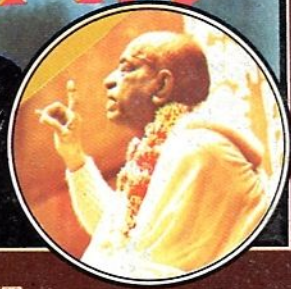


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

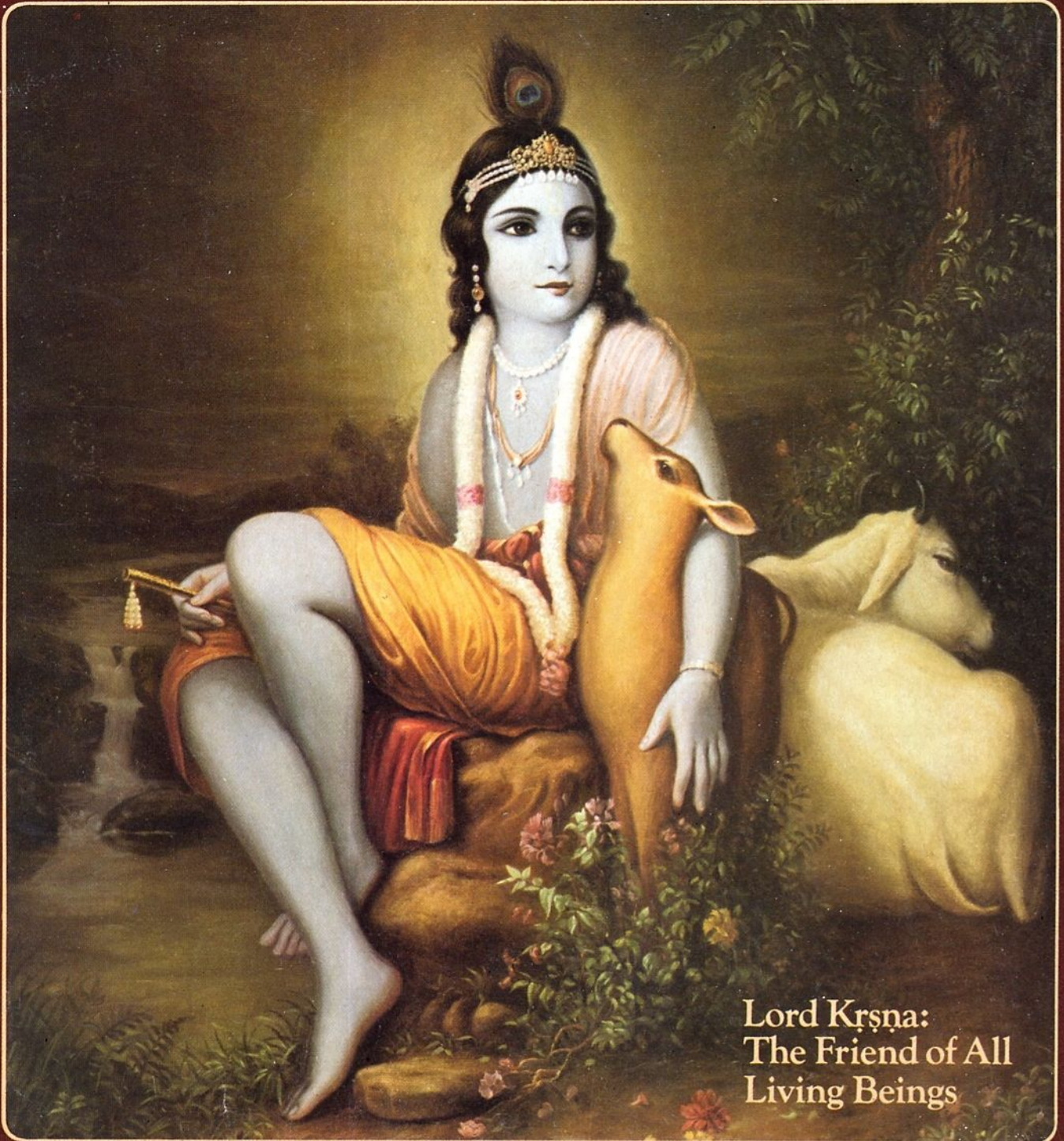


BACK TO GODHEAD



Vol. 13 No. 11

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



Lord Kṛṣṇa:
The Friend of All
Living Beings

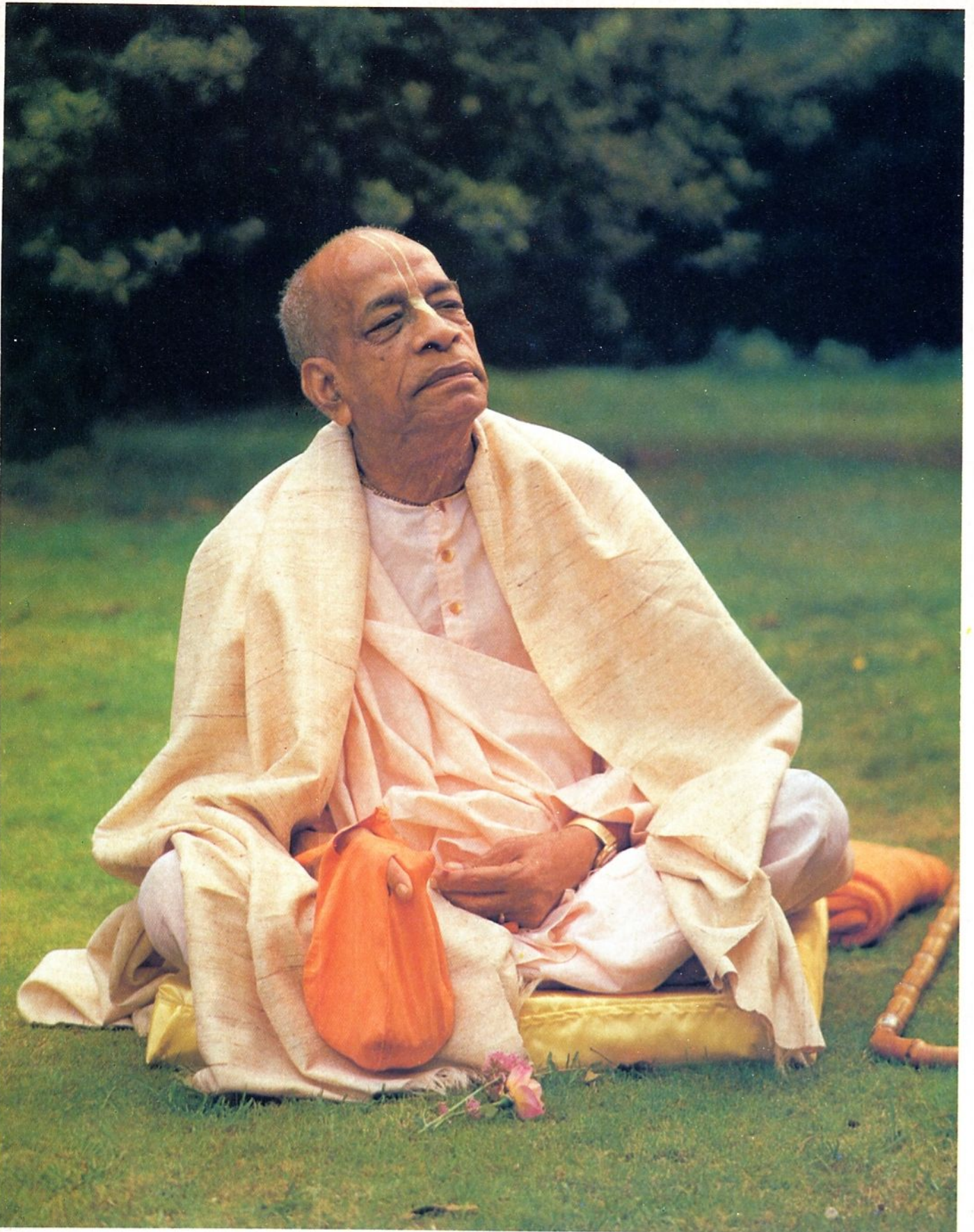


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His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

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His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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PRONUNCIATION of Sanskrit words and names.
BACK TO GODHEAD follows the international scholarly
standard. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in **but**, long **ā**
like the **a** in **far** (and hold it twice as long as the short
a). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in **evade**, long **ī** like the **i** in
pique. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **rim**, and **e**
like the **ch** in **chair**. Pronounce the aspirated conso-
nants (**ch**, **jh**, **dh**, etc.) as in **staunch-heart**,
hedge-hog, and **red-hot**. Finally, pronounce sibilants **ś**
and **ṣ** like **sh**, and **s** like the **s** in **sun**. So for *Kṛṣṇa* say
KRISHNA, and for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

ABOUT SANSKRIT NAMES in by-lines, credits, and
text. Members of the International Society for Krishna
Consciousness receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or His
great devotees, combined with *dāsa* (*dāsī* for women),
meaning "servant." For instance, the name *Kṛṣṇa*
dāsa means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

◀ His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami
Prabhupāda came to America in 1965, at age seventy,
to fulfill his spiritual master's request that he teach the
science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the English-speaking
world. In a dozen years he published some seventy
volumes of translation and commentary on India's
Vedic literatures, and these are now standard in uni-
versities worldwide. Meanwhile, traveling almost non-
stop, Śrīla Prabhupāda molded his international
society into a worldwide confederation of *āśramas*,
schools, temples, and farm communities. He passed
away in 1977 in India's Vṛndāvana, the holy place most
sacred to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and his disciples are carrying for-
ward the movement he started.

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COVER: Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Friend of All Living Beings. As India's Vedic
literatures describe, the Supreme is more than just energy or light. He's a per-
son—the well-wishing father and friend of all living beings. What's more, He is
ever youthful. His eyes have the shape of lotus petals, His transcendental body the
hue of monsoon rain clouds. (Cover art: Muralīdhara dāsa.)

ABOUT BACK TO GODHEAD: "Godhead is light" has always been BACK TO GODHEAD's byword—"Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience." Godhead means the source of everything, and this journal is meant to assist readers in cultivating practical, scientific realization of Godhead. To this end BACK TO GODHEAD explores the ideas presented in ancient India's Vedic literatures, especially *Bhagavad-gītā*. As the *Gītā* itself informs us, "When one is enlightened with the knowledge by which nescience is destroyed, then his knowledge reveals everything, as the sun lights up everything in the daytime."



Finding Calm In a World of Calamities

The Vedic literatures give us knowledge that can clear our minds
and steady our course toward life's ultimate goal.

by HIS DIVINE GRACE A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

During a strife-filled era in ancient India, Queen Kuntī and her sons had to undergo many hardships. Their enemies drove them out of their kingdom, tried to poison them, and trapped them in a burning house. Yet Lord Kṛṣṇa always saved them, and Queen Kuntī's devotion to Him grew stronger and stronger.

*vipadaḥ santu tāḥ śaśvat
tatra tatra jagad-guro
bhavato darśanam yat syād
apunar bhava-darśanam*

Queen Kuntī said: "I wish that all those calamities would happen again and again so that we could see You again and again, for seeing You means that we will no longer see repeated births and deaths." [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.8.25]

This material world is certified by the Lord in the *Bhagavad-gītā* as a dangerous place full of calamities. Less intelligent persons prepare plans to adjust to those calamities, not knowing that the nature of this place is to be full of calamities. They have no information of the abode of the Lord, which is full of bliss and without trace of calamity.

The duty of the sane person, therefore, is to be undisturbed by worldly calamities, which are sure to happen in all circumstances. Suffering all sorts of unavoidable misfortunes, one should make progress in spiritual realization, because that is the mission of human life.

Sea of Danger

The spirit soul is transcendental to all material calamities; therefore, the so-called calamities are called false. A man may see a tiger swallowing him in a dream, and he may cry for this calamity.

Actually there is no tiger and there is no suffering; it is simply a case of dreams. In the same way, all calamities of life are said to be dreams. If someone is lucky enough to get in contact with the Lord by devotional service, it is all gain. Contact with the Lord by any one of the nine devotional services is always a forward step on the path going back to Godhead.

In this very interesting verse, it is described that *vipadaḥ*—calamities or dangers—are very good if such dangers and calamities remind us of Kṛṣṇa. There must be dangers, because this material world is full of dangers. But foolish people who do not know this try to avoid the dangers. Thus they struggle for existence. Everyone is trying to become happy and avoid danger. This is our material business. Everyone is trying for *atyantika-sukha*, ultimate happiness. A working man thinks, "Let me work very hard now and put money in the bank, so that when I get old I shall enjoy life without working." This is the inner intention of everyone. No one wants to work; as soon as one gets some money, he wants to retire from work and become happy. But that is not possible. One cannot become happy in that way.

Here Kuntīdevī speaks of *apunar bhava-darśanam*. The prefix *a* means "not," and *punar bhava* means "repetition of birth and death." The real danger is the repetition of birth and death. That must be stopped.

The material world is full of dangers (*padam padam yad vipadām*). For example, if one is on the ocean one may have a very strong ship, but that ship can never be safe; because one is at sea, at any time there may be dangers. The Titanic was safe, but on its first voyage it sank, and many important men lost their lives. So danger there must be, because

we are in a dangerous position. This material world itself is dangerous.

Therefore, our business now should be to cross over this sea of danger as soon as possible. As long as we are at sea, we are in a dangerous position, however strong our ship may be. That's a fact. But we should not be disturbed by the sea waves; instead, we should just try to cross over the sea and get to the other side. That should be our business.

As long as we are in this material world there must be calamities, because this is the place of calamity. But even with calamities our business should be to develop our Kṛṣṇa consciousness, so that after giving up this body we may go back home, back to Kṛṣṇa.

A Pleasant Prescription

On the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, Arjuna said to Kṛṣṇa, "Whatever You are saying is all right. I am not this body. I am a soul, and this is also true of everyone else. So when the body is annihilated, the soul will continue to exist. But when I see that my son is dying or my grandfather is dying and that I am killing, how can I be solaced simply by knowing that they are not dying, but that only their bodies are changing? I am accustomed to thinking of them with affection in terms of the body, and so there must be grief and suffering."

Kṛṣṇa did not deny what Arjuna said. "Yes," He replied. "That's a fact. Because you are in the bodily concept of life, there must be suffering. So you must tolerate it, that's all. There is no other remedy." As mentioned in *Bhagavad-gītā* [2.14], Lord Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna:

*mātrā-sparśās tu kaunteya
śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkha-dāḥ*

“A devotee, however, is never disturbed by dangers, reverses, or calamities. Rather, he welcomes them: ‘Now Kṛṣṇa has appeared before me as danger.’”

*āgamāpayino 'nityās
tāms titikṣasva bhārata*

“O son of Kuntī, the nonpermanent appearance of heat and cold, happiness and distress, and their disappearance in due course, are like the appearance and disappearance of winter and summer seasons. They arise from sense perception, O scion of Bharata, and one must learn to tolerate them without being disturbed.”

In America it may sometimes be very chilly in the morning, and that may make taking one's morning bath a little difficult. But does that mean that those who are devotees will stop taking their prescribed morning bath? No. Even if it is chilly, they must take this regular bath. The duty must be done, even if there is a little suffering involved. That is called *tapasya*, or austerity. *Tapasya* means that we must proceed with our business of Kṛṣṇa consciousness despite all the dangers and calamities of this world. This is called *tapasya*, or voluntary acceptance of the difficulties of life.

Sometimes those who have undertaken strict vows of *tapasya* will ignite a ring of fire all around themselves, and in the scorching heat of the sun in the hot summer they will sit down in the midst of that fire and meditate. Similarly, in the chilly cold of winter they will immerse themselves in water up to the neck and meditate. Such vows are prescribed in strict systems of *tapasya*.

But Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu does not give us such a prescription. Instead, He gives us a very nice program: chant, dance, and take *prasāda*, food offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa. But still we are unwilling. We are so fallen that we cannot accept even this *tapasya*. Although this kind of *tapasya* is very easy to perform and very pleasant (*susukhaṁ kartum avyayam*), still we are not agreeable. We may even prefer to rot in the street. Some people prefer to drink and have sex and live in the street. So what can be done?

The Farthest and the Nearest

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is giving all facilities so that people may come here, chant, dance, live very peacefully, take *kṛṣṇa-prasāda*, and be happy—but people will not accept it. That is called misfortune. Caitanya Mahāprabhu, portraying the people of

this age, therefore said, “I am so unfortunate that I have no attachment for chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.” He also prayed:

*namnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktis
tatrārpitā niyamitah smarāṇe na kālah
etādṛśī tava kṛpā bhagavan mamāpi
durdaivam idṛśam ihājani nānurāgaḥ*

Kṛṣṇa, the transcendental holy name of God, has all potencies, Lord Caitanya said. Kṛṣṇa has unlimited potencies, and similarly in the holy name of Kṛṣṇa there are unlimited potencies. Kṛṣṇa has thousands and thousands of names, of which the name *Kṛṣṇa* is the chief, and there are no hard and fast rules for chanting. It is not that one must chant at a certain time. No. At any time one may chant. Furthermore, Kṛṣṇa's name is identical with Kṛṣṇa Himself. Therefore the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is Kṛṣṇa.

We should not think that Kṛṣṇa is living in His abode, Goloka Vṛndāvana, and that His name is different from Him. Of course, in the material world, in the material conception, a name is different from the fact it represents. But in the absolute world there are no such differences. The name is as potent as Kṛṣṇa is. We have a tongue, and if we use this tongue to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, we will immediately come directly in touch with Kṛṣṇa, because the name *Kṛṣṇa* and the person Kṛṣṇa are not different. We may think that Kṛṣṇa is far, far away, but in fact Kṛṣṇa is within us. He is far away, but at the same time He is the nearest. But even if we think that Kṛṣṇa is far, far away, His name is present. We can chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa will immediately become available. Kṛṣṇa is available in this easy way, for which there are no hard and fast rules. We can chant at any time and immediately get Kṛṣṇa. Just see the mercy of Kṛṣṇa!

Therefore Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, *etādṛśī tava kṛpā bhagavan mamāpi durdaivam idṛśam ihājani nānurāgaḥ*: “My dear Lord, You have given me such generous facilities by which to contact You, but I am so unfortunate that I have no attachment for these things. I have attachment for so many other things, but I have no attachment for chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. This is my misfortune.” Kṛṣṇa is so magnanimous that He is present before us by the transcendental vibration of His name, which has all the potencies of Kṛṣṇa Himself, and if we remain in

contact with that name, we will get all the benefits of Kṛṣṇa's benedictions. But still we are not inclined to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. This is our misfortune.

Welcoming Dangers

A devotee, however, is never disturbed by dangers, reverses, or calamities. Rather, he welcomes them. Because he is a surrendered soul, he knows that both dangers and festivals are but different demonstrations of Kṛṣṇa, who is absolute. In the *śāstra*, the Vedic literature, it is said that religion and irreligion, which are complete opposites, are merely the front portion and the back portion of God. But is there any difference between God's front and God's back? God is absolute, and therefore a devotee, either in opulence or in danger, is undisturbed, knowing that both of these are Kṛṣṇa.

When a devotee is in danger, he thinks, “Now Kṛṣṇa has appeared before me as danger.” In His form as Nṛsiṁhadeva, the Lord was dangerous to the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu, but the same Nṛsiṁhadeva was the supreme friend to the devoted Prahāda Mahārāja. God is never dangerous to the devotee, and the devotee is never afraid of dangers, because he is confident that the danger is but another feature of God. “Why should I be afraid?” the devotee thinks. “I am surrendered to Him.”

