

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

# BACK TO GODHEAD



Vol.17 No.4 \$1.25 THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

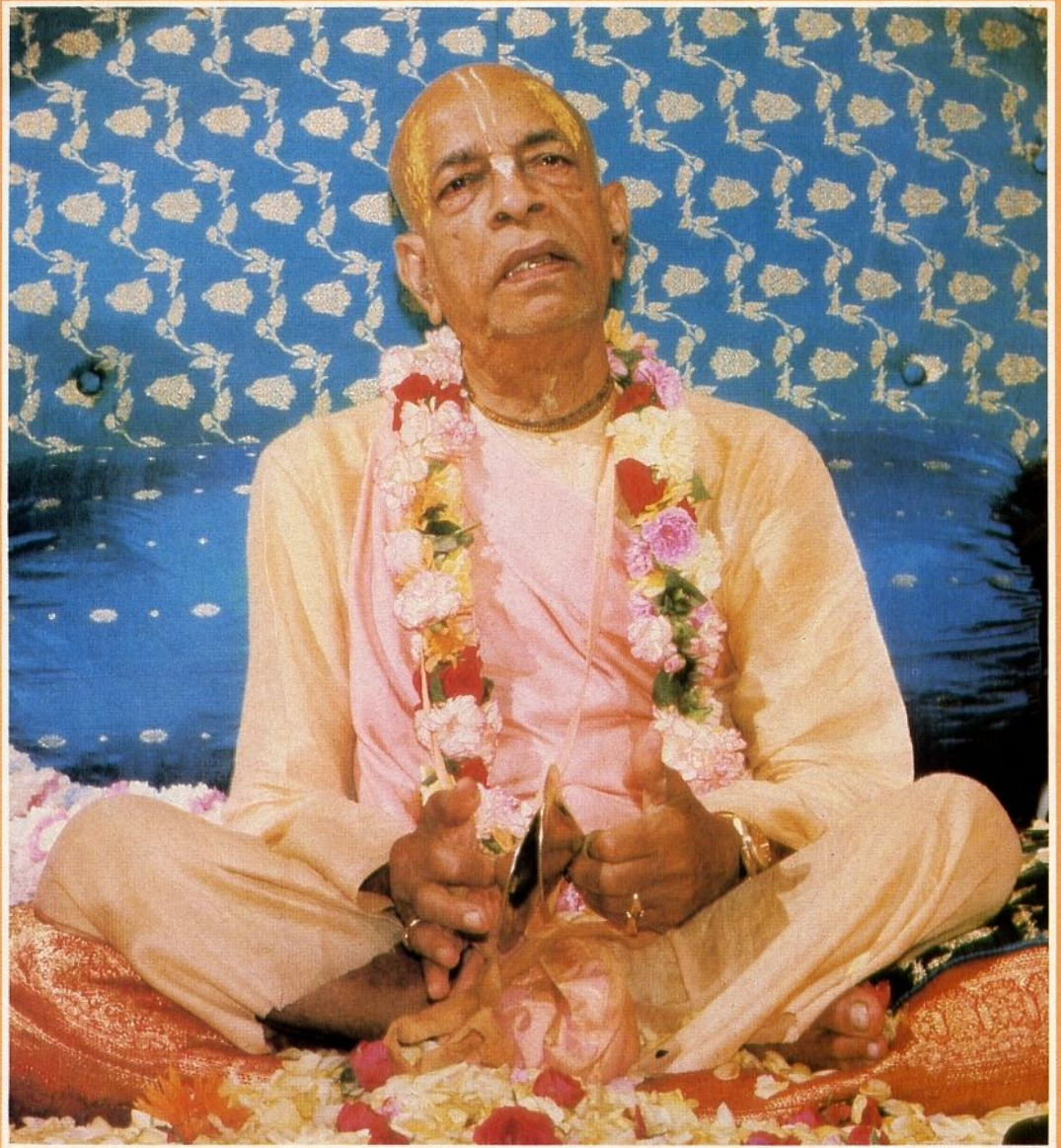


**“Time I am,  
Destroyer of Worlds...”**

### His Divine Grace

### A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda,

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, came to America in 1965, at age sixty-nine, 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 literature, and these are now standard in universities worldwide. Meanwhile, traveling almost nonstop, Śrīla Prabhupāda molded his international society into a worldwide confederation of āśramas, schools, temples, and farm communities. He passed away in 1977 in India's Vṛndāvana, the place most sacred to Lord Kṛṣṇa. His disciples are carrying forward the movement he started.



BACK TO GODHEAD is the monthly journal of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. When Śrīla Prabhupāda began the Society (in New York City, in 1966), he put into writing the purposes he wanted it to achieve. They are as follows:

1. To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all peoples in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life and to achieve real unity and peace in the world.
2. To propagate a consciousness of Kṛṣṇa, as it is revealed in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.
3. To bring the members of the Society together with each other and nearer to Kṛṣṇa, the prime entity, thus developing the idea within the members, and humanity at large, that each soul is part and parcel of the quality of Godhead (Kṛṣṇa).
4. To teach and encourage the *saṅkīrtana* movement, congregational chanting of the holy names of God, as revealed in the teachings of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
5. To erect for the members and for society at large a holy place of transcendental pastimes dedicated to the personality of Kṛṣṇa.
6. To bring the members closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler, more natural way of life.
7. With a view toward achieving the aforementioned purposes, to publish and distribute periodicals, books, and other writings.

# BACK TO GODHEAD

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(under the direction of His Divine Grace  
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda)  
His Divine Grace  
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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**PRONUNCIATION.** We spell Sanskrit words and names by a scholarly system that lets you know how to say each word. 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 **ṛ** like the **ch** in **chair**. Pronounce the aspirated consonants (**ch**, **jh**, **dh**, etc.) as in **staunch-heart**, **hedge-hog**, and **red-hot**. Finally, pronounce the sibilants **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh**, and **s** like the **s** in **sun**. So for *Kṛṣṇa* say **KRISHNA**, and for *Caitanya* say **CHAITANYA**.

**SPIRITUAL NAMES.** 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."

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**COVER: Kṛṣṇa's Universal Form.** "If hundreds of thousands of suns were to rise into the sky at once, their effulgence might resemble that of the Lord in His universal form. All the infinite expansions of the cosmos had manifested in one place, although divided into many thousands. Scorching the universe with His immeasurable blazing effulgence, He was devouring all people in His flaming mouths" (*Bhagavad-gītā*, Eleventh Chapter). For more on the universal form, see page 22. (Detail from a painting by Janmālaya dāsa)

# HOW TO SEE AND KNOW GOD

A talk given in October 1968  
by His Divine Grace  
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,  
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society  
for Krishna Consciousness,  
at the Hare Kṛṣṇa center in Seattle.

**W**e are worshiping Govinda, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the original person. And this song we were just singing—*govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*—is reaching Him. He's hearing it. You cannot say He's not hearing it. Especially in this scientific age, when radio messages are broadcast thousands and thousands of miles so you can hear them, it is easy to understand how Govinda, Kṛṣṇa, can hear your sincere prayer.

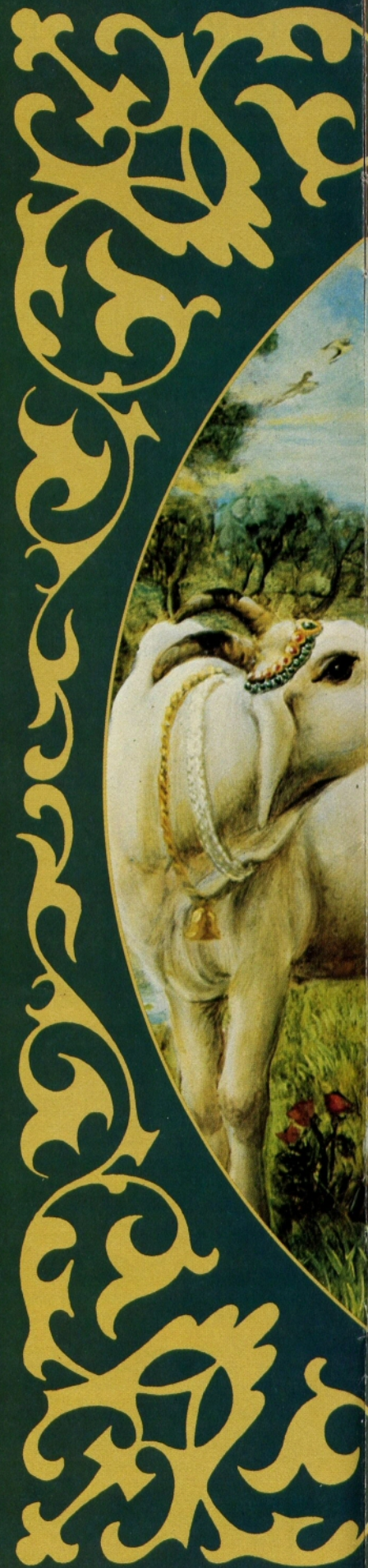
Similarly, just as you can see a television picture transmitted from thousands and thousands of miles away, you can always see Govinda in your heart if you prepare yourself properly. This is stated in *Brahma-saṁhitā* [5.38]: *premāñjana-cchurita bhakti-vilocanena santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti*. There is a television within your heart; it is not that you have to purchase the television set—it is there in your heart. And God is also there. You can see Him, you can hear Him, you can talk with Him, provided you repair the machine. And this repairing process is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

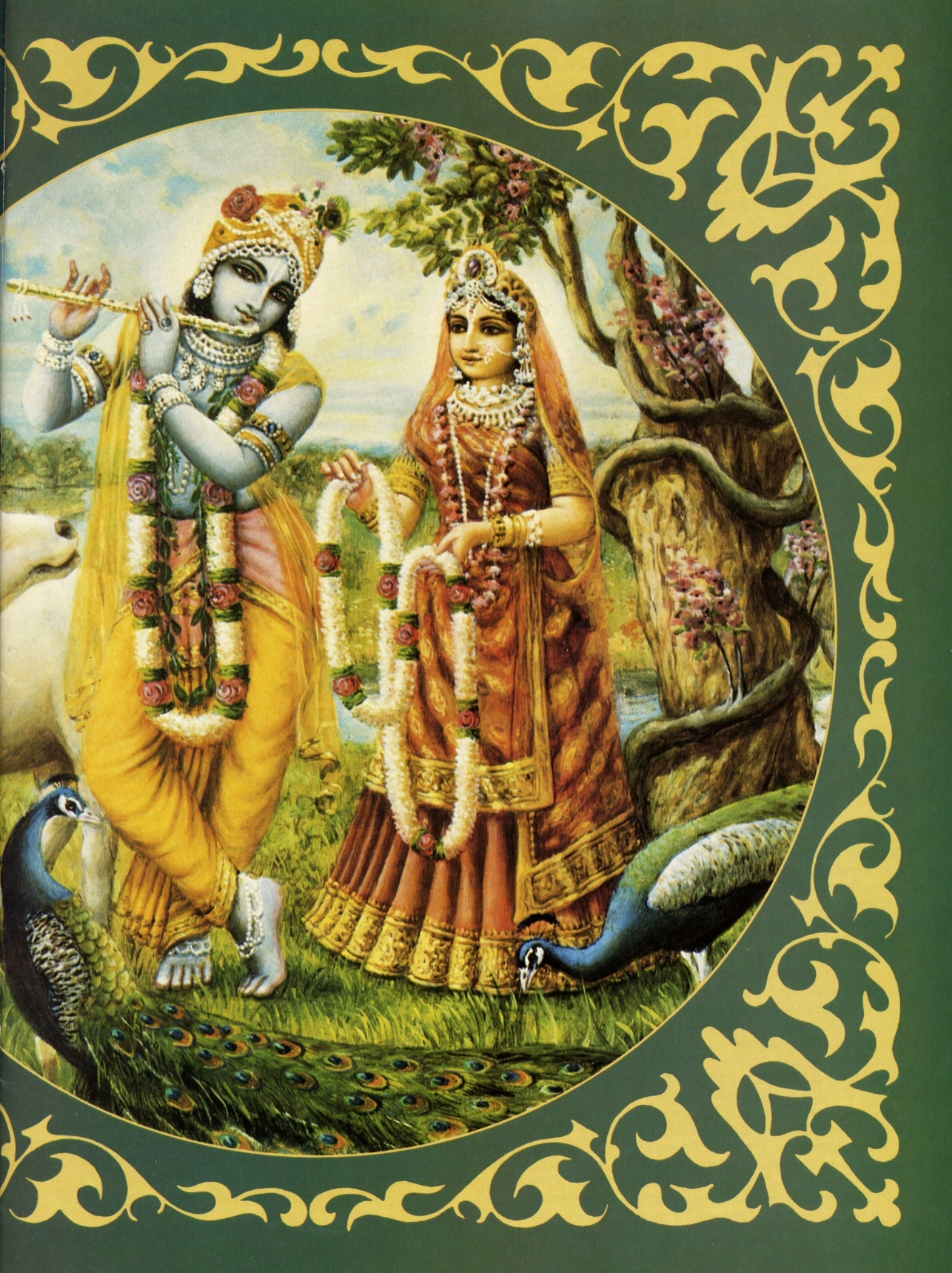
Now, to repair a television an expert technician is required. Similarly, you require the help of someone expert in the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Then the machine in your heart will work and you

will be able to see Kṛṣṇa. This is the perfection of *yoga*.

In the scriptures we hear how one can come to this perfection: *sādhu-śāstra-guru-vākya cittete kariyā aikya*. Spiritual realization can be perfected by following three parallel lines: *sādhu* (saintly persons who are realized souls), *śāstra* (authoritative Vedic scriptures), and *guru* (the spiritual master). In the railway yard you see two parallel tracks, and if they're in order the railway carriages go very smoothly to their destination. In Kṛṣṇa consciousness there are three parallel lines: association with saintly persons (*sādhu*), faith in the scriptures (*śāstra*), and acceptance of a bona fide spiritual master (*guru*). If you place your vehicle on these three parallel lines, it will go directly to Kṛṣṇa, without any disturbance.

Now, here in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is explaining Himself. But suppose you say, "How can I believe that Kṛṣṇa said these words? Somebody may have written them in the name of Kṛṣṇa." No. Because the *Bhagavad-gītā* is accepted by saintly persons, we should also accept it. Beginning from Vyāsadeva and Nārada, down to many *ācāryas* [spiritual exemplars] like





Rāmānujācārya, Madhvācārya, Viṣṇu-svāmī, and Lord Caitanya, all have accepted *Bhagavad-gītā*: “Yes, it is spoken by God, Kṛṣṇa.” So this is the proof that *Bhagavad-gītā* is authentic. Saintry persons, *sādhus*, have accepted *Bhagavad-gītā* as scripture; therefore it is scripture. That is the test.

This is a common-sense affair. If lawyers accept some book as a lawbook, then we should understand that it is an authoritative lawbook. You cannot say, “Why should I accept this lawbook?” The evidence is that the lawyers have accepted it. Similarly, if the medical practitioners accept a book as authoritative, then we should know that it is an authoritative medical book. In the same way, since saintly persons accept *Bhagavad-gītā* as scripture, you cannot deny that it is scripture. So these are the two lines of *sādhu* and *śāstra*, saintly persons and scripture.

And who is a *guru*, a spiritual master? He who follows and explains the scripture. The *sādhu* confirms the scripture, and the spiritual master follows and explains the scripture. So *sādhu*, *śāstra*, and *guru* are always in agreement. What is spoken in the scripture is accepted by saintly persons, and what is spoken in the scripture is followed and explained by the spiritual master, and he explains *only* that. The *via media* is the scripture, just as in the law court the *via media* is the lawbook. So the saintly persons, the scriptures, and the spiritual master: when you follow these three parallel lines your life is successful.

Now, here in the beginning of the Seventh Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa is speaking about *yoga*. In the first six chapters He has explained the constitutional position of the living entity. Until that is understood, your activities in *yoga*, in relation to Kṛṣṇa, cannot actually begin. Suppose you are working in an office. If your post is not settled up—if you don’t know what duties you have to execute—you cannot do anything very nicely. The typist, the clerk, the errand boy—they are executing their work very nicely because they understand their duties. Therefore, to practice *yoga* one first has to understand the constitutional position of the living entity, and that is explained in the first six chapters of *Bhagavad-gītā*.

