

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



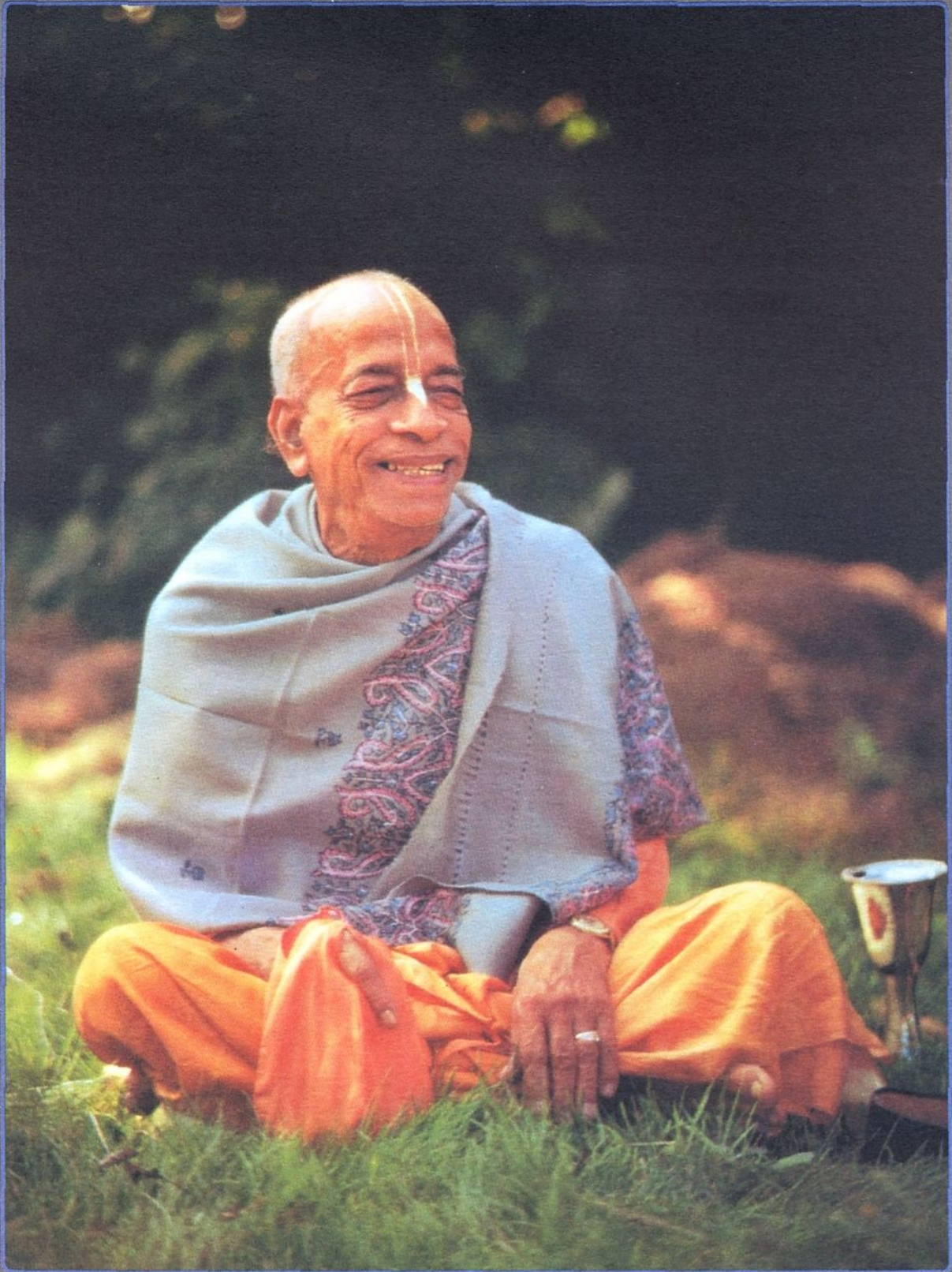
BACK TO GODHEAD



THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

No.58





**His Divine Grace
A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA**

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness



The Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is for everyone, regardless of one's religious faith, nationality, race, creed or occupation. This sound vibration is transcendental to all boundaries because it cannot be affected by material conditions; therefore anyone can chant it freely, at any time, in any place or under any circumstances. The chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare is the most simple and sublime method for realizing who God is, who we are, what the material world is, and what the relationship is between us all. *Hare* refers to the energy of the Lord. *Kṛṣṇa* and *Rāma* are names of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the reservoir of all pleasure. God, or Kṛṣṇa, is full in knowledge, He is eter-

HARE KṚṢṆA
HARE KṚṢṆA
KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA HARE HARE
HARE RĀMA
HARE RĀMA
RĀMA RĀMA HARE HARE

nal, and He is always blissful. God is absolute because His name and He Himself are nondifferent.

This spiritual knowledge is now inconceivable to us because our reasoning power has been contaminated by materialistic consciousness. By our own mental speculation we cannot transcend limited and mundane logic. But if one sincerely chants and hears the Lord's name, the Lord, who is seated in everyone's heart, will reveal His inconceivable nature. The articles in *Back to Godhead* explain this process of revelation. We humbly request you to experience life beyond the petty happiness and distress of day-to-day activities by sipping the nectar of the holy names. You have nothing to lose, and the gain is very great.



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ON THE COVER

Lord Viṣṇu, an expansion of the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, lies in mystic slumber amidst fire and huge waves that partially destroy the universe at the end of every millennium. (This is described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.)

PRONUNCIATION OF SANSKRIT WORDS

Sanskrit words and names in *Back to Godhead* are spelled according to a system accepted by scholars throughout the world which indicates the exact pronunciation of each word. Vowels in Sanskrit are pronounced almost as in Italian. The sound of the short *a* is like the *u* in *but*, the long *ā* is like the *a* in *far* and held twice as long as the short *a*, and *e* is like the *a* in *evade*. Long *ī* is like the *i* in *pique*. The vowel *ṛ* is pronounced like the *re* in the English word *fibre*. The *c* is pronounced as in the English word *chair*, and the aspirated consonants (*ch*, *jh*, *dh*, etc.) are pronounced as in *staunch*-heart, *hedge*-hog, *red*-hot, etc. The two aspirants *ś* and *ṣ* are pronounced like the English *sh*; *s* is pronounced as in *sun*. Thus Kṛṣṇa is pronounced KRISHNA, Caitanya is pronounced CHAITANYA, etc.

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WITH KRṢṢNA ON THE BATTLEFIELD OF LIFE by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

*arjuna uvāca
senayor ubhayor madhye
rathaṁ sthāpaya me 'cyuta
yāvad etān nirīkṣe 'haṁ
yoddhu-kāmān avasthitān
kair mayā saha yoddhavyam
asmin raṇa-samudyame*

“Arjuna said: O infallible one, please draw my chariot between the two armies so that I may see who is present here, who is desirous of fighting, and with whom I must contend in this great battle attempt.” (Bg. 1.21-22)

*tatrāpaśyat sthitān pārthaḥ
pitṛn atha pitāmahān
ācāryān mātulān bhrātṛn
putrān pautṛān sakhīṁs tathā
śvaśurān suhrdaś caiva
senayor ubhayor api*

“There Arjuna could see, within the midst of the armies of both parties, his fathers, grandfathers, teachers, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, friends, and also his father-in-law and well-wishers—all present there.” (Bg. 1.26)



Illustration: Yadurāṅṭ devī dāsī

Now Arjuna is facing the problem. He is facing all his relatives—his grandfathers, his uncles, sons, friends, animals, etc. Yes, there were also animals—horses and elephants—present before Arjuna on the battlefield. According to the Vedic conception, animals are also members of the family. They are considered members because they render service. It is not that we are to give protection only to one section of our family. We should not take everything from an animal and give it no protection. This is not civilization. The family includes wife, sons, daughters, cows, dogs, etc. Speaking in terms of either family or state, we should not give protection just to some members of our family and cut the throats of others.

On the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra all the members of Arjuna's family were present before him, and the problem was that he had to kill them. Since the Battle of Kurukṣetra was a family fight, some of the family members were on the other side as well as on Arjuna's side. Arjuna was even faced with his superiors, his uncles and teachers (*pitṛn, ācāryān*), for there were those who were on the platform of father and grandfather—Bhīṣmadeva and Somadatta. Even his great teacher Dronācārya was on the opposing side. Actually before fighting with Dronācārya, Arjuna cast an arrow at his lotus feet as a form of obeisance. Such was the etiquette. "My dear sir, you have taught me this fighting art. Now it is being used against you." This is duty. As for Dronācārya, he shot an arrow that grazed Arjuna's head, and he said, "My dear son, become blessed." How blessed? "By killing me. I know you will kill me, so I give you my blessing."

This material world is problematic, especially when we are involved in family, society, friendship and love. These are all entangling. In the Second Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is stated: *dehāpatya-kalatrādiṣv ātma-sainyeṣv asatsv api*. First of all the living entity has an attraction to his body, then to the offspring of the body. The individual is alone, he accepts a wife, and in this way, through the begetting of children, he expands himself. The woman is called *strī* because she helps the man expand. First the individual has affection for his own body, then the wife, then the children. In this way the individual expands his affection for the material world.

The material world means attachment; it is not required, but is a foreign thing. It is foreign because we are essentially spiritual—*ahaṁ brahmāsmi*: "I am spirit." But because we wish to lord it over material nature, Kṛṣṇa has given us these bodies. He gives a body to the great god Brahmā or to the ant—whatever one desires. If we want the body of a tiger, Kṛṣṇa will give it; if we want the body of a hog, He will give that also. And if we want the body of a demigod, like Brahmā, He will give it. If we want an American or Indian or English body, Kṛṣṇa will give it. He is so kind. A son may be disobedient to his father because he wants to enjoy something, but the father says, "All right. Take the money—anything." The father is so kind that even though he may not approve of what the son is doing, he says, "All right. You are free. Go ahead and take some money."

This material life is a concession given to us by God in order that we may gratify our material senses. Actually Kṛṣṇa does not want us to become entangled in this material world. Why does a man get married and beget children? When he is alone, he has no responsibility. Why take on the encumbrance of a wife, home, and children? Why make friends? Why go to such botheration? The answer is that we wish to enjoy. Kṛṣṇa is also a person. *Nityo nityānāṁ cetanaś cetanānāṁ*. Kṛṣṇa has produced so many children—all these living entities. Where does this idea come from that we will be happy with children, society, friendship, love, etc.? What is the origin of such an idea? It is there in Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is the origin of love. He is loving Rādhārāṇī, so the idea of love has come from Him. Whatever is within our experience is present in Kṛṣṇa; therefore Kṛṣṇa cannot be impersonal. He is a person exactly like ourselves, but the difference is that He is unlimitedly powerful.

Kṛṣṇa also wants to live peacefully with His family. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is a way of training ourselves so that we can again live within Kṛṣṇa's family. With these so-called families in the material world, we are suffering. The family idea is present in the material world, but it is only perfected in Kṛṣṇa. The family idea cannot exist unless it is present in Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is the origin of everything. What-

ever we are seeing here in this material world has its origin in Kṛṣṇa, but here it is perverted. When we see a tree, we see it standing erect, but when we see its reflection in a lake, it is upside down, topsy-turvy. Similarly, this material world is a perverted reflection of the spiritual world. It is false in the sense that it is a reflection. Those things which we see here exist in the spiritual world.

Because Arjuna was attached to society, friendship, family and love, when he was faced with his family on the battlefield, he began to shirk his duty. "Why do I have to kill my father and father-in-law?" he asked Kṛṣṇa. "My friends, my sons and grandsons, my brothers. They are all present here." It was natural that Arjuna became overwhelmed by compassion. "When the son of Kuntī, Arjuna, saw all these different grades of friends and relatives, he became overwhelmed with compassion." (Bg. 1.27) Why was Arjuna in such consciousness? The other side did not think in this way. Arjuna was thinking in this way because he was a devotee. A devotee does not like to kill anyone, not even an ant. So why should he be enticed to kill his friends? Arjuna's compassion was the result of devotional life. All Arjuna's belongings were taken away, his wife was insulted, and he was banished for thirteen years. Although he suffered so many atrocities, when the time came to kill, he was not very eager. He was ready to excuse even his greatest enemy, but Kṛṣṇa did not want this. If a devotee is insulted, the devotee may excuse his enemy, but Kṛṣṇa does not; therefore we should be careful not to insult a devotee. A devotee will excuse one, but Kṛṣṇa will not excuse. Kṛṣṇa is so strict that He cannot tolerate any insult against His devotee. Therefore the Battle of Kurukṣetra was arranged. Arjuna was saying, "Oh, let them be excused. I will not fight." But Kṛṣṇa said, "No, you must fight. You must kill them."

Arjuna, then, was in a dilemma. He did not wish to fight, but Kṛṣṇa was insisting. Arjuna was thinking, "How shall I kill my kinsmen?" This was the real problem. If we want to please Kṛṣṇa, we have to be prepared even to kill our so-called bodily relations. All Vedic civilization is arranged in such a way that we may become detached from so-called family attachment. First of all one must be a *brahmacārī*; that is, he must live the life of austerity. A

"Arjuna was saying, 'Oh, let them be excused. I will not fight!' But Kṛṣṇa said, 'No, you must fight. You must kill them.'"

brahmacārī is supposed to live in the home of the spiritual master and serve him. He may be a king's son or a very great *brāhmaṇa*'s son, but he must work as a menial servant for the spiritual master. As soon as the *brahmacārī* agrees to live with the spiritual master, he must live like a menial servant. Whatever the spiritual master orders, he must do. This is the meaning of *brahmacarya*.

