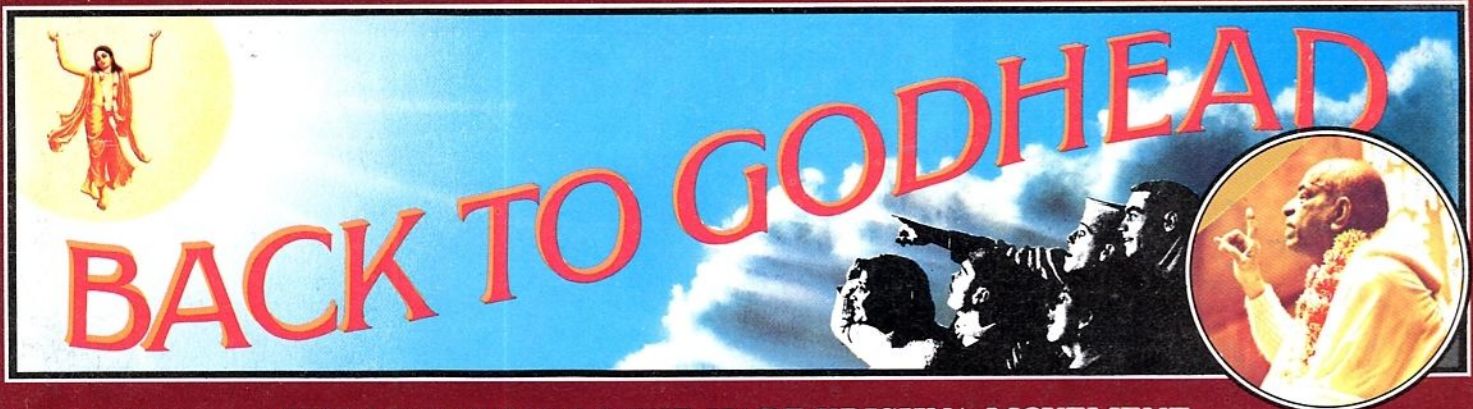


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



Vol. 12 No.7

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT





Devotees chant Hare Kṛṣṇa in Rome.

Photo: Murallivardana dāsa

A short statement of the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) is a worldwide community of devotees practicing bhakti-yoga, the eternal science of loving service to God. The Society was founded in 1966 by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, a pure devotee of God representing an unbroken chain of spiritual masters originating with Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. The following eight principles are the basis of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

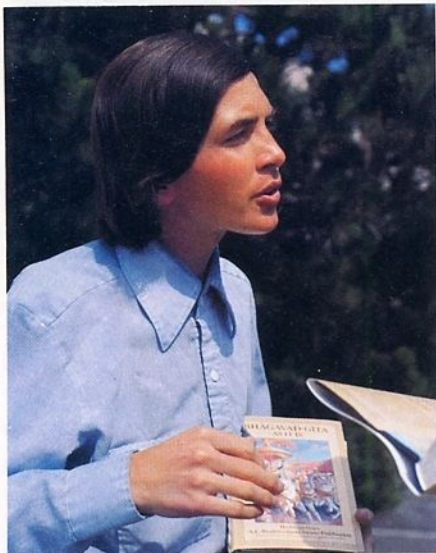
We invite all our readers to consider them with an open mind and then visit one of the ISKCON centers to see how they are being applied in everyday life.

1. By sincerely cultivating a bona fide spiritual science, we can be free from anxiety and come to a state of pure, unending, blissful consciousness in this lifetime.
2. We are not our bodies but eternal spirit souls, parts and parcels of God (Kṛṣṇa). As such, we are all brothers, and Kṛṣṇa is ultimately our common father.
3. Kṛṣṇa is the eternal, all-knowing, omnipresent, all-powerful, and all-attractive Personality of Godhead. He is the seed-giving father of all living beings, and He is the sustaining energy of the entire cosmic creation.
4. The Absolute Truth is contained in all the great scriptures of the world. However, the oldest known revealed scriptures in existence are the Vedic literatures, most notably the *Bhagavad-gītā*, which is the literal record of God's actual words.
5. We should learn the Vedic knowledge from a genuine spiritual master—one who has no selfish motives and whose mind is firmly fixed on Kṛṣṇa.
6. Before we eat, we should offer to the Lord the food that sustains us. Then Kṛṣṇa becomes the offering and purifies us.

7. We should perform all our actions as offerings to Kṛṣṇa and do nothing for our own sense gratification.
8. The recommended means for achieving the mature stage of love of God in this age of Kali, or quarrel, is to chant the holy names of the Lord. The easiest method for most people is to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra:

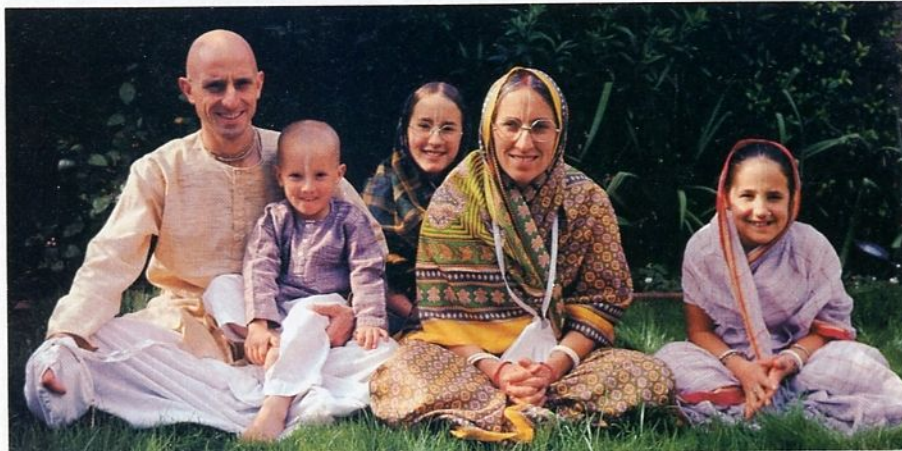
Hare Kṛṣṇa
 Hare Kṛṣṇa
 Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa
 Hare Hare
 Hare Rāma
 Hare Rāma
 Rāma Rāma
 Hare Hare

Chant and be happy...



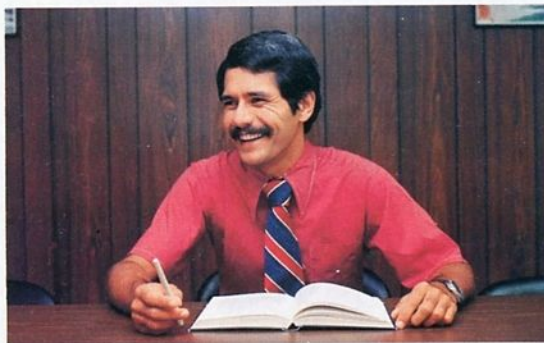
Mahādeva dāsa, book distributor

"I've been chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa for over three years, and the more I chant the more I can see that this chanting is an ever-fresh experience. By absorbing my mind in the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, I feel the spiritual strength and conviction to offer this chanting process to everyone. I feel this is the highest welfare work. People are suffering, because they're ignorant of their real, spiritual self. But as the scriptures say, 'If one simply chants the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, this holy name will rise within his heart like the powerful sun and immediately dissipate all the darkness of ignorance.'"



Dvārakānātha dāsa, schoolteacher, with family

"We knew that family life would be most successful if it had a central purpose. So we tried country living, gardening, a VW bus, a good-paying job, and natural foods. But none of these satisfied us. Now, by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, we've made Lord Kṛṣṇa the center of our lives. We chant together every day and read about Kṛṣṇa in the books of our spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda. More and more we're feeling unselfish in our family relationships and happy just being together to glorify Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotees."



Mike Gabbard, Dean of Students, American Samoa Community College

"Like most people, I often get caught up in the rush of events that go on around me. Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa helps me remember the *real* purpose in my life—loving service to God."



Here at ISKCON's center in Montreal, Quebec, everyone chants the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, including the children. Chanting is simple to understand. It isn't anything artificial to be imposed on the mind—it's something sublime to purify our hearts. We're all originally Kṛṣṇa-conscious spiritual entities, and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is the easiest method for reviving our dormant, pure state of God consciousness.

Find out more about Kṛṣṇa consciousness in this issue of **BACK TO GODHEAD** magazine.

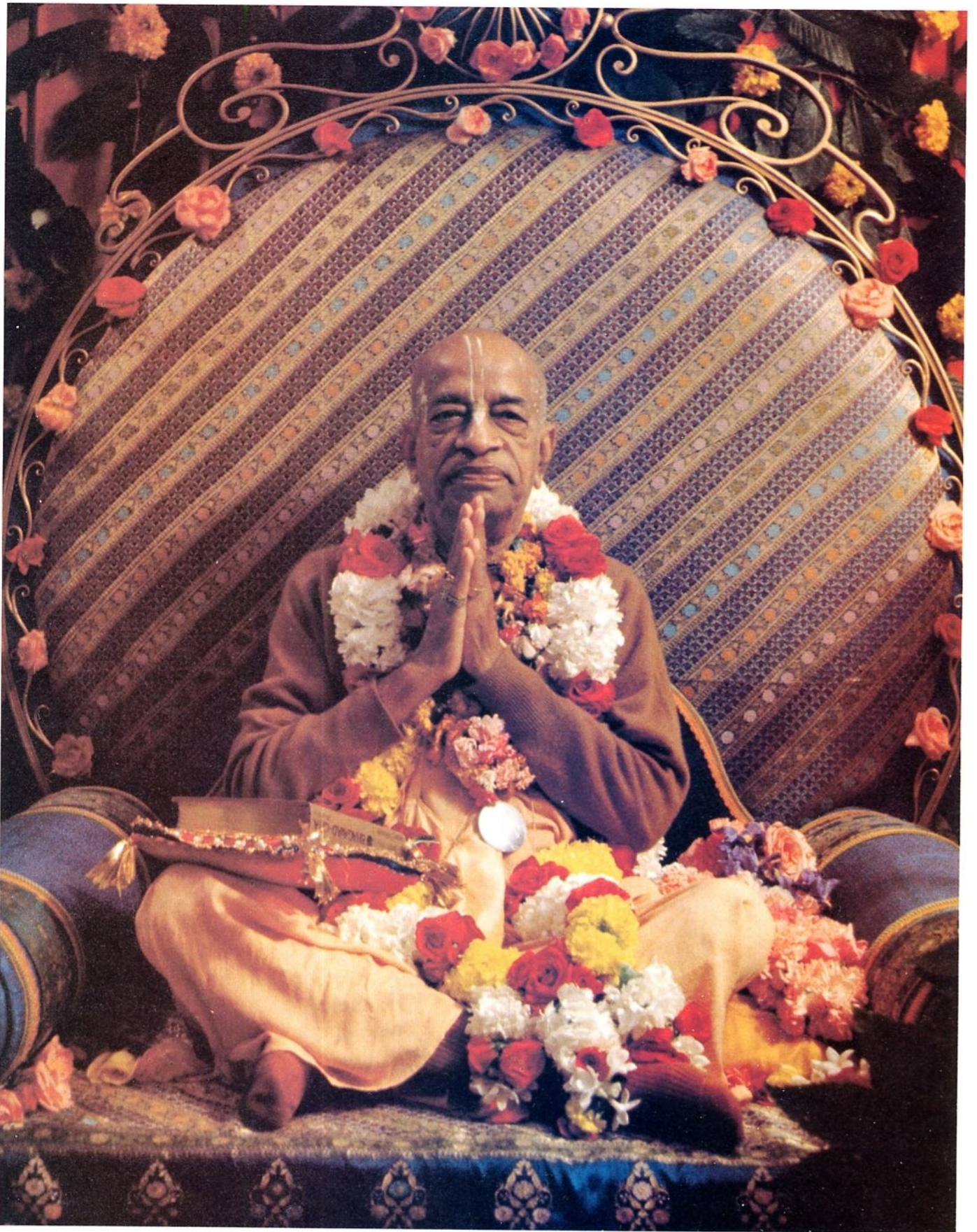


Photo: (Paris) Yogesvara dāsa

His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

BACK TO GODHEAD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

Vol. 12 No. 7

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 that scholars throughout the world use to show how to pronounce 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 **plique**. The vowel **ṛ** is pronounced like the **ri** in the English word **rim**. The **e** is pronounced as in the English word **chair**. The aspirated consonants (**ch, jh, dh, etc.**) are pronounced as in **staunch**-heart, **hedge-hog** and **red-hot**. The two spirants **ś** and **ṣ** are like the English **sh**, and **s** is like the **s** in **sun**. So pronounce **Kṛṣṇa** as **KRISHNA** and **Caitanya** as **CHAITANYA**.

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◀ The founder and original editor of

BACK TO GODHEAD is His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. In September, 1965, Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived in the United States. In July, 1966, in a storefront in New York City, he began the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. And from those beginning days, BACK TO GODHEAD has been an integral part of ISKCON.

In fact, since 1944, when he started writing, editing, printing, and distributing BACK TO GODHEAD, Śrīla Prabhupāda has often called it "the backbone of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement." Although over the years it has changed in some ways, BACK TO GODHEAD remains, in Śrīla Prabhupāda's words, "an instrument for training the mind and educating human nature to rise up to the plane of the spirit soul."

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More than a million years ago God Himself appeared—to rid the world of demonic leaders and protect the pious citizens. To this very day, the people of India revere the greathearted Lord Rāmacandra as the ideal ruler. A narrative from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, adapted by Drutakarma dāsa.

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Translation and commentary

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.



ON THE COVER

The Supreme Lord once appeared as Śrī Rāmacandra, the ideal God-conscious king. And He accomplished His mission—to establish the principles of religion and destroy demonic, irreligious influences—despite being exiled to Daṇḍakāraṇya Forest (with His eternal consort Sītā and brother Lakṣmaṇa, shown here). As Lord Rāma's triumph was inevitable, so today is the triumph of His holy names (Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare). Śrīla Prabhupāda says, "The kingdom of Rāma was immensely popular and beneficial, and the spreading of this Hare Kṛṣṇa movement can immediately introduce a similar situation, even in this Age of Quarrel."

What Thomas Aquinas Knew and Didn't Know About the Kingdom of God



Thomas Aquinas saw through the eyes of logic and gave us a logical but incomplete picture of God and His kingdom. The Kṛṣṇa-conscious spiritual master sees through the eyes of his own spiritual master and the Vedic literatures—and gives us the complete picture.

Hayagrīva dāsa: Thomas Aquinas compiled the entire Church doctrine in *Summa Theologica*, which constitutes the official philosophy of the Roman Catholic Church. He also systematized a good deal of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy. Aquinas believed that religious truths are attained through both reason and revelation. He also agreed with Augustine, who said: “I believe in order that I may understand” and “I understand in order that I may believe.” Thus reason and revelation complement one another as means to truth.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Since human reason is not perfect, revelation is also needed. As Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī has stated, *sevnmukhe hi jihvādau svayam eva*

sphuraty adah: “When we engage our senses in the Lord’s service, the Lord reveals Himself to us.” The truth is attained through logic, philosophy, and revelation. According to the Vaiṣṇava tradition, we arrive at the truth through the guru, the spiritual master, who is accepted as the representative of the Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead. The guru can transmit the message of the truth because he has seen the Absolute Truth through the disciplic succession [the chain of authorized spiritual masters]. If we accept the bona fide spiritual master and please him by submissive service, by virtue of his mercy and pleasure we can understand God and the spiritual world by revelation. We therefore offer our respects to the spiritual master in the prayer *yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādah:* “By the mercy of the spiritual master one receives the benediction of Kṛṣṇa.”

Hayagrīva dāsa: In the thirteenth century, Church scholars considered logical proof for God’s existence important, and Aquinas set forth five basic arguments. The first maintains that God necessarily exists as the first cause. The second states that the material world cannot create itself but needs something external, or spiritual, to bring it into existence. The third argument claims that because the world exists, there must necessarily be a creator capable of creating it. Fourth, since there is relative perfection in the world, there must be an absolute perfection underlying it. Fifth, since the creation has design and purpose, there must be a designer who has planned it.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: We also honor these arguments. Without a father and mother, children cannot be brought into existence. Modern philosophers do not consider this strongest argument for the existence of God. According to the *Brahma-saṁhitā* Kṛṣṇa is *sarva-kāraṇa-kāranam*, the cause of all causes. Everything has a cause, and God is the ultimate cause.

Hayagrīva dāsa: Aquinas also states that the relative perfection we find in this

material world necessitates an absolute perfection.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, the spiritual world is absolute perfection, and this temporary material world is but a reflection of that spiritual world. Whatever perfection we find in this material world is derived from the spiritual world. According to the *Vedānta-sūtra*, *janmādy asya yataḥ:* “Whatever is generated comes from the Absolute Truth.”

Hayagrīva dāsa: There are some scientists today who acknowledge Aquinas’s argument that since we can see nothing that can create itself in the material world, something external, or spiritual, is required to bring the material world into existence.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, a mountain cannot create anything, but a human being can give form to a stone. A mountain may be very large, but it remains a stone incapable of giving shape to anything.

Hayagrīva dāsa: Unlike Plato and Aristotle, Aquinas maintained that God created the universe out of nothing.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. God created the universe by His various energies, but God and his energies are always there. You cannot logically say that the universe was created out of nothing.

Hayagrīva dāsa: Aquinas would say that since the material universe could not have arisen out of God’s spiritual nature, it had to be created out of nothing.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Material nature is also an energy of God’s. As Kṛṣṇa states in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.4):

*bhūmir āpo ’nalo vāyuh
khaṁ mano buddhir eva ca
ahaṅkāra itīyaṁ me
bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā*

“Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence, and false ego—all together these eight comprise My separated material energies.” All of these emanate from God, and consequently they are not unreal. They are considered inferior



“God attracts everything. The word *Kṛṣṇa* means ‘all-attractive.’ What, then, is wrong with addressing God as *Kṛṣṇa*?”

because they are God’s separated material energies. They are like the sound that comes from a tape recorder, which may sound exactly like a person’s original voice. The recorded sound is not the person’s voice itself, but it has come from the person and is now separated from him. If one cannot see where the sound is coming from, one may suppose that the person is actually speaking, although the person may be far away. Similarly, the material world is an expansion of the Supreme Lord’s energy, and we should not think that it has been brought into existence out of nothing. It

has emanated from the Supreme Truth, but it is His inferior, separated energy. The superior energy is found in the spiritual world, which is the world of reality. *Parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate*: God has multienergies, and the material energy is but one. Since God is everything, you cannot say that the material universe comes from nothing.

Hayagrīva dāsa: Like Augustine, Aquinas believed that sin and man are concomitant. Due to Adam’s original sin, all men require salvation, and salvation can only be obtained through God’s grace. The individual living entity has to

assent by his free will in order for God’s grace to function.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, we call that assent *bhakti*, devotional service to the Lord. *Bhakti* is our eternal engagement, and when we engage in our eternal activities, we attain salvation, or liberation. When we engage in false activities, we are in illusion (*māyā*). *Mukti* (liberation) means remaining in our constitutional position as an eternal servant of God. In the material world we engage in many different activities, but they all refer to the material body. In the spiritual world we engage in the Lord’s service, and that

is liberation, or salvation.

Hayagrīva dāsa: Aquinas considered sins to be of two kinds: venial and mortal. A mortal sin is one that will send a person to eternal damnation unless it is forgiven. But a venial sin will not. In other words, according to Aquinas a mortal sin stains the soul.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: When a living entity disobeys the orders of God, he is put into this material world, and that is his punishment. If he does not rectify himself by good association and once again surrender to the Lord, he must undergo repeated transmigration. By taking on one body after another, he is subjected to the tribulations of material existence.

