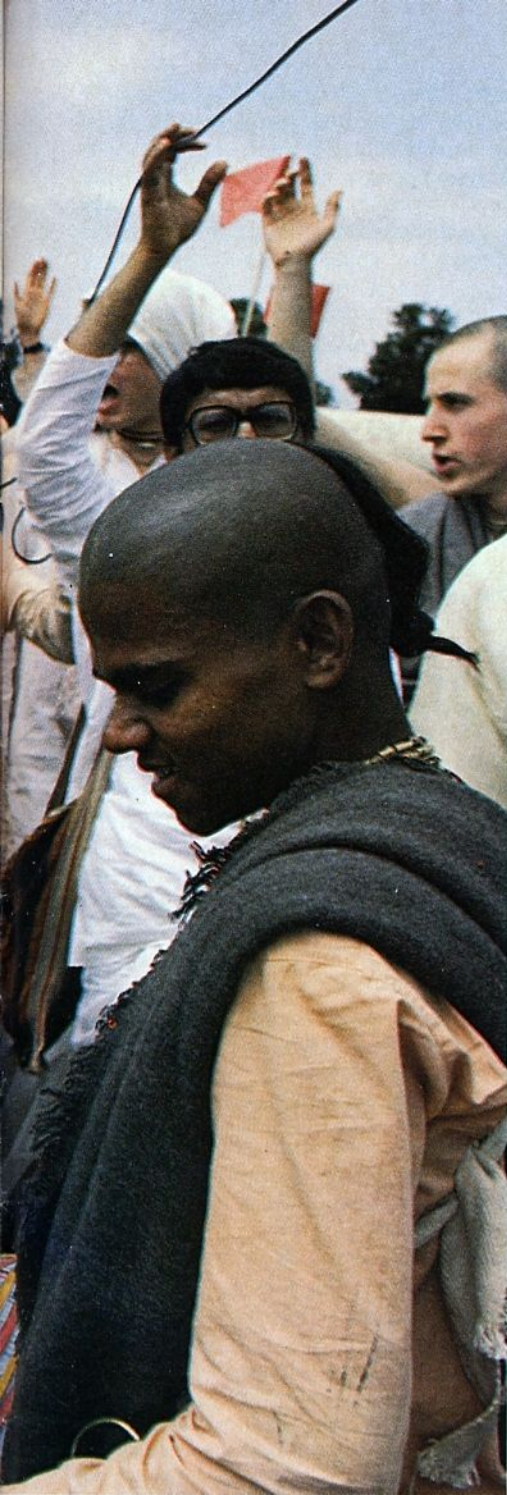
The week-long festival includes excursions each morning by bus, by boat, and on foot to places where Lord Caitanya enacted His pastimes five hundred years ago. The Lord's birthplace, the house



