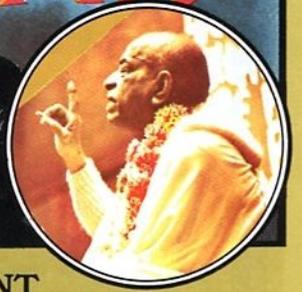


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



# BACK TO GODHEAD



Vol.10 No.12

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



# A SHORT STATEMENT OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS

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



Photo: Gopavindēśa dāśa

Devotees outside the Los Angeles Center of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

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

# BACK TO GODHEAD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

Vol.10 No.12

## FOUNDER

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

His Divine Grace

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## PRONUNCIATION OF SANSKRIT WORDS

Sanskrit words and names in BACK TO GODHEAD are spelled according to a system that scholars throughout the world use to show how to pronounce each word. Vowels in Sanskrit are pronounced almost as in Italian. The sound of the short *a* is like the *u* in *but*. The long *ā* is like the *a* in *far* and held twice as long as the short *a*, and *e* is like the *a* in *evade*. Long *ī* is like the *i* in *pique*. The vowel *ī* is pronounced like the *ri* in the English word *ring*. The *ē* 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 spirants *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.

## ON THE COVER

*Being an incarnation of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is also dear to all living creatures. When He traversed the holy forests of Vṛndāvana, India, five hundred years ago, all the animals, plants, and even the insects became very jubilant. Cows followed Him, peacocks danced, cuckoos sang, and the deer came and licked His body. (An original oil painting by Muralidhara dāsa.)*

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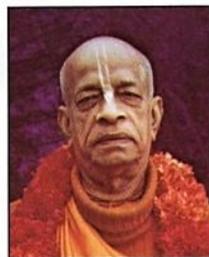
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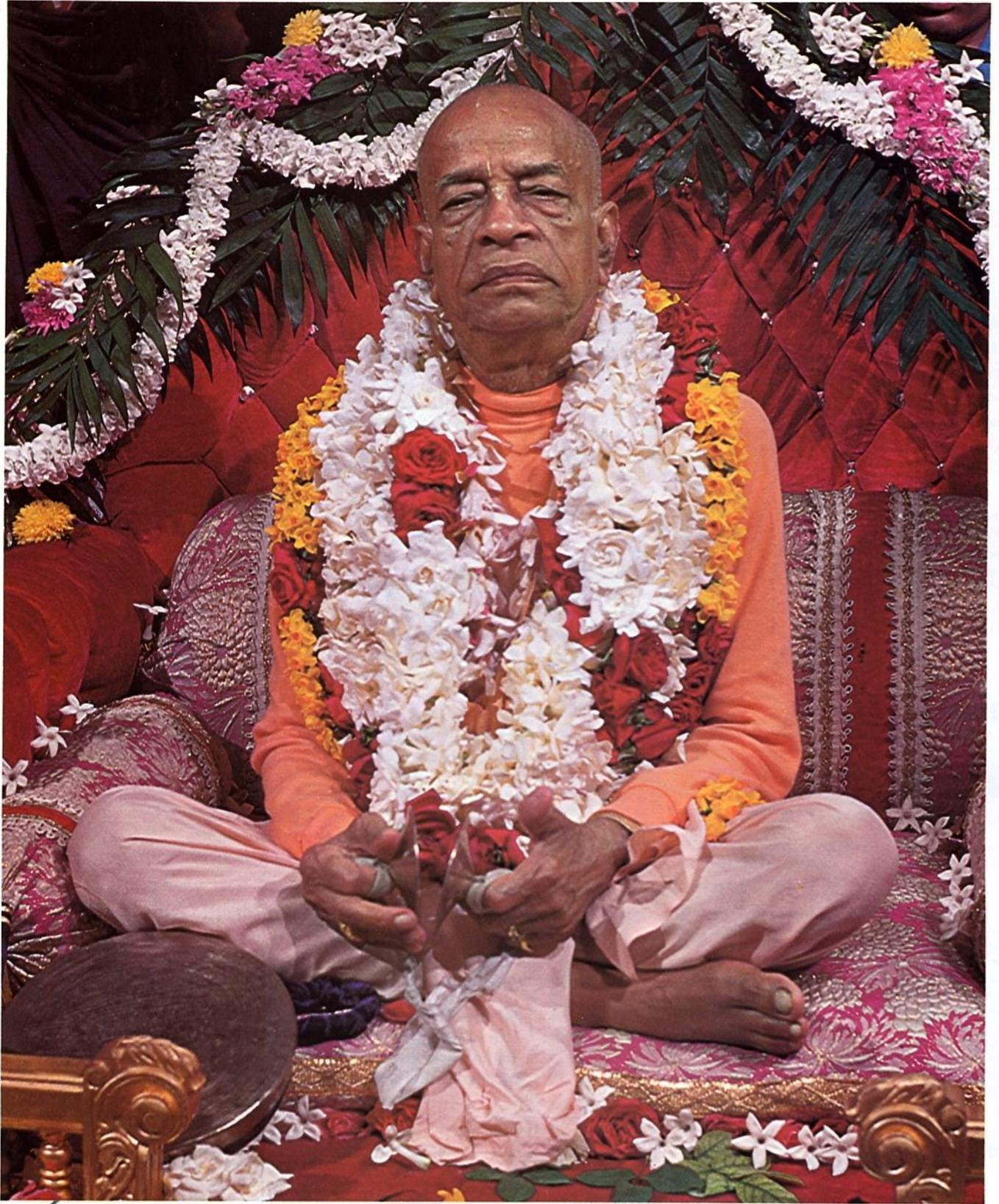
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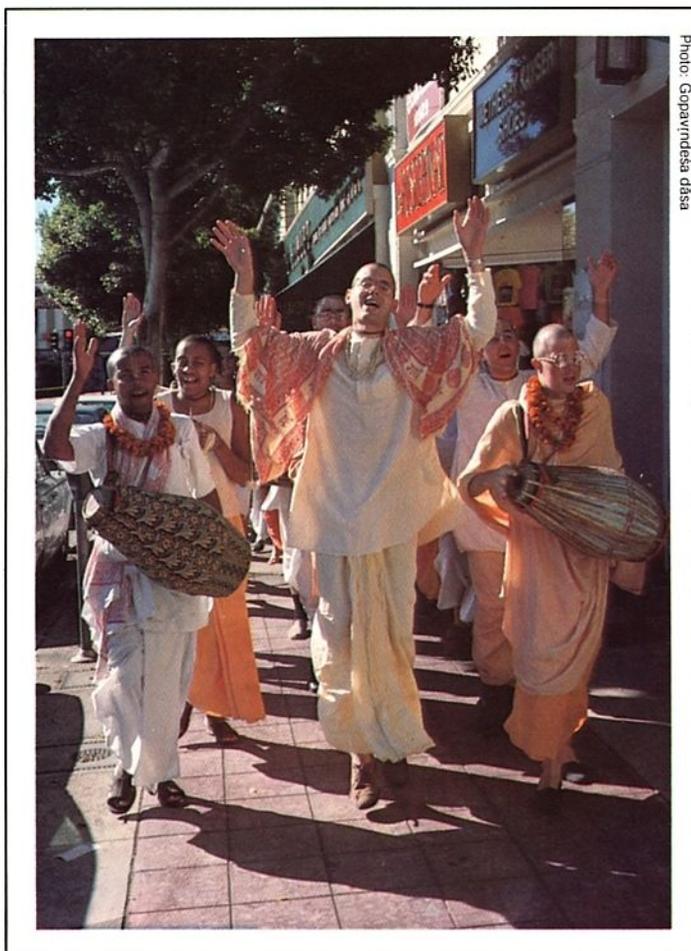
The founder and original editor of BACK TO GODHEAD is His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Śrīla Prabhupāda first came to the United States in September of 1965, and by October of 1966 he and his first American student had begun the International Society for Krishna Consciousness in a small storefront in New York City.

From the beginning, BACK TO GODHEAD magazine was an integral part of ISKCON. In fact, it has often been called "the backbone of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement" by Śrīla Prabhupāda, who began writing, printing and distributing it himself in 1944. Over the years, BACK TO GODHEAD has changed in many ways, but its purpose has remained one: to present topics concerning Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, for the spiritual enlightenment of its readers.



✓  
**His Divine Grace**  
**A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda**  
*Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness*

# HARE KṚṢṆA, HARE KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA, HARE HARE HARE RĀMA, HARE RĀMA RĀMA RĀMA, HARE HARE



It's natural to praise someone who does something wonderful, and God does the most wonderful things of all. He creates the entire cosmic manifestation, orbiting countless planets and stars with astonishing skill and artistry. He gives light to the sun and

fragrance to a rose, and He invests life in all that lives. Whatever wealth, wisdom, beauty, strength, fame or renunciation we see in this world is merely a fragment of His opulence. He directs the wanderings of all living beings by expanding Himself into everyone's heart. Indeed, the entire universe is pervaded by His energy.

He gives humanity great scriptures revealing the

eternal truth about Himself, which can liberate us from all suffering, and He sends His representatives to teach it. Moreover, He Himself descends into the material world and performs superhuman activities to attract and purify our minds.

He knows everything—past, present and future—and never forgets any service rendered to Him, no matter how small. His glorious qualities are unlimited, and He is known by millions of names, like Kṛṣṇa and Rāma. The Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is both a glorification of God and an appeal to be engaged in His service. Find out more in this issue of BACK TO GODHEAD.



## Can science create life in the laboratory?

On a morning walk with his disciples, Śrīla Prabhupāda explains why it's not possible to produce life from chemicals, now or in the future.

# LIFE COMES FROM LIFE

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** The whole world of science and technology is running on the false idea that life is born from matter. We cannot allow this nonsensical theory to go unchallenged. Life does not come from matter. Matter is generated from life. This is not theory; it is fact. Science is based on an incorrect theory; therefore all its calculations and conclusions are wrong, and people are suffering because of this. When all these mistaken modern scientific theories are corrected, people will become happy. So we must challenge the scientists and defeat them. Otherwise they will mislead the entire society.

Matter changes in six phases: birth, growth, maintenance, production of by-products, dwindling and death. But the life within matter, the spirit soul, is

eternal; it goes through no such changes. Life *appears* to be developing and decaying, but actually it is simply passing through each of these six phases until the material body can no longer be maintained. Then the old body dies and the soul enters a new body. When our clothing is old and worn, we change it. Similarly, one day our bodies become old and useless, and we pass on to a new body.

As Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.13), *dehino 'smin yathā dehe kaumāraṁ yauvanaṁ jarā/ tathā dehāntara-prāptir:* "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." And a little later (2.18): *antavanta ime dehā nityasyoktāḥ śarīraṇaḥ.* This means that only the material body of the indestructible and eternal entity is subject to destruction. This material body is perishable, but the life within the body is *nitya*, eternal.

According to the *Vedas*, the measurement of the soul within the body is one ten-thousandth part of the tip of a hair. This is very small; in fact, it is atomic. Yet because of that atomic spiritual energy, my body is working. Is it so difficult to understand? Suppose a man thinks himself very stout and strong. Why is he stout and strong? Only because within his body is a

**CREATION.** Innumerable universes are generated from the transcendental body of Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu, an expansion of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the original Supreme Personality of Godhead.



small spiritual spark. But as soon as the spiritual spark is gone, his body dies and his strength and vigor become void. If scientists say that matter is the cause and origin of life, then let them bring just one dead man back to life by injecting him with chemicals. But this they cannot do.

[Śrīla Prabhupāda points at a dead tree with his cane.] Now here is matter. Formerly leaves and twigs were growing from this tree. Why are they not growing now? Can the scientists answer this question?

**Karandhara:** They would say the chemical composition has changed.

must be the case, since all the chemicals that are necessary to support life are still there, yet the tree is dead.

Here is another example: suppose I am living in an apartment, and then I leave it. I am gone, but many other living entities remain there—ants, spiders and so forth. It is not true that simply because I have left the apartment, it can no longer accommodate life. Other living entities are still living there. It is simply that I—an individual living being—have left. The chemicals in the tree are like the apartment; they are simply the environment for the individual living force—the soul—to act through. Thus the scientists will never be able to produce life in the chemical laboratory.

The so-called scientists say that life begins from chemicals. But the real question is, “Where have the chemicals come from?” The chemicals come from life, and this means that life has mystic power. For example, an orange tree contains many oranges, and each orange contains chemicals—citric acid and others. So where have these chemicals come from? Obviously they have come from the life within the tree. The scientists are missing the origin of the chemicals. They have started their investigation from the chemicals, but they cannot identify the origin of the chemicals. Chemicals come from the Supreme Life—God. Just as the living body of a man produces many chemicals, the Supreme Life (the Supreme Lord) is producing all the chemicals found in the atmosphere, in the water, in humans, in animals and in the earth. And that is called mystic power. Unless the mystic power of the Supreme Lord is accepted, there is no solution to the problem of the origin of life.

**Dr. Singh:** The scientists will reply that they cannot believe in mystic power.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** But they must explain the origin of the chemicals. Anyone can see that an ordinary tree is producing many chemicals; they cannot deny it. But how does it produce them? Since they cannot answer this, they must accept that the living force has mystic power. I cannot explain how my fingernail is growing out of my finger; it is beyond the power of my brain. In other



**“The so-called scientists say that life begins from chemicals. But the real question is, ‘Where have the chemicals come from?’”**

**Dr. Singh:** Since scientists cannot see the spirit soul, they say its existence is very doubtful.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** How can they see it? It is too small to see. Where is such seeing power?

**Dr. Singh:** Still, they want to sense it by some means.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** If you inject just one grain of deadly poison into someone, he immediately dies. No one can see the poison or how it acts. But the poison is acting nevertheless. In the same way, the *Vedas* say that because the minute particle called the soul is within the body, the whole body is working nicely. If I pinch myself, I immediately feel it because I am conscious all over my skin. But as soon as the soul is absent, which is the case when my body dies, you can take this same skin and cut it and chop it, and no one will protest. Why is this simple thing so hard to understand? Is this not detecting spirit?

**Dr. Singh:** That is the soul. But what about God?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** First of all let us understand the soul. The soul is a small God. If you understand the sample, then you can understand the whole.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** All right, then if they are so advanced in knowledge of chemistry, they must supply the proper chemicals to make branches and leaves grow again.

**Brahmānanda Svāmī:** Knowledge means that one must be able to demonstrate his theory. They should be able to show in their laboratories that life is caused by a combination of chemicals.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, the scientific method means first observation, then hypothesis and then demonstration. But these scientists cannot demonstrate their hypothesis. They simply observe and then speak nonsense.

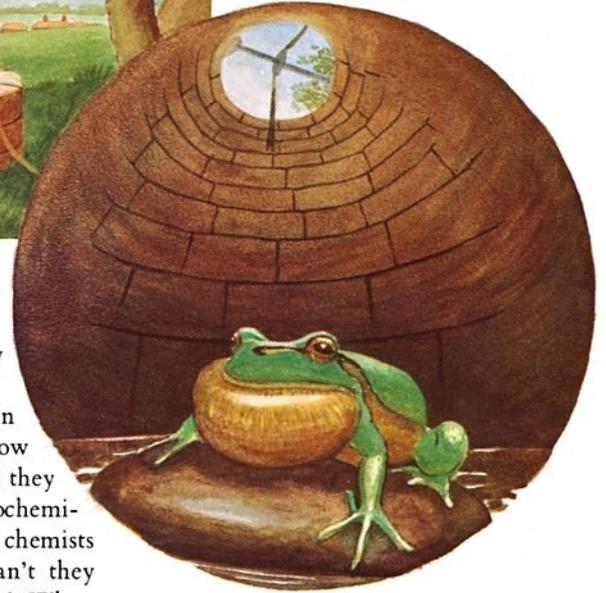
Scientists say that the chemicals are the cause of life. But all the chemicals that were there when the tree was living are still present. And life-energy is also there. There are thousands of microbes in the tree, and they are all living entities. No one can claim that life-energy is lacking in the body of this tree.

**Dr. Singh:** But what about the life-energy of the tree itself?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, that is the difference. The living force is individual, and the particular individual living entity which was the tree has left. This



Like a frog who can't accept the existence of anything outside his own well, a materialistic scientist denies the existence of God because God is outside his limited sensory experience.



words, it is growing by inconceivable potency, or *acintya-śakti*. So if *acintya-śakti* exists in an ordinary being, imagine how much *acintya-śakti* God possesses.

The difference between God and me is that although I have the same potencies as God, I can produce only a small quantity of chemicals, whereas He can produce enormous quantities. I can produce a little water in the form of perspiration, but God can produce the seas. Analysis of one drop of seawater gives you the qualitative analysis of the sea, without any mistake. Similarly, the ordinary living being is part and parcel of God, so by analyzing the living beings we can begin to understand God. In God there is great mystic potency. God's mystic potency is working swiftly, exactly like an electric machine. Machines operate by certain energy, and they are so nicely made that all the work is done simply by pushing a button. Similarly, God said, "Let there be creation," and there was creation. Considered in this way, the workings of nature are not very difficult to understand. God has such wonderful potencies that the creation, on His order alone, immediately takes place.

**Brahmānanda Svāmī:** Scientists don't accept God or *acintya-śakti*.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** That is their rascaldom. God exists, and His *acintya-śakti* also exists.

**Karandhara:** Scientists say that life was created biochemically.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** And I say to them: "Why don't you create life? Your biology and chemistry are very ad-

vanced, so why don't you create life?"

**Karandhara:** They say they will create life in the future.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** When in the future? If the scientists know the creative process, why can't they create life now? If life has a biochemical origin, and if biologists and chemists are so advanced, then why can't they create life in their laboratories? When this crucial point is raised, they say, "We shall do it in the future." Why in the future? That is nonsense. Trust no future, however pleasant. What is the meaning of their advancement? They are talking nonsense.

**Karandhara:** They say that they are right on the verge of creating life.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** But that is also the future in a different way. They must accept that they still do not know the truth about the origin of life. Since they are expecting to be able to create life in the future, presently their knowledge must be imperfect. Their proposal is something like giving someone a post-dated check. Suppose I owe you \$10,000 and I say, "Yes, I will pay you the entire sum with this post-dated check. Is that all right?" If you are intelligent, you will reply, "At present, give me at least five dollars in cash so I can see something tangible." Similarly, the scientists cannot produce even a single blade of grass by biochemistry, yet still they claim that life is produced from matter. What is this nonsense? Is no one questioning this? We can prove that life began from life. Here is the proof: When a father

begets a child, the father is living and the child is living. But where is the scientist's proof that life comes from matter? We can prove that life begins from life, and we can also prove that the original life is Kṛṣṇa. But what evidence exists that a child is ever born out of a dead stone? The scientists cannot prove that life comes from matter. They are leaving that aside for the future.

**Karandhara:** The basis of what the scientists call "scientific integrity" is that they talk only about what they can experience through their senses.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Then they are suffering from what we call "Doctor Frog's philosophy." There was once a frog who had lived all his life in a well. One day a friend visited him and informed him of the existence of the Atlantic Ocean.

"Oh, what is this Atlantic Ocean?" asked the frog in the well.

"It is a vast body of water," his friend replied.

"How vast? Is it double the size of this well?"

"Oh no, much larger," his friend replied.

“How much larger? Ten times the size?”

In this way the frog went on calculating. But what was the possibility of his ever understanding the depths and far reaches of the great ocean? Our faculties, experience and powers of speculation are always limited. The frog was always thinking in terms relative to his well. He had no power to think otherwise. Similarly, the scientists are estimating the Absolute Truth, the cause of all causes, with their imperfect senses and minds, and thus they are bound to be bewildered. The essential fault of the so-called scientists is that they have adopted the inductive process to arrive at their conclusions. For example, if a scientist wants to determine whether or not man is mortal by the inductive process, he must study every man to try to discover if some or one of them may be immortal. The scientist says, “I cannot accept the proposition that all men are mortal. There may be some men who are immortal. I have not yet seen every man. Therefore how can I accept that man is mortal?” This is called the inductive process. And the deductive process means that your father, your teacher or your *guru* says that man is mortal, and you accept it.

