

Description is found
Srimad Bhagavatam
(Krishna Book)

Prayers by the Personified Vedas

- ॐ King Parīkṣit inquired from Śukadeva Gosvāmī about a very important topic in understanding transcendental subject matter.
- ॐ His question was, “Since Vedic knowledge generally deals with the subject matter of the three qualities of the material world, how then can it approach the subject matter of transcendence, which is beyond the approach of the three material modes?”
- ॐ Since the mind is material and the vibration of words is a material sound, how can the Vedic knowledge, expressing by material sound the thoughts of the material mind, approach transcendence?
- ॐ Description of a subject matter necessitates describing its source of emanation, its qualities and its activities.
- ॐ Such description can be possible only by thinking with the material mind and by vibrating material words.
- ॐ Brahman, or the Absolute Truth, has no material qualities, but our power of speaking does not go beyond the material qualities.
- ॐ How then can Brahman, the Absolute Truth, be described by your words? I do not see how it is possible to understand transcendence from such expressions of material sound.”

ॐ *The purpose of King Parīkṣit’s inquiry was to ascertain from Śukadeva Gosvāmī whether the Vedas ultimately describe the Absolute Truth as impersonal or as personal. Understanding of the Absolute Truth progresses in three features—impersonal Brahman, Paramātmā localized in everyone’s heart, and, at last, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa.*

ॐ *The Vedas deal with three departments of activities. One is called karma-kāṇḍa, or activities under Vedic injunction, which gradually purify one to understand his real position; the next is jñāna-kāṇḍa, the process of understanding the Absolute Truth by speculative methods; and the third is upāsana-kāṇḍa, or worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and sometimes of the demigods also. The worship of the demigods recommended in the Vedas is ordered with the understanding of the demigods’ relationship to the Personality of Godhead. The Supreme Personality of Godhead has many parts and parcels; some are called svāmśas, or His personal expansions, and some are called vibhinnāmśas, the living entities. All such expansions, both svāmśas and vibhinnāmśas, are emanations from the original Personality of Godhead. Svāmśa expansions are called viṣṇu-tattva, whereas the vibhinnāmśa expansions are called jīva-tattva. The different demigods are jīva-tattva. The conditioned souls are generally put into the activities of the material world for sense gratification; therefore, as stated in the Bhagavad-gītā, to regulate those who are very much addicted to different kinds of sense*

gratification, the worship of demigods is sometimes recommended. For example, for persons very much addicted to meat-eating, the Vedic injunction recommends that after worshiping the form of goddess Kālī and sacrificing a goat (not any other animal) under karma-kāṇḍa regulation, the worshipers may be allowed to eat meat. The idea is not to encourage one to eat meat but to allow one who insists on eating meat to eat it under certain restricted conditions. Therefore, worship of the demigods is not worship of the Absolute Truth, but by worshiping the demigods one gradually comes to accept the Supreme Personality of Godhead in an indirect way. This indirect acceptance is described in the Bhagavad-gītā as avidhi. Avidhi means “not bona fide.” Since demigod worship is not bona fide, the impersonalists stress concentration on the impersonal feature of the Absolute Truth. King Parīkṣit’s question was, Which is the ultimate target of Vedic knowledge—this concentration on the impersonal feature of the Absolute Truth or concentration on the personal feature? After all, both the impersonal and the personal feature of the Supreme Lord are beyond our material conception. The impersonal feature of the Absolute, the Brahman effulgence, is but the rays of the personal body of Kṛṣṇa. These rays of the personal body of Kṛṣṇa are cast all over the creation of the Lord, and the portion of the effulgence which is covered by the material cloud is called the created cosmos of the three material qualities—sattva, rajas and tamas. How can persons who are within this clouded portion, called the material world, conceive of the Absolute Truth by the speculative method?

ॐ In answering King Parīkṣit’s question, Śukadeva Gosvāmī replied that the Supreme Personality of Godhead has created the mind, senses and living force of the living entity for the purpose of sense gratification and transmigration from one kind of body to another, as well as for the purpose of allowing liberation from the material conditions.

ॐ In other words, one can utilize the senses, mind and living force for sense gratification and transmigration from one body to another or for the matter of liberation. The Vedic injunctions are there just to give the conditioned souls the chance for sense gratification under regulative principles, and thereby also to give them the chance for promotion to higher conditions of life; ultimately, if the consciousness is purified, one comes to his original position and goes back home, back to Godhead.

ॐ The living entity is intelligent. One therefore has to utilize his intelligence over the mind and the senses. When the mind and senses are purified by the proper use of intelligence, then the conditioned soul is liberated; otherwise, if the intelligence is not properly utilized in controlling the senses and mind, the conditioned soul continues to transmigrate from one kind of body to another simply for sense gratification. Another point clearly stated in the answer of

Śukadeva Gosvāmī is that it is the mind, senses and intelligence of the individual living entity that the Lord created. It is not stated that the living entities themselves were ever created. Just as the shining particles of the sun's rays always exist with the sun, the living entities exist eternally as parts and parcels of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But just as the sun rays are sometimes covered by a cloud, which is created by the sun, so the conditioned souls, although eternally existing as parts of the Supreme Lord, are sometimes put within the cloud of the material concept of life, in the darkness of ignorance. The whole Vedic process is to alleviate that darkened condition. Ultimately, when the senses and mind of the conditioned being are fully purified, he comes to his original position, called Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and that is liberation.

- ॐ In the Vedānta-sūtra, the first sūtra, or code, questions about the Absolute Truth. Athāto brahma jijñāsā: What is the nature of the Absolute Truth? The next sūtra answers that the nature of the Absolute Truth is that He is the origin of everything. Whatever we experience, even in this material condition of life, is but an emanation from Him. The Absolute Truth created the mind, senses and intelligence. This means that the Absolute Truth is not without mind, intelligence and senses. In other words, He is not impersonal. The very word created means that He has transcendental intelligence. For example, when a father begets a child, the child has senses because the father also has senses. The child is born with hands and legs because the father also has hands and legs. Sometimes it is said that man is made after the image of God. The Absolute Truth is therefore the Supreme Personality, with transcendental mind, senses and intelligence. When one's mind, intelligence and senses are purified of material contamination, one can understand the original feature of the Absolute Truth as a person.
- ॐ The Vedic process is to promote the conditioned soul gradually from the mode of ignorance to the mode of passion, and from the mode of passion to the mode of goodness. In the mode of goodness there is sufficient light for understanding things as they are. For example, from earth a tree grows, and from the wood of the tree, fire is ignited. In that igniting process we first of all find smoke, and the next stage is heat, and then fire. When there is actually fire, we can utilize it for various purposes; therefore, fire is the ultimate goal. Similarly, in the gross material stage of life the quality of ignorance is very prominent. Dissipation of this ignorance takes place in the gradual progress of civilization from the barbarian stage to civilized life, and when one comes to the stage of civilized life he is said to be in the mode of passion. In the barbarian stage, or in the mode of ignorance, the senses are gratified in a very crude way, whereas in the mode of passion, or in civilized life, the senses are gratified in a polished manner. But when one is promoted to the mode of

goodness, one can understand that the senses and the mind are engaged in material activities only due to being covered by perverted consciousness. When this perverted consciousness is gradually transformed into Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then the path of liberation is opened. So it is not that one is unable to approach the Absolute Truth by the senses and the mind. The conclusion is, rather, that the senses, mind and intelligence in the gross stage of contamination cannot appreciate the nature of the Absolute Truth, but when purified, the senses, mind and intelligence can understand what the Absolute Truth is. The purifying process is called devotional service, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

ॐ In the Bhagavad-gītā it is clearly stated that the purpose of Vedic knowledge is to understand Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa is understood by devotional service, beginning with the process of surrender. As stated in the Bhagavad-gītā, one has to think of Kṛṣṇa always, one has to render loving service to Kṛṣṇa always, and one always has to worship and bow down before Kṛṣṇa. By this process only can one enter into the kingdom of God, without any doubt.

ॐ One who is enlightened in the mode of goodness by the process of devotional service is freed from the modes of ignorance and passion. In answering King Parīkṣit's question, Śukadeva Gosvāmī used the word ātmane, which indicates the stage of brahminical qualification in which one is allowed to study the Vedic scriptures known as the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads describe in different ways the transcendental qualities of the Supreme Lord. The Absolute Truth, the Supreme Lord, is called nirguṇa. That does not mean He has no qualities. It is only because He has qualities that the conditioned living entities can have qualities. The purpose of studying the Upaniṣads is to understand the transcendental qualities of the Absolute Truth, as opposed to the material qualities of ignorance, passion and goodness. That is the way of Vedic understanding. Great sages like the four Kumāras, headed by Sanaka, followed these principles of Vedic knowledge and came gradually from impersonal understanding to the platform of personal worship of the Supreme Lord. It is therefore recommended that we must follow the great personalities. Śukadeva Gosvāmī is also one of the great personalities, and his answer to the inquiry of Mahārāja Parīkṣit is authorized. One who follows in the footsteps of such great personalities surely walks very easily on the path of liberation and ultimately goes back home, back to Godhead. That is the way of perfecting this human form of life.

ॐ Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued to speak to Parīkṣit Mahārāja.

ॐ “My dear King,” he said, “in this regard I shall narrate a nice story.

ॐ This story is important because it is in connection with Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

ॐ This narration is a conversation between Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi and the great sage Nārada.”

