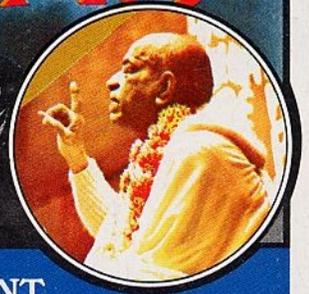


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



BACK TO GODHEAD



Vol.10 No.4

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

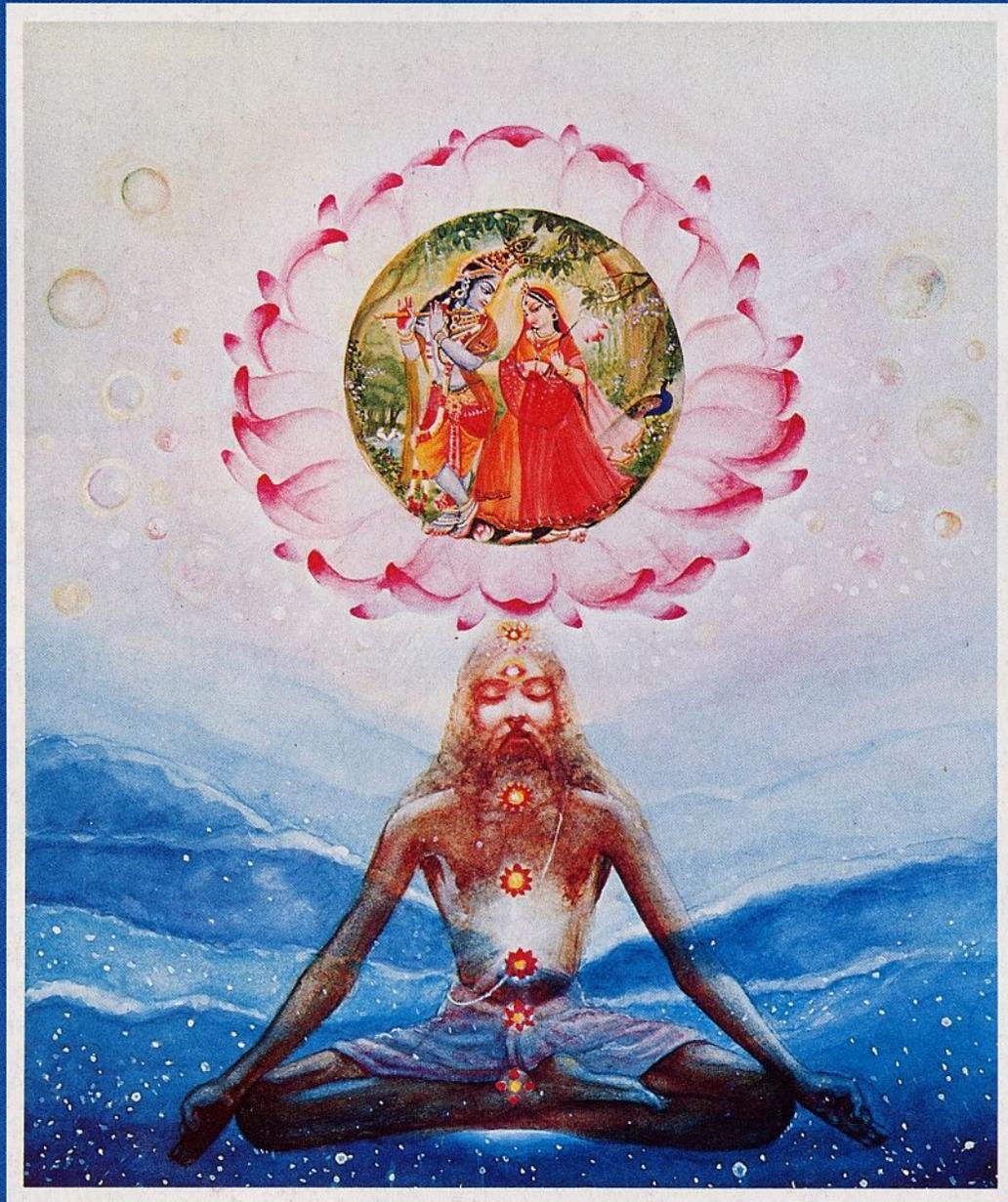




Photo: Bhārgava dāsa

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya

of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness



WHAT CAN

Chanting

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

The chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, known in India for thousands of years, is the great prayer for peace—for individual peace of mind and world-wide tranquility. By repeating these nonsectarian names of God the sincere chanter is gradually released from material illusions and elevated to the platform of pure spiritual



TURN A GREYHOUND BUS INTO A TEMPLE?

consciousness, Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This prayer has been given to the other countries of the world by the spiritual master of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. He has endowed his disciples with his spirit of traveling and enlightening the world in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and they in turn are using their Western technology to spread the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Pictured above are some of the traveling students of the Hare Kṛṣṇa

movement. They have converted three Greyhound buses into mobile temples to bring the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to every town and village in the United States and Canada. Their program consists of week-long festivals, featuring chanting (accompanied by Eastern instruments), delicious vegetarian feasts, and lectures from the books of their spiritual master. They have just completed a tour of colleges in Florida, Georgia, Texas, Arizona and California and are now preparing

for a tour of Canada and the northern United States.

The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement proposes to change the modern misconception that God should be kept locked in a church all week and then uncovered for an hour on Sunday. The truth is that serving the Supreme Lord is a 24-hour-a-day engagement, leading to eternal bliss. As you read through the pages of BACK TO GODHEAD, you'll find out how the members of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement live this truth and how they teach it all over the world.

BACK TO GODHEAD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

FOUNDER

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

His Divine Grace

A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda

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PRONUNCIATION OF SANSKRIT WORDS

Sanskrit words and names in *Back to Godhead* are spelled according to a system that scholars throughout the world use to show how to pronounce each word. Vowels in Sanskrit are pronounced almost as in Italian. The sound of the short *a* is like the *u* in *but*. The long *ā* is like the *a* in *far* and held twice as long as the short *a*, and *ē* is like the *a* in *evade*. Long *ī* is like the *i* in *pique*. The vowel *ṛ* is pronounced like the *er* in the English word *fiber*. The *ṛ* is pronounced as in the English word *chair*. The aspirated consonants (*ch*, *jh*, *dh*, etc.) are pronounced as in *staunch*-heart, *hedg*-hog and *red*-hot. The two sibilants *ś* and *ṣ* are like the English *sh*, and *s* is like the *s* in *sun*. So pronounce *Kṛṣṇa* as KRISHNA and *Caitanya* as CHAITANYA.

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ON THE COVER

As confirmed in the Bhagavad-gītā (Chapter 6, Verse 47), the most perfect yogi is he who concentrates his mind on Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

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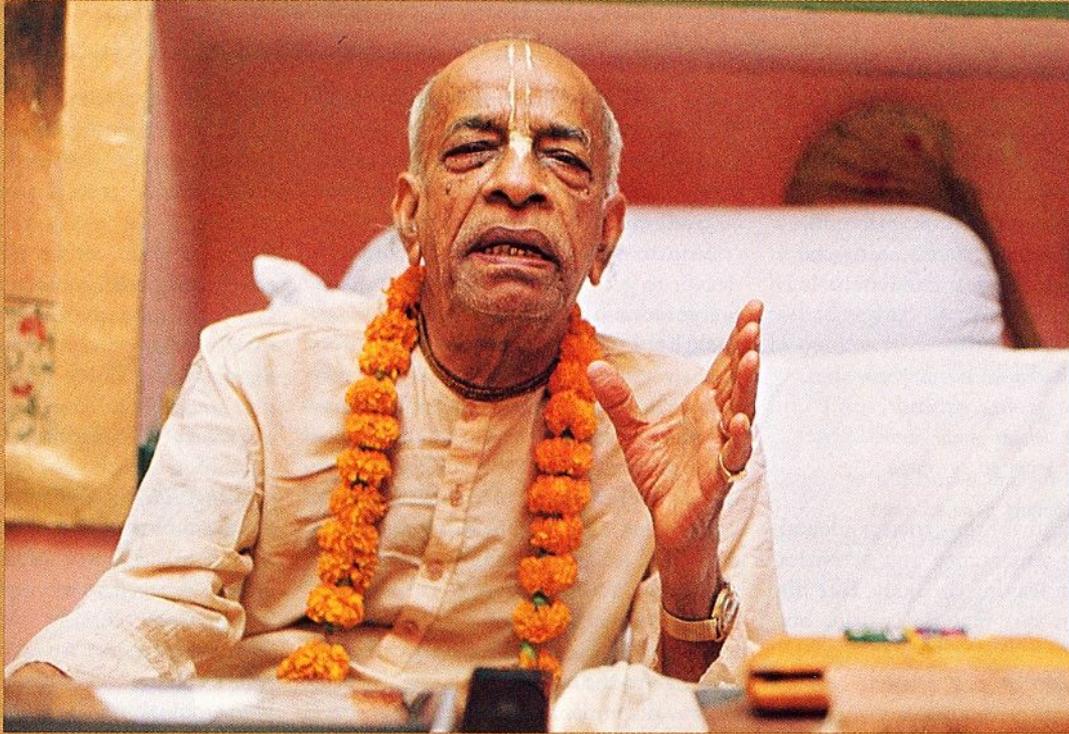


Photo: Bhāgavata dāsa

THE CHOICE IS YOURS

Besides working steadily to translate the ancient Sanskrit scriptures of India into English, and besides personally guiding the members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness in their spiritual advancement, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda travels extensively to explain Kṛṣṇa consciousness to people throughout the world. Wherever he goes, Śrīla Prabhupāda delivers public lectures directed toward bringing about a scientific understanding of *bhāgavata-dharma*, or one's eternal loving relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. When Śrīla Prabhupāda went to West Virginia to deliver such *Bhāgavata-dharma* discourses in New Vr̥ndāvana, a 1,000-acre Kṛṣṇa conscious spiritual community, thousands of spiritual seekers gathered to hear him. The *New York Times* sent two reporters to cover the event and to speak with Śrīla Prabhupāda. Here, Śrīla Prabhupāda is interviewed by Jon Nordheimer of the *Times*.

PRABHUPĀDA: When we speak of Kṛṣṇa, we mean God. Everyone has some vague idea of God, but no clear idea. Therefore God descends to show what He is. If we speculate on God, someone will think one thing, and another person will think another. This is the result of speculation. But if God Himself comes and shows Himself as He is and speaks about Himself, that is perfect knowledge. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is spreading that message. God Himself is speaking about Himself: “I am this; I am like this; My form is like this; My activities are like this; My address is this and that—if you like, you can come back to Me. This is the situation. Everyone can

An animal cannot know what God is, but a human being can. . . . nature gives us this human body just to understand God.

come to Me.” All this information is in *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. In *Bhagavad-gītā* God speaks about Himself and presents Himself as He is. We simply have to take that information; then we can understand God. As soon as we understand God, we can go home immediately. It is very simple. God says:

*janma karma ca me divyam
 evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ
 tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma
 naiti mām eti so 'rjuna*

“One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna.” [Bg. 4.9]

So God is there; that’s a fact. Anyone can go back to Him and live an eternal life full of bliss and knowledge simply by knowing about it. When God Himself comes, all great *ācāryas*, stalwart men, accept Him: “Yes, He is God.” If we simply understand God, we make a solution to all our problems. What is the problem? Because we are part and parcel of God, we are qualitatively equal with Him. God is eternal, and we are eternal. God is blissful, and we are blissful. God is full of knowledge; we are also full of knowledge. Unfortunately we are hampered by this material body. Therefore our problem is how to get out of this material body and come to our spiritual body. The spiritual body is there, just as our real body is present underneath our shirt and coat. I, you, and every one of us is a spiritual spark, part and parcel of God, and we are placed within a gross and subtle body. When this particular body is finished, we are carried by a

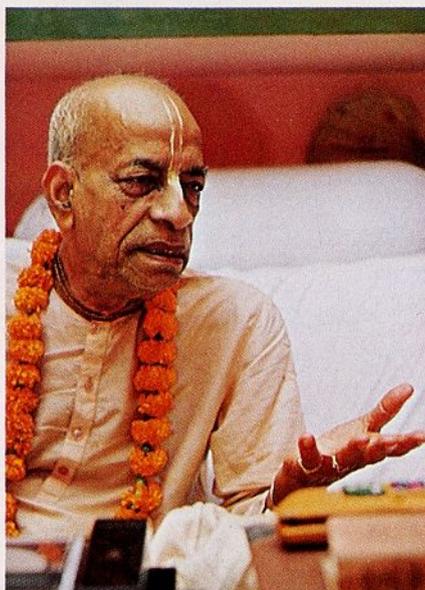
subtle body into another gross body. That is called transmigration of the soul. And when we finally get free from the subtle body also, we go back home, back to Godhead. It is that easy.

