

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. 68



How the
Teachings of
Lord Caitanya
Came to the
Western World

page 6

Lord Kṛṣṇa's
Prasāda

page 12

Secretary
to a
Pure Devotee

page 24



The Mexico City Temple of
the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

In Mexico City
And Around the World

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare

A few blocks from the house of Mexico's president lies the Mexico City Hare Kṛṣṇa Temple, one of the many centers of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness that have appeared in Latin America in recent years.

In the ancient Vedic scripture *Bhagavad-gītā*, as in the Bible also, it is said that Kṛṣṇa, or God, is the father of everyone. Therefore, it is very natural that Latin Americans, like their northern brothers, are taking to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and chanting the holy names Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

This chanting is a call to the Supreme Lord and His supreme energy to lift us out of material consciousness and reestablish us in our natural position as His eternal loving servants. The consciousness of eternal service to the Supreme Lord is natural for every living being, and it is transcendental to all nationalistic and sectarian boundaries. The chanting is simple and universal. And it is authorized as the most effective means of self-realization for this age by the Vedic literature, which gives in-depth knowledge of *bhakti-yoga*, or the science of devotional service. His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Prabhupāda, who is the founder and *ācārya* (spiritual master) of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, has brought this science to the West so that sincere and intelligent people may take advantage of this easy and sublime method of reviving their eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord. The articles inside *Back to Godhead* will tell you more about the philosophy and activities of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

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BACK TO GODHEAD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

FOUNDER

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

His Divine Grace

A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda

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PRONUNCIATION OF SANSKRIT WORDS

Sanskrit words and names in *Back to Godhead* are spelled according to a system that scholars throughout the world use to show how to pronounce 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 *pike*. The vowel *rī* is pronounced like the *er* in the English word *fiber*. The *cī* is pronounced as in the English word *chair*. The aspirated consonants (*ch*, *jh*, *dh*, etc.) are pronounced as in *staunch-heart*, *hedge-hog* and *red-hot*. The two aspirants *ṣ* and *ṣ* are like the English *sh*; *s* is like the *s* in *sun*. So pronounce *Kṛṣṇa* as KRISHNA and *Caitanya* as CHAITANYA.

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ON THE COVER

When Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Godhead, appeared on earth, He sometimes played like a small child to enjoy pastimes with His devotees. Here He is pictured accepting food from His pure devotee Yaśodā, who acts in the role of His mother. Although 5,000 years have passed since then, even an ordinary devotee can offer food to the Lord (see page 12).

CONTENTS

Divine Culture 3

by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda

How the Teachings of Lord Caitanya Came to the Western World (part 2) 6

by His Holiness Brahmānanda Svāmī

Lord Kṛṣṇa's Prasāda 12

by Viśakhā-devī-dāśī

Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa in Purity 17

by His Holiness Acyutānanda Svāmī

Secretary to a Pure Devotee 24

by His Holiness Satsvarūpa Gosvāmī

Kṛṣṇa Conscious Calendar 28

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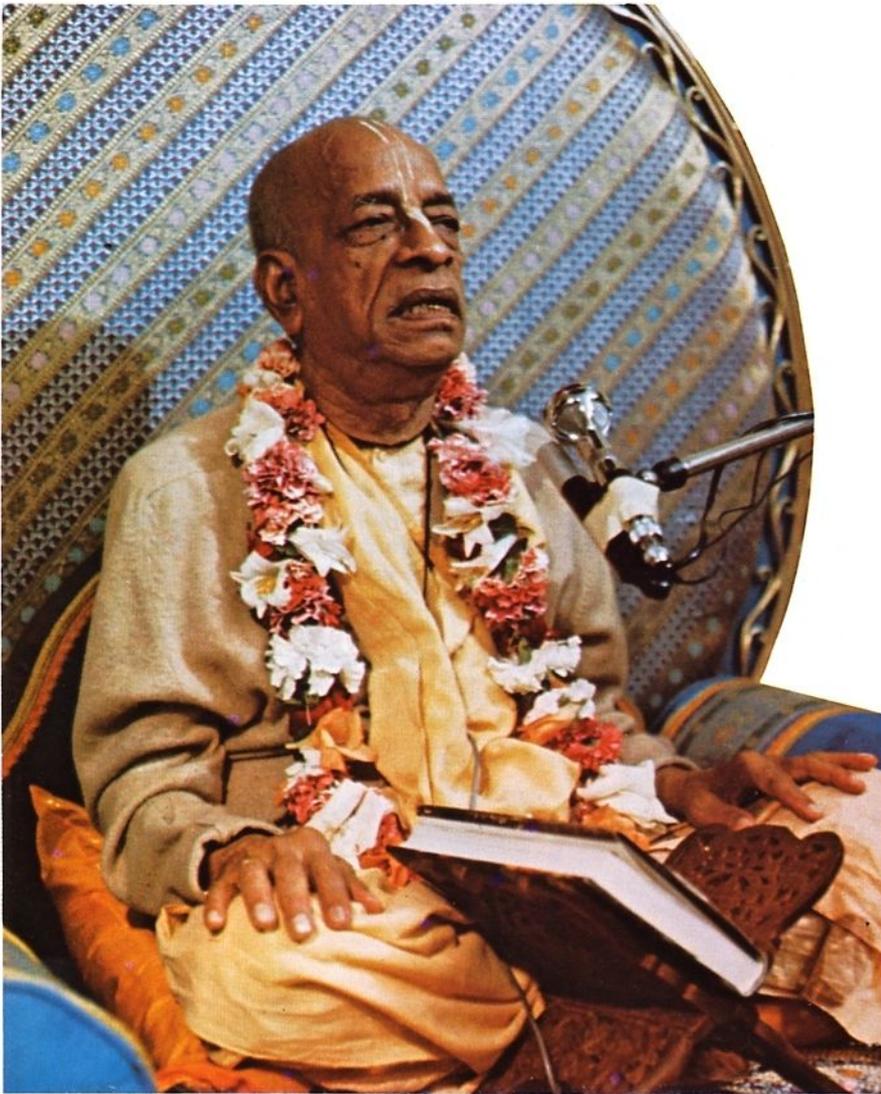
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by His Divine Grace

A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

There is a misconception that the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement represents the Hindu religion. In fact, however, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is in no way a faith or religion that seeks to defeat other faiths or religions. Rather, it is an essential cultural movement for the entire human society and does not consider any particular sectarian faith. This cultural movement is especially meant to educate people in how they can love God.

Sometimes Indians both inside and outside of India think that we are preaching the Hindu religion, but actually we are not. One will not find the word "Hindu" in *Bhagavad-gītā*. Indeed, there is no such word as "Hindu" in the entire Vedic literature. This word has been in-

troduced by the Muslims from provinces next to India, such as Afghanistan, Baluchistan and Persia. There is a river called "Sindhu" bordering the northwestern provinces of India, and since the Muslims there could not pronounce "Sindhu" properly, instead they called the river "Hindu," and the inhabitants of this tract of land they called "Hindus." In India, according to the Vedic language, the Europeans are called *mlecchas* or *yavanas*. Similarly, "Hindu" is a name given by the Muslims.

India's actual culture is described in *Bhagavad-gītā*, where it is stated that according to the different qualities or modes of nature, there are different types of men, who are generally classified into four social orders and four spiritual or-

DIVINE CULTURE

ders. This system of social and spiritual division is known as *varṇāśrama-dharma*. The four *varṇas*, or social orders, are *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra*. The four *āśramas*, or spiritual orders, are *brahmacarya*, *grhastha*, *vānaprastha* and *sannyāsa*. The *varṇāśrama* system is described in the Vedic scriptures known as the *Purāṇas*. The goal of this institution of Vedic culture is to educate every man for advancement in knowledge of Kṛṣṇa, or God. That is the entire Vedic program.

When Lord Caitanya talked with the great devotee Rāmānanda Rāya, the Lord asked him, "What is the basic principle of human life?" Rāmānanda Rāya answered that human civilization begins when *varṇāśrama-dharma* is accepted. Before coming to the standard of *varṇāśrama-dharma* there is no question of human civilization. Therefore, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is trying to establish this right system of human civilization, which is known as Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or *daiva-varṇāśrama*—divine culture.

In India, the *varṇāśrama* system has now been taken in a perverted way, and thus a man born in the family of a *brāhmaṇa* (the highest social order) claims that he should be accepted as a *brāhmaṇa*. But this claim is not accepted by the *śāstra* (scripture). One's forefather may have been a *brāhmaṇa* according to *gotra*, or the family hereditary order, but real *varṇāśrama-dharma* is based on the factual *quality* one has attained, regardless of birth or heredity. Therefore, we are not preaching the present-day system of the

Hindus, especially those who are under the influence of Śaṅkarācārya, for Śaṅkarācārya taught that the Absolute Truth is impersonal and thus he indirectly denied the existence of God.

Śaṅkarācārya's mission was special; he appeared to reestablish the Vedic influence after the influence of Buddhism. Because Buddhism was patronized by Emperor Aśoka, 2600 years ago the Buddhist religion practically pervaded all of India. According to the Vedic literature, Buddha is an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa who had a special power and who appeared for a special purpose. His system of thought or faith was accepted widely, but Buddha rejected the authority of the *Vedas*. While Buddhism was spreading, the Vedic culture was stopped both in India and in other places. Therefore, since Śaṅkarācārya's only aim was to drive away Buddha's system of philosophy, he introduced a system called Māyāvāda.

Strictly speaking, Māyāvāda philosophy is atheism, for it is a process in which one *imagines* that there is God. This Māyāvāda system of philosophy has been existing since time immemorial. The present Indian system of religion or culture is based on the Māyāvāda philosophy of Śaṅkarācārya, which is a compromise with Buddhist philosophy. According to Māyāvāda philosophy there actually is no God, or if God exists, He is impersonal and all-pervading and can therefore be imagined in any form. This conclusion is not in accord with the Vedic literature. That literature names many demigods who are worshiped for different purposes, but in every case the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead Viṣṇu, is accepted as the supreme controller. That is real Vedic culture.

The philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness does not deny the existence of God and the demigods, but Māyāvāda philosophy denies both; it maintains that neither the demigods nor God exists. For the Māyāvādīs, ultimately all is zero. They say that one may imagine any authority—whether Viṣṇu, Durgā, Lord Śiva or the sun-god—because these are the demigods generally worshiped in society. But the Māyāvāda philosophy does not in fact accept the existence of any of them. The Māyāvādīs say that because one cannot concentrate one's mind on the impersonal Brahman, one may therefore imagine any of these forms. This is a new system, called *pañcopāsanā*. It was introduced by Śaṅkarācārya, but *Bhagavad-gītā* does not teach such doctrines, and therefore they are not authoritative.

Bhagavad-gītā accepts the existence of the demigods. The demigods are described in the *Vedas*, and one cannot deny their existence, but they are not to be understood or worshiped according to the way of Śaṅkarācārya. The worship of demigods is rejected in *Bhagavad-gītā*. The *Gītā* clearly states:

*kāmais tais tair hr̥ta-jñānāḥ
prapadyante 'nya-devatāḥ
taṁ taṁ niyamam āsthāya
prakṛtyā niyatāḥ svayā*

“Those whose minds are distorted by material desires surrender unto demigods and follow the particular rules and regulations of worship according to their own natures.” (Bg. 7.20) Furthermore, in the Second Chapter of the *Gītā*, verse 44, Lord Kṛṣṇa states:

*bhogaśvarya-prasaktānāṁ
tayāpahṛta-cetasām
vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ
samādhau na vidhīyate*

“In the minds of those who are too attached to sense enjoyment and material opulence, and who are bewildered by such things, the resolute determination for devotional service does not take place.” Those who are pursuing the various demigods have been described as *hr̥ta-jñānāḥ*, which means “those who have lost their senses.” That is also further explained in *Bhagavad-gītā*, Chapter Seven, verse 23:

*antavat tu phalaṁ teṣāṁ
tad bhavaty alpa-medhasām
devān deva-yajo yānti
mad-bhaktā yānti mām api*

“Men of small intelligence worship the demigods, and their fruits are limited and temporary. Those who worship the demigods go to the planets of the demigods, but My devotees reach My supreme abode.” The rewards given by the demigods are temporary because any material facility must act in connection with the temporary body. Whatever material facilities one gets, whether by modern scientific methods or by deriving benedictions from the demigods, will be finished with the body. But spiritual advancement will never be finished.

People should not think that we are preaching a system of religion. No. We

are simply preaching how to love God. There are many theories about the existence of God. The atheist, for example, will never believe in God. Atheists like Professor Jacques Monod, who won the Nobel Prize, declare that everything is chance (a theory already put forward long ago by atheistic philosophers of India such as Cārvāka). Then other philosophies, such as *karma-mīmāṃsā* philosophy, accept that if one goes on doing his work nicely and honestly, automatically the result will come, without need for one to refer to God. For evidence, the proponents of such theories cite the argument that if one is diseased with an infection and takes medicine to counteract it, the disease will be neutralized. But our argument in this connection is that even if one gives a man the best medicine, he still may die. The results are not always predictable. Therefore, there is a higher authority, *daiva-netreṇa*, a supreme director. Otherwise, how is it that the son of a rich and pious man becomes a hippie in the street or that a man who works very hard and becomes rich is told by his doctor, “Now you may not eat any food, but only barley water”?

The *karma-mīmāṃsā* theory holds that the world is going on without the supreme direction of God. Such philosophies say that everything takes place by lust (*kāma-haituka*). By lust a man becomes attracted to a woman, and by chance there is sex, and the woman becomes pregnant. There is actually no plan to make the woman pregnant, but by a natural sequence when a man and a woman unite, a result is produced. The atheistic theory, which is described in the Sixteenth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* as asuric, or demoniac, is that actually everything is going on in this way, because of chance resulting from natural attraction. This demoniac theory supports the idea that if one wants to avoid children, he may use a contraceptive method.

Actually, however, there is a great plan for everything—the Vedic plan. The Vedic literature gives directions regarding how men and women should unite, how they should beget children, and what the purpose of sex life is. Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā* that sex life sanctioned by the Vedic order, or sex life under the direction of the Vedic rules and regulations, is bona fide and is acceptable to Him. But chance sex life is not acceptable. If by chance one is sexually attracted and there are children, they are called

varṇa-saṅkara, unwanted population. That is the way of the lower animals; it is not acceptable for humans. For humans, there is a plan. We cannot accept the theory that there is no plan for human life or that everything is born of chance and material necessity.

Śaṅkarācārya's theory that there is no God and that one can go on with his work and imagine God in any form just to keep peace and tranquility in society is also more or less based on this idea of chance and necessity. Our way, however, which is completely different, is based on authority. It is this divine *varṇāśrama-dharma* that Kṛṣṇa recommends, not the caste system as it is understood today. This modern caste system is now condemned in India also, and it should be condemned, for the classification of different types of men according to birth is not the Vedic or divine caste system.