ॐ *Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi still resides in Badarīkāśrama and is accepted as an incarnation of Nārāyaṇa. Badarīkāśrama is situated in the northernmost part of the Himalayan Mountains and is always covered with snow. Religious Indians still go to visit this place during the summer season, when the snowfall is not very severe.*

Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi and the great sage Nārada

- ॐ Once when Nārada, the great devotee and ascetic amongst the demigods, was traveling among different planets, he desired to meet the ascetic Nārāyaṇa personally in Badarīkāśrama and offer Him respects.
- ॐ This great sage incarnation of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi, has been undergoing great penances and austerities from the very beginning of the creation to teach the inhabitants of Bhārata-varṣa how to attain the highest perfectional stage of going back to Godhead.
- ॐ His austerities and penances are exemplary practices for the human being.
- ॐ The incarnation of God Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi was sitting amongst many devotees in the village known as Kalāpa-grāma.
- ॐ Of course, these were not ordinary sages sitting with Him, and the great sage Nārada also appeared there.
- ॐ After offering his respects to Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi, Nārada asked Him exactly the same question King Parīkṣit asked Śukadeva Gosvāmī.
- ॐ Then the Ṛṣi answered by following in the footsteps of His predecessors.
- ॐ He narrated a story of how the same question had been discussed on the planet known as Janaloka, which is above the Svargaloka planets, such as the moon and Venus.
- ॐ On this planet, great sages and saintly persons live, and they once discussed the same point regarding the understanding of Brahman and His real identity.
- ॐ The great sage Nārāyaṇa began to speak.
- ॐ “My dear Nārada,” He said, “I shall tell you a story which took place long, long ago.
- ॐ There was a great meeting of the denizens of the heavenly planets, and almost all the important brahmacārīs, such as the four Kumāras—Sanandana, Sanaka, Sanātana and Sanat-kumāra—attended.
- ॐ Their discussion was on the subject matter of understanding the Absolute Truth, Brahman.
- ॐ You were not present at that meeting because you had gone to see My expansion Aniruddha, who lives on the island of Śvetadvīpa.
- ॐ In this meeting, all the great sages and brahmacārīs very elaborately discussed the point about which you have asked Me, and their discussion was very interesting.

ॐ It was so delicate that even the Vedas were unable to answer the intricate questions raised.”

ॐ Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi told Nāradaḥ that the same question Nāradaḥ had raised had been discussed in that meeting on Janaloka. This is the way of understanding through the paramparā, or disciplic succession. Mahārāja Parīkṣit questioned Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and Śukadeva Gosvāmī referred the matter to Nārada, who had in the same way questioned Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi, who had put the matter to still higher authorities on the planet of Janaloka, where it was discussed among the great Kumāras—Sanātana, Sanaka, Sanandana and Sanat-kumāra. These four brahmacārīs, the Kumāras, are recognized scholars in the Vedas and other śāstras. Their unlimited volumes of knowledge, backed by austerities and penances, are exhibited by their sublime, ideal character. They are very amiable and gentle in behavior, and for them there is no distinction between friends, well-wishers and enemies. Being transcendently situated, such personalities as the Kumāras are above all material considerations and are always neutral in respect to material dualities. In the discussions held among the four brothers, one of them, namely Sanandana, was selected to speak, and the other brothers became the audience to hear him.

ॐ Sanandana said, “After the dissolution of the whole cosmic manifestation, the entire energy and the whole creation in its nucleus form enter into the body of Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu.

ॐ The Lord at that time remains asleep for a long, long time,

ॐ and when there is again necessity of creation, the Vedas personified assemble around the Lord and begin to glorify Him,

ॐ describing His wonderful transcendental pastimes,

ॐ exactly like servants of a king:

ॐ when the king is asleep in the morning, the appointed reciters come around his bedroom and begin to sing of his chivalrous activities,

ॐ and while hearing of his glorious activities, the king gradually awakens.

ॐ “The Vedic reciters, or the personified Vedas, sing thus:

ॐ ‘O unconquerable Lord, You are the Supreme Personality.

ॐ No one is equal to You or greater than You.

ॐ No one can be more glorious in his activities.

ॐ All glories unto You!

ॐ All glories unto You!

ॐ By Your own transcendental nature You fully possess all six opulences.

ॐ As such, You are able to deliver all conditioned souls from the clutches of māyā.

- ॐ O Lord, we fervently pray that You kindly do so.
- ॐ All the living entities, being Your parts and parcels, are naturally joyful, eternal and full of knowledge, but due to their own faults they imitate You by trying to become the supreme enjoyer.
- ॐ Thus they disobey Your supremacy and become offenders.
- ॐ And because of their offenses, Your material energy has taken charge of them.
- ॐ Thus their transcendental qualities of joyfulness, bliss and wisdom have been covered by the clouds of the three material qualities.
- ॐ This cosmic manifestation, made of the three material qualities, is just like a prison house for the conditioned souls.
- ॐ The conditioned souls are struggling very hard to escape from material bondage,
- ॐ and according to their different conditions of life they have been given different types of engagement.
- ॐ But since all engagements are based on knowledge supplied by You, the conditioned souls can execute pious activities only when You mercifully inspire them to do so.
- ॐ Therefore, without taking shelter at Your lotus feet one cannot surpass the influence of material energy. Actually, we, as personified Vedic knowledge, are always engaged in Your service by helping the conditioned souls understand You.’ ”
- ॐ *This prayer of the Vedas personified illustrates that the Vedas are meant for helping the conditioned souls to understand Kṛṣṇa.*
- ॐ All the śrutis, or personified Vedas, offered glories to the Lord again and again, singing, “Jaya! Jaya!”
- ॐ *This indicates that the Lord is the most glorious. Of all His glories, the most important is His causeless mercy upon the conditioned souls in reclaiming them from the clutches of māyā.*
- ॐ *There are unlimited numbers of living entities in different varieties of bodies, some moving and some standing in one place, and the conditioned life of these living entities is due only to their forgetfulness of their eternal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When the living entity wants to lord it over the material energy by imitating the position of Kṛṣṇa, he is immediately captured by the material energy and, according to his desire, is offered one variety of the 8,400,000 different kinds of bodies. Although undergoing the threefold miseries of material existence, the illusioned living entity falsely thinks himself the master of all he surveys. Under the spell of the material energy, represented by the threefold material qualities, the living entity is so entangled that he is not at all able to become free unless he is graced by the Supreme Lord. The living entity cannot conquer the influence of the material modes of nature by his own endeavor, but because material nature is working under the control of the Supreme Lord, the Lord is beyond*

its jurisdiction. Except for Him, all living entities, from Brahmā down to the ant, are conquered by the contact of material nature.

ॐ *Because the Lord possesses in full the six opulences of wealth, strength, fame, beauty, knowledge and renunciation, He alone is beyond the spell of material nature. Unless the living entity is situated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he cannot approach the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Yet the Lord, by His omnipotency, can dictate from within as the Supersoul how a living entity can gradually come to Him even while performing his ordinary work. As the Lord advises in the Bhagavad-gītā, “Whatever you do, do it for Me; whatever you eat, first offer it to Me; whatever charity you want to give, first give it to Me; and whatever austerities and penances you want to perform, perform them for Me.” In this way the karmīs are directed gradually to develop Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa directs the philosophers to approach Him gradually by discriminating between Brahman and māyā, for at last, when one is mature in knowledge, he surrenders unto Kṛṣṇa. As Kṛṣṇa says in the Bhagavad-gītā, “After many, many births, the wise philosopher surrenders unto Me.” The yogīs are also directed to concentrate their meditation upon Kṛṣṇa within the heart, and by such a continued process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness they can also become free from the clutches of the material energy. The devotees, however, are engaged in devotional service with love and affection from the very beginning, and therefore the Lord personally directs them so that they can approach Him without difficulty or deviation. This is stated in the Bhagavad-gītā. Only by the grace of the Lord can the living entity understand the exact position of Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān.*

ॐ *The statements of the personified Vedas give clear evidence that the Vedic literature is presented only for understanding Kṛṣṇa. The Bhagavad-gītā confirms that through all the Vedas it is Kṛṣṇa alone who has to be understood. Kṛṣṇa is always enjoying, either in the material world or in the spiritual world; because He is the supreme enjoyer, for Him there is no distinction between the material and spiritual worlds. The material world is an impediment for the ordinary living entities because they are under its control, but Kṛṣṇa, being the controller of the material world, has nothing to do with the impediments it offers. Therefore, in different parts of the Upaniṣads, the Vedas declare, “The Supreme Brahman is eternal, full of all knowledge and all bliss. That one Supreme Personality of Godhead exists in the heart of every living entity.” Because of His all-pervasiveness, He is able to enter not only into the hearts of the living entities, but even into the atoms also. As the Supersoul, He is the controller of all activities of the living entities. He lives within all of them and witnesses their actions, allowing them to act according to their desires and also giving them the results of their different activities. He is the living force of all things, but He is*

transcendental to the material qualities. He is omnipotent; He is expert in manufacturing everything, and on account of His superior, natural knowledge, He can bring everyone under His control. As such, He is everyone's master. He is sometimes manifest on the surface of the globe, but He is simultaneously within all matter. Desiring to expand Himself in multiforms, He glanced over the material energy, and thus innumerable living entities became manifest. Everything is created by His superior energy, and everything in His creation appears to be perfectly done, without deficiency. Those who aspire for liberation from this material world must therefore worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the ultimate cause of all causes. He is just like the total mass of earth, from which varieties of earthly pots are manufactured: the pots are made of earthly clay, they rest on the earth, the original cause of all varieties of manifestation.

