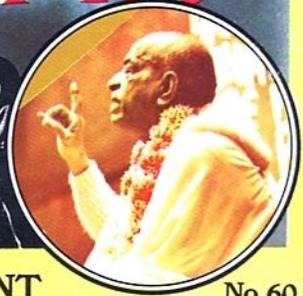


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



BACK TO GODHEAD

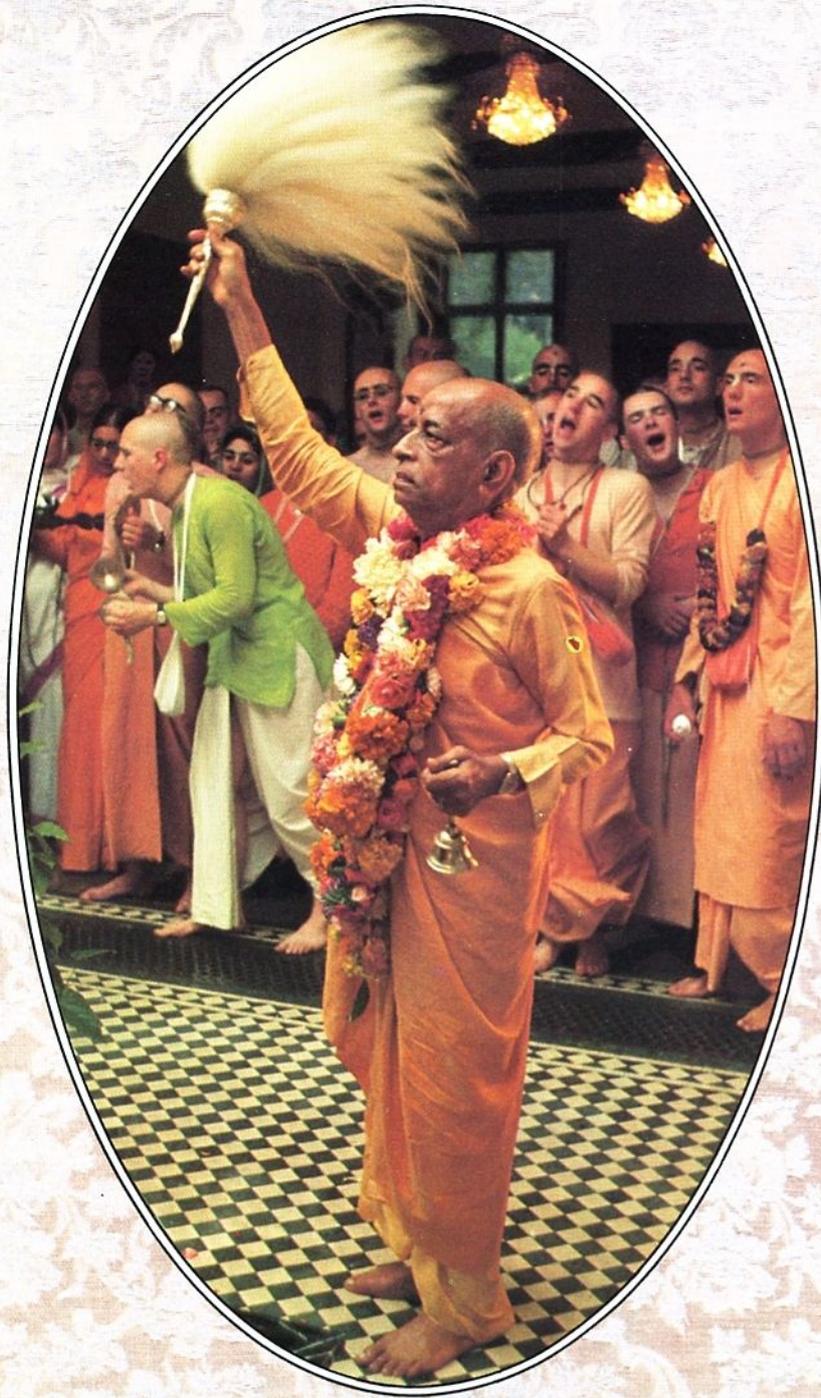


THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

No. 60



*The three modes
of material
nature tightly
control the
conditioned souls
within the
material world.*



His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness



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

The HARE KṚṢṆA DEVOTEES personally distribute almost half a million *Back to Godheads* each month, so it is likely that you received this copy by meeting and personally talking with a devotee. Perhaps you wanted to find out more about our humanitarian work, or about *bhakti-yoga*, or you might have been curious about our life-style. You might like the singing of Hare KṚṣṇa, or perhaps the KṚṣṇa consciousness philosophy intrigues you.

Whatever your interest, it can be satisfied here because the subject of *Back to Godhead* is KṚṣṇa. KṚṣṇa, which literally means “the All-attractive,” is a name of the original form of God. The Vedic scriptures state that

although people look for pleasure in many ways—through money, through fame, through love, or in some other way—the essence of what they are looking for is KṚṣṇa, the source of all pleasure, the embodiment of eternity, bliss and knowledge. Originally, in pure consciousness, we have a loving relationship with KṚṣṇa in which we share His qualities, but now we have forgotten it. When we revive that loving relationship, however, all our desires will be satisfied. The Vedic scriptures recommend the chanting of the Hare KṚṣṇa *mantra* printed on this page as the best method for reawakening our inner KṚṣṇa consciousness. The articles in *Back to Godhead* explain in more detail this eternal, blissful consciousness of the Absolute Truth.

BACK TO GODHEAD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

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(under the direction of His Divine Grace
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda)

His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda

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ON THE COVER

Although they may think themselves independent, the living beings in the material world act as puppets of the three qualities of *māyā*, or illusion. One can cut oneself free from *māyā*'s strings only by surrendering to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, for He is *māyā*'s ultimate controller. (original oil painting by Yadurānī devī dāsi)

PRONUNCIATION OF SANSKRIT WORDS

Sanskrit words and names in *Back to Godhead* are spelled according to a system accepted by scholars throughout the world which indicates the exact pronunciation of each word. Vowels in Sanskrit are pronounced almost as in Italian. The sound of the short *a* is like the *u* in *but*, the long *ā* is like the *a* in *far* and held twice as long as the short *a*, and *e* is like the *a* in *evade*, Long *ī* is like the *i* in *pique*. The vowel *r* is pronounced like the *re* in the English word *fibre*. The *c* is pronounced as in the English word *chair*, and the aspirated consonants (*ch*, *jh*, *dh*, etc.) are pronounced as in *staunch-heart*, *hedge-hog*, *red-hot*, etc. The two aspirants *ś* and *ṣ* are pronounced like the English *sh*; *s* is pronounced as in *sun*. Thus Kṛṣṇa is pronounced KRISHNA, Caitanya is pronounced CHAITANYA, etc.

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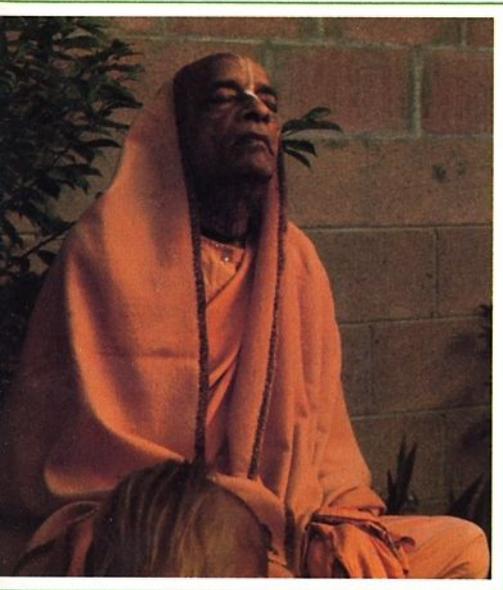
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ESCAPE FROM ETERNAL TIME

by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda



DHṚTARĀṢṬRA was the eldest son of his father, and therefore according to law he was to be installed on the throne of Hastināpura. He was disqualified, however, from his rightful claim because he was blind from birth. Nevertheless he could not forget this bereavement, and his disappointment was somewhat compensated after the death of Pāṇḍu, his younger brother. His younger brother left behind him some minor children, and Dhṛtarāṣṭra became their natural guardian. At heart, however, he wanted to become the factual king and hand over the king-

dom to his own sons, headed by Duryodhana.

With all these imperial ambitions, Dhṛtarāṣṭra contrived all sorts of intrigues in consultation with his brother-in-law Śakuni. By the will of the Lord, however, everything failed, but at the last stage, even after losing all his men and money in the Battle of Kurukṣetra, Dhṛtarāṣṭra still wanted to remain king, being the eldest uncle of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. Yudhiṣṭhira, who emerged victorious after the Battle of Kurukṣetra, maintained Dhṛtarāṣṭra in royal honor as a matter of duty. Thus Dhṛtarāṣṭra was happily passing his numbered days under the illusion of being a king as the royal uncle of King Yudhiṣṭhira.

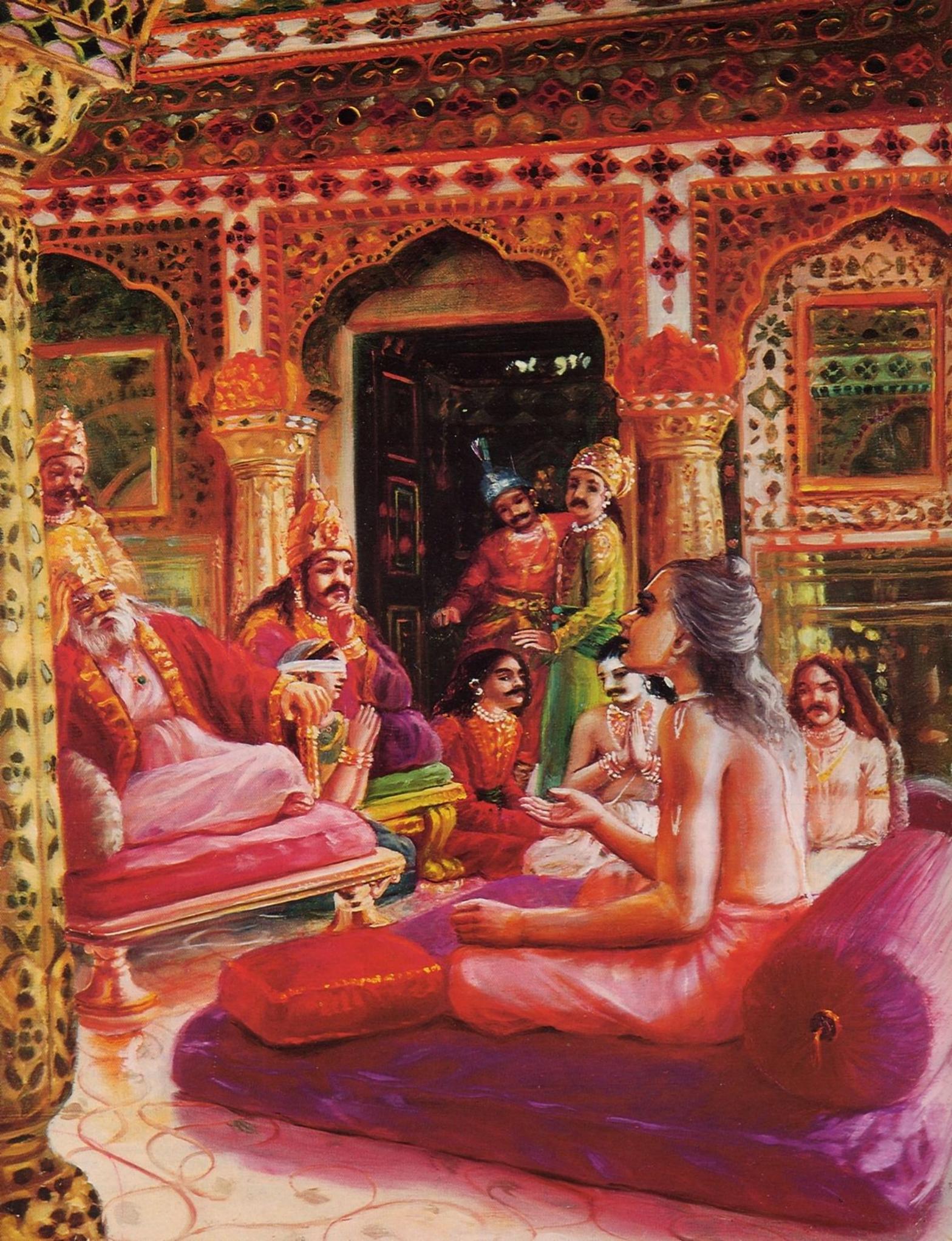
Dhṛtarāṣṭra at this point was aided by his youngest brother, the great saint and sage Vidura. Vidura came to the palace to speak to Dhṛtarāṣṭra because he felt duty-bound to awaken him from his slumber of disease and old age. Consequently Vidura addressed Dhṛtarāṣṭra as “King” although Dhṛtarāṣṭra was not a king in fact. Actually everyone is a servant of eternal time, and therefore no one can be king in this material world. A king is a person who can order. However, even a king cannot order time and tide. Therefore one is only a false king in this material world, and Vidura particularly reminded Dhṛtarāṣṭra of this false position and of the fearful happenings approaching him at this time.

Vidura informed him that if he wanted to be saved from the fearful situation that was approaching him fast, he had best get out of his illusion immediately.

An insanely attached householder who is blind to the passing of eternal time thinks, “I am now happy. I have everything in order. My bank balance is quite enough. I can now give my children enough estate. I am now successful. The poor *sannyāsī* beggars depend on God, but they come to beg from me. Therefore I am more than the Supreme God.”

The fact is, however, that our duration of life is measured, and no one is able to enhance it even by a second against that time ordained by the supreme will. A human being should cautiously spend his valuable time because even one second passed away cannot be replaced, not even in exchange for thousands of golden coins amassed by hard labor. Every second of human life is meant for making an ultimate solution to the problems of life, namely the repetition of birth and death and the continuation of the cycle of birth in 8,400,000 species of life.

The material body, which is subject to birth and death, disease and old age, is the cause of all sufferings for the living entity. Otherwise the living entity is eternal; he is never born, nor does he ever die. Foolish people forget the problem of repeated birth and death. They do not know how to solve



the problems of life, but instead they become engrossed in temporary family affairs, not knowing that eternal time passes imperceptibly. Unaware that their measured life span diminishes with every second, they do not make any solution to the big problem, which is the repetition of birth, death, disease and old age. Such a mentality is called illusion.

There is no superior power that can check the cruel hands of death. According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*pratikriyā na yasyeha
kutaścīt karhicit prabho
sa eṣa bhagavān kālāḥ
sarveṣāṃ naḥ samāgataḥ*

“This frightful situation cannot be remedied by any person in this material world. It is the Supreme Personality of Godhead as eternal time [*kāla*] that has approached us all.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.13.19) However acute the source of bodily sufferings may be, no one wants to die. Even in these days of so-called scientific advancement of knowledge, there is no remedial measure either for old age or for death. Old age is the notice of the arrival of death served by cruel time, and no one can refuse to accept either summon calls or the supreme judgment of eternal time.

Because Dhṛtarāṣṭra might otherwise have asked Vidura to find some remedy for the imminent fearful situation, Vidura informed him that there is no remedial measure against death in this material world. Because there is nothing comparable to death in this material world, death is identical with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and this is stated by the Lord Himself in *Bhagavad-gītā*: (Bg. 10.34): *mṛtyuḥ sarva-haraś cāham*. “I am all-devouring death.”

