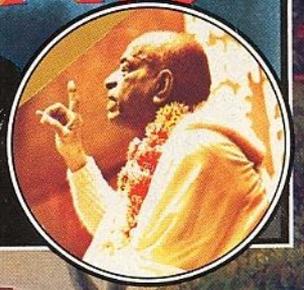


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



# BACK TO GODHEAD



Vol. 12 No. 9

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT





Photo: MuraliVadana daea

Devotees chant Hare Kṛṣṇa in St. Louis, Missouri.

# 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.*

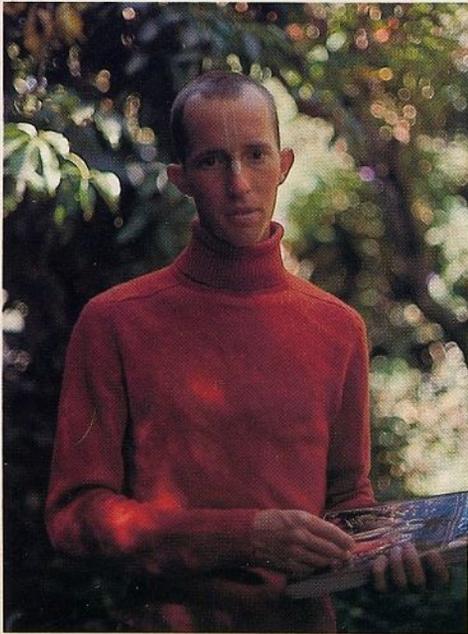
*We invite all our readers to consider them with an open mind and then visit one of the ISKCON centers to see how they are being applied in everyday life.*

1. By sincerely cultivating a bona fide spiritual science, we can be free from anxiety and come to a state of pure, unending, blissful consciousness in this lifetime.
2. We are not our bodies but eternal spirit souls, parts and parcels of God (Kṛṣṇa). As such, we are all brothers, and Kṛṣṇa is ultimately our common father.
3. Kṛṣṇa is the eternal, all-knowing, omnipresent, all-powerful, and all-attractive Personality of Godhead. He is the seed-giving father of all living beings, and He is the sustaining energy of the entire cosmic creation.
4. The Absolute Truth is contained in all the great scriptures of the world. However, the oldest known revealed scriptures in existence are the Vedic literatures, most notably the *Bhagavad-gītā*, which is the literal record of God's actual words.
5. We should learn the Vedic knowledge from a genuine spiritual master—one who has no selfish motives and whose mind is firmly fixed on Kṛṣṇa.
6. Before we eat, we should offer to the Lord the food that sustains us. Then Kṛṣṇa becomes the offering and purifies us.

7. We should perform all our actions as offerings to Kṛṣṇa and do nothing for our own sense gratification.
8. The recommended means for achieving the mature stage of love of God in this age of Kali, or quarrel, is to chant the holy names of the Lord. The easiest method for most people is to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra:

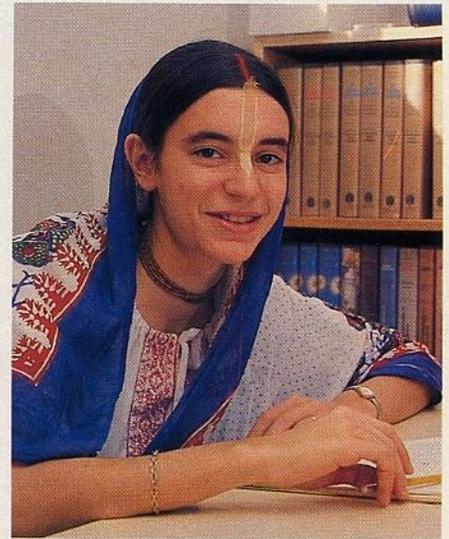
Hare Kṛṣṇa  
 Hare Kṛṣṇa  
 Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa  
 Hare Hare  
 Hare Rāma  
 Hare Rāma  
 Rāma Rāma  
 Hare Hare

# Chant and be happy...



**Satyasena dāsa, book distributor (above):** "Each day when I go out to distribute my spiritual master's books, I see that everyone is looking for happiness from sensual satisfaction. My job is to let them know they can get a higher pleasure from chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. Since God is absolute, He is personally present in His name—Kṛṣṇa, which means 'the all-attractive.' So chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is the most satisfying, beautiful experience, because it puts you directly in touch with the most satisfying, beautiful person."

**Viśākhā-devī dāśī (right):** "When I first met the devotees, I had no interest in spiritual life. But my work as a writer forced me to talk and argue with them. Eventually I met Śrīla Prabhupāda, the spiritual master of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, and read his books. My faith and understanding slowly grew, despite myself. The scriptures and the saints and spiritual masters through the ages all say that chanting the Lord's holy names is the best way to make spiritual advancement in this difficult time. Besides, it's practical; it works. Materially and spiritually, my life has changed for the better since I've been chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*."



**Turiyasāṅgitānanda (Alice Coltrane), musician (left):** "When you're chanting the *mahā-mantra*, your soul responds, because the soul *knows* these names. The soul relates to them, the soul is enlivened, the soul is lifted up upon hearing the names of the Lord. It's something people should open their hearts to and experience. They don't have to be musicians. They don't have to be any certain age—they can even be children. And they don't even have to understand the meaning of the words. Whether they understand or not, the hearing of that chanting is going to produce their spiritual good."



In Gainesville (home of the University of Florida) there's one fraternity that's quite different from the others. At the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple (pictured left) everyone chants the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. So they naturally relate to one another (and to everyone else) as kindred souls—fully happy and satisfied in their relationship with the Supreme Friend, Kṛṣṇa.

Find out more about Kṛṣṇa consciousness in this issue of BACK TO GODHEAD.

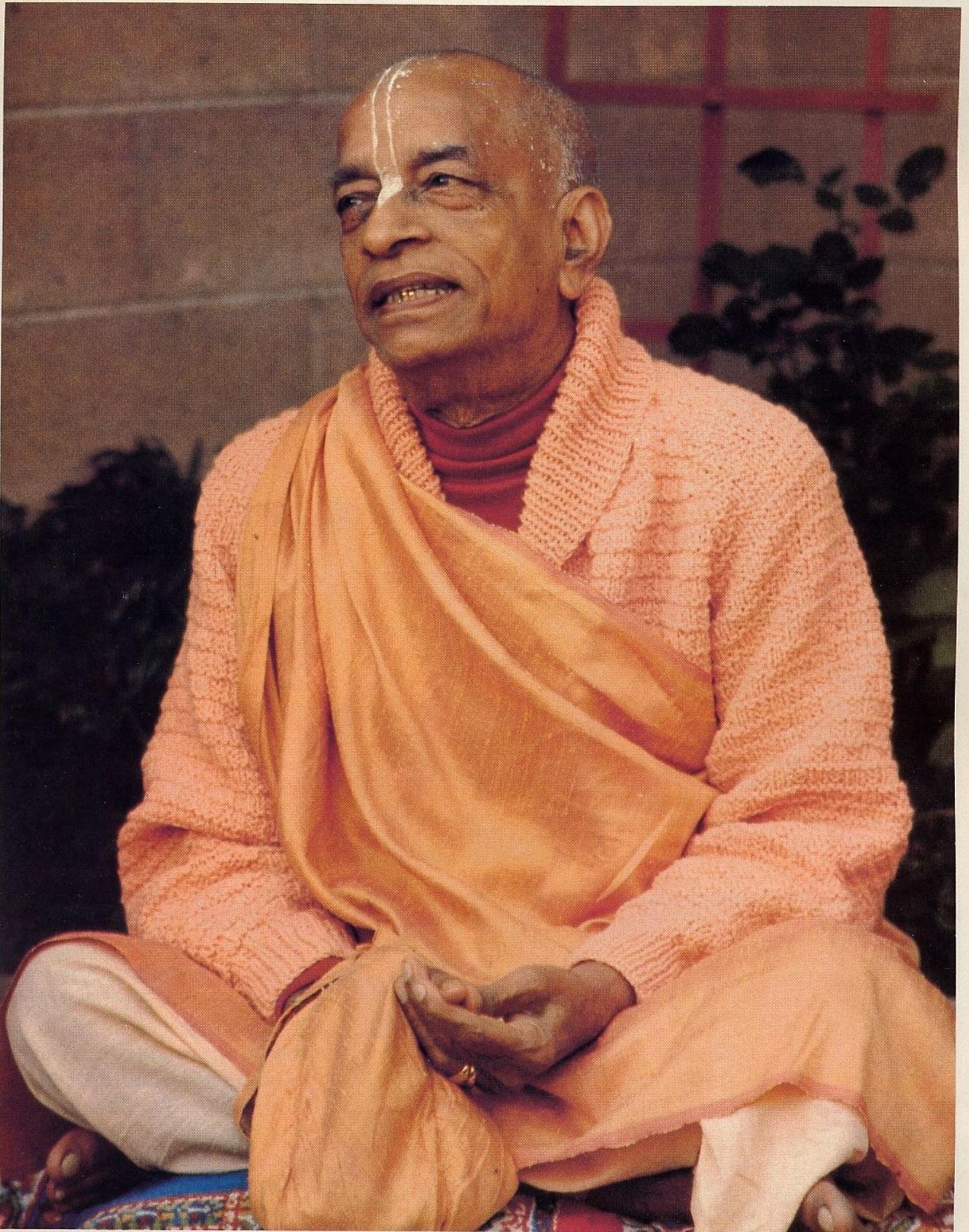


Photo: (Los Angeles) Bali Mardani dāsa

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

# BACK TO GODHEAD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

Vol. 12 No. 9

## FOUNDER

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

His Divine Grace

**A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda**

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## PRONUNCIATION OF SANSKRIT WORDS

Sanskrit words and names in BACK TO GODHEAD are spelled according to a system that scholars throughout the world use to show how to pronounce each word. Vowels in Sanskrit are pronounced almost as in Italian. The sound of the short *a* is like the *u* in *but*. The long *ā* is like the *a* in *far* and held twice as long as the short *a*, and *e* is like the *a* in *evade*. Long *ī* is like the *i* in *pique*. The vowel *ṛ* is pronounced like the *ri* in the English word *rim*. The *e* is pronounced as in the English word *chair*. The aspirated consonants (*ch*, *jh*, *dh*, etc.) are pronounced as in *staunch*, *heart*, *hedge-hog* and *red-hot*. The two 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.

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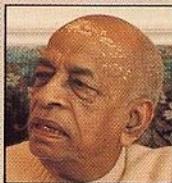
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## ◀ The founder and original editor of

BACK TO GODHEAD is His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. In September, 1965, Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived in the United States. In July, 1966, in a storefront in New York City, he began the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. And from those beginning days, BACK TO GODHEAD has been an integral part of ISKCON.

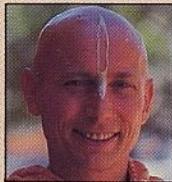
In fact, since 1944, when he started writing, editing, printing, and distributing BACK TO GODHEAD, Śrīla Prabhupāda has often called it "the backbone of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement." Although over the years it has changed in some ways, BACK TO GODHEAD remains, in Śrīla Prabhupāda's words, "an instrument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

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Arthur Schopenhauer thought nirvana (freedom from suffering) meant annihilating our will. "One should not be satisfied simply by annihilating the whimsical will," says His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. "One should understand the real will of the real person. That is the beginning of spiritual life."



### How I Found a Real Yoga Teacher 12

"It became obvious that my so-called teacher was not really interested in spreading the science of yoga. Rather, he was interested in spreading out his pocket, filling it up, and carrying away the cash." Amala-bhakta dāsa relates his long search for a spiritual master—and his final, crowning success.



### The Weather Emergency: Why—and What to Do? 20

"Irregular and uncontrollable weather has become a critical problem all over the world. Without sufficient rain, moderate temperatures, and a stable earth, how can we survive—what to speak of living happily and peacefully?" asks Balavanta dāsa. So should we look to science and technology? "Certainly not."



### The Brāhmaṇa Boy Who Strode the Universe 24

After King Bali and the demons had stolen the universe from the demigods, Lord Kṛṣṇa promised the demigods' distraught mother, "I shall become your son and help your other sons regain their rightful position." In just three steps the Lord did just that—and helped King Bali regain his rightful devotion. A story adapted by Drutakarma dāsa from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

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### Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

The continuing presentation of India's great spiritual classic.

Translation and commentary

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.



## ON THE COVER

This scene takes place five thousand years ago, in India's Vṛndāvana, the land of Lord Kṛṣṇa. "As Kṛṣṇa leaves the village," says artist Dṛghā-devī dāsi, "the *gopis* [cowherd girls] are concerned that He might hurt His lotus feet on the forest trail, and they're feeling such intense separation from Him that they're almost fainting. . . . Today, if people have any notion of Lord Kṛṣṇa, they think He should serve *them*—God is *their* servant. So naturally everything (like the weather) is topsy-turvy. But the *gopis* and all the other people in Vṛndāvana think they should serve Kṛṣṇa—they're *His* servants. So Vṛndāvana gets rain at night and sun all day—everything is nice. If you pay attention to Kṛṣṇa, you don't have any worries. He pays attention to you, too."

# NIRVANA

## Annihilation or Devotion?

German pessimist philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) thought that nirvana (freedom from suffering) means becoming desireless—putting an end to our will. But His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda disagrees. . . .



**Hayagrīva dāsa:** Arthur Schopenhauer was a nineteenth-century German philosopher who took some of his ideas from the Indian Vedic literature. For Schopenhauer, happiness meant inactive satisfaction—nirvana. Since he thought that the will to enjoy the material world is the irrational urge that brings about all

suffering, he advocated the extinction of the will. In his main book, *The World as Will and Idea*, he wrote, “The Indian Vedas and *Purāṇas* have no better simile than a dream for the actual [material] world, which they call ‘the web of *māyā*,’ and they use none more frequently.” From this Schopenhauer concluded, “Life is a long dream. . . . What is this world of perception but my idea?” He goes on to conclude that life is a projection of the will.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, material life is a projection of the material will, or material desire. And nirvana means that material desires are finished. But the living entity cannot be desireless, because he is an eternal spiritual being. Thus, even when he finishes his material desires, he still has spiritual desires. In the materially conditioned state, these spiritual desires are

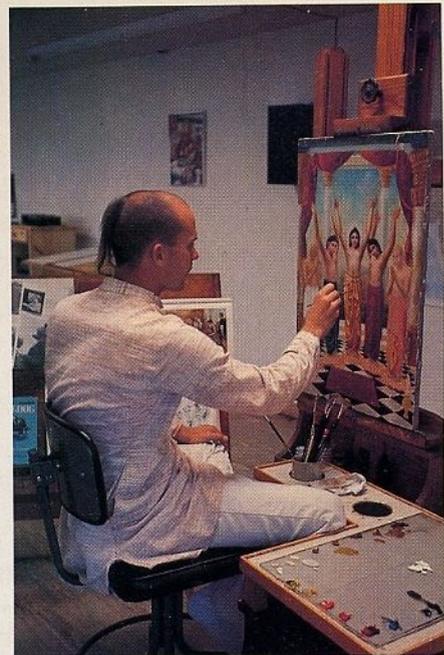
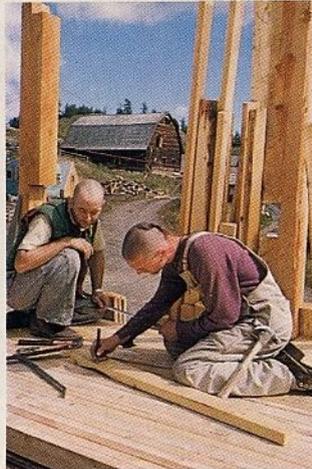
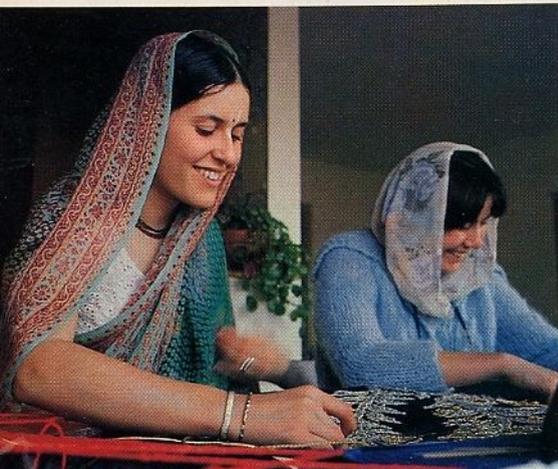
covered by material desires, but in any case desire is the constant companion of the soul, or living entity.

The soul transmigrates in this material world from one body to another, and he creates desires according to the type of body he gets. God’s supreme will affords the living entity various bodies so that he can fulfill his minute will, which is made up of material desires. In other words, the living entity wills something, and the supreme will (God, or Kṛṣṇa), understanding the finite will of the living entity, gives him facilities to fulfill his particular desire. In this way, the will of the living entities is the cause of this material existence.

However, Schopenhauer was wrong in thinking that you can become happy by extinguishing your will. Since you are a living being, you must *always* have desires. If your desires are stopped, you become like a stone. So instead of trying to put an end to all desire, you should try to cleanse the diseased form of desire (*sarvopādhi-vinirmuktam*). That cleansing process is Kṛṣṇa consciousness (*bhakti*). Presently our desires are desires of the body. When the living entity acquires the body of an American, a European, a Chinaman, or whatever, he desires like a human being. When he changes his body to that of a dog, he spends his time barking. According to his desires he has received a particular type of body. But these desires are temporary, and thus the living entity moves from one body to another. Because he is materially covered, he considers the temporary world to be reality; but because it is constantly changing, it is not. Therefore, in one sense, this material world is all a dream.

**Hayagrīva dāsa:** And trying to enjoy this dream is the source of frustration?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, because it is a fact that we cannot fulfill our material desires, which come and go like dreams. All material activities, subtle or gross, are manifestations of various dreamlike desires. Therefore, the impersonalist



Māyāvādī philosophers say *brahma satyaṁ, jagan mithyā*: “The dreamer is a fact, but the dream is false.” Our Vaiṣṇava philosophy agrees that the dreamer is the factual living entity; but we say that the dream of this material world is not false—but temporary. Therefore the dreamer has to come to the real, eternal spiritual platform so that his flickering material dreams can be extinguished. As explained in the *Nārada-pañcarātra*,

*sarvopādhi-vinirmuktam  
tat-paratvena nirmalam  
hr̥ṣīkeṇa hr̥ṣīkeṣa-  
sevanam bhaktir ucyate*

“*Bhakti*, or devotional service, means engaging all our senses in the service of the Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the master of all the senses. When the spirit soul renders service unto the Supreme, there are two side effects: he becomes free from all false material designations, and his senses become purified.” When one abandons the dream and awakens to reality, that is Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or *bhakti*.

**Hayagrīva dāsa:** Then will, or desire, can never be annihilated?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** No, not even for a second. It is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [3.5] that we cannot live for a second without desires. Because we are living, we must will and desire.

**Hayagrīva dāsa:** What about the Buddhists? They advocate a state of desirelessness.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** They believe that if you dismantle this material body, there will no longer be will, desire, or suffering. But this is not a fact. The fact is that you are an eternal spirit soul; you do not die after the destruction of the body. Consequently, thinking, feeling, and willing are actually carried from this body to another body in the process of transmigration. When the body dies, the living entity’s will carries him away, and according to the quality of his will, he receives another body. That body may be the body of a demigod, a dog, a human, or whatever. In any case, will or desire is the carrier.

**Hayagrīva dāsa:** Schopenhauer was greatly influenced by

some of the Vedic writings. He wrote, “Every keen pleasure is an error and an illusion, for no attained wish can give lasting satisfaction. . . . All pain rests on the absence or passing away of such illusory pleasure. Thus both pain and pleasure arise from defective knowledge. The wise man, therefore, holds himself equally aloof from joy and sorrow, and no event disturbs his composure.”

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** In this material world people say, “This is good, and that is bad.” But actually there is no question of good and bad, because everything material is on the temporary platform. Also, the *Bhagavad-gītā* states that the pains and pleasures experienced in the material world do not touch the spirit soul. When a spirit soul is under the illusion that he is his material body, he becomes concerned with the body’s pains and pleasures—because he thinks that those pains and pleasures are his. But this is not a fact. Therefore Kṛṣṇa advises,

*mātrā-sparśās tu kaunteya  
śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkha-dāḥ  
āgamāpāyino ’nityās  
tāms titikṣasva bhārata*

“O son of Kuntī, the nonpermanent appearance of happiness and distress, and their disappearance in due course, are like the appearance and disappearance of winter and summer seasons. They arise from sense perception, O descendant of Bharata, and one must learn to tolerate them without being disturbed” [Bg. 2.14]. Since pleasures and pains come and go in due course, they are not the reality. So why bother about them? If I feel pain, let me tolerate it and go about my business of serving Kṛṣṇa.

**Hayagrīva dāsa:** Schopenhauer saw happiness in the world as at best a negative state—simply a momentary suspension of suffering.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, that is explained by Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Sometimes when a man is to be punished, he is held under water to the point of suffocation. Then he is let up, and when he can finally breathe, he thinks, “Ah! Happiness at last!” But he is then immersed in the water for another period of suffering. So the point is that real happiness means to be relieved of suffering permanently, not for just a few moments.

“*Desirelessness*” in action—devotees serve Kṛṣṇa: “Even when the living entity finishes his material desires, he still has spiritual desires.”