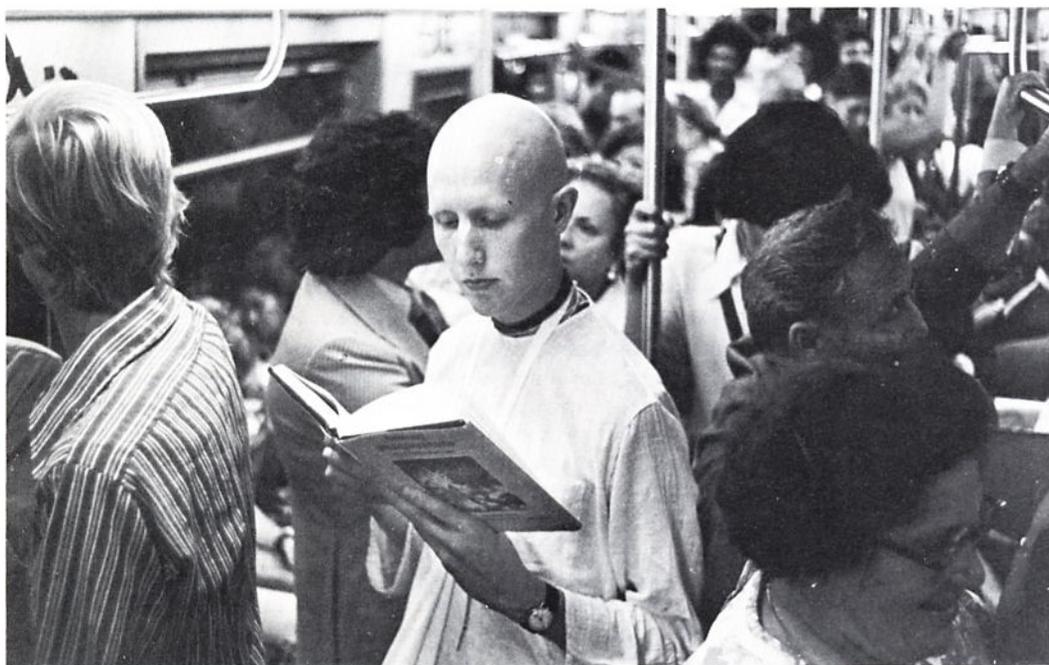
There are many classes of men in society—some men are engineers, some are medical practitioners, some are

chemists, tradesmen, businessmen, and so on. These varieties of classes are not to be determined by birth, however, but by quality. No such thing as the caste-by-birth system is sanctioned by the Vedic literature, nor do we accept it. We have nothing to do with the caste system, which is also at present being rejected by the public in India. Rather, we give everyone the chance to become a *brāhmaṇa* and thus attain the highest status of life.

Because at the present moment there is a scarcity of *brāhmaṇas*, spiritual guides, and *kṣatriyas*, administrative men, and because the entire world is being ruled by *śūdras*, or men of the manual laborer class, there are many discrepancies in society. It is to mitigate all these discrepancies that we have taken to this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. If the *brāhmaṇa* class is actually reestablished, the other orders of social well-being will automatically follow, just as when the brain is perfectly in order, the other parts of the body, such

as the arms, the belly and the legs, all act very nicely.

The ultimate goal of this movement is to educate people in how to love God. Caitanya Mahāprabhu approves the conclusion that the highest perfection of human life is to learn how to love God. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement has nothing to do with the Hindu religion or any system of religion. No Christian gentleman will be interested in changing his faith from Christian to Hindu. Similarly, no Hindu gentleman of culture will be ready to change to the Christian faith. Such changing is for men who have no particular social status. But everyone will be interested in understanding the philosophy and science of God and taking it seriously. One should clearly understand that the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is not preaching the so-called Hindu religion. We are giving a spiritual culture that can solve all the problems of life, and therefore it is being accepted all over the world.



duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam

(a place of miseries)

(temporary)

This material world is both temporary and full of miseries. Even if we tolerate or avoid overcrowding, anxiety, dirt, fatigue and irritability, we can never get around the pains of birth, disease, old age and death itself. At least not in this material world. For this reason, we humbly recommend that you read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is known as the ripened fruit on the tree of spiritual knowledge. By careful study of this single



masterpiece of ancient Vedic literature, one can transcend this material world, even while living within it.

Thirteen volumes are now available. Canto 1 (volumes 1, 2 and 3), Canto 2 (vol. 1 and 2), Canto 3 (vol. 1 thru 4) and Canto 4 (vol. 1 thru 4). To order any or all volumes, send your name and address and a check or money order for \$7.95 per volume to the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 3764 Watseka Ave., L.A., Calif. 90034.

HOW THE TEACHINGS OF LORD CAITANYA CAME TO THE WESTERN WORLD

(part 2)

by His Holiness **Brahmānanda Svāmi**



ŚRĪLA BHAKTIVINODA ṬHĀKURA

[Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself in the form of His own pure devotee, appeared 500 years ago in Bengal, India, to teach—by His own example—how one can become fully Kṛṣṇa conscious. The teachings of Lord Caitanya were recorded and transmitted by many faithful disciples, but they were virtually unknown in the West until 1896, when Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, a great spiritual master in the disciplic line from Lord Caitanya, published a short book entitled Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu—His Life and Precepts and sent copies to the Western world. The following is the second of three articles depicting the pioneering efforts of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and those who have followed him, in spreading the great benediction of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the West.]

DISPLAYING THE TRANSCENDENTAL ENERGY of Lord Caitanya, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura made a startling prophecy, like Lord Caitanya, who had previously predicted the worldwide spread of the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa. In 1885, almost 100 years ago, Bhaktivinoda published an article in his monthly journal, *Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, in which he wrote as follows: "Lord Caitanya did not advent Himself to liberate only a few men of India.

Rather, His main objective was to emancipate all living entities of all countries throughout the entire universe and preach the Eternal Religion. Lord Caitanya says in the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*: 'In every town, country and village, My name will be sung.'

"There is no doubt that this unquestionable order will come to pass. In the world now there are so many religious communities, and in their purest mature form they are the religion of singing the praises of the Lord. At the present time there is a great spiritual quest going on in the world, and it seems that one unalloyed religion which is the essence of all the religions will soon emerge. What is that religion? It is plain to see that in western countries and in Asia, religions are engaged in conflicts. There is no doubt that these religions will not be able to endure. Therefore many of the established religions which harbour prejudiced, conflicting beliefs have become fragmented. When all these contradictory dogmas are removed, it is then and there that all religions will be united. Let us consider what specifications the Eternal Religion would have: 1. God is one and is the all-knowing source of knowledge. He is devoid of all limitations and is

the reservoir of all qualities. 2. All living entities are infinitesimal parts and parcels of consciousness, and the eternal function of all living entities is to serve the Supreme Lord. 3. To sing the glorious qualities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and to establish the brotherhood of all men is pure religion.

"Gradually the established religions will then be removed of all specific contradictions, and the secular or 'party spirit' will not remain. Then all castes, all creeds and men of all countries will be united in coexistent brotherhood under the Supreme Personality of Godhead, united by *nāma-saṅkīrtana*." *Hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* is the congregational chanting of the holy name of the Lord. This congregational chanting was especially taught by Lord Caitanya, by Lord Nityānanda, His associate, and by Their devotees, such as Haridāsa Ṭhākura and Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita. Thus Śrīla Bhaktivinoda continues: "Then and there, personal

His Holiness Brahmānanda Svāmi served for several years as the first president of the first ISKCON temple in the United States (while at the same time working as a teacher in the New York City public school system). He later became director of ISKCON Press and in 1970 accepted the renounced order of life. He was the first devotee to introduce Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Africa. He has recently been preaching in Africa and India.



Prophecy Fulfilled. American, German, French, English and Indian disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda join in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa in the holy city of Navadvipa, West Bengal, during a pilgrimage in March of 1974.

hereditary status will be considered insignificant, and inter-caste hatred will disappear, and the common brotherhood of man will never be forgotten. Then we will carry the vessel of the Nectar of Devotion of Haridāsa, we will follow the words of Śrīvāsa and smear our bodies with the dust of Their Feet. O Lord Caitanya, Lord Nityānanda, the human race will spontaneously dance in ecstasy.

“Very soon the unparalleled path of *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* will be propagated all over the world. Already we are seeing the symptoms. Already many Christians have tasted the nectar of divine love of the holy name and are dancing with *karatālas* [hand cymbals] and *mṛdaṅgas* [drums]. Educated Christians are ordering these instruments and shipping them to England. By the super-excellence of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s holy name and the grace of pure devotees, our consciousness gets purified. After listening to a lecture on these principles, a great gathering of *brāhmaṇas* danced with drums and *karatālas*, singing, ‘Fill your eyes with the vision of the advent of the Two Holy Brothers [Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda].’ Even the Salvation Army somehow or other has its form of *kīrtana*. When I see these signs, my hopes of

seeing Lord Caitanya’s aforesaid prophecy being fulfilled are quickened, and that time has arrived. Although there is still no pure society of Vaiṣṇavas to be had, yet Lord Caitanya’s prophetic words will in a few days come true, I am sure. Why not? Nothing is absolutely pure in the beginning. From imperfection, purity will come about.

“Oh, for that day when the fortunate English, French, Russian, German and American people will take up banners, *mṛdaṅgas* and *karatālas* and raise *kīrtana* through their streets and towns. When will that day come? Oh, for the day when the fair-skinned men from their side will raise up the chanting of *jaya śacinandana, jaya śacinandana ki jaya* [All Glories to Lord Caitanya! All Glories to Lord Caitanya!] and join with the Bengali devotees. When will that day be? On such a day they will say, ‘Our dear Brothers, we have taken shelter of the ocean of Lord Caitanya’s Love; kindly embrace us.’ When will that day come? That day will witness the holy transcendental ecstasy of the *vaiṣṇava-dharma* [the eternal occupation of devotional service to the Lord] to be the only *dharma* [eternal engagement], and all the sects and religions will flow like rivers into the

ocean of *vaiṣṇava-dharma*. When will that day come?”

The Birthplace of the Lord

To usher in this new day of spiritual glory, Bhaktivinoda had founded the Viśva Vaiṣṇava Rāj Sabhā (International Society of Devotees) in 1844. The purpose of this organization was to propagate the teachings of Lord Caitanya through meetings, public discourses, and publication and distribution of literature. Its establishment was an important step in the realization of the Ṭhākura’s dream of a society based completely on theistic principles, as described in the Vedic scripture *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In previous epochs, Indian culture, social habits and customs were all connected with religion. Art, literature and drama—and even marriage customs, diet and people’s names—were all God-centered. But during Bhaktivinoda’s time, the onslaught of atheistic materialism had become so evident that he felt the need for vigorous preaching to radically change the deteriorating mentality of the people. His original motto—“Back home, back to Godhead”—pointed out his message to the deluded populace of Kail-yuga (the



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present Age of Quarrel). Bhaktivinoda propagated Lord Caitanya's method of congregational chanting of the holy name, for he was convinced that if only a small number of India's people took Lord Caitanya's teachings to heart, peace and harmony would prevail throughout the world.

To give impetus to the mission of Lord Caitanya, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda painstakingly searched out Lord Caitanya's birthplace. Until the Ṭhākura's time, the precise location of Caitanya Mahāprabhu's appearance was unknown—a fact that indicates how moribund His teachings had become in India. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda combed old government records and consulted antiquarian maps and authentic books written during the time of Lord Caitanya. Then he took support from the inspired testimony of his spiritual master, Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābāji. In Śrīdhāma Māyāpur, on the eastern bank of the Ganges, the holy site was finally ascertained. For this Jagannātha dāsa Bābāji is memorialized by all Vaiṣṇavas:

*gaurāvīrbhāva-bhūmes tvam
nīrdeṣṭā saj-jana-priyaḥ
vaiṣṇava-sārvabhaumah śrī-
jagannāthāya te namaḥ*

"I offer my respectful obeisances to Jagannātha dāsa Bābāji, who is respectful to the entire community of devotees and who discovered the place where Lord Caitanya appeared." In this way, Jagannātha dāsa Bābāji and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura followed the example of the six exalted Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana, who were sent to Vṛndāvana by Lord Caitanya to uncover the sites of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. During the time of Lord Caitanya, Vṛndāvana was just an open field. By revealing these holy sites, the Gosvāmīs sparked a renaissance in God consciousness. Similarly, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura resurrected the teachings of Lord Caitanya and provided the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement with a center from which Mahāprabhu's movement could be broadcast throughout the world.

The Lord Sends Assistance

Now that the great pioneering work had been established, another enlightened personage was needed to carry it on. Bhaktivinoda prayed fervently to Lord Caitanya to send someone. (We are reminded of how, four hundred years earlier, Śrī Advaita Prabhu, foreseeing a

hellish growth of materialism and irreligion, had similarly prayed for the advent of Lord Caitanya Himself.) Another prophesy was then penned by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda: "A personality will soon appear to preach the teachings of Lord Caitanya and move unrestrictedly over the whole world with His message."

On February 6, 1874, while Bhaktivinoda was serving in Purī as manager of the Jagannātha temple, a son was born to him. At the moment of birth, when the infant was taken from his mother, the child's umbilical cord was draped around his neck and across his chest, appearing like the thread *brāhmaṇas* wear after their initiation. Everyone was very impressed with this sign. During the annual Rathayātrā festival, six months later, in July, the massive holy cart in which Lord Jagannātha, a form of Kṛṣṇa, is pulled by thousands of devotees came to a sudden stop just outside Bhaktivinoda's house. While the crowd was trying to get the cart moving again, Bhaktivinoda's wife took the opportunity to have her new son blessed by Lord Jagannātha. She rushed out of her house with the baby and placed him high on the cart at the lotus feet of the Lord. At that very moment, a huge flower garland worn by Lord Jagannātha fell down, encircling the infant. Bhaktivinoda, overjoyed, then understood that his own son was Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's answer to his prayers. That son would later be known as Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

As the child grew up, Bhaktivinoda eagerly gave him transcendental instruction. Thus at the age of only seven years, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had committed to memory the entire *Bhāgavad-gītā* and could even explain the meaning of its verses. Once, the young boy took a mango from the room of the family Deity and ate it. Bhaktivinoda reprimanded his son, explaining that to eat food meant to be offered to the Lord was an offense. Bhaktisiddhānta resolved on the spot never again to eat a mango, and he kept this vow throughout his life, despite the mango's being perhaps the world's most tasty fruit. At the age of ten, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura initiated his son with the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

As a student, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī distinguished himself in mathematics, history, philosophy and Vedic astronomy. He wrote scholarly articles and treatises, edited two monthly magazines and started a cultural association, as well as a *ṭol*, or school, to teach



Śrīla Gaurakiśora dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja.
Renunciation personified.

astronomy. He was offered, but declined, a chair at Calcutta University. Throughout this time, he attended and participated in his father's Viśva Vaiṣṇava Rāj Sabhā.

Bhaktivinoda wanted his son to be initiated with the essential *Gāyatrī mantra*. Because it is not customary for one's own father to perform this ceremony, he instructed Bhaktisiddhānta to approach Śrīla Gaurakiśora dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja, an important saint of Navadvīpa, which is near Śrīdhāma Māyāpur: At first Gaurakiśora seemed to the young man a very unlikely choice for a spiritual master. He was living an extremely secluded and ascetic life, he had no disciples, and he was even illiterate. So Bhaktisiddhānta apparently did not take his father's instructions to heart. But Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura could understand that Gaurakiśora dāsa was a great teacher in the preceptorial disciplic succession. He was renunciation personified (*vairāgya-mūrti*) and was always merged in the elevated state of spiritual separation from Kṛṣṇa known as *vipralambha*. Finally, in 1901, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura surrendered himself, and Gaurakiśora duly accepted him as his only disciple.

In 1911 Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was invited to address the All-India conference of Paṇḍitas. Unable to attend because of illness, he sent Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī to speak in his place. The lecture was entitled "Truth Regarding the Comparative Position Between a Brāhmaṇa and a Vaiṣṇava." It was received as a work of genius and was the highlight of the conference. By 1913 Bhaktisiddhānta had established his first printing press, the Bhāgavata Press in Krishnanagar, solely for printing his writings. He then wrote the first of his many



Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and the foremost scholar and devotee in the recent age.

famous Bengali commentaries, which include his "Anubhāṣya" on Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, his "Anuvṛtti" on the Upadeśāmṛta, and a commentary on Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā.