**Dr. Singh:** So there is an ascending process of gaining knowledge and a descending process?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. The ascending process will never be successful because it relies on information gathered through the senses, and the senses are imperfect. So we accept the descending process.

God cannot be known by the inductive process. Therefore He is called *adhokṣaja*, which means “unknowable by direct perception.” The scientists say there is no God because they are trying to understand by direct perception. But He is *adhokṣaja*; therefore the scientists are ignorant of God because they are missing the method of knowing Him. In order to understand transcendental science, one must approach a bona fide spiritual master, hear from him submissively, and render service to him. Lord Kṛṣṇa explains this in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.34): *tad viddhi pranīpātena pariprasnena sevayā*.

**Dr. Singh:** There is a scientific journal

called *Nature*. It contains articles concerning natural products like plants and animals, but it does not mention God—only nature.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** We may correctly observe that plants are being produced by nature, but we must ask, “What has produced nature?” To ask *this* question is intelligence.

**Dr. Singh:** The scientists don’t think about that.



**“Nature means energy, and as soon as you speak of energy, you must accept that there is a source of that energy.”**

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** So they are fools. As soon as we speak of nature, the next question should be, “Whose nature?” For instance, I speak of *my* nature, and you speak of *your* nature. Therefore, as soon as nature is mentioned, the next inquiry should be, “Whose nature?”

Nature means energy, and as soon as you speak of energy, you must accept that there is a source of that energy. For example, the source of electric energy is the electric powerhouse. Electricity is not produced automatically. We must install a powerhouse and a generator. Similarly, in the *Vedas* it is said that material nature is working under Kṛṣṇa’s direction.

**Dr. Singh:** So do you mean to say that science has started from an intermediate point—not from the original point?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, that is it exactly. They are ignorant of the origin. The scientists start from one point—but where does that point come from? That they do not know, in spite of vast research. One has to accept that the original source is God, who is full of all mystic powers and from whom everything emanates. He Himself says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.8): *aham sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate*, “I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me.” Our conclusions are not based on blind faith; they are most scientific. Matter comes from life. In life—in the origin—there are unlimited material resources; that is the great mystery of creation.

Modern scientific research is just like Sāṅkhya philosophy, which analyzes material elements. Sāṅkhya means “to count.” We are also Sāṅkhya philosophers to some extent because we count and analyze the material elements; this is land, this is water, this is air, this is sunshine, this is fire. Furthermore, I can count my mind, my intelligence and my ego. Beyond my ego, however, I cannot count. But Kṛṣṇa says that there is existence beyond the ego, and that existence is the living force—the spirit soul. This is what the scientists do not know. They think that life is merely a combination of material elements, but Kṛṣṇa denies this in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. *Apareyam itas tv anyām prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām*: “Besides this inferior nature there is a superior energy of Mine.” (Bg. 7.5) The inferior energy is the material elements, and the superior energy is the living entity.

*bhūmir āpo 'nalo vāyuh  
khaṁ mano buddhir eva ca  
ahaṅkāra itiyāṁ me  
bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā*

“Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego—altogether these eight comprise My separated material energies.” (Bg. 7.4) Kṛṣṇa explains here in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that *vāyu* (gas) comes from Him, and that finer than the gases is *kha* (ether). Finer than ether is the mind, finer than the mind is intelligence, and finer than the intelligence is the soul. But the scientists do not know this. They can perceive only gross things. They mention *vāyu*, but



**“Material elements are not creative! The soul is creative. No one can create life with only matter, and matter cannot create itself.”** ✓

where does the *vāyu* come from? Where does the gas come from?

**Dr. Singh:** That they cannot answer.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** But *we* can answer. We have the knowledge that gas comes from *kha*, or ether, and ether comes from mind, mind comes from intelligence, and intelligence comes from Kṛṣṇa’s superior energy, the spirit soul.

**Dr. Singh:** Are both inferior and superior energies studied in Sāṅkhya philosophy.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** No. Sāṅkhya philosophers do not know of superior energy. They simply analyze the material elements, just as the scientists do. Neither the scientists nor the Sāṅkhya philosophers know anything of the spirit soul. They are simply analyzing Kṛṣṇa’s material energy.

**Dr. Singh:** They are analyzing the creative material elements?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Material elements are not creative! The *soul* is creative. No one can create life with only matter, and matter cannot create itself. You, a living entity, can mix hydrogen and oxygen to create water. But matter itself has no creative energy. If you place a bottle of hydrogen near a bottle of oxygen, will they automatically combine without your help?

**Dr. Singh:** No. They must be mixed.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, the superior energy—the living entity—is required. Oxygen and hydrogen are inferior energy, but when the superior energy mixes them, then they can become water.

Inferior energy has no power unless superior energy is involved. This sea [indicating the Pacific Ocean] is calm and quiet. But when superior force—air—pushes it, high waves are created. The sea has no power without the superior force. Similarly, there is another force superior to the air, and another and another, until we arrive at Kṛṣṇa, the most superior force. This is real research. Suppose a railroad train is just starting to move. The engine pushes one car, which pushes another and so on until the entire train is moving. And the whole motion originates with the engineer, a living entity. Similarly, in the cosmic creation, Kṛṣṇa gives the first push, and then, by means of many successive pushes, the entire cosmic manifestation comes into being. This is explained in *Bhagavad-gītā*: *mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ sūyate sa-carācaram*. “This material nature is working under My direction, O son of Kuntī, and is producing all moving and unmoving beings. By its rule this manifestation is created and annihilated again and again.” (Bg. 9.10)

And a little later:

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

“All species of life are made possible by birth in material nature, and I am the seed-giving father.” (Bg. 14.4) For example, if we sow a banyan seed, a huge tree eventually grows up and produces millions of new seeds. Each of these seeds, in turn, produces another tree with millions of new seeds, and so on. So Kṛṣṇa is the original seed-giving father.

Unfortunately, the scientists only observe the immediate cause, they do not perceive the remote cause. There are two causes—the immediate cause and remote cause. Kṛṣṇa is described in the *Vedas* as *sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*, “the cause of all causes.” If you understand the cause of all causes, then you understand everything. *Yasmin vijñāte sarvam evaṁ vijñātām bhavati*: “If you know the original cause, the later, subordinate causes are automatically known.” Although the scientists are searching after the original cause, when the *Vedas*, which contain perfect knowledge, give the original cause, they won’t accept. They keep to their partial, imperfect knowledge. 🌱

# How the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement Came to Africa

**T**he story of how the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement came to Africa starts in 1971 in the United States. I was in Tallahassee, Florida, teaching an experimental course in Kṛṣṇa consciousness at the state university, when I received a letter from my spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, instructing me to go immediately to West Pakistan for preaching work. I had very little money, and I knew the trip to Pakistan would be long and arduous. However, a disciple takes his spiritual master's order as his very life and soul, and I was determined that nothing would stop me.

The first leg of my journey took me to New York City, where a young *brahmācārī*\* assistant joined me; then the two of us flew to London. From London we went to Paris via hydro-plane and rail. In Paris I had a good opportunity to preach at Dauphine University, the Sorbonne, and to some *yoga* groups. After a few days in Paris, we boarded the Orient Express for a forty-eight-hour train ride to Istanbul, Turkey.

First we crossed the French, Swiss and Italian Alps and then descended onto the broad plains of Italy, with its many grape and olive farms. We saw Genoa, Venice and Trieste pass by our windows and then entered Yugoslavia, with its broad collective farms of peasants. From Belgrade our route took us to Sophia, Bulgaria, then through northern Greece

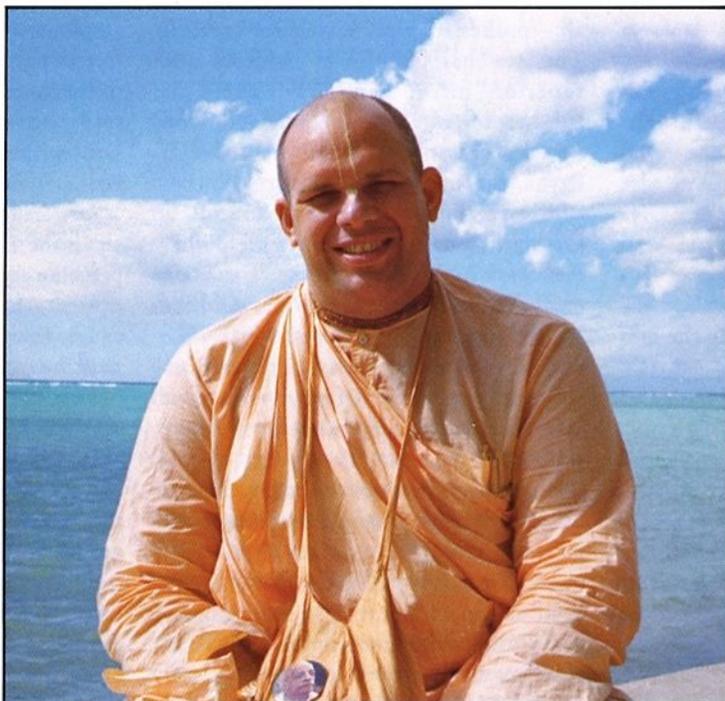
and on into the European side of Turkey, where at last we entered Istanbul.

**I**n my compartment on the train during the entire trip was a Turkish lady who had brought along an ample supply of French bread and cheese. I had prepared some very nice *prasāda*\* consisting of *upma* (farina with butter, peppers and spices), various vegetables, fried *puris* (a type of flat bread), and some delicious sweets. When I offered some to the woman on the first day, she refused, preferring her bread and cheese. But on the second day she accepted some and liked it very much. In fact, she ate sumptuously, and I took the opportunity to talk with her about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. She was very favorable and said she would pray to God for our success.

From this incident I realized how important *prasāda* distribution is in spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. By eating *prasāda*, a person gradually becomes spiritually purified and receptive to the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

In Istanbul we met two boys—an American and a Canadian—who were both intelligent and spiritually inclined. They were going to India and decided to accompany us to Pakistan. During the two-day train ride to the Turkish hill-town of Erzurum, the next stop on our journey, I talked constantly to the two boys about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The Canadian was going to India on a spiritual quest and was writing a journal of his

by  
**His Holiness Brahmānanda Svāmī**



\*single male student

\*Food offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa

daily thoughts and experiences. He had titled it "A Journey to the East," after the famous book by Hermann Hesse, and he was writing into it everything I said about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He was also avidly reading our books. By the time we reached Erzurum, he had learned all the prayers for offering *prasāda* and was also chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* on *japa* beads.

**T**he train pulled into Erzurum in the morning, and we all went to a nearby hotel to wait for the bus to Tabriz, Iran, which was scheduled to leave the following morning. Since we had a whole day, we decided to go out on *saṅkīrtana* (congregational chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*). So we took our drums, *karatālas* (hand cymbals) and some pamphlets, went out into the village square, sat down and started chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. A large crowd of several hundred curious villagers quickly formed. Suddenly my chanting was interrupted by a tap on the shoulder. When I looked up I saw that we were surrounded by many policemen and plainclothes detectives. They took us to the police station and confiscated our passports. (Only later did I learn that they suspected us of being Christian missionaries. In Turkey, preaching Christianity is against the law.) They also took all our books and pamphlets and sent them off to the university for translation. They wouldn't let us call the American embassy in Ankara, and worst of all, none of our captors spoke English.

After several days in jail, we were finally permitted to live outside in our hotel, although the police kept our passports so we could not leave town. We then placed a telephone call to the American embassy, but after several days of "investigating" our case, we had still heard nothing concerning our release. Finally, we made our way to the university and met a professor there who had studied in America. He was quite friendly toward us when we explained our situation. After he gave a favorable report about us to the police, they decided to let us leave and continue our journey. They still wanted to keep our books, though, and I had to become very forceful with them and demand that the books be returned. At last, seven days behind schedule, we boarded the bus for Tabriz, marveling at how Lord Kṛṣṇa protects His devotees.

On the bus to Tabriz, the Canadian and American boys decided to go their own way. I explained to them that if they were going to India, they should make it a point to visit Vṛndāvana. Ninety miles south of Delhi, Vṛndāvana is the transcendental abode where Kṛṣṇa appeared five thousand years ago to exhibit His extraordinary pastimes. I later found out that the Canadian boy did indeed go to Vṛndāvana and stayed with one of our devotees.

**W**e spent one night in Tabriz and then went on to Tehran and Meshed. In Meshed we got our visas for Afghanistan and boarded a bus which took us across the border into the city of Herat. From Herat we rode across the desolate terrain of central Afghanistan until we came to Kandahar. The use of opium and marijuana was very common there, not only among the local population, but also among many American and European hippies. The next town we reached was Kabul, where we made the last connection before entering Pakistan. After riding through the famous

Khyber Pass, an incredible masterpiece of nature, we finally descended onto the warm plains of Pakistan. Our bus let us down in Peshawar, and from there we took a train to Lahore.

I had planned to make Lahore my destination because it is the leading university city in Pakistan. First I visited the venerable Punjab University, where I spoke with the chairman of the philosophy and religion department. He thought Kṛṣṇa consciousness was a sectarian religion. I explained to him that far from being a sectarian religion, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the essence of all religion because it is the inseparable quality of every living entity. Just as sweetness is the essential quality of sugar (there is no such thing as sugar that is not sweet), similarly, service is the essential quality of every living entity. Everyone is a servant, from the street sweeper on up to the president. The husband serves the wife, the wife serves the children, the businessman serves his customers, and the worker serves his boss. But ultimately everyone is a servant of God, Kṛṣṇa, the cause of all causes. How to fully realize this fact and always act as a servant of God is the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

**O**n the Punjab University campus, some students became antagonistic when I spoke with them, telling me that the Koran was the only book. But I showed them that one of our books, *The Nectar of Devotion*, was written by a devotee who was a high official in the Muslim government. Then they listened intently, and invited me to speak at a philosophy class. However, as the days went by, the number of incidents grew. Students accused us of being spies and called us ill names. Some people once rubbed the *tilaka* off our foreheads and warned us not to walk on the streets or we'd be stabbed.

Meanwhile the political situation was becoming more and more critical. The Pakistani government was whipping up anti-Indian war fever. Newspapers and radio programs were filled with anti-Indian propaganda. Finally, the local Hindus told us that Pakistan was no place for us to be, so when the fighting broke out over in East Pakistan, we reluctantly took a Swissair flight from Karachi to Bombay, where Śrīla Prabhupāda had just started his Indian preaching program.

Unknown to me, Śrīla Prabhupāda had read a newspaper story reporting that four Hare Kṛṣṇa missionaries from America had been shot and killed by Pakistani soldiers. (In East Pakistan my brother, Gargamuni Svāmī, was also preaching with an assistant.)

When I entered Śrīla Prabhupāda's room in Bombay to offer him my humble obeisances, he was relieved to see me well. He rose from his seat, came forward and embraced me. Although I had been traveling and was dirty and sweaty, Śrīla Prabhupāda was so relieved to see me unharmed that he embraced me again and again. From his touch I felt great transcendental ecstasy. I also felt great shame because I was so unclean. I felt too sinful to be worthy of this wonderful benediction.

Soon after I arrived in Bombay, Śrīla Prabhupāda decided that I should go to Africa and preach. None of our men had been there, and he was very pleased to contemplate that if I went to Africa, we would then be preaching on the five major continents of the world.

I did not know what to expect in Africa. A few hunting



By train, plane, bus and boat, Brahmānanda Svāmi made his way from Paris to Mombasa in early 1971.

stories by Ernest Hemingway and some adventure films had led me to believe that Africa was a place of jungles, wild animals and primitive peoples. I naively thought there was no electricity in Africa, so I gave my tape recorder away, gathered together a few essentials—a drum, a pair of *karatālas*, and a metal box full of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books—and prepared myself for the journey.

Soon after my assistant and I boarded the ship for Africa, the seas became very rough, making the journey difficult. Another problem was that although there was Indian-style vegetarian food available, it was neither very palatable nor cooked under especially clean conditions. I became absorbed in thinking of Śrīla Prabhupāda, who has vividly shown us the meaning of real devotion: to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness without concern for one’s own well-being. At the advanced age of seventy, he traveled alone aboard a ship from India to America in 1965. I wondered at the difficulty he must have endured traveling across the Atlantic Ocean during the September hurricane season. I thought of how he had also traveled with only a metal box full of books, a pair of *karatālas* and forty rupees (I had a bit more—\$20) and of how he would cook his plain meals on a little tin stove the captain’s wife had given him. I remembered how he had wanted to get off the ship and return to India, but had remained aboard, and how he had even experienced a stroke during the trip. Who could fail to be inspired by such an example!

Everyone in the world is concerned primarily with his own well-being, but a self-realized soul—a pure devotee of the Lord—is only concerned with fulfilling Kṛṣṇa’s desire. This selflessness is the essence of love. A pure devotee’s love

for Kṛṣṇa is just like that of a mother who does not hesitate to run in front of a moving car to save the life of her child. She doesn’t think, “If I run in front of this car, I may be killed.” No: because of her love for her child, she will risk her own life. Similarly, one who is Kṛṣṇa conscious also has this mentality of total surrender.

Although the sea journey was scheduled to take eight days, only after a rough voyage of twelve days did the ship finally arrive in the port of Mombasa on the coast of the east African state of Kenya. Unfortunately, no one had told us that a first-class return ticket was needed to enter Kenya, so we failed to meet the immigration requirements. The immigration officials would not let us disembark, and when the ship’s authorities began talking about sending us back to India, I became very discouraged. One day passed, and in the evening of the second day a man approached me and struck up a conversation. I explained my predicament to him, and he offered to place a telephone call to our center in Bombay and have them wire me a ticket. I gave him the \$20. Another day passed. Finally, on the fourth day, the ticket arrived but our Bombay center had sent a third-class ticket instead of the first-class one we required.

By this time, all the members of the crew as well as the dock workers were talking about “the two Americans dressed as Indian *sādhus* [saintly persons] who could not get off the ship.” People would come to the dock and point to us sitting on the ship’s deck. They said we would probably have to go all the way back to India. Finally, the manager of the shipping company agreed to issue us a first-class ticket, for which we could repay him later. This satisfied the immigra-

tion officials, and on the afternoon of the fourth day we took our belongings and started walking down the gangplank. Just then the ship's whistle tooted, signaling departure within half an hour.

**A**s we came down the gangplank, many dock workers, officials, and other people crowded around us and started cheering. They were very glad to see that we were successful, and we were very glad to know that Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is situated in everyone's heart, was taking care of us. I was now sure that Kṛṣṇa wanted me to preach in Africa.

After disembarking, we just stood on the dock for a while, greatly relieved after sixteen days on board the ship. We had no money and didn't know where to go. Soon an Indian man approached me, and we began conversing. He was very favorable toward us and toward Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and he drove us in his car to a Hindu temple of Lord Śiva. Within a few moments we were safely ensconced in a comfortable room with a fan, beds, a veranda overlooking a courtyard, and other conveniences.

Each day people would come to see "the American *sādhus*." They would offer us fruit, flowers, money and other necessities. We were reminded of Mṛgrāri, the devotee of Nārada Muni who had been a hunter by profession. He had led a very sinful life, but after he became a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, his life was very peaceful and pleasant. He did not have to hunt animals; people would bring him fruits and flowers and many other things so that he could offer ample *prasāda* to the Lord. Formerly, we had been like Mṛgrāri—hunters after the illusory pleasures of intoxication, illicit sex, uncontrolled tongue. But now, by the grace of Śrīla Prabhupāda, we had become purified of these things.

**D**uring this time, we were preaching exclusively to the Indian nationals in Africa, and we began to appreciate their unique position among the world's people. Because vestiges of the deeply spiritual Vedic culture are still present in India, the Indian people have respect for a *sādhu*, they are charitable and kind, and they are not as mad after sense gratification as people in the Western countries. They showed us their character by helping us out in many ways during those difficult early days and by being enthusiastic to introduce us to their compatriots. They would take us to various functions, and we would speak on Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Śrīla Prabhupāda had not given me any specific instructions on how to preach in Africa, and somehow or other I concluded that I should preach mainly to the Indians, just as Prabhupāda was doing in India. Remembering the incident in Erzurum, I was reluctant to take Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the local people—to go out into the streets and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa—although that was my inclination. I didn't know how the authorities would react.

