

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

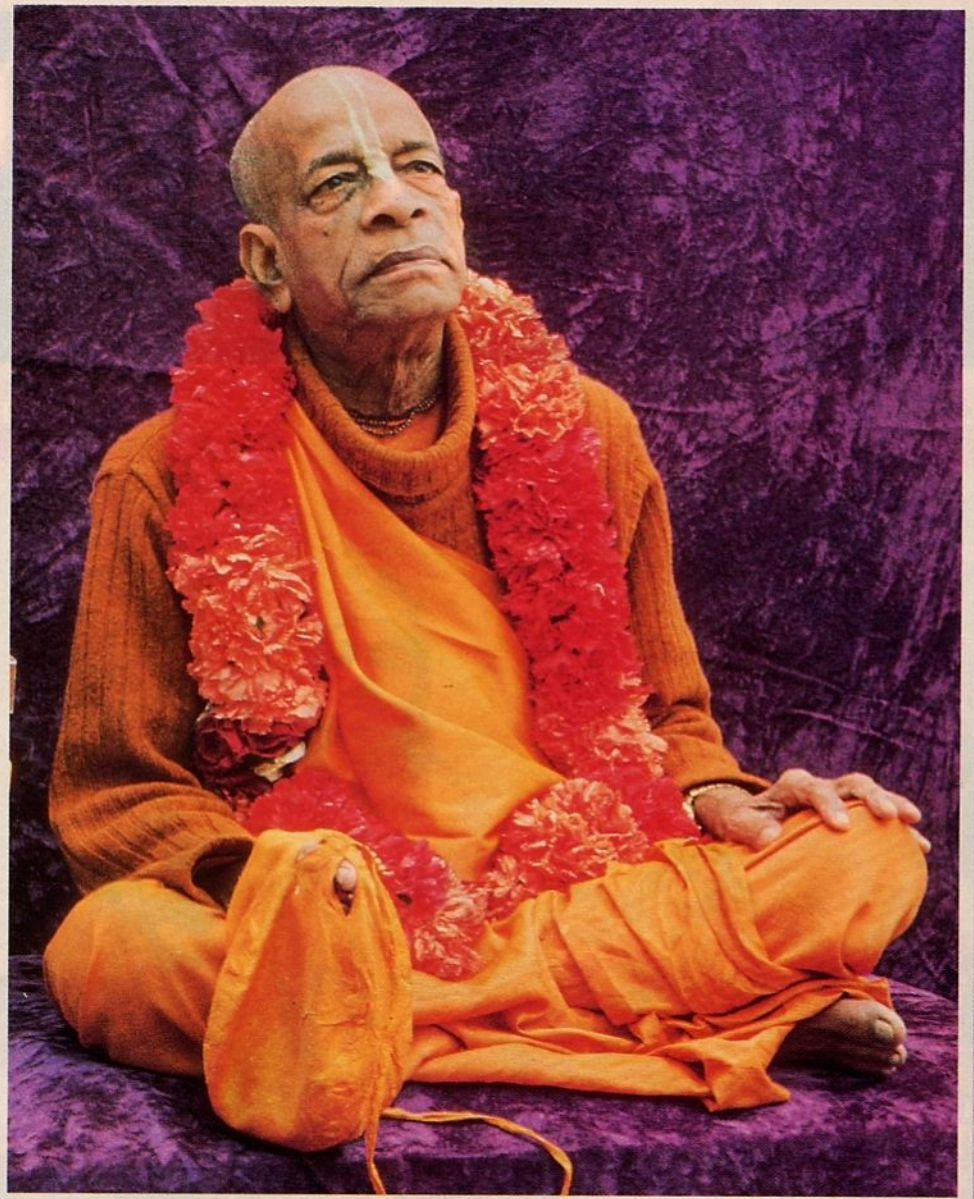
# BACK TO GODHEAD

Vol.23 No.12

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.

# BACK TO GODHEAD

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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 **ri** in **rim**, and **ṛ** like the **ch** in **chair**. Pronounce the aspirated consonants (**ch**, **jh**, **dh**, etc.) as in **staunch**-heart, **hedge**-hog, and **red**-hot. 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* (*dāstī* for women), meaning "servant." For instance, the name *Kṛṣṇa dāsa* means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

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**COVER:** The birth and activities of the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, and His expansions are always transcendental and wonderful. King Pṛthu, the incarnation of the Lord's power to rule, and his wife, Arci, an expansion of Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune, appeared in this world thousands of years ago. They manifested themselves from the dead body of the wicked king Vena, who had been killed by the powerful words of great sages. Adherents of Vedic culture, following the esteemed spiritual teachers of India's past, accept the history of King Pṛthu as fact and meditate upon it for their purification. Please see the story of King Pṛthu on page 28. (Painting by Yadurāṅgī-devī dāstī.)

# THE FORCE OF LIFE



When we accept knowledge from Kṛṣṇa, the supreme authority,  
we avoid erroneous conclusions about the nature of the soul.

A lecture in London on August 31, 1973

by HIS DIVINE GRACE

A. C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*dehī nityam avadhyo 'yam  
dehe sarvasya bhārata  
tasmāt sarvāṇi bhūtāni  
na tvaṁ śocitum arhasi*

“O descendant of Bharata, he who dwells  
in the body can never be slain. Therefore  
you need not grieve for any living being.”  
(*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.30)

In this section of the *Bhagavad-gītā*,  
Kṛṣṇa is explaining in so many ways  
that the living entity within the body is  
eternal, indestructible, immutable. It does  
not take birth, it does not die, it is always  
the same.

Here Kṛṣṇa says, *dehī nityam avadhyo  
'yam dehe sarvasya bhārata*: “Nobody can  
kill the soul, who dwells in all bodies.”  
This is very important. It is not that the  
soul is simply in the human body and not  
in other bodies. That theory is rascaldom.  
Kṛṣṇa says, *dehe sarvasya*, “in every body.”  
Even within the ant, even within the ele-  
phant, even within the gigantic banyan  
tree and the microbe, the soul is there.

Some rascals say animals have no soul.  
This is wrong. How can they say animals

have no soul? Here is the authoritative  
statement by Kṛṣṇa: *dehe sarvasya*. “The  
soul is in every body.” And in another  
place [*Bhagavad-gītā* 14.4] Kṛṣṇa says,  
*sarva-yoniṣu kaunteya mūrtayaḥ sambha-  
vanti yāḥ*: “Of all the embodied beings  
who appear in all the species of life,” *tāsāṁ  
brahma mahad yonir*: “the source of their  
bodies is this material nature.” And *ahaṁ  
bīja-pradaḥ pitā*: “I am the seed-giving  
father.” Without both a father and a  
mother, there is no offspring. So the uni-  
versal father is Kṛṣṇa, and the mother is ei-  
ther the material nature or the spiritual  
nature.

There are two natures: the material na-  
ture and the spiritual nature, or the infer-  
ior nature and the superior nature. (This  
is explained in the Seventh Chapter of  
*Bhagavad-gītā*.) So, although both the spiri-  
tual nature and the material nature come  
from the same source, the Absolute Truth,  
still one is superior and one is inferior.  
What is the difference between the in-  
ferior and the superior natures? In the in-  
ferior nature, the material nature, God  
consciousness is almost nil. Persons in  
the mode of goodness have a little God





Montage by Yennaraja dasa

consciousness, those in the mode of passion have less, and those in the mode of ignorance have no God consciousness. It is completely absent.

Therefore, although this material body comes from the same source as the soul, still it is inferior. And although by nature the soul is superior to the material nature, still, because he is encaged within a body made of the material nature, he forgets Kṛṣṇa. This is the problem.

So those who are not rascals, those who are intelligent and in complete knowledge, do not make any spiritual distinction between a human being and an animal. As Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā* [5.18],

*vidyā-vinaya-sampanne  
brāhmaṇe gavi-hastini  
śuni caiva śva-pāke ca  
pañḍitāḥ sama-darsinaḥ*

“A learned person knows that the spirit soul is present in every body—within the first-class learned *brāhmaṇa*, the cow, the elephant, the dog, and the lowest kind of human being.” The soul is present everywhere. It is not that simply in the human beings and the demigods there is a soul but the poor animals have no soul. No, everyone has a soul—*dehe sarvasya bhārata*.

So, what shall we accept—the statement of Kṛṣṇa, or the statement of some rascal philosopher or so-called religionist? We have to accept the statement of Kṛṣṇa, the supreme authority, the supreme being. And in many places in the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says the soul is present in every body. Therefore those who are learned do not say that the animals have no soul.

Now, another point Kṛṣṇa is stressing here is that the soul is eternal, that it cannot be killed. “Therefore,” Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, “it is your duty to fight. The bodies of your friends and relatives may be destroyed, but even after the destruction of the body, the soul exists. He will get another body, that’s all (*tathā dehāntara-prāptiḥ*).”

It is not that anyone can engage in killing others whimsically, however. As will be explained in the next verse, a *kṣatriya* [warrior] can kill his enemies only when he is in a religious fight. His cause must be right; then the fighting is good. When a *kṣatriya* kills his enemies in a religious fight, he’s not sinful. Thus Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, “Do your duty. Don’t worry that you are killing your kinsmen and grandfather. Take it from Me that you cannot kill the soul; he’s eternal.”

Now, another important point you should note is that in every living entity, the body grows on the platform of the spirit soul. The body may be very gigantic or very small; it doesn’t matter. But it grows on the platform of spirit. It is not that a spirit soul, or living force, comes into existence due to the combination of

material elements. No. Matter is dependent on spirit (*yayedam dhāryate jagat*), and therefore matter is inferior to spirit.

There are two kinds of spirit: *ātmā* and *Paramātmā*, *īśvara* and *Parameśvara*. The gigantic universe is resting on spirit—either the Supreme Spirit, Kṛṣṇa, or the small spirit, the living entity. As Kṛṣṇa explains [*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.5],

*apareyam itas tv anyāṁ  
prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parāṁ  
jīva-bhūtāṁ mahā-bāho  
yayedam dhāryate jagat*

“Besides the inferior, material energy, there are the living entities, who are sustaining the material universe.”

Why are the gigantic planets floating weightless in the sky? Kṛṣṇa says, *gām*

***We have to accept the statement of Kṛṣṇa, the supreme authority. And in many places in the Bhagavad-gītā Kṛṣṇa says the soul is present in every body. Therefore those who are learned do not say that the animals have no soul.***

*āviśya . . . dhārayāmy aham ojasā*: “I sustain the planets by My energy.” Just try to understand: A 747 airplane with five or six hundred passengers flies in the sky without any difficulty. Why? Because the pilot is there. Don’t think that it is because of the gigantic machine. No. It is because the pilot is there. The machine is also there, but the flying is dependent not on any mechanical arrangement but on the pilot. If the pilot were not there, the whole machine would immediately fall down. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa enters into all the gigantic planets and sustains them in outer space.

Without Kṛṣṇa’s entering into matter, nothing can work. Within the shell of the universe He is present as *Garbhodakāśāyī Viṣṇu*, and therefore the universe exists. And within the body of everyone He is present as *Paramātmā*, the Supersoul. He is not only within the body of all living

entities, but also within the atom: *aṇḍāntara-stha-paramāṇu-cayāntara-stham*. The scientists are now studying the atom—dividing, dividing, dividing. But they are having difficulty in coming to any conclusion because they cannot find God, or Kṛṣṇa, in the atom in His form as the Supersoul.

So, without Kṛṣṇa’s presence, nothing can exist. Therefore one who is advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness sees only Kṛṣṇa everywhere, not the outward covering. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* [*Madhya* 8.274] it is said, *sthāvara-jaṅgama dekhe, na dekhe tāra mūrti/ sarvatra haya nija iṣṭa-deva-sphūrti*. There are two kinds of entities, the moving and the nonmoving. (*Sthāvara* means “nonmoving,” and *jaṅgama* means “moving.”) A pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa sees both these kinds of entities, but he does not exactly see their forms. Rather, he sees Kṛṣṇa, because he knows that within the moving entities is the living force, which is Kṛṣṇa’s energy, and that inert matter is also Kṛṣṇa’s energy. So, in everything he sees only Kṛṣṇa. The *Brahma-samhitā* [5.38] states, *premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena sataḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti*: “The devotee whose eyes are anointed with the salve of love of Kṛṣṇa always sees Him within his heart.”

Sometimes people inquire, “Have you seen God?” The answer is that one who is actually an advanced devotee is simply seeing Kṛṣṇa and nothing else, within and without. The more advanced you are in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the more you’ll see simply Kṛṣṇa. And if you become practiced to see Kṛṣṇa always, then at the time of death you’ll think of Him and go back to Godhead. That is Kṛṣṇa’s instruction: *man-manā*, “Always think of Me.”

Now, who can think of Kṛṣṇa always? Only a devotee can think of Kṛṣṇa always. Is it a very difficult task? You are seeing Kṛṣṇa in the temple, chanting Kṛṣṇa’s name, engaging in Kṛṣṇa’s service. Nothing but Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa. And this twenty-four-hour engagement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness means you are becoming practiced to see Kṛṣṇa always. This is the purpose of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement—to train people so that they cannot forget Kṛṣṇa even for a moment. And that is Kṛṣṇa’s instruction in *Bhagavad-gītā* [9.34]: *man-manā bhava mad-bhaktō mad-yājī mām namaskuru*. “Think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me, offer obeisances unto Me.”

When you see the Deity in the temple, you get the impression within your mind, and when you are out of the temple you can see the Deity within your heart if you have developed love for Kṛṣṇa. Otherwise, if you only officially come to the temple, as soon as you leave you think, “Oh, it is a botheration: let me forget it.” That is another thing.

The process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is

meant for developing love for Kṛṣṇa. *Sa vai pumsām paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje*: “The first-class religious system enables one to develop love for Kṛṣṇa.” So Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the first-class, topmost religious system because it is educating people to always think of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, and to love Him. We cannot think of anyone always unless we love him. Suppose a boy and a girl are in love. Then each of them will always think of the other: “Oh, when shall we meet again, when shall we meet again?” Similarly, you can always think of Kṛṣṇa if you have developed your love for Him. And by devotional service you can develop your love for Kṛṣṇa. That is required.

So, even in the lower stages of animal life, Kṛṣṇa is in the heart. As He says here, *dehe sarvasya bhārata*. In another place

[*Bhagavad-gītā* 13.3] He says, *kṣetra-jñām cāpi mām viddhi sarva-kṣetreṣu bhārata*. The individual soul is *kṣetra-jñā*, the owner of the body, but there is another *kṣetra-jñā*, another owner, and that is Kṛṣṇa. As the individual soul is within the body, similarly the Supersoul, Kṛṣṇa, is also there. So Kṛṣṇa is the owner of all bodies.

Sometimes rascals accuse Kṛṣṇa: “Why did He dance with others’ wives?” But He is actually the proprietor of everyone. We are not the proprietor; He is the proprietor. So if the proprietor dances with His maid-servants or devotees, what is wrong there? The individual soul is in every body, but the Supersoul is the real proprietor of the body. Lord Kṛṣṇa says that *bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasām sarva-loka-maheśvaram*. “I am the enjoyer and proprietor of everything” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 5.29]. He is *maheśvaram*, the supreme proprietor, and also

*suhṛdam sarva-bhūtānām*, the actual friend of everyone. If you have some lover, you think you are his friend, but actually you are not his friend. His actual friend is Kṛṣṇa.

So if the *gopīs* dance with their real friend, what is wrong there? But the rascals, those who do not know Kṛṣṇa, say He is immoral. He is not immoral. He is doing the right thing, because Kṛṣṇa is the real husband of every woman. He married 16,108 wives. Why only 16,108? If He had married sixteen billion trillion wives, there would have been nothing wrong, since He is every woman’s real husband.

Still, those who do not know Kṛṣṇa, the rascals, accuse Him of being an immoral woman-hunter. They take pleasure in painting pictures of Kṛṣṇa’s affairs with the *gopīs*. But they do not paint pictures of  
(continued on page 22)

## In Memoriam

# Sri Vishvambhara Dayal

On August 24, 1988, the anniversary of the passing of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Sri Vishvambhara Dayal, affectionately known as “Bhagatji” by hundreds of ISKCON devotees, passed away.

