

GODHEAD IS LIGHT. NESCIENCE IS DARKNESS. WHERE THERE IS GODHEAD THERE IS NO NESCIENCE.



BACK TO GODHEAD

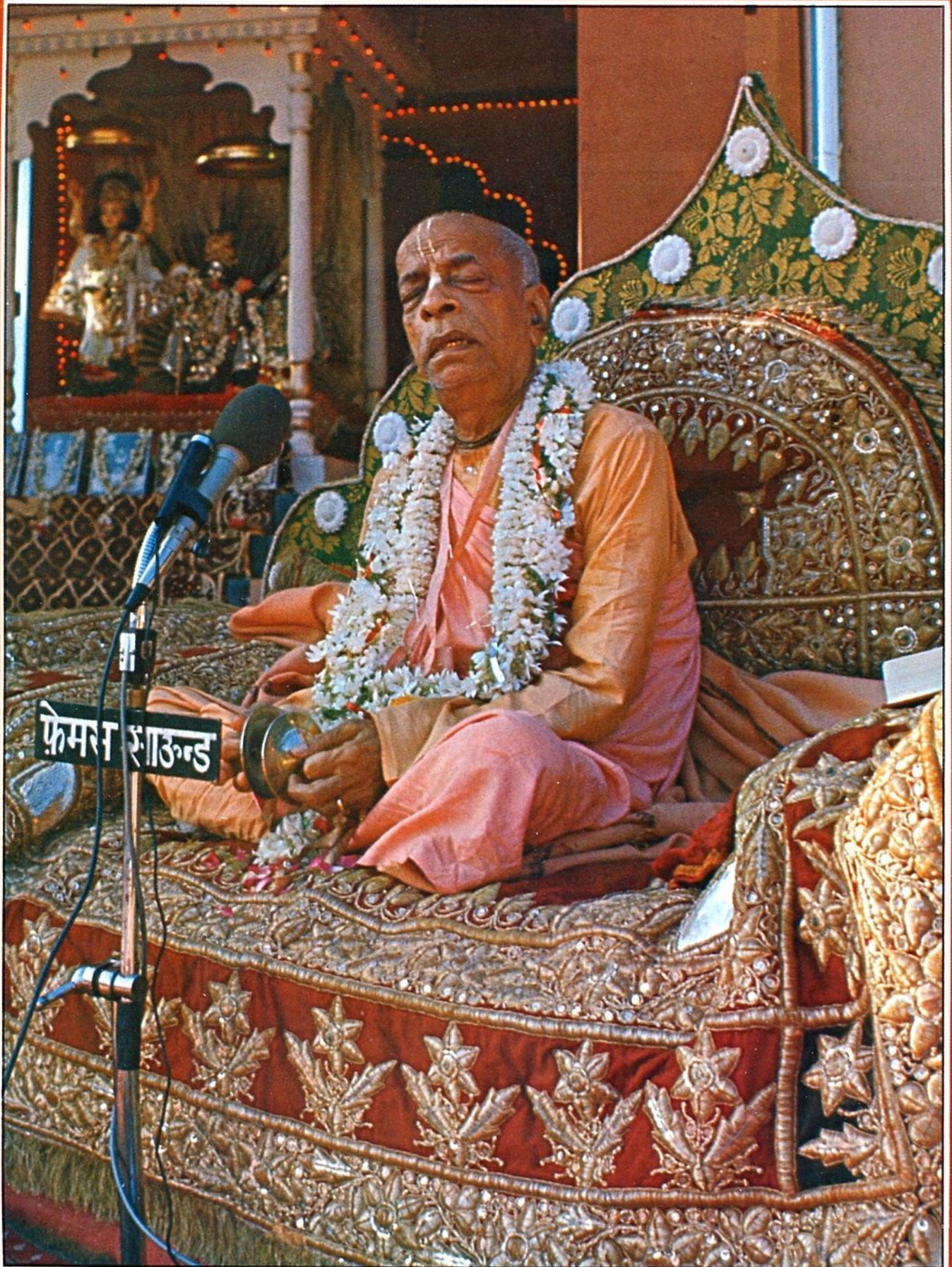


THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

No.54



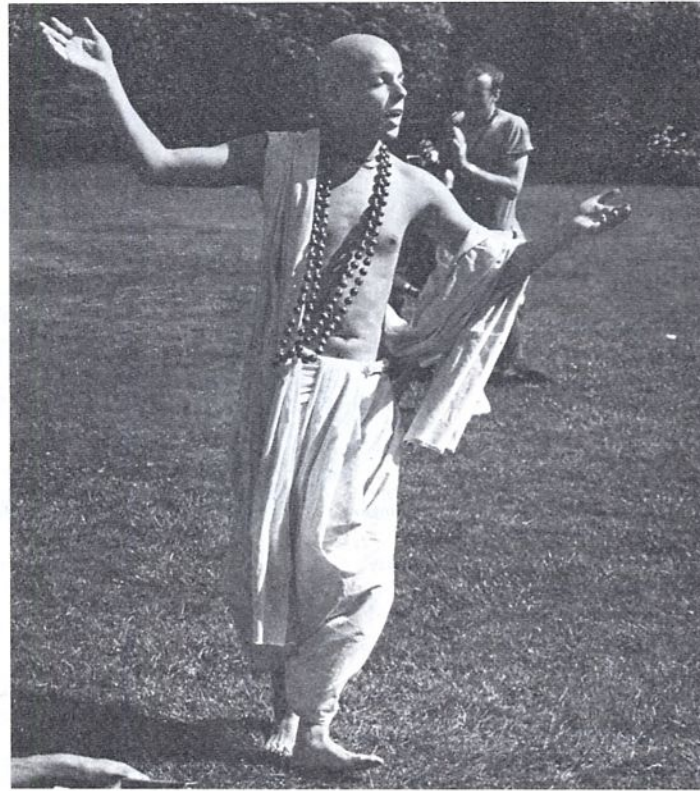
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This magazine, *Back to Godhead*, is like a desire-fulfilling tree. In the transcendental world called *Vaikuṅṭha* there are trees which can yield any desire. In the same way, this *Back to Godhead* magazine can actually fulfill all of our desires.

On our part, we must be very serious and read with great attention. The knowledge of *Kṛṣṇa* found herein is exactly what we are searching for because *Kṛṣṇa* is the reservoir of pleasure. *Kṛṣṇa* is all-attractive and is the source of all enjoyment.

HARE KṚṢṆA HARE KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA HARE HARE



HARE RĀMA HARE RĀMA RĀMA RĀMA HARE HARE

In trying to understand *Kṛṣṇa*, it will help to chant the *Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra* found on this page. This chant—*Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare*—cleans the dust from one's mind. It is a transcendental sound vibration which does not need to be analyzed. Even if one does not know the chemical elements of honey, one can still taste its sweetness very easily.

Please chant *Hare Kṛṣṇa* and study *Back to Godhead* magazine very carefully. If one does these simple things he can gradually advance more and more, day by day, until he comes to the point of complete *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness, which is the end of knowledge and the highest stage of blissful liberation.



Founder
(under the direction of His Divine Grace
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda)
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Published monthly, \$4.50 per year (\$6.00 outside USA),
by the Bhaktivedānta Book Trust, 3764 Watseka Avenue,
Los Angeles, California 90034.

Editorial Offices: 32 Tiffany Place,
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11231.



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PRONUNCIATION OF SANSKRIT WORDS

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

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS / MEMBERSHIP

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is presenting a scientific program for the spiritualization of all of human society. Although man has made rapid material progress, there is a need for a spiritual method by which all men can become one in peace, friendship and prosperity through a common cause. The greatest cause for all men is devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and this is being introduced all over the world by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness in a simple, practical and universal way that can be accepted by men of any race, religion or nationality. For information on how you can become a registered member of this important spiritual movement, please write to the Society's secretary at 3764 Watseka Avenue, Los Angeles, California.

ON THE COVER Underneath one of the desire trees in the transcendental land of Vṛndāvana in the spiritual world, there is a jeweled throne on which Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārānī, the Supreme Lord and His supreme pleasure potency, are seated. They are served with great reverence and affection by the *gopīs* or goddesses of fortune who are Their eternal companions. (See "Approaching Kṛṣṇa with Love" in this issue.)

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APPROACHING KṚṢṆA WITH LOVE

His Divine Grace

A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

When Kṛṣṇa was on this earth, all the residents of Vṛndāvana loved Him. Indeed, they knew nothing but Kṛṣṇa. They did not know whether Kṛṣṇa is God or not God, nor were they disturbed by such thoughts as, "I shall love Kṛṣṇa if He is God." Their attitude was one of pure love, and they thought, "He may or may not be God—it doesn't matter. We love Kṛṣṇa, that's all." This then is the platform of real unalloyed love. When one thinks, "If Kṛṣṇa is God, I shall love Him," it should be known that this is

not the platform of pure love but of conditional love. While on earth, Kṛṣṇa exhibited extraordinary powers, and the *vrajavāsīs*, the residents of Vṛndāvana, often thought, "Oh, Kṛṣṇa is such a wonderful child. Maybe He is some demigod." They thought in this way because people were generally under the impression that the demigods were all-powerful. Within the material world the demigods are powerful, but people are not aware that Kṛṣṇa is above all of them. The highest of the demigods, *Brahmā*, gave his opinion of

this matter in the verse *Īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ*: "Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Controller, and His body is full of knowledge, bliss and eternity." Little did the residents of Vṛndāvana know of Kṛṣṇa's power as the ultimate controller and master of all the demigods. What is noteworthy is that their love for Him was not subject to such considerations.

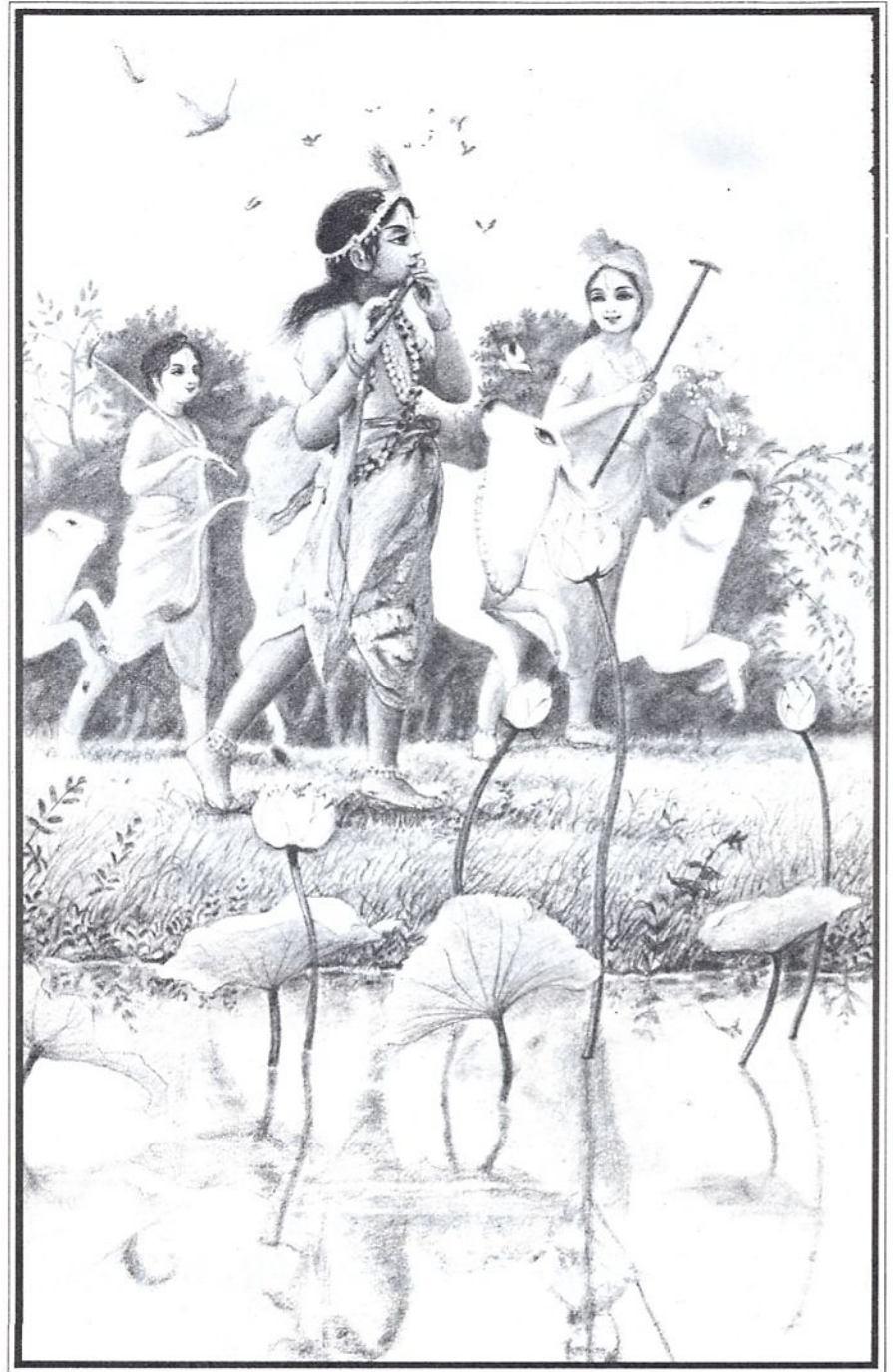
As the residents of Vṛndāvana loved Kṛṣṇa unconditionally, similarly Kṛṣṇa loved them unconditionally. *Vraja-jana-vallabha*, *girivaradhārī*. When the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana stopped performing sacrifices to Lord Indra, the chief demigod of the heavens, they placed themselves in a very dangerous position. Indra became very angry and sent powerful clouds which rained over Vṛndāvana incessantly for seven days. The whole area began to flood, and the inhabitants became very disturbed. Although He was only seven years old, Kṛṣṇa saved the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana by lifting Govardhana Hill and holding it up as an umbrella to shield the village. Lord Kṛṣṇa thus taught the demigod Indra that his disturbances could be stopped simply by His little finger. Seeing this, Lord Indra bowed down before Kṛṣṇa.

