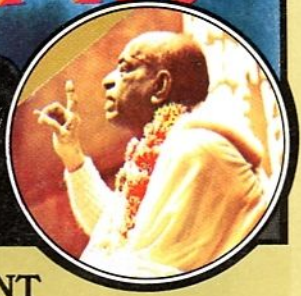


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



BACK TO GODHEAD



Vol.10 No.8

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



In San Diego, California, and around the world...

**HARE KṚṢṆA, HARE KṚṢṆA, KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA, HARE HARE/
HARE RĀMA, HARE RĀMA, RĀMA RĀMA, HARE HARE**



Photo: Bhārgava dāsa

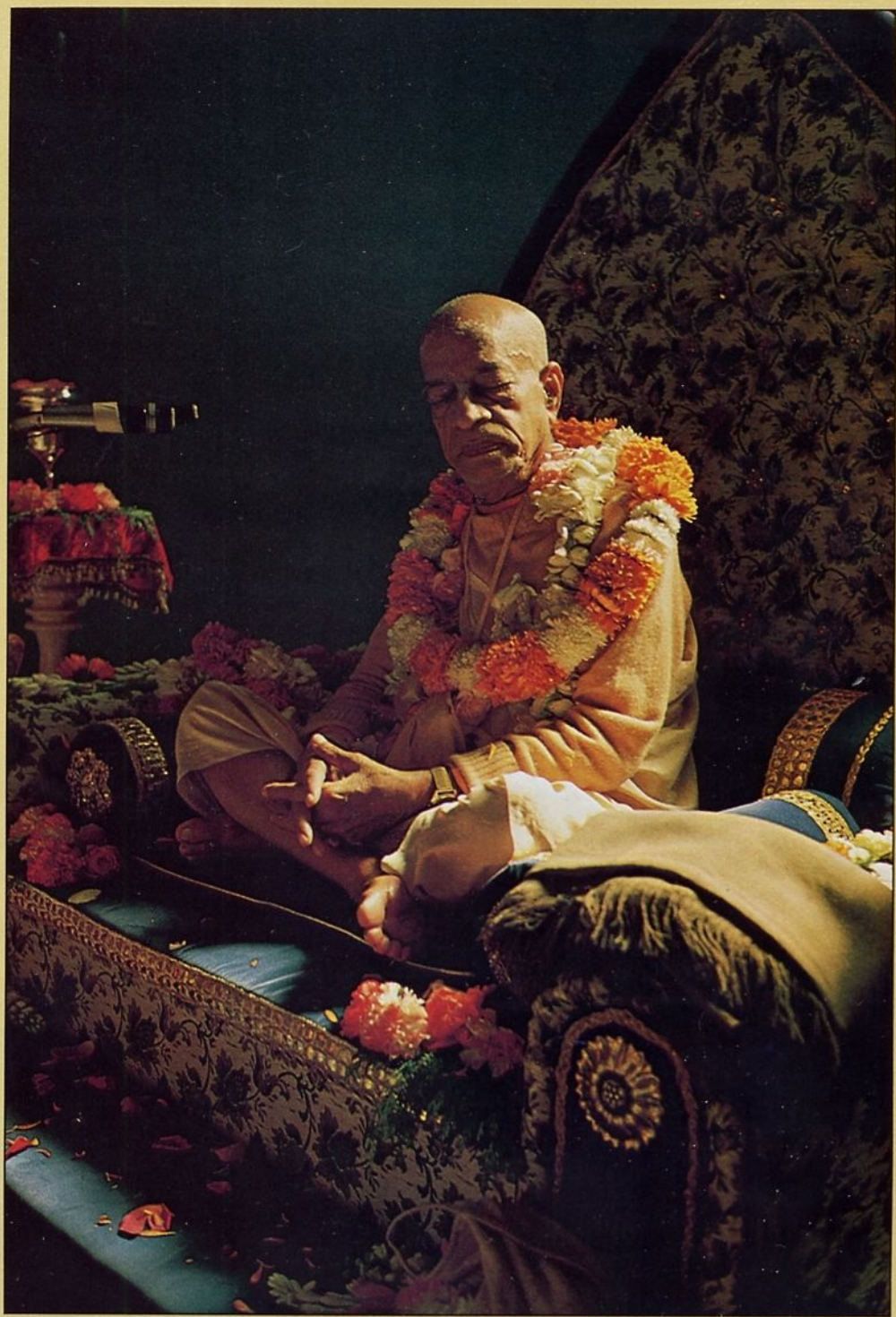
Nearing the end of its arduous journey from Calcutta to New York ten years ago, the cargo ship *Jaladuta* docked briefly in Boston. One of the few passengers on board was His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who at the age of sixty-nine was making his first journey outside of India. His mission, given him by his spiritual master, was to teach the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the people of the Western world. When he stepped off the boat, Śrīla Prabhupāda noticed how materially inclined the people of the West were. He saw what a difficult task he would have, and he prayed to Lord Kṛṣṇa for help. A year later, in a humble storefront in New York City, he founded the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) and began the movement that's surprising the world with its remarkable growth and popularity.

Over the past nine years, Śrīla Prabhupāda has

established ISKCON centers (like the one above in San Diego) in over seventy major cities throughout the world. His message is simple and clear: "Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, and your life will be sublime." The Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is a chant or prayer requesting the Supreme Lord to engage us in His service.

The disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda, who have taken his advice and experienced the pleasure of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and serving the Lord, are naturally eager to express their gratitude to him. They'll do this formally on August 31, his birthday anniversary, which is called *Vyāsa-pūjā*. By a wonderful coincidence, *Vyāsa-pūjā* falls on the day following Lord Kṛṣṇa's birthday celebration (*Janmāṣṭamī*). Therefore both events are observed side by side with equal enthusiasm. You'll find out more about the significance of these two days as you read through this issue of BACK TO GODHEAD.

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



BACK TO GODHEAD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

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(under the direction of His Divine Grace
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PRONUNCIATION OF SANSKRIT WORDS

Sanskrit words and names in **BACK TO GODHEAD** are spelled according to a system that scholars throughout the world use to show how to pronounce each word. Vowels in Sanskrit are pronounced almost as in Italian. The sound of the short *a* is like the *u* in *but*. The long *ā* is like the *a* in *far* and held twice as long as the short *a*, and *e* is like the *e* in *evade*. Long *i* is like the *i* in *pike*. The vowel *ī* is pronounced like the *er* in the English word *fiber*. The *ē* is pronounced as in the English word *chair*. The aspirated consonants (*ch, jh, dh, etc.*) are pronounced as in *staunch-heart, hedge-hog* and *red-hot*. The two sibilants *ś* and *ṣ* are like the English *sh*, and *s* is like the *s* in *sun*. So pronounce *Kṛṣṇa* as KRISHNA and *Caitanya* as CHAITANYA.

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ON THE COVER

Although *Kṛṣṇa* is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, He dutifully carries the shoes of His father, Nanda Māhārāja.
Illustration: Parīkṣit dāsa

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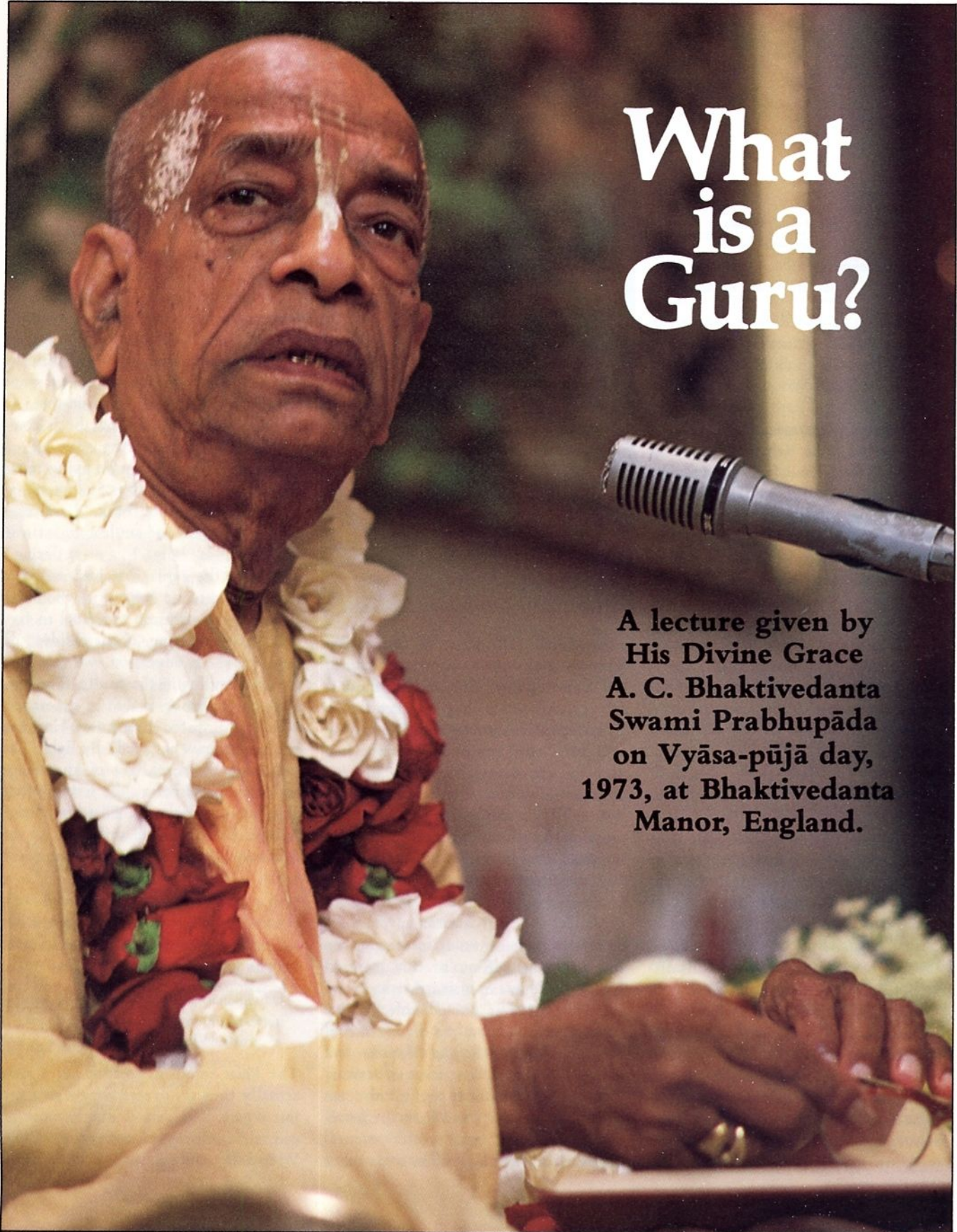
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What is a Guru?

A lecture given by
His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupāda
on Vyāsa-pūjā day,
1973, at Bhaktivedanta
Manor, England.

**“A criminal may say, ‘I did not know the law,’
but he will not be excused if he commits a crime.
Ignorance is no excuse.”**

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya
jñānānjana-salākayā
cakṣur unmilitam yena
tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

“I was born in the darkest ignorance, and my *guru*, my spiritual master, opened my eyes with the torch of knowledge. I offer my respectful obeisances unto him.”

The word *ajñāna* means ignorance or darkness. If all the lights in this room immediately went out, we would not be able to tell where we or others are sitting. Everything would become confused. Similarly, we are all in darkness in this material world, which is a world of *tamas*. *Tamas* or *timira* means darkness. This material world is dark, and therefore it needs sunlight or moonlight for illumination. However, there is another world, a spiritual world, that is beyond this darkness. That world is described by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*na tad bhāsayate sūryo
na śaśāṅko na pāvakaḥ
yad gatvā na nivartante
tad dhāma paramam mama*

“That abode of Mine is not illumined by the sun or moon, nor by electricity. One who reaches it never returns to this material world.” (Bg. 15.6)

From Darkness to Light

The *guru*'s business is to bring his disciples from darkness to light. At present everyone is suffering due to ignorance, just as one contracts a disease out of ignorance. If one does not know hygienic principles, he will not know what will contaminate him. Therefore due to ignorance there is infection, and we suffer from disease. A criminal may say, “I did not know the law,” but he will not be



excused if he commits a crime. Ignorance is no excuse. Similarly, a child, not knowing that fire will burn, will touch the fire. The fire does not think, “This is a child, and he does not know I will burn.” No, there is no excuse. Just as there are state laws, there are also stringent laws of nature, and these laws will act despite our ignorance of them. If we do something wrong out of ignorance, we must suffer. This is the law. Whether the law is a state law or a law of nature, we risk suffering if we break it.

The *guru*'s business is to see that no human being suffers in this material world. No one can claim that he is not suffering. That is not possible. In this material world, there are three kinds of suffering: *adhyātmika*, *adhibhautika* and *adhidaivika*. These are miseries arising from the material body and mind, from other living entities and from the forces of nature. We may suffer mental anguish, or we may suffer from other

living entities—from ants or mosquitos or flies—or we may suffer due to some superior power. There may be no rain or there may be flood. There may be excessive heat or excessive cold. So many types of suffering are imposed by nature. Thus there are three types of miseries within the material world, and everyone is suffering from one, two or three of them. No one can say that he is completely free from suffering.

We may then ask *why* the living entity is suffering. The answer is: out of ignorance. He does not think, “I am committing mistakes and am leading a sinful life; that is why I am suffering.” Therefore the *guru*'s first business is to rescue his disciple from this ignorance. We send our children to school to save them from suffering. If our children do not receive an education, we fear that they will suffer in the future. The *guru* sees that suffering is due to ignorance, which is compared to darkness. How can one in darkness be saved? By light. The *guru* takes the torchlight of knowledge and presents it before the living entity enveloped in darkness. That knowledge relieves him from the sufferings of the darkness of ignorance.

Guru is One

One may ask whether the *guru* is absolutely necessary. The *Vedas* inform us that he is:

*tad vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet
samit-pāṇiḥ śrotriyaṁ brahma-niṣṭham*
(Munḍaka Up. 1.2.12)

The *Vedas* enjoin us to seek out a *guru*; actually, they say to seek out *the guru*, not just a *guru*. The *guru* is one because he comes in disciplic succession. What Vyāsadeva and Kṛṣṇa taught 5,000

**“A rascal guru may say, ‘I am God,’ or
‘We are all God.’ That is all right, but we should find out
what the meaning of God is.”**

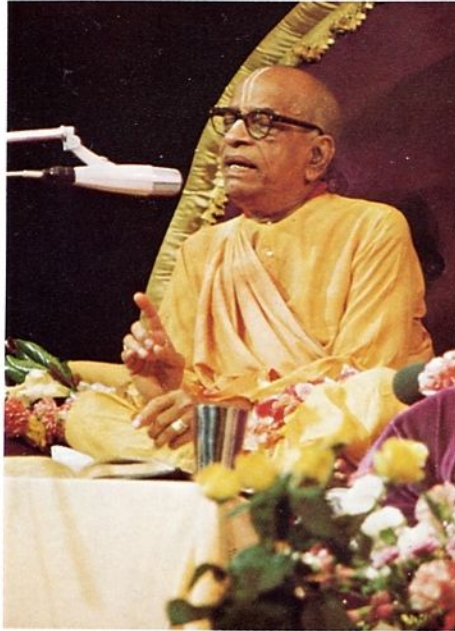
years ago is also being taught now. There is no difference between the two instructions. Although hundreds and thousands of *ācāryas* have come and gone, the message is one. The real *guru* cannot be two because the real *guru* does not speak differently from his predecessors. Some spiritual teachers say, “In my opinion you should do this,” but this is not a *guru*. Such so-called *gurus* are simply rascals. The genuine *guru* has only one opinion, and that is the opinion expressed by Kṛṣṇa, Vyāsadeva, Nārada, Arjuna, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the Gosvāmīs. Five thousand years ago Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa spoke *Bhagavad-gītā*, and Vyāsadeva recorded it. Śrīla Vyāsadeva did not say, “This is my opinion.” Rather, he wrote, *śrī bhāgavān uvāca*, that is, “The Supreme Personality of Godhead says.” Whatever Vyāsadeva wrote was originally spoken by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Śrīla Vyāsadeva did not give his own opinion.

Consequently, Śrīla Vyāsadeva is a *guru*. He does not misinterpret the words of Kṛṣṇa but transmits them exactly as they were spoken. If we send a telegram, the person who delivers the telegram does not have to correct it, edit it or add to it. He simply presents it. That is the *guru's* business. The *guru* may be this person or that, but the message is the same; therefore it is said that *guru* is one.

In the disciplic succession we simply find repetition of the same subject. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Śrī Kṛṣṇa says:

*man-manā bhava mad-bhakto
mad-yājī mām namaskurū
mām evaiṣyasi yuktvaiivam
ātmānaṁ mat-parāyaṇaḥ*

“Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, become My devotee, offer obei-



sances and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me.” (Bg. 9.34) These very instructions were reiterated by all the *ācāryas*—Rāmānujācārya, Madhvācārya and Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The six Gosvāmīs also transmitted the same message, and we are simply following in their footsteps. There is no difference. We do not interpret the words of Kṛṣṇa by saying, “In my opinion, the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra represents the human body.” Such interpretations are set forth by rascals. In the world there are many rascal *gurus* who give their own opinion, but we can challenge any rascal. A rascal *guru* may say, “I am God,” or, “We are all God.” That is all right, but we should find out from the dictionary what the meaning of God is. Generally, a dictionary will tell us that the word God indicates the Supreme Being. Thus we may ask such a *guru*, “Are you the Supreme Being?” If he cannot understand this, then we should give

the meaning of supreme. Any dictionary will inform us that supreme means “the greatest authority.” We may then ask, “Are you the greatest authority?” Such a rascal *guru*, even though proclaiming himself to be God, cannot answer such a question. God is the Supreme Being and the highest authority. No one is equal to Him or greater than Him. Yet there are many *guru* Gods, many rascals who claim to be the Supreme. Such rascals cannot help us escape the darkness of material existence. They cannot illumine our darkness with the torchlight of spiritual knowledge.

The bona fide *guru* will simply present what the supreme *guru*, God, says in bona fide scripture. A *guru* cannot change the message of the disciplic succession. Once there was a gentleman named Vallabhācārya, who was very devoted to Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Vallabhācārya wrote a commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and he presented it to Caitanya Mahāprabhu, saying, “Lord Caitanya, please hear my commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. You will find that it is far better than Śrīdhara Svāmī’s.” Śrīdhara Svāmī was a very ancient commentator. Caitanya Mahāprabhu immediately rejected Vallabhācārya, saying, “Oh, are you claiming that you have written something better than Śrīdhara Svāmī?” Caitanya Mahāprabhu then chastised Vallabhācārya, saying, *svāmike yini nā mānena, tini veśyā*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu sarcastically used the word *svāmī*, which also means husband. He said, “I think that one who does not recognize the *svāmī* [husband] is a prostitute.” In other words, “If you do not recognize Śrīdhara Svāmī, then you are a prostitute. How can I hear from a prostitute?”