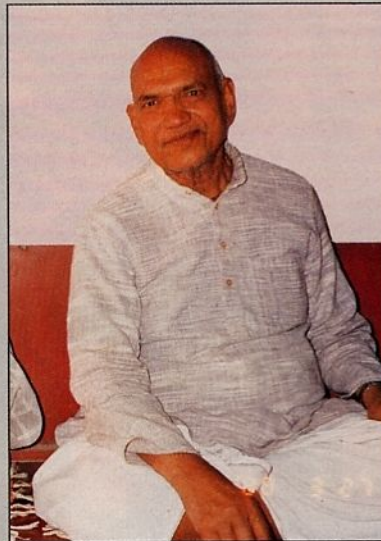
A resident of Vṛndāvana, India, the holy land of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s birth and childhood activities, Bhagatji was a lifelong devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and a dear friend of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s. He assisted Śrīla Prabhupāda greatly in establishing and developing ISKCON in Vṛndāvana.

As a boy in the town of Meerut during the time of British rule in India, Bhagatji attended a school with an Irish headmaster. Almost forty years later, Śrīla Prabhupāda brought his European and American disciples to Vṛndāvana, all chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Bhagatji was amazed. The British had brought their Western influence to India, but now Śrīla Prabhupāda was bringing Britishers, Europeans, and Americans who appreciated the philosophy, religion, and culture of India as perfectly presented by Śrīla Prabhupāda. Bhagatji was deeply moved by this great feat of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s.

Bhagatji almost single-handedly established and developed the Bhaktivedanta Swami Gośālā (a place where cows are kept and cared for) in Vṛndāvana, working diligently to hire and supervise all the laborers for the construction work. He wanted very much to establish, on Śrīla Prabhupāda’s behalf, a first-class gośālā in Vṛndāvana.

When it was time to purchase the first cows for the newly completed gośālā, Bhagatji insisted that he accompany

Dhanañjaya dāsa and Guṇāṁava dāsa to the Govardhana Cow Market so that the ISKCON devotees would get the best deal. On a motorcycle—Guṇāṁava driving, Dhanañjaya in the middle, and Bhagatji at the rear—they headed off to Govardhana. When they arrived, Bhagatji promptly yet carefully selected two cows



for the Bhaktivedanta Swami Gośālā.

Bhagatji served Śrīla Prabhupāda and ISKCON continually. He was expert at getting things done quickly and efficiently in otherwise slow and laborious situations. When the devotees sometimes apologized for asking him to do so much, he would say that the service he was doing for ISKCON was a manifestation of his love

for Śrīla Prabhupāda and that it gave him vitality. Over the years, Śrīla Prabhupāda often told ISKCON’s leaders in Vṛndāvana to seek Bhagatji’s advice in their local dealings.

Śrīla Prabhupāda greatly appreciated Bhagatji’s cooking, especially his *capātīs*, and would often call Bhagatji over to visit him in his room, where he would then jokingly ask Bhagatji when he was going to invite him over for *prasādam*. Bhagatji loved to offer *prasādam* to Śrīla Prabhupāda in a spirit of loving exchange between devotees.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to purchase the land to build a *gurukula* (school) next to ISKCON’s temple complex in Vṛndāvana, he instructed Dhanañjaya dāsa to speak with Bhagatji about this. Dhanañjaya did, and Bhagatji negotiated the purchase of the land at a very good price and then donated the money to pay for it. He said he enjoyed every minute of the struggle to get that land for building the Bhaktivedanta Swami Gurukula.

Bhagatji loved Śrīla Prabhupāda and assisted him enthusiastically. He also loved Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disciples and relished sitting and talking about Śrīla Prabhupāda for hours with any ISKCON devotee. He often expressed his realization of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s extraordinary spiritual position.

Those of us who knew and loved Bhagatji feel sorrow in separation from him. Yet we are sure that Lord Kṛṣṇa has called him back to His eternal abode to serve in Goloka Vṛndāvana with the same enthusiasm he exhibited in Vṛndāvana here on earth.





# THREE STEPS TO GOD

Lord Caitanya convinced a group of religious scholars that beyond all speculation, three—and only three—principles emerge as the eternal truths of religion.

by SATSVARŪPA DĀSA GOSWAMI

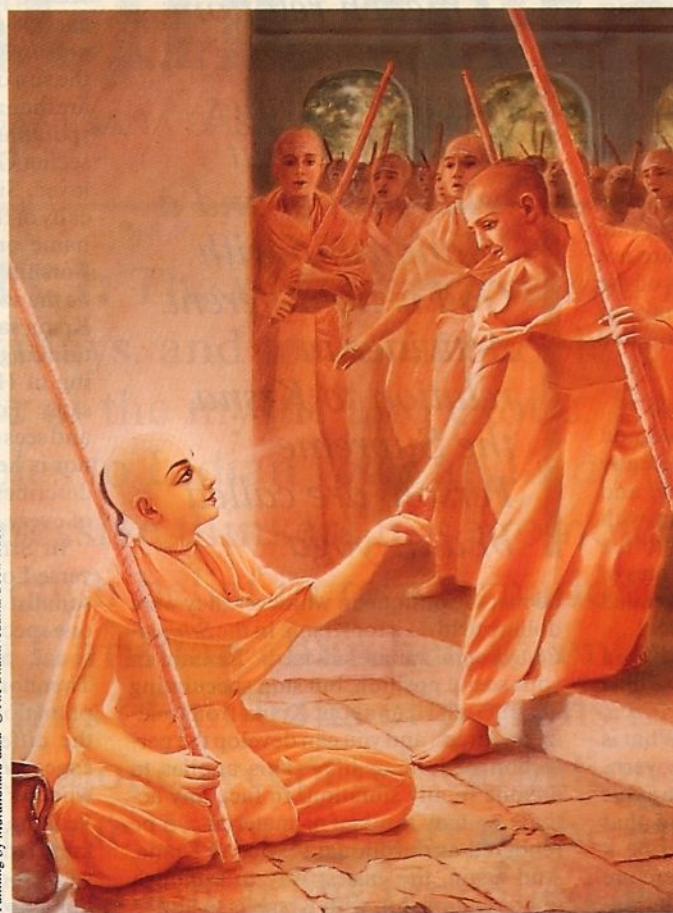
Five hundred years ago, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who Vedic scriptures tell us is Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, addressed a gathering of philosopher-scholars in the Indian city of Vārāṇasī. This place, now called Benares, has long been known as a center for philosophers who hold that the Absolute Truth is impersonal.

Lord Caitanya had been challenged by these philosophers, and He agreed to attend their meeting to discuss doctrine. He pointed out that their founder, Śaṅkara, had taken the direct meaning of the Vedānta scripture and changed it to suit his own philosophy. Lord Caitanya's presentation was very strong and learned; the impersonalists were moved and convinced.

Their leader said, "You have pointed out our wrong interpretation of Vedānta.

Would you please explain to us Your understanding of the actual meaning of Vedānta?"

Lord Caitanya then summarized the philosophy in this way:



Painting by Muralidhara dāsa ©The Bhaktivedāna Book Trust

**Leading His followers** in the chanting of Kṛṣṇa's holy names, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu (left) demonstrated the process of awakening our love for God. After taking to the renounced order of life, He converted the impersonalists of Benares, led by Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī, shown above inviting Lord Caitanya to an assembly of impersonalist *sannyāsīs*.

*sambandha, abhidheya, prayojana nāma ei tina artha sarva-sūtre paryavasāna*

"One's relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, activities in terms

of that relationship, and the ultimate goal of life [to develop love of God]—these three subjects are explained in every code of the *Vedānta-sūtra*, for they form the culmination of the entire Vedānta philosophy."

These three principles—to come to know the Supreme Being, to learn how to serve Him, and to develop love for Him—are central to every religion. As presented by Lord Caitanya, they are simple, nondogmatic, and comprehensive. Unfortunately, most people will not take the first step, which is to inquire about their relationship with the Supreme.

The philosopher Śaṅkara said that in observing people, we see the young playing sports and games, the grown-ups running after sex and money, and the elderly reminiscing. No one is seriously

inquiring into the Absolute Truth.

Although the materialist claims that no truth exists beyond what we can perceive with our senses, questions about the Absolute Truth must arise in the heart of a

real human being. Such a person is not satisfied with the proposition that the universe and all the arrangements in it have come about by accident. He wants to know something beyond just living and dying in this temporary world. As he sees the suffering brought on by material conditions, he is impelled to ask, "Is there liberation from this? Do I have to suffer? Do I have to die?" When a person has the inclination to inquire whether there is knowledge or a consciousness higher than material consciousness, if he is fortunate he will go to qualified teachers for answers.

#### Step One—Awakening

Not everyone is qualified to give us information about the Absolute Truth, yet a great wealth of information is available, especially in the Vedic literature, which contains the world's oldest knowledge. To inquire from standard books of knowledge, like *Bhagavad-gītā*, one must have a little faith. It should not be blind faith, but one should have enough faith to inquire and try to learn.

This then is the first stage: inquiry. One learns that yes, there is a source of all life manifested in this universe. There is a supreme being, a supreme intelligence from whom it has all come. This stage can be called the awakening of God consciousness. To know God, however, one must know his own identity. You are not your body; the body is a covering of the spirit self. And you, the spirit soul, have an eternal relationship with the supreme being—God, or Kṛṣṇa.

#### Step Two—Taking Up a Relationship

A person might well ask, "What good does it do me to understand intellectually or philosophically that there is God and that I have an eternal relationship with Him?" Therefore he has to come to the next stage, which is to take up activities of that relationship; otherwise the so-called knowledge of God is only theoretical.

For example, a man may claim to have a relationship with his country, and we may ask him what are his activities as a citizen. Does he vote? Does he pay taxes? What is his position with regard to the government? Or a man may claim a woman as his wife, but if he has no activities in that relationship, how can he claim to be a husband? In each relationship there are specific activities that define that relationship, and a relationship with God is no different. Activities in relation to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, are called *bhakti-yoga*, or devotional service, and the relationship of service begins by hearing about Him and, especially, by chanting His names.

For this age the scriptures recommend chanting the *mantra* of the names of Kṛṣṇa: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare

Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. This *mantra* serves as a direct link with God, for as we chant His names, we associate with Him and become purified. Under the guidance of a spiritual master, we can learn how to offer our occupational work to the Supreme. The performance of our job then becomes purifying. It has a transforming effect in that it clears up doubt and misconception.

Gradually, God begins to reveal Himself through the activities of service to Him, and as we draw closer to God, we become liberated. Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.9), *yajñārthāt karmaṇo 'nyatra*: "You should render your work as a sacrifice to God; otherwise work will bind you to this material world. Therefore do not give up your duties, but do them as sacrifice to the Supreme."

Similarly, our spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, would always instruct those

*In each relationship there are specific activities that define that relationship, and a relationship with God is no different. Activities in relation to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Person, are called bhakti-yoga.*

he met to continue in whatever they were doing but to do it for Kṛṣṇa. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we are advised, "Remain in your social position, but stop speculating about God. Hear about Kṛṣṇa from realized sources, and you can develop the perfection of human life." This applies to anyone in any situation. In fact, any activity we may think of as material can be rendered as devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. And again, the easiest way to establish one's relationship with Kṛṣṇa is to add to one's regular activities the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*.

A person cannot practice other forms of *yoga* seriously and correctly unless he gives up his social position. He has to live in seclusion and renounce all activities associated with civilized life. Even Arjuna, a great disciple of Lord Kṛṣṇa, said he could not do it. So Lord Kṛṣṇa teaches *bhakti-yoga*, by which a person can remain in the world and become the best *yogī*.

#### Step Three—The Goal: Loving Exchanges

The third stage outlined by Lord Caitanya is the goal, the perfection of life. By performing devotional activities under rules and regulations, one gradually reaches a stage of spontaneous love of God. In the beginning a person agrees to work under the order of the spiritual master, and he takes it as an obligation. But automatically, by rendering service, the love of God dormant within comes out. The activities of *bhakti-yoga* can be compared to the churning of milk into butter. The butter is already present in the milk; it comes out when the milk is worked.

Similarly, devotional service brings out our love of God because we are all spirit souls, each with a loving relationship with the Supreme. Through continued devotional service, one becomes more advanced in love of God, until one sees Kṛṣṇa, or God, everywhere in everything.

Kṛṣṇa is not just an impersonal spirit—He is a person, as much an individual as each of us. The devotee sees the individual person Kṛṣṇa in all things. When he sees the sun or trees, he understands that these are the energy of God. Because he now has spontaneous affection for God, just by seeing God's energy he thinks of his beloved. Similarly, when he thinks specifically of the Personality of Godhead in His name or His form, he appreciates and worships Him as such, knowing Kṛṣṇa to be the source of all things in the universe. Kṛṣṇa says that in His heart He is always thinking of those devotees who are thinking of Him. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.30), He says, "For one who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, I am never lost, nor is he ever lost to Me." Although this describes an advanced stage, it is the right of every living being to attain it.

In Śrīla Prabhupāda's purport to the verse Lord Caitanya spoke to the impersonalist philosophers, he writes that if one speculates that the Absolute is impersonal, all his efforts will be wasted. Therefore, Lord Caitanya's threefold explanation is the only subject matter of all the different branches of Vedic knowledge. Whatever is discussed therein—whether *yoga* or *karma* or meditation or Vedānta—is some aspect of this threefold knowledge: to awaken our relationship with God, to take up activities in that relationship, and to enjoy the result of eternal love of God, the highest stage of existence.

On hearing Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's explanation of *Vedānta-sūtra*, with its three steps to God, the impersonalist scholars were completely satisfied and changed their views. Through the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, Śrīla Prabhupāda brought the teachings of Lord Caitanya to the West, and thus the threefold process described by Lord Caitanya is available to everyone. ❏

*This series systematically explains some of the important philosophical concepts that form the foundation of the Vedic culture and the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.*

## LESSON TWO: Reincarnation

by PAVANEŚANA DĀSA

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**PART I:** The word *reincarnation* is popular nowadays, and for most people it conveys a sense of the mystic and exotic. Everyone from hippies to Indian *yogīs* and *svāmīs* to progressive thinkers has promoted the idea. Although belief in reincarnation is rejected by most Christian churches, recent polls show that tens of millions of persons in the United States alone accept reincarnation as a fact.

Despite the popularity of the idea of reincarnation, it has remained a vague concept for most people, with little bearing on even the believers' lives. The common understanding—that reincarnation means being born again as someone else—lacks clarity and lends itself to a number of false notions.

It is not possible to grasp the real meaning of reincarnation without understanding our real identity and the difference between matter and spirit. In lesson one of this series, in last month's issue, we concluded that every living entity is a spirit soul, distinct from his body. The relationship between soul and body is similar to the relationship between a driver and his car. The car is a tool to accomplish a mission determined by the driver. The driver exists independent of the car, but the car without the driver is just an inert piece of metal.

This conclusion is the first understanding of spiritual life, and building from this we can examine reincarnation. Here we'll address some frequently asked questions about reincarnation.

**Q:** Can I be born again as another person?

**A:** That depends on what you mean by "I." The real "I" is the soul. He's the real person, and he never changes. The soul does change bodies, however, and because the soul identifies with these bodies, he becomes, in the material sense, a new person.

**Q:** How is it determined what my next life will be?

**A:** You determine it yourself by your own actions. This is clearly explained in *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.6):

Whatever state of being one remembers when he quits his body, O son of Kuntī, that state he will attain without fail.

What you remember at death results from the actions, thoughts, and desires of your entire lifetime. According to the Vedic literature there are 8,400,000 species of life, and you, the spirit soul, have to accept the body of a particular species according to the activities and desires of your present life.

**Q:** But I couldn't take an animal body!

**A:** Why not? Reincarnation is not limited to the human species. The difference between an animal and a human being is only the body. There is no difference between a soul in a human body and a soul in a dog's body.

According to Darwin, physical bodies evolved until they reached the human form. The Vedic literature, however, states that all forms of life have always existed, and that the soul is evolving, or migrating, from the lower forms of life up to the higher forms until it reaches the human form.

So the same soul, or the same person, who hundreds of thousands of years ago was living in the body of a reptile, fish, or bird, is now living in the body of a human being—you or me.

On the bodily platform there is very little difference between animals and human beings: The animal eats; we eat.