Death cannot be checked by anyone. Hiraṇyakaśipu, in an attempt to become immortal, underwent a severe penance that caused the whole universe to tremble. Brahmā himself approached Hiraṇyakaśipu to dissuade him from executing such severe

The great devotee Vidura tries to enlighten his blind older brother. *Even by a moment's association with a pure devotee, one can achieve all perfection.*

penances, and Hiraṇyakaśipu asked Brahmā to award him the blessings of immortality. Brahmā said, however, that he himself was subject to death, which governs even the topmost planet. How, then, could he award him the benediction of immortality? Therefore there is death even in the highest planet of this universe, and what to speak of other planets, which are far, far inferior in quality to Brahmā, the residence of Brahmā.

Wherever there is eternal time, there is birth, disease, old age and death, and all of these are invincible. Indeed, there is no powerful living being within the universe who can overcome the influence of time. Many poets have written verses on the influence of time, and many devastations have taken place over the universe due to the influence of time. No one could check these devastations by any means. Even in our daily life so many things come and go, and we have no hand in them. We simply have to suffer or tolerate them. We are helpless to provide any remedy. This is the result of time. According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*yena caivābhipanno 'yaṃ
prāṇaiḥ priyatamair api
janaḥ sadyo viyujyeta
kim-utānyair dhanādibhiḥ*

“Whoever is under the influence of supreme *kāla* [eternal time] must surrender his dear life, and what to speak of other things, such as wealth, honor, children, land and home.” (*Bhāg.* 1.13.20)

Thus Vidura reminded Dhṛtarāṣṭra of his precarious condition, influenced by cruel time, for by his past experience Dhṛtarāṣṭra should have more intelligently seen what was going to happen to his own life. Vidura told him:

*pitṛ-bhrāṭṛ-suhṛt-putrā
hatās te vigataṃ vāyam
ātmā ca jarayā grastaḥ
para-geham upāsase*

“Your father, brother, well-wishers and sons are all dead and passed away. You yourself have expended the major portion of your life, your body is now overtaken by invalidity, and you are

now living in the home of another person.” (*Bhāg.* 1.13.21)

Dhṛtarāṣṭra's father, Vicitravīrya, had died long ago, when Dhṛtarāṣṭra and his younger brothers were all little children, and it was due to the care and kindness of Bhīṣmadeva that they were properly brought up. Then again his brother Pāṇḍu died also. Then in the Battle of Kurukṣetra his one hundred sons and grandsons all died, along with all other well-wishers like Bhīṣmadeva, Droṇācārya, Karṇa and many other kings and friends. Thus Dhṛtarāṣṭra had lost all his men and money, and now he was living at the mercy of his nephew, Yudhiṣṭhira, whom he had put into various types of trouble.

Despite all these reverses, Dhṛtarāṣṭra thought he would prolong his life more and more. Therefore Vidura wanted to point out to him that everyone has to protect himself by his action and the grace of the Lord. One has to execute his duty faithfully and depend for the results on the supreme authority. No friends, no children, no father, no brother, no state nor anyone else can protect a person not protected by the Supreme Lord. One should therefore seek the protection of the Supreme Lord, for the human form of life is meant for seeking that protection.

Vidura even went further in warning Dhṛtarāṣṭra of his precarious condition.

*andhaḥ puraiva vadhiro
manda-prajñās ca sāmprataṃ
viśṛṇa danto mandāgniḥ
sarāgaḥ kapṣam udvahan*

“You have been blind from your very birth,” Vidura told him, “and recently you have become hard of hearing. Your memory is shortened, and your intelligence is disturbed. Your teeth are loose, your liver is defective, and you are coughing up mucus.” (*Bhāg.* 1.13.22) The symptoms of old age were already developed in Dhṛtarāṣṭra, and one by one Vidura pointed them out to him, concluding that they all served as a warning that death was approaching very quickly. Nonetheless Dhṛtarāṣṭra was foolishly carefree about his future.

The signs pointed out by Vidura in the body of Dhṛtarāṣṭra were signs of the material body's dwindling before

the last strokes of death. The body takes birth, develops, stays, creates other bodies, dwindles and then vanishes. Foolish men want to make a permanent settlement for the perishable body, and they think that their estate, children, society, country, etc., will give them protection. Because of such foolish ideas, they are overtaken by temporary engagements, and they altogether forget that they must give up this temporary body and take on a new one to arrange for another cycle of society, friendship and love, which will again ultimately perish. Forgetting their permanent identity, they become foolishly active in nonpermanent occupations, forgetting their prime duty altogether.

Saints and sages like Vidura approach such foolish men to awaken them to the real situation, but unfortunately such *sādhus* [holy men] and saints are taken as social parasites. Thus foolish men refuse to hear the words of these *sādhus* and saints, although they welcome showbottle *sādhus* and so-called saints who can satisfy their senses. Vidura was not a *sādhu* who satisfied the unfortunate sentiments of men like Dhṛtarāṣṭra. He was correctly pointing out the real situation and informing him how he could save himself from the catastrophes of life. A *sādhu* should never flatter kings or rich men to live comfortably at their cost. A *sādhu* should speak to householders about the naked truth so that they may come to their senses regarding the precarious material existence.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra is a typical example of an attached old man in household life. Although he became a pauper in the true sense, he nonetheless wanted to live comfortably in the house of the Pāṇḍavas. Thus Vidura told him:

*aho mahīyasī jantor
jīvitāśā yathā bhavān
bhīmāpavarjitam piṇḍam
ādatte grha-pālavat*

“Alas, how powerful are the hopes of a living being to continue his life. Verily, you are living just like a household dog and are eating remnants of food given by Bhīma.” (*Bhāg.* 1.13.23) Vidura especially mentioned Bhīma because

Bhīma personally killed Dhṛtarāṣṭra’s two prominent sons, Duryodhana and Duḥśāsana. These two sons were very dear to Dhṛtarāṣṭra for their notorious and nefarious activities, and Bhīma was particularly pointed out because he killed these two pet sons. Why was Dhṛtarāṣṭra living at the house of the Pāṇḍavas? Because he wanted to continue his life comfortably, even at the risk of all humiliation. Vidura was therefore astonished at the powerful urge to continue life despite humiliation.

This sense of continuing one’s life indicates that a living being is eternally a living entity and does not want to change his bodily habitation. A foolish man does not know that a particular term of bodily existence is awarded to him as a term of imprisonment, and the human body is awarded after many, many births and deaths as a chance for self-realization to go back home, back to Godhead. Persons like Dhṛtarāṣṭra try to make plans to live in the material body in a comfortable position with profit and interest, for they do not see things as they are.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra was blind, and he continued to hope to live comfortably in the midst of all of life’s reverses. A *sādhu* like Vidura is meant to awaken such blind people and thus help them return to Godhead, where life is eternal. Upon returning to God, one does not want to return to this material world of miseries. We can hardly imagine how responsible a task is entrusted to a *sādhu* like Mahātmā Vidura.

The system of *varṇāśrama* religion sets aside a part of one’s life completely for the purpose of self-realization and attainment of salvation in the human form of life. That is a routine division of life. But persons like Dhṛtarāṣṭra, even at their weary ripened age, want to stay home, even in a degraded condition. Dhṛtarāṣṭra was actually accepting charity from his enemies. Wanting to point this out and impress upon him that it was better to die like his sons than to accept such humiliating charity, Vidura told him:

*agnir niṣṣṭo dattaś ca
garo dārās ca dūṣitāḥ
hṛtam kṣetram dhanam yeṣān*

tad-dattair asubhiḥ kiyat

“There is no need to live a degraded life and subsist on the charity of those whom you tried to kill by arson and poisoning. You also insulted one of their wives and usurped their kingdom and wealth.” (*Bhāg.* 1.13.24)

Five thousand years ago there was one Dhṛtarāṣṭra, but at the present moment there are many Dhṛtarāṣṭras in every home. Politicians especially do not retire from political activities unless dragged by the cruel hand of death or killed by some opposing element. To stick to family life till the end of one’s human life is the grossest type of degradation, and there is an absolute need for Viduras to educate such Dhṛtarāṣṭras, even at the present moment.

Vidura further informed Dhṛtarāṣṭra: “Despite your unwillingness to die and your desire to live even at the cost of honor and prestige, your miserly [*kṛpaṇa*] body will certainly dwindle and deteriorate like an old garment.” (*Bhāg.* 1.13.25) The words *kṛpaṇasya jīviṣoḥi* in this verse are significant. There are two classes of men. One is called a *kṛpaṇa*, and the other is called a *brāhmaṇa*. The *kṛpaṇa*, the miserly man, has no estimation of his material body, but the *brāhmaṇa* has a true estimation of himself and the material body. Having a wrong estimation of his material body, the *kṛpaṇa* wants to enjoy sense gratification with his utmost strength, and even in old age he tries to become a young man by medical treatment or otherwise. Dhṛtarāṣṭra is addressed herein as a *kṛpaṇa* because without considering his material body he wants to live at any cost, and Vidura is trying to open his eyes to see that he cannot live more than his time and that he must prepare for death.

Since death is inevitable, why should one accept such a humiliating position? It is better to take the right path, even at the risk of death. Human life is meant for finishing all kinds of miseries that arise due to material existence, and life should be so regulated that one can achieve the desired goal. Because of his wrong conception of life, Dhṛtarāṣṭra had already spoiled eighty percent of his energy, so it behooved

him to utilize his remaining days for the ultimate good. Dhṛtarāṣṭra's life was miserly because he did not properly utilize the assets of the human form of life. By good luck such a miserly man meets a self-realized soul like Vidura, and by Vidura's instructions he gets rid of the nescience of material existence.

Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, a great Kṛṣṇa conscious devotee and spiritual master, has sung:

*hari-hari viphale janama goñānu
manuṣya-janama pāiyā,
rādhā-kṛṣṇa nā bhajiyā
jāniyā śuniyā viṣa khānu*

“My Lord, I have simply wasted my life. Having obtained the human body, I have neglected to worship Your Lordship, and therefore willingly I have drunk poison.” In other words, the human body is especially meant for cultivating knowledge of devotional service to the Lord, without which life is full of anxieties and miserable conditions. Therefore one who has spoiled his life without such cultural activities is advised to leave home without the knowledge of friends or relatives and, being thus freed from all obligations to family, society, country, etc., give up the body at some unknown destination so that others may not know where and how he has met his death.

Thus Vidura advised Dhṛtarāṣṭra:

*gata-svārtham imam deham
virakto mukta-bandhanaḥ
avijñāta-gatir jahyāt
sa vai dhīra udāhṛtaḥ*

“He is called undisturbed [*dhīra*] who goes to an unknown, remote place and, freed from all obligations, quits his material body when it has become useless.” (*Bhāg.* 1.13.26) A *dhīra* is one who is not disturbed, even when there is sufficient provocation. Generally, one cannot give up a comfortable life due to his affectionate relation with wife and children. Self-realization is obstructed by such undue affection for family, and if anyone is at all able to forget such a relation, he is called undisturbed, or *dhīra*.

This, however, is the path of renun-

ciation based on a frustrated life, but stabilization of such renunciation is possible only by association with bona fide saints and self-realized souls who can engage one in the loving devotional service of the Lord. Sincere surrender unto the lotus feet of the Lord is possible by awakening the transcendental sense of service, and this is made possible by the association of pure devotees of the Lord. Dhṛtarāṣṭra was lucky enough to have a brother like Vidura whose very association was a source of liberation for his frustrated life.

Vidura further told Dhṛtarāṣṭra:

*yaḥ svakāt parato veha
jāta-nirveda ātmavān
hṛdi kṛtvā hariṁ gehāt
pravrajēt sa narottamaḥ*

“He is certainly a first-class man who awakens and understands, either by himself or from others, the falsity and misery of this material world and thus leaves home and depends fully on the Personality of Godhead residing in his heart.” (*Bhāg.* 1.13.27) Real perfection on the path of liberation is obtained when one is practiced to depend fully on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who lives in everyone's heart. One may live in the darkest jungle alone, but a steadfast devotee knows very well that he is never alone. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is within him, and He can protect His sincere devotee in any awkward circumstance. One should therefore practice devotional service at home, hearing chanting of the Lord's holy name, quality, form, pastimes and entourage in the association of pure devotees, and this practice will help one awaken God consciousness in proportion to one's sincerity.

Vidura's words to Mahārāja Dhṛtarāṣṭra did not go in vain. We are informed by *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*evam rājā vidureṇānujena
prajñā-cakṣur bodhīta ājamīdhaḥ
chittvā sveṣu sneha-pāśān draḍhīmno
niścakrāma bhrātṛ-sandarśitādhvā*

“Thus Mahārāja Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the scion of the family of Ājamīdha, firmly convinced by introspective knowledge,

broke at once the strong network of familial affection by his resolute determination. Thus he immediately left home to set out on the path of liberation, as directed by his younger brother Vidura.” (*Bhāg.* 1.13.29)

Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the great preacher of the principles of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, has stressed the importance of association with *sādhus*, or pure devotees of the Lord. He said that even by a moment's association with a pure devotee, one can achieve all perfection. Vidura's association with Dhṛtarāṣṭra serves as an example of this truth. Mahārāja Dhṛtarāṣṭra was tightly bound in a network of material affinities related to politics, economy and family attachment, and he did everything in his power to achieve so-called success in his planned projects, but he was frustrated from the beginning to the end so far as his material activities were concerned. And yet, despite his life of failure, he achieved the greatest of all success in self-realization by the forceful instructions of a pure devotee of the Lord, who is the typical emblem of a *sādhu*. The scriptures enjoin, therefore, that one should associate with *sādhus* only, rejecting all other kinds of association, and by so doing one will have ample opportunity to hear the *sādhus*, who can cut to pieces the bonds of illusory affection in the material world.

It is a fact that the material world is a great illusion because everything appears to be a tangible reality but at the next moment everything is evaporated like the dashing foam of the sea or a cloud in the sky. A cloud in the sky undoubtedly appears to be a reality because it rains and due to rain so many temporary green things appear, but in the ultimate issue, everything disappears, namely the cloud, rain and green vegetation, all in due course. But the sky remains, and the varieties of luminaries in the sky also remain forever. Similarly the Absolute Truth, which is compared to the sky, remains eternally, and the temporary cloudlike illusion comes and goes away. Foolish living beings are attracted by the temporary cloud, but intelligent men are more concerned with the eternal sky with all its variegatedness. ❏

Nawab Hussein Shah entered the assembly
and demanded to know Sanātana's intentions.

The Glories of SANĀTANA GOŚVĀMĪ

by His Holiness Satsvarūpa dāsa Gośvāmī

IN HIS BOOK *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda describes how Sanātana Gośvāmī, a learned scholar and expert politician, became an important member of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Five hundred years ago, Sanātana Gośvāmī was a central figure in the government of Bengal, but by leaving his governmental responsibilities to surrender to Lord Caitanya, he fulfilled a far more important responsibility to both himself and humanity in the service of the Supreme Lord.

