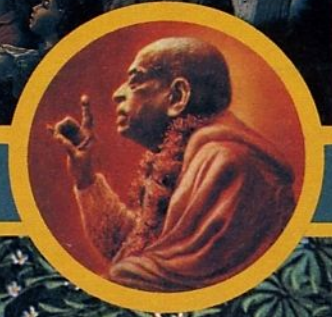


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

BACK TO GODHEAD

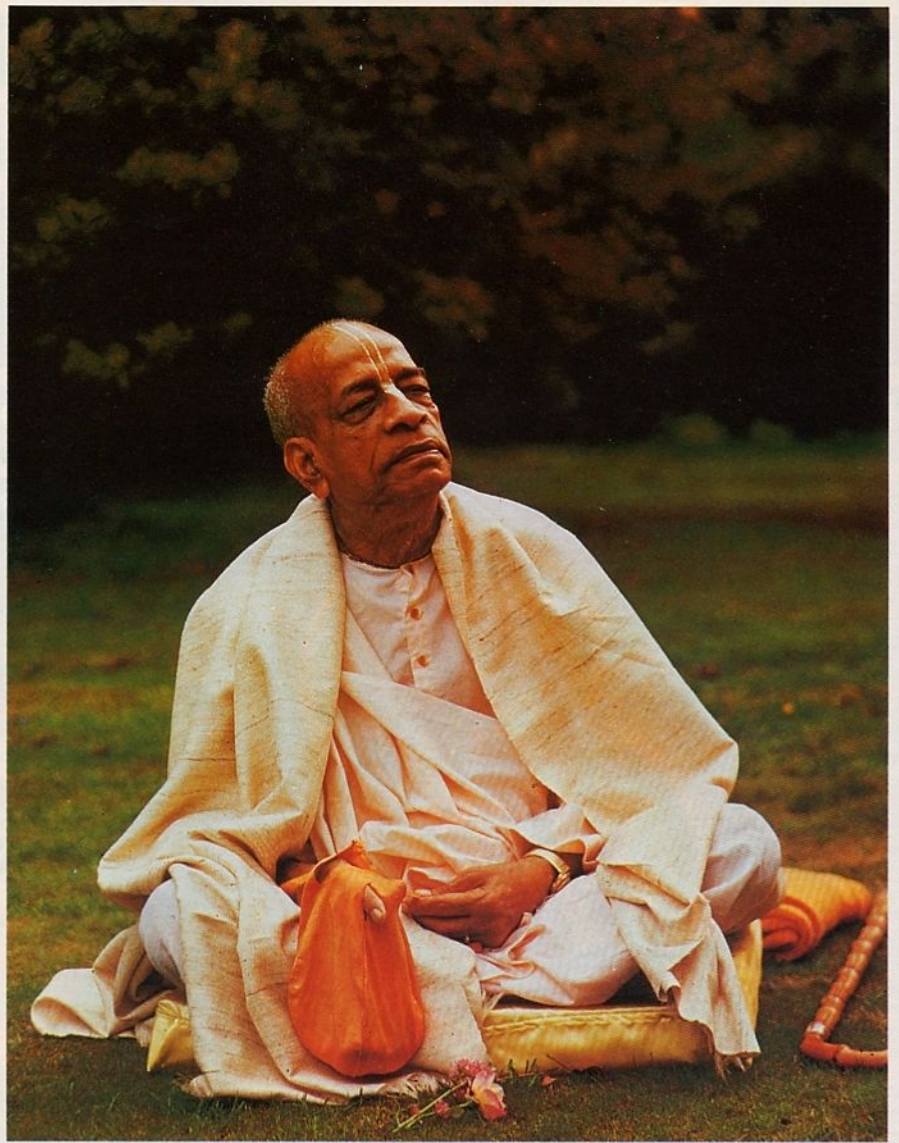
Vol.23 No.10

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



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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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 **pique**. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **r** 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**. 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 (dāśī for women), meaning "servant." For instance, the name **Kṛṣṇa dāsa** means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

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COVER: The supreme couple—Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, His eternal consort and the personification of love for Him—has been the subject of art, music, sculpture, and dance throughout Indian history. This painting, done in the style of the Moghul period, gives us a glimpse into the exchange of love between God and His devotees. Because Rādhā is Kṛṣṇa's best devotee, He is especially attracted to Her, but of His relationship with any of His devotees, the Lord says, "The pure devotee is always within the core of My heart, and I am always in the heart of the pure devotee. My devotees do not know anything else but Me, and I do not know anyone else but them" (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.4.68).





BEYOND THE SENSES

A lecture in London, England,
on August 24, 1973,
by His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,
Founder-Ācārya of
the International Society for
Krishna Consciousness.

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*antavanta ime dehā
nityasyoktāḥ śarīraṇaḥ
anāśino 'prameyasya
tasmād yudhyasva bhārata*

“The material body of the indestructible, immeasurable, and eternal living entity is sure to come to an end; therefore fight, O descendant of Bharata.”

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.18)

Here Kṛṣṇa is convincing Arjuna that the soul is different from the body. While the soul is eternal, this body will one day be finished. However you may try to preserve the body by applying cosmetics and other things, you cannot save it. That is not possible, because the body is *antavanta*, perishable. (*Anta* means “end,” and *vat* means “possessing.”)

So Kṛṣṇa is saying to Arjuna, “Your duty is to fight, but you are lamenting that the bodies of your grandfather and teacher and kinsmen will be destroyed. You think this will make you unhappy. Certainly you’ll be unhappy, but even if you do not fight, their bodies will be finished today or tomorrow or a few years later. So why should you not discharge your duty?” This is Kṛṣṇa’s argument here.

As for the souls of Arjuna’s grandfather, teacher, and others, they are eternal. The words used are *nityasya uktāḥ*.

Lord Kṛṣṇa, the source of perfect knowledge, instructs Arjuna, who is overwhelmed with lamentation and bewildered about his duty in life. Kṛṣṇa’s perfect instructions, recorded in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, are available to anyone who wants knowledge free from the defects inherent in knowledge gained through our limited senses

Now, it is significant that Kṛṣṇa says *uktaḥ*. *Uktaḥ* means “it is said.” It is not that Kṛṣṇa dogmatically puts forward some theory. No. The fact that the soul is eternal is already settled; it is already ascertained. By whom? By the Vedic literature, and by previous authorities. This is the way of presenting evidence for spiritual statements. Even Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, does not theorize. He says, “It is said; it is authorized.”

Then Kṛṣṇa says the soul is *anāśīno 'prameyasya*. *Anāśīnaḥ* means “indestructible,” and *aprameyasya* means “immeasurable.” Of course, in the Vedic literature the measurement of the soul is given, but it is so small that you cannot measure it.

Many things are described in the Vedic literature that are beyond our experience. You are so advanced in scientific knowledge, but when dealing with Vedic knowledge you cannot say whether or not it is factual. For example, the *Padma Purāṇa* gives a count of the varieties of living entities: *jalajā nava-lakṣāṇi*. “There are 900,000 aquatic animals.” You cannot say, “No, there are not 900,000. There are more.” It is not possible for you to see within the water and count how many varieties of living entities are there. The biologists might investigate, but it is not possible for them to see 900,000 forms. Then the *Padma Purāṇa* says, *sthāvarā lakṣa-vimśati*: “There are 2,000,000 varieties of trees and plants.” Then, *krmayo rudra-sankhyākaḥ*: “There are 1,100,000 insects”

It is a puzzling thing how the Vedic literature can state everything so precisely: “Nine hundred thousand aquatics, 2,000,000 plants and trees, 1,100,000 insects.” This is realized knowledge. And we accept it. Because we accept the *Vedas* as authority, knowledge is there, ready. If somebody asks you, “Can you say how many forms of living entities there are within the water?” it would be very difficult for you to answer. Even the biologists cannot say, although they are very expert. But because we accept the Vedic authority, we can immediately say, “There are 900,000 aquatics.” Although I have never seen these forms personally, because it is stated in the Vedic literature I can give you the correct answer. So, by Vedic authority we can know things beyond our direct experience.

Sometimes rascals come and challenge, “Can you show me God?” Yes, we can show you God—provided you have the eyes to see Him. God can be seen with a different type of eyes, not with these ordinary eyes. That is stated in the *śāstra* [scripture]: *ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ*. *Indriyaiḥ* means “with these material senses.” With these material senses we cannot directly experience the form of the Lord, or His qualities,

or what He does. But the *śāstra* describes the Lord's qualities, form, and activities. So you can learn of these things from the *śāstra*.

The *Vedānta-sūtra* says, *śāstra-yonitvāt*. *Yoni* means “source.” Thus *śāstra-yonitvāt* means that the *śāstra* is the source of knowledge about the Supreme Lord. As it is said, one should be *śāstra-cakṣuḥ*—the *śāstra* should be one's eyes, not these blunt, material eyes.

So, to know what is beyond our sense perception, we have to see through the authorized books. *Acintyāḥ khalu ye bhāvā na tāms tarkena yojayet*: “By argument one cannot understand what is beyond sense perception.”

So many things are beyond our direct experience. Daily we see many planets and stars in the sky, but we have no information about them. Now the scientists are

You can try to understand the subject matter with your intelligence, but you cannot make any addition or alteration. That is not allowed. The science of the Absolute Truth is already settled; you cannot argue.

sending men to see the moon planet, but hopelessly they are coming back. Then the scientists dogmatically declare, “There is no life on any planet except Earth.” This is false. We have information from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that there are people on the moon who live for ten thousand years. And what is the measurement of their year? Our six months is equal to their twelve hours, so just imagine how long ten thousand of their years is!

Actually, everyone's year is calculated differently. A small ant lives for a hundred “years,” but the ant's hundred years and our hundred years are different. Similarly, our hundred years and Brahmā's hundred years are different. So time is relative, according to the nature of your body.

Now, let us try to calculate the life span of Brahmā by calculating his one day. Kṛṣṇa says, *sahasra-yuga-paryantam ahar yad brahmaṇo viduḥ*: “Brahmā's day lasts

for a thousand *yuga* cycles.” In each cycle there are four *yugas*, or ages—Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara, and Kali—which last a total of 4,320,000 years. So one of Brahmā's days (a day is morning to evening) lasts 4,320,000,000 of our years, and Brahmā lives one hundred years composed of these days and equally long nights.

These things are to be understood through the *śāstra*. Otherwise, we can have no knowledge of them. You cannot calculate on your own, nor can you go to Brahmā and ask him. You cannot even go to the moon planet, what to speak of Brahmāloka. It is in the remotest part of this universe. Modern scientists estimate that to go to the topmost planet would require thousands of years if one travels at the speed of light. So by direct perception we cannot understand even this material world, what to speak of the spiritual world.

As Lord Brahmā says, *panthās tu kotīśata-vatsara-sampragamyo vāyor athāpi manaso muni-puṅgavānām*. You can go on with your mental speculation for many hundreds and thousands of years, but still it is not possible to know of the soul and God in this way. You have to learn about these subject matters from the *śāstra*; otherwise, it is not possible to understand them.

Therefore here, when Kṛṣṇa says the soul is *nitya*, eternal, He also says *uktaḥ*, “it is said.” Kṛṣṇa is not presenting some dogma, although He can do so, since He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But He is teaching us that only when something is said by previous authorities, or *ācāryas*, can you declare it. This is called *paramparā*, the disciplic succession. You can try to understand the subject matter with your intelligence, but you cannot make any addition or alteration. That is not allowed. The science of the Absolute Truth is already settled; you cannot argue.

Now, in the previous verse Kṛṣṇa said, *avināśi tu tad viddhi yena sarvam idaṁ tatam*: “The power of the indestructible soul is spread all over the body.” What is that power? Consciousness. This power of the soul you can perceive, but not the soul itself. The soul is so small that it is not even possible to measure it. We have no means to measure it because our material senses are too blunt. We can simply understand the presence of the soul by seeing the presence of consciousness.

When Caitanya Mahāprabhu fainted in the Jagannātha temple, Śārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya examined Him and concluded that there was no consciousness, because His abdomen was not moving. When you have consciousness, you breathe, and thus your abdomen moves. But because Caitanya Mahāprabhu's abdomen was not moving, Śārvabhauma

(continued on page 13)

Coming to Kṛṣṇa

GOOD INTENTIONS

Though he sought enlightenment on an isolated beach through music, meditation, and marijuana, it came to him in a way he'd never expected.

by SARVĀTMĀ DĀSA



Having had some mystical experiences as a teen-ager that convinced me of the existence of God, I left my native country, Argentina, for Salvador, capital of the Brazilian state of Bahia, famous for its mysticism and magic. I arrived in the area without plans, money, or acquaintances and moved into a straw hut by the beach a couple of miles from the nearest fishing village and fifty miles from civilization. It was an ideal setting of palm trees, a small lake, a river of crystalline water, and the turquoise Atlantic Ocean, in year-round eighty-degree weather.

I made a new friend there. He was reading the Bible and other books about God, playing music for God, and smoking marijuana to keep in touch with "the subtle world of God consciousness." While I played saxophone and recorder, he would play guitar. We intended to satisfy God with our musical spontaneity.

I read a book by a Japanese doctor who

claimed that everyone had inherent healing powers that could be awakened just by practicing austerities like fasting and chanting *mantras*. Since our eating depended on what God would send, fasting wasn't unknown to us, although God would almost daily send someone with something to eat, or drop some green coconuts to the ground. To try to attain enlightenment, I was already planning to undergo a forty-day fast. So I followed the Japanese doctor's program and, by the grace of God, I developed some healing powers. I could close wounds and heal minor afflictions.

My friend and hut-mate, David (as he wanted people to call him—after the biblical character), made bamboo flutes, which we decided to try selling at the artisans' market in Salvador. For the first time in months, I put on a shirt and sandals. I walked along the beach to the next village (there was no road) and caught a bus into the city.

Although the contrast between the city and the beach was shocking, my mind was peaceful because I was always thinking of finding the way to God. I walked around the market playing a flute. I sold a few and

then went to the telephone company to make a long-distance call.

A young woman in a wheelchair waiting for her turn to use the phones attracted my attention. Here was a serious case I might be able to cure. Without hesitation, I went up to her and revealed my intentions.

"By the grace of God," I said, "I have some healing powers that said might enable you to walk. I'm not going to touch you or charge you anything, nor is it going to hurt you to try." I waited for her answer, which came in a way I'd never expected.