Thus Kṛṣṇa also became known as *Gopī-jana-vallabha*, which indicates that His only business is to protect the *gopījana*. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement aims at teaching people how to become *gopījanas*, or pure lovers of Kṛṣṇa. When we reach that stage of pure love of God, the Lord will save us from any danger, even if it means His lifting a hill or a mountain. Kṛṣṇa did not have to practice some *yoga* system in order to lift Govardhana Hill. As God, He is all-powerful, even as a child. He played like a child and dealt with others like a child, but when there was need, He manifested Himself as God Almighty. That is the nature of Kṛṣṇa, or God: He does not have to practice meditation or follow some system of *yoga* in order to become God. He is not a manufactured type of God but is God eternally.

Although He is God, He enjoys loving relationships with His devotees, and in order to satisfy His devotees, He often takes roles that appear to be

subsidiary. Kṛṣṇa often likes being the child of a devotee, and thus He became the beloved child of Yaśodā, Yaśodā-nandana. Because He is God and everyone worships Him, no one chastises Him. However, Kṛṣṇa enjoys being chastised by His devotee father and mother, and because Kṛṣṇa takes pleasure in being chastised, the devotees also take up the role, saying, "All right, I shall become Your father and chastise You." Similarly, when Kṛṣṇa wants to fight, one of His devotees becomes the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu and fights with Him. In this way, all Kṛṣṇa's activities are carried out in connection with His devotees. If we aspire to become such associates of Kṛṣṇa, we must develop Kṛṣṇa consciousness, awareness of Kṛṣṇa.

Yaśodā-nandana vraja-jana-rañjana. Kṛṣṇa's only business is satisfying the *vraja-janas*, and their only business is satisfying Kṛṣṇa. This is the reciprocation of love. *Yāmuna-tīra-vaṇacārī:* Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, wanders on the banks of the Yamunā to please the *gopīs*, the cowherd boys, the birds, the bees and the cows and calves. These are not ordinary birds, bees, cows, calves or men; they have all reached the summit of self-realization and thus, after many, many lives, have attained a position whereby they can play with Kṛṣṇa. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement can enable everyone to go to Kṛṣṇa-loka and become Kṛṣṇa's associate as a friend, servant, father or mother. Kṛṣṇa is agreeable to take any of these positions in relation to His devotee. How He does so is all described in our book, *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*. To realize our relationship with Kṛṣṇa, we have but to follow in the footsteps of Lord Caitanya and His chief associates, the six *gosvāmīs*—Śrī Rūpa, Sanātana, Śrī Jīva, Gopāla, Raghunātha Dāsa and Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa. These *gosvāmīs* were always engaged in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and dancing in ecstasy. They taught that when one is merged in *Kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*, or the chanting of the holy names of Kṛṣṇa, he merges into the ocean of love of Kṛṣṇa. As soon as the sound of Kṛṣṇa's name is vibrated, one can immediately merge into the ocean of love. That is the sign of pure



Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, wanders on the banks of the Yamunā.

devotion. Thus at *kīrtanas* the six *gosvāmīs* would merge immediately into the ocean of love of Godhead.

The six *gosvāmīs* were not only dear to the other devotees of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu but to the nondevotees as well. A pure devotee's position is that he has no enemy because he is not envious. A pure devotee is always open to everyone, and he does not discriminate that this person can be

allowed to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and that person should not be allowed. On the material platform, which is a platform of dualism, there are differences between high and low, man and woman, and this or that, but on the spiritual platform there are no such distinctions. The pure devotee, seeing everything with an equal mind, is therefore non-envious. Because he is nonenvious, he is worshipable. Indeed, it may even be

said that a person is worshipable simply if he is nonenvious, for it is only possible to be nonenvious on the spiritual platform. This is also the verdict of *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*vidyā-vinaya-sampanne
brāhmaṇe gavi hastini
śuni caiva śvapāke ca
pañḍitāḥ sama-darśinaḥ*

*ihaiva tair jitaḥ sargo
yeṣāṃ sāmye sthitaṃ manaḥ
nirdoṣaṃ hi samaṃ brahma
tasmād brahmaṇi te sthitāḥ*

“The humble sage, by virtue of true knowledge, sees with equal vision a learned and gentle *brāhmaṇa*, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog-eater (outcaste). Those whose minds are established in sameness and equanimity have already conquered the conditions of birth and death. They are flawless like Brahman, and thus they are already situated in Brahman.” (Bg. 5.18-19)

Such a position can be obtained by one who has acquired the mercy of Lord Caitanya. Upon obtaining His mercy, a person can deliver suffering humanity from material contamination. Because the six *gosvāmīs* were such devotees, we offer our respectful obeisances unto them with the *mantra*: *vande rūpa-sanātanau raghuyugau śrī-jīva-gopālakau*. The six *gosvāmīs* were expert in scrutinizingly studying all the scriptures with the aim to establish real religion in the world. They left many books to guide us, the most famous of which is Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *Bhaktirasāmṛta-sindhu* (*The Nectar of Devotion*), which gives the neophyte devotee initial direction. The *gosvāmīs* always worked very hard, day and night, and their business was simply writing books, chanting and dancing. Indeed, they were practically released from the bodily necessities of eating, sleeping, mating and defending themselves out of fear. There was no question of mating at all, nor was there any question of fearing or defending, for they were totally absorbed in Kṛṣṇa. At most they used to sleep one and a half hours daily, and they ate practically nothing. Whenever they felt hun-

gry, they would simply go to a householder’s home and beg one or two pieces of bread.

The mission of such saintly persons is but to make suffering humanity happy by elevating everyone to spiritual consciousness. In the material world, everyone is trying to exploit one another—one nation is trying to exploit another nation, one society is trying to exploit another, one businessman is trying to exploit another, etc. This is called the struggle for existence, and out of it the people who are struggling have invented a law called “might is right,” but we can actually see that even the most powerful must struggle, just as in the current world situation. There is a great struggle going on between Russia, America and China. Because of such struggle, everyone is suffering. Indeed, the very struggle for existence means suffering. The pure devotees of Kṛṣṇa, however, are not interested in exploiting others but in helping people become happy, and therefore they are worshiped on all planets. Cāṇakya Paṇḍit even said that a rich man and a learned man cannot be compared because a rich man may be honored in his own country or on his own planet, but a learned man, a devotee of God, is honored wherever he goes.

Nor for a devotee is there a distinction between heaven and hell, because Kṛṣṇa is with him in both places. Where there is Kṛṣṇa, there is no question of hell; every place is Vaikuṅṭha. Haridāsa Ṭhākura, for instance, didn’t enter Jagannātha Temple at Purī because he was born in a Mohammedan family, and the Hindus opposed the Mohammedans entering the temple. Haridāsa Ṭhākura did not let this disturb him, however. He thought, “Oh, why should I go and disturb them? I shall chant here.” Consequently Lord Caitanya, who is Lord Jagannātha Himself, came daily to see Haridāsa. This is the power of a pure devotee: He doesn’t have to go to Jagannātha; Jagannātha comes to him. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu used to go see Haridāsa Ṭhākura daily when the Lord was going to bathe in the sea. The Lord would enter Haridāsa’s cottage and ask, “Haridāsa, what are you

doing?” and Haridāsa would reply, “Please come in, my Lord.” This then is the actual position of a devotee. Therefore Kṛṣṇa says that worship of His devotee is even more valuable than worship of Himself. The devotee is actually able to deliver Kṛṣṇa, for he knows the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the science of hearing Kṛṣṇa’s words, eating Kṛṣṇa *prasādam* and enjoying Kṛṣṇa. The impersonalists and voidists may preach dry philosophical treatises on *aham brahmāsmi*—“I am spirit”—but ultimately who will be attracted? What is the difference between someone who thinks, “I am a stone,” and someone who thinks, “I am void?” Why should we become stone, wood or void? Our actual position should be in reciprocating loving affairs with Kṛṣṇa.

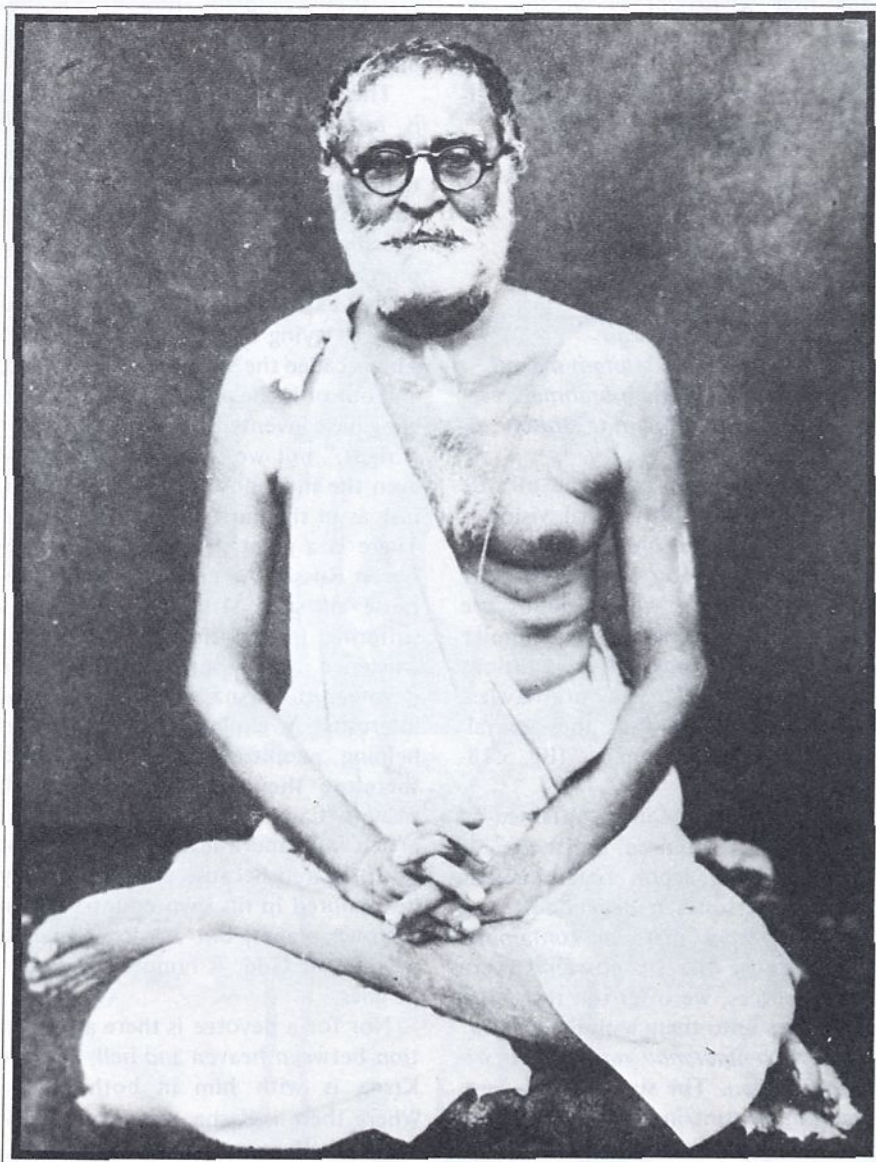
The spark for love of Kṛṣṇa is struck by the spiritual master, the pure devotee. As for myself, my spiritual master, His Divine Grace Om Viṣṇupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, ordered me to take up the responsibility of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the Western world. His Divine Grace had a great desire to preach Lord Caitanya’s message in the West, and my success is both his grace and pleasure. When I first met my spiritual master, I was a very young man in India, a nationalist, engaged in a very responsible office. But although I did not want to go, one of my friends, who is still living in Calcutta, forcibly took me to His Divine Grace. I was reluctant to see him because in our home our father used to receive many *sannyāsīs*, and I was not very satisfied with their dealings. I thought that Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja might be a similar man, and if he were, what business would I have in seeing him? But my friend took me forcibly. “Why not see him?” he asked. I finally relented and went with him, and I profited.

On my first visit, His Divine Grace said that it was necessary for educated boys like me to go to foreign countries and preach the gospel of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. I replied that India was a foreign dominated nation and that no one would hear our message. Actual-

ly at the time foreigners considered Indians to be very insignificant because in the face of so many independent nations India was still dependent, being dominated by Britain. At the time there was one Bengali poet who actually lamented that even uncivilized nations like China and Japan were independent, whereas India was dependent on the British. His Divine Grace convinced me that dependence and independence are simply temporary conditions, and he pointed out that because we are concerned with the eternal benefit of humanity, we should take up this challenge of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. This meeting with His Divine Grace, my Guru Mahārāja, took place in 1922, half a century ago.

I was officially initiated in 1933, just three years before the passing of Guru Mahārāja from this mortal world. At the last moment, just a fortnight before his passing away, he wrote me a letter repeating his instructions. He specifically said that I should try to preach this gospel amongst English speaking people. After receiving this letter, I sometimes dreamed that Guru Mahārāja was calling me and that I was leaving home and following him. I was dreaming in this way and thinking, "I have to give up my home. My Guru Mahārāja wants me to give up my home and take *sannyāsa*." At the same time I thought, "This is horrible. How can I leave my home? My wife? My children?" This is called *māyā*. Actually I did not want to give up my home life, but Guru Mahārāja made me give it up. Following his orders, I left my home, including a few children, but now Guru Mahārāja has given me many nice children all over the world. Thus by serving Kṛṣṇa no one becomes a loser, and this is an example from my own practical experience.

When I left India alone in 1965, I feared that I would have a great deal of trouble. The Indian government would not allow me to take any money out of the country, so I came with only a few books and fourteen rupees. I arrived in New York City in such a condition, but it was all by the grace of Guru Mahārāja and Kṛṣṇa. Everything happens by the combined mercy of Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master. In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*



His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja

it is stated that the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and *guru* are combined. This is the secret of the success of this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Kṛṣṇa is always within us, and consequently He knows everything about our purposes, and He gives us the opportunity to work as we decide. If we decide to enjoy this material world, Kṛṣṇa gives us the intelligence to become a very shrewd businessman, or a popular politician, or a cunning man so that we can earn money and enjoy ourselves. According to the standards of material life, many people are becoming great. They begin as very poor men and soon, by good fortune, become millionaires. We should not think, however, that they

are attaining such success by their own puny endeavors. Without intelligence, no one can improve, and that intelligence is given by Kṛṣṇa. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa states that He is seated in everyone's heart as the Supersoul and that by His will a man can remember, and by His will a man can forget. Kṛṣṇa supplies forgetfulness and remembrance according to the living entity's desire. If we want to forget Kṛṣṇa and enjoy the material world, He will give us the necessary intelligence so that we can forget Him for good.

