A short statement of the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

The International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness (ISKCON) is a worldwide community of devotees practicing bhakti-yoga, the eternal science of loving service to Kṛṣṇa. The Society was founded in 1966 by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa representing an unbroken chain of spiritual masters originating with Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. The following eight principles are the basis of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. We invite all our readers to consider them with an open mind and then visit one of the ISKCON centers to see how they are being applied in everyday life.

1. By sincerely cultivating a bona fide spiritual science, we can be free from anxiety and come to a state of pure, unending, blissful consciousness in this lifetime.
2. We are not our bodies but eternal spirit souls, parts and parcels of God (Kṛṣṇa). As such, we are all brothers, and Kṛṣṇa is ultimately our common father.
3. Kṛṣṇa is the eternal, all-knowing, omnipresent, all-powerful, and all-attractive Personality of Godhead. He is the seed-giving father of all living beings, and He is the sustaining energy of the entire cosmic creation.
4. The Absolute Truth is contained in all the great scriptures of the world. However, the oldest known revealed scriptures in existence are the Vedic literatures, most notably the Bhagavad-gītā, which is the literal record of God's actual words.
5. We should learn the Vedic knowledge from a genuine spiritual master—one who has no selfish motives and whose mind is firmly fixed on Kṛṣṇa.
6. Before we eat, we should offer to the Lord the food that sustains us. Then Kṛṣṇa becomes the offering and purifies us.
7. We should perform all our actions as offerings to Kṛṣṇa and do nothing for our own sense gratification.
8. The recommended means for achieving the mature stage of love of God in this age of Kali, or quarrel, is to chant the holy names of the Lord. The easiest method for most people is to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Pictured: devotees (top) chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa in downtown Amsterdam and (bottom) standing before the Amsterdam center of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness.
Many people in our materialistic world are feeling a void in their lives—a lack of something that they can’t quite put their finger on. To fill this void, many are taking up “consciousness-raising” or “meditational” techniques. Several individuals and groups have marketed various techniques to a largely innocent public, with some mention that most of their methods are “inspired by” or “adopted from” the spiritual disciplines of India. What these entrepreneurs have really done is to water down and exploit genuine spirituality.

However, one spiritual teacher has consistently refused to compromise. And from Harvard to Oxford to the Sorbonne, the world’s leading scholars agree: His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada is delivering India’s sacred devotional culture as it is.

The key to understanding this culture and elevating ourselves to clear consciousness—Krṣṇa consciousness—is the simple, easy, yet sublime process of chanting the Hare Krṣṇa māhā-mantra. Māhā means “great,” mān means “mind,” and tra means “release.” Māhā-mantra, then, means “the great chanting for releasing the mind from illusion.” The māhā-mantra consists of three names for God: Hare (God’s pleasure energy), Krṣṇa (God, the all-attractive Supreme Personality), and Rāma (God, the reservoir of all pleasure). Śrīla Prabhupada explains that simply by chanting and hearing these sounds, “one can achieve all the benefits of spiritual life.”

India’s most respected spiritual books and teachers all bear out Śrīla Prabhupada’s statement. For instance, six centuries ago Śrīdhara Svāmi said, “If one always chants the holy name of the Lord with great devotion in the morning and evening, one can become free from all material miseries.”

If the process is so easy, can we learn it from anyone? The Padma Purāṇa explains, “Unless one receives his mantra from a bona fide spiritual master in the authorized disciplic succession, his mantra will be without any effect.” Śrīla Prabhupada, the foremost teacher in the Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍiya disciplic succession, freely offers the Hare Krṣṇa māhā-mantra to fill whatever void may exist in our lives.
His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Founder-Acārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness
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The founder and original editor of BACK TO GODHEAD is His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. In September, 1966, Srila Prabhupada arrived in the United States. In July, 1966, in a storefront in New York City, he began the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. And from those beginning days, BACK TO GODHEAD has been an integral part of ISKCON.

In fact, since 1944, when he started writing, editing, printing, and distributing BACK TO GODHEAD, Srila Prabhupada has often called it "the backbone of the Krishna consciousness movement." Although over the years it has changed in some ways, BACK TO GODHEAD remains, in Srila Prabhupada's words, "an instrument for training the mind and educating human nature to rise up to the plane of the spirit soul."

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Srimad-Bhagavatam

The continuing presentation of India's great spiritual classic. Translation and commentary by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

ON THE COVER

"Srila Prabhupada (our spiritual master) has called our paintings "windows to the spiritual world,"" says Bhaktivedanta Book Trust artist Parikshit dasa. "That's because we exactly follow the descriptions given in ancient India's Vedic literature." This painting illustrates a verse from Srimad-Bhagavatam: "Krishna's face is decorated with ornaments, such as earrings resembling sharks. His ears are beautiful. His cheeks brilliant, and His smiling is attractive to everyone. Whoever sees Lord Krishna sees a festival. His face and body are fully satisfying for everyone to see..." (Bg. 9.24.65).
Beyond Animal Technology

Though today's scientist has devised a lofty technology, essentially he knows about as much as his dog: how to eat well, how to sleep peacefully, how to have an enjoyable sex life, and how to defend against enemies.

But what about human technology — How is a living body different from a dead body? Who are we really? Where have we come from? Where are we going at death? We can find out all these things... from someone who knows.

An excerpt from Krishna Consciousness, the Matchless Gift, by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

The purpose of this Hare Krishna movement is to bring man back to his original consciousness, which is Krishna consciousness, clear consciousness. When water falls from the clouds, it is uncontaminated like distilled water, but as soon as it touches the ground it becomes muddy and discolored. Similarly, we are originally pure spirit soul, part and parcel of Krishna, and therefore our original constitutional position is as pure as God's. In Bhagavad-gita Sri Krishna says:

manamaya jiva-loke
jiva-bhuta sanadhanah
mara sastra-indriyai
prakriti-sihan karat

"The living entities in this conditioned world are My fragmental parts, and they are eternal. But due to conditioned life, they are struggling very hard with the six senses, which include the mind." (Bg. 15.7.)

Thus all living entities are part and parcel of Krishna. By Krishna it should always be remembered that we are speaking of God, Krishna denoting the all-attractive Supreme Personality of Godhead. As a fragment of gold is qualitatively the same as a gold reservoir, so the minute particles of Krishna's body are therefore qualitatively as good as Krishna. The chemical composition of God's body and the eternal spiritual body of the living entity is the same — spiritual. Thus originally, in our un-contaminated condition, we possessed a form as good as God's, but just as rain falls to the ground, so we come in contact with this material world, which is manipulated by the external material energy of Krishna.

When we speak of external energy or material nature, the question may be raised, "Whose energy? Whose nature?" Material energy or nature is not active independently. Such a concept is foolish. In the Bhagavad-gita it is clearly stated that material nature does not work independently. When a foolish man sees a machine he may think that it is working automatically, but actually it is not — there is a driver, someone in control, although we sometimes cannot see the controller behind the machine due to our defective vision. There are many electronic mechanisms which work very wonderfully, but behind these intricate systems there is a scientist who pushes the button. This is very simple to understand: since a machine is matter, it cannot work on its own accord but must work under spiritual direction. A tape recorder works, but it works according to the plans and under the direction of a living entity, a human being. The machine is complete, but unless it is manipulated by a spirit soul, it cannot work. Similarly, we should understand that this cosmic manifestation which we call nature is a great machine, and that behind this machine there is God, Krishna. This is also affirmed in Bhagavad-giti, where Krishna says:

mayadhysakena prakrtih
sivate sa-caradicaram
hemadriena kaumeya
jugad viparivartate

"This material nature is working under My direction. O son of Kunti, producing all the moving and unmoving beings, and by its rule this manifestation is created and annihilated again and again" (Bg. 9.10). So Krishna says that material nature is acting under His direction. Thus behind everything there is a supreme controller. Modern civilization does not understand this due to lack of knowledge. It is the purpose of this Society for Krishna Consciousness, therefore, to enlighten all people who have been maddened by the influence of the three modes of material nature. In other words, our aim is to awaken mankind to its normal condition.

There are many universities, especially in the United States, and many departments of knowledge, but they are not discussing these points. Where is the department for this knowledge that we find given by Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad-giti? When I spoke before some students and faculty members at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the first question I raised was: "Where is the technological department which is investigating the difference between a dead man and a living man?" When a man dies, something is lost. Where is the technology to replace it? Why don't scientists try to solve this problem? Because this is a very difficult subject matter, they set it aside and busily engage in the technology of eating, sleeping, mating, and defending. However, Vedic literatures inform us that this is animal technology. Animals are also trying their best to eat well, to have an enjoyable sex life, to sleep peacefully, and to defend themselves. What, then, is the dif-
"Even the most complicated computers need trained men to handle them. Similarly, we should know that this great machine, which is known as the cosmic manifestation, is manipulated by a supreme spirit. That is Kṛṣṇa."

ference between man’s knowledge and the animals’ knowledge? The fact is that man’s knowledge should be developed to explore that difference between a living body and a dead body.

That spiritual knowledge was imparted by Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna in the beginning of the Bhagavad-gītā. Being a friend of Kṛṣṇa’s, Arjuna was a very intelligent man, but his knowledge, as all men’s, was limited. Kṛṣṇa spoke, however, of subject matters which were beyond Arjuna’s finite knowledge. These subjects are called adhokṣaja because our direct perception, by which we acquire material knowledge, fails to approach them. For example, we have many powerful microscopes to see what we cannot see with our limited vision, but there is no microscope that can show us the soul within the body. Nevertheless, the soul is there.

“Where am I? What am I?”

Bhagavad-gītā informs us that in this body there is a proprietor—the spirit soul. I am the proprietor of my body, and other souls are the proprietors of their bodies. I say, “my hand,” but not “1 hand.” Since it is “my hand,” I am different from the hand, being its owner. Similarly, we speak of “my eye,” “my leg,” “my this,” “my that.” In the midst of all of these objects which belong to me, where am I? The search for the answer to this question is the process of meditation. In real meditation, we ask, “Where am I? What am I?” We cannot find the answers to these questions by any material effort, and because of this all the universities are setting these questions aside. They say, “It is too difficult a subject.” Or they brush it aside: “It is irrelevant.”

Thus engineers direct their attention to creating and attempting to perfect the horseless carriage and wingless bird. Formerly, horses were drawing carriages and there was no air pollution, but now there are cars and rockets, and the scientists are very proud. “We have invented horseless carriages and wingless birds,” they boast. Although they invent imitation wings for the airplane or rocket, they cannot invent a soulless body. When they are able to actually do this, they will deserve credit. But such an attempt would necessarily be frustrated, for we know that there is no machine that can work without a spirit soul behind it. Even the most complicated computers need trained men to handle them. Similarly, we should know that this great machine, which is known as the cosmic manifestation, is manipulated by a supreme spirit. That is Kṛṣṇa.