After a month and a half in Mombasa, I received an invitation from an Indian family to go to Nairobi for Janmāṣṭamī, Lord Kṛṣṇa's birthday celebration. Since Nairobi is three hundred miles inland, we had to take a taxi across the broad, flat African plains. We stopped frequently along the way to view the many rhinoceroses, elephants, giraffes and other

wildlife. I came to know how really big Africa is. It contains one-fifth of the world's land, being almost as large as Asia and twice as large as South America. The coastline of Africa is as long as the earth's diameter at the equator. It is sealed off from the rest of the world by the foreboding Sahara Desert and the Atlas Mountains in the north, and its shores are protected by huge sandbars and impenetrable thickets along the coastlines. From the sea, many of its rivers, such as the Congo and the Zambezi, are impassable due to the rapids and other natural barriers. For many years, malaria prevented outsiders from penetrating inland. For these reasons, the distinct lifestyles, languages and cultures of the people of Africa had for the most part remained intact until fairly recently. Due to the vast differences between each tribal group, there are only nineteen people per square mile in Africa. Thus Africa contains few real cities. Whenever food was found wanting, people could easily move to a nearby tract of virgin land that would provide all their needs.

**W**hen we arrived in Nairobi, we held a very successful program at a Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple. People were astonished that Americans had taken to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and they appreciated our *kīrtana* and our lectures on *Bhagavad-gītā* very much. Many wanted to help us in our mission.

Shortly thereafter, three American devotees arrived. They were sent by Śrīla Prabhupāda, who by this time had reached London. He had fallen ill there, and having heard that the African climate is very healthful, he desired to come to Africa to recuperate. First Śrīla Prabhupāda came to Nairobi and remained one night at the home of a life member with whom we were staying. (This life member later surrendered at the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda and became his initiated disciple.) We then arranged for Prabhupāda to stay in a nice house in Mombasa, in a location I had once described to him as one of the most wonderful places in the world. When Śrīla Prabhupāda walked into his spacious, airy room overlooking the aquamarine-colored sea and saw the cloudless skies, the pleasant sunshine and the white sandy beach fringed with palm trees, he said, "Yes, Brahmānanda, this is one of the most wonderful places in the world." Śrīla Prabhupāda quickly recovered his health with the help of the mild climate, the abundant varieties of fruits and vegetables, and various rich milk-products. Prabhupāda then decided to return to Nairobi, the capital of the country, and launch the African preaching campaign from there.

In Nairobi, Śrīla Prabhupāda personally demonstrated how a *sannyāsī* should preach. We would stay at the homes of various Indians, and although they provided very comfortable accommodations for us—nice food and sleeping quarters—Śrīla Prabhupāda would never stay in one home longer than three days. He would travel from home to home, strictly following the Vedic injunction that *sannyāsīs* should never stay in one place for more than three days. This rule prevents their becoming attached to bodily comforts as well as inconveniencing their hosts.

At each residence, Śrīla Prabhupāda would hold intimate talks with the gentlemen of the house and give *darsana* (audience) to the family members and their friends in the after-

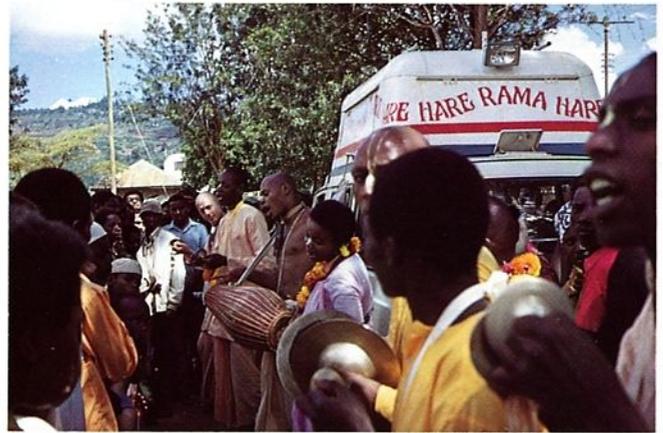
noons. And in the evenings he would conduct *kirtanas* and give lectures. In this way, Śrīla Prabhupāda made good friends with many prominent Indian people in Nairobi, and they willingly became life members. Today they continue to take an active interest in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

Later, I expanded the life member program. I stayed for one and a half months in Lusaka, Zambia, moving to a different residence every three days just as Śrīla Prabhupāda had done. In this way I was able to preach by example. People could see firsthand how we rose before dawn, took a cold bath, performed *kirtanas* and *japa*, and refrained from intoxication, illicit sex, meat-eating and gambling. A Vaiṣṇava preaches not only by his words, but also by his actions. This separates us from so many bogus *yoga* groups, whose members may be expert in speaking some speculative philosophy or presenting *yoga* in a pleasing way to an audience, but who are not able to practice in their private lives the austerity necessary for spiritual realization.

Śrīla Prabhupāda began encouraging me to preach directly to the African people. "This is our real business in Africa," he said. So we organized a program at the University of Nairobi, placed an ad in the newspaper, printed and displayed some posters, and distributed handbills. The night of Śrīla Prabhupāda's lecture, the auditorium was so crowded with African students that people had to stand outside to look through the doors and windows. At the end of Śrīla Prabhupāda's speech the students cheered. Then we had *kirtana*, showed a film, and distributed *prasāda*. As a result of this engagement, we received a lot of favorable publicity.

The next program Prabhupāda instituted was preaching to the general public. The first event was held in a hall situated in a rather shabby area of town. We went there one evening and just opened the doors and started chanting. Pretty soon the hall filled up with many curiosity seekers right off the street. There was a full house when Śrīla Prabhupāda walked in, effulgent in his bright, silken robes. He quickly passed among the curious people, got up on stage and started chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Then he spoke about the meaning of human life. He said that the real aim of human life is to understand that we are not this body but pure spirit soul, and that our duty is to serve the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Most of the people could not understand what Śrīla Prabhupāda said, since they spoke only Swahili, but they all enjoyed themselves nevertheless. They were all smiles, as they danced, chanted and clapped. A few days later, Prabhupāda departed for India, having fully inspired us to carry on the preaching work in Africa.

Soon afterward we organized our first outdoor *kirtana* performance at Nairobi's Kamakunji Park. We simply stood under the largest tree there and started chanting. Soon a large crowd gathered and immediately began chanting with us. Some were even dancing in a sort of African shuffle step. We had a battery-powered megaphone, and one young man stepped forward and offered to translate our lectures into Swahili. Everyone really enjoyed this. We then distributed a sweet food preparation called *bundi* that the crowd liked even more. Every weekend we held this program, and soon we became well known.



In a specially-equipped van, devotees travelled around the Nairobi area chanting, dancing and distributing *prasāda*.

Soon one young Kenyan joined our movement. This was considered a great event by the local Swahili newspaper. It published his photo with shaven head and *tilaka* and headlined the story, "When You See These People, Don't Say 'Jambo!' Say 'Hare Kṛṣṇa!'" (Jambo is the Swahili equivalent of hello.)

By this time we were holding *sankirtana* processions in the heart of downtown Nairobi and distributing literature. We rented social halls in various housing estates for evening programs. We would show a film of the Ratha-yātrā festival in San Francisco, and when the image of Lord Jagannātha appeared on the screen, all the people would clap and cheer. We purchased a vehicle with a distinctive roof carrier for storing our literature and *prasāda* utensils, and we fitted it out as a gaily painted Hare Kṛṣṇa Safari van, complete with a tape player and a loudspeaker system. As we drove down the city streets playing the tape of Śrīla Prabhupāda chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, people would stop and stare at us. Many would start dancing in the streets. The first time we went into the local villages to distribute *prasāda*, we prepared the favorite national food of Kenya—maize, meal and cabbage—but the people were very reluctant to take it. "Don't give us what we already have on our tables," one man called out. "Why don't you give us some of that sweet stuff!" Then all the children would chant, "Sweets! Sweets! Sweets!"

Śrīla Prabhupāda returned to Nairobi in January, 1972, to preside at the World Hare Kṛṣṇa Festival held at the Nairobi city stadium. The British Broadcasting Company made a film of the festival and also interviewed Śrīla Prabhupāda, who publicly initiated the first Kenyan devotee. This time Śrīla Prabhupāda stayed in our new temple, a spacious house we had purchased in a residential area not far from the downtown commercial section of Nairobi.

Before returning to India, Śrīla Prabhupāda encouraged us to further expand our preaching. Thus we made extensive preaching safaris throughout northern and western Kenya, to neighboring Tanzania and Zambia, and even down into Salisbury, Rhodesia.

In each of the towns and in the surrounding villages,  
(continued on page 15)

# ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

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## First Canto "Creation"

### Chapter Three

### Kṛṣṇa is the Source of All Incarnations

(continued)

#### TEXT 14

ऋषिभिर्याचितो भजे नवमं पार्थिवं वपुः ।  
दुग्धेमामोषधीर्विप्रास्तेनायं स उशत्तमः ॥१४॥

ṛṣibhir yācito bheje  
navamam pārthivam vapuḥ  
dugdhemām oṣadhīr viprās  
tenāyam sa uśattamaḥ

ṛṣibhiḥ—by the sages; yācitaḥ—being prayed for; bheje—accepted; navamam—the ninth one; pārthivam—the ruler of the earth; vapuḥ—body; dugdha—milking; imām—all these; oṣadhīr—products of the earth; viprāḥ—O brāhmaṇas; tena—by; ayam—this; saḥ—he; uśattamaḥ—beautifully attractive.

#### TRANSLATION

O brāhmaṇas, the ninth incarnation of the Lord, prayed for by sages, was King Pṛthu, who cultivated the land to yield various produces, and for that reason the earth was beautiful and attractive.

#### PURPORT

Before the advent of King Pṛthu, there was great havoc of maladministration due to the vicious life of the previous king, the father of Mahārāja Pṛthu. The intelligent class of men (namely the sages and the brāhmaṇas) not only prayed for the Lord to come down, but they also dethroned the previous king. It is the duty of the king to be pious and thus look after the all around welfare of the citizens. Whenever there is some negligence on the part of the king in discharging his duty, the intelligent class of men must dethrone him. The intelligent class of men, however, do not occupy the royal throne because they have much more important duties for the welfare of the public. Instead of occupying the royal throne, they prayed for the incarnation of the Lord, and the Lord came as Mahārāja Pṛthu. Real intelligent men or qualified brāhmaṇas never aspire for political posts. Mahārāja Pṛthu excavated many produces from the earth, and thus not only the citizens became happy to have such a good king, but the complete sight of the earth also became beautiful and attractive.

#### TEXT 15

रूपं स जग्धे मात्स्यं चाक्षुषोदधिसम्भवे ।  
नाच्यारोप्य महीमय्यामपाद्रैवस्वतं मनुम् ॥१५॥

rūpaṁ sa jagrhe mātsyam  
cākṣuṣodadhi-samplave  
nāvy āropya mahīmāyām  
apād vaivasvatam manum

rūpaṁ—form; saḥ—he; jagrhe—accepted; mātsyam—of fish; cākṣuṣa—Cākṣuṣa; udadhi—water; samplave—inundation; nāvi—on the boat; āropya—keeping on; mahī—the earth; mayyām—drowned in; apāt—protected; vaivasvatam—Vaivasvata; manum—Manu, the father of man.

#### TRANSLATION

When there was a complete inundation after the period of the Cākṣuṣa Manu and the whole world was deep within water, the Lord accepted the form of a fish and protected Vaivasvata Manu, keeping him up on a boat.

#### PURPORT

According to Śrīpāda Śrīdhara Svāmī, the original commentator on the Bhāgavata, there is not always a devastation after the change of every Manu. And yet this inundation after the period of Cākṣuṣa Manu took place in order to show some wonders to Satyavata. But Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has given definite proofs from authoritative scriptures (like Viṣṇu-dharmottara, Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, Harivaṁśa, etc.) that there is always a devastation after the end of each and every Manu. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī has also supported Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, and he (Śrī Cakravartī) has also quoted from Bhāgavatāmṛtam about this inundation after each Manu. Apart from this, the Lord, in order to show special favor to Satyavata, a devotee of the Lord, in this particular period, incarnated Himself.

#### TEXT 16

सुरासुराणामुदधिं मयतां मन्दराचलम् ।  
दद्रे कमठरूपेण शुद्धं एकादशे विद्युः ॥१६॥

surāsuraṇām udadhīm  
mathnatām mandarācalam  
dadhre kamaṭha-rūpeṇa  
pṛṣṭha ekādaśe vibhuḥ

sura—the theists; asurāṇām—of the atheists; udadhīm—in the ocean; mathnatām—churning; mandarācalam—the Mandarācalam Hill; dadhre—sustained; kamaṭha—tortoise; rūpeṇa—in the form of; pṛṣṭhe—shell; ekādaśe—eleventh in the line; vibhuḥ—the great.

## TRANSLATION

The eleventh incarnation of the Lord was in the form of a tortoise whose shell served as a pivot for the Mandarācalam Hill, which was being used as a churning rod by the theists and atheists of the universe.

## PURPORT

Once both the atheists and the theists were engaged in producing nectar from the sea so that all of them could become deathless by drinking it. At that time the Mandarācalam Hill was used as the churning rod, and the shell of Lord Tortoise, the incarnation of Godhead, became the resting place (pivot) of the hill in the sea water.

## TEXT 17

धान्वन्तरं द्वादशमं त्रयोदशममेव च ।  
अपाययत्सुरानन्यान्मोहिन्या मोहयन् स्त्रिया ॥१७॥

*dhānvantaram dvādaśamam  
trayodaśamam eva ca  
apāyayat surān anyān  
mohinyā mohayan striyā*

*dhānvantaram*—the incarnation of Godhead named Dhanvantari; *dvādaśamam*—the twelfth in the line; *trayodaśamam*—the thirteenth in the line; *eva*—certainly; *ca*—and; *apāyayat*—gave to drink; *surān*—the demigods; *anyān*—others; *mohinyā*—by charming beauty; *mohayan*—alluring; *striyā*—in the form of a woman.

## TRANSLATION

In the twelfth incarnation, the Lord appeared as Dhanvantari, and in the thirteenth He allured the atheists by the charming beauty of a woman and gave nectar to the demigods to drink.

## TEXT 18

चतुर्दशं नारसिंहं बिभ्रद्वैत्येन्द्रमूर्जितम् ।  
ददार करजैरूरावेरकां कटकृद्यथा ॥१८॥

*caturdaśam nārasīṅham  
bibhrat dāityendram ūrjitam  
dadāra karajair ūrāv  
erakām kaṭa-kṛt yathā*

*caturdaśam*—the fourteenth in the line; *nārasīṅham*—the incarnation of the Lord as half man and half lion; *bibhrat*—advented; *dāityendram*—the king of the atheists; *ūrjitam*—strongly built; *dadāra*—bifurcated; *karajaiḥ*—by the nails; *ūrau*—on the lap; *erakām*—canes; *kaṭa-kṛt*—carpenter; *yathā*—just like.

## TRANSLATION

In the fourteenth incarnation, the Lord appeared as Nṛsiṅha and bifurcated the strong body of the atheist Hiranyakaśipu with His nails, just as a carpenter pierces cane.

## TEXT 19

पञ्चदशं वामनकं कृत्वागाध्वरं बलेः ।  
पदत्रयं याचमानः प्रत्यादित्सुखिपिष्टपम् ॥१९॥

*pañcadaśam vāmanakam  
kṛtvāgād adhvaram baleḥ  
pada-trayaṁ yācamāṇaḥ  
pratyaāditsus tri-piṣṭapam*

*pañcadaśam*—the fifteenth in the line; *vāmanakam*—the dwarf *brāhmaṇa*; *kṛtvā*—by assumption of; *agāt*—went; *adhvaram*—arena of sacrifice; *baleḥ*—

of King Bali; *pada-trayaṁ*—three steps only; *yācamāṇaḥ*—begging; *pratyaāditsus*—willing at heart to return; *tri-piṣṭapam*—the kingdom of the three planetary systems.

## TRANSLATION

In the fifteenth incarnation, the Lord assumed the form of a dwarf *brāhmaṇa* [Vāmana] and visited the arena of sacrifice arranged by Mahārāja Bali. Although at heart He was willing to regain the kingdom of the three planetary systems, He simply asked for a donation of three steps of land.

## PURPORT

The Almighty God can bestow upon anyone the kingdom of the universe from a very small beginning, and similarly, He can take away the kingdom of the universe on the plea of begging a small piece of land.

## TEXT 20

अवतारे षोडशमे पश्यन् ब्रह्मद्रुहो नृपान् ।  
त्रिःसप्तकृत्वः कुपितो निःक्षत्रामकरोन्महीम् ॥२०॥

*avatāre ṣoḍaśame  
paśyan brahma-druho nṛpān  
triḥ-sapta-kṛtvāḥ kupīto  
niḥkṣatrām akaron mahīm*

*avatāre*—in the incarnation of the Lord; *ṣoḍaśame*—sixteenth; *paśyan*—seeing; *brahma-druhaḥ*—disobedient to the orders of the *brāhmaṇas*; *nṛpān*—the kingly order; *triḥ-sapta*—thrice seven times; *kṛtvāḥ*—had done; *kupītaḥ*—being engaged; *niḥ*—negation; *kṣatrām*—the administrative class; *akarot*—did perform; *mahīm*—the earth.

## TRANSLATION

As Bhṛgupati, the sixteenth incarnation of the Godhead, the Lord annihilated the administrative class [kṣatriyas] twenty-one times, being angry with them because of their rebellion against the *brāhmaṇas* [the intelligent class].

## PURPORT

The *kṣatriyas* or the administrative class of men are expected to rule the planet by the direction of the intelligent class of men who give direction to the rulers in terms of the standard *śāstras* or the books of revealed knowledge. The rulers carry on the administration according to that direction. Whenever there is disobedience on the part of the *kṣatriyas* or the administrative class against the orders of the learned and intelligent *brāhmaṇas*, the administrators are removed by force from the posts, and arrangement is made for better administration.

## TEXT 21

ततः सप्तदशे जातः सत्यवत्यां पराशरात् ।  
चक्रे वेदतरोः शाखा दृष्ट्वा पुंसोऽल्पमेघसः ॥२१॥

*tataḥ saptadaśe jātaḥ  
satyavatyaṁ parāśarāt  
cakre veda-taroḥ śākhā  
dṛṣṭvā puṁso 'lpa-medhasaḥ*

*tataḥ*—thereafter; *saptadaśe*—in the seventeenth incarnation; *jātaḥ*—advented; *satyavatyaṁ*—in the womb of Satyavatī; *parāśarāt*—by Parāśara Muni; *cakre*—prepared; *veda-taroḥ*—of the desire tree of the *Vedas*; *śākhāḥ*—branches; *dṛṣṭvā*—be seeing; *puṁsaḥ*—the people in general; *alpa-medhasaḥ*—less intelligent.

## TRANSLATION

Thereafter, in the seventeenth incarnation of Godhead, Śrī Vyāsadeva appeared in the womb of Satyavatī, wife of Parāśara Muni, and he divided

the one Veda into several branches and sub-branches, seeing that the people in general were less intelligent.

## PURPORT

Originally the *Veda* is one. But Śrīla Vyāsadeva divided the original *Veda* into four, namely *Sāma*, *Yajus*, *Rik*, *Atharva*, and then again they were explained in different branches like the *Purāṇas* and the *Mahābhārata*. Vedic language and the subject matter are very difficult for ordinary men. They are understood by the highly intelligent and self-realized *brāhmaṇas*. But the present age of Kali is full of ignorant men. Even those who are born by a *brāhmaṇa* father are, in the present age, no better than the *śūdras* or the women. The twice-born men, namely the *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas*, are expected to undergo a cultural purificatory process known as *saṁskāras*, but because of the bad influence of the present age the so-called members of the *brāhmaṇa* and other high order families are no longer highly cultured. They are called the *dvija-bandhu* or the friends and family members of the twice-born. But these *dvija-bandhus* are classified amongst the *śūdras* and the women. Śrīla Vyāsadeva divided the *Vedas* in various branches and sub-branches for the sake of the less intelligent classes like the *dvija-bandhus*, *śūdras* and the women.

