

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

BACK TO GODHEAD



THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT No. 37





By His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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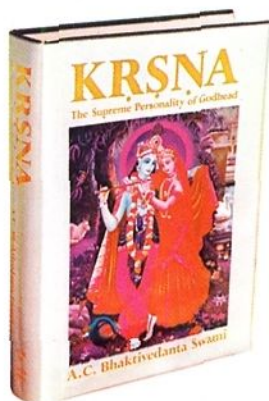
THE NECTAR OF DEVOTION

This book is especially intended for those who are engaged in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. The text is flooded with nectarean stories, philosophy and poetic verses about Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotees—all taken directly from the Vedic literatures. It is a summary study of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and it teaches us how to stimulate our original love for Kṛṣṇa so that we can enjoy our blissful life.

KṚṢṆA, The Supreme Personality of Godhead

The most comprehensive and authoritative Vedic scriptural literature is the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* ("The Beautiful Story of the Personality of Godhead"), the mature contribution of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the compiler of the *Vedas*. Of the twelve cantos of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the Tenth Canto is considered the most confidential, since it describes all the transcendental pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Kṛṣṇa* is a summary study of the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

The activities of Kṛṣṇa, which appear to be like those of an ordinary human being, can only be properly understood with the help of a bona fide spiritual master fully realized in the knowledge of their transcendental nature. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda is such a spiritual master.



—2—

ŚRĪMAD—BHAGAVATAM

The *Vedas* are compared to a desire-tree because they contain all things knowable by mankind about both mundane necessities and spiritual realization. *Śrīmad-Bhagavatam* is the mature ripened fruit of this tree. It narrates the transcendental pastimes of the transcendental Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

—3—

TEACHINGS OF LORD CAITANYA

Lord Caitanya, the most munificent incarnation of Godhead, appeared 500 years ago to demonstrate by example how to live the teachings of *Bhagavad-gītā* in the present age. *Teachings of Lord Caitanya* recounts the words and deeds of this great saint. Lord Caitanya was famous as a scholar and spoke authoritatively on the highest aspects of the science of love of Godhead. He is the divine origin of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement and distributed love of God simply by singing the holy names.

—4—

ŚRĪ ISOPANISAD

From the most authoritative sources, the famed 108 Upaniṣads of India, *Śrī Isopaniṣad* supplies revealed evidence that the Personality of Godhead is the creator, maintainer and destroyer of everything that exists. The author's transparent commentaries reveal that the Supreme Lord is "unembodied" and "formless," since His form is not a material form which is subject to birth, disease, old age and death.

THE BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ AS IT IS

Now, for the first time, this renowned scripture is being brought to the West as it is—as taught by Kṛṣṇa Himself and understood by His disciple Arjuna—in a unique translation and commentary. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the supreme authority on the *Gītā*, and He initially delivered the *Gītā* so that all persons could reach the perfection of life and be liberated from all suffering. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda is passing on Kṛṣṇa's mercy in its full potency, as it is, so that everyone can attain to his rightful position, full of bliss and knowledge.

From the Introduction: "The perplexities of life appear like a forest fire which takes place without being set by anyone. The man in material perplexities is he who does not understand the problems of life. Out of many many human beings, the *Bhagavad-gītā* is directed to the one who seeks to understand his position."

EASY JOURNEY TO OTHER PLANETS

This book is an authentic discussion on the techniques and practice of the *yoga* system by which one can leave this body for travel to anti-material planets where life is blissful, eternal and full of knowledge.

KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS: THE TOPMOST YOGA SYSTEM

This book presents the most authorized process of *yoga* practice in God realization, without any deviation from the original Vedic scriptural literature. In this present volume, the author forcefully exposes the speculative systems which depart from love of God as the ultimate goal of *yoga*.

THE FIRST STEP IN GOD REALIZATION

This book marks the continuation of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda's mighty task of translating all twelve cantos of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. *The First Step in God Realization* comprises the First Chapter of the Second Canto, in which the sage Śukadeva advises his disciple Mahārāja Parīkṣit to meditate on the universal form of God, in which the entire physical universes are seen as parts of the gigantic body of the Supreme Lord.

THE LORD IN THE HEART

The continuation of Sukadeva's teachings: He advises his disciple to go beyond meditation on the universal form, to meditation on the transcendental form of Paramātmā, the localized representation of the Lord who resides in the hearts of all living entities.

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement

BACK TO GODHEAD is the only magazine in the Western world to present the authorized, transcendental science of God realization known only to the saints of India's unbroken disciplic succession.

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WHAT IS THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS?

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness was formed in 1966 by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who came from India on the order of his spiritual master to preach love of God to the people of the West. Śrīla Prabhupāda is in a line of disciplic succession going back directly 500 years to the time when Lord Caitanya appeared in India, and from there back still further—5,000 years—to the time when Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa first spoke *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is experienced as a process of self-purification. Its means and end are an open secret, and there is no financial charge for learning Kṛṣṇa consciousness or receiving initiation into the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa. The gist of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is that one takes whatever capacity or talent he or she has and dovetails it with the interests of the supreme enjoyer, the Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The writer writes articles for Kṛṣṇa, and we publish periodicals in this way. The businessman does business in order to establish many temples across the country. The householders raise children in the science of God, and husband and wife live in mutual cooperation for spiritual progress. These activities are done under the sanction of the expert spiritual master and in line with the scriptures. Devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness means regular chanting in the temple, hearing talks about the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and taking foodstuffs prepared for and offered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

By books, literature and records, the Society is dedicated to awakening the worldwide public to the normal, ecstatic state of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, so that all may regain their eternal position of favorably serving the will of Kṛṣṇa. *Saṅkīrtana*—congregational chanting—is carried to the people: in public parks, schools, on t.v., in the theater, on the streets. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not an idler's philosophy. Rather, by chanting and by engagement in the service of Kṛṣṇa, anyone who takes part will experience the state of "samādhi," ecstatic absorption in God consciousness, twenty-four hours a day!

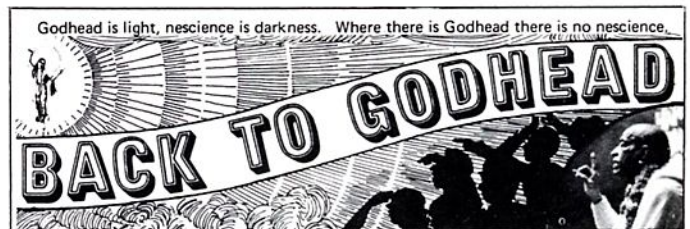
Since the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is nonsectarian, any man, Hindu or Christian, will become better in his faith by chanting the holy name of God and by hearing the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Without knowledge and realization and loving service to the one Supreme God, there can be no religion. Let everyone rejoice in the *Saṅkīrtana* Movement, and we may see the fulfillment of the prediction made by Lord Caitanya 500 years ago that the chanting of the holy names of God, Hare Kṛṣṇa, would be carried to every town and village of the world. Only in this way can real peace prevail. It is sublime and easy.

HARE KṚṢṆA, HARE KṚṢṆA
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His Divine Grace
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NĀRADA MUNI, SPIRITUAL MASTER OF KṚṢṆA-DVAIPĀYANA VYASA, AND
THE UNIVERSAL DELIVERER OF THE HARE KṚṢṆA MAHĀ-MANTRA



His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

LOVE IN THE ABSOLUTE WORLD

by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

As long as we have the desire for material sense gratification or the desire for material liberation, there is no possibility of developing transcendental bliss in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. *Bhukti* is the desire for material sense gratification, and *mukti* is the desire, after being frustrated, for liberation. Real *mukti* or liberation, however, means to achieve devotional service. If one becomes liberated from nonsense, then one must engage oneself in something which is tangible. Otherwise it is not possible to stop one's material sense gratificatory activities. To make the mind void of engagement in the material world by intoxication or by forgetting with drugs is artificial. One must be completely free from material engagement. That freedom can be possible. To give a material example,

if one fills up a glass with milk, then there is no possibility of the glass's filling up with ink. It is our choice whether to fill up the glass with ink or with milk. But if we simply empty the glass of ink and do not fill it up, or if we have no knowledge how to fill the glass with milk, then naturally, in an inky atmosphere, there is the possibility that it will again become filled with ink. Even if we empty the glass of ink, if we have no better quality of liquid with which to fill the glass, then it will be prone to being filled with ink again. Therefore, this impersonal void philosophy does not stand. It is simply negation. Impersonalists wish to cease material activities, but if they do not take on positive, spiritual activity, then they will fail because they will not be able to control their minds.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is stated that the mind cannot be vacant even for a second. The mind must accept something and reject something. Either one is accepting something or rejecting something, but one cannot make the mind void. And even if one is able to do so, that voidness will not stand. If one has nothing good to think, then one will have to think of all nonsense. And when we fill up our minds with Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we will not be distracted by material sense gratification or material liberation.

FILL THE MIND WITH KṚṢṆA

There is transcendental bliss in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But transcendental bliss cannot be conceived as long as one's mind is not completely vacated of material sense gratification. This process of emptying the mind of material engagement and filling

THE PRACTICE: BHAKTI

it with spiritual engagement can be practiced. Caitanya Mahāprabhu says that one has to follow the regulative principles. A man who is diseased has to follow the regulative curative principles, and gradually his fever decreases, and he is cured. Similarly, one must adopt the means by which one can fill one's mind with Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and gradually the mind's engagement in material consciousness will disappear. This is the process of devotional service. If one is always engaged in some sort of service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then there will be no chance for material consciousness to enter the mind. Therefore I insist that when my students are not engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness work, then they must simply chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa. That is also engagement. Twenty-four hours a day, even in sleeping or even in working, our minds should be always full with Kṛṣṇa consciousness; then there will be no chance for material consciousness to enter, and that will make us perfect.

THE OBJECT OF LOVE

When one sincerely struggles to fill the mind with Kṛṣṇa consciousness and drive away material consciousness, then one gradually develops the mature condition of love of Godhead. The mind is attracted by so many so-called loving affairs in the material world that it is very difficult to drag the mind from this so-called love and transfer the love to God or Kṛṣṇa. Love exists, of course, in everyone. I want to love. That is my instinct. But if I have no object of love which will permanently exist, then I will have to apply myself to an object which will ultimately perish. This is called *sat* and *asat*. *Sat* means that which will exist, and *asat* means that which will not exist. Matter will cease to exist, but spirit will exist and is existing eternally. Our bodies are matter, so if we place our love in connection with these bodies, then our love will cease to exist. It will be frustrated, either during this life or the next life; it will be frustrated because matter will not exist eternally. How can your love exist eternally? Everyone has love, so if we practice how to direct our love toward Kṛṣṇa, then gradually our temporary love for so many different objects will be transferred to Kṛṣṇa, and our eternal life and the propensity of love will continue.

Now we are trying by regulative principles to transfer our minds to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In that mature condition, one achieves love of God. Love of God does not mean theoretical knowledge and book writing. People say, "We have trust in God; we have love for God," and yet they engage in all sorts of nonsense. This will not do. Rather, one must practice so that one will love others. *Bhakti* means devotional service. Kṛṣṇa consciousness means realization of God. The symptom of realization of God is that as soon as one is in touch with God or Kṛṣṇa, one will have no more taste for material things. This is the test. If one is free of disease, one will have no more fever, and one's pulse will be normal. Similarly, if one is actually advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the concomittant result will be that one will lose one's interest in material consciousness. One can test for oneself whether one is advancing. If one is advancing in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then his taste for material consciousness will decrease. If one gives a hungry man food-stuffs, the more he goes on eating, the more strongly he feels satisfaction. He can understand, "I am eating something." And when he has actually filled his belly with foodstuffs, then even if one offers him a golden sweetball, he will not accept it. He is filled up; he does not want any more. Dhruva Mahārāja went to search out God in order to get the kingdom of his father, but when he actually found God he said, "My dear Lord, I do not want anything."

It is confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* that if one actually attains Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then any other gain or profit will be most insignificant. That is satisfaction. Kṛṣṇa consciousness will give one peace. This is called self-realization. It is not gained by smoking marijuana or ganja. By intoxication one may be able to forget material nonsense for the time being, but as soon as the hallucination is gone, one must again come back. For example, one can travel 50,000 miles high by spacecraft, but what are 50,000 miles? There are millions and millions of miles in outer space! Unless one gets the shelter of another planet, one will have to come back again to this planet. We want shelter. To be situated in the sky-voidness will not give one satisfaction. The astronauts are trying again to go to the moon or other planets. It is not that they are trying to

wander in outer space. Their aim is to go to the moon; they are looking for tangible shelter.

As for spiritual life, as long as one does not get that ultimate shelter, he will have to come back again. Simply voidism or impersonal negation of this material consciousness will not help. One must have positive consciousness; then one can stop. Therefore, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says, "My dear Lord, there are persons who speculate that they have become free." *Vimuktī-mānīnā* means the concoction of thinking that one has become free when actually one is not free. One may go up 20,000 or 50,000 miles and think, "Now I am out of this world," but that is not out of the world. Similarly, those who are speculating mentally—"Now I am free."—are not actually free. They are thinking, "I am out of this earthly sphere," but they are not because their intelligence is not yet purified. And why are they not purified? The *Bhāgavatam* says, "They have neglected Your personality." Because they are impersonalists, they have no shelter. Those who are thinking in an impersonal way have no entrance into the Kṛṣṇa planet. Their intelligence is not purified. The result is that even though they go very high, almost to the concept of Brahman realization, because there is no engagement in the service of the Lord, they will come back again and engage themselves in philanthropic service and altruistic service, such as opening hospitals and doing humanitarian work, and so they fall down.

First of all they say, "The world is false, and the Absolute Truth is truth," and they try to realize the Absolute Truth. But because they have not truly realized the Absolute Truth, they therefore come back *again* to that false world which they have denied. So what is the value of their humanitarian work? If they say that this world is false, then why do they take to humanitarian work? It is because they do not have genuine realization of the Absolute Truth. If they say that the world is false, then why do they take to material service, social science? Why take to it if it is false? It is because they have no other engagement that they have to take to this false engagement. Therefore the *Bhāgavatam* states, "Their intelligence is not purified because they have no shelter." *Bhagavad-gītā* confirms this: "Therefore, when one's intelligence is purified after many, many births of the speculative habit of searching after the

Absolute Truth, one then surrenders.”

Mental speculators say that they want peace in the world, but they will not believe in God. This was nicely stated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who said, “You want the kingdom of God without God.” They will say that God is dead, that there is no necessity of God, and that God has played so much havoc. They will decry God, and with their limited power they will try to establish peace and prosperity among humanity. But how is it possible? The example can be given that if one doesn’t pour water on the root of a tree but simply waters the leaves and twigs, the entire tree will die. That is not the natural process. Similarly, if one doesn’t supply foodstuffs to one’s stomach but simply washes one’s body with soap to make it clean, it will die; it will cease to exist. So we have to take to the root. *Vedānta-sūtra* says, *janmādyasya yataḥ*: Brahman is He from whom everything is coming. Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, “If one gives up the prime source of emanation, if one gives up the root, and if one simply hovers by mental concoction, then where is the possibility of transcendental bliss?” There is no possibility. One must engage oneself in the regulative principle of devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and then gradually the material disease will be cured, and one will be established in complete Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and that will give one blissful eternal life.

SOMEHOW OR OTHER, SURRENDER

If one surrenders in some way or other to Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa will not let him go. Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī says, “Somehow or other, just try to apply your mind to Kṛṣṇa. Never mind what you are, what you are doing or what your position is—it doesn’t matter. Simply try to apply your mind to Kṛṣṇa; then everything will follow.” Kṛṣṇa is not subject to any conditions. It is not that one can go to Him only after becoming qualified. There is no such necessity. Material qualifications have no value. In the material world we calculate, “This is good, and this is bad.” But actually nothing is good, and nothing is bad—it is all illusion. In illusion where is there goodness or badness? Illusion is illusion.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said that even a slight application of the principle of Kṛṣṇa consciousness delivers a person from

the greatest danger. What is that greatest danger? The greatest danger is our material existence. Repeatedly we take birth, and repeatedly we meet death. This is the greatest danger. People do not understand it. They do not know on which platform they are standing. This material platform is the greatest danger. It is compared to a forest fire: *saṁsāra-dāvānala-līḍha-loka*. Actually, anywhere we go we see that there is always fire. The fire brigade is always running this way and that way. However we try to keep our material existence peaceful and prosperous by artificial means, there is no possibility of peace and prosperity in the material world. We must understand that it is always full of danger. One who becomes serious about his position knows: “I am not in a very steady or fixed up position; my position is very tottering. I am standing on a tottering platform.” This is the actual beginning of spiritual life.

LOVE IS OUR LIFE

Once we begin spiritual life, we can find real enjoyment. Caitanya Mahāprabhu has explained that our real life is love of Godhead. Love is our life; everyone wants to love. Everyone is hankering to love someone. But we do not know where to place our love. Kṛṣṇa, however, is the ultimate object of love. We are trying to maintain this body, but the body is not actually the proper object of our love. Rather, it is the life within the body that is the real object of love. Similarly, the central point is Kṛṣṇa. As soon as we somehow or other place our love with Kṛṣṇa, our path of happiness, eternity and bliss opens. If we gradually make progress, then we actually reach the platform of love, and then other symptoms of love become manifested. Caitanya Mahāprabhu has explained how love in the pure transcendental stage of life develops with Kṛṣṇa, and He has divided it into five relationships: *sānta*, *dāsya*, *sākhya*, *vat-salya* and *mādhurya*.