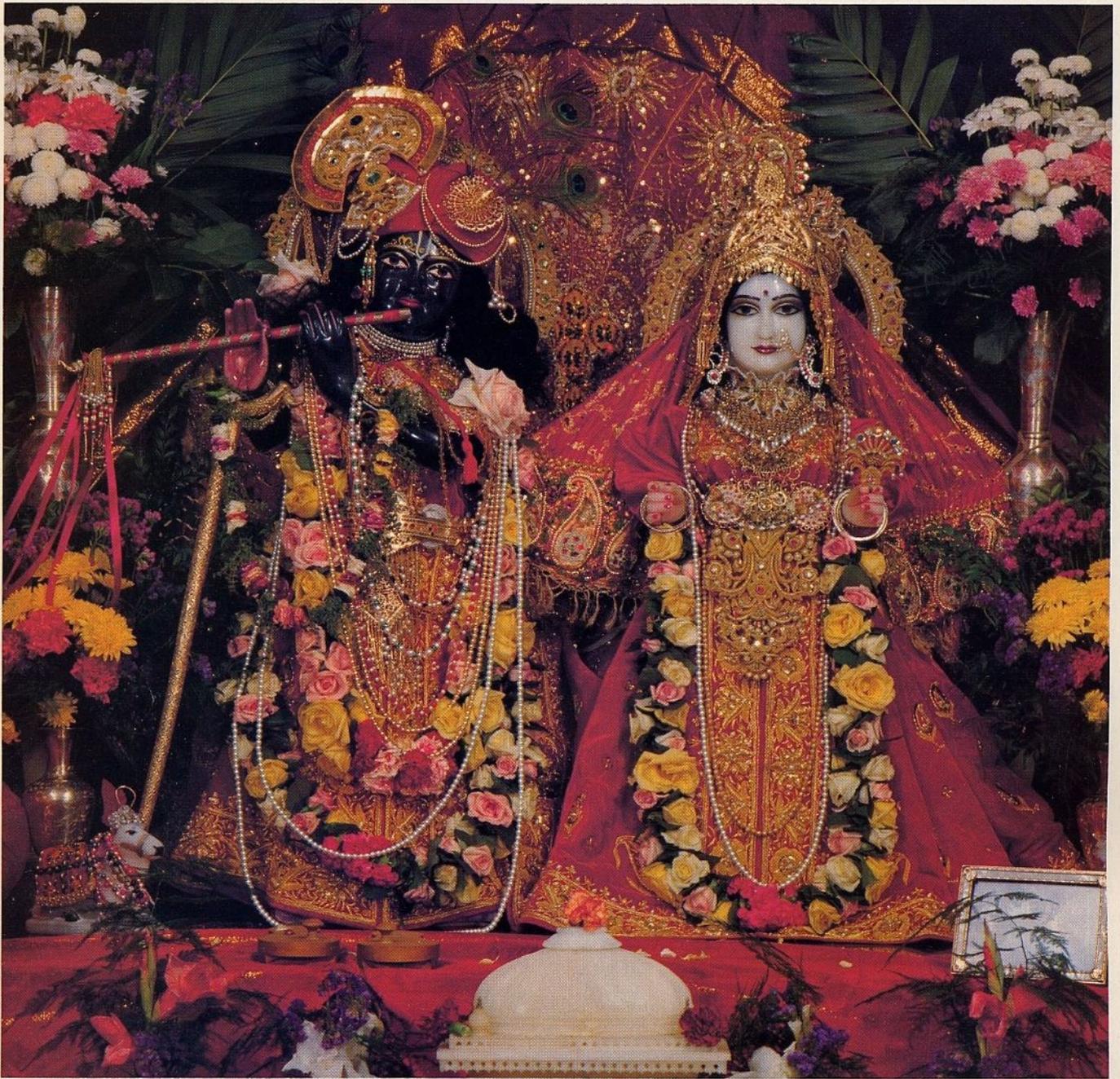


Photo: (Toronto) Hasti Gopāla dāsa

*Kṛṣṇa consciousness: "a better life—with superior thoughts, philosophy, food, song, poetry, and art. For instance, we worship the Deities [Lord Kṛṣṇa and His eternal consort Rādhā, above] in the temple—that is actual 'aesthetic salvation.'"*

**Hayagrīva dāsa:** Schopenhauer felt that the greatest crime of man was that he was ever born.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** That's all right, but when you understand that there is a crime, you must understand that there is someone to punish you for that crime. If you suffer because of that crime, you must understand that there is someone who has judged you to be a criminal.

**Hayagrīva dāsa:** Schopenhauer would disagree. He wrote, "Human life must be some kind of mistake." And because he thought the world mad or irrational, he concluded that it could not possibly have an author. He believed that if there were a God, He would have set the world in order.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** We have certainly experienced that there are madmen in the world, but there are also hospitals where such men can be treated. The world may be mad, but God is providing hospitalization and treatment—the process of Kṛṣṇa

consciousness. Unfortunately, Schopenhauer had no knowledge of the hospital or the treatment. He speaks of sinful life, but he does not accept the judge who gives the punishment for sinful life. He sees that the world is mad, but he does not know the treatment for madmen.

**Hayagrīva dāsa:** In *The World as Will and Idea*, Schopenhauer wrote, "If we narrowly analyze the reality of our body and its actions . . . we find nothing in it except the will; with this the body's reality is exhausted." He goes on to state that "the genitals are the focus of the will."

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** As I said before, one wills in accordance with his body. We should understand that we have nothing to do with this material world, which is the production of the material will. We are spiritual, and when we will spiritually, we are Kṛṣṇa conscious. When we will materially, we get different types of material bodies.

It is true that the basis of material life is sex. *Yan maithunādi-grhamedhi-sukham hi tuccham*: “The basic principle of those who are addicted to the material world is *maithuna*, sexual intercourse.” This strong desire for sex will continue as long as we are in material existence, because sex is the center of all material pleasure. However, when we get a taste of spiritual pleasure—pleasure in Kṛṣṇa consciousness—we can give up sex. *Param dṛṣṭvā nivartate*: by experiencing a superior pleasure, we can give up an inferior one.

**Hayagrīva dāsa**: Schopenhauer considered sex to be selfishness, whereas real love means sympathy.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda**: Sex is animalistic. It is not love but lust. Sex simply means the mutual satisfaction of the material senses, and that is lust. All this lust is taking place under the name of love, and out of illusion people mistake this lust for love. One who has real love—love for Kṛṣṇa and for all living entities—thinks, “People are suffering from a lack of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Let me do something for them so that they can understand the value of life.”

**Hayagrīva dāsa**: Schopenhauer considered that immoral acts result from a sense of egoism.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda**: Yes, that is so. To be immoral means to avoid surrendering to the will of Kṛṣṇa. Immoral people think, “Why should I surrender to Kṛṣṇa? Kṛṣṇa is a person, and I also am a person.” Such thinking is demonic. Rascals cannot understand that by surrendering unto the supreme will and satisfying the supreme will, they can attain salvation.

**Hayagrīva dāsa**: Schopenhauer felt that it is possible to crush egoism and desire by love.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda**: Yes—but we must direct that love toward Kṛṣṇa. If I do not love Kṛṣṇa, I cannot surrender to Him, and if I do not surrender to Kṛṣṇa, my false egoism will continue. So the more you love Kṛṣṇa, the more your surrender is perfect. But when there is a lack of love, the mentality by which you can surrender will not develop. For instance, if you have some love for me, you will carry out my orders. There is no question of forcing you to surrender. Or take the example of a child: a small child naturally surrenders to his parents because there is love for the parents. In the same way, the living entity is free to love Kṛṣṇa or to reject Him. Without freedom, there cannot be love. Therefore Kṛṣṇa consciousness means learning to love Kṛṣṇa.

**Hayagrīva dāsa**: Schopenhauer looked on love as compassionate sympathy for one who is suffering. Through this compassionate love we can lose our selfish desire.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda**: Why should we love those who are suffering but not those who are enjoying?

**Hayagrīva dāsa**: Schopenhauer saw everyone as suffering.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda**: Yes, we agree to this. Everyone within material nature is suffering. Therefore Kṛṣṇa descends and speaks the *Bhagavad-gītā* to deliver all fallen souls. Similarly, a Vaiṣṇava [a devotee of Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa)] takes *sannyāsa*, the renounced order, out of compassion for others—because a *sannyāsī*'s only duty is to preach the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. People in this world are suffering because of ignorance. They think, “Oh, now I have a nice car, an apartment, and a girl friend; therefore I am happy.” Actually, this is not happiness but suffering. Because the Vaiṣṇava loves Kṛṣṇa and understands that he is part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, he realizes that the conditioned living entities are suffering for want of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Therefore, out of compassion the Vaiṣṇava takes *sannyāsa* and goes forth to preach.

**Hayagrīva dāsa**: Schopenhauer saw the pleasures of this world as ultimately frustrating.

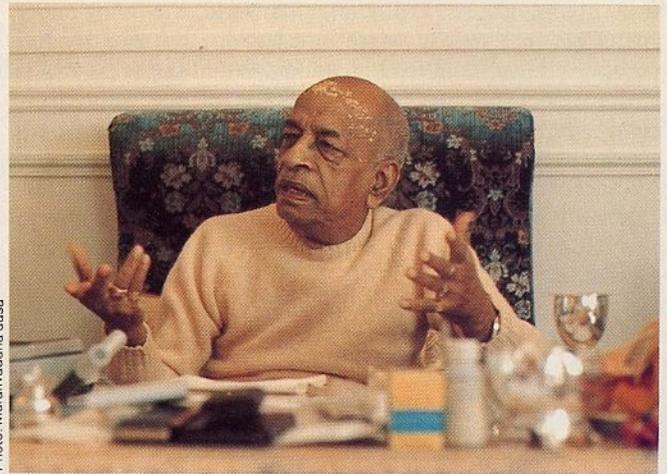


Photo: Murarivadana dāsa

*“Death simply means a suspension of the will for a few months—that’s all. If you fail to train your willing process properly you have to suffer, life after life, but if you train your will properly—to serve Kṛṣṇa’s supreme will—you can go to Kṛṣṇa’s supreme planet immediately after death.”*

**Śrīla Prabhupāda**: If he had taken his frustration seriously, it might have made him successful. I receive many letters from frustrated students who understand that frustration is hell. Eventually they come to understand that they should seek the real shelter—Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So frustration is really not so bad. If you are put into a dangerous position and you know how to save yourself from it, that very danger can become a source of pleasure for you.

**Hayagrīva dāsa**: In *The World as Will and Idea*, Schopenhauer wrote, “Eternal becoming, endless flux, characterizes the inner nature of will. Finally, the same thing shows itself in human endeavors and desires, which always delude us by presenting their satisfaction as the final end of will. As soon as we attain our desired objects, they no longer appear the same; therefore, they soon grow stale or forgotten, and we throw them aside as vanished illusions.”

**Śrīla Prabhupāda**: Yes, all this is going on, and therefore the living entity acquires one body after another.

**Hayagrīva dāsa**: Schopenhauer saw everyone going through a constant transition from desire to satisfaction, and from satisfaction to a new desire. For Schopenhauer, it is this flux from desire to satisfaction that characterizes the will’s activities in the phenomenal world. Outside this flux, he thought, there is only nirvana, extinction of the will.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda**: That is not a fact. One has to understand that behind the will and its satisfaction is a *person who is willing*. Schopenhauer did not take that person into consideration; he considered only the will and its satisfaction. It is the individual soul who is willing. If the soul succeeds in stopping this flickering willing, what next? Even the stopping of the will is temporary. You may stop one kind of willing, but you will adopt another kind of willing and another kind of satisfaction. We must understand that behind the whimsical will is the spirit soul. When that spirit soul understands his real identification as the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, his will is purified. One should not be satisfied by simply annihilating the whimsical will. One should understand the real will of the real person. That is the beginning of spiritual life.

It will not help simply to negate the temporary material will. One has to will in reality, and that is his eternal willing—that is

Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In the material world, the living entity directs his will toward sense satisfaction, because he has forgotten the spiritual field of willing. When the same will is directed towards satisfying the senses of the Supreme—Kṛṣṇa—that is the eternal willing of the living entity. *Jivera 'svarūpa' haya kṛṣṇera 'nitya dāsa'*: “When one comes to the platform of real knowledge, he understands that he is the eternal servant of God.” When we concentrate our will on how to serve God, we attain our real position of eternity, bliss, and knowledge.

**Hayagrīva dāsa:** Schopenhauer apparently believed in life after death. He wrote, “If a man fears death as his annihilation, it is just as if he were to think that the sun cries out at evening, ‘Woe is me! For I go down to eternal night. . . .’”

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, because the will is eternal, death is not the stoppage of life. One simply gets another body. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says, *tathā dehāntara-prapīti*: “When the body dies, the soul transmigrates to another body.” This is proof that the life of the person is eternal. And because the person is eternal, his desire and will are also eternal. But Schopenhauer did not know what that eternal willing is. The eternal will of every living entity is to serve Kṛṣṇa always.

**Hayagrīva dāsa:** Schopenhauer looked on Indian philosophy as a philosophy of the denial of the will . . .

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** But he did not study Vedic philosophy and religion perfectly. He simply had some idea of some portions of the impersonalist and Buddhist philosophies. Evidently he did not know about Vaiṣṇavism. Although he touched the *Bhagavad-gītā*, he did not study it thoroughly. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that if he simply tries to attain knowledge of God—Kṛṣṇa—his will and his life will be purified, and he will return back to Godhead upon giving up his body. In the fourth chapter Kṛṣṇa says,

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

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

Either Schopenhauer did not study the *Bhagavad-gītā* very thoroughly, or he could not understand it for want of a real spiritual master. According to the *Gītā* itself, one should go to a bona fide guru who has actually seen the truth. Schopenhauer simply speculated on the basis of his own experience, and consequently, although everything is there in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, he could not see it.

**Hayagrīva dāsa:** According to Schopenhauer, the man of knowledge is imperturbable in any condition. He wrote, “Such a man would regard death as a false illusion, an impudent specter which frightens the weak but has no power over him who knows that he is himself the will of which the whole world is the objectification or copy, and that therefore he is always certain of life. . . .”

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** This is contradictory. On the one side Schopenhauer has a desire for the certainty of life, and on the other he says that nirvana, annihilation, is the only answer. Which does he want? He simply tried to adjust things to fit his theory. But he couldn't understand the philosophy behind purification of the will.

**Hayagrīva dāsa:** Apparently he had no other solution than the suppression of the will.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** But that is not possible. In order to be happy, you must change the *quality* of your willing through purification. The purification process is *bhakti*—chanting and hearing the pastimes of the Lord (*śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ*). That purifies the will. Schopenhauer missed the point. Although he accepted the fact that life is eternal, he thought that its purpose is nirvana, putting an end to the will. Unfortunately, he did not know what nirvana is. Nirvana means putting an end to the whimsical will and coming to the platform of willing in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

**Hayagrīva dāsa:** For Schopenhauer, there were three means of salvation—aesthetic, ethical, and religious. Through aesthetic salvation—contemplation of the Platonic ideals—we rise above passion through poetry, music, and art. Through the contemplation of these higher ideals, we reach a plane of desirelessness.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** This is not a new idea; it is mentioned in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: *param dṛṣtvā nivartate*. The students of this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement have abandoned their abominable living habits because they have received a better life—with superior thoughts, philosophy, food, song, poetry, and art. When the mind is filled with Kṛṣṇa consciousness, there is no chance of its engaging in the contemplation of nonsense.

**Hayagrīva dāsa:** For Schopenhauer, aesthetic salvation is a temporary experience. For instance, when one looks at a beautiful painting, he transcends the lower levels of consciousness and for a few moments becomes “will-less,” or desireless.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, we admit that this may be the case, but we wish to remain in that higher consciousness continuously—not momentarily. This is possible if we practice. By practice a child learns to read and write, and thus he becomes educated. It is not a momentary thing. If we practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness daily, lower consciousness will automatically vanish. For instance, we worship the Deities in the temple—that is actual aesthetic salvation. But unless you apply the aesthetic sense with reverence and respect, you cannot derive benefit from worshiping the Deities.

**Hayagrīva dāsa:** According to Schopenhauer, you achieve ethical salvation by attempting to satisfy your will. When you satisfy your will, no new desires can arise, and you experience happiness.

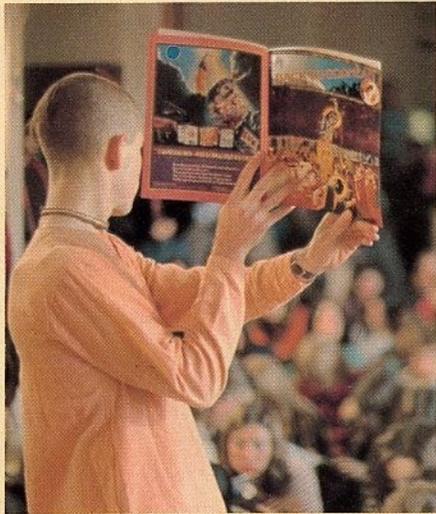
**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Apart from the individual will, there is the supreme will. If we satisfy the supreme will, we are happy. But we cannot know the supreme will directly, and therefore we must approach a spiritual master. Our philosophy is that by satisfying the spiritual master, the representative of God, we satisfy the supreme will (*yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādah*).

**Hayagrīva dāsa:** For Schopenhauer, the third and most effective type of salvation is religious salvation. He felt that by denying the will through asceticism, you can attain the state of nirvana, nothingness.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** But Schopenhauer did not know that since the soul is eternal, willing is also eternal—although the will may be suppressed for some time. For instance, after death, when a living entity enters a mother's womb, he spends nine months developing his next body, and there is a temporary suspension of the will. But when he emerges from his mother's womb, he resumes the willing process. Death simply means a suspension of the will for a few months—that's all. If you fail to train your willing process properly you have to suffer, life after life, but if you train your will properly—to serve Kṛṣṇa's supreme will—you can go to Kṛṣṇa's supreme planet immediately after death. ❀

# Compassion Means Spreading Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

by Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami



India's greatest gift to civilization is her highly advanced spiritual culture, based on the eternal truths of the Vedic literatures. Sometimes, however, we hear the strange idea that this culture is not meant to be shared with others. I have heard more than one Western professor of Indian religion say, "The idea of preaching about God in a missionary spirit is not part of India's religion. That's something the Christians introduced into India a few hundred years ago." And self-styled yogis sometimes say to me, "People should be left alone to realize God in their own way, in their own time. You can't go out and preach about inner life." I have also heard seemingly devout Hindus say, "Why are you teaching of Kṛṣṇa in America? To follow the *Vedas* you have to be born in India." Is Kṛṣṇa's message, then, just for a few?

No. Both the Vedic literatures themselves and the living examples of India's greatest saints disprove that idea. Moreover, such disdain for preaching Vedic truths reveals a sad lack of compassion for fallen humanity.

In fact, the Vedic literatures (the world's most time-honored scriptures) fully support the idea of preaching the gospel of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In the five-thousand-year-old *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the self-realized sages who compiled the *Vedas* at the beginning of creation offer their prayers to Lord Kṛṣṇa,

the Personality of Godhead: "All glories unto You! O Lord, You can deliver all suffering conditioned souls from the clutches of *māyā* [illusion]. O Lord, we fervently pray that You do so. As the personifications of Vedic knowledge, we always try to help the conditioned souls understand You" (*Bhāg.* 10.87.14).

Unless devotees of God broadcast His message, the ignorant living entities can never know that the ultimate purpose of life is liberation from material bondage. Thus, in mad pursuit of sense gratification, they will commit sinful acts and have to suffer the painful reactions, according to the law of karma. They will have to transmigrate from one body to another, repeatedly suffering the miseries of birth, old age, disease, and death. Since surrender to the will of the Lord is the only way to nullify karma and stop the process of transmigration, the merciful devotees of the Lord always preach His glories widely. And the Supreme Lord Himself regularly visits the earth to reclaim the fallen souls. As Lord Kṛṣṇa states in the *Bhāgavad-gītā* (4.8), "In order to deliver the pious and annihilate the miscreants, as well as to establish the principles of religion, I advent Myself millennium after millennium." And in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we find that the sage Vyāsadeva, who compiled the Sanskrit Vedic scriptures, also felt the same compassion for the suffering souls: "The material miseries of the living entity, which are superfluous to him, can be directly mitigated by the linking process of devotional service, but the mass of people do not know this. And therefore the learned Vyāsadeva compiled this Vedic literature, which is in relation to the Supreme Truth" (*Bhāg.* 1.7.6). Thus, thousands of years before Christianity appeared in the world, the Vedic literature stated emphatically that souls suffering in darkness should be helped by the torchlight of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. From the historical perspective, then, the Christians could not have introduced the preaching spirit to India.

Another misconception is that one should cultivate spiritual knowledge only by private meditation and should not

"bother" those who are spiritually ignorant. But the great devotee Prahlāda Mahārāja rejects this view in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.9.44): "My dear Lord, I see that there are many saintly persons indeed, but they are interested only in their own deliverance. Not caring for the big cities and towns, they go to the Himalayas or the forest to meditate with vows of silence. They are not interested in delivering others. As for me, however, I do not wish to be liberated alone, leaving aside all these poor fools and rascals. I know that without Kṛṣṇa consciousness, without taking shelter of Your lotus feet, one cannot be happy. Therefore, I wish to bring them back to the shelter of Your lotus feet."

Thus, while there undoubtedly is a kind of yogi who neglects others' welfare, he is hardly of the highest standard. In the *Bhāgavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says that the highest yogi is His devotee—and that His dearest devotee is he who takes all risks to approach others and give them the same liberation and bliss he has found in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Finally, we must also take issue with the sectarian notion that Vedic knowledge is meant only for people born in India. This idea finds support neither in any scriptural statement nor in the heart of any intelligent and compassionate person. As the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* states, "If someone is ignorant and addicted to the path of samsara [birth and death], how can one who is actually learned, merciful, and spiritually advanced engage him in material activity, and thus further entangle him in material existence? If a blind man is walking down the wrong path, how can a gentleman allow him to continue on his way to danger? No wise man can allow this."

The greatest of India's saints—Rāmānuja, Madhva, Bhaktisiddhānta—toured as widely as possible to broadcast Kṛṣṇa's message. (Outside India, spiritual teachers like Jesus Christ and Hajrat Muhammad displayed the same preaching spirit). And the most enthusiastic preacher of all was Lord Caitanya, the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa who appeared in India five hundred years ago to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the form of the chanting of God's holy names: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Lord Caitanya taught that chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra is the best form of God consciousness for the present fallen age, and He predicted, "The names of God shall be chanted in every town and village in the world." Thus, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the science of God, is universal; it is meant not just

(continued on page 14)

Prepare yourself for a perfectly outrageous



Photo: (Los Angeles) Nitya Trptā-devi dāsi



Photo: (London, England) Mohana dāsa

**“In this age of Kali, the holy name of the Lord, the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, is the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Simply by chanting the holy name, one associates with the Lord directly. Anyone who does this is certainly delivered” (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 17.22).**

**“In the age of Kali (Quarrel and Hypocrisy) the chanting of the holy name is the best means of God-realization. There is no other alternative, no other alternative, no other alternative” (Bṛhan-nāradya Purāṇa).**



# The Mantra for Everyone

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

In India saints and ordinary people alike have long known about these holy names of God—the *mahā-mantra*, or great chanting for deliverance. In 1965 His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, a pure devotee of the Lord, brought the chanting to the West.