- ॐ Employing this analogy of Brahman with earth, the impersonalists especially stress the Vedic statement *sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma*: “Everything is Brahman.” The impersonalists do not take into account the varieties of manifestation emanating from the supreme cause, Brahman. They simply consider that everything emanates from Brahman and after destruction merges into Brahman and that the intermediate stage of manifestation is also Brahman. But although the Māyāvādīs believe that prior to its manifestation the cosmos was in Brahman, after creation it remains in Brahman, and after destruction it merges into Brahman, they do not know what Brahman is. The *Brahma-saṁhitā*, however, clearly describes Brahman: “The living entities, space, time and the material elements like fire, earth, sky, water and mind constitute the total cosmic manifestation, known as *Bhūḥ*, *Bhuvah* and *Svah*, which is manifested by Govinda. It flourishes on the strength of Govinda and after annihilation enters into and is conserved in Govinda.” Lord Brahma therefore says, “I worship Lord Govinda, the original personality, the cause of all causes.”
- ॐ The word “Brahman” indicates the greatest of all and the maintainer of everything. The impersonalists are attracted by the greatness of the sky, but because of their poor fund of knowledge they are not attracted by the greatness of Kṛṣṇa. In our practical life, however, we are attracted by the greatness of a person and not by the greatness of a big mountain. Thus the term “Brahman” actually applies to Kṛṣṇa only; therefore in the *Bhagavad-gītā* Arjuna admitted that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Parabrahman, or the supreme resting place of everything.
- ॐ Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Brahman because of His unlimited knowledge, unlimited potencies, unlimited strength, unlimited influence, unlimited beauty and unlimited renunciation. Ultimately, therefore, the word “Brahman” can be applied to Kṛṣṇa only. Arjuna affirms that because the impersonal

Brahman is the effulgence emanating as rays of Kṛṣṇa's transcendental body, Kṛṣṇa is the Parabrahman. Everything rests on Brahman, but Brahman itself rests on Kṛṣṇa. Therefore Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate Brahman, or Parabrahman. The material elements are accepted as the inferior energy of Kṛṣṇa. By their interaction the cosmic manifestation takes place, rests on Kṛṣṇa, and after dissolution again enters into the body of Kṛṣṇa as His subtle energy. Kṛṣṇa is therefore the cause of both manifestation and dissolution.

- ॐ *Sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma means that everything is Lord Kṛṣṇa in the sense that everything is His energy. That is the vision of the mahā-bhāgavatas. They see everything in relation to Kṛṣṇa. The impersonalists argue that Kṛṣṇa Himself has been transformed into many and that therefore everything is Kṛṣṇa and worship of anything is worship of Him. This false argument is answered by Kṛṣṇa in the Bhagavad-gītā: although everything is a transformation of the energy of Kṛṣṇa, He is not present everywhere. He is simultaneously present and not present. By His energy He is present everywhere, but as the energetic He is not present everywhere. This simultaneous presence and nonpresence is inconceivable to our present senses. But a clear explanation is given in the beginning of the Īsopaniṣad, in which it is stated that the Supreme Lord is so complete that although unlimited energies and their transformations emanate from Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa's personality is not in the least bit transformed. Therefore, since Kṛṣṇa is the cause of all causes, intelligent persons should take shelter of His lotus feet.*
- ॐ *Kṛṣṇa advises everyone just to surrender unto Him alone, and that is the way of Vedic instruction. Since Kṛṣṇa is the cause of all causes, He is worshiped by all kinds of sages and saints through observance of the regulative principles. As far as meditation is concerned, great personalities meditate on the transcendental form of Kṛṣṇa within the heart. In this way the minds of great personalities are always engaged in Kṛṣṇa. With their minds engaged in Kṛṣṇa, naturally the captivated devotees simply talk of Kṛṣṇa.*
- ॐ *Talking of Kṛṣṇa or singing of Kṛṣṇa is called kīrtana. Lord Caitanya recommends, kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ [Cc. Ādi 17.31], which means always thinking and talking of Kṛṣṇa and nothing else. That is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is so sublime that anyone who takes to this process is elevated to the highest perfection of life—far, far beyond the concept of liberation. In the Bhagavad-gītā, therefore, Kṛṣṇa advises everyone always to think of Him, render devotional service to Him, worship Him and offer obeisances to Him. In this way a devotee becomes fully Kṛṣṇa-ized and, being always situated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, ultimately goes back to Kṛṣṇa.*
- ॐ *Although the Vedas have recommended worship of different demigods as different parts and parcels of Kṛṣṇa, it is to be understood that such instructions are meant for less intelligent men who are still attracted by*

material sense enjoyment. But the person who actually wants perfect fulfillment of the mission of human life should simply worship Lord Kṛṣṇa, and that will simplify the matter and completely guarantee the success of his human life. Although the sky, the water and the land are all part of the material world, when one stands on the solid land his position is more secure than when he stands in the sky or the water. An intelligent person, therefore, does not stand under the protection of different demigods, although they are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. Rather, he stands on the solid ground of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That makes his position sound and secure.

ॐ Impersonalists sometimes give the example that if one stands on a stone or a piece of wood one certainly stands on the surface of the land, because the stone and wood both rest on the surface of the earth. But it may be replied that if one stands directly on the surface of the earth he is more secure than if he stands on the wood or stone, which rest on the earth. In other words, taking shelter of Paramātmā or taking shelter of impersonal Brahman is not as secure a course as taking direct shelter of Kṛṣṇa in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The position of the jñānīs and yogīs is therefore not as secure as the position of the devotees of Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa has therefore advised in the Bhagavad-gītā that only a person who has lost his sense takes to the worship of demigods. And regarding persons attached to the impersonal Brahman, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam says, “My dear Lord, those who think of themselves as liberated by mental speculation are not yet purified of the contamination of material nature because of their inability to find the shelter of Your lotus feet. Although they rise to the transcendental situation of existence in impersonal Brahman, they certainly fall from that exalted position because they deride Your lotus feet.” Lord Kṛṣṇa therefore advises that the worshipers of the demigods are not very intelligent persons because they derive only temporary, exhaustible results. Their endeavors are those of less intelligent men. On the other hand, the Lord assures that His devotee has no fear of falling.

ॐ The personified Vedas continued to pray,

ॐ “Dear Lord, considering all points of view, if a person has to worship someone superior to himself, then just out of good behavior he should stick to the worship of Your lotus feet because You are the ultimate controller of creation, maintenance and dissolution.

ॐ You are the controller of the three worlds, Bhūḥ, Bhuvaḥ and Svaḥ;

ॐ You are the controller of the fourteen upper and lower worlds;

ॐ and You are the controller of the three material qualities.

ॐ Demigods and persons advanced in spiritual knowledge always hear and chant about Your transcendental pastimes because this process has the specific potency of nullifying the accumulated results of sinful life.

- ॐ Intelligent persons factually dip into the ocean of Your nectarean activities and very patiently hear about them.
- ॐ Thus they are immediately freed from the contamination of the material qualities; they do not have to undergo severe penances and austerities for advancement in spiritual life.
- ॐ This chanting and hearing of Your transcendental pastimes is the easiest process for self-realization.
- ॐ Simply by submissive aural reception of the transcendental message, one's heart is cleansed of all dirty things.
- ॐ Thus Kṛṣṇa consciousness becomes fixed in the heart of a devotee.”
- ॐ *The great authority Bhīṣmadeva has also given the opinion that this process of chanting and hearing about the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the highest religious process. And the Taittirīya Upaniṣad says that worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the essence of all Vedic ritualistic performances.*
- ॐ “Dear Lord,” the personified Vedas continued, “the devotee who wants to elevate himself simply by the process of devotional activities, especially by hearing and chanting, very soon comes out of the clutches of the dualities of material existence.
- ॐ By this simple process of penance and austerity, the Supersoul within the devotee's heart is very much pleased and gives the devotee directions so that he may go back home, back to Godhead.”
- ॐ *It is stated in the Bhagavad-gītā that one who engages all his activities and senses in the devotional service of the Lord becomes completely peaceful because the Supersoul is satisfied with him; thus the devotee becomes transcendental to all dualities, such as heat and cold, honor and dishonor. Being freed from all dualities, he feels transcendental bliss, and he no longer suffers cares and anxieties due to material existence. The Bhagavad-gītā confirms that the devotee always absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness has no anxieties for his maintenance or protection. Being constantly absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he ultimately achieves the highest perfection. While in material existence, he lives very peacefully and blissfully, without cares and anxieties, and after quitting this body he goes back home, back to Godhead. The Lord confirms in the Bhagavad-gītā, “My supreme abode is a transcendental place from which, having gone, one never returns to this material world. Anyone who attains the supreme perfection, being engaged in My personal devotional service in the eternal abode, reaches the highest perfection of human life and does not have to come back to the miserable material world.”*
- ॐ The personified Vedas continued:

- ॐ “Dear Lord, it is imperative that the living entities be engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, always rendering devotional service by such prescribed methods as hearing and chanting and executing Your orders.
- ॐ If a person is not engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and devotional service, it is useless for him to exhibit the symptoms of life.
- ॐ Generally if a person is breathing he is accepted to be alive.
- ॐ But a person without Kṛṣṇa consciousness may be compared to a bellows in a blacksmith’s shop.
- ॐ The big bellows is a bag of skin which exhales and inhales air, and a human being who simply lives within the bag of skin and bones without taking to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and loving devotional service is no better than the bellows.
- ॐ Similarly, a nondevotee’s long duration of life is compared to the long existence of a tree, his voracious eating capacity is compared to the eating of dogs and hogs, and his enjoyment in sex life is compared to that of hogs and goats.”