These categories differ according to progressive affection for God, but the basic principle of all of them is love of God. *Sānta* means the neutral position. This is the sublime position of knowing that God is great. When there is appreciation of God but there is no activity, that is called the neutral stage, *sānta-rasa*. But when activity is added, one concludes,

“God is the greatest, so let me render some service to the greatest.” It is quite natural. Suppose one is with a person who is one’s superior. Naturally one says, “Mr. Such and Such, can I do something for you?” This offering of service is natural. Whenever one finds some superior, one will naturally offer one’s service.

Simply understanding that God is great is the principle of all religious scriptures, whether Christian or Jewish or Hindu or Muslim. The common conception of all religion is that God is very great. The Muslims say, “*Allah agavat*.” The Christians say, “God is great.” The Hindus say, “*Satyam param brahman*.” When Arjuna understood *Bhagavad-gītā* and understood Kṛṣṇa also, he addressed Kṛṣṇa as *param brahman*, the greatest spiritual identity. The acceptance of the greatness of God is called *sānta-rasa*. It is also peaceful realization: “I have realized the greatest.” This is called *brahma-bhūta*. “I am qualitatively one with the Supreme. I am Brahman, and the Lord is also Brahman.” Suppose a very big man is our very nearest and dearest relative. Are we not proud of it? For example, wouldn’t you feel proud to know that the President were your uncle? Similarly, as soon as one understands that he is Brahman or that Kṛṣṇa is Param Brahman, he will feel ecstasy. That is called *sānta-rasa*.

The next stage is when one feels, “Why not render some service to the President? I want to do something for him.” A great man has a great field of activities; if one offers some service to the Supreme Lord, one has an unlimited field. One can worship the Supreme Lord by one’s talent. Everyone has some specific talent; even birds and beasts have specific talents. When Lord Rāmacandra was constructing a bridge over the Indian Ocean to approach the kingdom of Rāvaṇa, Hanumān and the other big monkeys were bringing big stones, and a spider also concluded, “Why not serve Rāmacandra?” They were trying to construct a bridge, and the spider thought, “What can I do?” So he started rubbing his legs in the dust and throwing bits of dust into the ocean. Hanumān said, “What nonsense are you doing?” The spider replied, “I am doing some service.” And Rāmacandra said, “He is doing as good as you are. You are throwing big stones, but he has no power to bring big stones. He is doing whatever he has the power to do, so he is doing as well as you.” This shows that God does not require any

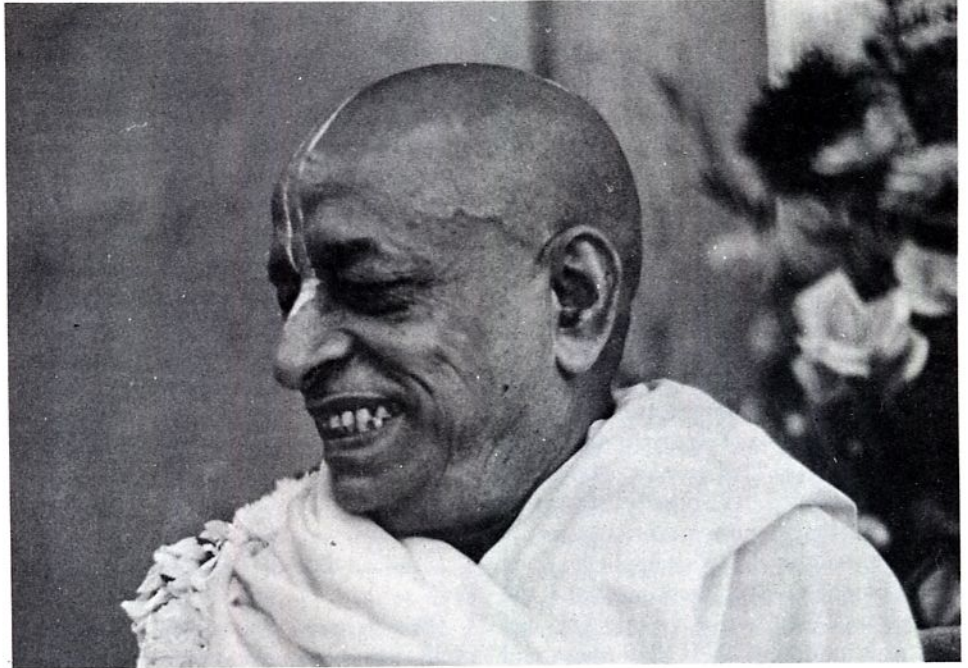
service from us. He is complete, but He wants to see our existence engaged in giving pleasure to the Supreme.

Many people ask, "Why did God create us?" The answer is that God created us for enjoyment. Why does a father create so many children? For enjoyment. Otherwise, what is the use of taking so much responsibility for a family? Nowadays people don't want to take any responsibility, but people try to evade it. It is a fact, however, that by not being family men they are unhappy. Everyone should be responsible; no scripture disallows family life. Anyone can serve the Supreme Lord.

THE UNLIMITED ENJOYER

The Lord has created all these living entities for His enjoyment. Why has He created so many? Because He is unlimited, and His aspiration for enjoyment is also unlimited. Therefore He can produce unlimited children, and there is an unlimited possibility for enjoyment with God. This is God consciousness. Don't think that if a few people enter into the abode of Kṛṣṇa, it will become congested and overpopulated. There is no question of overpopulation. That is nonsense. God has the capacity to maintain everyone because He is unlimited. We are not suffering due to overpopulation. It is due to our godlessness that nature inflicts suffering upon us and we are therefore suffering. Fruit is produced for human beings, and if there is overpopulation, nature can profusely produce more fruit. It has the power. But if we are not God conscious, Kṛṣṇa conscious, nature can reduce, and then we have poverty. Any production depends on nature, and so nature will supply. For example, in a prison house the prisoners sometimes are not supplied the proper food. Why? Is the government unable? No. But the government feels that the criminals should be punished. So when there is poverty, when there is scarcity, one should know that it is not due to overpopulation; it is due to our godlessness.

In India they are thinking that technology will save them. But technology will not save them. They have committed a great mistake; they have killed their own culture of God consciousness. In Berkeley there was a meeting, and an Indian girl asked me, "Swamiji, what is God?" So that is their punishment. I told her, "You claim that you are an Indian girl, and you



do not know what God is. The birthplace of God is India; Kṛṣṇa appeared there, Lord Rāmacandra appeared there, Lord Caitanya appeared there, and you claim to be Indian, and you do not know. How degraded you have become." It is due to our degradation that we suffer, otherwise there is no scarcity in the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God can be immediately established here also, if we are Kṛṣṇa conscious.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes the great prosperity of the government of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. It is even stated that there was no excessive heat or excessive cold in his kingdom, and there was no anxiety among the people. Not only were there foodstuffs in abundance, but no one was in physical anxiety. There was no enmity; there was not even severe cold or severe heat. These miseries are punishment. When we feel severe cold or severe snowfall, this is punishment. One can observe that in some of the cold parts of the world there are Eskimos living in houses of ice and eating raw flesh and blood, and yet *māyā* has so much power that they are thinking, "We are happy." If they did not think themselves happy, they couldn't live there. Therefore the conditions are created in such a way that even a worm in the stool also thinks, "I am happy." The hog who is eating stool also thinks, "I am happy. I am getting fat." Unless one feels happy, he cannot get fat. This is psychology. Eating will not make one fat. When one thinks, "I am quite all right," he will

get fat. The hog is thinking, "I am happy." The worm in the stool is thinking, "I am happy." The Eskimos are thinking, "I am happy." But who is actually happy? No one is happy. There is no happiness in this material world.

When one gets out of the so-called happiness of material life and becomes conscious that God is great, that is called *sānta-rasa*. And when one tries to offer some service to the Supreme Lord, then there is much one can do because this is a civilization of godlessness. If one engages one's body, mind, words, intelligence and talent for propagation of this Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then one's *dāsyā-rasa* attitude of rendering service to the Lord will be nicely developed. In *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord says, "Anyone who is trying to broadcast the *Bhagavad-gītā*'s message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is very dear." Those rascals who are trying to curb down Kṛṣṇa while at the same time teaching from the *Bhagavad-gītā* are doing the greatest disservice, and they will have to suffer for that. They preach only their own concocted philosophy, not the real thing. But if anyone actually preaches *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is, he becomes the dearest person. The example is given that if one pleases one's stomach, then automatically all parts of one's body will be pleased. Similarly, God, Kṛṣṇa, is the center; He is the stomach of all manifestations. If we give Him our service, then He will be pleased, and the whole world will be pleased—and the whole world will be peaceful and prosperous.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is very scientific. Try to please Kṛṣṇa. If one pours water onto the root of a tree, all the branches, leaves, flowers and twigs become nourished, and if one supplies foodstuffs to one's stomach, the nourishment is distributed all over the body. Similarly, if one wants peace and prosperity, then one should begin devotional service immediately.

Sānta-rasa is to realize that God is great. Every religion says that God is great, but in the Vedic scriptures we find how to render service to the Lord. That we won't find in any other scripture. Simply to understand that God is great is very nice, but that understanding of greatness will not stand if one does not apply oneself practically in service. That science is taught in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Therefore Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not a sectarian religion. The example is given regarding the pocket dictionary and the international dictionary. A pocket dictionary is undoubtedly a dictionary, and the huge Webster's International Dictionary is also a dictionary. But the two dictionaries are not the same, although both of them are dictionaries. Similarly, there are many scriptures and many religious principles all over the world. No human society is without religious principles. But here is the International Dictionary, *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. So don't take it as a sectarian thing. It is international, universal. One should study *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in that spirit, not in the sectarian spirit.

Lord Caitanya has therefore described the five different kinds of attraction. The first is *sānta*, neutral attraction. When the affection increases more, it becomes servitude; when it increases still more, it becomes friendship; when it increases still more it becomes parental love; and when it finally increases to the highest degree, it is called conjugal love. These things are possible in our relationship with Kṛṣṇa in the transcendental world. The basic ingredient is love of Godhead. The example of degrees of sweetness was nicely given by Lord Caitanya to illustrate this principle: molasses, when sweetened, becomes sugar, and when sugar is further concentrated, it becomes rock candy. Also, when we analyze the material elements, we find that from ether, air is produced; from air, fire is produced; from fire, water is produced; from water, earth is produced; and in the earth one will find all other elements. If one analyzes earth one will find ether, fire, air, and water, but in the water there is no earth, in the fire there is no water, in

the air there is no fire, and in the ether there is no air. This is scientifically true. Similarly, in the transcendental world, our relationship with Kṛṣṇa can be further and further developed. It can be developed unlimitedly. In the spiritual world the spirit souls are enjoying unlimitedly. There is no misery there, and all is full of joy, eternal bliss and eternal knowledge. Everyone there is relishing his particular relationship with Kṛṣṇa, and everyone is satisfied in that particular relationship. One may say that friendship is better than servitude, but in the transcendental world there are no such differences. Whether friendship, servitorship, parental love or conjugal love, the transcendental bliss is fully derived.

SECONDARY RELATIONSHIPS

There are seven secondary relationships with Kṛṣṇa. Hiraṇyakaśipu, for example, was killed by an incarnation of the Lord, Nṛsiṃhadeva, for the sake of his son. It is very difficult to understand the absolute nature of the Supreme Lord: to be killed by Him is another mellow. Hiraṇyakaśipu is an eternal associate of Kṛṣṇa, but Kṛṣṇa wanted to fight. We cannot make God a stereotype—He is the most dynamic force. When Kṛṣṇa wants to fight, He fights. Sometimes kings keep wrestlers, and they mock fight. Similarly, when Kṛṣṇa desires to fight, then He has to fight with His devotee. If Kṛṣṇa desires to have a mother, then one of His devotees becomes His mother. If Kṛṣṇa wants a wife, then one of the devotees becomes His wife. He is full, but at the same time He has unlimited desires. Don't think that Kṛṣṇa has no desire. With that desire, He has become many. Sometimes we take pleasure in fighting. We make fighting parties; some friends form one party, and other friends form an opposite party, and they fight. That is enjoyment, not fighting. Similarly, the killing of a devotee by Kṛṣṇa is also a sporting pastime. In the absolute world there is no such thing as discrimination, yet every variety exists.

The secondary as well as the primary relationships relished by Kṛṣṇa and His devotees are described in *The Nectar of Devotion*. When the relationship between Kṛṣṇa and His devotee is joking, it is called *hāsa-rasa*. Another relationship is that of *adbhuta*, wonder. Hiraṇyakaśipu was struck with wonder at the form of Nṛsiṃhadeva, half-lion and half-man. He did not know whether the form was an animal or man or God or a demigod. This

is called *adbhuta*, being struck with wonder. There is also another reciprocation: *vīra*, chivalry, as in the fighting between Bhīṣma and Arjuna. Bhīṣma was taking pleasure in piercing Kṛṣṇa with arrows. Blood was oozing from Kṛṣṇa's body, and ultimately He took a wheel and presented Himself before Bhīṣma: "I have taken the weapon. Just see!" The description of Bhīṣma's worshiping Kṛṣṇa by fighting appears in the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. It is not that Kṛṣṇa can be worshiped only by offering flower garlands. A devotee also has the power to love Kṛṣṇa by piercing His body. Otherwise it is not complete. The impersonalists cannot enter into the kingdom of completeness. There is eternal bliss in fighting with Kṛṣṇa and in seeing Kṛṣṇa bloodstained. That is described in this scene from the *Bhāgavatam*. Bhīṣma enjoyed seeing Kṛṣṇa with His hair covered with the dust kicked up by the horses on the battlefield. Kṛṣṇa was in anxiety that His devotee Arjuna would be killed. He appeared disturbed and was perspiring, while at the same time Bhīṣma was piercing Him with arrows. That scene was remembered by Bhīṣma: "I want to see *that* Kṛṣṇa." This is reciprocation. Hiraṇyakaśipu wanted to see Kṛṣṇa as an enemy, and therefore he began to torture his own son so that Kṛṣṇa would come as His enemy and kill him.

Other relationships were displayed when Kṛṣṇa appeared as a gigantic boar form in the sky to deliver the earth. At that time the earth planet had fallen in the mire of the nether world, and all the demigods prayed to Kṛṣṇa to get it out. When features such as ghastliness, astonishment, wonder, anger and dread are displayed in different pastimes of the Lord, these are not direct relations, but are indirect. In the absolute world, however, there is no difference between the feature of wonder or the loving feature of Kṛṣṇa embracing Rādhārāṇī or Kṛṣṇa playing with the damsels of Vraja. There is no such difference in the absolute world.

For purposes of calculation, there are a total of twelve different relationships with Kṛṣṇa. Out of the twelve, five are primary, and the seven others are secondary. But there is no difference between the primary and secondary relationships. We should always remember that this is the Lord's absolute variety. This transcendental variety is always absolute, and so there is no difference. That is not to be understood on the material platform because here there is antagonism in the variety, but in the spiritual world there is no antagonism. Everything is relishable.

TRANSCENDENTAL KNOWLEDGE

by Kīrtanānanda Svāmī

[This is the fourth in a series of eighteen articles on the eighteen chapters of *Bhagavad-gītā*.—editor]

In the Fourth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa explains two main topics to his disciple Arjuna; the first has to do with the nature and activities of the Lord, and the second has to do with the activities of the living entity, which are sometimes called *sanātana-yoga*, or eternal activities of the living being. Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Lord of the universe is always transcendental, and in the first nine verses of this chapter we learn a great deal about the transcendental nature of the Lord. He first instructs Arjuna about the transcendental nature of *Bhagavad-gītā* itself, and how this science was transmitted: "I instructed this imperishable science of *yoga* to the sun-god Vivasvān, and Vivasvān instructed it to Manu, the father of mankind, and Manu in turn instructed it to Ikṣvāku." (Bg. 4.1)

So the first point to be made about the transcendental nature of Kṛṣṇa is that He is the origin of all *dharma*. No system of religion can be manufactured by the mental speculator. Kṛṣṇa definitely asserts here, "I instructed," and similarly He says that in the course of time, because of changes made in the transmission, the disciplic succession was broken. Therefore Kṛṣṇa is again speaking the same message to Arjuna, "because you are My friend and devotee."

There are always two classes of men, the devotee, who is always trying to carry out Kṛṣṇa's orders, and the demon, who is always envious of Kṛṣṇa. The Lord speaks the message of *Bhagavad-gītā* to the first class only, namely the devotees, such as Arjuna or Vivasvān, because they are not envious of Kṛṣṇa, and will listen. But the demons never listen and are forever rebellious. They are convinced that they can figure out the Absolute Truth by their own mental speculation, and ultimately they conclude that they are as good as Kṛṣṇa, even though they have none of the qualifications of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore they cannot accept Lord Kṛṣṇa as He is, and as He is portrayed in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

HE IS TRANSCENDENTAL

The second point to be made about the transcendental nature of Kṛṣṇa is that

He is not like an ordinary living entity, in that His memory is always perfect: "Many, many births both you and I have passed," He tells Arjuna, "I can remember all of them, but you cannot." (Bg. 4.5) Actually this capacity of remembrance and forgetfulness is one of the basic differences between the Supreme and the conditioned soul. The quality of the Supreme is *cit*, or perfect knowledge, past, present, and future, but the conditioned soul is always forgetful.