Many people are thinking, "I can enjoy this material world very nicely. Everyone is having such a good time.

There is no reason I can't enjoy myself as much as them." This idea is illusion because there is no real enjoyment in the material world. We may rise to a very high position like President Kennedy. We may be very good looking, very famous, very intelligent and well educated, very wealthy and very powerful, and we may have a very beautiful wife and children and hold the highest position in the country—but at any moment we are subject to be shot down. This is the nature of the material world: We have to face danger at every step. There is no question of having pleasure without impediments. Even when the pleasures are earned, they are earned after a great deal of struggle and sacrifice, and whatever pleasure may be acquired is temporary, for in the material world there is no pleasure that can give us constant and unending enjoyment. Only Kṛṣṇa can give us that.

Therefore Kṛṣṇa instructs in *Bhagavad-gītā* that it is the welfare of every living entity to give up this nonsensical material activity and just surrender unto Him. Unfortunately, in this age people are so attracted by the glitter of material nature, to illusion, or *māyā*, that they are not very interested. Kṛṣṇa even declares that if one surrenders unto Him, He will give all protection from all sinful reactions, but still people are so attached that they cannot do it. People always fear that by surrendering to Kṛṣṇa they will lose something, just as I feared losing my family by going to the Western world and preaching. But Kṛṣṇa is so kind that if He takes anything away, He will reward us a thousand-fold.

The spiritual master is also kind in that he begs from door to door, country to country, town to town: "My dear ladies and gentlemen, my dear boys and girls, please take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness." In this way he renders very confidential service to Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord who gives the orders, and the spiritual master executes those orders; therefore the spiritual master is very dear to Kṛṣṇa. Whether Kṛṣṇa sends him to heaven or to hell makes no difference to him. For the spiritual master, a pure devotee, *heaven and hell are both the same if*

there is no Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In hell people are suffering in so many ways, and in heaven they are enjoying their senses in so many ways, but a devotee of the Lord can live anywhere where there is Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and since he brings this consciousness with him, he is always self-satisfied. If he is sent to hell, he will be satisfied simply chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. In fact, he does not believe in hell but in Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, if he were put in heaven, where there are so many opportunities for sense gratification, he would also remain aloof, for his senses are satisfied by Kṛṣṇa Himself. Thus for the service of the Lord a devotee is prepared to go anywhere, and for this reason he is very dear to Kṛṣṇa.

Renounced impersonalist philosophers say that this world is false and that the impersonal Brahman is truth. But if they are asked to go out into society where material sense gratification predominates, they will refuse for fear of being affected by those conditions. For a Kṛṣṇa conscious person, however, there is no such difficulty. Because he is controlled and has taken shelter of Kṛṣṇa, he is not afraid of going anywhere.

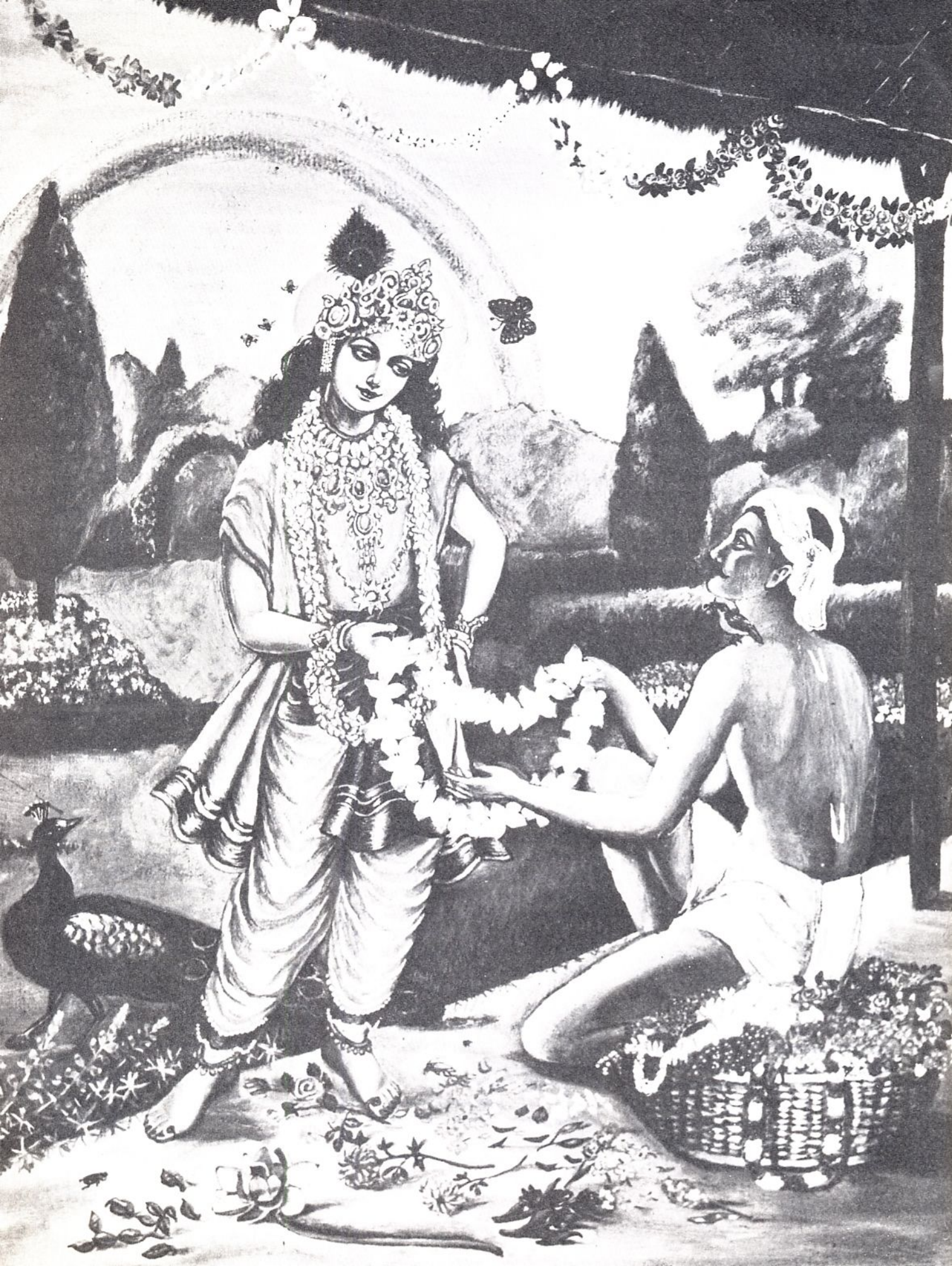
Consequently when devotees meet in a place where there is no Kṛṣṇa consciousness, there is no harm, for they take the opportunity to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and infuse the place with Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This opportunity should always be taken. It is not that one should close himself up in a room and chant alone. The great sage Nārada is a spaceman who travels all over the universe. Although he can dwell in the most elevated planets, he sometimes goes to hell and preaches there. That is the beauty of a servant of God—he is always acting out of love for Kṛṣṇa and His parts and parcels.

The underlying principle of devotional service is unalloyed love for Kṛṣṇa. Regardless of the position of a particular devotee—as friend, servant, parent or lover of Kṛṣṇa—his service is unconditional, for Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not dependent on any material condition. It is transcendental and has nothing to do with the modes of material nature. A devotee is not afraid to go anywhere, and because of this he

sees all material conditions as equal. In the world we may say that this is a good place to be and that is a bad, but, as pointed out before, the devotee is not subject to these mental concoctions. For him the basic principle of material existence is bad, for material existence means forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa.

In the neutral stage of devotion one may give more importance to the impersonal bodily effulgence of the Lord and to the Supersoul within the heart, but Kṛṣṇa consciousness actually develops when one thinks, "Kṛṣṇa is my very intimate master of intimate relationships." In the beginning, of course, impersonal realization and realization of the Supersoul are part of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The partial realization of God in His impersonal aspect or in His aspect as Supersoul enables one to develop veneration of the Lord, but when one has an intimate relationship with Kṛṣṇa as a friend, master, son or lover, then the veneration disappears.

This platform of personal relationship is certainly higher than the impersonal platform or the platform of Supersoul or Paramātmā realization. In the neutral conception, one simply realizes that he and the Absolute Truth are one in quality, or he realizes that he is part and parcel of the Supreme. That is certainly knowledge, for when one develops a personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa as servant and master, he begins to appreciate the full opulence of the Supreme Lord. One who realizes that God is full in six opulences actually begins rendering service. As soon as one becomes aware of the greatness of Kṛṣṇa and understands Kṛṣṇa's superiority, his service begins. The awareness of God's greatness increases when transcendental service is rendered. A person who serves the Lord in order to satisfy the senses of the Lord becomes satisfied because Kṛṣṇa is the Supersoul, and the individual living entity is His part and parcel. If He is satisfied, then the living entity is satisfied. If the stomach is satisfied, then all the parts of the body are satisfied, for they receive nourishment through the stomach. When one of my Godbrothers began to fan Guru Mahārāja on a very hot day, Guru Mahārāja asked, "Why are



you fanning me all of a sudden?" The boy replied, "Because if you are satisfied, we are all satisfied." This is the formula—we should not try to satisfy our senses separately but should try to satisfy Kṛṣṇa's senses. Then naturally we will become satisfied.

A Kṛṣṇa conscious person is always trying to give satisfaction to Kṛṣṇa, and this is the beginning of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Because in the impersonal conception there is no form of God, there is no opportunity to satisfy His senses. However, one who sees Kṛṣṇa as master can render service. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa is referred to as Hṛṣīkeśa, master of the senses. When it is understood that the Absolute Truth is the master of the senses, that our senses are products of His senses and that they should therefore be utilized for the satisfaction of His senses, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which is dormant within everyone, begins to awaken. Once Caitanya Mahāprabhu asked, "What is the difference between the neutral position in relation to Kṛṣṇa and the relationship of master and servant?" In both cases one can understand that Kṛṣṇa is great, but in the neutral position there is no inclination for service. Therefore the master-servant relationship between Kṛṣṇa and the living entity is more elevated. Then when one attains friendship with Kṛṣṇa, another transcendental quality is added. There is the conception that God is great and that service must be rendered unto Him, but there is also an extra feeling: "Kṛṣṇa is my friend. Therefore I must treat Him in such a way that He will be happy." With a friend we are not simply content with rendering service but in making him actually happy and satisfied. There is also equality in such a relationship, for Kṛṣṇa and the devotee relate on equal terms. Thus devotees in this position actually forget Kṛṣṇa's superiority. When Kṛṣṇa's boy friends used to ride on Kṛṣṇa's shoulders playing games, they did not think that they were greater than Him. There is no question of sense gratification or self-glorification, for the relationship is based on pure love. The devotee's only desire is to give pleasure to Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa also takes His friends on His

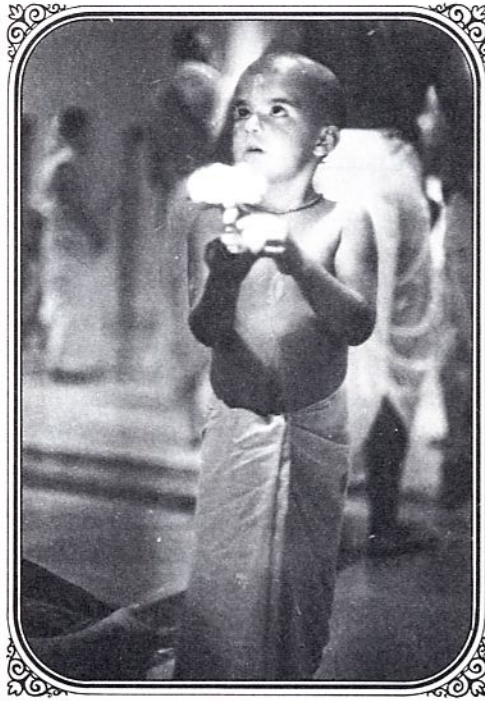
shoulders to derive pleasure from them. Sometimes a person simply accepts the fact that his friend will slap his face—but there is no question of inferiority in such an action. When friendship and mutual pleasure are the basis of the relationship, there is no question of insult or inferiority.

The whole basis of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and a relationship with Kṛṣṇa is the pleasure potency of Kṛṣṇa Himself. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the damsels of Vraja and Kṛṣṇa's cowherd boy friends are all expansions of Kṛṣṇa's pleasure potency. We all have a tendency toward pleasure because the source from which we emanate is fully potent in pleasure. Impersonalists cannot think in these terms, for they deny the pleasure potency; therefore the impersonalist philosophy is incomplete and inferior. Those who are in Kṛṣṇa consciousness recognize the pleasure potency in Kṛṣṇa and in all His paraphernalia—His friends, servants, father, mother and consort. All relationships with Kṛṣṇa which aim at satisfying Kṛṣṇa's senses are manifestations of Kṛṣṇa's pleasure potency.

As far as the individual soul is concerned, it is originally a part and parcel of this pleasure potency, of the reservoir of pleasure Himself. However, due to contact with material nature, the soul has forgotten its actual position and has become trapped in the evolutionary process of transmigration from one body to another. Thus one struggles hard for existence. Now we must extricate ourselves from the sufferings of the struggle, from the countless transmigrations that force us to suffer the miseries of birth, old age, disease and death, and come to the point of our eternal life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That eternal life is possible. If one tries his best in this human form of life, in his next life he will get a spiritual body. The spiritual body is already within the gross material body, but it will develop only as soon as one becomes free from the contamination of this material existence. That is the aim of human life and the actual self-interest of all people. Self-interest is actually realizing, "I am part and parcel of God. I have to return to the kingdom of God and join with Him." Just

as we have a social life here, God has a social life in the spiritual kingdom, and we can join Him there. It is not that after finishing this body we become void. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna, "Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings, nor in the future shall any of us cease to be." (Bg. 2.12) Our existence is therefore eternal, and the changes of birth and death are simply the changes of the temporary material bodies.