Human beings therefore should endeavor to get out of this gross and subtle body, attain the spiritual body and go back home. That should be the aim of human endeavor. Not that we should simply live like animals. Animals cannot get out of the gross and subtle body because to extricate oneself one must know in fact what God is. An animal cannot know what God is, but a human being can. That is the opportunity afforded by this body; nature gives us this human body just to understand God, but if we simply use it for animal propensities, we again go to the animal kingdom. That is a form of punishment.

INTERVIEWER: Prabhupāda, it’s been thirty-five years since you were given this mission by your spiritual master to bring the word of Kṛṣṇa to the West. A lot has happened in the world over that period of time. The world has—

PRABHUPĀDA: That is nothing. That period of time is relative. As human beings, we live for some time—say for a hundred years—but there are demigods who can live for millions of years. And an ant will live for only a few hours. So

this is relative. But time is eternal, and what is happening in so-called human history has no consideration from the viewpoint of eternal time. That is all relative. If there is some catastrophe in ant society, the ants may be very much concerned, but human society does not take any notice of it. Similarly, if a catastrophe occurs in human society, the demigods, who are higher than us, do not consider it. Some birds or cats or dogs may be fighting, and for them it may be a catastrophe, but for us it is nothing. This is the relative world, and we should know that what has happened in this world is not worthy of consideration in terms of universal affairs. Things are coming and going like seasonal changes. Arjuna put this question to Kṛṣṇa: “This is a catastrophe! I have to kill my own men.” Although Arjuna believed this to be a catastrophe, Kṛṣṇa likened it to seasonal changes. *Mātrā-sparśās tu kaunteya śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkha-dāh:* “O son of Kuntī, the nonpermanent appearance of happiness and distress and their disappearance in due course are like the appearance and disappearance of winter and summer seasons.” [Bg. 2.14] In the winter season water is not very pleasant, but in the summer it is very pleasing. What, then, is the condition of water? Is it pleasing or not? The water is the same, but in touch with our skin it becomes pleasing or not according to the climatic circumstances. Just because the summer is hot, should I give up cooking? Work must be done. Similarly, just because water is cold in the winter, should I give up my bath? No. These things may come and go, but we have to do our duty. Our duty is Kṛṣṇa consciousness; that is our philosophy, and that is an actual fact.



But if we behave like animals, then in the next life we will take animal bodies. That's all.

These seasonal changes may come and go in life; sometimes they may please us, and sometimes they may pinch us, but our duty in human life is to understand God. We shouldn't care for all these catastrophes that come and go. We should have no concern, for their nature is like that—sometimes pleasing and sometimes not pleasing. Despite all this, we have to do our duty, which is to understand God.

INTERVIEWER: What about the future? Is it possible to bring more people into Kṛṣṇa consciousness? To expand?

PRABHUPĀDA: Of course there are good men and bad men, and good men are taking to this movement because it is a good movement. "Good" means not having illicit sex, not eating meat, not indulging in intoxication, and not indulging in gambling. If anyone observes these four principles, he is considered a good man, and if he does not observe them, he is a bad man. So good men will take to this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, and bad men will not. We give distinct rules on how to become good, for if one does not become good, how can he understand God, who is all good? First we must become good men; then we can understand God. God is all good, and if we don't become good we cannot understand Him—that's all. It's up to us to make the choice. The future is open for everyone. There is no restriction; no one says, "This class of men shall be good, and this class of men shall be bad." Anyone can become good. If we educate a child nicely, he becomes good, but if we train him foolishly, he becomes a rascal. It is the duty of the government, of the father and of the teachers to make everyone good. If the government is bad, if the father is bad and the society is

bad—how can the child be good? Everywhere the government, father and society are bad; therefore we are producing bad men, and therefore there is no peace and prosperity.

INTERVIEWER: What about the men who surround you?

PRABHUPĀDA: They're all good men.

INTERVIEWER: They are good men who were raised in a bad society.

PRABHUPĀDA: They were raised in a bad society, but they have chosen to become good.

INTERVIEWER: Is that preordained, or is it by free choice?

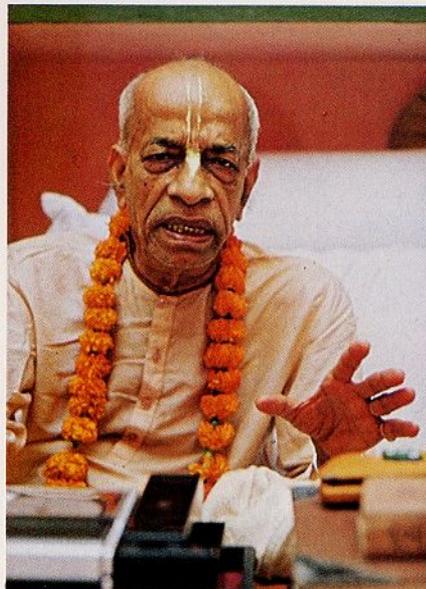
PRABHUPĀDA: Free choice. What is preordained? You are here of your free choice. If you like, you can sit down and talk with me, and if you don't like, then you can go. That is your free choice. Free choice makes destiny; if I act in goodness, then my future is good. And if I act badly, my future is bad. That is destiny. Man is the architect of his own destiny. If you are educated, your future is nice, and if you remain foolish, then your future is bad. Future destiny depends on present action. This life is an opportunity to make the next life, and if we behave like human beings, then in our next life we will go back home, back to Godhead. But if we behave like animals, then in the next life we will

take animal bodies. That's all. All this is very clearly described in *Bhagavad-gītā*. The conclusion is that human beings are meant for understanding God, but if we waste our time understanding dog, that is our choice. If we try to understand dog instead of God, and if we become attached to dog, then we will become dogs in our next life. And if we are attached to God, we become like God in our next life. The choice is ours.

*ye yathā mām prapadyante
tāms tathaiva bhajāmy aham
mama vartmānuvartante
manusyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ*

"All of them—as they surrender unto Me—I reward accordingly. Everyone follows My path in all respects, O son of Prthā." [Bg. 4.11]

God is everything, and we can associate with Him according to our choice. The ability to choose, or our conscience, is given to us in the human form so we can utilize it. All the ingredients are there. The spiritual master is there, the scripture is there, and God is there, within you and within me. The atmosphere is calm and quiet, we have a good boat and a good navigator, and the wind is blowing favorably. We should take our chance and cross the ocean. This human body is a very nice boat, and we have a very good navigator, the spiritual master. We also have a very favorable wind—the instructions of God. If we don't take this opportunity and solve the problems of life, we are cutting our own throats. If you cut your own throat, who can save you? We can say, "Now here is an opportunity. Take it and be saved from birth, old age,



The government does not want the youth to become hippies, but they are abandoning a wealthy life just to lie down in the street.

disease and death,” but if you don’t take advantage, what can we do?

INTERVIEWER: Why does all this exist? Why the challenge in the first place? Why *māyā* [illusion]?

PRABHUPĀDA: *Māyā* means that you are unfortunate. Here it is light, and there it is darkness. If I tell you to come from the darkness into the light and if you don’t come, that is your misfortune. *Māyā* is there, and God is there. If you want to remain in *māyā*, then how can you be saved? I can help you by saying, “Don’t remain in darkness. Please come out into the light.” But if you say, “No, I shall remain here,” then how can I save you? You have your choice. God is there, and *māyā* is there. If you take to *māyā*, you remain in *māyā*. What can I do, and what can God do? That is your choice.

INTERVIEWER: Who created *māyā*—man or God?

PRABHUPĀDA: The government may create a prisonhouse, but why do you go there? Does the government invite you there? No, you become a criminal and go there. The prisonhouse is there, and the university is there. Why do some people go to prison rather than the university? The government is not partial to people; it does not say, “You live in this university and be educated, and you go to the prison and live there.” It is the individual’s choice. Similarly, God has created so many things, but our duty is to follow God’s instructions. God says, *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja*: “Just give up all nonsense and surrender unto Me. I shall give you all protection.” That is God’s declaration. Why don’t you take to that? God is all-powerful, and He may create so many things for some purpose, but why don’t you follow God’s instructions? God says,

“Surrender unto Me,” so why not surrender? Why surrender to *māyā*? That is the individual’s choice. Another example: the government does not want the youth to become hippies, but they are abandoning a wealthy life just to lie down in the street. In London I’ve seen many boys lying in the street. Why? We Indians may lie in the street because we are poor, but they are not poor, nor are the Americans. Why have some of the younger generation accepted this way of life? They have enough food, enough houses, enough money, facilities, machines—everything. Why are they accepting this kind of life?

INTERVIEWER: They reject what they see.

PRABHUPĀDA: Yes, but they are coming from respectable fathers, from a respectable nation. Why are they rejecting this mode of civilization?

INTERVIEWER: They don’t really find it respectable.

PRABHUPĀDA: Therefore everyone has his choice. That you have to accept. Why do you forget it? God has given us everything, and now it is up to us to make our choice. So God is good, and if we follow His instructions, we become good.

INTERVIEWER: What problems do you have in making His word, His instruc-

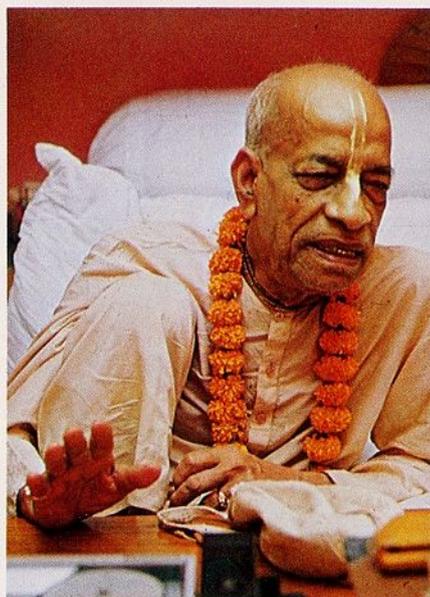
tions, reach the ears of everyone in the world?

PRABHUPĀDA: We are not preaching our own words; we are preaching God’s words. Now it is up to you to make your choice. God says to give up all engagements and just surrender unto Him. God says:

*man-manā bhava mad-bhakto
mad-yājī mām namaskuru
mām evaiśyasi yuktvaivam
ātmānaṁ mat-parāyaṇaḥ*

“Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, offer obeisances and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me.” [Bg. 9.34]

Suppose I am a member of a political party and am always thinking of Mr. Such-and-such, my leader. I become a staunch follower of that leader, worship him and offer obeisances to him. So many people are sacrificing their lives simply by following a political leader, and for party superiority they are doing so many things, always thinking of the party’s activities, always offering obeisances and worshiping the party’s principles. If all these things are transferred to God, they become good. God says, “Think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me and offer obeisances unto Me.” If we transfer these activities to God, we can become Kṛṣṇa conscious. That is what we are teaching. We advise that what you are doing for some nonsense, do it for God. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is not difficult. But if I want to love a dog and become a dog in my next life, instead of loving God and becoming like God in the next life, that is my choice. The prison and university are open to everyone, and by making our choice, we can make our future destiny.



Our program is to make people godly. . . . Every sane man should help this movement for the good of human society.

These boys and girls are worshipping God, and people criticize them, but when a man worships a dog, he is not criticized. In this way society has progressed. When one worships God, he is criticized, and when he worships dog, he is considered a gentleman. So it is folly to be wise where ignorance is bliss.

INTERVIEWER: What is the role of women in Kṛṣṇa consciousness?

PRABHUPĀDA: There is no distinction between men and women.

INTERVIEWER: I keep hearing about certain propensities women have that would separate them from propensities men have.

PRABHUPĀDA: Well, it is still man's duty to become the husband and woman's duty to become the wife; so these propensities are there. But all this can be adjusted. I have many students and am getting them married, and they are living peacefully and advancing in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Not that everyone is *brahmacārī* [celibate]. We have many *grhasthas* [married men] and children. In this way the propensities of the woman and the man are adjusted. A man wants a woman, and a woman wants a man, so we say, "All right, take it. Live peacefully, but don't change partners." We don't allow divorce; once they're married there is no separation. Nor do we allow boys and girls to live together as friends. If a man wants a woman and a woman wants a man, they should become united by marriage, live peacefully and advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That is our proposal. In this way all facilities are there in this movement. Our program is to make people godly, and everyone should help us. Every sane man should help this movement for the good of human society.

INTERVIEWER: What about the United States government?

PRABHUPĀDA: Yes, it should come forward. My students here are all United States citizens. I have not imported them from India. They are Americans, and they are in difficulty. So why shouldn't the government come forward? Their character is being formed, and they are becoming God conscious by participating in this movement. The government is spending millions of dollars to stop LSD and other drug intoxication, but my students are giving up everything simply by following my word. So why isn't the government coming forward to help me?

INTERVIEWER: They don't care about the people, Prabhuṣāda.

PRABHUPĀDA: But don't they want good for their own men? I am stopping American boys and girls from taking LSD and other drugs, and the government is spending millions of dollars to do this. It is only practical that they come forward to support this movement.

INTERVIEWER: Understanding is needed, for I know some of the misconceptions that exist about your movement.