*Hare* is an address to God's energy, *Kṛṣṇa* means "God, the all-attractive," and *Rāma* is another of God's names, meaning "the highest pleasure." Chanting these names frees the mind from anxiety and illusion and revives our eternal loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

Five hundred years ago Lord Caitanya (the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa in the mood of a devotee) began spreading the chanting of the *mahā-mantra*. He stressed its benefits for the people of this materialistic age and predicted that out of compassion, devotees would take the chanting to every town and village in the world. And now Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples—the members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness—are fulfilling that prediction, as we see here.

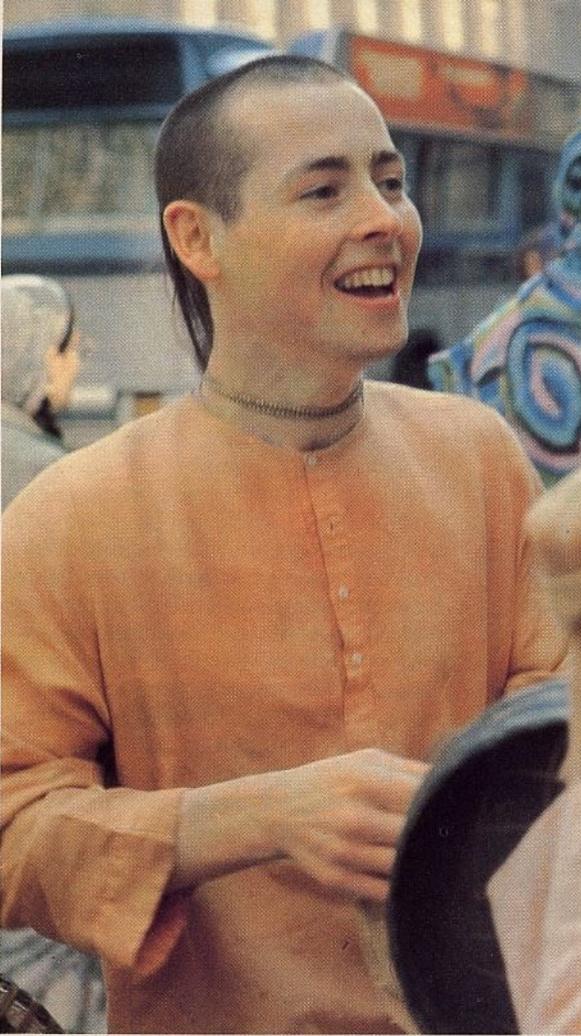


Photo: (New York) Bhārgava dāsa

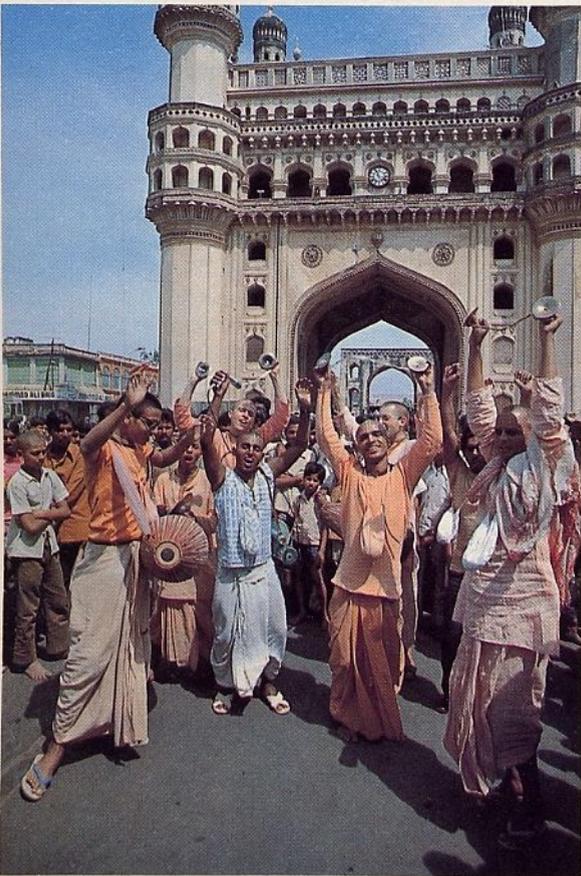


Photo: (Hyderabad, India) Bhārgava dāsa

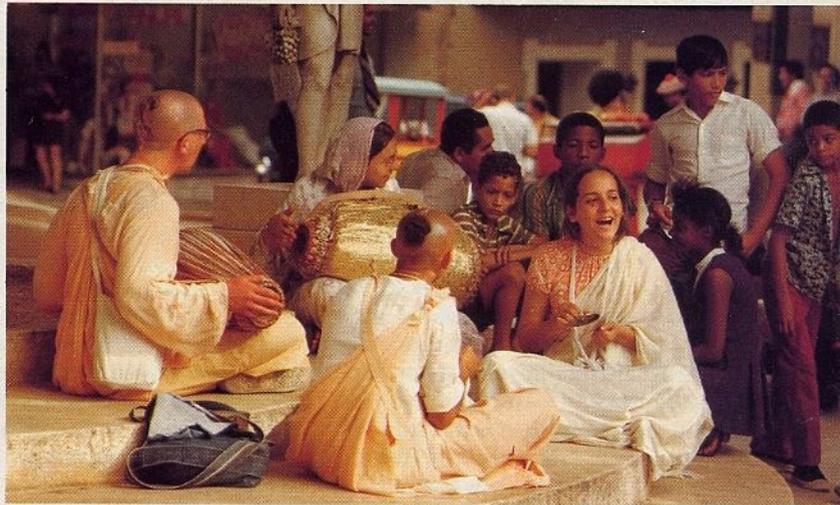


Photo: (Puerto Rico) Bhārgava dāsa

**"Glory to the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, which cleanses the heart of all the dust accumulated for years and extinguishes the fire of conditional life, of repeated birth and death. . . . It increases the ocean of transcendental bliss, and it enables us to fully taste the nectar for which we are always anxious" (Śrī-Śrī-Śik-ṣāṣṭaka).**

After Thirteen Years With a “Yoga Cheater”

# How I Found A Real Yoga Teacher

by Amala-bhakta dāsa (as told to Draviḍa dāsa)

*The path from the haṭha-yoga ashram to the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple is a well-worn one. Many people who are now ISKCON devotees had in the past performed various stretchings, contortions, breathing exercises, headstands, and silent meditations—before they learned of the higher yoga of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But Amala-bhakta's case is extraordinary: not only was he an expert haṭha-yogī when he came to the Los Angeles temple in February of 1976, but he was also in the most respected order of spiritual life (sannyāsa), and he had been running a major yoga center in New York for almost thirteen years. Here is his account of why he took up haṭha-yoga—and then left it and his teacher for Kṛṣṇa consciousness.*

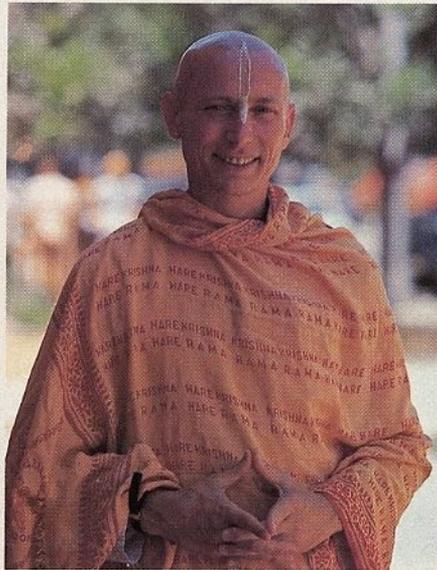


Photo: Muralivadana dāsa

In 1957 my life was pretty much up in the air. I had dropped out of New York University at twenty-five and had gone to Los Angeles to “find myself.” I was working at odd jobs and reading a lot of philosophy when, in July of that year, I began to read a book on yoga. This book set off a volcanic eruption in my life. I suddenly realized—very starkly, very pointedly—that all of us fear death. We may not *know* we fear death, but our every step, our every glance, our every gesture, our every word betrays this fear. And I realized that I certainly feared death. I also saw that no one, myself included, was really happy, and that I could achieve happiness only by giving myself to God and His work—in other words, by realizing Him. I felt that since God is eternal and transcendental to the world's miseries, I could conquer fear and gain happiness by becoming God conscious.

With this idea burning in my mind, I hitchhiked back to my parents' country home in New Jersey and started practicing *haṭha-yoga* and meditation. But soon it became clear that I needed some personal instruction. One day, after some searching, I stopped into a book shop in downtown Manhattan and saw an ad for a yoga teacher. Soon I began studying under him. My teacher showed me

*haṭha-yoga*, which included a lot of stretching and bending exercises, and also breath control and meditation. He didn't instruct me in *bhakti-yoga*, the yoga of devotion to God. But before coming to him I had read about some of the techniques of *bhakti-yoga*, and I had felt impressed and charmed by them. Since my basic desire was to realize God, meditation on God's form, or on His holy names, appealed to me more than meditation on silence or light, which was what my teacher showed me. So I began incorporating some of the *bhakti* techniques into my own program.

In 1963, after five years in the United States, my teacher went back to India. At that time he asked me to take charge of the yoga ashram he had begun in a Manhattan hotel. The same classes I had been studying in I was now teaching. Now it was my responsibility to carry on my teacher's lecture program and classes in *haṭha-yoga* and meditation, and to talk with people who felt they wanted guidance.

During the first few years I headed the ashram, I gradually added more of the devotional practices of *bhakti-yoga*. I considered them enjoyable and effortless ways to concentrate the mind. Then, in 1967, I started noticing the Hare

Kṛṣṇa devotees on Fifth Avenue. (Śrīla Prabhupāda had founded the International Society for Krishna Consciousness a year earlier on Manhattan's Lower East Side.) The place where they chanted every day was close to my ashram. And although I looked upon them as an odd bunch and thought they were too far-out to succeed in the West, I was nonetheless fascinated by their cymbal and drum playing and chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. So I thought the best thing to do would be simply to adopt some of ISKCON's practices in my own program and see if I could interest my own students in devotional yoga.

I began giving over a portion of each evening—from about 7:00 to 9:30—to congregational chanting of God's holy names. At that time I was also deeply immersed in editing an English translation of the *Rāmāyaṇa* (the story of Lord Rāmacandra, an incarnation of God who lived millions of years ago). I was becoming enraptured by the pastimes of Lord Rāma and His consort, Sītā. So, in imitation of the Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees I had seen on Fifth Avenue, I would chant “Sītā Rāma, Sītā Rāma . . .” several times, my students would answer, and we would go on like that for some time, in call-and-response fashion.

Also, on Sunday nights, I would read to my students from an abridged version of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Some time previously I had also read the story of Kṛṣṇa, and I knew that He and Rāma were actually the same divine person. So another thing I did to increase my devotion was to mount beautiful posters of Kṛṣṇa and Rāma on the walls of the classroom where I taught *haṭha-yoga*.

Unfortunately, my teacher had not taught me how to devote myself to a personal God. He wasn't a *bhakta*, a devotee; basically he was an impersonalist. He neither wrote, talked, nor acted in the mood of a devotee. Rather, he acted like a cool businessman. So I began feeling more and more that the devotion I had cultivated by reading Lord Rāma-

candra's pastimes and chanting His holy names needed a new outlet.

Then, in June of 1975, someone sent me a BACK TO GODHEAD magazine. I carefully read an article by Śrīla Prabhupāda, entitled "What is a Guru?" After studying the Vedic principles Śrīla Prabhupāda revealed there, I concluded that my teacher was a cheater, a charlatan—he was exploiting gullible seekers, squeezing money out of them under the pretense of spirituality. I further understood that Śrīla Prabhupāda was not using such deceitful methods. He was giving the Vedic philosophy straight—speaking boldly yet compassionately, without caring what anyone thought. Śrīla Prabhupāda was trusting completely that the Lord's mercy would sustain the big projects he had started. He was sincere, and he was attracting the sincere.

Just after I read that BACK TO GODHEAD, something happened that quickened my coming to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One day a man came to me for a consultation. He was contemplating suicide. (He was out of money and out of work and had about six kids to take care of.) He had known of my fifteen-dollar-for-fifteen-minutes consultation fee—a policy set up by my teacher—but he had been too embarrassed to ask for a "pay later" appointment. Finally, after two weeks, he had been able to scrape up the money. When I saw him he cried like a baby for a long time. Finally, he told me how desperate he was to talk to me because he considered me his spiritual advisor. He said that if he had had to wait another day, he just might have finished himself off. I then told him that from then on, he could see me whether he could pay or not. I decided this was simply what I had to do. I no longer cared about the rules or the regulations or the principles or the policies.

This incident really stung my conscience. I realized that this consultation-fee policy could have killed a man! And I also thought, "How can I inspire this man to love God if my love for *him* is conditional?" I knew beyond a doubt that I could not produce a change in his heart unless I gave freely of my understanding and knowledge. At the same time, I was well aware that the Kṛṣṇa devotees would never think of charging anything for consultation and guidance. The contrast with my own teacher's policy had a very powerful effect on me.

That wasn't my teacher's only shortcoming. For one thing, he would offer initiation only to people who could pay him \$191.00. You didn't have to take any vows, follow any principles, or serve him before initiation, nor did you have to

serve him even *afterward*. The whole thing seemed like an assembly line: it took just five or ten minutes to turn out each new disciple, and then my teacher would call the next candidate into his room.

On the other hand, the initiation that Śrīla Prabhupāda gives is free, but generally one must serve faithfully for six months. At Śrīla Prabhupāda's initiation ceremony the disciple vows to abstain from meat, fish, eggs, and intoxicants, as well as gambling and illicit sex. He also promises to chant sixteen rounds of *japa* (1,728 repetitions of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra) each day. There is a beautiful fire ceremony, along with a lecture on the real meaning of initiation and the eternal obligations of the disciple toward the spiritual master.

Another thing that disturbed me was that whenever my teacher visited the United States, he would stay at a first-class Manhattan hotel. Once he stayed there for six months at seventeen hundred dollars a month, when he could have stayed at our ashram at no expense. On the other hand, I noted that Śrīla Prabhupāda always stayed with his devotees at the temples. He wanted all available money to be used for educating people in the science of *bhakti-yoga*, which would alleviate their suffering.

Finally, for one thousand dollars my teacher would sell a "mystic amulet" to disciples who lived outside our ashram. He claimed they could "get more benediction and protection from God" if they wore this amulet. In other words, the name of God that they had received through initiation wasn't powerful enough—the amulet had a little something extra going for it! God's name needed help from an amulet? This was totally illogical to me.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, emphasized that if you sincerely chanted the holy names and steadily performed devotional service, that was all you needed to receive the mercy of God. Śrīla Prabhupāda did not deprecate God's name by saying that some cheap charm could enhance its power.

So all these contrasts had a huge effect upon my life. It became obvious that my so-called teacher was not really interested in spreading the science of yoga. Rather, he was interested in spreading out his pocket, filling it up, and carrying away the cash.

Somehow, before 1976 I had never actually visited an ISKCON temple. (I had gathered all my information from some fellow disciples who would visit temples and report back to me.) By this time I had been in the *sannyāsa* order, the senior order of spiritual life, for three

years. Consequently, I had vowed to follow my teacher's instructions as if they were God's, and I did not want to break my vow by visiting another yoga center. But as I watched my teacher's crookedness come to light, I began to think seriously of leaving.

Finally, I paid a visit to the New York Kṛṣṇa temple, on 55th Street. I had a four-hour discussion with Kapīndra dāsa, the receptionist, and after talking with him I no longer had any question in my mind: I would leave my cheating "guru" and take up Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So, at four the next morning I packed a couple of bags and left the quarters of the yoga society I had been part of for eighteen years. Glad to be out of this intolerably depressing environment, I checked into a hotel near the New York temple.

That night I attended the *ārati* ceremony, in which the devotees lavishly worship the Deities of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. What a beautiful experience! As I watched the devotees singing and dancing for the Deities, I felt enthralled.

The next day I attended the morning program, which began with an *ārati* at 4:30 A.M. and continued with an inspiring talk by Hṛdayānanda Gosvāmī. The wealth of Vedic philosophy he expounded greatly impressed me—and cleared up any lingering doubts I might have had that Kṛṣṇa consciousness was really what I wanted. The next day I left for Los Angeles to visit my mother, who had moved there from New York. And two days later I moved into the Los Angeles Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple.

As the weeks flew by, I discovered the world of Kṛṣṇa consciousness—especially in Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. It was then that the full magnitude of my former teacher's cheating became clear to me. This so-called "guru" had taught that everyone was God, though each of us had "forgotten" his divinity. Supposedly, when our impurities dissolved we would regain our true, divine position. As he had explained it, God realization meant realizing "I am God" and merging with the "infinite light."

Now, in view of what I had learned from reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, nothing seemed more absurd than the idea that the Absolute Truth—who controls the entire universe—could become deluded and forget His divinity. Had God forgotten His divinity just to undergo the pain of birth and death? Could He be fond of suffering? No, the whole idea that the individual soul and God are identical was patently ridiculous.

Actually, the living entity is an infinitesimal particle of spirit. As such, he

is never equal to God, the Supreme Spirit. So to equate the living entity with God is nonsense; it's just a disguised form of atheism. The real reason why someone poses himself as God is so that he won't have to worship anyone but himself. This is generally what people like, especially in the present degraded age of Kali. People don't want to *serve* God; they want to *be* God. They want to be served, adored, and glorified—like my teacher in that lavish hotel suite.

But the whole idea is absurd. The part can never be equal to the whole, any more than the hand can be equal to the entire body. Nor can we enjoy like the Lord—although we try to, and this is our downfall. Our real enjoyment is to give enjoyment to the Lord, just as the hand's enjoyment is to give enjoyment to the whole body.

Suppose your hand had a will of its own, and that it tried to directly enjoy your food—instead of placing it in your mouth and letting it go to your stomach. Could the hand enjoy the food that way? No, of course not, and if it persisted it would simply wither away from lack of nourishment. Similarly, people today are

withering away from a lack of spiritual pleasure—because instead of giving whatever they have to God, they're trying to hoard it for themselves.

How different Kṛṣṇa consciousness is. I am now directly experiencing that the more I serve Kṛṣṇa through Śrīla Prabhupāda, the more blissful I become. Every day I'm learning more about my personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. (That's what makes the relationship with Him so beautiful: it's personal.) I'm reading about Kṛṣṇa every day, and the more I learn about the way Kṛṣṇa looks and talks and acts, the more I realize that serving Kṛṣṇa is infinitely more pleasurable than the best of this world's pleasures. Everything here is limited and temporary, but our relationship with Kṛṣṇa is eternal and full of bliss and knowledge.

We have to realize that our relationship with Kṛṣṇa is the only thing that will last, and that hearing about Him, chanting about Him, remembering Him, serving Him, worshiping Him, offering prayers to Him, carrying out His orders, establishing friendship with Him, and surrendering everything to Him are

the only activities that can make our lives full.

Now my goal is to serve Śrīla Prabhupāda purely—realizing that the little drop of gratitude I offer him can never compare with the ocean of mercy he has given me. May I always remember how fortunate he has made me, and more, may I always remember to tell other people about Kṛṣṇa, so that they may one day become just as fortunate. ❧

## Spreading Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

(continued from page 9)

for Indians but for every living soul in creation.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, came to America in 1965, impelled by the very same desire that moved Vyāsadeva, Prahlāda, Madhva, Lord Caitanya, and other great saints of the past. Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to rescue the unfortunate souls who are blindly trying to enjoy material pleasure in this life, oblivious of the suffering they will inevitably experience in their next life. Despite great personal inconvenience, Śrīla Prabhupāda came here at the advanced age of seventy to fulfill the order of his spiritual master. He introduced the same message that Lord Kṛṣṇa taught in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and that Lord Caitanya practically demonstrated through His *saṅkīrtana*\* movement.

What Śrīla Prabhupāda has taught is the sum and substance of India's spiritual message—to glorify the name, fame, and pastimes of the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa—and Śrīla Prabhupāda has delivered this message without adulteration. Thousands of young Westerners who had never heard of Kṛṣṇa, and who certainly had no plans to give up sinful life, have taken up devotional service to Kṛṣṇa and are now becoming purified.

So we can see that an essential part of the Vedic teachings is that one should first perfect his own life, and then try to teach others how to perfect their lives. In that way one most quickly attains Kṛṣṇa's recognition, and he performs the greatest welfare work for humanity. Teaching people to become devotees of God is far more beneficial than any mundane altruism in the form of food, shelter, hospital care, or materialistic education. Why? Because if a person overcomes the disease of his soul, he attains the Supreme Lord's eternal abode and never has to come back again to this miserable material world. ❧

\**Saṅkīrtana* is the congregational chanting of the *mahā-mantra*.

# Hear the timeless wisdom of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness.

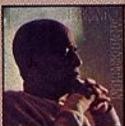
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## First Canto "Creation"

### CHAPTER TWELVE

#### Birth of Emperor Parikṣit

(continued from previous issue)

#### TEXT 22

मृगेन्द्र इव विक्रान्तो निषेव्यो हिमवानिव ।  
तितिक्षुर्बसुधेवासौ सहिष्णुः पितराविव ॥२२॥

*mṛgendra iva vikrānto  
niṣevyo himavān iva  
titikṣur vasudhevāsau  
sahiṣṇuḥ pitarāv iva*

*mṛgendrah*—the lion; *iva*—like; *vikrāntaḥ*—powerful; *niṣevyaḥ*—worthy of taking shelter; *himavān*—the Himalaya Mountains; *iva*—like; *titikṣuḥ*—forbearance; *vasudhā iva*—like the earth; *asau*—the child; *sahiṣṇuḥ*—tolerant; *pitarau*—parents; *iva*—like.

#### TRANSLATION

This child will be as strong as a lion, and as worthy a shelter as the Himalaya Mountains. He will be forbearing like the earth, and as tolerant as his parents.

#### PURPORT

One is compared to the lion when one is very strong in chasing an enemy. One should be a lamb at home and a lion in the chase. The lion never fails in the chase of an animal; similarly, the head of the state should never fail in chasing an enemy. The Himalaya Mountains are famous for all richness. There are innumerable caves to live in, numberless trees of good fruits to eat, good springs to drink water from and profuse drugs and minerals to cure diseases. Any man who is not materially prosperous can take shelter of these great mountains, and he will be provided with everything required. Both the materialist and the spiritualist can take advantage of the great shelter of the Himalayas. On the surface of the earth there are so many disturbances caused by the inhabitants. In the modern age the people have begun to detonate atomic weapons on the surface of the earth, and still the earth is forbearing to

the inhabitants, like a mother who excuses a little child. Parents are always tolerant to children for all sorts of mischievous acts. An ideal king may be possessed of all these good qualities, and the child Parikṣit is foretold to have all these qualities in perfection.

#### TEXT 23

पितामहसमः साम्ये प्रसादे गिरिशोपमः ।  
आश्रयः सर्वभूतानां यथा देवो रमाश्रयः ॥२३॥

*pitāmaha-samaḥ sāmye  
prasāde giriśopamaḥ  
āśrayaḥ sarva-bhūtānām  
yathā devo ramāśrayaḥ*

*pitāmaha*—the grandfather, or Brahmā; *samaḥ*—equally good; *sāmye*—in the matter; *prasāde*—in charity or in munificence; *giriśa*—Lord Śiva; *upamaḥ*—comparison of equilibrium; *āśrayaḥ*—resort; *sarva*—all; *bhūtānām*—of the living beings; *yathā*—as; *devaḥ*—the Supreme Lord; *ramā-āśrayaḥ*—the Personality of Godhead.

#### TRANSLATION

This child will be like his grandfather Yudhiṣṭhira or Brahmā in equanimity of mind. He will be munificent like the lord of the Kailāsa Hill, Śiva. And he will be the resort of everyone, like the Supreme Personality of Godhead Nārāyaṇa, who is even the shelter of the goddess of fortune.

#### PURPORT

Mental equanimity refers both to Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira and to Brahmā, the grandfather of all living beings. According to Śrīdhara Svāmī, the grandfather referred to is Brahmā, but according to Viśvanātha Cakravartī, the grandfather is Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira himself. But in both cases the comparison is equally good because both of them are recognized representatives of the Supreme Lord, and thus both of them have to maintain mental equanimity, being engaged in welfare work for the living being. Any responsible executive agent at the top of administration has to tolerate different types of onslaughts from the very persons for whom he works. Brahmāji was criticized even by the *gopīs*, the highest perfectional devotees of the Lord. The *gopīs* were dissatisfied with the work of Brahmāji because Lord Brahmā, as creator of this particular universe, created eyelids which obstructed their seeing Lord Kṛṣṇa. They could not tolerate a moment's blinking of the eyes, for it kept them from seeing their beloved Lord Kṛṣṇa. So what to speak of others, who are naturally very critical of every action of a responsible man? Similarly, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira had to cross over many difficult

situations created by his enemies, and he proved to be the most perfect maintainer of mental equanimity in all critical circumstances. Therefore the example of both grandfathers for maintaining equanimity of mind is quite fitting.

Lord Śiva is a celebrated demigod who awards gifts to beggars. His name is therefore Āśutoṣa, or one who is pleased very easily. He is also called the Bhūtanātha, or the lord of the common folk, who are mainly attached to him because of his munificent gifts, even without consideration of the aftereffects. Rāvaṇa was very attached to Lord Śiva, and by easily pleasing him, Rāvaṇa became so powerful that he wanted to challenge the authority of Lord Rāma. Of course, Rāvaṇa was never helped by Lord Śiva when he fought with Rāma, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the Lord of Lord Śiva. To Vṛkāsura, Lord Śiva awarded a benediction which was not only awkward, but also disturbing. Vṛkāsura became empowered, by the grace of Lord Śiva, to vanish anyone's head simply by touching it. Although this was awarded by Lord Śiva, the cunning fellow wanted to make an experiment of the power by touching the head of Lord Śiva. Thus the lord had to take shelter of Viṣṇu to save himself from trouble, and the Lord Viṣṇu, by His illusory potency, asked Vṛkāsura to make an experiment with his own head. The fellow did it and was finished himself, and so the world was saved from all sorts of trouble by such a cunning beggar of the demigods. The excellent point is that Lord Śiva never denies anyone any sort of gift. He is therefore the most generous, although sometimes some kind of a mistake is made.

Ramā means the goddess of fortune. And her shelter is Lord Viṣṇu. Lord Viṣṇu is the maintainer of all living beings. There are innumerable living beings, not only on the surface of this planet but also in all other hundreds of thousands of planets. All of them are provided with all necessities of life for the progressive march towards the end of self-realization, but on the path of sense gratification they are put into difficulty by the agency of māyā, the illusory energy, and so travel the path of a false plan of economic development. Such economic development is never successful because it is illusory. These men are always after the mercy of the illusory goddess of fortune, but they do not know that the goddess of fortune can live only under the protection of Viṣṇu. Without Viṣṇu, the goddess of fortune is an illusion. We should therefore seek the protection of Viṣṇu instead of directly seeking the protection of the goddess of fortune. Only Viṣṇu and the devotees of Viṣṇu can give protection to all, and because Mahārāja Parikṣit was himself protected by Viṣṇu, it was quite possible for him to give complete protection to all who wanted to live under his rule.

#### TEXT 24

सर्वसद्गुणमाहात्म्ये एष कृष्णमनुव्रतः ।  
रन्तिदेव इवोदारो गयातिरिव धार्मिकः ॥२४॥

sarva-sad-guṇa-māhātmye  
eṣa kṛṣṇam anuvrataḥ  
rantideva ivodāro  
yayātir iva dhārmikah

sarva-sat-guṇa-māhātmye—glorified by all godly attributes; eṣah—this child; kṛṣṇam—like Lord Kṛṣṇa; anuvrataḥ—a follower in His footsteps; rantideva—Rantideva; iva—like; udārah—in the matter of magnanimity; yayātir—Yayāti; iva—like; dhārmikah—concerning religion.

#### TRANSLATION

This child will be almost as good as Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa by following in His footsteps. In magnanimity he will become as great as King Rantideva. And in religion he will be like Mahārāja Yayāti.

#### PURPORT

The last instruction of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā* is that one should give up everything and should follow in the footsteps of the Lord

alone. Less intelligent persons do not agree to this great instruction of the Lord, as ill luck would have it, but one who is actually intelligent catches up this sublime instruction and is immensely benefited. Foolish people do not know that association is the cause of acquiring qualities. Association with fire makes an object hot, even in the material sense. Therefore, association with the Supreme Personality of Godhead makes one qualified like the Lord. As we have discussed previously, one can achieve seventy-eight percent of the godly qualities by the Lord's intimate association. To follow the instructions of the Lord is to associate with the Lord. *The Lord is not a material object whose presence one has to feel for such association.* The Lord is present everywhere and at all times. It is quite possible to have His association simply by following His instruction because the Lord and His instruction and the Lord and His name, fame, attributes and paraphernalia are all identical with Him, being absolute knowledge. Mahārāja Parikṣit associated with the Lord even from the womb of his mother up to the last day of his valuable life, and thus he acquired all the essential good qualities of the Lord in all perfection.

*Rantideva:* An ancient king prior to the *Mahābhārata* period, referred to by Nārada Muni while instructing Sañjaya, as mentioned in *Mahābhārata (Droṇa-parva 67)*. He was a great king, liberal for hospitality and distribution of foodstuff. Even Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa praised his acts of charity and hospitality. He was blessed by the great Vasiṣṭha Muni for supplying him cold water, and thus he achieved the heavenly planet. He used to supply fruits, roots and leaves to the ṛṣis, and thus he was blessed by them with fulfillment of his desires. *Although a kṣatriya by birth, he never ate flesh in his life.* He was especially hospitable to Vasiṣṭha Muni, and by his blessings only he attained the higher planetary residence. He is one of those pious kings whose names are remembered in the morning and evening.

*Yayāti:* The great emperor of the world and the original forefather of all great nations of the world who belong to the Āryan and Indo-European stock. He is the son of Mahārāja Nahuṣa, and he became the emperor of the world due to his elder brother's becoming a great and liberated saintly mystic. He ruled over the world for several thousands of years and performed many sacrifices and pious activities recorded in history, although his early youth was very lustful and full of romantic stories. He fell in love with Devayāni, the most beloved daughter of Śukrācārya. Devayāni wished to marry him, but at first he refused to accept her because of her being a daughter of a *brāhmaṇa*. According to *sāstras*, a *brāhmaṇa* could marry the daughter of a *brāhmaṇa*. They were very much cautious about *varṇa-saṅkara* population in the world. Śukrācārya amended this law of forbidden marriage and induced Emperor Yayāti to accept Devayāni. Devayāni had a girl friend named Śarmiṣṭhā, who also fell in love with the emperor and thus went with her friend Devayāni. Śukrācārya forbade Emperor Yayāti to call Śarmiṣṭhā into his bedroom, but Yayāti could not strictly follow his instruction. He secretly married Śarmiṣṭhā also and begot sons by her. When this was known by Devayāni, she went to her father and lodged a complaint. Yayāti was much attached to Devayāni, and when he went to his father-in-law's place to call her, Śukrācārya was angry with him and cursed him to become impotent. Yayāti begged his father-in-law to withdraw his curse, but the sage asked Yayāti to ask youthfulness from his sons and let them become old as the condition of his becoming potent. He had five sons, two from Devayāni and three from Śarmiṣṭhā. From his five sons, namely (1) Yadu, (2) Turvasu, (3) Druhyu, (4) Anu and (5) Pūru, five famous dynasties, namely (1) the Yadu dynasty, (2) the Yavana (Turk) dynasty, (3) the Bhoja dynasty, (4) the Mleccha dynasty (Greek) and (5) the Paurava dynasty, all emanated to spread all over the world. He reached the heavenly planets by dint of his pious acts, but he fell down from there because of his self-advertisement and criticizing other great souls. After his fall, his daughter and grandson bestowed upon him their accumulated virtues, and by the help of his grandson and friend Śibi, he was again promoted to the heavenly kingdom, becoming one of the assembly members of Yamarāja, with whom he is staying as a devotee. He performed more than one thousand different sacrifices, gave in charity very liberally and was a very influential king. His majestic power

was felt all over the world. His youngest son agreed to award him his youthfulness when he was troubled with lustful desires, even for one thousand years. Finally he became detached from worldly life and returned the youthfulness again to his son Pūru. He wanted to hand over the kingdom to Pūru, but his noblemen and the subjects did not agree. But when he explained to his subjects the greatness of Pūru, they agreed to accept Pūru as the King, and thus Emperor Yayāti retired from family life and left home for the forest.

## TEXT 25

धृत्या बलिसमः कृष्णे प्रहाद इव सद्ग्रहः ।  
आहर्तैषोऽश्वमेधानां वृद्धानां पर्युपासकः ॥२५॥

*dhṛtyā bali-samaḥ kṛṣṇe  
pahrāda iva sad-grahaḥ  
āhartaiṣo 'śvamedhānām  
vṛddhānām paryupāsakah*

*dhṛtyā*—by patience; *bali-samaḥ*—like Bali Mahārāja; *kṛṣṇe*—unto Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *pahrāda*—Prahāda Mahārāja; *iva*—like; *sat-grahaḥ*—devotee of; *āhartā*—performer; *eṣaḥ*—this child; *śvamedhānām*—of Aśvamedha sacrifices; *vṛddhānām*—of the old and experienced men; *paryupāsakah*—follower.

## TRANSLATION

This child will be like Bali Mahārāja in patience, a staunch devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa like Prahāda Mahārāja, a performer of many aśvamedha [horse] sacrifices and a follower of the old and experienced men.

## PURPORT

*Bali Mahārāja*: One of the twelve authorities in the devotional service of the Lord. Bali Mahārāja is a great authority in devotional service because he sacrificed everything to please the Lord and relinquished the connection of his so-called spiritual master who obstructed him on the path of risking everything for the service of the Lord. The highest perfection of religious life is to attain to the stage of unqualified devotional service of the Lord without any cause or without being obstructed by any kind of worldly obligation. Bali Mahārāja was determined to give up everything for the satisfaction of the Lord, and he did not care for any obstruction whatsoever. He is the grandson of Prahāda Mahārāja, another authority in the devotional service of the Lord. Bali Mahārāja and the history of his dealings with Viṣṇu Vāmana-deva are described in the Eighth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (Chapter 11–24).

*Prahāda Mahārāja*: A perfect devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa (Viṣṇu). His father, Hiraṇyakaśipu, chastised him severely when he was only five years old for his becoming an unalloyed devotee of the Lord. He was the first son of Hiraṇyakaśipu, and his mother's name was Kayādhū. Prahāda Mahārāja was an authority in the devotional service of the Lord because he had his father killed by Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva, setting the example that even a father should be removed from the path of devotional service if such a father happens to be an obstacle. He had four sons, and the eldest son, Virocana, is the father of Bali Mahārāja, mentioned above. The history of Prahāda Mahārāja's activities is described in the Seventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

## TEXT 26

राजर्षीणां जनयिता शास्ता चोत्पथगामिनाम् ।  
निग्रहीता कलेरेष भ्रुवो धर्मस्य कारणात् ॥२६॥

*rājarṣīṇām janayitā  
śāstā cotpatha-gāminām  
nigrahītā kalerēṣa  
bhruvo dharmasya kāraṇāt*

*rāja-rṣīṇām*—of kings as good as sages; *janayitā*—producer; *śāstā*—chastiser; *ca*—and; *utpatha-gāminām*—of the upstarts; *nigrahītā*—molester; *kaleḥ*—of the quarrelsome; *eṣaḥ*—this; *bhruvaḥ*—of the world; *dharmasya*—of religion; *kāraṇāt*—on account of.

## TRANSLATION

This child will be the father of kings who will be like sages. For world peace and for the sake of religion, he will be the chastiser of the upstarts and the quarrelsome.

## PURPORT

The wisest man in the world is a devotee of the Lord. The sages are called wise men, and there are different types of wise men for different branches of knowledge. Unless, therefore, the king or the head of the state is the wisest man, he cannot control all types of wise men in the state. In the line of royal succession in the family of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, all the kings, without exception, were the wisest men of their times, and so also it is foretold about Mahārāja Parikṣit and his son Mahārāja Janamejaya, who was yet to be born. Such wise kings can become chastisers of upstarts and uprooters of Kali, or quarrelsome elements. As will be clear in the chapters ahead, Mahārāja Parikṣit wanted to kill the personified Kali, who was attempting to kill a cow, the emblem of peace and religion. The symptoms of Kali are (1) wine, (2) women, (3) gambling and (4) slaughterhouses. Wise rulers of all states should take lessons from Mahārāja Parikṣit in how to maintain peace and morality by subduing the upstarts and quarrelsome people who indulge in wine, illicit connection with women, gambling and meat-eating supplied by regularly maintained slaughterhouses. In this age of Kali, regular license is issued for maintaining all of these different departments of quarrel. So how can they expect peace and morality in the state? The state fathers, therefore, must follow the principles of becoming wiser by devotion to the Lord, by chastising the breaker of discipline and by uprooting the symptoms of quarrel, as mentioned above. If we want blazing fire, we must use dry fuel. Blazing fire and moist fuel go ill together. Peace and morality can prosper only by the principles of Mahārāja Parikṣit and his followers.

## TEXT 27

तक्षकादात्मनो मृत्युं द्विजपुत्रोपसर्जितात् ।  
प्रपत्स्यत उपश्रुत्य मुक्तसङ्गः पदं हरेः ॥२७॥

*takṣakād ātmano mṛtyuṁ  
dvija-putropasarjitāt  
prapatsyata upaśrutya  
mukta-saṅgaḥ padam hareḥ*

*takṣakāt*—by the snakebird; *ātmanah*—of his personal self; *mṛtyuṁ*—death; *dvija-putra*—the son of a brāhmaṇa; *upasarjitāt*—being sent by; *prapatsyate*—having taken shelter of; *upaśrutya*—after hearing; *mukta-saṅgaḥ*—freed from all attachment; *padam*—position; *hareḥ*—of the Lord.

## TRANSLATION

After hearing about his death, which will be caused by the bite of a snakebird sent by a son of a brāhmaṇa, he will get himself freed from all material attachment and surrender unto the Personality of Godhead, taking shelter of Him.

## PURPORT

Material attachment and taking shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord go ill together. Material attachment means ignorance of transcendental happiness under the shelter of the Lord. Devotional service to the Lord, while existing in the material world, is a way to practice one's transcendental relation with the Lord, and when it is matured, one gets completely free from all material attachment and becomes competent to go back home, back to Godhead. Mahārāja Parikṣit, being especially attached to the Lord from the beginning of his body in the womb of his mother, was continuously under the shelter of the Lord, and the so-called warning of his death within seven days from the date of the curse by the brāhmaṇa's son was a boon to him to enable him to prepare himself to go back home, back to Godhead. Since he was always protected by the Lord, he could have avoided the effect of such a curse by the grace of the Lord, but he did not take such undue advantage for nothing. Rather, he made the best use of a bad bargain. For seven days continuously he heard

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam from the right source, and thus he got shelter at the lotus feet of the Lord by that opportunity.

## TEXT 28

जिज्ञासितात्मयाथार्थो मुनेर्व्याससुतादसौ ।  
हित्वेदं नृप गङ्गायां यास्यत्यद्वाकुतोभयम् ॥२८॥

jijñāsītātma-yāthārthyo  
muner vyāsa-sutād asau  
hitvedam nrpa gaṅgāyām  
yāsyaty addhākutobhayam

jijñāsita—having inquired of; ātma-yāthārthyah—right knowledge of one's own self; muneḥ—from the learned philosopher; vyāsa-sutāt—the son of Vyāsa; asau—he; hitvā—quitting; idam—this material attachment; nrpa—O King; gaṅgāyām—on the bank of the Ganges; yāsyati—will go; addhā—directly; akutaḥ-bhayam—the life of fearlessness.

## TRANSLATION

After inquiring about proper self-knowledge from the son of Vyāsadeva, who will be a great philosopher, he will renounce all material attachment and achieve a life of fearlessness.

## PURPORT

Material knowledge means ignorance of the knowledge of one's own self. Philosophy means to seek after the right knowledge of one's own self, or the knowledge of self-realization. Without self-realization, philosophy is dry speculation or a waste of time and energy. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam gives the right knowledge of one's own self, and by hearing Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam one can get free from material attachment and enter into the kingdom of fearlessness. This material world is fearful. Its prisoners are always fearful as within a prison house. In the prison house no one can violate the jail rules and regulations, and violating the rules means another term for extension of prison life. Similarly, we in this material existence are always fearful. This fearfulness is called anxiety. Everyone in the material life, in all species and varieties of life, is full of anxieties, either by breaking or without breaking the laws of nature. Liberation, or *mukti*, means getting relief from these constant anxieties. This is possible only when the anxiety is changed to the devotional service of the Lord. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam gives us the chance to change the quality of anxiety from matter to spirit. This is done in the association of a learned philosopher like the self-realized Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the great son of Śrī Vyāsadeva. Mahārāja Parikṣit, after receiving warning of his death, took advantage of this opportunity by association with Śukadeva Gosvāmī and achieved the desired result.

There is a sort of imitation of this reciting and hearing of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam by professional men, and their foolish audience thinks that they will get free from the clutches of material attachment and attain the life of fearlessness. Such imitative hearing of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is a caricature only, and one should not be misled by such a performance of *bhāgavatam saptāha* undertaken by ridiculous greedy fellows to maintain an establishment of material enjoyment.

## TEXT 29

इति राज्ञ उपादिश्य विप्रा जातककोविदाः ।  
लब्धापचितयः सर्वे प्रतिजग्मुः स्वकान् गुहान् ॥२९॥

iti rājña upādīśya  
viprā jātaka-kovidāḥ  
labdhāpacitayaḥ sarve  
pratijagmuḥ svakān gṛhān

iti—thus; rājñe—unto the King; upādīśya—having advised; viprah—persons well versed in the Vedas; jātaka-kovidāḥ—persons ex-

pert in astrology and in the performance of birth ceremonies; *labdhāpacitayaḥ*—those who had received sumptuously as remuneration; *sarve*—all of them; *pratijagmuḥ*—went back; *svakān*—their own; *gṛhān*—houses.

## TRANSLATION

Thus those who were expert in astrological knowledge and in performance of the birth ceremony instructed King Yudhiṣṭhira about the future history of his child. Then, being sumptuously remunerated, they all returned to their respective homes.

## PURPORT

The Vedas are the storehouse of knowledge, both material and spiritual. But such knowledge aims at perfection of self-realization. In other words, the Vedas are the guides for the civilized man in every respect. Since human life is the opportunity to get free from all material miseries, it is properly guided by the knowledge of the Vedas, in the matters of both material needs and spiritual salvation. The specific intelligent class of men who were devoted particularly to the knowledge of the Vedas were called the *vipras*, or the graduates of the Vedic knowledge. There are different branches of knowledge in the Vedas, of which astrology and pathology are two important branches necessary for the common man. So the intelligent men, generally known as the *brāhmaṇas*, took up all the different branches of Vedic knowledge to guide society. Even the department of military education (*Dhanur-veda*) was also taken up by such intelligent men, and the *vipras* were also teachers of this section of knowledge, as were Dronācārya, Kṛpācārya, etc.

The word *vipra* mentioned herein is significant. There is a little difference between the *vipras* and the *brāhmaṇas*. The *vipras* are those who are expert in *karma-kāṇḍa*, or fruitive activities, guiding the society towards fulfilling the material necessities of life, whereas the *brāhmaṇas* are expert in spiritual knowledge of transcendence. This department of knowledge is called *jñāna-kāṇḍa*, and above this there is the *upāsana-kāṇḍa*. The culmination of *upāsana-kāṇḍa* is the devotional service of the Lord Viṣṇu, and when the *brāhmaṇas* achieve perfection, they are called Vaiṣṇavas. Viṣṇu worship is the highest of the modes of worship. Elevated *brāhmaṇas* are Vaiṣṇavas engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord, and thus Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which is the science of devotional service, is very dear to the Vaiṣṇavas. And as explained in the beginning of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, it is the mature fruit of Vedic knowledge and is superior subject matter, above the three *kāṇḍas*, namely *karma*, *jñāna* and *upāsana*.

Amongst the *karma-kāṇḍa* experts, the *jātaka* expert *vipras* were good astrologers who could tell all the future history of a born child simply by the astral calculations of the time (*lagna*). Such expert *jātaka-vipras* were present during the birth of Mahārāja Parikṣit, and his grandfather, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, awarded the *vipras* sufficiently with gold, land, villages, grains and other valuable necessities of life, which also include cows. There is a need of such *vipras* in the social structure, and it is the duty of the state to maintain them comfortably, as designed in the Vedic procedure. Such expert *vipras*, being sufficiently paid by the state, could give free service to the people in general, and thus this department of Vedic knowledge could be available for all.

## TEXT 30

स एष लोके विख्यातः परीक्षित इति यत्प्रभुः ।  
पूर्वन् दृष्टमनुध्यायन् परीक्षेत नरोऽपि ॥३०॥

sa eṣa loke vikhyaṭah  
parikṣit iti yat prabhuḥ  
pūrvan drṣṭam anudhyāyan  
parikṣeta nareṣv iha

saḥ—he; eṣaḥ—in this; loke—world; vikhyaṭah—famous; parikṣit— one who examines; iti—thus; yat—what; prabhuḥ—O my King;

*pūrvan*—before; *dr̥ṣtam*—seen; *anudhyāyan*—constantly contemplating; *parikṣeta*—shall examine; *nareṣu*—unto every man; *iha*—here.

## TRANSLATION

So his son would become famous in the world as Parikṣit [examiner] because he would come to examine all human beings in his search after that personality whom he saw before his birth. Thus he would come to constantly contemplate Him.

## PURPORT

Mahārāja Parikṣit, fortunate as he was, got the impression of the Lord even in the womb of his mother, and thus his contemplation on the Lord was constantly with him. Once the impression of the transcendental form of the Lord is fixed in one's mind, one can never forget Him in any circumstance. Child Parikṣit, after coming out of the womb, was in the habit of examining everyone to see whether he was the same personality whom he first saw in the womb. But no one could be equal to or more attractive than the Lord, and therefore he never accepted anyone. But the Lord was constantly with him by such examination, and thus Mahārāja Parikṣit was always engaged in the devotional service of the Lord by remembrance.

*Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī* remarks in this connection that every child, if given an impression of the Lord from his very childhood, certainly becomes a great devotee of the Lord like Mahārāja Parikṣit. One may not be as fortunate as Mahārāja Parikṣit to have the opportunity to see the Lord in the womb of his mother, but even if he is not so fortunate, he can be made so if the parents of the child desire him to be so. There is a practical example in my personal life in this connection. My father was a pure devotee of the Lord, and when I was only four or five years old, my father gave me a couple of forms of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. In a playful manner, I used to worship these Deities along with my sister, and I used to imitate the performances of a neighboring temple of Rādhā-Govinda. By constantly visiting this neighboring temple and copying the ceremonies in connection with my own Deities of play, I developed a natural affinity for the Lord. My father used to observe all the ceremonies befitting my position. Later on, these activities were suspended due to my association in the schools and colleges, and I became completely out of practice. But in my youthful days, when I met my spiritual master, Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti-siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, again I revived my old habit, and the same playful Deities became my worshipful Deities in proper regulation. This was followed up until I left the family connection, and I am pleased that my generous father gave the first impression which was developed later into regulative devotional service by His Divine Grace. Mahārāja Prahlāda also advised that such impressions of a godly relation must be impregnated from the beginning of childhood, otherwise one may miss the opportunity of the human form of life, which is very valuable although it is temporary like others.

## TEXT 31

स राजपुत्रो ववृधे आशु शुक्ल इवोदुपः ।  
आपूर्यमाणः पितृभिः काष्ठाभिरिव सोऽन्वहम् ॥३१॥

*sa rāja-putro vavṛdhe*  
*āśu śukla ivodupah*  
*āpūryamāṇah pitr̥bhiḥ*  
*kāṣṭhābhir iva so 'nvaham*

*sah*—that; *rāja-putrah*—the royal prince; *vavṛdhe*—grew up; *āśu*—very soon; *śukle*—waxing moon; *iva*—like; *udupah*—the moon; *āpūryamāṇah*—luxuriantly; *pitṛbhiḥ*—by the parental guardians; *kāṣṭhābhiḥ*—plenary development; *iva*—like; *sah*—he; *anvaham*—day after day.

## TRANSLATION

As the moon, in its waxing fortnight, develops day after day, so the royal prince [Parikṣit] very soon developed luxuriantly under the care and full facilities of his guardian grandfathers.

## TEXT 32

यक्ष्यमाणोऽश्वमेधेन ज्ञातिद्रोहजिहासया ।  
राजालम्बधनो दध्यौनान्यत्र करदण्डयोः ॥३२॥

*yakṣyamāṇo 'śvamedhena*  
*jñāti-droha-jihāsayā*  
*rājā labdha-dhanaḥ dadhyau*  
*nānyatra kara-daṇḍayoḥ*

*yakṣyamāṇah*—desiring to perform; *śvamedhena*—by the horse sacrifice ceremony; *jñāti-droha*—fighting with kinsmen; *jihāsayā*—for getting free; *rājā*—King Yudhiṣṭhira; *labdha-dhanaḥ*—for getting some wealth; *dadhyau*—thought about it; *na anyatra*—not otherwise; *kara-daṇḍayoḥ*—taxes and fines.

## TRANSLATION

Just at this time, King Yudhiṣṭhira was considering performing a horse sacrifice to get freed from sins incurred from fighting with kinsmen. But he became anxious to get some wealth, for there were no surplus funds outside of fines and tax collection.

## PURPORT

As the *brāhmaṇas* and *vipras* had a right to be subsidized by the state, the state executive head had the right to collect taxes and fines from the citizens. After the Battle of Kurukṣetra the state treasury was exhausted, and therefore there was no surplus fund except the fund from tax collection and fines. Such funds were sufficient only for the state budget, and having no excess fund, the King was anxious to get more wealth in some other way in order to perform the horse sacrifice. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira wanted to perform this sacrifice under the instruction of Bhīṣmadeva.

## TEXT 33

तदभिप्रेतमालक्ष्य भ्रातरोऽच्युतचोदिताः ।  
घनं ग्रहीणमाजहुर्दृद्यां दिशि भूरिषः ॥३३॥

*tad abhipretam ālakṣya*  
*bhrātaro 'acyuta-coditāḥ*  
*dhanam grahīṇam ājahur*  
*udīcyaṁ diśi bhūriṣaḥ*

*ta*—his; *abhipretam*—wishes of the mind; *ālakṣya*—observing; *bhrātaraḥ*—his brothers; *acyuta*—the infallible (Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa); *coditāḥ*—being advised by; *dhanam*—riches; *grahīṇam*—to collect; *ājahur*—brought about; *udīcyaṁ*—northern; *diśi*—direction; *bhūriṣaḥ*—sufficient.

## TRANSLATION

Understanding the hearty wishes of the King, his brothers, as advised by the infallible Lord Kṛṣṇa, collected sufficient riches from the North [left by King Marutta].

## PURPORT

*Mahārāja Marutta*: one of the great emperors of the world. He reigned over the world long before the reign of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. He was the son of Mahārāja Avikṣit and was a great devotee of the son of the sun-god, known as Yamarāja. His brother Samvarta was a rival priest of the great Bṛhaspati, the learned priest of the demigods. He conducted one sacrifice called Sankāra-yajña by which the Lord was so satisfied that He

was pleased to hand over to him the charge of a mountain peak of gold. This peak of gold is somewhere in the Himalaya Mountains, and modern adventurers may try to find it there. He was so powerful an emperor that at the day's end of sacrifice, the demigods from the other planets like Indra, Candra and Brhaspati used to visit his palace. And because he had the gold peak at his disposal, he had sufficient gold in his possession. The canopy of the sacrificial altar was completely made of gold. In his daily performances of the sacrificial ceremonies, some of the inhabitants of the Vāyuloka (airy planets) were invited to expedite the cooking work of the ceremony. And the assembly of the demigods in the ceremony was led by Viśvadeva.

By his constant pious work he was able to drive out all kinds of diseases from the jurisdiction of his kingdom. All the inhabitants of higher planets like Devaloka and Pitṛloka were pleased with him for his great sacrificial ceremonies. Every day he used to give in charity to the learned *brāhmaṇas* such things as beddings, seats, conveyances and sufficient quantities of gold. Because of munificent charities and performances of innumerable sacrifices, the King of heaven, Indradeva, was fully satisfied with him and always wished for his welfare. Due to his pious activities, he remained a young man throughout his life and reigned over the world for one thousand years, surrounded by his satisfied subjects, ministers, legitimate wife, sons and brothers. Even Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa praised his spirit of pious activities. He handed over his only daughter to Mahārṣi Angirā, and by his good blessings, he was elevated to the kingdom of heaven. First of all, he wanted to offer the priesthood of his sacrifices to learned Brhaspati, but the demigod refused to accept the post because of the King's being a human being, a man of this earth. He was very sorry for this, but on the advice of Nārada Muni he appointed Samvarta to the post, and he was successful in his mission.

The success of a particular type of sacrifice completely depends on the priest in charge. In this age, all kinds of sacrifice are forbidden because there is no learned priest amongst the so-called *brāhmaṇas*, who go by the false notion of becoming sons of *brāhmaṇas* without brahminical qualifications. In this age of Kali, therefore, only one kind of sacrifice is recommended, *saṅkīrtana-yajña*, as inaugurated by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

#### TEXT 34

तेन सम्भृतसम्भारो धर्मपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः ।  
वाजिमेधैस्त्रिभिर्भितो यज्ञैः समयजद्वरिम् ॥३४॥

*tena sambhṛta-sambhāro  
dharma-putro yudhiṣṭhirah  
vājimedhais tribhir bhīto  
yajñaiḥ samayajad dharim*

*tena*—with that wealth; *sambhṛta*—collected; *sambhārah*—ingredients; *dharma-putrah*—the pious king; *yudhiṣṭhirah*—Yudhiṣṭhira; *vājimedhaiḥ*—by horse sacrifices; *tribhiḥ*—three times; *bhītaḥ*—being greatly afraid after the Battle of Kurukṣetra; *yajñaiḥ*—sacrifices; *samayajat*—perfectly worshiped; *harim*—the Personality of Godhead.

#### TRANSLATION

By those riches, the King could procure the ingredients for three horse sacrifices. Thus the pious King Yudhiṣṭhira, who was very fearful after the Battle of Kurukṣetra, pleased Lord Hari, the Personality of Godhead.

#### PURPORT

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was the ideal and celebrated pious King of the world, and still he was greatly afraid after the execution of the Battle of Kurukṣetra because of the mass killing in the fight, all of which was done only to install him on the throne. He therefore took all the responsibility for sins committed in the warfare, and to get rid of all these sins, he wanted to perform three sacrifices in which horses are offered at the altar. Such a sacrifice is very costly. Even Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira had to

collect the necessary heaps of gold left by Mahārāja Marutta and the *brāhmaṇas* who were given gold in charity by King Marutta. The learned *brāhmaṇas* could not take away all the loads of gold given by Mahārāja Marutta, and therefore they left behind the major portion of the gift. And Mahārāja Marutta also did not again collect such heaps of gold given away in charity. Besides that, all the golden plates and utensils which were used in the sacrifice were also thrown in the dustbins, and all such heaps of gold remained unclaimed property for a long time, till Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira collected them for his own purposes. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa advised the brothers of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira to collect the unclaimed property because it belonged to the King. The more astonishing thing is that no subject of the state also collected such unclaimed gold for industrial enterprise or anything like that. This means that the state citizens were completely satisfied with all necessities of life and therefore not inclined to accept unnecessary productive enterprises for sense gratification. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira also requisitioned the heaps of gold for performing sacrifices and for pleasing the Supreme Hari Personality of Godhead. Otherwise he had no desire to collect them for the state treasury.

One should take lessons from the acts of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. He was afraid of sins committed on the battlefield, and therefore he wanted to satisfy the supreme authority. This indicates that unintentional sins are also committed in our daily occupational discharge of duties, and to counteract even such unintentional crimes, one must perform sacrifices as they are recommended in the revealed scriptures. The Lord says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (*yajñārthāt karmaṇo 'nyatra loko 'yam karma-bandhanaḥ*) that one must perform sacrifices recommended in the scriptures in order to get rid of commitments of all unauthorized work, or even unintentional crimes which we are apt to commit. By doing so, one shall be freed from all kinds of sins. And those who do not do so but work for self-interest or sense gratification have to undergo all tribulations accrued from committed sins. Therefore, the main purpose of performing sacrifices is to satisfy the Supreme Personality Hari. The process of performing sacrifices may be different in terms of different times, places and persons, but the aim of such sacrifices is one and the same at all times and in all circumstances, *viz.*, satisfaction of the Supreme Lord Hari. That is the way of pious life, and that is the way of peace and prosperity in the world at large. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira did all these as the ideal pious king in the world.

If Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira is a sinner in his daily discharge of duties, in royal administration of state affairs, wherein killing of man and animals is a recognized art, then we can just imagine the amount of sins committed consciously or unconsciously by the untrained population of the Kali-yuga who have no way to perform sacrifice to please the Supreme Lord. The *Bhāgavatam* says, therefore, that the prime duty of the human being is to satisfy the Supreme Lord by the performance of one's occupational duty (*Bhāg.* 1.2.13).

Let any man of any place or community, caste or creed be engaged in any sort of occupational duty, but he must agree to perform sacrifices as it is recommended in the scriptures for the particular place, time and person. In the Vedic literatures it is recommended that in Kali-yuga people engage in glorifying the Lord by chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa (*kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya mukta-saṅgaḥ param vrajet*) without offense. By doing so one can be freed from all sins and thus can attain the highest perfection of life by returning home, back to Godhead. We have already discussed this more than once in this great literature in different places, especially in the introductory portion by sketching the life of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and still we are repeating the same with a view to bring about peace and prosperity in society.

The Lord has declared openly in *Bhagavad-gītā* how He becomes pleased with us, and the same process is practically demonstrated in the life and preaching work of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The perfect process of performing *yajñas*, or sacrifice, to please the Supreme Lord Hari (the Personality of Godhead, who gets us free from all miseries of existence) is to follow the ways of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in this dark age of quarrel and dissension.

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira had to collect heaps of gold to secure the paraphernalia for the horse sacrifice *yajñas* in days of sufficiency, so we

can hardly think of such performance of *yajñas* in these days of insufficiency and complete scarcity of gold. At the present moment we have heaps of papers and promises of their being converted into gold by economic development of modern civilization, and still there is no possibility of spending riches like Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, either individually or collectively or by state patronization. Just suitable, therefore, for the age, is the method recommended by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in terms of the *śāstra*. Such a method requires no expenditure at all and yet can award more benefit than other expensive methods of *yajña* performances.

The horse sacrifice *yajña* or cow sacrifice *yajña* performed by the Vedic regulations shouldn't be misunderstood as a process of killing animals. On the contrary, animals offered for the *yajña* were rejuvenated to a new span of life by the transcendental power of chanting the Vedic hymns, which, if properly chanted, are different from what is understood by the common layman. The *Veda-mantras* are all practical, and the proof is rejuvenation of the sacrificed animal.

There is no possibility of such methodical chanting of the Vedic hymns by the so-called *brāhmaṇas* or priests of the present age. The untrained descendants of the twice-born families are no more like their forefathers, and thus they are counted amongst the *śūdras*, or once-born men. The once-born man is unfit to chant the Vedic hymns, and therefore there is no practical utility of chanting the original hymns.

And to save them all, Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu propounded the *saṅkīrtana* movement or *yajña* for all practical purposes, and the people of the present age are strongly recommended to follow this sure and recognized path.

## TEXT 35

आहूतो भगवान् राज्ञा याजयित्वा द्विजैर्नृपम् ।  
उवास कतिचिन्मासान् सुहृदां प्रियकाम्यया ॥३५॥

āhūto bhagavān rājñā  
yājayitvā dvijair nṛpam  
uvāsa katicin māsān  
suhṛdām priya-kāmyayā

*āhūtaḥ*—being called by; *bhagavān*—Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead; *rājñā*—by the King; *yājayitvā*—causing to be performed; *dvijaiḥ*—by the learned *brāhmaṇas*; *nṛpam*—on behalf of the King; *uvāsa*—resided; *katicit*—a few; *māsān*—months; *suhṛdām*—for the sake of the relatives; *priya-kāmyayā*—for the pleasure.

## TRANSLATION

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, being invited to the sacrifices by Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, saw to it that they were performed by qualified [twice-born] *brāhmaṇas*. After that, for the pleasure of the relatives, the Lord remained a few months.

## PURPORT

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa was invited by Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira to look into the supervision of the performances of *yajña*, and the Lord, to abide by the orders of His elderly cousin, caused the performance of *yajñas* by learned twice-born *brāhmaṇas*. Simply taking birth in the family of a *brāhmaṇa* does not make one qualified to perform *yajñas*. One must be twice-born by proper training and initiation from the bona fide *ācārya*. The once-born scions of *brāhmaṇa* families are equal with the once-born *śūdras*, and such *brahma-bandhus*, or unqualified once-born scions, must be rejected for any purpose of religious or Vedic function. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa was entrusted to look after this arrangement, and perfect as He is, He caused the *yajñas* to be performed by the bona fide twice-born *brāhmaṇas* for successful execution.

## TEXT 36

ततो राज्ञाम्यनुज्ञातः कृष्णया सह बन्धुभिः ।  
ययौ द्वारवतीं ब्रह्मन् सार्जुनो यदुभिर्यतः ॥३६॥

tato rājñābhyanuññātaḥ  
kṛṣṇayā saha-bandhubhiḥ  
yayau dvāravatīm brahman  
sārgjuno yadubhir vṛtaḥ

*tataḥ*—thereafter; *rājñā*—by the King; *abhyanuññātaḥ*—being permitted; *kṛṣṇayā*—as well as by Draupadī; *saha*—along with; *bandhubhiḥ*—other relatives; *yayau*—went to; *dvāravatīm*—Dvārakādhāma; *brahman*—O *brāhmaṇas*; *sa-arjunah*—along with Arjuna; *yadubhiḥ*—by the members of the Yadu dynasty; *vṛtaḥ*—surrounded.

## TRANSLATION

O Śaunaka, thereafter the Lord, having bade farewell to King Yudhiṣṭhira, Draupadī and other relatives, started for the city of Dvārakā, accompanied by Arjuna and other members of the Yadu dynasty.

Thus end the Bhaktivedanta purports of the First Canto, Twelfth Chapter, of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, entitled "Birth of Emperor Parikṣit."

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

## Dhṛtarāṣṭra Quits Home

## TEXT 1

सूत उवाच

विदुरस्तीर्थयात्रायां मैत्रेयादात्मनो गतिम् ।  
ज्ञात्वागाद्वास्तिनपुरं तथावाप्तविवित्सितः ॥ १ ॥

sūta uvāca  
viduras tīrtha-yātrāyām  
maitreyād ātmano gatim  
jñātvāgād dhāstinapuram  
tayāvāpta-vivitsitaḥ

*sūtaḥ uvāca*—Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī said; *viduraḥ*—Vidura; *tīrtha-yātrāyām*—while traveling to different places of pilgrimage; *maitreyāt*—from the great sage Maitreya; *ātmanah*—of the self; *gatim*—destination; *jñātvā*—by knowing it; *agāt*—went back; *hāstinapuram*—the city of Hastināpura; *tayā*—by that knowledge; *avāpta*—sufficiently a gainer; *vivitsitaḥ*—being well versed in everything knowable.

## TRANSLATION

Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī said: While traveling on a pilgrimage, Vidura received knowledge of the destination of the self from the great sage Maitreya and then returned to Hastināpura. He became as well versed in the subject as he desired.

## PURPORT

*Vidura*: One of the prominent figures in the history of the *Mahābhārata*. He was conceived by Vyāsadeva in the womb of the maidservant of Ambikā, mother of Mahārāja Pāṇḍu. He is the incarnation of Yamarāja. Being cursed by Maṇḍuka Muni, he was to become a *śūdra*. The story is narrated as follows. Once upon a time the state police caught some thieves who had concealed themselves in the hermitage of Maṇḍuka Muni. The police constables, as usual, arrested all the thieves and Maṇḍuka Muni along with them. The Magistrate specifically punished the *muni* to death by being pierced with a lance. When he was just to be pierced, the news reached the king, and he at once stopped the act on consideration of his being a great *muni*. The king personally begged the *muni*'s pardon for the mistake of his men, and the saint and the once went to Yamarāja, who prescribes the destiny of the living beings.

Yamarāja, being questioned by the *muni*, replied that the *muni* in his childhood pierced an ant with a sharpened straw, and for that reason he was put into difficulty. The *muni* thought it unwise on the part of Yamarāja that he was punished for his childish innocence, and thus the *muni* cursed Yamarāja to become a *śūdra*, and this *śūdra* incarnation of Yamarāja was known as Vidura, the *śūdra* brother of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Mahārāja Pāṇḍu. But this *śūdra* son of the Kuru dynasty was equally treated by Bhīṣmadeva, along with his other nephews, and in due course Vidura was married with a girl who was also born in the womb of a *śūdrānī* by a *brāhmaṇa*. Although Vidura did not inherit the property of his father (the brother of Bhīṣmadeva), still he was given sufficient state property by Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the elder brother of Vidura. Vidura was very much attached to his elder brother, and all along he tried to guide him on the right path. During the fratricidal war of Kurukṣetra, Vidura repeatedly implored his elder brother to do justice to the sons of Pāṇḍu, but Duryodhana did not like such interference by his uncle, and thus he practically insulted Vidura. This resulted in Vidura's leaving home for pilgrimage and taking instructions from Maitreya.

## TEXT 2

यावतः कृतवान् प्रश्नान् क्षत्ता कौषारवाग्रतः ।  
जातैकमक्तिर्गोविन्दे तेभ्यश्चोपरराम ह ॥ २ ॥

yāvataḥ kṛtavān praśnān  
kṣattā kauṣāravāgrataḥ  
jātaika-bhaktir govinde  
tebhyaś copararāma ha

yāvataḥ—all that; kṛtavān—did he put; praśnān—questions; kṣattā—a name of Vidura; kauṣārava—a name of Maitreya; agrataḥ—in the presence of; jāta—having grown up; eka—one; bhaktiḥ—transcendental loving service; govinde—unto Lord Kṛṣṇa; tebhyaḥ—regarding further questions; ca—and; upararāma—retired from; ha—in the past.

## TRANSLATION

After asking various questions and becoming established in the transcendental loving service of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Vidura retired from putting questions to Maitreya Muni.

## PURPORT

Vidura retired from putting questions before Maitreya Muni when he was convinced by Maitreya Ṛṣi that the *summum bonum* of life is to be finally situated in the transcendental loving service of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is Govinda, or one who satisfies His devotees in all respects. The conditioned soul, the living being in material existence, seeks happiness by employing his senses in the modes of materialism, but that cannot give him satisfaction. He then searches after the Supreme Truth by the empiric philosophic speculative method and intellectual feats. But if he does not find the ultimate goal, he again goes down to material activities and engages himself in various philanthropic and altruistic works, which all fail to give him satisfaction. So neither fruitive activities nor dry philosophical speculation can give one satisfaction because by nature a living being is the eternal servitor of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and all the Vedic literatures give him direction towards that ultimate end. The *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.15) confirms this statement.

Like Vidura, an inquisitive conditioned soul must approach a bona fide spiritual master like Maitreya and by intelligent inquiries must try to know everything about *karma* (fruitive activities), *jñāna* (philosophical research for the Supreme Truth) and *yoga* (the linking process of spiritual realization). One who is not seriously inclined to put questions before a spiritual master need not accommodate a show-bottle spiritual master, nor should a person who may be a spiritual master for others pose to be so if he is unable to engage his disciple ultimately in the transcendental loving service of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Vidura was successful in approaching such a spiritual master like Maitreya, and he got the ultimate

goal of life: *bhakti* unto Govinda. Thus there was nothing to be known further about spiritual progress.

## TEXTS 3-4

तं बन्धुमागतं दृष्ट्वा धर्मपुत्रः सहानुजः ।  
धृतराष्ट्रो युयुत्सुश्च सतः शारदतः पृथा ॥ ३ ॥  
गान्धारी द्रौपदी ब्रह्मन् सुभद्रा चोत्तरा कृपी ।  
अन्याश्च जामयः पाण्डोर्जातियः ससुताः स्त्रियः ॥ ४ ॥

taṁ bandhum āgataṁ dr̥ṣṭvā  
dharma-putraḥ sahanujah  
dhṛtarāṣṭro yuyutsuś ca  
sūtaḥ sāradvataḥ pṛthā

gāndhārī draupadī brahman  
subhadrā cottarā kṛpī  
anyāś ca jāmayah pāṇḍor  
jñātayah sasutāḥ striyah

taṁ—him; bandhum—relative; āgataṁ—having arrived there; dr̥ṣṭvā—by seeing it; dharma-putraḥ—Yudhiṣṭhira; saha-anujah—along with his younger brothers; dhṛtarāṣṭrah—Dhṛtarāṣṭra; yuyutsuḥ—Sātyaki; ca—and; sūtaḥ—Sañjaya; sāradvataḥ—Kṛpācārya; pṛthā—Kuntī; gāndhārī—Gāndhārī; draupadī—Draupadī; brahman—O brāhmaṇas; subhadrā—Subhadrā; ca—and; uttarā—Uttarā; kṛpī—Kṛpī; anyāḥ—others; ca—and; jāmayah—wives of other family members; pāṇḍoḥ—of the Pāṇḍavas; jñātayah—family members; sasutāḥ—along with their sons; striyah—the ladies.

## TRANSLATION

When they saw Vidura return to the palace, all the inhabitants—Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, his younger brothers, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Sātyaki, Sañjaya, Kṛpācārya, Kuntī, Gāndhārī, Draupadī, Subhadrā, Uttarā, Kṛpī, many other wives of the Kauravas, and other ladies with children—all hurried to him in great delight. It so appeared that they had regained their consciousness after a long period.

(continued in next issue)

## Vaiṣṇava 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 at the ISKCON center nearest you will gladly tell you about the meaning of these festivals.

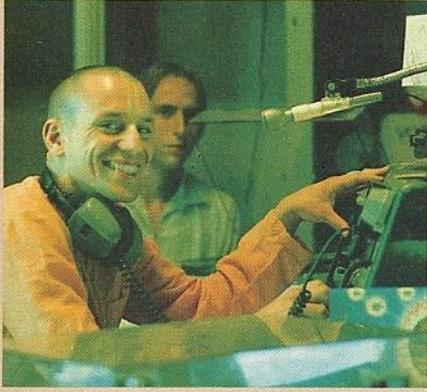
Year 491, Caitanya Era			
Vaiṣṇava months of Hṛṣīkeśa (August 29–September 27) and Padmanābha (September 28–October 26)			
Sept 25 (Hṛṣīkeśa 28)	Sept 26 (Hṛṣīkeśa 29)	Sept 27 (Hṛṣīkeśa 30)	Oct 8 (Padmanābha 11)
Appearance of Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Thākura.	Śrī Ananta-caturdaśī-vrata. Disappearance of Śrīla Haridāsa Thākura.	Śrī Viśvarūpa-mahotsava. Pūrṇimā.	Indrā-ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).
Oct 9 (Padmanābha 12)	Oct 22 (Padmanābha 25)	Oct 23 (Padmanābha 26)	Oct 24 (Padmanābha 27)
Ekādaśī break-fast after sunrise before 10:25 A.M.	Vijayotsava of Lord Rāmacandra. Appearance of Śrīpāda Madhvācārya.	Pāśāṅkuṣā-ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans). Beginning of Kārtika-vrata if starting from the Ekādaśī.	Ekādaśī break-fast after sunrise, before 9:47 A.M. Disappearance of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī.
Oct 26 (Padmanābha 29)			
Pūrṇimā. Śāradīya-rāsayātrā of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (rāsa-līlā). Beginning of Kārtika-vrata if started from the Pūrṇimā. Disappearance of Śrī Murārī Gupta.			



# Every Town and Village

A look at the worldwide activities of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

## ISKCON Goes on the Air in Memphis



**Brahmā dāsa at the WEVL console.**

Every Tuesday night in Memphis, Tennessee, the transcendental sounds of a two-and-a-half-hour Hare Kṛṣṇa radio show fill the Southern airwaves, courtesy of station WEVL, 90.3-FM. The program, aired live, includes a variety of guest interviews, comedy/satire, and music—all centered on the dynamic philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Station manager Dennis Badson explains that the community-owned station seeks out unusual programs not normally broadcast on commercial radio. Not long ago Brahmā dāsa, the president of ISKCON's Memphis center, offered to do a show called "The Cheaters and the Cheated." He told the station's board members that the show would expose the shortcomings of modern society and present the alternative society—one based on God consciousness, "simple living and high thinking." Program director Bart Lipman liked the idea and asked to hear more.

Brahmā dāsa took the opportunity to explain, "We want to show how the big leaders have systematically conditioned ordinary people to search for happiness under a completely false conception of life. They have directed people toward acquiring useless paraphernalia that only drives them deeper into the realm of hopelessness. The leaders are misguiding everyone into thinking that advancement means concrete, steel, money, and the selfish pursuit of pleasure. As a result, everyone feels constantly driven and repeatedly frustrated by an unending network of artificial desires. And, of course, that mentality simply results in crime, poverty, and social unrest. Then

the masses—and even the so-called leaders—try to shelter themselves from despair with alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, pornography, and so forth. We should rise to a higher state of consciousness and happiness. Unless we realize that the real goal of life is God consciousness, we will never achieve any real advancement—only a shadow advancement that leads to chaos and destruction."

## The Summer of the Chariots

This summer, for the eleventh-straight year, the chariots of Lord Jagannātha (the Lord of the Universe) rolled down the avenues of American and Canadian cities. The International Society for Krishna Consciousness was restaging a festival held since time immemorial in the city of Purī, India. Hundreds of thousands of amazed and delighted people witnessed Rathā-yātrā—the Festival of the Chariots.

This year's festival in New York City was as memorable as ever. Three huge, bright-canopied, hand-drawn wooden chariots left Central Park and journeyed down Fifth Avenue to Washington Square Park. Harvard University religion



**Cheering the Lord's chariot on—at San Francisco's Golden Gate Park.**

professor Harvey Cox rode on one of the carts and later spoke to the crowd on the importance of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. "I'm here to pay tribute to a movement which has meant a lot to me, spiritually and intellectually," said Dr. Cox. He went on to condemn the attacks of "deprogrammers": "They are trying to deprive the devotees of the most valuable possession in life—faith in the Supreme Lord."

For a full week the chariots stayed in Washington Square Park, until at last devotees and well-wishers drew them back along Sixth Avenue to the temple. The week of festivities peaked at the day's free feast and festival in Central Park. Musician-composer Alice Coltrane delighted the crowd with her Gospel-flavored renderings of traditional Kṛṣṇa chants. And VEDA (ISKCON's new Vedic Ensemble of the Dramatic Arts) presented an enchanting original dance performance based on the ancient Indian epic *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Similar festivals took place in Honolulu, Toronto, and Atlanta; at Philadelphia's historic Independence Mall; in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, where Rathā-yātrā in the West began; and along Venice Beach in Los Angeles, where police estimated the crowd at 200,000.

## Scientific Conference: "Life Comes from Life"

From October 14 to 16, in the historic and holy city of Vṛndāvana, India, ISKCON's Bhaktivedanta Institute will hold an international scientific conference titled "Life Comes from Life." Scientists from around the world will gather to discuss the central theme—that life arises not from material but from spiritual causes—in light of both modern theories and the ancient Vedic literatures.

The Bhaktivedanta Institute, the academic division of ISKCON, comprises professional scientists and scholars who are also devotees of Kṛṣṇa. These men study the Vedic information on nature, the self, consciousness, and God, and they present their gleanings to the world academic community. For further details, please contact Svarūpa Dāmodara dāsa Brahmācārī (Thoudam Damodar Singh, Ph.D.), Director of the Bhaktivedanta Institute, at 70 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02116. Phone: (617) 266-8369.

## Parliament Member Praises the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

We recently received the following warm appreciation for Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from Sri R.

Subrahmanyam, Deputy Director of Research at the Lok Sabha Secretariat, Indian National Parliament (New Delhi).

“For the welfare and happiness of mankind, His Divine Grace Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the ISKCON movement, has taken upon himself the stupendous task of translating the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from Sanskrit into English in about sixty volumes. It is really astonishing how he is able to do this single-handedly, considering the enormity of the task itself as well as Śrīla Prabhupāda’s ceaseless travels and other multifarious activities in the service of the Lord.

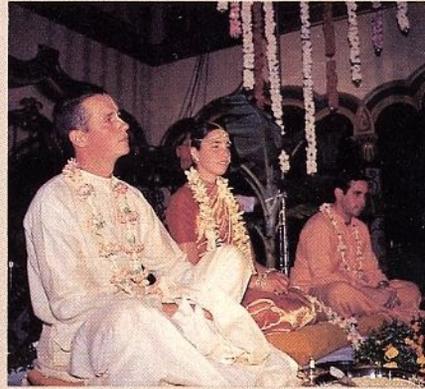
“So far twenty-eight volumes of this most beautiful literature on God have been brought out by ISKCON, and the rest are under preparation. The publishers have seen to it that the printing, format, and pictures are of the highest quality, so that they serve as an ornament to the divine contents of the books.

“The people and leaders of every country, race, and community in the world now have a rare opportunity to understand the glorious science of God and follow it for their own perfection. I would say that this encyclopedia of spiritual knowledge is more important and fundamental than the encyclopedia of any other branch of knowledge. It should, therefore, find its rightful place

not only in the libraries of educational institutions but also in every household, and above all, in the hearts and minds of every man and woman.”

### Kṛṣṇa Conscious Fete for Walter Reuther’s Daughter

Everyone who attended had the highest praise for the Vedic wedding of Lekhaśravantī dāsī (Elisabeth Luise Reuther, daughter of the late labor leader Walter Reuther) and Bhūśaya dāsa (Bruce Dickmeyer) at ISKCON’s fifty-five-room Detroit center, the former Lawrence P. Fisher mansion. Best man was Ambārīṣa dāsa (Alfred Brush Ford, the great-grandson of



The bridegroom Bhūśaya dāsa (Bruce Dickmeyer), the bride, and the best man Ambārīṣa dāsa (Alfred Ford).

automobile magnate Henry Ford).

The ceremony featured a Vedic fire sacrifice and chanting of ancient hymns and mantras. In addition, each of the two hundred guests received a garland of Hawaiian flowers, and at the end of the ceremony fragrant flower petals showered the newlyweds.

Bhūśaya and Lekhaśravantī plan to stay active in the Detroit center’s preaching programs, and they spoke briefly about the wedding and their involvement in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Bhūśaya noted that fewer and fewer of today’s young people regard marriage as a sacred obligation. Then he said, “We would like to show that if you put Kṛṣṇa (God) at the center of your married life, you’ll have a harmonious, lasting family situation that grows in meaning. Lekhaśravantī and I decided that we could help each other advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and also help others see how a married couple can cooperate for spiritual progress.”

“My father was always talking about human dignity,” Lekhaśravantī observed. “So in one sense Bhūśaya and I are working for the same goal: awakening people to a higher awareness of themselves. But we want people to know that they’re really spiritual beings.” Explaining the wedding’s opulence, Lekhaśravantī said, “We don’t try to attract attention to ourselves—we do everything nicely, just to please Kṛṣṇa.”

## An Open Letter One Christian’s Comment: “ISKCON Is of God.”

In recent years there has been an abundance of controversy concerning “cults.” Jesus forewarned about false prophets and religions that would appear in this last age. The Bible clarifies this issue of which “cults” are of God and which aren’t. Sad to say, in this Age of Quarrel people would rather create a disturbance than look to God’s word for the answers.

In the Biblical book of Acts (5:38–39), we find the case of Peter and other Apostles before the Jewish council. A respected teacher of the law named Gamaliel gives sound instruction to the council: “And so in this present case, I say to you, stay away from these men and let them alone, for if their plan or action should be of men, it will be overthrown; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God.”

Presently there are many false cults

that only pretend to be “of God,” but I assure you the International Society for Krishna Consciousness is not one of them. I strongly believe this, because Jesus said (in Matthew 7:18), “A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a rotten tree produce good fruit,” and (in Matthew 7:20) “So then, you will know them by their fruits.”

In Galatians (5:19–23) we learn how to “know them by their fruits”: “Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, carousings, and things like these, of which I forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” It should be evident to anyone with even a little impartial vision

that the fruits of the spirit and not of the flesh predominate in ISKCON.

Jesus gave the commandment that we love one another (Galatians 5:14): “For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in this statement, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” And the devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa are laying down their lives daily to perform the highest welfare activities for the suffering people of this world—spreading God consciousness. They suffer insults, mockery, trials, and tribulations because of their love of God and mankind, and though they seek no reward, they will not go unrewarded.

So I feel sure that after impartially examining the facts, all will conclude that ISKCON is of and for God, and God is for ISKCON. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

David Hoover  
Holland, Ohio

# Śrīla Prabhupāda Speaks Out

## On Absolute Authority

The following conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and one of his disciples took place in Bhuvaneśvara, India.

**Devotee:** Śrīla Prabhupāda, one criticism against our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is that we are following absolute authority. People are critical because we rigidly adhere to your authority and to the authority of the scriptures. They say this is not a healthy psychology.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Their criticism is a contradiction. If they say authority is not good, then why are they criticizing us? They are trying to impose their own authority on us.

**Devotee [in the role of an antagonist]:** I don't say you have to accept me as an authority.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Then you are talking nonsense. You are like a merchant selling his wares, but telling the customer, "You don't have to buy from me." What is the use of his selling? And what is the use of your instruction, if I don't have to accept you as an authority?

**Devotee:** Well, everyone has his own life to live, so each person should take the best from many authorities. I might accept some ideas from your philosophy and some from various other philosophies as well. I can take whatever I think is best for me.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** But if you find the best of everything all in one place, then why should you run here and there?

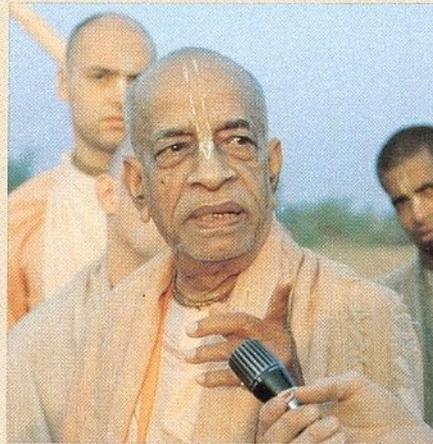
**Devotee:** Well, history teaches us that whenever there is absolute authority, it isn't healthy—like Hitler's Germany, for example.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Absolute authority is bad when the authority is wrong. But if the authority is right, then it is good—because you can submit to one authority and receive all knowledge. It's like going to a supermarket; we can get everything there in one place.

**Devotee:** But people often confuse our allegiance to scriptural authority with totalitarianism. One professor told me that if the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement ever became powerful, we would probably be intolerant towards all other religions.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** That means he does not understand us.

**Devotee:** Suppose someone didn't want to be a devotee in a society with a Kṛṣṇa-



conscious king or president. What would happen to him?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** The king must chastise him—he has that power. For example, if a child says, "Father, I don't believe in education; let me play," the father will never allow it. The king's duty is to guide the citizens like that.

**Devotee:** But if someone wanted to be a Christian in a society governed by a Kṛṣṇa-conscious leader, would that person be chastised?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** The father does not chastise always, but only when his son does something wrong. To practice the Christian religion means to believe in God and abide by His orders. A faithful Christian would not be persecuted in a society with Kṛṣṇa-conscious leadership.

**Devotee:** So the Christians would be allowed to follow the Bible?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. To follow the Bible is certainly religion. But the Christians today do not follow their scripture. The Bible says, "Thou shalt not kill," but they are killing millions of cows and eating their flesh. What kind of Christianity is that?

**Devotee:** So they should be chastised.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, they should be punished. That is the duty of the king. You may follow any bona fide religion and receive all protection by the Kṛṣṇa-conscious government. But if you don't follow your own religion faithfully, then you must be corrected. That is the king's duty. A king cannot dictate that you must follow one particular religious faith, but he can order that you follow *some* religion. If you have no religion, then you're an animal, and you must be

chastised. Religion means the instruction given by God (*dharmāṁ tu sāksād bhagavat-praṇītam*). And to be religious means to obey God and to love Him. So it doesn't matter through what religious process you have understood God. The important thing is that you love God and abide by His orders. Then you are religious. But if you do not know God—or if you have some imaginary god—then you must learn who God actually is. And if you refuse to learn, then you must be punished.

**Devotee:** If someone says, "I know God," what is the test to see if he really does?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** The test is that he must be able to explain about God to others. Ask him, "Can you say what God is?"

**Devotee:** "God is the force moving the universe."

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** So that means you do not know God. Who is *behind* the force? Whenever there is force, there must be a person who is forceful—who is forcing. Who is that?

**Devotee:** I don't have such vision.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Then learn about God from me. And if you refuse, then you must be punished. You see, the king has to see that the citizens are God conscious. That is his duty.

**Devotee:** Then a Kṛṣṇa-conscious leader has to be like a father.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. That quality was personally exhibited by Lord Rāmacandra. He treated His subjects like His own sons, and they treated Lord Rāma as their father. The relationship between the king and the citizens should be like that between a father and his sons.

**Devotee:** The chastisement that the king gives. . .

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** That is out of love, not enviousness. Chastisement means correction. If a citizen is acting wrongly, he has to be corrected. This is actually Kṛṣṇa's business in human society: to chastise the miscreants, to give protection to the godly persons, and to establish the true principles of religion. This is the mission of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the world, and we have to execute His mission. Gradually Kṛṣṇa-conscious devotees have to take the posts of leadership and correct the whole human society.

# ABORTION: SETTING THE MATTER STRAIGHT

## Life in the Womb Begins at Conception

by Amarendra dasa

One of today's most disturbing, confusing, and hotly debated issues is whether abortion is right or wrong. Feelings run deep, and both sides offer complex arguments. But at the heart of the controversy lies one crucial question: When does life begin within the womb? Ironically, despite so much progress in economics, education, technology, and so on, even our leaders are still unable to answer this basic question.

Take, for example, the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1973 the Court ruled that women could legally have an abortion during the first three months of pregnancy. Although they lacked any relevant evidence whatsoever, the justices decided that the element of life does not enter the fetus until after the third month. In effect, the justices turned their court into a pseudoscientific laboratory and legalized an act that had been virtually outlawed throughout the United States. The result? A staggering increase in the number of known abortions—from several thousand in 1973 to over one million in 1976.

However, in a 6-to-3 decision handed down a few months ago, the Supreme Court appeared to be backtracking from its previous pro-abortion stand. Now, in an obvious reaction to grass-roots anti-abortion pressure, the Court has ruled that state and local governments can refuse to finance abortions for needy women. Although not outlawing abortions altogether, the Court's latest ruling has made them exceedingly more difficult to obtain—and has proved beyond a doubt that even the highest judges in the land are more concerned with public opinion than with scientific fact.

After all, if the justices had had some scientific basis for their first ruling—that the fetus is not really "alive" until after the third month of pregnancy—then why should they now reverse themselves and make abortions during the first three months more difficult to obtain? What would be the harm in getting rid of a "lifeless lump of flesh" to protect the welfare of an unwed mother, for example? On the other hand, if some new scientific evidence has recently come to light proving that life in the womb begins at the point of conception, then why won't the Supreme Court outlaw abortions altogether? Why should they continue to condone mass infanticide? Clearly, the Supreme Court has shown its ineptitude at solving the abortion issue.

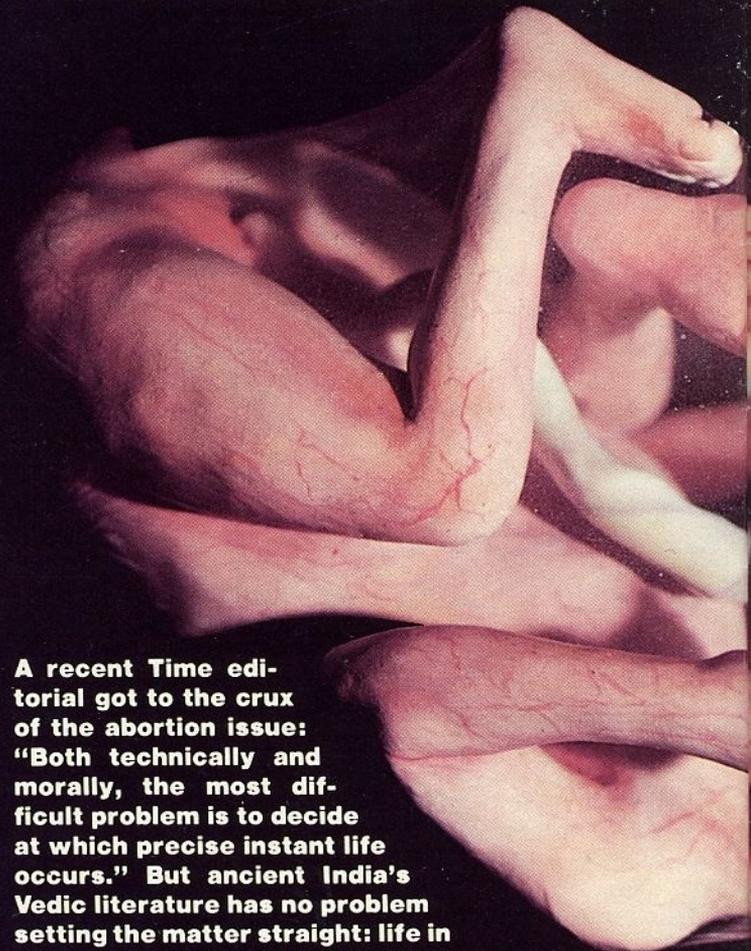
So we are left still facing our basic question: When does life begin within the womb? In searching for answers to this question, we must first understand that we are not dealing with something gross—something we can measure in a laboratory. The life principle is the subtlest substance in existence. We can't see it with the most powerful microscope or weigh it on the most sensitive scale. In fact, the Vedic *Upaniṣads* explain that the dimension of the soul, or life force, is one ten-thousandth part of the tip of a hair. This is even smaller than the atom! Therefore, if we want to understand this life force,

we must approach authorities who are beyond the limitations that our imperfect mind and senses place upon us. In other words, the Supreme Court won't do; we must approach a *transcendental* source of knowledge—the revealed Vedic scriptures.

At this point the reader may object that our method of acquiring knowledge is dogmatic and blind. But think for a moment: Is there really any other way to find out about something as subtle as the soul? Suppose you want to know the identity of your father, but you've never seen him before? Can you perform some experiment to find out? No: there's only one way to know for sure who your father is—ask your mother. Only she can authoritatively say, "That man is your father."

Similarly, if we want to know about the soul—which is beyond our sensory experience, beyond our experimental knowledge—then we must accept the Vedic authority. *Veda* means "knowledge," and the Vedic knowledge comes from Lord Kṛṣṇa, or God, and is therefore infallible. If we accept the words of the Vedic literature we can truly understand the nature of life, and when it begins in the womb. Then we can finally resolve the abortion issue.

Now, according to modern scientific theory, various chemical reactions in the body of the developing fetus produce the life force, or consciousness. Until those chemical reactions occur, the scientists say, no life is present. From this point it is easy to take our logic one step further and conclude that up to a certain age—say, three months—the child within the mother's womb is not



**A recent Time editorial got to the crux of the abortion issue: "Both technically and morally, the most difficult problem is to decide at which precise instant life occurs." But ancient India's Vedic literature has no problem setting the matter straight: life in the womb begins at conception—and there are no arguments that can prove otherwise.**

alive, but is simply a lump of dead matter. The final grisly conclusion is that since the body of the developing child is like a tumor, what is the harm if a surgeon removes the tumor and throws it away?

In contradiction to this distorted idea, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the essence of all Vedic knowledge, declares, "Under the supervision of the Supreme Lord, and according to the result of his previous work, the living entity (the soul), dwelling within the male sperm cell, enters a woman's womb to assume a particular type of body" (*Śrīmad-Bhāg.* 3.31.1). This authoritative statement resolves the crucial question of when life begins in the womb. Most emphatically, *life begins from the point of conception*—the point at which the sperm, carrying the soul, enters the ovum.

Another important point to note is that the right to life is determined by divine law, not by our whimsical decisions. It is the law of karma, working under the supervision of the Supreme Lord, that determines when an individual spirit soul will enter a human womb. (A common-sense proof of this is that conception often occurs despite the most extensive contraceptive measures. Also, a previously sterile woman or impotent man may sometimes conceive a child.) So if, through violent abortion, we try to deny a soul a human birth due him by the laws of karma, we defy God's will in a most heinous fashion.

By that same law of karma, anyone who destroys a developing fetus must suffer severe punishment after death. "As you sow, so shall you reap," declares the Bible, and the Vedic literatures confirm that both the person performing the abortion and those sanctioning it are forced at the time of death to enter wombs where they themselves become victims of the same vicious act. Abortion is a grave transgression of the laws of nature and of God. So those who are anxious to enjoy sexual pleasure, yet wish to avoid the responsibility of rearing children, should soberly consider abortion's severe consequences.

Unlike the edicts of the Supreme Court, the laws of nature and of God are always strictly enforced.

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## The Real Problem... and the Solution

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### A Comment from the BTG Staff

Behind the abortion crisis we'll find an even deeper problem: the recent vast increase in the number of unwanted pregnancies. This is another crisis—a crisis so severe that millions of Americans are resorting to murder of unborn infants as the only apparent solution. "Without legal and affordable abortion," wrote Lance Morrow in a recent *Time* editorial, "many lives in progress are hopelessly ruined; the unwanted children very often grow up unloved, battered...and criminal." We certainly agree that we must rectify these social conditions. But what sane person, understanding that the fetus is fully alive from the moment of conception, would then consider abortion a valid solution to unwanted pregnancy?

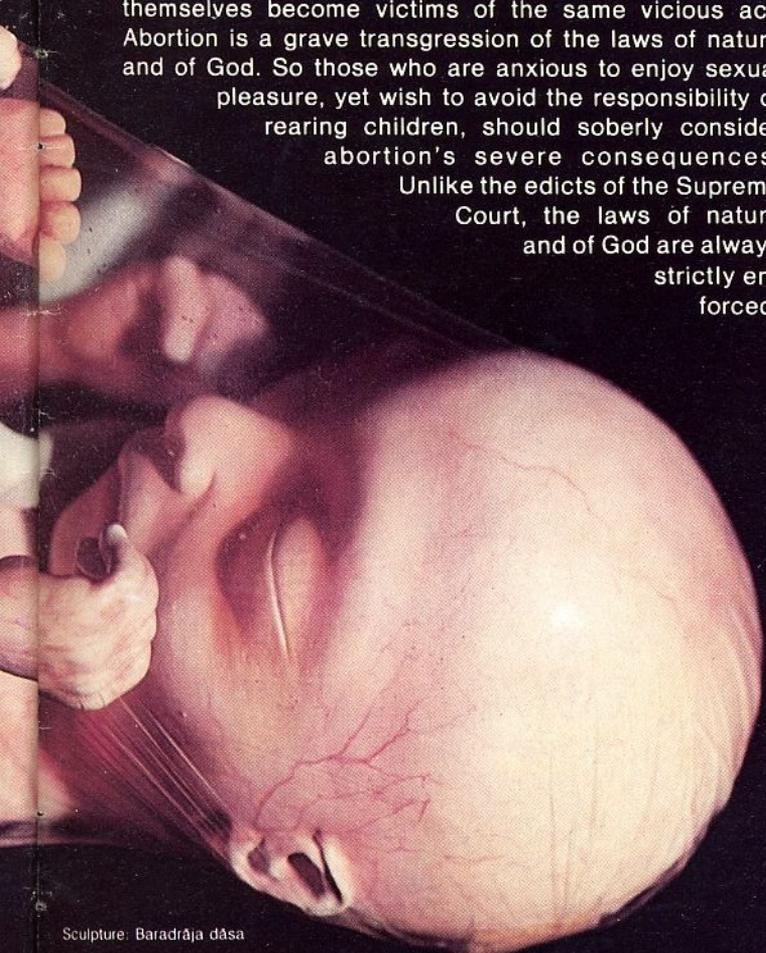
We seem to be caught on the horns of a cruel dilemma: the horror of abortion, or the misery of broken lives, broken homes, and masses of unwanted children. But the truth is that the crises of abortion and unwanted pregnancy, as well as those of venereal disease, child abuse, and divorce, have arisen from the same basic cause—unrestricted illicit sex life. The Vedic scriptures allow sex for only one purpose—to produce God-conscious children. Therefore sex only for pleasure is a violation of God's law, and a society of sex mongers must suffer punishment in the form of the abortion, pornography, and VD plagues, widespread child abuse, and so on.

American society is feeling the agonizing reaction to its own godlessness, and discussions about whether states should or should not help pay for abortions are like so much aimless chatter aboard a sinking ship. By ignoring the scriptural rules governing sex, we have descended to the level of animals. What good is "reasoned discussion" among the beasts? By killing more than one million unborn babies every year, Americans are committing the largest mass murder in recent history—and now they're trying to decide how to do it fairly and morally!

No. The only moral issue here is how to stop illicit sex. Everyone, from the nation's leaders on down, must understand God's purpose for sex—to produce God-conscious children. Furthermore, all government leaders must strictly adhere to this principle in their own lives and vigorously propagate it throughout society.

Unfortunately, our so-called leaders do not have the moral strength to live by God's laws. Therefore they do not care to enforce God's laws within society. The laws God presents in the revealed scriptures are meant to insure peace and prosperity, and ultimately to guide the citizens toward God consciousness. But our demonic leaders' nefarious business is to perpetrate the philosophy of unrestricted sense pleasure—especially sex pleasure. As the *Bhagavad-gītā* explains, "The demons believe that to gratify the senses up to the end of life is the prime necessity of human civilization. Thus there is no end to their anxiety."

Abortion, divorce, child abuse—the list of anxieties will simply increase unless we stop illicit sex. And the only way to do this is to replace the present leaders with trained Kṛṣṇa-conscious leaders, who will have the spiritual strength to control their own senses and turn society back from its hell-bent course.



Sculpture: Baradrāja dāsa

# THE WEATHER EMERGENCY

**Why—and What to Do?** by Balavanta dāsa

During last winter's big freeze, all our slick technology couldn't heat the nation's factories or keep traffic moving. Now, in the middle of one of the worst droughts ever, our scientists are resorting to "cloud seeding"—but they can't find any worthwhile clouds to seed. . . . Could it be that amid all their attempts to control nature, the scientists are forgetting the Supreme Controller?

At present the entire world is experiencing severe irregularities in the natural weather pattern. For example, whereas fifty years ago India had two monsoon seasons every year, now she has only one, and her food production has significantly decreased. In fact, just ten years ago a drought in India brought starvation to millions, and to this day parts of South India have yet to receive sufficient rain for even subsistence agriculture. In Africa the Sahara Desert is rapidly spreading southward, which is creating an acute food problem for many. Russia's Ukraine once was known as Europe's breadbasket, but for the last three years insufficient rain has forced the U.S.S.R. to import millions of tons of grain from the United States. Earthquakes have devastated large cities in

China, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East. And in Western Europe, especially in England, last summer's drought drastically reduced food production.

Although still the most economically prosperous nation in the world, the United States is also experiencing its share of problems. In the South this year, portions of both Georgia and Florida have been declared disaster areas because of severe drought. The West is now sizzling from the worst drought on record—one in which even the usual solution of irrigation is proving futile. And last year in the North, one of the worst winters in history killed hundreds of men and animals, tortured thousands more, and cost millions of dollars in damage. Without a doubt, irregular and uncontrollable weather has become a critical problem all over the world. Without sufficient rain, moderate temperatures, and a stable earth, how can we survive—what to speak of living happily and peacefully?

Of course, anyone can point out the problems, but real intelligence means finding a workable solution. Should we, then, look to our so-called brain trust of advanced science and technology? Certainly not. The scientists are scurrying to produce theories and answers, but by their own admission they are becoming hopeless. They are being forced to admit that whatever progress they have made



toward “weather control” is at best experimental and theoretical. Last winter, with much of the United States in the grip of sub-freezing weather and with snow piled up everywhere, our scientists’ slick technology was powerless to heat the nation’s factories and keep traffic moving. Now the scientists are trying to seed the clouds—but they can’t find any worthwhile clouds to seed! Time and again modern science has proved helpless in the face of nature’s fury. So instead of presenting yet another pseudoscientific pipe dream, I offer here a practical solution to our modern weather dilemma—the time-tested program of the ancient Vedic civilization.

Literatures such as the *Bhagavad-gītā* (the Song of God) and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (the Beautiful Story of the Personality of Godhead) form the basis of the Vedic culture—the culture that prevailed throughout the world millions of years ago. These great literatures declare that the purpose of human life is not simply to enjoy sense gratification. Nor are we meant to exploit nature, vainly trying to conquer her through technological advancement. Rather, following the process outlined in the Vedic literatures, we should live simply and use our advanced human intelligence to revive our original God consciousness. Becoming God conscious means living in harmony with God’s

plan for universal management. When we live in this way, then we are automatically in harmony with nature, and the Lord bestows bounteous natural gifts upon us. Otherwise—if we avoid surrendering to God and foolishly try to conquer nature—then as we see today, nature’s stringent laws will put us into difficulty, just as the state puts a criminal into difficulty.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* tells how in Vedic times the people’s high level of God consciousness resulted in benevolent weather conditions everywhere. There was plenty of rainfall—but only during the night, while the people were asleep—and the climate was neither too hot nor too cold. Consequently, all the fruit trees, vegetables, grains, and grasses grew profusely. The lush pastures enabled large herds of cows to eat their fill—any time they liked. Cow slaughter was unknown in those days, so the cows were always very happy. In fact, because of their jolly dispositions, they produced so much milk that it would often leak out of their milk bags and muddy the pastures. (Modern “beef cows” are so miserable that they can’t produce enough milk to feed even their own calves!) Because there was plenty of milk, butter, cream, yogurt, fruit, grain, vegetables, herbs, minerals, jewels, and so on, the people were peaceful and happy in all respects. Even if someone

were to leave a valuable object in a public place, he could always find it when he returned, because everyone was so satisfied by nature’s opulences that they had no inclination to steal.

“What happened to the Vedic culture?” you may ask. “If it actually existed, and if it really had such a workable solution to the world’s problems, then why did it disappear?” Even a young, healthy person gradually becomes old and diseased. And in the same way, although the Vedic civilization was perfectly constituted (according to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, God Himself provided the guidelines), gradually it degraded. In fact, Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the author of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, foresaw our present troubles over five thousand years ago. He wrote that the present age (the Age of Kali) would be characterized by increasing Godlessness, which would cause severe conflicts and hypocrisy. Śrīla Vyāsadeva also foresaw that because of the lack of God consciousness, natural disturbances (especially drought) would harass the people more and more.

Then are we doomed to worsening weather conditions? No. Vyāsadeva also pointed out that although the present age would be full of faults, it would have one very good quality. In this age we can very easily satisfy the Lord—and everyone can thus live very happily and



Photo: Visakha-devi dasi

For harmonious weather conditions (as at ISKCON's farms, shown on this spread), we should live in harmony with God's plan. In Vedic times—with cow slaughter unknown—regular rainfall produced plenty of lush pastureland. . . .

peacefully—simply by coming together and chanting the Lord's holy names: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. If people perform this sacrifice, which is called *saṅkīrtana*, they will counteract all the Godlessness and ill effects of the Kali Age.

Does this seem too simple a solution to the myriad problems we face? Actually, it is a very logical and scientific one. Consider: weather conditions are part of nature, but nature cannot exist or function independently. As soon as we speak of nature, we must ask, "Whose nature is it?" As soon as we say "mother nature," we must ask, "Who is the father?" The father—and the controller of nature—is God, the Supreme Personality, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This fact is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, where Kṛṣṇa says, *mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛti*: "Nature works under My direction." Nature cannot produce the millions and millions of living organisms without the help of the supreme father (God) any more than a mother can produce children without the help of her husband. If mother nature exists, and if the "children" (the living entities) exist, then on what grounds can we deny the existence of the father, God?

The orderly management we see in nature is proof of God's existence. Without the controlling intelligence of God, how could things be going on as they are? When a child sees a light bulb, he may think that it is producing light automatically. But we know that behind the light bulb is the arrangement of the electric company, the power generators, and ultimately the government. Similarly, behind the sun, behind the rain, behind all the forces of nature is the

Supreme Lord. Less intelligent people argue that since they cannot see God, He must not exist. But we can't always see the power station or the president, either. Does that mean they don't exist? Wherever we see complex organization, we know that there is intelligent management going on behind the scenes. For example, if a large city is to have order, it must also have elaborate management—otherwise, there will be chaos. Also, everyone has experienced that if a building or farm has no management, it quickly deteriorates to weeds and cobwebs. And, in every case, management means that there is a manager. How, then, can we imagine that the universe—with its regularly changing seasons, its orbiting planets, its extraordinarily intricate biological and ecological systems—is working automatically, without a supreme manager? This is simply a childish idea.

So God exists, and He controls nature in every galactic and atomic detail. Actually, God has two "natures"—the material and the spiritual. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* the Sanskrit term for nature is *prakṛti*, "that which is controlled." Now, material nature is made of inert, dead matter and is called *aparā prakṛti*, or inferior energy, and spiritual nature is composed of the conscious living entities and is called *parā prakṛti*, or superior energy. Both the material and spiritual energies are controlled by God. But the

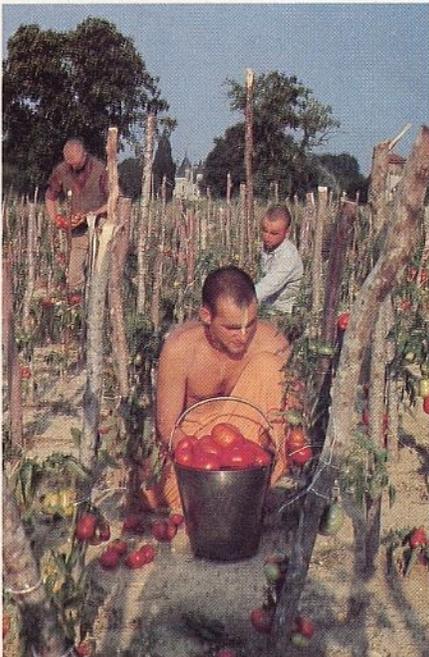


Photo: Muralivadana dāsa

Also, vegetables, grains, and fruit of all kinds grew in abundance. . . .

living entities are designated as superior energy because they are conscious and because they try to exploit material nature. Material nature, being unconscious, cannot move itself, any more than a car can move itself. We may not see the car's driver, but we know that he must always be there. In the same way, we may not see God, but we should know for certain that He is "driving" or controlling the whole universe.

The Vedic literatures tell us, therefore, to stop foolishly denying God and start learning to work cooperatively with Him. As we have seen, prosperity depends not on our work but on the background arrangement of the Supreme Lord. He supplies all our necessities—food, water, heat, light, air, soil—none of which we can manufacture. Even manufacturing enterprises require raw materials like iron, sulfur, manganese, mercury, and so on. Obviously, we cannot live except by the grace of the Lord. And how do we achieve His grace? By performing sacrifices to please Him. But one who will not do that will soon find himself in scarcity, as we are seeing so plainly today.

Performing sacrifice simply means that we reciprocate the Lord's kindness. This is only natural. A father gives everything to his son, and when the son offers him a gift in return, the father gladly accepts it and they both enjoy the loving exchange—though the father actually doesn't need anything from the son. In the same way, we should offer something to the Lord in sacrifice—to express our appreciation for His gifts and to reciprocate His love. God doesn't actually need anything from us, but if we aren't grateful enough to try to please Him in some way—and, indeed, if we are so foolish as to deny His very existence—why should He continue to supply us with rain and other necessities?

So, once again: if we want to live happily and prosperously, we have to perform sacrifice to the Supreme Lord. If we satisfy Him, He will bestow all wonderful and bounteous things upon us; but if we ignore Him, what can our puny material science and technology do? This world exists just so that we can have a chance to learn the spiritual science of devotional service, the science of satisfying Kṛṣṇa (God). This is the eternal occupa-

tion of the self, or soul, but now we have forgotten it. So out of kindness Kṛṣṇa provides us with all the necessities of life simply so that we can use them to revive our consciousness of Him. But if we keep ignoring the purpose of life and simply take everything from the Lord for our own sense gratification, we're thieves—and we have to suffer punishment under the laws of material nature.

Such is the state of the world now. We have become a civilization of gross materialistic thieves, and we have forgotten everything about sacrifice to the Lord. But the situation isn't hopeless. As previously mentioned, just for our degraded society the Lord has given the very easy process of sacrifice called *saṅkīrtana*, the congregational chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. In fact, all the Vedic literatures recommend this sacrifice for the present age. (Of course, chanting any genuine name of God will help, but the Vedic literatures say that in the Kali Age the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra is the most effective.)

Clearly, we should give up our elaborate arrangements for conquering nature and enjoying sense gratification. Instead, we should live simply and meet together as often as possible to chant the holy names of God. If we offer the Lord this sacrifice, surely He will be pleased with us and provide all the natural resources we need to live comfortably and become God-conscious.

On the national level, government leaders should arrange for large-scale performances of *saṅkīrtana*. They should discontinue their stop-gap efforts to alter or control the weather, which are all destined to fail because they ignore God. The *Srīmad-Bhāgavatam* affirms that government leaders are responsible for everything that happens within their jurisdiction—including weather conditions. So all of us should immediately demand that our leaders arrange to satisfy the Lord through *saṅkīrtana*—which will bring an end to all the natural disturbances that now plague us.

The purpose of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is to spread *saṅkīrtana* as widely as possible. At present people all over the world are suffering, but if they will just take the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement seriously, give up their sinful activities, and chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, they will solve all their problems without difficulty and become supremely peaceful and happy.