So Kuntīdevī says, *vipadaḥ santu*: “Let there be calamities.” *Vipadaḥ santu tāḥ śasvat*: “Let all those calamities happen again and again.” Because she knows how to remember Kṛṣṇa at times of danger, she is welcoming danger. “My dear Lord,” she says, “I welcome dangers, because when dangers come I can remember You.” When Prahāda Mahārāja's father was putting him into dangerous predicaments, Prahāda was always thinking of Kṛṣṇa.

So if we are put into a dangerous position and that danger gives us an impetus to remember Kṛṣṇa, that is welcome: “Oh, I am getting this opportunity to remember Kṛṣṇa.” Why is this welcome? It is welcome because seeing Kṛṣṇa or remembering Kṛṣṇa means advancing in spiritual life, so that we will not have to suffer any more of these dangers. *Tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti mām eti so 'rjuna*. If one becomes advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the

“I may be in a comfortable position. . . . Yet if, when I give up this body, my mentality causes me to become a dog, a cat, or a mouse, what is the value of my comfortable position?”

result will be that after giving up the body (*tyaktvā deham*) one will not have to take birth again in this material world (*punar janma naiti*). This is to be desired.

Suppose I am very comfortable at the present moment. My body may be comfortable, but there will be death, and then another birth. After giving up my present body, if I get the body of a cat or a dog, what is the meaning of my comfortable position? Death is sure, and after death one must surely accept another body. We may not know what kind of body we will get, but we can know from the *śāstra*, the Vedic literature. The *śāstra* says that according to our particular mentality, we will get a particular kind of body. Although I may be in a comfortable position, if I keep myself in the mentality of a dog, I shall get my next life as a dog.

Philosophy of Hedonism

Therefore, what is the value of this comfortable position? I may be in a comfortable position for twenty years, thirty years, fifty years, or at the utmost one hundred years. Yet if, when I give up this body, my mentality causes me to become a cat, a dog, or a mouse, what is the benefit of this comfortable position? But people do not consider this. They think, especially in the present age, “I am now in a comfortable position. I have enough money and a good estate. I have ample comforts and enough food. When this body is finished, I am not going to take birth again, so as long as I am living, let me enjoy life.” This is the modern philosophy of hedonism, but it does not correspond to the facts.

Kuntī, however, is aware of birth and death, and she is anxious not to repeat this process. This is indicated by the words *apunar bhava-darśanam*. If one always sees Kṛṣṇa, one is in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, for Kṛṣṇa consciousness means always thinking of Kṛṣṇa. One’s consciousness should be absorbed in Kṛṣṇa thought.

Therefore, the spiritual master gives different varieties of engagements to devotees in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. For example, under the direction of the spiritual master the devotees may sell books in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But if the devotees think that the energy invested in selling books should be diverted into selling jewelry, that is not a very good

idea. Then they would become nothing more than jewelers. We should be very careful not to be diverted from Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

A Cut on the Finger

Even if there is danger or suffering in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we should tolerate it. We should even welcome such danger, and we should pray in appreciation to Kṛṣṇa.

How should we pray? *Tat te 'nukampām susamīkṣamāṇo*: “My dear Lord, it is Your great mercy that I have been put into this dangerous position.” That is the viewpoint of a devotee. He doesn’t regard danger as danger. Rather, he thinks, “It is Kṛṣṇa’s mercy.” What kind of mercy? *Bhūñjāna evātma-kṛtām vipākam*: “Because of my past activities, I was meant to suffer very much. But You are mitigating that suffering and giving me only a little.” In other words, by the grace of Kṛṣṇa a devotee may receive only token punishment.

In court, an important man is sometimes found to be a culprit, and the judge may be able to fine him a hundred thousand dollars and know that the man can pay it. But he may tell the man, “You just give one cent.” That is also punishment, but it is greatly minimized. Similarly, we have to suffer for our past deeds. That is a fact, and we cannot avoid it. But *karmāṇi nirdahati kintu ca bhakti-bhājām*: the sufferings of those who engage in devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness are minimized.

For example, one may have been destined to be killed with a knife, but instead of being killed, he may instead get some little cut on his finger. In this way, for those who engage in devotional service, the reactions of past activities are minimized. Lord Kṛṣṇa assures His devotees, *aham tvām sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi*: “I shall give you protection from the reactions of sinful life.” So even if a devotee has a history of very grievous criminal activities behind him, instead of being killed he may only get a little cut on his finger. Why, then, should a devotee fear danger?

We should simply depend on Kṛṣṇa consciousness, because if we live Kṛṣṇa consciously under all circumstances, we shall not return to this material world (*apunar bhava-darśanam*). If we repeatedly think of Kṛṣṇa, see Kṛṣṇa, read

of Kṛṣṇa, work for Kṛṣṇa, and somehow or other remain in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we benefit in such a way that we shall be saved from taking birth again in the material world. That is true benefit.

But if we become a little comfortable because of other, materialistic engagements and we forget Kṛṣṇa and have to take birth again, then what is our benefit? We should be very careful about this. We should act in such a way that our Kṛṣṇa consciousness can under no circumstances be disturbed, even if there is heavy suffering. That is the instruction of Kuntidevi.

Before winning the Battle of Kurukṣetra, the Pāṇḍavas were put into many dangers, as described in the previous verses. They were given poison, they were put into a house of lac that was later set afire, and they were even confronted with great man-eating demons. They lost their kingdom, they lost their wife, they lost their prestige, and they were exiled to the forest.

We Must Have Firm Faith

Therefore, when the Pāṇḍavas went to see their grandfather Bhīṣmadeva on his deathbed, Bhīṣmadeva began to cry. “These boys, my grandsons, are all very pious,” he said. “Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, the oldest of the brothers, is the most pious person. He is even called Dharmarāja, the king of religion. Bhīma and Arjuna are both devotees, and they are such powerful heroes that they can kill thousands of men. Their wife, Draupadi, is directly the goddess of fortune, and it has been enjoined that wherever she is, there will be no scarcity of food. Thus they all form a wonderful combination, and moreover, Lord Kṛṣṇa is always with them. But still they are suffering.” Thus he began to cry, saying, “I do not know what Kṛṣṇa’s arrangement is, because such pious devotees are also suffering.”

Therefore, we shouldn’t think, “Because I have become a devotee, there will be no danger or suffering.” Prahlāda Mahārāja suffered greatly, and so did other devotees, like the Pāṇḍavas and Haridāsa Ṭhākura. But we should not be disturbed by such sufferings. We must have firm faith, firm conviction, and we must know, “Kṛṣṇa is present, and He will give me protection.” Don’t try to take the benefit of any shelter other than Kṛṣṇa. Always take to Kṛṣṇa.

How Much Are You Worth?

“What we are caught in is more than just the inflation spiral.”

by JAYADVAITA SVĀMĪ

“Thanks to inflation,” says a recent release from the Associated Press, “you are now worth 5 1/2 times more than you were just a few years ago.

“The calcium, magnesium, iron and other chemicals in an adult’s body were worth 98 cents in the early part of this decade; now they’re worth \$5.60, according to Dr. Harry Monsen, a professor of anatomy at Illinois College of Medicine. ‘And the price will keep going up, just like it’s doing with cadavers and skeletons,’ he said. ‘We are caught in the inflation spiral.’”

What we are caught in is more than just the inflation spiral. We are caught in what the Vedic literature points to as the very essence of illusion—the failure to understand clearly who we are.

“Most of the human body,” the article continues, “is water. In a 60-pound person, Dr. Monsen said, there are about five pounds of calcium, 1 1/2 pounds of phosphate, about nine ounces of potassium, a little more than six ounces each of sulfur and sodium, a little more than an ounce of magnesium, and less than an ounce each of iron, copper, and iodine.”

Now, does that sound like you?

Meditate on this for a moment. The body is mostly water, Dr. Monsen says. But when you think about who you are—when you think about your self, your identity—do

you think of yourself as watery? In the course of your life you’ve drunk so much water in and passed so much of it out. The water has come and gone—but you are still here. Who is that *you*?

Calcium, phosphate, potassium, sulfur—is this the essential stuff of our identity? Sodium, magnesium, iron, copper...?

The point is simple. If we analyze our bodies we’ll find nothing more than a barrelful of water and five or six dollars’ worth of chemicals. Yet if we meditate on our selves—who we really are—we intuitively know that each of us is something more. Conclusion? We are not these material bodies.

By intelligent discrimination, we should try to understand the difference between the body and the self. The body is made of chemicals—sulfur, iodine, and so on—but the self, the real identity of the living being, is consciousness. The body with consciousness is a person; the body without it, a cadaver.

Cadavers, notes AP, are “more expensive than ever.” Dr. Monsen predicts that the price will soon reach \$200.

Consciousness, however, is priceless. Intellect, ambition, kindness, love—these are all symptoms of consciousness. So, in one word, it is consciousness that is the essential, invaluable element in the body.

AP has sent out an interesting

release about the value of the body, but how much more interested we should be in understanding the self within the body. What is it that makes us attach so much value to our bodies while we’re in them? If we inquire in this way, we shall ultimately come to see the importance of consciousness. It is consciousness that gives life to the body and makes it temporarily so precious.

This consciousness is also known as *ātmā*, the soul, or the spirit. The Vedic literature therefore tells us that if we want to understand the true value of life, we should inquire about our spiritual identity, beyond our material bodies.

The body is what most of us think ourselves to be. When we think of ourselves as American, Indian, Japanese, or German, white or black, man or woman, what are these but more detailed descriptions of our bodies? We give so much attention to the body—which is worth practically nothing—and we ignore the invaluable soul, or consciousness, within the body.

“When people were told they were worth only 98 cents they were shocked,” Dr. Monsen said. “They feel better knowing they are worth \$5.60.” But if we can free ourselves from bodily designations, understand that we’re not these bodies at all, and recognize who we really are, there’s no limit to how much better we shall feel.

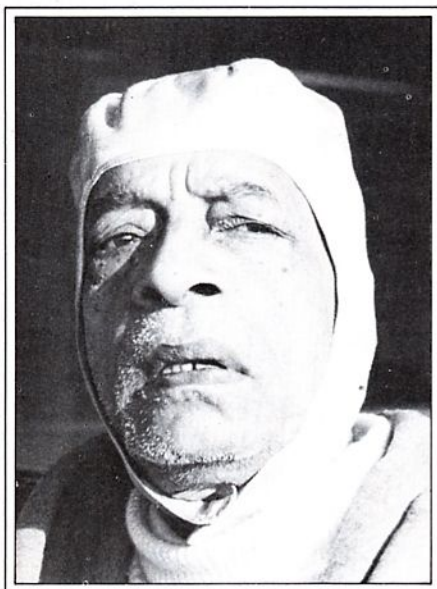
LORD KṚṢṆA'S PURE DEVOTEE REACHES AMERICA

by SATSVARŪPA DĀSA GOSVĀMĪ

We are trying to relish more and more the life of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, our beloved spiritual master, the Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī writes in his Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 9.363-364): "The activities of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu are just like an unfathomable ocean. It is not possible for me to enter into them. Simply standing on the shore, I am but touching the water. Whoever hears the pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu with faith, analytically studying them, attains the ecstatic riches of love of Godhead."

We believe that this description of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's pastimes also holds true for the activities of Śrīla Prabhupāda, the great ācārya (spiritual teacher) in disciplic succession from Lord Caitanya who created the world movement of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, beginning in America in the 1960s. We know that just as one worships the Ganges River by an offering of Ganges water, we can glorify Śrīla Prabhupāda

The first in a series of excerpts from the authorized biography of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

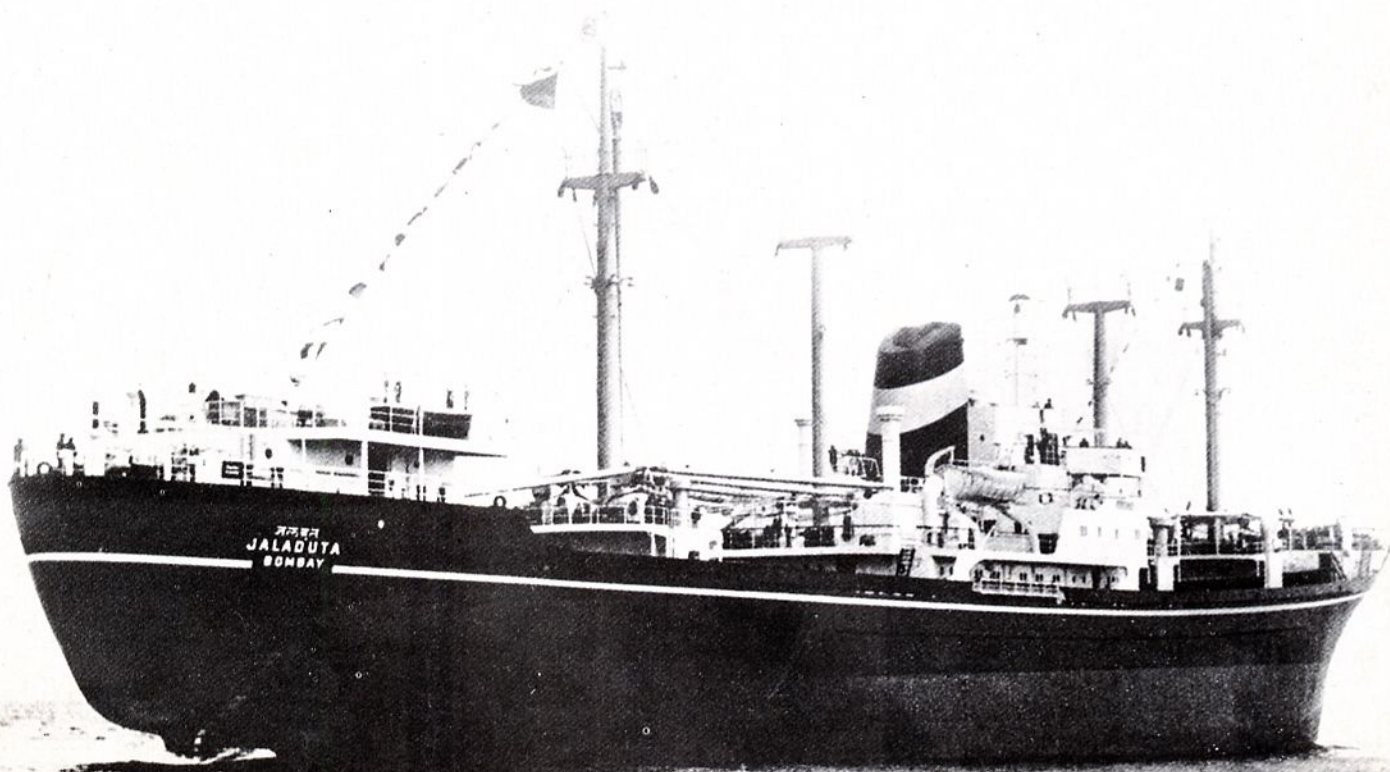


only by his own mercy. Since we are his disciples, his mercy is all we are made of. We proceed, then, in this attempt, desiring to describe him for the benefit of all who can hear.

We have begun our research and writing with the last twelve years of his life in this world—from 1965, when he began preaching in the West, through 1977. Since his personal letters from this period are the most abundant and his associates the most numerous and available, we have chosen to begin our work with these most important years.

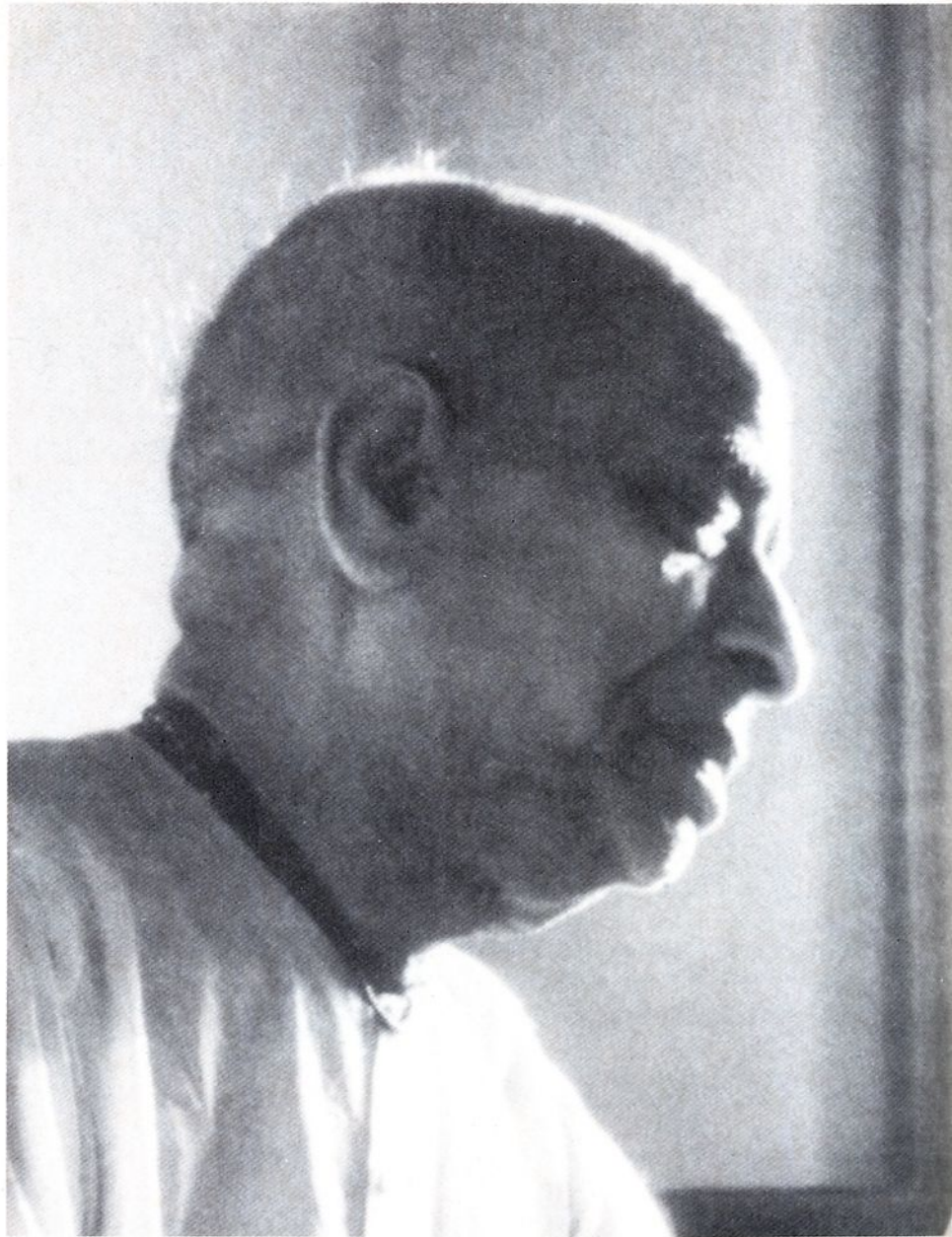
When the biography is complete, of course, it will start with his birth in Calcutta in 1896, and describe his early training under his Vaiṣṇava (Kṛṣṇa conscious) father, from whom he learned to worship the Deity of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and hold the

In 1965, just before he turned seventy, Śrīla Prabhupāda (left) took the risk of going to the West. The head of Scindia Steamship Company gave him free passage aboard the cargo ship *Jaladuta*. Destination: New York City.



Ratha-yātrā festival. We shall then recount in detail his meeting in 1922 with his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī, who instructed him to go preach in the West. After his spiritual master's departure from this world in 1936, Śrīla Prabhupāda started BACK TO GOD-HEAD magazine in 1944 and left home in 1950 to dedicate himself fully to his spiritual master's mission. Then he went to live in Vṛndāvana and took sannyāsa initiation in 1959. From 1960 to 1965 Śrīla Prabhupāda stayed at the historic Rādhā-Dāmodara temple in Vṛndāvana, where he lived in two small rooms. There he wrote and published three volumes of his translation and commentary on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. By correspondence he also tried to create interest in a world movement of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, although he received little response from the various gentlemen he approached.

