

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

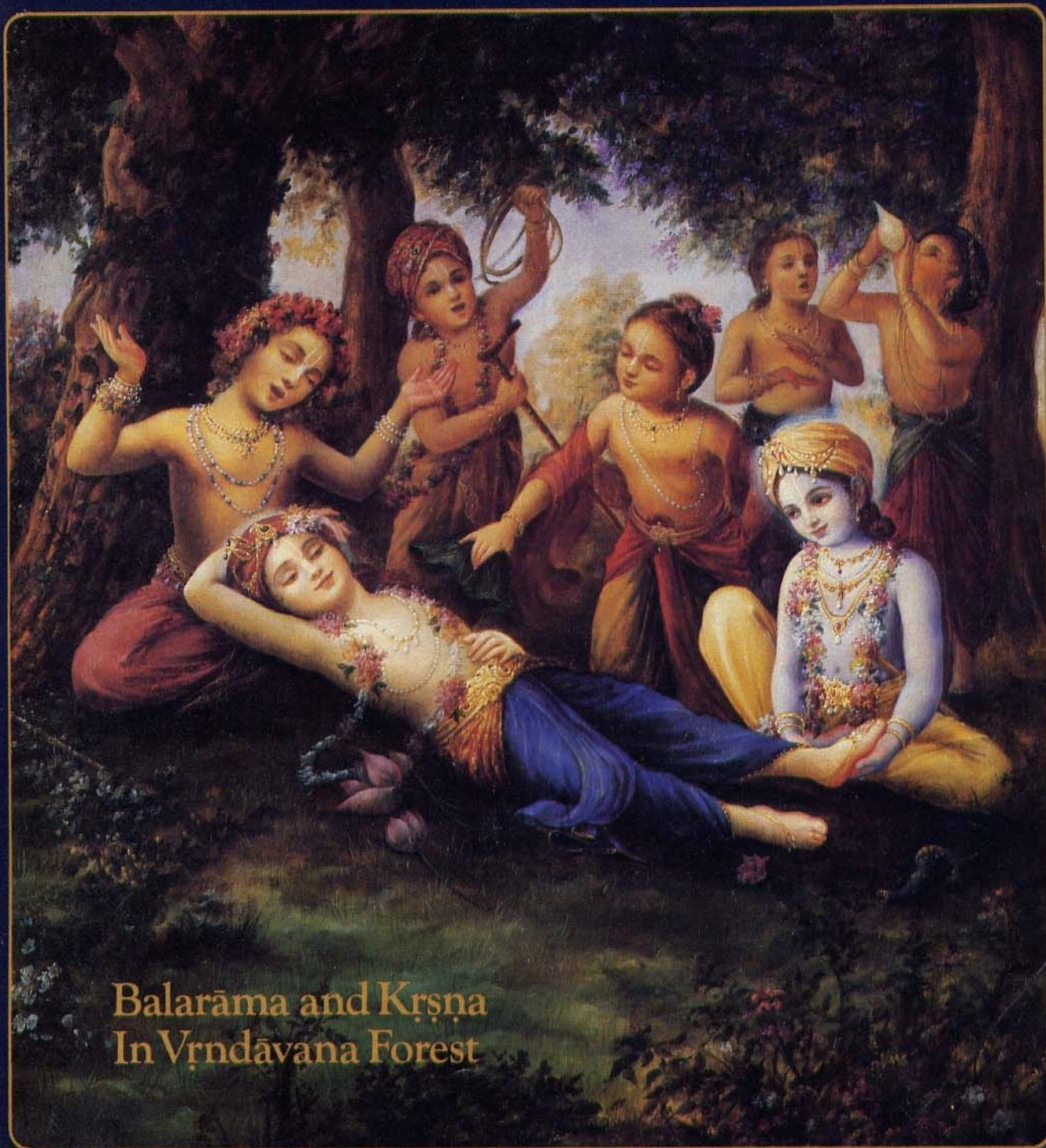


BACK TO GODHEAD



Vol. 14 No. 1

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa
In Vṛndāvana Forest

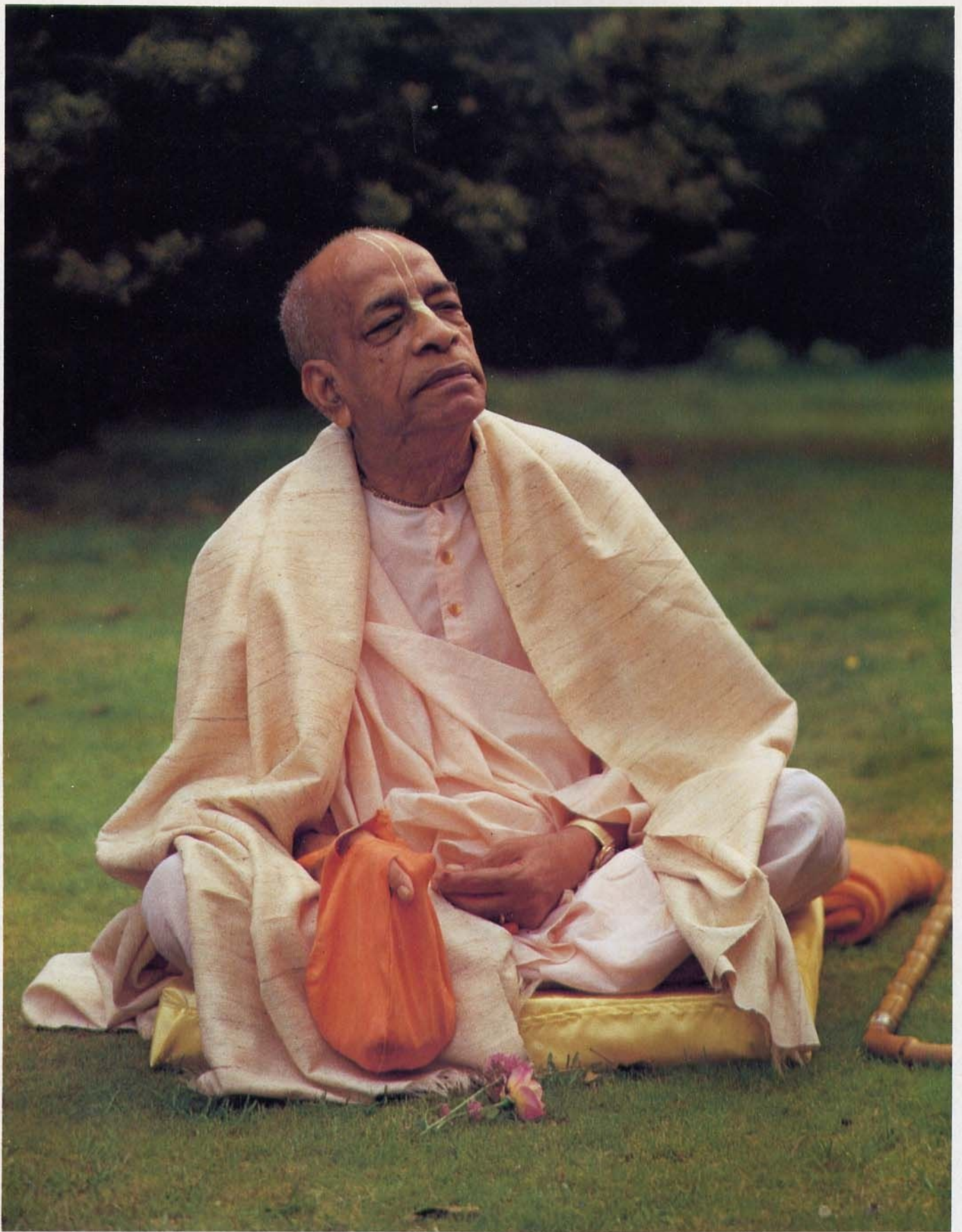


PHOTO BHARGAVA DASA

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

BACK TO GODHEAD

VOL. 14, NO. 1

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His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedānta 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
plique. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **rim**, and **c**
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* (*dāśī* for women),
meaning "servant." For instance, the name *Kṛṣṇa*
dāsa means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

◀ His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta 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 throughout 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 stan-
dard in universities worldwide. Meanwhile, traveling
almost nonstop, Śrīla Prabhupāda molded his inter-
national society into a worldwide confederation of
āśramas, schools, temples, and farm communities. He
passed away in 1977 in India's Vṛndāvana, the place
most sacred to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and his disciples are carry-
ing forward the movement he started.

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COVER: Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana Forest. Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme
Personality of Godhead, massages the feet of His brother and primary expansion,
Lord Balarāma. Their companions, the cowherd boys, are spiritually liberated
souls who in past lives purified their consciousness through *yoga*. (See page 2.)
(Cover art: Dhṛti-devī dāśī.)

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."

YOGA

Making Friends with the Mind

A lecture by HIS DIVINE GRACE A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

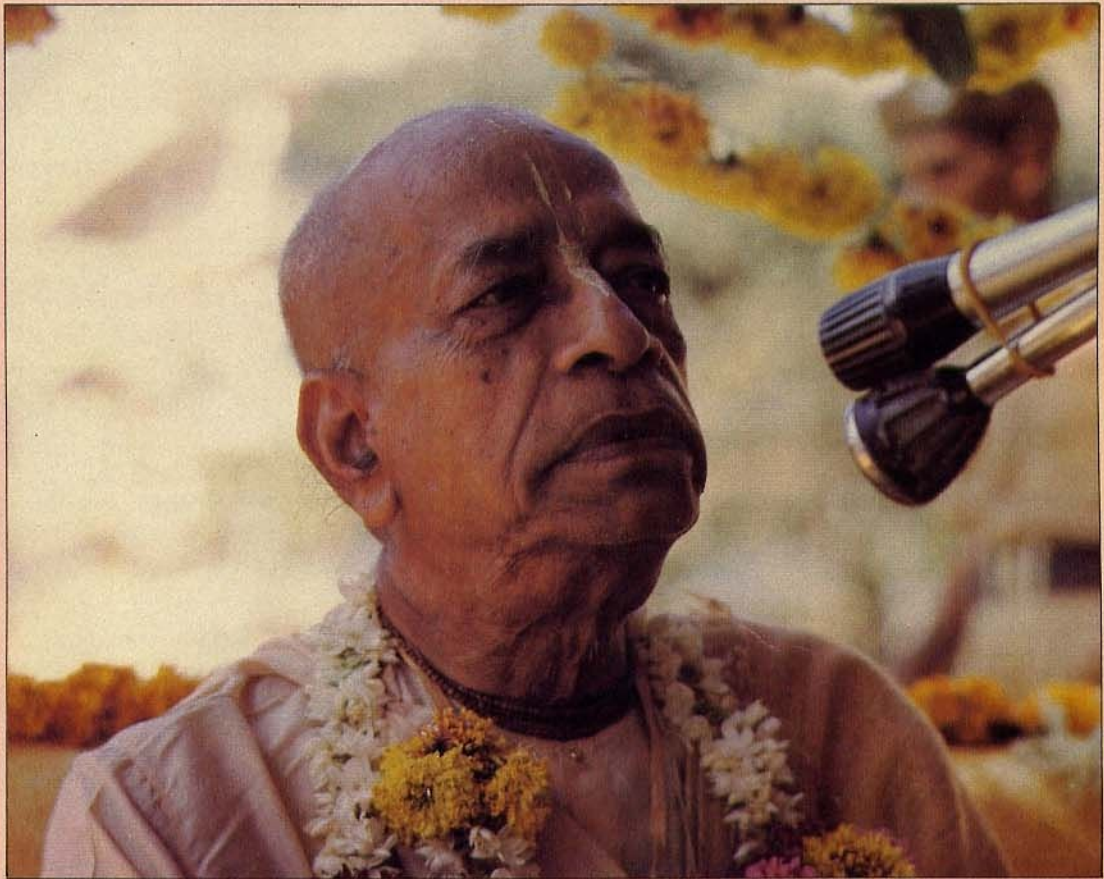


PHOTO: BHARGAVA DASA

*bandhur ātmātmanas tasya yenātmaivātmanā jitaḥ
anātmanas tu śatrutve vartetātmaiva śatruvat*

“For him who has conquered his mind, it is the best of friends.
But for one who has failed to do so, his very mind will be the
greatest enemy.” [Bhagavad-gītā 6.6]

The whole purpose of the *yoga* system is to make the mind our friend. The mind in material contact is our enemy, just like the mind of a person in a drunken condition. In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* [Madhya 20.117], it is said, *kṛṣṇa bhulī sei jīva anādi-bahirmukha ataeva māyā tāre deya saṁsāra-duḥkha*. “Forgetting Kṛṣṇa, the living entity has been attracted by the Lord’s external feature from time immemorial. Therefore, the illusory energy [māyā] gives him all kinds of misery in his material existence.” I am a spiritual soul, part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, but as soon as my mind is contaminated I rebel, because I have a little independence. “Why shall I serve Kṛṣṇa, or God? I am God.” When this idea is dictated from the mind, my whole situation turns. I come under a false impression, an illusion, and my whole life is spoiled. So, we are trying to conquer so many things—empires, and so on—but if we fail to conquer our minds, then even if we conquer an empire we are failures. Our very mind will be our greatest enemy.

The purpose of practicing eightfold *yoga* is to control the mind in order to make it a friend in discharging the human mission. Unless the mind is controlled, the practice of *yoga* is simply a waste of time; it is simply for show. One who cannot control his mind lives always with the greatest enemy, and thus his life and its mission are spoiled. The constitutional position of the living entity is to carry out the order of the superior. As long as one’s mind remains an unconquered enemy, one has to serve the dictations of lust, anger, avarice, illusion, and so on. But when the mind is conquered, one voluntarily agrees to abide by the dictation of the Personality of Godhead, who is situated within the heart of everyone as the Supersoul (Paramātmā). Real *yoga* practice entails meeting the Paramātmā within the heart and then following His dictation. For one who takes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness directly, perfect surrender to the dictation of the Lord follows automatically.

*jitātmanaḥ praśāntasya
paramātmā samāhitaḥ
śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkheṣu
tathā mānāpamānayoḥ*

“For one who has conquered the mind, the Supersoul is already reached, for he has attained tranquility. To such a man happiness and distress, heat and cold, honor and dishonor are all the same.” [Bg. 6.7]

Actually, every living entity is intended to abide by the dictation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is seated in

everyone’s heart as Paramātmā. When the mind is misled by the external energy, one becomes entangled in material activities. Therefore, as soon as one’s mind is controlled through one of the *yoga* systems, one is to be considered as having already reached the destination. One has to abide by superior dictation. When one’s mind is fixed on the superior nature, he has no other alternative but to follow the dictation of the Supreme. The mind must admit some superior dictation and follow it. The effect of controlling the mind is that one automatically follows the dictation of the Paramātmā, or Supersoul. Because this transcendental position is at once achieved by one who is in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the devotee of the Lord is unaffected by the dualities of material existence like distress and happiness, cold and heat, and so on. This state is practical *samādhi*, or absorption in the Supreme.

*jñāna-vijñāna-ṭṛptātmā
kūṭa-stho vijitendriyah
yukta ity ucyate yogī
sama-loṣṭrāśma-kāñcanaḥ*

“A person is said to be established in self-realization and is called a *yogī*, or mystic, when he is fully satisfied by virtue of acquired knowledge and realization. Such a person is situated in transcendence and is self-controlled. He sees everything—whether it be pebbles, stones, or gold—as the same.” [Bg. 6.8]

Book knowledge without realization of the Supreme Truth is useless. In the *Padma Purāṇa* this is stated as follows:

*ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi
na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau
svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*

“No one can understand the transcendental nature of the name, form, qualities, and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa through his materially contaminated senses. Only when one becomes spiritually saturated by transcendental service to the Lord are the transcendental name, form, quality, and pastimes of the Lord revealed to him.”

This is very important. Now, we accept Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Lord. And why do we accept that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord? Because it is stated in the Vedic literature. The *Brahma-samhitā*, for example, says, *īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ*: “The supreme controller is Kṛṣṇa, who has an eternal, blissful, spiritual body.” Those who are in the modes of passion and ignorance simply imagine the form of God. And

when they are confused, they say, “Oh, there is no personal God. The Absolute is impersonal or void.” This is frustration.

Actually, God has a form. Why not? The *Vedānta-sūtra* says, *janmādy asya yataḥ*: “The Supreme Absolute Truth is that from whom or from which everything emanates.” Now, we have forms. And not only we but all the different kinds of living entities have forms. Wherefrom have they come? Wherefrom have these forms originated? These are very common-sense questions. If God is not a person, then how have His sons become persons? If my father is not a person, how have I become a person? If my father has no form, wherefrom did I get my form? Nonetheless, when people are frustrated, when they see that their bodily form is troublesome, they develop an opposite conception of form and imagine that God must be formless. But the *Brahma-samhitā* says no. God has a form, but His form is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss (*īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ*). *Sat* means “eternity,” *cit* means “knowledge,” and *ānanda* means “pleasure.” So God has a form, but His form is full of pleasure, full of knowledge, and eternal.

Now, let’s compare our body to God’s. Our body is neither eternal nor full of pleasure nor full of knowledge. So our form is clearly different from God’s. But as soon as we think of form, we think the form must be like ours. Therefore, we think that since God must be the opposite of us, He must have no form. This is speculation, however, not knowledge. As it is said in the *Padma Purāṇa*, *ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ*: “One cannot understand the form, name, quality, or paraphernalia of God with one’s material senses.” Our senses are imperfect, so how can we speculate on the Supreme Perfect? It is not possible.

Then how is it possible to see Him? *Sevonmukhe hi jihvādau*: if we train our senses, if we purify our senses, those purified senses will help us see God. It is just as if we had cataracts on our eyes. Because our eyes are suffering from cataracts, we cannot see. But this does not mean that there is nothing to be seen—only that we cannot see. Similarly, now we cannot conceive of the form of God, but if our cataracts are removed, we can see Him. The *Brahma-samhitā* says, *premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-viloka-neṇa santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti*: “The devotees whose eyes are anointed with the love-of-God ointment see God, Kṛṣṇa, within their hearts twenty-four hours a day.” So, we require

to purify our senses. Then we'll be able to understand what the form of God is, what the name of God is, what the qualities of God are, and what the paraphernalia of God is, and we'll be able to see God in everything.

The Vedic literatures are full of references to God's form. For example, it is said that God has no hands or legs, but that He can accept anything you offer: *apāṇi-pādo javano grhītā*. Also, it is said that God has no eyes or ears, but that He can see everything and hear everything. So, these are apparent contradictions, because whenever we think of someone seeing, we think he must have eyes like ours. This is our material conception. Factually, however, God does have eyes, but His eyes are different from ours. He can see even in the darkness, but we cannot. God can hear, also. God is in His kingdom, which is millions and millions of miles away, but if we are whispering something—conspiracy—He can hear it, because He is sitting within us.

So, we cannot avoid God's seeing or God's hearing or God's touching. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* [9.26] Lord Kṛṣṇa says,

*patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam
yo me bhaktiyā prayacchati
tad ahaṁ bhakti-upahṛtam
aśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ*

"If somebody offers Me flowers, fruits, vegetables, or milk with devotional love, I accept and eat it." Now, how is He eating? We cannot see Him eat, but He is eating. We experience this daily: when we offer Kṛṣṇa food according to the ritualistic process, we see that the taste of the food changes immediately. This is practical. So God eats, but because He is full in Himself, He does not eat like us. If someone offers me a plate of food, I may finish it, but God is not hungry, so when He eats He leaves the things as they are. *Pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate*: God is so full that He can eat all the food that we offer and still it remains as it is. He can eat with His eyes. This is stated in the *Brahma-saṁhitā. Aṅgāni yasya sakalendriya-vṛttimanti*: "Every limb of the body of God has all the potencies of the other limbs." For example, we can see with our eyes, but we cannot eat with our eyes. But if God simply sees the food we have offered, that is His eating.

Of course, these things cannot be understood by us at the present moment. Therefore, the *Padma Purāṇa* says that only when one becomes spiritually saturated by transcendental service to the Lord are the transcendental name, form, qualities, and pastimes of the Lord

revealed to him. We cannot understand God by our own endeavor, but God can reveal Himself to us. Trying to see God by our own efforts is just like trying to see the sun when it is dark outside. If we say, "Oh, I have a very strong flashlight, and I shall search out the sun," we will not be able to see it. But in the morning, when the sun rises out of its own will, we can see it. Similarly, we cannot see God by our own endeavor, because our senses are all imperfect. We have to purify our senses and wait for the time when God will be pleased to reveal Himself before us. This is the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We cannot challenge, "Oh, my dear God, my dear Kṛṣṇa, You must come before me. I shall see You." No, God is not our order supplier, our servant. When He is pleased with us, we'll see Him.

So, our *yoga* process tries to please God, so that He will be revealed to us. That is the real *yoga* process. Without this process, people are accepting so many nonsensical "Gods." Because people cannot see God, anybody who says "I am God" is accepted. No one knows who God is. Somebody may say, "I am searching after truth," but he must know what truth is. Otherwise, how will he search out truth? Suppose I want to purchase gold? I must know what gold is, or at least have some experience of it. Otherwise, people will cheat me. So, people are being cheated—accepting so many rascals as God—because they do not know what God is. Anyone can come and say, "I am God," and some rascal will accept him as God. The man who says "I am God" is a rascal, and the man who accepts him as God is also a rascal. God cannot be known like this. One has to qualify himself to see God, to understand God. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. *Sevonmukhe hi jihvādau svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*: if we engage ourselves in the service of the Lord, then we'll become qualified to see God. Otherwise, it is not possible.