The actual process for achieving eternal life is not at all difficult. This process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is based on knowledge received from Kṛṣṇa, the most perfect being. Knowledge received from others is defective because the conditioned soul is certain to commit mistakes, certain to be illusioned, certain to cheat and certain to have imperfect senses. The knowledge received from Kṛṣṇa, however, actually enables us to see Kṛṣṇa. Someone may challenge, "Can you show me God?" and our answer is, "Yes. God can be seen at every moment." Kṛṣṇa says, *raso'ham apsu kaunteya*: "I am the taste of water." We drink water every day, and the taste of water is there, so if we think of this taste as Kṛṣṇa, we will have begun realizing God every day. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa further says, *prabhāsmi saśi-sūryayoḥ*: "I am the light of the sun and the moon." Every day we receive sunlight, and in the evening there is moonshine, so if we think of the source of these emanations, we will ultimately become God conscious. There are so many similar instances given in *Bhagavad-gītā*, for Kṛṣṇa is the beginning, middle and end of all manifestations. If we want to become God conscious and realize our own essence, it is not very difficult. We only have to understand God in truth—how He appears, how He disappears and what His functions are—then we can become eligible to enter into the kingdom of God. After quitting this material body, a person who understands God, Kṛṣṇa, does not return again to earth to accept another material body. Where does he go? Kṛṣṇa says, *mām eti*: "He comes to Me." That should be the aim of any intelligent human being. ❧



GURUKULA

NEW HOPE FOR HUMANITY

Satsvarūpa dāsa Gosvāmī

Why There Is a Need for GURUKULA

Anyone who visits a few of the hundreds of big universities in the United States and other advanced nations will see an impressive array of opulence. Every big state university has dozens of modern buildings with plush student unions, skyscraper dormitories, vast stadiums, acres of scenic campus grounds, etc. But what is the result of all this external opulence in education? By way of answer, there is a suitable allegory told by our spiritual master.

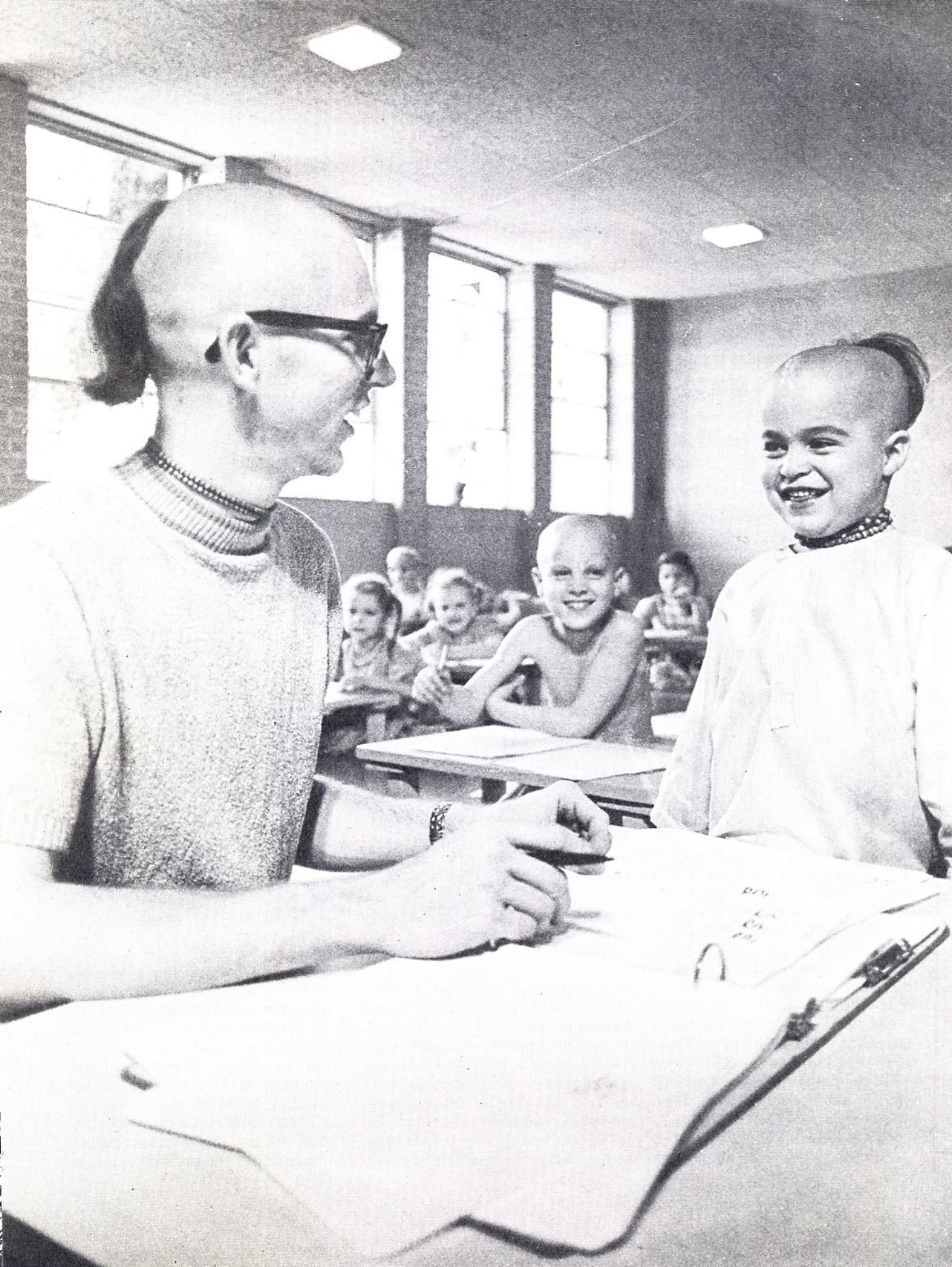
One time a rumor began that the Himalayan Mountains were going to give birth to offspring. Upon hearing this, many people gathered at the foot of these famous mountains because everyone wanted to see what kind of offspring such huge and formidable mountains would produce. With great

anticipation, crowds of people gathered, but they were confused and amazed when they saw many rats come running out from the Himalayas. The greatest mountains in the world had given birth to a pack of rats! Similarly, although we have many big campuses staffed by professional managerial administrators, with many offices and many professors with doctorates, the offspring of these universities are frustrated men and women who do not know the actual purpose of life.

Considering this deficiency, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness has begun a school named Gurukula (which means, in Sanskrit, "the place of the *guru* or spiritual master"). Gurukula is revolutionary because it is producing devotees of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One who becomes a self-

realized devotee of Kṛṣṇa automatically develops all good qualities and is a first-class educated and cultured person because it is a fact that human life is meant for self-realization, for finding one's eternal relationship with the Supreme. A human being who neglects self-realization is actually no more than an animal, even if he is very proud of his scientific advancement. Try as he may by attempting to enjoy with the body or mind, a human being cannot be happy unless he develops knowledge of himself as a spirit soul who is an eternal part and parcel of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. Yet self-realization is the all-important subject which is not taught in the schools and universities of the advanced nations of the modern world.

The first step in self-realization is to realize one's identity as separate from



the body: "I am not this body but spirit soul." This realization is essential for anyone who wants to be actually successful and happy in *this* world, and furthermore it is the first step toward entrance into the eternal spiritual world. It is not that one can simply say, "I'm not this body," but one must actually realize it. This is not as simple as it may at first seem. We are not these bodies but pure consciousness, yet somehow or other we have become covered by a bodily dress. If one actually wants the happiness and independence to transcend death, one must establish himself in his constitutional

taint of the religious or ethnic sectarianism which leads the less educated dogmatic religionist to argue that God is revealed only to Jews, only to Christians, only to Hindus, etc. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the eternal science of God and is therefore universal.

The reason that Kṛṣṇa consciousness was only recently introduced in the West is that it requires to be taught by one who is a pure devotee of the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa. It has to be taught by one who understands thoroughly that God, the Supreme Person, is not the property of one small sect but is universal and full of

needs math and English to get along in this world, he also needs self-realization in order to practically know his own identity, his duty in life, and how to solve the problems of material suffering. If children can learn that each one of us is actually an eternal spirit and is meant to serve the Supreme, they will not waste the great opportunity of human life; such children can grow up to truly help others find the real meaning of life.

Formerly, in classical Vedic society, influential citizens sent their children at five years of age to the home of the spiritual master to be trained in aus-



Excellent facilities: Śrīla Prabhupāda takes a tour of the school grounds with Gurukula teachers and children.

position as pure consciousness. Each of us is a minute spirit spark who is hankering for the qualities of the whole—knowledge, bliss and eternity—but these hankerings are frustrated due to the material body. The information on how to obtain the goal of the soul's hankering is given in *Bhagavad-gītā* and other Vedic literatures, and the pursuit of this goal is meant to be taken up by the practical lifelong study of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The authority of these teachings rests on the Vedic literatures which were compiled in Sanskrit five thousand years ago in India. These teachings are completely free from the slightest

love for all people. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda is the first pure devotee to bring the Vedic process of devotional service to the West. Previous to his coming, there was no Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, and it is he who within the last six years has given the inspiration and guidance for almost a hundred authorized Kṛṣṇa consciousness centers.

Now the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement has begun the Gurukula educational project, a primary school for children from ages five to fifteen. From an early age, children can learn the Absolute Truth along with their reading, writing and arithmetic. Just as a child

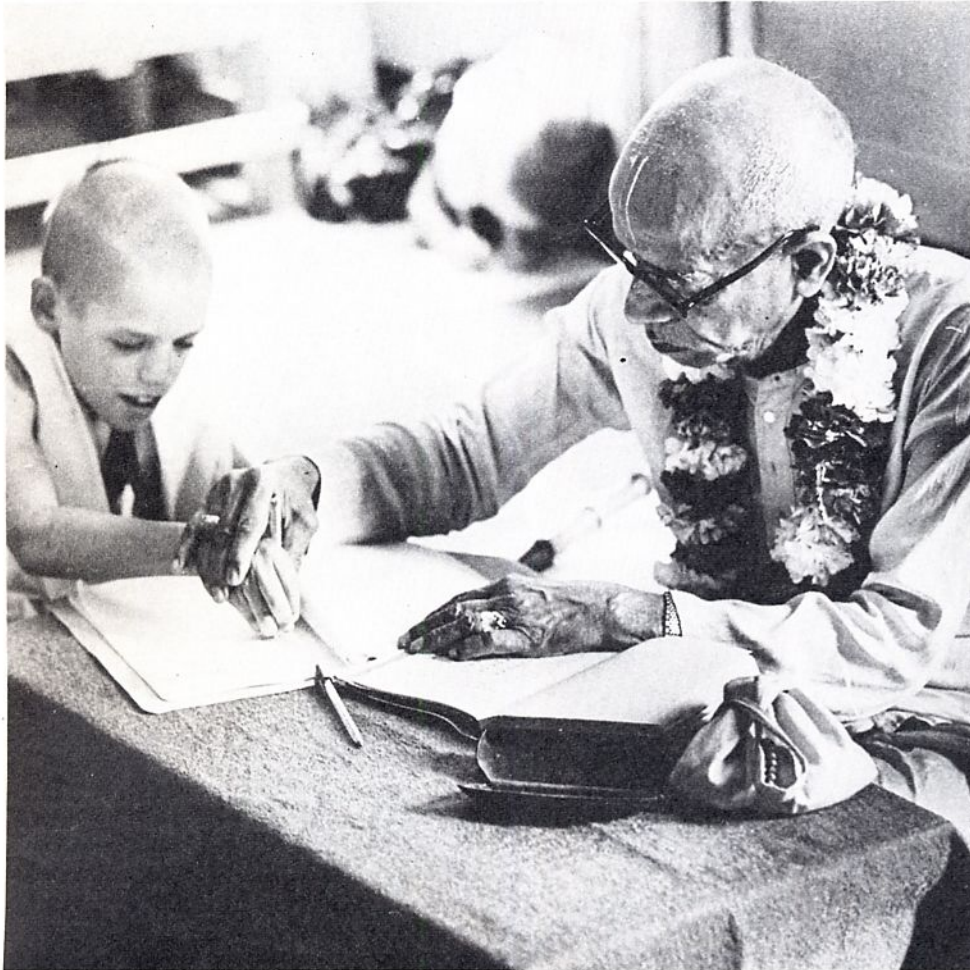
terity, sense control and God consciousness, for thus in later life, no matter what occupation they would enter, they would not forget the purpose of life as service to Kṛṣṇa. To train children from the early age of five in these devotional practices is to train real leaders and good citizens. Indeed, one cannot expect a good society without Gurukula. If children are taught an artificial standard of sense gratification, their brains become spoiled, for by the time they are twelve years old they think that life is meant simply for enjoyment of the senses to the fullest extent. We cannot expect sane leaders or responsible citizens from such an

education system. However, children who are shown by example that serving Kṛṣṇa in many ways is the real happiness of life—children who come to understand transcendental knowledge regarding their eternal, blissful servitorship to God—will be happy and useful in society.

One who does not know the real purpose of life cannot help anyone, not even himself. The great leaders of humanity, therefore, are the great devo-

less, charitable, mild, clean, simple, benevolent, peaceful, completely attached to Kṛṣṇa, free from material hankering, meek, steady, self-controlled, eating no more than required, sane, respectful, humble, grave, compassionate, friendly, poetic, expert, silent. These are the first-class human qualities that are being developed at Gurukula. The leaders of every nation are supposed to protect all the citizens under their jurisdiction, not encourage

occupations strive to go back to Godhead by their practical daily work, under the guidance of leaders who have thoroughly realized the principles of God consciousness, is not merely theoretical or utopian. It is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* that Kṛṣṇa Himself has created in man all the qualities needed for a socially and spiritually successful society in which everyone can work together in God consciousness. Such a society would offer the highest benefit to all living entities, even to the animals who live within the state. However, in order to be successful, such a state must operate under the strong administration of a God conscious leader, and as long as there are no God conscious



Spiritual guidance: In the wonder of an atmosphere surcharged with love of Kṛṣṇa, children take genuine pleasure in their schoolwork.

tees. From the Vedic histories of India we learn that in bygone ages the great leaders were all holy sages who were able to give the citizens guidance in the real mission of life.

The qualities of a devotee are mentioned as follows in the Vedic literature: kind to everyone, does not quarrel with anyone, fixed in the Absolute Truth, equal to everyone, fault-

less, charitable, mild, clean, simple, benevolent, peaceful, completely attached to Kṛṣṇa, free from material hankering, meek, steady, self-controlled, eating no more than required, sane, respectful, humble, grave, compassionate, friendly, poetic, expert, silent. These are the first-class human qualities that are being developed at Gurukula. The leaders of every nation are supposed to protect all the citizens under their jurisdiction, not encourage

them to live in the illusion of sense gratification, thinking that increased material standards, more cars and bigger tv's will make them happy. The real leader is one who can simultaneously protect the citizens and give them the opportunity to cultivate self-realization while living in their occupations.

