

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



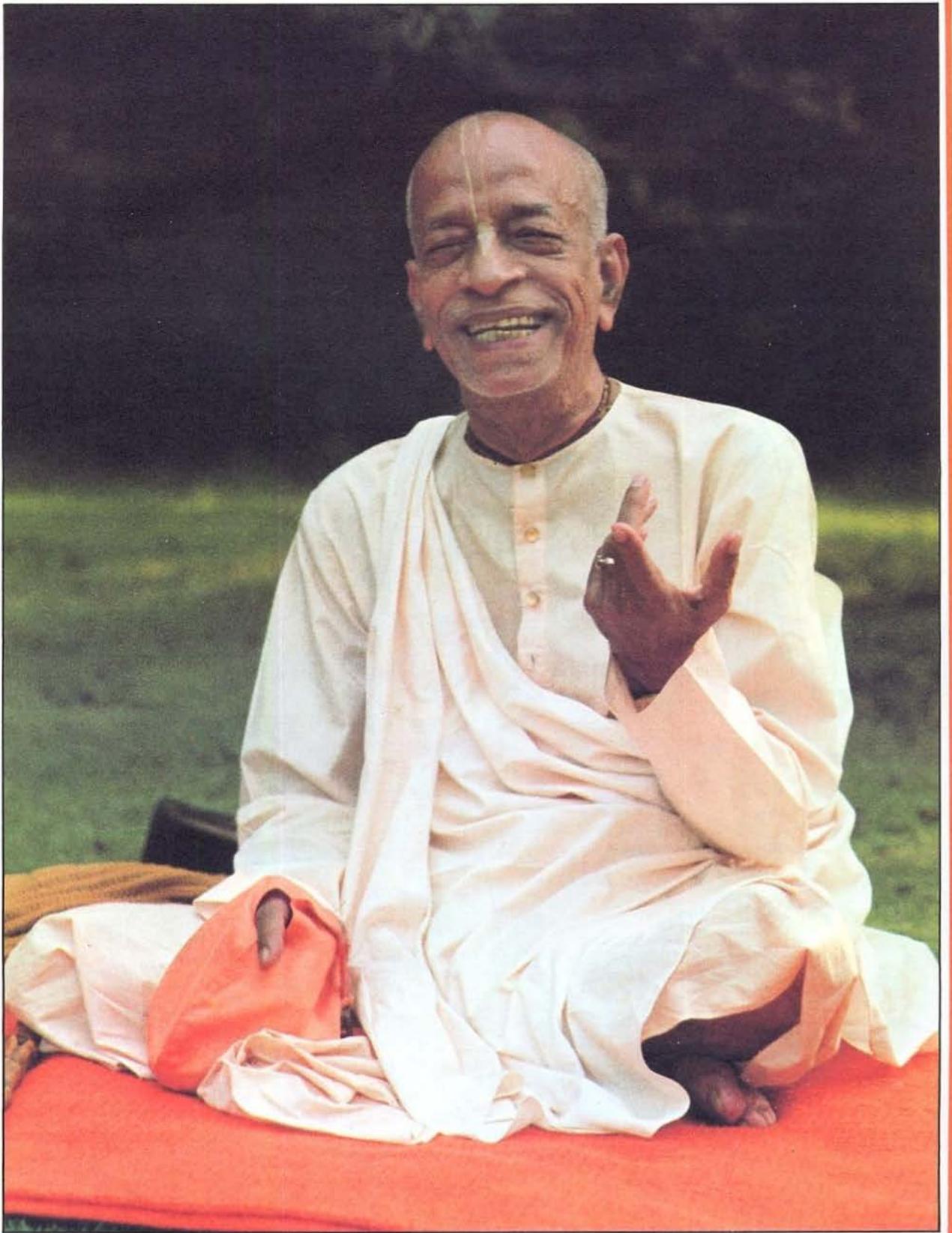
# BACK TO GODHEAD



THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

No.57





HIS DIVINE GRACE  
A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

*Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness*



Photo: Muralīvadana dāsa

**Hare Kṛṣṇa  
Hare Kṛṣṇa  
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa  
Hare Hare**

**Hare Rāma  
Hare Rāma  
Rāma Rāma  
Hare Hare**

Who am I? Where did I come from before birth, and after death where am I going? What is this universe? Is it chaotic madness, or does it follow a plan? Why must I die? Grow old? Feel pain? Is there real happiness here? Or is it somewhere else? Who is God? Does He exist at all?

In 1944, on the order of his spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda founded *Back to Godhead* magazine to present the most confidential and illuminating knowledge of the ancient Sanskrit *Vedas*, which contain sane, understandable answers to all these questions. His Divine Grace has received this transcendental knowledge, through a chain of disciplic succession, from the creator, maintainer and destroyer of all the universe—the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa is so great and powerful that one cannot approach Him directly, just as one cannot approach even the rulers of this

tiny mundane earth. Nor can one gain knowledge of Him by theorizing or speculating about His transcendental position. But by approaching His pure devotee—one who already knows Him—it is possible to understand Him to some extent.

Actual love of Kṛṣṇa is natural to everyone, but it is beyond the realm of the temporary body and mind. Therefore to understand Kṛṣṇa one should accept guidance from an expert spiritual master fully conversant with scientific knowledge of Kṛṣṇa. *Back to Godhead* connects one with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, through the teachings of His pure devotee. By reading *Back to Godhead* and chanting the great *mantra* for deliverance—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—one can gradually attain the platform of complete knowledge in love of God and the blessings of unending, blissful peace.



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Published monthly, \$6.00 per year (\$7.00 outside USA), by the  
Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 3764 Watseka Ave., Los Angeles, Calif.  
90034. Editorial Offices: 38 Tiffany Place, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11231

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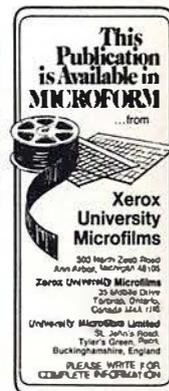
Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, became the charioteer of His friend and devotee, Arjuna, to whom He spoke the immortal spiritual instructions of *Bhagavad-gītā* 5,000 years ago on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra. This is the cover illustration of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. All glories to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa!

### PRONUNCIATION OF SANSKRIT WORDS

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

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[This is an excerpt from a conversation between His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness and author of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, and Professor Kotovsky, head of the India Studies Department of the University of Moscow, that took place during Śrīla Prabhupāda's recent visit to the Soviet Union to introduce the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.]

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**Prabhupāda:** The other day I was reading the paper, *Moscow News*. There was a Communist congress, and the President declared, "We are ready to take others' experience to improve." So I think the Vedic concept of socialism or communism will much improve the idea of communism. For example, in a socialistic state the idea is that no one should starve; everyone must have his food. Similarly, in the Vedic con-

cept of *gṛhastha* (householder) life it is recommended that a householder see that even a lizard or a snake living in his house should not starve. Even these lower creatures should be given food, and certainly all humans should. It is recommended that the *gṛhastha*, before taking his lunch, stand on the road and declare, "If anyone is still hungry, please come! Food is ready!" If there is no response, then the proprietor of the household takes his lunch. Modern society takes the people as the whole or proprietor of a certain state, but the Vedic conception is *īśā vāsyam idam sarvam*—everything is owned by *īśā*, the supreme controller. *Tena tyaktena bhujīthā*—you may enjoy what is allotted to you by Him. *Mā gṛdhaḥ kasya svid dhanam*: but do not encroach upon others' property.<sup>1</sup> This is the *Īsopaniṣad Veda*. The same idea is explained in the different *Purāṇas*. There are many good concepts in the Vedic literature about

1. Śrī-Īsopaniṣad-Mantra One

An interview in Moscow with  
His Divine Grace  
**A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami  
Prabhupāda**  
world teacher of Kṛṣṇa consciousness,  
the science of understanding God.

# THE VEDIC CONCEPTION OF COMMUNISM

communism. So I thought that these ideas should be distributed to your most thoughtful men. Therefore I was anxious to speak.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** It is interesting that here in our country there is now great interest in the history of old, old thought. From this point of view, our Institute translated into Russian and published many literary monuments of great Indian culture. You will be interested to discover that we published some of the *Purāṇas* and parts of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. There are volumes in Russian of *Mahābhārata* and also a second edition of *Mahābhārata*, translated in full. We have also published the full translation of *Manu-smṛti* with Sanskrit commentaries. Interest in these publications was so great that they sold out in a week. They are now completely out of stock. It was impossible to get them in the book market after a month. There is great interest among reading people here in Moscow and the USSR towards ancient Vedic culture, and from this point of view we published many such books.

**Prabhupāda:** Among these *Purāṇas*, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is called the *Mahā-purāṇa*.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** *Mahā-purāṇa*.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes. We have translated the full text—first we present the original Sanskrit text, its transliteration, the English equivalent for each word, then the translation, and then a purport or explanation of the verse. In this way, there are 18,000 verses in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. We are translating everything literally. You can see. Each and every verse is being done like that for the whole *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. The opinion of the *ācāryas*, the great saintly sages who are the preachers of the *Bhāgavata* philosophy, is *nigama-kalpataror galitarṇ phalam*.<sup>2</sup> This is the ripened fruit of the Vedic desire tree. It is accepted by all the Indian scholars, and Lord Caitanya especially preached this *Bhāgavatam*. So we have the complete *Bhāgavatam* in its English translation. If you want to see it, I can show you.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** It seems to me that in the Moscow and Leningrad libraries we have nearly all of the major texts of ancient Indian culture, beginning from the *Vedas*, the original texts in Sanskrit. For instance, in the Leningrad branch of our Institute there are six or eight editions of *Manu-smṛti*. This institute was founded in Imperial Russia in Leningrad, so in Leningrad we now have a branch of our Institute dealing mainly with the history of Asiatic culture. You will find here an account of what is being translated and what studies are being done on the history of Indian religion and also the state of Indian religion, Hinduism, in Hindu India today.

**Prabhupāda:** Hinduism is a very complex topic.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Oh yes. [they laugh] Really, to my understanding, it is not a religion from the European point of view; it is a way of life—religion, philosophy, a way of life, whatever you want.

**Prabhupāda:** This word "Hindu" is not a Sanskrit word. It was given by the Mohammedans. You know that there is a river, Indus, which in Sanskrit is called Sindhu. The Mohammedans pronounce *s* as *h*. Instead of *Sindhu*, they made it *Hindu*. So Hindu is a term that is not found in the Sanskrit dictionary, but it has come into use. But the real cultural institution is called *varṇāśrama*. There are four *varṇas* (social divisions)—*brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra*—and four *āśramas* (spiritual divisions)—*brahmacārī*, *gṛhastha*, *vānaprastha* and *sannyāsa*. According to the Vedic

concept of life, unless people take to this system or institution of four *varṇas* and four *āśramas*, actually they do not become civilized human beings. One has to take this process of four divisions of social orders and four divisions of spiritual orders; that is called *varṇāśrama*. India's culture is based on this age-old Vedic system.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** *Varṇāśrama*.

**Prabhupāda:** *Varṇāśrama*. And in *Bhagavad-gītā*—perhaps you have read *Bhagavad-gītā*?

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Yes.

**Prabhupāda:** There, in *Bhagavad-gītā*, is the statement *cāturvarṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭam*—this system was created by Viṣṇu [God].<sup>3</sup> So since *varṇāśrama* is a creation of the Supreme, it cannot be changed. It is prevalent everywhere. It is like the sun. The sun is a creation of the Supreme. The sunshine is there in America, in Russia and in India—everywhere. Similarly, this *varṇāśrama* system is prevalent everywhere in some form or another. Take, for example, the *brāhmaṇas*, the most intelligent class of men. They are the brains of the society. The *kṣatriyas* are the administrative class; then the *vaiśyas* are the productive class, and the *śūdras* are the worker class. These four classes of men are prevalent everywhere under different names. Because it is created by the original creator, so it is prevalent everywhere, *varṇāśrama-dharma*.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** It is interesting that in the opinion of some European and old Russian scholars, this *varṇāśrama* system is a later creation, and if you would read the old texts of Vedic literature, you would find a much more simple and agrarian society. It is the opinion of these scholars that the *varṇāśrama* system was introduced in Indian society in the late age of the Vedic era but not from the beginning. And if you would analyze the old texts, you would find that in the old classical India it was not so prevalent.

**Prabhupāda:** As far as we are concerned, it is mentioned in *Bhagavad-gītā*. *Cāturvarṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭam*. *Bhagavad-gītā* was spoken five thousand years ago, and in *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said, "This system of *Bhagavad-gītā* was spoken by Me to the sun-god." So if you take an estimation of that period, it comes to 40,000,000 years ago. Can the European scholars trace back history 5,000 years? Can they go back 40,000,000 years? We have evidence that this *varṇāśrama* system has been current at least 5,000 years. The *varṇāśrama* system is also mentioned in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*. *Varṇāśram-ācāra-vatā puruṣeṇa paraḥ pumān*.<sup>4</sup> That is stated in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*. *Varṇāśrama-dharma* is not a phenomenon of a historical period calculated in the modern age. It is natural. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* the comparison is given that just as in the body there are four divisions—the brain division, the arms division, the belly division and the leg division—so by nature's way these four divisions are existing in the social body. There exist a class of men who are considered the brain, a class of men who are considered the arms of the state, a class of men who are called the productive class, and so on. There is no need of tracing history; it is naturally existing from the day of creation.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** You have said that in any society there are four divisions, but they are not so easy to distinguish. For instance, one can group together different social classes and professional groups into four divisions in any society; there is no difficulty. The only difficulty is, for instance, in the socialistic society—in our country and other socialist

societies—how you can distinguish the productive group from the workers.

**Prabhupāda:** For example, we belong to the intellectual class of men. This is a division.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Intelligent class, *brāhmaṇas*. And you can also put together all the intelligentsia in that department.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** And then the administrative class.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** But who are the *vaiśyas* and *śūdras*? That is the difficulty. Because all others are workers—factory workers, collective farm workers and so on. So from this point of view there is a great distinction, in my opinion, between socialist society and all societies preceding socialism because in modern Western society you can group all social and professional classes in these particular class divisions—*brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas* and *śūdras*: intellectuals, productive class, owners of the productive system (factory owners, for instance) and menial workers. But here you have no *vaiśyas* because you have administrative staffs in factories, and you can call them *kṣatriyas*, and then there are the *śūdras*, the workers themselves, but no intermediate class.