Hayagrīva dāsa: In any case, how can any sin be said to “stain” the soul?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The soul is not stained, but he can participate in sinful activity. Although you cannot mix oil and water, oil floating on water is carried away by the water. Similarly, as soon as we are in contact with material nature, we come under the clutches of the material world (*prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ*). As soon as the living entity enters the material world, he loses his own power. He is then completely under the clutches of material nature. Oil never mixes with water, but it may be carried away by the waves.

Hayagrīva dāsa: Aquinas did not believe in a soul divorced from a particular form. According to Aquinas, God did not simply create a soul capable of inhabiting any body or form; rather, He created an angelic soul, a human soul, an animal soul, or a plant soul. Aquinas felt that the creation of a pure soul would be tantamount to God’s creating Himself.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The soul is not created, but is eternally existing along with God. The soul has the independence to turn from God, in which case he becomes like a spark falling from a great fire. When the spark is separated, it loses its illumination. In any case, the individual soul always exists. The master and His servants exist eternally. We cannot say that the parts of a body are separately created. As soon as the body is present, all the parts are there with it. The soul is never created, and it never dies. This is confirmed by the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.20):

*na jāyate mriyate vā kadācin
nāyaṁ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ
ajo nityaḥ śāśvato 'yaṁ purāṇo
na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*

“For the soul there is never birth or death. Nor, having once been, does he



Illustration: Raṅgora dāsa

ever cease to be. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, undying, and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain.” It may appear that the soul comes into existence and dies, but this is because he has accepted the material body. When the material body dies, the soul simply transfers to another body. When the soul is liberated, he doesn’t have to accept another material body. He can return home, back to Godhead, in his original spiritual body. The soul was never created but is always existing with God. If we say that the soul was created, the question may be raised whether or not God, the Supreme Soul, was also created. Of course, this is not the case. God is eternal, and His parts and parcels are

also eternal. The difference is that God never accepts a material body, whereas the individual soul, being but a small particle of spirit, sometimes succumbs to the material energy.

Hayagrīva dāsa: What is the relationship between the soul’s original, spiritual form and the form of the material body?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The material body is an imitation. It is false. Because the spiritual body has form, the material body takes on form. The material body is like a coat. The cloth originally has no form, but a tailor can cut the cloth and make a coat to fit you. Similarly, in actuality this bodily form made of material elements is illusory. The material elements originally had no form, but they take on form for a

God creates the material universes out of His external energy – not out of nothing, as Thomas Aquinas thought. Here we see the process of creation: God in His form as Mahā-Viṣṇu exhales billions of universes from His transcendental body.

while, and when the body becomes old and dies, they return to their original position. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.61), the physical body is compared to a machine. The soul has its own form, but he is given a machine, the body, which he uses to wander throughout the universe, attempting to enjoy himself.

Hayagrīva dāsa: Aquinas thought that one should not try to restrict scriptures to one meaning, that it belongs to the dignity of divine scripture to contain many meanings in one text so that, in this way, the scripture may be appropriate to the various understandings of men.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The meaning of scripture is one. It is the interpretations that are different. In the Bible it is stated that God created the universe, and that is a fact. One may conjecture that the universe was created out of some chunk or whatever, but we should not interpret scripture in this way. We present *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, without interpretation or motive. We cannot change the words of God. Unfortunately, many interpreters have spoiled the God consciousness of society.

Hayagrīva dāsa: Aquinas says that the scriptures may contain many meanings according to one's degree of realization.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. No one should interpret the words of scripture. "Interpretation" means "change." Man is imperfect, so how can he change the words of God? If the words are changed, there will be doubt whether they are spoken by God or by an imperfect person. As soon as you interpret or change the scripture, the scripture loses its authority. Then another man will come and interpret things in his own way. Another will come and then another, and in this way the original purport of the scripture is lost.

Hayagrīva dāsa: Aquinas believed that it is not possible to see God in this life. He writes, "God cannot be seen in His essence by one who is merely man, except he be separated from this mortal life. . . . The divine essence cannot be

known through the nature of material things."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: What does he mean by "divine essence"? For us, God's divine essence is personal. When one cannot conceive of the Personality of Godhead, he sees the impersonal feature everywhere. When one advances further, he sees God as the Paramātmā [Supersoul] within his heart. That is the result of yogic meditation. Finally, if one is truly advanced, he can see God face to face. When Kṛṣṇa came, people saw Him face to face. Christians accept Christ as the son of God, and when he came, people saw him face to face. Does Aquinas think that Christ is not the divine essence of God?

Hayagrīva dāsa: For a Christian, Christ must be the divine essence incarnate.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: And didn't many people see him? Then how can Aquinas say that God cannot be seen?

Hayagrīva dāsa: This seems to be contradictory. It's difficult to tell whether or not Aquinas is basically an impersonalist or a personalist.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That means he is speculating.

Hayagrīva dāsa: Aquinas writes about the personal feature of God in this way: "Because God's nature has all perfection, every kind of perfection should be attributed to Him. Every individual with rational nature is spoken of as a person, and since the dignity of divine nature certainly surpasses every other nature, it is entirely suitable to speak of God as a person." Aquinas is no more specific than this. Concerning the nature of the personality of God, the Church fathers have never been more specific.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Christ is accepted as the son of God, and if the son can be seen, why can't God the father be seen? If Christ is the son of God, who is God? In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.8) Kṛṣṇa says, *aham sarvasya prabhavaḥ*: "Everything is emanating from Me." Christ says that he is the son of God, and this means that he emanates from God. Just as he has his personality, God also has His personality. Thus we refer to Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Hayagrīva dāsa: Concerning God's names, Aquinas felt that the less determinate God's name, the more universal and absolute it is. He therefore believed that the most proper name for God is "He who is."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Why? If God is active and has created the entire universe, what is wrong with addressing Him according to His activities and attributes?

Hayagrīva dāsa: Aquinas claims that

the very essence of God is the sheer fact of His being, the fact that He is.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: He is, certainly, but "He is" means that He is existing in His abode with His servants, playmates, hobbies, and paraphernalia. Everything is there. We must ask what is the meaning or nature of His being. One of God's attributes is being. Similarly, one of His attributes is attraction. God attracts everything. The word *Kṛṣṇa* means "all-attractive." What, then, is wrong with addressing God as Kṛṣṇa? Because Kṛṣṇa is the enjoyer of Rādhārāṇī, His name is Rādhikā-ramaṇa. Because He exists, He is called the Supreme Being. In one sense God has no name, but in another sense He has millions of names according to His activities.

Hayagrīva dāsa: It seems that Thomas Aquinas basically took an impersonalistic stand.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. He could not determine whether God is personal or impersonal. His inclination was to serve God as a person, but he had no clear conception of His personality. Therefore he speculated.

Hayagrīva dāsa: In the *Vedas*, is there an equivalent to "He who is"?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. *Om tat sat*, which is impersonal. This mantra, however, can also be extended to *om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya*. The word *vāsudeva* means "one who lives everywhere" and refers to Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. God is both personal and impersonal, but the impersonal feature is secondary. According to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.27):

*brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham
amṛtasyāvyaṇṇasya ca
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya
sukhasyaikāntikasya ca*

"And I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman, which is the constitutional position of ultimate happiness, and which is immortal, imperishable, and eternal." What purport did I write to that verse?

Hayagrīva dāsa: "The constitution of Brahman is immortality, imperishability, eternity, and happiness. Brahman is the beginning of transcendental realization. Paramātmā, the Supersoul, is the second stage in transcendental realization, and the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the ultimate realization of the Absolute Truth" [*Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, 14.27 purport].

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is the divine essence in full.

HOW TO UPLIFT THE UNFORTUNATE?

Wherever you go—India, America, and points between—you find certain people who seem to be getting less of life's pleasures and more of its pains. What's the solution? Increase public aid? Provide better job opportunities? Demand equal rights? After reading an article on the plight of India's "untouchables" (Harijans), Tamal Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī wrote to the author about the real solution. It's education—but not just any education...

14 April 1977

Dear Professor Parmar,

I read with keen interest your article "100 Million Harijans* Seek A New Messiah" in the *Bombay Sunday Standard*, April 10, 1977. I can certainly appreciate your compassion for the suffering of so many unfortunate people. In view of the new government's interest in taking knowledge from the *Vedas* to help find solutions to the many problems India faces, I thought you might find the following illuminating as well as helpful.

The Harijan movement was started by Mohandas Gandhi. Seeing the suffering of millions of "untouchables," Gandhi thought to elevate them in their own eyes and in the eyes of others by designating them "Harijans." The actual definition of *Harijan* is "a person (*jana*) who has been elevated to the position of associating with the Supreme (*Hari*)." An actual Harijan, therefore, is a saint, a great personality. But since Gandhi has popularized the term to indicate the "untouchable" class, and since you have used it in the same sense, I will also use it in that way.

Unfortunately, Gandhi's rubber-stamping has not actually improved the Harijans' condition, as you have so thoroughly pointed out in your article: "The Indian government has launched numerous projects and schemes, allocating more than Rs. 3,200 crores [about \$3.5 billion] in Five-year Plans, for the welfare and amelioration of Harijans. However, all efforts to raise their status and improve their living conditions by granting special rights—social, economic, political—have not made any significant impact on their condition of life."

Thus neither Gandhiji, Dr. Ambedkar, nor any other leader has succeeded in uplifting the Harijans. Why? Because they have not properly understood the real cause for man's suffering. On this point we can get insight from the *Bhagavad-gītā*, where Lord Kṛṣṇa explains to Arjuna, "While speaking learned words, you are mourning for what is not worthy of grief. Those who



are wise lament neither for the living nor the dead. . . . 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" (*Bhagavad-gītā*, 2.11,13).

We have to understand that the self is not the outer body but the soul within—and that at death the self transmigrates to another body, according to the way he has lived his life. This understanding is the beginning of the solution to India's Harijan problem. The government leaders and all their planning commissions have applied themselves only to the outward body, not to the soul within the body. Therefore, measures meant for the upliftment of the Harijans have fallen short of the mark; they have aimed at adjusting some physical or mental situation, but they have ignored the needs of the self. All the land grants, work plans, and defense forces (as well as the other economic, social, and political arrangements that you have suggested) will be of no use until India's leaders concern themselves with not only the body but also the soul within the body.

In your article you have asked, "Who are these Harijans? What is their origin? What sins did they commit so that they should be permanently persecuted? There are no authentic answers to these basic questions." If you don't know the answers to these questions about the

Harijans, then how can you expect the solutions which you have suggested to work?

Actually, there *are* authentic answers to these questions, and they have been known to authorities like Svāyambhuva Manu, Nārada Muni, Lord Śiva, the Kumāras, Śrī Kapiladeva, Prahlāda, and so many others. All of these great personalities have themselves taken instruction from Lord Kṛṣṇa (*Hari*), and therefore they are the real Harijans. This instruction is still available in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and if you take it exactly as Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke it, then you too can become a genuine Harijan and help to elevate the one hundred million so-called Harijans.

You have asked about the origin of these "untouchable" Harijans. For the answer we need merely turn to the *Bhagavad-gītā*: "The living entity in material nature follows the ways of life, enjoying the three modes of nature. This is due to his association with that material nature. Thus he meets with good and evil amongst various species" (Bg. 13.22). This verse describes how one is forced by the laws of nature to take birth in a particular species of life. One's birth is not a matter of chance. As Kṛṣṇa explains in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.22), the soul changes bodies just as a man changes his dress, and this change is due to one's attachment to a particular mode of material nature. As long as one is captivated by the allurements of material nature, he has to change bodies.

*India's "untouchables": the poorest, least educated members of society.

And at the time of death, the extent of his desire to lord it over matter determines what kind of body he will have in his next life, and how much he will suffer or enjoy. This is nature's law. Whether we believe in it or not, we still are controlled by it. We also may not believe in the laws of the government, but if we violate them we have to suffer. How much more stringent, then, are the laws of God.

If India's government leaders are ignorant of God's laws, how can they uplift the citizens? A government may be powerful, but it is not so powerful that it can protect its citizens from the results of sinful activities performed in previous lives. Though you may award all kinds of privileges to the Harijans in an effort to counteract their sufferings, those benefits will be of little avail. Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is very difficult to overcome" (Bg. 7.14). This verse explains why the position of the Harijan community as a whole has not significantly changed. Who is checking them from improving? Neither the government, nor social pressures, nor economic impediments. (No one prevented Dr. Ambedkar and Jagjivan Ram from rising to leadership.) No. The checking is from within, and from the modes of material nature. This is explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, in a verse I have already quoted: "The living entity in material nature follows the ways of life, enjoying the three modes of material nature. This is due to his association with that material nature. Thus he meets with good and evil amongst various species" (Bg. 13.22). In the fourteenth chapter of the *Gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa further explains: "Material nature consists of the three modes—goodness, passion, and ignorance. When the living entity comes into contact with nature, he becomes conditioned by these modes." Association is very strong. It is just like an infection: when you contact germs, you must suffer disease. Similarly, if you associate with the lower qualities of material nature (passion and ignorance), then you must suffer accordingly.

To the civil libertarian all this may seem very unjust—that one man is condemned to sweep the latrines, while another sits comfortably in his white-collar job, working in the government offices. And out of sentiment, suppose you enact some legislation to adjust this imbalance. By your legislation you may arbitrarily elevate ten percent of all the sweepers to jobs in the government offices, but the result will be chaos. A dog may be placed on the king's throne, but toss him an old shoe and he'll jump down to chew it. Similarly, by legislation

you may appoint anyone to a high position, but if he is not qualified, his nature will betray him and he will do only nonsense. The current world political scene sufficiently demonstrates this.

Actually, the kind of work a person does is directly related to the modes of nature affecting him. As Lord Kṛṣṇa states in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, "According to the modes of material nature and the work ascribed to them, the four divisions of human society were created by Me" (Bg. 4.13). And in the eighteenth chapter: "*Brāhmaṇas*, *ksatriyas*, *vaiśyas* and *śūdras* (intellectuals, administrators, merchants or agriculturalists, and laborers) are distinguished by their qualities of work, O chastiser of the enemy, in accordance with the modes of nature" (Bg. 18.41).

Thus the tendency of a particular man towards a particular type of work is determined solely by the modes of material nature which he has acquired—not by political, social, or economic pressures. This statement by Lord Kṛṣṇa may bring rancor to the hearts of the modern-day libertarians, who are demanding equality for all. But we must discern whether everyone actually deserves equality. No one can be more fair than Kṛṣṇa: He is equally disposed to all creatures (Bg. 9.24) and He claims all living entities as His children (Bg. 14.4). So when Kṛṣṇa designates one person as an intellectual (*brāhmaṇa*) and another as a laborer (*śūdra*), He is not doing so out of prejudice; He is simply describing their *karma* and *guṇa*—their work and the particular modes of nature that affect them. Kṛṣṇa never mentions birth as a consideration, though some selfishly motivated individuals have used this argument of birth to justify their falsely elevated position above those of supposedly lower birth. Undeniably, this misconception has caused hatred for the caste system, or *varṇāśrama* system, and cries for abolishment are now being heard from all sides. But if the eyes are diseased, they should be cured, not plucked out. Similarly, the caste system should be properly established on the basis of the *Bhagavad-gītā*'s teachings; it should not be abolished.

Actually, in this age everyone is born a *śūdra* (*kalau śūdra sambhavāḥ*). It is only by proper education that someone may rise to the position of a *brāhmaṇa*. For as we have already seen, a *brāhmaṇa* is known by his qualification, not by his birth. (My father may be a high-court judge, but that does not qualify me to be a high-court judge.) Though everyone is born a *śūdra* in this age, everyone is also free to cultivate the qualities of a *brāhmaṇa*. These qualities are listed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* as peacefulness, self-

control, austerity, purity, tolerance, honesty, wisdom, knowledge, and religiousness. But to call someone who has not developed these qualities a *brāhmaṇa* or a Harijan is simply rubber-stamping.

Kṛṣṇa, the original Messiah of all Harijans, openly invites everyone: "O son of Pṛthā, those who take shelter of Me, though they be of lower birth—women, *vaiśyas* (merchants), as well as *śūdras* (workers)—can approach the supreme destination" (Bg. 9.32). By proper education and association, anyone—no matter how degraded his birth—can attain to the highest position. Kṛṣṇa also says,

*brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā
na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu
mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām*

"One who is transcendently situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman. He never laments, nor does he desire to have anything. He is equally disposed to every living entity. In that state he attains pure devotional service unto Me" (Bg. 18.54). Since God is full, a living entity engaged in God's service (in Kṛṣṇa consciousness) also becomes fully satisfied by self-realization.

There is no doubt that the one hundred million Harijans deserve to become happy. They are feeling frustration because they lack a qualified leader. We of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (a society dedicated to living by the teachings of the *Bhagavad-gītā*) are prepared to take responsibility for all one hundred million Harijans and guide them to the highest perfection of life. The founder and *ācārya* of our movement, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, has in the last eleven years successfully uplifted hundreds of thousands of unfortunate souls worldwide to the platform of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. By Kṛṣṇa's grace, I happen to be Śrīla Prabhupāda's personal secretary, and it is by his direction that I write this letter. He read your article, and feeling great concern for the welfare of the Harijan community, he requested me to write to you and invite you to meet with us at our headquarters at Juhu, Bombay, for practical discussions. If you are actually sincere in your desire to uplift the Harijans, please do not miss this opportunity.

Yours faithfully,
Tamal Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī
(Personal Secretary to His Divine
Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami
Prabhupāda)

THE DEMONS AMONG US

“There are always two kinds of living beings in the creation—the divine and demonic. But a demon need not be a huge monster with ten heads and a thousand arms, nor a little red fiend with a pitchfork. In fact, the demons who live among us generally appear quite ordinary.”

by JAYĀDVAITA DĀSA

Demons exist—millions of them. And they live among us, mostly unrecognized, wherever we go. Who are they? What are they like? How do they exhibit their powers, and how can we be safe from their influence? These are the questions we shall deal with in this article.

The answers will not be invented fictions, the products of fanciful philosophical speculations conjured up out of the mind. Nor shall we waste our time recounting tales of chain-clanking ghosts and spirits. The analysis you are about to read will be a scientific presentation based on the words of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as spoken thousands of years ago and recorded in the Sanskrit language in the book known as the *Bhagavad-gītā*. You may find this analysis enlightening, or, indeed, depending on your sympathies, you may find it offensive. You may accept it or reject it. Our only request is that you open the gates of your mind and allow these ancient ideas to enter for your thoughtful consideration.

The Divine and the Demonic

There are always two kinds of living beings in the creation—the divine and the demonic. Just as every state has two kinds of citizens—those who abide by the laws and those who do not—the state of the universe is filled with two kinds of living beings: those who abide by its natural laws and those who try to defy them. The former are called divine; the latter, demonic.

In other words, a demon need not be a huge monster with ten heads and a thousand arms, nor a little red fiend with a pitchfork. Of course, there may very well be demons with grotesque features and supernatural powers, but the demons who live among us generally appear quite ordinary. Your mailman might be a demon. So might your grocer, your congressman, or anyone else you know. For that matter, so might you.

How, then, can we tell whether a person is divine or demonic? By observing his qualities. The *Bhagavad-gītā* clearly explains which qualities are divine and which demonic. The good qualities include truthfulness, fearlessness, charity, self-control, austerity, and simplicity. They also include non-violence, cleanliness, gentleness, modesty, and steady deter-

mination. These are all spiritual qualities that anyone can appreciate. Other good qualities are compassion, tranquility, renunciation, vigor, forgiveness, and fortitude. A good person should also be free from anger, greed, envy, and the passion for honor. Purification of one's existence, cultivation of spiritual knowledge, aversion to faultfinding, and study of the revealed scriptures are also good qualities. According to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, these are the best human qualities. Anyone decorated with even a few of them could well be considered saintly or godly; therefore they are called divine qualities.

The demonic qualities are just the opposite. Arrogance, pride, anger, conceit, harshness, ignorance—these qualities indicate a demonic person. Such persons are averse to the principles of religion and to the cultivation of spiritual knowledge. They are lustful, and they think that life's only aim is to gratify the senses. They are unclean, dishonest, envious, and mischievous. Such are the qualities that degrade the demons.

The Killers of the Soul

The *Īsopaniṣad* further explains the demon's nature—and his fate—as follows:

*asuryā nāma te lokā
andhena tamasāvṛtāḥ
tāms te pretyābhigacchanti
ye ke cātma-hano janāḥ*

“The killer of the soul, whoever he may be, must enter into the planets known as the worlds of the faithless, full of darkness and ignorance” (*Śrī Īsopaniṣad* 3).

This verse describes the demons as *ātma-hana*, killers of the soul. How is that? According to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the soul is eternal and can never be killed. Even when the temporary body dies, the soul continues to exist (*na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*). So how can anyone be a “killer of the soul”? The answer is also in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: when the eternal soul identifies himself with the temporary body, he becomes subject to repeated birth and death. Therefore, when one does not cultivate spiritual understanding, when he does not try to free

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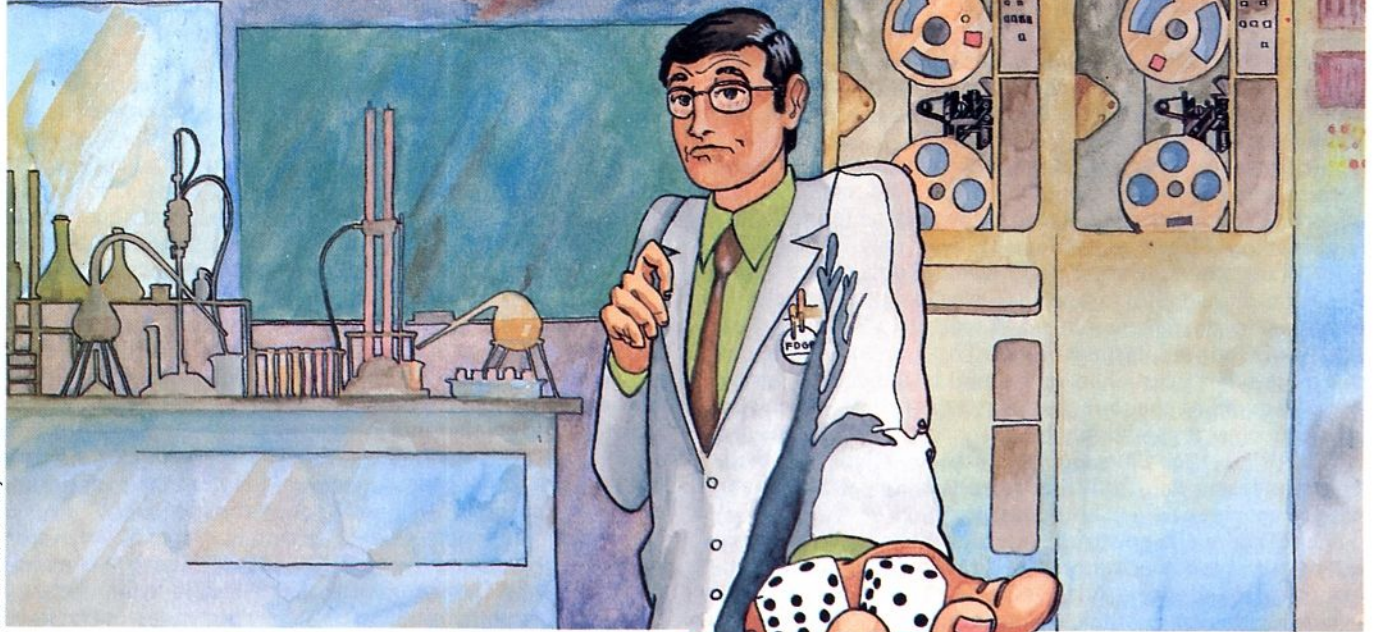


Illustration: Parasatya dāsa

Demons think everything in the world is a product of the random attraction of various material bodies. Abandoning logic and good sense, they say that order, by chance, arises from disorder, and that life springs spontaneously from matter.

one who adamantly refuses to accept this responsibility must be termed a killer of the soul and a demon.

The Blind Leaders

Unfortunately, our modern materialistic civilization is filled with so-called leaders who are devoid of spiritual knowledge and who refuse to take guidance from genuine spiritual authorities. Such leaders are blind in the truest sense, and therefore both they and their blind followers waste their time in a hopeless, meaningless struggle to be happy by gratifying the senses of the temporary material body. In defiance of God's laws for spiritual life in harmony with the laws of nature, such leaders encourage all sorts of sinful activities, such as gambling, intoxication, meat eating, and illicit sex. As a result they make civilization hellish, and in their next lives both they and their followers are thrown into hellish planets. Such leaders should certainly be known as demons.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* further explains:

*pravṛtīm ca nivṛtīm ca
janā na vidur āsurāḥ
na śaucaṁ nāpi cācāro
na satyaṁ teṣu vidyate*

“Those who are demonic do not know what is to be done and what is not to be done. Neither cleanliness nor proper behavior nor truth is found in them” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 16.7).

Because demons do not know what to do and what not to do, they become involved in unclean dealings. For example, the highest elected official in the world's most influential country was recently implicated in all sorts of dirty dealings intended to increase his own wealth and power. And even after his dirty tricks were brought to light, he refused to admit the truth. As clearly indicated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, these are classic symptoms of a demonic personality. As long as such

the eternal soul—himself—from the cycle of repeated birth and death, he becomes a killer of the soul. He is killing himself by refusing to accept spiritual instruction about the soul and how it can be liberated from material bondage.

Achieving liberation from birth and death is not difficult, but one must take guidance from a bona fide, self-realized spiritual master who has understood the Absolute Truth. This Truth is conveyed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and other revealed Vedic scriptures, and the bona fide spiritual master presents this Truth without any change or interpretation. Any deviation from the literal meaning of the scriptures makes a so-called spiritual master disqualified. If one learns the science of spiritual understanding from the Vedic scriptures with the help of a bona fide, Kṛṣṇa-conscious spiritual master, one can cease identifying himself with his material body and make swift progress on the path of self-realization.

Identifying oneself (the soul) with the body is the great mistake of modern civilization, and it represents the grossest ignorance—ignorance of one's real identity as a spiritual being. The root cause of this ignorance is the demonic mentality—or, in other words, the refusal to accept the principles of spiritual consciousness found in the revealed Vedic scriptures. These scriptures explain that the spirit soul receives the gift of a human body only after passing through 8,400,000 species of life in the evolutionary cycle. In lower forms of life, our consciousness is undeveloped, and we are therefore unable to inquire about spiritual realization. In the human form, however, we have sufficient intelligence to understand our spiritual identity, and this is our primary responsibility. But

demons falsely occupy responsible government posts, the people in general will not be peaceful, prosperous, or happy.

Cleanliness and truthfulness are basic principles of proper behavior. Unless one is clean and truthful, how can he qualify as a political, religious, or intellectual leader? And this purity must be more than just skin deep. Anyone who bathes regularly with soap and water may be considered superficially clean, but one must also be clean within. In other words, one's heart must be free from the dirt of lust, greed, envy, false pride, anger, and so on. Because of these material contaminations, one thinks that his body is his self and that temporary material possessions and arrangements for bodily comfort will actually satisfy him. This spiritual blindness disqualifies one for leadership of any kind.

To cleanse the heart of all misconceptions, the Vedic authorities recommend that one chant the holy names of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, especially as found in the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Also, one should live in accordance with Lord Kṛṣṇa's instructions in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the Absolute Truth, and therefore one who follows His instructions is truthful in the deepest sense. Thus, by avoiding the four great sins (meat eating, illicit sex, intoxication, and gambling), by chanting God's names, and by following the *Bhagavad-gītā's* instructions, a God-conscious leader can fulfill his responsibility to the general mass of people, who are his wards.

The real duty of a government leader is to govern in such a way that everyone has both proper employment and the opportunity to advance spiritually. Without favoring one religious sect over another, the government must nevertheless foster God consciousness as vigorously as possible. That will make for a happy and contented citizenry, free from the

degrading activities of meat eating, illicit sex, intoxication, and gambling. Unfortunately, because demonic leaders reject the principles of God consciousness put forth in the revealed scriptures, the world must bear the burden of corrupt governments in which self-interested politicians exploit the populace.

The Godless Scientists

Demons oppose God consciousness in all respects—even to the extent of concocting their own atheistic philosophies. The *Bhagavad-gītā* explains:

*asatyam apratiṣṭham te
jagad āhur anīśvaram
aparaspāra-sambhūtaṁ
kim anyat kāma-haitukam*

“The demons say that this world is unreal, that there is no foundation, and that there is no God in control. They believe it is produced of sex desire, and has no cause other than lust” (Bg. 16.8).

This material world, with all its complex details, is itself irrefutable evidence of the existence of God. From the grand arrangement of the stars and planets down to the intricate workings of the atom, the affairs of the material world are so perfectly planned that they couldn't possibly exist without the supervision of a higher intelligence. Unwilling to acknowledge that supreme intelligence, however, the demons conjure up various philosophical theories to deny the obvious.

The chief offenders in this respect are the materialistic scientists, who misuse their God-given intelligence to contend that there is no God in control of the cosmic manifestation. They have many theories about the creation of the universe—all of them fantastic, and all of them foolish and implausible. According to one such theory, everything began from a

A Hopeful Note

by Jagajivana dāsa

If scientists and political leaders become God-conscious, they can do tremendous good for all of society. So what we are bemoaning is simply the sickness that today's scientists and political leaders are suffering from. We might call it “demon disease”—the compulsion to deny and decry the existence and superintendence of the Supreme Lord.

In reality, as Lord Kṛṣṇa confirms in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, all living beings are part and parcel of Him. The reason we're here in this material world in the first place is that we have forgotten our intimate relationship with the Lord. So in the strict philosophical sense of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, all of us are demons—unless and until we reconcile ourselves with Kṛṣṇa by again taking up our devotional service to Him. In other words, all of us are really the Lord's devotees, but for now we're playing the role of demons. Many people are open to reconciling themselves with Kṛṣṇa and giving up the demonic role, but sad to say, at the present moment our scientists, philosophers, and political leaders are not only holding on to the role but also playing it quite convincingly—and as a result the whole world is in chaos.

Actually, our cultural and political leaders can end the chaos and use their professions for everyone's benefit, if they learn the secret. In his English rendering of ancient India's *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda makes it an open secret:

“Human intellect is developed for advancement of learning in art, science, philosophy, physics, chemistry, psychology, economics, politics, and so forth. By culture of such knowledge the human society can attain perfection of life. This perfection of life culminates in the realization of the Supreme Being, Viṣṇu [Kṛṣṇa] . . . (Bhāg. 1.5.22 purport).

How can our cultural and political leaders help us all to come to the perfection of life?

“Philosophy and science should be engaged to establish the glory of the Lord. Advanced people are eager to understand the Absolute Truth through the medium of science, and therefore a great scientist should endeavor to prove the existence of the Lord on a scientific basis. Similarly, philosophical speculations should be utilized to establish the Supreme Truth as sentient and all-powerful. Similarly, all other branches of knowledge should always be engaged in the service of the Lord . . . (Bhāg. 1.5.22 purport).

“The political leader is the representative of the Supreme Lord, and therefore his interest must be identical with that of the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Lord wants all living beings to be obedient to Him and thereby become happy. Therefore the political leader's interest is to guide all citizens back to the kingdom of God. Hence the activities of the citizens should be so coordinated that they can at the end go back home,

concentrated mass of gases. According to another, everything began from atomic interactions. Other theories postulate that vast clouds of cosmic dust coagulated to form planets. But where have the gases, the atoms, or the cosmic dust come from? The demons cannot answer. And no wonder! As the *Encyclopedia Britannica* admits, "It should be emphasized that no theory of the origin of the solar system has as yet won general acceptance. All involve highly improbable assumptions. But the difficulty is in trying to find a theory with any degree of probability at all." Thus, with such "highly improbable" theories the demons try to deny God as the origin and controller of the universe.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* emphasizes not only that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, has generated the material elements, but also that He controls the material nature in all phases of creation, maintenance, and dissolution. But despite their sharp, inquisitive minds, the materialistic scientists cannot understand this fact, because their so-called intelligence has been stolen by illusion. As Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, "The foolish demons, who are the lowest among men, do not surrender to Me, for their intelligence has been plundered by My illusory energy" (Bg. 7.15).

Having failed to concoct any plausible theory to discredit the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the origin of the universe, the demonic scientists (as if to add insult to injury) also put forward godless propaganda about the origin of life. Abandoning logic and good sense, the demons say that order, by chance, arises from disorder, and that life springs spontaneously from matter. For example, according to one scenario for the creation of life, billions of years ago the earth spun off from the sun. Over many millions of years, the earth gradually cooled, and various elements interacted to create the earth's atmosphere and oceans. By chance some of these elements formed a "primordial chemical broth" of amino

acids. Then, again by chance, various kinds of radiation stimulated this broth to give rise to organic chemicals, such as proteins. As a result of further coincidences too complicated to explain here, these proteins (with a little help from some accidental thunderbolts, or some other unknown cause) finally changed into living organisms.

This is supposed to be a highly evolved, sophisticated theory—made possible by the latest advances in scientific knowledge—but in fact it is the same demonic philosophy described in the *Bhagavad-gītā* five thousand years ago: *aparaspara-sambhūtaṁ kim anyat kāma-haitukam*: "The demons believe that everything in this world is a product of the random attraction of various material bodies" (Bg. 16.8). Foolish demons, although sometimes honored as great scientists and philosophers, do not properly understand the workings of the material world because they do not know the difference between matter and spirit. They try to explain everything in terms of matter, and therefore they are materialists of the most blatant sort.

Even an ordinary person, however, if he uses his common sense, can see the difference between matter and spirit. For example, he need only consider the difference between a living body and a dead body. Once our spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, addressed a meeting of students and faculty at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He began by saying, "This is a great university, and you have many different departments for study and research—engineering, chemistry, and so on. But do you know the difference between a living body and a dead body?" No answer. That was something their technology hadn't gotten around to. They had only the haziest notions: in a dead body the heart isn't beating, the dead body has stopped breathing, and so on. Huge buildings, thousands of students, millions of dollars—but no common sense.

The difference between a living body and a dead body, His Divine Grace explained, is that the living body has consciousness. When a child is born dead, what's missing? All the organs are intact. All the necessary organic chemicals are present in abundance. Nothing has been ruptured or destroyed. The cells have not yet begun to deteriorate. Why, then, can't the dead child be brought back to life? The answer is that consciousness is not a product of matter and is therefore beyond the purview of material science.

This consciousness, which is the essential, nonmaterial element within the body, can never be understood by a demon. A doctor may artificially make the heart beat or the lungs pump air, but he cannot artificially create consciousness. There is no way that he can inject consciousness into a body which has died. Consciousness is spiritual, and no one can ever create it by any combination of material elements.

Of course, the demons may boast that they are "just on the verge" of creating life, but these are empty words, like the promise of a bankrupt man to pay a huge sum of money with a post-dated check. Suppose someone says, "Right now I have no money, but in a few days I'll be rich, so let me pay you with a post-dated check." Will any intelligent person accept it? Of course not. First get the money, then come back and purchase what you want. Similarly, why should we believe the so-called scientists who boast that they can create life? So far, they haven't been able to create even an ant or a tiny germ, nor can they point to even a single instance in which a living organism has been spontaneously created from matter. Yet they are proud of their hypothetical explanations of how life came from matter, and they have the unscientific brashness to boast that they can create life in their laboratories. It's time for us to stop accepting these sophisticated braggarts as scientists and recognize them for what they are—demonic rascals who are squandering their God-given intelligence and public-given funds to fight God consciousness and promote utter materialism as the Absolute Truth.

back to Godhead . . ." (*Bhāg.* 1.4.13 purport).

In practical terms, scientists and philosophers as well as writers, dramatists, poets, artists, and musicians should keep themselves and the rest of the populace merged in the ecstasy of hearing and chanting the glories of the Lord—through learned dissertations, narratives, plays, poems, paintings, and songs. After all, the one special quality that makes human culture different from animal culture is that human culture can be filled with God consciousness, with remembrance of Kṛṣṇa. Whereas animals can remember only their bodily demands (eating, sleeping, mating, and defending), human beings can remember the Lord and thus go back to Him at the time of death. So scientists, philosophers, and men of the arts should help us to remember Kṛṣṇa during life and, at life's end, go back to Godhead.

For their part, political leaders should knock away the four pillars of sinful life—meat eating, illicit sex, intoxication, and gambling—and such attendant atrocities as cow killing and abortion. In that way they will free the populace from the terrible karmic reactions to these sinful activities—namely epidemics, droughts, famines, and wars. On the positive side, political leaders should see to it that the citizens live in harmony with nature—each person taking only his quota and thus being assured of both receiving his quota and going back to Godhead. To put it simply, our cultural and political leaders should be Kṛṣṇa conscious—then they can make all of our lives both peaceful and successful.

Letters

Dear Brothers,

I salute you for trying to spread *dharma* [spiritual practice], and I'll agree that *bhakti-yoga* [devotional service to God] is the most effective means in this age. But it saddens me to see you butchering the concepts of the yogic systems so much. This is not ancient India (thank God) and it is fruitless to try to make it so.

The *Vedas* don't really disagree with modern science. Most *real* scientists are searching for truth, and they will agree that our present science is not perfect or complete. Those who say they know it all are just as pigheaded as those who say that some ten-thousand-year-old, incomplete book is the Absolute Truth. Mind you, I'm not running down your beliefs, because they're based on fact. But the modern sciences are also gifts of God and are based on truth. We don't need to fight or argue; let's just share the love.

Namaskara,
Chandresvar

Dear Chandresvar,

How in the world can you say that the *Vedas* don't really disagree with modern science? First of all, modern science says the moon is closer to the earth than the sun is, whereas the *Vedas* clearly say that the sun is closer (please see the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Fifth Canto, Chapter 22). Similarly, modern science generally holds that life arises from the interactions of material chemicals, whereas the *Vedas* say that life is eternal—that it is never destroyed or created—and that it emanates from the Supreme Life, the Personality of Godhead. Also, modern scientists almost universally believe in Darwin's theory of evolution, which the *Vedas* unequivocally reject. If these aren't disagreements, we don't know what are.

We would agree with you that *real* scientists are searching for truth. However, we must point out that the supreme truth is spiritual. With our material vision we cannot see the truth, even if we look through the most power-

ful microscopes and telescopes for millions and billions of years. One can't find spiritual truth through material science, any more than one can find the stars by digging in the ground. As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *paśyanti jñāna-cakṣuṣā*: one can see the truth only by developing eyes of knowledge, or spiritual vision. As you have correctly stated, *bhakti-yoga* is the most effective means in this age (and, the *Vedas* say, in any age) for developing this spiritual vision. Therefore *bhakti-yoga* is the real science, and one who is following the path of *bhakti* is the real scientist.

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is presenting the science of *bhakti-yoga* exactly as it is found in the Vedic literature. (If common misconceptions about yoga get butchered along the way, so much the better.) This is the actual method of spreading *dharma*. That we are not in ancient India doesn't matter: the truth is the truth. In India or America, millions of years ago or today, the truth is the same.

In one sense every living being is searching for truth. The philosopher searches for truth in books and in the mind; the drunkard searches for truth in the barroom; the hog searches for truth in the garbage. But if one wants to know the highest truth (*param satyam*), one must look for it by following the highest method of inquiry. Since you have already accepted that the highest, most effective method is *bhakti-yoga*, you need only follow this method *as it is*, with the help of a bona fide spiritual master, and your success is assured. *Bhakti-yoga* is the yoga of love—love for God, or Kṛṣṇa. Unlike modern scientists, God is perfect and complete, and whatever He says is also perfect and complete. Therefore, if we accept the process of *bhakti-yoga* as explained by God Himself in the *Bhagavad-gītā* *As It Is*, we will surely be able to understand the highest truth and share the highest love.

Sincerely yours,
The Editors

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Śrīla Prabhupāda Speaks Out

On “Science” and “Belief”

The following conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and one of his disciples was recorded during an early morning walk in Perth, Australia.

Devotee: [taking the part of a materialistic scientist] Why do you call Kṛṣṇa consciousness a science? It seems like it's only a belief.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Your so-called science is also belief. If you call your way science, then our way is also science.

Devotee: But with our science we can prove our beliefs.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Then prove that chemicals make life. Your belief is that life is made from chemicals. So prove it; then it is science. But you cannot prove it; therefore it remains a belief.

Devotee: Well, you believe in the soul, but you can't prove that it exists. Since we cannot see the soul, we have to conclude that life comes from matter.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: You cannot see the soul with your gross senses, but it can be perceived. Consciousness can be perceived, and consciousness is the symptom of the soul. But if, as you say, life comes from matter, then you must demonstrate it by supplying the missing chemicals to make a dead body live again. This is my challenge.

Devotee: It will require some time to find the right chemicals.

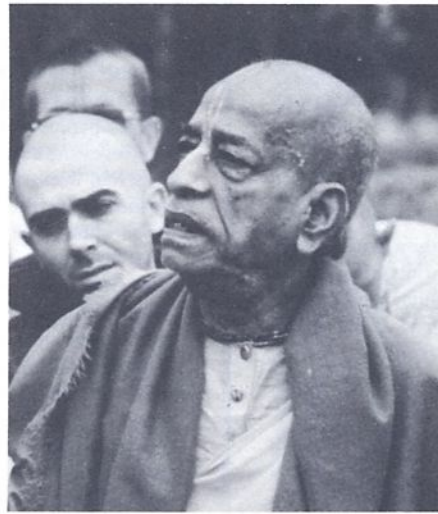
Śrīla Prabhupāda: That means you are talking nonsense. Your belief is that life comes from chemicals, but you cannot prove it. Therefore, you prove yourself to be a rascal.

Devotee: But you accept *Bhagavad-gītā* on faith. How is that scientific? It's only your belief, isn't that correct?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Why isn't it scientific? The *Bhagavad-gītā* says, *annā bhavanti bhūtāni*: “All living entities subsist by eating sufficient food grains, and grains are produced from rain.” Is that belief?

Devotee: That must be true.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Similarly, everything in the *Bhagavad-gītā* is true. If you think about it carefully, you will find it is all true. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says that in society there must be an intelligent class of men, the *brāhmaṇas*, who know the soul and God. That is civilized man. But where is such a class of men in today's society?



Devotee: There are many rabbis, priests, and ministers.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But what do they know about God? Just try to see this one point clearly. There is a supreme authority. You are not independent; therefore, you have to accept that a supreme authority exists. But you do not know who that supreme authority is. So if you do not know the supreme authority, what is the value of your knowledge? Suppose a man does not know about the government of his country. What kind of man is he? He is simply a third-class man, a rascal. A civilized man knows about his country's government. Similarly, there is a government of the whole universe, but if you do not know it, you are a third-class, uncivilized man. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa teaches in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that in human society there must be an intelligent class of men, who know God and who understand the whole universal management—how it is running under the order of God. We Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees know these things. Therefore we are civilized.

Devotee: But the *Bhagavad-gītā* was written five thousand years ago, so it doesn't pertain to today.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The *Bhagavad-gītā* was not written five thousand years ago; it was already there. It has always existed. Do you study the *Bhagavad-gītā*?

Devotee: Yes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Then where do you find in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that it was written five thousand years ago? It was first spoken more than 120 million years ago

(*imam vivasvate yogam proktavān aham avyayam*). Kṛṣṇa says, “I spoke this science to Vivasvān more than 120 million years ago.” You do not know this? What kind of reader of the *Bhagavad-gītā* are you? The *Bhagavad-gītā* is *avyayam*—it is eternally existing. So how can you say it was written five thousand years ago? [Śrīla Prabhupāda points to the rising sun with his cane.] Here we see the sun is just rising. But it is always there, in space. The *Bhagavad-gītā* is like that: it is eternal truth. When the sun is rising we don't say it is just now coming into existence. It is always there, but we can't see it until it rises. Men used to think that at night the sun would die, and in the morning a new sun was created. They also used to believe the earth was flat. This is your scientific knowledge: every day a new opinion.

Devotee: This means that we are discovering the truth.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. It means you do not know what the truth is. You are only speculating. Now you accept something as true, but after a few days you say it is not true. And you call this science!

Devotee: Yes, you're right. Many of the scientific textbooks that were written just a few years ago are outdated now.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: And the scientific books you are now using will be useless in a few years. This is your science.

Devotee: But at least what we know now is more true than what we knew before, and if we keep trying we will know more.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: This means you are always in ignorance. But the *Bhagavad-gītā* is not like that. Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna, “I first instructed this science 120 million years ago, and today I am teaching you the same thing.” That is scientific knowledge. The truth is always the same, but you scientists are always changing—“discovering the truth,” you call it. That means you do not know what truth is.

Devotee: [as himself] The problem is, everyone is a cheater. Everyone is speculating and presenting his own knowledge as the truth.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, therefore we have accepted Kṛṣṇa, the person who does not cheat. And since I am presenting only what Kṛṣṇa has said, I am also not a cheater. That is the difference between us and the scientists.

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First Canto "Creation"

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Lord Kṛṣṇa's Entrance into Dvārakā

(continued from previous issue)

TEXT 33

यद्यप्यसौ पार्श्वगतो रहोगत-
स्तथापि तस्याङ्घ्रियुगं नवं नवम् ।
पदे पदे का विरमेत तत्पदा-
बलापि बच्छ्रीर्न जहाति कर्हिचित् ॥३३॥
yadyapy asau pārśva-gato raho-gataḥ
tathāpi tasyāṅghri-yugam navam navam
pade pade kā virameta tat-padāc
calāpi yac chrīr na jahāti karhicit

yadi—although; api—certainly; asau—He (Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa); pārśva-gataḥ—just by the side; rahaḥ-gataḥ—exclusively alone; tathāpi—still; tasya—His; āṅghri-yugam—the feet of the Lord; navam navam—newer and newer; pade—step; pade—in every step; kā—who; virameta—can be detached from; tat-padāt—from His feet; calāpi—moving; yat—whom; śrīḥ—the goddess of fortune; na—never; jahāti—quits; karhicit—at any time.

TRANSLATION

Although Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa was constantly by their sides, as well as exclusively alone, His feet appeared to them to be newer and newer. The goddess of fortune, although by nature always restless and moving, could not quit the Lord's feet. So what woman can be detached from those feet, having once taken shelter of them?

PURPORT

Conditioned living beings are always after the favor of the goddess of fortune, although by nature she is moving from one place to another. In

the material world no one is permanently fortunate, however clever one may be. There have been so many big empires in different parts of the world, there have been so many powerful kings all over the world, and there have been so many fortunate men, but all of them have been liquidated gradually. This is the law of material nature. But spiritually it is different. According to *Brahma-saṁhitā*, the Lord is served very respectfully by hundreds and thousands of goddesses of fortune. They are always in a lonely place also with the Lord. But still the association of the Lord is so inspiringly newer and newer that they cannot quit the Lord for a moment, even though they are by nature very restless and are moving about. The spiritual relation with the Lord is so enlivening and resourceful that no one can leave the company of the Lord, once having taken shelter of Him.

The living beings are by constitution feminine by nature. The male or enjoyer is the Lord, and all manifestations of His different potencies are feminine by nature. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the living beings are designated as *parā-prakṛti*, or the superior potency. The material elements are *aparā-prakṛti*, or inferior potency. Such potencies are always employed for the satisfaction of the employer, or the enjoyer. The supreme enjoyer is the Lord Himself, as stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (5.29). The potencies, therefore, when engaged directly in the service of the Lord, revive the natural color, and thus there is no disparity in the relation of the potent and potency.

Generally people engaged in service are always seeking some post under the government or the supreme enjoyer of the state. Since the Lord is the supreme enjoyer of everything in or outside the universe, it is happiness to be employed by Him. Once engaged in the supreme governmental service of the Lord, no living being wishes to be relieved from the engagement. The highest perfection of human life is to seek some employment under the Lord's supreme service. That will make one extremely happy. One need not seek the moving goddess of fortune without the relation of the Lord.

TEXT 34

एवं नृपाणां क्षितिमारजन्मना-
मक्षौहिणीभिः परिवृत्ततेजसाम् ।
विधाय वैरं श्वसनो यथानलं
मिथो बधेनोपरतो निरायुधः ॥३४॥

evaṁ nṛpāṇāṁ kṣiti-bhāra-jaṅmanām
akṣauhiṇībhiḥ parivṛtta-tejasām
vidhāya vairam śvasano yathānalam
mitho vadhenoparato nirāyudhaḥ

evam—thus; *nṛpānām*—of the kings or administrators; *kṣiti-bhāra*—the burden of the earth; *janmanām*—born in that way; *akṣauhiṇibhiḥ*—empowered by a military strength of horses, elephants, chariots, infantry; *parivṛta*—being puffed up by such surroundings; *tejasām*—prowess; *vidhāya*—having created; *vairam*—hostility; *śvasanaḥ*—interaction of the wind and the pipe plants; *yathā*—as it is; *analam*—fire; *mīthah*—with one another; *vadhena*—by killing them; *uparataḥ*—relieved; *nirāyudhaḥ*—by Himself without being a party to such fighting.

TRANSLATION

The Lord was pacified after killing those kings who were burdensome to the earth. They were puffed up with their military strength, their horses, elephants, chariots, infantry, etc. He Himself was not a party in the fight. He simply created hostility between the powerful administrators, and they fought amongst themselves. He was like the wind which causes friction between bamboos and so sparks a fire.

PURPORT

As stated above, the living beings are not factual enjoyers of things which are manifested as God's creation. The Lord is the genuine proprietor and enjoyer of everything manifested in His creation. Unfortunately, influenced by the deluding energy, the living being becomes a false enjoyer under the dictation of the modes of nature. Puffed up by such a false sense of becoming God, the deluded living being increases his material strength by so many activities and thus becomes the burden of the earth, so much so that the earth becomes completely uninhabitable by the sane. This state of affairs is called *dharmasya glāni*, or misuse of the energy of the human being. When such misuse of human energy is prominent, the saner living beings become perturbed by the awkward situation created by the vicious administrators, who are simply burdens of the earth, and the Lord appears by His internal potency just to save the saner section of humanity and to alleviate the burden due to the earthly administrators in different parts of the world. He does not favor either of the unwanted administrators, but by His potential power He creates hostility between such unwanted administrators, as the air creates fire in the forest by the friction of the bamboos. The fire in the forest takes place automatically by the force of the air, and similarly the hostility between different groups of politicians takes place by the unseen design of the Lord. The unwanted administrators, puffed up by false power and military strength, thus become engaged in fighting amongst themselves over ideological conflicts and so exhaust themselves of all powers. The history of the world reflects this factual will of the Lord, and it will continue to be enacted until the living beings are attached to the service of the Lord. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* this fact is very vividly described (Bg. 7.14). It is said, "The deluding energy is My potency, and thus it is not possible for the dependent living beings to supersede the strength of the material modes. But those who take shelter in Me [the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa] can cross over the gigantic ocean of material energy." This means that no one can establish peace and prosperity in the world by fruitive activities or by speculative philosophy or ideology. The only way is to surrender unto the Supreme Lord and thus become free from the illusion of the deluding energy.

Unfortunately persons who are engaged in destructive work are unable to surrender to the Personality of Godhead. They are all fools of the first order; they are the lowest of the human species of life; they are robbed of their knowledge, although apparently they seem to be academically educated. They are all of the demoniac mentality, always challenging the supreme power of the Lord. Those who are very materialistic, always hankering after material power and strength, are undoubtedly fools of the first order because they have no information of the living energy, and being ignorant of that supreme spiritual science, they are absorbed in material science, which ends with the end of the material body. They are the lowest of human beings because the human life is especially meant for reestablishing the lost relation with the Lord, and they

miss this opportunity by being engaged in material activities. They are robbed of their knowledge because even after prolonged speculation they cannot reach to the stage of knowing the Personality of Godhead, the *summum bonum* of everything. And all of them are men of demoniac principle, and they suffer the consequences, as did such materialistic heroes as Rāvaṇa, Hiraṇyakaśipu, Kaiśa and others.

TEXT 35

स एष नरलोकेऽसिम्भवतीर्णः स्वमायया ।
रेमे स्त्रीरत्नकूटसो भगवान् प्राकृतो यथा ॥३५॥

sa eṣa nara-loke 'sminn
avatīrṇaḥ sva-māyayā
reme strī-ratna-kūṭastho
bhagavān prākṛto yathā

saḥ—He (the Supreme Personality of Godhead); *eṣaḥ*—all these; *nara-loke*—on this planet of human beings; *asmin*—on this; *avatīrṇaḥ*—having appeared; *sva*—personal, internal; *māyayā*—causeless mercy; *reme*—enjoyed; *strī-ratna*—woman who is competent to become a wife of the Lord; *kūṭasthaḥ*—among; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *prākṛtaḥ*—mundane; *yathā*—as if it were.

TRANSLATION

That Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa, out of His causeless mercy, appeared on this planet by His internal potency and enjoyed Himself amongst competent women as if He were engaged in mundane affairs.

PURPORT

The Lord married and lived like a householder. This is certainly like a mundane affair, but when we learn that He married 16,108 wives and lived with them separately in each and every palace, certainly it is not mundane. Therefore, the Lord, living as a householder amongst His competent wives, is never mundane, and His behavior with them is never to be understood as mundane sex relation. The women who became the wives of the Lord are certainly not ordinary women, because to get the Lord as one's husband is the result of many, many millions of births' *tapasya* (austerity). When the Lord appears on different *lokas*, or planets, or on this planet of human beings, He displays His transcendental pastimes just to attract the conditioned souls to become His eternal servitors, friends, parents and lovers respectively in the transcendental world, where the Lord eternally reciprocates such exchanges of service. Service is pervertedly represented in the material world and broken untimely, resulting in sad experience. The illusioned living being conditioned by material nature cannot understand out of ignorance that all our relations here in the mundane world are temporary and full of inebrieties. Such relations cannot help us be happy perpetually, but if the same relation is established with the Lord, then we are transferred to the transcendental world after leaving this material body and become eternally related with Him in the relation we desire. The women amongst whom He lived as their husband are not, therefore, women of this mundane world, but are eternally related with Him as transcendental wives, a position which they attained by perfection of devotional service. That is their competency. The Lord is *paraṁ brahma*, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Conditioned souls seek after perpetual happiness in all places—not only on this earth but also on other planets throughout the universe—because constitutionally a spiritual spark, as he is, can travel to any part of God's creation. But being conditioned by the material modes, he tries to travel in space by spacecraft and so fails to reach his destination. The law of gravitation is binding upon him like the shackles of a prisoner. By other processes he can reach anywhere, but even if he reaches the highest planet, he cannot attain that perpetual happiness for which he is searching life after life. When he comes to his

senses, however, he seeks after Brahman happiness, knowing it for certain that unlimited happiness, which he is seeking, is never attainable in the material world. As such, the Supreme Being, Parabrahman, certainly does not seek His happiness anywhere in the material world. Nor can His paraphernalia of happiness be found in the material world. He is not impersonal. Because He is the leader and Supreme Being amongst innumerable living beings, He cannot be impersonal. He is exactly like us, and He has all the propensities of an individual living being in fullness. He marries exactly like us, but His marriage is neither mundane nor limited by our experience in the conditioned state. His wives, therefore, appear like mundane women, but factually they are all transcendental liberated souls, perfect manifestations of internal energy.

TEXT 36

उदामभावपिशुनामलवल्युहास-
व्रीडावलोकनिहतो मदनोऽपि यासाम् ।
सम्मुह्य चापमजहात्प्रमदोत्तमास्ता
यस्येन्द्रियं विमथितुं कुहकैर्न शेकुः ॥३६॥

uddāma-bhāva-piṣunāmala-valgu-hāsa-
vṛīḍāvaloka-nihato madano 'pi yāsām
sammuhya cāpam ajahāt pramadottamāś tā
yasyendriyaṁ vimathitum kuhakair na śekuḥ

uddāma—very grave; bhāva—expression; piṣuna—exciting; amala—spotless; valgu-hāsa—beautiful smiling; vṛīḍa—corner of the eye; avaloka—looking; nihataḥ—conquered; madanaḥ—Cupid (or amadana—the greatly tolerant Śiva); api—also; yāsām—whose; sammuhya—being overpowered by; cāpam—bows; ajahāt—gave up; pramada—woman, who maddens; uttamāḥ—of high grade; tā—all; yasya—whose; indriyam—senses; vimathitum—to perturb; kuhakaiḥ—by magical feats; na—never; śekuḥ—was able.

TRANSLATION

Although the queens' beautiful smiles and furtive glances were all spotless and exciting, and although they could conquer Cupid himself by making him give up his bow in frustration, and although even the tolerant Śiva could fall victim to them, still, despite all their magical feats and attractions, they could not agitate the senses of the Lord.

PURPORT

The path of salvation or the path going back to Godhead always forbids the association of women, and the complete *sanātana-dharma* or *varṇāśrama-dharma* scheme forbids or restricts association with women. How, then, can one be accepted as the Supreme Personality of Godhead who is addicted to more than sixteen thousand wives? This question may be relevantly raised by inquisitive persons really anxious to know about the transcendental nature of the Supreme Lord. And to answer such questions, the sages at Naimiṣāraṇya have discussed the transcendental character of the Lord in this and in following verses. It is clear herein that the feminine attractive features which can conquer Cupid or even the supermost tolerant Lord Śiva could not conquer the senses of the Lord. Cupid's business is to invoke mundane lust. The whole universe is moving being agitated by Cupid's arrow. The activities of the world are being carried on by the central attraction of male and female. A male is searching after a mate to his liking, and the female is looking after a suitable male. That is the way of material stimulus. And as soon as a male is combined with a female, the material bondage of the living being is at once tightly interlocked by sex relation, and as a result of this, both the male's and female's attraction for sweet home, motherland, bodily offspring, society and friendship and accumulation of wealth becomes the illusory field of activities, and thus a false but indefatigable attraction for the temporary material existence, which is full of miseries, is manifest. Those who are, therefore, on the path of salvation for going

back home back to Godhead, are especially advised by all scriptural instruction to become free from such paraphernalia of material attraction. And that is possible only by the association of the devotees of the Lord, who are called the *mahātmās*. Cupid throws his arrow upon the living beings to make them mad after the opposite sex, whether the party is actually beautiful or not. Cupid's provocations are going on, even among beastly societies who are all ugly-looking in the estimation of the civilized nations. Thus Cupid's influence is exerted even amongst the ugliest forms, and what to speak of the most perfect beauties. Lord Śiva, who is considered to be most tolerant, was also struck by Cupid's arrow because he also became mad after the *Mohini* incarnation of the Lord and acknowledged himself to be defeated. Cupid, however, was himself captivated by the grave and exciting dealings of the goddesses of fortune, and he voluntarily gave up his bow and arrow in a spirit of frustration. Such was the beauty and attraction of the queens of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Yet they could not disturb the transcendental senses of the Lord. This is because the Lord is all-perfect *ātmārāma*, or self-sufficient. He does not require anyone's extraneous help for His personal satisfaction. Therefore, the queens could not satisfy the Lord by their feminine attractiveness, but they satisfied Him by their sincere affection and service. Only by unalloyed transcendental loving service could they satisfy the Lord, and the Lord was pleased to treat them as wives in reciprocation. Thus being satisfied by their unalloyed service only, the Lord reciprocated the service just like a devout husband. Otherwise He had no business becoming the husband of so many wives. He is the husband of everyone, but to one who accepts Him as such, He reciprocates. This unalloyed affection for the Lord is never to be compared to mundane lust. It is purely transcendental. And the grave dealings, which the queens displayed in natural feminine ways, were also transcendental because the feelings were expressed out of transcendental ecstasy. It is already explained in the previous verse that the Lord appeared like a mundane husband, but factually His relation with His wives was transcendental, pure and unconditioned by the modes of material nature.

TEXT 37

तमयं मन्यते लोको ह्यसङ्गमपि सङ्गिनम् ।
आत्मौपम्येन मनुजं व्यापृष्वानं यतोऽबुधः ॥३७॥

tam ayam manyate loko
hy asaṅgam api saṅginam
ātmaupamyena manujam
vyāpṛṣvānaṁ yato 'budhaḥ

tam—unto Lord Kṛṣṇa; ayam—all these (common men); manyate—do speculate within the mind; lokaḥ—the conditioned souls; hi—certainly; asaṅgam—unattached; api—in spite of; saṅginam—affected; ātma—self; aupamyena—by comparison with the self; manujam—ordinary man; vyāpṛṣvānaṁ—being engaged in; yatoḥ—because; abudhaḥ—foolish because of ignorance.

TRANSLATION

The common materialistic conditioned souls speculate that the Lord is one of them. Out of their ignorance they think that the Lord is affected by matter, although He is unattached.

PURPORT

The word *abudhaḥ* is significant here. Due to ignorance only, the foolish mundane wranglers misunderstand the Supreme Lord and spread their foolish imaginations amongst innocent persons by propaganda. The Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original primeval Personality of Godhead, and when He was personally present before the eyes of everyone, He displayed full-fledged divine potency in every field of activities. As we have already explained in the first verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, He is completely independent to act however He likes, but all His actions are full of bliss, knowledge and eternity. Only the foolish mundaners misunder-

stand Him, unaware of His eternal form of knowledge and bliss, which is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Upaniṣads*. His different potencies work in a perfect plan of natural sequence, and doing everything by the agency of His different potencies, He remains eternally the supreme independent. When He descends on the material world by His causeless mercy to different living beings, He does so by His own potency. He is not subject to any condition of the material modes of nature, and He descends as He is originally. The mental speculators misunderstand Him as the Supreme Person, and they consider His impersonal features as inexplicable Brahman to be all. Such a conception is also the product of conditioned life because they cannot go beyond their own personal capacity. Therefore, one who considers the Lord on the level of one's limited potency is only a common man. Such a man cannot be convinced that the Personality of Godhead is always unaffected by the modes of material nature. He cannot understand that the sun is always unaffected by infectious matter. The mental speculators compare everything from the standpoint of experimental knowledge of their own selves. Thus when the Lord is found to act like an ordinary person in matrimonial bondage, they consider Him to be like one of them, without considering that the Lord can at once marry sixteen thousand wives or more. Due to a poor fund of knowledge they accept one side of the picture while disbelieving the other. This means that due to ignorance only they always think of Lord Kṛṣṇa as like themselves and make their own conclusions, which are absurd and unauthentic from the version of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

TEXT 38

एतदीशनमीशस्य प्रकृतिस्थोऽपि तद्गुणैः ।
न युज्यते सदात्मस्थैर्यथा बुद्धिस्तदाश्रया ॥३८॥

*etad īśanam īśasya
prakṛti-stho 'pi tad-guṇaiḥ
na yujyate sadātma-sthair
yathā buddhiḥ tad-āśrayā*

etad—this; *īśanam*—divinity; *īśasya*—of the Personality of Godhead; *prakṛti-sthaḥ*—being in contact with material nature; *api*—in spite of; *tad-guṇaiḥ*—by the qualities; *na*—never; *yujyate*—is affected; *sadā ātma-sthaiḥ*—by those who are situated in eternity; *yathā*—as is; *buddhiḥ*—intelligence; *tad*—the Lord; *āśrayā*—those who are under the shelter of.

TRANSLATION

This is the divinity of the Personality of Godhead: He is not affected by the qualities of material nature, even though He is in contact with them. Similarly, the devotees who have taken shelter of the Lord do not become influenced by the material qualities.

PURPORT

In the *Vedas* and Vedic literatures (*Śruti* and *Smṛti*) it is affirmed that in the Divinity there is nothing material. He is transcendental (*nirguṇa*) only, the supreme cognizant. Hari, or the Personality of Godhead, is the supreme transcendental person situated beyond the range of material affection. These statements are also confirmed even by Ācārya Śaṅkara. One may argue that His relation with the goddesses of fortune may be transcendental, but what about His relation with the Yadu dynasty, being born in that family, or His killing the nonbelievers like Jarāsandha and other *asuras* directly in contact with the modes of material nature. The answer is that the divinity of the Personality of Godhead is never in contact with the qualities of material nature in any circumstances. Actually He is in contact with such qualities because He is the ultimate source of everything, yet He is above the actions of such qualities. He is known, therefore, as Yogeśvara, or the master of mystic power, or in other words the all-powerful. Even His learned devotees are not affected by the influence of the material modes. The great six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana all

came from greatly rich and aristocratic families, but when they adopted the life of mendicants at Vṛndāvana, superficially they appeared to be in wretched conditions of life, but factually they were the richest of all in spiritual values. Such *mahā-bhāgavatas*, or first-grade devotees, although moving amongst men, are not contaminated by honor or insult, hunger or satisfaction, sleep or wakefulness, which are all resultant actions of the three modes of material nature. Similarly, some of them are engaged in worldly dealings, yet are unaffected. Unless these neutralities of life are there, one cannot be considered situated in transcendence. The Divinity and His associates are on the same transcendental plane, and their glories are always sanctified by the action of *yogamāyā*, or the internal potency of the Lord. The devotees of the Lord are always transcendental, even if they are sometimes found to have fallen in their behavior. The Lord emphatically declares in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.30) that even if an unalloyed devotee is found to be fallen due to a previous material contamination, he is nevertheless to be accepted as fully transcendental because of his being engaged cent percent in the devotional service of the Lord. The Lord protects him always because of his rendering service unto Him, and the fallen conditions are to be considered accidental and temporary. They will vanish in no time.

TEXT 39

तं मेनिरेऽबला मूढाः स्रैणं चानुव्रतं रहः ।
अप्रमाणचिदो षुर्तुरीश्वरं मतयो यथा ॥३९॥

*taṁ menire 'balā mūḍhāḥ
straiṇaṁ cānuvratam rahaḥ
apramāṇa-vido bhartur
īśvaraṁ matayo yathā*

taṁ—unto Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *menire*—took it for granted; *abalāḥ*—delicate; *mūḍhāḥ*—because of simplicity; *straiṇaṁ*—one who is dominated by his wife; *ca*—also; *anuvratam*—follower; *rahaḥ*—lonely place; *apramāṇa-vidah*—unaware of the extent of glories; *bhartuḥ*—of their husband; *īśvaraṁ*—the supreme controller; *matayaḥ*—thesis; *yathā*—as it is.

TRANSLATION

The simple and delicate women truly thought that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, their beloved husband, followed them and was dominated by them. They were unaware of the extent of the glories of their husband, as the atheists are unaware of Him as the supreme controller.

PURPORT

Even the transcendental wives of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa did not know completely the unfathomable glories of the Lord. This ignorance is not mundane because there is some action of the internal potency of the Lord in the exchange of feelings between Him and His eternal associates. The Lord exchanges transcendental relations in five ways, as proprietor, master, friend, son and lover, and in each of these pastimes He plays fully by the potency of *yogamāyā*, the internal potency. He plays exactly like an equal friend with the cowherd boys or even with friends like Arjuna. He plays exactly like a son in the presence of Yaśodāmātā, He plays exactly like a lover in the presence of the cowherd damsels, and He plays exactly like a husband in the presence of the queens of Dvārakā. Such devotees of the Lord never think of the Lord as the Supreme, but think of Him exactly as a common friend, a pet son, or a lover or husband very much dear to heart and soul. That is the relation between the Lord and His transcendental devotees, who act as His associates in the spiritual sky, where there are innumerable *Vaikuṇṭha* planets. When the Lord descends, He does so along with His entourage to display a complete picture of the transcendental world, where pure love and devotion for the Lord prevail without any mundane tinge of lording it over the creation of the Lord. Such devotees of the Lord are all liberated souls, perfect representations of the marginal or internal potency in complete

negation of the influence of the external potency. The wives of Lord Kṛṣṇa were made to forget the immeasurable glories of the Lord by the internal potency so that there might not be any flaw of exchange, and they took it for granted that the Lord was a henpecked husband, always following them in lonely places. In other words, even the personal associates of the Lord do not know Him perfectly well, so what do the thesis writers or mental speculators know about the transcendental glories of the Lord? The mental speculators present different theses as to His becoming the causes of the creation, the ingredients of the creation, or the material and efficient cause of the creation, etc., but all this is but partial knowledge about the Lord. Factually they are as ignorant as the common man. The Lord can be known by the mercy of the Lord only, and by no other means. But since the dealings of the Lord with His wives are based on pure transcendental love and devotion, the wives are all on the transcendental plane without material contamination.

Thus end the Bhaktivedanta purports of the First Canto, Eleventh Chapter, of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, entitled "Lord Kṛṣṇa's Entrance into Dvārakā."

CHAPTER TWELVE

Birth of Emperor Parikṣit

TEXT 1

श्रीसाुनक उवाच

अश्वत्थाम्नोपसृष्टेन ब्रह्मशीर्णोरुतेजसा ।
उत्तरायाम् हतो गर्भे ईशेनाजीवितः पुनः ॥ १ ॥

śaunaka uvāca
aśvatthāmnopasṛṣṭena
brahma-śiṣṇoru-tejasā
uttarāyā hato garbha
īśenājīvitah punaḥ

śaunakah uvāca—the sage Śaunaka said; aśvatthāma—the son of Droṇa; upasṛṣṭena—by release of; brahma-śiṣṇā—the invincible weapon, brahmāstra; uru-tejasā—by high temperature; uttarāyā—of Uttarā (mother of Parikṣit); hataḥ—being spoiled; garbhaḥ—womb; īśena—by the Supreme Lord; ajīvitah—brought to life; punaḥ—again.

TRANSLATION

The sage Śaunaka said: The womb of Uttarā, mother of Mahārāja Parikṣit, was spoiled by the dreadful and invincible brahmāstra weapon released by Aśvatthāmā. But Mahārāja Parikṣit was saved by the Supreme Lord.

PURPORT

The sages assembled in the forest of Naimiṣāraṇya inquired from Sūta Gosvāmī about the birth of Mahārāja Parikṣit, but in the course of the narration other topics like the release of the brahmāstra by the son of Droṇa, his punishment by Arjuna, Queen Kuntidevī's prayers, the Pāṇḍavas' visit to the place where Bhīṣmadeva was lying, his prayers and thereafter the Lord's departure for Dvārakā were discussed. His arrival at Dvārakā and residing with the sixteen thousand queens, etc., were narrated. The sages were absorbed in hearing such descriptions, but now they wanted to turn to the original topic, and thus the inquiry was made by Śaunaka Ṛṣi. So the subject of the release of the brahmāstra weapon by Aśvatthāmā is renewed.

TEXT 2

तस्य जन्म महाबुद्धेः कर्माणि च महात्मनः ।
निघ्नं च यथैवासीत्स प्रेत्य गतवान् यथा ॥ २ ॥

tasya janma mahā-buddheḥ
karmāṇi ca mahātmanaḥ
nidhanaṁ ca yathaiivāsīt
sa pretya gatavān yathā

tasya—his (of Mahārāja Parikṣit); janma—birth; mahā-buddheḥ—of great intelligence; karmāṇi—activities; ca—also; mahā-ātmanaḥ—of the great devotee; nidhanam—demise; ca—also; yathā—as it was; eva—of course; āsīt—happened; saḥ—he; pretya—destination after death; gatavān—achieved; yathā—as it were.

TRANSLATION

How was the great emperor Parikṣit, who was a highly intelligent and great devotee, born in that womb? How did his death take place, and what did he achieve after his death?

PURPORT

The king of Hastināpura (now Delhi) used to be the emperor of the world, at least till the time of the son of Emperor Parikṣit. Mahārāja Parikṣit was saved by the Lord in the womb of his mother, so he could certainly be saved from an untimely death due to the ill will of the son of a brāhmaṇa. Because the age of Kali began to act just after the assumption of power by Mahārāja Parikṣit, the first sign of misgivings was exhibited in the cursing of such a greatly intelligent and devoted king as Mahārāja Parikṣit. The king is the protector of the helpless citizens, and their welfare, peace and prosperity depend on him. Unfortunately, by the instigation of the fallen age of Kali, an unfortunate brāhmaṇa's son was employed to condemn the innocent Mahārāja Parikṣit, and so the King had to prepare himself for death within seven days. Mahārāja Parikṣit is especially famous as one who is protected by Viṣṇu, and when he was unduly cursed by a brāhmaṇa's son, he could have invoked the mercy of the Lord to save him, but he did not want to because he was a pure devotee. A pure devotee never asks the Lord for any undue favor. Mahārāja Parikṣit knew that the curse of the brāhmaṇa's son upon him was unjustified, as everyone else knew, but he did not want to counteract it because he knew also that the age of Kali had begun and that the first symptom of the age, namely degradation of the highly talented brāhmaṇa community, had also begun. He did not want to interfere with the current of the time, but he prepared himself to meet death very cheerfully and very properly. Being fortunate, he got at least seven days to prepare himself to meet death, and so he properly utilized the time in the association of Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the great saint and devotee of the Lord.

TEXT 3

तदिदं श्रोतुमिच्छामो गदितुं यदि मन्यसे ।
ब्रूहि नः श्रद्धानानां यस्य ज्ञानमदाच्छुकः ॥ ३ ॥

tad idam śrotum icchāmo
gaditum yadi manyase
brūhi naḥ śraddadhānānām
yasya jñānam adāc chukah

tat—all; idam—this; śrotum—to hear; icchāmaḥ—all willing; gaditum—to narrate; yadi—if; manyase—you think; brūhi—please speak; naḥ—we; śraddadhānānām—who are very much respectful; yasya—whose; jñānam—transcendental knowledge; adāt—delivered; sukah—Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī.

TRANSLATION

We all respectfully want to hear about him [Mahārāja Parikṣit] to whom Śukadeva Gosvāmi imparted transcendental knowledge. Please speak on this matter.

PURPORT

Śukadeva Gosvāmi imparted transcendental knowledge to Mahārāja Parikṣit during the remaining seven days of his life, and Mahārāja Parikṣit heard him properly, just like an ardent student. The effect of such a bona fide hearing and chanting of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was equally shared by both the hearer and the chanter. Both of them were benefited. Out of the nine different transcendental means of devotional service to the Lord prescribed in the *Bhāgavatam*, either all of them, or some of them or even one of them are equally beneficial if properly discharged. Mahārāja Parikṣit and Śukadeva Gosvāmi were serious performers of the first two important items, namely the process of chanting and the process of hearing, and therefore both of them were successful in their laudable attempt. Transcendental realization is attained by such serious hearing and chanting and not otherwise. There is a type of spiritual master and disciple much advertised in this age of Kali. It is said that the master injects spiritual force into the disciple by an electrical current generated by the master, and the disciple begins to feel the shock. He becomes unconscious, and the master weeps for his exhausting his store of so-called spiritual assets. Such bogus advertisement is going on in this age, and the poor common man is becoming the victim of such advertisement. We do not find such folk tales in the dealings of Śukadeva Gosvāmi and his great disciple Mahārāja Parikṣit. The sage recited *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in devotion, and the great King heard him properly. The King did not feel any shock of electrical current from the master, nor did he become unconscious while receiving knowledge from the master. One should not, therefore, become a victim of these unauthorized advertisements made by some bogus representative of Vedic knowledge. The sages of Naimiṣāranya were very respectful in hearing about Mahārāja Parikṣit because of his receiving knowledge from Śukadeva Gosvāmi by means of ardent hearing. Ardent hearing from the bona fide master is the only way to receive transcendental knowledge, and there is no need for medical performances or occult mysticism for miraculous effects. The process is simple, but only the sincere party can achieve the desired result.

TEXT 4

सूत उवाच

अपीपलद्धर्मराजः पितृवद् रञ्जयन् प्रजाः ।
निःस्पृहः सर्वकामेभ्यः कृष्णपादानुसेवया ॥ ४ ॥

sūta uvāca
apīpalad dharmarājah
pitṛvad rañjayan prajāh
niḥsprhaḥ sarva-kāmebhyah
kṛṣṇa-pādānusevayā

sūtaḥ uvāca—Śrī Sūta Gosvāmi said; apīpalat—administered prosperity; dharmarājah—King Yudhiṣṭhira; pitṛvat—exactly like his father; rañjayan—pleasing; prajāh—all those who took birth; niḥsprhaḥ—without personal ambition; sarva—all; kāmebhyah—from sense gratification; kṛṣṇa-pāda—the lotus feet of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa; anusevayā—by dint of rendering continuous service.

TRANSLATION

Śrī Sūta Gosvāmi said: Emperor Yudhiṣṭhira administered generously to everyone during his reign. He was exactly like his father. He had no personal ambition and was freed from all sorts of sense gratification because of his continuous service unto the lotus feet of the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

PURPORT

As mentioned in our introduction, "There is a need for the science of Kṛṣṇa in human society for all the suffering humanity of the world, and we simply request the leading personalities of all nations to take to the science of Kṛṣṇa for their own good, for the good of society, and for the good of all the people of the world." So it is confirmed herein by the example of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, the personality of goodness. In India the people hanker after *Rāma-rājya* because the Personality of Godhead was the ideal king and all other kings or emperors in India controlled the destiny of the world for the prosperity of every living being who took birth on the earth. Herein the word *prajāh* is significant. The etymological import of the word is "that which is born." On the earth there are many species of life, from the aquatics up to the perfect human beings, and all are known as *prajāh*. Lord Brahmā, the creator of this particular universe, is known as the *prajāpati* because he is the grandfather of all who have taken birth. Thus *prajā* is used in a broader sense than it is now used. The king represents all living beings, the aquatics, plants, trees, reptiles, birds, animals and man. Every one of them is a part and parcel of the Supreme Lord (Bg. 14.4), and the king, being the representative of the Supreme Lord, is duty-bound to give proper protection to every one of them. This is not the case with the presidents and dictators of this demoralized system of administration, where the lower animals are given no protection while the higher animals are given so-called protection. But this is a great science which can be learned only by one who knows the science of Kṛṣṇa. By knowing the science of Kṛṣṇa, one can become the most perfect man in the world, and unless one has knowledge in this science, all qualifications and doctorate diplomas acquired by academic education are spoiled and useless. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira knew this science of Kṛṣṇa very well, for it is stated here that by continuous cultivation of this science, or by continuous devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, he acquired the qualification of administering the state. The father is sometimes seemingly cruel to the son, but that does not mean that the father has lost the qualification to be a father. A father is always a father because he always has the good of the son at heart. The father wants every one of his sons to become a better man than himself. Therefore, a king like Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, who was the personality of goodness, wanted everyone under his administration, especially human beings who have better developed consciousness, to become devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa so that everyone can become free from the trifles of material existence. His motto of administration was all good for the citizens, for as personified goodness he knew perfectly well what is actually good for them. He conducted the administration on that principle, and not on the *rākṣasī*, demonic, principle of sense gratification. As an ideal king, he had no personal ambition, and there was no place for sense gratification because all his senses at all times were engaged in the loving service of the Supreme Lord, which includes the partial service to the living beings, who form the parts and parcels of the complete whole. Those who are busy rendering service to the parts and parcels, leaving aside the whole, only spoil time and energy, as one does when watering the leaves of a tree without watering the root. If water is poured on the root, the leaves are enlivened perfectly and automatically, but if water is poured on the leaves only, the whole energy is spoiled. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, therefore, was constantly engaged in the service of the Lord, and thus the parts and parcels of the Lord, the living beings under his careful administration, were perfectly attended with all comforts in this life and all progress in the next. That is the way of perfect management of state administration.