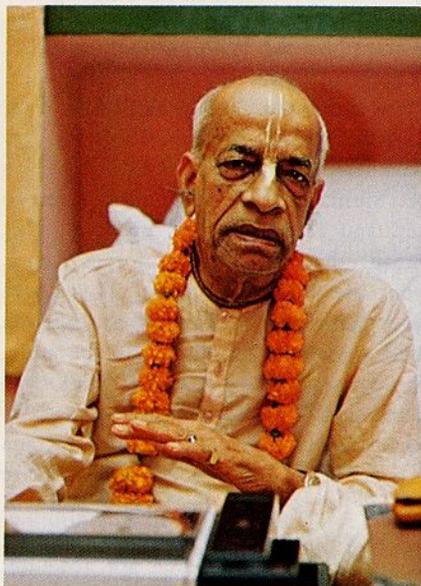
PRABHUPĀDA: Are the misconceptions cleared?

INTERVIEWER: I hope so.

PRABHUPĀDA: Yes, we invite everyone to come here to listen to our philosophy, take *prasāda* [sanctified food] and sing and dance with us. This program is very nice. We do not make distinctions in human society. We do not say that we shall serve the Indians and not the Americans or the Americans and not the Africans. We are going everywhere with this movement. We take all human beings to be part of God. Not only human beings, but every living entity—animals also.

INTERVIEWER: How many followers do you have?

PRABHUPĀDA: Well, this is a very difficult job, naturally. We don't have a large number of followers. As soon as you try to sell a diamond, you cannot expect many customers. Nonetheless, a diamond is a diamond, even if there are no customers. The number of customers is not the test. The customer must pay the value of the item. In this society we propose that you give up illicit sex, meat eating, intoxication and gambling. When people hear this, they go away saying, "Oh, Svāmījī is very conservative." But I cannot become liberal and tell everybody, "Go ahead and do all nonsense, and you can become God conscious." I cannot possibly recommend that. Therefore my first condition is that if someone wants to become my student he has to follow these four regulative principles. Consequently I do not have many followers, but I do have a select few. Because they are select, they will bring about a revolution in the world. One moon is sufficient to dissipate darkness. If there is one moon, there is no need for millions of stars. It is useless to expect a large number of followers. We want only one good follower. If I can get



There must be discontent and frustration amongst the youth because we are spiritual souls and cannot become happy simply by amassing material comforts.

one man to become Kṛṣṇa conscious, I will consider my mission fulfilled. If you talk to whatever small number of followers I have, you will find that they speak better than any great philosopher, better than any scientist or politician. That is the quality of my students. What's the point in talking nonsense? One's words may be simple, but they should be valuable. Every day your employer is printing so many newspapers. On Sunday, especially, the paper is so big that one can hardly carry it. But after reading it an hour, people throw it away. Here is this book, *Bhagavad-gītā*, and people keep it and read it for a lifetime, and in this way it has been read for the past 5,000 years. Give such literature that will be taken and kept forever.

INTERVIEWER: [Laughing] It's already been suggested that we [the *New York Times*] are not divinely inspired. At any rate, this book—

PRABHUPĀDA: If one gets a diamond, he possesses something valuable. But in this civilization you are simply making plastic plates and plastic cups. In fact, in Japan I have seen pasteboard homes. And everyone is thinking that he is advanced. Formerly people used to have golden and silver utensils, but now they have plastic ones, and still they are very proud to be so materially advanced. What is your position? You have a bunch of paper and think, "I am a millionaire." What is the value of that paper? Is that not cheating? However, if we possess gold or diamonds worth a million dollars, that is actual wealth. But we are educated in such a way that we think we are millionaires by paper only. As soon as there is some catastrophe, millions of such dollars cannot buy bread. This actually happened in Germany; millions of marks could not purchase one piece of bread. All this is going on in the name of advancement of civilization, and the real purpose of life, God consciousness, is missing. So every thoughtful man should come forward to understand this movement and take it seriously. Why are the people being misled? We just have to try to understand this philosophy, the basic prin-

ciples of God consciousness.

INTERVIEWER: Can you really expect to change the whole society?

PRABHUPĀDA: That I have already explained. The change is up to you; it is your choice. If everyone becomes God conscious, the world becomes the kingdom of God.

INTERVIEWER: Many people have tried to change the world, but we see that they have failed. Many people have tried to see God, but they do not succeed.

PRABHUPĀDA: That is because their purpose is not strong. That is due to *māyā*, forgetfulness. Just like darkness and light: if your light is strong, there is no darkness. But if you have no light, or if your light is not very strong, there is darkness. This is the principle: if you want to drive away darkness, you must bring light. That is the only medicine. You don't have to make a separate endeavor to drive away darkness. As soon as you bring light, darkness will go. The motto of our magazine BACK TO GOD-HEAD is: "Godhead is light, nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience."

*kr̥ṣṇa—sūrya-sama; māyā haya
andhakāra
yāhān kr̥ṣṇa, tāhān nāhi māyāra
adhikāra
(Cc. Madhya 22.31)*

This is also the Vedic injunction: don't remain in darkness; come to the light. How is this possible? When I flew from London to Los Angeles, there was no darkness, for we did not allow the sun to set. Similarly, if you don't allow Kṛṣṇa to set, you remain always in light. This means that if you don't forget Kṛṣṇa, your life will be successful. If you aim your plane westward and don't stop, you will remain in sunlight all the time. Similarly, if you remain in Kṛṣṇa consciousness by the simple method of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, you will never see the darkness. This is because Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa's name are absolute; Kṛṣṇa is not different from His name.

Kṛṣṇa is light, and if we associate with the name of Kṛṣṇa, we remain in light. Remaining in light is a very simple method; therefore you see all these boys with their beads chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare. In this way *māyā* cannot touch them. No intoxication, no illicit sex, no meat eating, no gambling. How can these boys, who have been trained to practice these four items from the beginning of their lives, give them all up? Everything is possible, provided we make the choice.

Therefore according to Vedic civilization, in the beginning of life you become a *brahmacārī*. Then you are allowed to marry and become a householder, and after a number of years you remain a husband but abandon sexuality, and that is called *vānaprastha*. Finally you take *sannyāsa* and leave your family to practice and preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This is Vedic civilization. Everything is provided to enlighten the people in general. All the knowledge is there, and the method is there; we simply have to take advantage of it. If we do not, how can we expect a peaceful and happy world? If society creates animals, then how can it expect peace and prosperity? In spite of so many big universities and all educational facilities, this society is producing hippies and frustration. There must be discontent and frustration among the youth because we are spiritual souls and cannot become happy simply by amassing material comforts. We must have spiritual life. If a fish is taken out of water, it cannot be made happy with all the comforts of land. To be happy, a fish must have all the freedom of water. Similarly, we are all spiritual sparks, and we cannot become happy in matter. We require spiritual food, a spiritual atmosphere.

DISCIPLE: Prabhupāda, it's time for *bhāgavata-dharma*.

PRABHUPĀDA: *Bhāgavata-dharma* is already finished here. [Laughter] You go and speak. [Turning to interviewer] At least write in your paper that we are not sentimentalists. We have a large philosophical background. Thank you.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you. [Leaves] 🌀

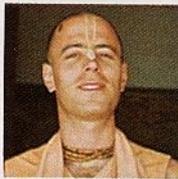
A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE HARE KṚṢṆA MOVEMENT DESCRIBES HOW MATERIALISM HAS PLUNDERED INDIA'S VALUABLE JEWEL OF VEDIC CULTURE.

CONVERSATIONS FROM INDIA (PART II)

You Can't Eat Nuts And Bolts

Last year, while the ISKCON temple in India's holy city of Vṛndāvana was still under construction, His Holiness Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja, a senior member of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, lived nearby the construction site in a small grass-and-adobe hut, which he used as a headquarters for chanting, reading and performing his various Kṛṣṇa consciousness duties. When I visited Vṛndāvana on pilgrimage, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja spent several mornings with me, answering my questions about Kṛṣṇa consciousness and India's ancient Vedic culture. A portion of those conversations, which we taped to share with readers of BACK TO GODHEAD, appeared in BTG No. 2. Here is another excerpt from our early-morning conversations.

Jayādvaita dāsa: If Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the background of India, how is it that India has become known all over the world for being an economically backward country? In some parts of India you walk down the streets and see beggars everywhere, people with little or nothing to eat. Is that the fruit of Vedic civilization?



Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: First of all we have to ask, "What is a Kṛṣṇa conscious Vedic civilization?" If we study the life of a typical villager in a Vedic community, we may find him living with his wife and a few children in a thatched hut with mud walls and a dirt floor. He has a couple of cows, a well and four or five acres of land. The river is nearby. He may never have gone beyond two or three villages away, but he's very happy. He lives to a ripe old age, doesn't get many diseases, works honestly in the fields, and has enough milk and grains to eat. With his extra produce, beyond what he needs to maintain his family, he may trade for clothing, jewelry and other items. In other words, he lives a very simple life. And he has sufficient time to cultivate God consciousness or spiritual consciousness. That is the ideal Kṛṣṇa conscious Vedic culture.

The ideal materialistic culture—do we have to go into it? It's what we find throughout the world today; that is to say, a culture that has no thought of God but is simply based upon accelerating and fulfilling desires for bodily enjoyment. It doesn't have anything to do with fulfilling the needs of the real self, the soul within the body. It simply deals with the body, the gross material body.

According to the *Vedas*, the individual is a pure spiritual soul, eternal, all-cognizant and full of bliss. In his original state, residing in the kingdom of God, the soul has a spiritual body endowed with spiritual qualities. But now, living in this material world, the soul is covered by a material body, which brings with it temporality, ignorance and great suffering. Vedic culture is concerned with transporting the soul back to the kingdom of God for a life of eternity, knowledge and bliss.

The *Vedas* tell you to work enough to maintain a healthy body and a healthy life for your family and spend the balance of your time developing love of God, God consciousness. And the work you do is honest work, using the things given by God, like the ground, water and sun. No cheating is involved; it is not a cheating process. You have a just amount, given to you by God, and you use it properly. God supplies everything you need.

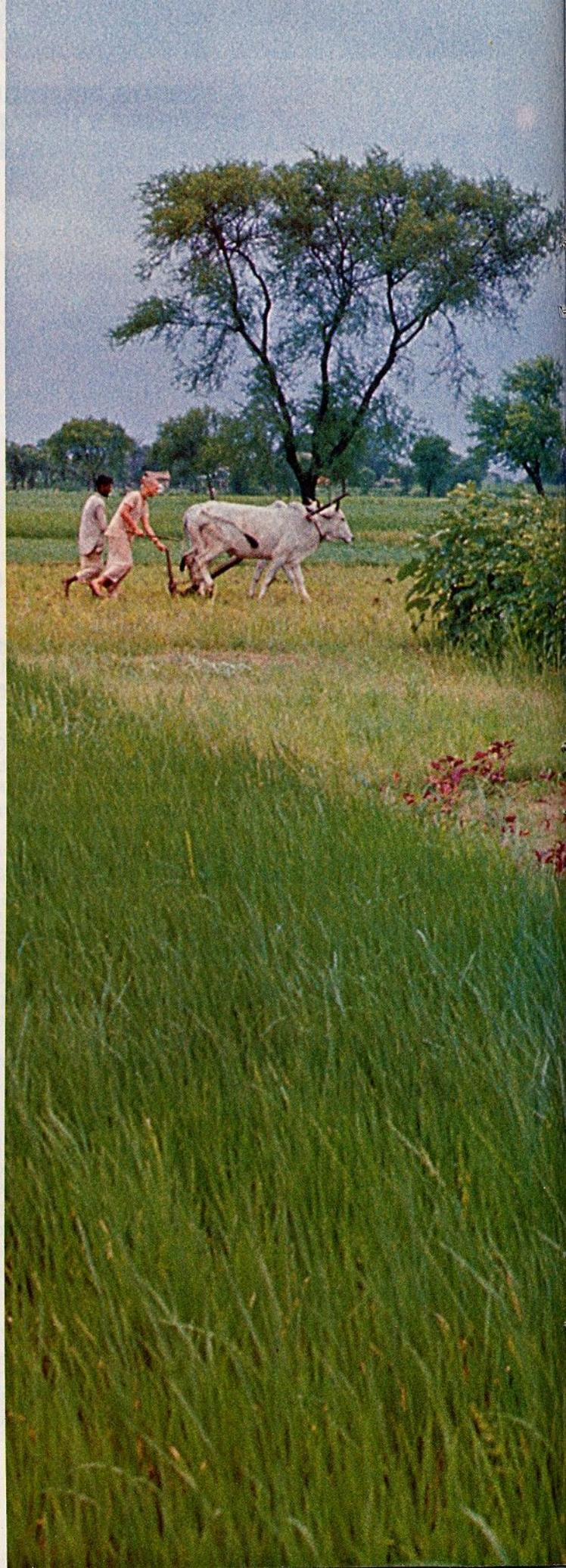
A Cheating Civilization

Actually, God has provided all our natural resources, but today's civilization is taking them from Him without any thought of return. Hardly even a "thanks." A materialist simply tries to enjoy the body. Never mind if the resources will run out; never mind where they came from—just madly chasing after material prosperity. It's a cheating, thieving civilization. And very cumbersome, too. Suppose a man lives in a twenty-five-room house or builds a twenty-five-story building or a hundred-story building. What is the need, actually? Does he need it to keep alive? No. It has nothing to do with just maintaining the body. It's geared for accelerating and fulfilling bodily desires. It has nothing to do with the essential needs. But most people deem this to be advancement. That is the point. So first of all we have to understand what advancement is. According to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, advancement means simple living and high thinking.