"You are very kind in trying to help me," she replied, "but you should also consider that I suffer no more pain than what your body gives you. I've been in a wheelchair since birth. I have never walked; nevertheless, I've always gotten where I wanted to go. This is the body God gave me after many past lives of sinful activities; therefore I deserve it. And more important than all this," she added, "is that I, the person, live in this machine we call the body. I need spiritual, not material, help, and in spite of your good intentions, I don't think you are ready to give that yet." After saying this, she smiled and waited for my reaction.

I was dumbfounded. It took me a while to recuperate. Then I said, "What you just said sounds like the absolute truth, which I had not expected to hear from someone in your circumstances."

My experience was that many persons confined to wheelchairs were easily irritated and seemingly resentful of their condition. I asked her not to go away. I wanted to make a call and return to talk at length. She promised to wait. When I returned I pushed the wheelchair outside and asked her where we should go.

"Let's take a taxi to a restaurant," she said.

"OK," I said, thinking, *Taxi? I never thought I'd ever ride in one again.* I had the same feeling about going to a restaurant.

Once in the taxi she asked me if I was a vegetarian. I replied that where I lived there was no meat, so circumstantially I was. But why?

She explained that killing animals or eating them is sinful and should be avoided by all means. This made sense to me, and I promised her that I would become a total vegetarian. I could see that she was serious about spiritual life, so I asked, "Is there any other prohibition?"

"Yes. No gambling."

"Fine with me," I said. "What else?"

"No illicit sex."

I had given up sex entirely some time before, understanding that it doesn't help in the pursuit of spiritual life. So I had no problems with that either.

"What else?" I asked.

"No intoxication," she replied shyly, knowing from my long hair and beard

that I was probably rather involved in this particular area.

"What do you mean by 'No intoxication'?" I asked her quickly.

"No alcohol, drugs, tobacco, coffee, tea . . ."

I then admitted to smoking marijuana to keep in constant touch with God, but at the same time I began to doubt this method of God realization.

"Where did you get the philosophy you were speaking back at the phone company?" I asked.

She calmly replied, "From the Hare Kṛṣṇas."

I searched my mind for some information about the Hare Kṛṣṇas. I told her I'd read long ago in a popular magazine that their diet consisted of lettuce and walnuts and that George Harrison of the Beatles paid all the bills. I also saw them once sell-

I searched my mind for some information about the Hare Kṛṣṇas. I told her I'd read that their diet consisted of lettuce and walnuts and that George Harrison of the Beatles paid all the bills.

ing books, incense, and oils at the Buenos Aires subway. She laughed at my poor description.

I then asked, "How do they get in touch with God if they don't smoke marijuana?"

"They chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare," she said.

Since I was already chanting some words to help with my healing powers, this made sense to me. I thought, *These Hare Kṛṣṇa people don't look like anyone else, so they easily could have something that no one else has, and why not exactly what I am looking for: the Absolute Truth? What wouldn't I give for that priceless gift!*

I asked, "What should I do?"

"Go live with them," she said.

I felt far too ignorant of their philosophy to just walk in and say, "Well, I'm one of you now." So I proposed that we spend a

few days together so I could learn the basics of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. She agreed.

We took a boat across the bay from Salvador to an island where she lived with some friends. For the next few days she taught me the basic philosophy, answered my questions, and gave me a Kṛṣṇa book and a volume of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. She showed me *japa* (chanting) beads and explained many things about the devotees' life. I was fascinated. I bid her farewell and took a boat back across the bay and a bus to the temple.

I met the temple president, Haṅkāra dāsa, who asked, "How did you get to know about us?" I briefly related my story, and he started explaining different aspects of the philosophy in a mixture of Portuguese and Spanish. I told him I wanted to become a pure devotee. Seated beside him was a young man with long hair (not as long as mine, but long enough to distinguish him from the shaven-headed devotees) who seemed absorbed in chanting on his beads, quite loudly, but also in listening to our conversation. I tried to appear unaffected by this strange sight.

Then came the *prasādam* (food that's been offered to Kṛṣṇa). To the girl, *prasādam* was a magic word. Yet despite her descriptions of celestial, divine, delicious *prasādam*, I thought it was terrible. But I silently ate everything on my plate. Later I learned that the cook was new and that the food I'd eaten, except for the bread Haṅkāra had made, was well below standard. Still, the philosophy was so satisfying that nothing was going to discourage me from living with devotees. They let me stay overnight, not in the *āśrama* but in the reception room, with no blanket or mat or pillow. My spontaneous attraction to the philosophy made them suspicious, and they were afraid I was just there to steal something or do something crazy.

They woke me for *maṅgala-ārati*, the ceremony of worshiping the Deities that begins the day. That afternoon a devotee accompanied me to my hut. I wanted to pick up my belongings and tell my roommate the good news: finally I'd found the process of awakening the soul from the slumber of material illusion and the torture of mental speculation. But my friend had left.

The next day, I rode the night bus to Recife, a city twelve hours north of Salvador, with the president of the Recife temple and a younger devotee. I was going there to join the program for newcomers. At about 9:15 P.M. the younger devotee asked me if I was chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. "Well, nobody told me to," I said, "so I guess I'm not ready yet." He laughed, gave me his own beads as a gift, and taught me how to chant. By 10:00 P.M., after chanting three rounds, I fell asleep. ❦



Vṛndāvana, India, March 1984

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare

Tap into the reservoir of pleasure. By chanting the names of God, you'll immediately be in touch with the source of all pleasure. The name *Kṛṣṇa* means "the all-attractive person," and *Rāma* means "the supreme pleasure." *Hare* is a word addressing Harā, God's devotional energy, to whom we pray to be engaged in the Lord's service. Because God is unlimited and absolute, He is fully present in the sound of His names. So, just as darkness cannot stand in the presence of light, miseries cannot affect us when we chant God's names.

Because we are spiritual and eternal, our natural state is one of unrestricted happiness. But forgetting our original positions as loving servants and devotees of Kṛṣṇa, we suffer the pains of material life. By chanting God's names, we become purified of all material desires, which separate us from Kṛṣṇa, and we regain entrance into the eternal, blissful, spiritual realm.

The spiritual realm is not restricted by time and space; it's always within reach. And you can experience it. Chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*—and taste the pleasure.

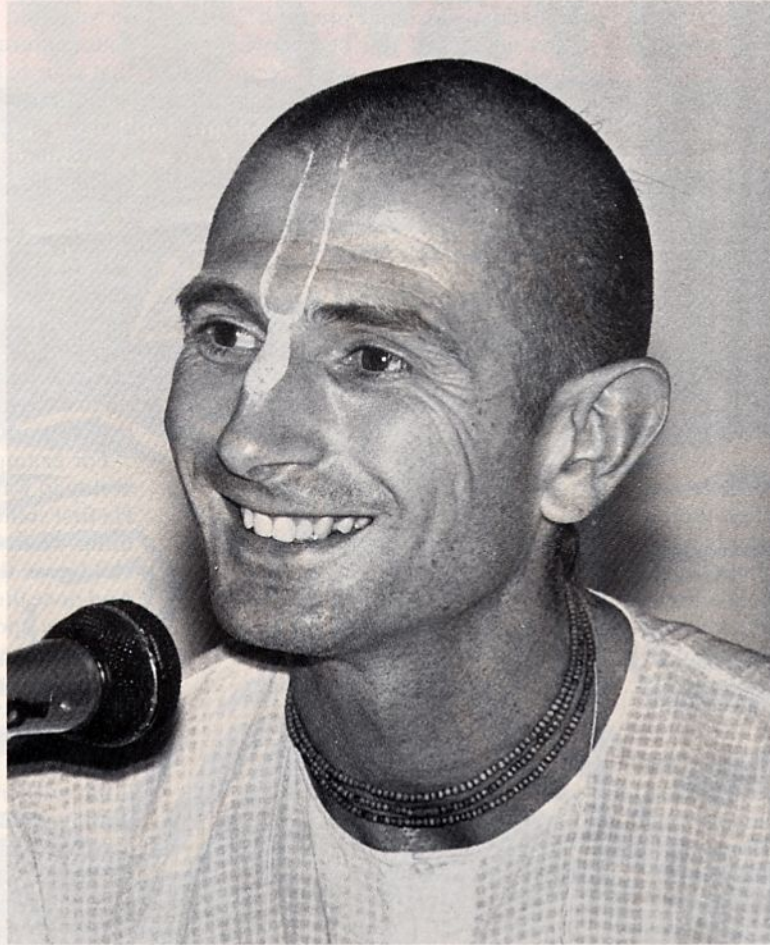


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A devotee naturally wants to please Kṛṣṇa.
But what can you give a person who has everything?

A Leaf, A Fruit, A Flower

A Sunday Feast lecture in Detroit, Michigan, on February 8, 1987,
by ROHIṆĪNANDANA DĀSA



BALI MAHARAJA DĀSA

PART I

In the Ninth Chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa says: *patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam yo me bhaktyā prayacchati/ tad ahaṁ bhakty upahr̥tam aśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ*. Here God is saying that He eats the offering of someone who has devotion. It's an extraordinary thing, because God already owns everything. It's not that God needs to eat.

We sometimes even see that *yogīs* are able to stop eating altogether. There was one great devotee during Lord Caitanya's time—Raghunātha dāsa—who used to live on just a little buttermilk every other day. He lived to be about one hundred and twenty years old.

It's actually a myth that we need food, because ultimately we're spiritual. Someone thinks, "Unless I get a

drink, I'll die" or "Unless I have another cigarette, I won't live until tomorrow morning." Or even a cup of tea. Sometimes we say, "Oh, I'm dying for a cup of tea" or "I'm starving." But, really, we're not starving; we're not going to die for want of these things.

So, similarly, food is another thing we think we need because we think we're this body. Of course, it's not that we don't need to eat—the body needs some food, we're not saying it doesn't—but if one comes to the point of liberation from the body, one can realize that one doesn't actually need any food. It's only the body that requires some food for it to grow. But once the body is grown up sufficiently, it's actually possible to live on surprisingly little food. Many people have done it.

Of course, it may seem a little strange my saying this, because in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement we sometimes tend to eat quite a lot, especially on festival days! But the principle is that a person in this world can actually come to the point where he doesn't really need to eat. So what to speak of God—He doesn't need to eat anything. In fact, the Lord is supremely independent. And yet He accepts our offering and He eats it.

In a sense He does "need" it, because of the love. That's the point: When there's love, the offering becomes palatable. Anything becomes acceptable if there's love. For instance, there's a story about a beautiful girl who once offered her beloved husband a garland that had some mud on it. He took it anyway and put it around his neck, in spite of the mud. He accepted it because of her love.

Kṛṣṇa once made a surprise visit to the home of a devotee named Vidura. Vidura jumped up, sat Kṛṣṇa down, and washed his feet. Next he tried to offer Kṛṣṇa some bananas. But he was so bewildered by love that after peeling a banana he threw it away and gave Kṛṣṇa the peel. And Kṛṣṇa was so overwhelmed with love for His devotee that He accepted his offering.

Of course, it's not that we should just give Kṛṣṇa banana peels. No. But there is a realm of loving exchange that we generally fail to touch or comprehend, a pure loving exchange in which there's no self-interest at all. There's no thought for oneself. A devotee of God thinks that he just wants to please the Lord; similarly, the Lord thinks, "I just want to please My devotee."

And it all begins by a simple thing—offering something. We can sing and offer our voices to Kṛṣṇa, and we can offer other things. Kṛṣṇa says, *patraṁ puṣpam phalaṁ toyam*: "You can offer Me a leaf or a fruit or some water or a little juice—just something small—and I'll accept it." Everyone can pick a leaf from a tree or grow a leafy

vegetable. Everyone can get a flower. They grow everywhere. You can offer a prize rose or a small wildflower—or even a dandelion or a buttercup! Everyone can get some water or a little juice. So it's not the item that's so important, but the love that goes into it.

Suppose you're a parent and you come home from work with a big bag of sweets to give your child. As you approach your house, the child runs out already sucking a sweet you gave her yesterday. Suppose she takes it out of her mouth—"This tastes good daddy; why don't you try it?"

How much will you be overwhelmed with affection because she is reciprocating your love! You've got a bagful of sweets. You don't eat sweets yourself. You certainly don't need the sticky sweet your

It's the most wonderful thing for parents when a child who is normally selfish, as most children are, becomes a little selfless and thinks of them. Similarly, if someone offers God something, He immediately feels overwhelmed with affection.

child is offering. But how could you not accept? It's the most wonderful thing for parents when a child who is normally selfish, as most children are, becomes a little selfless and thinks of them.

Similarly God is the father of everyone in the universe, and if somebody offers Him something, He immediately feels overwhelmed with affection. So this is the idea. We want to try to please God. It is said in the Vedic literature, *yasmin tuṣṭe jagat tuṣṭam*: "If you please God, you don't have to worry about pleasing anyone else." If you pour water on the root of a tree, you don't have to worry about the twigs, leaves, and branches. Similarly, if you want to do anything for anybody else in this world, do it for God, and then everything will work out perfectly. So we try to offer our devotion solely to God. If you

serve God, you will awaken some love for Him, and you will naturally want to love and serve everyone else.

We develop our love for God by accepting the things He likes and rejecting the things He dislikes. There's a saying—"Love me, love my dog." I might not even like dogs, but if I love you, then I'll say, "What a nice dog you have." If you love someone, then automatically you begin to love everything related to that person. You may take up a hobby that you didn't have before. Your loved one likes to go jogging, so you find yourself going jogging, because naturally you want to do the things that your beloved does.

Similarly, when we take up spiritual life and try to devote our lives to God, our interests change a little. We begin to think, "Well, what will please God?" We don't give up our individuality, but we surrender it. There's a difference. You may like to play hockey, but your beloved doesn't like hockey. So you may decide not to play hockey anymore. You still have the ability, but out of love you change your life style. That's the point. So Kṛṣṇa consciousness takes some practice for our love to gradually awaken.

For example, a child has an inherent ability to walk, but still he must practice. He first stands up by holding onto something. Then he takes the first step. Every child goes through the same procedure. And once the child can walk, his walking becomes spontaneous. He runs around everywhere without even thinking about it. It is the same with learning to drive a car. First you have to practice, and once you know how to drive, driving becomes second nature. Similarly, we have love for God within us—*nitya-siddha kṛṣṇa-prema*—and when our consciousness becomes purified by hearing about Kṛṣṇa, we develop a desire to serve Him, which becomes spontaneous after some time.

