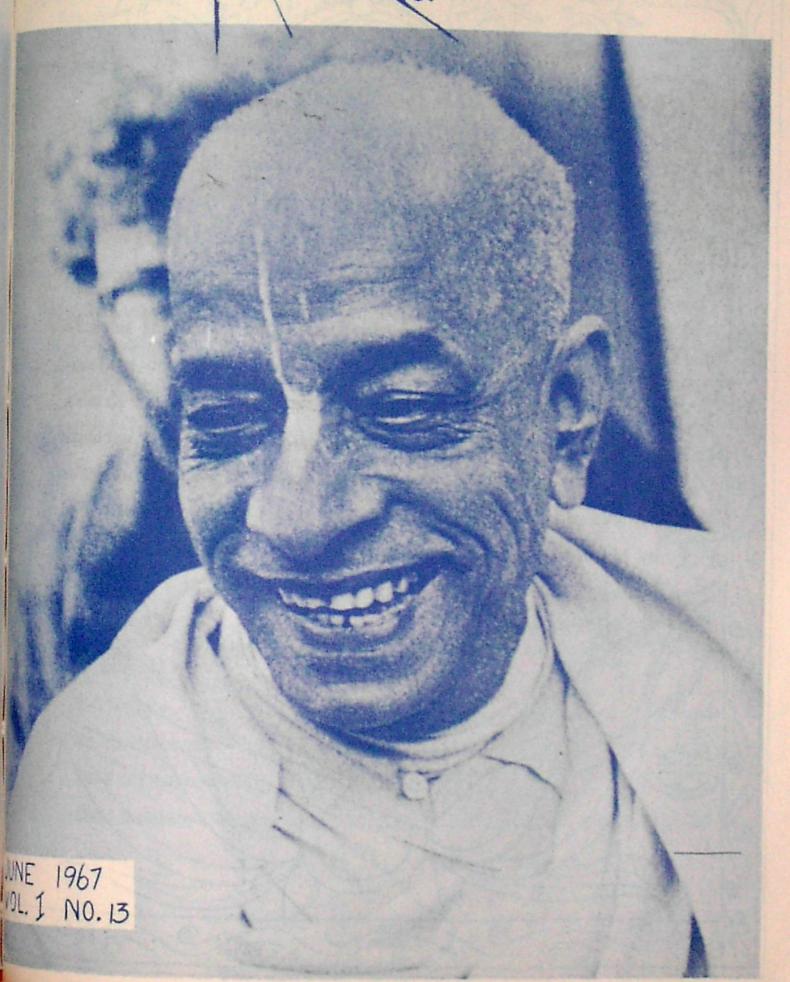
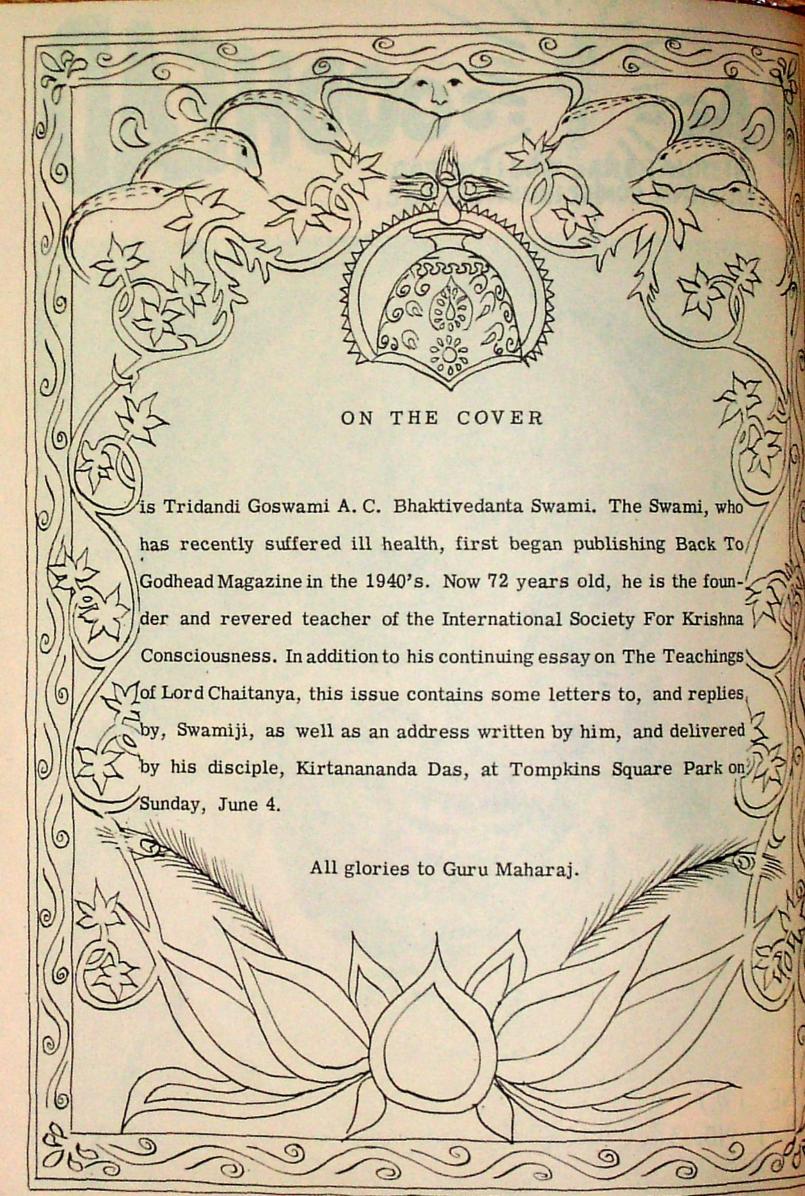
BACE EGODHEAD INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS INC.





CONTENTS

n	the Cover	2
di	itorial	4
SS	says	
	Teachings of Lord Chaitanya	
	Part IV	. 5
	Krishna Consciousness in American Poetry	
	Part IV-Hart Crane	19
	Radha Krishna	. 36
	How I Met Swami A. C. Bhaktivedanta	38
	Lord Ramachandra	42
	Krishna and the Vedic View	
	The Swami Responds	.45
	Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu	50
	An Address to American Youth	. 55
oe	etry	
	The Poems of Vidyapati	10
	Poem to Hart Crane	35
	The Ogre's Lament	44
	I Wanted To	52
lu	strations	
		94
	The Bridge	
	Radha Krishna	
	Lord Ramachandra	43
	Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu	.51

By The Mercy of Krishna:

This is the first edition of Back To Godhead to come off our presses. Although the difficulties involved in operating an offset press, especially in view of our inexperience, are great—we nevertheless feel that this is only the first ray of a glistening future for the Society's publications department.

Our mission is to spread the Samkirtan movement, as it was inaugurated by Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu about 480 years ago. We mean to avail ourselves of every opportunity to do this, for it is the Lord's pleasure to have us thus devote ourselves to His loving service; and what's more, this is the only real act of love which one living entity can offer to another—that is, the knowledge of Infinite God. And so we hope to perfect our publishing operations to the finest possible level of art and skill in every facet. And, because this is all in praise of Krishna, it is our delight, not our task, to do so.

Another medium which well served the Lord recently was television. On Thursday evening, May 25, Swami A. C. Bhaktivedanta
and several of his disciples appeared on the Alan Burke Show, on New
York's WNEW—channel 5. The program was extremely well- received,
and Mr. Burke's kindness and respect toward the Swami was most
appreciated. Our deep thanks go to him for this great service.

Hare Krishna

The Editors

TEACHINGS OF LORD CHAITANYA Part IV- The Forms of Krishna's Manifestations and Incarnations

By devotional service one can understand that Krishna first of all manifests Himself as Sayamrupa, His Personal Form, then as Tadekatmarupa, and then Avesarupa. In these three features He manifests Himself in His transcendental Form. The feature of Savamrupa is the form in which Krishna can be understood by one who may not understand His other features. In other words, the form in which Krishna is directly understood is called Sayamrupa, or His Personal Form. The Tadekatmarupa is that form which most resembles the Sayamrupa but has some differences of bodily features. This Tadekatmarupa is divided into two manifestations, called the Personal expansion and the Pastime expansion. As far as Avesarupa is concerned, sometimes Krishna empowers some suitable living entity to represent Him; when a living entity is acting as a representative of the Supreme Lord, he is called Avesa avatar, or Saktavesh avatara. His Personal Form is again divided into two: Sayamrupa and Sayapraksa. As far as His Sayamrupa is concerned, it is in that form that He remains always in Vrindaban(also called Pastime Form) with all the inhabitants of Vrindaban. That Personal Form is again divided into two, known categorically as Prabhavav and Braibhava Forms. For example, Krishna expanded Himself in multi forms in the Rasa Dance, and when He danced with the Gopis, He expanded Himself in multi forms to dance with each and every Gopi who took part in that dance. Similarly, He expanded Himself also in 16,000 forms at Dwarka when He married 16,000 wives.

There are some instances of great mystics also expanding their bodily features in different way, but that sort of expansion by yoga.

process is not applicable to Krishna. There are instances in the Vedic history such as Saubhary Rishi, a sage who expanded himself into eight forms by the yoga process, but that expansion was not actually into eight forms-it was simply a manifestation, for Saubhary remained one. But as far as Krishna is concerned, when He manifested Himself in different forms each and every one of them was a separate individual. When Narada Muni visited Krishna at different palaces at Dwarka, he was astonished, and yet Narada is never astonished to see the expansion of the body of a vogi since he knows the trick himself. But in a verse in the Srimad Bhagawatam states that Narada was astonished to see the expansion of Krishna. He explains his wonder as to how the Lord was present in each and every house of the 16,000 palaces with His queens. Krishna Himself was in a different form with each queen, and He was acting in different ways. For example, in one Form He was talking with His wife; in another Form He was engaged with His children and yet another Form He was performing some household work. These different activities are called actions in the Lord's different emotions, and when He is in these "emotional" Forms, the expansions are known as Vaibhavapraksa. Similarly there are other unlimited expansions of the Forms of Krishna, but even when they divided or expanded in such unlimited Forms they are still one and the same. There is no difference between one Form and another; that is the Absolute conception of the Personality of Godhead.