**Prabhupāda:** That is stated. *Kalau śūdra-sambhavaḥ*. In this age practically all men are *śūdras*. But if there are simply *śūdras*, the social order will be disturbed. In spite of your state of *śūdras*, the *brāhmaṇa* is found here, and that is necessary. If you do not divide the social order in such a way, there will be chaos. That is the scientific estimation of the *Vedas*. You may belong to the *śūdra* class, but to maintain social order you have to train some of the *śūdras* to become *brāhmaṇas*. Society cannot depend on *śūdras*. Nor can you depend on the *brāhmaṇas*. To fulfill the

necessities of your body, there must be a brain, arms, a stomach and legs. The legs, the brain and the arm are all required for cooperation to fulfill the mission of the whole body. So in any society you can see that unless there are these four divisions, there will be chaos. It will not work properly. It will be *māyā*, and there will be disturbances. The brain must be there, but at the present moment there is a scarcity of brains. I am not talking of your state or my state; I am taking the world as a whole. Formerly the Indian administration was a monarchy. For example, Mahārāja Parīkṣit was a *kṣatriya* king. Just before his death, he renounced his royal order. He came to the forest to hear about self-realization. If you want to maintain the peace and prosperity of the whole world society, you must create a very intelligent class of men, a class of men expert in administration, a class of men expert in production and a class of men to work. That is required; you cannot avoid it. That is the Vedic conception, *mukha-bāhūru-pāda-jāḥ*.<sup>5</sup> *Mukha* means the face, *bāhu* means the arms, *ūru* means the waist, and *pāda*, the legs. Whether you take this state or that state, unless there is a smooth systematic establishment of these four orders of life, the state or society will not run very smoothly.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Generally it seems to me that this whole *varṇāśrama* system to some extent created a natural division of labor in the ancient society. But now division of labor amongst people in any society is much more complicated and sophisticated. So it is very confusing to group them into four classes.

**Prabhupāda:** Confusion has come to exist because in India, at a later day, the son of a *brāhmaṇa*, without having the brahminical qualifications, claimed to be a *brāhmaṇa*; and others, out of superstition or a traditional way, accepted

*S. Bhāg. 11.17.13*

**THOUGHTFULNESS.** Take the best idea from the original idea.



him as a *brāhmaṇa*. Therefore the Indian social order was disrupted. But in our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement we are training *brāhmaṇas* everywhere because the world needs the brain of a *brāhmaṇa*. Although Mahārāja Parīkṣit was a monarch, he had a body of *brāhmaṇas* and learned sages to consult, an advisory body. It is not that the monarchs were independent. In history it is found that if some of the monarchs were not in order, they were dethroned by the brahminical advisory council. Although the *brāhmaṇas* did not take part in politics, they would advise the monarch how to execute the royal function. This is not too far in the past. How long ago was Aśoka?

**Prof. Kotovsky:** That would be equal to what we call, in our terminology, ancient and medieval India.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** In old and feudal India—you are right—it was very open, and the major part of the high administrative staff in the legislative department were *brāhmaṇas*. Even in the Mogul era there were *brāhmaṇas* to advise the Moslem emperors and administrators.

**Prabhupāda:** That is a fact—the *brāhmaṇas* were accepted. They formed the advisory committee of the king. For example, Candragupta, the latest Hindu king, was in the age of Alexander the Great. Just before Candragupta, Alexander the Great went from Greece into India and conquered a portion. When Candragupta became emperor, he had Cāṇakya as his prime minister. Perhaps you have heard this name Cāṇakya?

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Yes.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes, he was a great *brāhmaṇa* politician, and it is by his name that the quarter of New Delhi where all the foreign embassies are grouped together is called Cāṇakya Purī. Cāṇakya Paṇḍita was a great politician and *brāhmaṇa*. He was vastly learned. His moral instructions are still valuable. In India, school children are taught Cāṇakya Paṇḍita's instructions. Although he was the prime minister, Cāṇakya Paṇḍita maintained his *brāhmaṇa* spirit; he did not accept any salary. If a *brāhmaṇa* accepts a salary, it is understood that he has become a dog. That is stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He can advise, but he cannot accept employment. So Cāṇakya Paṇḍita was living in a cottage, but he actually was the prime minister. This brahminical culture and the brahminical brain is the standard of Vedic civilization. The *Manu-smṛiti* is an example of the standard of brahminical culture. You cannot trace out from history when *Manu-smṛiti* was written, but it is considered so perfect that it is the Hindu law. There is no need for the legislature to pass a new law daily to adjust social order. The law given by Manu is so perfect that it can be applicable for all time. It is stated in Sanskrit to be *tri-kālādau*, which means good for the past, present and future.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** I am sorry to interrupt you, but to my knowledge all of Indian society in the second half of the Eighteenth Century was, by order of the British administration, under a law divergent from Hindu law. There was a lot of change. The actual Hindu law that was used by the Hindus was quite different from the original *Manu-smṛiti*.

**Prabhupāda:** They have now made changes. Even our late Paṇḍita Jawaharlal Nehru introduced his own Hindu code. He introduced the right of divorce in marriage, but this was not in the *Manu-saṁhitā*. There are so many things they have changed, but before this modern age the whole human society was governed by the *Manu-smṛiti*. Strictly

speaking, modern Hindus are not strictly following the Hindu scriptures.

But our point is not to try to bring back the old type of Hindu society. That is impossible. Our idea is to take the best ideas from the original idea. For example, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* there is a description of the communistic idea. It is described to Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. If there is something good, a good experience, why shouldn't you adopt it? That is our point of view. Besides that, modern civilization is missing one all-important point—the aim of human life. Scientifically, the aim of human life is self-realization, *ātma-tattvam*. It is said that unless the members of human society come to the point of self-realization, they are defeated in whatever they do. Actually it is happening in modern society, despite all economic advancement and other advancement: instead of keeping peace and tranquility, they are fighting—individually, socially, politically and nationally. If we think about it in a cool-headed way, we can see that in spite of much improvement in many branches of knowledge, we are keeping the same mentality that is visible in the lower animal society. Our conclusion, according to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, is that this human body is not meant for working hard for sense gratification. But people do not know anything beyond that. They do not know about the next life. There is no scientific department of knowledge to study what happens after this body is finished. That is a great department of knowledge.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said, *dehino'smin yathā dehe. Deha* means this body. *Dehinaḥ* means the one who owns this body. *Dehino'smin yathā dehe kaumāraṁ yauvanam jarā*. The *dehī*, the owner of the body, is within, and the body is changing from one form to another.<sup>6</sup> The child has a certain type of body that changes to another type when he is older. But the owner of the body still exists throughout. Similarly, when this body is completely changed, we accept another body. People do not understand this. We are accepting different bodies, even in this life, from babyhood to childhood to boyhood to youth. That is a fact—everyone knows it. I was a child, but that childhood body is no more. I have a different body now. What is the difficulty in understanding that when this body will be no more, then I will have to accept another body? It is a great science.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** As you know, there are two quite opposite approaches to this problem. The approach is slightly different according to different religions, but at the same time, any religion recognizes and searches for the change-of-place experience, or transmigration of spirit. In Christian religion, in Judaism, in . . .

**Prabhupāda:** I am not talking religions with you. I am talking science and philosophy. One religion may accept one way; that is not our concern. We are concerned with the point that if the owner of the body is permanent in spite of different changes of body, there should be no difficulty in understanding that when this body changes, the owner of the body will have another body.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Another approach is that there is no separation. There are no two phenomena—the body and the owner of the body are the same.

**Prabhupāda:** (emphatically): No.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** When the body dies, the owner also dies.

**Prabhupāda:** No, no. But why is there no department of knowledge in the university to study this fact scientifically? That is my proposition—they are lacking. It may be as you



**PRABHUPĀDA IN RED SQUARE.** Kṛṣṇa consciousness is everywhere.

say or it may be as I say, but there must be a department of knowledge to study this. Recently a cardiologist in Toronto, a doctor, has accepted that there is a soul. I had some correspondence with him, and he strongly believes that there is a soul. So there is another point of view, but our process is to accept knowledge from authority. We have Kṛṣṇa's statement on this subject, and He is authoritative. Kṛṣṇa is accepted as the authority by all the *ācāryas*. *Bhagavad-gītā* is accepted by scholarly and philosophical circles all over the world. Kṛṣṇa says:

*dehino 'smin yathā dehe  
kaumāraṁ yauvanaṁ jarā  
tathā dehāntara-prāptir  
dhīras tatra na muhyati*

"Just as the soul gives up the childhood body and comes to the boyhood body and then to youth, similarly, the soul gives up this body and accepts another body."<sup>7</sup> This statement is given by Kṛṣṇa, the greatest authority according to our tradition of knowledge. We accept such a statement without argument. That is the way of Vedic understanding.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** The difficulty is that our approach is that we do not believe in anything without argument. We can believe only things based on argument.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes, that is allowed. That is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*. *Tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā*.<sup>8</sup> *Pari-praśnaḥ*, argument, is allowed—but not in the challenging spirit, but rather with the spirit to understand. Argument is not denied. But as far as Vedic statements are concerned, they are infallible, and the scholars of the *Vedas* accept them in that way. For example, cow dung is the stool of an animal. Now, the Vedic statement is that as soon as you touch the stool of any animal—even if you touch your own stool—you are impure and have to purify yourself by taking a bath. According to the Hindu system, after evacuating one has to take a bath.

7. Bg. 2.13

8. Bg. 4.34

**Prof. Kotovsky:** That is quite understandable hygienic knowledge.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Yes, that is right.

**Prabhupāda:** But in another place it is stated that cow dung, although the stool of an animal, is pure. Even if you apply it to an impure place, that place becomes purified. This is superficially contradictory. In one place it is said that the stool of an animal is impure and as soon as you touch it you have to be purified, and in another place it says that cow dung is pure. According to our knowledge, it is contradictory—but still it is accepted by those who are followers of the *Vedas*. And the fact is that if you analyze cow dung, you will find that it contains all antiseptic properties.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** This I don't know.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes, one professor in a medical college has analyzed it, and he found it full of antiseptic properties. So Vedic statements, even if found contradictory, if analyzed scrutinizingly will prove correct. There may be an exception. But it is accepted, and when scientifically analyzed and examined, it is found to be correct.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Yes, if you analyze from the scientific point of view, that is right.

**Prabhupāda:** There are other instances—for example, the conch shell. The conch shell is the bone of an animal, and according to Vedic instruction if you touch the bone of an animal you become impure and have to take a bath. But this conch shell is kept in the Deity room because it is accepted as pure by the *Vedas*. My point is that we accept Vedic laws without argument. That is the principle followed by scholars. If you can substantiate your statements by quotations from the *Vedas*, then they are accepted. You are not required to substantiate them in other ways. There are different kinds of *pramāṇas*, or evidences. Proof by Vedic quotation is called *śruti-pramāṇa*. As in the legal court if you can give statements from the law book your statement is accepted, so all statements you give, if supported by *śruti-pramāṇas*, are accepted by scholars. I think you know the *Vedas* are known as *śrutis*.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Yes.

**Prabhupāda:** *Śruti-smṛti-purāṇādi-pañcarātra-vidhiṁ vinā aikāntikī harer bhaktir utpātayaiva kalpate*. Any system we accept must be supported by evidences of *śruti*, *smṛti*, the *purāṇas* and *pañcarātra*. That which is not proved by these *pramāṇas* is a disturbance.<sup>9</sup>

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Could I just say one thing? What is in the *Vedas* could also have been proved in a scientific way. Today, suppose there is a scientific laboratory. What is said by that lab is true. That it is true you accept, without going into the propriety of it. Suppose you have a scientific workshop or institution; if this workshop or scientific institution said, "This is not good," the general body would take it for granted: "Yes. The scientific body has said so, so it is understood."

**Prabhupāda:** Similarly, Vedic authoritative statements are accepted by the *ācāryas* [great teachers]. India is governed by the *ācāryas*—Rāmānujācārya, Madhvācārya, Śaṅkarācārya. They accept the *Vedas*, and their followers accept them. The benefit is that I do not waste my time to research whether cow dung is pure or impure, but because it is stated in the *Vedas* to be pure, I accept it. I save my time by accepting the *śruti-pramāṇa*. In that way there are dif-

9. *Brahma-yāmala*

ferent statements in the *Vedas* for sociology and politics or anything, for *Veda* means knowledge.

*sarvasya cāham ḥṛdi sanniviṣṭo  
mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanam ca  
vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo  
vedānta-kṛd veda-vid eva cāham*<sup>10</sup>

**Prof. Kotovsky:** May I put one question to you? Have you many branches of your society in the world?

**Prabhupāda:** Yes.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Where is your main center, and where are the branches of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness society?

**Prabhupāda:** Of course, I have over sixty-five branches.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Sixty-five branches.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes, and I have made my main center in Los Angeles. And now we are establishing an important center in Māyāpura, the birthplace of Lord Caitanya. Have you been to India?