In the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement we are trying to develop spontaneous love for Kṛṣṇa. For example, we offer many things on the altar that we've cooked in the kitchen. When we're cooking, we're not thinking, "This is going to be for my pleasure." Or at least we're trying not to think like that. And we're not thinking it's going to be for my wife's pleasure, my husband's pleasure, or my child's pleasure. We're thinking that we're doing it for the pleasure of God. But it's amazing how everyone who comes to the temple on Sunday enjoys a big feast and feels very satisfied. People remark sometimes, "This is the best food I've ever tasted!"

It's not that by cooking something for Kṛṣṇa others are going to suffer. Actually everyone benefits—not only the people who eat the food, but even the food itself. It

(continued on page 35)

WHO'S AFRAID?

Even if we think the horrors in the headlines will never happen to us, deep down there's a fear in all of us that hints that something is wrong.



by DVĀRAKĀDHĪŚA-DEVĪ DĀŚI

Imagine you are driving alone on a desolate road at night, when suddenly the car's engine dies without a sputter. At first, perhaps you are preoccupied with the business of pulling over, finding the flashers, fiddling with the ignition key. But as your final curses fade, you realize that . . . *Gee, it's awfully dark out here.*

Armed with a flashlight,

you slide from the car and open the hood. As you peer at the machinery, you hear the drone of an approaching car. Coming pretty slow, it seems. Looking for something? Then the headlights appear, washing you with a brightness nearly as unpleasant as the night. You wait as the car slows, pulling up beside you. And when you glance at the shadowy face of the driver, it

seems your worst nightmare has come to life . . .

It would be nice to think that this scene will never progress further than your imagination, that looking up from the page removes you from danger. Yet every newspaper is littered with stories of horror inflicted on innocent persons like you and me. Real people, just driving home from

Cooking with KŪRMA



AMOGHĀ DĀSĀ

Based on the three-part videotape series *Cooking With Kūrma*, produced by ISKCON Television (ITV), this column features the gourmet recipes and authentic Indian techniques of ISKCON's famous Australian chef Kūrma dāsa.

Lassi

These traditional Indian yogurt drinks are ideal for cooling the body in the warm summer months. They are very light and easily digested.

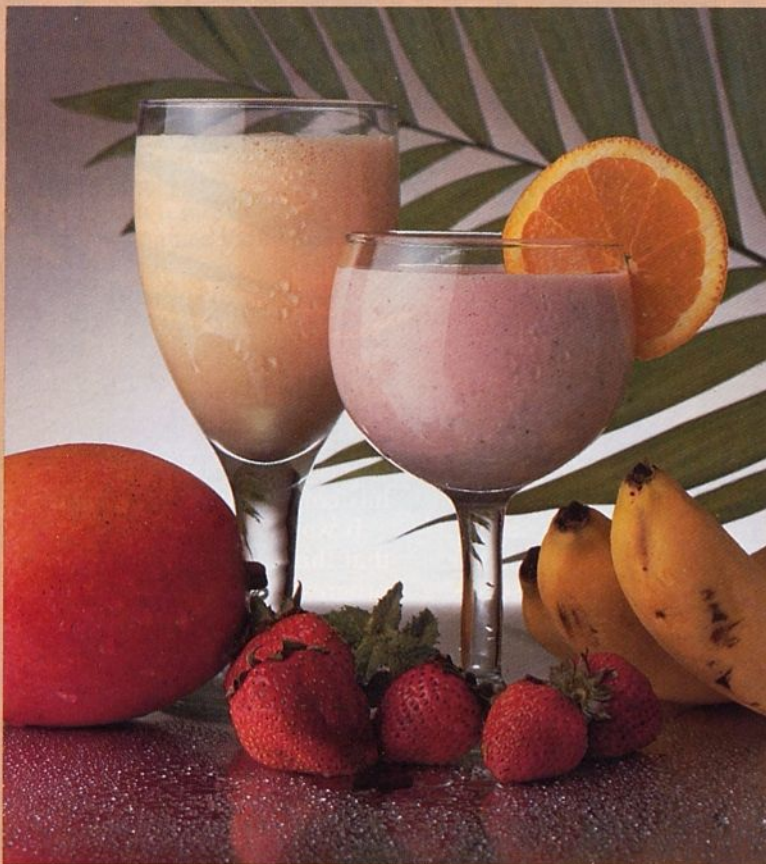
Directions:
Mix all ingredients in a blender and serve over crushed ice.

Rose (serves 4)
3 cups plain yogurt
1 cup ice water
½–½ cup sugar
½ teaspoon rose water

Banana (serves 5)
2 ripe bananas
2½ cups yogurt
½ cup sugar
pinch nutmeg
(freshly grated,
if possible)

Strawberry (serves 5)
1 dozen strawberries
3 cups yogurt
1 cup water
½ cup sugar

Mango (serves 4)
pulp from 2 mangoes
2 cups yogurt
1 cup water
½ cup sugar



PURUSĀRTHA DĀSĀ

work or school or Mom's birthday party. Real stories, with endings like rape, mutilation, and murder.

From one perspective, there *is* so much to fear. Yet this fear, however justified it appears, is only pervasive in conjunction with a particular state of consciousness. Ultimately, we fear the loss of our dearest possession—our own body, the basis of our identity. Peel away the layers of trivial fears, and you'll find stark fear of death underlying them all. Dying simply means the expiration of the body. But when all our love and happiness depends upon that body, death signifies the end of existence. Certainly a frightening prospect.

But reality is different. The temporary body can be compared to a vehicle. The driver steps in and out of it without losing his true self. The true person, the real you, is spiritual—an eternal being with full knowledge and limitless happiness. This self is forgotten when we identify with the physical body, and such distorted consciousness is aptly named "conditioned." We are conditioned—by repeated lifetimes submerged in our bodily identities—to view the world according to a narrow perspective: life begins with the birth of the body, is validated by the sensual experiences of the body, and ends with the body's demise. Fearfulness is rooted in this perception.

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains while commenting on a verse in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.14.38):

Fearfulness is a sort of illusion for the living being when he is in slumber and forgetting his eternal relationship with the Lord. Since the living being is never to die by his constitution, as stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.20), then what is the cause of fearfulness? A person may be fearful of a tiger in a dream, but another man who is awake by his side sees no tiger there. The tiger is a myth for both of them, namely the person dreaming and the person awake, because actually there is no tiger; but the man forgetful of his awakened life is fearful, whereas the man who has not forgotten his position is not at all fearful.

Fear can be defeated by knowledge of the Supreme Lord and our dependent relationship with Him. A devotee is confident and fearless in this world, because even the prospect of death won't interrupt his vital exchange with his beloved Lord. His mind is always fixed on the merciful Supreme Lord, who has nothing to fear.

In further explanation of the same verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Prabhupāda concludes, "Thus the members of the Yadu dynasty [in which Kṛṣṇa appeared] were fully awake in their service to the Lord, and therefore there was no tiger for them to be afraid of at any time. Even if there was a real tiger, the Lord was there to protect them."

The Lord is there to protect us, too. ☒

THE SENSES

(continued from page 4)

Bhaṭṭācārya thought, "This *sannyāsi* might have died." But when the Bhaṭṭācārya brought a cotton swab and put it before the Lord's nostrils, he saw that the fibers of the swab moved a little, and in this way he saw that Lord Caitanya was living.

So, everything material has a specific measurement, but as far as the soul is concerned, it is *aprameyasya*, immeasurable. That is why the materialistic scientists say there is no soul. They cannot detect it with their instruments.

But we have proof that there is a soul. What is that proof? The existence of consciousness. This is the proof. And in the *śāstra* the place of the soul is also given: the heart. *Īsvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṃ hṛd-deśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati*. The soul is in the heart, and Kṛṣṇa is also in the heart. They remain together.

So, you can perceive the presence of the soul by the presence of consciousness, but if you want to measure the soul, that is

not possible. Therefore Kṛṣṇa says it is *aprameya*, immeasurable. Now, you may say, "Why should I believe Kṛṣṇa when He says the soul is immeasurable?" The answer is that He says *uktah*, "It is already settled by previous authorities." In other words, there is Vedic evidence that the soul is immeasurable. Where is the Vedic evidence? In the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* [5.9]:

*bālāgra-śata-bhāgasya
śatadhā kalpitasya ca
bhāgo jīvaḥ sa vijñeya
sa cānantyāya kalpate*

"The measurement of the living entity is one hundredth of one hundredth part of the tip of a hair." In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [11.16.11] there is also evidence: *sūksmānām apy ahaṁ jīvaḥ*. Kṛṣṇa Himself says, "Of minute particles, I am the *jīva*." These are some of the evidences in the Vedic literature that the soul is immeasurable, and we have to accept them.

So, from the Vedic literature we get evidence for the size of the soul, and from our experience of consciousness we can un-

derstand the presence of the soul. Therefore how can anyone say there is no soul? This is foolishness. The whole world is going on under this foolishness. Not only now, but in ancient times also. For example, Cārvāka Muni was an atheist; he did not believe in God or the soul. Lord Buddha also said there is no soul. He knew everything because he is an incarnation of God, but he had to teach the people in that way because they were not intelligent enough to understand anything of God or the soul. Why? Because they were killers of animals.

The brains of animal-killers are as dull as stone. Such people cannot understand subtle things. Therefore meat-eating should be stopped. In order to revive the finer tissues of the brain so that one can understand subtle things, one must give up meat-eating. This is the statement of Mahārāja Parīkṣit. He said that God consciousness, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, cannot be understood by animal-killers (*vinā paśughnāt*).

You'll find that those who are animal-killers
(continued on page 35)

Shell Collectors on Miami Beach

by Mathureśa dāsa

In the morning on the shoreline
Before the sun heats up the sand
Come the shell collectors walking
One by one or hand in hand.

Before the wee-bikini bathers
Sprawl the beach and splash the shallows
Collectors wade the water edges
As wave and moon-drawn tide allow.

No less rolling, crashing surfside
Was this ocean long ago, when
No man, some say, was here to watch
These slow waves lash the chattel sands.

Some say that men of sand-grain learning
Bearing bones to prove their lore
Speak true of times earth sheltered only
The pterodactyl and the dinosaur.

In truth, though, man has always been here
With all his hopes, his dreams, his pride.
So say the Vedic men of learning
Who stand above both wave and tide.

Not always oiled and wee-bikini'd
Not always prostrate to the sun
But men on earth their dreams pursuing
Dreams unrelenting, never done.

Not done unless through tideless blessings
Of Guru-Kṛṣṇa's mercy sweet
They dreamed they were not lords but servants
Sand grains at their creator's feet.

Those servant men raised loud their voices
Sang Yahweh! Allah! Kṛṣṇa! Lord!
Took every creature as their brother
Drank Guru's every priceless word.

They're walking now on deathless beaches
In deathless lands of living beauty
The eternal youthful Lord their comrade
Serving Him their joyous duty.

And here along the morning shoreline
Strolling in the wave-strewn foam
The shell collectors stoop to gather
A mollusk's shattered dreams of home.

THE VEDIC

Transcendental Comment

DONKEY LOADS

by Mathureśa dāsa
(Port Royal, Pennsylvania)

The *Miami Herald* reports that a donkey in Bulawayo, a village in south-western Zimbabwe, accidentally uncovered a cache of Soviet-made surface-to-air missiles. Villagers trying to rescue the creature from a dam found that a wooden box containing a missile had trapped its hind leg. According to *Elephant News*, a Zimbabwe military magazine, soldiers alerted by the terrified villagers found eight more missiles after scouring the dam. An officer quoted in the magazine said the live missiles were left over from the guerrilla war that led to Zimbabwe's independence in 1980.

The incident makes headlines for a somewhat undistinguished species. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* uses the donkey, or ass, to illustrate the plight of persons who accept backbreaking tasks for little reward. Donkeys are not that robust, yet they will carry immense loads for their masters and will accept a paltry handful of grass as payment. Although the donkey could easily find his own grass at the side

of the road, altogether avoiding such menial employment, his masters won't allow it, and the foolish, weary animal resigns himself to his fate.

The *Bhāgavatam* doesn't advocate that a human being not work hard, just that we shouldn't carry unnecessary loads for cruel masters. With a reasonable amount of labor and organization on our part, nature responds with more than enough food, more than enough raw materials for clothing, shelter, and other needs.

We don't need heavy industry, which forces us into donkey labor for handfuls of grass. We don't need massive military budgets, which devour the time and hard-earned gains of our human lives. We don't need to spend trillions of dollars and rubles to launch men and weapons into outer space.

All these may appear to be attractive, noble enterprises, but they are in fact unnecessary, cruel, backbreaking loads for man to carry. There's grass at the side of the road, and unlike donkeys we have the brains to avail ourselves of it. If we can't drop our loads all of a sudden, let's at least try not to accept additional weight.

To this end, our thanks go out to the vil-

lagers and soldiers in Bulawayo. If not for their careful handling of those live missiles, we might have had to pay the expenses of another ass on the moon.

LAND RIGHTS: WHO'S RIGHT?

by Nareśvara dāsa
(Sydney)

"A Celebration of a Nation"— catch phrase for 1988 here in Australia. It's the two-hundredth anniversary of the arrival of the first fleet of settlers to the shores of the "new" land. The settlement was begun by a group of men from England, and included a large number of deported convicts. They cleared and developed the land, claiming it as their own. The present-day descendants of the first settlers and those who followed them to this "lucky country" are happy with their ancestors' find and are celebrating their own good fortune. They have organized cultural programs around the country, and everyone is trying to make it a year to remember.

Before the arrival of the settlers, the land was already inhabited by aborigines, who, being simple people, were no match for the sophisticated newcomers. They still consider themselves the owners of the land, however, and since the sixties they have been claiming their rights. This year they have intensified their push and are using the bicentenary to focus world attention on the issue.

So who really owns the land? We are hearing many arguments from both sides, and there seems to be no conclusion.

The very first verse of *Śrī Īsopaniṣad* clarifies the actual situation:

Everything animate and inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one should not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong.

By Vedic standards the argument over who owns the land is academic at best. The real owner of Australia and every-



OBSERVER

ary on the Issues of the Day

thing within it is the Supreme Lord. He has provided all the resources, which may be used by each person in accordance with his needs. Instead of wasting our energy in arguments, it would be more useful to become introspective about the real aim and importance of our life here in Australia and to recognize the authority of the Supreme Lord.

A birthday is a good occasion to take stock. As human beings we should accept the wisdom of the *Vedas* and not quarrel over material possessions that are the property of the Lord. We should be satisfied with whatever He mercifully supplies.

