

BACK TO GODHEAD



VOL 1. NO 15

ON THE COVER

On the wedding day of Vasudeva to the maid Devaki, her mighty brother Kamsa learned by a mystic voice that her eighth son would prove, in time, to be his slayer. For the Earth then was oppressed by evil, and the Lord had promised to Appear, to drive out the cruel and vicious leaders and restore the reign of righteousness. Kamsa well recognized his own preeminence amongst the forces of darkness. He now pitted himself against God, Who had chosen the virtuous Devaki to bear Him, and imprisoned the couple. But God's will cannot be shackled, nor His purposes obstructed. There in the palace, He came to Devaki, and through the glance of Vasudeva He entered her, and thenceforth she showered light like the sun, for the Source of all brightness was with her. And when the time came, whilst all the worlds rejoiced and the stars glittered and the blossoms opened themselves unafraid—though the hour was midnight—and the fragrances of heaven and earth intermingled to form a sublime atmosphere—at last He came, the Eternal, the Ineffable, the Primeval Person. Though unborn, the Lord took birth through Devaki—first in His four-handed form, and then, upon her request, He assumed His Primal Form, as Lord Krishna, Refuge of the Universes, the Babe of Mathura.

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By The Mercy of Krishna,

The reaction to our recent editions of Back To Godhead, beginning with issue no. 13, has been very satisfying, and ought to guarantee the continuance of this move toward an ever finer magazine. We feel that a large measure of this success is due to the fine work of our art staff, headed by Goursundar das Adhikary (Gary McElroy) and Jaigovinda das Brahmachary (Jeffrey Havener). Goursundar's wife Govinda Devi Dasi, is his close collaborator in all projects. In addition to these three, there are Haimavati Devi Dasi (Helena Kary) and Jadurani Devi Dasi (Judy Koslofsky). In the future issues, as we (hopefully) gain on our deadlines, we hope to make even more elaborate presentations.

This issue falls just after the Appearance Days of the Supreme Lord, Sri Krishna, and of our Spiritual Master, Sri Bhaktivedanta Swami, and so is especially devoted to celebrating Their Glories.

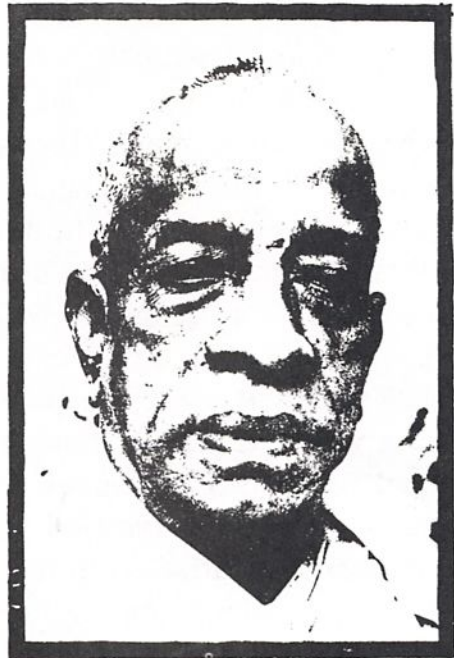
Swami Bhaktivedanta has returned to Vrindavana in India, in hopes of recovering his health, which has recently suffered severe setbacks, and prolonged uncertainty. In our next issue, we'll present the story of the Swami's departure, but for now it may cheer one and all to know that Swamiji's health is improving markedly. We have hopes of seeing him back in America within the next six months. Thanks be to God.

Hare Krishna
The Editors

FROM THE LECTURES OF
SWAMI A. C. BHAKTIVEDANTA

Friday evening, Dec. 30, 1966

In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna is advising Arjuna. "I am speaking to you a still more confidential part of knowledge, because you are My dear friend." As stated in the 4th Chapter, the Bhagavad Gita is spoken to Arjuna because of his one qualification—he was a devotee. The Lord says that the mystery of Bhagavad Gita is very confidential. Without becoming an unalloyed devotee you cannot know it. In India there are 645 different commentaries on Bhagavad Gita. One professor has even pictured Krishna as a doctor and Arjuna as the patient, and has interposed his own commentary in that way. The people have taken it that everyone is perfect, and he can interpret scripture in his own way. As far as we are concerned, we agree to read Bhagavad Gita according to the Parampara system of disciplic succession. It is being taught by the Supreme Person because, "You are My dear friend. I desire that you become prosperous and happy. So I speak to you." He wants everyone to be happy and peaceful and prosperous, but they do not want it. The sunshine is open to everyone, but if someone wishes to remain in darkness, what can the sunshine do for him? So the Bhagavad Gita is open to everyone.



There are different species of life. Lower and higher grades of understanding exist; that is a fact. But Krishna says anyone can come to Him. If he has lower birth or whatever, it doesn't matter. Bhagavad Gita is transcendental subject matter. Everyone can understand, provided he goes along with this basic principle. The principle is stated in the 4th Chapter: Bhagavad Gita is coming down: "I first of all instructed this yoga system to the Sun-god Vivaswan, who taught it to Manu, who

taught it to Ikshaku." From him the disciplic succession is coming down, but "in course of time the disciplic succession was broken." Arjuna is made the new disciple.

In the 2nd Chapter Arjuna surrenders: "So far, we have been talking as friends, but now I accept you as my spiritual master." Anyone following the principle in this line must represent Arjuna. Krishna is speaking as the spiritual master of Arjuna. And Arjuna says, "Whatever You are speaking, I accept." Read it like that. Not, "I like this so I accept. This I don't like, so I reject it." Such reading is useless nonsense.

So the teacher must be a representative of Krishna, His devotee; and the student must be like Arjuna; then the study of Krishna consciousness is perfect and otherwise it is a waste of time. In Srimad Bhagawatam it is stated: "If anyone wants to understand the science of Krishna, he should associate with pure devotees. When discussions take place between pure devotees, the potential of spiritual language will be revealed." Scholarly discussion of Bhagavad Gita is futile. In the Upanishads it is stated, "To one who has got firm faith in God and similar faith in God's representative all the import of Vedic language will be revealed."

We must have the qualification of being a devotee. Become dear to God. My spiritual master used to say, "Don't try to see God. Just act in such a way that God will see you." We have to qualify ourselves. By your qualification God Himself will come and see you.

One who can perceive God is transcendental to all material demands. We are always dissatisfied in the material world with circumstances that won't continue. Happiness is temporary, temporary plight will also exist only for some time, cold, heat, duality, all this is coming and going. To get in the Absolute stage is the process of Krishna consciousness. He is seated in everyone's heart, and as you become purified He will show you the path and in the end when you quit this body, you will go to the spiritual sky.

"Nobody knows Me," He says. "My influence, My power and extension. Even the maharishi (great thinkers) don't know." "I am the Original Person of all demigods and the Original Person of all rishis." There are so many forefathers whom we don't know, nor do we know Brahma and the demigods. What little do we know? We can't reach that foremost platform where we can touch God by our own methods. We gather knowledge by limited senses and Krishna can't be reached by the mind (the center of these senses). Imperfect senses can't reach The Perfect Knowledge. Mind and sense manipulation can't reach Him. However, if you engage your senses in Service of the Lord, then He will reveal Himself through your senses.

People can say, What is the use of understanding God? What is the use? Let Him stay in His place, let me stay in my place. But in the Shastras it states that pious activities will raise us to beauty, knowledge, good birth, and that by impious (sinful) activities we suffer. Suffering is always there, pious or impious, but a distinction is nevertheless made. But he who knows God becomes freed from all sinful reactions. If we reject God, we can never be happy.

Monday evening, Jan. 2, 1966

Lord Chaitanya says that nobody knows Him. What to speak of human society, if you take the demigods who are more advanced and intelligent, they don't know either. The seven great sages whose planet is near the North Star—they also do not know. Krishna says: "I am the Original, the Source of all these demigods." He is the Father of everything. Not only the origin of the demigods but of the sages—and the universe itself. The Srimad Bhagawatam describes how the Universal Form took place and everything is emanating from Him. Also the origin of Paramatma and Impersonal Brahmajyoti is in Him. "Of everything, of any conception, I am the Source."

The Absolute Truth is realized in 3 phases. It is One non-dual Truth in 3 phases. Brahman—the glowing effulgence; localised Supersoul; and Bhagawan—the Supreme Person. There are many expansions of the Supreme Person—all planets are emanations from the Superior Deity, as is stated in the Puranas, Upanisads, Bhagwat—all is summarized in the Bhagavad Gita.

If nobody knows the Supreme Person of God, how can He be known? He can be known when the Supreme Lord comes before you and reveals Himself to you. Then you can know. Our senses are imperfect, they cannot realize the Supreme Truth. When you adopt a submissive attitude, and you chant, then realization begins from the tongue. To eat and vibrate sound is the business of the tongue. If you can control your tongue for Prasadam and make sound vibration of the Holy Name—by surrender of the tongue you control all other senses. If you cannot control your tongue, you cannot control the other senses. You taste and become spiritually advanced. You can have this process at your home: offer food to Krishna and chant the Mantra and offer obeisances:

Namo Bramanya devaya
go brahmana hitaya cha
jagat hitaya Krishnaya
Govindaya namo nama.

Everyone can offer food, and take it with friends, and chant before the picture of Krishna, and lead a pure life. Just see the result—the whole world will become Vaikuntha, where there is no anxiety. All is anxious with us because we have accepted this material life. Just the opposite is so in the Spiritual world. No one knows how to get out. Taking an intoxicant doesn't help; the same anxieties are there when you are finished being drunk. If you want to be free and want life eternal with bliss and knowledge, take to Krishna. No one can know Him, but still there is a way. This is the process of Krishna consciousness.

In Srimad Bhagawatam it is stated, nobody can conquer Him or approach Him, but He becomes conquered. How? Let persons remain in their own position, but let them give up nonsense speculation through volumes of books. Thousands of books are printed and read, and after 6 months are thrown away. This way and that way—how can you know the Supreme by speculation with your blunt senses? Give up research—throw it away—just become submissive, acknowledge yourself that you are limited and subordinate to both material Nature and God. Nobody can be equal to or greater than God. So be submissive. Try to hear about the glories of the Supreme Lord from an authorized source. Authority is handed over by disciplic succession. If we can understand by the same authority as Arjuna, that is authority.