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Six or seven times. Now there is a very difficult situation in Calcutta because of the influx of refugees from Bangladesh.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes, but we had our *saṅkīrtana* for ten days, and it was very wonderful. The gathering was not less than thirty thousand people daily. They were much interested in

10. Bg. 15.15

Photos: Bali Mardan dāsa

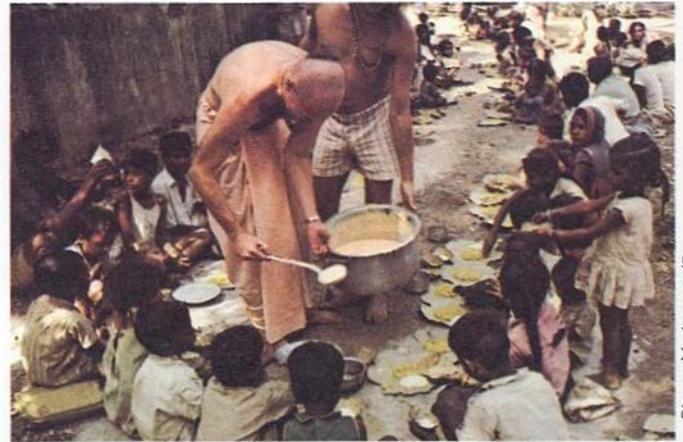
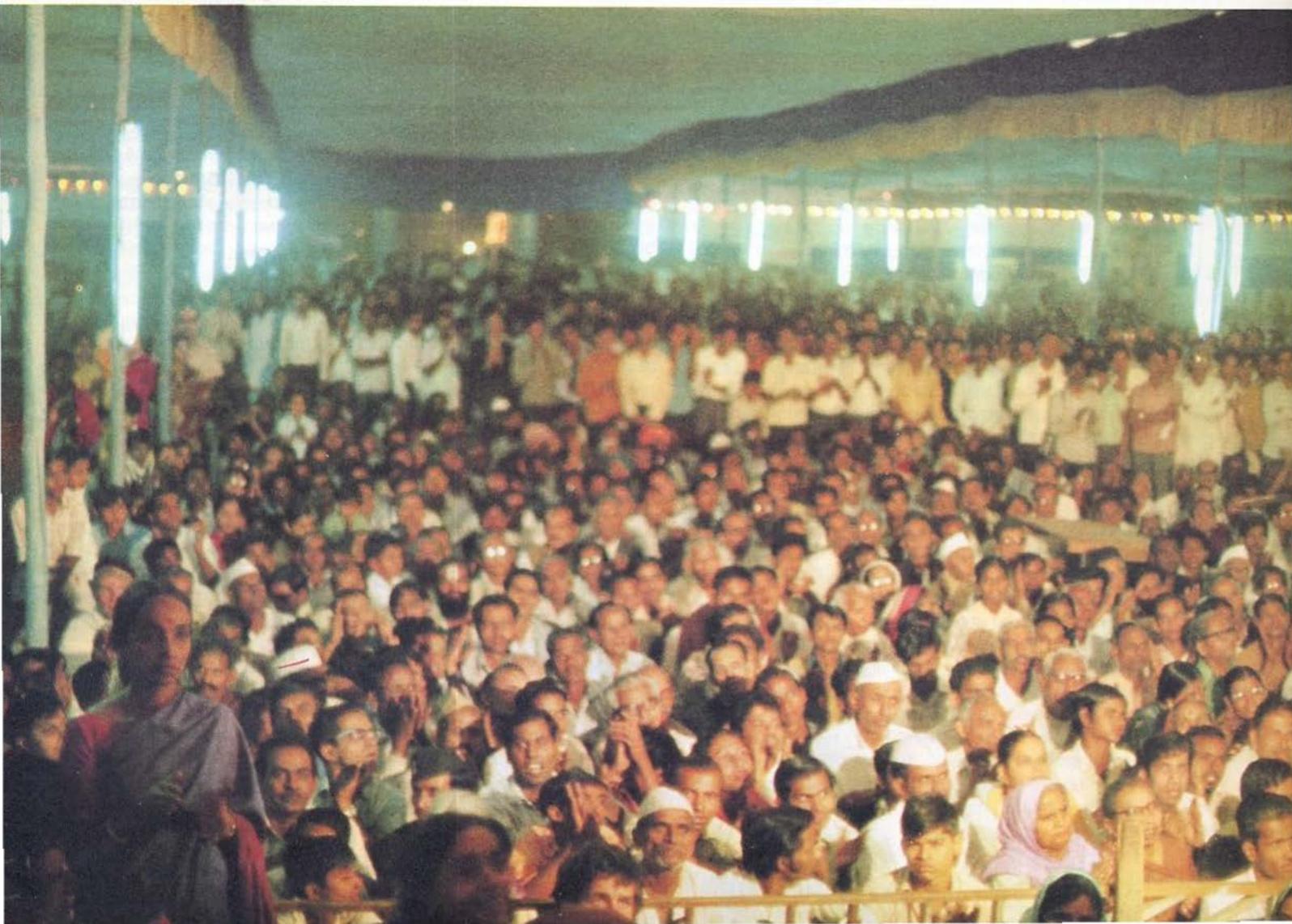


Photo: Yaduvara dāsa

**WONDERFUL PROGRAMS.** Bangladesh refugees receive spiritual food at a Kṛṣṇa consciousness center in Calcutta.

hearing our lectures, since we lecture from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Bhagavad-gītā*. So people are responding from every part of the world, especially the American boys and girls. They are especially interested, and England and also Germany and France. From here I plan to go to Paris. What is the name of that place?

**A disciple:** In Paris? Oh, Fontenay-aux-Roses?



**Prabhupāda:** Yes, they have taken a whole house, a nice house. So our process is very simple. We ask our students to observe four prohibitive principles—no illicit sex life, no eating of meat, fish or eggs, no gambling and no intoxication, including cigarettes, tea and coffee. One has to obey these four principles and chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, and you will find how, by this process only, these boys and girls are quickly improving. The process is very simple. Besides that, we have books—volumes of books—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gītā*. Throughout all these years, I have written about one dozen 400-page books—*Kṛṣṇa* in two parts, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in six parts, *Teachings of Lord Caitanya* in one part, *Nectar of Devotion* in one part. So we are trying to push this Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa is a historical personality, as much as Lenin is a historical personality. Just as you are trying to understand his philosophy, we are trying to understand Kṛṣṇa's philosophy.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Are there many participants in your sixty-five branches?

**Prabhupāda:** Oh yes, more than one thousand initiated, and outside there are many. The one thousand have accepted the principles. Just like these boys. [Śrīla Prabhupāda points to his two secretaries.]

**Prof. Kotovsky:** But does that mean that these students abstain from normal Western, European universities? For in-

stance, can a normal student from one of the various universities who is attending lectures in the normal way also be initiated and admitted to your community?

**Prabhupāda:** If you want to live in our community and be initiated, we welcome you. If not, come try to understand our philosophy, read our books—there are so many books, magazines, questions and answers. Try to understand the philosophy. It is not that all of a sudden a student comes and becomes our disciple. He first of all comes, associates and tries to understand. We do not canvass. He voluntarily says that he wants to be a disciple.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** What happens if, for instance, one is not a student but a young worker or the young son of a farmer? Would he renounce his whole life and join your community in a given center? How would he maintain himself in his day-to-day life, in material life?

**Prabhupāda:** As I told you, this propaganda is meant for creating *brāhmaṇas* all over the world because the *brāhmaṇa* element is lacking. One who seriously comes to us has to become a *brāhmaṇa*, so he should adopt the occupation of a *brāhmaṇa* and give up the occupation of a *kṣatriya* or *śūdra*. But if one wants to keep his profession and also at the same time understand our movement, that is allowed. We have many professors following our movement. There is Howard Wheeler, a professor at Ohio State University.

**PEOPLE ARE RESPONDING.** Śrīla Prabhupāda addresses a crowd of thousands at a Hare Kṛṣṇa Festival in Bombay.



He is my disciple. He is continuing with his professorship, but almost all the money he is getting he is spending for this Kṛṣṇa consciousness. *Gṛhasthas*, those who are in householder life outside, are expected to contribute fifty percent of their income for our society, keep twenty-five percent for family, and keep twenty-five percent for personal emergencies. But Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu teaches that it does not matter whether one is *agr̥hastha*, householder, or in the renounced order, or a *brāhmaṇa* or a *śūdra*. Lord Caitanya says, "Anyone who understands the science of Kṛṣṇa becomes My spiritual master." The actual words in Bengali are *kibā vipra, kibā nyāsī, śūdra kene naya*. Do you understand a little Bengali?

**Prof. Kotovsky:** A little.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes, as a vibration. *Yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā, sei 'guru' haya*. "Anyone who understands the science of Kṛṣṇa can become a spiritual master."<sup>11</sup>

**Prof. Kotovsky:** But by creating *brāhmaṇas* from different social classes of society, you deny the old prescription of the Hindu scriptures.

**Prabhupāda:** No, I establish it.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** According to all scriptures—the *Purāṇas*, etc.—every member of one of these four classes of *varṇas* has to be born within it.

**Prabhupāda:** No, no, no, no.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** That is the foundation of all the *varṇas*. . .

**Prabhupāda:** No, no. I am sorry.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** The foundation of all the *varṇas*. . .

**Prabhupāda:** You have spoken incorrectly. With great respect I beg to submit that you are not speaking correctly. In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is stated, *cāturvarṇyair̥ mayā sṛṣṭam guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ*. "These four orders of *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas* and *śūdras* were created by Me according to quality and work."<sup>12</sup> There is no mention of birth.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** I agree with you that this is the addition of later *brāhmaṇas* who tried to perpetuate these qualities.

**Prabhupāda:** That has killed the Indian culture. Otherwise there is no necessity of the division of part of India into Pakistan. Not only that, but from the historical point of view this whole planet was *Bhārata-varṣa*, and it was controlled by one flag up to the time of Mahārāja Parīkṣit. Then it gradually separated. This is history. Lately they have separated Pakistan. So *Bhārata-varṣa* is now crippled into a small piece of land. Otherwise, according to Vedic scripture, this whole planet is called *Bhārata-varṣa*. Formerly it was named *Ilāvṛta-varṣa*. But since Emperor Bharata ruled this planet, it is called *Bhārata-varṣa*. So this culture, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, was always existent. Consider any religion—Christian, Mohammedan, Jewish. They are at most two to three thousand years old. But you cannot trace out the beginning of this Vedic scripture. It is therefore called *sanātana*, eternal. This culture is for this whole human society. It is not a religious faith. Religious faith you can change, but real *dharma* you cannot change. Try to understand Kṛṣṇa. In *Bhagavad-gītā* He says, *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja*: "Give up all other forms of religion and just surrender to Me."<sup>13</sup> That is real knowledge—to surrender to the Supreme. You or I—anyone—is surrendered to someone. That is a fact. Our life is by surrender, is it not? Do you disagree with this point?

**Prof. Kotovsky:** To some extent you surrender.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes, to the full extent.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** You have to surrender to the society, for instance. To the whole people.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes, to the whole people, or to the state or to the king or the government or whatever you say. This surrender must be there.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** The only difficulty is that we cannot half surrender to a government or a king. The principal difference is of surrender to a king, to a person, or to the society.

**Prabhupāda:** No, that is only a change of color. But the principle of surrender is there. Whether you surrender to monarchy, democracy, aristocracy or dictatorship, you have to surrender; that is a fact. Without surrender there is no life. It is not possible. So we are educating people to surrender to the Supreme, wherefrom you get all protection, just as Kṛṣṇa says (*sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja*).<sup>14</sup> No one can say, "No, I am not surrendered to anyone." Not a single person. The difference is *where* he surrenders. The ultimate surrendering object is Kṛṣṇa. Therefore in *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says, *bahūnām janmanām ante jñānavān mām prapadyate*. "After surrendering to so many things birth after birth, when one is factually wise he surrenders unto Me."<sup>15</sup> *Vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa mahātmā sudurtabhaḥ*. "Such a *mahātmā* is very rare."<sup>16</sup>

**Prof. Kotovsky:** But at the same time it seems to me that surrender is to be accompanied by revolt. The history of mankind has proved that mankind has developed only by revolt against some kind of surrender. In the medieval age there was the French revolution. It was revolt against surrender. But this revolution itself was surrender to the rank and file of the people. You are agreed?

**Prabhupāda:** Yes.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** So it is not enough to come to a full stop. Surrender is to be accompanied with revolt against some and surrender to other people.

**Prabhupāda:** But the surrender will be fully stopped when it is surrender to Kṛṣṇa.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Ah, ah.

**Prabhupāda:** That is full stop—no more surrender. Any other surrender you have to change by revolution. But when you come to Kṛṣṇa, then it is sufficient. You are satisfied. I'll give you an example: a child is crying, and people change laps. Oh, he does not stop. But as soon as the baby comes to the lap of his mother—

**Prof. Kotovsky:** It stops.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes, full satisfaction. So this surrender, these changes, will go on in different categories. But the sum total of all this surrender is surrender to *māyā*. Therefore, in *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said that this surrender, neglecting Kṛṣṇa, is all *māyā*. Either you surrender to this or to that, but final surrender is surrender to Kṛṣṇa; then you will be happy. The process of surrender is there, but surrender to Kṛṣṇa keeps one quite satisfied, transcendently.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Haven't you come across hostile attitudes to your teachings from orthodox Hindus or *brāhmaṇas* in India?

**Prabhupāda:** We have subdued them.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Ah.

**Prabhupāda:** Any orthodox Hindu may come and challenge, but we have our weapons—the Vedic literatures. So no one has come. Even Christian priests in America love me. They say, "These boys are American, Christian, Jewish, and now they are so much after God. But we could not deliver

11. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 8.128*

12. *Bg. 4.13*

13. *Bg. 18.66*

14. *Bg. 18.66*

15. *Bg. 7.19*

16. *Bg. 7.19*

them." They are admitting it. Their fathers and their parents come to me, offer their obeisances and say, "Svāmijī, it is our great fortune that you have come here to teach God consciousness." So on the contrary, I have been well received. In India also, since you inquired of India, all other sects are admitting that before me many kinds of *svāmīs* went to the Western countries, but they could not convert even a single person to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They are admitting that. As far as I am concerned, I don't take any credit, but I am confident that because I am presenting the Vedic knowledge as it is, without adulteration, it is being effective. That is my confidence. If you have the right medicine and you administer it to a patient, you must be sure that he will be cured.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** How many out of your one thousand disciples do you have in India itself? How many of your community do you have in India?

**Prabhupāda:** In India?

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Yes.

**Prabhupāda:** In India there are many Kṛṣṇa conscious persons—hundreds, thousands, millions. In India there is no question. There is not a single Hindu who is not Kṛṣṇa conscious.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Yes, I understand.

**Prabhupāda:** Vaiṣṇavas. This is called the Vaiṣṇava cult. You have been in India, so as it is commonly known, there are many millions of Vaiṣṇavas. For example, this gentleman [an Indian gentleman present] is the commander of Air India Airlines. He is not my disciple, but he is a Vaiṣṇava, Kṛṣṇa conscious. Similarly, in India there are millions of Kṛṣṇa conscious persons. There are even Mohammedans who are Kṛṣṇa conscious. At Gorakhpura University there is a Mohammedan professor who is a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. So this is natural. It is said in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is everywhere, in everyone's heart. It simply has to be awakened by this process. That is all. It is there in your heart also. It is not that it is foreign to you. In everyone's heart there is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. By this process we have to awaken it. It is just like the way the sun rises. It is not that all of a sudden the sun comes from nowhere. It is there, but it rises in the morning. Similarly, this Kṛṣṇa consciousness is everywhere, but some way or another it is now covered. By this process it is reawakened and aroused by association.

