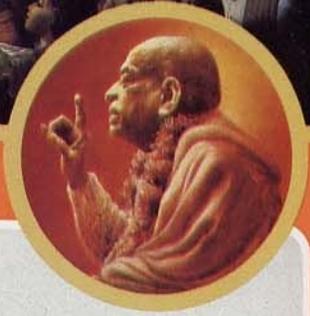


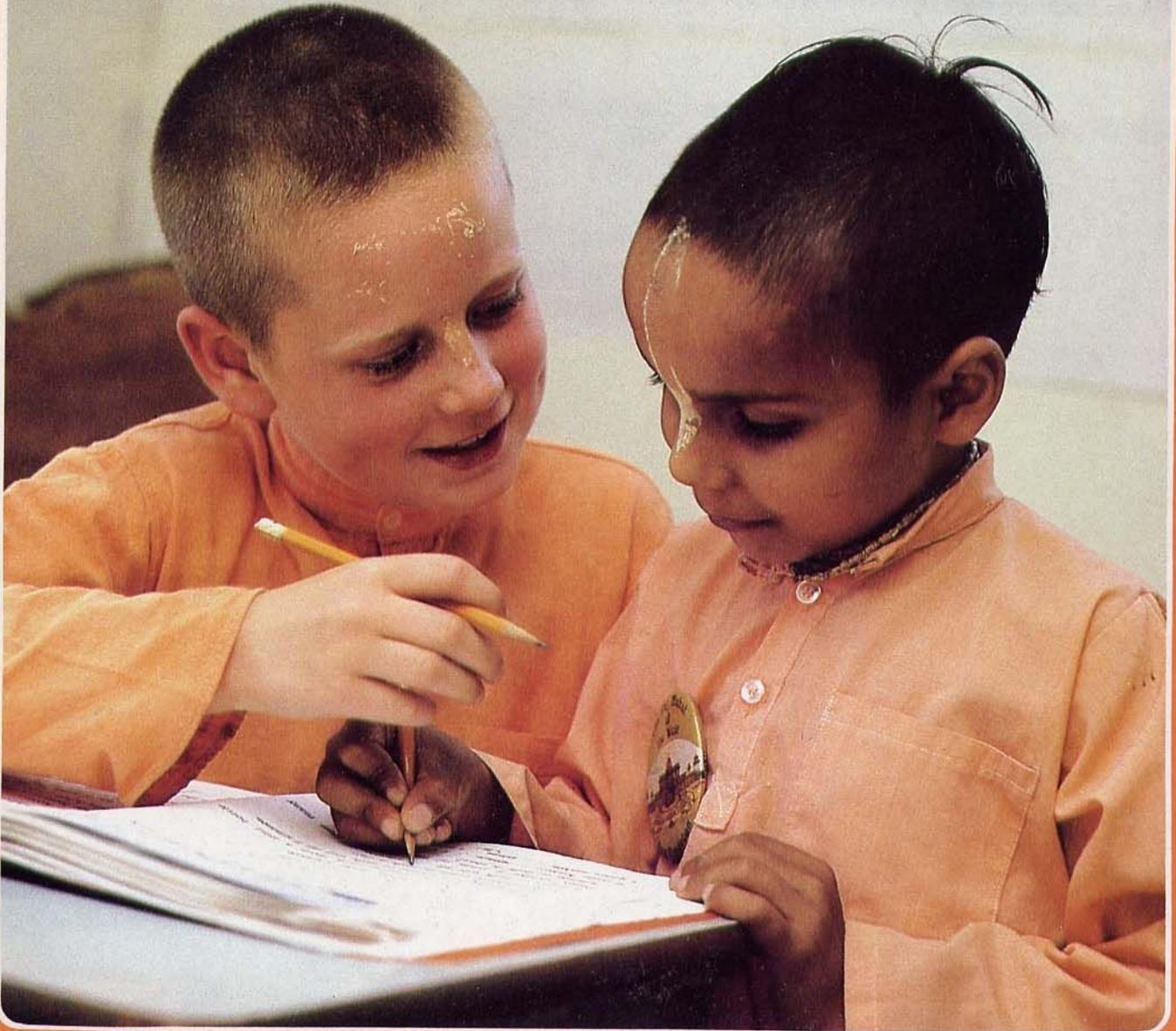
Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



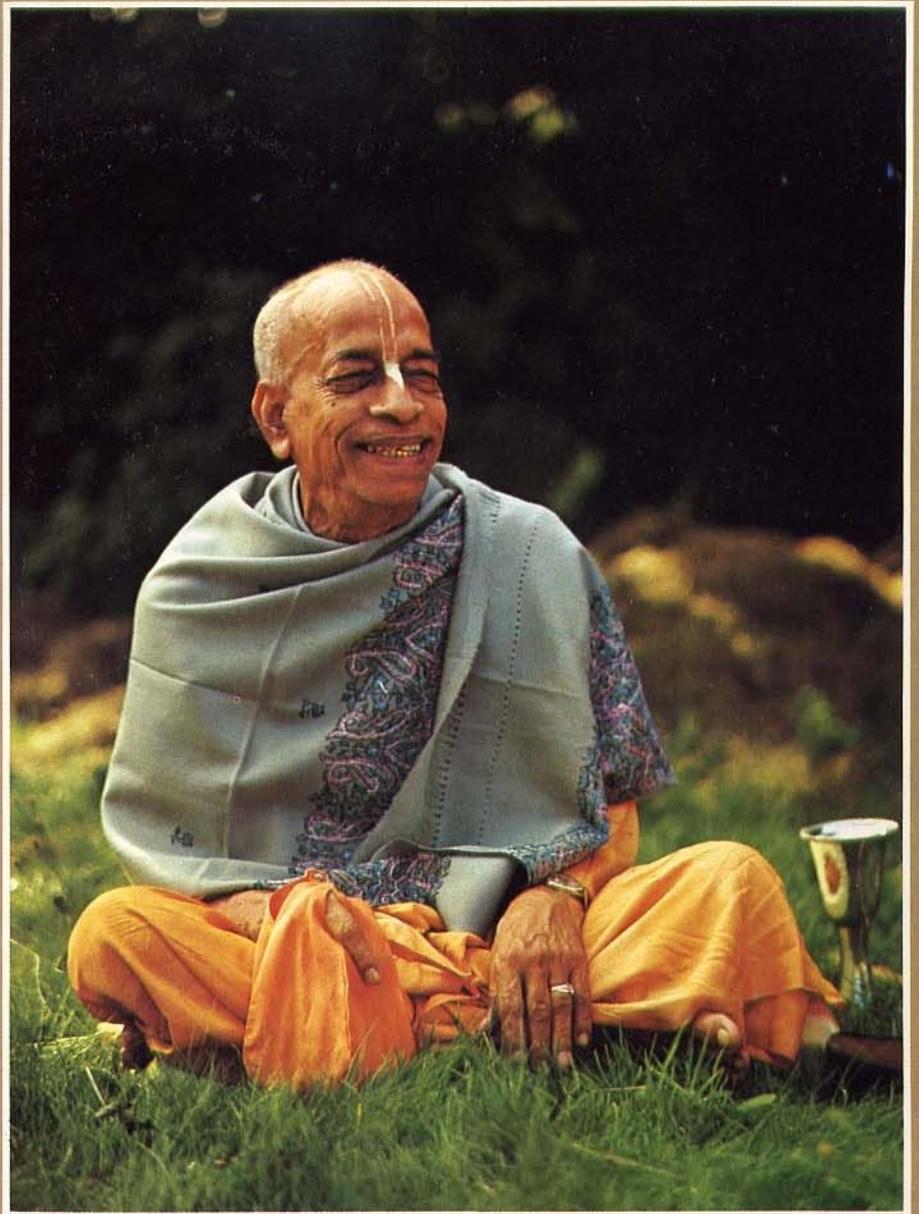
October 1982 \$1.25 THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



A School for Vancouver's Hare Kṛṣṇa Kids



His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta 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.

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Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda)

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda

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SENIOR EDITOR Jayādvaīta Swami

MANAGING EDITOR Draividā dāsa

ASSOCIATE EDITORS Jagajīvana dāsa,

Ravindra-svarūpa dāsa, Viśākhā-devī dāsi,

Yogeśvara dāsa

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Drutakarmā dāsa,

Hridayananda dāsa Goswami, Suhotra dāsa

DESIGN Yamarāja dāsa

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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**, **hedg-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: Ten-year-old Gauracandra helps Amita (wearing button) do a writing exercise at the Hare Kṛṣṇa school in Vancouver. Besides what public school kids learn—English, arithmetic, history, geography—the students at the Hare Kṛṣṇa school also learn Sanskrit, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And all in an atmosphere of love. For more on the Vancouver school, please turn to page 8. (Photo: Amogha dāsa)



THE SUPREME ARTIST

A lecture given in February 1972
by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness,
at an art gallery in Auckland, New Zealand.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you very much for coming here and giving us a chance to speak about the Supreme Artist. The *Vedas* describe how great an artist Kṛṣṇa is: *na tasya kāryaṁ karaṇaṁ ca vidyate na tat samaś cābhyadhikaś ca dr̥śyate*. Nobody can be found who is greater than the Supreme Personality of Godhead or equal to Him, and although He is the greatest artist, He doesn't have to do anything personally.

In this world every one of us knows somebody lesser than us, somebody equal to us, and somebody greater than us. That is our experience. However great you may be, you will find somebody equal to you and somebody greater than you. But as far as the Supreme Personality of Godhead is concerned, great sages have concluded by research and experiment that nobody is equal to Him or greater than Him.

God is so great that He has nothing to do, no duties He must perform (*na tasya kāryaṁ karaṇaṁ ca vidyate*). Why? *Parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate*: His energies are multifarious and they are working automatically, according to His desire (*svabhāviki jñāna-bala-kriyā ca*). Suppose you

Lord Kṛṣṇa shines with unlimited energies.

Everything, from the planets whirling around the sun to the electrons whirling around the nucleus, from the huge banyan tree to the delicate rose, comes from Kṛṣṇa through His energies. But because His energies act in automatic accordance with His will, He doesn't have to do anything Himself. He simply enjoys His pastimes in the spiritual world.

are an artist. To paint a picture of a very nice rose, you have to take your brush, mix your colors on the palette, and tax your brain to make the picture beautiful. But in a garden you can see not only one rose but many thousands of roses blooming. They have been very artistically "painted" by nature.

But we should go deeper into the matter. What is nature? Nature is a working instrument, that's all—an energy. Without some energy working, how could the rose bloom so beautifully from the bud? There must be some energy working, and that energy is Kṛṣṇa's energy. But it acts so subtly and swiftly that we cannot understand how it is working.

The material energies seem to be working automatically, but actually there is a brain behind them. When you paint a picture, everyone can see that you are working. Similarly, the "painting" of the actual rose is also worked out by several energies. Don't think that the rose has been created automatically. No. Nothing is created automatically. The rose is created out of the energies of the Supreme Lord, but these energies are so subtle and so artistic that a nice flower can bloom overnight.

So, Kṛṣṇa is the greatest artist. Nowadays, in the electronic age, a scientist just pushes a button and his machine works so perfectly. Or an airplane pilot simply pushes a button and a huge machine just like a small city flies in the sky. So if it is possible for ordinary men of this world to

work so wonderfully simply by pushing some buttons, how much greater must be God's ability to work. How much more fertile His brain must be than ordinary artists' or scientists'. Simply by His desire—"Let there be creation!"—everything is immediately manifest. So Kṛṣṇa is the greatest artist.

There is no limit to Kṛṣṇa's artistic ability, because Kṛṣṇa is the seed of all creation (*bijaṁ māṁ sarva-bhūtānām*). You have all seen a banyan tree. It grows from a small seed. This small seed has so much potency that if you sow it in a fertile place and water it, one day it will become a big banyan tree. Now, what are the potencies, what are the artistic and scientific arrangements within that small seed that allow it to grow into a big banyan tree? Also, on that banyan tree there are many thousands of fruits, and within each fruit there are thousands of seeds, and each seed contains the potency of another tree. So where is the scientist who can create in that way? Where is the artist within this material world who can create a work of art as pleasing as a banyan tree? These inquiries should be made.

The first aphorism of the *Vedānta-sūtra* is *athāto brahma-jijñāsā*: "In the human form of life one should inquire about the Absolute Truth." So one should carefully study these questions. You cannot manufacture a machine that automatically grows into a big banyan tree. So don't you think there must be a big artistic brain, a great scientific brain, behind nature? If

you simply say "Nature is working," that is not a sufficient explanation.

The second aphorism of the *Vedānta-sūtra* is *janmādy asya yataḥ*: "The Absolute Truth is He from whom everything is generated." We have to expand our vision from the small things to the great things. Now we become amazed when we see a small sputnik flying in the sky. It is flying toward the moon, and we are giving all credit to the scientists, and the scientists are challenging, "What is God? Science is everything."

But if you are intelligent you will compare the sputnik to the millions and trillions of planets and stars. Just on this tiny earth planet there are so many oceans, so many mountains, so many skyscrapers. But if you go above this planet a few million miles, it will look just like a small spot. You will see it as just a spot in the sky. And there are millions of planets floating in the sky like swabs of cotton. So if we give so much credit to the scientists who have manufactured a sputnik, how much more credit we should give to the person who has manufactured this universal arrangement. This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness—appreciating the greatest artist, the greatest scientist.

We may appreciate so many artists, but unless we appreciate the greatest artist, Kṛṣṇa, our life is wasted. We find that appreciation in the *Brahma-saṁhitā*, the prayers of Lord Brahmā, the creator of this universe. In appreciation of Govinda, Kṛṣṇa, he sings,

yasya prabhā prabhavato jagad-aṅḍa-koṭi-koṭiṣv aśeṣa-vasudhādi-vibhūti-bhinnam tad brahma niṣkalam anantam aśeṣa-bhūtam govindam ādi-puruṣam tam ahaṁ bhajāmi

Now we are trying to understand the planetary system by our scientific method. But we have not been able to finish studying even the nearest planet, the moon, what to speak of the millions and billions of other planets. But from the *Brahma-saṁhitā* we get this knowledge: *yasya prabhā prabhavato jagad-aṅḍa-koṭi-koṭiṣu*. By the glaring effulgence emanating from Kṛṣṇa's body, innumerable universes are created. We cannot study even one universe, but from the *Brahma-saṁhitā* we get information that there are innumerable universes and that in each and every universe there are innumerable planets (*jagad-aṅḍa-koṭi-koṭiṣu*). (*Jagad-aṅḍa* means "universes," and *koṭi-koṭiṣu* means "innumerable.") So there are innumerable universes with innumerable suns, innumerable moons, and innumerable planets.

All of this is made possible by Kṛṣṇa's bodily effulgence, which is called the *brahmajyoti*. The *jñānis*, those who are trying to approach the Absolute Truth by mental speculation, by dint of their tiny brain power, can at most approach this

brahmajyoti. But that *brahmajyoti* is only the illumination of Kṛṣṇa's body. The best analogy is the sunshine. The sunshine is coming from the sun globe. The sun is localized, and the effulgence of the sun, the sunshine, is distributed all over the universe. Just as the moon reflects the sunshine, the sun also reflects the *brahmajyoti*. And the *brahmajyoti* is the bodily effulgence of Kṛṣṇa.

So the greatest art is to understand Kṛṣṇa. That is the greatest art. If we actually want to be an artist, we should try to understand, or try to be intimately associated with, the greatest artist, Kṛṣṇa. For this purpose we have established the International Society for Krishna Con-

Those who have developed love of God are enjoying transcendental pleasure at every moment by seeing the artistic work of Kṛṣṇa everywhere.

sciousness. The members of this society are trained to see in everything the display of Kṛṣṇa's artistic sense. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness—to see the artistic hand of Kṛṣṇa everywhere.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* [10.8] Kṛṣṇa says, *ahaṁ sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate*: "Whatever you see is an emanation from Me. Everything is created out of My energy." One should understand this fact—that Kṛṣṇa is the origin of everything. Lord Brahmā confirms this in his *Brahma-saṁhitā* [5.1]: *īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ*. "Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Controller." Here in this material world we have experience of many controllers. Every one of us is a controller. You are a controller; I am a controller. But above you there is another controller, and above him there is another controller, and so on. You may go on searching out controller after controller, and when you come to the Supreme Controller—He who is not controlled by anyone but who controls everyone else—that is Kṛṣṇa. This is our definition of God: the Supreme Controller.

Nowadays it has become a cheap business to see many "Gods." But you can test someone to see if he is God. If he is controlled by somebody else, he is not God. Only if He is the Supreme Controller

should you accept Him as God. That is the simple test for God.

Now, another quality of God is that He is full of pleasure (*ānandamayo 'bhyāsāt*). By nature the Supreme Absolute Person is *ānandamaya*, full of pleasure. Suppose you are an artist. You engage in artistic work just to get some pleasure. By painting a picture you enjoy some *rasa*, some pleasurable mellow. Otherwise, why would you work so hard? There must be some pleasure in painting.

So, Kṛṣṇa is *raso vai saḥ*, the reservoir of all pleasurable mellows. He is *sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ*, full of eternity, knowledge, and pleasure. (*Ānanda* means "pleasure.") His pleasure potency is Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. You have seen pictures of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. So, Rādhārāṇī is the manifestation of Kṛṣṇa's pleasure potency. As I have already explained, Kṛṣṇa has innumerable energies, and one of these is His pleasure potency, Rādhārāṇī.

So those who have developed love of God are enjoying transcendental pleasure at every moment by seeing the artistic work of Kṛṣṇa everywhere. That is the position of a devotee. Therefore we request everyone to become a devotee, to become Kṛṣṇa conscious, so that you will see the artistic work of Kṛṣṇa everywhere.

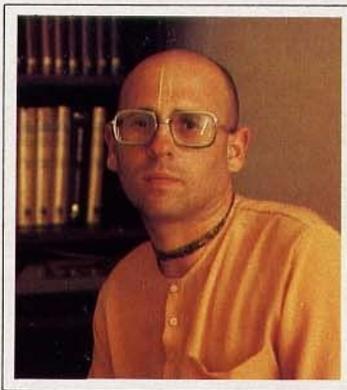
Seeing Kṛṣṇa everywhere is not difficult. For example, suppose you are thirsty and you drink some water. When you drink you feel so much pleasure. And Kṛṣṇa is the reservoir of all pleasure (*raso vai saḥ*). So, that pleasure you feel by drinking water—that is Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa states this in *Bhagavad-gītā* [7.8]: *raso 'ham apsu kaunteya*. "I am the taste of water." For an ordinary person, who cannot fully appreciate Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa is giving the instruction that He is the taste of the water that quenches your thirst. If you simply try to understand that this taste is Kṛṣṇa, or God, you become God conscious.

So it is not very difficult to become Kṛṣṇa conscious. You simply require a little training. And if you read *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*—understanding it the way it is stated by Kṛṣṇa Himself, without any rascaldom or false interpretation—you will become Kṛṣṇa conscious. And if you become Kṛṣṇa conscious, your life is successful. You will return to Kṛṣṇa (*tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti mām eti*).

So there is no loss in becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious, but the gain is very great. Therefore we request all of you to try to become Kṛṣṇa conscious. Read *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*; you will find all the information you need to become Kṛṣṇa conscious. Or, if you don't want to read *Bhagavad-gītā*, please chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. You will still become Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Thank you very much.