## TEXT 22

नरदेवत्वमापन्नः सुरकार्यचिकीर्षया ।  
समुद्रनिग्रहादीनि चक्रे वीर्याण्यतः परम् ॥२२॥

*nara-devatvam āpannaḥ*  
*sura-kārya-cikīrṣayā*  
*samudra-nigrahādīni*  
*cakre vīryāṇy ataḥ param*

*nara*—human being; *devatvam*—divinity; *āpannaḥ*—having assumed the form of; *sura*—the demigods; *kārya*—activities; *cikīrṣayā*—for the purpose of performing; *samudra*—the Indian Ocean; *nigraha-ādīni*—controlling, etc.; *cakre*—did perform; *vīryāṇi*—superhuman prowess; *ataḥ param*—thereafter.

## TRANSLATION

In the eighteenth incarnation, the Lord appeared as King Rāma. In order to perform some pleasing work for the demigods, He exhibited superhuman powers by controlling the Indian Ocean and then killing the atheist King Rāvaṇa, who was on the other side of the sea.

## PURPORT

The Personality of Godhead Śrī Rāma assumed the form of a human being and appeared on the earth for the purpose of doing some pleasing work for the demigods or the administrative personalities to maintain the order of the universe. Sometimes great demons and atheists like Rāvaṇa and Hiraṇyakaśipu and many others become very famous due to advancing material civilization by the help of material science and other activities with a spirit of challenging the established order of the Lord. For example, the attempt to fly to other planets by material means is a challenge to the established order. The conditions of each and every planet are different, and different classes of human beings are accommodated there for particular purposes mentioned in the codes of the Lord. But, puffed up by tiny success in material advancement, sometimes the godless materialist challenges the existence of God. Rāvaṇa was one of them, and he wanted to deport ordinary men to the planets of Indra (heaven) by material means without consideration of the necessary qualifications. He wanted a staircase to be built up directly reaching the heavenly planet so that people might not be required to undergo the routine of pious work necessary to enter that planet. He also wanted to perform other acts against the established rule of the Lord. He even challenged the authority of Śrī Rāma the Personality of Godhead and kidnapped His wife Sītā. Of course Lord Rāma came to chastise this atheist, answering the prayer and desire of the demigods. He therefore took up the challenge of Rāvaṇa, and the complete activity is the subject matter of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Because Lord Rāmacandra was the Personality of Godhead, He exhibited superhuman activities which

no human being, including the materially advanced Rāvaṇa, could perform. Lord Rāmacandra prepared a royal road on the Indian Ocean with stones that floated on the water. The modern scientists have done research in the area of weightlessness, but it is not possible to bring in weightlessness anywhere and everywhere. But because weightlessness is the creation of the Lord by which He can make the gigantic planets fly and float in the air, He made the stones even within this earth to be weightless and prepared a stone bridge on the sea without any supporting pillar. That is the display of the power of God.

## TEXT 23

एकोनविंशो विंशतिमे वृष्णिषु प्राप्य जन्मनी ।  
रामकृष्णाविति भुवो भगवानहरद्भरम् ॥२३॥

*ekonaviṁśe viṁśatime*  
*vṛṣṇiṣu prāpya janmanī*  
*rāma-kṛṣṇāv iti bhuvō*  
*bhagavān aharad bharam*

*ekonaviṁśe*—in the nineteenth; *viṁśatime*—in the twentieth also; *vṛṣṇiṣu*—in the Vṛṣṇi dynasty; *prāpya*—having obtained; *janmanī*—births; *rāma*—Balarāma; *kṛṣṇau*—Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *iti*—thus; *bhuvah*—of the world; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *aharat*—removed; *bharam*—burden.

## TRANSLATION

In the nineteenth and twentieth incarnations, the Lord advented Himself as Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa in the family of Vṛṣṇi [the Yadu dynasty], and by so doing He removed the burden of the world.

## PURPORT

The specific mention of the word *bhagavān* in this text indicates that Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa are original forms of the Lord. This will be further explained later. Lord Kṛṣṇa is not an incarnation of the *puruṣa* as we learned from the beginning of this chapter. He is directly the original Personality of Godhead, and Balarāma is the first plenary manifestation of the Lord. From Baladeva the first phalanx of plenary expansions, Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Aniruddha and Pradyumna, expands. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is Vāsudeva, and Baladeva is Saṅkarṣaṇa.

## TEXT 24

ततः कलौ सम्प्रवृत्ते सम्मोहाय सुरद्विषाम् ।  
बुद्धो नाम्नाजनसुतः कीकटेषु भविष्यति ॥२४॥

*tataḥ kalau sampravṛtte*  
*sammohāya sūra-dviṣām*  
*buddho nāmnānjana-sutaḥ*  
*kīkaṭeṣu bhaviṣyati*

*tataḥ*—thereafter; *kalau*—the age of Kali; *sampravṛtte*—having ensued; *sammohāya*—for the purpose of deluding; *sura*—the theists; *dviṣām*—those who are envious; *buddhaḥ*—Lord Buddha; *nāmnā*—of the name; *añjana-sutaḥ*—the son of Añjana (Lord Buddha); *kīkaṭeṣu*—in the province of Gayā (Behar); *bhaviṣyati*—will take place.

## TRANSLATION

Then, in the beginning of Kali-yuga, the Lord will appear as Lord Buddha, the son of Añjana, in the province of Gayā, just for the purpose of deluding those who are envious of the faithful theist.

## PURPORT

Lord Buddha, a powerful incarnation of the Personality of Godhead, appeared in the province of Gayā (Bihar) as the son of Añjana, and he preached his own conception of nonviolence and deprecated even the animal sacrifices sanctioned in the *Vedas*. At the time when Lord Buddha

appeared, the people in general were atheistic and preferred animal flesh to anything else. On the plea of Vedic sacrifice, every place was practically turned into a slaughterhouse, and animal killing was indulged in unrestrictedly. Lord Buddha preached nonviolence, taking pity on the poor animals. He preached that he did not believe in the tenets of the *Vedas* and stressed the adverse psychological effects incurred by animal killing. Less intelligent men of the age of Kali, who had no faith in God, followed his principle, and for the time being they were trained in moral discipline and nonviolence, the preliminary steps for proceeding further on the path of God realization. He deluded the atheists because such atheists who followed his principles did not believe in God, but they kept their absolute faith in Lord Buddha who himself was the incarnation of God. Thus the faithless people were made to believe in God in the form of Lord Buddha. That was the mercy of Lord Buddha: He made the faithless faithful to him.

Killing of animals before the advent of Lord Buddha was the most prominent feature of the society. They claimed that these were Vedic sacrifices. When the *Vedas* are not accepted through the authoritative disciplic succession, the casual readers of the *Vedas* are misled by the flowery language of that system of knowledge. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* a comment has been made on such foolish scholars. The foolish scholars of Vedic literature who do not care to receive the transcendental message through the transcendental realized sources of disciplic succession are sure to be bewildered. To them, the ritualistic ceremonies are considered to be all in all. They have no depth of knowledge, according to the *Bhagavad-gītā*. The whole system of the *Vedas* is to lead one gradually to the path of the Supreme Lord. The whole theme of Vedic literature is to know the Supreme Lord, the individual soul, the cosmic situation and the relations between all these items. When the relation is known, the relative function begins, and as a result of such a function the ultimate goal of life or going back to Godhead takes place in the easiest manner. Unfortunately, unauthorized scholars of the *Vedas* become captivated by the purificatory ceremonies only, and natural progress is checked thereby.

To such bewildered persons of atheistic propensity, Lord Buddha is the emblem of theism. He therefore first of all wanted to check the habit of animal killing. The animal killers are dangerous elements on the path of going back to Godhead. There are two types of animal killers. The soul is also sometimes called the "animal" or the living being. Therefore, both the slaughterer of animals as well as those who have lost their identity of soul are animal killers.

Mahārāja Parīkṣit said that only the animal killer cannot relish the transcendental message of the Supreme Lord. Therefore if people are to be educated to the path of Godhead they must be taught first and foremost to stop the process of animal killing as above mentioned. It is nonsensical to say that animal killing has nothing to do with spiritual realization. By this dangerous theory many so-called *sannyāsīs* have sprung up by the grace of Kali-yuga who preach animal killing under the garb of the *Vedas*. The subject matter has already been discussed in the conversation between Lord Caitanya and Maulana Chand Kāzi Shaheb. The animal sacrifice as stated in the *Vedas* is different from the unrestricted animal killing in the slaughterhouse. Because the *asuras* or the so-called scholars of Vedic literatures put forward the evidence of animal killing in the *Vedas*, Lord Buddha superficially denied the authority of the *Vedas*. This rejection of the *Vedas* by Lord Buddha was adopted in order to save people from the vice of animal killing as well as to save the poor animals from the slaughtering process of their big brothers who clamor for universal brotherhood, peace, justice and equity. There is no justice when there is animal killing. Lord Buddha wanted to stop it completely, and therefore his cult of *ahiṃsā* was propagated not only in India but also outside the country.

Technically Lord Buddha's philosophy is called atheistic because there is no acceptance of the Supreme Lord and because that system of philosophy denied the authority of the *Vedas*. But that is an act of camouflage by the Lord. Lord Buddha is the incarnation of Godhead. As such, he is the original propounder of Vedic knowledge. He therefore cannot reject Vedic philosophy. But he rejected it outwardly because the *sura-dvīṣa*, or the demons who are always envious of the devotees of Godhead, try to support cow killing or animal killing from the pages of the *Vedas*, and this is now being done by the modernized *sannyāsīs*. Lord Buddha had to reject the authority of the *Vedas* altogether. This is simply technical, and had it not been so he would not have been so accepted as the incarnation of Godhead. Neither would he have been worshiped in the transcendental

songs of the poet Jayadeva, who is a Vaiṣṇava *ācārya*. He preached the preliminary principles of the *Vedas* in a manner suitable for the time being (and so also did *Ācārya Śaṅkarācārya*) to establish the authority of the *Vedas*. Therefore both Lord Buddha and *Ācārya Śaṅkara* paved the path of theism, and Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, specifically Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, led the people on the path towards a realization of going back to Godhead.

We are glad that people are taking interest in the nonviolent movement of Lord Buddha. But will they take the matter very seriously and close the animal slaughterhouses altogether? If not, there is no meaning to the *ahiṃsa* cult.

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was composed just prior to the beginning of the age of Kali (about five thousand years ago), and Lord Buddha appeared about 2,600 years ago. Therefore in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Lord Buddha is foretold. Such is the authority of this clear scripture. There are many such prophecies, and they are being fulfilled one after another. They will indicate the positive standing of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is without trace of mistake, illusion, cheating and imperfection, which are the four flaws of all conditioned souls. The liberated souls are above these flaws; therefore they can see and foretell things which are to take place on distant future dates.

## TEXT 25

अथासौ युगसंज्ञायां दस्युप्रायेषु राजसु ।  
जनिता विष्णुयज्ञसो नाम्ना कल्किर्जगत्पतिः ॥२५॥

athāsau yuga-sandhyāyām  
dasyu-prāyeṣu rājasu  
janitā viṣṇu-yaśaso  
nāmnā kalkir jagat-patiḥ

atha—thereafter; asau—the same Lord; yuga-sandhyāyām—at the conjunction of the *yugas*; dasyu—plunderers; prāyeṣu—almost all; rājasu—the governing personalities; janitā—will take His birth; viṣṇu—named Viṣṇu; yaśasaḥ—surnamed Yaśā; nāmnā—in the name of; kalkiḥ—the incarnation of the Lord; jagat-patiḥ—the Lord of the creation.

## TRANSLATION

Thereafter, at the conjunction of two *yugas*, the Lord of the creation will take His birth as the Kalki incarnation and become the son of Viṣṇu Yaśā. At this time the rulers of the earth will have degenerated into plunderers.

## PURPORT

Here is another foretelling of the advent of Lord Kalki, the incarnation of Godhead. He is to appear at the conjunction of the two *yugas*, namely at the end of Kali-yuga and the beginning of Satya-yuga. The cycle of the four *yugas*, namely Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali, rotates like the calendar months. The present Kali-yuga lasts 432,000 years, out of which we have passed only 5,000 years after the Battle of Kurukṣetra and the end of the regime of King Parīkṣit. So there are 427,000 years balance yet to be finished. Therefore at the end of this period, the incarnation of Kalki will take place, as foretold in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. His father's name, Viṣṇu Yaśā, a learned *brāhmaṇa*, and the village Sambhal are also mentioned. As above mentioned, all these foretellings will prove to be factual in chronological order. That is the authority of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

## TEXT 26

अवतारा ह्यसंख्येया हरेः सत्त्वनिषेद्धिजाः ।  
यथाविदासिनः कुल्याः सरसः स्युः सहस्रशः ॥२६॥

avatārā hy asankhyeyā  
hareḥ sattva-nidheḥ dvijāḥ  
yathāvidāsinaḥ kulyāḥ  
sarasaḥ syuḥ sahasraśaḥ

avatārāḥ—incarnations; hi—certainly; asankhyeyāḥ—innumerable; hareḥ—of Hari, the Lord; sattva-nidheḥ—of the ocean of goodness; dvijāḥ—the *brāhmaṇas*; yathā—as it is; avidāsinaḥ—inexhaustible; kulyāḥ—rivulets; sarasaḥ—of vast lakes; syuḥ—are; sahasraśaḥ—thousands of.

## TRANSLATION

O brāhmaṇas, the incarnations of the Lord are innumerable rivulets flowing from inexhaustible sources of water.

## PURPORT

The list of incarnations of the Personality of Godhead given herein is not complete. It is only a partial view of all the incarnations. There are many others, such as Śrī Hayagrīva, Hari, Haṁsa, Pṛṣṇigarbha, Vibhu, Satyasena, Vaikuṅṭha, Sārvabhauma, Viśvakṣeṇa, Dharmasetu, Sudhāmā, Yogeśvara, Bṛhadbhānu, etc., in the bygone ages. Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja said in his prayer, "My Lord, You manifest in as many incarnations as there are species of life, namely the aquatics, the vegetables, the reptiles, the birds, the beasts, the men, the demigods, etc., just for the maintenance of the faithful and the annihilation of the unfaithful. You advent Yourself in this way in accordance with the necessity of the different yugas. In the Kali-yuga You have incarnated garbed as a devotee." This incarnation of the Lord in the Kali-yuga is Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. There are many other places, both in the *Bhāgavatam* and other scriptures, in which the incarnation of the Lord as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is explicitly mentioned. In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* also it is said indirectly that although there are many incarnations of the Lord, such as Rāma, Nṛsiṁha, Varāha, Matsya, Kūrma and many others, the Lord Himself sometimes incarnates in person. Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu are not, therefore, incarnations, but the original source of all other incarnations. This will be clearly explained in the next *śloka*. So the Lord is the inexhaustible source for innumerable incarnations which are not always mentioned. But such incarnations are distinguished by specific extraordinary feats which are impossible to be performed by any living being. That is the general test to identify an incarnation of the Lord directly and indirectly empowered. Some incarnations mentioned above are almost plenary portions. For instance, the Kumāras are empowered with transcendental knowledge. Śrī Nārada is empowered with devotional service. Mahārāja Pṛthu is an empowered incarnation with executive function. The Matsya incarnation is directly a plenary portion. So the innumerable incarnations of the Lord are manifested all over the universes constantly without cessation, as water flows constantly from waterfalls.

## TEXT 27

ऋषयो मनवो देवा मनुपुत्रा महौजसः ।  
कलाः सर्वे हरेरेव सप्रजापतयः स्मृताः ॥२७॥

ṛṣayo manavo devā  
manu-putrā mahaujasaḥ  
kalāḥ sarve hareṛ eva  
sa-prajāpatayaḥ smṛtāḥ

ṛṣayaḥ—all the sages; manavaḥ—all the Manus; devāḥ—all the demigods; manu-putrāḥ—all the descendants of Manu; mahā-ujasaḥ—very powerful; kalāḥ—portion of the plenary portion; sarve—all collectively; hareḥ—of the Lord; eva—certainly; sa-prajāpatayaḥ—along with the Prajāpatīs; smṛtāḥ—are known.

## TRANSLATION

All the ṛṣis, Manus, demigods and descendants of Manu, who are especially powerful, are plenary portions or portions of the plenary portions of the Lord. This also includes the Prajāpatīs.

## PURPORT

Those who are comparatively less powerful are called *vibhūti*, and those who are comparatively more powerful are called *aveśa* incarnations.

## TEXT 28

एते चांशकलाः पुंसः कृष्णस्तु भगवान् स्वयम् ।  
इन्द्रारिव्याकुलं लोकं मृडयन्ति युगे युगे ॥२८॥

ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ  
kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam

indrāri-vyākulaṁ lokaṁ  
mṛdayanti yuge yuge

ete—all these; ca—and; aṁśa—plenary portions; kalāḥ—portions of the plenary portions; puṁsaḥ—of the Supreme; kṛṣṇaḥ—Lord Kṛṣṇa; tu—but; bhagavān—the Personality of Godhead; svayam—in person; indra-ari—the enemies of Indra; vyākulam—disturbed; lokam—all the planets; mṛdayanti—gives protection; yuge yuge—in different ages.

## TRANSLATION

All of the above-mentioned incarnations are either plenary portions or portions of the plenary portions of the Lord, but Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original Personality of Godhead. All of them appear on planets whenever there is a disturbance created by the atheists. The Lord incarnates to protect the theists.

## PURPORT

In this particular stanza Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa the Personality of Godhead is distinguished from other incarnations. He is counted amongst the *avatāras* (incarnations) because out of His causeless mercy the Lord descends from His transcendental abode. *Avatāra* means one who descends. All the incarnations of the Lord, including the Lord Himself, descend on the different planets of the material world as also in different species of life to fulfill particular missions. Sometimes He comes Himself, and sometimes His different plenary portions or parts of the plenary portions or His differentiated portions directly or indirectly empowered by Him descend on this material world to execute certain specific functions. Originally the Lord is full of all opulences, all prowess, all fame, all beauties, all knowledge and all renunciations. When they are partly manifested through the plenary portions or parts of the plenary portions, it should be noted that certain manifestations of His different powers are required for those particular functions. When in the room small electric bulbs are displayed, it does not mean that the electric powerhouse is limited by the small bulbs. The same powerhouse can supply power to operate large-scale industrial dynamos with greater volts. Similarly, the incarnations of the Lord display limited powers because so much power is needed at that particular time.

For example, Lord Paraśurāma and Lord Nṛsiṁha displayed unusual opulence by killing the disobedient *ksatriyas* twenty-one times and killing the greatly powerful atheist Hiranyakaśipu. Hiranyakaśipu was so powerful that even the demigods in other planets would tremble simply by the unfavorable raising of his eyebrow. The demigods in the higher level of material existence many, many times excel the most well-to-do human beings, in duration of life, beauty, wealth, paraphernalia, and in all other respects. Still they were afraid of Hiranyakaśipu. Thus we can simply imagine how powerful Hiranyakaśipu was in this material world. But even Hiranyakaśipu was cut into small pieces by the nails of Lord Nṛsiṁha. This means that anyone materially powerful cannot stand the strength of the Lord's nails. Similarly, Jāmadagnya displayed the Lord's power to kill all the disobedient kings powerfully situated in their respective states. His empowered incarnation, Nārada, and plenary incarnation, Varāha, as well as indirectly empowered Lord Buddha, created faith in the mass of people. The incarnations of Rāma and Dhanvantari displayed His fame, and Balarāma, Mohinī and Vāmana exhibited His beauty. Dattātreya, Matsya, Kumāra and Kapila exhibited His transcendental knowledge. Nara and Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣis exhibited His renunciation. So all the different incarnations of the Lord indirectly or directly manifested different features, but Lord Kṛṣṇa, the primeval Lord, exhibited the complete features of Godhead, and thus it is confirmed that He is the source of all other incarnations. And the most extraordinary feature exhibited by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa was His internal energetic manifestation of His pastimes with the cowherd girls. His pastimes with the *gopīs* are all displays of transcendental existence, bliss and knowledge, although these are manifested apparently as sex love. The specific attraction of His pastimes with the *gopīs* should never be misunderstood. The *Bhāgavatam* relates these transcendental pastimes in the Tenth Canto. And in order to reach the position to understand the transcendental nature of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes with the *gopīs*, the *Bhāgavatam* promotes the student gradually in nine other cantos.

