

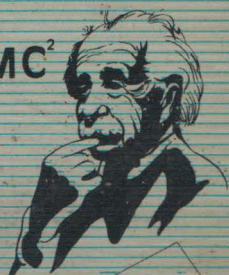
The Scientific Basis of
KṚṢṆĀ
CONSCIOUSNESS



SVARŪPA DĀMODARA DĀSA, Ph.D.



$$E=MC^2$$



ALL GLORY TO ŚRĪ GURU AND GAURĀṄGA

**The
Scientific Basis of
KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS**

by SVARŪPA DĀMODARA DĀSA, Ph.D.



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Dedication

Before making this humble attempt to write a few words about the unlimited and inexhaustible nectar-eating knowledge of the all-merciful Supreme Personality of Godhead, the supreme scientist, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, I offer my most humble obeisances unto the lotus feet of my spiritual master and eternal father, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, and beg from His Divine Grace his kind mercy. Without the mercy of His Divine Grace, it is completely beyond the power of this most unqualified pupil to utter even a fraction of a single word describing the transcendental qualities of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. I therefore completely and fully depend on the kind and causeless mercy of my eternal father, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

1. The Bewildered Spirit Soul

Modern scientists, especially geneticists, have gone so far that it appears as if the destiny of man lies in their hands. They proclaim that in the future they will make human beings according to demand and necessity.¹ This sort of scientific revolution started in 1543 with the publication by Copernicus, the Polish astronomer, of the heliocentric theory (i.e., the premise that planets revolve around the sun). E. E. Snyder, in his book *History of the Physical Sciences*, writes: "Since an understanding of the natural world was possible through science, it was also possible through science that man should be able to alter the world to his own ends and thereby improve his nature. The burden for man's progress, then, was on man, not God. God created the universe so that it obeyed certain natural laws. These laws were discovered by men (scientists); therefore God was not particularly necessary except in a personal sense."²

My concern is to show that God is still as necessary as ever, and that the further advancement of science itself is necessarily dependent on this understanding. We have reached a point in our technological capability where humanity, whose independence is the cornerstone of the scientific edifice, is threatened by its own achievements. Doomsayers abound, but whether the end comes by bomb, pollution, automated loneliness, or whether it comes at all, there

1. Tom Paskal, "Tampering with the Machinery of God," *Weekend Magazine*, September 18, 1971, p.5.

2. E.E. Snyder, *History of the Physical Sciences* (Columbus, Ohio: Merrill Publishing Co., 1969), p. 28.

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can be no doubt that a fundamental error is being committed in thinking that humanity alone has all the answers.

Science—that is, observation and hypothesis—is a basic fact of the mechanics of thought. What is lacking is a purpose, and a larger intellectual setting within which this empirical exercise can take place.

The word “revolution” is appropriate to describe the history of science. It has been most essentially a chronology of attempts to overthrow the authority, not only of the Church, which burned Bruno at the stake, but also of that kind of thinking called *a priori*, deductive, submissive, or faithful, and that Person to whom such a thinker pays homage—Kṛṣṇa, God. There is no reason to document here the progress of this intoxicating rebellion. What is important is that once it started, no one could stop it.

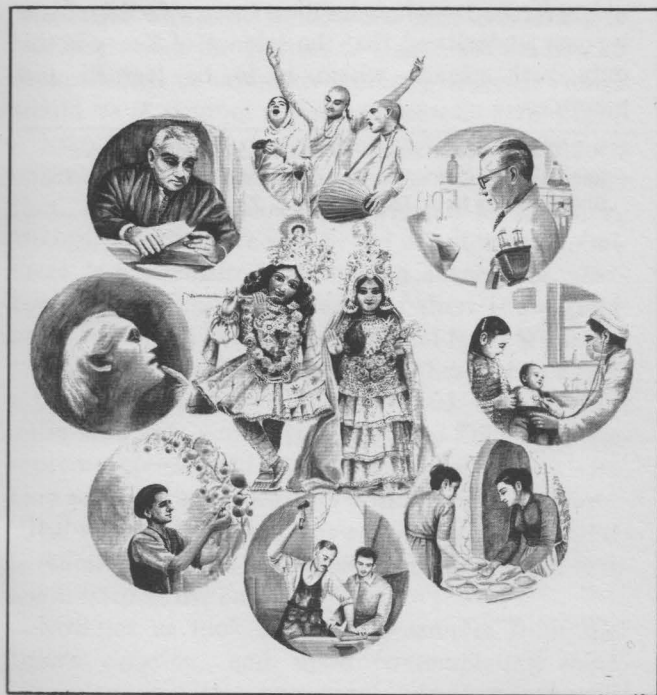
This booklet is primarily directed to our scientific friends. Instead of centering one’s consciousness around temporary machines, one should transfer his consciousness to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the supreme scientist, knowing that He is the central point for all activities. There can be innumerable concentric circles around a common center. Similarly, all scientists, philosophers, businessmen, politicians, etc., can engage in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, keeping Kṛṣṇa in the center of all their activities.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is defined as “one’s eternal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead; the ultimate goal of life, which is to return

3. Bg. 5.15

4. *prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ
ahaṅkāra-vimūḍhātmā kartāham iti manyate* (Bg. 3.27)

5. *mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ sūyate sa-carācaram
hetunānena kaunteya jagad viparivartate* (Bg. 9.10)



*Whatever one's occupation, one should learn the science
of placing Kṛṣṇa in the center of all one's activities.*

home, back to Godhead; and the process of returning to the spiritual world.”⁶ Zero, if it stands alone, has no value. However, when a one is put before it, it becomes ten. Similarly, all activities have no value unless Kṛṣṇa is included within these activities. Thus we can understand that the science of Kṛṣṇa is the only real science which is to be learned and practiced.

6. A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, *Teachings of Lord Caitanya* (New York, Los Angeles, London and Bombay: The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1968), p. 23.

2. Perceiving the Existence of the Supreme Scientist, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa

When we think calmly and carefully about this wonderful universe, we can see that everything is working under the control of a supreme brain. The arrangements in nature are perfectly ordered. Things would be at random without the careful planning of a scientific and engineering brain. It is a common understanding that there is a cause behind each action. A machine cannot run without an operator. Modern scientists are very proud of automation, but there is a scientific brain behind automation also. Even Albert Einstein agreed that there is a perfect brain behind all the natural physical laws. When we talk about “brain” and “operator,” these terms imply a person. They cannot be impersonal. One may inquire who this person is. He is Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the supreme scientist and supreme engineer, under whose kind will the whole cosmos is working. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says: “The whole cosmic order is under Me. By My will it is manifested again and again, and by My will it is annihilated at the end.”¹

Now let us look into a few samples from the Lord’s creation, and upon contemplating these exemplary aspects, one should develop a better understanding and appreciation of the existence of the most powerful brain, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The sun that we see daily is the nearest star. It is one hundred earth diameters across and is ninety-three million miles away from the earth. Every day the sun supplies the solar system with a tremendous amount of heat,

1. *prakṛtiṁ svām avastabhya vistjāmi punaḥ punaḥ
bhūta-grāmam imāṁ kṛtsnam avasāṁ prakṛter vaśāt* (Bg. 9.8)

light and energy. "The very tiny fraction of the sun's energy that falls on the earth—estimated at about five parts in a hundred million million—is about 100,000 times greater than all the energy used in the world's industries. The total energy the sun emits in a single second would be sufficient to keep a one-kilowatt electric fire burning for 10,000 million million years. Put in a different way, the energy the sun emits in one second is greater than the whole amount of energy the human species has consumed throughout its entire history."² Yet it is only one of the countless number of stars floating in the sky in every direction. With the material scientific brain, the thermal, electrical and nuclear powerhouses have been made. These can supply heat, light and energy to a small, limited extent, but Lord Kṛṣṇa is supplying the whole planet with an unlimited source of energy just from one sun. Kṛṣṇa says: "The splendor of the sun, which dissipates the darkness of this whole world, comes from Me. And the splendor of the moon and the splendor of fire are also from Me."³ The planets are revolving in a systematic path around the sun. Even within the smallest atom, the electrons are orbiting around the nucleus in a perfect manner.

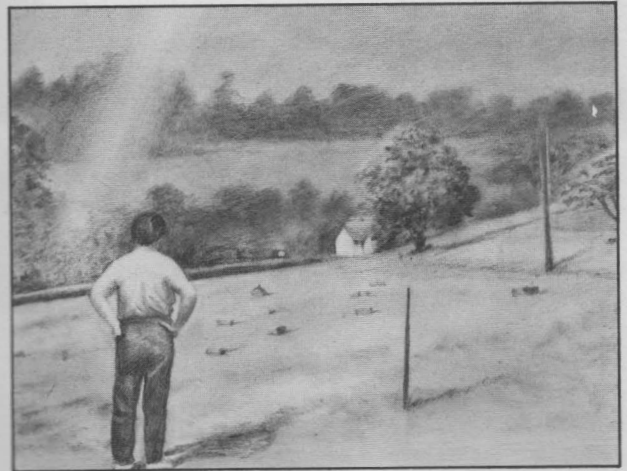
Thus, from the submicroscopic realm of the atom to the expanding reaches of the galactic objects, this material universe is running like intricate, well-oiled clockwork according to great natural physical laws and principles. Scientists have gained great acclaim for making a few spaceships, whereas Kṛṣṇa effortlessly produces gigantic spaceships, such as planets

2. Fred Hoyle, *Astronomy* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1962), p. 232.

3. *yad āditya-gataṁ tejo jagad bhāsayate'khillam yac candramasi yac cāgnau tat tejo viddhi māmakam* (Bg. 15.12)

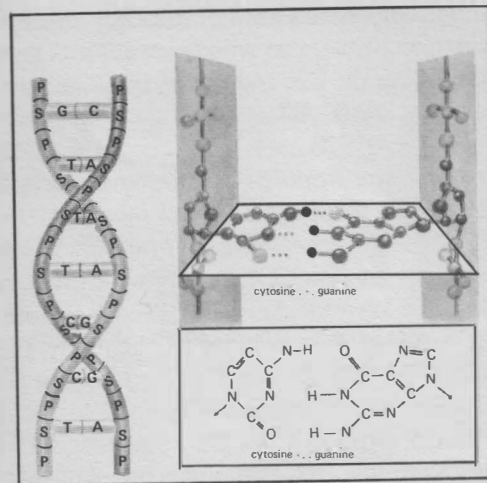
and stars, which are perfectly equipped and maintained. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says, *gām āviśya ca bhūtāni dhārayāmy aham ojāsa*: "I enter into each planet, and by My energy they stay in orbit."⁴ The laws made by the supreme brain always remain perfect; they are never violated. We never see the sun rising in the west and setting in the east. The colorful rainbow that we observe when the sun is shining during a shower is only visible when the sun is behind the observer, due to the laws of refraction. Also, each year the seasons change quite periodically, producing symptoms unique to each season.