They sleep; we sleep. They mate; we mate. They defend; we defend.

If someone behaves like a dog or a pig, he can certainly take the body of such an animal in his next life.

**Q:** How exactly does the soul transmigrate from one body to another?

**A:** There are three levels of existence: the soul, the subtle body, and the gross body. The subtle body is inside the physical body like a hand within a glove. At the time of death, the soul and the subtle body (composed of mind, intelligence, and false ego) leave the gross body (composed of earth, water, fire, air, and ether, or space). The physical elements that had been temporarily assembled into a gross body then disassemble.

After leaving the body, the soul, carried by the subtle body, enters a particle of

*Unfortunately, today human society is rejecting all spiritual knowledge and is priding itself on so-called advancement in science and technology. What kind of a civilization is it that degrades people to animal existence in their next life?*

male semen by which he is placed within the womb of his next mother.

**Q:** So when does this new life actually begin? I specifically refer to the abortion controversy.

**A:** Since the soul didn't die in the first place, there is no question of "beginning." But in this case the *Vedas* explain clearly that the "new" life, or the development of the new physical covering of the soul, begins at the time of conception. It is impossible to kill the soul, but in the material world killing refers to the slaying of the material body. So abortion at any stage is certainly murder.

**Q:** Would I take my next birth in the same environment as the one I leave at death?

**A:** You can take a body on any planet.

**Q:** But there's no life on other planets!

**A:** That may be what you've been taught,

but consider this: You can't live in the water, but a fish certainly can. You can't live in the earth, but a worm can. And you can't live in the air, but a bird can. To say that there is no life on other planets because we cannot live there is like saying there is no life in the water or in the earth because we cannot live there.

The *Vedas* explain that life exists everywhere, on all planets, in all universes. Whoever lives on a particular planet is obviously suited for the conditions there. Nature provides the appropriate body.

**Q:** So, how many times do I have to reincarnate?

**A:** That's up to you. You can reincarnate in an endless cycle—up and down in this material world—if you want to. But human life gives you a chance to stop that troublesome business.

**Q:** What happens when someone becomes an animal again?

**A:** The soul evolves gradually through higher and higher species until he reaches the human form. An animal is not responsible for its activities. It cannot degrade itself to a lower birth. In other words, if a tiger kills you, he does not get a reaction for this killing, because it is his nature.

But as soon as the soul reaches the human form of life, he becomes responsible for all his activities. In other words, if you kill that tiger needlessly, you will get the reaction for killing. So the human being can degrade himself through his actions, whereas the animal progresses automatically.

**Q:** But it seems unfair that the human being is held responsible for all his actions. Most people don't even know these universal laws that determine the reactions to their activities.

**A:** For this reason an enlightened or educated society has to know the laws of God. Complete knowledge is given to human society in the form of scripture. The *Vedas* are meant to guide the human being so that he does not violate the universal laws that govern us all.

Unfortunately, today human society is rejecting all spiritual knowledge and is priding itself on so-called advancement in science and technology. What kind of advancement is it that degrades people to animal existence in their next life?

In Vedic society the leaders had the responsibility to make sure that people were educated in spiritual science. But modern leaders don't even know that there is such a science. Therefore, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, through the publication of Vedic literature, is stressing the spiritual education.

**Q:** But if people don't know the laws that determine their next life, isn't it wrong that they are affected anyway?

**A:** Ignorance is no excuse, just as, for

(continued on page 34)

# The Art of Work

*Sannyāsa*, the fourth stage of Vedic life, symbolizes renunciation and detachment. But, Lord Kṛṣṇa says, why wait till then?

by DHANURDHARA SWAMI



Viśakha-devī dāsa

*Renunciation is essential to spiritual life, but that doesn't mean we have to go to the forest. Living a renounced life at home begins with placing Kṛṣṇa in the center of the family. By worshipping Him daily, we can master the art of performing our normal work for His pleasure.*

**A** famous pacifist, who also wrote a commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, once said that if in fact Lord Kṛṣṇa had asked Arjuna to kill, he would no longer accept the authority of Lord Kṛṣṇa. But Lord Kṛṣṇa does ask Arjuna to fight, and more astonishingly He supports His

request with eighteen chapters of philosophy. The *Bhagavad-gītā* is not, however, a treatise on war. A more subtle point is being made. Although every state needs a class of men to assume the duty of protecting its citizens from aggression, Lord Kṛṣṇa's arguments to convince Arjuna to fight are more than a call to secular duty; they are an analysis of how to attain perfection through one's duty, even as a warrior.

The first consideration of any man seeking perfection is to become free from *karma*. The law of *karma* is similar to the physical law of motion that states that every physical action has an equal and opposite reaction. *Karma* has jurisdiction over human actions and allots reward and punishment. Bound by *karma*, one must repeatedly take birth to reap the good or bad results of one's work. Thus a person engaged in fruitive work can never attain perfection.

It was especially difficult, therefore, for Arjuna to imagine attaining perfection in the course of his work, since his duty was warfare. The reaction to killing was a dreadful prospect. Arjuna therefore concluded that only by renouncing his duty could perfection be possible.

Hearing Kṛṣṇa's instruction on *buddhi-yoga*, Arjuna felt that his desire to renounce action was reinforced. *Buddhi-yoga* literally means using one's intelligence to advance in spiritual knowledge. According to his understanding of *karma*, Arjuna concluded that intelligence in spirituality meant renouncing work for a life of penance and philosophical pursuits. In other words, he wanted to become a *sannyāsī*.

In one sense it is understandable that Arjuna desired *sannyāsa*. According to the *Vedas*, human life is meant for self-realization, and therefore an intelligent man should certainly try to free himself from worldly duties so that his life is not diverted to temporary pursuits.

So, considering what he felt to be Kṛṣṇa's instruction concerning renunciation and its obvious advantages, Arjuna became bewildered by Kṛṣṇa's insistence that he achieve perfection through performance of his duties. "O Kṛṣṇa," he asked the Lord, "why do You want to engage me in this ghastly warfare, if You think that intelligence is better than fruitive work?"

To encourage Arjuna to seek perfection through his work, Lord Kṛṣṇa began to correct Arjuna's shallow understanding of *sannyāsa*.

*Sannyāsa* is not just a physical separation from home. One has to be internally detached. Kṛṣṇa condemns the man who poses as a *sannyāsī* but has not been purified of his worldly propensities by properly discharging his prescribed du-

ties: "One who restrains the senses of action but whose mind dwells on sense objects certainly deludes himself and is called a pretender."

A pretender will not be able to maintain his apparent detachment, because *sannyāsa* is a painstaking life. The *sannyāsī* must be satisfied to live simply, depending wholly on the gifts of nature. The pseudo mendicant without occupation but desirous of worldly comforts will be forced to beg a living at the cost of others. Such so-called renunciation for the purpose of maintenance is at no time recommended by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Rather, He advises Arjuna, "Perform your prescribed duty, for doing so is better than not working. One cannot even maintain one's physical body without work."

**To work for Viṣṇu and cultivate detachment from the fruits of work is an art that needs expert guidance. Guidance is especially needed today, when one's duties, unlike Arjuna's, are not prescribed by a society dedicated to self-realization.**

Although the perils of renunciation and the need to maintain the body certainly dampened Arjuna's aspiration for *sannyāsa*, he was nevertheless still bewildered as to his prospects for happiness at home. He still dreaded *karma*. Lord Kṛṣṇa therefore explained to Arjuna that work—even the work of a warrior—can be without karmic reaction: "Work done as a sacrifice for Viṣṇu has to be performed; otherwise work causes bondage in this material world. Therefore, O son of Kuntī, perform your prescribed duties for His satisfaction, and in that way you will always remain free from bondage."

Lord Kṛṣṇa thus gave the key to understanding perfection at home by giving Arjuna a deeper understanding of *karma*. The basis of *karma* is that the one who is responsible for actions has to enjoy or suffer the consequences of those actions.

Arjuna should now understand that responsibility for work lies not with the performer but with the one who has desired the work. Working for the satisfaction of Viṣṇu means that one works not out of one's personal desire but out of the desire to serve God. Such a dutiful man is thus absolved of the responsibility for reaction to his work.

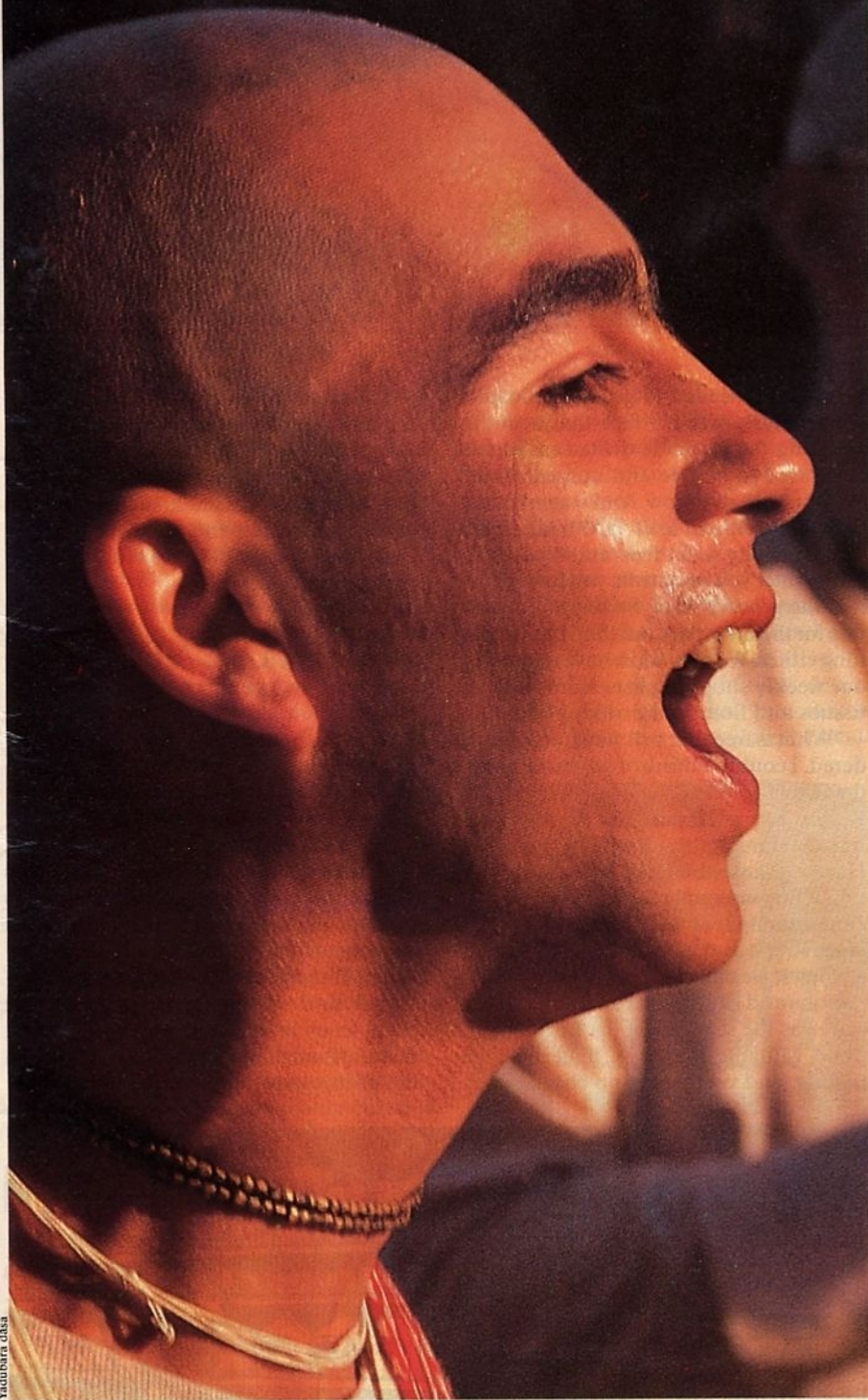
For example, because a soldier fights on the order of his government, he is never tried for murder, even though he may kill many enemy soldiers. On the other hand, if the same soldier kills even one man in his village in a private conflict, he will be punished severely. The real meaning of *karma*, therefore, is that one who acts on his own desire must accept the consequences of his action. On the other hand, the actions one performs out of duty yield no reaction.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* thus offers a feasible process of self-realization for the common man. Nonetheless, to work for Viṣṇu and cultivate detachment from the fruits of work is an art that needs expert guidance. Guidance is especially needed today, when one's duties, unlike Arjuna's, are not prescribed by a society dedicated to self-realization.

A good example of how Lord Kṛṣṇa's principle of attaining perfection at home can be practically applied today is found in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, the life and teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. While touring South India, in every village Lord Caitanya visited He would inspire the people who saw Him to become God conscious. In the village of Kūrmakṣetra a rich *brāhmaṇa* invited the Lord to his home and served Him with great respect and attention. Being inspired by Lord Caitanya's association, he begged the Lord, "My dear Lord, kindly show me favor and let me come with You. I can no longer tolerate the miseries caused by materialistic life."

But Lord Caitanya did not think it advisable for one in this age of Kali to leave one's family suddenly. Rather, He advised the *brāhmaṇa* to remain at home, continue his duties, and try to become purified by adopting a spiritual way of life. "Don't speak like that again," the Lord told him. "Better to remain home and chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa always. Instruct everyone to follow the orders of Kṛṣṇa as they are given in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. . . If you follow these instructions your materialistic life at home will not obstruct your spiritual advancement."

Lord Kṛṣṇa's message in the *Bhagavad-gītā* is thus applicable to all men. We should therefore consider that if even in the midst of war spiritual perfection is obtainable, then why can't perfection be achieved at home? ☐



Yadubarna dāsa

**HARE**  
**KṚṢṂA**  
**HARE**  
**KṚṢṂA**  
**KṚṢṂA**  
**KṚṢṂA**  
**HARE**  
**HARE**  
**HARE**  
**RĀMA**  
**HARE**  
**RĀMA**  
**RĀMA**  
**RĀMA**  
**HARE**  
**HARE**

**C**hanting is easy, and it works. In fact, it is the most effective means of God realization.

Here's why. God is unlimitedly powerful, and His name is Himself. When we chant God's names, God is totally present through the transcendental sound. So potent are God's names that the Vedic scriptures consider chanting the essential, universal religion of the age.

So why don't more people chant?

Maybe they're embarrassed. Or busy. Or doubtful. Or maybe they think chanting is a sectarian religious

practice—something only for the Hare Krishnas.

Yet what could be less sectarian than calling out to God? All the great scriptures of the world praise the holy names of God. God's names may vary from religion to religion or from culture to culture, but the person—the supreme father of all—is the same.

Don't be embarrassed. Chanting is for everyone. Don't feel you're too busy. Chanting is easy. And don't remain doubtful. Try chanting and see the results.

Chant. It's easy, effective, and universal.

# THE VEDIC

## Transcendental Commemorative

### IDEAL PLACE

by Kamrā-devī dāśī  
(Alachua, Florida)

I was sitting in my classroom in north Florida, reviewing the day's lesson plans before class. Bees were humming outside my window, and huge white cumulus clouds drifted in the blue sky over the level countryside.

I had moved from Philadelphia only a few months before. I needed the warmth and fresh air for my health, and my sons needed some room to let off their boyish energy.

"Ah, the ideal place," I was thinking. Suddenly I smelled something acrid. What was it? I tried to ignore it, but the smell persisted, and after a few minutes I was getting shaky and my mouth was dry. The print seemed to be lifting off the page of my lesson-plan book. My students arrived, and though I was disconcerted, I tried to leave my problems outside the classroom, as I had learned in teacher training. But something was wrong, and the beautiful scenery now appeared eerie and dismal. And as I tried to start class, I could see that the children were similarly affected.

"Go to the temple building—quick!" I told the children. "And close all the doors!" I went to the phone to dial 911.

Several weeks have now passed since that morning, when I had to deal with six emergency vehicles and eighteen or so medics and emergency volunteers. The problem had been caused by a pesticide that had drifted from a neighbor's farm during bean harvest and settled in a cloud over my classroom and home. I am since quite sobered about the seemingly perfect qualities of a beautiful countryside, and I get nervous any time there is a strange smell in the air.

