

# BACK TO GODHEAD

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR  
KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS INC.



APRIL, 1967  
VOL. I NO. 11



THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR  
**KRISHNA**  
CONSCIOUSNESS INCORPORATED



W.F. 7-9 PM  
CHANTING  
RA  
DANCING  
EVENING 5-7

SUNDAY  
KIRTAN  
AT  
OMPKIN  
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PARK  
3-5 PM

26 SECOND AVE. NYC  
RITUAL MASTER  
KSWAMI  
A.C. VERDANTA



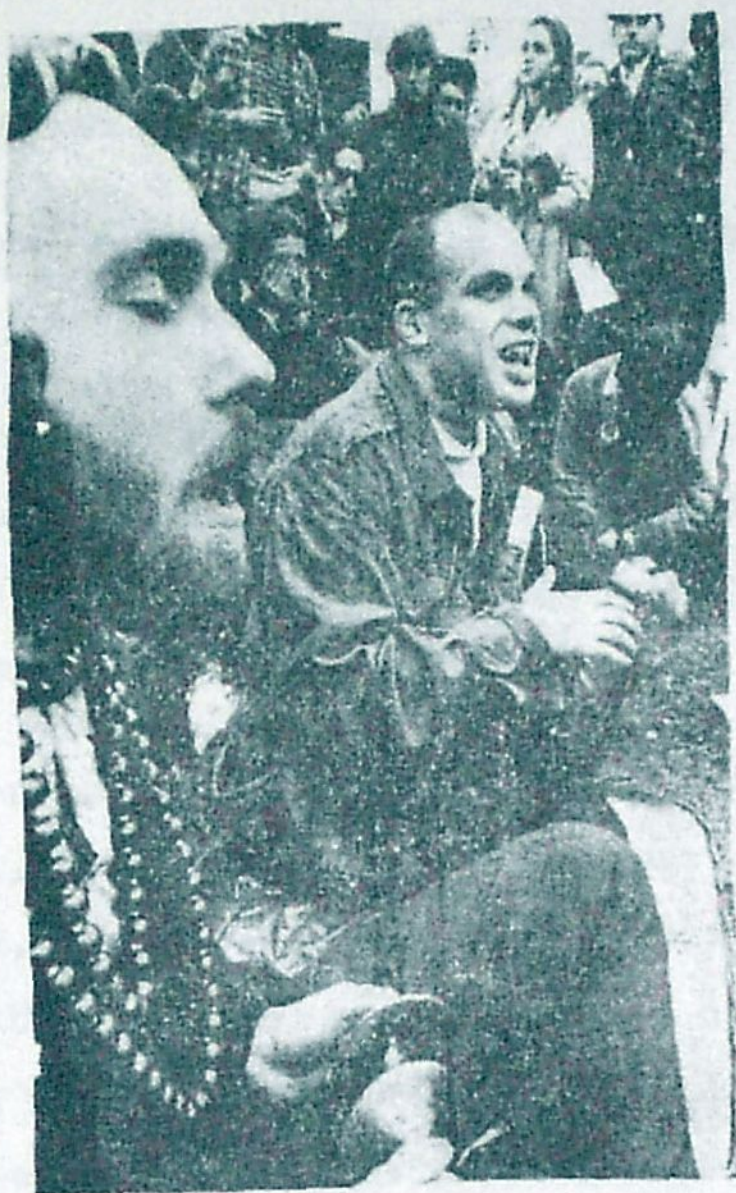
## ON OUR COVER

is the Lord, Sri Krishna, in full battle array. As Creator of all that be, God is no stranger to violence. It too is His play--for He has the full knowledge of the eternal, indestructible nature of all living entities, and His warrior spirit is on the same plane as His loving attitude. Warrior or Lover, Krishna is Absolute.

God accepts men in whatever relationship they crave to have with Him. If, like the atheists, they wish for there to be no God, then Krishna hides Himself from them, and gives them proofs to uphold their sentiments. If one wants the Lord as his friend, however, he finds Krishna always with him, kind and loving and playful. And if, as so many do, you want Krishna as your father, He will supply you fully with all needs, as indeed He does anyway.

Again, if one seeks to be the enemy of God, he will find God neither impotent nor unwilling to join the contest. And, just as Krishna can be the dearest Friend, so can He also be the fiercest, most indomitable, most implacable Foe. He never turns from any proposition, for He is full in renunciation, and neither fears nor longs for anything. Furthermore, those who die by the Lord's hand directly attain to immediate salvation, which is so ardently sought after by others.





The above picture is reproduced from the front page of the Boston Globe, April 27, 1967. It shows Rayarama Das and Brahmananda Das holding Kirtan at the Franklin Park Zoo Be-In of the previous day. This was Boston's first such gathering, and a great number of people joined in the chanting of Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare; Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Such encouraging interest has added impetus to our hopes of establishing a center in that city.

Please forgive the late appearance of this issue, which is in fact out of sequence, as it carries Part II of Hayagriva Das' Krishna Consciousness In American Poetry, the third part of which appeared last issue. Back To Godhead has been undergoing considerable transformations; of which we'll speak at greater length shortly. Before that, here are some ISKCON bulletins:

\*The Society's record album, KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS, has been selling wonderfully well wherever it has reached the public, and is already on sale as far away as London.

\*The great Love Feast which the New York Temple was planning has come to nothing, but a different program of monthly --though more modest--feasts is still being considered.



\*The Rathayatra Chariot Festival will begin on July 9 with a parade through New York's streets to a beach--provided a suitable beach can be found.

\*The San Francisco Temple's Chariot Festival is all set; we'll publish details next issue.

\*As shown on our second page, New York's Tompkins Square Park on the Lower East Side at 7th Street and Avenue A will again resound with the chanting of the Maha Mantra on Sunday afternoons, beginning May 7, at 3P.M.