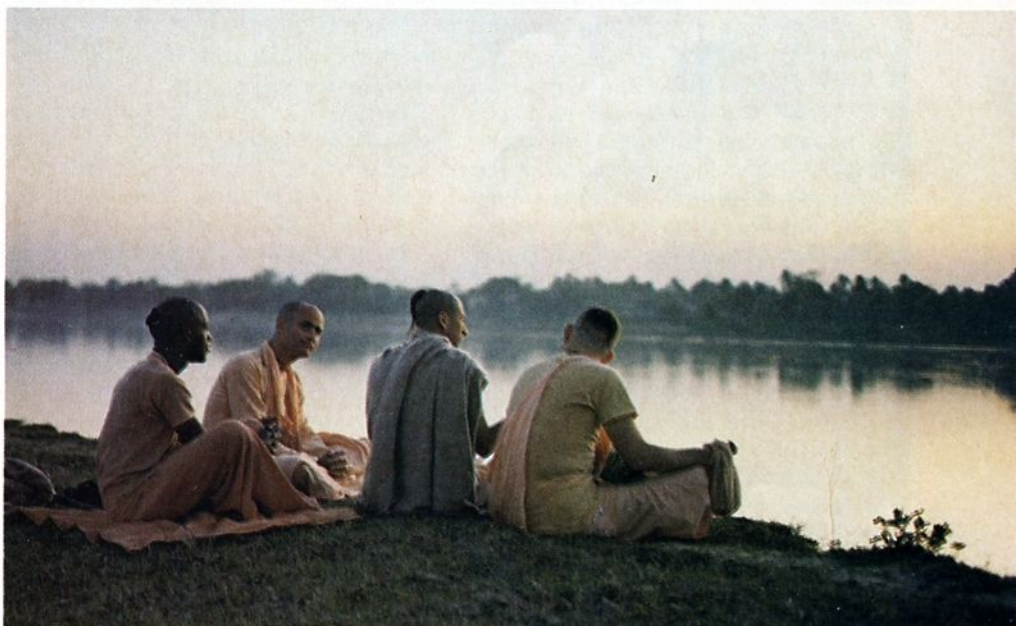
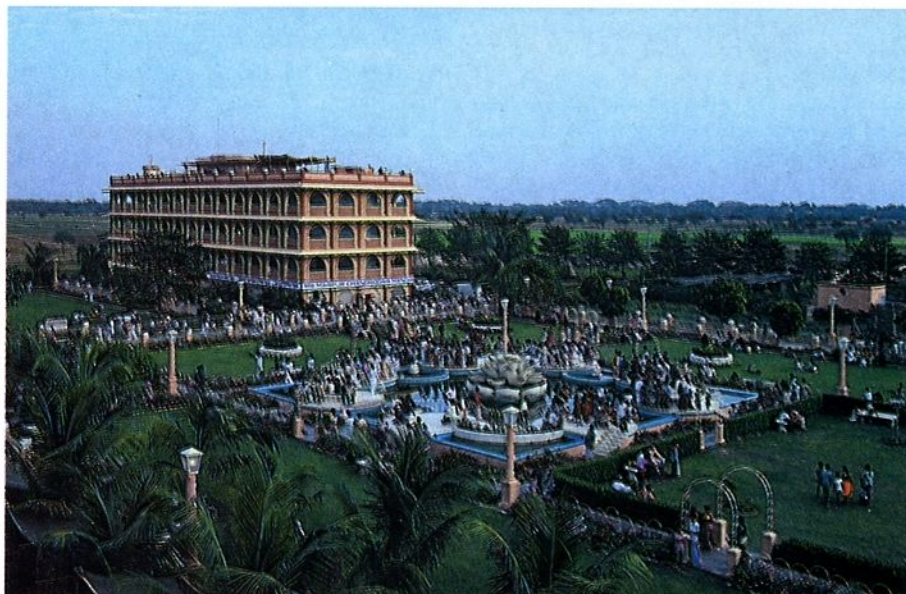
At least half the fun is getting there.

On an excursion to the home of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, a great nineteenth-century leader of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, devotees paddle across the Jalāṅgī River.





Eager crowds of pilgrims (below) from all parts of India flock to the Māyāpur temple, where they are warmly received with spiritual food, transcendental books, and singing of the holy names during the week-long festival to celebrate Lord Caitanya's birth. The bank of the Ganges (bottom) on a mild evening is the perfect setting for devotees to gather and talk about the glories of Lord Caitanya.



where He and His associates met each evening to congregationally chant the holy names, and the homes of certain other of His associates remind the pilgrims of the importance of the Supreme Lord's appearance in this material world. According to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa descends whenever true religion declines and irreligion increases.

True religion means obedience to the laws of God, and God Himself comes not to favor a particular religious group but to reestablish His laws for humanity. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the topmost Vedic literature, explains that the four principles common to all true religions are cleanli-

ness, mercifulness, austerity, and truthfulness. Cleanliness is destroyed by illicit sex, austerity by intoxication, mercy by the slaughter of animals, and truthfulness by gambling. True religion, therefore, must prohibit illicit sex, meat-eating, intoxication, and gambling, while at the same time promoting the glorification of the Supreme Lord. If the members of the world's religions were to follow these four essential restrictions and to chant God's holy names, then all sectarian religious fighting would end and the world would realize the peace, prosperity, morality, and love of God that all religions espouse.