In the Srimad Bhagawatam it is stated in the 10th canto, 40th chapter that at the time when Akuru was carrying both Krishna and Valaram from Gokula to Mathura, he entered into the water of the Jamu and could see all the spiritual planets in the spiritual skyhe saw there the Lord in His Vishnu Form along with Narada and

the four Kumaras, and he saw how they are worshipping. This is described in the Srimad Bhagawatam as "Form." It is stated in the Bhagavat Purana that there are many worshippers who are purified by different processes of worship, as the Vaisnav, or the Aryan who also worship the Supreme Lord according to their convictions and their spiritual understanding; each process of worship involves the understanding of different Forms of the Lord as mentioned in the Scriptures, but the ultimate idea is to worship the Supreme Lord Himself. In the feature of His Vaibhavapraksa, the Lord manifests Himself as Valaram. The feature of Valaram is as good as Krishna; the difference is that Krishna is blackish and Valaram is whitish. The Vaibhavapraksa Form was also displayed when Krishna appeared in the four handed form of Narayana before Devaki when He was appearing in this world, and by the request of His parents He transformed Himself into a two handed Form. Therefore, sometimes He becomes four handed and sometimes He becomes two handed. When He is in a Form of two hands that is actually Vaibhavapraksa, and when He is four handed that is Vravhavabilasa. In His Personal Form He is just like a cowherd boy and He thinks Himself, but when He is in the Vasudeva Form He thinks Himself as the son of a Ksyatriya, and He feels Himself also as a Ksyatriya or a princely administrator. Form, Opulence, Beauty, Wealth, Attractiveness, and Pastimes are fully exhibited in His Form as the Son of Nanda. In some of the Vaisnav literature it is found that sometimes in His Form as Vasudeva He becomes attracted to the Form of Govinda in Vrindaban; sometimes as Vasudeva He desires to enjoy like Govinda, although the Govinda Form and the Vasudeva Form are one and the some. There is a passage in the Laleeta Madhava 4th chapter in which

Krishna addresses Uddhava as follows: "My dear friend, this Govinda Form as a cowherd boy attracts Me. I wish to be like the damsels of Vraja and be attracted by this Govinda Form." Similarly, in the Laleeta Madhava, 8th chapter, Krishna says: "O how wonderful it is, Who is this Personality? Exactly after seeing Him I am attracted by Him, so that now I am desiring to embrace Him just like Radhika." When this Form of Krishna becomes a little differentiated, it is called Tadekatma.

In this Tadekatmarupa or Form there are two divisions also: one is called Svamsa. Both in the Vilasa and Svamsa Forms also there are many differential features which are also divided into Prabhava and Braibhava. As far as Vilasa Forms are concerned, there are innumerable Prabhava Vilasa. Krishna expands Himself as Vasudeva, Samkarsan, Pradyumna, Aniruddha. Sometimes the Lord thinks Himself a cowherds boy, and sometimes He thinks Himself the son of Vasudeva, a Ksyatriya, and this "thinking" of Krishna is called "Pastimes." In His Prabhava Prakasa and Prabhava Vilasa He is in the same Form but appears differently as Krishna and Valadeva. As mentioned above, His expansion as Vasudeva, Samkarsan, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha is in the Original Chaturvuha, or four armed Forms.

There are innumerable four armed Formal manifestations in different planets and different places. For instance, this four Formal manifestation is both in Dwarka and Mathura eternally. And from these four Forms originally there are the principle twenty four Forms, named differently in terms of the different adjustments of the symbols in the hands—and they are called Baibhivabilasa. The same four Formal manifestations of Krishna is in each planet of the Spiritual Sky, called the Narayan loka or Vaikuntha loka. In the Vaikuntha loka He

is manifested in a four handed Form called Narayan. And from each Narayan there is a manifestation of the four formal Forms as mentioned above. Therefore Narayan is in the center, and the four formal Forms are surrounding the Narayan Form. Each of the four Forms again expands in three different Forms, and they all have their different names, beginning from Keshava, and they are twelve in all. Such Forms are understood by different names according to the different placements of the symbols in the hands of Narayan. As far as the Vasudeva Form is concerned, in the four formal Forms they are three, namely Keshava. Narayana, and Madhava. The three Forms of Govinda are known as Govinda, Vishnu, and Sri Madhusadan. It should be noted however that this Govinda Form is not the same Govinda Form as manifested in Vrindaban (as the son of Nanda). Similarly, Pradyumna is also divided into three Forms known as Trivikrama, Vamana, and Sridhra, and similarly there are three Forms of Aniruddha known as Hrisikesa, Padmanabha, and Damodara.

End of Part IV

POEMS BY VIDYAPATI

(Vidyapati (1352-1448) a famous and popular court poet of Mathila, India, wrote these Radha-Krishna love songs which find their correspondence in the West to the poems of St. John of the Cross as songs of bhakti between the soul of man and his Creator. In Bengal, Vidyapati's use of Radha and Krishna as ideal lovers led many Bengalis to regard him as a Vaishnava. Bengali scholars visiting Mathila brought back copies of his songs, and in the 15th century Lord Chaitanya read them with enthusiasm. In fact, Jayadeva, Chandidas and Vidyapati were Lord Chaitanya's favorite poets. Chaitanya freely adopted the songs of Vidyapati as Vaishnava hymns. The poems rendered below are excerpted from Love Songs of Vidyapati, Translated by Deben Bhattacharya, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1963.)

Black Stone

Your glances tempt their love....

O Krishna, Krishna,
You are known to be wise.
How can I tell You what is right?
Gold is tested on the black-stone,
The love of a man by his nature.
Fragrance reveals the flower and its pollen
And the eyes and the tears
The dawn of love.

Nights of Joy

O friend: How can you ask me What I feel? poems by Vidypati, con't

In talk, love always grows,
Is always new.
Since I was born
I've seen his beauty
With insatiate eyes.
His gentle voice
Brushed my ears.
Thrilled, I long for more.
Nights of spring
Passed in joy,
Yet still the game of love
Has new delights.
I've held Him to my heart
A million ages,

My Body Hid My Body

Yet longing flares again.

Their love reduced to ashes,

Know nothing of its power....

A host of lovers,

My eyes encountered Him
And left me.
The lotus snubbed the sun
And fled away.
The moon and the night-lily
Unite in love.
Madhava I saw today,
But with art I hid my passion.

Shyness dropped with my clothes.

Poems by Vidyapati, con't

My body hid my body.

My heart was another's.

Krishna I saw

Everywhere.

Sorrow

Clouds filled the sky

And the God of love,

Piercing her heart, withdrew.

Leaning on the ground

She lifts her frail form...

O Krishna,
Cast aside Your moods...
Like the dimmed moon
In a dark fortnight
Radha fades.
Is she the pale crescent moon
Of the wet monsoon sky?
Krishna, You have turned Your face away,
Inflicting pain unbearable.

Ecstacy

Her hair, dishevelled,
Veils the beauty of her face
As evil shadows eat the glowing moon.
Strings of blossom in her hair
Wantonly play
As flooded rivers
Twine about their twins.

Exquisite today,
This sport of love,
As Radha rides on Krishna.
Beads of sweat glisten on her face
Like pearls on the moon,
A present to her
From the God of love.

With all her force
She kisses her lover's lips,
Like the moon swooping
To drink a lotus bloom.
Her necklace dangles
Below her hanging breasts;
Like streams of milk
Trickling from golden jars.
The jingling bells around her waist
Sang glory to the God of love.

Smiles and Laughter

Blue lotuses
Flower everywhere
And black kokilas sing...
King of the seasons,
Spring has come
And wild with longing
The bee goes to his love.
Birds flight in the air
And cowherd-girls
Smile face to face...

Krishna has entered The great forest.

New To Love

New to love, I shrank from loving Yet the night grew And all was done. I did not relish Sweets of dalliance. My shyness warred against my will ... He seized my garland, Held my hair And pressed his heart Against my smothered breasts But, in my clumsy innocence, Alone, with none to aid, I could not please. He wanted everything In one great rapture And to my painful shame I gave so little. The spell of passion went. I said Nothing.

Eyes of Danger

To gaze on Krishna was my greatest wish,
Yet seeing Him was filled with danger.
Gazing has bewitched me, no will remains,
I cannot speak or hear.
Like monsoon clouds.

My eyes pour water.

My heart flutters.

O friend, why ever did I see Him

And with such joy deliver Him my life?...

Master of Love

My Krishna is so very clever.

With no effort on his part,

He broke my all-resisting pride.

Today He came garbed as a yogi

To mystify me by an exquisite act...

But He was overwhelmed at seeing my face.

When He begged the jewel of My pride,

I knew how cunning was His ming.

And then what He said

I am too shy to repeat.

No one even knew

That this was the master of love.

The Quest

So long our world was new,
We were one like fish and water.
Such was our love.
A sharp word passed between us.
My dear love smiled
And gave no answer
Krishna, in the same bed with me,
Seemed in a far-away land.
In the forest where no one moves,
My love now smiles,

My love now speaks.

I shall dress as a yogini

And look for my love.

Bold Love

I am going today, dear friend,
And shall not fear the elders at home.
Words will not trouble me.
With sandal paste my skin will glisten.
I shall deck myself in pearls.
My eyes look brilliant with no mascara.
I shall cover my body in white
And walk with leisured steps.
When the sky is lit with the smiling moon
From staring eyes I shall not flinch
Nor shall I hide.
So much did I conceal
From fear of others,
Even the currents of my love.

War of Youth

Two armies were engaged in war

As childhood merged in youth.

Knotted, the hair of Radha fell.

At times, she hid her limbs,

At times, released her charm.

Her eyes in innocence roved here and there.

The skin about her rising breasts

Was tinged with red.

Her feet became

As restless as her heart.

The god was waking up in Radha.

His eyes were closed with love.

Waves of Lightning

Her feet showered lotuses.
The glitter of her body
Brought waves of lightning.
The enchanting beauty
Has entered my heart.
Her eyes opened
Like lotuses in flower.
Her widening smile
Cast nectar-spells on all.
Her sidelong glances
Issued darts of love.
I saw her beauty
Only in a flash
But thinking of it
Fills three different worlds.

At the River

Hold my hand.

Caress me, Krishna.

I will give you

A wondrous garland.

The friends are gone,

But which way, Krishna,

I do not know.

I will not walk

Poems by Vidyapati, con't

With You, Krishna,

But at the river

By the lonely bank

There I will meet You.

KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS IN AMERICAN POETRY

Part IV: Hart Crane's The Bridge and the 20th Century

The victory of the North in the Civil War was also a victory of industrialism in America, for the industrial North had proved the importance of the machine— the machine meant power. Henry Adams, in his Education, proclaimed the Dynamo to be to the modern age what the Blessed Virgin Mary was to 13th century Europe. The machine was to be the new God, and the scientists the priests. What Crane was to call the "iron dealt clevage" had already cut across the new nation. In his Democratic Vistas (1871), Whitman warned America of spiritual degeneracy and cautioned that science without spirituality would only lead mankind into chaos. In his 1872 Preface to Leaves of Grass, he indicates the true function of science:

With Science, the Old Theology of the East, long in its dotage, begins evidently to die and disappear. But (to my mind) Science—and may be such will prove its principal service—as evidently prepares the way for One indescribably grander—Time's young but perfect offspring—the New Theology—heir of the West—lusty and loving, and wondrous beautiful. For America, and for today, just the same as any day, the supreme and final Science is the Science of God—what we call science being only its minister—as Democracy is or shall be also.

