

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

BTF Archives



BACK TO GODHEAD



THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

No. 66



In Paris
And Around the World. . .

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

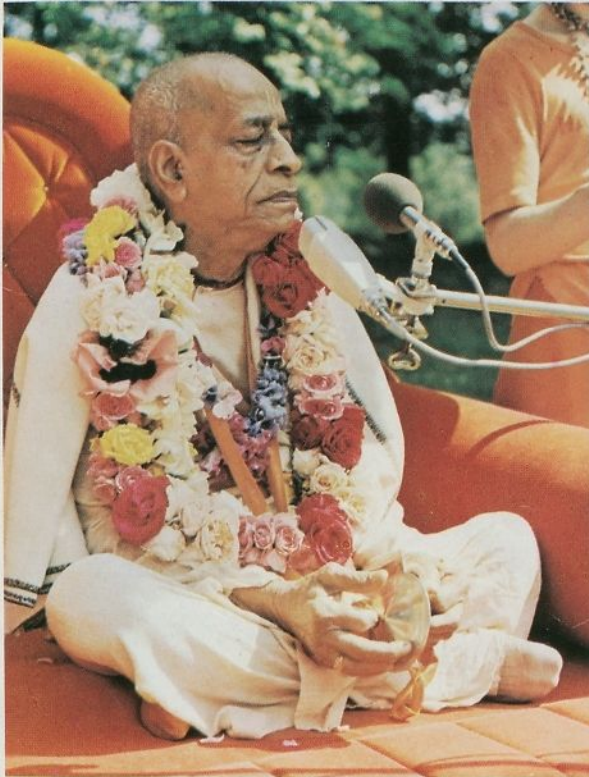
Sometimes we forget that God is a person. But He is. In fact, He is the Supreme Person, the original father of us all, and our dearest friend as well. Because His activities and qualities are infinite, He is known by innumerable names. The

name Kṛṣṇa means "all-attractive"; no one can be more attractive than God. So if we simply hear about Kṛṣṇa from an authority who has scientific knowledge of Him, we cannot fail to be attracted to Kṛṣṇa—and to His loving service, which is the ultimate goal of life.

His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, is presenting such knowledge on the basis of ancient Vedic scriptures like *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He has established more than eighty centers throughout the world, simply for one purpose—to give everyone a chance to hear about Kṛṣṇa and cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Here you see the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple in Paris. Located in the elegant 16th district, the temple maintains sixty full-time devotees. The devotees teach a weekly course in Vedic Wisdom at Nanterre University, run a press and translating office (now finishing the French edition of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*) and hold a weekly festival that attracts some four hundred guests. Also, several groups of devotees travel in vans throughout the country, distributing spiritual literature (more than 40,000 copies of French *Back to Godhead* monthly) and raising funds to support the temple. Śrīla Prabhupāda was officially welcomed at the Paris City Hall in August 1973 by Jacques Dominati, President of the City of Paris.

In spiritual life there is no meaning to such terms as French, American, Russian, Chinese. The relationship between Kṛṣṇa and every living being goes beyond national and sectarian boundaries. We can easily reawaken our relationship with Kṛṣṇa by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Back to Godhead explains why this is so. It tells about the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement and gives a taste of its philosophy. For more, we invite you to read our larger books or visit the Hare Kṛṣṇa Temple nearest you.





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THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

FOUNDER

(under the direction of His Divine Grace
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda)

His Divine Grace

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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PRONUNCIATION OF SANSKRIT WORDS

Sanskrit words and names in *Back to Godhead*
are spelled according to a system scholars
throughout the world use to indicate
exact pronunciation of each word.

Vowels in Sanskrit are pronounced almost
as in Italian. The sound of the short *a* is like
the *u* in *but*, the long *ā* is like the *a* in *far* and
held twice as long as the short *a*, and *e* is like
the *a* in *evade*. Long *ī* is like the *i* in *pique*. The
vowel *ṛ* is pronounced like the *re* in the
English word *fibre*. The *c* is pronounced as in the
English word *chair*, and the aspirated consonants
(*ch*, *jh*, *dh*, etc.) are pronounced as in *staunch*-,
hedge-hog and *red-hot*. The two aspirants
ś and *ṣ* are pronounced like the English *sh*;
s is pronounced as in *sun*. Thus *Kṛṣṇa* is
pronounced KRISHNA and *Caitanya* is pronounced
CHAITANYA.

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ON THE COVER

At the request of His friend Arjuna, Lord
Kṛṣṇa displayed His four-armed form of Viṣṇu
and then His beautiful two-armed form.

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WHO IS CRAZY?

The whole world is divided into factions, and each accuses the others of being crazy. But if there are no criteria by which to judge sanity, then who can decide?

*man-manā bhava mad-bhakto mad-yājī mām namaskuru
mām evaiṣyasi yuktvaivam ātmānam mat-parāyaṇaḥ*

“Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, engage your body in My service and surrender unto Me. Completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me.”

(Bhagavad-gītā, 9.34)

Here Kṛṣṇa says that one should always think of Him, be His devotee and worship Him. This is the process of devotional service; it is not very difficult, and anyone can execute it by thinking of God, offering obeisances and rendering some service unto Him. Generally people identify with some party, either socially, politically, economically or religiously. In America there are the Republican and Democratic parties, and on the international scale there are the capitalists and the communists. Religiously, people identify with a party as Christian, Moslem, Hindu and so on. In India there are social parties also, like the *brāhmaṇas* and *kṣatriyas*. In short, to avoid belonging to some party or other is not possible. Spiritualism, however, means that we should identify ourselves with God’s party.

On this platform also there is “party-ism” in that the spiritualists call the materialists crazy, and the materialists call the spiritualists crazy. We have formed a Society for Krishna Consciousness, and those who do



This is a challenge to the world: Whoever claims God's property as belonging to his body can only be considered a crazy man.

not like it say that we are “crazy.” Similarly, a person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness sees a person who is acting in material consciousness as a crazy person. Who, then, is actually crazy? Who decides? How are the parties involved capable of deciding? Indeed, the whole world is divided into parties, each accusing the others of being crazy, but if there are no criteria by which to judge sanity, then who can decide? If we ask any man, any common man on the street, what he is, he will reply, “I am this body.” He may give some further explanation by saying that he is Christian, or Hindu, or Jewish, or that he is Mr. So-and-So, or whatever, but all these are simply designations he attaches to the body. In other words, they all arise from the body. When a person says that he is an American, he is referring to the body because by some accident or reason he is born into the land of America and so takes the title of an American. But that is also artificial because the land is neither American nor French, nor Chinese, nor Russian, nor anything—land is land. We have simply artificially created some boundaries and said, “This is America, this is Canada, this is Mexico, Europe, Asia, India.” These are our concoctions, for we do not find that these lands were originally divided in this way. Three or four hundred years ago this land was not even known as America, nor was it even inhabited by white men from Europe. Even a thousand years ago Europe was inhabited by different peoples and called different names. These are all designations that are constantly changing. From the Vedic literatures we can understand that this whole planet was known as Ilāvṛta-varṣa, and one king, Mahārāja Bharata, who ruled the entire planet, changed the name of the planet to Bhārata-varṣa. Gradually, however, the planet became divided again, and different continents and sectors became known by different names. Even recently India has been divided into a number of countries, whereas earlier in the century India had included Burma, Ceylon and East and West Pakistan. In actuality the land is neither Bhārata-varṣa, India, Europe, Asia or whatever—we simply give it these designations in

accordance with time and influence.

Just as we give the land designations, we also give our bodies designations, but no one can say what his designations were before birth. Who can say that he was American, Chinese, European or whatever? We are thinking that after leaving this body we will continue as American or Indian or Russian. But although we may live in America during this life, we may be in China in the next, for we are constantly changing our bodies. Who can say that he is not changing bodies? When we are born from the womb of our mother, our body is very small. Now, where is that body? Where is the body we had as a boy? We may have photographs that remind us what the body was like in past years, but we cannot say where that body has gone. The body may change, yet we have the feeling that we do not change. “I am the same man,” we think, “and in my childhood I looked like this or like that.” Where have those years gone? They have vanished along with the body and everything that came in contact with it. But although everything is changing at every moment, we are still sticking to our bodily identification so that when we are asked what we are, we give an answer that is somehow or other related to this body. Is this not crazy? If a person identifies with something he is not, he is considered crazy. The conclusion is that one who identifies with the body cannot really be considered sane. This, then, is a challenge to the world: Whoever claims God's property or earth as belonging to his body, which is constantly changing, can only be considered a crazy man. Who can actually establish that this is his property or that this is his body? By the chances of nature a person is placed in a body and is dictated to by the laws of material nature. Yet in illusion we think we are controlling that nature. Therefore Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni
guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ
ahaikāra-vimūḍhātmā
kartāham iti manyate*

“The bewildered spirit soul, under the influence of the three modes of material nature, thinks himself the doer of activities that are in actuality carried out by nature.” (Bg. 3.27)

Prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni: Material nature is pulling everyone by the ear, just as a stern teacher pulls a student. Every individual is under the dictations of material nature and is being put sometimes in this body and sometimes in that. We are

now fortunate to have acquired a human body, but we can easily see that there are many other types of bodies (8,400,000 according to *Padma Purāna*) and by the laws of nature we can be put into any type of body according to our work. Thus we are completely in the grip of material nature. Although this lifetime we may be fortunate in acquiring a human body, there is no guarantee that the next time we will not have the body of a dog or some other animal. All this depends on our work. No one can say, “After my death, I will take my birth again in America.” Material nature will force us into this body or that. Since we are not authorities, *Bhagavad-gītā* informs us that everything is being conducted by the supreme laws of nature, and it is the foolish man who thinks, “I am something. I am independent.” *Ahaikāra-vimūḍhātmā*: this is false reason. Although the living entity is different from the body, he thinks, “I am this body.” Therefore Śaṅkarācārya basically preached the same message over and over: *ahaṁ brahmāsmi*, “I am not this body; I am Brahman, spirit soul.”

Nonetheless, even when we have resolved to take to the path of self-realization, *māyā* or illusion persists. By self-realization a person may come to realize that he is not the body but a spiritual soul. What then is his position? Void? Impersonal? People think that after the demise of this body there is nothing but *nirvāṇa* or void. The impersonalists similarly say that as soon as the body is finished, one's personal identity is finished also. In actuality, however, the body can never be identified with the living entity any more than a car can be identified with its driver. A person may direct a car wherever he wishes, but when he gets out of the car he does not think that his personality is gone. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa speaks of the living entity in this way:

*īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṁ
hṛd-deśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati
bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni
yantrārūḍhāni māyayā*

“The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone's heart, O Arjuna, and is directing the wanderings of all living entities, who are seated as on a machine, made of the material energy.” (Bg. 18.61)

These various bodies are like cars, and they are all moving. One person may have an expensive kind of car, and another person may have an inexpensive one; one person may have a new car, and another person may have an old one. Should we then think that when we are out of the car

of the body the personality no longer exists? This is another kind of craziness. The void philosophy, which maintains that after death we become nothing, is also a craziness that has been contradicted. We are not void but spirit. When one attains spiritual realization, knowing himself as spirit outside the body, he can advance further by inquiring about his duty as spirit. "What is my spiritual work?" he should ask. Realizing one's spiritual identity and asking about one's spiritual duty is actual sanity. So much individuality and discrimination are displayed by the living entity even in the body. Should we think that at death one's intelligence, discrimination and individuality no longer exist? Although we may make such great plans and work so hard within the body, are we to assume that when we leave the body we become void? There is no basis for this nonsense, and it is directly refuted by Kṛṣṇa at the very beginning of *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*na tv evāhaṁ jātu nāsam
na tvaṁ neme janādhipāḥ
na caiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ
sarve vayam atah param
dehino 'smin yathā dehe
kaumāraṁ yauvanaṁ jarā
tathā dehāntara-prāptir
dhīras tatra na muhyati*

"Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings; nor in the future shall any of us cease to be. As the embodied soul continually passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. The self-realized soul is not bewildered by such a change." (Bg. 2.12-13)

Thus the spiritual identity of the individual soul continues after death, for Lord Kṛṣṇa assures Arjuna of the eternity of all the individual souls assembled on the battlefield. The spiritual spark or self is within the body from the moment the body begins to form within the womb of the mother; and it continues existing in the body as the body undergoes all of its changes through infancy, childhood, youth and old age. This means that the person who is within the body is present from the moment of conception. The measurement of this individual soul is so small that the Vedic scriptures approximate it to be no larger than one ten-thousandth part of the tip of a hair—in other words, as far as human vision is concerned, it is invisible. One cannot see the soul with material eyes, but the soul is there nonetheless, and the fact that the

body grows from the shape of a pea to full-grown manhood is proof of its presence. There are six symptoms of the soul's presence, and growth is one of them. If there is growth, or change, one should know that the soul is present within the body. When the body becomes useless, the soul leaves it, and the body simply decays. One cannot directly perceive the soul's leaving the body, but one can perceive it symptomatically when the body loses consciousness and dies. In the Second Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa gives the following simile to illustrate this process:

*vāsāmsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya
navāni gṛhṇāti naro 'parāṇi
tathā śarīrāṇi vihāya jīrṇāny
anyāni saṁyāti navāni dehī*

"As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, similarly, the soul accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones." (Bg. 2.22)

Although the soul takes on new bodies, the soul does not select the bodies himself; the selection is made by the law of nature. However, the mentality of the soul does affect the selection, as indicated by Kṛṣṇa in the following verse:

*yaṁ yaṁ vāpi smaran bhāvam
tyajaty ante kalevaram
taṁ tam evaiti kaunteya
sadā tad-bhāva-bhāvitaḥ*

"In whatever condition one quits his present body, in his next life he will attain to that state of being without fail." (Bg. 8.6)

As one's thoughts develop, his future body also develops. The sane man understands that he is not the body, and he also understands what his duty is: to fix his mind on Kṛṣṇa so that at death he can attain Kṛṣṇa's nature. This is the advice of Kṛṣṇa in the last verse of the Ninth Chapter:

*man-manā bhava mad-bhakto
mad-yājī māṁ namaskuru
māṁ evaiṣyasi yuktvaivam
ātmānaṁ mat-parāyaṇaḥ*

"Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, engage your body in My service and surrender unto Me. Completely absorbed in Me, surely will you come to Me." (Bg. 9.34)

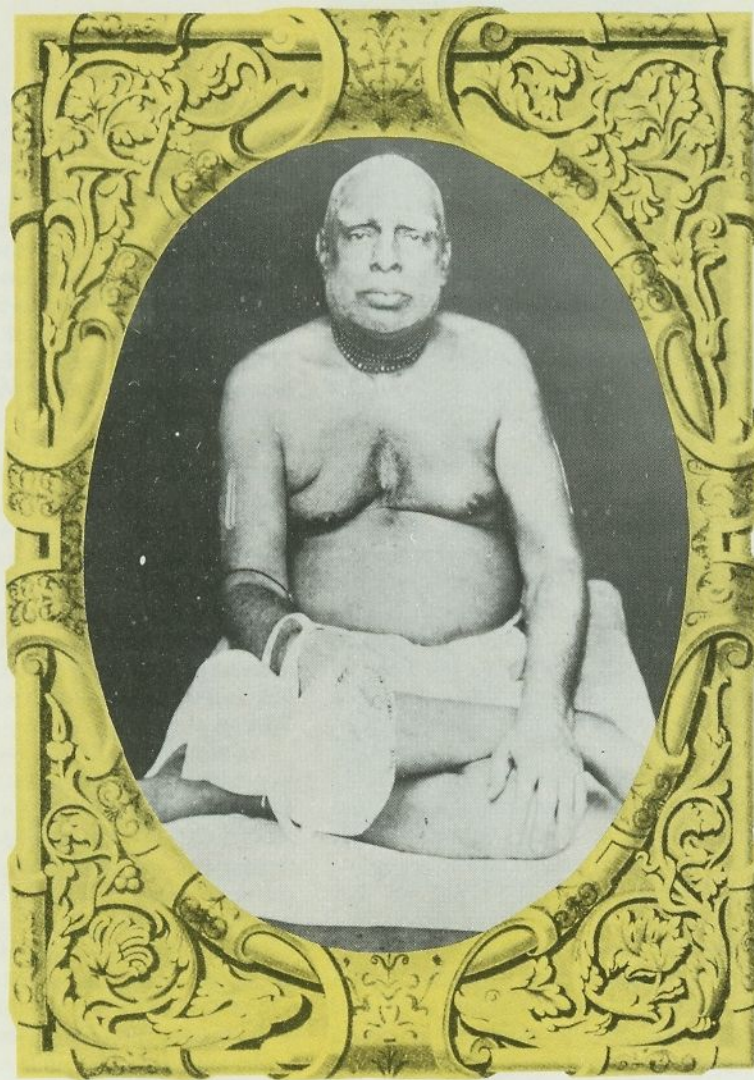
Every embodied soul is in the constant act of thinking. To refrain from thinking something is not possible for a moment. The duty of the individual, therefore, is to think of Kṛṣṇa. There should be no difficulty in this, nor any harm; Kṛṣṇa

has pastimes and activities, He comes to earth and leaves His message in the form of *Bhagavad-gītā*, and there are so many literatures about Kṛṣṇa that thinking of Him is neither a difficult nor costly task. There are enough literatures on Kṛṣṇa to last one a lifetime, so there is no shortage of material. Thinking of Kṛṣṇa, however, should be favorable. If a man is employed, he may always be thinking of his employer: "I must get there on time. If he sees me late, he may deduct from my paycheck." This kind of thinking will not do. It is necessary to think of Kṛṣṇa with love (*bhava mad-bhaktaḥ*). In the material world when the servant thinks of the master, there is no love; he is thinking only of pounds, shillings and pence. Because that kind of thinking will not save us, Kṛṣṇa requests that one just be His devotee.

Thinking of Kṛṣṇa with love, or devotion to Kṛṣṇa, actually means service. The spiritual master prescribes various duties to enable the neophyte devotee to think of Kṛṣṇa. In the Society for Krishna Consciousness, for instance, there are so many duties assigned: printing, writing, typing, dispatching, cooking, and so on. In so many ways the students are thinking of Kṛṣṇa because they are engaged in the service of Kṛṣṇa.

What is the duty indicated by Kṛṣṇa? *Mad-yājī māṁ namaskuru*. Even if we are not inclined to obedience, we must obey and offer respects (*namaskuru*). *Bhakti*, or devotion, minus respect is not *bhakti*. One should engage in Kṛṣṇa consciousness with love and respect and should thus fulfill his designated duties. Then life will be successful. One can never be happy by identifying himself with the material body and engaging in all kinds of nonsensical activities. For happiness, there must be consciousness of Kṛṣṇa; that is the difference between spiritualism and materialism. The same typewriter, dictation machine, tape recorder, mimeograph machine, paper, ink, the same hand—on the surface, everything is the same, but everything becomes spiritualized when it is used in the service of Kṛṣṇa. This, then, is spiritual. We should not think that something has to be uncommon to be spiritual. The entire material world can be transformed into spirit if we simply become Kṛṣṇa conscious. By ardently following the instructions of Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavad-gītā* and following in the footsteps of the great *ācāryas*, teachers of *Bhagavad-gītā* in the line of disciplic succession, we can spiritualize the earth and restore its inhabitants to sanity.





How the Teachings of Lord Caitanya Came to the Western World

by His Holiness Brahmānanda Svāmī

In Calcutta in 1896, the teachings of Lord Caitanya began their journey to the West. In Bengali-speaking Calcutta on August 20th of that year, Śrīla Bhaktivinoḍa Ṭhākura published a small English treatise entitled *Lord Caitanya—His Life and Precepts*. Seventy-one years later, in 1967, in Montreal, Canada, a graduate student came across a copy of this book while browsing through the rare-book collection of the McGill University library. The book was a wonderful find for him because he was a dedicated follower of Lord Caitanya's, having been convinced of Lord Caitanya's teach-

ings by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, whom he had accepted as his spiritual master. Śrīla Prabhupāda was born in Calcutta on September 1, 1896, only a few days after *Lord Caitanya—His Life and Precepts* was published. Thus by a transcendental arrangement this significant book and he who would fulfill the purpose of the book appeared together.

The *sāstras* (authoritative scriptures) and *ācāryas* (authoritative teachers) affirm that Lord Caitanya, who appeared in Bengal 500 years ago, is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The great Vedic scripture *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* states that in Kali-yuga (the present Age of Quarrel) the Supreme Lord descends not in His

**“He reasons ill who tells that Vaiṣṇavas die
When thou art living still in Sound!
The Vaiṣṇavas die to live and living try
To spread a holy life around!”**

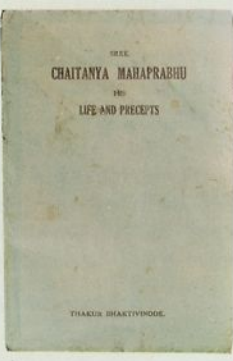
—verse by Śrīla Bhaktivinoḍa Ṭhākura on the tomb of the great saint Ṭhākura Haridāsa at Puṛī, India

original form as Kṛṣṇa, but in the garb of a golden-complexioned devotee who constantly sings the name of Kṛṣṇa. Lord Caitanya, the perfect devotee, descends to teach us how to love Him. Although He is Kṛṣṇa Himself, He shows us how to love Kṛṣṇa, like a teacher who takes up a pencil and writes as if learning the ABC's, just to teach his pupils how to write. Lord Caitanya is Kṛṣṇa Himself, but as one great *ācārya* has declared, He is more kind than Kṛṣṇa because He teaches pure love of Kṛṣṇa (*namo mahā-vadānyāya kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te/ kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāme gaura-tviṣe namaḥ*). Thus in this age if one wants to be an unalloyed devotee of God, practically speaking one need only follow the teachings of Lord Caitanya.

A TRUSTED REPRESENTATIVE

The author of *Lord Caitanya—His Life and Precepts*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoḍa Ṭhākura, pioneered in bestowing upon the world the benediction of Kṛṣṇa consciousness through the instructions of Lord Caitanya. He himself appeared near Lord Caitanya's very birthsite, in the district of Nadia in West Bengal, India, in 1834. Bhaktivinoḍa Ṭhākura is not a conditioned soul born in this temporary world because of the effects of bad deeds performed in previous lives; he is a *nitya-siddha*, an eternal associate of the Lord, and he is indeed the transcendental energy of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu (*gaura-śakti-svarūpāya*). Sometimes during spiritual peril the Lord empowers a trusted representative to act on His behalf, just as a king may send an ambassador to a foreign land to represent him. Bhaktivinoḍa Ṭhākura is called *sac-cid-ānanda* because he is a representative of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, who is also known as *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha*, the embodiment of eter-

His Holiness Brahmānanda Svāmī served for many years as the first president of the first ISKCON temple in the United States (while at the same time working as a teacher in the New York City public school system). He later became director of ISKCON Press and in 1970 accepted the renounced order of life. He was the first to introduce Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Africa. He has recently been preaching in Africa and India.



Historic Volume. The book that first brought Lord Caitanya's teachings to the West.

nity, knowledge and bliss. He was sent by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu to revive Mahāprabhu's message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and thus redeem the modern world.

While cultivating spiritual consciousness, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was simultaneously a prominent magistrate in the government of Bengal. Thus Bhaktivinoda's life exemplifies what he contributed to spiritual knowledge. He proved that renunciation (*vairāgya*) consists not of ceasing or abolishing any activity, but of adjusting every activity and using every object of the world for the service of the Lord, without thought of personal gain or enjoyment. Thus Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, while outwardly a materially successful man, was an ascetic of the highest order (*yukta-vairāgi*). He was completely distinct from the stereotyped Hindu ascetics who renounce everything because they think that everything is mundane, yet he was not among the pseudo devotees (*sahajiyās*) who indulge in sensual pleasure on the plea that because they are part of God they should be free to enjoy like Him.