This brings us back to Back To Godhead. Last issue we promised that, although the cover was about to be changed, the price was not. Now we feel like those politicians who've promised to do away with the taxes: once in office, they find things to be not what they had hoped for: Beginning with the May issue, No. 13, Back To Godhead will be offset printed from cover to cover, and will include considerably more pictorial material than it has in the past. Printing will greatly aid circulation, as many stores flatly refuse to carry mimeographed work. It will also, unfortunately, force us to raise the price of the magazine. This and future editions will contain more than double the present amount of material, and will appear monthly rather than semi-monthly. After reviewing the May Back To Godhead, why not write and tell us what you think of the change? We'll be hoping to hear from you.

Hare Krishna.

The Editors



## FROM THE LECTURES OF SWAMI A. C. BHAKTIVEDANTA

Notes transcribed from a lecture given December 21, 1966.

Lord Krishna says, Although I am equal to everyone and no one is My enemy or my special friend, and there is no particular favor for anyone, still-- and "still" here indicates that there is a special case-- for anyone who is engaged in My service, so I am engaged in his service. In the Gita, God states that He also becomes a devotee to us. Love is not one-sided; it is reciprocal. Although God is great, He takes part in our lives. It is clearly stated in the Gita that He takes pleasure in serving the devotee.

Someone may say, If a devotee is engaged in the service of the Lord, but his behavior isn't up to standard, what happens to him? Of course, a devotee is in the process of developing the 26 saintly qualities-- but the one all important qualification is that he be a devotee. If he lacks other qualifications but is unflinching in devotion, if his conduct is not good but still he does not divert his attention to demigods and others, fixing it only on Krishna-- then the Lord says that he is to be reckoned as sadhu in view of his Krishna consciousness. Sadhu means honest, religious and pious. If I have a bad character but think Krishna consciousness is the right course of action and I take to it, then, even if I can't lose my bad habits, I am considered honest, pious and religious according to Krishna. One may now say, Although one may call him a sadhu, he's not a hundred percent so. But Krishna says, Yes, he is a hundred percent sadhu regardless of whatever else he may be, if he is devoted to Me.

We must not cling too tightly to the rules and regulations of Vedic culture. All people should be given a chance to develop Krishna consciousness. Rupa Goswami, a great Acharya, said, "The first business is to see that, somehow or other, people become Krishna conscious. As far as rules are concerned,



if one takes to the line, then regulations will follow, just as the servant follows his master." The Lord says that, because one has taken to Krishna consciousness, he will very soon become a pious man. If you take to Krishna consciousness very sincerely-- chanting, and with rules and regulations-- you will very soon become a pious man. If you want to sit on the high court bench you have to have many credentials, along with the proper background and training; but with Krishna consciousness, if you'll just sit on the bench, all education will follow. You will relish Krishna consciousness so much that you will readily give up all nonsense.

The whole world is chasing after sense gratification, but the man in Krishna consciousness will very quickly give it up. You don't have to train yourself to stop sense gratification. Just chant and hear-- you will enjoy this so much that you will automatically give up what is not conducive to spiritual life. Chant Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. In this fashion, a man will easily attain to perfect, eternal blissful life.

"My dear Arjuna," the Lord says, "Declare it boldly to the world, that My devotee never perishes." Why doesn't He Himself tell it? Krishna has promised that He will protect His devotee. God can violate His own promise, but He will protect the devotee who will spread His word. At the battle of Kurukshetra, Krishna was on one side with Arjuna, while His soldiers were on the other side. He declared, "I shall join Arjuna's side, but I shall not fight. I shall simply take some work: I shall drive Arjuna's chariot." But in the fight, when Arjuna was hard-pressed by Bhishma, the Lord broke His word. Bhishma had been accused by his comrades of not fighting hard enough because he had so many dear relatives in Arjuna's camp. And so he promised that he would kill all five enemy leaders-- the Pandava brothers-- on the next day of battle. For this purpose he had five special arrows with Duryodhana kept. Now, Krishna sent Arjuna to Duryodhana-- who was king of the opposing forces-- after that



day's battle. Arjuna went to the king's camp and was received. He now asked Duryodhana to fulfill the promise of a boon he had made, and Duryodhana agreed to do what Arjuna asked. Arjuna asked for the five arrows, which were promptly handed over to him.

Aware of Krishna's hand in this, Bhishma resolved to kill His devotee or else force Him to break His promise and fight. On the battlefield the next day Bhishma fought Arjuna so fiercely that Krishna had to grab the wheel of their shattered chariot and run up to him, demanding that he stop. "It were better I break My promise," said the Lord, "than that you kill Arjuna."

So the Lord says, "You are my devotee. . . You tell them that anyone who takes to Krishna consciousness will never be destroyed." What is destruction? When we lose our spiritual consciousness, we lose our identity. As a spiritual being you have eternal bliss and all knowledge, but here you are in a wretched condition, already destroyed-- without bliss, eternity or full knowledge. Unless you revive your spiritual awareness, you are destroyed by illusory energy. But whosoever takes to this process will never return to this material world of sense gratification and misery. Sooner or later he will be taken up by the Lord, according to how he approaches Krishna consciousness.

Material existence is ignorance of the spiritual world. We are being kicked around like footballs from body to body-- in one birth American, then Indian, then Chinese, etc. This process of Krishna consciousness is the only way to attain full spiritual life. Eternity, bliss and knowledge are awaiting us. Why should we refuse them? Nor is this a mere theory. Don't think that Bhagavad Gita is imaginary-- people have taken to it for thousands of years; in its written form it is 5,000 years old and, before that, it was taught to the sun-god millions of years ago. The Gita is followed by all great acharyas.

Take to this process and you will be saved from the material world. If you are thrown in the ocean, it is practically your destruction even if you



swim well. To struggle here in the material world is also your destruction. Get out of the ocean. Krishna promises that He will take them from the ocean of birth and death. Save yourself from destruction.