Now, this *Bhagavad-gītā* is the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. No one can become Kṛṣṇa conscious simply by mundane scholarship. Simply because one has some titles—M.A., B.A., Ph.D.—that does not mean he'll understand the *Bhagavad-gītā*. This is a transcendental science, and one requires different senses to understand it. So one has to purify his senses by rendering service to the Lord. Otherwise, even if one is a great scholar—a doctor or a Ph.D.—he will make mistakes in trying to find out what Kṛṣṇa is. He will not understand—it is not possible. This is why Kṛṣṇa appears in the material world as He is. Although He is unborn (*ajo pi sann*

avyayātmā), He comes to make us know who God is. But since He is not personally present now, to know Him one must be fortunate enough to associate with a person who is in pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person has realized knowledge, by the grace of Kṛṣṇa, because He is satisfied with pure devotional service. So we have to acquire the grace of Kṛṣṇa. Then we can understand Kṛṣṇa, then we can see Kṛṣṇa, then we can talk with Kṛṣṇa—then we can do everything.

Kṛṣṇa is a *person*. He is the supreme *person*. That is the Vedic injunction: *nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām*—"We are all eternal persons, and God is the supreme eternal person." Now, being engaged within this body, we are meeting birth and death. But actually, we have no birth and death at all, because we are eternal spiritual souls. According to our work, according to our desire, we are transmigrating from one kind of body to another, another, and another. Yet actually, we have no birth and death. As explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [2.20], *na jāyate mriyate vā*: "The living entity never takes birth, nor does he ever die." Similarly, God is also eternal. *Nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām*: "God is the supreme living entity among all living entities, and He is the supreme eternal person among eternal persons." So, by practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness, by purifying our senses, we can re-establish our eternal relationship with the supreme eternal person, the complete eternal person. Then we will see God.

Through realized knowledge, one becomes perfect. Through transcendental knowledge one can remain steady in his convictions, but with mere academic knowledge one can be easily deluded and confused by apparent contradictions. It is the realized soul who is actually self-controlled, because he is surrendered to Kṛṣṇa. And he is transcendental, because he has nothing to do with mundane scholarship. For him, mundane scholarship and mental speculation (which may be as good as gold to others) are of no greater value than pebbles or stones.

Even if one is illiterate, even if he does not know the ABC's, he can realize God—provided he engages himself in submissive, transcendental loving service to God. On the other hand, although one is a very learned scholar, he may not be able to realize God. God is not subject to any material condition, because He is the Supreme Spirit. Similarly, the process of realizing God is also not subject to any material condition. It

(continued on page 24)

The Machinery of Evolution: OUT OF GEAR?

by RICHARD L. THOMPSON, PH.D.

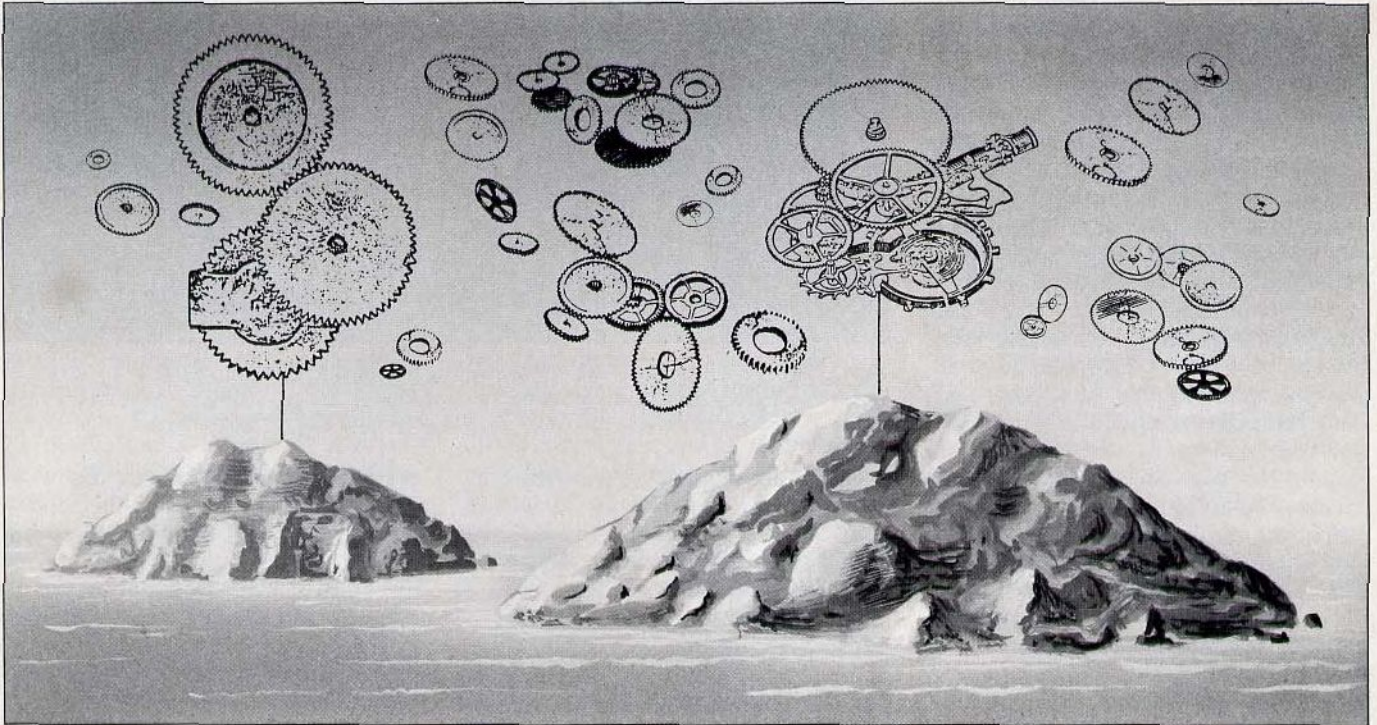


Fig. 1. The class of all possible forms made from organic chemicals is like an ocean of tiny mechanical devices, most of them useless. The few useful forms are like islands surrounded by vast expanses of useless ones.

One of the most fundamental ideas in modern evolutionary biology is that the physical structures of living organisms can transform from one into another through a series of small modifications, without departing from the realm of potentially useful forms. For example, the foreleg of a lizard can, according to this principle, gradually transform into the wing of a bird, and the lizard's scales can

gradually convert into feathers. In the course of these transformations, each successive stage must serve a useful function for the organism in some possible environment. Thus each intermediate form between leg and wing must be able to act as a serviceable limb under some appropriate circumstances.

Darwin's theory is based on the hypothesis that, without exception, all the organisms in the world today came about by transformations of this kind, starting with some primitive ancestral form. If such transformations are always possible, then the problem of evolutionary theory is to determine what events in nature might cause them to take place. However, if there exist any significant structures in living organisms that cannot have developed in this way, then for these structures, at least, the hypothesis of evolution is ruled out, and some other

explanation of their origin must be sought. Charles Darwin, the founder of the modern theory of evolution, clearly recognized this point: "If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down."¹

Although Darwin admitted he could not imagine the intermediate, transitional forms leading to many different organs, he assumed that they might later be revealed by a deeper understanding of the organs' structure and function, and he proceeded to base his theory on their presumed existence. However, in the nearly 120 years since the publication of his *On the Origin of Species*, practically no significant advance has been made in the understanding of intermediate forms. While evolutionists often speak of

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changes in the size and shape of existing organs, they still can do very little but make vague suggestions about the origin of the organs themselves.

The geneticist Richard Goldschmidt once gave a list of seventeen organs and systems of organs for which he could not even conceive of the required transitional forms. These included hair in mammals, feathers in birds, the segmented structure of vertebrates, teeth, the external skeletons and compound eyes of insects, blood circulation, and the organs of balance.² These organs, and many others, present a fundamental question: How can we explain the origin of a complex system depending on the action of many interdependent parts?

We would like to suggest here that for many organs, the reason why the required chains of useful intermediate forms are unimaginable is simply that they do not exist. Let us try to visualize this in mathematical terms. The class of all possible forms made from organic chemicals can be thought of as a multidimensional space in which each point corresponds to a particular form. We propose that in this space the potentially useful structures will appear as isolated islands surrounded by a vast ocean of disjointed forms that could not be useful in any circumstances. Within these islands some freedom of movement will exist, corresponding to simple variations in characteristics such as size and shape. But going from island to island—that is, evolving from one particular type of useful organ to another—will require a long and accurate jump across the ocean.

Leaping the Gap

Figure 1 on the previous page depicts these ideas by a mechanical example. Here we consider the space of all possible combinations of mechanical parts, such as shafts, levers, and gears. These mechanical parts are comparable to the molecules making up the organs in the bodies of living beings. Since mechanical parts and molecules alike fit together in very limited and specific ways, a study of mechanical combinations should throw some light on the nature of organic forms.

If we visualize the space of mechanical forms, we can see that some regions in this space will correspond to wrist-watches and other familiar devices, and some regions will correspond to machines that are unfamiliar, but that might function usefully in some situation. However, the space will consist mostly of combinations of parts that are useful as paperweights at best.

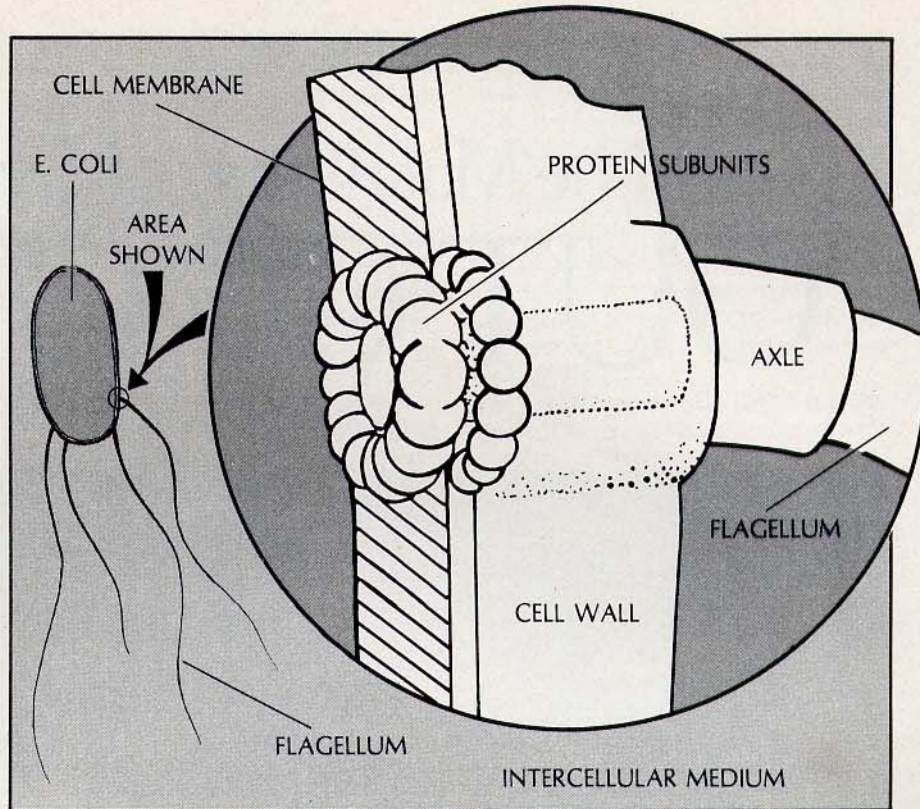


Fig. 2. The one-celled bacterium *Escherichia coli* is propelled through the water by a kind of motor. To have a continuum of useful forms spanning the gap between "non-motor" and "motor," we would have to postulate progressively more useful "non-motors."

Since a machine can operate smoothly only if many variables are simultaneously adjusted within precise limits, the useful machines will occupy isolated islands, surrounded by an ocean of machines that are either jammed or broken. If we started from a point on the shore representing a very rudimentary machine, or no machine at all, then we would have to leap over this vast ocean in order to reach, say, a functional wrist-watch. As we were making this leap, we could not obtain any guidance by testing the relative usefulness of the forms beneath, for all of them would be equally useless.

Since the bodies of living organisms are built of molecular components and are very complicated, they are not nearly as easy to visualize as the machines in our illustration. However, there are examples of organs that are simple enough to be comparable to man-made mechanisms. One such example is found in the one-celled bacterium *Escherichia coli*, shown in Figure 2.

Each *Escherichia coli* cell possesses several long, curved fibers (called flagella) that enable it to swim.³ Each flagellum is connected at one end to a kind of motor built into the bacterial cell wall, and when these motors rotate in a certain direction, the flagella rotate in unison and act as propellers to drive the

bacterium forward through the water. When the motors rotate in the opposite direction, the flagella separate and change the orientation of the bacterium by pulling in various ways. By systematically alternating between these two modes of operation, the bacterium is able to swim from undesirable to desirable regions of its environment.

The motors are presently thought to be driven by a flux of protons flowing into the cell. Each motor is thought to consist of a ring of sixteen protein molecules attached to an axle, along with a stationary ring of sixteen proteins built into the cell wall.⁴ Protons are steadily pumped out of the cell by its normal metabolic processes. As some of these protons flow back into the cell through the pairs of rings, they impart a rotary motion to the movable ring. Since the motor can operate in forward or reverse, there must be some mechanism that adjusts the molecules in the rings so as to reverse the direction of rotation.

Although the exact details of the *Escherichia coli*'s molecular motors have not been worked out, we can see that they depend on the precise and simultaneous adjustment of many variables. In the space of possible molecular structures, the functional motors will represent a tiny, isolated island.

To have a continuum of useful forms

spanning the gap between “no motor” and “motor,” we would have to postulate useful organs that do not function as motors but are very similar to motors in structure. For the selective processes of evolutionary theory to eventually choose a working motor, these non-motors would have to be progressively more useful to the bacterium the more motorlike they became. Apart from this very unlikely possibility, evolutionists can suggest no guiding process that can cross the gap.

In the case of very simple organs, such as the bacterial motor, it should be possible to carry out a completely rigorous study of the possibilities of form. Such a study would definitely resolve the question of whether the intermediate forms required by the theory of evolution do or do not exist. Of course, for the highly complicated organs of higher plants and animals, this kind of study may not be practical, but there are still many cases where the combinatorial logic of an organ strongly suggests the impossibility of useful intermediate forms.

One interesting example of this impossibility is found in the statocyst of a certain species of shrimp.⁵ The statocyst is a hollow, fluid-filled sphere built into the shrimp’s shell. It is lined with cells bearing pressure-sensitive hairs and contains a small weight. The weight tends to sink and press against the downward portion of the sphere, thus enabling the shrimp to tell up from down. Curiously, the weight is a small grain of sand that the shrimp picks up with its claws and inserts into the statocyst through a small hole in its shell. The shrimp has to do this every time it moults its shell.

Now, the question is this: By what intermediate stages did the arrangement of the shrimp’s statocyst come about? Both the statocyst and the behavioral pattern involved in picking up the grain of sand are quite complex, and neither is of any use without the other. Even if a statocyst evolved with a built-in weight and then lost this feature by a mutation, the appearance of the insertion behavior would require a leap involving the coordination of many variables.

A Personal Avenue of Approach

At this point, let us try to find an alternative explanation of how such a leap might come about. One natural process in which such leaps are commonly seen is the process of human invention. The products of human creativity, from watches to poetic compositions, are generated with the aid of spontaneous insight, which sometimes enables one to

proceed directly to the solution of a problem without groping laboriously through many false attempts. In fact, it is often the case that after experiencing great frustration in a totally futile trial-and-error search, an inventor will see the complete solution to his problem in a sudden flash. One example of this is the experience of the mathematician Carl Gauss in solving a problem that had thwarted his efforts for years: “Like a sudden flash of lightning,” he wrote, “the riddle happened to be solved. I myself cannot say what... connected what I previously knew with what made my success possible.”⁶ It is significant that the solution did not exhibit even a hint of a connection with Gauss’s previous attempts. Here again we find a structure—this time a structure of abstract thought—that is not linked by any discernible chain of intermediate forms to other, existing structures.

If it is the nature of biological form and the forms of human invention to exist as isolated islands in the sea of possible forms, then some causal agency must exist that can select such forms directly. The experience of inventors indicates that this agency lies outside the realm of human consciousness or control, and that it is capable of acting very quickly.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* a unified description is given of an agency that accounts for the origin of both biological form and human creativity. There it is explained that the ultimate cause underlying the world of our perceptions is not a blind, impersonal process, but a primordial, absolute personality—a personality possessing eternal form, qualities, and activities. Thus in *Bhagavad-gītā* Śrī Kṛṣṇa affirms, “I am the father of all living entities” (Bg. 14.4) and also “I am seated in everyone’s heart, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge, and forgetfulness” (Bg. 15.15).


Of course, even though the nonexistence of intermediate biological forms implies some kind of absolute information or guidance that transcends the categories of ordinary science, this is not sufficient in itself to bring us to the conclusion that the transcendental source must be the Supreme Person. However, this hypothesis opens up very interesting opportunities for further scientific investigation. If the information for the manifestations of form and order in this world is existing in a transcendental state, then this information might be directly accessible in some way. And if the transcendental source is indeed the Supreme Person, as described in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, then it is reasonable to expect that a personal avenue of ap-

proach is possible.

In fact, such an avenue does exist. It consists of an elaborate scientific method for establishing a personal relationship with the Supreme. This method, called *bhakti-yoga*, is quite similar to modern science, in that it depends on clearly specified procedures leading to reproducible results. It is experimentally verifiable, for it is based on direct personal experience attainable by anyone who carries out the procedures correctly.

Organization’s Origins

On the other hand, *bhakti-yoga* differs from modern science in its method of acquiring basic information. In modern science the hypotheses to be tested, as well as the methods for testing them, are obtained in a haphazard way from the poorly understood sources of “inspiration” or “creative imagination.” In the science of *bhakti-yoga*, experimental procedures and philosophical principles are both explicitly obtained from the Supreme Person. In other words, although the source of knowledge in both modern science and *bhakti-yoga* is the Supreme Person, in *bhakti-yoga* this is fully recognized, and thus there is direct access to the transcendental knowledge available from this source. A good example of this direct access is *Bhagavad-gītā* itself, which, far from being a product of gradual cultural evolution, was directly spoken by Śrī Kṛṣṇa some five thousand years ago at Kurukṣetra, in India.

It would be worthwhile for scientists to consider this direct method of attaining knowledge. Even though history has shown that “revealed knowledge” may become corrupted, the basic principle is still valid, and fruitful scientific investigation in this area should be possible. The value of seeking such a rigorous approach is especially apparent if, as we have seen, there is reason to suppose that organized form in both the biological and cultural spheres must originate from a transcendental source. 

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New York City, 1965 STRUGGLING ALONE

by SATSVARŪPA DĀSA GOSWAMI

On arriving in New York, Śrīla Prabhupāda had nowhere to stay but the āśrama of an impersonalist svāmī. To see students submissively listening to a speaker who denied the Personality of Godhead was painful for the pure devotee. But was he to go homeless and beg in the streets? A holy man might have been able to do that in India, but not in Manhattan.

Śrīla Prabhupāda knew no one in New York City, but at least he had a contact. In India he had met a publisher of religious books, Paramananda Mehra of Bombay, who had written a note introducing him to a guru based in New York City, Dr. Rammurti Misra. While still in Butler, Pennsylvania, Śrīla Prabhupāda had sent Mr. Mehra's note and one of his own to Dr. Misra. He had also phoned Dr. Misra, who had told him he was welcome to come join him in New York.

A student of Dr. Misra's met Śrīla Prabhupāda on his arrival from Butler and brought him directly to an Indian festival in the city. There he was introduced to Dr. Misra, as well as to Ravi Shankar and his brother, the dancer Uddhar Shankar. Śrīla Prabhupāda then accompanied Dr. Misra to his apartment at 33 Riverside Drive, beside the Hudson River. The apartment was on the fourteenth floor and had large windows facing the river. Dr. Misra gave Śrīla Prabhupāda a room to himself.

Dr. Misra was perhaps the first Hindu svāmī Śrīla Prabhupāda met in America. Like Śrīla Prabhupāda, he wore the traditional saffron dhotī. At forty-four, he was young enough to be Prabhupāda's

son. His complexion was darker than Prabhupāda's, and his black hair hung down to his shoulders. He was a dramatic, showy personality, given to flashing glances and frequent gestures with his hands, and he regularly used words like "lovely" and "beautiful." Presenting an artfully polished image of what a guru should be, he was what some New Yorkers in the 1960's referred to as "an uptown swami." Before coming to America, Dr. Misra had been a Sanskrit scholar and guru, as well as a doctor. He had written a number of books, such as *The Textbook of Yoga Psychology* and *Self-Analysis and Self-Knowledge*, a work based on the teachings of the monistic philosopher Śaṅkara. When he came to the United States, he continued to practice neurology, psychology, and acupuncture, but after he began to take on disciples, he gradually dropped his medical practice.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda came into his life, Dr. Misra had been suffering from bad health. Śrīla Prabhupāda seemed the perfect medicine. "His Holiness Prabhupāda Bhaktivedanta Gosvāmiji really knocked me down with love," Dr. Misra says. "He was really an incarnation of love. My body had become a skeleton, and he really brought me back to life. His cooking, and especially his love and devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa. I was very lazy in the matter of cooking, but he would get up and have ready."