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the father of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, was a householder for the first twenty-four years of His life, and He began the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement before He was twenty. But He gave up His wife and home and entered the renounced order, *sannyāsa*, to facilitate His mission of preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

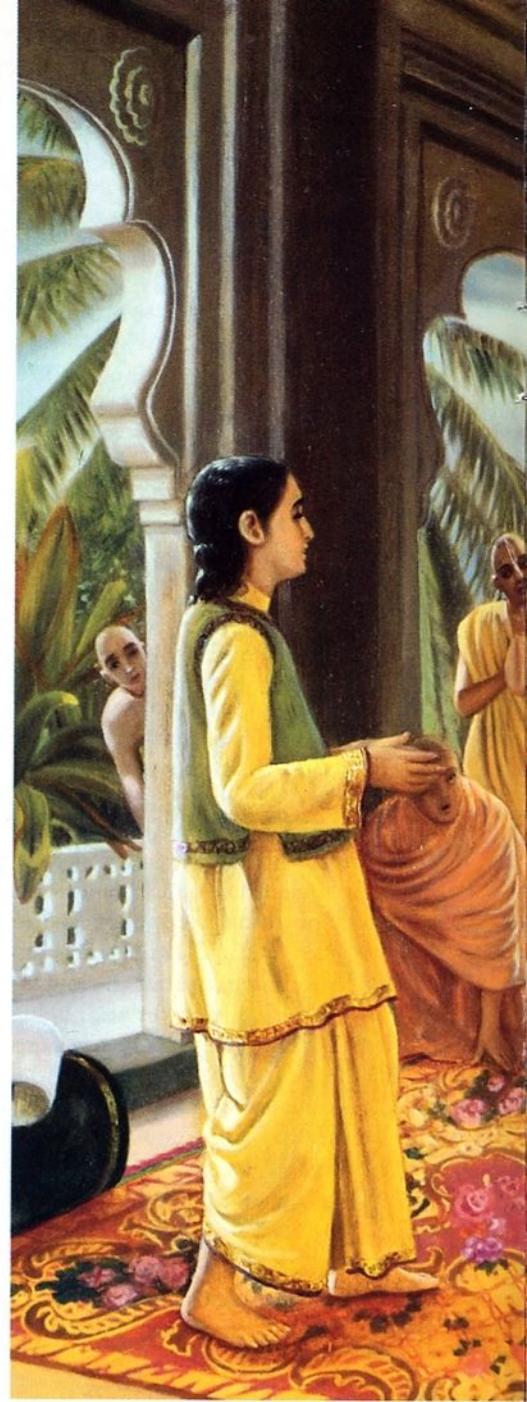
For the first six years of His life as a *sannyāsī*, Lord Caitanya traveled all over India performing *saṅkīrtana*, the congregational chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, singing and dancing with thousands of people and thus overflowing the land with love of God. While thus engaged, He came to a village in Bengal named Rāmakeli, and there He met Sanātana Gośvāmī and his brother Rūpa.

Although the two brothers, then known as Sākara Mallik and Dabhir Khās, appeared exalted in their posts as ministers in the Mohammedan government of Nawab Hussain Shah, they were actually degraded. They had been highly placed Hindu *brāhmaṇas* (intellectuals), but their acceptance of

posts in government service had jeopardized both their intellectual and religious standing. Indeed, because of the brothers' association with worldly, sinful people addicted to meat eating, illicit sex, intoxication and worldly power, the other *brāhmaṇas* considered them fallen and ostracized them from the Hindu community.

That the Hindus had rejected the brothers, considering them half-Moslem, did not concern Lord Caitanya, for He was a universal teacher who declared that He was neither Hindu, *brāhmaṇa* nor *sannyāsī*, but was a servant of the servant of the servant of the Supreme Lord. Kṛṣṇa declares in *Bhagavad-gītā* that He is the father of all living entities, not the God of any one sect or religion, and He asks everyone to surrender to Him. Therefore Lord Caitanya, while distributing the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, taught as a devotee that one should surrender to Kṛṣṇa. When the two brothers Sanātana and Rūpa met Lord Caitanya at Rāmakeli, they decided to resign from their governmental posts and join the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. And later, despite his former aristocracy, Sanātana Gośvāmī admitted that Lord Caitanya had saved him from a hellish life.

Once in office, most politicians, being interested only in gratifying their own senses, scheme to stay in office until they die or their constituents kick them out. But Sanātana wanted to disentangle himself from the service of the State. Nawab Hussain Shah, the ruler of Bengal, liked to hunt and conduct military campaigns, and he usually left the government in Sanātana's hands. Therefore, since Sanātana was practically guiding the entire government, how could he leave his post? His



resignation would be comparable to our modern Secretary of State's suddenly resigning to become a renounced monk of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

Nevertheless, after handing over his official responsibilities to his immediate assistants, Sanātana stayed home to study *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* intensively with ten or twenty *brāhmaṇas*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is called the spotless scripture because it leaves behind all compromising philosophies and religions, teaching only pure love of God. Lord Caitanya has declared that for spiritual perfection one need study no books

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other than *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and therefore His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the spiritual master spearheading the modern resurgence of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is translating the *Bhāgavatam* into English with elaborate purports to teach knowledge of Kṛṣṇa to the people of the West.

Sanātana absorbed himself in studying the *Bhāgavatam* because simply hearing the *Bhāgavatam* can change one's life. One should not think that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is meant only to give shelter to economic failures, for

although he was a wealthy aristocrat, a learned scholar in Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian, and a successful and influential politician, Sanātana Gosvāmī, considering such opulences insignificant, aspired only to be a humble student of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

While preparing himself in this way to join Lord Caitanya, Sanātana submitted reports of sickness to the Nawab, but since the ruler was anxious to get Sanātana's advice on governmental affairs, one day he appeared at Sanātana's home. When he entered the assembly of Sanātana and the

brāhmaṇas, they all stood up to receive him, but unfortunately the Nawab was not interested in hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

"You have submitted reports of sickness," he said, "but I sent my physician to see you, and he reported that you have no illness. Your behavior greatly perturbs me." When the Nawab demanded to know Sanātana's intentions, Sanātana answered that he was unable to work any more and that it would be kind of the Nawab to appoint someone else to do his work. The Nawab then left in anger, and shortly

afterwards he went off to conquer the province of Orissa, ordering the arrest of Sanātana Gosvāmī until he returned.

It is unfortunate that the Nawab did not see the value of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, for it would have been valuable to his administration. Formerly great leaders consulted the *Bhāgavatam* and its brahminical devotees for practical guidance in organizing a peaceful and prosperous society according to principles of God consciousness. But the Nawab, being a rather low-minded hunter, did not take the *Bhāgavatam* seriously.

Despite Sanātana's apparent misfortune in being imprisoned, one should not think him an ordinary conditioned soul entangled in a snare of material circumstances. As confirmed by revealed scriptures, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. To make the knowledge He formerly taught in *Bhagavad-gītā* easily available to everyone, Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared in India five hundred years ago to propagate love of God by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Sanātana Gosvāmī is an eternal servant of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and he appeared in this world to assist the Lord in His pastimes. He was never under the influence of material contamination, but difficulties beset him only so that he might set an example of how to act in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Dedication to Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a declaration of war against material illusion. Freeing oneself from sinful life is sometimes difficult because of one's previous attachments, but if one is sincere, like Sanātana, and depends on the Lord, he will emerge from all difficulties and be able to engage freely in devotional service. Therefore, although Sanātana appeared to fare badly as soon as he took to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, his apparent setback was but another feature of his glory, for he had escaped a hellish life and was on the path to becoming a *gosvāmī*, or master of the senses, who always feels transcendental ecstasy.

Sanātana did not stay long in prison, for his brother Rūpa heard of his

plight and came to his aid. Rūpa, who had been able to leave his governmental post and start for Jagannātha Purī to meet Lord Caitanya, arranged to make ten thousand gold coins available for Sanātana's release. On hearing that this money was available, Sanātana offered five thousand coins to the jail keeper as a bribe for letting him go. The jail keeper expressed fear that he would be caught, but when Sanātana raised his offer to ten thousand coins, the jail keeper agreed, and Sanātana then set out to meet Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, traveling not by the open roads but through the jungles.

One might ask, "You describe Sanātana Gosvāmī as a saint, yet he did not hesitate to bribe a government official to release himself. What kind of saintliness is that?" To understand Sanātana's purity, however, one must first understand that a devotee's foremost duty is to satisfy the Supreme Lord. A devotee always acts to please Kṛṣṇa, not whimsically but as directed by the scriptures and his spiritual master. Since Kṛṣṇa is the absolute morality and the absolute good, one who strives in this way only to please Kṛṣṇa is the greatest, purest moralist.

Impure and selfish men who do not understand that everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa and should be offered to Him try to enjoy God's property themselves, not properly recognizing the Lord's ownership. Despite their social standing and their reputation as public-spirited citizens, it is such men who are actually cheaters and thieves, whereas devotees like Sanātana, who work not for their own purposes but only to serve Kṛṣṇa, are thereby able to make the greatest contributions to human society.

After escaping from prison, Sanātana, traveling on foot with one servant, reached a place in Behar called Pabda, where he rested at a hotel. But when the hotel keeper's astrologer calculated that Sanātana had eight gold coins with him, the hotel keeper formed a plot to kill Sanātana. Treating him with artificial respect, the hotel keeper said, "My dear sir, just rest here tonight, and in the morning I shall arrange to get you out of this jungle trap."

Sanātana, however, suspecting the

man's insincerity, asked his servant, Iṣāna, if he had money with him. When Iṣāna admitted that he indeed had seven gold coins, Sanātana, angry at him for secretly carrying money, demanded, "Why do you carry this death knell on the road?" He then took the seven coins and offered them to the hotel keeper.

"I understood that you had eight coins with you," the hotel keeper admitted, "and I was thinking of killing you to take them. But I understand you are a good man, and you don't have to offer me the money. I'll help you out of the jungle in any case."

But Sanātana insisted, "If you don't take this money, someone else will kill me for it. Please take it." The hotel keeper agreed, and that very night he helped Sanātana past the hills.

When clear of the jungle, Sanātana sent his servant home. Although he was supposed to have been Sanātana's menial helper, he was secretly carrying eight gold coins, and when his master asked about them he lied, saying he had only seven, so he could keep one coin for himself. It is not that one may not use money in Kṛṣṇa's service—indeed, one may collect and spend millions of dollars to build temples and publish books glorifying the Lord. But a devotee, especially one in the renounced order, should be wary of collecting money for his own sense gratification.

Realizing the contaminating influence of his former wealth and aristocracy, Sanātana wanted to divest himself of his opulence and approach Lord Caitanya in a spirit of purity and humility, not as a dollars-and-cents man. To Sanātana, material acquisitions were burdens that weighed him down. He understood that they lead only to future bondage in birth and death. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, "The wise, engaged in devotional service, take refuge in the Lord and free themselves from the cycle of birth and death. Thus, by renouncing the fruits of actions in this world, they obtain the place beyond all misery."

After the departure of his servant, Sanātana Gosvāmī, feeling completely free, wearing torn clothing and carrying a water pot in his hand, proceeded

toward Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. While traveling he met his rich brother-in-law, who was surprised to see him traveling alone in the guise of a beggar. Sanātana was no longer eager to associate with worldly men, but his brother-in-law insisted that he take an excellent blanket, and Sanātana accepted it.

Sanātana finally arrived in Benares, and he was glad to hear that Lord Caitanya was indeed in the city. When he approached the house of Candraśekhara Ācārya, where the Lord was staying, the Lord, understanding that Sanātana had arrived, asked His host to go outside and ask the great devotee standing by the door to come in.

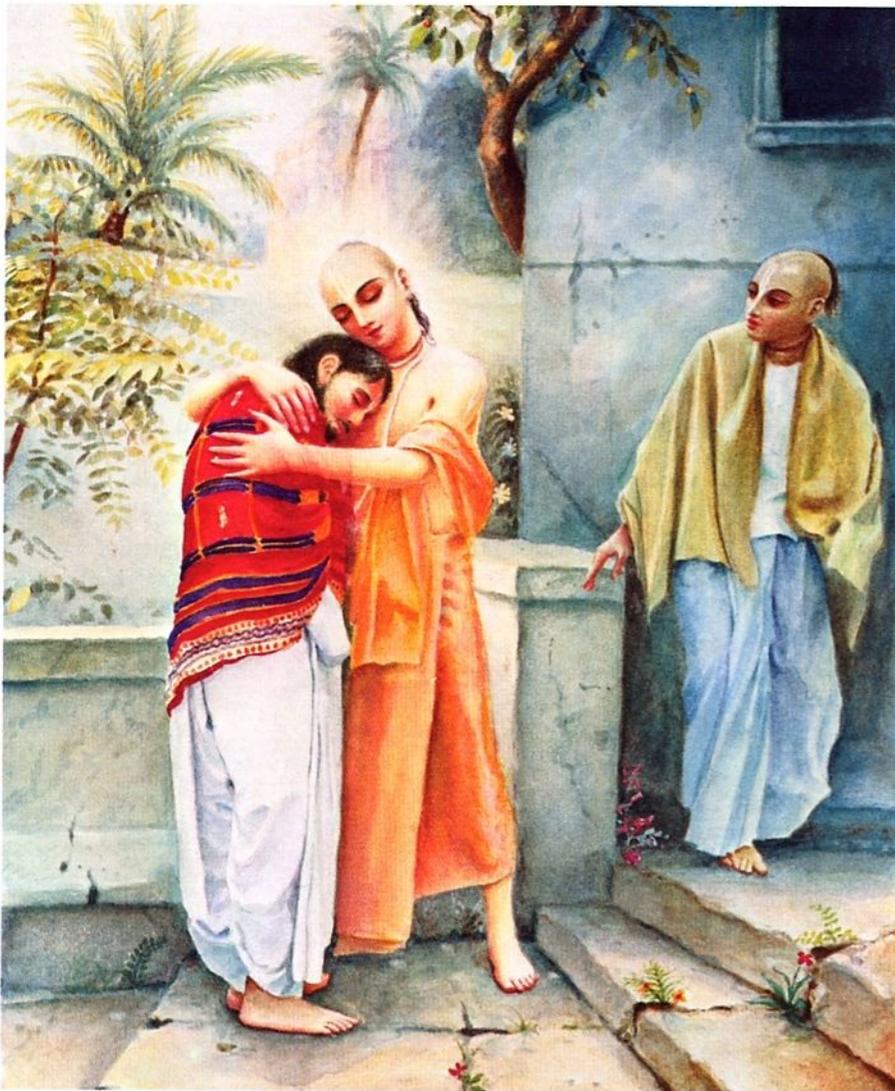
Candraśekhara went outside, but when he came back he reported to the Lord, “There is no great devotee out there, but only a wretched man with a beard.”

“The man you saw,” Lord Caitanya replied, “is actually a pure devotee. Have him come in at once.” Thus we can understand that unless one already has genuine spiritual knowledge, one cannot recognize a great devotee simply by seeing him. So many false *svāmīs* and *yogīs* make money by growing long beards, dressing up in saffron robes and pretending to be saints. Therefore one should recognize a great spiritualist not by his appearance but by his words. The best way to recognize a genuine pure devotee is by his teachings.

When Sanātana entered the courtyard of the house, Lord Caitanya ran to receive and embrace him. He touched Sanātana with His hand, but Sanātana, thinking himself a lowly, contaminated man, pleaded, “My dear Lord, please do not touch me.”

But the Lord replied, “I am touching you just for My purification because you are a great devotee. By your devotional service, you can deliver the whole universe and enable everyone to go back to Godhead.” He then quoted a verse stating that one who fully engages in devotional service is the most valuable person, regardless of his birth or any other consideration.

After Sanātana explained how he had gotten free from custody, the Lord introduced him to Candraśekhara.



Lord Caitanya embraced Sanātana in the courtyard of Candraśekhara's house.