A society in which people of all

leaders, such a state is impossible. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, whatever a great man does, others will follow. Nowadays the leaders of society are the lowest class of men, for they lead people only toward the illusory goal of happiness obtained by increased material sense gratification. It is this illusory leadership that results in the corruption, war, crime, poverty, pollution and myriad other problems that plague the modern world. Only if men of saintly quality can lead the affairs of the nations of the world can there be peace, prosperity and spiritual advancement for all. This is the version of all the world's scriptures: the real





leader is the man who can give spiritual guidance, and the good, sober citizen is one who is trained in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Gurukula has been established to fill the need for an institution to train such leaders.

THE PHILOSOPHY of GURUKULA

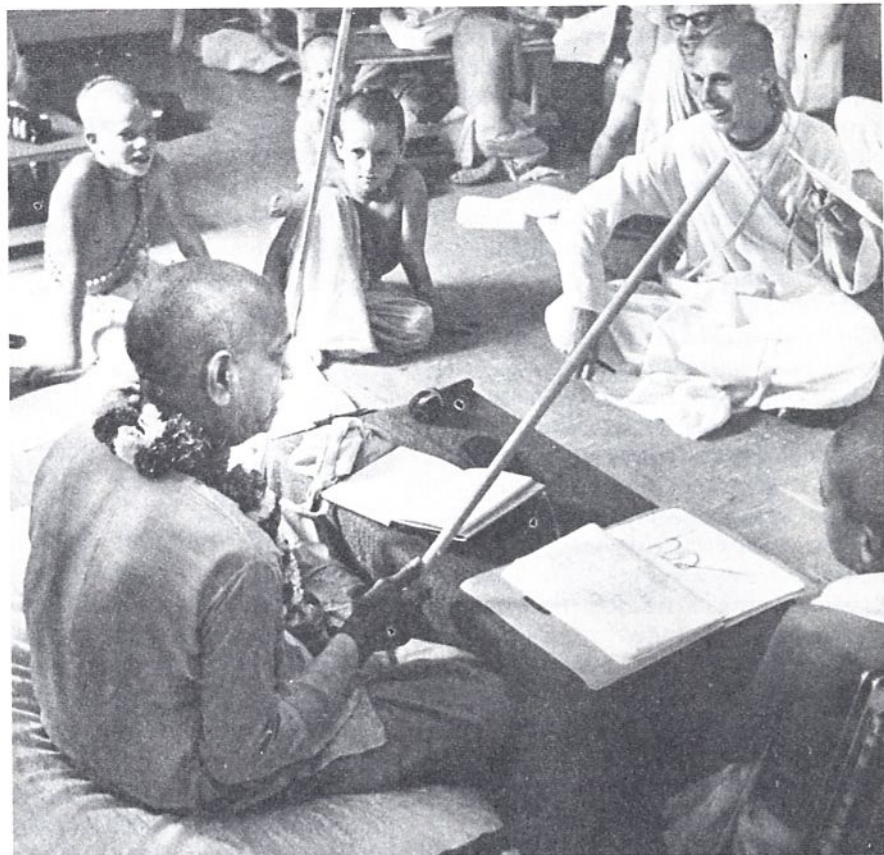
By studying the lives of great devotees, we learn that they started devotional service from the earliest age. Our spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C.

devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa who lived long ago and was trained in the devotional principles from the earliest age. When he was only five years old he used to tell his fellow classmates, "My dear friends, now is the time to learn what Kṛṣṇa consciousness is, while we are still very young." Whenever the teacher left the room for recess, he would speak in this way.

At first Prahāda's young friends told him: "Leave us alone. We are only five years old; let us play. When we are

and the middle twenty years, in which the sex urge is strong, in raising and maintaining a family. Thus sixty years are spent without self-realization. How much time is left to find the real value of life and begin eternal loving service to Kṛṣṇa?"

With this consideration in mind, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda has asked his disciples to reintroduce the original Vedic system of Gurukula. It is described in the Vedic literatures that children living



Practical instruction: Devoted, fully trained teachers work personally with each child. At right, Śrīla Prabhupāda gives a Sanskrit lesson for the benefit of the Gurukula children and staff.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, gives credit to his father for encouraging him from childhood to practice devotional service in his play. The Vedic histories also cite the same training in the life of great devotees such as Mahārāja Parīkṣit, who used to imitate worship of the temple Deity in his own childish play at home. Mahārāja Parīkṣit later became king of the entire world and leader of the most successful God conscious monarchy in history.

Prahāda Mahārāja is another great

older we will take the time to learn about Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

Prahāda, however, spoke with great compassion to the young boys and girls. "My dear friends," he said, "we must take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness without delay." Prahāda explained that the life span of a human being is at most one hundred years, and it is calculated that the first twenty years are wasted in the games and sports of youth, the last twenty years in rest and retirement in a state of greater or lesser infirmity,

in a God conscious society would go to the home of the spiritual master at five years of age. Even if the children were of a very aristocratic home, they would submit themselves to the spiritual master as menial servants to perform service for him and receive spiritual instruction. It is described that a young student would rise early, spend all day receiving knowledge and training from the spiritual master, and in the evening he would eat a little rice and then go to sleep. He would

think such life great fun because he was serving Kṛṣṇa. Nowadays, children are spoiled at a very early age; they miss the real point of life because they are mistakenly taught that to please the senses is the all in all. Thus they take to a kind of pampered animalism for the rest of their days, working in order to maintain a high standard of eating, sleeping, sex and defense, and they become useless men who are unable to perform real service for humanity.

At Gurukula, however, children are carefully guided to appreciate that serving Kṛṣṇa is fun. One of the basic requirements of real spiritual life is to learn how to control the senses. Bodily pleasure is flickering and intoxicating, and one cannot actually enjoy it because of its momentary nature. One who can come to understand the philosophy of the self as spirit soul will never leave it in favor of a whimsical life of unrestricted sense gratification. In his book *Beyond Birth and Death*, Śrīla Prabhupāda has written, "We have to understand that if we want to continue the artificial enjoyment of the body we will not be able to obtain our position of eternal enjoyment." Therefore Gurukula works to give realization that the purpose of life is to serve Kṛṣṇa and to gain freedom from the shackles of material life.

After being trained in Kṛṣṇa consciousness a man can marry and enter household life and yet not fall prey to unrestricted sense gratification. Materialistic householders live simply to work hard and spend money for family maintenance, sex and comfortable sleep at night. Thus they ruin their lives in the darkness of ignorance. But if one learns about the real meaning of life by hearing from the spiritual master at Gurukula, he can enter any occupation in the material world and not be materially implicated. In fact, unless one understands the real meaning of life, he cannot be successful as a citizen, as a family man or in any other sphere of life. Therefore the philosophy of Gurukula is a prime necessity for the present day.

THE CURRICULUM

Religious principles such as austerity,

truthfulness, cleanliness and mercy are essential to any human civilization. Even though a secular state naturally wishes to declare itself impartial to religious sectarianism, it cannot abandon these religious principles, for in their absence we have pilfering, prostitution, corruption and cruelty. However, if one becomes a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, he automatically develops all good qualities. Therefore, in addition to their academic subjects, Śrīla Prabhupāda has asked

us to teach the children at Gurukula four things: to always think of Kṛṣṇa, to become His devotees, to worship Him and to offer Him obeisances.

It is a well-known fact that one becomes like his associates. For example, if one associates with thieves he will become a thief, or if one associates with scholars he will become a scholar. Similarly, one can become saintly in the association of saintly devotees who are guided by a bona

Gurukula is ultimately directed by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, whose correspondence with his disciples in Dallas shows how carefully he guided, advised and encouraged the program from its inception. In October of 1971 he wrote: "The important matter is that the children are taken care of nicely. . . . Now you organize our Kṛṣṇa conscious school on the basis of a kindergarten and primary school for children up to fifteen years old. As you develop our program there, I shall give you more hints." Similarly, in December, Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote: "Encourage them to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa as much as possible, but there is no question of force or punishment. Try as far as possible to discipline them with love and affection so that they develop a taste for austerity in life and think it great fun to serve Kṛṣṇa in many ways. Rising early and attending *maṅgala-ārati* [the first temple worship of the day, which is conducted at 4:30 a.m.] is enough austerity. Besides that, let them learn, chant, dance, and eat much *prasādam* if they like, and do not mind if they have a playful nature."

Gurukula in Dallas is located in large and excellent facilities. When ISKCON was negotiating for purchase of the school buildings, at one point it became doubtful whether the owner would sell, and Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote: "I have been getting good reports that you are all serious to develop this program, so I am sure that Kṛṣṇa will bless you with the desired building. Good things do not come so easily; you know the difficulties that I encountered in my first year in your country. Sometimes I did not even know where I was to live, nor when I came did I have any friends. But I was always determined to do everything possible to fulfill the desire of my spiritual master, and despite all difficulties I always remained enthusiastic. So do not diminish your program in any way now. Continue the school

The Guide of The Spiritu



His Divine
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

fide spiritual master. By associating with those who are vital in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the children at Gurukula also follow and become Kṛṣṇa conscious themselves.

Children take seriously whatever they learn from their elders. Therefore the teachers at Gurukula teach not simply by precept but also by example. Activities in devotional service begin with chanting and hearing about the pastimes of the Supreme Personality of

Godhead, and the teachers at Gurukula are committed to this hearing and chanting process. The chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa is especially recommended in the modern age for a person interested in God realization, and the children at Gurukula take this up with great enthusiasm by association with older devotees who are themselves enthusiastic over this great chanting for deliverance—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma

Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. The children take it up because the older devotees are doing it. They could be singing the latest sensuous rubbish broadcast over the radio, but instead they are singing the glories of the Lord—simply by right association.

Although in mundane schools the academic qualifications of the teachers are carefully considered, their personal character and habits are often most abominable. Indeed, it would be a rare institution that could boast that its teachers are free from smoking, drinking, gambling and loose sexual relationships. According to the Vedic system, however, which is followed by the present-day Gurukula, the teacher must not only be learned but also spotless in character. To be a teacher at Gurukula, one must strictly refrain from gambling, intoxication, meat eating and illicit sex, and, most importantly, one must be an initiated devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore the strength behind Gurukula is the ultimate teacher—the bona fide spiritual master—for it is the spiritual master's association that is the cause of all spiritual progress.

The Vedic literature reveals that Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute Truth, is certainly the Supreme Person, and He appeared on earth five thousand years ago. To attract everyone back to Godhead, He displayed His transcendental pastimes here just as they are going on eternally in the spiritual world. These pastimes are described in our spiritual master's book, *Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*, and the children at Gurukula very much enjoy acting out the Lord's activities. One child will play that he is Kṛṣṇa, and another will play that he is His brother, Balarāma, as They go off to the woods to find the cows. Sometimes They meet demons sent by Kaṁsa. Kṛṣṇa kills the demons and dances and plays with His friends, who are one hundred percent absorbed in love of Kṛṣṇa.

The sublime, exalted activity of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and His intimate unalloyed devotees cannot be understood even by the greatest philosophers so long as they attempt to understand them on the basis of mental speculation and concoction.

Guidance of the Spiritual Master



His Divine Grace
Swami Prabhupāda

project enthusiastically and expect Kṛṣṇa's mercy at all times. Everything will come out all right."

By Kṛṣṇa's grace the purchase went through successfully, but in one letter to Śrīla Prabhupāda, the Gurukula president expressed some concern about taking on such a seemingly worldly enterprise as the purchase and maintenance of big buildings. His Divine Grace replied: "Externally we may behave like ordinary men, but internally we remain fixed in the service of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. The Māyāvādī [philosopher who thinks God impersonal or void] cannot accept this fact, and he takes devotional service to be an ordinary material affair. You should never, however, accept the impersonal philosophy at any time."

His Divine Grace continues to give all guidance regarding Gurukula, as can be seen in a recent letter to one of the Gurukula teachers: "I am very glad to learn that the children at Gurukula are making good progress in their Kṛṣṇa conscious education. That is very good news. Yes, if we simply train them properly they will come to the highest standard of Vaiṣṇava devotees. And what is that training? They should simply be engaged in such a way that they are somehow or other remembering Kṛṣṇa at every moment, that's all. It is not some mechanical process: 'If we force them in such a way, they will come out like this.' No. We are persons and Kṛṣṇa is a person, and our relationship with Kṛṣṇa is always open as a voluntary agreement. That voluntary attitude—'Yes, Kṛṣṇa, I shall gladly cooperate. Whatever You say.'—that ready willingness to obey is only possible if there is love. Forcing will not make me agree. But if there is love, oh, I shall gladly do it. That is *bhakti*. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Similarly, if we train children by developing and encouraging their propensity to love Kṛṣṇa, then we shall be successful in educating them to the topmost standard."



The mundane mind takes Kṛṣṇa to be an ordinary historical person and His activities to be fiction, but according to all Vedic scriptures and the disciplic succession of spiritual masters, God is the Supreme Person, and He engages in pastimes of love for the pleasure of His devotees. In other words, the dry scholars and professors will have to take lessons from the children of Gurukula regarding the relishable nature of the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. Just in their playing about Kṛṣṇa, they are realizing that God is a person and that although He is a person He is the Supreme Lord who maintains all.

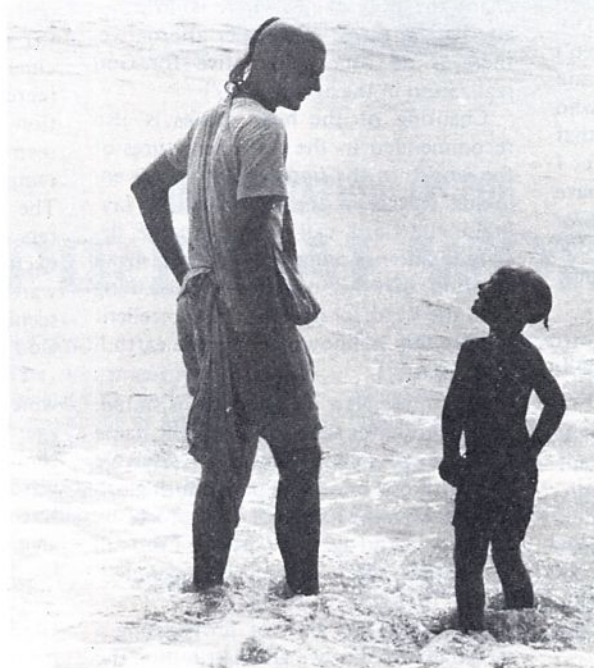
As for classroom academics, Sanskrit, English, primary math, history and geography are taught during six hours of daily study, as described below.