Scientists are searching for the ultimate cause or the ultimate controller of this material universe and are postulating different theories and proposals, but the real means for knowledge is very easy and perfect: we need only hear from the perfect person, Kṛṣṇa. By accepting the knowledge imparted in Bhagavad-gītā, anyone can immediately know that this great cosmic machine, of which the earth is a part, is working so wonderfully because there is a driver behind it—Kṛṣṇa.

Our process of knowledge is very easy. Kṛṣṇa’s instruction, Bhagavad-gītā, is the principal book of knowledge given by the adi-puruṣa Himself, the Supreme Primeval Person, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is indeed the perfect person. It may be argued that although we have accepted Him as a perfect person, there are many others who do not.

But one should not think that this acceptance is whimsical; He is accepted as the perfect person on the evidence of many authorities. We do not accept Kṛṣṇa as perfect simply on the basis of our whims or sentiments. No—Kṛṣṇa is accepted as God by many Vedic authorities like Vyāsadeva, the author of all Vedic literatures. The treasurehouse of knowledge is contained in the Vedas, and their author, Vyāsadeva, accepts Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and Vyāsadeva’s spiritual master, Narada, also accepts Kṛṣṇa as such. Narada’s spiritual master, Brahmā, accepts Kṛṣṇa not only as the Supreme Person but the supreme controller as well—īśvarah paramah kṛṣṇah: “The supreme controller is Kṛṣṇa.”

There is no one in the creation who can claim that he is not controlled. Everyone, regardless of how important or powerful, has a controller over his head. Kṛṣṇa, however, has no controller, therefore He is God. He is the controller of everyone, but there is no one superior to Him, no one to control Him; nor is there anyone equal to Him, no one to share His platform of absolute control. This may sound very strange, for there are many so-called gods nowadays. Indeed, gods have become very cheap, being especially imported from India. People in other countries are fortunate that gods are not manufactured there, but in India gods are manufactured practically every day. We often hear that God is coming to Los Angeles or New York and that people are gathering to receive Him, etc. But Kṛṣṇa is not the type of God created in a mystic factory. No. He was not made God, but He is God.

We should know, then, on the basis of authority, that behind this gigantic material nature, the cosmic manifestation, there is God—Kṛṣṇa—and that He is accepted by all Vedic authorities. Acceptance of authority is not new for us; everyone accepts authority—in some form or another. For education we go to a teacher or to a school or simply learn from our father and mother. They are all authorities, and our nature is to learn from them. In our childhood we asked, “Father, what is this?” and father would
“Scientists are searching for the ultimate cause or the ultimate controller of this material universe and are postulating different theories and proposals, but the real means for knowledge is very easy and perfect: we need only hear from the perfect person, Kṛṣṇa.”

say, “This is a pen,” “These are spectacles,” or “This is a table.” In this way, from the very beginnings of life a child learns from his father and mother. A good father and mother never cheat when their son inquires from them; they give exact and correct information. Similarly, if we get spiritual information from an authority, and if the authority is not a cheater, then our knowledge is perfect. However, if we attempt to reach conclusions by dint of our own speculative powers, we are subject to fall into error. The process of induction, by which, reasoning from particular facts or individual cases, one can arrive at a general conclusion, is never a perfect process. Because we are limited and our experience is limited, the inductive process of acquiring knowledge will always remain imperfect.

Kṛṣṇa, the Perfect Source of Knowledge

But if we receive information from the perfect source, Kṛṣṇa, and if we repeat that information, then what we are speaking can also be accepted as perfect and authoritative. This process of paramāṇa, or disciplic succession, means hearing from Kṛṣṇa, or from authorities who have accepted Kṛṣṇa, and repeating exactly what they have said. In Bhagavad-gītā Kṛṣṇa recommends this process of knowledge: evam paramāṇa-prāptam īmam rājasayo viduḥ. “This supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession, and the saintly kings understood it in that way” (Bg. 4.2).

Formerly, knowledge was passed down by great saintly kings, who were the authorities. In previous ages, however, these kings were rṣis—great learned scholars and devotees—and because they were not ordinary men the government which they headed worked very nicely. There are many instances in Vedic civilization of kings who attained perfection as devotees of God. For example, Dhrūva Mahārāja went to the forest to search out God, and by practice of severe penance and austerity he found God within six months.

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness process is also based on austerity, but it is not very difficult. There are restrictions governing eating and sex life (only prasāda, food first offered to Kṛṣṇa, is taken, and sex is restricted to married life), and there are other regulations which facilitate and foster spiritual realization. It is not possible in these days to imitate Dhrūva Mahārāja, but by following certain basic Vedic principles, we can make advancement in spiritual consciousness, Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As we advance, we become perfect in knowledge. What is the use in becoming a scientist or a philosopher if we cannot say what our next life will be? A realized student of Kṛṣṇa consciousness can very easily say what his next life is, what God is, what the living entity is, and what his relationship with God is. His knowledge is perfect because it is coming from perfect books of knowledge, such as the Bhagavad-gītā and the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

This, then, is the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is very easy, and anyone can adopt it and make his life perfect. If someone says, “I’m not educated at all, and I cannot read books,” he is still not disqualified. He can still perfect his life by simply chanting the mantra: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Kṛṣṇa has given us a tongue and two ears, and we may be surprised to know that Kṛṣṇa is realized through the ears and tongue, not through the eyes. By hearing His message, we learn to control the tongue, and after the tongue is controlled, the other senses follow. Of all the senses, the tongue is the most voracious and difficult to control, but it can be controlled simply by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and using Kṛṣṇa prasāda, food offered to Kṛṣṇa.

We cannot understand Kṛṣṇa by sensual perception or by speculation. It is not possible, for Kṛṣṇa is so great that He is beyond our sensual range. But He can be understood by surrender. Kṛṣṇa therefore recommends this process:

sarva-dharmān pariṇāyata
mām ekaṁ sarvamāṁ vraja
ahim tvaṁ sarva-pāpebhya
mokṣayissvāṁ mā śucat

“Give up all varieties of religiousness, and just surrender unto Me; and in return I shall protect you from all sinful reactions. Therefore, you have nothing to fear” (Bg. 18.66).

Unfortunately, our disease is that we are rebellious—we automatically resist authority. Yet although we say that we don’t want authority, nature is so strong that it forces authority upon us. We are forced to accept the authority of nature. What can be more pathetic than a man who claims to answer to no authority but who follows his senses blindly wherever they lead him? Our false claim to independence is simply foolishness. We are all under authority, yet we say that we don’t want authority. This is called maya, illusion. We do, however, have a certain independence—we can choose to be under the authority of our senses or the authority of Kṛṣṇa. The best and ultimate authority is Kṛṣṇa, for He is our eternal well-wisher, and He always speaks for our benefit. Since we have to accept some authority, why not accept His? Simply by hearing of His glories from the Bhagavad-gītā and the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and by chanting His names—Hare Kṛṣṇa—we can swiftly perfect our lives.
"The Supreme Lord walks ... ." Thousands go on a procession with the Kṛṣṇa Deity during this festival in Uḍupi, near Mangalore, South India (above). People in India have known for ages that God is a person — and that as the master of all energies, He can manifest Himself as He likes, even through Deity forms supposedly made of earth, stone, or wood. "He is far away, but He is very near as well ... ." Though He never leaves His spiritual abode, Lord Kṛṣṇa also appears in such places as Los Angeles (opposite page). (His queen: Śrīmati Rukmini-devī.) For the surrendered soul Kṛṣṇa is always within reach.

"The Supreme Lord walks and does not walk. He is far away, but He is very near as well. He is within everything, and yet He is outside of everything."

This mantra is from the Īsopaniṣad, the oldest of the famed Upaniṣads, which are the philosophic heart of the sacred scriptures of India. The mantra presents contradictions — by way of proving the inconceivable potencies of God. In India, as well as throughout the world, those who admit God's existence have always disputed whether God is impersonal or personal. The Māyāvāda school accepts only an impersonal aspect of the Lord and rejects His personal feature. The Bhāgavata school (devoted to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and represented today by the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement) accepts the Lord as both impersonal and personal.

We should not take it for granted that just because we cannot see God with our eyes, the Lord does not have a personal existence. The Īsopaniṣad mantra refutes this argument by warning us that the Lord is "far away but very near as well." The abode of the Supreme Lord is far, far beyond the material sky, and its distance cannot even be measured. But despite the Lord's being so far away, He can at once, within less than a second, descend before us with a speed swifter than the mind or wind.

And there is no power to prevent the primeval Supreme Being from coming before us in the material world in His supreme personal form. For example, the Lord can appear in the form of Deities supposedly made of earth, stone, or wood. Although engraved from wood, stone, or other matter, these forms are not idols (as the iconoclasts contend). In our present state of imperfect material existence, we cannot see the Supreme Lord because of our imperfect senses. Yet those devotees who want to see Him by means of material vision are favored by the Lord, who appears in a so-called material form to accept His devotees' service. One should not think that such devotees are worshiping an idol. They are actually worshiping the Lord, who has agreed to appear before them in an approachable way. Nor is the Deity form fashioned to the whims of the worshiper. (This is the actual meaning of the Biblical injunction, "Thou shalt not worship a graven image" — one is forbidden to imagine a form and worship it as God.) The Deity form is authorized by scripture and exists eternally with all His paraphernalia. This can be actually felt by a sincere devotee, but not by an atheist. For the surrendered soul the Lord is always within reach, whereas for the unsurrendered soul He is far, far away and cannot be approached.
By now it's no secret that the space scientists have cheated us out of billions of dollars. But the hoax is even more colossal than we could have imagined.

MAN ON THE MOON
A case of mass brainwashing

by Satsvarupa dāsa Goswami

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura, the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, once described materialistic civilization as "a society of the cheaters and the cheated." Looking at our modern world, we can easily see why: massive advertising campaigns for cigarettes and liquor that promise pleasure but deliver disease; widespread gambling rackets of all kinds; some government-sponsored that bilk the public of billions each year; high-level corruption of many leaders in industry and government that reveals a nearly total disregard for the public's welfare. From all this, and much more, the only conclusion to draw is that the vast majority of people, out of ignorance of a meaningful goal of life, actually desire to be cheated—actually feel the need for the false promises and outright lies of the hucksters to provide some hope of happiness from day to day. Thus a few clever, aggressive professionals take advantage of the ignorant masses and engage in large-scale cheating for their own selfish interests.