So *yoga* means to understand one’s constitutional position and to act in that position. The first step is controlling the senses (*yogam indriya-samnyamaḥ*). Now everyone is busy gratifying the senses. When you stand on the street, you see that everybody is very busy. The storekeeper is busy, the motorcar driver is busy—everyone is very busy. How are they busy? If you minutely study their business, you will find that their only business is sense gratification. That’s all. Everyone is busy trying to gratify his senses. This is material life. And

spiritual life, or *yoga*, means to control the senses and understand our constitutional position as spirit souls.

One’s spiritual life begins when one asks, What am I? Why have I come here? Why am I put into so many miserable conditions? Is there any remedy? When these questions arise, our spiritual life begins. And human life is meant for answering these questions. Animals do not know anything except sense gratification. They have no power of understanding; their consciousness is not developed. For example, in Green Lake Park there are many ducks. As soon as somebody goes there with a little food, they gather: “Kaa,

---

**We are small,  
infinitesimal, yet  
we still have  
so many desires,  
so many activities,  
so much brainwork.  
Just imagine  
how much greater  
are God’s desires  
and activities  
and brainwork!**

---

kaa, kaa, kaa.” And after eating, they enjoy sex. That’s all. The life of cats and dogs is like that also, and human life is also like that if one never asks, What am I? If one is simply directed by the urges of the senses, one is no better than the ducks and dogs.

So in the first six chapters of *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa explains that the living entity is a spiritual spark. It is very difficult to find out where the spark is because it is so minute. No microscope can find it out. But it is there in your body. Because it is in your body, you are moving, you are talking, you are planning—you are doing so many things simply by the influence of that spiritual spark.

We are very minute sparks of the Supreme Spirit, just like particles of sunshine. The sun’s rays are made up of shining particles, and when these shining particles mix together they form sunshine. Similarly, we are minute particles of God, and because we are part and parcel of God we have the same propensities as God:

thinking, feeling, willing, creating—everything. Whatever you see in yourself is there in God also. Therefore, since we are all persons God cannot be impersonal. I have so many propensities in a very minute quantity, and the same propensities are there in Kṛṣṇa, or God, in an unlimited quantity. This is the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

We are small, infinitesimal, yet we still have so many propensities, so many desires, so many activities, so much brainwork. Just imagine how much greater are God’s desires and activities and brainwork! So qualitatively God and the living entity are one, but quantitatively we are different. He is great, we are small. He is infinite, we are infinitesimal.

Now, when sparks are in the fire they glow very nicely, but when they are out of the fire they are extinguished. Similarly, since we are sparks of Kṛṣṇa, when we associate with Him our illuminating quality is manifested. Otherwise, we are practically extinguished, or covered. The living spark cannot be extinguished. If it were extinguished, how are we manifesting our living condition? No, it is not extinguished; it is covered. When a fire is covered you can feel heat on the cover, but you cannot see the fire directly. Similarly, when the spiritual spark is covered by the material dress, the body, you can see the effects of the spark—your activities of life—but you cannot see the spark directly. To see the spiritual spark directly, to uncover your original spiritual nature, you must practice *yoga*.

In the first verse of the Sixth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa explains the *yoga* process: *mayy āsakta-manāḥ pārtha yogam yuñjan mad-āśrayaḥ*. You have to constantly engage your mind in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa. That is the *yoga* process we are presenting as Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And it is not very difficult. Kṛṣṇa is beautiful, all-attractive, and He has many activities. The Vedic literature is full of Kṛṣṇa’s activities. And the *Bhagavad-gītā* is full of Kṛṣṇa’s teachings. Simply understanding that God is great is a neutral state of understanding. You have to elevate yourself more and more by understanding *how* great He is. Of course, it is not possible to fully understand how great He is, because our senses are always imperfect, but as far as possible we should try. You can hear about the activities of God, about the position of God, and you can put your argument and make your judgment. Then you will understand without any doubt what God is.

So real *yoga* is *mayy āsakta-manāḥ*, always thinking of Kṛṣṇa. At the end of the Sixth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa explains that one who is constantly absorbed in thoughts of Him is a first-class *yogī*. In your country *yoga* is very popular, but you

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## The Vedic Observer

# Poland's Double Darkness

As we in the "free world" watch the Poles agonize under martial law,  
we may forget the more basic bondage we share with them.

by SUHOTRA DĀSA

Forty-three years ago, on September 1, 1939, World War II began in Europe with the invasion of Poland by Hitler's Wehrmacht. After a month of valiant resistance, the hopelessly outgunned and outnumbered Polish Army surrendered. On October 3 the Germans staged a victory march through the streets of Warsaw, a cynical celebration that marked the beginning of a five-year rampage of Nazi oppression, pillage, and genocide. In April 1940 Hitler's army invaded Denmark and Norway and brought them quickly to heel. Shortly thereafter, the Nazis conquered Belgium, France, and the Netherlands, and then Yugoslavia and Greece. A British news commentator anguished, "The lights are going out all over Europe."

Perhaps it was the recollection of that grim time, or simply the aptness of the metaphor, that a few months ago led the editors of *Time* magazine to headline their cover "Poland's Ordeal: The Darkness Descends." General Jaruzelski had just clamped down martial law on Poland, at the instigation and with the undercover help of his Soviet bosses. (There were even reports that some of the "Polish" troops were actually Russians in Polish uniforms.) Solidarity was virtually crushed; its leader, Lech Walesa, arrested and silenced; the West forced to stand by helplessly. The darkness of totalitarian repression had indeed descended once more and snuffed out the glimmers of political freedom in Poland.

Viewed from the perspective of Vedic knowledge, however, the events in Poland carry a deeper meaning. The longings of

the Polish people for political freedom and economic well-being are actually misguided expressions of the soul's longings for liberation from the miseries of life in the material world. Why misguided? Because even if—miracle of miracles—Solidarity had triumphed and the Polish people had won full political freedom and economic self-determination, the iron shackles of the fundamental material miseries would have remained. Every Pole would still have had to suffer old age, disease, death, and rebirth in another body. Ignorance of how to gain freedom from *this* bondage is the real darkness in Poland.

This darkness is not merely a Polish affliction, however. Human society East and West is suffering from ignorance of the real self, and this ignorance is a direct result of the predominant ideologies guiding the world's leaders. Capitalism and communism are simply two varieties of materialism, a philosophy that identifies the psychophysical body as the self. Materialism, defining reality as nothing more than the temporary embodied life of sensual perception and action, thus directs human endeavor toward the enjoyment of sense objects. This goal is the same as that of the animals, who also accept their sense perceptions as all in all. So it is not surprising that the philosophy of materialism results in people leading lives closely resembling, in essence, those of lower species—lives of hard struggle for physical survival, lives revolving around defense, eating, mating, and sleep.

The Vedic literatures assure us that the living being can attain a state of existence

higher than this, and they urge each of us to try to reach this state by cultivating transcendental knowledge. Indeed, if a human being doesn't rise above the consciousness of animalistic sense pleasure, the Vedic scriptures judge his life a tragic waste. Says the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.9.29), the foremost text for understanding the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness: "After many embodiments one attains a human form, which is difficult to achieve. Although mortal, it allows one to fulfill life's purpose. Having obtained this form, a sober person should quickly endeavor for God realization before death comes. He should not worry too much about his physical maintenance, for, after all, sense pleasure is available everywhere" (*Bhāg.* 11.9.29).

The *Bhagavad-gītā*, another basic Vedic text, teaches that the realm of sense perception is *māyā*, or illusion, because it is temporary and always imperfect, no matter how hard we struggle to improve it. Reality lies beyond the flickering sensual realm, in the eternal, unchanging realm of the spirit. A person who perceives his existence in the light of transcendence knows he's not his temporary body—not a Pole, American, or Russian; not a capitalist, communist, or nationalist; not a Hindu, Moslem, or Jew. Such a knower of the truth sees himself as a soul (*jīvātmā*), an eternal particle of pure consciousness, whose only real duty is to serve Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

In this world of illusion we have misdirected our service because of *māyā's* influence, and thus we foolishly serve our

(continued on page 28)

## The Biography of a Pure Devotee

# Drawing Inspiration From a Rich Devotional Heritage

1922–1923: Calcutta.

The lives and writings of two great Kṛṣṇa conscious teachers  
deepen Śrīla Prabhupāda's appreciation for a spiritual tradition he already knows well.

by ŚRĪLA SATSVARŪPA DĀSA GOSWAMI

*Devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa had always been the main current in the life of Śrīla Prabhupāda, born Abhay Charan De. His father had lovingly raised him as a devotee of the Lord and prayed that he would become a preacher of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But for Abhay the culmination of his father's training came in 1922, in his twenty-sixth year, when he met Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Abhay felt strongly drawn to this powerful, scholarly preacher and accepted him in his heart as his spiritual master.*

*What Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta spoke at that first meeting was not new to Abhay: he had known from early childhood about Lord Caitanya and the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But how Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta preached—his purity, his uncompromising arguments, his broad knowledge of the scriptures—all impressed Abhay deeply. He saw that the message of Kṛṣṇa was in the hands of an expert devotee. So Abhay, filled with inspiration, turned toward the books by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta and others to learn more about the spiritual heritage which he knew he would dedicate himself.*

Abhay began to associate more with the Gaudiya Math devotees after his first meeting with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. They gave him books and told him the history of their spiritual master.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was one of ten children born to Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, a great Vaiṣṇava teacher in the disciplic line from Lord Caitanya Himself. Before the time of Bhaktivinoda, the teachings of Lord Caitanya had been obscured by teachers and sects falsely claiming to be followers of Lord Caitanya but deviating in various drastic ways from

His pure teachings. The good reputation of Vaiṣṇavism had been compromised. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, however, through his prolific writings and through his social position as a high government officer, re-established the respectability of Vaiṣṇavism. He preached that the teachings of Lord Caitanya were the highest form of theism and were intended not for a particular sect or religion or nation but for all the people of the world. He prophesied that Lord Caitanya's teachings would go worldwide, and he yearned for this.

The religion preached by [Chaitanya] Mahāprabhu is universal and not exclusive. . . . The principle of kīrtan [congregational chanting of God's names] as the future church of the world invites all classes of men, without distinction of caste or clan, to the highest cultivation of the spirit. This church, it appears, will extend all over the world and take the place of all sectarian churches, which exclude outsiders from the precincts of the mosque, church, or temple.

Lord Chaitanya did not advent Himself to liberate only a few men of India. Rather, His main objective was to emancipate all living entities of all countries throughout the entire universe and preach the Eternal Religion. Lord Chaitanya says in the Chaitanya Bhagavat: "In every town, country, and village, My name will be sung." There is no doubt that this unquestionable order will come to pass. . . . Although there is still no pure society of Vaiṣṇavas [devotees of Kṛṣṇa] to be had, yet Lord Chaitanya's prophetic words will in a few days come true, I am sure. Why not? Nothing is absolutely pure in the beginning. From imperfection, purity will come about.

Oh, for that day when the fortunate English, French, Russian, German, and American people will take up banners, mridangas [drums] and kartals [cymbals] and raise kīrtan through the streets and towns. When will that day come?

As a prominent magistrate, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was a responsible govern-

ment officer. He served also as superintendent of the temple of Lord Jagannātha and was the father of ten children. Yet amidst all these responsibilities, he served the cause of Kṛṣṇa with prodigious energy. After coming home from his office in the evening, taking his meals, and going to bed, he would sleep from eight until midnight and then get up and write until morning. He wrote more than one hundred books during his life, many of them in English. One of his important contributions, with the cooperation of Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī and Gaurakīśora dāsa Bābājī, was to locate the exact birthplace of Lord Caitanya in Māyāpur, about sixty miles north of Calcutta.

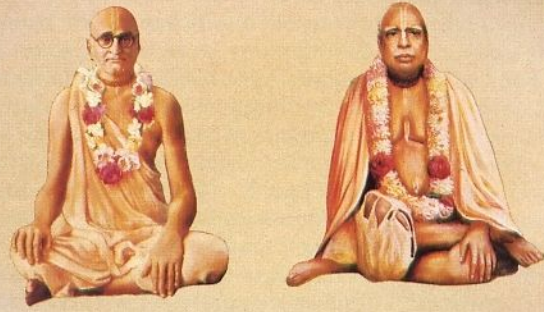
While working to reform Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism in India, he prayed to Lord Caitanya, "Your teachings have much depreciated. It is not in my power to restore them." And he prayed for a son to help him in his preaching. When, on February 6, 1874, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was born to Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in Jagannātha Purī, the Vaiṣṇavas considered him the answer to his father's prayers. He was born with the umbilical cord wrapped around his neck and draped across his chest like the sacred thread worn by *brāhmaṇas*. His parents gave him the name Bimala Prasada.

When Bimala Prasada was six months old, the carts of the Jagannātha festival

**A period of deep reflection and study** followed Śrīla Prabhupāda's first meeting with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura (above, left). Śrīla Prabhupāda greatly revered this scholarly spiritual teacher and read his writings assiduously. The life and works of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta's father, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (above, right), also revealed much to Śrīla Prabhupāda about the spiritual heritage of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and helped inspire him to propagate the science of devotional service through the English language.

(Excerpted from *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*, by Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami. © 1981 by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.)





stopped at the gate of Bhaktivinoda's residence and for three days could not be moved. Bhaktivinoda Thākura's wife brought the infant onto the cart and approached the Deity of Lord Jagannātha. Spontaneously, the infant extended his arms and touched the feet of Lord Jagannātha and was immediately blessed with a garland that fell from the body of the Lord. When Bhaktivinoda Thākura learned that the Lord's garland had fallen onto his son, he realized that this was the son for whom he had prayed.

One day, when Bimala Prasada was still a child of no more than four years, his father mildly rebuked him for eating a mango not yet duly offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Bimala Prasada, although only a child, considered himself an offender to the Lord and vowed never to eat mangoes again. (This was a vow that he followed throughout his life.) By the time Bimala Prasada was seven years old, he had memorized the entire *Bhagavad-gītā* and could even explain its verses. His father then began training him in proofreading and printing, in conjunction with the publishing of the Vaiṣṇava magazine *Sajjana-toṣaṇī*. With his father, he visited many holy places and heard discourses from the learned *paṇḍitas*.

As a student, Bimala Prasada preferred to read the books written by his father instead of the school texts. By the time he was twenty-five he had become well-versed in Sanskrit, mathematics, and astronomy, and he had established himself as the author and publisher of many magazine articles and a commentary on one book, *Sūrya-siddhānta*, for which he received the epithet Siddhānta Sarasvatī in recognition of his erudition. When he was twenty-six his father guided him to take initiation from a renounced Vaiṣṇava saint, Gaurakīśora dāsa Bābājī, who advised him "to preach the Absolute Truth and keep aside all other works." Receiving the blessings of Gaurakīśora dāsa Bābājī, Bimala Prasada (now Siddhānta Sarasvatī) firmly resolved to dedicate his body, mind, and words to the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

In 1905 Siddhānta Sarasvatī took a vow to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* a billion times. Residing in Māyāpur in a grass hut near the birthplace of Lord Caitanya, he chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* day and night. He cooked rice once a day in an earthen pot and ate nothing more; he slept on the ground, and when the rainwater leaked through the grass ceiling, he sat beneath an umbrella, chanting.

In 1911, while his aging father was lying ill, Siddhānta Sarasvatī took up a challenge against pseudo Vaiṣṇavas who claimed that birth in their caste was the prerequisite for preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The caste-conscious *brāhmaṇa* com-

munity had become incensed by Bhaktivinoda Thākura's presentation of many scriptural proofs that anyone, regardless of birth, could become a *brāhmaṇa*-Vaiṣṇava. These *smārta-brāhmaṇas*, out to prove the inferiority of the Vaiṣṇavas, arranged a discussion. On behalf of his indisposed father, young Siddhānta Sarasvatī wrote an essay, "The Conclusive Difference Between the Brāhmaṇa and the Vaiṣṇava," and submitted it before his father. Despite his poor health, Bhaktivinoda Thākura was elated to hear the arguments that would soundly defeat the challenge of the *smārtas*.

Siddhānta Sarasvatī then traveled to Midnapore, where *paṇḍitas* from all over

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## With the *br̥hat mṛdaṅga*, the big *mṛdaṅga* drum of the printing press, the message of Lord Caitanya could be spread all over the world.