The Mission Begins Expanding

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura stayed mainly in Māyāpur during this time, writing and sometimes giving discourses to the pilgrims who began to visit Lord Caitanya's birthsite. He was respected for his authoritative books and forthright preaching. An important figure in a popular religious organization once approached Bhaktisiddhānta and was so impressed by his purity and potency that he became his disciple. He arranged for Bhaktisiddhānta's transportation to Calcutta, rented a storefront for him, and in many other ways provided Bhaktisiddhānta with good facilities for preaching. Soon many people once again became interested in the teachings of Lord Caitanya.

Bhaktisiddhānta then extended his

preaching throughout India, following the example of Lord Caitanya. Lord Caitanya had spread His teachings by dispatching the six Gosvāmīs north to Vṛndāvana and Lord Nityānanda to West Bengal and had preached Himself in South India and Orissa. Bhaktisiddhānta soon was able to open centers in many cities, such as Calcutta, Bombay, Allahabad, Benares, Bhuvaneśvar, Dacca, Hardwar, Madras, New Delhi and Puri. Ultimately, sixty-four such centers were established. The purpose of these centers was to broadcast the teachings of Lord Caitanya, to distribute Bhaktisiddhānta's books and to perform worship of the śrī-mūrti, or form of the Lord, according to the authorized principles of the pāñcarātra scriptures.

A Fateful Meeting

Like his great father, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura wanted to promulgate Lord Caitanya's teachings beyond the shores of India. Bhaktivinoda Thākura had determined the course with his book

Lord Caitanya—His Life and Precepts. The medium of preaching had to be English, rather than Bengali or any other Indian language, because English is the common language of the commercial world.

It was in 1922 that Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura planted the seed for the great world mission he had inherited from his father. Abhay Charan De, who was later to become His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder and Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, was at that time building up a successful pharmaceutical-manufacturing concern in Calcutta. A friend who had heard Bhaktisiddhānta speak took Abhay Charan De to meet the saintly teacher. Thus in 1922, on a rooftop of the house where Bhaktisiddhānta was staying in Calcutta, Abhay Charan De first presented himself before Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta, although at first, because of pressing business matters, he was reluctant to go meet him. Immediately Bhaktisiddhānta gave Śrīla Prabhupāda what was to be his life's mission: "Preach the message of Lord Caitanya, especially in the English language. You will benefit, and everyone you preach to will benefit." At the time, however, Śrīla Prabhupāda was active in Gandhi's ever-growing independence movement; he doubted that foreigners in the West could take any instruction from India, since India was not even independent. In reply, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura explained the teachings of Lord Caitanya. Śrīla Prabhupāda was very much impressed. "Here is a real *sādhu*, a real saintly person," he said after taking his leave.

"The Lion Guru"

In his preaching, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was especially keen to confront and defeat what is known as Māyāvāda or impersonalist philosophy. This is the mission of Lord Caitanya, who converted the most powerful Māyāvādī impersonalists of His time, such as Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī, who had 60,000 followers, and Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, who conducted an important school for training Māyāvādī teachers. Māyāvādīs are impersonalists who maintain that God is under the influence of *māyā* (illusion). According to them, His attributes, such as His name, form and activities, are all materially contaminated. On the other hand, the Vaiṣṇavas, the personalist devotees of the Lord, correctly accept the transcendental nature of the Lord and

everything connected with Him. Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā* that His birth and activities are all transcendental (*janma karma ca me divyam*). The Māyāvādīs, however, stress the impersonal aspect of the Lord, ultimately concluding that He is nothing. This, of course, is an atheistic idea. Unlike the Buddhists, who arrive at the same conclusion but do not accept any Vedic authority, the Māyāvādīs try to argue their point from the Vedic scriptures. Therefore Lord Caitanya has forbidden all devotees to read Vedic commentaries by Māyāvādīs. *Bhagavad-gītā* says, *avajānanti mām mūḍhāḥ*: those who deride the Lord because of His humanlike form are all fools and rascals. Bhaktisiddhānta met and defeated all such wrangling Māyāvādīs so ferociously that he became known as *siṃha-guru*, or “the lion guru.” Thus, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī is the personification of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s teachings (*gauravānī-śrī-mūrti*) because he refused to tolerate any statement that was against the doctrine of devotional service as enunciated by Lord Caitanya’s chief disciple, Rūpa Gosvāmī (*rūpānuga-virudhāpa siddhānta-dhvānta-hāriṇe*).

In his books, obviously not intended for an ordinary audience, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura revealed his genius for tearing apart the materialistic philosophy of the Māyāvādīs in order to establish the truth. His style, although scholarly and at times abstruse, will reveal to any serious reader a depth of transcendental understanding and charm. But one must be prepared to read and reread his great words. Here is an example, from his introduction to his English translation and commentary on *Śrī Brahma-saṃhitā*:

“The materialistic demeanour cannot possibly stretch to the Transcendental Autocrat who is ever inviting the fallen conditioned souls to associate with Him through devotion, the eternal serving mood. The phenomenal attractions are often found to tempt sentient beings to enjoy the variegated position, which is opposed to undifferentiated monism. People are so much apt to indulge in transitory speculations, even when they are to educate themselves on a situation beyond their empiric area or experiencing jurisdiction. The esoteric aspect often knocks them to trace out immanence in their outward inspection of transitory and transformable things. This impulse moves them to fix the position of the Immanent to an Indeterminate Impersonal Entity, no clue of which could be dis-

cerned by moving earth and heaven through their organic senses.

“The lines of this booklet will surely help such puzzled souls in their march towards the Personality of the Immanent lying beyond their sensuous gaze of inspection. The very first stanza of this publication will revolutionise their reserved ideas when the nomenclature of the Absolute is put before them as Kṛṣṇa.”

The Indispensable Press

In 1923, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura opened the Gauḍīya Printing Works in Calcutta, the second of four presses he would establish. For preaching work, a press is indispensable. Of course, in preaching *saṅkīrtana*, congregational chanting, a *mṛdaṅga* drum is also important. We will rarely see devotees on a chanting party without one. But Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta dubbed the press the *bṛhad-mṛdaṅga*, or “greater *mṛdaṅga*,” because the sound of a *mṛdaṅga* is limited to the immediate vicinity, whereas a press can pour out literature that can reach for thousands of miles. In 1927 Bhaktisiddhānta converted his father’s *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* journal into *The Harmonist*, a magazine. He also published a daily newspaper called the *Nadia Prakash*, or “The Light of Nadia,” Nadia being the district where Lord Caitanya appeared. Bhaktisiddhānta was once asked the reason for publishing a daily newspaper about God. He replied that here in the material world there are thousands of daily newspapers reporting repetitious occurrences that become stale after one day, so what to speak of the necessity for reporting the events of the spiritual world, where everything is dynamic, conscious and ever fresh.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī traveled throughout India in the same way as Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who had toured on foot from northern India down to Cape Cormorin. In 1919 Bhaktisiddhānta toured northern and eastern Bengal, and in 1921 he went further east, to Dacca. Then, in 1922, he led a mass *parikrama* (pilgrimage) in the 84-mile Vṛndāvana-Mathurā area. Together with hundreds of his disciples, he went by foot to visit the sacred places of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes, including Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa, Govardhana, and Barsana. Setting up tent camps all along the way, Bhaktisiddhānta would take every opportunity to preach to the local inhabitants and explain to his disciples the

history and significance of the sacred places. In between Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa he conducted a large initiation ceremony.

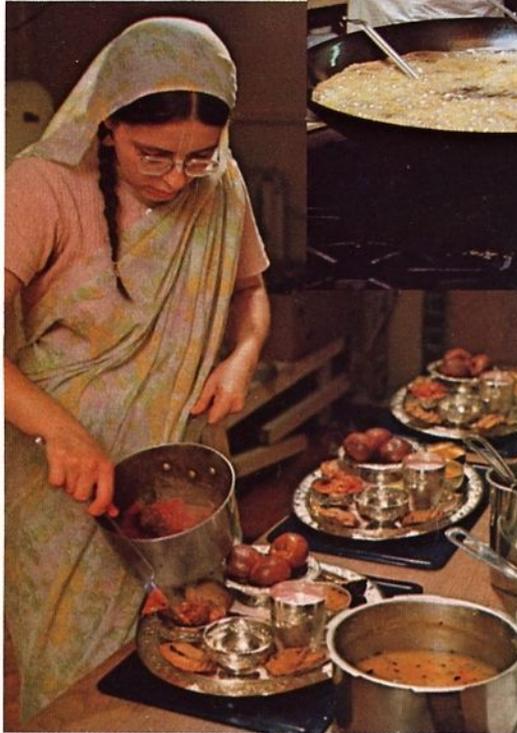
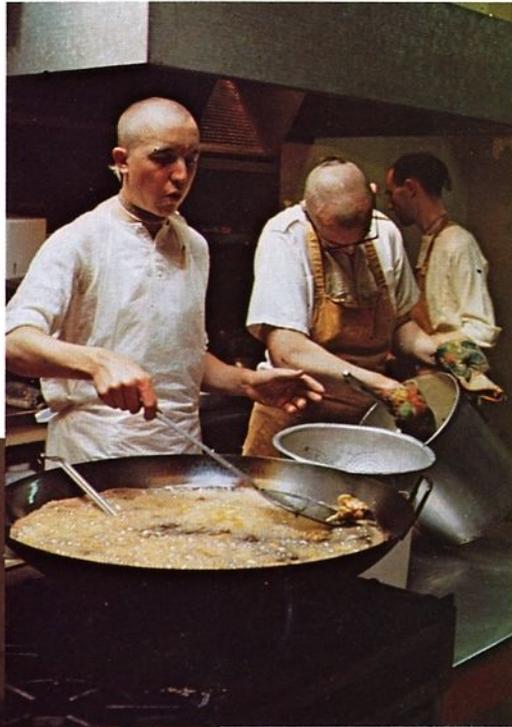
An Attempted Assassination

The pilgrimage was not without difficulties. All along the way, the *brāhmaṇa* shopkeepers would close their shops and refuse to sell provisions to the party. They protested against Bhaktisiddhānta because his disciples included those born as *śūdras*, members of the lowest caste. In accordance with the teachings of Lord Caitanya, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī enlisted disciples from all ranks of men and elevated them to the topmost position of *brāhmaṇa* (literally one who knows Brahman, or spirit). The opponents of Bhaktisiddhānta resented his turning those born as non-*brāhmaṇas* into better *brāhmaṇas* than them. In particular, the *nityānanda-vaiṣṇava*, a class of priestly persons supposedly descended from Lord Caitanya’s great associate Lord Nityānanda, claimed for their particular class the exclusive right to the practice of devotional service. There was such a struggle that they even attempted to assassinate Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta. These priests approached the local police commander, a notoriously corrupt official, and offered him a huge bribe so that he would not try to apprehend them after they had committed the horrible deed. But the officer warned Bhaktisiddhānta, for although killing was commonplace, he could not associate with a plot to kill a holy man. This incident is strikingly similar to the conspiracy against Lord Caitanya by the caste *brāhmaṇas* of His day, who hired the Muslim police to disrupt the Lord’s *saṅkīrtana* parties and smash the *mṛdaṅga* drums.

Ultimately Bhaktisiddhānta succeeded in establishing that devotional service is not restricted to a particular class of men. This is the principle of Rūpa Gosvāmī, who so aptly cited the following passage from the *Kāśī-khaṇḍa* portion of the *Padma Purāna*: “In the country known as Mayūradhvaja, the lower-caste people, who are considered less than *śūdras*, are also initiated into the Vaiṣṇava cult of devotional service. And when properly dressed, with *tilaka* on their bodies and beads in their hands and on their necks, they appear to be coming from Vaikuṇṭha, the spiritual world. In fact, they look so beautiful that immediately they surpass the ordinary *brāhmaṇas*.”

(to be continued)

To please Kṛṣṇa's senses, devotees prepare delicious offerings according to ancient Vedic recipes. Kṛṣṇa must relish everything first, so the food is never tasted before it is offered.



LORD KṚṢṆA'S PRĀSĀDA

by Viśākhā-devī-dāsī

also the air we breathe, the water we drink and, in fact, the very earth on which we live.

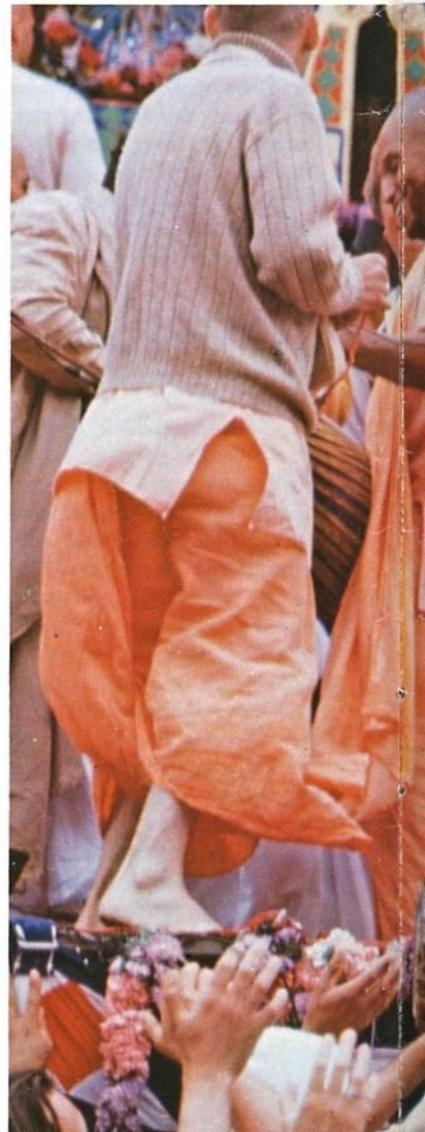
In *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa says:

*aham sarvasya prabhavo
mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate
iti matvā bhajante mām
budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ*

"I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything comes from Me. The wise who perfectly know this engage in My devotional service and worship Me with all their hearts." (Bg. 10.8) Thus the devotee, out of a sense of duty, gratitude and love, first offers all his food to Kṛṣṇa. Although God is independent and in no way needs such offerings, our desire to serve Him is natural, like the natural wish of a mature child to serve the parents who have provided for him all his life.

The offering of *prasāda* gives a good example of how a devotee acts in relationship with Kṛṣṇa. A Kṛṣṇa conscious devotee does not ask, "O God, please give us our daily bread." No. The devotee does not ask God to be his order supplier, for he knows that God is already providing everything for us—and for all other living beings, from the elephant to the ant. Therefore the devotee accepts the food that the Lord has already provided—food made with fruits, vegetables, milk, sugar and grains—but first he

Kṛṣṇa Himself appears in the form of the Deity in the temple to accept the service of His devotees. Above, He is offered a noon meal. Below, even tiny remnants of the offering are greatly valued because the food has become Kṛṣṇa-ized, spiritualized.