While cheating goes on in all fields of endeavor, one of the most outstanding is modern science. Scientists can make useful contributions to material life, but they become cheaters when they claim that science is (or someday will be) independent of the laws of nature. Theories such as "Life originates from matter and can be created in the laboratory," or "Since there is no supreme intelligence directing the universe, we [the scientists] are the only ones who can explain existence," are all bluffs perpetrated without a shred of scientific proof. Their only purpose is to advance the prestige of the scientists and net them billion-dollar government grants for endless research. Recent efforts to travel to the moon provide a prime example of this kind of lucrative mass "brainwashing," which is still succeeding with a large portion of the gullible public.

Despite the tremendous volume of propaganda proclaiming the "conquest of outer space," we have information from a very reliable source, the Sanskrit Vedic scriptures, that the so-called "astronauts" never actually went to the moon. Although most people hold it as an article of absolute faith that man first reached the moon in July, 1969, the manned moon landing is actually a colossal hoax.

We realize that this is very difficult for you to accept, since it directly contradicts your established beliefs. But since you yourself have not actually gone to the moon, you owe it to yourself to consider why you are so confident that the "astronauts" actually have gone there. Why do you accept the popular version of the manned moon landing? Because you believe the authority of the scientists, the journalists, and the politicians who propagate that version. When we cite the Vedic scriptures, which state that the "astronauts" could not have gone to the moon, we are simply favoring another authority. In both cases, it is a matter of accepting an authority and believing what it says.

Now, why do we believe the Vedic scriptures rather than the material scientists? Because the Vedic scriptures differ from the conclusions of material science in that they are not based on imperfect sensory investigation, but are apauruṣya, i.e., they emanate from God, who is beyond the material world. In other words, Vedic evidence stands above the defects of conditioned souls within the material world. Thus, when it comes to real scientific knowledge, the standard of Vedic authority is perfect because it originates directly from the all-perfect, omniscient Personality of Godhead.

The Vedic account of our planetary system is already researched, concluded, and perfect. The Vedas state that the moon is 800,000 miles farther from the earth than the sun. Therefore, even if we accept the modern calculation of 93 million miles as the distance from the earth to the sun, how could the "astronauts" have traveled to the moon—a distance of almost 94 million miles—in only 91 hours (the alleged elapsed time of the Apollo 11 moon trip)? This would require an average speed of more than one million miles per hour for

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*Twenty-eight percent of all Americans, according to a Gallup poll cited in the Los Angeles Times on October 13, 1976, have seen through the sham and now believe the moon landing to be a fake.
MUSEUM EXHIBIT NO. 13

ROCKS from the MOON

Our grateful acknowledgment to the American people for their generous contribution of $24 billion for this recent acquisition.
CALLING THE BLIND SCIENTISTS' BLUFF

When we state that the material scientists are mistaken about where the planets are situated in space, we go against the deep faith of most people. The common man thinks, "But they have figured everything out mathematically. They have Ph.D.'s and Nobel Prizes, and they are using gigantic telescopes to measure the heavens with great accuracy." In fact, however, the scientists themselves are the first to admit that they constantly make mistakes and have to revise their theories.

The real point is that no matter how huge a telescope is, or how precisely the data it reports is handled by a computer, the scientists themselves, being ordinary conditioned souls, suffer from four basic defects that completely invalidate their conclusions. These defects are stated in the Vedic scriptures to be bhrama, pramada, vipralipsa, and karanāpātava.

The first defect (bhrama) is the tendency to make mistakes. For example, Columbus discovered America, but he thought it was India. Similarly, the so-called "astronauts" may have gone somewhere, but it wasn't to the moon, as they believe.

The second defect (pramada) is the tendency to become illusioned. A good example of mass illusion is that almost everyone identifies himself as his body rather than as his real self, the soul within the body. This indicates a nearly universal lack of the most basic knowledge.

The third defect (vipralipsa) is the tendency to cheat. There are many cases on record of researchers attempting to prove a pet theory by doctoring up their laboratory findings. But doubtless the most harmful deception occurs when the scientists, knowing themselves prone to error and illusion, still put forward their jerry-built theories as gospel truth before an innocent public.

The fourth defect (karanāpātava) is the imperfection of our gross senses. For instance, regardless of how perfect a telescopic lens may be, it is the defective eyes and brain of a human being (the scientist) that have to perceive and interpret the data. Therefore his conclusions are bound to contain some error.

These are some serious reasons to reject the material scientists' contention that they possess real, factual knowledge. We should not give them much credit, nor should we accept what they say about the nature of the universe. Rather, we should realize that they are fallible men, subject to great imperfection. Perfect knowledge is beyond them.
Similarly, they cannot go to the moon planet, which the Vedas describe not as a lifeless desert but as a heavenly planet of extraordinary material pleasures. Where the astronauts actually went, or how this fabrication of lunar visitation will one day be exploded, is an extraordinary material pleasure. For example, a human being cannot possibly live in the water, nor can a fish live on land. These are the rigid conditions of life, and any attempt to defy them is artificial and will fail. Similarly, just as you have to change your dress if you want to go from India to Europe, where the climatic conditions are different, so you also have to change your physical “dress” if you want to go to the specialized atmosphere of the moon. In other words, if you want to go to the moon or the sun or any other higher planet, you can keep your finer dress of mind, intelligence, and ego, but you have to leave behind your gross dress (your physical body) made of earth, water, fire, and other material elements, and acquire a body suitable for your destination.

Of course, none of this will help you solve the real problem of life—entrapment in the vicious cycle of birth and death. As Kṛṣṇa states in the Bhagavad-gītā, even if one transfers in his next life to a very elevated position in the highest planet in the universe, Brahmāloka, he will still have to experience birth and death. The goal of human life is to free the soul from its continuous transmigration among different species of life on various planets, and to transfer to the spiritual planets, where life is eternal. To reach these planets, a complete change of both gross and subtle bodies is necessary, for one can reach the spiritual sky only in a spiritual form. We will elaborate on this a little later, but our point here is that you cannot simply force yourself onto another planet without the proper qualification.

Just as in the United States there are laws controlling the entry of foreigners through the issuance of visas, so in the universe there are also laws controlling the movement of all living beings—even astronauts and scientists—and unless one’s karma is such that he deserves to take birth on the moon or the sun or the earth or wherever, he cannot defy the laws of nature and go there by force. The scientists are always claiming they are independent of nature’s law, but even they have to submit to death and rebirth, they cannot check them. Similarly, they cannot go to the moon planet, which the Vedas describe not as a lifeless desert but as a heavenly planet of extraordinary material pleasures. Where the astronauts actually went, or how this fabrication of lunar visitation will one day be exploded to people in general, are not part of our present discussion. But the Vedic teachings warn us that the manned moon landing is certainly an empty bluff.

When we contradict the revered scientists like this and warn people that, through the use of brainwashing propaganda, they are being cheated out of billions of hard-earned tax dollars—we ourselves are accused of brainwashing. But which is better: a sober warning or a colossal multi-billion-dollar hoax?

Furthermore, even if, for argument’s sake, we accept that the “astronauts” did go to the moon, our main contention still holds: the moon excursion is a hoax, a mass brainwashing job. Why? Because it has no value. Even the scientists now admit its uselessness, and their interest in going to the moon has subsided. After many years of concentrated effort and billions of dollars of public money spent, the scientists have concluded that the moon is uninhabitable and have stopped trying to go there. But the public is encouraged to regard this failure as a wonderful achievement! “Just see! They have come back with some moon dust!” Long ago the Vedic literatures said the moon was uninhabitable by man, before going there the scientists themselves predicted they could not live in that atmosphere, and upon reaching the moon they discovered the same thing—that they could not live there. So what is the value of this kind of billion-dollar excursion, which has produced only a few rocks?

The scientists’ stubbornness is like that of a boy who is repeatedly warned by his father not to stick his finger in the revolving blades of a fan, but who goes ahead and does it anyway, and is hurt. The scientists insisted that a lunar landing would prove the United States to be the most advanced nation. Never mind that it cost billions, which could have been spent on worthwhile projects, such as feeding the starving. The brainwashing was so extreme that at one point Pan American Airlines was even selling tickets to the moon, and there was talk of colonizing it, although everyone acknowledged that it is impossible to live there. And yet if we speak out strongly against this nonsense, people say we are brainwashed—for not believing in the bluff of the moon excursion. Now, having squeezed as much prestige as possible out of their great “success” in reaching the moon, the scientists have become disappointed and set their sights on Mars—and the huge expenditure of public funds goes on.

Again, we do not say that man should neglect science, but rather that he should practice science according to the authorized knowledge of the laws of nature. The scientists should not attempt to defy the laws of nature, or those of God, but should work humbly in harmony with the real purpose of human life—liberation from the cycle of birth and death. Despite all scientific theorizing, research, and technology, the scientists do not even know the nature of the life within the body, how life enters the body, and where life goes after death. Not being able to produce even the smallest living creature, and being unable to stop death, the modern scientists should not consider themselves the all-in-all.

If we desire to praise someone for scientific achievements, let us praise the Great Brain who is actually controlling all living beings by directing His material energy, and who regulates the immense machinery of the universe. Let us follow Lord Brahma, who sings in the Vedic scripture Brahma-saṁhitā (5.52): “I worship Govinda [Kṛṣṇa], the primeval Lord, by whose order the sun assumes immense power and heat and traverses its orbit.” The sun is a creation of God; it is not a creation of the scientists. So also are the oceans and the great mountains, the resources of nature, and outer space—all are works of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As for machine-making, the material energy of Kṛṣṇa, the Supem Energetic, has expertly fashioned male and female forms that go on reproducing themselves without further assistance from Him. And this happens over and over in millions of species. Can the scientists create such replicating machines? Can they create a sun and keep it floating perpetually in space? Can they create the oceans, the brain of a great scientist like Einstein, or even an ant or an amoeba? No. All these scientific achieve-
ments are the works of God. And when God Himself speaks through authorized scriptures like the Bhagavat-gita, He explicitly says, “Do not waste your time trying to go to the moon, that is not your place.” If the godless human scientists defy this Supreme Scientist and Supreme Controller, then disaster will befall them and whoever follows them. Therefore we are protesting a godless science that defies God’s laws.

In Easy Journey to Other Planets, written back in 1959, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada warned us that attempting to reach the moon by materialistic methods is a waste of time. In a speech ten years later he further explained:

If we go to live on the moon—assuming that it is possible—even with an oxygen mask, how long could we stay? Furthermore, even if we had the opportunity to stay there, what would we gain? We might gain a little longer life perhaps, but we could not live there forever. That is impossible. And what would we gain by a longer life? Near San Francisco I have seen a forest where there is a tree 7,000 years old. But what is the benefit? If one is proud of standing in one place for 7,000 years, that is not a very great credit.