Now let us look into some aspects of the Lord's creation at the molecular level. Chemists find that the different colors in flowers are due to chemicals called anthocyanins, and the different aromas are mostly due to chemicals called terpenes and terpenoid com-



Who made the laws of refraction that govern the visibility of the rainbow?

pounds. The molecular frameworks for these compounds range from very simple structures to very complex networks. Camphor, for example, is a terpenoid compound, and the characteristic odor of lemons is due to the molecule called limonene, which is one of the simple terpenes. Similarly, the characteristic colors in carrots and tomatoes are due to molecules called carotenoids, which are higher forms of terpenes. The molecular framework for each definite color or aroma is wonderfully unique. A little change in position of a few atoms in the molecule, a little variation in the geometry of the molecule or a slight change in the size of the molecule can cause a color to change from orange to red, a mild, pleasing aroma to become repellent and pungent, and a flavor to change from sweet to bitter. On one extreme we find the smallest molecule, the hydrogen molecule, which contains only two atoms of hydrogen. On the other extreme we find giant molecules such as the proteins and nucleic acids (DNA and RNA), the building blocks of all living material bodies, which contain innumerable atoms made for a definite function. Similarly, the crystalline pattern of each different molecule is unique. The geometrical shape for sodium chloride (common salt), for example, is cubical. Charcoal, graphite and diamonds are all derived from the same element, carbon, and yet the shining and transparent diamond is extremely hard, whereas graphite is soft, black and opaque. This is due to the difference in the crystalline forms of these molecules. In the crystal lattice of the diamond, each carbon atom is tetrahedrally surrounded by four other carbon atoms at a distance of 1.54 angstroms (one angstrom = 10^{-8} cm.). In graphite, by contrast, the three bonds of each carbon atom are distorted so



The intricate DNA molecule exhibits the artistry of the supreme scientist, Kṛṣṇa.

as to lie in the same plane, the fourth bond being directed perpendicularly to this plane to link with a carbon atom of the neighboring layer.

In this way we can cite innumerable examples of molecular networks so fantastically and delicately arranged that chemists cannot but wonder about the most expert hand and brain who is making all these wonderful artistic arrangements in His laboratory. Indeed, the intelligence and ability of the supreme scientist, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, are inconceivable (*acintya*). There is no scientist who can deny it. How then can any chemist abstain from appreciating the wonderful works of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa? In *Bhagavad-gītā* we find: "One should meditate upon the Supreme Person as the one who knows everything, as He who is the oldest, who is the controller, who is smaller than the smallest, who is the maintainer of

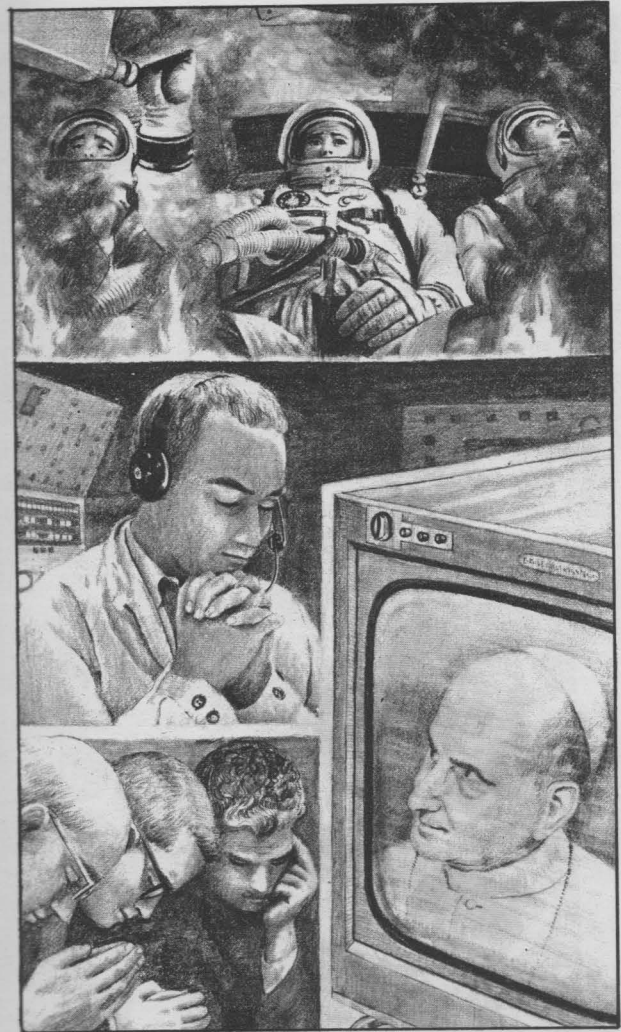
everything, who is beyond all material conception, who is inconceivable, and who is always a person. He is luminous like the sun and, being transcendental, is beyond this material nature.”⁵

At best, scientists can only try to imitate the wonderful artistic works of the Supreme Lord. They cannot even do this properly, and most of their attempts lead to failure and disappointment. Even when they are partly successful, it is only with the greatest difficulty. For example, Professor R.B. Woodward of Harvard, a Nobel Prize winner in chemistry (1965) and Professor A. Eschenmoser of Zurich took eleven years to synthesize the vitamin B₁₂ molecule. Altogether, ninety-nine scientists from nineteen different countries were involved just to accomplish this one small task.⁶ Yet Kṛṣṇa is making all these complex molecules at will.

Interestingly enough, when scientists fail again and again in their attempts to make something, they consciously or unconsciously pray to God for help. Does this not indicate the existence of the supreme scientist, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the natural subordinate position of all other living entities? A crude example is the explosion that occurred inside the Apollo 13 spacecraft during its attempt to land on the moon on April 11, 1970. The Apollo capsule was made by hundreds of scientific and technological brains and cost millions of dollars. No one could predict that there would be an explosion. When it happened, however, and the lives of the three astronauts were in danger, those involved in the mission requested all

5. *kaviṁ purāṇam anuśāsītāram aṇor aṇīyāṁsam anusmared yaḥ sarvasya dhātāram acintya-rūpam āditya-varṇaṁ tamaśaḥ parastāt* (Bg. 8.9)

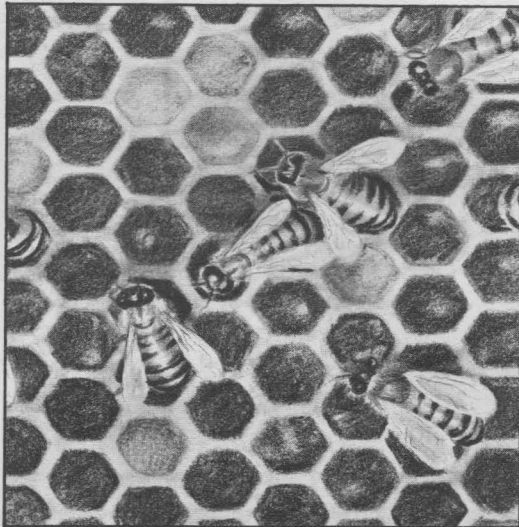
6. James H. Krieger, *Chemical and Engineering News*, March 12, 1973, p.16.



Danger in Apollo 13: The members of the mission requested all the people of the earth to pray for the return of the astronauts.

the people on earth to pray to God for the safe return of the astronauts. Such is the situation. At times of danger, most people tend to remember God, although at other times they forget Him.

Now, let us look into some very simple and graphic examples of the artistry of the Lord's creation. We see that among the lower forms of living entities, social organization is very smoothly maintained. For example, in a bee colony the queen bee is nicely taken care of by the drones (male bees), while the workers collect nectar from flowers all day long. It is quite amazing to consider how the bees, with their tiny bodies, can collect such a great amount of honey for themselves as well as for other living entities. In this way, the colony is maintained with beautiful order. Similarly, the loving relationship between a mother and her baby is quite clearly visible even in



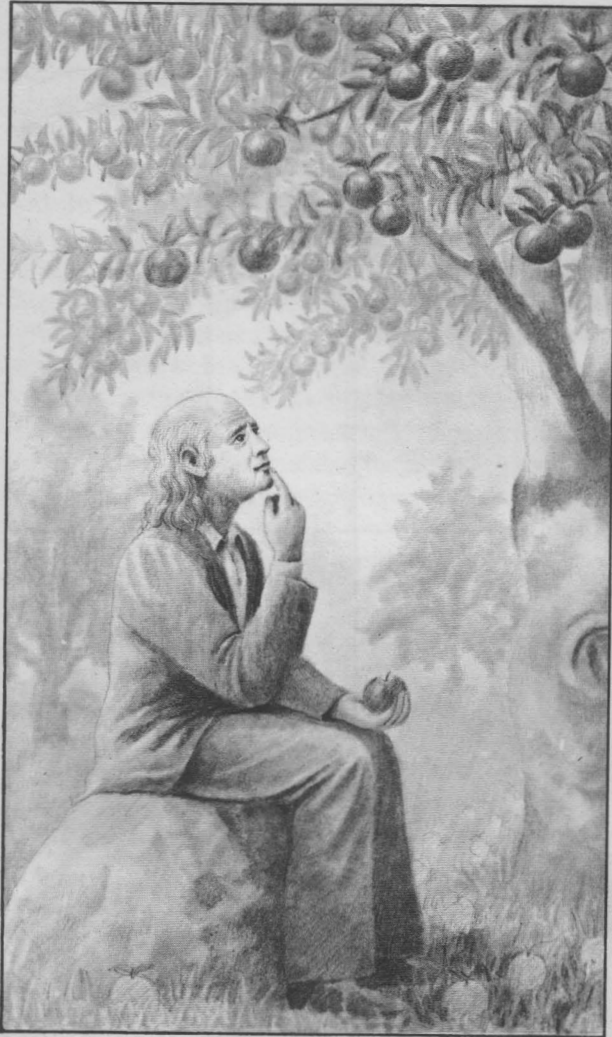
The Supreme Lord arranges the social organization of the bee colony.

very small forms of living entities. During the monsoon season in tropical countries, when there are torrents of rain, the small ants run to find shelter, carrying their eggs on their heads. The spider makes its wonderful webs with great architectural skill to serve as a shelter as well as to catch its prey for survival. Silkworms spin hundreds of yards of fine threads to form cocoons for their shelter during the pupa stage. Inside a tiny seed, smaller than the size of a mustard seed, the whole potency of a big banyan tree is present. In this way, we can see the wonderful arrangements of the Supreme Lord, who is creating, maintaining and guiding all living entities, small or big. Kṛṣṇa says: "Furthermore, O Arjuna, I am the generating seed of all existences. There is no being-moving or unmoving—that can exist without Me."⁷



Kṛṣṇa can place an entire banyan tree within a tiny seed.