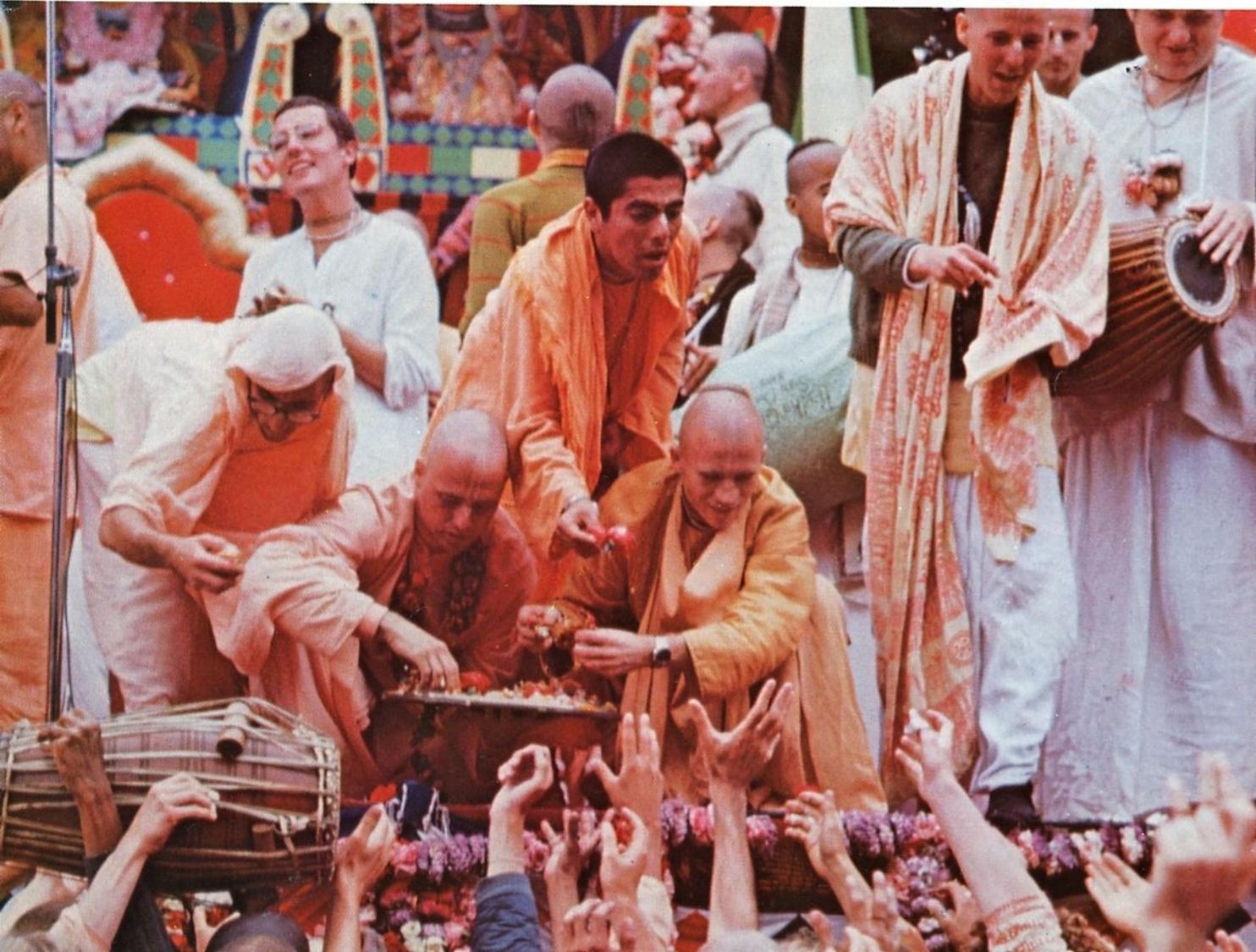


What food is sometimes buttery, sometimes sweet, sometimes spicy, sometimes mellow, often unusual and always tastes good? Answer: *kṛṣṇa-prasāda*. "*Prasāda*" means "God's mercy," and it specifically refers to food that's been offered to Kṛṣṇa. If you've ever been around Lord Kṛṣṇa's devotees, you may well have been offered some *prasāda* in the form of exotic dishes like puris, halavah, kichories or laddus, or perhaps just slices of apple with dates and nuts. What's the difference between *prasāda* and ordinary food? They may look quite the same. But the difference is that *prasāda* has been offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa in love by one of His devotees, whereas ordinary food has not.

The special quality of a devotee that distinguishes him from others is that he recognizes God's supreme dominion over all that is. He knows that the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, is creating and providing not only all the food we eat, but



Photos : Viśākṣā-devī dāśī





offers the food back to Kṛṣṇa. The food may be offered to the Deity of Kṛṣṇa in the temple, or to the spiritual master, who is Kṛṣṇa's representative. In any case, it is always understood that the offering is made through the spiritual master.

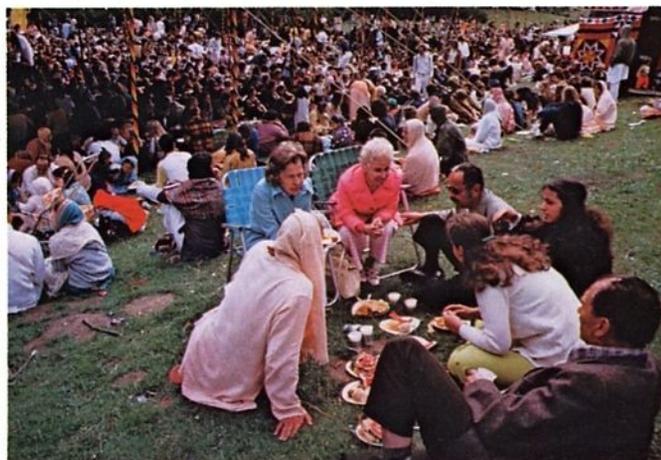
Nondevotees, of course, will object that such devotion is senseless. This world and the life in it, they will say, have sprung from an impersonal lifeless force. The perfect order and harmony of the universe originated from the dust of outer space. Life originally came from matter—from some chemicals that came together by chance. Kṛṣṇa reciprocates with such dull materialists by remaining hidden from their view, until finally, at the end of their contaminated lives, He comes to them as death and takes away everything they have.

Those who have understood that God exists but who have not yet fully understood the science of devotion may ask why, since God is already providing everything, we should take the trouble to offer our food to Him. Aside from expressing gratitude, we should offer our food first to the Lord because this will protect us from the materialistic snares that would otherwise entangle us as we eat. That every action has an equal and opposite reaction is a commonly known law in physics. What people generally don't know, however, is that this law extends far beyond the boundaries of physics; it is a law of nature that profoundly affects almost every aspect of our lives. Even a simple act like eating can involve us in a network of material reactions.

The Vedic literature says, *jīvo jīvasya jīvanam*: one living being serves as food for another. To eat, we all must kill. Because animals are less intelligent, the laws of nature do not

hold them responsible for the killing they naturally perform. However, when a human being kills, he becomes involved in a complex network of actions and reactions. For the suffering he inflicts, he himself will have to suffer at some time in the future. But by preparing food for God and offering it to Him before eating it, one becomes exempt from the reactions imposed by material nature. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, "The devotees of the Lord are released from all kinds of sins be-

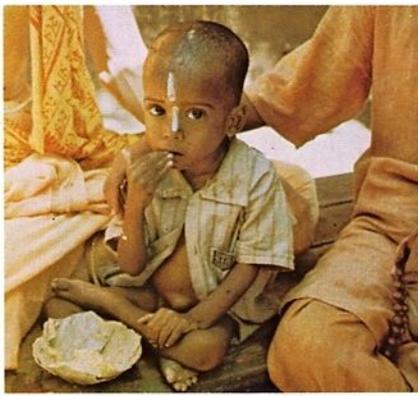
At San Francisco's annual Rathayātrā Festival last year, 12,000 full plates of prasāda were distributed. With devotees serving seconds, thirds and fourths, one and all took to their full satisfaction.



cause they eat food which is offered first for sacrifice. Others, who prepare food for personal sense enjoyment, verily eat only sin" (Bg. 3.13)

Commenting on this verse, Śrīla Prabhupāda says, "The devotees of the Lord, who are in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, offer food to Kṛṣṇa and then eat—a process which nourishes the body spiritually. By such action not only are past sinful reactions in the body vanquished, but the body becomes immunized to all contamination of material nature. When there is an epidemic disease, an antiseptic vaccine protects a person from the attack of such an epidemic. Similarly, food offered to Lord Viṣṇu [Kṛṣṇa] and then taken by us makes us sufficiently resistant to material affection, and one who is accustomed to this practice is called a devotee of the Lord."

Neophytes in self-realization offer their food to Kṛṣṇa according to the instructions



In the village of Māyāpur in West Bengal, India, devotees feed up to 20,000 people daily a substantial diet of rice and dahl (a high-protein bean soup). With donations from the West, this program is expanding to other poverty-stricken areas.

of advanced devotees whose only interest is to please Kṛṣṇa. Such great souls serve Kṛṣṇa out of love and expect nothing for themselves in return. But how does one please that Supreme Person, who is com-

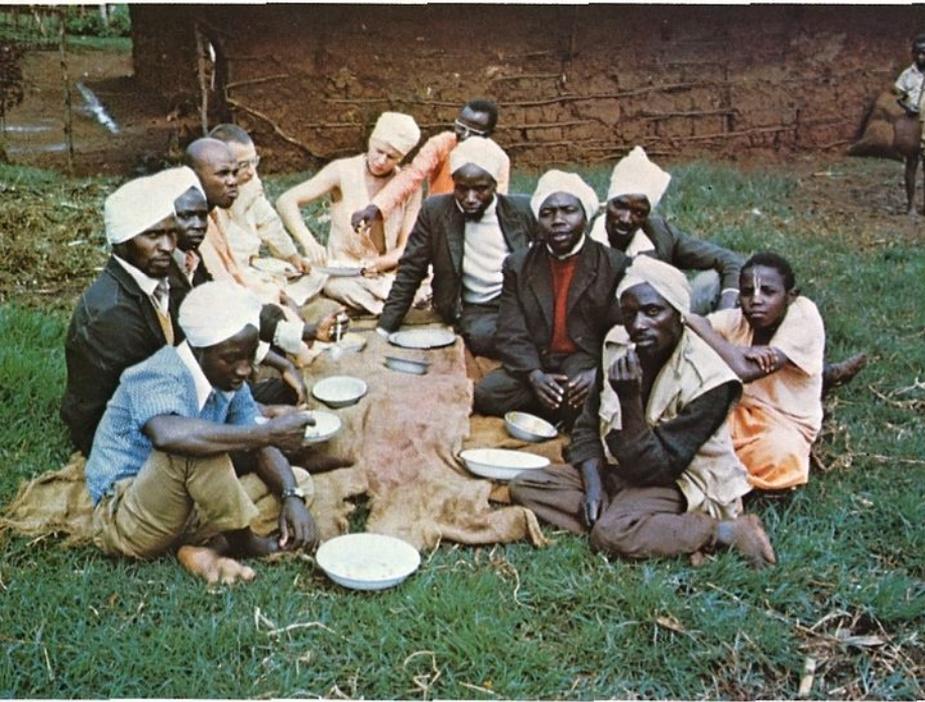
pletely independent, fully cognizant and all-pervading and who is the original cause of all causes? Simply by following His instructions—and the instructions of His pure devotees—with a serious and sincere attitude. Lord Kṛṣṇa says:

*patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyāṁ
yo me bhaktyā prayacchati
tad ahaṁ bhakty-upahṛtam
aśnāmi prayatāmanaḥ*

"If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit or water, I will accept it." (Bg. 9.26)

If one wishes to be purified by rendering transcendental devotional service to the Supreme, he should find out what the Lord wants of him. One who loves Kṛṣṇa will give Him whatever He wants, and he avoids offering anything undesirable or unasked for. Thus, one should not offer meat, fish or eggs to Kṛṣṇa. If He desired





In Africa (above), England (right), America (below), Germany (bottom, left), on nationwide American television (bottom, right), and in Australia, Iran, South America, Canada—wherever there are devotees—prasāda is freely distributed. This is the joyful Kṛṣṇa conscious program: sing for God, dance, discuss the most elevated and scientific philosophy of self-realization, and when you are tired, enjoy kṛṣṇa-prasāda.



Photo: Viśākhā-devī dāśī



Photo: Bhārgava dāsa

such offerings, He would have said so. Instead, He clearly requests a leaf, fruit, flowers and water, and He says of such an offering, "I will accept it." Therefore we should understand that He will not accept meat, fish and eggs. Vegetables, grains, fruits, milk and water are the proper foods for human beings and are prescribed by Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. Whatever else we eat cannot be offered to Him, since He will not accept it. Thus we cannot be acting on the level of loving devotion if we offer such foods.

Once the Supreme Personality of Godhead has accepted an offering (He can accept it by seeing it and hearing the prayers of His devotees), the food, now prasāda, has tremendous spiritual potency. Therefore devotees distribute it freely to everyone. Such spiritualized food increases one's duration of life, purifies one's existence, and gives strength, health, happiness and satisfaction. Moreover, it nourishes one's transcendental realization. And that is a special quality that one cannot purchase with any amount of money.

You can find out more about how to cook for Kṛṣṇa and offer your food to Him from the *Hare Kṛṣṇa Cookbook*, published by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. You can get one at the ISKCON center nearest you, or else we can mail you one. See page 22 for further details.



Photo: Viśākhā-devī dāśī

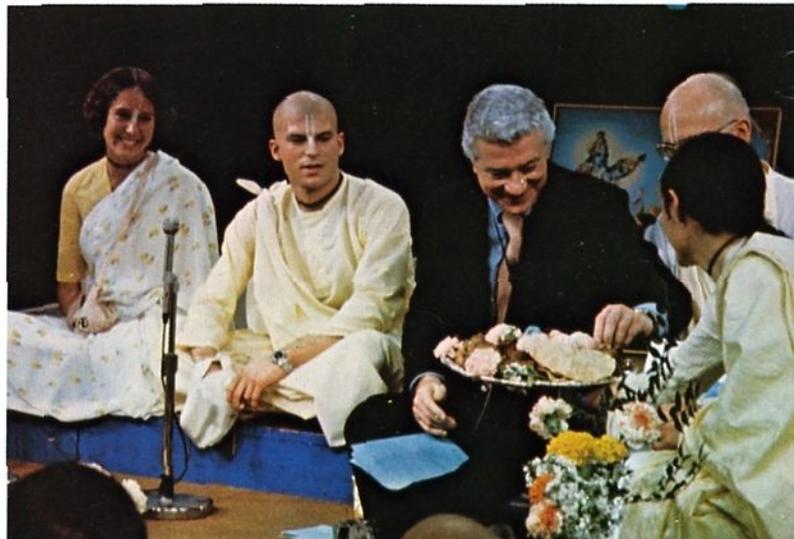


Photo: Bhārgava dāsa

Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa in Purity

BY HIS HOLINESS ACYUTĀNANDA SVĀMĪ

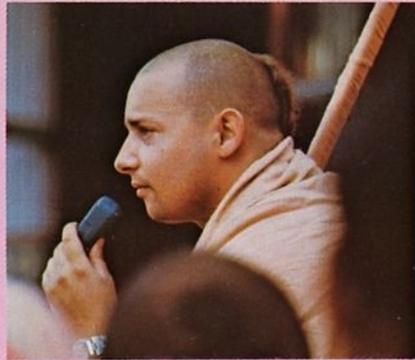
[His Holiness Acyutānanda Svāmī is one of the first American students initiated into Kṛṣṇa consciousness by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda. When Śrīla Prabhupāda initiates a new devotee, he requests the devotee to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and, while chanting, to avoid ten offenses. At a recent initiation ceremony for new disciples in Vṛndāvana, India, Śrīla Prabhupāda requested Acyutānanda Svāmī to instruct the new initiates about these ten offenses. By Śrīla Prabhupāda's request, Acyutānanda Svāmī's remarks are reproduced here.]

The name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as found in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—is a transcendental sound vibration. Rūpa Gosvāmī says: *nāma cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ/pūrṇaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto 'bhinnatvān nāma-nāminoḥ*. Kṛṣṇa and His name are non-different. Kṛṣṇa Himself is transcendental, and so are Kṛṣṇa's form, Kṛṣṇa's name and Kṛṣṇa's paraphernalia, as well as Kṛṣṇa Himself. They are all made of transcendental energy.