A Spiritual Challenge



Herpes, Harry, and Hellfire

Mysteries for the soul who couldn't beat the rap.

by ŚRĪLA HRIDAYANANDA DĀSA GOSWAMI

An incurable viral infection called genital herpes, transmitted through sex, has reached epidemic proportions in the United States. The August 2 edition of *Time* reported, "Spurred on by two decades of sexual permissiveness, the disease has cut swiftly through the ranks of the sexually active. . . . An estimated 20 million Americans now have genital herpes, with as many as half a million new cases expected this year, according to the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta. . . . Those remarkable numbers are altering sexual rites in America, changing courtship patterns, sending thousands of sufferers spinning into months of depression and self-exile, and delivering a numbing blow to the one-night stand. The herpes counter-revolution may be ushering a reluctant, grudging chastity back into fashion."

Pornography merchant Al Goldstein said, "It may be there is a God in heaven carving out His pound of flesh for all our joys."

But Rabbi Harold Kushner of Temple Israel in Natick, Massachusetts, might have a different explanation. In his best-selling book *When Bad Things Happen To Good People*, he argues that we should blame neither God nor ourselves for our sufferings, because God, though basically good, is not omnipotent. Since there is no all-powerful God who can prevent the innocent from suffering or punish the sinful, we shouldn't feel angry at God or guilty when we or our loved ones suffer. As a result of his book, Rabbi Kushner is in great demand for counseling and consoling the grief-stricken.

Naturally, Rabbi Kushner's heretical view has provoked a wave of protest from

many traditional Jewish and Christian theologians, who reassert the omnipotence of God. "I believe the biblical God is a God who is all-good and all-powerful," says Daniel Bloesch, professor of theology at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary in Iowa. "In and of Himself, He is in control. *The ultimate explanation of evil is a mystery.*" (Emphasis mine.)

Considering these different viewpoints, how should traumatized herpes victims be counseled? Are they being punished by an omnipotent God? Are they random victims of forces of nature beyond the control of a well-meaning but limited God? Is there no God or spirit at all, and are they thus hapless witnesses to mere chemical reactions? The last view, atheistic and reductionistic, is unacceptable to most Americans. Even in Russia, where the brutal machinery of the Soviet government has sought to crush religion, faith in God and the need to worship Him are resurging. Certainly God-fearing America cannot existentially explain itself, much less comfort itself, with a cold, purely physical world view that seeks to kill God and the soul.

The problem boils down to the old nemesis of the true believer: "the problem of evil." If God is both good and all-powerful, why do the innocent suffer? Why do young children, for example, suffer crippling diseases and the horrors of war? Are we to accept Dr. Bloesch's view that the ultimate explanation of evil is a mystery? Thank God, we are not.

In fact, the mystery of why evil exists is solved as soon as we accept God's own statement in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that the soul exists eternally, both before and

after our present bodily experience. Of course, that the soul is eternal implies reincarnation, an idea that for America's Jews and Christians has an aura of weird, almost voodooish mysticism alien to the solemn rites and dogmas of all sane and God-fearing people. But denying the soul's previous and future lives chisels away at the very foundation of belief in the soul by imposing upon spirit the material properties of creation and destruction.

Material things, which are created, can certainly be destroyed. But the soul is a spiritual entity, a transcendental being; he was never born and will never die. He comes into the material body just as a man comes within the confines of a room or a shirt, and he leaves the body with his transcendental properties intact. The concept of the creation of the soul conjures up the idea that the soul did not previously exist. And this idea pollutes the real understanding of an ever-existing spiritual entity. Having learned that we, the soul, once did not exist, we naturally fear that we may again not exist. Thus Western civilization plunges blindly into material progress, hoping to reinforce bodily existence itself rather than discover a spiritual life beyond the confines of the material body.

Where Western theology *has* spoken of an undying soul, it generally also speaks of an everlasting hell, with no possibility of respite. Seizing upon the obvious contradiction between the idea of an all-merciful God and a God who damns you forever, modern man has rejected the entire concept of divine punishment.

Thus modern humanistic man, arrogantly denying the existence of a God who could or would punish him, sees himself as

the ultimate reality. He tries to prove this proud vision by pointing out that innocent persons, such as children and the pious, also suffer. Obviously, God would not punish the innocent. Therefore suffering is not some kind of punishment meted out by God upon sinners but rather the blind interaction of molecules, or it is caused by unknown forces that are inscrutable and thus irrelevant to our immediate attempt to enjoy ourselves.

Beyond this proud humanistic bluff is a simple truth: We are eternal servants of God who have rebelled against Him and are therefore suffering just punishment. We have sinned in this and previous lives, and instead of brazenly denying it and then trying to emasculate God to neatly fit together our "innocence" and our suffering, or instead of declaring life's greatest questions to be unfathomable mysteries and thus virtually killing the spirit of theological inquiry, we should admit that God is good and all-powerful and that the reason we are suffering is precisely because we have performed obnoxious acts in this and former lives.

At times our protestations of innocence are patently absurd. For example, Americans dare claim that there is no divine punishment for the gruesome massacre of

hundreds of millions of innocent creatures merely for the satisfaction of our gastronomic whims. "God has put the animals here for us to eat," claim the most pious priests and rabbis.

Evil is mysterious only to those who are blinded by arrogant humanism, flagrant cruelty, and gross ignorance of the eternal soul. Artificial "counseling" for the spiritually blind so that they can rush headlong toward death with a ludicrous "inner peace" is not the solution to the problem of evil. People should be properly educated in the science of the soul and his relation to God.

Some people may consider our claim to perfect spiritual knowledge a worse and more dangerous type of arrogance than humanism. But we arrogate to ourselves no special status other than the official status reserved to the faithful mailman. We are faithfully delivering perfect knowledge spoken by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa's *Bhagavad-gītā* gives us perfect insight into our real position.

Of course we are being punished by God. Civilized human beings cannot indulge in sex like pigs and dogs and get off scot-free. Certainly God is both all-good and omnipotent, and the suffering baby

is not a baby at all but an eternal soul who couldn't beat the rap.

As a child I used to watch reruns of *The Little Rascals* on TV. Sometimes a certain cigar-smoking midget would dress up as a baby and hide his cigar. When some doting person would approach his baby carriage, the midget would beat the person over the head, steal his purse or wallet, and hightail it down the sidewalk. Similarly, suffering babies are not babies at all but eternal souls being punished for their previous sins.

If Americans stick to their erroneous conception that the soul is created—or, worse still, that the soul doesn't exist at all—it will be impossible for them to understand the meaning of life. They will continue to believe that life's important questions are "mysteries," and they will continue to confront their suffering with various types of "counseling," "consolation," and so on, which are just so many useless palliatives. Let us acknowledge our eternal servitude to the omnipotent, all-good Personality of Godhead; let us recognize our long history of births and deaths through many lifetimes; and let us cut off the cycle of sin-and-punishment by practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

(For more on Rabbi Kushner and the problem of evil, turn to page 23.) ❁

We welcome your letters. Write to
BACK TO GODHEAD
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Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19119

LETTERS

Regarding the article "Actions Speak Louder Than Birth," by Vasu Ghosa Dasa (BTG Vol. 17 No. 4), I'm afraid I must protest your statement that "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 traditions 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." I don't know for sure if children there are being taught the things you claim they are being taught; my own school-age cousins haven't learned any such nonsense—only that the Indian government guarantees religious freedom.

I certainly don't agree with your attitude that there is something "atheistic" about a secular state. Religious freedom is very important, since people have the right to believe in whatever they wish, and such freedom exists only in countries

which uphold the ideal of separation of church and state. A government has no right to teach religion to its people, any more than it has the right to teach them atheism (as is currently being done in most communist nations). For religious freedom to exist, the government must allow people to believe what they want and not try to change their faith by teaching them something else. Seen in this light, secularism is beneficial for non-Hindus. And in a land as religiously diverse as India, this is important. A government should treat all its citizens equally and not discriminate on the grounds of race, religion, sex, or even sexual preference.

I speak from experience. Having grown up in this country, I know what it feels like to be constantly reminded (through common expressions, remarks made on TV, sayings such as "you only live once," as well as Christian bigots telling me I'll "burn in hell" for not believing in their faith) that I'm part of a religious minority here, and therefore "inferior." The last thing on earth I'd want would be the U.S. government forcing mandatory Bible

readings upon me each day before class begins (which were actually practiced until the Supreme Court declared them unconstitutional 20 years ago).

Speaking as someone who hopes to become fully self-realized some day, I must tell you quite strongly that secularism has helped me keep my faith; it did not destroy it. I realize you will never print this letter, since it's much too critical, but I would like to see a retraction regarding your attack on the ideal of separation of church and state, or at least an explanation as to why you would stand by it.

Hare Kṛṣṇa!
Srinivas S. Murty
Livermore, CA

OUR REPLY: Thank you for your well-argued letter. Let's consider your points.

First, you say that the secularism of the Indian government merely insures religious freedom and does not nurture atheism.

We wish this were so.

Unfortunately, the "secular ideal" tends almost inevitably to war against spirituality.

When we take a secular approach to a problem, what we do, in effect, is say "This problem lies beyond the domain of religion or spirituality." So the more secularism expands, the more religion shrinks.

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The Vedic Observer

For a New Kind of Social Security

Social Security payments top \$200 billion a year,
yet old people still feel insecure. Why?

by DRUTAKARMĀ DĀSA

America's grandpas are now mugging their young." That's how English economist Norman Macrae describes the present state of this country's Social Security system. Not much of an overstatement, considering these statistics: A full 26% of the national budget (more than \$206 billion) went to the elderly last year, most of it in the form of Social Security benefits. Every minute, the government pays \$17,000 more in benefits than it collects in taxes. At this rate the Social Security system would go broke by mid-1983. Of course, we can't let that happen. So up go taxes—at the expense of young wage-earners.

And young people are beginning to crack under the increasing strain of supporting their elders. Complained one young worker in a recent letter to *Time*: "First they sent us to Vietnam. Now they want \$3,000 a year [from me] in Social Security taxes to finance their Winnebagoes and European vacations." And in this year's *Information Please Almanac*, Barry Robinson, a lawyer for the American Association of Retired Persons, has described a disturbing new phenomenon called "the battered parent syndrome." It seems that a growing number of people are finding the physical, emotional, and financial demands of their live-in parents intolerable. The result: the young are beating up their elders.

Of course, old people justifiably resent such treatment, and they're organizing to fight for their rights.

From the Kṛṣṇa conscious viewpoint, none of this is surprising. When people become preoccupied with making money and getting sensual pleasure, as they have in modern America, they become angry at those who put a crimp in their enjoyment. Old folks not only cost a lot of money to support; they also demand attention and

affection and, perhaps most important, remind us of where we're all headed. When you're trying to delude yourself that you can stay young and enjoy forever, who wants a *memento mori* around the house?

Such problems are not new for materialistic societies. In the five-thousand-year-old *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, India's greatest spiritual classic, the sage Kapila describes the fate of an old person who has devoted his life solely to material pursuits: "His wife and children, seeing him unable to support them, do not treat him with the same respect as before, even as miserly farmers do not accord the same treatment to their old and worn-out oxen. The foolish family man doesn't become averse to family life, although he is maintained by those whom he once maintained. Deformed by the influences of old age, he prepares to meet ultimate death. Thus he remains at home just like a pet dog and eats whatever is so negligently given to him. Afflicted with many illnesses, such as dyspepsia and loss of appetite, he eats only very small morsels of food, and he becomes an invalid who cannot work any more" (*Bhāg.* 3.30.13–15).

The painful humiliation of old age that Kapila describes was something the Vedic culture thought no one should have to undergo. And avoiding such a fate was possible because Vedic society was based on self-realization, not the pursuit of wealth.

Self-realization begins when we understand that our real identity is not the physical body. It's not hard to come to this understanding. With the passing of the years we can all see that our bodies are changing—from childhood to youth to old age. Yet despite all the changes the body goes through, the conscious self, the person within the changing body, remains the same. Therefore, we are not the body

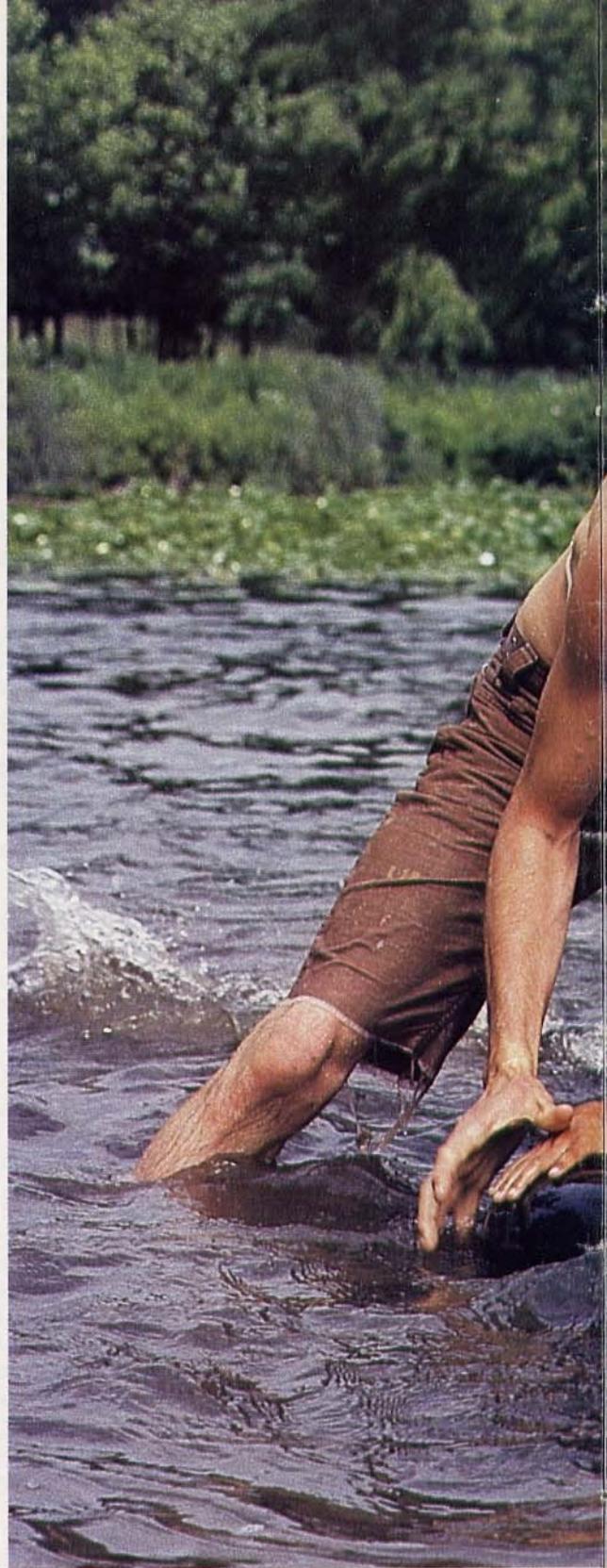
but rather the unchanging conscious self who animates it.

According to the teachings of the Vedic literature, the conscious self in his original condition has three main characteristics: eternity, knowledge, and bliss. But our identification with the temporal body covers these characteristics, and we feel ourselves painfully mortal and ignorant. Life after life, in body after body, the eternal conscious self, or soul, suffers the pains of birth, old age, disease, and death. The Vedic teachings urge us to break out of this agonizing cycle and regain our birthright of eternal happiness in the spiritual world, the kingdom of God.

We can return to the spiritual world and experience our original state of eternal bliss and knowledge only when we are situated in our constitutional relationship of service to God, or Lord Kṛṣṇa. This Kṛṣṇa Himself unequivocally states in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.55): "One can understand Me as I am only by devotional service. And when one is in full consciousness of Me by such devotion, one can enter into the kingdom of God." The leaders in Vedic times, knowing that human life alone offers the opportunity for escape from the cycle of birth and death, carefully structured their society so that everyone had the chance to reawaken his original pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

In contrast, today's society progressively covers the spiritual consciousness of the soul. In general, the life of a citizen in a materialistic society proceeds as follows: In childhood he is pampered, coddled, and protected by his family. Later, in school, he learns that success in life is purchased at the cost of hard labor. If his family is religious he may even learn to pray to God for success, but in any case he prepares himself to take up some kind of

(continued on page 29)



Higher Education

At School With Kṛṣṇa's Canadian Kids

In Vancouver, children at a Hare Kṛṣṇa school learn and play in an atmosphere of love.

Text and photos by AMOGHA DĀSA

They rise at 4:00 A.M., chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and dance, and stand respectfully when their teachers enter the classroom. They're vegetarians, they don't watch cartoons, and they do their own laundry.

Too disciplined? I thought the children at the Hare Kṛṣṇa *gurukula* school in Vancouver were having a lot of fun.

With my heavy black camera bag slung

over my shoulder, I knocked at the door that said "Bāla Kṛṣṇa dāsa, Headmaster." His wife, Madhumatī-devī dāsī, greeted me with a smile and showed me in. Bāla Kṛṣṇa and I liked each other straightaway.

I asked him how the children were doing academically. "These kids are really bright," he said. "They're reading better than most other children their age. Also, they're protected from drugs and other

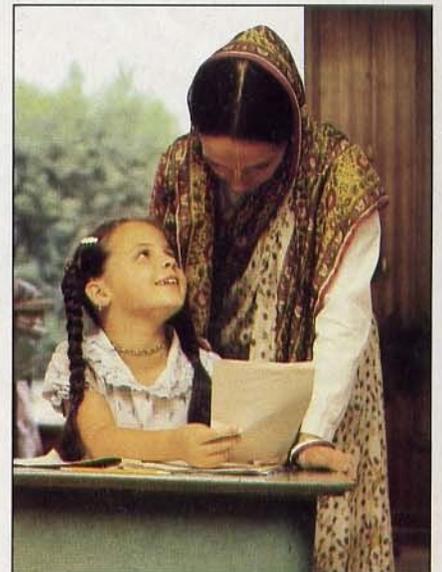
bad influences, and they're jubilant."

"Sounds great," I said. "But is it really *that* great?" He invited me to talk with some of the parents and visit the classrooms.

I met Bahūdaka dāsa, president of the Vancouver Kṛṣṇa center and father of seven. "It's amazing how fast our students learn to read," he said. "All of my children learned extremely quickly. My son Kuñjavihāri, for example, first attended the *guru-*



Frolicking in a lake near the school (left). “We grow with these children,” says one teacher, “and we’ll see them through their whole education.” Below, Nirupamā-devī dāśī checks Mitrā’s spelling exercise. At far left, impish Vṛndā-devī charms the photographer.



As they scrambled in I followed and sat down to watch.

The four youngest girls (around five years old) sat down at a low table beneath a bay window at the front of the room and started practicing how to print letters. At the other end three older girls sat reading.

Harirāṇī-devī dāśī (the kids call her Mother Harirāṇī) sat down at another low table to help six-year-old Kṛṣṇa-devatā as she carefully sounded out each word from a primer. Then Harirāṇī got up and began demonstrating a new letter to the youngest girls. “Today we’re learning *R*,” she announced. “Down . . . around . . . and down.” She drew it three times on the blackboard. “All right, who will try?”

One by one the children in the youngest group went to the blackboard and shakily drew their *R*’s, and when one girl gave

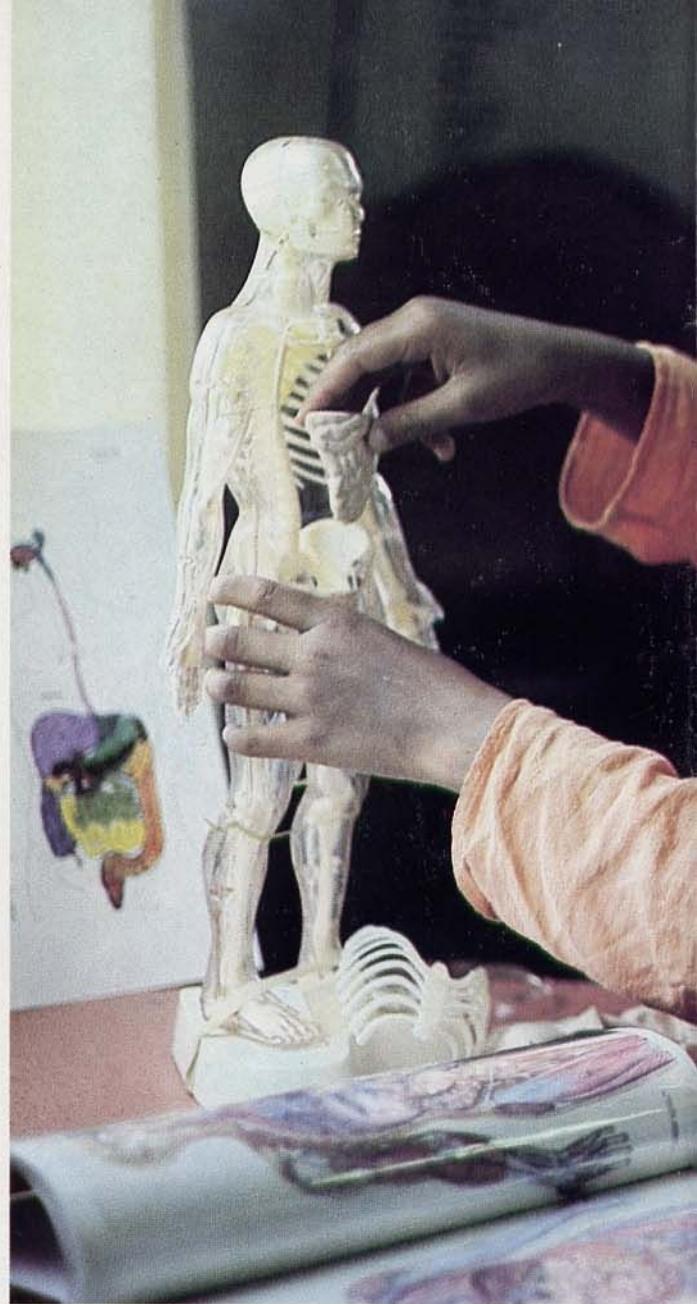
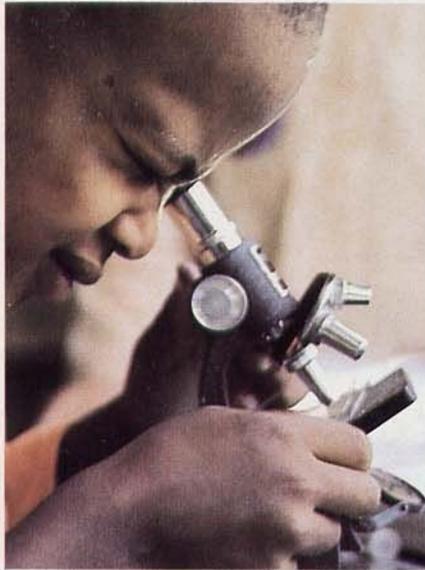
kula in Philadelphia. In the middle of second grade he took a standardized reading test and scored at the ninth-grade level. My second daughter, Śyāma-gaurī, is now in second grade, but she’s reading at the level of an eighth-grader. My wife Nirupamā teaches the older girls, and she tells me this kind of achievement isn’t unusual.”

I went to see the class for beginning girls and found them out on the lawn.

“You stand over there with Lakṣmaṇa,” one girl directed, “and this time *you* be Sītā, I’ll be Rāma, and she’ll be Hanumān. O.K., bring Sītā the message.”

The girls were playing a scene from the Vedic classic *Rāmāyaṇa*—a scene they’d picked up from the temple’s videocassette player. Suddenly a teacher appeared at the classroom door: “Play time is over now. Everyone come inside.”

“One day we looked at swamp water through a microscope and saw lots of little tubes swimming around,” says Gopīnātha (right). “We learned that they’re tiny animals that live by eating even smaller one-celled plants.” Below, Harirāṇī-devī dāsī teaches the second of the three R’s.



hers a crooked leg, everyone (including her) had a big laugh.

Throughout the school I saw that the teachers knew how to be firm—“Kālindī, are you doing your work?”—but also playful and loving. Both teachers and students were having a good time.

Later, I asked Harirāṇī to tell me something about her teaching. “One of the things I teach the children is the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Of course, the *Bhagavad-gītā* is a highly philosophical work, so they can’t read all of it right away. But it’s also a fascinating story. So we have been learning it as a play. All together, we memorize each character’s lines. Then we rehearse, with each child playing a different part. Finally, we perform with full costume and make-up.

“Because of the *Bhagavad-gītā* play we have all become very close. It’s hard to explain, but by glorifying Kṛṣṇa together we’ve developed a very special feeling for

each other. Most of the time we have a regular academic schedule, but the children like this part of their education the best.”

I asked Harirāṇī how she felt teaching in the *gurukula* might compare with teaching in a public school.

“In public schools, teachers don’t expect to see their students much more than a few hours a day for several months. For most teachers, teaching’s just a job. But we grow with these kids. We live with them, and we’ll see them through their whole education. The teachers, the students, and the other members of the community are like a big family. I’m like a mother to the children; I see them as I would my own.

“Since I’m with the children steadily, I know their personalities, and I’ll know the whole context of their lives if they develop problems. A public-school teacher has to be less involved, since the children come and go so quickly. Plus, he has to look out

for his job, which depends on how his students perform on standardized tests. So he’ll often try to instill fear of failure in his students to motivate them. We can concentrate on cultivating a positive enthusiasm for learning in each child.”

When I walked into the boys’ classroom, they all stood up and greeted me. Surprised by the reception, I returned the greeting and then sat down at the back of the room. At the next break they began telling me about some of the things they’d learned.

“One day we looked at swamp water through a microscope and saw lots of little tubes swimming around,” recalls nine-year-old Gopīnātha. “We learned in our nature class that they’re tiny animals that live by eating even smaller one-celled plants.”

I asked the boys what they learned in *gurukula* that children in public schools don’t.



The Visible Man fascinates Amiṣa (left). “What the model doesn’t show is the soul,” says Amiṣa’s classmate Gauracandra. “The soul is inside the body, like the driver of a car. It’s not very smart to think ‘I am the car.’ You have to know you’re a spirit soul.” Below, Kāṇḍī holds forth as Dhṛtarāṣṭra in a play from the *Bhagavad-gītā*. At left below, the boys have a ball on a slide near the school, and Kṛṣṇa-devatā helps out in the pea patch.



“Kṛṣṇa consciousness!” said ten-year-old Gauracandra. “We learn everything they learn—like English, arithmetic, history, and geography—but we also learn Sanskrit, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and how to know Kṛṣṇa. So our education will get us out of the cycle of birth and death, but theirs will keep them in it.”

Then he turned to a Visible Man model on the table. “See,” he said, “here’s the spine, and here’s the rib cage, the lung, and the heart. They’re parts of the body, like parts of a machine. But what the model doesn’t show is the soul. The soul is inside the body, like the driver of a car. It’s not very smart to think ‘I am the machine. I am the car.’ You have to know you’re a spirit soul.”

We heard a whistle. The boys said it meant they were due at their *āśrama*, the house where they live, and they scampered out the door.

After a few days I’d made friends with

all the children. I had watched an older girls’ sewing class, gone swimming with the boys, sat in on a drama performance, and even caught the debut of Devakī’s pet lizard. On Friday we’d gone together to the garden, where the children were all helping to pick peas and pull weeds.

One day the boys invited me to their *āśrama* for lunch. There I met their *āśrama* teachers, Jaya Gauracandra dāsa and his wife, Ātmārāmā-devī dāsī, who live with the eight boys and carefully watch over them.

I learned the boys’ daily schedule: They rise before 4:00 A.M. and attend the first worship ceremony in the temple. Then they chant Hare Kṛṣṇa together quietly, listen with the adults to the morning class on the Vedic scripture *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, have breakfast, and go to school. (The girls’ schedule is the same.)

Jaya Gauracandra expects each boy to be responsible—to take his turn cleaning

the bathroom and the floors, to help prepare meals and wash dishes, to fold the laundry, and to watch out for his own personal needs. All the while Jaya Gauracandra and his wife instruct and encourage the boys.

“Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted us to be strict with them, to make sure they don’t become lazy,” he said. “But he also taught us that the basis of strictness must be love. The children can benefit from our strictness and instruction only when they know we love them.”

I was impressed with Jaya Gauracandra’s dedication to the children. Certainly a working parent couldn’t give his own children such attention.

I was also glad to note that the children’s parents were close by. They live in the same community, worship with their children in the temple each morning, and see them running outside at play time. When the *gurukula* presents a play, the audience is full of parents. The children spend Sundays at home, and home is where they live during vacations.

Before leaving, I met with Bāla Kṛṣṇa again. He showed me a book entitled *Śrīla Prabhupāda on Gurukula*. It’s a recent publication compiled by His Holiness Jagadīśa Goswami, the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement’s minister of education.

“I’ve picked out some passages to read to you,” said Bāla Kṛṣṇa, “so you can understand the ultimate goal of *gurukula* education.” He read out loud:

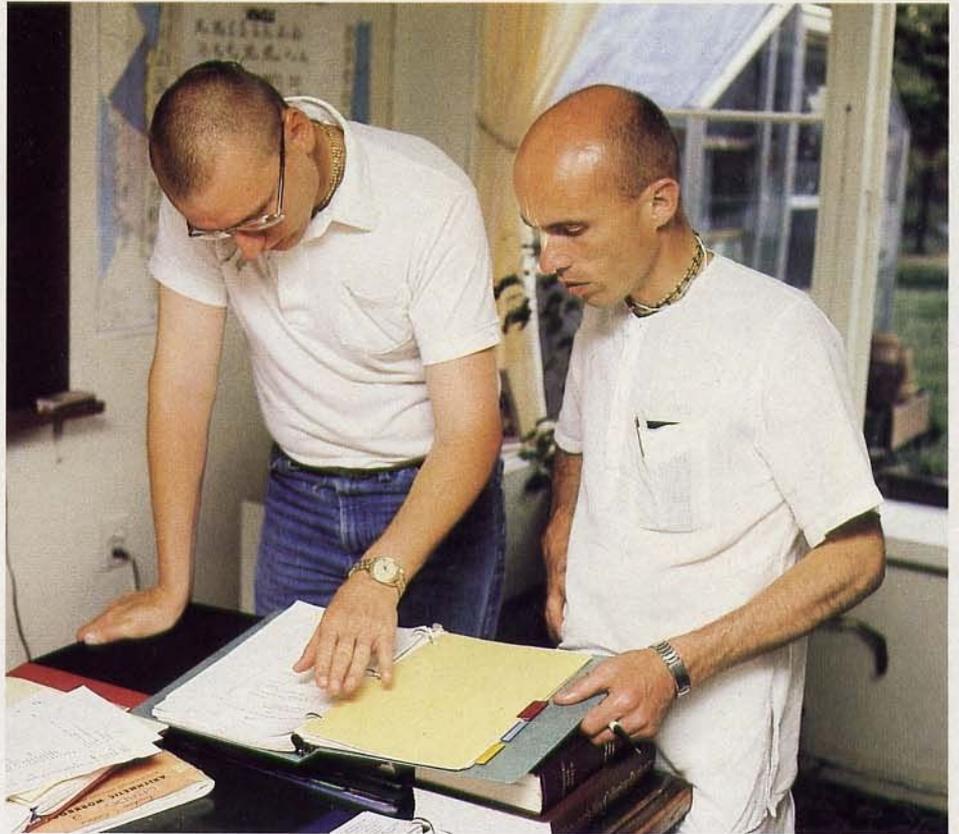
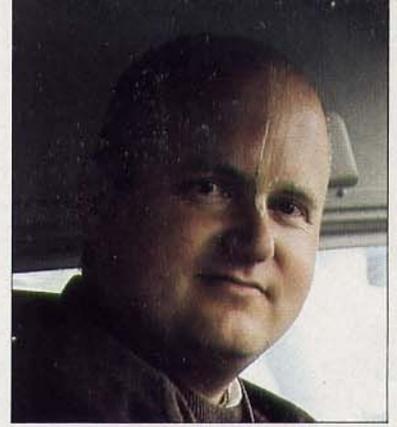
A Kṛṣṇa conscious student can immediately give up all illicit sex, gambling, meat-eating, and intoxication, whereas those who are not in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, although they may be very highly educated, are often drunkards, meat-eaters, sex-mongers, and gamblers. This is practical proof of how a Kṛṣṇa conscious person becomes highly developed in good qualities, whereas a person who is not in Kṛṣṇa consciousness cannot do so.

“Our teachers are free from these sinful activities,” Bāla Kṛṣṇa said. “They’re examples for the students. ‘Do as I say, not as I do’ never works. In another place Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote,

Modern civilization has advanced considerably in the field of mass education, but the result is that people are more unhappy than ever before because of the stress placed on material advancement to the exclusion of the most important part of life, the spiritual aspect. . . . Modern civilization is a patchwork of activities meant to cover the perpetual miseries of material existence. Such activities are aimed toward sense gratification, but above the senses is the mind, and above the mind is the intelligence, and above the intelligence is the soul. Thus the aim of real education should be self-realization, realization of the spiritual values of the soul.

“In other words,” Bāla Kṛṣṇa concluded, “Śrīla Prabhupāda had a far-reaching goal

“A gurukula child depends on his teacher to show him how to develop strong character, intelligence, and spiritual knowledge,” says Bahūdaka dāsa (right), head of the Vancouver Hare Kṛṣṇa center. Below, headmaster Bāla Kṛṣṇa dāsa (on right) reviews curriculum with Bhāva dāsa, one of teachers at the Vancouver school. At bottom, Devakī shows off her pet lizard to her friends.





Kṛṣṇa is always in the center of the children's activities. During the first worship of the day (above), the youngsters join their elders in the temple at 4:30 A.M. Later, Ajita (left) helps squeeze grapefruit juice to offer to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

in mind when he founded the *gurukula* educational system: to awaken the spiritual nature of the children so they can get out of repeated birth and death in this material world and live eternally with the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, in His transcendental abode."

After some time I thanked Bāla Kṛṣṇa for his hospitality and started packing for the trip home. Bahūdaka offered to drive me to the airport. On the way he told me some more of his thoughts about *gurukula* education.

"You know," he said, "children need a teacher they can have full faith in. They can't succeed without one. I understood this better recently when I began taking flying lessons. There's a maneuver in which the teacher puts the plane into a spin and then shows you how to pull out of it. Then *you* have to try. You're falling through the air, so your natural reaction is to turn the wheel back against the spin. But if you do that, you just increase the spin and end up crashing. You have to learn from the teacher how to keep a neu-

tral wheel, ride with the spin, dive right down toward the ground, and pull out. Instead of reacting on reflex, you have to act on knowledge, on what you learned in training.

"My life was in the teacher's hands—I was totally dependent on him. Similarly, in *gurukula* a child is dependent on his teachers to show him how to develop strong character, intelligence, and spiritual knowledge. With these he will be equipped to face the dangers that come when you try to lead a disciplined spiritual life in today's world. He won't easily fall prey to the lures of illicit sex, drugs, and other things that would cause him to crash in misery.

"My two eldest children are both hitting teenage years now, but they aren't showing the usual teenage problems—promiscuity, drug abuse, rebellion, confusion. They're respectful, truthful, self-controlled, and eager to help."

We soon reached the airport, and he dropped me off.

I entered the bustling airport terminal. Passing by a newsstand, I saw the latest *U.S. News & World Report*. Looking out from the cover was a sullen ten-year-old with a shock of red hair. The headline: "Our Neglected Kids."

With relief I recalled that my four-year-old daughter would soon be entering *gurukula*. 

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

On the Dis-United Nations

This conversation between His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and Mr. P. Sharma, a former United Nations worker, took place in Paris some eight years ago.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Suppose I ask the United Nations, as an organization, to explain the purpose of this cosmic manifestation. I am created a man, another is created an elephant, and another is created an ant. Why is this? The sun is rising on time, the moon is rising on time, seasons are changing. What is the purpose behind all this?

Mr. Sharma: I think the United Nations would be at a loss to tell you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So, people have become very dull in spite of their so-called education.

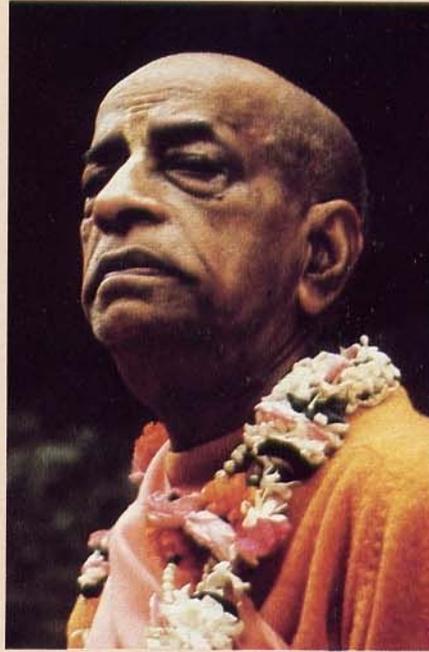
Mr. Sharma: Oh, yes. Education today is merely book knowledge.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Such so-called knowledge is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as simply a waste of time. Although a person may execute his duties perfectly, if he doesn't understand the purpose of creation—if he doesn't awaken his Kṛṣṇa consciousness—then whatever he has done is simply a waste of time. So our point is that the United Nations is only wasting time.

Even from the practical point of view, they are unable to accomplish anything. The original idea was to stop war. But there have been so many wars, and they cannot stop them. They call themselves the United Nations, but actually they are becoming disunited more and more. According to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, if they actually want peace they must know that Lord Kṛṣṇa (the Supreme Personality of Godhead) is the supreme enjoyer (*bhoktā*), that He is the supreme proprietor (*sarva-loka-maheśvaram*), and that He is everyone's friend (*suhṛdam sarva-bhūtānām*). When they know this, Kṛṣṇa says, then there will be peace. Otherwise, their big conferences in big offices will never be successful.

Mr. Sharma: That means everything belongs to God. That's the one fact they want to avoid.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, that is their nonsense. The United Nations is simply an association of the cheaters and the cheated. Someone wants to cheat, and someone is being cheated. That is our opinion. So how can an association of



cheaters and cheated do any good for human society? They are cheaters. They do not know how to attain peace, but they are claiming that they will bring peace to the world. Therefore they are cheaters.

Mr. Sharma: Well, many people will say that the only things that matter are those that can be rationally explained. Anything else is beyond reason—

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But our argument is quite reasonable. Everything in this room has been created, Isn't that so?

Mr. Sharma: Yes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The table has been created, the light has been created—everything has been created by someone. So how can you deny the fact that someone has created the whole universe? If you say it has come about automatically, that is rascaldom. Someone has created it. But who is that someone? We are not the creators. So we can understand that *someone else* has created this world. And then we have to ask, Who is the proprietor? Shall I be the proprietor or shall the creator be the proprietor?

Mr. Sharma: The creator, of course.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So why are they claiming, "This is my country"?

Mr. Sharma: Are you saying that the United States, for instance, doesn't belong to the Americans?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. It doesn't belong to them. Yet these rascals are

claiming, "This is mine. This is my flag." Therefore, they are all cheaters. And they are combining and trying to cheat others. The Americans are thinking, "How can I cheat the Russians?" And the Russians are thinking, "How can I cheat the Americans?" Is that civilization—to become cheaters and waste time in so-called conferences? Is that civilization?

Mr. Sharma: No, not at all.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: In America they cheated the red Indians. They got the land, and now they are claiming, "It is mine." Well, where did you get this land? You cheated the red Indians, and now you claim it is your land. All over the world this is going on. Napoleon thought, "France is mine." So, France is there, but where is Napoleon? Where is he living now? In France or in hell or in heaven? There are so many places and so many forms of life. In this body, in this life, I may be working as a nationalist—as a Napoleon or as a Gandhi or as someone fighting in the United Nations. But as soon as this body is finished, I'll get another body. So the whole duration of my previous life is simply wasted.

Mr. Sharma: I see . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Simply wasted. They are simply wasting time. They don't have perfect knowledge—simply some utopian ideas. And they are passing as advanced in civilization. They should know what the purpose of life is—what our relationship is with this cosmic manifestation. There must be a creator. So who is that creator? What is my relationship with Him? But they are neglecting all these things and still passing as world leaders.

Mr. Sharma: That's the worst kind of government. It seems that their standard is just as you've said: every nation for itself.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But a human being can get out of this illusion. There is sufficient knowledge, especially in the Vedic literature. So why don't they take advantage of this knowledge and make their lives successful? That is my proposal. We are spreading this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement only for this purpose. These people are missing the point and unnecessarily wasting their lives in illusion. So we are trying to save them—that is our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

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 TEN

Bhāgavatam Is the Answer to All Questions

In this installment of our continuing presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Sukadeva Gosvāmī recites seven continuous verses explaining the ten divisions of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—the creation of the universe, sub-creation, planetary systems, the Lord's protection, the creative impetus, the change of Manus, the science of God, returning back to Godhead, liberation, and the summum bonum.

TEXT 3

भूतमात्रेन्द्रियधियां जन्म सर्ग उदाहृतः ।
ब्रह्मणो गुणवैषम्याद्विसर्गः पौरुषः स्मृतः ॥ ३ ॥

*bhūta-mātrendriya-dhiyāṃ
janma sarga udāhṛtaḥ
brahmaṇo guṇa-vaiṣamyād
visargaḥ pauruṣaḥ smṛtaḥ*

bhūta—the five gross elements (the sky, etc.); *mātrā*—objects perceived by the senses; *indriya*—the senses; *dhiyām*—of the mind; *janma*—creation; *sargaḥ*—manifestation; *udāhṛtaḥ*—is called the creation; *brahmaṇaḥ*—of Brahmā, the first *puruṣa*; *guṇa-vaiṣamyāt*—by interaction of the three modes of nature; *visargaḥ*—re-creation; *pauruṣaḥ*—resultant activities; *smṛtaḥ*—it is so known.

TRANSLATION

The elementary creation of sixteen items of matter—namely the five elements [fire, water, land, air and sky], sound, form, taste, smell, touch, and the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin and mind—is known as *sarga*, whereas subsequent resultant interaction of the modes of material nature is called *visarga*.

PURPORT

In order to explain the ten divisional symptoms of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, there are seven continuous verses. The first of these under reference pertains to the sixteen elementary manifestations of earth, water, etc., with material ego composed of material intelligence and mind. The subsequent creation is a result of the reactions of the above-mentioned sixteen energies of the first *puruṣa*, the Mahā-Viṣṇu incarnation of Govinda, as later explained by Brahmā in his treatise *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.47) as follows:

*yaḥ kāraṇārṇava-jale bhajati sma yoga-
nidrām ananta-jagadaṇḍa-saroma-kūpaḥ
ādhāra-śaktim avalambya parām sva-mūrtim
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

The first *puruṣa* incarnation of Govinda, Lord Kṛṣṇa, known as the Mahā-Viṣṇu, goes into a *yoga-nidrā* mystic sleep, and the innumerable universes are situated in potency in each and every hair hole of His transcendental body.

As mentioned in the previous verse, *śrutena* (or with reference to the Vedic conclusions), the creation is made possible from the Supreme Personality of Godhead directly by manifestation of His particular energies. Without such a Vedic reference, the creation appears to be a product of material nature. This conclusion comes from a poor fund of knowledge. From Vedic reference it is concluded that the origin of all energies (namely internal, external and marginal) is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And as explained hereinbefore, the illusory conclusion is that creation is made by the inert material nature. The Vedic conclusion is transcendental light, whereas the non-Vedic conclusion is material darkness. The internal potency of the Supreme Lord is identical with the Supreme Lord, and the external potency is enlivened in contact with the internal potency. The parts and parcels of the internal potency which react in contact with the external potency are called the marginal potency, or the living entities.

Thus the original creation is directly from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, or Parambrahman, and the secondary creation, as a reactionary result of the original ingredients, is made by Brahmā. Thus the activities of the whole universe are started.

TEXT 4

स्थितिर्वैकुण्ठविजयः पोषणं तदनुग्रहः ।
मन्वन्तराणि सद्वर्म उतयः कर्मवासनाः ॥ ४ ॥

*sthitiḥ vaikunṭha-vijayaḥ
poṣaṇam tad-anugrahaḥ
manvantarāṇi sad-dharma
ūtaḥ karma-vāsanāḥ*

sthitiḥ—the right situation; *vaikunṭha-vijayaḥ*—the victory of the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha; *poṣaṇam*—maintenance; *tad-anugrahaḥ*—His causeless mercy; *manvantarāṇi*—the reign of the Manus; *sat-dharmaḥ*—perfect occupational duty; *ūtaḥ*—impetus to work; *karma-vāsanāḥ*—desire for fruitive work.

TRANSLATION

The right situation for the living entities is to obey the laws of the Lord and thus be in perfect peace of mind under the protection of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Manus and their laws are meant to give right direction in life. The impetus for activity is the desire for fruitive work.

PURPORT

This material world is created, maintained for some time, and again annihilated by the will of the Lord. The ingredients for creation and the subordinate creator, Brahmā, are first created by Lord Viṣṇu in His first and second incarnations. The first *puruṣa* incarnation is Mahā-Viṣṇu, and the second *puruṣa* incarnation is the Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, from whom Brahmā is created. The third *puruṣa-avatāra* is the Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, who lives as the Supersoul of everything in the universe and maintains the creation generated by Brahmā. Śiva is one of the many sons of Brahmā, and he annihilates the creation. Therefore the original

creator of the universe is Viṣṇu, and He is also the maintainer of the created beings by His causeless mercy. As such, it is the duty of all conditioned souls to acknowledge the victory of the Lord and thus become pure devotees and live peacefully in this world, where miseries and dangers are always in existence. The conditioned souls, who take this material creation as the place for satisfaction of the senses and thus are illusioned by the external energy of Viṣṇu, remain again to be subjected to the laws of material nature, creation and destruction.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said that beginning from the topmost planet of this universe down to the lowest planet, Pātālaloka, all are destructible, and the conditioned souls may travel in space either by good or bad work or by modern spacecraft, but they are sure to die everywhere, although the duration of life in different planets is different. The only means to attain eternal life is to go back home, back to Godhead, where there is no more rebirth as in the material planets. The conditioned souls, being unaware of this very simple fact because of forgetting their relationship with the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha, try to plan out a permanent life in this material world. Being illusioned by the external energy, they thus become engaged in various types of economic and religious development, forgetting that they are meant for going back home, back to Godhead. This forgetfulness is so strong due to the influence of *māyā* that the conditioned souls do not at all want to go back to Godhead. By sense enjoyment they become victims of birth and death repeatedly and thus spoil human lives which are chances for going back to Viṣṇu. The directive scriptures made by the Manus in different ages and millenniums are called *sad-dharma*, good guidance for the human beings, who should take advantage of all the revealed scriptures for their own interest, to make life's successful termination. The creation is not false, but it is a temporary manifestation just to give a chance for the conditioned souls to go back to Godhead. The desire to go back to Godhead and functions performed in that direction form the right path of work. When such a regulative path is accepted, the Lord gives all protection to His devotees by His causeless mercy, while the nondevotees risk their own activities to bind themselves in a chain of fruitive reactions. The word *sad-dharma* is significant in this connection. *Sad-dharma*, or duty performed for going back to Godhead and thus becoming His unalloyed devotee, is the only pious activity; all others may pretend to be pious, but actually they are not. It is for this reason only that the Lord advises in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that one give up all so-called religious activities and completely engage in the devotional service of the Lord to become free from all anxieties due to the dangerous life of material existence. To work situated in *sad-dharma* is the right direction of life. One's aim of life should be to go back home, back to Godhead, and not be subjected to repeated births and deaths in the material world by getting good or bad bodies for temporary existence. Herein lies the intelligence of human life, and one should desire the activities of life in that way.

TEXT 5

अवतारानुचरितं हरेश्चास्यानुवर्तिनाम् ।
पुंसामीशकथाः प्रोक्ता नानाख्यानोपबृंहिताः ॥ ५ ॥

avatārānucaritam
hareś cāsyānuvartinām
puṁsām īśa-kathāḥ proktā
nānākhyānopabṛṁhitāḥ

avatāra—incarnation of Godhead; *anucaritam*—activities; *hareḥ*—of the Personality of Godhead; *ca*—also; *asya*—of His; *anuvartinām*—followers; *puṁsām*—of the persons; *īśa-kathāḥ*—the science of God; *proktāḥ*—is said; *nānā*—various; *ākhyāna*—narrations; *upabṛṁhitāḥ*—described.

TRANSLATION

The science of God describes the incarnations of the Personality of Godhead and His different activities together with the activities of His great devotees.

PURPORT

During the course of the existence of the cosmic manifestation, the chronology of history is created, recording the activities of the living entities. People in general have a tendency to learn the history and narrations of different men and times, but due to a lack of knowledge in the science of Godhead, they are not apt to study the history of the incarnations of the Personality of Godhead. It should always be remembered that the material creation is created for the salvation of the conditioned souls. The merciful Lord, out of His causeless mercy, descends to various planets in the material world and acts for the salvation of the conditioned souls. That makes the history and narrations worth reading. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* offers such transcendental topics of the Lord in relationship with great devotees. Therefore the topics of the devotees and the Lord are to be given respectful aural reception.

TEXT 6

निरोधोऽस्यानुशयनमात्मनः सह शक्तिभिः ।
मुक्तिर्हित्वान्यथारूपं स्वरूपेण व्यवस्थितिः ॥ ६ ॥

nirodho 'syānuśayanam
ātmanah saha śaktibhiḥ
muktir hitvānyathā rūpaṁ
sva-rūpeṇa vyavasthitih

nirodhaḥ—the winding up of the cosmic manifestation; *asya*—of His; *anuśayanam*—the lying down of the *puruṣa* incarnation Mahā-Viṣṇu in mystic slumber; *ātmanah*—of the living entities; *saha*—along with; *śaktibhiḥ*—with the energies; *muktih*—liberation; *hitvā*—giving up; *anyathā*—otherwise; *rūpaṁ*—form; *sva-rūpeṇa*—in constitutional form; *vyavasthitih*—permanent situation.

TRANSLATION

The merging of the living entity, along with his conditional living tendency, with the mystic lying down of the Mahā-Viṣṇu is called the winding up of the cosmic manifestation. Liberation is the permanent situation of the form of the living entity after he gives up the changeable gross and subtle material bodies.

PURPORT

As we have discussed several times, there are two types of living entities. Most of them are ever liberated, or *nitya-muktas*, while some of them are ever conditioned. The ever-conditioned souls are apt to develop a mentality of lording over the material nature, and therefore the material cosmic creation is manifested to give the ever-conditioned souls two kinds of facilities. One facility is that the conditioned soul can act according to his tendency to lord it over the cosmic manifestation, and the other facility gives the conditioned soul a chance to come back to Godhead. So after the winding up of the cosmic manifestation, most of the conditioned souls merge into the existence of the Mahā-Viṣṇu Personality of Godhead, lying in His mystic slumber, to be created again in the next creation. But some of the conditioned souls, who follow the transcendental sound in the form of Vedic literatures and are thus able to go back to Godhead, attain spiritual and original bodies after quitting the conditional gross and subtle material bodies. The material conditional bodies develop out of the living entities' forgetfulness of their relationship with Godhead, and during the course of the cosmic manifestation, the conditioned souls are given a chance to revive their original status of life with the help of revealed scriptures, so mercifully compiled by the Lord in His different incarnations. Reading or hearing of such transcendental literatures helps one become liberated even in the conditional state of material existence. All the Vedic literatures aim at devotional service to the Personality of Godhead, and as soon as one is fixed upon this point, he at once becomes liberated from conditional life. The material gross and subtle forms are simply due to the conditioned soul's ignorance and as soon as he is fixed in the devotional service of the Lord, he be-

comes eligible to be freed from the conditioned state. This devotional service is transcendental attraction for the Supreme on account of His being the source of all pleasing humors. Everyone is after some pleasure of humor for enjoyment, but does not know the supreme source of all attraction (*raso vai saḥ rasam hy evāyam labdhvānandī bhavāti*). The Vedic hymns inform everyone about the supreme source of all pleasure; the unlimited fountainhead of all pleasure is the Personality of Godhead, and one who is fortunate enough to get this information through transcendental literatures like *Śrīmad-Bhāgatavam* becomes permanently liberated to occupy his proper place in the kingdom of God.

TEXT 7

आमासश्च निरोधश्च यतोऽस्त्यव्यवसीयते ।
स आश्रयः परं ब्रह्म परमात्मेति शब्द्यते ॥ ७ ॥

*ābhāsaś ca nirodhaś ca
yato 'sty adhyavastyate
sa āśrayaḥ paraṁ brahma
paramātmēti śabdyate*

ābhāsaḥ—the cosmic manifestation; *ca*—and; *nirodhaḥ*—and its winding up; *ca*—also; *yataḥ*—from the source; *asti*—is; *adhyavastyate*—become manifested; *saḥ*—He; *āśrayaḥ*—reservoir; *param*—the Supreme; *brahma*—Being; *paramātmā*—the Supersoul; *iti*—thus; *śabdyate*—called.

TRANSLATION

The supreme one who is celebrated as the Supreme Being or the Supreme Soul is the supreme source of the cosmic manifestation as well as its reservoir and winding up. Thus He is the Supreme Fountainhead, the Absolute Truth.

PURPORT

Synonyms for the supreme source of all energies, as explained in the very beginning of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgatavam*, are *janmādy asya yataḥ, vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam/ brahmēti paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate*, called Parambrahma, Paramātmā or Bhagavān. The word *iti* used here in this verse completes the synonyms and thus indicates Bhagavān. This will be further explained in the later verses, but this Bhagavān ultimately means Lord Kṛṣṇa because the *Śrīmad-Bhāgatavam* has already accepted the Supreme Personality of Godhead as Kṛṣṇa. *Kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*. The original source of all energies, or the *summum bonum*, is the Absolute Truth, which is called Parambrahma, etc., and Bhagavān is the last word of the Absolute Truth. But even with the synonyms for Bhagavān, such as Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu and Puruṣa, the last word is Kṛṣṇa, as confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: *aham sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate*, etc. Besides that, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgatavam* is the representation of Lord Kṛṣṇa as a sound incarnation of the Lord.

*kṛṣṇe sva-dhāmopagate
dharma-jñānādibhiḥ saha
kalau naṣṭa-dṛṣām eṣaḥ
purānārko 'dhunoditaḥ
(Bhāg. 1.3.43)*

Thus by general conclusion Lord Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate source of all energies, and the word Kṛṣṇa means that. And to explain Kṛṣṇa or the science of Kṛṣṇa, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgatavam* has been prepared. In the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgatavam* this truth is indicated in the questions and answers by Sūta Gosvāmī and great sages like Śaunaka, and in the First and Second Chapters of the canto this is explained. In the Third Chapter this subject is more explicit, and in the Fourth Chapter even more explicit. In the Second Canto the Absolute Truth as the Personality of Godhead is further emphasized, and the indication is the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. The summary of *Śrīmad-Bhāgatavam* in four verses, as we

have already discussed, is succinct. This Supreme Personality of Godhead in the ultimate issue is confirmed by Brahmā in his *Brahma-saṁhitā* as *īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ*. So it is concluded in the Third Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgatavam*. The complete subject matter is elaborately explained in the Tenth and Eleventh Cantos of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgatavam*. In the matter of the changes of the Manus or *manvantaras*, such as the Svāyambhuva-*manvantara* and Cākṣuṣa-*manvantara*, as they are discussed in the Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Cantos of *Śrīmad-Bhāgatavam*, Lord Kṛṣṇa is indicated. In the Eighth Canto the Vaivasvata-*manvantara* explains the same subject indirectly, and in the Ninth Canto the same purport is there. In the Twelfth Canto the same is further explained, specifically regarding the different incarnations of the Lord. Thus it is concluded by studying the complete *Śrīmad-Bhāgatavam* that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate *summum bonum*, or the ultimate source of all energy. And according to the grades of worshipers, the indications of the nomenclature may be differently explained as Nārāyaṇa, Brahmā, Paramātmā, etc.

TEXT 8

योऽध्यात्मिकोऽयं पुरुषः सोऽसावेवाधिदैविकः ।
यस्तत्रोभयविच्छेदः पुरुषो षाधिभौतिकः ॥ ८ ॥

*yo 'dhyātmiko 'yaṁ puruṣaḥ
so 'sāv evādhidivikāḥ
yas tatrobhaya-vicchedaḥ
puruṣo hy ādhibhautikāḥ*

yaḥ—one who; *adhyātmikāḥ*—is possessed of the sense organs; *ayam*—this; *puruṣaḥ*—personality; *saḥ*—he; *asau*—that; *eva*—also; *adhidivikāḥ*—controlling deity; *yaḥ*—that which; *tatra*—there; *ubhaya*—of both; *vicchedaḥ*—separation; *puruṣaḥ*—person; *hi*—for; *ādhibhautikāḥ*—the visible body or the embodied living entity.

TRANSLATION

The individual person possessing different instruments of senses is called the adhyātmic person, and the individual controlling deity of the senses is called adhidaivic. The embodiment seen on the eyeballs is called the adhibhautic person.

PURPORT

The supreme controlling *summum bonum* is the Personality of Godhead in His plenary portion of Paramātmā, or the Supersoul manifestation. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.42) it is said:

*athavā bahunaitena
kiṁ jñātena tavārjuna
viṣṭabhyāham idaṁ kṛtsnam
ekāmsena sthito jagat*

All the controlling deities like Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva are different manifestations of the Paramātmā feature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who exhibits himself in such manners by entering into each and every universe generated from Him. But still apparently there are divisions of the controller and controlled. For example, in the food-controlling department the controller of food is a person made of the same ingredients as the person who is controlled. Similarly, each and every individual in the material world is controlled by the higher demigods. For example, we have our senses, but the senses are controlled by superior controlling deities. We cannot see without light, and the supreme controller of light is the sun. The sun-god is in the sun planet, and we, the individual human beings or any other being on this earth, are all controlled by the sun-god as far as our eyes are concerned. Similarly, all the senses we have are controlled by the superior demigods, who are also as much living entities as we are, but one is empowered while the other is controlled. The controlled living entity is called the adhyātmic person, and the controller is called the adhidaivic person. All

these positions in the material world are due to different fruitive activities. Any individual living being can become the sun-god or even Brahmā or any other god in the upper planetary system by a higher grade of pious work, and similarly one becomes controlled by the higher demigods by lower grades of fruitive activities. So every individual living entity is subject to the supreme control of the Paramātmā, who puts everyone in different positions of the controller and the controlled.

That which distinguishes the controller and controlled, i.e. the material body, is called the adhibhautic *puruṣa*. The body is sometimes called *puruṣa*, as confirmed in the *Vedas* in the following hymn: *sa vā eṣa puruṣo 'nna-rasamayah*. This body is called the *anna-rasamaya* body. The sun may have a gigantic body, and the man may have a smaller body, but all these visible bodies are made of matter; nonetheless, the sun-god and the individual person, who are related as the controller and the controlled, are the same spiritual parts and parcels of the Supreme Being, and it is the Supreme Being who places different parts and parcels in different positions. And thus the conclusion is that the Supreme Person is the shelter of all.

TEXT 9

एकमेकतराभावे यदा नोपलभामहे ।
त्रितयं तत्र यो वेद स आत्मा स्वाश्रयाश्रयः ॥ ९ ॥

ekam ekatarābhāve
yadā nopalabhāmahe
tritayaṁ tatra yo veda
sa ātmā svāśrayāśrayaḥ

ekam—one; *ekatara*—another; *abhāve*—in the absence of; *yadā*—because; *na*—does not; *upalabhāmahe*—perceptible; *tritayam*—in three stages; *tatra*—there; *yaḥ*—the one; *veda*—who knows; *saḥ*—he; *ātmā*—the Supersoul; *sva*—own; *āśraya*—shelter; *āśrayaḥ*—of the shelter.

TRANSLATION

All three of the above-mentioned stages of different living entities are interdependent. In the absence of one, another is not understood. But the Supreme Being who sees every one of them as the shelter of the shelter is independent of all, and therefore He is the supreme shelter.

PURPORT

There are innumerable living entities, one dependent on the other in the relationship of the controlled and the controller. But without the medium of perception, no one can know or understand who is the controlled and who is the controller. For example, the sun controls the power of our vision, we can see the sun because the sun has its body, and the sunlight is useful only because we have eyes. Without our having eyes, the sunlight is useless, and without sunlight the eyes are useless. Thus they are interdependent, and none of them is independent. Therefore the natural question arises concerning who made them interdependent. The one who has made such a relationship of interdependence must be ultimately completely independent. As stated in the beginning of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the ultimate source of all interdependent objectives is the complete independent subject. This ultimate source of all interdependence is the Supreme Truth or Paramātmā, the Supersoul, who is not dependent on anything else. He is *svāśrayāśrayaḥ*. He is only dependent on His self, and thus He is the supreme shelter of everything. Although Paramātmā and Brahma are subordinate to Bhagavān, be-

cause Bhagavān is Puruṣottama or the Superperson, He is the source of the Supersoul also. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.18) Lord Kṛṣṇa says that He is the Puruṣottama and the source of everything, and thus it is concluded that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate source and shelter of all entities, including the Supersoul and Supreme Brahman. Even accepting that there is no difference between the Supersoul and the individual soul, the individual soul is dependent on the Supersoul for being liberated from the illusion of material energy. The individual is under the clutches of illusory energy, and therefore although qualitatively one with the Supersoul, he is under the illusion of identifying himself with matter. And to get out of this illusory conception of factual life, the individual soul has to depend on the Supersoul to be recognized as one with Him. In that sense also the Supersoul is the supreme shelter. And there is no doubt about it.

The individual living entity, the *jīva*, is always dependent on the Supersoul, Paramātmā, because the individual soul forgets his spiritual identity whereas the Supersoul, Paramātmā, does not forget His transcendental position. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* these separate positions of the *jīva-ātmā* and the Paramātmā are specifically mentioned. In the Fourth Chapter, Arjuna, the *jīva* soul, is represented as forgetful of his many, many previous births, but the Lord, the Supersoul, is not forgetful. The Lord even remembers when He taught the *Bhagavad-gītā* to the sun-god some billions of years before. The Lord can remember such millions and billions of years, as stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.26) as follows:

vedāhaṁ samatītāni
vartamānāni cārjuna
bhaviṣyāṇi ca bhūtāni
māṁ tu veda na kaścana

The Lord in His eternal blissful body of knowledge is fully aware of all that happened in the past, that which is going on at the present and also what will happen in the future. But in spite of His being the shelter of both the Paramātmā and Brahma, persons with a poor fund of knowledge are unable to understand Him as He is.

The propaganda of the identity of cosmic consciousness with the consciousness of the individual living entities is completely misleading because even such a person or individual soul as Arjuna could not remember his past deeds, although he is always with the Lord. And what can the tiny ordinary man, falsely claiming to be one with the cosmic consciousness, know about his past, present and future?

TEXT 10

पुरुषोऽण्डं विनिर्भिद्य यदासौ स विनिर्गतः ।
आत्मनोऽयनमन्विच्छन्नपोऽस्त्राक्षीच्छुचिः शुचीः ॥१०॥

puruṣo 'ṇḍam vinirbhidyā
yadāsau sa vinirgataḥ
ātmano 'yanam anvicchan
apo 'srākṣic chuciḥ śuciḥ

puruṣaḥ—the Supreme Person, Paramātmā; *aṇḍam*—the universes; *vinirbhidyā*—making them each separately situated; *yadā*—when; *asau*—the same; *saḥ*—He (the Lord); *vinirgataḥ*—came out; *ātmanaḥ*—of Himself; *ayanam*—lying in place; *anvicchan*—desiring; *apaḥ*—water; *asrākṣū*—created; *śuciḥ*—the most pure; *śuciḥ*—transcendental.

TRANSLATION

After separating the different universes, the gigantic universal form of the Lord [Mahā-Viṣṇu], which came out of the causal ocean, the place of appearance for the first *puruṣa-avātara*, entered into each of the separate universes, desiring to lie on the created transcendental water [Garbhodaka].

(continued in next issue)



Every Town and Village

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

London Chariot Festival First of Six in England



MAYEŠVARA DĀSA



The Lord of the Universe rolls down Park Lane in His chariot during the Ratha-yātrā festival in London (above). At left, the chariot has been compacted and hoisted onto a truck for the trip to the next festival.

London—Last summer, thousands of tourists sightseeing in the center of this city may have been more than a little surprised to see a forty-foot-high, gaily decorated chariot being pulled around a corner onto Park Lane by scores of chanting and dancing Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees and their friends. But surprise soon turned to delight as the procession drew closer, the bright red-and-yellow canopy towered above, the music grew louder, and the wooden Deity forms of Lord Jagannātha, Lord Balarāma, and Śrīmatī Subhadrā became visible sitting upon their thrones within the chariot. It was London's annual Ratha-yātrā Festival.

The chariot (modeled after those used every year in Purī, India, where Ratha-yātrā is an ancient tradition) rolled down Park Lane along Picadilly Circus to Trafalgar Square. All the while, devotees riding threw packets of *prasādam* (vegetarian food offered to Lord Jagannātha) into the eager hands of the crowd. Śrīla Bhagavān dāsa Goswami, who oversees the affairs of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in Great Britain and initiates new disciples there, led the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa and later spoke on Kṛṣṇa consciousness to five

thousand people gathered around Nelson's Column.

After the talk the celebrants enjoyed performances by children from the local Hare Kṛṣṇa *gurukula* school. The children recited beautiful Sanskrit verses from memory and then staged a drama about Lord Caitanya, the divine incarnation who pioneered the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in India five hundred years ago. The high point of the festival for many was the free feast—one and a half tons of *prasādam* cooked by the devotees and relished by the festival-goers.

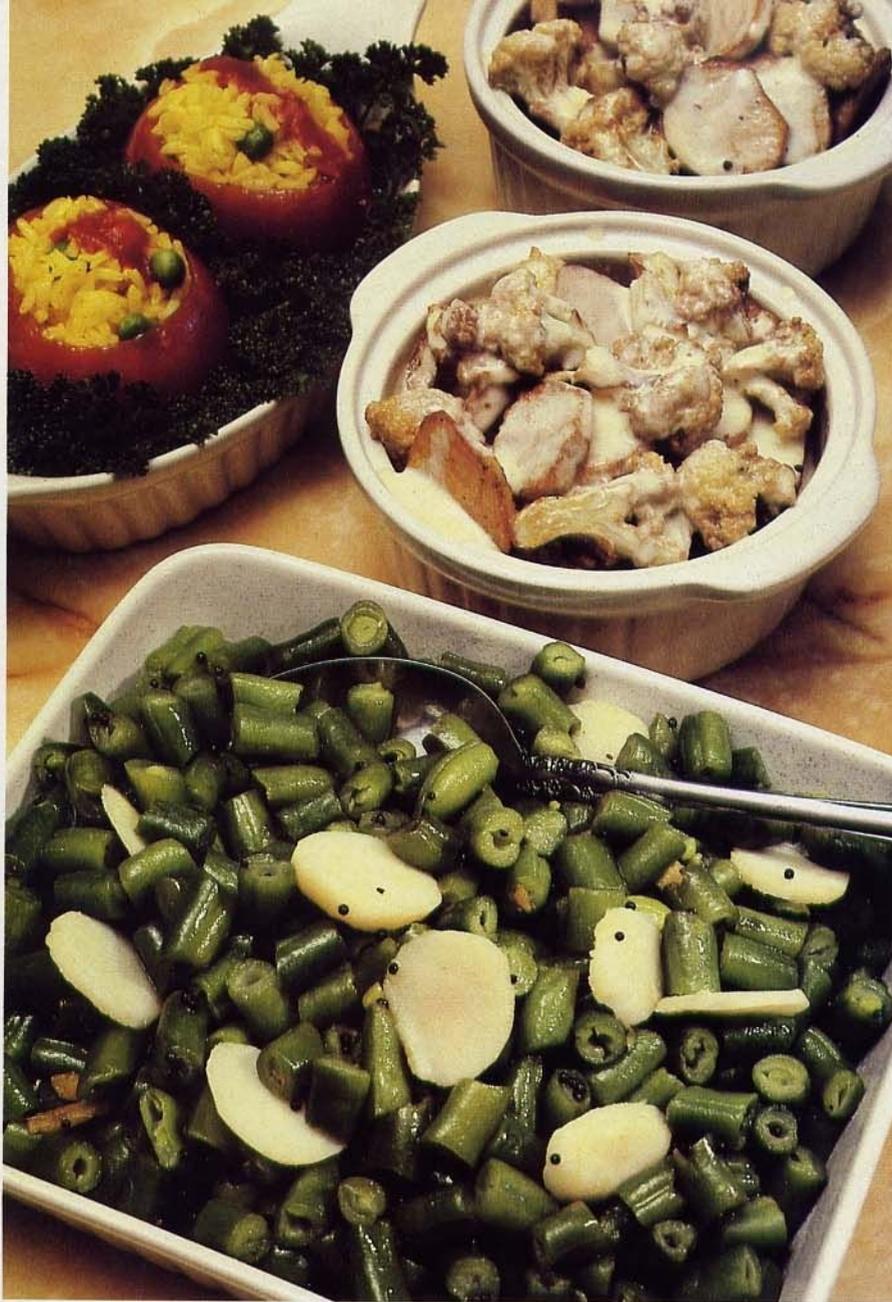
The London Ratha-yātrā is only the first in a series the devotees will hold in England this year. The people of Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Manchester, and Glasgow will also get to see Jagannātha's chariot rolling down their main thoroughfares. What makes it all possible is the ingenious design of the chariot itself. It was built by Māyeśvara dāsa, a highly skilled designer-builder with several years' experience constructing chariots for Hare Kṛṣṇa Ratha-yātrās in Calcutta and Bombay. In only two hours devotees can bring down the canopy on a telescopic winch, sink the struts into one another, fold the

sides up, and slide in other sections, thus making the chariot so compact that it can be jacked up and hoisted onto the bed of a truck.

Comments Māyeśvara, "Śrīla Prabhupāda was the first devotee ever to take Ratha-yātrā out of India and bring it to people who'd never seen it before—the residents of the big cities in the West. I'm sure he'd be pleased to know that we can now build portable chariots and start bringing Ratha-yātrā to smaller cities and towns as well. After all, *Jagannātha* means 'Lord of the Universe,' so Ratha-yātrā is for everyone."

Ethiopians Can Now Read About Kṛṣṇa

London—Forty million Ethiopians will now have a chance to read a book about Kṛṣṇa consciousness: *The Teachings of Prahlāda Mahārāja*. The new book has been translated into Amharic, a language that dates back to biblical times, and published here by Vaṅki-vihārī dāsa, a native Ethiopian. Hari-vilāsa dāsa, of Spiritual Sky Products in France, made a generous donation toward the publication.



Lord Kṛṣṇa's Cuisine

The Perfect Person's Perfect Diet

When you eat what Kṛṣṇa eats, you know you're eating the best way you can for body, mind, and soul.

Text and photo by
VIŚĀKHĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

Like most Westerners, I was raised a meat-eater. Then, about ten years ago, after wrestling with the Kṛṣṇa consciousness philosophy for about a year, I finally accepted it, and along with it came *kṛṣṇa-prasādam* (vegetarian food that's been offered to the Lord). For me, *prasādam* was a delightful part of the whole Kṛṣṇa consciousness culture. I never questioned it or

examined its merits. I simply relished it along with the singing, dancing, and philosophy, and the association of the Lord's devotees. But during the last year I've been analyzing this cuisine from many angles, and I've found that, like everything else directly related to the Supreme Lord, there's no fault in it. I'm convinced there is no better way to eat, whether for

health, nutrition, taste, variety, or spiritual advancement.

For example, consider that the typical Vedic lunch is the main meal of the day. "But supper has always been my main meal," you object. Well, listen to Laurel Robertson, co-author of the best-selling *Laurel's Kitchen*: "Food is the fuel for your day's activities, so it makes no sense at all to eat your biggest meal at night when it's all behind you . . . Dinner should not be heavy."¹

The typical Vedic lunch consists of *capātis* (unleavened whole-wheat breads) rice, *dāl* (bean soup), cooked vegetables, and salad. "The best health insurance of all seems to be a well-chosen vegetarian diet from varied sources and a life free of junk foods," says Vic Sussman, author of *The Vegetarian Alternative*.² Those who associate vegetarians with slump-shouldered, spaced-out oddballs should know that Dr. Irving Fisher of Yale University found that vegetarians performed better than meat-eaters in a series of endurance tests.

And combining various vegetables with rice, whole-wheat bread, and beans has tremendous nutritional advantages. Eaten separately, each of these foods will give you a certain amount of protein, but when you combine them in one meal the total protein your body receives is greater than the sum of the parts. Such combinations can increase the protein by as much as fifty percent!

Here's another way Vedic eating makes sense nutritionally. At a traditional Vedic luncheon you'll find a wedge of lemon on every plate. Why? I always thought it was there for the nuances of taste that lemon juice adds to the various dishes. But according to Gary Null, author of *The New Vegetarian*, lemon juice has another function as well: "Your body has difficulty absorbing iron. Ascorbic acid (vitamin C) increases this absorption."³ There are good sources of iron in our lunch—the bean soup, the whole-wheat bread, the rice, and some of the vegetables—and the lemon juice, rich in vitamin C, helps our body absorb it.

Last summer more fuel was added to the fire of my conviction when a panel of dietary experts from the National Academy of Sciences issued a list of recommendations. Having fully explored the connection between nutrition and cancer, the experts advised people to eat less fat and more vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. In particular, they urged all of us to eat fruits and vegetables rich in vitamin C and betacarotene—in other words, citrus fruits, tomatoes, peppers, carrots, spinach, and the like. These are all staples in Kṛṣṇa's cuisine.

Ultimately, of course, my faith in
(continued on page 30)

(Recipes by Yamunā-devī dāśī)

Water Chestnuts and Fresh String Beans (Singara-Barbati Sabji)

Sometimes fresh water chestnuts are available at Indo-Asian grocers or Oriental markets. For those of you fortunate enough to come across them, this combination will prove delightful.

Preparation time: 15 minutes
Servings: 4 or 5

2 tablespoons vegetable oil or *ghee* (clarified butter)
½ teaspoon black mustard seeds
½-inch to 1-inch piece fresh ginger root, sliced into paper-thin julienne strips
1 pound fresh green stringbeans, washed, trimmed, and cut diagonally into ¼-inch slices
¼ cup water
½ teaspoon cumin powder
¼ teaspoon turmeric powder
1 teaspoon coriander powder
5 to 6 ounces water chestnuts
1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons fresh coriander or parsley leaves, minced

1. Prepare the water chestnuts by slicing them from the crown through the base and peeling away the soft brownish-black casings. Slice the smooth, crispy white bulbs into round pieces ¼-inch thick and soak in cool water until ready to use.

2. Heat the *ghee* in a 10- to 12-inch frying pan or a 10- to 12-inch wok over a medium-high flame until a drop of water flicked in sputters at once. Stir in the black mustard seeds and julienne strips of ginger root and fry until the mustard seeds sputter and pop.

3. Add the sliced string beans and stir-fry for about 5 to 7 minutes. Pour in the water, cover securely, and boil gently for about 5 minutes. Remove the lid and boil off nearly all the remaining liquid. When the water has nearly evaporated, add the water chestnuts and the remaining ingredients and cook for a few minutes until the beans are tender-crisp and the water is gone. Remove the pan or wok from the stove and offer the dish to Kṛṣṇa immediately.

Baked Tomatoes Stuffed with Rice and Green-Pea Pilaf (Tomatar Mattar Pulau)

Preparation time: 25 to 35 minutes
Servings: 4

4 medium-size firm ripe tomatoes, washed and dried
1 to 1½ teaspoons salt
5 tablespoons vegetable oil or *ghee*
6 whole cloves
1 cinnamon stick 1½ inches long
2 whole black cardamom pods
½ tablespoon peeled, finely minced fresh ginger root
½ teaspoon turmeric powder
½ cup slivered or sliced almonds
1 cup basmati rice or any other superior

quality long-grain white rice
2 cups water
1 cup fresh green peas

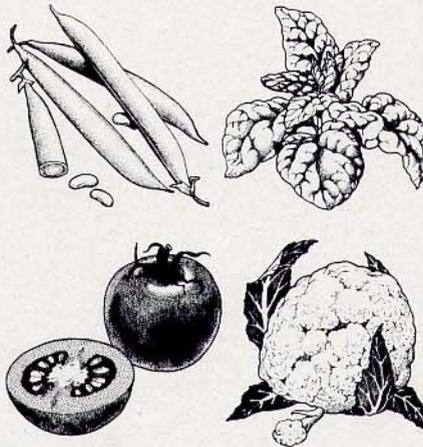
To prepare the savory rice and green-pea pilaf:

1. Clean, wash, soak, and drain the rice.
2. Lightly tap each cardamom pod to partially crush open.

3. Heat 3½ to 4 tablespoons of *ghee* or vegetable oil in a heavy 1½-quart saucepan over a medium flame for 1½ minutes. Add the whole cloves, cinnamon stick, and bruised cardamom pods, and stir-fry for 30 seconds.

4. Add the rice and nuts and stir-fry for about 4 minutes, or until the nuts begin to turn pale golden brown.

5. Boil the water and pour it into the rice-and-nut mixture. Then add the peas and salt. Stir, raising the flame to high and bringing the water to a full boil. Immediately reduce the flame to low, cover with a tight-fitting lid, and, without stirring, simmer for about 15 to 20 minutes, or until all the water has been absorbed and the rice is tender.



6. Remove the cover and cook for 1 or 2 minutes to allow the rice to dry out. Fluff with a fork and, if desired, remove the whole spices.

To prepare the baked tomatoes:

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F.
2. Cut a thin slice off the top of each tomato and set the slices aside. With a teaspoon, carefully scoop out the seeds and pulp and set aside. Sprinkle the inside of the tomatoes with ½ teaspoon salt and invert them on a rack to drain for about 15 minutes. Chop the tomato pulp and force it through a strainer. Collect the pulp and discard the seeds.

3. Heat 1 to 1½ tablespoons of *ghee* or vegetable oil in a 1-quart saucepan over a medium flame until it is hot. Drop in the minced ginger root and fry until brown. Add the tomato pulp and turmeric, and then stir-fry until the pulp is reduced to a thick purée. Remove the pan from the flame and set aside.

4. Stuff the tomatoes with the savory rice and pour a teaspoon of the thick tomato sauce into the opening of each tomato. Replace the tops of the tomatoes saved in step 1.

5. To bake the tomatoes, set them on a rack

over a small, shallow tray with ¼ inch of hot water at the bottom. Bake in the oven at 350° for 10 to 15 minutes before offering to Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Deep-Fried Cauliflower and Potatoes in Sour Cream (Sukhe-Gobi Alu)

Note: The sour cream puts a glistening coat of flavor on the vegetables, but if you let the dish sit the sauce will dry up and the potatoes will turn soggy. So offer this dish to Kṛṣṇa as freshly prepared as possible.

Preparation time: 40 minutes
Soaking time for potatoes: at least ½ hour
Servings: 6 to 8

3 cups *ghee* or vegetable oil
1 medium-size cauliflower
2 large, mature baking potatoes, soaked at least ½ hour
1 to 1¼ teaspoons salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
½ teaspoon turmeric powder
1 cup light cream, plain whisked yogurt, or whisked sour cream at room temperature
1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley or fresh coriander leaves

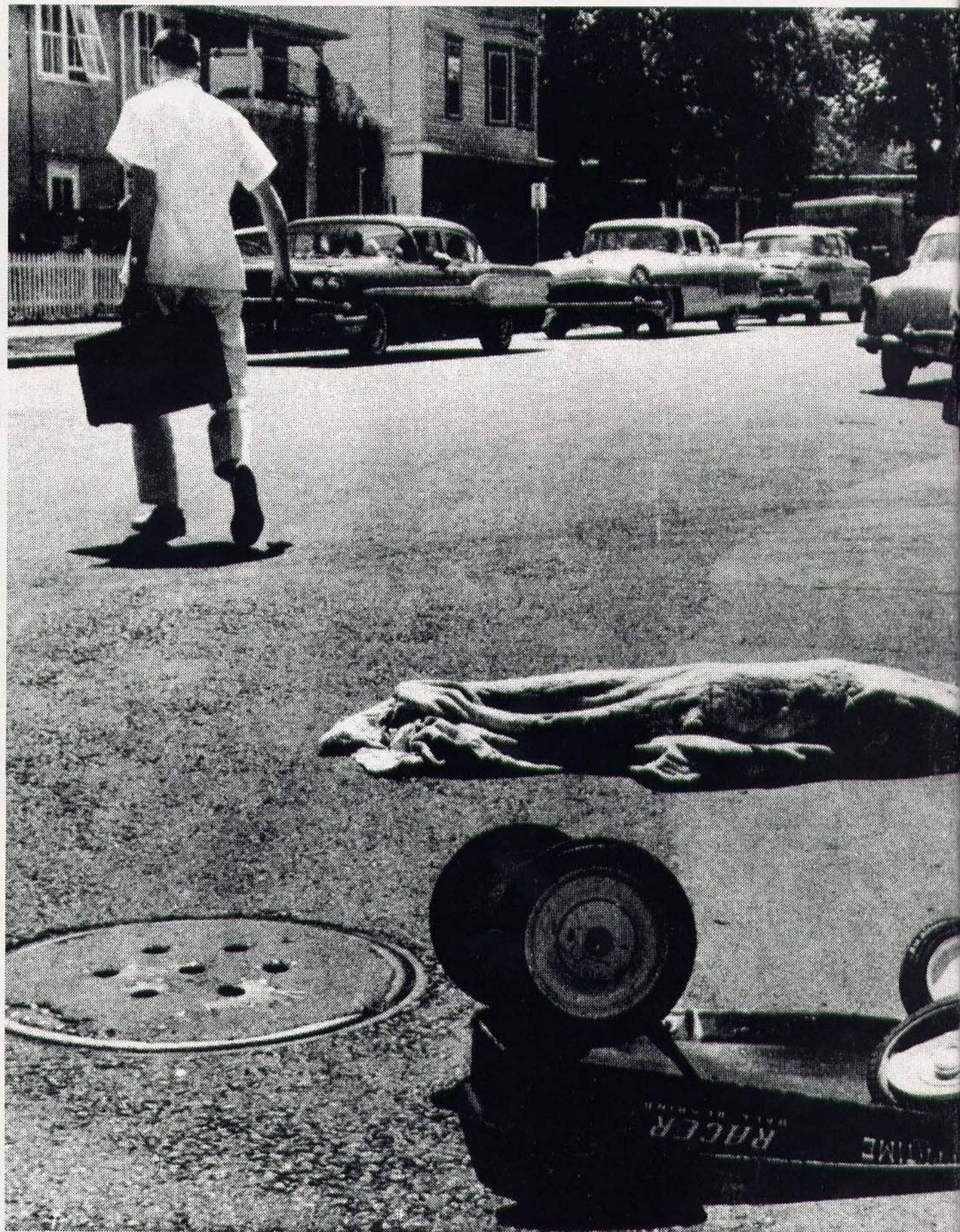
1. Preheat the oven to 250° F.
2. Wash and trim the cauliflower, and then cut it into flowerettes 1½ inches long by ¾ inch thick. Rinse and dry the flowerettes. Cut the potatoes into slices ½ inch thick.

2. Deep-fry the cauliflower and potatoes in either of the following ways:

(A) Heat the *ghee* or oil over a medium-high flame until it reaches 360° (use a deep-frying thermometer). Divide the cauliflower into two batches and fry each batch until the flowerettes are crispy, tender, and golden brown. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on absorbent paper. Keep warm in a preheated oven. Divide the potatoes into two batches and fry each batch until crisp and golden brown. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on absorbent paper. Keep warm in the oven.

(B) Fry the cauliflower as instructed above and double-fry (soufflé) the potatoes. You'll need really mature baking potatoes with a mealy texture and a high starch content. The potatoes must be evenly cut into slices ½ inch thick and then rinsed and soaked for at least a half hour in several changes of ice-water. Fry in small batches, a handful at a time, at 275° to 300° for 4 minutes. Drain for at least five minutes. For the second frying, fry at 380° to 390° for 1 or 2 minutes, or until the potato slices puff and turn brown. Although tricky, souffléed potatoes are novel eye-catchers, and even the duds are acceptable.

2. Combine the fried, hot vegetables in a mixing bowl, sprinkle with salt, pepper, and turmeric, and toss gently to coat the vegetables evenly with the spices. Just before offering to Kṛṣṇa, fold in the cream, yogurt, or sour cream and garnish with the fresh minced herbs.





Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?

A rabbi's best-selling book proposes a radical solution to the problem of evil. Does it work?

by RAVĪNDRA-SVARŪPA DĀSA

About five years ago, when we were having an altar installed in our new temple, the overseer from the marble company would regularly bring his seven-year-old son along to watch. The boy was very handsome, with jet-black hair and pale skin and long, dark eyelashes. He was well-behaved and always seemed in a good humor even though he could hardly walk at all. I never saw him take more than a few steps, leaning on a wall and straining his torso with an awkward twisting motion and then swinging forward a leg clamped into a large, clumsy brace.

The boy had been born crippled. While he was cheerful despite that, his father was not. His father was an angry man. "When that boy was born I stopped going to church," he told me once, as he knelt on our altar putting grout between the marble slabs. "I never did anything bad enough to deserve this. Sure, I'm not a saint, but I don't deserve this. And even if I did, what could *he* have done?"

The aggrieved father, an unsophisticated marble contractor, was raising a problem that has long preoccupied Western religious thinkers, so much so that it has created a special discipline called *theodicy*, a branch of theology concerned with justifying the ways of God to man. Theodicy deals with what is usually called "the problem of evil." St. Augustine cast it into the form of a dilemma: "Either God cannot or God will not eliminate evil from the world. If He cannot, He is not all-powerful; if He will not, He is not all-good." This formulation makes the logic of the problem clear: to show that the existence of a world with evil in it is compatible with the existence of a God who is *both* all-powerful *and* all-good. To deny either one of these attributes would easily explain evil, but orthodox theologians

RAVĪNDRA-SVARŪPA DĀSA holds a doctorate in religion from Temple University, Philadelphia. He has been a devotee of Kṛṣṇa for eleven years.

have always considered that unacceptable.

Those who find the problem of evil intractable usually deny the existence of God outright rather than settle for a God limited either in power or goodness. Would such a finite being really qualify to be called "God"? Would he be worthy of our worship?

Although philosophers and theologians have left us a huge body of technical literature on the problem of evil, it is far from a theoretical concern. It is everybody's problem, sooner or later. Suffering is universal. But oddly enough, practically as widespread is the sufferer's feeling that he has been unfairly singled out. From millions come the outraged cry: "Why me! What did I do to deserve this?"

It is for such people that Harold S. Kushner, a Massachusetts rabbi, has written his book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*. It is a painfully honest treatment of what the author claims is the one theological issue that reaches folks "where they really care."

Kushner's book grew out of his personal pain; his testimony commands respect. He tells how his son was afflicted from infancy with progeria, a disease that brings on rapid aging, so that Kushner saw him grow bald and wrinkled, stooped and frail, until he died of old age in his fourteenth year. Kushner presents the victim's point of view, and he lets us hear the real voices of people in pain. In that stark light, the standard religious justifications for our misfortunes, which Kushner lays out one by one, do indeed seem like facile verbal shuffles that don't take people's suffering seriously but simply try, however lamely, to get God off the hook.

Kushner effectively criticizes the standard answers handed out by priests, ministers, and rabbis, and he offers instead his own radically unorthodox solution. His book has been a bestseller for months, and he has attracted a large and grateful following among Jews, Catholics, and Protestants. Indeed, the popularity of his view among members of America's mainstream churches and synagogues suggests something of a grassroots theological rebellion.

The most reprehensible device of theodicy, in Kushner's view, is to remove the blame from God by putting it onto the sufferer, to explain suffering "by assuming that we deserve what we get, that somehow our misfortunes come as punishment for our sins." To accept that bad things happen to us as God's punishment, Kushner says, may help us make sense of the world, give us a compelling reason to be good, and sustain our belief in an all-powerful and just Deity—yet it is not "religiously adequate."

By "religiously adequate" Kushner means "comforting." Seeing suffering as a punishment for sin is not comforting be-

cause it teaches people to blame themselves for their misfortunes, and so creates guilt, and it also "makes people hate God, even as it makes them hate themselves."

Kushner tells us of a couple who blamed their teenage daughter's sudden death on their own failure to observe the prescribed fast on a Jewish holy day: "They sat there feeling that their daughter's death had been their fault; had they been less selfish and less lazy about the Yom Kippur fast some six months earlier, she might still be alive. They sat there angry at God for having exacted his pound of flesh so strictly, but afraid to admit their anger for fear that He would punish them again. Life had hurt them and religion could not comfort them. Religion was making them feel worse."

It is a virtue of Kushner's work to bring

"Why do ordinary people, nice friendly neighbors, suddenly have to face the agony of pain and tragedy? Why should their lives be so much harder?"

this anger at God up front, to talk at length about what few believers have had the courage to admit, even to themselves. Many people must be grateful that someone has recognized their real feelings and has dealt with them openly.

But the worst thing about the belief that our misdeeds cause our misfortunes, says Kushner, is that it doesn't even fit the facts. People do suffer ills they don't deserve; bad things happen to good people all the time. Kushner adamantly maintains this. To the thousands who resent life's unfair treatment, who proclaim in outrage and indignation, "I didn't do anything to deserve this!" Kushner answers, comfortingly, "That's right, you didn't."

And Kushner is not talking about saints, about people who never do wrong. Rather, he wants to know "why ordinary people, nice friendly neighbors, neither extraordinarily good nor extraordinarily bad, should suddenly have to face the agony of pain and tragedy. . . . They are neither much better nor very much worse than most people we know; why should their lives be so much harder?"

Here, tapping into a great psychic underground of resentment, Kushner has

found his following. He has been willing to openly acknowledge a vast repressed sense of betrayal, a great silenced accusation that leaks unwillingly from the hearts of believers and wends its way up to the divine ear as the universal unvoiced anti-prayer: "You didn't hold up your end of the bargain!"

Kushner insists that the innocent suffer, and as conclusive proof he advances that grievance which has been the bane of Judeo-Christian theodicy and which occasioned his own harrowing foray into the problem of evil: the suffering and death of children.

This is what drove the marble contractor to take up atheism, the usual response of those who feel God has failed them. But atheism is the response Kushner wants to prevent with his book. To restore the faith of those who have been spiritually devastated by misfortune, Kushner offers his own story of how he and his wife "managed to go on believing in God and in the world after we had been hurt."

Kushner is indeed convinced that the existence of a God both all-good and all-powerful is incompatible with the evils of our world; yet he wants us to go on believing in God. His conclusion, then, is simple: we *can* go on believing in God—but not in a God who is all-powerful. God is good, but there are limits to what He can do. God does not want us to suffer; He is as angry and upset at our misfortunes as we are. But He is also helpless.

This is Kushner's credo: "I believe in God," he says, but—"I recognize His limitations." As a result, Kushner tells us in relief, "I no longer hold God responsible for illnesses, accidents, and natural disasters, because I realize that I gain little and I lose much when I blame God for these things. I can worship a God who hates suffering but cannot eliminate it more easily than I can worship a God who chooses to make children suffer and die, for whatever exalted reason."

It is not hard for me to put myself in the place of Kushner or the marble contractor: I have children of my own. I can even understand why, given the kind of religion they know, Kushner can worship only a finite deity, and the marble contractor can't bear to enter a church. Nevertheless, I don't have the problem with God that they do. When bad things happen, I don't find myself calling into question either His power or His goodness.

Of course, I am a devotee of Kṛṣṇa; my religious convictions are founded upon the Vedic theism revealed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. To espouse those convictions has been viewed by most normal Americans as a radical thing to do. But now we find that many normal Americans are willing to do something that, in its way, is more radical than

what I've done. They are abandoning one of the most basic and universal theistic tenets: they are becoming worshipers of God-the-not-almighty.

I want to tell you how we handle the problem of evil. If you, like so many others, are unsatisfied with the standard Judeo-Christian theodicy, perhaps you will consider our Kṛṣṇa conscious view before following Rabbi Kushner.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa explains that you and I, like all living beings, are spiritual entities, souls. We now animate bodies made of matter, but we are not these bodies. Our involvement with matter is unfortunate, for it is the cause of all our suffering. We rightly belong in the spiritual kingdom, where life is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss. There everyone is joyously surrendered to the control of God as they directly serve Him in love. Every action is motivated exclusively by the desire to satisfy God.

But some of us perversely wished God's position for ourselves. We wanted independence so that we could try to enjoy and control others like God does. Yet we cannot, of course, take God's place; He alone has no master. But to grant our desires, God sends us to the material world, where He now controls us indirectly, through His material nature and its laws. Here we can forget God, strive to fulfill our desires, and have the illusion of independence.

Yet we are controlled by the laws of nature, and these force us to perpetually inhabit a succession of temporary material bodies. In ignorance, we identify ourselves with each body we enter, and we suffer again and again the pains of birth, old age, disease, and death. Life after life we transmigrate through plant, animal, and human bodies, sometimes on this planet, sometimes on far better ones, sometimes on far worse.

Once we take a human birth, our destiny is shaped by *karma*. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.3) Kṛṣṇa succinctly defines *karma* as "actions pertaining to the development of material bodies." This means that there are actions we do now that determine our future material births. What kind of actions? Those motivated by material desire. We may do them directly for ourselves or indirectly for our extended self—our family, friends, community, nation, and the like. All such acts sentence us to future births in the material world, there to reap what we have sown.

Karma is of two kinds: good and bad.

Every civilized society recognizes a set of commandments that have divine authority and that regulate material enjoyment. Such commandments, for example, restrict the enjoyment of sex to marital relations and oblige the wealthy to be philanthropic. They also encourage religious and charitable acts, which earn the

performer merit. And they prescribe atonements for transgressors. Thus people are allowed to pursue material enjoyment, but they must observe moral and religious codes. And those who follow these codes, who live pious lives of restricted sensual pleasure, are assured of even greater enjoyment in the life to come.

If we act according to scriptural regulations, the *Vedas* tell us, we will produce good *karma* and in future births enjoy the benefits of our piety. For example, if a person is born in an aristocratic family, is beautiful, well-educated, or wealthy, he is reaping the benefits of good *karma*. The *Vedas* also tell us that if a person is extraordinarily pious he may be reborn on one of the higher planets in this universe, where the standard of sensual pleasure is far

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greater than anything we have on earth.

Conversely, there is bad *karma*. We create bad *karma* when we disregard scriptural injunctions and restrictions in our pursuit of sense pleasure—that is, when we act sinfully. Bad *karma* brings us suffering and misfortune, such as birth in a degraded family, poverty, chronic disease, legal problems, or physical ugliness. Exceptionally bad *karma* will take us into animal bodies or down to lower planets of hellish torment.

The law of *karma* is as strict, relentless, and impartial as the grosser natural laws of motion and gravity. And, like them, it applies to us whether we know about it or not. For example, if I eat the flesh of animals even though I can live as well without it, my bad *karma* will force me to be born as an animal and to be slaughtered myself. Or if I arrange to have a child killed in the womb, I simultaneously arrange for myself to be killed in the same way, again and again, without ever seeing the light of day.

So when you and I were born we inherited, along with our blue eyes or our black hair, the consequences of our past good and bad deeds. We have a long history, and the happiness and distress our lives

will bring is set. We are indeed children of destiny, hostages to fortune, but it is a destiny we created for ourselves, a fortune self-made. And in this life we are continuing to create our future.

But of all this Kushner is unaware, and he can make no sense of his suffering. He has the unshakable conviction that God owes him an agreeable and happy life, that God is obliged to arrange matters for his satisfaction. But God fails, bringing on Kushner's crisis of faith. It can only be that God is either bad or weak, Kushner reasons, and then settles for weakness.

Yet in spite of Kushner, God is both all-good and all-powerful. But He does not engineer our suffering—we do. We are the authors of our *karma*. And it is our decision, not His, that brings us down into the material world, into the realm of suffering.

So the answer to the question "Why do bad things happen to good people?" is "They don't." All of us here in the material world are—how shall I put it?—*not of the best sort*. Reprobates and scapegraces—each of us persona non grata in the kingdom of God. We are sent here because we seek a life independent of God, and He grants our desire as far as possible. But since His position is already taken, we can only play at being God while deceiving ourselves that we are independent of Him.

At the same time, the material world reforms us, teaches us through reward and punishment to acknowledge God's supreme position. For by natural law we are rationed out the pleasures we desire according to our observance of the divine regulations, following the ways of good *karma*. The practice of good *karma*, then, amounts to a materially motivated religion, an observance of God's orders on the inducement of material reward. By this practice, spanning many lifetimes, I may, it is hoped, become habituated to following God's commands and reconciled to His supremacy. Thereupon I become eligible at last to take up the pure and eternal religion, in which, completely free of all material desires, I serve God in loving devotion, asking nothing in return. This religion, called *bhakti* in the *Vedas*, causes my return to the kingdom of God. The acts of *bhakti* are karmaless: they produce no future material births, good or bad.

From the *Vedas*, then, we learn of two clearly distinct religions, one pure and the other impure. Practicing good *karma* can elevate us in the material world, secure for us a vast life span on heavenly planets, and so on. In other words, it can make us first-class inmates of the material world. But *bhakti* alone can release us from the prison altogether. Even the best *karma* cannot free us from suffering, as Kṛṣṇa warns in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.16): "From the highest planet in the material world down to the lowest, all are places of misery where

repeated birth and death take place.” But *bhakti* destroys all karmic reaction, extirpates all material desires, revives our pure love for God, and delivers us beyond birth and death to His abode. There we never taste temporary, material pleasure but rather relish eternal, spiritual bliss by serving Kṛṣṇa and thus joining in His bliss.

It is a signal virtue of the Vedic tradition that it distinguishes so clearly between the religion of good *karma* and the religion of *bhakti* and offers *bhakti* purely, without compromise. Most of us, whether Catholic, Protestant, or Jew, have been taught a kind of common karmic religion: God has put us on this earth to enjoy ourselves, and if we do so within the ordained limits, not forgetting to show God gratitude and proper respect, He will see to our success. We should ask God to meet our needs and fulfill our lawful desires, for He is the greatest order supplier. If we are observant and good, He will reward us well in this life and even better in the next.

This is the religion Kushner professed: “Like most people, my wife and I had grown up with an image of God as an all-wise, all-powerful parent figure who would treat us as our earthly parents did, or even better. If we were obedient and deserving, He would reward us. If we got out of line, He would discipline us, reluctantly but firmly. He would protect us from being hurt or from hurting ourselves, and would see to it that we got what we deserved in life.”

Of course, Kushner begins to reconsider his religion when he discovers that it doesn’t work. At this point, most people (like the marble contractor) become atheists. The idea of God as order supplier is thus responsible for a great deal of unbelief. But Kushner wants to preserve his faith in God, or at least in God’s goodness, by denying His power.

Kushner’s chief defense of his position is that it is “religiously adequate,” that is, comforting. You will recall that he accused conventional theodicy of making people feel worse—causing them to feel guilty and to hate God. The explanation of suffering I have presented shouldn’t make anyone feel worse. True, it says that we cause our own suffering, yet the point is not to make us feel guilty. The point is to let us know we’ve made some mistakes and should correct them. And why should we resent God for our suffering? Suffering comes by the law of *karma*. But *karma* is the impartial working of causal law. Hostility toward God is what has put us under that law; it certainly won’t help us get out. For His part, God is making every effort to get us out: He comes to this world from time to time to teach the path of *bhakti*, which will destroy all our *karma*, He sends His representatives throughout the world on the same mission, and He even stays

with us as the indwelling Supersoul during our sojourn in the material world, ready to give us the intelligence to approach Him when we put aside our ancient enmity.

Kushner has the right instincts: he too would like people to cease their enmity toward God, and he even recognizes the ignobility of worshiping Him on the condition that He satisfy our demands. But if only we recognize God’s limitations, he says, we won’t be angry at Him when things go wrong in our life, nor will we worship Him for the satisfaction of our desires. Kushner thus urges the religious adequacy of his own theodicy.

But it is far from adequate. Kushner’s

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problem is that he cannot overcome the conditioning of karmic religion. He needs something more spiritually powerful than good instincts to free him from the implicit hostility toward God, the unconscious, deep-seated unwillingness to serve Him unconditionally, that binds the conditioned soul to *karma*.

Kushner is still hostile. Because God did not satisfy his demands, Kushner must think of Him as ineffectual and weak. Kushner once thought of God as a parent who always gratifies our desires. But now Kushner views Him as needing our forgiveness—for having failed as a parent: “Are you capable of forgiving and loving God even when you have found out that He is not perfect, even when He has let you down and disappointed you by permitting bad luck and sickness and cruelty in His world, and permitting some of those things to happen to you? Can you learn to love and forgive Him despite His limitations . . . as you once learned to forgive and love your parents even though they were not as wise, as strong, or as perfect as you needed them to be?”

Kushner asserts that his hostility toward God is no more, but what he has really done is simply change the form in which it is expressed—from rage to condescension. And this idea of God will only support our unwillingness to acknowledge His supremacy, and thus it will help keep us in the material world, where we will continue to suffer. Thus Kushner’s theodicy will not make us feel better; it will only make us feel worse.

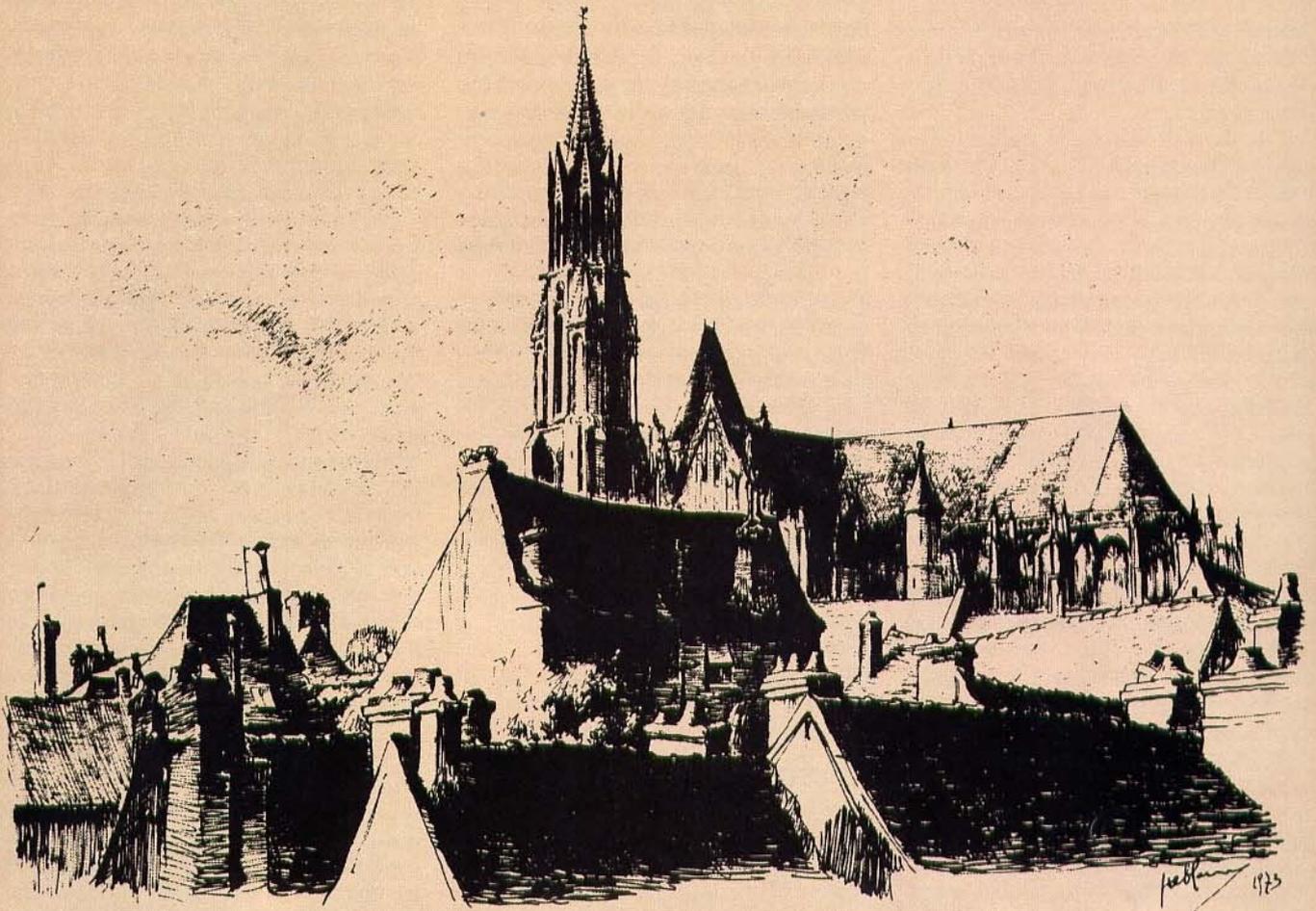
Furthermore, if we think God weak and ineffectual, it is certain that we will not be able to surrender to Him fully and serve Him without any personal consideration. The condition that makes such service and surrender possible is His promise of complete protection. “Declare it boldly,” Kṛṣṇa tells His disciple Arjuna, “My devotee never perishes” (Bg. 9.31). Because we can depend upon God completely, we can surrender to Him completely: “Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Therefore you have nothing to fear” (Bg. 18.66).

If we accept Kushner, we will always have to look out for ourselves; we will have to act for our own sake, and so we will remain involved with *karma*. Our service to God will never be total and unconditional. Indeed, as long as we insist on taking care of ourselves, God will leave us to our own devices.

But if we accept Kṛṣṇa, if we give up independent action and depend completely on God, devoting all our effort to His service, He will take complete care of us. We shouldn’t expect God to remove all inconvenience, but if difficulty comes we should simply tolerate it, recognizing that our residual bad *karma* is playing itself out, and continue to expect God’s mercy.

God will minimize the karmic reaction due us, but the ultimate way He protects us is by bestowing spiritual consciousness upon us and destroying the ignorance by which we identify ourselves with matter. Kṛṣṇa describes that consciousness in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.22-23): “In that joyous state, one is situated in boundless transcendental happiness and enjoys himself through transcendental senses. . . . Being situated in such a position, one is never shaken even in the midst of the greatest difficulty. This, indeed, is actual freedom from all miseries arising from material contact.” God frees us not so that we can goof off, not so we can get some “reward,” but so that we can serve Him wholeheartedly, without any other concern.

So if we accept Kṛṣṇa, we can solve the problem of evil. That solution doesn’t lie in rejecting either the goodness or the power of God, but rather in taking advantage of that goodness and power to perform pure devotional service—and in that way end all our suffering forever. ❁



Privilege Declined

“I thought of the people I had known who had shown the promise of genius and then left that promise unfulfilled . . .”

by YOGEŚVARA DĀSA

My landlord is a descendant of the Rothschilds, that complex genealogy of European aristocrats who have been accused of everything short of cannibalism, including the takeover of the world by manipulation of their vast fortunes. Well, my landlord falls short of Napoleonic in his ambitions: his are triumphs of the simple. Granted, in our touristic French village there are few houses to match the nobility and gilded decor of his; but he has no desire to buy up the rest of

YOGEŚVARA DĀSA, a devotee of Kṛṣṇa for thirteen years, is a contributing editor for BACK TO GODHEAD magazine. He is also head of Bala Books, which publishes Kṛṣṇa conscious literature for children.

the village or extend his power beyond the hundred or so walls of his humble empire.

Since we live in houses that face each other, I see him sometimes in the early morning, standing proudly at his window, breathing in deep drafts of fresh country air. From what I have seen of the inside of his mansion, he favors Louis XV furniture, fine satin draperies, and chandeliers of Austrian crystal. His elegant living room is lined from cashmere carpet to frescoed ceiling with handsomely bound books, heavy with gold embossing and hand-engraved designs. He loves to open wide the door of that great room as though drawing open the curtain on some lavish theatrical presentation, yet he has the re-

serve and good judgment not to stare at his guests, whatever their reaction may be to the drama of wealth and power unfolding before their eyes.

He likes the cultivated forms of nature and prides himself on the neatly trimmed lawns and brilliant flower gardens of his great estate, lined with shrubbery pruned into shapes. Although he's well into his fifties, he wears his age nobly. Yet his neck is not stiff nor his eye hard, for he has seen the price men pay for pride and arrogance, and he is careful to respect the integrity of a person's labors, however humble his station. In fact, nothing so satisfies him as to loaf upon the cool veranda of his club and talk about the world with anyone and everyone, to joke and laugh, and drink

aged Scotch.

After my return from a recent trip to India, I presented him a two-foot-square painting of Kṛṣṇa in royal blues and gold, a fine piece of work in traditional Rajasthani style on silk. He looked admiringly at the painting.

"You know," he said, looking up with an air of seriousness he assumes at such moments, "you are a *lyrique*, my friend—intelligent, and despite your mystical affiliations" (he leaned forward as if to share with me some deep secret) "a man of good taste." And with that he chuckled heartily, satisfied as much by his own remarks as by the gift.

Well, such is my landlord. He has seen the sun setting on the Riviera, smelled the wet, fresh earth of Brittany after the spring rains, felt the surge of admiration ripple across the social halls of Paris as he enters with his lovely young wife, heard the whistle and whine of the Concord as he jets across the Atlantic. No Napoleon is he, no strong face burning East. Yet, in some remote corner of his being, a *lyrique* himself, a sprig off the upper branch of French life. A thinker of dull thoughts, for the most part, but poetic in their expression.

When we met that day, I felt the detached curiosity a devotee may sometimes feel when confronted by the other life, the life of privilege he might have known had fate not stepped in and introduced him to the eternal message of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Was it all so bad, the life my landlord knew? Could I not learn to enjoy the world of privilege as he did, better equipped as I would be with the knowledge of how far to go in the pleasures of the mind and flesh? Could there not be for me, too, a portion of life's bounty as the world knows it, or were my vows of spiritual discipline un retractable, too firm to allow me to rejoin the familiar world of family, society, and love?

The vision of what might have been filled my horizon as I left his house that day. What kept me from reaching for the other life my visit had brought so sharply into focus was in part its philosophical and spiritual deficiencies. But it was more the utter resignation, the capitulation such a life would demand. Most people I knew who lived for the world of the senses so lacked individual distinction that each seemed a small particle of some immense, nondescript lifestuff rather than an eternal spiritual being, capable of feeling and inspiring others to feel the mystery of the creation.

But there was something more as well.

After leaving my landlord's house I went for a stroll in nearby Jean Jacques Rousseau Park, and there I saw two attractive girls cantering gaily about on dark chestnut horses. Two well-groomed young

men escorted them on bays. Responsive to the reins, the horses pranced and strutted. The carefree picture set against the immense countryside was like a mockery, the fruit inches away from Tantalus's lips.

I was fascinated by the scene. As far as the distance would allow, I began examining the faces of the riders, trying to penetrate the social masks they wore, probing, searching as for some clue. I knew the young men. They had been at a reception my landlord had given for new residents of our village. We had spoken of India, of Kṛṣṇa, and of the search for one's spiritual self. They had listened, politely, nodding at the appropriate times—yes, surely such an interest was needed for a balanced

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life. But their speech was casual, social, for they already knew everything and had seen everything, and now they received every new intelligence with an amused look in their eyes. Nothing shocked them any more. Not death, not old age, not all the signs thrown by nature to warn us of our own mortality. It was the way things were. It was what they had come to expect of life.

Ah, there it was. It was not so much what they did that made their life impossible for me, for I also traveled and met people of importance and occasionally even rode a horse. It was their attitude of acceptance, their complacency about themselves and about their life, their lack of faith in anything better. I could not, would not ever come to that. For me the utter simplicity of soul, of self beyond matter, would remain a constant source of wakefulness against approaching lethargy or other dangers. I remembered an example my spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, had once used to describe the attentiveness of a devotee. Samurai warriors,

he described, were trained by their martial arts *guru* to sleep so lightly that the slightest sound would wake them and put them on guard. At night the *guru* would silently creep up and bring a bamboo switch swiftly down across the disciple's legs. It would get to the point where the disciple could hear the swish of his *guru's* stick, awaken, and roll instantly out of range before the switch hit the ground.

Yes, that was it, the core of the problem. Could I as a devotee belong to this world of privilege without taking upon myself the apathy and burden of that privilege? Could I ever speak truthfully of the material world as I had learned to see it, help others awaken to its snare of illusion, and at the same time belong to this world of which I would have to speak? Were the two things possible? Would not the very fact of living to see my own ambitions fulfilled come between me and the truth of my eternal self, first as a shadow, then as a virtual wall? And would I then be any different from the vast camps of others who had let themselves be captured by false visions of wealth, ease, pleasure, by the deadly honors of profit, adoration, and distinction?

That was the danger, and it was real enough. I thought of the people I had known who had come close to the full, whole life of devotees, who had shown the promise of genius and then had left that promise unfulfilled because they decided to trade that spiritual prerogative for just such a mess of the world's pottage of loping horses and pretty young girls. Touched by Śrīla Prabhupāda's words and character, they had begun as determined devotees but had suffered some eclipse of vision and fallen away. And whenever I meet them, whatever they have become—and there is no limit to their variety—they are like the blind men with the elephant: each one has accepted some part of life for the whole, some fragmentary truth or half-truth for truth itself, some personal little interest for the all-embracing interest of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If that were to happen to me, how could I ever speak again?

I spent that evening quietly at home, chanting Kṛṣṇa's holy names and reading *Bhagavad-gītā*. There was more than mere solace in these humble acts. There was strength to push on even when the whole world seems to be forcing you to be someone else. There was the wisdom to reinforce the fight against *māyā*, the illusory energy. And there was Kṛṣṇa, and a vision of a sweet homecoming at battle's end, urging me on:

"Therefore the doubts which have arisen in your heart out of ignorance should be slashed by the weapon of knowledge. Armed with *yoga*, O Bhārata, stand and fight" (*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.42). 

LETTERS

(continued from page 6)

To give an example, the Indian government actively encourages artificial methods of birth control, and secularists urge that every pregnant woman has “the right to choose” to abort the life of her unborn child. Under this approach, birth control is seen as a social necessity, and religious objections are “traditionally held values” that must be “overcome by education.”

Since everyone has a right to his own beliefs, if you believe abortion is murder it’s murder—and if you believe it isn’t murder, it isn’t. Spiritual objections are “one’s own religious viewpoints” that one shouldn’t be allowed to “impose upon others.”

Yet within the urge for secularism we do see something worth holding on to, and that is freedom from bigotry and narrow-minded sectarianism. As you point out, a government has no business forcing the beliefs and rituals of one faith on the people of another. And we’ll do our best to keep sectarianism from creeping into our pages.

But must we choose only between secularism and sectarianism, between a god-

less state and a State God?

We say no.

You write that you hope to become a fully self-realized person. And why should the leaders of the state not also be fully self-realized persons? After all, the alternative to self-realization is self-ignorance. And why should someone ignorant run the show?

Self-realization is the greatest need of every human being—and what kind of government is it that disregards the citizen’s greatest need?

The self-realized person can’t ignore God or banish Him from ordinary mundane affairs of state, nor can he press God into service as the standard bearer for some narrowly conceived state religion.

When a person truly becomes self-realized, he goes beyond limited sectarian dualities, beyond petty disputes between one religious faith and another. The self-realized person sees that God is one, even though people may worship Him in different ways.

The basic principles of religion are universal. Truthfulness, cleanliness, austerity, mercy—these values transcend the barriers between man’s religious faiths.

And these are values the state and its leaders must uphold.

You say that a government has no right to teach religion to its people. But without religion, irreligion takes over—and brings with it corruption, injustice, violence, and decay.

Therefore government has not only the right but the duty to teach religion. But while doing so it must honor and protect religious diversity by staying above sectarian bias.

On the material platform, religious faiths are at odds with one another. But on the spiritual platform, when we go beyond externals, we come to the real essence of religion, which is love of God. And with that love for God comes love for all other living beings, regardless of distinctions between one religion and another, one race or sex and another, one nation and another, and even one species of life and another.

Therefore real peace and freedom are guaranteed not by the state that is materialistic and secular but by the state whose leaders and their followers pursue this highest ideal of self-realization and universal God consciousness. ❁

Social Security

(continued from page 7)

work. If all goes well, upon completing his education he begins a career, marries, and raises a family. After a life of struggle to maintain himself and his family and to enjoy as much worldly pleasure as possible, he begins to grow old. Soon he can no longer work, he becomes dependent, and his ability to enjoy vanishes. Eventually he dies in great unhappiness.

The Vedic literature teaches that such a man has wasted his life. Having failed to try for self-realization, he must return to this world as a human being or even, if very sinful, as an animal or plant. Such a birth is a great defeat. To prevent such a disaster, the leaders of Vedic times structured society in this way:

From the age of five to twenty-five a person would live in a school under the direction of a self-realized spiritual master who would teach him the techniques of self-realization along with a particular trade or profession. Education was not merely academic or technical. A student was expected to develop such qualities as self-control, simplicity, compassion, purity, and austerity—qualities his *guru* exemplified and could thus impart. During the years of schooling, all students would remain celibate.

After twenty-five, some students would stay single and continue their spiritual

training but most would marry and take up a trade or profession in society. In either case, self-realization would remain the central goal of life.

When the husband and wife reached fifty and had fulfilled their family obligations, they would dedicate themselves full-time to attaining self-realization. They would give up sexual relations and travel together to places of pilgrimage. Knowing that family relationships are temporary and that their real relationship is with Lord Kṛṣṇa, they would prepare themselves for eventual separation.

During this stage of life the couple would live very simply, taking meals and finding lodging in *āśramas* the state especially maintained for retired people. Retirement in Vedic society was much different from what it is today. Then, people would disentangle themselves from work and family not so they could vainly try to enjoy their “sunset years” but so they could devote their full time to spiritual pursuits. And because they had been trained from childhood in renunciation, they gladly reduced their material needs and thus imposed no great financial burden on society.

In the final stage of life the husband and wife would separate. Ideally, the wife would then live in a temple *āśrama* or with her grown-up children (from whom she would receive the utmost respect and support), and the husband would accept *sannyāsa*, the renounced order. He would

then travel widely, teaching other members of society the science of transcendence. No one would refuse the *sannyāsī* food and lodging. In fact, he would be highly respected as a great asset to society, for he would be a living example of the goal of the Vedic teachings.

In his final years, the *sannyāsī* would stop traveling and reside in a sacred place of pilgrimage. There he would prepare for death. If at the close of his life he had achieved complete self-realization—his life’s mission—he would return home, to the kingdom of God, and enjoy an eternal life of bliss and knowledge in association with the Supreme Lord.

The devotees of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness are striving to reestablish this sane and rational social system throughout the world. They know that aside from reviving our relationship with the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, there is no security in this world, social or otherwise. Even if the Social Security system gave each elderly person a million dollars a month, it couldn’t save anyone from the inevitable insecurity brought on by old age, disease, and impending death. The only sure path is to rely completely on Kṛṣṇa. As He declares in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.22): “Those who devote themselves steadfastly to Me, meditating on My transcendental form, receive all bounties and all security from Me.” For the insecure of any age, what could be more reassuring? ❁

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.)

Causal Ocean—The spiritual ocean that forms the boundary between the material and spiritual worlds.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* tells us that beyond the temporary, material world in which we live is the eternal, spiritual world, the kingdom of God.

The spiritual world is like a vast effulgent sky, and in that spiritual sky there are innumerable spiritual planets. But one small corner of that spiritual sky lies under a cloud, known as the *mahat-tattva*. Within the *mahat-tattva* are the waters of the Causal Ocean.

Lying on the Causal Ocean is an expansion of Lord Kṛṣṇa known as Mahā-Viṣṇu. While Mahā-Viṣṇu sleeps in a mystic trance, innumerable universes emanate from His gigantic body like bubbles. These are the material universes, such as the one in which we live. They float on the waters of the Causal Ocean, which is also sometimes called the River Virajā.

The geography of the material and spiritual domains is further described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Christ—The devotees of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement accept Jesus Christ as the son of God. In technical language, he is called a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*. This means that he is an ever-liberated servant of God who descends from the spiritual to the material world at God's behest.

In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa says that in age after age He descends to the material world to protect the godly, vanquish the demonic, and reassert the principles of religion. Sometimes He Himself descends, and sometimes He sends His empowered messenger from the spiritual kingdom. Jesus Christ is such an empowered spiritual messenger of God.

The Bible speaks of Jesus Christ as the son of God, and the Vedic scriptures speak of Lord Kṛṣṇa as God Himself. So Jesus Christ is the son of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The father and son are one in purpose. Lord Kṛṣṇa descends and tells us, "Love Me. Always think of Me. Devote yourself to Me." And Jesus Christ tells us, "Love my father." So one who fully devotes himself to the service of Kṛṣṇa is a perfect Christian.

Cintāmaṇi—A spiritual gem. As the land in the material world consists mostly of dirt and clay, the land in the spiritual world is made of *cintāmaṇi*. And unlike the lifeless stones beneath our feet, the *cintāmaṇi* gems are fully conscious. In the spiritual world, everything is fully conscious; unconsciousness doesn't exist.

By the grace of the *cintāmaṇi*, the residents of the spiritual world can freely have whatever they desire. But these spiritual residents desire nothing for themselves—they desire only to please Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Cintāmaṇi was also the name of a prostitute who became the spiritual master of the great devotee Bilvamaṅgala Thākura. Before becoming a devotee, he was enamored of this prostitute, and on one occasion he underwent all sorts of difficulties to reach her home in the midst of a torrential storm. When she opened the door and learned of the troubles he'd gone through, she said, "Oh, if you only had this kind of attraction for Kṛṣṇa instead of for me, how wonderful your life would be!" These words awakened his spiritual consciousness, and he renounced materialistic life to become a pure devotee. He honored Cintāmaṇi as one of his spiritual masters because it was she who had turned him to the spiritual path.

Citraketu—Citraketu, a great king, had many wives but no children. By the blessings of the sage Aṅgirā, one wife finally gave birth to a son. But the other wives became envious and killed the child with poison.

Aṅgirā then appeared again before Citraketu with the sage Nārada, who by mystic power revived the child long enough for the child to enlighten the father by speaking words of spiritual instruction.

Thereafter, Citraketu became an enlightened soul, but later he was cursed to undergo birth as a demon. But even in this demonic life he retained his enlightenment, and when finally killed in battle he returned to the kingdom of God.

The history of King Citraketu appears in the Sixth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Perfect Diet

(continued from page 20)

Kṛṣṇa's cuisine is part of my faith in Kṛṣṇa. We can adjust our diet in so many ways to become healthier or stronger or thinner, or just to enjoy ourselves. But if we simply offer Kṛṣṇa what He likes and then eat that, we can get all these benefits and more. Why? Because there's no mistake in Lord Kṛṣṇa's dietary preferences: they're as perfect and complete as He is.

Westerners often doubt the health value of *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*, or the truth of Vedic wisdom in general. In response, Śrīla Prabhupāda, my spiritual master, would often give this example: Although we ordinarily regard excreta of any kind as contaminating, the *Vedas* declare that cow dung is pure—so pure that when smeared on a dirty place the place becomes decontaminated. And, in fact, for centuries simple Indian villagers have cleansed their homes with cow dung (much to the horror of Westerners). Only recently has a prominent scientist and doctor in Calcutta analyzed cow dung and found that, sure enough, it has antiseptic properties.

Similarly, Kṛṣṇa's devotees have eaten His *prasādam* for centuries, and only recently have nutritionists and doctors discovered its nutritional benefits. Yet with all their experiments, analyses, and studies, they have yet to disclose the *spiritual* benefits of eating *prasādam*. But why wait for them? Each of us can experience those benefits for ourselves simply by cooking and offering our vegetarian food to Lord Kṛṣṇa, for His pleasure. 

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1. Laurel Robertson, Carol Flinders, and Bronwen Godfrey, *Laurel's Kitchen* (New York: Bantam Books, 1981), pp. 108, 150.
2. Vic Sussman, *The Vegetarian Alternative* (Emmaus, Pa.: Rodale Press, 1978), p. 124.
3. Gary Null, *The New Vegetarian* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1978), p. 317.

FESTIVALS

and the 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 Hare Kṛṣṇa center nearest you will gladly tell you more about the meaning of the festivals listed here.

Leap-Year Month of Puruṣottama (September 18–October 16)

September 28—Padminī Ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).

October 13—Paramā Ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).

Month of Padmanābha

(second half, October 17–November 1)

October 21—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhavānanda Goswami Viṣṇupāda, one of the present spiritual masters in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

October 27—Rāma-vijayotsava (festival in honor of Lord Rāma's victory over Rāvaṇa). Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa center. Appearance anniversary of the great teacher Madhvācārya.

October 28—Pāśāṅkuṣā Ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).

October 29—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, great associates and followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

November 1—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Murāri Gupta, an intimate associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Rāsa dance of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Dāmodara-vrata begins (offering of lamps for one month). Fourth month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from urad dāl).

Month of Dāmodara

(November 2–December 1)

This month (also known as Kārttika) is particularly festive, especially in Vṛndāvana, the town ninety miles south of present-day Delhi where Lord Kṛṣṇa enacted His childhood pastimes. The *Nectar of Devotion* (Śrīla Prabhupāda's summary study of the sixteenth-century devotional classic *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*) states that if during Kārttika a person visits Vṛndāvana and performs even a little devotional service, he easily reaches the highest platform of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

November 8—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Narottama dāsa Thākura. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Harikeśa Swami Viṣṇupāda, one of the present spiritual masters in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

November 11—Śrīramā Ekādaśī (fasting from grains and beans).

November 15—Dīwālī (the festival of decorating Kṛṣṇa's temple with lamps). Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa center. (Celebration on 14th)

November 16—Govardhana-pūjā (festival celebrating the worship of Govardhana Hill by the residents of Vṛndāvana and Kṛṣṇa's lifting of the hill). Profuse distribution of sanctified food highlights this festival. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa center. (Celebration on 14th)

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If you're a scientific person, apply your mind to the science of self-realization. Read *Mechanistic and Nonmechanistic Science*, an investigation into the nature of consciousness and

form by Richard L. Thompson, Ph.D. (Sadāpūta dāsa).

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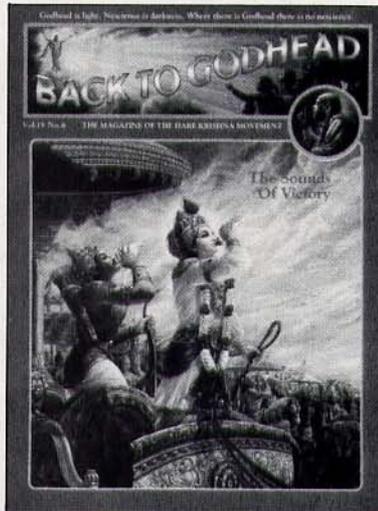
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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

A Proposal for Economic Sanity

Unemployment. Inflation. Recession. High interest rates. Mounting personal, national, and international debt. Depression. The litany of economic woes pours from television, radio, and printed page, and no one can seem to explain them, much less do anything about them. Yet as complex as they seem, all these problems share a common root: the presence of insatiable lust and greed in the human heart. Expunge lust and greed, and you solve these economic problems. Sound too simple? Let's analyze the situation from the viewpoint of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, a summary of India's ancient spiritual wisdom.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa is asked by His disciple Arjuna, "By what is one impelled to perform sinful acts even unwillingly, as if by force?" Kṛṣṇa replies, "It is lust only, Arjuna, which is born of contact with the material modes of passion and later transformed into wrath and which is the all-devouring sinful enemy of this world." Later Kṛṣṇa explains that lust is inherent in the lower self of a materialistic man—in his senses, mind, and intelligence—and that this lust is never satisfied. By acting under the impulse of lust, Kṛṣṇa says, one becomes greedy.

Greed is the constant push to accumulate wealth, to exploit nature and our fellow man and thus increase material enjoyment as far as possible. In the 1940's Hollywood film *Key Largo*, the "good guy" (Humphrey Bogart) asks the mobster (Edward G. Robinson) what he wants that drives him to theft and murder. In reply the mobster snarls, "I want *more, more, more!*" This is greed, the demand of the lower self.

When our lower self dominates our higher self (the soul), our intelligence serves lust and greed, and so we seek to exploit nature and other people unlimitedly. Thus we have built up a huge technological machine that requires vast amounts of natural resources like oil, iron, and uranium to keep going. Since the earth's resources are limited but man's desire to exploit is ever-expanding, naturally there are imbalances, shortages, poverty, and depressions. Also, the desire to exploit leads to haves and have-nots, which in turn leads to social chaos.

Let's consider an alternative society,

one based on the principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Such a society would emphasize the fulfillment of our spiritual needs while providing sufficient but not exaggerated material necessities. This is the ideal Wordsworth spoke of a century and a half ago: plain living and high thinking. The lower self, as expressed by the gangster in *Key Largo*, should be controlled by the higher self. We can do this not by suppressing our lower impulses but by experiencing the higher taste of our eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

Basic to Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the knowledge that the real self is beyond the body. The real self, the spirit soul, is eternal, and human life is meant for self-realization, for coming to the state of full awareness of God, or Kṛṣṇa, and attaining our eternal life with Him. A devotee therefore minimizes his material desires and necessities by directing his energies toward activities of self-realization, such as chanting the names of God and helping others to become Kṛṣṇa conscious. The transcendental pleasure a devotee feels from these activities diminishes his greed and lust; he is thus satisfied with a simple life and is not a burden on the earth's resources or on his fellow man.

We should not conclude, however, that because devotees don't exploit nature unnecessarily they are all poverty-stricken. God provides basic economic well-being to all creatures, what to speak of His devotees. As the *Īsopaniṣad* states, the world is so created by the Supreme that it supplies the needs of all the living beings who inhabit it, provided they take only what is their quota and do not encroach upon the quotas of others. Seen in this light, problems such as poverty and a shortage of food are but creations of man's greed and foolishness. We don't find poverty or a food shortage in the animal kingdom, except where man has tampered with the animals' natural habitat.

Therefore, we should be satisfied with what nature provides. We should also use nature's resources in the service of Kṛṣṇa. Then, as He Himself states in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, He will supply everything needed for material well-being.

The produce of the field, for ex-

ample, is under the control of nature, which in turn is under Kṛṣṇa's control. Man can develop the most sophisticated agricultural technology, but if nature doesn't supply the rain there will be no fruits, grains, and vegetables. Ultimately, therefore, earth's natural resources are under the control of Kṛṣṇa, and He can provide a bounty as long as man lives sanely, in accordance with the laws of nature and God.

So we do not advocate that man should live as a primitive. There can be Kṛṣṇa conscious cities and farm communities, along with the development of culture and science at the highest level. But we should create nothing for exaggerated sense pleasure or for the exploitation of the many by the few. When we center all our activities on Kṛṣṇa and work for His satisfaction, there will naturally be economic, political, and social harmony. According to Vedic history this kind of God-centered civilization once flourished throughout the world.

Here is how the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [1.10.4-6], the foremost *Purāṇa*, or Vedic history, describes the prosperity people enjoyed during the rule of the pious King Yudhiṣṭhira: "The clouds showered all the water that people needed, and the earth produced all necessities in profusion. Due to its fatty milk bag and cheerful attitude, the cow used to moisten the grazing ground with milk. In every season, the rivers, oceans, hills, mountains, forests, and fields paid their tax quota to the king in profusion. Because the king had no enemy, no one was ever disturbed by diseases, mental agonies, or excessive heat or cold."

No doubt our proposals sound radical or utopian to the economic pundits, who think in terms of how to increase the gross national product, how to stimulate production and consumption. But for all their accountant's jargon and expertise at analyzing colossal debits and credits, things are simply out of their control. The world economic juggernaut is running wild, a man-made monster of greed. Only by transcending greed, as suggested by Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, can we alleviate the economic problems causing acute suffering in every country of the world.—SDG

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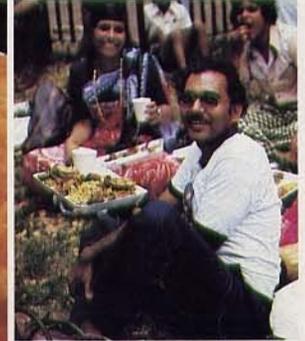
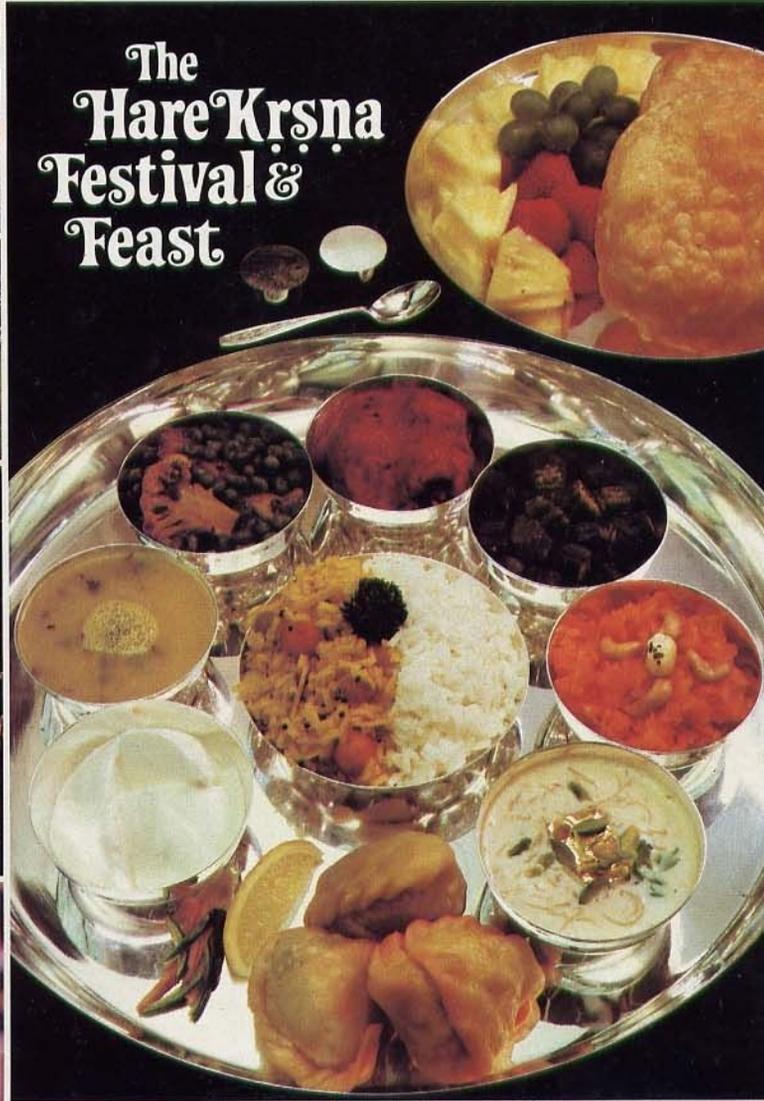
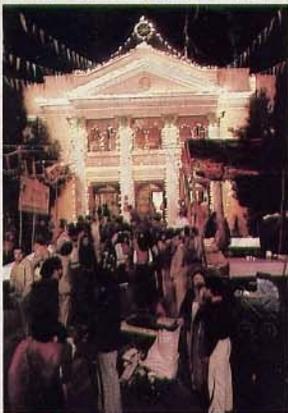
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