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India had gathered for a three-day discussion. Some of the *smārta-paṇḍitas* who spoke first claimed that anyone born in a family of *sūdras* (manual laborers), even though initiated by a spiritual master, could never become purified and perform the brahminical duties of worshiping the Deity or initiating disciples. Finally, Siddhānta Sarasvatī delivered his speech. He began quoting Vedic references glorifying the *brāhmaṇas*, and at this the *smārta* scholars became very much pleased. But when he began discussing the actual qualifications for becoming a *brāhmaṇa*, the qualities of the Vaiṣṇavas, the relationship between the two, and who, according to Vedic literature, is qualified to become a spiritual master and initiate disciples, then the joy of the Vaiṣṇava-haters disappeared. Siddhānta Sarasvatī conclusively proved from the scriptures that if one is born as a *sūdra* but exhibits the qualities of a *brāhmaṇa*, then he should be honored as a *brāhmaṇa*, despite his birth. And if one is born in a *brāhmaṇa* family but acts like a *sūdra*, then he is not a *brāhmaṇa*. After his speech, Siddhānta Sarasvatī was congratulated by the president of the conference, and thousands thronged around him. It

was a victory for Vaiṣṇavism.

With the passing away of his father in 1914 and his spiritual master in 1915, Siddhānta Sarasvatī continued the mission of Lord Caitanya. He assumed the editorship of *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* and established the Bhagwat Press in Krishnanagar. Then in 1918, in Māyāpur, he sat down before a picture of Gaurakīśora dāsa Bābājī and initiated himself into the *sannyāsa* order. At this time he assumed the *sannyāsa* title Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was dedicated to using the printing press as the best medium for large-scale distribution of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He thought of the printing press as a *br̥hat mṛdaṅga*, a big *mṛdaṅga*. Although the *mṛdaṅga* drum had traditionally been used to accompany *kīrtana*, even during the time of Lord Caitanya, and although Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī himself led *kīrtana* parties and sent groups of devotees chanting in the streets and playing on the *mṛdaṅgas*, such *kīrtanas* could be heard only for a block or two. But with the *br̥hat mṛdaṅga*, the big *mṛdaṅga* drum of the printing press, the message of Lord Caitanya could be spread all over the world.

Most of the literature Abhay began reading had been printed on the Bhagwat Press, which Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had established in 1915. The Bhagwat Press had printed Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī's *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, with commentary by Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, with commentary by Viśvanātha Cakravartī, and, one after another, the works of Bhaktivinoda Thākura. This literature was the spiritual heritage coming from Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who had appeared almost five hundred years before.

Abhay had been a devotee of Lord Caitanya since childhood, and he was familiar with the life of Lord Caitanya through the well-known scriptures *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and *Caitanya-bhāgavata*. He had learned of Lord Caitanya not only as the most ecstatic form of a pure devotee who had spread the chanting of the holy name to all parts of India, but also as the direct appearance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself in the form of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa combined. But now, for the first time, Abhay was in touch with the great wealth of literature compiled by the Lord's immediate associates and followers, passed down in disciplic succession, and expounded on by great authorities Lord Caitanya's immediate followers—Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, and others—had compiled many volumes based on the Vedic scriptures and proving conclusively that Lord Caitanya's teachings were the essence of Vedic wisdom. There were

(continued on page 28)

We welcome your letters. Write to  
BACK TO GODHEAD  
51 West Allens Lane  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19119

# LETTERS

I'm a fifth-grader from Saudi Arabia. I was born in New Jersey, U.S.A. My parents are Hindu. I am Hindu too. I would like to know how man was made and how the earth was made too. I would love it if you wrote me a letter and told me how they were created.

Miss Anjna Nain  
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

## OUR REPLY:

Modern scientists invent many theories about creation, but because material scientists are limited and defective in so many ways, none of their accounts are trustworthy. In the West people are attracted to such speculative theories because the description of creation in the Bible is so skimpy that it doesn't satisfy their curiosity. But if we turn to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the foremost of the ancient Vedic literatures of India, we find an account of creation that is both complete and trustworthy, because it is delivered by the Creator Himself, who is in the best position to know.

The material cosmos is much older and much vaster than we could ever discover from our own observations. The universe in which we live is now about 155½ trillion years old and has about the same amount of time left before it will be destroyed. But the creation of our universe was not the first creation, nor will it be the last. Nor is ours the only universe.

In fact, material universes are created and destroyed in regular cycles, and these cycles have been going on endlessly, since time immemorial. During each cycle of creation, hundreds of billions of universes come into being. Yet this whole material creation is only a tiny part of God's kingdom. Because this part is material, it is created and destroyed, but beyond this is the eternal, spiritual world, where there is no creation or destruction. There the liberated souls eternally live on spiritual planets in direct association with the Personality of Godhead. This material creation, like a prison house in God's kingdom, is the place for conditioned souls who want to forget God and be independent of Him. But here they can also be reformed and learn how to return to their forgotten, eternal homeland, God's personal abode.

At the beginning of creation there forms in one corner of the limitless spiritual sky a kind of cloud called the *mahat-tattva*, God's material energy, where all the material elements and forces are merged together. Later they are separated out one by one (this is described in detail

in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*), just as cream, whey, curds, butter, ghee, and so on can be separated from milk. Within this cloud a gigantic expansion of Kṛṣṇa called Mahā-Viṣṇu lies down in mystic slumber. Whenever He breathes out, billions of seedling universes come gushing out of His nostrils and skin pores. These universes develop into hollow balls that float on the *mahat-tattva* ocean like clusters of soap bubbles. They last for many trillions of years, until Mahā-Viṣṇu breathes in and draws them back into Himself. After many more trillions of years He breathes out again, and there is a new creation as before.

After the universes come out of Mahā-Viṣṇu, an expansion of His called Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu enters into the hollow interior of each one and fills it half full of water. Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu then lies down on this water, floating on a bed made by an expansion of His called Ananta Śeṣa, who appears like a many-headed serpent. From the navel of Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu a lotus grows; the bud opens, and in the center sits Lord Brahmā, the first created being. He is the engineer of the universe.

After eons of severe penance, Brahmā becomes inspired by Kṛṣṇa with the knowledge to complete the creation. Kṛṣṇa also provides the seeds of the creation as well as the ingredients, and Brahmā then creates all the planetary systems, controlling deities, and species of life. (Thus the acts of creation described in the beginning of the Bible are performed not by God Himself but by His deputed agent, Brahmā.) Brahmā produces offspring from his own body, and these multiply and go forth to become the human races on the various planets in our universe. Brahmā also helps the Lord reclaim fallen souls from the material world by forming a spiritual party for preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the universe. This party, called the Brahma-sampradāya, is still active today in the form of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

Of course, this is just a brief summary of the creation. We hope you will go on to read more about it in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

\* \* \*

In your magazine you recommend that Bhakti Yoga [devotional service to Kṛṣṇa] is most applicable for self-realization in Kali-yuga [the present age]. But what about Lord Shiva? Has Shiva gained self-realization? What is his position as far as

knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is concerned? Can we say that Shiva is one with the Father? How did Shiva come to be the ruler of a planet in which there is no occurrence of birth and death? Is he ever in misery?

Gita Jankie  
Princes Town, Trinidad  
Republic of the West Indies

## OUR REPLY:

Yes, Lord Śiva is certainly self-realized—in fact, he is more than self-realized, because he is a pure devotee of Lord Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa), the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Sometimes he is even described as the most exalted devotee of Lord Viṣṇu (*vaiṣṇavānām yathā sambhuh*).

The position of Lord Śiva is unique. He is not the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, so he is not on an equal level with Viṣṇu. But he is also not an ordinary living being like you and me. He is in an exalted position all his own.

The *Brahma-saṁhitā* describes that Lord Śiva is *almost* on the same level as Lord Viṣṇu, the Supreme Lord. The difference is that Lord Viṣṇu never comes in touch with the material energy. When He sets the material creation in motion at the beginning of the universal creation, He does so merely by His glance, from a distance, and He Himself remains in a completely transcendental position, in the company of His spiritual energy, represented by Śrī Lakṣmī. Lord Śiva, however, by Lord Viṣṇu's desire, comes directly in touch with the material energy. In fact, his consort—known as Devī, Durgā, Pārvatī, or by many other names—personifies the material energy.

The *Brahma-saṁhitā* explains the relationship between Lord Viṣṇu and Lord Śiva by giving an example. When milk comes in touch with something sour, its quality changes, and it becomes yogurt. Yogurt is actually nothing but milk, but it is not quite the same. Similarly, Lord Śiva is identical with Lord Viṣṇu Himself, but because Lord Śiva comes in touch with the material energy, his identity is associated with material qualities. So he is not in a position as exalted as that of Lord Viṣṇu, the supreme transcendental Lord.

Lord Viṣṇu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, and Lord Śiva is one of the demigods. They are never to be considered equal in all respects. Lord Viṣṇu is the supreme master of all, and Lord Śiva is His eternal servant.

Because Lord Śiva is a great devotee of Lord Viṣṇu, he has intimate knowledge of Lord Viṣṇu, and he is also free from all material miseries. He has a special abode, between the material world and the spiritual world, that is free from the birth and death of material existence.

# ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN BIRTH

Popular wisdom said, “A *brāhmaṇa* is someone born in a *brāhmaṇa* family.” But Śrīla Prabhupāda, following Vedic scripture, had another idea . . .

by VĀSU-GHOṢA DĀSA

Back in 1966, sometime in September, Allen Ginsberg dropped by a little Hare Kṛṣṇa temple in a storefront on New York’s Lower East Side. He had come to meet His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, a seventy-year-old Indian *svāmī* who had come to America to fulfill his spiritual master’s order that he bring Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the English-speaking people of the world. At the end of their meeting, Mr. Ginsberg asked Śrīla Prabhupāda, “Do you really intend to make these Americans into Vaiṣṇavas [devotees of Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa]?”

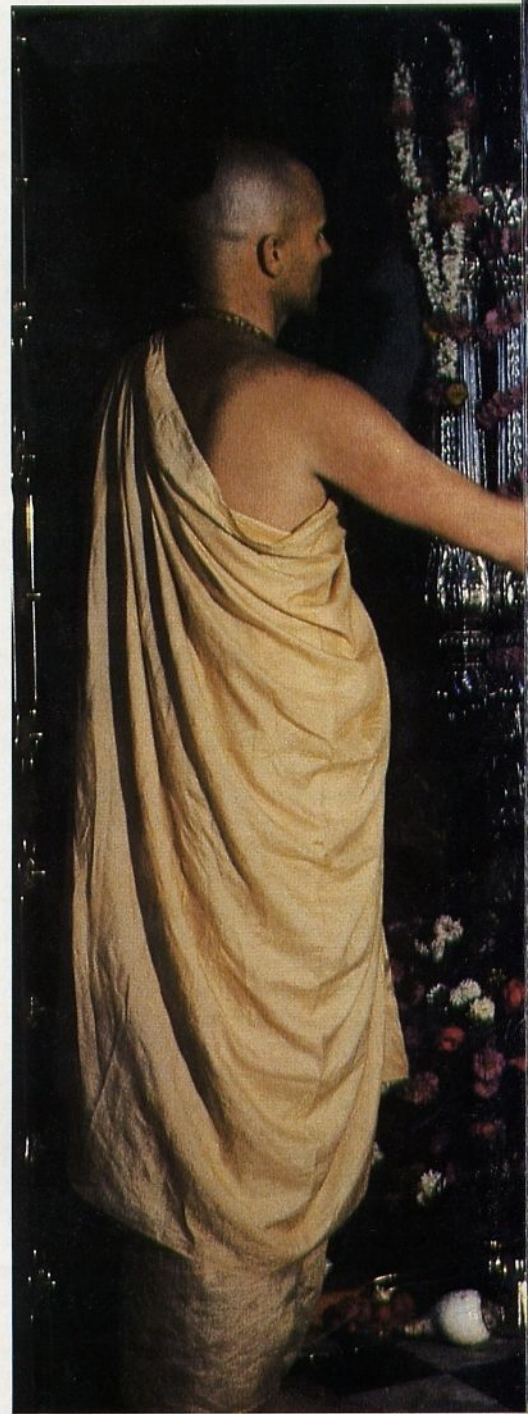
“Yes,” Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, “and I will make them all *brāhmaṇas*.”

This conviction of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s—that he could turn Westerners into qualified *brāhmaṇas*—astonished Allen Ginsberg, and in the years that followed it would also astonish many people in India and around the world who had preconceived notions about who could and who could not be a *brāhmaṇa*. The Vedic scriptures clearly direct us to look at person’s qualities and activities to determine whether or not he is a *brāhmaṇa*, but in India this direction is generally either unknown or ignored. Instead, most people there believe that the

sole criterion for being a *brāhmaṇa* is birth in a family of *brāhmaṇas*. In the early part of this century Śrīla Prabhupāda’s spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura, saw the great need for reviving pure brahminical culture in the modern world and strove to train a class of genuine *brāhmaṇas* in India. And Śrīla Prabhupāda followed his spiritual master’s example when he came to the West.

The fundamentals of brahminical culture are outlined in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, a book widely revered as the essence of Vedic wisdom. Early in that work Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is God Himself, explains that He has created four natural divisions in society according to work and quality. These are the *brāhmaṇas* (intellectuals), the *kṣatriyas* (military and political leaders), the *vaiśyas* (farmers and merchants), and the *sūdras* (servants of the higher classes, or manual laborers). Later in the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa explains the qualities of the *brāhmaṇas*: “Peacefulness, self-control, austerity, purity, tolerance, honesty, wisdom, knowledge, and religiousness—these are the qualities that *brāhmaṇas* display in their activities” (Bg. 18.42).

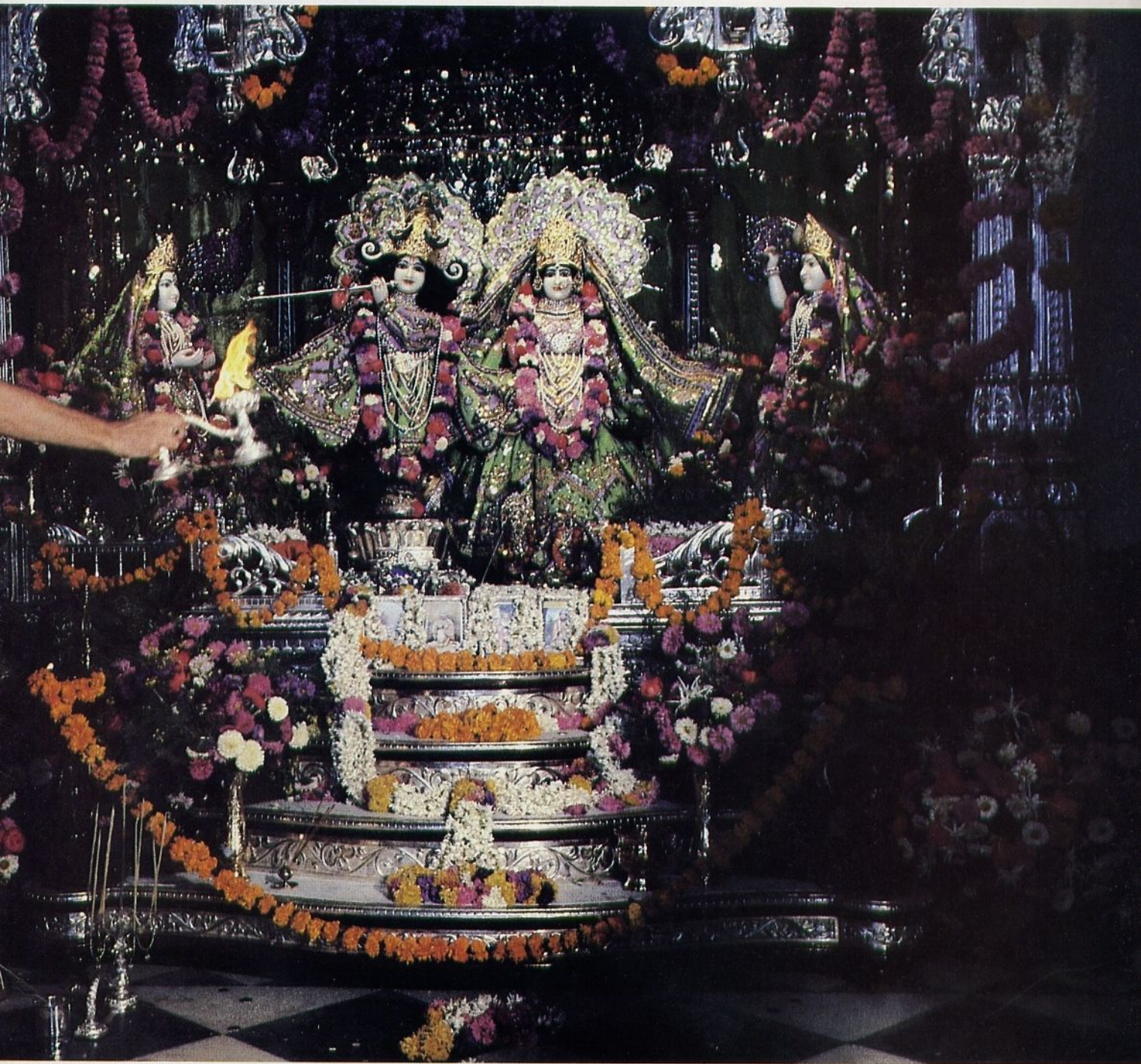
At present the world lacks the guidance



VISAKHĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

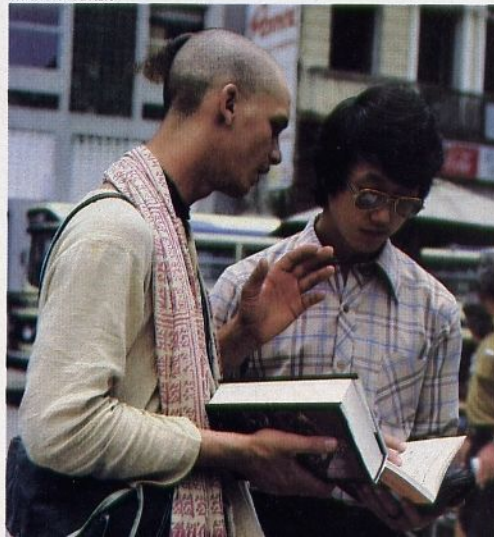
of such persons. Instead, we are led by people motivated by greed, lust for power, or perverted ideologies. The basic principle, of course, is the overweening desire for sense pleasure. Lord Kṛṣṇa explains in *Bhagavad-gītā* that this desire destroys one’s intelligence and brings hellish punishment both in this life and the next. But because such leaders either disbelieve in God outright or else have no systematic knowledge of His instructions or His powers, they feel they can do anything with impunity. Thus they insure a dark future for themselves and those they lead.