As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, *janma karma ca me divyam*: Kṛṣṇa's birth and activities are eternal and transcendental. When an ordinary person is born due to *karma*, the laws of material action and reaction, his body is all wrinkled up and covered with blood and mucus. But Kṛṣṇa is born smiling. In Mathurā He is born holding a conchshell, disc, club and lotus and decorated with a crown, jewels, a beautiful garland and all of His transcendental ornaments. None of us are born like that here; we are all born because of *karma*. But not Kṛṣṇa. And simply by knowing that Kṛṣṇa's birth and activities are divine, one also becomes divine. Then one need not take birth again in the material world.

Spiritual nature has form (*caitanya-rasa-vigraha*); it is not formless. Kṛṣṇa's

nature has form, but that form is divine, transcendental, *cintāmaṇi*. *Cintāmaṇi* also implies consciousness (*cintā* means “consciousness” or “divine substance”). And Kṛṣṇa's form is not different from His name. A transcendental sound, however, cannot be uttered by material lips. A transcendental sound must be uttered by transcendental senses. The transcendental form of Kṛṣṇa can be seen only by



transcendental eyes, and the transcendental name of Kṛṣṇa can be spoken only with transcendental lips. Therefore we have to purify our senses, purify our eyes, purify our tongue, purify our lips, purify our hands—everything must become purified. Then we can understand Kṛṣṇa.

This is natural, because spirit is *adhokṣaja*; it cannot be perceived by material senses. Scientists want to see everything with their mundane eyes, but so many things cannot be seen that way. To see tiny microbes or distant planets, you have to make your vision finer with a microscope or telescope. So, to see spirit you also have to purify your vision, make it finer. *Premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena*: you have to smear the ointment of love upon your eyes. Ordinary *yogīs* and mental speculators cannot see Kṛṣṇa. Only devotees, or *bhaktas*, can see Him (*bhaktiyā mām abhijānāti; bhaktiyā tv ananyayā śakyah*).

There are ten offenses (*nāma-aparādhās*) to be avoided while chanting

the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. These are given in *The Nectar of Devotion*, and in the *Padma Purāṇa* as well. Only devotees can see Kṛṣṇa in His personal form, because they are the ones who avoid these ten offenses. When we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, we must therefore be very careful to avoid these offenses.

Is someone chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa offensively or without offenses? You may not know. Suppose I showed you two white pills—one arsenic and the other aspirin. You might not know which is which. You would have to go to an authority—a doctor, for example—who could give you the right thing. You wouldn't go to a quack; he might give you the arsenic. After all, it's a white pill, and you don't know the difference. Therefore you have to go to a genuine doctor. In the same way, we must hear the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa only from devotees who are avoiding these ten offenses. Otherwise, the chanting will be like milk touched by the lips of a serpent. Milk is very pure and healthful, but milk touched by the lips of a serpent will turn to poison. We may see a nice *sādhu*, or saintly person, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, but if he is not avoiding these offenses, hearing from him is dangerous.

The first offense is *sādhu-nindā*: to blaspheme devotees who have dedicated their lives to propagating the holy name of the Lord. The devotees who surrender their lives to the Lord and who fully engage in preaching must be spotless in their character. Still, *Bhagavad-gītā* says that if someone fully engages in preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness and chanting the holy name, he should be regarded as saintly even if by chance he commits some abominable activity. We should not magnify the faults of a devotee. The moon is shining, spreading its sweet, cool light, and although the moon also has some black spots, the moonlight shines so

brightly that we should not consider them. In the same way, even if a preacher accidentally commits a serious mistake, that should be excused. Kṛṣṇa says, *keṣipraṇi bhavati dharmātmā*: very quickly he will be purified. Temporarily there may be some spot on his character, but very soon it will be washed away by the potency of chanting the holy name. Then he will be pure, like the clear sky. If there was a cloud over a patch of sky a few moments ago but now the sky is clear, what is the difference between that sky and the sky that was never covered? There is no difference; both are pure.

If we speak ill of devotees, people will lose faith in their words. Such a loss of confidence merely hinders the spiritual progress of humanity. Bees look for honey, whereas flies look for open sores. Some people are like flies. If they see the slightest fault, they magnify it out of proportion. But we should not be like flies; we should be like buzzing bees and see all the good qualities of a devotee. If there are any bad qualities, they will soon be washed away. We should never speak ill or gossip about devotees who have surrendered their lives to the holy name.

The second offense is to consider demigods, like Lord Śiva or Lord Brahmā, to be equal to or independent of the name of Lord Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa. In the material world there are many super-powerful living beings who control the workings of nature. They are called demigods. Just as some human beings are more powerful than others, the demigods are even more powerful than any human being. But the Supreme Personality of Godhead is Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He is complete and full because He has full opulences—all wealth, all strength, all fame, all beauty, all knowledge and all renunciation. No other personality, no other deity or demigod, has these qualities in full. Kṛṣṇa is therefore *pūrṇa-avatāra*. *Pūrṇa* means that He is complete—completely complete. All the demigods, like Śiva, Candra and Indra, are partial aspects of this *pūrṇa*. For example, the moon tonight is *amāvāsyā*, the dark moon. The moon is there, but you cannot see any light. Then tomorrow there will be a thin light coming from the moon. The whole moon is there, but you can see only partial aspects of it, until the full moon appears. In the same way, Kṛṣṇa has many forms, but the Lord manifests His full potency only as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śyāmasundara, with two arms holding the flute (*veṇuṁ kvaṇantam aravin-*

da-dalāyātākṣam). He is the original, full Personality of Godhead.

There are many people who worship many deities, even Kṛṣṇa, but do not believe that Kṛṣṇa is supreme. They think that although God has no form or name, some portion of God has slipped into *māyā* and taken the form of Kṛṣṇa, Śiva, Durgā or the other demigods. “I shall worship this deity and concentrate on his form,” such a worshiper thinks, “and then one day the form will dissolve and I will dissolve, and I’ll become as good as him. I’ll become equal to Kṛṣṇa.” That is an offense. That is not *bhakti* but prostitution. It is what I have called *veśyā-vāda*, a prostitute’s philosophy. What is a prostitute’s proposal? A prostitute does not love anyone. Any man on the street is as good as any other. But the prostitute thinks, “If this man gives me something, then I’ll pretend to love him. If I can get something from this man—or any man, it doesn’t matter who—then I’ll pretend to love him.” In the same way, people think, “Oh, any god, it’s all the same. If I can get something, then it’s worth the pretense of *bhakti*. I’ll go worship in the temple.” But that is not *bhakti*—that’s cheating. You’re not worshipping what you think is the Supreme. You think the Supreme is formless. Then why are you performing *arcana*, *sādhana*, *pūjā* and other kinds of worship?

The demigods are only partial parts of a part of Kṛṣṇa. They are very far from the Supreme Absolute Truth. The Absolute Truth has nothing to do with matter. Therefore even Lord Śiva, who is almost as good as Kṛṣṇa, is not the Supreme because his activity pertains only to material destruction. Lord Kṛṣṇa is compared to milk, and Lord Śiva is compared to yogurt. Yogurt is milk, but if you eat yogurt the reaction in the stomach is cold, and if you drink milk the reaction in the stomach is hot—just the opposite. So if you worship Lord Śiva, or any demigod, the reaction will be material, but if you worship Kṛṣṇa, the reaction will be eternal spiritual development. Therefore we should not equate the names of Śiva, Durgā, Candra and other demigods with the name of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa’s name has full spiritual potency.

The devotees in the disciplic line from Lord Caitanya understand that the names of the demigods all come from Kṛṣṇa’s name. Let’s take Indra for an example. “Indra” means “king.” Kṛṣṇa is *paramēśvara*, the supreme king, so really the name “Indra” belongs to Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is Indra. And the demigod Indra,

who is the king of the heavenly planets, is named after Kṛṣṇa. Another demigod: Śiva. “Śiva” means auspicious. Kṛṣṇa is *maṅgalo maṅgalānām*: nothing is more auspicious than Kṛṣṇa. Therefore Kṛṣṇa is Śiva, and the Śiva who is the deity of destruction is named after Him. My name is Acyutānanda. I am not *acyuta*. *Acyuta* means Kṛṣṇa. I am the servant of Acyuta. *Dāsa* means “servant.” So I am named after Kṛṣṇa as His servant, *dāsa*. Similarly, all the demigods are Kṛṣṇa *dāsa*. Indra means Kṛṣṇa *dāsa*. Śiva means Kṛṣṇa *dāsa*. Candra means Kṛṣṇa *dāsa*. Everyone is Kṛṣṇa *dāsa*. *Ekala īśvara kṛṣṇa āra saba bhṛtya*: the one supreme enjoyer, the supreme personality, is Kṛṣṇa; everyone else is His servant. Therefore we must concentrate on the name of Kṛṣṇa.

The third offense is to disobey the orders of the *guru*, or spiritual master. The *guru* is the only connection we have between ourselves and God. If an ant crawls on your body, the ant cannot even understand that you are a human being and that he is walking on a man. He thinks he is walking on a forest of trees. Nor can you explain, “Mr. Ant, you are walking on me.” You don’t have the power to explain yourself to him, and he doesn’t have the power to understand where he is. You are both helpless. But even farther apart are the living entity (*jīva*) and Kṛṣṇa. We are tiny; the *jīva* is one ten-thousandth the size of the tip of a hair. And Kṛṣṇa is so great that from the pores of Mahā-Viṣṇu, who is but one partial aspect of Kṛṣṇa, innumerable universes are coming, like dust particles coming through a window.

We should realize our position as tiny living beings and not try to imitate God. The universe we live in has many different galaxies and an infinite number of planets, and they are all enclosed in one bubble that has come from a pore of Mahā-Viṣṇu. Millions and millions of bubblelike universes are coming from each pore of Mahā-Viṣṇu, and we are living in one of those universes. Our universe has millions of planets, and one tiny planet is earth. On that planet earth there is so much water and land, and the land, which is only about one third of the planet, is divided into so many countries, with so many states in each. One insignificant country among all these countries is India, which is divided into twenty-one states. One state is Bengal, and in Bengal there are many cities. One city is Calcutta, which is further divided into so

many areas—Ballygunge, Tallygunge, Burra Bazaar, and so on. One place there is Camac Street, and on Camac Street there is one house in which many devotees are living, and one of those devotees is thinking, “I am God.” You are so tiny, so insignificant! The only connection you, as an insignificant being, have with the Supreme Significant Being is the *guru*.

The *guru*, the spiritual master, is the transparent via medium between the infinite God and the finite soul. The Infinite can make Himself known to the finite. He is not weak. We cannot explain ourselves to an ant, but Kṛṣṇa can explain Himself to a *jiva*. Therefore, to offend or disobey the order of Kṛṣṇa’s representative, the *guru*, is suicide.

If one has *guru-śraddhā*, faith in the *guru*, if it is nighttime but the *guru* says it’s day you will see the sun shining. Beyond our material sense perception, we must accept the order of the bona fide *guru*. Our senses are fallible, limited, imperfect, but the words of the bona fide *guru* are pure and perfect. *Guru-mukha-padma-vākya*, *cittete kariyā aikya*, *āra nā kariha mane āśā*: our only wish is to hear and understand the orders of the spiritual master. Disobeying the orders of the spiritual master will stop any progress in spiritual life. *Yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo yasyāprasādān na gatiḥ kuto* ‘pi: if Kṛṣṇa is pleased with you but the *guru* is displeased, there is no hope; and if the *guru* is pleased and Kṛṣṇa is displeased, you have nothing to worry about.

We are preaching slavery, divine slavery. Every country of the world has a scheme for enjoyment—communism, socialism, democracy or whatever—but they are all trying to have enjoyment independent of the Supreme Lord. We are preaching that slavery is far more blissful than a false sense of independence. What the *guru* says, we do. But he is perfect. To be a slave of perfection—that is ecstatic life.

Fourth offense: to blaspheme the Vedic literature or literature in pursuance to the Vedic version. The Vedic literatures are in harmony with the words of the spiritual master, for the spiritual master will not say anything that is not upheld in the scriptures. Therefore the words of the scriptures and the spiritual master are our guidelines.

The Vedic scriptures are spoken by God Himself, and by those who have perfect understanding. Unlike philosophies concocted by imperfect human in-

telligence, the Vedic scriptures were written by perfect intelligence, by devotees, by great sages who sacrificed their lives, not by leaders who lived in luxury and wanted to write some constitution or put forward some policy to further their sense gratification. Such leaders live in luxury at the expense of everyone else. As much as they can, they try to bluff people with altruistic talk, but their real goal is to live in luxury at your expense. You starve and they live in luxury, no matter what they preach. The great sages who saw the Supreme Absolute Truth sacrificed their lives for the Supreme; they lived in such hardship—for us—because they were our well-wishers. Devotees are all oceans of mercy who come to save us.

*vāñchā-kalpa-tarubhyaś ca
kṛpā-sindhuhya eva ca
patitānām pāvanebhyo
vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ*

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto all the Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees of the Lord. They are just like desire trees who can fulfill the desires of everyone, and they are full of compassion for the fallen conditioned souls.”

The great sages and devotees do not come to cheat; they come to give us the Vedic literatures. Therefore these scriptures are scientifically pure. We find so much scientific evidence to support the statements of the *Vedas*. For example, the *Vedas* declare that cow dung is so pure that you can even put it in the temple, and now science is finding out that in fact cow dung has many antiseptic qualities. But for thousands of years we knew that cow dung is pure; we didn’t have to do scientific research. So why not just accept Vedic literature as it is, pure and perfect, without having to doubt it?

Some people interpret the words in the Vedic scriptures, assuming them all to be allegorical or symbolic. But such interpretations cannot influence the devotees who have been serving in India, for we have seen the places where Kṛṣṇa’s incarnations have stood. If someone obstinately insists that Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes are all mythology, I can take him by the ear to Hastināpura and the Indraprastha fort where the Pāṇavas lived, then pull him by the other ear to Kurukṣetra, 100 miles from there, where Kṛṣṇa spoke *Bhagavad-gītā*, then by the nose to Vṛndāvana, where Kṛṣṇa performed His pastimes, and dunk his thick head into the holy River Yamunā. Were these places fashioned merely to justify some poems? Certainly not. Here in

Vṛndāvana and Māyāpur we develop faith, the seed of *bhakti*, when we see the places where Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu had Their pastimes.

Fifth offense: to consider the glories of chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* imaginary. It is said in the Vedic literature that by once chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa one can eradicate more sins than he can possibly commit in all the fourteen worlds. So we should not doubt this. We should not consider this an exaggeration. But that statement is a big pill to swallow. Therefore although we may say that chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is an easy process for spiritual perfection, people will doubt that it’s true. If I stood on the street and said, “diamonds, free diamonds,” no one would believe me. But here the scriptures are saying more than that. *Ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpaṇam*: you can get complete liberation from all sins by purely chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa once. People will doubt that this is true. To have full faith in the holy name is not easy; still, we must. We must never think that the Vedic scriptures are just bluffing, trying to woo us into chanting by exaggerating the potency of the chanting. No, we must have complete faith.

Sixth offense: to interpret the chanting of the holy name of the Lord. Some people like to twist the statements of the *Vedas* or the meaning of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. For example, we chant the names Hare Kṛṣṇa. *Hari* means thief, *hari* means lion, and *hari* also means snake. So does Hare Kṛṣṇa mean snake Kṛṣṇa, thief Kṛṣṇa, lion Kṛṣṇa? No. *Harir om tat sat*: Hari is the Supreme Absolute Truth. Does this mean that a thief is the Supreme Absolute Truth? Should we build a temple to a thief? Should we build a temple to a snake?