⁷ *yac cāpi sarva-bhūtānāṁ bījaṁ tad aham arjuna
na tad asti vinā yat syān mayā bhūtaṁ carācaram* (Bg. 10.39)



Newton's laws could not explain who caused the apples to fall.

The main trouble with material scientists is that they generally neglect the most important and fundamental aspect of their inquiries. For example, when Newton saw the falling of the apple, he asked why and how the apple fell. However, he did not inquire who caused the falling of the apple. As an answer to his inquiry, he discovered the laws of gravitation. His answer was that the apple fell because of the laws of gravitation. But who made the laws of gravitation? Śrīla Prabhupāda kindly explains that the apple did not fall while green but while ripe. Therefore Newton's gravitational theory was not enough to explain the falling of the apple. There is some other cause behind the total scene of the falling and, thereby, behind the law of gravitation. That cause is Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In *Bhagavad-gītā* we find, *vāsudevaḥ sarvaṃ iti*: "Kṛṣṇa is the cause of all causes."⁸ Furthermore, scientists have to know that the little ability they have is also given by the Lord. Kṛṣṇa says, *pauruṣaṃ nṛṣu*: "I am the ability in man."⁹

By various mechanical means (telescopes, etc.), assumptions, empiric theories and conceptual models, cosmologists and astronomers are trying with tremendous vigor to understand what the universe is, what its size is, and the time scale of its creation. At the present time they are speculating that there may be a tenth planet in the solar system, and they are trying to locate it.¹⁰ How far they will be successful in finding a real answer to their attempts only time can tell. But the fact is that they will never be able to fully discover the secrets of nature, which is the product of creation of Kṛṣṇa, the supreme scientist. Any

8. Bg. 7.19

9. Bg. 7.8

10. D. Rawlins and M. Hammerton, "Is There a Tenth Planet in the Solar System?" *Nature*, December 22, 1972, p. 457.

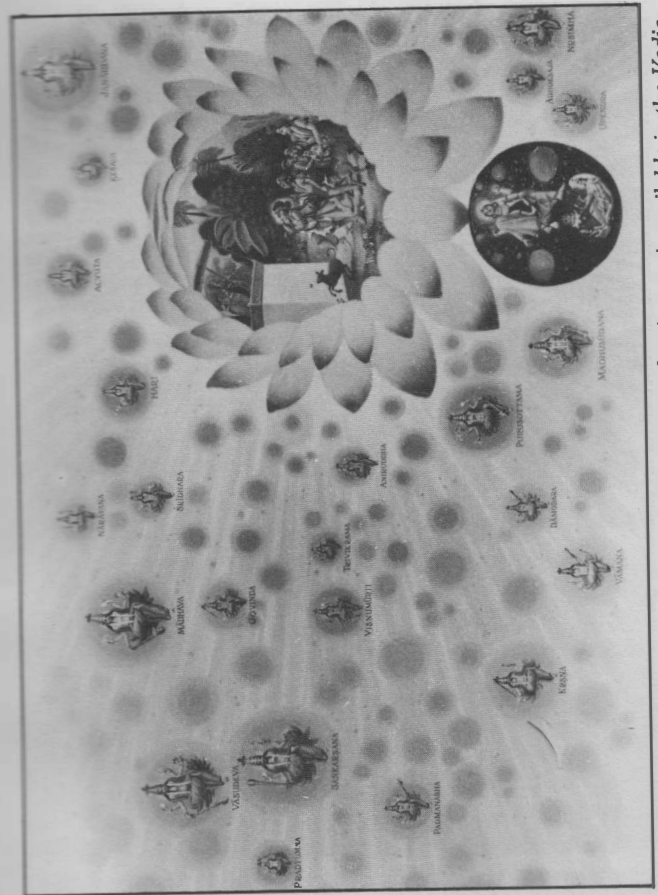
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thoughtful person can understand how foolish he is even to dream of measuring the size of this universe, since he does not know completely the nature of the sun, the nearest star. Śrīla Prabhupāda cites the example of the philosophy of Dr. Frog, who lives in a well of three feet and has no idea how vast the Pacific Ocean is but who speculates that the Pacific Ocean might be five feet wide, ten feet wide, etc., comparing it to his well. The point is that comprehending the unlimited knowledge beyond by our limited means is simply a waste of time and energy. All the knowledge is already there in the authorized scriptures, the *Vedas*. One simply has to take the knowledge from the supreme authority, Kṛṣṇa.

The details of the creation of this material universe and the living entities like demigods, men and others have been given in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, First Canto, Chapter Three, verses 1-5. The description of the material and spiritual universes is completely given in the *Brahma-saṁhitā*, Fifth Chapter, and from



Dr. Frog, Ph.D.



A complete description of the material and spiritual universes is available in the Vedic literatures.

Bhagavad-gītā we get the clear information that the entire material universe is only one fourth of the creative energy of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The other three fourths of the creative energy of the Lord are manifested in the spiritual sky, called the Vaikuṅṭhaloka.

Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the golden *avatāra* (incarnation) of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa, clearly explained to Sanātana Gosvāmī, one of the Lord's intimate disciples, about the nature of these universes. The Lord explained that the material universes have a limited length and breadth, whereas no one can measure the length and breadth of all the Vaikuṅṭha planets. These Vaikuṅṭha planets are like the petals of a lotus flower, and the principal part of that flower is the center of all the Vaikuṅṭhas. This part is called Kṛṣṇaloka, or Goloka Vṛndāvana. The Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, has His original eternal abode on this planet. The other Vaikuṅṭhas are also inhabited by residents who are full with six opulences—wealth, strength, knowledge, beauty, fame and renunciation—and in each and every Vaikuṅṭha planet a different expansion of Kṛṣṇa has His eternal abode.¹¹ Material scientists have no information of this vast knowledge.

Certainly, the secrets of the universe cannot be unfolded by the tiny brains of material scientists. We should agree without a doubt that man's vision in all directions is extremely limited by the inadequacies of his senses, his technology and his intellect. None can deny the existence of the supreme scientist, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He is the proprietor and knower of everything. Kṛṣṇa says: "O son of Pr̥tha, know that I am the original seed of all existences, the intelligence of the in-



The Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, has His original eternal abode on Goloka.

11. Prabhupāda, *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, pp. 82-83.

telligent, and the prowess of all powerful men¹². . . . O conquerer of wealth [Arjuna], there is no truth superior to Me. Everything rests upon Me, as pearls are strung on a thread.”¹³ Only fools would argue about the existence of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says: “Those miscreants who are grossly foolish, lowest among mankind, whose knowledge is stolen by illusion, and who partake of the atheistic nature of demons, do not surrender unto Me.”¹⁴

Therefore, instead of denying and challenging the existence of the supreme scientist, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa or God, it should be the prime duty of all our scientist friends to appreciate the inconceivable brain of the Lord and His wonderful manifestations everywhere. One may falsely claim the credit for the discovery of radio, television, computers, penicillin, etc. But the fact is that everything was already there because nothing can come out of nothing. If someone claims that anything belongs to him, he is the greatest thief. He is stealing property from the supreme father, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and claiming it to be his. Nothing belongs to us. Everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa. *Śrī Īśopaniṣad* says: “Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one must not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong.”¹⁵

12. *bijaṁ māṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ viddhi pārtha sanātanam buddhir buddhimatām asmi tejas tejasvinām aham* (Bg. 7.10)

13. *mattaḥ parataraiṁ nānyat kiñcid asti dhanañjaya mayi sarvam idaṁ protaṁ sūtre maṇi-gaṇā iva* (Bg. 7.7)

14. *na māṁ duṣkṛtino mūḍhāḥ prapadyante narādhamāḥ māyayāpahṛta-jñānā āsurāṁ bhāvam āśritāḥ* (Bg. 7.15)

15. *īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ yat kiñca jagatyāṁ jagat tena tyaktena bhujñīthā mā gṛdhaḥ kasya svid dhanam* (Īso. 1)

3. What is the Difficulty?

The greatest disease in the minds of the scientists is that they do not believe that something is a fact unless it is proved by scientific experiments. When a scientist makes a statement and he supports that statement with scientific experiments, everyone is completely convinced, and no questions are asked. When we talk about the spirit soul to these scientists, their usual response is, “How can one detect the presence of the soul?” Because they have been conditioned to working with machines, they wonder whether the soul can be detected by scientific experiments. However, scientists have to agree that even in their own scientific realm there are many facts that cannot be proved by experiments. The fact is that the soul is there, but in order to understand its existence we have to accept knowledge from the right person, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, or God, and His representative in disciplic succession, the spiritual master.