According to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's statement, in accordance with authoritative sources, Lord Kṛṣṇa is the source of all other incarnations. It is not

that Lord Kṛṣṇa has any source of incarnation. All the symptoms of the Supreme Truth in full are present in the person of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and in the *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord emphatically declares that there is no truth greater than or equal to Himself. In this stanza the word *svayam* is particularly mentioned to confirm that Lord Kṛṣṇa has no other source than Himself. Although in other places the incarnations are described as *bhagavān*, because of their specific functions, still nowhere are they declared to be the Supreme Personality. In this stanza the word *svayam* signifies the supremacy as the *summum bonum*.

The *summum bonum* Kṛṣṇa is one without a second. He Himself has expanded Himself in various parts, portions and particles as *svayam-rūpa*, *svayam-prakāśa*, *tadekātmā*, *prabhava*, *vaibhava*, *vilāsa*, *avatāra*, *aveśa*, and *jīvas*, all provided with innumerable energies just suitable to the respective persons and personalities. Learned scholars in transcendental subjects have carefully analyzed the *summum bonum* Kṛṣṇa to have sixty-four principal attributes. All the expansions or categories of the Lord possess only some percentages of these attributes. But Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the possessor of the attributes cent percent. And His personal expansions such as *svayam-prakāśa*, *tadekātmā* up to the categories of the *avatāras*, who are all *Viṣṇu-tattva*, possess up to ninety-three percent of these transcendental attributes. Lord Śiva, who is neither *avatāra* nor *aveśa* nor in between them, possesses almost eighty-four percent of the attributes. But the *jīvas* or the individual living beings in different statuses of life possess up to the limit of seventy-eight percent of the attributes. In the conditioned state of material existence, the living being possesses these attributes in very minute quantity, varying in terms of the pious life of the living being. The most perfect of living beings is Brahmā, the supreme administrator of one universe. He possesses seventy-eight percent of the attributes in full. All other demigods have the same attributes in less quantity, whereas human beings possess the attributes in very minute quantity. The standard of perfection for a human being is to develop the attributes up to seventy-eight percent in full. The living being can never possess attributes like Śiva, Viṣṇu or Lord Kṛṣṇa. A living being can become godly by developing the seventy-eight percent transcendental attributes in fullness, but he can never become a God like Śiva, Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa. He can become a Brahmā in due course. The godly living beings who are all residents of the planets in the spiritual sky are eternal associates of God in different spiritual planets called Hari-dhāma and Maheśa-dhāma. The abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa above all spiritual planets is called Kṛṣṇaloka or Goloka Vṛndāvana, and the perfected living being by developing seventy-eight percent of the above attributes in fullness can enter the planet of Kṛṣṇaloka after leaving the present material body.

## TEXT 29

जन्म गुह्यं भगवतो य एतत्प्रयतो नरः ।  
सार्थं प्रातरुणन् भक्स्या दुःस्वप्नामाद्विमुच्यते ॥२९॥

janma guhyaṁ bhagavato  
ya etat prayato naraḥ  
sāyam prātar gṛṇan bhaktyā  
duḥkha-grāmād vimucyate

janma—birth; guhyam—mysterious; bhagavataḥ—of the Lord; yaḥ—one; etat—all these; prayataḥ—carefully; naraḥ—man; sāyam—evening; prātaḥ—morning; gṛṇan—recites; bhaktyā—with devotion; duḥkha-grāmāt—from all miseries; vimucyate—gets relief from.

## TRANSLATION

Whoever carefully recites the mysterious appearances of the Lord, with devotion in the morning and in the evening, gets relief from all miseries of life.

## PURPORT

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* the Personality of Godhead has declared that anyone who knows the principles of the transcendental birth and activities of the Lord will go back to Godhead after being relieved from this material tabernacle. So simply knowing factually the mysterious way of the Lord's incarnation in this material world can liberate one from material bondage. Therefore the birth and activities of the Lord, as manifested by Him for

the welfare of the people in general, are not ordinary. They are mysterious, and only by those who carefully try to go deep into the matter by spiritual devotion is the mystery discovered. Thus one gets liberation from the material bondage. It is advised therefore that one who simply recites this chapter of *Bhāgavatam*, describing the appearance of the Lord in different incarnations, in sincerity and devotion, can have insight into such birth and activities of the Lord. The very word *vimukti*, or liberation, indicates that the Lord's birth and activities are all transcendental; otherwise simply by reciting them one could not attain liberation. They are therefore mysterious, and those who do not follow the prescribed regulations of devotional service are not entitled to enter into the mysteries of His births and activities.

## TEXT 30

एतद्रूपं भगवतो हरूपस्य चिदात्मनः ।  
मायागुणैर्विरचितं महदादिभिरात्मनि ॥३०॥

etat rūpaṁ bhagavato  
hy arūpasya cid-ātmanah  
māyā-guṇair viracitam  
mahadādibhir ātmani

etat—all these; rūpaṁ—forms; bhagavataḥ—of the Lord; hi—certainly; arūpasya—of one who has no material form; cid-ātmanah—of the transcendence; māyā—material energy; guṇaiḥ—by the qualities; viracitam—manufactured; mahad-ādibhiḥ—with the ingredients of matter; ātmani—in the self.

## TRANSLATION

The conception of the *virāṭa* universal form of the Lord, as appearing in the material world, is imaginary. It is to enable the less intelligent [and neophytes] to adjust to the idea of the Lord having form. But factually the Lord has no material form.

## PURPORT

The conception of the Lord known as the *viśva-rūpa* or the *virāṭa-rūpa* is particularly not mentioned along with the various incarnations of the Lord because all the incarnations of the Lord above mentioned are transcendental, and there is not a tinge of materialism in their bodies. There is no difference between the body and self as there is in the conditioned soul. The *virāṭa-rūpa* is conceived for those who are just neophyte worshipers. For them the material *virāṭa-rūpa* is presented, and it will be explained in the Second Canto. In the *virāṭa-rūpa* the material manifestations of different planets have been conceived as His legs, hands, etc. Actually all such descriptions are for the neophytes. The neophytes cannot conceive anything beyond matter. The material conception of the Lord is not counted in the list of His factual forms. As Paramātmā or Supersoul, the Lord is within each and every material form, even within the atoms, but the outward material form is but an imagination, both for the Lord and the living being. The present forms of the conditioned souls are also not factual. The conclusion is that the material conception of the body of the Lord as *virāṭa* is imaginary. Both the Lord and the living beings are living spirits and have original spiritual bodies respectively.

## TEXT 31

यथा नभसि मेघाघो रेणुर्वा पार्थिवोऽनिले ।  
एवं द्रष्टरि दृश्यत्वमारोपितमबुद्धिभिः ॥३१॥

yathā nabhasi meghaugho  
reṇur vā pārthivo 'nile  
evaṁ draṣṭari dṛśyatvam  
āropitam abuddhibhiḥ

yathā—as it is; nabhasi—in the sky; meghaughā—a mass of clouds; reṇuḥ—dust; vā—as well as; pārthivaḥ—muddiness; anile—in the air; evam—thus; draṣṭari—to the seer; dṛśyatvam—for the purpose of seeing; āropitam—is implied; abuddhibhiḥ—by the less intelligent persons.

## TRANSLATION

Clouds and dust are carried by the air, but less intelligent persons say that the sky is cloudy and the air is dirty. Similarly, they also implant material bodily conceptions on the spirit self.

## PURPORT

It is further confirmed herein that with our material eyes and senses we cannot see the Lord, who is all spirit. We cannot even detect the spiritual spark which exists within the material body of the living being. We look to the outward covering of the body or subtle mind of the living being, but we cannot see the spiritual spark within the body. So we have to accept the living being's presence by the presence of his gross body. Similarly, those who want to see the Lord with their present material eyes or with the material senses are advised to meditate on the gigantic external feature called the *virāṭa-rūpa*. For instance, when a particular gentleman goes in his car, which can be seen very easily, we identify the car with the man within the car. When the President goes out in his particular car, we say, "There is the President." For the time being we identify the car with the President. Similarly, less intelligent men who want to see God immediately without necessary qualification are shown first the gigantic material cosmos as the form of the Lord, although the Lord is within and without. The clouds in the sky and the blue of the sky are better appreciated in this connection. Although the bluish tint of the sky and the sky are different, still we conceive of the color of the sky as blue. But that is a general conception for the laymen only.

## TEXT 32

अतः परं यदव्यक्तमव्यूढगुणवृंहितम् ।  
अदृष्टाश्रुतवस्तुत्वात्स जीवो यत्पुनर्भवः ॥३२॥

*ataḥ param yad avyaktam  
avyūḍha-guṇa-bṛñhitam  
adṛṣṭāśruta-vastutvāt  
sa jīvo yat punarbhavaḥ*

*ataḥ*—this; *param*—beyond; *yat*—which; *avyaktam*—unmanifested; *avyūḍha*—without formal shape; *guṇa-bṛñhitam*—affected by the qualities; *adṛṣṭa*—unseen; *śruta*—unheard; *vastutvāt*—being like that; *saḥ*—that; *jīvaḥ*—living being; *yat*—that which; *punarbhavaḥ*—takes birth repeatedly.

## TRANSLATION

Beyond this gross conception of form there is another subtle conception of form which is without formal shape and is unseen, unheard and unmanifest. The living being has his form beyond this subtlety, otherwise he could not have repeated births.

## PURPORT

As the gross cosmic manifestation is conceived as the gigantic body of the Lord, so also there is the conception of His subtle form, which is simply realized without being seen, heard or manifested. But in fact all these gross or subtle conceptions of the body are in relation with the living beings. The living being has his spiritual form beyond this gross material or subtle psychic existence. The gross body and psychic functions cease to act as soon as the living being leaves the visible gross body. In fact, we say that the living being has gone away because he is unseen and unheard. Even when the gross body is not acting when the living being is in sound sleep, we know that he is within the body by his breathing. So the living being's passing away from the body does not mean that there is no existence of the living soul. It is there, otherwise how can he repeat his births again and again?

The conclusion is that the Lord is eternally existent in His transcendental form, which is neither gross nor subtle like that of the living being; His body is never to be compared to the gross and subtle bodies of the living being. All such conceptions of God's body are imaginary. The living being has his eternal spiritual form, which is conditioned only by his material contamination.

## TEXT 33

यत्रेमे सदसद्रूपे प्रतिषिद्धे स्वसंविदा ।  
अविद्ययाऽऽत्मनि कृते इति तद्ब्रह्मदर्शनम् ॥३३॥

*yatreṃe sad-asad-rūpe  
pratiṣiddhe sva-saṃvidā  
avidyayātmani kṛte  
iti tad brahma-darśanam*

*yatra*—whenever; *ime*—in all these; *sat-asat*—gross and subtle; *rūpe*—in the forms of; *pratiṣiddhe*—on being nullified; *sva-saṃvidā*—by self-realization; *avidyayā*—by ignorance; *ātmani*—in the self; *kṛte*—having been imposed; *iti*—thus; *tad*—that is; *brahma-darśanam*—the process of seeing the Absolute.

## TRANSLATION

Whenever a person experiences, by self-realization, that both the gross and subtle bodies have nothing to do with the pure self, at that time he sees himself as well as the Lord.

## PURPORT

The difference between self-realization and material illusion is to know that the temporary or illusory impositions of material energy in the shape of gross and subtle bodies are superficial coverings of the self. The coverings take place due to ignorance. Such coverings are never effective in the person of the Personality of Godhead. Knowing this convincingly is called liberation, or seeing the Absolute. This means that perfect self-realization is made possible by adoption of godly or spiritual life. Self-realization means to become indifferent to the needs of the gross and subtle bodies and to become serious about the activities of the self. The impetus for activities is generated from the self, but such activities become illusory due to ignorance of the real position of the self. By ignorance, self-interest is calculated in terms of the gross and subtle bodies, and therefore a whole set of activities is spoiled life after life. When, however, one meets the self by proper culture, the activities of the self begin. Therefore a man who is engaged in the activities of the self is called *jīvanmukta*, or a liberated person even in the conditional existence.

This perfect stage of self-realization is not attained by artificial means, but under the lotus feet of the Lord, who is always transcendental. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord says that He is present in everyone's heart, and from Him only all knowledge, remembrance or forgetfulness take place. When the living being desires to be an enjoyer of material energy (illusory phenomena), the Lord covers the living being in the mystery of forgetfulness, and thus the living being misinterprets the gross body and subtle mind to be his own self. And by culture of transcendental knowledge, when the living being prays to the Lord for deliverance from the clutches of forgetfulness, the Lord, by His causeless mercy, removes the living being's illusory curtain, and thus he realizes his own self. He then engages himself in the service of the Lord in his eternal constitutional position, becoming liberated from the conditioned life. All this is executed by the Lord through either His external potency or directly by the internal potency.

## TEXT 34

यद्येवोपरता देवी माया वैशारदी मतिः ।  
सम्पन्न एवेति विदुर्महिम्नि स्वे महीयते ॥३४॥

*yadyeṣoparatā devī  
māyā vaiśārādī matiḥ  
sampanna eveti vidur  
mahimni sve mahīyate*

*yadi*—if, however; *eṣā*—they; *uparatā*—subsided; *devī māyā*—illusory energy; *vaiśārādī*—full of knowledge; *matiḥ*—enlightenment; *sampannaḥ*—enriched with; *eva*—certainly; *iti*—thus; *viduḥ*—being cognizant of; *mahimni*—in the glories; *sve*—of the self; *mahīyate*—being situated in.

## TRANSLATION

If the illusory energy subsides and the living entity becomes fully enriched with knowledge by the grace of the Lord, then he becomes at once enlightened with self-realization and thus becomes situated in his own glory.

## PURPORT

Being part of the absolute transcendence, all the Lord's forms, names, pastimes, attributes, associates and energies are identical with Him. His transcendental energy acts according to His omnipotency. The same energy acts as His external, internal and marginal energies, and by His omnipotency He can perform anything and everything through the agency of any of the above energies. He can turn the external energy into internal by His will. Therefore by His grace the external energy, which is employed in illusioning those living beings who want to have it, subsides by the will of the Lord in terms of repentance and penance for the conditioned soul. And the very same energy then acts to help the purified living being make progress on the path of self-realization. The example of electrical energy is very appropriate in this connection. The expert electrician can utilize the electrical energy for both heating and cooling by adjustment only. Similarly, the external energy, which now bewilders the living being into continuation of birth and death, is turned into internal potency by the will of the Lord to lead the living being to eternal life. When a living being is thus graced by the Lord, he is placed in his proper constitutional position to enjoy eternal spiritual life.

## TEXT 35

एवं जन्मानि कर्माणि ह्यकर्तुरजनस्य च ।  
वर्णयन्ति स्म कवयो वेदगुह्यानि हृत्पतेः ॥३५॥

evaṁ janmāni karmāṇi  
hy akartur ajanasya ca  
varṇayanti sma kavayo  
veda-guhyāni hṛt-pateḥ

evam—thus; janmāni—birth; karmāṇi—activities; hi—certainly; akartuḥ—of the inactive; ajanasya—of the unborn; ca—and; varṇayanti—describe; sma—in the past; kavayaḥ—the learned; veda-guhyāni—undiscoverable by the Vedas; hṛt-pateḥ—of the Lord of the heart.

## TRANSLATION

Thus learned men describe the births and activities of the unborn and inactive, which is undiscoverable even in the Vedic literatures. He is the Lord of the heart.

## PURPORT

Both the Lord and the living entities are essentially all spiritual. Therefore both of them are eternal, and neither of them has birth and death. The difference is that the so-called births and disappearances of the Lord are unlike those of the living beings. The living beings who take birth and then again accept death are bound by the laws of material nature. But the so-called appearance and disappearance of the Lord are not actions of material nature, but are demonstrations of the internal potency of the Lord. They are described by the great sages for the

purpose of self-realization. It is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* by the Lord that His so-called birth in the material world and His activities are all transcendental. And simply by meditation on such activities one can attain realization of Brahman and thus become liberated from material bondage. In the *śrutis* it is said that the birthless appears to take birth. The Supreme has nothing to do, but because He is omnipotent, everything is performed by Him naturally, as if done automatically. As a matter of fact, the appearance and disappearance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and His different activities are all confidential, even to the Vedic literatures. Yet they are displayed by the Lord to bestow mercy upon the conditioned souls. We should always take advantage of the narrations of the activities of the Lord, which are meditations on Brahman in the most convenient and palatable form.

## TEXT 36

स वा इदं विश्वममोघलीलः  
सृजत्यवत्यत्ति न सज्जतेऽस्मिन् ।  
भूतेषु चान्तर्हित आत्मतन्त्रः  
षाड्वर्गिकं जिघ्रति षड्गुणेशः ॥३६॥

sa vā idaṁ viśvam amogha-līlaḥ  
sṛjaty avaty atti na sajjate'smin  
bhūteṣu cāntarhita ātma-tantraḥ  
ṣaḍ-vargikaṁ jighrati ṣaḍ-guṇeśaḥ

saḥ—the Supreme Lord; vā—alternately; idaṁ—this; viśvam—manifested universes; amogha-līlaḥ—one whose activities are spotless; sṛjati—creates; avaty atti—maintains and annihilates; na—not; sajjate—is affected by; asmin—in them; bhūteṣu—in all living beings; ca—also; antarhitaḥ—living within; ātma-tantraḥ—self-independent; ṣaḍ-vargikaṁ—endowed with all the potencies of six opulences; jighrati—superficially attached, like smelling the fragrance; ṣaḍ-guṇeśaḥ—master of the six senses.

## TRANSLATION

The Lord, whose activities are always spotless, is the master of the six senses and is omnipotent and full with six opulences. He creates the manifested universes, maintains them and annihilates them without being in the least affected. He is within every living being and is always independent.

## PURPORT

The prime difference between the Lord and the living entities is that the Lord is the creator and the living entities are the created. Here He is called the *amogha-līlaḥ*, which indicates that there is nothing lamentable in His creation. Those who create disturbance in His creation are themselves disturbed. He is transcendental to all material afflictions because He is full with all six opulences, namely wealth, power, fame, beauty, knowledge and renunciation, and thus He is the master of the senses. He creates these manifested universes in order to reclaim the living beings who are within them suffering threefold miseries, maintains them, and in due course annihilates them without being the least affected by such actions. He is connected with this material creation very superficially, as one smells odor without being connected with the odorous article. Non-godly elements therefore can never approach Him, despite all endeavours.

(continued in next issue)

(continued from page 14)

we held a full program of *kirtana*, film shows, lectures, life-membership enrollments, and literature and *prasāda* distribution. Then we held *saṅkīrtana* processions down the main street. Finally we called upon prominent citizens to subsidize the cost of complete sets of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and five-year subscriptions to BACK TO GODHEAD magazine, which we then donated in their names to all the towns' libraries, schools and colleges. These institutions were extremely grateful to receive a gift of books from abroad. Large quantities of magazines were also subsidized, which we then distributed to the people at token cost.