With a dictionary you can interpret, bend and twist words unlimitedly. For instance, I may speak of President Kennedy. But “ken” can mean “mental position,” and “eddy” means a swirling pool, so a word juggler may say that Kennedy was someone whose mind was mixed up and who became the president. One can twist words like that in so many ways. “The teacher,” said the boy, “is a fool.” The teacher said the boy is a fool. If we change the punctuation, the whole sentence has a completely different mean-

ing. In the same way, some people try to twist out false, completely deceptive meanings from the *Vedas*. But we don't want that.

We don't want some twisted interpretation. We want the truth, as it is. Śrīla Prabhupāda is giving *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is. One should not try to twist out some other meaning. We should not be like the foolish man whose wife told him to purchase some ghee, clarified butter. He went out to buy the ghee, but when he went to the man who sold ghee, that man said, "My ghee is so fine, it's like oil." So the man said, "Oh, oil. Oil must be better than ghee." So he went to the man who sold oil. But the oil man said, "My oil is so clear, it's as clear as water." So the fellow thought that water must be better than oil. So instead of ghee, he bought some water. Step by step he came to something useless. You can't fry anything in water, but he thought that water is better than ghee. In that way, a mental speculator can twist and turn everything. Kṛṣṇa means black, black means dark, dark is unknown, so Kṛṣṇa means unknown. It's a very dangerous kind of philosophy. So we cannot interpret the meanings of these words; rather, we should accept them according to the understanding of the *ācāryas*, the pure devotees in the disciplic line.

Seventh offense: to commit sinful activities on the strength of chanting the holy name of the Lord. Chanting the holy name rids us of so many sins, but we should not think, "I will commit sinful activities and then chant to become pure. Then I'll commit more sins and then chant again." That is nonsense. That is cheating. You cannot cheat Kṛṣṇa, nor can you cheat the holy name. The holy name is Kṛṣṇa. Therefore Kṛṣṇa will know what you are doing. In some religions it is a policy that on Saturday one may confess all his sins and thus become pure so that on Sunday he may come into the church. Then, starting from Monday, he can resume his sinful nonsense. But if one has confessed that his sins are wrong, why should he commit them again? He will be forgiven once or twice, if he commits them unknowingly, but the third or fourth time he will have to suffer. One cannot go on using the Lord to justify one's sin. That is nonsense. To try to use the strength of the holy name to justify one's evil propensities is considered the worst offense.

Eighth offense: to consider the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa one of the auspicious ritualistic activities offered in the *Vedas* for fruitive gains (*karma-kāṇḍa*). We are chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa to get *kṛṣṇa-prema*, love of Kṛṣṇa—not for the sake of religiosity (*dharma*), economic development (*artha*), sense gratification (*kāma*) or even liberation (*mokṣa*). When someone is imbued with love of Kṛṣṇa, liberation seems wholly miserable because in impersonal liberation there is no love. Kṛṣṇa is manifested in His spiritual abodes, such as Goloka and Vaikuṅṭha, and He appears in the material world as an *avatāra*, or incarnation. In the form of the Varāha *avatāra*, Kṛṣṇa went to the darkest region of hell to rescue the planet earth. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa appears to His devotees in hell, on earth, in heaven and in Goloka Vṛndāvana, but in the impersonal Absolute, the *brahmajyoti*, Kṛṣṇa does not manifest Himself. Therefore, *kaivalyaṁ narakāyate*: impersonal liberation (*kaivalya-mukti*) is worse than hell for a devotee.

We are not chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa for any personal gain. *Na dhanam na janam na sundarim kavitam va jagad-isa kamaye*: we don't want money, we don't want followers, we don't want beautiful women, nor do we want popularity, education or an important position. *Mama janmani janmaniṣvare bhavatād bhaktir ahaituki tvayi*: we want causeless devotion, *bhakti*, at the feet of Kṛṣṇa. Nothing else. Therefore we are chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa—for that and that alone.

Ninth offense: to instruct a faithless person about the glories of chanting the holy name. Anyone can take part in chanting the holy name, but we should not give deeper instruction or initiation to one who is faithless. This lack of faith may be due to his ignorance, and therefore we may be able to give him knowledge and purify him. But before he is purified, if he has made up his mind to be averse to Kṛṣṇa (*bahir-mukha, vimukha*), the more we instruct him about Kṛṣṇa, the more he will hate Kṛṣṇa. Then we will be causing that person to commit more offenses, and this is an offense on our part. Therefore, one should not give deeper instruction on chanting the holy name to someone who has no faith; rather, we must first develop his faith by giving him knowledge.

People have no faith in Kṛṣṇa only because they are ignorant. They have not been exposed to real knowledge of Kṛṣṇa, but have absorbed only false notions. For example, in Japan during World War II, the Japanese air force took young boys, thirteen or fourteen years old, and taught them how to fly planes. They didn't teach them how to land the planes, but only how to take off and fly. They told these innocent boys that for the sake of their country they could crash the plane into an enemy boat and then climb out alive. They didn't tell them that explosives had been loaded into the plane and that they would be killed. The pilots were given only a small amount of fuel, so they couldn't turn back if they became afraid. Finally, their commanders charged them with some false notions about love of country and love of their forefathers and then sent them off on their mission. They were simply a suicide squad. All they had was partial knowledge, partial fuel and partial education, and so, charged up with some false sentiments, they were deluded into committing suicide. In the same way, modern education is giving us only partial education, so that we will work like dogs.

According to popular belief, the Indian people do not have any capacity to work. This is a misconception. I have seen extremely old people walking eight or nine miles around Govardhana Hill in the hot sun. They climb the seven hills to Tirupati temple, take cold baths in the month of Māgh (January), or walk all the way to Badarikāśrama. They are so willing to perform these activities for spiritual realization, so why aren't they eager to work in a factory? Because they know they are not getting spiritual benefit by working in a factory. They want spiritual benefit, because people in India are basically religious. They know that *mukti* (liberation) cannot be achieved by working in a factory, but the government is trying to propound the philosophy that work is worship. The government leaders know that people are basically religious, so they're saying, "If you work hard in the hot factory, you'll get *mukti*!" They are trying to screw out a false meaning of *Bhagavad-gītā*—work hard and forget anything else. No religion, no temple, just work in the factory. They are trying to impose this philosophy on the public to get people to work in the factory and think that factory work or hard labor is auspicious, pious activity.

But it doesn't work. Go into any office building and you'll find everyone sitting

around smoking, trying to do the least work possible. But if you go to Jagannātha Puri, you'll see a huge temple there built thousands of years ago. How did the people get the energy to build such a temple? They knew, "I'm doing it for Jagannātha, for Kṛṣṇa." That brought out the best in them. If the people know they're working for some cheating minister, they will also be cheaters. They'll do the least amount of work possible. However, if they work for God, they know that He sees everything they do and that by pleasing Him they can see Him and live with Him. That is an inspiration. But modern leaders don't like that. They want people to work for them, not for Kṛṣṇa. They are envious of Kṛṣṇa. They think, "Oh, if you work for me, that is worship." This is bogus. We are accepting the *mahātma-panthāhī*, the path of the previous *ācāryas*, the great spiritual masters. Does modern society know more than the great *ācāryas*?

The last offense is to not have complete faith in the chanting of the holy name and to maintain material attachment even after understanding so many instructions in this matter. Kṛṣṇa declares in *Bhagavad-gītā, rasa-varjam raso 'py asya param dṛṣṭvā nivartate*: "One who is attached to sensual enjoyment becomes freed from that attachment when he experiences a higher taste." We devotees in India are apparently living very difficult lives. Although we are Americans, we are sleeping on the floor, eating only one or two meals a day, living in this hot country and dressing and living humbly. So people may think that we're suffering, but actually we are not—we are blissful. We're happy because we have the holy name, because we're getting a higher taste. But if after having this higher taste we again want the lower taste, that is a great mistake. A person in that position is called *vāntāsi*. *Vāntāsi* means one who eats his own vomit. When one rejects one's low attachments, that is compared to vomiting. However, after one has gotten a higher taste, indulging again in a lower taste is as good as eating vomit. Therefore, to maintain material attachment after hearing the glories of the holy name of the Lord is an offense.

If we avoid these ten offenses to the holy name of the Lord we will certainly make progress, by the grace of the spiritual master, Lord Caitanya and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The result will be, *ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam*: our consciousness will be

purified. That is a necessity. How can we have peace or make any progress when our consciousness is cloudy and agitated?

There was a meeting between some mideastern leaders concerned with making peace in Israel. They had assembled in a room and were about to take seats at different tables. Jordan was assigned to one table, Syria to another, Iran to another and Israel to another. The Israelis, however, didn't want to take their assigned seats. They wanted to sit at a table on the other side of the room. But the Syrians said, "No, we want this table." So a raging argument ensued, in which the members of the peace talk threatened to close the talks and go to war. Because their minds were agitated, they couldn't make peace even in a ten-foot room. Therefore the first need in society is for purity of consciousness.

With impure consciousness within, how can we externally have peace or purity? First we must become pure internally. For example, here in India the merchants now adulterate the ghee (clarified butter) by mixing in many impure things to save money. Why? Because they no longer believe in God. If they believed in God, they would think, "This ghee may be offered in a temple somewhere. To make it impure would be a great offense." But because they are not God conscious, they think, "Who cares? No one will see me. The government won't know." But although one may escape the vision of the government, one cannot escape the vision of God. The Supreme Lord sees everything. However, if we eliminate the idea of God as the *sākṣī*, the witness, then hell will prevail. Therefore we must purify the consciousness. *Bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpanam*: when our consciousness is purified, automatically the fire of our material existence will be extinguished.

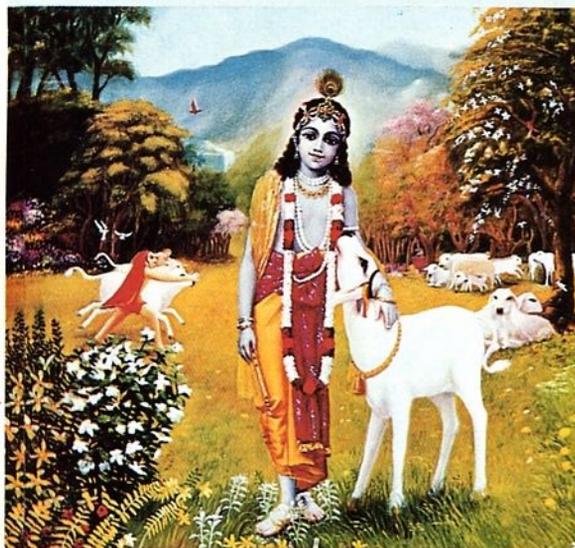
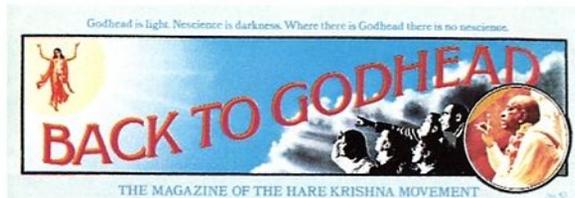
The chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa disseminates transcendental knowledge into the heart like moonlight (*śreyah-kairavacandrikā-vitarāṇam vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam*) and increases our ecstasy at every moment (*ānandāmbudhi-varধানam*). In material ecstasy, pleasure gradually decreases. If you get pleasure from eating one piece of candy, before long you'll need two pieces to get the same pleasure. Then you'll need three, then five, and soon you won't want to look at candy any more. That is material pleasure; it decreases. But in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, *ānandāmbudhi-varধানam pratipadam pūrṇāmṛtā svādanam*: at every step you'll get a fuller taste of nectar. *Sarvātma-snapanam param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*: everyone can

become cleansed by chanting this Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. *Ātmā* means the body, the mind, the intelligence, endeavor, the soul and Kṛṣṇa. Caitanya Mahāprabhu gave all these different meanings for the word *ātmā* when He explained the *ātmārāma* verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Therefore, *ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam*. . . *sarvātma-snapanam*. when we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, all the *ātmās* become purified—the mind, the intelligence, the soul. By chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, all living entities can become happy. And Kṛṣṇa also becomes happy when we chant.

We may offer Kṛṣṇa a flower (*patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam*), but the name of Kṛṣṇa is Kṛṣṇa Himself (*abhinnavān nāma-nāminoh*). So by chanting the holy names of the Lord Kṛṣṇa, we are giving Him the best offering. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is stated, *yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair yajanti hi sumedhasaḥ*: those who are intelligent in this Age of Quarrel will worship the Supreme Lord by *nāma-saṅkīrtana-yajña*, the sacrifice of chanting the holy name of the Lord. *Yajña* (sacrifice) must be performed, for without *yajña*, even material prosperity is impossible. In this Age of Kali the recommended sacrifice is *saṅkīrtana-yajña*, and those who are intelligent will perform this chanting of the holy names of the Lord and therefore follow the teachings of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu is our goal, our object of meditation and worship. He is Kṛṣṇa Himself with a golden complexion, surrounded by His associates. Lord Caitanya, however, carries no weapons. Lord Rāmacandra carries a bow and arrow, Paraśurāma has His axe, Kṛṣṇa has His disc, and Viṣṇu carries a conch, disc, club and lotus. But Caitanya Mahāprabhu is empty-handed. His only weapons are His associates, like Lord Nityānanda and Haridāsa, because His weapon is love. Instead of killing the demons and giving them liberation, He made them into devotees and conquered them by love. Lord Nityānanda used to go from house to house, knock on their doors and beg the people to please chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. He would open the door, fall prostrate on the floor and roll on the ground, begging them to chant the holy name of the Lord. How can you deny His request? The Supreme Personality of Godhead is at your feet, begging you, rolling in the dust of your house. Will you deny Him? Can you refuse? No intelligent person can refuse Him. Therefore, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and avoid these offenses. That is the perfection of human life.