With each body that we take we leave behind the memory of the last. With each new body, and even within these bodies, we tend to forget, and especially in this present age called Kali-yuga, memory is being so reduced that we cannot even remember things very close at hand. I doubt if there is a single reader who could recite perfectly the first sentence in this essay. Yet it was not very long ago that a good *brahmacārī*, or student, could hear a lecture and remember it perfectly. Such is our position in this age that we are going down and down, and all the while we think that we are advancing. That is called *māyā*, what is not. We are being degraded and dragged down to hell, and *māyā* says, "Isn't it nice?"

HE NEVER FORGETS

But Kṛṣṇa is never forgetful. In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* it says: "I worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Govinda [Kṛṣṇa], who is the Original Person, absolute, infallible, without beginning, although expanded into unlimited forms, still the same original, the oldest, and the person always appearing as a fresh youth." Such vision may on occasion be manifest to the best Vedic scholars, but Kṛṣṇa says that it is always available to the pure devotee. Actually, this word *acyuta*, infallible, means that He never forgets himself, even when He is in contact with material nature. The *jīva*, or individual soul, forgets himself because the *jīva* is infinitesimal, while Kṛṣṇa is infinite.

So the Lord and the living entity can never be equal in all respects, even if the living entity is as liberated as Arjuna. Although Arjuna is a liberated soul from the very beginning and is an eternal associate of the Lord, nevertheless he sometimes forgets the nature of the Lord. But by the divine grace of the Lord, a devotee

alone can understand the infallible condition of the Lord, whereas a nondevotee or demon cannot understand this transcendental nature of Kṛṣṇa.

And why the Lord never forgets is further explained in the sixth verse: "Although I am unborn and My transcendental body never deteriorates, and although I am the Lord of all sentient beings, I still appear in every millennium in My original transcendental form." The Lord's body is called *advaita*, which means that there is no distinction between the Lord and His body—everything is spirit. But the conditioned soul is different from his material body. Therefore when he leaves one material body and goes to another he forgets, but the Lord never takes a material body; He always appears in the same *sac-cid-ānanda* body. *Sac-cid-ānanda* means eternal, knowledgeable and blissful, so that is called His transcendental body, and it never deteriorates, and He never changes bodies.

It is something like the sun, which appears on the horizon and passes through the meridian and then sets; but this appearance and disappearance is due to our vision, not to the sun. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa's appearance and disappearance are due to the imperfect eyesight of the conditioned soul. The Lord is always the same Absolute Truth and is without differentiation between His form and His Self, or between His quality and body. This is omnipotence.

WHY HE APPEARS

Now the reason for this appearance and disappearance is revealed in verse seven: "Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, and a predominant rise of irreligion—at that time I descend My Self." No man can manufacture a system of religion, for only Kṛṣṇa can breathe new life into the sleeping soul. Therefore, it says that the Lord originally spoke this transcendental message to Brahmā from within his heart. Actually, from the eighth verse of the Fourth Chapter, we can understand that the reason the Lord descends Himself is not so much to annihilate the wicked—He can do that without coming Himself. He can do that by the potency of any one of His multi-energies—all of whom He controls by His expansion as Paramātmā.

Then why does He come Himself? Just to deliver the pious, just for the pleasure of His devotees. Actually, when Kṛṣṇa was a small child He killed so many demons, but it was not for the demons' sake that

He appeared. It was for Mother Yaśodā's sake, just so she could think, "Oh how God has saved my child." God was her child, but by the ecstasy of love, Mother Yaśodā could think, "Oh how God has saved my child." That is one of the inconceivable pastimes of the Lord. So just to please His devotees, the Lord appears when there is too much wickedness.

For anyone who can understand this transcendental nature of the Lord, the transcendental nature of His appearance and disappearance, and the nature of His activities and speaking, for him there is assurance of liberation, and Kṛṣṇa promises such a one a place in His transcendental abode. Why is that? Because such a person is qualified. According to the tenth verse, such a person has no attachment to the material world, and one who has no attachment to this material world becomes completely attached to Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa means all-attractive, and therefore He can attract one completely. Even as a magnet can attract all of the iron to itself, so Kṛṣṇa can attract every *jīva* soul to Himself. The question is one of knowledge. The soul in knowledge is attracted to Kṛṣṇa, because He is the reservoir of all pleasure; but the soul in forgetfulness is being attracted to so many reflections because the conditioned soul has forgotten the source of all *rasa* or pleasure. So Kṛṣṇa can attract all the living entities as soon as they remember Him. Furthermore, as one becomes free from attachment, he automatically becomes free from fear and anger, because he is completely absorbed in Kṛṣṇa. And since he is taking refuge in Kṛṣṇa, what is there to fear?

Next, Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that as proof of what He says, so many great saints and sages in the past became purified in this way and attained transcendental love for Him. So this process of thinking about the transcendental nature of Kṛṣṇa, His appearance and activities, is an authorized way to attain love for Kṛṣṇa.

KṚṢṆA RECIPROCATES

It is all a question of surrender. Verse eleven states: All of them, as they surrender unto Me, I reward accordingly." Actually Kṛṣṇa is seated within the heart of every living entity. So there is no question of fooling the Supersoul. He is not impressed by outward show, and He is not impressed by ritual, but He is impressed by a loving heart. There is a nice verse in the Holy Bible which says, "Seek and ye

shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." The point is that the Lord responds in exact proportion to the striving of the living entity. If we want Kṛṣṇa ten percent, it is ten percent that we will get. But if we surrender everything that we have (and actually we have nothing which is not already Kṛṣṇa's save and except the false ego which we have manufactured in our conditioned state), then Kṛṣṇa will likewise give Himself. It is something like the mother who hears her child beginning to whine, and so hands him a toy. Then when he whines again she gives him another and another, until the point is reached when the child will not be quieted with any toy. At that point the mother picks up the child and gives him herself.

Similarly, when we become thoroughly disgusted with all of this paraphernalia, and when nothing else will satisfy, Kṛṣṇa will give us Himself. In this connection, one great saint has prayed, "O my Lord, when will that day come when I will have no more taste for the inebrieties of this world, and I will take to the nectar of Thy loving service? When will that day come when my ears will become stopped up from hearing of Thy glories, and my tongue will be forever engaged in chanting Thy holy name?"

Actually, no one ever becomes the loser by giving to Kṛṣṇa. We may be giving up ten percent, or fifty percent, or one hundred percent of what we have, but count it any way you want, ten percent of nothing or fifty percent of nothing or one hundred percent of nothing is still nothing. It is all illusion, *māyā*, that is all. But if I get ten percent of the Infinite, that is infinite, and we cannot imagine what is one hundred percent of the Infinite. One may give up a worthless body, or the worthless conception of "I" and "mine," but Kṛṣṇa can give one a body like His own, and a conception of I and mine which is spiritual, and therefore in perfect relation to the Absolute, a body not subject to birth and death, but one which is eternal and full of bliss. In short, such a man has Kṛṣṇa, and therefore all the resources of all the opulences of the Almighty.

Kṛṣṇa is so kind that He reciprocates with the devotee just as the devotee would like to have him. To one He is master, to another He is friend, to another He is son and to still another, He reciprocates in the supreme exchange of the perfect lover. Kṛṣṇa awards equally all devotees in their different intensities of love for Him. Thus the devotees can serve Kṛṣṇa personally, and as such they partake of His *sac-cid-*

ānanda nature, because no one can be in the presence of Kṛṣṇa without experiencing bliss.

And even the impersonalists, who are envious of Kṛṣṇa's personal form, who are fearful of having an eternal personality because of their material frustrations, and who are so frustrated with material existence that they want to commit spiritual suicide, they will also be rewarded by Kṛṣṇa accordingly. Kṛṣṇa allows them to merge into His effulgence, called the *brahmajyoti*, but that certainly is not the most desirable position. We have information that those who attain this *brahmajyoti* eventually fall down to material existence again to exhibit their dormant desire for activities.

Activity is the actual condition of the living entity, and such a condition of non-activity is against our spiritual nature. So we should not strive to give up activity, but we should strive to practice *sanātana-yoga*, or the eternal activities of the living entity. Verse fifteen of Chapter Four says, "All the liberated souls in ancient times acted with this understanding and so attained liberation. Therefore, as did the ancients, you should perform your duty in this divine consciousness." And verse eighteen says: "One who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction, is intelligent among men, and he is in the transcendental position, although engaged in all sorts of activities."

So we can understand that this *sanātana-yoga* or eternal activities of the living entity is not exactly a question of whether one is materially active or inactive, but rather, a question of his consciousness. Therefore there are three concepts in the Sanskrit: One is *karma*, one is *vikarma*, and the third is *akarma*. *Karma* means to follow prescribed regulations, as laid down by the great authorities and scriptures, for good work, for good results, for fruitive activity, for gaining some material benefit or heavenly happiness. These activities are always performed with some good result in view, and therefore ultimately there must also be some reaction. *Vikarma* is just the opposite. It means acting for one's personal sense enjoyment, or according to one's personal whim, disregarding the directions of the scriptures or authorities. Therefore there is reaction, but the consequences are always inauspicious or bad.

But *akarma* means to work in such a way that there is no reaction. The first *mantra* of *Īsopaniṣad* says: "Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the

Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one must not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong.” So the conclusion of *Īsopaniṣad* is that everything belongs to the Lord. Everything is His energy, and therefore He is the ultimate proprietor of everything that is.

So if a man can become a servant of Kṛṣṇa and use things only as Kṛṣṇa directs, then certainly for that man there is no reaction, any more than there is legal action against the bank teller who just does his job nicely, without claiming any of the millions of dollars he is handling as his own. He is simply transferring it from one account to another on behalf of the bank. But if a teller tries to keep some of the funds for himself, he is called an embezzler, and is immediately thrown into jail. Similarly, the living entities who do not do everything for Kṛṣṇa are actually thieves.

EVERYTHING FOR KṚṢṆA

So *sanātana-yoga* means to be doing everything for Kṛṣṇa, and in verse twenty-four of this Fourth Chapter it is practically explained how such a man works: “To him, Brahman, the Supreme, is the offering, Brahman is the oblation and the sacrificial fire, and by Brahman the sacrifice is performed. By performing action in this way, one ultimately attains the Supreme.” So it is not very difficult for someone who is practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness to know that whatever has come into his hands is simply the energy of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, or Brahman. Therefore the very offering is Kṛṣṇa; and to whom he is offering it, that is also Kṛṣṇa. He understands that even his body is Kṛṣṇa’s energy, and therefore it is Kṛṣṇa’s energy which is performing the sacrifice.

The conclusion, therefore, is that one who practices Kṛṣṇa consciousness in this way certainly can never be separated from Kṛṣṇa. The more the activities of the material world are performed in this Kṛṣṇa consciousness, as a sacrifice for Viṣṇu only, the more the material atmosphere becomes spiritualized by complete absorption.

Some people want to give up all activities because they have become frustrated by material activities of *māyā*, but that is not at all recommended. A person who is suffering from a disorder of the bowels from drinking too much milk cannot be cured

just by abstinence from milk. No, that is not a very good cure. But if he would take another milk product, yogurt, then that will cure him. Similarly, we have become addicted to and diseased by this material life consisting of activity for sense gratification, and the cure is to transform this material life into spiritual life by dovetailing everything with the Supreme. Actually, everything that exists is Kṛṣṇa’s energy and is situated with His *brahmajyoti*, or divine effulgence. But when this effulgence is covered by the cloud of illusion, it is called *māyā* or sense gratification, and that is called material. But when matter is dovetailed in the service of the Supreme, or Kṛṣṇa, it regains its spiritual quality. Kṛṣṇa consciousness, wherein everything is done for Kṛṣṇa, is the process of converting illusory energy into spiritual energy, or Brahman.

THE AIM OF SACRIFICE

So what shall we sacrifice, what shall we give to Kṛṣṇa? Basically, there are two kinds of sacrifice, as explained in the thirty-third verse. There is a sacrifice of material possessions and a sacrifice of knowledge. Actually the two are one, but in the beginning there is an apparent difference. The ultimate aim of all sacrifice is to attain Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which means to attain complete knowledge of the Absolute and thereby be freed of all material miseries, finally attaining transcendental love of Kṛṣṇa. But due to differences between performers, there are also differences in prescriptions for gradually attaining that goal. Therefore for one who is a neophyte it is prescribed that he give up his material possessions, and gradually this will elevate him to the position where he can sacrifice knowledge. But a person who is actually in Kṛṣṇa consciousness sacrifices everything, material possessions and knowledge.

So this transcendental knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not such a cheap thing that it can be discovered on any corner or practiced whimsically, without direction. As stated in the thirty-fourth verse: “Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.” As was pointed out in the very beginning of the chapter, the transcendental message must come from above. Kṛṣṇa first spoke it to Vivasvān, and Vivasvān

spoke it to Manu, and thus the message comes down in disciplic succession. So Kṛṣṇa is repeating here that one must find a spiritual master in the disciplic succession and inquire from him submissively. That means unchallengingly, without thinking that one is as good as the spiritual master: The qualification of the spiritual master is that he has seen the truth, and therefore he is in a position to instruct.

So the aspiring disciple must be willing not only to listen, but to also render service. And since our ultimate goal is to render transcendental loving service to Kṛṣṇa, this process must be learned by rendering such service to the spiritual master. This is the way we learn, and without a developed service mood, no one can enter the transcendental realm. For the ultimate goal of transcendental knowledge is service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and until one has learned how to serve the representative of the Supreme Person, how can they hope to serve the Supreme Personality Himself? The spiritual master is not envious, and he is not trying to get something out of his disciples, but instead he is trying to give. He is trying to disseminate knowledge of Kṛṣṇa, so that he can present the disciple to Kṛṣṇa. One who is unqualified cannot approach Kṛṣṇa, and therefore the spiritual master, as the confidential servant of Kṛṣṇa, has no other business than to take these forgotten souls for his master, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, back to home, back to Godhead.

Therefore, when the disciple is submissive, and always ready to render service, the reciprocation of knowledge and inquiry becomes perfect, and the result is stated in the thirty-fifth verse: “When you have thus learned the Truth, you will know that all living beings are My parts and parcels, and that they are in Me, and are Mine.” One who has factually realized his identity with Kṛṣṇa as part and parcel, or as eternal servant of the Lord, is certainly in the transcendental position and free from all anxiety. In the association of a pure devotee one can attain this consciousness simply by rendering devotional service and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. This is the recommended process for this age for cleansing all the dust, all the dirty things, from the mirror of the mind. Such a person can easily realize that the Supreme Lord is definitely a person, and that all His activities are transcendental. One who understands this is a liberated person from the very beginning of his study of *Bhagavad-gītā*.

THE GENUINE SPIRITUAL MASTER

by Girirāja dāsa Brahmācārī (ISKCON Boston)

“Instant Problem Solving—Guru Inside”

Every day we Boston devotees pass this sign as we chant the holy names in Harvard Square. The sign hangs on a local shop window, and it is sold in quantity inside. This week at the neighboring movie theatre a new movie is showing—*The Guru*. So who is the *guru*?

The true *guru* is the person who says that Kṛṣṇa, God, is our true friend. He does not pose himself as God or tell us that we can become God. The bona fide *guru* has various qualifications, and someone who is looking for a spiritual master must know the standards that the true *guru* must meet.

Today everyone is posing himself as a spiritual master or *guru*, and so we have that facetious sign. One group of foolish persons thinks that they can become *gurus* by their own concoction, simply by proclaiming themselves spiritual masters. And a corresponding group of foolish persons accepts such phonies because the formula is so easy, offers so much sense gratification, and supposedly permits the practitioner to become God. They like to think that in an instant their problems will vanish, and thus they are cheated.

Despite such foolishness, there is such a thing as a bona fide *guru* or spiritual master, and the sincere student of spiritual science should know how to recognize him. One should understand who the spiritual master is, what his position is, how he can be identified, and how we relate to him. And one should know the ultimate goal in accepting a spiritual master.

Simply stated, the ultimate goal of spiritual life is to develop love of God, and the duty of the spiritual master is to awaken this dormant love of God in the hearts of his students. The spiritual master is a servant of the Supreme Lord. Thus the student becomes the indirect servant of God, and if a student serves God sincerely, God will ultimately reveal Himself to the student in a pure loving exchange. This process is described in *Bhagavad-gītā* and is recommended as the highest *yoga* by the Supreme Lord Himself, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the original spiritual master.

So in real spiritual life the spiritual master acts as the via medium between us, so minute, and Kṛṣṇa, so great. We are so limited that we cannot approach the un-

limited God, but the spiritual master, out of his causeless mercy, makes himself available to help us approach the Supreme Lord.

