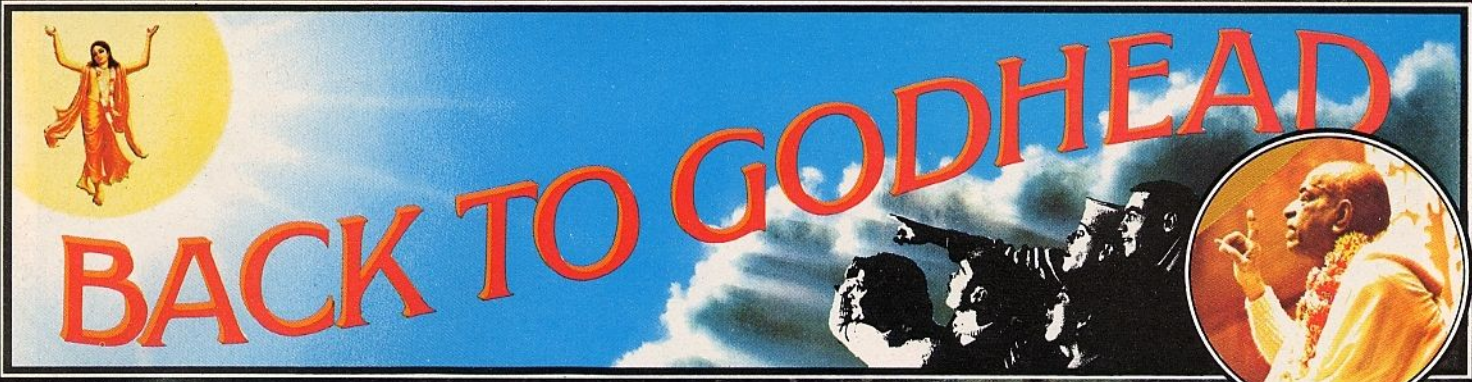


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



Vol. 14 No. 4

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

P.O.P 2



Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa,
The Divine Couple

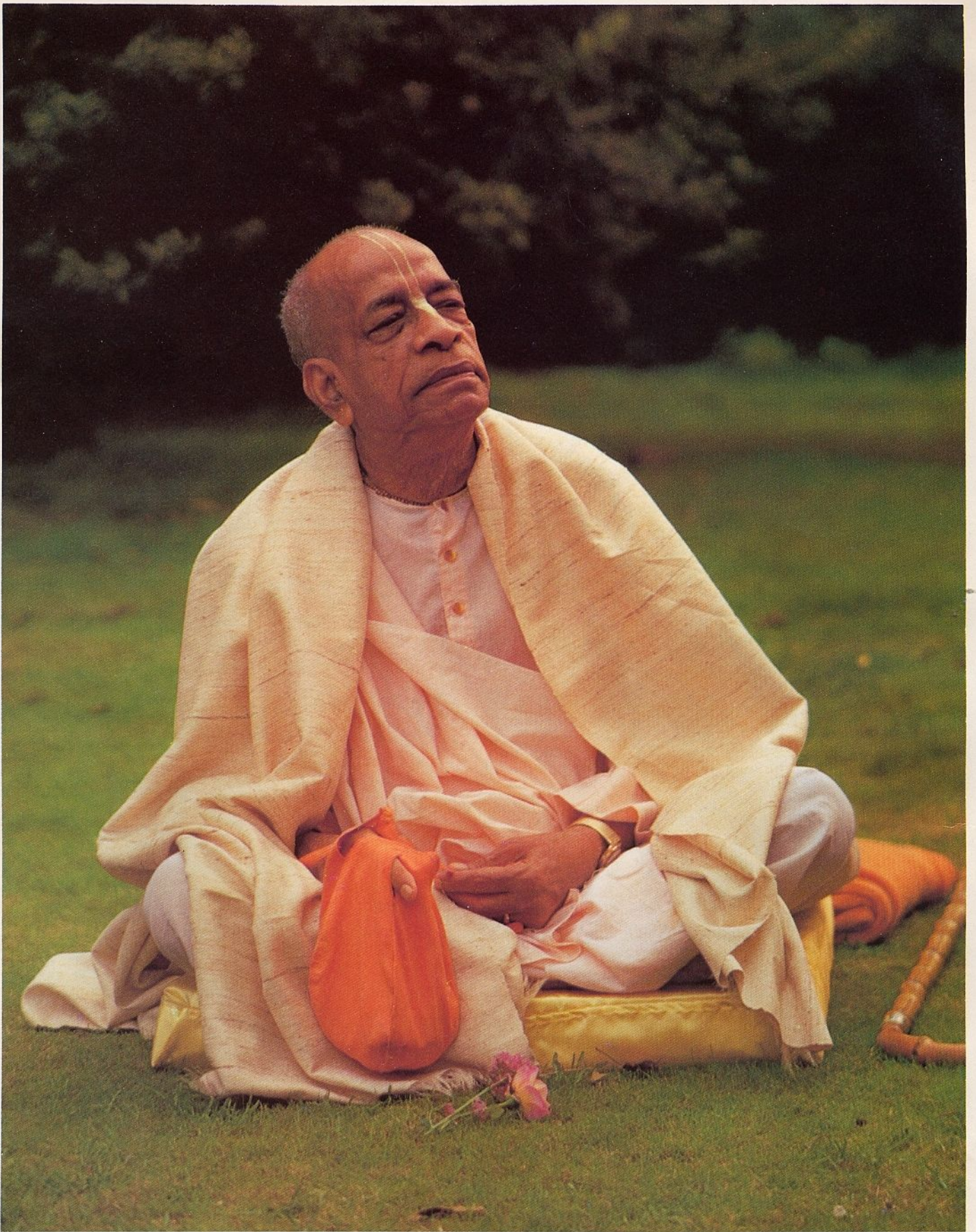


PHOTO BHARGAVA DĀSA

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

BACK TO GODHEAD

VOL. 14, NO. 4

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

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

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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

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

◀ His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami
Prabhupāda came to America in 1965, at age seventy,
to fulfill his spiritual master's request that he teach the
science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness 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 stand-
ard 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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consort, enjoy transcendental pastimes in the spiritual world. People who
practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness can go there after this lifetime and take part in
Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. (Cover art: Dhṛti-devī dāsi.)

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."

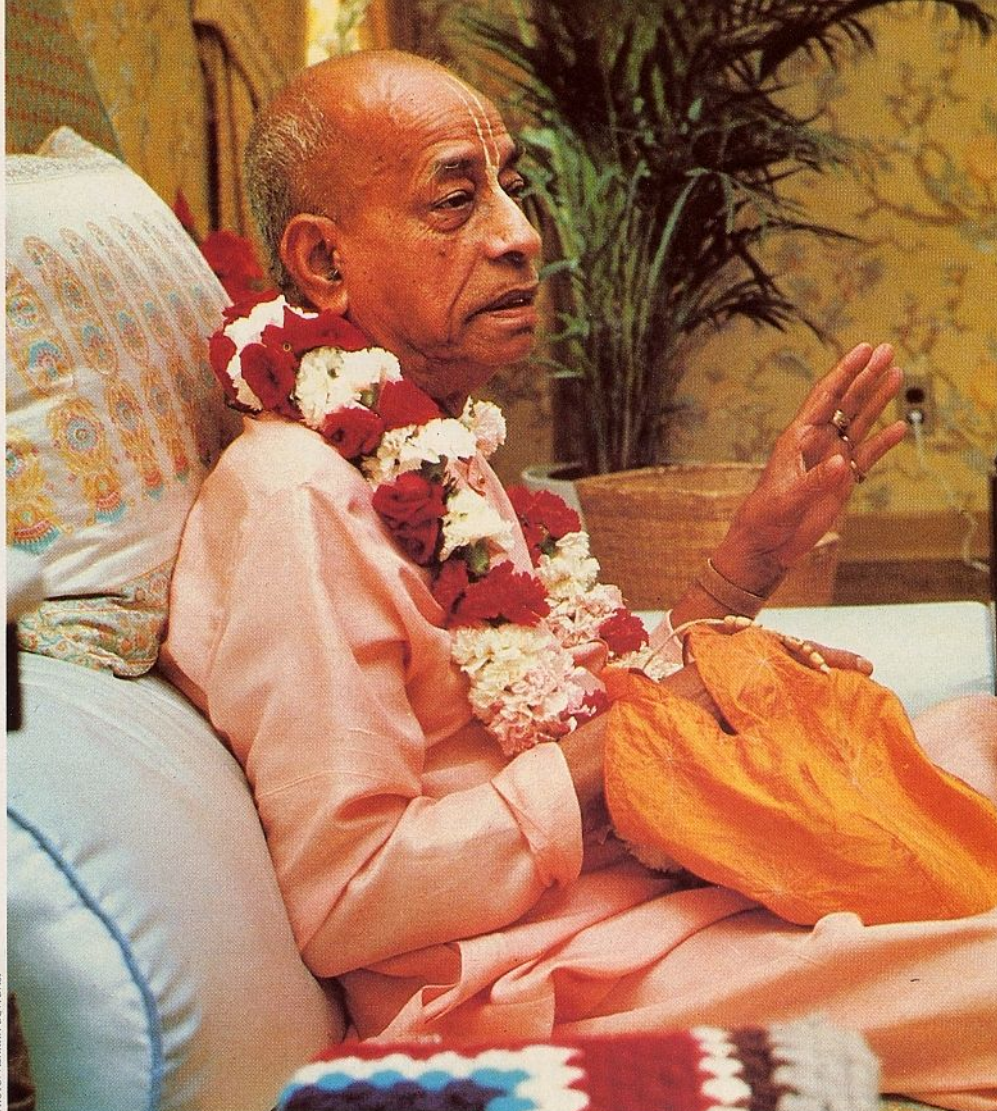


PHOTO: VISAKHA-DEVI DAS

LOOKING TOWARD “THE UNITY OF MAN”

During the summer of 1975, in Hawaii, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda received a visit from a well-known *yogī* who professes the Sikh tradition. Their conversation follows.

Yogī: Will you be in a position to come to the conference?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Which conference?

Yogī: This “Unity of Man” conference, in New Mexico. We have confirmation of leaders coming from all around the world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: They have not invited me, I don’t think.

Yogī: An invitation must have gone to you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Hmm?

Yogī: We invited everybody. Your invitation may be on the way. We have decided that this is a time for everybody to get together and get their scene

together and merge together.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: They will never. [Laughs.] You may hold unity conferences—hundreds and thousands. But the leaders will never unite, because they have no common platform.

Yogī: A common platform. That’s what we’re trying to provide.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: You are trying—that’s nice. But it will never be successful. You can write it down in your notebook.

Yogī: Well, the question is very simple. Somebody has to break the ice.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Hmm?

Yogī: Somebody has to break the ice.

Somebody. It doesn’t matter who. Somebody has to go out and say, “You are welcome. Come in.” So we are carrying that spirit.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The thing is, everyone is trying to be “united.” The United Nations started in 1945, and for thirty years, what have they done? The best men of the whole world—and no unity. Simply disunity. They have no common platform; they are not agreeable. *They do not accept God*—that is the difficulty. No central point. “You have got your own philosophy, I have got my own philosophy, he has got his own philosophy . . .” Now, how will we agree?

Yogī: Oh, I may not agree with your philosophy, and you may not agree with my philosophy, but one thing we both have agreed: that you are you and I am I, and both can have respect and love for each other. And there has to be a place where everybody can—

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is going on. . . . When I meet you I say, “Yes, sir.” And you say, “Yes, sir.” That is all right. That is social etiquette. But real unity is on the platform of spirit soul:

*vidyā-vinaya-sampanne
brāhmaṇe gavi hastini
śuni caiva śvāpāke ca
paṇḍitāḥ sama-darśinaḥ*

“The humble sage, by virtue of true knowledge, sees a learned scholar, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and a dog-eater all on an equal level.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 5.18]

Now, how can you see a learned scholar and a dog on an equal level? But you *can* see in that way. *Paṇḍitāḥ sama-darśinaḥ*. If you see on the *spiritual platform*, then you can see that every one of us is spirit soul. It is just that because of our different *karma*, our different past activities, we are now covered with different kinds of material dress. The dog is actually a soul, and a learned scholar is also a soul, but they are covered with different bodies. So one who sees the soul—he can see all living beings on the same level. But one who sees only their different bodies—he cannot see properly. Spiritual vision is the basic principle of equality and unity. Otherwise, I am seeing you are Sikh, you are seeing I am Hindu, someone else is seeing “He is Christian,” “Muhammadan,” and so on and so on. . . . But nobody is seeing that nobody is Sikh, nobody is Hindu, nobody is Christian—that everyone is pure soul. So unless people attain that vision, how can they have equality and unity? There is no possibility.

Yogī: That’s agreed, but—

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So that requires education. *Brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu* [Bg. 18.54]: when one is spiritually realized, then he can see equally. But that requires training in how to attain the spiritual platform. At the present moment everyone is on the bodily platform. Everyone is thinking, “I am this body.” So how can you have unity? We may attempt, but it is not possible.

Yogī: There are a lot of misunderstandings and misconceptions given against each other.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Misconceptions. . . . For instance, you have got a

different kind of body from mine, and I have got a different kind of body from yours. So I may say, “No, I don’t like you. . . .” Naturally, when we see superficially, then this tendency will go on. But when we see inside—introspectively—then there will be unity. That requires education. So . . .

Yogī: All right. Come and educate.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: [*Laughs.*] That education is already there in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. In the beginning Kṛṣṇa immediately says, *dehino ’smin yathā*

“Suppose you come here—I welcome you. If I go to your place, you welcome me. Similarly, in a big assembly people show one another respect. But how will you unite them?”

dehe kaumāraṁ yauvanaṁ jarā tathā dehāntara-praptiḥ [Bg. 2.13]. *Asmin dehe*: each of us is actually a soul—*this is the beginning of education*. But there are many “learned scholars” who do not believe in the soul. They don’t agree on anything else, but they agree that there is no soul. . . . Big, big professors. In Moscow I met one Professor Kotovsky, and he said, “No, there is no soul. After the body is finished, everything is finished.”

Yogī: But they don’t have any experience of the soul.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is their position. So if you assemble some spiritually inexperienced men, then how will they come to the point of unity?

Yogī: What we are trying to do is . . . we are giving out a call to all . . . the learned, the unlearned. The basic fact is, there is a desire somewhere in the ether . . . that everybody wants to feel each other. And they have not done anything good by negating each other, talking negatively. They have not gained anything . . . they are realizing now. Otherwise—

Śrīla Prabhupāda: What will be the basic principle of unity? That is the point.

Yogī: The point of basic unity is respect for each other.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is going on. Suppose you come here—I welcome you. If I go to your place, you welcome me. That respect is going on.

Yogī: Yes . . . that’s right . . . That is between two individuals.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Similarly, whenever people come together in a big assembly, they show one another respect. That is no problem. But how will you unite them?

Yogī: Gradually . . . one by one, one by one . . . they will understand. Love is the main point. That’s what they don’t understand. But when they find love from you and they find love from me . . . love from people, love from everybody else . . . You know. You can take a mango stick and beat somebody, but you can take mango pulp and eat. . . . I’m a member of an inter-religious council, and finally . . . after two years . . . the president admitted, “I was a fanatic. I could never understand how my God and anyone else’s God could be the same. But now I understand that God is one.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, you see. So if God is one, and if every one of us is concerned with God, then why is there disagreement?

Yogī: Well, everyone has a limited ego. So we understand that.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. The conference should ask the question, If there is a God, and if God is one, then *who is that God—what are His characteristics?* That should be discussed.

Yogī: That’s what I say . . . that what we are trying to do is provide a platform. The fundamental idea is, What you are doing is God’s will. These people who are following you . . . this is God’s will. And those who will receive it . . . that is God’s will. . . . But it is not that everybody sees God’s will.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Why not? God’s will is open. Kṛṣṇa says, *mana-manā bhava mad-bhaktō mad-yājī mām namaskuru* [Bg. 9.34]. God says, “Always think of Me. Just become My devotee. Worship Me and offer your respect to Me.” *This is God’s will*. And, “If you do this, you are coming back to Me.” God’s will is not secret; it is open. He declares it. But the thing is that everyone has got his different God.

Yogī: Well, the question is very fundamental. Everybody has his own God, so let everybody bring their own God and understanding—

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No! *God’s* understanding is that He is *one*—one God for everybody. So we should come to that understanding and just do what God

requests. For instance, He says *man-manāḥ*: “Always think of Me.”

Yogī: Mm-hmm. That’s true.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So people should think of Him. *Mad-yāji mām namaskuru*: “You become My devotee, and worship Me, and offer respect to Me.” That’s all. So we are teaching our students, “Here is God: Kṛṣṇa. You chant Hare Kṛṣṇa; always think of Him. Just offer your respect and worship Him. In this way become a devotee.” We do not teach anything else. That’s all. And they are doing that, and they are getting the result. We do not say, “Sit down, press your nose, and meditate on this, or...” No. It’s a simple thing. We say, “Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Here is God, so please think of Him.” As soon as you chant “Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa...” everyone has got the beat. That means you are thinking of Kṛṣṇa. . . . And then we are offering respect. We go to the temple and offer obeisances. . . . It is a very simple thing. So we accept Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Now, if you don’t accept, then you must be concocting your own idea of God. Do that, if you like. But I think Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism—*he* accepted Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme. Is it a fact?

Yogī: We have in our main scripture the *Graṇtha-sāhib* a lot of things about Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: How is Kṛṣṇa accepted? Is He accepted as the Supreme Lord?

Yogī: Kṛṣṇa is accepted as an incarnation of God.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: An incarnation of God and God—there is no difference.

Yogī: Also there is a fundamental message in that, that as God created everyone. . . . God created all of us. . . . so God (whatever we want to call it. . . . “ultimate reality,” “beyond,” “the truth”) . . . What our problem at this time is. . . . is that humanity is divided in many forms, and it is the inner hatred which people want to expel out.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So if Guru Nanak has accepted that Kṛṣṇa is God and we have accepted that Kṛṣṇa is God, then why not put forward this God—one God?

Yogī: “One God” is all right. That everybody will agree on.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That one God—Kṛṣṇa—says, “*I am the one Supreme Lord*”:

*mattaḥ parataram nānyat
kiñcid asti dhanañjaya
mayi sarvam idaṁ protama
sūtre mañi-gaṇā iva*

“There is no truth superior to Me.

Everything rests upon Me, as pearls are strung on a thread.” [Bg. 7.7] And all the great spiritual masters—Rāmānujācārya, Madhvācārya, Viṣṇusvāmī, Śaṅkarācārya, Guru Nanak—they have accepted that God is Kṛṣṇa. So why not present this God all over the world?

Yogī: But the question is very simple. Present it along with the other Gods. The time has come for a mutual presentation.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. A “mutual presentation”—simply talking—will not do.

“A ‘mutual presentation’ — simply talking— will not do. If Kṛṣṇa is God, why not present, ‘Here is God—His name is Kṛṣṇa’? If they say no, we have to ask, ‘What is your concept of God?’ ”

If Kṛṣṇa is God, why not present, “Here is God—His name is Kṛṣṇa”?

Yogī: Yes, but understand one thing. Everybody here in this world. . . . four billion people. . . . everybody does not have that spirit.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: I mean to say that every religious sect believes in God. If we present, “Here is God; you are seeking after God—here is God,” now, what will they say?

Yogī: Well, some will say, “Yes, it is.” Some will say no.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: If they say no, then we have to ask, “Why do you say no? What is your conception of God?”

Yogī: Well, that is what we want to understand, basically. That is what we are talking about. . . . this one thing. Your realization about God is a very universal realization. Somebody else on this human level may be very imperfect. But after all, the imperfect and the perfect have to be brought together—

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. The imperfect are imperfect. Unless one has a perfect understanding, he cannot understand God. God is perfect. So you have to come to that platform to understand. Those who are imperfect—they cannot

understand. That is not possible. God says,

*manuṣyānām sahasreṣu
kaścid yatati siddhaye
yatatām api siddhānām
kaścin mām vetti tattvataḥ*
[Bg. 7.3]

Siddha means one who has become perfect, spiritually realized. So Kṛṣṇa says, *manuṣyānām sahasreṣu*: “Out of many millions of persons. . . .” *Kaścid yatati siddhaye*: “. . . perhaps only one is trying to become perfect.” And *yatatām api siddhānām*: “Out of millions of those who have become perfect, perhaps one can understand Me—Kṛṣṇa.”

Understanding God is for the perfect, not for the common man. *Ācāryopāsanam*: the common man should accept the perfect spiritual teachers. For instance, the Sikhs should follow Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak says, “Yes, Kṛṣṇa is God.” So they should accept, that’s all. Not that every Sikh is expected to be as perfect as Guru Nanak. It is not expected that every Sikh will understand Kṛṣṇa. But they should follow Guru Nanak—then they’ll understand. *Mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ*: the paths the great spiritual teachers have shown—*these* paths will show us the way. All the great spiritual teachers—they accept Kṛṣṇa. So we have to follow; otherwise, what will we understand? We must follow the great spiritual teachers.

Yogī: That doesn’t solve the problems of the world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: First of all, if we accept, “Here is God,” then it will solve our problems. But we have to accept. . . . A student accepts that his teacher has knowledge, and he solves his problems with that knowledge. But if we do not accept the great spiritual teachers. . . .

Yogī: No. . . . we may be perfect or imperfect. The question is very simple. There are four billion people on this earth—

Śrīla Prabhupāda: And therefore, not all four billion are expected to understand God. They should follow the leaders.

Yogī: That is what we are trying to do. We are going to get the leaders together.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The real leaders—the great spiritual teachers—are already there. Now, for instance, Guru Nanak says, “Kṛṣṇa is God.” So will you and your followers follow Guru Nanak or your own whims?