God is always ready to reveal Himself. You just become Krishna conscious. Follow the path traversed by the great Acharyas, then everything will be known. And, although He is unconquerable, He can be known in your home, even though the sages themselves don't know Him.

If you take to this process and follow its principles, what will be the result?

As soon as you understand, you will know the Supreme Lord as the Cause of all Causes, but He Who is not caused by any other cause. He is the Master of all planets. This is not accepting blindly. God has given you the power of reason, the power of arguing—but don't argue falsely. If you want to know the transcendental science you must surrender. Surrender to authority and know Him by signs. Don't surrender to a nonsense. Find one who is coming in disciplic succession: who is fully convinced about the Supreme Absolute Truth. If you find such person, surrender and try to please him, serve him and question him. Surrender unto him is surrender to God. But question to learn, not to waste time.

The process is there, but if we waste time by intoxication we will never see Him, the Unconquerable. Follow the principles and slowly but surely, without any doubt, you will know as you go along. You'll know you're on the proper path. "Yes, I'm making progress," you'll say.

And it is very easy, and you can execute and be in a happy mood. Study, take part with music, Prasadam,—and nobody can cheat you by this process. But if you want to be cheated—then go to the cheaters.

Try to understand Krishna consciousness from the authoritative source, and apply it in your life. Amongst the dying mortals, you become the most intelligent because you are freed from sinful actions. If you act only for Krishna, then you are freed from all reactions. There can be no anxiety over what is auspicious or inauspicious, because he is in touch with the Most Auspicious. This is the process. Ultimately we can get in touch with Krishna. Life will be successful.

Anyone can adopt it. It is very simple.

Wednesday evening, January 4, 1967

Here is a nice formula presented by Krishna Himself: that one should understand the position of Krishna. He is unborn and without any Cause. We have got the experience that we are born and we have a cause. Our father is our cause. If someone poses himself as God, he has to prove that he is unborn and uncaused. Our practical experience is that we are born. Krishna is not born—we have to understand this. Understanding this is to be firmly convinced that He is the Cause but is not caused, and since he is not caused He is the Proprietor of all manifestations. Whoever understands this simple philosophy is not illusioned.

But we are illusioned. We are claiming ownership of the land. Yet, before my birth the land was here, and after my death it will be here still. How long will I go on claiming, in body after body—"This is my land! This is my land!" Is it not nonsense?

We should know that whatever we are doing in the material concept of life is illusion. You have to understand whether you are illusioned or not. And all conditioned souls are illusioned. He who learns to be disillusioned gets free of all encumbrances. If you want freedom from all bondage you have to understand God. There is no neglecting this; it is the prime duty of the human form of life.

Out of millions of entities, one may be enlightened. Generally we are all born fools. As soon as I take birth, I am nurtured by parents and educated to falsely claim some land as my own. National education means to make you more foolish. Am I not foolish? I am changing my body and dress—here, changing, changing, you have so many minds and dresses—why do you claim this one? Why don't you understand: "This dress is nice, but next moment I may be in another." You are in the grip

of Nature. You can't say what dress you will have: "Nature, make me American." No, material nature controls. If you live like a dog—here, take a dog's dress! If you live godly—here, take God! I may be able to dictate to my students, but I can't dictate to the Government. And even the Government cannot dictate to Nature. Out of many fools somebody tries to understand what I actually am—dog? American? Russian? This real enquiry goes on. If you enquire, you have to ask someone besides yourself. Crossing the street in a place you don't know, you have to ask the policeman or some gentleman. For what I am you have to go to some authority. What is a spiritual master? He is a person conversant with the science of Krishna. Nobody enquires, but if a man does he can make progress and come to this understanding: Krishna is the Cause of all Causes.

The followers of scripture and higher authority enquire of Krishna. Those addicted to sinful activities can't enquire—they go on in intoxication. The righteous, pious man inquires and goes to God. Facility is given to people in the process by the authority—to make people happy, not to exploit them. The purpose of ISKCON is this: to understand the science of God. You want happiness. Here it is. You are distressed due to sinful reactions. If there is no sinful reaction, there is no suffering. One who knows Krishna without doubt is relieved of all reactions. Krishna says, "Come to Me and I will give you freedom from all reactions." Don't disbelieve it—He can give you shelter—He has all power. If I give you that promise, I have no such power and I may have to break my promise. But if you associate with Krishna consciousness your dormant relationship with Krishna will be evoked. You have got a relationship with Him. There is no question of disbelieving, it is simply foolishness, the dormant relationship is there. We want to serve Krishna but simply by the spell of Illusion we think we have no connection with Him. We go on doing all "independent" nonsense, and we are always anxious. When we associate with these dormant feelings for Krishna, we will be joyously engaged in Krishna consciousness.

"God is unborn" indicates that He is different from the material world. We have no such experience of an unborn being here. This city was born. Our history is filled with such dates. Spiritual nature is unborn—at once we can see the difference. The material nature is born. You have to understand, if Krishna is Unborn, then He is spiritual and not like one of us. Krishna is not like some extraordinary person who was also born. He is not born. So how can I decide that He is an ordinary man? "Those who are fools and rascals think of Me as an ordinary man," Krishna says in Bhagavad Gita. He is different from everything in this world. He is anadi—without any cause.

Krishna may be spiritual, we will admit, but there are other spiritual bodies. We have a spiritual body like Krishna's but it is born. It is not exactly born. It is like the sparks of the fire—the sparks are not born apart from the fire—it is actually not born, it is there. We are not born—we are the sparks come out of the Original Form. Even though we are not born, still the spark is come of Krishna: so we are different, we are not Krishna. Simultaneously we are one and different; the sparks of the fire are fire but they are not the original fire. So far as quality is concerned, we are the same. It is like the difference between father and son. Father and son are different and nondifferent, at the same time. The son is an expansion of the father, but he cannot claim he is the father—this is nonsense.

Because Krishna is declaring Himself to be the Supreme Proprietor, therefore He is different from anyone. If I am the proprietor of New York State, I am still not New York State. In every step there is duality. No one can say we are completely and in every way one with God. Analytically studied, you can understand Krishna and your position in a nice way. Then at once you become free from sinful reactions. This process will help you: Chant Hare Krishna and cleanse your mind, and you will catch up the message. One has to be qualified. If you chant and hear, you will approach God. All things will become clear and illuminated. We welcome you to participate.





YASODA AND KRISHNA

Of the states of love manifested between God and His devotee, one of the most exalted is that exhibited by Yasoda and Krishna: although He is the Supreme Absolute Truth, Krishna accepts the role of Son before His fond worshipper, and she with great concern feeds Him, thinking His health may suffer should He not eat well.



SEPARATION

What difference will it make?
 if I go down to the river to look for You
 in the stream of the water—
 or if I sit down here before Your picture,
 Either way it is the same because
 I have Your Name to recite over and over
 and it seems I have actually done both,
 by thinking of the river I have gone there
 and I've come back to where I have not left—
 sitting before Your picture.
 Everything seems empty and vacant
 because I am not worthy
 and do not really have You as my Lover and Friend.
 Or I do not understand
 that You Love me beyond what I can measure
 —I cannot realize that.
 I think only that You should love me
 more than anyone
 and then I think I am unspeakably low.
 Nothing saves me but Your Name—
 Not so much the literature of great learned Goswamis
 delineating the 12 categories of relationship to You,
 and not by saying the word Bhakti, Bhakti, Bhakti
 can I bring it about.
 But to say "KRISHNA," and say all the words of the mantra
 together, HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA KRISHNA KRISHNA
 HARE HARE HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE
 —and actually saying it hundreds and thousands of
 times, alone with You—then I'm pacified.
 Though the truth is I am lazy and
 as empty handed as any impersonalist philosopher,
 still recitation of Your Name is a balm
 to this separated soul who is trying to come back
 just on Your Name.

Satsvarupa das Brahmachary
 (Stephen Guarino)

GETTING ACROSS

A weak, starving man was walking
Slowly through a landscape of
Dead trees and barren thorn bushes.
On his back was a large sack
Filled with heavy grey stones.
He had nothing except these stones.
He loved his stones;
One was round, one was square,
And one was like a pyramid.
He took them out every now and then
To feel them. Then he
Put them back into the sack
And stumbled slowly on.
One day he came to a river;
The first he had ever seen.
On the other side was an amazing
Lush landscape of rich mountains,
Waterfalls, fruit trees, birds,
Gardens, and brilliant golden
Temples with happy children
Laughing, playing with deer.
Strong men with clear eyes
Came to the edge of the river
And shouted to him,
"Come over here! Come over here!
Just swim across the river!"
But the man said,
"I can't! I'd have to leave
My stones! I couldn't swim
With my stones! I'm too weak!"
"Leave them! Don't be foolish!
We have stones here—perfect stones,
Diamonds, dazzling rubies!"
"Yes, but my stones are round,

Square, and one is a pyramid!"
 "We have better stones here—
 What are you waiting for?"
 "But, I'd have to give up my stones!"
 "We just said, we could give
 You better ones!"
 "Yes, but they're not mine!"
 "Why should that bother you?
 What you have is nothing!
 Look at all the beauty here!"
 "Well, suppose you swim to me
 And carry me over to your side."
 "With your stones?"
 "Yes, with my stones."
 "No, we can't do that.
 Nothing can get those stones
 Across the water. They belong
 Over there; but you do not!
 You belong over here!"
 Just then the man turned
 To his side of the river
 To see a thin creature
 Loaded with stones
 Jump into a thick mist downstream
 And drown. It was screaming,
 "Nothing! Nothing!" as it died.
 Another one came, quietly,
 And walked calmly in to drown.
 It had no stones, but said, "Nothing."
 The man looked at the mist,
 And at the temples,
 And he looked at himself.
 Then he remembered something
 He had forgotten, a long time ago.
 He threw his stones away
 And swam back across the river to get it.
 The people greeted him with dancing,
 And he found he was in the home of God.

Damodara das Adhikary
 (Dan Clark)

HOW I MET SWAMI A. C. BHAKTIVEDANTA

I had a "normal" childhood, had fights with the kids on the block, envied my older brother for his associations with pretty girls, and tried to be a number one lover myself, all through my school days.

I started taking marijuana in my senior year in high school. After my first semester of college, at the age of 17, I went travelling through Europe and North Africa trying to squeeze some enjoyment out of all I came across.

After running out of money I came back to the Village, where I somehow came upon the joy-spreading chanters of HARE KRISHNA in Tompkins Square Park. My feeling about it was that it was nice; however, at this time I did not think that there was anything serious in these names of God—I thought that these were merely words. I also thought it strange to have a rug in the middle of a park. I did not inquire further.

I began drowning myself in psychedelic drugs such as LSD and DMT, thinking myself a very advanced creature. At the same time I became serious about my relationship to everything around me, and asked questions as to who I was and where I was going. I then went to the Haight-Ashbury area in San Francisco, to live with some people I had met in the Village.

I got too serious about bodily relationships with people and the world, thinking that I was this body and relating to everything in this manner. In trying to be a "virtuous creature," I was seeking the perfection of life in these relationships, through drugs—which I truly felt to be the answer to the problems of Mankind. I deemed myself one of the discoverers of the newly-found panacea. Such is an example of illusion. In my quest for knowledge—that is, in finding the answers to my questions—the question, Who is God? arose. This was the supreme quest. Then during one "trip" I was sure I had realized God, and afterward desperately tried to put what I thought to be my new knowledge to practical use. I soon entered a mental hospital.

I was then delivered back to New York and started sessions with a therapist.

One day, by the grace of God, I came upon the temple storefront. The first thing that struck me was that the people were so warm and friendly and had no arrogance of attitude. They answered my numerous questions completely, for as I have learned, this is a complete philosophy and the practical method is guaranteed.

After coming to service once, I returned for each one after that. Dancing

and chanting the praises of Lord Krishna is so nice. Our kind Lord reveals Himself to His devotees in proportion to their devotion. Much of the revelation comes automatically during chanting, for the chanting of the Lord's Name is our meditation and a most important part of the process of God consciousness.

At the time I came, Swami Bhaktivedanta was at the San Francisco temple, but his message is so fine that I was attracted to Krishna and to the Swami by the teachings he had given to his disciples.

Some time later, as Swamiji was arriving at the airport, I and some of my God-brothers-to-be were preparing the feast. We were very anxious to meet our guru. Finally, we were told that he was downstairs in the temple, and we hurriedly fumbled there to greet our Spiritual Master. He was clad in saffron robes and grandly sitting on his throne-like altar. He was a magnificent sight, as I beheld him every morning at Kirtan. Never have I met a person who exhibited the godly qualities of this man. It is my pleasure to try to be the loving servant of my Spiritual Master, and through him to learn to serve Krishna.

Madhusudan das Brahmachary
(Michael Blumert)





THAKUR HARIDAS

Part II

from the book "Sree Krishna-Chaitanya
by Professor Sanyal

[In Part I, Professor Sanyal has described how Thakur Haridas was accosted by a harlot, at the instigation of Ramchandra Khan. Instead of falling to the woman's wiles, however, the Thakur converted her to the path of Krishna Consciousness.]

The immoral life that was being actually led by the harlot did not stand in the way of her redemption. The point is made absolutely clear by the fact that she went to Thakur Haridas for the purpose of seducing him. This shows also that her instinctive faith in sadhus was not coloured by any conventional moral sentiments. This

was an adventure. Too rigid empiric morality obstructs spiritual awakening more effectively than even confirmed immorality. This is due to want of humility and spirit of submission to the sadhu that is sure to be engendered more or less by the dogmatic professor of conventional morality. True morality is never possible prior to spiritual awakening. That which passes as morality in the society of worldlings, is only a hypocritical, and, therefore more dangerous form of immorality. The moral instinct proper, which belongs to the soul, must not be confounded with this hypocritical immorality and its conventions. The harlot was not hampered by the conventions of a hypocritical morality. She possessed an open mind with a natural liking for the society of really pure souls, although she herself was actually leading a life that is condemned by moralists. But as it is not possible for a person to be really and fully moral before he realizes the nature of his true self, the case of the harlot, instead of being worse, was in certain respects better than that of the conventional moralist who is rigidly committed to the casuistical defence of the unspiritual life that he actually leads.

It is not, of course, intended to undervalue the principle of morality in any way. That instinct, in its pure form, as in the case of every other instinct, belongs to the soul. The form in which it passes current in the world is only the perverted reflection of the real principle and is not conducive to spiritual life. Its apparent advantages are strictly confined to this perverted existence. Whatever tends to reconcile us to the worldly life, stands self-condemned for that very reason. Empiric morality is fully open to this charge of pandering to the unspiritual life. As a matter of fact neither conventional morality nor conventional immorality are praised by the sadhus, as, by themselves, they stand without any relation to the Truth. As soon as our conduct gets related to the Truth it assumes its natural state which has nothing to do with either the conventional moral or immoral principle of this world. To call spiritual conduct merely moral in the ordinary conventional sense of the world, would, therefore, be wholly misleading. Spiritual conduct is no doubt perfectly wholesome, being free from all affinity with the unwholesome things of this world. The so-called 'moral' conduct based on worldly experience owes all its value to its worldly utility. This fact categorically differentiates spiritual 'purity' from worldly morality. There is, of course, no possibility of immoral conduct on the spiritual plane. In the absence of all possibility of immorality there is no scope for worldly morality in the realm of the Absolute. The Kingdom of Godhead accommodates all varieties of conduct by endowing all of them with perfect wholesomeness. Can such conduct be appropriately called 'moral' in the conventional sense of the term?

For instance, the trade of the harlot is in this world generally held to be utterly immoral. Is it possible for the 'ethical' mind to conceive of a state of existence that is infinitely higher than any conceivable worldly moral excellence?

Those fanatics who, grossly misunderstanding the nature of the subject treated by the spiritual Scriptures, set up as orthodox and uncompromising 'believers' in the 'letter' of the Scriptural texts and try to 'reform' the 'abuses' of this world by immoral regulations that are profanely attributed to Godhead Himself on the strength of such silly and mischievous interpretation, deserve to be put into the pound in the company of those 'innocent' creatures that are mercifully denied the quality of voicing their 'notions' for harming everybody. There are hypocritical pedants who affect to hold up their nose at the very sound of the name of a harlot and forthwith prescribe penitential punishment of the most atrocious kind for reforming their morals in 'obedience' to the injunctions of the Holy Scriptures. The Devil is also permitted to quote the Scriptures for his purposes.

Fanatics and hypocrites were in possession of the stage of the tragic drama of worldly life at the time when Thakur Haridas emerged before the bewildered vision of those pseudo-religionists and began to supply by his actual conduct the real explanation of the only purpose of all the Scriptures, by electing the harlot as the fittest and the very first object of the Divine Grace. He was natually opposed by the renegade Brahmana Ramchandra Khan, who, in order to exploit the letter of the Scriptures for the accomplishment of his villainy, gave it out as his 'duty' to put down by all means a Muhammedan who had the temerity to set up as the expounder of the Shastras of the Hindus!

This brings us to the principle of hereditary caste. The teaching of the Shastras belongs exclusively to the twice-born. The Shastras themselves lay down elaborate rules by which to constitute the community of the Brahmanas who are to be the only teachers of them. This last part of the system had been allowed to pass out of the memory of the people, and, in its place, had been substituted by gradual and insidious steps and by general connivance, the principle of heredity. The hereditary Brahmanas by the strict Shastric test are no Brahmanas at all. Ramchandra Khan was the champion of this corrupt system, not for any real regard born of sincere conviction for the merits of the system itself or from any knowledge of the Shastras, but, as it always happens in such cases, from malice and insolence.

If Haridas Thakur would practise the function strictly reserved for hereditary Brahmanas then the whole system of caste based upon the principle of heredity is challenged at its source. If a Muhammedan can

become a Brahmana, the present social system of the Hindus, which is claimed to be part and parcel of the Religion, is utterly demolished. This was bound to agitate profoundly all caste-Hindus.

Nor was this all. The chanting of the Holy Name of Krishna was also practised with a loud voice. This was an entirely novel mode of worship to the Hindus of that time. The new out-caste apostle of the eternal religion, in opposition to all current rituals and forms of worship, was declaring to admiring Hindus an apparently new form of worship as the one enjoined by the Shastras. Could all the contemporaneous Hindus be so utterly mistaken that they required to be imparted ab initio the knowledge of the fundamentals of their own religion by a Muhammedan, against the teaching of all the hereditary Brahmanas, the exclusive teachers of the same by the rules of the Shastras themselves?

It is quite easy to imagine the intense consternation and hostility that were naturally aroused in an Age of casuistical fanaticism by the preaching of the simple doctrines of the Religion of the Truth. The chanting of the Holy Name of Godhead is the only sacrament of the true religion prescribed for the present Age. This simplification is in keeping with the spirit of all the other sacraments authorised by the Shastras. The other sacraments are not suitable for this Age which is too addicted to sceptical argumentation ad nauseum. As soon as one realises the true nature of the soul, all his activities are thenceforward naturally and necessarily performed on the spiritual plane. The narrow ceremonial view of the sacrament is due to the imperfect spiritual vision of the observer. The sacrament may, therefore, differ in the different Ages in its external appearance, which is, however, the only view that is open to the novice for whose special benefit it is ordained.

The chanting of the Holy Name is liable to the least objection even as sacrament, from a casuistical Age. The Mercy of Godhead must be sought willingly, nay with the keenest hankering that is born of positive liking, for obtaining real touch with Him in order to serve Him by means of the spiritual senses of the pure soul.

The sacrament implies a real mutual personal relationship between the Lord and His servant. It is definite, concrete and loving, but in the spiritual (not abstract, notional or concocted i. e., purely mental) sense. The personality, senses and functions of the soul are not comprehensible to, nor admissible by the mind. The mental refusal to recognise the substantive existence of the soul, is the greatest curse of this Age of dogmatic empiricism. This piece of dogmatism must be got rid of.

The empiric reason is confronted to a fight at its own weapons when it is summoned to admit the rationale of the worship of Godhead by means of

His Name only. The Name of Godhead must not also be supposed to connote or denote anything of this world, in no shape, neither as precept nor concept. This should in all conscience more than satisfy the passion for abstraction of even the Moslem iconoclast.

The next point is that the Name of Godhead must be admitted as true and not as a mere concoction of the material mind. The Scriptural Name of Godhead is not a thing of this world. The Scriptural Name is Himself Divine. The Scriptural Name requires to be served with the tongue by an attitude of humble supplication for manifesting His Divine Nature to the pure serving essence of our soul. Even the most rabid iconoclast need have no cause of complaint against such service. It is this pure service that was practised by Thakur Haridas, which, he maintained, was the only sacrament enjoined by the Scriptures as suitable for this Age of wrangling sophistry (Kali Yuga.) The implications of this position will be more fully developed in course of this Narrative at the proper stages.

As the service of Godhead is the eternal function of the individual soul in the state of grace, it transcends all mental and physical activities. The Shastras accordingly reserve the service of Godhead to those who are twice-born. The terms Brahmana (one who has knowledge of Godhead as the Great) and Dwija (twice-born) applied to persons who are eligible for the service of Godhead, refer to the individual soul in the state of grace and not to caste. If Thakur Haridas be regarded as a Moslem born, it is then the physical body that is denoted by the Name Thakur Haridas. If Ramchandra Khan claimed to be a Brahmana on the strength of his seminal birth in a Brahmana(?) family, he also supposed his physical body to be Brahmana. The objection of Ramchandra Khan to Thakur Haridas, on the strength of such foolish interpretation of the Shastras, was met by Thakur Haridas with pity and indifference. Ramchandra Khan did not possess the good fortune of the harlot, whom he made the dupe of his deviltries, to be enabled to listen to the Holy Name of Godhead from the lips of Thakur Haridas. A Brahmana, who claims to be such by right of seminal birth, is less fit for spiritual service than even an open-minded harlot.

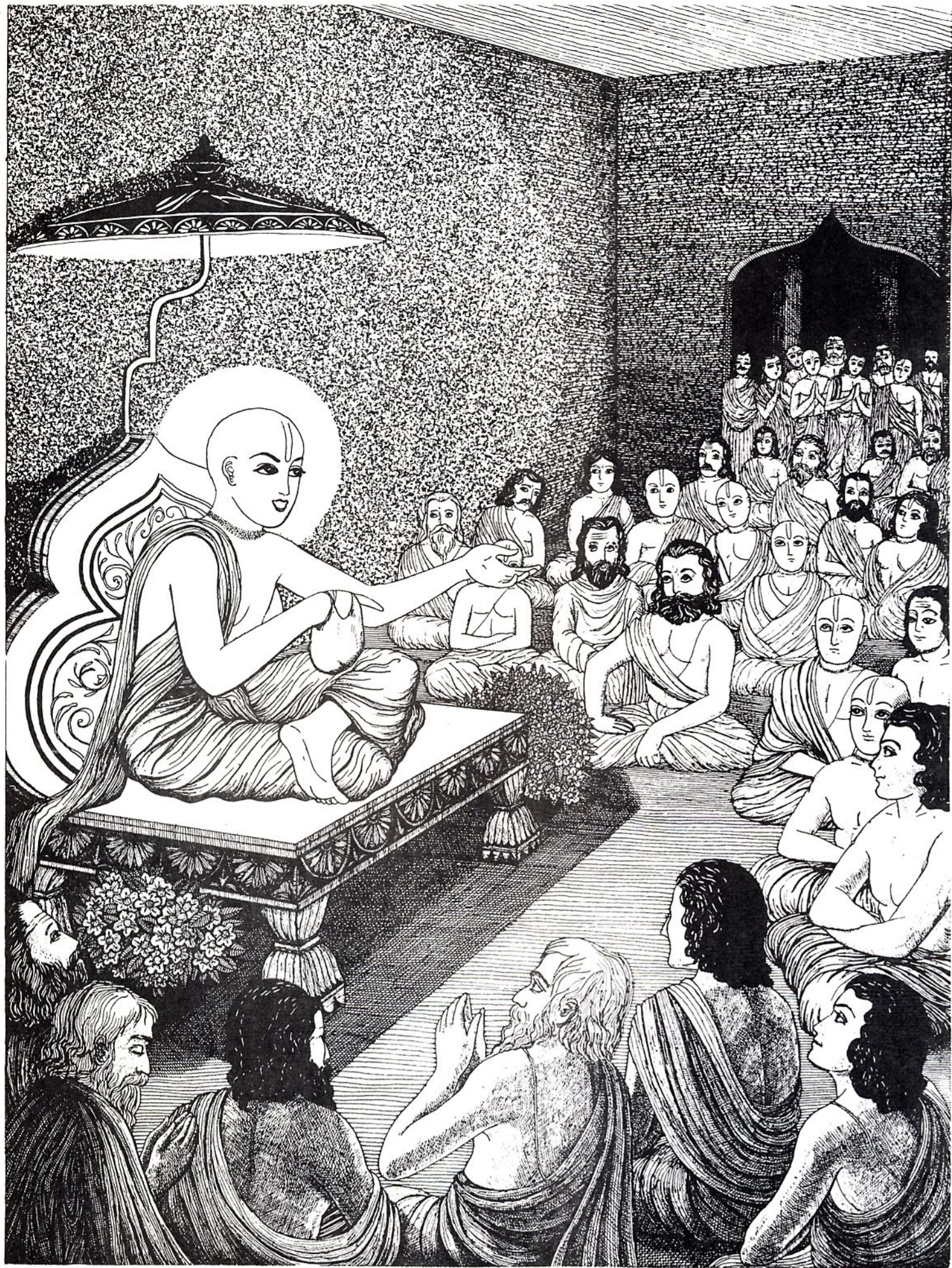
From Fulia, Thakur Haridas moved off to Chandpur. The village of Chandpur was situated in the present District of Hughly in the neighbourhood of Tribeni. Balaram and Jadunandan Acharyas, the purohits (family-priests) of Hiranya and Gobardhan Mazumdars of Tribeni, had their residence in the village of Chandpur which lay to the east of Tribeni. The word 'Mazumdar' is the equivalent of 'Majmu adar', the title of an accountant of the royal revenues under the Nawabs. Balaram Acharya was the disciple of Thakur Haridas and regarded himself as his servant. Haridas stayed with Balaram Acharya in the latter's house. Balaram

Acharya with great care made arrangements for the residence of the Thakur in the village. Haridas lived there in a hut and accepted the alms of food at the house of Balaram Acharya. The boy Raghunath Das, son of Bobardhan, was at this time studying under Balaram Acharya. Raghunath used to go to Thakur Haridas for a sight of the saint. Haridas was merciful to the boy. Thakur Haridas's mercy was the cause of subsequent attainment of spiritual enlightenment by Raghunath Das. The following event occurred while Thakur Haridas was staying at Chandpur.

One day Balaram Acharya, by his humble supplications, induced Thakur Haridas to repair to a gathering at the house of the Mazumdars. The two brothers stood up on seeing the Thakur and, falling at his feet, offered him a seat with great respect. There was present in the assembly a very large number of Pandits, Brahmanas, and other worthy people. The two brothers Hiranya and Gobardhana were also very learned persons. All present spoke highly in praise of Thakur Haridas. This met with the hearty approval of the brothers. It was known to all that the Thakur recited the Holy Name three lakhs (300,000) of times daily. The Pandits accordingly talked about the greatness of the Name as Thakur Haridas assumed his seat in their midst.

Some of the Pandits said that the cure of all sinfulness automatically results from uttering the Name of Godhead. Others expressed the view that the individual soul (jiva) is freed from the miseries of this life by uttering the Name. Haridas declared that those two were not proper fruits of chanting of the Name. Love to the Feet of Krishna is aroused by taking of the Name. Haridas said that the condition of a person who realises such love is described in a sloka of the Bhagawatam (Bhag. 11-2-35). "A person, who is habituated to serve Krishna in the ways enunciated above (viz., hearing, chanting, etc.,) loses all control over his mind and, by reason of realising the quality of love by chanting the Name of Krishna, experiences an anxious restlessness of the heart. He loses all consideration for the opinion of the people and laughs, cries, shouts, sings and dances at intervals." Salvation and destruction of sinfulness are only attendant results—"Just as the rising of the Sun dispels all darkness, so also no sooner does the Name of Hari manifests Himself than He forthwith destroys all the sins of the persons who utters His Name."

Haridas requested the Pandits present to explain the above sloka. All the Pandits desired Thakur Haridas to elucidate its meaning to them. Haridas who had recited the sloka now said that even before the Sun actually begins to appear darkness is dispelled by his approaching light and the fear from thieves, ghosts and demons is also destroyed; and, on his actual appearance, all useful activities begin to be performed. In like



manner sins and other evils are destroyed by the reflected light of the approaching Sunrise of the full manifestation of the Name; while, on the actual appearance of the Name, love to the Feet of Krishna is aroused. Salvation is a trivial result which is effected by the dim reflection cast by the Name as His Appearance draws nigh. The devotee does not wish to accept salvation which is at first offered by Krishna. Haridas quoted the two following slokas of the Bhagawatam in support of his contention (Bhag. 6-3-42; 5-19-12): "If the dying Ajamil could attain to the realm of the Vaikuntha by calling upon Hari, which happened to be the name of his son, who can estimate the effect if the Name is chanted with faith?" "My own," says Krishna, "Never accept the different forms of salvation, e.g., attainment of My realm, attainment of power and wealth and fame similar to Mine, the privileges of dwelling near Me, even the favour of becoming one with Myself; all of which privileges I offer them unreservedly. They covet nothing except My service."

Gopal Chakravarti was a Brahmana who belonged to the household of the Mazumdars, being employed to carry letters and money to the king. He had to go up to Gauda and appear before the Padishah himself in connection with the discharge of his official duties. He used to convey twelve lakhs of rupees annually to the king. He was, in his early youth, very handsome and a very good scholar. Gopal lost his patience on hearing that salvation can be obtained by the dim reflection of the Name. He then spoke in great anger.

"Pandits who are in assembly here," said Gopal. "All of you have heard the conclusion announced by one whose trade is to amuse people by dance and song. Emancipation, which is unattainable by means of knowledge of the Brahman in crores of births, is held by him to follow automatically the manifestation of the dim reflection of the Name."

At this point Haridas entreated Gopal not to entertain any doubt on the subject, as the Shastras themselves declare that liberation from the bondage of the world results at once from the appearance of the dim reflection of the Name. The bliss of liberation is utterly trivial in comparison with the happiness of loving service. It is for this reason that the devotees do not accept liberation. The Thakur then quoted the sloka of Haribhaktisudhodaya (H. Bh. S. 14-31): "Teacher of the universe, to me, immersed in the pure ocean of bliss by meeting Thee, the bliss of the attainment of the knowledge of the Brahman (the Great Nourisher) appears to be as contemptible as the tiny speck of water filling a hole in the ground indented by the hoof of cattle."

The Brahmana now became furious. He shouted out that he would assuredly cut off his nose if liberation does not result from the dim reflection

of the Name. On hearing the blasphemy the members of the assembly gave vent to their sorrow at the behaviour of Gopal. Mazumdar reproved him severely. Balaram Acharya expressed his indignation by remarking that the offender was a fool fit only for hair-splitting sophistry and was perfectly ignorant of the principle of devotion. How could he go the length of insulting even Thakur Haridas! He was doomed to perdition beyond all help.

Haridas rose to leave the place as he heard the words of the Brahmana. Mazumdar forthwith severed all his official connection with Gopal and with all the assembled persons fell prostrate at the feet of Thakur Haridas. Haridas smiled and spoke sweet words. He said that none of them had done anything offensive except that Brahmana. The Brahmana was also not to blame. His addiction to controversial discussion was the cause of his strange behaviour. The greatness of the Name is not realisable by futile discussion. How could he, therefore, understand those principles? He then bade them depart to their homes in peace, expressing the wish that no one might come to grief by his connection with himself.

Hiranya-das came back to his house after receiving this assurance of pardon and forbade Gopal to cross his threshold. In course of three days the offending Brahmana was attacked with virulent leprosy. His very prominent nose rapidly melted away. The fingers of his hands and feet, rivaling the champaka buds in their delicacy, all shrivelled up and dissolved away by the corrosive force of the malady. On beholding this all the people were filled with great wonder. They praised Haridas and made obeisance to him with reverence.

Sri Krishna Kaviraj Goswami concludes the above account with the pregnant observation that although Haridas did not feel offended by the conduct of the Brahmana yet did Godhead award the offender the punishment due to his transgression. It is the nature of the devotee of Godhead that he ever pardons the faults of the ignorant. It is Krishna's Nature that He cannot bear any calumny of His devotees even through ignorance.

Haridas was grieved at heart on hearing of the misery of the Brahmana. He apprised Balaram Acharya of his intention to leave the place and proceed to Shantipur.

The account is prefaced by Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami with the remark that the event narrated is most wonderful for the reason that it contains the clear elucidation, from the lips of the Acharya himself, of the Divine Dispensation of the present Age. The reader must not forget the point, which is the centre of interest of the whole narrative detailed in this work, viz., that Thakur Haridas is the Acharya, or the practising teacher, authorized by Godhead to promulgate the congregational chanting (Samkirtana) of the Holy Name, which is the mode of worship that alone

can demolish the worst form of atheism in the name of 'free' thinking which is unfortunately so prevalent nowadays all over the world; and which is the terrible but inevitable natural consequence of the exclusive worship of Mammon by all the resources of mind and body.

End—Part II

DELIVERANCE

Be born again.
This time a perfect child.
This time immortal.
This time happy, forever blissful.

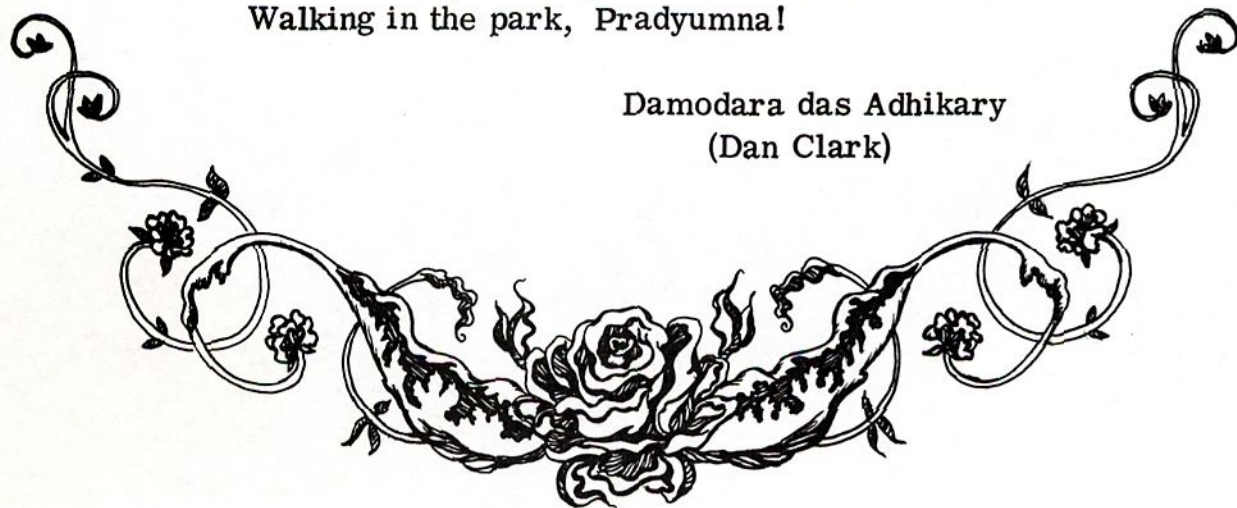
Be born again!
This time let your crying ring
out to the stars!
This time just scream in eternal ecstasy,
"I'm back. I'm back!"
This time, you fool, Just worship
Govinda, Just worship Govinda,
Just worship Govinda!!

Purushottam das Brahmachary
(Paul Auerbach)

PRADYUMNA

Pradyumna, Pradyumna,
 Pradyumna Prabhu, walking in the park.
 Pradyumna walking in the park.
 Yellow and blue, shaved head Prabhu,
 Walking in the park through the families.
 Pradyumna walking through the families.
 The grass is green, bright green
 Where Pradyumna walks, blue and yellow,
 Chanting on his beads, walking,
 Walking through the families
 In Montreal, walking to the temple,
 Prabhu walking so nicely, walking
 To the temple among the citizens
 Who do not notice he is chanting,
 Chanting Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna,
 On his beads as he walks, Krishna
 Krishna, to the temple, Hare Hare,
 Straight to the temple, Hare Rama,
 Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Krishna kirtan,
 Hare Hare, walking to Krishna's temple.
 Yellow and blue on a green field,
 A Brahmachary flag for Lord Krishna.
 But still the people do not sing,
 Do not follow him, the children do not
 Laugh and dance with flowers at his feet.
 How can they ignore the call, Krishna's call,
 The urge to sing His Name, the urge
 To follow Pradyumna Prabhu, a devotee
 Of The Lord, walking, Pradyumna Prabhu,
 Walking in the park, Pradyumna!

Damodara das Adhikary
 (Dan Clark)





IN KRISHNA'S ABODE

The streets and houses are made of touchstone,
And all the trees are fulfillers of desire.
The cows give limitless nectarlike milk,
And the Lord is served by many fair goddesses of Fortune.
O! I worship that Cowherd Boy,
Who is the Supreme Enjoyer.





KRISHNA AND THE VEDIC VIEW: The Swami Responds



Dear Swami Bhaktivedanta,

As simply as possible, could you tell me what the real essence of your message is? I find all philosophers to be long on wind but short on solid meaning. Please try to be clear. Thank you.

John M. Taylor

Dear Mr. Taylor,

I shall try: My message is that humankind can find real—not theoretical or abstract—peace and happiness only through association with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And this association is established most quickly

and easily through the congregational chanting of the Lord's Holy Names. My followers and I sing the Maha Mantra—Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. However, other authorized Names, such as Jehovah, Jesus Christ and Allah are quite acceptable, as God has a limitless supply of Personal Names. I hope this is lucid, and further hope you will take up this practice of Kirtan, or singing the Lord's Names.

Dear Swami,

Who is Narada Muni? When you say on your record album cover that he's a spaceman, do you mean that he uses a flying saucer?

Yours truly,

Marjorie Sherman

Dear Miss Sherman,

Narada is one of the principal saints mentioned in Vedic literature. As stated on the record cover it was he who delivered the Maha Mantra to Earth. Narada Muni doesn't use a flying saucer, because his body is completely spiritual, and therefore has no limitation in material time or space.

Dear Swami,

If God loves us, why doesn't He stop warfare?

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Arthur

Dear Miss Arthur,

The Lord presents Mankind with all means of understanding His Fatherhood, and our brotherhood toward one another. But He doesn't impinge upon the minute quantity of independence that we have. If we choose to ignore Him, He permits us. Greed treachery and warfare are natural results of this ignorance. As for the major horror of war, death: that is merely an illusion. The living entities are by constitution eternal, in spite of material appearances. But great suffering is undeniably there, due to our unfortunate ignorance.

Dear Swami,

Are there any esoteric principles in Krishna Consciousness, revealed only to advanced students?

Thank you,

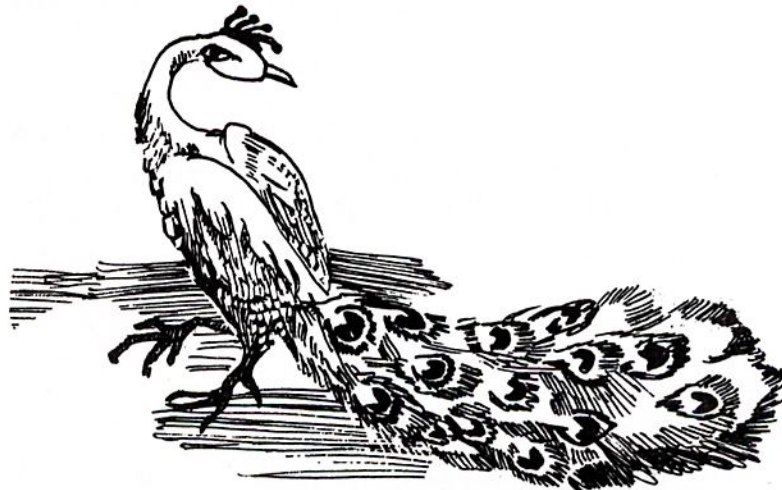
Ben Ordway

Dear Mr. Ordway,

Why not take up Krishna Consciousness and see?