The Vedic literatures contain that systematic knowledge our present leaders



BHĪRĀGAVA DĀSA

lack. Vedic knowledge teaches that we are not our material bodies but rather spiritual souls, part and parcel of the Supreme Soul, Kṛṣṇa, or the Absolute Truth. And one who knows the Absolute Truth, or the Supreme Brahman, is a *brāhmaṇa* (*brahma jñānīti brāhmaṇa*). The need today is to train a class of genuine *brāhmaṇas* who possess the aforementioned qualities and who know the relationship between matter, spirit, and the controller of both. With these qualities and this knowledge they will truly be able to guide people to the ultimate goal of life—liberation from the painful cycle of birth and death and entrance into the



**Worshipping the Deity form of Lord Kṛṣṇa** demands the highest brahminical standards of purity and devotion. Above, Śrīla Bhavānanda Goswami, one of the spiritual masters in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness Society, worships the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities at the Society's temple in Bombay. Another important brahminical duty disseminating the transcendental knowledge found in the Vedic scriptures. At left, a devotee in Brazil distributes a Portuguese translation of a book by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

eternal, blissful kingdom of God.

But, you may say, such guidance seems impractical. How can it help us in our everyday lives? The answer is that although the ultimate goal of brahminical culture is liberation from the material world, it is not in any sense quixotic. Genuine *brāhmaṇas* provide invaluable guidance in the day-to-day affairs of society. It is this dual approach that Śrīla Prabhupāda offered: spiritual ideals based on broad scriptural knowledge along with practical instruction in everyday life. By his teachings and his own example of impeccable brahminical behavior, Śrīla Prabhupāda inspired his Western followers to rise to the brahminical standard and take on the duties of qualified *brāhmaṇas*.

Unfortunately, many people in India still cling to the idea that only a person born in a *brāhmaṇa* family can be a *brāhmaṇa*—an idea completely antithetical to the Vedic scriptures. A son of a Justice of the Supreme Court is not automatically entitled to sit on the bench when he comes of age. He must qualify himself by earning a law degree, passing the bar examination, and distinguishing himself in legal affairs. Similarly, one who claims to be a *brāhmaṇa* must back up his claim by acting like one.

Today many Indians born in *brāhmaṇa* families are earning their livelihood doing menial service. According to *Bhagavad-gītā*, this makes them *sūdras*. Of course, such work is respectable if done sincerely and honestly, but a person who works in this way cannot claim to be a *brāhmaṇa*. A *brāhmaṇa* is also known as a *dvija*, “one who is twice-born.” This indicates that a true *brāhmaṇa* takes a second birth by virtue of his knowledge of the Absolute Truth and his dedication to purity of mind, body, and words. Only then is he fit to wear the traditional sacred thread.

Now however, people are simply paying a few cents for a brahminical thread and wearing it as a status symbol, ignoring the responsibilities it entails. We see many sons of *brāhmaṇas* doing abominable things—eating meat, drinking liquor, associating with loose women—yet insisting they are *brāhmaṇas*. Many such so-called *brāhmaṇas* are atheists, in direct contradiction to Lord Kṛṣṇa’s injunction in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that a *brāhmaṇa* must be religious. Most important, these pseudo-*brāhmaṇas* perform none of the activities of genuine *brāhmaṇas*.

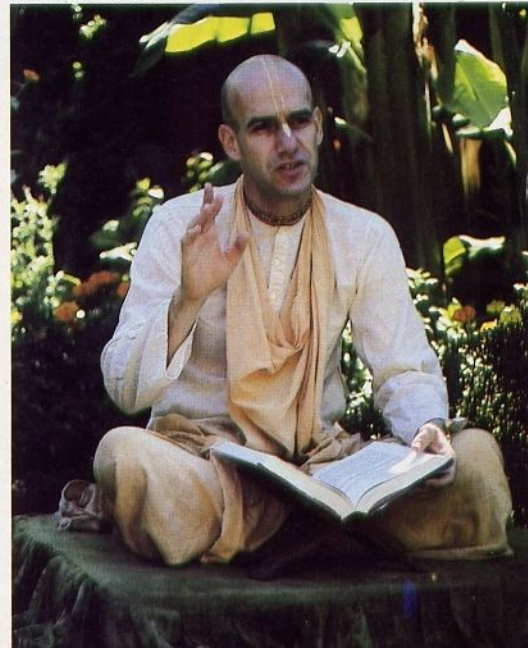
In the Seventh Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the chief of the traditional Vedic texts known as the *Purāṇas*, the sage Nārada prescribes six basic duties for a *brāhmaṇa*: studying the Vedas, teaching the Vedas, worshipping the Deity form of Kṛṣṇa in the temple, teaching others how to worship the Deity, accepting charity on

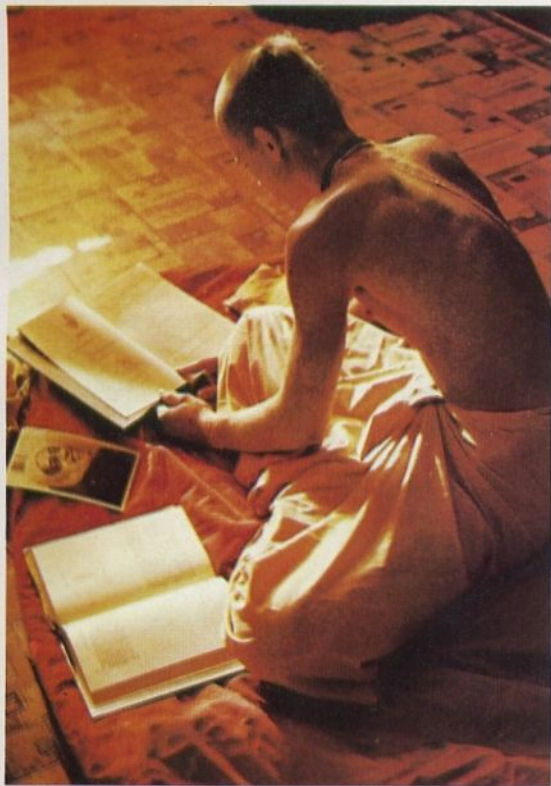


BHĀRGAVA DĀSA

NITYA-TRPTĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

**Chanting Vedic mantras and teaching others to chant them** are two functions that all *brāhmaṇas* must perform. Above, devotees fulfill both obligations at once as they chant the greatest of all mantras—the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*—on the streets of the Chinese quarter in São Paulo, Brazil. At right, His Holiness Trivikrama Swami meets another prime responsibility of a *brāhmaṇa*: expounding on the Vedic literatures. Here he teaches a class on the *Bhagavad-gītā* in Los Angeles.





A *brāhmaṇa* must study the Vedic scriptures regularly, as at left, to remain fixed in his understanding of the Supreme Brahman, Lord Kṛṣṇa. He must also give charity, as at the Sunday Festival in London shown below, where hundreds of guests receive the greatest of all gifts: the *prasādam* (mercy) of Kṛṣṇa in the form of delicious vegetarian dishes prepared and offered to Him with loving devotion.



VISAKHĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

behalf of the Lord, and giving charity. The vast majority of today's *brāhmaṇas* in India practice hardly any of these activities regularly. And we do not have to search far to find out why. India proclaims itself a secular state, and in a secular state public schools cannot teach religion. Therefore few schools are teaching the Vedic knowledge, let alone the Vedic *mantras* necessary to perform brahminical duties. Modern children are taught right from first grade that there is no God and that India has to deny its own religious tradi-

tion so that it can enter the modern technological world. The result of all this atheistic propaganda is the mess we find our youngsters in today.

So the urgent need is for qualified *brāhmaṇas* who will teach the science of God in institutions of learning and provide brahminical guidance in institutions of government. Making this ideal a reality is the mission of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). As Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in his commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.11.14):

“Sometimes [Indian] *brāhmaṇas* protest against our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement for creating *brāhmaṇas* from Europeans and Americans, or in other words from *mlecchas* and *yavanas* [meat-eaters and low-class people]. This movement, however, is supported in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. At the present moment society is in a chaotic condition, and practically everyone has given up the cultivation of spiritual life, which is especially meant for the *brāhmaṇas*. Because spiritual culture has been stopped all over the world, there is now an emergency, and therefore it is now time to train those who are considered lower and condemned so that they may become *brāhmaṇas* and take up the work of spiritual progress.”

Despite all criticism and in the face of severe difficulties, Śrīla Prabhupāda succeeded in training genuine *brāhmaṇas*—*brāhmaṇas* who actually meet the standards of brahminical behavior set forth in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The *brāhmaṇas* in ISKCON are studying these and other books of Vedic knowledge every day, and they are teaching millions of people the importance of this knowledge through widespread book distribution and by other means. They are chanting Vedic *mantras*, especially the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—and teaching others to do so. (Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is the most highly recommended means for attaining spiritual perfection in the present Age of Quarrel.) They are regularly worshiping the Deity of Lord Kṛṣṇa according to the strictest Vedic standards in nearly two hundred temples worldwide, and they are teaching these standards to newly initiated *brāhmaṇas*. They are accepting charity from those who receive the transcendental literature they distribute, from friends of ISKCON, and from people who are simply interested in reviving brahminical culture. And they are giving charity by freely distributing *prasādam* (food offered to Kṛṣṇa), by renovating holy places, by often giving out literature free, and in general by sacrificing their own comfort and safety to spread the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

These are just a few of the ways the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is reviving brahminical culture, which is so sorely needed in the world today. We encourage everyone to help in this great task by following the simple principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness taught by Śrīla Prabhupāda and his successors, by becoming a qualified *brāhmaṇa* oneself, and by teaching others to become *brāhmaṇas*. In this way we shall all one day attain our real birthright—a place in the spiritual world as eternal servants of Lord Kṛṣṇa. 🌸

# ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

## On the Crucial Choice: To Be Controlled by Force—or by Love

The following conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples took place in January 1974 on an early-morning walk in Hawaii.

**Devotee:** Materialists think that everything in nature is meant for man, for his exploitation and enjoyment.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** But when there is an arrangement there must be some higher supervision. You call it nature, and we accept that. In *Bhagavad-gītā* [3.27] Kṛṣṇa says, *prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ*: “Everything is being done by the direction of *prakṛti*, nature.” So nature is superior to you. You have to accept this, because you are being directed by nature.

**Devotee:** The materialists hope to become superior to nature.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** That is rascaldom, foolishness. Kṛṣṇa says,

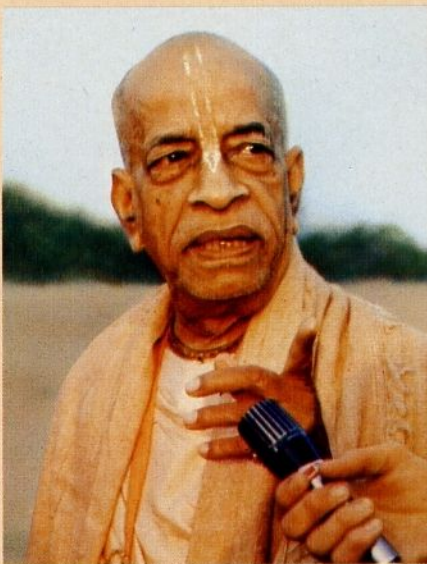
*prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni  
guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ  
ahaṅkāra-vimūḍhātmā  
kartāham iti manyate*

The rascal’s actions are all being dictated by nature, but he is thinking, “I am the lord.” By self-conceit, he’s falsely thinking, “I am controlling nature” or “I shall be able to control nature in the future.” This is foolishness. This is rascaldom.

**Devotee:** The scientists can give so much evidence that they have already achieved partial control over nature. Now we can fly all over the world—

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Partial control means no control. We are controlled by nature; that you cannot deny. Now, the next question should be, How is nature working? That Kṛṣṇa also explains in *Bhagavad-gītā* [9.10]: *mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ sūyate sa-carācaram*. “The material nature is working under My supervision.” To a small degree, we are also supervising material nature. For example, here is some earth. We can take this earth and make it into bricks and build a skyscraper. It is not that the earth is going to become a skyscraper by itself. A living entity must utilize the earth to build the skyscraper. Another example is an airplane. It is simply a combination of various kinds of matter, but it has to be worked out by the manufacturer and flown by the pilot. Therefore the pilot of the airplane, or the manufacturer, is superior to the airplane itself.

Now, the elements of material nature (earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intel-



ligence, and ego) are working together so nicely, just like a big machine, that anyone can see they are being manipulated by some living entity. And that entity is God, or Kṛṣṇa. So our position is that we are controlled by the material nature, and the material nature is controlled by Kṛṣṇa. One who is at all sensible will think, “After all, the Supreme Controller is Kṛṣṇa, so why not directly come under His control? Why not serve Him directly?” This is good sense.

**Devotee:** The difference between Kṛṣṇa’s control and that of the material nature seems to be that Kṛṣṇa is benevolent but the material nature is not.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. Material nature is just like a jail superintendent. If you don’t care for the laws of the government, the laws of God, then you’ll be controlled by the jail superintendent. That’s all. You will be controlled; you cannot be free. This is your constitutional position.

**Devotee:** We have the choice of being controlled either by love or by force.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. When we decide to be controlled by Kṛṣṇa, it is out of love for Him. Similarly, you are being controlled by me, but there is no force. You serve me voluntarily, out of love. I am not paying you; still, when I ask you to do something you immediately do it. Why? There is love between us.

**Devotee:** If a person actually understands the distinction between control by Kṛṣṇa and control by the material nature, is it possible that he will still choose to be controlled by the material nature?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. He has already made that choice. But he’s so foolish that


he thinks, “I am now independent of the Supreme Lord.” Because he’s foolish he cannot understand that he is simply being controlled by an *agent* of God, the material nature. Although he is controlled at every moment, he is thinking, “I am free.” Therefore he is in illusion. *Illusion* means “believing something that is not a fact.” So the materialists and so-called scientists who are thinking, “There is no God; we are independent” are simply foolish, childish rascals. That is why Kṛṣṇa uses the word *vimūḍhātmā* to describe them. *Vimūḍhātmā* means befooled rascal.”

**Devotee:** Most people don’t think life in the material nature is so bad. They think it’s pleasurable. They think they’re having fun.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. That is another illusion. Unless one thinks material life is pleasurable, how could he tolerate it? When we see a pig eating stool, we say, “Ughhh!” But unless the pig thinks, “This is pleasurable,” how could he eat stool? He is eating the most abominable thing, but he is thinking, “I am enjoying.” This is *māyā*, illusion.