The Lord asked Candraśekhara to take Sanātana to a barber and make him gentle because he had grown a long beard that Lord Caitanya did not like. Candraśekhara also offered Sanātana new clothes, but Sanātana accepted only used garments. When Candraśekhara invited him to have lunch with him every day, Sanātana replied, “As long as I stay in Benares I shall beg from door to door.”

When Lord Caitanya heard about this behavior of Sanātana, He was greatly pleased. But He noticed the blanket given Sanātana by his brother-in-law, and although He said nothing about it, Sanātana understood that the Lord did not approve of his wearing it. Therefore he immediately went to the bank of the Ganges, and when he saw

a mendicant there washing an old quilt, he asked him to trade the quilt for his valuable blanket.

The poor mendicant thought Sanātana was joking with him. “You appear to be a nice gentleman,” he said. “Why are you mocking me?”

“I am not joking with you,” Sanātana informed him. “I am serious. Will you kindly take this blanket for the torn quilt?” Then Sanātana exchanged his blanket for the quilt and came before the Lord.

Lord Caitanya was pleased, and He thanked Sanātana. “Being intelligent,” He declared, “you have now left behind all your attraction for material wealth.”

Sanātana Gosvāmī then brought forward his inquiries about spiritual life. Falling down at the feet of the Lord

with great humility, he asked about his own identity. "I have been born of a low family," he said, "and my associations are all abominable. I am the most fallen and wretched of men. Suffering in the dark well of material enjoyment, I never knew the actual goal of my life. I do not know what is beneficial for me. Although in the mundane sphere I am known as a greatly learned man, I am in fact so much of a fool that I even accept that I am learned. You have accepted me as Your servant and delivered me from the entanglement of material life. Now please tell me my duty in this liberated stage of life."

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda comments: "We see by this plea of Sanātana's that liberation is not the final word in perfection. There must be activities in liberation. Sanātana clearly asks, 'You have saved me from the entanglement of material existence. Now, after liberation, what is my duty? Kindly explain it to me. Who am I? Why are the threefold miseries always giving me trouble? How can I be relieved from material entanglement?'"

Sometimes people think liberation is the end of spiritual life, but here we see that although the Lord considered Sanātana already liberated from all material connections, this did not mean that his business in spiritual life was finished. Now he had to take on the activities of spiritual life because acting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the true essence of renunciation.

Thus by placing his sincere and relevant questions before the Lord with all humility, Sanātana Gosvāmī provided Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu with the opportunity to expound upon the true meaning of liberated life. Sanātana accepted Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu as his spiritual master, not as a matter of fashion or to dominate the spiritual master as one might a pet, but to surrender unto Him and ask sincerely and seriously for direction.

The teachings of Lord Caitanya to Sanātana Gosvāmī begin where the instructions of *Bhagavad-gītā* leave off. In the *Gītā*'s last instruction, Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, answering the ques-

tions of Arjuna, said that one should surrender unto Him and thus realize true happiness. But now Kṛṣṇa Himself in the form of Lord Caitanya, answering the questions of Sanātana Gosvāmī, explained the transcendental activities of a surrendered soul. These instructions give the essence of devotional service to the Lord.

The Lord instructed Sanātana not only in the basic principles of liberated life but also in its scientific details. He explained the symptoms of a wise man, how to approach God, and what the expansions and *avatāras* of Godhead are. Describing Kṛṣṇa as the original source of all other forms of God, He explained the Lord's opulence and the practicalities of rendering service unto Him and attaining the highest stages of attachment and ecstasy. Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Teachings of Lord Caitanya* describes these instructions in detail.

Lord Caitanya requested Sanātana to explain these teachings by writing books about devotional service, but Sanātana prayed, "My dear Lord, You have taught me so many things, and now You are asking me to explain the principles of devotional service in books for devotees in the future. But I belong to the lowest caste. I have no knowledge, nor do I know how I can execute such an important task. But if you kindly give me some hints about the preparation of such books, then I may become qualified to write."

The Lord then blessed him, saying, "By the grace of Kṛṣṇa, whatever you write will come from your heart to be accepted as you have asked. I shall give you some notes to take down. The first and foremost thing is that one should accept a bona fide spiritual master, for that is the beginning of spiritual life."

After receiving elaborate instructions from the Lord, Sanātana Gosvāmī went to Vṛndāvana, where he faithfully carried out the orders of the Lord, thus becoming one of the six Gosvāmīs who propagated the immortal teachings of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Lord Caitanya Himself wrote only eight verses, which describe the essence of His teachings, but He entrusted to the six Gosvāmīs the task of explaining

the teachings in their fullness. Thus it is the grace of the six Gosvāmīs that they scientifically explained devotional service, establishing it firmly on the basis of the ancient Vedic scriptures.

Not only did Sanātana and the other Gosvāmīs write books, but they also taught the meaning of these books by the examples of their own lives. Commissioned by Lord Caitanya, Sanātana Gosvāmī, as a transcendental archaeologist, uncovered all the places where Kṛṣṇa had engaged in His pastimes 5,000 years ago in Vṛndāvana, such as the Govardhana Hill and the area of the *rāsa* dance. With the other Gosvāmīs, Sanātana helped construct seven important temples in Vṛndāvana for the worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa in the land where Kṛṣṇa appeared. Sometimes writing, sometimes dancing and chanting by the River Yamunā, always feeling the ecstasy of Kṛṣṇa's love for the *gopīs* and faithfully carrying out the orders of Lord Caitanya, the Gosvāmīs hardly slept at all—perhaps one or two hours a night—and they lived very austerely; but they were always feeling great happiness in executing devotional service to the Lord. Although Sanātana had given up an exalted position, he considered it insignificant, and he felt no remorse, for he had gained the great treasure of love of God.

Thus Sanātana Gosvāmī, formerly an aristocratic minister of a materialistic ruler, became a humble servant of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and a confidential assistant in Lord Caitanya's mission of distributing love of Godhead to the fallen souls of this age. *Teachings of Lord Caitanya* describes him as follows: "Sanātana Gosvāmī was a great devotee of the Lord, and he was directly instructed to spread the cult of *bhakti* by writing many books. His brother, Rūpa Gosvāmī, was also a minister in the government, but both of them gave up their lucrative government service and became mendicants to serve the Supreme Lord. Within their hearts they were full of transcendental loving service, but externally they were just like ordinary mendicants with a great liking for the cowherd boy of Vṛndāvana (Kṛṣṇa). Sanātana Gosvāmī was very dear to all pure devotees of his time." ❏



CENTERS

THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS has recently opened centers in Birmingham, Alabama; Capetown, South Africa; Caracas, Venezuela; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Ottawa, Canada; Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico; Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; Suva, Fiji; Stockholm, Sweden; and Geneva, Switzerland.

THE SOCIETY has established its new Paris headquarters in a stately four-story building one block from the Arc de Triomphe. Śrīla Prabhupāda personally performed the ceremony installing the temple's Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities. His Divine Grace named the Deity of Kṛṣṇa "Paris Īśvara" ("the Controller of Paris"), in conformity with the *Upaniṣads*, which state, *īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ*: "Everything is owned and controlled by the Supreme Lord."



Photo: Viśākhā devī dāśī

Photo: Bhārgava dāśa

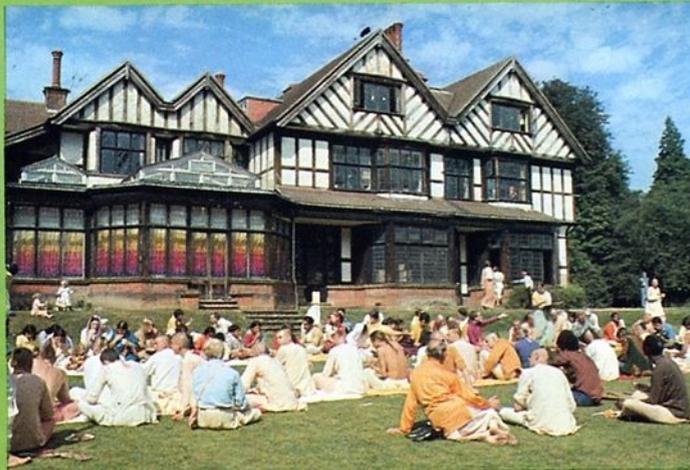


Photo: Viśākhā devī dāśī

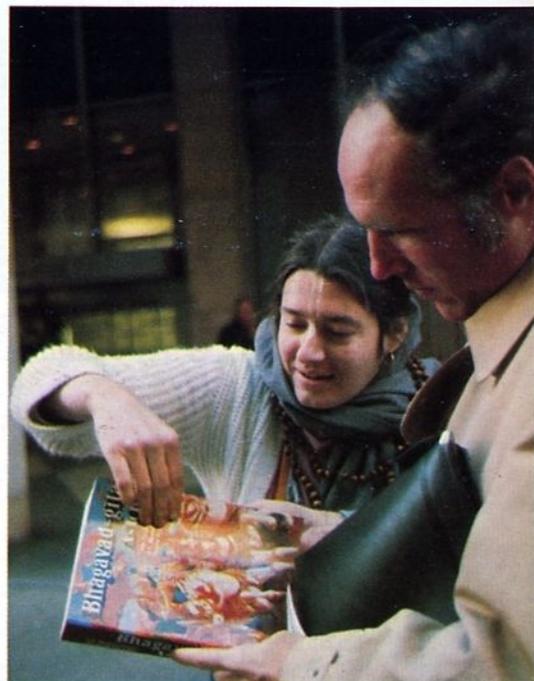
A PERSONAL FRIEND of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in England has arranged for the Society to open a temple in a spacious Victorian mansion in Hertfordshire, half an hour from London. The new center, located on a beautiful 17-acre estate with gardens, clear lakes and a dozen milk-giving cows, has been named "Bhaktivedanta Manor."

IN LATIN AMERICA, our recently opened center in Buenos Aires already has fifty full-time devotees, the center in Caracas has forty, and the Mexico City branch has seventy-five. Traveling parties of devotees have also been warmly received in Colombia, Trinidad, Guyana, Chile and Brazil.

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY reports that it has distributed more than 150,000 copies of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, now in its fifth printing. Sales of the many other English editions of the *Gītā* are dwindling, the Company notes, as *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* continues to grow in popularity.

THE BHAKTIVEDANTA BOOK TRUST is now publishing Śrīla Prabhupāda's books in Spanish, German, French, Portuguese, Dutch, Swedish and Swahili. While the Book Trust is preparing the Third and Fourth Cantos of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* for publication in English, Śrīla Prabhupāda is simultaneously translating the *Bhāgavatam's* Fifth Canto and Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja's sublime *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

BACK TO GODHEAD, the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement's monthly journal, is now available in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, Gujarati, Chinese, Dutch, Swahili and Bali. In English, almost half a million copies are distributed each month.



THE NEW VRNDĀVANA COMMUNITY



SIX YEARS OLD and continuing to expand, New Vṛndāvana, the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement's model agricultural community dedicated to "plain living and high thinking," now extends for some 1,000 acres in the hills of West Virginia. Although most of ISKCON's centers are located in heavily populated cities, the Society has established this simple spiritual village to show that one need not depend upon factories, movies, department stores and night clubs for happiness; one may live peacefully and happily with little more than some land, cows and the association

of devotees in a transcendental atmosphere of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

In New Vṛndāvana, everything is done to please Kṛṣṇa. The devotees are building gardens and temples, tending the fields, milking the cows and making bread, cheese, butter and yogurt only to please the Lord. Thus New Vṛndāvana, like the original Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa's own abode in the spiritual world, is a land of pure consciousness. Yet it is not an imaginary place; it is a practical, down-to-earth, working community, only 9 miles from Wheeling.

THE MĀYĀPUR and VṚNDĀVANA INTERNATIONAL CENTERS

WHEN LORD KṚṢṆA APPEARED ON EARTH 5,000 YEARS AGO, He appeared in the village of Vṛndāvana, India. Thus Vṛndāvana, inconceivably, is nondifferent from the spiritual abode of the Lord. If one goes to Vṛndāvana, he will immediately feel loving separation from Kṛṣṇa, who performed such nice activities when He was present there.



Photos: Yaduvara dāsa

Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared again, 4,500 years after His Vṛndāvana pastimes, as Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Lord Caitanya, who appeared in the City of Māyāpur, India, to spread love of Kṛṣṇa through the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, is actually Kṛṣṇa Himself, as confirmed by Vedic scriptures. Thus there is no difference between Vṛndāvana and Māyāpur; they are both as good as the spiritual world.

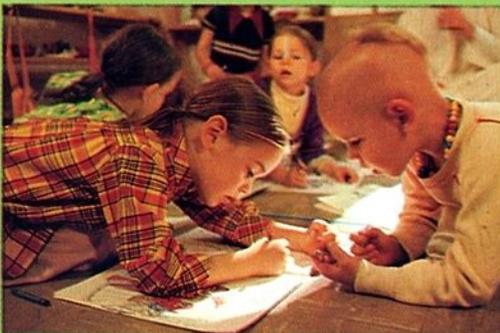
The great spiritual masters in the Kṛṣṇa conscious chain of disciplic succession have long desired that people from all over the world—of all races, religions and nationalities—be given a chance to visit these holy places and thus revive their dormant love of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, to fulfill the desires of his spiritual masters, our spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, is constructing beautiful International Centers for these two holy cities.

The Centers will have modern guest houses, opulent marble temples, schools for instructing the Vedic arts and sciences, gardens, libraries, and galleries of transcendental art. It is an ambitious project, but with the help of ISKCON's friends and life-members, it is progressing steadily. In Vṛndāvana, construction of the ISKCON temple of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma (Kṛṣṇa's elder brother) is in full swing, and in Māyāpur a palatial four-story guest house has already been completed. The proposed temple in Māyāpur, 350 feet high, will have 108 domes. A swirling mural surrounding its central staircase will depict elevation from the material world to the topmost spiritual abode.

In Vṛndāvana and Māyāpur, Śrīla Prabhupāda has directed, chanting should go on twenty-four hours a day, "so that no one will hear any other vibration than the chanting of the holy names of the Lord." These important International Centers will be special places where people may go for spiritual inspiration and renewal, to return home with fresh insight and the inner peace of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Every year in March, ISKCON holds its annual World Meeting at the thirty-acre Māyāpur *āśrama* to celebrate the Appearance Day of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The Society extends to all the readers of *Back to Godhead* an open invitation to attend this festival.

THE GURUKULA SCHOOL

Photo: Viśākṣā devī dāśī



ISKCON'S UNIQUE GURUKULA SCHOOL in Dallas, Texas, now provides a Vedic education for eighty young boys and girls. Gurukula has already published two of its own books especially for Kṛṣṇa conscious children, and more will be forthcoming. The students at Gurukula are becoming expert in reading, writing, arithmetic, Sanskrit and, above all, Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Running Out of Gas

It appears that after noisily back-firing for so many years, our modern technological civilization may be running out of gas. A crisis, the newspapers call it, an energy crisis.

We may note, however, that since energy can be neither created nor destroyed, there is enough energy—but we do not know where to get it or what nature's laws for its distribution are. And by wastefully exploiting whatever sources of energy we have found, we have technologically outfoxed ourselves, like the man who cuts off the branch of a tree, not realizing, until he hits the ground, that he was sitting on the branch.

When we speak of energy, of course, we understand that it must have a source—the sun for solar energy, atoms for nuclear energy, and so on. But there is an ultimate source for all these varied sources of energy—Kṛṣṇa, or God.