ॐ *The cosmic manifestation has been made possible because of the entrance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as Mahā-Viṣṇu within this material world. The total material energy is agitated by the glance of Mahā-Viṣṇu, and only then does the interaction of the three material qualities begin. Therefore it should be concluded that whatever material facilities we are trying to enjoy are available only due to the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.*

ॐ *Within the body there are five different departments of existence, known as anna-maya, prāṇa-maya, mano-maya, vijñāna-maya and, at last, ānanda-maya. In the beginning of life, every living entity is food conscious. A child or an animal is satisfied only by getting nice food. This stage of consciousness, in which the goal is to eat sumptuously, is called anna-maya. Anna means “food.” After this one lives in the consciousness of being alive. If one can continue his life without being attacked or destroyed, one thinks himself happy. This stage is called prāṇa-maya, or consciousness of one’s existence. After this stage, when one is situated on the mental platform, his consciousness is called mano-maya. The materialistic civilization is primarily situated in these three stages, anna-maya, prāṇa-maya and mano-maya. The first concern of civilized persons is economic development, the next concern is defense against being annihilated, and the next consciousness is mental speculation, the philosophical approach to the values of life.*

ॐ *If by the evolutionary process of philosophical life one happens to reach the platform of intellectual life and understands that he is not this material body but a spiritual soul, he is situated in the vijñāna-maya stage. Then, by evolution in spiritual life, he comes to the understanding of the Supreme Lord, or the Supreme Soul. When one develops his relationship with Him and executes devotional service, that stage of life is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness,*

the ānanda-maya stage. Ānanda-maya is the blissful life of knowledge and eternity. As it is said in the Vedānta-sūtra, ānanda-mayo 'bhyāsāt. The Supreme Brahman and the subordinate Brahman, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the living entities, are both joyful by nature. As long as the living entities are situated in the lower four stages of life—anna-maya, prāṇa-maya, mano-maya and vijñāna-maya—they are considered to be in the material condition of life, but as soon as one reaches the stage of ānanda-maya, he is a liberated soul. This ānanda-maya stage is explained in the Bhagavad-gītā as the brahma-bhūta [SB 4.30.20] stage. There it is said that in the brahma-bhūta stage of life there is no anxiety and no hankering. This stage begins when one is equally disposed toward all living entities, and it then expands to the stage of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, in which one always hankers to render service unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This hankering for advancement in devotional service is not the same as hankering for sense gratification in material existence. In other words, hankering remains in spiritual life, but it becomes purified. Similarly, when our senses are purified, they are freed from all material stages, namely anna-maya, prāṇa-maya, mano-maya and vijñāna-maya, and they become situated in the highest stage—ānanda-maya, or blissful life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The Māyāvādī philosophers consider ānanda-maya to be the state of being merged in the Supreme. To them, ānanda-maya means that the Supersoul and the individual soul become one. But the real fact is that oneness does not mean merging into the Supreme and losing one's own individual existence. Merging into the spiritual existence is the living entity's realization of qualitative oneness with the Supreme Lord in His aspects of eternity and knowledge. But the actual ānanda-maya (blissful) stage is attained when one is engaged in devotional service. That is confirmed in the Bhagavad-gītā: mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām [Bg. 18.54]. Here Lord Kṛṣṇa states that the brahma-bhūta ānanda-maya stage is complete only when there is an exchange of love between the Supreme and the subordinate living entities. Unless one comes to this ānanda-maya stage, his breathing is like the breathing of a bellows in a blacksmith's shop, his duration of life is like that of a tree, and he is no better than the lower animals like the camels, hogs and dogs.

- ॐ Undoubtedly the eternal living entity cannot be annihilated at any point. But the lower species of life exist in a miserable condition, whereas one who is engaged in the devotional service of the Supreme Lord is situated in the pleasurable, or ānanda-maya, status of life. The different stages described above are all in relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Although in all circumstances there exist both the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the living entities, the difference is that the Supreme Personality of Godhead always exists in the ānanda-maya stage, whereas the subordinate

living entities, because of their minute position as fragmental portions of the Supreme Lord, are prone to fall to the other stages of life. Although in all the stages both the Supreme Lord and the living entities exist, the Supreme Personality of Godhead is always transcendental to our concept of life, whether we are in bondage or in liberation. The whole cosmic manifestation becomes possible by the grace of the Supreme Lord, it exists by the grace of the Supreme Lord, and when annihilated it merges into the existence of the Supreme Lord. As such, the Supreme Lord is the supreme existence, the cause of all causes. Therefore the conclusion is that without development of Kṛṣṇa consciousness one's life is simply a waste of time.

- ॐ For those who are very materialistic and cannot understand the situation of the spiritual world, the abode of Kṛṣṇa, great sages have recommended the yogic process whereby one gradually rises from meditation on the abdomen, which is called *mūlādhāra* or *maṇipūṛaka* meditation. *Mūlādhāra* and *maṇipūṛaka* are technical terms which refer to the intestines within the abdomen. Grossly materialistic persons think that economic development is of foremost importance because they are under the impression that a living entity exists only by eating. Such grossly materialistic persons forget that although we may eat as much as we like, if the food is not digested it produces the troubles of indigestion and acidity. Therefore, eating is not in itself the cause of the vital energy of life. For digestion of eatables we have to take shelter of another, superior energy, which is mentioned in the *Bhagavad-gītā* as *vaiśvānara*. Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that He helps the digestion in the form of *vaiśvānara*. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is all-pervasive; therefore, His presence in the stomach as *vaiśvānara* is not extraordinary.
- ॐ Kṛṣṇa is actually present everywhere. The *Vaiṣṇava*, therefore, marks his body with temples of Viṣṇu: he first marks a *tilaka* temple on the abdomen, then on the chest, then between the collarbones, then on the forehead, and gradually he marks the top of the head, the *brahma-randhra*. The thirteen temples of *tilaka* marked on the body of a *Vaiṣṇava* are known as follows: On the forehead is the temple of Lord Keśava, on the belly is the temple of Lord Nārāyaṇa, on the chest is the temple of Lord Mādhava, and on the throat, between the two collarbones, is the temple of Lord Govinda. On the right side of the waist is the temple of Lord Viṣṇu, on the right arm the temple of Lord Madhusūdana, and on the right side of the collarbone the temple of Lord Trivikrama. Similarly, on the left side of the waist is the temple of Lord Vāmanadeva, on the left arm the temple of Śrīdhara, on the left side of the collarbone the temple of Hṛṣīkeśa, on the upper back the temple called *Padmanābha*, and on the lower back the temple called *Dāmodara*. On the top of the head is the temple called *Vāsudeva*. This is the process of meditation on

the Lord's situation in the different parts of the body, but for those who are not Vaiṣṇavas, great sages recommend meditation on the bodily concept of life—meditation on the intestines, on the heart, on the throat, on the eyebrows, on the forehead and then on the top of the head. Some of the sages in the disciplic succession from the great saint Aruṇa meditate on the heart, because the Supersoul stays within the heart along with the living entity. This is confirmed in the Bhagavad-gītā, Fifteenth Chapter, wherein the Lord states, "I am situated in everyone's heart."

- ॐ As part of devotional service, Vaiṣṇavas protect the body for the service of the Lord, but those who are gross materialists accept the body as the self. They worship the body by the yogic process of meditation on the different bodily parts, such as maṇipūraka, dahara and hṛdaya, gradually rising to the brahma-randhra, on the top of the head. The first-class yogī who has attained perfection in the practice of the yoga system ultimately passes through the brahma-randhra to any one of the planets in either the material or spiritual worlds. How a yogī can transfer himself to another planet is vividly described in the Second Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.
- ॐ In this regard, Śukadeva Gosvāmī has recommended that the beginners worship the virāt-puruṣa, the gigantic universal form of the Lord. One who cannot believe that the Lord can be worshiped with equal success in the Deity, or arcā form, or who cannot concentrate on this form is advised to worship the universal form of the Lord. The lower part of the universe is considered the feet and legs of the Lord's universal form, the middle part of the universe is considered the navel or abdomen of the Lord, the upper planetary systems such as Janaloka and Maharloka are the heart of the Lord, and the topmost planetary system, Brahmaloaka, is considered the top of the Lord's head. There are different processes recommended by great sages according to the position of the worshiper, but the ultimate aim of all meditational yogic processes is to go back home, back to Godhead. As stated in the Bhagavad-gītā, anyone who reaches the highest planet, the abode of Kṛṣṇa, or even the Vaikuṅṭha planets, never has to come down again to this miserable material condition of life.
- ॐ The Vedic recommendation, therefore, is that one make the lotus feet of Viṣṇu the target of all one's efforts. *Tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam*: the Viṣṇu planets, or Viṣṇuloka, are situated above all the material planets. These Vaikuṅṭha planets are known as sanātana-dhāma, and they are eternal. They are never annihilated, not even by the annihilation of this material world. The conclusion is that if a human being does not fulfill the mission of his life by worshipping the Supreme Lord and does not go back home, back to Godhead, it is to be understood that he is breathing just like a blacksmith's bellows, living just like a tree, eating just like a camel and having sex just like

the dogs and hogs. Thus he has been frustrated in fulfilling the specific purpose of human life.

ॐ The next prayer of the personified Vedas to the Lord concerns His entering into different species of life.