As Śrīla Prabhupāda points out in his commentary on the *Śrī Iṣopaniṣad* verse:

The root of sin is deliberate disobedience of the laws of nature through disregarding the proprietorship of the Lord. Disobedience of the laws of nature or the order of the Lord brings ruin to a human being. If one is sober, knows the laws of nature, and is not influenced by unnecessary attachment or aversion, he is sure to be recognized by the Lord, and he is sure to become eligible to go back to Godhead, back to the eternal home.

This advice is of course relevant to all people of the world, not only for the people of Australia. Peaceful co-existence is possible only when we act in this way.

LESSONS FROM THE DEAD SEA

by Harikeśa Swami
(Grödinge, Sweden)

Now the North Sea is dying. Fishes, swollen in death, float aimlessly as the killer algae spread like poison on the warm summer waves. Volunteer ecologists cruise the area collecting data and photos. Everyone sees, everyone knows, but still it seems they see and know nothing.

The obvious is before us, yet we are blind. Why? And what to do? Metaphysical questions rarely asked are becoming commonplace. "Is man an inherently evil creature devoid of common sense and decency, or is he a mere pawn in a devilish plot conceived and enacted by caustic so-

cial manipulators sinisterly devising his end?" One might wonder how such things as the pollution of our seas can occur in our enlightened society. Haven't we gone to the moon, cured man of his most troublesome diseases, and made poverty but a symptom of backward religious cultures?

Ah, were it so simple. And now reality presents itself in a form previously un-

alone." We enter this world filled with desire to exploit nature as much as we can, regardless of the cost to ourselves, others, or the world itself. Lusty to enjoy the resources of nature without restriction, man speculates that he is the supreme intelligence within the universe and that only he is capable of creating order within this mass of chaos. Blinded by such egocentric



thinkable: no life in the sea. Will the land soon follow suit? Will we ever wake up? It's doubtful, for a man determined not to see the obvious can avoid acknowledging even the presence of death itself.

"All right, Mr. Philosopher," I hear the cynics taunting, "what is your idea? We should all just shave our heads and play with wooden beads, and everything will be fine?"

But how long can their cynical speech satisfy them, when the basic platform required to sustain life itself is on the verge of collapse? What good is an oblivious assessment of our own worth in the face of such obvious incompetence as that displayed by man in his management of the world's resources?

Kṛṣṇa, the only one capable of sheltering all living beings, has explained the cause of our blindness in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. He simply says, "It is due to lust

ideas as these, he creates hell on earth and calls it heaven. Pouring unlimited tons of waste into the seas—while the air is still filled with the radiation of another set of mistakes, and the land wasted by pollutants of all varieties—man, the pinnacle of evolutionary development, calculates how long he can rape the environment before the cosmic policemen wake up and punish him for his crimes. Uncaring for his descendants, he concerns himself only with his body, and thus he falls victim to the same trap he unwittingly set for others in the future.

It is all due to lust alone. Who can control it? Certainly one can write in the newspapers about the administrative miscalculations, speak about them on TV, make a counter campaign with posters, demonstrations, and strikes, while the more impassioned blow up a whaling boat or two. But without spiritual potency,

one cannot change the hearts of the irresponsible controllers of a godless society. Proposing material stop-gap measures may make one feel warm within his heart, for what noble man would not like to die fighting his unjust enemies? But such righteous indignation will not save the earth from being ravaged by those whose minds are absorbed only in the objects of their lust.

Indeed, the earth is our mother, and we are raping her. Such is the culture of the advanced modern civilization. But she will not tolerate us for long, for despite her loving disposition toward her own children, soon she will teach us what suffering really means. Aren't the lessons of history clear? Man destroys cultured life, the earth, and righteousness, and the earth destroys man. And the cycles of war help reduce the burden of the earth through mass destruction of men and their cities. Soon you will see the real face of modern civilization, as it sinks into muddy pools of rotting flesh.

Only a God conscious government can change this situation. What can a government run by lusty persons change? They are themselves elected by other lusty crea-

tures and dare not enact legislation that would place their coveted positions in jeopardy. Since the lusty citizens want sense enjoyment, at almost any cost, the administrators must oblige them or risk being replaced by more submissive slaves of the senses. Who else but the governments of Europe have the power to change such total insanity as is now apparent in the North Sea?

But to enact change means to create legislation that reduces sense gratification, and, more dangerously, that reduces animal slaughter, the big business of the North Sea region. This is simply not possible for lusty men concerned with pleasing their supporters, who are none other than the same persons guilty of the cited transgressions.

Therefore the *Vedas* say that a government should not be elected by common men, who are only concerned with self-satisfaction without consideration of the higher goals of life. The government should be guided not by politicians but by enlightened *brāhmaṇas*, professors of all the socially relevant and required arts and sciences. Such professors know how to propagate a human social order without

undue karmic reactions. They know how to supply life's necessities without creating by-products that threaten man's very means of sustenance.

These concerned and spiritually devoted *brāhmaṇas*, the factual well-wishers of the people, are meant to guide the leaders of state. Detached from any selfish interest, or interests born merely from the desire for economic gain, such professors of social welfare must be empowered to create legislation congenial to the proper functioning of the intimate relationship between man and nature. Without such a higher body of independent wise men, there is no hope for change. And without Kṛṣṇa consciousness, there is no question of creating such an enlightened body of truly learned men.

We are not so foolish as to think that such social change can happen soon in a society dominated by lusty persons, but we request the readers of this article to remember the purport of these words and, after we are forced to chew the bitter fruits of our past foolish actions, to work toward a God conscious society guided by an enlightened group of dispassionate and learned Kṛṣṇa conscious advisors. ❏

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

LETTERS

The rural public in India is still purer, kinder, and more inclined to nonmaterialism, though poor and illiterate. To get more honest people involved in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, rural India is the best. This factor might not have been hinted by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, or the ISKCON GBC [Governing Body Commission] has not yet got this idea. I request you to try to concentrate in small towns and villages.

Dr. Mure Venkata Narayana Reddy
Ghittoor, Andhra Pradesh, India

OUR REPLY: Since ISKCON is trying to give everyone a chance to take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, naturally we also include Indian villagers in our preaching plans. Śrīla Prabhupāda clearly understood the potential for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in rural India. He showed this by requesting his disciples to organize a *pada-yātrā* (walking pilgrimage) to spread Kṛṣṇa's message throughout India. ISKCON's *pada-yātrā* has already traveled more than fifteen thousand kilometers. ISKCON also has the Nāma Haṭṭa program, which sets up and oversees centers for Kṛṣṇa consciousness in thousands of Indian villages. These centers are run by the villagers themselves. This program

has especially blossomed in West Bengal, but it is also going on in other parts of India.

* * *

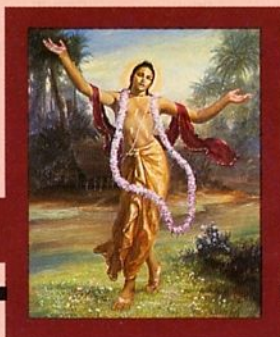
Recently I went to the Epcot Center in Florida with a friend, where we saw a 3-D motion picture presented by Kodak. Before we entered the theatre we were given special glasses to view the 3-D picture. I was immediately reminded of Lord Kṛṣṇa's giving divine eyes to Arjuna (*Bhagavad-gītā* 11.8) so that he could see His universal form. During the last decades man has made tremendous progress in science and technology. I am wondering whether it would ever be possible to invent such glasses so that common men with, of course, some minimum spiritual qualifications could see the universal form of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Or is it a hundred-percent spiritual matter?

Professor A. K. Agarwal
Department of Mathematics
Pennsylvania State University
Mont Alto, Pennsylvania

OUR REPLY: You have asked an interesting question, and the answer is fairly simple: one cannot see Kṛṣṇa's universal form unless Kṛṣṇa shows it to him. In

other words, that form is not always manifest or available for us to see. From the scriptures we learn of only a few instances when the Lord showed it. For example, Lord Vāmanadeva showed it to Bali Mahārāja, and Lord Kṛṣṇa showed it to Arjuna. It is not an eternal form of Kṛṣṇa but a temporary demonstration of His opulence, so it is not simply a matter of having a certain ability or technology to see it. It's not there unless the Lord wants to show it. And when He does show it, only those whom He chooses to see it are able to do so. So that is the spiritual qualification required: one must receive Kṛṣṇa's benediction.

On the other hand, there is another universal form that is mentioned in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. One can "see" that form with practice. It is not a real form, however, but a way of conceptualizing the universe as having a form. One is encouraged to think of the mountains as the Lord's bones, the rivers as His veins, the trees as the hairs on His body, and so forth. The *Bhāgavatam* tells us that even though this form is imaginary, we can think of the universe in this way to help us get used to the idea that God has a form—but God's form is transcendental, or spiritual, not material. Imperfect philosophies and our own limited intellects tend to make us think of God as formless. So the *Bhāgavatam* suggests that we meditate on the universe in this way to advance toward an understanding and appreciation of the personal form of God. ❏



Soviet Vice-Consul Inaugurates Calcutta Ratha-yātrā

Calcutta, India—The Soviet vice-consul to India, Mr. Alexander Vaulin, and the wife of the Soviet consul general, Mrs. Irina Passentchouk, inaugurated ISKCON's seventeenth annual Ratha-yātrā festival here, which took place on the same day as the ancient festival in Jagannātha Purī, Orissa. An estimated three million people crowded the streets to witness the parade, beginning seven days of festivities in honor of Lord Jagannātha. The festival was dedicated to ISKCON devotees in the USSR, where the government has recently recognized ISKCON as a bona fide religion.

Before the parade began, Vice-Consul Vaulin addressed a crowd of thousands, stating his belief that the acceptance of ISKCON in the Soviet Union would lead to greater friendship and understanding between India and the Soviet

Union. He said that ISKCON's message of love and fellowship would foster international brotherhood.

Mr. Vaulin offered *ārati* to Lord Jagannātha and happily received a Russian translation of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. As the parade began, Mr. Vaulin, accompanied by Mrs. Passentchouk, swept the road in front of Lord Jagannātha's chariot with a golden broom.

NEWS BRIEFS

Govinda's Restaurant on Soho Street in London received a full-page review in *What's On*, London's leading weekly entertainment guide. In the article, entitled "Vegetarian Excellence in Soho," Michael Darvel, assistant editor for *What's On*, writes, "I think the food offered is the most attractive vegetarian cuisine I have seen." He says that even though Govinda's was around well before the current

trend toward vegetarianism, "it is still one of the best places for vegetarian food in London." He explains that Govinda's is connected with the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple upstairs, and that all the food is offered to Kṛṣṇa before being served to customers.

Although the Tokyo ISKCON temple was destroyed by fire in May, the devotees are still preaching, using an apartment as a temple for the time being and even holding Sunday Feasts there. The women devotees wear *sārīs* to distribute the new Japanese *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. The devotees perform *harināma-saṅkīrtana* [congregational chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa] and distribute Śrīla Prabhupāda's books six days a week.

ISKCON's *pada-yātrā*, a walking tour of holy India, is scheduled to continue for at least eight more years, until the one-hundredth anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's birth. In July the *pada-yātrā* joined the Dindī Pada-yātrā in Maharashtra. During this 700-year-old festival as many as 200,000 people walk and chant from Poona to Pandharpur. In October ISKCON's *pada-yātrā* will tour the Vṛndāvana area and then head for Allahabad for the Kumbha-melā in January.

RESOURCES

Plain living, high thinking. Get out of the city—away from the noise, pollution, anxiety, and madness of city life. Come back to a simpler, more natural way of life. Live close to the earth, close to God. The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement has thirty-four farm communities throughout the world. These are sacred places where your spirit can unfold. And at the same time, they're realistic, practical places, where you can build a sane, stable



Before the start of the Calcutta Ratha-yātrā festival, the Soviet vice-consul to India offers a ghee lamp to Lord Jagannātha in the traditional *ārati* ceremony.

life for yourself and, if you're married, for your family.

To find out more, get in touch with the ISKCON farm community nearest you.

Vṛndāvana Dhāma Ki Jaya!

A Pictorial Guide to the Land of Kṛṣṇa. More than one hundred color photos. Maps. Printed in Singapore. Easy to read and understand. Only one thousand copies available. Send cashier's check or money order (U.S. funds) to The Bhaktivedanta Archives, P.O. Box 34453, Los Angeles, California 90034, U.S.A. \$17 per book, plus \$1.50 for shipping in the U.S. Add 50% for international air mail, 30% for surface mail.

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and Lord Rāma. . . . Visit the centers of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement around the world. . . . Attend classes given by Śrīla Prabhupāda himself. . . . Relish the life story of Śrīla Prabhupāda in *Your Ever Well-Wisher*.

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Join Śrīla Prabhupāda's Sankīrtana Pada-yātrā for the Kārtika Vraja-maṇḍala *parikrama*, October 25–November 23, 1988. See all of the holy places of Lord Kṛṣṇa's blissful, transcendental pastimes on this month-long walking tour of Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma. For details, write to Lokanātha Swami at ISKCON New Delhi.

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

Month of Padmanābha
(September 26–October 25)

October 6—Indirā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

October 20—Śrī Rāmacandra-vijayotsava, the anniversary of Lord Rāmacandra's victory over the demon Rāvaṇa. Also, appearance anniversary of Śrīla Madhvācārya, a great teacher of devotional service.

October 21—Pāśāṅkuśā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

October 22—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, great associates and followers of Lord Caitanya.

October 25—Beginning of Dāmodara-vrata. Offering lamps for one month. Fourth month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from *urad dāl*). Śrī Kṛṣṇa Śaradiya Rāsa-Yātrā. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Murāri Gupta, an associate of Lord Caitanya.

Month of Dāmodara
(October 26–November 23)

October 29—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa known for his Bengali devotional songs.

November 5—Ramā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

November 9—Diwali (the festival of illuminating Kṛṣṇa's temples with lamps). Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa center for details.

November 10—Govardhana Pūjā, the festival commemorating the worship of Govardhana Hill by the residents of Vṛndāvana and Kṛṣṇa's lifting the hill. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa center for details.

November 13—Disappearance anniversary of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Devotees observe this day with personal remembrances of Śrīla Prabhupāda, readings from his biography, and fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

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BY JIM QUINN

LIFEFood



Govinda's chef, Rama Natha Suka, in the restaurant's newly designed Peacock Room.