After the pesticide incident, I took a few *hatha-yoga* lessons from a local instructor, still intent on improving my health. As we practiced in the morning sun, he scrutinized my awkward efforts and said strongly, "Breathe deeply; oxygen is free!"

I lost my concentration. Oxygen may be free now, I thought, but it wouldn't have

been had I needed to go to the hospital with a mask over my face that beautiful morning the pesticide drifted in. In fact, land used to be free and unspoiled, too. We don't see that now. And water isn't always free either. Like in Philadelphia. There are city water fees, and if you want some water you can drink, you have to buy it at the grocery store. So oxygen may be free for the most part, but that may not last long either. We may soon have to put it on our weekly shopping lists along with the tissues and flour and drinking water.

"What is free that will stay free?" I wondered. I couldn't think of anything except the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Because the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is not of this material realm, it can never be contaminated or used up. By chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and associating with Kṛṣṇa's devotees, we can rise above bodily designations and sufferings and know our real selves as the servants of the Lord. This is more valuable than any material commodity, and yet there is no charge for it.

The chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa is satisfying and cleansing to the individual soul. And it is so satisfying to Lord Kṛṣṇa that if enough of us do it, He will arrange that our material necessities, such as air and water, remain free and plentiful. Thus we can have peaceful lives for spiritual realization.

### NO TO CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: AN OPINION

by Mathureśa dāsa  
(Port Royal, Pennsylvania)

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa teaches that the body is a temporary, lifeless piece of flesh, an inanimate vehicle that appears to be alive and conscious only because of the presence of an eternal individual soul. When the soul leaves, the body loses its life and we pronounce it dead, although in fact the body never had life of its own at any point.



Drawings by Kṛṣṇadāna dāsa



# OBSERVER

ary on the Issues of the Day

On the basis of this fundamental teaching, Kṛṣṇa orders Arjuna, a soldier, general, and His intimate friend, to fight and kill. "Do not lament," Kṛṣṇa exhorts soft-hearted Arjuna, "for you will kill only the outer body, not the eternal person inside. Death is sure anyway, so why should you hesitate?"

Quite obviously, these are instructions that, if they fell into the hands of the wrong person, could produce horrible results. Arjuna, we have to remind ourselves, was a general, a military man poised on the brink of a battle that, as the *Mahābhārata* recounts in great detail, had been years in the making, and that both Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa had made every diplomatic effort to forestall. If General Eisenhower had, on D-Day morning, been riven with doubts about the morality and propriety of fighting and killing his dear Nazi brothers, he would have been in a position roughly analogous to Arjuna's. The *Gītā* does not sanction killing in ordinary circumstances.

On the contrary, the primary instruction we receive from Vedic sources is that one should never unnecessarily commit violence to any living thing. Only in self-defense or in defense of one's dependents may one kill. For a soldier like Arjuna, a man responsible for many dependents, or citizens, that might entail going to war and bloodying an entire battlefield. Most of the rest of us should pass our life, if possible, without harming a flea.

And not that every war is justified, either. By Vedic standards, neither the Nazis nor the allied forces were fully justified in the deaths they caused in World War II. In fact, the whole question of when and where killing is justified often appears quite delicate, even when scriptural injunctions, Vedic or otherwise, are unequivocal.

On the question of capital punishment, for example, the *Manu-saṁhitā* enjoins that a murderer be put to death, and that execution should not ultimately be considered an act of violence.

But aside from rigid adherence to scripture, we have to consider whether we can answer the objections raised by opponents of capital punishment: Isn't execu-

tion an act of cruelty equaling the murder it is designed to punish? Can we guarantee that the death penalty be administered fairly, without discrimination based on race, color, creed, or political affiliation? Does execution have any effect in deterring future murderers?

Deterrence seems to be one of the weakest objections. Obviously execution would prevent the murderer from killing again. And how could it not affect the behavior of potential criminals? American opponents of capital punishment point out that states that allow the death



penalty don't have consistently lower murder rates than states that do not. But the fact is that even states with the death penalty have never executed more than five percent of their convicted murderers. Everyone would agree that an execution rate of one in twenty has no deterrent value.

Even assuming, though, that a higher execution rate would deter potential killers, can the cruelty of execution be justified? Isn't a murderer someone like you and me who got a bad break?

On this question the Vedic texts shed some new light. According to Vedic authorities, a human being, unlike an animal, is responsible for his actions not only

under state laws but under the universal laws of *karma*, and the *Manu-saṁhitā* states that the karmic punishment a murderer receives in his next life is far worse, far more cruel if you will, than the guillotine, gas chamber, electric chair, or firing squad. The *Manu-saṁhitā* further asserts, however, that capital punishment by the state obviates karmic punishment in a future life. Thus the party who benefits most from an execution is not the society relieved of a criminal element, not the victim's family and friends pacified by the retribution, but the killers themselves, relieved as they are from all karmic reaction and free to start afresh in a new life.

But assuming that both karmic justice and the deterrent effect of the death penalty are facts, how can we assure ourselves that those with the power to use the death penalty would do so fairly? If we again refer to Vedic sources, we find that the leaders in Vedic history who held this power of life and death were *rājarsis*, or saintly kings, men who perfectly combined absolute monarchical power with wisdom and impartiality. One might contend that the saintly qualities of these kings are exaggerated, if not purely mythological. But sidestepping that debate for now, the more relevant point here is that the Vedic texts strongly associate an unwavering stand on capital punishment with its implementation by men of perfect character.

Although this counters the argument that the death penalty is itself a criminal, unsaintly act, we must face the fact that we don't have an overabundance of saintly characters in the ranks of our leaders (or any other ranks, for that matter) anywhere in the world. If the death penalty must go hand in hand with saintliness, where are those saintly hands?

We are therefore back to square one: any instruction, however valuable, can wreak havoc if misused. In the hands of a surgeon, a book on liver transplants may be an asset, but you can't let just anyone cut you open, no matter what they've read. The prescribed Vedic cure for the capital punishment controversy is available, but saintly leaders to administer the prescription aren't. ❏

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**Brasília, DF**—HIGS 706-Bloco C, Casa 29 / Tel. (061) 242-7579  
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**Campos, RJ**—Av. Bezamath, 35, Pq. Califórnia  
**Curtiba, PR**—Av. 7 de Setembro, 1594, Alto da Rua 15 / Tel. (041) 264-6634  
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## FARM COMMUNITIES

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**Pindamonhangaba, SP (New Gokula)**—Bairro Riberao Grande (mail: Caixa Postal 108, CEP 12.400) / Tel. (0122) 42-5002

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## OTHER COUNTRIES

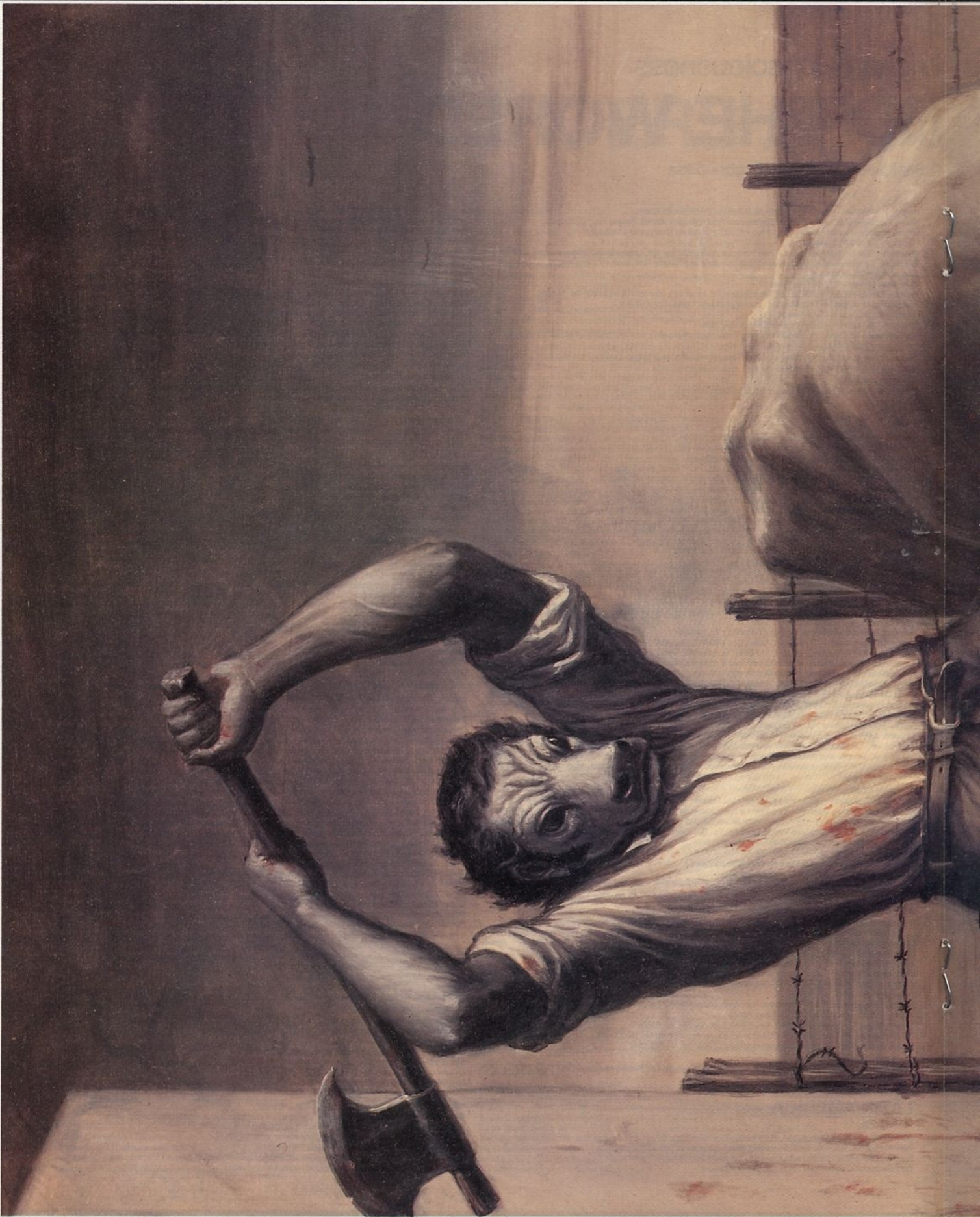
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**Caracas, Venezuela**—Prolongación Ave. Las Palmas, Calle Capriles, Quinta Pollita / Tel. 782-1939  
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**Essequibo Coast, Guyana**—New Navadvipa Dham, Mainstay, Essequibo Coast  
**Georgetown, Guyana**—24 Uruvugi Front, West Coast Demerara  
**Guatemala, Guatemala**—Apartado Postal 1534  
**Guayaquil, Ecuador**—Velez 1915 (between Carchi & Tulcan) / Tel. 36-16-47  
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**San Jose, Costa Rica**—Centro Cultural Govinda, 235 mtrs. norte del Banco Anglo, San Pedro (mail: Apdo. 166, 1002) / Tel. 34-1218  
**San Salvador, El Salvador**—Avenida Universitaria 1132, Media Cuadra al sur de la Embajada Americana, San Salvador (mail: P.O. Box 1506) / Tel. 25-96-17  
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## FARM COMMUNITIES

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**Guyana**—Seawell Village, Corentyne, East Berbice  
**San Jose, Costa Rica**—Granja Nueva Goloka Vrindavana, Carretera a Paraiso, de la entrada del Jardín Lancaster (por Calle Concaza), 200 metros as sur (mano derecha) Cartago (mail: Apdo. 166, 1002) / Tel. 51-6752  
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## RESTAURANTS

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



Painting By Paragjit dasa ©The Bhaktivadanta Book Trust



# KARMA



# A Timely Trip

by RĀDHĀ KRṢṂA SWAMI

In referring to the scientific understanding attained by the sages of ancient India, the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi once wrote, "The quality of ancient India that is most striking is the breadth of its vision, its capacity to feel at home in vast spaces, to think of great stretches of time and astronomical numbers, a capacity matched only by the mathematicians of our age."

Even thousands of years ago, India's scientific understanding of the universe was highly advanced. It was common knowledge that the world isn't flat but round, that our planet isn't the center of the universe but a mere speck within it, and that the earth wasn't suddenly created on May 23, 5478 B.C., but had existed for billions of years. This is remarkable when we consider that in the West, these facts have been accepted for only the last few hundred years.

Fortunately, modern science has been catching up and continues to make further progress every day. One of the greatest achievements of this century is Albert Einstein's general theory of relativity, which, among its postulates, describes the behavior and measurement of time under factors such as gravity and velocity. Surprisingly, even such advanced concepts of physics are also found in the Vedic litera-

ture, India's ancient books of wisdom.

In the Ninth Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* there is a revealing story on the workings of the theory of relativity. It is about a king named Kakudmī and his daughter Revatī. When the king was planning for his daughter's marriage, he decided to go see Lord Brahmā, by whose influence, he was sure, an ideal husband could be found. Lord Brahmā is the chief demigod and occupies the post of the engineer-creator of this universe. His life span encompasses the duration of the entire universe. His abode, the planet Brahmāloka, is the highest in the universe. The inhabitants there are endowed with mystic powers; evil, pain, and anxiety are practically unknown; the potential for enjoyment is thousands of times greater than on earth; and spiritual advancement is easily attainable.

King Kakudmī took Revatī with him and traveled to Brahmāloka, where he found that Lord Brahmā was hearing a musical performance and for the moment could not talk to him. Therefore Kakudmī waited, and at the end of the show he approached Brahmā, offered obeisances, and presented his request. After listening to Kakudmī, Brahmā laughed loudly and said, "O king, all those whom you might have thought of as candidates for your

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***Some of the implications of the theory of general relativity, Einstein's great modern discovery, were understood by Vedic sages long, long ago.***

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daughter's hand died already a long time ago. Millions of years have passed since you left your kingdom. They are all dead and forgotten, and so are their sons, grandsons, and other descendants."

When the king heard this, he returned to what had been his domain and found it vacant. Just as modern archeologists discover the sites of ancient civilizations and determine the cause of their demise, such as famines, invasions, and natural disasters, Kakudmī returned to find that his descendants had long ago abandoned the kingdom because of the threat posed by their enemies.

While King Kakudmī was still in Brahmāloka, Lord Brahmā advised him to offer his daughter in marriage to Lord Balarāma. According to Vedic theology, Lord Balarāma is an expansion of the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, and assists Him in His mission to purify the entire world. After returning to his former kingdom, Kakudmī gave his beautiful daughter in marriage to Lord Balarāma. Then he renounced worldly life and retired to Badarikāśrama in the Himalayas, where many ascetics go to achieve spiritual perfection.

King Kakudmī experienced the influence of time in a way that agrees with Einstein's general theory of relativity. Normally we tend to regard time as absolute and constant throughout the universe. But the theory of relativity states that there is no absolute time; rather, each one of us is influenced uniquely, depending on our location and the speed with which we are moving in the universe.

To illustrate this point, there is the clas-

sic example of the twins. One twin goes off in a rocket to the nearest star outside our planetary system. Traveling at speeds near that of light (186,000 miles per second), the traveler will make the round trip in twenty-two earth years, but because of his high speed, time will affect him only partially, and upon his return he will find himself twelve and a half years younger than his brother!

Even on earth the same principle applies. A twin living at sea level will be, after sixty years, six seconds younger than his brother living high in the mountains, because of the way the earth's gravity affects his own measure of time. But this variation is so negligible that it goes unnoticed.

King Kakudmī experienced the principles stated in the theory of relativity. On his journey to Brahmāloka, time influenced the king in a different way than it did his subjects and acquaintances back on earth, to the extent that he outlived generations of his descendants.

Histories like this, as found in works like the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, aren't simply for supplying us with facts for a trivia game, nor are they armchair scientific statements. The overall purpose of these scriptures is to promote an existential understanding of life and to teach one how to act accordingly.

If we could make a trip in time similar to King Kakudmī's, disappearing from home and suddenly reappearing in the same place a few thousand years later, we would see everything so changed that we would be forced to see our lives in a completely different light. During such a journey,

many nations would have been created and destroyed; whole dynasties and clans would have lived and died; life styles and popular notions would have come and gone; geological and ecological upheavals would have taken place repeatedly. Witnessing these changes, we would naturally ask, "What is there in life that is worth pursuing because it doesn't fade away with time?"