Everyone in the scientific community knows that mathematicians work with an imaginary number called “i,” which is the square root of minus one ($\sqrt{-1} = i$). This number does not figure among the natural numbers (1,2,3, etc.). However, important branches of mathematics—for example, the theory of analytical functions—are based on this imaginary unit. Without the help of this branch of mathematics, various complex theories and problems cannot be solved. Thus the existence of this number cannot be denied; yet there is no experiment to prove it. In a similar manner, scientists in the field of statistical mechanics also utilize various conceptual models—en-

sembles, for example—to explain their theories and arguments. These are all beyond the realm of experimental science. If scientists are willing to accept these imaginary and conceptual models, what is the difficulty in accepting the perfect knowledge given by Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme scientist?

Another scientific theory that is beyond the limit of experimental science is Heisenberg's uncertainty principle. The statement of this principle is that it is impossible to simultaneously determine the position and momentum of any object. In mathematical language, it is stated that the product of the uncertainties in the measured values of the position and momentum (product of mass and velocity) cannot be smaller than Planck's constant. No existing experimental technique can prove this principle. However, scientists all over the world accept this statement as a fact, knowing that the experimental proof is beyond their ability. Similarly, there is no scientific experiment to prove the Third Law of Thermodynamics. This law, as formulated by Planck, states that the entropy of a perfect crystal at absolute zero degrees is equal to zero. Factually, there is no means available for measuring directly the absolute entropies. Therefore the proof of this law is beyond the realm of experimental science.

It is also to be noted that so-called scientific theories are changing constantly. For example, at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century (1808), John Dalton, in developing his atomic theory, stated that atoms could not be further divided. However, toward the end of the Nineteenth Century and the beginning of the Twentieth Century, it was found that Dalton's atomic theory could no longer be considered correct. It was observed that atoms could be further divided

into fundamental particles like electrons, protons and neutrons. It was also found that some atoms could emit alpha and beta particles, thereby producing new atoms, and so on. As a matter of fact, the so-called nuclear bombs are a result of these findings. In a similar manner, during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries Newton's mechanics had a tremendous influence on the minds of scientists, since they could be applied to gross material objects. However, at the beginning of the Twentieth Century, with the discoveries of the fundamental particles, it was realized that Newton's mechanics failed in describing the motions of these particles. Thus quantum mechanics has been developed to explain the phenomena they exhibit. These theories are filled with speculation, and they are also changing. Just as past and present scientific theories are changing, so we can understand that future scientific theories will also change.

This simply shows that the brains of the highly honored material scientists are imperfect, and, as a result, the theories proposed by these brains will always be imperfect. Actually, perfect knowledge cannot be changed. In order to get perfect knowledge, one has to take knowledge from the perfect scientist, Lord Kṛṣṇa, and His bona fide representative, the spiritual master. Kṛṣṇa says: "I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who know this perfectly engage in My devotional service and worship Me with all their hearts."¹ Furthermore: "Of all creations I am the beginning and the end and also the middle, O Arjuna. Of all sciences I am the spiritual science

1. *ahaṁ sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate
iti matvā bhajante mām budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ* (Bg. 10.8)

of the Self, and among logicians I am the conclusive truth.”²

Scientists have to understand that the knowledge and ability they have is extremely limited and in fact quite insignificant. With this insignificant and limited knowledge, how will it be possible to understand knowledge beyond the material context? Actually there is no question about the existence of the soul. The living entities are fragmental spirit souls, whereas Lord Kṛṣṇa is the supreme soul, supreme person and supreme scientist. Kṛṣṇa says: “The living entities in this conditioned world are My eternal, fragmental parts. Due to conditioned life, they are struggling very hard with the six senses, which include the mind.”³ Also: “It should be understood that all species of life, O son of Kuntī, are made possible by birth in this material nature, and that I am the seed-giving father.”⁴

Just as the existence of air can be felt by touch and the existence of certain molecules by fragrance and aroma, similarly consciousness is the clear symptom of the existence of the soul. “O son of Bharata, as the sun alone illuminates all this universe, so does the living entity, one within the body, illuminate the entire body by consciousness.”⁵ Biologists also confirm that even the smallest microorganisms, such as bacteria, have consciousness. When consciousness enters into a material body, we call it a

2. *sargāṇām ādir antaḥ ca madhyaṁ caivāham arjuna adhyātma-vidyā vidyānaṁ vādaḥ pravadaṭām aham* (Bg. 10.32)
3. *mamaivāṁso jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ manaḥ ṣaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi prakṛti-sthāni karṣati* (Bg. 15.7)
4. *sarva-yoniṣu kaunteya mūrtayaḥ sambhavanti yāḥ tāsāṁ brahma mahad yonir ahaṁ bīja-pradaḥ pitā* (Bg. 14.4)
5. *yathā prakāśayaty ekaḥ kṛtsnaṁ lokam imaṁ raviḥ kṣetraṁ kṣetrī tathā kṛtsnaṁ prakāśayati bhārata* (Bg. 13.34)

living body. However, when there is no consciousness in the body—in other words, when the spirit soul leaves the body—simply a lump of matter is left over. This phenomenon we call death. Therefore the spirit soul never dies and is never born. It is eternal. What we call birth and death are nothing but the changing of different material bodies, the replacement of old bodies with new ones. “The living entity in the material world carries his different conceptions of life from one body to another as the air carries aromas.”⁶ Thus birth, death, old age and disease are the signals of the changing of the material body.

When our scientific friends readily accept Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle, the imaginary unit and the various conceptual models of statistical mechanics, which are all beyond experimental science, what is the difficulty in accepting the existence of the spirit soul? The supreme scientist Śrī Kṛṣṇa says: “For the soul there is never birth nor death. Nor, having once been, does he ever cease to be. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, undying and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain.”⁷ Its size has been described thus: “When the upper point of a hair is divided into one hundred parts and again each of such parts is divided into one hundred parts, each such part is the measurement of the dimension of the spirit soul.”⁸

6. *śarīraṁ yad avāpnoti yac cāpy utkrāmātiśvaraḥ gṛhītvaitāni sarhyāti vāyur gandhān ivāśayāt* (Bg. 15.8)
7. *na jāyate mriyate vā kadācin nāyaṁ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ ajo nityaḥ śāsvato’yaṁ purāṇo na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre* (Bg. 2.20)
8. *bālāgra-śata-bhāgasya śatadhā kalpitasya ca bhāgo jīvaḥ sa vijñeyaḥ sa cānanyāya kalpate* (Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad, 5.9)

Scientists are familiar with the law of conservation of energy which states that energy can be neither created nor destroyed. The living entities are the superior energy of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Therefore the soul is eternal. "Know that which pervades the entire body is indestructible. No one is able to destroy the imperishable soul."⁹ The nature of the spirit soul is elaborately described in the Second and Thirteenth Chapters of *Bhagavad-gītā*. One simply has to take the knowledge from the supreme scientist, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the speaker of *Bhagavad-gītā*.

9. *avināśi tu tad viddhi yena sarvam idaṁ tatam
vināśam avyayasyāsyā na kaścit kartum arhati* (Bg. 2.17)

4. The Incomplete and Speculative Knowledge of Darwin's Theory of Evolution

Before Charles Darwin published his theory of evolution in 1859, he frequently corresponded with A.R. Wallace, one of his contemporary naturalists. In one of his letters to A.R. Wallace (December 22, 1857), Darwin wrote, ". . . I am a firm believer that without speculation there is no good and original observation. . . ."¹ Thus, one does not need to make an extensive study in order to understand his theory. His theory was completely based on his own speculation and mental manipulation, based on some data collected during his "Voyage of the Beagle" (1831-1836). Every sensible person knows that speculative knowledge is quite fallible.

How his theory was developed is given in his own words: "When onboard H.M.S. 'Beagle' as naturalist, I was much struck with certain facts in the distribution of the organic beings inhabiting South America, and in the geological relations of the present to the past inhabitants of that continent. These facts. . . seemed to throw some light on the origin of species, that mystery of mysteries. On my return home, it occurred to me, in 1837, that something might perhaps be made out on this question by patiently accumulating and reflecting on all sorts of facts which could possibly have any bearing on it. *After five years work I allowed myself to speculate on the subject, and drew up some short notes; these I enlarged in 1844 into a sketch of the conclusions, which seemed to me probable: from that period to the present day*

1. Philip Appleman, ed., *Darwin* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1970), p. 66.

I have steadily pursued the same object. In considering the Origin of Species, it is quite conceivable that a naturalist might come to the conclusion that species had not been independently created, but had descended, like varieties from other species.”²

Darwin has no knowledge about the nature of the spirit soul. He has no clear information as to how the living entity (spirit soul) is transmigrating from one species to another. He does not know whether there is further evolution from the human platform, and he hasn't the slightest idea as to the total number of species through which the cycle of evolution goes on. He also has no information whether the spirit soul can transmigrate from the human platform to lower species of life.

There has been great confusion regarding Darwin's Theory. His critics are very legitimately asking, “If the theory of natural selection of Darwin is correct, why can't we see the intermediate forms of species, the connecting links?” Darwin himself was completely confused in this respect. He could not provide any logical answer except his speculative argumentation. His own answer was that “extinction and natural selection will. . . go hand in hand.”³ He did not know that all the species of life have been existing since the dawn of creation. “The different species of life are created immediately along with the universe. Men, animals, beasts, birds—everything is simultaneously created, because whatever desires the living entities had at the last annihilation are again

2. Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1883), pp. 1-2 (italics added).

3. Alvar Ellegard, *Darwin and the General Reader* (Goteberg: Elanders Boktryckeri Aktiebolag, 1958), p. 217.

manifested.”⁴ As a crude example, the species portrayed in the ancient Egyptian pyramids were the same as those we meet at the present day. Similarly, since time immemorial the peacock, whose colorful feathers so nicely decorate the transcendental head of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa, has been the same as the species we find today. With his poor fund of knowledge, Darwin concluded that some species became extinct in the process of evolution. This is completely wrong.