Dr. Misra liked the fact that Prabhupāda, cooking with the precision of a chemist, would prepare many dishes, and that he had a gusto for eating. "It was not bread he gave me," Dr. Misra

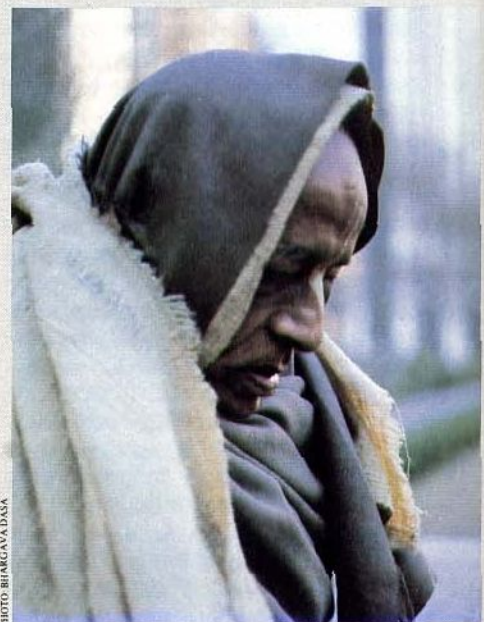
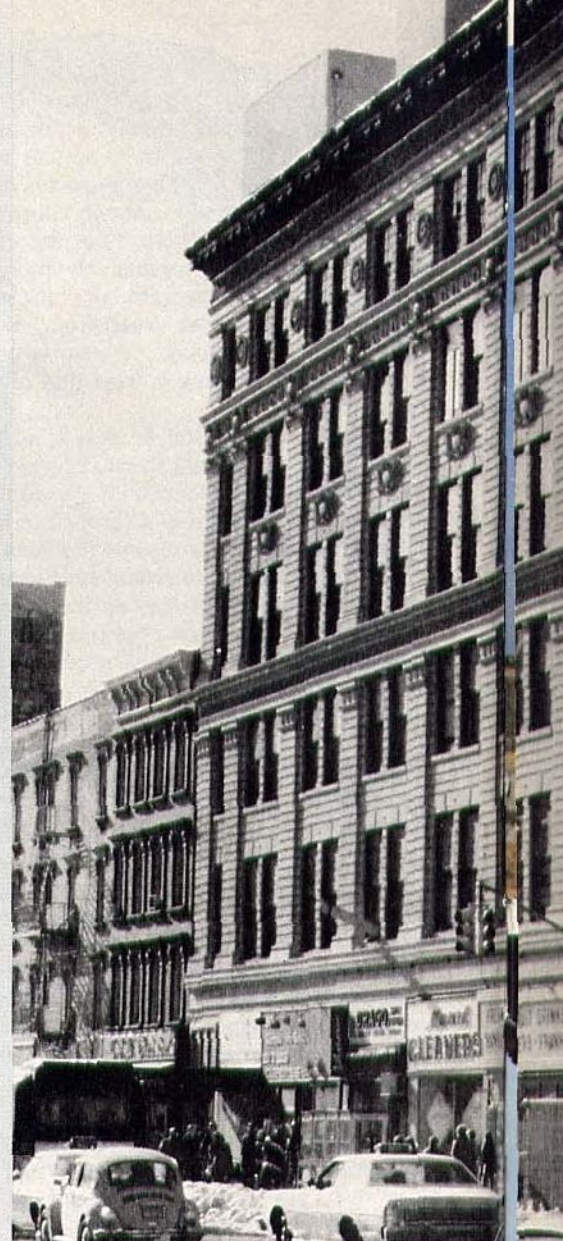


PHOTO: BHINJAVADASA



remembers. "He gave me *prasāda* [the mercy of Kṛṣṇa]. This was life, and he saved my life. At that time I was not sure I would live, but his habit to eat on time, whether I was hungry or not—that I very much liked. He'd get up and say, 'All right, this is *bhagavat-prasāda* [the mercy of the Supreme Lord],' and I would say, 'All right.'"

Joan Suval, an old student of Dr. Misra's, remembers seeing Śrīla Prabhupāda and her teacher together at the Riverside Drive apartment.

I have a memory of Svāmījī as a "child" in the sense of his being very innocent, a very simple person, very pure. The impression I have from Dr. Misra is that he [Dr. Misra] regarded him as a father figure who was kindly and good. But basically the words most often used referring to Svāmījī were "like a child," meaning that he was simple in a classical, beautiful sense. Dr. Misra mentioned to me when I was first introduced to Svāmījī that he was a very holy man, very religious, rapt in God consciousness.

Svāmījī was very sweet. I myself remember him as a very, very good man, even in the practical details of living in New York, which involved him very much because he was a practical man and was looking for the best place to begin his work. I remember very well that he was very careful about washing his clothes out every night. I would come in and find a group of students in the living area of Dr. Misra's apartment, but in the bathroom were hung Svāmījī's orange robes, which he carefully prepared every night.

When Dr. Misra asked Śrīla Prabhupāda about the aim of his visit to America, Śrīla Prabhupāda expressed his spiritual master's vision of preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the West, and he requested Dr. Misra to help him. But Dr. Misra replied that he was very busy with his own teaching and that in fact he was planning to leave the country. After a few weeks, when it became inconvenient for Dr. Misra to maintain Śrīla Prabhupāda at the apartment, he shifted Śrīla Prabhupāda to his *haṭha-yoga* studio on the fifth floor at 100 West Seventy-second Street, near Columbus Avenue. Located in the center of the building, with no windows, this large studio included an office and an adjoining private room, which is where Śrīla Prabhupāda stayed.

Philosophically, Dr. Misra was at

For a while Śrīla Prabhupāda (far left) lived in this building (top), in a windowless fifth-floor room. Often he would walk down Seventy-second Street to the West End Superette (left) and buy produce and spices.



complete odds with Śrīla Prabhupāda. According to the Vedic literatures, the Absolute Truth is known in three aspects—as the impersonal Brahman, as the Paramātmā (the form of the Lord seen in the heart by mystic yogīs), and as Śrī Bhagavān (the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa). As a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Prabhupāda accepted the *Bhagavad-gītā*'s statement that Bhagavān is the highest aspect of the Absolute Truth. The *Gītā* (14.27) declares that the impersonal, all-pervading Brahman is subordinate to Bhagavān and is an emanation from Him, just as the sunshine is an emanation from the sun.

That the realization of Bhagavān is the supreme conclusion of the *Vedas* is accepted by all the leading *ācāryas* (saintly teachers) of ancient India, such as Rāmānuja and Madhva, and Śrīla Prabhupāda was coming in disciplic succession from them. Dr. Misra, on the other hand, followed Śāṅkara, who taught that the impersonal presence of the Absolute Truth is the all in all and that the Personality of Godhead is ultimately an illusion. According to this view, the spiritual self (*ātmā*) is not individual. Rather, each person is identical with God, the Supreme Brahman, and there is no need of worshipping the Supreme Lord, as do *bhakti-yogīs*. In other words, as Dr. Misra would put it, "Everything is one."

Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, challenged this idea. "If each of us is actually the same Supreme," he would say, "then why is this 'Supreme' now struggling in the material world?" When Dr. Misra would answer that the Supreme is temporarily covered by illusion but can become enlightened by *haṭha-yoga* and meditation and some day come to know that "it is all Supreme," Śrīla Prabhupāda would again challenge him. "If we are nondifferent from the Supreme," he would say, "then how can we be covered, even temporarily, by illusion? If the Supreme were covered by *māyā*, this would mean that illusion is greater than God, greater than the Supreme—and that is absurd." Śrīla Prabhupāda considered Dr. Misra a "Māyāvādī," a name the Vaiṣṇavas use to refer to impersonalists and at the same time point out the flaw in their philosophy. Because the impersonalist philosophers deny the supremacy of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and inadvertently assert that *māyā*, illusion, is greater than the Absolute, the Vaiṣṇavas refer to them as Māyāvādīs (followers of *māyā*, spokesmen of illusion).

Śrīla Prabhupāda pointed out that in *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa clearly refutes

the Māyāvādī conclusion. "Unintelligent men who know Me not," Kṛṣṇa says, "think that I have assumed this form and personality. Due to their small knowledge, they do not know My higher nature, which is changeless and supreme. . . . Fools deride Me when I appear in this human form. They do not know My transcendental nature and My supreme dominion over all that be." (Bg. 7.24, 9.11) Lord Caitanya also strongly refuted the Māyāvādīs. He said, "Everything about the Supreme Person-

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ality of Godhead is spiritual, including His body, opulence, and paraphernalia. Māyāvādī philosophy, however, covers His spiritual opulence and advocates the theory of impersonalism."

By 1965 Śrīla Prabhupāda had already written volumes of commentary on *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in which he had thoroughly discussed the distinction between the Vaiṣṇava and Māyāvādī philosophies. In his purports to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* he had written, "The ambitious Māyāvādī philosophers desire to merge into the existence of the Lord. This form of *mukti* (liberation) means denying one's individual existence. In other words it is a kind of spiritual suicide. This is absolutely opposed to the philosophy of *bhakti-yoga*. *Bhakti-yoga* offers immortality to the individual conditioned soul. If one follows the Māyāvādī philosophy he misses his opportunity to become immortal after giving up the material body." In the words of Lord Caitanya, *māyāvādī kṛṣṇe aparādhī*: "Māyāvādī impersonalists are great offenders unto Lord Kṛṣṇa." Thus Lord Caitanya had concluded that if one hears the commentary of Śāṅkara, one's entire spiritual life is spoiled.

As a mendicant with no followers or residence, Śrīla Prabhupāda was temporarily dependent on the good will of his Māyāvādī acquaintance, with whom he regularly ate and conversed and from whom he accepted his shelter. But what a great inconvenience it was to the pure Vaiṣṇava! He who had come to America to speak purely and boldly about Kṛṣṇa found himself again in a situation in which he could not really discourse. Whereas in Butler, Pennsylvania, he had been confined by his hosts' middle-class materialistic sensibilities, now he was silenced in a different way: though treated kindly, he was considered a threat. Dr. Misra could not allow his students to hear the exclusive praise of Lord Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

According to Dr. Misra, Śrīla Prabhupāda was busy most of the time typing in his room, but would sometimes come out and give a lecture or lead *kīrtana* (congregational chanting). A boy named Robert Nelson, perhaps the first young sympathizer Śrīla Prabhupāda met in New York, had his own impression of Śrīla Prabhupāda's presence in Dr. Misra's *yoga* society.

I first went to Dr. Misra's service, and Dr. Misra talked. Prabhupāda was sitting on a bench, and then all of a sudden Dr. Misra stops the service and gets a big smile and says, "Svāmījī will sing us a song." But I think Misra wouldn't let him speak. Somebody told me Dr. Misra didn't want him to preach.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had his own reminiscences. "I used to sit in the back and listen to his meetings silently. He was speaking all impersonal nonsense, but I kept my silence. Then one day he asked if I would like to speak, and I spoke about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I challenged that he was speaking manufactured philosophy and all nonsense from Śāṅkarācārya. He tried to back out and said it was not him who was speaking but Śāṅkarācārya. I said, 'You are representing him. That is the same thing.' He then said to me, 'Svāmījī, I like you very much, but you cannot speak here.' But although our philosophies differed and he would not let me speak, he was kind, and I was nice to him."

Lord Caitanya warned Vaiṣṇavas never to hear from an impersonalist, yet there was no danger of Śrīla Prabhupāda's being converted or contaminated by impersonalistic thought. Rather, it was the impersonalist who would be affected by tasting *kṛṣṇa-prasāda*.

To see students submissively listening to a speaker who denied the Personality

of Godhead was certainly painful to the pure devotee. Still, what was the alternative? Was he to go homeless and beg for food in the streets? This might have been acceptable behavior for wandering *sannyāsīs* in Indian villages, but it was impossible in Manhattan. So for the time being, Śrīla Prabhupāda accepted the arrangement provided by Kṛṣṇa. He carried America's future Kṛṣṇa consciousness within himself, a baby yet to be born, a bomb about to go off. The *Bhagavad-gītā* had been read for thousands of years in India and hundreds of years in the West (it had been admired by Emerson and Thoreau), and now it was being preached in New York (by Māyāvādīs, who didn't believe in Kṛṣṇa), but the real *Gītā* had yet to be spoken. Americans had not heard the real message of Kṛṣṇa—as it is—and Śrīla Prabhupāda fervently desired to speak it, as ordered by his spiritual master. But he had to struggle and wait.

On weekends Śrīla Prabhupāda would accompany Dr. Misra to his Ananda Ashram in Monroe, New York, an hour's drive north. Joan Suval, who used to drive them, remembers the two *sannyāsīs* holding animated conversations in the back seat of her car. Although she could not understand their Hindi, she could hear their discussions turn into loud, shouting arguments. But afterwards, she said, they would again become friends.

On many occasions, Prabhupāda would ask Dr. Misra to take part in spreading Lord Caitanya's movement, but Dr. Misra would sidestep Prabhupāda by saying that he considered him an incarnation of Caitanya Mahāprabhu and therefore not in need of help. Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, would say that since Misra was the name of Lord Caitanya's father, Dr. Misra should help spread Lord Caitanya's movement. Śrīla Prabhupāda offered to engage him in checking the Sanskrit to his translations of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and Dr. Misra now says he repents that he did not take up the offer.

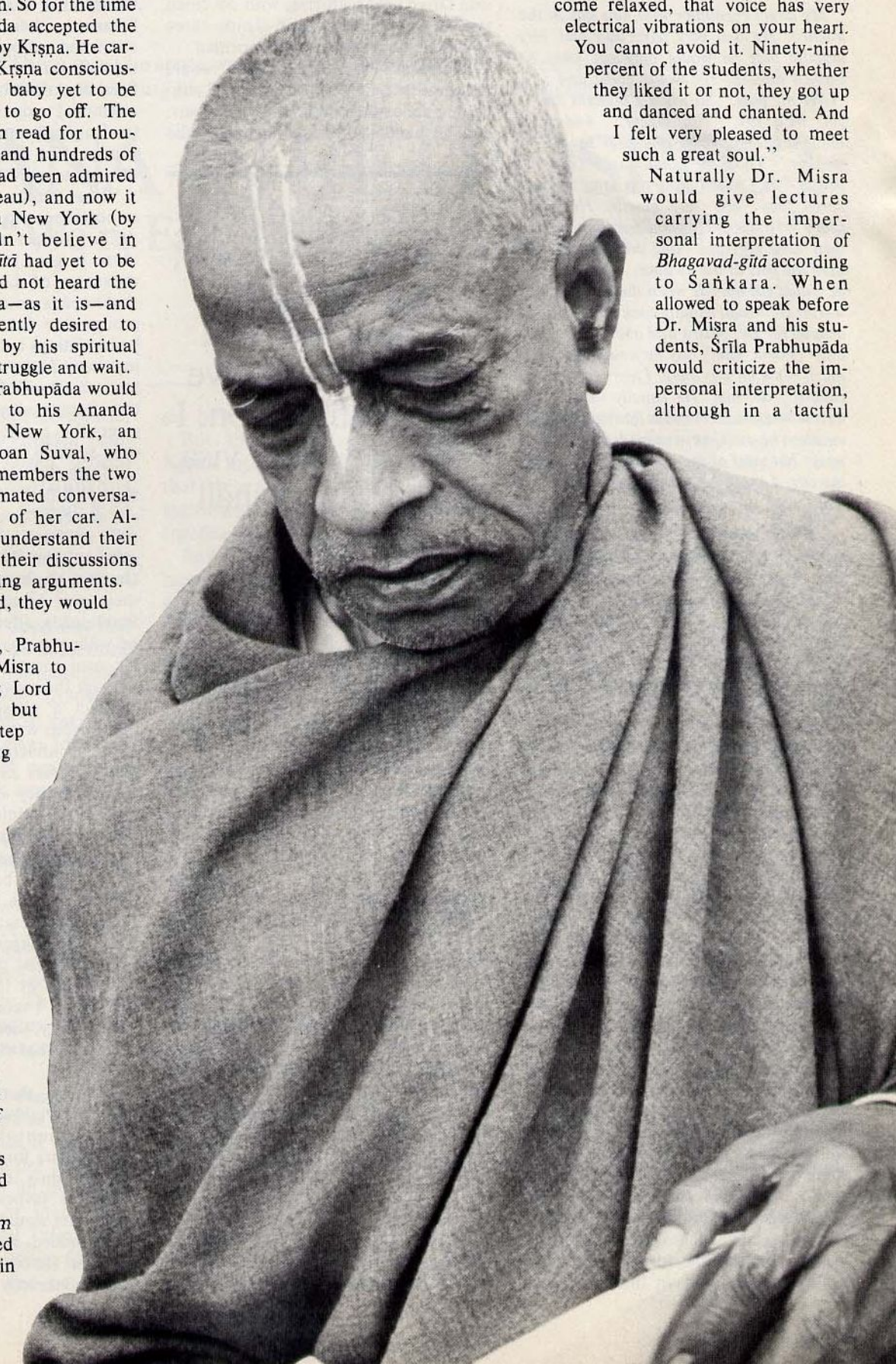
The Ananda Ashram lies in a peaceful wooded setting of sixty acres in

the foothills of the Catskill Mountains. The place includes a lake with an island. Whenever Śrīla Prabhupāda would go to the *āśrama*, he would hold *kīrtana*, and the *yoga* students would join him in

chanting and even dancing. Dr. Misra was particularly fond of Śrīla Prabhupāda's chanting. "I have never seen or met any devotee who sang so much," Dr. Misra says. "And his *kīrtana* was just ambrosial. If you pay attention and become relaxed, that voice has very electrical vibrations on your heart.

You cannot avoid it. Ninety-nine percent of the students, whether they liked it or not, they got up and danced and chanted. And I felt very pleased to meet such a great soul."

Naturally Dr. Misra would give lectures carrying the impersonal interpretation of *Bhagavad-gītā* according to Śaṅkara. When allowed to speak before Dr. Misra and his students, Śrīla Prabhupāda would criticize the impersonal interpretation, although in a tactful



way, describing it as “the beginning step in appreciating the Supreme Person.”

Hurta Lurch, a woman who attended the Ananda Ashram when Śrīla Prabhupāda was visiting, recalls his presence there.

My direct encounter with him was in the kitchen. He was very particular and very definite that he would only eat what he cooked himself. He would come and say, “Give me pots.” So when I brought him a pot, he’d say, “No, bigger.” And so I brought a bigger pot, and he’d say, “No, smaller.” Than he would say, “Give me potato,” so I would bring a potato. He prepared food very, very quietly. He never spoke very much. He prepared potatoes and then some vegetables and then capatis. He used the pots at the āśrama. After cooking, he would eat outside when the weather was warm. He would usually cook enough to go around for Dr. Misra and about five or six other people. Every day he would cook that much when he was there. I learned to make capatis from him. He usually stayed only for the weekends. Perhaps during the warm weather he may have stayed for a whole week, but most of the time he went back to the city. I think he felt that was where his main work was to be done.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s work was certainly in the city, but what could he do there with no money or support? He was thinking of staying for only a few weeks and then going back to India. In the meantime, he spent most of his hours working on his *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* manuscripts, writing letters, and walking in Manhattan.

Since Dr. Misra’s studio had no cooking facilities, Śrīla Prabhupāda had to walk daily about seven blocks to cook in the kitchen of Dr. Misra’s Riverside Drive apartment. He would walk north on Columbus Avenue amid a steady flow of pedestrians. As he stopped at each intersection, he could feel the sweeping breeze from the Hudson. Instead of the small-town scenery of Butler, Pennsylvania, he first passed by a section of thirty-story office buildings on Columbus Avenue. On the street level were shoe repair shops, candy stores, laundries, and continental restaurants. The upper stories held the professional suites of doctors, dentists, and lawyers. At Seventy-fifth Street, Śrīla Prabhupāda would turn west and walk through a neighborhood of brownstone apartments whose entranceways were three or four steps below street level. Then he would cross Amsterdam and come to Broadway. Here a thin strip of park area where old men sat on benches separated Broadway’s northbound and southbound traffic. The greenery in this area could

more accurately be described as “blackery,” since it was covered with soot and city grime. Here Broadway displayed produce shops and butcher shops whose stands extended onto the sidewalk. The last block toward Riverside Drive held high-rises with doormen standing at the entrances. Thirty-three Riverside Drive also had a doorman.

Sometimes Śrīla Prabhupāda would walk in Riverside Park. He was still concerned about the condition of his heart, and he liked the long stretches of flat

“I see a good field for work,” he wrote, “but I am alone, without men and money. If I receive your confirmation, I shall extend my visa. Otherwise, I shall return to India immediately.”

walking area in that park. Besides the daily walk to and from Dr. Misra’s apartment, Śrīla Prabhupāda frequently walked from Dr. Misra’s studio down Seventy-second Street to Amsterdam Avenue, where the West End Superette is located. There, with what little money he had gathered, Śrīla Prabhupāda would sometimes buy produce and spices for his cooking. On other occasions he would wander through the streets of Manhattan without any set direction or sometimes take buses to different areas of the city.

He had been in New York for a month and a half, without money or any support but Dr. Misra’s. Cooking and distributing *prasāda* to the Māyāvādīs was surely a kind of preaching, but he could not regard it as an engagement serious enough to keep him in America. Time was passing, with no great result, and his return to India seemed inevitable. But although he did not have a home or headquarters, he did have an impressive-sounding New York City address—“Studio 51, 100 West 72nd St., New York City.” He began writing letters to India.

On November 8 he wrote Tīrtha

Mahārāja, his Godbrother, who had become president of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, the institution formed by Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Typing on a small manual machine while the city roared around him, he reminded his Godbrother that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, their spiritual master, had cherished a strong desire to open preaching centers in the Western countries. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta had several times attempted to do this by sending *sannyāsīs* to England and other countries in Europe, but, Prabhupāda noted, “without any tangible results.”