Jayādvaita dāsa: But India now, it seems, doesn't even have the simple necessities.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: Yes, that's true. But in India now we don't find the ideal Vedic culture. When we did find it, two or three hundred years ago, it was ideal. You wouldn't have found people starving to death. But what happened was this—the first picture the West gets of India comes through the eyes of the British. The British see India, and they see a Vedic culture, which is very simple and, in their terminology, barbaric, backwards, because from the materialistic standpoint anyone who lives in a mud hut with a grass roof is backwards. If he can't read English—of course, he may read Sanskrit, but if he can't read English he's illiterate. The Indian people were reading Sanskrit, many of them, but not English. "Oh, he's illiterate." In the same way, one may know *Bhagavad-gītā*, but if he doesn't know the Bible he's irreligious.

So in other words, the whole process of westernizing India or materializing India began about two or three hundred years ago. The Westerners introduced their so-called civilization, with its coffee, tea and meat eating. They built factories and developed large cities that had never been developed before. The entire Indian economy had been based on the villages, but under British rule and then recently more and more, everything moved toward the city. What happened is that the Vedic culture broke down. When it was present, the necessities of life were plentiful; there was no difficulty. But by and by it broke down. People were encouraged, "Come into the cities to work in the big factories." And what is the great advantage of the big factories? Luxury: an economy with the ultimate goal of material, temporary sense gratification. And as bodily satisfaction becomes paramount, spiritual culture fades away. But the actual necessities—fruits, grains, vegetables, milk—these were not produced by the factories. You can't eat nuts and bolts, you know.



Railway Robbery

Jayādvaita dāsa: The British built the railroads.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: The British built the railroads to link up all the big cities so that people would no longer live in villages. The British induced the villagers to come to the cities to work in the factories. Then they took all the goods and all of India's wealth to Britain. Gandhi's whole movement was to stop this. What did Gandhi say? Village industry. Go back to the village; begin the small industries. Decentralize, dematerialize, deindustrialize. He had the intel-

ligence to see that this was required. But unfortunately by the time so-called independence came, the people were already materialized to a great extent; enough people had become so polluted that they could no longer go back.

The materialistic disease eats away at a man's intelligence so that he loses the strength to realize his fallen condition; instead, he sees his fallen position as superior. But how has the city man actually improved his condition? Has he solved any of the real problems of life, such as birth, death, disease and old age? No. Does he actually know who he is—that he is pure spirit soul, not his body? No. So what is the gain? He lives in a big, comfortable house, complete

“The British induced the villagers to come to the cities to work in the factories.”

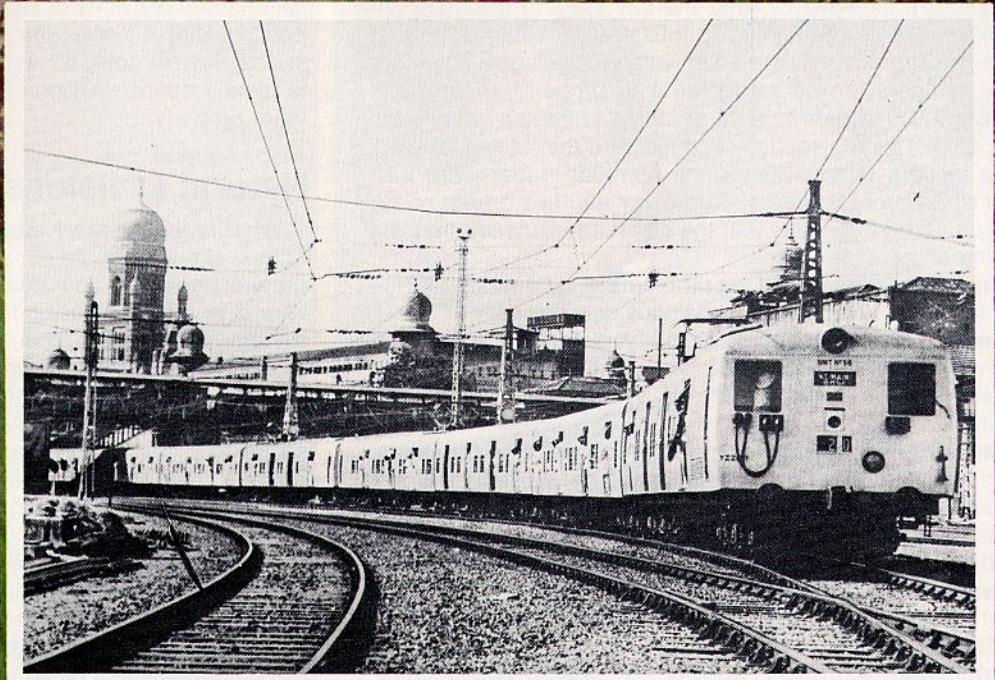


Photo: Courtesy of the India Information Service

with all luxuries and a big bank balance. But at the time of death, how will any of these help him? Can he take his house or bank balance with him? You see, the material disease is so bewildering that at the time of death a man clings desperately to all his possessions. All his life he has identified himself with his body and his possessions, instead of cultivating knowledge of the true self, the soul, and the real possession, love of God. As a result he dies in misery and ignorance, destined for a hellish future. But just as a crazy man thinks that he's sane and everyone else is insane, so a materially diseased person thinks, "I'm very well off, but the other man is not." The man in the village? "Oh, barbaric, backwards, impoverished." You see? But the Vedic villager lives simply and honestly, and with the better part of his time he cultivates spiritual knowledge. He has real wealth: knowledge of the self, of God, and his relationship with God.

The Lure of City Life

These people were lured out of the villages, and now they've become completely indoctrinated to believe that a cumbersome, complex society is more advanced. A society of slaughtering millions of animals to drink their blood instead of drinking their milk, a society of prostitution, of living packed together in small places where there's insufficient air and space—this is more advanced. But actually, you know, there's a huge amount of land in India, enough to maintain not only seven hundred million people but ten times that; there is that much land. Go traveling on the train in India, and you'll find that nearly all of India is unpopulated except for a few big cities. We hear that people are living in horrible conditions. But the most horrible conditions exist within the cities. The people in the villages are still relatively happy.

The fact is, however, that the city life and the city consciousness are beginning to infiltrate the villages, so that now most of the young men have left the villages. Therefore the villagers are no longer farming properly. There aren't enough young men to farm properly, so there's not enough food. There's not enough produce. And the intelligent men, the leaders of the village, the spiritual leaders, are also gone. Everyone is being lured away into this dream of the city and led to believe that the city is the panacea that will bring all happiness.

Jayādvaīta dāsa: So the problems in India today are due to lack of a Vedic, Kṛṣṇa conscious culture.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: In a Vedic culture, there is no poverty. The poverty we see here is not present in a Vedic culture; it's a consequence of our modern materialistic culture.

Jayādvaīta dāsa: All right. Because the traditional Indian culture has been contaminated by Western culture, it doesn't work. So suppose we introduce Kṛṣṇa consciousness and the mass of Indian people, the intelligentsia of Indian people, take to it. Then what do they do practically?

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: The first thing is that a Kṛṣṇa conscious culture, or a perfect society, is based on a *varṇāśrama* system. A *varṇāśrama* society is a community of *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas* and *śūdras* [intellectuals, administrators, farmers and workers]. One of the first features of Indian culture destroyed by foreigners was the caste system. This point is very much played up. "India was for so long held down by the caste system, but now it's

being abolished, and India is developing." But what is the caste system? The caste system, Kṛṣṇa says, was originally created by Him.

*cāturvarṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam
guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśah*

"I have created these four *varṇas* [castes or divisions of human society] according to the qualities and work of different people." Kṛṣṇa, God, says, "I have created these divisions." And what are they? The *brāhmaṇas* are the intelligent men—are there not intelligent men all over the world? *Kṣatriya* means the protective class. The *brāhmaṇa* teaches and the *kṣatriya* protects. Is there not a class of administrators who protect? *Vaiśya* means a farmer, a protector of cows or a trader. Aren't there people everywhere who normally do that? And *śūdra* means one who simply does menial work, assisting the other classes. So in any country in the world, not just in India but everywhere, you'll find these four *varṇas*, or occupational divisions. Automatically they are there. By nature, everyone is inclined toward a certain type of work, and therefore the purpose of the *varṇāśrama* system is to define the duties of each division, so that everyone will have his own work to do and everyone can work cooperatively in a peaceful and progressive society. Without these four divisions, there's no question of a civilized society. There are so many societies—human society, animal society, plant society and so on. But only the human society is considered civilized. Why? Because a human being can regulate his life to achieve a higher purpose. The so-called caste system is therefore meant to regulate human society in such a way that everyone can be prosperous and at the same time God conscious. So what is the question of destroying these divisions? You cannot destroy them; it's not possible to destroy them. They represent natural divisions of labor, divisions of work. So the first point is that if we're going to restore the culture of the *Vedas*, if we're going to restore prosperity to India, we have to clearly define divisions of human society and establish them properly.

Natural Divisions

What is the greatest attack upon the caste system? Its critics say that it holds a man back. It unfairly gives preference to one community above another. Now, anyone who says this has not understood the actual *varṇāśrama* system. In its modern, polluted, materialistic form, the caste system holds people down, but the actual system of the *Vedas* is not like that. According to the actual Vedic system, the different duties required within any community or society must be given to persons who are naturally meant to perform them. For example, in your body there's a head, there are arms, there's a belly, and there are legs. It's not that there's only a head, only legs or only arms. All are needed for a healthy body. Similarly, in a healthy social body, there are those meant to teach, those qualified to provide protection and administration, those inclined toward agriculture and those needed to help the others. All are given equal respect as being necessary for a healthy social body. So, similarly, all have an equal right to develop love of God. Everyone is respected on the worldly plane as being required for a well-rounded society, and everyone is respected on the spiritual platform as a servant of God.

Paṇḍitāḥ sama-darśinaḥ: a learned person sees with equal vision a *brāhmaṇa*, an elephant, a cow, a dog and a dog-eater. One who has Vedic vision sees spiritually, so he sees all living entities as equals. Therefore in the Vedic *varṇāśrama* system all living entities were given an equal opportunity to develop Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One caste was never superior to another. In the eyes of God, everyone is equal, so in the eyes of a Vedic man also, everyone is equal.

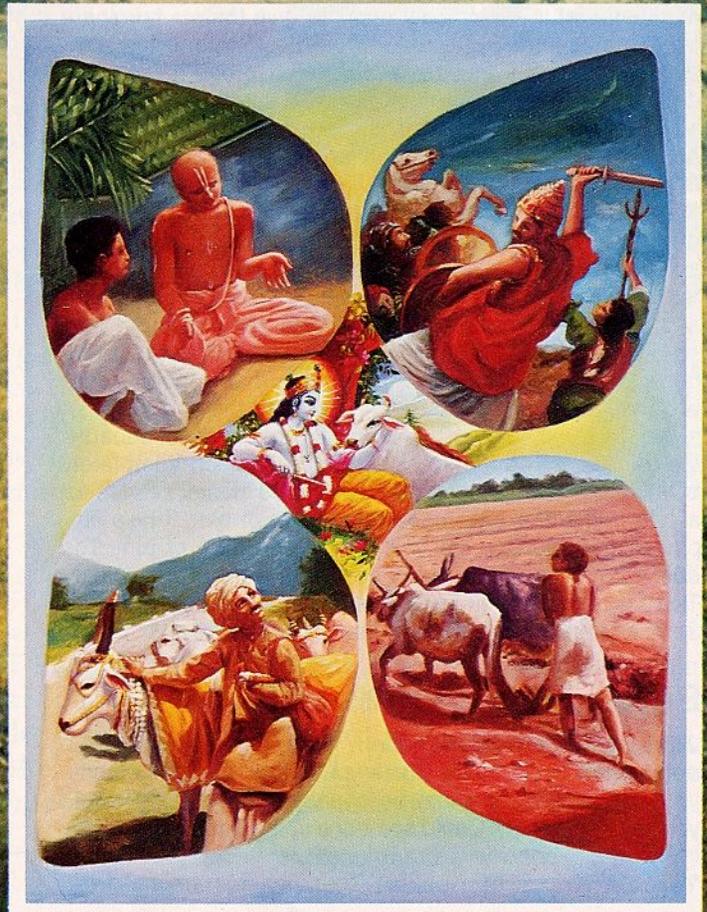
We have to restore the caste system on the Vedic basis. For instance, we must train qualified teachers. Instead, society now has teachers who are not at all qualified. Teaching means giving knowledge. And what is knowledge? One should know spirit, matter and the creator of both. That is real knowledge. Knowledge should not simply deal with materialistic subjects. To have complete knowl-

edge means to also know about spiritual subjects, especially about God, who has created everything. So where is the qualified man? The teachers who are now teaching have no knowledge of God. And where is the institution where knowledge of God is available? The universities offer courses in every field of material research, but we hardly find even one course in the science of God or the science of the soul. In fact, because of separation of church and state, you're not allowed to teach about God.