Ever your well-wisher,

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami



THE HIGHEST SENSE

“Every second of human life is meant for making an ultimate solution of the problems of life, i.e., repetition of birth and death and revolving in the cycle of 84 lakhs of different species of life.”—Swami A. C. Bhaktivedanta

We have only minute
independence but it
overwhelms us. The
energy of our body we
run like a crazy machine
to hear it roar only—
the fingertips the ears
the monkey we are—what
nonsense without spirit soul!

Like a dog we run
2 miles one way and
return 2 miles the other way,
stopping at hotels and
motels, slamming and opening
the car door and eating
any junk put on the counter and talking
about the newspapers and
the radio—what
rubbish without cultivation of the soul!

We are driving the
machine but we're so obsessed
we think “I am the machine”
and we waste
our power and only a few times a day
we have to think “What is God?”
but we dismiss it, “Who cares?
throw Him away! We are God!” and
the highest pleasure is to
park our machine in some
garage with another machine
and run our engines
together and we
call that Love.

The aim of life is spirit
 even the hogland fools should know it
 this is the highest pleasure:
 the soul as the only Sense.
 Drive those cars into towns
 in the morning and at night
 and use the hotels—for kirtan parties to stay overnight
 and chant Hare Krishna and give out great
 prasadam feasts of sweet rice, halavah and pouris
 offered to Lord Sri Krishna's Senses
 and use the main ballroom and the hall and the theater
 and the public park and the downtown road
 for mass dancing to the sound of voice and cymbals
 and drums of kirtan and let the neons light up:
 GLORIES TO GOVINDA
 and speed the cars and planes
 to cities like Dwarka built just to please Him
 and turn the Love for cats and dogs and machines
 into Krishna Who reciprocates His devotees
 as Friend and Master and Lover—He
 will hear this rejoicing of
 victory over matter
 and will release us from this
 nasty world, which even if transformed,
 will have to perish
 when only Krishna will be standing
 in a nicely curved position,
 dark blue like a rain cloud,
 and playing His flute.

Satsvarupa das Brahmachary
 (Stephen Guarino)

TRUTH AND BEAUTY

by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

It has often been argued whether truth and beauty are terms compatible with one another. One would agree willingly, some say, to express the truth, but since truth is not always beautiful—indeed it is frequently rather startling and unpleasant—how is one to express truth and beauty at the same time?

In reply to this we may inform all concerned that Truth and Beauty are indeed compatible terms. Truth which is Absolute is always beautiful. It is so beautiful that it attracts everyone, including itself. Truth is so beautiful that many sages, saints and devotees have left everything for its sake. Mahatma Gandhi, the idol of the modern world, dedicated his life for experimenting with Truth, and all his activities were targetted towards Truth only.

Why Mahatma Gandhi?—every one of us is drawn by an urge towards Truth, because it is not only beautiful, but possesses all power, all resources, all fame, all renunciation and all knowledge as well.

Unfortunately, people have no information of the actual Truth, and 99.9 per cent of men in all ranks of life are following the principles of Untruth in the name of Truth and its quest. We are actually attracted with the beauty of Truth, but we are, since time immemorial, habituated to love untruth in the name of Truth. And therefore, to the mundane thinker, Truth and Beauty are incompatible terms. Mundane Truth and beauty are explained as follows:

A man fell in love with a beautiful girl. He was very powerful and strongly built, but his character was doubtful. The girl, meanwhile, was not only beautiful in appearance, but also saintly in character. As such the beautiful girl did not like the proposal of the powerful man. The powerful man, however, insisted upon his lustful desires, whereupon the beautiful girl requested the man to wait for only seven days and after that she fixed up a time when they could meet. The strong man agreed, and with high expectations began to count the hours, waiting for the moment when he was fixed to meet the girl.

The saintly girl, however, in order to manifest the real beauty of relative Truth, adopted a means which is very instructive: She took a very strong dose of purgative medicine, and for seven days continually she passed loose stool and vomitted all that she ate. All the loose stool

and the vomit she stored up in suitable reservoirs. As a result of this laxative medicine, the so-called beautiful girl became lean, thin as a skeleton, and turned gloomy of complexion, with her beautiful eyes pushed into the socket of the skull.

At the appointed hour, she was waiting anxiously to receive the man in love.

The man appeared on the scene well-dressed and well-behaved, and asked the waiting girl, who was depressed in appearance, about the beautiful girl who had called him there. The man could not recognize the waiting girl, as the same beauty whom he was asking for. The girl was in a pitiable condition, and the foolish man, in spite of repeated assertions, could not recognise her. All due to the action of the medicine.

At last the girl told the powerful man the story of her beauty, that she had separated the ingredients of beauty, and stored them up in the reservoirs. She told him that he could have and enjoy the juices of beauty stored up in these reservoirs if he wanted them. The man agreed to see the juices of beauty, and thus he was directed to the store of loose stool and liquid vomit, which were emanating unbearable odors. Thus the whole story of the liquid beauty was disclosed to him. The characterless man, by the grace of the saintly girl, was now able to distinguish between the shadow and the substance, and thus he came to his senses.

That is the real position of every one of us who are attracted by false material beauty. The girl above-mentioned developed a beautiful material body as she desired in her mind, but she was actually apart from that temporary material manifestation of body and mind. She is in fact a spiritual spark, and so also is the man in love, who was attracted by the false skin of the girl.

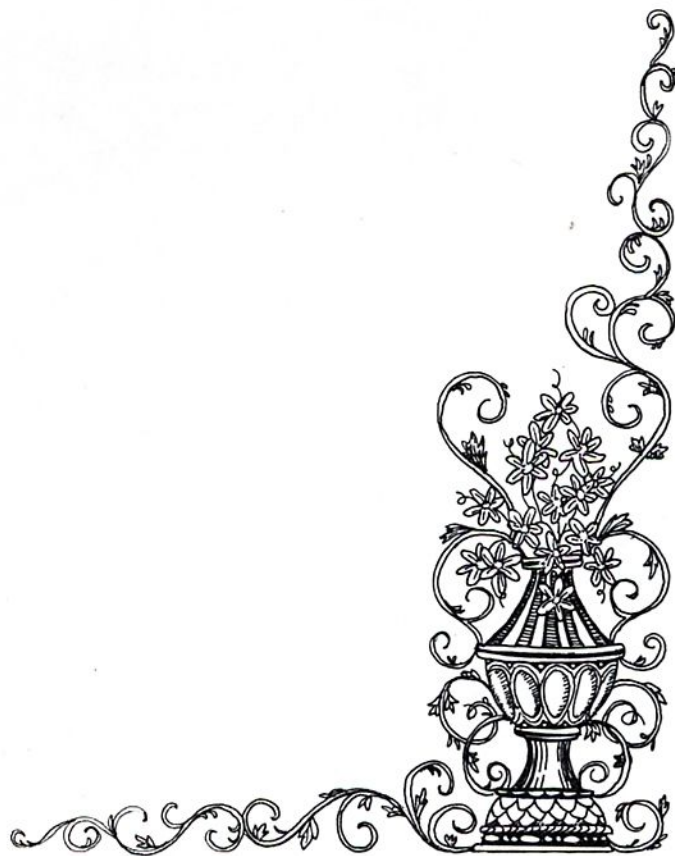
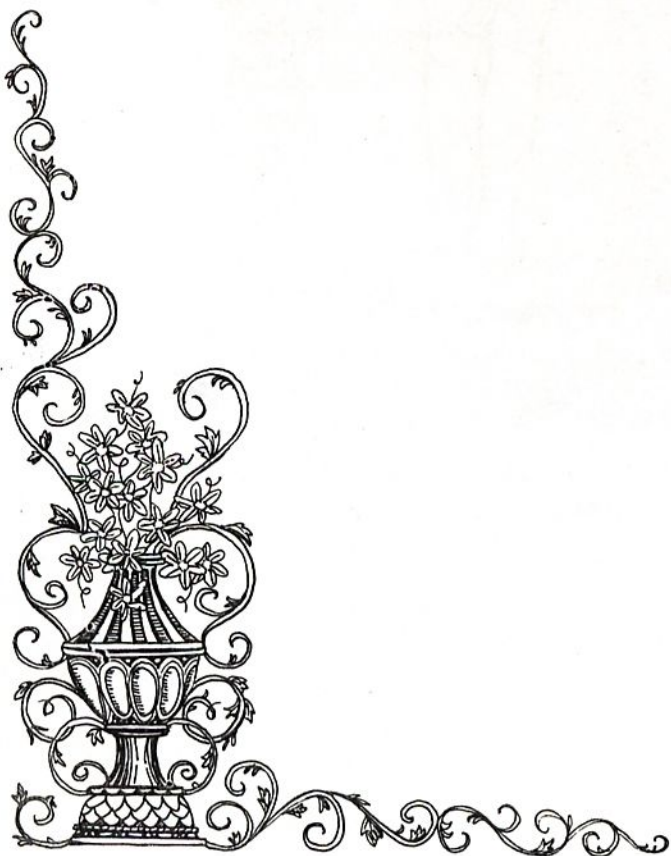
Many great thinkers, poets, artists and people in general, are deluded by the outward beauty and attraction of the relative truth, and are unaware of the spiritual spark which is both Truth and Beauty at one and the same time. The spiritual spark is so beautiful that on its leaving the body no one any longer wishes to touch it, even though the body may be decorated with the most costly jewels.

And because we are all after a false, relative truth, we find it to be incompatible with real beauty. The truth is so permanently beautiful that it maintains the same standard of beauty as it is for millions upon millions of years. Besides that, the spiritual spark is indestructible. The beauty of the outer skin can be destroyed in a few hours time by one small dose of strong purgative, but the beauty of Truth is always the same, and is indestructible just as it is. Unfortunately, mundane writers are ignorant of the beautiful sparks of spirit, as well as of the fiery resources of these

spiritual sparks and their interrelations of transcendental pastimes. When these pastimes are displayed here by the Grace of the Almighty, the foolish persons who cannot see beyond the gross senses mistake such pastimes of Truth and Beauty as being within the same field as the store of loose stools and liquid vomit. Thus they come to despair, and then declare that Truth and beauty cannot be accomodated at one and the same time.

The mundane thinkers do not know that the Whole Spiritual Entity is the beautiful Person attracting everything as the Prime Substance, the Prime Source and the Fountainhead of everything that be. And the infinitesimal spiritual sparks, as parts and parcels of the Whole Spirit, are qualitatively the same—beautiful and eternal entities. The difference is that the Whole is eternally the Whole, and the parts are eternally the parts. Both of them are the Ultimate Truth, Ultimate Beauty, Ultimate Knowledge, Ultimate Energy, Ultimate Renunciation and Ultimate Opulence.

Any literature which does not describe such Ultimate Truth and Beauty is a store of loose stools and liquid vomit of the relative truth. Real literature is that which describes this Ultimate Truth and Beauty.



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EVOLUTION AND THE HUMAN MISSION

by Rayarama das Brahmachary

(Raymond Marais)

Long before the advent of Linnaeus, the existing species of life had been analyzed and categorized in the uniquely scientific scriptural literature of India. And, at about the same distance in time from Darwin, a presentation of the evolutionary process was made. In both instances, the earlier work was by far the more exhaustive, although it was done in mind of spiritual values, and with scant heed to the speculative studies of the material world which are so much a part of the scientific tradition to which Linnaeus and Darwin belonged. Indeed, the Vedic analyses are cosmic in scope, depending as they do upon the revelations of seers whose minds were attuned to the absolute knowledge possessed by God. Their theses are complete, and are meant to point out and define the specific place of human life in the universal order, as well as to indicate the role for which the human being is intended.

To begin with, the living entities are divided into eight million, four hundred thousand species. Although not all of these species exist on any one planet, they are to be found within this universe as a whole. What's more, no species may ever be said to be extinct—not even those seemingly progressive developments like eohippus which have so enchanted Charles Darwin's successors. Occasionally, a breed of beings will disappear from one planet, or appear on another where it was not before known to exist—but the Vedic literature rules out the concept of extinction.

(At this point, we may clearly see that the man who is dependent upon and faithful to the limited scope of vision of empirical science may not in good humor proceed with us. We shall later take up the particular limitations of the individual living entity, and explain why he therefore ought not to rely upon the knowledge acquired by his senses and their mechanical extensions such as the telescope, spectroscope, and radio wave transmitters. But for the moment, we must simply say that Vedic knowledge was delivered by entities far more developed than any earthly doctorate can attest to, and leave skepticism unappeased.)

The Padma Purana classifies the species of life thusly: 9,000,000 aquatic; 2,000,000 vegetable; 1,000,000 crawlers (such as worms and

reptiles); 1, 000, 000 birds; 3, 000, 000 four-legged beasts; and 400, 000 humans. These divisions are not made in the same spirit as are those of modern science, needless to say. For example, gorillas and monkeys are considered human, as are the demi-gods of the heavenly planets. And just as we are advanced above the apes, so are the demi-gods advanced over us— and often the gap is greater. Furthermore, those humans whom we see before us on this planet are divided into various more -or- less fixed gradations of primitive and civilized. For, so far as the Vedic seers are concerned, the civilized life of Earth is the penultimate in the evolutionary process.

How so, when the demi-gods are admitted to be more developed than we?

The answer to this question is also the answer to another question: What is meant by advancement? The biologists, anthropologists and ecologists of today's repute do not recognize the concept of advance and recession, at least not officially—for they say that it is anthropomorphic, unpragmatic, impractical. Within their range of vision this is certainly so. Without some spiritual understanding, no conclusion or goal can ever be perceived in anything, to be sure. But to the man who has some spiritual understanding a sure and unshakable goal is ever before him, its banners hailing his attention at every turn. This goal is spiritual perfection, self-realization as it is most often termed.

How is self realized? How is self obscured? The key word here is consciousness. That the dog has a soul may be a fact, but the dog has no consciousness of this, and therefore he suffers. So it is with all living beings. Spirit soul being the true and constitutional position of the creature, its realization in the form of direct experience means the attainment of Truth, of Reality, and, therefore, one's life can only actually begin at this point. To one without spiritual enlightenment, Truth is an elusive phantom, and so is happiness. Consciousness of Truth, of one's real identity, then, is the goal of life, for all beings seek immortality, knowledge and bliss, whatever their station.

The very wealthy, even on this Earth, do not generally turn to spiritual life, because they are engrossed in material enjoyment. They consider the spiritualist or transcendentalist to be the crier of sour grapes, as though they with their riches can avoid the death which he whom they have derided has transcended. As Lord Jesus Christ said, a camel may pass through the eye of a needle with greater ease than may a rich man go to God. Yet the opulences of this planet are mere baubles as compared to the abundance to be found on the heavenly planets, where dwell the demi-gods. And, therefore, they for all their highly developed bodies and minds, are not so fortunate as we—for we have the more inclusive vision of life and

death, which is inevitable for them as much as for us. And, with our vision, is increased the opportunity to transcend the mortal state.

The development of spiritual consciousness is possible only to the human species— and especially so for the civilized humans. This advanced, comprehensive consciousness is, in fact, the only quality which actually distinguishes man from the other creatures. For the pig and the horse and the ant all have sex life, all eat foods which please them, all sleep and all have weapons. And they have their politics, as well. We cannot conclude that human life is merely the manner of living of a sophisticated swine. No, for Man has the ability to wonder— and the ability to find out, too. Therefore, in the Vedas it is said that, when a man first questions, “What am I? How am I here?”— then his human life begins.

This human status is attained after millions upon millions of births. To be sure, the living spirit soul must progress through the bodies of each and every one of those eight million four hundred thousand species, before he can achieve civilized existence. This is a long, excruciating transmigration through a universe of never-ending frustration, pain and defeat. For the living entity cannot know eternal life, knowledge, or bliss complete as long as he identifies himself with matter; and no understanding of one’s true identity is possible at any stage below the human. Thus, all life in this material world means vanquishment.

Now, before continuing with the subject of evolution and the meaning of that study in terms of human purpose, we must wonder, after all: How did it begin? How am I here? In the Bhagavad Gita, the Lord explains,

All beings are born to delusion
O Bharata,
Overcome by the dualities
Which arise from wish and hate,
O Conqueror of the foe.
(VII, 27)

The living entity wishes to become the Lord, the ruler and master— and so he is given a domain in which he may fulfill his longings:

In ancient days the Lord of creatures
Created men along with sacrifice
and said,
By this shall ye bring forth, and
this shall be unto you
That which will yield the milk
of your desires.
(B. G. III, 10)

So Krishna, the God Who loves all beings, has given us what we craved, and by sacrifice we had the means to be eternally joyful even here, without His direct association. But the living entity cannot be what he is not—he cannot be God. Whereas the Lord is in all ways perfect, His fragmental portions suffer from certain constitutional imperfections, which are chiefly classed as four: the living entity is certain to make mistakes, he is envious, he is subject to illusion, and his senses are imperfect. With these unfortunate shortcomings, having gone so far to sunder the loving relationship with God, it is easy to see how the state of paradise, known both to Judaic and Vedic scriptural history, was lost.

It is the eternal religion of all beings to serve. By eternal religion it is meant that this is something which cannot be taken from the entity—something which he manifests at all times. Bugs and behemoths, trees and tigers—all creatures are engaged in service. Indeed, the Lord Himself, the Prime and Primal Being, is also the Prime and Primal Servant, giving to all creatures their sustenance in every way both direct and indirect. Because of our natural position of servitude, turning from the service of the Lord means that we must turn to some other service. This is the service of Maya, Illusion, for only God's service is true.

Thus we can see that, wilfully, we have made our own beds in this world of defeat.

Until the spirit soul enters upon the human platform, he remains blind and innocent of sin. He simply goes on from birth to birth, species to species, until he has risen to the level where his body permits the flowering of long-dulled and suppressed consciousness. At this point, intractable evolution ceases, for the greater consciousness leaves the entity literally master of his own fate. He may choose to end the material entanglement in which he has so long been caught, he may choose to continue human existence, or he may hurl himself back into the sea of raging mortality from which he has barely just emerged. Brief though it be, this human life is supremely important.

The process by which the human makes his choice and by which that choice is fulfilled is called karma. Karma means an action and its attendant reaction. I chop a tree...it falls. That is karma. In a similar sense, the manner in which I lead this human life creates a certain effect which is manifested in my next birth. The culmination of one's life is its final moment:

Thinking of whatever state
He at the end gives up his body,
To that being does he attain, O Son

of Kunti,
Being ever absorbed in the thought
thereof.

(B. G. VIII, 6)

This is the vital, crucial decision, but one may not make it at that last instance. Indeed, the mind will cling to its ways— and so reflect the life it has known. And in this lies the tragedy or triumph of Man. If he has lived as a goat, then he will get the body best suited to his wishes. And, has he lived as a friend to the eternal God, then he will have birth in that eternal association, and end rebirth altogether.

This is the crux of all Vedic philosophy: one can end the round of birth and death. It can be done. One must simply sever his ties to material existence in the proper manner. Here is the formula:

Save work done as and for sacrifice
This world is in bondage to work.
Therefore, O Son of Kunti, do thy work
as a sacrifice,
Becoming free from all attachment.

(B. G. III, 9)

Yes, the Bhagavad Gita says that the only means of liberation from the forest of action-reaction is to act without regard for the fruits of work. In other words, to work for God. Give Him your money, give Him your intelligence, give Him your energy. Again, Sri Krishna says,

Those who, laying all their actions on Me,
Intent on Me
Worship, meditating on Me,
With unswerving devotion;
These whose thoughts
Are set on Me,
I straightway deliver
From the ocean of death-bound existence,
O Partha. (B. G. XII, 6 & 7)

This is the way. Those not willing to follow it cannot hope to gain God's association. That a strong attachment to money, sex-life or fame exists is understood. But that attachment must be transferred to God. If it is not, then the individual's consciousness can never be fixed upon Him. For those who, like Nietzsche, want to go on in the sea, the Lord has no anger. But He has pity, and so He explains our plight to us for our own consideration:

At the coming of day, all manifested things
 Come forth from the unmanifested
 And at the coming of night they merge
 In that same, called the unmanifested.
 This very same multitude of existences
 Arising again and again
 Merges helplessly at the coming of night,
 O Partha,
 And streams forth at the coming of day.
 But, beyond this unmanifested,
 There is yet another,
 Unmanifested eternal being,
 Who does not perish.
 This Unmanifested is called the Imperishable.
 Him they speak of as the Supreme Status.
 Those who attain to Him return not.
 That is My supreme abode.
 This is the Supreme Person, O Partha,
 In Whom all existences abide
 And by Whom all this is pervaded;
 Who can, however, be gained by
 unswerving devotion.
 (B. G. VIII, 18-22)

And so we can see that the perfection of human life, indeed the goal of goals in all this Universe, is to transcend the material encagement and to enter into the eternal Abode of Krishna—through devotional service. This is the purpose to which a man ought wisely to dedicate his life. Otherwise, that life is necessarily dedicated to death, for only by God's grace can we cross the chasm of doom inherent in the flesh. Once spiritual life begins, once the transcendental consciousness is awakened, death has been conquered and life fulfilled beyond the sweetest of dreams.

These concepts are not new ones, nor are they Indian, nor even Vedic. They are found in the Bible and the Koran as well as in other great scriptural literature. The scientist may only examine the phenomenon of mortality, but he may never fully comprehend, much less overcome it. This is the domain of the spiritualist. How then has it come about that our world has turned from God? Why are people by the millions accepting post-dated checks from the men of science, whose finest pragmatic accomplishments are to move some tons of dead earth from one spot to another at great speed?

When we speak of the common good among men, the first and most general thought to arise is that of politics. After all, isn't every politician from the President to the town dogcatcher promising Utopia in exchange for your vote? Those who are genuinely moved to aid their suffering fellow men are, of course, as rare as rubies in the Arctic—yet even the few who have such sentiments simply serve as agents of Illusion if they have no spiritual understanding. And at their heels follow their people, sheep to the block. If Mankind's mortal sufferings are to be relieved, we must have leaders of a higher caliber, men of intelligence, who can see what the mission and purpose of human life actually are. Without such vision, no one can help his fellow man or himself.

Ideal leadership is outlined in the Bhagavad Gita, by Lord Krishna. There He says:

As the unlearned act from attachment
to their work
So should the learned also work,
O Bharata,
But without any attachment,
With the desire to maintain
the world order.
Let him not unsettle the minds
Of the ignorant who are attached
to action.
The enlightened man doing all
works in a spirit of yoga,
Should set others to act as well.
(B. G. III, 25 & 26)

This is good leadership. Those who are themselves mad for riches and fame cannot be expected to serve the people wisely. Those who are limited by the bodily concept of life are blind men, and those who imagine themselves outside God's shelter are worse:

The evil-doers who are foolish,
lowest of the humans,
Whose minds are carried away by illusion
And who partake of the nature of demons,
Do not seek refuge in Me.
(B. G. VII, 15)

It is a current fashion to exercise any limitless number of theories as to why the United States is declining so noticeably in moral vigor. The

answer stares the historian in the face from the page of every letter and document written by the Founding Fathers: they believed in God— most of them actually and ardently. This is what America lacks today, and nothing more, twist though you may for a different explanation.

One who has the true welfare of his fellow man in mind ought to make all strenuous efforts to lead them to the gateway of God's Kingdom. Here, in devotional service, lies the end to suffering; lies peace, plenty and life eternal. What more can one hope to offer? This is release from the age-long cycle of birth and death, and this is what all beings crave despite their delusions.

At the end of many lives
The man of wisdom resorts to Me,
Knowing that Vasudeva (Krishna) is all that is.
Such a great soul is rarely to be found.

(B. G. 19)

Offer the fruit of wisdom, ripened for millenia, to your fellows. This is the real act of love, this is the true public service. And, in the process, you will yourself be freed:

Having come to Me
These great souls do not return to rebirth,
The place of sorrow, impermanent,
For they have reached the highest perfection.

(B. G. VIII, 15)

The Great-souled, the Mahatma, is a perfected being, a human who has gone all the way to the goal, having turned to the Lord. He is the final, finished product of evolution, and he has transcended that process by which he has risen—by dint of his own willingness to love, and with the grace of Krishna.

Becoming a great soul, though the breed is a rare one, is not difficult. One simply chooses to dissociate from material activities and to take up the spiritual line. Krishna Himself will guide you from there.

Abandoning all duties,
Come to Me alone for shelter.
Be not grieved,
For I shall release thee from all evils.

(B. G.. XVIII, 66)

This is the way to perfection. And, unless he takes this proffered gift, a man's living is vain and wasted and dedicated to death. In the Brahma Vaivarta

Purana, it is couched in these rather straightforward words:

“There are 8,400,000 species of life among living entities. If one living being, having passed through this long cycle of births, comes to the human standard, and then foolishly misuses it, he has simply spoiled everything.”

All glorious news! The chariot pushes it's way
across Creation to deliver us back.

Behold the mighty driver with all the universe
streaking through His hair. It's Krishna! Our Lord.

So full in bliss, let our arms fly up. Let us
jump, leap, prance into the dance of the jivas.

Dance Hare Krishna, Hare Rama! We're free
again at last. O thunderous joy, leave your
body behind, we're free again at last!

Yes, my mother, my friends. It was always
so easy. The purple trees, the golden fields
were always ours to begin with. Simply chant
Hare Krishna, Hare Rama.

Then ripened with love, we'll gather for Krishna
to pluck us up. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna.

The task is ended at last.

Purushottam das Brahmachary
(Paul Auerbach)



THE NAME

Now—it is a joy to say His Name
 and hear of His Fame—
 Sometimes, I just can't say His Name enough!
 "Say it faster, faster—Krishna, Krishna
 Harder, harder
 Think deeply, concentrate—Krishna
 I'm Yours—"
 When I suddenly remember to
 continue saying Krishna
 it's like a long-needed
 soft cool breeze
 on a hot afternoon—
 My obeisances forever to You, Krishna
 My obeisances forever to You, Swamiji
 I shall always chant the Name of the Lord
 in order to feel the
 soft cool breeze
 of His presence.

Madhusudan das Brahmachary
 (Michael Blumert)





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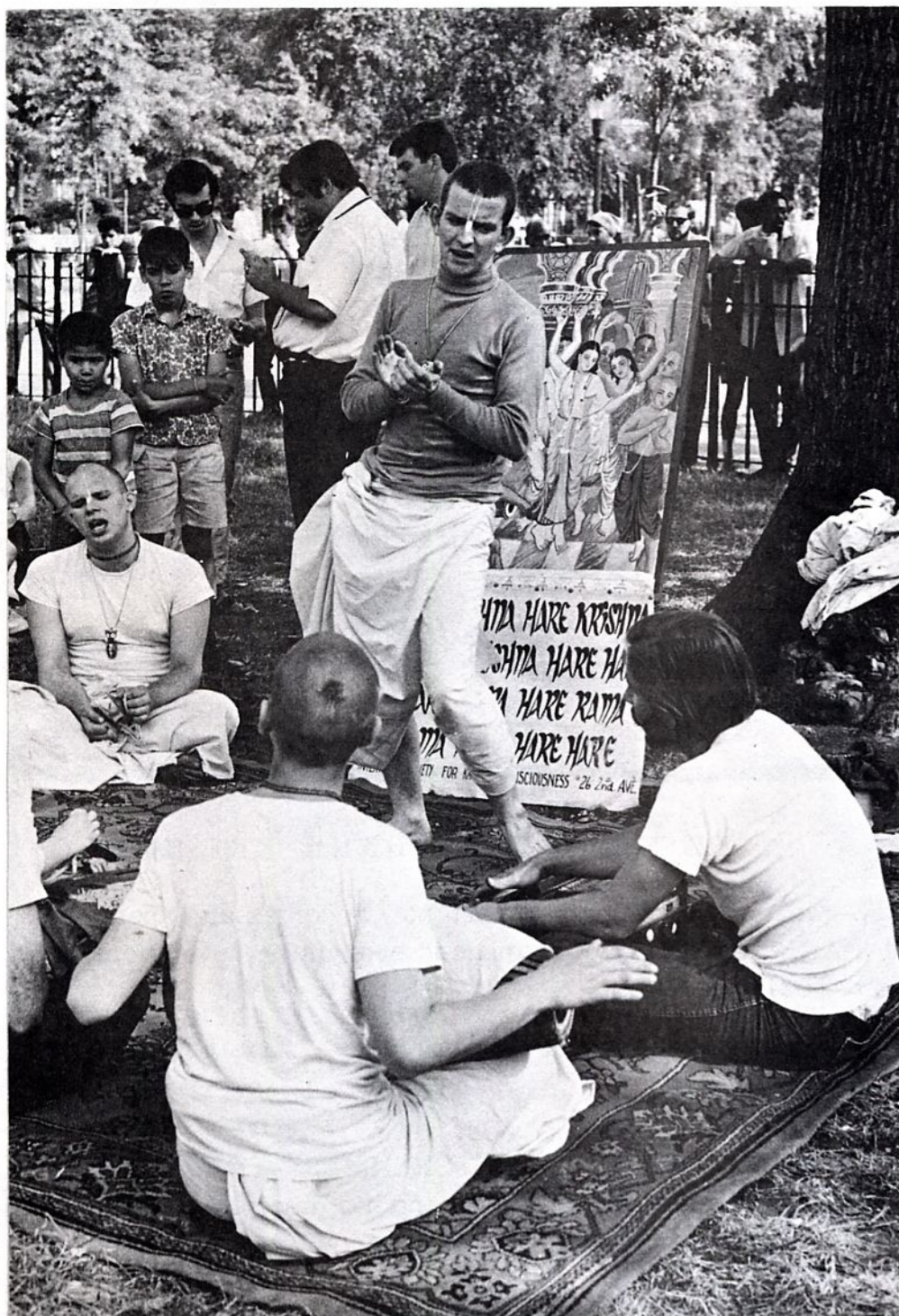
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