4. A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1972), p. 456.

5. Complete and Perfect Knowledge of Evolution

Complete and perfect knowledge of evolution in minute detail is available in the Vedic literatures. His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda has kindly supplied the following Vedic quotations:

*aṣītiṁ caturaś caiva lakṣāṁś tān jīva-jātiṣu
bhramadbhiḥ puruṣaiḥ prāpyaṁ mānuṣyaṁ janma-
paryayāt
tad apy aphaltām jātaḥ tesāṁ ātmābhimaninām
varākāṇām anāśritya govinda-caraṇa-dvayam*

“One attains the human form of life after transmigrating through 8,400,000 species of life by the process of gradual evolution. That human form of life is spoiled for those conceited fools who do not take shelter of the lotus feet of Govinda [Kṛṣṇa].”¹

*jala-jā nava-lakṣāṇi sthāvara lakṣa-viṁśati
kṛmayā rudra-saṅkhyākaḥ pakṣiṇām daśa-lakṣāni
paśavas triṁśa-lakṣāṇi manuṣyā catur-lakṣāṇi*

“There are 900,000 species of aquatic life; 2,000,000 species of plants and trees; 1,100,000 species of insects; 1,000,000 species of bird life; 3,000,000 species of beasts, and 400,000 species of human life.”² The meaning of “species” understood by biologists is different from the meaning implied here. The meaning used by biologists applies to the gross physical appearance or the gross morphological feature of the living material bodies. The Vedic meaning, however,

1. *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa*.

2. *Padma Purāṇa*.

which is derived after thorough and careful analysis, is based on the level of consciousness of the living being. For example, biologists say that all human beings belong to one species, whereas the Vedic literatures list 400,000 species. In other words, there are 400,000 grades of human beings on different levels of consciousness.

The process of evolution through these 8,400,000 species of life has been going on since time immemorial. As we noted earlier, the spirit soul never dies and is never born; it is eternal. It transmigrates from one body to another. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the supreme knower of everything, says: “As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, similarly, the soul accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones.”³ In this way the transmigration of the soul is going on.

As we noted from *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa*, the most important species of life is the human being. The *Vedānta-sūtra* instructs, *athāto brahma-jijñāsā*: “Now, therefore, in this human form of life, it is time to inquire about spiritual realization.”⁴ Who am I? What is the real mission of human life? What is the ultimate purpose of our existence? Every intelligent person must ask these questions and should search for the right answers from the right source. So-called modern educators claim that the purpose of education is to solve the problems of life. But in actuality they are teaching their students how to increase sense gratification more and more, thereby creating more and more paths to degradation. “Thus perplexed by various anxieties and bound by a network of illusions

3. *vāsāṁsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya navāni gṛhṇāti naro parāṇi
tathā śarīrāni vihāya jīrṇāny anyāni saṁyāti navāni dehī*
(Bg. 2.22)

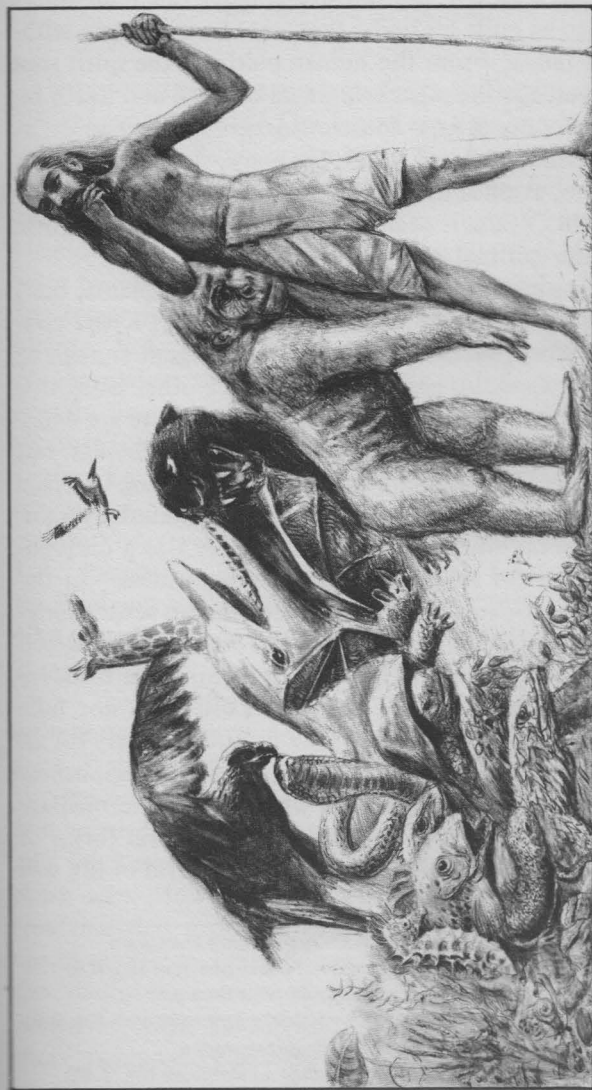
4. *Vedānta-sūtra*, 1.1.1

[in terms of increased sense gratification], one becomes too strongly attached to sense enjoyment and falls down into hell.”⁵ In modern universities and colleges no one teaches the science by which to answer the question “Who am I?” Śrīla Prabhupāda kindly points out, “There are so many departments in a university: technological, medical, engineering, etc. But where is the department to know and understand what this life is, what God is, and what our relationship is?”⁶ The most important department of education, that which teaches the real mission of human life, is completely left out. Scientists claim that modern science is a product of man’s curiosity to know. Why aren’t they curious to know who we are and what our relationship is with the Supreme Lord, the supreme scientist, Śrī Kṛṣṇa? The *Vedas* give all the answers perfectly.

Lower forms of life such as animals, birds and plants do not suffer from sinful activities because they never violate the laws of nature. A tiger, for instance, does not commit sinful activity by killing its prey because his body is meant to act in that way; it is properly equipped for that purpose. However, when the spirit soul comes to the level of a human being, the living entity is then subject to the results of his actions (*karma-phala*). From this human platform the living entity has, therefore, a choice. If the spirit soul wants to leave his material body and attain a spiritual body, he can do so from this human platform; otherwise, at the time of death he can transmigrate to one of the 8,400,000 species according to

5. *aneka-citta-vibhrāntā moha-jāla-samāvṛtāḥ prasaktāḥ kāma-bhogeṣu patanti narake’sucau* (Bg. 16.16)

6. A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, “It is for the Greatest Scholar, It is for the Innocent Boy,” *Back to Godhead* no. 44, p. 4.



The spiritual soul evolves through 8,400,000 species to come to the human form.

the desires and consciousness he has developed. Lord Kṛṣṇa says: "Whatever state of being one remembers when he quits his body, that state he will attain without fail."⁷ From the human platform the spirit soul can escape the miserable wheel of birth and death by developing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. "And whoever, at the time of death, quits his body, remembering Me alone, at once attains My nature. Of this there is no doubt."⁸ This is evolution from the material platform to the spiritual platform.

Lower forms of life (animals, birds, plants, etc.) are not favorably situated for taking to Kṛṣṇa consciousness because they are not intelligent enough to understand this great science. On the other hand, it is understood from Vedic literature that there are demigods who are more elevated than human beings, but their position is also not favorable for taking to Kṛṣṇa consciousness because they are too materially opulent. Too much material opulence is also a disqualification for taking up Kṛṣṇa consciousness. "In the minds of those who are too attached to sense enjoyment and material opulence, and who are bewildered by such things, the resolute determination of devotional service to the Supreme Lord does not take place."⁹ That is why it is an absolute necessity for all sane human beings to take up Kṛṣṇa consciousness from this human platform, which is the intermediate birth between the demigods and the lower forms of life. Otherwise, the precious human form of life will simply be wasted.

7. *yaṁ yaṁ vāpi smaran bhāvaṁ tyajaty ante kalevaram
taṁ tam evaiti kaunteya sadā tad-bhāva-bhāvitaḥ* (Bg. 8.6)

8. *anta-kāle ca mām eva smaran muktva kalevaram
yaḥ prayāti sa mad-bhāvaṁ yāti nāsty atra saṁśayaḥ* (Bg. 8.5)

9. *bhogaśvarya-prasaktānāṁ tayāpahṛta-cetasām
vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ samādhau na vidhīyate* (Bg. 2.44)

6. Śāstric (Authoritative Scriptural) Injunctions Are the Supreme Judgement

We understand that our knowledge and intelligence are extremely limited. Our brains are tiny, our senses and scientific equipment are imperfect, and our vision is limited. With all these imperfect means, how will it be possible to comprehend the knowledge (science) beyond? Attempting to understand unlimited knowledge by one's own limited means in the name of doing research is simply a waste of valuable time and energy. Śrīla Prabhupāda very kindly explains that by the mature research work of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, an *avatāra* (incarnation) of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, complete and perfect knowledge (science) is available in the Vedic literatures.

The *Vedas* were originally spoken by the Supreme Lord Himself to Brahmā, the first living being in the material universe, from within his heart. Vedic knowledge is called *śruti*, indicating that it is learned by aural reception. Therefore the Vedic knowledge has to be received from higher authorities by hearing (*śravaṇam*). In previous ages people were very intelligent. Their memories were extremely sharp. Just by hearing once from a spiritual master, disciples could remember everything. Therefore, there was no necessity for keeping the *Vedas* in written form during those ages. However, Śrīla Vyāsadeva could see beforehand that people in this present age of Kali, the age of quarrel and misunderstanding, situated amidst the disturbing noise of science and technology, would be much less intelligent, possessing extremely short memories. Therefore about 5,000 years ago he

compiled the *Vedas* in written form for the benefit of all inquisitive souls of this present age.

Veda actually means knowledge, and *Vedānta* means the end of knowledge, which is to know the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. *Bhagavad-gītā* is the essence of all Vedic knowledge. It was spoken by the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, to His intimate friend and disciple Arjuna. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the ripened fruit of all the Vedic literatures. It is the *summum bonum* of life, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa personified. It describes the unlimited transcendental qualities of the Lord. Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu explained to Sanātana Gosvāmī, “*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the sound representation of the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa. So, as Kṛṣṇa is unlimited, similarly, in each word and each letter of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* there are unlimited meanings, and one can understand them by the association of devotees.”¹ Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa says: “I am situated in everyone’s heart, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness. By all the *Vedas* am I to be known; indeed I am the compiler of *Vedānta*, and I am the knower of the *Vedas*.”² Thus the words of the *Vedas* are the supreme authority.