**“One who is serious about understanding spiritual life
requires a guru.”**

No Research Necessary

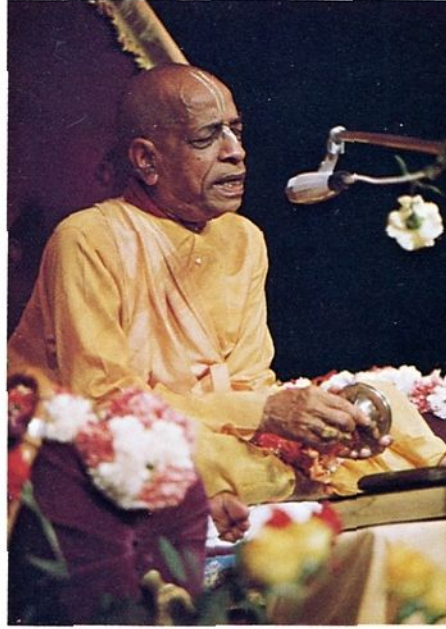
We must understand that we cannot carry out research to find the Absolute Truth. Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself said, “My Guru Mahārāja considered me a great fool.” He who remains a great fool before his *guru* is a *guru* himself. However, if one says, “I am so advanced that I can speak better than my *guru*,” he is simply a rascal. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Śrī Kṛṣṇa says:

*evam paramparā-prāptam
imam rājarāṣya viduḥ
sa kāleneha mahatā
yogo naṣṭaḥ parantapa*

“This supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession, and the saintly kings understood it in that way. But in course of time the succession was broken, and therefore the science as it is appears to be lost.” (Bg.4.2)

Taking on a *guru* is not simply a fashion. One who is serious about understanding spiritual life requires a *guru*. A *guru* is a question of necessity, for one must be very serious to understand spiritual life, God, proper action and one’s relationship with God. When we are very serious about understanding these subjects, we need a *guru*. We shouldn’t go to a *guru* simply because a *guru* may be fashionable at the moment. Surrender must be there, for without surrender we cannot learn anything. If we go to a *guru* simply to challenge him, we will learn nothing. But we must accept the *guru* just as Arjuna accepted his *guru*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself:

*kārpanya-doṣopahata-svabhāvaḥ
prechāmi tvām dharmā-sammūḍha-cetāḥ
yac chreyaḥ syān niścitam brūhi tan me
śiṣyas te ’ham śādhi mām tvām prapanmam*



“Now I am confused about my duty and have lost all composure because of weakness. In this condition I am asking You to tell me clearly what is best for me. Now I am Your disciple and a soul surrendered unto You. Please instruct me.” (Bg.2.7)

From “God” to Dog

This is the process for accepting a *guru*. The *guru* is Kṛṣṇa’s representative, the former *ācāryas*’ representative. Kṛṣṇa says that all *ācāryas* are His representatives; therefore the *guru* should be offered the same respect one would offer to God. As Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura says in his prayers to the spiritual master: *yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādah*. “By the mercy of the spiritual master, one receives the benediction of Kṛṣṇa.” Thus, if we surrender to the bona fide *guru*, we surrender to God. God accepts our surrender to the *guru*.

In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa instructs:

*sarva-dharmān parityajya
mām ekaṁ śaraṇam 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) Someone may argue, “Where is Kṛṣṇa? I shall surrender to Him.” But no, the process is that we first surrender to Kṛṣṇa’s representative; then we surrender to Kṛṣṇa. Therefore it is said, *sākṣād-dharitvena samasta-śāstraiḥ*: the *guru* is as good as God. When we offer respects to the *guru*, we are offering respects to God. Because we are trying to be God conscious, it is required that we learn how to offer respects to God through God’s representative. In all the *śāstras*, the *guru* is described to be as good as God, but the *guru* never says, “I am God.” The disciple’s duty is to offer respect to the *guru* just as he offers respect to God, but the *guru* never thinks, “My disciples are offering me the same respect they offer to God; therefore I have become God.” As soon as he thinks like this, he becomes a dog instead of God. Therefore Viśvanātha Cakravartī says, *kintu prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya*. Because he is the most confidential servitor of God, the *guru* is offered the same respect that we offer God. God is always God, *guru* is always *guru*. As a matter of etiquette, God is the worshipable God, and *guru* is the worshiper God (*sevā-bhagavān*). Therefore the *guru* is addressed as *prabhupāda*. The word *prabhu* means “lord,” and *pāda* means “position.” Thus *prabhupāda* means “he who has taken the position of the Lord.” This is the same as *sākṣād-dharitvena samasta-śāstraiḥ*.

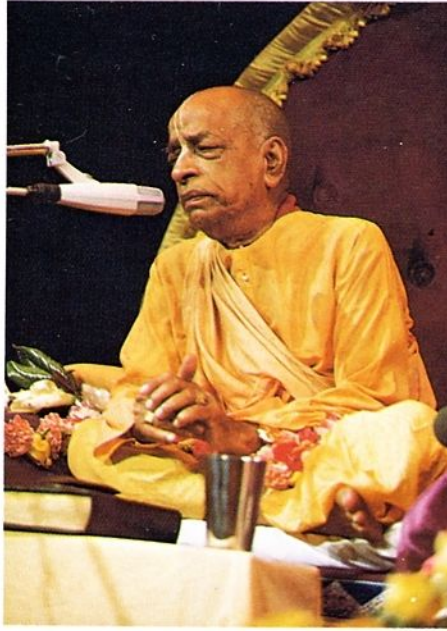
Only if we are very serious about

**“We should not accept a guru suddenly out of fanaticism.
That is very dangerous.”**

understanding the science of God is a *guru* required. We should not try to keep a *guru* as a matter of fashion. One who has accepted a *guru* speaks intelligently. He never speaks nonsense. That is the sign of having accepted a bona fide *guru*. We should certainly offer all respect to the spiritual master, but we should also remember how to carry out his orders. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself tells us the method of seeking out and approaching the *guru*:

—
*tad viddhi praṇipātena
paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānam
jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*

“Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.” (Bg.4.34) The first process is that of surrender. We have to find an exalted person and willingly surrender before him. The *sāstras* enjoin that before we take a *guru* we study him carefully to find out whether we can surrender to him. We should not accept a *guru* suddenly out of fanaticism. That is very dangerous. The *guru* should also study the person who wants to become a disciple to see if he is fit. That is the way a relationship is established between the *guru* and disciple. Everything is provided, but we must take up the process seriously. Then we can be trained to become a bona fide disciple. First we must find a bona fide *guru*, establish our relationship with him and act accordingly. Then our life will be successful, for the *guru* can enlighten the sincere disciple who is in darkness.



Perfecting Our Life

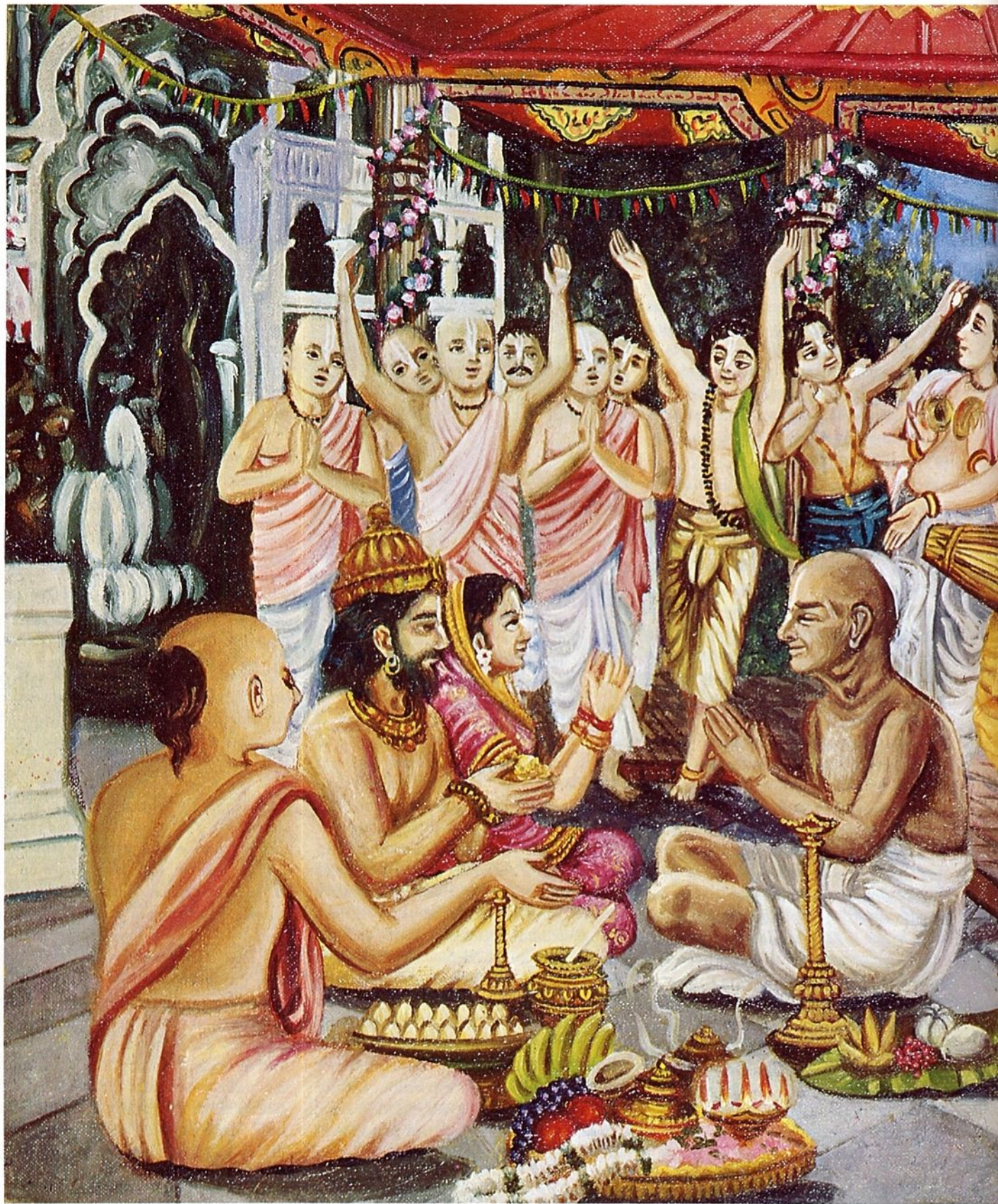
Everyone is born a rascal and a fool. If we are born learned, why do we need to go to school? If we do not cultivate knowledge, we are no better than animals. An animal may say that there is no need of books and that he has become a *guru*, but how can anyone obtain knowledge without the study of authoritative books on science and philosophy? Rascal *gurus* try to avoid these things. We must understand that we are all born rascals and fools and that we have to be enlightened. We have to receive knowledge to make our lives perfect. If we do not perfect our lives, we are defeated. What is this defeat? The struggle for existence. We are trying to obtain a better life, to attain a superior position, and for this we are struggling very hard. But we do not know what a superior position actually is.

Whatever position we have in this material world must be given up. We may have a good position or a bad position; in any case, we cannot remain here. We may earn millions of dollars and think, “Now I am in a good position,” but a little dysentery or cholera will finish our position. If the bank fails, our position is gone. So actually there is no good position in this material world. It is a farce. Those who try to attain a better position in the material world are ultimately defeated because there is no better position. *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.26) says what the better position is:

*mām ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa
bhakti-yogena sevate
sa guṇān samatīyaitān
brahma-bhūyāya kalpate*

“One who engages in full devotional service, who does not fall down in any circumstance, at once transcends the modes of material nature and thus comes to the level of Brahman.”

Is there any science that gives us the knowledge by which we may become immortal? Yes, we may become immortal, but not in the material sense. We cannot receive this knowledge in so-called universities. However, there is knowledge contained in the Vedic scriptures by which we may become immortal. That immortality is our better position. No more birth, no more death, no more old age, no more disease. Thus the *guru* takes on a very great responsibility. He must guide his disciple and enable him to become an eligible candidate for the perfect position, immortality. The *guru* must be competent to lead his disciple back home, back to Godhead. Thank you very much. 🙏





Celebrating the Birth of Lord Kṛṣṇa

Five thousand years ago, Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, descended from the spiritual world and appeared in Vṛndāvana, India. Naturally an occasion of great joy for His devotees, His birthday, Janmāṣṭamī, was celebrated with opulence and gaiety. The original Janmāṣṭamī (pictured left) took place in Vṛndāvana at the house of Kṛṣṇa's foster father, Nanda Mahārāja. Learned brāhmaṇas and astrologers led the festivities, and all the town's residents joined in the singing, dancing, and feasting. Each year since then Lord Kṛṣṇa's devotees have marked the auspicious event in the same way. Today, people from many nations, having heard about this wonderful day, take pleasure in celebrating Janmāṣṭamī. The following pages depict last year's festival at Bhaktivedanta Manor, near London, England.



Smiling affectionately, the Deities greet visitors to Bhaktivedanta Manor.

Friends of the Society from the London area gather at the estate for the Janmāṣṭamī fair.



The Birth of Lord Kṛṣṇa

An International Holiday

by Mādhāvananda dāsa

Many Indian people who have left their homeland in search of material prosperity in the West have become estranged from their own culture. But when they see young Westerners taking to the essence of the Vedic tradition in the form of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, they are moved to review their neglected heritage and revive their practice. Thus thousands of Indians regularly visit Kṛṣṇa consciousness centers around the world. One of them, Bhaktivedanta Manor, is pictured here.

Bhaktivedanta Manor is a large estate in the countryside near London, England. Its bountiful gardens, orchards, pastureland and dairy accompany an exquisite temple graced by Deities of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His eternal consort, Rādhārāṇī. The formal name of the Deities, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gokulānanda, honors Gokula, a farming village in India where Kṛṣṇa lived thousands of years ago.

Drawn by these perennial attractions, busloads of Indian guests come to the Manor every Sunday. As they arrive, they bow down before the altar, offering prayers, fruits, grains and flowers. The Indian guests feel quite at home doing this, for as His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda has said, "Most Indian people are by nature Kṛṣṇa conscious, but being attracted by the glare of material life in the West, they have forgotten their great culture and heritage."

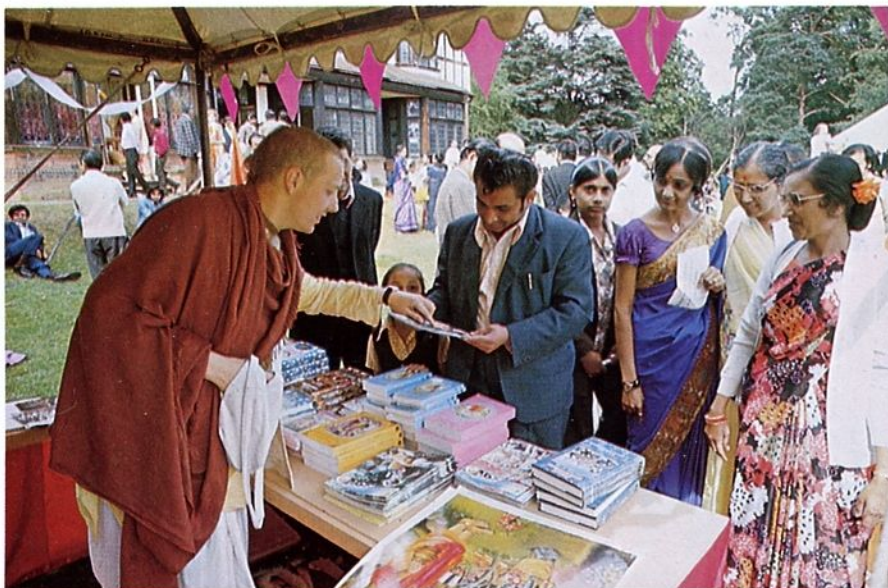
Of course, Indians are not alone in this regard. The cultural mainstream of all human civilization, East and West, is its spiritual heritage, and all contemporary societies are beset by forgetfulness of this fact. It is the aim of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness to remind us all, regardless of background, of our permanent relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Indians and native-born Britishers alike appreciate the transcendental

qualities of a Sunday feast at the Manor.

Last August at Bhaktivedanta Manor, a celebration of the birthday, or appearance day, of Lord Kṛṣṇa drew over five thousand people to the temple. That gathering is seen on these pages. Kṛṣṇa's appearance day, called Janmāṣṭamī, is the most important holiday on the Vedic calendar. Expecting a crowd, the devotees erected a large tent on the front lawn. Inside the tent, festivities—plays, movies, slides, discourses and congregational chanting of the Lord's holy names—continued through the day and evening until midnight. Then a magnificent ceremony called *abhiṣeka* was performed. The Deities were bathed in yogurt, milk, rose water, clarified butter and honey, with fifteen hundred guests staying to watch. At its conclusion, everyone enjoyed a sumptuous feast of food offered to Kṛṣṇa. That evening, inspired by the transcendental mission of ISKCON, eleven guests enrolled in the society's life membership program.

On many days that summer, the Deities were taken from Their altar, placed on a palanquin and carried through the local village of Letchmore Heath. Hundreds of participants followed, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. And in November a throng of nine thousand came to the Manor to celebrate a favorite holiday, Govardhana-pūjā, which commemorates Kṛṣṇa's transcendental pastime of lifting Govardhana Hill.

On hearing about the marvelous programs at Bhaktivedanta Manor, Śrīla Prabhupāda commented, "This movement of Lord Caitanya's is so wonderful. There are so many festivals—Janmāṣṭamī, Gaura-pūrṇimā, Govardhana-pūjā, Jhulana-yātrā, Ratha-yātrā, Rāsā-līlā. Practically speaking, there is a big festival every two months. So let there be many such wonderful programs, and let everyone come and see the blissful life of Kṛṣṇa consciousness." The devotees of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness extend this invitation to all readers of BACK TO GODHEAD. We hope you'll join us at the ISKCON center nearest you for this month's Janmāṣṭamī celebration on August 30. 🙏



Indians are familiar with Vedic literature, but most haven't heard the meaning clearly explained. They are eager to read the books of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda to gain a better understanding.



Chanting the Lord's holy names is the highlight of the program, and it continues for many hours. The beautiful sound awakens spiritual consciousness.



Devotees and guests crowd into the huge pavilion all afternoon and evening for the plays, dances and concerts. The Deities preside at the right of the stage.

The Killing of Pūtanā Witch

Even as a child, Lord Kṛṣṇa demonstrated His divinity by performing superhuman feats. The following account of His slaying the witch Pūtanā is taken from *Kṛṣṇa, The Supreme Personality of Godhead*, by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.