For a devotee, seeing the places where

Lord Caitanya performed His pastimes serves as a potent reminder of His life, His teachings, and the purpose of His appearance. In fact the entire mood of the Māyāpur festival is one of intense remembrance and appreciation of Lord Caitanya through hearing about Him and seeing His earthly abode. This remembrance of the Lord combines with an expanded appreciation of Śrīla Prabhupāda—who brought the teachings and abode of the Lord within the reach of every human being—to make the Māyāpur festival a blissful, transcendental experience. The devotees aspire for nothing more than to share this experience with everyone.

CERTAINTY

(continued from page 22)

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda— all confirm that the *Vedas* emanated from the Absolute Truth, and that the Absolute Truth is Kṛṣṇa.

The knowledge Kṛṣṇa reveals about Himself in the *Vedas* is as good as His autobiography. Kṛṣṇa is the superexcellent authority and the last word on Himself, just as Shakespeare is the last word and authority on himself. Devotees find no contradiction or fallacious reasoning in the theory that transcendental knowledge must come from transcendental authority. Rather, they find it sublime. It is so sublime that even if you withdraw the support of the *Vedas*, it still stands up to the critical examination of reason.

The final point concerning the theory of *śabda-brahma* is understanding the authority of the *guru*, the spiritual master. Lord Kṛṣṇa, besides being the basis of authority for the scriptures, is also the authority for the disciplic succession of *gurus*. He explains this in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. He is the

original *guru*, having enlightened Lord Brahmā with transcendental knowledge. Lord Brahmā enlightened Nārada Muni, whose disciple was Vyāsadeva, and so on down to the present day.

Transcendental, indubitable knowledge is first given by Lord Kṛṣṇa and then transmitted as it is without any adulteration through the disciplic chain. Each *guru* repeats the message in just the way he heard it from his predecessor *guru*.

Hearing from the lips of a bona fide spiritual master is as good as hearing from Kṛṣṇa directly. The *guru's* teachings and behavior must be in consonance with the Vedic version. The moment a “*guru*” deviates from this principle, the disciple is no longer obligated to follow him.

In the *Vedas*, Kṛṣṇa repeatedly exhorts us to seek out a bona fide *guru*, surrender to him, and please him by submissive inquiry and service. In this way the disciple gradually transcends all material limitations of his senses, mind, and intellect. Then by spiritual cognition, called *vaiḍuṣya-pratyakṣa*, he can see Kṛṣṇa face to face. But he can be successful in this endeavor

only if he humbles himself before the authority of scripture and the authorized spiritual master.

Actually, accepting authority is the universal principle in learning virtually any subject. Granted, authority has been corrupted and abused in the past—and it certainly will be in the future—but the validity of the principle still stands. Hundreds of years of philosophical speculation have not produced a more feasible method for understanding the Absolute Truth than *śabda-brahma*.

Those who think the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness places too much emphasis on authority would benefit immensely by studying the *Vedas'* theory of knowledge. They would be pleased to find it “invincible to all skepticism,” although on a personal level they may balk at accepting the discipline. That raises a question of their integrity. As far as the quest for certainty is concerned, there is simply no other way to get around the impasse created by perception and inference. *Śabda-brahma* has been tried and proven true. It does deliver the indubitable Absolute Truth. ❁

ILLUSIONS

(continued from page 4)

eating grains, which we must produce in any case—either for ourselves or for the animals. Without producing food grains, you cannot even eat the meat, because the animals need food grains to live. So you have to produce food grains in any case. But because we have uncontrolled senses, we are eating the animals instead of the grains. We do not consider, “The animals I am killing for my subsistence are eating grains, and I can also eat grains. So why should I commit this sinful act of killing another living being?” Unfortunately, those who are too sinful never think like that.

By God's law, you are not allowed to kill even an ant. For example, suppose there is a useless man; he is not doing anything. You cannot kill him. The state will take steps to punish you. You will be hanged. You cannot say, “This man was useless; he had no utility for society. Therefore I have killed him.” No. According to our man-made laws, you cannot do this.

But according to the *God-made* laws, if you kill *any* living being you will be punished. This we do not know on account of our uncontrolled senses. We do not know that if we kill innocent animals we must go to the darkest region of hellish life (*viśatām tamisram*). Actually, that is happening now—hellish life. The child in the womb of the mother is in a hellish condition, floating in stool and urine. But even there his life is not safe, because in the modern, so-called advanced civilization

the mother is killing the child in the womb. This is going on.