To live in the Himalayas eating roots and berries, shunning all the activities of the world, actually shows one's lack of spiritual knowledge. *Everything* belongs to God. This is the verdict of the *Upaniṣads*. *Īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ yat kiñca jagatyām jagat*: "Everything in the world, both animate and inanimate, belongs to the Supreme Lord." Since He is the proprietor, we cannot renounce anything, for one can give up only what one has in the first place. Therefore an enlightened man accepts his quota, what he needs for his maintenance, while at the same time fully aware that God is the proprietor who maintains him.

AN ACTIVE PREACHER

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura preached devotional service, which is the real message

of the *Gītā* and all the Vedic scriptures. A devotee surrenders everything to Kṛṣṇa by using everything in the Lord's service. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda wrote in one song: "My mind, my household affairs, my body—whatever is mine—I offer to You, my dear Lord, for Your service. Now You can do with them as You like. You are the supreme master of everything, so if You like You may kill me, or if You like You may give me protection. All authority belongs to You. I have nothing to claim as my own." This illustrates the surrendered attitude of a pure devotee.

For Bhaktivinoda, just to perform devotional service was not enough. As a truly realized soul, he yearned for the day when the entire world would taste the nectar of devotion. Each night the Ṭhākura would rest for only four hours, from eight until midnight, and then he would write until morning, when he would go to the courthouse for his judicial duties. In this way he wrote more than one hundred books while still a magistrate. Bhaktivinoda maintained a respectable position in society, but at the same time explained in detail how to get out of this material world. The result was that people listened to him more respectfully than had he been a hirsute hermit.

Bhaktivinoda wrote his books mostly in Bengali but also in Sanskrit and Urdu, and to make the teachings of Lord Caitanya appreciable to those outside Bengal and India, he also wrote in English. He wrote his first work, *Harikathā*, a book of Bengali verses, in 1850. At a meeting in Calcutta in 1869 he delivered a remarkable speech in English entitled "The *Bhāgavata*: Its Philosophy, Its Ethics, and Its Theology." Other works he wrote in English during this time include "Speech on Gautama," "Reflections" (poems), "Jagannātha Temple of Purī," "*Slokas* on the *Samādhi* of Ṭhākura Haridāsa," and "*Ākhaṇḍās* [Monasteries] of Purī." Śrīla Bhaktivinoda started *Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, a unique monthly journal that continued through seventeen volumes. He composed *Kalyāṇa-kalpataru*, a collection of Bengali songs, and wrote many other books, among them *Śrī Caitanya-sikṣāmṛta*, *Śaraṇāgati*, *Jaivadharmā* and *Prema-pradīpa* (a fiction showing the excellence of *bhakti-yoga*). Furthermore, he published numerous Bengali translations of important Sanskrit works, such as *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* (one edition with Sanskrit commentary by Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī and a second with commentary by Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa), *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka*, *Mañḥ-sikṣā*, *Śrī*

Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma, *Śrī Caitanya Upaniṣad* and *Śrī Īsopaniṣad* (with a commentary by Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa).

A CAREFUL PRESENTATION

During the 1890's reports came to India of an intensified European and American interest in Indian culture, and a particular interest in Sanskrit. In 1896 Bhaktivinoda penned *Śrī Gaurāṅga-smaraṇa-maṅgala-stotra*, 104 Sanskrit verses concerning Lord Caitanya's life and precepts. He sent copies to literary and scholastic luminaries all over the world. Today, Bhaktivinoda's only surviving son still preserves a letter from Ralph Waldo Emerson, the famous American transcendentalist, gratefully acknowledging receipt of Bhaktivinoda's book but requesting books in English. As a result of such requests, Bhaktivinoda then wrote *Lord Caitanya—His Life and Precepts*.

As a preacher, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura wanted to make the teachings of Lord Caitanya understandable to people in general and popular among them. This missionary spirit followed the express desire of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Although Lord Caitanya Himself wrote only eight short verses on His teachings, He ordered His chief disciples to write volumes of books explaining, codifying and substantiating these teachings with Vedic authority. It is quite evident from Bhaktivinoda's books that he took great pains to make these topmost transcendental teachings readily appreciable. For instance, in his speech on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, we see the Ṭhākura making an old, massive Sanskrit tome really interesting because he writes about it in such an honest and charming way. He writes:

"The *Bhāgavata* has suffered from shallow critics both Indian and foreign. That book has been accursed and denounced by a great number of our young countrymen who have scarcely read its contents and pondered the philosophy on which it is founded. It is owing mostly to their having imbibed an unfounded prejudice against it when they were in school. The *Bhāgavata*, as a matter of course, has been held in derision by those teachers who are generally of an inferior mind and intellect. This prejudice is not easily shaken off when the student grows up unless he candidly studies the book and meditates on the doctrines of Vaiṣṇavism. We are ourselves witnesses to the fact. When we were in college, reading the philosophical works of the West and

exchanging thoughts with the thinkers of the day, we contracted a hatred of the *Bhāgavata*. That great work seemed like a repository of ideas scarcely adapted to the Nineteenth Century, and we hated to hear any argument in its favour. To us then a volume of Channing, Parker, Emerson or Newman had more weight than whole lots of Vaiṣṇava works. Greedily we pored over the various commentations upon the Holy Bible and the labours of the *Tattva-bodhini Sabhā*, containing extracts from the *Upaniṣads* and the *Vedānta*, but no work of the Vaiṣṇavas had any favour with us. But when we advanced in age and our religious sentiment received development, we turned Unitarian in our belief and prayed as Jesus prayed in the Garden. Accidentally, we fell upon a work about the Great Caitanya, and on reading it with some attention in order to settle the historical position of that Mighty Genius of Nadia, we had the opportunity to gather His explanations of the *Bhāgavata*, given to the wrangling Vedāntists of the Benares school. This accidental study created in us a love for all the works which we could find about our Eastern Saviour. We gathered with difficulties the famous *Kīrcaas* written in Sanskrit by the disciples of Caitanya. The explanations we got of the *Bhāgavata* from these sources were of such a charming character that we procured a copy of the *Bhāgavata* complete and studied its texts (difficult, of course, to those who are not trained in philosophical thoughts) with the assistance of the famous commentaries of Śrīdhara Svāmī. From such study it is that we have at last gathered the real doctrines of the Vaiṣṇavas. Oh! What trouble it is to get rid of prejudices gathered in unripe years!" It is rare to find such honesty in the field of religion, where blind faith often demands dishonesty in order to keep itself intact.

Next, we see the Thākura writing like a real religious freethinker:

"Subjects of philosophy and theology are like the peaks of towering and inaccessible mountains standing in the midst of our planet, inviting attention and investigation. Thinkers and men of deep speculation take their observations through the instruments of reason and consciousness. But they take their stand on different points when they carry on their work. These points are positions chalked out by the circumstances of their social and philosophical life, different as they are in the different parts of the world. Plato looked at the peak of the



Śrīla Thākura Bhaktivinoda. The pioneer of the program to spread the benediction of Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the entire world by the instructions of Lord Caitanya.

spiritual question from the West, and Vyāsa made the observation from the East; so Confucius did it from further East, and Schlegel, Spinoza, Kant and Goethe from further West. These observations were made at different times and by different means, but the conclusion is all the same inasmuch as the object of observation was one and the same. They all searched after the Great Spirit, the unconditioned Soul of the Universe. They could not but get an insight into it. Their words and expressions are different, but their import is the same. They tried to find the absolute religion, and their labours were crowned with success, for God gives all that He has to His children if they want to have it. It requires a candid, generous, pious and holy heart to feel the beauties of their conclusions. Party spirit—that great enemy of truth—will always baffle the attempt of the enquirer who tries to gather truth from religious works of his own nation, and will make him believe that absolute truth is nowhere except in his old religious book. What better example could be adduced than the fact that the great philosopher of Benares will find no truth in the universal brotherhood of man and the common fatherhood of God? The philosopher, thinking in his own way of thought, can never see the beauty of the Christian

father. The way in which Christ thought of His own father was love absolute, and so long as the philosopher will not adopt that way of thinking, he will ever remain deprived of the absolute faith preached by the western Saviour. In a similar manner, the Christian needs adopt the way of thought which the Vedāntist pursued, before he can love the conclusions of the philosopher. The critic, therefore, should have a comprehensive, good, generous, candid, impartial and sympathetic soul."

And finally, we see his humor: "What sort of a thing is the *Bhāgavata*?" asks the European gentleman newly arrived in India. His companion tells him with a serene look that the *Bhāgavata* is a book which his Oriya bearer daily reads in the evening to a number of hearers. It contains a jargon of unintelligible and savage literature for those men who paint their noses with some sort of earth or sandal and wear beads all over their bodies in order to procure salvation for themselves. Another of his companions, who has travelled a little in the interior, would immediately contradict him and say that the *Bhāgavata* is a Sanskrit work claimed by a sect of men, the Gosvāmīs, who give *mantras*, like the Popes of Italy, to the common people of Bengal, and pardon their sins on payment of gold enough to defray their social expenses. A third

gentleman will repeat a third explanation. A young Bengali chained in English thoughts and ideas, and wholly ignorant of the pre-Mohammedan history of his own country, will add one more explanation by saying that the *Bhāgavata* is a book containing an account of the life of Kṛṣṇa, who was an ambitious and an immoral man! This is all that he could gather from his grandmother while yet he did not go to school. Thus the Great *Bhāgavata* ever remains unknown to the foreigners, like the elephant of the six blind men who caught hold of the several parts of the body of the beast. But Truth is eternal and is never injured, but for a while, by ignorance.”

THE FIGHT AGAINST CASTEISM

For his time, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s approach and thought were downright rebellious. Of all the world’s religions, certainly none is more conventional and reactionary than Indian religion, but there was no protest from the orthodox because Bhaktivinoda presented his arguments most reasonably. This kind of intelligent reasoning, rather than emotionalism, was what Bhaktivinoda used to expose what has been the singlemost perversion of Indian religion: caste consciousness.

Although Gandhi is more popularly known in the struggle against casteism, actually Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had campaigned against it long before. And even before him, it was Caitanya Mahāprabhu who first promoted spiritual equality in India. Indeed, Mahāprabhu’s two foremost disciples, Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī, had been deemed outcasts by orthodox Hindu society because they had very closely associated with the Muslim rulers of the time. Lord Caitanya also appointed Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who was born a Mohammedan, to be the *ācārya* or master of the holy name.

Only one who is enlightened, who sees spiritually, can see all creatures equally (*paṇḍitāḥ sama-darśinaḥ*). One who is materially contaminated must see differences because bodies naturally differ. It is the body which is male or female, brown or white, young or old, American or Indian, and so on. In his *Life and Precepts*, Bhaktivinoda made Lord Caitanya’s teachings in this regard quite clear:

“The religion preached by Mahāprabhu is universal and not exclusive. . . . The principle of *kīrtana*, as the future church of the world, invites all classes of men, without distinction of caste or clan, to the highest cultivation of the spirit. This church, it appears, will

extend all over the world and take the place of all sectarian churches, which exclude outsiders from the precincts of the mosque, church, or temple.”

Nevertheless, after Caitanya Mahāprabhu, a group of self-interested *brāhmaṇas* arose who declared that by genealogy they were the only qualified spiritual leaders. Such exclusiveness is very strong in Indian religion and, of course, not unknown in other religions. This group’s idea was to monopolize all religious functions and collect money. Caitanya Mahāprabhu had opposed such imposters. In fact, on one occasion in Benares, as a protest, He purposely resided at the house of a *śūdra*, although it is mandatory for a *sannyāsī* to stay with a *brāhmaṇa*.