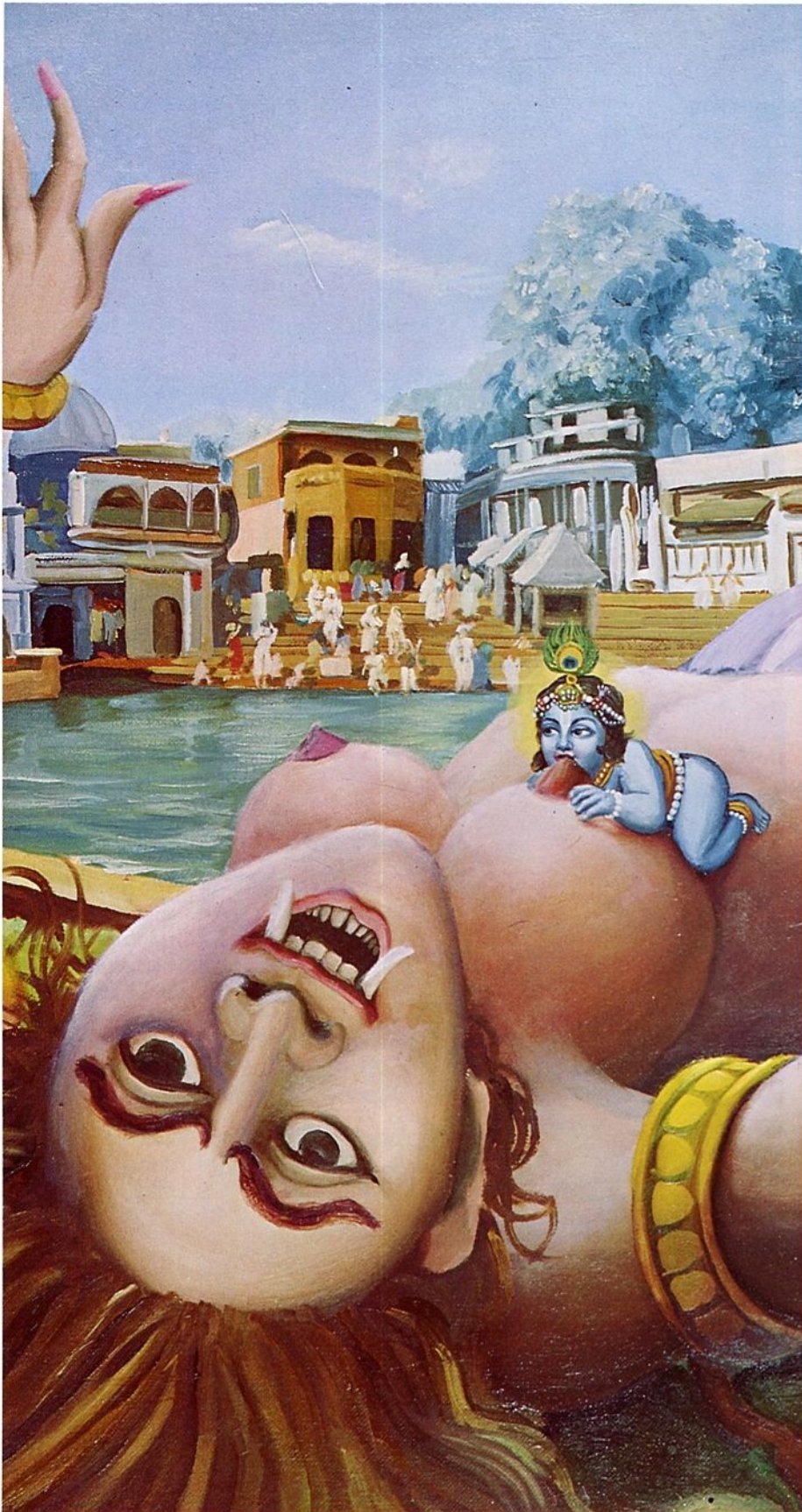


Illustration: Muralidhara dāsa

AFTER consulting with his demonic ministers, Kāmsa instructed a witch named Pūtanā, who knew the black art of killing small children by ghastly, sinful methods, to kill all kinds of children in the cities, villages and pasturing grounds. Such witches can play their black art only where there is no chanting or hearing of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. It is said that wherever the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is done, even negligently, all bad elements—witches, ghosts and dangerous calamities—immediately disappear. And this is certainly true of the place where the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is done seriously—especially in Vṛndāvana when the Supreme Lord was personally present. Therefore, the doubts of Nanda Mahārāja were certainly based on affection for Kṛṣṇa. Actually there was no danger from the activities of Pūtanā, despite her powers. Such witches are called *khecarī*, which means they can fly in the sky. This black art of witchcraft is still practiced by some women in the remote north-western side of India. They can transfer themselves from one place to another on the branch of an uprooted tree. Pūtanā knew this witchcraft, and therefore she is described in the *Bhāgavatam* as *khecarī*.

Pūtanā entered the county of Gokula, the residential quarter of Nanda Mahārāja, without permission. Dressing herself just like a beautiful woman, she entered the house of Mother Yaśodā. She appeared very beautiful with raised hips, nicely swollen breasts, and flowers in her hair. She looked especially beautiful on account of her thin waist. She was glancing at everyone, with attractive looks and smiling face, and all the residents of Vṛndāvana were captivated. The innocent cowherd women thought that she was a goddess of fortune appearing in Vṛndāvana with a lotus flower in her hand. It seemed to them that she had personally come to see Kṛṣṇa, who is her husband. Because of her exquisite beauty, no one checked her movement, and therefore she freely entered the house of Nanda Mahārāja. Pūtanā, the killer of many, many children, found baby Kṛṣṇa lying on a small bed, and she could at once perceive that the baby was hiding His unparalleled potencies.

Pūtanā thought, “This child is so powerful that He can destroy the whole universe immediately.”

God is Always God

Pūtanā’s understanding is very significant. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is situated in everyone’s heart. It is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that He gives one necessary intelligence, and He also causes one to forget. Pūtanā was immediately aware that the child whom she was observing in the house of Nanda Mahārāja was the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. He was lying there as a small baby, but that does not mean that He was less powerful. The materialistic theory that God-worship is anthropomorphic is not correct. No living being can become God by undergoing meditation or austerities. God is always God. Kṛṣṇa as the child-baby is as complete as He is as a full-fledged youth. The Māyāvāda theory holds that the living entity was formerly God but has now become overwhelmed by the influence of *māyā*. Therefore they say that presently he is not God, but when the influence of *māyā* is taken away, then he again becomes God. This theory cannot be applied to the minute living entities. The living entities are minute parts and parcels of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; they are minute particles or sparks of the supreme fire, but they are not the original fire, or Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, even from the beginning of His appearance in the house of Vasudeva and Devakī.

Kṛṣṇa showed the nature of a small baby and closed His eyes, as if to avoid the face of Pūtanā. This closing of the eyes is interpreted and studied in different ways by the devotees. Some say that Kṛṣṇa closed His eyes because He did not like to see the face of Pūtanā, who had killed so many children and who had now come to kill Him. Others say that something extraordinary was being dictated to her, and in order to give her assurance, Kṛṣṇa closed His eyes so that she would not be frightened. And yet others interpret in this way: Kṛṣṇa appeared to kill the demons and give protection to the devotees, as it is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.8): *paritrāṇāya*

sādhūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām. The first demon to be killed was a woman. According to Vedic rules, the killing of a woman, a *brāhmaṇa*, cows or of a child is forbidden. Kṛṣṇa was obliged to kill the demon Pūtanā, and because the killing of a woman is forbidden according to the Vedic *śāstra*, He could not help but close His eyes. Another interpretation is that Kṛṣṇa closed His eyes because He simply took Pūtanā to be His nurse. Pūtanā came to Kṛṣṇa just to offer her breast for the Lord to suck. Kṛṣṇa is so merciful that even though He knew Pūtanā was there to kill Him, He took her as His nurse or mother.

There are seven kinds of mothers according to Vedic injunction: the real mother, the wife of a teacher or spiritual master, the wife of a king, the wife of a *brāhmaṇa*, the cow, the nurse and the mother earth. Because Pūtanā came to take Kṛṣṇa on her lap and offer her breast’s milk to be sucked by Him, she was accepted by Kṛṣṇa as one of His mothers. That is considered to be another reason He closed His eyes: He had to kill a nurse or mother. But His killing of His mother or nurse was no different from His love for His real mother or foster mother Yaśodā. We further understand from Vedic information that Pūtanā was also treated as a mother and given the same facility as Yaśodā. As Yaśodā was given liberation from the material world, so Pūtanā was also given liberation. When the baby Kṛṣṇa closed His eyes, Pūtanā took Him on her lap. She did not know that she was holding death personified. If a person mistakes a snake for a rope, he dies. Similarly, Pūtanā killed so many babies before meeting Kṛṣṇa, but now she was accepting the snake that would kill her immediately.

A Sword in a Decorated Case

When Pūtanā was taking baby Kṛṣṇa on her lap, both Yaśodā and Rohiṇī were present, but they did not forbid her because she was so beautifully dressed and because she showed motherly affection towards Kṛṣṇa. They could not understand that she was a sword within a decorated case. Pūtanā had smeared a very powerful poison on her breasts, and immediately after taking the baby on her

lap, she pushed her breastly nipple within His mouth. She was hoping that as soon as He would suck her breast, He would die. But baby Kṛṣṇa very quickly took the nipple in anger. He sucked the milk-poison along with the life air of the demon. In other words, Kṛṣṇa simultaneously sucked the milk from her breast and killed her by sucking out her life. Kṛṣṇa is so merciful that because the demon Pūtanā came to offer her breast-milk to Him, He fulfilled her desire and accepted her activity as motherly. But to stop her from further nefarious activities, He immediately killed her. And because the demon was killed by Kṛṣṇa, she got liberation. When Kṛṣṇa sucked out her very breath, Pūtanā fell down on the ground, spread her arms and legs and began to cry, "Oh, child, leave me, leave me!" She was crying loudly and perspiring, and her whole body became wet.

Nightmare Finished

As she died screaming, there was a tremendous vibration both on the earth and in the sky, in all directions, and people thought that thunderbolts were falling. Thus the nightmare of the Pūtanā witch was over, and she assumed her real feature as a great demon. She opened her fierce mouth and spread her arms and legs all over. She fell exactly as Vṛkāsura when struck by the thunderbolts of Indra. The long hair on her head was scattered all over her body. Her fallen body extended up to twelve miles and smashed all the trees to pieces, and everyone was struck with wonder upon seeing this gigantic body. Her teeth appeared just like ploughed roads, and her nostrils appeared just like mountain caves. Her breasts appeared like blind wells, and her two thighs appeared like two banks of a river; her two hands appeared like two strongly constructed bridges, and her abdomen seemed like a dried-up lake. All the cowherd men and women became struck with awe and wonder upon seeing this. And the tumultuous sound of her falling shocked their brains and ears and made their hearts beat strongly.

When the *gopīs* saw little Kṛṣṇa playing on Pūtanā's lap, they very quickly came and picked Him up. Mother Yaśodā, Rohiṇī and other elderly *gopīs* immediately performed the auspicious

rituals by taking the tail of a cow and circumambulating His body. The child was completely washed with the urine of a cow, and the dust created by the hooves of the cows was thrown all over His body. This was all just to save little Kṛṣṇa from further inauspicious accidents. This incident gives us a clear indication of how important the cow is to the family, society and to living beings in general. The transcendental body of Kṛṣṇa did not require any protection, but to instruct us on the importance of the cow, the Lord was smeared over with cow dung, washed with the urine of a cow and sprinkled with the dust upraised by the walking of the cows.

After this purificatory process, the *gopīs*, headed by Mother Yaśodā and Rohiṇī, chanted twelve names of Viṣṇu to give Kṛṣṇa's body full protection from all evil influences. They washed their hands and feet and sipped water three times, as is the custom before chanting *mantra*. They chanted as follows: "My dear Kṛṣṇa, may the Lord who is known as Maṇimān protect Your thighs; may Lord Viṣṇu who is known as Yajña protect Your legs; may Lord Acyuta protect Your arms; may Lord Hayagrīva protect Your abdomen; may Lord Keśava protect Your heart; may Lord Viṣṇu protect Your arms; may Lord Urukrama protect Your face; may Lord Īśvara protect Your head; may Lord Cakradhara protect Your front; may Lord Gadādhara protect Your back; may Lord Madhusūdana, who carries a bow in His hand, protect Your eyesight; may Lord Viṣṇu with His conchshell protect Your left side; may the Personality of Godhead Upendra protect You from above, and may Lord Tārkaṣya protect You from below the earth; may Lord Haladhara protect You from all sides; may the Personality of Godhead Hṛṣīkeśa protect all Your senses; may Lord Nārāyaṇa protect Your breath; and may the Lord of Śvetadvīpa, Nārāyaṇa, protect Your heart; may Lord Yogeśvara protect Your mind; may Lord Pṛṣṇigarbha protect Your intelligence, and may the Supreme Personality of Godhead protect Your soul. While You are playing, may Lord Govinda protect You from all sides; and when You are sleeping, may Lord Mādhava protect You from all danger; when You are working, may the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha

protect You from falling down; when You are sitting, may the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha give You all protection; and while You are eating, may the Lord of all sacrifices give You all protection."

Thus Mother Yaśodā began to chant different names of Viṣṇu to protect the child Kṛṣṇa's different bodily parts. Mother Yaśodā was firmly convinced that she should protect her child from different kinds of evil spirits and ghosts—namely Dākinīs, Yātudhānīs, Kūṣmāṇḍās, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, Vināyakas, Koṭarā, Revatī, Jyeṣṭhā, Pūtanā, Mātṛkās, Unmādas and similar other evil spirits who cause persons to forget their own existence and give trouble to the life air and the senses. Sometimes they appear in dreams and cause much perturbation; sometimes they appear as old women and suck the blood of small children. But all such ghosts and evil spirits cannot remain where there is chanting of the holy name of God. Mother Yaśodā was firmly convinced of the Vedic injunctions about the importance of cows and the holy name of Viṣṇu; therefore she took all shelter in the cows and the name of Viṣṇu so that He might save the child. Vedic culture has taken advantage of keeping cows and chanting the holy name of Viṣṇu since the beginning of history, and persons who are still following the Vedic ways, especially the householders, keep at least one dozen cows and worship the Deity of Lord Viṣṇu, who is installed in their house.

Loving Protection

The elderly *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana were so absorbed in affection for Kṛṣṇa that they wanted to save Him, although there was no need to, for He had already protected Himself. They could not understand that Kṛṣṇa was the Supreme Personality of Godhead playing as a child. After performing the formalities to protect the child, Mother Yaśodā took Kṛṣṇa and let Him suck her own breast. When the child was protected by Viṣṇu *mantra*, Mother Yaśodā felt that He was safe. In the meantime, all the cowherd men who went to Mathurā to pay tax returned home and were struck with wonder at seeing the gigantic dead body of Pūtanā.

(continued on page 17)

ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

The Beautiful Story of the Personality of Godhead

This is the first installment of a new monthly feature: a serialized presentation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, India's great spiritual classic written 5,000 years ago by Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, and now presented in a new translation with commentary by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* provides the key to how humanity can become united in peace, prosperity and friendship around a common cause. That common cause is the spiritual oneness of all living beings, and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* presents a revolutionary ideology which can serve as the basis for the re-spiritualization of society. There is no lack of mundane scientific advancement in today's world, but what is lacking is knowledge of the science of God. Therefore, in a world suffering from universal discord, anxiety and confusion, there is no more important literature than this brilliant *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. If you would like to obtain any single volume or the entire series of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* currently in print, please see page 15.

First Canto "Creation"

Chapter One Questions by the Sages

TEXT 1

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय

जन्माद्यस्य यतोऽन्वयादितरतश्चार्थेष्वभिज्ञः स्वराट्
तेने ब्रह्म हृदा य आदिकवये मुह्यन्ति यत्सूरयः ।
तेजोवारिमृदां यथा विनिमयो यत्र त्रिसर्गोऽमृषा
धाम्ना स्वेन सदा निरस्तकुहकं सत्यं परं धीमहि ॥ १ ॥

om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya
janmādy asya yato 'nvayād itarataś cārtheṣu abhijñāḥ sva-rāṭ
tene brahma hṛdā ya ādi-kavaye muhyanti yat sūrayaḥ
tejo-vāri-mṛdāṃ yathā vinimayo yatra tri-sarga 'mṛṣā
dhāmnā svena sadā nirasta-kuhakaṃ satyaṃ paraṃ dhīmaḥi.

om—O my Lord; namaḥ—offering my obeisances; bhagavate—unto the Personality of Godhead; vāsudevāya—unto Vāsudeva (the son of Vasudeva), or Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Primeval Lord; janma-ādī—creation, sustenance and destruction; asya—of the manifested universes; yataḥ—from whom; anva-yāt—directly; itarataḥ—indirectly; ca—and; artheṣu—purposes; abhijñāḥ—fully cognizant; sva-rāṭ—fully independent; tene—imparted; brahma—the Vedic knowledge; hṛdā—consciousness of the heart; yaḥ—one who; ādi-kavaye—unto the original created being; muhyanti—are illusioned; yat—about whom; sūrayaḥ—great sages and demigods; tejaḥ—fire; vāri—water; mṛdām—earth; yathā—as much as; vinimayaḥ—action and reaction; yatra—whereupon; tri-sargaḥ—three modes of creation, creative faculties; amṛṣā—almost factual; dhāmnā—along with all transcendental paraphernalia; svena—self-sufficiently; sadā—always; nirasta—negation by absence; kuhakaḥ—illusion; satyaḥ—truth; param—absolute; dhīmaḥi—I do meditate upon.

TRANSLATION

I offer my obeisances unto Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, son of Vasudeva, who is the supreme all-pervading Personality of Godhead. I meditate upon Him, the transcendent reality, who is the primeval cause of all causes, from whom all manifested universes arise, in whom they dwell and by whom they are destroyed. I meditate upon that eternally effulgent Lord who is directly and indirectly conscious of all manifestations and yet is beyond them. It is He only who first imparted Vedic knowledge unto the heart of Brahmā, the first created being. Through Him this world, like a mirage, appears real even to great sages and demigods. Because of Him, the material universes,

created by the three modes of nature, appear to be factual, although they are unreal. I meditate therefore upon Him, the Absolute Truth, who is eternally existent in His transcendental abode, and who is forever free of illusion.

PURPORT

Obeisances unto the Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva, directly indicate Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the divine son of Vasudeva and Devakī. This fact will be more explicitly explained in the text of this work. Śrī Vyāsadeva asserts herein that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original Personality of Godhead, and all others are His direct or indirect plenary portions or portions of the portion. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has even more explicitly explained the subject matter in his *Kṛṣṇa-sandarbhā*. And Brahmā, the original living being, has explained the subject of Śrī Kṛṣṇa substantially in his treatise named *Brahma-saṁhitā*. In the *Sāma-veda Upaniṣad*, it is also stated that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the divine son of Devakī. Therefore, in this prayer, the first proposition holds that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the primeval Lord, and if any transcendental nomenclature is to be understood as belonging to the Absolute Personality of Godhead, it must be the name indicated by the word Kṛṣṇa, which means the all-attractive. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, in many places, the Lord asserts Himself to be the original Personality of Godhead, and this is confirmed by Arjuna, and also by great sages like Nārada, Vyāsa, and many others. In the *Padma Purāṇa*, it is also stated that out of the innumerable names of the Lord, the name of Kṛṣṇa is the principal one. Vāsudeva indicates the plenary portion of the Personality of Godhead, and all the different forms of the Lord, being identical with Vāsudeva, are indicated in this text. The name Vāsudeva particularly indicates the divine son of Vasudeva and Devakī. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is always meditated upon by the *paramahंसas* who are the perfected ones among those in the renounced order of life.

Vāsudeva, or Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is the cause of all causes. Everything that exists emanates from the Lord. How this is so is explained in later chapters of this work. This work is described by Mahāprabhu Śrī Caitanya as the spotless *Purāṇa* because it contains the transcendental narration of the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The history of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is also very glorious. It was compiled by Śrī Vyāsadeva after he had attained maturity in transcendental knowledge. He wrote this under the instructions of Śrī Nāradaḥ, his spiritual master. Vyāsadeva compiled all Vedic literatures containing the four divisions of the *Vedas*, the *Vedānta-sūtras* or the *Brahma-sūtras*, the *Purāṇas*, the *Mahābhārata*, and so on. But nevertheless he was not satisfied. His dissatisfaction was observed by his spiritual master, and thus Nārada advised him to write on the transcendental activities of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. These transcendental activities are described specifically in the Tenth Canto of this work. But, in order to reach to the very substance, one must proceed gradually by developing knowledge of the categories.

It is natural that a philosophical mind wants to know about the origin of the creation. At night he sees the stars in the sky, and he naturally speculates about their inhabitants. Such inquiries are natural for man because man has a developed consciousness which is higher than that of the animals. The author of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* gives a direct answer to

such inquiries. He says that the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the origin of all creations. He is not only the creator of the universe, but the destroyer as well. The manifested cosmic nature is created at a certain period by the will of the Lord. It is maintained for some time, and then it is annihilated by His will. Therefore, the supreme will is behind all cosmic activities. Of course, there are atheists of various categories who do not believe in a creator, but that is due to a poor fund of knowledge. The modern scientist, for example, has created space satellites, and by some arrangement or other, these satellites are thrown into outer space to fly for some time at the control of the scientist who is far away. Similarly, all the universes with innumerable stars and planets are controlled by the intelligence of the Personality of Godhead.

In Vedic literatures, it is said that the Absolute Truth, Personality of Godhead, is the chief amongst all living personalities. All living beings beginning from the first created being, Brahmā, down to the smallest ant are individual living beings. And above Brahmā, there are even other living beings with individual capacities, and the Personality of Godhead is also a similar living being. And He is an individual as are the other living beings. But the Supreme Lord or the supreme living being has the greatest intelligence, and He possesses supermost inconceivable energies of all different varieties. If a man's brain can produce a space satellite, one can very easily imagine how brains higher than man can produce similarly wonderful things which are far superior. The reasonable person will easily accept this argument, but there are stubborn atheists who would never agree. Śrīla Vyāsadeva, however, at once accepts the supreme intelligence as the *parameśvara*. He offers his respectful obeisances unto the supreme intelligence addressed as the *para* or the *parameśvara* or the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And that *parameśvara* is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as admitted in *Bhagavad-gītā* and other scriptures delivered by Śrī Vyāsadeva and specifically in this *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Lord says that there is no other *Para-tattva* (*summum bonum*) than Himself. Therefore, Śrī Vyāsadeva at once worships the *Para-tattva*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose transcendental activities are described in the Tenth Canto.

Unscrupulous persons go immediately to the Tenth Canto and especially to the five chapters which describe the Lord's *rāsa dance*. This portion of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the most confidential part of this great literature. Unless one is thoroughly accomplished in the transcendental knowledge of the Lord, one is sure to misunderstand the Lord's worshipable transcendental pastimes called *rāsa dance* and His love affairs with the *gopīs*. This subject matter is highly spiritual, and only the liberated persons who have gradually attained to the stage of *paramahansa* can transcendently relish this *rāsa dance*. Śrīla Vyāsadeva therefore gives the reader the chance to gradually develop spiritual realization before actually relishing the essence of the pastimes of the Lord. Therefore, he purposely invokes a *Gāyatrī mantra*, *dhīmahi*. This *Gāyatrī mantra* is meant for spiritually advanced people. When one is successful in chanting the *Gāyatrī mantra*, he can enter into the transcendental position of the Lord. One must therefore acquire brahminical qualities or be perfectly situated in the quality of goodness in order to chant the *Gāyatrī mantra* successfully and then attain to the stage of transcendently realizing the Lord, His name, His fame, His qualities and so on.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the narration of the *svarūpa* of the Lord manifested by His internal potency, and this potency is distinguished from the external potency which has manifested the cosmic world, which is within our experience. Śrīla Vyāsadeva makes a clear distinction between the two in this *śloka*. Śrī Vyāsadeva says herein that the manifested internal potency is real, whereas the external manifested energy in the form of material existence is only temporary and illusory like the mirage in the desert. In the desert mirage there is no actual water. There is only the appearance of water. Real water is somewhere else. The manifested cosmic creation appears as reality. But reality, of which this is but a shadow, is in the spiritual world. Absolute Truth is in the spiritual sky, not the material sky. In the material sky everything is relative truth. That is to say, one truth depends on something else. This cosmic creation results from interaction of the three modes of nature, and the temporary manifestations are so created as to present an illusion of reality to the bewildered mind of the conditioned soul, who appears in so many species of life, including the higher demigods, like Brahmā, Indra, Candra, and so on. In actuality, there is no reality in the manifested world. There appears to be reality, however, because of the true reality which exists in the spiritual world, where the

Personality of Godhead eternally exists with His transcendental paraphernalia.

The chief engineer of a complicated construction does not personally take part in the construction, but he knows every nook and corner because everything is done under his direction. He knows everything about the construction, both directly and indirectly. Similarly, the Personality of Godhead who is the supreme engineer of this cosmic creation knows every nook and corner, although affairs are being carried out by demigods. Beginning from Brahmā down to the insignificant ant, no one is independent in the material creation. The hand of the Lord is seen everywhere. All material elements as well as all spiritual sparks emanate from Him only. And whatever is created in this material world is but the interaction of two energies, the material and the spiritual, which emanate from the Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. A chemist can manufacture water in the chemical laboratory by mixing hydrogen and oxygen. But, in reality, the living entity works in the laboratory under the direction of the Supreme Lord. And the materials with which he works are also supplied by the Lord. The Lord knows everything directly and indirectly, and He is cognizant of all minute details, and He is fully independent. He is compared with the mine of gold, and the cosmic creations in so many different forms are compared with objects made from the gold, such as gold rings, necklaces and so on. The gold ring and the gold necklace are qualitatively one with the gold in the mine, but quantitatively the gold in the mine is different. Therefore, the Absolute Truth is simultaneously one and different. Nothing is absolutely equal with the Absolute Truth, but at the same time, nothing is independent of the Absolute Truth.

Conditioned souls beginning from Brahmā, who engineers the entire universe, down to the insignificant ant, are all creating, but none of them are independent of the Supreme Lord. The materialist wrongly thinks that there is no creator other than his own self. This is called *māyā*, or illusion. Because of his poor fund of knowledge, the materialist cannot see beyond the purview of his imperfect senses, and thus he thinks that matter automatically takes its own shape without the aid of a superior intelligence. This is refuted in this *śloka* by Śrīla Vyāsadeva: "Since the complete whole or the Absolute Truth is the source of everything, nothing can be independent of the body of the Absolute Truth." Whatever happens to the body quickly becomes known to the embodied. Similarly, the creation is the body of the absolute whole. Therefore, the Absolute knows everything directly and indirectly that happens in the creation.

In the *Śruti mantra*, it is also stated that the absolute whole or Brahman is the ultimate source of everything. Everything emanates from Him, and everything is maintained by Him. And at the end, everything enters into Him. That is the law of nature. In the *Smṛti mantra*, the same is confirmed. It is said that the source from which everything emanates at the beginning of Brahmā's millennium, and the reservoir to which everything ultimately enters, is the Absolute Truth or Brahman. Material scientists take it for granted that the ultimate source of the planetary system is the sun, but they are unable to explain the source of the sun. Herein, the ultimate source is explained. According to the Vedic literatures, Brahmā, who may be compared to the sun, is not the ultimate creator. It is stated in this *śloka* that Brahmā was taught Vedic knowledge by the Personality of Godhead. One may argue that Brahmā, being the original living being, could not be inspired because there was no other being living at that time. Herein it is stated that the Supreme Lord inspired the secondary creator, Brahmā, in order that Brahmā could carry out his creative functions. So, the supreme intelligence behind all creations is the Absolute Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa states that it is He only who superintends the creative energy, *prakṛti*, which constitutes the totality of matter. Therefore, Śrī Vyāsadeva does not worship Brahmā, but the Supreme Lord, who guides Brahmā in his creative activities. In this *śloka*, the particular words *abhijñāḥ* and *svarāḥ* are significant. These two words distinguish the Supreme Lord from all the other living entities. No other living entity is either *abhijñāḥ* or *svarāḥ*. Namely, no one is either fully cognizant or fully independent. Even Brahmā has to meditate upon the Supreme Lord in order to create. Then what to speak of great scientists like Einstein! The brains of such a scientist are certainly not the products of any human being. Scientists cannot manufacture such a brain, and what to speak of foolish atheists who defy the authority of the Lord? Even Māyāvādī impersonalists who flatter themselves that they can become

one with the Lord are neither *abhiññāḥ* nor *svārāt*. Such impersonalists undergo severe austerities to acquire knowledge to become one with the Lord. But ultimately they become dependent on some rich disciple who supplies them with money to build monasteries and temples. Atheists like Rāvaṇa or Hiranyakaśipu had to undergo severe penances before they could flout the authority of the Lord. But ultimately, they were rendered helpless and could not save themselves when the Lord appeared before them as cruel death. This is also the case with the modern atheists who also dare to flout the authority of the Lord. Such atheists will be dealt with similarly, for history repeats itself. Whenever men neglect the authority of the Lord, nature and her laws are there to penalize them. This is confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* in the well-known verse: *yadā yadā hi dharmasya glāñiḥ*. "Whenever there is a decline of *dharma* and a rise of *adharma*, O Arjuna, then I incarnate Myself." (Bg. 4.7)

That the Supreme Lord is all-perfect is confirmed in all *Śruti mantras*. It is said in the *Śruti mantras* that the all-perfect Lord threw a glance over matter and thus created all living beings. The living beings are parts and parcels of the Lord, and He impregnates the vast material creation with seeds of spiritual sparks, and thus the creative energies are set in motion to enact so many wonderful creations. An atheist may argue that God is no more expert than a watchmaker, but of course God is greater because He can create machines in duplicate male and female forms. The male and female forms of different types of machineries go on producing innumerable similar machines without God's further attention. If a man could manufacture such a set of machines that could produce other machines without his attention, then he could approach the intelligence of God. But that is not possible, for each machine has to be handled individually. Therefore, no one can create as well as God. Another name for God is *asmaurdha*, which means that no one is equal to or greater than Him. *Param satyam*, or the Supreme Truth, is He who has no equal or superior. This is confirmed in the *Śruti mantras*. It is said that before the creation of the material universe there existed the Lord only, who is master of everyone. That Lord instructed Brahmā in Vedic knowledge. That Lord has to be obeyed in all respects. Anyone who wants to get rid of the material entanglement must surrender unto Him. This is also confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Unless one surrenders unto the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, it is certain that he will be bewildered. When an intelligent man surrenders unto the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa and knows completely that Kṛṣṇa is the cause of all causes, as confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā*, then only can such an intelligent man become a *mahātmā* or great soul. But such a great soul is rarely seen. Only the *mahātmās* can understand that the Supreme Lord is the primeval cause of all creations. He is *parama* or ultimate truth because all other truths are relative to Him. He is omniscient. For Him, there is no illusion.

Some Māyāvādī scholars argue that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was not compiled by Śrī Vyāsadeva. And some of them suggest that this book is a modern creation written by someone named Vopadeva. In order to refute such meaningless arguments, Śrī Śrīdhara Svāmī points out that there is reference to the *Bhāgavatam* in many of the oldest *Purāṇas*. This first *śloka* of the *Bhāgavatam* begins with the *Gāyatrī mantra*. There is reference to this in the *Matsya Purāṇa*, which is the oldest *Purāṇa*. In that *Purāṇa*, it is said with reference to the *Gāyatrī mantra* in the *Bhāgavatam* that there are many narrations of spiritual instructions beginning with the *Gāyatrī mantra*. And there is the history of Vṛtrāsura. Anyone who makes a gift of this great work on a full moon day attains to the highest perfection of life by returning to Godhead. There is reference to the *Bhāgavatam* in other *Purāṇas*, also, where it is clearly stated that this work was finished in twelve cantos which include 18,000 *ślokas*. In the *Padma Purāṇa* also there is reference to the *Bhāgavatam* in a conversation between Gautama and Mahārāja Ambarīṣa. The King was advised therein to read regularly *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* if he desired liberation from material bondage. Under the circumstances, there is no doubt about the authority of the *Bhāgavatam*. Within the past 500 years, many erudite scholars and *ācāryas* like Jīva Gosvāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī, Viśvanātha Cakravartī, Vallabhācārya, and many other distinguished scholars even after the time of Lord Caitanya made elaborate commentaries on the *Bhāgavatam*. And the serious student would do well to attempt to go through them to better relish the transcendental messages.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura specifically deals with the original

and pure sex psychology (*ādī-rasa*), devoid of all mundane inebriety. *The whole material creation is moving under the principle of sex life*. In modern civilization, sex life is the focal point for all activities. Wherever one turns his face, he sees sex life predominant. Therefore, sex life is not unreal. Its reality is experienced in the spiritual world. The material sex life is but a perverted reflection of the original fact. The original fact is in the Absolute Truth, and thus the Absolute Truth cannot be impersonal. It is not possible to be impersonal and contain pure sex life. Consequently, the impersonalist philosophers have given indirect impetus to the abominable mundane sex life because they have overstressed the impersonality of the ultimate truth. Consequently, man without information of the actual spiritual form of sex has accepted perverted material sex life as the all in all. There is a distinction between sex life in the diseased material condition and spiritual sex life.

This *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* will gradually elevate the unbiased reader to the highest perfectional stage of transcendence. It will enable him to transcend the three modes of material activities: fruitive actions, speculative philosophy, and worship of functional deities as inculcated in Vedic verses.

TEXT 2

धर्मः प्रोज्झितकैतवोऽत्र परमो निर्मत्सराणां सतां
वेद्यं वास्तवमत्र वस्तु शिवदं तापत्रयोन्मूलनम् ।
श्रीमद्भागवते महाद्युनिकृते किं वा परैरिष्वरः
सद्यो हृद्यवरुध्यतेऽत्र कृतिमिः शुश्रुषुभिसत्क्षणात् ॥ २ ॥

*dharmah projjhita-kaitava 'tra paramo nirmatsarāṇām satām
vedyam vāstavam atra vastu śivadam tāpa-trayonmūlanam
śrīmat bhāgavate mahādyunikṛte kiṁ vā parair iṣvaraḥ
sadyo hṛdyavarudhyate 'tra kṛtibhiḥ śuśrūṣubhis tat-kṣaṇāt.*

dharmah—religiosity; *projjhita*—completely rejected; *kaitavaḥ*—covered by fruitive intention; *atra*—herein; *paramah*—the highest; *nirmatsarāṇām*—of the one hundred percent pure in heart; *satām*—devotees; *vedyam*—understandable; *vāstavam*—factual; *atra*—herein; *vastu*—substance; *śivadam*—well-being; *tāpa-traya*—three-fold miseries; *unmūlanam*—causing uprooting of; *śrīmat*—beautiful; *bhāgavate*—the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*; *mahādyuni*—the great sage (Vyāsadeva); *kṛte*—having compiled; *kiṁ*—what is; *vā*—the need; *paraiḥ*—others; *iṣvaraḥ*—the Supreme Lord; *sadyaḥ*—at once; *hṛdy*—within the heart; *avarudhyate*—become compact; *atra*—herein; *kṛtibhiḥ*—by the pious men; *śuśrūṣubhiḥ*—by culture; *tat-kṣaṇāt*—without delay.

TRANSLATION

Completely rejecting all religious activities which are materially motivated, this *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* propounds the highest truth, which is understandable by those devotees who are pure in heart. The highest truth is reality distinguished from illusion for the welfare of all. Such truth uproots the threefold miseries. This beautiful *Bhāgavatam*, compiled by the great sage Śrī Vyāsadeva, 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.

PURPORT

Religion includes four primary subjects, namely pious activities, economic development, satisfaction of the senses, and finally liberation from material bondage. Irreligious life is a barbarous condition. Indeed, human life begins when religion begins. Eating, sleeping, fearing, and mating are the four principles of animal life. These are common both to animals and to human beings. But religion is the extra function of the human being. Without religion, human life is no better than animal life. Therefore, in human societies there is some form of religion which aims at self-realization and which makes reference to man's eternal relationship with God.

In the lower stages of human civilization, there is always competition to lord it over the material nature or, in other words, there is a continuous rivalry to satisfy the senses. Driven by such consciousness, man turns to religion. He thus performs pious activities or religious functions in order to gain something material. But if such material gains are obtainable in other ways, then so-called religion is neglected. This is the situation in

modern civilization. Man is thriving economically, so at present he is not very interested in religion. Churches, mosques or temples are now practically vacant. Men are more interested in factories, shops, and cinemas than in religious places which were erected by their forefathers. This practically proves that religion is performed for some economic gains. Economic gains are needed for sense gratification. Often when one is baffled in the pursuit of sense gratification, he takes to salvation and tries to become one with the Supreme Lord. Consequently, all these states are simply different types of sense gratification.

In the *Vedas*, the above mentioned four activities are prescribed in the regulative way so that there will not be any undue competition for sense gratification. But *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is transcendental to all these sense gratificatory activities. It is purely transcendental literature which can be understood only by the pure devotees of the Lord who are transcendental to competitive sense gratification. In the material world there is keen competition between animal and animal, man and man, community and community, nation and nation. But the devotees of the Lord rise above such competitions. They do not compete with the materialist because they are on the path back to Godhead where life is eternal and blissful. Such transcendentalists are nonenvious and pure in heart. In the material world, everyone is envious of everyone else, and therefore there is competition. But the transcendental devotees of the Lord are not only free from material envy, but they are well-wishers to everyone, and they strive to establish a competitionless society with God in the center. The contemporary socialist's conception of a competitionless society is artificial because in the socialist state there is competition for the post of dictator. From the point of view of the *Vedas* or from the point of view of common human activities, sense gratification is the basis of material life. There are three paths mentioned in the *Vedas*. One involves fruitive activities to gain promotion to better planets. Another involves worshiping different demigods for promotion to the planets of the demigods, and another involves realizing the Absolute Truth and His impersonal feature and becoming one with Him.

The impersonal aspect of the Absolute Truth is not the highest. Above the impersonal feature is the *Paramātmā* feature, and above this there is the personal feature of the Absolute Truth or *Bhagavān*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* gives information about the Absolute Truth in His personal feature. It is higher than impersonalist literatures and higher than the *jñāna-kāṇḍa* division of the *Vedas*. It is even higher than the *karma-kāṇḍa* division, and even higher than the *upāśana-kāṇḍa* division because it recommends the worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In the *karma-kāṇḍa*, there is competition to reach heavenly planets for better sense gratification, and there is similar competition in the *jñāna-kāṇḍa* and the *upāśana-kāṇḍa*. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is superior to all of these because it aims at the Supreme Truth which is the substance or the root of all categories. From *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* one can come to know the substance as well as the categories. The substance is the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Lord, and all emanations are relative forms of energy.

Nothing is apart from the substance, but at the same time the energies are different from the substance. This conception is not contradictory. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* explicitly promulgates this simultaneously one and different philosophy of the *Vedānta-sūtra*, which begins with the "janmādy asya" sūtra.

This knowledge of the energy of the Lord being simultaneously one and different from the Lord is an answer to the mental speculators' attempt to establish the energy as the Absolute. When this knowledge is factually understood, one sees the conceptions of monism and dualism to be imperfect. Development of this transcendental consciousness grounded in the conception of simultaneously one and different leads one immediately to the stage of freedom from the threefold miseries. The threefold miseries are 1.) those miseries which arise from the mind and body, 2.) those miseries inflicted by other living beings, and 3.) those miseries arising from natural catastrophes over which one has no control. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* begins with the surrender of the devotee unto the Absolute Person. The devotee is fully aware that he is one with the Absolute and at the same time in the eternal position of servant to the Absolute. In the material conception, one falsely thinks himself the lord of all he surveys, and therefore he is always troubled by the threefold miseries of life. But as soon as one comes to know his real position as transcendental servant,

he at once becomes free from all miseries. As long as the living entity is trying to master material nature, there is no possibility of his becoming servant of the Supreme. Service to the Lord is rendered in pure consciousness of one's spiritual identity; by service one is immediately freed from material encumbrances.

Over and above this, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is a personal commentation on the *Vedānta-sūtra* by Śrī Vyāsadeva. It is written in the maturity of his spiritual life through the mercy of Nārada. Śrī Vyāsadeva is the authorized incarnation of Nārāyaṇa, the Personality of Godhead. Therefore, there is no question as to his authority. He is the author of all other Vedic literatures, yet he recommends the study of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* above all others. In other *Purāṇas* there are different methods set forth by which one can worship the demigods. But in the *Bhāgavatam* only the Supreme Lord is mentioned. The Supreme Lord is the total body, and the demigods are the different parts of that body. Consequently, by worshiping the Supreme Lord, one does not need to worship the demigods. The Supreme Lord becomes fixed in the heart of the devotee immediately. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu has recommended the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as the spotless *Purāṇa* and distinguishes it from all other *Purāṇas*.

The proper method for receiving this transcendental message is to hear it submissively. A challenging attitude cannot help one realize this transcendental message. One particular word is used herein for proper guidance. This word is *śuśrūṣu*. One must be anxious to hear this transcendental message. The desire to sincerely hear is the first qualification.

Less fortunate persons are not at all interested in hearing this *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The process is simple, but the application is difficult. Unfortunate people find enough time to hear idle, social, political conversations, but when invited to attend a meeting of devotees to hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* they suddenly become reluctant. Sometimes professional readers of the *Bhāgavatam* immediately plunge into the confidential topics of the pastime of the Supreme Lord, which they seemingly interpret as sex literature. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is meant to be heard from the beginning. Those who are fit to assimilate this work are mentioned in this *śloka*: "One becomes qualified to hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* after many pious deeds." The intelligent person by thoughtful discretion can be assured by the great sage Vyāsadeva that he can realize the Supreme Personality directly by hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Without undergoing the different stages of realization set forth in the *Vedas*, one can be lifted immediately to the position of *paramahaṁsa* simply by agreeing to receive this message.

TEXT 3

निगमकल्पतरोर्गलितं फलं
शुकमुखादमृतद्रवसंयुतम् ।
पिबत भागवतं रसमालयं
मुहुर्हो रसिका भुवि भावुकाः ॥ ३ ॥

nigama-kalpa-taror galitaṁ phalaṁ
śuka-mukhād amṛta-drava-sanyutam
pibata bhāgavatam rasam ālayam
muhur aho rasikā bhuvī bhāvukāḥ.

nigama—the Vedic literatures; *kalpa-taroḥ*—the desire-tree; *galitaṁ*—fully matured; *phalam*—fruit; *śuka*—Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the original speaker of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*; *mukhāt*—from the lips of; *amṛta*—nectar; *drava*—semi-solid and soft and therefore easily swallowable; *sanyutam*—perfect in all respects; *pibata*—do relish it; *bhāgavatam*—the book dealing in the science of the eternal relation with the Lord; *rasam*—juice (that which is relishable); *ālayam*—until liberation, or even in a liberated condition; *muhur*—always; *aho*—O; *rasikāḥ*—those who are full in the knowledge of mellows; *bhuvī*—on the earth; *bhāvukāḥ*—expert and thoughtful.

TRANSLATION

Know, O thoughtful men, that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the mature fruit of the tree of Vedic literatures. It emanated from the lips of Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Therefore this nectarean fruit is all the more relishable by liberated souls.

PURPORT

In the two previous *ślokas* it has been definitely proved that the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the sublime literature which surpasses all other Vedic scriptures due to its transcendental qualities. It is transcendental to all mundane activities and mundane knowledge. In this *śloka* it is stated that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is not only a superior literature, but that it is the ripened fruit of all Vedic literatures. In other words, it is the cream of all Vedic knowledge. Considering all this, patient and submissive hearing is definitely essential. With great respect and attention, one should receive the message and lessons imparted by the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

The *Vedas* are compared to the desire tree because they contain all things knowable by man. They deal with mundane necessities as well as spiritual realization. The *Vedas* contain regulated principles of knowledge covering social, political, religious, economic, military, medicinal, chemical, physical and metaphysical subject matter and all that may be necessary to keep the body and soul together. Above and beyond all this are specific directions for spiritual realization. Regulated knowledge involves a gradual raising of the living entity to the spiritual platform, and the highest spiritual realization is to know that the Personality of Godhead is the reservoir of all spiritual tastes or *rasas*.

Every living entity, beginning from Brahmā, the first-born living being within the material world, down to the insignificant ant, desires to relish some sort of taste derived from sense perceptions. These sensual pleasures are technically called *rasas*. Such *rasas* are of different varieties. In the revealed scriptures the following twelve varieties of *rasas* are enumerated: 1) *raudra* (anger) 2) *adbhuta* (wonder) 3) *śṛṅgāra* (conjugal love) 4) *hāsyā* (comedy) 5) *vīra* (chivalry) 6) *dayā* (mercy) 7) *dāsyā* (servitorship) 8) *sakhya* (fraternity) 9) *bhayānaka* (horror) 10) *vībhatsa* (shock) 11) *sānta* (neutrality) 12) *vātsalya* (parenthood).

The sum total of all these *rasas* is called affection or love. Primarily, such signs of love are manifested in adoration, service, friendship, eternal affection, and conjugal love. And when these five are absent, love is present indirectly in anger, wonder, comedy, chivalry, fear, shock and so on. For example, when a man is in love with a woman, the *rasa* is called conjugal love. But when such love affairs are disturbed there may be wonder, anger, shock, or even horror. Sometimes love affairs between two persons culminate in ghastly murder scenes. Such *rasas* are displayed between man and man and between animal and animal. There is no possibility of an exchange of *rasa* between a man and an animal or between a man and any other species of living beings within the material world. The *rasas* are exchanged between members of the same species. But as far as the spirit souls are concerned, they are one qualitatively with the Supreme Lord. Therefore, the *rasas* were originally exchanged between the spiritual living being and the spiritual whole, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The spiritual exchange or *rasa* is fully exhibited in spiritual existence between living beings and the Supreme Lord.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is therefore described in the *Śruti mantras*, Vedic hymns, as "the fountainhead of all *rasas*." When one associates with the Supreme Lord and exchanges one's constitutional *rasa* with the Lord, then the living being is actually happy.

These *Śruti mantras* indicate that every living being has its constitutional position which is endowed with a particular type of *rasa* which is to be exchanged with the Personality of Godhead. In the liberated condition only, this primary *rasa* is experienced in full. In the material existence, the *rasa* is experienced in the perverted form, which is temporary. And thus the *rasas* of the material world are exhibited in the material form of *raudra* (anger) and so on.

Therefore, one who attains full knowledge of these different *rasas*, which are the basic principles of activities, can understand the false representations of the original *rasas* which are reflected in the material world. The learned scholar seeks to relish the real *rasa* in the spiritual form. In the beginning he desires to become one with the Supreme. Thus, intelligent transcendentalists cannot go beyond this conception of becoming one with the spirit whole, without knowing of the different *rasas*.

In this *śloka*, it is definitely stated that spiritual *rasa*, which is relished even in the liberated stage, can be experienced in the literature of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* due to its being the ripened fruit of all Vedic knowledge. By submissively hearing this transcendental literature, one can attain the full pleasure of his heart's desire. But, one must be very careful

to hear the message from the right source. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is exactly received from the right source. It was brought by Nārada Muni from the spiritual world and given to his disciple Śrī Vyāsadeva. The latter in turn delivered the message to his son Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī delivered the message to Mahārāja Parīkṣit just seven days before the King's death. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī was a liberated soul from his very birth. He was liberated even in the womb of his mother, and he did not undergo any sort of spiritual training after his birth. At birth no one is qualified, neither in the mundane nor the spiritual sense. But Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, due to his being a perfectly liberated soul, did not have to undergo an evolutionary process for spiritual realization. Yet despite his being a completely liberated person situated in the transcendental position above the three material modes, he was attracted to this transcendental *rasa* of the Supreme Personality of Godhead who is adored by liberated souls who sing Vedic hymns. The Supreme Lord's pastimes are more attractive to liberated souls than to mundane people. He is of necessity not impersonal because it is only possible to carry on transcendental *rasa* with a person.

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* the transcendental pastimes of the Lord are narrated, and the narration is systematically depicted by Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Thus the subject matter is appealing to all classes of persons, including those who seek liberation and those who seek to become one with the supreme whole.

In Sanskrit the parrot is also known as *śuka*. When a ripened fruit is cut by the red beaks of such birds, its sweet flavor is enhanced. The Vedic fruit which is mature and ripe in knowledge is spoken through the lips of Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who is compared to the parrot not for his ability to recite the *Bhāgavatam* exactly as he heard it from his learned father, but for his ability to present the work in a manner that would appeal to all classes of men.

The subject matter is so presented through the lips of Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī that any sincere listener that hears submissively can at once relish transcendental tastes which are distinct from the perverted tastes of the material world. The ripened fruit is not dropped all of a sudden from the highest planet of Kṛṣṇaloka. Rather, it has come down carefully through the chain of disciplic succession without change or disturbance. Foolish people who are not in the transcendental disciplic succession commit great blunders by trying to understand the highest transcendental *rasa* known as the *rāsa* dance without following in the footsteps of Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who presents this fruit very carefully by stages of transcendental realization. One should be intelligent to know the position of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by considering personalities like Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who deals with the subject so carefully. This process of disciplic succession of the *Bhāgavata* school suggests that in the future also *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has to be understood from a person who is factually a representative of Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī. A professional man who makes a business out of reciting the *Bhāgavatam* illegally is certainly not a representative of Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Such a man's business is only to earn his livelihood. Therefore one should refrain from hearing the lectures of such professional men. Such men usually go to the most confidential part of the literature without undergoing the gradual process of understanding this grave subject. They usually plunge into the subject matter of the *rāsa* dance, which is misunderstood by the foolish class of men. Some of them take this to be immoral, while others try to cover it up by their own stupid interpretations. They have no desire to follow in the footsteps of Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī.

One should conclude, therefore, that the serious student of the *rasa* should receive the message of *Bhāgavatam* in the chain of disciplic succession from Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who describes the *Bhāgavatam* from its very beginning and not whimsically to satisfy the mundaner who has very little knowledge in transcendental science. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is so carefully presented that a sincere and serious person can at once enjoy the ripened fruit of Vedic knowledge simply by drinking the nectarean juice through the mouth of Śukadeva Gosvāmī or his bona fide representative.

TEXT 4

नैमिषेनिमिषक्षेत्रे ऋषयः शौनकादयः ।
सत्रं स्वर्गायलोकाय सहस्रसममासत ॥ ४ ॥

*naimiṣe 'nimiṣakṣetre
ṛṣayaḥ śaunakādayaḥ
satraṁ svargāyalokāya
sahasra-samam āsata*

naimiṣe—in the forest known as Naimiṣāraṇya; *animiṣa-kṣetre*—the spot which is especially a favorite of Viṣṇu (who does not close His eyelids); *ṛṣayaḥ*—sages; *śaunakādayaḥ*—headed by the sage Śaunaka; *satraṁ*—sacrifice; *svargāya*—the Lord who is glorified in heaven; *lokāya*—and for the devotees who are always in touch with the Lord; *sahasra*—one thousand; *samam*—years; *āsata*—performed.

TRANSLATION

Once, in a holy place in the forest of Naimiṣāraṇya, great sages headed by the sage Śaunaka assembled to perform a great thousand-year sacrifice for the satisfaction of the Lord and His devotees.

PURPORT

The prelude of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was spoken in the previous three *ślokas*. Now the main topic of this great literature is being presented. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, after its first recitation by Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, was repeated for the second time at Naimiṣāraṇya.

In the *Vāyavīya Tantra*, it is said that Brahmā, the engineer of this particular universe, contemplated a great wheel which could enclose the universe. The hub of this great circle was fixed at a particular place known as Naimiṣāraṇya. Similarly, there is another reference to the forest of Naimiṣāraṇya in the *Varāha Purāṇa*, where it is stated that by performance of sacrifice at this place, the strength of demoniac people is curtailed. Thus *brahmaṇas* prefer Naimiṣāraṇya for such sacrificial performances.

The devotees of Lord Viṣṇu offer all kinds of sacrifices for His pleasure. The devotees are always attached to service of the Lord, whereas fallen souls are attached to the pleasures of material existence. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, it is said that anything performed in the material world for any reason other than for the pleasure of Lord Viṣṇu causes further bondage for the performer. It is enjoined therefore that all acts must be performed sacrificially for the satisfaction of Viṣṇu and His devotees. This will bring every-one peace and prosperity.

The great sages are always anxious to do good to the people in general, and as such the sages headed by Śaunaka and others assembled at this holy place of Naimiṣāraṇya with a program of performing a great and continuous chain of sacrificial ceremonies. Forgetful men do not know the right path for peace and prosperity. However, the sages know it well, and therefore for the good men they are always anxious to perform acts which may bring about peace in the world. They are sincere friends to all living entities, and at the risk of great personal inconvenience they are always engaged in the service of the Lord for the good of all people. Lord Viṣṇu is just like a great tree, and all others, including the demigods, men, Siddhas, Cāraṇas, Vidyādhara and other living entities, are like branches, twigs and leaves of that tree. By pouring water on the root of the tree, all the parts of the tree are automatically nourished. Only those branches and leaves which are detached cannot be so satisfied. Detached branches and leaves dry up gradually despite all watering attempts. Similarly, human society, when it is detached from the Personality of Godhead like detached branches and leaves, is not capable of being watered, and one attempting to do so is simply wasting his energy and resources.

The modern materialistic society is detached from its relation to the Supreme Lord. And all its plans which are being made by atheistic leaders are sure to be baffled in every step. Yet they do not wake up to this.

In this age, the congregational chanting of the holy names of the Lord is the prescribed method for waking up. The ways and means are most scientifically presented by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and intelligent persons may take advantage of His teachings in order to bring about real peace and prosperity. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is also presented for this same purpose, and this will be explained more specifically later in the text.

TEXT 5

त एकदा तु मुनयः प्रातर्हुतहुतायः ।
सत्कृतं स्रतमासीनं पत्रच्छुरिदमादात् ॥ ५ ॥

*ta ekadā tu munayaḥ
prātar huta-hutāgnayaḥ
satkṛtaṁ sūtam āsīnaṁ
papracchur idam ādarāt*

te—the sages; *ekadā*—one day; *tu*—but; *munayaḥ*—sages; *prātaḥ*—morning; *huta*—burning; *huta-agnayaḥ*—the sacrificial fire; *sat-kṛtam*—due respects; *sūtam*—Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī; *āsīnam*—seated on; *papracchuḥ*—made inquiries; *idam*—on this (as follows); *ādarāt*—with due regards.

TRANSLATION

One day, after finishing their morning duties by burning a sacrificial fire and respectfully offering a seat to Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī, the great sages made earnest inquiries about the following matters.

PURPORT

Morning is the best time to hold spiritual services. The great sages offered the speaker of the *Bhāgavatam* an elevated seat of respect called the *Vyāsāsana*, or the seat of Śrī Vyāsadeva. Śrī Vyāsadeva is the original spiritual preceptor for all men. And all other preceptors are considered to be his representatives. A representative is one who can exactly present the viewpoint of Śrī Vyāsadeva. Śrī Vyāsadeva impregnated the message of *Bhāgavatam* unto Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī heard it from him (Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī). All bona fide representatives of Śrī Vyāsadeva in the chain of discipleship succession are to be understood to be Gosvāmīs. These Gosvāmīs restrain all their senses, and they stick to the path made by the previous *ācāryas*. The Gosvāmīs do not deliver lectures on the *Bhāgavatam* capriciously. Rather, they execute their services most carefully, following their predecessors who delivered the spiritual message unbroken to them.

Those who listen to the *Bhāgavatam* may put questions to the speaker in order to elicit the clear meaning, but this should not be done in a challenging spirit. One must submit questions with a great regard for the speaker and the subject matter. This is also the way recommended in *Bhagavad-gītā*. One must learn the transcendental subject by submissive aural reception from the right sources. Therefore these sages addressed the speaker Sūta Gosvāmī with great respect.

TEXT 6

ऋषय ऊचुः

त्वया खलु पुराणानि सेतिहासानि चानथ ।

आख्यातान्यप्यधीतानि धर्मशास्त्राणि यान्युत ॥ ६ ॥

*ṛṣaya ūcuḥ
tvayā khalu purāṇāni
setihāsāni cānagha
ākhyātāny apy adhitāni
dharma-śāstrāṇi yāny uta*

ṛṣayaḥ—the sages; *ūcuḥ*—said; *tvayā*—by you; *khalu*—undoubtedly; *purā-ṇāni*—the supplements to the *Vedas* with illustrative narrations; *sa-itihāsāni*—along with the histories; *ca*—and; *anagha*—freed from all vices; *ākhyātāni*—explained; *api*—although; *adhitāni*—well read; *dharma-śāstrāṇi*—scriptures giving right directions to progressive life; *yāni*—all these; *uta*—said.

TRANSLATION

The sages said: Respected Sūta Gosvāmī, you are completely free from all vice. You are well versed in all religious scriptures, the Purāṇas and histories, for you have gone through them under proper guidance and have also explained them.

PURPORT

A Gosvāmī, or the bona fide representative of Śrī Vyāsadeva, must be free from all kinds of vices. The four major vices of Kali-yuga are 1.) illicit connection with women, 2.) animal slaughter, 3.) intoxication, 4.) speculative gambling of all sorts. A Gosvāmī must be free from all these vices before he can dare sit on the *Vyāsāsana*. No one should be allowed to sit on the *Vyāsāsana* who is not spotless in character and who is not freed

from the above mentioned vices. He should not only be freed from all such vices, but he must also be well versed in all revealed scriptures or in the *Vedas*. The *Purāṇas* are also parts of the *Vedas*. And histories like the *Mahābhārata* or *Rāmāyaṇa* are also parts of the *Vedas*. The *ācārya* or the *gōsvāmī* must be well acquainted with all these literatures. To hear and explain them is more important than reading them. One can only assimilate the knowledge of the revealed scriptures by hearing and explaining. Hearing is called *śravaṇa*, and explaining is called *kīrtana*. The two processes of *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* are of primary importance to progressive spiritual life. Only one who has properly grasped the transcendental knowledge from the right source by submissive hearing can properly explain the subject.

TEXT 7

यानि वेदविदां श्रेष्ठो भगवान् बादरायणः ।
अन्ये च मुनयः स्रत परावरविदो विदुः ॥ ७ ॥

yāni veda-vidām śreṣṭho
bhagavān bādarāyaṇaḥ
anye ca munayaḥ sūta
parāvara-vido viduḥ

yāni—all that; veda-vidām—scholars of the *Vedas*; śreṣṭhaḥ—senior-most; bhagavān—incarnation of Godhead; bādarāyaṇaḥ—Vyāsadeva; anye—others; ca—and; munayaḥ—the sages; sūta—O Sūta Gosvāmī; parāvara-vidāḥ—amongst the learned scholars, one who is conversant with physical and metaphysical knowledge; viduḥ—one who knows.

TRANSLATION

Being the eldest learned Vedāntist, O Sūta Gosvāmī, you are acquainted with the knowledge of Vyāsadeva, who is the incarnation of Godhead, and you also know other sages who are fully versed in all kinds of physical and metaphysical knowledge.

PURPORT

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is a natural commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra* or the *Bādarāyaṇa Vedānta-sūtras*. It is called natural because Vyāsadeva is author of both *Vedānta-sūtras* as well as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or the essence of all Vedic literatures. Besides Vyāsadeva, there are other sages who are the authors of six different philosophical systems, namely Gautama, Kanāda, Kapila, Patañjali, Jaimini and Aṣṭāvakra. Theism is explained completely in the *Vedānta-sūtra*, whereas in other systems of philosophical speculations, practically no mention is given to the ultimate cause of all causes. One can sit on the *Vyāsāsana* only after being conversant in all systems of philosophy so that one can present fully the theistic views of the *Bhāgavatam* in defiance of all other systems. Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī was the proper teacher, and therefore the sages at Naimiṣāraṇya elevated him to the *Vyāsāsana*. Śrīla Vyāsadeva is designated herein as the Personality of Godhead because he is the authorized incarnation.

TEXT 8

वेत्थ त्वं सौम्य तत्सर्वं तत्त्वतस्तदनुग्रहात् ।
ब्रूयुः स्निग्धस्य शिष्यस्य गुरवो गुह्यमप्युत ॥ ८ ॥

vettha tvam saumya tat-sarvam
tattvatas tad-anugrahāt
brūyuh snigdhasya śiṣyasya
guravo guhyam apy uta

vettha—you are well conversant; tvam—your honor; saumya—one who is pure and simple; tat—those; sarvam—all; tattvataḥ—in fact; tat—their; anugrahāt—by the favor of; brūyuh—will tell; snigdhasya—of the one who is submissive; śiṣyasya—of the disciple; guravaḥ—the spiritual masters; guhyam—secret; api uta—endowed with.

TRANSLATION

And because you are submissive, your spiritual masters have endowed you with all their favors. Therefore you can tell us all you have learned from them.

PURPORT

The secret of success in spiritual life is in satisfying the spiritual master and thereby getting His sincere blessings. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has sung in his famous eight stanzas on the spiritual master as follows: "I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of my spiritual master. Only by his satisfaction can one please the Personality of Godhead, and when he is dissatisfied there is only havoc on the path of spiritual realization." It is essential, therefore, that a disciple be very much obedient and submissive to the bona fide spiritual master. Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī fulfilled all these qualifications as a disciple, and therefore he was endowed with all favors by his learned and self-realized spiritual masters such as Śrīla Vyāsadeva and others. The sages of Naimiṣāraṇya were confident that Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī was bona fide. Therefore they were anxious to hear from him.

TEXT 9

तत्र तत्राज्ञसाऽऽयुष्मन् भवता यद्विनिश्चितम् ।
पुंसामेकान्ततः श्रेयस्तन्नः शंसितुमर्हसि ॥ ९ ॥

tatra tatrāñjasā'ayusman
bhavatā yad viniścitam
puṁsām ekāntataḥ śreyas
tan naḥ śamsitum arhasi

tatra—thereof; tatra—thereof; añjasā—made easy; āyusman—blessed with good duration of life; bhavatā—by your good self; yat—whatever; viniścitam—ascertained; puṁsām—for the people in general; ekāntataḥ—absolutely; śreyasḥ—ultimate good; tat—that; naḥ—to us; śamsitum—to explain; arhasi—deserve.

TRANSLATION

Please, therefore, being blessed with many years, explain to us what you ascertain to be the absolute and ultimate good for the people in general.

PURPORT

In *Bhagavad-gītā*, worship of the *ācārya* is recommended. The *ācāryas* and the *gōsvāmīs* are always well-wishers for the general public. They are especially spiritual well-wishers. Spiritual well-being is automatically followed by material well-being. The *ācāryas* therefore give directions in spiritual well-being for the people in general. Foreseeing the incompetencies of the people in this age of Kali, or the iron age of quarrel, the sages requested that Sūta Gosvāmī give a summary of all revealed scriptures because the people of this age are condemned in every respect. The sages, therefore, inquired of the absolute good, which is the ultimate good for the people. The condemned state of affairs of the people of this age is described as follows.

TEXT 10

प्रायेणाल्पायुषः सम्य कलावस्मिन् युगे जनाः ।
मन्दाः सुमन्दमतयो मन्दभाग्या ह्युपद्रुताः ॥ १० ॥

prāyeṇālpāyusaḥ sabhya
kalāv asmin yuge janāḥ
mandāḥ sumanda-matayo
manda-bhāgyā hy upadrutāḥ

prāyeṇa—almost always; alpa—meager; āyusaḥ—duration of life; sabhya—member of the learned society; kalau—in this age of Kali (quarrel); asmin—herein; yuge—age; janāḥ—the public; mandāḥ—lazy; sumanda-matayaḥ—misguided; manda-bhāgyāḥ—unlucky; hi—and above all; upadrutāḥ—disturbed.

TRANSLATION

O learned one, in this iron age of Kali men have but short lives. They are quarrelsome, lazy, misguided, unlucky and above all, always disturbed.

PURPORT

The devotees of the Lord are always anxious for the spiritual improvement of the general public. When the sages of Naimiṣāraṇya analyzed the state of affairs of the people in this age of Kali, they foresaw that men would live short lives. In Kali-yuga, the duration of life is shortened not so much because of insufficient food but because of irregular habits. By keeping regular habits and eating simple food, any man can maintain his health. Overeating, over sense gratification, over dependence on another's mercy, and artificial standards of living sap the very vitality of human energy. Therefore the duration of life is shortened.

The people of this age are also very lazy, not only materially but in the matter of self-realization. The human life is especially meant for self-realization. That is to say, man should come to know what he is, what the world is, and what the supreme truth is. Human life is a means by which the living entity can end all miseries of material existence which arise in the hard struggle for existence and by which he can return to Godhead, his eternal home. But, due to a bad system of education, men have no desire for self-realization. Even if they come to know about it, they unfortunately become victims of misguided teachers.

In this age, men are not only victims of different political creeds and parties, but also of many different types of sense-gratificatory diversions, namely cinemas, sports, gambling, clubs, mundane libraries, bad associations, smoking, drinking, cheating, pilfering, bickerings, and so on. Their minds are always disturbed and full of anxieties due to so many different engagements. In this age, many unscrupulous men manufacture their own religious faiths which are not based on any revealed scriptures, and very often people who are addicted to sense gratification are attracted by such institutions. Consequently, in the name of religion so many sinful acts are being carried on, and the people in general have neither peace of mind nor health of body. The student (*brahmācārī*) communities are no longer being maintained, and householders do not observe the rules and regulations of the *gṛhastha-āśrama*. Consequently, the so-called *vānaprastha* and *sannyāsī* who come out of such *gṛhastha-āśramas* are easily deviated from the rigid path. In the Kali-yuga the whole atmosphere is surcharged with faithlessness. Men are no longer interested in spiritual values. Material sense gratification is now the standard of civilization. For the maintenance of such material civilizations, man has formed complex nations and communities, and there is a constant strain of hot and cold war between these different groups. It has become very difficult, therefore, to raise the spiritual standard due to the present distorted values of human society. The sages of Naimiṣāraṇya are anxious to disentangle all fallen souls, and here they are seeking the remedy from Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī.

TEXT 11

भूरीणि भूरिकर्माणि श्रोतव्यानि विभागशः ।
अतः साधोऽत्र यत्सारं समुद्धृत्य मनीषया ।
ब्रूहि भद्रायभूता नां येनात्मा सुप्रसिदति ॥११॥

bhūrīṇi bhūri-karmāṇi
śrotavyāni vibhāgaśaḥ
ataḥ sādho 'tra yat sāram
samuddhṛtya maṇīṣayā
brūhi bhadrāya bhūtānām
yenātmā suprasīdati

bhūrīṇi—multifarious; *bhūri*—many; *karmāṇi*—duties; *śrotavyāni*—to be learned; *vibhāgaśaḥ*—by division of subject matter; *ataḥ*—therefore; *sādho*—O sage; *atra*—herein; *yat*—whatever; *sāram*—essence; *samuddhṛtya*—by selection; *maṇīṣayā*—best to your knowledge; *brūhi*—please tell us; *bhadrāya*—for the good of; *bhūtānām*—the living beings; *vena*—by which; *ātmā*—self; *suprasīdati*—becomes fully satisfied.

TRANSLATION

There are many varieties of scriptures, and in all of them there are many prescribed duties which can be learned only after many years of study. Therefore, O sage, please select the essential teachings of all these scriptures and explain them for the good of all living beings, that by such instruction their hearts may be satisfied.

PURPORT

Ātmā or self is distinguished from matter and material elements. It is spiritual in constitution, and thus it is never satisfied by any amount of material planning. All scriptures and spiritual instructions are meant for the satisfaction of this self or *ātmā*. There are many varieties of approaches which are recommended for different types of living beings in different times and at different places. Consequently, the numbers of revealed scriptures are innumerable. There are different methods and prescribed duties recommended in these various scriptures. Taking into consideration the fallen condition of the people in general in this age of Kali, the sages of Naimiṣāraṇya suggested that Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī relate the essence of all such scriptures because in this age it is not possible for the fallen souls to understand and undergo all the lessons of all these various scriptures in a *varṇa* and *āśrama* system.

The *varṇa* and *āśrama* society was considered to be the best institution for lifting the human being to the spiritual platform, but due to Kali-yuga it is not possible to execute the rules and regulations of these institutions. Nor is it possible for the people in general to completely sever relations with their families as the *varṇāśrama* institution prescribes. The whole atmosphere is surcharged with opposition. And considering this, one can see that spiritual emancipation for the common man in this age is very difficult. The reason for the sages' inquiry into this matter is explained in the following verse.

TEXT 12

सूत जानासि भद्रं ते भगवान् सात्वतां पतिः ।
देवक्यां वसुदेवस जातो यस्य चिकीर्षया ॥१२॥

sūta jānāsi bhadrām te
bhagavān sātvatām patiḥ
devakyām vasudevasya
jāto yasya cikīrṣayā

sūta—O Sūta Gosvāmī; *jānāsi*—you know; *bhadrām te*—all blessings upon you; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *sātvatām*—of the pure devotees; *patiḥ*—protector; *devakyām*—in the womb of Devakī; *vasudevasya*—by Vasudeva; *jātaḥ*—born of; *yasya*—for the purpose of; *cikīrṣayā*—executing.

TRANSLATION

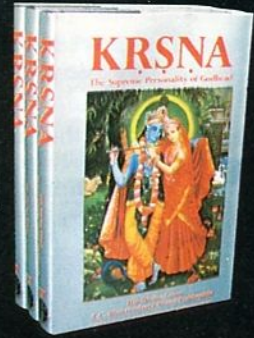
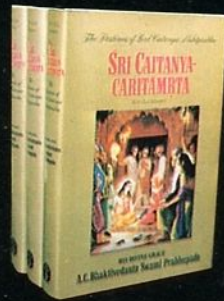
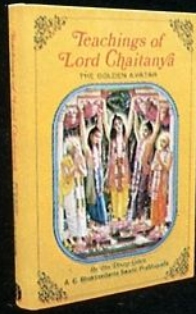
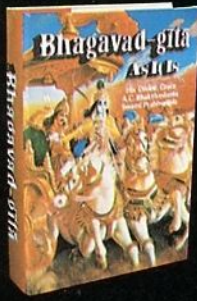
All blessings upon you, O Sūta Gosvāmī. You know for what purpose the Personality of Godhead appeared in the womb of Devakī as the son of Vasudeva.

PURPORT

Bhagavān means the Almighty God who is the controller of all opulences, power, fame, beauty, knowledge and renunciation. He is the protector of His pure devotees. Although God is equally disposed to everyone, He is especially inclined to His devotees. *Sat* means the Absolute Truth. And persons who are servitors of the Absolute Truth are called *sātvatas*. And the Personality of Godhead who protects such pure devotees is known as the protector of the *sātvatas*. *Bhadrām* or "blessings upon you" indicates the sages' anxiety to know the Absolute Truth from the speaker. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, appeared to Devakī, the wife of Vasudeva. Vasudeva is the symbol of the transcendental position wherein the appearance of the Supreme Lord takes place.

(continued in next issue)

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



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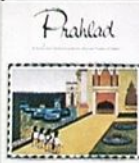
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**(listed on page two of this issue)*

Kṛṣṇa Conscious Calendar

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

Year 489, Caitanya Era
Vaiṣṇava Month of Śrīdhara (29 days, July 24—August 21, 1975)

Kṛṣṇa pakṣa (dark fortnight)

Śrīdhara 5 (July 28)	Śrīdhara 8 (July 31)
Disappearance of Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī.	Disappearance of Śrīla Lokanātha Gosvāmī.
Śrīdhara 11 (August 3)	Śrīdhara 12 (August 4)
Kāmikā-ekādaśī.	Ekādaśī Pāraṇa after 5:17 a.m. and before 9:32 a.m.

Śukla pakṣa (bright fortnight)

Śrīdhara 19 (August 11)	Śrīdhara 24 (August 16)
Disappearance of Śrīla Raghunandana Ṭhākura and Śrīla Varṇśidāsa Bābājī.	Beginning of Śrī Rādhā- Govinda's Jhulana-yātrā.
Śrīdhara 25 (August 17)	Śrīdhara 26 (August 18)
Pavitrāropanā-ekādaśī.	Ekādaśī Pāraṇa before 9:32 a.m. Disappearance of Śrīla Rūpa Go- svāmī and Śrīla Gauridāsa Paṇḍita. Lord Kṛṣṇa's Pavitrāropanapotsava.
Śrīdhara 29 (August 21)	
The End of Śrī Rādhā-Govinda's Jhulana-yātrā. Appearance of Lord Baladeva (fasting).	
Hṛṣīkeśa 9 (August 30)	Hṛṣīkeśa 10 (August 31)
Śrī Kṛṣṇa-janmāṣṭamī (fasting).	Janmāṣṭamī Pāraṇa before 9:32 a.m. Śrī Nandotsava. Appearance of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā.

The Killing of Pūtanā Witch

(continued from page 14)

Nanda Mahārāja recalled the prophecy of Vasudeva and considered him a great sage and mystic *yogī*; otherwise, how could he have foretold an incident that happened during his absence from Vṛndāvana? After this, all the residents of Vraja cut the gigantic body of Pūtanā into pieces and piled it with wood for burning. When all the limbs of Pūtanā's body were burning, the smoke emanating from the fire created a good aroma. This aroma was due to her being killed by Kṛṣṇa. This means that the demon Pūtanā was washed of all her sinful activities and attained a celestial body. Here is an example of how the Supreme Personality of Godhead is all good: Pūtanā came to kill Kṛṣṇa, but because He sucked her milk, she was immediately purified, and her dead body attained a transcendental quality. Her only business was to kill small children; she was only fond of blood. But in spite of being envious of Kṛṣṇa, she attained salvation because she gave her milk to Him to drink. So what can be said of others who are affectionate to Kṛṣṇa in the relationship of mother or father?

Immense Profit

The pure devotees always serve Kṛṣṇa with great love and affection, for He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Supersoul of every living entity. Therefore it is concluded that even a little energy expended in the service of the Lord gives one immense transcendental profit. This is explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: *svalpam apy asya dharmasya*. Devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is so sublime that even a little service to Kṛṣṇa, knowingly or unknowingly, gives one the greatest benefit. The system of worshiping Kṛṣṇa by offering flowers from a tree is also beneficial for the living entity who is confined to the bodily existence of that tree. When flowers and fruits are offered to Kṛṣṇa, the tree that bore them also receives much benefit, indirectly. The *arcanā* process, or worshiping procedure, is therefore beneficial for everyone. Kṛṣṇa is worshipable by great demigods like Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva, and Pūtanā was

so fortunate that the same Kṛṣṇa played in her lap as a little child. The lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, which are worshiped by great sages and devotees, were placed on the body of Pūtanā. People worship Kṛṣṇa and offer food, but automatically He sucked the milk from the body of Pūtanā. Devotees therefore pray that if simply by offering something as an enemy, Pūtanā got so much benefit, then who can measure the benefit of worshiping Kṛṣṇa in love and affection?

One should only worship Kṛṣṇa if for no other reason than so much benefit awaits the worshiper. Although Pūtanā was an evil spirit, she gained elevation just like the mother of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is clear that the cows and the elderly *gopīs* who offered milk to Kṛṣṇa were also elevated to the transcendental position. Kṛṣṇa can offer anyone anything, from liberation to anything materially conceivable. Therefore, there cannot be any doubt of the salvation of Pūtanā, whose bodily milk was sucked by Kṛṣṇa for such a long time. And how can there be any doubt about the salvation of the *gopīs*, who were so

fond of Kṛṣṇa? Undoubtedly all the *gopīs* and cowherd boys and cows, who served Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana with love and affection, were liberated from the miserable condition of material existence.

When all the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana smelled the good aroma from the smoke of the burning Pūtanā, they inquired from each other, "Where is this good flavor coming from?" And while conversing, they came to understand that it was the fumes of the burning Pūtanā. They were very fond of Kṛṣṇa, and as soon as they heard that the demon Pūtanā was killed by Kṛṣṇa, they offered blessings to the little child out of affection. After the burning of Pūtanā, Nanda Mahārāja came home and immediately took up the child on his lap and began to smell His head. In this way, he was quite satisfied that his little child was saved from this great calamity. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī has blessed all persons who hear the narration of the killing of Pūtanā by Kṛṣṇa. They will surely attain the favor of Govinda.

Thus ends the *Bhaktivedanta purport of the Sixth Chapter of Kṛṣṇa, "Pūtanā Killed."*

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Śrīla Vyāsadeva receives inspiration to compile Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam from his spiritual master, Nārada Muni.

Delivering the Message Unchanged

by
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The day on which a disciple celebrates the appearance of his spiritual master is called Vyāsa-pūjā. The word "Vyāsa" indicates Śrīla Vyāsadeva, a powerful incarnation of Kṛṣṇa (God) who compiled all of the Vedic literature, and "pūjā" means worship.

Vyāsadeva appeared five thousand years ago, at the dawn of the present Age of Quarrel, just when widespread moral deterioration was about to begin. He could foresee that the people of this age would be short-lived, unfortunate and always disturbed.

Before Vyāsadeva, all the Vedic scriptures were taught and received verbally in disciplic succession. The memories of both the students and the spiritual masters of those ages were so sharp that once they heard a transcendental message from their spiritual master, the message was immediately imprinted into their brains and considered a written language.

To give the unfortunate people of the modern age a chance to partake of the knowledge contained in the *Vedas*, Śrī Vyāsadeva undertook the enormous task of compilation. He composed the millions of Sanskrit verses of the *Mahābhārata*, the *Vedānta-sūtra* and the *Purāṇas*, including *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. No one else in history can compare with him as a poet, philosopher or writer, and he is thus known as Mahāmuni (the great sage). He is the spiritual master of all who follow the teachings of the *Vedas*. His final, mature work, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, is known as the "ripened fruit of the *Vedas*" and is sufficient in itself for God realization. The precious *Bhāgavatam* has been handed down in disciplic succession, from *guru* to disci-



Photo: Bhārgava dāsa

The Vyāsāsana (The seat of Vyāsa). One who qualifies himself as a pure representative of Śrī Vyāsadeva is eligible to be seated here.

ple, in an unbroken chain, and today His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, spiritual master of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, is delivering it in turn to his disciples.

Out of his causeless mercy, Śrīla Vyāsadeva wrote *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* for the benefit of the fallen people of Kali-yuga (the modern age), and out of his causeless mercy Śrīla Prabhupāda is personally translating and expanding this monumental work—and he is preaching it throughout the Western world as well. At the advanced age of seventy, he traveled under great hardship from India to America to found the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, and today, nine years later, he tirelessly works eighteen to twenty hours a day, still translating and preaching the eter-

nal message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: pure, unalloyed service to Kṛṣṇa (God).