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.16), Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, "Those who are seers of the truth have concluded that of the nonexistent there is no endurance, and of the existent there is no cessation. This they have concluded by studying the nature of both." We usually place too much value on the particular situation around us—on our family, community, life style, skills—and take our background and place in time in absolute terms. But Lord Kṛṣṇa teaches us that these are all temporary and unimportant, and thus He describes them as "nonexistent."

Our trip in time would confirm the conclusions of learned sages, including King Kakudmī. By placing too much emphasis on our material life, we lose sight of our real self, the soul, which represents our real, eternal existence. By cultivating spiritual knowledge, we can awaken that real self, understand our nature beyond the "relativity" of this temporal world, and enter the realm of eternal spiritual existence. Attaining this is the purpose of life. And this is what the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, beginning with the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, is meant to help us achieve. ❏

## FORCE OF LIFE

(continued from page 5)

Him killing Kāmsa and other demons. These pastimes they do not like. This attitude is called *sahajiyā*. The business of the *sahajiyās* is debauchery, which they try to justify by citing Kṛṣṇa's pastimes: "Kṛṣṇa danced with the *gopīs*. Kṛṣṇa was immoral, so we can also be immoral. We are great devotees of Kṛṣṇa because we are immoral." This is going on.

Therefore, to understand Kṛṣṇa one requires a little better intelligence. Kṛṣṇa says [*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.19],

*bahūnām janmanām ante  
jñānavān mām prapadyate  
vāsudevaḥ sarvaṁ iti  
sa mahātmā su-durlabhaḥ*

"After many births one may become *jñānavān*." *Jñānavān* means "one who possesses first-class intelligence." Then? *Mām prapadyate*: "He surrenders unto Me." Why? *Vāsudevaḥ sarvaṁ iti*: "He understands that Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa, is every-

thing." And, *sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ*: "Such an intelligent *mahātmā* is very rare."

There are so many rascal "*mahātmās*" who simply change their dress and declare themselves to be God, or Kṛṣṇa. Kick on their faces. A real *mahātmā* is different from all these rascals because he knows Kṛṣṇa. If you understand Kṛṣṇa, you are so fortunate: *brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva/ guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bija*. There are many, many millions and trillions of living entities within this universe, and they are rotating in 8,400,000 different species of life. They are all unfortunate, simply repeating birth and death, birth and death, in different species. Out of all of them, the most fortunate get the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master and are given a chance to know Kṛṣṇa.

By the mercy of the *guru* and Kṛṣṇa, one gets the seed of devotional service, which is planted at the time of initiation. And then one must water the seed. Suppose you get a nice seed of a tree. You have to sow it and pour a little water on it. Then it

will grow. Similarly, anyone who by great fortune has come into contact with Kṛṣṇa consciousness, who has received the seed of devotional service, should water it. What is that water? *Śravaṇa-kīrtana*: hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa. So, don't be absent from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class. This hearing and chanting of topics about Kṛṣṇa is watering the seed of devotional service. This is the most important thing—hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa.

*Śravaṇa-kīrtana* does not mean hearing and chanting about just anything. No. One must hear and chant about Kṛṣṇa. The rascals have manufactured "Kālī-kīrtana." Where in the scripture is there a mention of Kālī-kīrtana or Śiva-kīrtana? No. *Kīrtana* means glorifying the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa. That is *kīrtana*. Other so-called *kīrtanas* are all nonsense. Simply hear and chant about Kṛṣṇa.

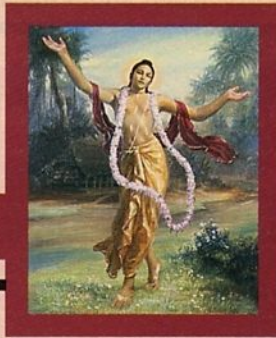
Kṛṣṇa should be worshiped, Kṛṣṇa should be heard, Kṛṣṇa should be chanted, Kṛṣṇa should be remembered. In this way, you'll advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Thank you very much. Hare Kṛṣṇa. ❏



# Every Town

The worldwide activities of the International



# And Village

Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)

## Devotees Welcome Peace Cruise

**Natchez, Mississippi**—For the past twenty-five years, fifty Americans have been traveling to the Soviet Union each summer to join one hundred Russians in a peace cruise down the Volga River. This year fifty Russians joined one hundred Americans on a cruise down the Mississippi River. When the famous paddlewheeler *Delta Queen* docked here on its way from St. Louis to New Orleans, ISKCON devotees took part in the welcoming ceremonies, presenting the Russian visitors with Russian *Kṛṣṇa* books and *Bhagavad-gītās*.

Rūpa Vilāsa dāsa, former headmaster of the ISKCON's *gurukula* (school) in Vṛndāvana, spoke first in a series of "Prayers for Peace" presented by the different religions of the Natchez area and by Russian Orthodox Archbishop Agafangar, a cruise member. Rūpa Vilāsa read Śrīla Prabhupāda's essay *The Peace*

*Formula*, which explains how to achieve lasting peace through Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

During the press conference that followed, Jñānagamyā dāsa asked reporters from the U.S.S.R., "Why are devotees of Kṛṣṇa still being held in labor camps and prisons in the Soviet Union?" A reporter from *Izvestia*, the second largest paper in



the Soviet Union, answered, "The policies of *glasnost* are the reversal of such previous policies. I hope the devotees will be freed very soon, even while the Peace Cruise is going on. They should not be held, for they have done nothing wrong."

The devotees spoke with several persons from the Soviet Union who expressed concern for the incarcerated devotees. Russian cosmonaut Gorgy Grechko promised to help, but he needed the names of the imprisoned devotees. Jñānagamyā dāsa phoned Raṅganātha dāsa, president of ISKCON New Orleans, who went down to meet the cruise when it docked in New Orleans. He delivered a list of the imprisoned devotees' names and locations to a Russian reporter, who promised to give it to the cosmonaut.

## Temple Donated to ISKCON in Gujarat

**Vallabha Vidyanagar, Gujarat**—On Janmāṣṭamī, the anniversary of Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance, devotees installed the Deities of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gīrdhārī here in the former home of Sri Fulabhai Girdharbhai Patel. A couple of years ago, the 85-year-old Mr. Patel had a dream in which he heard devotees chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa in his home. A voice told him to donate his house to the Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees for a temple of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. At that time Mr. Patel had never heard of ISKCON. Two days later ISKCON devotee Rājasūya dāsa came to see Mr. Patel to ask about renting part of his house. Mr. Patel told him enthusiastically, "I don't want to rent you part of the house—I want to give you the whole house!"

Before he passed away, Mr. Patel saw the plans for the temple room that would be built in his former house, which has twenty rooms and was at one time used as a hostel.

Vidyanagar is a college town



At the Peace Cruise reception in Natchez, Russian cosmonaut Gorgy Grechko (above, center) holds a Russian *Bhagavad-gītā* As It Is while speaking with Rūpa Vilāsa dāsa through an interpreter. Russian Orthodox Archbishop Agafangar (top) holds Jñānagamyā dāsa's son, Rasācārya.

with twenty-five thousand students. Every day about a hundred students visit the temple, which is run by Bhakti Rāghava Swami, founder of the Bhaktivedanta Youth Services in Calcutta.

## NEWS BRIEFS

Industrialist Sri K. K. Patel, of the Nirma washing powder group, laid the cornerstone for ISKCON's new project in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, which will include a temple, a guesthouse, a community hall, and vegetarian restaurants. Sri R. K. Trivedi, the governor of Gujarat, presided over the function, which was attended by five thousand persons. Fifty thousand attended the Janmāṣṭamī celebrations at ISKCON's present temple in Ahmedabad.

Despite a strike of all rail and road transportation in Madhya Pradesh, India, on Janmāṣṭamī day eighty thousand persons attended the festivities at ISKCON's Hyderabad temple. Among the special guests were the governor of Madhya Pradesh, Kumudben M. Joshi, and the international head of the Ramakrishna Mission, Swami Ranganathananda.

The world-famous singer Anup Jalota inaugurated the three-day Janmāṣṭamī festival at ISKCON's temple in the Punjabi Bagh section of New Delhi. The festival was televised for one hour on a national network program.

## RESOURCES

**Tired of media stereotypes** of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement? Want to understand who the Hare Kṛṣṇa people really are and what they're about? Then read *Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna: Five Distinguished Scholars on the Krishna Movement in the West*, a collection of interviews with Harvey Cox, Larry Shinn, Thomas Hopkins, A. L. Basham, and Srivatsa Goswami conducted by the book's editor, Steven J. Gelberg, the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement's director for interreligious affairs. Together,

## 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 Mādhava (January 22–February 20)

**February 10**—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, a Vaiṣṇava ācārya and author who appeared in the seventeenth century. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Viṣṇupriyā-devī, consort of Lord Caitanya.

**February 12**—Appearance anniversary of Śrī Advaita Ācārya, an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa's expansion Mahā-Viṣṇu and a close associate of Lord Caitanya. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

**February 14**—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīpāda Madhvācārya, a famous Vaiṣṇava philosopher and spiritual master who appeared in the thirteenth century.

**February 15**—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Rāmānujācārya, a famous eleventh-century philosopher and spiritual master.

**February 16**—Bhaimī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. (Fasting for the appearance of Lord Varāha.)

**February 17**—Appearance anniversary of Lord Varāha, Lord Kṛṣṇa's boar incarnation. Feast at noon.

**February 18**—Appearance anniversary of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu, a close associate of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and an incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa's elder brother, Lord Balarāma. Fasting till noon, then feasting.

**February 20**—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, a famous spiritual master in the disciplic line from Lord Caitanya who composed many devotional songs in Bengali.

### Month of Govinda (February 21–March 22)

**February 25**—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the spiritual master of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Fasting till noon, then feasting.

these dialogues shed much light on relevant historical sociological, psychological, and theological issues surrounding the movement. This book will help you understand the logic and appeal of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

276 pages, softbound.

Order from a bookstore or check the gift shop at the Hare Kṛṣṇa center nearest you.

**Become trained in brahminical knowledge, qualities, and skills.** The Vṛndāvana Institute for Higher Education is offering courses in studying Śrīla Prabhupāda's books; clear thinking, speaking, and writing; Vaiṣṇava etiquette; Sanskrit for preachers; and more. For information write The Vṛndāvana Institute for Higher Education, c/o ISKCON Ministry of Education, P.O. Box 400767, Brooklyn, NY 11240.

**Plain living, high thinking.** Get out of the city—away from the noise, pollution, and the 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 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.

### Going to Bombay?

Visit the ISKCON cultural center—Hare Krishna Land, in beautiful Juhu Beach. A short ride from the Bombay airports, Hare Krishna Land features a gorgeous traditional Kṛṣṇa temple, together with a multistory modern guesthouse, Govinda's pure vegetarian *prasādam* restaurant, musical and theatrical performances in the 425-seat auditorium, and a sublime atmosphere of spiritual realization in the association of Kṛṣṇa's devotees.

For more information, inquire at your local ISKCON center or get directly in touch with ISKCON Bombay.

# 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, how Lord Brahmā completed his work of creating the material world.

#### TEXT 46

ते तु तज्जगृह रूपं त्यक्तं यत्परमेष्ठिना ।  
मिथुनीभूय गायन्तस्तमेवोषसि कर्मभिः ॥४६॥

te tu taj jagrūh rūpaṁ  
tyaktaṁ yat parameṣṭhinā  
mithuni-bhūya gāyantas  
tam evosaṁ karmabhiḥ

te—they (the Kinnaras and Kimpuruṣas); tu—but; tat—that; jagrūh—took possession of; rūpaṁ—that shadowy form; tyaktaṁ—given up; yat—which; parameṣṭhinā—by Brahmā; mithuni-bhūya—coming together with their spouses; gāyantaḥ—praise in song; tam—him; eva—only; uṣasi—at daybreak; karmabhiḥ—with his exploits.

#### TRANSLATION

The Kimpuruṣas and Kinnaras took possession of that shadowy form left by Brahmā. That is why they and their spouses sing his praises by recounting his exploits at every daybreak.

#### PURPORT

The time early in the morning, one and a half hours before sunrise, is called *brāhma-muhūrta*. During this *brāhma-muhūrta*, spiritual activities are recommended. Spiritual activities performed early in the morning have a greater effect than in any other part of the day.

#### TEXT 47

देहेन वै भोगवता शयानो बहुचिन्तया ।  
सर्गेऽनुपचिते क्रोधादुत्सर्जे ह तद्रूपः ॥४७॥

dehena vai bhogavatā  
śayāno bahu-cintayā  
sarge 'nupacite krodhād  
utsasarja ha tad vapuḥ

dehena—with his body; vai—indeed; bhogavatā—stretching out full length; śayānaḥ—lying fully stretched; bahu—great; cintayā—with concern; sarge—the creation; anupacite—not proceeded; krodhāt—out of anger; utsasarja—gave up; ha—in fact; tat—that; vapuḥ—body.

#### TRANSLATION

Once Brahmā lay down with his body stretched at full length. He was very concerned that the work of creation had not proceeded apace, and in a sullen mood he gave up that body too.

#### TEXT 48

येऽहीयन्तामुतः केशा अह्यस्तेऽङ्ग जज्ञिरे ।  
सर्पाः प्रसर्पतः क्रूरा नागा भोगोरुकन्धराः ॥४८॥

ye 'hiyantāmutaḥ keśā  
ahayas te 'nga jajñire  
sarpāḥ prasarpataḥ krūrā  
nāgā bhogoru-kandharāḥ

ye—which; ahiyanta—dropped out; amutaḥ—from that; keśāḥ—hairs; ahayaḥ—snakes; te—they; aṅga—O dear Vidura; jajñire—took birth as; sarpāḥ—snakes; prasarpataḥ—from the crawling body; krūrāḥ—envious; nāgāḥ—cobras; bhoga—with hoods; uru—big; kandharāḥ—whose necks.

#### TRANSLATION

O dear Vidura, the hair that dropped from that body transformed into snakes, and even while the body crawled along with its hands and feet contracted, there sprang from it ferocious serpents and Nāgas with their hoods expanded.

#### TEXT 49

स आत्मानं मन्यमानः कृतकृत्यमिवात्मभूः ।  
तदा मनून् ससर्जान्ते मनसा लोकभावनात् ॥४९॥

sa ātmānaṁ manyamānaḥ  
kṛta-kṛtyam ivātmabhūḥ  
tadā manūn sasarjānte  
manasā loka-bhāvanāt

saḥ—Lord Brahmā; ātmānaṁ—himself; manyamānaḥ—considering; kṛta-kṛtyam—had accomplished the object of life; iva—as if; ātmabhūḥ—born from the Supreme; tadā—then; manūn—the Manus; sasarja—created; ante—at the end; manasā—from his mind; loka—of the world; bhāvanāt—promoting the welfare.

#### TRANSLATION

One day Brahmā, the self-born, the first living creature, felt as if the object of his life had been accomplished. At that time he evolved from his mind the Manus, who promote the welfare activities of the universe.

#### TEXT 50

तेभ्यः सोऽसृजत्स्वीयं पुरं पुरुषमात्मवान् ।  
तान् दृष्ट्वा ये पुरा सृष्टाः प्रशंसुः प्रजापतिम् ॥५०॥

tebhyaḥ so 'srjat svīyaṁ  
puraṁ puruṣam ātmavān  
tān dṛṣṭvā ye purā sṛṣṭāḥ  
praśaṁsuḥ prajāpatim

tebhyaḥ—to them; saḥ—Lord Brahmā; asrjat—gave; svīyam—his own; puram—body; puruṣam—human; ātmavān—self-possessed;

*tān*—them; *dṛṣṭvā*—on seeing; *ye*—those who; *purā*—earlier; *sṛṣṭāḥ*—were created (the demigods, Gandharvas, etc., who were created earlier); *praśaṅsuḥ*—applauded; *prajāpatim*—Brahmā (the lord of created beings).

#### TRANSLATION

The self-possessed creator gave them his own human form. On seeing the Manus, those who had been created earlier—the demigods, the Gandharvas and so on—applauded Brahmā, the lord of the universe.