**ANCIENT FESTIVAL IN SAN FRANCISCO.** Deity of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the original father of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, dances above a river of people at the annual Rathayātrā Car Festival.



**Prof. Kotovsky:** You came yesterday to Moscow. Have you seen something here in Moscow?

**Prabhupāda:** No, I am not very much interested in sight-seeing.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** But in any case, just to stay in an old-style hotel is not interesting—not many people to see. And you are leaving the day after tomorrow.

**Prabhupāda:** That is my program.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** You are leaving for the United States or for Europe?

**Prabhupāda:** Yes, for Europe. Paris. And we have two very big ceremonies in London and San Francisco. They are making arrangements for the Rathayātrā Car Festival. This car festival is observed in Jagannātha Purī. You have been to Jagannātha Purī?

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Yes, the car festival has been held from immemorial times. A very old tradition. Huge cars.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes, and it has now been introduced in the Western countries in London and San Francisco, and gradually maybe we will introduce it in other countries also.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** In London there is a large Indian community.

**Prabhupāda:** No, no. This is organized by the Englishmen and Americans. The Indian communities in London and San Francisco are trying to become—you know the word?—*saheb*?

**Prof. Kotovsky:** [Laughs] Westernized. [They both laugh.] A very great social anthropologist at the University has written something very interesting. He says there are two processes—the process of Westernization among *brāhmaṇas*, mainly the upper class, and the process called Sanskritization, which is the process of adopting *brāhmaṇa* rituals, etc., by so-called lower classes, even untouchables. It is a very interesting process in India just now. But India's position, unfortunately, is problematic.

**Prabhupāda:** The difficulty is that India is nowhere. They are trying to imitate Western life, but from a materialistic or technical point of view, they are one hundred years back.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Yes, that is right. But what to do for India?

**Prabhupāda:** There is one thing I am experiencing. If India's spiritual asset is distributed, that will increase India's honor. Because everywhere I go, people still adore Indian culture. If this treasure house of India's spiritual knowledge is properly distributed, at least people outside of India will think that they are getting something from India.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Of course, you're right. The Indian cultural heritage is to be made known everywhere. But at the same time, in what way would this benefit the Indian masses themselves? They are sitting in India, and they have nothing to gain from the spreading of the Indian cultural heritage all over the world. Indian villages have to have fertilizers, tractors, etc.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes, we do not object to that.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Yes, I don't think that you object, but at the same time, something has to be done in India. One may call it Westernization, but this introduction of an industrial-technological revolution is needed in all fields of Indian life—agriculture, industry, etc.

**Prabhupāda:** Arjuna, before understanding *Bhagavad-gītā*, was a fighter, and after understanding *Bhagavad-gītā* he remained a fighter. So we don't want to change the position. For example, you are a respectable professor, a teacher. We

don't say that you must change your position. We have come to convince you about our philosophy. That is all. Arjuna was refusing to fight. "Kṛṣṇa, I don't want to kill my relatives. I do not want this kingdom." But he was taught *Bhagavad-gītā*, and at the end when Kṛṣṇa inquired, "What is your decision now?" he said, *kariṣye vacanāṁ tava*—"Yes, I shall act as You say."<sup>17</sup> That means that his consciousness changed. He was a fighter, and he remained a fighter, but he changed his consciousness. We want that. We don't want to disturb the present condition of society. We are not against technology. No, but we try to make them understand this Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That is our program.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Of course, at the same time the final goal of any consciousness is to change the society—to make it a better society.

**Prabhupāda:** That is automatic.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** I am not really so happy that the ultimate goal is not to disturb society because in modern society there are many things to be changed through consciousness.

**Prabhupāda:** That preliminary change is to follow rules and regulations of austerity. For example, don't take intoxicants.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** No indulging in intoxicants, simplicity, etc.

**Prabhupāda:** So if one takes to this process. . .

**Prof. Kotovsky:** Then the others will come automatically.

**Prabhupāda:** One's whole life will change because these four things—illicit sex life, intoxicants, meat eating and gambling—are very great impediments to social improvement.

**Prof. Kotovsky:** That will automatically make life simpler because a person who does not indulge in illicit sex, intoxicants and such other things has to lead a comparatively simple life.

**Prabhupāda:** The other day I was speaking in Bombay with a respectable gentleman. I was telling him that Kṛṣṇa says:

*māṁ hi pārtha vyapāśritya  
ye'pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayaḥ  
striyo vaiśyās tathā śūdrās  
te'pi yānti parāṁ gatim*

"Even those who are low-born (*pāpa-yonayaḥ*)—*striyas*, *vaiśyas* and *śūdras*—are also included by accepting Me. By accepting My shelter they are also elevated to the transcendental position."<sup>18</sup> Now why have the higher classes of Hindu society neglected this injunction of *Bhagavad-gītā*? Suppose one is *pāpa-yonayaḥ*, lowborn. Kṛṣṇa says that he can be "elevated to the transcendental position if he accepts Me." Why wasn't this message propagated by the higher class people so that the so-called lowborn could be elevated? Why did they reject them? The result was that instead of accepting the Mohammedans, the Indians rejected them, and now they are partitioned off. They have become eternal enemies of India. So for the first time we are trying to elevate persons to the higher position of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, even if one is lowborn. Because the soul is pure. In the *Vedas* it is said that the soul is untouched by any material contamination; it is simply temporarily covered. This covering should be removed. Then one becomes pure. That is the mission of human life—to uncover ourselves from this material environment, come to spiritual understanding and surrender to Kṛṣṇa. Then life is perfect. ☐

<sup>17</sup> Bg. 18.72

<sup>18</sup> Bg. 9.32

# THE FOUR ENEMIES OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

by  
Revatinandana  
Svāmī

From ancient Vedic scriptures like *Bhagavad-gītā* comes the message that our human life, with its developed intelligence, is meant for spiritual realization. These scriptures teach the principle that in the body there is an eternal, unchanging soul who has a fully blissful relationship with the Supreme Soul, Lord Kṛṣṇa, or God, that he has now forgotten. Because of this forgetfulness, we all undergo the inconveniences and miseries of material life, like old age, disease, apparent death and many others, and we lead lives that fail to give us enduring happiness or full satisfaction. Therefore *Bhagavad-gītā* recommends that one seek out a spiritual master who has received the Vedic messages from a line of spiritual masters coming down from Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself and from such a master learn the true nature of spiritual life and the most practical means of experiencing it.

*continued on page 22*

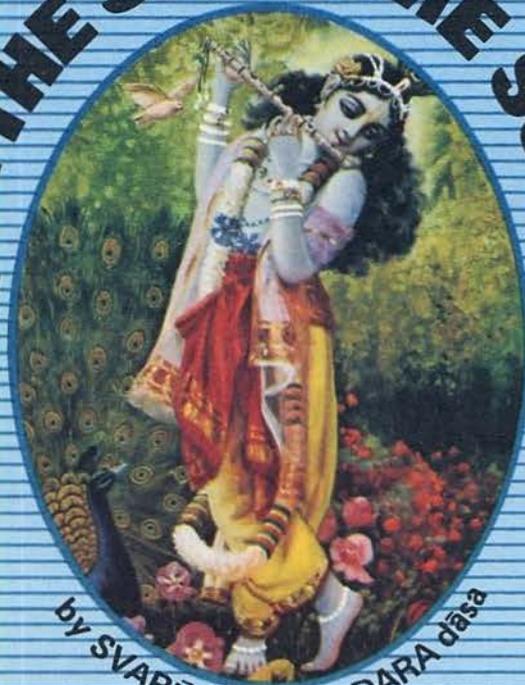


## THE LORD IN THE HEART

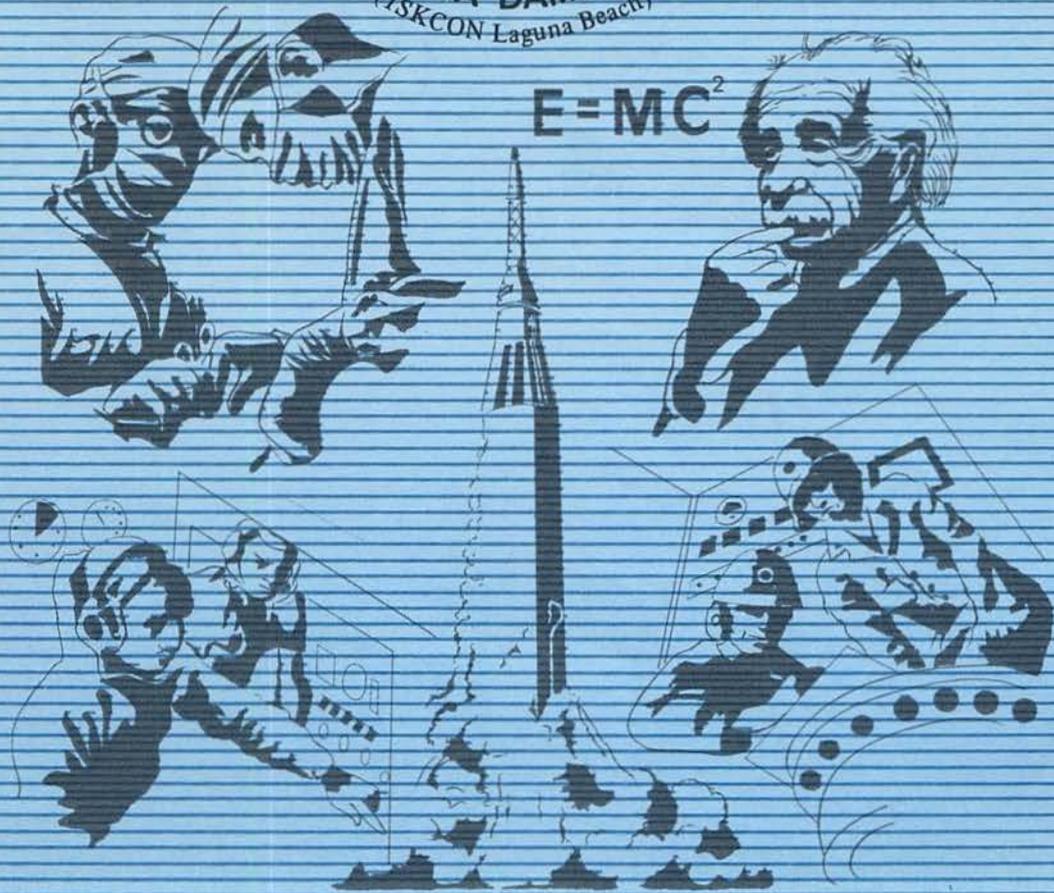
Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, appearing in His beautiful two-handed humanlike form, is the original Personality of Godhead. Yet the Lord also appears in innumerable other forms for various pastimes. As four-handed Viṣṇu, the form pictured here, the Lord becomes no bigger than a thumb to appear in the heart of every living being. The Lord is personal, not impersonal, and meditation upon His personal form is much easier and more sublime than impersonal meditation. Perfect *yogīs* concentrate their minds upon this transcendental form of the Lord, beginning from His lotus feet and gradually rising higher and higher, up to His smiling face. The more one meditates upon this transcendental form of the Lord, the more his intelligence will be purified, and thus he will be freed from all material desires and attain the highest spiritual perfection. This is fully described in Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Second Canto, where this original oil painting first appeared.



# KR̥ṢṂA: THE SUPREME SCIENTIST



by SVARŪPA DĀMODARA dāsa  
(ISKCON Laguna Beach)



When we think calmly and carefully about this wonderful universe, we can see that everything is working under the control of a supreme brain. The arrangements in nature are perfectly ordered. Things would be at random without the careful planning of a scientific and engineering brain. It is a common understanding that there is a cause behind each action. A machine cannot run without an operator. Modern scientists are very proud of automation, but there is a scientific brain behind automation also. Even Albert Einstein agreed that there is a perfect brain behind all the natural physical laws. When we talk about “brain” and “operator,” these terms imply a person. They cannot be impersonal. One may inquire who this person is. He is Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the supreme scientist and supreme engineer, under whose kind will the whole cosmos is working. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says: “The whole cosmic order is under Me. By My will it is manifested again and again, and by My will it is annihilated at the end.”<sup>1</sup>

Now let us look into a few samples from the Lord’s creation, and upon contemplating these exemplary aspects, one should develop a better understanding and appreciation of the existence of the most powerful brain, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The sun that we see daily is the nearest star. It is one hundred earth diameters across and is ninety-three million miles away from the earth. Every day the sun supplies the solar system with a tremendous amount of heat, light and energy. “The very tiny fraction of the sun’s energy that falls on the earth—estimated at about five parts in a hundred million million—is about 100,000 times greater than all the energy used in the world’s industries. The total energy the sun emits in a single second would be sufficient to keep a one-kilowatt electric fire burning for 10,000 million million years. Put in a different way, the energy the sun emits in one second is greater than the whole amount of energy the human species has consumed throughout its entire history.”<sup>2</sup> Yet it is only one of the countless number of stars floating in the sky in every direction. With the material scientific brain, the thermal, electrical and nuclear power-

houses have been made. These can supply heat, light and energy to a small, limited extent, but Lord Kṛṣṇa is supplying the whole planet with an unlimited source of energy just from one sun. Kṛṣṇa says: “The splendor of the sun, which dissipates the darkness of this whole world, comes from Me. And the splendor of the moon and the splendor of the fire are also from Me.”<sup>3</sup> The planets are revolving in a systematic path around the sun. Even within the smallest atom, the electrons and the protons are orbiting around the nucleus in a perfect manner.

Thus, from the submicroscopic realm of the atom to the expanding reaches of the galactic objects, this material universe is running like intricate, well-oiled clockwork according to great natural physical laws and principles. Scientists have gained great acclaim for making a few spaceships, whereas Kṛṣṇa effortlessly produces gigantic spaceships, such as planets and stars, which are perfectly equipped and maintained. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says, *gām āviśya ca bhūtāni dhārayāmy aham ojasā*: “I enter into each planet, and by My energy they stay in orbit.”<sup>4</sup> The laws made by the supreme brain always remain perfect; they are never violated. We never see the sun rising in the west and setting in the east. The colorful rainbow that we observe when the sun is shining during a shower is only visible when the sun is behind the observer, due to the laws of refraction. Also, each year the seasons change quite periodically, producing symptoms unique to each season.