Bhagavad-gītā describes four orders of spiritual and social life, but nowhere does it hold that one’s birth determines one’s place among these orders. The *Gītā* says:

*cātur-varṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam
guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ*

According to this verse, four classes—intellectuals; administrators, merchants and laborers—are all created by Kṛṣṇa. Thus we naturally find these different classes in societies all over the world. However, these classes manifest themselves naturally; they are not artificially created. Everyone has different qualities inherent within him and will behave accordingly. But in no circumstances does one’s behavior depend only upon one’s birth. If one’s father is a high-court judge, this does not mean that one is himself a high-court judge. He also must first be trained and win a judicial appointment. Kṛṣṇa therefore says that one is classified according to one’s qualities (*guṇa*), and not one’s birth (*janma*). Thus the caste system as created by the Lord is meant to take account of one’s natural qualities, regardless of one’s birth. If one is born in the family of a *śūdra*, or laborer, but has the qualities of a *brāhmaṇa*, or intellectual, then he must be accepted as a *brāhmaṇa*; and if one is born in a *brāhmaṇa* family but has the qualities of a *śūdra*, he must be accepted as a *śūdra*.

History now records how India has generally come to reject caste designations, but Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had to fight caste consciousness not only in worldly society but even within religious society. Thus it is rather surprising that anyone who purports to be a follower of Caitanya Mahāprabhu could refuse to accept *brāhmaṇas* who happen to be born as non-Indians. Lord Caitanya counted

Rūpa, Sanātana, and Haridāsa Ṭhākura among His chief disciples. He elevated them to the status of Vaiṣṇava, which is even higher than that of *brāhmaṇa*, to demonstrate that anyone who is qualified must be accepted as a *sādhu*, or holy man. Lord Caitanya even predicted that Kṛṣṇa’s name would be sung in every town and village of the world. Did He mean that only Indians would be singing Kṛṣṇa’s name all over the world? Obviously He meant that Europeans, Americans and Africans would also take to the chanting of Kṛṣṇa’s holy name.

The revealed scriptures state that anyone who takes to the chanting of the holy name is situated on the topmost spiritual platform. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says: “If a person born in a family of dog-eaters takes to chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, it is to be understood that in his previous life he must have executed all kinds of austerities and penances and performed all the Vedic sacrifices.” (*Bhāg.* 3.33.7) Similarly, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Ādi-līlā* 7.23) states: “In distributing love of Godhead, Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates did not consider who was a fit candidate and who was not, nor where such distribution should or should not take place. They made no conditions. Wherever they got the opportunity, they distributed love of Godhead.” And, again in *Ādi-līlā* 7.26: “The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement will inundate the entire world and drown everyone, whether one be a gentleman, a rogue, or even lame, invalid or blind.” Lord Caitanya made no bodily distinctions, for His movement is purely spiritual.

The scriptures declare that anyone who discriminates against a qualified devotee is doomed. The *Padma Purāṇa* states:

*arcye viṣṇau śilā-dhīr guruṣu
nara-matir vaiṣṇave jāti-buddhiḥ*

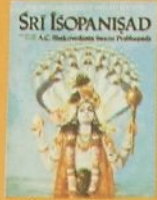
“One who considers the worshipable Deity of Lord Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa, to be stone, the spiritual master to be an ordinary human being, or a devotee to belong to a particular caste or creed, is possessed of hellish intelligence.” Nevertheless, such material consciousness still prevails in some religious quarters. Even today the priests of the temple of Lord Jagannātha at Purī will not allow any non-Indian to enter, even though Lord Caitanya Himself stayed there for twelve years and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was the chief administrator of the temple for over five years, from 1871 to 1876.

(to be continued)

FREEDOM IN KNOWLEDGE

"In this world, there is nothing so sublime and pure as transcendental knowledge. Such knowledge is the mature fruit of all mysticism. And one who has achieved this enjoys the self within himself in due course of time."—*Bhagavad-gītā*

When one is situated in transcendental knowledge he need not search for peace elsewhere, for he enjoys peace within himself. Cultivate this transcendental knowledge. Read the books of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.



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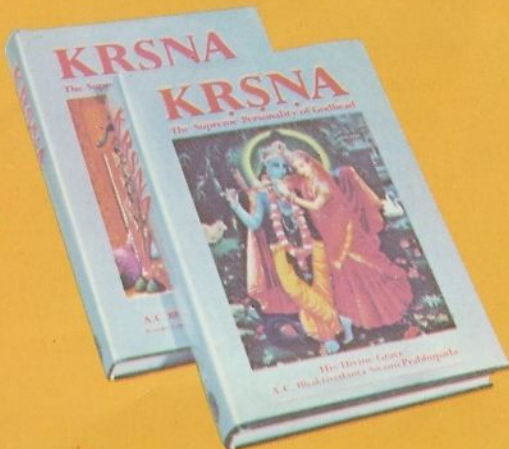
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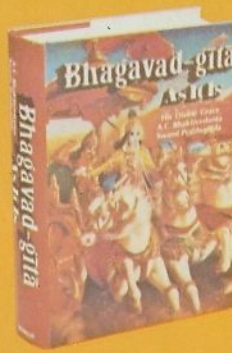
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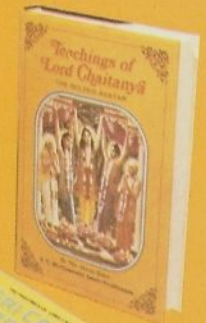


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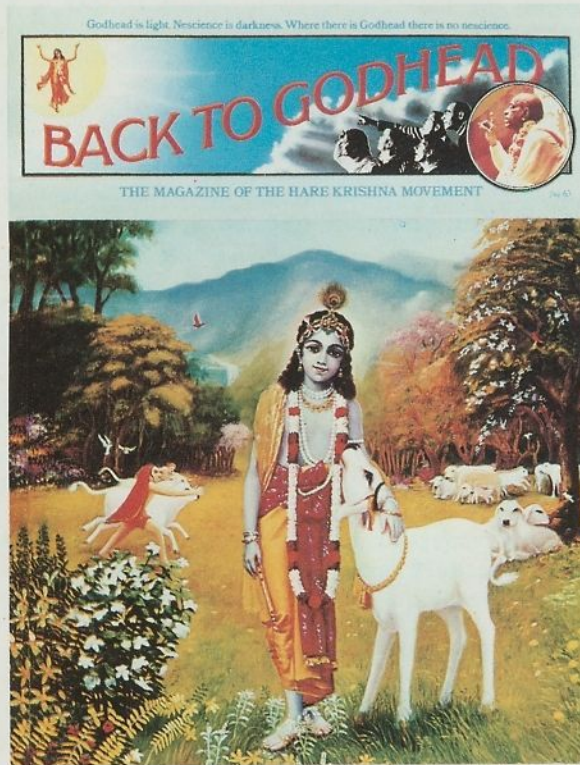
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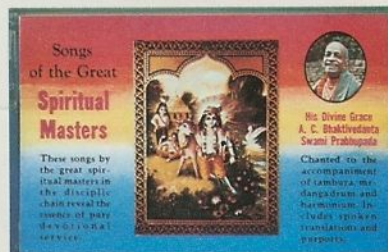
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KṚṢṆA'S UNIVERSAL FORM

by His Holiness Satsvarūpa dāsa Gosvāmī

ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS SECTIONS OF *BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ* is that in which Lord Kṛṣṇa's disciple Arjuna sees that Kṛṣṇa's body encompasses the entire universe. A prominent university scholar describes the universal form as "the mystery" of *Bhagavad-gītā*. However, one can easily understand the universal form by studying the *Gītā* through the testimony of Arjuna and the devotees who follow him.

Arjuna asked to see the universal form not for himself but for the benefit of others, who might doubt that Kṛṣṇa is God. Arjuna indeed accepted Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Earlier in the *Gītā*, Arjuna had already expressed his realization that Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute Truth. The Lord had described that He is all-pervading

and that He can be seen in everything great and powerful in the material world. "Of purifiers," the Lord said, "I am the wind. Of flowing rivers I am the Ganges. Of all sciences I am the spiritual science of the self. . . . Know that all beautiful, glorious and mighty creations spring from but a spark of My splendor."

Hearing of Kṛṣṇa's opulences, Arjuna declared, "You are the Supreme Brahman, the Ultimate." Arjuna had testified, moreover, that although some might think that his friendship with Kṛṣṇa had swayed his opinion, such great sages as Nārada, Devala, Asita and Vyāsa—and all the Vedic scriptures—confirm that Kṛṣṇa is indeed the Supreme. Nevertheless, so that his acceptance of Kṛṣṇa as God would not be merely theoretical, Arjuna requested Kṛṣṇa to reveal His *viśva-rūpa*, or universal form. Kṛṣṇa therefore agreed to reveal this form to Arjuna, and He blessed Arjuna with the special vision he needed to see it.

His Holiness Satsvarūpa dāsa Gosvāmī has served as President of ISKCON's Boston Temple, as Editor of Back to Godhead and, most recently, as personal secretary to Śrīla Prabhupāda, the founder-ācārya of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. He is now traveling in the United States, distributing Kṛṣṇa conscious literature to libraries and college professors.

The universal form is the form of the Supreme Lord in which one can see everything in the universe, all at once. In the universal form, one can see past, present and future. One can see all the demigods of the material creation, and all other living beings. *Bhagavad-gītā* graphically describes the revelation of the universal form: “Arjuna saw in that universal form many unlimited mouths and unlimited eyes. It was all wondrous. The form was decorated with divine, dazzling ornaments and arrayed in many garbs. . . . All was magnificent, all-expanding, unlimited. This was seen by Arjuna. If hundreds of thousands of suns were to rise at once in the sky, they might resemble the effulgence of the Supreme Person in that universal form.” (Bg. 11.10-12)

While Kṛṣṇa manifested His cosmic form, He nonetheless continued to exist in His form as a human being, sitting beside Arjuna. Arjuna was Kṛṣṇa’s friend, but upon seeing Kṛṣṇa in the universal form, he was filled with awe and wonder. Bewildered and astonished, his hairs standing on end, Arjuna began to pray with folded hands, offering obeisances to the Supreme Lord: “O Lord of the universe, I see in Your universal body many, many forms—bellies, mouths, eyes—expanded without limit. There is

would die in another way; their death could not be checked. Thus Kṛṣṇa explained to Arjuna the mission of the universal form.

Although Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord of the universe, He enjoys eternal personal relationships with His devotees such as Arjuna. However, when Kṛṣṇa appeared in His universal form. Arjuna, overwhelmed, begged Kṛṣṇa to forgive him for all the personal familiarities of their friendship. Arjuna said, “I have in the past addressed You as my friend, Kṛṣṇa, without knowing Your glories. Please forgive whatever I may have done in madness or in love. I dishonored You many times while we were relaxing, lying on the same bed or eating together, sometimes alone and sometimes among friends. Please excuse me for all my offenses. You are the father of the complete cosmic manifestation, the worshipful chief, the spiritual master. No one is equal to You, nor can anyone be one with You.” (Bg. 11.41-43) Thus although Arjuna, seeing his friend in the form of Time, was very much afraid, he could not forget that Kṛṣṇa was his friend in a loving relationship.

According to our spiritual master, the main reason Arjuna asked Kṛṣṇa to show this form was to discredit imposters who

The universal form is the form of the Supreme Lord in which one can see everything in the universe, all at once. In the universal form, one can see past, present and future. One can see all the demigods of the material creation, and all other living beings.

no end, there is no beginning, there is no middle to all this. Your form, adorned with various crowns, clubs and discs, is difficult to see because of its glaring effulgence, which is fiery and immeasurable like the sun. You are the supreme primal objective. You are the best in all the universes, You are inexhaustible, and You are the oldest. You are the maintainer of religion, the eternal Personality of Godhead. . . . You are spread throughout the sky and the planets and all space between.”