In Lusaka, Zambia, a group of wealthy Indian life members became very enthusiastic about our preaching to the local people. Anxious to participate, they all agreed to come to a program we were holding that night at a social hall in a low-income area of town. In the evening they all arrived at the hall in a caravan of large Mercedes cars. As soon as they entered the hall, a large crowd of children gathered outside. They were excited from the afternoon, when we had driven through the area with our loudspeakers blaring a bouncy Hare Kṛṣṇa *kirtana*. Hundreds of kids had run after our truck, and we had thrown leaflets to them announcing the evening program. Now they were singing Hare Kṛṣṇa outside the hall at the top of their lungs. So we opened the doors and they flooded in—an ecstatic swirling mass of beautiful, black kids. Once they were inside, we started a tumultuous *kirtana*. The life members had never expected anything like this. They had come wearing their finest clothes and gold jewelry. I in-

vited them to come up and take refuge on the stage, and they did so, sitting down very stiffly and chanting in their usual sedate way while trying not to see what was happening all around them. The *kirtana* was so ecstatic that I jumped off the stage and danced with the kids until we were all exhausted. Then we showed the Ratha-yātrā film and sent them home with *prasāda*. The members later agreed that from then on we could do all the preaching ourselves, and they would just help out with contributions.

**W**hen we returned to Nairobi, practically every Kenyan greeted us with "Hare Kṛṣṇa" or "Hare Rāma." Even the shoeshine boys were chanting one of our Hare Kṛṣṇa tunes. I was reminded of Vṛndāvana, India, the transcendental village where Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared on earth, 5,000 years ago. There all the residents chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and greet each other by vibrating the holy name. Previously I had written a letter to Śrīla Prabhupāda expressing how much I appreciated Vṛndāvana, and he had replied that this was very good and that I should try to spread the Vṛndāvana spirit to Africa. Now it appeared to me that, by his grace, Nairobi had become a black Vṛndāvana.

In this way, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's Hare Kṛṣṇa movement came to Africa—not by our efforts, but by Śrīla Prabhupāda's. We are simply following what he has told us to do, and what he has done himself. 

His Holiness Brahmānanda Svāmī is personal secretary to His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and represents Africa as one of ISKCON's twelve Governing Board Commissioners.

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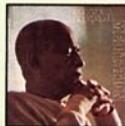
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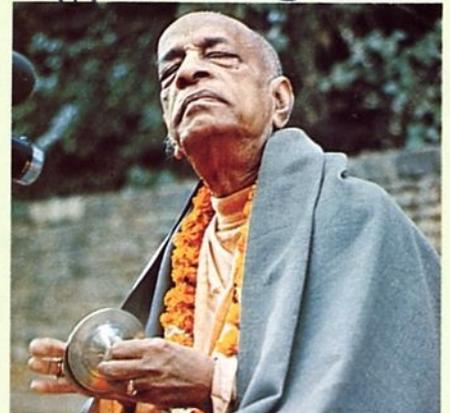


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# Letters

The editors of BACK TO GODHEAD welcome correspondence pertaining to spiritual enlightenment. All letters will receive personal replies, and correspondence of general interest will be published regularly.

Dear Editors,

It has been one year since I received my copy of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* from your mail-order department. Since then I have read it through twice and am almost through it again. It is the kind of book that fascinates me. And to one of my tendencies it speaks a thoroughly understandable message. Strangely, from childhood up I have never felt at home in my own culture. The material things that so fascinate our people leave me cold and always have.

I understand perfectly the purport of the *Gītā's* great discipline, and if I weren't so old (over eighty-one) I could integrate myself quite well with its philosophy. It is so satisfyingly complete—ancient, yet as modern as today. It is an awesome, ageless wonder.

All my reading, for the brief time allotted me, will be from the *Gītā*, be assured. Enclosed is my check for a subscription to your BACK TO GODHEAD magazine. The last issue I received was from some devotees who tarried here for a while in 1973.

Believe me to be faithfully,

Mrs. A. Marguerite Kuersteiner  
Louisville, Kentucky

Dear Mrs. Kuersteiner,

Thank you for your very kind letter. We are most pleased to have you as a subscriber to BACK TO GODHEAD.

By submissively hearing the message of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, you are already integrating yourself with the *Gītā's* philosophy. As Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "And I declare that he who studies this sacred conversation worships me by his intelligence." (Bg. 18.70) The sincere sentiment you so nicely express in your letter proves that age is no barrier to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Dear Editors,

Let me offer my praise and thanks to you for your efforts in spreading love of God in the Western world. In this age we are all sorely in need of spiritual enlightenment, and we have been greatly served by you.

I have a question that has been troubling me. I can understand the importance you place on the exalted science of *bhakti-yoga* and on receiving knowledge through an unbroken chain of spiritual masters, but is there no room for other methods, other religions and other gurus?

Malachy Grange  
Yonkers, New York

Dear Mr. Grange,

Your question reveals a common misunderstanding that many people have about religion: that it is a creation of man and thus subject to many interpretations. Actually, religion is created by God and is, therefore, eternal and unchanging. There may be many faiths in the world—such as Christian, Muslim or Hindu—but the one immutable constant in all of them is the development of love of God through unalloyed service to Him. How to actually achieve this goal of love for God—the essence of all religion—is the science of *bhakti-yoga* delineated in *Bhagavad-gītā*.

To fully understand the importance of receiving knowledge through disciplic succession—a chain of authentic

spiritual masters—one must first understand the importance of the *Vedas*.

The goal of Vedic knowledge is explained by Lord Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavad-gītā*: *vedaś ca sarvair aham eva vedyah*. "By all the *Vedas* am I to be known." (Bg. 15.15) And what is the process for knowing Kṛṣṇa? In the Eighteenth Chapter, verse 55, He says: *bhakti-yā mām abhijānāti*. "One can understand Me only by devotional service." The goal of Vedic study is therefore realized by one who practices *bhakti-yoga* under the direction of a genuine spiritual master.

The method of chanting the holy names of the Lord to achieve spiritual perfection is also supported by Vedic evidence. In the *Bṛhan-nāradya Purāṇa* it is said:

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

"In this age of Kali (quarrel and hypocrisy) the only means of spiritual realization is chanting the holy name of the Lord. There is no other way, no other way, no other way."

## 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 about the meaning of these festivals.

Year 489, Caitanya Era

Vaiṣṇava Month of Keśava (November 19—December 18, 1975)

Kṛṣṇa-pakṣa (dark fortnight)

November 29 (Keśava 11)	November 30 (Keśava 12)	December 1 (Keśava 13)	
Utpannā-ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).	Ekādaśī Pāraṇa before 9:38 a.m. Disappearance of Śrīla Kāliya Kṛṣṇadāsa Thākura.	Disappearance of Śrīla Sāraṅga Thākura.	

Śukla-pakṣa (bright fortnight)

December 8 (Keśava 20)	December 11 (Keśava 23)	December 14 (Keśava 26)	December 15 (Keśava 27)
Oḍana-śaṣṭhī of Lord Jagannātha.	Disappearance of Śrīla Madhusūdana dāsa Bābājī.	Mokṣadā-ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).	Ekādaśī Pāraṇa before 9:45 a.m.

Kṛṣṇa-pakṣa (dark fortnight) of the month of Nārāyaṇa

December 22 (Nārāyaṇa 4)	December 28 (Nārāyaṇa 10)	December 29 (Nārāyaṇa 11)	December 30 (Nārāyaṇa 12)
Disappearance of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura Prabhupāda.	Saphalā-ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans). Disappearance of Śrīla Devānanda Paṇḍita.	Ekādaśī Pāraṇa before 9:53 a.m.	Disappearance of Śrīla Maheśa Paṇḍita.

# Farm Report

Over the past eight years, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness has established successful farming communities in various parts of the world. As national economies flounder and cities go bankrupt, ISKCON's farms flourish and grow, proving that the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is providing not only potent spiritual knowledge, but a viable alternative lifestyle as well. There's full employment for everyone and natural prosperity when everything's done for Lord Kṛṣṇa. For more information please visit or write any of the farms listed in opposite column.

ATLANTA (Mulberry, Tennessee)—Last June, ISKCON devotees from Atlanta purchased a 250-acre farm in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains of southern Tennessee. Graced with beautiful green hillsides for pasturing the cows, the farm also has verdant forests for shade and lumber, bottomland and hilltops for grain production, and abundant springs of clear, pure water flowing into many ponds.

The first challenge we encountered was erecting adequate dwellings. The two barns on the property were in good shape, but the small, hundred-year-old house was hardly suitable as a temple and living quarters for fifteen devotees. In a short time we completed three cement-block houses, each of which can hold two couples. A large combination temple and kitchen should be finished this winter. In addition, a solid marble temple is scheduled for spring, and the hundred-year-old house has been refurbished and now has a beautiful temple room, fresh outside paint and an insulated dormitory. Thus everyone is comfortably situated for the winter.

We are finding that Kṛṣṇa's instructions in *Bhagavad-gītā* are not only spiritually purifying but economically sound as well. In the *Gītā*, Kṛṣṇa says there must be a class of men dedicated to farming and cow protection. Kṛṣṇa has sent us eight cows to protect, and, as soon as Yamunā (our expectant cow) has her calf, there will be sufficient milk for both the farm and the Atlanta temple (about seventy-five devotees). And by the end of this year we will have harvested literally tons of grains—enough to supply both ourselves and nearby temples with chapatis (whole wheat bread) for the entire year. The garden is flooded with eggplants, tomatoes, zucchini and beans, and this winter we will grow spinach, collards and turnips. With such abundance always at hand, graciously supplied by God, what need is there for hellish slaughterhouses to unnecessarily give pain to innocent animals?

Gradually our village will expand and develop according to the Vedic standard of peace, harmony and spiritual culture. Śrīla Prabhupāda has explained that if our farm projects around the world are successful then modern industry will no longer be necessary. We will not have to make propaganda; people will see our example and automatically reject the artificial way of life. From the farm we can obtain all necessities—milk, fruits, grains, vegetables and fodder—to satisfy both the animals and ourselves materially, and then we can all focus our energies on spiritual development. This is the perfection of Vedic village life: to be self-sufficient and live peacefully and happily in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Balavanta dāsa

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ASIA: Bombay, India—Hare Krishna Land, Gandhi Gram Road, Juhu, Bombay 400 054/579-373; Calcutta, India—3 Albert Road, 70017/44-3757; Hyderabad, India—Hare Krishna Land, Nampally Station Road, A.P., Jakarta, Indonesia—Gg. Kelinci IV, 8-A; Hong Kong—38 Mooy Rd. 4 fl, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon/3-668061; Madras, India—50, Aspiran Gardens, 2nd Street, Kilpauk, Madras-10/612515; New Delhi, India—19 Todar Mal Lane, New Delhi 110001; Tehran, Iran—P.O. Box 66-1540, Navaran, Tokyo, Japan—Saitama-ken, Tokorozawa-shi, Mikajima Ohaza 284/1429-24-5932; Vrindavan, India—Krishna-Balarama Temple, Chaitikara Road, Raman Reti, Mathura, UP/178.

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EUROPE: Amsterdam, Holland—Herengracht 96/020-249410; Copenhagen, Denmark—Riggervej, 11, 2660 Brønd by Strand, Edinburgh, Scotland—14 Forrest Rd., United Kingdom EH1 2QN; (Frankfurt A. Main), W. Germany—6241 Schloss Rittershof, bei Koenigstein-Taurus/06174-21357; Geneva, Switzerland—9, Chemin du Credo, 1213 Petit Lancy/921-318; London, England—7 Bury Place, Bloomsbury WC101 4051463; Paris, France—4 rue Le Sueur, 75016 Paris/727-0202; Rome, Italy—Sede Centrale, Via Mistrretta 2, (Piazza Lodi) 00182; Stockholm, Sweden—11453 Stockholm, Grevgatan 18/607881.

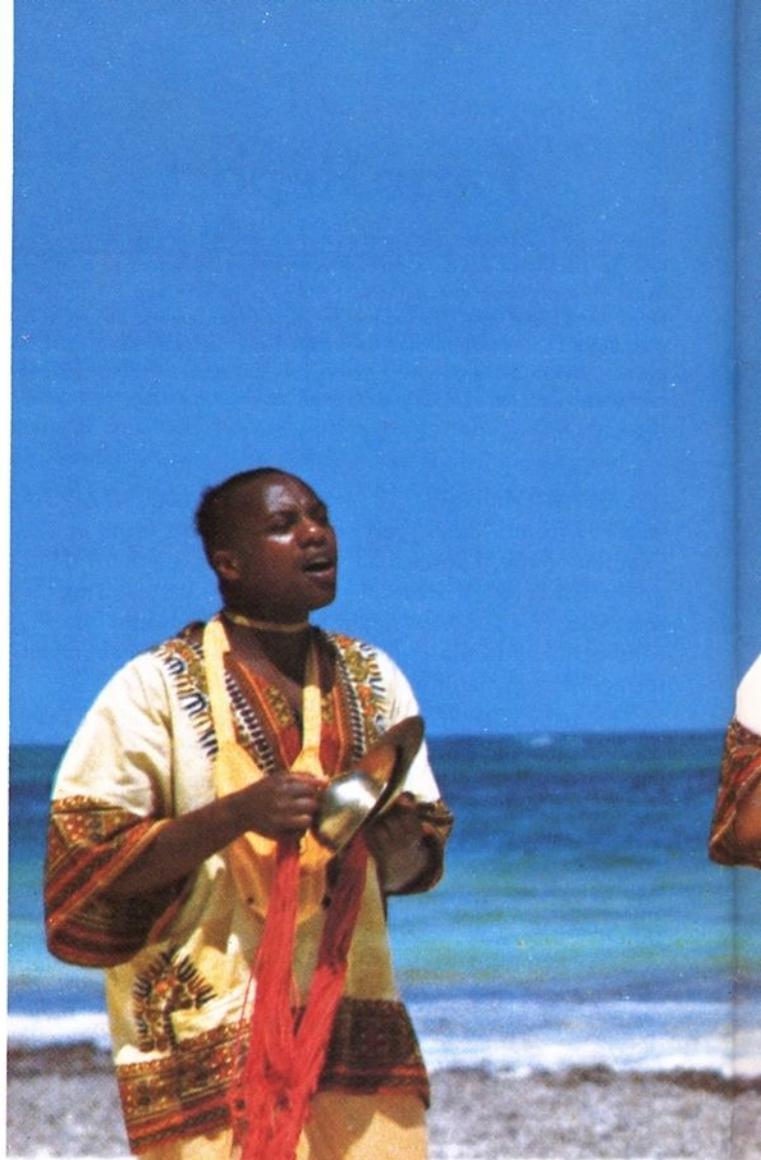
LATIN AMERICA: Buenos Aires, Argentina—Ecuador 473; Caracas, Venezuela—Calle Luis Roche No. 61, Colinas, De Los Chaguaramos, 78-74-57; Mexico City, Mexico—Gobernador Tiburcio, Montreal 45; San Miguel, Mexico City 18/277-3124; Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico—55 Jorge Romany, Santa Rita 00925/ (809) 764-1373; San Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago—corner of Gordon Streets and Santa Margarita Circular, San Augustine, Trinidad/862-4605; San Jose, Costa Rica—Hatillo No.3, Calle Costa Rica No.12/26-3248; Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic—Cayetano Rodriguez No. 36, Sao Paulo, Brazil—Av. Afranio Peixoto No. 457.

THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA: Ann Arbor, Michigan—718 W. Madison 48103/ (313) 665-6340; Atlanta, Georgia—1287, Ponce de Leon Ave. N.E. 30306/ (404) 378-9182; Baltimore, Maryland—200, Bloomsbury Ave., Catonsville 21228, (301) 788-6783; Berkeley, California—2334 Stuart St., 94705/ (415) 843-7874; Boston, Massachusetts—72 Commonwealth Ave. 02116/ (617) 536-1669; Buffalo, New York—132 Bidwell Pkwy., 14222/ (716) 882-0281; Charlotte, North Carolina—Rt. 7, Box 870, Mallard Creek Road, 28213/ (704) 596-5151; Chicago, Illinois—1014 Emerson St., Evanston 60201/ (312) 475-9126; Cleveland, Ohio—15720 Euclid Ave., E. Cleveland 44122/ (216) 851-9367; Dallas, Texas—5430 Gurley Ave. 75223/ (214) 827-6330; Denver, Colorado—1400 Cherry St. 80220/ (303) 333-5461; Detroit, Michigan—8311 E. Jefferson Ave. 48214/ (313) 824-6000; Gainesville, Florida—921 SW Depot Ave. 32601/ (904) 377-1496; Honolulu, Hawaii—51 Coehee Way 96817/ (808) 595-3947; Houston, Texas—1111 Rosalie St., 77004, (713) 526-9660; Laguna Beach, California—641 Ramona Ave. 92651/ (714) 494-9172; Los Angeles, California—3764 Watska Ave. 90034/ (213) 871-0717; Miami, Florida—10900 Coral Way, 33165/ (305) 552-1766; Montreal, Canada—1626 Pie IX Blvd. H1V 2C5/ (514) 527-1101; New Orleans, Louisiana—2936 Esplanade Ave. 70119/ (504) 488-1313; New York, New York—340-348 West 55th St., 10019/ (212) 586-7238; Ocala, Hawaii—PO. Box 112, 96774; Ottawa, Canada—224 Bessner St., Ontario/ (513) 236-9091; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania—424 E. Woodlawn St. 19144/ (215) 849-1767; Phoenix, Arizona—7602 N. 27th Ave. 85021/ (602) 985-1241; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania—4626 Forbes Ave. 15213/ (412) 683-7700; Portland, Oregon—2805 SE Hawthorne 97214/ (503) 234-1785; Rāchā-dāmodara Traveling Sankirtana Parties—P.O. Box 22436, Tampa, Florida 33622/ (813) 253-3505; St. Louis, Missouri—4544 Laclede Ave. 63108/ (314) 361-1224; San Diego, California—3300 Third Ave. 92103/ (714) 291-7778; San Francisco, California—3006 Laguna St. 94123/ (415) 567-7440; Seattle, Washington—400 18th Ave. East 98102/ (206) 329-9348; Toronto, Canada—187 Gerrard St. East, Ontario M5A 2E5/ (416) 922-5415; Vancouver, Canada—1774 West 18th Ave., Vancouver-9 B.C./ (604) 732-8422; Washington, D.C.—2015 "Q" St. N.W. 20009/ (202) 667-3516; Winnaipeg, Canada—160 Home St., Manitoba/ (204) 775-3575.

ISKCON FARMS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD: Bridesville, B.C., Canada—VOH 1BQ, Rock Mt. Road/ (604) 446-2436; Buffalo, New York—(write ISKCON, Buffalo); Carriere, Mississippi—Rt. No. 2, Box 449, 39426/ (601) 798-6705; Delaplane, Virginia—Rt. No. 1, Box 22, 22025/ (703) 364-2156; Indre, France—Lucy-Le-Male, 3660 Valency, Kilifi, Kenya, Africa—(write ISKCON Nairobi); London, England—Bhakivedanta Manor, Letchmore Heath, Watford WD2 8EP, Hertfordshire; Radlett, code 9246, 7244; Mayapur, India—ISKCON International Center, P.O. Sree Mayapur Dham, W Bengal (District Nadia), Mulberry, Tennessee—Rt. No. 1, Box 146A, 37359/ (615) 759-7058; New Vrindaban, West Virginia—R.D. No. 1, Box 620, McCreary's Ridge 26041/ (304) 845-2790; Port Royal, Pennsylvania—R.D. No. 1, 17082/ (717) 527-2493.

# AFRICA'S BRIGHT FUTURE: Independence Through Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

*Practical solutions to Africa's economic, political and social problems. An interview with His Holiness Chāyavana Svāmī, Chairman of ISKCON's African Mission.*



**BTG:** What do you regard as the challenge of the ISKCON mission in Africa?



**Chāyavana Svāmī:** The challenge of the African mission is the same challenge we find everywhere in the world: to go out and present Kṛṣṇa consciousness as we have been taught it by our spiritual master, and to convince

people that Kṛṣṇa conscious life is the solution to the problems of modern day society by showing our practical example.

**BTG:** The Christian missionary movement has been very active in Africa for about one hundred years and has played a very important role in the continent's development. How do your philosophy and practices differ from theirs?