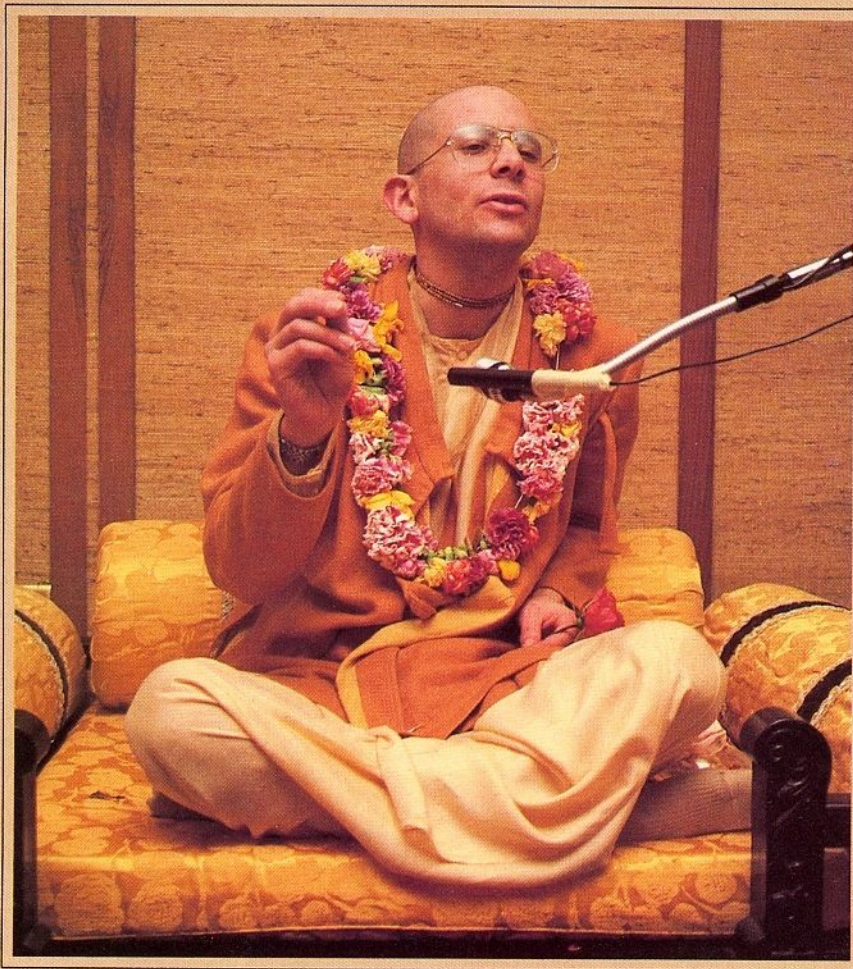
Yogī: No, no. . . . We will follow the instructions of. . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak says, “Kṛṣṇa is God.”

(continued on page 33)

HOW TO GET FREE OF FALSE EGO

In this talk, His Divine Grace Rāmeśvara Swami points out that an erroneous self-concept can keep us from self-fulfillment.



The original consciousness of the self cannot be awakened as long as it is contaminated by material affection. The soul in his pure state does not want anything material: he doesn't want a big home; he doesn't want a fancy car; he doesn't want the trappings of material life; he doesn't want to be surrounded by material possessions, absorbed in ma-

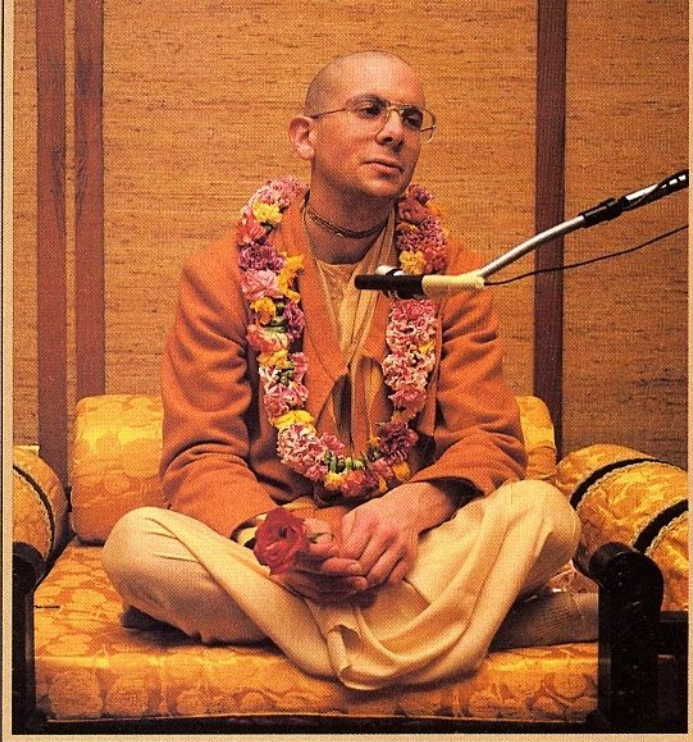
HIS DIVINE GRACE RĀMEŚVARA SWAMI is one of eleven spiritual masters that ISKCON's founder-ācārya Śrīla Prabhupāda selected to initiate new disciples. He is ISKCON's director for Japan, Hawaii, Colorado and Southern California. He is also a trustee of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.

terial thoughts, caring only for material friends and relatives. All this has nothing to do with the soul.

These are the aspirations of persons haunted by ghosts. Haunted—this is a very appropriate description. A man can sometimes become possessed. This is actually possible. The ghost will come at a time when the living entity's senses are not under his control—in a moment of intoxication or in a moment of deep sleep. At that time the ghost will cover the soul. And once the soul is covered, the ghost enters and possesses the material body. Under the possession of a

ghost, a man behaves in a crazy way—not at all in the way he would normally behave. His body is now moving under the control of someone else. The soul is inside the body, but he's unable to control it. It's being directed by some other personality, the ghost, who has different motives and desires.

This is a suitable analogy. We know that the soul doesn't desire anything material, yet we see that everyone is actively trying to acquire material opulence—wealth, beauty, family, friends, society, home, education, fame, prestige, honor—as much as possible. So



“This is all foolishness, dreaming, hallucination—to think we’re going to be happy in attempting to do the very things we’ve been doing for millions of years, in millions of bodies. We’ve already tried to do all these things before, when we were royalty and when we were worms.”

everyone is acting in a way which is completely contrary to the real self, the soul. It’s as if they were haunted by ghosts.

The “ghost” is the false ego—the conception that “I am this mind, I am this body.” Everyone is under the spell of this false ego. Sometimes we say that everyone is under the spell of the witch called *māyā*, illusion. Everyone is sitting on the lap of *māyā*, and she’s playing with them. Sometimes we say that everyone is being tossed about on the waves of the ocean of *māyā*, or sometimes we say that everyone is just like a feather being tossed in the wind of *māyā*.

Because our material desires, our material affections, are misguiding us, our real self is unable to feel satisfied. Thinking that this material body is the self, we are simply being misdirected at every moment. As soon as we feel a bodily urge—“Oh, I’m hungry. Oh, I’m sleepy”—we think, “Oh, my dear body, don’t worry. Let me immediately make some arrangement for you.” As soon as our mind wants to go to New York or London, “Oh, my dear mind, don’t be in anxiety. I’ll immediately make all arrangements. Please don’t worry.” In this way the living being becomes the servant of the body and mind.

As soon as the tongue wants to eat something nice or sweet, we say, “Oh, my dear tongue, immediately I’ll serve you.” We’re serving a slab of flesh so faithfully. Forgetting to serve God, Kṛṣṇa, we have become a servant of this slab of flesh, the tongue, and also of the

genitals. This is a haunted life. It’s as if some other force were controlling everything we do. This is due to our false ego—the idea that “I am this body.”

We have to understand that there is more to life than the bodily activities of eating, sleeping, and mating. There’s more to life than enjoying ordinary friendship, family, and society. There’s more to life than just satisfying our animalistic urges. That’s the symptom of a wise man—he has come to the conclusion that there is more to life than just living like an animal. A wise man can see that the animals have an ample supply of food, ample opportunity for sex, ample arrangement for sleeping. They have ample time for all these things, yet they are not happy.

But one who is intoxicated by materialistic illusion is so blind that he cannot see things as they are. Blinded by the intoxication of material opulence, people can’t understand they are living like animals—simply eating, sleeping, mating, and defending. The dazzling material world intoxicates us. Material wealth, material prestige, material power, material beauty, material education, material family and reputation—these things intoxicate us into an illusion, and we forget the goal of life.

We’re subjected to a dreamlike conception of who we really are. A crazy man might be thinking, “I’ve become Napoleon. I am the ruler of Europe.” But there isn’t any difference between the crazy man who thinks he’s Napoleon

and the so-called sane man who thinks, “I am very rich. I am powerful. I am the president of General Motors.” What is the difference? Actually, there is no difference. He’s dreaming just as much as the man who thinks he’s Napoleon, because his bodily identification has nothing to do with his real self, the soul. The more a man becomes preoccupied with these material conceptions and desires, the more intoxicated he becomes. He hallucinates about who he is and what he’s doing.

So these material things are not assets. They are *anārtas*—unwanted things. Actually, they are disqualifications for spiritual life. A wise man sees all this. He sees that there is more. There must be more. Obviously we can’t ever be satisfied by the animalistic existence of eating, sleeping, sex, and fighting. No one is satisfied with that. There must be something else. So when we realize this, we begin to search for spiritual happiness, spiritual satisfaction. Then we have to take up following the codes of spiritual life.

The first thing we have to understand is that we cannot achieve our goal unless we first free ourselves from all material attachment. We have to be prepared to give up our selfish desires in order to become qualified spiritually. We have to give up the desires of our false, bodily ego for the desires of our real, spiritual ego. We cannot have both. There’s no arguing about it. There’s no changing it.

If we are actually searching for spiri-

tual perfection, spiritual knowledge, and spiritual satisfaction, then the first point is that we cannot achieve it until we give up our material hankering, our material attachment. That is why in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement we follow four rules—no meat-eating, no gambling, no intoxication, no illicit sex. As we gradually give up these things, we can become more and more advanced in spiritual life. That is the key to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

We'll never experience *ānanda*, spiritual bliss, if we foolishly cling to our bodily desires, thinking, "I have just one more thing I want to experience. I have just one more thing I want to go through, just one more stage of material life." We're fools for thinking like that. In our past lives we've already had all kinds of sex. We've had millions of years of family life. We've had millions of years of eating all kinds of nonsense. We've had millions of years of serving our senses. Why do we say, "Just let me have one more thing, just one more chance to see if I can be happy by a material arrangement. Give me just one more chance to enjoy my genitals." You'll never put out the fire of material life by pouring on the gasoline of bodily sense gratification. Wake up to the truth. Become wise. There's no real happiness in animal pleasure, in animal indulgence. We've already gone through it.

Of course we might think, "Well, just let me try once more, because I haven't gone through it in this type of body. Now I'm a human being." Or we might think, "I may have been a human before, but this is a different type of human body. It must be at least a slightly different experience." This is all foolishness, dreaming, hallucination—to think we're going to be happy in attempting to do the very things we've *been* doing for millions of years, in millions of bodies. We may have a human body now, but we've already tried to do all these things before, when we were royalty and when we were worms.

Give it all up, Kṛṣṇa says. Come to the position of being wise. Realize that the goal is spiritual satisfaction, spiritual enlightenment, and then take up the process to achieve this. But don't do it whimsically. The whimsical approach to spiritual life is nothing more than slavery to the mind. Actually, we will experience spiritual advancement only as much as we give up our material attachments.

There's no way around it. We have to be prepared to give up all our false hopes that there's something for us to enjoy in this material world. There's not.

Kṛṣṇa tells us in *Bhagavad-gītā*, "From the highest planet to the lowest, everywhere you will find misery, repeated birth and death." We have to become convinced of this and give up our hope that there is anything in this material world that will make us happy. When we're enlightened in that way, we become satisfied. Then our original consciousness is reawakened. Then we enter fully into the loving network of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Then we experience fully the spiritual pleasure energy of God.

But we cannot experience this unless we come up to the spiritual platform. We have to give up our illusory dreams once and for all. If we cling to our material plans, then Kṛṣṇa sees that we are putting other desires before Him and He doesn't reveal Himself as much to us.

So this is what we have to work on.

This is what we have to do. If we can give up our material plans we'll someday come to the position of the great devotee Yāmunācārya, who said, "Since I have been engaged in the transcendental loving service of Kṛṣṇa, realizing ever-new pleasure in Him, whenever I think of sex pleasure I spit at the thought, and my lips curl with distaste." Of course, Kṛṣṇa does say in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that there is such a thing as sex according to religious principles. But when we finally experience spiritual pleasure, we'll remember our former pleasures and see that they were nothing.

In other words, it's a question of our desire. Everything is resting on our desire. Now our desire is impure, but we can purify it by hearing this philosophy, and by chanting the holy names of God, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. And when our desire is pure, then we'll fully experience *ānanda*—unending, loving spiritual exchange between the soul and the Supreme Soul.

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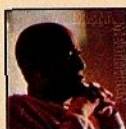


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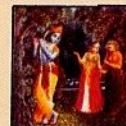
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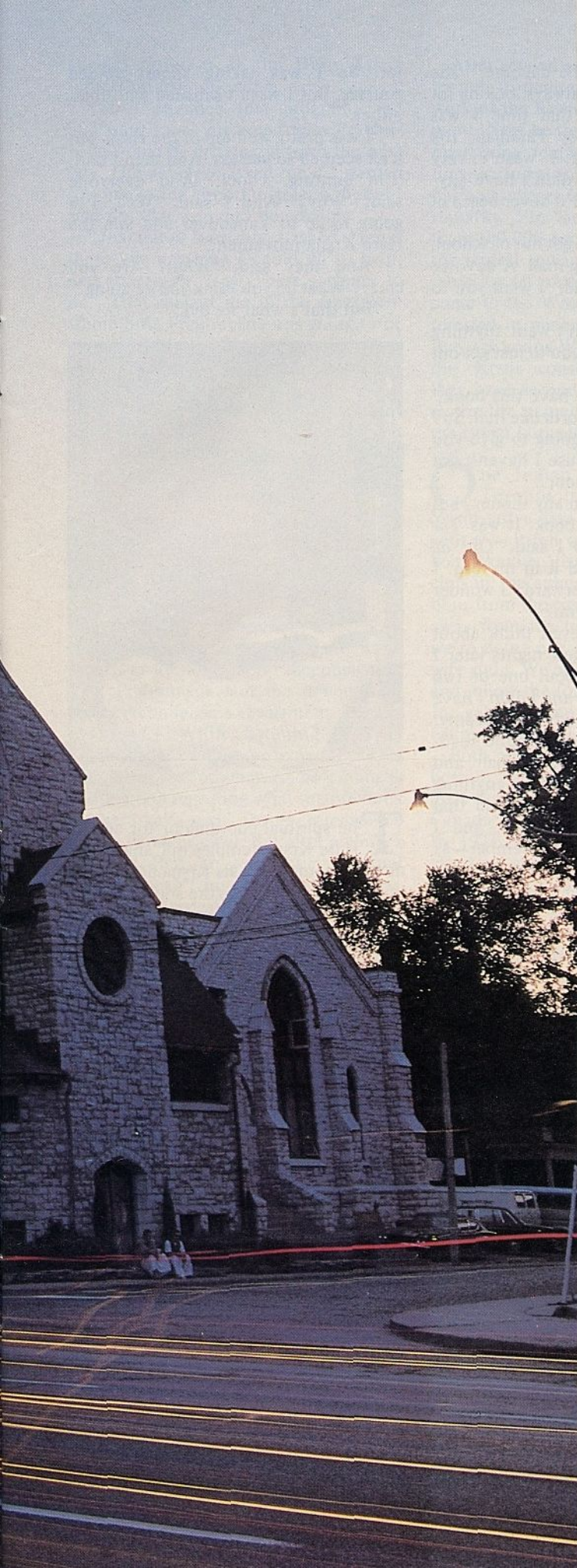
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The Hare Kṛṣṇa People of Canada

A nurse, an executive, a health spa owner, an engineer, and an architect tell how and why they joined the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.



Before joining the Vancouver Hare Kṛṣṇa temple, Śraddhā dāśī was a nurse. “I used to work all the time with people who were dying,” she says, “and at the time of death you can almost see the spirit soul leaving the body—it’s kind of like water pouring out of a cup. Especially when somebody dies very quickly. The hands and feet lose their consciousness, the extremities of

the body get cold—you could stick a pin in them and they wouldn’t even feel it—until gradually the only place that’s really warm at all is around the heart. It’s just like a wave. All the consciousness just goes out of the body.

“So I was wondering, ‘Could we really be just these bodies—alive one minute and dead the next?’ And I was realizing, ‘We *can’t* be these bodies. We’re whatever it is that makes the difference between a live body and a dead body.’ But I couldn’t find anything that agreed with that until I read Prabhupāda’s books.

“One time this lady was dying. She wasn’t a very old lady, either. But somehow she just started hemorrhaging internally. I knew she was, because of her symptoms. So I phoned up the doctor—it was Friday night—and I said, ‘Hello, Dr. So-and-so?’

“He said, ‘Oh, hello. I’m not here.’”

A downtown landmark that dates back to the turn of the century is now Toronto’s Hare Kṛṣṇa temple. The white limestone structure overlooks Avenue Road, one of the city’s main arteries.

"I said, 'Pardon me?'"

"He said, 'I'm not here. I'm away for a week.'"

"I said, 'What do you mean you're not here? I'm talking to you right now, and this person really needs a doctor.' As nurses, we can't do anything we're not authorized to do. We can't send a person to a hospital or give oxygen or anything, unless the doctor says we can do it. We just have to watch until we get authorization."

"But he said, 'Well, you'll just have to find someone else.'"

"So I phoned another doctor, and he said, 'OK, I'll be in right away.' But he never came in. And so I just kind of sat by the lady's bed. And she said to me, 'Nurse, nurse, I'm dying! What am I supposed to do?'"

"I said, 'I don't know.' And I just realized: 'Well, what *is* she supposed to do?' And actually I realized, 'Hey, I'm going to die, too... I'm going to die, too.'"

"I sat there holding her hand, and after she died I wrapped up her body and put it away, and I thought, 'Wow... What could I have said to her?' You can't say, 'Oh, don't worry, dear. You have a thousand dollars in the bank, and you have a nice family.' It doesn't make any difference. Nothing makes any difference at that time."

"And so after a while I realized that there's *no point* to anything in the material world at all. There's no point at all. Actually, I couldn't find any reason for living the way people do. Because their death is just inevitable. They're all just going to die anyway. And it makes everything kind of useless. All these things people are so caught up in—but they could just die at any second."

Soon this understanding came even closer to home. "After I had been a devotee for a few months," Śraddhā relates, "my sister—she was fifteen, she was going to be an Olympic swimmer, and she was so beautiful—she got hit by a car, and she became a vegetable."

"And so they decided to use her body. They hooked it up to machines, and they used it for a whole bunch of tests, and then they pulled the plug out. I was really upset. And I was thinking, 'How could she die? My *sister*. I grew up with her. That's amazing.' And then I started reading the second chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, and I realized that death is coming at any minute. It's sitting right behind you all the time. So if you think like that, you don't waste any time."

Śraddhā had first come in touch with Kṛṣṇa consciousness while still in nursing training. "I used to work night shift

and go to college in the daytime," she says. "Actually, I was always looking for something more. At that time I was reading some *sūtras* by Patañjali. It's very impersonal, and I wasn't very satisfied with it. But I didn't have anything else to read, and I'd never heard of Hare Kṛṣṇa."

"One time I had just got out of school, and I was at a shopping mall. A devotee approached me and said, 'I want you to have this book.'"

"I said, 'Look, I don't want anything to do with you. I want you to just get out of here.'"

"He said, 'You *must* have this book,' and we went back and forth like that. So I said to him, 'I'm not going to give you any money for it, because I haven't got any money. I'm very poor.'"

"So I didn't give him any money, but he made me take the book. It was *The Nectar of Devotion*. So I said, 'Oh, *all right*,' and I just tossed it in my bag. I remember thinking afterward, 'I wonder why I was so rude to him?'"

"Anyway, I didn't even think about the book. But then a few nights later I was working. It was about one or two o'clock in the morning, and I didn't have anything to do—everybody was sleeping, dying... We were sitting around reading. I finished reading Patañjali and threw it down, so I didn't have anything to read. And then I remembered that book, *The Nectar of Devotion*, and I started reading it. And I remember—as soon as I started reading it, it made so much sense. I remember I started chanting that very night. While I was getting people up, cleaning their beds, and so on, I started chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa."

"I went home the next day, and met my boyfriend. (We're married now; his name's Bhakti-rasa.) I remember saying, 'Have you seen this book? Have you heard about Kṛṣṇa?'"

"He told me he had. He used to meet the devotees all the time in Toronto. 'I know the Hare Kṛṣṇa people,' he said. 'They're really nice. I don't like the way they force you to take things in the street, but they're really very nice people.'"

After that, Śraddhā relates, she got married and moved to Calgary. Her husband would sometimes go to bookstores and get her books about Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but they didn't see the Hare Kṛṣṇa people again until four years later.

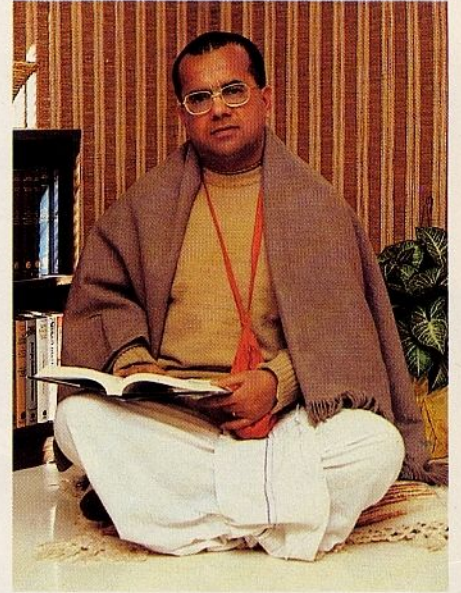
"Then we met some devotees, and we decided that we were going to join. I was at another hospital by that time. I'd finished my training. Also, I was enrolled in school again. I'd gotten a scholarship to go on and become a doc-

tor. So I was taking some premed courses. But I wasn't satisfied with that, either."

"I was pretty well top of the class, but it all seemed so useless. And then I said, 'I'm quitting school.' And everyone said, 'Why?' And I said, 'Well, I'm going to go to Vancouver and join the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.'"

"And they said, '*What?* Are you crazy? What do you think you're doing?'"

"But that's what we did."