Serving Krishna

People come to Govinda's expecting to meet religious cultists; they leave having enjoyed some of the best — and cheapest — vegetarian food in the city.

THE TEACHERS OF MY childhood were women who, for religious reasons, cut their hair close to the skull, wore exotic robes, abandoned their friends and families to live in communes with no personal property of any kind, worked long hours without pay, and practiced total chastity. By current definition, they were weird cultists, of course, but to us kids they weren't strange at all — just nuts.

Anyway, they provided us with as good a preparation for the future as any other grade-school teachers, and an object lesson in toleration for the varieties of religious appearance. Every time a friend is horrified by the sight of Hare Krishna devotees chanting in the street, I remember — it's people like this who taught me my multiplication tables. Whole classrooms full of us chanted in exactly the same dream-like rhythmic trance, and almost to the same tune. In fact, I believe that if I stuck in "Five times four is Krishna, Five times five is Hare Rama," no one would have noticed. And I am sure that if there were Krishnas around at the time, I would have tried it, for I was a mischievous kid when lost in the crowd, and I stuck in other non-mathematical terms as fast as they came to my fourth-grade attention.

All of which came to mind as I ate at Govinda's, one of the very best vegetarian restaurants in the city, and one of the very cheapest restaurants anywhere at all. Govinda's all-you-can-eat lunch is \$3.49, its all-you-can-eat dinner is \$7.49, and takeout of your choice is a low, low \$3.49 a pound.

The menu, which changes daily, is influenced by, but not limited to, Indian cooking. Among my favorite entrees are kofta balls in tomato sauce (which make a spectacular meatless meatball sandwich along with the homemade brown bread); a creamy and flaky Greek spinach pie in phyllo dough, superb peppers stuffed with cheese and almonds; and one of the lightest, most unusual and best-tasting variations of eggplant Parmesan around. Along with these, the typical Indian food is a potato and tofu and spinach mix, or chickpeas, potatoes and coconut cream, or baked saffron or curried cauliflower. Besides all that, there are mixed steamed vegetables and

a salad bar of fresh romaine, sunflower seeds, pasta salad, carrot salad, fresh fruit and vegetables, and several dressings ranging from mild Russian to exotic tahini.

All the ingredients are fresh, all the food is not only expertly but also extremely carefully prepared. "It must be well-cooked, because it's offered to Govinda before we eat it," says Haryava Dasa, whose friends call him Hary. Hary is manager of Govinda's. He tells me that Govinda is one of the names of Krishna, which means He Who Gives Pleasure to the Senses — and the Protector of the Cows. "What we're serving is prasad, food sanctified by being prepared by a devotee. Food offered to Govinda must be clean and fresh, and Govinda must have the first enjoyment of it. Our chef would never put his finger in the food, or taste it before serving."

The chef at Govinda's is Rama Natha Suka, who is, Hary says, known as one of the best chefs in the movement.

"At least I haven't burnt out," Rama laughs. Like Hary, and like many other

people who care enough about ideas to live their lives by them, Rama is a relaxed and cheerful joker in ordinary conversation. "I started cooking in the movement back in 1981, when we opened a very successful restaurant in Los Angeles. Then in 1983, I went to open the Hare Krishna restaurant in San Francisco. Of course, my experience goes back before that. My father had a restaurant — a steak house. I started out in the kitchen cooking steaks for him. Now," Rama laughs again, "thanks to the grace of Krishna, I'm still doing the work I love, but on a higher spiritual plane. No question of cooking steaks in here, is there, Hary? If there is, I quit!"

I ask why the Hare Krishna movement runs so many restaurants.

"We think of it as a cultural presentation of Krishna consciousness," says Hary. "That's why we have Indian art on the walls, Indian music on our tapes. When people first come in, I can see that they're worried. Is someone going to try to make a convert of me? Are they going to slip something in the food? But we never approach anyone. We just want them to enjoy themselves. In fact, it's usually the other way around; people come in frightened, and before they leave, they're full of questions. Why do you chant? What does your name mean? Who was Krishna? Sometimes

they're beating on me all day long. Not that I mind," he laughs.

"For whatever reason," says Rama, "Hare Krishnas have a bad image in the media. People come in here expecting to meet cultists, mindless robots. And they leave realizing we're normal guys, who just happen to take our spiritual life seriously. When we see that, it makes us feel . . ." Rama pauses a minute to laugh once more, ". . . ecstatic!"

Govinda's, 529 South St. Cooking classes are held at Govinda's every Thursday night by Louise Emma, president of Philadelphia Vegetarians. For information, call 482-7931.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL BRYANT

An article on Govinda's Restaurant in Philadelphia that appeared in the Sunday magazine of the Philadelphia Inquirer, whose Sunday circulation is one million.

Book Section

ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

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

Third Canto: “The Status Quo”

CHAPTER TWENTY

Conversation Between Maitreya and Vidura

In this installment of our continuing presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the sage Maitreya describes to Vidura, a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, some incidents that occurred during Lord Brahmā's creation of the material world.

TEXT 22

देवताः प्रभया या या दीव्यन् प्रमुखतोऽसृजत् ।
ते अहर्षुर्देवयन्तो विमुष्टां तां प्रभामहः ॥२२॥

*devatāḥ prabhayā yā yā
divyan pramukhato 'srjat
te ahārṣur devayanto
viṣṭām tāṁ prabhām ahaḥ*

devatāḥ—the demigods; *prabhayā*—with the glory of light; *yāh yāh*—those who; *divyan*—shining; *pramukhataḥ*—chiefly; *asrjat*—created; *te*—they; *ahārṣuḥ*—took possession of; *devayantaḥ*—being active; *viṣṭām*—separated; *tām*—that; *prabhām*—effulgent form; *ahaḥ*—daytime.

TRANSLATION

He then created the chief demigods, who were shining with the glory of goodness. He dropped before them the effulgent form of daytime, and the demigods sportingly took possession of it.

PURPORT

Demons were born from the creation of night, and the demigods were born from the creation of day. In other words, demons like the Yakṣas and Rākṣasas are born of the quality of ignorance, and demigods are born of the quality of goodness.

TEXT 23

देवोऽदेवाञ्जनतः सृजति स्नातिलोलुपान् ।
त एनं लोलुपतया मैथुनायाभिपेदिरे ॥२३॥

*devo 'devāñ jaghanataḥ
srjati smātilolupān
ta enam lolupatayā
maithunāyābhipedire*

devaḥ—Lord Brahmā; *adevān*—demons; *jaghanataḥ*—from his buttocks; *srjati sma*—gave birth; *ati-lolupān*—excessively fond of sex; *te*—they; *enam*—Lord Brahmā; *lolupatayā*—with lust; *maithunāyā*—for copulation; *abhipedire*—approached.

TRANSLATION

Lord Brahmā then gave birth to the demons from his buttocks, and they were very fond of sex. Because they were too lustful, they approached him for copulation.

PURPORT

Sex life is the background of material existence. Here also it is repeated that demons are very fond of sex life. The more one is free from the desires for sex, the more he is promoted to the level of the demigods; the more one is inclined to enjoy sex, the more he is degraded to the level of demonic life.

TEXT 24

ततो हसन् स भगवानसुरैर्निरपत्रपैः ।
अन्वीयमानस्तरसा क्रुद्धो भीतः परापतत् ॥२४॥

*tato hasan sa bhagavān
asurair nirapatrapaiḥ
anvīyamānas tarasā
kruddho bhītaḥ parāpatat*

tataḥ—then; *hasan*—laughing; *saḥ bhagavān*—the worshipful Lord Brahmā; *asurair*—by the demons; *nirapatrapaiḥ*—shameless; *anvīyamānaḥ*—being followed; *tarasā*—in great haste; *kruddhaḥ*—angry; *bhītaḥ*—being afraid; *parāpatat*—ran away.

TRANSLATION

The worshipful Brahmā first laughed at their stupidity, but finding the shameless asuras close upon him, he grew indignant and ran in great haste out of fear.

PURPORT

Sexually inclined demons have no respect even for their father, and the best policy for a saintly father like Brahmā is to leave such demonic sons.

TEXT 25

स उपव्रज्य वरदं प्रपन्नार्तिहरं हरिम् ।
अनुग्रहाय भक्तानामनुरूपात्मदर्शनम् ॥२५॥

*sa upavrajya varadam
prapannārti-haraṁ harim
anugrahāya bhaktānām
anurūpātma-darśanam*

saḥ—Lord Brahmā; *upavrajya*—approaching; *vara-dam*—the bestower of all boons; *prapanna*—of those taking shelter at His lotus feet; *ārti*—distress; *haram*—who dispels; *harim*—Lord Śrī Hari; *anugrahāya*—for showing mercy; *bhaktānām*—to His devotees; *anurūpa*—in suitable forms; *ātma-darśanam*—who manifests Himself.

TRANSLATION

He approached the Personality of Godhead, who bestows all boons and who dispels the agony of His devotees and of those who take shelter of His lotus feet. He manifests His innumerable transcendental forms for the satisfaction of His devotees.

PURPORT

Here the words *bhaktānām anurūpāma-darśanam* mean that the Personality of Godhead manifests His multiforms according to the desires of the devotees. For example, Hanumāji (Vajrāṅgaji) wanted to see the form of the Lord as the Personality of Godhead Rāmacandra, whereas other Vaiṣṇavas want to see the form of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and still other devotees want to see the Lord in the form of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa. The Māyāvādī philosophers think that although all these forms are assumed by the Lord just as the devotees desire to see Him, actually He is impersonal. From *Brahma-saṁhītā*, however, we can understand that this is not so, for the Lord has multiforms. It is said in the *Brahma-saṁhītā, advaitam acyutam*. The Lord does not appear before the devotee because of the devotee's imagination. *Brahma-saṁhītā* further explains that the Lord has innumerable forms: *rāmādi-mūrtiṣu kalāniyamena tiṣṭhan*. He exists in millions and millions of forms. There are 8,400,000 species of living entities, but the incarnations of the Supreme Lord are innumerable. In the *Bhāgavatam* it is stated that as the waves in the sea cannot be counted but appear and disappear continually, the incarnations and forms of the Lord are innumerable. A devotee is attached to a particular form, and it is that form which he worships. We have just described the first appearance of the boar within this universe. There are innumerable universes, and somewhere or other the boar form is now existing. All the forms of the Lord are eternal. It is the devotee's inclination to worship a particular form, and he engages in devotional service to that form. In a verse in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Hanumān, the great devotee of Rāma, said, "I know that there is no difference between the Sītā-Rāma and Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa forms of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but nevertheless, the form of Rāma and Sītā has absorbed my affection and love. Therefore I want to see the Lord in the forms of Rāma and Sītā." Similarly, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava loves the forms of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa and Rukmīṇī at Dvārakā. The words *bhaktānām anurūpāma-darśanam* mean that the Lord is always pleased to favor the devotee in the particular form in which the devotee wants to worship and render service unto Him. In this verse it is stated that Brahmā approached Hari, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This form of the Lord is Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. Whenever there is some trouble and Brahmā has to approach the Lord, he can approach Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, and it is the grace of the Lord that whenever Brahmā approaches about disturbances in the universe, the Lord gives him relief in so many ways.

TEXT 26

पाहि मां परमात्मस्ते प्रेषणेनामृजं प्रजाः ।
ता इमा यमितुं पापा उपाक्रामन्ति मां प्रभो ॥२६॥

*pāhi mām paramātmaṁ te
preṣaṇenāsrjaṁ prajāḥ
tā imā yabhituṁ pāpā
upākrāmanti mām prabho*

pāhi—protect; *mām*—me; *parama-ātman*—O Supreme Lord; *te*—Your; *preṣaṇena*—by order; *asrjam*—I created; *prajāḥ*—living beings; *tāḥ imāḥ*—those very persons; *yabhitum*—to have sex; *pāpāḥ*—sinful beings; *upākrāmanti*—are approaching; *mām*—me; *prabho*—O Lord.

TRANSLATION

Lord Brahmā, approaching the Lord, addressed Him thus: My Lord, please protect me from these sinful demons, who were created by me under Your order. They are infuriated by an appetite for sex and have come to attack me.

PURPORT

It appears here that the homosexual appetite of males for each other is created in this episode of the creation of the demons by Brahmā. In other words, the homosexual appetite of a man for another man is demonic and is not for any sane male in the ordinary course of life.

TEXT 27

त्वमेकः किल लोकानां क्लिष्टानां क्लेशनाशनः ।
त्वमेकः क्लेशदस्तेषामनासन्नपदां तव ॥२७॥

*tvam ekaḥ kila lokānām
kliṣṭānām kleśa-nāśanaḥ
tvam ekaḥ kleśadas teṣām
anāsanna-padām tava*

tvam—You; *ekaḥ*—alone; *kila*—indeed; *lokānām*—of the people; *kliṣṭānām*—afflicted with miseries; *kleśa*—the distresses; *nāśanaḥ*—relieving; *tvam ekaḥ*—You alone; *kleśa-daḥ*—inflicting distress; *teṣām*—on those; *anāsanna*—not taken shelter; *padām*—feet; *tava*—Your.

TRANSLATION

My Lord, You are the only one capable of ending the affliction of the distressed and inflicting agony on those who never resort to Your feet.

PURPORT

The words *kleśadas teṣām anāsanna-padām tava* indicate that the Lord has two concerns. The first is to give protection to persons who take shelter of His lotus feet, and the second is to give trouble to those who are always demonic and who are inimical toward the Lord. Māyā's function is to give afflictions to the nondevotees. Here Brahmā said, "You are the protector of the surrendered souls; therefore I surrender unto Your lotus feet. Please give me protection from these demons."

TEXT 28

सोऽवधार्यस्य कार्पण्यं विविक्ताद्यात्मदर्शनः ।
विमुञ्चात्मतनुं घोरामित्युक्तो विमुमोच ह ॥२८॥

*so 'vadhāryāsya kārṇyaṁ
viviṭādhyaṭma-darśanaḥ
vimuñcāta-tanuṁ ghorām
ity ukto vimumoca ha*

saḥ—the Supreme Lord, Hari; *avadhārya*—perceiving; *asya*—of Lord Brahmā; *kārṇyaṁ*—the distress; *viviṭa*—without a doubt; *adhyātma*—minds of others; *darśanaḥ*—one who can see; *vimuñca*—cast off; *ātma-tanuṁ*—your body; *ghorām*—impure; *iti uktaḥ*—thus commanded; *vimumoca ha*—Lord Brahmā threw it off.