Of course, scientists, journalists, and politicians are not known for considering things in the philosophical light of transcendental knowledge, but a sober fact to consider is this: if, even after all the scientists’ achievements, we must still die and suffer the miseries of repeated birth and death, then what is the benefit of that science? Krishna tells us not to waste our valuable time with things that are only temporary and do not lead to liberation from birth and death. “Don’t waste your time going from this planet to that planet,” He says in the Bhagavat-gita. “Your material miseries will only follow you.” So the moon excursion is a hoax in yet another, all-important sense: the scientists are leading people to believe they will be happy if they go to the moon, but when considered in the context of the eternal soul’s welfare, going to the moon and living there for many, many years still won’t solve the problems of life. It is a hoax to claim that the endeavor to travel to other planets will bring happiness. A person can be happy only if he receives information from authorized scriptures about the nature of the soul and the method of liberating the soul from his suffering condition. This liberation is the goal of Krishna consciousness.

And yet, when we warn people not to waste their lives in temporary achievements, when we warn them not to engage in sinful activities that will force them to transmigrate to lower planets and lower forms of life—they accuse us of being duped and spreading false propaganda. But we will not be quieted by their accusations. As devotees of Krishna, we must go on repeating His instructions for everyone’s benefit. As Krishna tells us in His incarnation as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, “Instruct everyone to follow the teachings of Lord Sri Krishna as they are given in the Bhagavad-gita and the Srimad-Bhagavatam. In this way become a spiritual master and try to liberate everyone in the world.”

So you have to decide who is actually cheating: the materialist, who promises happiness in the context of temporary advancement and enjoyment, and who thereby ignores the eternal soul, or the spiritualist, the Krishna conscious person, who says, “Always think of Krishna and become His devotee. Worship Him and bow down before Him. If you practice in this way, at the end of life you will certainly return to the supreme spiritual planet, which is eternal and free from all miseries, because of your full absorption in and devotion to the Lord.”

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TRANSLATION

O friends, just think of His wives, whose hands He has accepted. How they must have undergone vows, baths, fire sacrifices and perfect worship of the Lord of the universe to constantly relish now the nectar from His lips [by kissing]. The damsels of Vrajabhumi would often faint just by expecting such favors.

PURPORT

Religious rites prescribed in the scriptures are meant to purify the mundane qualities of the conditioned souls to enable them to be gradually promoted to the stage of rendering transcendental service unto the Supreme Lord. Attainment of this stage of pure spiritual life is the highest perfection, and this stage is called svarsita, or the factual identity of the living being. Liberation means renovation of this stage of svarsita. In that perfect stage of svarsita, the living being is established in five phases of loving service, one of which is the stage of madhurya-asya, or the humor of conjugal love. The Lord is always perfect in Himself, and thus He has no hankering for Himself. He, however, becomes a master, a friend, a son or a husband to fulfill the intense love of the devotee concerned. Herein two classes of devotees of the Lord are mentioned in the stage of conjugal love. One is svarupa, and the other is para-svarupa. Both of them are in conjugal love with the Personality of Godhead Krishna. The queens at Dvārakā were svarupa, or duly married wives, but the damsels of Vraja were young friends of the Lord while He was unmarried. The Lord stayed at Vrindavana till the age of sixteen, and His friendly relations with the neighboring girls were in terms of para-svarupa. These girls, as well as the queens, underwent severe penances by taking vows, bathing and offering sacrifices in the fire, as prescribed in the scriptures. The rites, as they are, are not an end in themselves, nor are fruitive action, culture of knowledge or perfection in mystic powers ends in themselves. They are all means to attain to the highest stage of svarsita, to render constitutional transcendental service to the Lord. Each and every living being has his individual position in one of the above-mentioned five different kinds of reciprocating means with the Lord, and in one's pure spiritual form of svarsita, the relation becomes manifest without mundane affinity. The kissing of the Lord, either by His wives or His young girl friends who aspired to have the Lord as their friend, is not of any mundane perverted quality. Had such things been mundane, a liberated soul like Sukadeva would not have taken the trouble to reclassify them, nor would Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu have been inclined to participate in those subjects after renouncing worldly life. The stage is earned after many lives of penance.

TEXT 29

ya-virya-suklma-hrādaya-stayānāre
pramahyā-cavidyā-pramukhiḥ hi śrīmāṇāḥ
prātyanām-sāmbhāma-sūl 당ad-yā purā
īd-cāhrita-bhāma-vadhe sahasrāsāya

ya—the lady; virya—prowess; sukāma—by payment of the price; hrādaya—taken away by force; stayānāre—in the open selection of the
TRANSLATION

All these women auspiciously glorified their lives despite their being without individuality and without purity. Their husband, the lotus-eyed Personality of Godhead, never left them alone at home. He always pleased their hearts by making valuable presentations.

PURPORT

The devotees of the Lord are purified souls. As soon as the devotees surrender unto the lotus feet of the Lord, the Lord accepts them, and thus the devotees at once become free from all material contaminations. Such devotees are above the three modes of material nature. There is no bodily disqualification of a devotee, just as there is no qualitative difference between the Ganges water and the unclean drain water when they are amalgamated. Women, merchants and laborers are not very intelligent, and thus it is very difficult for them to understand the science of God or to be engaged in the devotional service of the Lord. They are more materialistic, and less than them are the Kirtas, Haras, Andres, Pulindas, Pulkaas, Abhiraas, Kankas, Yavanas, Khasas, etc., but all of them can be delivered if they are properly engaged in the devotional service of the Lord. By engagement in the service of the Lord, the designative disqualifications are removed, and as pure souls they become eligible to enter into the kingdom of God.

The fallen girls under the echettes of Bhaumarsa sincerely prayed to Lord Sri Krishna for their deliverance, and their sincerity of purpose made them at once pure by virtue of devotion. The Lord therefore accepted them as His wives, and thus their lives become glorified. Such auspicious glorification was still more glorified when the Lord played with them as the most devoted husband.

The Lord used to live with His 16,108 wives constantly. He expanded Himself into 16,108 plenary portions, and each and every one of them was the Lord Himself without deviation from the Original Personality. The Sri-mantra affirms that the Lord can expand Himself into many. As husband of so many wives, He pleased them all with presentations, even at a costly endeavor. He brought the purna-jata plant from heaven and implanted it at the palace of Satyabhama, one of the principal queens. If, therefore, anyone desires the Lord to become one's husband, the Lord fulfills such desires in full.

TEXT 31

evamvishad gadaantinam sa girah para-yostam
niraksapendhahanandam saamitena yayau harih

evamvishah—in this way; gadaantinam—thus praying and talking about Him; sa—he (the Lord); girah—of words; para-yostam—of the ladies of the capital; niraksapena—by His grace of glancing over them; abhinandan—and greeting them; sa-smiteva—with a smiling face; yayau—departed; harih—the Personality of Godhead.

TRANSLATION

While the ladies of the capital of Hastina pura were greeting Him and talking in this way, the Lord, smiling, accepted their good greetings, and changed the grace of His glance over them. He departed from the city.

TEXT 32
TRANSLATION

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, although no one’s enemy, engaged four divisions of defense [horse, elephant, chariot and army] to accompany Lord Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of the asuras [demons]. The Mahārāja did this because of the enemy, and also out of affection for the Lord.

PURPORT

Natural defensive measures are horses and elephants combined with chariots and men. Horses and elephants are trained to move to any part of the hills or forests and plains. The charioteers could fight with many chariots and men. Horses and elephants are trained to move to any part of the province of Dvārakā. The provinces passed over by the Lord in those days were differently divided provincial territories. We do not gain any profit simply by researching the analogous provinces of those days up to now, but it appears that the desert of Rajasthan and the provinces of the desert and the land of scantly water. After crossing these provinces He gradually reached the Saurastra and Abhirata provinces, then west of these, reached Dvārakā at last.

PURPORT

The provinces passed over by the Lord in those days were differently named, but the direction given is sufficient to indicate that He traveled through Delhi, Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Saurashtra and Gujarat and at last reached His home province at Dvārakā. We do not gain any profit simply by researching the analogous provinces of those days up to now, but it appears that the desert of Rajasthan and the provinces of scantly water like Madhya Pradesh were present even five thousand years ago. The theory of soil experts that the desert developed in recent years is not supported by the statements of Bhāgavatam. We may leave the matter for expert geologists to research because the changing universe has different phases of geological development. We are satisfied that the Lord has now reached His own province, Dvārakādhamma, from the Kuru provinces. Kuruṣeṣṭra continues to exist since the Vedic age, and it is sheer foolishness when interpreters ignore or deny the existence of Kurukṣeṣṭra.

TEXT 36

tatu tatu ha tatratyai
harish pratuyadatarahasaḥ
sāyam bheje disam paśūd
gaviśo gani gatam tadā

tatu tatu—at different places; hā—it so happened; tatratyai—by local inhabitants; harish—the Personality of Godhead; pratuyadatarahasaḥ—being offered presentations and worshipful regards; sāyam—the evening; bheje—having overtaken; disam—direction; paśūd—eastern; gaviśo—the sun in the sky; gani—to the ocean; gatam—having gone; tadā—at that time.
TRANSLATION
On His journey through these provinces He was welcomed, worshiped and given various presentations. In the evening, in all places, the Lord suspended His journey to perform evening rites. This was regularly observed after sunset.

PURPORT
It is said here that the Lord observed the religious principles regularly while He was on the journey. There are certain philosophical speculations that even the Lord is under the obligations of fruitful action. But actually this is not the case. He does not depend on the action of any good or bad work. Since the Lord is absolute, everything done by Him is good for everyone. But when He descends on earth, He acts for the protection of the devotees and for the annihilation of the impious nondevotees. Although He has no obligatory duty, still He does everything so that others may follow. That is the way of factual teaching; one must act properly himself and teach the same to others, otherwise no one will accept one's blind teaching. He is Himself the awader of fruitful results. He is self-sufficient, and yet He acts according to the rulings of the revealed scripture in order to teach us the process. If He does not do so, the common man may go wrong. But in the advanced stage, when one can understand the transcendental nature of the Lord, one does not try to imitate Him. This is not possible.

The Lord in human society does what is the duty of everyone, but sometimes He does something extraordinary and not to be imitated by anyone. For example, although He has no obligatory duty, still He does everything so that others may follow. That is the way of factual teaching; one must act properly himself and teach the same to others, otherwise no one will accept one's blind teaching. He is Himself the awader of fruitful results. He is self-sufficient, and yet He acts according to the rulings of the revealed scripture in order to teach us the process. If He does not do so, the common man may go wrong. But in the advanced stage, when one can understand the transcendental nature of the Lord, one does not try to imitate Him. This is not possible.