Then in 1965, just before he turned seventy, an age when most devotees of Kṛṣṇa are confined to Vṛndāvana and preparing to pass away, Śrīla Prabhupāda took the risk of going to the West. A Mr. Agarwal in nearby Mathurā had a son who agreed to sponsor Śrīla Prabhupāda at his home in Butler, Pennsylvania, for one month. And Sumati Morarjee, the head of the Scindia Steamship Company, agreed to give him free round-trip passage to America on one of her cargo ships. But he had to travel without money, since governmental restrictions prevented him from taking money out of the country. His prospects, therefore, were full of uncertainty: he had only a month's residence in the United States, he would be living with strangers, and he had no money and no formulated plan for what to do in America. But he was thoroughly convinced of the potency of his spiritual master's instructions.



Much as reigning queens in past ages financed explorers' voyages to the New World, so in 1965 Sumati Morarjee, a pious Hindu lady and wealthy business magnate, financed a voyage from India to America by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, "a preacher of the bhāgavata cult."

The *Jaladuta* is a regular cargo carrier of the Scindia Steam Navigation Company, but there is a single passenger cabin aboard. For the voyage from Calcutta to New York in August and September of 1965, the cabin was occupied by "Sri Abhoy Charanaravinda Bhaktivedānta Swami," whose age was listed as sixty-nine and who was taken on board bearing "a complimentary ticket with food."

The *Jaladuta*, under the command of

Captain Arun Pandia, whose wife was also aboard, left at 9 A.M. on Friday, August 13. Śrīla Prabhupāda, in the diary he kept for the ocean crossing, noted on the thirteenth: "The cabin is quite comfortable and thanks to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa for enlightening Sumati Morarjee for all these arrangements. I am quite comfortable." But on the fourteenth he reported in his diary: "Seasickness, dizziness, vomiting—Bay of Bengal. Heavy rains. More sickness."

On the nineteenth, when the ship arrived at Colombo, Ceylon, Śrīla Prabhupāda was able to get relief from his seasickness. The captain took him ashore, and he traveled around Colombo by car. Then the ship went on toward Cochin, a city on the west coast of India.

The observance of Janmāṣṭamī, the

appearance day of Lord Kṛṣṇa, occurred that year on the twentieth of August. Śrīla Prabhupāda noted that he took the opportunity to speak to the crew about the philosophy of Lord Kṛṣṇa and distributed *prasāda* he had cooked himself. August 21 was his seventieth birthday, observed (without ceremony) at sea. On August 21 the ship arrived at Cochin, and Śrīla Prabhupāda's trunks of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* volumes, which had been shipped from Bombay, were loaded on board.

By the twenty-third the ship had put out to the Red Sea, where Śrīla Prabhupāda encountered great difficulty. He noted in his diary: "Rain, seasickness, dizziness, headache, no appetite, vomiting." Although his diary gives no further description, Śrīla Prabhupāda told us

several times of the two strokes he experienced on this ocean crossing. Two years later, in 1967, when he was hospitalized for a heart attack, he realized that what he had gone through on the *Jaladuta* on two consecutive days was a pair of heart attacks. The severe pains in his chest, he said, made him think he would die at any moment.

On board the *Jaladuta*, Śrīla Prabhupāda attributed the symptoms to seasickness and tolerated the difficulty, meditating on the purpose of his mission. But after two days of such violent attacks, he thought that if another came on the third day, he would certainly not survive it.

But on the night of the second day, Śrīla Prabhupāda had a dream. Lord Kṛṣṇa was rowing a boat, and He told Śrīla Prabhupāda that he should not fear, but should come along. Śrīla Prabhupāda felt assured of Lord Kṛṣṇa's protection, and the violent attacks did not recur.

The *Jaladuta* entered the Suez Canal on September 1 and stopped in Port Said on the second. Śrīla Prabhupāda visited the city along with the captain and reported that he liked it. By the sixth he had recovered a little from his illness and was eating for the first time, having cooked his own *kichrī* and *puris*. He reported in his diary that his strength renewed little by little.

Thursday, September 9:

To 4:00 this afternoon, we have crossed over the Atlantic Ocean for 24 hours. The whole day was clear and almost smooth. I am taking my food regularly and have got some strength to struggle. There is also a slight tacking of the ship and I am feeling a slight headache also. But I am struggling and the nectarine of life ["nectarine" is Śrīla Prabhupāda's word for "nectar"] is Śrī Caitanya-*caritāmṛta* the source of all my vitality.

Friday, September 10:

Today the ship is plying very smoothly. I feel today better. But I am feeling separation from Śrī Vṛndāvana [the holy abode of the Lord's pastimes] and my Lord Śrī Govinda Gopinātha Rādhā-Dāmodara. The only solace is Śrī Caitanya-*caritāmṛta* in which I am tasting the nectarine of Lord Caitanya's *līlā* [pastimes]. I have left Bhārata-bhūmi [India] just to execute the order of Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī in pursuance of Lord Caitanya's order. I have no qualification, but have taken up the risk just to carry out the order of His Divine Grace. I depend fully on Their mercy so far away from Vṛndāvana.

During the voyage, Śrīla Prabhupāda must have sometimes stood on the deck at the ship's rail, watching the ocean or the sky and thinking of *Caitanya-*

caritāmṛta, Vṛndāvana-dhāma, and the order of his spiritual master to go preach in the West. Mrs. Pandia, the captain's wife, whom Śrīla Prabhupāda described as "an intelligent and learned lady," foretold Śrīla Prabhupāda's future. If he were to pass beyond this crisis in health, she said, this would indicate the good will of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The ocean voyage of 1965 was a calm one for the *Jaladuta*. The captain said that in his entire career he had never seen such a calm crossing of the Atlantic. Śrīla Prabhupāda replied that this calm-

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ness was Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Mrs. Pandia then asked Śrīla Prabhupāda to come back with them so that they might have such a calm crossing again. Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote in his diary, "If the Atlantic would have shown its usual face, perhaps I would have died. But Lord Kṛṣṇa has taken charge of the ship." We also know that at one point Śrīla Prabhupāda sold the captain three volumes of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

On August 13 Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote a Bengali poem, a prayer composed in pure devotion. He noted in his diary: "32nd day of journey. Cooked *bañi kacaurī*. It appeared to be delicious, so I was able to take some food. Today I have disclosed my mind to my companion, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. There is a Bengali poem made by me in this connection."

This prayer to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa is filled with devotional confidence in the mission Śrīla Prabhupāda was inspired to undertake on behalf of his spiritual master. An English translation of the verses follows:

"I emphatically say to you, O brothers, you will obtain your good fortune from the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa only when Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī becomes pleased with you.

"Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who is very dear to Lord Gaurāṅga [Lord Caitanya], the son of mother Śacī, is unparalleled in his service to the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He is that great saintly spiritual master who bestows intense devotion to Kṛṣṇa at different places throughout the world.

"By his strong desire, the holy name of Lord Gaurāṅga will spread throughout all the countries of the Western world. In all the cities, towns, and villages on the earth, from all the oceans, seas, rivers, and streams, everyone will chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa.

"As the vast mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu conquers all directions, a flood of transcendental ecstasy will certainly cover the land. When all the sinful, miserable living entities become happy, the desire of the Vaiṣṇavas is fulfilled.

"Although my Guru Mahārāja ordered me to accomplish this mission, I am not worthy or fit to do it. I am very fallen and insignificant. Therefore, O Lord, now I am begging for Your mercy so that I may become worthy, for You are the wisest and most experienced of all.

"If You bestow Your power, by serving the spiritual master one attains the Absolute Truth—one's life becomes successful. If that service is obtained, then one becomes happy and gets Your association due to good fortune.

"My dear Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, because of my association with material desires, one after another, I was gradually falling into a blind well full of snakes, following the general populace. But Your servant Nārada Muni kindly accepted me as his disciple and instructed me how to achieve this transcendental position. Therefore, my first duty is to serve him. How could I leave his service?" [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*]

"O Lord Kṛṣṇa, You are my eternal companion. Forgetting You, I have suffered the kicks of *māyā* birth after birth. If today the chance to meet You occurs again, then I will surely be able to rejoin You.

"O dear friend, in Your company I will experience great joy once again. In the early morning I will wander about the cow pastures and fields. Running and frolicking in the many forests of Vraja, I will roll on the ground in spiritual ecstasy. Oh, when will that day be mine?

"Today that remembrance of You came to me in a very nice way. Because I have a great longing I called to You. I am Your eternal servant, and therefore I desire Your association so much. O Lord

Kṛṣṇa, other than You there is no means of success.”

The confidential themes of these prayers are obvious, and it is not necessary to make extended commentary on them. But since we are attempting to be with Śrīla Prabhupāda as he lived his life, we must at least pause to appreciate such an intense, concentrated view of himself, in which he completely reveals his mind and soul in his confidential relationship with God.

In the first verse he declares that the only way one can get the mercy of Kṛṣṇa is to get the mercy of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, who is the mercy representative of the Lord. The spiritual master is considered the representative of Rādhārāṇī, and verses two through seven describe the relationship between the disciple and the spiritual master. Śrīla Prabhupāda gives credit to his Guru Mahārāja, his spiritual master—Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī—and foresees the day when, through Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saras-

vatī's strong desire, the holy name of Kṛṣṇa will spread through all the countries of the Western world. He plainly states that he has been ordered to accomplish this mission of worldwide Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Feeling unworthy, he prays to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, asking to be empowered to engage as the servant of his spiritual master to fulfill the desires of the Lord and the Vaiṣṇavas, the devotees of the Lord.

Certain literary critics state that a biographer should never step ahead in time to remind the reader of the great success his subject will gain, since that disturbs the reality of the time sequence. A man does not know what he will achieve until he achieves it, and the biography should capture as far as possible the experience of the man's life as he lived it, which was without knowledge of the future. But the anticipation in this prayer written aboard the *Jaladuta* was so great that we cannot help studying it, not

only to appreciate what Śrīla Prabhupāda would do, but to appreciate what he was doing already. We trust that the reader will not be disturbed as we examine these Prabhupāda gems.

Śrīla Prabhupāda rarely made entries in his diary, yet from this ocean crossing we have a number of intimate revelations of his mind. With the same straightforward, factual tone in which he has noted the date, the weather, and the state of his health, he has described his helpless dependence on his “companion” Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and his absorption in the ecstasy of separation from Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda rarely wrote poems; we have found a life's total of no more than about half a dozen. They were not the products of idle literary hours, nor were they written for publication or fame. (The poems and diary entries were found years later by curious disciples who uncovered them among their spiritual master's miscellaneous papers.)



The last two verses of this poem give an unexpected confidential glimpse into Śrīla Prabhupāda's direct relationship with Lord Kṛṣṇa. In verse 9 he calls on Kṛṣṇa as his "dear friend" and speaks of again experiencing the joy of wandering in the cow pastures and fields of Vraja. In verse 10 he relishes how this memory of Kṛṣṇa has come to him in such a nice way, because of his great desire for serving Kṛṣṇa. Surely the experiences related in this poem are above the mundane level.

Externally Śrīla Prabhupāda was experiencing great inconvenience; he had been aboard ship for a full month and had suffered heart attacks and repeated seasickness. Moreover, even if he were to recover from these difficulties, his arrival in America would undoubtedly bring many more difficulties. But through this poem and through remarks in his diary, we can understand that Śrīla Prabhupāda's consciousness was beyond all the difficulties of material duality. Nor can we say that these writings are merely idealistic discussions. With all deference to the literary critics, we will foretell here that this seventy-year-old mendicant was actually to ignite the worldwide Hare Kṛṣṇa explosion he predicted in this poem.

And what are we to make of his remembrance of his friend Kṛṣṇa wandering about in the forest of Vraja? I will not be so foolish as to attempt to understand these things. As Śrīla Prabhupāda had already written in 1961 in his *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* commentary, "Spiritual feelings of happiness and intense ecstasies have no mundane comparison. Therefore it is very difficult to give expression to such feelings. We can just have a glimpse of such ecstasy in the words of Śrī Nārada Muni." I can at least understand that Śrīla Prabhupāda was thinking of Kṛṣṇa and speaking intimately to Kṛṣṇa, and that Kṛṣṇa was reciprocating with him out of His own interest.

Śrīla Prabhupāda used to tell us that although God can certainly speak to anyone, He is selective, just like an important man in the material world who speaks only with his own associates or those with whom he has some important business. To enter the association of God will be our fortune too, if we can submissively appreciate the glimpses of pure devotional service given to us by Śrīla Prabhupāda's dream of Kṛṣṇa and by his prayers and diary remarks as he sailed the Atlantic to bring Kṛṣṇa consciousness to America.

After a thirty-six-day journey from Calcutta, the *Jaladuta* reached Boston's

Commonwealth Pier at 5:30 A.M. on September 17, 1965. Śrīla Prabhupāda recalled that among the first things he saw were the letters "A & P" painted on a pierfront warehouse. (The warehouse is still there today.) The ship was to stop in Boston briefly before proceeding to New York City, which was Śrīla Prabhupāda's port of entry. Many skyscrapers have been added to the Boston skyline since 1965, but probably the same gray waterfront dawn that occurs now at that time of year was awaiting him then, and there must have been an earlier version

**“ ‘Somehow or
other, O Lord, You
have brought me
here to speak about
You. Now, my
Lord, it is up to You
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You like.’ ”**

of today's conglomeration of lobster stands.

In 1965, after a short walk across a footbridge and down a few streets, you would be in a downtown section of Boston, with old churches, warehouses, office buildings, bars, tawdry bookshops, nightclubs, and restaurants. We know that Śrīla Prabhupāda went walking into the city with the captain, who did some shopping. But what is perhaps most significant about Śrīla Prabhupāda's short stay in Boston—aside from the fact that he had now set foot in America—was that Commonwealth Pier was the place where he wrote another Bengali poem, titled *Mārkine bhāgavata-dharma* ("Teaching Kṛṣṇa Consciousness in America"). The translation of this prayer is printed here:

"My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, You are so kind upon this useless soul, but I do not know why You have brought me here. Now You can do whatever You like with me.

"But I guess You have some business here, otherwise why would You bring me to this terrible place?

"Most of the population here is covered by the material modes of ignorance and passion. Absorbed in material life, they think themselves very happy and satisfied, and therefore they

have no taste for the transcendental message of Vāsudeva [Kṛṣṇa]. I do not know how they will be able to understand it.

"But I know that Your causeless mercy can make everything possible, because You are the most expert mystic.

"How will they understand the mellows of devotional service? O Lord, I am simply praying for Your mercy so that I will be able to convince them about Your message.

"All living entities have come under the control of the illusory energy by Your will, and therefore, if You like, by Your will they can also be released from the clutches of illusion.

"I wish that You may deliver them. Only if You desire their deliverance will they be able to understand Your message.

"The words of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are Your incarnation, and if a sober person repeatedly receives it with submissive aural reception, then he will be able to understand Your message.

"He will become liberated from the influence of the modes of ignorance and passion, and thus all inauspicious things accumulated in the core of the heart will disappear.

"It is said in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.17–21): 'Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, who is the Paramātmā [Supersoul] in everyone's heart and the benefactor of the truthful devotee, cleanses desire for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee who has developed the urge to hear His messages, which are in themselves virtuous when properly heard and chanted.

"By regular attendance in classes on the *Bhāgavatam* and by rendering of service to the pure devotee, all that is troublesome to the heart is almost completely destroyed, and loving service unto the Personality of Godhead, who is praised with transcendental songs, is established as an irrevocable fact.

"As soon as irrevocable loving service is established in the heart, the effects of nature's modes of passion and ignorance, such as lust, desire, and hankering, disappear from the heart. Then the devotee is established in goodness, and he becomes completely happy.

"Thus established in the mode of unalloyed goodness, the man whose mind has been enlivened by contact with devotional service to the Lord gains positive scientific knowledge of the Personality of Godhead in the stage of liberation from all material association.

"Thus the knot in the heart is pierced, and all misgivings are cut to pieces. The chain of fruitive actions is

terminated when one sees the self as master.'

"How will I make them understand this message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness? I am very unfortunate and unqualified and am the most fallen. Therefore I am seeking Your benediction so that I can convince them, for I am powerless to do so on my own.

"Somehow or other, O Lord, You have brought me here to speak about You. Now, my Lord, it is up to You to make me a success or failure, as You like.

"O spiritual master of all the worlds! I can simply repeat Your message. So if You like You can make my power of speaking suitable for their understanding.

"Only by Your causeless mercy will my words become pure. I am sure that when this transcendental message penetrates their hearts, they will certainly feel gladdened and thus become liberated from all unhappy conditions of life.

"O Lord, I am just like a puppet in Your hands. So if You have brought me here to dance, then make me dance, make me dance, O Lord, make me dance as You like.

"I have no devotion, nor do I have any knowledge, but I have strong faith in the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. I have been designated as Bhaktivedanta, and now, if You like, You can fulfill the real purport of Bhaktivedanta.

"Signed—the most unfortunate, insignificant beggar,

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami,
On board the ship *Jaladuta*,
Commonwealth Pier,
Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A.
Dated 18th of September, 1965"

These are the thoughts of one who was coming, physically and spiritually, from the holiest abode of Kṛṣṇa consciousness into the hellishness of twentieth-century materialism—from Vṛndāvana to Boston. He could immediately see the death, suffering, illusion, the human beings reduced to animal life—as materialists could never see them. Yet he did not turn away in loathing. He had come to save these people, but now he felt very weak and lowly, unable to do anything on his own. He stood in the American city, a city rich with billions, populated with millions, and determined to stay the way it was. He was but an "insignificant beggar" with no money, an old man who had barely survived two heart attacks at sea, who spoke a different language, and who was dressed stangely—yet he had come to tell people to give up meat-

eating, illicit sex, intoxication, and gambling, and to worship Kṛṣṇa, who to them was an unknown Hindu god. What would he be able to accomplish?

But while feeling his own weakness, he directly spoke his heart to God. He was alone, with no friend, but God was his friend. And what did he wish of his friend? "I wish that You may deliver them. I am seeking Your benediction so that I can convince them." And in this intimate poem he also revealed the method he would use. He would trust in the power of the transcendental vibration of God's holy name. As expressed

"He would never forget even his first sight of the massive skyscrapers, which were for him always a symbol of a proud but futile materialistic civilization."

in the verses he quoted from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the message of Godhead itself would clean away desire for material enjoyment and create loving service unto Kṛṣṇa as an irrevocable fact. It was complete faith in this process that he expressed, even while forced to feel the powerful influence of ignorance and passion that dominated everything around him in the American city. He was tiny, but God was the greatest, and God was Kṛṣṇa, his dearest friend.

Therefore, although no one in Boston or New York had the slightest suspicion of it, and although he himself did not assume it, he had entered as a powerful enemy of illusion. Kṛṣṇa's empowered emissary had entered the shore of America in the form of a poor mendicant from India, and no one yet knew what it all meant. As for Śrīla Prabhupāda's understanding of the event, he expressed it in his poem: "Somehow or other, O Lord, You have brought me here to speak about You. Now, my Lord, it is up to You to make me a success or failure, as You like."

On the nineteenth of September the *Jaladuta* sailed into New York Harbor and docked at a Manhattan pier, and

Śrīla Prabhupāda ended his stay on the ship. Now he was on his own. He later said that he had so little idea of what to do that even as he walked off the ship onto the pier he did not know whether to turn left or right. He carried only forty rupees cash, which he himself called "a few hours' spending in New York."