Now, someone may ask, Is there any qualification? Krishna appeared to be Hindu, and the acharyas are very learned; how can one take to Krishna consciousness if he is not learned or belonging to a particular creed? But Krishna says that even women (who are generally considered to have small endowment for spiritual advancement), sudras and vaishyas (the lower classes) and even lower can come too. Lord Krishna surpasses all formalities of social structure. All can come. There is no bar to spiritual consciousness. If you simply take to Krishna consciousness, the Lord is there, and He will give you all protection. One in Krishna consciousness is already liberated. This is its beauty. Never mind what you are. Take to it. You will reach the perfection of life. Your progress is guaranteed. Just take to this process.

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#### PRAYER TO VISHNU

In the morning  
 after heavenly porridge,  
 we go out the door,  
 down the street  
 flying with the Maha Mantra  
 through dual atmosphere  
 of sad and glad,  
 trying to forget all that nonsense  
                     and just fight for  
                     reaching Krishna.

Soaring with the Maha Mantra  
 into all that sad-glad material  
                     blue sky and flags  
                     and karmis hurrying to work.  
 Vishnu! guide me, protect me,  
 keep me assured to expect  
                     Mercy in You.



How do I keep my mind on You?  
 With mace and conch-shell and  
 lotus and disc,  
 You, Great, Kind, Unattached Ruler of  
 Universal Good,  
 let me turn within to You--  
 soul of me, turn to Vishnu!  
 let me dwell in Him,  
 and the rest can go on and on.

The sighing faces at work,  
 the demigod bosses,  
 bowing to the temporal Office . . . .  
 it can go on and me with it,  
 but give me strength  
 to bear for you  
 acts in Your Name,  
 and since I'm unconcerned,  
 it can go on to the end.

I say I want to  
 get out  
 to where  
 You are  
 just to be at Your Feet--  
 but what do I do? Why  
 don't I answer every question  
 with Vishnu? Why do I flinch  
 when they ask me why I'm flowering  
 just by the thought of You  
 --You the Indweller in all of us--  
 even the office boys who think  
 existence is a kind of joke which  
 they control.  
 Vishnu-in-me!  
 Enable me  
 to turn a braver face to You  
 and then to talk out everywhere  
 for You and say:  
 "everyone should turn to  
 Godhead and yearn for that."

Empower me, try me  
 with the courage  
 to do much more  
 so that at least  
 I can begin  
 at the foot of Love.

--Satsvarupa Das Brahmachary  
 (Stephen Guarino)



The Supreme Gift is  
KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS

This is an Invitation to all Men and Women of Good Will to Benefit the Human Race and all other Inhabitants of planet Earth by distributing the Peace and eternal Bliss of KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS.

Wherever you Live, you can do this Work. This is called the Devotional Service of the Lord, and it is simply a matter of finding Others who may be receptive to the philosophy and practice of Love of Godhead. Inquire at your neighborhood Shops to see if the storekeepers will retail Back To Godhead Magazine, or our record album, KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS. Speak with your Friends and Relatives about Krishna Consciousness. Perhaps you can hold Kirtan with them at regular Meetings.

Kirtan means Chanting the Lord's Praises--such as the Maha (Hare Krishna) Mantra--and Reading from authorized Scriptural Literature, such as Bhagavad Gita, Srimad Bhagawatam, Holy Bible, Koran, Chaitanya Charitamrita, and others of the same stature. This will Purify Consciousness, and the active Participation will immensely benefit All concerned.

The most valuable Asset for Spiritual Life is the ability to Serve the Lord actively. Take this Opportunity. See for yourself whether the effect is simply Abstract Theoretics, or the practical experience of Sublime Love. And you may have the added Satisfaction of Knowing that Humankind cannot fail to be Elevated by your Labors, be those Labors great or small.



We were doing it together  
and there was no imperfection--  
the Prayer in our hearts,  
and Krishna: there was only  
One Sea of Ecstasy.

We were bowing down  
and there was no effort.  
Before us the Prasadam offering  
was alive, the plate and food ecstatic.  
The altar was fashioned of Ecstasy.

The flowers, candle, the very flame,  
all were made of Ecstasy. Everything  
a maddening sweet Scent, breathing,  
bursting our pores in universes of pleasure,  
drowning, a blissful rush of fragrant waves.

We were borne on Ecstasy, Thoughts of  
Krishna swelling over and over, washing us away . . . .

Then, how did we get there? In that bed,  
moving, awakening only for a brief  
remembering murmur (falling asleep  
I promised not to forget):

Later you said you had a dream  
about giving Christmas presents  
or something? (Yes, it is December).  
But was I not there also? Oh Krishna . . . .

Now it is noon and you say there  
was no dream at all, that you  
were agreeing only to please me!  
"Surely, you have only forgotten . . . ."

Rupanuga says, Oh Maya, Maya,  
Maya, such a Thief you are!  
stealing memories and leaving  
dreams that disappear.

-- Rupanuga Das Adhikary  
(Robert F. Corens)

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#### TWO IN ONE

and if i saw god in the woods?  
and I see god in cement  
and god in the sky  
and god in the headlights?  
would that be good?  
or would that be bad?