GOD IS REVEALED

The spiritual master has completely surrendered to God, and God has revealed Himself fully to such a pure devotee. The spiritual master acts as a via medium between ourselves, who are contaminated by our association with matter, and Kṛṣṇa, God. In this sense the spiritual master is even more merciful than God, since he comes and reveals himself to the conditioned soul who is still contaminated by material association. But since the spiritual master is pure in his surrender to God and the will of God, he is, in a sense, one with God. Thus the student who comes to hear and love the spiritual master also comes to develop knowledge and love of God.

Of course it is the mercy of God to send the spiritual master, and then it is the grace of the spiritual master to deliver God. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, the process for going back to Godhead is simply to engage in devotional service to God. But how can we, who are so minute and actually helpless, do anything for God, who controls and owns everything? The answer is to serve the spiritual master. It is like this: Suppose one knows a very, very rich man. What can one do to please him? Nothing. He has everything, and in comparison we have nothing. But suppose the man has a son. Then simply by giving a small piece of fruit to the son, one can please the son, and when the son is pleased, then automatically the father becomes pleased. So in this way one can please a very rich man.

The spiritual master is very dear to Kṛṣṇa, just as a son is dear to the loving father, and by pleasing the spiritual master one can please God Himself. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Supreme Lord states, “There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he, nor will there ever be one more dear.” (Bg. 18.69) So Kṛṣṇa has feelings, and He dearly loves the spiritual master. In fact, as stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhagavatam*, Third Canto, the Supreme Personality of Godhead is thinking, “There is no way I can ever repay My pure devotees.” When

a man walks barefoot in the blazing sun, his feet are scorched, but his head feels no pain. Similarly, although He may tolerate offenses to Himself, Kṛṣṇa tolerates no abuse to His pure devotee. As stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Third Canto, “They captivate My heart who are gladdened in heart; they look upon the *brāhmaṇas* [holy men] as My own Self and pacify them by praising them in loving words, even as a son would appease an angry father or as I am pacifying you.” So by serving the spiritual master we can please the Supreme Lord and thus go back to Him, by His divine grace.

AN INTIMATE SERVANT

In this connection another example may help. Suppose you know of a very rich, famous, or distinguished personage and want to gain entrance into his house. You cannot go to his home and say, “I make \$200 a week so let me in.” No—\$200 a week or \$500 a week or \$1000 a week is nothing to him. You have no qualification of your own. But if you have the favor of one of his associates or servants, then by his desire you may enter the rich man’s home. Similarly, the intimate associate of the Lord is the spiritual master, and the Lord is anxious to please His pure devotees. The relationship between the Lord and His devotee is transcendently beautiful. As a devotee is elevated in all good qualities due to his being a devotee of the Lord, so the transcendental glories of the Lord are increased due to His being devoted to His servitor. In other words, as the devotee is always anxious to render service to the Lord, similarly, the Lord is very anxious to render service to the devotee, the bona fide spiritual master.

With confidence in this relationship, the student, out of love, agrees to serve the spiritual master. There is no question of force. Where there is force, there is no love. Our spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, once said, “If a father calls his son, ‘Come here!’ and there is no love, the son will either refuse to come, or he will come reluctantly, thinking secretly, ‘How can I get back at my father?’ But if I say, ‘Satsvarūpa, come here!’ you will come immediately, out of excess of love. Is that not right?” Satsvarūpa, one of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s students, immediately nodded his head—“Yes!” Thus the service rendered

by the student to the bona fide spiritual master is performed out of love. Anyone who sees His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda with his disciples is seeing the perfection of family life.

The mother, the *Vedas*, directs the child to the father, the bona fide spiritual master, as illustrated so personally in the *Gītā*. Arjuna, who had very great spiritual qualifications as well as material qualifications, still confessed to Kṛṣṇa, the supreme spiritual master: "Now I am confused about duty, and I have lost all composure because of weakness. In this condition I am asking You to tell me clearly what is best for me. Now I am Your disciple, a soul surrendered unto You. Please instruct me." (Bg. 2.7) By nature's own way, the complete system of material activities is a source of perplexity for everyone. Vedic wisdom therefore advises us that in order to solve the perplexities of life and to understand the science of the solution, one must approach a spiritual master, for a bona fide spiritual master is supposed to know everything.

DISCIPLIC SUCCESSION

Furthermore, the *Vedas* set forth the qualifications of the bona fide spiritual master. The first requirement for the bona fide spiritual master is that he be in the line of disciplic succession from the Supreme Lord Himself. Not just anyone can qualify as a spiritual master, nor should the student accept anyone to be a spiritual master simply on sentiment. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original spiritual master, as stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: *dharmaṁ tu sākṣād bhagavat-praṇītam*: "The path of religion is directly enunciated by the Lord." The bona fide spiritual master teaches the transcendental science, as first enunciated by the Lord, *as it is*, without concoction or alteration. He is able to do so because he understands the purport of the Lord's teaching from the disciplic succession descending directly from the Lord.

The knowledge mercifully given by the Lord is like a perfect fruit passed down from the top of a tree. The fruit must be passed delicately. If someone drops the fruit, or lets it fall, or in any way mishandles it, then the whole fruit is spoiled. If the bona fide spiritual master is in the line of disciplic succession from the Supreme Lord, he is careful to pass the fruit of Vedic wisdom to us without personally motivated interpretation. The conclusion

of all Vedic knowledge is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the goal of all *yoga*, knowledge and sacrifice. All the great saints and sages in our line of disciplic succession, the Brahma-Mādhva-Gauḍīya Sampradāya, beginning with Śrī Kṛṣṇa and including Brahmā, Nārada, Vyāsa, Lord Caitanya, Śrīla Narotama Dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja Prabhupāda, and finally His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, have personally realized and taught Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If the result of a process is good, then the process itself must be good. These great saints and *ācāryas* are unmatched in spiritual realization, so the process of God realization first spoken by Kṛṣṇa and passed on through the disciplic succession is also matchless.

The second requirement of the bona fide spiritual master is that he speak only on the authority of the *Vedas* or of his spiritual master, so that the disciplic succession may be kept rigidly in line with the original teachings. The spiritual master never invents ideas or processes for self-realization, but always goes to the higher authorities. He is aware of the limitations of the minute living entity and his small mind and imperfect senses, so he similarly teaches his students to speak only from the higher authority.

Even the Supreme Lord Himself does this. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Chapter Thirteen, Verse 4, Kṛṣṇa states, "That knowledge of the field of activities and of the knower of activities is described by various sages in various Vedic writings, especially in the *Vedānta-sūtra*." Of course, Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the ultimate source of all the *Vedas*, and the supreme authority on all matters, but still He cites the accepted spiritual literature. Lord Kṛṣṇa teaches by example how the bona fide spiritual master always gives evidence from previous authorities. That is the process. Similarly, Lord Caitanya, who was also the Supreme Personality of Godhead, accepted a bona fide spiritual master in the line of disciplic succession, and He always quoted His spiritual master.

The spiritual master and student alike strictly follow the line of disciplic succession and the Vedic authorities, so others who are interested in spiritual life should follow this process too. People are so prone to indulge in transitory speculation, even when they are to educate themselves on areas beyond their empiric jurisdiction.

People so often mistake these illusory experiences, especially when influenced by a drug or "meditative" process, for genuine spiritual realization. They so often have "inspirations," "visions," "experiences" and "revelations" which are merely the concoctions of a limited and deluded mind. The person interested in spiritual life should therefore be very wary of his own personal messages. God, Kṛṣṇa, is in our hearts as Paramātmā, Supersoul, and thus He can speak to us. But there are parallel tracks—God on the inside and spiritual master on the outside—so the religious seeker must confirm his inner realizations by the authority of the spiritual master on the outside. This dual confirmation is very important; one must go to the spiritual master.

REALIZATION

The third requirement of the bona fide spiritual master is that his knowledge is realized. He must be a pure devotee of God, teaching by example, practicing what he is preaching—not that he teaches dry theory or philosophy. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa describes the characteristics of His pure devotees, and by these characteristics one can recognize a bona fide spiritual master: "He who knows in truth this glory and power of Mine engages in unalloyed devotional service; of this there is no doubt. I am the source of everything; from Me the entire creation flows. Knowing this, the wise worship Me with all their hearts. Their thoughts dwell in Me, their lives are surrendered unto Me, and they receive great satisfaction and bliss, enlightening one another and conversing about Me." (Bg. 10.7-9) "They are always engaged in chanting My glories. Endeavoring with great determination, offering homage unto Me, they worship Me with devotion." (Bg. 9.14) These are the characteristics of the pure devotees.

The bona fide spiritual master is always in ecstasy of love of God, having realized who God is, who the self is, and what is actually the relation between the Lord and the living entity. The bona fide spiritual master is in a direct relationship of loving reciprocation with the Lord, and he fully accepts the Lord in His personal form. As stated above, the *mahātmā*, or great soul, is always engaged in chanting the glories of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, with no other engagement.

That means that he must glorify the Supreme Lord, praising His holy name, His eternal form, His transcendental qualities and His uncommon pastimes, and he must pass on such information to his students. The bona fide spiritual master does not dwell on the impersonal Brahman feature of the Supreme Lord, in which the *ānanda* or blissful aspect of loving exchange with the Supreme Person is missing.

The spiritual master, being completely attached to the Supreme Person, is not attracted to material or bodily affairs. He understands that he is not this body but is pure spirit soul, part and parcel of the Supreme Person Kṛṣṇa, and that his position is of loving service to Kṛṣṇa. Therefore he is always joyful and free of anxieties, neither hankering nor lamenting about material affairs. He is self-satisfied, *ātmārāma*, and transcendental to the dualities of material life. His eyes are always wet with tears of love for Kṛṣṇa, in fully realized knowledge of *Bhagavad-gītā*. And, as stated in the *Gītā* itself, such a great soul is very rare.

Once a student of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda said to Śrīla Prabhupāda, "Prabhupāda, you look so sad in this picture." And Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, "No, that was a moment of ecstasy." Who can imagine the ecstasy of one who is in direct contact with Śrī Kṛṣṇa? His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda has all the qualifications of a bona fide spiritual master, and he is always in contact with Kṛṣṇa, the all-attractive person, the supreme friend. His Divine Grace needs nothing but engagement in transcendental loving service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and that he has all the time. So what need has he of us? He has no desire to accumulate wealth, nor any desire to enjoy beautiful women, nor does he want any number of followers. He wants only the Lord's causeless devotional service. He has come to the West to spread this divine message only out of his causeless mercy upon us, in service to Kṛṣṇa and his Guru-Mahārāja, pouring the shower of his mercy on all the dried-up souls of the universe.

DOES NOT CLAIM TO BE GOD

The fourth requirement of the bona fide spiritual master is that, realizing Kṛṣṇa to be everything, he never poses himself as God, nor does he ever promise his students that they can become God. God is God,

and we are His servants eternally. God is infinite, and we are infinitesimal parts of God, inconceivably, simultaneously one and different from God, but we are never God Himself. Actually, the spiritual master, having approached God and having realized how inconceivably great He is, always feels meek and lowly, completely dependent on the Lord for protection. Thus the sage is humble; he is ready to pay his respects even to the ant, and he considers himself the most fallen. This is humility. When the Lord was on earth five hundred years ago, He was known as Patita Pāvana, the deliverer of the most fallen. When the great saint Narrotama Dāsa Ṭhākura approached Him, the Ṭhākura said, "You are the deliverer of the most fallen, so kindly save me first."

Once Śrīla Prabhupāda was in his room in Los Angeles with a few devotees surrounding him, and at one point in the discussions he began to cry, saying, "All I ask of you is to be humble. All we can do is be humble to everyone and in everything that we do. That is all that I ask." Another time Śrīla Prabhupāda went to the temple, and, seeing the throne that the devotees had just made for him, he said, "Oh, I cannot accept this. I am the most fallen, and you have made this for me." He was crying. So a devotee replied, "Oh please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept this as our offering to you." His Divine Grace said, "I have no qualification of my own, but I shall accept it for Kṛṣṇa."

Then another time a boy made some *prasādam* (spiritual food) for Śrīla Prabhupāda and was waiting at Śrīla Prabhupāda's door to give it to him. When His Divine Grace appeared, he looked at the *prasādam* and opened his eyes wide and said, "For me?" After that, the boy who brought the food smiled so hard that he got a headache, and he danced down the street all the way home. Later he said, "Up until that moment I had only theoretically known what humility meant. Now I have practical experience of what humility is; now I understand humility."

Even Lord Caitanya, although He was actually the Supreme Personality of Godhead, never claimed to be God because He wanted to demonstrate the proper behavior for a bona fide spiritual master. When people said that they recognized Him as God, He would cover His ears with His hands and say, "No, don't say that!" He further said that one should chant the holy name of the Lord constantly "in a humble

state of mind, thinking himself lower than the straw in the street; one should be more tolerant than the tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige, and ready to offer all respects to others." The true spiritual master is always humble. He sees on an equal level a learned and gentle *brāhmaṇa*, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and a dog-eater, and he offers his services to all. He always points to Kṛṣṇa, saying, "God is great, and we are very small. Therefore we are not God, so we should surrender to God."

FAKE SPIRITUALISTS

The fake spiritualists are puffed up with notions of their own power, and they often think that they are God. "I am God, a dog is God, everyone is God." Or they say, "All is one. We are actually God, but we are now under illusion." If God is under illusion, then illusion is greater than God. And if everything is God, then our everyday meditation on dog or wife should be sufficient to give us liberation. Clearly these pretenders are not God, and His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda urges everyone not to accept cheap gods and fake spiritual masters.

The story is told of one so-called spiritual master who was on the stage in an auditorium sitting in so-called *yoga* and saying, "I am moving the sun, I am moving the moon." But he had to leave the stage because he got a toothache. So is he God? He claims to be moving the sun and the moon, but he cannot stop a toothache. Another charlatan spiritual master was once going to give a lecture on the secret of eternal youth, but on the way to deliver the lecture he died. Still another *yoga* instructor, after giving a lecture, met with one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's students. The so-called *yogī* was sitting on a chair smoking a cigarette, and he said, "You know, I have been having a terrible problem. I just can't give up smoking. Do you have any suggestions?" He was teaching *yoga*, but he could not give up smoking. *Yoga* means to control the senses, to renounce sense gratification, but although he could not even control his tongue, this rascal claimed to teach *yoga*. Is *yoga* such nonsense? "Surrender to Kṛṣṇa. That is *yoga*. That is all," says His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda.

He who teaches surrender to Kṛṣṇa is the bona fide spiritual master, and such a

spiritual master is the only refuge for one who wishes to end his material bondage and live in spiritual ecstasy. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself states this in *Bhagavad-gītā*: "Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth." (Bg. 4.34) In other words, only someone whose hands are free can free someone whose hands are tied. The *paramparā* purport to this verse is as follows: "One has to approach a bona fide spiritual master to receive the knowledge. Such a teacher should be accepted in full surrender, and one should serve the spiritual master like a menial servant, without false prestige. Satisfaction of the spiritual master is the secret of advancement in spiritual life. Inquiries and submission constitute the proper combination for spiritual understanding. Unless there is submission and service, inquiries from the learned spiritual master will not be effective. One must pass the test of the spiritual master, and when the spiritual master sees the genuine desire of the disciple, he automatically blesses the disciple with genuine spiritual understanding. In this verse, both blind following and absurd inquiries are condemned. One should not only hear submissively from the spiritual master, but one must also get a clear understanding from him, in submission and service and inquiries. The spiritual master is by nature very kind toward the disciple, and therefore when the student is submissive and is always ready to render service, the reciprocation of knowledge and inquiries becomes perfect."

For Kṛṣṇa consciousness to act, therefore, there must be a bona fide source of information and a sincere soul desiring to know, just as in order for there to be conception, there must be a potent male and a fertile female. If a man is potent and a

woman is fertile, then by their combination there can be conception. Otherwise, if there is no reciprocation, conception is impossible. One should ask questions and learn from a person to whom one can surrender. If one has any doubts about the person, then one should not waste one's time, since one will not accept his instructions anyway. At the same time, a person who approaches a bona fide spiritual master with a challenging attitude will never understand the transcendental message. One who is fortunate enough to have found a bona fide spiritual master must hear submissively in order to understand and benefit.

QUALIFICATION FOR HEARING

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto Three, verses 40-41, Kṛṣṇa describes the nice qualifications for hearing in relation to the spiritual master: "This instruction should be imparted by the spiritual master to persons who have taken Me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as more dear than anything, and who are not envious of anyone, are perfectly cleansed and have developed detachment from everything outside the purview of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Instruction in Kṛṣṇa consciousness should be given to the faithful devotee who is respectful to the spiritual master, nonenvious, friendly to all kinds of living entities, and ready to render service with faith and sincerity." This attitude is demonstrated by Arjuna on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra in the beginning of *Bhagavad-gītā*. He understands that he had no facility to know the Truth by his own endeavors, and that he must surrender at the lotus feet of the authority, in this case the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Therefore he says, "Now I am Your disciple and a soul surrendered to You. Please instruct me."