With innumerable faces, arms and legs, terrible teeth, and radiant colors spreading everywhere, the universal form bewildered the great warrior Arjuna. “I cannot keep my balance,” Arjuna said. “Seeing Your blazing deathlike faces, I am bewildered! All our soldiers and the soldiers of the enemy are rushing into Your mouths, their heads smashed by Your fearful teeth. As the rivers flow into the sea, all these warriors enter Your blazing mouths and perish. I see all people rushing with full speed into Your mouths as moths dash into a blazing fire. I see You devouring all people.” In great fear, Arjuna told the Lord, “I do not know what Your mission is, and I desire to hear of it.”

Thereupon, the universal form of the Lord replied: “Time I am, the destroyer of the worlds, and I have come to engage all people. With the exception of you, the Pāṇḍava brothers, all the soldiers on both sides will be slain.” (Bg. 11.32)

Those who have studied *Bhagavad-gītā* know that it is a dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna in which Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, tries to convince Arjuna, His friend and disciple, to fulfill his duty as a warrior by fighting against a demoniac army. Throughout *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa gives many arguments why Arjuna should fight, and He especially assures Arjuna that he and all the others in the battle are eternal spiritual souls who cannot actually be killed. In His universal form, however, the Lord tells Arjuna that even if he refused to fight, the material bodies of all the warriors would nevertheless be destroyed, for that was the plan of the Lord. If Arjuna refused to fight, they

might come later and claim to be God. Many rascals boast that they are God or incarnations of God, but they should be challenged to show a form as wonderful as the *viśva-rūpa*, in which all the universes appear within Kṛṣṇa’s body. No one but the Supreme Lord Himself can display such a form.

Arjuna’s vision of the universal form was real; it was not a dream, for the *Gītā* indicates that many other important personalities also beheld the universal form when the Lord revealed it to Arjuna. Moreover, since five thousand years ago, when *Bhagavad-gītā* was spoken, great philosophers and spiritual masters have confirmed the reality of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s universal form.

Sometimes fraudulent Gods bluff their followers by asserting that they can indeed show them the universal form. One time a boy came to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness center in New York and announced to the devotees that he was God. When asked to show his universal form, he declared, “Yes, here it is,” and then he held up his arms so that everyone could behold his cosmic body. But a display of mere insolence and a form of skin and bones—“Here it is. Can’t you see it?”—does not constitute a revelation of the universal form. Nor can word jugglery, LSD, hypnotism or charisma induce a true vision of the universal form. Only the Supreme Godhead can reveal that cosmic form, and as stated in the *Gītā*, only His pure devotees are qualified to see it.

Some professors and scholars try to dismiss the universal form by saying that it is a poetic fantasy. Such an interpretation, however, is contrary to all the understanding of Vedic literature. These professors and their students may take *Bhagavad-gītā* to be fanciful, but the real philosophers, the spiritual masters who come in the disciplic line from Kṛṣṇa and who have guided the course of Vedic philosophy for thousands of years, accept *Bhagavad-gītā* as the Absolute Truth. Mundane scholars do not know whether Kṛṣṇa showed His universal form, but the *ācāryas* (the spiritual masters who teach by the example of their



lives) do know. That the tiny minds of atheists cannot accept such a wonderful manifestation as the universal form does not disprove its existence. The message of the *Gītā* was spoken by Kṛṣṇa, who showed the universal form, as clearly stated in the *Gītā* itself. We accept the *Gītā* as it is, on the authority of Kṛṣṇa and the Vedic *ācāryas*. Thus we need not consult foolish speculators for their opinions. Since they try to interpret *Bhagavad-gītā* in their own way, they cannot possibly understand the universal form as it is.

After seeing the form of the universe in the body of Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna could not maintain his equilibrium. Thus he begged Kṛṣṇa not only to forgive him for his familiarity as a friend, but to relieve his mind by again showing him the form in which Arjuna knew Him as the Personality of Godhead. Arjuna prayed: "After seeing this universal form, which I have never seen before, I am gladdened, but at the same time my mind is disturbed with fear. Therefore, please bestow Your grace upon me and reveal again Your form as the Personality of Godhead. O universal Lord, I wish to see You in Your four-armed form, with helmeted head and with club, wheel, conch and lotus flower in Your hands. I long to see You in that form."

The universal form is meant to convince us that although Kṛṣṇa may appear like an ordinary human being, He is indeed the all-powerful Personality of Godhead. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa should be the object of our meditation and our love.

According to the Vedic scriptures, the Supreme Lord has innumerable forms and incarnations. Among them, the four-armed form of Viṣṇu is often celebrated as the foremost, for He is the source of many other incarnations and is the ultimate controller of the material world. Despite popular Western misconceptions, Viṣṇu is not one of a hierarchy of Hindu deities like the gods and goddesses of the ancient Greeks. According to the Vedic scriptures, God is one without a second, but He can appear in many different forms, just as a gem appears in different colors when viewed under different kinds of light. Thus the Supreme Lord may appear as Kṛṣṇa, as Viṣṇu or as the universal form, but He is always the same Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Thus Kṛṣṇa answered: "My dear Arjuna, happily have I shown you this universal form within the material world by My internal potency. No one before you has ever seen this unlimited and glaringly effulgent form. . . . But your mind has been perturbed by seeing this horrible feature of Mine. Now let it be finished. My devotee, be free from all disturbance. With a peaceful mind you can now see the form you desire." (Bg. 11.47,49)

Thus at the request of His friend Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa stopped displaying the universal form and showed Arjuna His four-armed form as Viṣṇu. Then at last He showed him His two-armed form. This very much encouraged Arjuna. Arjuna said, "Seeing this humanlike form, so very beautiful, my mind is now pacified, and I am restored to my original senses."

Kṛṣṇa's changing from the universal form to the four-armed form and finally to the two-armed form is most significant, for this demonstrates that all other forms are coming from the original form of Kṛṣṇa. Many interpreters say that the universal form is the most important feature in *Bhagavad-gītā*. Others stress the form of Viṣṇu. Actually, however, Viṣṇu and the universal form are but aspects of Lord Kṛṣṇa as we see Him in His two-armed form when He drives the chariot for Arjuna. As stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*: Kṛṣṇa

is the source of all other incarnations of Godhead. In that humanlike form, He has such inconceivable potencies that He can expand into the whole universe. Therefore that original form is His most worshipable and most important. Furthermore, Lord Kṛṣṇa, in His two-armed form, is the reservoir of all loving relationships. The Lord appears in various forms to create the material world and perform various pastimes, but in His original form as Kṛṣṇa, the Lord fully reciprocates transcendental love with His devotees.

To say that the impersonal spirit or universal form is more exalted than Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, is a great disservice to the meaning of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Kṛṣṇa's humanlike form is His very Self, and there is no truth higher than Kṛṣṇa. As stated in the *Brahma-saṁhitā*, *īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ*: Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord, the supreme controller. *Govindam ādi-puruṣam tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*: He is the original form of Godhead. Therefore devotees desire to see Kṛṣṇa in His two-armed form, which is the most confidential form of Godhead. Śrīla Prabhupāda has commented: "Those who deride Kṛṣṇa, taking Him to be an ordinary person, must be ignorant of His divine nature. Kṛṣṇa has actually shown His universal form and

His four-armed form, so how can He be an ordinary human being?" Most editions of *Bhagavad-gītā* unfortunately give interpretations that misguide the reader, but an actual devotee is not confused because the original verses of *Bhagavad-gītā* are as clear as the sun. They do not require a lamplight from foolish commentators.

Although Kṛṣṇa gave Arjuna special vision to see the gigantic *viśva-rūpa*, to see Kṛṣṇa in His original form is even more difficult. In the *Gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa, after returning to His original two-armed form, tells Arjuna: "The form you are seeing now is very difficult to behold. Even the demigods are ever seeking the opportunity to see this form, which is so dear."

In His original form, Kṛṣṇa eternally reciprocates with His devotees as their master, friend, child or lover. The *viśva-rūpa*, however, is not an eternal form of Kṛṣṇa, but a temporary manifestation to convince even a common man of the Lord's almighty nature. Śrīla Prabhupāda has said, "Don't try to love the *viśva-rūpa*. It is not possible." In the universal form, the Lord displays His opulence and power, but He does not reciprocate love with His devotees. Śrīla Prabhupāda therefore gives the example that if a boy's father is a policeman, even the boy himself might become afraid and forget his love if his father appeared before him, revolver blazing, in the line of duty. Similarly, Arjuna became fearful when he saw Kṛṣṇa's universal form. When Kṛṣṇa returned to His pleasing two-armed form, however, Arjuna was fully satisfied.


Lord Kṛṣṇa displayed His universal form to inspire all men to fix their minds upon Him and devote themselves to Him alone. The universal form is meant to convince us that although Kṛṣṇa may appear like an ordinary human being, He is indeed the all-powerful Personality of Godhead. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa, not the *viśva-rūpa*, should be the object of our meditation and our love. He is the original form of Godhead, the reservoir of all beauty, knowledge, wealth, strength, fame and renunciation. Therefore when we revive our dormant love for Kṛṣṇa, we also, like Arjuna, will find full spiritual satisfaction. 

Photo: Yaduvāra dāsa



New Vṛndāvana

by Viśākhā-devī-dāśī

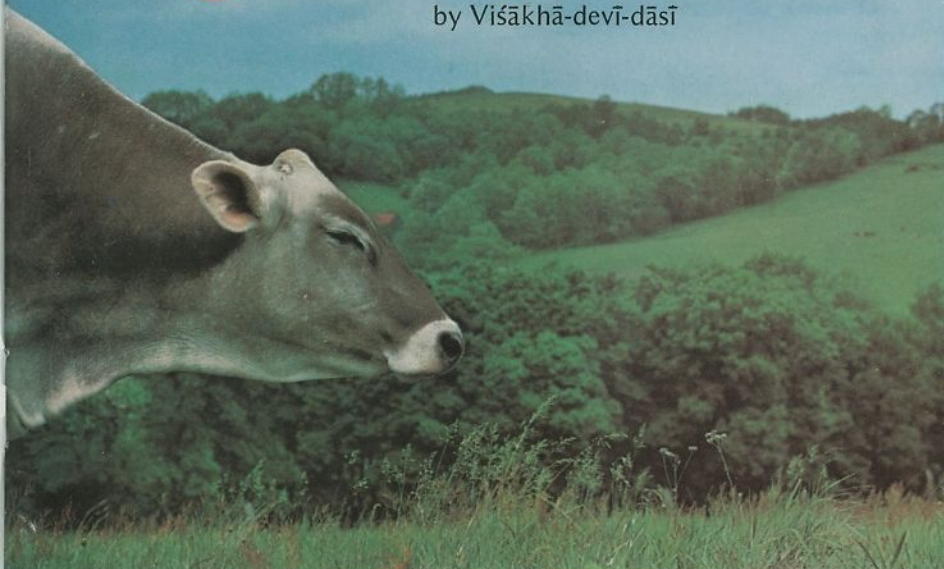


Photo: Viśākhā-devī dāśī

By His inconceivable potency, the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared 5,000 years ago as a cowherd boy in the village of Vṛndāvana, India. The devotees of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, therefore, who have established a 1,000-acre Kṛṣṇa conscious community in West Virginia, have called it New Vṛndāvana. In New Vṛndāvana, the devotees find that by following the Lord's example of living with what the land and cows provide, they can easily be free of all economic problems. By pursuing Kṛṣṇa consciousness in such an untroubled atmosphere, one can reestablish one's eternal relationship with the Supreme Person and thus begin the joyful journey back home, back to Godhead.

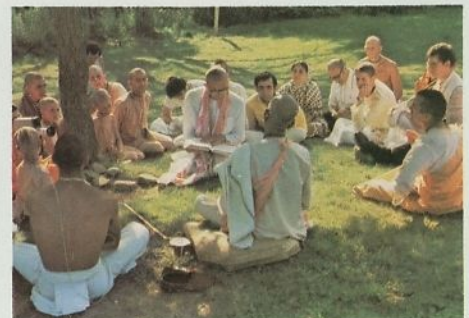


Photo: Viśākhā-devī dāśī





One can start this journey back to Godhead here on earth, by developing an attraction to serving the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In the material world, we are not able to see Kṛṣṇa everywhere. Therefore He appears in the form of the worshipable Deity in the temple to accept service from His devotees.