The Brains of Society

So, first of all, we want to create a community of *brāhmaṇas*. Those who can understand God, the spiritual world, the soul and the material world should be considered

By nature everyone is inclined toward a certain type of work. Therefore the purpose of the *varṇāśrama* system is to define the duties of each division so that everyone can work cooperatively in a peaceful and progressive society.



the brain of the social body. They should give advice. To whom? To the administrators. And who are the administrators? They're those who know how to maintain a Vedic society, how to implement the teaching of the *brāhmaṇas* practically. The *brāhmaṇa* teaches that God is the center of the state because He is the original proprietor of everything within the state. Actually this is not an exaggeration. From the *Vedas* we learn, *īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ yat kiñca jagatyāṁ jagat*: everything within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. Why? *Ahaṁ sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate*: because He is the source of all planets and because everything is emanating from Him. As the creator of everything, from huge planets to minute atomic particles, God has natural proprietary rights. We are only secondary proprietors because we've gotten everything from Him on a loan basis. Since He is the real master, whatever we have should be used in His service. Everything should center around service to God. Everyone is a servant of God, and if the master is satisfied, all the servants will automatically become satisfied because the master gives full protection and maintenance to his faithful servants. That is what the *brāhmaṇa* teaches. And the *kṣatriya* gives directions to practically implement that understanding. "All right, let the farmers go out and bring home the produce. Let it be offered to God and then be distributed equally to all. Let the *brāhmaṇas* be maintained for their teachings. They shouldn't have to take up any other employment. Let them simply teach and be given enough to maintain themselves. And the *sūdras*, who are helping all the other communities—let them also get enough; give them a fair share of what they farm. See that everyone has proper living standards, see that everyone is instructed properly, see that everyone is protected from attack, and see that Kṛṣṇa is always being served." That is the business of the *kṣatriya*. And what is the business of the *vaiśya*? He should see that the animals are protected, the fields are being worked and the land is productive. Kṛṣṇa has created the earth and given it to man—"Here is a gift; take care of it." Since it is actually God's land, it should be used as He intended. That is the business of a *vaiśya*—to take care of Kṛṣṇa's earth and produce from it. Kṛṣṇa's giving is complete (*om pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam idam*). It can provide enough to maintain everything if it's dealt with properly. That is the business of a *vaiśya*—to use the land properly. And the *sūdra*'s business? To serve all the others. And for that service, because the *sūdras* are so faithful, they are maintained completely by the other three orders. If a *sūdra* does menial service for a *brāhmaṇa*, the *brāhmaṇa* takes care of him. If he's employed by a *vaiśya*, the *vaiśya* will take care of him. The *sūdra* is like a child. You simply take care of him nicely. There is nothing wrong with this: everyone becomes happy. So this is our program. This is an ideal community.

Beyond the Barriers of Birth

Jayādvaīta dāsa: In modern India, caste seems to be determined by birth. The caste you're born into is the caste you stay in. But can there be changing also? What would you say about that? Could someone in the family of a *sūdra*, for instance, become a *brāhmaṇa*?

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: These castes are not fixed

according to birth. A man can be born in a *sūdra* caste and be elevated to the highest position of a *brāhmaṇa*. It's according to his ability. If he's qualified, there's no stopping him. It's not something fixed; it's according to the nature of a person and the work he's doing. Suppose your father is a judge on the Supreme Court, does that make you also a Supreme Court justice? No, of course not. You have to be properly qualified. It's not a question of heredity. The caste system simply means a system of division of labor.

Jayādvaīta dāsa: Suppose we reinstitute the *varṇāśrama* divisions, with Kṛṣṇa conscious teachers, Kṛṣṇa conscious administrators, and so on. What is the next step?

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: Lord Caitanya has shown the way. He instructs: *harer nāma harer nāma harer nāma eva kevalam/ kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā*. The Vedic scriptures explain that history progresses in cycles of ages, and the age we're in now is called Kali-yuga. In the Kali-yuga, the best way to attain the perfection of life is to chant the holy names of the Lord: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. There is no other way, there is no other way, there is no other way. Lord Caitanya repeats "there is no other way" three times, just to emphasize the point. In previous ages other methods were recommended. Each age has different conditions, both in the people and in the environment, and, accordingly, an appropriate method for achieving the truth is recommended. In this age the *saṅkīrtana-yajña*, the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, is perfect. All the divisions of society may cooperate to perform it successfully. *Saṅkīrtana* means chanting God's name congregationally for the well-being of the nation and the well-being of all the citizens. And *yajña* means sacrifice—everyone must sacrifice. The *vaiśyas* should bring abundant amounts of grains, fruits, vegetables and milk products from the fields. The *kṣatriyas* should pass laws encouraging all the citizens to take part in the sacrifice. And they should see that each person offers his services fully, according to his occupation. The *sūdras* may assist in every way possible. And the *brāhmaṇas* should lead everyone in chanting the holy names—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. The Vedic scriptures confirm this:

*yataḥ pravṛttir bhūtānāṁ
yena sarvaṁ idaṁ tatam
sva-karmaṇā tam abhyarcya
siddhiṁ vindati mānavaḥ*

"By worship of the Lord, who is the source of all beings and who is all-pervading, man can, in the performance of his own duty, attain perfection." [Bg. 18.46]

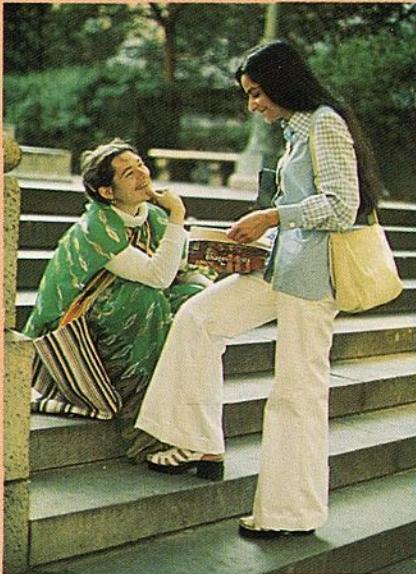
This, then, is the culmination of Vedic society. Everyone working for a common goal: to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is the perfection of life. If India once again takes up the Vedic way, there will be no limit to her prosperity, no end to the people's joy. And why just India? Let the whole world join the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Lord Caitanya and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Let everyone perfect life's mission and go back home, back to Godhead.

A brief look at the worldwide activities of the



International Society for Krishna Consciousness

Literature Distribution More Than Doubles In One Year



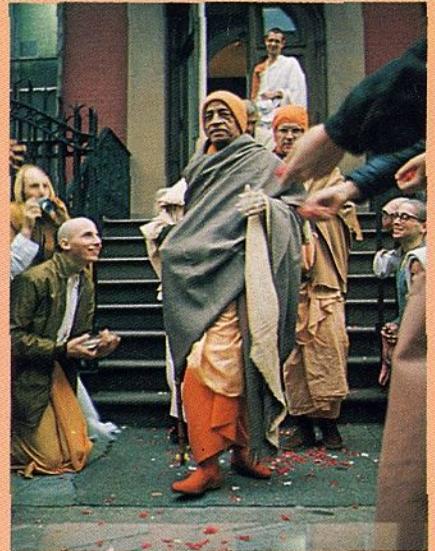
The members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness made 1974 an outstanding year for the distribution of transcendental literature. Following the request of their spiritual master, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, to “distribute my books profusely,” in 1974 the devotees distributed

more than 6-1/2 million pieces of literature—from small pamphlets to 1,000-page BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀS. More people than ever before—some 400,000 of them—took large, 400-page Kṛṣṇa conscious books. In only one year’s time the annual distribution of BACK TO GODHEAD magazine (described by Śrīla Prabhupāda as “the backbone of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement”) almost doubled to four million copies. And in 1975—in February alone—circulation climbed to 900,000 copies. Has the distribution of Kṛṣṇa conscious books reached its peak? “This is only the beginning,” said Rāmeśvara dāsa, the devotee in charge of the Society’s central book warehouse in Los Angeles. “Kṛṣṇa is unlimited. There’s no end in sight.”

World Tour

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda has just completed a tour of ISKCON temples in the Western Hemisphere. After first visiting Hawaii, he then went on to Los

Angeles, Mexico City, Caracas, Miami, Atlanta, Dallas, and New York. Śrīla Prabhupāda is now in Māyāpura, India, where he is celebrating the appearance day of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu with many of his disciples from



around the world. He plans to open the Vṛndāvana (India) Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple in late April and, tentatively, to then visit the newly opened center on Mauritius, an African coastal island whose Prime Minister is a life member of ISKCON.

Is there a higher enjoyment beyond the relative pleasures and pains of material life? His Holiness Revatinandana Svāmī describes how to achieve the realm of transcendental consciousness, where pleasure is ever increasing.

WAKING UP TO WAKING UP TO WAKING UP TO

BY HIS HOLINESS REVATĪNANDANA SVĀMĪ

When we are asleep we dream—sometimes pleasant dreams, but sometimes nightmares also. Although we sometimes suffer nightmares and don't know how our dreams will develop, we nevertheless become attached to sleeping, and if someone tries to wake us, we resist. It might be that when we awaken we'll have many enjoyable things to do, but because we are bewildered by our dreams, we think, "Why is he disturbing me? Better let me sleep." Similarly, embodied life is like a dream for the sleeping spiritual soul. Although we are eternal and naturally blissful, we think, "I am this body," and because of past impious activities, life sometimes seems like a nightmare. There is no possibility of perfect, happy life as long as we mistake the body to be the self. But when offered knowledge of our eternal life as spiritual souls, we resist because we don't want to accept the trouble of changing our actions from bodily motivated to spiritually motivated. It may be possible, though, to achieve eternally joyful life through spiritual advancement, and so even if ideas like reincarnation and self-realization are new to us, they are worth trying to understand.

We may have some knowledge of our own bodies and the world around us, but we can't know whether we existed before our bodies were conceived or whether we will go on living after death.

Scientists have their theories, but these are only possibilities and will never be more because no one can directly investigate the past, before the body, or the future, after death. Materialists may think that they are no more than lumps of chemicals, come to life of their own accord, and that when the chemicals break down and death occurs everything is finished. But this theory is only a "maybe." Because the soul is not material and so does not register on their instruments, the scientists cannot locate it. But does this disprove its existence? When I can't find my car keys, does that mean they don't exist?

Life Comes From Life. In fact, we should not expect to get life from dead matter. From unconscious, inert chemicals we won't get life and consciousness, no matter how we combine them, just as we won't get milk from the fleshy bags on the neck of a goat, even though they look like nipples. There must be a conscious element that combines with the bodily chemicals and brings them to life. We might call that element the spirit soul, or self. The idea that life is due to the presence of a spirit soul and that death occurs when the soul departs from the body is not only reasonable, but is also the opinion of *Bhagavad-gītā*, the most philosophical scripture in the world. Only by such a revelation of knowledge from the higher authority of the Supreme Spirit can we get real knowledge of what causes life and what

happens after death.

In the *Gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa says:

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

"As the embodied soul continually passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. The self-realized soul is not bewildered by such a change." (Bg. 2.13)

Here Kṛṣṇa offers an example to help us understand that we are eternal souls who live in bodies only temporarily and who are unaffected by bodily changes. I may think that the twenty-eight-year-old body I see in the mirror is me, but I can also remember that once I had a five-year-old body. I recall going to kindergarten, drawing with big, hexagonal crayons, eating graham crackers and milk, and so on. You'd hardly imagine that the body I have now has developed from that body, because there is almost no similarity between them. Since then, scientists agree, every cell has changed or been replaced, and my mind has changed as much as my body. Yet I was there then, and the same 'I,' or sense of self, is here now. The part that remains the same while the body and mind change is the spiritual soul, and so I can understand that I am not an aging, dying body, but an unchanging spiritual being. The *Gītā* informs us that we will not

HIGHER HAPPINESS

HIGHER HAPPINESS

The *Gītā* informs us that we will not change even at the moment of death, but will leave dead bodies behind and go on to future living conditions.

change even at the moment of death, but will leave dead bodies behind and go on to future living conditions. If all our lives we have been attached to bodily pleasures and mental diversions, when we leave this body the laws of nature will force us to take birth in another body, in which we can go on with such activities. Thus the eternal soul changes bodies just as a person takes off an old, worn coat and puts on a new one.