“I have come to this country with the same purpose in view,” he wrote, “and as far as I can see it, here in America there is good scope for preaching the message of Lord Caitanya.” Śrīla Prabhupāda pointed out that Māyāvādī groups like the Ramakrishna Mission had buildings but were really not attracting many followers. He reported that he had talked with Swami Nikhilananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, who had given the opinion that the Americans were suitable for *bhakti-yoga*.

“I am here and see a good field for work,” Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote, “but I am alone, without men and money. To start a center here, we must have our own building.” If the leaders of the Gauḍīya Maṭha would consider opening their own branch in New York, Śrīla Prabhupāda offered, he himself would be willing to manage it. Speaking from his own experience, he reported that without their own house they could not conduct a mission in the city. Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote to convince them, citing his confidence that they could open many centers in cities throughout the country if they agreed to cooperate. He repeatedly pointed out that although other groups did not have the genuine spiritual philosophy of India, they were buying many buildings, whereas the Gauḍīya Maṭha had nothing. “If you agree to cooperate with me,” he wrote, “as I have suggested above, then I shall extend my visa period. My present visa period ends by the end of this November. But if I receive your confirmation immediately, then I shall extend my visa period. Otherwise I shall return to India.”

Although there were many reasons why Śrīla Prabhupāda could expect disappointment in approaching his Godbrothers for support, he thought it was their duty to help him. But if he did not get a favorable response soon, it seemed he would have to give up trying to introduce Kṛṣṇa consciousness in America. He could not go on struggling alone indefinitely.

“There must be some way to verify—before one dedicates oneself—that one is not wasting his time and money, or perhaps even risking his life.”

GUYANA IN RETROSPECT

“We’re Easy Targets for Cheaters”

by JAYĀDVAITA SVĀMĪ

The bizarre mass suicide-murder of 913 members of the Peoples Temple in Guyana has raised serious questions about unscrupulous religious leaders who exploit their followers, stripping their souls and pockets bare and sometimes leading them into sexual perversion, mental slavery, and even death.

Many citizens have cried out that the government must do something to stop these groups from manipulating and enslaving their followers. Pointing out that the most easy prey for such groups are naive, idealistic youth in the midst of personal or social perplexity, they urge that the government do something to protect vulnerable young people from ruthless psychological manipulation by quasi-religious cults.

The government replies that its hands are tied. We can’t discriminate between a religion and a cult, between a bona fide religion and a bogus one, the Justice Department says, without trampling on the First Amendment’s guarantees of religious liberty.

There are those who maintain that if we accept one religion as valid, we have to accept them all. If someone believes he’s God, or the Messiah, or the mouthpiece for all the Great Masters of eternity, or that taking drugs or having sexual intercourse with disciples is the highest form of religious expression, who are we to

say he’s wrong?

But the members of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement disagree. We say that while many forms of religion are legitimate, some are just out-and-out frauds.

But the essential question is, how—without falling into narrow sectarianism—are we to draw the line between spirituality and shysterism, between ecstasy and exploitation, between religion and rip-off?

What we are looking for here is an objective standard—a definite set of criteria—not something any holyman who comes to town can melt and bend and shift. The criteria must be broad enough to account for different religious practices, yet precise enough to exclude the cheats and charlatans.

What we propose is that every legitimate religious process must be governed by an authentic body of scripture. Now, which scripture one follows is less important. One may follow the Bible, the Koran, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, or any other authentic scriptural authority. (To insist on anything more exclusive would be needlessly sectarian.) But, to be truly religious, one must actually follow the scriptural path of the religion one professes.

Of course, the scripture one follows must be a standard scripture recognized by saintly teachers from the past, not a recent concoction. A

contemporary religious leader may express his own spiritual realizations, but these expressions, to be of spiritual value, must agree with the eternal truths revealed in the great traditional scriptures of the world.

At this point one may protest, why be so dogmatic? Why not admit new scriptures, new religions, new paths? In answer we say that religion is neither new nor old—it is eternal, just as God and our relationship with Him are eternal. To follow some self-proclaimed prophet on a newly discovered path is to invite oneself to be led into the woods and plundered. Of course, one is always free to gamble. But if one sincerely wants to reach God, one is best advised to follow a path traversed by the great souls of history who followed a reliable process of God realization and actually achieved success.

A further criterion is that the scripture must be followed without needless interpretation. To use a traditional scripture merely as a vehicle for one’s own recently manufactured doctrines or speculations is dishonest, and any philosopher or evangelist who does so should immediately be rejected. Let them at least have the honesty to write their own ideas in their own books. Scripture—to be meaningful—should be accepted as it is.

If we accept this simple standard—
(continued on page 24)

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

A Suicidal Civilization

This exchange between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples and guests took place during a morning walk on the Berkeley campus of the University of California, in July of 1975.

Guest: About a month ago, Śrīla Prabhupāda, there was a crazy story in the newspaper. It seems a young student went through the archives in the Washington, D.C., public library, and he compiled enough information to construct an atom bomb. So now many leaders are afraid that within a few years, any terrorist group will be able to make their own atom bomb.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, that may be. . . .

Guest: Oh, do you see that tower? Students here have been known to jump from it. Actually, at schools all over the country, a growing number of students are committing suicide.

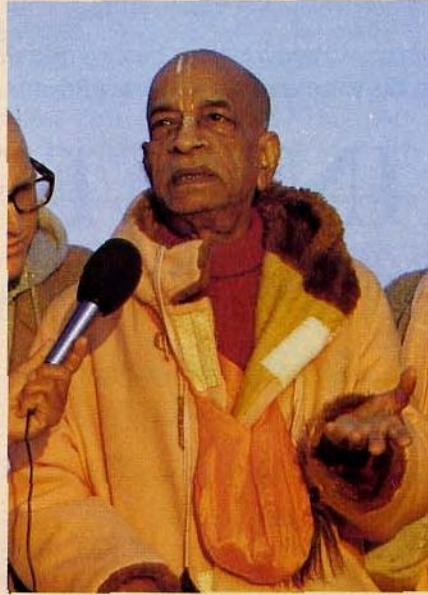
Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. They are openly committing suicide, and the rest of the people are covertly committing suicide. This man who found out how to construct an atom bomb—he's thinking that now his life is successful. But if he doesn't use his human life for trying to become spiritually realized, he is committing suicide.

Guest: How's that?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Because he won't be able to save himself from his own death and rebirth.

Guest: Interestingly enough, the scientists originally developed the atom bomb to prevent death—to end the Second World War as soon as possible.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: How can they prevent death? They do not know how to prevent it. They can accelerate it, that's all. Here is your problem, Mr. Scientist: *janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhi*—the cycle of birth, death, old age, and disease. Solve it! Where is the scientist who can do that? Instead they take some childish problem and try to avoid the real problem. But they cannot avoid it, because Kṛṣṇa puts it openly before everyone: *janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhi-duḥkha-doṣānudarśanam*—“The real seer will see to this problem of birth, death, old age, and disease.” But the scientists have no answer, no solution to this problem. Where is the biochemist or the psychologist or the nuclear physicist who can solve this problem?



Disciple: They have a theory nowadays that by the proliferation of atomic weapons—Russia has so many weapons, China has so many weapons, the United States has so many weapons—everyone will be afraid of using them.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: They will inevitably use them! That is nature's arrangement. “You all die”—that is nature's arrangement. For instance, in your country you have so many cars that even a poor man goes almost everywhere by car and hardly an inch on foot—because there are so many cars. So, because there are so many weapons now, they must be used. That is the natural sequence.

Guest: But every country knows that an atomic war would mean total destruction.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Well, total or partial—that we shall see. But the weapons will be used. . . . Everything can be solved by understanding these three items: God is the proprietor, He is the enjoyer, He is the friend of everyone. But the scientists and philosophers and politicians are acting with just the opposite understanding: “I am the proprietor, I am the enjoyer, I am the friend—because *I am God*.” You see? And everyone who says he's the people's friend ultimately proves to be their enemy. President Nixon collected votes by pretending to be a friend, and later on he proved an enemy. . . . Everyone. . . . Gandhi pretended to be a friend, but he proved to be an enemy. Otherwise, why was he shot down? Unless some people

regarded him as an enemy, why was he shot down? So nobody can be your actual friend, except Kṛṣṇa.

Disciple: But the Lord's pure devotee—he's also a friend to all. . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda:—Because he carries the message of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is everyone's friend, and the pure devotee is carrying the friend's message. Therefore he is a friend. If there is a nice friend, and if somebody gives information about that nice friend, he is also a friend. Therefore, nobody can be an actual friend except Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa's representative. Materialistic life means, “I am your enemy, and you are my enemy.” Envy and enmity—this is the whole construction of the material world. So how can the enemy become a friend? This is pretension, cheating.

Disciple: When we go out to distribute your books, we're letting people know that your disciples are actually their friends, also.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Oh, yes. That is real friendship. You are giving people the message of Lord Caitanya [Kṛṣṇa's most recent incarnation, who appeared in India five centuries ago]: *kota nidrā yāo māyā-piśācīra kole. . . enechi auśadhi māyā nāśibāra lāgi'* *hari-nāma mahā-mantra lao tumi māgi*: “People everywhere, you are sleeping under the spell of *māyā*, illusion. How long will you sleep and suffer in this world of death and rebirth? I've brought you this eternal, spiritual medicine. Take it and sleep no more.” *Hari-nāma mahā-mantra lao tumi māgi*: “Now take the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*—this is your medicine.”

Guest: So all the relationships within this material world are based on enmity? But the scientists and philosophers and politicians often speak highly of love.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is not love. That is lust—“As soon as my lusty desire is not fulfilled, then you are my enemy.”

Guest: Sometimes, though, it seems these people really have our best interests at heart.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Sometimes we see a dog swimming in the water, and we may think, “Oh, let me capture his tail and I shall cross.” Similarly, those who are thinking the so-called scientists and philosophers or any other materialistic person will solve their problems—it is exactly like trying to cross the Pacific Ocean by capturing the tail of a dog. 🐕

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 NINETEEN

The Appearance of Śukadeva Gosvāmī

In this part of our continuing presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, sages from all over the universe have gathered on the bank of the Ganges to witness the passing of King Parīkṣit, who has been cursed to die within seven days. Suddenly the great devotee Śukadeva Gosvāmī arrives.

TEXT 23

समागताः सर्वत एव सर्वे
वेदा यथा मूर्तिधरास्त्रिपृष्ठे ।
नेहाथनामुत्र च कश्चनार्थ
ऋते परानुग्रहमात्मशीलम् ॥२३॥

samāgatāḥ sarvata eva sarve
vedā yathā mūrti-dharāḥ tri-prṣṭhe
nehātha nāmutra ca kaścānārtha
rte parānugrahaṁ ātma-śīlam

samāgatāḥ—assembled; sarvataḥ—from all directions; eva—certainly; sarve—all of you; vedāḥ—supreme knowledge; yathā—as; mūrti-dharāḥ—personified; tri-prṣṭhe—on the planet of Brahmā (which is situated above the three planetary systems, namely the upper, intermediate and lower worlds); na—not; iha—in this world; atha—thereafter; na—nor; amutra—in the other world; ca—also; kaścana—any other; arthaḥ—interest; rte—save and except; para—others; anugrahaṁ—doing good to; ātma-śīlam—own nature.

TRANSLATION

The King said: O great sages, you have all very kindly assembled here, having come from all parts of the universe. You are all as good as supreme knowledge personified, who resides in the planet above the three worlds [Satyaloka]. Consequently you are naturally inclined to do good to others, and but for this you have no interest, either in this life or in the next.

PURPORT

Six kinds of opulences, namely wealth, strength, fame, beauty, knowledge and renunciation, are all originally the different attributes pertaining to the Absolute Personality of Godhead. The living beings, who are part-and-parcel entities of the Supreme Being, have all these attributes partially, up to the full strength of seventy-eight percent. In the material

world these attributes (up to seventy-eight percent of the Lord's attributes) are covered by the material energy, as the sun is covered by a cloud. The covered strength of the sun is very dim, compared to the original glare, and similarly the original color of the living beings with such attributes becomes almost extinct. There are three planetary systems, namely the lower worlds, the intermediate worlds and the upper worlds. The human beings on earth are situated at the beginning of the intermediate worlds, but living beings like Brahmā and his contemporaries live in the upper worlds, of which the topmost is Satyaloka. In Satyaloka the inhabitants are fully cognizant of Vedic wisdom, and thus the mystic cloud of material energy is cleared. Therefore they are known as the Vedas personified. Such persons, being fully aware of knowledge both mundane and transcendental, have no interest in either the mundane or transcendental worlds. They are practically desireless devotees. In the mundane world they have nothing to achieve, and in the transcendental world they are full in themselves. Then why do they come to the mundane world? They descend on different planets as messiahs by the order of the Lord to deliver the fallen souls. On the earth they come down and do good to the people of the world in different circumstances under different climatic influences. They have nothing to do in this world save and except reclaim the fallen souls rotting in material existence, deluded by material energy.

TEXT 24

ततश्च वः पृच्छयमिमं विपृच्छे
विश्रभ्य विप्रा इतिकृत्यतायाम् ।
सर्वात्मना म्रियमाणैश्च कृत्यं
शुद्धं च तत्रामृशताभियुक्ताः ॥२४॥

tataś ca vaḥ pṛcchyaṁ imaṁ vipṛcche
viśrabhya viprā iti kṛtyatāyām
sarvātmanā mriyamāṇaiś ca kṛtyaṁ
śuddhaṁ ca tatrāmṛśatābhīyuktāḥ

tataḥ—as such; ca—and; vaḥ—unto you; pṛcchyaṁ—that which is to be asked; imaṁ—this; vipṛcche—beg to ask you; viśrabhya—trustworthy; viprāḥ—brāhmaṇas; iti—thus; kṛtyatāyām—out of all different duties; sarva-ātmanā—by everyone; mriyamāṇaiḥ—especially those who are just about to die; ca—and; kṛtyaṁ—dutiful; śuddhaṁ—perfectly correct; ca—and; tatra—therein; amṛśata—by complete deliberation; abhīyuktāḥ—just befitting.

TRANSLATION

O trustworthy brāhmaṇas, I now ask you about my immediate duty. Please, after proper deliberation, tell me of the unalloyed duty of everyone in all circumstances, and specifically of those who are just about to die.

PURPORT

In this verse the King has placed two questions before the learned sages. The first question is what is the duty of everyone in all circumstances, and the second question is what is the specific duty of one who is to die very shortly. Out of the two, the question relating to the dying man is most important because everyone is a dying man, either very shortly or after one hundred years. The duration of life is immaterial, but the duty of a dying man is very important. Mahārāja Parikṣit placed these two questions before Śukadeva Gosvāmī also on his arrival, and practically the whole of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, beginning from the Second Canto up to the last Twelfth Canto, deals with these two questions. The conclusion arrived at thereof is that devotional service of the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as it is confirmed by the Lord Himself in the last phases of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, is the last word in relation to everyone's permanent duty in life. Mahārāja Parikṣit was already aware of this fact, but he wanted the great sages assembled there to unanimously give their verdict on his conviction so that he might be able to go on with his confirmed duty without controversy. He has especially mentioned the word *śuddha*, or perfectly correct. For transcendental realization or self-realization, many processes are recommended by various classes of philosophers. Some of them are first-class methods, and some of them are second- or third-class methods. The first-class method demands that one give up all other methods and surrender unto the lotus feet of the Lord and thus be saved from all sins and their reactions.

TEXT 25

तत्राभवद्भगवान् व्यासपुत्रो
यद्दृच्छया गामटमानोऽनपेक्षः ।
अलक्ष्यलिङ्गो निजलामतुष्टो
वृत्तश्च बालैरवधृतवेषः ॥२५॥

*tatrābhavad bhagavān vyāsa-putro
yadr̥ccchayā gām aṭamāno 'napekṣaḥ
alakṣya-liṅgo nija-lābha-tuṣṭo
vṛtaś ca bālair avadhṛta-veṣaḥ*

tatra—there; *abhavat*—appeared; *bhagavān*—powerful; *vyāsa-putraḥ*—son of Vyāsadeva; *yadr̥ccchayā*—as one desires; *gām*—the earth; *aṭamānaḥ*—while traveling; *anapekṣaḥ*—disinterested; *alakṣya*—unmanifested; *liṅgaḥ*—symptoms; *nija-lābha*—self-realized; *tuṣṭaḥ*—satisfied; *vṛtaḥ*—surrounded; *ca*—and; *bālaiḥ*—by children; *avadhṛta*—neglected by others; *veṣaḥ*—dressed.

TRANSLATION

At that moment there appeared the powerful son of Vyāsadeva, who traveled over the earth disinterested and satisfied with himself. He did not manifest any symptoms of belonging to any social order or status of life. He was surrounded with women and children, and he dressed as if others had neglected him.

PURPORT

The word *bhagavān* is sometimes used in relation with some of the great devotees of the Lord, like Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Such liberated souls are disinterested in the affairs of this material world because they are self-satisfied by the great achievements of devotional service. As explained before, Śukadeva Gosvāmī never accepted any formal spiritual master, nor did he undergo any formal reformatory performances. His father, Vyāsadeva, was his natural spiritual master because Śukadeva Gosvāmī heard *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from him. After this, he became completely self-satisfied. Thus he was not dependent on any formal process. The formal processes are necessary for those who are expected to reach the stage of complete liberation, but Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī was already in that status by the grace of his father. As a young boy he was

expected to be properly dressed, but he went about naked and was uninterested in social customs. He was neglected by the general populace, and inquisitive boys and women surrounded him as if he were a madman. He thus appears on the scene while traveling on the earth of his own accord. It appears that upon the inquiry of Mahārāja Parikṣit, the great sages were not unanimous in their decision as to what was to be done. For spiritual salvation there were many prescriptions according to the different modes of different persons. But the ultimate aim of life is to attain the highest perfectional stage of devotional service to the Lord. As doctors differ, so also sages differ in their different prescriptions. While such things were going on, the great and powerful son of Vyāsadeva appeared on the scene.

TEXT 26

तं द्व्यष्टवर्षं सुकुमारपाद-
करोरुबाह्वंसकपोलगात्रम् ।
चार्वार्यिताशोभसतुल्यकर्ण-
सुभ्राननं कम्बुसुजातकण्ठम् ॥२६॥

*taṁ dvyāṣṭa-varṣaṁ su-kumāra-pāda-
karoru-bāhv-amsa-kapola-gātram
cārv-āyatākṣonnasa-tulya-karṇa-
subhru-ānanaṁ kambu-sujāta-kaṇṭham*

taṁ—him; *dvi-āṣṭa*—sixteen; *varṣaṁ*—years; *su-kumāra*—delicate; *pāda*—legs; *kara*—hands; *ūru*—thighs; *bāhu*—arms; *amsa*—shoulders; *kapola*—forehead; *gātram*—body; *cāru*—beautiful; *āyata*—broad; *akṣa*—eyes; *unnasa*—high nose; *tulya*—similar; *karṇa*—ears; *subhru*—nice brows; *ānanaṁ*—face; *kambu*—conchshell; *sujāta*—nicely built; *kaṇṭham*—neck.

TRANSLATION

This son of Vyāsadeva was only sixteen years old. His legs, hands, thighs, arms, shoulders, forehead and the other parts of his body were all delicately formed. His eyes were beautifully wide, and his nose and ears were highly raised. He had a very attractive face, and his neck was well formed and beautiful like a conchshell.

PURPORT

A respectable personality is described beginning with the legs, and this honored system is observed here with Śukadeva Gosvāmī. He was only sixteen years of age. A person is honored for his achievements and not for advanced age. A person can be older by experience and not by age. Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who is described herein as the son of Vyāsadeva, was by his knowledge more experienced than all the sages present there, although he was only sixteen years old.

TEXT 27

निगूढजत्रुं पृथुतुङ्गवक्षस-
मावर्तनाभिं वलिवल्गुदरं च ।
दिगम्बरं वक्त्रविकीर्णकेशं
प्रलम्बबाहुं स्वमरोत्तमामम् ॥२७॥

*nigūḍha-jatruṁ pṛthu-tuṅga-vakṣasaḥ
āvarta-nābhiṁ vali-valgūdaraṁ ca
dig-ambaraṁ vaktra-vikīrṇa-keśaṁ
pralamba-bāhuṁ svamarottamābham*

nigūḍha—covered; *jatrum*—collarbone; *pṛthu*—broad; *tuṅga*—swollen; *vakṣasaḥ*—chest; *āvarta*—whirled; *nābhiḥ*—navel; *vali-*

valgu—striped; *udaram*—abdomen; *ca*—also; *dik-ambaram*—dressed by all directions (naked); *vaktra*—curled; *vikīrṇa*—scattered; *keśam*—hair; *pralamba*—elongated; *bāhum*—hands; *su-amara-uttama*—the best among the gods (Kṛṣṇa); *ābham*—hue.

TRANSLATION

His collarbone was fleshy, his chest broad and thick, his navel deep and his abdomen beautifully striped. His arms were long, and curly hair was strewn over his beautiful face. He was naked, and the hue of his body reflected that of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

PURPORT

His bodily features indicate him to be different from common men. All the signs described in connection with the bodily features of Śukadeva Gosvāmī are uncommon symptoms, typical of great personalities, according to physiognomical calculations. His bodily hue resembled that of Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is the supreme among the gods, demigods and all living beings.