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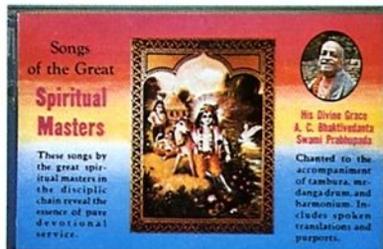
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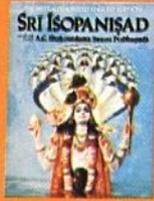
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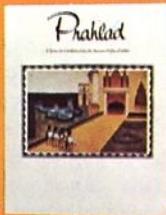
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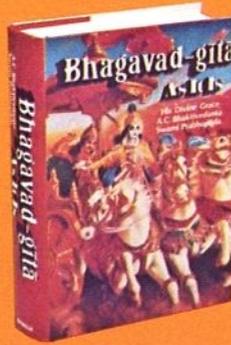
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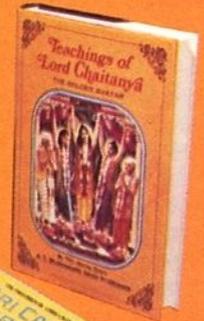
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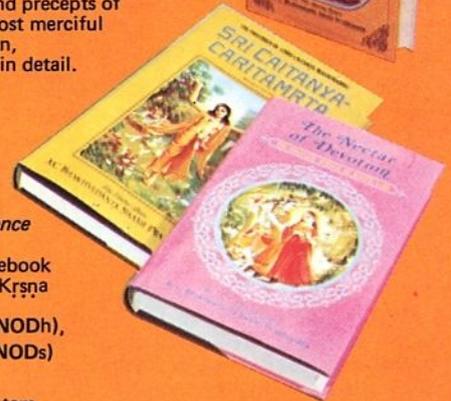
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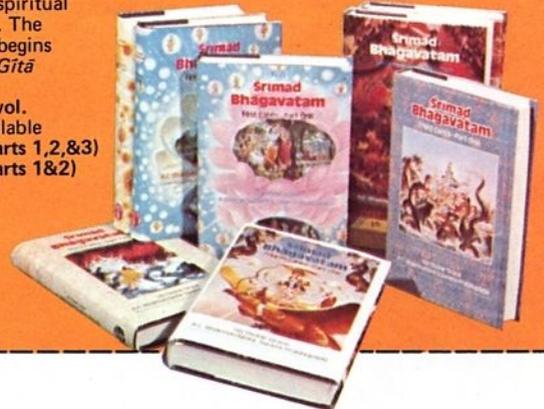


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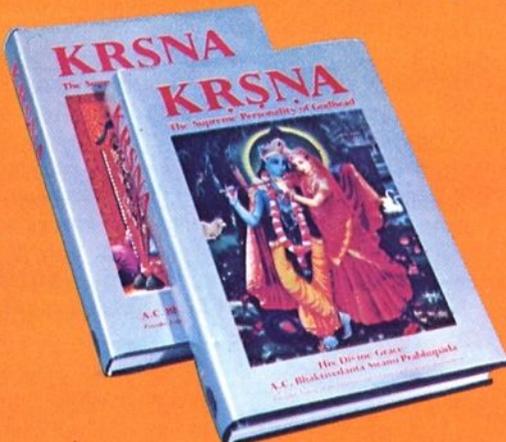
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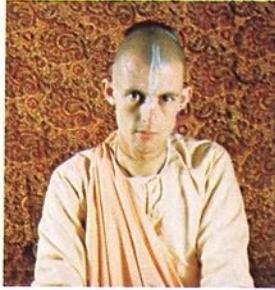
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SECRETARY TO A PURE DEVOTEE

by His Holiness Satsvarūpa Gosvāmī

His Holiness Satsvarūpa dāsa Gosvāmī is one of the leaders of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Until he returned to the United States in July to organize distribution of Kṛṣṇa conscious books to schools and libraries, he was serving as the personal secretary of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda. Śrīla Prabhupāda, the founder and spiritual master of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, has been extensively traveling to preach and oversee the progress of his disciples. As Satsvarūpa dāsa Gosvāmī traveled with Śrīla Prabhupāda around the world—from New York to London, Paris, Hamburg, Geneva, Bombay, Melbourne and back to Los Angeles (with many other stops in between)—he kept a personal diary, filled with accounts of Śrīla Prabhupāda's activities and words. These are excerpts from that diary.

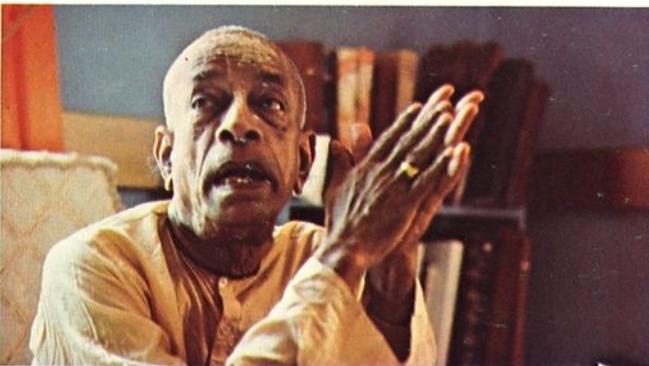


...

Hyderabad, India. April 19

At the press conference in Hyderabad one reporter asked right away whether Śrīla Prabhupāda was an *advaita* (monistic) or *dvaita* (dualist) philosopher. Śrīla Prabhupāda scoffed at the question. "What is the point of discussing such things—whether one is *dvaita* or *advaita*. Kṛṣṇa says, *annād bhavanti bhūtāni*: 'All living beings subsist on food grains.' *Annād* means grains. The people have no grains. Grains are produced from rain, and the rain from *yajña* (sacrifice).' So perform *yajña*. Become Kṛṣṇa conscious. *Dvaita* or *advaita* you may be, but you still need grains."

...



Recalling the press conference. Kṛṣṇa never says we are all one.

April 20

Śrīla Prabhupāda was recalling the press conference. One newspaper reported that he had said that *Bhagavad-gītā* contains all answers to all problems—social, political and otherwise—and should not be misinterpreted. He smiled when he heard that and said, "They have captured the main points of my talk." As for *dvaita/advaita*, he said, "Kṛṣṇa never says we are all one. If a servant says, 'Yes, I am the same as the master,' that is his impudence. But the master never says it. Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna,

'Many births you and I have had, but you are not the same as Me. You forget; I do not. Therefore you should surrender to Me.' Where is the question of *advaita* if Kṛṣṇa says 'Surrender to Me'? Our philosophy is both *advaita* and *dvaita*. We are one with Kṛṣṇa in our qualities, but He is much greater than us."

...

From a letter to a disciple: "I have no business criticizing, but as spiritual master, leader of the institution, it is my duty to find your faults. Even Caitanya Mahāprabhu presented Himself as faulty before His spiritual master. Do not be sorry when I find faults. That is my prime duty. Cāṅkya Paṇḍita says that one must find fault with disciples and sons—it is good for them."

...

April 21

After his lecture at the exhibition grounds, a crowd of about 1,000 presses forward, and with great difficulty, forming a human chain, we escort Śrīla Prabhupāda back to his car. Many spectators dive forward to touch his feet. On the way back, Śrīla Prabhupāda was appreciating that the big crowd was silent during his whole lecture. "The women and children," he said, "could not even understand English. This is a good field for Kṛṣṇa consciousness." Later I commented that his lectures seemed planned out, although I see that he simply chooses a verse and speaks without preparation. "It appears that I prepare?" he asked. "Yes," I said, "there is such symmetry to each lecture." "Kṛṣṇa is speaking," he said, "I am not speaking. I am His microphone. Let us depend on Kṛṣṇa, and He will do everything."

...

April 22

On his early-morning walk, with three *sannyāsīs* [disciples in the renounced order] present, Śrīla Prabhupāda took the role of a pious religionist and challenged us, saying we had nothing to teach him, since he already loved God. "But you don't know what God is," one of us said. "That's all right," he said. "Whatever idea I have, I am praying. If I didn't love God, I wouldn't go to church." We gave argument after argument, but he rejected them all, saying he was as good in his religion as we were in ours; he had his own love of God and scripture and world religion, and he was as good as we were. We couldn't catch him. Finally he revealed to us what we should have said: "If you love God, why do you disobey Him?"

...

A sympathetic Endowments Officer from the government was talking with Śrīla Prabhupāda. He said that the government policy is that everyone should be God conscious, and it seems they have a branch that dispenses money to different temples for the propagation of Hindu culture. He said that "orthodox *brāhmaṇas*" [religious intellectuals] object to ISKCON because we recruit men from the *mleccha* and *yavana* classes [meat-eaters, outcastes] and make them *brāhmaṇas*. Śrīla Prabhupāda opened his Sanskrit *Bhāgavatam* and turned to a passage where Nārada is talking to King Yudhiṣṭhira about the four orders of society [intellectuals, administrators, merchants and laborers]. Nārada said that if you find in another country a person work-

ing as a *brāhmaṇa*, with the qualities of a *brāhmaṇa*, he must be accepted as a *brāhmaṇa*. Śrīla Prabhupāda then read Śrīdhara Svāmi's comment on the verse also. If one gets a degree as an engineer but sits home and doesn't work, he's not an engineer. Kṛṣṇa created the four social orders on the basis of *guṇa* and *karma*, one's qualities and his work. It's very scientific. One must acquire the qualities, and he must work. And the role of a secular government is to see that *brāhmaṇas* are actually working as *brāhmaṇas*. So the four castes must be maintained. This is called *varṇāśrama*. Prabhupāda said that if the Indian government would finance him, he could rid India of godlessness in a year. "People are fed up with materialism and cheating *yoga*. Why not support this movement? Immediately we could open one hundred Varṇāśrama Colleges and start training. We wouldn't just rubber stamp a man '*brāhmaṇa*' because he happens to be born in a *brāhmaṇa* family. That religion of the body won't do. One must actually become qualified."

That is just one sample of the practical discussions about Kṛṣṇa and practical proposals that Śrīla Prabhupāda talks about with respectable men hour after hour, day after day, untiringly, with 100% conviction and fresh enthusiasm.

Śrīla Prabhupāda said that someone wanted to write a book about him, just like the big books people write about their *gurus* to call the *gurus* God. But he said, "No, write books about Kṛṣṇa—hundreds of volumes about Kṛṣṇa."

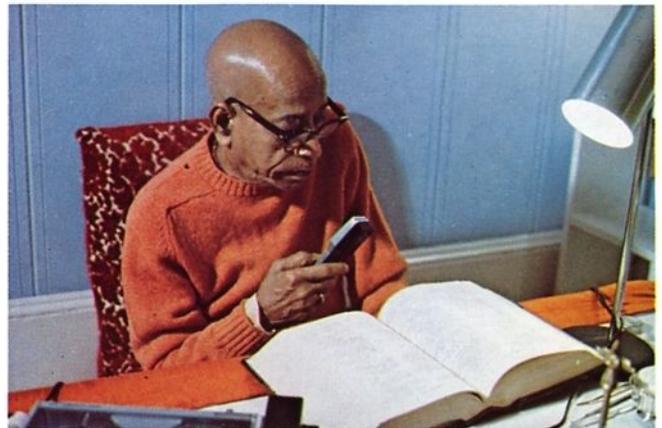
April 25

We flew to Tirupati. In the mountains nearby is Tirmula, where there is the richest temple in India, the Venkateśvara temple, with its Bālajī Deity. Śrīla Prabhupāda very much liked the cottage the temple managers provided for him. They were very respectful and let our party enter the temple, although (1) people usually have to wait on a long line, since 15,000 people enter daily, and (2) Westerners are usually not allowed in. Following behind Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, we walked right in. In the cottage there was a picture of the Bālajī Deity. Prabhupāda said that the Deity's name means "child," Kṛṣṇa as a cowherd boy, not in His Vaikuṅṭha aspect [His majestic form in the spiritual planets]. "What do the rascal scientists know of Vaikuṅṭha?" I said. "They haven't seen these planets through their telescopes."

He said, "That [telescope knowledge] is imaginary, defective. So many planets are glittering at night. What do the scientists know of these other planets? They cannot say that such a place [the spiritual sky] is not possible. The rascals can't get a vague idea of even this one planet." I said they are making progress because 500 years ago people thought the earth was flat. "Not in the *Vedas*," he said. "It is clearly stated: *goloka*, meaning 'round.' Maybe in your Bible," he laughed, "but although you didn't know, the *Vedas* knew."

About all the people going to see Bālajī, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "This shows that the mass of people are still attracted to God, despite government propaganda. The people are coming and going, visiting the Deity. But an advanced devotee can capture God in his heart. *Premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena*: with the ointment of love of God spread over his eyes. Of course, Deity worship is good for the neophyte."

We went three or four times daily to receive *darśana* [association] of the Bālajī Deity. One time we went at 2 in the morning. The Deity is very big, in a dark inner sanctum where the only light comes from the torches held by the *pūjāris* [attendants]. Śrīla Prabhupāda would regularly leave his cane on the rail before Bālajī, and then, after we were walking out, he would call "Where is my stick?" and we would have to go back for it. As the general mass of people go into the temple for alleviation of material distress, they call out "Govinda!" When Śrīla Prabhupāda started in (you have to go barefoot in the whole area around the temple, outside also) he would say "*Govindam ādi-puruṣam tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*" [I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord]. He said we should build temples like this Venkateśvara temple, which has a gold dome and wonderful facilities for visiting pilgrims. While he was there, Śrīla Prabhupāda took Bālajī's *prasāda* [food offered to the Lord] and said it was tasteful. He said that Lord Caitanya had visited this and many other places all over south India. We were thinking that Śrīla Prabhupāda, who says he hasn't visited any holy places in India except Māyāpur and Vṛndāvana, was visiting them to purify them.



Early-morning translation. Working before sunrise for the service of Kṛṣṇa.

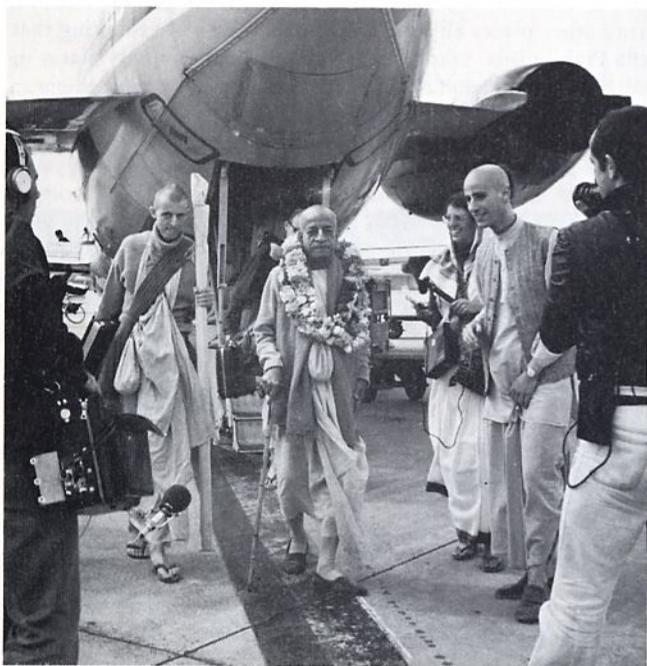
May 25

People ask, What is Śrīla Prabhupāda's day like? Śrīla Prabhupāda rises about 1:30 a.m. Sometimes around 2 or 3 a.m. I awaken and hear him dictating. Once one man in Bombay said to Śrīla Prabhupāda, "Today I rose at 2:30!"—to which Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, "I rose at 1:30!" In Hyderabad Gargamuni Svāmi said to me, "What other *sādhu* in India gets up at 1:30 to write books?" It is great proof of his authenticity. In Bombay we set up a small house of mosquito netting for him to work in. He opens the big volume of Bengali *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, and with a small desk lamp lit, he begins translating the synonyms one by one, clicking the dictaphone button as he pauses briefly for his thoughts.

The translation work usually goes on for two or three hours, sometimes less. From around 3 to 5 he sits and chants Hare

Kṛṣṇa on his beads. Śrīla Prabhupāda chants beads almost silently, although the motion of the beads can sometimes be heard in the next room, and sometimes “Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa.”

His regular morning walk begins just before the sun comes up. In India, Śrīla Prabhupāda says, clothing is artificial; India is so warm. In other countries sometimes he has to bundle up in big coats and a hat. He wears a pair of shoes that he saves only for the morning walks. As Kṛṣṇa is known to appear in yellowish garments with a peacock feather in His hair, our spiritual master wears saffron, with a wrapper around his shoulders or over his head, and walks with his cane, followed by his devotees. In the *Kṛṣṇa* book it says that a devotee is like a waterfall—sometimes he speaks, and sometimes he is silent. I asked what this means, and Śrīla Prabhupāda said that the devotee speaks at his will; he is not obliged to speak. Devotees are eager to accompany Śrīla Prabhupāda on his walks. Sometimes he speaks the whole time. He walks long, usually about an hour and a half. If it rains he says, “Today we will take our walk sitting down,” and we ride in the car.



Traveling and preaching. Disciples and newsmen meet Śrīla Prabhupāda at the Geneva airport. To Prabhupāda's right is Satsvarūpa dāsa Gosvāmi, his secretary.