One might protest that it's a bit far-fetched to believe that we live forever and migrate from body to body, and this might especially be so if one also hears that in his next body he is going to have to accept the good and bad reactions he deserves because of his deeds in this body. The materialist likes to believe that when he dies everything is finished and that he won't have to endure any misery in an afterlife because of the misery he sometimes causes for others in this life. But this is not the case. Not only does Kṛṣṇa offer us knowledge of this transmigration of the soul, but it's not at all unreasonable. I can recall that I existed at fifteen years of age, at ten and at five, but I cannot remember what I was doing when I was two years old.

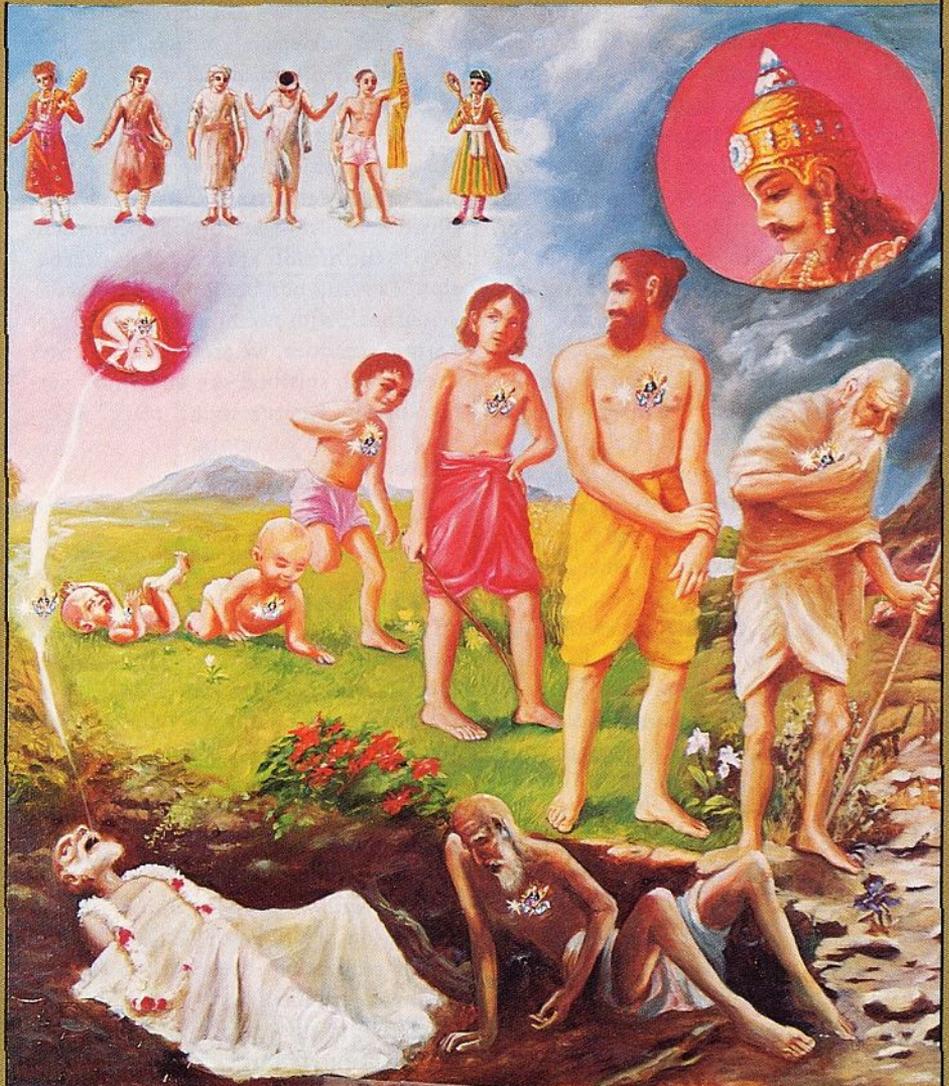


Illustration: Bharadrāja dāsa

Does this mean that I did not exist at two? No, my good sense, as well as my parents, will confirm that I existed then also. Why, then, is it so difficult to learn from the Supreme Parent that I also existed one hundred years ago and one million years ago, but have simply forgotten, just as I have forgotten my recent babyhood?

We can't recall what it was like to be locked in the womb of the mother, but from the kicking of the unborn baby in his struggle to be free we can understand that it is very miserable to be awake but cramped upside-down in darkness in the fluid of the natal sac. After the pain of being squeezed out into the world by muscular contractions, we go through the helplessness and real or imaginary fears of childhood. Then we move through a life of sometimes enjoying and sometimes suffering—accepting the reactions of our deeds in the previous body—and although we want to remain young, fit and ready to enjoy life forever, the laws of nature do not allow this. Instead, we must gradually become old and decrepit, suffer miserable diseases, and finally go through the total loss and fearful illusion of dying. To go through this once is bad enough, but to do it again and again is really intolerable for the spiritual soul. We should not think that this is the “theory” of reincarnation. From the scientists we get uncertain theories, but from the Supreme Scientist we can get the facts. Reincarnation is such a fact, but because we are limited, tiny souls, we forget what we have factually gone through.

The Web of Karma. Sometimes we see that a person is not even born fit to enjoy life—he is born poor and underprivileged, or very ugly, or even crippled or retarded. This is not simply the result of random chance or “cruel fate.” Kṛṣṇa says, *bhūta-bhāvodbhava-karo visargaḥ karma-samjñītaḥ*: “The action that develops these material bodies is called *karma*, or fruitive activity.” (Bg. 8.3) Destiny, or fate, is not due to chance, but is the result of our own previous work in the world to get some results and enjoy them. We're all caught in a web of kar-

Sometimes we see that a person is not even born fit to enjoy life—he is born poor and underprivileged, or very ugly, or even crippled or retarded. This is not simply the result of random chance or “cruel fate.”

mic reactions from the past, and busy with more fruitive activities in the present, in this way steering ourselves toward repeated birth, old age, disease and death in the future. That is why Kṛṣṇa offers us the knowledge of *Bhagavad-gītā*—to teach us the nature of the soul so that we can deliver ourselves from this material bondage. Therefore He says, *dhīras tatra na muhyati*: “The self-realized soul is not bewildered by the process of changing from body to body.” If we can achieve complete self-realization—direct experience of our eternal, blissful nature—we put a permanent stop to the dreadful process of reincarnation. Leaving our bodies in divine consciousness, with no more attachment for karmic activities, we are then fit to enter the eternal, spiritual sky and enjoy perfect life in Kṛṣṇa's living place. Kṛṣṇa says:

*na tad bhāsayate sūryo
na śāsāṅko na pāvakaḥ
yad gatvā na nivartante
tad dhāma paramam mama*

“That abode of Mine [the spiritual world] is not illuminated by the sun or moon, nor by electricity. One who reaches it never returns to this material world.” (Bg. 15.6) There everything is luminous, and because we there attain our original, spiritual forms, we stop changing bodies. Undisturbed by old age, sickness and death, we can then enjoy our unlimited, blissful life in the association of the Supreme.

Self-realization, therefore, is the real business of life, and the ability to progress in this direction is the distinguishing feature of the human species. There are innumerable species of living beings—plants, fishes, animals,

humans and so on—and wherever we see life in a body, we may know that a spiritual soul is present to cause the consciousness. According to the *Gītā*, a person who becomes very degraded can lose his human body at death and be forced to accept birth in the animal kingdom (Bg. 14.15). He then has to transmigrate from one lower species to another until he has expiated all the reactions of his human sins. Then he is reinstated in the human form. In animal life there is all facility for eating, sleeping, mating and defending—the bodily propensities—and human beings can also do these things, but the reason a human birth is periodically awarded to the spiritually forgetful soul is that in a human body the soul has the greater intelligence needed to discriminate between body and self and to engage in *yoga*, or activities for spiritual deliverance. Therefore a soul who gets a human birth but takes no interest in self-realization, and who goes on working only to maintain his body—as the cats and dogs do—has wasted a most valuable chance. He may not get another for literally millions of miserable births and deaths.

The Perfection of Yoga. The culture of self-realization is called *yoga*, and while there are several approaches to *yoga* described in *Bhagavad-gītā*—through philosophical introspection, mystic meditation and active devotion—the final goal of all is the same. Kṛṣṇa says:

*bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasāṁ
sarva-loka-maheśvaram
suhṛdaṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ
jñātvā māṁ śāntim ṛcchati*

“The sages, knowing Me as the ultimate purpose of all sacrifices and austerities, the Supreme Lord of all planets and demigods, and the benefactor of all living entities, attain peace from the pangs of material miseries.” (Bg. 5.29) Despite what some people think, the goal of *yoga* is not to become a nonentity by merging into a void or spiritual light. The self is an eternal individual (Bg. 15.7) who never becomes void or merges into formlessness. The real goal

"In this world, there is nothing so sublime and pure as transcendental knowledge. Such knowledge is the mature fruit of all mysticism. And one who has achieved this enjoys the self within himself in due course of time."—Bhagavad-gītā As It Is



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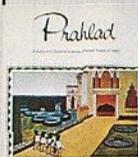
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*(listed on page two of this issue)

Kṛṣṇa Conscious Calendar

Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees follow a spiritual calendar that divides the year into twelve months, each named for a different form of Kṛṣṇa. The year is full of Kṛṣṇa conscious festivals, and some of the upcoming ones are listed here. The devotees of the ISKCON center nearest you will gladly tell you more about the meaning of these festivals.

March 28	April 4	April 7	April 8
Gaura Pūrṇimā Pāraṇa (the Ānandotsava of Śrī Jagannātha Mīra). Kṛṣṇa conscious month of Viṣṇu begins.	Appearance of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita.	Ekādaśī (Pāpa-vimocani Ekādaśī) (fasting from grains and beans).	Ekādaśī Pāraṇa. Disappearance of Govinda Ghoṣa. (break fast)
April 15	April 19	April 20	April 21
Appearance of Rāmaṇujācārya.	Rāma-navami Vrata (fasting) (Appearance of Lord Rāmacandra).	Rāma-navami Pāraṇa (break fast).	Ekādaśī (Kāmadā Ekādaśī) (fasting from grains and beans).
April 22	April 24		
Ekādaśī Pāraṇa (break fast).	Lord Balarāma's Rāsa-yātrā. Lord Kṛṣṇa's Vasanta Rāsa. Appearance of Śyāmānanda Gosvāmī and Vamśīvanānanda Thākura.		

We cannot artificially control our agitated minds by mental speculation or mystic yoga, but if we actively engage the mind in thinking of Kṛṣṇa and His service, the mind automatically becomes controlled.

of that individual soul's struggle to end suffering and enjoy supreme happiness is explained here—he must know Kṛṣṇa and revive his original relationship with Him.

Who is Kṛṣṇa? He is the supreme spiritual personality, described in great detail in the *Gītā* and other Vedic scriptures—especially *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In this verse He is described as the supreme owner, the supreme enjoyer and the best friend of all living beings. Earlier the *Gītā* explains that He has an eternal, spiritual body, which is full of knowledge, power and beauty and which never gets old or dies. In the *Upaniṣads* the Personality of Godhead is acclaimed as *nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām*, the supreme eternal amongst many eternals (like we ourselves) and the supreme living being among all living beings. When we hear this description of God as a person, we may become puzzled because we tend to equate the idea of “person” with the idea “having a material body.” Because we, although spiritual, are encaged in material bodies, we tend to assume that Kṛṣṇa is in the same condition. But from Vedic references we can begin to understand that Kṛṣṇa's body is eternal and spiritual, rather than temporary and material. In the spiritual world there is no difference between body and self. And Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord of all spiritual personalities.

We can learn from the *Vedas* that we fell into the cycle of birth and death because we rebelled against our original position as loving servants of Kṛṣṇa, and that the only way we can permanently solve all the problems that have resulted is by again surrendering to Him. Sometimes a rich man's son becomes envious of his father, and although he has all

facilities for a happy life under his father's shelter, he rebels and leaves home, determined to enjoy life on his own. It is not surprising if he then fails, becomes bewildered and suffers, forgetting his father and birthright. In that fallen condition, foolish thoughts of becoming his father are useless. Until he humbly returns to his subordinate position, he can't get relief from suffering or enjoy a fully happy life. So it is with self-realization: all approaches to *yoga* described in the *Gītā*—through work, philosophy or meditation—culminate in the devotional service of the Lord, or pure *bhakti-yoga*.