The spiritual coordinator for all the Hare Kṛṣṇa temples in Canada is a devotee named Gopāla Kṛṣṇa dāsa. Born in Delhi in 1946, he is the son of a commander in the Indian navy. Gopāla Kṛṣṇa earned a B.A. at Delhi University and a postgraduate business degree at the Sorbonne, where he studied for two years on a French government scholarship. Later he studied at the University of Toronto and received his master's degree in business management from McGill University, in Montreal.

"My upbringing was not at all religious," Gopāla Kṛṣṇa says. "Actually, before I came to Kṛṣṇa consciousness I was very materialistic. But by November of 1967, a great urge had developed in me to discover spiritual life. One day on my way home I threw away my cigarette packet, and a few days later I gave up eating meat. The last movie I saw was some time that month, and I also stopped visiting the discotheques. This was all about six months before I met Śrīla Prabhupāda."

"I started visiting different churches and temples in Toronto, hoping to find some guidance about God. And then, after I had moved to Montreal, I received a card inviting me to come to a

special program at the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple on May 30, 1968.

“So I attended that program, and afterward I was informed Śrīla Prabhupāda would be arriving in town the next day. The devotees asked me if I wanted to come to the airport to greet him, but I said no, that wouldn’t be possible.

“Just out of formality, I asked them if there was anything I could do to help, and they said, ‘Yes! There’s plenty to do.’ They guided me to the apartment where Śrīla Prabhupāda was going to be staying, and the first assignment they gave me was to clean the windows and shelves of his apartment.

“Frankly, I didn’t relish this assignment, but I felt I was stuck. So on that very first day I worked nonstop from two or three in the afternoon till about nine in the evening. After finishing my cleaning duties, I returned to the temple, which was about five minutes away, and the devotees were so pleased with me that they offered me a glass of banana-flavored milk.”

After Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived in Montreal, Gopāla Kṛṣṇa began attending classes in the temple and meetings with Śrīla Prabhupāda and the devotees at Śrīla Prabhupāda’s apartment in the evenings. “While listening to Śrīla Prabhupāda, I would say to myself, ‘This man is not very original. All he’s doing is quoting and repeating what the previous teachers have said.’ To me, intelligence meant being original. But after a while I realized that an authentic spiritual master doesn’t invent something new, but instead repeats the spiritual knowledge given in the scriptures and transmitted to him by his own spiritual master. This is the secret of spiritual understanding.

“I was coming to the temple regularly,” Gopāla Kṛṣṇa says, “and just after the first two or three weeks I knew that this was what I was looking for.”

After joining the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, Gopāla Kṛṣṇa continued to work at his job as a senior market research analyst for Pepsi-cola, and later he worked in a similar capacity for a major pharmaceutical company. His work, however, was not for himself but for Kṛṣṇa. He contributed his earnings for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This, Śrīla Prabhupāda explained, was the process of *yoga*—to work for Kṛṣṇa’s service, without being attached to enjoying the fruits of the work for oneself. While working at his regular job, he also organized the first publications about Kṛṣṇa consciousness in French. (He speaks French, English, and Hindi fluently.)

After several years, Gopāla Kṛṣṇa left his job to dedicate his full time to the work of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Now he divides his time between overseeing temples and book publication, in India and in Canada. “Canada has a very large Indian community,” he remarks. “In fact, Toronto has more than 100,000 people of Indian origin—the largest Indian community in North America. Of course, when Indian people come to the West, they’re primarily interested in material benefits, but when they see young Westerners taking part in this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, they have second thoughts and start to realize the tremendous spiritual value of their own heritage.”

One Indian devotee residing in Toronto is thirty-four-year-old Viṣṇu-tattva dāsa, a former Mr. Ontario, with a wall full of trophies and a black belt in karate. Viṣṇu-tattva owns a health club in the suburb of Barrie, about an hour from the city. “I’m forty-five miles away from the temple,” he says, “but we’re doing our devotional service, my wife and I. We offer all our food to Kṛṣṇa and follow the four regulative principles [no gambling, no intoxication, no meat-eating, and no illicit sex] very strictly.”

Both Viṣṇu-tattva and his wife were born in Fiji and come from Gujarati Indian families. In 1970 they moved to Canada and became Canadian citizens. In 1971 Viṣṇu-tattva began managing the three-story health club, with its gymnasium, swimming pool, sauna, whirlpool, sun room, and dozens of exercise machines. Later he bought out the owner and took over the business himself.



Each month Viṣṇu-tattva sets aside roughly a thousand dollars to cover his family’s expenses, plus something extra to keep expanding the business. Beyond that, he gives everything to help spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness (fifty percent goes to the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple in Toronto and fifty percent to the temple in Delhi).

Viṣṇu-tattva says that indirectly his body building helped him become Kṛṣṇa conscious. “In my younger days, exercising was what kept me away from all kinds of degrading activities. Because of these exercises, I kept away from drinking and even the women. I just didn’t have time for illicit activities. I mean, I knew that all those things were wrong, and that if I did them I would lose my body’s shape. And so psychologically this kept me strong.”

It was his wife who first brought him to the temple in Toronto. “My wife was always a devotee,” Viṣṇu-tattva says. “Even as a young girl she used to get up at six each morning and water the *tulasī* plant [a plant sacred to Lord Kṛṣṇa]. Starting from age eleven—every morning at six o’clock.

“After she heard about the temple in Toronto, she said, ‘Let’s go to the temple.’ And I said, ‘I’m too busy today.’ But she said, ‘Let’s go.’ And she kept bugging me for six months in that way, until I said, ‘OK, we’ll go.’”

At the temple he met Viśvakarmā dāsa, the temple president. “Viśvakarmā invited me to come in and have some *prasāda* [food offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa]. We left a donation and took some books, and I started reading the *Bhāgavatam*.”

Gradually, Viṣṇu-tattva’s Kṛṣṇa consciousness began to revive. “Having been raised in Indian families,” he says, “we knew about Kṛṣṇa, but I had a *Māyāvādī* [impersonal] conception, because I thought Brahmā, Śiva, and Viṣṇu [Kṛṣṇa] were one. But in his books Śrīla Prabhupāda made it obvious that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the source of Brahmā and Śiva. So by reading the *Bhāgavatam* we developed a solid, well-grounded trust in Prabhupāda and in Lord Kṛṣṇa. We understood that Kṛṣṇa is the source of everything, that everything emanates from Him.

“Whenever I felt any anxiety about how my spiritual life was going,” Viṣṇu-tattva recalls, “I would call Viśvakarmā, and he’d clear things up for me. Then, too, with my wife already being a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, we just carried on directly from there.”

Tom Varadi is a process engineer at an oil refinery, and his wife Suzanne is an architect with a firm of

consulting engineers. Tom and Suzanne began chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa regularly a year ago. "We started with twenty minutes a day," Tom says, "and as more realizations kept coming to us, we kept chanting more each day."

"Before we got interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we had been involved in various types of *yoga* and meditation," says Tom. "We appreciated talking with devotees, but we always thought, you know, 'Here you have the mountain, and there are various ways to get to the top of the mountain.' We believed that each way was just as valid as any other way—until we realized some of the

things that were going on with some of these *yoga* and meditation groups."

Tom and Suzanne had been practicing a popular form of meditation. "We'd been meditating for quite a while—seven years. First they had told me, 'You'll be a better businessman,' or a better . . . you know, whatever you wanted to be. But I was a bit more serious than that. I didn't want to be just a better businessman. Of course, at the beginning it was all laid out in a pleasant format. And we were quite young, so we went along."

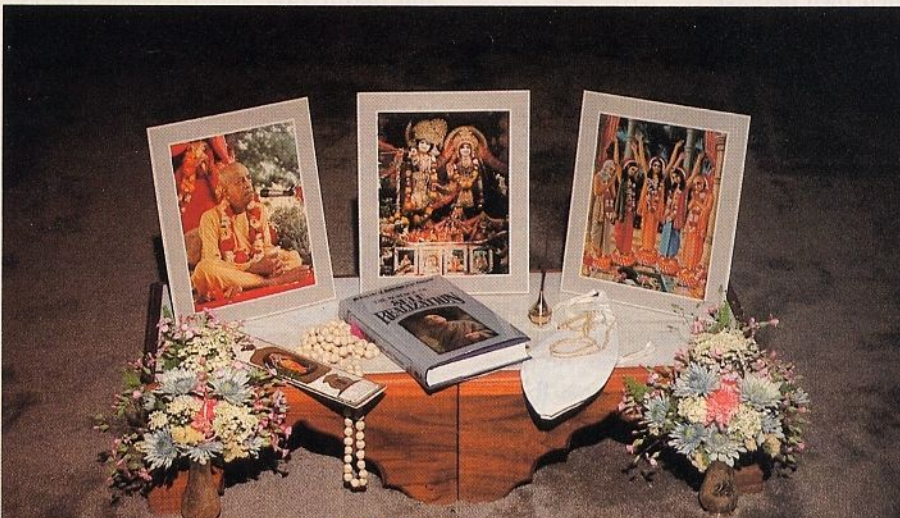
"When we started," says Tom, "they told us things like, 'We promise you'll have enlightenment in five to eight

years. We guarantee it.' But after five years we thought, 'Well, where is it?'

"We started to see how shallow the whole thing was. About that time they started introducing new tricks to try to get more people. . . ."

"The *siddhi* business—trying to sell us on levitation and mystic powers—that's what finally did it," says Suzanne. "We both looked at each other and said, 'You know, four thousand dollars is what they're charging to learn this *siddhi* program.' Slowly. They charge you maybe a hundred dollars a shot . . . two or three hundred dollars. And you have to keep going from one course to the next to get to the *siddhi*."

Tom says, "I have an old acquaintance who started meditating at the same time I did. He even became a teacher, and he likes to show us pictures of people flying and all sorts of things. But we tell him,



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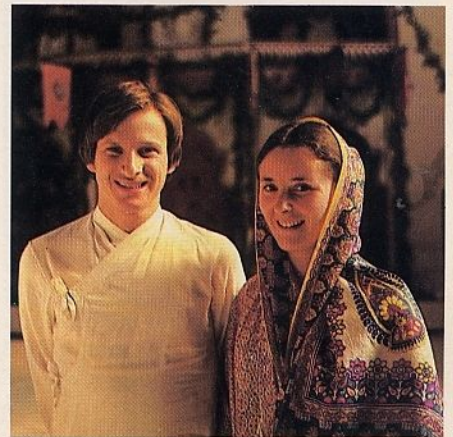
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'So what? Even if it were true, so what? What's the point?'

Tom and Suzanne began investigating other methods of meditation, and gradually (it's a long story) they took to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Says Suzanne, "The more you chant, the more you realize about life . . . and about yourself."

Tom says, "I feel like I'm being put into the right position, sort of put in my place, so to speak. Your outlook really changes—I guess according to your devotion in chanting—and you begin to find your relationship with God."

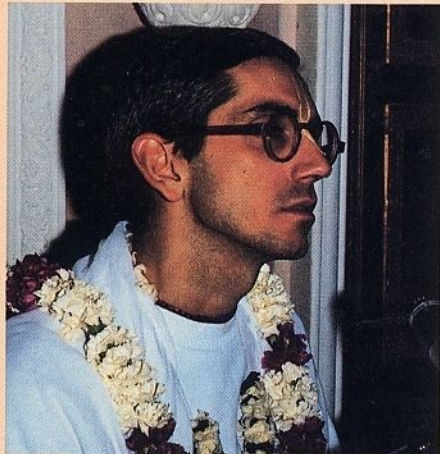
"I know that the world is completely controlled," says Suzanne. "You can see it. That's another thing from chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. You *see* the perfection in Kṛṣṇa's arrangement of *everything*. You see the whole thing laid out before you. Things fit together like a puzzle—perfectly. By that process of chanting, the realizations follow, and you can just put the puzzle together. It's a slow process at first, and then it accelerates the more you chant."



Every Town and Village

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

New Cultural Center for London



His Divine Grace Jayatīrtha Mahārāja, initiating *guru* for the United Kingdom, noted that the center has been planned for decades.

London—Just off Oxford Street, English devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa have opened a new cultural center that includes a temple, a theater, and a vegetarian restaurant.

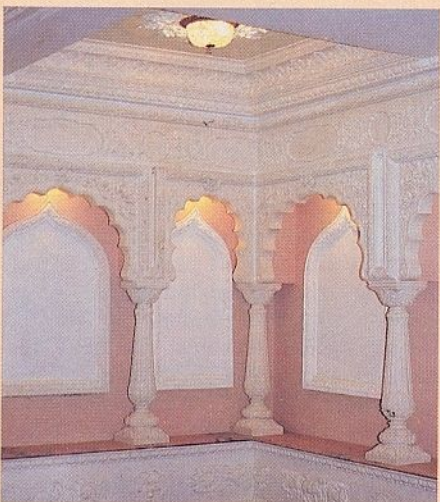
The six-story building near Soho Square was already a minor landmark, and the government had ordered it preserved for its historical and architectural value. Now that its interior has been remodeled into a replica of an ancient Vedic temple, the building has become even more of an attraction. Says one leading British architect, "This is the first time I've seen an interior recreate with such a degree of authenticity one of the great art forms of the ancient world."

The grand opening took place on the anniversary of the day that Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura (1874–1936), made his appearance in this world. Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was the first Kṛṣṇa conscious spiritual master to send his disciples to teach in the Western countries, and he specifically wanted to maintain a cultural center in London. But though he sent several followers there in the 1930s, they returned to India unsuccessful.

At the opening ceremony His Divine Grace Jayatīrtha Mahārāja, ISKCON's initiating *guru* for the United Kingdom, noted with pleasure that the wishes of Śrīla Prabhupāda and Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī are now being fulfilled.



The greenish-hued building is just off Oxford Street, near Soho Square. It contains a temple, theatre, and restaurant.

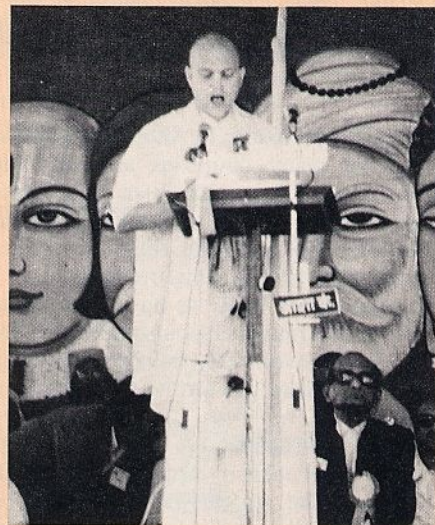


The interior has been completely remodeled. Now it is an authentic replica of an ancient Indian temple.

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His Divine Grace Jayapatāka Swami

ISKCON Guru Addresses World Hindu Conference

India—In late January more than one hundred thousand people, many of them *yogīs* and monks, journeyed to the pilgrimage center of Allahabad, in southern Uttar Pradesh. The events that drew the crowds were Magh Mela (a yearly transcendental fair that dates back many centuries) and the Second World Hindu Conference. Guest speakers included the Dalai Lama, the current spiritual leaders of the Śāṅkara and Madhva disciplic successions, and Śrīla Jayapatāka Swami, coordinator for ISKCON in East India, Bangladesh, and Nepal and one of the eleven spiritual masters that ISKCON's founder-*ācārya* Śrīla Prabhupāda selected to initiate new disciples.

Allahabad is the place where the sacred rivers Ganges, Yamunā, and Sarasvatī come together, and for spiritual purification and upliftment, thousands bathed in the waters. Yet in his address, His Divine Grace Jayapatāka Swami pointed out that the most powerful spiritual practice—the one the Vedic literatures recommend for this age—is chanting and hearing the glories of the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa. The crowd responded with cheering and applause, and all through the festivities devotees of Kṛṣṇa chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and distributed thousands of volumes of Śrīla Prabhupāda's translations and commentaries on the Vedic literatures.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

The “Secular State”

This conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and India’s ambassador to Sweden took place in Stockholm, in the fall of 1973.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: In America and India and so many countries all over the world, they have a “secular state.” The government leaders say they don’t want to favor any particular religion, but actually they are favoring irreligion.

Ambassador: Well, we have a problem. We have a multireligious society, so we people in government have to be careful. We can’t take too strong a position on religion.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, no. The government *must* take a strong position. Of course, the government should be neutral to all forms of bona fide religion. But it also has a duty to see that the people are genuinely religious. Not that in the name of a “secular state,” the government should let the people go to hell.

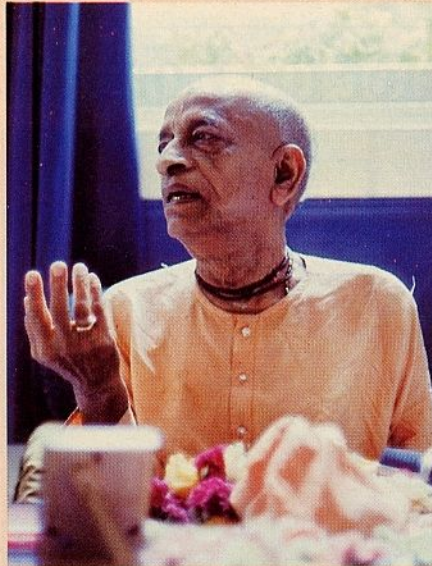
Ambassador: Well, that’s true.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, if you are a Muslim, then it is the duty of the government to see that you are really acting as a Muslim. If you are a Hindu, it is the government’s duty to see that you are acting as a Hindu. If you are Christian, it is the government’s duty to see that you are acting as a Christian. The government cannot give up religion. *Dharmaṇa hīna paśubhiḥ samān:* if people become irreligious, then they are simply animals. So it is the government’s duty to see that the citizens are not becoming animals. The people may profess different forms of religion. That doesn’t matter. But they must be religious. “Secular state” doesn’t mean that the government should be callous—“Let the people become cats and dogs, without religion.” If the government doesn’t care, then it isn’t a good government.

Ambassador: I think there’s a lot in what you say. But, you know, politics is the art of the possible.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. Politics means seeing that the people become advanced, that the citizens become spiritually advanced. Not that they become degraded.

Ambassador: Yes, I agree. But I think the primary duty of the government is to provide the conditions in which gifted people, spiritual leaders like you, can function. If the government does any



more than that, it might even corrupt the various religious groups. I think government should be like an umpire in a game—provide the conditions, provide the conditions for free speech.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. Government must do more than that. For instance, you have a commerce department—the government sees that the trade and industrial enterprises are doing nicely, properly. The government issues licenses. They have supervisors and inspectors. Or, for instance, you have an educational department—educational inspectors who see that the students are being properly educated. Similarly, the government should have expert men who can check to see that the Hindus are really acting like Hindus, the Muslims are acting like Muslims, and the Christians are acting like Christians. The government should not be callous about religion. They may be neutral. “Whatever religion you profess, we have nothing to do with that.” But it is the government’s duty to see that you are doing nicely—that you are not bluffing.

Ambassador: Surely... as far as moral conduct is concerned. But more than that, how is it possible, you know?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The thing is, unless you are actually following religious principles, you cannot possibly have good moral conduct.

*yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcana
sarvair guṇais tatra samāstate surāḥ
harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇā
manorathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ*

“One who has unflinching devotion to God consistently manifests all godly qualities. But one who has no such devotion always must be concocting schemes for exploiting the Lord’s material, external energy—and so he can have no good moral qualities whatsoever.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.18.12]

As long as you have faith in God, devotion to God, everything is all right. After all, God is one. God is neither Hindu nor Christian nor Muslim. God is one. And that is why the Vedic literatures tell us,

*sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo
yato bhaktir adhokṣaje
ahaituky apratihātā
yayātmā suprasidati*

“The supreme duty for all humanity is to achieve loving devotional service to the Supreme Lord. Only such devotional service—unmotivated and uninterrupted—can completely satisfy the self.” [*Bhāg.* 1.2.6] So one must be religious. Without being religious, no one can be satisfied. Why is there so much confusion and dissatisfaction all over the world? Because people have become irreligious.

Ambassador: In Moscow, so many people are hostile to religion, completely against it.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Why do you say Moscow? *Everywhere.* At least in Moscow they are honest. They honestly say, “We don’t believe in God.”

Ambassador: That’s true. That’s true.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But in other places they say, “I am Hindu,” “I am Muslim,” “I am Christian,” “I believe in God.” And still they don’t know *anything* about religion. *They don’t follow God’s laws.*

Ambassador: I’m afraid most of us are like that. That’s true.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: [*Laughs.*] I should say that in Moscow at least they are gentlemen. They cannot understand religion; so they say, “We don’t believe.” But these other rascals say, “Yes, we’re religious. In God we trust.” And yet they are committing the most irreligious acts. Many times I have asked Christians, “Your Bible says, ‘Thou shalt not kill.’ Why are you killing?” They cannot give any satisfactory answer. It is clearly said, “Thou shalt not kill”—and they are maintaining slaughterhouses. What is *this*?

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

Second Canto: "The Cosmic Manifestation"



CHAPTER ONE

The First Step in God Realization

In this part of our continuing presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the great sage Śukadeva Gosvāmī explains to King Parikṣit, who has been cursed to die within seven days, that one can gradually spiritualize his mind by learning to see the Lord in His cosmic, or universal, form.

TEXT 18

नियच्छेद्विषयेभ्योऽक्षान्मनसा बुद्धिसारथिः ।
मनः कर्मभिराक्षितं शुभार्थे धारयेद्विया ॥१८॥

niyacched viṣayebhyo 'kṣān
manasā buddhi-sārathiḥ
manaḥ karmabhir ākṣiptam
śubhārthe dhārayed dhiyā

niyacchet—withdraw; viṣayebhyaḥ—from sense engagements; akṣān—the senses; manasā—by dint of the mind; buddhi—intelligence; sārathiḥ—driver; manaḥ—the mind; karmabhiḥ—by the fruitive work; ākṣiptam—being absorbed in; śubha-arthē—for the sake of the Lord; dhārayet—hold up; dhiyā—in full consciousness.

TRANSLATION

Gradually, as the mind becomes progressively spiritualized, withdraw it from sense activities, and by intelligence the senses will be controlled. The mind too absorbed in material activities can be engaged in the service of the Personality of Godhead and become fixed in full transcendental consciousness.