ॐ *It is stated in the Bhagavad-gītā, Fourteenth Chapter, that in every species and form of life the spiritual part and parcel of the Supreme Lord is present. The Lord Himself claims in the Gītā that He is the seed-giving father of all forms and species, who therefore must all be considered sons of the Lord. The entrance of the Supreme Lord into everyone’s heart as Paramātmā sometimes bewilders the impersonalists into equating the living entities with the Supreme Lord. They think, “Both the Supreme Lord and the individual soul enter into the various bodies; so where is the distinction? Why should individual souls worship the Paramātmā, or Supersoul?” According to them, the Supersoul and the individual soul are on the same level; they are one, without any difference between them. There is a difference, however, between the Supersoul and the individual soul, and this is explained in the Bhagavad-gītā, Fifteenth Chapter, wherein the Lord says that although He is situated with the living entity in the same body, He is superior. He is dictating or giving intelligence to the individual soul from within. It is clearly stated in the Gītā that the Lord gives intelligence to the individual soul and that both memory and forgetfulness are due to the influence of the Supersoul. No one can act independently of the sanction of the Supersoul. The individual soul acts according to his past karma, reminded by the Lord. The nature of the individual soul is forgetfulness, but the presence of the Lord within the heart reminds him of what he wanted to do in his past life. The intelligence of the individual soul is exhibited like fire in wood. Although fire is always fire, it is exhibited in a size proportionate to the size of the wood. Similarly, although the individual soul is qualitatively one with the Supreme Lord, he exhibits himself according to the limitations of his present body. But the Supreme Lord, or the Supersoul, is unlimited. He is said to be eka-rasa. Eka means “one,” and rasa means “mellow.” The transcendental position of the Supreme Lord is that of eternity, bliss and full knowledge. His position of eka-rasa does not change in the slightest when He becomes a witness and advisor to the individual soul in each individual body.*

ॐ *But the individual soul, from Lord Brahmā down to the ant, exhibits his spiritual potency according to his present body. The demigods are in the same category with the individual souls in the bodies of human beings or in the bodies of lower animals. Intelligent persons, therefore, do not worship different demigods, who are simply infinitesimal representatives of Kṛṣṇa manifest in conditioned bodies. The individual soul can exhibit his power only in proportion to the shape and constitution of the body. The Supreme*

Personality of Godhead, however, can exhibit His full potencies in any shape or form without any change. The Māyāvādī philosophers' thesis that God and the individual soul are one and the same cannot be accepted because the individual soul has to develop his power according to the development of different types of bodies. The individual soul in the body of a baby cannot show the full power of a grown man, but the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, even when lying on the lap of His mother as a baby, could exhibit His full power by killing Pūtanā and other demons who attacked Him. Thus the spiritual potency of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is said to be eka-rasa, or without change. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, therefore, is the only worshipable object, and this is perfectly known to persons who are uncontaminated by the modes of material nature. In other words, only the liberated souls can worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Less intelligent Māyāvādīs take to the worship of the demigods, thinking that the demigods and the Supreme Personality of Godhead are on the same level.

ॐ The personified Vedas continued to offer their obeisances.

ॐ “Dear Lord,” they prayed, “after many, many births, those who have actually become wise take to the worship of Your lotus feet in complete knowledge.”

ॐ *This is confirmed in the Bhagavad-gītā, wherein the Lord says that after many, many births, a great soul, or mahātmā, surrenders unto the Lord, knowing well that Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa, is the cause of all causes. The Vedas continued: “As already explained, since the mind, intelligence and senses have been given to us by God, when these instruments are actually purified there is no alternative but to engage them all in the devotional service of the Lord. A living entity's entrapment in different species of life is due to the misapplication of his mind, intelligence and senses in material activities. Various kinds of bodies are awarded as the result of a living entity's actions, and they are created by the material nature according to the living entity's desire. Because a living entity desires and deserves a particular kind of body, it is given to him by the material nature, under the order of the Supreme Lord.”*

ॐ *In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Third Canto, it is explained that under the control of superior authority a living entity is put within the semen of a male and injected into the womb of a particular female in order to develop a particular type of body. A living entity utilizes his senses, intelligence, mind and so on in a specific way of his own choosing and thus develops a particular type of body, within which he becomes encaged. In this way the living entity becomes situated in different species of life, either in a demigod, human or animal body, according to different situations and circumstances.*

- ॐ It is explained in the Vedic literature that the living entities entrapped in different species of life are part and parcel of the Supreme Lord. The Māyāvādī philosophers mistake the living entity for the Paramātmā, who is actually sitting with the living entity as a friend. Because the Paramātmā (the localized aspect of the Supreme Personality of Godhead) and the individual living entity are both within the body, a misunderstanding sometimes takes place that there is no difference between the two. But there is a definite difference between the individual soul and the Supersoul, and it is explained in the Varāha Purāṇa as follows. The Supreme Lord has two kinds of parts and parcels: the living entity is called vibhinnāṁśa, and the Paramātmā, or the plenary expansion of the Supreme Lord, is called svāṁśa. The svāṁśa plenary expansion of the Supreme Personality is as powerful as the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. There is not even the slightest difference between the potency of the Supreme Person and that of His plenary expansion as Paramātmā. But the vibhinnāṁśa parts and parcels possess only a minute portion of the potencies of the Lord. The Nārada Pañcarātra states that the living entities, who are the marginal potency of the Supreme Lord, are undoubtedly of the same quality of spiritual existence as the Lord Himself, but they are prone to be tinged with the material qualities. Because the minute living entity is prone to be subjected to the influence of material qualities, he is called jīva, and sometimes the Supreme Personality of Godhead is also known as Śiva, the all-auspicious one. So the difference between Śiva and jīva is that the all-auspicious Personality of Godhead is never affected by the material qualities, whereas the minute portions of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are prone to be affected by the qualities of material nature.
- ॐ The Supersoul within the body of a particular living entity, being a plenary portion of the Lord, is worshipable by the individual living entity. Great sages have therefore concluded that the process of meditation is designed so that the individual living entity may concentrate his attention on the lotus feet of the Supersoul form (Viṣṇu). That is the real form of samādhi. The living entity cannot be liberated from material entanglement by his own effort. He must therefore take to the devotional service of the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, or the Supersoul within himself. Śrīdhara Svāmī, the great commentator on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, has composed a nice verse in this regard, the meaning of which is as follows: “My dear Lord, I am eternally a part of You, but I have been entrapped by the material potencies, which are also an emanation from You. As the cause of all causes, You have entered my body as the Supersoul, and I have the prerogative of enjoying the supreme blissful life of knowledge along with You. Therefore, my dear Lord, please order me to render You loving service so that I can again be brought to my original position of transcendental bliss.”

ॐ *Great personalities understand that a living entity entangled in this material world cannot be freed by his own efforts. With firm faith and devotion, such great personalities engage themselves in rendering transcendental loving service to the Lord. That is the verdict of the personified Vedas.*

ॐ The personified Vedas continued:

ॐ “Dear Lord, it is very difficult to achieve perfect knowledge of the Absolute Truth.

ॐ Your Lordship is so kind to the fallen souls that You appear in different incarnations and execute different activities.

ॐ You appear even as a historical personality of this material world, and Your pastimes are very nicely described in the Vedic literature.

ॐ Such pastimes are as attractive as the ocean of transcendental bliss.

ॐ People in general have a natural inclination to read narrations in which ordinary jīvas are glorified, but when they become attracted by the Vedic scriptures which delineate

ॐ Your eternal pastimes, they actually dip into the ocean of transcendental bliss.

ॐ As a fatigued man feels refreshed by dipping into a reservoir of water, so the conditioned soul who is very much disgusted with material activities becomes refreshed and forgets all the fatigue of material activities simply by dipping into the transcendental ocean of Your pastimes.

ॐ And eventually he merges into the ocean of transcendental bliss.

ॐ The most intelligent devotees, therefore, do not take to any means of self-realization except devotional service and constant engagement in the nine different processes of devotional life, especially hearing and chanting.

ॐ When hearing and chanting about Your transcendental pastimes, Your devotees do not care even for the transcendental bliss derived from liberation or from merging into the existence of the Supreme.

ॐ Such devotees are not interested even in so-called liberation, and they certainly have no interest in material activities for elevation to the heavenly planets for sense gratification.

ॐ Pure devotees seek only the association of paramahāṁsas, or great liberated devotees, so that they can continuously hear and chant about Your glories.

ॐ For this purpose the pure devotees are prepared to sacrifice all comforts of life, even giving up the material comforts of family life and so-called society, friendship and love.

ॐ Those who have tasted the nectar of devotion by relishing the transcendental vibration of chanting Your glories—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—do not care for any other spiritual bliss or for material comforts, which appear to the pure devotee as less important than the straw in the street.”

- ॐ The personified Vedas continued: “Dear Lord, when a person is able to purify his mind, senses and intelligence by engaging himself in devotional service in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness, his mind becomes his friend.
- ॐ Otherwise, his mind is always his enemy.
- ॐ When the mind is engaged in the devotional service of the Lord, it becomes the intimate friend of the living entity because the mind can then think of the Supreme Lord always.
- ॐ Your Lordship is eternally dear to the living entity, so when the mind is engaged in thought of You one immediately feels the great satisfaction for which he has been hankering life after life.
- ॐ When one’s mind is thus fixed on the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one does not take to any kind of inferior worship or inferior process of self-realization.
- ॐ By attempting to worship a demigod or by taking to any other process of self-realization, the living entity becomes a victim of the cycle of birth and death, and no one can estimate how much the living entity is degraded by entering abominable species of life such as cats and dogs.”

ॐ Śrī Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura has sung that persons who do not take to the devotional service of the Lord but are attracted to the process of philosophical speculation and fruitive activities drink the poisonous results of such actions. Such persons eat all kinds of obnoxious things, such as meat, and take pleasure in alcohol and other intoxicants, and after death they are forced to take birth in lower species of life. Materialistic persons generally worship the transient material body and forget the welfare of the spirit soul within the body. Some take shelter of materialistic science to improve bodily comforts, and some take to the worship of demigods to be promoted to the heavenly planets. Their goal in life is to make the material body comfortable, but they forget the interest of the spirit soul. Such persons are described in the Vedic literature as suicidal, because attachment for the material body and its comforts forces the living entity to wander through the process of birth and death perpetually and suffer the material pangs as a matter of course. The human form of life is a chance for one to understand his position. Therefore the most intelligent person takes to devotional service just to engage his mind, senses and body in the service of the Lord without deviation.