TEXT 28

श्यामं सदापीव्यवयोऽङ्गलक्ष्म्या
स्त्रीणां मनोज्ञं रुचिरस्मितेन ।
प्रत्युत्थितास्ते मुनयः स्वासनेभ्य-
स्तल्लक्षणज्ञा अपि गूढवर्चसम् ॥२८॥

śyāmam sadāpīvya-vayo-ṅga-lakṣmyā
strīṇāṁ mano-jñam rucira-smītena
pratyutthitās te munayaḥ svāsanebhyas
tal-lakṣaṇa-jñā api gūḍha-varcasam

śyāmam—blackish; *sadā*—always; *apīvya*—excessively; *vayah*—age; *aṅga*—symptoms; *lakṣmyā*—by the opulence of; *strīṇām*—of the fair sex; *manah-jñam*—attractive; *rucira*—beautiful; *smītena*—smiling; *pratyutthitāḥ*—stood up; *te*—all of them; *munayaḥ*—the great sages; *sva*—own; *āsanebhyaḥ*—from the seats; *tat*—those; *lakṣaṇa-jñāḥ*—expert in the art of physiognomy; *api*—even; *gūḍha-varcasam*—covered glories.

TRANSLATION

He was blackish and very beautiful due to his youth. Because of the glamor of his body and his attractive smiles, he was pleasing to women. Though he tried to cover his natural glories, the great sages present there were all expert in the art of physiognomy, and so they honored him by rising from their seats.

TEXT 29

स विष्णुरातोऽतिथय आगताय
तस्मै सपर्या शिरसःअहार ।
ततो निवृत्ता ह्यबुधाः स्त्रियोऽर्भका
महासने सोपविवेश पूजितः ॥२९॥

sa viṣṇu-rāto 'tithaya āgatāya
tasmai saparyāṁ śirasājahāra
tato nivṛtāḥ hy abudhāḥ striyo 'rbhakā
mahāsane sopaviveśa pūjitaḥ

saḥ—he; *viṣṇu-rātaḥ*—Mahārāja Parikṣit (who is always protected by Lord Viṣṇu); *atithaye*—to become a guest; *āgatāya*—one who arrived there; *tasmai*—unto him; *saparyāṁ*—with the whole body; *śirasā*—with bowed head; *ajahāra*—offered obeisances; *tataḥ*—thereafter; *nivṛtāḥ*—ceased; *hi*—certainly; *abudhāḥ*—less intelligent; *striyaḥ*—

women; *arbhakāḥ*—boys; *mahā-āsane*—exalted seat; *sa*—he; *upaviveśa*—sat down; *pūjitaḥ*—being respected.

TRANSLATION

Mahārāja Parikṣit, who is also known as Viṣṇurāta [one who is always protected by Viṣṇu], bowed his head to receive the chief guest, Śukadeva Gosvāmī. At that time all the ignorant women and boys ceased following Śrīla Śukadeva. Receiving respect from all, Śukadeva Gosvāmī took his exalted seat.

PURPORT

On Śukadeva Gosvāmī's arrival at the meeting, everyone, except Śrīla Vyāsadeva, Nārada and a few others, stood up, and Mahārāja Parikṣit, who was glad to receive a great devotee of the Lord, bowed down before him with all the limbs of his body. Śukadeva Gosvāmī also exchanged the greetings and reception by embrace, shaking of hands, nodding and bowing down, especially before his father and Nārada Muni. Thus he was offered the presidential seat at the meeting. When he was so received by the king and sages, the street boys and less intelligent women who followed him were struck with wonder and fear. So they retired from their frivolous activities, and everything was full of gravity and calm.

TEXT 30

स संवृतसत्र महान् महीयसां
ब्रह्मर्षिराजर्षिर्देवर्षिसङ्घैः ।
व्यरोचतालं भगवान् यथेन्दु-
र्ग्रहर्क्षतारानिकरैः परीतः ॥३०॥

sa saṁvṛtas tatra mahān mahīyasāṁ
brahmarṣi-rājarṣi-devarṣi-saṅghaiḥ
vyarocataḥ bhagavān yathendur
graharkṣa-tārā-nikaraiḥ parītaḥ

saḥ—Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī; *saṁvṛtaḥ*—surrounded by; *tatra*—there; *mahān*—great; *mahīyasām*—of the greatest; *brahmarṣi*—saint among the brāhmanas; *rājarṣi*—saint among the kings; *devarṣi*—saint among the demigods; *saṅghaiḥ*—by the assembly of; *vyarocata*—well deserved; *alam*—able; *bhagavān*—powerful; *yathā*—as; *induh*—the moon; *graha*—planets; *rkṣa*—heavenly bodies; *tārā*—stars; *nikaraiḥ*—by the assembly of; *parītaḥ*—surrounded by.

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī was then surrounded by saintly sages and demigods just as the moon is surrounded by stars, planets and other heavenly bodies. His presence was gorgeous, and he was respected by all.

PURPORT

In the great assembly of saintly personalities, there was Vyāsadeva the *brahmarṣi*, Nārada the *devarṣi*, Paraśurāma the great ruler of the *ksatriya* kings, etc. Some of them were powerful incarnations of the Lord. Śukadeva Gosvāmī was not known as *brahmarṣi*, *rājarṣi* or *devarṣi*, nor was he an incarnation like Nārada, Vyāsa or Paraśurāma. And yet he excelled them in respects paid. This means that the devotee of the Lord is more honored in the world than the Lord Himself. One should therefore never minimize the importance of a devotee like Śukadeva Gosvāmī.

TEXT 31

प्रशान्तमासीनमकुण्ठमेधसं
मुनिं नृपो भागवतोऽभ्युपेत्य ।

प्रणम्य मूर्ध्नावहितः कृताञ्जलि-
नत्वा गिरा सुनृतयान्वपृच्छत् ॥३१॥

*praśāntam āsinam akunṭha-medhasaṁ
munim nṛpo bhāgavato 'bhyupetya
pranamyā mūrdhnāvahitaḥ kṛtāñjaliḥ
natvā girā sunṛtayānvapṛcchat*

praśāntam—perfectly pacified; *āsinam*—sitting; *akunṭha*—without hesitation; *medhasam*—one who has sufficient intelligence; *munim*—unto the great sage; *nṛpaḥ*—the King (Mahārāja Parikṣit); *bhāgavataḥ*—the great devotee; *abhyupetya*—approaching him; *pranamyā*—bowing down; *mūrdhnā*—his head; *avahitaḥ*—properly; *kṛta-añjaliḥ*—with folded hands; *natvā*—politely, *girā*—by words; *sunṛtayā*—in sweet voices; *anvavṛcchat*—inquired.

TRANSLATION

The sage Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī sat perfectly pacified, intelligent and ready to answer any question without hesitation. The great devotee, Mahārāja Parikṣit, approached him, offered his respects by bowing before him, and politely inquired with sweet words and folded hands.

PURPORT

The gesture now adopted by Mahārāja Parikṣit of questioning a master is quite befitting in terms of scriptural injunctions. The scriptural injunction is that one should humbly approach a spiritual master to understand the transcendental science. Mahārāja Parikṣit was now prepared for meeting his death, and within the very short time of seven days he was to know the process of entering the kingdom of God. In such important cases, one is required to approach a spiritual master. There is no necessity of approaching a spiritual master unless one is in need of solving the problems of life. One who does not know how to put questions before the spiritual master has no business seeing him. And the qualification of the spiritual master is perfectly manifested in the person of Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Both the spiritual master and the disciple, namely Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī and Mahārāja Parikṣit, attained perfection through the medium of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Śukadeva Gosvāmī learned *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from his father, Vyāsadeva, but he had no chance to recite it. Before Mahārāja Parikṣit he recited *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and answered the questions of Mahārāja Parikṣit unhesitatingly, and thus both the master and the disciple got salvation.

TEXT 32

परीक्षितुवाच

अहो अद्य वयं ब्रह्मन् सत्सेव्याः क्षत्रबन्धवः ।
कृपयातिथिरूपेण भवद्भिस्तीर्थकाः कृताः ॥३२॥

*parikṣid uvāca
aho adya vyaṁ brahman
sat-sevyāḥ kṣatra-bandhavaḥ
kṛpayātiṭhi-rūpeṇa
bhavadbhis tīrthakāḥ kṛtāḥ*

parikṣit uvāca—the fortunate Mahārāja Parikṣit said; *aho*—ah; *adya*—today; *vayaṁ*—we; *brahman*—O brāhmaṇa; *sat-sevyāḥ*—eligible to serve the devotee; *kṣatra*—the ruling class; *bandhavaḥ*—friends; *kṛpayā*—by your mercy; *atiṭhi-rūpeṇa*—in the manner of a guest; *bhavadbhiḥ*—by your good self; *tīrthakāḥ*—qualified for being places of pilgrimage; *kṛtāḥ*—done by you.

TRANSLATION

The fortunate King Parikṣit said: O brāhmaṇa, by your mercy only, you have sanctified us, making us like unto places of

pilgrimage, all by your presence here as my guest. By your mercy, we, who are but unworthy royalty, become eligible to serve the devotee.

PURPORT

Saintly devotees like Śukadeva Gosvāmī generally do not approach worldly enjoyers, especially those in royal orders. Mahārāja Pratāparudra was a follower of Lord Caitanya, but when he wanted to see the Lord, the Lord refused to see him because he was a king. For a devotee who desires to go back to Godhead, two things are strictly prohibited: worldly enjoyers and women. Therefore, devotees of the standard of Śukadeva Gosvāmī are never interested in seeing kings. Mahārāja Parikṣit was, of course, a different case. He was a great devotee, although a king, and therefore Śukadeva Gosvāmī came to see him in his last stage of life. Mahārāja Parikṣit, out of his devotional humility, felt himself an unworthy descendant of his great kṣatriya forefathers, although he was as great as his predecessors. The unworthy sons of the royal orders are called *kṣatra-bandhavas*, as the unworthy sons of the brāhmaṇas are called *dvija-bandhus* or *brahma-bandhus*. Mahārāja Parikṣit was greatly encouraged by the presence of Śukadeva Gosvāmī. He felt himself sanctified by the presence of the great saint whose presence turns any place into a place of pilgrimage.

TEXT 33

येषां संस्मरणात् पुंसां सद्यः शुद्धयन्ति वै गृहाः ।
किं पुनर्दर्शनस्पर्शपादशौचासनादिभिः ॥३३॥

*yeṣāṁ saṁsmaraṇāt puṁsāṁ
sadyaḥ śuddhyanti vai gṛhāḥ
kiṁ punar darśana-sparśa-
pāda-śaucāsanādibhiḥ*

yeṣāṁ—of whom; *saṁsmaraṇāt*—by remembrance; *puṁsāṁ*—of a person; *sadyaḥ*—instantly; *śuddhyanti*—cleanses; *vai*—certainly; *gṛhāḥ*—all houses; *kiṁ*—what; *punaḥ*—then; *darśana*—meeting; *sparśa*—touching; *pāda*—the feet; *śauca*—washing; *āsana-ādibhiḥ*—by offering a seat, etc.

TRANSLATION

Simply by our remembering you, our houses become instantly sanctified. And what to speak of seeing you, touching you, washing your holy feet and offering you a seat in our home?

PURPORT

The importance of holy places of pilgrimage is due to the presence of great sages and saints. It is said that sinful persons go to the holy places and leave their sins there to accumulate. But the presence of the great saints disinfects the accumulated sins, and thus the holy places continue to remain sanctified by the grace of the devotees and saints present there. If such saints appear in the homes of worldly people, certainly the accumulated sins of such worldly enjoyers become neutralized. Therefore, the holy saints actually have no self-interest with the householders. The only aim of such saints is to sanctify the houses of the householders, and the householders therefore should feel grateful when such saints and sages appear at their doors. A householder who dishonors such holy orders is a great offender. It is enjoined, therefore, that a householder who does not bow down before a saint at once must undergo fasting for the day in order to neutralize the great offense.

TEXT 34

सान्निध्यात्ते महायोगिन्यात्कानि महान्त्यपि ।
सद्यो नश्यन्ति वै पुंसां विष्णोरिव सुरेतराः ॥३४॥

sānnidhyāt te mahā-yogin
pātakāni mahānti api
sadyo naśyanti vai puṁsām
viṣṇor iva suretarāḥ

sānnidhyāt—on account of the presence; *te*—your; *mahā-yogin*—O great mystic; *pātakāni*—sins; *mahānti*—invulnerable; *api*—in spite of; *sadyaḥ*—immediately; *naśyanti*—vanquished; *vai*—certainly; *puṁsām*—of a person; *viṣṇoḥ*—like the presence of the Personality of Godhead; *iva*—like; *sura-itarāḥ*—other than the demigods.

TRANSLATION

Just as the atheist cannot remain in the presence of the Personality of Godhead, so also the invulnerable sins of a man are immediately vanquished in your presence, O saint! O great mystic!

PURPORT

There are two classes of human beings, namely the atheist and the devotee of the Lord. The devotee of the Lord, because of manifesting godly qualities, is called a demigod, whereas the atheist is called a demon. The demon cannot stand the presence of Viṣṇu, the Personality of Godhead. The demons are always busy in trying to vanquish the Personality of Godhead, but factually as soon as the Personality of Godhead appears, by either His transcendental name, form, attributes, pastimes, paraphernalia or variegatedness, the demon is at once vanquished. It is said that a ghost cannot remain as soon as the holy name of the Lord is chanted. The great saints and devotees of the Lord are in the list of His paraphernalia, and thus as soon as a saintly devotee is present, the ghostly sins are at once vanquished. That is the verdict of all Vedic literatures. One is recommended, therefore, to associate only with saintly devotees so that worldly demons and ghosts cannot exert their sinister influence.

TEXT 35

अपि मे भगवान् प्रीतः कृष्णः पाण्डुसुतप्रियः ।
पैतृष्वसेयप्रीत्यर्थं तद्गोत्रस्यात्तबान्धवः ॥३५॥

api me bhagavān prītaḥ
kṛṣṇaḥ pāṇḍu-suta-priyaḥ
paitṛ-śvaseya-prīty-arthaṁ
tat-gotrasyātta-bāndhavaḥ

api—definitely; *me*—unto me; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *prītaḥ*—pleased; *kṛṣṇaḥ*—the Lord; *pāṇḍu-suta*—the sons of King Pāṇḍu; *priyaḥ*—dear; *paitṛ*—in relation with the father; *śvaseya*—the sons of the sister; *prīti*—satisfaction; *arthaṁ*—in the matter of; *tat*—their; *gotrasya*—of the descendant; *atta*—accepted; *bāndhavaḥ*—as a friend.

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, who is very dear to the sons of King Pāṇḍu, has accepted me as one of those relatives just to please His great cousins and brothers.

PURPORT

A pure and exclusive devotee of the Lord serves his family interest more dexterously than others, who are attached to illusory family affairs. Generally people are attached to family matters, and the whole economic impetus of human society is moving under the influence of family affection. Such deluded persons have no information that one can render better service to the family by becoming a devotee of the Lord. The Lord gives special protection to the family members and descendants of a devotee, even though such members are themselves nondevotees!

Mahārāja Prahlāda was a great devotee of the Lord, but his father, Hiranyakaśipu, was a great atheist and declared enemy of the Lord. But despite all this, Hiranyakaśipu was awarded salvation due to his being the father of Mahārāja Prahlāda. The Lord is so kind that he gives all protection to the family members of His devotee, and thus the devotee has no need to bother about his family members, even if one leaves such family members aside to discharge devotional service. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers were the sons of Kuntī, the paternal aunt of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and Mahārāja Parikṣit admits the patronage of Lord Kṛṣṇa because of his being the only grandson of the great Pāṇḍavas.

TEXT 36

अन्यथा तेऽव्यक्तगतेर्दर्शनं नः कथं नृणाम् ।
नितरां म्रियमाणानां संसिद्धस्य वनीयसः ॥३६॥

anyathā te 'vyakta-gateḥ
darśanam naḥ katham nṛṇām
nitarāṁ mriyamāṇānām
saṁsiddhasya vanīyasah

anyathā—otherwise; *te*—your; *avyakta-gateḥ*—of one whose movements are invisible; *darśanam*—meeting; *naḥ*—for us; *katham*—how; *nṛṇām*—of the people; *nitarām*—specifically; *mriyamāṇānām*—of those who are about to die; *saṁsiddhasya*—of one who is all-perfect; *vanīyasah*—voluntary appearance.

TRANSLATION

Otherwise [without being inspired by Lord Kṛṣṇa] how is it that you have voluntarily appeared here, though you are moving incognito to the common man and are not visible to us who are on the verge of death?

PURPORT

The great sage Śukadeva Gosvāmi was certainly inspired by Lord Kṛṣṇa to appear voluntarily before Mahārāja Parikṣit, the great devotee of the Lord, just to give him the teachings of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. One can achieve the nucleus of the devotional service of the Lord by the mercy of the spiritual master and the Personality of Godhead. The spiritual master is the manifested representative of the Lord to help one achieve ultimate success. One who is not authorized by the Lord cannot become a spiritual master. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmi is an authorized spiritual master, and thus he was inspired by the Lord to appear before Mahārāja Parikṣit and instruct him in the teachings of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. One can achieve the ultimate success of going back to Godhead if he is favored by the Lord's sending His true representative. As soon as a true representative of the Lord is met by a devotee of the Lord, the devotee is assured a guarantee for going back to Godhead just after leaving the present body. This, however, depends on the sincerity of the devotee himself. The Lord is seated in the heart of all living beings, and thus he knows very well the movements of all individual persons. As soon as the Lord finds that a particular soul is very eager to go back to Godhead, the Lord at once sends His bona fide representative. The sincere devotee is thus assured by the Lord of going back to Godhead. The conclusion is that to get the assistance and help of a bona fide spiritual master means to receive the direct help of the Lord Himself.

TEXT 37

अतः प्रच्छामि संसिद्धिं योगिनां परमं गुरुम् ।
पुरुषस्येह यत्कार्यं म्रियमाणस्य सर्वथा ॥३७॥

ataḥ praśchāmi saṁsiddhim
yoginām paramaṁ gurum

*puruṣasyeha yat kāryaṁ
mriyamānasya sarvathā*

ataḥ—therefore; *prcchāmi*—beg to inquire; *saṁsiddhim*—the way of perfection; *yoginām*—of the saints; *paramam*—the supreme; *gurum*—the spiritual master; *puruṣasya*—of a person; *iha*—in this life; *yat*—whatever; *kāryam*—duty; *mriyamānasya*—of one who is going to die; *sarvathā*—in every way.

TRANSLATION

You are the spiritual master of great saints and devotees. I am therefore begging you to show the way of perfection for all persons, and especially for one who is about to die.

PURPORT

Unless one is perfectly anxious to inquire about the way of perfection, there is no necessity of approaching a spiritual master. A spiritual master is not a kind of decoration for a householder. Generally a fashionable materialist engages a so-called spiritual master without any profit. The pseudo spiritual master flatters the so-called disciple, and thereby both the master and his ward go to hell without a doubt. Mahārāja Parīkṣit is the right type of disciple because he puts forward questions vital to the interest of all men, particularly for the dying men. The question put forward by Mahārāja Parīkṣit is the basic principle of the complete thesis of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Now let us see how intelligently the great master replies.

TEXT 38

यच्छ्रोतव्यमथो जप्यं यत्कर्तव्यं नृभिः प्रभो ।
सर्तव्यं भजनीयं वा ब्रूहि यद्वा विपर्ययम् ॥३८॥

*yac chrotavyam atho japyam
yat kartavyam nṛbhiḥ prabho
smartavyam bhajanīyam vā
brūhi yad vā viparyayam*

yat—whatever; *śrotavyam*—worth hearing; *atho*—thereof; *jap-
yam*—chanted; *yat*—what also; *kartavyam*—executed; *nṛbhiḥ*—by
the people in general; *prabho*—O master; *smartavyam*—that which is
remembered; *bhajanīyam*—worshipable; *vā*—either; *brūhi*—please ex-
plain; *yad vā*—what it may be; *viparyayam*—against the principle.

TRANSLATION

Please let me know what a man should hear, chant, remember and worship, and also what he should not do. Please explain all this to me.

TEXT 39

नूनं भगवतो ब्रह्मन् गृहेषु गृहमेधिनाम् ।
न लक्ष्यते ह्यवस्थानमपि गोदोहनं क्वचित् ॥३९॥

*nūnam bhagavato brahman
grheṣu grha-medhinām
na lakṣyate hy avasthānam
api go-dohanam kvacit*

nūnam—because; *bhagavataḥ*—of you, who are powerful; *brahman*—O *brāhmaṇa*; *grheṣu*—in the houses; *grha-medhinām*—of the house-
holders; *na*—not; *lakṣyate*—are seen; *hi*—exactly; *avasthānam*—stay-
ing in; *api*—even; *go-dohanam*—milking the cow; *kvacit*—rarely.

TRANSLATION

O powerful *brāhmaṇa*, it is said that you hardly stay in the houses of men long enough to milk a cow.

PURPORT

Saints and sages in the renounced order of life go to the houses of the householders at the time they milk the cows, early in the morning, and ask some quantity of milk for subsistence. A pound of milk fresh from the milk bag of a cow is sufficient to feed an adult with all vitamin values, and therefore saints and sages live only on milk. Even the poorest of the householders keep at least ten cows, each delivering twelve to twenty quarts of milk, and therefore no one hesitates to spare a few pounds of milk for the mendicants. It is the duty of householders to maintain the saints and sages, like the children. So a saint like Śukadeva Gosvāmi would hardly stay at the house of a householder for more than five minutes in the morning. In other words, such saints are very rarely seen in the houses of householders, and Mahārāja Parīkṣit therefore prayed to him to instruct him as soon as possible. The householders also should be intelligent enough to get some transcendental information from visiting sages. The householder should not foolishly ask a saint to deliver what is available in the market. That should be the reciprocal relation between the saints and the householders.