We do not know the subtle laws of nature, the subtle laws of God, how things are happening, how things are going on. And without knowing these facts, our human life is being spoiled.

So, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is trying to educate people about the value of life and about the laws of God. We have not manufactured all this. It is received from the *Vedas*. The *Vedas* are books of knowledge (the word *veda* means “knowledge”). *Jñāna* also means “knowledge.” So, this life is meant for acquiring knowledge and detachment (*jnana-vairāgya*). Otherwise we will suffer. We are now being implicated in so many sinful activities, and we have to suffer for them in our next life. As souls, we are not going to die. As Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*: “The soul does not die when the body dies.”

The atheists think like that: “When the body is finished, everything is finished.” But that is not the fact. We are simply changing the dress, this body. But as souls, I am eternal, you are eternal. It is only because of our unbridled senses that we are entering different types of bodies. Suppose I am enjoying life as a human being very nicely. But if in my next life I become a dog in the street, how miserable my life will be! Or even if I become a very powerful animal—a tiger or a lion—it is still a miserable life. Simply misery!

Therefore, so long as we remain in the material world, changing bodies, life will

be miserable. Every body is painful, miserable. As Lord Rṣabhadeva says in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [5.5.4],

*nūnaṁ pramattaḥ kurute vikarma
yad indriya-prītaya āprṇoti
na sādhu manye yata ātmano 'yam
asann api kleśada āsa dehaḥ*

People have become mad (*pramattaḥ*) and are doing all kinds of sinful activities (*vikarma*). (*Vikarma* means “very sinful activities.”) And why are they doing so? *Yad indriya-prītaya āprṇoti*: “Simply for sense gratification.” There is no higher aim, only sense gratification. Then Rṣabhadeva says, *na sādhu manye*: “I do not think this is good.” Why? Because on account of their sinful activities they already have this painful, miserable conditioned life in a material body, and if they go on performing sinful activities they will again get such a body and continue suffering. This is *jñāna*.

Every one of us is trying to be happy, without any suffering. That is the aim of life. We are all living beings, part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, and as such our nature is to be happy, pleased, joyful (*ānandamayo bhyāsāt*). But performing sinful activities for sense gratification is not the way to become happy and joyful. That is not the way. The way is different.

That way is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So everyone should be very serious about accepting the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And you should not only accept it personally but you should also teach it to others. You should propagate Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout your community,

your country—throughout the whole human society. Everyone should have a chance to understand Kṛṣṇa consciousness, make his life happy, and attain the stage of eternity, knowledge, and bliss.

So, this Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a great science, but unfortunately it is not being taught in the schools, colleges, and universities. Therefore the people are in darkness. If we keep people in darkness and advertise that we are advancing, that is cheating. People should understand the value of life, the science of life—why living entities are taking so many different forms of life. For example, the trees standing in our compound cannot move an inch. Is that a very good life? If I am asked to stand still in one place for five minutes, it becomes troublesome. And the trees are standing for a hundred years. Just see the punishment!

So, where is the science that explains why these trees are standing in the courtyard in a miserable condition and I am sitting in this room very comfortably? Who is arranging for the different statuses of life? The scientists cannot explain these things, but everything is clearly explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. If you take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and study the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, you will get full knowledge and your life will be sublime and successful. Thus every father, every state leader, every guardian, every spiritual master should educate his dependents in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and thus give them a chance to be liberated from bondage and from the miserable conditions of material life.

Thank you very much. Hare Kṛṣṇa. 🌸

FESTIVALS

and the 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 Hare Kṛṣṇa center nearest you will gladly tell you more about the meaning of the festivals listed here.

Month of Trivikrama (May 16–June 13)

June 8—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, a great scholarly devotee of Kṛṣṇa who lived during the eighteenth century and wrote, among other works, commentaries on *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Vedānta-sūtra*.

June 10—Pāṇḍava-nirjalā Ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).

Month of Vāmana (June 14–July 13)

June 17—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Tamal Krishna Goswami, one of the present spiritual masters in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

June 24—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīvāsa Thākura, an intimate associate of Lord Caitanya who personified the qualities of a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa.