- ॐ The personified Vedas continued:
- ॐ “Dear Lord, there are many mystic yogīs who are very learned and deliberate in achieving the highest perfection of life.
- ॐ They engage themselves in the yogic process of controlling the life-air within the body.
- ॐ Concentrating the mind upon the form of Viṣṇu and controlling the senses very rigidly, they practice the yoga system, but even after much laborious austerity, penance and regulation, they achieve the same destination as persons inimical toward You.

- ॐ In other words, both the yogīs and the great, wise philosophical speculators ultimately attain the impersonal Brahman effulgence, which is automatically attained by the demons who are regular enemies of the Lord.
- ॐ Demons like Kāmsa, Śiśupāla and Dantavakra also attain the Brahman effulgence because they constantly meditate upon the Supreme Personality of Godhead out of enmity.
- ॐ The real point is to concentrate the mind on the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- ॐ Women such as the gopīs were attached to Kṛṣṇa, being captivated by His beauty, and their mental concentration on Kṛṣṇa was provoked by lust.
- ॐ They wanted to be embraced by the arms of Kṛṣṇa, which resemble the beautiful round shape of a snake.
- ॐ Similarly, we, the Vedic hymns, simply concentrate our minds on the lotus feet of Your Lordship.
- ॐ Women like the gopīs concentrate upon You under the dictation of lust, and we concentrate upon Your lotus feet to go back home, back to Godhead.
- ॐ Your enemies also concentrate upon You, thinking always of how to kill You, and yogīs undertake great penances and austerities just to attain Your impersonal effulgence.
- ॐ All these different persons, although concentrating their minds in different ways, achieve spiritual perfection according to their different perspectives because You, O Lord, are equal to all Your devotees.”
- ॐ Śrīdhara Svāmī has composed a nice verse in this regard: “My dear Lord, to be engaged always in thinking of Your lotus feet is very difficult. It is possible for great devotees who have already achieved love for You and are engaged in transcendental loving service. My dear Lord, I wish that my mind may also be fixed somehow or other on Your lotus feet, at least for some time.”
- ॐ The attainment of spiritual perfection by different spiritualists is explained in the Bhagavad-gītā, wherein the Lord says that He grants the perfection the devotee desires in proportion to the devotee’s surrender unto Him. The impersonalists, yogīs and enemies of the Lord enter into the Lord’s transcendental effulgence, but the personalists who follow in the footsteps of the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana or strictly follow the path of devotional service are elevated to the personal abode of Kṛṣṇa, Goloka Vṛndāvana, or to the Vaikuṅṭha planets. Both the impersonalists and the personalists enter the spiritual realm, the spiritual sky, but the impersonalists are given their place in the impersonal Brahman effulgence, whereas the personalists are given a position in the Vaikuṅṭha planets or in the Vṛndāvana planet, according to their desire to serve the Lord in different mellows.
- ॐ The personified Vedas stated that persons born after the creation of this material world cannot understand the existence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead by manipulating their material knowledge. Just as a person born in

a particular family cannot understand the position of his great-grandfather, who lived before the birth of the recent generation, we are unable to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa, or Kṛṣṇa, who exists eternally in the spiritual world. In the Eighth Chapter of the Bhagavad-gītā it is clearly said that the Supreme Person, who lives eternally in the spiritual kingdom of God (sanātana-dhāma), can be approached only by devotional service.

ॐ *As for the material creation, Brahmā is the first created person. Before Brahmā there was no living creature within this material world; it was void and dark until Brahmā was born on the lotus flower that sprouted from the abdomen of Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu is an expansion of Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu is an expansion of Saṅkarṣaṇa, and Saṅkarṣaṇa is an expansion of Balarāma, who is an immediate expansion of Lord Kṛṣṇa. After the creation of Brahmā, the two kinds of demigods were born: demigods like the four brothers Sanaka, Sanātana, Sanandana and Sanat-kumāra, who are representatives of renunciation of the world, and demigods like Marīci and their descendants, who are meant to enjoy this material world. From these two kinds of demigods were gradually manifested all other living entities, including the human beings. Thus all living creatures within this material world, including Brahmā, all the demigods and all the Rākṣasas, are to be considered modern. This means that they were all born recently. Therefore, just as a person born recently in a family cannot understand the situation of his distant forefather, no one within this material world can understand the position of the Supreme Lord in the spiritual world, because the material world has only recently been created. Although they have a long duration of existence, all the manifestations of the material world—namely the time element, the living entities, the Vedas and the gross and subtle material elements—are created at some point. Thus any process manufactured within this created situation as a means for understanding the original source of creation is to be considered modern.*

ॐ *Therefore by the process of self-realization or God realization through fruitive activities, philosophical speculation or mystic yoga, one cannot actually approach the supreme source of everything. When the creation is completely terminated—when there is no existence of the Vedas, no existence of material time, and no existence of the gross and subtle material elements, and when all the living entities are in the nonmanifested stage, resting within Nārāyaṇa—then all these manufactured processes become null and void and cannot act. Devotional service, however, is eternally going on in the eternal spiritual world. Therefore the only factual process of self-realization or God*

realization is devotional service, and one who takes to this process takes to the real process of God realization.

- ॐ In this regard, Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī has composed a verse which conveys the idea that the supreme source of everything, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is so great and unlimited that it is not possible for the living entity to understand Him by any material acquisition. One should therefore pray to the Lord to be engaged in His devotional service eternally, so that by the grace of the Lord one can understand the supreme source of creation. The supreme source of creation, the Supreme Lord, reveals Himself only to the devotees. In the Fourth Chapter of the Bhagavad-gītā the Lord says to Arjuna, “My dear Arjuna, because you are My devotee and because you are My intimate friend, I shall reveal to you the process of understanding Me.” In other words, the supreme source of creation, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, cannot be understood by our own endeavor. We have to please Him with devotional service, and then He will reveal Himself to us. Then we can understand Him to some extent.
- ॐ There are different kinds of philosophers who have tried to understand the supreme source by their mental speculation. There are generally six kinds of mental speculators, whose speculations are called *ṣaḍ-darśana*. All these philosophers are impersonalists and are known as *Māyāvādīs*. Every one of them has tried to establish his own opinion, although they all have later compromised and stated that all opinions lead to the same goal and that every opinion is therefore valid. According to the prayers of the personified Vedas, however, none of them is valid because their process of knowledge is created within the temporary material world. They have all missed the real point: the Supreme Personality of Godhead, or the Absolute Truth, can be understood only by devotional service.
- ॐ One class of philosophers, known as *Mīmāṃsakas*, represented by sages such as Jaimini, have concluded that everyone should engage in pious activities or prescribed duties and that such activities will lead one to the highest perfection. But this is contradicted in the Ninth Chapter of the Bhagavad-gītā, where Lord Kṛṣṇa says that by pious activities one may be elevated to the heavenly planets, but that as soon as one’s accumulation of pious activities is used up, one has to leave the enjoyment of a higher standard of material prosperity in the heavenly planets and immediately come down again to these lower planets, where the duration of life is very short and where the standard of material happiness is of a lower grade. The exact words used in the Bhagavad-gītā are *kṣīṇe puṇye martya-lokaṃ viśanti* [Bg. 9.21]. Therefore the conclusion of the *Mīmāṃsaka* philosophers that pious activities will lead one to the Absolute Truth is not valid. Although a pure devotee is by nature inclined to perform pious activities, no one can attain the favor of the

Supreme Personality of Godhead by pious activities alone. Pious activities may purify one of the contamination caused by ignorance and passion, but this purification is automatically attained by a devotee constantly engaged in hearing the transcendental message of Godhead in the form of the Bhagavad-gītā, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam or similar scriptures. From the Bhagavad-gītā we understand that even a person who is not up to the standard of pious activities but who is absolutely engaged in devotional service is to be considered well situated on the path of spiritual perfection. It is also said in the Bhagavad-gītā that a person who is engaged in devotional service with love and faith is guided from within by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Lord Himself as Paramātmā, or the spiritual master sitting within one's heart, gives the devotee exact directions by which he can gradually go back to Godhead. The conclusion of the Mīmāṃsaka philosophers is not actually the truth which can lead one to real understanding.

- ॐ Similarly, there are Sāṅkhya philosophers, metaphysicians or materialistic scientists who study this cosmic manifestation by their invented scientific method and do not recognize the supreme authority of God as the creator of the cosmic manifestation. They wrongly conclude that the reactions of the material elements are the original cause of creation. The Bhagavad-gītā, however, does not accept this theory. It is clearly said therein that behind the cosmic activities is the direction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This fact is corroborated by the Vedic injunction *sad vā saumyedaṃ agra āsīt*, which means that the origin of the creation existed before the cosmic manifestation. Therefore, the material elements cannot be the cause of the material creation. Although the material elements are accepted as immediate causes, the ultimate cause is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. The Bhagavad-gītā says, therefore, that material nature works under the direction of Kṛṣṇa.
- ॐ The conclusion of the atheistic Sāṅkhya philosophy is that because the effects—the phenomena of this material world—are temporary, or illusory, the cause is therefore also illusory. The Sāṅkhya philosophers are in favor of voidism, but the actual fact is that the original cause is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and that this cosmic manifestation is the temporary manifestation of His material energy. When this temporary manifestation is annihilated, its cause, the eternal existence of the spiritual world, continues as it is, and therefore the spiritual world is called *sanātana-dhāma*, the eternal abode. The conclusion of the Sāṅkhya philosophers is therefore invalid.
- ॐ Then there are the philosophers headed by Gautama and Kaṇāda. They have minutely studied the cause and effect of the material elements and have ultimately come to the conclusion that atomic combination is the original cause of creation. At present the materialistic scientists follow in the footsteps

of Gautama and Kaṇāda, who propounded this theory, called *Paramāṇuvāda*. This theory, however, cannot be supported, for the original cause of everything is not inert atoms. This is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, as well as in the Vedas, wherein it is stated, *eko nārāyaṇa āsīt*: “Only Nārāyaṇa existed before the creation.” *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the *Vedānta-sūtra* also say that the original cause is sentient and both indirectly and directly cognizant of everything within this creation. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says, *ahaṁ sarvasya prabhavaḥ* [Bg. 10.8], “I am the original cause of everything,” and *mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate*, “From Me everything comes into existence.” Therefore, atoms may form the basic combinations of material existence, but these atoms are generated from the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Thus the philosophy of Gautama and Kaṇāda cannot be supported.