TEXT 40

सूत उवाच
एवमाभाषितः पृष्टः स राज्ञा श्लक्ष्णया गिरा ।
प्रत्यभाषत धर्मज्ञो भगवान् बादरायणिः ॥४०॥

*sūta uvāca
evam ābhāṣitaḥ pṛṣṭaḥ
sa rājñā ślakṣṇayā girā
pratyabhāṣata dharma-jñō
bhagavān bādārayaṇiḥ*

sūtaḥ uvāca—Śrī Sūta Gosvāmi said; *evam*—thus; *ābhāṣitaḥ*—being
spoken; *pṛṣṭaḥ*—and asked for; *sah*—he; *rājñā*—by the King; *ślakṣṇayā*—by
sweet; *girā*—language; *pratyabhāṣata*—began to reply; *dharma-jñāḥ*—one
who knows the principles of religion; *bhagavān*—the powerful personality; *bādā-
rayaṇiḥ*—son of Vyāsadeva.

TRANSLATION

Śrī Sūta Gosvāmi said: The King thus spoke and questioned the sage, using sweet language. Then the great and powerful personality, the son of Vyāsadeva, who knew the principles of religion, began his reply.

Thus end the Bhaktivedanta purports of the First Canto, Nineteenth Chapter, of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, entitled "The Appearance of Śukadeva Gosvāmi."

END OF THE FIRST CANTO

Second Canto

“The Cosmic Manifestation”

CHAPTER ONE

The First Step in God Realization

INVOCATION

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

om namo bhagavate vasudevāya

om—O my Lord; *namaḥ*—my respectful obeisances unto You; *bhagavate*—unto the Personality of Godhead; *vasudevāya*—unto Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva.

TRANSLATION

O my Lord, the all-pervading Personality of Godhead, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You.

PURPORT

Vāsudevāya means “to Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva.” Since by chanting the name of Kṛṣṇa, Vāsudeva, one can achieve all the good results of charity, austerity and penances, it is to be understood that by the chanting of this *mantra*, *om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya*, the author or the speaker or any one of the readers of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is offering respectful obeisances unto the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, the reservoir of all pleasure. In the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the principles of creation are described, and thus the First Canto may be called “Creation.”

Similarly, in the Second Canto, the postcreation cosmic manifestation is described. The different planetary systems are described in the Second Canto as different parts of the universal body of the Lord. For this reason, the Second Canto may be called “The Cosmic Manifestation.” There are ten chapters in the Second Canto, and in these ten chapters the purpose of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the different symptoms of this purpose are narrated. The first chapter describes the glories of chanting, and it hints at the process by which the neophyte devotees may perform meditation on the universal form of the Lord. In the first verse, Śukadeva Gosvāmī replies to the questions of Mahārāja Parikṣit, who asked him about one’s duties at the point of death. Mahārāja Parikṣit was glad to receive Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and he was proud of being a descendant of Arjuna, the intimate friend of Kṛṣṇa. Personally, he was very humble and meek, but he expressed his gladness that Lord Kṛṣṇa was very kind to his grandfathers, the sons of Pāṇḍu, especially his own grandfather, Arjuna. And because Lord Kṛṣṇa was always pleased with Mahārāja Parikṣit’s family, at the verge of Mahārāja Parikṣit’s death Śukadeva Gosvāmī was sent to help him in the process of self-realization. Mahārāja Parikṣit was a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa from his childhood, so he had natural affection for Kṛṣṇa. Śukadeva Gosvāmī could understand his devotion. Therefore, he welcomed the questions about the King’s duty. Because the King hinted that worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate function of every living entity, Śukadeva Gosvāmī welcomed the suggestion and said, “Because you have raised questions about Kṛṣṇa, your question is most glorious.” The translation of the first verse is as follows.

TEXT 1

श्रीशुक उवाच

वरीयानेष ते प्रश्नः कृतो लोकहितं नृप ।
आत्मवित्सम्मतः पुंसां श्रोतव्यादिषु यः परः ॥ १ ॥

śrī-śuka uvāca
varīyān eṣa te praśnaḥ
kṛto loka-hitam nṛpa
ātmavit-sammataḥ puṁsāṁ
śrotavyādiṣu yaḥ paraḥ

śrī-śukaḥ uvāca—Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said; *varīyān*—glorious; *eṣaḥ*—this; *te*—your; *praśnaḥ*—question; *kṛtaḥ*—made by you; *loka-hitam*—beneficial for all men; *nṛpa*—O King; *ātmavit*—transcendentalist; *sammataḥ*—approved; *puṁsām*—of all men; *śrotavyādiṣu*—in all kinds of hearing; *yaḥ*—what is; *paraḥ*—the supreme.

TRANSLATION

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: My dear King, your question is glorious because it is very beneficial to all kinds of people. The answer to this question is the prime subject matter for hearing, and it is approved by all transcendentalists.

PURPORT

Even the very question is so nice that it is the best subject matter for hearing. Simply by such questioning and hearing, one can achieve the highest perfectional stage of life. Because Lord Kṛṣṇa is the original Supreme Person, any question about Him is original and perfect. Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said that the highest perfection of life is to achieve the transcendental loving service of Kṛṣṇa. Because questions and answers about Kṛṣṇa elevate one to that transcendental position, the questions of Mahārāja Parikṣit about Kṛṣṇa philosophy are greatly glorified. Mahārāja Parikṣit wanted to absorb his mind completely in Kṛṣṇa, and such absorption can be effected simply by hearing about the uncommon activities of Kṛṣṇa. For instance, in the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is stated that simply by understanding the transcendental nature of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s appearance, disappearance, and activities, one can immediately return home, back to Godhead, and never come back to this miserable condition of material existence. It is very auspicious, therefore, to hear always about Kṛṣṇa. So Mahārāja Parikṣit requested Śukadeva Gosvāmī to narrate the activities of Kṛṣṇa so that he could engage his mind in Kṛṣṇa. The activities of Kṛṣṇa are nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa Himself. As long as one is engaged in hearing such transcendental activities of Kṛṣṇa, he remains aloof from the conditional life of material existence. The topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa are so auspicious that they purify the speaker, the hearer and the inquirer. They are compared to the Ganges waters, which flow from the toe of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Wherever the Ganges waters go, they purify the land and the person who bathes in them. Similarly, *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, or the topics of Kṛṣṇa, are so pure that wherever they are spoken, the place, the hearer, the inquirer, the speaker and all concerned become purified.

TEXT 2

श्रोतव्यादीनि राजेन्द्र नृणां सन्ति सहस्रशः ।
अपश्यतामात्मतत्त्वं गृहेषु गृहमेधिनाम् ॥ २ ॥

śrotavyādīni rājendra
nṛṇāṃ santi sahasraśaḥ
apaśyatām ātma-tattvaṃ
gṛheṣu gṛha-medhinām

śrotavya-ādīni—subject matters for hearing; rājendra—O Emperor; nṛṇām—of human society; santi—there are; sahasraśaḥ—hundreds and thousands; apaśyatām—of the blind; ātma-tattvaṃ—knowledge of self, the ultimate truth; gṛheṣu—at home; gṛha-medhinām—of persons too materially engrossed.

TRANSLATION

Those persons who are materially engrossed, being blind to the knowledge of ultimate truth, have many subject matters for hearing in human society, O Emperor.

PURPORT

In the revealed scriptures there are two nomenclatures for the householder's life. One is *gṛhastha*, and the other is *gṛhamedhī*. The *gṛhasthas* are those who live together with wife and children but live transcendently for realizing the ultimate truth. The *gṛhamedhīs*, however, are those who live only for the benefit of the family members, extended or centralized, and thus are envious of others. The word *medhī* indicates jealousy of others. The *gṛhamedhīs*, being interested in family affairs only, are certainly envious of others. Therefore, one *gṛhamedhī* is not on good terms with another *gṛhamedhī*, and in the extended form, one community, society or nation is not on good terms with another counterpart of selfish interest. In the age of Kali, all the householders are jealous of one another because they are blind to the knowledge of ultimate truth. They have many subject matters for hearing—political, scientific, social, economic and so on—but due to a poor fund of knowledge, they set aside the question of the ultimate miseries of life, namely miseries of birth, death, old age and disease. Factually, the human life is meant for making an ultimate solution to birth, death, old age and disease, but the *gṛhamedhīs*, being illusioned by the material nature, forget everything about self-realization. The ultimate solution to the problems of life is to go back home, back to Godhead, and thus, as stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.16), the miseries of material existence—birth, death, old age and disease—are removed.

The process of going back home, back to Godhead, is to hear about the Supreme Lord and His name, form, attributes, pastimes, paraphernalia and variegatedness. Foolish people do not know this. They want to hear something about the name, form, etc., of everything temporary, and they do not know how to utilize this propensity of hearing for the ultimate good. Misguided as they are, they also create some false literatures about the name, form, attributes, etc., of the ultimate truth. One should not, therefore, become a *gṛhamedhī* simply to exist for envying others; one should become a real householder in terms of the scriptural injunctions.

TEXT 3

निद्रया हियते नक्तं व्यवायेन च वा वयः ।
दिवा चार्थेहया राजन् कुटुम्भरणेन वा ॥ ३ ॥

nidrayā hriyate naktam
vyavāyena ca vā vayah

divā cārthehayā rājan
kuṭumba-bharanena vā

nidrayā—by sleeping; hriyate—wastes; naktam—night; vyavāyena—sex indulgence; ca—also; vā—either; vayah—duration of life; divā—days; ca—and; artha—economic; ihayā—development; rājan—O King; kuṭumba—family members; bharanena—maintaining; vā—either.

TRANSLATION

The lifetime of such an envious householder is passed at night either in sleeping or in sex indulgence, and in the daytime either in making money or maintaining family members.

PURPORT

The present human civilization is primarily based on the principles of sleeping and sex indulgence at night and earning money in the day and spending the same for family maintenance. Such a form of human civilization is condemned by the *Bhāgavata* school.

Because human life is a combination of matter and spirit soul, the whole process of Vedic knowledge is directed at liberating the spirit soul from the contamination of matter. The knowledge concerning this is called *ātma-tattva*. Those men who are too materialistic are unaware of this knowledge and are more inclined to economic development for material enjoyment. Such materialistic men are called *karmīs*, or fruitive laborers, and they are allowed regulated economic development or association of woman for sex indulgence. Those who are above the *karmīs*, that is, the *jñānīs*, *yogīs* and devotees, are strictly prohibited from sex indulgence. The *karmīs* are more or less devoid of *ātma-tattva* knowledge, and as such, their life is spent without spiritual profit. The human life is not meant for hard labor for economic development, nor is it meant for sex indulgence like that of the dogs and hogs. It is specially meant for making a solution to the problems of material life and the miseries thereof. So the *karmīs* waste their valuable human life by sleeping and sex indulgence at night, and by laboring hard in the daytime to accumulate wealth, and after doing so, they try to improve the standard of materialistic life. The materialistic way of life is described herein in a nutshell, and how foolishly men waste the boon of human life is described as follows.

TEXT 4

देहापत्यकलत्रादिष्वात्मसैन्येष्वसत्स्वपि ।
तेषां प्रमत्तो निधनं पश्यन्नपि न पश्यति ॥ ४ ॥

dehāpatya-kalatrādiṣv
ātma-sainyeṣv asatsv api
teṣāṃ pramatto nidhanam
paśyann api na paśyati

deha—body; apatya—children; kalatra—wife; ādiṣu—and in everything in relation to them; ātma—own; sainyeṣu—fighting soldiers; asatsu—fallible; api—in spite of; teṣām—of all of them; pramattaḥ—too attached; nidhanam—destruction; paśyan—having been experienced; api—although; na—does not; paśyati—see it.

TRANSLATION

Persons devoid of *ātma-tattva* do not inquire into the problems of life, being too attached to the fallible soldiers like the body, children and wife. Although sufficiently experienced, they still do not see their inevitable destruction.

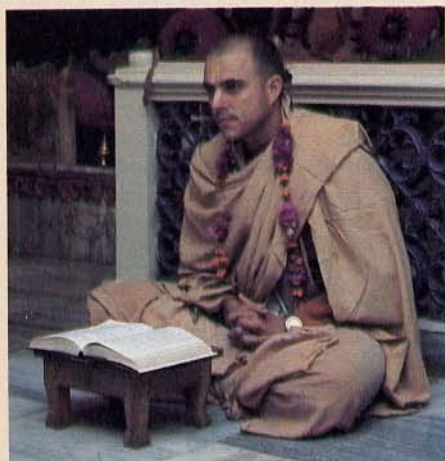
(continued in next issue)



Every Town and Village

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

India Citizenship for ISKCON Guru



In fluent Bengali, His Holiness Jayapatāka Swami speaks to residents of Māyāpur.

Since India won her independence in 1947, a mere 952 foreigners have received citizenship, and of those only a small percentage have been Westerners. But not long ago India's Home Ministry granted citizenship to American-born Jayapatāka Swami.

His Holiness Jayapatāka Swami is one of eleven elder devotees chosen by ISKCON's founder-*ācārya*, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, to initiate new disciples. A resident of India since 1972, he is in charge of ISKCON's projects in East India, Bangladesh, and Nepal. He speaks

fluent Bengali and often addresses civic, cultural, and religious gatherings. In addition, Jayapatāka Swami supervises ISKCON's food relief projects on the subcontinent. During last October's severe flooding in West Bengal, he organized a program that fed twenty thousand people a day. He is also one of the directors of the Śrī Gaura-maṅḍalabhūmi Trust, established by Śrīla Prabhupāda to renovate important places of pilgrimage.

When Jayapatāka Swami applied for citizenship, more than ten thousand residents of Bengal and Orissa, including members of the leading bar association, petitioned the government on his behalf.

When he is not traveling, Jayapatāka Swami resides at ISKCON's world headquarters, in Māyāpur, West Bengal, where he is co-director. At present, he is overseeing the first stages in the construction of a Kṛṣṇa conscious city that will accommodate fifty thousand.



PHOTO: EDDIE ADAMS

"Changing Bodies" Photo a Winner

Last year, Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist Eddie Adams took a picture of a diorama called "Changing Bodies." The picture appeared in more than a hundred newspapers throughout America and won numerous awards. Representatives from the National Press Photographers Association and *Popular Photography* magazine selected it for the 1978 APA (Advertising Photographers Association) International Exhibition of Photography. It also appeared in *1977 In Pictures*, the yearbook of the Associated Press.

As millions of Americans have read in their newspapers, the "Changing Bodies" diorama illustrates a verse from the ancient *Bhagavad-gītā*: "As the embodied soul continually passes in this body from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. The self-realized soul is not bewildered by such a change."

The diorama is the work of devotee artists at FATE (First American Transcendental Exhibition). It is now on display in the FATE Museum at the Los Angeles Hare Kṛṣṇa center.

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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 Mādhava (January 14- February 12, 1979)		
January 16 (Mādhava 11)	January 24 (Mādhava 17)	
Appearance of Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmi Disappearance of Śrīla Rāmacandra Kavirāja	Sattā-ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans)	
February 1 (Mādhava 19)		February 3 (Mādhava 21)
Vasanta-pañcāmī of Lord Kṛṣṇa Appearance of Śrī Nityānanda Appearance of Śrī Rāghunātha dāsa Gosvāmi and Śrī Rāghunādana Thākura Disappearance of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura		Appearance of Śrī Advaitācārya (fasting)
February 8 (Mādhava 26)	February 9 (Mādhava 27)	
Pakṣavardhini-mahādvādāśī (fasting from grains and beans)	Appearance of Lord Nityānanda	

YOGA

(continued from page 4)

is not true that because one is a poor man, he cannot realize God, or because one is a very rich man, he shall realize God. No. God is beyond our material conditions (*apratihatā*). In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [1.2.6] it is said, *sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje*: "That religion is first-class which helps one advance his devotional service and love of God."

The *Bhāgavatam* does not mention that the Hindu religion is first-class or the Christian religion is first-class or the Muhammadan religion is first-class or some other religion is first-class. The *Bhāgavatam* says that that religion is first-class which helps one advance his devotional service and love of God. That's all. This is the definition of a first-class religion. We do not analyze that one religion is first-class or that another religion is last-class. Of course, there are three qualities in the material world (goodness, passion, and ignorance), and religious conceptions are created according to these qualities. But the *purpose* of religion is to understand God, and to

learn how to love God. *Any* religious system, if it teaches one how to love God, is first-class. Otherwise, it is useless. One may prosecute his religious principles very rigidly and very nicely, but if his love of God is nil, if his love of matter is simply enhanced, then his religion is no religion.

In the same verse, the *Bhāgavatam* says that real religion must be *ahaitukī* and *apratihatā*: without selfish motivation and without any impediment. If we can practice such a system of religious principles, then we'll find that we are happy in all respects. Otherwise there is no possibility of happiness. *Sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje*. One of God's names is Adhokṣaja. *Adhokṣaja* means "one who conquers all materialistic attempts to be seen." *Akṣaja* means "direct perception by experimental knowledge," and *adhaḥ* means "unreachable." So, we cannot understand God by experimental knowledge. No. We have to learn of Him in a different way—by submissive aural reception of transcendental sound and by the rendering of transcendental loving service. Then we can understand God.

So, a religious principle is perfect if it

teaches us how to develop our love for the Godhead. But our love must be without selfish motive. If I say, "I love God because He supplies me very nice things for my sense gratification," that is not love. Real love is without any selfish motive (*ahaitukī*). We must simply think, "God is great; God is my father. It is my duty to love Him." That's all. *No exchange*—"Oh, God gives me my daily bread; therefore I love God." No. God gives daily bread even to the animal—the cats and dogs. God is the father of everyone, and He supplies food to everyone. So, appreciating God because He gives me bread—that is not love. Love is without motive. I must think, "Even if God does not supply me daily bread, I'll love Him." This is real love. As Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, *āśliṣya vā pāda-ratām pinaṣṭu mām adarśanān marma-hatām karotu vā*: "O Lord, You may embrace me, or You may trample me down with Your feet. Or You may never come before me, so that I become broken-hearted without seeing You. Still, I love You." This is pure love of God. When we come to this stage of loving God, then we'll find ourselves full of pleasure. Just as God is full of pleasure, we'll also be full of pleasure. This is perfection. 🌸

GUYANA

(continued from page 13)

that traditional scripture, accepted as it is, should define the path of every legitimate religious process—we can immediately see past the corrupt legions of *gurus*, *svāmīs*, *yogīs*, messiahs, Gods, and self-appointed masters who have invaded the modern world.

Apply this standard, and see how quickly the cheaters fail the test. The pudgy little boy from India who claimed he was God. The science-fiction writer who rigged up an electric meter to track down bad *karma* and give you liberation (for maybe five or ten thousand dollars). The Korean businessman who declares that he has succeeded where Jesus Christ failed. The innumerable *svāmīs* and *yogīs* who proclaim that God is everyone and everyone is God. All hit the dust immediately, as soon as you apply this test.

The scriptures of the world describe the qualities of an actual saintly person. The *Bhagavad-gītā*, for example, explains that a spiritual leader must have control of his mind and senses, he must be austere, tolerant, and simple, he must be conversant with scriptural knowledge and be able to apply this knowledge in his own life, and he must have firm faith in the Supreme Lord, the Personality of

Godhead. Anyone lacking these qualifications is unfit to be a spiritual leader.

Unfortunately, however, in modern life we are afflicted by a poor fund of knowledge about spiritual affairs, and therefore we are easy targets for cheaters.

It is the duty of the responsible leaders of society—the teachers, government officials, authors, psychologists, journalists, and others—to protect the citizens from spiritual frauds, as much as from frauds in other spheres of life.

But lamentably our modern social and political leaders seem no more enlightened than anyone else. We can't depend on such leaders even to balance the budget or contain inflation or crime, what to speak of aiding people in their spiritual welfare. In this sense, such leaders themselves are frauds too. And our religious leaders—are they truly qualified? Can we confidently turn to them for guidance? Do they actually practice what they preach? The Vedic literature calls our present era the Age of Hypocrisy. Further elaboration on this point hardly seems necessary.

But although some leaders, or even a majority of leaders, both spiritual and secular, may be frauds, this doesn't mean that no spiritual teacher can be genuine.

If one is lacking in spiritual knowledge

but desires to understand higher truth, one *must* approach a bona fide teacher. This is true in every religion—or, for that matter, in science, music, art, and any other field of human endeavor. And the way to avoid being taken for a ride is not to insist that the teacher demand only a minimal commitment. After all, a cheater may ask only a small offering—a few dollars, perhaps—whereas great teachers throughout history have called upon their followers to dedicate their entire lives.