Crane was familiar with all of Whitman's writings, and the following exerpt from and 1876 Preface is also indicative of Crane's attitude to-ward science and its spiritualization:

Only . . . joyfully accepting Modern Science, and loyally following it without the slightest hesitation, there remains ever recognized still a higher flight, a higher fact, the Eternal Soul of Man, (of all Else too,) the Spiritual, the Religious -- which it is to be the greatest office of Scientism, in my opinion, and of future Poetry also, to free from fables, crudities and superstitions, and launce forth in renewed Faith and Scope a hundred fold. To me the worlds of Religiousness, of the conception of the Divine, and of the Ideal, though mainly latent,

are just as absolute in Humanity and the Universe as the world of Chemistry, or any thing in the objective worlds.

(Whitman, 1876 Preface to Leaves of Grass)

Ironically, today the greatest of the modern scientists proclaims the spiritual to be the most important single fact in life, and the source of all true science. Albert Einstein:

The most beautiful and most profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the source of all true science. He to whom emotion is a stranger, who can no longer stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead. That deeply emotional conviction of the presence of a superior reasoning power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God.

In his essay "Modern Poetry," Hart Crane calls Science "the uncanonized Deity of the times" that "seems to have automatically displaced the hierarchies of both Academy and Church."

It was Hart Crane (1899-1932) who directly took up Whitman's job of creating a poetry of vision that extends beyond civilizations and histories into the grand significance of man in his relationship with the eternal. Crane has been called the greatest poetic genius that America has produced, "the Shelley of our age," as Robert Lowell called him, for in his short, chaotic life he was able to create a poetic myth that extends and endures beyond narrow literary confines. Crane was also one of the first great poetic geniuses to bump heads with the Machine Age-- and he refused to let the mechanical chaos of the 20th Century triumph. In "Modern Poetry" he writes:

The function of poetry in a Machine Age is identical to its function in any other age; and its capacities for presenting the most complete synthesis of human values remain essentially immune from any of the so-called inroads of science . . . For unless poetry can absorb the machine, i.e., acclimatize it as naturally and casually as trees, cattle, galleons, castles and all other human associations of the past, then poetry has failed of its full contemporary function.

Crane's job, as he saw it, was to inject his vision of God into machinery. He sees Science and its Machine capable of taking two paths -- the road to Hell (symbolized by the subway in "The Tunnel") or the road to God (symbolized by the Brooklyn Bridge). He recognizes the Brooklyn Bridge as a magnificent technological achievement that is capable of "singing" God. When Crane wrote The Bridge, his magnus opus, he lived in Brooklyn, and his apartment window afforded him a scenic view of the East River and the Brooklyn Bridge. Coincidently, his apartment was the same apartment the Bridge's architect used during its construction. Musing out the window at the Bridge, that gateway to Whitman's "golden Manahatta", the harplike "altar" soon came to represent a unifying force in Crane's roaring life, and in his greatest poem Brooklyn Bridge metamorphosizes into "Thou steeled Cognizance", the symbol of the Absolute in a technological age of chaos. The Bridge is a long poem divided into eight sections, "Ave Maria," "Powhatan's Daughter", "Cutty Sark", "Cape Hatteras", "Three Songs", "Quaker Hill", "The Tunnel", and "Atlantis." Together they represent an odyssey of the soul through the horrors and paltry sensual joys of the tunnel of life and the soul's subsequent release into the eternal bliss of the spiritual realms. Throughout the soul's odyssey the Bridge is there, but it is removed from all struggle. It awaits the sojourner as the eternal Reality. "I stop somewhere waiting for you", is the promise, for God awaits all in eternity; He waits for the individual soul to turn from Maya and turn to Him. In the opening Poem, the Bridge, as the symbol of Godhead, is presented in triumph through "white rings of tumult", as Krishna is surrounded by His Brahmajyoti effulgence. The picture is one of eternality, omnipotence, and freedom.

How many dawns, chill from his rippling rest

The seagull's wings shall dip and pivot him, Shedding white rings of tumult, building high Over the chained bay waters Liberty--

The City and its "chained bay waters" are bound however by an inextricable workday business karma. In his Wall Street office, man falls from his realization of this vision.

Then, with inviolate curve, forsake our eyes
As apparitional as sails that cross
Some page of figures to be filed away;
--Till elevators drop us from our day . . .

At this point Crane likens the phenomenal creation to a motion picture cinema wirh mankind bending toward the screen, as the deluded men in Socrates' cave watch with fascination the illusory reflections thrown on the wall of the cave, unaware that the reflections are only dream fantasies and that in actuality their faces are turned from the bright Reality. But the true nature of "Maya" as a reflection of the Reality is revealed to "other eyes," namely the poet and seer, though hidden from the multitudes, for the Divine reserves the right to disclose Himself only to His chosen.

I think of cinemas, panoramic sleights
With multitudes bent toward some flashing scene
Never disclosed, but hastened to again,
Foretold to other eyes on the same screen;

Meanwhile the great Magician Whose creation is merely a "sleight of hands" trick, stands in His Supreme Abode across the harbor, eternally "unspent" by dint of His own freedom.

And Thee, across the harbor; silver-paced As though the sun took step of thee, yet left Some motion ever unspent in thy stride, -- Implicitly thy freedom staying thee!

Arjuna saw "the heroes of the mortal world rush into Thy (Krishna's)

fiercely flaming mouths, "(Gita, XI/28) but in the age of Kali the heroes are reduced to one mad "bedlamite" jumping from the Bridge's parapets. This is also a prefiguration of Crane's suicidal jump from the back of a boat in 1932.

Out of some subway scuttle, cell or loft A bedlamite speeds to thy parapets, Tilting there momently, shrill shirt ballooning, A jest falls from the speechless caravan.

Amidst this madness, the gift of the Divine lies in His pardon and in the relative anonymity of the individual soul.

And obscure as that heaven of the Jews,
Thy guerdon . . . Accolade thou dost bestow
Of anonymity time cannot raise:
Vibrant reprieve and pardon thou dost show.

Then the Bridge is addressed as "harp and altar," which it tends to resemble. The forces surrounding this Absolute are forces of cosmic, not human, fury. No human toil can ever conceive or construct a miracle that is the answer to all prayers, the cry of all lovers, the fulfillment of all desires and prophecies.

O harp and altar, of the fury fused,
(How could mere toil align thy choiring strings!)
Terrefic threshold of the prophet's pledge,
Prayer of pariah, and the lover's cry, --

Its "swift unfractioned idiom" is a monolithic omnipotence that has power to condense eternity. To the sigh of stars, the dharma is indicated. It is the personal figure of the Deity that lifts night in His powerful arms.

Again the traffic lights that skim thy swift Unfractioned idiom, immaculate sigh of stars, Beading thy path-- condense eternity: And we have seen night lifted in thine arms. In the Poem's" conclusion, the Cognizance, Who is eternally awake as His creation (the river, the ocean, the prarie) flows eternally beneath Him, is petitioned to descend into the iron age, and, by His descent, to give mankind a new myth by which to worship Him.

O Sleepless as the river under thee, Vaulting the sea, the praries' dreaming sod, Unto us lowliest sometime sweep, descend And of the curveship lend a myth to God.

In the "Ave Maria" section of <u>The Bridge</u>, the Deity is invoked by the New World "discoverer," Columbus, as he sails back to Spain. Columbus, like Whitman in a later day, is a mystical explorer, a seer and leader, who knows Krishna to be as an ocean "athwart lanes of death and birth." As an explorer, he enters into the Creator's "burning blue" savannahs and petitions His assurance that his "sail is true," Without such faith, man can accomplish nothing. Crane's Columbus knows the Creator to be omnipotent and omnipresent, and fittingly praises His "teeming span" and "primal scan" that surveys all in His domain from the sacred Ganges to the Chan.

O Thou who sleepest on Thyself, apart
Like ocean athwart lanes of death and birth,
And all the eddying breath between doth search
Cruelly with love thy parable of man-Inquisitor! incognizable Word
Of Eden and the enchained Sepulchre,
Into thy steep savannahs, burning blue,
Utter to loneliness the sail is true.

. . . O Thou

Within whose primal scan consummately
The glistening seignories of Ganges swim;-Who sendest greeting by the corposan,
And Teneriffe's garnet-- flamed it in a cloud,
Urging through night our passage to the Chan;-Te Deum laudamus, for thy teeming span!
White toil of heaven's cordons, mustering

In holy rings all sails charged to the far
Hushed gleaming fields and pendant seething wheat
Of knowledge, --round thy brows unhooded now
--The kindled Crown! acceded of the poles
And biassed by full sails, merideans reel
Thy purpose-- still one shore beyond desire!
The sea's green crying towers a-sway, Beyond

And kingdoms

naked in the

trembling heart --

Te Deum laudamus

O Thou Hand of Fire

Again, God is presented surrounded by dazzling lights. Images like "seething wheat of knowledge" are typical of Crane who telescopes two interrelated ideas in one phrase. For man, God is both bread (sustenance) and knowledge. Again, His omnipotence is stressed in such phrases as "meridians reel Thy purpose." The "Hand of Fire" is God's Shiva (Destroyer) aspect. Columbus is well aware that God can enable him to return with news of his discovery or kill him with one swift stroke.

"Kingdoms naked in the trembling heart" echo Christ's "The Kingdom of God is within you." As in other instances, Columbus prefigures a later figure in the poem, Whitman, as a seer and man of faith.

In the second section of the poem we are shifted again to the Twentieth Century in a part entitled "The River" which is none other than the river of life. Here we are given a graphic picture of the wild, bumbling 20th Century Express that roars its way to hell to jazz rhythms. The Express is the 20th Century machine run wild without spiritual direction.

--while an EXpress makes time like
SCIENCE-- COMMERCE and the HOLYGHOST
RADIO ROARS IN EVERY HOME WE HAVE THE NORTHPOLE
WALLSTREET AND VIRGINBIRTH WITHOUT STONES OR
WIRES OR EVEN RUNning brooks connection ears
and no more sermons windows flashing roar

Breathtaking-- as you like it . . . eh?

So the 20th Century-- so
whizzed the Limited-- roared by and left
three men, still hungry on the tracks, ploddingly
watching the tail lights wizen and converge, slipping gimleted and neatly out of sight.