TRANSLATION

The Lord, who can distinctly see the minds of others, perceived Brahmā's distress and said to him: "Cast off this impure body of yours." Thus commanded by the Lord, Brahmā cast off his body.

PURPORT

The Lord is described here by the word *viviṭādhyaṭma-darśanaḥ*. If anyone can completely perceive another's distress without doubt, it is the Lord Himself. If someone is in distress and wants to get relief from his friend, sometimes it so happens that his friend does not appreciate the volume of distress he is suffering. But for the Supreme Lord it is not difficult. The Supreme Lord, as Paramātmā, is sitting within the heart of every living entity, and He directly perceives the exact causes of distress. In *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord says, *sarvasya cāham ḥṛdi sanniviṣṭaḥ*: "I am sitting in everyone's heart, and because of Me one's remembrance and forgetfulness occur." Thus whenever one fully surrenders unto the Supreme Lord, one finds that He is sitting within one's heart. He can give us direction how to get out of dangers or how to approach Him in devotional service. The Lord, however, asked Brahmā to give up his present body because it had created the demonic principle. According to Śrīdhara Svāmī, Brahmā's constant dropping of his body does not refer to his actually giving up his body. Rather, he suggests that Brahmā gave up a particular mentality. Mind is the subtle body of the living entity. We may sometimes be absorbed in some thought which is sinful, but if we give up the sinful thought, it may be said that we give up the body. Brahmā's mind was not in correct order when he created the demons. It must have been full of passion because the entire creation was passionate; therefore such passionate sons were born. It follows that any father and mother should also be careful while begetting children. The mental condition of a child depends upon the mental status of his parents at the time he is conceived. According to the Vedic system, therefore, the

garbhādhāna-saṁskāra, or the ceremony for giving birth to a child, is observed. Before begetting a child, one has to sanctify his perplexed mind. When the parents engage their minds in the lotus feet of the Lord and in such a state the child is born, naturally good devotee children come; when the society is full of such good population, there is no trouble from demonic mentalities.

TEXT 29

तां कृष्णराम्भोजां मदविह्वललोचनाम् ।
काञ्चीकलापविलसदुकूलच्छन्नरोधसम् ॥२९॥

*tām kṛṣṇac-caraṇāmbhojāṁ
mada-vihvala-locanām
kāñcī-kalāpa-vilasat-
dukūla-cchanna-rodhasam*

tām—that body; *kṛṣṇat*—tinkling with ankle bells; *caraṇa-ambhojām*—with lotus feet; *mada*—intoxication; *vihvala*—overwhelmed; *locanām*—with eyes; *kāñcī-kalāpa*—with a girdle made of golden ornaments; *vilasat*—shining; *dukūla*—by fine cloth; *channa*—covered; *rodhasam*—having hips.

TRANSLATION

The body given up by Brahmā took the form of the evening twilight, when the day and night meet, a time which kindles passion. The asuras, who are passionate by nature, dominated as they are by the element of rajas, took it for a damsel, whose lotus feet resounded with the tinkling of anklets, whose eyes were wide with intoxication and whose hips were covered by fine cloth, over which shone a girdle.

PURPORT

As early morning is the period for spiritual cultivation, the beginning of evening is the period for passion. Demonic men are generally very fond of sex enjoyment; therefore they very much appreciate the approach of evening. The demons took the approach of the evening twilight to be a beautiful woman, and they began to adore her in various ways. They imagined the twilight to be a very beautiful woman with tinkling bangles on her feet, a girdle on her hips, and beautiful breasts, and for their sexual satisfaction they imagined the appearance of this beautiful girl before them.

TEXT 30

अन्योन्यश्लेषयोस्तुङ्गनिरन्तरपयोधराम् ।
सुनासां सुद्विजां स्निग्धहासलीलावलोकनाम् ॥३०॥

*anyonya-śleṣayottuṅga-
nirantara-payodharām
sunāsāṁ sudvijāṁ snigdha-
hāsa-līlāvalokanām*

anyonya—to each other; *śleṣayā*—because of clinging; *uttuṅga*—raised; *nirantara*—without intervening space; *payah-dharām*—breasts; *su-nāsām*—shapely nose; *su-dvijām*—beautiful teeth; *snigdha*—lovely; *hāsa*—smile; *līlā-avalokanām*—sportful glance.

TRANSLATION

Her breasts projected upward because of their clinging to each other, and they were too contiguous to admit any intervening space. She had a shapely nose and beautiful teeth; a lovely smile played on her lips, and she cast a sportful glance at the asuras.

TEXT 31

गूहन्तीं व्रीडयात्मानं नीलालकवरुथिनीम् ।
उपलभ्यासुरा धर्म सर्वे सम्मुमुहुः स्त्रियम् ॥३१॥

*gūhantīm vṛīḍayātmānaṁ
nīlāla-ka-varūthinīm
upalabhyāsura dharmā
sarve sammumuhuḥ striyam*

gūhantīm—hiding; *vṛīḍayā*—out of shyness; *ātmānam*—herself; *nīla*—dark; *alaka*—hair; *varūthinīm*—a bunch; *upalabhya*—upon imagining; *asurāḥ*—the demons; *dharmā*—O Vidura; *sarve*—all; *sammumuhuḥ*—were captivated; *striyam*—woman.

TRANSLATION

Adorned with dark tresses, she hid herself, as it were, out of shyness. Upon seeing that girl, the asuras were all infatuated with an appetite for sex.

PURPORT

The difference between demons and demigods is that a beautiful woman very easily attracts the minds of demons, but she cannot attract the mind of a godly person. A godly person is full of knowledge, and a demonic person is full of ignorance. Just as a child is attracted by a beautiful doll, similarly a demon, who is less intelligent and full of ignorance, is attracted by material beauty and an appetite for sex. The godly person knows that this nicely dressed and ornamented attraction of high breasts, high hips, beautiful nose and fair complexion is *māyā*. All the beauty a woman can display is only a combination of flesh and blood. Śrī Śaṅkarācārya has advised all persons not to be attracted by the interaction of flesh and blood; they should be attracted by the real beauty in spiritual life. The real beauty is Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. One who is attracted by the beauty of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa cannot be attracted by the false beauty of this material world. That is the difference between a demon and a godly person or devotee.

TEXT 32

अहो रूपमहो धैर्यमहो अस्या नवं वयः ।
मध्ये कामयमानानामकामेव विसर्पति ॥३२॥

*aho rūpam aho dhairyam
aho asyā navam vayah
madhye kāmayamānānām
akāmeva visarpati*

aho—oh; *rūpam*—what beauty; *aho*—oh; *dhairyam*—what self-control; *aho*—oh; *asyāḥ*—her; *navam*—budding; *vayah*—youth; *madhye*—in the midst; *kāmayamānām*—of those passionately longing for; *akāmā*—free from passion; *iva*—like; *visarpati*—walking with us.

TRANSLATION

The demons praised her: Oh, what a beauty! What rare self-control! What a budding youth! In the midst of us all, who are passionately longing for her, she is moving about like one absolutely free from passion.

TEXT 33

वितर्कयन्तो बहुधा तां सन्ध्यां प्रमदाकृतिम् ।
अभिसम्भाव्य विश्रम्भात्पर्यपृच्छन् कुमेधसः ॥३३॥

*vitarkayanto bahudhā
tām sandhyāṁ pramadākr̥tim
abhisambhāvya viśrabhāt
paryaprechan kumedhasaḥ*

vitarkayantaḥ—indulging in speculations; *bahudhā*—various kinds; *tām*—her; *sandhyām*—the evening twilight; *pramadā*—a young woman; *ākṛtim*—in the form of; *abhisambhāvya*—treating with great respect; *viśrabhāt*—fondly; *paryaprechan*—questioned; *ku-medhasaḥ*—wicked-minded.

TRANSLATION

Indulging in various speculations about the evening twilight, which appeared to them endowed with the form of a young woman, the wicked-minded asuras treated her with respect and fondly spoke to her as follows.

(continued in next issue)

Thorny Pleasure

by AJAMĪDHA DĀSA

Today's consumer seems to be moving away from accumulating things toward acquiring new experiences and feelings, collecting mental images with which to fill his life. Thus modern man has realized an age-old truth: enjoyment is only in one's mind.

The spirit soul, the actual living entity, is captured within a material body. He has at his disposal the intelligence, the mind, and the senses. Because the spirit soul is acting under false ego, which means he thinks himself to be the body, he never gets enough satisfaction and pleasure, however he tries. The example is given of a fish out of water—a pathetic situation. The fish does not become satisfied even if you give it the best food, the best cigar, or the softest bed. Similarly, the spirit soul has a longing for eternity, bliss, and knowledge, and his quest for these things is shown in his construction of hospitals, research laboratories, amusement parks, and so on. But eternity, full knowledge, and full bliss can never be attained by these endeavors, because the body itself is temporary, full of miseries, and full of ignorance. No one can deny that.

The solution lies in getting the fish back into the water—we have to find out the natural position of the soul. All the hospitals, laboratories, amusement parks, and schools are just part of the search for water in the desert. The living entity is by nature superior to matter and thus can never become satisfied with mere material pleasures.

One problem with material pleasure is that its opposite—distress—follows it. This world is full of dualities. No one can say what is darkness without describing its opposite. Nor has “up” any meaning without “down.” So also for happiness and distress, pleasure and pain, love and hate. One follows the other. By embracing material joy, soon enough sorrow will come.

Sense gratification can be compared to embracing a cactus in a desert. I may think, “Oh, here is a nice

green plant. It must be full of water!” Because I am very thirsty, I don't consider the thorns on the cactus. “Let me embrace it! Let me get some juice, some nectar! Yes, I can feel the juice running down, cooling my body.” I become so overwhelmed that I don't realize that the juice is my own blood and sweat caused by the thorns and the heat.

Similarly, the living entity takes on so much trouble to reach his desired enjoyment. The student spends many years in school to get a degree and a good job. The athlete tortures his body in many ways to become the champion, and almost everyone accepts many mental and physical troubles to attract the opposite sex.

But too soon all one's hard labor for family, wealth, and fame will prove useless, as disease, old age, and death come, bringing with them the reactions for all one's deeds in this life. And who knows what one's next birth will be?

But do we have to meet such an end? Of course, if we seek solutions from those who are themselves entrapped, if we rely on fallible friends and relatives, scientists and economists, then we shall also be eaten up by eternal time. They can't give us what they themselves don't have. We have to gather information from transcendental sources.

Bhagavad-gītā, spoken by Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord Himself, and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, spoken by Śukadeva Gosvāmī, a most confidential associate of Kṛṣṇa, are the cream of Vedic literatures, an ocean of supramundane knowledge and instructions. Their waves wash away all doubts concerning transcendental reality for the sincere reader and seeker of the truth. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement distributes these literatures, which are specifically aimed at helping the bewildered people of today come to the shore of the ocean of transcendental knowledge, where they can drink the nectar of eternity, bliss, and knowledge to their full satisfaction, thus allowing them to end their miserable material existence and return home, back to Godhead. ❏

We spend our lives
working hard to secure happiness.
It doesn't have to be that way.





Save some for us! Actually, the calf needs only about a tenth of its mother's milk. The rest is ours.

CONSIDER THE COWS

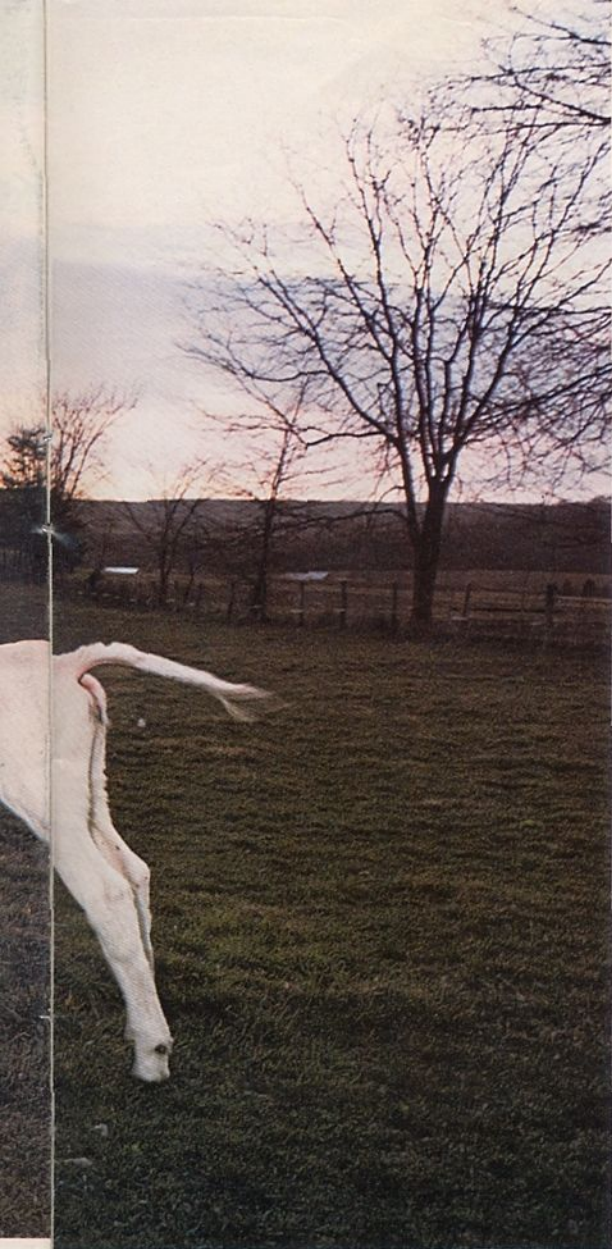
Text and photos by VIŚĀKHĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

The sanctity of cows and bulls is a frequently misunderstood tenet of the Vedic tradition. This tenet is not grounded in mythology or sentiment. Adherents of the Vedic culture appreciate the valuable service cows and bulls render human beings by providing milk and tilling the land, and they know that, of all animals, cows and bulls are especially dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is also known

as Govinda, or “one who gives pleasure to the cows.”