PURPORT

The first process of spiritualizing the mind by mechanical chanting of the *praṇava* (*omkāra*) and by control of the breathing system is technically called the mystic or yogic process of *prāṇāyāma*, or fully controlling the breathing air. The ultimate state of this *prāṇāyāma* system is to

be fixed in trance, technically called *samādhi*. But experience has proven that even the *samādhi* stage also fails to control the materially absorbed mind. For example, the great mystic Viśvāmītra Muni, even in the stage of *samādhi*, became a victim of the senses and cohabited with Menakā. History has already recorded this. The mind, although ceasing to think of sensual activities at present, remembers past sensual activities from the subconscious status and thus disturbs one from cent percent engagement in self-realization. Therefore, Śukadeva Gosvāmī recommends the next step of assured policy, namely to fix one's mind in the service of the Personality of Godhead. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, also recommends this direct process in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.47). Thus, the mind being spiritually cleansed, one should at once engage himself in the transcendental loving service of the Lord by the different devotional activities of hearing, chanting, etc. If performed under proper guidance, that is the surest path of progress, even for the disturbed mind.

TEXT 19

तत्रैकावयवं ध्यायेदव्युच्छिन्नेन चेतसा ।
मनो निर्विषयं युक्त्वा ततः किञ्चन न स्मरेत् ।
पदं तत्परमं विष्णोर्मनो यत्र प्रसीदति ॥१९॥

*tatraikāvayavaṁ dhyāyēd
avyucchinna cetasā
mano nirviṣayaṁ yuktvā
tataḥ kiñcana na smaret
padam tat paramaṁ viṣṇo
mano yatra prasīdati*

tatra—thereafter; *eka*—one by one; *avayavam*—limbs of the body; *dhyāyēt*—should be concentrated upon; *avyucchinna*—without being deviated from the complete form; *cetasā*—by the mind; *manaḥ*—mind; *nirviṣayam*—without being contaminated by sense objects; *yuktvā*—being dovetailed; *tataḥ*—after that; *kiñcana*—anything; *na*—do not; *smaret*—think of; *padam*—personality; *tat*—that; *paramam*—Supreme; *viṣṇoḥ*—of Viṣṇu; *manaḥ*—the mind; *yatra*—whereupon; *prasīdati*—becomes reconciled.

TRANSLATION

Thereafter, you should meditate upon the limbs of Viṣṇu, one after another, without being deviated from the conception of the complete body. Thus the mind becomes free from all sense objects. There should be no other thing to be thought upon. Because the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu, is the Ultimate Truth, the mind becomes completely reconciled in Him only.

PURPORT

Foolish persons, bewildered by the external energy of Viṣṇu, do not know that the ultimate goal of the progressive search after happiness is to get in touch directly with Lord Viṣṇu, the Personality of Godhead. *Viṣṇu-tattva* is an unlimited expansion of different transcendental forms of the Personality of Godhead, and the supreme or original form of *viṣṇu-tattva* is Govinda, or Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme cause of all causes. Therefore, thinking of Viṣṇu or meditating upon the transcendental form of Viṣṇu, specifically upon Lord Kṛṣṇa, is the last word on the subject of meditation. This meditation may be begun from the lotus feet of the Lord. One should not, however, forget or be misled from the complete form of the Lord; thus one should practice thinking of the different parts of His transcendental body, one after another. Here in this verse, it is definitely assured that the Supreme Lord is not impersonal. He is a person, but His body is different from those of conditioned persons like us. Otherwise, meditation beginning from the *praṇava* (*omkāra*) up to the limbs of the personal body of Viṣṇu would not have been recommended by Śukadeva Gosvāmī for the attainment of complete spiritual perfection. The Viṣṇu forms of worship in great temples of India are not, therefore, arrangements of idol worship, as they are wrongly interpreted

to be by a class of men with a poor fund of knowledge; rather, they are different spiritual centers of meditation on the transcendental limbs of the body of Viṣṇu. The worshipable Deity in the temple of Viṣṇu is identical with Lord Viṣṇu by the inconceivable potency of the Lord. Therefore, a neophyte's concentration or meditation upon the limbs of Viṣṇu in the temple, as contemplated in the revealed scriptures, is an easy opportunity for meditation for persons who are unable to sit down tightly at one place and then concentrate upon *praṇava omkāra* or the limbs of the body of Viṣṇu, as recommended herein by Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the great authority. The common man can benefit more by meditating on the form of Viṣṇu in the temple than on the *omkāra*, the spiritual combination of *a-u-m* as explained before. There is no difference between *omkāra* and the forms of Viṣṇu, but persons unacquainted with the science of Absolute Truth try to create dissension by differentiating between the forms of Viṣṇu and that of *omkāra*. Here it is indicated that the Viṣṇu form is the ultimate goal of meditation, and as such it is better to concentrate upon the forms of Viṣṇu than on impersonal *omkāra*. The latter process is also more difficult than the former.

TEXT 20

रजस्तमोभ्यामाक्षिप्तं विमूढं मन आत्मनः ।
यच्छेद्धारणया धीरो हन्ति या तत्कृतं मलम् ॥२०॥

*rajas-tamobhyāṁ ākṣiptam
vimūḍham mana ātmanaḥ
yacched dhāraṇayā dhīro
hanti yā tat-kṛtam malam*

rajaḥ—the passionate mode of nature; *tamobhyām*—as well as by the ignorant mode of material nature; *ākṣiptam*—agitated; *vimūḍham*—bewildered; *manaḥ*—the mind; *ātmanaḥ*—of one's own; *yacchet*—get it rectified; *dhāraṇayā*—by conception (of Viṣṇu); *dhīraḥ*—the pacified; *hanti*—destroys; *yā*—all those; *tat-kṛtam*—done by them; *malam*—dirty things.

TRANSLATION

One's mind is always agitated by the passionate mode of material nature and bewildered by the ignorant mode of nature. But one can rectify such conceptions by the relation of Viṣṇu and thus become pacified by cleansing the dirty things created by them.

PURPORT

Persons generally conducted by the modes of passion and ignorance cannot be bona fide candidates for being situated in the transcendental stage of God realization. Only persons conducted by the mode of goodness can have the knowledge of the Supreme Truth. Effects of the modes of passion and ignorance are manifested by too much hankering after wealth and women. And those who are too much after wealth and women can rectify their leanings only by constant remembrance of Viṣṇu in His potential impersonal feature. Generally the impersonalists or monists are influenced by the modes of passion and ignorance. Such impersonalists think of themselves as liberated souls, but they have no knowledge of the transcendental personal feature of the Absolute Truth. Actually they are impure in heart on account of being devoid of knowledge of the personal feature of the Absolute. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, it is said that after many hundreds of births, the impersonal philosopher surrenders unto the Personality of Godhead. To acquire such a qualification of God realization in the personal feature, the neophyte impersonalist is given a chance to realize the relation of the Lord in everything by the philosophy of pantheism.

Pantheism in its higher status does not permit the student to form an impersonal conception of the Absolute Truth, but it extends the conception of the Absolute Truth into the field of the so-called material energy. Everything created by the material energy can be dovetailed with the

Absolute by an attitude of service, which is the essential part of living energy. The pure devotee of the Lord knows the art of converting everything into its spiritual existence by this service attitude, and only in that devotional way can the theory of pantheism be perfected.

TEXT 21

यस्यां सन्धार्यमाणायं योगिनो भक्ति-लक्षणः ।
आशु सम्पद्यते योग आश्रयं भद्रमीक्षतः ॥२१॥

*yasyām sandhāryamāṇāyām
yogino bhakti-lakṣaṇaḥ
āśu sampadyate yoga
āśrayam bhadram iṅśataḥ*

yasyām—by such systematic remembrance; *sandhāryamāṇāyām*—and thus being fixed in the habit of; *yoginaḥ*—the mystics; *bhakti-lakṣaṇaḥ*—being practiced to the devotional system; *āśu*—very soon; *sampadyate*—attains success; *yogaḥ*—connection by devotional service; *āśrayam*—under the shelter of; *bhadram*—the all-good; *iṅśataḥ*—which seeing that.

TRANSLATION

O King, by this system of remembrance and by being fixed in the habit of seeing the all-good personal conception of the Lord, one can very soon attain devotional service to the Lord, under His direct shelter.

PURPORT

Success of mystic performances is achieved only by the help of the devotional attitude. Pantheism, or the system of feeling the presence of the Almighty everywhere, is a sort of training of the mind to become accustomed to the devotional conception, and it is this devotional attitude of the mystic that makes possible the successful termination of such mystic attempts. One is not, however, elevated to such a successful status without the tinge of mixture in devotional service. The devotional atmosphere created by pantheistic vision develops into devotional service in later days, and that is the only benefit for the impersonalist. It is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (12.5) that the impersonal way of self-realization is more troublesome because it reaches the goal in an indirect way, although the impersonalist also becomes obsessed with the personal feature of the Lord after a long time.

TEXT 22

राजोवाच

यथा सन्धार्यते ब्रह्मन् धारणा यत्र सम्मता ।
यादृशी वा हरेदाशु पुरुषस्य मनोमलम् ॥२२॥

*rājovāca
yathā sandhāryate brahman
dhāraṇā yatra sammata
yādṛśī vā hared āśu
puruṣasya mano-malam*

rājā uvāca—the fortunate King said; *yathā*—as it is; *sandhāryate*—the conception is made; *brahman*—O *brāhmaṇa*; *dhāraṇā*—conception; *yatra*—where and how; *sammata*—in a summary; *yādṛśī*—the way by which; *vā*—or; *hared*—extricated; *āśu*—without delay; *puruṣasya*—of a person; *manaḥ*—of the mind; *malam*—dirty things.

TRANSLATION

The fortunate King Parikṣit, inquiring further, said: O *brāhmaṇa*, please describe in full detail how and where the mind has to be applied and how the conception can be fixed so that the dirty things in a person's mind can be removed.

PURPORT

The dirty things in the heart of a conditioned soul are the root cause of all troubles for him. A conditioned soul is surrounded by the manifold miseries of material existence, but on account of his gross ignorance he is unable to remove the troubles due to dirty things in the heart, accumulated during the long prison life in the material world. He is actually meant to serve the will of the Supreme Lord, but on account of the dirty things in the heart, he likes to serve his concocted desires. These desires, instead of giving him any peace of mind, create new problems and thus bind him to the cycle of repeated birth and death. These dirty things of fruitive work and empiric philosophy can be removed only by association with the Supreme Lord. The Lord, being omnipotent, can offer His association by His inconceivable potencies. Thus persons who are unable to pin their faith on the personal feature of the Absolute are given a chance to associate with His *virāt-rūpa*, or the cosmic impersonal feature of the Lord. The cosmic impersonal feature of the Lord is a feature of His unlimited potencies. Since the potent and potencies are identical, even the conception of His impersonal cosmic feature helps the conditioned soul to associate with the Lord indirectly and thus gradually rise to the stage of personal contact.

Mahārāja Parikṣit was already directly connected with the personal feature of the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and as such he had no need to inquire from Śukadeva Gosvāmī about where and how to apply the mind in the impersonal *virāt-rūpa* of the Lord. But he inquired after a detailed description of the matter for the benefit of others, who are unable to conceive of the transcendental personal feature of the Lord as the form of eternity, knowledge and bliss. The nondevotee class of men cannot think of the personal feature of the Lord. Because of their poor fund of knowledge, the personal form of the Lord, like Rāma or Kṛṣṇa, is completely revolting to them. They have a poor estimation of the potency of the Lord. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.11) it is explained by the Lord Himself that people with a poor fund of knowledge deride the supreme personality of the Lord, taking Him to be a common man. Such men are ignorant of the inconceivable potency of the Lord. By the inconceivable potency of the Lord, He can move in human society or any other society of living beings and yet remain the same omnipotent Lord, without deviating in the slightest from His transcendental position. So, for the benefit of men who are unable to accept the Lord in His personal eternal form, Mahārāja Parikṣit inquired from Śukadeva Gosvāmī how to fix the mind on Him in the beginning, and the Gosvāmī replied in detail as follows.

TEXT 23

श्रीशुक उवाच

जितासनो जितश्वासो जितसङ्गो जितेन्द्रियः ।
स्थूले भगवतो रूपे मनः सन्धारयेद्विया ॥२३॥

*śrī-śuka uvāca
jitāsano jita-śvāso
jita-saṅgo jiteṅdriyaḥ
sthūle bhagavato rūpe
manaḥ sandhārayet dhiyā*

śrī-śukaḥ uvāca—Śukadeva Gosvāmī said; *jita-āśanaḥ*—controlled sitting posture; *jita-śvāsaḥ*—controlled breathing process; *jita-saṅgaḥ*—controlled association; *jita-indriyaḥ*—controlled senses; *sthūle*—in the gross matter; *bhagavataḥ*—unto the Personality of Godhead; *rūpe*—in the feature of; *manaḥ*—the mind; *sandhārayet*—must apply; *dhiyā*—by intelligence.

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī answered: One should control the sitting posture, regulate the breathing process by the yogic *prāṇāyāma* and thus control the mind and senses and with intelligence apply the mind to the gross potencies of the Lord [called the *virāt-rūpa*].

PURPORT

The materially absorbed mind of the conditioned soul does not allow him to transcend the limit of the bodily conception of self, and thus the *yoga* system for meditation (controlling the sitting posture and breathing process and fixing the mind upon the Supreme) is prescribed in order to mold the character of the gross materialist. Unless such materialists are able to cleanse the materially absorbed mind, it is impossible for them to concentrate upon thoughts of transcendence. And to do so one may fix one's mind on the gross material or external feature of the Lord. The different parts of the gigantic form of the Lord are described in the following verses. The materialistic men are very anxious to have some mystic powers as a result of such a controlling process, but the real purpose of yogic regulations is to eradicate the accumulated dirty things like lust, anger, avarice and all such material contaminations. If the mystic *yogī* is diverted by the accompanying feats of mystic control, then his mission of yogic success is a failure, because the ultimate aim is God realization. He is therefore recommended to fix his gross materialistic mind by a different conception and thus realize the potency of the Lord. As soon as the potencies are understood to be instrumental manifestations of the transcendence, one automatically advances to the next step, and gradually the stage of full realization becomes possible for him.

TEXT 24

विशेषस्तस्य देहोऽयं स्वविद्युश्च स्ववीयसाम् ।
यत्रेदं व्यज्यते विश्वं भूतं भव्यं भवच्च सत् ॥२४॥

*viśeṣas tasya deho 'yaṁ
sthaviṣṭhaś ca sthaviyasām
yatredaṁ vyajyate viśvaṁ
bhūtaṁ bhavyaṁ bhavaś ca sat*

viśeṣaḥ—personal; *tasya*—His; *dehaḥ*—body; *ayaṁ*—this; *stha-
viṣṭhaḥ*—grossly material; *ca*—and; *sthaviyasām*—of all matter; *ya-
tra*—wherein; *idaṁ*—all these phenomena; *vyajyate*—is expe-
rienced; *viśvaṁ*—universe; *bhūtaṁ*—past; *bhavyaṁ*—future; *bha-
vat*—present; *ca*—and; *sat*—resultant.

TRANSLATION

This gigantic manifestation of the phenomenal material world as a whole is the personal body of the Absolute Truth, wherein the universal resultant past, present and future of material time is experienced.

PURPORT

Anything, either material or spiritual, is but an expansion of the energy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and as stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (13.13), the omnipotent Lord has His transcendental eyes, heads and other bodily parts distributed everywhere. He can see, hear, touch or manifest Himself anywhere and everywhere, for He is present everywhere as the Supersoul of all infinitesimal souls, although He has His particular abode in the absolute world. The relative world is also His phenomenal representation because it is nothing but an expansion of His transcendental energy. Although He is in His abode, His energy is distributed everywhere, just as the sun is localized as well as expanded everywhere, since the rays of the sun, being nondifferent from the sun, are accepted as expansions of the sun disc. In the *Viṣṇu Purāna* (1.22.52) it is said that as fire expands its rays and heat from one place, similarly the Supreme Spirit, the Personality of Godhead, expands Himself by His manifold energy everywhere and anywhere. The phenomenal manifestation of the gigantic universe is only a part of His *virāṭ* body. Less intelligent men cannot conceive of the transcendental all-spiritual form of the Lord, but they are astounded by His different energies, just as the aborigines are struck with wonder by the manifestation of lightning, a gigantic mountain or a hugely expanded banyan tree. The aborigines praise the strength of the tiger and the elephant because of their superior energy and strength. The *asuras* cannot recognize the existence of the Lord, although there are vivid descriptions of the Lord in

the revealed scriptures, although the Lord incarnates and exhibits His uncommon strength and energy, and although He is accepted as the Supreme Personality of Godhead by learned scholars and saints like Vyāsadeva, Nārada, Asita and Devala in the past and by Arjuna in the *Bhāgavad-gītā*, as also by the *ācāryas* like Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Madhva and Lord Śrī Caitanya in the modern age. The *asuras* do not accept any evidential proof from the revealed scriptures, nor do they recognize the authority of the great *ācāryas*. They want to see with their own eyes at once. Therefore they can see the gigantic body of the Lord as *virāṭ*, which will answer their challenge, and since they are accustomed to paying homage to superior material strength like that of the tiger, elephant and lightning, they can offer respect to the *virāṭ-rūpa*. Lord Kṛṣṇa, by the request of Arjuna, exhibited His *virāṭ-rūpa* for the *asuras*. A pure devotee of the Lord, being unaccustomed to looking into such a mundane gigantic form of the Lord, requires special vision for the purpose. The Lord, therefore, favored Arjuna with special vision for looking into His *virāṭ-rūpa*, which is described in the Eleventh Chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. This *virāṭ-rūpa* of the Lord was especially manifested, not for the benefit of Arjuna, but for that unintelligent class of men who accept anyone and everyone as an incarnation of the Lord and so mislead the general mass of people. For them, the indication is that one should ask the cheap incarnation to exhibit his *virāṭ-rūpa* and thus be established as an incarnation. The *virāṭ-rūpa* manifestation of the Lord is simultaneously a challenge to the atheist and a favor for the *asuras*, who can think of the Lord as *virāṭ* and thus gradually cleanse the dirty things from their hearts in order to become qualified to actually see the transcendental form of the Lord in the near future. This is a favor of the all-merciful Lord to the atheists and the gross materialists.

TEXT 25

अण्डकोशे शरीरेऽस्मिन् सप्तावरणसंयुते ।
वैराजः पुरुषो योऽसौ भगवान् धारणाश्रयः ॥२५॥

*aṇḍa-kośe śarīre 'smiṇ
saptāvaraṇa-saṁyute
vairājaḥ puruṣo yo 'sau
bhagavān dhāraṇāśrayaḥ*

aṇḍa-kośe—within the universal shell; *śarīre*—in the body of; *asmiṇ*—this; *sapta*—sevenfold; *āvaraṇa*—coverings; *saṁyute*—having so done; *vairājaḥ*—the gigantic universal; *puruṣaḥ*—form of the Lord; *yaḥ*—that; *asau*—He; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *dhāraṇā*—conception; *āśrayaḥ*—object of.

TRANSLATION

The gigantic universal form of the Personality of Godhead, within the body of the universal shell, which is covered by sevenfold material elements, is the subject for the *virāṭ* conception.

PURPORT

Simultaneously, the Lord has multifarious other forms, and all of them are identical with the original fountainhead form of the Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, it has been proven that the original transcendental and eternal form of the Lord is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute Personality of Godhead, but by His inconceivable internal potency, *ātma-māyā*, He can expand Himself by multifarious forms and incarnations simultaneously, without being diminished in His full potency. He is complete, and although innumerable complete forms emanate from Him, He is still complete, without any loss. That is His spiritual or internal potency. In the Eleventh Chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa, manifested His *virāṭ-rūpa* just to convince the less intelligent class of men, who cannot conceive of the Lord as appearing just like a human being, that He factually has the potency of His claim to be the Supreme Absolute Person without any rival or superior. Materialistic men can think, although very imperfectly, of the huge universal space, comprehending an innumerable number of planets as big as the sun. They can see only the circular sky overhead, without any infor-

mation that this universe, as well as many other hundreds of thousands of universes, are each covered by sevenfold material coverings of water, fire, air, sky, ego, noumenon and material nature, just like a huge football, pumped and covered, floating on the water of the Causal Ocean, wherein the Lord is lying as Mahā-Viṣṇu. All the universes in seed are emanating from the breathing of the Mahā-Viṣṇu, who is but part of a partial expansion of the Lord, and all the universes presided over by the Brahmās vanish when the Mahā-Viṣṇu withdraws His great breath. In this way, the material worlds are being created and vanished by the supreme will of the Lord. The poor foolish materialist can just imagine how ignorantly he puts forward an insignificant creature to become His rival incarnation, simply on the allegations of a dying man. The *virāt-rūpa* was particularly exhibited by the Lord just to give lessons to such foolish men, so that one can accept a person as the incarnation of Godhead only if such a person is able to exhibit such a *virāt-rūpa* as Lord Kṛṣṇa did. The materialistic person may concentrate his mind upon the *virāt* or gigantic form of the Lord in his own interest and as recommended by Śukadeva Gosvāmī, but he must be on his guard not to be misled by pretenders who claim to be the identical person as Lord Kṛṣṇa but are not able to act like Him or exhibit the *virāt-rūpa*, comprehending the whole of the universe.

TEXT 26

पातालमेतस्य हि पादमूलं
पठन्ति पाष्णिप्रपदे रसातलम् ।
महातलं विश्वसृजोऽथ गुल्फौ
तलातलं वै पुरुषस्य जङ्घे ॥२६॥

*pātālam etasya hi pāda-mūlam
paṭhanti pārṣṇi-prapade rasātalam
mahātalam viśva-srjo 'tha gulphau
talātalam vai puruṣasya jaṅghe*

pātālam—the planets at the bottom of the universe; *etasya*—of His; *hi*—exactly; *pāda-mūlam*—soles of the feet; *paṭhanti*—they study it; *pārṣṇi*—the heels; *prapade*—the toes; *rasātalam*—the planets named Rasātala; *mahātalam*—the planets named Mahātala; *viśva-srjah*—of the creator of the universe; *atha*—thus; *gulphau*—the ankles; *talātalam*—the planets named Talātala; *vai*—as they are; *puruṣasya*—of the gigantic person; *jaṅghe*—the shanks.