**Chāyavana Svāmī:** The Christian missionaries have actually done a lot of good work in Africa. They have taught the people that God exists and that one should offer Him respect. But because their philosophy is based on a material

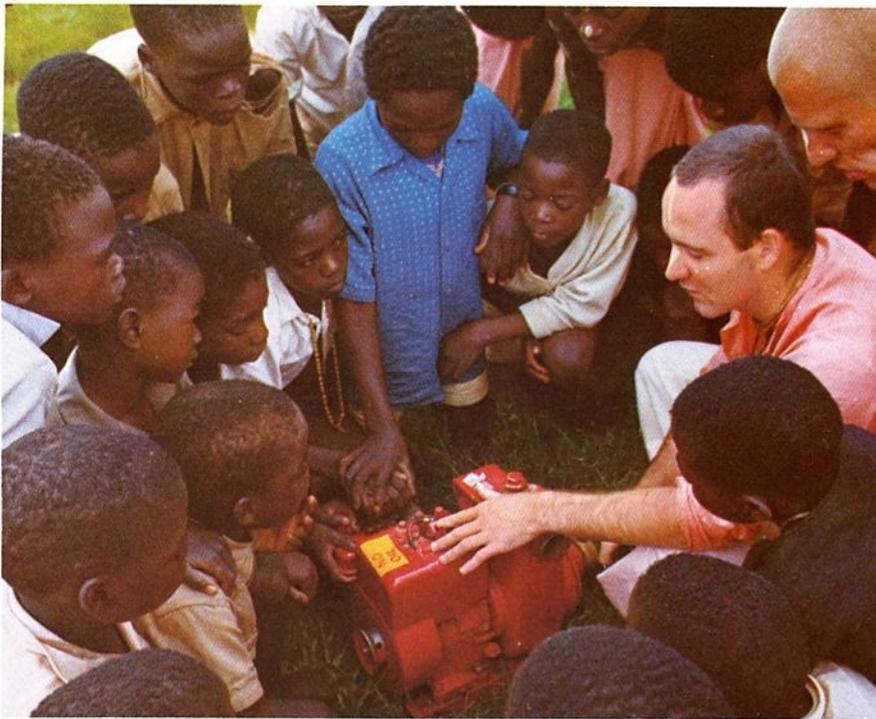
Pioneers of the Kṛṣṇa

from print →

print →



consciousness movement in Africa chant Hare Kṛṣṇa on the beach at Mombasa, Kenya.



At ISKCON's farm community (above) in the village of Kilifi, just north of Mombasa, a devotee teaches local youngsters how a portable irrigation pump works. Although the community depends largely upon manual farming techniques, a limited amount of basic machinery is also utilized.

↑ print

Devotees give the cows special attention. Below, a farm worker bathes Mahārāṇī, a thoroughbred Freesland cow from Europe who gives about sixteen pounds of milk a day. Bathing the cows three times a week helps prevent tick fever and other diseases.



↑ print

conception of human welfare, they are mainly concerned with things like opening hospitals and schools, which can only temporarily alleviate suffering. They do not understand that the individual is actually spiritual—an eternal part of God or Kṛṣṇa—and that real human welfare is to awaken people to this truth, which can actually liberate them from all material miseries.

**BTG:** What are the advantages of working here in Africa rather than in America or in Europe?

**Chāyavana Svāmī:** The main advantage is having a field that is still undeveloped. In one sense we can call Africa a new frontier for Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The continent is tremendous—it is a vast conglomerate of fifty-four nations—and there are many challenges yet uncovered. Of course, in any part of the world there is opportunity for preaching, but Africa is especially suitable because it's a unique combination of East and West. We find not only large universities and modern cities but simple village life as well. We can preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness on both levels. There are also many native Indians here, and this gives us an opportunity to make life members, as we do in India. So we have a very broad field for our missionary activities.

**BTG:** I've heard you're establishing a *varṇāśrama* program in Africa. Can you explain what *varṇāśrama* is?

**Chāyavana Svāmī:** *Varṇāśrama* is a comprehensive system of social organization designed to uplift everyone to the platform of spiritual understanding. In the *varṇāśrama* system there are four spiritual orders and four functional classes. The four functional classes are the *brāhmaṇas*, the *kṣatriyas*, the *vaiśyas* and the *sūdras*. The *brāhmaṇas* are the most intelligent members of society. As the spiritual authorities, they give direction to the *kṣatriyas*, who administer the government and protect the citizens. The *vaiśyas* engage in trading, cow protection and farming, and in this way support the other three classes. And the *sūdras* or laborers assist the other three classes. The four spiritual orders are the *brahmacāris* (single male students), *grhasthas* (householders following the regulative principles of spiritual life), *vānaprasthas* (those who are retired from

household life), and *sannyāsīs* (those who have completely renounced everything for the purpose of self-realization).

**BTG:** Is the *varṇāśrama* system the same as the caste system?

**Chāyavana Svāmī:** Yes, but it is not the artificial caste system prevalent in India today, which is based on birthright. If I claim to be a *brāhmaṇa* because my father was a *brāhmaṇa*, that is artificial. For example, suppose a qualified doctor has a son. The son is not automatically a doctor. He may become a doctor, but he is not born a doctor. Similarly, the son of a *brāhmaṇa* is not automatically a *brāhmaṇa*. He must actually qualify himself as a *brāhmaṇa*. The system we advocate accepts a *brāhmaṇa* by qualification, not by birth. This is the caste system given by Lord Kṛṣṇa for the benefit of human society.

**BTG:** When someone joins your mis-

sion, how do you determine his place in the *varṇāśrama* system?

**Chāyavana Svāmī:** We don't force a person into a specific *varṇa* or *āśrama*. We simply let him work according to his propensities, and he naturally falls into one of these categories.

**BTG:** How can the *varṇāśrama* system solve the problems of society?

**Chāyavana Svāmī:** In the *varṇāśrama* system, everyone's energies are directed toward serving God. *Īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ*. This means that God is the supreme controller and owner of everything. Thus when everyone cooperates in using everything in His service, He provides all the necessities of life. In this way society becomes peaceful, free from the disturbances created by a godless civilization.

**BTG:** How are you introducing this program here in Africa?

**Chāyavana Svāmī:** At present we have a small-scale project in the coastal village of Kilifi, near Mombasa, Kenya. We live among the villagers, teach Kṛṣṇa consciousness at regular meetings, and apply the *varṇāśrama* philosophy. We're getting very good results in Kilifi, and the government has recently promised us another plot of land where we will expand our activities.

**BTG:** How will the *varṇāśrama* system change the present economic structure of Africa?

**Chāyavana Svāmī:** The basic principle is to go back to the land. For example, here in Mauritius, the European colonists came to exploit. They took the land, which was at one time used for raising the necessities of life, and turned the island into a one-crop economy. In this way people became dependent upon foreign imports for their subsistence.



How plants grow—and how they can grow better—is the subject of this class on the Kilifi farm. The farm has attracted the interest of the Kenyan government which has recently promised ISKCON another plot of land to expand its programs.

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And because they were dependent, the prices could be controlled, and the people were forced into such a degraded position that they could barely get by from day to day. The whole idea of importing and exporting, which came about as a result of colonialism, is simply artificial. If the land is properly used with an aim toward self-sufficiency, then the people will not be dependent for their livelihood upon importing and exporting. We are trying to present the idea of *varṇāśrama* on a small scale with an aim toward self-sufficiency. If a man can become self-sufficient in providing food for himself by proper use of the land and by keeping a few cows, then his primary problem is solved. Using the same land and the same simple process, he can also construct a small house and live very peacefully there with his family. Then he can begin to make cloth to provide clothing, and by following this system he will become completely freed from the unwanted things in society that simply cause agitation and disturbance. He will be in an ideal atmosphere for cultivating Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the real purpose of life.

**BTG:** You mentioned that trade is artificial. But doesn't it yield the benefit of promoting contact between various peoples? Wouldn't total self-sufficiency lead to indifference and hostility be-

tween different people of the world?

**Chāyavana Svāmī:** No, the only valuable connection between countries—as between individuals—is on the platform of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Every individual living entity is part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, instead of each state becoming the center of activity, if Kṛṣṇa remains the center of activity, then there is peace and harmony between individuals as well as nations. The present system creates envy between the haves and the have-nots. Under the banner of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, however, the whole world can be united with God as the center.

**BTG:** Do you have a food distribution program here like the one in India?

**Chāyavana Svāmī:** Yes. At our temple in Nairobi we distribute *prasāda*\* daily, and we also prepare large quantities of *prasāda* for distribution in villages throughout Kenya. The devotees go out every day in trucks and distribute the *prasāda* in the villages. This program has become very popular in Kenya.

However, unlike the mass food distribution program in India—which we may yet develop in the future—our main emphasis has been on teaching self-sufficiency through the establishment of the *varṇāśrama* system. Many groups have

\*Food offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa

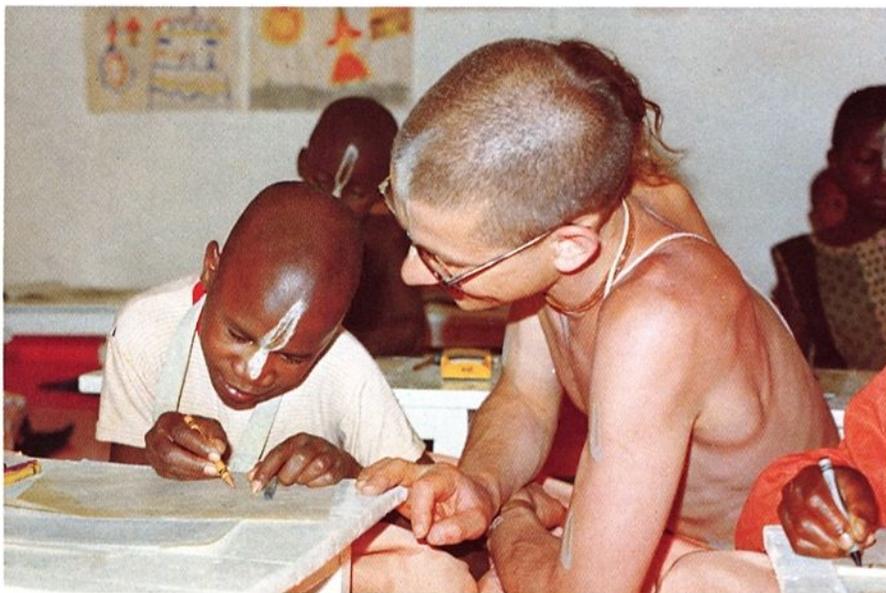
come to Africa and tried mass food-distribution programs, and although they temporarily relieved some suffering, they did not have the long-range effect that the *varṇāśrama* college will have. In the *varṇāśrama* college we are educating people to take care of themselves and be independent of handouts from philanthropic organizations. Although we are doing both kinds of work, we find that the real future lies in the *varṇāśrama* education, which will instill a sense of pride in the people and give them what they actually want: self-sufficiency and, ultimately, spiritual enlightenment.

**BTG:** Have you had any success in making dedicated African devotees?

**Chāyavana Svāmī:** Yes, a great deal. For example, several months ago two of our men came to see me and indicated that they were very anxious to travel and preach. One of them had just been initiated, and the other had been with us for only six months. I immediately arranged for them to take books and *prasāda* into neighboring Tanzania, where they were to open up a center in Dares Salaam. Unfortunately, they were stopped at the border by immigration officials and forced to return to Nairobi. Although we were disappointed at not being able to successfully establish a center in Tanzania, we were not discouraged because the men had developed the determination to go out on their own and preach. Now we are arranging for them to travel and preach within Kenya. Because this preaching attitude is developing among the local men who have joined us, we are very encouraged. The desire to preach is the most important thing in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

**BTG:** How do you propose to solve the challenge of preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the people of Africa?

**Chāyavana Svāmī:** The solution lies in how effectively we are able to present Kṛṣṇa consciousness as it is. Śrīla Prabhupāda, our spiritual master, has given us the perfect example. When he came to America in 1966, he began preaching, and gradually young men and women came forward and started to take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Professor Stillson Judah of Berkeley University has recently written a book about Kṛṣṇa consciousness in which he concludes



Mark of tilaka, an insignia of the soul, is prominently displayed on the forehead of a young student at ISKCON's primary school in Nairobi. Spiritual instruction compliments the school's standard academic curriculum.

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In the Nairobi temple's special outdoor kitchen (below) a devotee prepares large amounts of a wholesome maize dish for distribution in the villages of Kenya (above). Every day thousands of Africans benefit from this food that's been offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

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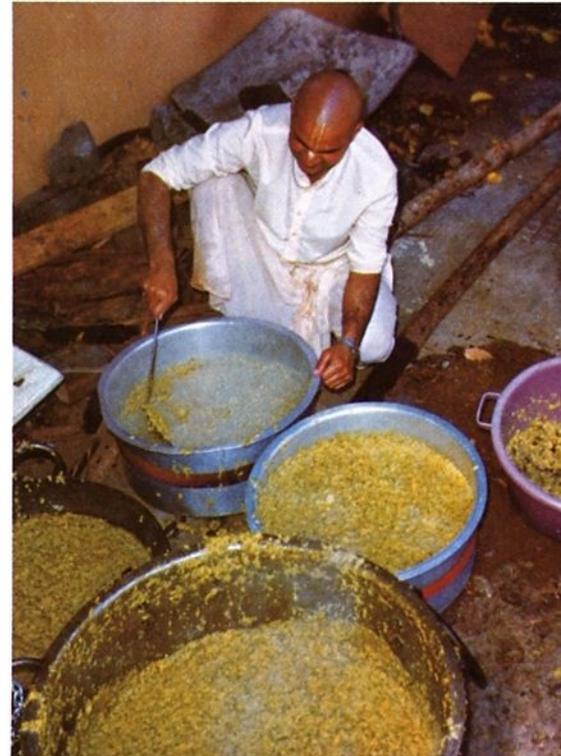
that it has a very good chance of surviving in the Western world because the senior disciples are serious and have remained fixed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The same idea applies in Africa. Now we have nearly thirty Kenyan men and women, and we are very encouraged by their progress. Some of them have been initiated, and they are all taking the process very seriously and becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious. Therefore, we are confident the movement will spread here in Africa. We are also very encouraged that many foreign devotees—particularly from the United States and Europe—are taking a new interest in the ISKCON mission in Africa. In the past year nearly fifty young men and women from America and Europe have come to Africa, and they are all enthusiastically engaged here. As long as this missionary spirit is present among the members of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is sure to spread in Africa and all over the world.

**BTG:** Are any Africans taking leadership roles in the ISKCON mission here?

**Chāyavana Svāmī:** Yes. In Nairobi, Yogeśa dāsa adhikāri is training to be the president of the Nairobi temple. And in Mombasa a recent initiate named Sarvavit dāsa brahmācārī is also being trained for the presidency of that city's temple. Within six months to one year these men will be able to take their posts, and they will then become the leaders of the ISKCON mission in Africa. Many others are being trained in Deity worship, cooking, gardening, farming and other aspects of service, according to their capacities. They will eventually take over the work now being done by the foreign students of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

**BTG:** What special programs have you instituted in Africa?

**Chāyavana Svāmī:** One of the most important is the life membership program begun in 1971. We arrived in Africa with very little money and com-



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pletely dependent on the support of the local people. We do not receive money from overseas, as many other missions do. Therefore our first problem was how to raise funds. At that time Śrīla Prabhupāda had just instituted the program of life membership in India, and we began a similar program among the Indian nationals in Africa. At first we did not even have books. We simply issued a life membership card and promised that in the future we would give them the books and they would receive BACK TO GOD-HEAD magazine every month for the rest of their lives. To date we have enrolled well over one thousand life members throughout Africa. Most of them are members of the Indian community, and they have given us their financial support. Any endeavor requires organization, labor, land and capital. We have the ability to organize and to provide labor, and from the local population we request capital and land. As we acquire these things, we are then able to apply the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness

and make it work for the benefit of the local inhabitants.

Our next program was starting Deity worship in the temples. Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote us a letter explaining that for the new men traveling and preaching would be too difficult in the beginning; therefore it would be necessary to establish temples like the ones in the West. So in 1973 we installed the Deities of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Bāṅkavihārī in our Nairobi temple, and by Kṛṣṇa's grace it has become the most popular Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple in that city. On Sunday we have two feast programs, and during the week we receive many guests.

Our third program is the *varṇāśrama* college, launched within the past year on an experimental basis. The *varṇāśrama* system itself is well-tested and proven—we know it will work. It is simply up to us to become pure and determined enough to practically apply the principles in Africa.

Of course, our traveling *saṅkīrtana* (preaching) parties are as active as ever.

Just a few weeks ago we sent a group of devotees to the ancient city of Addis Ababa, high in the mountains of Ethiopia. We've received reports that they are doing very well there. They've met some very intelligent people who are taking interest in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We have high hopes that the mission will continue to expand in this way, although traveling in Africa is certainly not easy. The group that went to Ethiopia spent five days of arduous travel to go about a thousand miles. Spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Africa is a challenge for anyone, but I am confident we are attracting people who can meet this challenge successfully.

**BTG:** How have the African people received your movement here?

**Chāyavana Svāmī:** Very well. We've now established centers in Nairobi, Johannesburg, Mombasa and Mauritius. In the beginning, people were curious, and we found large crowds gathering wherever we held a public event. But now, although we still attract large crowds wherever we go, the movement has matured to the point where we're beginning to interest the intelligentsia—the leaders of society. They are coming forward not only out of curiosity but also out of a genuine desire to learn something.

**BTG:** What is your role in the ISKCON African mission?

**Chāyavana Svāmī:** I am trying to practically apply the instructions given to me by my spiritual master. Most of the management and organization work is carried out by the African students. I simply preach and keep them enlivened and fixed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

**BTG:** What do you feel ISKCON can contribute to the African people?

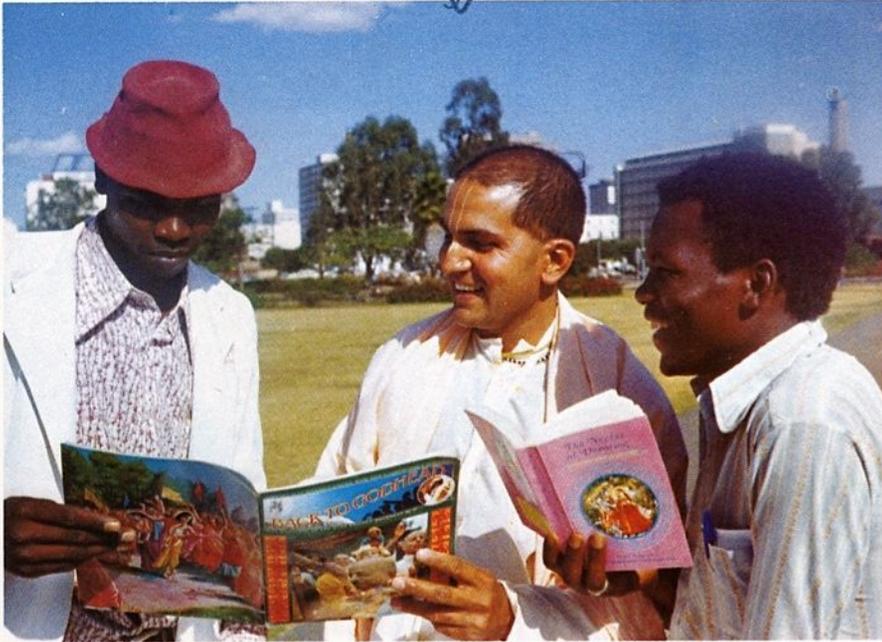
**Chāyavana Svāmī:** As I mentioned before, the most important thing we are trying to give them is a simple, peaceful way of life, which is what everyone is looking for. They are fed up with the exploitation of the Europeans, and now the Russians and the Chinese are coming—all simply to exploit the land and the people of Africa. But we have not come here to exploit Africa; we have come to give the African people what they actually want: a peaceful, God-centered way of life. This is our most important contribution to Africa and to the world.



Lord Kṛṣṇa and His consort Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī stand as Deities at the ISKCON temple in Nairobi, a large house surrounded by gardens of sweet-smelling flowers, clear ponds, and many fruit trees. The forty devotees from Africa, India, Europe and the U. S. who live and work here receive hundreds of visitors a week.