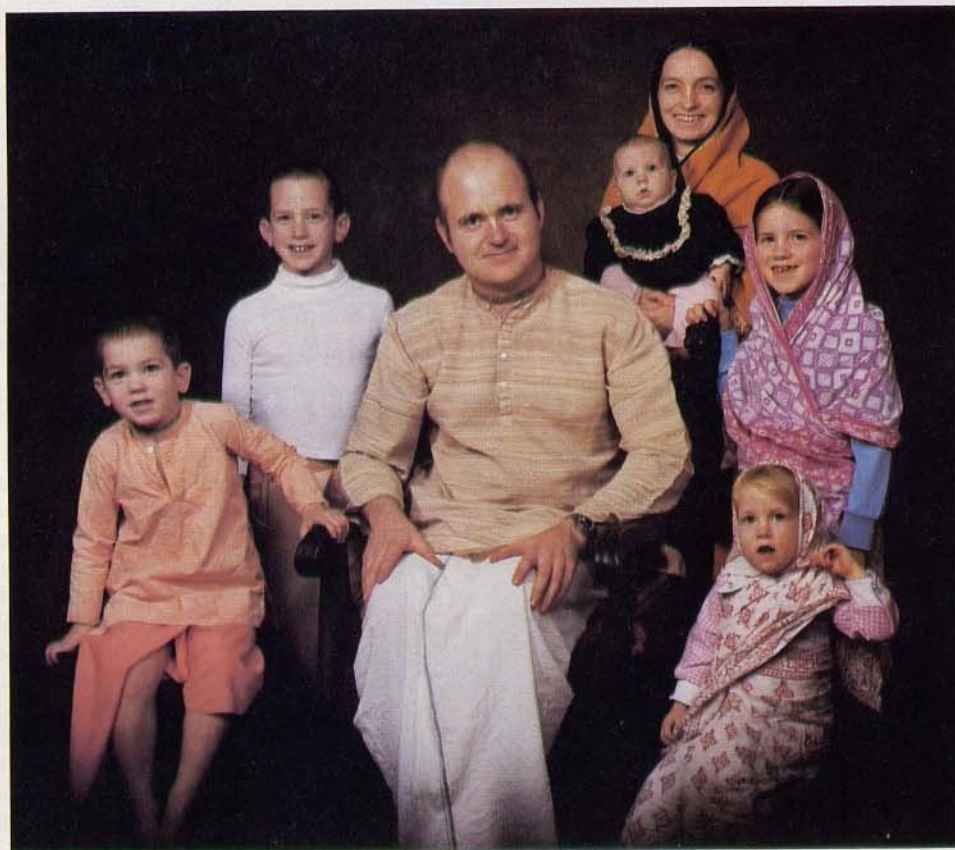
Religion is necessary for human life. Animals have no other concern than eating, sleeping, defending, and mating—in animal society there is no religion—but a human being can inquire about who he is and who God is. As the Vedic authorities say, only when one asks these questions has he truly become a human being. In other words, human life without religion is animal life.

But there must be some way to verify—before one dedicates oneself—that one is not wasting his time and money, or perhaps even risking his life.

We suggest this criterion: don't trust any teacher unless you find that his words never deviate from the teachings of reliable scripture, and that his actions match up to his words. Had those who died in Jonestown applied this test, they might still be alive today. 🌸

HOW I CAME TO KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS

by BAHŪDAKA DĀSA (as told to Jayādvaita Svāmī)



BAHŪDAKA DĀSA AND FAMILY

I guess I'm a kind of model Canadian citizen. My father was always active in the community. He was mayor of Saanich, Victoria, the city that I grew up in. He was chairman of the school board, and all sorts of things like that, and then he was a member of Parliament for eight years.

When I was in grade eight we moved to Ottawa, the national capital. I went to high school there and was president of my graduating class.

I had a scholarship to McGill University, the country's most prestigious school. But halfway through my studies I got married, so I came back to Victoria.

My father gave me a house there.

By the time I was fifteen or sixteen, I had completely rejected God. Previous to that I'd gone to church every week, so it was like a big traumatic thing for me. I just gave it all up and actually became very inimical to religion. In fact, I remember that when I was in grade thirteen (that's like the first year of college) I used to be the chief cynic. We'd look around during the Lord's Prayer, and anyone who was saying the Lord's Prayer, we'd harass him afterwards.

But then, in the university, I was studying psychology and philosophy, and I became interested in consciousness. I

read a book by Eric Fromm—it might have been *The Art of Loving*—and I really became interested in man's inner activities. I was reading other books also, and they just kind of stimulated my interest. And I wanted to pursue this interest in my studies. My mother had always wanted me to be a doctor, so I figured I'd become a psychiatrist.

But at the university I found it very frustrating, because the professors had no actual knowledge. Gradually I could see that. All they had were speculative theories, which were just like fiction, practically. They didn't give you any solid information. And every year that

went by, I just became more and more disgusted with the whole process. In my final year I just hated it, but I stayed in to get my degree.

Anyway, by the time I finished my studies I was very disillusioned with university and that whole style of life. I'd become more interested in the Western self-realizing or self-actualizing psychologists, and that got me more interested in Eastern philosophy. I was reading Carl Jung and Gurdjieff and Ouspensky, and then I started to read Eastern books. Gradually I was getting more and more interested in the spiritual side of psychology and philosophy.

It was right in my last year of university that I first came into contact with some chanting. A friend of mine was chanting, and I was a little interested. And at the same time I was very interested in music. That was my biggest side interest—I used to play instruments and sing. I was into folk music, and sometimes I'd play in coffee houses. Every day I would spend hours in music, but gradually I was getting tired of it all. I'd go through so many different styles and get tired of them. I was looking for some new form of music, something really satisfying. So because of my interest in music and psychology, I kind of put the two together and started chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

By the time I finished university, I was married and had a child. Then I went through a real period of decision-making, and I decided that I wasn't going to go on in what I considered materialistic life.

Up until that time, I was still pretty much a golden-haired Canadian boy, doing everything my parents wanted me to, sort of leading a double life. So I decided to give it up, and I moved to a commune in Bella Cooola, which is up north in British Columbia.

It was very simple. There was no electricity and no running water—you had to get the water out of the well. It was a very simple life, and you could think more. And at that time we became much more interested—seriously interested—in spiritual life. It was no longer just a hobby, but was really starting to mean something to me.

Also, right at that time there was a girl there who knew something about Kṛṣṇa consciousness and really liked chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. I had heard the chanting before and had done a little bit, but it was very superficial. But this girl was so enthusiastic about Kṛṣṇa consciousness that she would even make sure that we offered all our food to Kṛṣṇa.

The funny thing is that at that time I was so opposed to the idea of God being

a person that if I'd known what the chanting meant, I wouldn't have done it. In fact, one of my friends gave me the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and after I read one page of it, I wouldn't read it any more. "Kṛṣṇa—the Supreme Personality of Godhead." I didn't like that. I wouldn't read the *Gītā* or the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. I looked at some of the *Back to Godhead* magazines, and I thought that they were kind of like Bible stuff, so I looked down on it. I didn't like the philosophy.

But every evening in this commune we used to get together for about an hour

“You'd go through this horrible part of town, with smells and junk yards, and then you'd reach this beautiful temple. It was like a lotus flower in a garbage dump.”

and a half of music, and I was like the musical leader. At first we would chant Hare Kṛṣṇa just as a small part of our routine, but gradually we got more and more interested in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. It kind of took over. Also, we were growing our own food, and we were mostly vegetarian, although once in a while we'd eat fish, because there's a lot of fish out there. Anyway, the women were offering the food to Kṛṣṇa, which I didn't know at the time. I couldn't understand why we liked the food so much. We were just going nuts over this food.

So actually Kṛṣṇa had already tricked me, because I was eating *prasāda*, spiritual food offered to Him, and I was chanting His names—and I didn't know what I was doing, but I liked it.

Actually, after coming out of the university I was very cynical, very puffed up; plus my thinking about God was very impersonal because of the books I was reading. But the *prasāda* and the chanting—they just softened me up. In fact, I can remember very distinctly: I had one experience just at the end of summer, when I was chanting, that just came from within—because I wouldn't have accepted it if anyone had told me.

I was chanting as usual, and all of a

sudden I had this distinct idea... it was like a realization: Why not chant like you're chanting to Kṛṣṇa, instead of like you are Kṛṣṇa? It just came to me, that it should be like worshiping. Actually, I had thought I was Kṛṣṇa. I never had any concept of devotion to God, because I couldn't think of God as being outside of myself. But the moment I thought this other way, I felt so much ecstasy that tears came to my eyes—as soon as I thought like that, as soon as I changed the attitude of the chanting.

At the end of the summer I went down to Vancouver with some other members of the commune. Actually, we went way over to Victoria, but then we made a special trip to Vancouver to visit the Kṛṣṇa temple, because one of the members of the commune had been there before. At that time the temple was on Raymur Street, which is a little street in the midst of industrial Vancouver, right across from the B.C. Sugar Refinery. You'd go through this horrible part of town, with smells and junk yards, and then you'd reach this beautiful temple right in the middle of it. It was like a lotus flower in the midst of a garbage dump. Quite dramatic. And as soon as I walked into the temple it was an incredible experience. I had already done a lot of chanting, so I was very sensitive to the spiritual atmosphere. I was immediately attracted. It was like being a kid in a candy shop, I felt so attracted.

Actually they were having a kind of festival. The devotees from Seattle had come up. So there were about fifteen devotees, instead of the usual four, and they were all chanting.

At first I felt ill at ease. The room was brightly lit, and I'd never seen devotees dressed in their robes before. They were dancing, and my mind was saying, "Oh, they're just phony. They're putting it on." But then I looked over, and I saw that the guy playing the drum had this big grin on his face—it was so ecstatic, and it just immediately made me enthusiastic. And I started to dance, and I felt real ecstasy, which was a completely new experience.

It was natural, this feeling of joy that was coming from within, without any intoxication or anything. It was a more powerful happiness than any I had ever felt before—my first real religious experience, I would say. I was very affected by it. And I stayed at the temple for a day and a half. The atmosphere was just so pleasing, so spiritually pleasing. It was a very powerful experience.

But, then, of course, I wasn't willing to surrender right at that point. My friends and I had a little business going

(continued on page 33)



Reprinted from the *Wheeling (West Virginia) News-Register*

“Krishna Temple Is Labor of Love”

by ED KOZEL
News-Register Staff Writer

Something of a minor marvel is taking shape in the hills of Marshall County, where members of the Hare Krishna religious community have sacrificed over the past four years to complete a “labor of love”—a temple in honor of their spiritual master.

Formally named Prabhupada’s Palace, after His Divine Grace Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the temple will be known to those who visit it as the Marble Temple, complete with formal gardens and incorporating more than 50 kinds of imported marble.

The temple sits atop a hill near the rural community of Limestone, midway between Cameron and Moundsville. The site was a garbage dump four years ago when members of the sect began their project. Today, with yet another year of work remaining before completion, the temple and grounds afford a striking view of the surrounding hills and valleys.

Visually, the temple is stunning. Designed in the Jaipur style of Indian architecture, it features arched doorways, brass and copper balustrades, and marble inlays in intricate and delicate patterns, all constructed by Hare Krishna devotees.

According to Swami Kirtanananda, a leader of the religious sect, the temple



Prabhupada’s Palace (top) honors the memory of Srila Prabhupada (above), the Krishna movement’s founder and spiritual preceptor, shown here on his last visit, in 1976. In foreground is His Holiness Kirtanananda Swami, the leader of West Virginia’s Hare Krishna farm community.

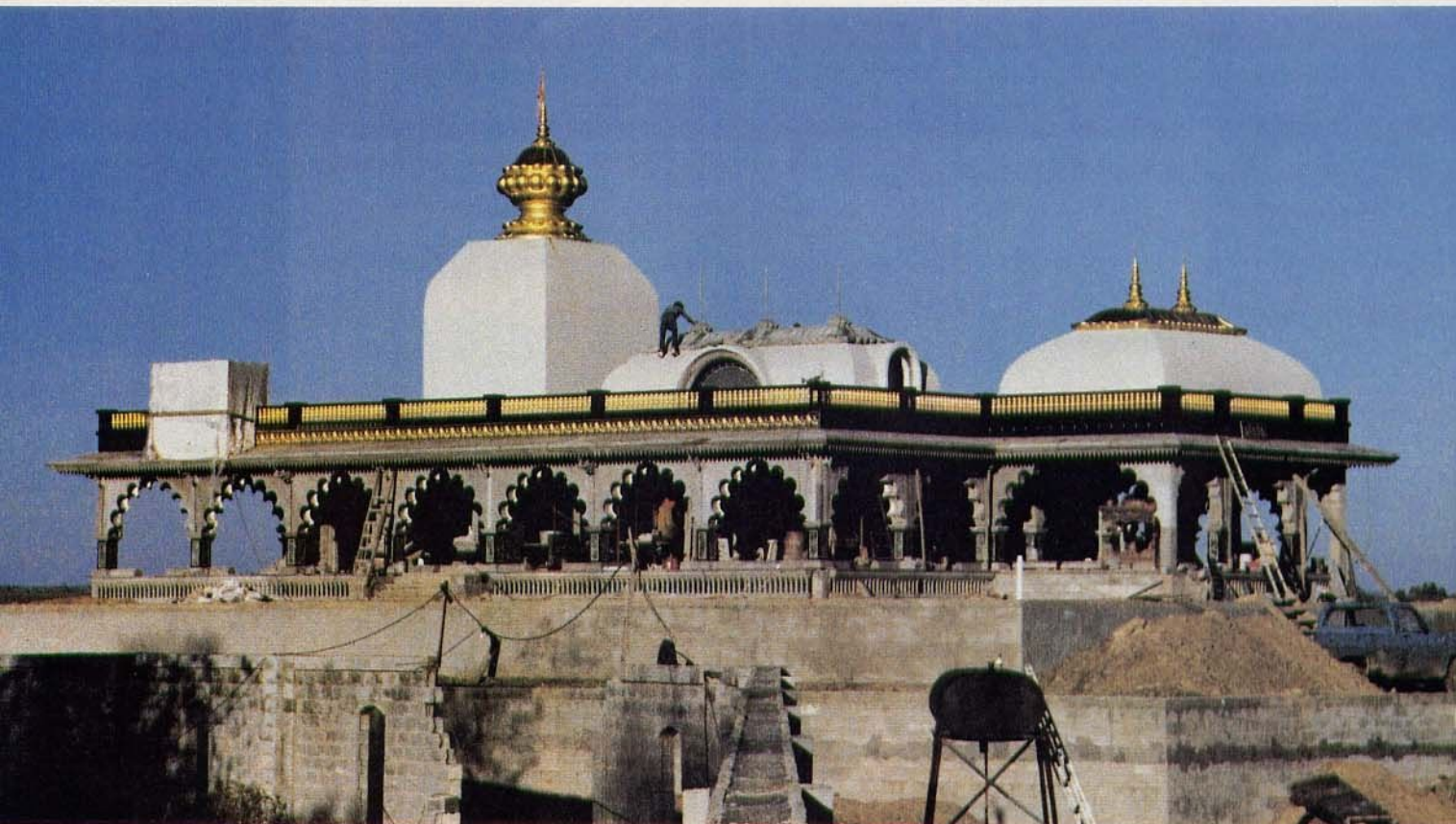
and grounds occupy about 50 acres of the 1,500-acre community. Landscaping will begin this fall, he said, with a final goal of including several fountains and a reflecting pool into the design of the grounds.

As much as the architectural style differs from the local style, so do the construction workers themselves. Absent are the hardhats and salty language commonly associated with any construction site, and in their stead are the quiet attitudes and robed figures of Hare Krishna devotees.

Every aspect of construction and design was undertaken by the devotees, some traveling to India to learn the detail of Jaipur architecture from some of the finest craftsmen. Others traveled the world in search of the finest marbles from Italy, Iran, Canada, and other spots.

The time invested on the temple can best be realized by Kirtanananda’s example that it takes two months to complete one of the marble-inlaid panels used on the temple interior. Ten panels are needed for one room alone. The plaster casts for the temple doors are intricately hand-carved and take over one month to prepare.

Windows combine stained glass and



Designed in India's Jaipur architectural style, the temple features graceful arches and brass and copper balustrades (above), all constructed by Hare Krishna devotees. The plaster casts for the doors are intricately hand-carved (bottom) and take over a month to prepare. Absent are the hardhats and salty language commonly associated with any construction site, and in their stead are the quiet attitudes of the Hare Krishna devotees.

joli screens carved out of teakwood. Teak also comprises the main arches, a delicate pattern of animals and flowers.

The temple is crowned with towers and spires; the dome to the highest tower will be capped with gold, Kirtanananda said.

The temple is the only one of its kind in the United States, Kirtanananda said, and already nearly 50 people visit the temple daily. Members of the sect hold worship services there twice daily, in keeping with the regimens of their faith.

In addition to work at the temple grounds, devotees have begun work on a new access road to the temple, one that provides several beautiful views, prompting some visitors to comment that the temple looks as though it had "descended" from above, Kirtanananda said.

Perched on a hilltop with the blue skies of the Ohio Valley as a background, the temple is reminiscent of the resi-





The image of ancient grandeurs. Here Krishna devotees have done all the marble inlays (left), in intricate and delicate patterns. It takes two months to complete one marble-inlaid panel, and ten panels are needed for one room alone. Elephantine rainspouts, fine lattice work, tasteful patterns in teak and metal, and crowning spires (below, left to right)—all are reminiscent of the palaces and temples of ancient India.

dences of kings and deities told of in old mythologies.

The image of ancient grandeurs is continued in the marble inlays, as colors of red, blue, green, and gold mix and play in a man-made design that compares adequately with the grandiose veining in the marble provided by nature.

This exotic beauty will be continued in the main sanctuary ceilings, whereupon will be hand-painted pastimes of Krishna, according to Kirtanananda.

Only a handful of the community's 200 members work on the temple at any one time. The remaining members are involved in ensuring the continued self-sustenance of the community, which was founded in 1968.

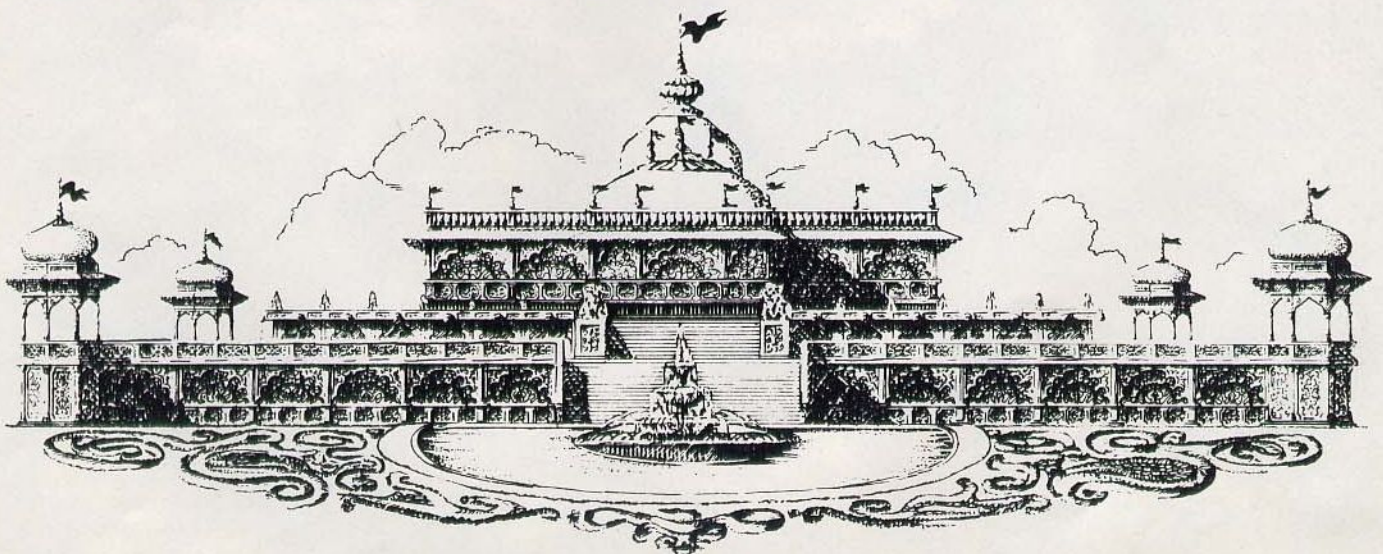
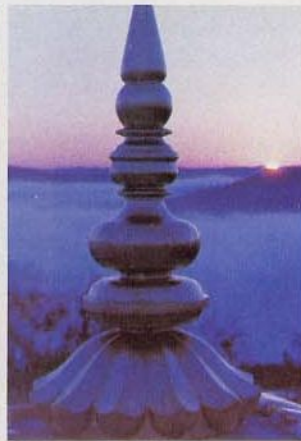
Because of the community's standing as a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization, the cost of the project has been greatly reduced. However, Kirtanananda confided that several million dollars would have been invested had the temple been built by a commercial interest.

The community is primarily supported through the sale of its books, although some support does come from residents of surrounding communities and several area businessmen. However, in the community, Kirtanananda said, the concentration is on personal fulfillment through love, although he said the community is very much like any secular community in other aspects.

Visitors are welcome to visit the grounds, located near U.S. 250, from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. daily. Kirtanananda expects the number of visitors to grow following the temple's completion sometime next summer.

Meanwhile, the Marble Temple is still something at which to marvel.

On August 16, 1979, the devotees will dedicate the completed temple (artist's rendering below) and commemorate the day, in 1896, when Srila Prabhupada made his appearance in the world.



10-3-3



The Stealing Of the Boys and Calves

When the powerful demigod Brahmā tried to bewilder Lord Kṛṣṇa by stealing His friends and calves, Kṛṣṇa completely mystified him.

One morning Lord Kṛṣṇa and His cowherd friends went with their calves into the forest. While the boys were enjoying a picnic lunch on the bank of the river Yamunā, the calves started looking for fresh grass and wandered away. When Kṛṣṇa noticed that the calves were gone, He left His friends and went searching after them. All this time the great demigod Brahmā had been watching, and now he decided to test Kṛṣṇa's power. He took all the calves and boys and hid them in a cave.

When Kṛṣṇa was unable to find the calves, He returned to the bank of the river and discovered that the cowherd boys, too, were gone. Immediately Kṛṣṇa understood that Brahmā had taken them away. To hide the loss from their mothers, Lord Kṛṣṇa expanded Himself and exactly duplicated the missing boys and calves. These expansions were nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Lord Brahmā went away for what he thought was a moment (by our calculation it was a solar year). Then he came back to see the fun he'd caused by stealing Kṛṣṇa's calves and friends. But to his great surprise, Brahmā saw that they were playing with Kṛṣṇa in exactly the same way as before he'd stolen them.

Brahmā began to think, "The original boys and calves are still sleeping in the cave under the spell of my mystic power, but another set is here playing with Kṛṣṇa. How has this happened?" Brahmā couldn't grasp what was going on. Which boys were real, and which were not real? He pondered over the

matter for a long while, but was unable to come to any definite conclusion.

"How can there be two sets of calves and boys at the same time? Have the boys and calves here been created by Kṛṣṇa, or has Kṛṣṇa created the ones lying asleep? Or are both merely creations of Kṛṣṇa?" Brahmā thought about the mystery in many different ways.

"After I go to the cave and see that the boys and calves are still there, does Kṛṣṇa go and take them and put them here so that I come here and see them, and does Kṛṣṇa then take them from here and put them there?" Brahmā could not figure out how there could be two sets of calves and cowherd boys exactly alike. Although he thought and thought, he could not understand at all.

Brahmā had wanted to bewilder Kṛṣṇa, but the result was that Brahmā himself was bewildered. During the darkness of night, a glowworm can show some glittering power, but in the daytime it is hardly noticeable. In the same way, Brahmā's limited mystic power became insignificant in the presence of Kṛṣṇa's unlimited mystic power.

Then, to convince Brahmā that all the calves and boys playing with Kṛṣṇa were not the original ones, they all transformed into four-armed Viṣṇu forms. (Viṣṇu is Kṛṣṇa's expansion for the creation and maintenance of the material universes.) Actually, the original boys and calves were still sleeping under the spell of Brahmā's mystic power, and the present ones were all direct expansions of Kṛṣṇa, or Viṣṇu. All the Viṣṇu forms were bluish in color and dressed in yellow garments. In Their four hands They held conchshell, disc, mace, and lotus flower. On Their heads They wore glittering, jeweled helmets. All the Viṣṇu

forms were bedecked with pearls and garlanded with beautiful flowers. On Their chests was the mark of Śrīvatsa (a curl of whitish hair), the emblem of the goddess of fortune. Their arms were decorated with armlets, Their legs with bells, and Their fingers with rings. All the Viṣṇu forms were transcendently beautiful. Their smiling resembled the moonlight, and Their glancing resembled the rising of the sun.

Then Brahmā saw that many living entities—from the demigods down to the ants—were dancing around the Viṣṇu forms, accompanied by various kinds of music. And all the living entities were worshiping Lord Viṣṇu. Brahmā saw that the Viṣṇu forms possessed all mystic powers, from that of becoming small like an atom to that of becoming infinite like the cosmic manifestation. He saw that the Viṣṇu forms were reservoirs of eternity, knowledge, and bliss.

What's more, Brahmā could see that the calves and boys that had become Viṣṇu forms were Viṣṇu Himself. How was it possible that they weren't merely reflections? An ordinary material object like the sun may reflect into many water-pots, but we know that the reflections in the pots are not actually the sun. Within the pots we find little of the sun's heat and light, although the reflection looks like the sun. But each and every one of the Viṣṇu forms was fully Viṣṇu.

His senses jolted by astonishment, Brahmā became silent. From the first, he had not understood what he was seeing, and now he was unable to see at all. Although Brahmā has full control over the goddess of learning, he was totally bewildered. He couldn't understand the extraordinary power of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Brahmā was mystified about Kṛṣṇa's

To convince Brahmā that Kṛṣṇa's new calves and boys were not the original ones, They all transformed into four-armed Viṣṇu forms. All were transcendently beautiful. Their glancing resembled the sunrise.



Though he is the most intelligent creature in the universe, four-headed Brahmā was baffled by Kṛṣṇa.

opulence, because it was inconceivable. With our limited senses we cannot grasp that which is beyond our conception. Therefore the inconceivable is called *acintya*—that which is beyond *cintya*, our thoughts and arguments. Unless we accept the Supreme Lord as *acintya*, we have not understood what “God” means. Actually, the only way we can have knowledge of God is to accept the words of *sāstra*, scripture. And we should take these words as they are, unchanged. Generally people like to argue and theorize about the nature of God, but they would do better to accept the Vedic knowledge as it is.

This path of acceptance is called *avaroha-panthā*. The word *avaroha* is related to the word *avatāra*, which means “that which descends.” The materialist,

on the other hand, wants to understand everything by the *āroha-panthā*—the ascending path of argument and reason. But no one can understand Kṛṣṇa in this way. One must follow the *avaroha-panthā*, the descending path of knowledge. *Avaroha-panthā* means knowledge that comes down to us through *param-parā*, through a disciplic succession of spiritual masters. And the best *param-parā* is that which extends from Kṛṣṇa, for what the Supreme Lord says we can accept as perfect.

Brahmā, however, adopted the *āroha-panthā*. He wanted to understand Kṛṣṇa’s mystic power by his own limited intelligence, and therefore he was baffled. Everyone wants to take pleasure in his own knowledge and think, “I know something.” But no one can bring

Kṛṣṇa within the limits of his tiny mental powers.

Seeing Brahmā so bewildered, Kṛṣṇa took compassion upon him. Suddenly the Lord pulled the curtain of His spiritual potency (*yogamāyā*) over the Viṣṇu forms, so that Brahmā would not become still more perplexed.

Quickly, Brahmā’s external consciousness revived, and he stood up just like a dead man coming back to life. Opening his eyes with great difficulty, Brahmā saw all around him the peaceful land of Vṛndāvana, filled with trees.

Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, was again playing the part of a small cowherd boy. The Viṣṇu forms were gone, and under the spell of *yogamāyā*, Brahmā saw Kṛṣṇa as a little child with a lump of food in His hand, searching out His friends and calves, just as He had been doing one year before.

Astonished, Brahmā hastily got down from his huge swan carrier and let his body fall to the earth. Usually, the demigods never touch the ground, but voluntarily giving up his prestige, Brahmā bowed down before Kṛṣṇa. Brahmā has four heads, and he brought all of them to the ground and let the tips of his helmets touch Kṛṣṇa’s feet. Although Brahmā’s intelligence works in every direction, he surrendered himself before the boy Kṛṣṇa. Even though Kṛṣṇa was not demonstrating His power, Brahmā could understand that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Overjoyed, Brahmā washed the Lord’s lotus feet with his tears. Again and again he fell at Kṛṣṇa’s feet, remembering the manifestation of the Lord’s greatness that he had just witnessed.

Brahmā had considered himself absolute. He had thought himself the most powerful being in the universe. But now his pride was subdued, and again he became merely one of the demigods—an important demigod, to be sure, but a demigod and nothing more.

Now Brahmā could see that he was simply a creation of Kṛṣṇa’s material energy. He was just like a puppet. A puppet has no independent power to dance, but dances according to the direction of the puppet master. And in the same way, the demigods and all other living entities are subordinate to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* informs us, the only master is Kṛṣṇa, and all others—even Lord Brahmā—are His servants.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE

[Adapted from the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, translation and commentary by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.]

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HOW I CAME

(continued from page 26)

in Shawnigan Lake, in the country, about forty miles from Victoria. We were trying to sell wood and things. But after this visit we became very interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

We invited the devotees over to see us at the house where we were living, and when they came we practically surrendered to them—we just did everything they said. They taught us how to do everything in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and we kind of set up our own temple—we actually did. After that we offered our food on our altar, we had classes, we cooked for Kṛṣṇa, and we would visit the temple in Vancouver once in a while. So in this way we very quickly became absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Now, in retrospect, I can see that I didn't understand anything about the philosophy for at least a year. I was such an atheist that it took me months and months to even begin to comprehend what "God" meant. I was so deep into my own mental ramblings that I just could not understand the philosophy. But I liked to chant, and I liked the devotees, and I liked the *prasāda*. I couldn't deny the way I was feeling.

But I was very much averse to coming into the city, and that was one of the

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reasons I hadn't become a devotee right away. I remember the first or second time I went to the Vancouver temple. I had been living in the country, so I was very unhappy about being in the city. From Bella Coola I had come down the coast by boat, and when we got into Vancouver I just couldn't believe it. I'd been way up north, and all of a sudden everything started to change—all the plants started to lose their color, and the city

was covered with a pall of smoke. I'd been away in the country, and the city was so ugly it was terrifying—and the horrible way of life people had condemned themselves to. But I remember that when we went out chanting, right downtown in the middle of Vancouver, I could see we weren't in the city at all—we were completely in a different atmosphere, a spiritual atmosphere, by chanting the holy names.

After that my friends and I used to go out chanting ourselves. Sometimes we'd go down to the University of Victoria, right into where everyone was having lunch, and we'd chant. We were pretty bold. And Kṛṣṇa must have liked that, because He helped us surrender to Him, more and more.

There was something else, also, that happened right around this time, when I was first becoming a devotee. I was becoming much more open to the idea that God is a person, and so my mother convinced me to go back to church—because she was a bit afraid I was going to become a "Hare Kṛṣṇa." So I went to communion.

Of course, I'd been doing this all my life, but it never meant anything to me. But when I went to the service after chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, it was a different story. I was very attracted and interested. When I said the prayers, they *meant* something to me. I felt moved. In fact, when I took communion I felt much more spiritually conscious than ever before. I actually felt ecstatic.

So I could see that the potency of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa actually cleanses your heart and makes you more receptive to God. I had these experiences a couple of times. Still, I wasn't interested in cultivating Christianity, because I realized . . . When I was living up in the country I had totally given up cigarettes, but when I came back to the city I began smoking again, on account of the bad influence. And even though I'd had this wonderful experience in church, fifteen minutes later I was smoking a cigarette. I knew it was wrong.

So I realized that just having a wonderful experience wasn't enough. To actually become pure, one has to change his consciousness so he can have that experience all the time. And I could see that the devotees were doing that.

Then, after a few months, my friends decided to go to Vancouver and move into the temple, and I went down to Victoria, where we rented a house and invited a devotee to come up from Seattle to get things organized. So in that way we started a temple in Victoria. I stayed there about a year, and then my family and I moved to the temple in Vancouver, where we've been ever since.

Bahūdaka dāsa has been the president of the Vancouver ISKCON center for six years. When he first joined, in 1970, the center had only four full-time devotees. It is now a community of more than ninety. The community has recently moved to a woodsy eight-acre estate in Burnaby, a Vancouver suburb. Like all other ISKCON centers, it is open to the public.

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

WHAT IS A *MANTRA*? In Sanskrit, *man* means "mind" and *tra* means "freeing." So a *mantra* is a combination of transcendental, spiritual sounds that frees our minds from the anxieties of life in the material world.

Ancient India's Vedic literatures single out one *mantra* as the *mahā* (supreme) *mantra*. The *Kali-santarāṇa Upaniṣad* explains, "These sixteen words—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—are especially meant for counteracting the ill effects of the present age of quarrel and anxiety."

The *Nārada-pañcarātra* adds, "All *mantras* and all processes for self-realization are com-

pressed into the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*."

Five centuries ago, while spreading the *mahā-mantra* throughout the Indian subcontinent, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu prayed, "O Supreme Personality of Godhead, in Your holy name You have invested all Your transcendental energies."

The name *Kṛṣṇa* means "the all-attractive one," the name *Rāma* means "the all-pleasing one," and the name *Hare* is an address to the Lord's devotional energy. So the *mahā-mantra* means, "O all-attractive, all-pleasing Lord, O energy of the Lord, please engage me in Your devotional service." Chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, and your life will be sublime. ☪

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

More on Faith Healing

Recently we received this comment from a reader:

"I read with much dismay your reflections ("Healer, Heal Thyself") in Vol. 13, No. 9. What gives you the right to criticize faith healers and charismatics? Most of them that I know have never killed anything in their life... As for me, I serve a God that is concerned about my body and my pains as well as my soul. I would hate to think that I served a God who would want me to suffer pain for some past sin when I had confessed it and asked forgiveness...."

John Fislser
Carlsbad, California"

In "Healer, Heal Thyself" we made two criticisms that we may further clarify for Mr. Fislser. We pointed out that calling on God to remove physical distress is far short of pure love of God. The scriptures teach us to love God and have faith in Him unconditionally; our devotion should not be dependent on His adjusting our material situation as we may desire. As we also pointed out, suffering is an inevitable part of life in the material world. The only way to get ultimate relief is to get out of the cycle of birth and death and return to the spiritual world.

Turning to God as the order supplier for our material desires is at least recognition of the Supreme and may therefore be considered religious, but it is more like religious business than pure devotion. Even if God blesses our family with health and prosperity, that does not mean we have attained to the kingdom of God. Rather, before we can attain to the spiritual world, we must give up all material attachments, whether our attachments are impious or pious. Even attachment for a good, wholesome material life will be the cause of our taking birth again in the material world and inevitably suffering its miseries.

The kingdom of God is attained by one who has exclusive devotion for Him and never asks for anything but to be engaged in His eternal devotional service. Such a devotee of the Lord takes even material distress as a manifestation of God's mercy, since it reminds him that his only shelter is in the eternal

world and that there is no permanent abode of peace in this material world. In the ancient *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* a devotee expresses these higher sentiments of pure devotional service: "My dear Lord, one who constantly waits for Your causeless mercy and goes on suffering the reactions for his past misdeeds, offering You respectful obeisances from the core of his heart, is surely eligible for spiritual liberation."

Mr. Fislser says he would hate to think he served a God who would allow us to suffer after we have confessed and asked for forgiveness. By definition, God is merciful, and He never *wants* us to suffer. He wants us to be with Him in the spiritual world, but when by misuse of our independence we fall into the material world, suffering is inevitable. Sincere confession will certainly gain us Kṛṣṇa's mercy, but if we are actually sincere, then we have to reform our activities. Otherwise, such repeated "confessions" become a mockery of His mercy. If we repeatedly confess our sins and praise the Lord but claim we are too weak to follow His commandments, then we are attempting to cheat God. But because Kṛṣṇa is the most intelligent and no one can cheat Him, it is we who have to be cheated and suffer. And *we cannot blame Him for sufferings that we have brought upon ourselves*. Even an ordinary civil magistrate would not be fooled if a repeated offender asked to be let off with a few words of confession. And the Bible affirms,

Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord" shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of my father, who is in heaven.

(Matthew 7:21)

On this point the Christian and Vedic scriptures are in agreement, although the Vedic scriptures contain a more developed description of how the soul transmigrates and how the law of *karma* acts upon him.

We also stated that the healers who claim mystic intimacy with the Supreme should demonstrate their confidential love of God by at least following His commandments, such as the commandment "Thou shalt not kill." Mr. Fislser has objected to our implication that

some healers are not following this commandment. "Most of them that I know have never killed anything in their life." But aren't faith healers among those who pay to have thousands of cows slaughtered daily for meat?

The Vedic literatures acknowledge that in this material world one living being is food for another, but this does not allow for unrestricted violence or cannibalism or murder. Each living being has a quota allowed by God, and he should not go beyond that. For example, if a tiger attacks a deer and kills it with his own claws, that is not considered a transgression of God's laws, but all the great scriptures of the world insist upon nonviolence as standard for the human being. (Even if a human being takes his own life, that is a great sin, and he has to suffer for it in his next life.) Humans should spare not only the lives of their fellow human beings but also the lives of animals.

Even a vegetable is a form of life (though a lower one). So while complete nonviolence may be impossible, violence should be kept to a minimum. The Vedic scriptures prescribe that a human being should avoid animal slaughter and eat only simple foods such as grain, fruit, milk products, and vegetables. Although the vegetarian is also taking life, if he makes an offering of his food to God, he's relieved from the *karma*. Otherwise, as Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.13), "Those who eat food for personal sense enjoyment verily eat only sin."

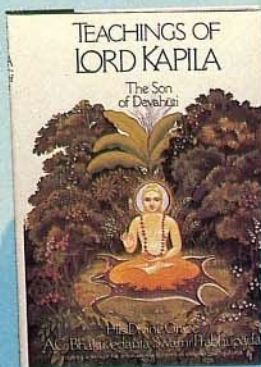
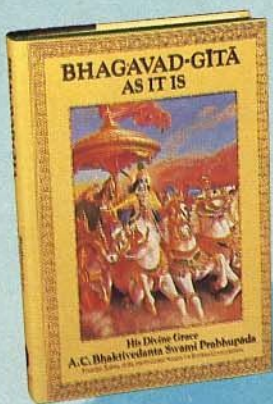
We certainly do not intend to insult the sincere follower of any authentic scripture. But those who pursue the path of religion must be exemplary in their behavior and must thoroughly understand the science of God. A person who really wants to follow God's will does not try to make Him his private "healer" or order supplier for material advantage; his sincere desire should be to serve and praise God, no matter what material position he is in. And acknowledging that all living creatures are sons of God, he should obey the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" and avoid the slaughter of innocent creatures, animals as well as human beings.

—SDG

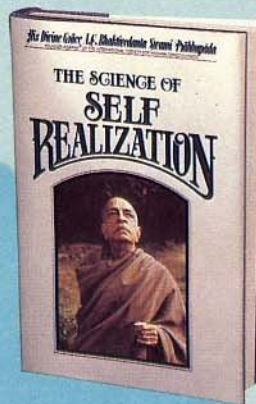
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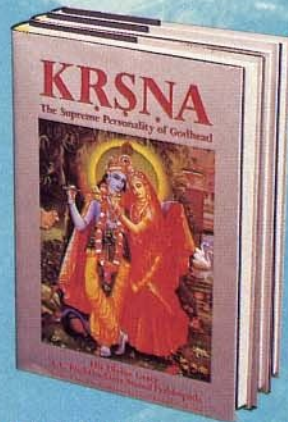
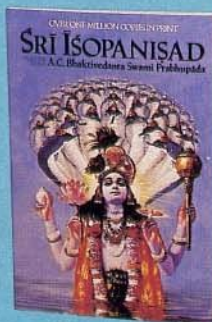
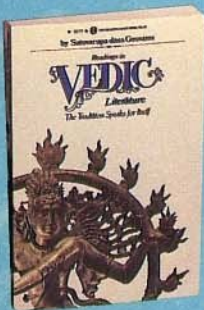
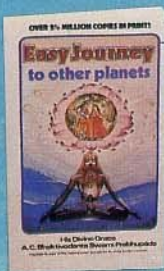
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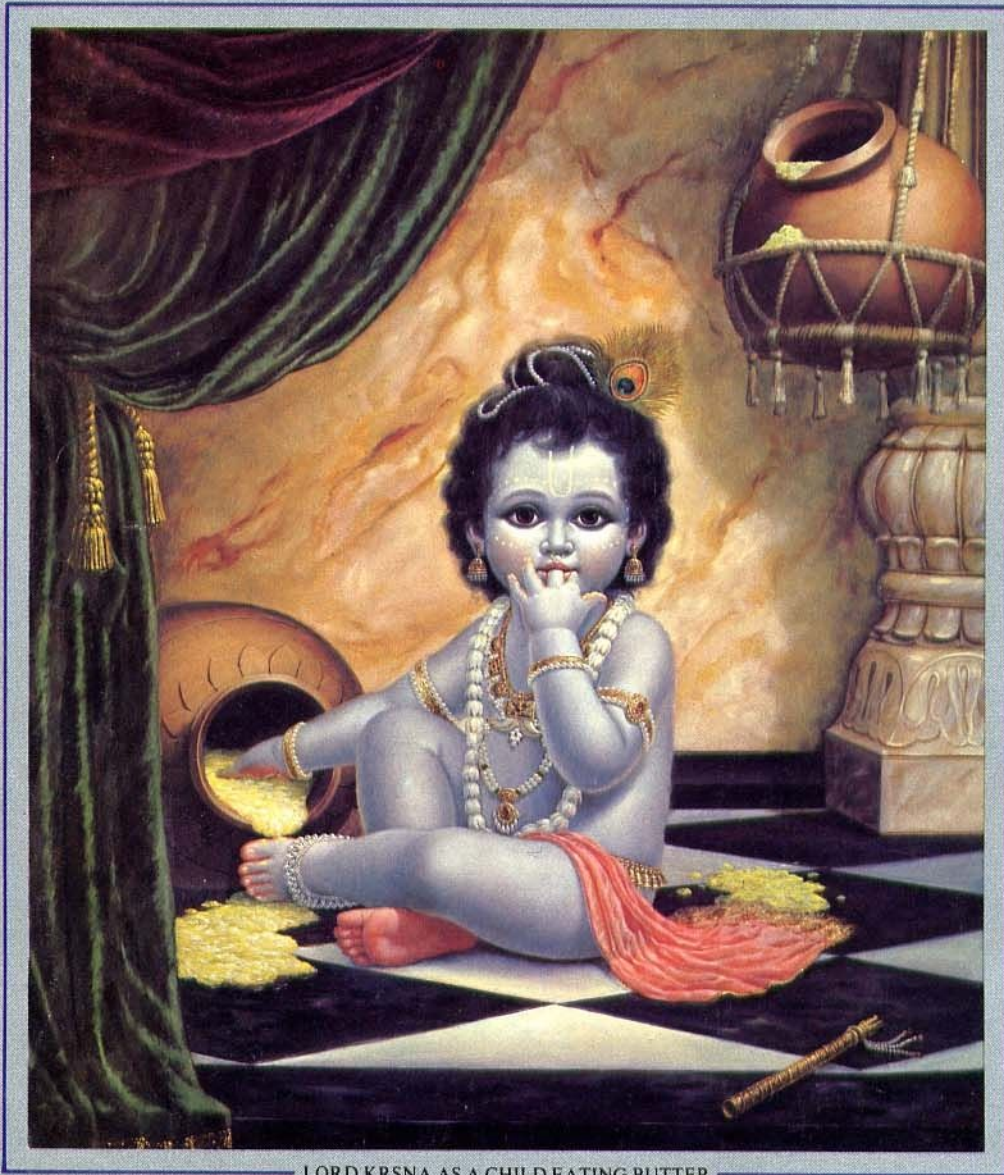
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