The three men are mendicants, "hobo trekkers" who have jumped off the wild American bandwagon that is bumbling its way toward "Progress" and Materialism. These are the transcendental waysiders with whom Crane Identifies, outcasts who somehow know something of God, though they cannot articulate their knowledge

Each seemed a child, like me, on a loose perch, Holding to childhood like some termless play

Like Whitman, these hobos "confess no rosary or clue," but their wanderings have put them in intimate contact with the Deity.

Yet they touch something like a key perhaps. . . . They know a body under the wide rain . . They lurk across her, knowing her vonder breast Snow-silvered, sumac-stained or smoky blue--Is past the valley-sleepers, south or west. -- As I have trod the rumorous midnights, too. And past the circuit of the lamp's thin flame (O Nights that brought me to her body bare!) Have dreamed beyond the print that bound her name. Trains sounding the long blizzards out -- I heard Wail into distances I knew were hers. Papooses crying on the wind's long mane Screamed redskin dynasties that fled the brain, -- Dead echoes! But I knew her body there, Time like a serpent down her shoulder, dark, And space, an eaglet's wing, laid on her hair.

They travel over the body of God (here referred to in the feminine gender) that contains and reconciles both time (theserpent) and space (the eagle). Contrasted with the wandering mendicants is the "Sheriff, Brakeman and Authority," repressive forces in the 20th Century, that "smile out eerily what they seem" and joke at heaven's gate." Such

absurd men who try to lord it over the creation are borne down the river of life despite themselves. Crane's condemnation of the 20th Century American materialists is severe—he sees them as "grimed tributaries to an ancient flow" (a flow that could be Vedic civilization). Without God they can "win no frontier," make no progress, but only "drift in stillness."

Down, down-- born pioneers in time's despite, Grimed tributaries to an ancient flow--They win no frontier by their wayward plight, But drift in stillness, as from Jordan's brow.

The River of Life is much greater than any tributary civilization, and it sweeps all along with it in its course. This is also a River of dreams whose unity or "knit of identity" rests in the Self that is the same in all.

Man is eternal in this river, for each man is the father of his father endlessly reincarnated.

The River, spreading, flows-- and spends your dream. What are you, lost within this tideless spell? You are your father's father, and the stream-- A liquid theme that floating niggers swell.

The theme the River sings is the Song of God as it heaps itself free from its bed to flow into the great Gulf of the Supreme Lord. The dream of life, of history, pours into the sea, its only will is in rapidly flowing unchecked, in spending itself of its confines and meeting and praising God in His great Gulf.

. . Ahead

No embrace opens but the stinging sea;
The River lifts itself from its long bed,
Poised wholly on its dream, a mustard glow
Tortured with history, its one will-- flow!
--The Passion spreads in wide tongues, choked and slow,
Meeting the Gulf, hosannas silently below.

In the "Cape Hatteras" section of The Bridge, Whitman is canonized by Crane as the great American poet-sage-guru-seer-saint who could

perceive the Deity beneath the inherent sweetness of the earth and, like Columbus, the great Navigator, maintain his vision of the Godhead despite innumerable impediments—in Whitman's case, the Civil War, industrialism, and the incipient madhouse of the Stock Exchange.

O Saunterer on free ways still ahead!

Not this our empire yet, but labyrinth

Wherein your eyes, like the Great Navigator's without ship,
Gleam from the great stones of each prison crypt

Of canyoned traffic . . . Confronting the Exchange,
Surviving in a world of stocks

Sea eyes and tidal, undenying, bright with myth!

Crane also states that it was Whitman who inspired The Bridge:

Our Meistersinger, thou set breath in steel; And it was thou who on the boldest heel Stood up and flung the span on even wing Of that great Bridge, our Myth, whereof I sing!

The poet's and humanity's duty, as Crane sees it, is to meet the challenge Whitman gives them.

. . . To course that span of consciousness thou'st named The Open Road-- thy vision is reclaimed!

What heritage thou'st signalled to our hands!

O joyous seer!

Recorders ages hence, yes, they shall hear In their own veins uncancelled thy sure tread And read thee by the aureole 'round thy head Of pasture-shine, Panis Angelicus!

Crane calls for a cohesive force in the Machine Age, one that will empregnate science and machinery with the vision of God. The airplane pilot, "Falcon-Ace," carries with him the hope of the race, and the Vedic injunctions are also in his veins, written in his wrists.

Remember, Falcon-Ace, Thou hast there in thy wrist a Sanskrit charge To conjugate infinity's dim marge--Anew . . . ! The next to last section of The Bridge, "The Tunnel," stands as the most graphic depiction in verse of the hell man has constructed for himself in the 20th Century. The New York City subway comes to symbolize mankind's tunnel of horrors that result from the improper use of the machine. "The Tunnel" does serve a positive function, however, for as in Dante's Divine Comedy, one gets to heaven by going through hell. Hence the Blake quotation heading this section: "To find the Western path/Right thro' the Gates of Wrath." It is in this tunnel that we hear the cries and bellows of a chaotic demonic mankind caught in the endless rounds and boroughs of samsara.

Some day by heart you'll learn each famous sight And watch the curtain lift in hell's despite

Our tongues recant like beaten weather vanes . . .

The phonographs of hades in the brain
Are tunnels that re-wind themselves, and love
A burnt match skating in a urinal

In these "back forks of the chasms of the brain" and "interborough fissures of the mind," Crane sees Edgar Poe, poet laureate of the tunnel of horrors, riding like a ghost with Death in his eyes "below the toothpaste and the dandruff ads." As the train bends to a scream before diving under the East River, Crane delivers the most vehement accusation against the iron age in verse:

Daemon, demurring and eventful yawn!

Whose hideous laughter is a bellows mirth

--Or the muffled slaughter of a day in birth-
O cruelly to inoculate the brinking dawn

With antennae toward worlds that glow and sink;-
To spoon us out more liquid than the dim

Locution of the eldest star, and pack

The conscience navelled in the plunging wind,

Umbilical to call-- and straightway die!

O caught like pennies beneath soot and steam,

Kiss of our agony thou gatherest;

Condensed, thou takest all-- shrill ganglia

Impassioned with some song we fail to keep.

The "shrill ganglia" is contemporary civilization without a living spiritual myth, and the "song we fail to keep" is the Song of God. The section ends on a note of triumph, however. The subway rises up the slope from under the River and emerges in the open air where Crane sees the Bridge standing as a great Word promising eternal life.

And yet, like Lazarus, to feel the slope, The sod and billow breaking, -- lifting ground, -- A sound of waters bending astride the sky Unceasing with some Word that will not die . . . !

The "Word" is the dharma that releases man from what Krishna called "the Great Fear," death and the endless cycles of rebirths. Crane asks "Or shall the hands be drawn away, to die?" and the reply is that Shiva, the destroyer aspect, the "hand of Fire," only gathers us to God. "Kiss of our agony Thou gatherest, / O Hand of Fire/gatherest -- " leads logically into "Atlantis," the great promise of the poem, which is a wonderful, tumbling description (the only one given in American verse) of the wonders of the spiritual universe. In "Atlantis," the lost mythical city, the Bridge is celebrated in all its beauty, majesty, omnipotence, eternality, and knowledge. Religion, myth, science and technology merge to make a new and joyous music. "Music is then the knowledge of that which relates to love in harmony and system," Crane quotes Plato, then sings the Absolute.

Through the bound cable strands, the arching path Upward, veering with light, the flight of strings, --Taut miles of shuttling moonlight syncopate The whispered rush, telepathy of wires. Up the index of night, granite and steel--Transparent meshes -- fleckless the gleaming staves --Sibylline voices flicker, waveringly stream As though a god were issue of the strings

And through that cordage, threading with its call

One arc synoptic of all tides below-Their labyrinthine mouths of history
Pouring reply as though all ships at sea
Complighted in one vibrant breath made cry, -"Make thy love sure-- to weave whose song we ply!"

White tempest nets file upward, upward ring With silver terraces the humming spars, The loft of vision, palladium helm of stars.

Like hails, farewells, -- up planet-sequined heights Some trillion whispering hammers glimmer Tyre . .

The Bridge is seen through a vision of blazing light, which is none other than the white, pervasive light of love. It is the Bridge that yokes "wave to kneeling wave," unifying the creation in one mighty song of itself. "The vernal strophe chimes from deathless strings!"

From gulfs unfloding, terrible of drums,
Tall Vision-of-the-Voyage, tensely spare-Bridge, lifting night to cycloramic crest
Of deepest day-- O Choir, translating time
Into what multitudinous Verb the suns
And synergy of waters ever fuse, recast
In myriad syllables, -- Psalm of Cathay!
O Love, thy white, pervasive Paradigm . . . !

The Bridge is beyond this relative world of time and space. It defies all mundane conceptions, logic, explanation, or description. Crane's verse-- a fusion of images-- is peculiarly adept to give a sense of its wonder and power. It is the Bridge that controls the creation from lark's northward flight to the glowing star. And it is the Bridge that leads man lovingly from the realms of time into the realm of eternal bliss.

O Thou steeled Cognizance whose leap commits
The agile precincts of the lark's return;
Within whose lariat sweep encinctured sing
In single chrysalis the many twain, -Of stars Thou art the stitch and stallion glow
And like an organ, Thou, with sound of doom-Sight, sound and flesh Thou leadest from time's realm

As love strikes clear direction for the helm.

Swift peal of secular light, intrinsic Myth

Whose fell unshadow is death's utter wound

As in Whitman, the Bridge is a secular force in the New Age of the Machine. Without its unifying influence, man dies. Science is only a "minister" to this eternally young Deity, assigning Him a new beatitude, a new attribute as the God of Science and the Machine Age.

Forever Deity's glittering Pledge, O Thou
Whose canticle fresh chemistry assigns
To rapt inception and beatitude, -Always through blinding cables, to our joy,
Of thy white seizure springs the prophecy:
Always through spiring cordage, pyramids
Of silver sequel, Deity's young name
Kinetic of white choiring wings . . . ascends.

Crane, at this point, sees his own chaotic life as a transgression against the Deity and, begging His pardon, bequeaths himself to His dazzling light while proclaiming the Deity Everpresent beyond the realms of time, unified as One Song, One Bridge, reconciling time and space omnipotently in Himself.

Unspeakable Thou Bridge, to Thee, O Love.
Thy pardon for this history, whitest Flower,
O Answerer of all, --Anemone, -Now while thy petals spend the suns about us, hold--(O Thou whose radiance doth inherit me)
Atlantis, --hold thy floating singer late!

So to thine Everpresence, beyond time,
Like spears ensanguined of one tolling star
That bleeds infinity— the orphic strings,
Sidereal phalanxes, leap and converge:
—One Song, one Bridge of Fire! Is it Cathay,
Now pity steeps the grass and rainbows ring
The serpent with the eagle in the leaves . . .!
Whispers antiphonal in azure swing.