Here, of course, is where our energy experts balk. They would prefer that we just chant, dance and read our scriptures and leave solving the energy crisis up to them. But the trouble is that they created the problem in the first place, and now they are incapable of solving it. The best we can hope from them is a patchwork of stopgap solutions, caulked with scientific rhetoric and officialese, to cover up the job they have botched so badly.

But to exclude God from the energy picture so they can get on with their work, the world's energy czars must either (1) dismiss or disregard the idea of God altogether or (2) admit that God exists but say that it's irrelevant. Neither position, however, is defensible.

If scientists want to say that there is no God, they must then come up with a better explanation of what the source of all energy is. Of course, for those who settle for superficial explanations, scientists have them down pat. Solar energy comes from the sun. Nuclear energy comes from the fission or fusion of molecular particles. Speculating cosmogonists can draw neat little graphs of how electrical, nuclear and petrochemical energy ultimately comes from the sun, which in turn was produced from swirling gasses. But these gasses, in turn, came from something that ultimately came from something such

speculators know nothing about. In other words, despite all their bluffing, atheistic scientists are no closer to knowing the original source of the universe's energy than the local grease monkey who has suddenly found he can no longer sell you any gas. Were they gentlemen, they would stop their rather pompous theorizing and admit their ignorance instead of denying something they cannot disprove.

As for the idea that God exists but is irrelevant, this is even more unreasonable. Our industrialized society is in a crunch for new sources of energy, but if God is the ultimate reservoir of everything, how can He be irrelevant? The only reason the energy experts declare God irrelevant is that they are scientists and politicians, not theologians, and they would hate to shift their own attention, or public attention (what to speak of public funds), from science and politics to something like God about which they know nothing.

On the basis of Vedic evidence and practical experience, however, the Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees accept that the reservoir of all energy is Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The *Īsopaniṣad* says:

*īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ
yat kiñca jagatyāṁ jagat
tena tyaktena bhujjīthā
mā grdhaḥ kasya svid dhanam*

"Everything within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept those things necessary for himself, and one must not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong." (*Īsopaniṣad, Mantra 1*)

The crux of the energy crisis, therefore, is that the leaders of the world are thieves because they are stealing energy from God for their own mundane purposes. The grains the United States dumps in the ocean, the oil the Arab nations hoard, and the rivers and skies into which industrialized nations all over the world pour waste do not belong to them. Who gave these nations the right to claim these natural assets as their own and exploit them?

Clearly, these nations do not know to whom the resources belong. But, as the so-called energy crisis indicates, ignorance is no excuse. Even if I do not know to whom something belongs, if it is not mine but I claim it as my own, I am a thief. And no matter how big and responsible a thief may be, he is still a thief. Consequently these nations are all nations of thieves. Is it

surprising, then, that nature's laws are catching up with them?

Nature is governed by strict laws, and if we violate those laws, nature will surely retaliate. Modern scientists, politicians and industrialists are ignorant of the laws of nature because they are ignorant of the Personality of Godhead who made and enforces them. And they are ignorant of the Personality of Godhead on purpose, because if they accept the existence of God they will have to give up their stolen property and illegal activities and do what He wants, not what they want.

The Personality of Godhead wants us to serve Him, not our own selfish ends; and we want to serve ourselves, not Him. In such a conflict of interests, the position of the foolish materialist is hopeless because Kṛṣṇa always has the upper hand. Since He owns and controls everything, He can cut off our supplies at any moment. Now He is cutting off some of our oil, paper, fresh air and fresh water. But from Vedic literature we learn that as society becomes more godless, the laws of nature will gradually cut off the supply of milk, grains, fruit, vegetables and practically all the other basic necessities by which even such a godless civilization must maintain itself.

The solution to this problem is swift and simple: since Kṛṣṇa is the reservoir of all resources, society will have all the energy it needs, provided society is connected with Kṛṣṇa. Just as an electric light cannot work unless plugged in to a source of power, society cannot function properly unless connected with Kṛṣṇa, the ultimate source of all power. A society that cuts itself off from Kṛṣṇa also cuts itself off from all chances for peace and prosperity.

The problem, therefore, is not a lack of energy but a lack of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa can supply unlimited energy, but we must learn how to use it wisely in His service. Society's leaders must therefore learn the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, for everyone's benefit. And if they cannot, the duty of the intelligent and responsible citizens is to expel such leaders from power and replace them with leaders who can. Those who are not God conscious do not know what is to be done and what is not to be done. They are ignorant of the laws of nature, and therefore the havoc their technology has created is not surprising. We should expect more such havoc in the future, and to a more intense degree, as long as we continue to allow the ignorant to control the energy and the resources of the world. ☐

THE FLOW OF ATTRACTION TO KRŠNA

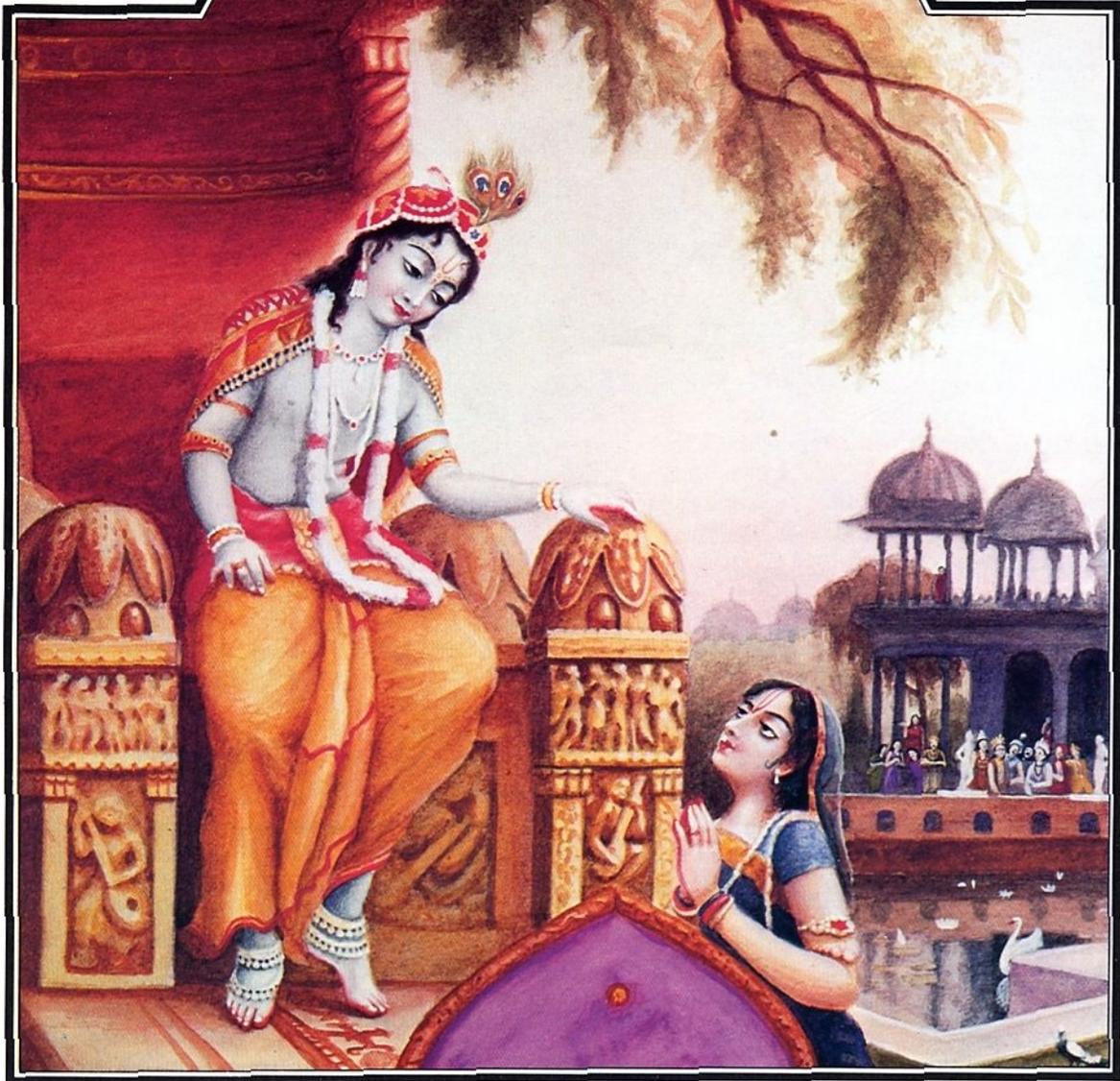


Illustration: Muralīdhara dāsa

*tvayi me 'nanya-viṣayā matir madhu-pate 'sakṛt
ratim udvahatād addhā gaṅgevaugham udanvati*

**“O LORD OF MADHU, as the Ganges forever flows to the sea
without hindrance, let my attraction be constantly
drawn unto You without being diverted to anyone else.”**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 1.8.42 (Prayer by Queen Kuntī)

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

In the previous verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Queen Kuntī prayed that the Lord kindly cut off her attraction for her kinsmen, the Pāṇḍava and Vṛṣṇi families. However, giving up one's attraction for material things is not sufficient. The Māyāvādī philosophers say, *brahma satyaṁ jagan-mithyā*: "This world is false, and Brahman [spirit] is truth." We admit this, but qualify it. As living entities, we want enjoyment. Enjoyment means variety. It is not possible to enjoy anything without variety. Why has God created so many colors and so many forms? In order to create enjoyment out of variety. Indeed, variety is the mother of enjoyment. Māyāvādī philosophers wish to negate this variety, and therefore they are called impersonalists.

The human form of life is meant for reestablishing our relationship with God. This material world means forgetfulness of our relationship with God. There is no Kṛṣṇa consciousness in this material world, for as soon as there is Kṛṣṇa consciousness, as soon as there is action on the basis of Kṛṣṇa, there is nothing material. Everything is spiritual.

As a woman, Kuntīdevī had a relationship with two families. That was her attachment. Therefore she prayed to Kṛṣṇa to cut off these relationships and free her. But after becoming free, what should she do? That is the question. One may be employed in some business and, feeling inconvenience, resign. That resignation may be all right, but if by resigning one becomes unemployed and has no engagement, then what is the value of resigning?

Those who are frustrated and confused want to negate this material world. They know what they don't want, but they do not know what they do want. People are always saying, "I don't want this." But what do they want? That they do not know.

What they want is actually explained by Kuntīdevī. She says, "Let my family relationship cease." But she further adds, "Let my relationship with You be confirmed." In other words, she does not want to be attracted to any-

thing but Kṛṣṇa. This is perfection, and this is actually wanted.

We must simply be attached to Kṛṣṇa twenty-four hours a day without deviation. In this way our renunciation can be perfect. If we think we can be attached to Kṛṣṇa and material things at the same time, we are mistaken. We cannot ignite a fire and at the same time pour water on it. If we do, the fire will not act.

The Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* try to renounce this world (*brahma satyaṁ jagan-mithyā*). It is very good to preach renunciation of the world, but side by side we must have attachment for something, otherwise our renunciation will not remain. We see many Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* who say *brahma satyaṁ jagan-mithyā*, but after they take *sannyāsa* they return to the material world to open hospitals and do philanthropic work. Why, if they have left this world, considering it *mithyā*, false, do they again return to take up politics, philanthropy and sociology? Actually this is bound to happen, for we are living entities and are active. If, out of frustration, we try to become inactive, we will fail in our attempt. We must engage in activities.

The supreme activity, the Brahman (spiritual) activity, is devotional service. Unfortunately the Māyāvādīs do not know this. They think that the spiritual world is void. However, the spiritual world is exactly like the material world in that it has varieties. In the spiritual world there are also houses, trees, roads, chariots—everything is there, but without the material inebrieties. As described in *Brahma-saṁhitā*:

cintāmaṇi-prakara-sadmasu kalpa-vṛkṣa-lakṣāvṛteṣu surabhūr abhipālayantam lakṣmī-sahasra-śata-sambhrama-sevya-mānaṁ govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi

"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, the first progenitor, who is tending the cows, yielding all desire, in abodes built with spiritual gems, surrounded by millions of purpose trees, always served

with great reverence and affection by hundreds of thousands of goddesses of fortune, or *gopīs*." (Bs. 5.29)

In the spiritual world there are *kalpa-vṛkṣa* trees, which yield whatever type of fruit we desire. In the material world a mango tree cannot supply grapes, nor can a grape vine supply mangoes. In the spiritual world, however, if we take a mango from a tree and at the same time desire grapes, the tree will supply them. This is called a "desire tree." These are some of the actualities of the spiritual world.

In this material world we require sunlight and moonlight, but in the spiritual world there is no need of sunlight and moonlight because everything is effulgent. Everything can be seen by the light emanating from Kṛṣṇa. In *kṛṣṇa-līlā*, Kṛṣṇa stole butter, and the neighborhood friends of mother Yaśodā complained. Actually they were not complaining but were just enjoying the bodily features and the fun of Kṛṣṇa. They told mother Yaśodā, "Your son comes to our house and steals butter. We try to conceal it in the dark so that He cannot see it, but somehow He still finds it out. You had better take away all His ornaments because we think the light of His jewels helps Him to find the butter pot." Mother Yaśodā replied, "Yes, I will take off all His ornaments." But the neighbors would reply, "No, no. It is useless. Somehow this boy has an effulgence that comes out of Himself. He can find the butter even without the ornaments." Thus the transcendental body is effulgent.

Because of the effulgence of Kṛṣṇa's transcendental body, there is light. Whatever light we see is simply borrowed light from Kṛṣṇa's effulgence. As stated in *Brahma-saṁhitā*:

yasya prabhā prabhavato jagad-anda-koṭi-koṭiṣv aśeṣa-vasudhādi-vibhūti-bhinnam/ tad brahma niskalam anantam aśeṣa-bhūtaṁ govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi

The bodily effulgence of Kṛṣṇa generates millions of universes. In this solar system the sun produces



If we live in a Kṛṣṇa conscious temple, we live in the spiritual world.

many planets, and due to sunshine the planets are warm and the seasons change. Due to the sun there are trees, green foliage, fruits and flowers. Similarly, whatever we see in creation is all due to Kṛṣṇa's bodily effulgence.

The Māyāvādīs simply see the effulgence, which is impersonal. They cannot see anything more. We may see an airplane rise in the sky, but after a while it passes out of our sight due to the dazzling sunshine. The airplane is there, but we cannot see it. Similarly, if we simply try to see the effulgent *brahmajyoti*, we are unable to see within it. One of the *mantras* in the *Īśopaniṣad* petitions the Lord to wind up His effulgence so that He can be seen properly.

The Māyāvādī philosophers cannot see the personal activities of Kṛṣṇa nor the planet where Kṛṣṇa is personally active. Because they do not see the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, they have to return to this material world, despite all their serious penances and austerities. Thus renunciation in itself will not help us. We may artificially renounce, but again we will become so-called enjoyers. Such renunciation and enjoyment is like a pendulum that goes this way and that. On one side we become false renunciates, and on the other we become false enjoyers. The remedy is here, however. If we really want to become detached from this material world, we must increase our attachment for Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Renunciation alone will not help us. There-

fore Kuntidevī prays: *tvayi me 'nanya-viṣayā*. She prays that her attraction be constantly drawn unto Kṛṣṇa without being diverted to anything else.