Bhagavad-gītā demonstrates the transcendental relationship between Kṛṣṇa, the supreme authority, and Arjuna, the ideal listener. This relationship is established out of respect and love, and only from this personal relationship is God realization possible. The student takes the spiritual master as his spiritual father and follows the teachings of the spiritual master to his full capacity. Lord Jesus Christ said, "Unless you become like little children, you cannot enter the kingdom of God." Only to one who has full faith in the spiritual master will all knowledge be revealed. The word of the spiritual master is the life of the student, and everything else is secondary. Then there is contact. If one touches electricity, even if the source is thousands of miles away, the current is there, and one who touches it can always feel the blissful association of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Everyone now has all facility to become happy by the mercy of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, our spiritual master. He wants everyone to be happy in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and he is offering all transcendental opportunities. He gives us *Back to Godhead Magazine*, *The Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the many temples of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and himself wherever he appears. Greatest of all, he is offering Kṛṣṇa Himself directly, in His holy name: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. These names form the *mahāmantra*, the great chanting for deliverance and the greatest benediction for the conditioned living entities. Finally, His Divine Grace is giving everyone the opportunity to become a spiritual master. The greatest spiritual master, Lord Caitanya, the Supreme Personality Himself, said, "Whoever tells people, 'Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa,' he is My spiritual master."

END

O glorify the one who to Kṛṣṇa is so dear,
Whose presence scatters the clouds of illusion clear,
Whose name is sweeter than the sweetest nectar,
And who brings the torch of knowledge near:

His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda,
At whose lotus feet all other masters gather,
Pulling us out of *māyā*'s thralls to see
How wonderful is reality.
None can save us from death but he.

When will I have eyes to see you
And to concentrate my attention on you?
Your Divine Grace, our very lives
Are dependent on your mercy.

O Prabhupāda, let me forever be
Chained to your service, never free,
Lest *māyā* should overcome my weak mind
And drown me in her fearful sea.

—*Tīrthapāda Dāsa Brahmācārī*
(ISKCON Sydney)

ISKCON Detroit

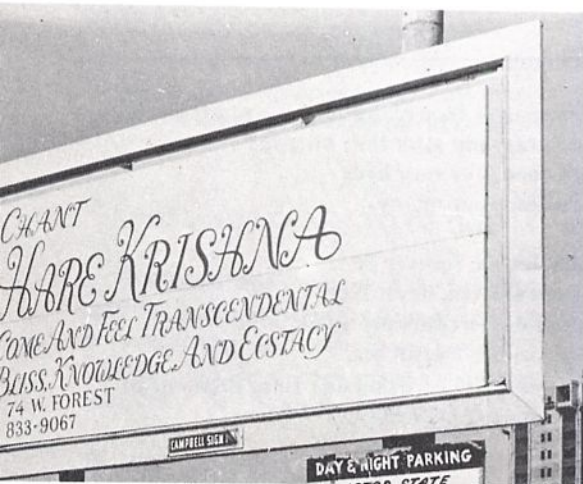
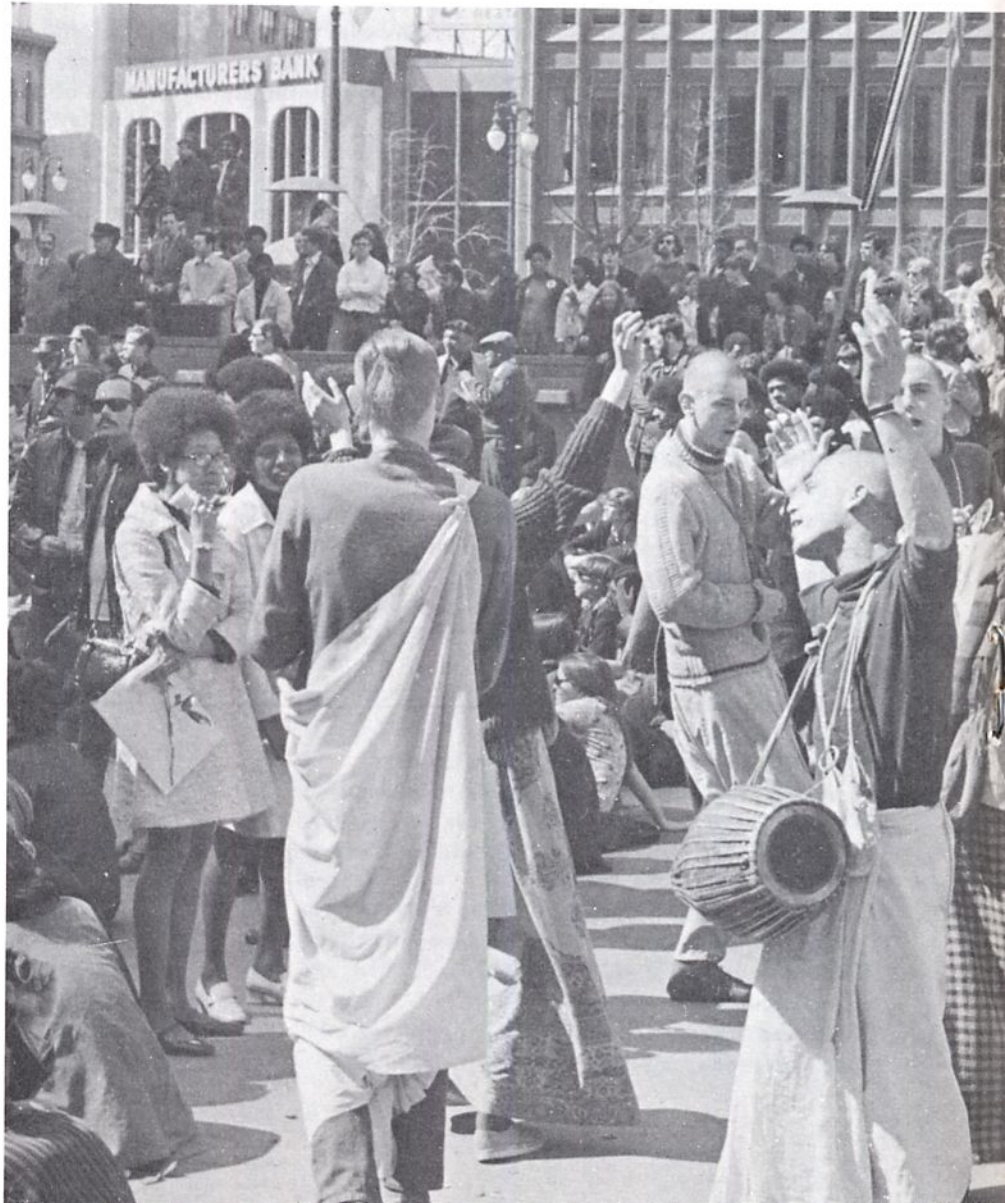
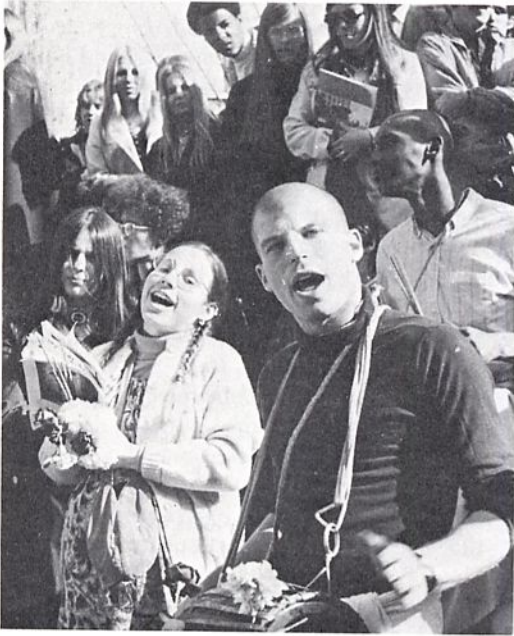
Vedic authorities confirm that the holy name of the Supreme Lord can render all benediction upon all living entities. The living beings in the material world, although originally pure in their spiritual nature, have become contaminated by forgetfulness of their relationship with the Supreme Godhead. The living beings are God's eternal parts and parcels, but due to the influence of material nature, this eternal relationship has been forgotten. Thus somehow or other the conditioned souls have fallen into the ocean of birth and death.

But the Lord has kindly invested all of His transcendental potencies in His holy names, and therefore by chanting any one of His innumerable names, one can be delivered from the ocean of birth and death and be fixed as an eternal servitor of the Lord, an atom at His lotus feet. This is not a sectarian process limited to a particular faith or nationality. The Supreme Lord has made approach to Him easy by His holy names, and there are not even

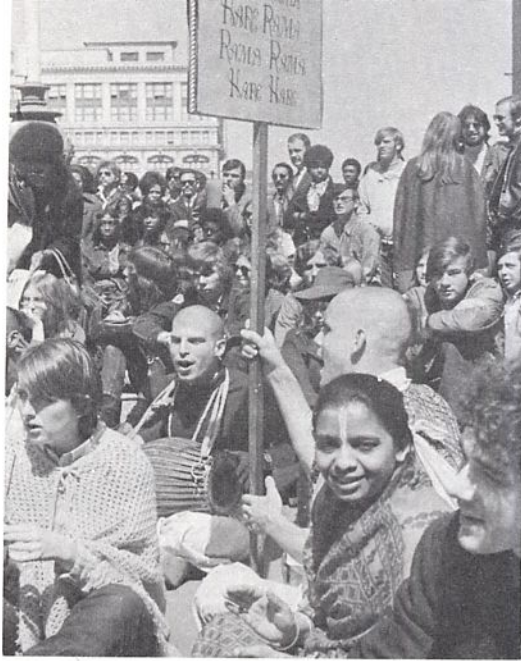
any hard and fast rules for chanting the name of God. Anyone, no matter what his position in life, can chant the name of God as he finds it in His particular scripture, and thus anyone can feel transcendental ecstasy by glorifying the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

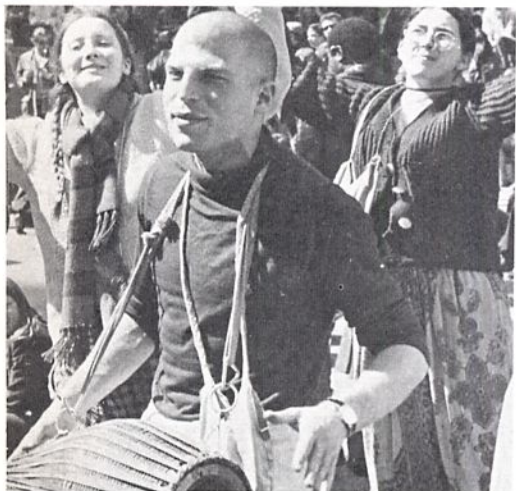
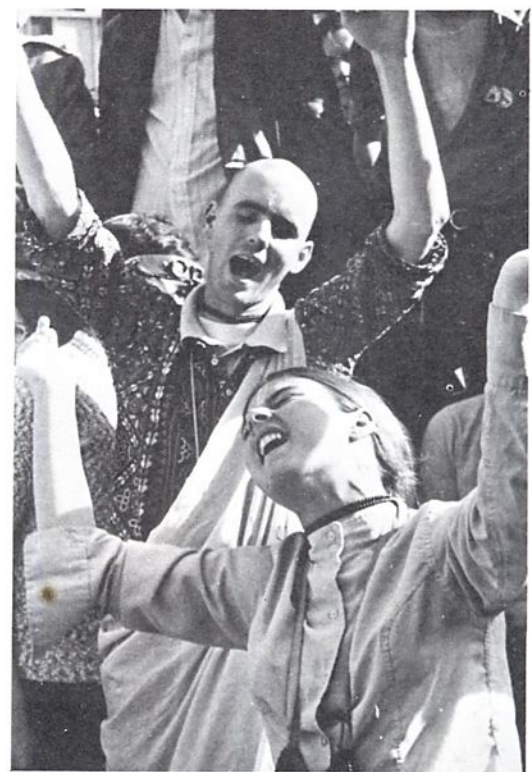
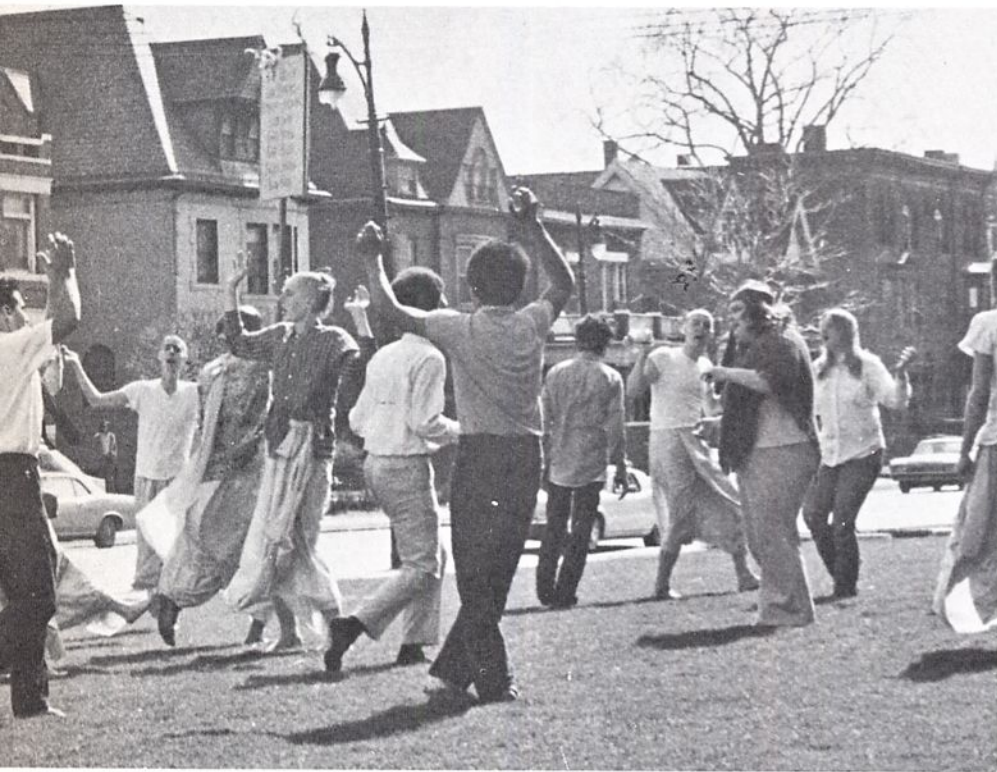
The disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, under the guidance of their beloved spiritual master, are engaged in spreading the *saṅkīrtana* movement of publicly chanting the holy names Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, so that all living entities may, by hearing this transcendental sound vibration, begin to revive their eternal love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa.

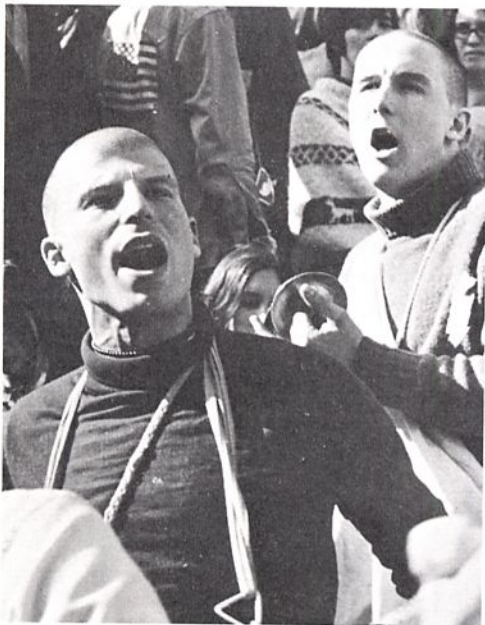
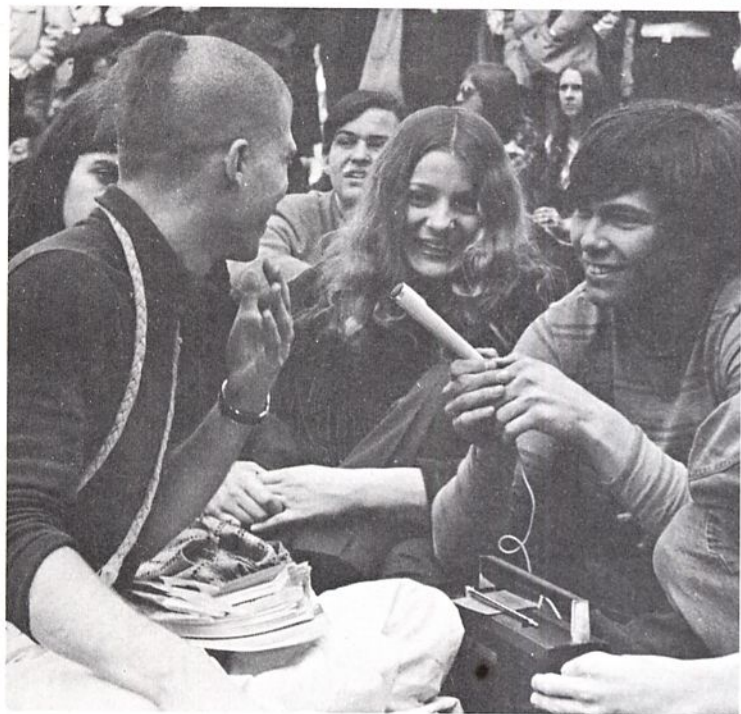
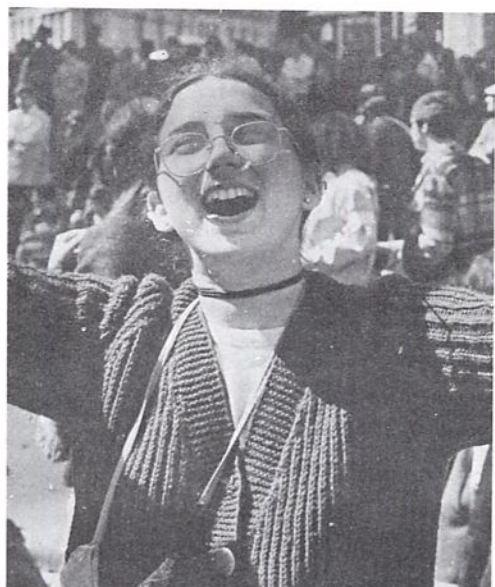
The pictures on these pages show devotees in Detroit engaged in spreading the rays of the benediction moon of the holy name by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.