Śrīla Prabhupāda was dressed appropriately for a resident of Vṛndāvana. His complexion was golden, his forehead decorated carefully with whitish Vaiṣṇava *tilaka*. He wore a simple cotton *dhoti* and carried an old *chāda*, or shawl. Śrīla Prabhupāda's only immediate hope for financial maintenance was that he might sell some English copies of his *Bhāgavatams*, which were to be shipped on to Butler in several trunks. He wore pointed white-rubber slippers, not uncommon for *sādhus* in India. But almost no one in New York had ever seen or dreamed of anyone appearing like this Vaiṣṇava.

He may have been the first full-fledged Vaiṣṇava to arrive in New York and not hide himself with compromised appearance. He fully manifested all the outward and inward characteristics of a Vaiṣṇava, including shaven head and *śikhā* (the tuft of hair on the back of the head), *kuṅṭhī-mālā* (neckbeads), Vaiṣṇava *tilaka*, *japa-mālā* (chanting beads), and total dedication of mind, body, and words to the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. His presence was extraordinary, but of course the people of New York City have an expertise in not giving much attention one way or another to any new kind of strange arrival. Later, in his 1966 lectures, Śrīla Prabhupāda would speak of his first hours in the city, citing himself as an example of anxiety. He would particularly mention how he went to the bus station and looked at the signs on all the different buses, not knowing which one to take, until a man sent by Mr. Agarwal met him and helped him get the right bus to Butler.

So Śrīla Prabhupāda's first encounter with New York City was brief, but he would never forget even his first sight of the massive skyscrapers, which were for him always a symbol of a proud but futile materialistic civilization. He would note that the same men who had built these Manhattan skyscrapers by first pile-driving solid foundations were in ignorance that their own foundation, their own existence in this material world, was extremely fragile, for they did not know where they would go in the next life. Very soon Śrīla Prabhupāda's preaching was filled with images of American society.

Questions People Ask About Chanting

HARE KṚṢṆA HARE KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA HARE HARE
HARE RĀMA HARE RĀMA RĀMA RĀMA HARE HARE

Q. *How can I find more time for chanting? I like it, but I'm usually too busy.*

A. We're all busy, but eventually we all have to die. And then what? By the law of *karma*, anyone who is not God-realized will have to stay in the cycle of rebirth and death. So our real business should be to become God-realized and get out of the karmic cycle. And chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* is the surest way to do that.

Q. *If I want to take up chanting, do I need a teacher?*

A. Not to start. But if you want your chanting to give you lasting results, then you'll take instruction from a bona fide spiritual master. As the Vedic literatures point out, "Unless one receives instruction from a bona fide spiritual master in the authorized disciplic succession, then his *mantra* will have no effect."

Q. *If I chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, will I be able to levitate?*

A. Even if you could overcome the law of gravity, you'd still be under the law of *karma*. You'd still have to undergo old age, disease, death, and rebirth. But if you want to overcome the law of *karma* and, when you pass on, levitate all the way to the spiritual world, then chant the *mahā-mantra*.

Q. *Why not keep the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra secret, like other mantras?*

A. If something can actually do some good for others, then who but a rascal would keep it secret and sell it for



a fee? The Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* can deliver everyone from the karmic cycle of rebirth and death. So Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, the incarnation of God for this age, ordered His followers to spread the *mahā-mantra* "to every town and village."

Q. *If you chant a mantra in public, won't it lose its power?*

A. A *mantra* can never lose its power. (Here we're not talking about the nonsense syllables that phony *gurus* are marketing nowadays. These "*mantras*" never had any power to begin with.) At any rate, a *mantra* is a combination of sacred sounds—names of God and His energies. So just as God is inexhaustible, a *mantra* is inexhaustible. Unlimited numbers of people can chant it unlimitedly, and it will always have its power. And the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is known as

the *mahā-mantra*. *Mahā* means "great," or "the most powerful."

Q. *I don't see that everybody has to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Don't all paths lead to the same place?*

A. If you take a flight to Paris and your friend takes a flight to London, you'll go to Paris and he'll end up in London. It's not that you'll both arrive in Paris. Now, the Vedic literatures explain that life's highest destination is to revive our relationship with Lord Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world, and that the path is the chanting of the Lord's names. So if you're doing something else, you'll end up in a different place.

Q. *God is everywhere. So why chant Hare Kṛṣṇa? I'm already "back to Godhead," right here and now.*

A. That may be, but there's a difference. For instance, the state government is running both the university system and the prison system. So it's all the same, in a way, but where would you rather be—UCLA or San Quentin?

Similarly, God controls both the spiritual and material worlds. But the material world is a place where people who've forgotten Him go through all kinds of trouble—until, finally, they come to their senses and revive the relationship. And the best way to do that is to chant God's names. Then, as you say, you'll be "already back to Godhead, right here and now," and when you pass away you'll live with Kṛṣṇa eternally in the spiritual world.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

The God-blind Scientists

The following conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples took place in December of 1973, during a morning walk at Venice Beach, Los Angeles.

Devotee: The scientists say their power of reason tells them there's no God. They say if you believe in God it's strictly a matter of faith.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: It is not a matter of faith—it is fact.

Devotee: When scientists say "fact," they mean something they can perceive through their senses.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, and in Kṛṣṇa consciousness we can perceive God through our senses. The more we engage our senses in devotional service—service to God—the more we are able to perceive Him. *Hṛṣīkeṣa hṛṣīkeṣa-sevanam bhaktir ucyate:* "When one engages his senses in service to the Supreme, that relationship is called *bhakti* [devotion]." For example, we use our legs to walk to the temple, and our tongue to glorify God and eat *prasāda* ["the Lord's mercy," vegetarian food offered to Kṛṣṇa].

Devotee: But the scientists say these are acts of faith. They say that when we offer food to God, it's only our faith that makes us think God accepts it. They say they can't see Him eating.

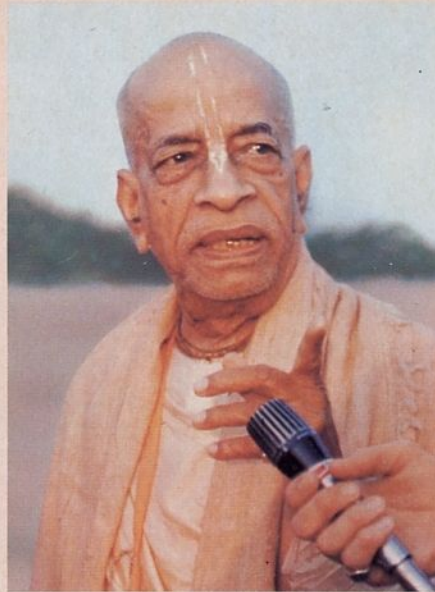
Śrīla Prabhupāda: They cannot see, but I can see. I am not a fool like them. They are spiritually blind—suffering from cataracts—ignorance. If they come to me, I shall operate, and then they'll see God also.

Devotee: Well, the scientists want to see God now.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But Kṛṣṇa will not reveal Himself to them now, because they're rascals—big animals. *Śva-vid-varāhoṣṭra-kharaiḥ samstutaḥ puruṣaḥ paśuḥ:* "Anyone who's not a devotee of God is just a big animal—a big camel or a big dog or a big swine—and the people who praise him are the same."

Devotee: They say we're just dreamers—that we make up fantasies about God and the spiritual world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Why do they say "fantasies"? They have no brain to



understand—so they say "fantasies."

Devotee: Well, their standard of objectivity is what they can perceive through their senses.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, they can perceive God through their senses. When they perceive sand through their senses, who do they think made the sand? They didn't. When they perceive the ocean through their senses, who do they think made that? Why are they such fools that they don't understand this?

Devotee: They say that if God made these things, they'd be able to see Him, just as they can see the ocean.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: And I say to them, "Yes, you can see God—but first you have to have the eyes. You are blind; you have cataracts. Come to me and I will operate. Then you'll see God." This is why the Vedic scriptures say, *tad-vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet:* "To see God, you must approach a bona fide spiritual master." Otherwise, how can they see God with their blind eyes?

Devotee: But the scientists don't have any faith in the kind of seeing you're talking about. The only kind of seeing they put any faith in is what they can gather through their eyes and their microscopes and telescopes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Why? If you look up in the sky now, you will think it is vacant. But it is not vacant—your eyes are

deficient. There are innumerable planets and stars in the sky, but you cannot see them—you are blind to them. So just because you cannot see the stars and planets, does this mean they do not exist?

Devotee: The scientists admit they're ignorant about some things. But still they won't accept your explanation of things they can't see with their own eyes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Why not?

Devotee: Because they think that what you tell them may be wrong.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is their misfortune. Our gross senses cannot approach God. To know Him we have to hear from an authority—that is the process for gaining higher knowledge.

Devotee: But that step requires faith. Faith in the *guru*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Not faith—common sense! If you want to learn medicine, you have to go to an expert physician. You cannot learn it by yourself.

Devotee: Śrīla Prabhupāda, from all you've said, it's obvious we can support our ideas as well as the atheistic scientists can support theirs. But they're in control of society. They're dominant.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Dominant? [Laughs.] One kick from *māyā* [Kṛṣṇa's material energy] and all their "dominance" is finished in one second. They are controlled by *māyā*, but they are thinking that they are free. This is foolishness.

Devotee: They don't want to come to their senses.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Therefore they are rascals. A rascal is someone who will insist he's right even after you have proved he's wrong. He will never take a good lesson. And why do they remain rascals? *Na mām duṣkṛtino mūḍhāḥ:* because they are *duṣkṛtina*—very, very sinful. Don't you see how they are making a world of slaughterhouses and brothels, how they are ruining everyone's life by promoting sensual enjoyment? These are all sinful activities. And because the scientists are so sinful, they will have to suffer in the darkest regions of hell. In their next life they'll become worms in stool. Yet out of ignorance they are thinking they are safe.

The Beautiful Story of the Personality of Godhead

ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

Translation and commentary by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

First Canto: "Creation"

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Mahārāja Parīkṣit Cursed by a Brāhmaṇa Boy

In this part of our continuing presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the saintly King Parīkṣit momentarily forgets himself and insults a meditating brāhmaṇa. In revenge the brāhmaṇa's son curses King Parīkṣit to die within seven days from the bite of a poisonous bird.

TEXT 29

अभूतपूर्वः सहसा क्षुत्तृड्भ्यामर्दितात्मनः ।
ब्राह्मणं प्रत्यभूद्ब्रह्मन् मत्सरो मन्युरेव च ॥२९॥

abhūta-pūrvah sahasā
kṣut-tṛḍbhyām arditātmanah
brāhmaṇam praty abhūd brahman
matsaro manyur eva ca

abhūta-pūrvah—unprecedented; sahasā—circumstantially; kṣut—hunger; tṛḍbhyām—as well as by thirst; arditā—being distressed; ātmanah—of his self; brāhmaṇam—unto a brāhmaṇa; prati—against; abhūt—became; brahman—O brāhmaṇas; matsarah—envious; manyuh—angry; eva—thus; ca—and.

TRANSLATION

O brāhmaṇas, the King's anger and envy, directed toward the brāhmaṇa sage, were unprecedented, being that circumstances had made him hungry and thirsty.

PURPORT

For a king like Mahārāja Parīkṣit to become angry and envious, especially at a sage and brāhmaṇa, was undoubtedly unprecedented. The King knew well that brāhmaṇas, sages, children, women and old men are always beyond the jurisdiction of punishment. Similarly, the king, even though he commits a great mistake, is never to be considered a wrongdoer. But in this case, Mahārāja Parīkṣit became angry and envious at the sage due to his thirst and hunger, by the will of the Lord. The King was right to punish his subject for coldly receiving him or neglecting him, but because the culprit was a sage and a brāhmaṇa, it was unprecedented. As the Lord is never envious of anyone, so also the Lord's devotee is never envious of anyone. The only justification for Mahārāja Parīkṣit's behavior is that it was ordained by the Lord.

TEXT 30

स तु ब्रह्मण्येषरंसे गतासुमुगं रुषा ।
विनिर्गच्छन्धनुष्कोट्या निधाय पुरमागतः ॥३०॥

sa tu brahma-ṛṣer aṁse
gatāsum uragam ruṣā
vinirgacchan dhanuṣ-koṭyā
nidhāya puram āgataḥ

sah—the King; tu—however; brahma-ṛṣeḥ—of the brāhmaṇa sage; aṁse—on the shoulder; gata-asum—lifeless; uragam—snake; ruṣā—in anger; vinirgacchan—while leaving; dhanuṣ-koṭyā—with the front of the bow; nidhāya—by placing it; puram—palace; āgataḥ—returned.

TRANSLATION

While leaving, the King, being so insulted, picked up a lifeless snake with his bow and angrily placed it on the shoulder of the sage. Then he returned to his palace.

PURPORT

The King thus treated the sage (tī for tat, although he was never accustomed to such silly actions. By the will of the Lord, the King, while going away, found a dead snake in front of him, and he thought that the sage, who had coldly received him, thus might be coldly rewarded by being offered a garland of a dead snake. In the ordinary course of dealing, this was not very unnatural, but in the case of Mahārāja Parīkṣit's dealing with a brāhmaṇa sage, this was certainly unprecedented. It so happened by the will of the Lord.

TEXT 31

एष किं निभृताशेषकरणो मीलितेक्षणः ।
मृषासमाधिराहोस्वित्किं नु स्यात्क्षत्रबन्धुभिः ॥३१॥

eṣa kiṁ nibhṛtāśeṣa-
karaṇo militekṣaṇah
mṛṣā-samādhir āhosvit
kiṁ nu syāt kṣatra-bandhubhiḥ

eṣaḥ—this; kiṁ—whether; nibhṛta-āśeṣa—meditative mood; karaṇah—senses; milita—closed; ikṣaṇah—eyes; mṛṣā—false; samādhīḥ—trance; āho—remains; svit—if it is so; kiṁ—either; nu—but; syāt—may be; kṣatra-bandhubhiḥ—by the lower kṣatriya.

TRANSLATION

Upon returning, he began to contemplate and argue within himself whether the sage had actually been in meditation, with senses concentrated and eyes closed, or whether he had just been feigning trance just to avoid receiving a lower kṣatriya.

PURPORT

The King, being a devotee of the Lord, did not approve of his own action, and thus he began to wonder whether the sage was really in a trance or was just pretending in order to avoid receiving the King, who was a kṣatriya and therefore lower in rank. Repentance comes in the mind of a good soul as soon as he commits something wrong. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī do not believe that the King's action was due to his past misdeeds. The arrangement was so made by the Lord just to call the King back home, back to Godhead.

According to Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī, the plan was made by the will of the Lord, and by the will of the Lord the situation of frustration was created. The plan was that for his so-called misdeed the King could be cursed by an inexperienced brāhmaṇa boy infected by the influence of Kali, and thus the King would leave his hearth and home for good. His connections with Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī would enable the presentation of the great Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which is considered to be the book incarnation of the Lord. This book incarnation of the Lord gives much fascinating information of the transcendental pastimes of the Lord, like His rāsa-līlā with the spiritual cowherd damsels of Vrajabhūmi. This specific pastime of the Lord has a special significance because anyone who properly learns about this particular pastime of the Lord will certainly be dissuaded from mundane sex desire and be placed on the path of sublime devotional service to the Lord. The pure devotee's mundane frustration is meant to elevate the devotee to a higher transcendental position. By placing Arjuna and the Pāṇḍavas in frustration due to the intrigue of their cousin-brothers, the prelude of the Battle of Kurukṣetra was created by the Lord. This was to incarnate the sound representative of the Lord, Bhagavad-gītā. So by placing King Parikṣit in an awkward position, the incarnation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam was created by the will of the Lord. Being distressed by hunger and thirst was only a show, because the King endured much, even in the womb of his mother. He was never disturbed by the glaring heat of the brahmāstra released by Aśvatthāmā. The King's distressed condition was certainly unprecedented. The devotees like Mahārāja Parikṣit are powerful enough to forbear such distresses, by the will of the Lord, and they are never disturbed. The situation, in this case, was therefore all planned by the Lord.

TEXT 32

तस्य पुत्रोऽतितेजस्वी विहरन् बालकोऽर्भकैः ।
राज्ञार्थं प्रापितं तातं श्रुत्वा तत्रेदमब्रवीत् ॥३२॥

tasya putro 'titejasvī
viharan bālako 'rbhakaiḥ
rājñāgham prāpitam tātam
śrutvā tatredam abravīt

tasya—his (the sage's); putraḥ—son; ati—extremely; tejasvī—powerful; viharan—while playing; bālakaiḥ—with boys; arbhakaiḥ—who were all childish; rājñā—by the King; agham—distress; prāpitam—made to have; tātam—the father; śrutvā—by hearing; tatra—then and there; idam—this; abravīt—spoke.

TRANSLATION

The sage had a son who was very powerful, being a brāhmaṇa's son. While he was playing with inexperienced boys, he heard of his father's distress, which was occasioned by the King. Then and there the boy spoke as follows.

PURPORT

Due to Mahārāja Parikṣit's good government, even a boy of tender age, who was playing with other inexperienced boys, could become as powerful as a qualified brāhmaṇa. This boy was known as Śṛṅgi, and he achieved good training in brahmācarya by his father so that he could be as powerful as a brāhmaṇa, even at that age. But because the age of Kali was seeking an opportunity to spoil the cultural heritage of the four orders of life, the inexperienced boy gave a chance for the age of Kali to enter into the field of Vedic culture. Hatred of the lower orders of life began from this brāhmaṇa boy, under the influence of Kali, and thus cultural life began to dwindle day after day. The first victim of brahminical injustice was Mahārāja Parikṣit, and thus the protection given by the King against the onslaught of Kali was slackened.

TEXT 33

अहो अधर्मः पालानां पीत्रां बलिभुजामिव ।
खामिन्यघं यद् दासानां द्वारपानां शुनामिव ॥३३॥

aho adharmah pālānām
pīvnām bali-bhujām iva
svāmīny agham yad dāsānām
dvāra-pānām śunām iva

aho—just look at; adharmah—irreligion; pālānām—of the rulers; pīvnām—of one who is brought up; bali-bhujām—like the crows; iva—like; svāmīni—unto the master; agham—sin; yat—what is; dāsānām—of the servants; dvāra-pānām—keeping watch at the door; śunām—of the dogs; iva—like.

TRANSLATION

[The brāhmaṇa's son, Śṛṅgi, said:] O just look at the sins of the rulers who, like crows and watchdogs at the door, perpetrate sins against their masters, contrary to the principles governing servants.

PURPORT

The brāhmaṇas are considered to be the head and brains of the social body, and the kṣatriyas are considered to be the arms of the social body. The arms are required to protect the body from all harm, but the arms must act according to the directions of the head and brain. That is a natural arrangement made by the supreme order, for it is confirmed in the Bhagavad-gītā that four social orders or castes, namely the brāhmaṇas, the kṣatriyas, the vaiśyas and the śūdras, are set up according to quality and work done by them. Naturally the son of a brāhmaṇa has a good chance to become a brāhmaṇa by the direction of his qualified father, as a son of a medical practitioner has a very good chance to become a qualified medical practitioner. So the caste system is quite scientific. The son must take advantage of the father's qualification and thus become a brāhmaṇa or medical practitioner, and not otherwise. Without being qualified, one cannot become a brāhmaṇa or medical practitioner, and that is the verdict of all scriptures and social orders. Herein Śṛṅgi, a qualified son of a great brāhmaṇa, attained the required brahminical power both by birth and by training, but he was lacking in culture because he was an inexperienced boy. By the influence of Kali, the son of a brāhmaṇa became puffed up with brahminical power and thus wrongly compared Mahārāja Parikṣit to crows and watchdogs. The King is certainly the watchdog of the state in the sense that he keeps vigilant eyes over the border of the state for its protection and defense, but to address him as a watchdog is the sign of a less-cultured boy. Thus the downfall of the brahminical powers began as they gave importance to birthright without culture. The downfall of the brāhmaṇa caste began in the age of Kali. And since brāhmaṇas are the heads of the social order, all other orders of society also began to deteriorate. This beginning of

brahminical deterioration was highly deplored by the father of Śṛṅgi, as we will find.