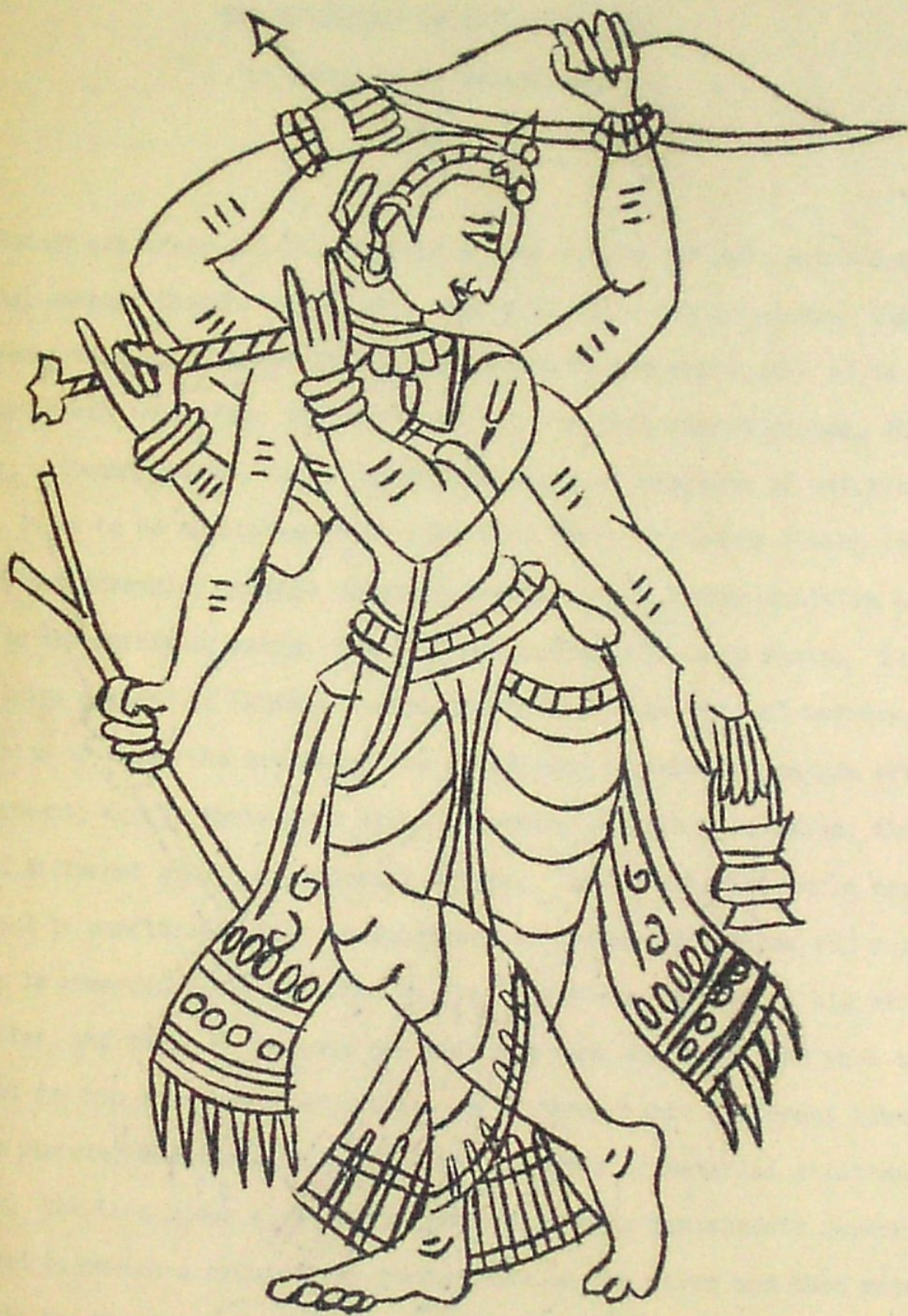
and if i saw the woods in god?  
and i see cement in god

and the sky in god  
and the headlights in god?  
would that be good?  
or would that be bad?

and if i saw the air in god?  
and i see god in the air?

--Daffi







## THE TEACHINGS OF LORD CHAITANYA

by Swami A. C. Bhaktivedanta

## PART II

Nobody can trace out the history of the living entity's entanglement in material energy; therefore the Lord says that it is beginningless. Beginningless means that conditional life exists prior to the creation-- it is simply manifested with and after the creation. Due to this forgetfulness, the living entity, although spirit, is suffering all kinds of miseries of material existence. It is to be understood here also that there are other living entities who are not entangled in this material energy. Such living entities are situated in the spiritual world, and they are called liberated souls. They are also always engaged in Krishna Consciousness and in devotional service. The activities of those who are under the conditions of material nature are taken into account, and in their next life, according to such activities, they are offered different grades of material bodies. In the material world the spiritual soul in conditional life is subjected to different rewards and punishments. When he is rewarded he is elevated to the higher planets due to his righteous activities, and there he becomes one with the many demigods; and when he is punished for his abominable activities he is thrown into different kinds of hellish planets, and there he suffers the miseries of material existence more acutely. The Lord gives a very nice example of this punishment; formerly a king used to punish a criminal by dunking him in the river and then raising him again for breath, and then again dunking him in the water; now, material nature punishes and rewards the individual entity in just the same way. When he is punished he is dunked into the water of material miseries, and when he is rewarded he is taken out of it for some time. Elevation of the living



entity to higher planets or to a higher status of life is never permanent. He has to come down again to be drowned in the water. All this is going on in this material existence. Sometimes he is elevated to the higher planetary system, and sometimes he is thrown into the hellish condition of material life.

In this connection the Lord recites a nice verse from Srimad Bhagawatam taken from the instruction of Narada Muni to Vasudeva, father of Krishna. In this quotation from the nine sages who were instructing Maharaj Nemi it is stated that forgetfulness of the relationship with Krishna is called maya. Actually, maya means that which is not. It has no existence. Therefore that the living entity has no connection with the Supreme Lord is a false conception. He may not believe in the existence of God, or he may think he has no relationship with God, but these are all so called "illusions," or maya. Due to his absorption in this false conception of life, man is always fearful and full of anxieties; in other words, such a Godless concept of life is maya-- therefore one who is actually learned in the Vedic literatures surrenders unto the Supreme Lord with all devotion and accepts Him as the Supreme Goal. When a living entity becomes forgetful of the constitutional position of his relationship with God, then he is at once overwhelmed by the external energy, and this is the cause of his false ego of identifying his body as self. His whole conception of the material universe is due to his false conception of Body. He therefore becomes attached to this body and the by-products of this body. To get out of this entanglement he has simply to perform his duty-- to surrender unto the Supreme Lord with intelligence, with devotion, and with sincere Krishna Consciousness.