Generally the *brahmacārīs* are eager to do what the spiritual master asks because they are children and begin their life of *brahmacarya* from the age of five. A child will do anything when asked. If he is asked to go from door to door and beg alms for the spiritual master, he will do so. And when a child begs food or money, one will readily give it. In this way the *brahmacārī* brings things to the spiritual master, and these things become the spiritual master's property. It is not that because the *brahmacārī* has begged, what he receives is his property. It is given to the spiritual master. After the food or whatever is prepared, the spiritual master tells the *brahmacārī*, "My son, come on. Take *prasāda*." If the spiritual master forgets to call a *brahmacārī*, the *brahmacārī* will not eat. Although the *brahmacārī* begs for the food and takes it to the spiritual master, if the spiritual master does not ask him to eat, he will not eat. He will starve. This is *brahmacārī* life.

Thus one is first trained to become austere and tolerant. He is also trained up to consider all women as his mother. Indeed, he calls all women except his sister "mother." Cāṇakya Paṇḍita has given the following definition of a learned man:

*mātrvat para-dāreṣu
para-dravyeṣu loṣṭavat
ātmavat sarva-bhūteṣu
yaḥ paśyati saḥ paṇḍitaḥ*

"He is learned who sees every woman but his wife as his mother." This is the perfection of education. One must see all women except his wife as his mother. Furthermore: "The learned man sees all others' property as no more than garbage in the street. And the learned man also thinks of other living entities as he does his own self." We can experience pleasure and pain, and by this we know that when our head is cut we are in pain. Knowing this, how can we cut off the head of an animal? This, then, is the threefold test

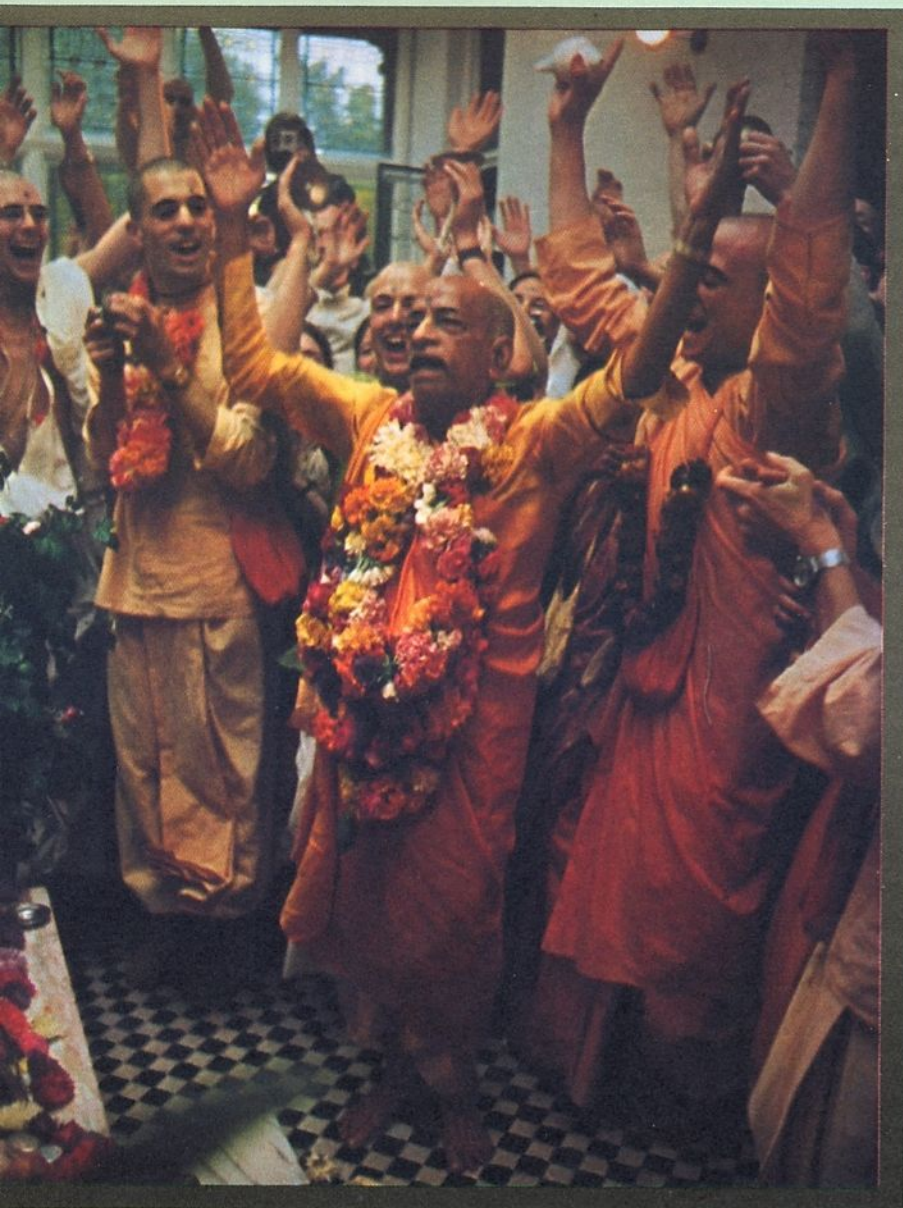


"No one but Kṛṣṇa can actually give us protection.

of education. The *paṇḍita*, or learned man, sees all women as his mother and all property as no more than garbage in the street, and he considers all living entities as he would consider himself. Unfortunately today there are no learned men.

Vedic civilization is therefore meant to enable us to cut the knot of material attachment. If we at all want to go back to Godhead, our attachment for this material world—for so-called society, friendship and love—must be severed. As long as we have a pinch of attachment for this material world, there is no possibility of going to the spiritual world. Thus by training and education

we must become detached. We have to understand the falsity of this so-called society, friendship and love. As Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, "We are being carried away by the waves of *māyā*." *Māyāra vāse, yāccha bhese', khāccha hābuḍubu, bhāi*. Just as during the rainy season we see so many trees, vegetables and other debris floating down the river, we are also floating on the waves of *māyā*. Sometimes we are drowning, sometimes we are on the surface, sometimes we are on this shore or that, but as long as we are in this material world, we are being tossed by so many currents. At one moment we may be master of some kingdom,



Therefore we must surrender unto Him."

and at the other moment we may be a dog. This is our position. Sometimes we are together, and the next moment the waves tear us asunder.

Thus we are all assembled here, tossed together by the waves of *māyā*. We are thinking, "This is my father, this is my mother, this is my brother, etc." But in actuality these are simply illusory combinations. No one is our father, no one is our mother, no one is our brother. These are all illusory and temporary combinations, but we are so much attached to such combinations that we refuse to go back home, back to Godhead. Therefore we must develop detachment from all such illusions.

If we are thinking that in this material world we will be saved through the assistance of family, society, friendship, country, politics, sociology, science, etc., we are mistaken. It is not possible to be saved in this way. Each individual has to take care of himself. Our society, friendship and country will never be able to save us. We are under the clutches of *māyā*. We have no independence, nor does anyone have the independence to save us. We may learn how to drive an airplane and go high in the sky, but if we are in danger, no other airplane can save us. Therefore we must be very careful pilots.

Thus in this material world everyone

individually has to take care of himself. Everyone must see to it that he is saved from the clutches of *māyā*. The *ācārya*, or teacher, may give one hints as to how he can be saved, but the execution is in the hands of the living entity. If we perform our spiritual duty rightly, we are saved. If the *ācārya* gives us instructions and we do not follow them, how can he save us? He can save us by his instructions and by his mercy as far as possible, but we have to take the matter in our own hands and take it seriously.

*dehāpatya-kalatrādiṣv
ātma-sainyeṣv asatsv api
teṣāṁ pramatto nidhanaṁ
paśyann api na paśyati
(Bhāg. 2.1.4)*

We are, of course, thinking that we will be protected by our family, by our sons, our fathers, our grandfathers, etc. Everyone is thinking that his nation, community, philosophy, politics, or whatever, will save him, but all these things are temporary. They come and go. One who is too much attached to society, friendship and love is actually mad. He does not see that the father who gave him protection when he was a small child is no longer giving him protection. Now one may be thinking that his sons or wife are giving him protection, but how long will this last? Actually it is only Kṛṣṇa who can give us protection, and He can give protection always. Society, friendship and love will be finished. Just as our grandfathers and fathers may be finished, so in the future our sons and grandsons will be finished. So no one but Kṛṣṇa can actually give us protection. Therefore we must surrender to Him.

*sarva-dharmān parityajya
mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpēbhyo
mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

"Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reaction. Do not fear." (Bg. 18.66)

Again, Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, *kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati*: "O son of Kuntī, declare it boldly that My devotee never perishes." (Bg. 9.31) The best course, therefore, is to take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, fully surrender to Kṛṣṇa, and in this way be protected. Otherwise, there is no protection; we will be carried away by the waves of *māyā*. ❧

CLASSES IN THE SCIENCE OF GOD

“This beautiful *Bhāgavatam* is sufficient in itself for God realization.

As soon as one attentively and submissively hears the message of *Bhāgavatam*, he becomes attached to the Supreme Lord.”
(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.2) |

Every day, each of our Kṛṣṇa consciousness centers holds an early-morning class in which a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is read and discussed. The book *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is a Vedic literature. Therefore, the subject matter is always the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa. In the *Bhāgavatam* class there is no discussion of mundane topics concerning the temporary material world. Anyone who regularly takes part in hearing the *Bhāgavatam* in the association of devotees will experience a cleansing of all inauspicious things from his heart.

Our problem is that although we are eternal spiritual souls, we have identified ourselves with our temporary material bodies. In other words, we have forgotten who we really are. Most people think they are their material bodies—that is the inauspicious misconception that clouds our hearts. We have forgotten Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, and we have forgotten our eternal relationship with Him. But one can revive that lost relationship and regain his original nature of eternity, bliss and knowledge—just by hearing about Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhāgavatam* class.

Regardless of one’s material designation, he should hear about Kṛṣṇa. One should not object, “I am a Christian. I cannot hear about Kṛṣṇa,” or “I am a Jew. I cannot chant the verses of the *Bhāgavatam*.” Because Kṛṣṇa is universal, He is transcendental to all designations. I have taken my birth in a certain race, a certain nation, a certain religious sect, a certain family—but that pertains to my material body, which I am not. Spiritually I am transcendental to all temporary designations. I am an eternal servant of God. One should revive such pure consciousness, beyond the scope of ethnic culture and sectarian religion, by hearing the transcendental message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

When conducting *Bhāgavatam* classes, the devotees begin by chanting a Sanskrit verse out loud. This is the same Sanskrit, word for word, that was originally composed 5,000 years ago by Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa who compiled all the millions of verses of the Sanskrit Vedic literature. The sound of congregational chanting of the *Bhāgavatam* is transcendental, and purification takes place even for a hearer who does not understand a word of Sanskrit. These verses are sometimes compared to gold. Even in the hands of a child who knows nothing of its worth, gold is always valuable. Similarly, the transcendental sound vibration will always act to purify its hearers.

Before chanting the verse, the leader first chants the mantra “*om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya*.” This is an invocation of the Supreme Lord and is translated, “I offer my obeisances unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is all-pervading.” The chanting is responsive—the leader chants, and the congregation repeats. This hearing and chanting engage two important senses—

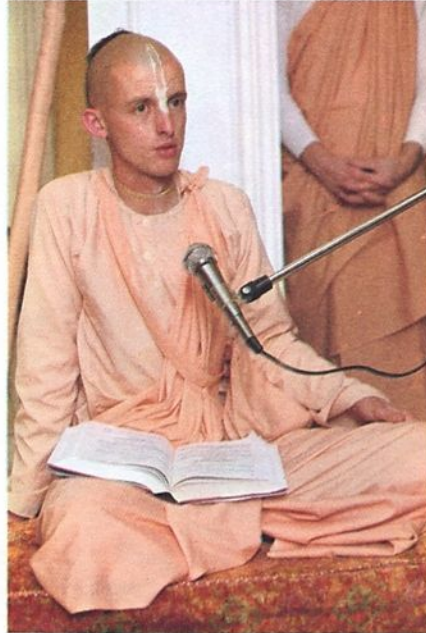
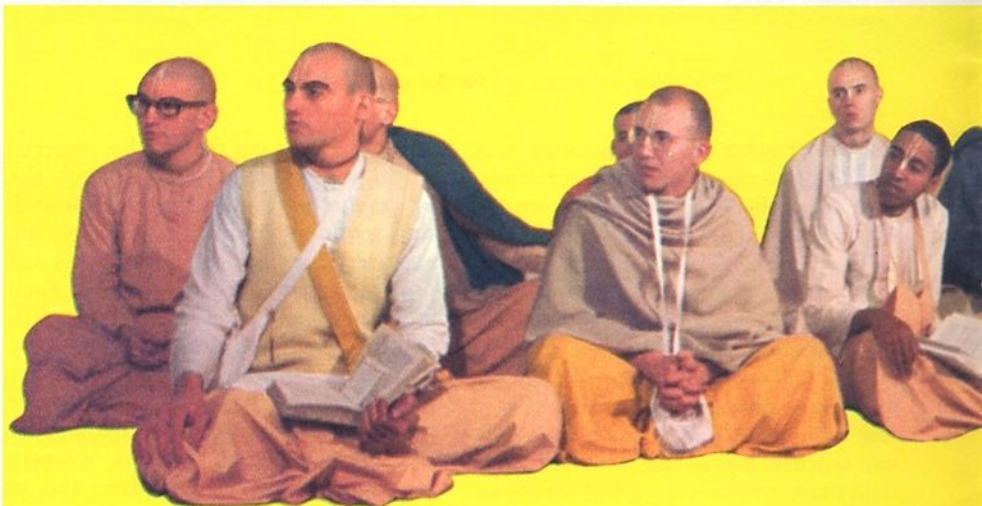


Photo: Murairivadaṇa dāsa

by SATSVARŪPA DĀSA GOSVĀMĪ



the ear and the tongue—and thus the restless mind is captured, and one can think of Kṛṣṇa, the goal of life.