#### TEXT 51

अहो एतज्जगत्स्रष्टः सुकृतं बत ते कृतम् ।  
प्रतिष्ठिताः क्रिया यस्मिन् साकमन्नमदामहे ॥५१॥

*aho etaj jagat-sraṣṭaḥ*  
*sukṛtaṁ bata te kṛtam*  
*pratiṣṭhitāḥ kriyā yasmin*  
*sākam annam adāma he*

*aho*—oh; *etat*—this; *jagat-sraṣṭaḥ*—O creator of the universe; *sukṛtam*—well done; *bata*—indeed; *te*—by you; *kṛtam*—produced; *pratiṣṭhitāḥ*—established soundly; *kriyāḥ*—all ritualistic performances; *yasmin*—in which; *sākam*—along with this; *annam*—the sacrificial oblations; *adāma*—we shall share; *he*—O.

#### TRANSLATION

They prayed: O creator of the universe, we are glad; what you have produced is well done. Since ritualistic acts have now been established soundly in this human form, we shall all share the sacrificial oblations.

#### PURPORT

The importance of sacrifice is also mentioned in *Bhagavad-gītā*, Third Chapter, verse 10. The Lord confirms there that in the beginning of creation Brahmā created the Manus, along with the ritualistic sacrificial method, and blessed them: "Continue these sacrificial rites, and you will be gradually elevated to your proper position of self-realization and will also enjoy material happiness." All the living entities created by Brahmā are conditioned souls and are inclined to lord it over material nature. The purpose of sacrificial rituals is to revive, gradually, the spiritual realization of the living entities. That is the beginning of life within this universe. These sacrificial rituals, however, are intended to please the Supreme Lord. Unless one pleases the Supreme Lord, or unless one is Kṛṣṇa conscious, one cannot be happy either in material enjoyment or in spiritual realization.

#### TEXT 52

तपसा विद्यया युक्तो योगेन सुसमाधिना ।  
ऋषीन्विद्दृषीकेशः ससर्जाभिमताः प्रजाः ॥५२॥

*tapasā vidyayā yukto*  
*yogena susamādhinā*  
*ṛṣīn ṛṣir hr̥ṣīkeśaḥ*  
*sasarjābhimatāḥ prajāḥ*

*tapasā*—by penance; *vidyayā*—by worship; *yuktaḥ*—being engaged; *yogena*—by concentration of the mind in devotion; *su-samādhinā*—by nice meditation; *ṛṣīn*—the sages; *ṛṣiḥ*—the first seer (Brahmā); *hr̥ṣīkeśaḥ*—the controller of his senses; *sasarja*—created; *abhimatāḥ*—beloved; *prajāḥ*—sons.

#### TRANSLATION

Having equipped himself with austere penance, adoration, mental concentration and absorption in devotion, accompanied by dispassion, and having controlled his senses, Brahmā, the self-born living creature, evolved great sages as his beloved sons.

#### PURPORT

The ritualistic performances of sacrifice are meant for material economic development; in other words, they are meant to keep the body

in good condition for cultivation of spiritual knowledge. But for actual attainment of spiritual knowledge, other qualifications are needed. What is essential is *vidyā*, or worship of the Supreme Lord. Sometimes the word *yoga* is used to refer to the gymnastic performances of different bodily postures which help mental concentration. Generally, the different bodily postures in the *yoga* system are accepted by less intelligent men to be the end of *yoga*, but actually they are meant to concentrate the mind upon the Supersoul. After creating persons for economic development, Brahmā created sages who would set the example for spiritual realization.

#### TEXT 53

तेभ्यश्चैकैकशः स्वस्य देहस्यांशमदादजः ।  
यत्तत्समाधियोगद्विंशोपविद्याविरक्तिमत् ॥५३॥

*tebhyaś caikaikaśaḥ svasya*  
*dehasyāṁśam adād ajaḥ*  
*yat tat samādhi-yogarddhi-*  
*tapo-vidyā-viraktimat*

*tebhyaḥ*—to them; *ca*—and; *ekaikaśaḥ*—each one; *svasya*—of his own; *dehasya*—body; *āṁśam*—part; *adāt*—gave; *ajaḥ*—the unborn Brahmā; *yat*—which; *tat*—that; *samādhi*—deep meditation; *yoga*—concentration of the mind; *ṛddhi*—supernatural power; *tapāḥ*—austerity; *vidyā*—knowledge; *virakti*—renunciation; *mat*—possessing.

#### TRANSLATION

To each one of these sons the unborn creator of the universe gave a part of his own body, which was characterized by deep meditation, mental concentration, supernatural power, austerity, adoration and renunciation.

#### PURPORT

The word *viraktimat* in this verse means "possessed of the qualification of renunciation." Spiritual realization cannot be attained by materialistic persons. For those who are addicted to sense enjoyment, spiritual realization is not possible. In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is stated that those who are too attached to seeking material possessions and material enjoyment cannot reach *yoga-samādhi*, absorption in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Propaganda that one can enjoy this life materially and at the same time spiritually advance is simply bogus. The principles of renunciation are four: (1) to avoid illicit sex life, (2) to avoid meat-eating, (3) to avoid intoxication and (4) to avoid gambling. These four principles are called *tapasya*, or austerity. To absorb the mind in the Supreme in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the process of spiritual realization.

*Thus end the Bhaktivedanta purports of the Third Canto, Twentieth Chapter, of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, entitled "Conversation Between Maitreya and Vidura."*

### CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

### Conversation Between Manu and Kardama

#### TEXT 1

विदुर उवाच

स्वयम्भुवस्य च मनोर्वंशः परमसम्मतः ।  
कथ्यतां भगवन् यत्र मैथुनेनैधिरे प्रजाः ॥ १ ॥

*vidura uvāca*  
*svāyambhuvasya ca manor*  
*vaṁśaḥ parama-sammataḥ*  
*kathyatām bhagavan yatra*  
*maithunenaidhire prajāḥ*

*viduraḥ uvāca*—Vidura said; *svāyambhuvasya*—of Svāyambhuva; *ca*—and; *manor*—of Manu; *vaṁśaḥ*—the dynasty; *parama*—most; *sammataḥ*—esteemed; *kathyatām*—kindly describe; *bhagavan*—O

worshipful sage; *yatra*—in which; *maithunena*—through sexual intercourse; *edhire*—multiplied; *prajāh*—the progeny.

#### TRANSLATION

**Vidura said: The line of Svāyambhuva Manu was most esteemed. O worshipful sage, I beg you—give me an account of this race, whose progeny multiplied through sexual intercourse.**

#### PURPORT

Regulated sex life to generate good population is worth accepting. Actually, Vidura was not interested in hearing the history of persons who merely engaged in sex life, but he was interested in the progeny of Svāyambhuva Manu because in that dynasty, good devotee kings appeared who protected their subjects very carefully with spiritual knowledge. By hearing the history of their activities, therefore, one becomes more enlightened. An important word used in this connection is *paramasammatah*, which indicates that the progeny created by Svāyambhuva Manu and his sons was approved of by great authorities. In other words, sex life for creating exemplary population is acceptable to all sages and authorities of Vedic scripture.

#### TEXT 2

प्रियव्रतोत्तानपादौ सुतो स्वायम्भुवस्य वै ।  
यथाधर्मं जुगुपतुः सप्तद्वीपवर्ती महीम् ॥ २ ॥

*priyavratottānapādau*  
*sutau svāyambhuvasya vai*  
*yathā-dharmam jugupatuḥ*  
*sapta-dvīpavatīm mahīm*

*priyavrata*—Mahārāja Priyavrata; *uttānapādau*—and Mahārāja Uttānapāda; *sutau*—the two sons; *svāyambhuvasya*—of Svāyambhuva Manu; *vai*—indeed; *yathā*—according to; *dharmam*—religious principles; *jugupatuḥ*—ruled; *sapta-dvīpa-vatīm*—consisting of seven islands; *mahīm*—the world.

#### TRANSLATION

The two great sons of Svāyambhuva Manu—Priyavrata and Uttānapāda—ruled the world, consisting of seven islands, just according to religious principles.

#### PURPORT

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is also a history of the great rulers of different parts of the universe. In this verse the names of Priyavrata and Uttānapāda, sons of Svāyambhuva, are mentioned. They ruled this earth, which is divided into seven islands. These seven islands are still current, as Asia, Europe, Africa, America, Australia and the North and South Poles. There is no chronological history of all the Indian kings in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, but the deeds of the most important kings, such as Priyavrata and Uttānapāda, and many others, like Lord Rāmacandra and Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, are recorded because the activities of such pious kings are worth hearing; people may benefit by studying their histories.

#### TEXT 3

तस्य वै दुहिता ब्रह्मन्देवहृतीति विश्रुता ।  
पत्नी प्रजापतेरुक्ता कर्दमस्य त्वयानघ ॥ ३ ॥

*tasya vai duhitā brahman*  
*devahūṭīti viśrutā*  
*patnī prajāpater uktā*  
*kardamasya tvayānagha*

*tasya*—of that Manu; *vai*—indeed; *duhitā*—the daughter; *brahman*—O holy *brāhmaṇa*; *devahūṭī*—named Devahūṭī; *itī*—thus; *viśrutā*—was known; *patnī*—wife; *prajāpateḥ*—of the lord of created beings; *uktā*—has been spoken of; *kardamasya*—of Kardama Muni; *tvayā*—by you; *anagha*—O sinless one.

#### TRANSLATION

O holy *brāhmaṇa*, O sinless one, you have spoken of his daughter, known by the name Devahūṭī, as the wife of the sage Kardama, the lord of created beings.

#### PURPORT

Here we are speaking of Svāyambhuva Manu, but in *Bhagavad-gītā* we hear about Vaivasvata Manu. The present age belongs to the Vaivasvata Manu. Svāyambhuva Manu was previously ruling, and his history begins from the Varāha age, or the millennium when the Lord appeared as the boar. There are fourteen Manus in one day of the life of Brahmā, and in the life of each Manu there are particular incidents. The Vaivasvata Manu of *Bhagavad-gītā* is different from Svāyambhuva Manu.

#### TEXT 4

तस्यां स वै महायोगी युक्तायां योगलक्षणैः ।  
ससर्ज कतिधा वीर्यं तन्मे शुश्रूषवे वद ॥ ४ ॥

*tasyām sa vai mahā-yogī*  
*yuktāyām yoga-lakṣaṇaiḥ*  
*sasarja katidhā vīryam*  
*tan me śuśrūṣave vada*

*tasyām*—in her; *saḥ*—Kardama Muni; *vai*—in fact; *mahā-yogī*—great mystic *yogī*; *yuktāyām*—endowed; *yoga-lakṣaṇaiḥ*—with the eightfold symptoms of yogic perfection; *sasarja*—propagated; *katidhā*—how many times; *vīryam*—offspring; *ta*—that narration; *me*—to me; *śuśrūṣave*—who am eager to hear; *vada*—tell.

#### TRANSLATION

How many offspring did that great *yogī* beget through the princess, who was endowed with eightfold perfection in the yoga principles? Oh, pray tell me this, for I am eager to hear it.

#### PURPORT

Here Vidura inquired about Kardama Muni and his wife, Devahūṭī, and about their children. It is described here that Devahūṭī was very much advanced in the performance of eightfold *yoga*. The eight divisions of *yoga* performance are described as (1) control of the senses, (2) strict following of the rules and regulations, (3) practice of the different sitting postures, (4) control of the breath, (5) withdrawing the senses from sense objects, (6) concentration of the mind, (7) meditation and (8) self-realization. After self-realization there are eight further perfectional stages, which are called *yoga-siddhis*. The husband and wife, Kardama and Devahūṭī, were advanced in *yoga* practice; the husband was a *mahā-yogī*, great mystic, and the wife was a *yoga-lakṣaṇa*, or one advanced in *yoga*. They united and produced children. Formerly, after making their lives perfect, great sages and saintly persons used to beget children, otherwise they strictly observed the rules and regulations of celibacy. *Brahmacarya* (following the rules and regulations of celibacy) is required for perfection of self-realization and mystic power. There is no recommendation in the Vedic scriptures that one can go on enjoying material sense gratification at one's whims, as one likes, and at the same time become a great meditator by paying a rascal some money.

#### TEXT 5

रुचिर्यो भगवान् ब्रह्मन्दक्षो वा ब्रह्मणः सुतः ।  
यथा ससर्ज भूतानि लब्ध्वा भार्यां च मानवीम् ॥ ५ ॥

*rucir yo bhagavān brahman*  
*dakṣo vā brahmaṇaḥ sutah*  
*yathā sasarja bhūtāni*  
*labdhvā bhāryām ca mānavīm*

*rucir*—Ruci; *yaḥ*—who; *bhagavān*—worshipful; *brahman*—O holy sage; *dakṣaḥ*—Dakṣa; *vā*—and; *brahmaṇaḥ*—of Lord Brahmā; *sutah*—the son; *yathā*—in what way; *sasarja*—generated; *bhūtāni*—offspring; *labdhvā*—after securing; *bhāryām*—as their wives; *ca*—and; *mānavīm*—the daughters of Svāyambhuva Manu.

#### TRANSLATION

O holy sage, tell me how the worshipful Ruci and Dakṣa, the son of Brahmā, generated children after securing as their wives the other two daughters of Svāyambhuva Manu.

(continued in next issue)

# FIRST AMONG KINGS

From the Vedic literature: the history of King Pṛthu, the incarnation of the ruling potency of the Supreme Lord.

by DRUTAKARMĀ DĀSA

*Long ago, the normally peaceful wise men of a Vedic kingdom forcibly deposed an intolerably corrupt ruler. But instead of replacing him with another unprincipled politician (as has so often happened in the history of the world), they selected a perfect chief executive to command the state. The story of this ancient coup d'état holds many lessons for the people of nations victimized by unworthy leaders.*

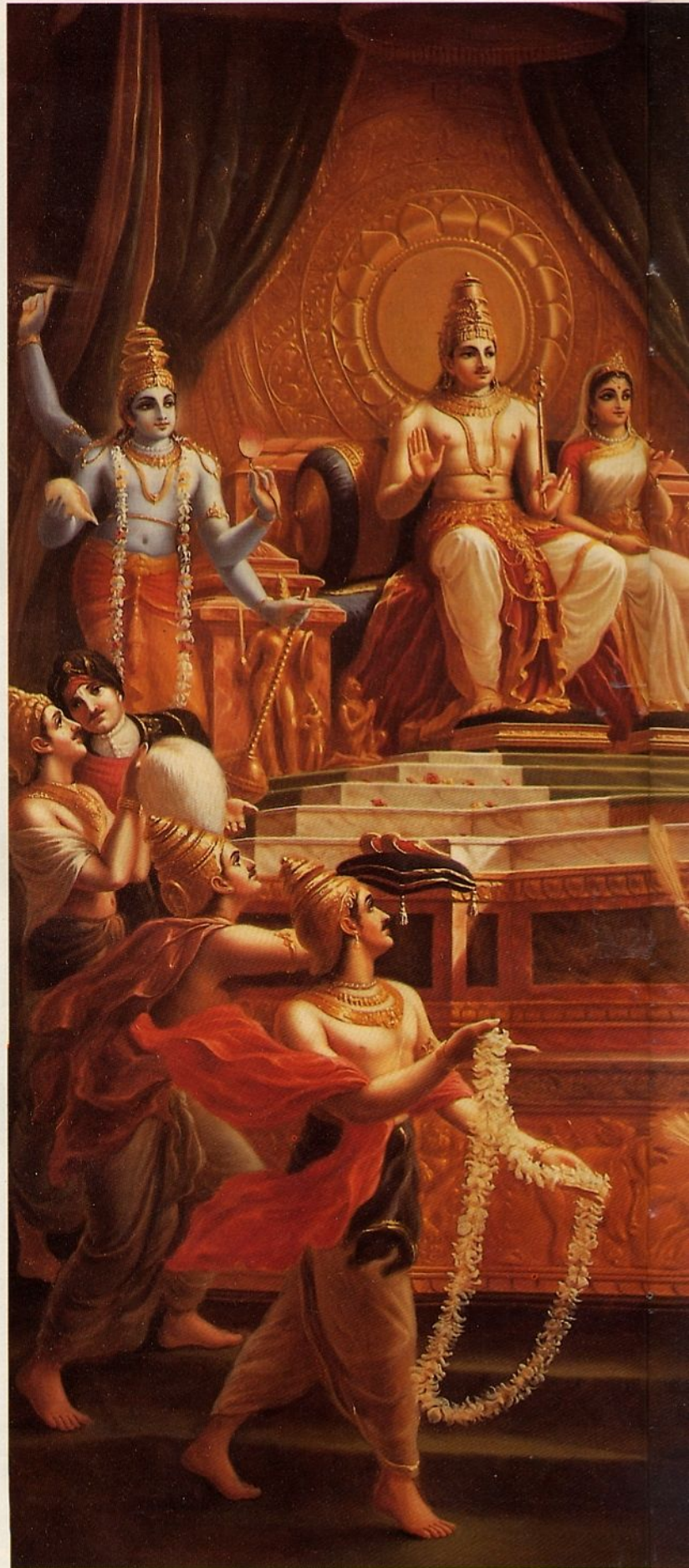
Once, King Aṅga, unsuccessful in his attempt to perform a great religious sacrifice, addressed the *brāhmaṇa* priests, "Kindly tell me what offense I have committed. The demigods are neither taking part in the sacrifice nor accepting their shares." In those days demigods, such as Indra, the god of heaven, would descend from higher planets to take part in rituals performed by saintly monarchs.