TRANSLATION

Persons who have realized it have studied that the planets known as Pātāla constitute the bottoms of the feet of the universal Lord, and the heels and the toes are the Rasātala planets. The ankles are the Mahātala planets, and His shanks constitute the Talātala planets.

PURPORT

Outside the bodily existence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the manifested cosmic existence has no reality. Everything and anything of the manifested world rests on Him, as confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.4), but that does not imply that everything and anything in the vision of a materialist is the Supreme Personality. The conception of the universal form of the Lord gives a chance to the materialist to think of the Supreme Lord, but the materialist must know for certain that his visualization of the world in a spirit of lording over it is not God realization. The materialistic view of exploitation of the material resources is occasioned by the illusion of the external energy of the Lord, and as such, if anyone wants to realize the Supreme Truth by conceiving of the universal form of the Lord, he must cultivate the service attitude. Unless the service attitude is revived, the conception of *virāt* realization will have very little effect on the seer. The transcendental Lord, in any conception of His form, is never a part of the material creation. He keeps His identity as Supreme Spirit in all circumstances and is never affected by the three material qualities, for everything material is contaminated. The Lord always exists by His internal energy.

The universe is divided into fourteen planetary systems. Seven planetary systems, called Bhūr, Bhuvar, Svar, Mahar, Janas, Tapas and Satya, are upward planetary systems, one above the other. There are also seven planetary systems downward, known as Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talātala, Mahātala, Rasātala and Pātāla, gradually, one below the other. In this verse, the description begins from the bottom because it is in the line of devotion that the Lord's bodily description should begin from His feet. Śukadeva Gosvāmī is a recognized devotee of the Lord, and he is exactly correct in the description.

TEXT 27

द्वे जानुनी सुतलं विश्वमूर्ते-
रुरुद्वयं वितलं चातलं च ।
महीतलं तज्जघनं महीपते
नभस्तलं नाभिसरो गृणन्ति ॥२७॥

*dve jānūni sutalam viśva-mūrte
ūru-dvayam vitalam cātalam ca
mahītalam taj-jaghanam mahīpate
nabhastalam nābhi-saro gṛṇanti*

dve—two; *jānūni*—two knees; *sutalam*—the planetary system named Sutala; *viśva-mūrteḥ*—of the universal form; *ūru-dvayam*—the two thighs; *vitalam*—the planetary system named Vitala; *ca*—also; *atalam*—the planets named Atala; *ca*—and; *mahītalam*—the planetary system named Mahītala; *taj*—of that; *jaghanam*—the hips; *mahīpate*—O King; *nabhastalam*—outer space; *nābhi-sarah*—the depression of the navel; *gṛṇanti*—they take it so.

TRANSLATION

The knees of the universal form are the planetary system of the name Sutala, and the two thighs are the Vitala and Atala planetary systems. The hips are Mahītala, and outer space is the depression of His navel.

TEXT 28

उरःस्थलं ज्योतिरनीकमस्य
ग्रीवा महर्वदनं वै जनोऽस्य ।
तपो वराटीं विदुरादिपुंसः
सत्यं तु शीर्षाणि सहस्रशीर्षणः ॥२८॥

*urah-sthalam jyotir-anikam asya
grīvā mahar vadanam vai jano 'sya
tapo varāṭīm vidura-dipuṃsah
satyaṁ tu śīrṣāṇi sahasra-śīrṣṇaḥ*

urah—high; *sthalam*—place (the chest); *jyotiḥ-anīkam*—the luminary planets; *asya*—of Him; *grīvā*—the neck; *mahaḥ*—the planetary system above the luminaries; *vadanam*—mouth; *vai*—exactly; *janaḥ*—the planetary system above Mahar; *asya*—of Him; *tapah*—the planetary system above the Janas; *varāṭīm*—forehead; *viduḥ*—is known; *ādi*—the original; *puṃsah*—personality; *satyaṁ*—the topmost planetary system; *tu*—but; *śīrṣāṇi*—the head; *sahasra*—one thousand; *śīrṣṇaḥ*—one with heads.

TRANSLATION

The chest of the Original Personality of the gigantic form is the luminary planetary system, His neck is the Mahar planets, His mouth is the Janas planets, and His forehead is the Tapas planetary system. The topmost planetary system, known as Satyaloka, is the head of He who has one thousand heads.

PURPORT

The effulgent luminary planets like the sun and the moon are situated almost in the midplace of the universe, and as such they are to be known as the chest of the original gigantic form of the Lord. And above the

luminary planets, called also the heavenly places of the universal directorate demigods, are the Mahar, Janas and Tapas planetary systems, and, above all, the Satyaloka planetary system, where the chief directors of the modes of material nature reside, namely Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva. This Viṣṇu is known as the Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, and He acts as the Supersoul in every living being. There are innumerable universes floating on the Causal Ocean, and in each of them the representation of the *virāt* form of the Lord is there along with innumerable suns, moons, heavenly demigods, Brahmās, Viṣṇus and Śivas, all of them situated in one part of the inconceivable potency of Lord Kṛṣṇa, as stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.42).

TEXT 29

इन्द्रादयो बाहव आहुरुस्ताः
कर्णौ दिशः श्रोत्रममुष्य शब्दः ।
नासत्यदस्रौ परमस्य नासे
घ्राणोऽस्य गन्धो मुखमग्निरिद्धः ॥२९॥

indrādayo bāhava āhur usrāḥ
karnau diśaḥ śrotram amuṣya śabdah
nāsatya-dasrau paramasya nāse
ghrāṇo 'sya gandho mukham agnir iddhaḥ

indra-ādayaḥ—demigods headed by the heavenly king, Indra; *bāhavaḥ*—arms; *āhuḥ*—are called; *usrāḥ*—the demigods; *karnau*—the ears; *diśaḥ*—the four directions; *śrotram*—the sense of hearing; *amuṣya*—of the Lord; *śabdah*—sound; *nāsatya-dasrau*—the demigods known as the Aśvinī-kumāras; *paramasya*—of the Supreme; *nāse*—nostrils; *ghrāṇaḥ*—the sense of smell; *asya*—of Him; *gandhaḥ*—fragrance; *mukham*—the mouth; *agniḥ*—fire; *iddhaḥ*—blazing.

TRANSLATION

His arms are the demigods headed by Indra, the ten directional sides are His ears, and physical sound is His sense of hearing. His nostrils are the two Aśvinī-kumāras, and material fragrance is His sense of smell. His mouth is the blazing fire.

PURPORT

The description of the gigantic form of the Personality of Godhead made in the Eleventh Chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā* is further explained here in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The description in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (11.30) runs as follows: "O Viṣṇu, I see You devouring all people in Your blazing mouths and covering all the universe by Your immeasurable rays. Scorching the worlds, You are manifest." In that way, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the postgraduate study for the student of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Both of them are the science of Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute Truth, and so they are interdependent.

The conception of the *virāt-puruṣa*, or the gigantic form of the Supreme Lord, is said to include all the dominating demigods as well as the dominated living beings. Even the minutest part of a living being is controlled by the empowered agency of the Lord. Since the demigods are included in the gigantic form of the Lord, worship of the Lord, whether in His gigantic material conception or in His eternal transcendental form as Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, also appeases the demigods and all the other parts and parcels, as much as watering the root of a tree distributes energy to all of the tree's other parts. Consequently, for a materialist also, worship of the universal gigantic form of the Lord leads one to the right path. One need not risk being misled by approaching many demigods for fulfillment of different desires. The real entity is the Lord Himself, and all others are imaginary, for everything is included in Him only.

TEXT 30

धौरक्षिणी चक्षुरभूत्पतङ्गः
पक्ष्माणि विष्णोरहनी उभे च ।

तद्भ्रूविजृम्भः परमेष्ठिधिष्य-
मापोऽस्य तालू रस एव जिह्वा ॥३०॥

dyaur akṣiṇī cakṣur abhūt pataṅgaḥ
paṅkmāṇi viṣṇor ahanī ubhe ca
tad-bhrū-vijrmbhaḥ parameṣṭhi-dhiṣṇyam
āpo 'sya tālū rasa eva jihvā

dyauh—the sphere of outer space; *akṣiṇī*—the eyeballs; *cakṣuh*—of eyes (senses); *abhūt*—it so became; *pataṅgaḥ*—the sun; *paṅkmāṇi*—eyelids; *viṣṇoḥ*—of the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Viṣṇu; *ahanī*—day and night; *ubhe*—both; *ca*—and; *tat*—His; *bhrū*—eyebrows; *vijrmbhaḥ*—movements; *parameṣṭhi*—the supreme entity (Brahmā); *dhiṣṇyam*—post; *āpaḥ*—Varuṇa, the director of water; *asya*—His; *tālū*—palate; *rasaḥ*—juice; *eva*—certainly; *jihvā*—the tongue.

TRANSLATION

The sphere of outer space constitutes His eyepits, and the eyeball is the sun as the power of seeing. His eyelids are both the day and night, and in the movements of His eyebrows, the Brahmā and similar supreme personalities reside. His palate is the director of water, Varuṇa, and the juice or essence of everything is His tongue.

PURPORT

To common sense the description in this verse appears to be somewhat contradictory because sometimes the sun has been described as the eyeball and sometimes as the outer space sphere. But there is no room for common sense in the injunctions of the *śāstras*. We must accept the description of the *śāstras* and concentrate more on the form of the *virāt-rūpa* than on common sense. Common sense is always imperfect, whereas the description in the *śāstras* is always perfect and complete. If there is any incongruity, it is due to our imperfection and not the *śāstras*. That is the method of approaching Vedic wisdom.

TEXT 31

छन्दांस्यनन्तस्य शिरो गृणन्ति
दंष्ट्रा यमः स्नेहकला द्विजानि ।
हासो जनोन्मादकरी च माया
दुरन्तसर्गो यदपाङ्गमोक्षः ॥३१॥

chandāmsy anantasya śiro gṛṇanti
daṅṣṭrā yamaḥ sneha-kalā dvijāni
hāso janonmāda-karī ca māyā
duranta-sargo yad-apāṅga-mokṣaḥ

chandāmsi—the Vedic hymns; *anantasya*—of the Supreme; *śiraḥ*—the cerebral passage; *gṛṇanti*—they say; *daṅṣṭrāḥ*—the jaws of teeth; *yamaḥ*—Yamarāja, the director of sinners; *sneha-kalāḥ*—the art of affection; *dvijāni*—the set of teeth; *hāsaḥ*—smile; *jana-unmāda-karī*—the most alluring; *ca*—also; *māyā*—illusory energy; *duranta*—insurpassable; *sargaḥ*—the material creation; *yad-apāṅga*—whose glance; *mokṣaḥ*—casting over.

TRANSLATION

They say that the Vedic hymns are the cerebral passage of the Lord, and His jaws of teeth are Yama, god of death, who punishes the sinners. The art of affection is His set of teeth, and the most alluring illusory material energy is His smile. This great ocean of material creation is but the casting of His glance over us.

PURPORT

According to Vedic assertion, this material creation is the result of the Lord's casting a glance over the material energy, which is described herein as the most alluring illusory energy. The conditioned souls who

are allured by such materialism should know that the material temporary creation is simply an imitation of the reality and that those who are captivated by such alluring glances of the Lord are put under the direction of the controller of sinners called Yamarāja. The Lord smiles affectionately, displaying His teeth. The intelligent person who can grasp these truths about the Lord becomes a soul fully surrendered unto Him.

TEXT 32

व्रीडोत्तरोष्ठोऽधर एव लोभो
धर्मः स्तनोऽधर्मपथोऽस्य पृष्ठम् ।
कस्तस्य मेदू वृषणौ च मित्रौ
कुक्षिः समुद्रा गिरयोऽस्थिसङ्घाः ॥३२॥

*vriḍottara-uṣṭho 'dhara eva lobho
dharmah stano 'dharma-patho 'sya pṛṣṭham
kas tasya medhram vṛṣaṇau ca mitrau
kuksiḥ samudrā girayo 'sthi-saṅghāḥ*

vriḍa—modesty; *uttara*—upper; *oṣṭha*—lip; *adharaḥ*—chin; *eva*—certainly; *lobhaḥ*—hankering; *dharmah*—religion; *stanaḥ*—breast; *adharmā*—irreligion; *pathaḥ*—way; *asya*—His; *pṛṣṭham*—back; *kaḥ*—Brahmā; *tasya*—His; *medhram*—genitals; *vṛṣaṇau*—testicles; *ca*—also; *mitrau*—the Mitrā-varuṇas; *kuksiḥ*—waist; *samudrāḥ*—the oceans; *girayaḥ*—the hills; *asthi*—bones; *saṅghāḥ*—stack.

TRANSLATION

Modesty is the upper portion of His lips, hankering is His chin, religion is the breast of the Lord, and irreligion is His back. Brahmājī, who generates all living beings in the material world, is His genitals, and the Mitrā-varuṇas are His two testicles. The ocean is His waist, and the hills and mountains are the stacks of His bones.

PURPORT

The Supreme Lord is not impersonal, as misconceived by less intelligent thinkers. Rather, He is the Supreme Person, as confirmed in all authentic Vedic literatures. But His personality is different from what we can conceive. It is stated here that Brahmājī acts as His genitals and that the Mitrā-varuṇas are His two testicles. This means that as a person He is complete with all bodily organs, but they are of different types with different potencies. When the Lord is described as impersonal, therefore, it should be understood that His personality is not exactly the type of personality found within our imperfect speculation. One can, however, worship the Lord even by seeing the hills and mountains or the ocean and the sky as different parts and parcels of the gigantic body of the Lord, the *virāt-puruṣa*. The *virāt-rūpa*, as exhibited by Lord Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna, is a challenge to the unbelievers.

TEXT 33

नद्योऽस्य नाड्योऽथ तनुरूहाणि
महीरुहा विश्वतनोर्नृपेन्द्र ।
अनन्तवीर्यः श्वसितं मातरिश्वा
गतिर्वयः कर्म गुणप्रवाहः ॥३३॥

*nadyo 'sya nādyo 'tha tanū-ruhāṇi
mahī-ruhā viśva-tanoḥ nṛpendra
ananta-vīryaḥ śvasitaṁ mātariśvā
gatiḥ vayah karma guṇa-pravāhaḥ*

nadyaḥ—the rivers; *asya*—of Him; *nādyāḥ*—veins; *atha*—and thereafter; *tanū-ruhāṇi*—hairs on the body; *mahī-ruhāḥ*—the plants and trees; *viśva-tanoḥ*—of the universal form; *nṛpa-indra*—O King;

ananta-vīryaḥ—of the omnipotent; *śvasitaṁ*—breathing; *mātariśvā*—air; *gatiḥ*—movement; *vayah*—passing ages; *karma*—activity; *guṇa-pravāhaḥ*—reactions of the modes of nature.

TRANSLATION

O King, the rivers are the veins of the gigantic body, the trees are the hairs of His body, and the omnipotent air is His breath. The passing ages are His movements, and His activities are the reactions of the three modes of material nature.

PURPORT

The Personality of Godhead is not a dead stone, nor is He inactive, as is poorly thought by some schools. He moves with the progress of time, and therefore He knows all about the past and future, along with His present activities. There is nothing unknown to Him. The conditioned souls are driven by the reactions of the modes of material nature, which are the activities of the Lord. As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.12), the modes of nature act under His direction only, and as such no natural functions are blind or automatic. The power behind the activities is the supervision of the Lord, and thus the Lord is never inactive as is wrongly conceived. The *Vedas* say that the Supreme Lord has nothing to do personally, as is always the case with superiors, but everything is done by His direction. As it is said, not a blade of grass moves without His sanction. In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.48), it is said that all the universes and the heads of them (the Brahmās) exist only for the duration of His breathing period. The same is confirmed here. The air on which the universes and the planets within the universes exist is nothing but a bit of the breath of the unchallengeable *virāt-puruṣa*. So even by studying the rivers, trees, air and passing ages, one can conceive of the Personality of Godhead without being misled by the formless conception of the Lord. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (12.5) it is stated that those who are much inclined to the formless conception of the Supreme Truth are more troubled than those who can intelligently conceive of the personal form.

TEXT 34

ईशस्य केशान् विदुरम्बुवाहान्
वासस्तु सन्ध्यां कुरुवर्य भूमः ।
अन्यक्तमाहुर्हृदयं मनश्च
स चन्द्रमाः सर्वविकारकोशः ॥३४॥

*iśasya keśān vidur ambuvāhān
vāsaḥ tu sandhyāṁ kuru-varya bhūmaḥ
avyaktam āhur hṛdayaṁ manaś ca
sa candramāḥ sarva-vikāra-kośaḥ*

iśasya—of the supreme controller; *keśān*—hairs on the head; *viduḥ*—you may know it from me; *ambu-vāhān*—the clouds which carry water; *vāsaḥ tu*—the dress; *sandhyāṁ*—termination of day and night; *kuru-varya*—O best of the Kurus; *bhūmaḥ*—of the Almighty; *avyaktam*—the prime cause of material creation; *āhuḥ*—it is said; *hṛdayam*—intelligence; *manaś ca*—and the mind; *saḥ*—He; *candramāḥ*—the moon; *sarva-vikāra-kośaḥ*—the reservoir of all changes.

TRANSLATION

O best amongst the Kurus, the clouds which carry water are the hairs on His head, the terminations of days or nights are His dress, and the supreme cause of material creation is His intelligence. His mind is the moon, the reservoir of all changes.

TEXT 35

विज्ञानशक्तिं महिमामनन्ति
सर्वात्मनोऽन्तःकरणं गिरित्रम् ।

अश्वाश्चतयुष्ट्रगजा नखानि
सर्वे मृगाः पशवः श्रोणिदेशे ॥३५॥

*vijñāna-śaktim mahim āmananti
sarvātmano 'ntah-karaṇam giritram
aśvāsvatary-uṣṭra-gajā nakhāni
sarve mṛgāḥ paśavaḥ śroṇi-deśe*

vijñāna-śaktim—consciousness; *mahim*—the principle of matter; *āmananti*—they call it so; *sarva-ātmanaḥ*—of the omnipresent; *antah-karaṇam*—ego; *giritram*—Rudra (Śiva); *aśva*—horse; *aśvatari*—mule; *uṣṭra*—camel; *gajāḥ*—elephant; *nakhāni*—nails; *sarve*—all other; *mṛgāḥ*—stags; *paśavaḥ*—quadrupeds; *śroṇi-deśe*—on the region of the belt.

TRANSLATION

The principle of matter [mahat-tattva] is the consciousness of the omnipresent Lord, as asserted by the experts, and Rudradeva is His ego. The horse, mule, camel and elephant are His nails, and wild animals and all quadrupeds are situated in the belt zone of the Lord.

TEXT 36

वयांसि तद्व्याकरणं विचित्रं
मनुर्मनीषा मनुजो निवासः ।
गन्धर्वविद्याधरचारणाप्सरः
स्वरस्मृतीरसुरानीकवीर्यः ॥३६॥

*vayāmsi tad-vyākaraṇam vicitrām
manur manīṣā manuḥ nivāsaḥ
gandharva-vidyādhara-cāraṇāpsarah
svara-smṛtir asurānika-vīryaḥ*

vayāmsi—varieties of birds; *tad-vyākaraṇam*—vocables; *vicitrām*—artistic; *manuḥ*—the father of mankind; *manīṣā*—thoughts; *manujāḥ*—mankind (the sons of Manu); *nivāsaḥ*—residence; *gandharva*—the human beings named Gandharvas; *vidyādhara*—the Vidyādharas; *cāraṇa*—the Cāraṇas; *apsarah*—the angels; *svara*—musical rhythm; *smṛtiḥ*—remembrance; *asura-anika*—the demoniac soldiers; *vīryaḥ*—prowess.

TRANSLATION

Varieties of birds are indications of His masterful artistic sense. Manu, the father of mankind, is the emblem of His standard intelligence, and humanity is His residence. The celestial species of human beings, like the Gandharvas, Vidyādharas, Cāraṇas and angels, all represent His musical rhythm, and the demoniac soldiers are representations of His wonderful prowess.

PURPORT

The aesthetic sense of the Lord is manifested in the artistic, colorful creation of varieties of birds like the peacock, parrot and cuckoo. The celestial species of human beings, like the Gandharvas and Vidyādharas, can sing wonderfully and can entice even the minds of the heavenly demigods. Their musical rhythm represents the musical sense of the Lord. How then can He be impersonal? His musical taste, artistic sense and standard intelligence, which is never fallible, are different signs of His supreme personality. The *Manu-saṁhitā* is the standard lawbook for humanity, and every human being is advised to follow this great book of social knowledge. Human society is the residential quarters for the Lord. This means that the human being is meant for God realization and association with God. This life is a chance for the conditioned soul to regain his eternal God consciousness and thus fulfill the mission of life. Mahārāja Prahlāda is the right type of representative of the Lord in the family of *asuras*. None of the living beings is away from the Lord's

gigantic body. Each and every one has a particular duty in relation to the supreme body. Disruption in the matter of discharging the specific duty assigned to each and every living being is the cause of disharmony between one living being and another, but when the relation is re-established in relation with the Supreme Lord, there is complete unity between all living beings, even up to the limit of the wild animals and human society. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu displayed this living unity in the jungle of Madhya Pradesh, where even the tigers, elephants and many other ferocious animals perfectly cooperated in glorifying the Supreme Lord. That is the way to peace and amity all over the world.

TEXT 37

ब्रह्मानं क्षत्रभुजो महात्मा
विह्वरुद्विश्रितकृष्णवर्णः ।
नानाभिधामीज्यगणोपपन्नो
द्रव्यात्मकः कर्म वितानयोगः ॥३७॥

*brahmānanam kṣatra-bhujo mahātmā
viḥ uru aṅghri-śrīta-kṛṣṇa-varṇaḥ
nānābhīdhāmījyagaṇopapanno
dravyātmakaḥ karma vitāna-yogaḥ*

brahma—the *brāhmaṇas*; *ānanam*—the face; *kṣatra*—the *kṣatriyas*; *bhujāḥ*—the arms; *mahātmā*—the *virāt-puruṣa*; *viḥ*—the *vaiśyas*; *uruḥ*—the thighs; *aṅghri-śrīta*—under the protection of His feet; *kṛṣṇa-varṇaḥ*—the *śūdras*; *nānā*—various; *abhīdhā*—by names; *abhījya-gaṇa*—the demigods; *upapannaḥ*—being overtaken; *dravya-ātmakaḥ*—with feasible goods; *karma*—activities; *vitāna-yogaḥ*—performances of sacrifice.

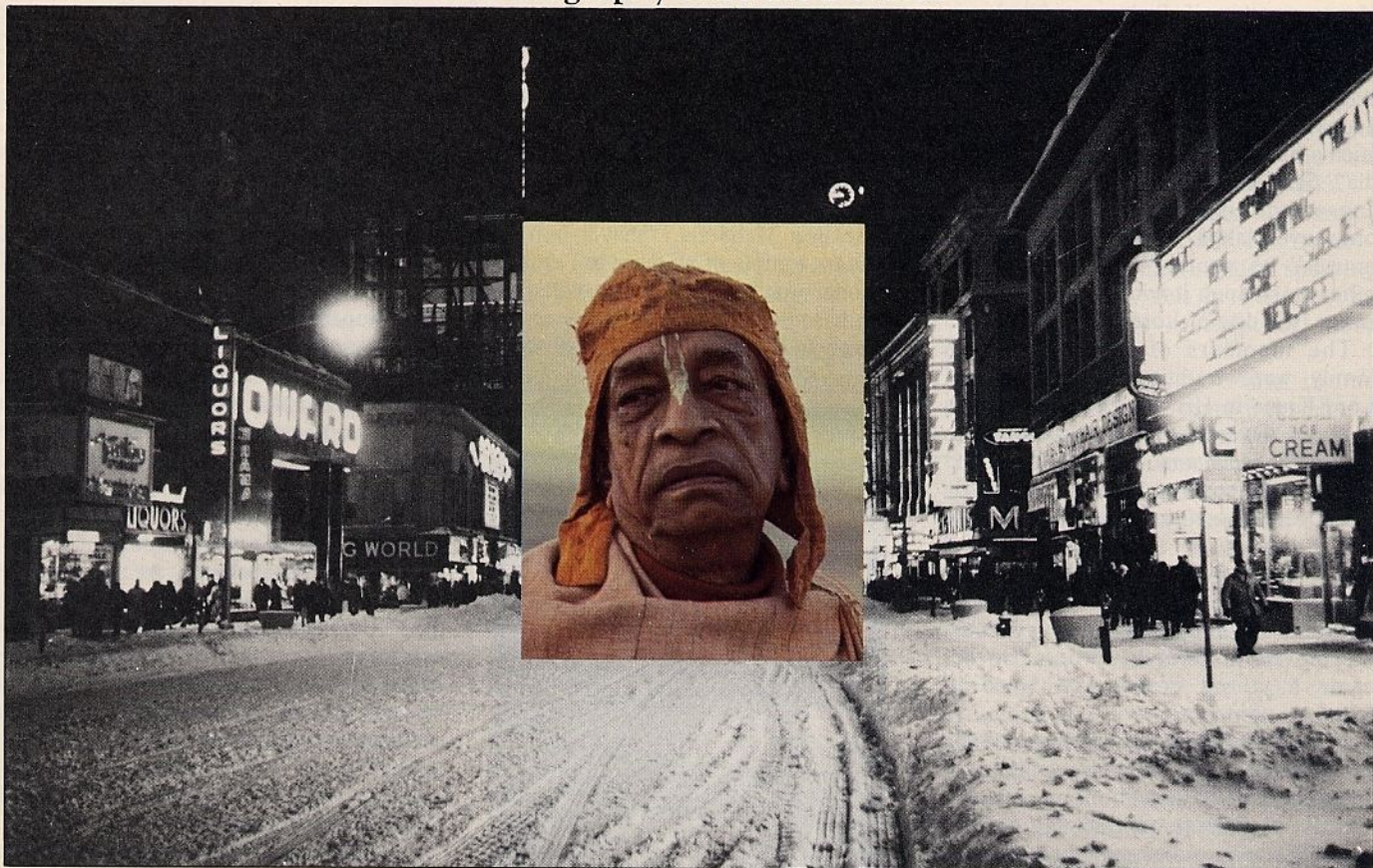
TRANSLATION

The *virāt-puruṣa*'s face is the *brāhmaṇas*, His arms are the *kṣatriyas*, His thighs are the *vaiśyas*, and the *śūdras* are under the protection of His feet. All the worshipable demigods are also overtaken by Him, and it is the duty of everyone to perform sacrifices with feasible goods to appease the Lord.

PURPORT

Monotheism is practically suggested here. Offering sacrifices to many demigods under different names is mentioned in the Vedic literatures, but the suggestion made in this verse is that all those varieties of demigods are included in the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; they are only the parts and parcels of the original whole. Similarly, the divisions of the orders of human society, namely the *brāhmaṇas* (the intelligent class), the *kṣatriyas* (the administrators), the *vaiśyas* (the mercantile community) and the *śūdras* (the laborer class), are all included in the body of the Supreme. As such, sacrifice by every one of them in terms of pleasing the Supreme by feasible goods is recommended. Generally, the sacrifice is offered with clarified butter and grains, but with the progress of time, human society has produced varieties of goods by transforming materials supplied by God's material nature. Human society, therefore, *must learn to offer sacrifices not only with clarified butter, but also with other manufactured goods in the propagation of the Lord's glory, and that will bring about perfection in human society.* The intelligent class of men, or *brāhmaṇas*, may give direction for such sacrifices in consultation with the previous *ācāryas*; the administrators may give all facilities to perform such sacrifices; the *vaiśya* class or mercantile community, who produce such goods, may offer them for sacrifice; and the *śūdra* class may offer their manual labor for the successful termination of such sacrifice. Thus by the cooperation of all classes of human beings, the sacrifice recommended in this age, namely the sacrifice of congregational chanting of the holy name of the Lord, may be executed for the common welfare of all the people of the world.

(continued in next issue)



WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

New York City, January-February 1966

“It Will Not Be Possible to Assist You”

by SATSVARŪPA DĀSA GOSWAMI

Śrīla Prabhupāda pursued his desire to purchase the two-storied structure at 143 West Seventy-second Street. The realtors had shown him the building, and he had already mentally arranged the interior for Deity worship and distribution of *prasāda* [food offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa].

On January 14 he wrote a letter to the building's owner, Mr. A. M. Hartman, explaining his problem in getting the government of India to sanction the release of money from the country. He requested Mr. Hartman to donate the building for the time being for use as a Kṛṣṇa temple.

Śrīla Prabhupāda related that he had expected to get personal sanction from the prime minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, who was due to visit America. “But now the prime minister is suddenly dead,” wrote Śrīla Prabhupāda, “and I’m greatly perplexed.” (Prime Minister Shastri died of a heart attack on January 11, 1966, while visiting Russia.) So Śrīla Prabhupāda suggested that if Mr. Hartman were to donate the building, at least

he would not have to pay taxes. He also requested that Mr. Hartman become one of the directors of the proposed institution.

Mr. Hartman was not agreeable. But in January a reply to one of the letters to India gave Śrīla Prabhupāda considerable hope. It came from Śrī Padmapat Singhania, the director of a very large business in India known as the J. K. Organization. Śrīla Prabhupāda had written him an appeal to help, since the members of his family were traditionally devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

On January 14, 1966, Mr. Singhania replied as follows:

“My dear Svāmījī,

I have gone through your letter. I am very glad to know your idea of erecting a Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple in New York. I think the proposal is a good one, but the following are the difficulties. We have got to send foreign exchange for building the temple for which the government sanction is required. Without the government sanction no money can be

sent abroad. If the government of India agrees, then one can think of erecting a temple in New York. I doubt whether with this small amount of rupees, seven lakhs [\$147,000], a temple can be built in New York. I mean to carry out a nice construction with Indian type of architecture. To get the temple completed in Indian type of architecture we have to send a man from India.

These are the main difficulties. Otherwise the idea is very good.

Yours sincerely,
Śrī Padmapat Singhania”

Śrīla Prabhupāda and Mr. Singhania disagreed as to what kind of building should become the first Kṛṣṇa temple in New York. To construct a magnificent Indian temple in New York would cost many millions of dollars. Śrīla Prabhupāda had mentioned that they might not be able to buy suitable vacant land in Manhattan, and in that case they might even have to purchase a building, dismantle it, and then construct a temple.

He knew that if Padmapat Singhanian truly desired, he was rich enough to spend millions of dollars. But then again there was the critical situation regarding exchange. How would they be able to get such a huge amount of money out of India? Śrīla Prabhupāda therefore again suggested his plan that they spend only seven lakhs. "After purchasing the house," he wrote, "we can build another story upon it with a temple dome, *cakra* [the disc of Lord Viṣṇu], etc."

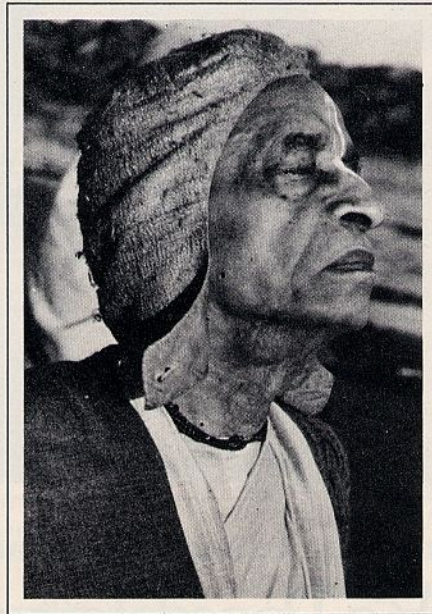
The members of Mr. Singhanian's family were traditionally devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa in His opulent form known as Lord Dvārakā-nātha. According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, when Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, made His appearance in the material world, He first appeared in the rural setting of Vṛndāvana, where in His childhood He sported with the cows and cowherd boys and girls. When He was sixteen years old He moved to Dvārakā, where He became a young prince and lived in fabulous opulence.

"Lord Dvārakādhīśa," wrote Śrīla Prabhupāda, "exhibited His opulence at Dvārakā with sixteen thousand queens, and it is understood that He built a palace for each and every queen, and the palaces were made with jewels and stones so that there was no necessity for artificial light in the palaces. So your conception of building a temple of Lord Kṛṣṇa is in opulence. But we are residents of Vṛndāvana, and Vṛndāvana has no palaces like your Dvārakā. Vṛndāvana is full of forests and cows on the bank of the Yamunā, and Lord Kṛṣṇa in His childhood played the part of a cowherd boy without any real opulence [like that of which] you people, the inhabitants of Dvārakā, think. So when the Dvārakā-vālās meet the Vṛndāvana-vālās there may be a via media [that is, a compromise]." With Mr. Singhanian's Dvārakā-like wealth and Śrīla Prabhupāda's Vṛndāvana-like devotion, Lord Kṛṣṇa—the Lord of both Vṛndāvana and Dvārakā—could be properly worshiped.

With one apparently hot iron in the fire, Śrīla Prabhupāda proceeded to add others. He wrote to another Godbrother, Bon Mahārāja, the rector of the Institute of Oriental Philosophy, in Vṛndāvana, saying that he had found a place for a temple in New York City and that he wanted to install Deities of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Bon Mahārāja wrote back on January 14 with price estimates for fourteen-inch brass Deities of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, but he warned Śrīla Prabhupāda that to start the Deity worship would be a heavy responsibility for the future.

Śrīla Prabhupāda requested Bon Mahārāja's assistance in getting the

government to sanction the release of the money he felt Padmapat Singhanian would donate. Śrīla Prabhupāda mentioned that he had carried on an extensive personal correspondence with the vice-president of India, Dr. Radhakrishnan, who was also known to Bon Mahārāja. "Tell him," Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote Bon Mahārāja, "that it is not an ordinary temple of worship but an international institution for God consciousness based on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*." In reply to Bon Mahārāja's question as to



whether Śrīla Prabhupāda could single-handedly manage a temple in New York, Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, "I think that after the temple has started, some men, even from America, may be available, as I see they have in the Ramakrishna Mission as well as in so many *yoga* societies. So I am trying to open a temple here because Śrīla Prabhupāda [meaning his own spiritual master, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura] wanted it."

On Saturday, January 22, while Śrīla Prabhupāda prayed to receive Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in New York, a snow storm hit the city. That morning, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who had never before seen snow, woke up and thought that someone had whitewashed the whole side of the adjoining building. When he went outside, he saw that everything was covered with snow. Now he had to walk through heavy snow with only a thin *dhoti* beneath his overcoat and his head covered with his "*svāmī* hat." The temperature was down to ten degrees.

While the city went into a state of emergency, Śrīla Prabhupāda continued his daily walks. The main roads were cleared, but many sidewalks were covered with snow. Along the strip of

park dividing Broadway, the gusting winds piled snowbanks up to shoulder height and totally buried the benches. The Broadway kiosks, plastered with layer upon layer of posters and notices, were now plastered with additional layers of snow and ice. But despite the snow, people were still walking their dogs, although the dogs now wore raincoats and mackinaws. (The pampering behavior of the American dog owners always left Prabhupāda with a feeling of surprised amusement.) As he approached West End Avenue, he found the doormen blowing whistles as usual to signal the taxis, and scattering salt to create safe walkways in front of the buildings. In Riverside Park the benches, paths, and trees were glazed with ice and gave off a shimmering reflection from the sky.

In the newspapers that week, Selective Service officials announced that for the first time since the Korean War, substantial numbers of young people would be drafted. In Vietnam a month-long peace ended, and the U.S. Air Force raided North Vietnam. The transit strike ended after three weeks, and subsequently the transit labor leader, who had been arrested, died of a heart attack.

On January 30 the whole East Coast was hit by severe blizzards, and seven inches of snow fell on the city, with winds up to fifty miles an hour. The City of New York offered free warm rooms and board for people living in tenements without heat. J.F.K. Airport was temporarily closed, as were train lines and roadways into the city. For the second time within eight days, a state of emergency was called on account of snow.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was struggling, but he remained convinced that the world's suffering could be solved only by Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As a lone individual, he could not do anything about the snow emergency or the international warfare, which he saw as mere symptoms of the age of Kali. There would always be misery in the material world, but if he could bring Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa to a building in New York, it would be possible for the Supreme Lord to do anything. Even in the midst of Kali-yuga, a golden age could appear, and people could get relief from all the anomalies of the present age. If Americans could take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, its potency for peace and prosperity based on genuine God consciousness could spread all over the world. Seeing through the eyes of the scriptures, Śrīla Prabhupāda pushed himself through the city blizzard and pursued the thin trail for support of his project.

On February 4, Śrīla Prabhupāda

wrote a letter in answer to his Godbrother Tirtha Mahārāja. His Godbrother had said that he would try for the government sanction only after he had gotten a letter from a responsible donor who promised to purchase a temple for Śrīla Prabhupāda. Śrīla Prabhupāda informed him that the donor would be Śrī Padmapat Singhanīa of the J. K. Organization, and he enclosed Mr. Singhanīa's letter of the fourteenth expressing a favorable attitude toward building a Kṛṣṇa temple in New York. Śrīla Prabhupāda reminded his Godbrother, "Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta wanted such temples in foreign countries such as New York, London, Tokyo, etc., and I had personal talks with him when I first met him at Ulta Danga in 1922. Now here is a chance for me to carry out his personal order. . . . I am just seeking your favor and mercy in making this attempt successful."

Śrīla Prabhupāda's attempt to nourish all these plans around the promise of support by Padmapat Singhanīa met discouragement when the Dvārakā-vālā wrote a letter (dated Janaury 27) expressing his disinterest in the Seventy-second Street building.

"I am afraid that I cannot agree with your suggestion that you should buy a small house and erect something on top of it," said Mr. Singhanīa. "Unfortunately, such a kind of proposal will not suit me. The temple must be a small one, but it must be constructed properly. I quite agree that you cannot spend a lot of money at present, but within the amount the government may sanction, you should build something according to the architecture of Indian temples. Then only will we be able to create some impression on the American people. This is all that I can write to you in this connection. I am very grateful for your taking the trouble of writing me."

Somehow Śrīla Prabhupāda did not take this letter as final; he still maintained hopes that Śrī Padmapat Singhanīa would give money for the temple, if only the transfer of money could be arranged from India. He continued writing his Godbrothers and other devotees, asking them to approach the government to arrange sanction for release of money. He continued desiring the building, even though his one likely donor had gone sour on the idea of a *cakra* and dome placed atop a converted two-story structure.

In the beginning of February, 1966, Śrīla Prabhupāda changed his room from 501 to 307 in the same building on Seventy-second Street. In one of his letters to a Godbrother in India, he wrote,

"I have changed my room to Room 307 in the same building as above mentioned, for better air and light, and on the roadside junction of two roads, the Columbus Avenue and Seventy-second Street." According to Dr. Misra, Śrīla Prabhupāda moved in order to have his own place, independent of the Misra Yoga Society.

Room 307 was a very small office space with a toilet and sink but no facilities for bathing or cooking. It clearly was not intended for use as a residence, *āśrama*, or lecture hall. The door to 307

Again, India
was not
interested.
Even in
"the land of
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religious subjects
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"a small sect."

had a glass transom above it, and it held a large pane of frosted white glass, the kind common in old office doors. Usually, the name of the firm renting the office would have been printed on the lower left-hand corner of the pane. The room was very narrow. It had no furniture and no phone.

Śrīla Prabhupāda set out his blankets on the floor, next to a makeshift desk he had arranged for his typewriter and books. Although in that room he was now independent to preach as he liked, his material standards had been reduced. Whoever found him there saw that he was very poor. He could not even eat or bathe at home. He simply worked at his writing there and slept on the floor. He still had to walk to Seventy-fifth Street to cook at Dr. Misra's residence.

While Śrīla Prabhupāda had stayed at Dr. Misra's *yoga āśrama*, Dr. Misra had personally financed his needs, but now that Dr. Misra was leaving for Europe, Śrīla Prabhupāda was financially on his own. Whatever money he could raise by sales of his books he had to use for the monthly rent of seventy-two dollars. He was also spending a few dollars a day for maintenance. He noted that for a little chili powder the West End Superette

charged twenty-five cents, many times what he would have paid for the same thing in India. Although he had no income, his expenses had increased. But at least this was his own place, and he began his own preaching to the few guests who began to attend his talks.

Śrīla Prabhupāda pursued his plans to purchase the building, and he also continued his writing and his local speaking and book selling. But in February he suffered reverses in most of these projects.

On February 16 he wrote to the proprietors of the Universal Book House of Bombay, giving some hints for selling his *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in the Bombay area. Śrīla Prabhupāda informed them that he was trying to establish a Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple and that "a big industrialist of India has promised to pay for the cost." Since it seemed he might stay in the United States "for many more days," Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted the Book House to take increased charge of selling his books throughout India. The Book House was the agent for selling his books in the province of Maharashtra, but now Śrīla Prabhupāda recommended that they take the responsibility for selling his three volumes of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in all the other provinces and introducing them in colleges and universities throughout the country. He also requested that they credit his bank account there for the books sold so far.

Within ten days a letter from the Universal Book House arrived at Room 307. "I cannot give you very happy news on the progress of the sale of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*," wrote Mr. A. P. Dharmwadkar, "because the subject is religious and [only] a small sect of the society may be personally interested in the books." The book agent explained that their line of business rarely brought them in contact with colleges and universities. The few booksellers who had taken the books had returned them after some time, for want of response. "As such," the agent wrote, "we are not only unenthusiastic to greet your proposal to take up sales for all India, but we were just thinking to ask you to nominate some other people to represent your sales program in Maharashtra." So far, they had sold only six sets of his books, for which they were about to transfer 172 rupees to his account. This was hardly encouraging to the author. Again, India was not interested. Even in "the land of religion," religious subjects were only for "a small sect."

Another reverse came directly from the head of the Indian government. On February 8 Śrīla Prabhupāda had

addressed a letter to the new prime minister, Indira Gandhi, requesting her to give him permission to release money from India to invest in the Kṛṣṇa temple in New York. His reply came from the prime minister's official secretary, Mr. L. K. Gha. It was dated February 25 from New Delhi.

“Dear Svāmiji,

The Prime Minister has seen your letter of February 8, 1966. She appreciates the spirit which has prompted you to carry the message of the *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to other countries. Owing to the critical foreign exchange situation which the country is facing, it is greatly regretted that it will not be possible to assist you from here in your plan to set up a Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple.”

Once again the message was a clear no, but Śrīla Prabhupāda wouldn't take no for an answer, at least not until he had pursued the matter to its furthest limit. Even after receiving this letter, he continued trying to get governmental sanction for the release of money.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's visa, which he had extended several times, was to run out again by March 1966. To get an extension, he would have to apply a few weeks beforehand. He wrote to his Godbrothers that he needed definite encouragement from them to continue in America, because it was so expensive. He informed them that he was spending the equivalent of a thousand rupees a month. “And as such, I am counting every day to receive your favorable replies.”

In a letter dated February 16, he again requested Tirtha Mahārāja to approach Dr. Radhakrishnan on his behalf, to try to persuade the government to release funds, but this time the Godbrothers let his letter go unanswered. Apparently they felt little obligation toward preaching in America; they didn't even bother to write him regular replies.

On March 18 Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote another letter to Śrī Padmapat Singhanian, requesting a man from India to work on the temple in New York, as Mr. Singhanian had previously suggested. Śrīla Prabhupāda again wrote to Sumati Morarjee, requesting her to please send him a *mṛdaṅga*, a drum to accompany his chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. And he requested that in the future, when he would send many men from India, she oblige by giving them free passage on Scindia Steamship Lines. There is no record of any reply to these inquiries. As his financial situation became more urgent and his hopes more strained, his support from India withdrew in silence. His unanswered correspondence was

itself a kind a message, loud and clear: “We cannot help you.”

Although no one encouraged him, Śrīla Prabhupāda trusted in the order of his spiritual master and the will of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He extended his visa to stay on in New York. Although the word from the prime minister was a definite no, Śrīla Prabhupāda still hoped that Padmapat Singhanian was influential enough to send him money if he wanted to. Mr. Singhanian had already written that he

**The only question
was whether
Americans
would take notice
of the pure devotee
in their midst.
It didn't
seem that anyone
was going to
take him seriously.**

was not interested in Prabhupāda's building, but Śrīla Prabhupāda had written him further, suggesting different ways the money could be released from India and a temple built according to Mr. Singhanian's satisfaction.

The one light in all these maneuvers was the slight hope that Mr. Singhanian would still make a big donation. But this hope was thoroughly discouraged by a letter of March 28 from the J. K. Organization. This time Mr. Singhanian did not write personally. The reply came from his secretary, Mr. Easwara Iyer.

“I regret to write that Śrī Padmapatji is not interested in the scheme of building a Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple in New York at present. In regard to the inquiry contained in the last paragraph of your letter, Śrī Padmapatji duly received your books of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from your Delhi offices. Yours sincerely.”

Had Śrīla Prabhupāda given up, as would most persons his age, there would be nothing further to tell about the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. But he persisted, and there is more to our story of one pure devotee's singlehanded effort to

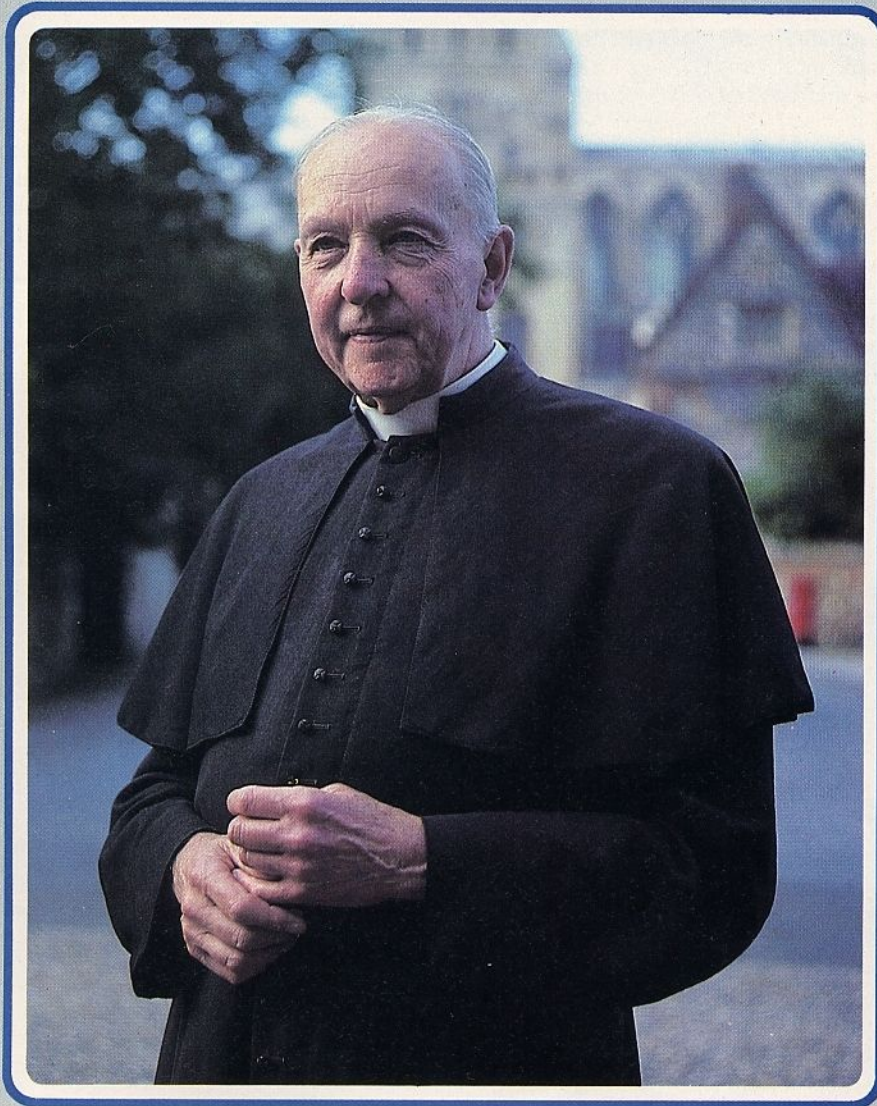
introduce Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the West.

Seeing him from a long distance, a tiny figure walking Manhattan's streets and avenues among many other tiny figures; hearing of his daily survival, an Indian immigrant, old and poor, whose visa had almost run out—in this way we come upon only the external appearance of Śrīla Prabhupāda. He would always acknowledge that those days were real enough and very difficult, but the other level, his transcendental consciousness, was always there and predominant. Formerly, when he had suffered his heart attacks aboard the *Jaladuta*, his reading of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* had supplied him the nectar of life. And now he was not really living in Manhattan consciousness, but was absorbed in dependence upon Kṛṣṇa, and thus he was situated in the soul's original, constitutional nature in relation to God.

Certainly Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted very much to open Lord Kṛṣṇa's temple in New York. But whether or not the world would recognize him and provide him with a building, he had already succeeded, because he was remembering Kṛṣṇa, even in New York City in the winter of 1965-66. Not a day went by when he did not work on Kṛṣṇa's book, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which fully declares the glories of Kṛṣṇa. And not a day went by when he did not offer *prasāda* to Kṛṣṇa and speak on Kṛṣṇa's philosophy of *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Lord Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā*, “For one who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, I am never lost to him, and he is never lost to Me.” Kṛṣṇa makes this promise to His devotee and assures him that there need be no doubt. “My devotee will never be vanquished.” There was never any doubt about this for Śrīla Prabhupāda. The only question was whether Americans would succeed in taking notice of the pure devotee in their midst. At this point it certainly didn't seem that anyone was going to take him seriously.

Years later, Śrīla Prabhupāda would describe his change of fortune in New York as no less than a miracle performed by Kṛṣṇa. “When I was alone in New York,” he would say, “I was thinking, ‘Who will listen to me in this horrible, sinful place? All right, I shall stay a little longer. At least I can distribute a few of my books. That is something.’ Now I can see that it is a miracle. Otherwise, your city, New York, one single old man, with only a few books to sell for barely getting eatables—how can he survive, what to speak of introducing a God conscious movement for saving humankind? That is Kṛṣṇa's miracle.”



“HERE IS SOMETHING VERY BEAUTIFUL AND LOVELY”

Reflections on Kṛṣṇa consciousness, by Rev. Norman Moorhouse.

My first impression of the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple was, “Here is something that is very beautiful and lovely.” As far as the worship was concerned, it was the happiness of it, the joy of it, that I noticed. I observed it in all the faces of the devotees. And, of course, there was the dancing, which in the Christian church you don’t have at

all. I also was very impressed with the way the children were enjoying themselves in worship and really taking part in it. So it was an experience of great joy, an experience that made me think, “This is what religion is all about.”

Having stayed with the devotees, I was able to appreciate some of the discipline involved in their way of living. It isn’t an easy life. Indeed, it is a hard life in many ways—rising early, abstaining from meat and intoxicants and sex outside marriage. But it has always been my belief that religious life must be a disciplined life. Maybe that’s where so many Christian churches have failed: they do

not expect or ask for a disciplined, ordered life.

* * * *

I have read several of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books and commentaries and find them a tremendous help. I’ve also found that chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa has helped me a great deal in my general time given to prayer and meditation. Some Christians do use this kind of prayer. The rosary is chiefly associated with Roman Catholics, but many members of the Church of England also use it. And there are many Russian orthodox Christians who chant

FATHER MOORHOUSE is a priest of the Church of England. He was born in 1912 in Manchester, and was ordained in 1948. Having served in many parishes throughout Britain, he is now a member of the College of Chaplains of Norwich Cathedral.

the name of Jesus several hundred or thousand times every day. It's a great help to many people to meditate on the names of God. In the book of Psalms there are biddings to praise the name of the Lord and to sing.

Srīla Prabhupāda once wrote to us in England that the Sanskrit word *Kṛṣṇa* and the Greek word *Christos* have a common root. I remember that during the Second World War, I was in Greece for Easter, and it was a wonderful thing to hear all the people chanting and singing *Christos aneshe*—Christ is risen, Christ is risen. I get the same feeling hearing the devotees chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

* * * *

I have read most of the writings of Thomas Merton. He felt that there was much in India's tradition that could help Christians understand the purpose of religion. For many people today, the teachings of their Bible do not, for some reason or another, seem to fulfill the deepest needs.

* * * *

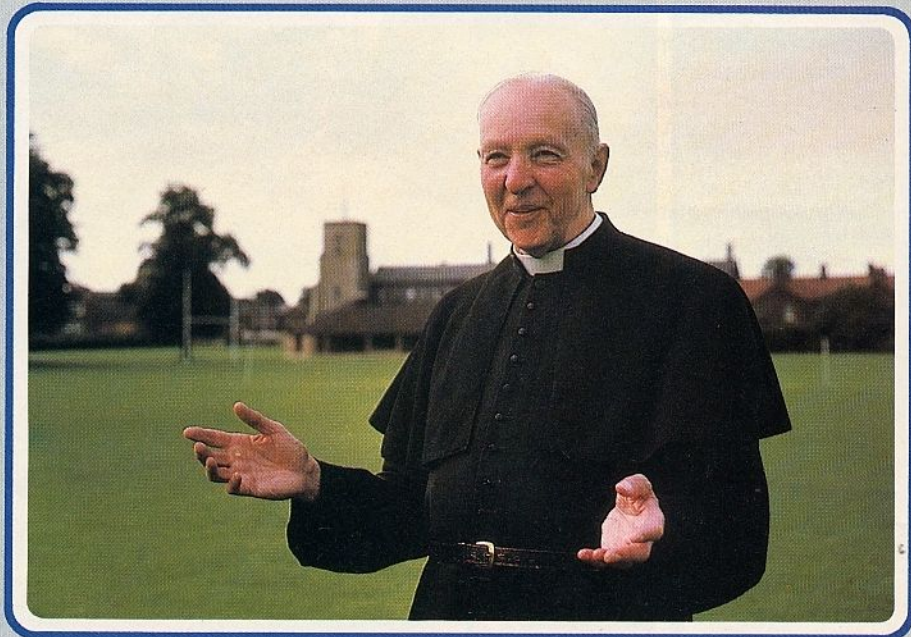
I'm sorry to see that the members of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement are sometimes being harassed by the police and that some commentators are giving out false ideas about their way of life and their worship in their temples. And, of course, they are being wrongly labeled as a "cult." There are in fact many undesirable groups about today, but it's really not proper to number the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement among them. Very often I think this is done through simple lack of information. Then again, some people see in this movement something that's going to hurt their way of life, and they do all they can to stop it. They're so satisfied with their materialistic way of life that they wouldn't want a religion that really practices what it preaches. So they try to suppress it. They feel it's a threat to them. . . .

* * * *

The Bible, like the *Bhagavad-gītā*, makes a distinction between the soul and the material body. Jesus said that we are spirit, that God is a spirit, and that we should worship God in spirit and in truth. But it also says in the Bible that when God made man's earthly body, it was not alive until God breathed into it. And then the body became alive—the soul gave life to the body. And you and I are souls living in such bodies (just as the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement teaches). Yet many Christian people believe that the body that is buried in the earth will

somehow arise again on the last day and go to heaven. They appear to forget that the body is, after all, only clothing for life. That's a great tragedy, and that's why I think that cemeteries and churchyards are all such dreadful places. A woman will go there and say, "I'm going to visit John," speaking of her late husband. But we shall have another body after death—a spiritual body. It's the

was in a better state of health than those that had been eating the meat and drinking the wine provided by the king. So the Christians are many times bidden to be vegetarian. Adam and Eve, before they fell, lived a simple life by eating those things that God provided for them. They didn't kill animals for food. We should all try to get back to that way of life by eating grains and vegetables and drink-



kind of body that Jesus had when he appeared to Mary Magdalene on Easter morning, the kind of body he had when he came to his disciples—the Bible purposely says that the doors were locked and yet Jesus appeared in the midst of them. So it's a spiritual body we shall have. The teaching of the *Vedas* is very strong on this point. You learn from the very start that "I am not this material body." I think that Christians are giving perhaps a too materialistic conception of who we are.

* * * *

There is an ancient tradition that Jesus was a vegetarian. Whether this is actually true I do not know. But I would go as far as to say that St. John the Baptist was a vegetarian, and those who belonged to the same sect as he. And, of course, in the Old Testament we have the example of Daniel, who lived as a vegetarian and refused to eat the meat (or drink the wine) that King Nebuchadnezzar ordered his stewards to give him while he was imprisoned. The stewards insisted he take it, so that he would not lose his health. But Daniel made a bargain and said, "Look, give me vegetarian food just for ten days, and then see what I'm like." At the end of the ten days, Daniel

ing milk. Not only will we be better off physically, but our mental powers for understanding spiritual subjects will be strengthened if we eat and drink in the way prescribed in the Hare Kṛṣṇa diet.

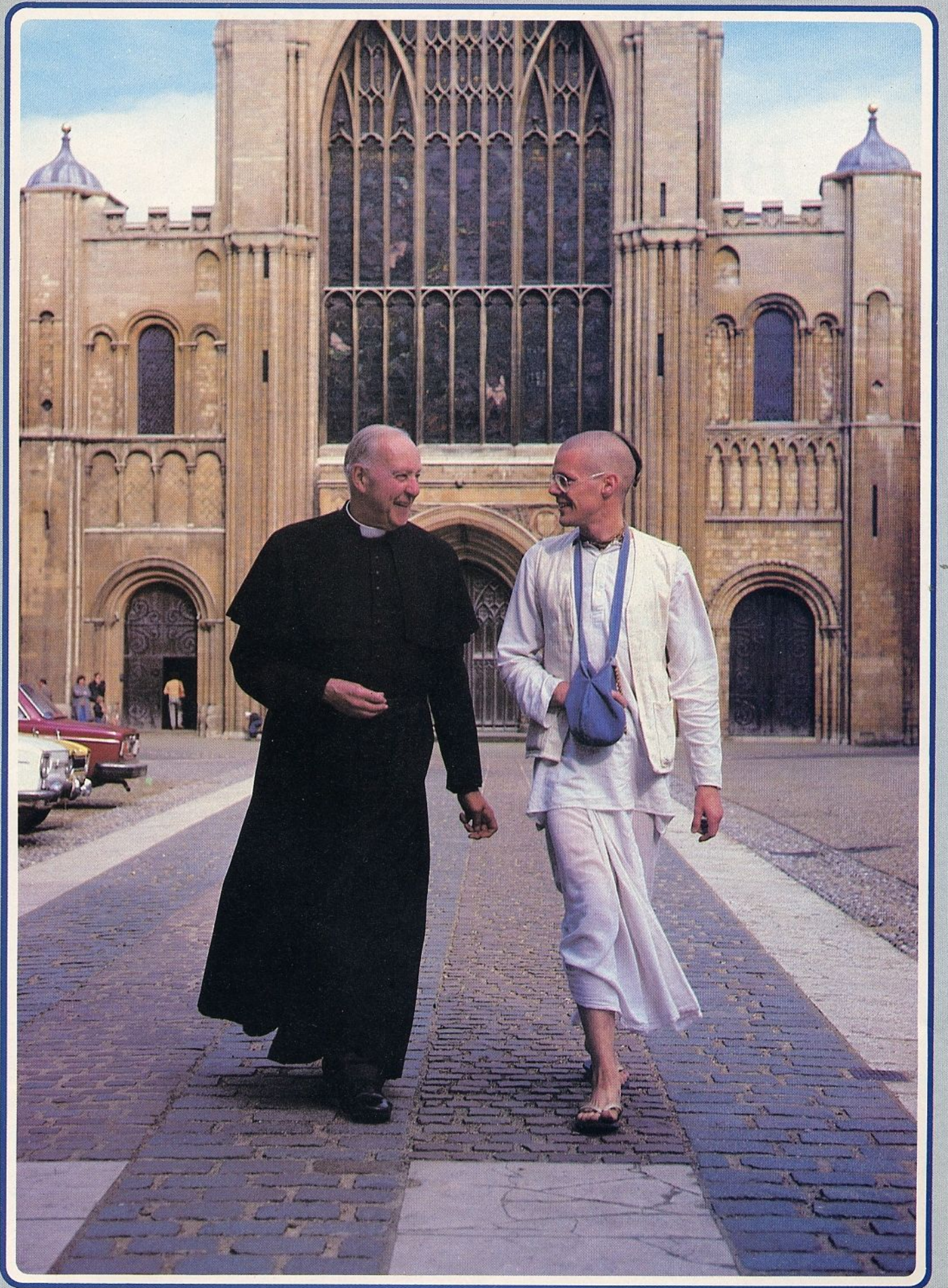
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I've thought of Jesus Christ as a *guru*. He said that he was the way, the truth, and the life, and that no one comes to the Father but through him. In this way he was speaking as a *guru* to his disciples. And in the same way, a Kṛṣṇa conscious devotee receives instructions through his *guru*.

* * * *

We are living in days when Christians of various traditions are trying to get together and find unity. But more important still, many Christians are looking beyond their immediate traditions and realizing a transcendent unity of all religions.

We must get beyond the external rituals, forms, and terminologies. The *Vedas* teach that there is a sense in which all religions are the same: we should all be living our lives in love and service to God. I'm quite sure that Christian people can accept this as a principle to live by.



BREAKING OPEN THE JAWS OF DEATH

Western poets and philosophers have long lamented the power of time. Shakespeare's King Richard despairs, "I wasted time, and now doth time waste me." But in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and other Vedic literatures we find portraits not only of time's victims but also of persons who conquered time and death. One was Gajendra.

Ages ago, on a celestial planet in this universe, there was a mountain named Trikūṭa. In the valleys surrounding this mountain were many lakes and streams, whose water was clear as crystal and whose banks and beaches were covered not with sand but with trillions of tiny jewels. Sometimes lovely young demigoddesses would come to the lakes and streams to bathe, and their bodies (quite unlike those of earthly women, who must smear themselves with deodorants) lent a pleasing fragrance to the water and the breeze.

In one valley of Trikūṭa Mountain was a garden called Ṛtumat. Many tropical fruits—including mangoes, coconuts, dates, pomegranates, and bananas—grew luxuriantly all year long. There was a lake filled with golden lotuses and other rare flowers. Intoxicated bumblebees drank the nectar of the flowers and hummed along with the chirping of the birds. And graceful swans glided across the lake's surface.

Deep in the mountain forest lived Gajendra, the king of the elephants. On one occasion Gajendra and his male and female companions wandered to the lake, overrunning all sorts of plants, creepers, thickets, and trees in their path. As soon as Gajendra's scent reached the rival elephants and other ferocious animals like lions and rhinoceroses, they fled in fear. The smaller and less dangerous animals like the porcupines, rabbits, foxes, and wolves remained in the forest. But out of respect for Gajendra, they did not come before him.

The weight of Gajendra's body made Trikūṭa Mountain tremble. As Gajendra

walked he perspired, his mouth dripping with liquor and his eyes clouded with intoxication. From a distance he smelled the lotus flowers' sweet pollen. Now he led his herd to the lake, where they could satisfy their thirst.

In a moment the king of the elephants plunged in, bathed, and drank the cold, clear, nectarean water. Feeling utterly satisfied and refreshed, he invited his wives and children to bathe and drink as he had done. And with great endeavor he drew water in through his trunk and sprayed it over them.

Then, suddenly, a huge crocodile attacked the mighty elephant's leg. Gajendra was uncommonly strong, but though he tried and tried, he could not get free. His wives felt aggrieved and began to cry. The other elephants wanted to rescue Gajendra by grasping him from behind, but because of the crocodile's great strength they could not do anything. So the crocodile and the king of the elephants fought and pulled each other in and out of the water, for one thousand years.

Eventually, the elephant became weakened. At the same time the crocodile, being an animal of the water, increased in enthusiasm, physical strength, and sensory power. When Gajendra saw that he could not save himself, he became terrified of being killed.

"The other male elephants, my friends and relatives, cannot help me," he thought. "What, then, to speak of my wives? It must be the will of providence that I have been attacked by this crocodile.

"The serpent of eternal time endlessly chases everyone," said Gajendra, "but if one who fears this serpent seeks the shelter of the Supreme Lord, the Lord gives him protection. Even death runs away in fear of the Lord. I therefore surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa."

Now Gajendra fixed his mind on a prayer he had learned in his previous life, and he chanted it with all his heart.

"The Supreme Lord is the platform on which everything rests and the ingredient from which everything is produced," Gajendra prayed. "The Lord is the person who has created this cosmic manifestation. By expanding His energy He keeps it sometimes visible and sometimes invisible.

"The identity of an actor on stage is covered by attractive costuming and dancing and cannot be understood by his audience. Similarly, the activities and features of the supreme actor cannot be understood even by the demigods and great sages, and certainly not by those men who are unintelligent like animals. But may that Supreme Personality of Godhead give protection to an animal like me."

Gajendra did not want simply to be saved from his present predicament. He further prayed, "After I am rescued from the attack of the crocodile, I do not wish to live in this material world any more. What is the use of living in this elephant's body, covered by ignorance? Now, fully desiring release from material life, I offer my respectful obeisances unto that Supreme Person who is the creator of the universe."

In *Bhagavad-gītā* we learn that all living beings are actually spirit souls, part and parcel of the Supreme Personality of Godhead—that they are like spiritual sparks emanating from the fire of the Absolute Truth. Unfortunately, some souls desire to forget their eternal connection with the Supreme Lord. As a result, they take birth in the material world, in the bodies of demigods, humans, animals, birds, plants, and insects.

These bodies—subject to birth, death, old age, and disease—cover the eternal soul. And so, ignorant of his real identity, the soul remains in the material world lifetime after lifetime. Forgetful of his spiritual selfhood, he remains attracted to material life (to house, country, society, family, bank balance, and so on). Continually he thinks, "I am this





ILLUSTRATION: YADIRAN-DEVI DAS

body, and everything related to this body is mine.” This conception of life is extremely difficult to surmount, unless (like Gajendra) the soul realizes, *aham brahmāsmi*—“I am a spirit”—and surrenders to the Supreme Spirit, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. At that moment he regains his spiritual enlightenment.