In this material world there are *jñānīs* and *karmīs*. The *karmīs* are fools who unnecessarily work very hard, and the *jñānīs* are those who, when a little elevated, think, "Why work so hard? So many things are not required. Why accumulate so much money and food and so much false prestige?" The *jñānī* thinks in this way. The *bhakta*, however, is beyond the *karmī* and the *jñānī*. *Jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam*. The *karmī* has many desires, and the *jñānī* tries to get rid of all desires, but desirelessness can be possible only when we desire to serve Kṛṣṇa. Otherwise it is not

possible to get rid of desire. As *bhaktas*, we should have no desires for *jñāna* and *karma*. We should be without attachment for material things, but we must have attachment for Kṛṣṇa. In this way our detachment will be fixed.

We must cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness favorably. This means thinking of how Kṛṣṇa will be satisfied. We must always think of Kṛṣṇa, just like the *gopīs*. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness of the *gopīs* was perfect because they had no other desire but to try to please Kṛṣṇa. That is perfection. Therefore Caitanya Mahāprabhu recommends: *ramyā kācid upāsānā vraja-vadhū-vargeṇa yā kalpitā* There is no better process by which to worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead than that method adopted by the *gopīs*.

The *gopīs* had no desire other than to satisfy Kṛṣṇa. All of the *gopīs* tried to satisfy Him, including the elder *gopīs*, Yaśodā and her friends, and so also did the elderly *gopas*, Nanda Mahārāja, Kṛṣṇa's brother and His friends of the same age, the boys and girls of Vṛndāvana. Everyone tried to satisfy Kṛṣṇa—even the cows, the flowers, the fruits and the water in Vṛndāvana. This is because everything in Vṛndāvana is spiritual; nothing is material.

We should understand the difference between spiritual and material. Material means “no living symptoms,” and spiritual means “all living symptoms.” Both the trees in the spiritual world and those in the material world are living entities, but in trees here the living symptoms are absent. A human being is also a living entity, and the devotees in the spiritual world are also living entities, but in the human beings who are not Kṛṣṇa conscious the real symptoms of life are absent.

Actually there is no other consciousness but Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And that consciousness is spiritual. Thus even while in this material world if we simply increase our Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we will live in the spiritual world. If we live in the temple, we live in the spiritual world because in the temple there is no business other than Kṛṣṇa consciousness. There are so many engagements carried out for Kṛṣṇa. Those

who strictly follow the regulations of Kṛṣṇa consciousness actually live in the spiritual world, not the material world. We may think we are living in New York, Los Angeles or elsewhere, but we are actually living in Vaikuṅṭha.

It is a question of consciousness. A bug may sit on the same seat with the spiritual master, but because the spiritual master has developed consciousness and the bug does not, they are different. They may be sitting in the same place, but the bug remains a bug, and the spiritual master remains the spiritual master. The position in space may remain the same, just as we may remain in the material world or the spiritual world, but if our Kṛṣṇa consciousness is strong, we are not in the material world.

Thus renunciation by itself, the simple giving up of worldly things, is not sufficient. Renunciation may be a helpful process, but it will not help absolutely. When we increase our attachment for Kṛṣṇa, our renunciation will be perfect. As we increase attachment for Kṛṣṇa, attachment for this material world will automatically diminish. Attachment for Kṛṣṇa and the material world cannot go hand in hand. If a woman is attached to two men—her husband and her paramour—she cannot maintain her attachment for both. Her attachment will increase for her paramour. Although she may work at her husband's home very nicely, her mind will be attached to her paramour, and she will think, “When will I meet him tonight?” In the same way, if we increase our attachment for Kṛṣṇa, detachment or renunciation of this material world will automatically come.

Thus Kuntīdevī prays to Kṛṣṇa that He may grant her His mercy by which she can become attached to Him. We cannot increase our attachment for Kṛṣṇa without Kṛṣṇa's mercy. We cannot become devotees without Kṛṣṇa's mercy; therefore we simply have to serve Kṛṣṇa, for by service Kṛṣṇa is satisfied.

Kṛṣṇa does not require anyone's service, for He is perfect in Himself. However, if we give Him service wholeheartedly and sincerely, then, by His mercy, we will make advancement. *Sevonmukhe hi jihvādau svayam eva*

sphuraty adaḥ. God will reveal Himself to us. We cannot see God with these blunt eyes. How then, can we see Him? *Premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti*. We have to smear our eyes with the ointment of love; then Kṛṣṇa will reveal Himself. Kṛṣṇa will actually come in front of us.

When Dhruva Mahārāja was undergoing penance and meditating upon the form of Viṣṇu within his heart, the Viṣṇu form suddenly disappeared, and his meditation broke. Upon opening his eyes, Dhruva Mahārāja immediately saw Viṣṇu before him. Thus Kṛṣṇa is there. Like Dhruva Mahārāja, we should always think of Kṛṣṇa, and when we attain perfection we will see Kṛṣṇa before us. This is the process. We should not be too hasty. We should wait for the mature time. Of course, it is good to be eager to see Kṛṣṇa, but we should not become discouraged if we do not see Him immediately. If a woman gets married and wants a child immediately, she will be disappointed. It is not possible to have a child immediately. She must wait. Similarly, just because we engage ourselves in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we cannot expect to see Kṛṣṇa immediately. But we must have faith that we will see Him. We must have firm faith that because we are engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness we will be able to see Kṛṣṇa face to face. But we should not be disappointed. We should simply go on with our Kṛṣṇa conscious activities, and the time will come when we will see Kṛṣṇa, just as Kuntīdevī sees Him face to face. There is no doubt about this.

Kuntīdevī addresses Kṛṣṇa as *madhupati*. Kṛṣṇa has thousands of names, and the name *madhupati* indicates that He killed the demon Madhu. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is likened to a river, but not an ordinary river. It is like the River Ganges, which is very pure and directly connected to Kṛṣṇa. Kuntīdevī prays that just as the River Ganges flows toward the sea, her attraction will flow incessantly to touch Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. This is called *ananya-bhakti*, unalloyed devotion. Thus Kuntīdevī prays that her attraction for Kṛṣṇa will flow without hindrance. This should also be our prayer. ❏

Avoiding Wrong Turns on the Path of Knowledge

by His Holiness **Hṛdayānanda dāsa Gosvāmī**

[Editor's note: This is an extract from questions and answers that followed a lecture by His Holiness Hṛdayānanda dāsa Gosvāmī at the University of Florida.]



Photo: Muralivadana dāsa

Hṛdayānanda dāsa Gosvāmī: If we accept the arguments of so-called *yogīs* that no matter what we do we will all merge into the same point, there is no question of free will because we would all be compelled to come together, although we are acting and desiring differently. And without free will, what is the use of liberation? Liberation is meaningless without free will. Therefore the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, advises us to surrender freely to Him. But if we are stubborn like asses and want to worship someone other than Kṛṣṇa, we will get an inferior result.

Question: But in *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa Himself says, "Everyone is on the Lord's path in all respects." Therefore it seems to me that although everyone may appear to be on a different path, actually we are all on the same one path.

HDG: Yes, but you have not given the complete quotation. The other part of that verse says, *ye yathā māṁ prapadyante tāṁs tathaiva bhajāmy aham*: "I reward all men proportionately as they surrender to Me." If things were all the same, as *you* say, there would be no proportionate exchange. Actually, we should examine this concept of a "path." We should study this analogy. Let's say there's a

pathway going all the way from Miami to New York City. That is a path also. But if you examine this path at any moment, you will find perhaps ten thousand cars on this highway. But are there any two cars in exactly the same position? Can you say that any two cars are exactly at the same point? Of course not! And the argument that they will all end up together is also false because some cars are going one way and some are going the opposite way. Similarly, any sane man can see that living beings are all in different situations in different species of life. And just as cars go in different directions, some people are elevating themselves, and others are becoming degraded. Nowhere in the world do we see that people are automatically becoming perfect. Actually, the world is becoming more and more nasty, but although everyone is worried and unhappy, blind and lazy so-called spiritualists go on assuring people, "There's no need to worry. Just be happy. Everything will automatically be all right."

Another practical observation is that on a highway there are many exits, and very few cars take a road to the farthest point. For example, on the highway leaving Miami many cars will stop at Atlanta; others will stop at Washington, others at Baltimore and others at Philadelphia, but very few will take the road to the end.

Similarly, almost everyone exits prematurely from the *yoga* system. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says that hardly anyone finishes the path. Many people exit prematurely from the *yoga* path to chase the illusion of becoming God. Others exit to indulge in material sense gratification. And others consider mere contentment the perfection of life, although anyone can see that many dumb animals are also content.

But according to Kṛṣṇa and all other authorities, that is not the perfection of *yoga*. Actual perfection lies in returning to our original eternal positions as servants of Kṛṣṇa. If someone wants to argue that merely performing gross bodily exercises or silent meditation can be equal to directly surrendering unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead and directly serving Him twenty-four hours a day in *bhakti-yoga*, he may argue, but he is a first-class fool, with no knowledge of actual *yoga* and its purpose.

So we accept that there is only one path, but that does not mean that we can immediately jump to conclusions and flatter ourselves that we are perfect. There is only one path, but that path stretches a long, long way—all the way from Kṛṣṇaloka, the highest planet in the spiritual sky, down to the wretched Pātālaloka, the lowest planet within this universe. That one path winds its way up from the pit of this nasty material world, up through the antimaterial Vaikuṅṭha

Hṛdayānanda dāsa Gosvāmī, a devotee in the renounced order, is now on a speaking tour of colleges and universities in the midwestern United States.

planets, and all the way up to Kṛṣṇaloka and the transcendental forest where Kṛṣṇa dances with the *gopīs* in the moonlight.

It is natural for modern fools to flatter themselves that they are automatically going to the highest point regardless of their qualifications, but our practical observations of ourselves and others cannot justify this lazy and self-aggrandizing attitude. We find many people in difficulty, and often their difficulty is increasing—unhappy people whose unhappiness increases daily. It is rare to find someone actually elevating himself. In this age of quarrel, Kali-yuga, we are naturally inclined to be lazy, and we are always eager to get something for nothing and cheat someone. But we should give up wishfully thinking we will automatically become perfect. We should try to deal with our situation honestly.

Our actual situation is that we are eternal parts and parcels of Kṛṣṇa. But we are now conditioned by material nature. Being part of God, however, we do have minute independence, and we can exercise our independence by surrendering to Kṛṣṇa and in that way releasing ourselves from this dilemma.

On the other hand, the attempt to avoid the ominous repercussions of our sinful life merely by wishfully thinking that we are God, or that our sinful activities may be offered to God, will only prolong our entanglement and the stupor of our material life. We should admit just what we want—and take it! If someone wants Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme, let him say it directly, chant it directly and accept it directly. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Therefore Kṛṣṇa summarized the entire issue of spiritual life by saying that worshipers who pray to demigods such as Brahmā and Śiva for material benedictions are dispatched to the planets of the demigods, whereas worshipers of ghosts and spirits also become ghosts and spirits. And those who offer everything to the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, live with Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa indicates that those who worship something other than God are going backwards on the path. The Lord says, *pravṛtīm ca nivṛtīm ca janā na vidur āsurāḥ*: “Those who are demons do not know what is to be done and what is not to be done.” So how can we argue that everything gets the same result? If we want to see Kṛṣṇa, God, face to face, we should focus intensely on that object.

Question: But I don’t see any need to worship an external God like Kṛṣṇa. To my way of thinking, since everyone has the same divine spark within, I can also be God.

HDG: Yes, we may say we are God because things are easier said than done. But by my say-so can I become God so whimsically? How does an ordinary man become God? If I can collect a band of naive followers, then I become an incarnation by their votes. That is the democratic spirit: incarnations of the people and by the people. But that is nonsense. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa teaches us that we can know the authentic incarnations by consulting Vedic literature, where the incarnations of Kṛṣṇa are carefully catalogued. Kṛṣṇa is called “Urukrama” because whenever He incarnates He performs wonderful activities impossible for an ordinary man. But pseudo-incarnations never do

anything wonderful. Therefore any intelligent man who studies the authoritative literature will not be cheated. But if we audaciously ignore the revealed scriptures, we can be cheated very easily.

Question: I don’t see why we should accept any God beyond our own selves. Each person has to have his own realization, not just read about the realization of others. I have to be my own God.

HDG: Yes, you may want to be God. But what can you do? For example, if someone comes here to purchase a car from you and gives you a check for five thousand dollars, what do you immediately say to him? This is business. What’s the first thing you say to him?

Response: Credit references. . .

HDG: Yes! Credit references. “Let me call your bank and check this out.” Because one has to be polite in business, we say, “Oh, it’s not that I don’t trust you, but it’s just our company policy. Let me call your bank and check your credit references.” Because we don’t want to be cheated. Similarly, if someone claims to be God, we don’t want to be cheated and waste our lives serving an imposter.

But if a man comes and gives us a check and argues with us, “No, you cannot call my bank, nor have I any credit references, but still you must take the check,” will you take it?

Response: You see, what I mean is. . .

HDG: No, no, answer the question. Will you take the check with no bank references?

Response: No.

HDG: So if someone comes and claims, “I am God,” we say, “Yes, probably you are the Supreme Personality, but our policy is that we want to check your credit; we want to see what you can do.” The activities and qualifications of God are all mentioned in the revealed scriptures.

Response: The scriptures give some idea, but they’re limited because they’re words. You have to get knowledge for yourself. The scriptures are material.

HDG: So first you have to concede my first point—that you can’t act like God. But why do you say the scriptures are material? What is the evidence that Vedic literature is material? Material means temporary. There’s no evidence that Vedic literature is temporary. It is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that Kṛṣṇa spoke this literature to Brahmā billions of years ago (*tene brahmā hṛdā*). Brahmā was supposed to create the universe, but he was faltering until Kṛṣṇa delivered the Vedic scriptures to him from within his heart. Then he could do it. And the *Bhāgavatam* describes very clearly that long before the creation, personified Vedic knowledge existed. Great saintly persons accept these descriptions and the Vedic literature is still going strong all over the world. So where is the evidence that it has any cessation? Actually, there is no evidence of a beginning to it and no evidence of its end. “Material” refers to temporary things that have a beginning and end. But where is the evidence that *Bhagavad-gītā* is temporary?

Response: Do you really think it’s eternal? After all, it’s just printed on temporary paper with temporary ink. In a few years it will just be dust.

HDG: That is nonsense. *Bhagavad-gītā* is not paper and ink. *Bhagavad-gītā* is a sound vibration. For example, I am speaking, and you can write down on paper what I'm saying and distribute it. That's another thing. But where is the evidence that *Bhagavad-gītā* has a beginning or end?

Response: It is said that the sage Vyāsadeva wrote it 5,000 years ago.

HDG: No! I have already given the example that if I speak and you record what I say and type it out, that does not mean that the day you type it out is the day the words were first spoken. These are not very substantial objections.

Question: But how do you know that Kṛṣṇa was anything more than an ordinary man?

HDG: If Kṛṣṇa was ordinary, why then did He act extraordinarily? Why did all the contemporary authorities say that Kṛṣṇa is extraordinary? People argue that these descriptions can be psychologically explained. But actually such faithless demons can be psychologically explained. These fools are simply envious of Kṛṣṇa. All the saintly authorities declare that Kṛṣṇa is extraordinary, but the demons convince themselves that He is a myth. Why do they do that? If they are not sure, they should investigate. But they cannot stand to investigate Kṛṣṇa consciousness because Kṛṣṇa is actually the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Response: But that is just your interpretation.

HDG: No! It is not *our* interpretation. It is Arjuna's interpretation, Asita's, Devala's, Nārada's. It is the opinion of all the great transcendental authorities. They all insist that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So if the great say yes and the fools say no, whom shall we believe?