- ॐ Similarly, impersonalists headed by Aṣṭāvakra and later by Śaṅkarācārya accept the impersonal Brahman effulgence as the cause of everything. According to their theory, the material manifestation is temporary and unreal, whereas the impersonal Brahman effulgence is reality. But this theory cannot be supported either, because the Lord Himself says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that the Brahman effulgence rests on His personality. It is confirmed in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* that the Brahman effulgence is the personal bodily rays of Kṛṣṇa. As such, impersonal Brahman cannot be the original cause of the cosmic manifestation. The original cause is the all-perfect, sentient Personality of Godhead, Govinda.
- ॐ The most dangerous theory of the impersonalists is that when God comes as an incarnation He accepts a material body created by the three modes of material nature. This *Māyāvāda* theory has been condemned by Lord Caitanya as most offensive. He has said that anyone who accepts the transcendental body of the Personality of Godhead to be made of material nature commits the greatest offense at the lotus feet of Viṣṇu. Similarly, the *Bhagavad-gītā* also states that when the Personality of Godhead descends in a human form, only fools and rascals deride Him. This actually occurred when Lord Kṛṣṇa, Lord Rāma and Lord Caitanya moved within human society as human beings.
- ॐ The personified Vedas condemn the impersonal conception as a gross misrepresentation. In the *Brahma-saṁhitā*, the body of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is described as *ānanda-cinmaya-rasa*. The Supreme Personality of Godhead possesses a spiritual body, not a material body. He can enjoy anything through any part of His body, and therefore He is omnipotent. The limbs of a material body can perform only a particular function; for example, the hands can hold but cannot see or hear. But because the body of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is made of *ānanda-cinmaya-*

rasa and is thus sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha [Bs. 5.1], He can enjoy anything and do everything with any of His limbs. Acceptance of the spiritual body of the Lord as material is dictated by the tendency to equate the Supreme Personality of Godhead with the conditioned soul. The conditioned soul has a material body. Therefore, if God also has a material body, then the impersonalistic theory that the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the living entities are one and the same can be very easily propagated.

ॐ *Factually, when the Supreme Personality of Godhead comes He exhibits a nonmaterial body, and thus there is no difference between His childish body when He is lying on the lap of His mother Yaśodā and His so-called grown-up body fighting with the demons. In His childhood body He also fought with demons, such as Pūtanā, Trṇāvarta and Aghāsura, with strength equal to that with which He fought in His youth against demons like Dantavakra and Śiṣupāla. In material life, as soon as a conditioned soul changes his body he forgets everything of his past body, but from the Bhagavad-gītā we understand that because Kṛṣṇa has a sac-cid-ānanda body, He did not forget instructing the sun-god about the Bhagavad-gītā millions of years ago. The Lord is therefore known as Puruṣottama because He is transcendental to both material and spiritual existence. That He is the cause of all causes means that He is the cause of the spiritual world and of the material world as well. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is omnipotent and omniscient. Therefore, because a material body can be neither omnipotent nor omniscient, the Lord's body is surely not material. The Māyāvāda theory that the Personality of Godhead comes within this material world with a material body cannot be supported by any means.*

ॐ *It can be concluded that all the theories of the materialistic philosophers are generated from temporary illusory existence, like the conclusions in a dream. Such conclusions certainly cannot lead us to the Absolute Truth. The Absolute Truth can be realized only through devotional service. As the Lord says in the Bhagavad-gītā, bhaktyā mām abhijānāti: [Bg. 18.55] “Only by devotional service can one understand Me.” Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī has composed a nice verse in this regard, which states, “My dear Lord, let others engage in false argument and dry speculation, theorizing upon great philosophical theses. Let them loiter in the darkness of ignorance and illusion, falsely enjoying as if very learned scholars, although they are without knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As far as I am concerned, I wish to be liberated simply by chanting the holy names of the all-beautiful Supreme Personality of Godhead—Mādhava, Vāmana, Trinayana, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Śrīpati and Govinda. Simply by chanting Your transcendental names, O Lord Madhupati, let me become free from the contamination of this material existence.”*

ॐ In this way the personified Vedas said,

ॐ “Dear Lord, when a living entity, by Your grace only, comes to the right conclusion about Your exalted transcendental position, he no longer bothers with the different theories manufactured by the mental speculators or so-called philosophers.”

ॐ *This is a reference to the speculative theories of Gautama, Kaṇāda, Patañjali and Kapila (nirīśvara). There are actually two Kapilas: one Kapila, the son of Kardama Muni, is an incarnation of God, and the other is an atheist of the modern age. The atheistic Kapila is often misrepresented to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Lord Kapila the incarnation of Godhead appeared as the son of Kardama Muni long, long ago, during the time of Svāyambhuva Manu; the modern age is the age of Vaivasvata Manu.*

ॐ *According to Māyāvāda philosophy, this manifested world, or material world, is mithyā or māyā, false. The Māyāvādī preaching principle is brahma satyaṃ jagan mithyā: “Only the Brahman effulgence is true, and the cosmic manifestation is illusory, or false.” But according to Vaiṣṇava philosophy this cosmic manifestation is true because it is caused by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In the Bhagavad-gītā the Lord says that He enters within this material world by one of His plenary portions and thus the creation takes place. From the Vedas also we can understand that this asat, or temporary cosmic manifestation, is an emanation from the supreme sat, or fact. From the Vedānta-sūtra also it is understood that everything has emanated from the Supreme Brahman. As such, the Vaiṣṇavas do not take this cosmic manifestation to be false. Because the Supreme Personality of Godhead has entered this cosmic manifestation in the form of His plenary expansion and caused the creation, the Vaiṣṇava philosophers see everything in this material world in relationship with the Supreme Lord.*

ॐ *This conception of the material world is very nicely explained by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, who says that when persons renounce the material world as illusory or false without knowing that the material world is a manifestation of the Supreme Lord, their renunciation is of no value. The Vaiṣṇavas, however, are free of attachment to this world because although the material world is generally accepted as an object of sense gratification, the Vaiṣṇavas are not in favor of sense gratification and are therefore not attached to material activities. The Vaiṣṇava accepts this material world according to the regulative principles of the Vedic injunctions and works without attachment. Since the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the original cause of everything, the Vaiṣṇava sees everything in relationship with Kṛṣṇa, even in this material world. By such advanced knowledge, everything becomes spiritualized. In other words, everything in the material world is already spiritual, but due to our lack of knowledge we see things as material.*

- ॐ The personified Vedas presented the example that those seeking gold do not reject gold earrings, gold bangles or anything else made of gold simply because they are shaped differently from the original gold. All living entities are part and parcel of the Supreme Lord and are qualitatively one, but they are now differently shaped in 8,400,000 species of life, just like many different ornaments manufactured from the same source of gold. As one who is interested in gold accepts all the differently shaped gold ornaments, so a Vaiṣṇava, knowing well that all living entities are of the same quality as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, accepts all living entities as eternal servants of God. As a Vaiṣṇava, then, one has ample opportunity to serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead simply by reclaiming these conditioned, misled living entities, training them in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and leading them back home, back to Godhead. The fact is that the minds of the living entities are now agitated by the three material qualities, and the living entities are therefore transmigrating, as if in dreams, from one body to another. When their consciousness is changed into Kṛṣṇa consciousness, however, they immediately fix Kṛṣṇa within their hearts, and thus their path for liberation becomes clear.
- ॐ In all the Vedas the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the living entities are stated to be of the same quality—*cetana*, or spiritual. This is confirmed in the *Padma Purāṇa*, wherein it is said that there are two kinds of spiritual entities: one is called the *jīva*, and the other is called the Supreme Lord. From Lord Brahmā down to the ant, all living entities are *jīvas*, whereas the Lord is the supreme four-handed Viṣṇu, or Janārdana. Strictly speaking, the word *ātmā* can be applied only to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but because the living entities are His parts and parcels, sometimes the word *ātmā* is applied to them also. The living entities are therefore called *jīvātmā*, and the Supreme Lord is called *Paramātmā*. Both the *Paramātmā* and the *jīvātmā* are within this material world, and therefore this material world has a purpose other than sense gratification. The conception of a life of sense gratification is illusion, but the conception of service by the *jīvātmā* to the *Paramātmā*, even in this material world, is not at all illusory. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person is fully aware of this fact, and thus he does not take this material world to be false but acts in the reality of transcendental service. The devotee therefore sees everything in this material world as an opportunity to serve the Lord. He does not reject anything as material but dovetails everything in the service of the Lord. Thus a devotee is always in the transcendental position, and everything he uses becomes spiritually purified by being used in the Lord's service.
- ॐ Śrīdhara Svāmī has composed a nice verse in this regard: "I worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is always manifested as reality even within this material world, which is considered by some to be false." The

conception of the falsity of this material world is due to a lack of knowledge, but a person advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness sees the Supreme Personality of Godhead in everything. This is actual realization of the Vedic aphorism sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma: “Everything is Brahman.”

ॐ The personified Vedas continued:

ॐ “Dear Lord, less intelligent men take to other ways of self-realization,

ॐ but actually there is no chance of becoming purified from material contamination or of stopping the repeated cycle of birth and death unless one is a thoroughly pure devotee.