The Bridge was the only great poem of God consciousness in America to follow Whitman's "Song of Myself," and Crane's early death no coubt cut short some even greater works. Today, thirty-seven years after The Bridge's publication (1930), no poet in America has taken up the work begun by the transcendentalists, Whitman, and Crane: which is the work of all true poetry, the harmonization of God with the age. Today the poets in America are too busy with protest poems to positively affirm the Presence of the Supreme Lord Who is also the Lord of the Space Age. A true poet shows how God is visible in every age. Many of the young poets have jumped off the bumbling rampaging American bandwagon and are sitting alongside the American roadside like transcendental mendicants, but they don't offer warm fires of love and truth. They simply grumble that the 20th Century Express is going too fast and in the wrong direction. No one is saying, "Here, this way."

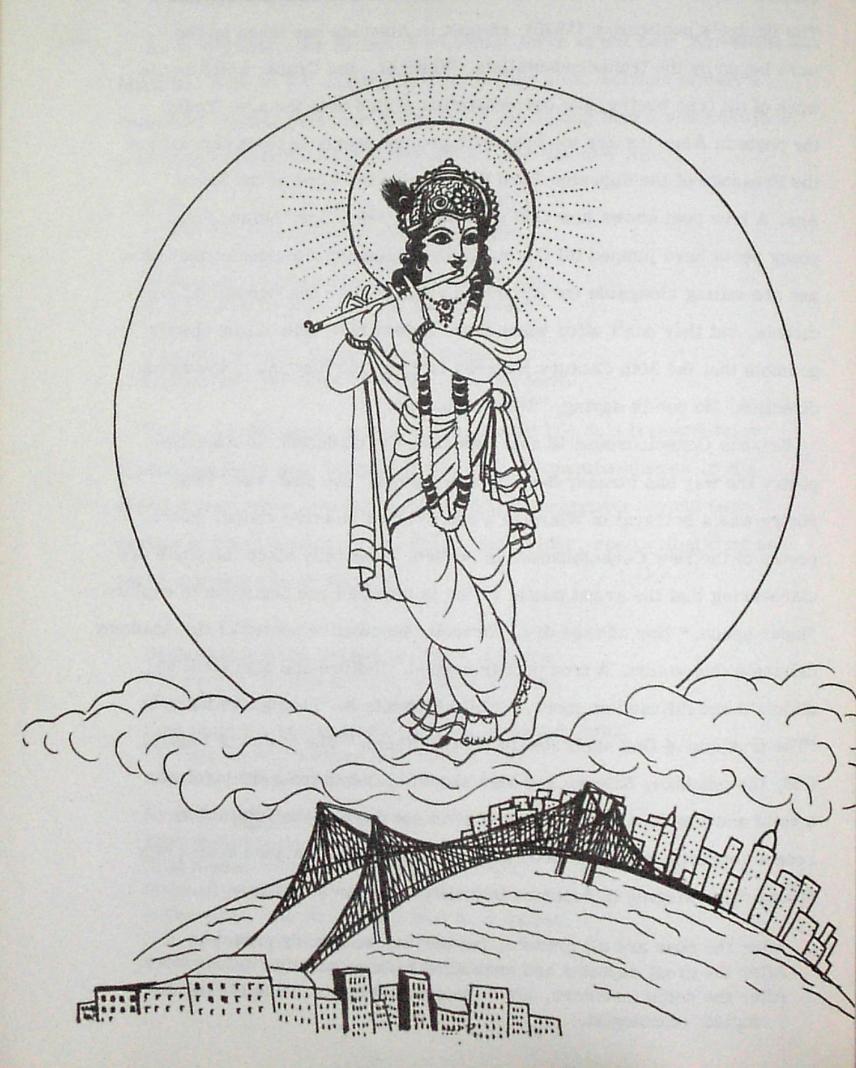
Krishna Consciousness is now indicating the direction. In American poetry the way has already been trod to a point. The post-war "Beat" poetry was a betrayal of Whitman's and Crane's positive vision. Now a poetry of the New Consciousness is needed, especially since the youth are discovering that the grand poetic vision is true and are beginning to explore "inner space." Nor can the dry, corncob, speculative poetry of the Academy delineate this vision. A true poet is needed. "Nature and Man shall be disjoin'd and diffused no more," Whitman wrote in "Passage to India." "The true son of God shall absolutely fuse them." The fusion of Nature, God, the machine, Science and Man should be begun from the pivot of a solid and timeless theology, such as is set down in the Gita, not by recent concoctions of self-proclaimed avatars. May we soon hear a new strong voice singing in America to justify Whitman's vision--

After the seas are all cross'd, (as they seem already cross'd,)

After the great captains and engineers have accomplish'd their work,

After the noble inventors, after the scientists, the chemist, the geologist, ethnologist,

Finally shall come the poet worthy that name, The true son of God shall come singing his songs.



POEM TO HART CRANE

How many dawns you stood to watch the Bridge Usher the sun from Brooklyn to New York, Or how many dawns the Beauty of His Face Entranced you with that white pervasive Smile.

I know not; nor have these quick forty years Changed the Changeless -- the Twentieth rolls on, The hustler's at his corner and the boys Still wind themselves to Wall Street's karmic tick.

Aloft new steel-winged astronauts doth soar, While underground demonic subways roar And sweltering masses advertise our doom--Here no tokens of the heart, nor love can bloom.

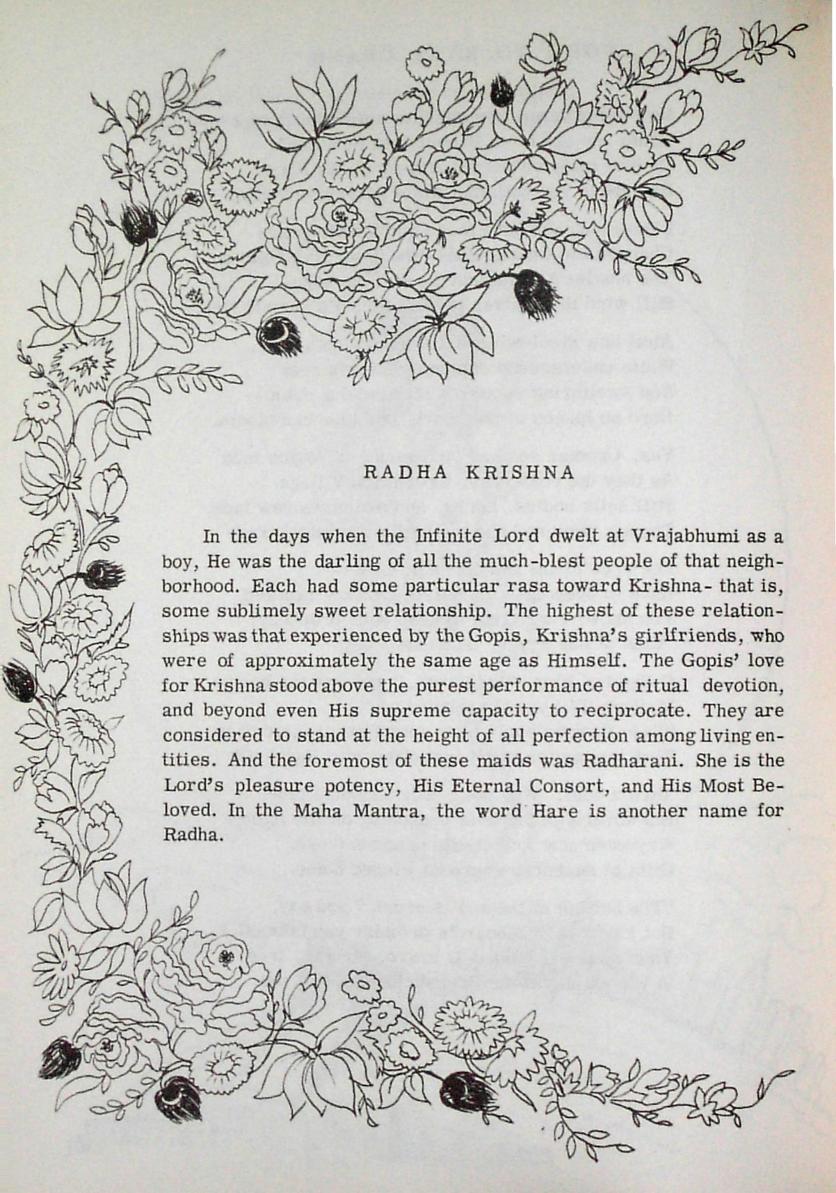
Yes, Grecian sex and rum would drive you mad As they did yesterday. Greenwich Village Still sells bodies, books, and promises new fads, Though "Bolero" and the bottle you might trade

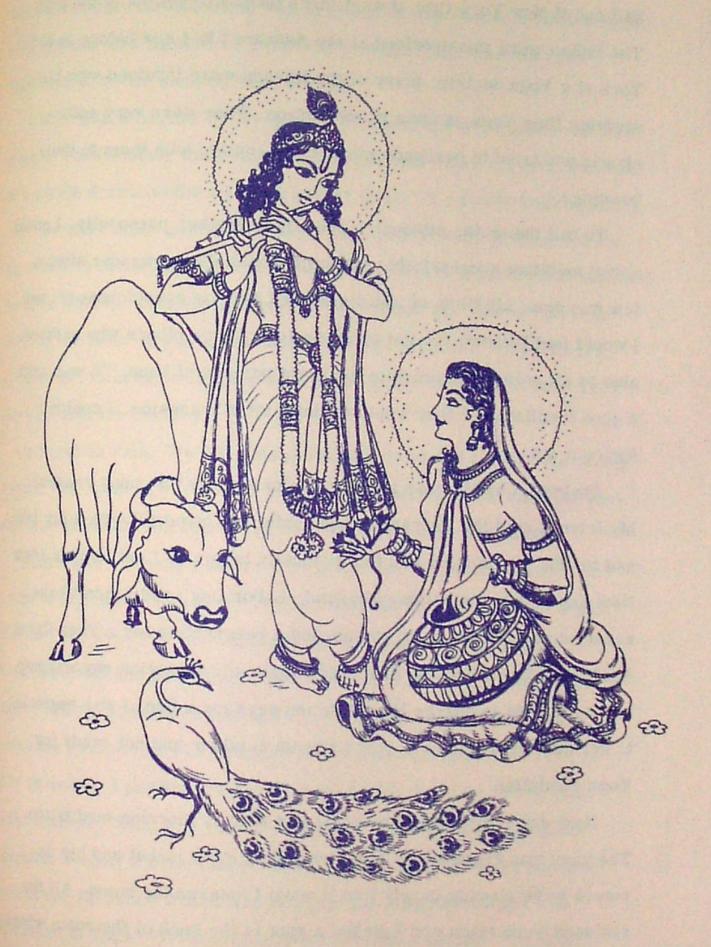
For rock 'n' roll and cubes of LSD--Have to keep up-- Twentieth Century Limited, You know, roars fast to keep your prophecy: "Kiss of our agony, thou gatherest,

O Hand of Fire-- gatherest," and now the bombs Multiply like weekly subway ads While Bowery bums blow spindrift off their beer. That typewriter won't type Sanscrit, Hart! Oh

Take a boat. Why not? The season's ripe, His sovereign Smile is beckoning on His foam . . . Why even now I catch His breezes fresh, Gifts of seahorse couriers winged home.