For example, if I want to invest some money and a highly successful businessman says to invest but a poor beggar says not to invest, why should I listen to the poor beggar? If I do, I will also become a beggar. Similarly, who are these people that deny Kṛṣṇa? What is their caliber? It is well known that they cannot control their senses. They have no definite transcendental knowledge, nor any experience of real Vedic study. So what is their caliber?

Who are these petty critics compared to great souls like Nārada and Vyāsadeva? Vyāsadeva could simply sit down alone, without a tinge of material desire, in a secluded place, and spontaneously sing hundreds of thousands of perfectly composed Sanskrit verses so beautiful that five thousand years later they are studied everywhere in the world. And his language is so sophisticated that scholars cannot surpass it. All the philosophies of the earth can be found within these verses, and at the end Vyāsadeva defeated all other philosophies to establish Kṛṣṇa above everything as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Vyāsadeva could pinpoint in detail our modern condition of life. Which of these petty critics could dare presume exactly what life will be like five thousand years from now? Actually, despite their lofty notions on life, many modern philosophers and scientists have personal habits like dogs and cats. They are simply addicted to material sense gratification. But Vyāsadeva was pure, uncontaminated. He was not a hypocrite; he was saintly. He was ecstatic twenty-four hours a

day. So who are these so-called critics who dare to challenge the transcendental status of Vyāsadeva? Kṛṣṇa demonstrated that He is God, and all the greatest spiritual authorities confirmed it.

Response: Kṛṣṇa may have been a very wonderful man, but. . .

HDG: If Kṛṣṇa was wonderful, why should He have misunderstood His own position? Kṛṣṇa said over and over, "I am the Supreme God." But you say Kṛṣṇa is a man. So if Kṛṣṇa misunderstood Himself, how was He wonderful? Someone who does not know his own position cannot be wonderful. A man becomes wonderful by self-realization. So if Kṛṣṇa is wonderful, we should accept Kṛṣṇa's statement that He is God.

Response: Kṛṣṇa may have understood Himself, but today we don't understand His real teachings.

HDG: That is still nonsense. Kṛṣṇa spoke very clearly. Kṛṣṇa said, "I am God." *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* explains that Kṛṣṇa spoke *Bhagavad-gītā* for the least intelligent people. ("*Iti bhāratam ākhyānam kṛpayā muninā kṛtam.*") So if Kṛṣṇa was speaking for the least intelligent people, which is what we are in this age, why should He speak in riddles? Riddles are for clever people. Riddles and esoteric language are not meant for slow learners. The *Bhāgavatam* specifically states that because in this age we cannot understand the esoteric and sophisticated language of the *Vedas*, Vyāsadeva included *Bhagavad-gītā* in the *Mahābhārata*. According to the simple and clear language of the *Gītā*, Kṛṣṇa is the Original Person, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Response: There are many editions of *Bhagavad-gītā*.

HDG: There are not many editions according to Kṛṣṇa. One must understand *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is, as Kṛṣṇa spoke it, without adding or subtracting anything. One should therefore hear the message of *Bhagavad-gītā* from a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, its original speaker.

To understand God, one needs intelligent discrimination. But people do not understand this. For example, the schools say, "If we allow you to teach Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then we must allow everyone to come and teach his idea." But that is such foolishness! Why don't they argue this way in hiring their faculty? If there are one hundred applications to join the faculty and one man is accepted, does everyone have to be accepted? If a university admits one student, must it then admit every student, without evaluation or limitation? Is that necessary? If the cafeteria serves one kind of food, does it have to serve every kind of food? The answer is no in every case. They will discriminate between different students, teachers and foods according to their quality. If I use one book in a course, do I have to use every book in the world? No! Then where do they get this foolish idea of not discriminating? Why do they artificially mention it in our case? Discrimination based on ignorance is useless, but discrimination based on quality is necessary. The professor says that if he allows us to teach, he has to allow everyone. But why does he marry one girl and not another? Why? What is your answer? Why doesn't he marry all the girls? In every other field they discriminate. In the choice of books, faculty, administration, architecture, landscaping.

Even the cafeteria discriminates. Why then in our case do they suddenly say, “No discrimination. If you come, everyone must come”?

Response: Because you are a religion.

HDG: Yes, they say, “Because it is a religion, it cannot be proven.” But they teach poetry, don’t they? In the field of poetry, how can anything be proven? How can you prove that one poem is better than another?

Response: Simply by taste.

HDG: But how can you *prove* it? How can you prove that Shakespeare is better than an ordinary man?

Response: You can’t actually prove it because it all depends on your personal taste.

HDG: But still they make judgments.

Response: No, the schools are there to educate, not to make judgments.

HDG: Yes, they *do* make judgments because they offer courses in Shakespeare in every school, but there are no courses in your writings or mine. If they don’t judge, then why do they offer certain specific courses in the literature department? Do they offer courses in Shakespeare?

Response: Yes, but. . .

HDG: Do they offer courses in your writings? [laughter] Why not? Do they teach a course in Beethoven?

Response: Yes.

HDG: But will they offer a course in your singing? Why Beethoven and not others? Why Shakespeare and not others? What is your answer?

Response: It’s because of personal taste.

HDG: No! It’s not personal taste. Shakespeare is actually better. Beethoven is actually better. There’s a difference in quality, and that quality can be ascertained. But to justify qualitative distinctions, we have to understand the absolute value. That is Kṛṣṇa. If you do not know that there is a central, absolute value, you will think that everything is relative.

Response: Then why will they not accept your knowledge?

HDG: Yes, that is what I’m asking you. Actually, they are cheating. By objective study, anyone can see that we are presenting the most elaborate and expansive philosophy of God.

Response: But religion cannot be proven empirically.

HDG: What is this empirical nonsense? If you want to experience with your senses, you must remember that there are different qualities of senses. For example, a dog cannot see certain things a man can see. A dog will not appreciate Beethoven, but that does not mean that Beethoven is to be rejected. Then why should intelligent people reject Kṛṣṇa to satisfy doggish men who don’t have purified senses with which to see Him?

Actually, there is a standard of quality within this universe. There are three modes of material nature. Some poetry is in the mode of ignorance, some is in the mode of passion, and some is in the mode of goodness. Everything—religion, philosophy, food, action—is within these three modes of nature. So you discriminate between ignorance, passion and goodness. But why not discriminate between

goodness and transcendence? What is your answer?

Response: Well, these other things can be understood. . .

HDG: Kṛṣṇa can also be understood. But not with dull senses, not with a blunt mind. We have to purify our intelligence. Because Kṛṣṇa is subtle, not gross, we have to elevate ourselves. Then we can understand Him. Then we can perceive Him directly. Kṛṣṇa says: “This religion is the perfection because it gives direct perception of the self.” Therefore the universities should give the students the opportunity to develop this perception.

Response: But the university is supported by the State, and the State cannot support any religious movement.

HDG: Then what is the definition of religious? That God is involved? Why can the government support everything, but not God?

Response: Separation of Church and State. . .

HDG: You do not know what separation of Church and State is. The government cannot impose a particular religion by force, but it must encourage everything that is beneficial for the welfare of the citizens. The State cannot tell someone at gunpoint, “You must chant Hare Kṛṣṇa,” and separation of Church and State was meant to insure that such coercion would never be used. But the modern idea is a perversion. The government must make propaganda for God and spiritual life, otherwise the country will become wretched and vicious, just as modern nations are now becoming. Otherwise why is propaganda on the currency—“In God We Trust”? The founding fathers never meant that the State was to separate itself by ignoring God. They never meant that. Why did they make propaganda for God on the currency?

Response: Because it does not indicate any particular religion.

HDG: Yes. But we are not a particular religion. We are not sectarian. We are presenting a philosophy and technique that brings one to the point of God consciousness, which nullifies all designations. Christian, Hindu and all such designations are dissolved by God consciousness, so how can God consciousness be a designation?

We are not imposing anything upon people who don’t want it. For example, if the government offers a course in geology, does that mean that it’s forcing everyone to become a geologist? No. And besides that, geology is accepted as standard knowledge. You may argue that God’s existence has not been proven, but neither has the existence of the atomic particle, except by its symptoms. And anyone can know God by His symptoms. The government recognizes the need for geological science, but the government leaders are utter fools if they do not recognize the need for a spiritual science. If we offer Kṛṣṇa consciousness in schools, how is that any more of an imposition than offering geology? If I offer a course in anthropology, am I forcing everyone to become an anthropologist? No. So the government should give us the facility to offer courses everywhere in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is not an imposition on anyone’s freedom, but it will give intelligent and serious students inquiring about the essential problems of life an opportunity to receive sublime and authoritative scientific answers. ☑

Breaking Through the Clouds

by Vanamāli dāsa

It was a big rock concert in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, attended by more than 100,000 people, a panorama of men and women sitting around on a green field, many of them turning on to drugs while waiting for the band to begin. Distributing *Back to Godhead*, I could see many people around me in the position I used to be in—depressed, despite having made all arrangements for pleasure through music and drugs—and this made me more eager to give everyone the transcendental knowledge of my spiritual master’s magazine.

I was approaching people on the field and exchanging a few words with them to convince them to take a *Back to Godhead*. One boy no older than sixteen came up and asked me, “Got any grass?”

“I don’t smoke,” I replied, “but here’s something better. Here, take one of these.”

“One of what?” he asked.

“It’s a magazine about *bhakti-yoga*. *Bhakti* means devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is a name of God. We’re passing them out for a small donation. Can you give something to help?”

“Sure, I’ll give you all the change I have,” he said, “which isn’t much.” He enthusiastically emptied out his pocket, and along with keys, guitar picks and some small sea shells, he found a quarter and handed it to me.

“Thanks a lot,” I said. “Take this magazine home and read it when you have some time in a thoughtful mood. This is a heavy magazine. Some of it you’ll understand and some you won’t, but I’m sure you’ll appreciate the ideas. You won’t be disappointed.” He smiled, and with mutual feelings of brotherhood, we parted, he with

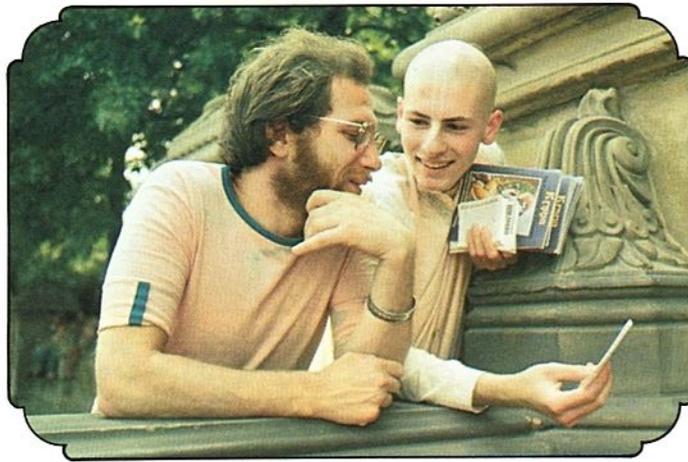


Photo: Bhārgava dāsa

his *Back to Godhead* and I with another opportunity to act in devotional service, *bhakti-yoga*.

Having been like them myself not long ago, I could easily identify with those taking part in the scene on the worn grass field. I remembered gathering with them at past concerts, waiting in anticipation and eagerness for a musical miracle to come and clear away the clouds of boredom. As I walked through the crowds, passing out magazines, the musicians onstage made last-minute preparations with the microphones and instruments, and the people in the crowd passed marijuana pipes from one to another in a mood of togetherness, exchanging jokes and smiles. But although it was all supposed to be very wonderful, to me it seemed ultimately a sad and depressing affair. I couldn’t see how any of this could make anyone really happy.

I recalled my old life clearly. I used to wake up each morning not knowing what to do besides go to school. I remembered how I used to watch television, take intoxicants and sleep. I had wasted so much valuable time! I used to talk on the telephone for hours. “What do you want to do tonight?” I would ask my friend.

“I don’t know,” he would answer. “What do you want to do?” and so on. And all the while I thought I was enjoying myself, I had never found anything worth doing. That knowledge was never taught in school; it remained unknown to me.

I remember when I first bought a *Back to Godhead* from a devotee in Times Square in New York City. The

first thing I read was an interview with Śrīla Prabhupāda in which he said: “Everyone is thinking, ‘There are so many problems I have to solve. I have to make this much money. I have to do this and that.’ But actually we have no such problems. We are manufacturing these problems. Our only real problem is how to accept Kṛṣṇa, God. And Kṛṣṇa is so kind that He says, ‘Yes, accept Me. Simply chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. I am yours.’ That’s all.” I had read it and thought, “Yes, how to accept Kṛṣṇa.”

“Hare Kṛṣṇa! Take one of these,” I chanted, approaching another boy and girl. “Kṛṣṇa is a name of God. It means ‘the highest pleasure.’ This world is His property; it belongs to Him. And we belong *with* Him in the spiritual sky. And here, this card invites you to our free Sunday *yoga* feasts.” A bearded boy looked straight at me with appreciation in his eyes and gave me a quarter to cover the cost of printing. “Thanks,” he said.

“Read it carefully,” I encouraged him. “It’s about what gives life meaning.”

“I’ve been meaning to get one of these,” he said. “Thanks again.”

I walked on, looking for the next person to whom to give a *Back to Godhead*, remembering slightly how it was when I was in that boy’s shoes, skeptical but open-minded enough for a chance. “Here, take one of these,” I continued. And I felt as if each magazine were a lightning bolt that could break the thickest cloud. I knew each magazine contained the transcendental knowledge of my spiritual master. ❧

Vanamāli dāsa leads a party of devotees from ISKCON’s Dallas center who travel all over the U.S.A. distributing Kṛṣṇa consciousness literature.

MEDITATION

in the age of quarrel

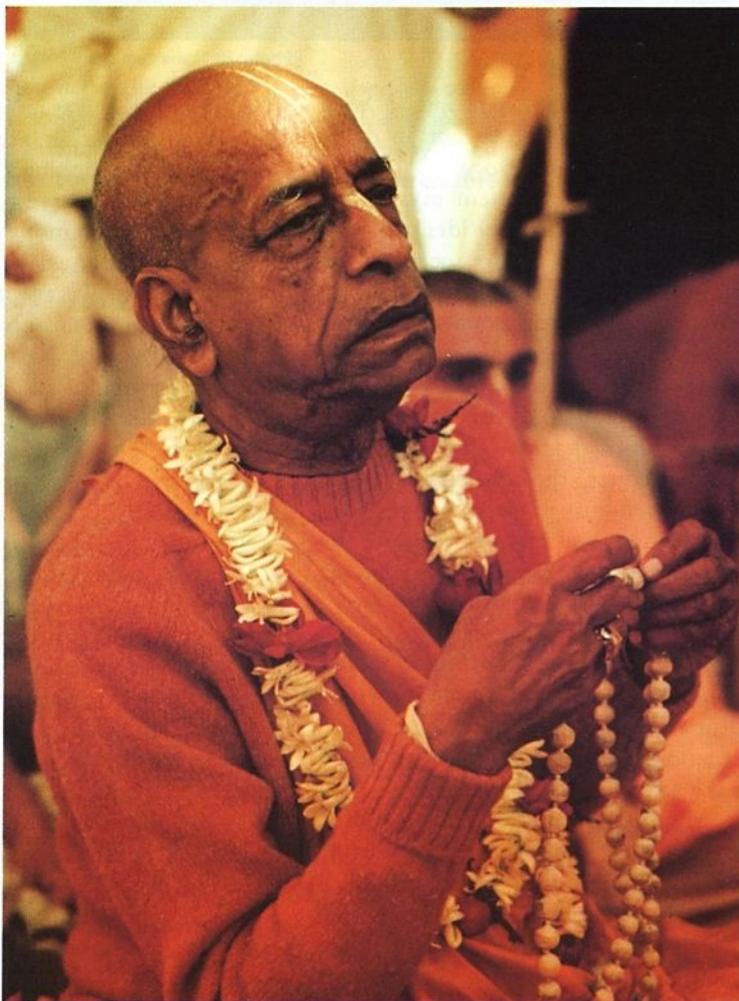


Photo: Yaduvara dāsa

by Hamsadūta dāsa

THE MEDITATION BUSINESS is flourishing. Soon, it appears, every suburban town will have its regular classes in *yoga* meditation for health and freedom from neuroses, and every college campus will have its *yogī* in residence. But despite the popularity of meditation as put forward by various *yogīs* and meditation societies, few people know the true meaning of meditation. According to the Vedic scriptures, the original source from which knowledge of *yoga* flows, most forms of meditation are virtually impossible to perform in the modern world, and therefore one should learn to meditate by the simple method of chanting and hearing the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*.