SANKĪRTANA IN THE BIBLE

by Hayagrīva dāsa Adhikārī (ISKCON Calcutta)

In the Vaiṣṇava (Kṛṣṇa) literature of India there are innumerable scriptural injunctions encouraging *saṅkīrtana*—the chanting and singing of the names of God—as an efficacious means to attain God realization or as a glorious end in itself. Yet many Westerners, perhaps justifiably skeptical, might ask, “If *saṅkīrtana* is so all-encompassing, so potent and effective, why isn’t it stressed in the Bible?”

Even a quick reading of the Bible will show that *saṅkīrtana* was very much present indeed amongst the ancient Jews and early Christians and that it was certainly stressed by one of the Bible’s major figures—David. “But that’s not the *saṅkīrtana* practiced by the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement,” one might object. “Moses and David certainly didn’t chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Rāma.” It would be difficult to prove that they did, and it is doubtless safe to assume that they didn’t, but *saṅkīrtana* is not limited to the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. In fact, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the chief propagator of Hare Kṛṣṇa chanting in this age, has written in His *Śikṣāṣṭaka*:

O my Lord, Your holy name alone can render all benediction to living beings, and thus You have hundreds and millions of names like Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, etc. In these transcendental names You have invested all Your transcendental energies. There are not even hard and fast rules for chanting these names. O my Lord, out of kindness You enable us to easily approach You by Your holy names, but I am so unfortunate that I have no attraction for them.

(*Śikṣāṣṭaka*, 2)

ANY NAME OF GOD

The principle of *saṅkīrtana*, then, does not insist on the names Kṛṣṇa and Rāma. Theoretically any name for the Absolute Godhead will do. The point is, however, that in this age—which extends back 5,000 years—the chanting and singing of the names of God and God’s glories is the most certain way to spiritual emancipation. “Chant the names of God,” Lord Caitanya enjoins. “In this age of Kali [chaos] there is no other way, there is no other way at all.” The effect of chanting the holy names, Lord Caitanya further instructs, is that transcendental love of God is awakened in the soul.

Why chant the name Kṛṣṇa in preference to others? Although other names are potentially as good, the name Kṛṣṇa is the principal name because it is the name of the primal, original person. God is one, but His manifestations are infinite. One may light any number of candles from an original candle, yet the original candle still retains its original identity. There are countless expansions of God, but the *ādi-purusa*, the primal person, is asserted in the *Vedas* to be Kṛṣṇa (*Govindam ādi-purusam tam aham bhajāmi, Brahma-saṁhitā*). From Him appear countless expansions, incarnations, *avatāras*, etc. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa asserts, “I am the source of everything; from Me the entire creation flows. Knowing this, the wise worship Me with all their hearts.” (*Bhagavad-gītā*, 10.8) This claim is not made by anyone in the Bible, not even by Christ.

The word “Christ” is also connected to “Kṛṣṇa” etymologically, for “Christ” is derived from the Greek word *christos*, meaning “anointed,” or “the anointed one,” a translation of the Hebrew word *mashiah*, Messiah. One of the principal signs of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees is the *tilaka* or clay which anoints the forehead with a V sign.

INFORMATION WITHELD

The Bible speaks of the Supreme as God, Jehovah and Christ, and the Vedic literatures—*Bhagavad-gītā*, *Brahma-saṁhitā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*—indicate Him personally to be Kṛṣṇa, a word which means “all-attractive” in Sanskrit. (*Rāma* means enjoyer, and *Hare* refers to the energy enjoyed.) The Bible is principally concerned with the laws given to the Jewish people by God, the Jews’ breaking of these laws and God’s subsequent punishments. Christ stressed forgiveness for those who are truly repentant, and He supplied a new element—love or *bhakti* as a means to attain God. Throughout the Bible, however, God is described as “great,” “angry,” “terrible,” “greatly to be feared,” “almighty,” “the everlasting Father,” “Alpha and Omega,” etc., but nowhere is the all-attractive personality of God explained. Who is God? Just how great is He? What are His features? His opulences? His activities? Exactly what does His abode look like? What does He look like? What are His various manifestations? Specifically how does He create? How does He pervade His creation? What is the relationship of the individual with God? What is the individual’s role in the world, and how does it come about, and how can the individual self transcend it? These and many other questions are neither raised nor answered in the Bible because ancient Judaic culture was not sufficiently advanced to absorb this information. Christ Himself told His disciples, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.” (John, 16:12) In the Old Testament we hear God’s voice from the sky, but we do not see His face. He appears as a burning bush, a dove, a pillar of fire by night, a cloud by day, etc., but He does not appear as He is. Christ appeared as a devotee of God, but He does not reveal His Father to His disciples. With a voice on high the Father speaks of Christ as His beloved Son, but Christ Himself said,

Ye have neither heard this voice at any time, nor seen His shape. . . . Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

(John, 5:37, 6:46)

Vedic literatures, which pre-date the Bible, were written in a highly advanced spiritual culture, and they specifically reveal God’s form, His features, His pastimes and His personality. Of course God’s attributes are infinite, and words can only hint at His glory, but the *Vedas* supply man’s mind with more information than he can accommodate to the point of enlightenment, at which time the *Vedas* are of no more use “than a pond when everywhere there is a flood.” (*Bhagavad-gītā*, 2.46) At that stage man sees God or Kṛṣṇa everywhere, but that realization is not to be imitated. The point is that the *Vedas* give a detailed explanation of God and His activities and indicate the Supreme Personality of Godhead to be Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Not only is Śrī Kṛṣṇa indicated to be God, but He is vividly physically described, and His personal activities are narrated.

Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself sang *Bhagavad-gītā* to Arjuna on the battlefield, and thus His instructions are known as the song (*gītā*) of God (*Bhāgavān*). In the *Gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa characterized the *mahātmās* or great souls in this way:

They are always engaged in chanting My glories. Endeavoring with great determination, offering homage unto Me, they worship Me with devotion. (*Bhagavad-gītā*, 9.14)

The Bible is certainly peopled with many great souls—Moses, David, Paul—and none would have contradicted the essential validity of the *saṅkīrtana* principle. This thesis is supported by innumerable passages in books by the prophets and the apostles.

The Books of Moses

After the children of Israel were saved, after they passed through the Red Sea and after the Pharaoh's army drowned, Moses and his followers immediately began to sing praises to God.

Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously. . . . The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt Him. (*Exodus*, 15:1-2)

In *Deuteronomy*, Moses, in his exhortation to the Jewish people after the deliverance of the ten commandments, set forth the basic tenets underlying the *bhakti* or devotional process which forms the very root of the *saṅkīrtana* philosophy. Here Moses stresses the importance of service to God and the evocation of His name.

Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. . . . Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; Him shalt thou serve, and to Him shalt thou cleave, and swear by His name. He is thy praise, and He is thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen. (*Deuteronomy*, 6:4-5, 10:20-21)

Knowledge of the greatness of God, Moses maintains, necessitates the devotee's "publishing" His name and broadcasting His glories. In his second song, Moses says:

My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: Because I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God.

(*Deuteronomy*, 32:2-3)

As in Vaiṣṇava philosophy, the name of God is integral with Him. Of course the Godhead, by His omnipresence, exists impersonally in all sound, and all sound has its being impersonally in Him, yet the names of God are identical with Him in a different way: they are *śabda*, or sound incarnations, and God is

personally present in them. Thus the names of God are praised and evoked in the religious traditions of both East and West. (The English word "God," for instance, stems from the Indo-European base *ghawa-* and the Sanskrit *havate*, meaning "to call out to, invoke," the idea being that God is He to whom man calls out both in joy and distress.) Moses, the great lawgiver and father of the Jews, was not inaugurating a new tradition in advocating the verbal glorification of God but was working within the established context of Judaism.

The Book of Judges

After Deborah and Balak delivered Israel from Jabin and Sisera, they sang: "Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes; I, even I, will sing unto the Lord; I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel."

Samuel

Upon being delivered out of the hands of his enemy Saul, David, in his psalm of thanksgiving, sang: "Therefore I will give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto Thy name." (*Samuel II*, 22:50)

Chronicles

Of all the figures in the Bible, David is undoubtedly the most avid promulgator of *saṅkīrtana*. David brought the ark of God—which was worshiped like the Vaiṣṇava Deities—into Jerusalem, and, dressed in fine linen, danced before it.

Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps. (*I. Chronicles*, 15:28)

David appointed a number of Levites to attend the ark, as in India certain *pūjarīs* are assigned to attend the Deities.

And he [David] appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord, and to record, and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel: Asaph the chief, etc., and Jeiel with psalteries and with harps; but Asaph made a sound with cymbals; Benaiah also and Jahaziel the priests with trumpets continually before the ark of the covenant of God (*I. Chronicles*, 16:4-6)

David then informed the people of the process of worship before the ark. In essence, this is also the message of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement: *kīrtana*, or praise of God, by song, the glorification of His names, the relation of His pastimes, the search for His personal presence.

Then on that day David delivered first this psalm, to thank the Lord, into the hand of Asaph and his brethren. Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon His name, make known His deeds among the people. Sing unto Him, sing

psalms unto Him, talk yet of all His wondrous works. Glory ye in His holy name; let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. Seek the Lord and His strength, seek His face continually. (*I. Chronicles*, 16:7-11)

This message extends beyond the people of Jerusalem, just as Lord Caitanya's message extends beyond India.

Sing unto the Lord, all the earth; shew forth from day to day His salvation. Declare His glory among the heathen; His marvellous works among all nations. For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised: He also is to be feared above all Gods. (*I. Chronicles*, 16:23-25)

In the Kṛṣṇa temples of India, the Deities are glorified full time. Similarly, David appointed Heman and Jeduthun "with trumpets and cymbals for those that should make a sound, and with musical instruments of God" (*Chronicles I*, 16:42) to sing continually before the ark. Moreover, David chose 288 people, mainly youths, to chant with instruments in the temple.

All these were under the hands of their father [Heman's fourteen sons and three daughters] for song in the house of the Lord, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God, according to the king's order to Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman. So the number of them, with the brethren that were instructed in the songs of the Lord, even all that were cunning, was two hundred fourscore and eight. (*Chronicles I*, 25:6-7)

Solomon, David's son, renowned for wisdom and riches, followed in his father's footsteps in building a magnificent temple on Mount Moriah at Jerusalem, a temple which he overlaid with pure gold, and in seeing that chanters were also installed. It seemed that their *kīrtanas* were lively indeed, being that they precipitated the descent of the glory of God.

Also the Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets:) It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is God; for His mercy endureth for ever; that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God.

(*II. Chronicles*, 5: 12-14)

Jehoshaphat, who reigned over Judah, also followed in this tradition. It is notable that specific mention is made of the method of bowing and of praising the beauty of God and relying on His mercy, for these are also typical of Vaiṣṇavism.

And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell

before the Lord, worshipping the Lord. And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice on high. And when he [Jehoshaphat] had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord: for His mercy endureth forever.

(*II. Chronicles*, 20:18-21)

Hezekiah, David's grandson, followed the path of David, not that of his idolatrous and blasphemous father Ahaz. He opened all the doors of the temples which his father had shut down. The ceremony that was conducted under his direction could be a description of a Vaiṣṇava *ārātrika*.

And he [Hezekiah] set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet; for so was the commandment of the Lord by His prophets. And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priest with the trumpets. And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David King of Israel. And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished. And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshipped. Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.

(*II. Chronicles*, 29:25-30)

The Book of Ezra

Of those returning to Jerusalem from captivity in Babylon, there were "among them two hundred singing men and singing women." (*Ezra*, 2:65) After they returned, the people gathered "as one man" in Jerusalem, where they began construction of a new temple and held *saṅkīrtana* during the foundation ceremony.

And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the songs of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the Lord, after the ordinance of David King of Israel. And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.

(*Ezra*, 3:10-11)

The Psalms of David

Of all the books in the Bible, David's *Psalms* place the greatest

emphasis on *kīrtana*. The *Psalms* make four important assertions. First, since man exists only by the mercy of God, man's only recourse is to trust Him completely. "And they that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee: for Thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee." (*Psalms*, 9:10) Second, the names of God have great potency, and it is the duty or *dharma* of man to thank and praise Him.

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of His holiness. (*Psalms*, 48:1)

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto Thy name, O most high. (*Psalms*, 92:1)

Praise ye the Lord. Praise, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord. Blessed by the name of the Lord from this time forth and for evermore. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised. (*Psalms*, 113:1-3)

Third, man derives great joy in praising Him.

Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness. Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness: To the end that my glory may sing praise to Thee, and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto Thee forever.
(*Psalms*, 30:4, 11-12)

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before His presence with singing.

(*Psalms*, 100:1-2)

I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of Him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord.
(*Psalms*, 104:33-34)

Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.
(*Psalms*, 147:1)

Fourth, all nations and indeed the entire creation will eventually praise Him, and thus the chanting of the names of God will constitute, as Lord Caitanya prophesied, the world religion.

All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord; and shall glorify Thy name.
(*Psalms*, 86:9)

Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise Him in the heights. Praise ye Him, all His angels: praise Him, all His hosts. Praise ye Him, sun and moon: praise Him, all ye stars of light. Praise Him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord: for He commanded, and they were created.

(*Psalms*, 148:1-5)

David also enjoined that the chanting of the holy names be—as in India—accompanied by a number of instruments and by hand clapping.

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise and rejoice, and sing praise. Sing unto the Lord with the harp, and the voice of a psalm. With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King. . . . O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph. (*Psalms*, 98:4-6, 47:1)

Nor are the chants to be mere vain repetitions or caterwauling noise-fests: "Sing ye praises with understanding," (*Psalms*, 47:7) David instructs. Man cannot take God's kingdom by storm, for God is not mundane and cannot be approached by fanaticism or human mental speculation. His abode is above the heavens, and the easiest approach to Him is through praise fixed firmly in knowledge.

My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise. Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early. I will praise Thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto Thee among the nations. For Thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and Thy truth unto the clouds. Be Thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: let Thy glory be above all the earth.
(*Psalms*, 57:7-11)

Chanting the holy names and recounting the great deeds of God are important factors in man's search for Him.

O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon His name: make known His deeds among the people. Sing unto Him, sing psalms unto Him: talk ye of all His wondrous works. Glory ye in His holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. Seek the Lord, and His strength: seek His face evermore. (*Psalms*, 105:1-4)

David also maintained that one should praise God throughout life.

Praise the Lord, O my soul. While I live I will praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being. (*Psalms*, 146:1)

David's last five psalms (146-150) are in themselves musical exhortations urging not only man but all living creatures to praise God. In their lyrical insistence (insistence it is, not repetition) they stylistically approach a *mantra* form. For example, the last psalm:

Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in His sanctuary: praise Him in the firmament of His power. Praise Him for His mighty acts: praise Him according to His excellent greatness. Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet: praise Him with the psaltery and harp. Praise Him with the timbrel and dance: praise Him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise Him upon the loud cymbals: praise

Him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let every thing that breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.

(*Psalms*, 150:1-6)

The *Psalms* of David are both lyrical and devotional. Christ's last words on the cross ("My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?") are the beginning of the 22nd Psalm. Far from being a cry of despair, this psalm, which Christ was not able to quote in full, asserts: "I will declare Thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." (*Psalms*, 22:22)

Thus the *Psalms* bridge the Judaic and Christian traditions and establish the *sañkīrtana* principle in the West more strongly than any other book in the Bible.

The Book of Isaiah

Isaiah, who foresaw the Lord's deliverance of the Jewish people from Assyria, Egypt and other places, prophesied:

And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon His name, declare His doings among the people, make mention that His name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord; for He hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. (*Isaiah*, 12:4-5)

Also in relating the Lord's future mighty deeds, Isaiah reports God as instructing Jacob and Israel in this way:

Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein: the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare His praise in the islands. (*Isaiah*, 42:10-12)

In speaking further to Jacob and his people, God coaxes the entire creation, including inanimate objects, to sing His praise:

Sing O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel. Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted His people, and will have mercy upon His afflicted.