**Devotee:** Sometimes when we tell people this life is full of miseries, they say, “What do you mean?”

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** That is their foolishness. They cannot distinguish misery from happiness. They are being kicked by material nature, the agent of Kṛṣṇa. Because they are desiring in various ways to become controllers or enjoyers, they are being offered various types of bodies and suffering repeated birth and death. But because people have no sense, they think this material life is pleasurable. Now, as Americans, you may have so many nice facilities, but you cannot enjoy them. By nature’s force you have to change your position. What can you do? Today you may be living in a nice apartment on the twenty-fourth floor of a skyscraper, and tomorrow you may become a rat in that apartment. It is not in your power to change the laws of nature.

Actually, everyone is being controlled by the material nature at every moment. So an intelligent person asks how to get out of this material nature, how to end the suffering of repeated birth, old age, disease, and death. And Kṛṣṇa explains how to end this suffering in *Bhagavad-gītā* [7.14]: *mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etān taranti te*: “As soon as the rascal surrenders to Me, he is out of the control of My material nature.” Surrendering to Kṛṣṇa is real intelligence. 



# ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the "cream of the Vedic literatures" of ancient India. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa*, or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. The original Sanskrit text is presented here with transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

## Second Canto: "The Cosmic Manifestation"

### CHAPTER NINE

#### Answers by Citing the Lord's Version

*Our serialized presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam continues with Brahmā, the first created being in the universe, relishing a vision of the spiritual world, where everything is eternal, full of knowledge, and full of bliss. Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself then appears before Brahmā and congratulates him for achieving the ultimate benediction—a revelation of the Supreme.*

#### TEXT 12

प्रवालवैदूर्यमृणालवर्चसः

परिस्फुरत्कुण्डलमौलिमालिनः ॥१२॥

*pravāla-vaidūrya-mṛṅāla-varcasaḥ  
parisphurat-kuṇḍala-mauli-mālinah*

*pravāla—coral; vaidūrya—a special diamond; mṛṅāla—celestial lotus; varcasaḥ—rays; parisphurat—blooming; kuṇḍala—earring; mauri—heads; mālinah—with garlands.*

#### TRANSLATION

Some of them are effulgent like coral and diamonds in complexion and have garlands on their heads, blooming like lotus flowers, and some wear earrings.

#### PURPORT

There are some inhabitants who have attained the liberation of *sārūpya*, or possessing bodily features like those of the Personality of Godhead. The *vaidūrya* diamond is especially meant for the Personality of Godhead, but one who achieves the liberation of bodily equality with the Lord is especially favored with such diamonds on his body.

#### TEXT 13

भ्राजिष्णुभिर्यः परितो विराजते

लसद्विमानावलिभिर्महात्मनाम् ।

विद्योतमानः प्रमदोत्तमाद्युभिः

सविद्युदभ्रावलिभिर्यथा नमः ॥१३॥

*bhrājiṣṇubhir yaḥ parito virājate  
lasad-vimānāvālibhir mahātmanām  
vidyotamānaḥ pramadottamādyubhiḥ  
savidyud abhrāvalibhir yathā nabhaḥ*

*bhrājiṣṇubhiḥ—by the glowing; yaḥ—the Vaikuṅṭhalokas; paritaḥ—surrounded by; virājate—thus situated; lasat—brilliant; vimāna—airplanes; avalibhiḥ—assemblage; mahā-ātmanām—of the great devotees of the Lord; vidyotamānaḥ—beautiful like lightning; pramada—*

*ladies; uttama—celestial; adyubhiḥ—by complexion; sa-vidyut—with electric lightning; abhrāvalibhiḥ—with clouds in the sky; yathā—as it were; nabhaḥ—the sky.*

#### TRANSLATION

The Vaikuṅṭha planets are also surrounded by various airplanes, all glowing and brilliantly situated. These airplanes belong to the great mahātmās or devotees of the Lord. The ladies are as beautiful as lightning because of their celestial complexions, and all these combined together appear just like the sky decorated with both clouds and lightning.

#### PURPORT

It appears that in the Vaikuṅṭha planets there are also airplanes brilliantly glowing, and they are occupied by the great devotees of the Lord with ladies of celestial beauty as brilliant as lightning. As there are airplanes, so there must be different types of carriages like airplanes, but they may not be driven machines, as we have experience in this world. Because everything is of the same nature of eternity, bliss and knowledge, the airplanes and carriages are of the same quality as Brahman. Although there is nothing except Brahman, one should not mistakenly think that there is only void and no variegatedness. Thinking like that is due to a poor fund of knowledge; otherwise no one would have such a misconception of voidness in Brahman. As there are airplanes, ladies and gentlemen, so there must be cities and houses and everything else just suitable to the particular planets. One should not carry the ideas of imperfection from this world to the transcendental world and not take into consideration the nature of the atmosphere, as completely free from the influence of time, etc., as described previously.

#### TEXT 14

श्रीर्यत्र रूपिण्युरुगायपादयोः

करोति मानं बहुधा विभूतिभिः ।

प्रेङ्खं श्रिता या कुसुमाकरानुगे-

विंगीयमाना प्रियकर्म गायती ॥१४॥

*śrīr yatra rūpiṇy urugāya-pādayoḥ  
karoti mānaṁ bahudhā vibhūtibhiḥ  
preṅkhaṁ śritā yā kusumākaraṇugair  
viṅgiyamānā priya-karma gāyati*

*śrīr—the goddess of fortune; yatra—in the Vaikuṅṭha planets; rūpiṇī—in her transcendental form; urugāya—the Lord, who is sung of by the great devotees; pādayoḥ—under the lotus feet of the Lord; karoti—does; mānaṁ—respectful services; bahudhā—in diverse paraphernalia; vibhūtibhiḥ—accompanied by her personal associates; preṅkham—movement of enjoyment; śritā—taken shelter of; yā—who; kusumākara—spring; anugaiḥ—by the black bees; viṅgiyamānā—being followed by the songs; priya-karma—activities of the dearest; gāyati—singing.*

## TRANSLATION

The goddess of fortune in her transcendental form is engaged in the loving service of the Lord's lotus feet, and being moved by the black bees, followers of spring, she is not only engaged in variegated pleasure—service to the Lord, along with her constant companions—but is also engaged in singing the glories of the Lord's activities.

## TEXT 15

ददर्श तत्राखिलसात्वतां पतिं  
श्रियः पतिं यज्ञपतिं जगत्पतिम् ।  
सुनन्दनन्दप्रबलार्हणादिभिः  
स्वपार्षदाग्रैः परिसेवितं विशुम् ॥१५॥

*dadarśa tatrākhila-sātvatām patim*  
*śriyaḥ patim yajña-patim jagat-patim*  
*sunanda-nanda-prabalārhaṇādibhiḥ*  
*sva-pārṣadāgraiḥ pariśevitam vibhum*

*dadarśa*—Brahmā saw; *tatra*—there (in Vaikuṅṭhaloka); *akhila*—entire; *sātvatām*—of the great devotees; *patim*—the Lord; *śriyaḥ*—of the goddess of fortune; *patim*—the Lord; *yajña*—of sacrifice; *patim*—the Lord; *jagat*—of the universe; *patim*—the Lord; *sunanda*—Sunanda; *nanda*—Nanda; *prabala*—Prabala; *arhaṇa*—Arhaṇa; *ādibhiḥ*—by them; *sva-pārṣada*—own associates; *agrāiḥ*—by the foremost; *pariśevitam*—being served in transcendental love; *vibhum*—the great Almighty.

## TRANSLATION

Lord Brahmā saw in the Vaikuṅṭha planets the Personality of Godhead, who is the Lord of the entire devotee community, the Lord of the goddess of fortune, the Lord of all sacrifices, and the Lord of the universe, and who is served by the foremost servitors like Nanda, Sunanda, Prabala and Arhaṇa, His immediate associates.

## PURPORT

When we speak of a king it is naturally understood that the king is accompanied by his confidential associates, like his secretary, private secretary, aide-de-camp, ministers and advisers. So also when we see the Lord we see Him with His different energies, associates, confidential servitors, etc. So the Supreme Lord, who is the leader of all living entities, the Lord of all devotee sects, the Lord of all opulences, the Lord of sacrifices and the enjoyer of everything in His entire creation, is not only the Supreme Person, but also is always surrounded by His immediate associates, all engaged in their loving transcendental service to Him.

## TEXT 16

भृत्यप्रसादाभिमुखं दृगासवं  
प्रसन्नहासारुणलोचनाननम् ।  
किरीटिनं कुण्डलिनं चतुर्भुजं  
पीतांशुकं वक्षसि लक्षितं श्रिया ॥१६॥

*bhṛtya-prasādābhimukhaṁ dṛg-āsavaṁ*  
*prasanna-hāsāruṇa-locanānanam*  
*kirīṭinam kuṇḍalinam catur-bhujam*  
*pītāṁśukaṁ vakṣasi lakṣitam śriyā*

*bhṛtya*—the servitor; *prasāda*—affection; *abhimukhaṁ*—favorably facing; *dṛk*—the very sight; *āsavam*—an intoxication; *prasanna*—very much pleased; *hāsa*—smile; *aruṇa*—reddish; *locana*—eyes; *ānanam*—face; *kirīṭinam*—with helmet; *kuṇḍalinam*—with earrings; *catur-bhujam*—with four hands; *pīta*—yellow; *āṁśukaṁ*—dress; *vakṣasi*—on the chest; *lakṣitam*—marked; *śriyā*—with the goddess of fortune.

## TRANSLATION

The Personality of Godhead, seen leaning favorably towards His loving servitors, His very sight intoxicating and attractive, appeared to be very much satisfied. He had a smiling face decorated with an enchanting reddish hue. He was dressed in yellow robes and wore earrings and a helmet on his head. He had four hands, and His chest was marked with the lines of the goddess of fortune.

## PURPORT

In the *Padma Purāṇa*, *Uttara-khaṇḍa*, there is a full description of the *yoga-pīṭha*, or the particular place where the Lord is in audience to His eternal devotees. In that *yoga-pīṭha*, the personifications of religion, knowledge, opulence and renunciation are all seated at the lotus feet of the Lord. The four *Vedas*, namely *Rk*, *Sāma*, *Yajur* and *Atharva*, are present there personally to advise the Lord. The sixteen energies headed by Caṇḍa are all present there. Caṇḍa and Kumuda are the first two doorkeepers, at the middle door are the doorkeepers named Bhadra and Subhadra, and at the last door are Jaya and Vijaya. There are other doorkeepers also, named Kumuda, Kumudākṣa, Puṇḍarīka, Vāmana, Śaṅkukarṇa, Sarvanetra, Sumukha, etc. The Lord's palace is well decorated and protected by the above-mentioned doorkeepers.

## TEXT 17

अच्यर्हणीयासनमास्थितं परं  
वृत्तं चतुःषोडशपञ्चशक्तिभिः ।  
युक्तं भगैः स्वैरितरत्र चाध्रुवैः  
स्व एव धामन् रममाणमीश्वरम् ॥१७॥

*adhyaṛhaṇīyāsanaṁ āsthitaṁ paraṁ*  
*vṛtaṁ catur-ṣoḍaśa-pañca-śaktibhiḥ*  
*yuktaṁ bhagaiḥ svair itaratra cādhruvaiḥ*  
*sva eva dhāman ramamaṇam īśvaram*

*adhyaṛhaṇīya*—greatly worshipable; *āsanaṁ*—throne; *āsthitaṁ*—seated on it; *paraṁ*—the Supreme; *vṛtaṁ*—surrounded by; *catur-ṣoḍaśa*, namely *prakṛti*, *puruṣa*, *mahat* and *ego*; *pañca*—the five; *śaktibhiḥ*—by the energies; *yuktaṁ*—empowered with; *bhagaiḥ*—His opulences; *svaiḥ*—personal; *itaratra*—other minor prowesses; *ca*—also; *adhruvaiḥ*—temporary; *sva*—own; *eva*—certainly; *dhāman*—abode; *ramamaṇam*—enjoying; *īśvaram*—the Supreme Lord.

## TRANSLATION

The Lord was seated on His throne and was surrounded by different energies like the four, the sixteen, the five, and the six natural opulences, along with other insignificant energies of the temporary character. But He was the factual Supreme Lord, enjoying His own abode.

## PURPORT

The Lord is naturally endowed with His six opulences. Specifically, He is the richest, He is the most powerful, He is the most famous, He is the most beautiful, He is the greatest in knowledge, and He is the greatest renouncer as well. And for His material creative energies, He is served by four, namely the principles of *prakṛti*, *puruṣa*, *mahat-tattva* and *ego*. He is also served by the sixteen, namely the five elements (earth, water, air, fire and sky), the five perceptive sense organs (the eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin), and the five working sense organs (the hand, the leg, the stomach, the evacuation outlet and the genitals), and the mind. The five includes the sense objects, namely form, taste, smell, sound and touch. All these twenty-five items serve the Lord in the material creation, and all of them are personally present to serve the Lord. The insignificant opulences numbering eight (the *aṣṭa-siddhis*, attained by *yogīs* for temporary overlordship) are also under His control, but He is naturally full with all such powers without any effort, and therefore He is the Supreme Lord.

The living being, by severe penance and performance of bodily exercises, can temporarily attain some wonderful power, but that does not make him the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Lord, by His own potency, is unlimitedly more powerful than any *yogī*, He is unlimitedly more learned than any *jñānī*, He is unlimitedly richer than any wealthy person, He is unlimitedly more beautiful than any beautiful living being, and He is unlimitedly more charitable than any philanthropist. He is above all; no one is equal to or greater than Him. Nor can anyone reach His level of perfection in any of the above powers by any amount of penance or yogic demonstrations. The *yogīs* are dependent on His mercy. Out of His immensely charitable disposition He can award some temporary powers to the *yogīs* because of the *yogīs'* hankering after them, but to His unalloyed devotees, who do not want anything from the Lord save and except His transcendental service, the Lord is so pleased that He gives Himself in exchange for unalloyed service.

## TEXT 18

तदर्शनाह्लादपरिप्लुतान्तरो  
हृष्यत्तनुः प्रेमभराश्रुलोचनः ।  
ननाम पादाम्बुजमस्य विश्वसृग्  
यत् पारमहंस्येन पथाधिगम्यते ॥१८॥

*tad-darśanāhlāda-pariplutāntaro*  
*hṛṣyat-tanuḥ prema-bharāśru-locanaḥ*  
*nanāma pādāmbujam asya viśva-sṛg*  
*yat pāramahānsyena pathādhigamyate*

*tat*—by that audience of the Lord; *darśana*—audience; *āhlāda*—joy; *paripluta*—overwhelmed; *antaraḥ*—within the heart; *hṛṣyat*—full in ecstasy; *tanuḥ*—body; *prema-bhara*—in full transcendental love; *aśru*—tears; *locanaḥ*—in the eyes; *nanāma*—bowed down; *pādāmbujam*—under the lotus feet; *asya*—of the Lord; *viśva-sṛg*—the creator of the universe; *yat*—which; *pāramahānsyena*—by the great liberated soul; *pathā*—the path; *adhigamyate*—is followed.

## TRANSLATION

Lord Brahmā, thus seeing the Personality of Godhead in His fullness, was overwhelmed with joy within his heart, and thus in full transcendental love and ecstasy, his eyes filled with tears of love. He thus bowed down before the Lord. That is the way of the highest perfection for the living being [paramahansa].

## PURPORT

In the beginning of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is stated that this great literature is meant for the *paramahānsas*. *Paramo nirmatsarānāḥ satām*, i.e. the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is meant for persons completely free from malice. In the conditioned life the malicious life begins from the top, namely bearing malice against the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Personality of Godhead is an established fact in all the revealed scriptures, and in the *Bhagavad-gītā* the personal feature of the Supreme Lord is especially mentioned, so much so that the last portion of the great literature has emphatically stressed that one should surrender unto the Personality of Godhead to be saved from the miseries of life. Unfortunately, persons with impious backgrounds do not believe in the Personality of Godhead, and everyone wants to become God himself without any qualification. This malicious nature in the conditioned soul continues even up to the stage when a person wants to be one with the Lord, and thus even the greatest of the empiric philosophers speculating on becoming one with the Supreme Lord cannot become a *paramahānsa* because the malicious mind is there. Therefore the *paramahānsa* stage of life can be attained only by those who are fixed in the practice of *bhakti-yoga*. This *bhakti-yoga* begins if a person has the firm conviction that simply discharging devotional service to the Lord in full transcendental love can elevate him to the highest perfectional stage of life. Brahmājī believed in this art of *bhakti-yoga*; he believed in the instruc-

tion of the Lord to execute *tapa*, and he discharged the function with great penance and thus achieved the great success of seeing the *Vaikuṅṭhalokas* and the Lord also by personal experience. No one can reach the abode of the Supreme Lord by any mechanical means of the mind or machine, but one can reach the abode of the *Vaikuṅṭhalokas* simply by following the process of *bhakti-yoga* because the Lord can be realized only through the *bhakti-yoga* process. Lord Brahmājī was actually sitting on his lotus seat, and from there, by executing the process of *bhakti-yoga* in great seriousness, he could see the *Vaikuṅṭhalokas* with all variegatedness as well as the Lord in person and His associates.

Following in the footsteps of Lord Brahmā, any person, even up to this day, can attain the same perfection by following the path of the *paramahānsa* as recommended herein. Lord Caitanya also approved of this method of self-realization for men in this age. One should first, with all conviction, believe in the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and without making efforts to realize Him by speculative philosophy, one should prefer to hear about Him from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavad-gītā* and later from the text of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. One should hear such discourses from a person *Bhāgavatam* and not from the professional man, or from the *karmī*, *jñānī* or *yogī*. That is the secret of learning the science. One does not need to be in the renounced order of life; he can remain in his present condition of life, but he must search out the association of a bona fide devotee of the Lord and hear from him the transcendental message of the Lord with faith and conviction. That is the path of the *paramahānsa* recommended herein. Amongst various holy names of the Lord, He is also called *ajita*, or one who can never be conquered by anyone else. Yet He can be conquered by the *paramahānsa* path, as practically realized and shown by the great spiritual master Lord Brahmā. Lord Brahmā has personally recommended this *paramahānsa-panthāḥ* in his own words as follows:

*jñāne prayāsam udapāsya namanta eva*  
*jīvanti sanmukharitām bhavadīya vārtām*  
*sthāne sthūāḥ śruti-gatām tanu-vān-manobhir*  
*ye prāyaśo 'jita jito 'py asi tais trilokyām*

Lord Brahmā said, "O my Lord Kṛṣṇa, a devotee who abandons the path of empiric philosophical speculation aimed at merging in the existence of the Supreme and engages himself in *hearing* Your glories and activities from a bona fide *sādhu*, or saint, and who lives an honest life in the occupational engagement of his social life, can conquer Your sympathy and mercy even though You are *ajita*, or unconquerable." (*Bhāg.* 10.14.3) That is the path of the *paramahānsas*, which was personally followed by Lord Brahmā and later recommended by him for attaining perfect success in life

## TEXT 19

तं प्रीयमाणं समुपस्थितं कविं  
प्रजाविसर्गे निजशसनार्हणम् ।  
बभाष ईषत्स्मितशोचिषा गिरा  
प्रियः प्रियं प्रीतमनाः करे स्पृशन् ॥१९॥

*taṁ prīyamāṇam samupasthitaṁ kavim*  
*prajā-visarge nija-śāsanārhaṇam*  
*babhāṣa īṣat-smīta-śociṣā girā*  
*priyaḥ priyam prīta-manāḥ kare spr̥ṣan*

*taṁ*—unto Lord Brahmā; *prīyamāṇam*—worthy of being dear; *samupasthitaṁ*—present before; *kavim*—the great scholar; *prajā*—living entities; *visarge*—in the matter of creation; *nija*—His own; *śāśana*—control; *arhaṇam*—just suitable; *babhāṣe*—addressed; *īṣat*—mild; *smīta*—smiling; *śociṣā*—with enlightening; *girā*—words; *priyaḥ*—the beloved; *priyam*—the counterpart of love; *prīta-manāḥ*—being very much pleased; *kare*—by the hand; *spr̥ṣan*—shaking.

## TRANSLATION

And seeing Brahmā present before Him, the Lord accepted him as worthy to create living beings, to be controlled as He desired, and thus being much satisfied with him, the Lord shook hands with Brahmā and, slightly smiling, addressed him thus.

## PURPORT

The creation of the material world is not blind or accidental. The living entities who are ever conditioned, or *nitya-baddha*, are thus given a chance for liberation under the guidance of His own representative like Brahmā. The Lord instructs Brahmā in Vedic knowledge in order to diffuse this knowledge to the conditioned souls. The conditioned souls are forgetful souls in their relationship with the Lord, and thus a period of creation and the process of dissemination of Vedic knowledge are necessary activities of the Lord. Lord Brahmā has a great responsibility in delivering the conditioned souls, and therefore he is very dear to the Lord.

Brahmā also does his duty very perfectly, not only by generating the living entities but also by spreading his party for reclaiming the fallen souls. The party is called the Brahma-sampradāya, and any member of this party to date is naturally engaged in reclaiming the fallen souls back to Godhead, back home. The Lord is very much anxious to get back His parts and parcels, as stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. No one is more dear than the one who takes the task of reclaiming the fallen souls back to Godhead.

There are many renegades from the Brahma-sampradāya whose only business is to make men more forgetful of the Lord and thus entangle them more and more in material existence. Such persons are never dear to the Lord, and the Lord sends them deeper into the darkest region of matter so that such envious demons may not be able to know the Supreme Lord.

Anyone, however, preaching the mission of the Lord in the line of the Brahma-sampradāya is always dear to the Lord, and the Lord, being satisfied with such a preacher of the authorized *bhakti* cult, shakes hands with him in great satisfaction.

## TEXT 20

श्रीभगवानुवाच

त्वयाहं तोषितः सम्यग् वेदगर्भं सिसृक्षया ।  
चिरं भृतेन तपसा दुस्तोषः कूटयोगिनाम् ॥२०॥

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca*  
*tvayāhaṁ toṣitaḥ samyag*  
*veda-garbhaḥ sirsṅṣayā*  
*ciraṁ bhṛtena tapasā*  
*dustoṣaḥ kūṭa-yoginām*

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca*—the all-beautiful Personality of Godhead said; *tvayā*—by you; *aham*—I am; *toṣitaḥ*—pleased; *samyak*—complete; *veda-garbha*—impregnated with the Vedas; *sirsṅṣayā*—for creating; *ciraṁ*—for a long time; *bhṛtena*—accumulated; *tapasā*—by penance; *dustoṣaḥ*—very hard to please; *kūṭa-yoginām*—for the pseudo mystics.

## TRANSLATION

The beautiful Personality of Godhead addressed Lord Brahmā: O Brahmā, impregnated with the Vedas, I am very much pleased

with your long accumulated penance with the desire for creation. Hardly am I pleased with the pseudo mystics.

## PURPORT

There are two kinds of penance: one for sense gratification and the other for self-realization. There are many pseudo mystics who undergo severe penances for their own satisfaction, and there are others who undergo severe penances for the satisfaction of the senses of the Lord. For example, the penances undertaken to discover nuclear weapons will never satisfy the Lord because such a penance is never satisfactory. By nature's own way, everyone has to meet death, and if such a process of death is accelerated by anyone's penances, there is no satisfaction for the Lord. The Lord wants every one of His parts and parcels to attain eternal life and bliss by coming home to Godhead, and the whole material creation is meant for that objective. Brahmā underwent severe penances for that purpose, namely to regulate the process of creation so that the Lord might be satisfied. Therefore the Lord was very much pleased with him, and for this Brahmā was impregnated with Vedic knowledge. The ultimate purpose of Vedic knowledge is to know the Lord and not to misuse the knowledge for any other purposes. Those who do not utilize Vedic knowledge for that purpose are known as *kūṭa-yogīs*, or pseudo transcendentalists who spoil their lives with ulterior motives.

## TEXT 21

वरं वरय भद्रं ते वरेशं माभिवाञ्छितम् ।  
ब्रह्मच्छ्रेयःपरिश्रामः पुंसां मद्दर्शनावधिः ॥२१॥

*varaṁ varaya bhadrāṁ te*  
*varaśaṁ mābhivāñchitam*  
*brahmaṁ chreyaḥ-parīśrāmaḥ*  
*puṁsāṁ mad-darśanāvadhīḥ*

*varaṁ*—benediction; *varaya*—just ask from; *bhadrāṁ*—auspicious; *te*—unto you; *vara-īśam*—the giver of all benediction; *mā (mām)*—from Me; *abhivāñchitam*—wishing; *brahmaṁ*—O Brahmā; *śreyaḥ*—the ultimate success; *parīśrāmaḥ*—for all penances; *puṁsām*—for every-one; *mat*—My; *darśana*—realization; *āvadhīḥ*—up to the limit of.

## TRANSLATION

I wish you good luck. O Brahmā, you may ask from Me, the giver of all benediction, all that you may desire. You may know that the ultimate benediction, as the result of all penances, is to see Me by realization.

## PURPORT

The ultimate realization of the Supreme Truth is knowing and seeing face to face the Personality of Godhead. Realization of the impersonal Brahma and localized Paramātmā features of the Personality of Godhead is not ultimate realization. When one realizes the Supreme Lord, one does not struggle hard to perform such penances. The next stage of life is to discharge devotional service to the Lord just to satisfy Him. In other words, one who has realized and seen the Supreme Lord has attained all perfection because everything is included in that highest perfectional stage. The impersonalists and the pseudo mystics, however, cannot reach this state.

(continued in next issue)



# Every Town and Village

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



At the studio of the new Hare Kṛṣṇa radio show in Paris, Indriya-damana dāsa directs operations.

## Radio ATMA on the Air in Paris

**Paris**—The International Society for Krishna Consciousness now broadcasts music and discussions on spiritual themes to the Paris area. Taking advantage of President Mitterand's policy of open access to the airwaves for private groups, devotees have mounted an 8,000-watt transmitter on the roof of their temple annex in the suburb of Suresnes and begun beaming Kṛṣṇa conscious programs around the clock to fifteen million people in and around Paris.

While permission for a permanent station is pending, Radio ATMA 95 has initiated an ambitious broadcast schedule

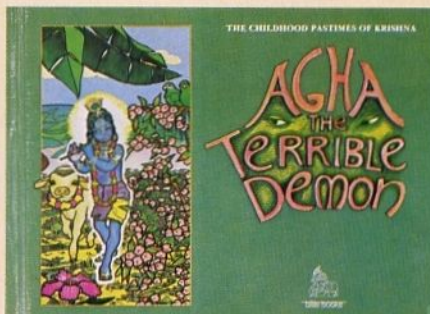
of devotional music, vegetarian cooking classes, *yoga* lessons, Kṛṣṇa conscious news commentary, and poetry readings. A popular feature of the programs is a series of debates on such topics as abortion, animal slaughter, social reform, and the origins of life and the universe.

Indriya-damana dāsa, director of operations for the programs, receives dozens of calls each week from satisfied listeners. "One woman called today," he recently related, "to tell us we are the only station that speaks personally and directly to its listeners, and that she recommends us to all her friends."

## "Terrible Demon" Recommended for Children

**New York**—When Lord Kṛṣṇa conquered the giant serpent Agha five thousand years ago, He rescued His childhood friends from the jaws of the cruel demon. Now the National Council of Teachers of English has chosen *Agha, the Terrible Demon*, a children's adaptation of the original Sanskrit story, as recommended reading. The Council has placed *Agha* on its booklist for parents, teachers, and librarians.

Bala Books, children's publishers for the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, first printed the full-color storybook three and a half years ago. Since then, more than 15,000



copies have been sold. French, Italian, Spanish, and Hindi editions are now in production.

## Festival in New Orleans

**New Orleans**—The devotees of four Hare Kṛṣṇa centers worked together to hold Ratha-yātrā, "The Festival of the Chariots," in New Orleans. Joining in the two days of festivities were devotees from Atlanta, New Orleans, and the Hare Kṛṣṇa farms in Mississippi and Tennessee. Guest speakers were Śrīla Kīrtanānanda Swami Bhaktipāda and Śrīla Jayapatāka Swami Ācāryapāda, who are among the spiritual masters now initiating disciples in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.



## Hare Kṛṣṇa Calendar

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

Year 496 Caitanya Era—Month of Viṣṇu		
March 17	March 21	March 29
Appearance of Śrīla Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita.	Pāpa-vimocani Ekādāśī (fasting from grains and beans).	Appearance of Śrīla Rāmānujācārya.
April 2	April 4	April 8
Appearance of Lord Rāmacandra (fasting till noon).	Kāmadā Ekādāśī (fasting from grains and beans).	Spring Rāsa Dance of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Rāsa Dance of Lord Balarāma.
Vaiṣṇava Month of Madhusūdana		
April 20		
Varāṭhni Ekādāśī (fasting from grains and beans).		



## Lord Kṛṣṇa's Cuisine

# Dāl: An Answer To the Protein Question

Beef-, fish-, and chicken-lovers take note:  
There's a cheaper, tastier, healthier, saintlier way  
to meet your protein needs.

Text and photo by  
VIŚĀKHĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

About a year ago my husband and I took an international flight that afforded us a one-day stopover in Prague. "What do you have for vegetarians?" my husband asked the headwaiter in the restaurant of the five-hundred-room hotel where we spent the night. He replied with a thick Czech accent and an astonished look: "I don't know what you people eat.

We have nothing for vegetarians." Then he sauntered to another table, obviously amazed that human beings could exist without eating meat.

An example of east European backwardness? Not at all. A noted American nutritionist and agriculturalist has said, "All vegetarian diets are rated as monotonous. There is a paucity of form and

flavor." And a subscriber to BACK TO GODHEAD magazine recently inquired, "I know you people don't eat meat, fish, or eggs, but what *do* you eat?"

So a vegetarian diet, a way of life for millions in India and other Eastern countries, is for many Westerners practically the eighth wonder of the world. It conjures up images of boiled green beans and mashed potatoes on an otherwise empty plate; of boney, slightly wild-eyed young men who busy themselves in the steamy kitchens of vegetarian restaurants and look upon non-vegetarians with disdain; of monks and *yogīs* who have renounced worldly pleasures and subsist in Himalayan caves on a palmful of rice per day.

But these ideas are simply cultural myths spawned by a society addicted to hamburgers, roast beef, and medium-rare steaks. In truth, a vegetarian diet is anything but limiting. There are forty to fifty kinds of commonly eaten vegetables, twenty-four kinds of dried peas and beans, twenty kinds of fruits, twelve kinds of nuts, nine kinds of grains, and eleven kinds of milk products. The possible combinations are limitless. Our spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, often pointed out that one can prepare hundreds of thousands of palatable dishes with vegetables, fruits, grains, and milk products.

But Śrīla Prabhupāda was not in favor of vegetarianism per se. He would challenge the proud vegetarian: "The monkeys are vegetarians. The pigeons are vegetarians. So to become vegetarian is not a very good credit. We are neither vegetarian nor nonvegetarian. We are transcendental. We are concerned with *kṛṣṇa-prasādam* [food cooked for Kṛṣṇa], and the nutrition provided by *kṛṣṇa-prasādam* has no comparison in any other food."

Take *dāl* (legumes) for instance, the subject of this month's recipes and a staple in Kṛṣṇa's cuisine. (If you groaned "Oh no, not beans!" it means there are a lot of wonderful dishes that haven't met your tongue yet.) *Dāl*, besides being a good source of iron and B vitamins, is an excellent source of vegetable protein. When you combine *dāl* with a food that has complementary protein, like grains, seeds, nuts, or milk products, a synergistic reaction occurs, and the usable protein in *dāl* increases by as much as 40%. In other words, if you eat  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of *dāl* with 2 cups of rice, you get the protein equivalent of a 9½-ounce steak. Eaten separately, the *dāl* and rice provide the equivalent of a 6½-ounce steak.

And if you eat *dāl* and rice today instead of a steak or hamburger, you won't have to worry about cholesterol or calories. You won't be having a dinner that was once an innocent steer who suffered in filthy, overcrowded pens, was injected with antibiotics and tranquilizers, and was

forced to eat an unnatural diet so he would gain weight quickly and cheaply. Nor need you concern yourself about the fear poisons steers release into their blood at the time of slaughter. Nor about the bacteria from putrefactive decomposition (they're not all killed by cooking). You won't have to worry about the dozens of diseases and parasites that a meat-bearing animal suffers from, nor how its life was utterly miserable from birth to death. (Maybe you don't think about these things—perhaps you should.) Nor will you have paid exorbitant prices for your food. (We all think about that.) Yet you will receive all the protein your body requires for good health. As Frances Moore

Lappé concludes in her bestseller *Diet for a Small Planet*, "We could completely eliminate meat, fish, and poultry from our national diet and still ingest our recommended daily protein in all the other high-protein foods we eat regularly."

As for variety, there are eleven kinds of dāl in Lord Kṛṣṇa's cuisine: *aduki*, *arhar*, *chana*, chickpea, *kala chana*, kidney bean, *mung*, *mutha*, *urad*, and yellow and green split pea. You can make these into soups, thick purée sauces, stews, gravies, fried savories, moist chutney, crispy pancakes, sprouted salads, and all sorts of sweets.

The knowledgeable cook can select a dāl dish to suit any meal, from breakfast to late dinner. You can also serve different

dāl dishes according to season: warm, hearty dishes for cold winter months; light, refreshing dishes for the hot summer.

But the best thing about dāl is that, unlike beef, fish, or chicken, it is perfectly offerable to Kṛṣṇa. One who regularly prepares dāl and other vegetarian dishes for Kṛṣṇa and then eats the remnants of such offerings gains in many ways. He gains materially, with improved health, a lower food budget, a higher standard of morality, and a variety of tasty dishes to choose from. But most important, he gains spiritually. In the words of Śrīla Prabhupāda, "If someone partakes of *prasādam*, sooner or later he is sure to go back home, back to Godhead." ❀

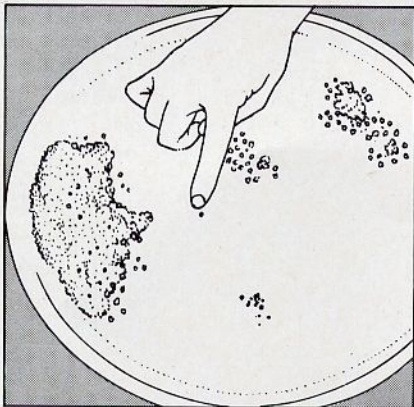
(Dāl recipes by Yamunā-devī dāsī)

### How to Clean and Wash Dāl

Since imported dāls undergo minimal processing before you buy them, you should pick through the dāl for foreign matter, such as dried leaves, stems, stones, or overly hardened kernels. You can participate in the time-honored ritual of cleaning dāl by following these easy steps:

1. Pour the beans onto a large cookie sheet or round metal plate. Place them at one end and slowly move them from one side to the other, a few at a time, carefully picking out the stones and other foreign matter. Any remaining particles of dust or chaff will float away when you wash the dāl.

2. To wash the dāl, put only as much as you will use right away into a metal strainer and lower the strainer into a large bowl two-thirds



full of fresh water. Rub the beans between your hands for about 30 seconds. Then lift the strainer, pour off the water, and fill the bowl again. Repeat the rubbing and rinsing 3 or 4 times, or until the water is practically clean. Drain or soak, as each recipe requires.

### Split Mung Dāl Soup

Smooth and liquidy, this soup is garnished with a simple fried seasoning known as a *chaunk*. It is simple to prepare and easy to digest, and its light consistency makes it appealing in any season. (The seasonings needed for this and the following recipe are available at Indian and Middle Eastern groceries.)

Servings: 4 to 6

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 1 to 1¼ hours, or 20 to 25 minutes in a pressure cooker

- ¾ cup split mung beans without skins
- 6 to 6½ cups water (5¼ to 5¾ cups if you're using a pressure cooker)
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 2 teaspoons ground coriander
- 1½ teaspoons scraped, minced fresh ginger root
- 1 teaspoon seeded, minced fresh hot green chilies (use as desired)
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons ghee or vegetable oil (See BACK TO GODHEAD Vol. 17, No. 2–3 for ghee recipe)
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh coriander (cilantro) or parsley leaves

1. Sort, wash, and drain the mung beans.
2. Combine the mung beans, water, turmeric, coriander, fresh ginger, and seeded chilies in a heavy 2½–3-quart saucepan and, stirring occasionally, bring to a full boil over a high flame. Reduce the flame to medium low, cover the saucepan with a tight-fitting lid, and gently boil for 1 to 1¼ hours, or until the dāl is soft and fully cooked. (For pressure cooking, combine the ingredients in a 6-quart pressure cooker, cover, and cook for 20 to 25 minutes under pressure, using 5¼ to 5¾ cups of water.) Add the salt.

3. Remove the dāl soup from the flame (reduce pressure if necessary), uncover, and beat with a wire whisk or rotary beater until it is creamy smooth.

4. Pour the ghee or vegetable oil into a small saucepan and heat 30 to 60 seconds over a medium to medium-high flame. Toss in the cumin seeds and fry for about 30 to 45 seconds, or until the seeds turn golden brown, and pour the ghee and seeds into the dāl soup. Immediately cover and allow the seasonings to soak into the hot dāl for 1 to 2 minutes. Then add the minced herbs, stir, and offer to Kṛṣṇa.

### Quick, Creamy Split-Pea Soup with Carrots (Gajar Matar-Ki Dāl)

This elegant, mildly seasoned dāl soup has a

light and pleasant texture and is good the whole year round.

Servings: 6 to 8

Soaking time: 1 hour

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 1¼ to 1½ hours, or 25 to 30 minutes in a pressure cooker

- 1 cup green or yellow split peas
- 7½ cups water (6¾ cups if you're using a pressure cooker)
- 1 teaspoon scraped, minced fresh ginger root
- ½ to 1½ teaspoons seeded, minced fresh hot green chilies (use as desired)
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- 1 tablespoon ground coriander
- 4 tablespoons ghee or vegetable oil
- ½ pound (about 3 medium-sized) scraped carrots, cut into ¼-inch slices
- 1 to 1¼ teaspoons salt
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley or coriander (cilantro) leaves
- 1¼ teaspoons cumin seeds
- ¼ to ½ teaspoon mild asafetida powder (*hing*), if available

1. Soak the split peas for 1 hour; then wash and drain.

2. Combine the split peas, water, minced ginger, seeded green chilies, turmeric, ground coriander, and a dab of ghee or vegetable oil in a heavy 3-quart saucepan and bring to a boil over a high flame.

3. Reduce the flame to medium-low, cover the saucepan with a tight-fitting lid, and gently boil for about 45 to 60 minutes. Add the carrots, cover again, and continue to cook for 30 minutes, or until the split peas are soft and fully cooked. (For pressure cooking, combine the ingredients, including the carrots, in a 6-quart pressure cooker, cover, and cook for 25 to 30 minutes under pressure.)

4. Remove saucepan from flame (reduce pressure if necessary), uncover, and stir in the salt and the parsley or coriander leaves.

5. Pour the ghee or vegetable oil into a small saucepan and heat 30 to 60 seconds over a medium to medium-high flame. Fry the cumin seeds 30 to 45 seconds, or until they're golden brown; then sprinkle in the asafetida and fry for 1 or 2 more seconds. Pour the fried seasonings into the dāl, immediately cover, and let the spices soak into the dāl for 1 or 2 minutes. Stir and offer to Kṛṣṇa.

# Revelation at Kuruk

“O Kṛṣṇa, O master of all mystics, please show me Your universal form!”  
This appeal by Lord Kṛṣṇa’s devotee, spoken fifty centuries ago  
on the field of battle, heralds a divine manifestation never seen before.

by DRAVIḌA DĀSA







PAINTING BY DHRTI-DEVI DAS

The scene is the vast Kurukṣetra plain, five thousand years ago. At that holy place, one hundred miles northwest of present-day New Delhi, a devastating fratricidal war of royal succession is about to begin. Suddenly a lone chariot enters the no-man's-land between the two poised armies. Upon it ride Arjuna, the hero of the battle, and his charioteer, Lord Kṛṣṇa. Arjuna, paralyzed with indecision at the prospect of slaying his own friends, relatives, and teachers in the opposing army, accepts his friend Kṛṣṇa as his *guru* and appeals to Him for guidance. The Lord then speaks the timeless teachings of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, "The Song of God."

The *Bhagavad-gītā* is profoundly revelatory. Not only does Kṛṣṇa reveal the details of the transcendental science of devotional service, by which the soul suffering in the world of matter can gain release and reach a state of eternal bliss, but He also reveals Himself to be the goal of that service, the object of all worship, the source of all that exists, and, indeed, the Supreme Absolute Truth Himself. Among all Kṛṣṇa's revelations, however, none is so awesome, so magnificent as the never-before-seen universal form . . .





The *Bhagavad-gītā* relates: "If hundreds of thousands of suns were to rise into the sky at once, their effulgence might resemble that of the Lord in His universal form. That wondrous form possessed unlimited mouths, unlimited eyes, unlimited faces, legs, and arms, and He wore countless divine, dazzling ornaments and garments. All the infinite expansions of the cosmos had manifested in one place, although divided into many thousands."

"Arjuna prayed, 'O almighty one, everyone is disturbed at seeing Your universal form, and so am I. I can no longer maintain my equilibrium. Beholding Your radiant colors filling the skies and Your many mouths with their terrible teeth, I am afraid. O all-pervading Lord, I see You devouring everyone with Your flaming mouths, scorching everything with Your fiery glare. O Lord of lords, please be gracious to me and tell me who You are.'"

The Lord spoke: "Time I am, destroyer of worlds, and I have come forth to annihilate all people. Except for you and your brothers, all the soldiers on this battlefield will perish in the war. So get up and prepare to fight, O Arjuna! Your enemies have already been slain by Me. Simply be My instrument, and after conquering them you shall enjoy a flourishing kingdom."

Then Arjuna, awestruck and trembling, addressed the Lord: "O Kṛṣṇa, O refuge of the universe, You are the imperishable source of all, the cause of all causes, transcendental to this creation. O limitless form, You pervade this entire universe! I bow before You thousands of times, from in front, from behind, from all sides! O Almighty Lord, O abode of the cosmos, having seen Your magnificent universal form for the first time, I am joyful, yet I am also filled with fear. Please, therefore, reveal to me once again Your original form as Kṛṣṇa. I long to see You in that form."

Full of compassion for His devotee, Kṛṣṇa replied, "My dear Arjuna, gladly have I shown you My universal form, but I see that this horrifying feature of Mine has disturbed you. Now, My friend, be done with fear; let your mind become peaceful. Behold My previous form, as you desire."


The Lord then displayed His four-armed form, and at last His two-armed form, thus encouraging Arjuna.

"My dear Arjuna," said Kṛṣṇa, "the form you are now seeing is very difficult to behold. Even the demigods are ever seeking the opportunity to see this two-armed form of Mine, which is so dear to all. Neither by dry academic study of the *Vedas*, nor by self-punishment, nor by mundane charity, nor by ritualistic worship can one see Me as you are seeing Me. Only by pure devotional service, O Arjuna, can one see Me as I am, standing

before you. Only in this way can one enter into the mysteries of My understanding."

We learn of the significance of Kṛṣṇa's universal form in *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, the translation and commentary by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda: "The universal form, with its thousands and thousands of heads and hands, is manifest just to draw the attention of those who have no love for God. It is not God's original form." For those who have no faith that Kṛṣṇa is God, and who thus deride devotional service to Kṛṣṇa as a pitiable delusion, Kṛṣṇa's revelation of the universal form may shock them out of their skepticism with its awesome majesty. Then, if out of fear they obey the laws of what they conceive as a "vengeful" God, they can gradually be drawn to the path of loving devotional service through proper guidance.

Arjuna, being Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee, had no real need or desire to see the universal form. But he requested Kṛṣṇa to display it for our sake—to convince us of Kṛṣṇa's divinity and to provide us with a foolproof test of anyone claiming to be an incarnation of God. If an "incarnation" can't show us the universal form, he's not God, and we should dismiss him at once as a fraud.

As for those of us who are open to the idea that Kṛṣṇa is in fact the Supreme Personality of Godhead, we should try to follow in Arjuna's footsteps. We may marvel at the wondrous universal form—"magnificent, all-expanding, unlimited"—as Kṛṣṇa reveals it in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. But we shouldn't desire to see it. Rather, we should want to see Kṛṣṇa's original, all-attractive, humanlike form. To be blessed with a revelation of *this* form is the real goal of all *yoga* and all religion, and we can earn that blessing only by learning to love Kṛṣṇa through the practice of pure devotional service. 



## Double Darkness

(continued from page 5)

senses and their extensions: family, society, party, nation, and so on. Although we may sometimes achieve some apparent happiness or success in such service, its ultimate result is inevitably the destruction of the present body and the continuation of the soul's ignorance and suffering in future embodied lives under the law of *karma*, the law of action and reaction. Neither peace nor happiness is possible for the eternal soul as long as he remains in material consciousness. Therefore the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.71-2) advises, "A person who has given up all desires for sense pleasure, who lives free from desires, who has given up all sense of proprietorship, and who is devoid of false ego—he alone can attain real peace. If one is thus situated even at the hour of death, one can enter the kingdom of God."

Unfortunately, today's leaders are too enamored of the kingdoms of this world. Instead of imparting a sense of detachment to their people and leading them toward spiritual perfection, the leaders of both the capitalist and the communist nations strive to satisfy the demands of their people for ever greater material comfort and more consumer goods. But this is an impossible proposition that will always result in such miseries as those currently tormenting Poland and the rest of the world.

What society on this planet can claim to have solved the problems of birth, old age, disease, and death? Human reason pushes us to try to overcome these problems through medical technology, and any apparent headway we make is called progress. Indeed, we often measure the advancement of a nation by how far it has gone toward increasing longevity or eradicating such diseases as smallpox or tuberculosis. But despite all such achievements, humanity remains victimized by the same old miseries—birth, old age, disease, and death. We inevitably fail to conquer these intractable enemies because beneath it all we nurture their very sustenance: materialism, or the identification of the material body as the self.

In May 1981 President Reagan declared in a speech at Notre Dame University that the West would "transcend communism." Unhappily, Mr. Reagan's words and actions to date indicate that he simply meant the West would try to outproduce the communists economically, outmaneuver them diplomatically, and outflank them militarily. But the West cannot hope to avoid the same fate as the East if it does not transcend communism by implementing transcendental knowledge. In the Thirteenth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa explains that transcendental knowledge consists of understanding the ins and outs of the material world, the nature of the soul, and the position of the Supreme Soul,

Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. And the result of such knowledge? "When one is enlightened with transcendental knowledge, by which nescience is destroyed, then this knowledge reveals everything, just as the sun lights up everything in the daytime" (Bg. 5.16).

At present, the West does seem to have a certain advantage over the Soviet Union, but that advantage is based only upon temporal, material wealth, which can at any time be destroyed by a sudden turn of international events. Any ideological system that defines reality as nothing more than the consumption of sense objects by the material body will be subject to the same fate as the body: destruction by the inexorable force of time. President Reagan's prophecy will come true only when the West transcends the bodily concept of life and bases its culture and civilization on the eternal platform of spiritual reality.

As long as the leaders of the Western world continue to preach the doctrine of materialism, they will remain blind to the real goal of human existence, devotional service to God. If blind men lead a blind populace in the West as well as the East, how can we expect anything good to come of it? The entire world is devoid of spiritual light, and only by the systematic introduction of genuine spiritual knowledge into human society can any light return anywhere. ❀

## Devotional Heritage

(continued from page 8)

many books not yet published, but Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was intent on establishing many presses, just to release the sound of the *br̥hat mṛdaṅga* for the benefit of all people.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was teaching the conclusion of Lord Caitanya's teachings, that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and that chanting of His holy name should be stressed above all other religious practices. In former ages, other methods of attaining to God

had been available, but in the present Age of Kali only the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa would be effective. On the authority of the scriptures such as the *Br̥han-nārādīya Purāṇa* and the *Upaniṣads*, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had specifically cited the *mahā-mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself had confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* that the only method of attaining Him was devotional service: "Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear."

Abhay knew these verses, he knew the chanting, and he knew the conclusions of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. But now, as he eagerly read the writings of the great *ācāryas*, he had fresh realizations of the scope of Lord Caitanya's mission. Now he was discovering the depth of his own Vaiṣṇava heritage and its efficacy for bringing about the highest welfare for people in an age destined to be full of troubles. ❀

*The biography of Śrīla Prabhupāda continues next month with an account of his formal initiation by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.*

## HOW TO SEE GOD

(continued from page 4)

do not know who is a first-class *yogī*. Kṛṣṇa says, *yoginām api sarveṣāṃ mad-gateṅnātarātmānā*. "Out of many thousands of *yogīs*, he who is always seeing the form of Kṛṣṇa within his heart is first class."