Going Home. In this age the philosophical and meditational approaches have become impractical because our minds and the world outside are agitated and materialistic. Therefore the path of surrendering to Kṛṣṇa and becoming His devotee has become not only the best way but the only way to attain spiritual perfection. We cannot artificially control our agitated minds by mental speculation or mystic *yoga*, but if we actively engage our minds in thinking of Kṛṣṇa and His service, the mind automatically becomes controlled. Thus finding higher spiritual satisfaction from the very beginning, we can become steady in the service of the Lord. In this way the boat of this material body moves across the ocean of material existence, and the passenger, the spiritual soul, finds a harbor at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. In the beginning, when we occasionally do something for the service of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees, we are performing what is called *karma-yoga*, and when we fully surrender to devotional service under the guidance of scripture and the spiritual master, we are performing *bhakti-yoga*. Kṛṣṇa is the supreme purifier (Bg. 10.12), and when we link with Him through service we become purified of falsely thinking, “I am this body.” Thus we begin to relish spiritual bliss.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says:

*patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam
yo me bhaktiṃ prayacchati
tad ahaṁ bhakti-upahṛtam
aśnāmi prayatāmanah*

“If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit or water, I will accept it.” (Bg. 9.26) To make such an offering is practical for everyone, for even the poorest man can offer Kṛṣṇa a flower or a little water. In *bhakti-yoga*, we follow this principle by learning how to perform all our daily activities—cooking, raising a family, working, singing, dancing, reading and so on—in such a way as to always satisfy Kṛṣṇa and offer all the results of our work to Him. Instead of cooking for ourselves, we cook pleasing vegetarian dishes and offer them to Kṛṣṇa with devotion before we ourselves eat. Whatever extra money we earn we use not to increase bodily comforts, but to help propagate Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Instead of spending hours reading of sex, violence and other mundane topics, we read detailed scriptures describing Kṛṣṇa and spiritual life, and we enjoy internal peace and happiness in the process. And at all times we sing or say the holy names of the Lord, so that there is no chance of forgetting Kṛṣṇa, even for a second.

When one's mind is always fixed on Kṛṣṇa in such ways, one naturally feels His all-attractiveness more and more, and because one cannot be shaken from this devotional service, one is always in trance (*samādhi*), actively meditating on the Supreme. Kṛṣṇa says (Bg. 11.54) that when He reveals Himself before a fully purified devotee, the devotee can then see both himself and God. When one becomes a pure devotee and thus turns to Kṛṣṇa with spiritual vision, he attains the perfection of all *yoga*, and the highest happiness in life.



His Holiness Revatinandana Svāmī, a frequent contributor to BACK TO GODHEAD, has been actively preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness for

the past 6 years in India, Great Britain and the United States. He is currently traveling and lecturing at ISKCON centers and at colleges on the West Coast.



THE PASTIMES OF SCHOLARSHIP

(1)
vidyāra vilāse, kātāinu kāla,
parama sāhase āmi
tomāra carāna, nā bhajinu kabhu,
ekhona śaraṇa tumi

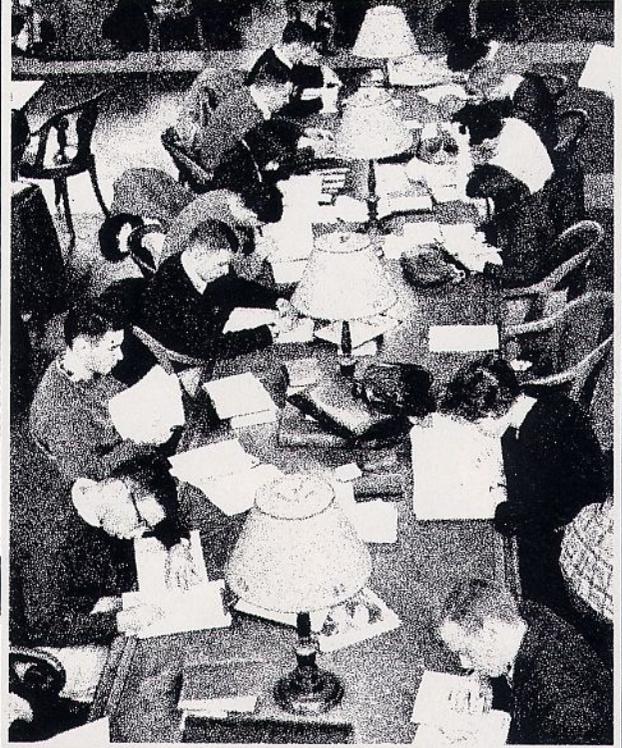
(2)
paḍite paḍite, bharasā bādīlo,
jñāne gati habe māni'
se āsā viphalo, se jñāna durbalo,
se jñāna ajñāna jāni

(3)
jadavidyā yata, māyāra vaibhava,
tomāra bhajane bādḥā
moha janamiyā, anitya samsāre,
jivake koroye gādḥā

(4)
sei gādḥā ho'ye, samsāreṇa bojḥā,
bahinu aneka kālo
vārdhakey ekhona, śaktira abhāve,
kichu nāhi lāge bhālo

(5)
jivana yātanā, hoilo ekhona,
se vidyā avidyā bhelo
avidyāra jvālā, ghaṭilo viśama,
se vidyā hoilo śela

(6)
tomāra carāna, vinā kichu dhana,
somsāre nā āche āra
bhaktivinod, jadavidyā chāḍi',
tuyā pada kore sāra



A song by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

translated from the Bengali by His Holiness Acyutānanda Svāmī

(1) Once I spent long, long hours in the pastimes of scholarship. I never took to service of Your lotus feet as I do now. (2) Reading on and on, never finding satiation, I felt that knowledge would be the highest goal. That hope was false and fruitless — that knowledge was ignorance. (3) Materialistic studies are the glare of *māyā* only,

for they are an obstacle to spiritual progress. The infatuated person is trapped in the impermanent world, falsely trying to enjoy it, and such studies make him as foolish as an ass. (4) When they stretch out over a long time, one loses all energy and is sapped of all power to enjoy. By the time old age comes, nothing in the world is tasteful for

such an ass. (5) Now at the end of life I realize that all my academic study is ignorance. Realization of this fact is burning like a piercing dart. (6) Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says: "Without Your lotus feet there is no value in the world. Reflecting upon my material studies, I take to Your lotus feet and superexcellence."

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, a great scholar and spiritual master, appeared in India some three generations ago. He has written that in his youth he absorbed himself in speculative books on religion and philosophy, both Eastern and Western. In the course of his studies he discovered the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and so later fully dedicated his life to the service of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.



“Yoga” is a word becoming increasingly familiar to people all over the world. Many are asking, “What is yoga? What does the yoga practitioner seek to achieve? And what is the ultimate goal of yoga?”

The Perfection of Yoga: Pure Love of Kṛṣṇa

A Bhāgavata Dharma Discourse—

an address on the science of understanding God, delivered in Delhi, India.

This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is the topmost *yoga* system. You have perhaps read in the Sixth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, wherein Arjuna declined to accept the *haṭha-yoga* system, the following words of Kṛṣṇa:

*yoginām api sarveṣāṃ
mad-gaṭenāntarātmanā
śraddhāvān bhajate yo mām
sa me yuktatamo matah*

“And of all *yogīs*, he who always abides in Me with great faith, worshiping Me in transcendental loving service, is most intimately united with Me in *yoga* and is the highest of all.” (Bg. 6.47)

Kṛṣṇa is known as *Yogeśvara*, the master of all *yogīs*, and if one takes Kṛṣṇa within his heart, he becomes the topmost *yogī*.

There are different kinds of *yogīs*, and there are different *yoga-siddhis*, or yogic perfections—*aṇimā*, *laghimā*, *mahimā*, *prāpti*, *prākāmya*, *iṣitā*, *vaṣitā*. The perfect *yogīs* can act wonderfully. They can become smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest. A *yogī* can create planets and can become lighter than a feather. He can also fly in the air without the aid of a machine. These are all

Left: When the great sage and spiritual master Nārada Muni was still a young boy, he achieved the perfection of yoga by his loving devotional remembrance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

called *siddhis*. There is actually a planet within this universe called Siddhaloka, and the residents of that planet can fly from one planet to another without any kind of spaceship. We receive this information from Vedic literature.

Nonetheless, Kṛṣṇa still says that a person who is always praising Him within himself with faith and love is the highest *yogī* of all. The purpose of all *yoga* systems is to get to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who always resides within the heart. That linking with Kṛṣṇa or that union is called *samādhi*. *Bhagavad-gītā* verifies that the Lord is indeed sitting in everyone's heart:

*iśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṃ
hṛd-deśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati
bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni
yantrārūḍhāni māyayā*

“The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone's heart, O Arjuna, and is directing the wanderings of all living entities, who are seated as on a machine, made of the material energy.” (Bg. 18.61)

Actually, everyone is carrying the Supreme Lord within his heart, but one who is conscious of carrying the Lord is Kṛṣṇa conscious. Therefore the purpose of our movement is to make everyone Kṛṣṇa conscious, or to make everyone a perfect *yogī*. Anyone who is conscious of the Supreme Personality of Godhead within his heart is to be considered a most elevated *yogī*. It is not that one has to study all the Vedic literatures very hard or undergo some yogic practices like *dhyāna*, *dhāraṇā*, *āsana* and *prāṇa*. That

is very difficult business and not to be taken lightly. Five thousand years ago, when advised to take up this *yoga* system, Arjuna declined, saying, “Kṛṣṇa, it is not possible.” Arjuna came from a very great royal family, and he was so elevated that he could talk to Kṛṣṇa personally as a friend. Despite all his great qualifications, Arjuna declined to accept the *yoga* system, that is, the *haṭha-yoga* system, claiming himself unfit for this practice.

In this age no one can practice the *haṭha-yoga* system systematically, for it is very difficult. First of all one has to leave home, select a very secluded place and sit down there alone. You cannot attend some transcendental *yoga* society in a big city. In America there are many transcendental *yoga* societies, but people are simply being misled. However, this *bhakti-yoga* system, as recommended by Caitanya Mahāprabhu, is the easiest process and can be practiced even by a child. When you chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* and dance in ecstasy, you can feel actual advancement. Even small children can take to this process. While I was chanting in Tompkins Square in New York, alone, these boys and girls used to come and chant and dance. Such a nice system.

We must practice this system by chanting the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare. This system is very scientific in that Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa's name, Kṛṣṇa's form, Kṛṣṇa's qualities, Kṛṣṇa's entourage and everything belonging to Kṛṣṇa or in

by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

relationship with Kṛṣṇa are all absolute.

*nāma-cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇas
caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ
pūrṇaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto
'bhinnatvān nāma-nāminoh
(Padma Purāna)*

This is the version of Vedic literature. The word *caitanya* means living force. God is not dead but is actually a living force.

*iśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ
sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindah
sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*

“There are many personalities possessing the qualities of God, but Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme because none can excel Him. He is the Supreme Person, and His body is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss. He is the primeval Lord Govinda and the cause of all causes.” (Brahma-saṁhitā 5.1)

Therefore Kṛṣṇa is also *sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ*, full of being, knowledge and bliss and possessing a form. We must try to understand absolute knowledge in this way. *Vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam (Bhāg. 1.2.11)*. The Absolute Truth is *advayam*, free from duality. Here, in this dream world, which we call the relative world, everything is separated. If we are thirsty and want water, we may chant, “Water, water, water.” But we will not be satisfied. We require the substance water because the substance and the name water are different. They are not on the absolute platform. But as far as Kṛṣṇa is concerned, Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa’s name are nondifferent. They are identical, or *pūrṇam*, complete. Just as Kṛṣṇa is complete, His name and form are also complete. That is why we are here worshipping the form of Kṛṣṇa. It is complete. No one should think that Kṛṣṇa is separate from this form. If He were separate, there would be no meaning to the words Absolute Truth. Therefore in the Vedic scriptures one is forbidden to enter the temple and, upon seeing the transcendental form of the Lord, think

that it is made of metal, stone or iron. No. We should know for certain that according to the injunctions of the Vedic scriptures, Kṛṣṇa is present. Such a realization may require advancement in spiritual knowledge, but actually there is no difference between Kṛṣṇa and His form. This form has descended and is called *arcā-vigraha*. The word *vigraha* means form, and *arcā* means worship. If

with spiritual gems and surrounded by millions of wish-fulfilling trees. He is always served with great reverence and affection by hundreds of thousands of *lakṣmīs*, or goddesses of fortune.” (Bs. 5.29)

Sometimes the members of the Māyāvāda school of philosophy say that Kṛṣṇa is imaginary, but this is not so. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Absolute Truth, as stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*mataḥ paratarāṁ nānyat
kiñcid asti dhanaijaya
mayi sarvaṁ idaṁ protaṁ
sūtre maṇi-gaṇā iva*

“O conquerer of wealth [Arjuna], no truth is superior to Me. Everything rests upon Me, as pearls are strung on a thread.” (Bg. 7.7)

How, then, can Kṛṣṇa be formless? He has His transcendental form. This is also described in *Brahma-saṁhitā*:

*veṅurīḥ kvaṅtaṁ aravinda-
dalāyatākeṣaṁ
barhāvataṁsam asitāmbuda-
sundarāṅgam
kandarpa-koṭī-kamaniya-viśeṣa-
śobhaṁ
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ
bhajāmi*

“I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is adept at playing on His flute, whose eyes are blooming like lotus petals and whose head is bedecked with peacock feathers, whose figure is the form of beauty tinged with

the hue of blue clouds and whose unique loveliness charms millions of cupids.” (Bs. 5.30)

These are statements made by Lord Brahmā in the *Brahma-saṁhitā*. It is not that Kṛṣṇa is a painting drawn up by some artist’s imagination. We are not following or worshipping some artist’s imagination. We are following the *śāstras*, or Vedic scriptures. The facts therefore have to be learned from these *śāstras*. In fact, we should see the world through the *śāstras*, just as we see the world by the light of the sun. It is not possible to see the world with these blunt eyes. We can only see under certain conditions, and this is true of all the senses. They function only under certain conditions. It is not possible to see Kṛṣṇa



Photo: ISKCON Melbourne

we are sincere in wanting to worship Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, by His omnipotence, presents Himself in this form we can see. At the present moment we cannot see God with our gross senses. Our present ears cannot even hear about the transcendental name of Kṛṣṇa, but Kṛṣṇa is so kind that He descends as *arcā-vigraha*. This is Kṛṣṇa’s special mercy. We should not think Kṛṣṇa is formless; He is actually existing eternally in His transcendental form.