Thus end the Bhaktivedanta purports of the First Canto, Tenth Chapter, of the Srimad-Bhagavatam, entitled "Departure of Lord Kṛṣṇa for Dvārakā."

CHAPTER ELEVEN
Lord Kṛṣṇa's Entrance into Dvārakā

TEXT 1
sūtra uvāca
ānātāṁ sa upapriyā
dhāmaṁ dāravaraṁ teṣāṁ
viśādo śāmīyavan iva

sūtra uvāca—Sūta Gosvāmi said; ānātāṁ—the country known as Anantā (Dvārakā); sa—He; upapriyā—reaching the border of; dhāmaṁ—most prosperous; dāravaraṁ—His own; teṣāṁ—of them; viśādaḥ—dejection; śāmīyaṁ—pacifying; iva—seemingly.

TRANSLATION
Sūta Gosvāmi said: Upon reaching the border of His most prosperous metropolis, known as the country of the Anantā, the Lord sounded His auspicious conchshell, heralding His arrival and apparently pacifying the dejection of the inhabitants.

PURPORT
The beloved Lord was away from His own prosperous metropolis of Dvārakā for a considerably long period because of the Battle of Kurukṣetra, and thus all the inhabitants were overcome with melancholia due to the separation. When the Lord descends on the earth, His eternal associates also come with Him, just as the entourage of a king accompanies him. Such associates of the Lord are eternally liberated souls, and they cannot bear the separation of the Lord even for a moment because of intense affection for the Lord. Thus the inhabitants of the city of Dvārakā were in a mood of dejection and expected the arrival of the Lord at any moment. So the heralding sound of the auspicious conchshell was very encouraging, and apparently the sound pacified their dejection. They were still more aspirant to see the Lord amongst themselves, and all of them became alert to receive Him in the befitting manner. These are the signs of spontaneous love of Godhead.

TEXT 2

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Canto 2, Chapter 2)

Thus end the Bhaktivedanta purports of the First Canto, Tenth Chapter, of the Srimad-Bhagavatam, entitled "Departure of Lord Kṛṣṇa for Dvārakā."

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PURPORT
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pratyudyayuh prayāh sarvāṁ
bharti-darśana-hālasāṁ
tām—that; upaśravya—having overheard; nītadāma—sound; jagat-bhaya—the fear of material existence; bhaya-dvāsaḥ—the threatening principle; prati—towards; udvayuh—rapidly proceeded; prayāḥ—the citizens; sarvāḥ—all; bhartī—the protector; darśana—audience; lālasāḥ—having so desired.

TRANSLATION
The citizens of Dvārakā, having heard that sound which threatens fear personified in the material world, began to run towards Him fast, just to have a long desired audience with the Lord, who is the protector of all devotees.

PURPORT
As already explained, the citizens of Dvārakā who lived at the time of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s presence there were all liberated souls who descended there along with the Lord as entourage. All were very anxious to have an audience with the Lord, although because of spiritual contact they were never separated from the Lord. Just as the gopīs at Vṛndāvana used to think of Kṛṣṇa while He was away from the village for cowherding engagements, the citizens of Dvārakā were all immersed in thought of the Lord while He was away from Dvārakā to attend the Battle of Kurukṣetra. Some distinguished fiction writer in Bengal concluded that the Kṛṣṇa of Vṛndāvana, that of Mathurā and that of Dvārakā were different personalities. Historically there is no truth in this conclusion. The Kṛṣṇa of Kurukṣetra and the Kṛṣṇa of Dvārakā are one and the same personality.

The citizens of Dvārakā were thus in a state of melancholy due to the Lord’s absence from the transcendental city, as much as we are put in a state of melancholy at night because of the absence of the sun. The sound heralded by Lord Kṛṣṇa was something like the heralding of the sunrise in the morning. So all the citizens of Dvārakā awoke from a state of slumber because of the sunrise of Kṛṣṇa, and they all hastened towards Him just to have an audience. The devotees of the Lord know no one else as protector.

This sound of the Lord is identical with the Lord, as we have tried to explain by the nondual position of the Lord. The material existence of our present status is full of fear. Out of the four problems of material existence, namely the food problem, the shelter problem, the fear problem and the mating problem, the fear problem gives us more trouble than the others. We are always fearful due to our ignorance of the next problem. The whole material existence is full of problems, and thus the fear problem is always prominent. This is due to our association with the illusory energy of the Lord, known as mayā or external energy, yet all fear is vanished as soon as there is the sound of the Lord, represented by His holy name, as it was sounded by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in the following sixteen words:

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

We can take advantage of these sounds and be free from all threatening problems of material existence.

TEXTS 4-5

pratyudyayuh prayāha sarvāṁ
bharti-darśana-hālasāṁ
tām—that; upaśravya—having overheard; nītadāma—sound; jagat-bhaya—the fear of material existence; bhaya-dvāsaḥ—the threatening principle; prati—towards; udvayuh—rapidly proceeded; prayāḥ—the citizens; sarvāḥ—all; bhartī—the protector; darśana—audience; lālasāḥ—having so desired.

TEXT 6

pratyudyayuh prayāha sarvāṁ
bharti-darśana-hālasāṁ
tām—that; upaśravya—having overheard; nītadāma—sound; jagat-bhaya—the fear of material existence; bhaya-dvāsaḥ—the threatening principle; prati—towards; udvayuh—rapidly proceeded; prayāḥ—the citizens; sarvāḥ—all; bhartī—the protector; darśana—audience; lālasāḥ—having so desired.

TRANSLATION
The citizens arrived before the Lord with their respective presentations, offering them to the fully satisfied and self-sufficient one, who, by His own potency, incessantly supplies others. These presentations were like the offering of a lamp to the sun. Yet the citizens began to speak in ecstatic language to receive the Lord, just as wards welcome their guardian and father.

PURPORT
The Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa is described herein as ātmārāma. He is self-sufficient, and there is no need for Him to seek happiness from anything beyond Himself. He is self-sufficient because His very transcendental existence is total bliss. He is eternally existent; He is all-cognizant and all-blissful. Therefore, any presentation, however valuable it may be, is not needed by Him. But still, because He is the well-wisher for one and all, He accepts from everyone everything that is offered to Him in pure devotional service. It is not that He is in want for such things, because the things are themselves generated from His energy. The comparison is made herein that making offerings to the Lord is something like offering a lamp in the worship of the sun-god. Anything fiery and illuminating is but an emanation of the energy of the sun, and yet to worship the sun-god it is necessary to offer him a lamp. In the worship of the sun, there is some sort of demand made by the worshiper, but in the case of devotional service to the Lord, there is no question of demand from either side. It is all a sign of pure love and affection between the Lord and the devotee.

The Lord is the Supreme Father of all living beings, and therefore those who are conscious of this vital relation with God can make filial demands from the Father, and the Father is pleased to supply the demands of such obedient sons without bargaining. The Lord is just like the desire tree, and from Him everyone can have everything by the causeless mercy of the Lord. As the Supreme Father, the Lord, however, does not supply to a pure devotee what is considered to be a barrier to the discharge of devotional service. Those who are engaged in the devotional service of the Lord can rise to the position of unalloyed devotional service by His transcendental attraction.
TRANSLATION

The citizens said: O Lord, You are worshiped by all demigods like Brahmā, the four Sanas and even the King of heaven. You are the ultimate rest for those who are really aspiring to achieve the highest benefit of life. You are the transcendental Lord, and inevitable time cannot exert its influence upon You.

PURPORT

The Supreme Lord is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as confirmed in Bhagavad-gītā, Brahma-saṁhitā, and other authorized Vedic literatures. No one is equal to or greater than Him, and that is the verdict of all scriptures. The Supreme Lord is the predominating Brahman, whereas the demigods are all parts and parcels of the Absolute. As soon as we forget this clear fact, we are at once in illusion, and thus we are put into threefold miseries, as one is put into dense darkness.

TEXT 7

bhava-narthaṁ aṁśa-vijñāna-tām
parā-yonih nañjanat syāmi

bhava-narthaṁ—of the ultimate rest for those who are really aspiring to achieve the highest benefit of life; aṁśa-vijñāna-tām—of the living entities; parā-yonih—of the transcendental Lord; nañjanat syāmi—I cannot forgive for the time being, but it can be revived also by the grace of the Lord, if we follow His injunctions, which are revealed in the scriptures of all times and all places.

TEXT 8

TEXT 9

purport

The Lord in His eternal personal form can be seen only by the pure devotees. The Lord is never impersonal, but He is the Supreme Absolute Personality of Godhead, possible to be visited by devotional service face to face, which is impossible to be done even by the denizens of higher planets. When Brahmājī and other demigods want to consult Lord Viṣṇu, they have to wait on the shore of the ocean of milk and transmit their message to Lord Viṣṇu, who is living on White Land (Śvetadvipa). This ocean of milk and the Śvetadvipa planet are the replica of Vaikuṇṭhaloka within the universe. Neither Brahmājī nor the demigods like Indra can enter into this island of Śvetadvipa, but they can stand on the shore of the ocean of milk and transmit their message to Lord Viṣṇu, known as Krauṇḍakāśyapi Viṣṇu. Therefore, the Lord is rarely seen by them, but the inhabitants of Dvārakā, because of their being pure devotees without any tinge of the material contamination of fruitive activities and empirical philosophical speculation, can see Him face to face by the grace of the Lord. This is the original state of the living entities and can be attained by reviving our natural and constitutional state of life, which is discovered by devotional service only.
Lord Krishna’s Entrance into Dwarka

TEXT 12

Lord Krishna’s attraction is so powerful that once being attracted by Him one cannot tolerate separation from Him. Why is this so? Because we are all eternally related with Him as the sun rays are eternally related with the sun disc. The sun rays are molecular parts of the solar radiation. Thus the sun rays and the sun cannot be separated. The separation by the cloud is temporary and artificial, and as soon as the cloud is cleared, the sun rays again display their natural effulgence in the presence of the sun. Similarly, the living entities, who are molecular parts of the whole spirit, are separated from the Lord by the artificial covering of maya, illusory energy. This illusory energy, or the curtain of maya, has to be removed, and when it is so done, the living entity can see the Lord face to face, and all his miseries are at once removed. Every one of us wants to remove the miseries of life, but we do not know how to do it. The solution is given here, and it rests on us to assimilate it or not.