The head priests said, "O king, in this life we do not find any sinful activity, but we can see that in your previous life you performed sins due to which you have no son." They then advised King Aṅga to pray to the Supreme Lord, who is superior to the demigods. They said that when Lord Viṣṇu would come to fulfill the king's desire for a son, the demigods would accompany Him.

King Aṅga accepted this proposal; so the priests offered oblations to Lord Viṣṇu, who is seated in the hearts of all living entities as the Supersoul. Lord Viṣṇu is a direct expansion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa.

While King Aṅga was offering oblations into the sacred fire, a person wearing white robes and a golden garland appeared suddenly from the flames. He was carrying a golden pot filled with rice boiled in milk. Taking permission from the priests, King Aṅga offered a portion of the rice preparation to his wife, Sunthā.

The queen, who was the daughter of death personified, soon became pregnant by her husband and gave birth to a son. From the Vedic literature we learn that generally a daughter inherits the qualities of her father, and a son inherits those of his mother. Accordingly, the son born to the good king Aṅga acquired the undesirable traits of his maternal grandfather.





**At King Prthu's coronation, various demigods and other great personalities came to offer him wonderful gifts. Lord Viṣṇu (upper left) gave King Prthu a Sudarśana disc, and Lord Śiva (upper right) presented him with a sword in a sheath marked with ten moons.**

The child's name was Vena. As a youth he used to take his bow and arrows to the forest and kill innocent deer. He was so cruel that he would sometimes kill his playmates, as if they were animals. King Aṅga punished Vena to reform him, but he was unable to bring his son to the path of gentleness.

The king thought, "Persons who have no son are certainly fortunate. They don't have to suffer the unbearable unhappiness caused by a bad son."

But then he considered, "A bad son is better than a good one. A bad son creates a hellish home from which an intelligent man becomes very easily detached." According to Vedic civilization, the true purpose of life is to realize one's eternal relationship with the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa. But if one becomes overly occupied with family duties, one can lose sight of this ultimate goal. Therefore the *Vedas* advise married persons to detach themselves from the burdensome duties of family life when they reach the age of fifty, so they can devote their remaining years to self-realization.

Thinking over all this, King Aṅga could not sleep, and in the dead of night he got up from bed and left the palace. He gave up all attraction for his opulent kingdom and, unseen by anyone, silently left for the forest.

When the citizens found out that King Aṅga had departed, they began to search for him. They could find no trace of him, however, and returned to the city, where all the sages of the country had assembled. With tears in their eyes, the citizens told the sages that they were unable to find the king anywhere.

With no one to maintain law and order, criminals began to disturb society. So the sages called for Queen Sunīthā, and with her permission they installed her son, Vena, on the throne. All the ministers, however, disagreed with the decision of the sages. They knew that Vena was too severe and cruel to be a good ruler. And sure enough, as soon as Vena ascended the throne he became overwhelmed with pride. He mounted his chariot and, like an uncontrolled elephant, began to travel throughout the kingdom, causing the sky and earth to tremble wherever he went.

But even though Vena had many bad qualities, there was one thing to his credit—out of fear of him the thieves and rogues ceased their predatory acts.

At one point, however, King Vena forbade the *brāhmaṇa* priests to perform any more sacrifices. He stopped all kinds of religious rituals. Today this same policy is being carried out by atheistic governments all over the world. Even in America, where there is technically freedom of religion, the government has banned prayer from the public schools, outlawed the teaching of God-centered explanations of science, and legalized the killing of unborn children within the wombs of their mothers.

After observing King Vena's atrocities, the sages concluded that the people of the world were in great danger. Although sages did not generally become involved in politics, the crisis was now too severe for them to ignore. Therefore they consulted among themselves about what to do.



**Lord Viṣṇu—holding a lotus flower and standing next to His carrier, Garuda—looks on approvingly as King Indra (whose body is covered with eyes) begs King Pṛthu to forgive him for having stolen the horse meant for Pṛthu’s great sacrifice.**

the king is dead, rogues and thieves have become active.” Although the sages could have immediately intervened to punish the criminals—as when they had killed King Vena—they decided not to use their special powers. They arrived at another solution.

The sages decided to produce another king—from the body of Vena, who despite his own bad qualities, was from a line of good kings. To do this they first generated an unsightly being called Bahuka from the lower part of Vena’s body. His complexion was dark, his eyes reddish. He immediately absorbed all the results of King Vena’s sinful activities.

From the upper part of Vena’s body the sages generated a male and a female empowered with potencies of the Supreme Lord. The male was

The sages said, “We appointed this Vena king of the state to give protection to the citizens, but now he has become their enemy. But before we take action against him, let us first try to pacify him.”

Concealing their anger, the sages said, “Dear king, we have come to give you good advice. You should not be the cause of spoiling the spiritual life of the general populace. If you do so, you will certainly fall down from your royal position.”

King Vena proudly replied, “Those who out of gross ignorance do not worship the king, who is actually the Supreme Personality of Godhead, experience happiness neither in this world nor in the world after death. For this reason, O sages, you should abandon your envy of me and worship me.”

“This impious and impudent man does not deserve to sit on the throne at all,” declared the sages. “He is so shameless that he has dared to insult the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” Then, without using any weapon other than sound, the sages killed King Vena.

Queen Sunīthā became very much aggrieved at the sight of her dead son’s body and decided to preserve it by applying certain ingredients and chanting *mantras*.

Some time later the sages noticed that society was again in a state of chaos. Talking among themselves they said, “Since

an incarnation of the ruling potency of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and the female an expansion of the goddess of fortune.

The sages said, “The male will be able to spread his reputation throughout the world. His name will be Pṛthu, and he will be the first among kings. The female has such beautiful qualities that she will beautify the ornaments she wears. Her name will be Arci, and she will accept King Pṛthu as her husband.”

Sages and demigods came to earth from all over the universe to witness Pṛthu’s coronation. King Pṛthu and Queen Arci, who were both exquisitely dressed, appeared as brilliant as fire. The demigods offered the new king many wonderful gifts.

Then professional reciters began to praise the king. But Pṛthu said, “O gentle reciters, offer such prayers in due course of time, when the qualities of which you have spoken actually manifest themselves in me.”

But instructed by the sages, the reciters continued to praise the king. They could understand his identity as an empowered representative of the Supreme Lord. In considering their descriptions of King Pṛthu’s qualities, we can gain insight into the character of a perfect ruler.

First the sages said that the king would himself follow religious principles and take steps to insure that the citizens would also follow them. He would punish the irreligious and the athe-



ists. In the present age, we sometimes see that a government, in the name of a secular state, will allow people to freely engage in irreligious behavior. By committing sinful activities, such as eating meat, gambling, taking intoxicants, and engaging in illicit sex aided by contraceptives and abortion, the population becomes implicated in the laws of *karma* and undergoes suffering in the form of wars, epidemics, famines, and so forth. In this way people suffer many miseries in this life and remain entrapped in the cycle of birth and death.

The reciters said the king would engage the population in performing sacrifice to the Supreme Lord and thus insure a plentiful supply of natural food and other resources. The modern industrial civilization does not actually provide the necessities of life. Food is produced in the fields, by God's arrangement, and not in factories. The raw materials used in manufacturing—such as air, water, minerals, and oil—are all supplied by the Supreme Lord. When these natural gifts are taken without acknowledging their source and used simply for sense gratification, the Lord restricts the supply. We can acknowledge the source of these resources by sacrifice, and the sacrifice recommended in the Vedic scriptures for this age is the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. By performing this sacrifice, the population will enjoy adequate supplies of natural gifts for a simple life dedicated to the cultivation of spiritual knowledge.

The reciters then said that the king would fairly collect taxes and disburse them to the public in times of need, just as the sun-god evaporates water from the ocean and returns it to the earth in the form of rain. In the present age, however, burdensome taxes are always increasing and are spent on lavish salaries for government administrators. This unfair taxation makes people dishonest, and they try to hide their income. Eventually the state will not be able to collect enough taxes to meet its huge military and administrative expenses. At that time, the whole economic system and governing apparatus will collapse. This is already beginning to occur.

***After completing the sacrifice, King Pṛthu entered his capital city, which was beautifully decorated with pearls, flower garlands, banners, and golden gates. The entire city was perfumed with highly fragrant incense. As the citizens came forward to welcome King Pṛthu, he bestowed upon them their desired blessings.***

The sages said the king would consider all living beings as dear to him as his own self. Today most heads of state are meat-eaters, as are their citizens. They advertise their concern for the welfare of others while allowing the slaughter of hundreds of millions of innocent creatures.

The sages then declared that King Pṛthu would be compared to a lion. Unless rogues and thieves are afraid of the chief executive, there cannot be peace and prosperity in the state. The sages also stated that the king would consider himself the servant of the devotees of the Lord and would rule his kingdom according to their good advice. He would also accept private spiritual instruction from them.

Upon accepting the throne, King Pṛthu had to confront many problems, including a scarcity of food grains. Many of the citizens had become skinny from starvation. Therefore they came before the king and said, "You are not only a king, but the incarnation of God as well. Therefore, O king of all kings, please arrange to satisfy our hunger."

Painting by Ramadasa Abhirama dasa ©The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust





**Observing the prescribed Vedic reception for honoring exalted guests, Prthu Mahārāja bathes the feet of the four Kumāras and pours the water on his head. Although the Kumāras are great sages and masters of mystic power and are millions of years old, they keep themselves as boys. The Kumāras gave King Prthu important instructions on spiritual topics.**

Indra and said, "My dear King Prthu, Indra, the king of heaven, has disturbed your execution of one hundred sacrifices. Now he has come with Me to be forgiven by you. Therefore excuse him." King Prthu did as the Lord requested.

Lord Viṣṇu then said, "My dear King Prthu, if you continue to protect the citizens according to the instructions of the learned *brāhmaṇa* authorities, as they are received by disciplic succession—by hearing—from master to disciple, and if you follow the religious principles laid down by them, without attachment to ideas manufactured by mental concoction, then every one of your citizens will be happy and will love you, and very soon you will be able to see such already liberated personalities as the four Kumāras: Sanaka, Sanātana, Sananda, and Sanat-kumāra." King Prthu sincerely accepted the instructions of the Lord and offered Him devotional prayers. The Lord then departed for His own abode.

The king then entered the gates of his capital city, where he was welcomed by his joyous citizens. King Prthu advised his citizens to worship the Supreme Lord by engaging their minds, words, and bodies

in His service along with the results of their occupational duties. He also advised them to obey and worship the pure devotees of the Lord, saying, "By regular service to the *brāhmaṇas* and Vaiṣṇavas, one can clear the dirt from his heart and thus enjoy supreme peace and liberation from material attachment."

After hearing King Prthu speak so nicely, the sages, demigods, and citizens declared that sinful King Vena had been delivered from the darkest region of hellish life by the action of his son, King Prthu. The four Kumāras, who were as brilliant as the sun, then arrived there. Seeing the four sages descend from the sky, the king received them with proper respect and worship.

The king asked the Kumāras how those in this material world could achieve the ultimate goal of life. Sanat-kumāra replied:

It has been conclusively decided in the scriptures, after due consideration, that the ultimate goal for the welfare of human society is detachment from the bodily concept of life and increased and steadfast attachment for the Supreme Lord, who is transcendental

King Prthu determined that the people were not at fault; rather, for some reason the earth was withholding her bounty. He therefore threatened the earth deity, who, after worshiping King Prthu as an incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, explained that she had been withholding her bounty because of the sinful activities of some of the population. Then, because of King Prthu's intervention, she began to supply every living entity with its proper food.

The king then initiated a series of one hundred sacrifices. Lord Viṣṇu was pleased to appear at these sacrifices along with demigods and sages. In response the earth produced abundant supplies of all natural resources. When the heavenly king Indra saw the sacrifices, however, he feared that King Prthu would surpass him in fame and opulence. He therefore began to interfere with the sacrifices, and King Prthu prepared to take strong action against him. But on the advice of Lord Brahmā, the chief of the demigods, he desisted.

Then Lord Viṣṇu appeared in the arena of sacrifice along with

and beyond the modes of material nature. One has to make progress in spiritual life by not associating with persons who are simply interested in making money and in sense gratification. One should mold his life in such a way that he cannot live in peace without drinking the nectar of the glorification of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One can be thus elevated by losing the taste for sense enjoyment.

Sanat-kumāra requested the king to always engage in devotional service to the Supreme Lord. King Pṛthu obeyed this instruction, and thus even though surrounded by royal opulence, he was able to lead a life of detachment and spiritual advancement.

By his wife Arci, Pṛthu begot five sons. He pleased the citizens by his rule and became famous all over the universe for his good qualities. At the end of his life, he transferred power to his sons and left with his wife for the forest, where he strictly followed the regulations of retired life. He underwent severe austerities just as seriously as he had governed the state. He ate only leaves and fruit and eventually subsisted only upon air. Queen Arci assisted him in his practice of austerities. Because of her pleasure in serving her exalted husband, she felt no difficulty in the forest.

By performing austerities Pṛthu became steadfast in spiritual life, worshipping the Supreme Personality of Godhead twenty-four hours a day. In due course of time, Pṛthu Mahārāja was able to fix his mind firmly upon the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. Practicing the mystic *yoga* system, he raised his soul to the top of his skull. After merging the various elements of his body with the totality of the natural elements, he gave up his body.

Queen Arci took the body of her husband and placed it on a fiery pyre on the top of a hill. Śrīla Prabhupāda comments, "The queen was aware that her husband was not dead. . . . When a living entity transfers from one body to another, a process generally known as death, a sane man does not lament, for he knows that the living entity is not dead but is simply transferred from one body to another."

***At the last stage of his life, Pṛthu Mahārāja, accompanied by his wife, went to the forest to practice austerities and devotional yoga. He fixed his mind on Lord Kṛṣṇa and gave up his material body. Queen Arci placed her husband's body on a fiery pyre and entered into the flames. Pṛthu and Arci, in their spiritual bodies, were then transported to the spiritual world on spiritual airplanes.***

After placing her husband's body in the fire, she herself entered the flames. Observing the devoted queen's brave act, the demigods and their wives showered flowers and offered prayers. The wives of the demigods said, "All glories to Queen Arci. Just see how this chaste lady, Arci, by dint of her inconceivable pious activities, is still following her husband upwards, as far as we can see."

King Pṛthu and Queen Arci ascended to the spiritual world, Vaikuṅṭha, in spiritual airplanes. They ascended in spiritual bodies, their material bodies having been consumed by the fire of the funeral pyre.

The sage Maitreya, narrating this history in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, said, "Any person who describes the great characteristics of King Pṛthu with faith and determination—whether he reads of them himself or helps others to hear of them—is certain to attain the very planet Mahārāja Pṛthu attained. In other words, such a person also returns home to the Vaikuṅṭha planets, back to Godhead."

*This article gives a brief summary of the history of King Pṛthu. A complete account is found in the Fourth Canto of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, available from the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.*



Painting by Yadurant-deer dasi ©The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust

# Reincarnation

(continued from page 10)

example, when a child touches fire. The fire won't think, "Oh, this child doesn't know that I'm hot. I won't burn him." No, fire burns—regardless of whether or not you are aware of its burning power. Therefore the only way to avoid suffering is by spiritual education.