Geneva, Switzerland. May 30

Flying here, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “This is a very dangerous spot [amidst the Alps]. Many planes crash here.” Later I asked if great sages still lived in the Himalayas. He said yes: Vyāsadeva, Vālmiki and Nara-Nārāyaṇa. I mentioned to him that in the *Bhāgavatam* he says that there's a gold peak in the Himalayas. “Yes,” he said, “if they find that out, they will become mad to go there.” This afternoon we were given an official reception by the governor of Geneva. Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke on the verse *sa vai puṁsām*. . . “The science of God must begin with knowledge that one is spirit soul, not the body.” The governor asked, “If everyone becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious, won't the economy be in trouble?” “No,” Śrīla Prabhupāda said, and



Official reception. The President of the Conseil d'Etat, the main governing body of the Canton of Geneva, welcomes Śrīla Prabhupāda to Geneva City.

he quoted the same verse he cited over a month ago in Hyderabad: *annād bhavanti bhūtāni*. “Everyone subsists on grains.” So he proposed that if everyone cultivates his own land and keeps cows, there will be no economic problem. One should live simply and spend the saved time solving the problems of birth, death, old age and disease. Later Śrīla Prabhupāda asked, “Were my answers all right?” I said that the governor asked about the economy being in trouble if everyone became a devotee because he thinks we are simply beggars. “Therefore,” Prabhupāda said, “I talked about tilling the land. We are not beggars. We are giving the highest knowledge. We gave him the book of highest knowledge [*Bhagavad-gītā*], but he could not give us anything.”

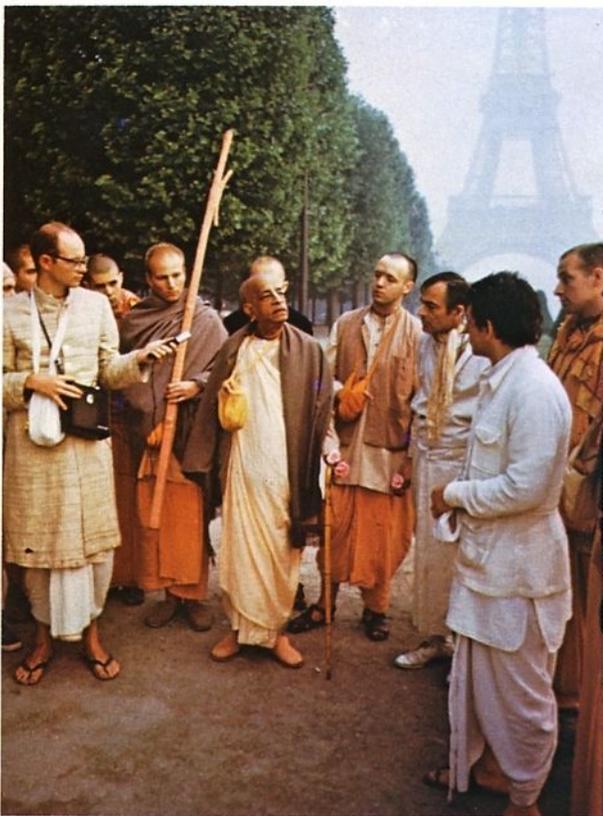
June 5

This morning on his walk, and again tonight with the Dean of Theology at Geneva, Śrīla Prabhupāda gave this example: What is the important thing in the body? It is the spirit soul, the life force. That is what's making the body move. Just as in an airplane the important thing is the pilot. The living entity within the body, the life force, is making the hand move, the eye see, the mind think. . . So in the universe, there is a life, a Soul, which is moving everything. As the person within the body is the important thing, so the Supreme Person is the important element in the universe that is making everything move and sustaining everything. We are *īśvaras*, or controllers, of our bodies, but He is the supreme controller, even of us. Each of us is controlled by God, the supreme controller, so to disobey His orders is sinful life. To agree to obey His direction is religion. Tonight after explaining this, he said, “I think this is perfect knowledge.”

He talked often with the Christians about why they disobey God by killing other living entities. Finally one of them complained that we were just talking the whole time about meat-eating. "Why can't we talk of higher principles?" they asked. Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "So long as one is sinful, there is no question of understanding higher principles."

Paris, France. June 9

He said that Paris attracts so many tourists. His hosts drove him around to see the Louvre buildings, the Arc de Triomphe, and other sites. He said that in India (for example at Tirupati, where Bālajī temple is) the same tourist urge is there, common people are visiting daily by the thousands, and the statues are there, but in India it is for God. While driving they pointed out where embassies are, and one devotee quipped, "So we have opened a Kṛṣṇa embassy." "Why one embassy?" he said. "Every house should be an embassy. Everywhere, a Kṛṣṇa embassy."



Transcendental words. Śrīla Prabhupāda instructs his disciples during a morning walk in Paris.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God." This means that the word preceded the creation. Therefore it was transcendental. We have to inquire, "What is a transcendental Word?" The poet Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura says, *golokera prema-dhana hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*: "Hare Kṛṣṇa comes from Kṛṣṇaloka." This means it is a transcendental, not a material, sound or word. The creation comes from the word of God. For example, His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda has started what is now a very large spiritual movement. In the beginning of the movement there were no buildings and stu-

dents; he came to this country without money, only with the word. But by preaching the transcendental word, all of ISKCON has become manifested. That's an example of the creative power of the word. The transcendental word of God, existing before the creation, is eternal, above the material creation—and it is the cause of the whole creation. Therefore by transcendental sound we are chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and becoming God conscious.

Germany. June 18

Hamsadūta arranged a procession of 20 vehicles from the airport to the castle where the devotees are staying. Śrīla Prabhupāda was pleased: "My heart becomes englanded when I hear a *mṛdaṅga* in a German village." [A *mṛdaṅga* is a drum for chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.] He quoted Lord Caitanya's verse that in every village the chanting will be heard. He said, "We should be aware that our goal is a worldwide movement. Actually, we have communities all over the world, but the movement is still very, very small. It will expand, however, and the whole world can be united under Kṛṣṇa for peace." But then, he said, people's only objection to us is that we are trying to prevent them from going to hell; therefore they misunderstand us. It's like when a man flies a kite on a roof and you see that he's in great danger, about to walk off the roof. But when you tell him, "Look out! You're in danger!" he becomes angry. "What! You have checked my movement." Any gentleman will speak out if he sees another plunging into danger. But they object. One world under Kṛṣṇa—we are not after domination, but we want to free people from death, old age and disease.

Śrīla Prabhupāda has been pointing out that the wars which are starting every few years in the West can be traced to *karma* from cow killing. It has very disastrous effects, the slaughterhouse. He says, "People should live in peace, eating the food they raise themselves from the land, and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Why artificially start these wars? They do not recognize that everything belongs to God. You can have the land to work; He has given you enough of everything to live peacefully. It is the fault of the so-called leaders. The mass of people are good."

June 19

He said that the idea of transmigration of the soul is very important—the beginning of transcendental philosophy—but no one in the West understands it. I brought up the argument that although the materialist will accept that we are changing bodies in this lifetime, and also that he is experiencing the change of bodies in dreams, these things are still within one lifetime, so he does not experience changing bodies at the time of death. Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "But in the dream one doesn't remember everything; so much of it is a hodge-podge mixture of different things. Our nature is to forget. Also, do you remember everything of your childhood? We have forgotten so many things. We do not remember being in the womb of the mother and suffering under those conditions, but we were there. The fact that we do not remember something does not mean it did not exist. So, we are forgetful and do not remember our past lives. The most important thing is the authority of Kṛṣṇa; He is the perfect authority, and He logically presents transmigration in *Bhagavad-gītā*." I said, "If we simply say you must believe it because Kṛṣṇa says so, they will take it as dogmatic." "No," he said, "the reasoning is given there, but the authority is final. For example, if you want to know who your father is, you can investigate in different ways your genealogy, your natural at-

traction to both parents, or your similarity to them in character—but finally the mother is the authority without flaw.”

Melbourne, Australia. June 21

I mentioned to Śrīla Prabhupāda that now that India has the nuclear bomb, other small nations are rushing to get it. He said, “What is this nuclear bomb? I will drop it on you and in turn you will drop it on me. What is the advancement over the dogs? This fearfulness of one nation for another with nuclear bombs is the dogs’ mentality. Sometimes, even when chained by their respective masters, two dogs will fight as soon as they meet. Have you seen it? It’s no better than that. “But,” I pursued a vague anxiety, “devotees sometimes think we are planning for the long-term future when we distribute books to schools and libraries, but if everything is going to end in nuclear war. . .” “Assure them,” said Śrīla Prabhupāda, “that there will be no nuclear war if they take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And even if there is nuclear war, that is not going to end everything. Formerly there was the *brahmāstra* [a weapon of Vedic times similar to today’s nuclear bomb]. Everything is under the control of the Supreme Lord. We are not afraid of the nuclear bomb, because the soul cannot be killed by the atom bomb. Do you know that? Have you read it? So what do they want to do in fear of the nuclear bomb—to sit down and do nothing and cry?” I said, “Well, we are asking people to invest in 60 volumes of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, but they might say, ‘I don’t want to make such a long-term investment in the future because there is nuclear war ahead.’” “Then why are they going to the university? Why don’t they stop eating? Do they mean one should not go for an education and should not have any hope and should stop everything?” “Yes,” I said, “some think like that—that it is doom.” Śrīla Prabhupāda expressed concern that people have been put into such a consciousness. Then he repeated that I should assure people that there will not be such a war if they can become Kṛṣṇa conscious. “In fact, because of our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, there will be no nuclear war. But even if there is, the soul cannot be killed, so we are not afraid the bomb will kill the soul.”

In Melbourne, Śrīla Prabhupāda has been getting lots of news coverage. One article misrepresented him, saying, “His Divine Grace is resigned to dying soon and returning to earth as an animal.” Amogha prepared a letter to the editor asking him to print what Śrīla Prabhupāda actually said. Amogha wrote that a pure devotee’s condition is just the opposite: he goes to the kingdom of God after leaving this body. The next morning in class, Śrīla Prabhupāda commented on the news article. He explained how the reporter, being against us, was really saying, “Let the *svāmī* come back as a dog.” (Actually all the miscreants will come back in the lower forms of life, not the devotees.) Prabhupāda had actually said, “The devotee doesn’t mind how he comes back, so long as he is with Kṛṣṇa. To become Kṛṣṇa’s animal is a great thing. In Kṛṣṇaloka the cows embraced by Kṛṣṇa, and the other animals—or even the plants—are very exalted to be with Kṛṣṇa.” So there is no objection if he becomes Kṛṣṇa’s animal in his next life.

June 29, 1974

On his morning walks through the Royal Botanical Gardens in Melbourne, Prabhupāda would ask how many varieties of plants they have. On several occasions he asked, “Do they have two million varieties? Kṛṣṇa has produced two million varieties of plants, but I think maybe they have two thousand.”



“The plants are standing still, while we are able to walk.” A pure devotee teaches his disciples to see Kṛṣṇa’s arrangement everywhere.

He said, “The plants are standing still while we are able to walk because they are being punished. But although it is punishment, Kṛṣṇa’s intelligence is so nice that it has become a beautiful arrangement.” Madhudviṣa Mahārāja asked, “If one gets a body according to his desire, so that one who wants to eat flesh can become a tiger—well, who would want to become a tree?” (We understand that tree life is the result of too much lust.) Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “The students in America like to stand naked. So Kṛṣṇa says, ‘Here, take the body of a tree. Stand naked for a hundred years.’” I could suddenly understand better Prabhupāda’s position as our savior. He can save us from coming back in the lower species. If we follow the regulations of devotional life he has taught us, if we don’t fall down from this, we can go to Kṛṣṇa at the end of this life. Those bewildered by material desires have to go on in the material world.

Prabhupāda is very interested in the excellent response from high church officials here in Melbourne. He wants to make a united effort with the Christians. The preaching platform is that they should chant the name of Christ, which is the same philologically as Kṛṣṇa, coming from the Greek “Christos,” and stop the animal slaughter. The clergy is appreciating this approach.



Kṛṣṇa Conscious Calendar

Here are some upcoming holidays and festivals for Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees. Devotees of the ISKCON center nearest you will gladly tell you more about the meaning of these festivals.

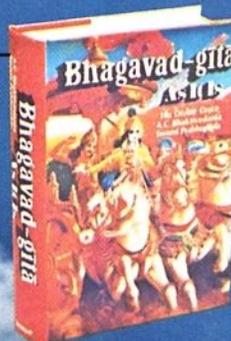
November 22	November 25	November 28	November 29
Disappearance day of Śrīla Gadādhara dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Dhanañjaya Paṇḍita and Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Ācārya Prabhū.	Ekādaśī (Utthāna-ekādaśī) (fasting from grains and beans). Disappearance of Śrīla Gaurakīśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja.	Disappearance of Śrīla Bhūgarbha Gosvāmī and Śrīla Kāśīvara Paṇḍita.	End of Cāturmāsya-vrata and Ūrja-vrata. Haimantika-rāsa-yātrā of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Appearance of Śrīla Nimbārka Ācārya.
December 9	December 10	December 11	December 25
Ekādaśī (Utpannā-ekādaśī) (fasting from grains and beans).	Disappearance of Śrīla Kāliya Kṛṣṇadāsa Ṭhākura and Śrīla Narahari Sarakāra Ṭhākura.	Disappearance of Śrīla Sāraṅga Ṭhākura.	Ekādaśī (Mokṣadā-ekādaśī) (fasting from grains and beans).

TRANSLATION

The splendor of the sun, which dissipates the darkness of this whole world, comes from Me. And the splendor of the moon and the splendor of fire are also from Me.

PURPORT

The unintelligent cannot understand how things are taking place. The beginning of knowledge can be established by understanding what the Lord explains here. Everyone sees the sun, moon, fire and electricity. One should simply try to understand that the splendor of the sun, the splendor of the moon, and the splendor of electricity or fire are coming from the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In such a conception of life, the beginning of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, lies a great deal of advancement for the conditioned soul in this material world. The living entities are essentially the parts and parcels of the Supreme Lord, and He is giving herewith the hint how they can come back to Godhead, back to home. From this verse we can understand that the sun is illuminating the whole solar system. There are different universes and solar systems, and there are different suns, moons and planets also. Sunlight is due to the spiritual effulgence in the spiritual sky of the Supreme Lord. With the rise of the sun, the activities of human beings are set up. They set fire to prepare their foodstuff; they set fire to start the factories, etc. So many things are done with the help of fire. Therefore sunrise, fire and moonlight are so pleasing to the living entities. Without their help no living entity can live. So if one can understand that the light and splendor of the sun, moon and fire are emanating from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, then one's Kṛṣṇa consciousness will begin. By the moonshine, all the vegetables are nourished. The moonshine is so pleasing that people can easily understand that they are living by the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa. Without His mercy there cannot be sun, without His mercy there cannot be moon, and without His mercy there cannot be fire, and without the help of sun, moon and fire, no one can live. These are some thoughts to provoke Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the conditioned soul.



This is a page from Chapter 15 of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

You can get this great book from your bookstore, or you can get it from us (please see page 22).



What does Kṛṣṇa taste like?

“If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit or water, I will accept it.” (Bhagavad-gītā 9.26)

Prasāda means “the Lord’s mercy,” and it refers specifically to food that has been offered to Kṛṣṇa. Hundreds of delicious dishes can be made with five basic ingredients (vegetables, grains, sugar, fruit, and milk). When these are prepared with care and offered in devotion to Kṛṣṇa, He accepts the

offering with His glance, and the food becomes “Kṛṣṇa-ized”—it becomes nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa. We would like to invite you to visit any one of the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Temples around the world, listed on page two of this magazine, to experience spiritual food. Every day, and especially on Sundays, we have a program of singing, dancing, philosophy and feasting on Kṛṣṇa *prasāda*.