TEXT 11

As Bhogavati, the capital of Nagaloka, is protected by the Nagas, so was Dwarka protected by the descendants of Vrṣṭī, Madhu, Daśārha, Arha, Kukura, Andhaka, etc.—who were as strong as Lord Krishna.

PURPORT

The Nāgaloka planet is situated below the earth planet, and it is understood that the sun rays are hampered there. The darkness of the planet is, however, removed by the flashes of the jewels set on the heads of the Nāgas (celestial serpents), and it is said that there are beautiful gardens, rivulets, etc., for the enjoyment of the Nāgas. It is understood here also that the place is well protected by the inhabitants. So also the city of Dwarka was well protected by the descendants of Vṛṣṭī, who were as powerful as the Lord, insofar as He manifested His strength upon this earth.

TEXT 10

We are all proud of our material senses for making experiments to determine the existence of God. But we forget that our senses are not absolute by themselves. They can only act under certain conditions. For example, our eyes. As long as the sunshine is there, our eyes are useful to a certain extent. But in the absence of sunshine, the eyes are useless. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, being the primeval Lord, the Supreme Truth, is compared to the sun. Without Him all our knowledge is either false or partial. The opposite of the sun is the darkness, and similarly the opposite of Kṛṣṇa is māyā, or illusion. The devotees of the Lord can see everything in true perspective due to the light disseminated by Lord Kṛṣṇa. By the grace of the Lord the pure devotee cannot be in the darkness of ignorance. Therefore, it is necessary that we must always be in the sight of Lord Kṛṣṇa so that we can see both ourselves and the Lord with His different energies. As we cannot see anything in the absence of the sun, so also we cannot see anything including our own self, without the factual presence of the Lord. Without Him all our knowledge is covered by illusion.
birthplaces of lotuses or nice reservoirs of water: śriyam—increasing the beauty.

TRANSLATION
The city of Dvārakāpuri was filled with the opulences of all seasons. There were hermitages, orchards, flower gardens, parks and reservoirs of water breeding lotus flowers all over.

PURPORT
Perfection of human civilization is made possible by utilizing the gifts of nature in their own way. As we find herewith in the description of its opulence, Dvārakāpuri was surrounded by flower gardens and fruit orchards along with reservoirs of water and growing lotus. There is no mention of mills and factories supported by slaughterhouses, which are the necessary paraphernalia of the modern metropolis. The propensity to utilize nature's own gifts is still there, even in the heart of modern civilized man. The leaders of modern civilization select their own residential quarters in a place where there are such naturally beautiful gardens and reservoirs of water. But they leave the common men to reside in congested areas without parks and gardens. Hence we find a different description of the city of Dvārakāpuri. It is understood that the whole dhāma, or residential quarter, was surrounded by such gardens and parks with reservoirs of water where lotuses grew. It is understood that all the people depended on nature’s gifts of fruits and flowers without industrial enterprises promoting filthy huts and slums for residential quarters. Advancement of civilization is estimated not on the growth of mills and factories to deteriorate the finer instincts of the human being, but on developing the potential spiritual instincts of human beings and giving them a chance to go back to Godhead. Development of factories and mills is called ugra-karma, or pungent activities, and such activities deteriorate the finer sentiments of the human being and society to form a dungeon of demons.

We find herein the mention of pious trees which produce seasonal flowers and fruits. The impious trees are useless jungles only, and they can only be used to supply fuels. In the modern civilization such impious trees are planted on the sides of roads. Human energy should be properly utilized in developing the finer senses for spiritual understanding, in which lies the solution of life. Fruits, flowers, beautiful gardens, parks and reservoirs of water with ducks and swans playing in the midst of lotus flowers, and cows giving sufficient milk and butter are essential for developing the finer tissues of the human body. As against this, the dungeons of mines, factories and workshops develop demoniac propensities in the working class. The vested interests flourish at the cost of the working class, and consequently there are severe clashes between them in so many ways. The presence of Dvārakādīma is the ideal of human civilization.

TEXT 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Appearance of Sīra Ramchandra Rasa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| May 13 | 8 | Appearance of Sīra Velaśvānita Gaur 

TRANSLATION
The city gateway, the household doors and festooned arches along the roads were all nicely decorated with festive signs like plantain trees and mango leaves, all to welcome the Lord. Flags, garlands and painted signs and slogans all combined to shade the sunshine.

PURPORT
Signs of decoration in special festivals were also collected from the gifts of nature, such as the plantain trees, mango trees, fruits and flowers. Mango trees, coconut palms and plantain trees are still accepted as auspicious signs. The flags mentioned above were all painted with the picture of either Garuḍa or Hanumān, the two great servitors of the Lord. For devotees, such paintings and decorations are still adored, and the servitor of the master is paid more respects for the satisfaction of the Lord.

TEXT 14

Vaiṣṇava Calendar

May 8: Appearance of Sīra Ramchandra Rasa
May 13: Appearance of Sīra Velaśvānita Gaur
May 14: Appearance of Sīra Velaśvānita Gaur
May 21: Appearance of Sīra Garuḍa Mitra

TRANSLATION
The highways, subways, lanes, markets and public meeting places were all thoroughly cleansed and then moistened with scented water. And to welcome the Lord, fruits, flowers and unbroken seeds were strewn everywhere.

(continued in next issue)
“Deprogramming” Smashed in NY Court

The Kršna consciousness movement has defeated a highly publicized challenge to the authority and value of its spiritual teachings. On March 17, New York State Supreme Court Justice John J. Leahy threw out indictments charging two leaders of the Society’s New York chapter with attempted extortion and illegal imprisonment of members through “brainwashing.”

Last October, Queens District Attorney Michael Schwed had raised many eyebrows—and spurred scholars, lawyers, Hindus, devotees, and many others to protest—when he jailed Trai ākṣā and Adi-Kėśava Swami on the “brainwashing” and extortion charges. At that time Schwed had spoken of the Kršna consciousness movement as a “frightening group that uses mind control to create an army of zombies, or robots, who could undermine the government and law enforcement.”

But the District Attorney filed the courtroom in embarrassment on March 17 when Justice Leahy handed down his decision. “The entire and basic issue before this court,” said the judge, “is whether or not the two alleged victims in this case [Merylee Kreshower and Edward Shapiro] and the defendants will be allowed to practice the religion of their choice—and this must be answered with a resounding affirmative.”

“The Hare Kršna religion is a bona fide religion, with roots in India that go back thousands of years. It behooved Merylee Kreshower and Edward Shapiro to follow the tenets of that faith, and their inalienable right to do so will not be trammeled upon. The presentment and indictment by the grand jury was in direct and blatant violation of the defendants’ constitutional rights.”

O’Connell, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at St. Michael’s College and Assistant Director of the Center for Religious Studies at the University of Toronto. He recently wrote as follows:

“Hare Kršna movement is but the most recent phase of an ancient tradition of religious piety known in India as Vaishnavism. The devotees in the Hare Kršna temples live a full and active life of study, prayer, singing, and day-to-day management of the temple’s activities. Many are also active in a variety of more practical tasks, such as the publishing and sale of books, the manufacture of incense, the operation of vegetarian restaurants, and the launching of a small dance-drama company. All observe abstinence from meat, intoxicants, and drugs. Only between married couples is sexual union permitted. In my judgement, it is indeed fortunate for...
Thousands Attend ISKCON Festival in Bengal

Each spring hundreds of ISKCON devotees from all corners of the world assemble in the sacred Indian villages of Mayapur and Vrndavana for a joyous celebration. The occasion is the anniversary of the appearance of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the incarnation of Lord Krsna who inaugurated the Hare Krsna movement some five hundred years ago.

This year more than four hundred devotees undertook the pilgrimage. For many it meant over twenty-five straight hours of travel by chartered 747 jet. After the flight from New York City landed in Calcutta, the devotees boarded buses for the short ride to ISKCON temple grounds in Mayapur, on the bank of the Ganges in West Bengal. Finally, the weary but joyful pilgrims settled into newly-built quarters just a few minutes’ walk from Lord Caitanya’s birthplace.

Each day of the two-week Mayapur festival was packed with a variety of Krsna-conscious activities. The devotees toured local holy spots, attended classes on bhakti-yoga, and saw the Vaikuntha Players of New York perform dance and drama from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, traditional Indian histories. The highlight of the program was the evening lectures on Krsna-conscious culture given by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, founder-acarya of ISKCON, and prominent Indian citizens like M. Bannerjee, Minister of Education for West Bengal. And, of course, prasada (spiritual food) was freely distributed, both to the devotees and to the hundreds of thousands of Indian guests who visited the center during the festival. The climax was a twelve-course feast for ten thousand on the full-moon night of Lord Caitanya’s appearance.

From Mayapur, the devotees traveled 750 miles to Vrndavana, the rural village ninety miles south of Delhi where Lord Krsna displayed His childhood pastimes five thousand years ago. The Vrndavana festival featured daily workshops in such arts as Deity worship and Vedic cooking. And in nearby Mathura, the actual birthplace of Lord Krsna, the devotees put on a lavish exhibition of chanting, lectures, plays, and ISKCON art and books—as well as prasada distribution to thousands.

Chief Justice Praises Book That “Breathes Devotion on Every Page”

Dr. P.B. Mukharji, the eminent former Chief Justice of the province of West Bengal, India, recently expressed his great delight with the Sri Caitanya-caritamrta (The Character of the Living Force in Immortality), by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada:

“I was delighted to read Sri Caitanya-caritamrta, by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, founder-acarya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. It is an account of the life of Lord Caitanya, the central themes of whose life were love for God, love for humanity, and love for the entire creation. This book breathes divinity and devotion on every page, and it brings an eternal message for the temporal world.

“Although He lived five hundred years ago, Sri Krsna Caitanya is relevant to every aspect of modern life. Intellecutally, He was the most supreme and superb scholar, learned in all the scriptures and an adept in all the yogic disciplines. Philosophically, His profoundly penetrating intellect cut through all the cobwebs of human thinking and pointed to the sure and final goal. In religion He is relevant today because He was cosmopolitan and universal, and socially He is relevant today because for Him there was no division, no difference, no castes, no priests, and no sects. In fact, all wealth, privilege, birth, and even tradition lost all validity before Him. From that point of view He was a great revolutionary. But His revolution did not hurt or defeat; it transformed human nature. Politically He is relevant today because He showed the way to passive resistance against evil.