"The bottom of the sea is cruel," you say, But knowing Greybeard's promise you take off Your coat and jump-- O brave, eternal, true Is His strong azure Breast that catches you.





HOW I MET SWAMI BHAKTIVEDANTA

I knew right away that he was my teacher. It was like something that happens in books.

In September, 1965 I went up to Ananda Ashram, an hour and a half out of New York City. I went there mostly to get out of the city. The Indian guru who presided at the Ashram I had met before in New York at a Yoga Society. Many of my friends were involved with him studying Raja Yoga, a form of meditation. They were very enthusiastic and tried to persuade me to come uptown with them to their meetings.

To tell the truth, although I liked their teacher personally, I could never meditate successfully. My mind would always wander after a few minutes. All kinds of images drifted into my consciousness, and I would feel I wasn't normal or as serious as the others who seemed able to sit calm and immobile for great periods of time. "It was such a good meditation." they would exclaim after a session. I couldn't figure it out.

Anyhow, I had to have a change from the city for many reasons. My friends said the Ashram was peaceful and beautiful with a big lake and woods. I took a but and felt gradually better as I got further from New York. It was a holiday weekend, Labor Day, and I didn't have a reservation. I didn't know you needed a reservation for a Yoga Camp. Arriving a two in the morning didn't make my reception any warmer, but the person in charge let me in and gave me a bed. I was beginning to get that feeling again—that I was an outsider and not ready for Yoga discipline.

Next day everyone got up early and went to morning meditation.

The guru was resplendent in golden Indian style jacket and his devotees were already deeply into it when I entered the room. All the cushions were taken and I picked a spot in the back of the room where

I could lean against the wall to facilitate my meditation. I noticed some of my friends, eyes closed in lotus position. Seated at one side was an older Indian man in saffron dyed thermal underwear and wrapped in a pinkish wool blanket. He seemed to be muttering to himself and I later discovered that he was praying. It was Swami Bhaktivedanta. His forehead was painted with a white V-shaped sign and his eyes were half shut. He seemed very serene.

There was a lecture by the guru of the Ashram and a girl read from a book. Then another meditation, this time with everyone concentrating on a circle drawn on the wall. I couldn't do it. The circle kept changing it's size and shape, and after a while began to fill with strange forms. My attention drifted to the faces around the room and all of them seemed involved with the circle. I looked out the window through the lacy curtains to the lake. It was green and misty and beautiful, and even if I couldn't get interested in Raja Yoga I felt happy to be out of New York City and into the country.

It began to rain. We left the meditation room and filed to the dining room a few hundred yards away in another building. The morning session was evidently success from the conversation at breakfast.

There was a Swedish nature film scheduled which I had seen, so I went to my room, sat on the single mattress on the floor and began to read. The rain was increasing and beating against the windows. It was peaceful and I was glad to be alone. I read for a while. Suddenly I sensed someone standing in the doorway. Looking up I saw it was the Swami. He was wrapped in his pink blanket. "Can I come in?" he asked. I nodded yes and he asked if he could sit in the chair in the corner. "What are you reading?" he smiled. "Kafka Diaries" I replied, feeling a little embarassed. "Uh," he said, and I put the book down. He asked what I was doing at the Ashram and if I was interested in Yoga. "What kind of yoga are you studying?" "I don't

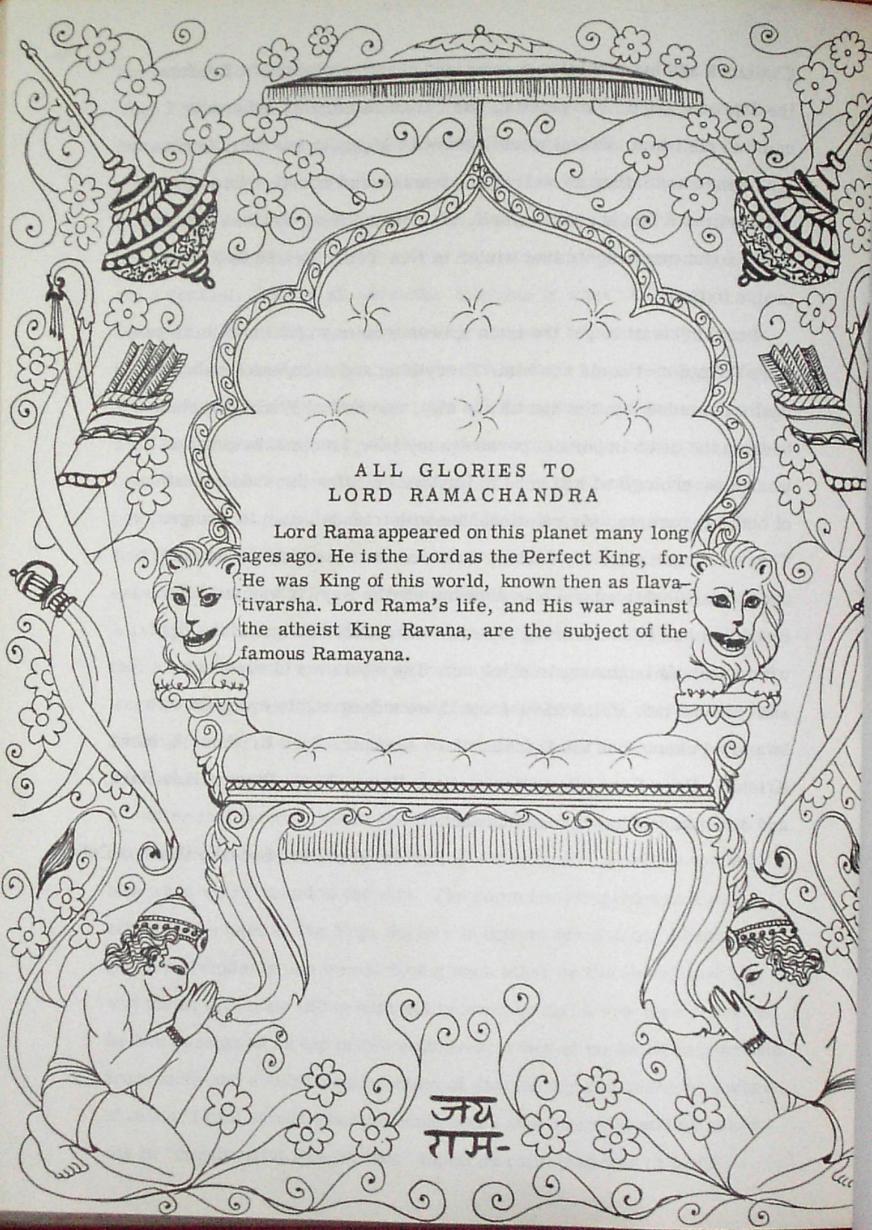
know much about it" I answered, "but I think I'd like to study Hatha Yoga." This didn't impress him. "There are better things than this," he explained. There are higher, more direct forms of yoga. Bhaktiyoga is the highest -- it is the science of God devotion". The Swami continued, "We are all dependent. No one is independent. Everyone here is thinking "Who am I?". I can answer that in one second, I am a servant. We are all servants. Servants of what? Of whom? Servants of God. All of us are serving someone or something, a boss a cat or dog, our family, our country. Why don't we admit this? We should serve the highest master. We should serve the Supreme Lord. This is our constitutional position and the only way to be happy and become liberated from material bondage." As he spoke I got the overpowering realization that he was right. He was speaking the truth. And it was as if I had never heard it before. All of my questions were answered without having to ask him anything. I felt he read my soul. A creepy ecstatic sensation came over me that this man was my teacher-that all my life was a mere preparation to this moment. His works were so simple, and yet they seemed to come from the deepest wisdom. I lost all sense of time and place. It was truly a turning point in my life and I knew it.

After that for the rest of the weekend I kept looking at him. He sat so calmly and had such dignity and warmth. He asked me to visit him when we returned to the city. The room he occupied was a tiny office in the back of the Yoga Society in uptown Manhattan. I began to go there regularly and we sat facing each other on the floor, just him and me in this little office with his typewriter and a new tape recorder he had purchased on top of two suitcases, a box of books he had brought from India and a color reproduction of dancing figures which he looked at often. I told Swami Bhaktivedanta that I was an artist and he asked me to "pleade paint this picture" which he explained was of Lord

Chaitanya and his disciples dancing and chanting praises to Krishna, the Supreme Lord. The painting was called Samkirtan. Whenever I came to visit him, Swami would always be happy to see me. He became my mother and father as well as my teacher and friend. I told him the most intimate things about myself. We chanted Hare Krishna together in his room many nights that winter in New York. Praise to Krishna, praise to God.

I couldn't wait to get the train uptown from my apartment in Greenwich Village so I could see him. Everything and everyone I knew gradually receeded into the hum of the city, and Swami Bhaktivedanta became the most important person in my life. I stopped seeing the woman psychologist I had gone to for therapy after the sudden death of both my parents. My relationships with friends began to change. They no longer were my center. Krishna was becoming my center and Swami Bhaktivedanta was showing me the way. It was as if the cloud that had been covering my soul was slowly lifting and the light within me was beginning to shine out. The whole world seemed to shift around me. Going home from those unforgettable evenings with Swamiji I chanted on the D train, Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare, and didn't care what anyone thought.

Haridas Das Brahmachary (Harvey Cohen)





ALL GLORIES TO LORD RAMACHANDRA

THE OGRE'S LAMENT

Gnarled within

And gnarled without,

I am the lumbering, lusting

Brute denizen of this concrete swamp,

The minion of immemorial shadow.

I am the killer and the coward,

I the beast of rages,

The blind and ugly madman

Chasing other madman

Through the death-choked catacombs of Time.

And now, as a burrowing mole might chance upon the noon sun all ablaze,
I have come to You, O Krishna,
And my savage throat,
Clogged with ghastly carrion,
Cannot cherish You.
O, I am a lover who cannot love!
I am a fool addressing Wisdom!
I am the gloomy grotesque, daring to praise the
glistening Pinnacle of beauty!

I croak and shamble,
Beetle my brows,
And groan at the prospect:
How (O how!) - I would adore You—
If I only might? If only I were other than I am!