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Twenty-six year old Caityaguru dāsa, son of an Indian government minister, shows Bhaktivedanta Book Trust literature to students at the University of Nairobi. Devotees are now busily translating the literature of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement into Swahili.

**BTG:** What advice would you give the leaders of the emerging African nations?

**Chāyavana Svāmī:** They should approach those who are spiritually enlightened for guidance in governing their nations. Here in Mauritius, for example, we have learned through meeting some of the top ministers in the government that they are trying to develop a perfect state. According to the Vedic literatures, a perfect state must have God at the center. During the Vedic age, such rulers as Mahārāja Parikṣit and Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira presided over perfectly peaceful and prosperous God-conscious empires. There was no enmity or dissension even among individuals; everyone was both materially and spiritually opulent. If the leaders of society would consult the Vedic literature, they could understand that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the practical solution to all the problems of modern life. Then, if the leaders themselves take up the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, they will actually acquire the qualities necessary to govern effectively: mercifulness, cleanliness, austerity, and truthfulness. If these qualities prevail in the leaders of society, then the general populace will soon acquire them, and the sinful, destructive ac-

tivities of illicit sex, intoxication, gambling and meat-eating will automatically be eliminated. Then the entire human civilization can be saved.

**BTG:** How is your mission funded?

**Chāyavana Svāmī:** Our activities are financed primarily through the sale of literature published in America by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. Contributions from life members are also an important source of income. As I mentioned before, we have over one thousand life members enrolled in Africa alone. We also have several thousand in India and Europe.

**BTG:** Are you still seeking help from devotees in other countries?

**Chāyavana Svāmī:** Yes, we are interested in attracting serious-minded men and women to come to Africa and help us propagate Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Africa is a great challenge because it is a strange place, and anyone who comes here must be prepared to make certain adjustments. But there is also an urgent need for Kṛṣṇa consciousness here. Now the people of Africa are looking for development, and they are naturally trying to follow in the footsteps of those nations who appear to be most developed. To the untrained, materialistic eye, the Western world ap-

pears to be very advanced, but from the *sāstras* [scriptures] we understand that they have simply created a hellish condition of life. In fact, in the big cities of the West, many people—especially the youth—are becoming so frustrated by so-called advanced technology that they are fleeing to the country. Actually, people all over the world are looking for a peaceful, natural way of life, and we know by our experience within the Kṛṣṇa consciousness society how to achieve that. We are simply trying to give everyone the opportunity to take advantage of the ideal Vedic way of life.

**BTG:** What do you see as the future of the ISKCON African mission?

**Chāyavana Svāmī:** Our goal is to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the entire continent of Africa. By exploring areas of western and northern Africa and the islands surrounding the continent, we have found an excellent field for spreading Vedic culture. People are actually anxious to take to the Vedic way of life, and we see a very bright future.

We have some very serious men and women now, and they are becoming determined and eager to preach the message of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu to their countrymen. As long as the devotees have this missionary spirit, then Kṛṣṇa consciousness will be successful in Africa or in any part of the world. The real Vaiṣṇava spirit is not to be satisfied simply remaining alone in a secluded place and attaining salvation, but to go out and preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness and save all the fallen souls. The great Vaiṣṇava saint Prahlāda Mahārāja was offered whatever he desired by the Lord, including liberation from all material miseries. But rather than take liberation, Prahlāda chose to stay in this world and preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness so that the unfortunate people could be saved and go back to home, back to Godhead. As long as this attitude prevails in ISKCON, our mission will be successful.

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*If you're interested in assisting the work of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in Africa, please contact Tridaṇḍī Chāyavana Svāmī, ISKCON African Mission Headquarters, P.O. Box 28946, Nairobi, Kenya, East Africa. Telephone 331568.*

# The Special Kindness of Lord Caitanya

*Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, an incarnation of the Supreme Lord, appeared in India in the fifteenth century. His mission was to freely distribute pure love of God to everyone without considering who was qualified or unqualified. He predicted that the whole world would one day hear the chanting of the Lord's holy names. The first of the following three narratives is excerpted from Śrīla Prabhupāda's introduction to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. The final two are taken from his English translation of Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, an extensive account of Lord Caitanya's life and teachings.*

## *Delivering the Drunken Brothers*

When Lord Caitanya was preaching in the town of Navadvīpa, two of His closest associates, Nityānanda Prabhu and Haridāsa Ṭhākura, approached a noisy crowd on the main road. They learned from passers-by that two brothers, Jagāi and Mādhāi, were once again causing a disturbance in a drunken condition. These two brothers had been born in a respectable *brāhmaṇa* family, but due to bad association they had become debauchees of the worst type. Not only were they drunkards, but they were also meat-eaters, woman hunters and thieves.

Nityānanda Prabhu decided that these two fallen souls must be the first to be delivered by Lord Caitanya's *sankīrtana* movement. If they were delivered from their sinful ways, the good name of Lord Caitanya would be still more glorified. Thinking in this way, Nityānanda Prabhu and Haridāsa Ṭhākura pushed through the crowd and asked the two brothers to chant the holy name of Lord Hari.

This enraged Jagāi and Mādhāi. The two drunks attacked Nityānanda and Haridāsa with filthy language, and chased them for a considerable distance. Later, when Lord Caitanya heard of the incident, He was glad that Nityānanda and Haridāsa had tried to deliver such fallen souls.

The next day, Nityānanda Prabhu went to see the brothers again. As He approached them, Mādhāi threw a piece of earthen pot at Him. It struck Nityānanda on the forehead,

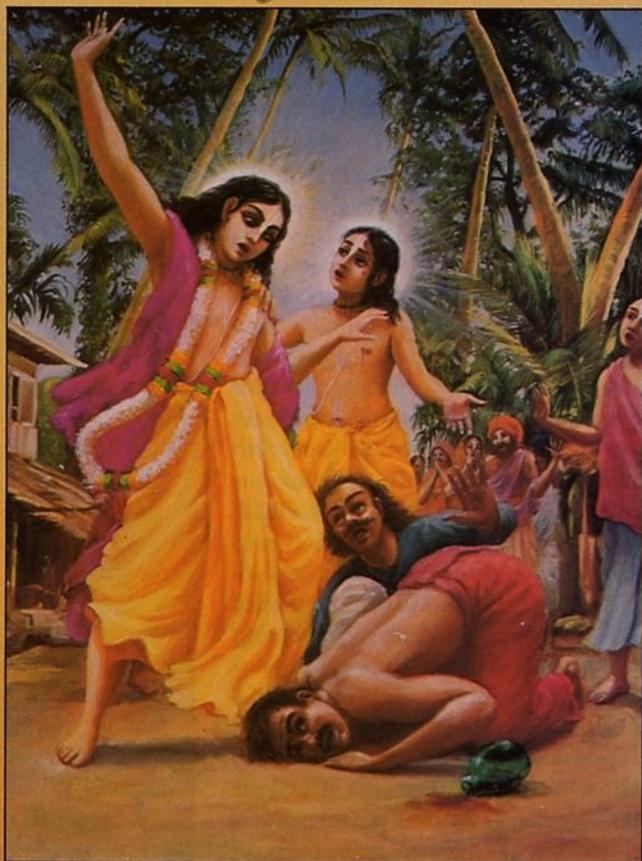


Illustration: Muralidhara dasa

and blood began to flow. But Nityānanda Prabhu was so kind that instead of protesting against the heinous act, He said, "It does not matter that you have thrown this pot at Me. I still request you to chant the holy name of Lord Hari." Astonished to see the mercy of Nityānanda Prabhu, Jagāi at once fell down at His feet and asked Him to pardon his sinful brother. When Mādhāi again attempted to hurt Nityānanda Prabhu, Jagāi stopped him and implored him to beg for Nityānanda's mercy.

Meanwhile, news of the attack on Nityānanda reached Lord Caitanya, who hurried to the spot in a fiery mood. The Lord immediately invoked His Sudarśana *cakra* (His ultimate weapon, shaped like a wheel) to kill the sinners. But Nityānanda Prabhu reminded Him of His mission to deliver the hopelessly fallen souls of the age, of whom Jagāi and Mādhāi were typical examples. Ninety-nine percent of the popula-

tion of the age resemble these brothers, despite high birth and apparent respectability.

As the Lord raised His Sudarśana *cakra* and Nityānanda Prabhu implored Him to forgive the two brothers, both Jagāi and Mādhāi fell at the lotus feet of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, begging Him to forgive them for their gross behavior. After Nityānanda reiterated their plea, the Lord agreed to accept them on one condition: that henceforward they would completely give up all their sinful activities. Both brothers agreed, and the Lord kindly accepted them. He never again referred to their past misdeeds.

This incident illustrates the special kindness of Lord Caitanya. In this age no one can claim to be sinless. Yet Lord Caitanya accepts anyone, no matter how sinful, on the condition that he promise not to indulge in sinful activities after being accepted as a disciple of a bona fide spiritual master.

\* \* \* \*

## Initiating the Buddhists

On His extraordinary tour of South India, Lord Caitanya visited many villages, and all the residents became Vaiṣṇavas (devotees of Kṛṣṇa) by chanting the holy names Hari and Kṛṣṇa. In this way, many thousands of people were delivered from the miseries of material life.

Sometimes the Lord would establish the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness by defeating various opposing philosophies. Once, a very learned Buddhist scholar came before the Lord with his disciples to establish the philosophical conclusions of Buddhism. With great pride, he set forth the nine Buddhist principles, but Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu broke them to pieces with strong logical arguments.

Many people had gathered to hear the debate, and when they all began to laugh, the Buddhists, who were all atheists, became fearful and ashamed. Atheists may be very expert in mental speculation and argument, but they can be defeated by a Vaiṣṇava firmly situated in his conviction and God consciousness. The Buddhists understood that Lord Caitanya was a powerful Vaiṣṇava, and they returned home very unhappy.

Later they began to plot against the Lord. Their plan was to discredit Him by tricking Him into eating untouchable food. The next day the Buddhists brought a plate of contaminated food to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, calling it *mahāprasāda* (spiritual food offered to Kṛṣṇa). As the food was being offered to the Lord, a very large bird swooped down, grabbed the plate with its beak and flew up into the air with it. All the food fell on the Buddhists and the plate itself fell down on the head of the chief Buddhist teacher, making a great sound. The teacher's head was cut by the edge of the plate, and he immediately fell to the ground unconscious.

At this calamity, all the Buddhist disciples cried aloud and ran to the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu for shelter. They addressed Him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, saying, "Sir, please excuse our offense. Please have mercy on

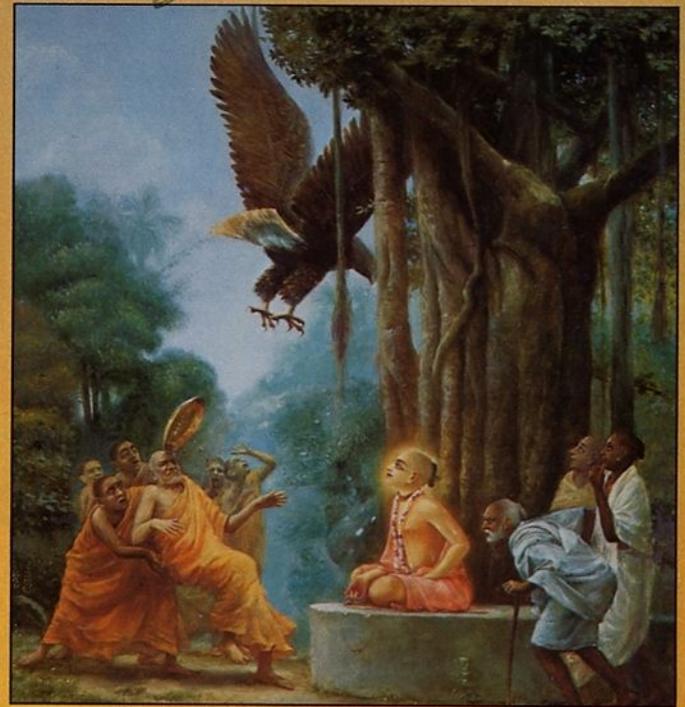


Illustration: Bharadvāja dāsa

us and bring our spiritual master back to life."

The Lord replied, "Chant the names of Kṛṣṇa and Hari very loudly near the ear of your spiritual master. Then he will regain consciousness."

Following Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's advice, all the Buddhist disciples began to chant the holy names of Kṛṣṇa, Rāma and Hari in unison. Soon the Buddhist scholar regained consciousness and immediately began to chant the holy name of Lord Hari with his disciples, much to the astonishment of all the onlookers. In this way Lord Caitanya initiated the Buddhists into the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, converting them to Vaiṣṇavism by reviving their original Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

## Inspiring the Jungle Animals ✓

Once Śrī Caitanya Mahārabhu decided to travel to Vṛndāvana, the place of Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance. A *brāhmaṇa* named Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya was chosen to assist the Lord, and before sunrise one morning they started their journey.

On the way, they passed through Jhārikhaṇḍa forest. At this time the Lord was in great ecstasy due to love of Kṛṣṇa. Packs of tigers, elephants, rhinoceroses and boars approached Him, but the Lord passed right through them unharmed. Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya was very afraid, but by Śrī Caitanya Mahārabhu's influence all the animals stood to one side.

Then the Lord splashed water on the bodies of some of the elephants, and they began to chant, "Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!" and dance. Some of the elephants fell to the ground, and some roared in ecstasy. Seeing this, Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya was completely astonished.

While passing through the jungle, Śrī Caitanya Mahārabhu chanted very loudly. Hearing His sweet voice, all the does came near Him. A group of tigers then joined the deer and began following the Lord. When He shouted, "Chant Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!" the tigers and deer began to chant "Kṛṣṇa!" and dance in ecstasy. Indeed, the tigers and deer embraced each other and kissed! Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya was struck with wonder at the sight, but Śrī Caitanya simply smiled to see all the fun.

In this way the Lord was able to deliver even the animals from the bonds of material existence. 

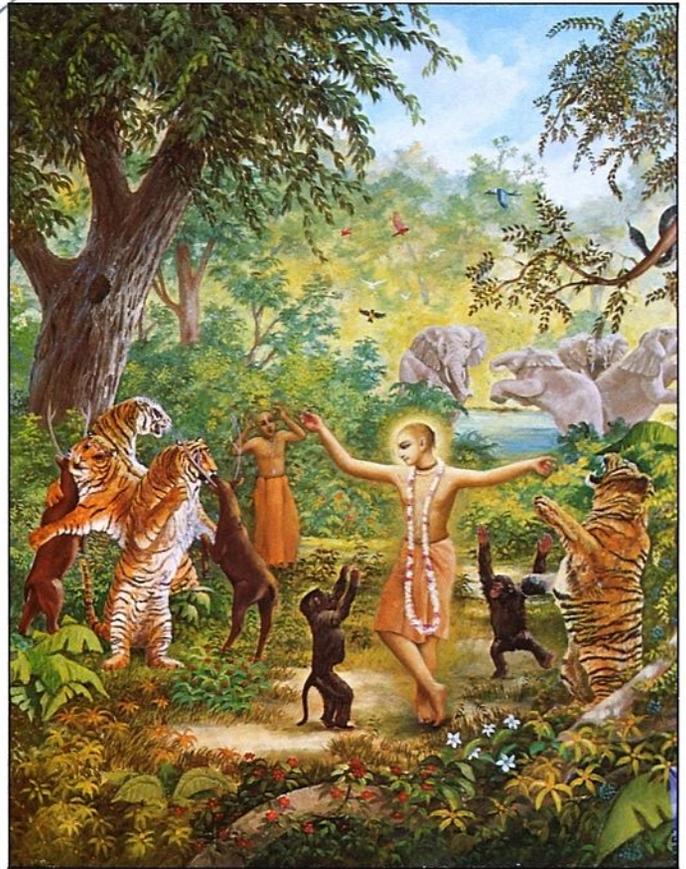


Illustration: Muralidhara dasa / Hector Salas

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—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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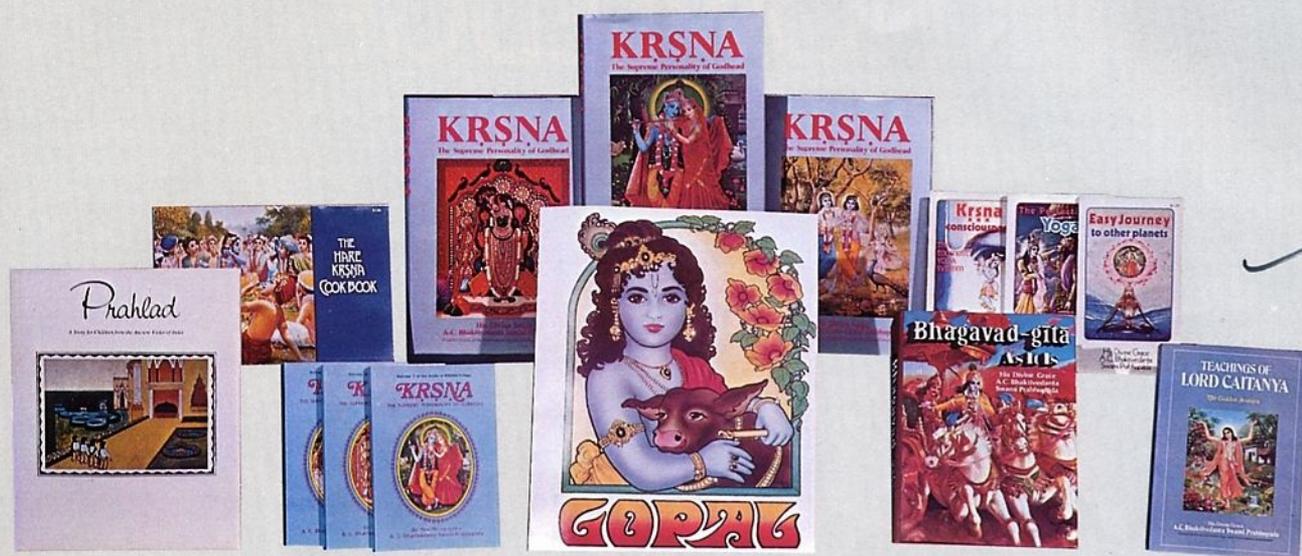
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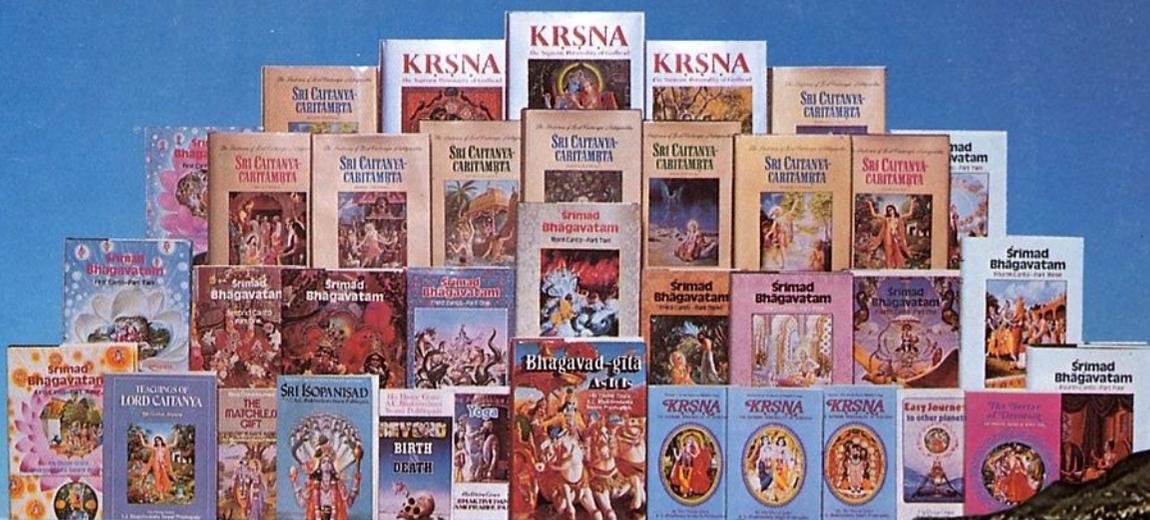
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