Seeing Gajendra’s awkward position, the Supreme Lord (in His four-armed form as Viṣṇu) flew toward the mountain lake on the back of His great winged carrier, Garuḍa. Gajendra was still caught in the jaws of the crocodile and was feeling acute pain. But he was relieved to see the Lord wielding His disc and other weapons and coming in the sky to rescue him. So with great difficulty due to his painful condition, he took a lotus flower in his trunk, raised it high,

and prayed, “O my Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You.”

The Lord got down from Garuḍa’s back and pulled Gajendra and the crocodile out of the water. Then He released His disc and cut the crocodile’s head from his body. All the demigods and sages who had gathered there praised this act and showered flowers upon the Lord and Gajendra.

In their previous lives, both Gajendra and the crocodile had been kings. The crocodile had been King Hūhū, of the Gandharva planet. But once, while reveling in the water with a group of celestial women, he had somehow pulled the leg of the sage Devala. At this the sage became furious and cursed King Hūhū to become a crocodile. Despondent, the king begged pardon from the

sage, who gave him the benediction that he would be freed at the very moment when the Supreme Lord delivered Gajendra. So as soon as the Lord cut off the crocodile’s head, the soul left that body and regained the beautiful form of the demigod King Hūhū. After offering prayers to Kṛṣṇa, King Hūhū returned at once to the Gandharva planet.

In his previous life Gajendra had been Indradyumna, a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the king of a South Indian region called Pāṇḍya. When Indradyumna retired from his kingdom and family life, he went to the Malaya Hills, where he lived in a small cottage *āśrama* and practiced spiritual disciplines. He let his hair grow in matted locks and engaged in continual austerities. Once, while observing a vow of silence, he became fully absorbed in the ecstasy of love of Godhead.

Just then the great sage Agastya arrived, along with his disciples. But King Indradyumna was so absorbed in meditation that he did not even notice the sage, what to speak of offering him a proper reception. Angered at this breach of etiquette, Agastya cursed the king.

“This King Indradyumna is not at all gentle,” said Agastya. “Being low and uneducated, he has insulted me. May he therefore enter the region of darkness and receive the dull, dumb body of an elephant.”

Because Indradyumna was a devotee, he humbly accepted the sage’s curse as the desire of the Lord. He lost his royal position and got the body of an elephant, but he retained his devotional mentality. And because he remembered how to offer prayers to the Lord, he received spiritual liberation. In fact, after the Lord saved His dear devotee from the crocodile’s jaws, He promised, “Anyone who offers Me the prayers you have offered and who meditates upon My form, this lake, this mountain, the gardens, the celestial trees, and My unlimited, all-auspicious activities—he will at last receive eternal residence in the spiritual world.”

As we have seen, time—death—takes everything away. No one can say that he is unafraid of death. Now, we might well ask, “Doesn’t Kṛṣṇa’s devotee also die?” The answer is that a devotee still has to give up his material body, but the present body is his last. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa assures us that after a devotee gives up his present body, he does not accept another. He returns home, back to Godhead. ❀

[Adapted by Drutakarmā dāsa from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, translation and commentary by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.]

“UNITY OF MAN”

(continued from page 4)

Yogī: That’s very true. Kṛṣṇa is God.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Then why don’t you follow Kṛṣṇa’s instructions?

Yogī: We are not disobeying any instructions of God.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: What Kṛṣṇa says—that is written in *Bhagavad-gītā*. Why don’t you take that instruction? What is wrong there? Every problem is solved. For instance, to solve economic problems Kṛṣṇa says, *annād bhavanti bhūtāni*: “If you simply grow enough food grains, then both animals and man will be happy and satisfied.” [Bg. 3.14] So who will disagree with this point? Follow this.

To solve social problems Kṛṣṇa says, *cātur-varṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ*: “Human society should be divided into four classes, according to their qualities and the different kinds of work ascribed to them.” [Bg. 4.13] And everywhere you go, you’ll find that four classes there *are*. Some people feel inclined to study and teach, others want to administrate and protect, another class does best in agriculture and trade, and others want to be workingmen and craftsmen. All this is already going on. “So,” Kṛṣṇa says, “make it systematic.”

Now, how will you know who is in what group? By their different qualities.

For instance, in the *Gītā* Kṛṣṇa says,

*śamo damaḥ tapaḥ śaucaṁ
kṣāntir ājīvam eva ca
jñānaṁ vijñānaṁ āstikyam
brahma-karma svabhāva-jam*

“Peacefulness, self-control, austerity, purity, tolerance, honesty, wisdom, knowledge, and religiousness—these are the qualities by which the intellectual class works.” [Bg. 18.42] And from that information you can train a real intellectual class. They must be truthful, they must be self-controlled—controlling the mind, controlling the senses—they must have full knowledge of the world. And they must know how to apply their knowledge in practical situations.

So Kṛṣṇa’s instructions aren’t sectarian. Where is the question of “I am Sikh,” “I am Hindu,” “I am Muslim”?

Yogī: No, no... the question is very simple. People will ask you... the caste system... what it did to India.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Kṛṣṇa doesn’t recommend a “caste system”—classifying people by the families they’re born in. No. That is a perversion of the real system, which is to classify people scientifically, by their qualities. Now, we are training these American boys as *brāhmaṇas*, priests and scholars. Do you think they belong to “the *brāhmaṇa* caste”?

Yogī: No, but that is only—

Śrīla Prabhupāda: We are showing people how to acquire priestly and scholarly qualifications. It doesn’t matter whether they are coming from Christian families or Muhammadan families. For instance, if you show someone how to become an engineer, it doesn’t matter what family he’s coming from. It doesn’t matter. So anyone from any family can come and be trained in *satyam*—truthfulness, how to speak truthfully... and in *samaḥ*—controlling the mind... and *damaḥ*—controlling the senses. You may be Hindu, Muslim, Christian. Now, if I say, “Please come here; learn these things: how to control the mind, how to control the senses,” who will object to it? So if anyone is trained—it doesn’t matter which sect or which family he is coming from—if he has learned how to control the mind, how to control the senses, then he becomes a *brāhmaṇa*, a real scholar and spiritual leader.

So all the information we need—everything is already spoken by God. If you accept it, then there is unity. But you *don’t* accept. You manufacture something. That is the difficulty.

Yogī: Yes. Well, there is another difficulty—

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. Our difficulty is that you don’t accept. If I say, “Come here; be educated,” and if you don’t accept—“No, no, I don’t want to”—then

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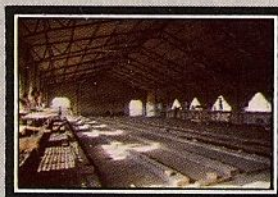
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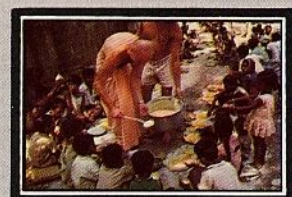
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how can you be educated? You must agree to what God says. But you say, "I believe . . . We believe . . ." What is this, "I believe . . . We believe"?"

All the information we need is already there in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Perfect information—but people do not accept it. We don't require any conference. You simply accept Kṛṣṇa's words, the standard knowledge—then everything will be all right. I am speaking to you because

you are a leader. Now, if we take *Bhagavad-gītā* very seriously and train people from all over the world—not that *Bhagavad-gītā* is meant only for the Hindus or for the Indians, but for everyone—then everything will be all right. Otherwise it is not possible.

Yogī: No, I definitely agree that you must be successful in that mission, and you have practically and honestly taught what you believe in. My idea—

Śrīla Prabhupāda: I "honestly believe." Why don't you "honestly believe"?"

Yogī: I believe that you honestly believe—

Yogī: Then you also try in this way.

Yogī: That's what I am saying . . . this is the time—

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Accept the *Bhagavad-gītā* as the standard knowledge and preach it.

Yogī: What I'm trying to say is that this concept which you honestly believe as an individual—

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Again, why do you say I "honestly believe"?" Why do you honestly disbelieve?

Yogī: Well, every honest, understanding person will believe what you are saying. There's no divergence on that. But still there is divergence.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No divergence. Now, you are the leader of a group. If you honestly believe, teach them—they will accept you. If we accept Kṛṣṇa's instructions, if we try to convince people that we haven't got to research how to unite the whole world—"This information is already in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Accept it and follow it"—then everything will be taken care of.

Yogī: That requires a message.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The message is already there. I am giving you the message.

Yogī: Well, they are coming to the conference . . . a lot of people . . . and they would like to understand, and . . . What, especially, will we—

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. Just carry this message to your followers. It is not my message; it is the message of Kṛṣṇa. I am not manufacturing this message. I may be imperfect, but I am presenting the perfect message. That is my duty. I don't say I am perfect. I am simply a carrier, a peon. When a postal peon delivers some money, it is not his money—he simply carries it. So my duty is to carry Kṛṣṇa's message, that's all. Whatever I've said, I'm quoting from *Bhagavad-gītā*. You have seen it. I never say, "In my opinion . . . I think . . ." No. We are not introducing anything new.

Yogī: It is very kind of you, and if you carry this message to New Mexico . . . to all those guys . . . it will be a great joy. That's what the whole event was . . . to provide a platform where everyone—

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Now, first of all, you and all the other leaders should accept Kṛṣṇa's message. Otherwise, everyone will simply come, and say something, and go away. That's all. There will be no understanding. I know that. There'll be no understanding. You can write it down in your notebook.

Enhance your spiritual life

For spiritual realization, all you really need is the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra. But to enhance your spiritual life, you may want to add the items listed below.

1 Mantra Meditation Beads: a string of 108 hand-carved "japa beads"—chanters use them as an aid to concentration during meditation on the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra. Each string of beads comes with a cotton carrying bag and an instruction pamphlet. \$4.95.

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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* from the *mahā* (supreme) *mantra*. The *Kali-santaraṇa 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

Strictly Speaking, the Language Reform Movement Is Useless

There is a movement afoot to correct the worldwide abuse of the English language. Reformers claim that our abuse of words is crucially linked with the moral decline of our society. One of the leaders is Edwin Newman, author of the best-selling *Strictly Speaking*, and there have been others. "Bad language ultimately is immoral," says Professor Richard Mitchell, who wages a war against linguistic abuse by publishing a monthly newspaper called *The Underground Grammarian*.

It was during the Vietnam war that the U.S. military used the phrase "hamlet pacification" to describe the annihilation of entire villages, and termed bombed-out areas "sanitized." (Remember the torture agents of Orwell's "Ministry of Love"?) And during Watergate, Mr. Newman recalls, the Nixon administration used evasive and desensitizing phrases like "excess of zeal" and "higher national interests" for what Congress finally decided was cheating in the White House.

Most of us are sick of hearing pompous double talk from politicians, TV announcers, and other self-styled authorities. We would welcome the triumph of clear, honest expression over verbal camouflage. But we should note where the movement for linguistic reform lacks substance. The reformers have exposed lamentable (and sometimes laughable) abuses of language, but they have not give us a vision of how language can best serve humanity.

"Our politics would be improved if our English were," says Newman, "and so would other parts of our national life. . . . those for whom words have lost their value are likely to find that ideas have also lost their value."

So, what if the reformers were to have their way? Let's say large numbers of people give up their bad habits and start communicating clearly and eloquently. Still the question remains, What will people say to each other that will solve life's problems? The language reformers can only talk vaguely about a liberating quality in language itself. Good language, Newman says, "is a treasure trove of wit, charm, and inspiration." But how will this save us from the problems of existence? Even a dog communicates directly and honestly, through barking; nonetheless, he lives a dog's

life. Will added eloquence bring us relief from misery?

Let's extend this discussion toward a philosophical inquiry into language's ultimate purpose. According to the Vedic logical treatise *Vedānta-sūtra*, life is meant for inquiring into the Absolute Truth. So language must help fulfill this basic human need. The *Vedānta* begins with the Sanskrit expression *athāto*, which means "now"—now that we've transmigrated up from the animal species and graduated to the human form. "Now"—now that we've learned that temporary, material pleasures can't satisfy the soul, the self—let us inquire *beyond*. The *Vedānta* declares, *athāto brahma-jijñāsā*—now let us go beyond the material into spiritual or absolute inquiry: *Where does everything come from? What is the highest truth? What is the ultimate happiness?* If we make this ultimate inquiry (*Vedānta* literally means "the goal of knowledge"), then we are putting language to its best use.

We have to direct language toward solving life's problems, notably the cycle of birth, old age, disease, and death. And further, we have to direct language toward a practical understanding of eternity. Otherwise, saying "hurry" instead of "delay should not be allowed to take place" may be an improvement, but does this take away the problem of death? If we say "I hope" instead of "hopefully," does this stop disease and old age? If not, then what is our ultimate gain? Linguistic reform becomes only a kind of parlor game. Despite their claims that bad language is immoral and a killer of ideas, the reformers don't have a grasp of what constitutes actual morality and knowledge.

Language, then, has to relay the Absolute Truth. Many philosophers believe that beyond this temporary, material existence there is only void or impersonal existence, and so they say that language cannot go further than the temporary and the relative. ("That which can be spoken cannot be truth.") But when properly used, language can convey absolute spiritual knowledge. In essence *Vedānta* is declaring, "Let us stop talking falsely. Now let us begin *real* talking."

But is it possible to use language so perfectly and profoundly that it will unlock the mysteries of existence? Yes, if we pattern our words strictly after the

scriptural statements in which the Supreme Personality of Godhead has conveyed knowledge of Himself to man. In these eternal statements we find no human flaws, speculations, or camouflages, or even any literary inconsistencies. The Vedic teachers do not expect us to accept such claims blindly. Instead, they invite us to inquire thoroughly.

In one Vedic verse, the human tongue is compared to a desert. Although the tongue may endlessly try to derive pleasure from mundane art, politics, sociology, philosophy, poetry, and such, these will not satisfy our taste for the water of immortality. However well articulated, these transient topics do not satisfy the urge of the soul. The soul's ultimate solace is to attain knowledge and realization and love of God. And we can enter into this transcendental stage by absorbing ourselves in the perfect language recorded in scripture and repeated by the great spiritual teachers.

On the other hand, as the ancient *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* informs us, "Those words which do not describe the glories of the Lord, who alone can sanctify the atmosphere of the whole universe, are considered by saintly persons to be like unto a place of pilgrimage for crows. Since the all-perfect persons are inhabitants of the transcendental abode, they do not derive any pleasure there." According to this transcendental criterion, the mundane linguistic crusade is just a kind of highbrow bewilderment (as opposed to the lowbrow kind). A whole population is lost amidst the babblings and rumblings of an abused language, and the reformers have made an accurate exposé. But their remedy—their attempt to correct the grammar and syntax of the lost souls—brings to mind the fellow who polished a bird's cage but forgot to feed the bird.

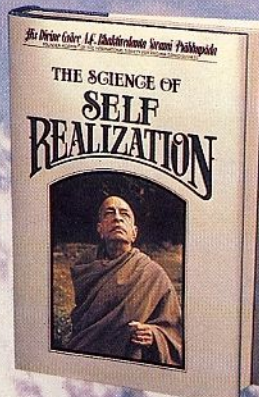
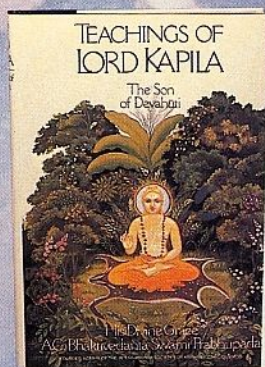
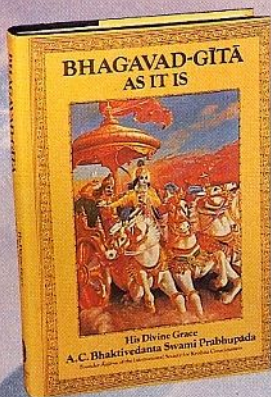
The real self is the soul, and he wants freedom from death—and knowledge of this freedom comes to him in the language of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: "That literature which is full of descriptions of the transcendental glories of the name, fame, forms, and pastimes of the unlimited Supreme Lord is a different creation, full of transcendental words that will bring about a revolution in the impious lives of this world's misdirected civilization."

—SDG

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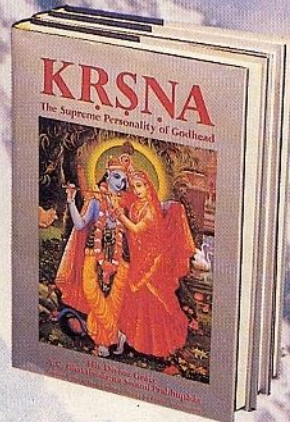
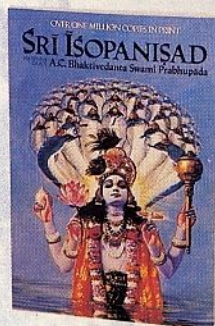
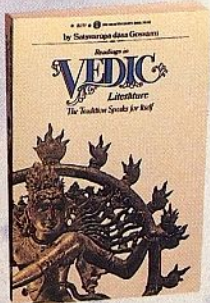
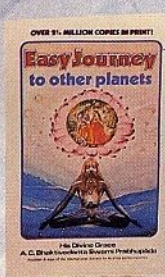
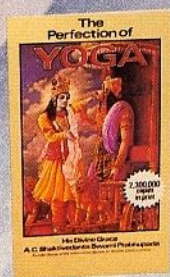
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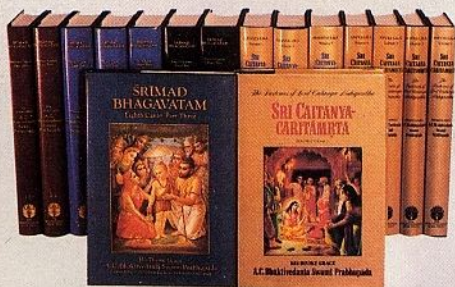
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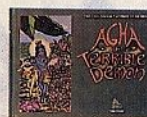
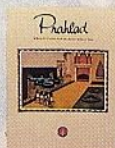
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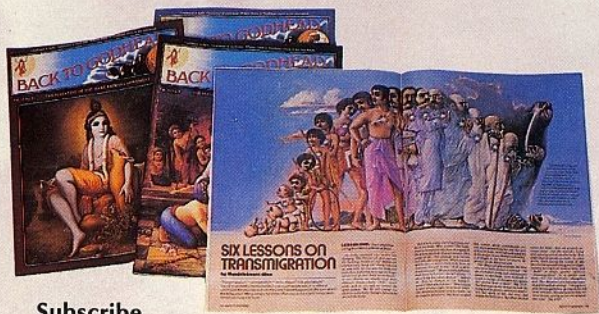
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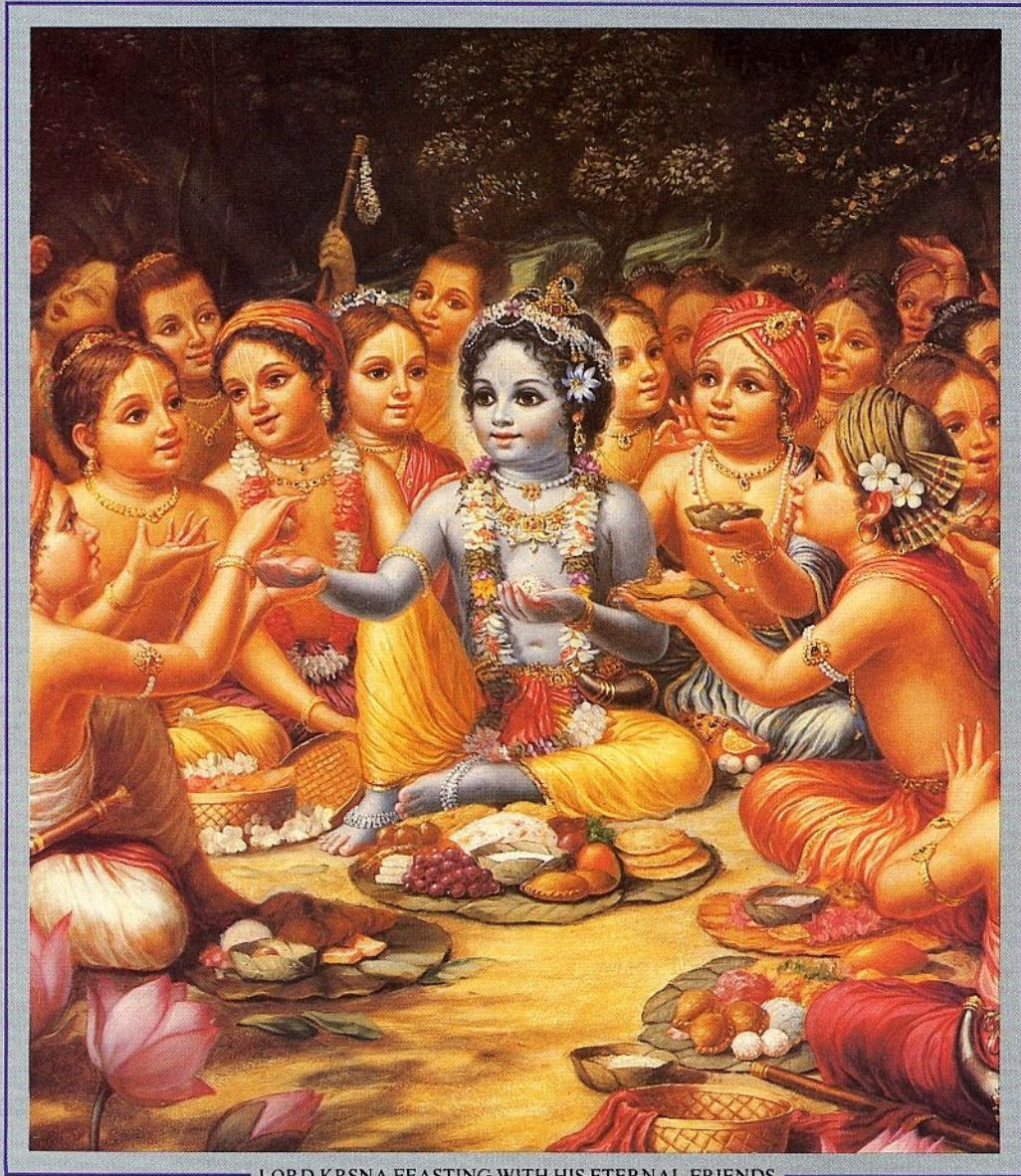
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