TEXT 34

ब्राह्मणैः क्षत्रवन्धुर्हि गृहपालो निरूपितः ।
सकथं तद्गृहे द्राःस्यः सभाण्डं भोक्तुमर्हति ॥३४॥

*brāhmaṇaiḥ kṣatra-bandhur hi
grha-pālo nirūpitaḥ
sa katham tad-grhe dvāḥ-sthaḥ
sabhāṇḍam bhoktum arhati*

brāhmaṇaiḥ—by the brahminical order; *kṣatra-bandhuh*—the sons of the *kṣatriyas*; *hi*—certainly; *grha-pālah*—the watchdog; *nirūpitaḥ*—designated; *saḥ*—he; *katham*—on what grounds; *tad-grhe*—in the home of him (the master); *dvāḥ-sthaḥ*—keeping at the door; *sa-bhāṇḍam*—in the same pot; *bhoktum*—to eat; *arhati*—deserves.

TRANSLATION

The descendants of the kingly orders are definitely designated as watchdogs, and they must keep themselves at the door. On what grounds can dogs enter the house and claim to dine with the master on the same plate?

PURPORT

The inexperienced *brāhmaṇa* boy certainly knew that the King asked for water from his father and the father did not respond. He tried to explain away his father's inhospitality in an impertinent manner befitting an uncultured boy. He was not at all sorry for the King's not being well received. On the contrary, he justified the wrong act in a way characteristic of the *brāhmaṇas* of Kali-yuga. He compared the King to a watchdog, and so it was wrong for the King to enter the home of a *brāhmaṇa* and ask for water from the same pot. The dog is certainly reared by its master, but that does not mean that the dog shall claim to dine and drink from the same pot. This mentality of false prestige is the cause of downfall of the perfect social order, and we can see that in the beginning it was started by the inexperienced son of a *brāhmaṇa*. As the dog is never allowed to enter within the room and hearth, although it is reared by the master, similarly, according to Śṛṅgi, the King had no right to enter the house of Śamika Rṣi. According to the boy's opinion, the King was on the wrong side and not his father, and thus he justified his silent father.

TEXT 35

कृष्णे गते भगवति शास्तर्युत्पथगामिनाम् ।
तद्भिन्नसेतूनघाहं शासि पश्यत मे बलम् ॥३५॥

*kṛṣṇe gate bhagavati
śāstary utpatha-gāminām
tad bhinna-setūn adyāham
śāsmi paśyata me balam*

kṛṣṇe—Lord Kṛṣṇa; *gate*—having departed from this world; *bhagavati*—the Personality of Godhead; *śāstari*—the supreme ruler; *utpatha-gāminām*—of those who are upstarts; *tad bhinna*—being separated; *setūn*—the protector; *adya*—today; *aham*—myself; *śāsmi*—shall punish; *paśyata*—just see; *me*—my; *balam*—prowess.

TRANSLATION

After the departure of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead and supreme ruler of everyone, these upstarts have flourished, our protector being gone. Therefore I myself shall take up this matter and punish them. Just witness my power.

PURPORT

The inexperienced *brāhmaṇa*, puffed up by a little *brahma-tejas*, became influenced by the spell of Kali-yuga. Mahārāja Parikṣit gave license to Kali to live in four places as mentioned hereinbefore, but by his very expert government the personality of Kali could hardly find the places allotted him. The personality of Kali-yuga, therefore, was seeking the opportunity to establish authority, and by the grace of the Lord he found a hole in the puffed-up, inexperienced son of a *brāhmaṇa*. The little *brāhmaṇa* wanted to show his prowess in destruction, and he had the audacity to punish such a great king as Mahārāja Parikṣit. He wanted to take the place of Lord Kṛṣṇa after His departure. These are the principal signs of upstarts who want to take the place of Śrī Kṛṣṇa under the influence of the age of Kali. An upstart with a little power wants to become an incarnation of the Lord. There are many false incarnations after the departure of Lord Kṛṣṇa from the face of the globe, and they are misleading the innocent public by accepting the spiritual obedience of the general mass of people to maintain false prestige. In other words, the personality of Kali got the opportunity to reign through this son of a *brāhmaṇa*, Śṛṅgi.

TEXT 36

इत्युक्त्वा रोषताम्राक्षो वयस्यानृषिबालकः ।
कौशिक्याप उपस्पृश्य वाग्वज्रं विससर्ज ह ॥३६॥

*ity uktvā roṣa-tāmrākṣo
vayasyān ṛṣi-bālakah
kauśikyāpa upaspr̥śya
vāg-vajram visasarja ha*

iti—thus; *uktvā*—saying; *roṣa-tāmra-akṣah*—with red-hot eyes due to being angry; *vayasyān*—unto the playmates; *ṛṣi-bālakah*—the son of a *ṛṣi*; *kauśiki*—the River Kauśikā; *āpah*—water; *upaspr̥śya*—by touching; *vāk*—words; *vajram*—thunderbolt; *visasarja*—threw; *ha*—in the past.

TRANSLATION

The son of the *ṛṣi*, his eyes red-hot with anger, touched the water of the River Kauśika while speaking to his playmates and discharged the following thunderbolt of words.

PURPORT

The circumstances under which Mahārāja Parikṣit was cursed were simply childish, as it appears from this verse. Śṛṅgi was showing his impudency amongst his playmates, who were innocent. Any sane man would have prevented him from doing such great harm to all human society. By killing a king like Mahārāja Parikṣit, just to make a show of acquired brahminical power, the inexperienced son of a *brāhmaṇa* committed a great mistake.

TEXT 37

इति लङ्घितमर्यादं तक्षकः सप्तमेऽहनि ।
दङ्घयति स कुलाङ्गारं चोदितो मे ततद्रुहम् ॥३७॥

*iti laṅghita-maryādam
takṣakah saptame 'hani
daṅkṣyati sma kulāṅgāram
codito me tata-druham*

iti—thus; *laṅghita*—surpassing; *maryādam*—etiquette; *takṣakah*—snake-bird; *saptame*—on the seventh; *ahani*—day; *daṅkṣyati*—will bite; *sma*—certainly; *kula-āṅgāram*—the wretched of the dynasty; *coditah*—having done; *me*—my; *tata-druham*—enmity towards the father.

TRANSLATION

The brāhmaṇa's son cursed the King thus: On the seventh day from today a snake-bird will bite the most wretched one of that dynasty [Mahārāja Parikṣit] because of his having broken the laws of etiquette by insulting my father.

PURPORT

Thus the beginning of the misuse of brahminical power began, and gradually the brāhmaṇas in the age of Kali became devoid of both brahminical powers and culture. The brāhmaṇa boy considered Mahārāja Parikṣit to be *kulāṅgāra*, or the wretched of the dynasty, but factually the brāhmaṇa boy himself was so because only from him did the brāhmaṇa caste become powerless, like the snake whose poisoned teeth are broken. The snake is fearful as long as his poison teeth are there, otherwise he is fearful only to children. The personality of Kali conquered the brāhmaṇa boy first, and gradually the other castes. Thus the whole scientific system of the orders of society in this age has assumed the form of a vitiated caste system, which is now being uprooted by another class of men similarly influenced by the age of Kali. One should see to the root cause of vitiation and not try to condemn the system as it is, without knowledge of its scientific value.

TEXT 38

ततोऽभ्येत्याश्रमं बालो गले सर्पकलेवरम् ।
पितरं वीक्ष्य दुःखार्तो मुक्तकण्ठो रुरोद ह ॥३८॥

tato 'bhyetyāśramam bālo
gale sarpa-kalevaram
pitarāṁ vikṣya duḥkhārto
mukta-kaṅṭho ruroda ha

tatah—thereafter; abhyetya—after entering into; āśramam—the hermitage; bālah—boy; gale sarpa—the snake on the shoulder; kalevaram—body; pitaram—unto the father; vikṣya—having seen; duḥkha-ārtah—in a sorry plight; mukta-kaṅṭhah—loudly; ruroda—cried; ha—in the past.

TRANSLATION

Thereafter, when the boy returned to the hermitage, he saw a snake on his father's shoulder, and out of his grief he cried very loudly.

PURPORT

The boy was not happy because he committed a great mistake, and he wanted to be relieved of the burden on his heart by crying. So after entering the hermitage and seeing his father in that condition, he cried loudly so that he might be relieved. But it was too late. The father regretted the whole incident.

TEXT 39

स वा आङ्गिरसो ब्रह्मन् श्रुत्वा सुतविलापनम् ।
उन्मील्य शनकैर्नेत्रे दृष्ट्वा चासे मृतोरगम् ॥३९॥

sa vā āṅgīraso brahman
śrutvā suta-vilāpanam
unmīlya śanakair netre
dṛṣṭvā cāṁse mṛtoragam

saḥ—he; vai—also; āṅgīrasah—the ṛṣi born in the family of Aṅgirā; brahman—O Śaunaka; śrutvā—on hearing; suta—his son; vilāpanam—crying in distress; unmīlya—opening; śanakaiḥ—gradually; netre—by the eyes; dṛṣṭvā—by seeing; ca—also; aṁse—on the shoulder; mṛta—dead; uragam—snake.

TRANSLATION

O brāhmaṇas, the ṛṣi, who was born in the family of Aṅgirā Muni, hearing his son crying, gradually opened his eyes and saw the dead snake around his neck.

TEXT 40

विसृज्य तत्र पप्रच्छ वत्स कस्माद्भि रोदिषि ।
केन वा तेषकृतमित्युक्तः स न्यवेदयत् ॥४०॥

visṛjya taṁ ca papraccha
vatsa kasmād dhi rodiṣi
kena vā te 'pakṛtam
ity uktaḥ sa nyavedayat

visṛjya—throwing aside; taṁ—that; ca—also; papraccha—asked; vatsa—my dear son; kasmāt—what for; hi—certainly; rodiṣi—crying; kena—by whom; vā—otherwise; te—they; apakṛtam—misbehaved; iti—thus; uktaḥ—being asked; saḥ—the boy; nyavedayat—informed of everything.

TRANSLATION

He threw the dead snake aside and asked his son why he was crying, whether anyone had done him harm. On hearing this, the son explained to him what had happened.

PURPORT

The father did not take the dead snake on his neck very seriously. He simply threw it away. Actually there was nothing seriously wrong in Mahārāja Parikṣit's act, but the foolish son took it very seriously, and being influenced by Kali he cursed the King and thus ended a chapter of happy history.

TEXT 41

निश्रम्य शप्तमतदर्हं नरेन्द्रं
स ब्राह्मणो नात्मजमभ्यनन्दत् ।
अहो बताहो महदद्य ते कृत-
मल्पीयसि द्रोह उरुर्दमो धृतः ॥४१॥

niśamya śaptam atad-arham narendram
sa brāhmaṇo nātmajam abhyanandat
aho batārho mahad adya te kṛtam
alpīyasi droha urur damo dhṛtaḥ

niśamya—after hearing; śaptam—cursed; atad-arham—never to be condemned; nara-indram—unto the King, best of humankind; saḥ—that; brāhmaṇah—brāhmaṇa-ṛṣi; na—not; ātma-jam—his own son; abhyanandat—congratulated; aho—alas; bata—distressing; amhaḥ—sins; mahat—great; adya—today; te—yourself; kṛtam—performed; alpīyasi—insignificant; drohe—offense; uruḥ—very great; damaḥ—punishment; dhṛtaḥ—awarded.

TRANSLATION

The father heard from his son that the King had been cursed, although he should never have been condemned, for he was the best amongst all human beings. The ṛṣi did not congratulate his son, but, on the contrary, began to repent, saying: Alas! What a great sinful act was performed by my son. He has awarded heavy punishment for an insignificant offense.

PURPORT

The king is the best of all human beings. He is the representative of God, and he is never to be condemned for any of his actions. In other words, the king can do no wrong. The king may order hanging of a culprit son of a brāhmaṇa, but he does not become sinful for killing a brāhmaṇa. Even if there is something wrong with the king, he is never

to be condemned. A medical practitioner may kill a patient by mistaken treatment, but such a killer is never condemned to death. So what to speak of a good and pious king like Mahārāja Parikṣit? In the Vedic way of life, the king is trained to become a *rājarṣi*, or a great saint, although he is ruling as king. It is the king only by whose good government the citizens can live peacefully and without any fear. The *rājarṣis* would manage their kingdoms so nicely and piously that their subjects would respect them as if they were the Lord. That is the instruction of the *Vedas*. The king is called *naendra*, or the best amongst the human beings. How then could a king like Mahārāja Parikṣit be condemned by an inexperienced, puffed-up son of a *brāhmaṇa*, even though he had attained the powers of a qualified *brāhmaṇa*?

Since Śamika Ṛṣi was an experienced, good *brāhmaṇa*, he did not approve of the actions of his condemned son. He began to lament for all that his son had done. The king was beyond the jurisdiction of curses as a general rule, and what to speak of a good king like Mahārāja Parikṣit. The offense of the King was most insignificant, and his being condemned to death was certainly a very great sin for Śṛṅgi. Therefore Ṛṣi Śamika regretted the whole incident.

TEXT 42

न वै नृमिर्नरदेवं पराख्यं
सम्मातुमर्हस्यविपक्वबुद्धे ।
यत्तेजसा दुर्विषहेण गुप्ता
विन्दन्ति भद्राण्यकुतोभयाः प्रजाः ॥४२॥

*na vai nṛbhir nara-devaṃ parākhyam
sammātum arhasy avipakva-buddhe
yat-tejasā durviṣaheṇa guptā
vindanti bhadraṇy akutobhayaḥ prajāḥ*

na—never; *vai*—as a matter of fact; *nṛbhiḥ*—by any man; *nara-devam*—unto a man-god; *para-ākhyam*—who is transcendental; *sammātum*—place on equal footing; *arhasi*—by the prowess; *avipakva*—unripe or immature; *buddhe*—intelligence; *yat*—of whom; *tejasā*—by the prowess; *durviṣaheṇa*—unsurpassable; *guptāḥ*—protected; *vindanti*—enjoys; *bhadraṇi*—all prosperity; *akutaḥ-bhayaḥ*—completely defended; *prajāḥ*—the subjects.

TRANSLATION

O my boy, your intelligence is immature, and therefore you have no knowledge that the king, who is the best amongst human beings, is as good as the Personality of Godhead. He is never to be placed on an equal footing with common men. The citizens of the state live in prosperity, being protected by his unsurpassable prowess.

TEXT 43

अलक्ष्यमाणे नरदेवनाम्नि
रथाङ्गपाणावयमङ्ग लोकाः ।
तदा हि चौरप्रचुरो विनङ्क्ष्य-
त्यरक्ष्यमाणोऽविवरूथवत् क्षणात् ॥४३॥

*alaksyamāṇe nara-deva-nāmnī
rathāṅga-pānāv ayam aṅga lokāḥ
tadā hi caura-pracuro vinakṣyaty
araksyamāṇo 'vivarūthavat kṣaṇāt*

alaksyamāṇe—being abolished; *nara-deva*—monarchical; *nāmnī*—of the name; *ratha-aṅga-pānau*—the representative of the Lord; *ayam*—this; *aṅga*—O my boy; *lokāḥ*—this world; *tadā hi*—at once; *caura*—thieves; *pracuraḥ*—too much; *vinakṣyati*—vanquishes; *araks-*

yamāṇaḥ—being not protected; *avivarūtha-vat*—like lambs; *kṣaṇāt*—at once.

TRANSLATION

My dear boy, the Lord, who carries the wheel of a chariot, is represented by the monarchical regime, and when this regime is abolished the whole world becomes filled with thieves, who then at once vanquish the unprotected subjects like scattered lambs.

PURPORT

According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* the monarchical regime represents the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead. The king is said to be the representative of the Absolute Personality of Godhead because he is trained to acquire the qualities of God to protect the living beings. The Battle of Kurukṣetra was planned by the Lord to establish the real representative of the Lord, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. An ideal king thoroughly trained by culture and devotional service with the martial spirit makes a perfect king. Such a personal monarchy is far better than the so-called democracy of no training and responsibility. The thieves and rogues of modern democracy seek election by misrepresentation of votes, and the successful rogues and thieves devour the mass of population. One trained monarch is far better than hundreds of useless ministerial rogues, and it is hinted herein that by abolition of a monarchical regime like that of Mahārāja Parikṣit, the mass of people become open to many attacks of the age of Kali. They are never happy in an overly advertised form of democracy. The result of such a hapless administration is described in the following verses.

TEXT 44

तदद्य नः पापमुपैत्यनन्वयं
यन्नष्टनाथस्य वसोर्विलुम्पकात् ।
परस्परं घ्नन्ति शपन्ति वृञ्जते
पशून् स्त्रियोऽर्थांन् पुरुदस्यवो जनाः ॥४४॥

*tad adya naḥ pāpam upaity ananvayam
yan naṣṭa-nāthasya vasor vilumpakāt
parasparaṃ ghnanti śapanti vṛñjate
paśūn striyo 'rthān puru-dasyavo janāḥ*

tat—for this reason; *adya*—from this day; *naḥ*—upon us; *pāpam*—reaction of sin; *upaiti*—will overtake; *ananvayam*—disruption; *yat*—because; *naṣṭa*—abolished; *nāthasya*—of the monarch; *vasoḥ*—of wealth; *vilumpakāt*—being plundered; *parasparam*—between one another; *ghnanti*—will kill; *śapanti*—will do harm; *vṛñjate*—will steal; *paśūn*—animals; *śtriyāḥ*—women; *arthān*—riches; *puru*—greatly; *dasyavaḥ*—thieves; *janāḥ*—the mass of people.

TRANSLATION

Due to the termination of the monarchical regimes and the plundering of the people's wealth by rogues and thieves, there will be great social disruptions. People will be killed and injured, and animals and women will be stolen. And for all these sins we shall be responsible.

PURPORT

The word *naḥ* (we) is very significant in this verse. The sage rightly takes the responsibility of the *brāhmaṇas* as a community for killing monarchical government and thus giving an opportunity to the so-called democrats, who are generally plunderers of the wealth of the state subjects. The so-called democrats capture the administrative machine without assuming responsibility for the prosperous condition of the citizens. Everyone captures the post for personal gratification, and thus instead of one king, a number of irresponsible kings grow up to tax the citizens. It

is foretold herein that in the absence of good monarchical government, everyone will be the cause of disturbance for others by plundering riches, animals, women, etc.

TEXT 45

तदार्यधर्मः प्रविलीयते नृणां
वर्णाश्रमाचारयुतस्त्रयीमयः ।
ततोऽर्थकामाभिनिवेशितात्मनां
शुनां कपीनामिव वर्णसंकरः ॥४५॥

*tadārya-dharmah pravilyate nṛṇām
varṇāśramācāra-yutaḥ trayīmayaḥ
tato 'rtha-kāmābhiniवेशitātmanām
śunām kapinām iva varṇa-saṅkaraḥ*

tadā—at that time; *ārya*—progressive civilization; *dharmah*—engagement; *pravilyate*—is systematically vanquished; *nṛṇām*—of humankind; *varṇa*—caste; *āśrama*—orders of society; *ācāra-yutaḥ*—composed in a good manner; *trayī-mayaḥ*—in terms of the Vedic injunction; *tataḥ*—thereafter; *artha*—economic development; *kāma-abhiniवेशita*—fully absorbed in sense gratification; *ātmanām*—of men; *śunām*—like dogs; *kapinām*—like monkeys; *iva*—thus; *varṇa-saṅkaraḥ*—unwanted population.