GURUKULA in DALLAS

The first large Gurukula school of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness has been operating for a year on a large estate near the downtown area of Dallas, Texas. As of this writing, there are twenty boys and twenty girls attending this transcendental boarding school. The classroom atmosphere is very serious, and the teachers maintain strict discipline. The classes are so arranged that one teacher can instruct twenty students at once, even though they are at various levels of age and achievement. All the students work simultaneously on individual assignments given by the teacher, and thus the whole class works silently while the teacher at his desk privately instructs each student one at a time. For example, one student may be learning to write the very first letters of the Sanskrit alphabet. The teacher will go over the work with the student and then give him an assignment to write out. As he returns to his seat to do this, another student, who may already be writing whole verses in Sanskrit, is

given further private instruction and an assignment suitable to his or her advancement. Thus all ages can be accommodated side by side in any class, and within a short time the students advance very quickly. They also take to the serious nature of the classroom with great appreciation and are very happy to engage their minds in directed study.

The teachers at Gurukula are all initiated disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Jamadagni dāsa Brahmācārī teaches



Purity: A child's purity is confirmed and nurtured by a pure teacher.

in the Sanskrit department. Rūpavilāsa dāsa Adhikārī and his wife Candrikā devī dāsī are English instructors, and Jayajagadīśa dāsa Brahmācārī and Dīnātāriṇī devī dāsī are math and geography teachers. The teachers associate constantly with the children and live with them. The students' parents visit the school on semi-annual "parents' weekends," but the real instruction comes from the teachers, who have dedicated their full time and energy to this upbringing of children in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The children study six hours per day in a six-day week, and

on Sunday they are free to play as they like, imitating the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and taking part in the Sunday festival that is held at the temple for the many guests who attend.

GURUKULA and THE FUTURE

There is a Sanskrit saying, "Judge the process by the result." We invite all interested persons to visit Gurukula in Dallas, Texas. Rather than merely tell you that these children are happy, we invite you to come and see for yourself. There is no doubt about it; they are coming out successful. They are already well behaved and happy and are advancing quickly in all academic subjects. Moreover, they are becoming thoroughly realized in what *Bhagavad-gītā* calls the "king of education." We very much look forward to the time when these children will come of age and usher in the new era of worldwide Kṛṣṇa consciousness. There is nothing so rare, pure and valuable in this world as a devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; therefore, one should appreciate the serious work of Gurukula.

We ask all readers, regardless of their religious upbringing or philosophy of life, to consider the youth of today and the future of their countries and the world. At the rate things are going, civilization is headed for total barbarianism. Gurukula, therefore, is a practical Godsend, and it is to the credit of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda that it is working right now, even as you read this article! The students are there, the teachers are there, the result is being produced. Gurukula is a practical, tangible, workable and successful project which should be continued and expanded upon. Let us all endeavor to familiarize ourselves with this important educational project and offer encouragement and help in any way we can.

Parents who wish to consider sending their children to Gurukula for a transcendental education leading to freedom from all the anxieties of material life may write to Gurukula's headmaster, Mohanānanda dāsa, for further information or an appointment to visit the school. GURUKULA, 5430 GURLEY STREET, DALLAS, TEXAS 75223.

Letters

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

The following exchange is reprinted from The Rising Nepal, a daily newspaper published in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Sir,

I am surprised that the International Society for Krishna Consciousness plans to build a temple in Nepal for the dissemination of spiritual knowledge. I feel they are undertaking this enterprise on the wrong end. They should be advised to open more centres in the West rather than waste their time and money establishing temples in this part of the world. It is the West that is at present suffering from an excess of materialism and therefore in urgent need of spiritual teaching. Haven't the members of the Kṛṣṇa cult, and especially Śrī Gargamuni dāsa Svāmī, who is at present in Kathmandu, seen that there are already enough temples here? I am sure visitors from the West will have no problem listening to sermons on *Gītā* or accounts of the Great Epics in our temples. So why do we need their temple?

Yours,

Gautam Shakya

Swoyambhu, Kathmandu

Sir,

In regard to the letter of Gautam Shakya, the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement is dedicated to fulfilling the following prediction of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the great exponent of the science of *bhakti-yoga* or devotion to the all-attractive Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which is stated in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

*pr̥thivīte āche yata nagarādi grāma
sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*

"In all the villages and towns all over the world, this *saṅkīrtana* movement will be preached everywhere."

Some 500 years ago in Bengal, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself appeared as Caitanya Mahāprabhu and preached this *saṅkīrtana* movement of the congregational chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahāmantra*—*Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare*! *Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare*. My Guru Mahārāja [spiritual master], His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, being a practical and sincere servant of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, is just trying to fulfill this prediction of the Lord. He has established over seventy training centers all over the world to scientifically instruct interested students in the science of *bhakti-yoga*. In

addition, thousands of missionaries have been sent throughout the world to teach *sanātana-dharma* [the science of the soul's relationship with Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa]. Therefore, under the instruction of our Guru Mahārāja, we have come to your city of Kathmandu to scientifically train the Nepalese people in the science of *bhakti-yoga*.

It is stated in the *Bṛhan-nārādīya Purāṇa*: *harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam* | *kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā*. "Chant the holy name, chant the holy name, chant the holy name! There is no other alternative, there is no other alternative, there is no other alternative for God realization in the age of Kali."

Chanting of the holy names is also recommended in the other scriptures of the world. In the book of Isaiah it is enjoined: "And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things: this is known on all the earth." (Isa. 12:4-5)

And in the New Testament it is stated: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved . . . That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people." (Rom. 10:13, 15:6, 15:11)

Therefore, we are not propagating a sectarian idea, but we are distributing the religion of pure love of God. In our Society we have Jews, Christians, Catholics, Protestants, Parsis, Moslems, Hindus, etc., and all of us are chanting the names of God. The age of Kali (this present age) is what Mr. Shakya so rightly characterizes as one of an "excess of materialism." However, in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is stated in one very nice verse sung by Śukadeva Gosvāmī to Mahārāja Parīkṣit, *kaler doṣa-nidhe rājann asti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ*: "My dear King, this age of Kali is full of faults, but there is one good opportunity." *Kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya mukta-saṅgaḥ paraṁ vrajet*: "Simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* one can be liberated and go back to Godhead."

Unfortunately, I do not find your city of Kathmandu free of an "excess of materialism." I am quite surprised that you have not recognized the degeneration presently existing in your city. I may just

cite some examples in this connection. (1) In the same newspaper in which our activities were reported you will find an article calling for an end to existing corruption and injustice. But you will also find a full-page advertisement to attract people to become intoxicated. (2) I have counted more liquor shops on New Road than you would ordinarily find on an American city street. (3) *Gāñjā* is freely offered in the streets although it is illegal in the U.S. (4) Many of the Nepalese youth are turning away from their religious tradition and taking to the Western culture of "eat, drink and be merry." (5) It seems that more crowds jam the cinema shows daily than attend the *āratis* [ceremonies] at the temples. (6) In addition, I have seen that the cinema houses seem to be in a better condition than the temples and seem to be better managed. The temples have become sleeping quarters and places to excrete stool and urine, exchange money and sell *gāñjā* and other wares to tourists. I have not found transcendental instruction in the science of God in any of the temples.

These are only a few of the diseases which are characteristic of this present age. My advice is that the learned men of Nepal organize and initiate a program to ward off these diseases—not only in Kathmandu but the whole world—and give scientific training and education in the science of love of God.

You will also be pleased to know that all the members of our Society refrain from eating meat, fish, eggs, onions and garlic, and they also refrain from illicit sex life, gambling, and intoxicants such as *gāñjā*, *pān*, cigarettes and even coffee and tea. Surely if the intelligent people of the world take up this movement very seriously and thus restrain their senses from such nasty habits, the whole world atmosphere may be transformed into Vaikuṅṭha (one of freedom from anxiety). All the modern problems pertaining to health, economics, population, politics, ecology, war, etc., may be solved by the practical application of this great science, as outlined in the text of *Bhagavad-gītā*.

We are presently holding classes on *Bhagavad-gītā* every evening at the Nepal Cultural Association in Kathmandu, and everyone is cordially invited to attend these meetings.

Sincerely,
Gargamuni Svāmī



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For want of a taste of things spiritual, a grave doubt arises in the minds of those who are enchain- ed by worldly knowledge. On hearing a narration of the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, they think that the truth regard- ing Kṛṣṇa is a mental concoction cre- ated by the imaginative brains of cer- tain learned scholars out of material drawn from mundane principles. With the object of removing this harmful doubt, Lord Brahmā, the chief created person in this universe, distinguishes between spirit and matter in a rational manner and then explains the pure pastimes of Kṛṣṇa according to realiza- tion he obtained in a trance of unmixed ecstasy. This is the subject of the Vedic scripture known as the *Brahma-saṁhitā*. Brahmā then concludes that the form of Kṛṣṇa is all existence, all knowledge, and all bliss, whereas all mundane ex- periences are full of palpable ignorance.

When people who are not devotees hear about Kṛṣṇa, see a picture of Kṛṣṇa, or see the worship of the Deity of Kṛṣṇa, they sometimes think that Kṛṣṇa is accepted and worshiped as God by foolish sentimentalists simply on the strength of legendary or mythological scriptures. Because such less intelligent persons are accustomed to understand- ing things by the direct experience of their limited material senses, they can- not understand the transcendental form and absolute nature of Kṛṣṇa, who is described as the Supreme Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead, by the Vedic scriptures. Because these fools, employing the blunt tools of sense, mind and intelligence, indulge in endless speculation regarding the nature and existence of the Absolute Truth, they infer that the words of authorized scripture, which are in fact the very words of God, Kṛṣṇa, of whom they claim to be in search, are also tinged with ignorance.



THE CAUSE OF ALL CAUSES

These so-called pilgrims in search of the Absolute are compared with the owl, who sits all day with his eyes closed and then opens his eyes when night falls. When the owl is informed that there is a sun whose illumination dissipates the darkness of the night, the owl will argue that it is not possible because he has not seen it with his own eyes. This is called owl philosophy. God is a fact and can be seen, but we have to be prepared to cleanse our vision to see God. A sound awakens a sleeping man from the travels of his dreams, and he finds his real self lying in bed. Similarly, all human society is sleeping on the lap of material nature, and the *Vedas* are calling us through the agency of the authorized spiritual master to awaken from our material dream and enter our real life of Kṛṣṇa consciousness by hearing authorized philosophy describing the nature of God.

God, Kṛṣṇa, is a fact. A blind man may not believe in the existence of the sun, but there is a sun nevertheless. Similarly, there is God, and He is the origin of everything. Everything we experience has an original cause. Whether we examine a harmonium, a tape recorder, a house, a city, or whatever, we will find a cause behind everything. If one is asked where he has originally come from, he will answer that he has come from his mother and father. If we ask where his father and mother came from, the answer will be that

they came from their fathers and mothers. We can conjecture that if we go on searching in this way, we will come to the ultimate cause of every- thing, the Supreme Father—God or Kṛṣṇa. However, to save us the bothera- tion of so much research work, Kṛṣṇa has kindly given us all information and directions regarding His transcendental existence. From the scriptures we understand that the one duty in human life is to become fully conversant with and obedient to the words and instruc- tions of God, just as a citizen of a country is expected to be fully obe- dient to that country's law. Ignorance of the law is not excused. Therefore, it is necessary for human society to gain a practical understanding of reli- gion or God consciousness. Now we are unconscious that there is Kṛṣṇa, but by hearing and chanting from authorized scripture, one becomes aware or con- scious of God.

Although Kṛṣṇa is the cause of everything, He Himself is not caused by anything. In the material world everything has its cause, but when we examine further, we find that each cause has in turn another cause, and this cause and effect goes on and on. That is the difference between God and God's creation. God is the cause of all causes, yet He Himself has no cause beyond Himself. Therefore, it is a qualification of God that He is supremely independent. If we wish to understand God, we must find that person from whom everything has come, by whom everything is main- tained, and into whom everything is merged to rest, who is the controller of everything but is not controlled by anyone. That is Kṛṣṇa. Although it has now become fashionable to claim one- self to be God or to say that everyone is God, these foolish statements only show that one has no knowledge of

by **Hamsadūta Dāsa**
(ISKCON HEIDELBERG)



The problems of an imitation God.

who God is. Whereas God is the supreme controller, we are controlled at every moment. We are controlled by our senses, which oblige us to eat, sleep, defend ourselves and engage in sex in material life, and we are further controlled by material nature's law of birth, old age, disease and death. No one can deny or challenge this fact. Who can say, "I am never controlled but always free?" No one can say that, for everyone is controlled, whether by his wife, his boss, community, country, or some other agent. And, most certainly, everyone is controlled by nature's law. For example, no one wants to become old or diseased, but old age and disease come upon us. Similarly, although no one wants to die, everyone must. Yet still people foolishly declare, "I am God." What is the use of being God if one is subjected to so many unwanted problems? To claim to be God is simply nonsensical. It is better to become the servant of God than foolishly claim to be God Himself.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says, "The material energy is very difficult to overcome, but one who surrenders un-

to Me can very easily cross beyond it." (Bg. 7.14) Kṛṣṇa is not a creation of the mundane minds of mundane wranglers who are entangled in the mundane world. The mundane world is a creation of Kṛṣṇa as a gift to the rebellious souls who want to enjoy mundane things because of their willful disobedience toward the Absolute Truth. The living entities are constitutionally spirit souls, part and parcel of the supreme spirit whole, Kṛṣṇa, yet they are entrapped in this mundane world when they are enchanted by the desire for sense gratification. This enchantment is called *māyā*.