Nor does it lessen my grief to realize
That in Your infinite splendor
Even I am bathed,
As the sun baths the deep pits of Earth in passing over them.
No, I remain inconsolable!
My heart is bleeding,
And the blood is like a tortured sea
Being churned by the whit hot blasts
Of Your unimagined loveliness.

Rayarama das Brahmachary (Raymond Marais)

KRISHNA AND THE VEDIC VIEW:

The Swami Responds

Dear Swami,

In some of your writings, you use the term Krishna, the
Divine Lover. Do you mean that Krishna is the Universal Erotic
Principle? Or is Krishna a symbol for universal brotherhood?

Sincerely,
Len Berkowitz

Dear Mr. Berkowitz,

It might be more accurate to say that eroticism—by which I assume you mean sexual activity—is a reflection of Krishna's Eternal Pastimes. Krishna is our eternal Lover, regardless of what body we may be in, if any. Sex must refer to the material body, but Krishna is unlimited, and His love is also unlimited. Neither time nor space can effect Them, as they do the body. As for brotherhood—that presupposes a common father. As Krishna, God, is our common Father, an understanding of our relationship to Him must produce the true sweet brotherhood which our present civilization so sadly lacks.

Dear Swamiji,

Do you claim that the Vedic mythology is actually true? Roger Cagloff

Dear Mr. Cagloff,
Do you claim it isn't?

Dear Swami,

What is the relationship between God and the material universe?

Maureen McShane

Dear Miss McShane.

This material universe is shining from the body of the Lord. We are as the sunlight, He the Sun.

Dear Swami Bhaktivedanta.

I've heard that you believe in many gods. Is this true?
How can you say that Krishna is God. if you follow many gods?
Sincerely,

Kay Duffield

Dear Miss Duffield,

The demi-gods are like the ministers of state. Each fulfills a particular function, controlling a particular agency of Nature, so to speak. And Krishna, God, is like the King. God is One, but His energies, agencies and agents are infinite. Some are very powerful, like Brahma, the creator of this material universe, and some are relatively insignificant, like the dust of the roadside, or a flea. But all are God's, and only He should be followed— nobody else, ever.

Dear Swamiji,

What are the upper planets? Is this the Christian heaven, or Kingdom of God?

Yours truly, Ronald Holmes

Dear Mr. Holmes,

The Vedic literature informs us that there are three planetary systems in the material world— the upper (heavenly) planets, the middle planets, and the lower, or hellish planets. This earth, for example, is a middle planet. The Kingdom of God, however, is Spiritual. It is transcendental to matter, and exists in the spiritual sky. The material planets are also within the spiritual sky— but in a section which is covered by the unfortunate cloud of Illusion.

Dear Swami Bhaktivedanta,

Could you please answer a question for me: Is ther such a thing as a spiritual sky? And if so, what is meant by the term? I've heard it used, but think maybe it's a mistranslation of some Hindu concept. Thanks.

Yours, Sutton Dale

Dear Mr. Dale,

The spiritual sky is not a concept, but a fact. Nor is it Hindu; it is beyond any material designation whatever. In the Bhagavad Gita and other Vedic writings this sky is described as being self-illuminated. That is to say, every atom of that sky is alive, conscious. Sky, or space, is considerably more extended than our modern scientists would have us believe. That is because their instruments are faulty and limited. But don't be fooled: you can yourself experience the spiritual sky, just as you can now perceive the blue vault over this planet. It simply requires finding out how to do so.

What is the Causal Ocean?

Your friend, Judy Johnson

Dear Miss Johnson,

Can you picture a deep-sea fish wondering, What is the atmosphere? The outer wrapping is difficult to see from the middle of the inside.

Dear Swami Bhaktivedanta,

I've heard a little about your Krishna Consciousness movement, and frankly I'm more than a bit skeptical. What is Krishna? Is it the Hindu concept of the Absolute Truth, like Om? Is it Void? Or is it a fearful character, like Jehovah? Another thing that bugs me is, how come Krishna isn't even mentioned as one of the Hindu Trinity?

Yours, Harry Fox

My dear Mr. Fox,

Please rest at ease— Krishna is not a fearful character. In the Bhagavad Gita, He declares Himself to be the dearest Friend to all living beings. Om is the sound representation of Krishna. Like the Jewish Jehova, Krishna is a Name of God. But, again, let me assure you, He is your good Friend. In fact, He is your eternal Lover. You have simply forgotten Him. My movement is simply the work of an emissary come from your Divine Lover— hoping to make you remember Him. As for the Void and the Hindu Trinity: do not lose sleep over them. They will not bite you. I shall take up those topics another time, when space permits.

Dear Swami Bhaktivedanta,

I have been chanting the Hare Krishan Mantra for a week. Am I liberated now?

Mrs. Jean McGillis

Dear Mrs. McGillis,

When you eat a good meal, do you have to ask the waiter if you are full? Keep chanting.

Your well-wisher A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Dear Mr. Wheeler,

A number of days ago, I read an article in the "National Insider" called: "The Secrets Of Krishna Consciousness." I quote you: "The Communists say that everything belongs to the State, we know that everything belongs to God. The key word is consciousness- and I attained it purely by chanting the 16 words over and over again. It is the vibrations you see " Frankly, I don't see. When you speak of consciousness, I assume that you mean awareness. Now I know that my awareness changes in quality, that is, my awareness varies in intensity. Or I would say that my perception varies in sharpness. Now my question is this; are you saying that your perception of the world, what is, or reality has changed; or are you saying that your consciousness change has allowed you to perceive a different world from the one which you perceived before the change in consciousness? Let me put it another way. A number of years ago, the thought came to me that God is not a person; it came to me that God is a state. It seemed to me that one is always in the state of God, but that most of the time we do not perceive ourselves as being in this state. Am I making any sense to you? You spoke of consciousness expansion. What did you mean by it? I assume that you mean that you are less distracted and more able to perceive the world without projecting your own feelings and what have you onto it. Am I right or wrong?

Suffice to say, I would be very grateful any information that you could give me on Krishna Consciousness. I agree with Swami Bhaktivedanta when he says that "Modern civilization is paying too much attention to the body and not enough attention to studying the nature of consciousness..."

Sincerely yours, Stephen V. Crosby, Jr. Penn. State College

Dear Mr. Crosby,

The Reality of God is eternal and does not change. It is <u>Sat Chit Ananda</u>, that is, eternal bliss and knowledge Absolute. It is also Consciousness and Intelligence. It is also <u>beyond Consciousness</u> and Intelligence. As the Supreme Personality, <u>it</u> is <u>He</u> (i. e. Krishna), and He is pure Spirit, or Soul (Purusha) which is imperishable, omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. Nothing can really be predicated about Him. He is.

Now, in regards to our individual consciousness—this can be changed. In fact, it is constantly being changed from day to day, hour to hour, moment to moment. We are conditioned beings and imperfect. Our senses are imper-

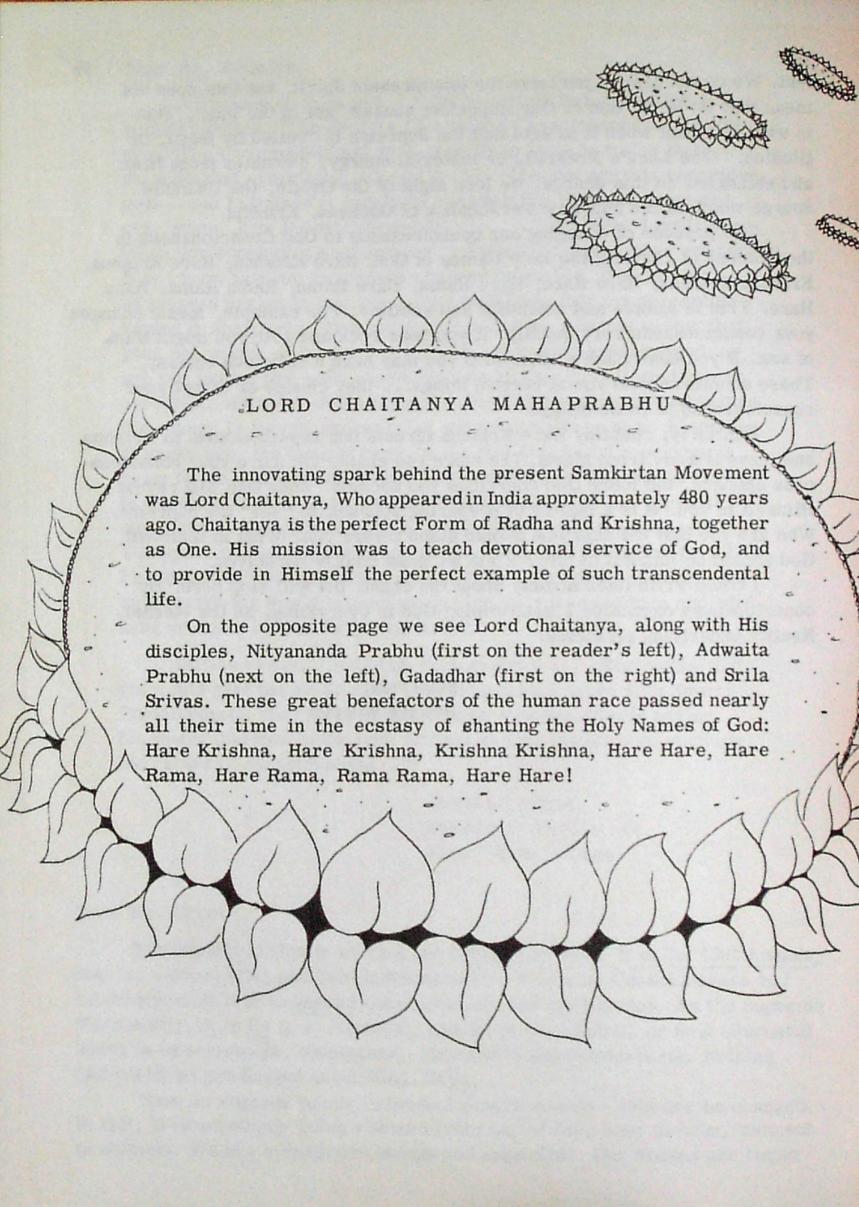
fect. We do not always perceive the omnipresent Spirit, but this does not mean that He is not there. Our imperfect senses "get in the way". This is what is meant when it is said that the Supreme is "veiled by Maya, or Illusion." The Lord's Prakriti, or material energy, emanates from Him, and entangled in this energy, we lose sight of the Origin, the Ultimate Source which is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna.

The process of changing our consciousness to God Consciousness is the process of chanting the Holy Names of God: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. This is simple and scientific and sublime. For example, music changes your consciousness very quickly. If you hear rock and roll, you might think of sex. If you hear Bach's Mass in B you may have a religious ecstasy. These sounds remind you of certain things... they change or direct your consciousness to these things.