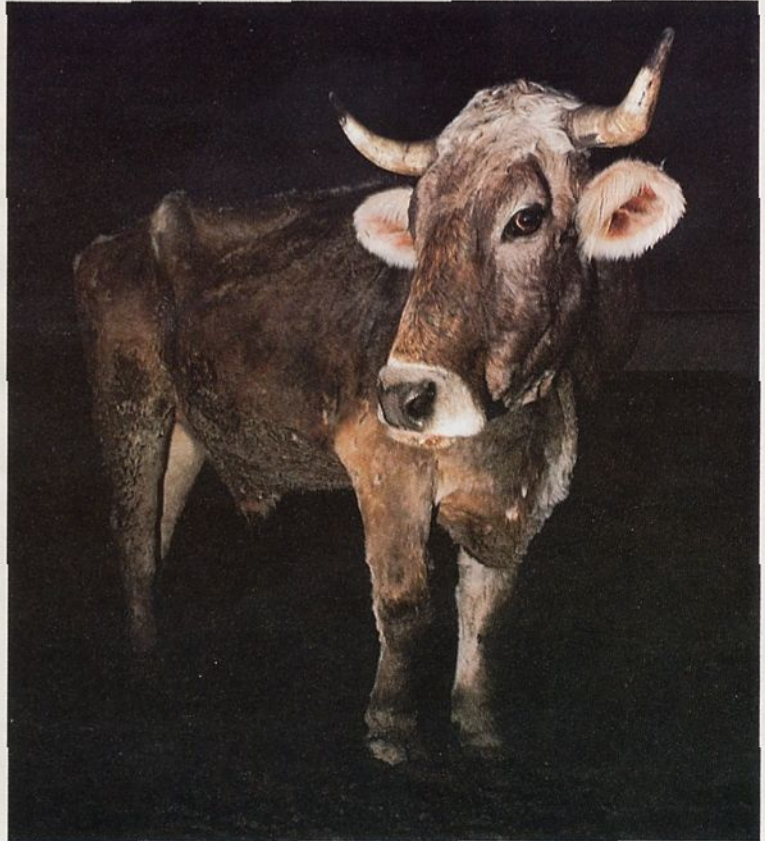
Gītā-nāgarī, a farm community of Kṛṣṇa devotees in central Pennsylvania, is home for around 150 cows, bulls, and calves. These animals will never see a slaughterhouse, even when they are old and unproductive, for the devotees at Gītā-nāgarī will not forget the service the cows once rendered and Lord Kṛṣṇa's fondness for them.

The Gītā-nāgarī scenes on these pages are accompanied by texts, sometimes paraphrased, from the writings of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Śrīla Prabhupāda mentions cows and bulls many times in his books, sometimes indirectly, as in analogies, and other times directly, in explaining the practical functioning of an ideal agrarian community.



“The Lord is so merciful that He gives His devotee all protection, just as a cow gives milk to a newly born calf.”

—Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.9.17, purport



Retired with dignity, Gītā-nāgarī cows are allowed to grow old and die a natural death.



“No one likes an old man who is unable to earn in the family, just as the farmer does not like an old bull who has ceased to work. It is judicious, therefore, to give up family attachment before one attains old age and take shelter of the Supreme Lord.”

— Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.30.13, purport

“The entire world is controlled by the Supreme Lord just as a bull is controlled by a rope in its nose.”

—Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.3.12

“This way fella!” It really doesn’t hurt, and it’s the time-honored way of getting a bull to go where you want him to.



A team of oxen plow the fields at Gītā-nāgarī.

...of the ancient Vedic ... ground ... ancient ... culture ... service cows and bulls render human beings by providing milk and tilling the land, and they know that of all animals, cows and bulls are especially dear to Lord Krishna, who is also known

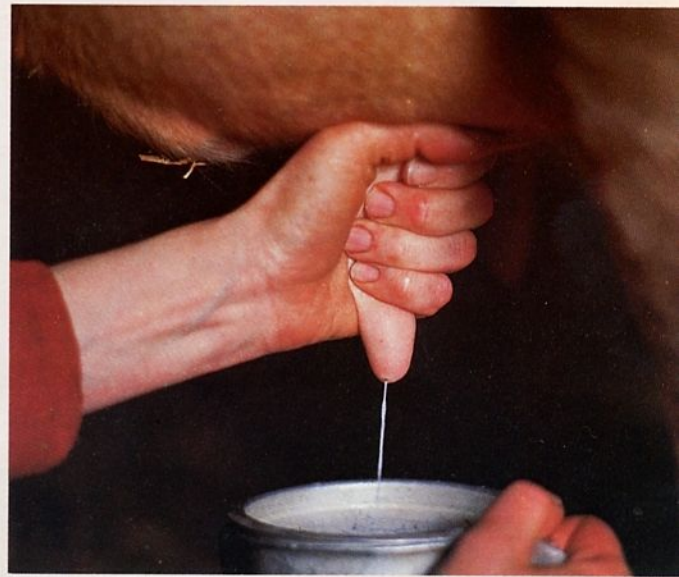
... Krishna's fondness for the ...

... of his ...



“The blood of the cow is very nutritious, but civilized men utilize it in the form of milk. Milk is nothing but cow’s blood transformed. This is civilized life—not directly killing an animal and eating its flesh.”

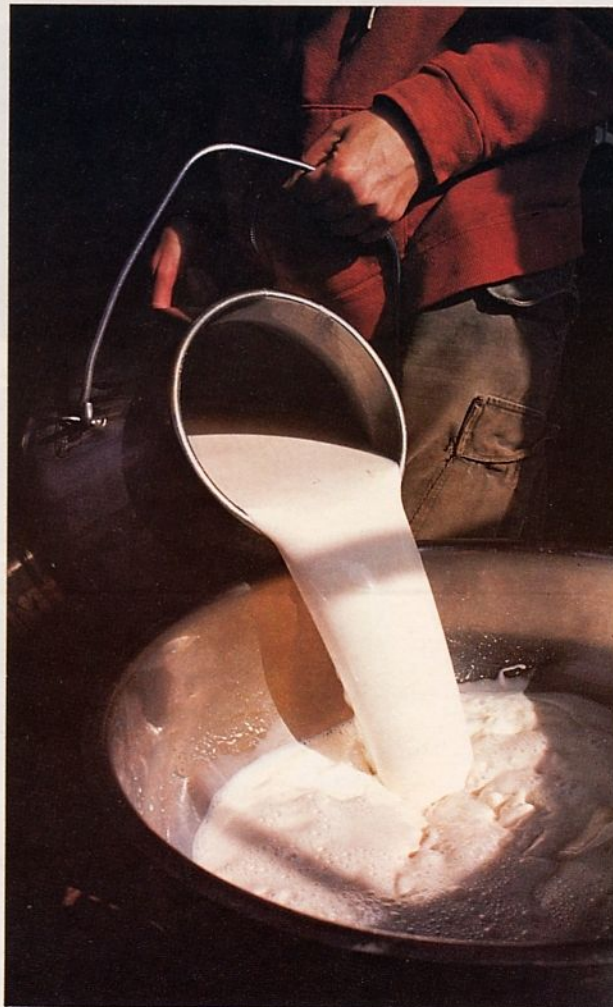
—The Science of Self-Realization, p. 13



This is where it comes from—not from the dairy cooler at your local supermarket.

“The cow is the mother because just as one sucks the breast of one’s mother, human society takes cow’s milk. Similarly, the bull is the father of human society because the father earns for the children just as the bull tills the ground to produce food grains. Human society will kill its spirit of life by killing the father and the mother.”

—Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.2.29, purport



Gītā-nāgarī cows each produce about eight gallons of milk a day.



After a day of tilling, Rasāla dāsa and his wife, Sītā-devī dāsī, rest with their animals.

“Vedic culture has taken advantage of keeping cows and chanting the holy name of Viṣṇu since the beginning of history, and persons who are still following the Vedic ways, especially the householders, keep at least one dozen cows.”

—Kṛṣṇa, Vol. 1, p. 68



During one of many annual festivals at Gītā-nāgarī Śaraṅa, a much-relished delicacy: molasses-and-grain balls.



"In the human form of life, one should not endeavor for unnecessary necessities, but should live a very simple life, just maintaining body and soul together. Instead of hankering for more and more money, sincere devotees of the Lord try to find some ways to earn their livelihood, and when they do so, Kṛṣṇa helps them. Earning one's livelihood, therefore, is not a problem. The real problem is how to get free from the bondage of birth, death, and old age."

—Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.14.5, purport



gari. Sāraṇam dāsi—with mixed pleasure and surprise—feeds a cow
walls.

Divorcing The Daughter Of Time

Man's quest for the elixir of immortality goes on, and old age continues to shatter his hopes.

by ANANTA-ŚAKTI DĀSA

Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of them all?

"Not me, that's for sure," I muse while a grim countenance stares back at me from the bathroom mirror. As the years advance, crow's feet spread from the corners of the eyes, varicose veins discolor the once clear skin, and the teeth are a constant concern. In the medicine cabinet are fortifiers for the over-forties and tonics to cure falling hair—just a hint of things to come.

Old age, the "daughter of time," encroaches upon us all, whether we like it or not. This unwelcome lady is attended by many maidservants, such as deafness, arthritis, and senility. Her first flirtation staggers our steps and slackens our skin. We make futile attempts to forestall her advances with cosmetic surgery and organ transplants. Old ladies with pink permed hair and powder masks carefully disguise body odors with heavy scents and wear gloves and glittering rings to distract our eyes from their withering skin.

Alas! All this is vanity, a sad masquerade for old age. She is irresistible and compels us to surrender to her increasing demands, until as unwilling victims we are easily delivered into the hands of death.

There is nothing as effective as old age for dispelling the myth of eternal





youth in this world. Even the *yogī*, who by virtue of breath control lives for hundreds of years—he too must eventually vacate his mortal frame.

Yet in spite of the facts being what they are, the aspiration for eternal youth is intrinsic to each of us, just as sweetness is present in each grain of sugar.

Is eternal youth an impossible dream, an imagination contrived to defeat despair? The perfect answer is given by the perfect person, Lord Kṛṣṇa, God Himself. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.20), Lord Kṛṣṇa addresses Arjuna, His dear friend and devotee:

*na jāyate mriyate vā kadācin
nāyam bhūtva bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ
ajo nityaḥ śāśvato 'yam purāṇo
na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*

“For the soul there is neither birth nor death at any time. He has not come into being, does not come into being, and will not come into being. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain.”

The terms *young* and *old* refer only to the temporary body and not to the soul. One who is free from bodily consciousness can discover the ever-fresh nature of the soul.

The key to this desirable state of consciousness is to understand that as spirit souls we are eternally fragmental parts of the supreme spirit soul, Lord Kṛṣṇa, and that our natural relationship with Him is one of loving service. When we act on this knowledge, we can enjoy unlimited happiness in relationship with the Supreme Lord.

Lord Kṛṣṇa, although the oldest person, is celebrated as *nava-yauvana*, an eternally fresh youth. He is Govinda, giver of pleasure to the senses, and He is Ādi-puruṣa, the original enjoyer. Thus Kṛṣṇa is the fountain of eternal youth from which we desire to drink deep. If we enter His loving service, especially by chanting His names, we gain His association and become rejuvenated. ❏

ILLUSTRATION BY BHOTABHAVANA DASA

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

Godly Qualities, Ungodly Qualities

This conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples took place in New Vrindaban, West Virginia, on June 26, 1976.

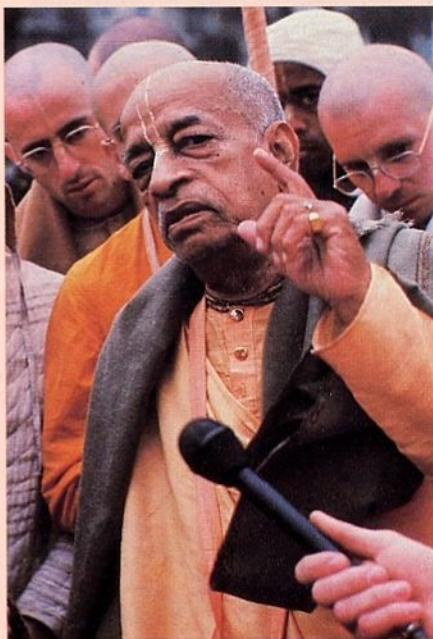
Disciple [reading from *Bhagavad-gītā* As It Is, 16.1]: "The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: 'Fearlessness; purification of one's existence; cultivation of spiritual knowledge; charity; self-control; performance of sacrifice; study of the *Vēdas*; austerity; simplicity; nonviolence; truthfulness; freedom from anger; renunciation; tranquillity; aversion to faultfinding; compassion for all living entities; freedom from covetousness; gentleness; modesty; steady determination; vigor; forgiveness; fortitude; cleanliness; and freedom from envy and from the passion for honor—these transcendental qualities, O son of Bharata, belong to godly men endowed with divine nature.'"

Purport, by Śrīla Prabhupāda: "In the beginning of the Fifteenth Chapter, the banyan tree of this material world was explained. The extra roots coming out of it were compared to the activities of the living entities, some auspicious, some inauspicious. In the Ninth Chapter, also, the *devas*, or godly, and the *asuras*, the ungodly, or demons, were explained. Now, according to the Vedic rites, activities in the mode of goodness are considered auspicious for progress on the path of liberation. . . ."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The defect of modern civilization is that people have no idea about liberation. Nor have they any idea about the transmigration of the soul. At its very root, this civilization is defective.

People are thinking just like animals. The dog is thinking, "I am this dog body. I am born a dog and I'll die—everything finished." He cannot realize that "I can also take on a human body." He cannot realize that.

So in this modern civilization, people cannot even realize that there is a next life and we can go to other planets, such as the moon. *Sarva-ga:* the living entity has the tendency to travel widely, to many situations. Artificially people are trying, but they do not know the proper method. As Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā*, *yānti deva-vratā devān pīṭṇ yānti pīṭṇ-vratāḥ/ bhūtāni yānti bhūtejyā yānti mad-yājino 'pi mām:* "Those who worship the demigods will take birth among the demigods; those who worship the ancestors go to the ances-



tors; those who worship ghosts and spirits will take birth among such beings; and those who worship Me will live with Me."

People do not know this. Although they have got the tendency to go to higher planets, they do not know how to go. They do not know positively what are the positions of the various material planets or *Vai-kunṭhaloka*, the spiritual planets. They do not know about liberation or the next life, transmigration—nothing of the sort. Simply like dogs.

Now, consider this point—whether I'm speaking rightly or wrongly. I know I am speaking the right thing, but if you disagree, then you can discuss it amongst yourselves.

Disciple: Śrīla Prabhupāda, many people think that "liberation" has nothing to do with spiritual realization. It just means you can do anything you like—free from any consequences.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is rascaldom. That is rascaldom. For instance, in a prison, if a prisoner thinks that he can do whatever he likes, that is rascaldom. That is going on. This modern civilization is rascaldom. Everyone is seeing daily that he's under the control of material nature, and still he thinks that "I can do whatever I like." That is rascaldom.