One may ask, “How may one accept authority?” The answer is given by Śrīla Prabhupāda: “The answer of the genuine mother to the question of who is one’s father is authoritative.” One cannot argue about or object to this point. Similarly, when a child learns that two times two is equal to four from his father and he tells the same thing to a professor of

1. Prabhupāda, *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, p. 151.

2. *sarvasya cāham ḥṛdī sanniviṣṭo
mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanam ca
vedaś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo
vedānta-kṛd veda-vid eva cāham* (Bg. 15.15)

mathematics, the professor has to agree that the child is speaking perfectly. The child may not be perfect, but the knowledge that he is speaking is perfect because he has taken it from an authority. Similarly, all the Vedic knowledge is infallible. For example, it has been mentioned in the *Vedas* that cow dung is pure whereas other stool is impure, and modern science has found this to be true. It has been scientifically confirmed by chemical analysis that cow dung indeed contains various antiseptic properties.

There are four principal defects inherent in the conditioned soul, namely, imperfect senses, the propensity to cheat, surety of committing mistakes and surety of being illusioned. Therefore, the conditioned soul is completely unfit to make any rules and regulations. The injunctions laid down in the *sāstras* (authoritative scriptures) are above these four defects. Therefore, all the great saints and *ācāryas* (holy teachers) accept the scriptural injunctions completely, without adulteration. Our position is simply to accept the supreme authority without question. In this way, one can understand the Supreme Lord and supreme scientist, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, through authority. One can perceive or detect Him through authority, one can see Him through authority, and one can associate with Him through authority. Similarly, one can also speak through authority, argue and defend through authority, and prove and demonstrate through authority. The supreme authority is the ultimate judgement, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa is that supreme authority.

Men who have a poor fund of understanding further ask, “How does one know that Kṛṣṇa is the supreme authority?” Lord Brahmā, the first living

being and the engineer who creates all the living entities in the material universe, sings as follows:

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

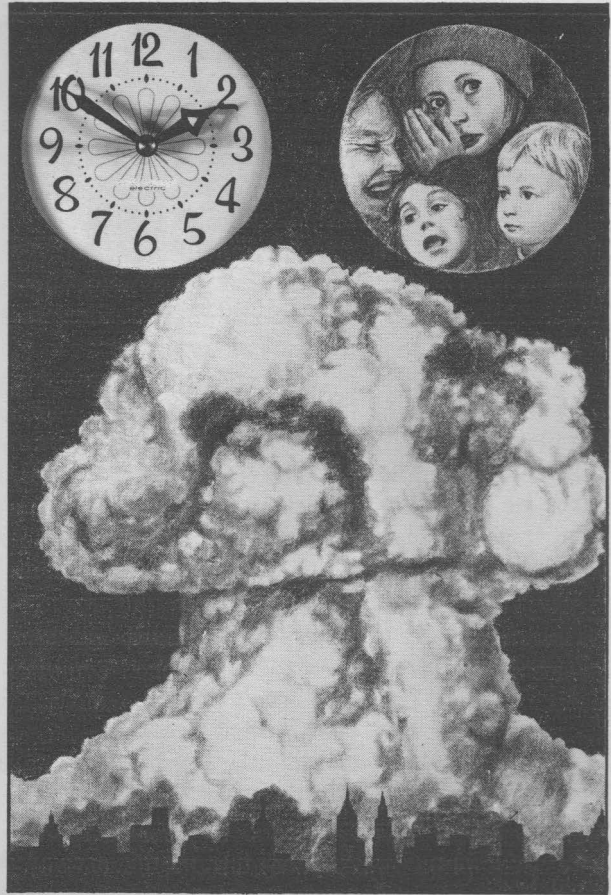
“Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is the very form of eternal being, full of knowledge and bliss. He is the primeval Lord Govinda and the cause of all causes.”³ *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says, *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*: “Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself.”⁴ Arjuna, the great devotee of the Lord, also says to Lord Kṛṣṇa: “You are the Supreme Brahman, the ultimate, the supreme abode and purifier, the Absolute Truth and the eternal divine person. You are the primal God, transcendental and original, and You are the unborn and all-pervading beauty. All the great sages such as Nārada, Asita, Devala, and Vyāsa proclaim this of You, and now You Yourself are declaring it to me.”⁵ In the same way, all the *mahājanas* (great self-realized personalities) like Prahlāda Mahārāja, Śukadeva Gosvāmī and Bali Mahārāja, the great *ācāryas* (holy teachers) like Madhvācārya, Rāmānujācārya and Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, all my predecessor *gurus* (spiritual masters) in disciplic succession and now my spiritual master and eternal father, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, declare the same thing—that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of God-

3. *Brahma-saṁhitā*, 5.1

4. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 1.3.28

5. *arjuna uvāca*

*paraṁ brahma paraṁ dhāma pavitraṁ paramaṁ bhavān
puruṣaṁ śāśvataṁ divyaṁ ādi-devaṁ ajaṁ vibhūm
āhuṣ tvāṁ ṛṣayaḥ sarve devarṣir nāradaś tathā
asito devalo vyāsaḥ svayaṁ caiva braviṣi me* (Bg. 10.12-13)



“Time I am, the destroyer of the worlds . . .” Dr. Oppenheimer quoted a verse from the *Gītā*, fearing that it would take a person as intelligent as God to be able to use atomic energy properly, and that humanity might not prove to be equal to the task.

head. Therefore there should be no tinge of doubt. Our duty is just to follow the kind footsteps of these greatest of saintly personalities. In this way we can understand the science of Kṛṣṇa.

In spite of this, the project to control nature continues. Rather than researching to find out the plan of the Supreme Being, rather than accepting the laws of nature as laws of God, the scientific mentality seeks to put mankind in the place of God in order to improve on nature. But when we inspect these activities closely, we can see that the two admitted goals, knowledge and pleasure, have not been achieved after so many years of trying. The materialists enjoin us to be patient, saying that very shortly the answer will be known and the pleasure will be available for all. To keep us amused in the meantime, there are technological trinkets galore. If it happens that we die waiting, still the scientist does not admit the tragedy, since for him life is only a molecular peculiarity anyway.

Thus the insensitive fritter away the valuable time of human life, time meant for discovering the answer to the most pressing of all questions—"Why am I suffering?" In fact, they won't even admit that they are suffering. Life thus wasted becomes a painful paradox, in which each minute that passes increases the misery, until finally the body collapses in agonized bewilderment.

In a jeep, in the 1940's, several scientists rode through the New Mexico desert. They were tense, trying to resolve the nerve-wracking conflict of fear and dizzy elation in their minds. The Manhattan Project had come to an end, and they were to witness

the first explosion of a nuclear device, which was being considered for use as the "ultimate weapon" to win the war. In their bunker, as they confronted the terrifying, spectacular power of the bomb, Dr. Oppenheimer quoted a verse from the *Bhagavad-gītā*, "Time I am, the destroyer of the worlds . . .," no doubt fearing that it would take a person as intelligent as God to be able to use atomic energy properly, and that humanity might not be equal to the task. To know that answer for certain, which evidence will be sufficient for us? The sublime words of the *Gītā*, or the brute force of history?

7. Accepting a Bona Fide Spiritual Master

Any sincere soul who is searching for spiritual science must try to seek out a bona fide spiritual master in disciplic succession (*paramparā*). Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original spiritual master. The Vedic knowledge, as it is, has been handed down from master to disciple, one after another. Even on the mundane platform, if someone wants to learn chemistry, he has to approach a professor of chemistry; how much greater, then, is the need to approach a bona fide spiritual master to attain the supreme spiritual perfection, Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is absolutely necessary for a sincere soul to approach a bona fide spiritual master and surrender unto the lotus feet of the spiritual master without reservation. Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu instructed Sanātana Gosvāmī thus: “The first and foremost thing is that one should accept a bona fide spiritual master. That is the beginning of spiritual life.”¹

The symptoms of a bona fide *guru* (spiritual master) and devotee are described in the *Padma Purāṇa*. “A person who is a qualified *brāhmaṇa*, and at the same time qualified with all the symptoms of a devotee, can become the spiritual master of all classes of men, and such a devotee and spiritual master must be respected as God Himself. But a person, even though he may be born of a very respected *brāhmaṇa* family, cannot become a bona fide spiritual master if he is not a devotee of the Lord.”² It is further stated: “Whatever he may be, whatever posi-

tion he may have, if a person is fully conversant with the science of Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he can become a bona fide spiritual master, initiator, or teacher of the science. In other words, his capability to become a bona fide spiritual master depends on his sufficient knowledge of the science of Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa consciousness; it does not depend on birth or a particular position in society.”³ The qualifications of a bona fide spiritual master are also described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Eleventh Canto, where the sage Prabuddha tells Mahārāja Nimi: “My dear King, please know for certain that in the material world there is no happiness. It is simply a mistake to think that there is happiness here because this place is full of nothing but miserable conditions. Any person who is seriously desirous of achieving real happiness must seek out a bona fide spiritual master and take shelter of him by initiation. The qualification of a spiritual master is that he must have realized the conclusion of the scriptures by deliberation and arguments and thus be able to convince others of these conclusions. Such great personalities who have taken shelter of the Supreme Godhead, leaving aside all material considerations, are to be understood as bona fide spiritual masters. Everyone should try to find such a bona fide spiritual master in order to fulfill his mission of life, which is to transfer himself to the place of spiritual bliss.”⁴ The sage further continued: “My dear King, a disciple has to accept the spiritual master not only as spiritual master, but also as the representative of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the

3. *Ibid.*, p. 266.

4. A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, *The Nectar of Devotion* (New York, Los Angeles, London and Bombay: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1970), p. 58.