So you have to practice that first-class *yoga* system, which Kṛṣṇa describes as *māyā āsakta-manāḥ*: "Make your mind at-

tached to Me." The mind is the vehicle for attachment, and generally we become attached to a person—a boy, a girl, and so on. Impersonal attachment is bogus. So *yoga* begins by attaching the mind to Kṛṣṇa, by always thinking of Kṛṣṇa, and culminates in love of Kṛṣṇa. For example [*Pointing to a picture*], here is a picture of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī loving Kṛṣṇa and offering a garland to Him as He plays on His flute. So you can always think of this picture; then you will constantly be in

*samādhi* [yogic trance]. Why try to think of something impersonal, some void? If you try to think of the void, you will start thinking of some light, some color—so many things will come into your mind. The mind *must* think of some form. How can we avoid form? It is not possible. Therefore, why not concentrate your mind on the supreme form, Kṛṣṇa?

*Īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ*. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Supreme Controller, is Kṛṣṇa,

# THE YOGA DICTIONARY

*The Sanskrit language is rich in words to communicate ideas about spiritual life, yoga, and God realization. This dictionary, appearing by installments in BACK TO GODHEAD, focuses upon the most important of these words (and, occasionally, upon relevant English terms) and explains what they mean. (For a guide to proper pronunciation, please see page 1.)*

and He has a body. What sort of body? *Sac-cid-ānanda*: an eternal body, full of bliss and full of knowledge. Not a body like ours. Our body is full of ignorance, full of miseries, and not eternal—just the opposite of Kṛṣṇa's. His body is eternal, my body is not eternal. His body is full of bliss, my body is full of miseries. There is always something troubling us: headache, toothache, this ache, that ache. Somebody is giving us personal trouble, we are feeling severe heat, severe cold—so many things. But Kṛṣṇa's form, Kṛṣṇa's body, is eternally full of bliss and knowledge.

So Kṛṣṇa consciousness means always thinking of Kṛṣṇa's form, name, pastimes, and so on. How can we practice this *yoga* system, Kṛṣṇa consciousness? *Mayy āsaktamanāḥ pārtha yogam yuñjan mad-āśrayaḥ. Mad-āśrayaḥ* means "taking shelter of somebody who is in touch with Me." As soon as you think of Kṛṣṇa you are in direct touch with Him. But unless you take shelter of a spiritual master who knows about Him, you cannot concentrate for a long time; your concentration will be temporary. Therefore, if you want to concentrate on Kṛṣṇa continuously, you have to hear from a person who knows about Kṛṣṇa, and you have to act according to his directions. Your life should be molded according to the directions of the spiritual master. Then you can practice *yoga* perfectly.

As mentioned before, Kṛṣṇa explains the perfection of *yoga* in the last verse of the Sixth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*. *Yoginām api sarveṣāṃ mad-gaṇāntarātmanāḥ*: "One who is always thinking of Me is a first-class *yogi*." So we have to place Kṛṣṇa in our mind; we have to always think of Him. How? Kṛṣṇa explains [Bg. 7.1],

*mayy āsaktamanāḥ pārtha  
yogaṃ yuñjan mad-āśrayaḥ  
asamśayaṃ samagraṃ mām  
yathā jñāsyasi tac chrṇu*

"Under My protection, under the protection of My representative, always think of Me. Then you will understand Me perfectly well, without doubt, and your life will be successful." *Asamśayaṃ* means "without any doubt." If you doubt that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, just put forward your questions and try to understand. It is undoubtedly a fact that He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but if you have some doubt, you can clear it up by placing questions before the spiritual master.

So if you practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the topmost of all *yoga* systems, in this way, then without any doubt you'll understand Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, perfectly well. And your life will be successful.

Thank you very much.

**B** **Brahmajyoti**—the spiritual effulgence of God. The Vedic scriptures tell us that God's person is effulgent.

Just as the sun gives off dazzling light in all directions, so too does the personal form of God. But whereas sunlight is material and temporary, the shining glow from the body of the Supreme Lord is spiritual and eternal. Just as sunlight shines throughout our solar system, the brilliant effulgence of the Lord shines throughout the entire spiritual world. The material world is by nature dark—only the sun lights it up. But the spiritual world, because of the presence of God, is always full of light. Those who think of the Supreme as an all-pervading spiritual light are in essence thinking of the *brahmajyoti*. But only by going beyond the *brahmajyoti* can one know the Supreme Lord in His ultimate personal feature.

**Brahman**—the ultimate, the Supreme, the Absolute Truth. The Vedic scriptures teach that human life is meant for inquiry about the Absolute Truth, the ultimate reality. And what is that ultimate reality? It is the cause of all causes, the ultimate source of all creation, maintenance, and dissolution of everything that exists.

There are many varied ways of trying to understand this Absolute Truth, and many ideas of what it is. But in essence we may look toward the Absolute Truth in either of two ways: as impersonal or as personal.

The *Upaniṣads* stress the impersonal approach to the Absolute. The Absolute, they say, has no form, no qualities, no divisions or categories. It is beyond the power of the senses to perceive and the mind to understand. It is the supreme One, beyond the dualities of material existence.

But even beyond this undivided oneness, the *Upaniṣads* ultimately point to a personal Absolute, an eternal, all-blissful, all-knowing Godhead. This supreme personal Godhead is the ultimate spiritual substance, the ultimate abode, in whom both unity and diversity come to perfect balance. When one goes beyond the unsatisfying varieties of material illusion and the unbearable monotony of impersonal spiritual truth, one realizes this Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* identifies this Su-

preme Personality of Godhead as Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu therefore taught that whenever we see the word *Brahman* we should understand that it means *Kṛṣṇa*.

Every living being is a part of Kṛṣṇa and shares in His spiritual qualities, just as every ray of sunshine shares in the heat and light of the sun. So the word *Brahman* may also sometimes refer to every living being. But Kṛṣṇa is infinite, whereas all other living beings are infinitesimal. To keep this distinction clear, Kṛṣṇa alone is known as *param brahman*—the supreme Brahman.

**Brahma-saṃhitā**—a treatise on transcendental understanding composed by Lord Brahmā, the first created being. It originally had one hundred chapters, of which only the fifth chapter is still extant. A copy of this book was discovered by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in the south Indian temple of Ādi-keśava, and He had it copied and distributed for the benefit of His followers. Lord Caitanya requested His followers to read this book regularly, since it contains the essential truths of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness philosophy. The *Brahma-saṃhitā* has been translated into English, with commentary, by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

**Brahmāstra**—a particular kind of weapon, resembling the nuclear weapon of the modern age. It is mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and other Vedic writings, and this indicates that it was used by experts in the Vedic military arts more than five thousand years ago.

The *brahmāstra* was more subtle and powerful than modern nuclear weapons. It was released not by complex machinery but by the vibration of a specific *mantra*. And it could be deployed with far greater precision, against a specific, limited target—even against only one person—without harming anything else.

The military commanders in Vedic society thousands of years ago had varied sophisticated weapons at their disposal, but the techniques necessary for unleashing them have been lost.

**Brahma-sūtras**—another name for the *Vedānta-sūtras*, the philosophical aphorisms that yield the essence of Vedic wisdom.

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WHAT IS A MANTRA? In Sanskrit, *man* means "mind" and *tra* means "freeing." So a *mantra* is a combination of transcendental sounds that frees our minds from anxiety.

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

Five centuries ago, while spreading the

*mahā-mantra* throughout India, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu prayed, "O Supreme Lord, in Your 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.

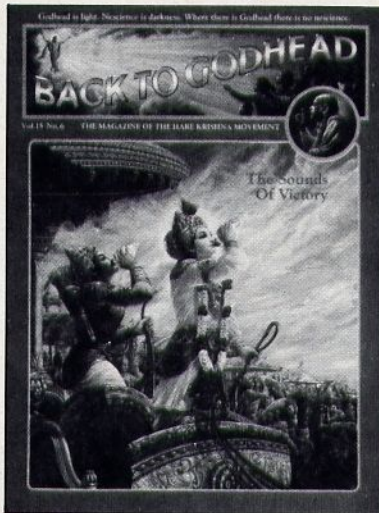
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# NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

## Liberation Through Free Will

Critics sometimes charge that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is “brainwashing,” a dogmatic, authoritarian power that denies the individual his personal integrity and free will. Supposedly, this authoritarian control forces an otherwise free-thinking person to conform to such a degree that he loses his identity and becomes a “mindless robot”; he loses his capacity for free thought and self-actualization. But such criticism is unfounded, for only by great inner resolve and personal volition can someone succeed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

A perfect example is Brahmā, the first being in the universe, who attained spiritual realization eons ago, before there were any teachers, books, or institutions. In fact, according to the Vedic literatures, when Brahmā first came to consciousness before the dawn of creation, he looked around and beheld only darkness pervading everywhere. He then sat in meditation for one hundred years, until Kṛṣṇa revealed to him within his heart the essence of all spiritual and material knowledge. Later, Brahmā presented this knowledge as the original Vedic scriptures.

Like Brahmā, each of us is a unique, individual person. And each of us must discover his own spiritual identity by unique effort and unique reciprocation with the Supreme. Unfortunately, the widespread influence of materialism nowadays has practically destroyed people’s capacity for deep introspection. We cannot meditate for even a hundred minutes, what to speak of a hundred years. On the other hand, we have several great advantages over Brahmā in our quest for self-realization: We have recorded knowledge of the Absolute Truth in the form of the Vedic literatures, and we have the guidance and example of perfected spiritual masters coming in a line of disciplic succession beginning with Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Another example of strong determination in seeking self-realization is Sanātana Gosvāmī, a highly advanced devotee and scholar who lived in India five hundred years ago. Sacrificing the great wealth, power, and prestige that went along with his position as a high government minister, Sanātana underwent severe hardships to submit himself before the most exalted spiritual authority and master, Lord Caitanya. Sanātana said, “Although I have a reputation as a learned man and a sophisticated politician, I must admit to You that I do not know the real meaning of my life.

Like every creature, I am suffering, but I do not know *why* I suffer or how to end my suffering. Please instruct me.” These are the statements of an introspective individual breaking free from the complacent conformity of the masses and seeking an ultimate solution to life’s problems. And Sanātana, by taking advantage of his spiritual master’s instructions and the Vedic literature, attained enlightenment as surely as had the original Vedic sage, Brahmā.

Now, that Brahmā, Sanātana, and many other persons in the past have succeeded in Kṛṣṇa consciousness does not mean anyone in the present can become self-realized simply through blind conformity to a religious authority. Spiritual realization must always be a matter of personal search, surrender, and growth. Each of us is an individual spirit soul, a part of the Supreme Being, and as such we have each been endowed with all the qualities of the Supreme, including free will. This is why Lord Kṛṣṇa concludes his teachings to Arjuna in *Bhagavad-gītā* with these words: “Thus I have explained to you the most confidential of all knowledge. Deliberate on this fully, *and then do what you wish to do.*” (Emphasis added.) So God will send His representative, the spiritual master, to teach us spiritual science, He will make transcendental knowledge available to us in the Vedic literatures, and sometimes He will even instruct us personally, as He did Arjuna in *Bhagavad-gītā*—but He will never interfere with our free will and independence.

You may ask, “If God is merciful and He sees us suffering here for lack of self-realization, why doesn’t He force that realization upon us? Why doesn’t He drag us back to the spiritual world?” The answer is that true self-realization, the kind that leads one back to the spiritual world, depends on attaining love of God. And without freedom, how can there be love? So the tiny soul must surrender to God, but that surrender must be voluntary.

Still, although it is not true that Kṛṣṇa consciousness robs a person of his individuality and then forces upon him an unnatural conformity, it *is* true that an aspiring devotee can find much assistance by associating with others on the path back to Godhead. Far from “brainwashing” a person or robbing him of his individual integrity, such association prepares a spiritual aspirant for the difficult tests and temptations of spiritual life, which he must meet

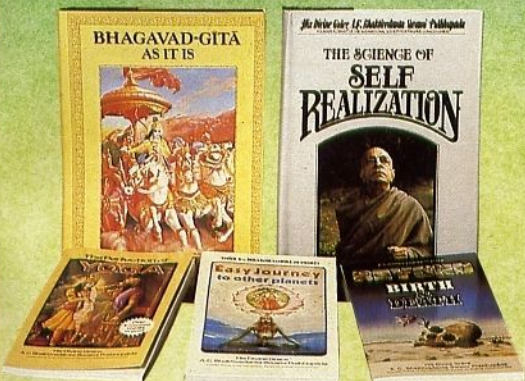
and overcome on his own. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains this point with the analogy of a jet pilot. In flight school a pilot receives many hours of instruction and help from teachers and other pilots, but when he takes his first solo flight none of his instructors can help him if he runs into trouble. Similarly, during our lifetime we can avail ourselves of the valuable instructions of the spiritual master and the scriptures, and we can associate with other devotees of the Lord, but we must face death alone.

So attaining Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not a matter of nominally joining a sect or blindly repeating a *mantra* or a doctrine. Pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness is attainable only by one who sincerely approaches Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa’s representatives and realizes within himself his higher nature as an eternal soul with an eternal relationship to God.

Those who criticize Kṛṣṇa consciousness as “brainwashing” or as “tyranny over the will” are ill informed, and often malicious. Under the sway of a materialistic misconception of their own identity, they are usually motivated by a desire to avoid surrendering to God. Thus when they see genuine surrender to God, they decry it. The influence of materialistic philosophy has largely obliterated genuine spiritual life from modern society, and there is great pressure for us to conform to the life of materialistic values. There are even materialistic brands of religion. With all this materialism in the air, it’s not surprising that when an individual, thinking for himself, decides seriously to seek spiritual life, he meets criticism from his family, friends, teachers, priest, psychiatrist, and so on. Only the rare, genuine individualist has the courage to embark on the path of real spiritual life.

Although criticism of Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees as “brainwashed robots” may make effective propaganda for the cause of materialistic conformity, it is a lie nonetheless. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is actually the best method for liberating the self from the miseries of repeated birth and death. Ultimately the Kṛṣṇa conscious devotee achieves the stage of eternal freedom from material miseries by realizing his eternal loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And this freedom is attainable only for one who chooses it of his own free will and works for it in earnest. —SDG

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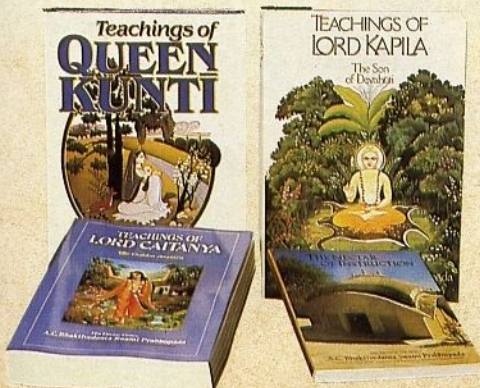
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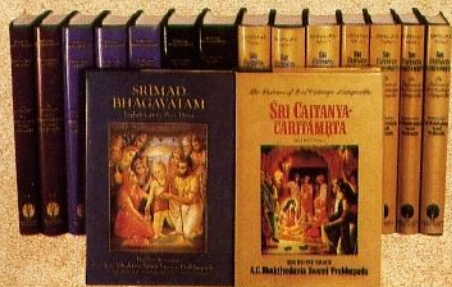
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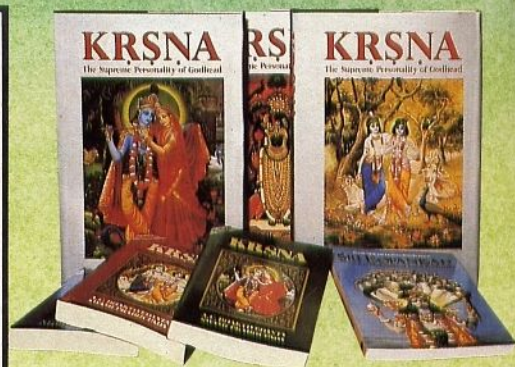
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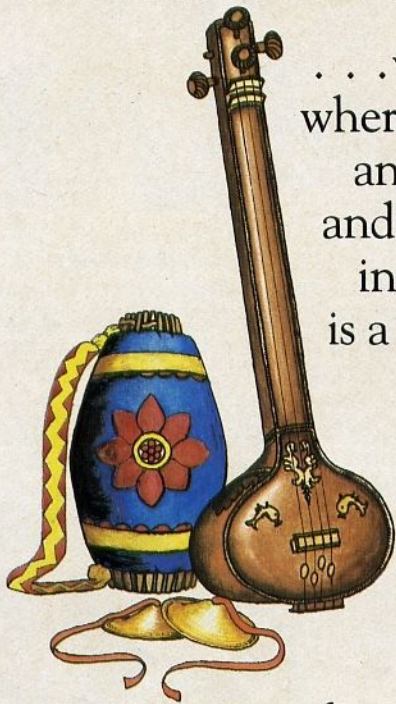
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