TRANSLATION

At that time the people in general will fall systematically from the path of a progressive civilization in respect to the qualitative engagements of the castes and the orders of society and the Vedic injunctions. Thus they will be more attracted to economic development for sense gratification, and as a result there will be an unwanted population on the level of dogs and monkeys.

PURPORT

It is foretold herein that in the absence of a monarchical regime, the general mass of people will be an unwanted population like dogs and monkeys. As the monkeys are too sexually inclined and dogs are shameless in sexual intercourse, the general mass of population born of illegitimate connection will systematically go astray from the Vedic way of good manners and qualitative engagements in the castes and orders of life.

The Vedic way of life is the progressive march of the civilization of the Āryans. The Āryans are progressive in Vedic civilization. The Vedic civilization's destination is to go back to Godhead, back home, where there is no birth, no death, no old age and no disease. The *Vedas* direct everyone not to remain in the darkness of the material world but to go towards the light of the spiritual kingdom far beyond the material sky. The qualitative caste system and the orders of life are scientifically planned by the Lord and His representatives, the great ṛṣis. The perfect way of life gives all sorts of instruction in things both material and spiritual. The Vedic way of life does not allow any man to be like the monkeys and dogs. A degraded civilization of sense gratification and economic development is the by-product of a godless or kingless government of the people, by the people, and for the people. The people should not, therefore, begrudge the poor administrations they themselves elect.

TEXT 46

धर्मपालो नरपतिः स तु सम्राट् बृहच्छ्रवाः ।
साक्षान्महाभागवतो राजर्षिर्हयमेधयाट् ।
क्षुत्तृश्रमयुतो दीनो नैवासच्छापमर्हति ॥४६॥

*dharma-pālo nara-patiḥ
sa tu samrāḍ bhṛhac-śravāḥ*

*sākṣān mahā-bhāgavato
rājarsir haya-medhayāṭ
kṣut-trīśrama-yuto dīno
nāvāsmac chāpam arhati*

dharma-pālah—the protector of religion; *nara-patiḥ*—the King; *saḥ*—he; *tu*—but; *samrāṭ*—Emperor; *brhat*—highly; *śravāḥ*—celebrated; *sākṣāt*—directly; *mahā-bhāgavataḥ*—the first-class devotee of the Lord; *rāja-ṛṣiḥ*—saint amongst the royal order; *haya-medhayāṭ*—great performer of horse sacrifices; *kṣut*—hunger; *trī*—thirst; *śrama-yutaḥ*—tired and fatigued; *dīnaḥ*—stricken; *na*—never; *eva*—thus; *asmat*—by us; *śāpam*—curse; *arhati*—deserves.

TRANSLATION

The Emperor Parikṣit is a pious king. He is highly celebrated and is a first-class devotee of the Personality of Godhead. He is a saint amongst royalty, and he has performed many horse sacrifices. When such a king is tired and fatigued, being stricken with hunger and thirst, he does not at all deserve to be cursed.

PURPORT

After explaining the general codes relating to the royal position and asserting that the king can do no wrong and therefore is never to be condemned, the sage Śamika wanted to say something about Emperor Parikṣit specifically. The specific qualification of Mahārāja Parikṣit is summarized herein. The King, even calculated as a king only, was most celebrated as a ruler who administered the religious principles of the royal order. In the *śāstras* the duties of all castes and orders of society are prescribed. All the qualities of a *kṣatriya* mentioned in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.43) were present in the person of the Emperor. He was also a great devotee of the Lord and a self-realized soul. Cursing such a king, when he was tired and fatigued with hunger and thirst, was not at all proper. Śamika Ṛṣi thus admitted from all sides that Mahārāja Parikṣit was cursed most unjustly. Although all the *brāhmaṇas* were aloof from the incident, still for the childish action of a *brāhmaṇa* boy the whole world situation was changed. Thus Ṛṣi Śamika, a *brāhmaṇa*, took responsibility for all deterioration of the good orders of the world.

TEXT 47

अपापेषु स्वभृत्येषु बालेनापक्वबुद्धिना ।
पापं कृतं तद्भगवान् सर्वात्मा क्षन्तुमर्हति ॥४७॥

*apāpeṣu sva-bhr̥tyeṣu
bālenāpakva-buddhinā
pāpaṁ kṛtaṁ tad bhagavān
sarvātmā kṣantum arhati*

apāpeṣu—unto one who is completely free from all sins; *sva-bhr̥tyeṣu*—unto one who is subordinate and deserves to be protected; *bālena*—by a child; *apakva*—who is immature; *buddhinā*—by intelligence; *pāpam*—sinful act; *kṛtam*—has been done; *tad bhagavān*—therefore the Personality of Godhead; *sarva-ātmā*—who is all-pervading; *kṣantum*—just to pardon; *arhati*—deserve.

TRANSLATION

Then the ṛṣi prayed to the all-pervading Personality of Godhead to pardon his immature boy, who had no intelligence and who committed the great sin of cursing a person who was completely free from all sins, who was subordinate and who deserved to be protected.

PURPORT

Everyone is responsible for his own action, either pious or sinful. Ṛṣi Śamika could foresee that his son had committed a great sin by cursing

Mahārāja Parikṣit, who deserved to be protected by the *brāhmaṇas*, for he was a pious ruler and completely free from all sins because of his being a first-class devotee of the Lord. When an offense is done unto the devotee of the Lord, it is very difficult to overcome the reaction. The *brāhmaṇas*, being at the head of the social orders, are meant to give protection to their subordinates and not to curse them. There are occasions when a *brāhmaṇa* may furiously curse a subordinate *kṣatriya* or *vaiśya*, etc., but in the case of Mahārāja Parikṣit there were no grounds, as already explained. The foolish boy had done it out of sheer vanity in being a *brāhmaṇa*'s son, and thus he became liable to be punished by the law of God. The Lord never forgives a person who condemns His pure devotee. Therefore, by cursing a king the foolish Śṛṅgi had committed not only a sin but also the greatest offense. Therefore the *ṛṣi* could foresee that only the Supreme Personality of Godhead could save his boy from his sinful act. He therefore directly prayed for pardon from the Supreme Lord, who alone can undo a thing which is impossible to change. The appeal was made in the name of a foolish boy who had developed no intelligence at all.

A question may be raised herein that since it was the desire of the Lord that Parikṣit Mahārāja be put into that awkward position so that he might be delivered from material existence, then why was a *brāhmaṇa*'s son made responsible for this offensive act? The answer is that the offensive act was performed by a child only so that he could be excused very easily, and thus the prayer of the father was accepted. But if the question is raised why the *brāhmaṇa* community as a whole was made responsible for allowing Kali into the world affairs, the answer is given in the *Varāha Purāna* that the demons who acted inimically toward the Personality of Godhead but were not killed by the Lord were allowed to take birth in the families of *brāhmaṇas* to take advantage of the age of Kali. The all-merciful Lord gave them a chance to have their births in the families of pious *brāhmaṇas* so that they could progress toward salvation. But the demons, instead of utilizing the good opportunity, misused the brahminical culture due to being puffed up by vanity in becoming *brāhmaṇas*. The typical example is the son of Śamika Ṛṣi, and all the foolish sons of *brāhmaṇas* are warned hereby not to become as foolish as Śṛṅgi and be always on guard against the demoniac qualities which they had in their previous births. The foolish boy was, of course, excused by the Lord, but others, who may not have a father like Śamika Ṛṣi, will be put into great difficulty if they misuse the advantages obtained by birth in a *brāhmaṇa* family.

TEXT 48

तिरस्कृता विप्रलब्धाः शप्ताः क्षिप्ता हता अपि ।

नास्य तत् प्रतिकुर्वन्ति तद्भक्ताः प्रमवोऽपि हि ॥४८॥

tiraskṛtā vipralabdhāḥ
śaptāḥ kṣiptā hatā api
nāsyā tat pratikurvanti
tad-bhaktāḥ prabhavo 'pi hi

tiraḥ-kṛtāḥ—being defamed; *vipralabdhāḥ*—being cheated; *śaptāḥ*—being cursed; *kṣiptāḥ*—disturbed by negligence; *hatāḥ*—or even being killed; *api*—also; *na*—never; *asya*—for all these acts; *tat*—them; *pratikurvanti*—counteract; *tat*—the Lord's; *bhaktāḥ*—devotees; *prabhavaḥ*—powerful; *api*—although; *hi*—certainly.

TRANSLATION

The devotees of the Lord are so forbearing that even though they are defamed, cheated, cursed, disturbed, neglected or even killed, they are never inclined to avenge themselves.

PURPORT

Ṛṣi Śamika also knew that the Lord does not forgive a person who has committed an offense at the feet of a devotee. The Lord can only give

direction to take shelter of the devotee. He thought within himself that if Mahārāja Parikṣit would countercurse the boy, he might be saved. But he knew also that a pure devotee is callous about worldly advantages or reverses. As such, the devotees are never inclined to counteract personal defamation, curses, negligence, etc. As far as such things are concerned, in personal affairs the devotees do not care for them. But in the case of their being performed against the Lord and His devotees, then the devotees take very strong action. It was a personal affair, and therefore Śamika Ṛṣi knew that the King would not take counteraction. Thus there was no alternative than to place an appeal to the Lord for the immature boy.

It is not that only the *brāhmaṇas* are powerful enough to award curses or blessings upon the subordinates; the devotee of the Lord, even though he may not be a *brāhmaṇa*, is more powerful than a *brāhmaṇa*. But a powerful devotee never misuses the power for personal benefit. Whatever power the devotee may have is always utilized in service towards the Lord and His devotees only.

TEXT 49

इति पुत्रकृतापेन सोऽनुतप्तो महामुनिः ।

स्वयं विप्रकृतो राज्ञा नैवाघं तदचिन्तयत् ॥४९॥

iti putra-kṛtāghena
so 'nutapto mahā-muniḥ
svayam viprakṛto rājñā
naivāghaṁ tad acintayat

iti—thus; *putra*—son; *kṛta*—done by; *aghena*—by the sin; *saḥ*—he (the *muni*); *anutaptaḥ*—regretting; *mahā-muniḥ*—the sage; *svayam*—personally; *viprakṛtaḥ*—being so insulted; *rājñā*—by the King; *na*—not; *eva*—certainly; *aghāṁ*—the sin; *tat*—that; *acintayat*—thought of it.

TRANSLATION

The sage thus regretted the sin committed by his own son. He did not take the insult paid by the King very seriously.

PURPORT

The whole incident is now cleared up. Mahārāja Parikṣit's garlanding the sage with a dead snake was not at all a very serious offense, but Śṛṅgi's cursing the King was a serious offense. The serious offense was committed by a foolish child only; therefore he deserved to be pardoned by the Supreme Lord, although it was not possible to get free from the sinful reaction. Mahārāja Parikṣit also did not mind the curse offered to him by a foolish *brāhmaṇa*. On the contrary, he took full advantage of the awkward situation, and by the great will of the Lord, Mahārāja Parikṣit achieved the highest perfection of life through the grace of Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Actually it was the desire of the Lord, and Mahārāja Parikṣit, Ṛṣi Śamika and his son Śṛṅgi were all instrumental in fulfilling the desire of the Lord. So none of them were put into difficulty because everything was done in relation with the Supreme Person.

TEXT 50

प्रायशः साधवो लोके परैर्द्वन्द्वेषु योजिताः ।

न व्यथन्ति न हृष्यन्ति यत आत्माऽगुणाश्रयः ॥५०॥

pṛāyaśaḥ sādhave loke
parair dvandveṣu yojitāḥ
na vyathanti na hṛṣyanti
yata ātmā 'guṇāśrayaḥ

pṛāyaśaḥ—generally; *sādhavaḥ*—saints; *loke*—in this world; *paraiḥ*—by others; *dvandveṣu*—in duality; *yojitāḥ*—being engaged;

na—never; vyathanti—distressed; na—nor; hr̥ṣyanti—takes pleasure; yataḥ—because; ātmā—self; aguna-āśrayaḥ—transcendental.

TRANSLATION

Generally the transcendentalists, even though engaged by others in the dualities of the material world, are not distressed. Nor do they take pleasure [in worldly things], for they are transcendentially engaged.

PURPORT

The transcendentalists are the empiric philosophers, the mystics and the devotees of the Lord. Empiric philosophers aim at the perfection of merging into the being of the Absolute, mystics aim at perceiving the all-pervading Supersoul, and the devotees of the Lord are engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Personality of Godhead. Since Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān are different phases of the same Transcendence, all these transcendentalists are beyond the three modes of material nature. Material distresses and happinesses are products of the three modes, and therefore the causes of such material distress and happiness have nothing to do with the transcendentalists. The King was a devotee, and the ṛṣi was a mystic. Therefore both of them were unattached to the accidental incident created by the supreme will. The playful child was an instrument in fulfilling the Lord's will.

Thus end the Bhaktivedānta purports of the First Canto, Eighteenth Chapter, of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, entitled "Mahārāja Parikṣit Cursed by a Brāhmaṇa Boy."

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The Appearance of Śukadeva Gosvāmī

TEXT 1

सूत उवाच

महीपतिस्त्वय तत्कर्म गह्वं
विचिन्तयन्नात्मकृतं सुदुर्मनाः ।
अहो मया नीचमनार्यवत्कृतं
निरागसि ब्रह्मणि गूढतेजसि ॥ १ ॥

sūta uvāca

māhī-patis tv aṭha tat-karma garhyaṁ
vicintayan ātma-kṛtaṁ sudurmanāḥ
aho mayā nicam anārya-vat kṛtaṁ
nirāgasi brahmaṇi gūḍha-tejasi

sūtaḥ uvāca—Sūta Gosvāmī said; māhī-patiḥ—the King; tu—but; aṭha—thus (while coming back home); tat—that; karma—act; garhyaṁ—abominable; vicintayan—thus thinking; ātma-kṛtaṁ—done by himself; su-durmanāḥ—very much depressed; aho—alas; mayā—by me; nicam—heinous; anārya—uncivilized; vat—like; kṛtaṁ—done; nirāgasi—unto one who is faultless; brahmaṇi—unto a brāhmaṇa; gūḍha—grave; tejasi—unto the powerful.

TRANSLATION

Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī said: While returning home, the King [Mahārāja Parikṣit] felt that the act he had committed against the

faultless and powerful brāhmaṇa was heinous and uncivilized. Consequently he was distressed.

PURPORT

The pious King regretted his accidental improper treatment of the powerful brāhmaṇa, who was faultless. Such repentance is natural for a good man like the King, and such repentance delivers a devotee from all kinds of sins accidentally committed. The devotees are naturally faultless. Accidental sins committed by a devotee are sincerely regretted, and by the grace of the Lord all sins unwillingly committed by a devotee are burnt in the fire of repentance.

TEXT 2

ध्रुवं ततो मे कृतदेवहेलनाद्
दुरत्ययं व्यसनं नातिदीर्घात् ।
तदस्तु कामं ह्यपनिष्कृताय मे
यथा न कुर्यां पुनरेवमद्वा ॥ २ ॥

dhruvaṁ tato me kṛta-deva-helanād
duratyayaṁ vyasanam nāti-dīrghāt
tad astu kāmam hy agha-niskṛtāya me
yathā na kuryāṁ punar evam addhā

dhruvam—sure and certain; tataḥ—therefore; me—my; kṛta-deva-helanāt—because of disobeying the orders of the Lord; duratyayam—very difficult; vyasanam—calamity; na—not; ati—greatly; dīrghāt—far off; tat—that; astu—let it be; kāmam—desire without reservations; hi—certainly; agha—sins; niskṛtāya—for getting free; me—my; yathā—so that; na—never; kuryāṁ—shall I do it; punaḥ—again; evam—as I have done; addhā—directly.

TRANSLATION

[King Parikṣit thought:] Due to my neglecting the injunctions of the Supreme Lord I must certainly expect some difficulty to overcome me in the near future. I now desire without reservation that the calamity come now, for in this way I may be freed of the sinful action and not commit such an offense again.

PURPORT

The Supreme Lord enjoins that brāhmaṇas and cows must be given all protection. The Lord is Himself very much inclined to do good to brāhmaṇas and cows (go-brāhmaṇa-hitāya ca). Mahārāja Parikṣit knew all this, and thus he concluded that his insulting a powerful brāhmaṇa was certainly to be punished by the laws of the Lord, and he was expecting something very difficult in the very near future. He therefore desired the imminent calamity to fall on him and not on his family members. A man's personal misconduct affects all his family members. Therefore Mahārāja Parikṣit desired the calamity to fall on him alone. By suffering personally he would be restrained from future sins, and at the same time the sin which he had committed would be counteracted so that his descendants would not suffer. That is the way a responsible devotee thinks. The family members of a devotee also share the effects of a devotee's service unto the Lord. Mahārāja Prahlāda saved his demon father by his personal devotional service. A devotee son in the family is the greatest boon or blessing of the Lord.

(continued in next issue)



Every Town and Village

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



PHOTO: DHIRAJ CHAWDRA

Five thousand guests arrived at ISKCON's estate near Potomac, Maryland, to take part in a festival honoring the day Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared in this world.

Kṛṣṇa Celebrations Draw Thousands

Recently, Western and Indian devotees came together at ISKCON centers worldwide to celebrate the day, some fifty centuries ago, when Lord Kṛṣṇa made His appearance on earth.

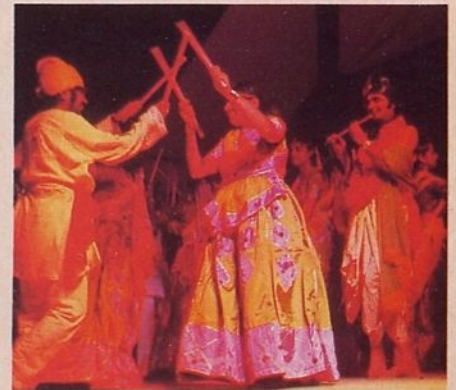
Washington, D.C. — At Bhaktivedanta Gardens, ISKCON's fifteen-acre estate near Potomac, Maryland, five thousand guests, including India's noted photo-journalist Dhiraj Chawdra, attended celebrations of the day Kṛṣṇa appeared. Shri D. S. Shastri (President of the Indian Cultural Coordination Committee of Greater Washington and Baltimore) remarked, "By this festival you have captivated the hearts of the Indian community."

Earlier, ISKCON members joined with the Indian Cultural Coordination Committee to welcome Prime Minister Morarji Desai at a reception at the University of Maryland. The next day

Rūpānuga dāsa, a member of ISKCON's central governing board, visited the Prime Minister at Blair Mansion, near the White House. Mr. Desai spoke to Rūpānuga dāsa about India's traditional world role of spiritual leadership, based on Lord Kṛṣṇa's teachings in *Bhagavad-gītā*. Mr. Desai added that he appreciated ISKCON's programs.

Bombay — At ISKCON's new cultural center, Dr. Premila Tople, Maharashtra State Minister for Health and Family Welfare, said this: "One day the teachings of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement will spread to every corner of the world. There may be many countries which are more advanced materially, but India can show the proper spiritual way of life to the whole world. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is an exact manifestation of our ancient culture, and I am confident it will progress more and more."

Bhubaneswara — In the capital of the eastern state of Orissa, Sri Satyapariya Mohanty, the speaker of the legislative assembly, said this to guests: "Once I held the opinion that ISKCON was an organization of opulent persons who get some mental enjoyment out of it, but during my recent tour of America I saw I was mistaken. The people in general are joining this genuine spiritual movement."



Devotional folk dancers recalled Kṛṣṇa's transcendental pastimes.



Prime Minister Desai received a plaque from ISKCON's Kṛṣṇa Gopāla dāsa. Mr. Desai had kind words for ISKCON.