(*Isaiah*, 44:23, 49:13)

The New Testament

Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples to go forth and preach among all men that "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." (*Luke*, 10:9) Such preaching is also *kīrtana*: whether one says, "Repent, the kingdom of God is at hand" or chants Hare Kṛṣṇa, the message is essentially the same, for the Godhead is verbally proclaimed amongst men. When asked

when the kingdom of God was coming, Christ taught that God is attained not by the mental speculative method nor by investigation of external phenomena but by spontaneous love arising from within the individual himself.

And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

(*Luke*, 17:20-21)

Thus God and His kingdom are most quickly attained when one's yearning is strong, when *bhakti* arises in the soul.

There is also stress on the holy names in the New Testament, for Christ warns His disciples: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." (*Mark*, 13:13) Christ also emphasized the potency of the holy names: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

(*Matthew*, 18:20)

In one of the most intensely mystical passages in St. John's Gospel, when Christ prays to His Father the night before the crucifixion, He asserts that the name of God is a unifying force, that He (Christ) Himself manifested the name to His disciples and that it will be God's name that will keep them as one. Christ prayed:

I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do. I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them me; and they have kept Thy word. And now I am no more in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name: those that Thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

(*John*, 17:4, 6, 11-12)

Christ's disciples continued in this tradition. After being beaten and thrown in jail and shackled in Philippi in Macedonia, Paul and Silas chanted praises to God: "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them." (*Acts*, 16:25) It was also St. Paul who wrote the Romans:

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. (*Romans*, 10:13, 15:6, 11)

Again, St. Paul emphasized the potency of the Lord's name in an epistle to the Philippians:

Wherefor God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name

Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. (*Philippians*, 2:9-11, 4:4)

St. Paul also wrote the Thessalonians and Hebrews similar instructions (*II Thessalonians*, 1:12, *Hebrews*, 2:12). Similarly, the apostle James in an epistle used skillful means to get the people to chant: "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms." (*James*, 5:13)

In his apocalyptic *Revelations*, St. John describes a vision of universal destruction and salvation which resembles, in magnitude, Lord Kṛṣṇa's display of His universal form in the Eleventh Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*. St. John, in his vision, sees the Lamb (Christ) glorified amongst thousands of devotees who have God's names written on their foreheads (a Vaiṣṇava custom). The devotees stand on a sea of glass and fire, a sea of cosmic destruction, and chant the names of God. Again it is proclaimed that all peoples will worship the Almighty God and glorify His name.

And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred

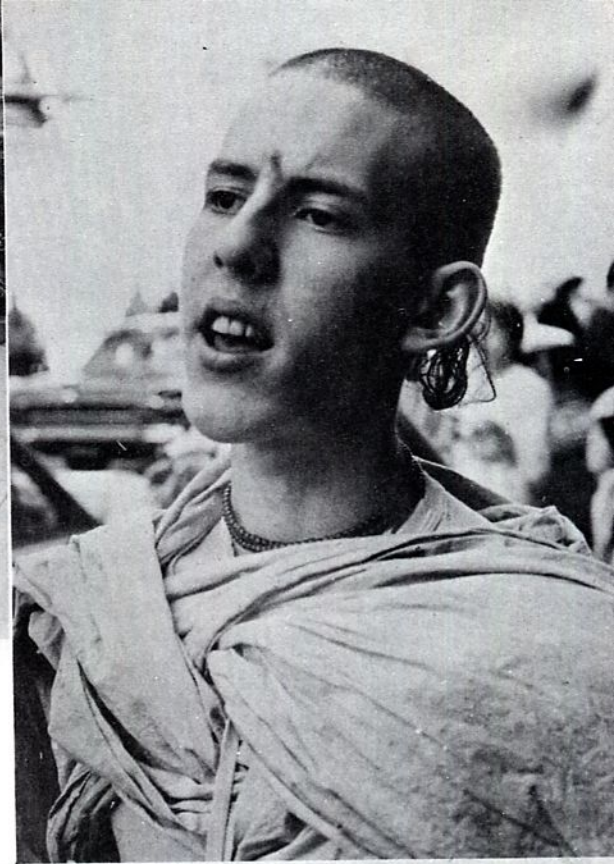
and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty: just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest.

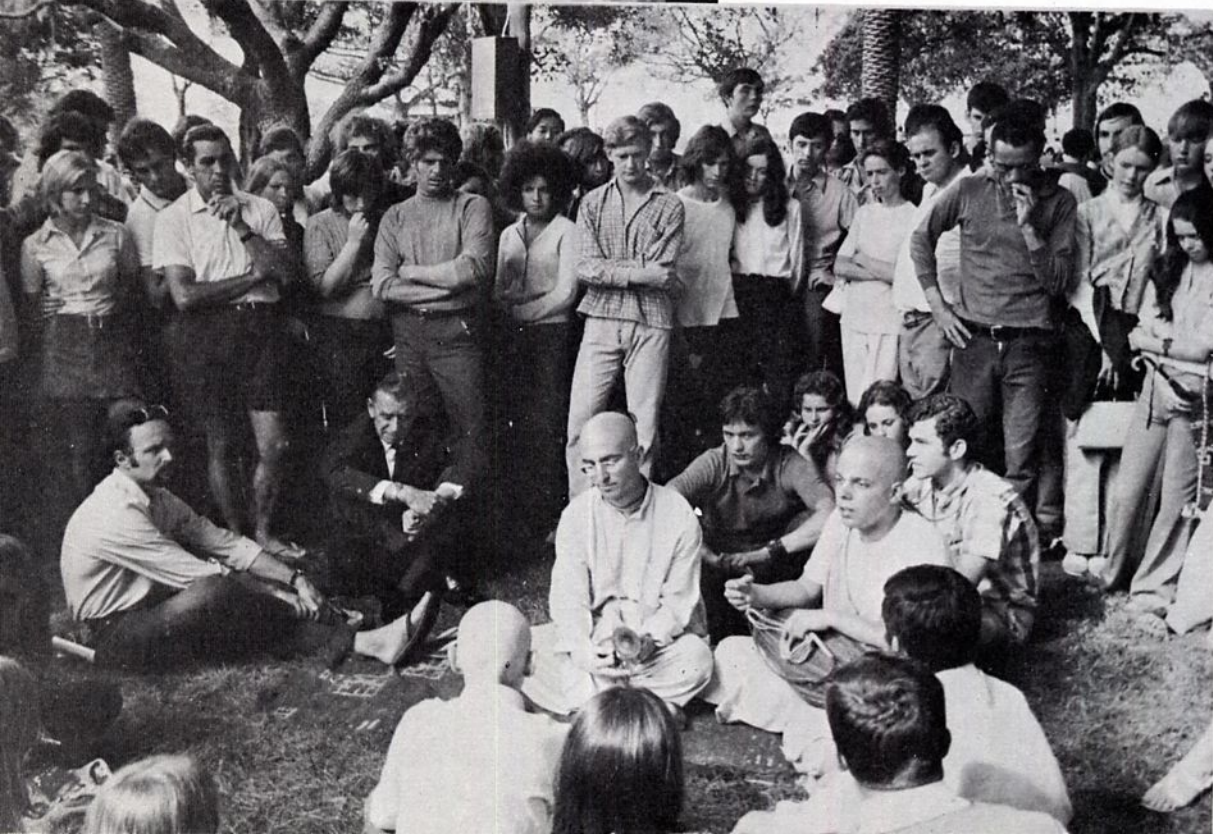
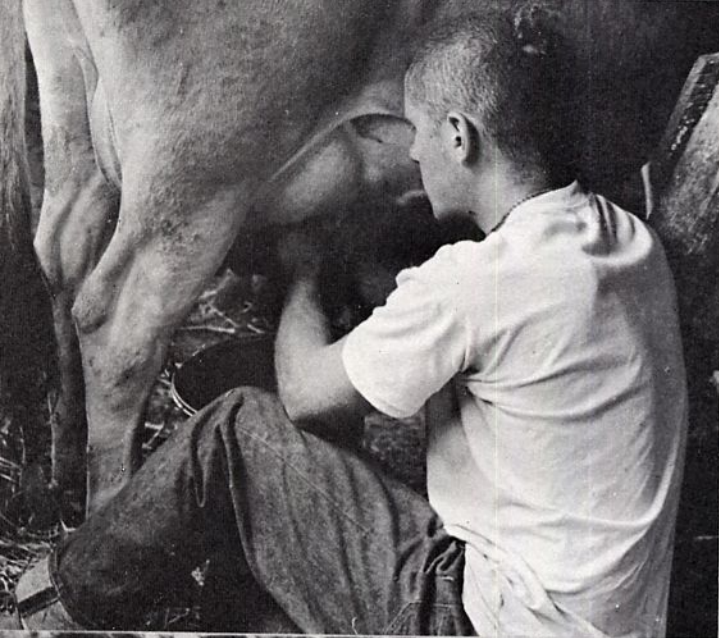
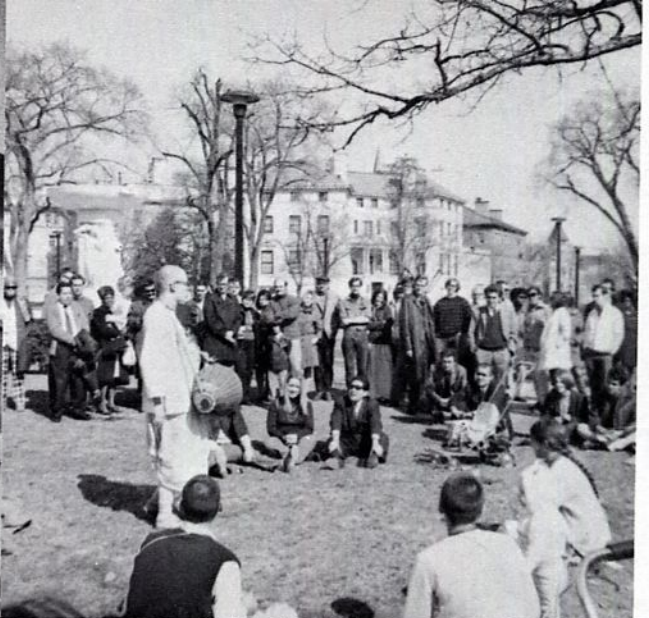
(*Revelations*, 14:1-3, 15:2-4)

Thus from Moses to *Revelations*—the gamut of the Bible—*saṅkīrtana* is a prominent factor. The message is essentially one throughout the Bible and Caitanya (Vaiṣṇava) philosophy: man only meets with frustration when he tries to assault the kingdom of God physically or intellectually. The Supreme Godhead is above man—is above, in fact, the heavens—and man is subordinate as an organ of the body is subordinate to the entire body. In the spiritual hierarchy that culminates with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, man's role is established as an organ of praise, and it is in praise of God that man is elevated to the spiritual platform. Actually this is not a unique role, for, as the Bible and Caitanya philosophy maintain, all creatures that breathe—and even entities that do not breathe—can join in universal acclamation of the Supreme Person. The total unity and harmony of that hymn comprise the great song of God.

END







HOW TO CHECK THE AGE OF KALI

by Satsvarūpa dāsa Adhikārī (ISKCON Boston)

The followers of Kṛṣṇa consciousness are aware that at present the universe and the earth are in the age of Kali. Vedic culture calculates the long duration of time between the creation and annihilation of the cosmos according to repeated cycles of the following four seasons: Satya-yuga, Tretā-yuga, Dvāpara-yuga and Kali-yuga. Of the four, the last, the Kali-yuga, is noted for being the fallen age, the age of hypocrisy and quarrel. Aside from the evidence of Vedic literature, one can observe the fallen condition of the present civilization in everyday common affairs. In Kali-yuga the basic principles of religion are abandoned by a majority of the people, the government is ruled by the lowest class of men, and society lives on the basis of animal life for the goal of sense gratification. Huge quarrels are predicated on various minor pretexts. Kali-yuga lasts for 432,000 years and is supposed to get increasingly worse, until finally men will be eating their own sons and finding sport in hunting down the devotees of God. Let us therefore examine the history of the influx of Kali-yuga 5,000 years ago and try to understand how its degrading influence can be checked.

This information regarding Kali-yuga is recorded in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the transcendental literature which depicts the pastimes performed by the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa when He appeared on the earth. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* relates that Kṛṣṇa appeared on this earth for a period of 125 years during the end of the Dvāpara-yuga, and when He disappeared from the earth the age of Kali entered. The personification of Kali, the agent for all irreligion and vice, was kept in check, however, even after the disappearance of Kṛṣṇa, due to the presence of a very strong and pious ruler of the earth, Mahārāja Parīkṣit. His life is described as being wonderful in its birth, wonderful in its duration, and wonderful in its completion. We may at this time examine the life of Mahārāja Parīkṣit as the background to understand the strength of Kṛṣṇa consciousness even in the midst of Kali-yuga.

Mahārāja Parīkṣit's strength was due to his being completely surrendered to the word of Kṛṣṇa. And as we shall see, Kṛṣṇa was pleased to work His will through this surrendered soul. Mahārāja Parīkṣit was the

posthumous child of Abhimanyu, who was the son of Arjuna, the famous hero of the Battle of Kurukṣetra. While he was still in the womb, Mahārāja Parīkṣit was struck by a nuclear weapon detonated by an enemy of his family, and yet due to the mercy of the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who entered the womb of his mother, Uttarā, and protected him, Parīkṣit was not burned. When he grew up and began to rule the kingdom, he was always conscientiously surrendered unto the Personality of Godhead and was never afraid nor overwhelmed, even up to his death.

KALI ENTERS

One day Emperor Parīkṣit was traveling through his kingdom, and he met the personality of religious principles, Dharma, in the form of a wounded, wandering bull. He also met the personality of the earth, in the form of a cow who had tears on her face and who appeared to be greatly aggrieved, like a mother who had lost her child. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, First Canto, Seventeenth Chapter, relates that Mahārāja Parīkṣit observed a lower class laborer, dressed like a king but with a large stick in his hand, beating the bull and the cow as if they were without a protector. The bull was as white as a lotus flower and was terrified of being beaten. It was trembling from fear and was standing on one leg urinating. Cows are beneficial because one can draw out religious principles from them, but this poor cow was being beaten by the lower class laborer and appeared very distressed.

Mahārāja Parīkṣit became furious upon seeing this scene. Seated on his golden chariot and equipped with arrows and bows, he came upon the cow's persecutor. "Who are you?" he demanded. "You appear to be strong enough, and still you dare to kill, within my protection, those who are helpless. By dress you pose as a manly king, but by your deeds it is clear that you are against all fighting principles. You rogue, do you dare to beat an innocent cow simply because Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna are out of sight? Since you are beating the innocent in a secluded place, you stand as a culprit and therefore deserve to be killed." Mahārāja Parīkṣit then turned to the bull

and said, "O bull, you are as white as a lotus. Who are you?" The *kṣatriyas* or rulers such as Mahārāja Parīkṣit are meant to protect the innocent, and therefore Parīkṣit Mahārāja was outraged to see this brutality taking place in his kingdom.

RELIGION PERSONIFIED

Before the arrival of Mahārāja Parīkṣit, the bull, the personification of religion, Dharma, had inquired of the cow, "Why are you lamenting? Are you unhappy because people in general do not follow the rules and regulations for eating, sleeping, drinking, and mating and are inclined to do these things without regard for time and place?" In the age of Kali, because the tendencies of sense gratification are not regulated, illicit sex, intoxication, and so many preliminary vices are being engaged in everywhere. When Parīkṣit arrived he said, "For the first time I see you lamenting with tears in a kingdom which has always been well protected by the arms of the kings. Before this I have never seen anyone shed tears because of royal negligence."

The Emperor could see that the bull was standing on only one leg. Dharma explained that his four legs were austerity, cleanliness, mercy, and truthfulness, and three of these legs had been broken because of the people's rampant irreligion, characterized by pride, affection for women, and intoxicating habits. He was left on only one leg, truthfulness. The Emperor took his sword and prepared to kill the personality of Kali who, posing as a ruler, was beating the bull and thus causing all irreligion and causing the cow of the earth to shed tears. In the dress of a king, this lower class man, Kali, was simply gratifying his senses and thinking that there was no suitable king to curb him down. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, in which the narration of Mahārāja Parīkṣit is given, is itself the systematic propaganda for educating people in general how to clean up the atmosphere of corruption. Mahārāja Parīkṣit, the ideal executive, was about to kill Kali, but when Kali saw that the King was willing to kill him, he at once gave up his false kingly attire and with great fear completely surrendered unto him.

According to the Vedic culture of the four orders or qualities of occupation, a real warrior never surrenders in a fight. Therefore, when this lower class laborer

or *sūdra* surrendered himself, he disclosed his real identity by not accepting the challenge. When he saw that Mahārāja Parīkṣit was ready to fight and that the king was beyond his power to defeat, Kali bowed down his head as a subordinate and gave up his royal dress. Mahārāja Parīkṣit did not want to kill a surrendered soul such as the fallen Kali because he was always compassionate and kind to the poor. Thus the personality of Kali, who was entering earth for the first time to cause corruption and irreligion, was saved by the will of providence.