Here follows a Sanskrit verse from the *Bhāgavatam* (First Canto, Chapter Two, verse 18). At first glance it may seem no more than a jumble of foreign words, but actually it is not foreign. We humbly request you to try pronouncing the words, aided by the Sanskrit pronunciation guide found on page 2 of this magazine.

*naṣṭa-prāyeṣv abhadreṣu
nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā
bhagavatī uttama-śloke
bhaktir bhavati naiṣṭhikī*

The English translation of each word is expertly rendered by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda:

naṣṭa—destroyed; *prāyeṣu*—almost to nil; *abhadreṣu*—all that is inauspicious; *nityaṁ*—regularly; *bhāgavata*—Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, or the pure devotee; *sevayā*—by serving; *bhagavatī*—unto the Personality of Godhead; *uttama*—transcendental; *śloke*—prayers; *bhaktiḥ*—loving service; *bhavati*—comes into being; *naiṣṭhikī*—irrevocable.

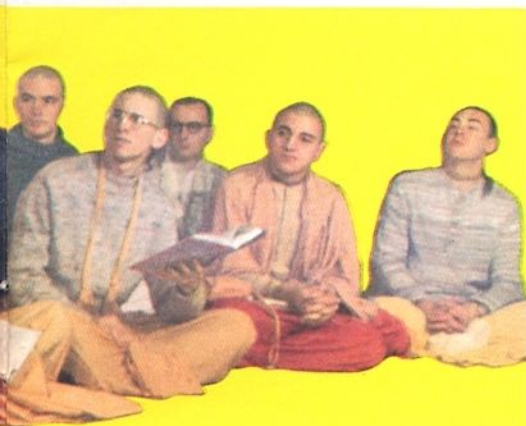


Photo: Bhārgava dāsa

Śrīla Prabhupāda has made all these literatures available as a service to humanity because by hearing Kṛṣṇa's message one can be freed from bondage to ignorance and repeated birth and death. Here is his English translation and purport of the Sanskrit verse.

TRANSLATION

“By regularly hearing the *Bhāgavatam* and rendering service unto the pure devotee, all that is troublesome to the heart is practically destroyed, and loving service unto the glorious Lord, who is praised with transcendental songs, is established as an irrevocable fact.”

PURPORT

“Here is the remedy for eliminating all inauspicious things within the heart which are considered to be obstacles in the path of self-realization. The remedy is the association of the *Bhāgavatas*. There are two types of *Bhāgavatas*, namely the book *Bhāgavata* [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam] and the devotee *Bhāgavata* [a pure devotee of the Lord]. Both the *Bhāgavatas* are competent remedies, and both of them or either of them can be good enough to eliminate the obstacles. A devotee *Bhāgavata* is as good as the book *Bhāgavata*, and the book *Bhāgavata* is full of information about the Personality of Godhead and His pure devotees. *Bhāgavata* book and person are identical.

“The devotee *Bhāgavata* is a direct representative of Bhagavān, the Personality of Godhead. So by pleasing the devotee *Bhāgavata* one can receive the benefit of the book *Bhāgavata*. Human reason fails to understand how by serving the devotee *Bhāgavata* or the book *Bhāgavata* one gets gradual promotion on the path of devotion. But actually these are facts explained by Śrīla Nārādadeva, who happened to be a maidservant's son in his previous life. The maidservant was engaged in the menial service of the sages, and thus he also came into contact with

them. And simply by associating with them and accepting the remnants of foodstuff left by the sages, the son of the maidservant got the chance to become the great devotee and personality Śrīla Nārādadeva. These are the miraculous effects of the association of *Bhāgavatas*. And to understand these effects practically, it should be noted that by such sincere association of the *Bhāgavatas* one is sure to receive transcendental knowledge very easily, and the result is that he becomes fixed in the devotional service of the Lord. The more progress is made in devotional service under the guidance of the *Bhāgavatas*, the more one becomes fixed in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. The messages of the book *Bhāgavata*, therefore, have to be received from the devotee *Bhāgavata*, and the combination of these two *Bhāgavatas* will help the neophyte devotee to make progress on and on.”

After reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's purport, his natural commentary on the verse, the devotee conducting the class will discuss the topic of that particular verse. All such discussion is exactly in accord with the authorized version presented by the spiritual master, who is coming in disciplic succession from Kṛṣṇa Himself. But each Sanskrit word is such a treasure house of meaning that a devotee can expound on the subject infinitely, without deviating from the conclusion of the disciplic succession. This assures the audience that the original truth, as first revealed by Kṛṣṇa, is being exactly repeated with all its purity and potency intact.

The essential activity of life is to glorify Kṛṣṇa, whose glorious activities can be understood properly from the book *Bhāgavata* and the person *Bhāgavata*. Glorification of Kṛṣṇa, which is beneficial for all living beings, is performed by a devotee. In his purports to the prayers of King Kulaśekhara, Śrīla Prabhupāda has written, “A devotee of Godhead is he who glorifies the Personality of Godhead under the dic-

tation of transcendental ecstasy. This ecstasy is a by-product of profound love for the Supreme which is attained by the process of glorification." In other words, if one begins at once, even as a neophyte, to glorify Kṛṣṇa as one has heard such glorification from his spiritual master, that will revive one's original love for the Supreme Lord. Glorification is a natural principle of life, but now we are turning our attention away from all false glorification and here attempting to describe the philosophy and activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Kṛṣṇa Himself advises Arjuna to remember Him as being always a person.

"One should meditate upon the Supreme Person as the one who knows everything, as He who is the oldest, who is the controller, who is smaller than the smallest, who is the maintainer of everything, who is beyond all material conception, who is inconceivable, and who is always a person. He is luminous like the sun and, being transcendental, is beyond this material nature." (*Bhāgavad-gītā*, 8.9)

Our spiritual master has told us of a poetic couplet he wrote that very

much pleased his own spiritual master, His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja: "The Absolute is sentient, thou hast proved./ Impersonal calamity thou hast removed." God, or Kṛṣṇa, is a person. He is not void or impersonal. God is a person, just as all the numberless living entities are. He is eternal and full of bliss, and in their original spiritual nature, all living entities share that eternal, blissful nature. But the difference is vast. Kṛṣṇa is maintaining all others. All are fed by the One. For example, it is not man who provides the food for the elephants in the jungle, nor does man provide for the ants. That is done by God. He maintains everything, and He is the Supreme Person. He is the chief and original person, and we are His subordinate parts and parcels. The simultaneous oneness and difference between Kṛṣṇa and all others can be explained by the following example. I am one with the President of the United States because we are both humans and both Americans, but the difference is that he is the chief American, whereas I am a subordinate. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Person, and everyone else is subordinate to Him.

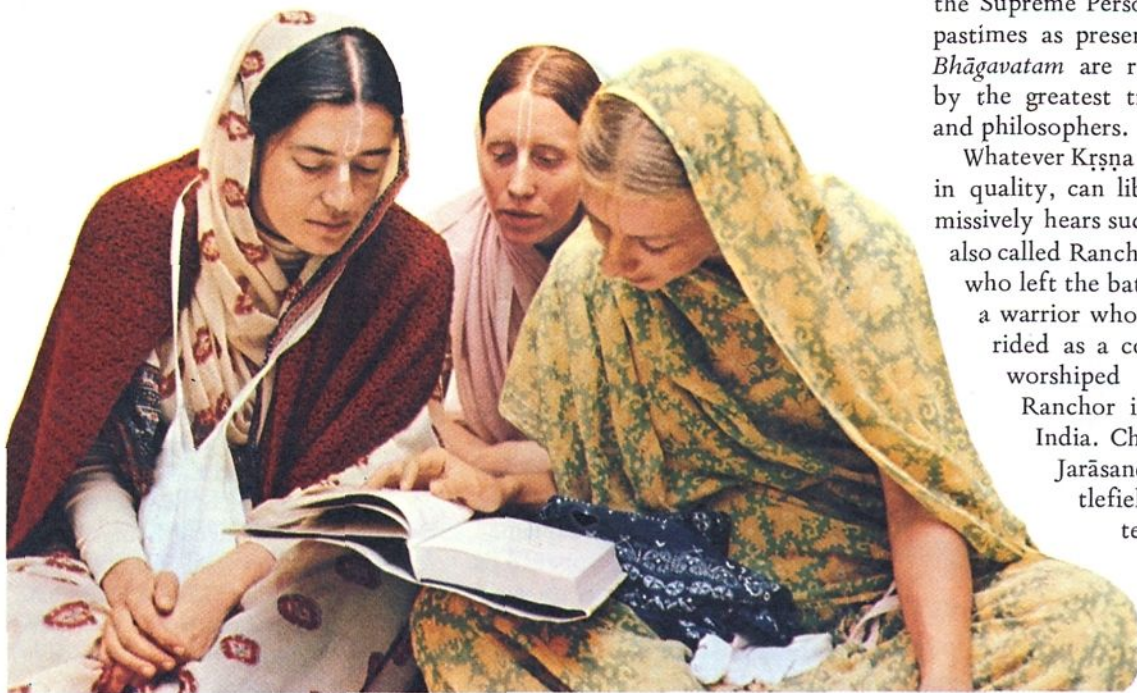
Considering that Lord Kṛṣṇa is vastly more powerful than anyone and

that He is a person, one should recognize that His personal activities must be extraordinary. There is one verse in the Second Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* where Kṛṣṇa in His incarnation of Lord Rāma is described as becoming so angry that His very glance generated burning heat in the ocean, causing fear to the fish and crocodiles. No one can be angry like the Lord. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is made up of thousands of such verses describing the transcendental philosophy and superhuman activities of the Supreme Person.

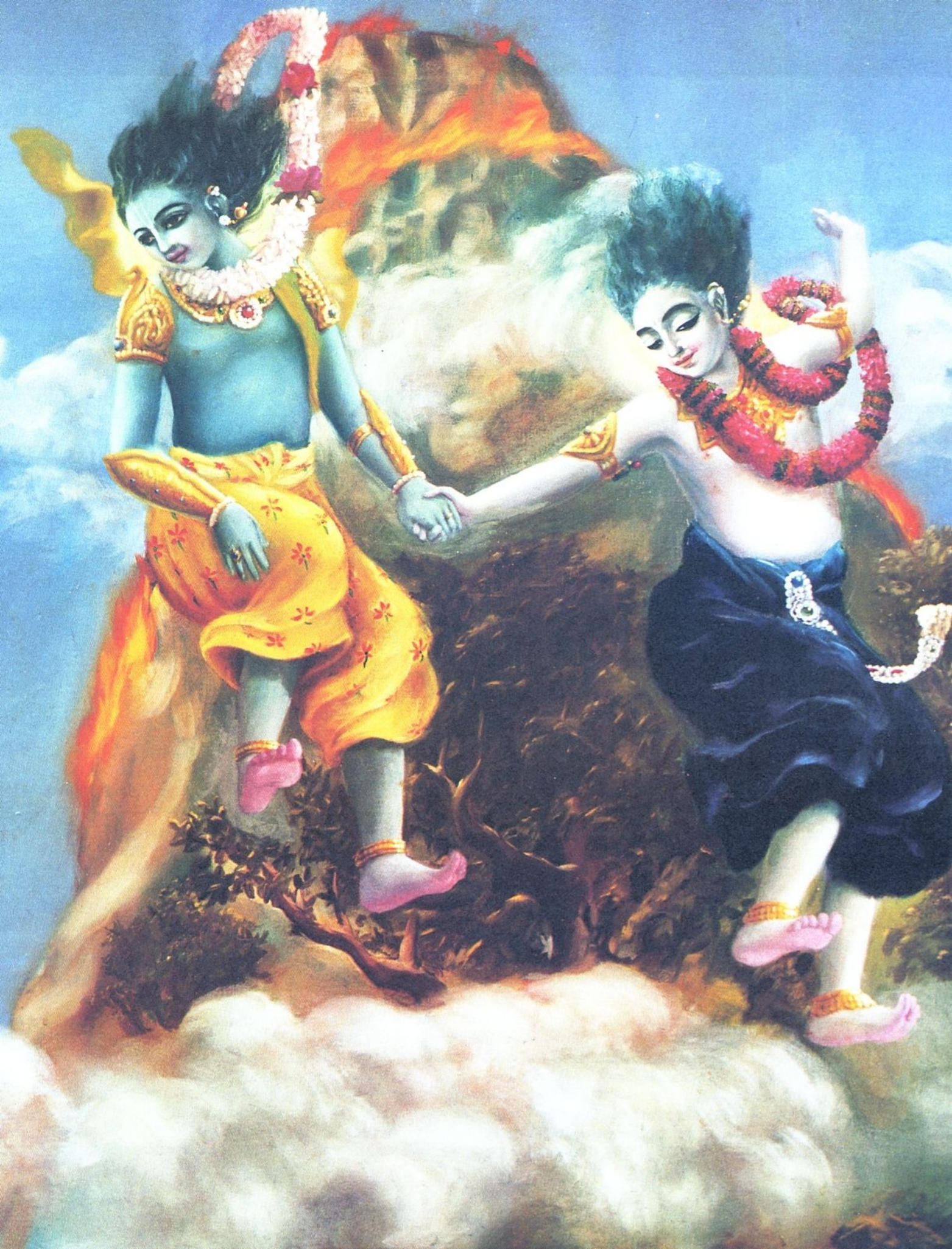
In another canto of the *Bhāgavatam* it is described that Kṛṣṇa in His original form married 16,000 wives and that He expanded into 16,000 Kṛṣṇas to act as an attentive husband to each. One who knows the spiritual science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness can understand how such acts are possible for God. Kṛṣṇa expands Himself, by His feature called Supersoul, in the heart of every living creature, and as Supersoul He supplies everyone with memory, intelligence and forgetfulness. Therefore, since Kṛṣṇa is in the hearts of all the countless living entities, it was not very difficult for Him to come out of the hearts of 16,000 women who were His great devotees and marry them. But only God can do such things. Some people call Kṛṣṇa's activities mythology, but they are facts. God is the Supreme Person, and His personal pastimes as presented in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are recited and glorified by the greatest transcendental poets and philosophers.

Whatever Kṛṣṇa does, being absolute in quality, can liberate whoever submissively hears such pastimes. Kṛṣṇa is also called Ranchor, which means "He who left the battlefield." Ordinarily a warrior who leaves a battle is derided as a coward, but Kṛṣṇa is worshiped in His feature as Ranchor in many temples in India. Chased by the demon Jarāsandha, Kṛṣṇa left a battlefield because He had to tend to another pastime, which also involved fighting with armies, to rescue His chief queen, Rukmiṇī.

Photo: Bhārgava dāsa



"Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma leaped from the mountain. No one can perform such feats but the Supreme Personality of Godhead."



At that time Kṛṣṇa and His brother, Balarāma, fled from the demon to the top of a high mountain. Jarāsandha set the mountain on fire, and Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma leaped down from the mountain, which was eighty-eight miles high. No one can perform such feats but the Supreme Personality of Godhead. There are no activities within our experience that can compare to His pastimes.

Of course, God can jump eighty-eight billion miles if He so desires. As stated in the *Īsopaniṣad*, "The Personality of Godhead is more swift than the mind and can overcome all others running." In His incarnation of Vāmana, the Lord covered the entire universe in three steps. The Lord's personal form has a bodily effulgence called the *brahmajyoti*, and in that light all the planets are sustained. One time, Lord Brahmā, seeing Kṛṣṇa engaged in His pastimes as a cowherd boy, doubted that He was God. He challenged and played a trick on Kṛṣṇa by stealing His cowherd friends and cows. Kṛṣṇa then proved Himself by manifesting the whole universe within His body, and Brahmā fell down dumbstruck. At that time, Lord Brahmā admitted: "You appear like a boy, but I know You are God. Your body has inconceivable potency."

We must therefore come to understand Kṛṣṇa's supremacy in His form as a cowherd boy holding a flute in His two hands. Sometimes people formally profess, "Yes, God is unlimited," but when the Supreme Lord comes to this world to give even a small indication of His limitless nature, foolish people deride Him. "No," they say, "He couldn't have lifted Govardhana Hill. He can't appear in the brass Deity. He can't appear in the chanting of His name." People who think like this have a poor fund of knowledge. They know that they themselves cannot lift a hill, so they think that it must be impossible for God also.

The philosophers of the impersonal school do not believe that God is a person who has His own eternal activities. When they hear about Rāmacandra's eyes' burning red-hot in anger, they take this description to be material. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "They want to see negation in perfection." This

means that the impersonalist has a negative idea of spirit as no more than the opposite of matter. Because in this miserable material world there is a variety of people, activities, eating, talking, singing and so forth, they take it that spirit must be devoid of all variety and personality. They want to make everything zero, and they think this to be perfection. They take the Absolute Truth to be a kind of blank or void. But this idea of the Supreme is not supported by the version of the Vedic literature. Throughout the whole of the Vedic scriptures we hear that Lord Viṣṇu, Lord Kṛṣṇa, is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the eternal source of everything. There is no void anywhere in His creation.

The impersonalists' goal is to lose their personal identities and merge as one with the divine "white light," the *brahmajyoti*. But, as we have explained, that effulgent light is only an aspect of Kṛṣṇa's supreme personality, and it is subordinate to Him. Nor can a living entity do away with his individual personality because, like the Supreme Lord, we are eternal persons. The impersonalist philosopher is fearful of real spiritual life because of his bitter experience with personal varieties in material life. He is like a man who has been ill in a hospital for a long time and who, when told that one day he will recover his health, eat normally and have many pleasurable activities, does not believe it because of experiencing only misery for so long.

But factually there is healthy, normal life. There is an eternal, blissful life of variety and personality in loving service to the Supreme Person. Certainly the activities and relationships of this material world are false because they are impermanent, but eternal truth is not void, zero or without variety. The Personality of Godhead has His own abode in the spiritual world, and it is described that "once going there, one never has to return to this world of birth and death." We can qualify to go there and enjoy with Kṛṣṇa in His eternal, blissful activities.

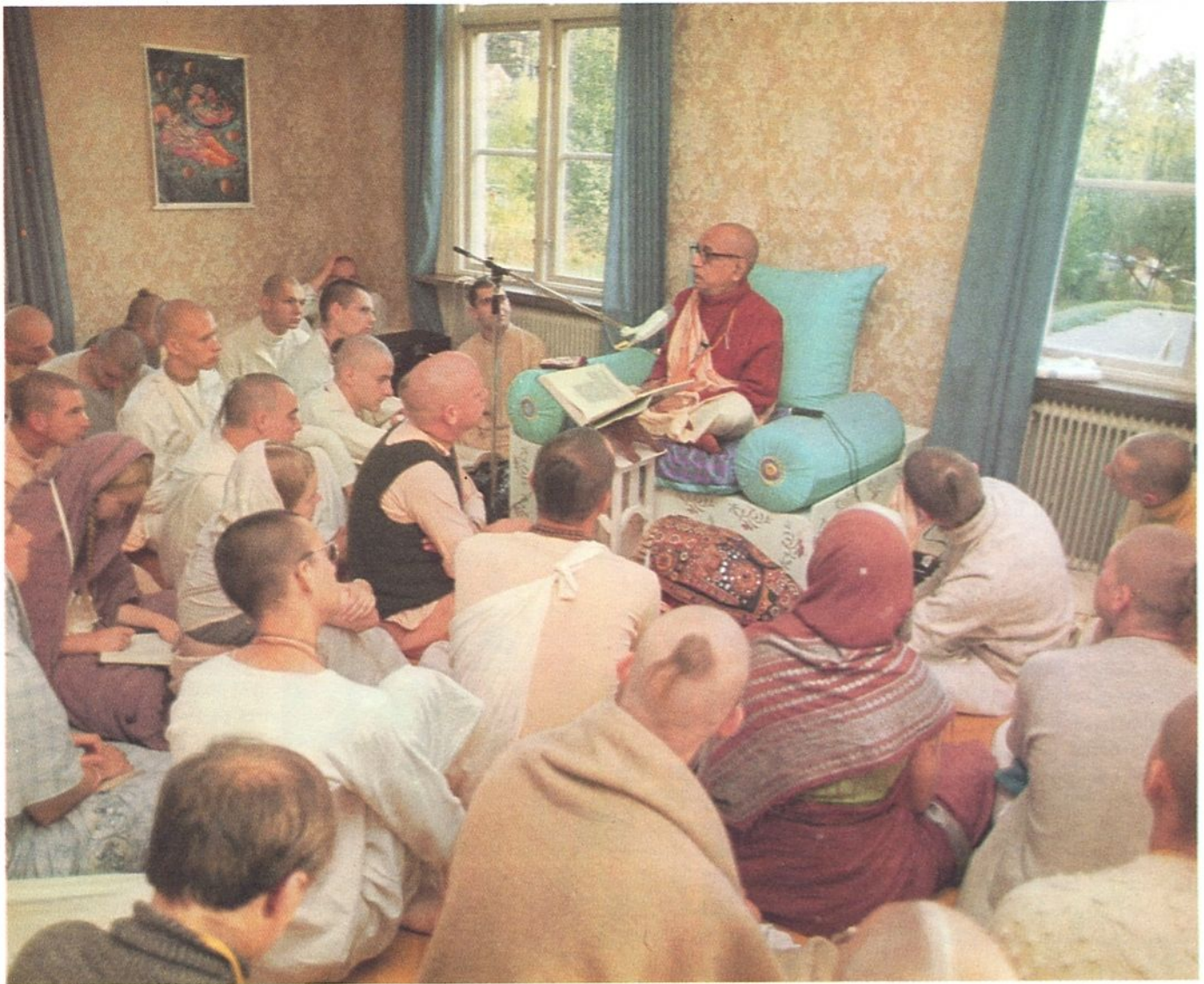
The best method for getting rid of all confusion about actual spiritual life is to hear the authorized version of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The purpose of

holding the *Bhāgavatam* class is to facilitate such hearing. One's attraction for fleeting material pleasures will diminish as one hears about the pastimes of the Supreme Person with His pure devotees. All confusion about the nature of God and the living entity will be cleared up as one hears Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy from great authorities.

It is extremely important that one hear *Bhāgavatam* from the right person, a bona fide spiritual master. If one tries to understand the pastimes of the incarnations of Godhead on his own, or if he is misled by a mundane academic scholar, he will come to the wrong conclusion and think that God is an ordinary man or that God is impersonal.

But who is the bona fide spiritual master from whom we must hear? Lord Kṛṣṇa describes in *Bhāgavad-gītā* that one must "approach a spiritual master and inquire from him. . . because he has seen the truth. And when you have thus learned the truth, you will know that all living beings are but part of Me—and that they are in Me, and are Mine." (Bg. 4.34-35) Therefore a spiritual master is one who teaches that Kṛṣṇa is supreme and that we are His eternal servitors. Such a teacher carries the message of Kṛṣṇa as it is. Kṛṣṇa says, "Surrender to Me." Therefore, the spiritual master does not misinterpret or change the meaning by saying, "Don't surrender to Kṛṣṇa. You are as good as Kṛṣṇa. Forget Kṛṣṇa." There is a system of checks and balances. What the spiritual master says is also stated in the scripture and upheld by the disciplic succession of bona fide teachers. For example, Kṛṣṇa first spoke the truth of the *Bhāgavatam* to the first living entity, Brahmā, who in turn spoke it to Nārada. Nārada spoke it to Vyāsadeva, who spoke it to Śukadeva. In this way it has come down to the present age, and Śrīla Prabhupāda, our spiritual master, is a bona fide teacher in this direct succession from Kṛṣṇa.

In *Bhāgavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa further describes the person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness in answer to Arjuna's question, "What does a person in Transcendence



His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda delivers the purifying message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to a small group of disciples in the recently opened Kṛṣṇa consciousness center in Stockholm, Sweden.

look like? How does he speak, and how does he walk?" Kṛṣṇa describes that such a person is not agitated by the happiness or distress of this material world. He controls his senses by fixing his consciousness upon the Personality of Godhead. Great spiritual masters like Brahmā, Nārada and Vyāsa are liberated from material desires, and therefore their desire to speak of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes proves that the Lord's pastimes are not material. Such liberated spiritual masters are not interested in telling fictional stories. Their meditation upon Kṛṣṇa is accepted as meditation upon the highest transcendental truth.

Lord Brahmā prays to Kṛṣṇa as fol-

lows: "My conclusion is, therefore, that You are the Supreme Soul, Absolute Truth, and the supreme original person; and although You have expanded Yourself in so many Viṣṇu forms, or in living entities and energies, by Your inconceivable transcendental potencies, You are the supreme one without a second. You are the supreme Supersoul."

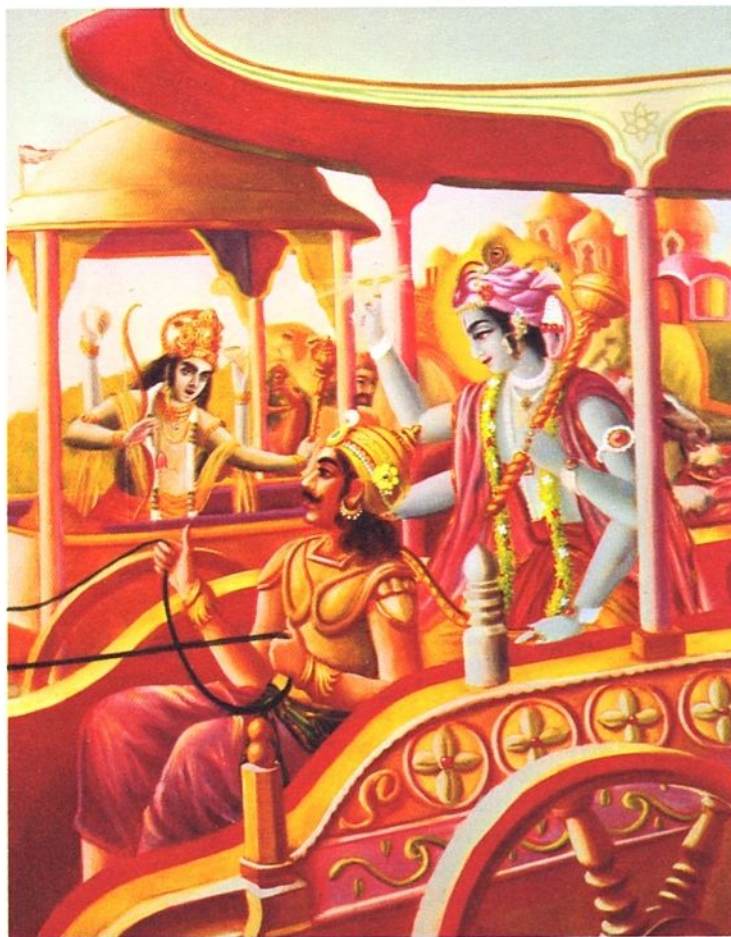
Such spiritual masters go everywhere just to speak to people about the glories of Kṛṣṇa. And although Kṛṣṇa is self-satisfied, He is always most pleased by His devotees. Therefore Kṛṣṇa says that one should not be puffed up by his own accomplishments, but should humbly approach a devotee

and hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from him. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda has introduced to the West this timeless process of hearing about Kṛṣṇa, and many sincere men and women have changed their lives and become devotees just by hearing the *Bhāgavatam*. Now Śrīla Prabhupāda's authorized disciples are conducting *Bhāgavatam* classes all over the world, in schools, universities, public festivals—everywhere. If people will simply give a submissive ear, the potent transcendental messages of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* can immediately clear all inauspicious conditions from the face of the earth. ❧

GOD OF THE FOOLS

by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

As in the present day, throughout history many cheaters have falsely claimed to be incarnations of God, and naive followers have acclaimed them. This excerpt from Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Kṛṣṇa Book* tells of the fate of one such fraudulent incarnation.



THE STORY OF KING Pauṇḍraka is very interesting because there have always been many rascals and fools who have considered themselves God. Even in the presence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, there

was such a foolish person. His name was Pauṇḍraka, and he wanted to declare himself God. While Lord Balarāma was absent in Vṛndāvana, this King Pauṇḍraka, the King of the Karūṣa province, being foolish and puffed up, sent a messenger to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa is accepted as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and King Pauṇḍraka directly challenged Kṛṣṇa through the messenger, who stated that Pauṇḍraka, and not Kṛṣṇa, was Vāsudeva [the Supreme Lord]. In the present day there are many foolish followers of such rascals. Similarly, in his day, many foolish men accepted Pauṇḍraka as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Because he could not estimate his own position, Pauṇḍraka falsely thought himself to be Lord Vāsudeva. Thus the mes-

senger declared to Kṛṣṇa that out of his causeless mercy, King Pauṇḍraka, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, had descended on the earth just to deliver all distressed persons.

Surrounded by many foolish persons, this rascal Pauṇḍraka had actually concluded that he was Vāsudeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This kind of conclusion is certainly childish. When children are playing, they sometimes create a king amongst themselves, and the child so selected thinks that he is the king. Similarly, many foolish persons, due to ignorance, select another fool as God, and then the rascal considers himself God, as if God could be created by childish play or by the votes of men. Under this false impression, thinking himself the Supreme Lord, Pauṇḍraka sent his messenger to Dvārakā to challenge the position of Kṛṣṇa. The messenger reached the royal assembly of Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā and conveyed the message given by his master,

Pauṇḍraka. The message contained the following statements.

“I am the only Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva. There is no man who can compete with me. I have descended as King Pauṇḍraka, taking compassion on the distressed conditioned souls out of my unlimited causeless mercy. You have falsely taken the position of Vāsudeva without authority, but You should not propagate this false idea. You must give up Your position. O descendant of the Yadu dynasty, please give up all the symbols of Vāsudeva which You have falsely assumed. And after giving up this position, come and surrender unto me. If out of Your gross impudence You do not care for my words, then I challenge You to fight. I am inviting You to a battle in which the decision will be settled.”

When all the members of the royal assembly heard this message sent by Pauṇḍraka, they laughed very loudly for a considerable time. After enjoying the loud laughter of all the members of the assembly, Kṛṣṇa replied to the messenger as follows. “O messenger of Pauṇḍraka, you may carry My message to your master: He is a foolish rascal. I directly call him a rascal, and I refuse to follow his instructions. I shall never give up the symbols of Vāsudeva, especially My disc. I shall use this disc to kill not only King Pauṇḍraka but all his followers also. I shall destroy this Pauṇḍraka and his foolish associates, who merely constitute a society of cheaters and cheated. When this action is taken, foolish King, you will have to conceal your face in disgrace, and when your head is severed from your body by My disc, it will be surrounded by meat-eating birds like vultures, hawks and eagles. At that time, instead of becoming My shelter as you have demanded, you will be subjected to the mercy of these low-born birds. At that time your body will be thrown to the dogs, who will eat it with great pleasure.”

The messenger carried the words of Lord Kṛṣṇa to his master, Pauṇḍraka, who patiently heard all these insults. Without waiting longer, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa immediately started out on His chariot to punish the rascal Pauṇḍraka. Because at that time the King of Karūṣa was living with his friend the King of Kāśī, Kṛṣṇa surrounded the whole city of Kāśī.

King Pauṇḍraka was a great warrior, and as soon as he heard of Kṛṣṇa’s attack, he came out of the city along with two *akṣauhīṇī* divisions of soldiers. The King of Kāśī was also a friend to King Pauṇḍraka, and he came out with three *akṣauhīṇī* divisions.¹ When the two kings came before Lord Kṛṣṇa to oppose Him, Kṛṣṇa saw Pauṇḍraka face to face for the first time. Kṛṣṇa saw that Pauṇḍraka had decorated himself with the symbols of the conchshell, disc, lotus and club. He carried the Śārṅga bow, and on his chest was the insignia of Śrīvatsa.² His neck was decorated with a false Kaustubha jewel, and he wore a flower garland in exact imitation of Lord Vāsudeva. He was dressed in yellow colored silken garments, and the flag on his chariot carried the symbol of Garuḍa, exactly imitating Kṛṣṇa’s. He had a very valuable helmet on his head, and his earrings, like swordfish, glittered brilliantly. On the whole, however, his dress and makeup were clearly imitation. Anyone could understand that he was just like someone onstage playing the part of Vāsudeva in false dress. When Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa

saw Pauṇḍraka imitating His posture and dress, He could not check His laughter, and thus He laughed with great satisfaction.

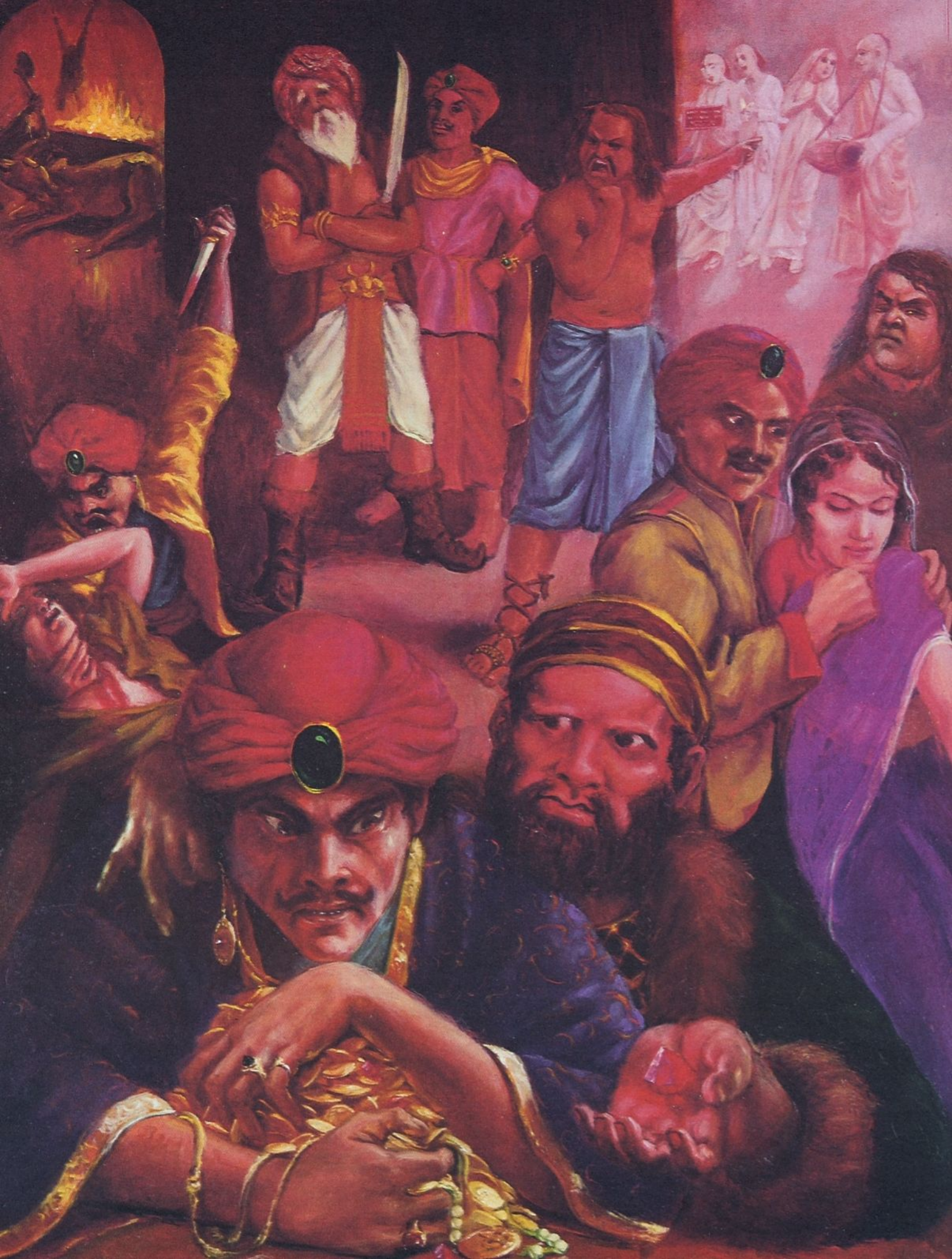
The soldiers on the side of King Pauṇḍraka began to shower their weapons upon Kṛṣṇa. The weapons, including various kinds of tridents, clubs, poles, lances, swords, daggers and arrows, came flying in waves, and Kṛṣṇa counteracted them. He smashed not only the weapons but also the soldiers and assistants of Pauṇḍraka, just as during the dissolution of this universe the fire of devastation burns everything to ashes. The elephants, chariots, horses, and infantry belonging to the opposite party were scattered by the weapons of Kṛṣṇa. The whole battlefield became scattered with the bodies of animals and chariots. There were fallen horses, elephants, men, asses and camels. Although the devastated battlefield appeared like the dancing place of Lord Śiva at the time of the dissolution of the world, the warriors who were on the side of Kṛṣṇa were very much encouraged by seeing this, and they fought with greater strength.

At this time, Lord Kṛṣṇa told Pauṇḍraka, “Pauṇḍraka, you requested Me to give up the symbols of Lord Viṣṇu, specifically My disc. Now I will give it up to you. Be careful! You falsely declare yourself to be Vāsudeva, imitating Myself. Therefore no one is a greater fool than you.” From this statement of Kṛṣṇa’s it is clear that any rascal who advertises himself as God is the greatest fool in human society. Kṛṣṇa continued: “Now, Pauṇḍraka, I shall force you to give up this false representation. You wanted Me to surrender unto you. Now this is your opportunity. We shall now fight, and if I am defeated and you become victorious, I shall certainly surrender unto you.” In this way, after rebuking Pauṇḍraka very severely, He smashed his chariot to pieces by shooting an arrow. With the help of His disc He separated the head of Pauṇḍraka from his body, just as Indra shaves off the peaks of mountains by striking them with his thunderbolt. Similarly, He also killed the King of Kāśī with His arrows. Lord Kṛṣṇa specifically arranged to throw the head of the King of Kāśī into the city of Kāśī itself so that his relatives and family members could see it. Kṛṣṇa did this just as a hurricane carries a lotus petal here and there. Lord Kṛṣṇa killed Pauṇḍraka and his friend Kāśīrāja on the battlefield, and then He returned to His capital city, Dvārakā.

When Lord Kṛṣṇa returned to the city of Dvārakā, all the Siddhas from the heavenly planets were singing the glories of the Lord. As far as Pauṇḍraka was concerned, somehow or other he was always thinking of Lord Vāsudeva by falsely dressing himself in that way, and therefore Pauṇḍraka achieved *sārūpya*, one of the five kinds of liberation, and was thus promoted to the Vaikuṅṭha planets, where the devotees have the same bodily features as Viṣṇu, with four hands holding the four symbols. Factually, his meditation was concentrated on the Viṣṇu form of Kṛṣṇa, but because he thought himself to be Lord Viṣṇu, it was offensive. After being killed by Kṛṣṇa, however, that offense was also mitigated. Thus he was given *sārūpya* liberation, and he attained the same form as the Lord. ❧

1. An *akṣauhīṇī* phalanx consists of 21,870 chariots, 21,870 elephants, 106,950 infantrymen and 65,600 cavalrymen.

2. These are all ornaments of Lord Kṛṣṇa.



Sense Gratification: THE OPIATE OF THE PEOPLE

by Bahulāśva dāsa
(ISKCON Mexico City)

nidrayā hriyate naktam
vyavāyena ca vā vayah
divā cārthehayā rājan
kuṭumba-bharaṇena vā

“The lifetime of the materialistic man is passed at night either in sleeping or in sex indulgence and in the daytime in making money, by any means, for gratification of the senses.”

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Canto Two,
Chapter One, text 3)

According to the philosophy of the Vedas, our present materialistic civilization, being primarily based on the principles of eating, sleeping, sex and defense, is an existence on a par with the lives of lower animals like dogs, hogs, camels and asses. Human society has developed into a polished animal existence. The Vedic school of thought considers this the greatest waste of human energy because human life provides a chance to acquire knowledge. Therefore human society should be directed toward the goal of liberating

the self from its bondage to matter.

Knowledge concerning the self is called *ātma-tattva*. *Ātma* indicates the living being, and *tattva* means knowledge. But those who are too materialistic are unaware of self-knowledge, being too much absorbed in the opiate of sense pleasure. In their dreamlike state of illusion, such foolish fellows, who are called *karmīs*, or fruitive laborers, philosophize that man is meant to work hard to enjoy this temporary life. But no pleasure is to be found in this transient phenomena, for it is pervaded by fourfold miseries—birth, old age, disease and death.

Factually speaking, life is a hard struggle for existence. We may claim to be scientifically advanced, but that will not save us from the pangs of death. No one, regardless how rich or powerful, will survive the battle against material nature. One should examine the fact that his father or his father's father has already died and that he will therefore also die, and similarly his children, who are the would-be fathers of their children, will also die in due course. How then can one find happiness here?

This physical world is known to be constantly changing. It is created just to be annihilated after some time, like waves in the ocean that appear and in a minute are gone. All material forms are like waves in the great ocean of material energy. They appear, develop, stay for some time, produce by-products, dwindle and at last vanish from sight. But although material forms undergo many changes, the conscious self always remains the same.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.16) Lord Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that seers of truth have

concluded that the phenomenal world has no endurance and the conscious element (the self) no cessation. One can easily understand this truth. The body is always changing—from boyhood to youth, from youth to manhood, from manhood to old age—yet the living entity (*ātmā*) remains throughout all the changes of the gross body. Once we all had the bodies of five-year-olds, but those bodies no longer exist. Yet *we* still exist. Thus one can see that his existence is more than merely physical. This is the realization of those conversant with the science of the self.

Unfortunately, people who are too attached to sense pleasure never take the time to contemplate the nature of their existence. They go on life after life enjoying the meager pleasure they experience through their senses. In false happiness, they never make a solution to their material struggle. Therefore they are compared to dogs, hogs, camels and asses. This comparison may be explained as follows.

A common man, untrained in the standard of higher life, unfortunately spends his valuable time trying to perfect his animal propensities. Consumer consciousness, which both communists and capitalists share, educates people into acquiring a doggish mentality. After finishing a so-called education in a technical school, the so-called educated man doggishly goes from shop to shop to apply for work, but he is often rejected and informed that his skill has been replaced by a machine. As dogs, although of no real value to society, serve their masters for scraps of food, so these doggish men take meaningless employment to provide themselves with bread.

Such unfortunate men do not realize that with the rising and setting of the sun their duration of life decreases. As a dog will bark at and quarrel with anyone, so when approached by *sādhus*, saintly persons who wish to give them enlightenment concerning a more meaningful existence, these men argue that life is not meant for contemplating the Absolute Truth. They declare that God is dead and that all spiritual pursuits are simply a waste of time. It is better to get a job, they say, and work hard to enjoy life, for by our advancements in medical science we will conquer disease and live indefinitely.

Prolong life to the maximum duration and enjoy eating, drinking, sexual intercourse and merrymaking to the fullest—this is their hoggish mentality. They have no information of the eternal existence of the self; like sleeping men who have forgotten wakefulness, materialists, lost to their higher consciousness, want to enjoy the maximum pleasure in this life, thinking that there is no existence after death.

Modern leaders are very happy to keep people in this ignorant condition and thereby exploit them in the name of advancement. But this ignorance about the eternality of the living being and the changing of bodies in the material world has played havoc in the structure of modern human society. Industrial plans to increase the pleasures of life have only multiplied the problems. In a passion to get places quickly, man has manufactured the automobile, and now the world is suffering a new misery—air pollution. Thus by exploiting nature, man, thinking he is making progress, only aggravates the miseries of his material existence, like the camel, who derives pleasure from eating thorny twigs and tasting his own blood when they cut his tongue.

Even if by medical science one could prolong his life more than one hundred years, advancement of human civilization would not necessarily follow. The *Vedas* ask, *taravaḥ kiṁ na jīvanti*: “Do trees not live for hundreds of years?” In San Francisco there are large redwood trees said to be thousands of years old, and similar trees exist all over the world. The lives of

Buddha, Socrates, Jesus Christ and, in modern times, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu were all very short. But does that mean that a tree’s long life is more important? A prolonged life without the enlightenment to stop the onslaught of material miseries is of little value.

A materialist may argue that the life of a tree and the life of a man cannot be compared because the tree cannot enjoy life by eating and having sex. In reply to this the *Vedas* ask, “Do not common animals like dogs and hogs, living in the same villages as human beings, enjoy eating and sex?” One who misuses his valuable intelligence in trying to polish these animal propensities is no more than an intellectual beast. A society of such polished animals cannot attain peace, nor can it achieve progressive heights. An animal can easily harm another animal but rarely do good.

The ass is celebrated as the greatest fool because it works very hard carrying heavy burdens but making no profit, and after working hard for its master, it is awarded with a little grass. The grass the ass receives can be had anywhere, but in ignorance the ass thinks, “If I don’t serve my master, how will I eat?” Foolish persons, like asses, work hard day and night for an employer who exploits them by making them give the most production for the least wages. The salary they receive barely covers the ever rising cost of living. Thus, exploited by their employers, they are forced to reside in dungeons called apartments while the heads of the big enterprise reside in the beauty of the country.

But the *Vedas* ask, “Could not the necessities of life be acquired without factories and workshops?” One great *gosvāmī* asked, “When there are ample earthly flats to lie on, what is the need of working so hard just to sleep on a bed? When one can use his arms, what is the necessity of a pillow? When one can dress simply but practically, what is the need of so many clothing shops? Do the trees, which exist for the maintenance of others, no longer give their fruit in charity? Then what is the need of slaughtering innocent animals just for the pleasure of the tongue? Above

all, does not the Almighty Lord fully protect the surrendered soul?”

The life style of higher consciousness is one of simple living but high thinking. One can easily meet the demands of the body. It is only the illusory comforts that man must work like a beast to obtain. Great sages of India like Śrīla Vyāsadeva, who compiled the Vedic knowledge in written form some 5,000 years ago, lived in simple grass huts on the banks of rivers like the Sarasvatī, yet they left behind immense treasures of transcendental writings full of all perfection. One should use his human energy in this way for the pursuit of higher consciousness. Such a life of self-realization far excels wasting human energy in imitating the eating and sleeping of animals.

To take birth, work, acquire material possessions, eat some food, grow old and die is not the purpose of human life. Human life is meant for earning true value. It is called *arthada*, or that which can deliver values. And what is the greatest value one can attain? Knowledge of the Absolute Truth and one’s existence beyond the body is the real value of human life.

The human life is so important that even the demigods in the higher planets sometimes aspire for human bodies on this earth because only in the human form can one easily go back to Godhead. Therefore in spite of having obtained such an important body, if one does not come to realize or at least inquire about the Absolute Truth, he has certainly lost sight of his real self-interest.

One obtains the human form of life by a gradual process of evolution in one body after another in a cycle of 8,400,000 species. Politicians and scientists who spread the idea of godlessness and sense enjoyment as all in all are misleading innocent people by involving them in illusory engagements to uplift their material position, thus leading them down the royal road to hell, which is not merely an imaginary fiery pit, but repeated birth and death in the 8,400,000 species of life. The opiate of material pleasure such leaders offer never has and never will bring satisfaction to the people, for it is based on a temporary platform. ❏

Presenting Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the British student community



Photo: Bhārgava dāsa

by REVATĪNANDANA SVĀMĪ

THE EXPRESSION “Kṛṣṇa consciousness” indicates a life of progressing spiritual awareness that prepares one to enter the eternal association of Kṛṣṇa (God) even before the death of the body. Devotional service to Kṛṣṇa (*bhakti-yoga*) is a practical life of rendering service to God under the guidance of the Vedic scriptures and a personal spiritual master. When the spiritual master is bona fide, the results of such spiritual service are complete detachment from the alternating pains and pleasures of materialistic life, and an increasing experience of spontaneous joy from within, indicating the awakening of the spirit soul’s love of God.

According to scriptures, one who experiences the extraordinary, ever-increasing happiness of Kṛṣṇa consciousness should feel obligated to extend the benediction his spiritual master has bestowed on him by attractively presenting the devotional process to others. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa says that, among His servants, one who extends himself by presenting Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others who are receptive becomes the most dear servant

of all. By becoming very dear to Kṛṣṇa one makes the most rapid advancement in devotional service, and therefore intelligent devotees try to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

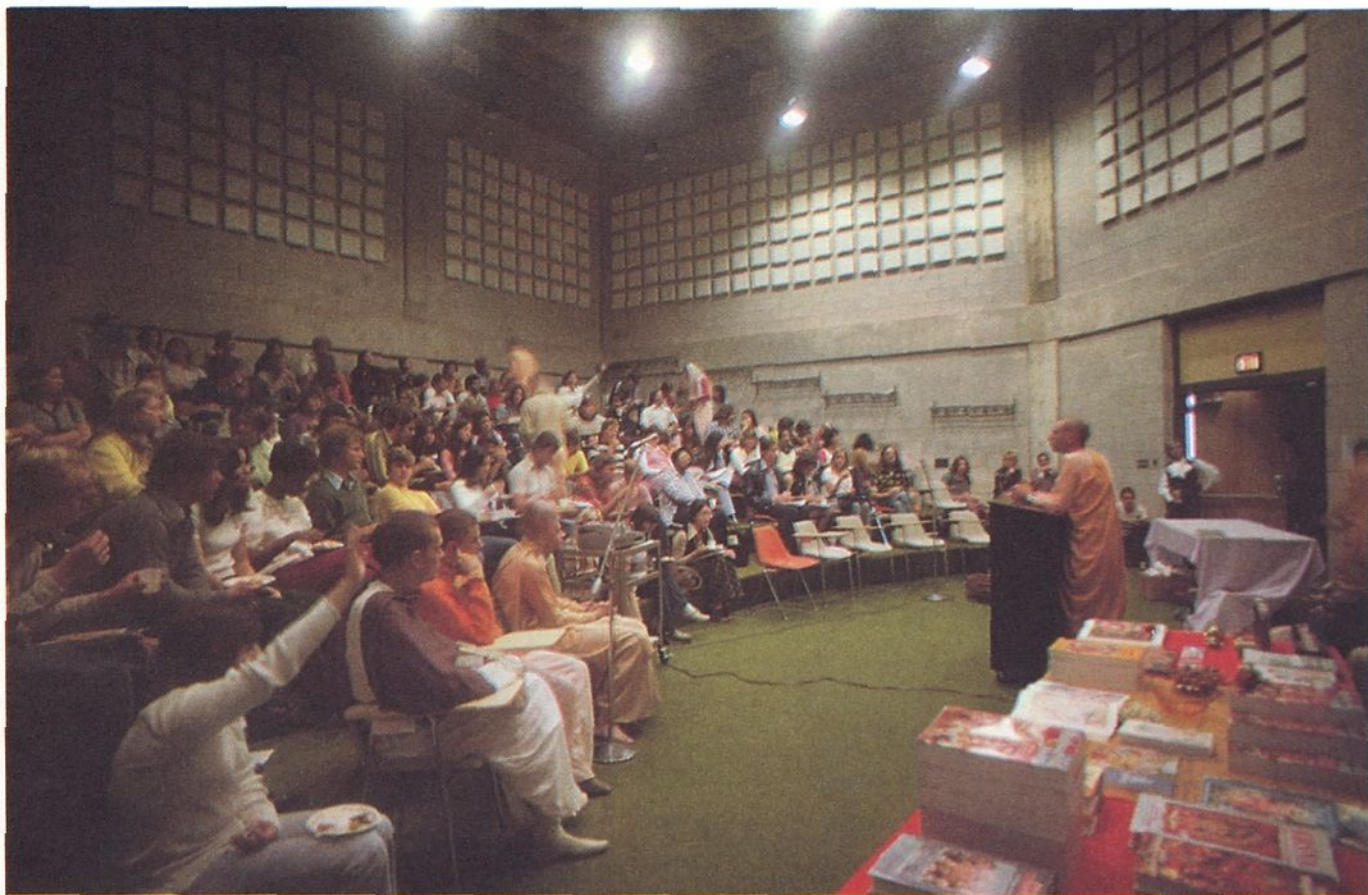
The main benefit of associating with a true spiritual master comes by understanding and implementing his divine instructions. A spiritual master will produce volumes of books describing and applying the Vedic principles according to the particular time and circumstances in which he is preaching. A disciple who wishes to begin preaching, therefore, finds his best beginning in attempting to convince others that they should read his spiritual master’s literature. As he becomes expert in this, and also becomes very learned in the Vedic teachings, he may find that the spiritual master is commissioning him increasingly to go out, attract audiences, and attempt to convince them himself. Doing this, he automatically will attract serious interest in his *guru*’s books, and he may rise to the high standard of spiritual realization where he himself can begin to produce pure, potent literature.

Often devotees find that because of

their bodily and emotional nature, they feel happier when married and raising a family in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Supporting a family generally means that a devotee will not be able to devote much of his time to active preaching, so he is recommended to preach whenever he finds an opportunity, and at the same time try to set aside fifty percent of his acquired wealth to give to those engaged fully in preaching work.