The devotees in New Vṛndāvana work hard at their different duties, but they all work on behalf of the Deity. Both the Lord and His devotees derive transcendental pleasure from such devotional service. Throughout the world, the disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda are following this authorized process of self-realization—*bhakti-yoga*, or devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord.

Opposite: Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vṛndāvana-candra are the worshipable Deities who preside over New Vṛndāvana.

Above: Kīrtanānanda Mahārāja (center), one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's first disciples and the president of the New Vṛndāvana community, leads devotees in ecstatic *kīrtana* (congregational chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra).

Above right: A new barn rises in a New Vṛndāvana field.

Right: A devotee quietly chants the Lord's holy names while observing the opulence of His creation.



Photo: Dharmatma dāśī



Photo: Viśakhā-devī dāśī

Photo: Viśākhā-devī dāśī

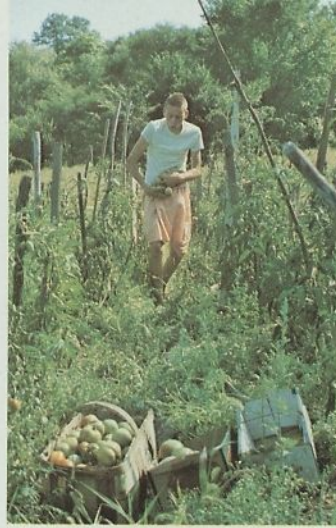


Photo: Viśākhā-devī dāśī

Photo: Jeffrey Dunan



In his purports to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes: "The secret of success is to take refuge under the protection of the Supreme Lord. Without His sanction, nothing can be possible. The rivers, the hills, fruits, flowers, grains and so on are not creations of man. They are all creations of the Supreme Lord, and the living being is allowed to make use of the property of the Lord for the service of the Lord. By His will, there is enough of everything, and we can make proper use of things to live comfortably without any enmity between men, between men and animals, or between men and nature. The control of the Lord is everywhere, and if the Lord is pleased, every part of nature will be pleased." It is this Kṛṣṇa conscious understanding that has made New Vṛndāvana an exemplary community, worthy of being emulated throughout the world.

Above: Devotees gather hay, pick tomatoes and till the soil. Farming in New Vṛndāvana is transcendental because it is performed not for any material motive, but as service to Kṛṣṇa.

Middle: In the morning, afternoon and evening, the devotees come together in small groups to sing devotional songs and have classes in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Left, below: Picking flowers for Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vṛndāvana-candra.

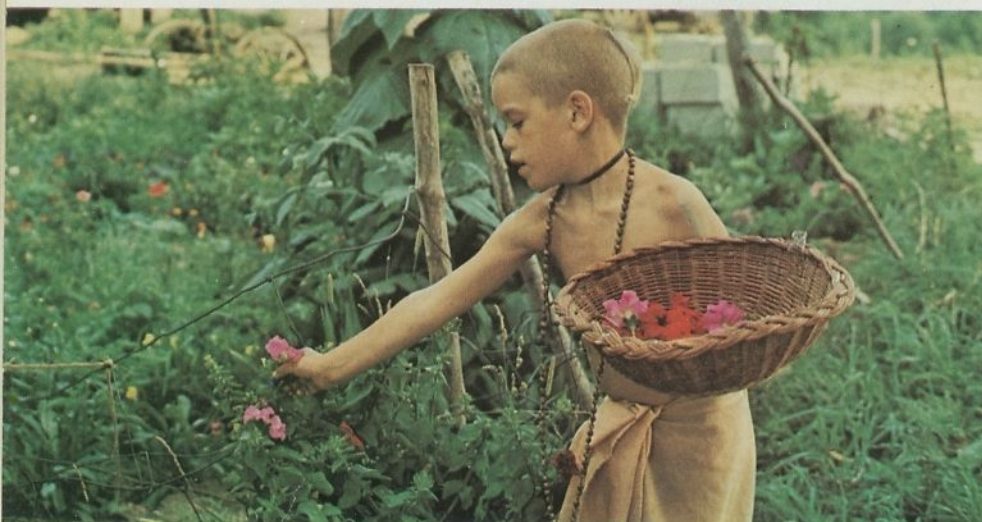


Photo: Viśākhā-devī dāśī

Viśākhā-devī dāśī graduated from Rochester Institute of Technology in 1970 and then wrote a technical book on the art of close-up photography. She and Yaduvara dāsa, her husband, also a professional photographer, joined ISKCON in 1971, while shooting assignments in India. They are now traveling around the world making documentary films about the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

TURNING OUR LOVE TOWARD KṚṢṆA

by His Holiness KĪRTANĀNANDA SVĀMĪ

Editor's note: In June of 1972, after a Sunday love feast at the Los Angeles Temple, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda was scheduled to give an address to his disciples. While the disciples awaited the arrival of Śrīla Prabhupāda in the sanctuary, one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's earliest disciples, Kīrtanānanda Svāmī, delivered the following talk. It is followed by Śrīla Prabhupāda's address.

I have no qualification to stand before you tonight and present myself as a teacher. I am not a teacher, but am simply here to relate what I have heard, what I have known through my association with a pure devotee of the Lord. We have learned from reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that the process for receiving spiritual knowledge is simply this: somehow or other, by some circumstance or good fortune, or by some past deed we have committed perhaps even by accident, we must attain the association of a pure devotee of the Lord. By such transcendental association, we get a chance to hear. If we take up that hearing process seriously, we have a chance to perfect our lives. This is a fact. We can actually see this demonstrated simply by looking around. Six months ago, where were these young people, who now have such glowing faces? Where were they one year or two years ago, before they met Śrīla Prabhupāda? Thus we can see that Śrīla Prabhupāda is changing the face of the globe. How? Not by any cheap magic, but by His association. His association gives us a chance to learn the real principles of religion, the actual principles of spiritual life. This is not a difficult process; it is actually the easiest process in the world because it is normal. Indeed, it is our constitutional position.

We are all eternally Kṛṣṇa conscious and are all parts and parcels of Kṛṣṇa.



Photo: Garvān dāsa

This is declared by Kṛṣṇa Himself in *Bhagavad-gītā*, wherein He says, "You are all My parts and parcels. I am the seed-giving father of every living entity." Anyone can understand that the qualities of the father are also present in the child. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness, therefore, is not a foreign condition imposed upon us. Somehow or other we have temporarily forgotten it, and we must have that knowledge revived. And reviving that

knowledge is what the pure devotee does. At a press conference in London, a reporter asked Śrīla Prabhupāda, "What have you come here to teach?" Prabhupāda replied, "I have come to teach what you have forgotten—Kṛṣṇa." Thus we have forgotten our eternal loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa, and Śrīla Prabhupāda is simply teaching anyone who will listen how we can revive that loving connection with Kṛṣṇa.

Factually we all have a connection with Kṛṣṇa that can't be broken. We may remember it, or we may forget it; we may have a connection in love, or we may have a connection in another way. We may even be connected with Kṛṣṇa in envy, fear or hatred. The point is that everyone is connected to Kṛṣṇa and that everyone believes in Him. Who doesn't believe in Kṛṣṇa? Someone may say, "I am an atheist." This simply means that he doesn't believe in Kṛṣṇa as a friend. But doesn't he believe in death? For such a person, Kṛṣṇa is cruel death. Everyone believes in Kṛṣṇa in one way or another. Some believe in Him as their friend, some believe in Him as their lover, some as their enemy. Kamsa was believing in Kṛṣṇa as an enemy, thinking, "He has come to destroy me." Thus Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā*, "In whatever way you want to approach Me, I will also approach you. If you want to approach Me with envy, I am cruel death, or I am your eternal enemy." Time is the destroyer of everyone, and Kṛṣṇa says, "I am time."

How do we want to be connected to Kṛṣṇa? Do we want a loving connection or another kind of connection? What is the advantage? It must be obvious. Where there is a loving connection, there is the chance of reviving our normal relationship. We are all eternally related to Kṛṣṇa by love because He is the father of everyone. He is the source of everything. *Go-*

vindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi. He is the cause of all causes, the original person. There is actually no question of anything but love. The question is simply how long you want to take until you revive that love of Kṛṣṇa. How long will you be satisfied with loving all the reflections of Kṛṣṇa? How long will you be satisfied by all the temporary manifestations of Kṛṣṇa?

This afternoon Śrīla Prabhupāda was talking about Kṛṣṇa's energy, and he said that everything is Kṛṣṇa's energy. For Kṛṣṇa there is no difference between material and spiritual, but for us there is a difference. If we simply love this energy of Kṛṣṇa, what is the result? This energy is temporary, changing. Our platform of love is shifting, and therefore we are frustrated because our desire is to be connected with that eternal reservoir of pleasure. Everyone is looking for the loving fountain of youth. Everyone wants pleasure, youth, beauty, fame, knowledge, strength and renunciation. But how can we get all these things? How can we get more than some flickering reflection? Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the process of reviving this connection with Kṛṣṇa, who is the reservoir of all these qualities.

The word *kṛṣṇa* means all-attractive, and factually when Kṛṣṇa was present personally on this earth 5,000 years ago, He displayed all these qualities unlimitedly. He displayed unlimited wealth, unlimited beauty, unlimited knowledge, strength, fame and renunciation. Whatever He did, He did as God. He didn't have to become God by some mystic process or by meditating on this or that. He was God from the moment of His appearance, and He acted in that way.

We all want to love and be loved; that is our nature. Consequently we are loving so many temporary objects. We love our friends or children, and when we become frustrated with loving our children, we take to loving dogs. We cannot stop that tendency to love, nor should we. We must, however, purify it. Instead of loving the creation, we have to love the creator. Instead of loving the energy, we have to love the energetic. Instead of loving the leaves of the tree, we must love the root. When we water the root, the whole tree is automatically nourished. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is simply learning how to water the root of everything—learning how to love Kṛṣṇa. We automatically love all of Kṛṣṇa's energy and all living entities because they are part of Kṛṣṇa. How can we claim to love Kṛṣṇa and not love all the parts of Him? On the other hand, how

can we claim to have brotherhood if we have no knowledge of the Father? If we simply gain knowledge of the Father, we can automatically love all His sons and daughters. This is not possible otherwise. Loving the Father means loving the children. However, if we start out trying to love each of the children independently, we will never be successful. Mankind has been trying this process for thousands of years with no success. The attempt is unsuccessful because everyone is missing the central point—Kṛṣṇa.

The process of *yoga* is the process of connecting with Kṛṣṇa. It is not artificial; it is natural. It is not external to us; it is actually our nature. It is made very simple by the grace of the pure devotee. Of course, he is not making this up; he is presenting the process to us exactly as he received it from his spiritual master. This is his greatness. He is presenting exactly what he heard from his spiritual master, who received it just as Caitanya Mahāprabhu presented it:

*harer nāma harer nāma
harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva
nāsty eva gatir anyathā*

In this age of Kali, self-realization is very difficult. Our duration of life is short, and our memory is also short. We have no great interest in philosophy, nor have we any great aptitude. Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, however, that if we simply chant this Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, or any name for God, we can revive our loving connection with Kṛṣṇa. Thus Lord Caitanya is accepted as the most munificent incarnation of Kṛṣṇa.

*namo mahā-vadānyāya
kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te
kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya-
nāmne gaura-tviṣe namaḥ*

“We offer our humble obeisances to Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself and who is more munificent than any other incarnation, including Kṛṣṇa Himself, because He is doing what no other incarnation has ever done—distributing love of Kṛṣṇa freely to whomever will just come and take it, to whomever will simply hear.”

We began by saying that spiritual life begins when one somehow or other associates with a pure devotee. That association means hearing from a pure devotee. Then it is up to us. The pure devotee says, “Just surrender to Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa and His name are nondifferent; therefore if you simply surrender to this

process of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, you will attain the perfection of life.” One attains the human form of life only after a long struggle, after an evolutionary process through 8,400,000 species of life. It is a rare opportunity, and we should not take it lightly. Unfortunately we spend our lives as if we have no other business than simply making a livelihood—eating, sleeping, defending and mating. The human form of life, however, is different from other forms because in this life we can make a solution to all the problems of existence. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says that this human form of life is an ideal boat for crossing the ocean of birth and death. If one is fortunate enough to meet a pure devotee, the spiritual master, he can acquire the proper captain, and Kṛṣṇa, in the form of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, is the breeze that will carry us across.

In Kṛṣṇa consciousness there are no contradictions. The pure devotee says, “Simply surrender unto Kṛṣṇa.” Kṛṣṇa says, “Simply surrender unto Me.” The devotee does not say, “Surrender to me.” Nor does he say, “Surrender to yourself.” Nor does he say, “Surrender to your wife, or surrender to your country.” He tells us simply to surrender to Kṛṣṇa, the cause of all causes, the original person, that beautiful form standing in a three-curved way, playing a flute and tending His *surabhi* cows. Kṛṣṇa dances in ecstasy with the *gopīs*, inviting all the conditioned souls to come back home. He invites us to come join in those eternal pastimes of love.

But in order to come we must learn how to love. That is our problem; we have forgotten how to love Kṛṣṇa. Consequently we rush to and fro in this material world trying to love this and that—wife, country, society, cats, dogs. Thus we are always frustrated. Why? Because we cannot harbor our love there indefinitely. A person may love his wife very much, and she may love him very much, but what ultimately happens? At some point she disappoints her husband, or her husband disappoints her, or she dies or her husband dies. Their love, therefore, just becomes a means of disappointment. Everyone is looking for love, for friendship, and that love and friendship cannot be fulfilled in this changing world. Our fulfillment lies in taking to this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

(At this point Śrīla Prabhupāda, the spiritual master, enters the sanctuary. All the devotees greet him with shouts of praise and offer obeisances. Śrīla Prabhupāda then begins to address the assembled devotees and guests.)

PERFECT KNOWLEDGE FOR HUMAN SOCIETY

by His Divine Grace A. C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you very much for kindly participating in this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. When this society was registered in 1966 in New York, a friend suggested that it be named the Society for God Consciousness. He thought that the name Kṛṣṇa was sectarian. The dictionary also says that Kṛṣṇa is a Hindu god's name. But in actuality if any name can be attributed to God, it is Kṛṣṇa.

Actually God has no particular name. By saying He has no name, we mean that no one knows how many names He has. Since God is unlimited, His names also must be unlimited. Therefore we cannot settle on one name. For instance, Kṛṣṇa is sometimes called Yaśodā-nandana, the son of mother Yaśodā; or Devakī-nandana, the son of Devakī; or Vasudevā-nandana, the son of Vasudeva; or Nandanandana, the son of Nanda. Sometimes He is called Pārtha-sārathi, indicating that He acted as the charioteer of Arjuna, who is sometimes called Pārtha, the son of Pṛthā.

God has many dealings with His many devotees, and according to those dealings, He is called certain names. Since He has innumerable devotees and innumerable relations with them, He also has innumerable names. We cannot hit on any one name. But the name Kṛṣṇa means "all-attractive." God attracts everyone; that is the definition of God. We have seen many pictures of Kṛṣṇa, and we see that He attracts the cows, calves, birds, beasts, trees, plants, and even the water in

Vṛndāvana. He is attractive to the cowherd boys, to the *gopīs*, to Nanda Mahārāja, to the Pāṇḍavas and to all human society. Therefore if any particular name can be given to God, that name is Kṛṣṇa.

Parāśara Muni, a great sage and the father of Vyāsadeva, who compiled all the Vedic literatures, gave the following definition of God:

*aiśvaryasya samagrasya
viriyasya yaśasaḥ śriyaḥ
jñāna-vairāgyayoś cāpi
saṅgñān bhaga itīnganā*

Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is thus defined by Parāśara Muni as one who is full in six opulences—who has full strength, fame, wealth, knowledge, beauty and renunciation.

Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the proprietor of all riches. There are many rich men in the world, but no one can claim that he possesses all the wealth. Nor can anyone claim that no one is richer than he. We understand from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, however, that when Kṛṣṇa was present on this earth He had 16,108 wives, and each wife lived in a palace made of marble and bedecked with jewels. The rooms were filled with fur-

niture made of ivory and gold, and there was great opulence everywhere. These descriptions are all given vividly in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In the history of human society we cannot find anyone who had 16,000 wives or 16,000 palaces. Nor did Kṛṣṇa go to one wife one day and another wife another day. No, He was personally present in every palace at the same time. This means that He expanded Himself in 16,108 forms. This is impossible for an or-

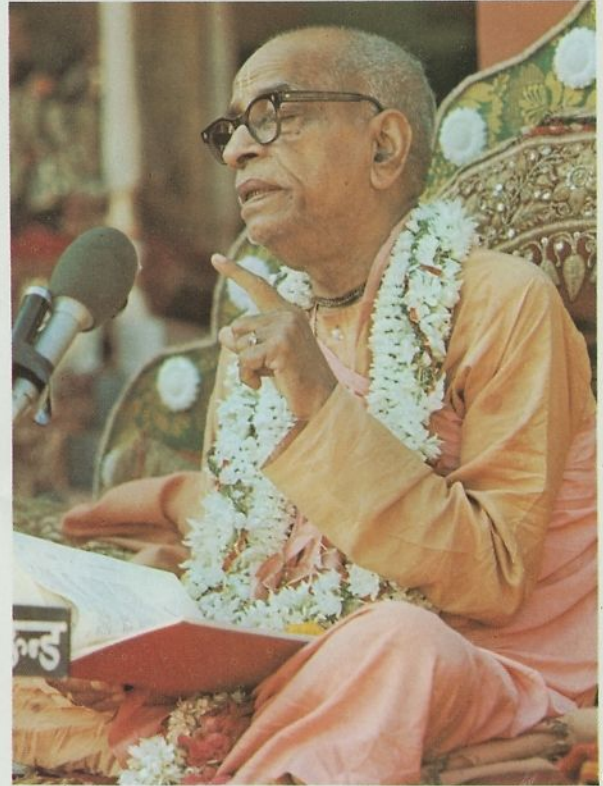


Photo: Yaduvara dīsa



dinary man, but it is not very difficult for God. If God is unlimited, He can expand Himself in unlimited forms, otherwise there is no meaning to the word “unlimited.” God is omnipotent; He can maintain not only 16,000 wives but 16,000,000 and still encounter no difficulty, otherwise there is no meaning to the word “omnipotent.”

These are all attractive features. We experience in this material world that if a man is very rich, he is attractive. In America, Rockefeller and Ford are very attractive because of their riches. They are attractive even though they do not possess all the wealth of the world. How much more attractive, then, is God, who is the possessor of all riches.

Similarly, Kṛṣṇa has unlimited strength. His strength was present from the moment of His birth. When Kṛṣṇa was only three months old, the Pūtānā demon attempted to kill Him, but instead she was killed by Kṛṣṇa. That is God. God is God from the beginning. He does not become God by some meditation or mystic power. Kṛṣṇa is not that type of God. Kṛṣṇa was God from the very beginning of His appearance.

Kṛṣṇa also has unlimited fame. Of course, we are devotees of Kṛṣṇa and know of Him and glorify Him, but apart from us, many millions in the world are aware of the fame of *Bhagavad-gītā*. In all countries all over the world *Bhagavad-gītā* is read by philosophers, psychologists and religionists. We are also finding very good sales with our *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. This is because the commodity is pure gold. There are many editions of *Bhagavad-gītā*, but they are not pure. Ours is selling more because we are presenting *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is. The fame of *Bhagavad-gītā* is Kṛṣṇa’s fame.

Lord Kṛṣṇa has unlimited beauty. Indeed, He possesses all opulences in full.

Beauty, another opulence, is possessed unlimitedly by Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa Himself is very beautiful, as are all His associates. Those who were pious in a previous life receive an opportunity in this material world to take birth in good families and good nations. The American people are very rich and beautiful, and these opulences are a result of pious activities. All over the world people are attracted to the Americans because they are advanced in scientific knowledge, riches, beauty and so on. This planet is an insignificant planet within the universe, yet within this

planet, one country—America—has so many attractive features. We can just imagine, then, how many attractive features must be possessed by God, who is the creator of the entire cosmic manifestation. How beautiful He must be—He who has created all beauty.

A person is attractive not only because of his beauty, but also because of his knowledge. A scientist or philosopher may be attractive because of his knowledge, but what knowledge is more sublime than that given by Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavad-gītā*? There is no comparison in the world to such knowledge. At the same time, Kṛṣṇa possesses full renunciation (*yairāgya*). So many things are working under Kṛṣṇa’s direction in this material world, but actually Kṛṣṇa is not present

here. A big factory may continue to work, although the owner may not be present. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa’s potencies are working under the direction of His assistants, the demigods. Thus Kṛṣṇa Himself is aloof from the material world. This is all described in the revealed scriptures.

God, therefore, has many names according to His activities, but because He possesses so many opulences and because with these opulences He attracts everyone, He is called Kṛṣṇa. The Vedic literature asserts that God has many names, but Kṛṣṇa is the principal name.

The purpose of this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is to propagate God’s name, God’s glories, God’s activities, God’s beauty and God’s love. There are many things within this material world,

Lord Kṛṣṇa lives in the spiritual world, which is transcendental to material existence.



Illustration: Yadurājīnī-devī dāśī

and all of them are within Kṛṣṇa. The most prominent feature of this material world is sex, and that also is present in Kṛṣṇa. We are worshipping Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and attraction exists between them, but material attraction and spiritual attraction are not the same. In Kṛṣṇa, sex is real, but here in the material world it is unreal. Everything we deal with here is present in the spiritual world, but here it has no real value. It is only a reflection. In store windows we see many mannequins, but no one cares about them because everyone knows that they are false. A mannequin may be very beautiful, but still it is false. When people see a beautiful woman, however, they are attracted because they think she is real. In actuality, the so-called living are also dead because this body is simply a lump of matter, and as soon as the soul leaves the body, no one would care to see the so-called beautiful body of the woman. The real factor, the real attracting force, is the spiritual soul.

In the material world everything is made of dead matter; therefore it is simply an imitation. The reality of things exists in the spiritual world. Those who have read *Bhagavad-gītā* can understand what the spiritual world is like, for there it is described.

*paras tasmāt tu bhāvo 'nyo
'vyakto 'vyaktāt sanātanaḥ
yaḥ sa sarveṣu bhūteṣu
naśyatsu na vinaśyati*

“Yet there is another nature, which is

eternal and is transcendental to this manifested and unmanifested matter. It is supreme and is never annihilated. When all in this world is annihilated, that part remains as it is.” (Bg. 8.20)

Scientists are attempting to calculate the length and breadth of this material world, but they cannot begin. It will take them thousands of years simply to travel to the nearest star. And what to speak of the spiritual world? Since we cannot know the material world, how can we know what is beyond it? The point is that we must know from authoritative sources.

The most authoritative source is Kṛṣṇa, for He is the reservoir of all knowledge. No one is wiser or more knowledgeable than Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa informs us that beyond this material world is a spiritual sky, which is filled with innumerable planets. That sky is far, far greater than material space, which constitutes only one fourth of the entire creation. Similarly, the living entities within the material world are but a small portion of the living entities throughout the creation. This material world is compared to a prison, and just as prisoners represent only a small percentage of the total population, so the living entities within the material world constitute but a fragmental portion of all living entities.

Those who have revolted against God—who are criminal—are placed in this material world. Sometimes criminals say that they don't care for the government, but nonetheless they are arrested

and punished. Similarly, living entities who declare their defiance of God are placed in the material world.

Originally the living entities are all part and parcel of God and are related to Him just as sons are related to their father. Christians also consider God the supreme father. Christians go to church and pray, “Our Father, who art in heaven.” The conception of God as father is also in *Bhagavad-gītā*.

*sarva-yoniṣu kaunteya
mūrtayah sambhavanti yāḥ
tāsām brahma mahad yonir
ahaṁ bīja-pradaḥ pitā*

“It should be understood that all the species of life, O son of Kuntī, are made possible by birth in this material nature, and that I am the seed-giving father.” (Bg. 14.4)

There are 8,400,000 species of life—including aquatics, plants, birds, beasts, insects and human beings. Of the human species, most are uncivilized, and out of the few civilized species only a small number of human beings take to religious life. Out of many so-called religionists, most identify themselves by designations, claiming, “I am Hindu, I am Moslem, I am Christian, and so on.” Some engage in philanthropic work, some give to the poor and open schools and hospitals. This altruistic process is called *karma-kāṇḍa*. Out of millions of these *karma-kāṇḍīs*, there may be one *jñānī*, a term meaning “one who knows.” Out of millions of *jñānīs*, one may be liberated, and out of billions of liberated souls, one may be able to understand Kṛṣṇa. This, then, is the position of Kṛṣṇa. As Kṛṣṇa Himself says in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*manuṣyāṇām sahasreṣu
kaścid yatati siddhaye
yatatām api siddhānām
kaścin mām vetti tattvataḥ*

“Out of many thousands among men, one may endeavor for perfection, and of those who have achieved perfection, hardly one knows Me in truth.” (Bg. 7.3)

Understanding Kṛṣṇa, then, is very difficult. Although the understanding of God is a difficult subject, God explains Himself in *Bhagavad-gītā*. He says, “I am like this, and I am like this. The material nature is like this, and the spiritual nature is like that. The living entities are like this, and the Supreme Soul is like that.” Thus everything is completely described in *Bhagavad-gītā*. Although understanding God is very difficult, it is not difficult

Kṛṣṇa Conscious Calendar

Here are the upcoming holidays and festivals for Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees. Devotees of the ISKCON center nearest you will gladly tell you more about the meanings of these festivals and how they are celebrated.

Sept. 20	Appearance day of Śrī Śītādevī, the consort of Śrī Advaita Prabhu.	Sept. 21	Appearance day of Śrī Lalitā-devī, one of the eight principal gopīs.	Sept. 23	Śrī Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī: appearance day of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Lord Kṛṣṇa's eternal consort.
Sept. 27	Ekādaśī (Pārsvaikādaśī) (fasting from grains and beans).	Sept. 28	Śrī Vāmana-dvādaśī Appearance day of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī.	Sept. 29	Appearance day of Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.
Sept. 30	Disappearance day of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.	Oct. 1	Śrī Viśvarūpa-mahotsava (the day when Lord Caitanya's brother, Viśvarūpa, accepts the renounced order of life).	Oct. 12	Ekādaśī (Indirā-ekādaśī) (fasting from grains and beans).
Oct. 25	Śrī Rāmacandra-vijayotsava (the victory celebration of Lord Rāmacandra). Appearance day of Śrī Madhvācārya.	Oct. 26	Ekādaśī (Pāśāṅkuṣā-ekādaśī) (fasting from grains and beans).		

when God Himself gives us His own knowledge. Actually that is the only process by which we can understand God. To understand God by our own speculation is not possible, for God is unlimited and we are limited. Our knowledge and perception are both very limited, so how can we understand the unlimited? If we simply accept the version of the unlimited, we can come to understand Him. That understanding is our perfection.

Speculative knowledge of God will lead us nowhere. If a boy wants to know who his father is, the simple process is to ask his mother. The mother will then say, "This is your father." This is the way of perfect knowledge. Of course, one may speculate about his father, wondering if this is the man or if that is the man, and one may wander over the whole city, asking, "Are you my father? Are you my father?" The knowledge derived from such a process, however, will always remain imperfect. Indeed, one will never find his father in this way. The simple process is to take the knowledge from an authority—in this case, the mother. She simply says, "My dear boy, here is your father." In this way our knowledge is perfect. Transcendental knowledge is similar. I was just previously speaking of a spiritual world. This spiritual world is not subject to our speculation. God says, "There is a spiritual world, and that is My headquarters." In this way we receive knowledge from Kṛṣṇa, the best authority. We may not be perfect, but our knowledge is perfect because it is received from the perfect source.

This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is meant to give perfect knowledge to human society. By such knowledge one can understand who he is, who God is, what the material world is, why we have come here, why we must undergo so much tribulation and misery, and why we have to die. Of course, no one wants to die, but death will come. No one wants to become an old man, but still old age comes. No one wants to suffer from disease, but surely enough disease comes. These are the real problems of human life, and they are yet to be solved. Civilization attempts to improve eating, sleeping, mating and defense, but these are not the real problems. A man sleeps, and a dog sleeps. A man is not more advanced simply because he has a nice apartment. In both cases, the business is the same—sleeping. Man has discovered atomic weapons for defense, but the dog also has teeth and claws and can also de-

fend himself. In both cases, defense is there. Man cannot say that because he has the atomic bomb he can conquer the entire world or the entire universe. That is not possible. Man may possess an elaborate method for defense, or a gorgeous method for eating, sleeping or mating, but that does not make him advanced. We may call his advancement polished animalism and that is all.

Real advancement means knowing God. If we are lacking knowledge of God, we are not actually advanced. Many rascals deny the existence of God because if there is no God, they can continue their sinful activities. It may be very nice for them to think that there is no God, but God will not die simply because we deny Him. God is there, and His administra-

tion is there. By His orders the sun is rising, the moon is rising, the water flows, and the ocean abides by the tide. Thus everything functions under His order. Since everything is going on very nicely, how can one realistically think that God is dead? If there is mismanagement, we may say that there is no government, but if there is good management, how can we say that there is no government? Just because people do not know God, they say that God is dead, that there is no God, or that God has no form. But we are firmly convinced that there is God and that Kṛṣṇa is God. Therefore we are worshipping Him. That is the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Try to understand it.

Thank you very much.

Perfectly packaged by Kṛṣṇa

"The Personality of Godhead is perfect and complete, and because He is completely perfect, all emanations from Him, such as this phenomenal world, are perfectly equipped as complete wholes. Whatever is produced of the complete whole is also complete in itself. Because He is

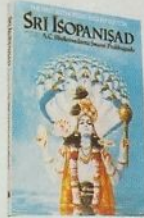
the complete whole, even though so many complete units emanate from Him, He remains the complete balance." (*Śrī Isopaniṣad*, Invocation)

The beautiful, intricate and perfect manifestations in this material world are not the products of an accident—a haphazard combination of matter.

This material world has been perfectly created by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. That Supreme Person has provided complete facilities for living beings to realize the nature of the complete whole, and with that realization to live happily and peacefully and thus complete within themselves.

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DON'T BE A VICTIM

By properly using your intelligence, you can escape from the forces of illusion and the dangers of repeated birth and death.

by His Holiness Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa Svāmī

Each day thousands of human beings are born, and each day thousands die. In fact, this material world has been described as a vast ocean of birth and death. Anyone struggling to stay afloat in a vast ocean is sure to be defeated in due course of time, unless a ship comes along and gives him shelter, for no one can swim indefinitely in the middle of the ocean. Both animals and human beings are struggling in the great ocean of birth and death, and although their activities differ, in the end the human body and the animal body are equal: both are annihilated. We should know that from the moment we are born, death is certain. Therefore, the so-called struggle for existence is like the squirming of a man about to die by the guillotine.

What makes a human being lose sight of this fact? There is a conversation in the Vedic scriptures between two great souls—Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, a mighty king who lived 5,000 years ago, and Yamarāja, the lord of death. Both were learned transcendentalists, and they were discussing the condition of men in the material world. Yamarāja asked Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, “What is the most wonderful thing in this material world?” King Yudhiṣṭhira expertly answered, “The most wonderful thing is that a man sees everyone dying around him—parents, friends, well-wishers, even animals—and still he is thinking that he will not die.” This is called illusion, or *māyā* (“that which is not”). Because a man thinks he is immune to death, he misuses and spoils his valuable human life.

Human life differs from other forms of life because a human being has a greatly developed intelligence. Generally, eating, sleeping, mating and defending make up the entire field of an animal’s activities. Human beings also eat, sleep, mate and defend, but they have another, special function: to use their developed intelligence to understand the Absolute Truth. The *Vedānta-sūtra*, a renowned philosophical work, informs us of the prime duty of human life: “*athāto*

brahma-jijñāsā.” *Brahma-jijñāsā* means inquiry into Brahman, or the Absolute Truth. “*Athāto*” means immediately, now that we have human intelligence with which to understand our actual position and the position of Brahman.

According to *Bhagavad-gītā*, living beings differ from the material energy, just as a man differs from the clothes he wears. We are not the material body, nor does our existence depend upon the material body. We are each a pure spiritual soul, a part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, or God. Because we have misused our tiny independence, we have come under the control of His external energy, called *māyā*. Therefore when we die the quality of our desires forces us to accept another material body in one of the various species of life, including trees, animals, birds, insects, reptiles, humans and so on. These different bodies are awarded to us by God through the agency of His material energy because of our desire to enjoy materially in one way or another.

The human form of life is a special opportunity to understand transcendental science and become free from repeated birth and death. Actually, the soul does not change, and so we feel our unchanging identity throughout our life; constant changes are due only to our material bodies. The soul transmigrates through material nature in different varieties of bodies by virtue of his material desires. Although the eternal soul is by nature full of bliss and knowledge, these bodies give rise to the varieties of happiness and distress in this world.

Material nature, however strict, is just. If someone wants to enjoy eating, sleeping, mating and defending, nature will offer him a body suitable for that. But although eating, sleeping, mating and defending are present in human life, lower animals are more adept at such activities. Consider how easily animals fulfill their needs, compared to the complex arrangements of civilized man. Unfortunately, many people think there is nothing

beyond this business of eating, sleeping, mating and defending. They do not like to accept the existence of the soul, for they fear the personal responsibility the soul would have to assume for all their abominable activities. Such so-called human beings are actually no better than polished animals, and they are taking the risk of actually becoming animals in their next birth.

Great sages have compared human life to a great sum of wealth. One should know how to spend this human life properly, without squandering or hoarding its energy. According to the *Garga Upaniṣad*, a man who quits his human body like a cat or dog, without having sufficiently inquired into the Absolute Truth, is considered to be a *kṛpaṇa*, or a most miserly man. The members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, therefore, are simply trying to educate people about the great boon of human life. If one is sincere, he can use this human life to achieve the greatest benefit—the revival of his eternally blissful pure consciousness—and escape from the round of birth and death in this miserable material world.

The consciousness of the living being is originally pure, just as water is originally pure when it falls from the clouds. However, when the water hits the earth, the result is mud. So, our original pure consciousness has become muddied by contact with material nature. However, as pure water can be extracted from mud by distillation, so our original pure consciousness can be revived by the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

We cordially invite all who are interested to pursue these topics of discussion at one of the many ISKCON centers throughout the world, and to chant the holy names of God for self-purification. Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.



A return to normalcy

The people in this photograph never eat meat, fish or eggs. None of them gamble. They do not engage in sex outside of marriage. Nor do they take any form of intoxicants. And each day, besides their normal working duties, they all chant the *mahāmantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa,

Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. This is normal? The members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness say that to live a joyful, pure life, following the instructions of God as found in the revealed scriptures, is normal indeed. They don't insist that you

follow these principles of austerity, but they *would* like to invite you to visit any one of the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Temples around the world (listed on page 2 of this magazine) to investigate the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, the oldest spiritual culture known to mankind.

“In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical philosophy of the Bhagavad-gītā . . . in comparison with which our modern world and literature seem puny and trivial.”

—Walden.
Henry David Thoreau

Bhagavad-gītā As It Is, the Definitive English Edition of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Hardbound: \$10.95. Softbound: \$4.95. To order your copy of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, send your name and address and cash, check or money order to the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 3764 Watseka Ave., L.A., Calif. 90034.