“This book, with the commentaries, is an intellectual, cultural, and spiritual landmark in the world. It is a book which should be in the library of every reader who values the essential glories of human life and the ultimate destiny of the universe.”
Last October a Queens, New York, grand jury leveled charges of extortion and "imprisonment through brainwashing" against New York ISKCON Temple President Adi-Kesava Swami. In mid-February of this year, one month before State Supreme Court Justice John J. Leahy threw the case out of court, Adi-Kesava traveled to ISKCON's temple in Mayapur, India, to take advice from his spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. The following excerpts from their conversations on the subject of "brainwashing" are reproduced from the journal of Srila Prabhupada's secretary.

February 17, 1977: Srila Prabhupada said, "The whole world is under a misconception, and we are giving them knowledge. And yet they say we are brainwashing. People in general do not know that the body is valuable only as long as the soul is there. Therefore, their brain is rubbish and must be washed, or human civilization is lost."

Later Srila Prabhupada gave an argument: "We are not brainwashing, but brain-giving. Where is your brain? You must first have a brain; then we can talk of washing it. You don't know who you are. Take a dead man and a living man—what is the difference? Because you do not know, you have no brain, and therefore you misunderstand. We can give evidence in court from the Bhagavad-gita to show this. We can prove that you have no brain. You are like the cats and dogs, even if you pose as a philosopher. For centuries this information has been missing: tathā dehaṁ tātāṁ prāpeṇa, 'The soul is changing, one body after another.' A person who has a brain will understand this simple logic. The body is changing from childhood to youth. When the important thing, the soul, is missing, it is a dead body. Where is your brain to understand it? Arjuna was chastised for this by Krsna, who said, 'You have no brain, and you are lamenting about the body.' They don't know the real thing, despite their big talk. They say life is a combination of chemicals, but then mix them and let life come. You can't do it. You are cheating people. You have no brain at all."

Adi-Kesava Swami (playing the part of an opponent): "But I have a brain; therefore, I am able to talk with you."

Srila Prabhupada: What is the difference between that talking and the barking of a dog? A dog is alert to someone coming from a distance, even more than a man. Your talking is not proof of a brain.

Adi-Kesava Swami: "But we have art and science."

Srila Prabhupada: Whatever you have, you cannot answer the ultimate question. Within the body is the real power. Because he is there, the body is changing. The body is like a dress. You should quote the Bhagavad-gita.

Adi-Kesava Swami: Another complaint is that they say we make a person lose his identity by brainwashing him.

Srila Prabhupada: But who are they? They do not know who they are. They are identifying the self with the body. That is brainwashing.

Adi-Kesava Swami: Well, they may say that "all this discussion of the soul is beyond our knowledge."

Srila Prabhupada: "It is beyond our knowledge" means you can't understand.

February 19, 1977: This morning Srila Prabhupada called for all the sannyasis [fully renounced preachers of Krsna consciousness]. "Be convinced of this," he said. "I am saying that everyone in the world has no brain, and we only are brain-giving. Why do I say this? Because I challenge the world's scientists and great thinkers: 'You just produce a machine like the body.' But they cannot. This machine is produced by God. Actually, God Himself does not make this machine. His servant, the material energy, makes the machine. Just see His intelligence. 'The Supreme Lord is seated in everyone's heart,' says the Bhagavad-gita. I am an ordinary man, and yet I can get things done—not directly, but by asking my disciples. So why can't God do this? The machine of the body is made by His material energy. How is it made? They don't know. If I challenge them to produce such a machine, they cannot. How this machine is being made by maya, or the material energy, we shall give them the brain to know. We should not be dull and simply accept whatever the scientists say, by noting, 'Yes, you are right.' No. At every step we must say, 'You are wrong. You have no brain.'"

Adi-Kesava Swami: Well, they say they have actually created a machine which is more complex than a man.

Srila Prabhupada: But that machine is worked by another man. And who made that man? They cannot even understand God's material nature, what to speak of the Supreme.

Adi-Kesava Swami: When we argue like this, they just change the subject.

Srila Prabhupada: Why do you let them? Capture them.

Adi-Kesava Swami: Well, they will say, "You are talking of religion."

Srila Prabhupada: We are not talking of religion! You don't know religion. We are talking of machines. An animal has no religion. Later we can talk of that. Now talk of machines. Religion is far away from you. And even if you could manufacture one living machine, these machines are now being created in such numbers that you are trying to stop their creation by abortion. So, so many are already being produced by nature. If you can create one, what will be your credit?

Adi-Kesava Swami: They will say, "We will make a better machine than God has made."

Srila Prabhupada: Oh. You cannot capture a garter snake, and now you are saying you will catch a cobra.

Adi-Kesava Swami: "Well, you can't make a brain either."

Srila Prabhupada: We don't say that we have a great brain. We are a servant. Our Master will show the brain. But you are a godless rascal. You have the onus of proof on you.

BACK TO GODHEAD 17
Chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa maha-mantra gives us strength for our life on the devotional road. Right: chanting softly, with our chanting beads in “bead bags,” we’re taking a morning walk through the lovely landscape of France’s Massif Central region. Above: of course, throughout the day we like to chant melodiously, too. In this picture we’re also offering food, incense, flowers, and other things in a celebration called ārati, a welcoming of the Lord. Our altar, in the back of the van, has pictures of our spiritual master and of Lord Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, who predicted, “In every town and village My name will be chanted.” Far right: on a Sunday morning we’re heading for Geneva to make good the Lord’s prediction.
A Report from France

Spreading the Holy Life Around

Now that they've seen everything from bad priests to bogey yogis, the French are more than a little embittered. But when they see people living the authentic life of devotion to God, they feel enlivened.

Text and Photos by Yogesvara dasa

By 6:00 P.M. on a chilly September day, rural France has already slipped into darkness. Passing swiftly through villages and towns in our Citroën van, we look out at row upon row of churches silhouetted against the moonlit evening sky—flimsy bastions against the forces of evil. We ride quickly down cobblestone streets, past small shops where old ladies in long black dresses weave precious dentelles for altars and parlors. The typical smell of French bread and cheese pervades the air.

For a few weeks I have put aside my work of translating Kṛṣṇa-conscious books into French and joined the devotees in the field for book distribution. It has been three years since I went on traveling sankīrtana, but I seem to be making the adjustment well. We are five in the van and the hardy mood of spiritual pioneering predominates. There is a distinct sense of mission, devoid of false prestige. Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the munificent incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa who appeared in Bengal, India, five hundred years ago, once predicted, "In every town and village My name will be chanted." Now, as we travel to the remotest corners of France to distribute the books of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, I am seeing the fulfillment of that prophecy.

The other devotees in our party (Pitavasa, Jagadvāsi, Sahasramūrdhan, and Prasannātmā) are enthusiastic to interest the French people in the life of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And the French are a receptive audience. Every month more than forty thousand French BACK TO GODHEADs circulate in France and French-speaking Switzerland. The French edition of the Bhagavad-gītā As It Is (La Bhagavad-gītā Telle Qu’Elle Est) has already sold out two printings of twenty-five thousand copies in one year. In addition, despite recent controversy over the tactics and political ambitions of certain pseudoreligious sects in France, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement has emerged with a unique reputation for integrity and authenticity.

On the road, our party’s daily routine is rigorous. Up at 4:00 A.M., we are more often than not parked in an open field, by a running stream if possible. We shower from jerry cans of fresh water, dress by candlelight. The resilience of sankīrtana devotees comes from a combination of youthful exuberance and a strong faith in the potency of Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mission. Simply by giving
out books and magazines on the science of bhakti-yoga, the devotees are helping people all over the world lend spiritual strength to their lives. Unlike communism, which is also popular among French youth, Caitanya Mahaprabhu’s movement accomplishes with a few regulative principles and the chanting of the holy names what no political or social revolution could do: it cleanses the heart of lust, anger, and greed, and plants the seed of love of God.

Often the devotees speak with priests in charge of particularly historic cathedrals, but these structures are mere vestiges of a Church once awesome in its political power and wealth. Today the youth of France are openly hostile to religion or anything reminiscent of Divine Right, because Church leaders have failed both to present God consciousness on a platform of intelligent dialogue and to practice what they preach. Thus, spiritualism in contemporary France has atrophied for lack of substance. The pages of Marxist-Leninist publications (“Bibles” for a large section of French youth) are best read between the lines. They reveal a bitterness toward Christian dogma and the threat of damnation, and a defiant affirmation of man’s absolute independence, without need of any God to help him. This hubris finds its expression in popular French songs, such as “Ni Dieu Ni Maître” (“No God, No Master”).

On the other hand, the majority of French people, both young and old, have had a Catholic training early in life. There are relatively few political activists outside hot spots like Paris and Marseille, and despite the prominence of communist sentiment (the President defeated his communist-supported opponent by less than one percentage point in the last national election), interest inKrishna consciousness is strong. Two years ago over twenty-five hundred people turned out to hear Srila Prabhupada lecture at the Salle Pleyel in Paris; every Sunday 150 to 200 guests attend the festival at the Paris temple; and every week hundreds of letters stream into our New Mayapur farm in central France, requesting information, books, and membership. So, with full faith in the impact our preaching is having in France, we are now traveling from town to town and introducing hundreds of people to Krishna consciousness each day. A typical encounter might go like this:

“Bonjour, we are from the Krishna movement. We have an album of traditional Indian songs [recorded by the Paris temple music group, “Vrindavan”] and books on the philosophy of Vedic culture. People make donations for our publications, and the money goes to maintain our programs in France. We have a farm near Valencay and a school for children.”

After some discussion people often ask, “Do you work?”

“Oh yes, not only do we work the land on our farm, but many of us work outside the community as well. The President of our association, Monsieur Dilhaire, is a professional architect. In addition, apart from our own studies, we have lecture programs at the high schools and universities, a publications bureau that produces French translations of ancient Sanskrit texts…”

On rare occasions, someone in a shop or office will ask, “What is your philosophy?” This is an opportunity for us to
Left and below: often people ask us why the food we serve at our feasts always seems so extraordinary. "We're vegetarian, too," some of them say, "so what's your secret?" "The main thing," we tell them, "is that you cook just to please Kṛṣṇa and then offer everything to Him by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa" (as in the picture at left). "The Lord tastes the food first—He tastes your devotion—and He becomes present in the food. That's why we call it praśāda, 'Kṛṣṇa's mercy.'"

Left: in places like Firminy, we may walk for half an hour between houses. Still, "Utility is the principle": these people want to hear about Kṛṣṇa.

Far left: "Preaching," Śrila Prabhupāda says, "is the essence of this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement." Next right: "Purity," he also says, "is the force." So at 4 A.M. we wake, shower, offer ārati, and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa on our beads (as here). Then we discuss Bhagavad-gītā and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—the books we'll be handing out all day: "Books are the basis." Left: in places like Firminy, we may walk for half an hour between houses. Still, "Utility is the principle": these people want to hear about Kṛṣṇa.
do anything to hinder your spiritual progress. We are having a conference next month at the Saint Etienne Cultural Center. Why don't you come? We're going to show slides of our farm community and discuss programs for this part of the country.