A conditioned soul falsely thinks himself happy in the material world, but if he is favored by an unalloyed devotee-- by hearing instruction from an unalloyed devotee-- he gives up the desire for material enjoyment and becomes enlightened in Krishna Consciousness. As soon as one enters into Krishna Con-



consciousness, his desire for material enjoyment at once is vanquished, and gradually he becomes free from material entanglement. For example, because there is no question of darkness where there is light, Krishna consciousness is like the light that dispels the darkness of material sense enjoyment. One who is engaged in Krishna Consciousness generally has no desire for material enjoyment. A Krishna Conscious person is never under the false conception that he is One with God. He does not think that he would be happy by working for himself. He engages all his energy in the service of the Supreme Lord, and thereby becomes released from the clutches of illusory energy, or material energy. In this connection the Lord quotes a verse in the Bhagavad Gita, 7th Chapter, to the effect that the material energy containing the three modes of material nature, is very strong. It is very difficult to get out of the process of material energy, but one who surrenders unto Krishna easily comes out from the clutches of Maya.

The Lord continued to teach that the conditioned soul, for each and every moment in which he is engaged in some fruitive activity, is forgetting his real identity. Sometimes when he is fatigued, when he is tired of material activities, he wants liberation and wants to become one with the Supreme, but other times he thinks that by working hard for his sense gratification he will be happy. In both cases he is covered by material energy. For the enlightenment of such bewildered conditioned souls who are working in false identification, the Lord has presented before us so many Vedic literatures, like the Vedas, the Puranas, Vedantasutra-- all intended to guide the human being back to Godhead. The Lord has presented further instructions advising that when a conditioned soul is recognized by the mercy of the spiritual master and when he is guided by the Supersoul, he takes advantage of the various Vedic literatures, becomes enlightened, and makes progress in his spiritual realization. It is understood that Lord Krishna is always merciful to His devotees, therefore He has presented



all these Vedic literatures by which one can understand his relationship with Krishna and can act in that relationship with the result that he is benefited with the ultimate goal of life.

Actually every living entity is destined to reach the Supreme Lord, and every one can understand his relationship with the Supreme Lord. The execution of duties to attain perfection is known as devotional service, and in fullness such devotional service becomes love of God, the factual goal of life for every living entity. The living entity is not intended to achieve success in religious perfection or economic development or sense enjoyment. Religiosity, economic development, sense enjoyment, and liberation should not actually be desired by the living entity. The real desire of the living entity should be to achieve the stage of loving transcendental service of the Lord. The All Attractive features of Lord Krishna help one in attaining Krishna Consciousness, and when one is engaged in Krishna Consciousness he can realize the relationship between Krishna and himself. In this connection the Lord quotes one story from the commentary of Mahabarata which occurs in Srimad Bhagawata, fifth canto. The story involves the instruction of Sarvajna to a poor man who came to Sarvajna to have his future told. When Sarvajna saw the horoscope of the poor man he was at once astonished that the man was so poor, and he said to the poor man, "Oh, why are you so unhappy? I see from your horoscope that you have some hidden treasure left to you by your father. The horoscope, however, states that your father could not disclose his hidden treasure to you because he died in a foreign place. But now you can search out the hidden treasure left by your father and be happy." This story is cited because the living entity is suffering due to his ignorance of the hidden treasure of the father. The hidden treasure of the Father, Krishna, is love of Godhead. In every Vedic literature the conditioned soul is advised to find that hidden treasure which is known as love of God. As stated in the Bhagavad Gita, Vadaisachasarvai aham



evavedynam. A conditioned soul, although he is the son of the Wealthiest-- the Personality of Godhead-- does not realize it, therefore the Vedic literature is given to him to help him search out his father and his paternal property.

Sarvajna further advised the poor man, "Don't try to dig on the southern side of your house to find the hidden treasure. If you do so then you'll be attacked by a poisonous wasp and you will be baffled in finding the treasure. The search should be to the eastern side where there is actual light which is called devotional service, or Krishna Consciousness. On the southern side there is ritualistic performance of the Vedic scripture, and on the western side there is speculative empiric knowledge, and on the northern side there is the yoga system or meditational process of self realization. If somebody searches for his ultimate goal by the ritualistic process then he will be baffled. Such a process involves performance of rituals under the guidance of the priest who takes money in exchange of service. A man thinks he'll be happy by such performances, but actually that will not make him happy. Even if he does gain some result therefrom, it is only temporary and his material distresses will continue, so he never becomes happy by such a ritualistic process-- instead, his material pangs increase more and more. Similarly, digging for the hidden treasure on the northern side is compared with one's self-realization by dint of the meditational process. By the meditational process, even if one attains perfection-- he thinks he is One with the Supreme Lord-- this merging into the Supreme by the living entity is something like the great serpent swallowing up the smaller serpent. From practical experience we see sometimes that the big serpent swallows up a smaller serpent, and the merge into the spiritual existence of the Supreme is analogous. The small serpent is, therefore, searching after perfection, and he is understood to be swallowed by the big serpent. Digging on the western side is compared to the hidden



treasure protected by yakasa. He is the evil spirit that protects hidden treasure. The idea is that hidden treasure can never be delivered by one who asks favor of Yakasa for attaining the hidden treasure-- the result is that he will simply be killed. The Jnanis or the yogins are analogous to the serpent relationship of the meditational process. The speculative process of self-realisation, or yoga perfection of self-realisation, is suicidal in this case. Actually one has to dig for the hidden treasure from the eastern side which is called devotional service in full Krishna Consciousness. That is the perpetual hidden treasure, and when one attains to that achievement, he becomes perpetually rich. One who is poor in devotional service and Krishna consciousness is always in need of material gain. Sometimes he is suffering the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," and sometimes he is baffled; sometimes he is following the philosophy of monism and therefore losing his identity, and sometimes he is swallowed up by the big serpent. By giving up all these things and becoming fixed in Krishna Consciousness or devotional service to the Lord, he achieves the perfection of life.

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#### MY SUBWAY SONG OF LOVE

A formidable endeavor,  
 To enter the labyrinthine depths  
 And pass among the shuffling, shuttling  
 Subway mob--  
 Shoving, scuffling, rushing with the hour  
 In a gray atmosphere which only merchant greed will adorn,  
 In a foul, burnt-iron, screeching hell.

Here beneath the surface  
 So little as a smile can signify the conquest of material nature--  
 But few emerge victorious.