ॐ Dear Lord, everything rests on Your different potencies, and everyone is supported by You, as stated in the Vedas: eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān.

ॐ Therefore Your Lordship is the supporter and maintainer of all living entities—demigods, human beings and animals.

ॐ Everyone is supported by You, and You are also situated in everyone’s heart. In other words, You are the root of the whole creation.

ॐ Therefore those who engage in Your devotional service without deviation, who always worship You, actually pour water on the root of the universal tree.

ॐ By devotional service, therefore, one satisfies not only the Personality of Godhead but also all others, because everyone is maintained and supported by Him.

ॐ Because a devotee understands the all-pervasive feature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he is the most practical philanthropist and altruist.

ॐ Such pure devotees, thoroughly engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, very easily overcome the cycle of birth and death, and they as much as jump over the head of death.”

ॐ *A devotee is never afraid of death or of changing his body; his consciousness is transformed into Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and even if he does not go back to Godhead, even if he transmigrates to another material body, he has nothing to fear. A vivid example is Bharata Mahārāja. Although in his next life he became a deer, in the life after that he became completely free from all material contamination and was elevated to the kingdom of God. The Bhagavad-gītā affirms, therefore, that a devotee is never vanquished. A devotee’s path to the spiritual kingdom, back home, back to Godhead, is guaranteed. Even though a devotee slips in one birth, the continuation of his Kṛṣṇa consciousness elevates him further and further, until he goes back to Godhead. Not only does a pure devotee purify his own personal existence, but whoever becomes his disciple also becomes purified and is ultimately able to enter the kingdom of God without difficulty. In other words, not only can a pure devotee easily surpass death, but by his grace his followers can also do so without difficulty. The power of devotional service is so great that a pure devotee can electrify another person by his transcendental instruction on crossing over the ocean of nescience.*

- ॐ The instructions of a pure devotee to his disciple are also very simple. No one feels any difficulty in following in the footsteps of a pure devotee of the Lord. Anyone who follows in the footsteps of recognized devotees, such as Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, the Kumāras, Manu, Kapila, King Prahlāda, King Janaka, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Yamarāja and their followers in disciplic succession, very easily finds the door of liberation open. On the other hand, those who are not devotees but are engaged in uncertain processes of self-realization, such as jñāna, yoga and karma, are understood to be still contaminated. Such contaminated persons, although apparently advanced in self-realization, cannot even liberate themselves, what to speak of those who follow them. Such nondevotees are compared to chained animals, for they are not able to go beyond the jurisdiction of the formalities of a certain type of faith. In the Bhagavad-gītā they are condemned as veda-vāda-rata. They cannot understand that the Vedas deal with activities of the material modes of nature—goodness, passion and ignorance. But as Lord Kṛṣṇa advised Arjuna, one has to go beyond the jurisdiction of the duties prescribed in the Vedas and take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, devotional service. The Lord says in the Bhagavad-gītā, nistrai-guṇyo bhavārjuna: “My dear Arjuna, just try to become transcendental to the Vedic rituals.” This transcendental position beyond the Vedic ritualistic performances is devotional service. In the Bhagavad-gītā the Lord clearly says that persons who are engaged in His devotional service without adulteration are situated in Brahman. Actual Brahman realization means Kṛṣṇa consciousness and engagement in devotional service. The devotees are therefore real brahmacārīs because their activities are always in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, devotional service.
- ॐ The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement therefore issues a supreme call to all kinds of religionists, asking them with great authority to join this movement, by which one can learn how to love God and thus surpass all formulas and formalities of scriptural injunction. A person who cannot overcome the jurisdiction of stereotyped religious principles is compared to an animal chained up by his master. The purpose of all religion is to understand God and develop one’s dormant love of Godhead. If one simply sticks to the religious formulas and formalities but does not become elevated to the position of love of God, he is considered to be a chained animal. In other words, if one is not in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he is not eligible for liberation from the contamination of material existence.
- ॐ Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī has composed a nice verse in this regard: “Let others engage in severe austerities, let others fall to the land from the tops of hills and give up their lives, let others travel to many holy places of pilgrimage for salvation, or let them engage in deep study of philosophy and Vedic literature. Let the mystic yogīs engage in their meditational service, and let the different

sects engage in unnecessary arguing as to which is the best. But it is a fact that unless one is Kṛṣṇa conscious, unless one is engaged in devotional service, and unless one has the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he cannot cross over this material ocean.” An intelligent person, therefore, gives up all stereotyped ideas and joins the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement for factual liberation.

- ॐ The personified Vedas continued their prayers:
- ॐ “Dear Lord, Your impersonal feature is explained in the Vedas. You have no hands, but You can accept all sacrifices offered to You.
- ॐ You have no legs, but You can walk more swiftly than anyone else.
- ॐ Although You have no eyes, You can see whatever happens in the past, present and future.
- ॐ Although You have no ears, You can hear everything that is said.
- ॐ Although You have no mind, You know everyone and everyone’s activities, past, present and future, and yet no one knows who You are.
- ॐ You know everyone, but no one knows You; therefore, You are the oldest and supreme personality.”

ॐ *Similarly, in another part of the Vedas it is said, “You have nothing to do. You are so perfect in Your knowledge and potency that everything becomes manifest simply by Your will. There is no one equal to or greater than You, and everyone acts as Your eternal servant.” Thus the Vedic statements describe that the Absolute has no legs, no hands, no eyes, no ears and no mind, and yet He can act through His potencies and fulfill the needs of all living entities. As stated in the Bhagavad-gītā, His hands and legs are everywhere, for He is all-pervasive. The hands, legs, ears and eyes of all living entities are acting and moving by the direction of the Supersoul sitting within the living entity’s heart. Unless the Supersoul is present, it is not possible for the hands and legs to be active. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is so great, independent and perfect that even without having any eyes, legs and ears, He is not dependent on others for His activities. On the contrary, others are dependent on Him for the activities of their different sense organs. Unless the living entity is inspired and directed by the Supersoul, he cannot act.*

ॐ *The fact is that ultimately the Absolute Truth is the Supreme Person. But because He acts through His different potencies, which are impossible for the gross materialists to see, the materialists accept Him as impersonal. For example, one can observe the personal artistic work in a painting of a flower, and one can understand that the color adjustment, the shape and so on have demanded the minute attention of an artist. The artist’s work is clearly exhibited in a painting of different blooming flowers. But the gross materialist, without seeing the hand of God in such artistic manifestations as*

the actual flowers blooming in nature, concludes that the Absolute Truth is impersonal. Actually, the Absolute is personal, but He is independent. He does not require to personally take a brush and colors to paint the flowers, for His potencies act so wonderfully that it appears as if flowers have come into being without the aid of an artist. The impersonal view of the Absolute Truth is accepted by less intelligent men, because unless one is engaged in the service of the Lord one cannot understand how the Supreme is acting—one cannot even know the Lord’s name. Everything about the Lord’s activities and personal features is revealed to the devotee only through his loving service attitude.

- ॐ In the Bhagavad-gītā it is clearly said, bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasām: [Bg. 5.29] “The Lord is the enjoyer of all sacrifices and of the results of all austerities.” Then again the Lord says, sarva-loka-maheśvaram: “I am the proprietor of all planets.” So that is the position of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. While He is present in Goloka Vṛndāvana enjoying transcendental pleasure in the company of His eternal associates—the gopīs and the cowherd boys—all over the creation His potencies are acting under His direction, without disturbing His eternal pastimes.
- ॐ Only through devotional service can one understand how the Supreme Personality of Godhead, by His inconceivable potencies, simultaneously acts impersonally and as a person. He acts just like the supreme emperor, and many thousands of kings and chiefs work under Him. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the supreme independent controlling person, and all the demigods, including Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Indra (the King of heaven), the king of the moon planet and the king of the sun planet, work under His direction. The Vedas confirm that it is out of fear of the Supreme Personality of Godhead that the sun is shining, the wind is blowing, and fire is distributing heat. The material nature produces all kinds of movable and immovable objects within the material world, but none of them can independently act or create without the direction of the Supreme Lord. All of them act as His tributaries, just like subordinate kings who offer their annual taxes to the emperor.
- ॐ The Vedic injunctions state that every living entity lives by eating the remnants of food offered to the Personality of Godhead. In great sacrifices the injunction is that Nārāyaṇa should be present as the supreme predominating Deity of the sacrifice and that after the sacrifice is performed the remnants of food should be distributed amongst the demigods. This is called yajña-bhāga. Every demigod has an allotment of yajña-bhāga, which he accepts as prasādam. The conclusion is that the demigods are not independently powerful: they are posted as different executives under the order of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and they eat prasādam, or the

remnants of sacrifices. They execute the order of the Supreme Lord exactly according to His plan. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is in the background, and because His orders are carried out by others, it appears that He is impersonal. In our grossly materialistic way, we cannot conceive how the Supreme Person is above the impersonal activities of material nature. Therefore the Lord explains in the Bhagavad-gītā that there is nothing superior to Him and that the impersonal Brahman is subordinately situated as a manifestation of His personal rays. Śrīpāda Śrīdhara Svāmī has composed a nice verse in this regard: “Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who has no material senses but through whose direction and will all the material senses are working. He is the supreme potency of all material senses or sense organs. He is omnipotent, and He is the supreme performer of everything. Therefore He is worshipable by everyone. Unto that Supreme Person do I offer my respectful obeisances.”

ॐ Kṛṣṇa Himself declares in the Bhagavad-gītā that because He is transcendental to all sentient and insentient beings, He is known as *Puruṣottama*, which means the Supreme Personality. (*Puruṣa* means “person,” and *uttama* means “supreme” or “transcendental.”) In another place the Lord says that as the air is situated in the all-pervading sky, everyone is situated in Him, and everyone is acting under His direction.

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