June 25—Yoginī Ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).

June 29—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita, an intimate associate of Lord Caitanya who personified Kṛṣṇa's internal, devotional energy. Also, the disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktinoda Thākura, the pioneer of modern-day Kṛṣṇa consciousness. (Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.)

June 30—Guṇḍicā-mārjana Mahotsava (Festival of Cleansing the Guṇḍicā Temple). This festival commemorates a pastime of Lord Caitanya in which the Lord personally led His devotees

in cleansing a temple near Jagannātha Purī. Also, Ratha-yātrā (Chariot Festival) of Lord Jagannātha. (This is the date of the festival in Purī, India. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa center for the date of the festival in your area.) Also, the disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī, an intimate associate of Lord Caitanya, and Śrīla Śivānanda Sena, one of His foremost devotees.

July 5—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Rāmeśvara Swami, one of the present spiritual masters in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

July 9—Śayanā Ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans). Also, beginning of the first month of Cāturmāsya, a four-month period of increased austerity and devotional disciplines. (Fasting from spinach for one month.)

Enhance Your Spiritual Life

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

1 Mantra Meditation Beads: a string of 108 hand-carved "japa beads"—chanters use them as an aid to concentration during meditation on the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra. Each string of beads comes with a cotton carrying bag and an instruction pamphlet. \$4.95.

2 Magazine Binder (for your copies of *Back to Godhead*): a handy way to keep each month's issue in excellent condition. Holds 12 issues. \$5.00.

3 Karatālas: pure bell-metal hand cymbals used in chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra. Imported from India. \$12.00/pair.

4 Mṛdaṅga Drum: lightweight, double-headed Indian-style drum used in chanting the mahā-mantra. Unbreakable. Comes with an instruction book and cassette instruction tape. \$119.85.

5 Deity Poster: a full-color photo of the beautiful Deities at the Los Angeles Hare Kṛṣṇa center. Poster-size. \$2.50.

6 SPECIAL: The original Hare Kṛṣṇa Meditation Album. In 1966 Śrīla Prabhupāda made this unique recording with his first disciples. On it Prabhupāda explains the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, and he and his disciples chant. A historic recording. C-60 cassette. \$4.00.

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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Transcendental Methods for Controlling Stress

Learning how to cope with stress in daily life is not a newly discovered gift from modern psychologists. Mental illnesses from anxiety, as well as expert cures for stress, are as old as humanity itself. The Vedic knowledge of ancient India, as taught today in the form of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, goes to the very source of the problem and gives solutions not only for how to cope effectively with stress but how to remove permanently the very causes of anxiety, which prevent us from realizing our full potential of happiness and productivity.

Modern psychology's approach is often based on the concept of a human as a biological and mental being, and doesn't take into account the spiritual dimensions of life. The psychologists' research and advice is, therefore, helpful only up to a certain limit. Thus they have prescribed certain favorable mental attitudes and drugs to combat anxieties that arise from inevitable human crises. But despite the successes of their techniques, psychologists know little of how to remove the root cause of stress.

Researchers at Beth Israel Hospital in Boston have even introduced meditation techniques for helping people adjust to stressful events. Apparently, a time of relaxed meditation blocks the effect of norepinephrine, an "emergency" hormone that raises the blood pressure and increases the heart rate. *Health* magazine ("Meditation: Medicine?" July 1982) reports:

To meditate, a person sits comfortably in a quiet environment, repeats a word, prayer, sound, or phrase, and maintains a passive attitude toward intervening thoughts. The aura of calm that meditation evokes is known as the relaxation response—characterized by a drop of blood pressure, heart rate . . .

As Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees we are pleased to see this mention of meditation on a sound or prayer—known in Vedic language as "*mantra* meditation"—advised as a psychiatric healing method. (This is hardly the "brainwashing" or hypnotism as charged by the anticultists.) But we cannot make a complete endorsement of this use of *mantra* meditation. Certainly the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* has beneficial mental and bodily effects, as indicated by the Beth Israel

research team, but if we are to get the full benefit, we should understand and practice *mantra* meditation with knowledge of its *spiritual* nature.