Now let us look into some aspects of the Lord’s creation at the molecular level. Chemists find that the different colors in flowers are due to chemicals called anthocyanins, and the different aromas are mostly due to chemicals called terpenes and terpenoid compounds. The molecular frameworks for these compounds range from very simple structures to very complex networks. Camphor, for example, is a terpenoid compound, and the characteristic odor of lemons is due to the molecule called limonene, which is one of the simple terpenes. Similarly, the characteristic colors in carrots and tomatoes are due to molecules

called carotenoids, which are higher forms of terpenes. The molecular framework for each definite color or aroma is wonderfully unique. A little change in position of a few atoms in the molecule, a little variation in the geometry of the molecule or a slight change in the size of the molecule can cause a color to change from orange to red, a mild, pleasing aroma to become repellent and pungent, and a flavor to change from sweet to bitter. On one extreme we find the smallest molecule, the hydrogen molecule, which contains only two atoms of hydrogen. On the other extreme we find giant molecules such as the proteins and nucleic acids (DNA and RNA), the building blocks of all living material bodies, which contain innumerable atoms made for a definite function. Similarly, the crystalline pattern of each different molecule is unique. The geometrical shape for sodium chloride (common salt), for example, is cubical. Charcoal, graphite and diamonds are all derived from the same element, carbon, and yet the shining and transparent diamond is extremely hard, whereas graphite is soft, black and opaque. This is due to the difference in the crystalline forms of these molecules. In the crystal lattice of the diamond, each carbon atom is tetrahedrally surrounded by four other carbon atoms at a distance of 1.54 angstroms (one angstrom = 10<sup>-8</sup> cm.). In graphite, by contrast, the three bonds of each carbon atom are distorted so as to lie in the same plane, the fourth bond being directed perpendicularly to this plane to link with a carbon atom of the neighboring layer.

In this way we can cite innumerable examples of molecular networks so fantastically and delicately arranged that chemists cannot but wonder about the most expert hand and brain who is making all these wonderful artistic arrangements in His laboratory. Indeed, the intelligence and ability of the supreme scientist, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, are inconceivable (*acintya*). There is no scientist who can deny it. How then can any chemist abstain from appreciating the wonderful works of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa? In *Bhagavad-gītā* we find: “One should meditate upon the Su-

1. *īrakṣiṇī svām avasābhya viśṭānī puṇaḥ puṇaḥ bhūta-gānam inamī kṛṣṇam avasūri prakṛter vaśū* (*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.8)

2. Fred Hoyle, *Astronomy* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1962), p. 232.

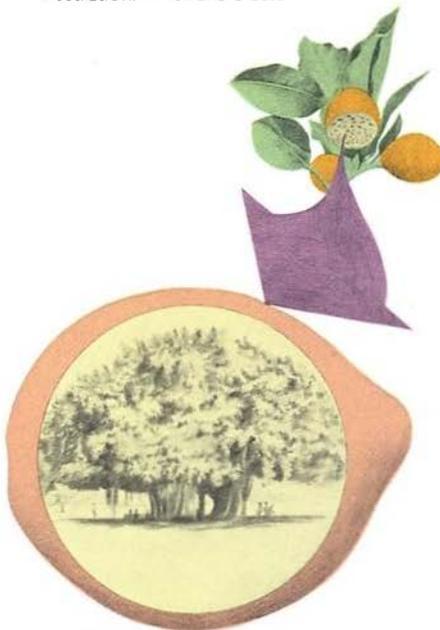
3. *yaṁ āditya-gaṇānī tejo gaṇāḥ bhūsayate khilam yac candramasi yac cāgnau tat tejo vidūhi mānakam* (*Bhagavad-gītā* 15.12)

4. (*Bhagavad-gītā* 15.13)



Illustration: Parīkṣit dāsa

Illustration: Muralīdhara dāsa



Left: **DEPENDENCY**—At times of danger, people remember God. Top: **POTENCY**—Within a tiny seed an entire tree is present. Right: **GRAVITY**—Who made the laws of gravitation? Next page: One cannot understand the universe by frog philosophy.

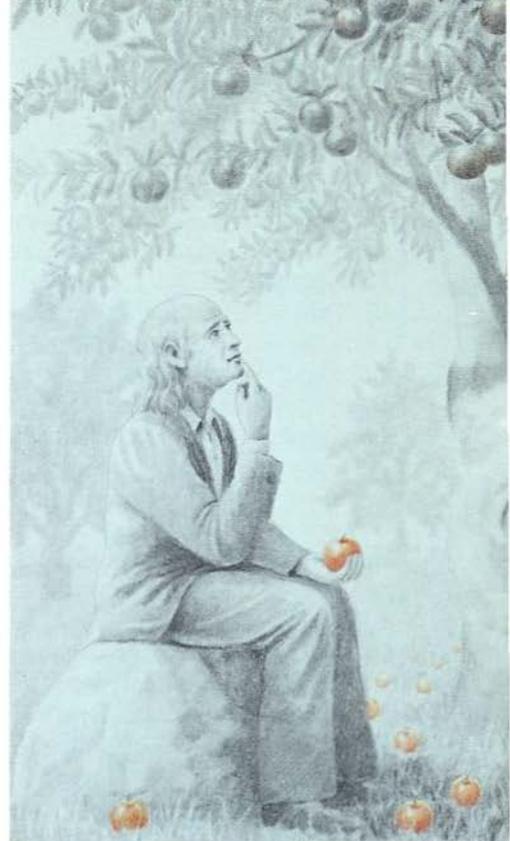


Illustration: Parīkṣit dāsa

preme Person as the one who knows everything, as He who is the oldest, who is the controller, who is smaller than the smallest, who is the maintainer of everything, who is beyond all material conception, who is inconceivable, and who is always a person. He is luminous like the sun and, being transcendental, is beyond this material nature.”<sup>5</sup>

At best, scientists can only try to imitate the wonderful artistic works of the Supreme Lord. They cannot even do this properly, and most of their attempts lead to failure and disappointment. Even when they are partly successful, it is only with the greatest difficulty. For example, Professor R.B. Woodward of Harvard, a Nobel Prize winner in chemistry (1965), and Professor A. Eschenmoser of Zurich took eleven years to synthesize the vitamin B<sub>12</sub> molecule. Altogether, ninety-nine scientists from nineteen different countries were involved just to accomplish this one small task.<sup>6</sup> Yet Kṛṣṇa is making all these complex molecules at will.

Interestingly enough, when scientists fail again and again in their attempts to make something, they consciously or unconsciously pray to God for help. Does this not indicate the existence of

the supreme scientist, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the natural subordinate position of all other living entities? A crude example is the explosion that occurred inside the Apollo 13 spacecraft during its attempt to land on the moon on April 11, 1970. The Apollo capsule was made by hundreds of scientific and technological brains and cost millions of dollars. No one could predict that there would be an explosion. When it happened, however, and the lives of the three astronauts were in danger, those involved in the mission requested all the people on earth to pray to God for the safe return of the astronauts. Such is the situation. At times of danger, most people tend to remember God, although at other times they forget Him.

Now, let us look into some very simple and graphic examples of the artistry of the Lord’s creation. We see that among the lower forms of living entities, social organization is very smoothly maintained. For example, in a bee colony the queen bee is nicely taken care of by the drones (male bees), while the workers collect nectar from flowers all day long. It is quite amazing to consider how the bees, with their tiny bodies, can collect such a great amount of honey for themselves as well

as for other living entities. In this way, the colony is maintained with beautiful order. Similarly, the loving relationship between a mother and her baby is quite clearly visible even in very small forms of living entities. During the monsoon season in tropical countries, when there are torrents of rain, the small ants run to find shelter, carrying their eggs on their heads. The spider makes its wonderful webs with great architectural skill to serve as a shelter as well as to catch its prey for survival. Silkworms spin hundreds of yards of fine threads to form cocoons for their shelter during the pupa stage. Inside a tiny seed, smaller than the size of a mustard seed, the whole potency of a big banyan tree is present. In this way, we can see the wonderful arrangements of the Supreme Lord, who is creating, maintaining and guiding all living entities, small or big. Kṛṣṇa says: “Furthermore, O Arjuna, I am the generating seed of all existences. There is no being—moving or unmoving—that can exist without Me.”<sup>7</sup>

The main trouble with material scientists is that they generally neglect the most important and fundamental aspect of their inquiries. For example, when Newton saw the falling of the apple, he asked why and how the

5. *kaviniḥ purāṇam anuśāsiṭāram  
aṭṭor auṭyāṁsam anuśmaroṭ yob  
sarvāsya dhātūrum icim ya-rīṇam  
āditya-varuṇiḥ tamasulī parastāḥ*  
(Bg. 8.9)

6. James H. Krieger, *Chemical and Engineering News*, March 12, 1973, p. 16.

7. *yo’c cā pi sarva-bhūtō nāṁ  
bījaṁ tad aham arjuna  
na tad asti viṇā yai syau  
maya bhūtāni aśa-caram* (Bg. 10.39)

apple fell. However, he did not inquire who caused the falling of the apple. As an answer to his inquiry, he discovered the laws of gravitation. His answer was that the apple fell because of the laws of gravitation. But who made the laws of gravitation? Śrīla Prabhupāda kindly explains that the apple did not fall while green but while ripe. Therefore Newton's gravitational theory was not enough to explain the falling of the apple. There is some other cause behind the total scene of the falling and, thereby, behind the law of gravitation. That cause is Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In *Bhagavad-gītā* we find, *vāsudevaḥ sarvaṃ iti*: "Kṛṣṇa is the cause of all causes."<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, scientists have to know that the little ability they have is also given by the Lord. Kṛṣṇa says, *pauruṣaṃ nṛṣu*: "I am the ability in man."<sup>9</sup>

By various mechanical means (telescopes, etc.), assumptions, empiric theories and conceptual models, cosmologists and astronomers are trying with tremendous vigor to understand what the universe is, what its size is, and the time scale of its creation. At the present time they are speculating that there may be a tenth planet in the solar system, and they are trying to locate it.<sup>10</sup> How far they will be successful in finding a real answer to their attempts only time can tell. But the fact is that they will never be able to fully discover the secrets of nature, which is the product of creation of Kṛṣṇa, the supreme scientist. Any thoughtful person can understand how foolish he is even to dream of measuring the size of this universe, since he does not know completely the nature of the sun, the nearest star. Śrīla Prabhupāda cites the example of the philosophy of Dr. Frog, who lives in a well of three feet and has no idea how vast the Pacific Ocean is but who speculates that the Pacific Ocean might be five feet wide, ten feet wide, etc., comparing it to his well. The point is that comprehending the unlimited knowledge beyond by our limited means is simply a waste of time and energy. All the knowledge is already there in the authorized scriptures, the *Vedas*. One simply has to take the

knowledge from the supreme authority, Kṛṣṇa.

The details of the creation of this material universe and the living entities like demigods, men and others have been given in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, First Canto, Chapter Three, verses 1-5. The description of the material and spiritual universes is completely given in the *Brahma-saṁhitā*, Fifth Chapter, and from *Bhagavad-gītā* we get the clear information that the entire material universe is only one fourth of the creative energy of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The other three fourths of the creative energy of the Lord are manifested in the spiritual sky, called the Vaikuṅṭhaloka.

Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the golden *avatāra* (incarnation) of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa, clearly explained to Sanātana Gosvāmī, one of the Lord's intimate disciples, about the nature of these universes. The Lord explained that the material universes have a limited length and breadth, whereas no one can

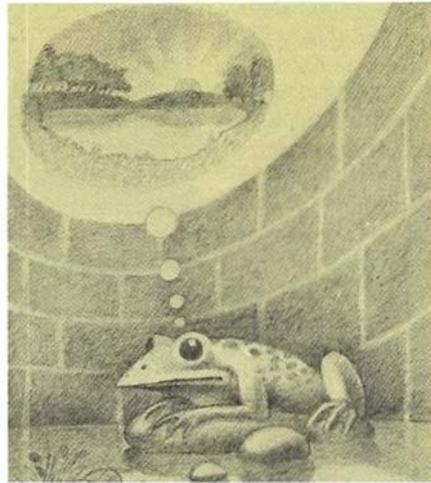


Illustration: Peter Hawkins

measure the length and breadth of all the Vaikuṅṭha planets. These Vaikuṅṭha planets are like the petals of a lotus flower, and the principal part of that flower is the center of all the Vaikuṅṭhas. This part is called Kṛṣṇaloka, or Goloka Vṛndāvana. The Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, has His original eternal abode on this planet. The other Vaikuṅṭhas are also inhabited by residents who are full with six opulences—wealth, strength, knowledge, beauty, fame and renunciation—and in

each and every Vaikuṅṭha planet a different expansion of Kṛṣṇa has His eternal abode.<sup>11</sup> Material scientists have no information of this vast knowledge.

Certainly, the secrets of the universe cannot be unfolded by the tiny brains of material scientists. We should agree without a doubt that man's vision in all directions is extremely limited by the inadequacies of his senses, his technology and his intellect. None can deny the existence of the supreme scientist, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He is the proprietor and knower of everything. Kṛṣṇa says: "O son of Pṛthvī, know that I am the original seed of all existences, the intelligence of the intelligent, and the prowess of all powerful men."<sup>12</sup> . . . O conquerer of wealth [Arjuna], there is no Truth superior to Me. Everything rests upon Me, as pearls are strung on a thread."<sup>13</sup> Only fools would argue about the existence of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says: "Those miscreants who are grossly foolish, lowest among mankind, whose knowledge is stolen by illusion, and who partake of the atheistic nature of demons, do not surrender unto Me."<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, instead of denying and challenging the existence of the supreme scientist, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, or God, it should be the prime duty of all our scientist friends to appreciate the inconceivable brain of the Lord and His wonderful manifestations everywhere. One may falsely claim the credit for the discovery of radio, television, computers, penicillin, etc. But the fact is that everything was already there because nothing can come out of nothing. If someone claims that anything belongs to him, he is the greatest thief. He is stealing property from the supreme father, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and claiming it to be his. Nothing belongs to us. Everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa. Śrī *Īṣopaniṣad* says: "Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one must not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong."<sup>15</sup> ☐

8. Bg. 7.19. 10. D. Rawlins and M. Hammerton, "Is There a Tenth Planet in the Solar System?" *Nature*, December 22, 1972, p. 457.  
9. Bg. 7.8.  
11. Prabhupāda, *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, pp. 82-83.