There are three primary energies of the Lord: (1) the spiritual energy, which manifests the transcendental world known as *Vaikuṇṭha*, (2) the marginal energy, which is the tiny individual spirit spark known as *jīvātmā*, and (3) the material energy, which covers the living entity and causes him to forget his supreme master, Kṛṣṇa, thus affording the illusioned soul the false sense of being the proprietor and enjoyer of everything he sees. When such illusioned living

entities are confronted with the bona fide description and philosophy of God which is imported directly from the spiritual world for their enlightenment, they attempt to cover God by the same *māyā* or ignorance which by the grace of God is covering them. These illusioned souls, who say that they are God, that everyone is God, or that God is impersonal and has to accept a form of matter when He comes to this material world, are called *Māyāvādīs*.

God, however, is neither formless nor impersonal. On the contrary, He is the supreme amongst all persons. Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.19) that one who knows this fact about Him is to be understood as the knower of everything. This conclusion of *Bhagavad-gītā* is understood as the most confidential knowledge of the Vedic wisdom. Although everything is God's energy, one cannot say that everything is God and that we are therefore also God and there is no need to worship God. This *Māyāvādī* philosophy is imperfect, for the conditioned soul is covered by *māyā* or illusion. If God were also covered by *māyā*, *māyā* would be God. This is contradictory.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says, "Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings; nor in the future shall any of us cease to be." (Bg. 2.12) From this statement we can understand that God and the living entity are both individual; in the past they existed, they exist now, and both the living entity and God will exist as individuals in the future. In *Bhagavad-gītā* there is no mention of one's becoming impersonal or becoming God. In the *Upaniṣads* it is said that God is the supreme eternal amongst all eternals and that He supplies and fulfills the desires of all others. How then can we conclude that God is impersonal or formless or that everyone is God? If He has created this world with all its varieties of form, how can He be formless? I have form because my father has form, but no one is ever born of a formless father. How then can we imagine that Kṛṣṇa, the supreme father of all living beings, is formless or impersonal?

God is never impersonal. Indeed, in the *Brahma-saṁhitā*, Lord Brahmā, the most intelligent being in this material universe, describes that it is under Kṛṣṇa's jurisdiction that he engages in material creation. As the original created being in this universe, Lord Brahmā is the original recipient of the Vedic knowledge, and thus he is the first spiritual master in the disciplic succession through which the science and philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is disseminated in the material world. Brahmā composed the prayers of *Brahma-saṁhitā* as an offering after his mature realization regarding the transcendental nature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, following in the footsteps of Lord Brahmā, we accept Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Absolute Truth and cause of all causes. This is not a question of speculation, sentiment or blind following. We accept the scientific understanding presented by Vedic authorities like *Bhagavad-gītā* (which was directly spoken by Kṛṣṇa 5,000 years ago), *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (spoken about Kṛṣṇa by the great sage and literary incarnation, Śrīla Vyāsadeva), and Lord Brahmā, who expresses his conclusions in the form of *Brahma-saṁhitā*.

If one has a little attraction and faith and agrees to hear from an authorized agent of the Lord, or from the Vedic scripture, he will be convinced about the existence of God in reality. The *Vedas* present the science of God with all logic, reason and arguments in order to clear up our illusion. Therefore we should make a scientific experiment which will not cost us anything and which promises us the greatest gain. That experiment is simply to give aural reception to the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness as presented by the bona fide representative of Kṛṣṇa. Because this message constitutes an absolute sound vibration, it will have its absolute effect, just as medicine has its effect when prescribed by a bona fide physician, regardless of the faith of the patient.

Lord Brahmā says, "I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord." The word "primeval" in this context indicates that Kṛṣṇa is the original cause of

everything. As already explained, there is a cause for everything, and the cause of all causes is Kṛṣṇa, who is also the ultimate effect. Kṛṣṇa is cause and effect simultaneously. Because everything originally emanates from Him, nothing is different from Him, and thus it is understood that God is simultaneously, inconceivably one with and different from everything. The sun is the cause of the sunshine, and clouds also exist due to the existence of the sun, but one cannot say that a cloud is the sun, although in another sense there is no distinction between the sun, the sunshine, the vegetation, fruits and flowers produced by the energy of the sun, and the clouds that sometimes cover the sun from our view. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa is understood as inconceivably, simultaneously identical with and different from everything. This philosophy of inconceivable and simultaneous oneness and difference, which was taught by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, is called the *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva* and is accepted by all authorities of Vedic evidence as the complete view of the Absolute Truth. It may be argued that if God is one with everything, He must be all-pervading and therefore impersonal. This argument is accepted as only partially correct, for it is said that He is also different from everything—simultaneously one and different. Therefore impersonal understanding of the Absolute Truth is partial understanding only.

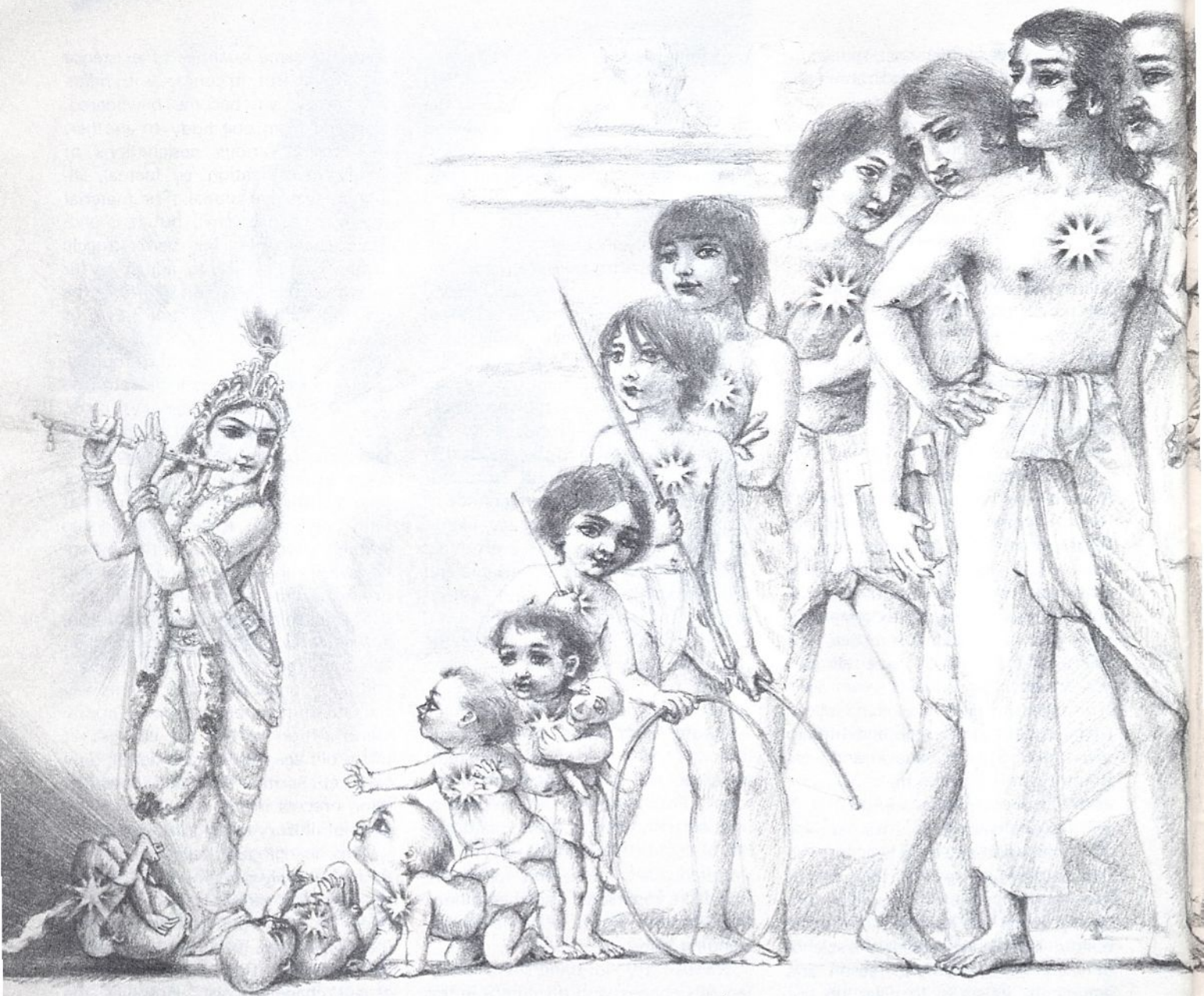
We can try to understand simultaneous oneness and difference in this way: When we speak of a tree, we automatically understand that the leaves, branches, fruits, etc., are included. But if we speak of a leaf, we refer to only part of the tree. One cannot say that the leaf is the tree, for it is only part, and the tree is the whole. Kṛṣṇa, in a like manner, is the supreme whole, and all others are His parts. Yet He is a person, as described by Brahmā.

Kṛṣṇa's form is full of bliss, truth and substantiality. Substantiality refers to eternal existence. We have no experience of any form that is substantial because everything in this material world is temporary. As living spirit souls, we are also eternal and

share the same qualities of existence with Kṛṣṇa. But, in contact with material energy, we become bewildered. Changing from one body to another, we accept various designations of bodily identification as factual, although they are unreal. The material energy is also eternal, but it is endlessly changeable. The hard struggle of the living entity to adjust to his ever changing condition of life in the material nature is called *māyā* or illusion.

Everyone is subjected to four unavoidable miseries in the struggle for existence—namely, birth, old age, disease and death. Even before taking birth, one has to struggle and suffer in the womb of the mother for nine months, and then one comes out with great pain. After living packed within the womb of the mother, where he is surrounded by blood, stool and urine, the child is born crying. Thus his life begins in an abominable condition, and similarly it ends in due course when the body becomes old and diseased and is no longer workable. In this way the soul who is under the spell of bodily identification suffers the changes of birth, old age, disease and death, only to accept another body and repeat the same process in his attempt to enjoy a life of illusory sense gratification.

This changing of bodies is also described in *Bhagavad-gītā*: "As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, similarly, the soul accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones." (Bg. 2.22) Thus we are always changing form. However, the form of Kṛṣṇa is nothing like the material form of our experience. That is stated by Kṛṣṇa as follows: "Although I am unborn and My transcendental body never deteriorates, and although I am the Lord of all sentient beings, I still appear in every millennium in My original form." (Bg. 4.6) Therefore we should not think Kṛṣṇa to be an ordinary person like ourselves. Kṛṣṇa never comes under the control of material nature. Since Kṛṣṇa created material nature for the punishment of the conditioned souls, how could it be possible for Kṛṣṇa to be contaminated by material coverings? The king is the creator of the prison house, and he can come



The body of the conditioned soul continuously changes,

and go freely and not be arrested. But if the king visits the prison and the prisoners think, "The king has become a prisoner like us," that is a mistake. Similarly, when Kṛṣṇa appears in the material world, His appearance is nothing like ours. Just as a king comes of his own accord to give amnesty, so Kṛṣṇa appears by His internal energy for the pleasure of His devotees. The living entities who are wandering through this material world are forced by the reactions of their work to take

birth in order to suffer and enjoy the reactions of their past activities, and for this purpose they are awarded different types of material bodies under the stringent laws of nature. But Kṛṣṇa is never subject to these stringent laws, for it is Kṛṣṇa who is the ultimate controller of material nature. Therefore He says, "There is no truth superior to Me. Everything rests upon Me, as pearls are strung on a thread." (Bg. 7.7)

Kṛṣṇa is full of truth or knowledge.

He says to Arjuna, "Many, many births both you and I have passed. I can remember all of them, but you cannot." (Bg. 4.5) We cannot even remember all that has happened in this one life. Because we are changing our bodies, we forget. A grown man cannot remember what he said or how he acted on the lap of his mother because the body is always changing. We say that we are growing, but actually we are changing bodies. This is explained in *Bhagavad-gītā*: "As the embodied soul con-



but Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa never changes His transcendental body.

tinually passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth, to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death." (Bg. 2.13) We are bewildered because we accept different types of bodies. For example, when a man is sleeping, his real body is lying in bed, but in dream he accepts another body—a mental body—and he completely forgets his real body. But although he is sleeping, he dreams that he is awake and is acting with the body that his dream has concocted. Material exist-

tence is like that. Constitutionally we are pure spirit souls and have nothing to do with material bodies, but under the spell of *māyā* we accept a body for sense gratification, and we act in so many ways in forgetfulness of our real identity. Like a man lying in bed dreaming, we are lying in the lap of material nature and forgetting ourselves.

The difference between God and the minute living entity is that God does not change His body,

and therefore He never forgets, whereas our bodies are changing at every moment, and therefore we are full of ignorance. Since Kṛṣṇa does not change, He is full of knowledge. He therefore says in *Bhagavad-gītā*: "I know everything that has happened in the past, everything that is happening now, and all things that are yet to be. I also know all living entities, but Me no one knows." (Bg. 7.26)

Kṛṣṇa is full of pleasure, for He is *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha*, the form of

eternity, full knowledge and bliss. The form of our material body, however, is temporary, ignorant and full of misery. Anyone who has accepted a material body must be full of misery, because the body is a breeding ground for misery. If we find that we are healthy, that is unusual, for it is the nature of the body to always give us troubles in the form of toothaches, stomachaches and so many other miseries. No one can deny this, but still we think and act as if a doctor could give us an injection and we could enjoy good health perpetually. Kṛṣṇa does not need any injection, nor is He ever attacked by disease, for He is God, and He is always enjoying. God does not have to suffer, but we suffer because we have forgotten God.

Although a king is free to enjoy, the disobedient citizens in his state have to suffer under the agency of the king's prison department. However, it is not that the king wants the citizens to suffer in prison; rather, he is always anxious for the welfare and happiness of all his subjects. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa does not want His parts and parcels to suffer the pangs of material misery. Therefore He appears from time to

time in this material world just to remind us of our actual position as His eternal parts. In quality we are one with the Lord, for we are also eternal, full of knowledge and bliss. Death exists only for the body. For the soul there is never birth nor death. Nor, having once been, does he ever cease to be. That which pervades the entire body is indestructible. No one is able to destroy the imperishable soul. These are instructions given by the Lord in *Bhagavad-gītā*. We have only to accept Kṛṣṇa and the instructions of Kṛṣṇa without unnecessary interpretation, and immediately we can experience our eternal life of knowledge and bliss.

There is no necessity of a candle to help us see the sun, for the sun is the source of all illumination. Similarly, there is no need to interpret the words of God, to change their meaning, or to speculate in our own way on what God is. In *Bhagavad-gītā* God Himself reveals Himself in His own words. Is there someone more qualified than God who can create a new religion by speculation or interpretation? Religion cannot be created by speculation, for religion is the law of God. It cannot

be changed, nor is there need for interpretation, for it is clear as it is. God is the supreme proprietor, the supreme enjoyer and the supreme friend of everyone. We are not the proprietors of anything, and therefore we have no right to enjoy anything independently of God, who is the best friend of everyone because He is supplying everyone his necessities of life.

It is the duty of a human being to understand God, for without this understanding one's life is considered to be a failure. The process is very simple. It requires only that we give submissive aural reception to the message of Kṛṣṇa, and gradually, by our hearing, the cloud which covers our real knowledge will be removed. *Bhagavad-gītā* says, "When one is enlightened with the knowledge by whichnescience is destroyed, then his knowledge reveals everything, as the sun lights up everything in the daytime." (Bg. 5.16) When the sun of Kṛṣṇa consciousness rises in the heart of the conditioned soul, he will be able to understand God, his own position, and the material nature, by direct spiritual perception. This is the way of lasting happiness. ❖

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His Divine Grace A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

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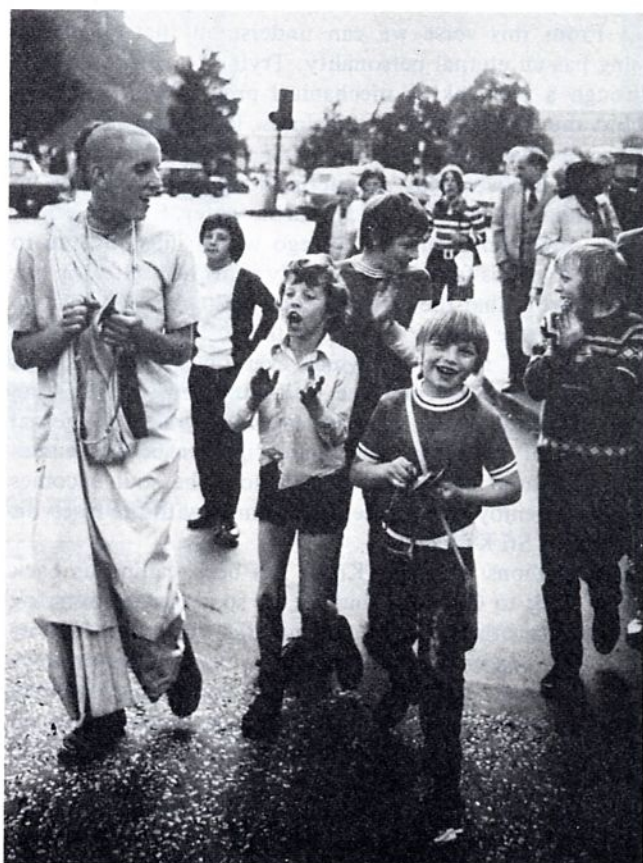
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Bill Gorry



Bhārgava dāsa

Bhārgava dāsa

by **GUNĀRṆAVA DĀSA** (ISKCON Vṛndāvana)

The young students living in mutual cooperation in the ISKCON temples around the world are understanding that the goal of life is to render loving devotional service to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. During the course of the day you may see some of these devoted souls of Kṛṣṇa consciousness dancing in the main streets of your city, chanting Vedic *mantras* and hymns, and playing drums and cymbals. The most important and popularly known *mantra* or chant to be heard is the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, which consists of sixteen words: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. "Mantra" refers to a transcendental chant that can deliver the mind from the material platform of life to the all-blissful spiritual platform. ("Man" means mind, and "tra" means deliverance.) When sincerely chanted, the Hare, Kṛṣṇa *mantra* cleanses one's heart of all the collected sin that has accumulated there for years together.

The devotees of ISKCON who chant this Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* have now realized the potency of the Vedic scriptures and are sincerely trying to regulate their lives accord-

ingly. All honor and full respect must be given to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda for coming to the West to deliver this method of truth, thus saving these disciples from the sinful activities of intoxication, meat eating, illicit sex and gambling in which they would otherwise surely have been engaged. These four major sinful activities not only bind one to the material conception of life but also send one down to the lower regions of the material creation. As a genuine spiritual master, His Divine Grace is telling his disciples that engaging in the service of the Lord will free them from all reactions of material life. In *Bhagavad-gītā* the Supreme Lord confirms this when He declares, "Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear." (Bg. 18.66)

The primary activities of the materialistic person are to eat, sleep, mate and defend. In the animal kingdom these

are the only natural activities because an animal has limited intelligence. However, we must try to understand that the human form of life is not meant for living like animals. Some people think that by creating a policy of free indulgence in sex, intoxication and general wanton living they can bring about an end to suffering in the material world. Of course, this path of unrestricted sense gratification is completely unjustifiable, for in no way will it solve life's problems. To give people a chance to experience happiness, one must become pure in his own activities and be situated in his natural position as spirit soul, part and parcel of the

Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The human form is the highest form of body in the material world. The *Vedas* say that to attain this form the spirit soul has transmigrated through 8,400,000 different species of life. This human form is likened to a boat which can sail the spirit soul over the ocean of nescience to the eternal abode of the Lord. Our spiritual master therefore says that the activities of eating, sleeping, mating and defending must go on, but they must be regulated so as to advance our cultivation of God consciousness.

Some people believe that to live a spiritual way of life and achieve perfection one must negate activity, for they think that the cause of all suffering is the personality or ego and that reality will be attained when this ego is negated. But, referring to scripture, we find that Kṛṣṇa instructs His disciple Arjuna on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, “Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings; nor in the future shall any of us cease to be.” (Bg. 2. 12) From this verse we can understand that the living being has an eternal personality. Trying to negate this ego through a painstaking mechanical process will not bring about the desired goal of happiness. The Vedic authorities inform us that while the living being is living in the material world he is covered by a material body which is made up of material elements—namely, earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and a false ego which illusions him to believe that this false material body is his real self. It is this false concept that the material body is the true self that we have to negate. When we achieve this result we will experience the full nectar for which everyone in the material world is anxious. Our true, self-illuminated, ever-existing spiritual form—which is *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha*, an eternal form full of knowledge and bliss—will then be uncovered. In this natural constitutional position, the soul becomes eligible to enjoy transcendental pastimes with the reservoir of all bliss, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

For millions of years Kṛṣṇa has been calling us back home, back to Godhead, but we are so persistent in trying some way or other to enjoy this material world that to most of us God consciousness seems just a myth. Therefore we must now wake up, listen and try to understand that this material world was not created for us to try to live in eternally and enjoy, for life here is temporary whereas the real life that exists beyond this world is eternal.

Kṛṣṇa’s representatives have appeared on earth time and time again to urge us to come back to Godhead. Five thousand years ago, Kṛṣṇa came personally to this material world in His original spiritual form specifically to reestablish religious principles and give pleasure to His devotees. In other words, the Supreme Personality of Godhead was here on earth just 5,000 years ago! Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā*, “In order to deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, I advent Myself millennium after millennium.” (Bg. 4.8)

To many people who read *Bhagavad-gītā* the conception that Kṛṣṇa is a person is very difficult to understand. In fact, Kṛṣṇa tells His disciple Arjuna in *Bhagavad-gītā*, “Only by undivided devotional service can I be understood as I

am, standing before you, and can thus be seen directly. Only in this way can you enter into the mysteries of My understanding.” (Bg. 11.54) Some people actually belittle the idea of devoting oneself to Kṛṣṇa, who seems to them to be just an ordinary man, and therefore Kṛṣṇa also says, “Fools deride Me when I descend in the human form. They do not know My transcendental nature and My supreme dominion over all that be.” (Bg. 9.11)

Fortunately, *Bhagavad-gītā* has now been translated and explained by a bona fide representative of Kṛṣṇa, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, simply so that we may understand it as it was spoken to Arjuna. Please inquire into this profound scripture. There must be so many questions we ask ourselves from time to time for which we can’t find solutions or answers, but all of our questions can be answered if we take shelter of the knowledge of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.

Regardless of the religious conception we follow—whether Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, or any other faith—the study of *Bhagavad-gītā* will in no way hinder us or deter us from our path; it can only increase the depth of our understanding. Factually the Truth is one, not many. *Bhagavad-gītā* is a profound treatise that will bring one who studies it nearer to understanding himself, his life and his eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

When devotees are performing chanting on the street, people often approach and ask why they don’t get jobs and do something for society. “What will this dancing, chanting and clashing of cymbals do to help people?” they ask. “Surely making contributions to rehabilitation programs and social welfare societies would be a greater asset to bringing about peace.” However, this is not the case. Yes, these activities are very praiseworthy and would help people, but the Society for Krishna Consciousness prefers to go to the root cause of suffering, which is forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa, because it is due to this forgetfulness that one comes to accept a material body, and it is this body which is the breeding ground of all miseries.

Performing pious or charitable activities will only bring temporary relief from suffering. Please understand that our position in the material world is like that of a prisoner who must experience great suffering and unhappiness. A prisoner cannot be made happy in his cell, for it is a man’s nature to want freedom. Similarly, as eternal spiritual living beings, we cannot be happy in temporary material bodies in a temporary material world. It is up to each individual person to use his intelligence to ask himself if he is really satisfied with temporary and limited freedom. This is the beginning on the path back to real and unlimited freedom, which one can achieve by going back home, back to Godhead.

Next time you see the smiling, happy devotees of the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement, please stop and inquire from them further about this Kṛṣṇa consciousness philosophy. There is no charge. Just put forward your questions. All that you need is an attentive ear with which to listen. And, most importantly, please try chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. This is all that we ask. Simply by hearing and chanting, one can understand the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. ❏

The Most Confidential Knowledge

Reprinted from *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* (Chapter Nine, Text 34)

by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda



मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि युक्तवैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ॥ ३४ ॥

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

mat-manāḥ—always thinking of Me; *bhava*—become; *mat*—My; *bhaktaḥ*—devotee; *mat*—My; *yājī*—worshiper; *mām*—unto Me; *namaskuru*—offer obeisances; *mām*—unto Me; *eva*—completely; *eṣyasi*—come; *yuktvā evam*—being absorbed; *ātmānam*—your soul; *mat-parāyaṇaḥ*—devoted to Me.

TRANSLATION

Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, offer obeisances and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me.

PURPORT

In this verse it is clearly indicated that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the only means of being delivered from the clutches of this contaminated material world. Sometimes unscrupulous commentators distort the meaning of what is clearly stated here: that all devotional service should be offered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. Unfortunately, unscrupulous commentators divert the

mind of the reader to that which is not at all feasible. Such commentators do not know that there is no difference between Kṛṣṇa's mind and Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is not an ordinary human being; He is the Absolute Truth. His body, mind and He Himself are one and absolute. It is stated in the *Kūrma Purāṇa*, as it is quoted by Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī in his *Anubhāṣya* comments on *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Fifth Chapter, *Ādi-līlā*, verses 41-48, "*deha-dehi-vibhedo'yaṁ neśvare vidyate kvacit*," which means that there is no difference in Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, between Himself and His body. But, because they do not know this science of Kṛṣṇa, the commentators hide Kṛṣṇa and divide His personality from His mind or from His body. Although this is sheer ignorance of the science of Kṛṣṇa, some men make profit out of misleading the people.

There are some who are demonic; they also think of Kṛṣṇa, but enviously, just like King Kaṁsa, Kṛṣṇa's uncle. He was also thinking of Kṛṣṇa always, but he thought of Kṛṣṇa as his enemy. He was always in anxiety, wondering when Kṛṣṇa would come to kill him. That kind of thinking will not help us. One should be thinking of Kṛṣṇa in devotional love. That is *bhakti*. One should cultivate the knowledge of Kṛṣṇa continually. What is that favorable cultivation? It is to learn from a bona fide teacher. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and we have several times explained that His body is not material, but is eternal, blissful knowledge. This kind of talk about Kṛṣṇa will help one become a devotee. Otherwise, understanding Kṛṣṇa from the wrong source will prove fruitless.

One should therefore engage his mind in the eternal form, the primal form of Kṛṣṇa; with conviction in his heart that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme, he should engage himself in worship. There are hundreds of thousands of temples in India for the worship of Kṛṣṇa, and devotional service is practiced there. When such practice is made, one has to offer obeisances to Kṛṣṇa. One should lower his head before the Deity and engage his mind, his body, his activities—everything. That will make one fully absorbed in Kṛṣṇa without deviation. This will help one transfer into the Kṛṣṇaloka [the transcendental abode of Kṛṣṇa]. One should not be deviated by unscrupulous commentators. One must engage in the nine different processes of devotional service, beginning with hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa. Pure devotional service is the highest achievement of human society.

In the most confidential chapters of *Bhagavad-gītā*, pure devotional service to the Lord has been explained, apart from the *yoga* of knowledge and mystic *yoga* or fruitive activities. Those who are not purely sanctified may be attracted by different features of the Lord, like the impersonal *brahmajyoti* [the shining effulgence of the Lord] and localized Paramātmā [the representation of the Lord within the heart of every living being], but a pure devotee directly takes to the personal service of the Supreme Lord.

There is a beautiful poem about Kṛṣṇa in which it is clearly stated that any person who is engaged in the worship of demigods is most unintelligent and cannot achieve at any time the supreme award of Kṛṣṇa. The devotee, in the beginning, may sometimes fall from the standard, but still he should be considered superior to all other philosophers and *yogīs*. One who always engages in Kṛṣṇa consciousness should be understood to be the perfect saintly person. His accidental nondevotional activities will diminish, and he will soon be situated without any doubt in complete perfection. The pure devotee has no actual chance to fall down because the Supreme Godhead personally takes care of His pure devotees. Therefore, the intelligent person should take directly to this process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and happily live in this material world. He will eventually receive the supreme award of Kṛṣṇa. ❧





“ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

IS THE LITERARY INCARNATION OF GOD

It is all-successful, all-blissful, and all-perfect.

It is as bright as the sun.

Thus persons who have lost their vision
due to the dense darkness of ignorance
in the age of quarrel shall get light from it.”

Srimad-Bhagavatam, 1.3.40, 43

ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

The Sublime Science of the Supreme Personality of Godhead

His Divine Grace

A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA