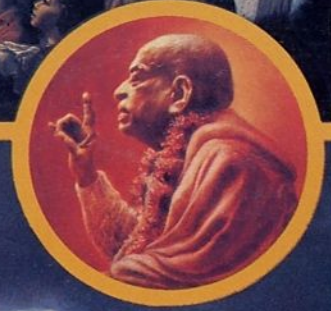


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

BACK TO GODHEAD

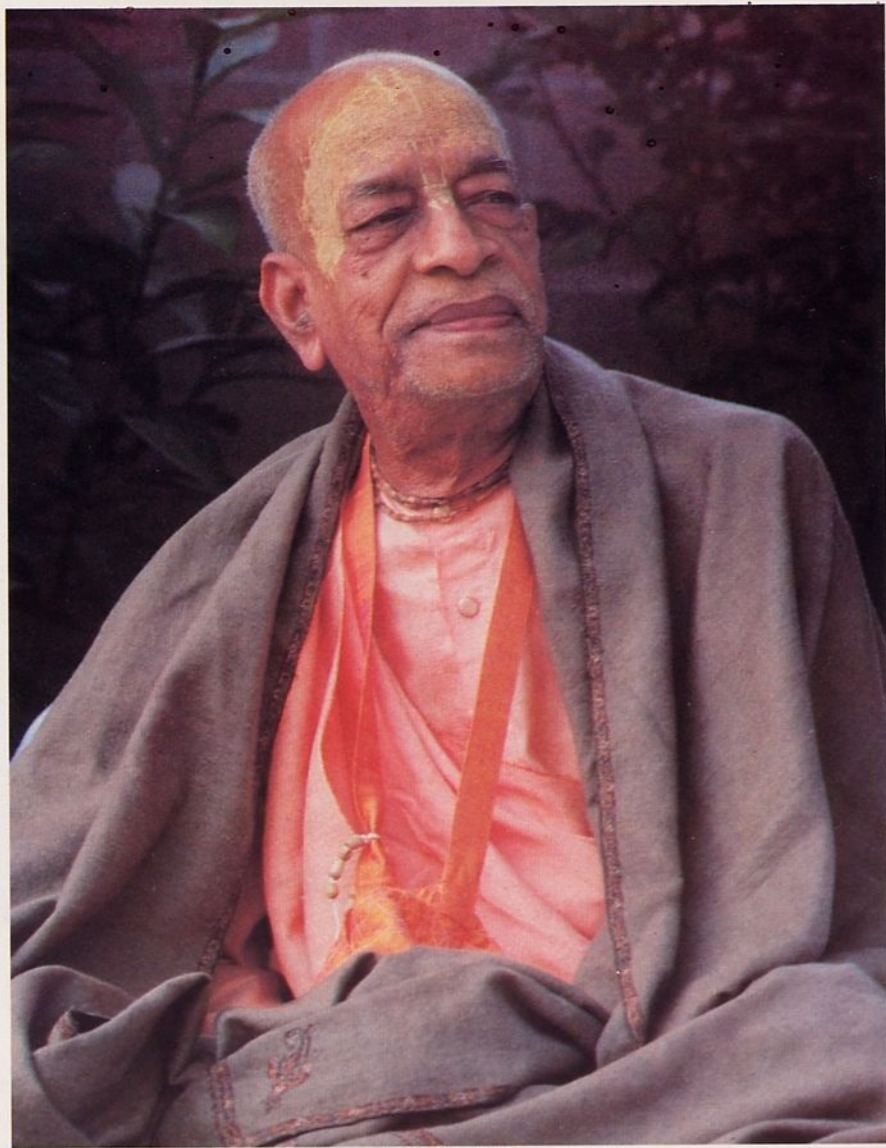
Vol.23 No.6

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



BL

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 Vṛndāvana, India, 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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(under the direction of His Divine Grace
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda)
His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda

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PRONUNCIATION. We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic 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 *plique*. Pronounce the vowel *ṛ* like the *ri* in *rim*, and *ṛ* like the *ch* in *chair*. Pronounce the aspirated consonants (*ch*, *jh*, *dh*, etc.) as in *staunch-heart*, *hedge-hog*, and *red-hot*. Finally, pronounce the sibilants *ś* and *ṣ* like *sh*. 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* (dāst for women), meaning "servant." For instance, the name *Kṛṣṇa dāsa* means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

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Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that because of a lack of spiritual knowledge people act in darkness and thus bring about their own suffering.

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COVER: Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, states in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that He descends in one of His innumerable incarnations whenever there is a need to reestablish religious principles. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* predicts that at the end of the present age—known as Kali-yuga, or the Age of Quarrel—the Supreme Lord will appear in the village of Śambhala as Kalki, the son of the great soul Viṣṇuśāśa. Mounting His horse Devadatta, He will take His sword in hand and ride about the earth, killing millions of bandits who have disguised themselves in the clothes of kings. After the destruction of the imposter kings, the remaining citizens, relieved from all anxieties and fear, will repopulate the earth. (Painting by Bharadvāja dāsa.)

TO DRIVE AWAY THE DARKNESS

In this age, people accept suffering as pleasure,
but Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda have come
to dispel the darkness of ignorance.

A lecture in Māyāpur, India, on March 26, 1975

by HIS DIVINE GRACE

A. C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*vande śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-
nityānandau sahoditau
gauḍodaye puṣpavantau
citrau śandau tamo-nudau*

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda, who are like the sun and the moon. They have arisen simultaneously on the horizon of Gauḍa to dissipate the darkness of ignorance and thus wonderfully bestow benediction upon all."

(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi 1.2)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya has many expansions, and the first is Lord Nityānanda, who is Kṛṣṇa's brother Balarāma. We have to understand these things from the *mahājanas*, the great sages who are learned in the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, a *mahājana*, says, *vrajendra-nandana yei, śacī-sūta hoilo sei, balarāma hoilo nitāi*: "Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Nanda Mahārāja, and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu is Balarāma."

Sometimes foolish people say Nityānanda is an expansion of Rādhārāṇī. That is not a fact. Nityānanda is Balarāma. We have to know from the *mahājanas*; we cannot manufacture our own ideas. That is blasphemy.

A *mahājana* is one who follows the pre-

vious *mahājanas*. This is the system. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu strictly followed this principle, and Kṛṣṇa also recommended it in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: *evam paramparā-prāptam*. We have to receive knowledge through the disciplic succession; we cannot manufacture it. The concoction of so-called spiritual philosophies has killed the spiritual life of India. "You can think in your way, and I can think in my way"—this idea is not at all scientific. Suppose you claim that two plus two equals three, or five. Is that acceptable? No, two plus two equals four, and you cannot claim otherwise.

So, Balarāma is presenting Kṛṣṇa, and therefore He is the original *guru*. Any bona fide *guru* must be a representative of Balarāma, or Nityānanda. And because Balarāma is presenting Kṛṣṇa, He is called *prakāśa*. When the sun shines, you can see everything clearly. That is called *prakāśa*. At night, in the darkness, everything is covered and we cannot see, but during the daytime, when there is *prakāśa*, illumination, we can see everything.

So, Nityānanda Prabhu is Balarāma, *prakāśa-tattva*. And just as Balarāma is manifesting Kṛṣṇa, Nityānanda is manifesting Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, who is also the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

When Nityānanda Prabhu was preaching in Bengal, He first of all delivered

Jagāi and Mādhāi, and by delivering them He showed how to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Lord Caitanya is Kṛṣṇa Himself: *śrī kṛṣṇa caitanya rādhā-kṛṣṇa nahe anya*: "Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya is Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa combined." And Nityānanda is presenting Lord Caitanya.

So, how can one present Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu? By His personal example Nityānanda Prabhu has given us a lesson. Caitanya Mahāprabhu would send Nityānanda Prabhu and Haridāsa Ṭhākura to preach on the streets of Navadvīpa, home to home. Once they saw a big crowd on the street, and Nityānanda Prabhu inquired from the people, "Why are there so many people assembled?" He was informed that there were two *gunḍās*, rogues, creating some trouble. The two *gunḍās* were Jagāi and Mādhāi. Now, even though they physically attacked Nityānanda Prabhu, He continued to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness to them, and He delivered them. This is the best way to serve Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu—by preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness boldly.

Displaying the mercy of God's devotees, who are considered more merciful than even God Himself, Nityānanda Prabhu, although injured by the rogues Jagāi and Mādhāi, delivers them from the divine anger of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.



The business of *guṇḍās* is to create trouble, that's all. Especially at the present moment in Bengal there are many *guṇḍās* creating trouble. This is due to not enough preaching of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Nityānanda Prabhu is not being given the chance to preach. He is very eager to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but He's not being given the chance.

In Bengal there is a family who say they are descendants of Nityānanda Prabhu. So, there is a controversy concerning their claim. But apart from the controversy, if they are descendants of Nityānanda Prabhu, their business is to act like Nityānanda Prabhu. What is that business? That is described by Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura: *dīna-hīna yata chilo, hari-nāme uddhārilo*. Their business should be to do what Nityānanda Prabhu did, along with Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and that is to deliver all the fallen souls by teaching them to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Nityānanda are the same as Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. When Kṛṣṇa incarnated, these two brothers were engaged as cowherd boys, as friends of the *gopīs*, and as sons of mother Yaśodā and Nanda Mahārāja. That was Their life in Vṛndāvana village.

Later, when They went to Mathurā, They killed Kāṁsa and the wrestlers, and when They went to Dvārakā They had to fight so many demons. But They spent Their childhood up to Kṛṣṇa's sixteenth year in Vṛndāvana, living a happy life. Simply love. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma enacted these early pastimes just to enliven Their devotees (*paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām*). The devotees are always anxious to see Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and Their associates, and they are always very much aggrieved when separated from Them. To rejuvenate their life, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma played Their childhood days in Vṛndāvana. And out of Vṛndāvana, in Mathurā and Dvārakā and other places, Their business was killing the demons.

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma have two businesses—pacifying the devotees and killing the demons. Of course, since Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are the Absolute Truth, there is no difference between Their killing and Their loving. Those who are killed are also delivered from material bondage.

Now these same two brothers have again descended as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Nityānanda Prabhu. They are compared to the sun and the moon. The business of the sun and the moon is to dissipate darkness. The sun rises during the daytime, and the moon rises at night. But the sun and moon of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda are wonderful because They have appeared simultaneously.

Still, Their business is the same as that of the ordinary sun and moon: *tamo-*

nudau, to dissipate darkness. Everyone in this material world is in darkness. In other words, they're ignorant, like animals. Why are they animals? Such civilized men, so well dressed and with university degrees. Are they in darkness? Yes, they are in darkness. What is the proof? The proof is that they are not Kṛṣṇa conscious. That is their darkness.

Now, someone may ask, "Who says this is proof we are in darkness?" We do not say it—Kṛṣṇa does: *na mām duṣkṛtino mūḍhāḥ prapadyante narādhamāḥ māyāpahrta-jñānā*.

Māyāpahrta-jñānā means that although someone may have a university degree, although he is called civilized, his knowledge has been stolen by illusion, and therefore he does not surrender to

As soon as you get a material body, there is suffering. It may be a king's body or a cobbler's body; it doesn't matter: the suffering is there. But because people are ignorant, they are accepting suffering as pleasure. This is called *māyā*, illusion.

Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is personally canvassing: *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja*. "Just give up your non-sense and surrender to Me." He's personally canvassing, but because these rascals and fools are in darkness, they do not know what the goal of life is. Therefore they are not willing to surrender to Him.

Kṛṣṇa also describes these fools as *narādhamā*, "the lowest of mankind." How have they become *narādhamā*? By always engaging in sinful life. What is sinful life? Illicit sex, meat-eating, intoxication, and gambling. People who are addicted to these things are *duṣkṛti*, "miscreants," and *narādhamā*, "the lowest of mankind." And whatever knowledge they have acquired by their so-called education is all false knowledge (*māyāpahrta-jñānā*). This is their position.

So, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, being merciful, have descended again as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Nityānanda Prabhu. They are canvassing for the same principle—*sarva-dharmān parityajya*—but in a different way. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda Prabhu have appeared in order to drive away the darkness of ignorance. There is no actual difference between Kṛṣṇa's preaching and Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's preaching. The only difference is that Kṛṣṇa, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, demands, "You rascal, surrender unto Me. You are suffering so much on account of your *duṣkṛti*, sinful activities. I am your father; I want to see you happy. Therefore, I have come. Surrender unto Me and I shall give you all protection."

Except for Kṛṣṇa conscious activities, whatever you do is sinful. The whole world is full of sinful activities, and they have been summarized into four categories: illicit sex, meat-eating, gambling, and intoxication. This is the summary, but there are many, many branches of these activities. Still, if you cut the root of sinful activity—illicit sex, gambling, meat-eating, and intoxication—then automatically the other sinful activities will go.

Therefore we who are propagating this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement are requesting that you give up these sinful activities. Otherwise, you will be implicated. What is that implication? Your implication is that your sinful life will get you another body. And again you will suffer. As soon as you get a material body, there is suffering. It may be a king's body or a cobbler's body; it doesn't matter: the suffering is there. But because people are *māyāpahrta-jñānā*, ignorant, they are accepting suffering as pleasure. This is called *māyā*, illusion.

When a pig is eating stool, he thinks he's enjoying life. He does not know that he's suffering. *Māyā* has given the living entity a pig's body so that he will suffer, but even in the pig's body he's thinking he's enjoying life. This is illusion.

Everyone in this material world is suffering, but there are different grades of suffering, just as in the prison house. There are different grades of prisoner—first class, second class, third class—but if the first-class prisoner thinks he is enjoying life, that is ignorance. In the prison house, where is the enjoyment? It is all suffering. It may be first-class suffering, but it is still suffering.

So, the whole of human society is in darkness, and out of Their kindness Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda Prabhu have appeared in order to dissipate this darkness.

Thank you very much. Hare Kṛṣṇa. ❧

Coming to Kṛṣṇa

Taking My Time

“I remembered the *Gītā*'s instruction that one cannot find real happiness in the material world. Although I had suspected that the statement was true, I felt that I was an exception.”

by BOB ROBERTS



BOB ROBERTS

I first heard about Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees in 1969, while I was attending Wayne State University in Detroit. An acquaintance of mine, who was very impressed with the devotees, was telling me about them. I was skeptical.

“Their religion may be just what is needed for a poverty-stricken and undeveloped country like India,” I argued, “but we’re blessed to live in abundance in America—nice homes, our own cars, good medical care, and long life-expectancy. We don’t need an ancient philosophy.”

“What good is all our material wealth,” she countered, “if people here still get

sick, grow old, and die? Even if most Americans live a few years longer and in more material luxury than residents of undeveloped countries, what is the big difference?”

“Wow!” I thought. “What is the big difference?” Raised in an American jingoistic environment, I’d never heard anyone espouse such an idea—certainly not my professors at WSU.

In 1974 I was in California, seeking fame and fortune as a photographer. While driving through Los Angeles, I remembered my acquaintance telling me that the Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees had a temple

At the Hare Kṛṣṇa center in Detroit (above, left to right), author Bob Roberts with Arjuna dāsa, Śyāmananda dāsa, Praghoṣa dāsa and his son Nimāi, Rohiṇinandana dāsa, Ravindra-svarūpa dāsa, and Ikṣvāku dāsa.

there. My mentality then was that *anything* in Los Angeles was worshipable, so I considered finding the temple and visiting. I still had never been to a temple. But I couldn't summon the initiative to go. Besides, I felt that my success as a photographer was just around the corner, and that was my real mission in life.

Back in Detroit in 1976, still chasing materialistic goals in photography, I heard that the Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees had purchased the Fisher Mansion on Lenox Avenue. A friend and I drove by and were invited to the Sunday Feast. We kept late hours then, and we arrived the next Sunday very late, 9:00 or 10:00 P.M. We were told that the feast was over. Though we were invited to come back the following week, it took me six years to return.

At eight o'clock one morning in 1982, I was awakened by persistent pounding on my bedroom window. A friend had just driven forty-five miles on his motorcycle to tell me about his recent discovery.

"This is the greatest book I've ever read," he exclaimed, thrusting a paperback *Gītā* by Śrīla Prabhupāda at me. "You've got to read it."

I showed him my identical copy of the book (I couldn't even remember how I'd come by it) and said that somehow its cover illustration of warriors in a chariot on a battlefield didn't much attract me. I told him I wasn't interested in war.

His interest in the *Bhagavad-gītā* made an impression on me, however, and when he became involved with the devotees, I began occasionally accompanying him to the temple. I thought the food there was fantastic, but I was always reluctant to eat as much as I wanted. I thought the devotees would consider me rude for eating what was theirs.

Later that year he and I drove to New Vrindaban. We arrived in the late afternoon and were cordially offered plates of sumptuous *prasādam*. We had tremendous conversations with a couple of devotees, and we decided to spend the night at the guest lodge. We were invited to attend *maṅgala-ārati* the next morning.

"What time should we get up?" I asked. "Three-thirty," came the reply. "The ceremony begins at 4:15."

I was stunned. My sleep time was often from 3:00 A.M. till noon. But I said, "Sure. Let's attend. We're here on a spiritual adventure."

Though I had no idea what the *maṅgala-ārati* ceremony was all about and felt rather self-conscious, I was impressed by the devotees, who graciously acknowledged our presence and indicated what we were to do at various points. When we left, I carried with me a most enlivening spiritual presence.

Although I continued attending the Sunday Feast in Detroit, I didn't go regu-

larly, just whenever the thought occurred. Yet I always went home with positive impressions of the devotees I talked with.

An experience with my neighbours in the fall of 1986 helped nudge me along on the spiritual path. I tried to convince my neighbours that burning leaves, though a biannual ritual for them, was not a wise thing to do. The enormous amount of smoke the leaf-burning generated in the neighbourhood caused choking, irritated the eyes, and, according to an article in the local newspaper, contained numerous carcinogens.

When I approached my neighbours to try to convince them that they should mulch the leaves for use as fertilizer, I tried to be calm and reasonable. I was stunned by their reactions.

"Mah advahce to you," one said, "is that if you don't lahk it, you can stay insahd."

A devotee invited us to the Sunday Feast. We kept late hours then and arrived the next Sunday very late, 9:00 or 10:00 P.M. Though we were invited to come back the following week, it took me six years to return.

"Don't try to impose your values on us," another said.

One neighbour told me he would be glad to mulch his leaves, and the next day he burned an even bigger pile than usual.

Not all the responses were negative, but I mostly remembered the rejections. The episode led to some soul-searching, and I remembered the *Bhagavad-gītā's* instruction that one cannot find real happiness in the material world.

Although I had suspected that the statement was true, I had felt that I was an exception. My parents and teachers had always told me how intelligent I was. I remember my sixth-grade teacher telling my parents, "For Robert anything is possible if he puts his mind to it." I had always thought I could use my intelligence to ensure my own happiness.

With my failure to convince my neighbours of the folly of burning leaves, I began to realize, reluctantly, that true hap-

piness would elude me just as it does everyone else. I could attempt to maintain my health by diet, exercise, and proper attitude, but not everyone would agree to keep the environment clean, despite my logic. I remembered that the *Bhagavad-gītā* states that in this world there are always disturbances stemming from one's own mind and body, from other living entities, and from natural forces. My careful and troublesome arrangements were doomed to frustration. I began to see how the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness was not armchair speculation, but real wisdom for my own life.

I decided that I should spend more time with the devotees. By doing so, not only would I naturally associate less with my neighbours, with whom I was angry, but I could also raise myself to a spiritual platform, from which it would be easier to convince people to do the right thing.

I began attending the Sunday Feast every week, and on Tuesday evenings I went to the meetings of the Friends of Lord Kṛṣṇa (FOLK). Although I had been invited to the FOLK meetings before, I had always been "too busy." But now I was ready.

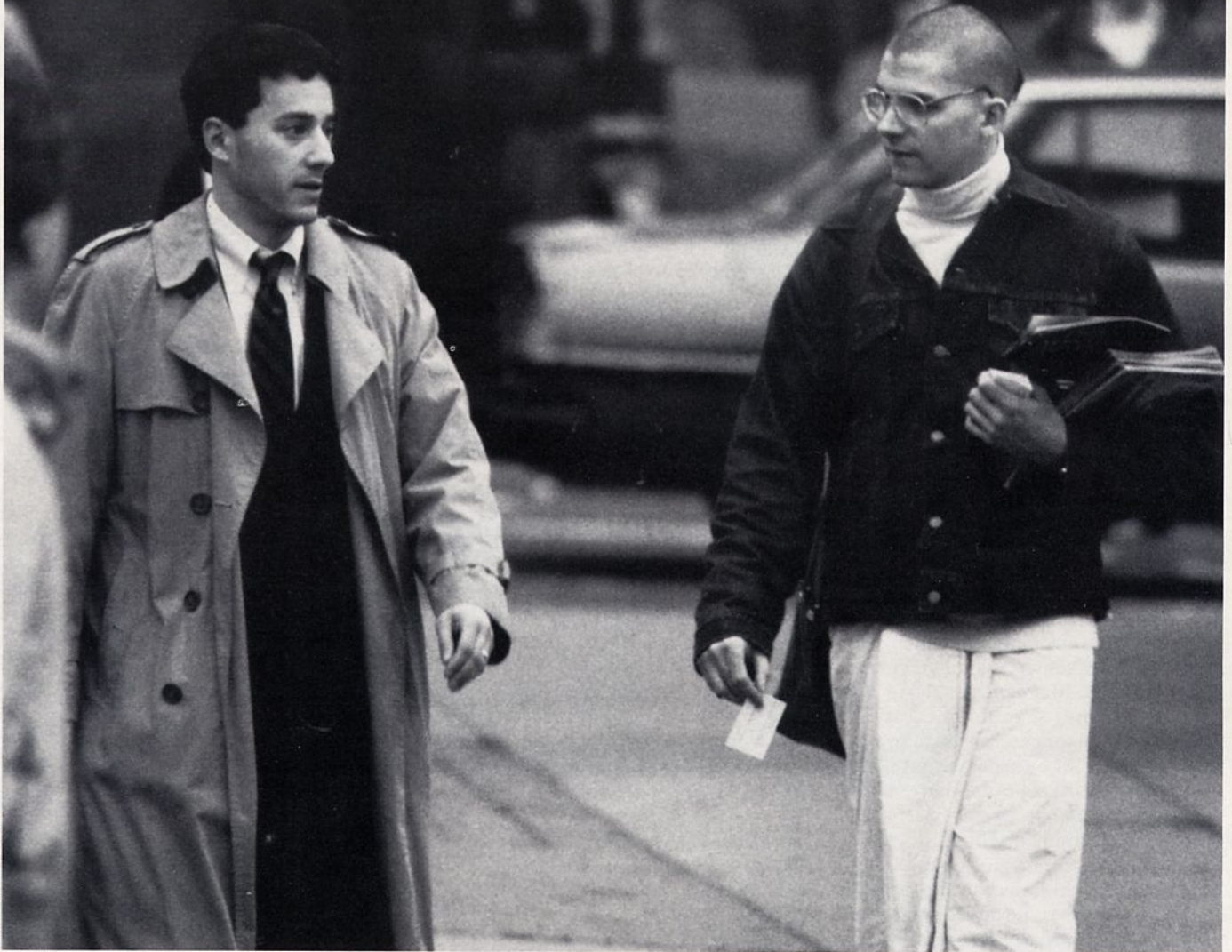
By going to the temple regularly, I found satisfaction in the philosophy, friends, and food, and my anger toward the leaf-burners faded. "Thanks for rejecting me," I could tell them. "You gave me the impetus I needed to search out and find a higher taste."

After several weeks of visiting the temple every Sunday and Tuesday, I began to feel discouraged. I wanted to make spiritual advancement, but I doubted my ability to conform to the same regulations the full-time devotees were following: no meat-eating, no illicit sex, no intoxication, no gambling, and chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* almost two thousand times a day on their beads. There were many other rules as well, and it seemed that so much of a life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness was antithetical to all I had lived by for a major chunk of my life. It seemed that everything I did was offensive to Kṛṣṇa or His devotees. "Maybe I just won't fit in here. It's too strict. I'd better stop coming and look for something else."

Then I had an auspicious dream. I saw Śrīla Prabhupāda beaming at me with a most radiant smile. He seemed pleased. I heard no words, but somehow he communicated to me—"It's all right. You're doing fine. Just keep coming regularly to the temple."

That was the encouragement I needed. I resolved to not only continue going to the temple regularly, but to do my best to apply the teachings of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in my life so that I could progress steadily toward the perfection of spiritual advancement—pure love for Kṛṣṇa. ☐

Not Interested?



ANANDAMAYA DĀSA

Dhanañjaya Paṇḍita dāsa distributes books and *Back to Godhead* magazines in Boston.

You might not want to spend your weekends discussing obscure philosophy, but should you completely ignore life's most important questions?

by DHANAÑJAYA PAṆḌITA DĀSA

When I'm out distributing books about the Supreme Personality of Godhead—books that describe the attributes, form, qualities, and activities of Kṛṣṇa—one of the most common responses I get from the people I meet is "I'm not interested." I sometimes wonder how anyone could not be interested in Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa is everywhere. He's the source of everything. He knows everything, including everything you've done in your life, even every thought. He knows things such as the exact position and velocity of every

atom and electron in the universe. Not only does He know everything, but He's all-powerful. That means He can do anything. He created all the universes. He created wonderful works of art like our bodies and the marvels of nature.

Since Kṛṣṇa created everything, He also owns everything. Imagine if you owned everything! Kṛṣṇa also ultimately controls everything; so everyone must do what He says. How is it that people are not interested in such a person?

The books I distribute—*Bhagavad-gītā*

and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*—explain much about Kṛṣṇa. And Kṛṣṇa is not the only interesting topic they present. Other topics include discussions of these relevant and timely questions: Why do we die? What happens after we die? Why must we suffer? Does God exist? How do we know for sure? These topics pertain to every living being in the universe; they have universal interest.

Yet people are not even interested in what will happen to them after they die. They know they will have to pass into an

unknown realm, but they are not interested to learn more about it. But wouldn't a person naturally show interest if he were to be forcibly uprooted and moved to a foreign country he had never seen before? Wouldn't he want to know what the place was like, what the people were like, what he would be doing there, and how he would be received?

And if a person were being punished, wouldn't he be interested to know why? "What is it I have done? Why do I have to undergo this suffering?" Any intelligent human being would ask these questions.

So why are we not interested in what will happen to us after we die? Because of a bad system of education.

Modern education tends to produce atheists and agnostics. We are losing the ability to question in a metaphysical way. Because of overemphasis on materialism, we have been taught implicitly that there is no such thing as life after death, that suffering is an inevitable fact of life, and that there is no God, no soul, no spiritual reality—just electrons, neutrons, and protons.

Modern education provides little philosophy, little higher thought about the larger questions of life. Even if there are philosophy classes in our academic institutions, they take an insignificant role in the educational process. They are not usually required courses, and their topics are so irrelevant to our day-to-day living that hardly anyone is interested in them. Subjects such as linguistic analysis and relativistic ethics are not the exciting things you want to spend a Saturday night thinking about. They just have nothing to do with the heartbeat of modern society.

Deep thinking has taken a back seat to industrial development. Universities have become factories for training technological workers. Institutions like Harvard and Yale turn out thousands of computer scientists, mechanical engineers, and businessmen, who may have knowledge of numbers and how to manipulate them, but who are completely ignorant of the most important subjects: What is consciousness? What are we?

Today knowledge is used only to satisfy the body's demands: how to become healthy, how to eat better food, how to make better medicine, how to titillate and stimulate the senses in every conceivable way.

In other words, even educated men and women are acting like animals. Why? Because their so-called knowledge is no different in quality from the knowledge animals have.

Just think of it. What do animals do? They eat, they sleep, they have sex, and they fight. Basically, everything an animal does relates to one of these four activities. Now, what about modern society's highly

trained, educated men and women? They fight or defend with high-technology bombs and medicines. They try to advance agriculture to produce food more efficiently, more inexpensively, and with nutritive and other supplements injected into it to make it more appealing. And they devise theories of psychology that revolve around sex as the prime satisfaction for humanity, while developing new contraceptive devices so that we can have sex unlimitedly without consequences.

Identifying the body as the self, many people think that self-realization, or self-actualization, means to develop the body. Therefore fitness spas and health salons proliferate. In the pursuit of bodily pleasures, money is essential, and therefore teaching how to make money is of primary importance in the academic curriculum.

But human life doesn't have to be like

Human life doesn't have to be like animal life—centered on the body. Human beings have one important quality that separates them from animals: They can inquire about philosophical questions. You never see animals going to church . . .

animal life—centered on the body. Human beings have one important quality that separates them from animals: They can inquire about philosophical questions. You never see animals going to church or reading and writing books about the meaning of life. Their brains are not developed enough to think about such subjects. So if a human being doesn't use his brain for inquiring about why he is here, why he must suffer, and what happens after death—philosophical questions—then how is he any different from an animal?

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it has been predicted that people in this age will be like this. It is described that they will have short lives, and that they will be quarrelsome, lazy, spiritually dull, misguided materially and spiritually, unlucky, and

always disturbed. People in this age will never really be peaceful.

Sad to say, I find these characteristics in most of the people I meet. They're not interested in spiritual life. They have no time. They're too busy trying to solve the problems of their life, which keep growing and growing. They're busy trying to make money just to make ends meet. They don't want to be bothered. They're always disturbed.

Of course, in this age we do suffer in many ways, practically without relief. You might say we have good reason to be disturbed. We suffer from creditors, thieves, attackers, slanderers, envious neighbors, friends, relatives. We suffer pains from our minds and from our bodies, which are always degenerating right out from under us. We suffer pains from the elements—from earthquakes, extreme heat and cold, drought, hunger, starvation—and from economic depression.

Does this have to be? Must we take this suffering for granted? Our educational system offers no solution. We are taught to accept it: There's nothing you can do about the "facts of life"—old age, disease, and death.

But there *is* something you can do. You can have eternal life: you never have to die. You can have complete knowledge. You can understand everything, including yourself. And you can have unlimited happiness. No misery, no pain. Even while you are still in this body, during this lifetime, you can have freedom from all miseries. How? By taking an interest in spiritual life. Pick up a copy of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or *Bhagavad-gītā*. These books give answers to the important questions.

You will find that the topics discussed in the *Bhāgavatam* are very satisfying. They're logical and agreeable. If you take up spiritual life as directed in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, you will find that you are experiencing greater and greater happiness, greater knowledge, and freedom from death. This is the proof of the potency of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

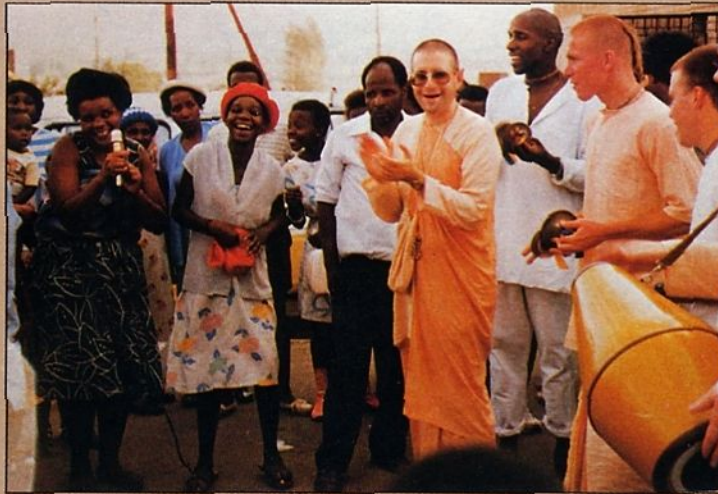
The knowledge given in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is *rāja-vidyā*, "the king of knowledge." *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.2) explains why: "This knowledge is the king of education, the most secret of all secrets. It is the purest knowledge, and because it gives direct perception of the self by realization, it is the perfection of religion. It is everlasting, and it is joyfully performed."

There is no other knowledge—neither physics, nor chemistry, nor biology, nor literature, nor history, nor psychology, nor art, nor music—no other knowledge that can give direct perception of the self, the soul, by realization. And there is no other knowledge that increases the joy of life steadily and perceptibly. ☐

SINGING IN HARMONY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Chanting the names of God brings welcome relief
to a country rife with racial tension.

by GIRIRĀJA SWAMI



The park resounded. The musicians were very careful in listening to the mantra. . . . The Swami sang Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. . . . "Hey," they would say, "listen to this holy monk." (Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta)

The practice of chanting God's names in public was begun by Lord Caitanya—who is God Himself—five hundred years ago in Bengal, India. The Lord predicted that in every town and village of the world God's name would be sung. But how His prediction would be fulfilled nobody knew for sure. Then in 1965 His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, age seventy, set sail from India to America to bring the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement to the West.

Because people in this age have no time (or no interest) to go to the church or temple, God comes to them in the form of His holy name. Therefore, in New York City not long after his arrival in America, Śrīla Prabhupāda suggested that his first followers take the chanting out of the temple and into the park. They readily agreed.

It was a strange sight for New Yorkers. Śrīla Prabhupāda sat under a tree and began singing. Strollers and musicians joined him. He entered their world with the holy names, and he entered their hearts. A headline in *The New York Times*

Girirāja Swami (at right, in orange) claps with satisfaction as some South Africans discover the pleasure of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

declared, *SWAMI'S FLOCK CHANTS IN PARK TO FIND ECSTASY.*

Every Saturday we go into the streets in South Africa and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Chanting in Johannesburg recently, we came across several musical groups playing in the promenade outside Market Theater. We joined in with some of them, and some of them joined in with us. When we joined some Zulus in tribal dress, they danced around their drums and chanted Kṛṣṇa's names. Looking into the crowd that gathered, I perceived a deep sense of appreciation. Here were blacks, whites, coloreds, Indians, Africans, and Europeans, all united in God's name. This coming together of peoples is exactly what everyone is hankering to see.

After we had chanted with some Rastafarians, one of them exclaimed, "We really liked playing with you. People are surprised: 'How is it that the Hare Kṛṣṇas and the Rastafarians are getting together, singing and dancing?' They couldn't believe it! So I told them, 'God speaks in dif-

ferent languages, but He's the same God. We chant in our language, and they chant in theirs, but it all goes to the same place. So what's the difficulty getting together and singing God's names?' " Another musician suggested we hold big festivals together, with chanting and dancing, speaking about God, and lots of "Hare Kṛṣṇa food."

Perhaps nobody really understood why everyone felt so pleased that afternoon, but it was actually due to the presence of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains: "As living spiritual souls, we are all originally Kṛṣṇa conscious entities, but due to our association with matter from time immemorial, our consciousness is now polluted. The transcendental vibration established by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare is the sublime method for reviving our transcendental consciousness. The chanting is a spiritual call for the Lord and His energy to give protection to the conditioned soul, and the Lord reveals Himself to the devotee who chants this *mantra* sincerely. No other means of spiritual realization is as effective in this age of quarrel and hypocrisy as the chanting of the *mahā-mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare." ☐



MESSAGE FROM BEYOND THE STARS

Instead of waiting to hear from other galaxies, we should listen to the Vedic literature, which tells us all we need to know about this universe and the spiritual world beyond it.

by DRUTAKARMĀ DĀSA

A radio-telescope dish points upward into the night sky, gathering signals from outer space. Nearby, scientists at computer consoles monitor the patterns of electromagnetic pulses for signs of communication. It's all part of SETI—the search for extraterrestrial intelligence.

In 1977 scientists and engineers of the Outlook for Space Study Group reported to NASA: “The impact of the detection of life elsewhere in the universe, in the solar system or beyond, would be felt in every aspect of human life—in our philosophical and religious concepts, our social interaction, and our scientific institutions. We might learn about achievements in science and technology that we cannot imagine. We might also learn of ways in which they have overcome the problems that beset us today. . . . In short, the promulgation of a program to detect extraterrestrial civilizations could gain us ac-

The creator of the cosmic manifestation, Lord Viṣṇu, lies in a transcendental realm imperceptible to modern science—even with science's most powerful telescopes. To perceive that realm and the primordial person lying behind the impersonal play of cosmic forces, we must go beyond the instruments and reductionist strategies of modern science. We require the help of a transcendent source of knowledge.

cess to a galactic heritage of knowledge.”

Here we find the U.S. government's space agency considering several interesting ideas: that there might be intelligent beings on other planets; that there might be a civilization more advanced than our earthly technological civilization in terms of religion, science, philosophy, and government; and that knowledge of this civilization might help us solve the problems we face on earth. The report from the Outlook for Space Study Group contains serious proposals for NASA's searching out advanced beings in other parts of the universe.

But scientists need not train their radio telescopes on distant stars, waiting for the first pulsing signals from another civilization. The “galactic heritage of knowledge” is already present on this planet. We are already in touch with an extraterrestrial civilization, and the sound of a message from a place beyond the farthest star has already reached us.

An essential part of that message is that the life animating our bodies is not the product of chemicals sloshing together in the primeval oceans of this planet; rather life is imported from a nonmaterial dimension of reality. In other words, we ourselves are extraterrestrials, temporarily

residing in an alien environment, forgetful of our home beyond this universe.

Where is this information found? In the Vedic literature of India. Many scholars agree that the Vedic tradition represents the world's oldest surviving body of knowledge. The *Vedas* have existed in written form for thousands of years, and as an oral tradition they stretch even further back. In fact, a close study of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, a summary of Vedic truth, reveals that the *Vedas* did not originate on this planet, but instead are part of a coherent body of knowledge designed to help the leaders of a far-flung interplanetary civilization guide their citizens to correct solutions of life's material and spiritual problems and ultimately direct them back to their higher dimensional home.

For example, as stated in the *Gītā* itself, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, first spoke the *Gītā* more than 120 million years ago to the ruler of the sun planet, who then taught it to the progenitor of the human race. The knowledge next passed to the founder of a dynasty of earthly kings and has come from one generation of teachers to another down to the present day. The Vedic teachings were once spread all over the world. Now, however, most of the world's population outside India is no

longer familiar with them.

One of the subjects discussed in the *Vedas* is life on other planets. In their 1977 report to NASA, the scientists of the Outlook for Space Study Group confessed that “although there may be billions of other planets in our galaxy, we do not yet have unambiguous evidence of even one planet outside our solar system. . . . Intelligent life may be widespread in the Universe, but we have not made contact with it. Many gaps, puzzles, and uncertainties remain.”

This statement shows the shortcomings of the so-called scientific method. The scientists’ powers of observation are extremely limited on the cosmic scale. On the other hand, we can take information from the books of Vedic knowledge, principally the *Bhagavad-gītā*, that there are in fact planets beyond those now visible to us and that they are inhabited. Lord Kṛṣṇa is proclaimed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* to be the source of all that exists, living or nonliving. Therefore, if one has questions about the nature of the universe, it makes sense to look to Kṛṣṇa, its creator, for reliable answers, just as one would learn about the composition or intended meaning of a painting by asking the artist.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa explains that there exist two inhabited regions: the *sanātana*, or eternal, region and the temporary, material cosmos. In the *sanātana* region live eternal beings, headed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Vedic *Upaniṣads* say, *nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām*: “The Lord is the supreme leader among all eternal living beings.” The Lord and the living beings exist in intimate relationship. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa states, *mamāivānśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ*—the living beings are His eternal, separated parts, related to Him as sparks are related to a fire. In other words, the individual souls are simultaneously one with and different from God.

As long as the living beings accept the leadership of the supreme eternal person, they remain in the *sanātana* region. Those who do not accept this leadership fall—like the “revolted multitudes” in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*—into the material world, which undergoes continuous cycles of creation and destruction. The *Gītā* informs us: “Again and again the day comes and this host of beings is active, and again the night falls and they are helplessly dissolved.”

The *Gītā* (8.20) then describes the *sanātana* region: “Yet there is another unmanifest nature, which is eternal and is transcendental to this manifested and unmanifest matter. It is supreme and is never annihilated. When all in this world is annihilated, that part remains as it is.”

Kṛṣṇa’s planet is found in the eternal region. Lord Kṛṣṇa states: “That which the Vedāntists describe as unmanifest and infallible, that which is known as the supreme destination, that place from which one, having attained it, never returns—that is My supreme abode.”

Thus there are two regions, and they are inhabited by two types of living beings. The *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.16, 17) says: “There are two classes of beings, the fallible and the infallible. In the material world every living entity is fallible, and in the spiritual world every living entity is called infallible. Besides these two, there is the greatest living personality, the Supreme Soul, the imperishable Lord Himself, who has entered the three worlds and is maintaining them.”

The Vedas tell us that there are living beings on every planet, and that they don’t necessarily have forms like ours. For example, their bodies might be composed of different elements than ours. On the sun, the living beings have bodies of fire.

Those who are in agreement with the Lord are infallible. They remain with Him in the spiritual world without making the mistake of leaving His service. The fallible living entities, the ones who have made the mistake, must come into the material region and suffer repeated birth and death.

In the sixteenth century Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself, described to His disciple Rūpa Gosvāmī the plight of the fallen living beings: “Wandering within this universe are limitless living entities in 8,400,000 species. Some of them are being elevated to the upper planetary systems, and some are going down into the lower planetary systems.”

The *Vedas* inform us that there are living beings on every planet, and that they don’t necessarily have forms like ours. For example, their bodies might be composed

of different elements than ours. On this planet, our bodies are composed mainly of water and earth. But on the sun, the living beings have bodies of fire, and on other planets they have bodies of subtle mental and intellectual energies.

The *Viṣṇu Purāna* enumerates the total number of life forms: “There are 900,000 species living in the water; 2,000,000 non-moving living entities, such as trees and plants; 1,100,000 species of insects and reptiles; 1,000,000 species of birds; 3,000,000 varieties of quadrupeds; and 400,000 human species.” These figures refer to the totality of life forms spread throughout the various planets.

Altogether, the *Vedas* tell us, there are fourteen planetary systems, divided into three groups—upper, middle, and lower. The upper (heavenly) planets are inhabited by beings who enjoy long life and varieties of sensual powers and pleasures far surpassing those available on earth. The earth belongs to the middle planetary system, and here pleasure is mixed with a proportionate amount of distress. Beings in the lower planetary systems live in hellish conditions of suffering.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* explains how the material energy influences living entities to inhabit certain bodies on certain planets. The material energy is composed of three modes—goodness, passion, and ignorance. Each living being is attracted to a certain combination of these modes of nature, and this is what determines his body. Just by combining three basic colors—red, yellow, and blue—an artist can produce countless hues. In the same way, permutations of the three modes of nature produce 8,400,000 types of bodies.

The modes of nature also determine what planet a living being will take birth on. These laws of transmigration are very complex, but there are some general laws. For example, one who dies in the mode of goodness will get the body of a demigod on one of the higher planets. One who dies in the mode of passion will get the body of a human being on an earthly planet. And one who dies in the mode of ignorance will get a subhuman body or descend to the lower planets—or both.

Sometimes the living beings go upward to enjoy life in the higher planets, and sometimes they fall downward. In one birth a person may be a demigod; in the next a dog. It is like riding a cosmic ferris wheel. But Kṛṣṇa says in the *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 one who attains to My abode, O son of Kuntī [Arjuna], never takes birth again.”

Followers of the Vedic principles are therefore not very concerned with travel-

ing from planet to planet within the material universe, although this is possible. There are civilizations more advanced than ours, with the capability of interplanetary travel, but still they must face the same problems: on any material planet, everyone must grow old, get sick, and eventually die. One's real goal should therefore be to return to Kṛṣṇa's deathless, spiritual planet in the *sanātana* region.

So instead of vainly waiting to hear from other galaxies in the material universe, we should listen to Kṛṣṇa's instructions in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, which tell us all we need to know about how to return to the spiritual world. Kṛṣṇa says: "Engage your mind in always thinking of Me, offer obeisances and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me."

This is the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, spoken to the leaders of all planets millions of years ago, and it is still valid today. The main process for absorbing our minds in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, a completely transcendental sound vibration that has its origin in the spiritual world. It is coming from a place far beyond the range of the most sensitive radio telescope, far beyond the most distant galaxy. A great Kṛṣṇa conscious poet has written, *golokera prema-dhana, hari-nāma-sankīrtana*: the sound of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is coming from Goloka, Kṛṣṇa's own planet in the spiritual sky.

The transcendental sound of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is absolute. In the material world, sound is relative—a word is different from the thing it signifies. I may say "water, water, water," but the actual substance water will not appear on my tongue to quench my thirst. But spiritual sound is the same as what it signifies. The name *Kṛṣṇa* is Kṛṣṇa Himself. So when we chant Kṛṣṇa's name purely, we will experience Kṛṣṇa and, along with Kṛṣṇa, His planet.

The Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is actually a prayer to return to the shelter of the spiritual energy. *Hare* means "O energy of the Lord, please accept me." Now we are under the control of the material energy. But by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa we can restore our connection with the spiritual world, even in our present body. We can't get to the spiritual world by spending billions of dollars on mechanical space travel. But if we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, we can experience life on another planet right now. It's not imaginary, like what we hear from science fiction books or movies.

And if we focus our mind on the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* at the time of death, we will be transferred to the spiritual planet where Kṛṣṇa lives eternally. The *Gītā* (8.6) states: "Whatever state of being one remembers when he quits his body, O son of

Kuntī, that state he will attain without fail."

The Vedic scriptures are another form of transcendental sound emanating from the nonmaterial region. The transcendental sound of the *Vedas* is first introduced from the spiritual world into the material universe by Kṛṣṇa, who injects it into the heart of Brahmā, the first created being. Then it is transferred by Brahmā to Nārada, a sage who travels throughout the universe enlightening conditioned souls with transcendental knowledge. Many disciples of Nārada have lived, and still live, on this planet. One is Vyāsadeva, who compiled the Vedic knowledge in written form.

The message of the *Vedas* cannot to be understood by mundane scholarship. It

The message of the Vedas can be understood only by hearing submissively from a spiritual master in the disciplic succession descending from Kṛṣṇa. In this way one can experience the supreme spiritual planet by "transcendental television."

can be understood only by hearing submissively from a spiritual master in the disciplic succession descending from Kṛṣṇa. In this way one can gain direct experience of the supreme spiritual planet by the process of what has been called "transcendental television." Śrīla Prabhupāda states:

The Lord's name, fame, form, quality, pastimes, entourage, etc., as they are described in the revealed scriptures or as performed in the Vaikunthalokas [spiritual planets], far, far beyond the material cosmic manifestation, are factually being televised in the heart of the devotee. The man with a poor fund of knowledge cannot understand, although by material science one can see things far away by means of television. Factually, a spiritually developed person is able to have the television of the kingdom of God always reflected within his heart. That

is the mystery of knowledge of the Personality of Godhead.

Bhāg. 2.9.35, purport

So it is possible to be walking around on planet earth and at the same time be internally communicating with the spiritual world. This opportunity is there for anyone who sincerely takes up the practice of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa Himself comes to this planet in many incarnations, or *avatāras*. *Avatāra* means "one who descends." Even though Kṛṣṇa descends to this material cosmos, being omnipotent He remains simultaneously in His supreme abode.

Kṛṣṇa last appeared in His original form on this planet some five thousand years ago, in Vṛndāvana, India. Although to mundane vision Vṛndāvana appears to be an ordinary geographic location—a small city ninety miles south of New Delhi—it is actually a replica of Kṛṣṇa's spiritual planet, Goloka Vṛndāvana. Śrīla Prabhupāda states:

In the spiritual world of Vṛndāvana the buildings are made of touchstone, the cows are known as *surabhi* cows, givers of abundant milk, and the trees are known as wish-fulfilling trees, for they yield whatever one desires. In Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa herds the *surabhi* cows, and He is worshiped by hundreds and thousands of *gopīs*, cowherd girls, who are all goddesses of fortune. When Kṛṣṇa descends to the material world, this same Vṛndāvana descends, just as an entourage accompanies an important person. Because when Kṛṣṇa comes His land also comes, Vṛndāvana is not considered to exist in the material world. Therefore devotees take shelter of the Vṛndāvana in India, for it is considered to be a replica of the original Vṛndāvana.

Vṛndāvana's identity is experienced only when one's mind becomes free from all material hankerings.

Actually, anywhere Kṛṣṇa is present is considered to be as good as Vṛndāvana. Therefore the temples where Kṛṣṇa is present in His Deity form are also considered to be replicas of the spiritual world. So if you want to begin to experience life on another planet—Kṛṣṇa's spiritual planet—then visit your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple.

Human life is potentially a launch vehicle for our journey back to the spiritual world. When we leave this body, we will get another one. If our consciousness is material, we will get a material body on a material planet. But if we use this life to transform our material consciousness to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then we will get a spiritual body on Kṛṣṇa's spiritual planet. That's the message coming down from beyond the stars—chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, read about Kṛṣṇa, serve Him in devotion, and come back home, back to Godhead. ❧

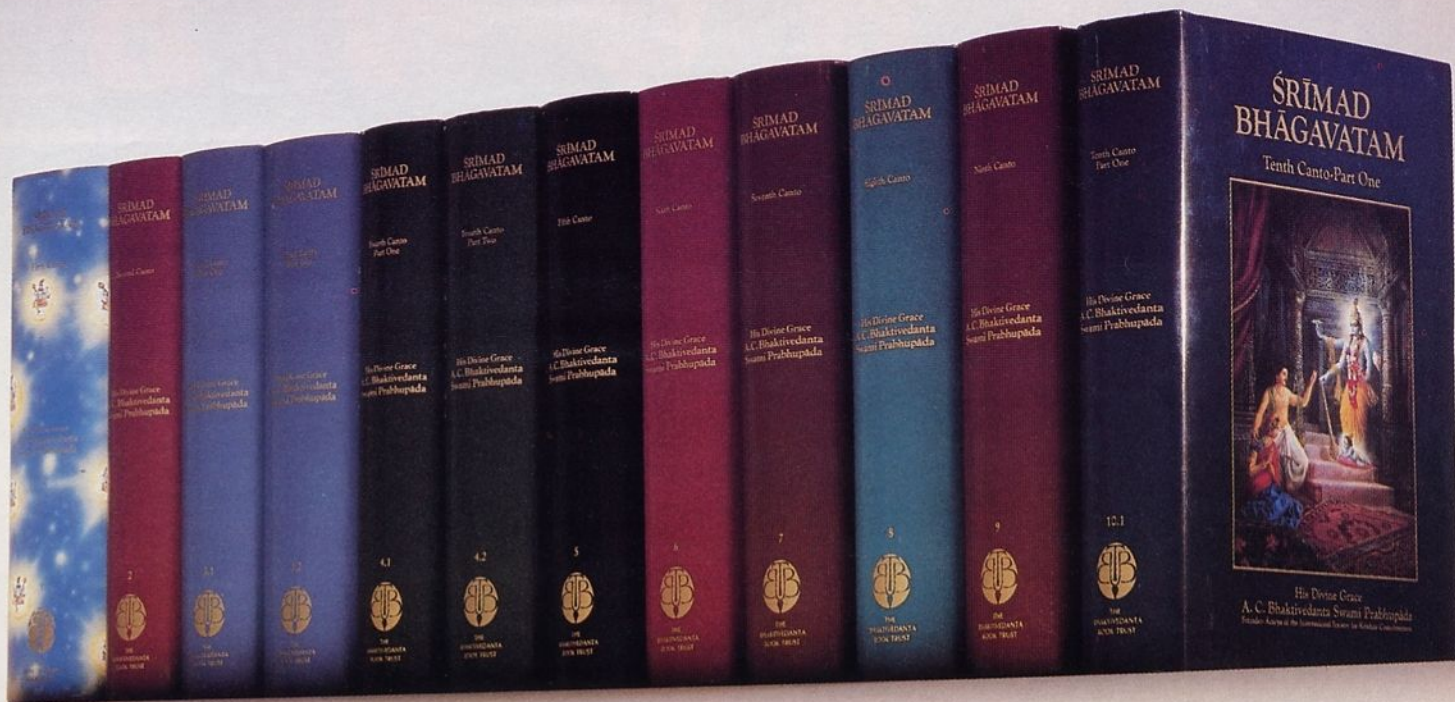
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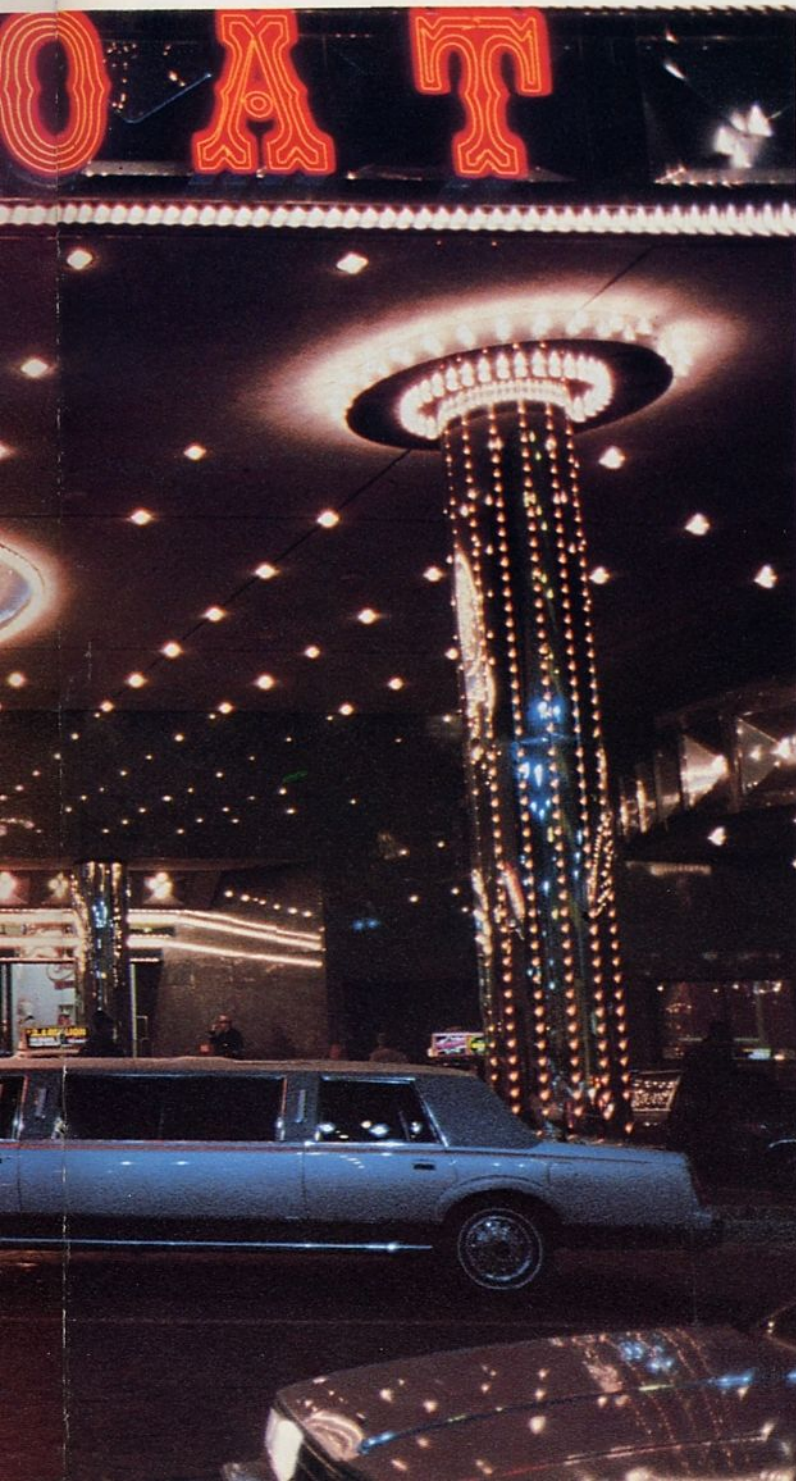
Text and photos by VIŚĀKHĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

Atlantic City, New Jersey, one of the newest casino cities, draws hopeful vacationers from around the world in all seasons. In their pursuit of happiness, they drive, walk, and run here and there in sprees of gambling, shopping, and dining. Unfortunately,

Śrīla Prabhupāda points out, by spending their time and energy in these ways they are simply “spoiling their lives.” Rather than using their intelligence to understand Lord Kṛṣṇa—who is seated within their hearts—and thus ending their sojourn in this material

world, they are misusing their intelligence to become further implicated in the process of transmigration.

The following quotations are from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, with translation and purports by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.



Men think they can advance in civilization by manipulating matter to build skyscrapers, big roads, automobiles and so on. Such a civilization must certainly be called materialistic because its people do not know the goal of life.

—Bhāg. 5.1.4, purport

A society concerned only with manufacturing new cars and new skyscrapers every year and then breaking them to pieces and making new ones may be technologically advanced, but it is not a human civilization.

—Bhāg. 6.7.13, purport

The conception of worldly opulence was formerly based mainly on natural resources such as jewels, marble, silk, ivory, gold and silver. The advancement of economic development was not based on big motorcars. Advancement of human civilization depends not on industrial enterprises but on possession of natural wealth and natural food, which is all supplied by the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

—Bhāg. 4.9.62, purport

Just as a person traveling on the road rests one foot on the ground and then lifts the other, . . . the conditioned soul takes shelter of another body and then gives up the one he had before.

—Bhāg. 10.1.40



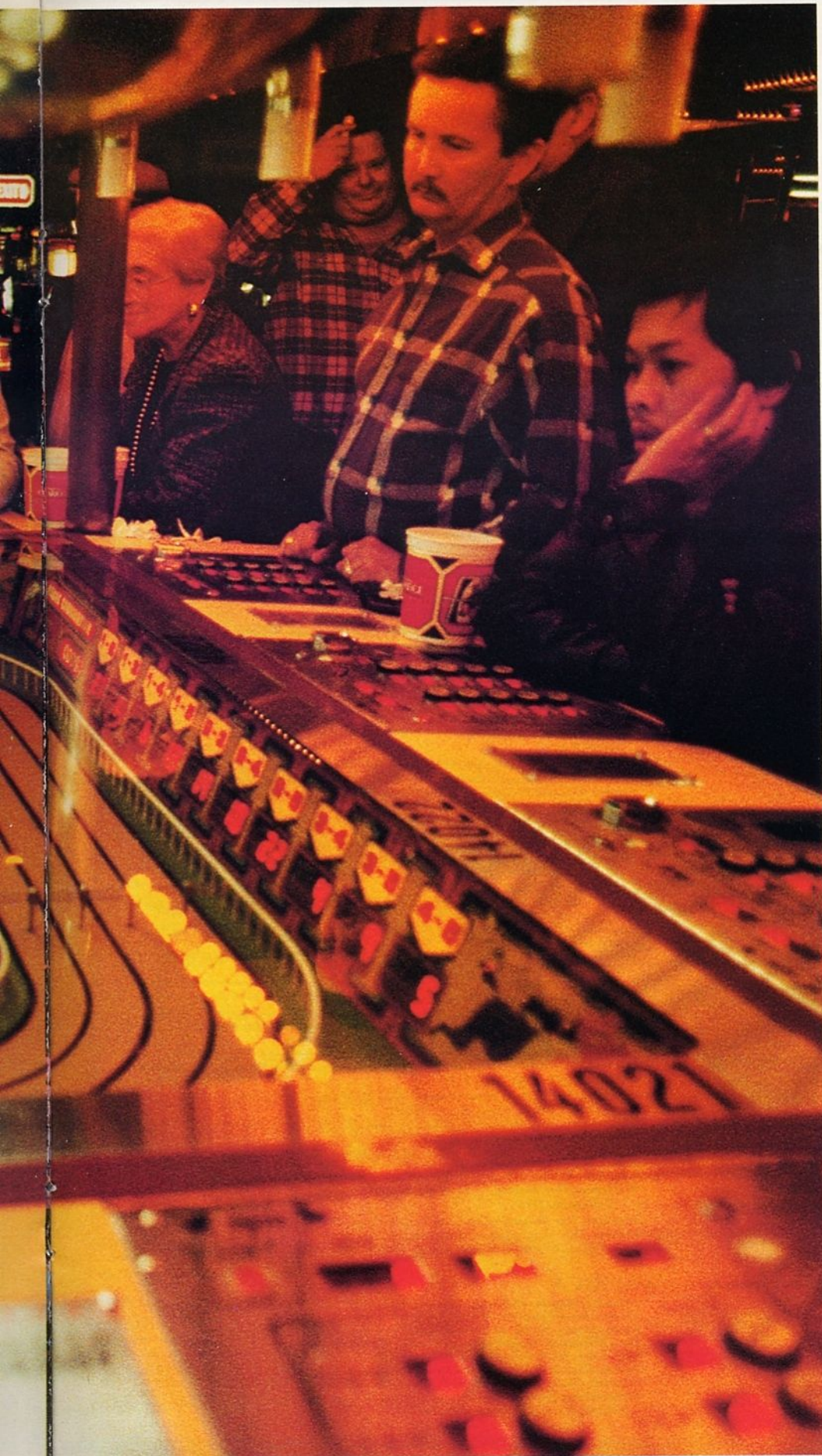


The Supreme Personality of Godhead is situated in the core of everyone's heart, just as the sun may be on everyone's head. Yet although the sun may be on the heads of millions and millions of people, this does not mean that the sun is variously situated. Similarly, because the Supreme Personality of Godhead has inconceivable potencies, He can be within everyone's heart and yet not be situated variously.

—Bhāg. 10.3.8, purport







Instead of spending money for advancing the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, one spends his hard-earned money on clubs, brothels, liquor, slaughterhouses, and so forth. Due to sinful activities, one becomes implicated in the process of transmigration and thus has to accept one body after another. Being thus absorbed in a distressed condition, one never attains happiness.

—Bhāg. 5.13.2, purport

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Cuenca, Ecuador—Pje. Paucarabamba & Gral. Veintimilla Barrio-las-Chirimollas / (07) 82-93-58
Georgetown, Guyana—24 Uirvugt Front, West Coast Demerara
Guatemala, Guatemala—Apartado Postal 1534
Guayaquil, Ecuador—Velez 1915 (between Carchi & Tulcan) / 36-16-47
La Paz, Bolivia—Calle 16 Obrajes 460 (mail: P.O. Box 10278) / 783556
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Quito, Ecuador—Carron 641 Amazonas / 520466
Rosario, Argentina—Centro Bhaktivedanta, Corrientes 925, Rosario 2000
Santa Cruz, Bolivia—P.O. Box 4920 / 40146 (31571)
San Jose, Costa Rica—Centro Cultural Govinda, 235 mtrs. norte del Banco Anglo, San Pedro (mail: Apdo. 166, 1002) / 34-1218
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San Jose, Costa Rica—Granja Nueva Goloka Vrindavana, Carretera a Paraíso, de la entrada del Jardín Lancaster (por Calle Concava), 200 metros al sur (mano derecha), Cartago (mail: Apdo. 166, 1002) / 51-6752

San Salvador, El Salvador—Carretera a Santa Ana, Km. 34, Canton Los Indios, Zapotitán, Dpto. de La Libertad

RESTAURANTS

Cuenca, Ecuador—Govinda's, Anexo Hotel, Crespo
Guatemala, Guatemala—Callejón Santandes a una cuadra abajo de Guatel, Panajachel Solola
Guayaquil, Ecuador—Govinda's (contact ISKCON Guayaquil)
La Paz, Bolivia—Restaurant Manjari, Calle Potosí 1315, esq. Colón
San Salvador, El Salvador—25 Avenida Norte 1132
Santa Cruz, Bolivia—Restaurant Govinda's, Calle Florida 594, esq. Cañoto
Santa Cruz, Bolivia—Snack Govinda, Av. Argomosa (1° anillo), esq. Bolivar

A Life Offered

The only “prisoner of conscience” to die in a Soviet labor camp last year, Śacīsūta dāsa had led a life of heroic service to Kṛṣṇa.

by SANNYĀSA DĀSA



At the time of Śacīsūta’s arrest, the KGB took the photos at right after having him pose with the incriminating evidence: his *Bhagavad-gīta* and his altar. Above, the author, Sannyāsa dāsa.

Sannyāsa dāsa (Suren Karapetyan), a Soviet devotee of Kṛṣṇa, wrote the following short biography in memory of his heroic God-brother who died last December in a Soviet labor camp in Siberia. Sannyāsa dāsa was himself recently released from a psychiatric hospital in Soviet Armenia, where he had been suffering severe persecution because of his participation in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. He is one of the main devotees responsible for the printing of many thousands of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books in Russian and Armenian within the USSR. The Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees in the USSR have earned distinction because of their courageous preaching. Here is an account of one very special Soviet devotee by another.



I first met Śacīsūta dāsa (Sarkis Ogadzhanyan) in January 1985. I had pneumonia then, and for that reason I was living at Kamalamālā’s home. Śacīsūta and Sārvabhāvana (Gagik Buniatyan) came for the first time then. They had heard about Kṛṣṇa consciousness from some impersonalists, and Kamalamālā was preaching to them about deep philosophical matters—not the kinds of things we would usually speak to newcomers about. The two young men listened to

Kamalamālā with great attention, without saying anything. I thought that they would not understand him, but I was wrong. Although they appeared very serious and did not express their joy, they demonstrated it in another way: they gave up smoking hashish that same day.

Śacīsūta and Sārvabhāvana had been classmates in high school and were intimate friends. Before meeting the devotees, they had learned a little Indian philosophy. They were aware of the principle of

red to Kṛṣṇa



ahimsa (nonviolence) and were vegetarians. After graduating from high school, they were sent to the army. In the army it was very difficult not to eat meat, but they were determined. They even suffered persecution for being vegetarians. Śacīsūta was regularly beaten by soldiers and officers.

Śacīsūta would speak very little. One might get the impression that he had no emotion. But he was relishing deeper, spiritual emotions. He was so attached to

Kṛṣṇa that he would constantly chant the holy name of the Lord. I had never seen such a person before; I had only read about such devotees in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. I never saw Śacīsūta idle. He was always serving his spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa. If he was not engaged in producing and distributing books, he would wash the floor or the pots and dishes.

Whatever Śacīsūta did, he did very conscientiously. He would always chant while doing his service. After the devotees

took *prasādam*, it was usual for everyone to sit down and relax. Śacīsūta, however, would immediately get up and wash all the plates. He would never allow anyone to wash his plate. He took great pleasure in serving the devotees.

Once I was going to wash my pants and had put them into a bucket of water. I went to another room for five minutes, and when I returned I found that my pants had been washed and hung up to dry. When I asked Śacīsūta why he had washed my

pants, he said nothing and simply smiled.

Śacīsūta always took *prasādam* with great pleasure and respect. Kamalamālā, as if he could predict the future, would give Śacīsūta huge quantities of *prasādam*. It would even sometimes fall off the plate. Kamalamālā would say, "Please take *prasādam*, dear Sarkis. Eat it when we have it. Tough times may come—we may be in prison with nothing to eat."

Śacīsūta's favorite activity was distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. He distributed more than any other devotee in the USSR. He would go out every morning with one hundred books and would return in the evening and place whatever money he had collected on the altar. To distribute books was very dangerous then, especially in Armenia. The KGB would follow us at every step.

I do not know if it was good or bad, but Śacīsūta was never careful. He just did not know how to be careful. He was completely open when he distributed books. It was as if he were unaware of which country he was living in. Therefore, it became routine for the KGB agents to catch Śacīsūta distributing books. Each time they would let him free, but under the condition that he would not distribute books again. When they caught him for the fourth time, Śacīsūta was carrying seventy of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. The KGB said, "Sarkis, it is you again!" Śacīsūta acted as if he had never been caught before and said, "What's the matter? Did I do something wrong?" Again they let him go.

Śacīsūta, Sārvabhāvana, and Advaita Ācārya were concerned that while many books had been distributed in Yerevan (the capital of Armenia), not so many had been distributed in other cities of the Soviet Union. Therefore, they took several hundred books and went to Russia.

In the city of Pyatigorsk, Śacīsūta was again caught. He was charged with illegal distribution of literature and was put into a local jail. He did not have any documents with him, and when the police asked his name and address he invented a new identity. The police sent an inquiry to Yerevan to find out about the name and address Śacīsūta had given them. Of course, they found there was no such person and no such address. They asked him a second time, and he again concocted an identity. He was sure that if they discovered how many times he had been arrested for distributing books, they would certainly prosecute him.

Śacīsūta was in this jail for eleven days. He ate nothing. He only prayed to Kṛṣṇa for help. On the eleventh day of his stay in jail, the local authorities decided to move all the prisoners to another location. Along with several other prisoners and guarded by two militia men, he began walking to the new jail. On the way, one

prisoner asked to drink water from a spring, and one militia man went with him. Some of the other prisoners, along with Śacīsūta, began to run in different directions. Because the second militia man had to guard the rest of the prisoners, he couldn't follow those who were escaping. Śacīsūta escaped very easily.

The railway station was not far away. Śacīsūta was lucky because the Moscow-Yerevan train was standing at the station. He did not have much strength because of not eating for so long. He climbed onto the car and asked the conductor if he could go to Yerevan without paying. The conductor kicked him off the train. He got onto another car without being noticed by anybody and hid up on a luggage rack all the way to Yerevan.

This whole time we were greatly worried about Śacīsūta, and finally he appeared, skinny and weak.

KGB agents offered the devotees freedom if they would reject Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If they would not, they would be sent to Siberia, where they would be imprisoned until the last day of their sentence.

In January 1986, Śacīsūta, along with Sārvabhāvana and Advaita Ācārya, was again arrested. Śacīsūta's situation was very difficult. The prison administration would arrange for other prisoners to harass him and beat him. All day Śacīsūta would sit under a blanket and chant. His diet consisted of only four hundred grams of bread each day, and the bread was often inedible.

Kamalamālā, Ātmānanda, and I had been arrested in November 1985, and in March 1986 we met Śacīsūta and the other two devotees at the Yerevan Sovetashen Psychiatric Hospital. They told us everything about their life in prison. Their trial was just a joke. There were no witnesses or victims. They had not said anything to defend themselves at the trial because they saw that it was futile. Everything had been arranged, like a drama on a stage.

Śacīsūta was sentenced to two years,

Sārvabhāvana was also sentenced to two years, and Advaita Ācārya was sentenced to three years because of a prior arrest. After the trial, KGB agents offered them freedom if they would reject Kṛṣṇa consciousness; otherwise, the KGB promised, they would be sent to Siberia, where they would be imprisoned until the last day of their sentence. There would be no chance of an early release or a probation. Of course, it was out of the question for the devotees to reject Kṛṣṇa, and the KGB sent them to Siberia.

Before they went to Siberia, the chief of the prison in Yerevan called Śacīsūta to his office for a discussion. The chief, whose name is Kazaryan, spoke to Śacīsūta for hours about atheistic philosophy, trying to convince him that the soul and God did not exist. Śacīsūta kept silent for a long time, and the chief thought that he was creating some doubt in Śacīsūta's mind. Finally, Kazaryan asked him what he thought, and Śacīsūta answered, "Yes, there is a soul, and fulfilling the needs of the soul is more important than fulfilling the needs of the body. The purpose of life is to surrender to God." Kazaryan was exasperated with Śacīsūta and concluded that it was useless to try to convert him.

Śacīsūta sent us letters from the labor camp in Siberia. He said it was very difficult for him to associate with the criminals imprisoned with him. In a letter dated October 1, 1987, he said, "What can I tell you about myself? I still chant sixteen rounds and follow the four regulative principles, but I do not think I can consider myself a disciple of my guru. In this tuberculosis hospital my consciousness has become very polluted and I commit many mistakes. . . . As for my health, it is difficult to breathe, and my stomach hurts."

In his last letter Śacīsūta said, "Dear Prāṇa dāsa, I will be released on the 23rd of January, 1988. I doubt that I will be able to return to Yerevan by myself. It would be nice if someone could come to meet me. Please tell Haridāsa Ṭhākura dāsa and Nityānanda Rāma dāsa to kindly come and take me back to Armenia. Please come and take me. It is really important if someone has the time to please come to take me home. Your little brother, Sarkis."

Śacīsūta passed away on December 26, 1987, less than one month before his scheduled release from the labor camp.

The KGB many times offered Śacīsūta freedom in exchange for even formal rejection of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but he could never compromise, even formally. In his life there was nothing more valuable than Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He knew that being in the labor camp was dangerous for him, yet he preferred to remain there rather than to reject Kṛṣṇa. Śacīsūta dāsa was willing to sacrifice everything for Kṛṣṇa—even his very life. ❏

Every Town

And Village

The worldwide activities of the International

Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)



Govinda's Restaurant Opens in Philadelphia

Philadelphia—Devotees from the ISKCON temple here recently opened Govinda's Restaurant in the heart of the city's nightlife district. Located on famous South Street, next door to one of the largest and most popular New Age bookstores in the eastern United States, Govinda's is likely to become the most prominent vegetarian restaurant in the Philadelphia area.

Head chef Rāmanātha-śuka dāsa, who has many years of experience cooking not only at Hare Kṛṣṇa temples but also at the Los Angeles Govinda's Restaurant and at the Higher Taste in San Francisco, says, "We have the best location we could want in this city, and our clientele is steadily increasing. We're especially pleased by the favorable comments we've gotten from the professional people who are choosing Govinda's as their lunch spot."

Patrons to Govinda's serve themselves at a buffet whose fare includes a variety of international vegetarian cuisine, all offered to Kṛṣṇa. In accordance with Śrīla Prabhupāda's directions for Hare Kṛṣṇa restaurants, diners get all they can eat for one price.

Indian Ambassador Visits Dallas Temple

Dallas, Texas—The Honorable Pratap Kishan Kaul, Indian ambassador to the United States, recently visited the Hare Kṛṣṇa center here. During his two-hour visit, he appreciated Kalachandji's Restaurant and the magnificent temple of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kālachandajī, known here as "the Palace." He also toured Prabhupāda's Memorial Room and a large sanctuary being renovated by the local Indian community.

ISKCON life member Dr. P. N. Misra, who presented a copy of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and his wife

during their visit to Houston in 1985, coordinated the visit.

NEWS BRIEFS

Vegetarian Times magazine recently reviewed ISKCON's women's shelter in Philadelphia, describing it as a unique welfare institution because it is the only vegetarian shelter in the United States. The article explains that "because of the presence of children, the shelter's vegetarian menu had to be approved by the city, and it passed with flying colors."

ISKCON Miami Beach's newly renovated Govinda's Restaurant was recently reviewed by *Miami Herald* staff writer Irene Lacher, who especially appreciated the salad bar, saying it was "one of the better one's we've seen." The restaurant serves Indian, Italian, and American *prasādam* (vegetarian food offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa).

Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees in Moscow help set the theme for a new Soviet film, *Is It Easy To Be Young?* The film documents the youth movement now sweeping the Soviet Union. Flashing between a Soviet rock concert, a courtroom, a military training camp, and a Hare Kṛṣṇa temple, the film explores how young people deal with negative aspects of Soviet life. It includes scenes of devotees chanting congregationally, worshiping, chanting on their beads, and explaining the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. At least seventeen million people have already seen the film.

The *Dallas Morning News* recently ran a cover story about Sunanda dāsa, head chef at Kalachandji's Restaurant at the Dallas Hare Kṛṣṇa temple. A large color photo of Sunanda sitting in the temple

BALE MAHARAJA DĀSA



Prospective patrons look over the menu at Govinda's Restaurant in Philadelphia.

appeared on the front page of the paper's Sunday "Food" section. The article describes Sunanda's cooking experience in ISKCON and commends his unique style of Indian cooking. Largely because of Sunanda's expertise, Kalachandji's is a highly rated restaurant in the Dallas area.

Yudhiṣṭhira dāsa and Jayantī-devī dāsī were recently invited to participate in a Religious Task Force for the Dallas Independent School District. Topics to be discussed by the Task Force include school prayer and First Amendment rights. Baptists, Catholics, Jews, Lutherans, Muslims, and the Dallas-Fort Worth Hindu Society are among the other groups participating.

Navayogendra Swami recently presented a copy of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and a large photograph of Lord Kṛṣṇa to His Excellency Jag Mohan Malhotra, governor of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. Navayogendra Swami, who is spending five months traveling and preaching in this remote Indian state, spoke with the governor about the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and the work of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement around the world.

RESOURCES

Read the history of the appearance of Lord Jagannātha, reenacted in *Jagannātha-priya Nāṭakam*, a moving drama written by Tamāla Krishna Goswami, which, although written in English, conforms to the rules of Sanskrit classical drama. For your copy write or call The Festival of India, P.O. Box 801, Spanish Fork, Utah 84660/ (801) 798-3559. Cost is \$11.95, postpaid.

Hear the message of Kṛṣṇa directly from His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Śrīla Prabhupāda's lectures, interviews, and conversations are available on more than seven hundred audiocassettes. Also available, on microfilm: all his let-

ters, as well as transcriptions of all his recorded lectures. For a catalog, send \$5 to the Bhaktivedanta Archives, P.O. Box 34453, Los Angeles, CA 90034.

Festivals & 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.

Month of Puruṣottama (May 16–June 14)

June 10—Paramā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

Month of Trivikrama (Second Half) (June 15–June 29)

June 24—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, a famous spiritual master in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* (disciplic succession) and the author of *Govinda Bhāṣya*, an important commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Gaṅgāmātā Gosvāminī, a famous woman spiritual master in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*.

June 26—Pāñḍava-nirjalā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

June 27—Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's chipped-rice-and-yogurt festival at Pāñihāṭi.

June 29—Snāna-yātrā, the bathing festival of Lord Jagannātha. Disappearance anniversaries of Śrīla Mukunda Datta and Śrīla Śrīdhara Pañḍita, two great devotees of Lord Caitanya.

Month of Vāmana (June 30–July 29)

July 9—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīvāsa Pañḍita, one of the principal associates of Lord Caitanya.

July 10—Yoginī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

July 13—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gadādhara Pañḍita, one of the principal associates of Lord Caitanya. Also, disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Fasting till noon.

Enjoy the writings of Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami, the author of a six-volume biography of Śrīla Prabhupāda. He continues to produce essays, poems, and other writings for everyone interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. For a list of publications, write The Gītā-nāgarī Press, P.O. Box 12380, Philadelphia, PA 19119.

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Help produce artistic translations of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. The Cultural Institute for Vedic Arts will be producing picture books and comic-book classics of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, as well as arranging exhibitions of transcendental art. If you're interested in these projects, register now for training in any of the media involved. Write to Yadurāñi-devī dāsī, 2445 Collins Ave., Miami Beach, FL 33140, or call (305) 532-5042.

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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. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Third Canto: “The Status Quo”

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The Killing of the Demon Hiranyākṣa

In this installment of our continuing presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the sage Maitreya describes to Vidura, a great devotee of the Lord, how Lord Viṣṇu in His boar incarnation killed the powerful demon Hiranyākṣa.

TEXT 20

गिरयः प्रत्यदृश्यन्त नानायुधमुच्चोऽनघ ।
दिग्वाससो यातुधान्यः शूलिन्यो मुक्तमूर्धजाः ॥२०॥

*girayah pratyadṛśyanta
nānāyudha-muco 'nagha
dig-vāsaso yātudhānyah
śūlinyo mukta-mūrdhajāḥ*

girayah—mountains; *pratyadṛśyanta*—appeared; *nānā*—various; *āyudha*—weapons; *mucaḥ*—discharging; *anagha*—O sinless Vidura; *dik-vāsasaḥ*—naked; *yātudhānyah*—demonesses; *śūlinyah*—armed with tridents; *mukta*—hanging loose; *mūrdhajāḥ*—hair.

TRANSLATION

O sinless Vidura, mountains discharged weapons of various kinds, and naked demonesses armed with tridents appeared with their hair hanging loose.

TEXT 21

बहुमिर्धक्षरोभिः पत्त्यश्वरथकुञ्जरैः ।
आततायिभिरुत्सृष्टा हिंसा वाचोऽतिवैशसाः ॥२१॥

*bahubhir yakṣa-rahṣobhiḥ
patty-aśva-ratha-kuñjaraiḥ
ātātāyibhir utsṛṣṭā
himsrā vāco 'tivaiśasāḥ*

bahubhiḥ—by many; *yakṣa-rahṣobhiḥ*—Yakṣas and Rākṣasas; *patti*—marching on foot; *aśva*—on horses; *ratha*—on chariots; *kuñjaraiḥ*—or on elephants; *ātātāyibhiḥ*—ruffians; *utsṛṣṭāḥ*—were uttered; *himsrāḥ*—cruel; *vācaḥ*—words; *ati-vaiśasāḥ*—murderous.

TRANSLATION

Cruel and savage slogans were uttered by hosts of ruffian Yakṣas and Rākṣasas, who all either marched on foot or rode on horses, elephants or chariots.

TEXT 22

प्रादुष्कृतानां मायानामासुरीणां विनाशयत् ।
सुदर्शनास्त्रं भगवान् प्रायुङ्क्त दयितं त्रिपात् ॥२२॥

*prāduṣkṛtānām māyānām
āsurīṇām vināśayat*

*sudarśanāstram bhagavān
prāyunkta dayitam tri-pāt*

prāduṣkṛtānām—displayed; *māyānām*—the magical forces; *āsurī-ṇām*—displayed by the demon; *vināśayat*—desiring to destroy; *sudarśana-astram*—the Sudarśana weapon; *bhagavān*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *prāyunkta*—threw; *dayitam*—beloved; *tri-pāt*—the enjoyer of all sacrifices.

TRANSLATION

The Lord, the personal enjoyer of all sacrifices, now discharged His beloved Sudarśana, which was capable of dispersing the magical forces displayed by the demon.

PURPORT

Even famous *yogīs* and demons can sometimes enact very magical feats by their mystic power, but in the presence of the Sudarśana *cakra*, when it is let loose by the Lord, all such magical jugglery is dispersed. The instance of the quarrel between Durvāsā Muni and Mahārāja Ambariṣa is a practical example in this matter. Durvāsā Muni wanted to display many magical wonders, but when the Sudarśana *cakra* appeared, Durvāsā himself was afraid and fled to various planets for his personal protection. The Lord is described here as *tri-pāt*, which means that He is the enjoyer of three kinds of sacrifices. In *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord confirms that He is the beneficiary and enjoyer of all sacrifices, penances and austerities. The Lord is the enjoyer of three kinds of *yajña*. As further described in *Bhagavad-gītā*, there are sacrifices of goods, sacrifices of meditation and sacrifices of philosophical speculation. Those on the paths of *jñāna*, *yoga* and *karma* all have to come in the end to the Supreme Lord because *vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti*—the Supreme Lord is the ultimate enjoyer of everything. That is the perfection of all sacrifice.

TEXT 23

तदा दितेः समभवत्सहसा हृदि वेपथुः ।
स्मरन्त्या भर्तुरादेशं स्तनाच्चासृक् प्रसुप्नुवे ॥२३॥

*tadā dīteḥ samabhavat
sahasā hṛdi vepathuḥ
smarantya bhartur ādeśam
stanāc cāsṛk prasusruve*

tadā—at that moment; *dīteḥ*—of Diti; *samabhavat*—occurred; *sahasā*—suddenly; *hṛdi*—in the heart; *vepathuḥ*—a shudder; *smarantyaḥ*—recalling; *bhartuḥ*—of her husband, Kaśyapa; *ādeśam*—the words; *stanāt*—from her breast; *ca*—and; *asṛk*—blood; *prasusruve*—flowed.

TRANSLATION

At that very moment, a shudder suddenly ran through the heart of Diti, the mother of Hiranyākṣa. She recalled the words of her husband, Kaśyapa, and blood flowed from her breasts.

PURPORT

At Hiranyākṣa's last moment, his mother, Diti, remembered what her husband had said. Although her sons would be demons, they would have

the advantage of being killed by the Personality of Godhead Himself. She remembered this incident by the grace of the Lord, and her breasts flowed blood instead of milk. In many instances we find that when a mother is moved by affection for her sons, milk flows from her breasts. In the case of the demon's mother, the blood could not transform into milk, but it flowed down her breasts as it was. Blood transforms into milk. To drink milk is auspicious, but to drink blood is inauspicious, although they are one and the same thing. This formula is applicable in the case of cow's milk also.

TEXT 24

विनष्टासु स्वमायासु भूयश्चात्रज्य केशवम् ।
रूपोपगृह्णमानोऽमुं दृष्ट्वाऽवस्थितं बहिः ॥२४॥

*vinastāsu sva-māyāsu
bhūyaś cāvrāja keśavam
rūpōpagūhamāno 'muṃ
dadṛśe 'vasthitam bahiḥ*

vinastāsu—when dispelled; *sva-māyāsu*—his magic forces; *bhūyaś*—again; *ca*—and; *āvrāja*—after coming into the presence; *keśavam*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *rūpā*—full of rage; *upagūhamānaḥ*—embracing; *amum*—the Lord; *dadṛśe*—saw; *avasthitam*—standing; *bahiḥ*—outside.

TRANSLATION

When the demon saw his magic forces dispelled, he once again came into the presence of the Personality of Godhead, Keśava, and, full of rage, tried to embrace Him within his arms to crush Him. But to his great amazement he found the Lord standing outside the circle of his arms.

PURPORT

In this verse the Lord is addressed as Keśava because He killed the demon Keśi in the beginning of creation. Keśava is also a name of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is the origin of all incarnations, and it is confirmed in *Brahma-saṁhitā* that Govinda, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the cause of all causes, exists simultaneously in His different incarnations and expansions. The demon's attempt to measure the Supreme Personality of Godhead is significant. The demon wanted to embrace Him with his arms, thinking that with his limited arms he could capture the Absolute by material power. He did not know that God is the greatest of the great and the smallest of the small. No one can capture the Supreme Lord or bring Him under his control. But the demoniac person always attempts to measure the length and breadth of the Supreme Lord. By His inconceivable potency the Lord can become the universal form, as explained in *Bhagavad-gītā*, and at the same time He can remain within the box of His devotees as their worshipable Deity. There are many devotees who keep a statue of the Lord in a small box and carry it with them everywhere; every morning they worship the Lord in the box. The Supreme Lord, Keśava, or the Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is not bound by any measurement of our calculation. He can remain with His devotee in any suitable form, yet He is unapproachable by any amount of demoniac activities.

TEXT 25

तं मुष्टिभिर्विनिम्नन्तं वज्रसारैरघोक्षजः ।
करेण कर्णमूलेऽहन् यथा त्वाह्णं मरुत्पतिः ॥२५॥

*taṃ muṣṭibhir vinighnantam
vajra-sāraiḥ adhokṣajah
kareṇa karṇa-mūle 'han
yathā tvāṣṭram marut-patiḥ*

taṃ—Hiranyākṣa; *muṣṭibhiḥ*—with his fists; *vinighnantam*—striking; *vajra-sāraiḥ*—as hard as a thunderbolt; *adhokṣajah*—Lord Adhokṣaja; *kareṇa*—with the hand; *karṇa-mūle*—at the root of the ear; *ahan*—struck; *yathā*—as; *tvāṣṭram*—the demon Vṛtra (son of Tvaṣṭā); *marut-patiḥ*—Indra (lord of the Maruts).

TRANSLATION

The demon now began to strike the Lord with his hard fists, but

Lord Adhokṣaja slapped him in the root of the ear, even as Indra, the lord of the Maruts, hit the demon Vṛtra.

PURPORT

The Lord is explained here to be *adhokṣaja*, beyond the reach of all material calculation. *Akṣaja* means "the measurement of our senses," and *adhokṣaja* means "that which is beyond the measurement of our senses."

TEXT 26

स आहतो विश्वजिता ह्यवज्ञया
परिभ्रमद्रात्र उदस्तलोचनः ।
विशीर्णबाह्वङ्घ्रिशिरोरुहोऽपतद्
यथा नगेन्द्रो लुलितो नमस्वता ॥२६॥

*sa āhato viśva-jitā hy avajñayā
paribhramad-rātra udastalocanaḥ
viśīrṇa-bāhv-aṅghri-śirorūho 'patad
yathā nagendro lulito nabhasvatā*

saḥ—he; *āhataḥ*—having been struck; *viśva-jitā*—by the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *hi*—though; *avajñayā*—indifferently; *paribhramat*—wheeling; *gātraḥ*—body; *udasta*—bulged out; *locanaḥ*—eyes; *viśīrṇa*—broken; *bāhu*—arms; *aṅghri*—legs; *śiraḥ-ruhaḥ*—hair; *apatat*—fell down; *yathā*—like; *naga-indraḥ*—a gigantic tree; *lulitāḥ*—uprooted; *nabhasvatā*—by the wind.

TRANSLATION

Though struck indifferently by the Lord, the conqueror of all, the demon's body began to wheel. His eyeballs bulged out of their sockets. His arms and legs broken and the hair on his head scattered, he fell down dead, like a gigantic tree uprooted by the wind.

PURPORT

It does not take even a moment for the Lord to kill any powerful demon, including Hiranyākṣa. The Lord could have killed him long before, but He allowed the demon to display the full extent of his magical feats. One may know that by magical feats, by scientific advancement of knowledge or by material power one cannot become the equal of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. His one signal is sufficient to destroy all our attempts. His inconceivable power, as displayed here, is so strong that the demon, despite all his demoniac maneuvers, was killed by the Lord when the Lord desired, simply by one slap.

TEXT 27

क्षितौ शयानं तमकुण्ठवर्चसं
करालदंष्ट्रं परिदष्टदच्छदम् ।
अजादयो वीक्ष्य शशांसुरागत
अहो इमां को नु लभेत संस्थितिम् ॥२७॥

*kṣitau śayānam tam akuṇṭha-varcasam
karāla-danṣṭram paridaṣṭa-dacchadam
ajādayo vikṣya śaśaṁsur āgatā
aho imāṁ ko nu labheta saṁsthitim*

kṣitau—on the ground; *śayānam*—lying; *taṃ*—Hiranyākṣa; *akuṇṭha*—unfaded; *varcasam*—glow; *karāla*—fearful; *danṣṭram*—teeth; *paridaṣṭa*—bitten; *dat-chadam*—lip; *ajā-ādayaḥ*—Brahmā and others; *vikṣya*—having seen; *śaśaṁsuḥ*—admiringly said; *āgatāḥ*—arrived; *aho*—oh; *imam*—this; *kaḥ*—who; *nu*—indeed; *labheta*—could meet; *saṁsthitim*—death.

TRANSLATION

Aja [Brahmā] and others arrived on the spot to see the fearfully tusked demon lying on the ground, biting his lip. The glow of his face was yet unfaded, and Brahmā admiringly said: Oh, who could meet such blessed death?

PURPORT

Although the demon was dead, his bodily luster was unfaded. This is very peculiar because when a man or animal is dead, the body immediately becomes pale, the luster gradually fades, and decomposition takes place. But here, although Hiranyākṣa lay dead, his bodily luster was unfaded because the Lord, the Supreme Spirit, was touching his body. One's bodily luster remains fresh only as long as the spirit soul is present. Although the demon's soul had departed his body, the Supreme Spirit touched the body, and therefore his bodily luster did not fade. The individual soul is different from the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One who sees the Supreme Personality of Godhead when he quits his body is certainly very fortunate, and therefore personalities like Brahmā and the other demigods eulogized the death of the demon.

TEXT 28

यं योगिनो योगसमाधिना रहो
ध्यायन्ति लिङ्गादसतो मुमुक्षया ।
तस्यैव दैत्यच्छपमः पदाहतो
मूलं प्रपश्यन्तनुमुत्ससर्ज ह ॥२८॥

*yam yogino yoga-samādhinā raho
dhyāyanti liṅgād asato mumukṣayā
tasyaiṣa dāitya-ṛṣabhāḥ padāhato
mukhaṁ prapaśyaṁs tanum utsasarja ha*

yam—whom; *yogināḥ*—the yogis; *yoga-samādhinā*—in mystic trance; *rahaḥ*—in seclusion; *dhyāyanti*—meditate upon; *liṅgāt*—from the body; *asataḥ*—unreal; *mumukṣayā*—seeking freedom; *tasya*—of Him; *ṣaḥ*—this; *dāitya*—son of Diti; *ṛṣabhāḥ*—the crest jewel; *padā*—by a foot; *āhataḥ*—struck; *mukham*—countenance; *prapaśyan*—while gazing on; *tanum*—the body; *utsasarja*—he cast off; *ha*—indeed.

TRANSLATION

Brahmā continued: He was struck by a forefoot of the Lord, whom yogis, seeking freedom from their unreal material bodies, meditate upon in seclusion in mystic trance. While gazing on His countenance, this crest jewel of Diti's sons has cast off his mortal coil.

PURPORT

The process of *yoga* is very clearly described in this verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. It is said here that the ultimate end of the yogis and mystics who perform meditation is to get rid of this material body. Therefore they meditate in secluded places to attain yogic trance. *Yoga* has to be performed in a secluded place, not in public or in a demonstration on stage, as nowadays practiced by many so-called yogis. Real *yoga* aims at ridding one of the material body. *Yoga* practice is not intended to keep the body fit and young. Such advertisements of so-called *yoga* are not approved by any standard method. Particularly mentioned in this verse is the word *yam*, or "unto whom," indicating that meditation should be targeted on the Personality of Godhead. Even if one concentrates his mind on the boar form of the Lord, that is also *yoga*. As confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā*, one who concentrates his mind constantly in meditation upon the Personality of Godhead in one of His many varieties of forms is the first-class *yogī*, and he can very easily attain trance simply by meditating upon the form of the Lord. If one is able to continue such meditation on the Lord's form at the time of one's death, one is liberated from this mortal body and is transferred to the kingdom of God. This opportunity was given to the demon by the Lord, and therefore Brahmā and other demigods were astonished. In other words, the perfection of *yoga* practice can be attained by a demon also if he is simply kicked by the Lord.

TEXT 29

एतौ तौ पार्षदावस्य शापाघातावसद्गतिम् ।
पुनः कतिपयैः स्थानं प्रपत्स्येते ह जन्मभिः ॥२९॥

*etau tau pārśadāv asya
śāpād yātāv asad-gatim*

*punaḥ katipayaiḥ sthānaṁ
prapatsyete ha janmabhiḥ*

etau—these two; *tau*—both; *pārśadau*—personal assistants; *asya*—of the Personality of Godhead; *śāpāt*—because of being cursed; *yātāu*—have gone; *asad-gatim*—to take birth in a demoniac family; *punaḥ*—again; *katipayaiḥ*—a few; *sthānaṁ*—own place; *prapatsyete*—will get back; *ha*—indeed; *janmabhiḥ*—after births.

TRANSLATION

These two personal assistants of the Supreme Lord, having been cursed, have been destined to take birth in demoniac families. After a few such births, they will return to their own positions.

TEXT 30

देवा ऊचुः

नमो नमस्तेऽखिलयज्ञतन्त्रवे
स्थितौ गृहीतामलसच्चमूर्तये ।
दिष्टया हतोऽयं जगतामरुन्दुद-
स्त्वत्पादभक्त्या वयमीश निवृताः ॥३०॥

*devā ūcuḥ
namo namas te 'khila-yajña-tantave
sthitau grhītāmala-sattva-mūrtaye
diṣṭyā hato 'yam jagatām aruntudaḥ
tvat-pāda-bhaktiā vayam īśa nirvṛtāḥ*

devāḥ—the demigods; *ūcuḥ*—said; *namaḥ*—obeisances; *namaḥ*—obeisances; *te*—unto You; *akhila-yajña-tantave*—the enjoyer of all sacrifices; *sthitau*—for the purpose of maintaining; *grhīta*—assumed; *amala*—pure; *sattva*—goodness; *mūrtaye*—form; *diṣṭyā*—fortunately; *hataḥ*—slain; *ayam*—this; *jagatām*—to the worlds; *aruntudaḥ*—causing torment; *tvat-pāda*—to Your feet; *bhaktiā*—with devotion; *vayam*—we; *īśa*—O Lord; *nirvṛtāḥ*—have attained happiness.

TRANSLATION

The demigods addressed the Lord: All obeisances unto You! You are the enjoyer of all sacrifices, and You have assumed the form of a boar, in pure goodness, for the purpose of maintaining the world. Fortunately for us, this demon, who was a torment to the worlds, has been slain by You, and we too, O Lord, are now at ease, in devotion to Your lotus feet.

PURPORT

The material world consists of three modes—goodness, passion and ignorance—but the spiritual world is pure goodness. It is said here that the form of the Lord is pure goodness, which means that it is not material. In the material world there is no pure goodness. In the *Bhāgavatam* the stage of pure goodness is called *sattvaṁ viśuddham*. *Viśuddham* means "pure." In pure goodness there is no contamination by the two inferior qualities, namely passion and ignorance. The form of the boar, therefore, in which the Lord appeared, is nothing of the material world. There are many other forms of the Lord, but none of them belong to the material qualities. Such forms are nondifferent from the Viṣṇu form, and Viṣṇu is the enjoyer of all sacrifices.

The sacrifices which are recommended in the *Vedas* are meant to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In ignorance only, people try to satisfy many other agents, but the real purpose of life is to satisfy the Supreme Lord, Viṣṇu. All sacrifices are meant to please the Supreme Lord. The living entities who know this perfectly well are called demigods, godly or almost God. Since the living entity is part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, it is his duty to serve the Lord and please Him. The demigods are all attached to the Personality of Godhead, and for their pleasure the demon, who was a source of trouble to the world, was killed. Purified life is meant to please the Lord, and all sacrifices performed in purified life are called Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness is developed by devotional service, as clearly mentioned here.

(continued in next issue)

THE VEDIC

Transcendental Comment

STAGE SET FOR WAR

by Bhūtātma dāsa

"Think of it," began President Ronald Reagan in a low, deliberate voice. "You are sitting at that desk. The word comes that they [the missiles] are on their way. And you sit here knowing that there is no way of stopping them. So they're going to blow up how much of this country we can only guess at, and your only response can be to push the button before they get here so that even though you're all going to die, they're going to die too."

(Time magazine)

In 1956 President Dwight D. Eisenhower proclaimed, "The era of armaments has ended. The human race must conform its actions to this truth or die." Yet the Atomic Age has witnessed no abatement in the friction between nations that generates a need for weapons and war.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* attributes these undying tensions to a lack of God consciousness, and calls for a broad awakening based on scientific spiritual principles to remedy the crisis. These principles derive from the understanding that God is the supreme enjoyer, that He owns everything, and that He is everyone's friend. The *Bhāgavatam* promotes the practical techniques of sense control, service to saintly persons, and meditation on the Supreme Truth.

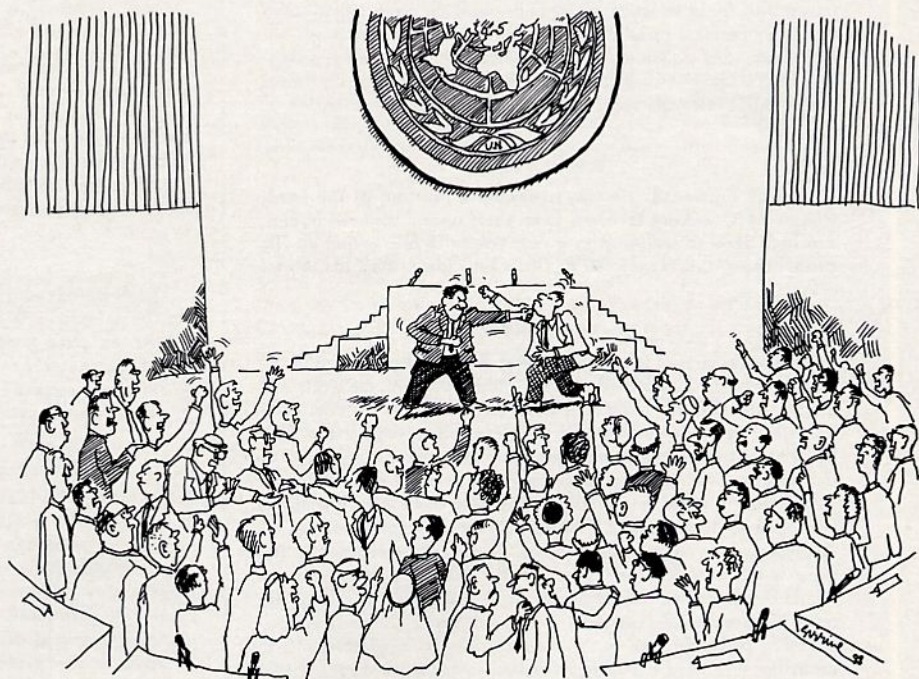
Some persons may insist that to consider spiritual remedies for a material crisis of the magnitude of imminent nuclear war is impractical and simplistic. But as Roger Rosenblatt wrote in a *Time* essay, "Most proposed solutions to this problem sound naive, the sophisticated answers being either to take up arms or give up entirely."

A history from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* dramatically illustrates how neglect of spiritual activities produces the psychological conditions that lead to enmity and war. The *Bhāgavatam* tells of the powerful king Hiraṇyakaśipu, who was deeply attached to his great political might and

economic prosperity and was accustomed to those around him bending to his will. His lust and greed were sharply contrasted by the qualities of his saintly son Prahlaḍa, whose purity and detachment from worldliness enraged the irascible king. When Prahlaḍa repeatedly refused to adopt his father's materialistic ways, the king threatened him, mocking his conviction that God, being omnipresent, would protect him. In a fury, Hiraṇya-

are trying to prove that there is no God and that everything takes place due to combinations and permutations of material elements. Thus the material world is becoming more and more godless, and consequently everything is in a disturbed condition."

The defiant spirit of the modern atheist is conspicuous in the most powerful nations of today. The godless attitude of many scientists was revealed by British



kaśipu smashed a palace column, shouting for Prahlaḍa's God to show Himself. Kṛṣṇa emerged from the column in the ferocious half-man, half-lion form of Nṛsiṃhadeva and slayed Hiraṇyakaśipu, abruptly ending his illusion of greatness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains in his commentary on this narration: "Since the creation of the material world, there have been two kinds of men—the *devas* and the *asuras*. The *devas* are always faithful to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whereas the *asuras* are always atheists who defy the supremacy of the Lord. At the present moment, throughout the entire world, the atheists are extremely numerous. They

scientist Peter Adkins on a recent BBC broadcast. "I believe science can explain everything in the universe," he said, "even beauty and the emergence of religious belief. I also believe that we'll be able to solve the biggest question of all, the question of where we all came from." Such a godless mentality creates a climate of materialism, founded on false proprietorship and powerful drives for sense gratification. As in the case of King Hiraṇyakaśipu, the atheistic conception of ourselves as the owners and enjoyers of what is factually the property of God is the underlying error in such thinking.

This error leads to international con-

OBSERVER

ary on the Issues of the Day

flicts in many ways. For example, when we believe that we are the owners and enjoyers of the earth's resources, we feel no compunction in slaughtering innocent creatures to provide meat for our meals. According to the Vedic teachings, this indiscriminate killing reacts heavily on human society: wars are a direct karmic reaction to animal slaughter. Animal slaughter also leads to war indirectly, because it nurtures qualities like pride and aggressiveness, which act as the root causes of war. But if we were to adopt spiritual processes for controlling our senses, we would be satisfied to maintain our bodies with foods that do not require violence to obtain. Thus we would eliminate a major cause of the belligerent tendencies that plague efforts for world peace.

Until we can subdue our mentality of exploiting material nature and other living entities, all our political plans for constructing a foundation for peace will fail. Even the United Nations, founded to maintain peace and security, stands accused of disrupting world harmony.

Retired U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Jeane Kirkpatrick described the organization's ineffectiveness in these words: "What goes on in the U.N. actually exacerbates conflict. . . . All kinds of countries that don't have any direct interest in a conflict get involved in it. As a result, you might say all conflict is globalized."

And John Burton, director of the Centre for the Analysis of Conflict, at the University of Kent, England, writes in *Peace Theory: Preconditions to Disarmament*, "The United Nations, operating in the absence of constructive regional bodies and in a world environment dominated by military alliances, itself contributed to the aggravation of conflicts and to their spread. Its operation threatened even its own existence by 1960."

Such contradictions should not surprise us; rather we should expect them. A world where every nation is a potential source of anxiety for others is a stage set for war. The "crystal ball effect"—knowledge of the incredible destructive capacity of nuclear weapons—is not a sound basis for peace. To create a lasting peace, to-

day's leaders must assimilate the message of the Vedic literature that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the supreme owner, the supreme enjoyer, and the friend of all living entities.

MARCH ON MOZAMBIQUE

by Mathureśa dāsa

Over the years the effects of drought, famine, and civil war in Africa have evoked the world's compassion. Our hearts have gone out along with the shiploads of food sent to Biafra, Ethiopia, and other afflicted areas.

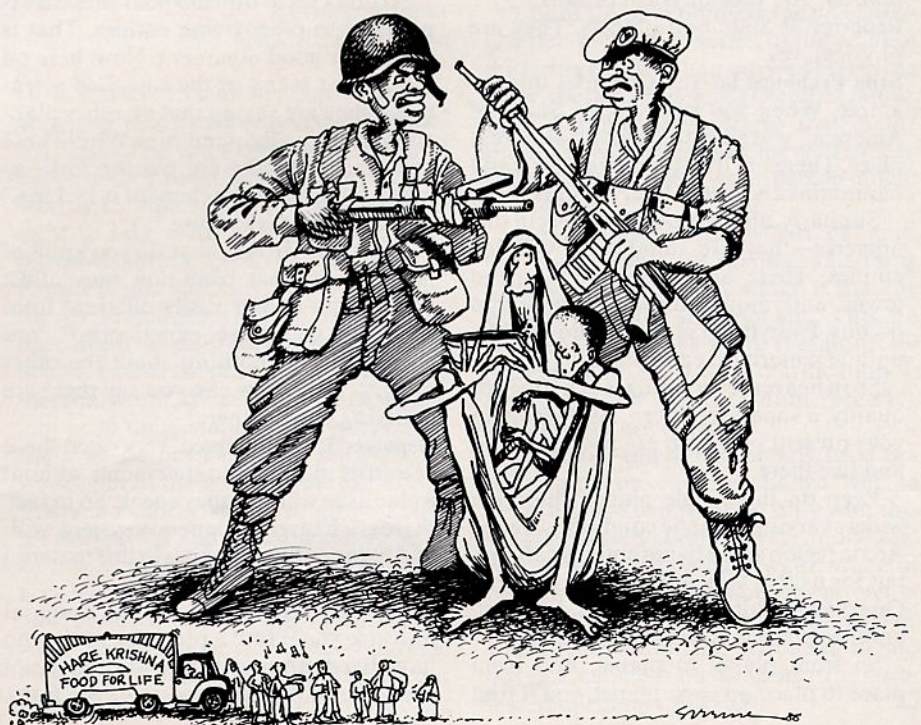
But our compassionate hope turns to disappointment, discouragement, and indifference. How can we help when the food that does reach Africa can't be effectively distributed because of war?

The East African nation of Mozambique is the latest focus of world attention. The images we see are of emaciated people sitting blank-faced and motionless. Nothing new. We saw the same thing in

Ethiopia. But those with first-hand experience in Africa say it is by far the worst they have ever seen. It's hard to find a building in Mozambique that hasn't been burned or riddled with gunfire. Because war destroys everything, no one even bothers to plant crops.

What are the warring parties in Mozambique or Ethiopia fighting for? For the right to govern. And what's the duty of government? To serve and protect the citizens. And yet the warring factions are forcing the citizens into starvation. Whoever wins, if winning is possible, couldn't possibly care about the citizens.

It's enough to evoke not merely compassion but anger, chivalry. Why just raise money and send food? Let's raise an army, march in, and set things straight. Can't NATO, the United Nations, Robin Hood—*somebody*—send at least enough troops to deliver food shipments? Communist or capitalist, superpower or third world, black or white, world leaders should agree that the particular form of government is irrelevant when millions of



ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

Going to God

This is a continuation of a conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and reporters in Melbourne, Australia, on June 29, 1974.

Reporter 3: Your Divine Grace, in your books you talk about Brahmaloaka, which, I suppose, is heaven, where we will at last see God.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. First of all, heaven is simply a higher material planetary system, where you cannot directly see God. There are many material *lokas*, or planetary systems, and heaven is one of them, and of course Brahmaloaka is one. Don't you see? There are so many material planetary systems, with innumerable planets. The planetary systems include Brahmaloaka, Candraloka, Varuṇaloka, Sūryaloka, and so many others.

Reporter 3: So when we speak of heaven, are we speaking of a physical place? Would one be on a physical planet?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Just consider the planets in this universe that you see each day and night. Are they physical or not? Take the sun. The sun is not a physical planet?

Reporter 3: It is.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: What do you mean by "physical."

Reporter 3: Well, actually existing on a material . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda: At night don't you see existing so many planets—innumerable planets? Are they physical or not?

Reporter 3: Stars and planets. They are physical, yes.

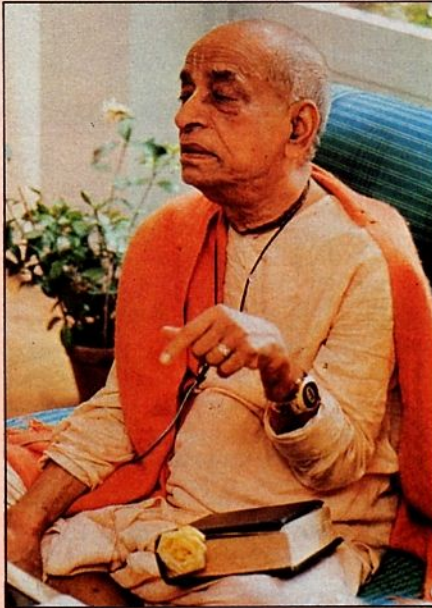
Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Consider this example. When you say "United States of America," you are talking about an actual place. There are living entities—men and mountains and rivers. Everything is there.

Similarly, all these other planets in this universe—they are inhabited by living entities. There are similarly cities and towns and mountains and rivers and oceans. Everything is there—though of a unique pattern on each planet.

So in heaven, everything is of a superior quality, a superior pattern. As a result, in your present body you are not able to go and live there.

Even on this single planet, there are widely varying climatic conditions. In the Arctic region some living entities can live, but for us it is very difficult to live there. One place is suitable for one kind of man; another place is suitable for another.

So from planet to planet, and from place to place on each planet, you'll find



living entities. And these living entities have received various kinds of material bodies just suitable to various conditions.

For instance, you cannot live within the ocean, but just for that reason you cannot say that nobody can live within the ocean. That would be foolishness. Simply you must admit you cannot live there. But there are so many varieties of fish, and they are living within the ocean very comfortably.

So don't try to transfer your present experience to other living entities. That is not a very good argument. Now, here on this planet many of the so-called scientists—they are saying that on other planets there are no living entities. Why? These so-called scientists are putting forth so many reasons: "This element is lacking." "That element is lacking."

But what, Mr. Scientist, do you know of how this or that condition may affect beings with bodies vastly different from anything you have experienced? You know virtually nothing about the other planets. Then how can you say there are no living entities there?

Reporter 3: I quite agree. Very often these scientists make grand statements without a clue as to whereof they speak. So in fact, there is a heavenly planetary system, with real living entities, and it is in this material universe?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. In this material universe you'll find a place for souls who have lived virtuously, but who have not become unalloyed devotees of the Lord.

That is called heaven, a place of great material opulence. But heaven is not in the spiritual universe. No, the spiritual universe is reserved for those souls who have developed unalloyed devotion to the Lord. Therefore in heaven you'll not see the Lord. And even though you may enjoy a life of many thousands of years, at last you must undergo death and accept another birth on an earthly planet.

Reporter 3: Your Divine Grace, do you see a time coming when all mankind will be united?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is very difficult to say, but we can be united on the spiritual platform, not on the material platform.

Reporter 3: Well, then, would you say that this spiritual unity of all mankind is possible within this generation?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: It is possible at any time—provided people take to the actual principles of spiritual life.

But they'll not take to these principles. For example, one of the basic principles of spiritual life is no meat-eating. Now, do you think this principle will be embraced by everyone? And yet this is one of the fundamental principles of spiritual life—no meat-eating.

Reporter 3: Is that a necessary . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Oh, yes. Without this—if you don't stop meat-eating—you cannot understand what spiritual life is. One who is mired in sinful life cannot understand what God is, or what devotion to God is. That is not possible.

Reporter 3: And would it be the same for the rest of what you call the principles of spiritual life?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. People who are sinful, who do not follow the spiritual principles, cannot understand God or devotion to God. The basic spiritual principles include four prohibitions. We instruct our students not to indulge in gambling, illicit sex, meat- or fish- or egg-eating, or intoxication, including cigarettes, tea, and coffee.

Reporter 3: Drinking coffee and tea is also prohibited?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Oh, yes. It is also a form of intoxication.

Gambling, illicit sex, flesh-eating, intoxication—these are the four pillars of sinful life. So unless one gives up these four things, he cannot understand what God is, what God's kingdom is, what our real business here in this material world is—namely preparing to go to God. ☑

(To be continued.)

innocent people are dying.

But no, we can't expect such a unified effort by world leaders, any more than we can expect reconciliation between the warring factions in Mozambique, because we are for all practical purposes ignorant of what unites us. Appeals to our "common humanity" are not, and never have been, enough.

A human being is an eternal individual person encaged in a temporary body of flesh and bone. There are five billion of us souls in human bodies of different colors and shapes, each body possessing different degrees of wealth, strength, intelligence, beauty, and so on, and all of these differences are due to individual *karma*—to activities we have performed in previous lives and in this life. We are not

communist or capitalist, black or white, old or young, Jewish or Christian or Hindu. We are eternal individual persons, and eternal parts of the Supreme Person, who is the Absolute Truth.

That is the common platform, not only for humanity, but for all living things. The animals and plants are also eternal individuals wrapped in bodies according to their *karma*. If we mistakenly reserve spiritual individuality for man, we'll never properly understand spirit.

Our own spiritual identity reveals itself as we revive our relationship with the supreme person. Lord Caitanya has urged us to precipitate this revival by regularly chanting any of the hundreds of names for the Absolute Truth and by eating vegetarian foods offered to Him. Chanting

cleanses us of mistaken identification with the body, while eating sanctified food purifies the mind and reduces violence toward nonhuman life to a minimum.

So is it possible to raise an army to march into Mozambique and feed the starving? Yes, but only if we set aside thinking in terms of our nationality, our sectarian religion, our politics, our race—even our humanity—and put practical spiritual matters first. And if we can thus accomplish our own spiritual purification, then equipping our invading troops might be less expensive. They could march in "firing" the hundreds of names of the Supreme Person and attack the enemy—spiritual ignorance—with the holy names and an arsenal of sanctified food. ❏

NOTES

(continued from page 36)

shopping in stores—housewives, and so on." To which Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, "Still we cannot make it a shopkeepers' magazine." And regarding the idea that Kṛṣṇa was perhaps too strange to many, Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, "Even if it is

esoteric, still Kṛṣṇa must be there."

Aware of Śrīla Prabhupāda's desires, and those of *Back to Godhead's* readers, we intend to keep up the right direction as we try to improve in order to realize Prabhupāda's "great dream" of seeing *Back to Godhead* become an influential journal in the modern world. There is no room for complacency. And while there is no room

for whimsy in printing such an authorized and important work, *Back to Godhead* allows for the full potential of artists, writers, and thinkers. To help us achieve the goals Śrīla Prabhupāda set for us, we hope to regularly hear from our readers, and we hope you will enjoy and profit spiritually by participating in the monthly adventure of *Back to Godhead*. —SDG

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

LETTERS

I am completely wonderstruck at the way the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is spreading. Please keep up this excellent work and carry on delivering the many fallen souls of today's world.

I have a few questions that I could not find answers to. Therefore I thought it a good idea to write to you so that they may be cleared.

Generally, relative to Indian Vedic scriptures, we are not allowed to eat meat or kill any animal. If anyone does so, then according to reincarnation he himself will be killed in the same way in his next life. But if I kill an animal with the understanding that it must have done the same to me in my previous life, do I have the right to kill it?

Secondly, in *Bhagavad-gītā*, Chapter Two, verse 24, Lord Kṛṣṇa says that the soul is immovable. But when we die, our soul has to either transmigrate to another material body or go back home to Godhead. Could you kindly account for this apparent contradiction? In addition, what happens to the soul during a heart transplant?

Lastly, you say in your magazine that if Jesus had meant "Thou shalt not kill" to apply only to humans, then he would have

said "murder" and not "kill." But I have seen a Bible where Jesus says, "Do not murder." I am not a Christian but would like you to clarify this issue.

Ravi Mendiratta
Redcliff, Zimbabwe

OUR REPLY: Essentially you raise four questions, which we'll answer one at a time.

1. Regarding your "right" to kill animals because they must have killed you previously, by your *karma* you may have the right to take a life in retribution for a previous karmic debt, but if you read *Bhagavad-gītā* carefully, you will see that the whole idea is not to become snarled in the endless tangle of karmic action and reaction. That is the path of bondage to this material world. What Kṛṣṇa wants Arjuna and us to understand is that as spiritual souls we do not belong in the material world, but in the spiritual world.

Kṛṣṇa exhorts Arjuna to give up both the auspicious and inauspicious fruits of *karma*, as the true achievement of salvation. He further says that such salvation is most perfect in one who engages in *bhakti-yoga*, devotional service to the Supreme Person. It is better, therefore, to set our sights on transcending our *karma* rather

than on fulfilling it.

2. When Lord Kṛṣṇa says that the soul is immovable, He means that the soul cannot be moved from his constitutional position as an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. Our material existence is really only a kind of dream; we think we are moving in the material world, just as a person in a dream thinks he is moving here and there, when actually he has not left his bed.

3. Lord Kṛṣṇa explains in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that the soul is seated in the heart of the living being. When the soul leaves the body, the body is dead. It becomes refuse. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that at the time of a heart transplant, the soul simply changes hearts, just as a person might change seats.

4. As for the question of "kill" or "murder" in the Bible, we say the same thing Śrīla Prabhupāda said, which is that the Bible says, "Thou shalt not kill." This is a clear order from the Lord. It requires no interpretation for further clarification. It doesn't say (at least not until recently), "Thou shalt not murder."

When self-interested persons, seeking a religion of convenience, change "kill" to "murder," we can respond only with this sensible observation: if every individual were to fashion the state laws to suit his or her convenience, there would be no meaning to the word *government*. Similarly, if we whimsically tailor the scriptures to suit our fancy, there is no meaning to our professed allegiance to God. ❏

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Why Back to Godhead Is the Way it Is

Back to Godhead is not the world's most popular magazine. And yet its founder, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, hoped that it might become extremely popular: "I am waiting for the day when this paper will take the shape of *Life* magazine or similar other magazines in the matter of its popularity." Although Śrīla Prabhupāda urged his followers to widely distribute *Back to Godhead*, he admitted that he didn't expect many people to take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As Lord Kṛṣṇa states in *Bhagavad-gītā*, out of many thousands of humans beings, hardly anyone will be interested in perfection, and even out of those interested in perfection, hardly one will know Kṛṣṇa in truth.

Back to Godhead, however, does have its long-time, faithful followers, as well as a steady flow of new readers. I would like to explain—with the aim of informing our new readers and reassuring our old ones—why *Back to Godhead* is the way it is.

Śrīla Prabhupāda founded the magazine in 1944 on the order of his spiritual master. In the beginning, Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote almost all the articles, setting the standard for the magazine by presenting the teachings of the Vedic scriptures in straightforward, philosophical prose. Yet by putting the Vedic scriptural truths into a magazine format relevant to the times (late- and post-World War II), he also became a journalist of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, writing articles like "Mr. Churchill's 'Humane World,'" "Mr. Bernard Shaw's Wishful Desire," and "Gandhi-Jinnah Talks."

When Śrīla Prabhupāda came to America and began the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, he handed over the task of producing *Back to Godhead* to his disciples. He still saw every issue until his passing away in 1977, and he always gave pertinent guidelines. Therefore, *Back to Godhead*, to be true to its purpose of bringing "revolution to human society about understanding spiritual life," will always be the work of followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda, who are carrying out his will. The editors have produced the *Back to Godhead Handbook*, which gives many statements by Śrīla Prabhupāda as to editorial policy, style, qualifications for authors, frequency, circulation, and so on.

The editorial policy of *Back to Godhead* is to present the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As Lord Kṛṣṇa teaches in *Bhagavad-gītā*, all of us living entities are eternal spirit souls, full of bliss and knowledge. In the material world, because of misidentification with our bodies, we suffer from miseries on all sides, and finally we die. But by revival of our original, spiritual nature and our original, loving relationship with the supreme soul, Lord Kṛṣṇa, we conditioned souls can rise to perfection even while in the human life, and we can transfer at death back to the spiritual world. Since Lord Kṛṣṇa recommends that His teachings be spread, *Back to Godhead* doesn't merely discuss theological principles; it advocates them and confronts the opposite ways of life, such as atheism and hedonism.

Back to Godhead has evolved into a "slick" magazine, employing modern graphics, photography, and journalistic prose, yet its staff members, as well as its regular readers, expect *Back to Godhead* to always be in line with the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Anyone who knows and likes *Back to Godhead* would never want to see it become altered in its essence. *Back to Godhead* is meant to be something you can depend on in a precarious world, like the morning sun or the existence of the Absolute Truth.

As for the magazine's becoming increasingly popular, that is a challenge given by Śrīla Prabhupāda, and one we haven't fully met. *Back to Godhead* has always been distributed by members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, so the number of magazines they distribute monthly is some indication of the health of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. Sometimes devotees have distributed 800,000 a month, and sometimes as few as 20,000. Although we at *Back to Godhead* hope to see an increase in single copy sales by preachers, the real future of the magazine may lie in steadily increasing the number of subscribers.

Back to Godhead should always have something fresh and new in it, because that's the nature of spiritual life. Lord Kṛṣṇa is never dull or static, and neither should we be. The test is whether in the name of change or while trying to gain readers, *Back to*

Godhead can keep its defined direction. On this point, Śrīla Prabhupāda made it clear that *Back to Godhead* should never "sell out" to ordinary taste, or it will have lost its soul. As he once wrote:

Actually, people are seeking transcendental reading matter more and more, so if we stick to our standard, as I have given you, then there's no doubt they will come to read our magazine in greater numbers. You make it very attractive, with our Kṛṣṇa consciousness subject matter as you have outlined, and our BTG will be very much in demand, without further changes. I have seen one religious newspaper which is trying to attract readers by resort to fashionable phrases and materialistic themes with mass public interest—simply because they have not got any real substance for attracting, they offer what they think the public might like, such as sex, crimes, amusements, like that. That is not our method. We have got such a stock of real substance that alone it is sufficient to capture the readers, without such ordinary tricks and commercial formulas.

As a matter of fact, the editors of BTG, about ten years ago, did start to drift away from the essential principles, but other devotees and faithful readers protested. The editors had an idea that it would be better to phase paintings of Lord Kṛṣṇa out of *Back to Godhead*, fearing that because His form wasn't a popular image He would be seen as a sectarian, Indian god. They began to make the magazine more of a New Age statement, bringing in authors who didn't share the philosophical conclusions of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

But the readers didn't go for it. They wrote, "Where are the beautiful pictures of Kṛṣṇa?" and "You should be ashamed of yourselves!" And Śrīla Prabhupāda stated, "What is the use of instituting many changes? Of something worthwhile people are not so stupid that they will prefer the package or label to the contents inside. Where is the end of change if we simply rely on public taste? It is the philosophy which must attract people to *Back to Godhead* magazine."

At that time, one of the editors presented the argument to Śrīla Prabhupāda that they wanted to distribute *Back to Godhead* widely, "to many ordinary people who go

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