**And there were no droughts (or floods)—just plenty of rainfall, and only at night, while people slept. . . .**

Photo: Muralivadana dāsa



# The Brāhmaṇa Boy Who

*With the whole universe as his realm, King Bali gladly promised to give the little brāhmaṇa boy just three steps of land. . . . No one could have foreseen how colossal those steps would be—or how colossal the king's truthfulness and generosity would be.*

Indrapurī, the capital of Indra, the king of heaven, overflowed with pleasing orchards and gardens where graceful, gliding swans played in ponds full of lotus flowers. The city was shaded by canopies decorated with pearls, and the domes of the palaces had flags embroidered with gold and precious gems. All through the city there were sitting places made of diamond and coral, and breezes bore the fragrance of the flowers falling from the hair of the demigods' wives, who were everlastingly beautiful and youthful. For protection the city was surrounded both by trenches full of Ganges water and by a high wall the color of fire. Yet even in the carefree capital of King Indra there is sometimes cause for fear. . . .

Desiring to conquer Indrapurī, the powerful king of the demons Bali Mahārāja once performed the *viśvajit* sacrifice. Because Bali had served his guru faithfully, he achieved success, and from the sacrificial fire appeared a celestial chariot of gold, powerful yellow horses, a flag emblazoned with a lion, a gilded bow, two quivers of infallible arrows, and a suit of invincible armor. Thus equipped for war, Bali assembled his vast army and set out for Indrapurī.

When Bali Mahārāja and his countless soldiers reached Indra's abode, they furiously attacked it from all directions. Overwhelmed, the demigods fled the heavenly kingdom in great haste and scattered here and there, assuming

**After appearing in His four-armed form (far right, bottom), the Lord assumed the form of a brāhmaṇa boy (right), like a theatrical actor.**



# Strode the Universe

different forms to escape detection. Then the victorious King Bali entered Indrapurī and brought the three worlds under his control.

## Lord Vāmanadeva Appears

Aditi, the mother of the demigods, began to lament the fate of her sons, who had been forced to leave the heavenly planets. She pleaded with her husband, the great sage Kaśyapa, saying, "O best of sages, please bestow upon my sons a benediction by which they can regain what they have lost."

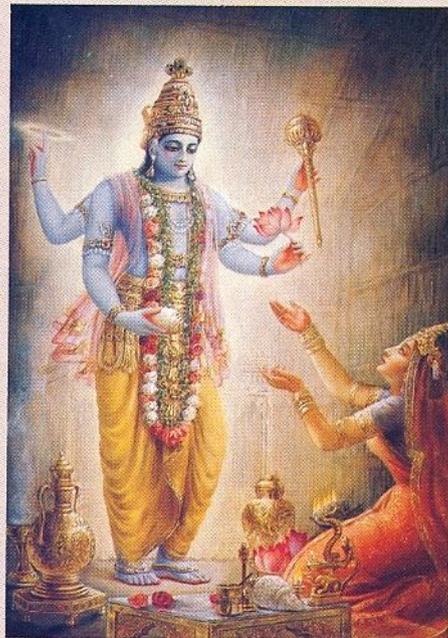
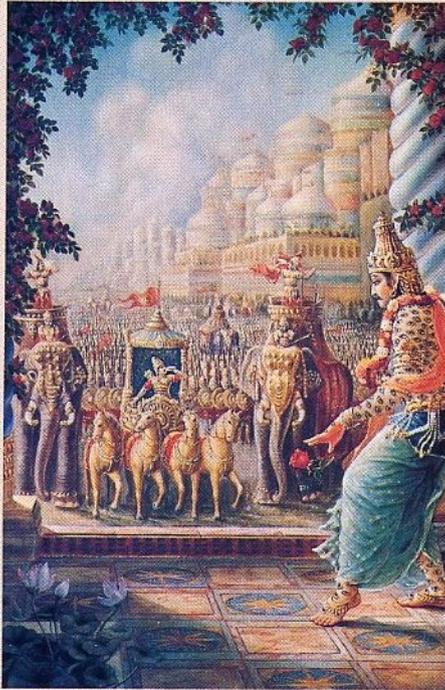
Kaśyapa, who was also a great devotee of the Lord, replied to his wife, "Only Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, can bestow such a benediction. You should engage in His devotional service, and He will surely fulfill your desire."

So with full and undiverted attention, Aditi began to meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In this way she subdued her mind and senses, which were as strong as strong horses.

At last the Supreme Personality of Godhead appeared before her in His original Viṣṇu form. He wore yellow garments and bore a conchshell, disc, club, and lotus in His four hands, and His eyes looked like the petals of a blooming lotus. On seeing the Lord, Aditi was overwhelmed with transcendental bliss and stood silently with tears in her eyes.

"You have prayed to Me and properly worshiped Me," the Supreme Lord said, "Therefore I shall agree to become your son, and in this way I shall act to help your other sons regain their rightful positions."

So on the twelfth day of the bright fortnight in the month of Bhādra, when the moon came into the lunar mansion Śravaṇā, at the auspicious moment of Abhijit, Lord Viṣṇu appeared in this universe as the son of Kaśyapa and Aditi. Then, in the presence of His supremely fortunate parents, the Lord assumed the form of Vāmana, a dwarf *brahmācārī* (spiritual student). Just as an actor may play different roles, but remains the same man, so the Lord assumes many



**Earlier (top), when King Bali and his vast army had stormed the heavenly kingdom, Indra and the other demigods were overwhelmed.**

thousands and millions of forms—and yet these forms are not different from one another.

When the great sages saw the Lord in the role of a dwarf *brahmācārī*, they were very pleased. They held many auspicious ceremonies and initiated Him as a *brāhmaṇa* (spiritual teacher of society). According to the Vedic culture a *brahmācārī* goes out to beg alms to learn the spiritual qualities of humility and pridelessness. And Lord Vāmanadeva determined that He would follow this custom, even though He was actually the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the proprietor of all the universes.

## Lord Vāmanadeva Begg Charity From Bali Mahārāja

Meanwhile Bali Mahārāja, the conqueror of the three worlds, was performing a huge sacrifice in the field known as Bhṛgukaccha, on the northern bank of the Narmadā River. When Lord Vāmanadeva heard this, he immediately went there to show His mercy to Bali.

Bali Mahārāja was jubilant on seeing the beautiful form of Lord Vāmana. With great satisfaction he offered Him a seat and washed His lotus feet. Then Bali said, "O *brāhmaṇa*, I offer You my hearty welcome and my respectful obeisances. Please let us know what we may do for You. It appears that You have come here to ask me for something. Therefore, whatever You want You may take from me."

Apparently, Bali Mahārāja did not know that the dwarf *brāhmaṇa* was actually the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But since the Vedic custom prescribes that a king give lavishly in charity—especially to the *brāhmaṇas*—Bali offered Lord Vāmanadeva whatever He might desire. Then the Lord made what seemed to be an insignificant request.

"O King of the demons, from Your majesty I ask only three paces of land, to the measurement of my footsteps."

Bali Mahārāja replied, "My dear *brāhmaṇa* boy, You don't know what is in your own best interest. I could give

you a whole planet, for I have conquered the entire universe. But you are asking me for only three paces of land. You are not very intelligent, I can see. O small boy, you should take this opportunity to ask me for as much as you want. That way you will never have to ask for anything more from anybody, ever.”

Lord Vāmanadeva replied just like a perfect *brāhmaṇa*. “If I were not satisfied with three paces of land, then surely I would not be satisfied even with possessing a whole planet. If I possessed one planet, I would hope to get others. One should be content with whatever comes his way by providence, for discontent can never bring happiness.

“Therefore, O King, from you I ask only three paces of land. By such a gift I shall be very pleased.”

When the Supreme Personality of Godhead had thus spoken to Bali Mahārāja, Bali smiled and told Him, “All right. Take whatever you like.”

But Śukrācārya, the family priest of Bali Mahārāja, could understand that the dwarf *brāhmaṇa* Vāmana was none other than the Supreme Lord Himself, so he spoke quickly to dissuade his patron.

“O King,” he said very earnestly,

“you have promised to give Him three steps of land in charity, but when you give it He will occupy the three worlds. You are a rascal! You do not know what a miserable mistake you have made. After He takes everything from you, how shall you live?”

Actually, Śukrācārya was more concerned over how he himself would live. As a non-Kṛṣṇa-conscious, professional spiritual master, he was completely dependent on his disciple for his upkeep. Bali Mahārāja remained silent for some time, deliberating on the words of his greedy guru, and then he replied.

“How can I withdraw my promise out of greed when I have already said that I shall give this land? How can I behave like an ordinary cheater, especially toward a saintly *brāhmaṇa*? There is nothing more sinful than untruthfulness. In any case, if Vāmana is the Supreme Lord, then what choice do I have but to offer Him the tract of land He has requested—even if He is coming as my enemy? He is all-powerful.”

On hearing this, Śukrācārya angrily cursed Bali Mahārāja. “Although you have no knowledge, you pretend to be learned, and therefore you dare disobey

my order. You are very impudent. Because of your disobedience, you shall very soon lose all your opulence.”

But even after being cursed in this way by his so-called spiritual master, Bali Mahārāja never deviated from his decision to offer charity to the young *brahmācārī* who had appeared before him. Thus, according to custom, he first offered water to Vāmanadeva and then gave Him the gift of land he had promised. At that time the residents of the higher planetary system—namely the demigods, Gandharvas, Vidyādharas, Siddhas, and Cāraṇas—all became so pleased by Bali’s simple and sincere action that they praised his character and showered millions of flowers upon him.

Then, as Bali Mahārāja and the members of the assembly watched stunned in amazement, Vāmana began increasing in size—until everything in the universe was within His body, including the earth, planetary systems, sky, oceans, birds, beasts, human beings, demigods, and great saints. Now the Lord stood before Bali Mahārāja in His universal form—holding a conchshell, sword, shield, flaming discus, arrow, bow, lotus flower, and club in His eight arms. Bali Mahārāja saw the surface of the globe on the Lord’s feet; on the surface of His calves, all the mountains; on His bosom, all the clusters of stars and also the goddess of fortune; and on the Lord’s hair Bali saw the clouds. The Lord wore a yellow garment covered by a jeweled belt, and He was decorated with a flower garland surrounded by bees. Manifesting Himself in this way, the Supreme Personality of Godhead covered the entire surface of the earth with one footstep, the sky with His body, and all directions with His arms.

As the Lord took His second step, He covered the heavenly planets—and not even a spot remained for His third step. With His second step the Lord actually kicked a hole in the covering of the universe, and through that hole the water of the sacred Ganges River descended to the material world.

Then Lord Vāmanadeva reduced Himself to His original form, and all the predominating deities of the various planetary systems began to worship Him by offering fragrant flowers, water, sandalwood pulp, incense, grain, and fruits.

When the demonic followers of Bali Mahārāja saw that their master had lost all his possessions to Vāmanadeva, they were very angry, and without the approval of Bali Mahārāja, they pushed forward to kill Lord Vāmanadeva.

When the associates of the Lord, who were each as powerful as ten thousand elephants, saw the demons coming



Illustration: Jayarāma dāsa

Lord Vāmana grew—until everything in the universe was within His body.

forward so violently, they smiled. Then they took up their own weapons and began to kill them. When Bali Mahārāja saw that his soldiers were all being killed, he remembered the curse of Śukrācārya and forbade his soldiers to continue fighting.

“O demons, please hear my words! Don’t fight! Stop immediately, for the present time is not favorable. When we conquered the heavenly kingdom, providence was in our favor, but now that same providence is against us.”

In accordance with the order of their master, all the chiefs of the demons and their followers entered the lower regions of the universe. Then suddenly Garuḍa, the huge bird-carrier of Lord Viṣṇu, arrested Bali Mahārāja with the ropes of Varuṇa [the demigod in charge of the seas]. Vāmanadeva then spoke to the captive Bali.

“O King of the demons, as far as the sun, the moon, and the stars shine, and as far as the clouds pour rain—to that extent all the land throughout the universe was in your possession. Now, with my first two steps I have taken all this. But you promised me three steps of land. *Where shall I place my third step?* You have broken your promise, so now you must descend for a few years to a hellish condition of life.”

### King Bali Surrenders Everything

Bali Mahārāja understood why the Lord was acting so mischievously, and he said, “Your Lordship, You have disguised Yourself to cheat me, saying you wanted only three steps of land. But now You have expanded Your body and taken my whole kingdom with just two steps. Because You have done this on behalf of Your devotees, the demigods, You do not regard this as cheating. And since You came to beg from me, I will keep my promise to You—I do not want to cheat You. You have taken my wealth, but I still have my body. *Therefore, please put your third step upon my head*, for the possessor is even more valuable than what he possesses.

“Only by providence have I been forcibly brought under Your lotus feet and deprived of all my opulence. Because of the illusion created by temporary opulence, people in general, who live under material conditions, facing accidental death at every moment, do not understand that this life is temporary. Only by providence have I been saved from that condition. It is to bring me to the right platform of eternal life that You have put me into these circumstances.”

In other words, Bali Mahārāja could see that although the Lord was ap-



Illustration: Dighā-devī dāśī

**Vāmana told Bali, “With two steps I have taken all this. Where shall I place My third step?”**

parently acting as an enemy, He was actually acting for Bali’s own best welfare. In this instance the Lord was a better friend to the demon than to the demigods. The demigods worship the Lord for temporary material benefit, and thus they are not pure devotees. But because the Lord took away all his possessions, Bali Mahārāja rose to the platform of pure devotion—which is very rare.

Just then Prahlāda Mahārāja, Bali’s illustrious grandfather, a most dear devotee of the Lord, appeared there, like a moon rising in the nighttime. Standing tall and elegant, he was dressed in yellow garments, and his beautiful eyes resembled lotus petals.

“My Lord,” said Prahlāda Mahārāja, “it is Your Lordship alone who gave Bali his heavenly opulence, and now, today, it is You who have taken it all away. Because his exalted position as king of heaven was putting him in the darkness of ignorance, You have done him a very merciful favor. Wealth, women, followers, and prestige are so bewildering that they make even a learned, self-controlled man forget to search for the shelter of Your lotus feet.”

Bound tight by the ropes of Varuṇa, Bali Mahārāja could simply bow his head respectfully. His eyes filled with tears of shame.

Then Lord Brahmā, the chief demigod in charge of creation, spoke. “My dear Lord Vāmana, please consider that those

who sincerely offer even a little water, some newly grown grass, or a few flower buds at Your lotus feet achieve the most exalted position in the spiritual world. This Bali Mahārāja has now offered You everything that exists within the three worlds, including his own body. How, then, can he deserve to suffer arrest like this?”

Lord Vāmanadeva said, “My dear Lord Brahmā, in truth Bali Mahārāja has satisfied Me greatly. First I took away his kingdom, and then My soldiers defeated him and arrested him with the ropes of Varuṇa. His spiritual master has cursed him, and his friends and relatives have rejected him. And in spite of all this, he has kept his promise to Me. Therefore not only shall I release him, but I shall also give

him a position not attainable even by the demigods themselves. He will again become king of the heavenly planets in a future age. Until that time he will live on a special planet called Sutala, which is hundreds of times more opulent than heaven.”

Then, turning to Bali Mahārāja, Lord Vāmanadeva said, “There you will live peacefully with all your friends and relatives, including your grandfather Prahlāda Mahārāja, and all good fortune will come to you. O great hero, I shall always be with you and give you protection in all respects.”

When the ancient and eternal Supreme Personality of Godhead had spoken, Bali Mahārāja—his eyes filled with tears, his hands folded, and his voice faltering in devotional ecstasy—responded by saying, “O my Lord, the causeless mercy You have shown me, a fallen demon, has never been achieved by the pious demigods.”

After Lord Vāmanadeva had released him from the ropes of Varuṇa, Bali Mahārāja entered the planet Sutala in full satisfaction. Then the Lord returned all the lands He had taken from Bali Mahārāja to their original owners—Indra and the demigods. Now that He had fulfilled Aditi’s desire, the Supreme Personality of Godhead continued to rule the affairs of the universe, protecting the devotees and reforming the demons, as always.

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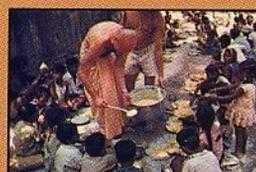
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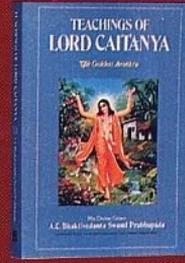
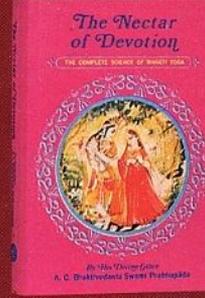
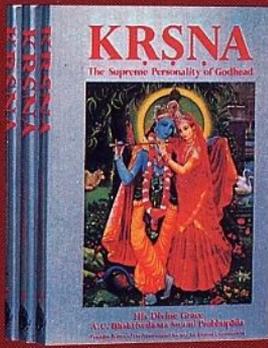
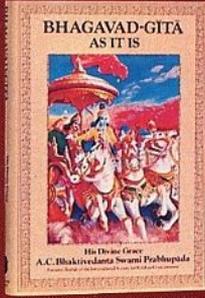
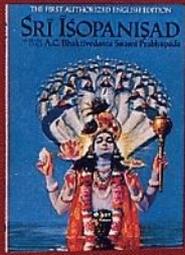
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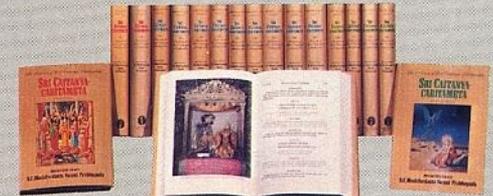
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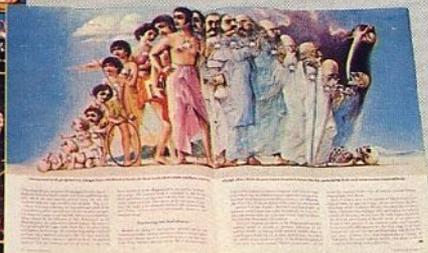
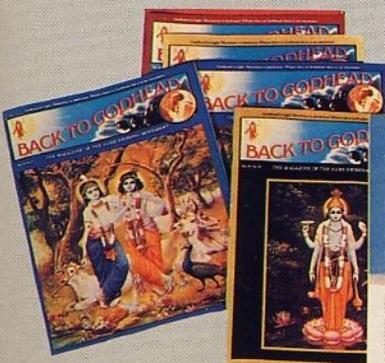
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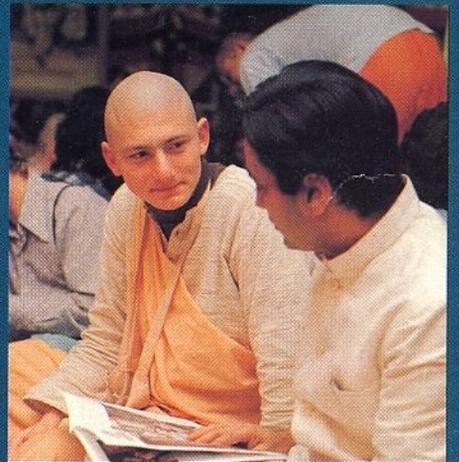
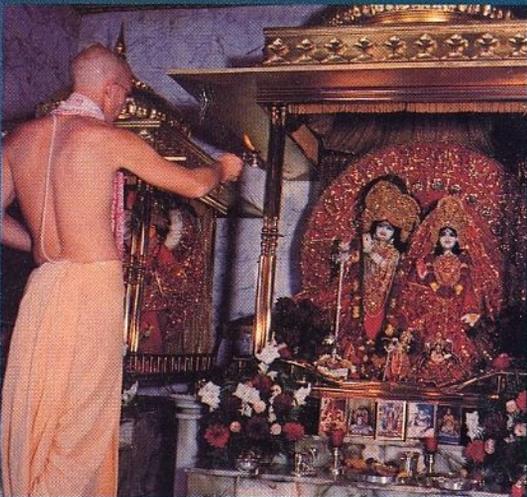
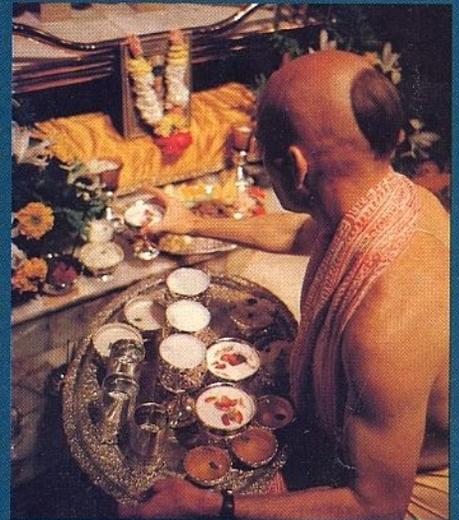
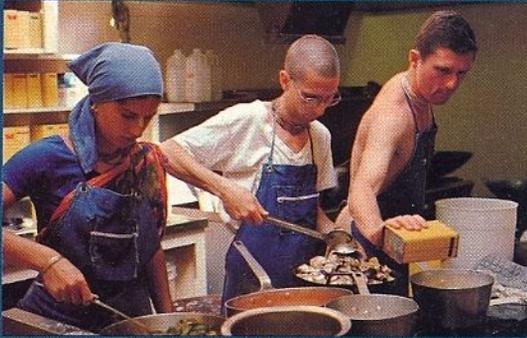
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“If one offers Me with love  
and devotion a leaf, a flower,  
fruit, or water, I will accept it.”

(*Bhagavad-gītā*)



The speaker of these words is Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Since He already possesses everything, surely He has no need of food. Yet He accepts His devotees' offerings to help them awaken their natural love for Him. As we can see, Kṛṣṇa accepts only vegetarian preparations offered to Him with love. This food then becomes *prasāda*—"the mercy of the Lord." The devotees are eager to distribute *prasāda*, because they know that whoever tastes it advances rapidly in spiritual life. And every Sunday afternoon thousands of people do just that—by visiting any of more than one hundred Hare Kṛṣṇa centers and partaking of the world-famous, incredibly delicious, transcendental Love Feast. So why not join us this Sunday? And after the feast, be sure to stay for the movie, play, or puppet show. (Please see page twenty-eight for the center nearest you.)