Yet, swaying and jolting in our passage as we span a borough,  
 Are we not like posies in the wind?  
 Are we not touched and kissed and tickled  
 In a passion we ourselves cannot abate?  
 O, do you hear the whine in the clatter?  
 Some poor, sun-starved deity is wandering these passages with us,







## NIGHT SHOWER SUTRA

Bathroom lightbulb bulging energy  
 blissfully from the ceiling,  
 white tile walls radiant,  
 I strip naked, chanting,  
 chanting, I prepare my billionth bath  
 maneuvering myself behind rubber-plastic curtains  
 and into the tub as if  
 for the first time  
 and turn on hot and cold water  
 simultaneously and watch with joy  
 the ceiling burst into countless  
 water-drop universes.

"Krishna is water! Hare! Hare! Hare!"  
 I chant joyfully, while the lightbulb  
 like Vivasvan, sun-god, pours his energy,  
 blissful, blissful, blissful kilowatts  
 all out for Lord Bhagavan in excelsus  
 while each joyous drop spurts  
 to mirror Mr. Sun-Bulb  
 showering dear mythical body  
 with a water orgy,  
 showering hairs and flesh  
 with warm water sensation.

Sensation is emptiness,  
 emptiness sensation  
 says Lord Buddha-woodha. Ah-cha!

Sensation is not different from Krishna, I add,  
 nor is Krishna different from sensation,  
indeed, Krishna is sensation,  
water sensation,  
 shower sensation over Hayagriva's feathers,  
 giving a shower ecstasy  
 over the millennium,  
 a bathroom satori,  
 a washtub samadhi,  
 free of charge.

Krishna is soap, I think, grabbing the Ivory,  
 slippery on my belly as I lather  
 watching with awe  
 a trillion rainbow'd soapbubbles  
 run down my pubic tangle  
 while Niagara  
 falls down my back.  
 "Hare Krishna, Hare Rama," I sing,  
 chanting the white cosmic bathtub  
 and universal gurgling drain  
 and soap and wondrous water shower  
 and washrag and bulging lightbulb



and billowing steam clouds and my own  
 miraculous body,  
 certain my nightly shower  
 greater indeed than Rome,  
 more glorious than Greece,  
 dwarfing, indeed, St. John's  
 tiny revelation,  
 as I lather my beard  
 with decillions of bubbles  
 while holy waters flow to my voice  
 sacred, sacred, sacred, sacred, sacred waters  
 Have Krishna-ing the neighbors awake . . .  
 and I thinking,  
 Next shower I'll have to bring  
 my fingercymbals.

--Hayagriva Das Brahmachary  
 (Howard Wheeler)

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#### PRANA

I breathe His Name  
 And for a fleeting second He's there  
 Now Gone . . . inhale.

Now He stays for one whole breath  
 At a time  
 Now Gone . . . I inhale.

How marvelous this situation, that  
 He shows Himself in these  
 Interval distances of my lungs.

This vital air supplied by Him  
 Is so precious . . . .  
 I chant like a bellows,

Krishna Kris'na, and spiritual  
 Blazes ignite, scorching my delusions,  
 Leaving my ancient self pure and vibrant.

I wipe my eyes and wake up  
 To this eternal spring morning.

Did all that dark, clouded suffering really happen,  
 Or did I just close my eyes  
 For a moment?

--Achuytananda Das Brahmachary  
 (Charles Barnett)



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DENTAL SOUND VIBRATION that has been sung on the banks of the  
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praises--is as vital and direct today as it was at the dawn of  
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HARE KRISHNA



## PRAYER OF SELF STUDY

Of bondage I come,  
 Yet must free myself and awaken.  
 Forgive me my inexcusable cravings, my petty wants  
 For denying the greatness and the Gift which  
     has been bestowed upon me.

Life in the fullest awakefulness in Thee--  
 My gift; my opportunity.

Yet I pursue my dreams, and remember not  
     my every deed; engrossed  
     are my many false selves  
     in this sensual play.

Hear me, Krishna, bearer of Lofty contemplations, that  
 I might transform these scattered games  
     into my search for Thee-- the  
     Self true in Thee.

I deny not that in my separation  
 I made myself a glutton by the wealth of  
     my passions.

Now let Thy grace and divine love strip me naked  
     unmercifully! I seek no mercy, for I know well  
     the deadly lies, and am fearful.

Let me view now! Now let me see the sickness  
 and tormented state of my being . . . my deceiving lies told!  
 Let this be my work, my prayer, my meditation.

Open me true to those facts  
 Which my false selves have long hidden away fearfully.

May I prepare myself for the glimpses of truth in my inner soul,  
 The shattering pulses agone in the  
     bubbling waters of creation,  
 The bursting bumble-bee's hum . . . the  
     piercing ecstatic Bliss.

I be a son lost! Your son of spirit  
 Sent to bear body; this fleshy burden . . .

Forsake me not then, Golden Godstar above,  
 Reawaken me in spirit that I may  
     perceive Thine infinite forms.

There are also millions and millions  
 upon this tiny earth-bubble-- and they the many  
 have forgotten the life of spirit, and the hurdle to overcome:  
 this illusion we have long assumed to be  
     the Reality.



O these little ones . . . the universe created around them, for them!  
 Give unto these, Krishna, the gift to realize their  
 ignorance and finitude, that they  
 might step out to the threshold of our  
 Infinite Holy Godstar.

--Davakananda Das Brahmachary  
 (Ronald Hoyt)

\*\*\*\*\*

In the valley of the heart  
 lies the seed of the spirit--

Water thy seed  
 with rains of love.

Seek the source  
 which shines within  
 as the flower faces  
 the sun  
 and drinks thereof.

When the wind blows,  
 sway as gently  
 as the tree stretches  
 from side to side,  
 keeping thy roots  
 rooted in God.

Open the heart  
 singing songs of love,  
 rejoice in the Name of the Lord  
 as the bird that sings  
 at the sight of the sky.