Disciple: The so-called Christian conception of salvation is based not so much on attraction for the transcendental reality as on fear of hell.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: This may be the official Christian conception, but the mass of people are not even afraid of hell. They do not even know what hell is. Because they are living in hell already.

You remember the humorous story. When a miner in Sheffield, England, heard some preacher's description of hell, he remained undisturbed.

"So hell is damp and dark? Oh, well, it is damp and dark here in our mine. What is the difference between hell and our mine?"

When the miner was informed that in hell there is no newspaper, only then did he become disturbed.

"Horrible! How can anyone live without a newspaper?"

So people's hellish condition is here now. Earlier, some of you were describing about the hellish conditions in factories. So people are working in factories—what do they care about hell?

"Even if I go to hell, I will get a good salary, that's all. Money is required. Then I can drink nicely."

But the transcendental reality is here also. Kṛṣṇa's standard is here. But this transcendental qualification, *abhayaṁ satva-samsuddhiḥ*, fearlessness and purification of one's existence—"What is that?" It does not appeal to people. It does not strike them at all. And yet in the Lord's estimation, these qualities are the high qualities. Is it not?

"Fearlessness and purification of one's existence," the Lord requires of us. But who is fearless? Everyone is fearful. Fearlessness is a godly quality, but today who understands it? *Āhāra-nidrā-bhaya-maithunam ca:* rather, all that people understand is eating, sleeping, mating, and defending, or fearing. This is animal life. To eat, to sleep, to have sex, and to become fearful—this is animal life. And so Kṛṣṇa says one has to become fearless. But who cares about it? People are thinking that to become fearless means to keep a gun. Of course, that is also one way. [Laughter.]

And as for purification of one's existence, here also people do not know anything. When someone falls sick he wants to go to a doctor and become purified. But his whole life is impure—that he doesn't know. You see. Because people's very existence is impure, they are subjected to birth, death, old age, and disease. That they do not know. ❏

(To be continued.)

THE SENSES

(continued from page 13)

killers, even if they claim to be very religious, cannot understand the soul. They are simply fanatics. They cannot understand what is the soul or what is God. They have some theories and they think they are religious, but what is actually sin, what are pious activities—these things they cannot understand because they are animal-killers. It is not possible.

Therefore Lord Buddha propagated *ahimsā*, nonviolence. He saw that the whole human race was going to hell by this animal-killing. He thought, "Let me stop them so that in the future they may become sober." He was compassionate in two ways: First, he was very compassionate toward the poor animals who were being killed. And he was also compassionate toward the people. He thought, "The whole human race is going to hell. So let me do something." He was an incarna-

tion of God, but because the people's brains could not tolerate the existence of the soul, he had to deny it. Thus he did not say anything about the soul or God. He said, "Never mind that animals have no soul. Just stop killing them. When I pinch you, you feel pain, so why should you give pain to others?"

Lord Buddha also denied the authority of the *Vedas*, because the *Vedas* sometimes recommend killing animals in sacrifice. Actually, the animals are rejuvenated, given a new body, but still Lord Buddha did not accept animal-killing in sacrifice. Therefore it is said, *nindasi yajña-vidher ahaḥ śruti-jātam*: "Lord Buddha criticized the sacrifices described in the *Vedas*." Why? *Sadaya-hṛdaya darsita paśu-ghātam*: "Because He was so kind and compassionate toward the animals who were being killed." That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

God is very kind, very compassionate. He does not like to see any living entity suffer. But when there is a necessity, He

can kill. His killing and our killing are different, however, because He is all good. Anyone killed by Kṛṣṇa immediately gets salvation.

So, here Kṛṣṇa is encouraging Arjuna to fight on the basis of the eternal existence of the soul. Kṛṣṇa says, "You cannot measure the soul, but the soul is there, and it is imperishable. On the other hand, the body is perishable. Even if you do not fight, you cannot save the bodies of your grandfather and teacher and others. Today or tomorrow they will die. So discharge your duty and fight."

The main point Kṛṣṇa wants Arjuna to understand is that he must fight, that he must discharge his duty as a *kṣatriya* [warrior] and not be overwhelmed by lamentation because of bodily destruction. In summary, Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, "The body is different from the soul. So don't think that the soul will be killed. Just stand up and fight." This is Kṛṣṇa's instruction.

Thank you very much. ☐

A Flower

(continued from page 10)

may sound extraordinary, but suppose you pick an apple from a tree and offer it to God—from His point of view, the tree has offered that apple. A tree is a living soul, just like you or me. It's a spiritual person with a tree's body. So when the apple is offered, it's as if the soul in the tree is offering it. Kṛṣṇa takes it like that. So the person in the tree's body benefits. When the apple is offered to Kṛṣṇa on the altar in the temple or in your home, it becomes transformed. It becomes spiritualized or "Kṛṣṇa-ized." If you take an iron bar and put it into a fire, it becomes "fire-ized"—red-hot. If you take it out of the fire, it will act just like fire.

Similarly, an apple becomes spiritualized when it's offered to Kṛṣṇa. It may seem like an ordinary apple, but it has a greatly different effect on the person who eats it. When you take a poker out of a fire, it may seem like ordinary iron, but it acts differently when you touch something with it. So food that's been offered to Kṛṣṇa becomes spiritualized, and anyone who eats it will experience his consciousness becoming purified, spiritualized.

Because God is spiritual and everything comes from Him, everything is

really spiritual; it has simply become covered by a material curtain. By offering something back to God, the material curtain is removed, and the object's real spiritual potential is revealed.

Even tiny material things like atoms can release seemingly unlimited energy. From the study of quantum mechanics we learn that on the subatomic level so many amazing things go on that defy our ability to comprehend. So, though it is hard to understand, ultimately everything is spiritual. But when something is severed from God, it becomes material.

In other words, it's a question of consciousness. If I look at something in relationship to me, then I see it as material because I'm limited. Even spiritually I'm limited, what to speak of materially. The soul is infinitesimally small, or limited, whereas God is infinite, or unlimited. In fact, God is both infinite and infinitesimal. In the Vedic literature it is described that all living beings, whether in the forms of humans, trees, or bugs, are infinitesimal aspects of God. When the infinitesimal is linked up with the infinite, the infinitesimal has unlimited potential. But when the infinitesimal part of God separates from God, he is left to his limited devices. A spark in a fire shares the total heat

of the fire, but if it falls out of the fire, it becomes an ember and dies.

Potentially the spark can be put back in the fire at any time and glow again, but on its own it loses its glowing quality. Similarly a soul can become almost like a dead rock. In a tree's body, for instance, the soul is in a sort of suspended animation, even though it possesses great potential spiritual energy.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a practical process of reviving our spirituality. It is said that "You are what you eat." So if you eat spiritualized food that's been offered to Kṛṣṇa, gradually your body will also become spiritualized, and you will be better able to understand God.

What to speak of understanding God, many people can't even understand that they have a soul. For persons who are very materialistic—like those who constantly eat meat—it's extremely difficult to understand the difference between matter and spirit. Anyone can say, "I love God" or "I know God," but to actually understand God is another thing. One has to have spiritualized intelligence to understand spiritual subject matters. So eating food that's been offered to God is a very important aspect of spiritual life. ☐

(To be continued.)

NOTES

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At the present moment, throughout the entire world, the atheists are extremely numerous. . . . Thus the material world is becoming more and more godless, and consequently everything is in a disturbed condition. If this continues, the Supreme

Personality of Godhead will certainly take action, as He did in the case of the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu. . . . The demons should therefore be careful and curtail their godless civilization. . . . Otherwise they are doomed. . . . The godless civilization can be destroyed at any moment.

Since the stakes are so high, it behooves

an intelligent person to look thoroughly into the available information on theism, even if it means going outside traditional Western sources. In an age characterized by irreligion, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is serving humanity by reminding us of the validity and importance of the theistic way.—SDG

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Divine and Demonic

According to the *Bhagavad-gītā* (16.6), there are two kinds of created beings: "One is called the divine and the other demoniac." The Sanskrit for "divine" is *sura*, which denotes the theist, whereas *asura* means "atheist." The consequences of belonging to one or the other of these two classes is very serious, and perhaps for this reason many persons try to look for a middle ground, such as agnosticism or impersonalism.

It is unfortunate that nowadays theism is often described as mere faith. Sometimes it is contrasted with modern science, as if science were verifiable truth, and religion simply blind faith. Yet physicists, chemists, and mathematicians also require faith in the axiomatic principles of their systems. Similarly, faith is required for beginning to hear the science of God from the bona fide spiritual master and from the Vedic literatures. But faith is not everything. In theism there is certainly a verifiable process whereby one can know his advancement in spiritual life.

I can recall my own position as a professed agnostic and how I became convinced of theism by Śrīla Prabhupāda. My case was a typical example of how the bona fide spiritual master can create faith in the faithless.

Śrīla Prabhupāda attacked my doubts from many fronts. In the beginning I did not accept the Vedic scriptures as absolute proof, but I was interested in hearing reasonable explanations. Śrīla Prabhupāda explained that God is the supplier and maintainer of life in the universe. All around us we find an expert arrangement for water, light, and food. Water is stored in the oceans, but when it is needed for human use, it is evaporated into the clouds and delivered as distilled water.

Similarly, there are natural supplies of heat and food. These supplies are not produced by man, and neither is it feasible to say that they all come about by chance. Rather, the universe is maintained by very exact management. If the sun were to deviate from its orbit and come even slightly closer to the earth, all life would be annihilated in fire; if the sun were to go slightly farther away from the earth, everything would become frozen to death. The abundant evidence of supply and control strongly

indicates the presence of an intelligent force behind life and nature. Examples like these had occurred to me even before I met Śrīla Prabhupāda, but when I heard them from him, with his conviction and deep appreciation of the Supreme Lord, they had a new effect on me.

Before I met Śrīla Prabhupāda, I had only a vague awareness of the Vedic scriptures. I had heard that they were the oldest spiritual writings on earth. From Śrīla Prabhupāda I began to gradually understand their comprehensiveness. For example, the *Vedas* discuss two types of transcendental knowledge: impersonalism and personalism. Although the *Vedas* declare both to be features of the Absolute Truth, the personal feature of God is revealed as the highest. (See *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, 12.1-3.) The science of the *ātmā*, or soul, the laws of *karma*, the varieties of *yoga*, the ultimate goal of eternity, bliss, and knowledge—all these and much more is given in the Vedic texts. The more I heard the Vedic wisdom, the better I liked it.

Vedic scriptures not only teach us that the Supreme Personality of Godhead exists, but they inform us of God in His original, confidential form as Lord Kṛṣṇa. From Śrīla Prabhupāda I also learned of the eternal abode of Kṛṣṇa, where He engages in pastimes of love with His pure devotees.

Śrīla Prabhupāda further explained that the present millennium is known as Kali-yuga, an age of degradation. But the Supreme Lord has given a benediction to the people of Kali-yuga in the form of the chanting of the holy names of God, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. The chanting is a special way to approach Lord Kṛṣṇa by which even less qualified persons become successful.

In addition to hearing logical examples from the spiritual master and learning the Vedic scriptures from him, I received further blows to my atheistic doubts when I learned about the disciplic succession of great spiritual teachers. The names and lives of many persons who have succeeded in becoming liberated from the ungodly nature are given throughout the Vedic literature. I learned of great philosophers, such as Nārada and Vyāsa, who could analyze the difference between matter and spirit, and who found out the Absolute Truth by strength of

intellectual reasoning as well as mystic devotion. I also read of *yogīs*, like Brahmā and Kardama, who transcended the relative material world through meditation and were able to directly associate with Kṛṣṇa and His internal energies.

When I learned of sages like Vyāsa, the compiler of the *Vedas*, and Śukadeva Gosvāmī, his son, who spoke the science of God in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and as I began to realize that there is a long chain of teachers after them that extends into the modern age, with writers such as Madhva (A.D. 1239-1319), Rāmānuja (A.D. 1017-1137), and Lord Caitanya and His followers, I began to consider these *gurus* the best examples to follow. My affection for Western writers and thinkers paled in comparison to my growing appreciation for the poets, saints, and military heroes of the theistic *Vedas*.

The greatness of the sages themselves is therefore another evidence of the existence of God as the Supreme Person, exactly as stated in the Vedic literature. As Śrīla Prabhupāda used to say, "We should not think that sages like Vyāsadeva would insert fairy tales or mythologies into their literature."

Besides reading the teachings and the authentic histories of the ancient sages, a person is fortunate if he can actually meet a bona fide spiritual master. Before I met Śrīla Prabhupāda, I was an *asura*, not only because of my intellectual doubt about God, but also because I was addicted to the ungodly habits of the *asuras*. Indeed, I fit the description given in the *Bhagavad-gītā*—"Those who are demoniac do not know what is to be done and what is not to be done. Neither cleanliness nor proper behavior nor truth is found in them."

But by following the teachings of Śrīla Prabhupāda, I soon was able to give up at least the gross manifestations of sinful activities, such as illicit sex, intoxication, and meat-eating, and I prepared myself for the real work of human life—to act in devotional service for the pleasure of the Supreme.

Regarding the serious consequences of belonging either to the godly or the ungodly class, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.8.31):

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Godhead Is Light.

“The process of going back home, back to Godhead, is to hear about the Supreme Lord and His name, form, attributes, pastimes, paraphernalia, and variegatedness. Foolish people do not know this. They want to hear something about the name, form, etc., of everything temporary, and they do not know how to utilize this propensity of hearing for the ultimate good.”

—From *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.1.2, purport)
by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami
Prabhupāda

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One thing's sure about the Sunday Feast—you'll never leave hungry. The food—an all-vegetarian fare offered with love to Lord Kṛṣṇa—is just too good to resist. And there's always plenty for everyone. The food is known as *prasādam*, or "mercy," and although it isn't all there is to the Sunday Feast, it's an important part. Lord Caitanya, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself and who appeared only five hundred years ago, gave us the most enjoyable process of self-realisation: chanting and singing the names of God, dancing for His pleasure, and refreshing ourselves with His purifying *prasādam*. You'll find all this and more at the Sunday Feast. So for an experience that's sure to satisfy you—from your taste buds to your soul—come to the Sunday Feast, held every week at Hare Kṛṣṇa centers around the world. (See list of centers inside.)