Occasionally, however, we find a devotee who becomes so absorbed in devotional practices and preaching that he becomes steadily free of disturbance from sexual desire. The enjoyment of devotion to Kṛṣṇa frees him from all other desires, and therefore he may decide to forego marriage and family life to fully concentrate on reaching the larger family of humanity with the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Such a factually renounced preacher may eventually formalize his position by accepting initiation by his spiritual master into *sannyāsa*, the renounced order of life. At that time he accepts the title “*svāmī*” (controller of the senses), along with the responsibilities of maintaining strict celibacy, keeping to the minimum his material eating and sleeping and accumulation of material possessions, and preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness everywhere. Such a qualified *sannyāsī* is revered as a spiritual leader by all other classes of men in the Vedic culture.

After spending two years learning the principles of Kṛṣṇa conscious life in America, where I joined the movement in 1968, I traveled to India with my *guru* in 1971 to assist him in establishing some centers there (an attempt to reinterest the people of India in the ancient scriptural culture they have come to neglect in recent centuries). In 1972, in Calcutta, I entered the renounced order, and at the end of 1972 my spiritual master commissioned me to travel to the United Kingdom to in-



“As the students came in and took seats, I would briefly introduce our movement as a movement for spiritual awakening and realization based on the ancient Vedic scriptures and handed down by a long line of spiritual masters.”

struct his newer British disciples in the principles of devotional service and preach widely among the people of Great Britain.

In Britain, like everywhere in the West, the most immediate and serious interest in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is found in the younger generation—particularly among some sections of the student and “hip” communities. There are several reasons for this, one being that young people are generally less set in their ways and therefore more liberal in examining new horizons. Another reason is that many of the more intelligent youth of today have examined the materialistic life of their parents and found it wanting even at its best. They are therefore more receptive to the idea of using their lives for spiritual realization than their predominantly materialistic forefathers.

My spiritual master, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

Prabhupāda, once said that the student community would provide the best source of prospective candidates for Kṛṣṇa consciousness. *Bhagavad-gītā* also confirms that when a very intelligent person understands Lord Kṛṣṇa to be the Supreme Truth and surrenders to His devotional service, that wise person becomes the dearest of all who approach the Lord. Because of their youth, intelligence and developing qualifications, students at colleges and universities certainly have the greatest potential to lead in eventually spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness to every town and village around the world. Also, because of their congregating for eight months of the year on and near college campuses, it is possible to attempt a systematic program to canvas them for interested souls. Therefore, I decided to concentrate primarily on presenting our process to the student community.

With this idea in mind, in the sum-

mer of 1972 I approached the householder devotees who manage our Society’s incense and cosmetics business (Spiritual Sky Scented Products) to inquire whether they would like to purchase a suitable estate car (station wagon) for my use. Seeing it as an opportunity to use their acquired wealth to advance our spiritual master’s movement, they agreed.

The next step was to choose, with the presidents of our British temples, four steady and intelligent *brahmacārīs* (unmarried student disciples) to fill out a traveling party. The requirements were that they be interested, personable and sufficiently learned in the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to speak convincingly with intelligent young people. When this group was formed, we began to amass the necessary paraphernalia to travel for weeks away from our centers and actually perform engagements. This included musical instruments to accompany Hare

Kṛṣṇa chanting, cooking utensils and storable Vedic foods, a large banner with the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, some holy pictures for a portable altar, a supply of our spiritual master's books, and our basic personal effects and bedding. We carefully arranged all these to fit (tightly) into the car, and physically we were prepared to move.

(morning and evening), programs. We traveled along behind actually doing the programs, maintaining the party by the prearranged donations and finding that Kṛṣṇa always provided us with a place to rest.

When the colleges were on their end-of-term breaks, we arranged our own programs at cities throughout Britain.

Renting a hall for an evening, making publicity and selling inexpensive tickets to finance the affairs, we did successful programs attended by fifty to two hundred at Glasgow, Liverpool, Sheffield, Nottingham, Oxford, Cambridge, London and Plymouth. We also did numerous programs at youth clubs and secondary schools (high schools) in these "open" periods.

On the day of a typical program, after our early morning devotional practices, we would prepare one or two

simple but delicious vegetarian dishes (wherever Kṛṣṇa provided a kitchen) and offer them to the Lord with devotion. The resulting *prasāda* (spiritual food) was partially for our own consumption but mainly for distribution at the program, and whenever there was time the *brahmacārīs* would go to a nearby town to distribute literature and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, while I retired to a public library to study and write.

As the time for the program arrived, we would go to the campus hall where it was to take place, assemble a simple altar and book array and prominently display the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* banner. The altar centered around a large oil painting of Lord Caitanya dancing with His associates. Lord Caitanya appeared in Bengal about five hundred years ago, and scriptures compiled long before predicted His appearance as an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa Himself. He inaugurated the movement of *saṅkīrtana* (chanting the names and glories of

God), of which we are a part. My spiritual master had instructed me to take such a picture along because the Lord is described to be personally present in such transcendental pictures and because His golden form as a devotee (Lord Caitanya) is the most immediately attractive and understandable of all His incarnations.

As the students (usually from 50 to 250 if the program was properly publicized) came in and took seats, I would briefly introduce our movement as a movement for spiritual awakening and realization based on the ancient Vedic scriptures and handed down by a long line of spiritual masters. I would explain that these scriptures recommend the chanting of the names of God as the most effective means of awakening Kṛṣṇa consciousness in these days, and that we would begin the program by chanting for some time. First we would sing a prayer offering our respects to our *guru* and then chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, in this way purifying the atmosphere to set the stage for speaking on spiritual matters. We invited them to join in the chanting if they liked.

The Vedic scriptures explain that the hearing and chanting of the names of God is essential for cleansing the heart and sanctifying the intelligence so that people may grasp the scriptural instructions for attaining perfection in life. They describe that as He is nondifferent from His picture, the absolute Lord is also nondifferent from His innumerable holy names (revealed in scriptures around the world), and that to be in the presence of the holy name is therefore to be in the presence of the Lord. Because the ear is the most acute of our senses, this hearing and chanting is the most effective means of awakening Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Generally, British students are relatively quiet and polite by nature and upbringing, but sometimes some sections of the audience would be loudly critical, heckling or simply being noisy at the beginning—especially after seeing us in our traditional robes and shaven heads. We found again and again, however, that although most students would not initially take part in the



Discussions with some interested students would often last one, two or even three hours.

One of the boys, who was extremely steady and fixed in his determination to serve Kṛṣṇa, set out ahead of time. Sometimes using trains and buses but usually simply hitchhiking, he began making his way along a prearranged route. Beginning from Scotland and traveling south through Wales and England, he began systematically approaching the student-union executives at nearly all colleges and universities to inquire whether they wished to invite us for programs about the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. Finding that about seventy percent of the student leaders responded with interest, he would proceed to arrange the dates, publicity and other details of the programs. He would also arrange donations averaging £ 10 (\$25) to maintain our party, and usually a place on the campus for us to spend the night.

Traveling ahead like this, he was able to fill nearly every day of the school year with one, if not two



Love of Kṛṣṇa is awakened by devotional service to Him which begins with chanting His holy names.

chanting, the effect of their simply hearing us chant with our instruments (small, metal cymbals and clay *mṛdaṅga* drum) was to still and purify completely the atmosphere in the room. Taking advantage of that more receptive atmosphere, I was then able to address them for as long as an hour, appealing to their good intelligence by explaining the philosophy and practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

It is impossible to present a typical lecture here, but an outline of the basic points I would usually present is as follows:

(1) It is not possible to gain perfect spiritual knowledge by experimental science or speculative philosophizing, even about scriptures. Spiritual knowledge is acquired by hearing the scriptural message from a spiritual master coming in a line of disciples originating from a bona fide incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, the origin of all knowledge.

(2) We do not accept the theory that life comes by chance from unliving matter. Our philosophy is that life appears in matter only when a living spirit soul is present. (Sometimes many arguments arose concerning this.)

(3) The spirit soul is eternal and unchanging. Therefore we are completely different from our bodies, which are born and will die. We have a spiritual way of enjoying eternally that is far superior to the material way of sometimes enjoying, sometimes suffering, accepting the miseries of old age, disease and death.

(4) The soul who quits his body in the attempt to enjoy the material world takes body after body there, enjoying and suffering the reactions to his past deeds.

(5) The Vedic scriptures describe God as the Supreme Person, with an eternal body full of unlimited knowledge, beauty, power and bliss. We can see the supreme, personal touch of Kṛṣṇa even in His material creation, which is full of wonderful manifestations (flowers, human bodies, sunsets, etc.) that none of us have sufficient intelligence, beauty or power even to imitate.

(6) Everyone seeks loving relationships, but in the material world what we call love is always contaminated by selfish interests (lust). Such limited and temporary relationships do not fulfill our lives.

(7) The perfect friend and lover for every living being is the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Spiritual life is not to annihilate the individual self, as some profess, but to relate him with Kṛṣṇa in an eternal loving relationship.

(8) Love of Kṛṣṇa is awakened by devotional service to Him (*bhakti-yoga*). It begins with chanting the names of the Lord, hearing about Him from Vedic literatures, and tasting *prasāda*. This awakening shows itself in the disposition to engage one's life in His service. The final result is that one will leave his body in a divine state of love of God and enter the eternal realm of the Lord as His personal associate.

(9) Service to Kṛṣṇa is practical. It does not necessarily require one to give up his family or career. While some may do this, as traveling preachers, one may also practice *bhakti-yoga* by raising a family in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and learning from the spiritual master how to use one's work, wealth, talents and abilities in advancing the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement—while engaging in the basic devotional practices. (chanting, etc.)

(10) If one begins to practice this, he can appreciate for himself the wonderful transformation that comes over his life. Because this process is practical for all and links us with the all-auspicious Lord, we are distributing it around the world as a practical solution for the problems of mankind, material as well as spiritual.

(11) Whoever wishes to understand and experience Kṛṣṇa consciousness more fully can do so simply by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa regularly, tasting *prasāda* (such as that to be distributed at the end of the program), reading the books on these teachings, and sometimes visiting centers of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness to observe the actual functioning of the society of devotees.

(12) No one should pass without a serious investigation of such a process, which offers a satisfying life of spiritual awakening and can lead one past the death of his material body into a life of eternity, bliss and knowledge—a life experienced by pure devotees of the Lord even before the death of their bodies.

In most circumstances I would open the program for questions at this point. Because the lecture was delivered more as a presentation than as a direct proselytizing attempt, it usually found a quite receptive audience, and therefore the questions were normally expository rather than challenging. After taking several such questions, and especially if an argument were developing (meaning intelligence giving way to anger), I would invite everyone to take part in an ending chant to actually experience the blissful potency of the revealed names of God.

Whereas in the beginning most students would simply watch us chant, after a reasonable talk they were often inclined to join in. Usually from fifty to one hundred percent of them would stand, clap and join in the chanting, regardless of the conservatism or liberality of that particular student body. By the end of the chant they would often become thoroughly aroused and afterwards express their enjoyment by appreciative words and exclamations.

After this conclusion I would invite them to taste some fruit and a sweet grain preparation (halavaḥ) we had earlier offered to Kṛṣṇa, to speak further with the devotees if they had more questions, and especially to look at the books of our spiritual master and our other literatures. The ensuing discussions with ten to thirty of the more interested students would often go on for one, two or even three hours. They usually ate all the prasāda with relish, and interested readers purchased a number of our major books, many magazines, and essays I had written and printed for students. As devotees preaching for Kṛṣṇa and our spiritual master in this way, we used to conclude almost every program feeling happy to the point of ecstasy.

My spiritual master told me that if the students asked good questions and were motivated to take literature, that indicated that the program had been potentially effective. Since this was nearly always the case, we are confident that in the course of doing 150 such programs all over Britain, we have made some beginning—a planting of seeds that may gradually grow into a Kṛṣṇa conscious generation of people

who will alter, for the good, both the United Kingdom and the world. Many British young people show a healthy attraction for the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, and this process alone, according to the Vedic scriptures, will illuminate this materialistic age.

In the coming school year we plan to make a second tour through all the colleges and universities here, meeting new students and also observing how some who attended last year's programs have developed by this simple, pure association. Already many have

come, on their summer travels, to visit our temples, and a few have actually joined our society as full-time students of our spiritual master. In this way we are encouraged to push on, in secondary and primary schools as well, and wherever an audience presents itself. We eagerly await the golden days of the Kṛṣṇa conscious world-culture the Vedic literatures predict for this age as the result of the appearance of Lord Caitanya and His glorious saṅkīrtana movement of chanting the holy names of God. ❧

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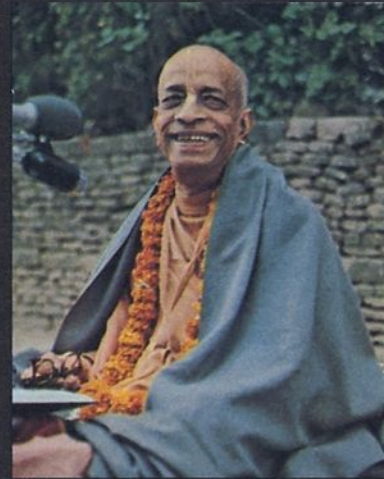


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HARE KRṢṢṢA FESTIVAL

(HEIDELBERG)

by HĀMSADŪTA DĀSA

(ISKCON HEIDELBERG)

ON JUNE 9th and 10th of 1973 the devotees of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement from Germany, Holland, Sweden, Switzerland, France and England assembled in Heidelberg, Germany, for the celebration of a massive Hare Kṛṣṇa festival.

What is a Hare Kṛṣṇa festival? It is a transcendental event organized for the



pleasure of the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa. Just as in the material world a meeting or event is conducted especially to show respect and honor to a great man, so a Hare Kṛṣṇa festival is especially organized to please the Supreme Person.

When we say "Supreme Person," we mean God, or Kṛṣṇa. God is not nameless, formless or impersonal. We understand God to be the Supreme Personali-

ty, greater than all others. As stated in the *Upaniṣads*, *nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām, eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān*: "Among all the eternal living beings, there is one Supreme Being, who fulfills the desires of all the others." For example, among many citizens, one is the leader or president. God, similarly, is the leader of all living beings. He is a person who thinks, feels and wills, but He is always transcendental.

A Hare Kṛṣṇa festival features singing, dancing and eating food first offered in sacrifice to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. This is usually called *saṅkīrtana*. The process of chanting, dancing and feasting on *prasāda* (spiritual food) was introduced by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu almost five hundred years ago as the authorized process of God realization for the present fallen age of Kali.

"In the Kali-yuga the Supreme Lord comes as one who always chants the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself and whose complexion is yellow. Persons endowed with sufficient intelligence will worship the Supreme Lord in this form, who will always be accompanied by His eternal associates and will chant and dance to the holy names of God." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 11.5.32).

These words of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, recorded more than 5,000 years ago by the author of the famous *Bhagavad-gītā*, Vyāsadeva, foretell the advent of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the incarnation of Godhead for our age, Kali-yuga, the age of quarrel and dissension. Lord Caitanya, like Christ, was a spiritual revolutionary who taught that the conceptions of Hindu, Muslim, black, white, male, female and so on are "bodily designations that are finished when the body is finished." Lord Caitanya taught that every living being, regardless of his outer dress as an animal, human, aquatic, bird, fish, etc., is an infinitesimal, eternal spiritual spark of the supreme spirit whole, Kṛṣṇa. To revive our lost consciousness of God and our eternal relationship with Him, Lord Caitanya introduced this *saṅkīrtana* movement when He was only sixteen years old, and in a short time He flooded the subcontinent of India with the sound of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*.

Lord Caitanya systematically staged gigantic Hare Kṛṣṇa festivals in which hundreds and thousands of people would sing and dance for days together, feasting on spiritual food and thus feeling fully satisfied, realizing the transcendental pleasure of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Lord Caitanya predicted that in the future this Hare Kṛṣṇa movement would spread to every town



"If one simply chants the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, the holy name will rise within one's heart like the powerful sun and will immediately dissipate all the darkness of ignorance."
—The Nectar of Devotion A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Photos: Harinānanda dāsa



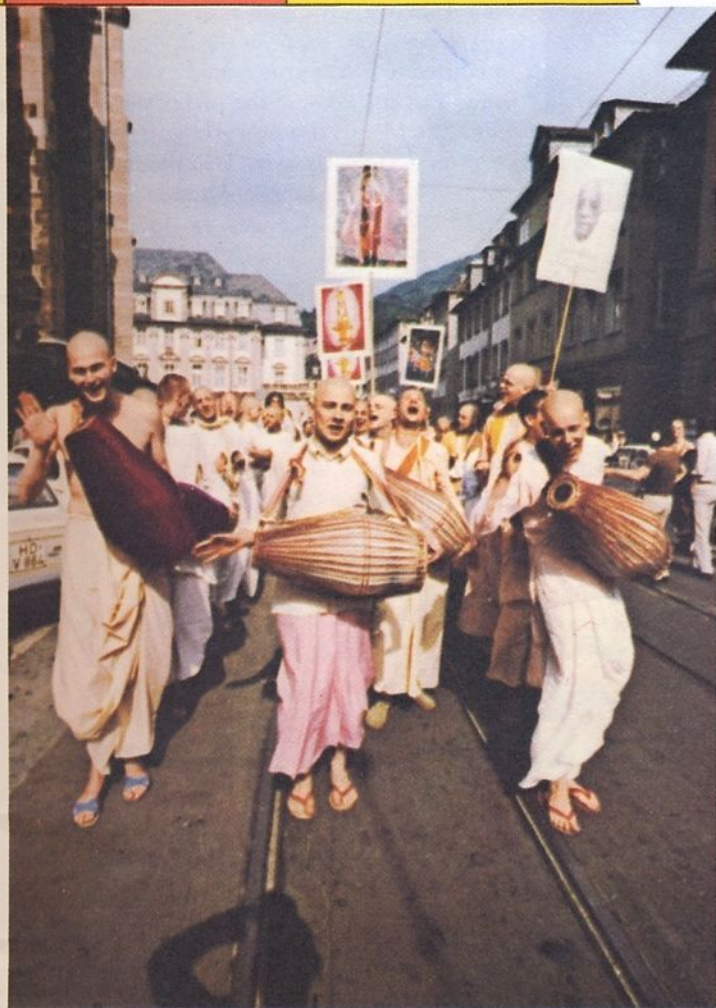
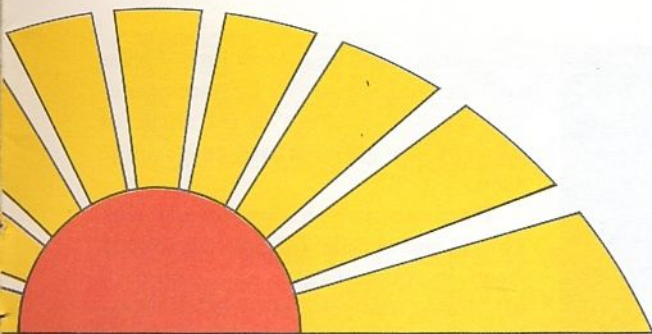
and village of the earth. This prediction of the Lord is today being fulfilled by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is the authorized representative of Lord Caitanya in our time and the *ācārya* (spiritual master who teaches by his life) of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement that is now rapidly sweeping the world.

We can see from the pictures how universally applicable the process of chanting the Lord's holy names is.

Everyone—young, old, black, white, German or American—can participate in *saṅkīrtana*. For this reason Lord Caitanya predicted that the congregational chanting of the Lord's holy names would soon become the universal religion. In every community we find scriptures that give us names of God like Allah, Jehovah or Kṛṣṇa. Authorized scriptures like the Bible, *Bhagavad-gītā* and Koran give hundreds and millions of names for God, and through the mercy of Caitanya Mahā-

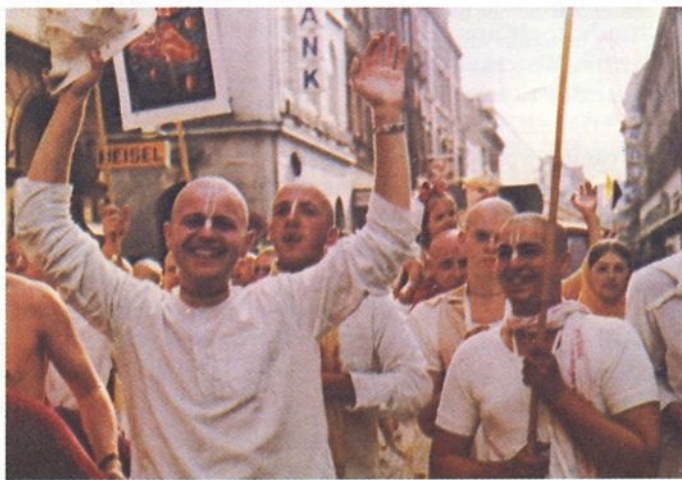
prabhu everyone can take advantage of the holy name of God by taking part in such Hare Kṛṣṇa festivals as the one conducted recently in Heidelberg.

Practically the whole city population was in one way or another connected with our Hare Kṛṣṇa festival. To get permission to conduct the parade on the Haupt Strasse and the fire ceremony on the Markt Platz, we took permission from Herr Handshusheim, the director of city planning, and from the chief of the Heidelberg



The chanting of the holy names creates an atmosphere of transcendental pleasure on the streets of Heidelberg. At the far left, Harṁsadūta

dāsa performs a fire sacrifice. Such colorful ceremonies are performed for purification at Kṛṣṇa conscious initiations and marriage celebrations.



police, who was very happy to give our parade a police escort. We engaged a printer to do our poster, which an advertising company placed all over the city. The television people sent their man to film the festival. Thus at least for the time our festival was in the planning and execution, people from all walks of life focused their attention either knowingly or unknowingly on Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, through the execution of their daily work.

This technique of applying one's natural activities in the service of the Lord is recommended in *Bhagavad-gītā* by Kṛṣṇa Himself. "Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you give away in charity or perform as penance should be done as an offering unto Me, and by this principle of work you will be released from all sinful reactions and will come to Me." When one works for Kṛṣṇa voluntarily and favorably, he can find the perfection of life.

Sometimes people criticize us when they see us arranging to print advertising posters or applying for permits from the police. They think that in the guise of spiritual mendicants we are trying to perform mundane money-making or political activities.

People who do not know the science of God sometimes think that spiritual life means to become inactive, renounce the world and sit somewhere in a yogic posture taking deep breaths or meditating on something void or

impersonal. They criticize, "If you are actually spiritual people, why are you using automobiles, tape recorders, money and so many other material things?" We reply according to what we have been told by our spiritual master and the statements of scripture: *everything belongs to God.*

As Kṛṣṇa Himself says in *Bhagavad-gītā*, "Of all that is material and all that is spiritual, I am both the origin and dissolution." If we can understand that everything is Kṛṣṇa or Kṛṣṇa's energy, we can also understand further that everything should be used in His service. This is not a very difficult fact to understand; yet if one applies it, the results are profound and revolutionary. We cannot accept that spiritual things have no substance, as if spiritual meant only airy, unknowable or formless. No. Rather, the criterion of whether a thing is material or spiritual is whether it is used in forgetfulness of God or the loving service of God. The important factor is the consciousness in which we use things. For example, an auto mechanic's tools are neither criminal nor lawful. We cannot describe them like that. But to use the tools to steal a car is criminal, whereas to use them to fix a car in a workshop is lawful. The same tools are used, but one engagement is criminal and another lawful. Therefore, the activities of the festival—singing, dancing and eating—are all spiritual, since they are only for the glorification of God.

According to *Bhagavad-gītā*, to execute any endeavor, five things are needed—the place, the senses, the doer, the activity and also the will of providence, or, more exactly, the sanction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So, like any activity, material or spiritual, our festival required practical arrangements.

The place: We rented the Kurfalshees Museum and used the streets and marketplace of Heidelberg for our public activities. The senses: the hands, legs, brains and bodies of the devotees, who did everything from making posters and cooking food for Kṛṣṇa to singing the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* ecstatically for hours. We engaged all our senses fully and always in a mood absorbed in praising Kṛṣṇa. The doers:

Photo: Bhārgava dāsa



In Every Town and Village
Haṁsadūta dāsa leading chanting
of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

the one hundred devotees of German ISKCON. The activity: *saṅkīrtana*, congregational chanting.

As for the fifth ingredient, the will of God, that is always most certainly there in a Hare Kṛṣṇa festival. Kṛṣṇa had not only encouraged our Heidelberg festival, but in His form of Lord Caitanya He had said, "In every town and village of the world My name will be heard." Not only had He given His sanction, but, as God, omnipotent in will, He had declared that it would be done. Therefore the festivals go on because God Himself is sponsoring them. Our part is simply to become His devotees and arrange them on Kṛṣṇa's behalf. Otherwise Kṛṣṇa will get someone else to do it.

There is always the question of money. In ordinary political rallies, millions of dollars are spent for propaganda to elect an unknown man as leader. We are also making propaganda, but for the real leader—God, or Kṛṣṇa. The *Vedas* say that God is the leader of all living entities. To make this fact known, we are prepared to collect unlimited amounts of money and spend it to glorify Kṛṣṇa. In material life, an insignificant person tries to make himself God by artificial propaganda. But in spiritual life one accepts his position as infinitesimal in comparison to God;

he accepts that he is an eternal servant of God and spends all his intelligence and energy—whether in the shape of money, strength or whatever—to praise God.

If we want to be happy and peaceful, this is the simple formula we should keep in mind: God is the creator of all things, the proprietor of all things and therefore the natural enjoyer of all things. He is also the only one qualified to be the true friend of everyone. The mistake of the materialist is that he tries to use everything for his own sense gratification. He takes himself as God, the proprietor and enjoyer of everything, but because he does not have the power of God, he is always in anxiety, trying to fulfill his false desires.

When one is actually enlightened as to his constitutional position in relation to God, he tries to please the Lord, and by this endeavor the Lord is pleased to reveal Himself. Kṛṣṇa says, "As one surrenders unto Me, I reveal Myself accordingly."

There is no meaning to life without Kṛṣṇa, just as there is no meaning to one's hand unless it is properly connected to the whole body. In material life one is disconnected from Kṛṣṇa, and this is a most unfortunate plight. Therefore it is the aim of the Hare Kṛṣṇa festivals to bring those who have forgotten Kṛṣṇa back to their original connection with Kṛṣṇa through the simple chanting of the transcendental sound vibration Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Singing, dancing and eating in Kṛṣṇa's service, under the direction of an expert spiritual master, are all spiritual activities, and those who participate become surcharged with spiritual consciousness. Not only the performers of the festival but also those who come to listen, and even the place where it is conducted, all become sanctified and blissful. Everyone should try to become active, somehow or other, in this movement of Kṛṣṇa consciousness by devoting his life, money or intelligence to Kṛṣṇa. Or, if nothing more, one can at least chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. ❏

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It is all-successful, all-blissful, and all-perfect.
It is as bright as the sun.
Thus persons who have lost their vision
due to the dense darkness of ignorance
in the age of quarrel shall get light from it.”

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 1.3.40, 43

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