The original purpose of every genuine form of meditation is to tap the existential, spiritual reality, which is at the heart of human consciousness. Real relief from life's miseries as well as relief from undue anxiety over those miseries can come only when we understand our constitutional position as eternal spirit souls. This ultimate well-being should be sought and discovered, and we should not be satisfied merely with a cover-over "medicinal" approach that does not remove the cause of anxieties.

In the transcendental epic *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa gives directions to His friend Arjuna, a warrior who is suffering in a situation of extreme stress on a battlefield. Kṛṣṇa observes that Arjuna has become overwhelmed by fear and ignorance and has failed to see beyond the fear of death. Kṛṣṇa therefore begins His instructions by informing Arjuna of a higher knowledge.

While speaking learned words, you are mourning for what is not worthy of grief. Those who are wise lament neither for the living nor the dead. (Bg. 2.11)

Lord Kṛṣṇa then proceeds to teach Arjuna the nature of the real self, beyond the body and mind. The spirit soul, which is our real identity, is not subject to any kind of destruction that might befall the body. It is also by nature full of bliss and knowledge, and it can be realized by direct perception. *Bhagavad-gītā* teaches the techniques of *yoga* and meditation for awakening us to an enlightened state in which we can remain strong even in adverse conditions.

In that joyous state, one is situated in boundless transcendental happiness, realized through transcendental senses. Established thus, one never departs from the truth, and upon gaining this, he thinks there is no greater gain. Being situated in such a position, one is never shaken, even in the midst of greatest difficulty. This indeed is actual freedom from all miseries arising from material contact. (Bg. 6.21–23)

The comprehensive transcendental sci-

ence of the *Bhagavad-gītā*—including knowledge of *karma* and reincarnation, techniques for doing devotional service to God even while in normal occupational situations, and directions for following the path leading to the highest liberation of love of God—are all completely relevant to life in the twentieth century. These teachings are not sentimental or imaginary, nor do they promise instant salvation without inner purification. Since the *Bhagavad-gītā* goes so much to the depth of the human condition, we recommend it for study, not as a matter of religious faith, but for anyone interested in transcending the anxieties of daily life.

Each of us faces a battlefield encounter every day, as we are threatened by inevitable attacks from disease, old age, and ultimately death. If we have no more to rely on or depend on than the resources of our body and mind, then we are sure to suffer anxiety, since our support system is fallible and, in fact, sure to fail us. Attempts to buttress our ego or well-being by such psychological techniques as positive thinking or by the impersonal approach to meditation will also fall short. Only when we understand the strength of our position as eternal spirit souls, in relation to the Supreme Personality of Godhead and under His protection, will we be assured and confident, even as we move through the battlefields of life.

Mantra meditation, under the guidance of a spiritual master who knows its purpose, will be especially effective in this age. Former techniques of meditation are practically impossible today, because they require extreme austerities and conditions of seclusion that are neither advisable nor possible nowadays. Chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—is easy and can be done in any situation. Not only will it adjust the flow of adrenalin, regulate heart rate and the bodily metabolism, increase the alpha brain waves, and lower the blood pressure, but far more importantly, it will allow us always to see beyond the anxieties of the temporary body and mind and thus enable us to work within this world for the ultimate benefit of ourselves and others.—SDG

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(continued from the back cover)

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Milan—Govinda, Via Valpette 3/5, 20123 Milano/ (2) 862-417

Rome—Via di San Simone 73/A, 00186 Roma/ (6) 654-8856

OTHER COUNTRIES

Amsterdam, Holland—Keizersgracht 94/ (020) 24-94-10
 Athens, Greece—Bhaktivedanta Cultural Assoc., 133 Solonos St./ 30-1-364-1618
 Barcelona, Spain—Calle Cuatro Caminos 27-29, Barcelona 22/ (93)-211-0216
 Copenhagen, Denmark—Govinda's, Soldanel 21, 2100 Copenhagen/ (01) 18-43-78
 Gothenburg, Sweden—Paradisvägen 11, 43331 Partille/ (031) 444636
 Grödinge, Sweden—Korsnäs Gärd, 140 32 Grödinge/ 0753-29151

(This list of worldwide Hare Kṛṣṇa centers continues on the inside back cover.)