"Perhaps," replies the merchant, "if I have the time. Not much time for anything these days. Business is so bad. But you're very nice. Here's a donation for your farm, and sure, I'll read your magazine.

As I leave his shop, I can see several people in the street with Bhagavad-gītās under their arms. (They obviously have met my Godbrothers down the street.) By the end of the week, people are stopping us to ask for another book or record for a friend or relative.

Pitavāsa remarks later in the van, "They're really interested. In one shop I met the head librarian and showed her the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. She said, 'Oh, un autre petit bijou! [Oh, another little gem!]' and gave me seventy francs. She has all the other French editions of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, from the time devotees were here last year."

Jagadvasi recalls an evening we spent with some interested people from Firminy. "There were about a dozen people. They had heard about the meeting from the lady who owns the health food shop. So when we arrived, cars were parked all up and down the road. We prepared a feast of pakoras, samosas, subji, lassi, and sweet rice** and offered it to Kṛṣṇa with kīrtana, and we talked with everyone during the feast. They appreciated that we offered our food to God. They were already interested in yoga, so they had a lot of questions about different spiritual masters, exercises, and so on.

"What do you tell people," asks Sahasramūrdhan, "when they want to know our opinion of such-and-such swami or guru?"

"I cite those verses from the Bhagavad-gītā:

\[\text{imam vivasvate yogam proktaivin altam anyayam vivasvan manave prāha mām ikṣvākave 'bravi evam paramparā-śrītām}\]

A real spiritual master is coming in disciplic succession from the Lord; therefore, whatever he presents is authentic spiritual knowledge. And it can be verified by reference to scripture. Also, he must practice the teachings of scripture in his own life.

"But they always say, 'Yes, so-and-so was the disciple of so-and-so, and he was always in trance.'"

"Then I would explain that you must judge a guru by the results of his teachings. If his teachings are authentic, then his followers will develop love of God. And the proof will be that they obey the orders of God, such as 'Thou shalt not kill.' And there are other indications of a true spiritual master given in the scriptures. One is that he never claims to be God, but rather the humble servant of God, and he petitions people to become God's devotees."

"But then they argue...

"'If they are looking to argue, then what can you do?'" interjects Sahasramūrdhan. "'If they are sincerely interested, they will be sensitive to what is real and what is bogus. But if they are just trying to haggle with us, how do you expect them to understand? The best reply I have heard was the one Śrīla Prabhupāda gave the Theosophists who came to see him in Geneva. He said that 'only one who is in knowledge of Kṛṣṇa can speak about Kṛṣṇa. If people want to know about something else, they can go elsewhere. That is their own concern. But in our movement we speak of Kṛṣṇa on the basis of Bhagavad-gītā As It Is and the predecessor ācāryas [spiritual masters]. If someone wants to know about Kṛṣṇa, he can come to us.'"

Everyone agrees that Śrīla Prabhupāda's approach would be better than trying to argue the pros and cons of various other practices and teachers.

The discussion returns to the san-kīrtana program and its great success in France. "Sometimes," says Prasannatmika, "I have to walk for half an hour in these small towns before coming to a house. But then someone will open the door and say, 'Oh, I have been hoping to see you!'"

Above, left: a devotee reads Bhagavad-gītā by an evening fire. Below and right: just as fire is dormant in every piece of wood, so love for Kṛṣṇa is dormant in everybody's heart. In this picture Pitavāsa is visiting with the head priest, the "chainon," of la Cathédrale Dupuy (one of France's largest cathedrals, more than fifteen hundred years old). The father appreciates our missionary work.

Above: in the little village of la Chaise-Dieu, this lady handweaves "dentelles," decorative mats that are commonly placed under flower vases on the altars. Here she's finishing a "dentelle" that she's promised us for Kṛṣṇa's altar.

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** subji: a vegetable dish made with lentils, potatoes, and spices.

* lassi: a yogurt drink.

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** kīrtana: a devotional song or chant.

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** puja: a sacred ritual of worship.

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** bhāga: a level or stage of spiritual realization in Hinduism.
You would pass by this way. Do you have the _Bhagavad-gītā_? It’s incredible, but many people greet us as if they’d been waiting patiently at the door.”

Jagadvaśī responds, “That’s happened to me, too. Even in the poorest sections of town, people show such real interest.”

“That proves real religion is not something dependent on economic or political factors,” remarks Prasannatma. “The old lady in the pastry shop or the big boss from the local textile factory—you meet people in all kinds of social conditions, people frustrated by materialistic life and looking for spiritual knowledge. Their questions are often very elevated, about the nature of the soul or the purpose of yoga.”

This is an important point. Georg Hegel, the German historian (much read in France), hypothesized that religion was a by-product of social necessity. He saw the function of religion as being what French youth call “white communism,” the class struggle hidden behind a mask of self-righteousness and piety. The _brāhmaṇas_ of Vedic times, said Hegel, were like today’s bourgeoisie, feeding off the labor of the lower classes, the proletariat. Thus, according to Hegel, the ultimate issue in human society—that of the haves versus the have-nots, the exploiters versus the exploited—was found even in the Vedic culture.

There are numerous fallacies in Hegel’s arguments, but the most outstanding is simply that he has taken the India of recent history, a country twisted by colonialism and the influences of Western materialism, and drawn general conclusions about the intrinsic value of a God-conscious culture. The Kṛṣṇa conscious _saṅkīrtana_ devotees, however, are living proof of a contrary conclusion. Their example of active devotion to God, decorated with the rare qualities of austerity, compassion, cleanliness, and honesty, disproves the theory that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is another brand of religious hypocrisy. The devotees are offering the greatest service to mankind by distributing God consciousness and introducing practical programs for the spiritual upliftment of society. In exchange for publications on the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, they ask people to make some contribution. This should not be seen as charity, but rather as an insignificant price to pay for the most invaluable knowledge.

After several weeks of distributing books with the _saṅkīrtana_ party, I have now returned to the New Mayapur farm. I see many new faces, and the farm is buzzing with activity: publishing work at the press, teaching at the Gurukula (the children’s school), construction of houses and beehives, planting and harvesting, classes and _kīrtanas_. It is at moments like these that I feel closest to Śrīla Prabhupāda, seeing how, by his mercy, people everywhere are becoming happy in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
The Bhagavad-gita, originally composed in Sanskrit five thousand years ago, is the literal record of the words of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The essence of all Vedic scriptures, it contains the most advanced science of God consciousness in the world.

There have been many translations of the Gītā, but the translation of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda is the only one that imparts the Gītā's original spirit and not the commentator's self-interested opinions. In essence, the Gītā tells us that we should accept Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Lord and surrender to Him—this is the very purpose of human life. Hiranyagarbha dāsa, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, has carefully followed the authorized teachings without attempting to change the message. He has simply rendered it in his own poetic style. Here are a few excerpts from the second and fourth chapters, prefaced by a dedication and a glorification of the Gītā.
DEDICATION

O Prabhupāda! You hold the torch
Which opens blinded eyes;
In this entire maddened world
Just you alone are wise.
You are the only preacher here,
Just you deserve all praise,
While I'm an ignorant weakling
Unlearned in Vaiṣṇava ways.

But my purpose is to please you;
Be merciful, please, to me.
Bless my pen with understanding
Of the Gītā's mystery.

*Vaiṣṇava ways: the ways of a Vaiṣṇava—the ways of a devotee of Lord Viṣṇu, Lord Kṛṣṇa.

IN PRAISE OF THE GĪTĀ

O Bhagavad-gītā, song of God,
I bow down at your feet.
Nondifferent from the Supreme Lord,
You therefore are complete.

You shower spiritual nectar
Throughout a hundred ages,
Praised by poets and by gods
And glorified by sages.

As one takes bath to cleanse himself
In water day by day,
So one who bathes in your nectar
Cleans all his sins away.

By your words alone we'll be freed
From Māyā's nasty hooks,
You spring from Kṛṣṇa's lotus lips,
What need of other books?

So let there be just one scripture—
The song of Devaki's son,**
And let the son of Devaki be
Worshipped by everyone.

And let Śrī Kṛṣṇa's holy names
Be the one song to be sung,
And His transcendental service
The one work to be done.

*Māyā: illness; forgetfulness of our relationship with Lord Kṛṣṇa.
**[Mother] Devaki's son: Kṛṣṇa.
From Chapter Two: "The Gitā Summarized"

Seeing intimate relatives and teachers on the enemy side, Arjuna loses his resolve to fight and sits down on his chariot in great fear and confusion. Kṛṣṇa then teaches him not to fear the outcome of the fight, because the soul is eternal and can never be killed.

The Supreme Lord said:

In matters for which learned men Would never grieve, My friend, You are absorbed in grief and still You speak like learned men.

Those who don't know the scriptures' truths Mourn at a man's demise; In life or death from sorrow freed Is he who's truly wise.

Neither you nor I nor all these kings Here on this field of war Did not exist before this birth, Nor will we die hereafter.

Just as we pass from child to youth Old age to final breath, We simply make another change Reaching the time of death.

Although we all must go through this, One who's sober, calm, and clear Remains undisturbed at that time— From death he knows no fear.

The higher truth, which never dies, Pervades the body whole, It's conscious and is consciousness And is known as the soul.

The body meets destruction, But one can't destroy the soul, Who's eternal and without death And has eternal goals.

So therefore you should fight, Arjuna, Knowing there is no death; All these foes of yours won't die, They'll just take other births.

From Chapter Four: "Transcendental Knowledge"

Here Lord Kṛṣṇa personally describes His own transcendental nature as the Supreme Lord and His purpose in coming to the material world.

The Supreme Lord said:

Through many births we both have passed Without a start or end; I can remember all of them, But you cannot, My friend.

Arjuna, My friend, you too were there, But in another form; You have forgotten this because You died and were reborn.

But Arjuna, I am never born, And neither do I wane, I am the Lord of all creation— By My own will I came.

I have no need to come to earth; I have no duty here. For these reasons nonetheless In each age I appear:

When irreligion dominates And religion's in decline, And the world situation Follows no scriptural line,

When no one else but I could do The thing that must be done— Establish the parampara— It is then that I come.

I annihilate the miscreants And save the holy men, I preach the Bhagavad-gitā And there is peace again.

My birth and My activities, Are not material, you see, One who understands this at death Comes back at once to Me.

(to be continued)

*parampara: the authorized line of spiritual masters in succession from Lord Kṛṣṇa.
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