-- Harsha Devi  
 (Hope Patrick)

\*\*\*\*\*

#### JUST SEE WHAT A NICE THING IT IS

"This birth of you and I  
 is just a footstep  
 along the way.

So it is with this child before me,  
 who is hearing Hare Krishna, Hare Rama.  
 It will not go in vain--  
 it will act,  
 because it is spiritual--  
 not material--  
 spiritual.

Just see what a nice thing it is . . . .  
 he tried to take the cymbals from his mother's hands . . . .  
 he wanted to play . . . .  
 he tried to dance . . . .  
 so he just sat and beat his two tiny hands together and gurgled,  
 applauding Krishna in his fashion,  
 as we chanted Hare Krishna, Hare Rama.

It is such a nice thing,  
 how it delights the children,  
 and what to speak of you and me?"

--Brahmananda Das Brahmachary  
 (Bruce Scharf)  
 (Rendered from Swami Bhaktivedanta's lecture)







## KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS IN AMERICAN POETRY

by Hayagriva Das Brahmachary  
(Howard Wheeler)

## PART II: Thoreau and Dickinson

Thoreau made Emerson's injunction of "plain living and high thinking" famous when he set out to live outside Boston on an isolated tract of Emerson's land surrounding Walden Pond. Since then, Walden has come to symbolize American asceticism. During most of Thoreau's mature years, he and Emerson were good friends, and Thoreau even lived in the Emerson home, relieving the Concord sage of many practical duties. Thoreau believed in Emerson's transcendental philosophy, and his passionate temperament carried this philosophy to the limit of rebellion against society and initiated his retreat into the woods at Walden. It was also due to Thoreau's temper and arrogance that his friendship with Emerson ran into some rough weather, nonetheless the two men generally weathered these storms. Thoreau was an ardent admirer of Indian literature, and when Whitman's Leaves of Grass was first issued in 1855, Thoreau went to Whitman with Emerson's compliments, and observing that "Song of Myself" was "remarkably like the Hindus," asked the poet whether he was acquainted with such writings. "No," Whitman said. "Tell me about them." Thoreau supplied Whitman with a list of books for reading, and included the Bhagavad Gita. In Walden, Thoreau writes in this way about the Gita:

Thus . . . the sweltering inhabitants of Madras and Bombay and Calcutta drink at my well. In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical philosophy of the Bhagvat-Geeta, since whose composition years of the gods have elapsed, and in comparison with which our modern world and literature seem puny and trivial; and I doubt if that philosophy is not to be referred to a previous state of existence, so remote is its sublimity from our conceptions. I lay down the book and go to my well for water, and lo! there I meet the servant of the Brahmin, priest of Brahma and Vishnu and Indra, who still sits in his temple on the Ganges reading the Vedas, or dwells at the foot of a tree with his crust and water jug. I meet his servant, and our buckets as it were grate together in the same well. The pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred water of the Ganges. (From Walden)



In Walden, Thoreau even wrote at greater length about the Gita, and it is clear that the words of Krishna figured prominently in the transcendentalist movement. The transcendentalist ideal was to attain union with God through "plain, healthy living," avoidance of the frills of society and all forms of artificial intoxication, avoidance of dogmatic "church religion," and abandonment to the direct revelation of the Supreme-- Who usually spoke through His Nature, or Prakriti, revealing His Supreme Purusha, or what Emerson called "the Over-Soul." "The overpowering reality," Emerson says, "is that unity, that oversoul within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other . . . . Within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the Eternal One." For the transcendentalists, direct contact with Nature was as good as direct contact with the Divine, for it served as a springboard to ultimate realization of Him. Nature was a wise, familiar and loving guru.

Just six years before Emerson's Nature was published in 1836, the greatest poetess in literary history was born in Amherst, Massachusetts. Though she had little contact with the New England transcendentalists, Emily Dickinson wrote poems of transcendental love that reveal her qualifications as a New England gopi. For example:

(1)	(2)	(3)
Wild nights! Wild nights!	Futile the winds	Rowing in Eden!
Were I with thee,	To a heart in port--	Ah! the sea!
Wild nights should be	Done with the compass	Might I but moor
Our luxury!	Done with the chart.	Tonight in thee!

It is love that figures prominently in Dickinson's poetry, love for the creation-- evinced in her Nature poems-- and love for the Creator-- expressed in her poems of the soul, death, time, eternity and Christ. She writes:

Love is anterior to life,  
 Posterior to death,  
 Initial of creation, and  
 The exponent of breath.



Her poems are intimate, intensely personal, and as one reads them one feels oneself to be actually transgressing, breaking into an elder sister's packet of love poems. Emily Dickinson became a recluse early in her life and seldom left her father's house in Amherst. She never intended that her poems be published, but after her death in 1886 her poems were salvaged and published in a series of three volumes. She never married, and though she was reportedly once interested in a Rev. Wadsworth, her interests seem wholly absorbed in transcendental matters. Capable of expressing her most subtle thoughts in verse, she is never at a loss for the perfect metaphor. Compared to Whitman, her style seems tinsel and delicate, but her poems-- for all their delicate appearances-- carry the weight and deliver the wallop of poetic genius. Poetically, she is far superior to Emerson, Thoreau and the other New England transcendentalists. One pictures her standing with fearless love and faith before the Infinite, actually handling God, Nature, eternity and death with a feminine finesse. This is enabled by her capacity to surrender.

My rivers run to thee:	I'll fetch thee brooks
Blue sea, wilt welcome me?	From spotted nooks,--
My river waits reply.	Say, sea,
Oh sea, look graciously!	Take me!

Her love poetry is unmistakably directed to the Divine:

I envy seas whereon he rides,  
 I envy spokes of wheels  
 Of chariots that him convey,  
 I envy speechless hills  
 That gaze upon his journey . . . .