**Q:** Still, this whole system seems cruel to me. Besides, I don't see any sense in this endless cycle of reincarnation.

**A:** No, it is not cruel. Suffering is an impetus for the living entity to find a solution to his problems. The material world is a place of misery.

From the highest planet in the material world down to the lowest, all are places of misery wherein repeated birth and death take place. But one who attains to My abode, O son of Kuntī, never takes birth again. (Bhagavad-gītā 8.16)

This verse explains that the material world is by nature not a pleasant place. Even if there is happiness, it is temporary; it will not last. And we cause our own suffering. Many people like to blame God for their suffering. But God wants us to return to the spiritual world, where there is no suffering.

This material world is not our home. Our situation is like that of a fish on the land. You can give the fish a TV, a Cadillac, a fancy house, but all the fish needs is the water. He doesn't care for all facilities on the land. So in the same way, temporary happiness in the material world will never satisfy us. Suffering provides the motivation to attain the goal of life—to go back to Godhead.

If someone is enjoying material happiness, generally he won't see any reason to turn to God. Unfortunately, he doesn't know that his enjoyment can't last. When the results of his pious activities are exhausted, suffering will come again, although he doesn't want it. Real enjoyment cannot be achieved through material senses. It can only be achieved in a spiritual way.

**Q:** How did we get into this cycle of reincarnation in the first place?

**A:** Originally all living entities are residents of the spiritual world. But they have a certain independence, and if they decide

to try to enjoy without God, they are given the material world as a place to try this.

**Q:** But if God is all-powerful, couldn't He prevent them from doing this? Why does He let them go and suffer?

**A:** The natural relationship between Kṛṣṇa and the living entities is love. And love cannot be forced; it must be given voluntarily. So if Kṛṣṇa could force the living entities to love Him, the word *love* would have no meaning.

Or take another example: The parents love their child. But sometimes the child wants to touch the fire out of ignorance. If

*If someone is enjoying material happiness, generally he won't see any reason to turn to God. Unfortunately, he doesn't know that his enjoyment can't last. When the results of his pious activities are exhausted, suffering will come again.*

he persists despite good advice, the parents may let him touch the fire once. After that experience, the child will be convinced. The parents don't do this because they want to see their child suffer, but because sometimes it is the only way to learn.

Similarly, Kṛṣṇa is infallible, and the living entities are fallible. Therefore some souls choose this way of learning. For us it appears a long time to spend millions of births in the material world, but from the spiritual viewpoint, our stay here is just like a passing cloud.

Kṛṣṇa does not cast us down here to suf-

fer eternally. There is no such thing as eternal damnation. On the contrary, there are always great devotees, prophets, and sons of God to guide us, and Kṛṣṇa Himself appears regularly to try to bring us back to Him.

Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, O son of Bharata, and a predominant rise of irreligion—at that time I manifest Myself. In order to deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of religion, I advent Myself millennium after millennium.

(Bhagavad-gītā 4.7, 8)

Although Kṛṣṇa Himself is not always here, He leaves us the Vedic scriptures and other genuine scriptures to guide us. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.3.43) states:

This *Bhāgavata Purāna* is as brilliant as the sun, and it has arisen just after the departure of Lord Kṛṣṇa to His own abode, accompanied by religion, knowledge, etc. Persons who have lost their vision due to the dense darkness of ignorance in the age of Kali shall get light from this *Purāna*.

**Q:** Can you explain the end of this cycle of reincarnation in more detail?

**A:** The human body is the only form of life that enables us to end this cycle. Only in this form is the consciousness developed enough to understand the difference between matter and spirit. Animals cannot understand this. Their only business is eating, sleeping, mating, and defending. They cannot understand what the goal of life is.

But if the human being does not take advantage of this opportunity and simply engages himself in sophisticated ways of eating, sleeping, mating, and defending, then he is nothing more than a sophisticated animal. The only purpose of human life is to develop one's original God consciousness, break free from the cycle of birth and death, and go back home, back to Godhead.

The process to accomplish this is called *bhakti-yoga*, or devotional service, which entails acting in a spiritual way according to the injunctions of the Vedic scriptures and the bona fide spiritual master. By doing so, one is no longer bound by the laws of material nature, which force one to transmigrate in the material world. ❧

## NOTES

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"Despite whatever limitations you have, if you express *feelingly*, 'My God! My Lord!' that will be accepted."

The real purpose of prayer is not to gain

material resources or even spiritual salvation for oneself. The power of prayer comes when we call to Kṛṣṇa out of a desire to do His will. Such pure prayers are not means to the end but are themselves loving exchanges between the Lord and His pure devotees. Whether we call on Him from the darkness of our fallen state

in the material world, or whether we praise Him in the midst of His liberated associates in the kingdom of God, the pure prayer is the same: "Please engage me in Your service"—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.—SDG

# ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

## Righting an Upside-down Civilization

*This is the continuation of a conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples in New Vrindaban, West Virginia, on June 26, 1976.*

**Disciple** [reading *Bhagavad-gītā* As It Is, 16.4]: “Pride, arrogance, conceit, anger, harshness, and ignorance—these qualities belong to those of demoniac nature, O son of Pṛthā.”

**Purport**, by Śrīla Prabhupāda: “In this verse, the royal road to hell is described. The demoniac want to make a show of religion and advancement in spiritual science, although they do not follow the principles. They are always arrogant or proud in possessing some type of education or so much wealth. They desire to be worshiped by others and demand respectability, although they do not command respect. Over trifles they become very angry and speak harshly, not gently. They do not know what should be done and what should not be done. They do everything whimsically, according to their own desire, and they do not recognize any authority. These demoniac qualities are taken on by them from the beginning of their bodies in the wombs of their mothers, and as they grow they manifest all these inauspicious qualities.”

**Śrīla Prabhupāda**: So here is your answer as to how modern civilization is defective. Everyone thinks “liberation” means he can do whatever he likes. And that is the definition of a demoniac person. Now you can discuss this point.

**Disciple**: We can see that this modern civilization has turned everything upside-down. What Kṛṣṇa describes as exalted qualities they think of as degraded. What Kṛṣṇa describes as degraded, demoniac qualities they think of as exalted.

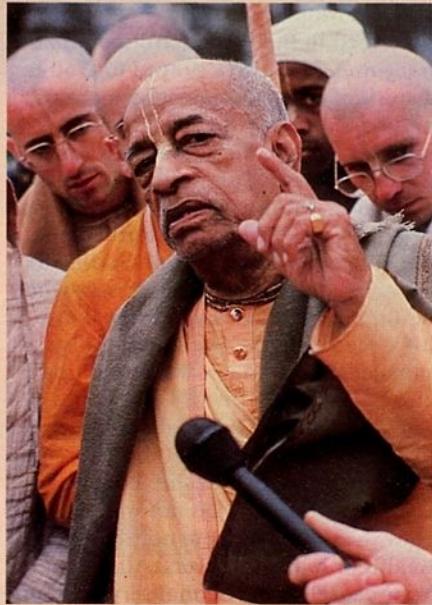
**Śrīla Prabhupāda**: Therefore preaching is required.

**Disciple**: Many people feel godly qualities are a sign of weakness. The demoniac qualities are a sign of strength.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda**: “Heroism.” The demoniac qualities constitute “heroism.”

**Disciple**: Yes, “heroism.” In this purport, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you perfectly describe our student life. As students, we were doing everything whimsically. Or we simply accepted bad things.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda**: For that reason Prahhlāda Mahārāja recommends, *kaumāra ācāret prājño dharmān bhāgavatān iha*:



students should be trained up in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That is what Prahhlāda Mahārāja recommends. Currently, from the very beginning of student life, one is trained up as a demon. So many things have to be reformed by pushing on Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So we have to do all this.

[To disciple:] Go on reading.

**Disciple** [reading from *Bhagavad-gītā*, 16.5]: “The transcendental qualities are conducive to liberation, whereas the demoniac qualities make for bondage. Do not worry, O son of Pāṇḍu, for you are born with the divine qualities.”

**Purport**, by Śrīla Prabhupāda: “Lord Kṛṣṇa encouraged Arjuna by telling him that he was not born with demoniac qualities. His involvement in the fight was not demoniac, because he was considering the pros and cons. He was considering whether respectable persons such as Bhīṣma and Droṇa should be killed or not, so he was not acting under the influence of anger, false prestige, or harshness. Therefore he was not of the quality of the demons. For a *kṣatriya*, a military man, shooting arrows at the enemy is considered transcendental, and refraining from such a duty is demoniac. Therefore there was no cause for Arjuna to lament. Anyone who performs the regulative principles of the different orders of life is transcendently situated.”

**Śrīla Prabhupāda**: Discuss this point.

**Disciple**: People say that “Your understanding is arbitrary. You allow the possi-

bility of a ‘godly war’ and say that for a bona fide military man, fighting and killing are exalted, but we think war is degraded. We think everyone should be peaceful. That’s our idea of a good man.”

**Śrīla Prabhupāda**: Our understanding of the divine qualities and the demoniac qualities is not arbitrary. It is given by Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So it is not arbitrary. This knowledge is given by the Supreme’s order. How can people say it is arbitrary? Then what is the use of referring to *Bhagavad-gītā*? Yes, things must not be arbitrary or whimsical. Therefore we make reference to *Bhagavad-gītā*—the lawbook. When a judge gives his verdict, he does not give it arbitrarily. There are lawbooks. So there is no question of “arbitrary.” The reference is there. How can you say it is arbitrary? But if you don’t care about the scriptural verdict, then you’ll never be successful. In this same chapter you’ll find the verse beginning *yaḥ śāstra-vidhim utsrjya*.

**Disciple**: *Yaḥ śāstra-vidhim utsrjya vartate kāma-kārataḥ/ na sa siddhim avāpnoti na sukhaṁ na parāṁ gatim*. “But he who discards scriptural injunctions and acts according to his own whims attains neither perfection, nor happiness, nor the supreme destination.”

**Śrīla Prabhupāda**: So we are not giving anything arbitrary.

**Disciple**: That’s quite easy to see, Śrīla Prabhupāda. By following the authority of Lord Kṛṣṇa, people really do become happy. And by merely following their whims, people really do become miserable.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda**: Yes. So the result is there—even in this life we can see it. And what to speak of beyond this life.

**Disciple**: But people may counter that even in a godly war, it’s hard to feel happy.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda**: In a godly war, such as the Battle of Kurukṣetra, bona fide military men feel happy. Take Arjuna, Droṇa, Bhīṣma—they felt happy. Otherwise, they could not have fought. They were not like these modern soldiers, who, when they are attacked, go away. Real *kṣatriyas*, godly military men, are not like that. They are determined that “I’ll either lay down my life or gain victory.” That is their attitude. Do you think they are afraid of fighting? They are not afraid of fighting. *Yuddhe cāpy apalāyanam*—“not fleeing in battle.” That is a real *kṣatriya*, a real military man. That is real training.

(To be continued.)

# NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

## The Power of Prayer

**A**theists think that a prayer to God is sheer imagination. But for centuries, thousands of sincere practitioners have accumulated definite evidence of the positive results of prayer. The serious doubt regarding prayer is not whether God can hear and respond, but whether the things people pray for are worthwhile. According to St. Teresa of Avila, "More tears are shed in this world from prayers that are answered than from those that go unanswered." Those who pray, therefore, need more than the conviction that the Supreme can fulfill our desires. Before we approach God with our requests, we ought to become educated as to what to pray for. The pure devotees of the Lord can teach us this ultimate truth.

One form of popular prayer emphasizes the pragmatic results. These "prayers" are actually nontheistic. As advised by psychologists, a person who believes strongly in his prayer can awaken from within his own subconsciousness huge stores of confidence and power and thus achieve his desired goal. Dale Carnegie, in his books on positive thinking, likes to narrate stories of people like the unsuccessful salesman who in desperation resorted to prayer and the next day was able to convince many customers to buy his vacuum cleaners. In such "prayers" the Personality of Godhead is hardly even acknowledged.

Another shortsighted type of prayer comes from those who believe in God but who are interested not so much in Him as in getting a bit of His opulence. Most prayers fall into this category, as the supplicants request health, riches, family happiness, and so on from a God whom they ask to function as a supreme order supplier. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa declares that persons who come to Him asking for material (and therefore temporary) benefits are *sukṛtina*, or pious. They are certainly better than those who never approach the Supreme, for although prayers for material benefits are ultimately foolish requests, the *sukṛtinas* get into the habit of approaching the Supreme, and thus they may purify themselves for higher communion with God.

An example of a successful *sukṛtina* is

Dhruva Mahārāja, whose prayers are described in the Vedic scripture *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Dhruva prayed to God in a spirit of revenge against his parents, and he requested the most opulent kingdom that had ever been awarded to a mortal being. After performing severe austerities, Dhruva gained the audience of Lord Viṣṇu (a form of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead). But when the Lord asked Dhruva what he wanted, Dhruva said, "Now that I have seen You, my Lord, I am fully satisfied, and I do not want anything else."

This should be the goal of all prayer: to attain loving service of the Supreme Lord, with no other desire. Lord Caitanya prayed, "I do not want to enjoy beautiful women, nor do I want wealth or many followers. All I want is Your causeless devotional service in my life, birth after birth."

On hearing a prayer of full surrender and devotion to God, we may think, "That is a beautiful sentiment, but it's only for the rare pure devotee, the saint." Yet we are *all* eternal, pure souls, part of the Supreme Lord. Because of the influence of illusion, we have lost our original connection with God and are wandering in the material world, suffering repeated miseries and continuing in illusion. The sincere call to God to be reconciled with His will is not just the practice of a saint; it is indeed the need of all fallen living entities.

When we think that we are independent and don't really need God, and don't need to pray, then we are in the most dangerous illusion. Sometimes our illusion is smashed by bitter suffering, or the truth may be revealed to us by association with pure devotees. When this happens we may realize that we are actually tiny, helpless creatures striving to survive but doomed to bodily annihilation. When a conditioned soul realizes his dangerous and fallen position, he deeply wishes to reform. Since all of us, to different degrees, are in the category of "fallen," we all need to pray to Lord Kṛṣṇa. But we cannot become reconciled with the Lord unless we receive His special mercy. We may pray, therefore, "My dear Lord, although I am unworthy to receive your special mercy to be relieved of false ego, I beg You to please give me the

qualities of love and surrender. Please give Your gift of mercy and relieve me of my impurities. Please reconcile my heart to Yours. If You do not give me Your mercy, I shall be lost."

True prayer is not mechanical recitation but the sincere cry of the contrite heart. When through prayer one receives even the first inclination of his revived association with Kṛṣṇa, one wants to call on Him constantly and remain in the soothing shelter of His protection. It is for this reason that Kṛṣṇa conscious spiritual masters recommend that we chant the holy names of God, especially the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, as often as possible. (*Kīrtaniya sadā hari*: "One should always chant the name of Lord Kṛṣṇa.") The Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is itself a prayer invoking good fortune and petitioning the Lord, "O energy of God, O Supreme Lord, please engage me in Your service."

Prayers of spontaneous pure devotion may take different forms, such as prayers of petition, praise, adoration, and thanksgiving. Kṛṣṇa is known as Uttamaśloka, which means "one who is praised with beautiful prayers." The Vedic scriptures contain many excellent prayers, which can be recited by devotees seeking union with the Supreme. At the end of one excellent prayer to Lord Kṛṣṇa, which is offered in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.24.76) by Lord Śiva, it is stated, "Although rendering devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead and worshiping Him are very difficult, if one vibrates or simply reads this prayer, he will very easily be able to invoke the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead." In his commentary to this verse, Śrīla Prabhupāda states, "Any devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa can attain all perfection simply by offering prayers to Him."

One should recite the excellent prayers given in the scriptures, and one should also call upon God with one's own feelings, thoughts, and words. The child-devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa named Prahlaḍa Mahārāja realized that the Lord is actually interested only in our devotion. Therefore even if we are unqualified to compose *uttamaśloka* prayers, we can please the Lord if we are sincere. Śrīla Prabhupāda states,

(continued on page 34)



# 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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