Out of chivalry and compassion, Mahārāja Parīkṣit said, “Do not fear. You have no need to fear for your life, but you cannot remain in any land of my kingdom.” So Kali was allowed to live, but he was afraid that wherever he went he would see the King with his bows and arrows. Therefore he asked for special places where he could live, and Mahārāja Parīkṣit then gave him permission to reside in four places—places where gambling, drinking, prostitution and the slaughter of animals take place. In this way he intended to confine him. The principle was to restrict Kali to these places so that those addicted to irreligious habits might be regulated and not encouraged by the state. Mahārāja Parīkṣit showed the simple way to categorically stop war and vice. He announced that he would collect all the illicit gold collected by exploiting the propensities of the age of Kali and employ it in *saṅkīrtana* propaganda for the glorification of God. He made sufficient plans so that Kali would have little chance to infiltrate the sound structure of human society. Thus the influence of Kali was checked as long as Mahārāja Parīkṣit himself was present to drive him away and uphold the principles of religion for the spiritual enlightenment of all people.

KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUS POLITICS

In the present day we lament that lower class men are voted in and voted out of high posts of political power, but in Mahārāja Parīkṣit we can see the example of a practical king who could progressively advance society and who was intolerant of all kinds of corruption. Often people ask if the Kṛṣṇa conscious movement is apolitical, but the answer is no. Kṛṣṇa consciousness offers the political principle followed by rulers such as Mahārāja

Parīkṣit, and the Kṛṣṇa consciousness society wishes to put such a God conscious man in office.

Further activities of Mahārāja Parīkṣit show how, because of the King’s complete surrender to the Absolute Truth, the Lord used him as an instrument to bring about the narration of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which, after the departure of Kṛṣṇa and after the death of Mahārāja Parīkṣit, was to be the standard of religion for all people in the midst of the age of Kali. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is declared to be the transcendental literary incarnation of the Personality of Godhead, and it is only because of Mahārāja Parīkṣit’s relationship to Kṛṣṇa that this story is narrated. All Kṛṣṇa conscious activities are meant to help us remember Him. The purpose of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and all spiritual literature is to continually glorify God. To hear these literatures is purifying and sublime. When spoken, especially by pure devotees of the Lord, these narratives carry the full potencies of *bhakti-yoga*, or devotion to Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, First Canto, Chapter 18, text 26, relates: “Once upon a time, Mahārāja Parīkṣit, while engaged in hunting in the forest with his bows and arrows, became extremely fatigued, hungry and thirsty while following some stags. In search of a reservoir of water, he entered the hermitage of the well-known Ṛṣi Śaunaka and saw the sage sitting silently with closed eyes.” The birth of Mahārāja Parīkṣit is wonderful because Parīkṣit was saved in the womb by the Supersoul when the demon Aśvatthāmā sent a fire weapon to kill him. His career as king was wonderful, for he upheld religious principles and drove out Kali. This present description of Mahārāja Parīkṣit’s becoming thirsty begins the story of his death, which proved to be most wonderful because it was engineered directly by the will of the Lord in order to bring about a much greater transcendental event—the narration of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

As a man of controlled senses, Mahārāja Parīkṣit would never have been disturbed by thirst or hunger. His hunger and thirst on this occasion were irregular in that he became perturbed by these bodily demands. It is therefore explained that the situation was created by the Lord in order to bring about Parīkṣit’s renunciation of worldly activities. As a worldly king, even though a great king, Mahārāja Parīkṣit was necessarily involved in much worldly diplomacy, and the Lord was making it

possible for him to be forced into a complete state of renunciation. The awkward situation by which the devotee Parīkṣit was obliged to renounce all worldly affairs is to be taken as the grace of the Lord and not as a matter of unfavorable frustration.

ARRANGED BY KṚṢṆA

Parīkṣit Mahārāja entered the *muni*’s hermitage and saw that the *muni*, long-haired and covered by the skin of a stag, was in transcendental meditation. The King, however, being thirsty, asked the sage for water. Not having received any formal welcome seat or water or sweet words of address, the King felt neglected, and he became angry. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda explains that this lack of sense control—his immediate anger at not being properly received by the *yogī*—is the same as Arjuna’s becoming bewildered on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra. Had Arjuna not been overcome by illusory family affection by the will of God, there would have been no chance for the *Bhagavad-gītā* to have been spoken because Arjuna would not have asked Kṛṣṇa his questions of doubt, to be answered for all mankind. Similarly, had Mahārāja Parīkṣit not been fatigued, hungry, thirsty, and then angry, there would have been no chance for *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to have been spoken by Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who was the prime authority on Kṛṣṇa. Parīkṣit’s improper behavior is actually the prelude to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is itself a counteraction to Kali, as much as the upraised sword of Parīkṣit on Kali’s neck.

The insulted King took up a dead snake which he found in the front of the cave. Picking it up on the front part of his bow, he placed it on the shoulder of the sage as an insult and then left. He accused the sage of not actually being in meditation on the Supreme but of putting on a false show of trance just in order to avoid receiving him.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam goes on to describe that the sage had a son, who was immature but, because he was a *brāhmaṇa*’s son, very powerful. While he was spending his time playing with other inexperienced boys, he heard of the King’s insult to his father, and he therefore became furious and cursed Mahārāja Parīkṣit to die. It was through this inexperienced boy that Kali found an

opportunity to ruin the entire cultural heritage of the four orders of life and bring about the corruption which now exists in India as the caste system. In the perverted caste system, one order of life tends to lord it over another by birth, and enmity is thus created among the orders. As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, because these orders are created by the Lord, they are naturally existing in every society. There is always an intelligent class, a warrior or administrative class, a mercantile or agricultural class, and a laborer class which serves the other three orders. By corruption, individuals claim to possess the qualities of a particular position simply by birthright, and then there is no cooperation among the natural orders, but rather there is friction. The first victim of brahminical injustice was Mahārāja Parīkṣit, and after the incident of his being cursed, the intelligent class was not protected properly by the warrior class, the mercantile class began outright exploitation of the other classes, and the lower classes became dissatisfied because of not being protected and cared for. Because these events occurred at the dawn of Kali-yuga, they are understood to be most significant in ushering in the corruption and degradation which characterize this fallen age.

The warrior class is supposed to protect and not insult the *brāhmaṇas*; therefore the son of the sage, acting immaturely and rashly, used his brahminical power to curse the King. The *brāhmaṇa* boy, Śṛṅgī, cried, "The warrior class is supposed to act as watchdogs. Since when does a watchdog enter the house of the king, sit in the house of the master, and eat with him on the same plate?" In that way he tried to explain away the incident of the *yogī's* not receiving the King. In those days the brahminical class had powers to curse, but the boy committed a great mistake in using this power. Touching the water of the River Kauśikī, he discharged a thunderbolt of words: "In seven days a snake-bird will bite the wretched King on account of his breaking the law of etiquette and insulting my father." The boy then returned to the hermitage, and seeing his father with the snake draped on his shoulder, he began to cry loudly. His father gradually opened his eyes and found the dead snake on his neck, but he did not take it very seriously. On hearing what his son had done, he very much regretted the whole incident. He said to his son, "What a greatly sinful act you

have performed over such an insignificant offense by the King. He then chastised his boy and warned him that the King, as a representative of the Personality of Godhead, is never to be placed on an equal footing with common men. The sage foresaw the downfall of cooperation between the orders, the end of the pious monarchical regime, and the plundering of the people's wealth by rogues and thieves. He told his son, "Without protection there will be great disruption and social anomalies in the future, and there will be killing and stealing of animals and women. And we shall be responsible for the reaction of all these sins. Without protection of a good king, the people will be scattered like lambs." The *ṛṣi* then prayed to the all-pervading Personality of Godhead to please pardon his boy who with no intelligence had committed the great sin of cursing a person who was completely sinless. Kings were considered subordinate to the intelligent or brahminical class, and therefore they should have been protected and not cursed.

King Parīkṣit returned home, but he regretted insulting the *brāhmaṇa* for his inauspicious act, and he hoped that whatever reaction there might be would come at once. While the King was thus repenting, he received the news of his imminent death. He accepted this news as good and used it at once to detach himself from his worldly kingdom. According to the Vedic system, a man is expected to detach himself from family affairs in the latter part of his life because old age is the notice of death. A householder should leave home and go to the forest and live there in seclusion in order to obtain knowledge from the sages about the real purpose of life, spiritual progress, and about how to prepare for the next life.

SEVEN DAYS TO LIVE

Rather than lamenting that he was to die within seven days, Mahārāja Parīkṣit took it as auspicious in that he knew that for at least seven days he would live. He utilized this accurate notice of death so that he could perfect the responsibility of life before the day of his death. Turning the reign of the kingdom over to his son Janamejaya, bidding his family good-bye, and giving up all royal paraphernalia, Mahārāja Parīkṣit went toward the bank of the Ganges to observe fasting unto death,

and he gave himself up unto the lotus feet of the Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa, who alone is able to award liberation. In this way he accepted the curse of the *brāhmaṇa* boy and used it to achieve the ultimate goal of spiritual advancement. At that time, because Mahārāja Parīkṣit was such a great personality, both as a king and as a saint, many greatly learned figures arrived with their disciples on the bank of the river where Mahārāja Parīkṣit was fasting and praying. They were of such an elevated status that the places of pilgrimage they visited became sanctified by their presence.

Thus the scene was set for the recitation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The great sages who were present included Bhṛgu, Vasiṣṭha, Parāśara, and Paraśurāma. The King received them by bowing his head to the ground. Then the *ṛṣis* took their seats, and the King expressed his decision to fast until death. He then stood before them humbly with folded hands and made his spoken obeisances. He began by saying that he understood that the sages generally did not like to associate with kings and that he therefore felt himself greatly fortunate. Sages usually reject royal personalities and keep them at a distant place like garbage. Parīkṣit said, "O *brāhmaṇas*, just accept me as a completely surrendered soul, and let the mother Ganges accept me because I have taken up in my heart the lotus feet of the Lord. Let the snake or anything magical created by the *brāhmaṇa* bite me at once. All I want is that you sages may go on singing of the deeds of Lord Viṣṇu." Because Mahārāja Parīkṣit was actually surrendered to the feet of the Supreme Lord, he was not afraid of death. Conditions were very auspicious for the sages to speak about Kṛṣṇa.

It is seen that Mahārāja Parīkṣit was not striving for ordinary spiritual knowledge or merely practicing *yoga* techniques to gain liberation. He said, "I do not even care if I take my birth in this material world again, as long as I have attachment for Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who has unlimited potencies." Mahārāja Parīkṣit, being a very advanced king and saint, was, at the time of his death, already beyond inquiring about liberation or trying to free himself from return to birth and death. He simply wanted to hear the glorification of God or even to be assured that after his demise the glorification of God, the highest pleasure, the highest satisfaction, and the prime benediction for all humanity, would go on. This example is so wonderful that

even the demigods in the higher planetary systems scattered flowers over the earth and beat celestial drums to praise the action of the King. The sages said that they were not astonished to see Mahārāja Parīkṣit give up his throne, which was decorated with the helmets of many other kings, in order to obtain eternal association with the Personality of Godhead. And they declared that they would wait there in the King's presence as long as he did not go back to the supreme planet, which is free from all material contamination.

Mahārāja Parīkṣit congratulated the great sages and again expressed his desire to hear of the activities of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead. Parīkṣit then asked them the following question: "What is the duty of people in general and specifically of those who are about to die immediately?" The sages, however, did not answer unanimously in their decision as to what was to be done. In fact, they offered many different prescriptions. It was at that time that the great sage Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the sixteen-year-old son of Vyāsadeva, arrived. Despite his young age, he is described by the *Bhāgavatam* as being most experienced in knowledge. All the sages present stood up and offered him obeisances.

ŚUKADEVA

The great devotee Mahārāja Parīkṣit went near the sage Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who was sitting perfectly at peace and who was prepared to answer everything. Bowing

down before him, Parīkṣit said, "You are sanctified. This place is a place of pilgrimage due to your presence."

This wonderful meeting of Mahārāja Parīkṣit and Śukadeva Gosvāmī is glorified by a whole disciplic succession of spiritual masters because Śukadeva Gosvāmī was authorized by Kṛṣṇa to speak about the pastimes of the Lord, and Mahārāja Parīkṣit, because of his eagerness to hear, was the perfect audience to receive that message. Mahārāja Parīkṣit had just been expressing to the sages that he wanted to hear about the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and nothing else, and when he expressed this to Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Śukadeva said, "This is very nice because I just was going to tell you that you should hear the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa." This is the perfect combination for Kṛṣṇa consciousness: a bona fide spiritual master and an eager and qualified student.

The teachings of Śukadeva Gosvāmī to Mahārāja Parīkṣit are the subject of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the most elevated of all Vedic literatures. Simply to hear this most authoritative *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* can bring one to the stage of devotional service to the Lord. Mahārāja Parīkṣit's death was great because he was able to achieve the ultimate success of going back to Godhead by being favored by Kṛṣṇa, who sent him His true representative. As soon as a devotee meets a true representative of the Lord, he is guaranteed to go back to Godhead after leaving the present body. This depends on the sincerity of the devotee himself. The Lord is seated in the hearts of all living beings, and he knows well the

movements of every individual person. And to that particular soul who is eager to go back to Godhead, He sends a bona fide spiritual master. When Mahārāja Parīkṣit was hearing from Śukadeva Gosvāmī, he was receiving the direct help of the Lord Himself in the form of the instructions of his spiritual master. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, First Canto, it is stated that after Kṛṣṇa left the earth, He remained present in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, so hearing the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* can be taken to by all peoples as the panacea for the age of Kali. Hearing about the pastimes of the Lord and chanting His holy names will free everyone from the attack of *māyā*, the illusory energy of the Lord.

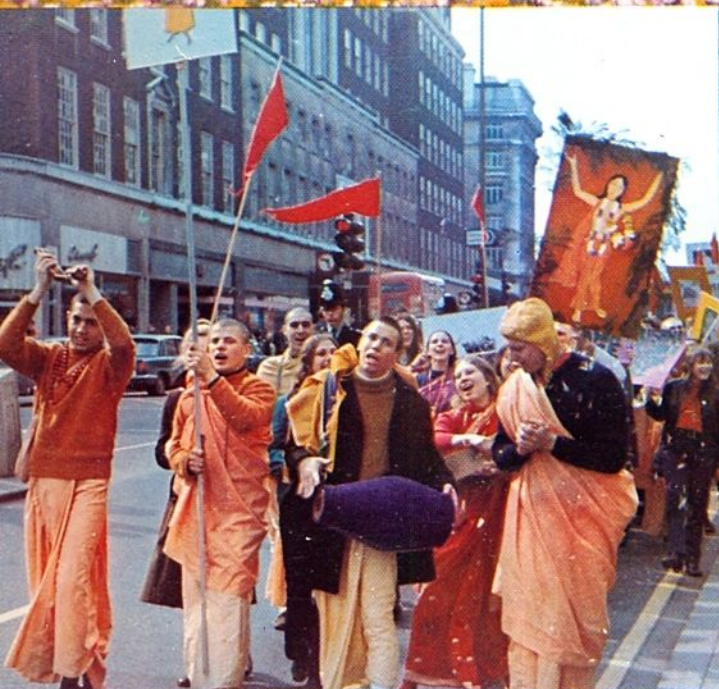
All of us should follow in the footsteps of the pure devotee Mahārāja Parīkṣit and glorify the Lord by hearing from the bona fide spiritual master. This was the answer given by Śukadeva to Mahārāja Parīkṣit's question. "What should one do at the time of death?" One should glorify God by hearing of His pastimes, as described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Surely that is the highest occupation for mankind. If one can simply do that, then there will be peace and prosperity, just as in the days when Mahārāja Parīkṣit ruled the earth. Mahārāja Parīkṣit controlled the corruption of the age of Kali, and there is every reason to believe this can be effected again today. By vigorous distribution of Kṛṣṇa conscious literature, *prasādam*, and *saṅkīrtana* or chanting the holy names, the age of Kali can be transformed into the golden age.

END

Tho' I wait days, months, years
For the moment when
My worthless eyes rest upon
Your divine face,
What will it matter?
For thou hast given me shelter;
Thou hast led me from
The darkest regions of nescience
By example
To surrender to the enchanting Lord.

O Prabhupāda,
When will the flowers of my devotion bloom
And be worthy to place
As an offering before thee?
I prepare for thy coming,
Chanting the holy name.
Ridding my mind of adulterated waste,
With zealous heart I shall say the name
Till it captivates my wandering consciousness.
In the silence of the temple I sit and chant,
Yearning for the sight of your holy face,
My only solace the name.

—Vida Jurkovic
(ISKCON Sydney)



London Saṅkīrtana:

On the occasion of the appearance day of Lord Caitanya, thousands of Britishers heard the joyous vibration of Hare Kṛṣṇa, the glorification of God's holy name. According to *Bhagavad-gītā*, the devotee of Kṛṣṇa "always busy working for the welfare of all sentient beings. The sufferings of humanity can be understood to be due to forgetfulness that Kṛṣṇa (God) is the supreme enjoyer, the supreme proprietor and the supreme friend. Therefore, to revive Kṛṣṇa consciousness within the entire human society is the highest welfare work. Hare Kṛṣṇa!