There are many so-called *gurus*, in India and elsewhere, who preach something other than pure devotional service to God. But such "gurus" are condemned by Vyāsadeva at the beginning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: "The supreme occupation for all humanity is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendent Lord. Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted in order to completely satisfy the self." (*Bhāg.* 1.2.6) And they are condemned by Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself in *Bhagavad-gītā*: "Just give up all other forms of religion and surrender unto Me. I will protect you from all sinful reaction. Do not fear." (*Bg.* 18.66) Those who are followers of the Absolute Truth, the source of all emanations, accept that all knowledge of the Absolute Truth is coming from the Vedic scriptures compiled by Vyāsadeva, which include *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Bhagavad-gītā*. The emphatic conclusion of these scriptures, which are the cream of the *Vedas*, is that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the source of all incarnations and manifestations. And this conclusion has been reiterated by all the spiritual masters in disciplic succession, such as Lord Brahmā, Nārada, Vyāsadeva and, in the modern age, Lord Caitanya, who stressed the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

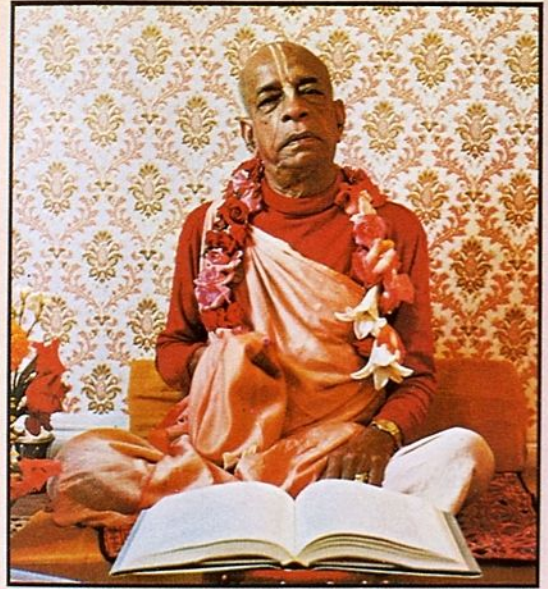
Therefore one who is an actual spiritual master, who is imparting genuine knowledge of the Absolute Truth, must preach the message of Vyāsadeva without change. So on his appearance day, the disciples of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda will worship him as a bona fide representative of Vyāsadeva, who is faithfully preaching the pure message of Vyāsadeva throughout the world. 🌸

THE MOST BLESSED EVENT

In 1969 a unique book was discovered—a collection of tributes to **Ṭhākura Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda** written by his disciples, one of whom was **Abhay Caran Das**, later to become His Divine Grace **A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda**. Those who came upon it were students of His Divine Grace, and they were inspired by it to print a similar volume in his honor. Since then it has become an annual publication, presented to **Śrīla Prabhupāda** on his appearance day. This selection from last year's book was written by **Girirāja dāsa**, now President of the ISKCON center in Bombay, India.

The Most Blessed Event

ŚRĪ VYĀSA-PŪJĀ



The Appearance Day of Our Beloved Spiritual Master

His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

August 12, 1974

Two recent editions of the *Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā* tribute book.

Dear **Śrīla Prabhupāda**, your appearance day is the most historic event in the history of man. Under your divine guidance the whole world is being inundated by Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As stated in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Ādi 7.26):

*saj-jana, dur-jana, paṅgu, jaḍa, andha-gaṇa
prema-vanyāya ḍuvāila jagatera jana*

“The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement will inundate the entire world and will drown everyone, whether one be a gentleman, a rogue or even lame, invalid or blind.”

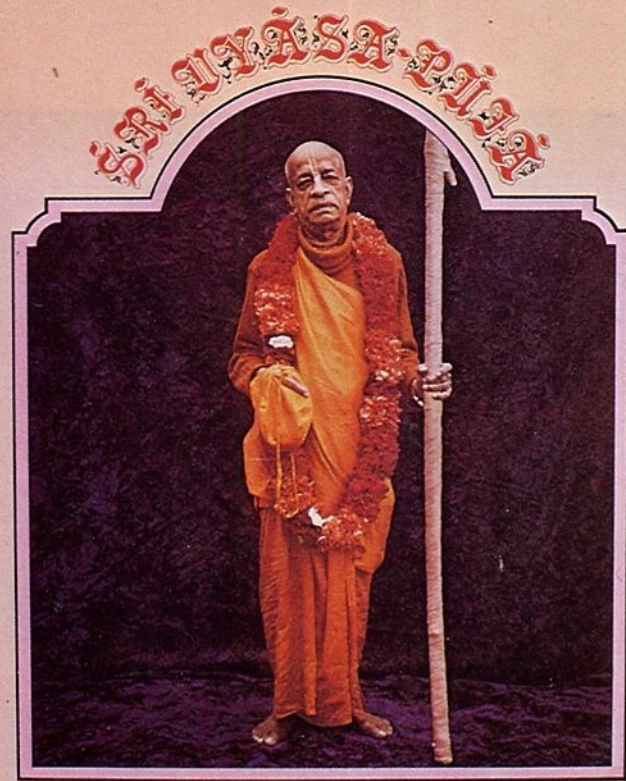
In this Age of Quarrel everyone is full of lust, anger and greed, being engrossed in the modes of passion and ignorance. We, all your disciples, were also born in that same ocean of material desires. We have been suffering in the hellish darkness of the material world since time immemorial. But you are a beam of light, pure and transcendental to this godless world, glowing with love of God. All the evils that we know are completely unknown to you, and all of the bliss in which you are immersed is alien to us. And yet you have so kindly extended

your all-merciful hand to pull us out of this dark well of material life. As **Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura** has said:

*cakṣu dāna dila yei, janme janme prabhu sei
divya-jñāna hṛde prakāṣita
prema-bhakti yāhā haite, avidyā vināśa yāte
vede gāya yānhāra carita*

“The spiritual master opens my darkened eyes and fills my heart with transcendental knowledge. He is my lord, birth after birth. From him ecstatic love of God emanates; by him ignorance is destroyed. The Vedic scriptures sing of his character.”

You have thus established the truth of the wonderful vision of *śāstra* (Vedic scriptures). Not only have you delivered all your disciples from the clutches of sinful life (meat-eating, intoxication, illicit sex and so on), but you have also inculcated them with divine qualities such as self-control, austerity, simplicity, non-violence, truthfulness and cleanliness. Who but your divine self could have brought about such astounding changes? As **Narottama dāsa** said in his prayer to a **Vaiṣṇava**:



हृषीकेश ८४८७ ❖ THE MOST BLESSED EVENT ❖ August 22, 1973

The Appearance Day of our Beloved Spiritual Master

His Divine Grace

OM VISNUPADA PARAMAHAMSA PARIVRAJAKACARYA ASTOTTARA-SATA SRISRIMAD
A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI MAHARAJA PRABHUPADA

Founder-Acarya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*yāhāra nikṣe geḷe pāpa dūre yāya
emana dayāla prabhu kebā kothā pāya*

“Whose association but yours can cause the sinful reactions of the most sinful man to run away? Who is so merciful as Your Divine Grace? Search as I may, I cannot find him.” You are the greatest Vaiṣṇava because you are the most magnanimous and because you are bestowing upon us the highest perfection: *prema-bhakti* (love of God).

You are so kind and humble that you do not take any credit for all your achievements. Taking unflinching shelter at the lotus feet of Śrīla Bhakti siddhānta Sarasvatī and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, you give all the credit to them. Your spiritual master is now glorified all over the world. We, who are so polluted by this Age of Kali, have nonetheless been accepted by you, so we simply pray earnestly to Lord Caitanya and the six Gosvāmīs to help us glorify Your Divine Grace all over the world.

One day, on your morning walk, a man started blaspheming you, saying that you are always criticizing everyone else. Your disciples were with you, and

they were going to take him away, but you stopped them, smiled and said, “I’m just saying what Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā*.” After a while the man came to his senses. He bowed down and touched your feet, and you accepted him. Who can stand against you? Your patience and determination are limitless. You are causelessly merciful because of being always absorbed in love of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. You are on the transcendental platform, free from anxieties. You have no business dealings with mundane people; you only deal with them to show them your causeless mercy. Somehow they must become attracted to Kṛṣṇa. That is your only concern.

The transcendental name of Kṛṣṇa vibrated through your lips surpasses all the singing of the Gandharvas, the celestial singers. As soon as the name “Kṛṣṇa” is mentioned to you, your face beams like the morning sun. O Śrīla Prabhupāda, when will we deserve to be your disciples? When will we give up our petty little worlds? When shall we be allowed entry into the world of the *paramahंसas* (perfected human beings) with Your Divine Grace? Even after

hearing so much from you, still we do not understand the value of the soul, especially the soul who has surrendered to Kṛṣṇa. Nor have we any appreciation of our Godbrothers.

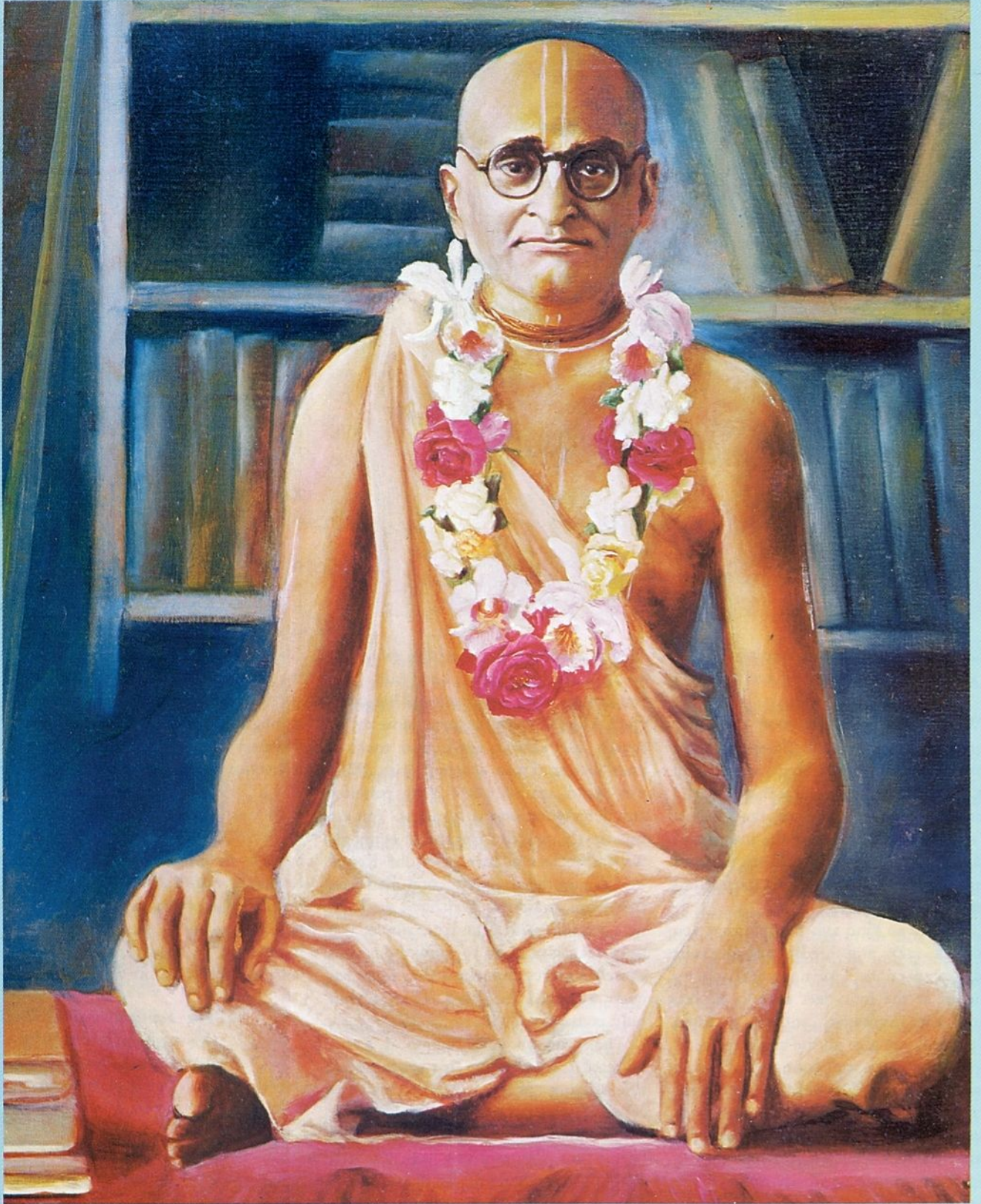
But you have started this movement from zero. Long before starting ISKCON, you struggled unsuccessfully for many years to find just one person who could learn pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness from you. Even though you now have thousands of disciples, you never lose sight of the value of each and every one of them. Each of them receives boundless mercy from you. You do not look at anyone’s faults. Someone may be ninety-nine percent in illusion and one percent in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but you just look at his one percent and immediately devise a trick to increase his Kṛṣṇa consciousness and expand his service.

My dear father, on this day of your divine appearance we make a meager offer of love at your lotus feet, and we beg that you accept it. We pray for the strength required to recognize our Godbrothers and Godsisters as your loving children. We beg for the cooperative spirit to push on this movement throughout and even beyond this world. We pray that Kṛṣṇa may give us the intelligence to act for your pleasure.

This material existence is a nightmare, Śrīla Prabhupāda. We do not want to come back here. You have brought us this far; now please take us further away from this hellish place, back to where the supremely attractive person is playing upon His flute, enjoying eternal sports with the *gopīs*. Please take us back to Kṛṣṇa.

*śrī-guru-karuṇā-sindhu
adhama janāra bandhu
lokanātha lokera jivana
hā hā prabhu kara dayā
deha more pada-chāyā
ebe yaśa ghuṣuk tribhuvana*

“Our spiritual master is an ocean of mercy, the friend of the poor and the lord and master of the devotees. O master, be merciful unto me. Give me the shade of your lotus feet. Your fame is spread all over the three worlds.”



Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura
the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā Offering

Adore adore ye all
The happy day,
Blessed than heaven,
Sweeter than May,
When He appeared at Puri,
The holy place,
My Lord and Master,
His Divine Grace.

Forty years ago, a disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura composed a poem in honor of the appearance of his spiritual master. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta greatly appreciated this simple expression of reverence and love. The disciple, Abhay Charan Das, was to become His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Absolute is sentient
Thou hast proved,
Impersonal calamity
Thou hast removed.
This gives us a life
Anew and fresh.
Worship thy feet,
Your Divine Grace.

Oh! my Master,
The evangelic angel,
Give us Thy light,
Light up Thy candle.
Struggle for existence
A human race,
The only hope
His Divine Grace.

Forgotten Kṛṣṇa,
We fallen souls
Pay most heavy
The illusion's toll.
Darkness around
All untrace,
The only hope,
His Divine Grace.

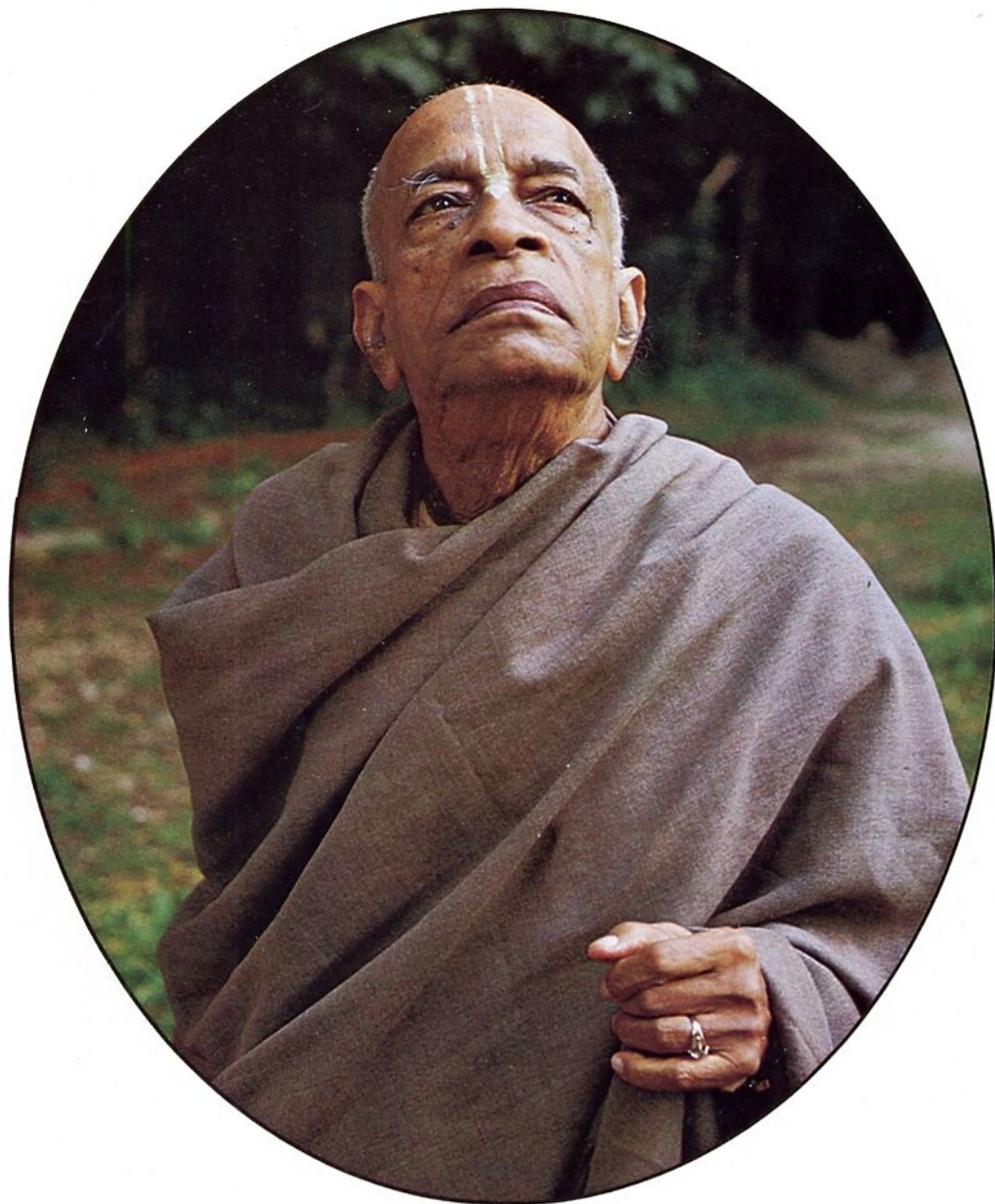
Had you not come,
Who had told
The message of Kṛṣṇa,
Forceful and bold?
That's your right,
You have the mace.
Save me, a fallen,
Your Divine Grace.

Misled, we are
All going astray.
Save us, Lord,
Our fervent pray.
Wonder Thy ways
To turn our face,
Adore Thy feet,
Your Divine Grace.

Message of service
Thou hast brought,
A healthful life
As Caitanya wrought.
Unknown to all,
It's full of brace.
That's your gift,
Your Divine Grace.

The line of service
As drawn by you
Is pleasing and healthy,
Like morning dew.
The oldest of all,
But in new dress
Miracle done,
Your Divine Grace.

THE UNIVERSAL



**The following speech was given by Abhay Charan Das
(His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda)
before the members of the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭh in Bombay in February, 1936,
on the occasion of the birthday anniversary of
Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.**

TEACHER

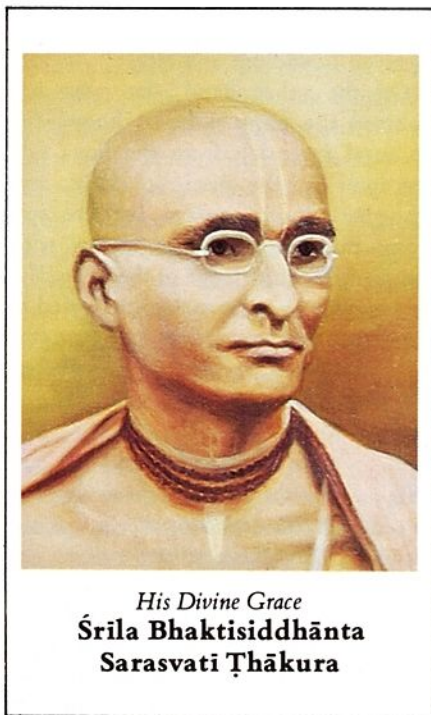
*sākeśād-dharitvena samasta-śāstrair
uktas tathā bhāvayata eva sadbhiḥ
kintu prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

“In the revealed scriptures it is declared that the spiritual master should be worshiped like the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and this injunction is obeyed by pure devotees of the Lord. The spiritual master is the most confidential servant of the Lord. Thus let us offer our respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of our spiritual master.”

Gentlemen, on behalf of the members of the Bombay branch of the Gauḍīya Maṭh, let me welcome you all because you have so kindly joined us tonight in our congregational offerings of homage to the lotus feet of the world teacher, Ācāryadeva, who is the founder of this Gauḍīya Mission and is the President-Ācārya of Śrī Śrī Viśva-vaiṣṇava Rājasabhā—I mean my eternal divine master, Paramahansa Parivrajakācārya Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

Sixty-two years ago, on this auspicious day, the Ācāryadeva made his appearance by the call of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda at Śrī Kṣetra Jagannāthadhāma at Puri.

Gentlemen the offering of such an homage as has been arranged this even-



His Divine Grace
Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta
Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

ing to the Ācāryadeva is not a sectarian concern, for when we speak of the fundamental principle of *gurudeva* or *ācāryadeva*, we speak of something that is of universal application. There does not arise any question of discriminating my *guru* from yours or anyone else's. There is only one *guru*, who appears in an infinity of forms to teach you, me and all others.

The *guru* or *ācāryadeva*, as we learn from the bona fide scriptures, delivers the message of the absolute world, the transcendental abode of the Absolute Personality, where everything non-differentially serves the Absolute Truth. We have heard so many times: *mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthā* (“traverse the trail which your previous *ācārya* has passed”), but we have hardly tried to understand the real purport of this *śloka*. If we scrutinizingly study this proposition, we understand that the *mahājana* is one, and the royal road to the transcendental

world is also one. In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*(1.2.12) it is said:

*tad vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet
samit-pāṇih śrotriyam brahma-niṣṭham*

“In order to learn the transcendental science, one must approach the bona fide spiritual master in disciplic succession, who is fixed in the Absolute Truth.”

Thus it has been enjoined herewith that in order to receive that transcendental knowledge, one must approach the *guru*. Therefore, if the Absolute Truth is one, about which we think there is no difference of opinion, the *guru* also cannot be two. The Ācāryadeva to whom we have assembled tonight to offer our humble homage is not the *guru* of a sectarian institution or one out of many differing exponents of the truth. On the contrary, he is the Jagad-guru or the guru of all of us; the only difference is that some obey him wholeheartedly, while others do not obey him directly.

In the *Bhāgavatam*(11.17.27) it is said:

*ācāryam mām vijānīyān
nāvamanyeta karhicit
na martya-buddhyāsūyeta
sarva-deva-mayo guruḥ*

“One should understand the spiritual master to be as good as I am,” said the Blessed Lord. “Nobody should be jealous of the spiritual master or think of him as an ordinary man, because the spiritual master is the sum total of all demigods.” That is, the *ācārya* has been identified with God Himself. He has nothing to do with the affairs of this mundane world. He does not descend here to meddle with the affairs of temporary necessities, but to deliver the fallen, conditioned souls—the souls or entities who have come here to the material world with a motive of enjoyment by the mind and the five organs of sense perception. He appears before us to reveal the light of the *Vedas* and to bestow upon us the blessings of full-fledged freedom, after which we should hanker at every step of our life’s journey.

The transcendental knowledge of the *Vedas* was first uttered by God to Brahmā, the creator of this particular universe. From Brahmā the knowledge descended to Nārada, from Nārada to Vyāsadeva, from Vyāsadeva to Madhva, and in this process of disciplic succession the transcendental knowledge was transmitted by one disciple to another till it reached Lord Gaurāṅga, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, who posed as the disciple and successor of Śrī Īśvara Purī. The present *Ācāryadeva* is the tenth disciplic representative from Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, the original representative of Lord Caitanya who preached this transcendental tradition in its fullness. The knowledge that we receive from our Gurudeva is not different from that imparted by God Himself and the succession of the *ācāryas* in the preceptorial line of Brahmā. We adore this auspicious day as Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā-tithi because the *Ācārya* is the living representative of Vyāsadeva, the divine compiler of the *Vedas*, the *Purāṇas*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Mahābhārata* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

One who interprets the divine sound or *śabda-brahma* by his imperfect sense perception cannot be a real spiritual *guru*, because, in the absence of proper disciplinary training under the bona fide *ācārya*, the interpreter is sure to differ from Vyāsadeva (as the *Māyāvādīs* do). Śrīla Vyāsadeva is the prime authority of Vedic revelation, and therefore such an irrelevant interpreter cannot be accepted

as the *guru* or *ācārya*, howsoever equipped he may be with all the acquirements of material knowledge. As it is said in the *Padma Purāṇa*:

*sampradāya-vihīnā ye
mantrās te niṣphalā matāḥ*

“Unless you are initiated by a bona fide spiritual master in the disciplic succession, the *mantra* that you might have received is without any effect.”

On the other hand, one who has received the transcendental knowledge by aural reception from the bona fide preceptor in the disciplic chain, and who has sincere regard for the real *ācārya*, must needs be enlightened with the revealed knowledge of the *Vedas*. But this knowledge is permanently sealed to the cognitive approach of the empiricists. As it is said in *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*(6.23):

*yasya deve parā bhaktir
yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ
prakāśante mahātmanāḥ*

“Only unto those great souls who simultaneously have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master are all the imports of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed.”

Gentlemen, our knowledge is so poor, our senses are so imperfect and our sources are so limited, that it is not possible for us to have even the slightest knowledge of the absolute region without surrendering ourselves at the lotus feet of Śrī Vyāsadeva or his bona fide representative. Every moment we are being deceived by the knowledge of our direct perception. It is all the creation or concoction of the mind, which is always deceiving, changing and flickering. We cannot know anything of the transcendental region by our limited, perverted method of observation and experiment. But all of us can lend our eager ears for the aural reception of the transcendental sound transmitted from that region to this through the unadulterated medium of Śrī Gurudeva or Śrī Vyāsadeva. Therefore, gentlemen, we should surrender ourselves today at the feet of the representative of Śrī Vyāsadeva for the elimination of all our differences bred

by our unsubmissive attitude. It is accordingly said in *Śrī Gītā*(4.34):

*tad viddhi praṇipātena
pariprasnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ
jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*

“Just approach the wise and bona fide spiritual master. Surrender unto him first and try to understand him by inquiries and service. Such a wise spiritual master will enlighten you with transcendental knowledge, for he has already known the Absolute Truth.”

To receive the transcendental knowledge we must completely surrender ourselves to the real *ācārya* in a spirit of ardent inquiry and service. Actual performance of service to the Absolute under the guidance of the *ācārya* is the only vehicle by which we can assimilate the transcendental knowledge. Today’s meeting for offering our humble services and homage to the feet of the *ācāryadeva* will enable us to be favored with the capacity of assimilating the transcendental knowledge so kindly transmitted by him to all persons without distinction.

Gentlemen, we are all more or less proud of our past Indian civilization, but we actually do not know the real nature of that civilization. We cannot be proud of our past material civilization, which is now a thousand times greater than in days gone by. It is said that we are passing through the age of darkness, the Kali-yuga. What is this darkness? The darkness cannot be due to backwardness in material knowledge, because we now have more of it than formerly. If not we ourselves, our neighbors at any rate have plenty of it. Therefore, we must conclude that the darkness of the present age is not due to a lack of material advancement, but that we have lost the clue to our spiritual advancement, which is the prime necessity of human life and the criterion of the highest type of human civilization. Throwing of bombs from airplanes is no advancement of civilization from the primitive, uncivilized practice of dropping big stones on the heads of enemies from the tops of hills. Improvement of the art of killing our neighbors by means of machine guns and poisonous gases is certainly no ad-

vancement from primitive barbarism, which prided itself on its art of killing by bows and arrows. Nor does the development of a sense of pampered selfishness prove anything more than intellectual animalism. True human civilization is very different from all these states, and therefore in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*(1.3.14) there is the emphatic call:

*uttiṣṭhata jāgrata
prāpya varān nibodhata
keśurasya dhārā nīṣītā duratyayā
durgamī pathas tat kavayo vadanti*

“Please wake up and try to understand the boon which you now have in this human form of life. The path of spiritual realization is very difficult; it is sharp like a razor’s edge. That is the opinion of learned transcendental scholars.”

Thus, while others were yet in the womb of historical oblivion, the sages of India had developed a different kind of civilization, which enabled them to know themselves. They had discovered that we are not at all material entities, but that we are all spiritual, permanent and indestructible servants of the Absolute. But because we have, against our better judgement, chosen to completely identify ourselves with this present material existence, our sufferings have multiplied according to the inexorable law of birth and death, with its consequent diseases and anxieties. These sufferings cannot be really mitigated by any provision of material happiness, because matter and spirit are completely different elements. It is just as if you took an aquatic animal out of water and put it on the land, supplying all manner of happiness possible on land. The deadly sufferings of the animal are not capable of being relieved at all until it is taken out of its foreign environment. Spirit and matter are completely contradictory things. All of us are spiritual entities. We cannot have perfect happiness, which is our birthright, however much we may meddle with the affairs of the mundane things. Perfect happiness can be ours only when we are restored to our natural state of spiritual existence. This is the distinctive message of our ancient Indian civilization, this is the message of the *Gītā*, this is the message of the *Vedas* and the *Purānas*, and this is the

message of all the real *ācāryas*, including our present *Ācāryadeva*, in the line of Lord Caitanya.

Gentlemen, although it is imperfectly that we have been enabled by his grace to understand the sublime messages of our *Ācāryadeva*, Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahansa Parivrajakācārya Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, we must admit that we have realized definitely that the divine message from his holy lips is the congenial thing for suffering humanity. All of us should hear him patiently. If we listen to the transcendental sound without unnecessary opposition, he will surely have mercy upon us. The *Ācārya*’s message is to take us back to our original home, back to God. Let me repeat, therefore, that we should hear him patiently, follow him in the measure of our conviction and bow down at his lotus feet for releasing us from our present causeless unwillingness for serving the Absolute and all souls.

From the *Gītā* we learn that even after the destruction of the body, the *ātmā* or the soul is not destroyed; he is always the same, always new and fresh. Fire cannot burn him, water cannot dissolve him, the air cannot dry him up, and the sword cannot kill him. He is everlasting and eternal, and this is also confirmed in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*(10.84.13):

*yaśyātma-buddhiḥ kuṅape tri-dhātuke
sva-dhīḥ kalatrādīṣu bhauma-ijya-
dhiḥ
yat-tīrtha-buddhiḥ salile na karhicij
janeṣv abhijñeṣu sa eva gokharah*

“Anyone who accepts this bodily bag of three elements (bile, mucus and air) as his self, who has an affinity for an intimate relationship with his wife and children, who considers his land as worshipable, who takes bath in the waters of the holy places of pilgrimage but never takes advantage of those persons who are in actual knowledge—he is no better than an ass or a cow.”

Unfortunately, in these days we have all been turned foolish by neglecting our real comfort and identifying the material cage with ourselves. We have concentrated all our energies for the meaningless upkeep of the material cage for its own sake, completely neglecting the captive soul within. The cage is meant for undo-

ing the bird; the bird is not meant for the welfare of the cage. Let us, therefore, deeply ponder this. All our activities are now turned towards the upkeep of the cage, and the most we do is try to give some food to the mind by art and literature. But we do not know that this mind is also material in a more subtle form. This is stated in the *Gītā*(7.4):

*bhūmir āpo ’nalo vāyuh
kham mano buddhir eva ca
ahanākāra itīyam me
bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā*

“Earth, fire, water, air, sky, intelligence, mind and ego are all My separated energies.”

We have scarcely tried to give any food to the soul, which is distinct from the body and mind; therefore we are all committing suicide in the proper sense of the term. The message of the *Ācāryadeva* is to give us a warning to halt such wrong activities. Let us therefore bow down at his lotus feet for the unalloyed mercy and kindness he has bestowed upon us.

Gentlemen, do not for a moment think that my Gurudeva wants to put a complete brake on the modern civilization, an impossible feat. But let us learn from him the art of making the best use of a bad bargain, and let us understand the importance of this human life, which is fit for the highest development of true consciousness. The best use of this rare human life should not be neglected. As it is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*(11.9.29):

*labdhvā sudurlabham idam
bahu-sambhavānte
mānuṣyam arthadam anityam
apīha dhīrah
tūrṇam yateta na pated anumrtu yāvan
niḥśreyasāya viṣayah khalu sarvataḥ syāt*

“This human form of life is obtained after many, many births, and although it is not permanent, it can offer the highest benefits. Therefore a sober and intelligent man should immediately try to fulfill his mission and attain the highest profit in life before another death occurs. He should avoid sense gratification, which is available in all circumstances.”

Let us not misuse it in the vain pursuit of material enjoyment, or, in other words, for the sake of only eating, sleep-

ing, fearing and sensuous activities. The Ācāryadeva's message is conveyed by the words of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī. (Bh.R.S.1.2.255,256):

*anāsaktasya viṣayān
yathārham upayujjatah
nirbandhaḥ kṛṣṇa-sambandhe
yuktaḥ vairāgyam ucyate/
prāpañcikatayā buddhyā
hari-sambandhi-vastunaḥ
mumukṣubhiḥ parityāgo
vairāgyam phalgu kathyate*

"One is said to be situated in the fully renounced order of life if he lives in accordance with Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He should be without attachment for sense gratification and should accept only what is necessary for the upkeep of the body. On the other hand, one who renounces things which could be used in the service of Kṛṣṇa, under the pretext that such things are material, does not practice complete renunciation."

The purport of the ślokas can only be realized by fully developing the rational portion of our life, not the animal portion. Sitting at the feet of the Ācāryadeva, let us try to understand from this transcendental source of knowledge what we are, what is this universe, what is God, and what is our relationship with Him. The message of Lord Caitanya is the message for the living entities and the message of the living world. Lord Caitanya did not bother Himself for the upliftment of this dead world, which is suitably named Martyaloka, the world where everything is destined to die. He appeared before us 450 years ago to tell us something of the transcendental universe, where everything is permanent and everything is for the service of the Absolute. But recently Lord Caitanya has been misrepresented by some unscrupulous persons, and the highest philosophy of the Lord has been misinterpreted to be the cult of the lowest type of society. We are glad to announce tonight that our Ācāryadeva, with his usual kindness, saved us from this horrible type of degradation, and therefore, we bow down at his lotus feet with all humility.

Gentlemen, it has been a mania of the cultured (or uncultured) society of the present day to accredit the Personality of Godhead with merely impersonal

features and to stultify Him by claiming that He has no sense, no form, no activity, no head, no legs and no enjoyment. This has also been the pleasure of the modern scholars due to their sheer lack of proper guidance and true introspection in the spiritual realm. All these empiricists think alike: all the enjoyable things should be monopolized by the human society, or by a particular class only, and the impersonal God should be a mere order supplier for their whimsical feats. We are happy that we have been relieved of this horrible type of malady by the mercy of His Divine Grace Paramahansa Parivṛājākācārya Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja. He is our eye opener, our eternal father, our eternal preceptor and our eternal guide. Let us therefore bow down at his lotus feet on this auspicious day.

Gentlemen, although we are like ignorant children in the knowledge of the transcendence, still His Divine Grace, my Gurudeva, has kindled a small fire within us to dissipate the invincible darkness of empirical knowledge. We are now so much on the safe side, that no amount of philosophical argument by the empiric schools of thought can deviate us an inch from the position of our eternal dependence on the lotus feet of His Divine Grace. Furthermore, we are prepared to challenge the most erudite scholars of the Māyāvāda school and prove that the Personality of Godhead and His transcendental sports in Goloka alone constitute the sublime information of the Vedas. There are explicit indications of this in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (8.13.1):

*śyāmāc chavalam prapadye
śavalāc chyāmam prapadye*

"For receiving the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, I surrender unto His energy (Rādā), and for receiving the mercy of His energy, I surrender unto Kṛṣṇa." Also in the *Rg Veda* (1.2.22.20):

*tad viṣṇoḥ paramam padam
sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ
divīva cakṣur ātātam
viṣṇor yat paramam padam*

"The lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu are the supreme objective of all the demigods. These lotus feet of the Lord are en-

lightening as the sun in the sky."

The plain truth so vividly explained in the *Gītā*, which is the central lesson of the Vedas, is not understood or even suspected by the most powerful scholars of the empiric schools. Herein lies the secret of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā. When we meditate on the transcendental pastimes of the Absolute Godhead, we are proud to feel that we are His eternal servitors, and we become jubilant and dance with joy. All glory to my divine master, for it is he who has out of His unceasing flow of mercy stirred up within us such a movement of eternal existence. Let us bow down at his lotus feet.

Gentlemen, had he not appeared before us to deliver us from the thralldom of this gross wordly delusion, surely we should have remained for lives and ages in the darkness of helpless captivity. Had he not appeared before us, we would not have been able to understand the eternal truth of the sublime teaching of Lord Caitanya. Had he not appeared before us, we could not have been able to know the significance of the first śloka of *Brahma-saṁhitā*:

*iśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ
sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ
sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*

"Kṛṣṇa, who is known as Govinda, is the Supreme Godhead. He has an eternal, blissful, spiritual body. He is the origin of all, he has no other origin, and He is the prime cause of all causes."

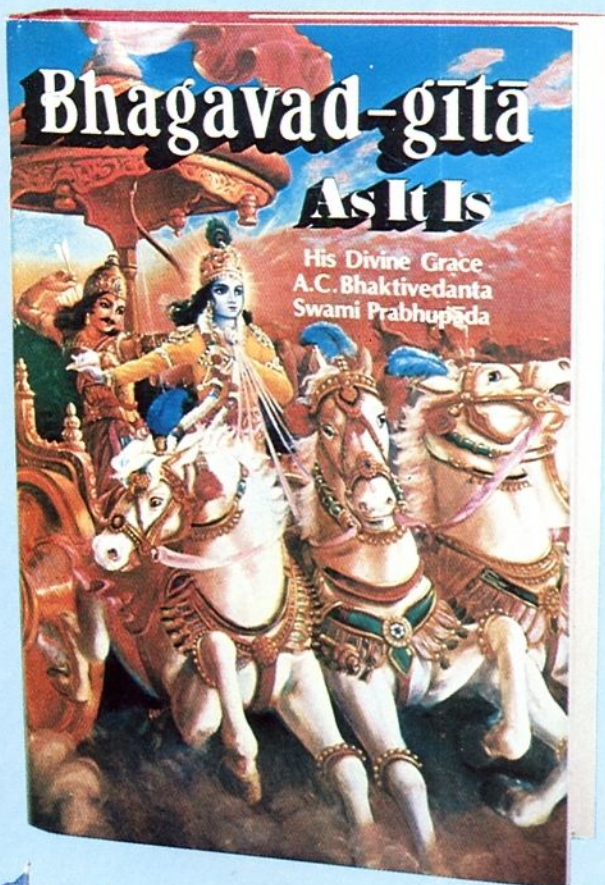
Personally, I have no hope for any direct service for the coming crores of births of the sojourn of my life, but I am confident that some day or other I shall be delivered from this mire of delusion in which I am at present so deeply sunk. Therefore let me with all my earnestness pray at the lotus feet of my divine master to allow me to suffer the lot for which I am destined due to my past misdoings, but to let me have this power of recollection: that I am nothing but a tiny servant of the Almighty Absolute Godhead, realized through the unflinching mercy of my divine master. Let me therefore bow down at his lotus feet with all the humility at my command.

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