*cintāmaṇi-prakara-sadmasu kalpa-vṛkṣa-
lakṣāvṛteṣu surabhīr abhipālayantam
lakṣmī-sahasra-śata-sambhrama-sevyaṁānam
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

“I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, the first progenitor, who is tending the cows, fulfilling all desire, in abodes built

by these senses, but if we follow the *śāstras*, it will be possible to see Him. How? We must engage in devotional service and surrender unto Kṛṣṇa. In the words of Kṛṣṇa:

*teṣāṁ satata-yuktānāṁ
bhajatāṁ priti-pūrvakam
dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ
yena mām upayānti te*

“To those who are constantly devoted and worship Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me.” (Bg. 10.10)

If you do not develop that love of Kṛṣṇa, then you cannot see Kṛṣṇa. But when you are fully developed in Kṛṣṇa’s love, you will see Kṛṣṇa at every moment.

*premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena
santah sadaiva hrdayeṣu vilokayanti
yaṁ śyāmasundaram acintya-guṇa-svarūpam
govindam ādi-puruṣam taṁ ahaṁ bhajāmi*

“I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is Śyāmasundara, Kṛṣṇa Himself, with inconceivable innumerable attributes, whom the pure devotees see in their heart of hearts with the eye of devotion tinged with the salve of love.” (Bs. 5.38)

This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is very scientific. No one should think that it is a sentimental movement. By the grace of Lord Caitanya, Lord Kṛṣṇa will show special mercy to the fallen conditioned souls of the world in this age. The mercy of Lord Caitanya has made Kṛṣṇa consciousness very easily available. Therefore Rūpa Gosvāmi praised Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu as the most munificent incarnation: *namo mahā-vadānyāya kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te*. The word *vadānyā* refers to one who gives charity, and the word *mahā* means great. Caitanya Mahāprabhu is addressed as *mahā-vadānyā* because He distributes *kṛṣṇa-premā* (love of Kṛṣṇa) generously to everyone. That is Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s special mercy. Just at the right moment, Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to claim the fallen conditioned souls. All my disciples were on the platform of the reprobates Jagāi and Mādhāi, but simply by chanting this Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, they have changed. Now they are chanting and dancing in pure love of Kṛṣṇa. So what was possible five thousand years ago and five hundred years ago is still possible today if we but take

to this chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa.

We must also take care to cleanse the impurities from the mirror of the mind, or, in the words of Lord Caitanya, *ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam*. All the problems of the world are due to an impure condition of the heart resulting from contamination by the modes of material nature; otherwise every man, every living entity, is as good as Kṛṣṇa because everyone is part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa claims all living entities as His parts and parcels:

*mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke
jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ
manaḥ śaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi
prakṛti-sthāni karṣati*

“The living entities in this conditioned world are My eternal, fragmental parts. Because of conditioned life, they are struggling very hard with the six senses, which include the mind.” (Bg. 15.7)

“... actually there is no difference between Kṛṣṇa and His form.”

Thus if Kṛṣṇa is *sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ*, we are also *sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ*. However, we are now covered by these material bodies and minds, and we have to cleanse them. That is not impossible. It is made possible by the chanting of the names of Kṛṣṇa. The name of Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Person, are nondifferent. Lord Caitanya has also confirmed this.

*nāmnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktis
tatārpiṭā nīyamitāḥ smarāṇe na kālah
etādṛśī tava kṛpā bhāgavan mamāpi
durdaivam idṛśam ihājani nānurāgaḥ*

“O my Lord, Your holy name alone can render all benediction to living beings, and thus You have hundreds and millions of names like Kṛṣṇa and Govinda. In these transcendental names You have invested all Your transcendental energies. There are not even hard and fast rules for chanting these names. O my Lord, out of kindness You enable us to easily approach You by Your holy names, but I am so unfortunate that I have no attraction for them.” (Śikṣāṣṭaka 2)

We do not arbitrarily say that

everyone should chant Kṛṣṇa, but we chant Kṛṣṇa because Caitanya Mahāprabhu chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa. However, if one has any other names for God, one can chant them also. Caitanya Mahāprabhu verified that God has many names (*nāmnām akāri bahudhā*). However, no one should just make up a name of God. The name must be real, not imaginary. Kṛṣṇa’s name, for instance, has been chanted from time immemorial. The name Kṛṣṇa is found in *Bhagavad-gītā* and in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was written five thousand years ago, so Kṛṣṇa’s name is not some new invention. In the *Atharva Veda* Kṛṣṇa’s name is also there. We are not inventing a name by chanting Kṛṣṇa. It is the real name of God. That is indicated by all the *śāstras*. *Kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam* (Bhāg. 1.3.28). Nor should we think that Kṛṣṇa is a Hindu Kṛṣṇa or an Indian Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is neither Indian nor Hindu. He does not belong to any particular religion. He is the father of all living entities, as stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*sarva-yoniṣu kaunteya
mūrtayaḥ sambhavanti yāḥ
tāsāṁ brahma mahad yonir
ahaṁ bija-pradaḥ pitā*

“It should be understood that all species of life, O son of Kunti, are made possible by birth in this material nature, and that I am the seed-giving father.” (Bg. 14.4)

There are 8,400,000 species of life, including aquatics, trees, plants, insects, birds, bees and uncivilized men. Kṛṣṇa claims all of these as His sons; therefore Kṛṣṇa is not for any particular country or religion. Why does there have to be a particular religion? Religion is one. There cannot be two religions. If there are two, one of them must be false. There is only one religion, and that religion is surrender unto God. There cannot be any other. Where there is no surrender unto God, and where there is no process of developing love for God, there is no religion. Many people execute some *dharma*, or religious system, but do not know whether they are making progress or not. But this Kṛṣṇa consciousness can be directly perceived because it is real religion. If we are hungry and eat something, we do not require a certificate from others to tell whether we are satisfied. We receive satisfaction simply by eating. The devotees who

have taken to this real religion, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, are feeling progress; otherwise why are they coming with me? What is this country of India in comparison with their countries? It is poverty-stricken. These Americans and Europeans are all rich men's sons, and I have not bribed them. They have followed me here to India because they are feeling progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They are understanding the real meaning of religion and are executing the orders of Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavad-gītā*, wherein Kṛṣṇa says:

*man-manā bhava mad-bhaktō
mad-yājī mām namaskuru
mām evaiśyasi yuktvaivam
ātmānam mat-parāyaṇaḥ*

“Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, offer obeisances and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me.” (Bg. 9.34)

Unfortunately many people read *Bhagavad-gītā* but are misled by so-called commentators. Many so-called learned scholars who comment on *Bhagavad-gītā* are actually envious of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa mentions such envious people in the very text of *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*tān ahaṁ diviśataḥ krūrān
samsāreṣu narādhamān
keṣipāmy ajasram aśubhān
āsurīṣv eva yoniṣu*

“Those who are envious and mischievous, who are the lowest among men, are cast by Me into the ocean of material existence, into various demoniac species of life.” (Bg. 16.19)

As stated in the Seventh Chapter, one who does not surrender to Kṛṣṇa is *narādhamā*, lowest among men. Why? Because the human form of life is meant for developing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The animals cannot develop Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and similarly if a human being does not develop Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he is low on the scale of living entities. As the *Vedānta-sūtra* enjoins, this life is meant for inquiring about Brahman, about God.

This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is therefore important, for we are giving every living entity the chance to make his life successful. As Kṛṣṇa states:

*mām upetya punar janma
duḥkhālayam aśāsvatam
nāpnuvanti mahātmānaḥ
sāmsiddhīm paramām gatāḥ*

“After attaining Me, the great souls, who are *yogīs* in devotion, never return to this temporary world, which is full of miseries, because they have attained the highest perfection.” (Bg. 8.15)

This is the highest perfection of life — to understand and approach Kṛṣṇa.

Our humble request is that everyone take to this Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It does not matter what position a person may be in. Kṛṣṇa says:

*mām hi pārtha vyapāśritya
ye 'pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayaḥ
striyo vaiśyās tathā sūdrās
te 'pi yānti parām gatim*

“O son of Pṛthā, those who take shelter in Me, though they may be of lower birth, can approach the supreme destination.” (Bg. 9.32)

One can therefore approach Kṛṣṇa regardless of birth or situation. That is the verdict of all the scriptures and all the *Vedas*. If we just try to understand Kṛṣṇa, our lives will be successful.

Kṛṣṇa can be understood by two processes, and one is this process of *bhakti-yoga*. One can also try to understand Kṛṣṇa by the process of philosophical speculation, or *jñāna*. But if one takes to *bhakti-yoga*, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, his knowledge will actually be perfect.

*bahūnām janmanām ante
jñānavān mām prapadyate
vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti
sa mahātmā sudurlabhah*

“After many births and deaths, he who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare.” (Bg. 7.19)

In this verse the word *mahātmā*, “great soul,” refers to an unflinching devotee of Kṛṣṇa. One who has unflinching faith in Kṛṣṇa has to be accepted as a *sādhu*, a holy man, even though his behavior may not be in order.

*api cet sudurācāro
bhajate mām ananya-bhāk
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ
samyag vyavasito hi saḥ*

“Even if one commits the most abominable actions, if he is engaged in devotional service, he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated.” (Bg. 9.30)

We must develop love of God. That is the actual test. At the present moment we cannot perceive Kṛṣṇa; we have to

purify our senses. *Sa vai pumsām paro dharma yato bhaktir adhoḥśaje*. That religion by which we develop love for the Supreme Lord, who is beyond sense perception, is the supreme religion. The process of worship is very simple, and Kṛṣṇa gives it in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam
yo me bhaktyā prayacchati
tad ahaṁ bhakty-upahṛtam
āśnāmi prayatātmanah*

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

Of course Kṛṣṇa's process of eating is different from ours. If we offer Kṛṣṇa a plate of food in the temple, after He eats we will see that the food is still there. That is the nature of Kṛṣṇa's eating. We do not know how it is that Kṛṣṇa eats, but because He says He eats, we have to understand that He does.

Our request therefore is that everyone chant this Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. One's heart will be cleansed gradually, and one will approach Kṛṣṇa. I did not tell these boys and girls from America and Europe to become my disciples, but when they began chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* they automatically did. I also requested that they not take meat, fish or eggs, that they not have illicit connection with women, that they not take any form of intoxication including tea, coffee or smoking, and that they not gamble. If you believe in these conditions, and if you can accept them, then I will accept you. Our acceptance of disciples is not a bluff. If I would have told them to do whatever they liked and become my disciples, then millions would have come, but because of these restrictions, only a few of them have come. But numbers do not matter. I am not after disciples; I only want to see that one man has understood Kṛṣṇa. That is my mission, and that is not very difficult. Please, then, try to understand Kṛṣṇa. That is my request. The process is so simple that if you chant this Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, your heart will be cleansed. Then you will understand Kṛṣṇa. And if you are curious to know Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa will give you the intelligence. The opportunity is there. Don't misuse this human form of life and forget Kṛṣṇa. Try to understand, develop your Kṛṣṇa consciousness and be happy.



Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego—these are the eight inferior energies of Kṛṣṇa that make up the material world.

But beyond these material energies is Kṛṣṇa's superior energy, consisting of the living beings who are struggling with material nature and who are sustaining the universe.

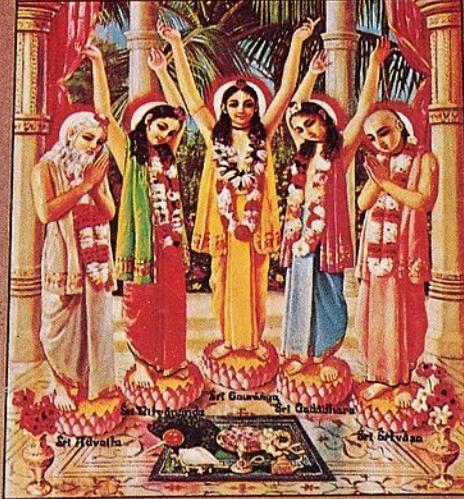
There is more to a person than just the outward material body. And then, too, there is even more than the mind and intellect. Within the body and mind is that intangible "something," that spiritual force that gives life to this material universe. But what is that spiritual energy within us? Where does it come from? Where is it going? If you've ever asked yourself these questions, you'll find this book uniquely valuable.

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