12. *bhūvaṁ mān sarva-bhūtānāṁ vidhi pārtha sanātanaṁ buddhiṁ vir buddhiṁ matām asmi tejas tejasvinām aham* (Bg. 7.10).

13. *matāḥ parataroṁ nānyat kiñcid asti dhanañjaya mayi sarvaṁ idam prōtaṁ sitte mañi-gaṇā iva* (Bg. 7.7).

14. *na mān duṣṭhānino mūḍhālḥ prapadyante narādhamāḥ māyāvāpohīta-jñānā āsurāṁ bhūvaṁ āśritāḥ* (Bg. 7.15).

15. *īśāvāsyam idam sarvaṁ yat kiñca jagatyām jagat tena tyaktena bhurijitā mā gṛhñāḥ kasyo sivā dhanam Śrī Īṣopaniṣad, Mantra 1.*

# Letters

The editors of *Back to Godhead* welcome correspondence pertaining to the subject matter of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. All letters will be personally replied, and correspondence of special interest will be published regularly.



## ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

Dist. 315

*Service Above Self - He Profits Most Who Serves Best*

Revered Svāmijī,  
Hare Kṛṣṇa.

On behalf of the members of the Rotary Club of Hyderabad and on my own personal behalf, I convey to Your Divine Grace, as well as to your international devotees who accompanied your good self, our thanks for having been so kind as to visit our club at the Ritz Hotel, when you graciously gave us all the benefit of listening to your highly spiritual program, including *saṅkīrtana* and discourses.

We were all deeply moved and impressed by the melodious and devotional *kīrtanas* sung by your disciples, with ecstasy clearly written on their faces and with complete dedication to the movement and to their *guru*. This was a source of real inspiration to the distinguished audience, and we thank you for giving us an opportunity to listen to such soul-stirring *kīrtanas* on Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Rāma and also participate while they were sung in chorus.

From the brilliant analysis of your address, delivered with masterly erudition, we have learned a great deal about the present-day problem of whether man, who is increasingly becoming skeptical of religion and all that it implies, will ever succeed in making this world a better place in which to live in peace and harmony and thus give full expression to the noble and spiritual side of his nature.

I need mention that our members heard your thought-provoking discourse with rapt attention and keen interest. We were all impressed by your simple and convincing answers to the complex problems faced by the modern world: "Just develop Kṛṣṇa consciousness, God consciousness. It changes one's outlook, it suggests a refreshingly spiritual perspective on the world, and the result of this new spiritual change is that all the problems that divide mankind will dwindle into insignificance and disappear, paving the way for enduring peace and harmony in the world of today."

We have noted your observation that although India is the birthplace of Vedic culture, we have not done anything to propagate this culture, and that Indians should have been trained to spread the true Vedic culture, which will accelerate the spiritual progress of mankind. The propagation

of Vedic culture and development of God consciousness will enable humanity to organize everything in its right order.

It was very enlightening to listen to your analysis, quoting extensively from *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Bhāgavatam*, that human society loses its meaning the moment it abandons religion and that it cannot exist without religion. To practice religion means to abide by the orders of God. This is religion, and this is explained in the *Gītā*.

I once again thank Your Divine Grace and the devotees for the trouble taken for us and hope that you will be kind enough to visit our club in the future whenever you happen to visit this historic city, so that we may be benefited by your divine teachings on Kṛṣṇa consciousness and also receive your blessings.

With respectful reverence,

Yours sincerely,

Ramesh Chandra Lahoti  
Chairman, Program Committee  
Rotary Club of Hyderabad (India)

My Dear Mr. Lahoti,

Please accept my greetings and the blessings of Lord Caitanya. I beg to acknowledge receipt of your kind letter, and I am very much encouraged by your appreciation of our humble activities.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said:

*yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas  
tat tad evetaro janaḥ  
sa yat pramāṇaṁ kurute  
lokas tad anuvartate*

"Whatever action is performed by a great man, common men follow in his footsteps. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues." (Bg. 3.21)

Therefore our only hope is that if leading personalities like you and the members of your society try to understand this important movement, then others will follow. There is a great need to spread this movement all over the world because without God consciousness no one can be happy. That is a fact. You already have our publications. Kindly read them carefully and try to implement the philosophy among your co-workers. I thank you once more for your kind words.

Yours sincerely,

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

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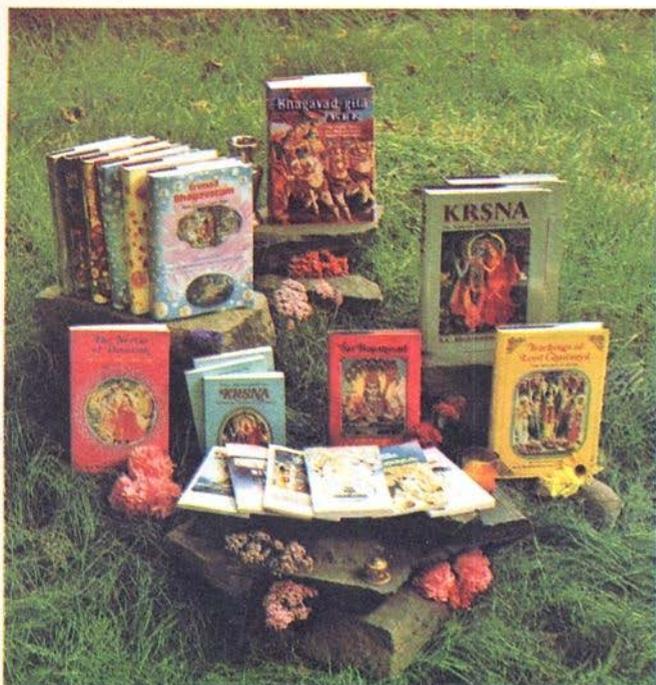
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The *Vedas* say that any society based on these principles of spiritual realization will automatically be peaceful and prosperous because spiritual culture naturally gives rise to simple and austere living with ever increasing satisfaction. People living in this spiritual way have little cause for envy or quarrel. Because their simple life takes only the bare necessities from the world, they do not disturb the natural harmony of God's material nature, which is meant to provide amply for all when undisturbed by greedy men. Moreover, Lord Kṛṣṇa is pleased when fallen souls endeavor to associate again with Him, and so He sees especially to their needs, even when the general, godless civilization has put itself into difficulties. He also gradually reveals Himself to His devotees, and thus their happiness is ever increasing.

### Degraded Activities

In the present human society around the world, we observe neither peace nor general prosperity, but, rather, increasing division, discord and calamities of all kinds. From the Vedic viewpoint, these clearly arise from a complete neglect of the need for spiritual advancement. Although some people still profess various religious creeds, they have but little interest in actually liberating the spirit soul from material conditions for returning to the spiritual association of God. As human society in this way neglects the plan of the Supreme Lord, we can expect only ever increasing difficulties as our fallible leaders and planning commissions compound error upon error in a futile attempt to establish the kingdom of God without God.

The ancient Vedic scriptures say that in a proper culture the human mind will naturally take interest in understanding God and spiritual life. Vedic histories tell us that 5,000 years ago and beyond, such proper culture and spiritual orientation were prominent. But in the present iron age—called the Kali-yuga—doubtfulness and lack of interest in spiritual life bring an era of gross materialism, hypocrisy and quarrel. In this age we see the rise of an improper culture where passion for sen-

sual enjoyment gives rise to inauspicious activities that pollute human consciousness, gradually destroying the spiritual inclination of human intelligence.

The scripture *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* explains that a peaceful, spiritually progressive culture rests on four pillars—*austerity, truthfulness, cleanliness and mercy*. These four qualities indicate a state of goodness conducive to spiritual aspiration. Unfortunately, the characteristic of this Kali-yuga is that men become inclined toward four basic sinful activities that break these four pillars of religiosity, leading men into the darkness of passion and ignorance. These four degrading activities, which cause humanity in this age to fall from the spiritual path into frustrated materialism, are gambling, intoxicating habits, illicit sex, and animal slaughter and eating of animal foodstuffs (meat, fish and eggs).

I know very well that nearly all the people of the world today commonly engage in many or all of these practices. One of them, eating of animal foods, is usually begun in the first year of life, and the other three are usually taken up—with or without society's consent—in the teen-age years or even before. In fact, the reader may well find that in the course of presenting this information, I have identified his favorite pastimes. My purpose in doing so is not to condemn or even criticize. But I know that few people in the world have a good understanding of why one should not engage in these four activities. The problem, therefore, is not so much negligence as a lack of understanding, and my only interest in now presenting criticism of these activities is to help the reader understand why one should abandon them if he wants to awaken his eternal Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or even lead a peaceful, happy life in this world.

### Gambling

The first sinful activity is gambling. By Vedic standards, gambling is taken to mean not only betting with money over games or sporting events, but also speculative, dishonest or illicit business dealings. The primary result of

such activities is excessive material attachment due to increased greed and avarice. Other results are loss of mental equilibrium because of anxiety, suffering of the participants because of loss, and an increase of dishonesty and cheating that destroys the elevating quality of truthfulness. People gamble because they are attracted by the excitement of risk and the possibility of material gain, but the resulting excessive attachment eliminates the possibility of liberating the eternal soul from material entanglements, and it also causes dishonesty, enmity and even violence in social relationships.

The gambling propensity extends itself even into the sphere of religion and spiritual life when men want to understand or explain spiritual matters and revealed scriptures on the strength of their speculative abilities although they have no factual experience of spiritual reality. One should try to understand spiritual life only by hearing receptively from those who appear to be fully self-realized spiritual masters. If one instead chooses to rely on his own cleverness, even though he is fallible in every way, he is gambling away the valuable spiritual opportunity of human life.

### Intoxication

Intoxication refers to the taking into the body of various chemicals that are not necessary for bodily maintenance and have stimulating or depressive effects on the mind and body. Under this heading the Vedic scriptures include everything from tea, coffee and tobacco, with their caffeine and nicotine, to liquor and other more powerful drugs. Countless people in this age depend on some such intoxicants for stimulation or relief from anxiety, but any objective observer will conclude that such enjoyment or relief is only transitory and therefore has no real substance.

Instead, there are many detrimental results coming from such intoxicating habits. They cause dependency on material, worldly supports that are never certainly available, and this dependency can increase with the

strength of the intoxicant, up to the point of addiction. These habits generally cause loss of bodily or mental health, resulting eventually in disease, premature aging, and inability to fix the mind intelligently and steadily on any subject or problem. In this way, such habits impede spiritual advancement by binding a person with material attachments and at the same time agitating the mind so that it cannot be fixed in meditation on the self and God. Beyond this, with the use of stronger and stronger intoxicants, cleanliness is gradually destroyed—witness the usual living conditions of addicts, alcoholics and drug-dependent hippies—and the mind is led into degradation and a miserable future. Of course, the stronger the intoxicant, the more pronounced the effects, but we can easily observe in these days how the use of milder intoxicants gradually leads toward dependence on stronger ones.

### Illicit Sex

“Illicit sex” refers to any sex life outside of marriage and, more than that, for any purpose other than begetting children. While this may seem to imply undue restriction of our greatest physical enjoyment, there are many reasons why unrestrained sex indulgence is the cause of both social breakdown and failure to attain spiritual life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

When one engages in sex outside of marriage, or even in marriage when not children but sexual pleasure is the desired product, the result is that if children come, they are unwanted. “We desired only to enjoy sex,” the parents lament, “but now this child has come, and we are being inconvenienced.” Or, worse than this, the father abandons the mother and child, or the child is rejected by both parents. Such unwanted children are naturally brought up with insufficient affection and guidance. Lacking any kind of proper upbringing and lusty because they were conceived out of lust only, they easily fall into bad association with demoniac people and become dangerous, vice-ridden rascals. City streets and jails around the Western

world are presently becoming overburdened with gangs of such dangerous ruffians, and the original responsibility lies with their irresponsible, sexually preoccupied parents.

Another consequence of this unrestrained sexual indulgence in a society without spiritual understanding is that people become more and more inclined toward contraception and abortion. Although a soul is meant to take birth as a result of their sexual intercourse, the parents deny him entrance to the womb by contraception, or they kill his body while he is yet unborn. It is foreseeable that as this godless, materialistic outlook advances, people will discreetly begin to kill born offspring as well if such children do not suit their schemes for sensual enjoyment. Although everyone can sense that all these activities are abominable and against the laws of nature, and although the scriptures identify them as murder, which will send those responsible into hellish conditions after death, people are nevertheless resorting to such killing processes more and more to avoid impediments or restraints to their sensuality.

Vedic scriptures like *Bhagavad-gītā* therefore inform us that one should indulge in sex only in marriage, and then only at the times when children are likely to be conceived. The husband and wife should be devotees of the Lord, and they should raise and educate their children to be Kṛṣṇa conscious. Lord Kṛṣṇa states that such sex life, which is not contrary to religious principles, is a representation of Himself.

When intended for sensual pleasure however, sex not only degrades human society but also destroys austerity, creating excessive attachment for the body and bodily pleasures. Thus a person engrossed in sexual indulgence has no possibility of uncovering and experiencing the eternal nature of his soul, not to speak of directly perceiving God in his heart. In this way, unrestrained sex roots us in bodily consciousness rather than Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

### Animal Killing

The fourth degrading activity, and

probably the most sensitive subject for most people in the West, is animal slaughter. This refers to slaughtering or troubling animal forms of life in order to eat their bodies or eggs. Implicated in this process are not only the actual killer of an animal but also the farmer, the transporter, the distributor, the retailer, and the server and eater of meat, fish and eggs.

When there is no other healthy food available, and where the land is unsuitable for cultivation for vegetable production and dairy farming (conditions generally found only in some desert areas and near the poles), a human being is justified in killing and eating animals. Otherwise, Vedic scriptures inform us that institutionalized animal slaughter and subsistence on animal flesh and eggs are the most condemned of all sinful activities, resulting in personal and social misery and effectively blocking any attempt at spiritual advancement.

Scriptural rules and regulations are not meant simply to inconvenience us in our attempt to enjoy life, but rather to open the door to higher and fuller enjoyment by spiritual realization in a peaceful culture. Please consider, therefore, the reasons offered by our line of spiritual masters to justify this Vedic injunction.

### Reactions

The first reason is the reaction due to slaughter. In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is explained that every action performed on the material platform—that is, with the intention to enjoy the result—will subject us to a reaction-in-kind in the future (generally in the next material body we take because of our material desires at the time of death). In other words, we will reap what we sow, as the Bible puts it, in terms of enjoyment and suffering in our next life, in exact accordance with the enjoyment or suffering we cause other living beings in this life.

Now, it is a cruel fact of life in the material world that one living being can feed himself only by troubling or killing another, and we all need to eat, even if we are culturing Kṛṣṇa consciousness, simply to maintain our

bodies. This does not, however, justify troubling or killing conscious animals who can experience fear and pain when systematically slaughtered. When milk products are available, as well as simpler forms of life that do not suffer when their fruit is removed or even when they are killed, such slaughter is completely unnecessary.

The cows, sheep and other animals we slaughter, as well as the chickens whose eggs we take, are all capable of consciously suffering, just as we do, because they have developed minds and senses. (Plants also, of course, can register rudimentary sensations, but nothing like the fear, pain and pleasure of animals.) Humans are more intelligent than animals, however, and if we misuse our intelligence simply to gratify our lusty tongues, causing misery to animals when we could instead subsist on simpler forms of life that do not suffer when killed, then, according to the *Vedas*, we ourselves will be liable to slaughter in the future. For example, today soldiers and civilians all over the world are being maimed and slaughtered in wars, just as they have previously slaughtered animals. The *Vedas* say that there will be constant wars as long as there are slaughterhouses, and in this way parents will have to suffer as their sons are killed, just as a cow suffers when her calf is dragged away and butchered to provide our veal cutlets. This is the law of *karma* (material activity).

### Adverse Psychological Effects

The second reason for the Vedic injunction against meat eating is that eating of flesh (or unborn flesh—e.g., eggs) creates inauspicious psychological effects, especially for those who want to understand spiritual life. The animal food we eat has been dead for hours or days, usually by plan (as meat is aged to increase its flavor), and this means that it is decomposing. The harsh juices from such decomposing flesh cause corrosion in the nervous system, and this can ultimately result in senility, palsy or insanity. It is a verifiable fact that for those peoples of the world who are primarily vegetarian (such as the older generation in India)

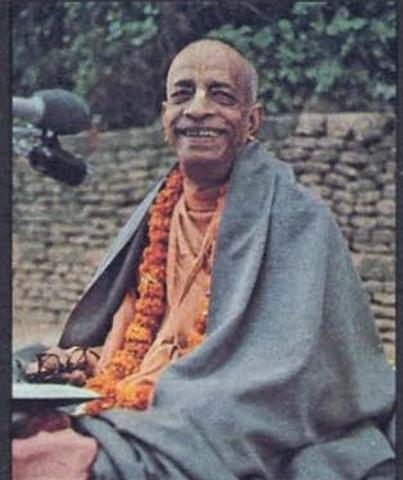
these three curses of life are much less common than in the West. On the other hand, the *Vedas* inform us that cows' milk provides us with necessary animal fat in a form just suitable for the development of the fine brain tissues and higher intelligence necessary for understanding spiritual life.

The more general psychological effect of eating animal foods is the creation of a gross state of consciousness in which one easily becomes harsh, angry and morose, and in which it is

very difficult to understand the philosophy and practice of spiritual life. The *Vedas* inform us that after many years of meat eating it is virtually impossible for a person to understand or accept spiritual principles, and even if he does understand, he cannot advance in the very subtle culture of spiritual knowledge and bliss until he puts aside this grossest habit. In addition to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, there are many groups interested in spiritual culture around the world who accept this principle of vegetarianism as es-

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sential, including some Christian sects and monastic orders and even some nondevotional sects such as the practicing Buddhists and impersonalists (monists) of Asia. Lord Buddha especially stressed the inauspicious psychological effects of flesh eating in preaching his doctrines of *ahimsā* (non-violence) and meditation.

### Kṛṣṇa's Request

The third reason applies particularly to those who want to advance in love of God, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa advises that we eat only food first offered to Him in loving sacrifice. He says that if food is offered with love and devotion, He will actually eat it with His unlimited, all-pervading eyes and ears, without actually removing it, as it is offered on the altar with suitable prayers. Offering food in this way forms a purifying link with the Lord through devotion, and Lord Kṛṣṇa instructs that if one subsists only on the purified remnants of such offerings (Kṛṣṇa *prasāda*), his whole existence becomes sanctified, and he advances surely in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa specifically requests that “a leaf, a fruit, a flower or a little water” be offered to Him, and similarly the *Vedas* instruct in other places that milk products, fruits, grains, vegetables and sugar are the foods to be offered and eaten. Thus, a devotee automatically becomes a vegetarian, since he accepts only Kṛṣṇa *prasāda*. Others, who do not care to accept this reasonable process, but who instead go on gratifying their tongues with the products of slaughter and misery, can be assured that in the future they themselves will become more and more bestial, losing entirely the quality of mercy and being themselves slaughtered in hellish conditions, even birth after birth.

These, then, are some of the more salient reasons offered in the Vedic scriptures why gambling, intoxication, illicit sex, and animal slaughter and meat eating should be shunned by everyone. Basically, each of them results in future individual suffering and the breakdown of society, and, at the

same time, each disqualifies one from experiencing his eternal, blissful spiritual life in direct touch with God. One cannot free his eternal self from material illusion if he engages in any of these practices, even if he practices some religious or yogic process, because such activities root us in material consciousness.

### A Higher Taste

The difficulty is that each of these four activities is a source of strong sensual stimulation and mental diversion. Because we are accustomed to accept such stimulation as pleasure, we are generally very much attached to some or all of these sinful activities. If we are now asked to give them up, even with the best of arguments, we will find this difficult.

To put aside what we accept as enjoyment is naturally difficult because originally, as spirits, we are meant to enjoy fully. Lord Kṛṣṇa speaks of this in *Bhagavad-gītā* (Chapter Two) when He says that even one who puts aside an inferior activity but maintains a taste for it in his mind is simply pretending and will later fall down from his artificial renunciation. He goes on to say, however, that one who puts aside unwanted so-called enjoyments by experiencing a higher taste—the taste of spiritual enjoyment—becomes firmly fixed in spiritual consciousness.

The necessity, then, is to understand the spirit soul's way of enjoying and a practical method by which we can actually experience that enjoyment, regardless of our past activities. Only in this way can we become truly detached from materialistic life, easily putting aside all sinful activities.

As I have already mentioned, the Vedic scriptures tell us that we are actually eternal servants of Lord Kṛṣṇa, or God. Now we are in a fallen condition, but in our constitutional state we enjoy unlimited bliss by lovingly associating with the Supreme Person, who is the reservoir of all pleasure. If we can practically engage even our temporary bodies and minds—all we presently have to work with—in the service of the Lord, then only will we begin to experience the higher

taste of spiritual pleasure that will give us relief from material lust and sinful life.

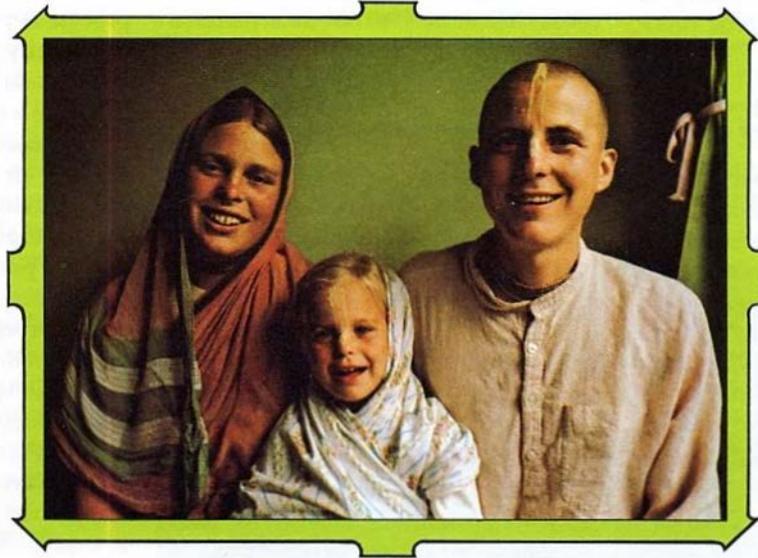
In the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement we are practicing such devotional life under the guidance of our spiritual master and the *Vedas*, and because the process is pure, we are finding that we can strictly, but without strain, abstain from these four degrading practices. By fully engaging our minds, bodies, words, work, wealth—everything at our disposal—in the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa, we are actually relishing spiritual pleasure in the culture of love of God and making progress toward regaining our eternal positions in the spiritual world. In the process, our society of devotees is naturally becoming peaceful and harmonious, showing that the quarrel and hypocrisy of the Kali-yuga quickly vanish wherever sinful life is stopped.

The keys to beginning to experience Kṛṣṇa consciousness are easily available to everyone. Not everyone can immediately put aside gambling, intoxication and so on, even if one can understand that he should do so, but anyone can sing or chant the holy names of the Lord—any such names around the world—and perhaps also taste a bit of food first offered to the Lord. Perhaps he may also be able to understand an authoritative discourse or publication about Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The *Vedas* say that the Supreme Lord is unlimited and that He personally pervades such devotional activities, and thus anyone who engages in them is gradually delivered by His supreme potency. Even the most sinful of all sinners can be delivered by the simple process of chanting the names of God and gradually become determined to give up all sinful activities and go on from this platform to relish supreme enjoyment in love of God.

Therefore, regardless of your present habits, whether pure or impure, we invite you to please join us in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, and perhaps visit a center for Kṛṣṇa consciousness to taste some Kṛṣṇa *prasāda* and hear more as well. In such harmless activities there can be no loss, and you may find the greatest gain. ❧

# A DEVOTEE'S LIFE



by Karuṇāsindhu dāsa  
(ISKCON Los Angeles)

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What thoughts cross your mind when you are asked what you think or know about a Hare Kṛṣṇa devotee? What is his background? Why is he a devotee? What are his cherished goals? How does he live his private life? What is a typical day for a devotee? Most people do not know the answers to these questions. In order to clear up these questions for a large number of people, we would like to present a typical devotee.

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The devotee we have chosen is Kavicandra. (This is his spiritual name, which was given at the time of his formal acceptance as a devotee.) Kavicandra is a soft-spoken, twenty-six-year-old family man with a three-year-old daughter with blonde curly hair and blue eyes. He was born in Minneapolis and attended the University of Minnesota, where he was a liberal arts student. It was at this time that he met his wife, a pleasant brunette with a background of Christian training who is now called Mahāsinī. In 1971, discouraged with the materialistic standards of modern society, they began seeking a life of seclusion. In the midst of their search for a pure life (especially for their young daughter), they happened upon the Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees in Tucson, Arizona. When he first saw them, Kavicandra was immediately struck by the devotees' great happiness.

From this point he was naturally intrigued to know more about the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, and gradually he began associating with the devotees more and more. Kavicandra recalls, "The devotees were honest and happy. They were actively doing something, and it was pure. Truthfulness—that was the main thing. It was fresh. Everywhere else, everyone was uptight, cheating and lying to one another. The devotees were just trying to serve Kṛṣṇa [God] together." Gradually, over a period of months, Kavicandra and his family became progressively attracted to devotional life, and step by step they became full-time devotees. The Tucson Hare Kṛṣṇa center was too small to meet the needs of their entire family, so Kavicandra moved to a larger center in Dallas, Texas, which is the home of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement's *Gurukula*, or children's school. In Dallas he was a sales representative

for Spiritual Sky Scented Products, a devotee-owned business with headquarters in Los Angeles. In the spring of 1972, when there was a need for a production foreman at Spiritual Sky, Kavicandra moved to Los Angeles to fill the post.

Since then, Kavicandra has experienced increasing fulfillment in his daily life, which is one of dedication to the ideal of serving the Supreme Lord wholeheartedly. On a typical day, Kavicandra rises so early that it is practically a symptom of devotion in itself: 3:30 to 4:00 a.m. After a shower and a brief period of chanting the Lord's names on his *japa* meditation beads, he walks the short distance from his apartment to the temple with his wife and daughter. At 4:30 there is an *ārātrika* ceremony, an active affair for hundreds of devotees who join in the ecstatic dancing and responsive singing of prayers, accompanied by the

melody of a harmonium and the beat of many *karatālas* (hand cymbals).

After this joyful ceremony, which lasts about thirty minutes, Kavicandra and most of the other devotees begin their main period of *japa* meditation. *Japa* is performed by softly chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. You will generally see each devotee carrying a small cloth bag, about the size of a large pear, by a strap around his neck. This bag contains a string of wooden prayer beads, each the size of a small marble, which the devotees use to chant *japa*.

The *japa* meditation in the morning lasts for a solid one and a half hours. Commenting on this, Kavicandra said, "This is incredible. But there is scriptural evidence that this is spiritual. By chanting the names of Kṛṣṇa (God), one can associate with God. Because of the absolute nature of His name, it is equal to Him. This is inconceivable to the materialistic mind. However, you can experience this by purifying your senses and mind by the simple practice of chanting."

After the *japa* period, which ends at 6:30 a.m., the devotees chant *Gurvaṣṭakam*, accompanied by dancing and the melodious harmonium, a *mṛdaṅga* drum and hand cymbals. The *Gurvaṣṭakam* are verses in praise of the *guru*, or spiritual master, who plays a most important role. The spiritual master is God's representative from whom the forgetful soul receives instruction and guidance in reviving pure consciousness.

Kavicandra spoke of the soul's lack of fulfillment with the temporary affairs of nonspiritual existence, and he commented on the necessarily high qualifications of the spiritual master by giving this example: "If you had a toothache, you would want a dentist who is bona fide, who knows the cause of the toothache and can stop it in a way that is favorable. He has credentials or qualifications. Similarly, the spiritual master, who comes in an unbroken succession of disciples, transmits the teachings intact, without change. You can verify this by examining the complete consistency of these teachings throughout their history and the changeless word-for-word presenta-

tion of the scriptures. The spiritual master does not ask anything for himself, but, rather, he directs the disciple to chant the holy names and work for enlightenment in an authorized way, according to the scriptures."

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda is the present representative in the disciplic line of teachers. Śrīla Prabhupāda (*prabhupāda* is a title that honors a great spiritual master in the line of devotion) came to the United States in 1965 to teach the practice of *bhakti-yoga*. He is the founder of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness and the spiritual master of the members of this worldwide organization.

After chanting the praises of the spiritual master, Kavicandra participates in an hour-long study of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from 7:00 to 8:00 a.m. "*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the beautiful history of the Personality of Godhead. It is *śāstra*, or scripture," says Kavicandra. Prabhupāda was specifically instructed by his predecessor and spiritual master, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, to spread this knowledge to the English-speaking countries. "It

**A PURE LIFE**-*Left*: Mahāśini looks on as her daughter, Bhakti, waters *tulasī* plants in the Los Angeles temple garden. *Tulasī* is especially sacred to Lord Kṛṣṇa. *Right*: Kavicandra performs *ārātrika*, offering incense to the temple Deities and then to the assembled devotees.

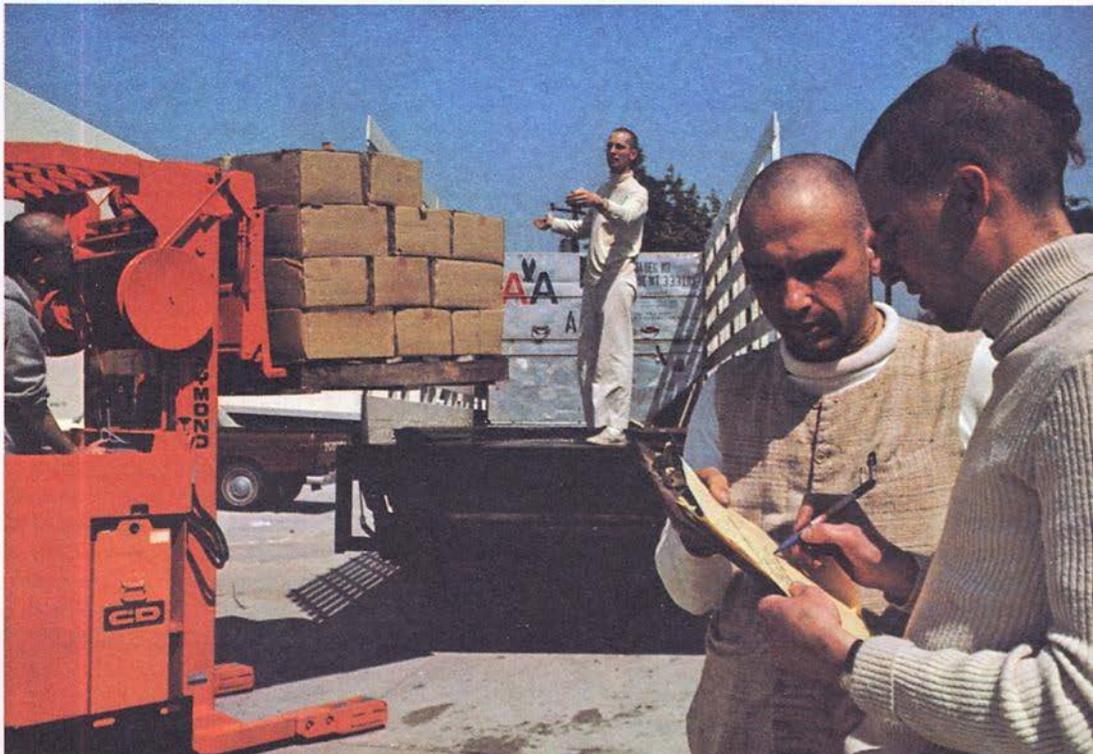


is very ancient (five thousand years plus),” states Kavicandra, “and is arranged in a way that will attract you to the Personality of Godhead.” The topics covered range from godly governmental administration to ancient history, life on other planets and universal creation. “You cannot become attracted to or love someone you know nothing about. Therefore this scripture is particularly valuable because it gives information of how God

the devotees adhere. Only pure foods are offered and then distributed for everyone.

Following breakfast, Kavicandra drives to work as millions of other Americans do. As we mentioned before, Kavicandra works at Spiritual Sky Scented Products, a devotee-owned and devotee-operated business enterprise that is a major source of financial support for the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. He works as a production manager of

reason we do it is different. We are not working for the frustration of gaining money and planning how to spend it. The workers are joyful because they are serving their beloved spiritual master and the Supreme Lord by their activity.” In fact, the factory is filled with the sounds of Prabhupāda’s lectures and pleasing chanting coming from a tape recorder. The incense factory closes at six o’clock, when the crew of devotees



**SHARING AND WORKING FOR KṚṢṆA** Left: Kavicandra offers *Back to Godhead* to pleased onlookers at a Hare Kṛṣṇa festival. Right: Devotees work hard in transcendental Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

is working through His many energies, and even how Kṛṣṇa is carrying on His most confidential dealings.” Kavicandra concluded, “This does not merely skim the surface. It is comprehensive and includes the chanting of the ancient verses in the Sanskrit language. And the study is carried out in relation to modern history and innumerable other scriptures such as the Bible. Without this complete understanding, how can we properly share this with others?”

At 8:30 there is breakfast for all. Kavicandra’s diet consists entirely of *prasāda*, sanctified food first offered on the altar to the Lord. Partaking of this delicious food is one of the most easy and delightful practices to which

the incense division, which is capable of producing over one million sticks of incense a day. Kavicandra has become expert in supervising production in every way, especially in formulating and mixing the various combinations of scenting and coloring materials. Some of the thirty scents of stick incense and twenty flavors of cone incense are imported from all over the world, including the Near East, South-east Asia and India.

The constant supply flow, quality control, ordering of materials, personnel supervision, and management of packaging and deliveries make Kavicandra’s days very busy.. “This may seem the same as any ordinary business,” stated Kavicandra, “but the

drive the short distance home.

Following a light meal and a shower, Kavicandra and his family go to the temple for the evening *ārātrika* ceremony, which they sometimes perform themselves in the key role as *pūjārī*, the person who offers the various articles on the altar on behalf of the entire congregation. The *ārātrika* ceremony is extremely colorful and melodious, with offerings of delicious foods, lamps of camphor and clarified butter, flowers, water and fragrant incense, all to the accompaniment of melodious responsive singing with instruments such as hand cymbals, drums and gongs.

Following *ārātrika*, at about 7:30, Kavicandra usually gathers a supply of Prabhupāda’s books and goes for *sañ-*

*kīrtana* in the shopping malls and other areas where people gather. *Saṅkīrtana* is the most conspicuous of a devotee's practices, for it involves public congregational chanting of the holy names and distribution of literature. This is Kavicandra's favorite activity, sharing the pleasure of divine love with one and all. In fact, *saṅkīrtana* absorbs his weekends and spare time almost completely. Sometimes, however, Kavicandra remains in the temple after the *ārātrika* ceremony for classes and discussion of scripture and singing of the holy names. "All of these things are fun," he said. "We aren't forced to seek pleasure elsewhere."

In speaking with Mahāsinī, Kavicandra's wife, we learned some interesting facts. "Formerly we were impersonalists or voidists, believing that the Supreme was a formless void or white light," Mahāsinī revealed. "This is currently a popular misconception. Actually, Kṛṣṇa does have an impersonal energy, but it is not the ultimate. Fortunately, we have received a higher realization. Everything has fallen into place with Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We've been able to *apply* all the religious principles and morals that we were formerly taught without any example or practical application." Mahāsinī is particularly delighted about the godly atmosphere for raising Bhakti, their three-year-old cherubic daughter. "The children actually are engaged in singing the glories of the Supreme Lord in their play rather than singing nonsense like 'Humpty Dumpty' or 'Ring Around the Rosy.' This is really remarkable because many times even big philosophers don't even come to realize that they should ultimately glorify Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Truth." In regard to a woman's position, she positively affirms, "This is the only place where women are respected. We are not regarded as objects for exploitation. The role of a woman is properly recognized; we simply have a different type of body, but we are essentially, spiritually, the same as men. We simply have a different outward dress. In Kṛṣṇa consciousness, a woman can completely fulfill herself."

When questioned about any difficulty in accepting the life of a devotee,

Kavicandra replied, "Of course, at first we may have many bad habits, but we are not exactly giving things up. Rather, we are just accepting things which are so much nicer. Suppose I were smoking cigarettes and my doctor told me that if I didn't quit he would have to cut out my lung. Then of course I would quit so that I might live. This would be an act of intelligence, and Kṛṣṇa consciousness is just like that. By intelligence you can understand how to come to a better life. There is a development of a higher taste, and the lower tastes are naturally left behind. If I am greatly



attached to something—say an old car—and someone offers me a large sum of money for it, even though I am strongly attached to it I would give it up. It's not that we are receiving money, but we are getting a peaceful and happy life. Everyone is looking for that. It awakens from within. It's not found in the externals of possessions, fame and so forth."

Kavicandra also explained the ease of accepting Kṛṣṇa consciousness by citing a practical example: "Last Sunday we held a festival at Venice Beach, and thousands of people were there, chanting and dancing, eating the spiritual food which we were distributing for free. They were talking with the devotees and taking the spiritual literature we had. One fellow, who has an automotive repair shop near the temple and who lives right across the street from where the festival was held, said that he thought it was wonderful, especially

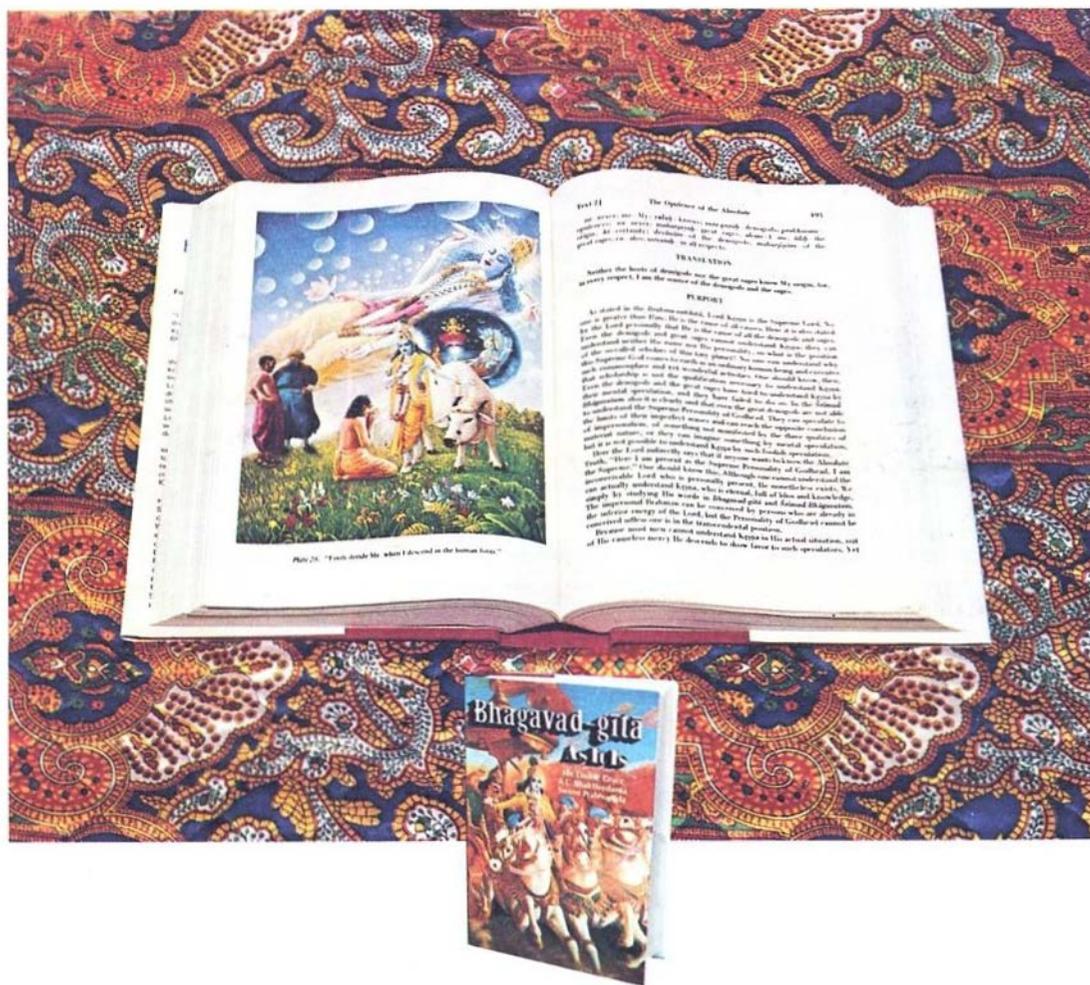
the music, and he wished we would have more festivals there. Everyone will find something attractive about this, and anyone can participate easily."

Kavicandra also indicated a broader acceptance of the Kṛṣṇa conscious life: "Everyone accepts what we are doing anyway. They are singing, dancing, eating, looking at pictures and hearing and speaking about someone's pastimes or qualities. We just perform these same activities in relation to Kṛṣṇa, who is the Supreme Person. We would like everyone to know Kṛṣṇa, the supreme attractive person. Actually, large-scale acceptance is happening. It's not a dream. We have a society, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness—ISKCON—and we're growing daily. Our spiritual master, Prabhupāda, came to New York in 1965 to spread this teaching in the West, and now we have over a hundred centers and thousands of members worldwide. Anyone can take part. For instance, one of our active supporters is an extremely famous recording artist. He sings about Kṛṣṇa in his songs and helps us a great deal with donations. He's famous, but there are thousands of others who are also participating whom you would not notice as readily as a famous person. In fact, this is not a new concoction. The *Purāṇas*—*purāṇa* means "ancient history"—the *Purāṇas* tell of times in past history when Kṛṣṇa consciousness was applied on a society-wide basis with phenomenal success. It includes a complete, spiritual, pure social structure that is not a dream but a historical fact. In the past and presently, this is a feasible life for peace and harmony. It doesn't mean that everyone must put on robes and live in a temple. You must simply gain the right conviction in life, and then you will follow it. You can begin Kṛṣṇa consciousness from any station in life. This deals with the eternal spirit self and goes beyond temporary circumstances such as birth, age, color and so on. We beg people to consider Kṛṣṇa consciousness impartially and also deeply. This is not a shallow or narrow understanding. It is universal, and if you can properly understand Kṛṣṇa consciousness, you can attain the highest goal of life." ❏

# ALL GLORIES TO ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA

“This knowledge is the king of education, the most secret of all secrets. It is the purest knowledge, and because it gives direct perception of the self by realization, it is the perfection of religion. It is everlasting, and it is joyfully performed.”

—*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.2



## BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ AS IT IS

His Divine Grace A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

published by  
Collier-Macmillan