One may find the Vedic directions for true meditation in the Sixth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, which explains that the goal of meditation is to absorb the mind in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and enable one to see the transcendental four-armed form of Viṣṇu within his heart. This system of meditation entails many difficult austerities. One must sit in a rigid posture in a sacred and secluded place, completely control the body's urges for sensual gratification, and utterly renounce sex. The scriptures say that such meditation was indeed possible in Satya-yuga, an age long past when men lived for 100,000 years and the celebrated Vālmiki Muni, the author of the epic Rāmāyaṇa, meditated for 60,000 years to achieve perfection. But in the modern age, Kali-yuga, the Age of Quarrel, such meditation is practically impossible because there is no guarantee that one

Hamsadūta dāsa, *personal secretary for western Europe to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda*, first joined the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in 1967. He has recently organized the openings of Kṛṣṇa consciousness centers in Heidelberg, Munich and Stockholm.

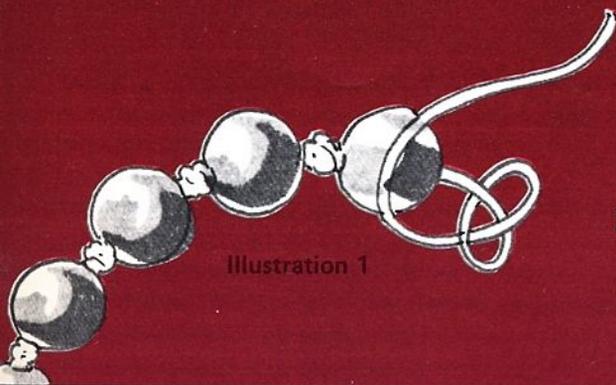


Illustration 1

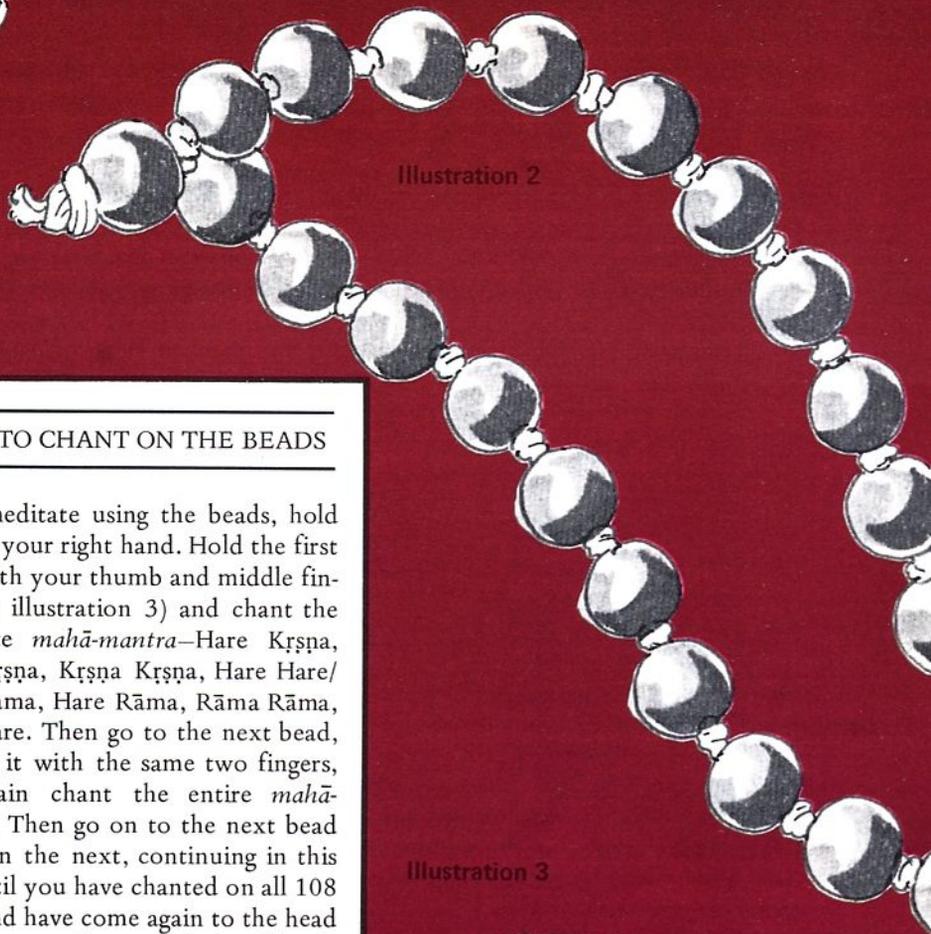


Illustration 2

will live for even sixty years. The so-called meditation now practiced in our modern cities may provide a lucrative business for the shrewd few who teach it, but in achieving the real goal of yogic meditation it has no practical value.

Despite the great difficulties of meditation in this age, however, the scriptures describe Kali-yuga's one great facility:

*kaler doṣa-nidhe rājann
asti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ
kīrtanād eva kṣṇasya
mukta-saṅgaḥ paraṁ vrajet*

"This age of Kali is an ocean of faults, but it offers one great advantage: in this age one can attain liberation simply by chanting the holy name of God." (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 12.3.51)

Therefore, those who are sentimentally meditating but do not know the true meaning of meditation should stop wasting their valuable time and chant the holy names of God as found in the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

HOW TO MAKE BEADS

One may chant either loudly so that others may also join in hearing and chanting, or softly on beads for personal meditation. For personal chanting, one may purchase beads in any hobby store. Tie a knot about six inches from the end of a long string, and then string 108 beads, tying a knot after each one (see illustration 1). Then pull the two ends of the string through one large head bead, making a total of 109, tie a tight knot right next to the head bead, and cut off the excess string (see illustration 2).

HOW TO CHANT ON THE BEADS

To meditate using the beads, hold them in your right hand. Hold the first bead with your thumb and middle finger (see illustration 3) and chant the complete *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Then go to the next bead, holding it with the same two fingers, and again chant the entire *mahā-mantra*. Then go on to the next bead and then the next, continuing in this way until you have chanted on all 108 beads and have come again to the head bead. Do not chant on the head bead. Turn the beads around and chant on them in the opposite direction, one after another. By chanting on all 108 beads, from one side of the head bead to the other, you will have completed one "round."

Although there are no hard and fast rules for chanting, if possible one should try to chant sixteen rounds daily and also give up the four habits of materialistic life: (1) eating meat, fish and eggs, (2) taking intoxicants such as liquor, coffee, tea and cigarettes, (3) indulging in illicit sex (sex performed outside of marriage or with contraceptives) and (4) gambling. To gain the greatest benefit from chanting, one should also read a portion of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* every day.

WHAT IS THE MAHĀ-MANTRA?

In Sanskrit, *mahā* means "great," *mana* means "mind," and *tra* means "deliverance." The *mahā-mantra*, therefore, is the "Great Chanting for Deliverance of the Mind." Especially in our complex modern society, many

Illustration 3



unwanted thoughts and anxieties cloud the mind. But the chanting of the holy names of God, or the *mahā-mantra*, cleanses the mind of all unwanted thoughts and simultaneously fixes it upon Kṛṣṇa, or God.

This fixing of the mind upon God is the basic principle of all meditation, and therefore vibration of the transcendental sound of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* is a simple, authorized and effective method of transcendental meditation. Although the Vedic scriptures recommend many different ways of meditation, such as *haṭha-yoga*, *rāja-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga*, they also conclusively state:

*harer nāma harer nāma
harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva
nāsty eva gatir anyathā*

“In this age of Kali there is no other way, no other way, no other way to achieve liberation than to chant the holy name, chant the holy name, chant the holy name of God.” (*Bṛhan-nāradya Purāṇa*)

WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF CHANTING THE MAHĀ-MANTRA?

There are three stages of elevation in the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. In the first stage, the chanting polishes the mirror of the mind. Like a mirror, the mind has reflective power. It is meant to form clear pictures from the sensations that strike it. But because contact with matter has covered our minds with material contamination, just as dust might cover a mirror, our reflections are no longer clear. The transcendental sound of the holy name of God cleanses the dust from the mirror of the mind, and this automatically brings one to the second stage in chanting.

In the second stage, the chanting frees one from the symptoms of material existence, namely, hankering and lamentation. In material life one hankers for what he does not have—“I want a car, I want a wife, I want money”—and he laments for what he has lost: “I’ve lost my car, I’ve lost my wife, I’ve lost my money,” etc. Regularly chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa frees one from such twofold anxieties and

elevates one to the liberated stage described as follows in *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.54):

*brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā
na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu
mad-bhaktim labhate parām*

“One who is transcendently situated at once realizes the Supreme Spirit. He never laments nor desires to have anything. Being equally disposed to every living entity, he attains the highest devotional perfection.”

In the third stage of chanting, one attains an all-blissful life (*ānandamayo bhyaśāt*). When situated on this platform, one is never disturbed by anything. *Bhagavad-gītā* describes this as follows: “In the stage of perfection called *samādhi*, or trance, one’s mind is completely restrained from material activities by practice of *yoga*. This is characterized by one’s ability to see the self by the pure mind and to relish and rejoice in the self. In that joyous state, one is situated in boundless transcendental happiness and enjoys himself 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 the greatest difficulty. This indeed is actual freedom from all miseries arising from material contact.” (Bg. 6.20-23)

THE ABSOLUTE NATURE OF THE HOLY NAME

God is absolute, and therefore anything directly connected with Him—such as His holy name, form, pastimes, paraphernalia and entourage—is identical with Him. In the material world of duality, things are different from their names. For example, a thirsty man’s calling out “Water! Water! Water!” will not satisfy his thirst because the name water and the substance water are completely different. But in the absolute world there are no such differences; there a thing and its name are one. Therefore simply by vibrating the holy name of God, one associates with God directly.

In the material world we experience

this in a crude way when we associate with someone thousands of miles away by radio waves. This same principle works in the spiritual world, but it works perfectly, bringing one beyond the limits of time and space.

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, recommended that one chant the *mahā-mantra* twenty-four hours a day and thus make one’s life perfect. He said: “One can chant the holy name of God in a humble state of mind, thinking himself lower than the straw in the street. One should be more tolerant than a tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige and always ready to offer all respects to others. In such a humble state of mind, one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly.”

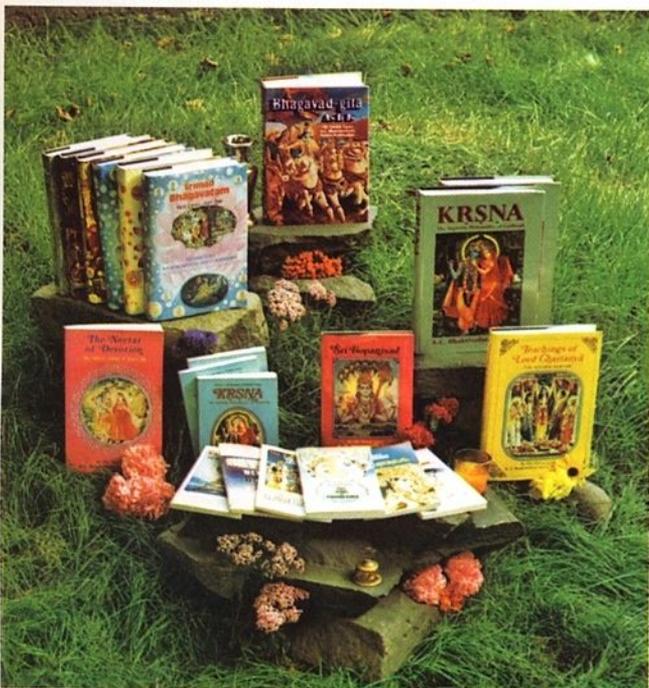
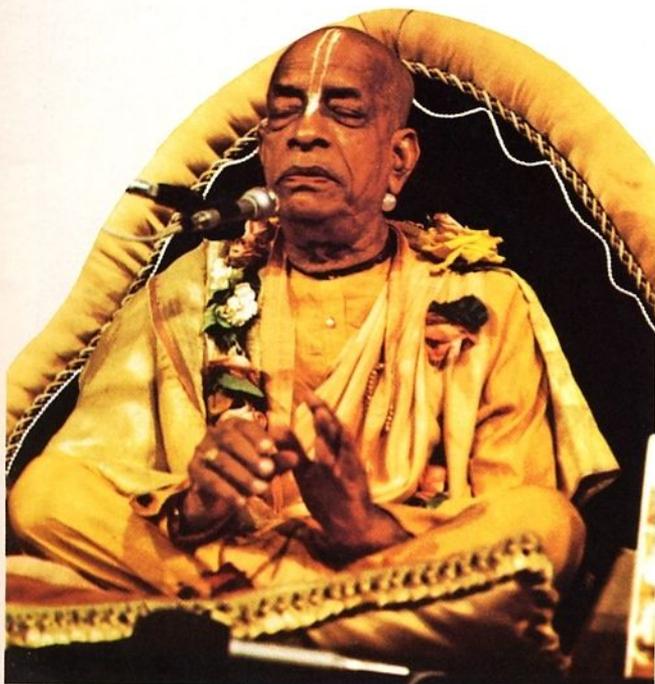
Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa gradually detaches one from material concepts and brings one to *samādhi*, a trance in which one realizes the Supersoul (*Paramātmā*) through his transcendental mind and intelligence, without misidentifying himself with the Supreme. This is the goal of *yoga*. A living being is called *jīvātmā* (the atomic self), and Kṛṣṇa is called *Paramātmā* (the Supreme Self). In perfect Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one realizes the eternal relationship between the atomic soul and the Supreme Soul, Kṛṣṇa.

In this age, therefore, the best method of practicing *yoga* is to chant and hear the holy names of God, as found in the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. This is the beginning of *bhakti-yoga*, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness. There are no hard and fast rules for chanting; one can chant at any time or in any place while at the same time continuing to work in his present occupation. One need not give up his job or family because the chanting automatically purifies one’s life, adjusting unwanted and unnecessary difficulties. The authorized scriptures of the world’s civilized nations give various names for God, but the Vedic scriptures especially recommend the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. We therefore humbly request you to chant this *mahā-mantra* and be happy. ❧

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“One of the *gopīs*, namely Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, was so much absorbed in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa by dint of Her personal touch with Him that She actually began to talk with a bumblebee. While the other *gopīs* were talking with Kṛṣṇa’s messenger Uddhava, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī took that

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