UPI and Gallup Poll Mark Growth of Kṛṣṇa Movement

A recent UPI report says that *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, with translation and commentary by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, is part of the personal library of California Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. The *Gītā* contains Lord Kṛṣṇa's instructions on self-realization, God consciousness, and social, political, and economic organization.

Also, the latest Gallup Youth Survey shows that half a million American teenagers now identify themselves with the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. The movement, which began in 1966 in a New York storefront, now has more than one hundred *āśramas*, schools, temples, institutes, and farm communities worldwide.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Calendar

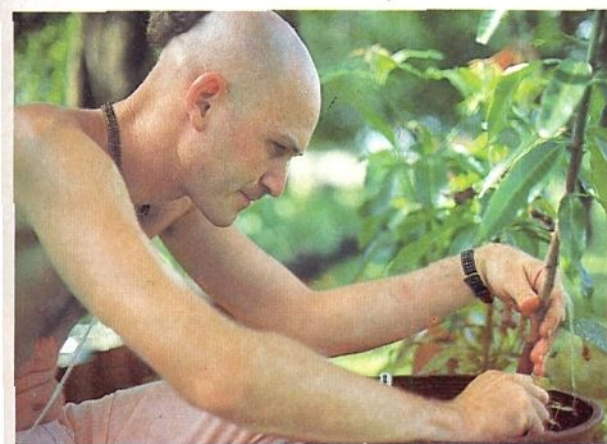
Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees follow a spiritual calendar that divides the year into twelve months, each named for a different form of Kṛṣṇa. The devotees at the ISKCON center nearest you will gladly tell you about the meaning of the festivals listed here.

Year 492 Caitanya Era

Vaiṣṇava month of Keśava (November 15–December 14, 1978)

November 16 (Keśava 2)	December 5 (Keśava 21)	December 10 (Keśava 26)
Utpann-ekādāśī (fasting from grains and beans).	Offering of new garments to Lord Jagannāthadeva.	Mokṣadā-ekādāśī (fasting from grains and beans).





Stunning yellow and orange marigolds (left) and superfragrant night-blooming jasmines are just two varieties that thrive here. (In the distance we see a chickee, a Seminole-style pavilion made of cypress logs and thatched palm fronds.) Each week hundreds of guests come through the entranceway (top)—New Naimiṣāranya Forest gets its name from a pilgrimage site in India. Coordinator Narahari dāsa (above) has made grafts from eight of the world's choicest varieties of mango trees.

MIAMI, FLORIDA

How Kṛṣṇa's Garden Grows

A visit to a tropical paradise.

by MAṄDALEŚVARA DĀSA

PHOTOS BY MURALIVADANA DĀSA

Jennifer is the manager of a tropical plant nursery in Key West. A thoughtful young woman, she sees herself as “a person who has always been searching for something more to life.”

“A few days ago,” says Jennifer, “a woman stopped by the nursery and mentioned she'd just been to an interesting spiritual *āśrama* in Miami. She said I ought to drive up and see for myself.”

“On the way there, I was picturing some kind of tall building. But when I finally arrived, I saw fruit trees and flowers and peacocks and cows and a lake with swans.”

Jennifer walked in through the Malaysian coconut palms and passed under a sign that said “NEW NAIMIṢĀRANYA FOREST” (after a pilgrimage site in India). A woman in a *sāri* said hello and invited her to sit in the cool shade of a chickee, a Seminole-style pavilion made of cypress logs and thatched palm fronds.

“It's time for lunch,” the woman said. “I'll bring you a plate of *prasāda*—it's vegetarian food we grow right here in our garden and offer to Kṛṣṇa. It's spiritual.”

Though she had been a vegetarian for ten years, Jennifer found the *prasāda* “a



real surprise.” After lunch she joined some other guests for a walk around the grounds.

The guide was the community’s coordinator, Narahari dāsa. Before starting his work with the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in 1972, he graduated in premed from the University of Maryland and played drums with a number of prominent jazz musicians.

“Now I’m playing the *khola* [an oblong Indian drum] for Kṛṣṇa—and wondering what it will be like to hear Him playing His flute.

“Before,” he says, “I was just living the ‘good life’ and trying to harmonize with nature. But one day a friend gave me a copy of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, and I was struck by the idea of *karma*.

“I saw that although I was getting everything I wanted at the time, it was just coming from my past good *karma*, and sooner or later that good *karma* would run out and I’d have to get old and diseased and die. And then there’d be my next life. You know—it was like a credit card. ‘Enjoy now. Pay later.’

“So,” he says, “I decided to go by the Kṛṣṇa center—before ‘later’ came around—and check things out. I used to study *Bhagavad-gītā*, which I found out means ‘The Song of God,’ and then I’d go to the Sunday festivals with lists of questions about *karma* and reincarnation and how to get beyond it all: I liked the answers the devotees gave me, so to learn more I eventually moved in.”

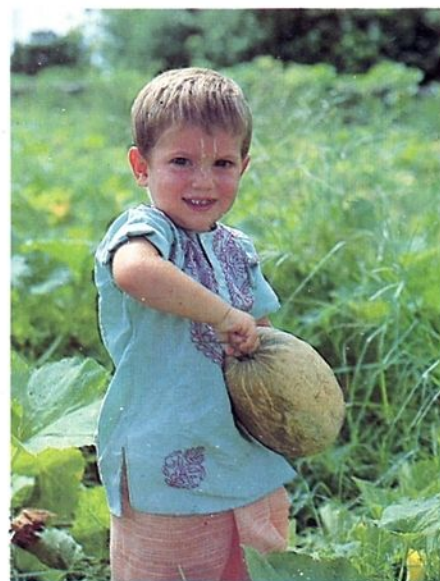
Narahari showed Jennifer and half a dozen other guests the two acres of marigolds, Lake Bindusarovara, the cowpens, the sugarcane field, and the fifty beehives that produce over five tons of honey a year.

They also saw the fruit trees, including eight varieties of mango from all over



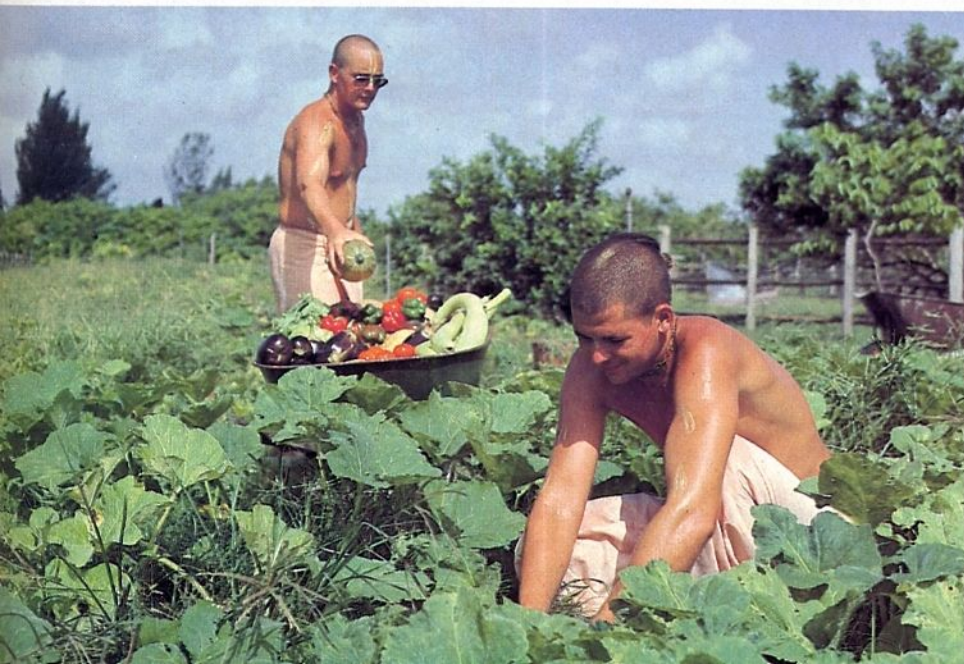
Five tons of honey a year come from fifty hives (top left). Says Narahari, “Each hive has sixty thousand bees, and each bee works hundreds of flowers a day. We offer all the honey to Kṛṣṇa, so we’re engaging millions of bees and flowers in Kṛṣṇa’s service.” The mangoes (above) taste sweeter here. From India, a special squash called *chaukumra* (right).

the world, ten varieties of avocado, five of banana (including Mysore and Rajpuris from India), four of plantain (including dwarf Puerto Rican), two of papaya, six of orange, three of lime, two of kumquat, and ten of star fruit (yes, the fruit is star-shaped). And they saw other fruit trees: lemon, grapefruit, litchi, loquat, custard apple, sugar apple, tropical apple, star apple (which tastes like a blueberry sundae), sea grape, fig,





The antique sugarcane press (above). Vegetables (left) include Indian varieties like *kerala* (bitter melon), *khira* (sweet cucumber), and *lau* (or *loki*—they grow up to three feet long and hang from trellises like chimes).



pomegranate, governor's plum, strawberry, Spanish lime, jackfruit (whose fruits can weigh up to forty pounds each), Barbados cherry, Mamey sapote, black sapote (which tastes like chocolate pudding), tamarind, white sapote, bael fruit, drumstick (named for the shape of its pods), monstera deliciosa, golden coconut, miracle fruit, sapodilla, and Jobaticaba (which produces grapes directly from its bark).

And the guests saw the cashew, wild almond, and macadamia trees and the ornamentals: pine, silver oak, eucalyptus, bamboo, bougainvillea, bottle



brush, and banyan.

In addition, they saw—and smelled—the allspice, turmeric, and cardamom plants and the flowering plants: four varieties of gardenia, five of hibiscus, and two of ginger, along with night-blooming jasmine, day-blooming jasmine, orange jasmine, Japanese jasmine, Montezuma, sanchesia, cordia, heliconia, and rose—three hundred rose bushes.

“Especially in the morning,” says Narahari, “when our guests walk near the flowering jasmine trees and all the rest, they say they feel intoxicated. And they say the fruit here tastes much sweeter than what they find in the market or the commercial groves or farms. An international group called the

Rare Fruit Council has tasted our fruit, too, and they say the same thing.

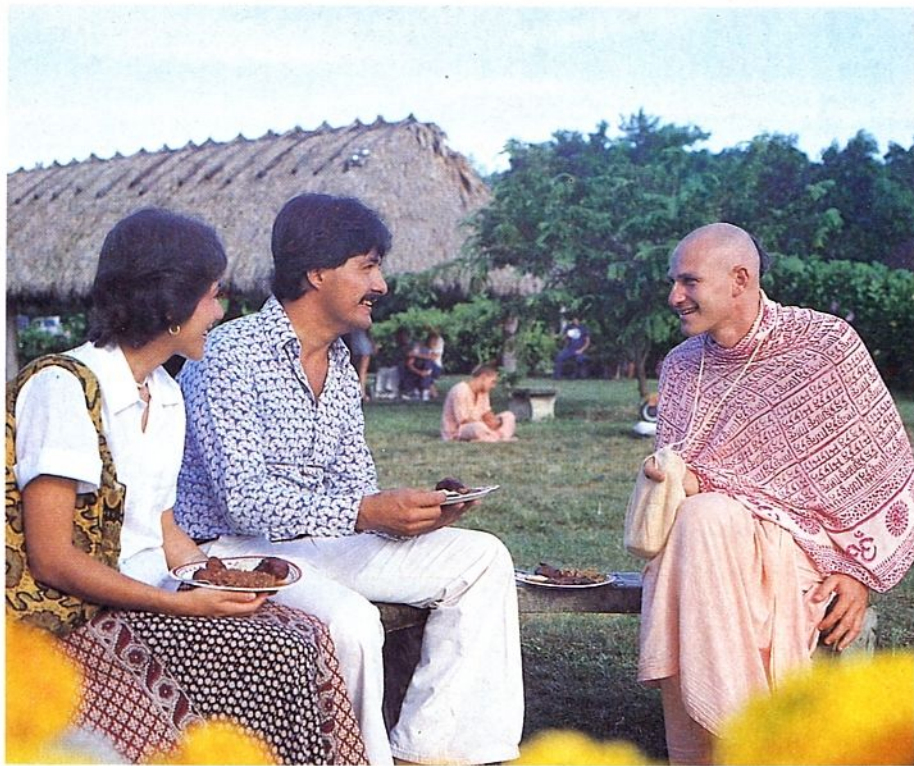
“We know the reason. Śrīla Prabhupāda once told us the flowers would smell more fragrant and the fruit would taste sweeter because this is Kṛṣṇa’s land. Kṛṣṇa makes everything nicer, because we’re offering all the produce to Him. For instance, we use the marigolds for decorating Kṛṣṇa’s Deity forms in the temple. And everything we eat we grow right here on this land and offer to Kṛṣṇa first on the altar.”

If guests are surprised at what’s growing here, they’re even more surprised at what’s cooking.

Says Narahari, “People come to the Sunday feast and tell me, ‘Hey—I thought you said you didn’t eat meat!’

And I tell them that what they’re eating is *koftā*, breaded cauliflower-potato balls in tomato-spice sauce. And *pakorā*, cauliflower chunks dipped in batter and deep-fried in pure butter. And also *baḍas*, ground split peas or garbanzos, mixed with flour and spices and deep-fried in pure butter.

“Actually,” he says, “these are the original tastes—the original recipes people knew about millions of years ago (and you can still find them in the Vedic literatures). These tastes come from Kṛṣṇa. And so do all of us—so naturally we all like to eat these things. But now, because we’ve become contaminated in the material world and twisted around in so many ways, we’ve forgotten this Vedic knowledge and we’ve found other



Lake Bindusarovara (far left) was once a neglected pool. Narahari (above) says guests find the Kṛṣṇa cuisine surprisingly satisfying. "Actually," he tells them, "these are the original tastes—the original recipes." The devotees offer all their produce in the temple (left)—through Śrīla Prabhupāda and his spiritual master (lower altar) to Kṛṣṇa, in the form of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu (upper altar).

ways to try to satisfy these original tastes. One of those ways, of course, is eating flesh. But the tastes of *koftā*, *pakorā*, *baḍas*—these are the original tastes."

It was Śrīla Prabhupāda who first had the idea of giving Miami a tropical-spiritual paradise. In an early letter to the devotees he said, "You have excellent land there, and you should develop it very nicely. Miami has a nice tropical climate, so our center there should be made lush with fruit and flower trees. Just work sincerely, and Kṛṣṇa will supply you with everything." But New Naimiṣāraṇya Forest wasn't always a paradise.

"A jungle," says Narahari, "—that's what this place was when we got here. The property had been abandoned for

fifteen years. The main house, which no one had ever lived in, was infested with snakes and scorpions. And the underbrush was so thick we had to cut through with machetes. Fifteen years of neglect had made the pond an overgrown sink-hole and the mango and avocado groves a wild mess, and it was going to take a lot of hard work, but we could see tremendous potential here.

"Now," he says, "we've completely renovated the main house, and we've put in a marble temple room, with a handcrafted altar for the Deities. And we've made the old pond into Lake Bindusarovara, with a full contingent of ducks, swans, and rare multicolored tropical fish that swim and play near the surface.

Assistant coordinator Rāghava dāsa explains, "Actually, this is the way Kṛṣṇa consciousness works. Think of Śrīla Prabhupāda coming here to the West. For him, America must have been more or less a jungle. The natives—ourselves—were totally in the dark about spiritual life. Really. What did we know about self-realization or God consciousness? But Śrīla Prabhupāda saw the potential—and cultivated it."

Just three years ago, before it became New Naimiṣāraṇya Forest, nobody paid much attention to this place. But now people come to visit almost every day of the year. Some, like Jennifer, are spiritual seekers. Others are just friends, stopping by to see how Kṛṣṇa's garden grows.

EVOLUTION

A THEORY IN DANGER OF EXTINCTION

by D.J. WEBB, M.A.

A scientist must be able to explain the origin of natural phenomena. As soon as he denies the existence of God, he must answer the question "Then where has life come from?"

Since the Middle Ages, some of the greatest scientists have had firm faith in the existence of God. Sir Isaac Newton, Michael Faraday, James Clerk Maxwell, Louis Pasteur, and Max Planck come to mind. However, the majority of scientists today are explaining the phenomenon of life without reference to any supernatural power. Their chief weapon is the famous theory of evolution, put forward jointly by Charles Darwin and Alfred Russell Wallace in their paper *On the Tendency of Species to Form Varieties; and on the Perpetuation of Varieties and Species by Natural Means of Selection* (1858).

Although the theory of evolution gives strong support to atheism, neither Darwin nor Wallace could completely dismiss the need for a guiding intelligence in the evolutionary process. In his *Origin of Species*, Darwin suggests that in the formation of the eye, a "power" is at work, "intently watching each slight alteration" and "carefully preserving" those which improve the image produced.¹ (Modern cynics would say that Darwin never escaped the conditioning of his religious upbringing, and needed more careful "deprogramming.")

Wallace, for his part, later wrote *The World of Life: a Manifestation of Creative Power, Directive Mind, and Ultimate Purpose*. In this work he concluded that events we witness in nature are directed

and guided by "a Mind not only adequate to direct and regulate all the forces at work in living organisms, but which is itself the source of all those forces and energies, as well as of the more fundamental forces of the whole material universe."²

With the advancement of materialism, later thinkers have become more militantly opposed to any belief in such a creative power and guiding intelligence. They use the theory of evolution as a powerful device for containing and reducing the effect of religious belief. If they show that life has evolved from chemicals, then people need no longer believe in the existence of a personal God. If they show that talk of "the wonders of nature" is simply naive—that nature is no more than a conjuring trick played by chance and simple physical laws over an immense span of time—then people need no longer marvel at the wonderful potencies of God. And consequently they need no longer consider it necessary to obey His laws.

Thus, in the last hundred years, the spokesmen of materialism have been making a great effort to convince the public that life is the result of evolution, and that material experimental science is the torch of knowledge that is dispelling the darkness of ignorance caused by religious superstitions. "No matter how aesthetically moving, the pathetic efforts of all the religions and most of the philosophies in blindly denying the reality of the human condition produce only chaos and heroic yet absurd somersaults. Obscurantism has had its day. Let there be light!"³

Although the theory of evolution has proved a challenge to religious convictions, the validity of the theory is being challenged in turn. In "Chemistry and Consciousness" (BACK TO GODHEAD, Vol. 13, no. 9) Dr. Richard L. Thompson pointed out that consciousness cannot be

described in terms of chemical processes or physical measurements.⁴ Yet the theory of evolution describes living organisms only in terms of increasingly complex systems of interacting chemicals. While the theory attempts to account for the origin of the species, it leaves aside the question of the origin of consciousness—and consciousness is the most important common quality in all living creatures.

This is not the only difficulty encountered by the theory of evolution, as Darwin himself was the first to admit. "Long before having arrived at this part of my work, a crowd of difficulties will have occurred to the reader. Some of them are so grave that to this day I can never reflect on them without being staggered."⁵ Many of these issues are still unresolved. Much of the evidence for evolution has been exaggerated, and much of the evidence against it has been suppressed. We think that an impartial person today will still be "staggered" that in the face of such difficulties, and on such a poor foundation of evidence and theoretical justification, eminent scientists can still claim, "Today the theory of evolution is an accepted fact for everyone but a fundamentalist minority, whose objections are based not on reasoning but on doctrinaire adherence to religious principles."⁶

The theory of evolution cannot explain the nature or development of consciousness. And since consciousness is the prime symptom of a living being, it also seems the theory will not be able to explain the origin and development of life. Still, let us examine the theory of evolution on its own terms and see what truth, if any, it offers.

If one denies the existence of a guiding power and intelligence, one is left with two alternatives. The first is that evolution has taken place purely by chance, and the second is that the evolution of life and consciousness is the natural and inevitable result of the laws of nature

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acting throughout the history of the earth.

“Chance” theorists admit that the probability of life appearing by accident is very small, but they claim that it happened anyway. In recent years the theory of chance formation of life has met with great opposition in the scientific community. Anti-chance theorists such as Schoffeniels protest, “It is one thing to ignore or reject the sentiment of a mystical destiny, inscribed in the impenetrable designs of a supernatural being. It is another matter to accept the idea that the origin of life and evolution were necessary because of the conditions on earth and the existing properties of the elements.”⁷

G.G. Simpson, a noted and prolific writer in the field, states the case more concretely: “If atoms of hydrogen and oxygen come together under certain simple and common conditions of energy, they always deterministically combine to form water. Formation of more complex molecules requires correspondingly more complex concatenations of circumstances, but is still deterministic in what seems to be a comparatively simple way.”⁸ In other words, Simpson claims that just as hydrogen and oxygen inevitably form water under the right conditions, so complex molecules—and ultimately living structures—are also *inevitably* formed from simple chemicals, given the right conditions (which are presumed to have been present on “primitive earth”).

Such claims would be reasonable if anyone had ever observed that “under certain simple and common conditions of energy,” simple chemicals “deterministically combined” to give some life form, such as a bacterium or a living cell. Of course, no such observation has been made. The nearest approach to the laboratory synthesis of living structures is the construction of genes and viruses. Admittedly, these are very complex molecules, but they are not of themselves alive. Their synthesis was made possible by the help of complex enzymes which, though lifeless themselves, were obtainable only from living cells. In other words, scientists cannot synthesize even lifeless genes starting from simple molecules alone. How, then, can statements that the origin and development of life are chemically inevitable be anything more than wishful thinking?

The evolutionists may have faith that the synthesis of life will be possible as the techniques of biochemistry improve, but even if it were possible, that still would not show that evolution could produce living organisms from nonliving

matter. Laboratory synthesis takes place under the intelligent guidance of the scientist, but the evolutionist claims that evolution has taken place naturally, without such guidance. Mathematical analysis also shows that the faith of the evolutionist is ill-founded. The complex structures of living matter contain a vast amount of specific information. The theoretical treatment of the generation and properties of information is called “information theory,” and it has been an accepted branch of mathematics for more than twenty years. Information theory shows that the probability of a

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specific, high information content arising by chance is negligibly small. One cannot get more specific information out of a system than has been put in.

For example, if one programs a computer with “Mary had a little lamb,” or with a complete telephone directory of the United States, one could not expect the computer to then produce Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*. Specific information must be available. Similarly, one may have a lot of information about the arrangement of bricks and pipes on a building site, but even more specific information is required to build a complete house.

In the case of complex living structures, with their high information content, either that specific information must already have been present in the starting materials, or else the laws of nature governing the development of the living forms must have been extremely complex. According to the theory of evolution, neither is the case. The starting materials are extremely simple

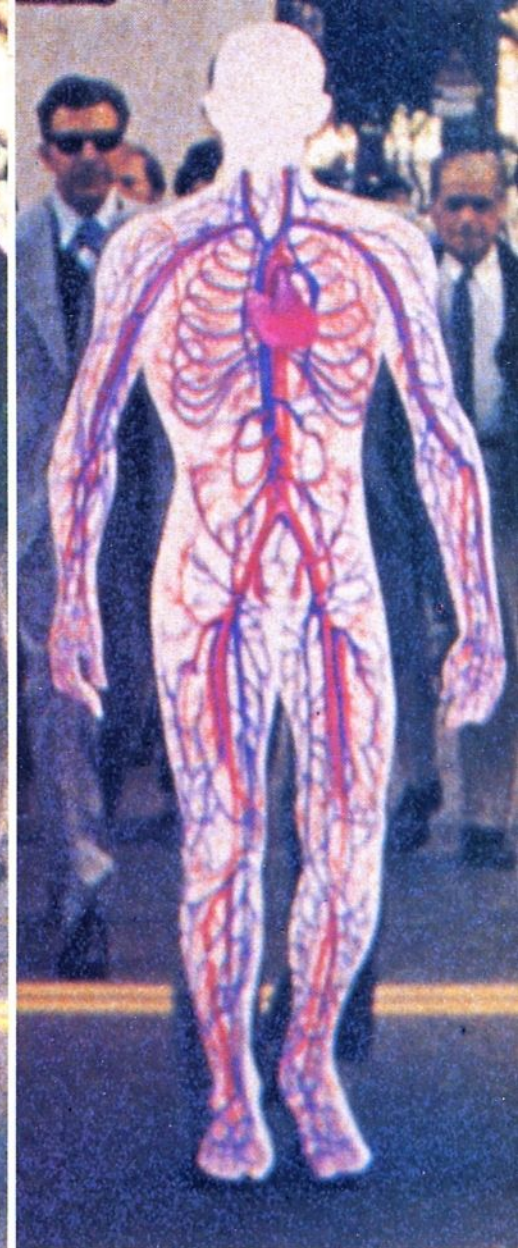
molecules, and the laws of nature which are studied and accepted by the material scientists are also comparatively simple. Dr. Thompson⁹ shows that the probability of a living cell being formed by chance and simple physical laws, as the evolutionists claim, is not greater than $10^{-130,000}$. In other words, if the whole universe appeared out of nothing $10^{130,000}$ times ($10^{130,000}$ may be written as 1 followed by 130,000 zeroes), one could not expect a living cell to be formed more than once or twice! Thus it is not possible that evolution could have taken place by chance, nor is it true that “we are here because about three million years ago conditions on earth and the properties of the elements were such as to ensure it.”¹⁰

The development of life seems to have two important aspects which must be explained: first, the inner development of consciousness, and second the outer development of the living form or structure.¹¹ As we have pointed out, the theory of evolution cannot explain either of these essential features. The evolutionist is scientifically bankrupt.

These difficulties of the doctrine of evolution are *theoretical* ones. What about the volumes of alleged *factual* evidence for evolution? Many interpretations of the fossil record have been made on the assumption that evolution has taken place. But a detailed examination of the evidence advanced by the evolutionists does not support their claims. The physical evidence is actually quite slender, and the popular impression that evolution is a “scientific fact” is due to misrepresentation.

Who would suspect from visits to museums, and from reading school textbooks, that the famous series showing the evolution of the horse was discredited long ago?¹² Who would have deduced from the “Evolution” issue of *Scientific American* (September 1978) that the existence of the primitive soup, in which the first living cells are supposed to have formed by collisions of smaller molecules, is a proven impossibility?¹³ Who would have thought that the evolution of man from a “still undiscovered hominid” through *Australopithecus* and *Homo erectus* is specifically disproved by the fossil evidence?¹⁴ Who would suspect that, in contrast to the sweeping claims of the popularizers, research workers are reduced to measuring insignificant features on fossils of molluscs, *Forminafera*, and other lowly forms of life, in an effort to prove that gradual evolution has taken place at all?¹⁵ When asked

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THE ANATOMY OF THE SELF

The textbooks are missing a chapter.

by VIŚĀKHĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

Visible Man—I remember my friends and I played for hours, taking him apart and piecing him back together. In the process we were learning about our own bodies—the heart, lungs, brain, muscles, veins, arteries, and the rest. But we never asked ourselves, “Which part is it that makes the body alive?”

In biology and chemistry classes our teachers told us that a complex arrangement of atoms is all it takes to make a living human being—complete with a

unique personality, emotions, opinions, and intelligence. But the atoms in our bodies are the same as the atoms in automobiles, TV sets, cameras, and other nonliving objects. So what makes one complex arrangement of atoms living and another nonliving?

I never got a straight answer to that question until I read ancient India’s classic *Bhagavad-gītā*. “Besides the material elements there is a superior element, which is the life force, or soul, in

all beings.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.5)

The soul is infinitesimal—even smaller than an atom. So the soul eludes electron microscopes, what to speak of probing scalpels. But that doesn’t make the soul’s existence any less real. The mind is invisible, too, but we know it’s there by its symptoms. In the same way, we can know that the soul is present in the body by the symptom of consciousness.

“As the sun alone illuminates all the universe,” says *Bhagavad-gītā*, “so does the soul, one within the body, illuminate the entire body by consciousness.” (Bg. 13.34)

As sunlight points to the presence of the sun, consciousness points to the presence of the soul. *Bhagavad-gītā* tells us that the soul sits in the heart of every being. And even modern medical science admits that the heart is the seat of all the body’s energies.

Actually, red corpuscles in the cir-



We know quite a lot about our skeletal structure, our circulation, digestion, nerves, muscles. . . . But what about our consciousness (at right, above). . . . Just what is consciousness—and where is it coming from?

culatory system carry consciousness from the soul all over the body. If the circulation to any part of the body is blocked, we experience a localized loss of consciousness—for instance, our leg “falls asleep.” And where the blood doesn’t flow at all, as in our hair and nails, there’s no consciousness.

If it actually is the soul in the heart that gives life and consciousness to the body, then what happens to the soul if the heart is transplanted? Śrīla Prabhupāda, my spiritual master, gave this analogy: “If I’m sitting in your home in an old chair, you may bring a nicer one to make me more comfortable. While you replace the old chair with the new one, I’ll get up and stand aside, and then I’ll sit down again in the new chair. Similarly, before a surgeon removes a patient’s heart, the soul moves to a different part of the body. Then, after


another heart has been inserted, the soul returns and takes his seat in the new heart. But in any case, with this heart or that one, as soon as the soul leaves the body, all that’s left is a corpse.”

In other words, the body is dead matter that appears alive, as long as the soul is in it. Without the soul there’s no life, just as without the sun there’s no sunlight.

We won’t find the soul listed in the Periodic Table of Elements. Nor can we perceive him with our blunt material senses. But we can learn of his qualities from *Bhagavad-gītā*:

“That which pervades the entire body is indestructible. No one is able to destroy the imperishable soul. The soul can neither be cut into pieces by any weapon, nor can he be burned by fire, nor moistened by water, nor withered by the wind. This individual soul

is unbreakable and insoluble and can be neither burned nor dried. Know that he who dwells in the body is eternal and can never be slain.” (Bg. 2.17, 23–25, 30)

Today many children are playing with *Visible Man* kits. Many students are studying biology and anatomy. But the kit has a missing piece, the textbooks a missing chapter. No one knows the soul. Some think the soul is just religious sentimentalism. Others are too busy to take interest. Still others may have some interest, but don’t have a clear, scientific conception of the soul and the soul’s relationship to the body. Yet although ignored, scorned, and misunderstood, the invisible living force—the soul—is the most important part of the body. Understanding the soul and his spiritual activities is the beginning of self-realization, the beginning of real life. 

Wisdom from Bhagavad-gītā

[Excerpts from the Seventh Chapter—
“Knowledge of the Absolute”]

The Supreme Personality of Godhead
said: Now hear, O son of Pṛthā [Arjuna],

how by practicing *yoga* in full consciousness of Me, with mind attached to Me, you can know Me in full, free from doubt.

I shall now declare unto you in full this knowledge both phenomenal and noumenal, by knowing which there shall remain nothing further to be known.

Out of many thousands among men, one may endeavor for perfection, and of

those who have achieved perfection, hardly one knows Me in truth.

Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence, and false ego—all together these eight comprise My separated material energies.

Besides this inferior nature, O mighty Arjuna, there is a superior energy of Mine, which consists of all living entities who are struggling with material nature and who are sustaining the universe.

Of all that is material and all that is spiritual in this world, know for certain that I am both the origin and dissolution.

O conqueror of wealth [Arjuna], there is no truth superior to Me. Everything rests upon Me, as pearls are strung on a thread.

O son of Kuntī [Arjuna], I am the taste of water, the light of the sun and the moon, the syllable *om* in Vedic *mantras*; I am the sound in ether and ability in man.

I am the original fragrance of the earth, and I am the light in fire. I am the life of all that lives, and I am the penances of all ascetics.

O son of Pṛthā, know that I am the original seed of all existences, the intelligence of the intelligent, and the prowess of all powerful men.

I am the strength of the strong, devoid of passion and desire. I am sex life which is not contrary to religious principles, O lord of the Bhāratas [Arjuna].

All states of being—goodness, passion, or ignorance—are manifested by My energy. I am, in one sense, everything—but I am independent. I am not under the modes of this material nature.

Deluded by the three modes [goodness, passion, and ignorance], the whole world does not know Me, who am above them and inexhaustible.

This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome, but those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it.

Those miscreants who are grossly foolish, lowest among mankind, whose knowledge is stolen by illusion, and who are of the atheistic nature of demons, do not surrender unto Me.

O best among the Bhāratas [Arjuna], four kinds of pious men render devotional service unto Me—the distressed, the desirer of wealth, the inquisitive, and he who is searching for knowledge of the Absolute.

Of these, the wise one who is in full knowledge, in union with Me through pure devotional service, is the best. For I am very dear to him, and he is dear to Me.



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EVOLUTION

(continued from page 31)

what evidence there is that one species can change into another, the famous anthropologist Richard Leakey replied that as far as he knew, there was no fossil evidence at all.

Of course, some of the opposition to evolution has been sentimental, unreasonable, and fanatical. But we are challenging evolution on the basis of reason, logic, and the ancient Vedic knowledge, which scientifically describes matter, spirit, and the controller of both. As Śrīla Prabhupāda instructed some of his students, "It is not our business to condemn the advancement of knowledge. But to deny the existence of God by the 'advancement of knowledge' is a waste of time. Don't forget the real origin. Saying that life is coming from chemicals is nonsense. Life is coming from life—from Kṛṣṇa."¹⁶

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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Man: Just an Old Animal?

According to some anthropologists, the human being is essentially an animal. "It is clear that we are an extremely old animal, perhaps three million years old, and we were evolved to live as hunter-gatherers," says a Rutgers University anthropologist with the ironically bestial name Lionel Tiger. In a recent essay in *Newsweek*, Professor Tiger claims that many social and psychological problems arise when we imagine that man is something more than a biological creature. "Oddly enough," he says, "seeing ourselves as animals may make the future more humane." But we cannot see how Tiger's view of man can actually benefit humanity.

Tiger takes Darwin's theory as axiomatic truth. But at the risk of being heretical, we must point out that Darwin's theory, one of the foundational beliefs of the modern age, has always been only that—a theory. What's more, it is a theory fraught with difficulties (see "Evolution—a Theory in Danger of Extinction," page 30). In the same issue of *Newsweek* that features Tiger's essay, we find a review of a new book by paleoanthropologist Richard Leakey. Dr. Leakey has developed his own theory of human evolution, based on a few skull findings in Africa. "Still, the evidence is sparse," says the reviewer. "All known remnants of our ancestors from one million to five million years ago could be spread out on two large trestle tables." Allegedly, fossils provide evolutionary theorists with their proof positive, but no one has any fossil record for the evolution of fish, or anything substantial for the evolution of birds. Even Darwin admitted that his theory had its holes, and that he had filled them in with guesswork. The data he had gathered on the voyage of the *Beagle* only "seemed to throw some light on the origin of the species." So, he says, "After five years' work I allowed myself to speculate on the subject and drew up some short notes; these I enlarged in 1844 into a sketch of the conclusions, which seemed to me probable."

Nor has the theory of mutation (which states that species can suddenly produce better-adapted offspring) ever proved itself in life. And, of course, there are many other counterarguments that destroy the credibility of Darwin's

theory. Yet although these counterarguments are well known and based strictly on empirical data, they are never discussed seriously in scientific journals. Apparently, the scientific community views as anathema any idea that puts the origin of life into a theistic light.

Even if we suspend the debate as to *how* and *when* man got his superior brain and consciousness, still we have to admit *he is highly developed beyond all other forms of life*. And it's clear he has to use his higher intellectual development for something more than just polishing the animal techniques of hunting, gathering, and mating. Actually, human consciousness enables us to gain spiritual enlightenment and free ourselves from *karma* (the natural cycle that forces un-God-conscious people to devolve back into animal species).

We can grant Dr. Tiger that modern industrial society has developed an artificial way of life, but does Dr. Tiger know what the natural way of human life actually is? As *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.3.19–20) describes, the human body is meant for self-realization—and if this use of the body is neglected, then indeed the human is to be considered an animal.

Men who are like dogs, hogs, camels, and asses praise those men who never listen to the transcendental pastimes of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, the deliverer from evils. One who has not listened to the messages about the prowess and marvelous acts of the Personality of Godhead and has not sung or chanted loudly the worthy songs about the Lord is to be considered to possess earholes like the holes of snakes and a tongue like the tongue of a frog.

The *Bhāgavatam* also describes a saintly king who used his human faculties for cultivating God consciousness:

Mahārāja Ambarīṣa always engaged his mind in meditating upon the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, his words in describing the glories of the Lord, his hands in cleansing the Lord's temple, and his ears in hearing the words spoken by Kṛṣṇa or about Kṛṣṇa. He engaged his eyes in seeing the Deity of Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa's temples, and Kṛṣṇa's places. He engaged his sense of touch in touching the bodies of the Lord's devotees. He engaged his sense of smell in smelling

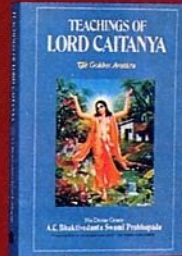
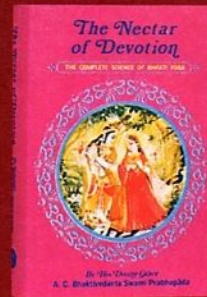
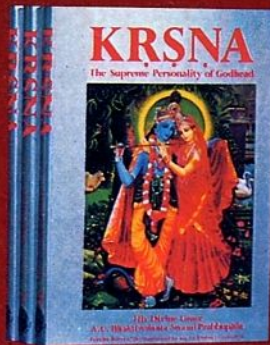
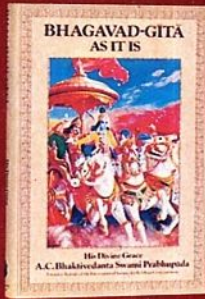
the fragrance of the *tulasī* leaves offered to the Lord, and he engaged his tongue in tasting foods offered to the Lord. He engaged his legs in walking to the holy places and temples of the Lord, his head in bowing down before the Lord, and all his desires in serving the Lord twenty-four hours a day.

For this age the Vedic literatures recommend one process of self-realization—*saṅkīrtana*, glorifying God through chanting His names and dancing. Engaged in the *yoga* of *saṅkīrtana*, all of us can dance and vibrate hymns, eat foods offered to Kṛṣṇa, and thus become liberated from transmigration down to the animal species. It is not a fact that if the human being neglects cultivation of transcendental consciousness and tries to live like an animal he'll be happy. Whether predator or prey, an animal suffers constant anxiety. Only by reviving our original, spiritual consciousness—and not by trying to live in savage industrial society or savage animal society—can we be happy.

If the atheistic theory of man and his purpose remains the foundation for civilized society, then how can we expect relief from war or crime or sexual immorality? Aren't all these bestialities simply outpourings of the survival-of-the-fittest mentality that Tiger would have us embrace as part of man's inner nature? But the Vedic literatures describe ancient societies and enlightened governments that promoted peaceful living—through realization of self and God.

This is the responsibility of man: to cultivate self-realization, to raise himself above junglelike terrorism and "Might-Makes-Right" exploitation, big animal-nations over small animal-nations. If we reject our identity as spiritual souls, emanations from God, if we reject God's plan for us on this planet and in the eternal, spiritual world—if we reject self-realization and God consciousness as the essential human commitments—then Professor Lion Tiger is right: we are no more than lions and tigers. And by nature's law of transmigration, a man who neglects his higher purpose in this life will get all facility in later lives to enjoy himself as a lion, and then as a tiger, and then a mouse, a lizard, a bug, a tree . . . life after life after life.

—SDG



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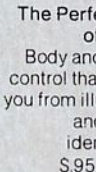
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