1. Prabhupāda, *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, p. 152.

2. *Ibid.*

Supersoul. In other words, the disciple should accept the spiritual master as God because he is the external manifestation of Kṛṣṇa.”⁵

Indeed, this material world is a vast ocean of sufferings and miseries, and the waves of *māyā* (illusion) are constantly kicking the living entities. Therefore, undoubtedly, all human beings urgently need the kind and able guidance of an expert captain to cross this vast ocean of Kali-yuga. If we are in the hands of an expert captain, our position is quite safe. The bona fide spiritual master in disciplic succession is, unquestionably, an expert captain. Our material bodies are the ships, and the words of Kṛṣṇa are the favorable winds. If one takes shelter of such a spiritual master, there is no difficulty in crossing this vast ocean of Kali-yuga. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa instructs Arjuna: “Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.”⁶ Also in the Vedic literatures we find:

*yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśānte mahātmanaḥ*

“Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master are all the imports of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed.”⁷

Therefore, we simply have to depend on the kind

5. Ibid., p. 59.

6. *tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ jñāninas tattva-darśināḥ* (Bg. 4.34)

7. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, 6.23

and causeless mercy of the spiritual master and the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu says: “By the mercy of Kṛṣṇa one gets a spiritual master, and by the mercy of the spiritual master one gets Kṛṣṇa.” In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is stated: “The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone’s heart, O Arjuna, and is directing the wanderings of all living entities, who are seated as on a machine, made of the material energy.”⁸ When the Supreme Lord within the heart sees the sincerity of the conditioned soul, He mercifully gives all opportunities for the deliverance of the fallen soul. “Out of compassion for them, I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy with the shining lamp of knowledge the darkness born of ignorance.”⁹ . . . When one is enlightened with the knowledge by which nescience is destroyed, then his knowledge reveals everything, as the sun lights up everything in the daytime.”¹⁰

It is an unquestionable fact that neither doctors, nor social and political leaders, nor philanthropists can solve the basic problems of life, namely, birth, death, old age and disease. At any moment the material body will be finished. Everyone, therefore, should prepare for inevitable death. But without the background of the transcendental science, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and without the merciful guidance of the expert spiritual master, how can one prepare for impending death? Parīkṣit Mahārāja, a great king and devotee of the Lord, had seven days’ time to prepare for death, but we do not even know for sure whether

8. *īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṁ hṛd-deśe’rjuna tiṣṭhati
bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni yantrārūḍhāni māyayā* (Bg. 18.61)

9. *teṣāṁ evānukampārtham aham ajñāna-jaṁ tamaḥ
nāśayāmy ātma-bhāvastho jñāna-dīpena bhāsvatā* (Bg. 10.11)

10. *jñānena tu tad ajñānaṁ yeṣāṁ nāśitam ātmanaḥ
teṣāṁ ādityavaj jñānaṁ prakāśayati tat param* (Bg. 5.16)

we have seven minutes to prepare for death. King Parīkṣit spent those days exclusively hearing the great sage Śukadeva Gosvāmī speak the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which describes the transcendental qualities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In this way, he perfected his life. Material scientists and philosophers cannot give transcendental knowledge to their students. They have no qualifications to do so. However, a bona fide spiritual master who is one hundred percent Kṛṣṇa conscious can impart complete transcendental knowledge, the science of Kṛṣṇa, to his disciples, and thus he can solve all their problems in life.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Absolute Truth. "The Absolute Truth must descend from the absolute platform. It is not to be understood by the ascending process."¹¹ One cannot, therefore, approach the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, directly. In the *Ādi Purāṇa*, Lord Kṛṣṇa addresses Arjuna: "My dear Pārtha, one who claims to be My devotee is not so. Only a person who claims to be the devotee of My devotee is actually My devotee."¹² Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu also says: "I am not a *brāhmaṇa* [teacher], I am not a *kṣatriya* [administrator], I am not a *gṛhastha* [householder] and I am not a *vānaprastha* [retired man]. I do not belong to any of the eight *varṇāśramas* [occupational and spiritual divisions of society]. I am the servant of the servant of the servant—one hundred times the servant—of the maintainer of the *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa." This is the perfect example given by the perfect master, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Himself.

The spiritual master is, therefore, the transparent

11. Prabhupāda, *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, p. 172.

12. Prabhupāda, *Nectar of Devotion*, p. 103.

via medium through which to approach the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, a great *ācārya* (holy teacher), kindly gives us the following sublime instructions in his famous prayers for the glorification of the spiritual master:

*yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo
yasyāprasādān na gatiḥ kuto'pi
dhyāyaṁ stuvaṁs tasya yaśas tri-sandhyaṁ
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

"If one satisfies the spiritual master, the Supreme Personality of Godhead becomes satisfied. If one does not satisfy the spiritual master, there is no chance of one's being promoted to the plane of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I should therefore meditate upon him, pray for his mercy three times a day, and offer my respectful obeisances unto him, my spiritual master."¹³

This is the great Vaiṣṇava (Kṛṣṇa conscious) tradition. The duty of the disciple is to always think and act to satisfy the spiritual master in all circumstances. Therefore, one should execute the orders of the spiritual master one hundred per cent, without any tinge of personal motivation.

13. Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, *Śrī Gurvaṣṭaka*, verse 8.

8. Conclusion

In a transcendental discourse between Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya, one of the greatest devotees of the Lord, the Lord inquired from Rāmānanda Rāya: “What is the highest standard of education?” Rāmānanda immediately replied that the highest standard of education is to know the science of Kṛṣṇa.¹ Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam says that Vāsudeva (another name of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa or God) is the ultimate object of knowledge:

*vāsudeva-parā vedā vāsudeva-parā mākhāḥ
vāsudeva-parā yogā vāsudeva-parāḥ kriyāḥ
vāsudeva-param jñānaṁ vāsudeva-param tapaḥ
vāsudeva-paro dharmo vāsudeva-parā gatih*

“In the revealed scriptures, the ultimate object of knowledge is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead. The purpose of performing sacrifice is to please Him. Yoga is for realizing Him. All fruitive activities are ultimately rewarded by Him only. He is supreme knowledge, and all severe austerities are performed to know Him. Religion [dharma] is rendering loving service unto Him. He is the supreme goal of life.”² The process of realizing Him is to render unalloyed devotional service (bhakti) unto the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and His bona fide representative, the spiritual master in disciplic succession. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa declared to Arjuna: “My dear Arjuna, only by undivided devo-

tional service can I be understood as I am, standing before you, and can thus be seen directly. Only in this way can you enter into the mysteries of My understanding.”³

The conditioned living entities should perform *yajñas* (sacrifices) for the satisfaction of Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa). Viṣṇu is also called Yajñeśvara, the Lord of all sacrifices. In *Bhagavad-gītā* the all-merciful Śrī Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna: “O best of the Kuru dynasty, without sacrifice one can never live happily on this planet or in this life; what then of the next?”⁴ Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the mercy incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, introduced the *saṅkīrtana-yajña* (the chanting and glorification of the names of God) 500 years ago for the deliverance of all men in this age of Kali. The Lord’s incarnation is mentioned in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam as follows:

*kṛṣṇa-varṇaṁ tviṣākrṣṇaṁ sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam
yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair yajanti hi sumedhasaḥ*

“In this age of Kali, people who are endowed with sufficient intelligence will worship the Lord, who is accompanied by His associates, by performance of *saṅkīrtana-yajña*.”⁵ Śrīla Prabhupāda states: “*Kīrtana* means *Hari-kīrtana*, glorification of Hari, Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and no other *kīrtana* is recommended.”⁶ It is also stated in the *Bṛhan-Nāradya Purāṇa*:

-
3. *bhaktiyā tv ananyayā śakya aham evaṁ-vidho’rjuna jñātuṁ draṣṭuṁ ca tattvena praveṣṭuṁ ca parantapa* (Bg. 11.54)
 4. *nāyaṁ loko’sty ayajñasya kuto’nyaḥ kuru-sattama* (Bg. 4.31)
 5. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 11.5.32
 6. A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, “Lord Caitanya: the Golden Avatāra,” *Back to Godhead* no. 39, p. 9.

1. Prabhupāda, *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, p. 282.
2. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 1.2.28-29.

*harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā*

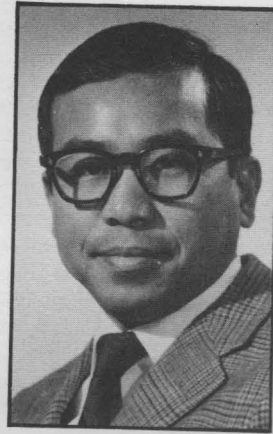
“In this age of Kali, the only means of deliverance is chanting the holy name of Lord Hari, Kṛṣṇa. There is no other way. There is no other way. There is no other way.”⁷ This process of *Hari-kīrtana* is to chant the *mahā-mantra* (the great chanting for deliverance): Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. In the *Padma Purāṇa* it is stated: “There is no difference between the holy name of the Lord and the Lord Himself. As such, the holy name is as perfect as the Lord Himself in fullness, purity and eternity. The holy name is not a material sound vibration, nor has it any material contamination.”⁸ How the holy name of the Lord can be chanted constantly is mercifully described by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself in His *Śikṣāṣṭaka*: “One can chant the holy name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking himself lower than the straw in the street; one should be more tolerant than a tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige, and should be ready to offer all respects to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly.”⁹

We therefore humbly request everyone—scientists, philosophers, businessmen, politicians, etc.—to please chant the *mahā-mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. This will cleanse the accumulated dust from the heart and lead to the understanding of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the supreme absolute science, the ultimate goal of life.

7. *Bṛhan-nāradya Purāṇa*, 18.126

8. *Padma Purāṇa*.

9. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, *Śikṣāṣṭaka*, verse 3.



About the Author

Svarūpa Damodāra dāsa Brahmācārī was born in a Vaiṣṇava (devoted) family in Manipur, India, on February 25, 1941. His father, Jogendra Singh, died when he was a mere child. In 1961 he earned his B.S. degree, with highest honors, in Chemistry from Gauhati University, and he earned his master's degree in Chemical Engineering and Chemical Technology with similar honors from Calcutta University in 1964. He was a recipient of a Research Fellowship from the University Grants Commission (1964-1966).