TEXT 5

सम्पदः ऋतवो लोका महिषी भ्रातरो मही ।
जम्बूद्वीपाधिपत्यं च यश्च त्रिदिवं गतम् ॥ ५ ॥

sampadaḥ kratavo lokā
maḥiṣī bhrātaro mahī
jambū-dvīpādhipatyam ca
yaśaś ca tri-divaṁ gatam

sampadaḥ—opulence; *kratavaḥ*—sacrifices; *lokāḥ*—future destination; *mahiṣī*—the queens; *bhrūtarāḥ*—the brothers; *mahī*—the earth; *jambū-dvīpā*—the globe or planet of our residence; *adhipatyam*—sovereignty; *ca*—also; *yaśaḥ*—fame; *ca*—and; *tri-divam*—celestial planets; *gatam*—spread over.

TRANSLATION

News even reached the celestial planets about Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira's worldly possessions, the sacrifices by which he would attain a better destination, his queen, his stalwart brothers, his extensive land, his sovereignty over the planet earth, and his fame, etc.

PURPORT

Only a rich and great man's name and fame are known all over the world, and the name and fame of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira reached the higher planets because of his good administration, worldly possessions, glorious wife Draupadī, the strength of his brothers Bhīma and Arjuna, and his solid sovereign power over the world, known as Jambūdvīpa. Here the word *lokāḥ* is significant. There are different *lokas* or higher planets scattered all over the sky, both material and spiritual. A person can reach them by dint of his work in the present life, as stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.25). No forceful entrance is allowed there. The tiny material scientists and engineers who have discovered vehicles to travel over a few thousand miles in outer space will not be allowed entrance. That is not the way to reach the better planets. One must qualify himself to enter into such happy planets by sacrifice and service. Those who are sinful in every step of life can expect only to be degraded into animal life to suffer more and more the pangs of material existence, and this is also stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (16.19). Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira's good sacrifices and qualifications were so lofty and virtuous that even the residents of the higher celestial planets were already prepared to receive him as one of them.

TEXT 6

किं ते कामाः सुरस्वार्हा मुकुन्दमनसो द्विजाः ।
अधिजहुर्युद्धं राज्ञः क्षुधितस्य यथेतरे ॥ ६ ॥

kiṁ te kāmāḥ sura-spārḥā
mukunda-manaso dvijāḥ
adhijahur mudam rājñāḥ
kṣudhitasya yathetare

kiṁ—what for; *te*—all those; *kāmāḥ*—objects of sense enjoyment; *sura*—of the denizens of heaven; *spārḥāḥ*—aspirations; *mukunda-manasaḥ*—of one who is already God conscious; *dvijāḥ*—O brāhmanas; *adhijahuh*—could satisfy; *mudam*—pleasure; *rājñāḥ*—of the king; *kṣudhitasya*—of the hungry; *yathā*—as it is; *itare*—in other things.

TRANSLATION

O brāhmanas, the opulence of the King was so enchanting that the denizens of heaven aspired for it. But because he was absorbed in the service of the Lord, nothing could satisfy him except the Lord's service.

PURPORT

There are two things in the world which can satisfy living beings. When one is materially engrossed, he is satisfied only by sense gratification, but when one is liberated from the conditions of the material modes, he is satisfied only by rendering loving service for the satisfaction

of the Lord. This means that the living being is constitutionally a *servitor*, and not one who is *served*. Being illusioned by the conditions of the external energy, one falsely thinks himself to be the served, but actually he is not served; he is servant of the senses like lust, desire, anger, avarice, pride, madness and intolerance. When one is in his proper senses by attainment of spiritual knowledge, he realizes that he is not the master of the material world, but is only a servant of the senses. At that time he begs for the service of the Lord and thus becomes happy without being illusioned by so-called material happiness. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was one of the liberated souls, and therefore for him there was no pleasure in a vast kingdom, good wife, obedient brothers, happy subjects and prosperous world. These blessings automatically follow for a pure devotee, even though the devotee does not aspire for them. The example set herein is exactly suitable. It is said that one who is hungry is never satisfied by anything other than food.

The whole material world is full of hungry living beings. The hunger is not for good food, shelter or sense gratification. *The hunger is for the spiritual atmosphere*. Due to ignorance only they think that the world is dissatisfied because there is not sufficient food, shelter, defense and objects of sense gratification. This is called illusion. When the living being is hungry for spiritual satisfaction, he is misrepresented by material hunger. But the foolish leaders cannot see that even the people who are most sumptuously materially satisfied are still hungry. And what is their hunger and poverty? This hunger is actually for spiritual food, spiritual shelter, spiritual defense and spiritual sense gratification. These can be obtained in the association of the Supreme Spirit, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and therefore one who has them cannot be attracted by the so-called food, shelter, defense and sense gratification of the material world, even if they are misled by the denizens of the heavenly planets. Therefore, in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.16) it is said by the Lord that even in the topmost planet of the universe, namely the Brahmāloka, where the duration of life is multiplied by millions of years by earth calculation, one cannot satisfy his hunger. Such hunger can be satisfied only when the living being is situated in immortality, which is attained in the spiritual sky, far, far above the Brahmāloka, in the association of Lord Mukunda, the Lord who awards His devotees the transcendental pleasure of liberation.

TEXT 7

मातुर्गर्भगतो वीरः स तदा भृगुनन्दन ।
ददर्श पुरुषं कञ्चिद्ब्रह्ममानोऽस्त्रतेजसा ॥ ७ ॥

mātur garbha-gato vīrah
sa tadā bhṛgu-nandana
dadarśa puruṣam kañcid
dahyamāno 'stra-tejasā

mātuḥ—mother; *garbha*—womb; *gataḥ*—being situated there; *vīrah*—the great fighter; *saḥ*—child Parikṣit; *tadā*—at that time; *bhṛgu-nandana*—O son of Bhṛgu; *dadarśa*—could see; *puruṣam*—the Supreme Lord; *kañcit*—as someone else; *dahyamānaḥ*—suffering from being burned; *astra*—the brahmāstra; *tejasā*—temperature.

TRANSLATION

O son of Bhṛgu [Śaunaka], when the child Parikṣit, the great fighter, was in the womb of his mother, Uttarā, and was suffering from the burning heat of the brahmāstra [thrown by Aśvatthāmā], he could observe the Supreme Lord coming to him.

(continued in next issue)



Every Town and Village

A look at the worldwide activities of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Breakthrough for Book Distribution



An important breakthrough has occurred in ISKCON's efforts to open all U.S. airports to unhampered book distribution. For years devotees have gone out to the crowded airports and sold the books of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda to literally millions of travelers—and for years the devotees have met opposition from angered airport managers. Now, finally, a meeting of minds seems at hand.

In the May issue of *Airport Services Management* magazine, editor Richard Coffey calls for an open dialogue between ISKCON and airport officials: "The Hare Krishna [people] are in the airports—protected by the First Amendment—and they will remain in the airports. So what do we do about it? Manage it. We'd make a stupid mistake underestimating the ability of the Krishna movement to meet us on every level of confrontation. . . . So it appears someone will have to open a dialogue. The Krishna [people] are willing; so should we be."

Another article by Mr. Coffey in the same magazine describes his visit to the Minneapolis Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple. He comes away impressed with the sincerity of the devotees and the seriousness of their mission to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He also confirms ISKCON's long-standing claim that all collections are used only to support the temples and book publication and distribution—"not for individual gratification."

Since every airport official reads *Airport Services Management* magazine, Mr. Coffey's advice and observations should go a long way toward creating a more

liberal atmosphere for book distribution at the nation's airports.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Books Draw Flood of Praise

Plaudits for the books of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda continue to pour into our offices from professors throughout the world. Dr. Geddes MacGregor, Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the University of Southern California, recently sent us this comment on Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*:

"In the West, no work in all Indian literature is more quoted (because none is better loved) than the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Translation of such a work demands more than just knowledge of Sanskrit; it demands an inward sympathy with the theme of the *Gītā* as well as verbal artistry, for the poem is a symphony in which God is seen in all things.

"His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda is, of course, profoundly sympathetic to the theme. He brings to it, moreover, a special interpretative insight, a powerful and persuasive presentation in the *bhakti* tradition. . . . The swami does a real service for students and laymen by investing the beloved Indian epic with fresh meaning. Whatever our outlook may be, we should all be grateful for the labor that has led to this illuminating work."

And from Dr. V. N. Shukla, Professor of Sanskrit and Hindi at Aligarh Univer-

sity in India, we received this appreciation:

"Before I met Śrīla Prabhupāda about a year ago, I had known him through his enormous works on Kṛṣṇa *bhakti*—works which comprise the nucleus of all Indian-Vedic spiritual literature. To name a few of these works: *The Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*; *The Nectar of Devotion*; *Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*; *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*; *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*; *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*; and *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*. All of these works are with commentary, and it is noteworthy to mention that the commentary on the *Śrī Īsopaniṣad* is one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's greatest contributions, for it completely refutes the impersonalist arguments of Śankarācārya. *Śrī Īsopaniṣad* is a book to be possessed by every Western scholar.

"Words fail me as I attempt to describe the height of scholarship and devotion manifested in the volumes mentioned above. Future generations will definitely find a better world to live in through the efforts of Śrīla Prabhupāda, for he stands for the feelings of international brotherhood and the spiritual integration of all mankind—sentiments which are the very backbone of India's Vedic *sanātana-dharma* [eternal religion]. Members of the literary world outside India, particularly in the West, should feel highly indebted to Śrīla Prabhupāda, who has so scientifically acquainted them with what is best in Kṛṣṇa-conscious India. I heartily call to the attention of all scholars, professors, and religious teachers the great importance and contribution of the books of Śrī Swami Prabhupāda."

Vaiṣṇava Calendar

Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees follow a spiritual calendar that divides the year into twelve months, each named for a different form of Kṛṣṇa. The year is full of Kṛṣṇa conscious festivals, and some of the upcoming ones are listed here. The devotees at the ISKCON center nearest you will gladly tell you about the meaning of these festivals.

Year 491, Caitanya Era					
Vaiṣṇava months of Vāmana (concluding half, July 17–30, 1977) and Śrīdhara (July 31– August 28)					
July 17 (Vāmana 16)	July 18 (Vāmana 17)	July 22 (Vāmana 21)	July 26 (Vāmana 25)	July 27 (Vāmana 26)	
Śrī Guṇḍicā-māṛjana.	Rathayātrā of Lord Jagannātha-deva (North America, Central America, Hawaii observe Rathayātrā on July 17). Disappearance of Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī.	Herā-pañcamī.	Return Rathayātrā of Lord Jagannātha-deva.	Sayana-ekādaśī. Beginning of Cāturmāsya-vrata if started from the Dvādaśī.	
July 28 (Vāmana 27)	July 30 (Vāmana 29)	August 4 (Śrīdhara 5)	August 7 (Śrīdhara 8)	August 10 (Śrīdhara 11)	August 11 (Śrīdhara 12)
Ekādaśī break-fast after sunrise and before 9:31 A.M.	Pūrnimā. Beginning of Cāturmāsya-vrata if started from Pūrnimā. Disappearance of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī.	Disappearance of Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī.	Disappearance of Śrīla Lokanātha Gosvāmī.	Kāmikā-ekādaśī.	Ekādaśī break-fast after sunrise and before 9:32 A.M.

F.A.T.E.

the First American Theistic Exhibition

Combine India's ancient Vedic wisdom and doll-making artistry with America's multimedia technology . . . and you get an unforgettable spiritual experience.

The inspirational seed for the First American Theistic Exhibition (just opened at the Los Angeles Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple) was planted in India more than forty years ago by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the grand-spiritual-master of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. It was then that he developed an impressive diorama exhibit to present the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness clearly and convincingly to all classes of people. That original theistic exhibition, consisting of dozens of dioramas, still draws hundreds of thousands of viewers on its annual tour of India.

When His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda came to America in 1965, he brought with him his spiritual master's dream of an American theistic exhibition. To fulfill that dream, Śrīla Prabhupāda asked some of his own disciples to go to India and learn the art of making "dolls," the figures displayed in a diorama. Now, by the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Śrīla Prabhupāda, those disciples have returned to America and developed a unique and fascinating multimedia presentation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness: the First American Theistic Exhibition.

The director of F.A.T.E. is Baradrāja dāsa, one of the first devotees Śrīla Prabhupāda sent to India to learn the doll-making art. After becoming proficient, Baradrāja has spent most of the last three years making dioramas and training others in the technique. He sees his assignment as a special favor from his spiritual master. . . .

"I was working as an artist," Baradrāja relates,

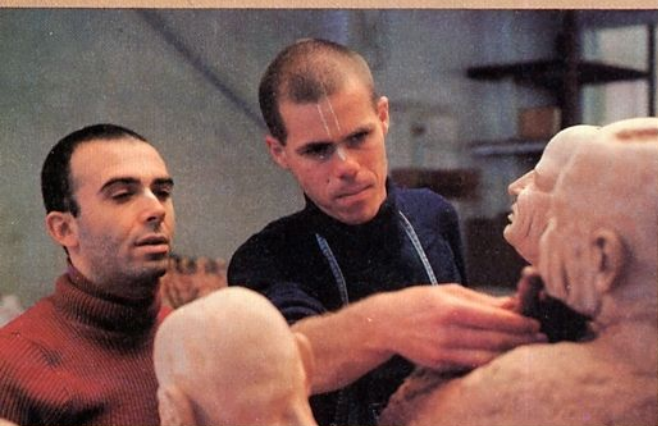
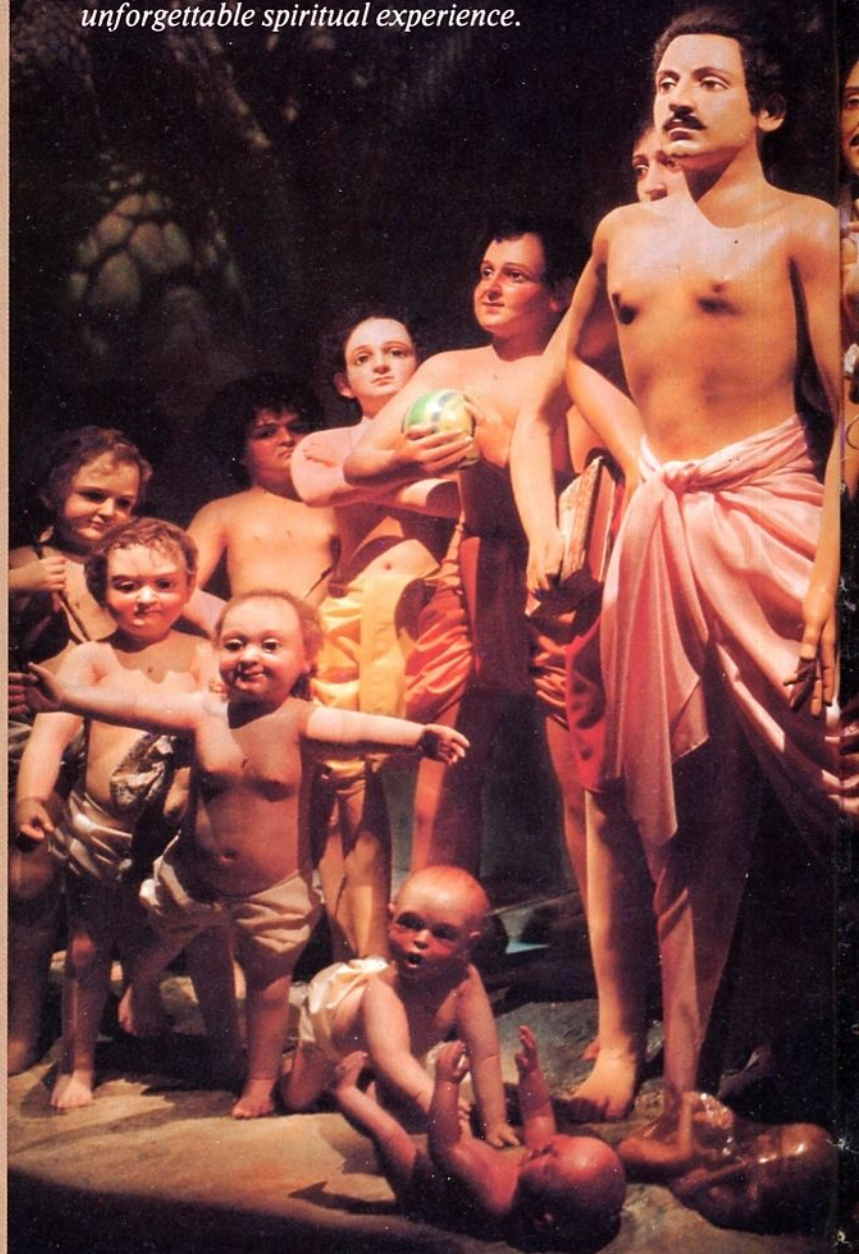


Photo: Viśākhā-devī dāśī

Baradrāja and Ādi-deva put finishing touches (above) on the "Changing Bodies" exhibit (right): the soul changes bodies through millions of species until—with human intelligence—he can at last understand what is happening. He sees that although his bodies are changing (from species to species and, within each species, from birth to youth to old age) he is the same person. So he realizes, "I'm not my changing bodies but pure soul."



*Text by Mandaleśwara dāsa
Photos by Muralivadana dāsa*



“doing paintings for Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books at ISKCON’s press in New York. As a devotee I had been painting for three years, and I was also doing art editing for BACK TO GODHEAD magazine. Then, in March of 1973, Śrīla Prabhupāda came to New York. At that time I told him, ‘Śrīla Prabhupāda, I want to preach.’ He looked at me like I was a lunatic. ‘What are you doing now?’ he said. ‘You are not preaching? This painting is not preaching? Please understand, this is preaching. If you do not do this painting, then who will? No, this is very important preaching.’ So that was the end of that—painting illustrations for Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books was preaching.

“A few days later, all the artists were talking with Śrīla Prabhupāda in his quarters. (This was at the old Brooklyn temple.) He was asking about the various paintings we were working on, and there was a lot of discussion. Then suddenly he said something that surprised everyone; no one knew what to say. ‘I want someone to learn how to make dolls,’ he said. What did he mean? Of course, none of us actually knew what he was talking about. He just kept speaking of ‘dolls.’ He told us that these dolls were made in India. ‘These doll makers are very expert. I want one of you to learn from them.’ It was a complete mystery. What were these dolls? Śrīla Prabhupāda looked around the room. He looked at all the artists. Then he turned to me and said, ‘Baradrāja, you will go.’

“Well, I began to feel a very strange combination of emotions. In my heart there was both horror and joy: joy at having a chance to go to India, horror at the idea of having to make dolls. At the time, I thought of myself in quite a vain fashion—as an *artiste*, one of good taste and aesthetic judgments. The idea of making dolls seemed really outlandish. But aside from my feelings, I knew the importance of the spiritual master’s order. Here was an opportunity for spiritual advancement, and my wife and I were both eager and thankful for our new service to Śrīla Prabhupāda. Practically speaking, this order to make dolls was the first real spiritual challenge in my whole life as a devotee. It was the first time that Śrīla Prabhupāda had actually asked me to do something I didn’t want to do. It was a very exciting time.”

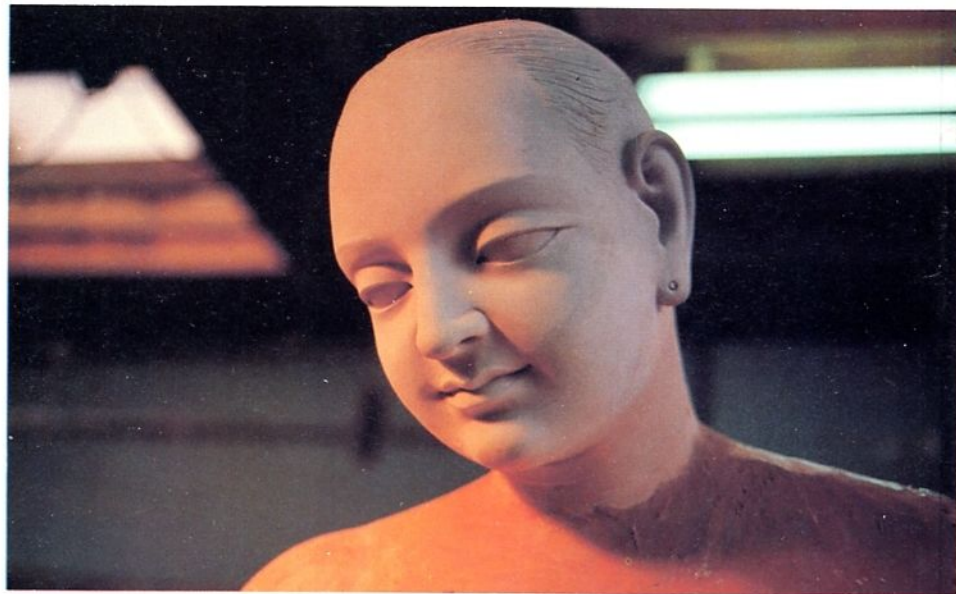
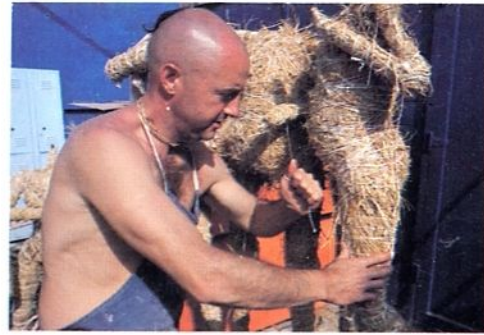
About this time Śrīla Prabhupāda began to inspire other disciples to take up the mission of preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness through dioramas. He wanted these disciples to go to India, learn the art of doll making, and then return to the West and assemble an American theistic exhibit. In a letter to Ādi-deva dāsa, Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote: “In London there is

a museum—Madame Tussaud’s Wax Museum—and people are lining up for blocks just to see some mundane dead bodies. You should go to India and learn how to make dolls. Then we will have our own museum, and simply by seeing our exhibits people will make spiritual advancement.”

Training in India

In the summer of 1973, the small group of devotees chosen by Śrīla Prabhupāda to pioneer the diorama project arrived in India. Their destination was Śrī Māyāpur, the holy birthsite of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. (Lord Caitanya is Kṛṣṇa Himself, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He appeared five hundred years ago to teach love of

India’s Vedic tradition spells out all the essentials for the exhibits (both photos below)—from the raw materials (bamboo, rice straw, various clays, and rice husk) on up to the dolls’ gracefully rounded forms.



God through the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.) “Śrīla Prabhupāda was staying at our ISKCON headquarters in Māyāpur,” Baradrāja continued, “so of course I went there as soon as my plane landed in Calcutta. When I arrived in Māyāpur, I immediately went upstairs to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s quarters. It was wonderful to see him there in Māyāpur. He was relaxed and very much at home.

“As we talked he began to outline my new work. I was immediately to begin learning all about making dolls. Śrīla Prabhupāda had already chosen a teacher, and I was to attend his classes. As I was leaving Śrīla Prabhupāda’s quarters, I ran into a Godbrother I hadn’t seen in about four years. I told him what Śrīla Prabhupāda had asked me to do—why I had come to Māyāpur—and he started telling me a few things

about India. We had stood there maybe five minutes at the most when Śrīla Prabhupāda’s secretary ran out and called to me, ‘Baradrāja, Śrīla Prabhupāda wants to speak with you.’ I couldn’t imagine why. I had just finished talking with him. I ran back upstairs to his room and offered obeisances. I looked up. Śrīla Prabhupāda was looking at me very sternly. He said, ‘So, you can immediately begin this training program. There is so much to do; there will be no time for talking.’ I don’t know how he could have heard us talking, but from that moment on I knew: I had a lot of work to do, and Śrīla Prabhupāda expected me to get a lot accomplished.”

Ādi-deva, another pioneer of F.A.T.E., recalls his early experiences in Māyāpur—learning the art of doll-making from his teacher and imbibing devotion to Kṛṣṇa from Śrīla Prabhupāda. “I remember the first thing we made in our class. The teacher had us sit



About the dolls' graceful forms and finely detailed features (upper and lower left), Ādi-deva has this to say: "When you visit the old temples in India, this is the way the figures look. As soon as you see these transcendental personalities—Lord Kṛṣṇa, the great sages, the demigods—right away you feel peaceful and satisfied. They put you in a reflective mood, and you can experience your inner, spiritual self." This same transcendental mood carries over even into the background scenery (below).



Photo: Nityatīrth-devi dasi



down and make a clay mango. We showed it to him, and he rejected it and had us make another one, and another, and another. I must have made a dozen mangos, but he wanted us to make it *exactly* like the one he made.

"Once we got over the mango, he had us make a banana. Then an eggplant. Then a squash, and so on. Finally we graduated to making animals. We made monkeys and peacocks—all quite small. It was really tedious, and we sometimes felt like quitting. But the thing that kept us all going was that we knew that one day this work would give pleasure to Śrīla Prabhupāda. Of course, at this time none of us could begin to understand the scope of this project, the vision of our spiritual master.

"In the scriptures it is said that the disciple has to pass the test of the spiritual master. So this was my test: to stay in Māyāpur and work only because my spiritual master wanted me to. Śrīla

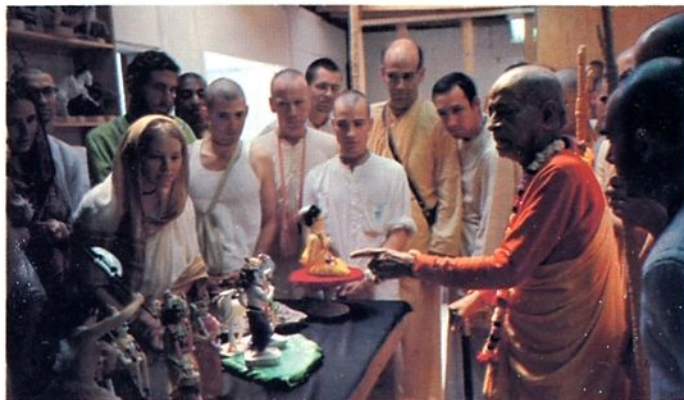


Photo: Viśakha-devi dasi

When Śrīla Prabhupāda visited the F.A.T.E. studios last year, he was happy to see the devotees using everything to serve the Supreme Lord. Otherwise, Prabhupāda explained, all their artistic and technological advancement would be just so many zeros. By adding "one"—Kṛṣṇa—they're turning all their zeros into millions and billions.



Kṛṣṇa's universal form (above) made His devotee Arjuna awestruck: "My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, I see assembled together in Your body all the demigods and various other living entities. I see Brahmā [the progenitor] sitting on the lotus flower [which sprouts from the navel of the reclining

Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu (the maintainer, Kṛṣṇa's plenary expansion)] as well as Lord Śiva [the destroyer, at left, attired in a leopard skin] and many sages and divine serpents. O Lord of the universe, I see in Your universal body many, many forms—bellies, mouths, eyes—expanded without limit."

Prabhupāda once told us, 'You should simply make and break.' We'd make a doll very carefully and exactly, and then we'd break it and start another one. That's the way he wanted us to learn. I can see now it was just like tearing off layer after layer of false egotism. Śrīla Prabhupāda used to come up every morning after his lecture in the temple to see what we'd made, and if we'd broken any.'

Dispelling Doubts

The dearest thing to a sincere disciple is the order of his spiritual master. Baradrāja explains, "We had our order, and through the whole thing Śrīla Prabhupāda confirmed that order and again and again enlivened all of us with his kindness. Then Śrīla Prabhupāda went to Bombay on a visit. Without his daily encouragement I gradually began having some doubts about the whole idea of making dolls. So finally I flew to Bombay to see Śrīla Prabhupāda. I had been in the hospital in Māyāpur, and when I arrived in Bombay Śrīla Prabhupāda had heard of my illness. He asked, 'How is your health?'—he was very kind—and I said, 'Now that I'm with you, it's perfectly all right.'

"Early that same morning, as the sun was coming up, I went with him on his walk along Juhu Beach. What he said to me that morning has become my life and soul. These words are what make me tick right now. Śrīla Prabhupāda instructed me that morning on Juhu Beach: 'Learn this art of doll making. Become expert. If you take this to the West, then my preaching mission will become successful all over the world.' So these words actually changed my life. From that day on, making dolls was a lot more than just a job or a task. It became my life's mission.

"I learned another important lesson, you might say, when Śrīla Prabhupāda asked us to make an exhibit in Māyāpur for Lord Caitanya's appearance day. It was our first real project, and there wasn't really enough time to finish it all. I made a doll of Lord Caitanya in His six-armed form, and one of Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva [the half-man, half-lion incarnation of Kṛṣṇa]. We finished on time, barely, and everyone who came was impressed. When Śrīla Prabhupāda came to the doll of Lord Caitanya he asked, 'Who has made this?' Someone said, 'Baradrāja did it.' Śrīla Prabhupāda thought for a minute as he looked at it. Then he turned to me and said, 'The hands are not yet perfect; you must study further.' That was the first time I had noticed how very perceptive and

critical Śrīla Prabhupāda was of this diorama art form. He actually wanted us to learn how to make everything perfect. Everyone else thought the Lord Caitanya doll was nice, but Śrīla Prabhupāda wasn't going to overlook anything.

"After that I began to feel a bit humble. When he came to the diorama of Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva and asked, 'Who made this?' I replied that I had. 'Very good,' he said. 'Now you can teach others.' From these two incidents I could understand that, yes, he wanted me to teach, but on the other hand I had much more to learn. So I decided to remain in India and continue with my training.

"Finally, Ādi-deva and I had the opportunity to go to Vṛndāvana [the small village (ninety miles from Delhi) where Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared five thousand years ago]. We lived and worked in a little shed right next to Śrīla Prabhupāda's quarters. Every day he would visit us during our work and point something out: 'This is too big. That is too small. Do this.' Whenever he was out he would almost always come over to the shop and see what we were doing. Then Śrīla Prabhupāda became very sick. For almost two weeks we didn't see him at all. We just kept working on the dolls. When we had finished them, Śrīla Prabhupāda's health was a little better, but he was still feeling very ill. One morning, after he had left his quarters for a short walk, we hurried in and put the newly finished dolls in his room as a surprise. And were we surprised! When Śrīla Prabhupāda saw the dolls he became very happy. That morning his whole disposition changed and he felt in good health again. The significance, I think, was that by our work we were showing him we had learned what he had brought us to India to learn and that we were enthusiastic to go and begin theistic exhibitions in the West.

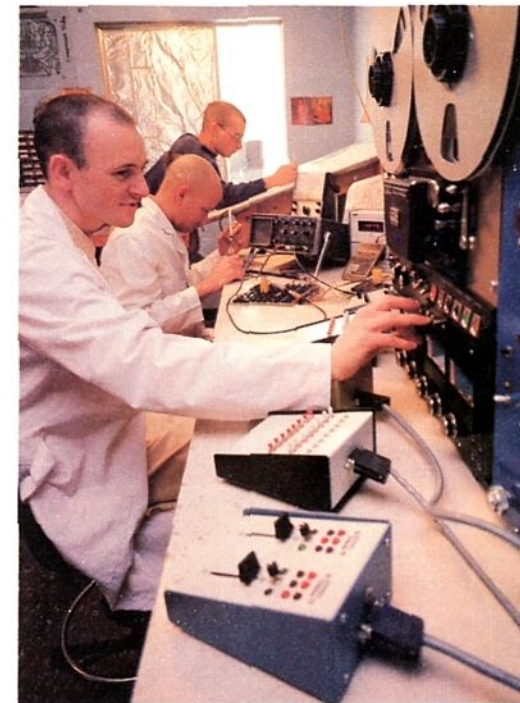
"A few days later I went with Śrīla Prabhupāda on his morning walk and he told me, 'Yes, I have often thought that I have brought you here and given you so much trouble just so you would learn to do this important work. And now I see it was not in vain.'"

This marked the conclusion of fifteen months' training in India. Looking back over this period of preparation, Ādi-deva recalls that the real motivation for all the devotees involved was the desire to please their spiritual master (which is actually the basic principle of spiritual life). "Going through that whole experience together helped everybody sense the importance that Śrīla Prabhupāda was putting on this work. All the way through, whenever we would become discouraged

or unsure, we'd either write to Śrīla Prabhupāda, or Baradrāja would go see him, or Prabhupāda would come to visit us. And he just kept encouraging, always encouraging."

F.A.T.E. Comes to Los Angeles

After returning from India, Baradrāja, Ādi-deva, and many other devotees (some who received training in India and others who simply felt attracted to F.A.T.E.) met at ISKCON's Western world-headquarters, in Los Angeles. Here they began the second phase in the



Besides the Vedic doll-making art (top), F.A.T.E. boasts a special computer (above) that synchronizes lighting, sixteen-track sound, projectors, and visuals. "We built our own computer, because we just couldn't find anything on the market that could handle such sophisticated programming."

Whereas material life is full of danger (see exhibit pictured at far right), spiritual life is full of delight. We can relate to Kṛṣṇa (“the all-attractive one”) as our master, our friend, our child, or even (see the exhibit pictured at right) as our beloved. Here Kṛṣṇa’s eternal consort Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī (whose hand is on His shoulder) and the other gopīs (cowherd girls) serenade Kṛṣṇa at the sandy bank of the River Yamunā, in the transcendental land of Vṛndāvana.



development of theistic exhibitions in America.

“Before we constructed the present exhibit in Los Angeles,” Baradrāja explains, “we presented the whole idea to Śrīla Prabhupāda, with models of all the dioramas. We marked off a corridor in the exhibit hall and set up models of the proposed dioramas all along the way. Śrīla Prabhupāda toured the whole display and approved all our proposed exhibits. ‘Very good,’ he said, ‘This is *buddhi-yoga*: you are utilizing your intelligence to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This is very nice.’

“F.A.T.E. is a far-reaching project,” says Baradrāja. “Making dioramas incorporates every facet of the arts and crafts. Someone is a potter; someone is a jeweler; someone a carpenter, an architect, an engineer. We are engaging tailors, painters, photographers, stained-glass artisans. There is no field of art that the diorama construction doesn’t touch. It opens up a whole new scope of activities for people in every field.”

Devotees make the dolls at F.A.T.E.’s Los Angeles studio, using methods essentially the same as those used in India. The basic materials—bamboo, rice straw, various clays, and rice husk—are the same, as are the processes of finishing, painting, and dressing the dolls. But if you closely observe the doll makers at their daily work, you’ll find many arts, crafts, and sciences—and a lot of paraphernalia and equipment—that definitely are *not* imported from India. For example, to make lighter, stronger, more portable exhibits, the devotees

have developed a system of making rubber molds of the original dolls. From each mold a devotee can cast dozens of replicas much quicker than he could construct another clay doll. The cast forms are made of polyester resin, a light, strong material that can hold up under frequent shipping and handling.

F.A.T.E. even has its own electronics department, a vital part of the multifaceted project. At the new museum in Los Angeles, one specially designed computer synchronizes the entire exhibition, including varieties of lighting, a sixteen-track sound system, numerous film and slide projectors, and special visual effects. “We built our own computer,” says F.A.T.E.’s electronics engineer Ameyātmā dāsa, “because we just couldn’t find anything on the market that could handle such sophisticated programming.”

The Significance of F.A.T.E.

The development of F.A.T.E. points up the essence of Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy: we achieve our natural and happy condition when we employ our intelligence, our talents, our possessions—everything—in the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the source and proprietor of all that is. Thus, Śrīla Prabhupāda has taught his disciples how to become expert in using everything in the service of the Lord. Cars, printing presses, electronics, the technical and fine arts—all can help spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and devotees should use them. Actually, these things are meant solely for serving

Kṛṣṇa. But unfortunately our technological society does not know the eternal science of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa and therefore misuses everything for temporary sense gratification. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that without dedicating everything to Kṛṣṇa, we waste our opulence and our technological advancement, and they become so many worthless zeros. Only by adding “one”—Kṛṣṇa—can we turn all our zeros into millions and billions.

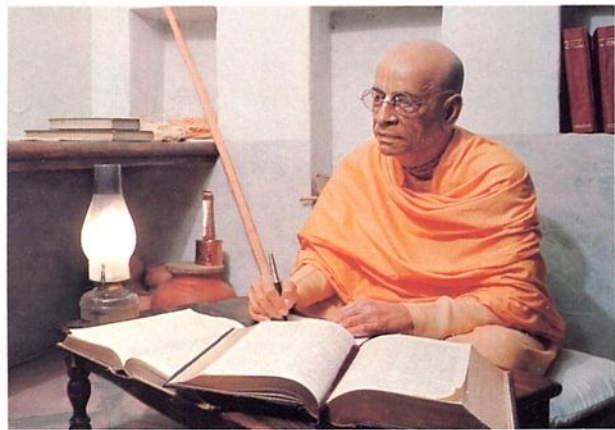
To give everyone a chance to add Kṛṣṇa to his life is Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mission—a mission given him by his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and the mission of a long line of spiritual masters dating back five hundred years to Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself. The First American Theistic Exhibition is an important step toward fulfilling that mission. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that people in this age aren’t interested in reading philosophical books, and those who do read hardly understand. People aren’t patient. They want to use their eyes and ears; they want an experience. So for such people, seeing a diorama that makes a profound, clear philosophical statement is equivalent to many weeks of reading. Even if they see these dioramas only once, they will never forget the experience.

Says Baradrāja, “Śrīla Prabhupāda told me that these dioramas are ‘living books.’ People say that pictures are worth a thousand words. Well, we have another saying: ‘A diorama is worth a thousand pictures.’”



Our body is a chariot (left and below) made of the material elements. Ordinarily, we let the driver, our intelligence, be pulled around by the reins, our mind, which in turn is pulled around by the horses, our senses. In other words, as in the exhibit at left, ordinarily we let our senses carry us away. But as in the exhibit below, we can let Kṛṣṇa be the driver of our chariot. We can ask Him to guide our intelligence and take the reins, just as He does here for His great devotee Arjuna.

As we see in the exhibit pictured below, child Kṛṣṇa often disturbs His mother by His naughty activities, and sometimes she wants to bind Him up. Once mother Yaśodā tried to tie Kṛṣṇa up, but the rope was too short. She tied together many ropes, but the rope was still too short. After a while she was perspiring. At that time Kṛṣṇa agreed to be bound up by His mother. In other words, no one can bind Kṛṣṇa by any means other than love.



All these exhibits come from descriptions in the books of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who himself is portrayed above right, translating the Bhagavad-gītā (at Vṛndāvana's Rādhā-Dāmodara temple, just before his journey to America). Of course, as Śrīla Prabhupāda says, people today are

impatient with books; they want to make full use of their eyes and ears. So for many people, seeing a diorama will be as good as weeks of reading. Even if they see the dioramas only once, they'll never forget the experience. As Śrīla Prabhupāda also says, these dioramas are "living books."

The Advent, Exile, and Triumph of
LORD RĀMACANDRA



*From the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, translation and commentary by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda
(Adapted by Drutakarma dāsa)*

Just to attract us to His service, God appeared on earth more than one million years ago as Lord Rāmacandra—the most benevolent ruler and valiant hero the world has ever known.

The incarnations of Godhead are as numerous as the waves of the sea, yet Kṛṣṇa, the original Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the source of them all. Just as from one original candle we may light many other candles equal in potency, so Kṛṣṇa expands Himself in many incarnations, each as powerful as Himself. Each incarnation has the same objective in human society—namely, to establish the principles of religion and to destroy demonic, irreligious influences.

To accomplish this mission, the Lord once appeared as Śrī Rāmacandra, the ideal God-conscious king. The poet Vālmīki tells the full history of Lord Rāmacandra in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and the great sage Śukadeva Gosvāmī summarizes the *Rāmāyaṇa* in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. To this day people in India worship Lord Rāmacandra in thousands of temples and regard His reign—the famous “Rāma-rājya”—as the model of God-conscious government.

Lord Rāmacandra appeared in India more than one million years ago as the son of the great saintly king Mahārāja Daśaratha. Early in His life the Lord began ridding the world of unwanted, irreligious elements. In the sacrificial arena of the sage Viśvāmītra, He killed many Rākṣasas (demons). Later He married Sītā, who is actually the Goddess of Fortune (His eternal consort) and the universal mother. Lord Rāmacandra entered the assembly of kings and heroes from whom Sītā was to choose her husband. Sītā’s father, King Janaka, had declared that whoever could break the bow of Lord Śiva would win Sītā’s hand in marriage. This bow was so heavy that it took three hundred men to carry, but Lord Rāmacandra bent it and strung it and broke it in the middle, just as a baby elephant breaks a stick of sugar cane. In that way He achieved the hand of Sītā, who was equal to Him in the transcendental opulences of beauty, behavior, age, and nature.

In Vedic times it was the custom that a man could have more than one wife, and

Lord Rāmacandra, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, easily broke a bow that had taken three hundred men to carry (above right). And He bridged the Indian Ocean by floating stones (left).

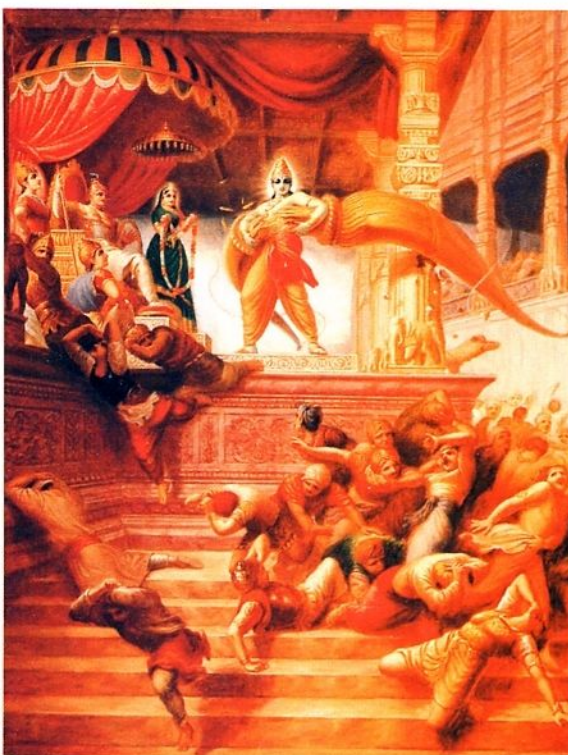


Illustration: Muralidhara dāsa

Lord Rāmacandra’s father, Mahārāja Daśaratha, had three. Since the one named Kaikeyī had served him very pleasingly, King Daśaratha had granted her a benediction. However, the prudent Kaikeyī had said she would ask for this benediction later, and the king had agreed. When the time came for the coronation of Prince Rāmacandra, who was the son of one of Kaikeyī’s co-wives, Kaikeyī requested her husband to enthrone her own son, Bharata, instead—and to send Rāmacandra to the forest. Aggrieved but nonetheless bound by his promise, Mahārāja Daśaratha ordered Rāmacandra to go to Daṇḍakāraṇya Forest for fourteen years, and the Lord, as an obedient son, followed the order immediately. He gave up His kingdom, palace, opulence, friends, and everything else. Then He went to the forest with Sītā and His brother Lakṣmana.

While wandering in Daṇḍakāraṇya Forest, Lord Rāma and His companions faced many dangers. On one occasion they encountered Śūrpaṅkhā, the sister of the ten-headed demon Rāvaṇa. Because Śūrpaṅkhā approached Him with lust, Lord Rāmacandra cut off her ears and nose. Then he annihilated her fourteen thousand demonic friends with His invincible bow and arrows.

When Rāvaṇa heard about the beautiful features of Lord Rāmacandra’s wife, Sītā, he also became agitated with lust—and he formulated a plan to kidnap her. Rāvaṇa ordered the mystic *yogī* Mārīca to assume the form of a golden deer, approach Rāmacandra’s forest

campsite, and in that way distract the Lord. By the Lord’s own arrangement, the ruse worked. When Lord Rāmacandra saw that wonderful deer, He followed it for a great distance and finally killed it. Meanwhile, seeing that both Lakṣmaṇa and Rāmacandra were out of the way, Rāvaṇa swiftly kidnapped Sītā, just as a tiger seizes unprotected sheep when the shepherd is absent.

(In this connection His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda comments, “A woman, however powerful she may be in the material world, must be given protection, for as soon as she is unprotected she will be exploited by Rākṣasas like Rāvaṇa.” According to the Vedic system, a woman must be protected at every

stage of life—first by her father, then by her husband, and finally by her grown-up sons.)

Although a large bird named Jaṭāyu tried bravely to stop Rāvaṇa’s attack, Rāvaṇa defeated him and cut one of his wings. When Lord Rāmacandra returned and found Sītā missing, He behaved as if very much distressed, and He and Lakṣmaṇa began to search for her. They came upon the dying Jaṭāyu, who told Rāmacandra how Rāvaṇa had taken Sītā. Then Lord Rāmacandra went on to kill a demon named Kabandha, and afterward He made an alliance with Sugrīva, Nīla, and Hanumān, the chiefs of the monkeys. They promised to help Him save Sītā from Rāvaṇa, who had removed her to his island kingdom of Lankā, present-day Ceylon.

Lord Rāmacandra proceeded with His monkey allies to the shore of the Indian Ocean, where He fasted for three days, awaiting the appearance of the personified ocean. When the ocean did not come, Lord Rāmacandra glanced angrily over the waters with red-hot eyes, and the ocean became so hot that all the sharks, crocodiles, and other aquatic creatures were in great distress. Finally, the personified ocean fearfully approached the Lord, fell at His lotus feet, and began to pray: “O all-pervading Supreme Person, I am dull-minded and did not understand who You were, but now I understand that You are the Supreme Person, the master of the universe, the unchanging and original Personality of Godhead. My Lord, You may

use my water as You like. You may cross it and go to the abode of Rāvaṇa. Please go kill him and thus regain Your wife, Sītā. Please construct a bridge over my waters. Upon seeing this great deed, all the exalted heroes and kings in the future will glorify You.”

Lord Rāmacandra thus ordered His mighty monkey soldiers to lop off mountain peaks—trees and all—and throw them into the water. By the Lord’s supreme will, they began to float. (This is not very remarkable. By the same supreme will, countless planets are floating in the vast ocean of space. The Lord is never limited by the laws of nature, because nature is under His complete control.) Then, to rescue Mother Sītā, Lord Rāmacandra and the monkey armies headed by Sugrīva, Nīla, and Hanumān marched across the Indian Ocean on the bridge of floating stones and launched an assault on Laṅkā, Rāvaṇa’s capital. The monkey soldiers immediately occupied all the strategic points, such as the city gates, granaries, treasuries, and assembly houses. The attack was so devastating that the entire city of Laṅkā appeared like a river disturbed by a herd of elephants.

When Rāvaṇa saw what was happening, he summoned his army of Rākṣasas and led them into a fierce battle with the forces led by Lord Rāmacandra. The Rākṣasas had all kinds of sophisticated weapons and rode proudly on elephants, horses, and chariots. However, condemned by the curse of Mother Sītā, the Rākṣasas had lost all good fortune. Thus, even though Lord Rāmacandra’s devoted monkey soldiers were armed with little more than tree trunks, huge boulders, and crude clubs, they were able to kill all of Rāvaṇa’s henchmen. Transcendental, spiritual power always defeats the power of materialistic demons. Although the monkeys’ weapons were primitive, the Lord fought on the monkeys’ side—that was the decisive factor.

When Rāvaṇa saw that his soldiers had all been killed, he became furious. The ten-headed demon boarded his mystic flower-decorated airplane and steered it toward Lord Rāmacandra, who sat on an effulgent chariot. When Rāvaṇa began shooting razor-sharp arrows at Rāmacandra, the Lord loudly rebuked him: “Rāvaṇa, you are an abominable, sinful, and shameless dog, for just as a dog steals food from the kitchen when his master is gone, so in My absence you kidnapped My wife, Sītā. Today I shall punish you without fail.”

After rebuking Rāvaṇa, Lord Rāmacandra shot an arrow that pierced his



Illustration: Caruhāsa dāsa

heart like a thunderbolt. Vomiting blood from each of his ten mouths, Rāvaṇa fell down dead from his airplane. Seeing their leader so ignominiously slain, all of Rāvaṇa’s followers cried tumultuously, “Alas! Alas! What has happened!” Then Rāvaṇa’s wife Mandodarī and the other slain Rākṣasas’ wives came out of Laṅkā, striking their breasts and crying piteously. Seeing her husband’s corpse, Mandodarī said, “My husband, you were always causing others to weep, and thus you were called Rāvaṇa. Driven by lust, you could not know Mother Sītā’s influence. But now, because of her curse, you have been destroyed by Lord Rāma. O delight of the demons, you have made your body fit to be eaten by vultures and your soul fit to go to hell!”

Thereafter, Lord Rāmacandra found Sītā sitting inside a small cottage deep within a forest of Aśoka trees. Seeing how lean and thin she had grown due to her captivity and separation from Him, the Lord felt great compassion for her and came before her. When she saw her beloved husband, her joy knew no bounds. Then Lord Rāmacandra raised Sītā onto a flower-bedecked airplane and boarded the plane Himself, along with Lakṣmaṇa, Hanumān, and Sugrīva. Together they flew back to Lord Rāmacandra’s capital, Ayodhyā. The Lord’s fourteen-year exile had ended.

As Lord Rāmacandra approached Ayodhyā, the princely order greeted Him with showers of beautiful, fragrant flowers, and common citizens offered Him garlands and danced in great jubilation. Women sung poetic prayers and professional reciters chanted His glories. Seated beside Mother Sītā on His air-

plane of flowers, Lord Rāmacandra appeared like a beautiful full moon rising amidst glowing stars and planets.

Lord Bharata had been ruling Ayodhyā in His brother Rāmacandra’s absence. When Bharata heard the news of Rāmacandra’s return to the capital, He immediately took Rāmacandra’s wooden shoes upon His own head and came forth with His retinue to receive Him. Ministers, musicians, priests, and learned *brāhmaṇas* joined the royal reception party. The musicians vibrated pleasing music while the *brāhmaṇas* loudly chanted the Vedic hymns, and beautiful horses with golden harnesses drew gaily decorated chariots. Many soldiers and servants bearing precious gifts followed in the procession. His heart melting with affection and His eyes overflowing with tears, Lord Bharata approached His brother and fell at His feet in deep ecstatic love.

After offering the wooden shoes before Lord Rāmacandra, Lord Bharata stood before Him with folded hands. Then Rāmacandra embraced Bharata for a long time, all the while bathing Him with tears of joy. Finally, Bharata fervently requested His elder brother to accept the throne, and Rāmacandra agreed.

Lord Rāmacandra began His reign as emperor by sending His brothers out to conquer the world and establish His authority. Meanwhile, He personally supervised the affairs of His kingdom for the benefit of all the citizens. In fact, He cared for the citizens exactly like a father. He saw to it that everyone observed religious principles, and as a result everyone was completely happy.

Lord Rāmacandra shot an arrow that pierced Rāvaṇa's heart like a thunderbolt (left). Now that the fourteen-year exile had ended, He and Mother Sītā returned to Ayodhyā on a flower-bedecked airplane (right).

During the reign of Lord Rāmacandra, the bountiful earth freely supplied the necessities of life for all living beings, and all physical and mental suffering—disease, old age, bereavement, lamentation, distress, fear, fatigue—were completely absent. For those who did not want it, there was even no death.

Lord Rāmacandra vowed to accept only one wife and to have no connection with any other woman. He was a *rājarsi* (saintly king) and everything in His character was perfect. Thus He taught the general public by His personal example. Especially exemplary was His behavior towards the *brāhmaṇas*, the spiritual teachers of society, who in Vedic times held a higher social position than even the ruling kings and princes. Thinking that the *brāhmaṇas*' unselfishness entitled them to possess the entire world, Lord Rāmacandra gave them all the land and wealth in His kingdom—east, west, north, and south. Upon receiving the gift, the *brāhmaṇas* were very pleased and spoke to the Lord with great affection: "O Lord, You are the master of the entire universe. What have You not given us? You have entered the core of our hearts and dissipated the darkness of our ignorance by Your effulgence. This is the supreme gift. We do not need anything else." So the *brāhmaṇas* remained satisfied with only the bare necessities of life and returned all the land to Lord Rāmacandra for Him to rule, with their blessings.

To ascertain what the citizens of Ayodhyā thought of Him, Lord Rāmacandra would sometimes walk among them incognito. One night while He was walking about in disguise, He happened to hear a foolish man of heinous character criticize Mother Sītā. To his own unchaste wife the man said, "You go to another man's house, and therefore you are unchaste and polluted. I shall not maintain you anymore. A henpecked husband like Lord Rāma may accept a wife like Sītā, who went to another man's house; but I am not henpecked like Him, and therefore I shall not accept you again." Although such talk was sheer nonsense, Lord Rāmacandra nonetheless feared that it might ruin His reputation as a religious ruler. Thus He parted from His wife, who was then with child, and she retired to the hermitage of Vālmiki Muni. After giving



Illustration: Jadurāṇi-devi dāsi

birth to two sons, Sītā absorbed herself in meditation upon the lotus feet of Lord Rāmacandra and then entered into the earth, unable to bear the separation from her beloved husband.

Upon hearing of Sītā's fate, Lord Rāmacandra was apparently overcome with grief. (Actually, the Lord can never be disturbed by any mundane emotion. In reality He felt the intense spiritual bliss of separation from the beloved, which can be experienced only on the highest transcendental platform.) Thereafter, Lord Rāmacandra observed complete celibacy and performed an uninterrupted fire sacrifice for thirteen thousand years. After completing the sacrifice, He returned to His eternal abode in Vaikuṅṭha, the spiritual sky—though He remains in the hearts of those who always think of Him. All the citizens of Ayodhyā accompanied Lord Rāmacandra to His planet, where He reigns eternally with Mother Sītā (the Goddess of Fortune), His brother Lakṣmaṇa, and His faithful monkey servant Hanumān.

Epilogue

Whereas in an age long ago Kṛṣṇa descended in the form of Rāmacandra, in the present age He has descended in the form of His holy names: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. When we chant these transcendental names according to the directions of the bona fide spiritual master, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are still present in this age. This is because the names of Kṛṣṇa and Rāma are absolute and thus non-different from Kṛṣṇa and Rāma themselves. So the holy name of Rāma has the same power as Rāma Himself to defeat the modern Rāvaṇas. As His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda says, "The kingdom of Rāma was immensely popular and beneficial, and the spreading of this Hare Kṛṣṇa movement can immediately introduce a similar situation, even in this Kali-yuga [Age of Quarrel and Hypocrisy]."

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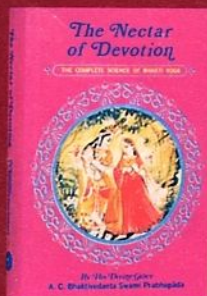
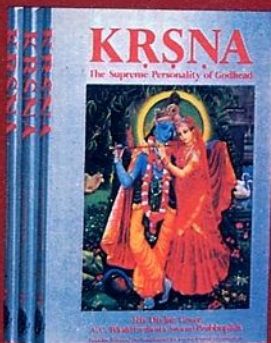
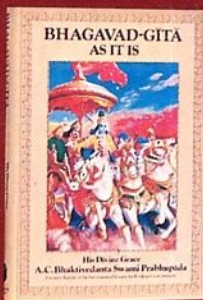
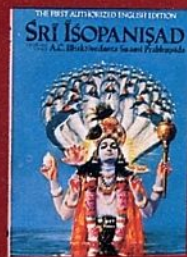
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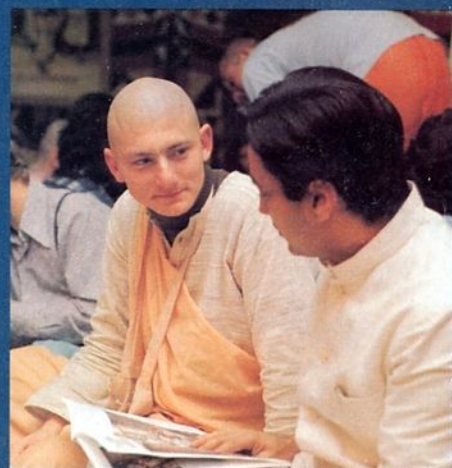
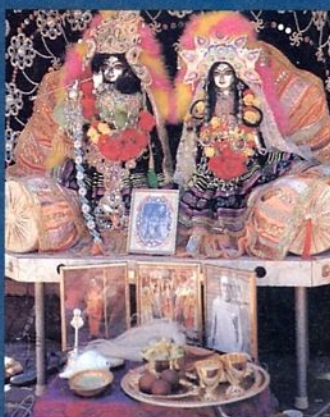
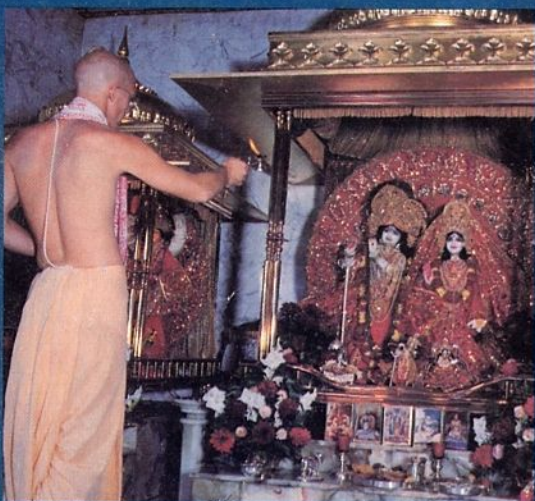
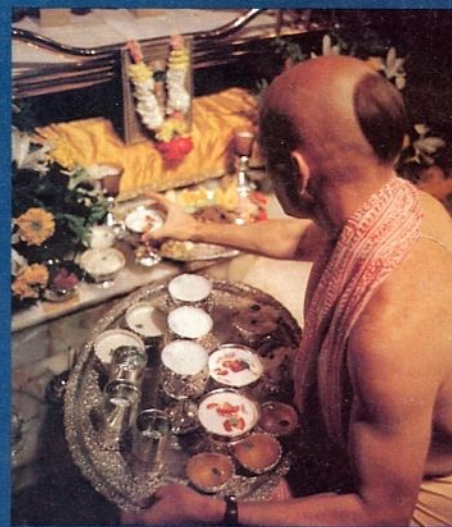
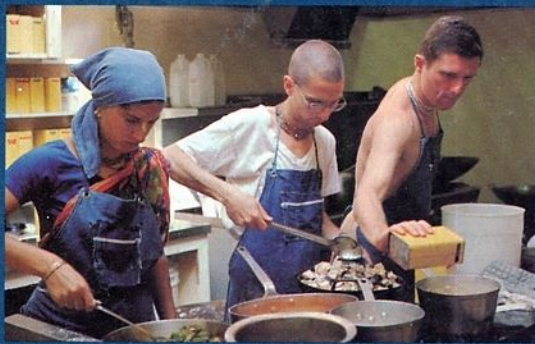
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(*Bhagavad-gītā*)



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