At times she actually seems to chastise God when He appears to be far from her, leaving her to stand alone before death. For example:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1) I know that he exists<br>Somewhere in silence.<br>He has hid his rare life<br>From our gross eyes. | 2) 'Tis an instant's play,<br>'Tis a fond ambush,<br>Just to make bliss<br>Earn her own surprise! |
| 3) But should the play<br>Prove piercing earnest,<br>Should the glee glaze<br>In death's stiff stare, | 4) Would not the fun<br>Look too expensive?<br>Would not the jest<br>Have crawled too far?        |



Certain poems reveal her experiencing doubt and also wondering about her own sanity, but she always emerges from these bouts victorious, with a firm faith in the Divine and the immortality of the soul.

I never saw a moor,  
I never saw the sea;  
Yet know I how the heather looks,  
And what a wave must be.

I never spoke with God,  
Nor visited in heaven;  
Yet certain am I of the spot  
As if the chart were given.

That she "never spoke with God" is doubtless claimed for the poem's sake, for other poems display a familiarity with His ways. She expresses surprise at the atheist class that turns from God, and considers this class of men to be pitifully drowning in their own ocean of disbelief.

The Maker's cordial visage,  
However good to see,  
Is shunned, we must admit it,  
Like an adversity.

For her, as for Whitman, the "kelson of the creation is love."

Who has not found the heaven below  
Will fail of it above.  
God's residence is next to mine,  
His furniture is love.

As with Emerson and Thoreau, her transcendental exhilaration is often stimulated by direct contact with Nature, and she gets drunk with air and water.

I taste a liquor never brewed,  
From tankards scooped in pearl;  
Not all the vats upon the Rhine,  
Yield such an alcohol!

Inebriate of air am I,  
And debauchee of dew . . . .

She writes poems celebrating the intimate details of Nature: the bee, the bat, the hummingbird, the robin, the butterfly, the flowers, the snake, the plants, grass, spiders, the rat, squirrel, jaybird, the rainbow and the wind--all are equally wonderful to her. Some of her Nature poetry is even cosmic, as the beautiful poem beginning "The moon was but a chin of gold . . . ."

Yet Nature is held in perspective. Throughout her poetry, death is her constant companion, and she often considers her sojourn on this earth as a sojourn in exile. Her real life and true lover are in eternity.



Not in this world to see his face  
 Sounds long, until I read the place  
 Where this is said to be  
 But just the primer to a life  
 Unopened, rare, upon the shelf,  
 Clapsed yet to him and me.

She pictures herself as sailing on a "wondrous sea" toward the eternal shore where there are no storms and all ships are at rest. While she is at sea, she prays, "Grant me, O Lord, a sunny mind,/ Thy windy will to bear." For her, eternity is revealed in the exquisite solitude of the Soul.

The Soul's superior instances  
 Occur to Her alone,  
 When friend and earth's occasion  
 Have infinite withdrawn . . . .

Eternity's disclosure  
 To favorites, a few,  
 Of the Colossal substance  
 Of immortality.

Death is the coachman of the carriage that carries her into eternity, and therefore is honored and glorified.

Because I could not stop for Death,  
 He kindly stopped for me;  
 The carriage held but just ourselves  
 And Immortality.

This carriage rides her past all the phenomena of the physical, material universe, off into a superior, timeless realm.

Since then 'tis centuries; but each  
 Feels shorter than the day  
 I first surmised the horses' heads  
 Were toward eternity.

In another poem, she likens death to the Spirit's discarding an old overcoat.

Death is a dialogue between  
 The spirit and the dust.  
 "Dissolve," says Death. The Spirit, "Sir,  
 I have another trust."

Death doubts it, argues from the  
 ground.  
 The Spirit turns away,  
 Just laying off, for evidence,  
 An overcoat of clay.

To what degree she saw Christ as her Savior from the clutches of death is not certain. However, a number of poems indicate that she accepted Christ as her Savior, and one poem actually implores His help.



At least to pray is left, is left.  
 O Jesus! in the air  
 I know not which thy chamber is,--  
 I'm knocking everywhere.

Thou stirrest earthquake in the South,  
 And maelstrom in the sea;  
 Say, Jesus Christ of Nazareth,  
 Hast thou no arm for me?

That Emily Dickinson is an excellent candidate for "gopi-hood" is undebatable. She seems to have had fewer personal problems than Thoreau and Emerson whose experiences in cosmic consciousness appear at times to have shaken their stolid New England personalities. She is definitely unattached to her earth-life, considering the life to come as the great promise. She lets the Lord

know she is "ready to go" on that carriage ride into Eternity in this way:

1)  
 Tie the strings to my life, my Lord,  
 Then I am ready to go!  
 Just a look at the horses--  
 Rapid! That will do!

2)  
 Put me in on the firmest side,  
 So I shall never fall;  
 For we must ride to the Judgment,  
 And it's partly down hill.

3)  
 But never I mind the bridges,  
 And never I mind the sea;  
 Held fast in everlasting race  
 By my own choice and thee.

4)  
 Good-by to the life I used to live,  
 And the world I used to know;  
 And kiss the hills for me, just once;  
 Now I am ready to go!

Emerson, Thoreau and Dickinson represent the major forces in the transcendental movement in America in the last century. Rebellion had indeed begun against the encroaching materialism that was triumphing in the cities and spreading through the veins of the young nation. Emerson warned young men against going to Boston and New York. Stay with your Maker in the open air, he enjoined. Thoreau retreated to the woods of Walden, and Emily Dickinson hardly ventured outside her house. But there was one courageous Olympian capable of shouting the good news of God and the universe for all men around the earth to hear, for men in cities as well as in the fields and forests-- Whitman, who could absorb both good and evil in his Leaves, and who was capable of translating what was previously considered untranslatable. The great song of cosmic consciousness in America was left for him to sing. And he was to be the mendicant-bard of the American roadside.

(NEXT ISSUE: KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS IN AMERICAN POETRY, Part III: Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself")



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FOUNDER: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

EDITORS: Hayagriva Das Brahmachary (Howard Wheeler)  
Rayarama Das Brahmachary (Raymond Marais)

CIRCULATION: Gargamuni Das Brahmachary (Gregory Scharf)

PRINTING: Gargamuni Das Brahmachary (Gregory Scharf)

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