Similarly, chanting Hare Krishna directs our consciousness to Krishna, and turns it away from Maya. The more you chant, the more your consciousness changes, the more God conscious you become. Then God will reveal Himself to you. It is a matter of preparing yourself to "see" the Supreme. Who are you that the Supreme should stand before you? What is man that God should be mindful of him? First we must qualify ourselves.

I could write interminably about the chant, but will stop here. By consciousness expansion I mean seeing God in everything, as the eternal Reality underlying all forms.

Sincerely, Howard Wheeler





I sat on a suburban hillside
And watched, across a small valley,
The opposite rise of land,
Covered with low grey houses.
Where I was, in the grass,
By a Black Birch tree
With Branches good for toothbrushes,
Two pheasants slowly picked
Their way through the dry leaves.
Across on the other hill,
Dim noises crackled from the roads
And rooftops. Robins whistled.

It gently faded into brilliance. I held the light back from me, Not desiring the Void any more, Only trying to understand it. Seven years ago I used beer To hold Revival Meetings. Six year's ago I used a lunatic system Of "Time and Energy" to forget God. Five years ago I used Bartok To make a window disappear. Four years ago I used logic To prove everything was nothing. Three years ago I used film To eliminate the blood problem. Two years ago I contemplated mist. One year ago I saw the Void. Brittle, metallic stupidity. The buzzing crash of electrons. But now Swami told us Something more that included The mute impersonal glare. Swami told us the truth. And this was just illusion. Swami told us about people, And this was just physics.

Swami told us about love, And this was just eternity. God takes care of this, somehow, All this ignorance.

Why was it illusion?
It appeared to be all-inclusive.
There was first the physical,
Then the rattling of the physical,
Then the dissemination into light.
But it didn't include
What Swami told us.
And he told us the truth.

I remembered the crashing electrons. I paid attention and realised The crashing was in this body, Not in the hillside over there. In my sense of it, the sight of it, The sound of it, smell, touch, taste. It appeared to be all-inclusive Because this body was a network With a beginning and an end. Void-consciousness was body-consciousness. And the hillside didn't give a damn. The hillside was still there. Going about its business, And I was wrapped up in this body. My senses only wanted to sense themselves. To get to the hill I needed faith. God made the hill and it was not Void. He put it there. I couldn't deny it. I relaxed beyong my senses, I relaxed into faith in God.

Staring at a hillside, Gathering sense impressions, Arranging them on a sheet of Celluloid in front of me, Pulling it, stretched, Away from the hillside,
Forced up to me.
Then it burned and disappeared
In a hard shining fire.
But the hill was still there.

I went to the temple that night Only because I wanted to.

Dancing there was Swami;
Chanting, there was Swami;
Sitting, there was Swami;
Who else told us the truth?
The truth is
Hare-Krishna-Hare-Krishna
Krishna-Krishna-Hare-Hare
Hare-Rama-Hare-Rama
Rama-Rama-Hare-Hare;
Him.
Swami told us that.
Everything else is extra.
Swami told us that too.

Damodara Das Adhikary (Dan Clark)

AN ADDRESS TO AMERICAN YOUTH by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

Delivered Sunday, June 4, at Tompkins Square Park by Kirtanananda Das Brahmachary)

My dear young beautiful boys and girls of America. I have come to your country with great hope and a great mission. My Spiritual Master, Om Vishnupad Paramhansa Paribrajaka Acharya Sri Sriman Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Maharaj, asked me to preach this cult of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in the Western World. That was the seed-giving incident. Gradually the seed fructified, and I was prepared to come to the Western World. Still, I do not know why I was so much attracted by the land of America. But from within Krishna dictated that instead of going to Europe I should better go to America. So you can see that I have come to your country under order of superior authority. And even after arriving here, when I perceived that some of the youngsters are being misled, confused and frustrated- this is not the condition in your country only, but in every country, the young people are neglected, although it is they who are the flower and future hope of everyone -- so I thought to myself that if I go the American youth with my message and they join with me in this movement, then it will spread all over the world and then all the problems of the world will be solved. How I would like to be with you in person today, but Krishna has prevented that. so please pardon me and accept my blessings in this written form.

This process of Samkirtan— this singing and dancing— is so nice because from the very beginning it places everyone on the spiritual platform. There are different platforms or levels to our existence: the bodily platform, the mental platform, the intellectual platform, and the spiritual platform. When you stand on the spiritual platform then all the broblems created by the necessities of the body, mind, intellect, and ego become solved. Therefore I appeal to you to join this movement most seriously. The process is very simple: we ask everyone to come join with us in chanting, hear something of the philosophy of life taught by Lord Krishna, take a little prasadam (foodstuff that is prepared and offered to the Lord), and peacefully, with refreshed mind go home. That is our mission.

We do have certain restrictions; practically, they are not restrictions, but something better in place of something inferior. The other day, Mr Alan Burke questioned me on his television program, "Swamiji, why do you insist on marriage?" And I answered him, "Unless one becomes peaceful in home life, how can he make any advance in any other area of life or knowledge? Therefore everyone should get married— just to be happy and peaceful." You are all beautiful, nice educated boys and girls— why shouldn't you get married and live

happily? If you live peacefully, regulated lives, eating nothing but Krishna prasadam, then the tissues in your brain will develop for spiritual consciousness and understanding.

However, if you are not agreeable to these simple restrictions, still I request you to join the chanting with us. Everybody can do that, and that will gradually clarify everything, and all problems will be solved, and you will find a new chapter of your life. Just this week I have received a letter from a girl in New Jersey who has had such an experience. She writes:

"Dear Swamiji,

You don't know me by name, but I am the girl who joined your parade in Washington Square this past Saturday.

When I first saw your group I thought you were all crazy. Either that or on dope of some kind. After listening and talking with some you I realized that it was neither of those. You people plainly believed in what you were doing and I admired you for that much; but my curiosity drove me further and I had to find out why. So I followed you and as I did, the chant you sang began to take hold. The next thing I knew I felt free of myself and I was singing too. I didn't know where I was or where I was going but I was too elated to care. It wasn't until we stopped that I learned where I was.

By that time I had picked up bits and pieces of what Krishna Consciousness was about. One of your members asked me to visit your temple and I followed you still further, hoping to discover just what it was that made you feel so stron about something I'd never heard of.

After having taken a meal with you and reading your literature I left; but not alone. I took with me a new awareness of life. It occured to me how futile my desires for the material things in life were: that a new dress, or big house, or color television were not important. If only people would open their eyes to the endless number of pleasures God has already given us, there would be no need to look any further.

You people are truly lucky. You may have had to do without many things but because of this you are able to enjoy the simple God-given treasures of the worl Because of your beliefs, you are the wealthy; and I thank you for sharing a bit of that wealth with me."

So we invite you to please chant with us— it is such a nice thing; come to our temple if you like; take a little prasadam; and be happy. It is not very difficult if you just chant this HARE KRISHNA, HARE KRISHNA, KRISHNA KRISHNA, HARE HARE, HARE RAMA, HARE RAMA, RAMA RAMA, HARE HARE. That will save you.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

INTRODUCTION TO GEETOPANISHAD

(Bhagavad Gita As It Is)

by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

Bhagavad Gita is widely recognized as the compendium of all Vedic wisdom, yet there are few who have the necessary qualifications to understand and teach this all-important scripture. Swami Bhaktivedanta-- who is a devotee in the line of disciplic succession from Arjuna-- is one of these few. His introduction to the Geetopanishad is a classic in its own right.

25¢

TWO ESSAYS

by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

In WHO IS CRAZY? and KRISHNA, THE RESERVOIR OF PLEASURE, the Swami explains the illusion of materialism, and the process of acquiring true vision in the perpetual bliss of Krishna Consciousness.

KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS

A 33 1/3 long playing record on the Happening label, in which the devotees perform Kirtan (chanting the Hare Krishna Mantrum), and which further includes mantras sung by the Swami in praise of his spiritual master. Available from the Society.

ALSO AVAILABLE AT OUR TEMPLE

-Incense-30 sticks	
-Wooden Beads, with a booklet which of to string them, and which further expla- in chanting the Hare Krishna Mantra.	ins their general value
-Indian Hand Cymbals	1 pair \$1. 25
-HARE KRISHNA lapel buttons	10¢ each

SRIMAD BHAGAWATAM

by Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasadeva

The original and genuine commentary on Vedanta philosophy by the author of the Vedanta Himself, Vyasadeva-- now available for the first time in English with an authorized commentary by Swami A. C. Bhaktivedanta.

The <u>Srimad Bhagawatam</u> is the post-graduate study of the Bhagawad Gita, or the Science of Krishna. This book of transcendental knowledge contains information of classical Hindu culture, philosophy, sociology, economics, politics, aesthetics and Divine Love.

This unique edition of <u>Srimad Bhagawatam</u> has been greatly appreciated by all learned societies of philosophy and theosophy and approved by the Indian State and Central Government Departments of Education, and by the United States Government. Swami Bhaktivedanta's edition contains Sanscrit, Sanscrit transliteration, English equivalents, translation and elaborate commentaries. Published by the League of Devotees, New Delhi, India, 1962-65. Price: \$16.80 for 3 volumes (1200 pages). Postage paid by the Society.

Available from the International Society For Krishna Consciousness, 26 Second Avenue, New York, New York, 10003.

BACK TO GODHEAD is published monthly by the International Society For Krishna Consciousness at 26 Second Avenue, New York, New York, 10003. 1-year subscription (12 issues) \$4.00. Phone 674-7428.

FOUNDER: A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

EDITORS: Hayagriva Das Brahmachary (Howard Wheeler) Rayarama Das Brahmachary (Raymond Marais)

CIRCULATION: Gargamuni Das Brahmachary (Gregory Scharf)

PRINTING: Purushottam Das Brahmachary (Paul Auerbach)
Jaigovinda Das Brahmachary (Jeffrey Havener)

THE ARTISTS

whose work so beautifully graces our pages are, to begin with, Jadurani Devi Dasi, directress of the Art Department. Jadurani Prabhu's work appears on the inside cover, and on the back cover. Her other work includes a prolific output of oil paintings on such subjects as Yasoda Krishna, Radha Krishna, Narayana (a series of twenty-four canvases), Guru Maharaj, Narada Muni, and numerous others.

The pictures of The Bridge, Radha Krishna, Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, and Lord Ramachandra were drawn by Gaursundar das Adhikary
(Gary McElroy) and his wife Govinda Devi. In addition to their illustrations
for Back To Godhead, they're engaged in creating a slide film strip on
the life of Prahlad Maharaj.

All glories to these fine servants of the Lord.