Allured by material advancement, he came to the United States of America and joined the Department of Chemistry, Canisius College, Buffalo, New York, in 1967 and obtained an M.S. degree in Chemistry in 1969. Then he joined the Department of Chemistry, University of California, Irvine, where he is finished his Ph.D. in Physical Organic Chemistry in June of 1974. Now he is working as a Post-Doctoral Research Associate at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

International Society for Krishna Consciousness

“Early in 1970,” he relates, “I got a cablegram from Manipur saying ‘Your mother expired, March 24, 1970; saradha April 6, 1970.’ From that very moment, my outlook about life became quite changed. I was very much occupied with thoughts of the extremely temporary nature, filled with sufferings and miseries, of this material world. One evening in June, 1970, Dr. Rao, later Rāmānanda Prabhu, and I went to Laguna Beach and saw four or five disciples of His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda doing *saṅkīrtana* [chanting] along the street. I was extremely surprised to see this in the United States. We were watching and following them from a distance, and we wanted to know what they were doing. Soon, one of the devotees stopped by and gave us a card inviting us to come for a Sunday love feast. On that day, I bought a small book entitled *Kṛṣṇa, the Reservoir of Pleasure*, by Śrīla Prabhupāda. A few days later, under Dr. Rao’s strong influence, I went with him to see Śrīla Prabhupāda in Los Angeles. This was toward the end of June 1970, when Dr. Rao was initiated.

“When I saw the devotees in the Los Angeles Temple, I suddenly felt that I should be living like them. I vividly remember the beautiful loving exchange of flowers between His Divine Grace and the disciples early in the morning in front of the temple. I was quite amazed to see the beautiful Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Temple in Los Angeles for the first time. Later on, after his initiation ceremony, Rāmānanda Prabhu took me upstairs to see Śrīla Prabhupāda. When we went upstairs, I received the most affectionate and compassionate glance from Śrīla Prabhupāda, and immediately I felt: ‘Here is my spiritual father.’ Śrīla Prabhupāda asked me some kind questions, and I replied with my broken Bengali sentences. I was extremely glad that I had come to see Śrīla Prabhupāda. I was formally initiated in the Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Temple, Los Angeles, on June 30, 1971.”

In early September of 1965, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda arrived on the shores of America. His mission was to introduce the sublime science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the Western world. By translating and explaining the essence of the Vedic literatures, which are vastly elaborate scriptures of advanced spiritual knowledge, he has made available to everyone a clear understanding of true spiritual life.

In 1966, Śrīla Prabhupāda founded the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) to spread this culture of Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the modern world. With over eighty centers on five continents, ISKCON is practicing and freely distributing the joyful, authorized process most recommended for God-realization in this age—the chanting of the *mahā-mantra*, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Furthermore, books such as *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, printed and distributed in over ten languages, establish this sublime and practical science on a strong intellectual basis.

The following is a sampling of letters ISKCON has received from people around the world who have appreciated the teachings of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Dear Sir,

I am a prisoner at the Royal Gaol, Frederick St., Port of Spain, Trinidad. Being in this condition of life, undergoing wrongful prosecution, I had given up all hopes. Reading *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and learning from it that our true identity is spirit soul, a part and parcel of that Supreme Lord Krishna, everyone having equal rights to obtain the Lord's greatest gift, has given me great courage to be most firm and steadfast in my duty towards my Blessed Lord. As a lover of reading God's word, I have never read a doctrine like *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. It is a transparent literature in which every verse is based on spiritual import, which is the main purpose of the scripture. It contains divine words and expression which would hardly be found in other doctrines, and whatever is found in other doctrines will be found in this.

I find great benefit by chanting the Hare Krishna, Hare Rāma *mantra*. In this condition I can experience peace of mind, just by chanting, praying and thinking of the Blessed Lord. There is no one dearer to Him than those who absorb the nectar of His divine teaching and explain it to His devotees. With these words I pray, may the Blessed Lord strengthen you and the Krishna movement in body and soul and protect, guide and lead you all on paths of safety. Best happiness to eternity, and long life and best service in the name of the Blessed Lord Krishna.

Jai Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa.

Yours truly,
Kissoon Ramnanan

Hare Kṛṣṇa. All glories to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and to the devotees of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

Thank you for the wonderful books, filled with spiritual nectar, which are continually filling me with encouragement and truth.

I am an elementary school teacher, teaching nine- and ten-year-old children in the public schools on St. Thomas. I dedicate each day of teaching to the spiritual Master and Lord Kṛṣṇa. My job is very difficult and tiring. At times I feel discouraged by the fact that I am too weak to remain steady in Kṛṣṇa consciousness while at work (not to speak of at home). Yet I feel that my best service to the Lord is to strive for pure devotion in my teaching duties.

I have found it easy to give up my practice of flesh eating, marijuana smoking, and use of intoxicants. But my mind often seems uncontrollable. I would like to see His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and offer my humble obeisances to him, and I would like to be initiated into the Society, although I know I am too unworthy. Please explain to me what is required and involved in initiation into the Society.

The summer is approaching, and I may be returning to the States. Would it be possible to meet with you, other devotees, and the Spiritual Master? How can I serve Lord Kṛṣṇa and His Divine Grace Swami Prabhupāda in the best way? Thank you for your help. My respects to you.

Sincerely,
Gary Dallmann
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands

Dear Friends,

I recently found a book *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, (Complete Edition) by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, at the public library, and I checked it out. I had formerly read portions of the abridged *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, and I have to admit that it was the pictures that finally urged me to take the Complete Edition.

I have often felt that I must study the *Gītā*, and Swami Prabhupāda's seems to be, as stated on the jacket, "The definitive English edition."

I love the way it is presented. The Sanskrit is like a beautiful painting to me; the English transliterations are like a holy chant; the word-for-word Sanskrit-English equivalents help me become familiar with the language. The translation, of course, speaks for itself; and the purport builds around it.

And now, at last, I may study it—and I have been shown a wonderful, beautiful version to use.

Patricia Langlois
Lombard, Illinois

Dear Sir,

Through an unusual combination of circumstances, there recently came into my possession a copy of the book *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. Although I am so far only up to Chapter 4, the idea of Krishna consciousness has taken possession of my thinking.

I would appreciate it if you would let me know how one can learn further about this matter. Note: I am age 50 and am not looking for anything complicated, but somehow I feel that this is not complicated.

Hoping to hear from you.

Sincerely yours,
Raymond C. Hill
Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

Sir,

I must admit to feeling a bit uncomfortable in writing this letter. A couple of weeks ago, devotees of Kṛṣṇa (from Denver, I understand) were here at the University of Arkansas distributing literature. One young man approached me, with a "hard pitch" for my purchasing a copy of the Prabhupāda translation of the *Bhagavad-gītā*; I

was initially quite skeptical (so many people are getting rich from selling their versions of "the answer") and told him not to bother me. He insisted, though, and I finally gave in.

I have been reading the *Gītā*, having not finished it yet, and have found it quite rewarding; my mind, shaped in logic and empiricism, seems to find itself barely tasting the transcendental material in the book. I discuss it with others; I find myself remembering certain passages which seem to shed some light (almost literally) on coincidental "everyday" occurrences.

It has genuinely stimulated my interest, to say the least, in a way that my readings in Christianity, Zen Buddhism, the "lower" forms of *yoga*, etc., have never succeeded in doing.

In short, I think I have finally found the beginning.

With best wishes,
Bob Ripley,
Fayetteville, Arkansas

I am 20 years old, living in Stockholm, Sweden, and very much interested in religion. Recently I read *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* (the complete edition) by Swami Bhaktivedanta. I personally think it is a most glorious book. The idea about Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Godhead is invincible.

I am very interested in ISKCON. Is it perhaps possible for me to become a member there? Would you please send me some information about your movement?

Yours very truly,
Anders Franzen
Stockholm, Sweden

Last year in June, I came for the first time in contact with your movement. I provided myself with some of your books because I was interested in your *bhakti-yoga* system. Especially the book *Īśopaniṣad* struck me very much because of the deep and elaborate devotional purports and the very special translation. I think that the Swami must be a very devoted and educated man, one of the rare true servants of God.

With kindest regards,
V.A. van Bylert
Holland

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ AS IT IS

His Divine Grace
A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA



"When one is enlightened with the knowledge by which nescience is destroyed, then his knowledge reveals everything, as the sun lights up everything in the daytime."

Bhagavad-gītā 5.16

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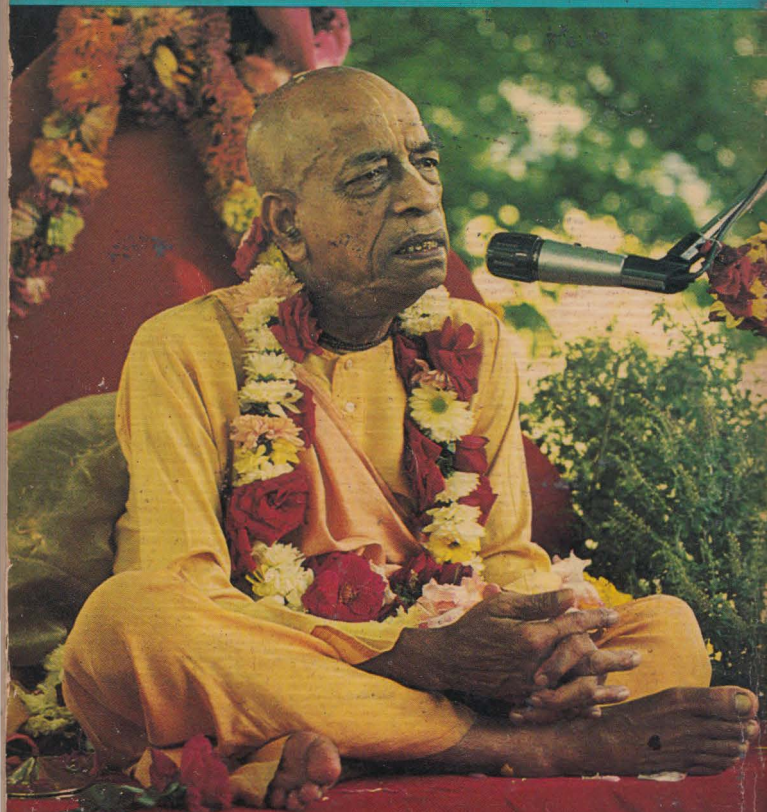
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His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda