

Chaitanya, The Golden Avatar

Saul Judoews

Teaching of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Golden Avatar. He came to reveal to us the science of God and the love for Krishna, God, the Supreme Person.

[New version clearer, more complete, more accessible and faithful to the teaching of the Lord, which I retransmit as is without any deviation]

Lord Chaitanya, the Golden Avatar, is the only refuge of the miserable, the most fallen, and the only hope of those devoid of all spiritual knowledge.

Almighty Lord Krishna manifests through five distinct powers. Although unique and without a second, He does not take on five different aspects in order to fulfill five specific spiritual functions. And this diversity is intended to be both eternal and blissful, in contrast to the monotony of undifferentiated unity. Absolute Truth, Krishna, God, the Supreme Person, exists eternally with its various energies. Now, Lord Chaitanya Himself appeared surrounded by his various powers, five in number, so that he is said to be Krishna surrounded by his various energies. There is no difference between energy and its source, and so is the appearance of the Lord in the form of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu surrounded by his four companions, Nityananda Prabhu, Advaita Prabhu, Gadadhar and Shrivasa. No spiritual difference exists between these distinct manifestations of the Supreme Lord as incarnation, emanation and energies. They simply represent five aspects of the one Absolute Truth thus deployed, in order to express the richness of the spiritual flavors inherent in the Absolute Truth. These are respectively the form of the devotee, the identity of the devotee, the embodiment of the devotee, the pure devotee and devotional energy.

Of these five manifestations of the variety of Absolute Truth, the form of Chaitanya is that of the original Lord, Krishna. Nityananda is that of the first emanation of the Supreme Lord and, likewise, Advaita Prabhu is an incarnation of the Sovereign Lord. All three belong to the order of the Supreme and Absolute Truth. Shrivasa represents the pure devotee, and Gadadhar, the internal energy of the Lord promoting the evolution of pure devotion. Thus, although they are numbered among the Supreme and Absolute Truths, Shrivasa and Gadadhar embody distinct energies of the Supreme Lord. In other words, they do not differ from the energy source, but are nonetheless differently manifested, in order to allow various spiritual exchanges. The precise purpose of the advent of Lord Chaitanya just a few centuries ago was to establish the truth that There is a Supreme God who sustains countless living beings. Lord Chaitanya therefore appeared Himself to convince the masses of the true nature of the relationship which unites each being with the Supreme Lord, Krishna. Lord Krishna appears in the guise of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Golden Avatar, in order

to spread the most sublime of messages, the collective chanting of the holy names of the Lord, the devotional service offered to his own Person and the love for God.

Whenever Lord Kṛiṣṇa desires to appear on earth in his human guise, He is preceded by all his devotees, who take the roles of his father, his tutor and his companions. All of these characters appear before Him. Thus, before the advent of Lord Kṛiṣṇa Chaitanya Mahāprabhu appeared Śrī Mādhavavendra Purī, his devotee; Śrī Ívara Purī, his tutor; Śrīmatī Śacīmātā, his mother; Śrī Jagannātha Miśra, his father; and Sri Advaita, his intimate companion. It is to revive these five feelings of eternal love: Neutrality, servitude, friendship, parental affection and the feeling of love, that Kṛiṣṇa Himself, the Absolute Being, descends into our galaxy, as He does so in others as well. This is how He reveals his transcendent entertainment to Vraja (*village in India*), so that men can be drawn to this sphere of activities and let go of their material ties which are only mere imitations. Having fully revealed all of these entertainments, the Lord then leaves this world. Kṛiṣṇa takes pleasure in his absolute entertainments as long as He wishes, then disappears. But now, having left this world, these thoughts come to Him:

It is a long time since I have granted to the world the pure service of love offered to Myself. However, deprived of this bond of love, the material world loses all reason to exist.

Taking with Me these pure devotees, I will descend into the material universe and rejoice in varied and wonderful entertainments, unknown even to Vaikuṅṭha, (the spiritual planets). I will make known entertainments which amaze Me Myself.

The Lord rarely grants pure service of absolute love. Unless, however, to have such a love for God, free from all interested desire as well as from all empiricist speculation, it remains impossible to attain the perfection of existence.

The Lord said: *All over the universe, beings worship Me according to scriptural codes. But the simple adherence to these regulatory principles is not enough to acquire the feelings of love which animate the devotees of Vrajabhūmi, (village of India where Krishna unveiled his entertainments).*

After coming to earth 5,000 years ago, Lord Kṛiṣṇa thought that He had not really made known personal feelings: Neutrality, bondage, friendship, parental affection and loving feeling, when He interacts with his devotees on a transcendent level. One can understand the science of God in the light of the Vedic writings, (*the original holy writings also called The true gospel*) and thus become a devotee of the Lord, who will worship him according to the regulatory principles stipulated by these writings; but no one, by this way, knows how the inhabitants of Vrajabhūmi serve Kṛiṣṇa. It is indeed impossible by the only observance of the rites and the regulatory principles stated in the sacred texts to conceive the nature of the exchanges in which the Lord engages in Vṛindāvana (*village of India and in his transcendent kingdom*). Respect for scriptural precepts may allow one to appreciate more the glories of the Lord, but

never to come into direct contact with Him. To give too much importance to the understanding of the prestigious glories of the Lord reduces the possibility of intimate exchanges of love with his person. And it is to unveil the principles that lie at the basis of such exchanges of love that the Lord decides to appear as Chaitanya. The regulated practice of devotional service inspired by respect and reverence can make it possible to reach Vaikuṅṭha, the spiritual world, and to obtain the four kinds of liberation: *[To obtain the same perfections as the Lord, to obtain a form similar to that of the Lord, to live in the personal company of the Lord and to reside on a Vaikuṅṭha, spiritual planet.]*

Krishna, God, the Supreme Person said: *I will open the way for the religion of this age, by the collective chanting of the holy name of the Lord. I will thus give the world to taste the four forms of sweet exchanged which are attached to the service of love and devotion, and thereby make it dance with ecstasy.*

Accepting the role of a devotee, I will teach by My example the practice of devotional service.

My plenary emanations are sufficient to establish the religious principles specific to each age. But none other than Me can bestow the loving service that the inhabitants of Vraja perform.

In order to teach the highest principles of spirituality, the Lord appeared in the guise of a devotee in the person of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Golden Avatar. There are many blessing Avatars, but only Krishna can bestow the love of God on submissive souls.

Upon these thoughts, Kṛiṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, descended in person to Nadia (District of West Bengal State, East India), at the dawn of the Iron Age, the present age, known to be the age of strife, strife, hypocrisy and sin. The Iron Age has a duration of 432,000 years, of which only 4,586 had passed when Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu appeared. There are 5,000 years appeared Krishna in his personal form, original and absolute, and recently it was 500 years ago, it appeared as Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Golden Avatar, in this same design, to show special mercy to the fallen souls of this present age. Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu appeared on February 18, 1486 to spread the song of the holy name, to spread the love of God and to bring fallen souls back to him. Raising his arms, chanting the holy name and laying on all his gaze charged with love, He dispels all sins and overwhelms beings with love for God.

Here are the two reasons which gave birth to the Lord's desire to descend into this world: He wanted to taste the essence of the sweet feelings born of love for God and He wanted to spread spontaneous devotional service throughout the earth. Also He is celebrated as the infinitely blessed and as the most merciful. Thus appeared to Navadvīpa (Bengal) Chaitanya, like a lion. His build, his power, his resounding voice, because very beautiful and serious, everything in Him reminds us of the lion.

Kṛiṣṇa, God, the Supreme and absolute Person, is the Lord in his personal, primordial and original form. The original Lord, Krishna, appeared in Navadvīpa (*India*) in the guise of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. He is the source of all Avatars, and appeared in person in the form of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Thus, Lord Chaitanya (or Caitanya) is the Supreme and Absolute Truth.

Lord Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is God, the Supreme Person. He is indeed Krishna, the Supreme Lord.

The sages call him Lord Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Lord Krishna Caitanya Mahāprabhu, or Lord Krishna Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

Caitanya means: Active Force, Conscious, Knowing.

Chaitanya means: Pure Consciousness, Vital Principle.

Krishna Caitanya means: All-living seductive force.

Krishna Chaitanya literally means: whose consciousness is Krishna.

Lord Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, who is in fact Krishna Himself, came to earth 500 years ago as a very great sage, a great Pure Soul, a great Devotee of God, to teach by example to the human beings the path of spiritual realization proper to the age in which we live, namely the *Sankirtana* the hymn, the song of the Holy Names of God.

In the Iron Age, the one in which we are now living, the Lord incarnates to teach the chanting of the Holy Name of Krishna. Putting on a yellow complexion, He personally shows people how to love God through the chanting of Krishna's name and Himself manifests his love for God through song and dance, surrounded by thousands of people who follow him. The advent of this Avatar of the Supreme Lord is specifically predicted in the pages of the Srimad-Bhagavatam, Words of Wisdom, (11.5.32), where it can be read that in this Kali Age or Iron Age, the Lord is embodied as a devotee who sings incessantly:

*Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare /
Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.*

Lord Chaitanya Mahāprabhu appeared to spread the chanting of the Holy Name, spread the love of God and bring fallen souls back to Him.

Krishna had said: *I will appear in the holy land of Navadvīpa as the son of Śacīdevī. (Kṛiṣṇa-yāmala)*

When in the age of Kali, (the iron age, the present age), the time comes to begin the movement of saṅkīrtana [Any activity which aims to spread the glories of God for the benefit of all. Its main manifestation is to sing in public the song of the Holy Names of the Lord, always accompanied by dances and distribution of consecrated food.], I appear as the son of Śacīdevī. (Vāyu Purāṇa)

It happens that, in the guise of a devotee of God, I descend in person into the material universe, and more particularly in the age of Kali, where I appear as the son of Śacī in order to open the way to saṅkīrtana movement. (Brahma-yāmala)

O Maheśvarī, the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa himself, the very soul of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and the Master of the creation, maintenance and annihilation of the universe, descends into this world in the form of the Avatar of Gold. (Ananta-saṁhitā)

Knowing that He [Lord Caitanya or Chaitanya] would be the Avatar for the age of Kali, the present age, sage Gargamuni had already predicted his coming at the ceremony where Kṛṣṇa received his name.

This child [Kṛṣṇa], now appeared with a transcendent dark complexion, affects three other skin tones, white, red, and yellow, depending on the age in which He manifests.

White, red and yellow, these are the three respective skin tones of the Lord, the bridegroom of the goddess of fortune, when He appears in the ages of silver, copper and iron. So, during the Copper Age, the Lord had appeared in a dark complexion (Black Blue) form.

In the Copper Age, the Supreme Lord appears in his dark complexion form. Dressed in yellow, he carries his personal weapons and adorns himself with the Kaustubh stone and the Śrīvatsa. These are the signs that characterize him.

The religion of the Iron Age consists in spreading the glories of the Holy Name. And this is the sole reason for the advent of the Lord in the form of Chaitanya, the Avatar of the golden complexion.

The Lord appears through the specific manifestations for each of the four ages. The Golden Age, the Silver Age, the Copper Age and the Iron Age. For each of these ages, the Avatar takes on a different complexion, respectively white, red, blue, black and yellow. In the Copper Age, for example, appeared Lord Krishna with a blue-black complexion, and in the Iron Age, Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, with a yellow complexion. One should not regard the Lord as an Avatar like everyone else, but rather as the source of all Avatars.

Krishna claims to be the Father of all beings, and shows infinite goodness. This is why He descends into this world, to call to Himself fallen souls, souls conditioned by matter, to bring them back to their eternal home, to his kingdom, where they will live eternally with Him. To save these souls, Lord Krishna himself sometimes comes in his personal, original form, or as an Avatar. Sometimes He sends His intimate servants, His sons, His companions or even His qualified representatives, the authentic spiritual masters.

All Avatars are plenary emanations of the Lord, or emanations of his plenary emanations, but Krishna Himself is God, the Supreme Lord in his primordial, original and Absolute form. Whenever in any place of the universe the demonic disbelievers

sow disorder, the Lord appears to protect his devotees. We must especially distinguish Krishna, the Supreme Lord, from all other Avatars. If we count him all the same among the Avatars, it is because in his infinite mercy, He descended from his spiritual realm [*the word Avatar literally means descending*]. All Avatars, including the Lord in his primordial form, descend to different planets in the universe as well as to different living species, in order to fulfill specific missions. Sometimes the Lord comes in person, and at other times He delegates his various plenary emanations, or their emanations, or even his partial emanations, directly or indirectly endowed by Him with powers. By nature, the Lord fully possesses all excellences, beauty, wealth, fame, power, wisdom and renunciation, and if it happens that his plenary emanations or their emanations show only a part of them when they appear, it is only, let's understand it, to meet the requirements of their respective missions.

So, all Avatars, all divine manifestations, are described in the original holy scriptures. An impostor would therefore have no chance to pass himself off as an Avatar to men who know the original holy scriptures. Especially since an Avatar does not claim this title for itself. These are the great sages who agree on his Divinity in the light of the indications given in the verses, which mention the characteristics specific to each Avatar, as well as his particular mission.

Lord Chaitanya is the Supreme Being descended in person to call to Himself the cohorts of fallen souls. The precise purpose of its advent, just a few centuries ago, was to establish the Vedic truth that There is a Supreme God who maintains countless living beings. Lord Chaitanya therefore appeared Himself to convince the masses of the true nature of the relationship which unites each being to the Supreme. He revealed the highest level of God's love, the highest perfection man can achieve.

He is the master of the six perfections; beauty, wealth, fame, power, wisdom and renunciation, for He is none other than Lord Kṛiṣṇa. In him are found in their fullness eternity, knowledge and happiness. He is God, the Supreme and Original Lord, descended into this world in the person of Chaitanya to teach detachment, spiritual knowledge, devotional service to the masses and pure love for God. Glorified as the Original Person, God, Chaitanya is compared to an ocean of mercy. He ceaselessly preaches the love of God through the movement of sankirtana, (*chanting of the Holy Names of Krishna*) and intelligent beings immediately adopt this path of spiritual realization.

For the benefit of all human society, not only does the Lord manifest himself as Manu [*the Father of mankind*] in order to properly rule the universe, but He also appears in the form of a preceptor, a spiritualist, of a great sage or other, for the good of humanity. The duty of men, therefore, is to follow the course of action defined by the Supreme Lord. In the present age, the essence of all Vedic knowledge will be found in the Bhagavad-gita, [*Words of Krishna, Christ, God, the Supreme Person*] which is personally spoken by God. This same Divine Person, appearing in the guise of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Golden Avatar, is spreading the teachings of the

Bhagavad-gita throughout the world. In other words, God, the Supreme Person, Krishna, is so good and so merciful to mankind that He always remains anxious to bring fallen souls back to their original home, to Him. Lord Chaitanya, the Avatar of Gold, is a very handsome boy whose complexion is like molten gold.

Teaching of Lord Chaitanya mahaprabhu to his disciple Rupa Gosvami.

The universe is populated by innumerable living beings who, through their own self-interested acts, transmigrate (*reincarnate*) from one species to another and roam from planet to planet. This is how their imprisonment in matter has been perpetuated since time immemorial. These living beings are infinitesimal fragments of the Supreme Soul, spiritual fragments whose dimensions it is possible to know. The distinct soul (*distinct from God*) measures approximately one ten thousandth of the tip of a hair.

The Lord continues his teaching by emphasizing the existence of two classes of living beings: those who are eternally liberated and those who are eternally conditioned by matter. These in turn are subdivided into two categories, mobile beings and immobile beings. Trees, which cannot move, belong to this second category. The others, the mobile beings, such as birds and beasts, are further subdivided into three categories: those who fly in the air (*birds*), those who swim in water (*aquatic beings*) and those who move on dry land (*humans and other animals*). Of the millions upon billions of earthly beings, humans are only a minority, most of whom know nothing about spirituality, are unclean and do not believe in the existence of God, the Supreme Person. In short, they live like animals. They can therefore be subtracted from the number of human beings who live in a civilized manner.

All things considered, we hardly find a handful of humans who believe in the holy scriptures and in the existence of God, even in sound conduct. Now, those who appreciate the value of such principles are called *Aryans*, in that they believe in spiritual evolution. Among those who believe in the holy scriptures and in the progress of human civilization, we recognize two classes, the righteous and the ungodly. The former generally engage in self-interested action, that is, in virtuous acts the fruits of which are likely to increase their sensory pleasures. Of the masses who belong to this group, very few get to know the Absolute Truth, like the philosophers. Among hundreds of thousands of such empiricists (*philosophers*), only a handful will actually achieve liberation and understand at least theoretically that being in itself is not made of material elements, but rather is a soul, spiritual, distinct from matter.

The simple understanding, even if theoretical, of this doctrine is enough to rank us among the so-called *liberated* beings, except that the truly liberated soul is the one which grasps its intrinsic condition of eternal servant of the Lord, of which it is a part.

integral. And the liberated soul that engages with faith and devotion in the service of the Lord is referred to as the Krishna conscious person. People who are thus Krishna conscious are freed from all material desire. As for those who have only a theoretical knowledge of the fact that the distinct being is not made of matter, they can still nourish certain desires, although they can technically be classified among liberated souls. Their main desire: to become one with God, the Supreme Person. In general, very attached to Vedic rites and virtuous works, they only perform them with a view to enjoying a very material prosperity. Even if some manage to transcend material pleasures, they still seek to derive enjoyment from the spiritual world by being grounded in the very existence of the Supreme Lord. Still others seek the perfection provided by the supernatural powers associated with the practice of yoga. As long as such longings haunt his heart, a person cannot know and understand the nature of pure devotional service. There is no peace for those who remain disturbed by such desires. In truth, no peace is possible unless one renounces all desire for material perfection. Krishna's devotees, who desire no such thing, are thus the only serene inhabitants of the material universe, as confirmed by the Srimad-Bhagavatam (6.14.5):

O great sage, among millions of liberated beings and having acquired the powers of yoga, it is very rare to find a single one who, totally serene, devotes himself fully to God, the Supreme Person.

Lord Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is God, the Supreme person. He is the one who supports, who protects, who directs, who stimulates and who creates. All beings dwell in God, the Supreme Lord, and he himself lives in everyone's heart. He is absolute power. Let us imagine, therefore, the power of the brain which maintains in space, by the force of gravity, the myriads of planets and satellites, and which has created the immeasurable space in which they evolve.

The Lord said: *I enter each of the planets, and by My energy I keep them in their orbit.*

If Lord Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu did not support them with his mighty grip, all the worlds would scatter like dust in the air. Modern scholars can hardly provide a practical explanation of this inconceivable strength of the Lord. The powers of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu are multi-faceted. It is through his various agents, endowed by him with powers, that the Lord maintains and protects all that is. But he personally protects only his devotees, like a king who takes his children under his own aegis while entrusting his helpers with the care of protecting the state and looking after its needs.

The Lord makes Himself the guide of the servants of God. He personally instructs his sincere devotees, so that they will make sure progress on the path of love and devotion to the Lord and attain the kingdom of God. The Lord is also the receptacle of all the adoration offered to him by his devotees, for whom he embodies the goal, the ultimate objective. For them, the Lord creates a situation favorable to the development of a feeling of transcendent love towards him. For this, He sometimes

forcibly withdraws them from all their material attachments and makes all their means of material protection useless.

Nothing directly links the Lord to the creation, maintenance and destruction of the material universe, for He eternally tastes the transcendent joy that comes to Him by the deployment of his internal power. Nevertheless, in order to set in motion the material and marginal energies (*constituted by the distinct beings*), He takes the form of Supreme Avatars, endowed with powers similar to His own. These Supreme Avatars also belong to the order of divine manifestations, since none differ from the original form of the Supreme Lord. The distinct beings (*the distinct individual souls of God that each of us is*) on the other hand, are tiny fragments of his person and are not qualitatively different from him. They are directed to the material universe in order to satisfy their desires for independence through the pleasures of this world, but they nevertheless remain subject to the supreme will of the Lord, which itself takes the form of the Supreme Soul, in order to supervise the fulfillment of their desires for material enjoyment. No doubt they are an integral part of the Supreme Lord, from whom they do not differ qualitatively, but they are eternally subordinate to him. They never equal him, and neither do they form with God a single Being. This manifestation of the Lord who accompanies the distinct being is called the Supreme Soul. No one, therefore, should place the infinitesimal soul and the Supreme Being on the same equal footing.

In the Lord rests the entire cosmic manifestation, the animate as well as the inanimate. The being has two types of material body, one subtle, ethereal, formed of mind, intelligence and false ego, and the other coarse, of dense material, formed of the five fundamental elements; earth, water, air, fire, ether, so it evolves on three planes, gross or material, subtle or ethereal, and spiritual. But he is first and foremost a spiritual soul.

The Lord thus explains that from the myriads of beings who wander in this material world, very rare and fortunate is the one who, by the grace of Krishna and the spiritual master, receives the seed of devotion. The man of piety or religion is generally inclined to venerate different gods in different temples; now, if by good fortune, and even without knowing it, he offers his homage to Lord Visnu and wins the favor of a devotee of the Lord, he immediately qualifies himself to approach the Supreme Being, God. This clearly emerges from the life of the great sage Narada, which the Srimad-Bhagavatam recounts. Having served devotees during his previous life, Narada was blessed by these devotees of the Lord and acquired great wisdom, as his name of Narada Muni (*Muni means the sage*) now attests.

Krishna devotees normally show great compassion towards conditioned souls. Without even being invited, they will go door to door to enlighten people and remove them from the darkness of ignorance, infusing them in various facets with the knowledge of their intrinsic nature, which is to be engaged in devotional service, Krishna consciousness. These devotees of the Lord are invested by him with the

power to impart devotional consciousness, or Krishna consciousness to the masses. Recognized as proven spiritual masters, it is by their grace that the conditioned soul obtains the seed of devotional service. The unmotivated mercy of God can first of all be appreciated when one meets a genuine spiritual master, able to elevate the conditioned soul to the highest devotion. This is why Lord Chaitanya says that the grace of the authentic spiritual master acquires us that of the Lord, and vice versa. By the grace of the spiritual master and Krishna, one receives the seed of devotion. Then it remains to plant it in the garden of his heart, like a gardener planting the seed of a precious tree. Once the seed is sown, it must be watered by singing and listening to the Holy Name of the Supreme Lord, or by taking part in exchanges on the science of devotion in the company of pure devotees. When the seed germinates, the devotional plant begins to grow freely. Fully blossomed, she crosses the limits of our galaxy to enter the spiritual world, the realm of Transcendence where everything is bathed in the radiance of the Lord. Little by little, she reached the planet Goloka Vrindavane, to take refuge there at the lotus feet of Krishna. This is the ultimate goal of devotional service. Accessing this position, the plant produces the fruit of love for God. However, it is required of the devotee, gardener of the Absolute, to water the plant every day by singing and listening. If it does not water its root in this way, the plant risks drying out.

The Lord then informed Rupa Gosvami of another threat related to the cultivation of the devotional plant. Indeed, when it has grown somewhat, an animal can come and eat its leaves or destroy it. When a plant loses its leaves in this way, it frequently dries up and dies. It is therefore necessary to ensure that the *animals* do not disturb the devotional plant, the animals in question being the offenses committed against the pure devotees of the Lord. Such offenses are compared to a raging elephant which, if it does enter a garden, causes serious damage to the plants and trees therein. Likewise, an offense against a pure devotee of God can significantly hinder our progress in devotional service. It is therefore advisable to protect the plant from devotion by surrounding it with an adequate fence, that is to say by avoiding any offense against pure devotees. There are ten of these offenses against pure devotees, or the Holy Name of Krishna.

The first is to blaspheme against the great devotees who strive to spread the glories of the Holy Name throughout the world. The wretch who, without foundation, shows himself hostile to a devotee seeking to spread the Holy Name throughout the world, in accordance with the directives of his spiritual master, commits the worst offense at the feet of the Holy Name. Krishna and his Holy Name being identical, the Lord does not tolerate that one denounces a pure devotee who spreads his Name everywhere.

The second offense is to deny that Lord Krishna embodies Absolute Truth. No difference distinguishes its Names from its Attributes, Forms, Entertainment and Activities. Whoever thinks he sees one is therefore also guilty of an offense. Being Supreme, no one can surpass or even equal the Lord. Therefore, anyone who identifies Krishna or his Name with any deity, or with a celestial being, is also

committing an offense. Putting the Supreme Lord and heavenly beings on an equal footing is hardly compatible with the practice of devotional service.

The third offense: to consider the spiritual master as an ordinary man. The fourth: to denigrate Vedic literature and its supplements, the Puranas. The fifth: to believe that the glories attributed to the Holy Name are exaggerated. The sixth: distorting the meaning of the Holy Name. The seventh offense is to perform sinful acts by relying on the chanting of the Holy Name to nullify the consequences. It is understood that this song delivers us from all consequences associated with our errors, but we must not believe that we can then continue to sin by perversion. This would be the greatest offense.

The eighth offense consists in comparing the chanting of the Holy Name to religious rites, to sacrifices, to austerity or to renunciation. This song is worth as much as the supremely personal presence of God. Acts of piety can certainly help us draw closer to the Supreme Being, but when they are performed for a material purpose, offense results. The ninth offense is to teach the glories of the Holy Name of the Divine to unbelievers. And the tenth and final offense is to remain attached to material things despite listening to and chanting the Holy Names. The principle is that this song, if it is devoid of any offense, will lift us up to the plane of liberation, where we will be free from all material attachment. Anyone who chants the Holy Names and remains attached to the matter is therefore committing an offense.

Other factors can also disrupt the devotional plant, as the weeds of material desires accompany its growth. When a person makes some progress in devotional service, many naturally want to become disciples while offering some material benefits. Whoever lets himself be captivated by the attraction of having many disciples and of taking advantage of the amenities they can provide him, to the point of forgetting his duty as an authentic spiritual master, will see the growth of his devotional plant hindered. The mere fact of enjoying material advantages risks making us slaves to the resulting comfort.

The quest for liberation is also detrimental to devotional service, as is neglecting the restrictions and prohibitions stipulated by the authoritative scriptures on the matter: avoiding any illicit sexual intercourse, any intoxicating substance, any food other than that which has first offered to Krishna, the consecrated meal. (*No meat, fish and eggs*) as well as any game of chance. Anyone who does not strictly adhere to these principles risks serious disruption in the performance of devotional service. The very act of aspiring to material fame is another source of hindrance to the practice of devotional service.

Any neglect in these respects risks fostering the growth of weeds that may hinder our progress on the path of devotion. It is simply a matter of understanding that watering a garden not only accelerates the growth of the desired plant, but also the growth of unwanted ones, and the gardener may not see the threat posed by these. It is

therefore the duty of the aspirant to devotional service to pull them out. In other words, beware of any unwanted plant, and that of devotion will grow wonderfully until reaching the ultimate goal, Goloka Vrindavane. Reaching this supreme planet is the true fruit of the devotional plant. When the living being engaged in devotional service savors the fruit of God's love, he forgets all ritual activity and all form of religiosity aimed at improving his financial situation. He then aspires neither to satisfy his senses nor to become one with the Supreme Lord by blending in his radiance. Spiritual science and transcendent bliss have many facets, including the sacrificial rites recommended by the Vedas (*the original holy scriptures*), the austerities and duties associated with piety, not to mention the practice of yoga. All these activities generate different results for which the practices, results certainly fascinating for those who have not yet risen to the level of the service of spiritual love for the Lord. In this context, let us quote the following analogy: the victim of a snakebite remains unconscious until he breathes the prescribed remedy, which will help him regain consciousness immediately. Latent in each of us, love for God can be awakened by performing pure devotional service.

What does this service consist of and what are its manifestations?

This is precisely what Lord Chaitanya then explained to Roupa Gosvami. Pure devotion leaves no room for desires other than to progress in Krishna consciousness. Krishna consciousness does not admit the worship of any celestial being or any other form of Krishna, nor does the philosophical speculation of empiricists (*philosophers*) or self-interested action. It is advisable to get rid of all these defilements. The devotee should only accept that which is favorable to the harmony of body and soul, and he should reject that which increases the demands of the body. Only the elements essential to the survival of the body can be accepted. By putting the bodily needs on the back burner in this way, one can focus on developing one's Krishna consciousness through chanting of the Holy Name of God. Pure devotional service consists in absorbing all of one's senses in the service of the Lord. For now, these are all plagued by various designations because our bodies are too. So we believe we belong to a given family, community or nation. So many designations are attached to the body. Likewise, if the senses that are part of the body are engaged in serving the family, community or nation, one cannot cultivate Krishna consciousness. It is therefore a question of purifying the senses. Realizing fully that one belongs body and soul to Krishna and recognizing his identity as an eternal servant of Krishna, if one employs his senses in serving the Lord, only then does one establish oneself at the level of pure devotional service.

The pure devotee adopts the sublime loving service of the Lord, but rejects any form of liberation aimed at any personal enjoyment. In the Srimad-Bhagavatam (3.29.11-13), Avatar Kapiladeva explains the nature of pure devotional service: from the moment the pure devotee hears of the glories and sublime attributes of God, the

Supreme Person, is in the heart of each living being, his mind is drawn towards him just as the waters of the Ganges flow towards the ocean. A spontaneous attraction to the service of the Supreme Lord is what characterizes pure devotional service, which consists in serving the Lord unconditionally and without material barriers. The pure devotee neither aspires to live on the same planet as the Lord, nor to share his wealth, nor to assume a form identical to his own, nor to be in his company, nor to merge in him. Even if the Lord offered him such rewards, he would refuse them. It must be understood here that the devotee is so absorbed in the service of the Lord's spiritual love that he has little time to think of any benefit other than the very fact of serving him. Just as the materialistic businessman thinks of nothing else when going about business, so the pure devotee busy serving the Lord dreams of nothing else.

It is understood that everyone so absorbed in the service of the Lord has reached the highest level of devotion. Only this sublime service of love allows one to escape the influence of Maya (*the illusion*) and to savor the pure love of God. As long as one seeks material enjoyment or liberation, called the two witches of bewitchment, one cannot appreciate the flavor of the service of spiritual love and devotion offered to the Lord.

Devotional service is the manifestation of love for God, and the expression of feelings for Krishna.

There are three levels of devotional service: that of initial learning, that of realization, and that of pure love for God, the final step. At the learning stage, the neophyte has nine different ways to cultivate devotional service: listening to the glories and entertainment of God, chanting his Holy Names, remembering his Divine Person, serving him in thoughts, in word and deed, He worship with sixteen accessories offer prayers become his servant (*his servant*), consider it as our best friend, and all abandon him. These nine practices are part of the pure service of love and devotion offered to the Lord. The one who has dedicated his or her life to the service of Krishna, God, the Supreme Person through these nine activities is to be considered the most educated, for he / she has attained complete knowledge. Whoever engages with faith and devotion in singing and listening sees all his material apprehensions gradually vanish. The more his faith in devotional service grows, the more assured he will reach a higher level of perfection. Thus can he establish himself firmly in devotion, increase his attraction and attachment to it, and finally feel the ecstasy, identified with the first stage of love for God, which comes after having diligently cultivated the service of God. devotion. Once this stage is reached, continued practice of singing and listening gradually strengthens one's devotion until it turns into true love for God.

In the stage of love for God, various transcendental manifestations appear, such as affection, emotion, ecstasy and an attachment of extreme intensity. Going from one level to another is like the gradual thickening of cane juice when it is cooked. First liquid, it becomes more and more dense under the effect of evaporation, until it turns into molasses. Then, it crystallizes, turns into sugar and, finally, into candy

sugar... Likewise, the transcendent love for God, the Supreme Person, develops in stages, in a progressive way. It is only when one truly establishes oneself on the absolute level that one becomes steadfast in the love of God. Until then, there is always a risk of relapse into the material. Beyond that develop other manifestations, such; bliss or permanent ecstatic state, ecstasy or symptoms of ecstatic love for Krishna, symptoms of pure emotion towards Krishna, and expressions of deep love for Krishna, God, the Supreme Person. When these four ingredients are added to the constancy which characterizes the purely spiritual existence, occurs what it is called an exchange of transcendental flavor. Thus the reciprocal exchange of love between the beloved is generally called the transcendent flavor of the exchange of loving feelings between the devotee and the Supreme Being, God. Be that as it may, let us not forget that the achievement of such exchanges requires that one first establish oneself in constancy, at the stage of transcendental flavor. The very foundation of the transcendent flavor is in fact the exchange of loving feelings, the other manifestations serving as auxiliaries to the development of transcendent love.

The ecstasy associated with transcendent love has two parts: the context and the source of exaltation. The context itself divides into two elements, the subject and the object. The exchange of devotional service represents the subject, and Krishna embodies the object. As for the source of exaltation, it derives from the spiritual and absolute attributes of Krishna, which bewitch the devotee and incite him to serve him, the Supreme Lord. Mayavadi philosophers (*impersonalists, who believe only in the formless aspect of God*) claim that Absolute Truth is devoid of any specific attribute, but philosophers who dedicate their lives to Krishna make it clear that Absolute Truth is only spiritual in this sense that its attributes are not material. Indeed, the spiritual attributes of the Lord are so glorious and enchanting that they fascinate even the liberated beings. In truth, even souls already established in self-realization feel the attraction of the sublime attributes of Krishna. It must be concluded that these, far from being material, are revealed to be as pure as they are transcendent in nature.

Supreme ecstasy is characterized by thirteen transcendent manifestations:

- 1) dance,
- 2) roll on the floor,
- 3) sing,
- 4) clap your hands,
- 5) see your hair stand on end,
- 6) thunder,
- 7) yawn,
- 8) breathe heavily,
- 9) forget social conventions,
- 10) salivate,
- 11) laugh,
- 12) have a headache, and
- 13) cough.

These symptoms do not all appear simultaneously, but manifest themselves through the exchange of spiritual flavors. Sometimes this symptom will predominate, sometimes another. Spiritual flavors are of five varieties.

The initial phase takes the name of *shanta-rati*, when the soul freed from material defilement appreciates the greatness of God, the Supreme Person, but does not really engage in his loving service, for that is a phase of neutrality marked by appreciation.

In the second phase, called *dasya-rati*, one appreciates one's position of eternal subordination to the Supreme Lord, realizing that one depends for all eternity on his unmotivated mercy. At the same time, a natural affection awakens like that felt by a son who, as he grows up, begins to appreciate his father's blessings. Here the living being desires to serve the Sovereign Lord instead of Maya, the Illusion.

In the third phase of transcendental love, called *sakhya-rati*, we exchange as equals with the Supreme Being, imbued with love and respect. Progressing further at this level, laughter and jokes fuse in an atmosphere of relaxation. These are fraternal exchanges with the Divine Person, free from all bondage. You almost forget your lower position of distinct soul, but without feeling the highest respect for the Supreme Person.

The fourth phase, called *vatsalya-rati*, sees the fraternal affection manifested at the previous level develop into parental affection. We would then like to play the role of parent to the Lord. Instead of worshiping Him, the separate soul instead becomes the object of the worship of the Supreme Being, who then depends entirely on his pure devotee and relies on him for his education. The devotee then reaches the level where he can embrace the Lord and even cover his head with kisses. Thus is manifested parental affection for the Supreme Lord.

The fifth phase, called *madhourya-rati*, allows a true transcendental exchange of conjugal love between loved ones. It is at this level that Krishna and the maidens of Vraja contemplate each other in an exchange of loving looks, movements of eyebrows, sweet words and charming smiles.

Along with these five main flavor exchanges, there are seven secondary ones that consist of laughter, wonderful visions, valor, pity, anger, horror, and devastation. For example, the exchanges between Bhishma (*warrior and pure devotee of Krishna*) and Krishna were at the level of the valiant relationship. Hiranyakasipu (*demonic king*), he experienced the dreadful devastating aspect of the Supreme Lord, under the sign of horror.

The five main feelings permanently inhabit the heart of the pure devotee, while the seven secondary feelings are intermittent and serve to enhance the flavor of the first five. An example of a neutral, calm, peaceful, gentle *relationship*, [*Neutral, passive, indifferent relationship, which does not participate in a conflict, which refrains from*

taking part, one of the five main relations which can unite the pure soul to Krishna. The holy being united to the Lord by this relationship venerates his greatness with great respect, but does not engage in active service in order to please Him.] Is that of the nine transcendentalists that are Kavi, Havi, Antariksha, Prabuddha, Pippalayana, Avirhotra, Dravida, or Droumila, Chamasa and Karabhajana. The four Kumaras, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanat-kumara and Sanatane, all great sages, also belong to this class. The devotees whose names follow play the role of servant to Krishna in Gokula; Raktak, Citrak and Patrak; in Dvaraka, Daruka, and on the planets Vaikuntha, Hanumane, among others. Among the devotees associated with exchanges of friendship with the Lord are Sridam in Vrindavana, as well as Bhima and Arjuna in Dvaraka or on the battlefield of Kuruksetra. Those who are in a loving parental relationship with Krishna include his mother, father, uncle, and other relatives. As for those who bathe in conjugal love, there are first of all the young girls of Vraja, Vrindavana, without forgetting the queens and goddesses of the fortune of Dvaraka, whom no one can count.

Attachment to Krishna can also take two forms, the first being one of respect and reverence. This form of attachment, characterized by a certain absence of freedom, manifests itself in Mathura and on the spiritual planets, Vaikuntha. In these places of the Lord's residence, the exchanges of spiritual love are restricted, while in Gokula Vrindavana, they are free. Even though the young girls and shepherds of Vrindavana know that Krishna is God, the Supreme Person, they show Him little respect or reverence because of the immeasurable intimacy which marks their relationship with Him. In the context of the five principal spiritual relationships, respect and reverence sometimes obscure the true greatness of the Lord, and sometimes even hamper the service offered to Him. But where friendship, parental affection and marital love reign, respect and reverence are minimized. For example, when Krishna appeared as the son of Vasudeva and Devaki, his parents prayed to him with respect and reverence, knowing well that the Supreme Lord, Krishna or Visnu, appeared to them as their cherished child. Although appeared as their child, Devaki and Vasudeva immediately offered prayers to him, knowing that He was God, the Supreme Person. And likewise, when Arjuna saw the universal form of the Lord, fear gripped him, so much so that he begged for forgiveness from Krishna for often behaving cavalierly towards him as a close friend.

The Bhagavad-Gita (XI: 41-42) also reports this Arjuna prayer: *Dear Krishna, ignoring the extent of your inconceivable power, I sometimes lacked respect for you, and named "O my friend". Please forgive me for having, out of reason, addressed you as to a friend or to an ordinary man.*

Likewise, when Krishna joked with Rukmini, fearing that He would leave her, she found herself so disturbed that she dropped the fan with which she was fanning her and her hair came undone. Like a plantain uprooted by a fierce gust of wind, she fell to the ground, almost unconscious. As for Yasoda, the mother of Krishna in Vrindavana, the Srimad-Bhagavatam (10.8.45) affirms that she believed born from

her womb the Lord whom all the authentic scriptures worship, including the Vedas and the upanisads, and the philosophy of sankhya. And again when mother Yasoda tied the child Krishna with a rope, as if he were an ordinary son with a material body born of her own (Srimad-Bhagavatam, 10.9.12). There are also other passages where Krishna sees himself treated like ordinary people, including the one where it is said that after being defeated at play by his friends the shepherds, Krishna carried Sridham on his shoulders (SB, 10.18.24).

Addressing the reports of the gopis [*Young villagers, companions of Krishna in Vrindavana, the transcendent realm. They embody, because of their pure love for God, the highest devotion to the Lord.*] With Krishna in Vrindavana, the Srimad-Bhagavatam (10.30.36-40) relates that when Krishna left the emotional dance alone with Srimati Radhika, that - here believed that He had abandoned all the other gopis. Although all equal in beauty, He showered her in this way, and she conceived vain thoughts: *My dear Krishna forsook the beautiful gopis, satisfied that He is only me.* In the forest, she said to Him: *My beloved Krishna, I am unable to take one more step; You can take me wherever you want.* And Krishna replied: *Come, rest on My shoulder,* and then disappear as soon as these words are spoken, thus plunging Srimati Radhika into an ocean of repentance.

Krishna having left the dance of feelings, emotions, all the gopis immediately lament: *Dear Krishna, leaving husbands, sons, relatives, brothers and friends, we have come to these places ignoring their advice, we have come to You, who know better than anyone the reason for our presence here. The sweet sounds of your flute bewitch us. But you are so cunning that in the depths of the night, you abandon the young girls and women that we are, which hardly suits you.*

It is important to master the mind by fixing it on the Supreme Lord, to prevent it from going astray in various ways. The mind will then be said to be established at the level of pure knowledge, where the devotee understands that Krishna is the fundamental principle of all that we are aware of. After many lifetimes devoted to cultivating knowledge, a person relies on Vasudeva (full *emanation of Krishna*), realizing that Krishna is present in all things and He is entering the entire cosmic manifestation. Although under the control of the Supreme Lord and located in his energy, everything is nonetheless different from Krishna in his personal form. Fixing your mind on Krishna is emotional.

The Supreme Lord himself said: *Unless one ascends to the level of mastery of the senses, one cannot know all the greatness of Krishna, nor the diffusion of his various energies, the causes of all manifestations.*

Mental equilibrium can be acquired by who comes to the conclusion that God, the Supreme Person, is the primary source of all things. As for tolerance, it is the attitude of a person ready to tolerate all kinds of tribulations in order to acquire mastery of

the senses and mental balance. Also called dhriti, the ability to resist impulses from the tongue and genitals. A person thus appeased becomes what is called a dhira.

When one succeeds in fixing one's mind unswervingly on Krishna, one succeeds in establishing oneself steadily in Krishna consciousness. It is the neutral, calm, peaceful, gentle relationship, in which an unshakeable faith in Krishna settles and in which all material desires, that is, unrelated to Krishna, end. This double characteristic of the neutral relationship is also found in other feelings, in the same way that sound is generally present in all other elements, air, fire, water and earth, since it emanates from the ether. All spiritual relationships, whether under the sign of service, brotherhood, parental affection or marital love, thus possess this double characteristic of the neutral relationship, an unshakeable faith in Krishna and the absence of desire for all that is not Krishna. When we say *what is not Krishna*, we should not conclude that there can be anything besides Him. On the contrary, since everything is produced from the energy of Krishna. As Krishna and his energies turn out to be the same, everything is indirectly Krishna. For example, consciousness is characteristic of all living beings. But when the consciousness is totally focused on Krishna, what is called Krishna consciousness, it is said to be pure. When it is focused on the pleasures of the senses and not on Krishna, it can be called *Krishna unconsciousness*. It is from this impure condition that the concept of *the absence of Krishna* arises. In its purest form, however, there is only Krishna consciousness. A clear interest in Krishna, that Krishna is mine, or vice versa, and my purpose is to serve his senses, falls on a higher level than neutral love. It suffices to grasp the greatness of Krishna to access the neutral relationship, where the object of worship is the Supreme Impersonal Being or the Supreme Soul. It is this form of worship favored by the followers of empirical speculation and the yoga of powers. Anyone who further develops their Krishna consciousness, their spiritual understanding, will realize that the Supreme Soul embodies the eternal object of worship and surrender to Him. After many rebirths dedicated to the worship of the Supreme Being and the Supreme Soul, the person who surrenders to Vasudeva, the Supreme Soul, seeing in him the Supreme Master of whom she is the eternal servant, becomes a great soul, a realized soul. The unwavering relationship which then unites him to the Supreme and Absolute Truth encourages him to begin his loving service to the Person of God. Thus the neutral relationship is transformed into an attitude of service.

It is at the level of the relationship uniting the servant to the Supreme Master, that the highest degree of respect and reverence towards the Supreme Lord is manifested, the greatness of God is also appreciated there. Note here that the neutral relationship is devoid of any activity related to service, which we see however arise in the relationship uniting the servant to the Supreme Master, so that the latter unites two components: the feeling specific to the neutral relationship and the spirit of spiritual brotherhood. The existence of the spiritual characteristics of the neutral relation and of the relation uniting the servant to the Master is not in doubt, but a third one is added thereafter: the intimate attachment which engenders purely

spiritual love. This intimacy with the Supreme Person is called brotherhood, and excludes any feeling of respect and veneration towards God, the Supreme Being. Thus, the relationship of spiritual fraternity unites three transcendent components: the notion of greatness, the notion of kinship and the notion of privacy free of any trace of respect or veneration, so that this fraternal relationship is enriched with an additional spiritual characteristic.

The liberation of conditioned souls, prisoners of the envelopes of dense and ethereal matter formed by the material body. Once freed from all material stain, the soul, abandoning its dense and ethereal material bodies, can reach the spiritual world in its original spiritual body, and there at Vaikuṅṭhaloka or Kṛiṣṇhaloka, become absorbed in the service of transcendent love offered to the Lord. It is when the soul is thus in its natural, original and eternal position that it is qualified as liberated. It is possible to access the service of transcendent love offered to the Lord, and thus to become a liberated soul, even in the material body.

Likewise, parental affection has four characteristics. In addition to the three characteristics already mentioned, there is the notion that the Lord depends on the mercy of the devotee. Playing the role of parent to the Lord, the devotee will sometimes chastise the Lord while seeing himself as his support. The sublime feeling of being the support of the supreme support is very pleasant for the devotee as for the Sovereign Lord.

The Blessed Lord says: *Any appearance of truth from which I am absent is within My energy of illusion, for nothing can exist without Me. It is only a simple imitation, like a pale reflection of light in the shadow, for in the light there is neither darkness nor reflection.*

Just as the material elements exist inside the bodies that beings put on but nevertheless remain outside of them, I exist in all material creations without however being in them.

Lord Chaitanya is the master of the six perfections: beauty, wealth, fame, power, wisdom and renunciation, for He is none other than Lord Krishna. In him are found in their fullness eternity, knowledge and happiness.

Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said: *So I will open the way for the religion of this age, the collective song of the holy name of the Lord. I will thus give the world to taste the four forms of sweet exchanges which are attached to the service of love and devotion, and thereby make it dance with ecstasy.*

Accepting the role of a devotee, I will teach by My example the practice of devotional service.

The Lord descends into this world at regular intervals to restore the spiritual culture that time has declined. Lord Krishna therefore appeared at the end of the Copper Age, the one that preceded ours, in order to regenerate spirituality in men, but also to

manifest his divine entertainments. The Lord in his aspect of Visnu is concerned with maintaining the cosmic creation. It is above all this divinity who restores order within the galaxy. Krishna is the Lord in his original form. He does not appear to solve these problems but only to reveal his purely spiritual entertainments and thus attract fallen souls to return to their original home, to the kingdom of God. However, at the end of the last age coincided the time of restoring order in the galaxy and the time of the advent of Lord Krishna. Consequently, when the Supreme Lord, Krishna, comes to this world, Visnu, who maintains the galaxy, merges into himself, as indeed all his full emanations.

When God, the Supreme Lord in his absolute form, descends into the material universe, all other Avatars unite in Him. Narayaṇa, the first four emanations [*Vasudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha*], Matsya and the other līla-Avatars [*Divine manifestations which, at various times, descend into the material universe to make visible there the spiritual and absolute entertainments of the Supreme Lord.*], the yuga-Avatars [*Divine manifestations appearing in each age to teach there the method of spiritual realization which is proper to it.*] as well as the manvantara-Avatars [*The various fathers of humanity, whose function is to people galaxy and to establish there the laws of a just and balanced society.*] and all other Avatars that may exist all manifest in the body of Krishna, the Supreme Lord in his full form.

Lord Krishna, the Absolute Divine Person, is the all-powerful form of existence, knowledge, and transcendent bliss in their fullness. When Lord Krishna comes into the material world at the end of the copper age of the twenty-eighth four-age cycle of Vaivasvata Manu, the present father of mankind, He brings with Him His eternal abode where His most entertaining entertainments take place. sublime. The Lord appears by the effect of his internal power. Likewise, by this same power, He transfers everything that is directly related to Him into this world, without the aid of any external influence.

Only devotional service can lead the being to God, the Supreme Person. Only devotional service can allow the saint, with a realized soul, to meet the Lord face to face. God is drawn to devotional service, so it is in the mastery of this science that Vedic knowledge [*of the Vedas, the original holy scriptures*] culminates. What is this particular seduction that devotional service exerts so strongly on the Sovereign Lord, and what is the nature of this service?

The Vedic scriptures [*of the Vedas, the original holy scriptures*] teach us that God, the Supreme Person, the Absolute Truth, is self-sufficient and that maya, the delusion, can never affect him in any way. Also, the power which surpasses the Supreme must be purely spiritual and therefore cannot belong to material manifestation. The bliss enjoyed by the Supreme Lord cannot be material in nature like the impersonal concept of the bliss of the spiritual being. Devotional service is an exchange between

two people and cannot be found only in oneself. Therefore, the joy of self-realization cannot be compared to devotional service.

God, the Supreme Person, possesses three varieties of internal energy: The power of pleasure, the existential power, and the cognitive power. We find in the Visnu Purana (*sacred book*) the following prayer addressed to the Lord:

O my God, support of all that is, the three attributes, the power of pleasure, the existential power, and the cognitive power, exist in You as one and the same spiritual power. Never do the attributes of material nature, the cause of joy, sorrow or a combination of the two, inhabit Your Person, for You are free from all material attributes.

Since the power of pleasure, the personal manifestation of the bliss of the Supreme Lord and the source of his pleasure exists eternally in Him, the theory that the Lord appears on the plane of material virtue cannot be accepted. The conclusion of the impersonalist (*one who believes that God is only a Formless, Supreme Spiritual Being*) is opposed to the assertion of the original holy scriptures that the Lord possesses a power of transcendental bliss. When the latter is manifested by the grace of the Supreme Lord in the person of a servant of the Lord, it takes the name of love of God. This love of God is another attribute of the blissful power of the Lord. Hence, the devotional service between the Lord and his devotee is a manifestation of this transcendent blissful power. The power which constantly adorns God, the Supreme Person, with pure bliss is not material, as the followers of the impersonalist doctrine would like in their ignorance of the identity of the Sovereign Lord and of his power of pleasure.

These ignorant people cannot understand what distinguishes impersonal spiritual bliss from the variety which characterizes the energy of spiritual pleasure. The Lord obtains all his transcendent pleasure through this power of pleasure, and He confers it on his pure devotee.

The body of Kṛṣṇa is all of eternity, knowledge and bliss. Its unique spiritual power has three aspects; the aspect of bliss, the aspect of eternal existence, and the aspect of perception, which can also admit the term of knowledge. The transcendental power by which God, the Supreme Person, maintains his existence is called sandhinī. That by which He has knowledge of his own person and by which again He allows others to know him is called samvit. Finally, that by which He possesses and confers on his devotee transcendent bliss is called hlādinī. The total manifestation of these powers is called viśuddha-sattva.

This level of spiritual variety is revealed even in the material world when the Lord appears there. Thus, its entertainment and events are not material. They are on the pure transcendental level. Anyone who grasps the transcendental nature of the Lord's advent, deeds and disappearance qualifies to be freed from material bondage after leaving his body. He can then enter the spiritual realm and, there, taste the

company of the Supreme Lord through exchanges governed by the power of pleasure. Material virtue, soiled by passion and ignorance, is called mixed virtue. On the other hand, no material trait comes to sully the transcendental diversity of pure virtue. The latter thus offers the atmosphere required to apprehend the Lord and his absolute diversions. Spiritual variety is eternally independent of any material condition and is identical with God, since both are absolute. The Lord and His devotees simultaneously perceive the power of pleasure through the power of perception. The three attributes of material nature; virtue, passion, ignorance exert their control over the conditioned soul, but the Lord never comes under their influence, as corroborated directly and indirectly by all the Vedic writings.

Kriṣṇa Himself said: *Material influences (virtue, passion and ignorance) touch conditioned souls, but never reach Me, God, the Supreme Person.*

The Viṣṇu Purāṇa (*sacred book*) confirms this: *Viṣṇu, the Supreme Lord, is beyond the three attributes of nature (virtue, passion and ignorance). There is no material attribute in Him. May Narayaṇa, this original person, fully seated in transcendence, be satisfied with us.*

In their unmanifest state, the attributes and modes of influence of material nature are virtue. When their action is exteriorized in the production of the diversities linked to material existence, it is said that they proceed from passion. And in the absence of activity and variety, then they arise from ignorance. In other words, the disposition to reflect belongs to virtue, activity to passion, and inertia to ignorance. However, beyond these various manifestations of material nature lies pure virtue. When it is dominated by existential power, we perceive it as transcendental knowledge, dominated by the power of pleasure, and we then perceive it as the most intimate love for God there is. Pure virtue, the simultaneous and unique manifestation of these three influences, is the main characteristic of the kingdom of God.

Absolute Truth is therefore the very substance of reality, eternally manifested in three energies. The manifestation of the internal energy of the Lord is the inconceivable diversity, that of the marginal energy is the living being and that of the external energy is the form of the material cosmos. Absolute Truth thus comprises four principles: God Himself, the Supreme Person, and his internal, marginal and external powers. The form of the Lord and his so-called personal, original and two-handed emotional emanations draw their bliss directly from the internal energy, which eternally reveals the spiritual world, the most confidential of energy manifestations. External manifestation, or material energy, provides the bodily envelopes of conditioned living beings, from Brahma the first created being, down to the insignificant ant. This energy is manifested under the influence of the three attributes of material nature; virtue, passion, ignorance, and living things perceive it in various ways within lower and higher species. Each of the three categories of internal energy, the power of bliss, the power of perception and the existential power, exerts its influence on one of the external powers which direct the

conditioned soul. This influence makes manifest the three attributes of material nature, proving categorically that living beings, constituting the marginal energy, remain eternally servants of the Lord and are therefore under the tutelage of internal energy or energy. external.

To serve Krishna, God, the Supreme Person and to take pleasure in satisfying all his desires, this is our real duty, always manifested in love for the Lord. With the eyes of love for God one can perceive its true identity. It is the very place of entertainment that Kṛiṣṇa indulges in with the young shepherds and the gopīs [*Young villagers, companions of Krishna in Vrindavana, the transcendent realm. They embody, because of their pure love for Him, the highest devotion to the Lord.*], In His kingdom.

I adore the primordial Lord, the original father, who keeps the cows and fulfills all desires. Its mansions are built with spiritual gems and surrounded by millions of wish-trees. Thousands of goddesses of fortune serve him forever with great reverence and the deepest affection.

This verse, taken from the Brahma-saṁhitā (*sacred text*), reveals to us in a precise way the abode of Kṛiṣṇa, this transcendent place where life is all of eternity, bliss and knowledge, but where we find also a profusion of vegetables, milk, jewels, beautiful homes and gardens maintained by charming young ladies, all goddesses of fortune. Kṛiṣṇaloka is the supreme planet of the spiritual world, below which innumerable spiritual planets evolve.

Vaikuṅṭhaloka, [*the eternal planets located in the kingdom of Vaikuntha, the spiritual world. Krishna, God, the Supreme Person reigns over each of them in his Narayana form.*] Is not subject to the influence of the three attributes of material nature, which are virtue, passion, and ignorance. In the material world the highest mode is that of virtue, which is characterized by veracity, mental balance, purity, mastery of the senses, simplicity, the essence of learning, faith in God, scientific knowledge, etc. Nonetheless, all of these attributes are tainted with passion and imperfection. On the contrary, the attributes of Vaikuṅṭha, proceed from the internal energy of God and are therefore of a purely spiritual and transcendent nature, free from any material infection. No material planet, including Satyaloka, the highest in our galaxy, can compare with the spiritual planets, where none of the five characteristics of the world of matter appear, namely ignorance, suffering, selfishness, selfishness, anger, and envy.

In the material world, everything is a creation. Everything that personal experience allows us to conceive, including our body and mind, has been created. This process of creation began at the same time as the life of Brahma, the first created being and ruler of our galaxy, and the creative principle operates throughout the material world due to the influence of passion. However, since it shines by its absence on the Vaikuṅṭhas, spiritual planets, no creation takes place there, everything exists there eternally. Moreover, given the absence of ignorance, there can also be no question of

annihilation or destruction. In the material world, despite all the efforts that one can provide to cultivate in oneself the virtuous qualities mentioned above in order to make everything permanent, nothing can exist perpetually, and this in spite of the good ideas of the best scientific brains, for material virtue is mingled with passion and ignorance. As a result, we in this world have no experience of eternity, bliss and omniscience. On the contrary, in the spiritual world, where the attributes of material nature shine through their absence, everything is eternal, full of bliss and knowledge. Everything has the gift of expressing oneself, of moving, of hearing, of seeing, and this, in an existence of eternal happiness. Under these conditions, naturally neither space nor time, in the form of the past, the present and the future, have any influence there: no change therefore in the spiritual world, since time there. has no hold. Therefore, we cannot detect in it any influence of total material energy (māyā), which prompts us to become more and more materialistic and to forget the relationship which unites us to God.

As spiritual sparks of the rays emanating from the transcendent body of the Lord, we are eternally connected with Him and participate in His nature. Material energy is like a matrix that envelops this particle of spiritual energy, but in Vaikuṅṭhaloka, living beings are free from such a veil, they never lose the memory of their identity. Eternally they remain aware of their link with God, being situated in their natural condition which is to offer the Lord a service of transcendent love. From the fact that they are constantly absorbed in this transcendent service, it is natural to conclude that their senses are also transcendent in nature since one cannot serve the Lord with material senses. The hosts of Vaikuṅṭhaloka are therefore devoid of such senses which aim to dominate material nature. Those who remain neophytes on the path of knowledge say to themselves that a place devoid of material characteristics can only be nothingness without form. However, in truth, the spiritual world is not without characteristics, but these differ from those of the material nature because everything there is eternal, infinite and pure. The atmosphere produces its own light there, no need for the sun, the moon, fire, electric force. Whoever reaches this kingdom never comes back to this world in a material body. All the beings who live there surrender themselves with submission to the loving service of the Lord.

The inhabitants of Vaikuṅṭha, the spiritual world, have a shiny black complexion, much more fascinating and attractive than the dull white or black skin, of the material universe. Their bodies of a spiritual nature have no equivalent in this world. The radiant beauty of a cloud illuminated by lightning only offers a glimpse of their seduction. They usually wear yellow clothes, their delicate bodies have attractive shapes, and their eyes are like lotus petals. Like Viṣṇu, the Lord, the beings who inhabit Vaikuṅṭha have four arms and they carry a conch, a wheel, a mace and a lotus. Their chest, very large, and nicely adorned with necklaces made of a metal reminiscent of diamonds and enhanced with jewels such as one will never be able to find in the material world. The residents of Vaikuṅṭha are rich in power and perpetual radiance. Some are of a complexion reminiscent of red coral, cat and lotus eyes; each

of them wear all gemstone ear ornaments. On their heads are placed flower tiaras in the form of garlands.

On the Vaikuṅṭha also evolve many aircraft, which are not accompanied by any deafening noise. Our material planes do not offer any security, they can fall and be shattered at any time since the material is imperfect in all respects. Rather, the aircraft that fly the spiritual sky are themselves spiritual in nature and shine with transcendent brilliance. On board, instead of businessmen, politicians, planning commissions or even goods or mail bags, all of which is completely unknown there, the citizens of Vaikuṅṭha, with their fairy-like companions of fascinating beauty, take pleasure to leisure trips, for which these devices are exclusively designed. Therefore these aircraft filled with residents of Vaikuṅṭha, male and female, enhance the beauty of the spiritual sky. We cannot even imagine its grace. At most one could compare it to that of the clouds in the sky crossed by the silvery ramifications of lightning. The skies of Vaikuṅṭhaloka are always so decorated.

The opulence of God's inner power eternally shines in all its fullness in this kingdom of Vaikuṅṭha, where the goddesses of fortune have an ever-growing attachment to the service of the Supreme Lord. The presence of these goddesses of fortune and their companions always arouses a joyous atmosphere of transcendent celebration. Continuously singing the glories of the Lord, they never know silence. There is an unlimited number of Vaikuṅṭha planets in the spiritual world, which cover an area three times the size of the material cosmos. So the poor materialist is preoccupied with the political organization of a planet which is nothing but dust in the immensity of God's creation. Without even considering our planet, the entire cosmos with its countless planets scattered across galaxies, is like a mustard seed in a bag full of such seeds. Alas, the materialist is lost in a thousand projects to live in comfort here below and thus wastes his human energy, yet so precious, for an illusory well-being which will only lead to frustration. Instead of wasting his time in hazardous matters, he could have sought a life of simplicity and lofty spiritual thoughts, and thus escape the perpetual turmoil imposed on him by material life.

In fact, even if a materialist wants to enjoy higher material advantages, he can soar to reach planets which offer much more refined pleasures than those available on earth. It is best to prepare to return to the spiritual realm after letting go of the body. However, those who still desire to enjoy material goods can gain other material planets through the powers of yoga. The funny machines used by the astronauts are only a toy and can in no way be used for this purpose. Astanga-yoga, on the contrary, is a material technique allowing one to become master of the vital air by raising it from the navel region to that of the abdomen, then to that of the heart, then between the clavicles, between the eyebrows, and finally at the level of the brain. If he succeeds, the spiritualist, the realized soul, can then go to the planet of his choice. We have been able to scientifically calculate the speed of wind and that of light, but we do not know anything about the speed of the mind or that of the intelligence. We certainly have some experience of the rapidity of the mind since in a fraction of a

second our thoughts can transport us to places thousands of kilometers away. Now intelligence is superior to it, and the soul is even more subtle than intelligence. The soul is anti-material, spiritual in nature, unlike the mind and intelligence. Its power and subtlety exceed by hundreds of thousands of times that of intelligence. So we can just get an idea of how fast the soul moves from one planet to another. Moreover, needless to say, it travels by its own strength and does not need a material vehicle.

The bestial civilization only preoccupied with eating, sleeping, defending itself and fulfilling the desires of the senses, has led modern man astray, making him forget how powerful his soul is. We have already explained that the soul is a much brighter, more radiant, and more powerful spiritual spark than the sun, moon, or electricity. Man is wasting his life if he does not realize that his true identity is spiritual. It was to save him from such a *civilization* that Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu appeared, and with him Lord Nityananda, his full emanation.

The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam also reports how the spiritualist can travel to all the planets in the universe. In the course of this practice, when he raises his vital force to the top of the skull, it is very likely to spring from the body through the openings of the eyes, nose or ears, these regions of the body form what we call the seventh orbit of the life force. The spiritualist, however, can plug his orifices by completely suspending the circulation of air in his body. He then carefully fixes his life force between the eyebrows and focuses his mind on the planet he wishes to reach after leaving the body. He can choose to access the abode of Kṛiṣṇa in the transcendent kingdom of Vaikuṅṭha, from where he will never have to descend into the material universe again, or to go to the Edenic planets of our galaxy. The accomplished spiritualist is free to take either path. For the perfect spiritualist who thus manages to leave his body while retaining full possession of his consciousness, traveling from one planet to another is as easy as, for an ordinary man, going to the local grocery store. As we have already seen, the material body is only the envelope of the spiritual soul. The mind and intelligence form its first envelopes and the gross material body, made of earth, water, air, fire and ether, constitutes the outer envelope. Any spiritualist who has acceded to spiritual realization and understood the relationship between matter and spirit, can leave the coarse garment of the soul in a perfect way whenever he wants. By the grace of God, we have complete freedom. In his perfect benevolence towards us, he allows us to choose where we want to live. In the material cosmos or in the spiritual world, on the planet of our election. It is the misuse of this independence that causes the living being to fall into the material world where he is forced to undergo the three kinds of sufferings inherent in conditioned life [*Those arising from the body and the mind, those caused by other living entities, and those which originate from the elements of material nature, such as extreme cold or heat, lightning, earthquakes, hurricanes, drought, etc.*]. In his book *Paradise Lost*, Milton was able to illustrate well the miserable life that the soul chose to live by coming into

the material world. But she can just as easily decide to return to this paradise and return to God, to his original home, located in the kingdom of God.

At the critical hour of death, by bringing the vital force between the two eyebrows, one can then choose his destiny. Anyone who no longer wants to keep the slightest link with the material world can, in less than a second, gain the transcendent kingdom of Vaikuṅṭha, where he will live in his spiritual body, a body adapted to the spiritual atmosphere. It suffices for him to desire to leave the world of dense and ethereal matter, in order to then move the vital force towards the top of the skull where is the orifice through which he will leave his body. Such an enterprise is easy for anyone who has perfected the practice of yoga. Of course, man has his free will and therefore, if he does not wish to be delivered from the material universe, he can take the position of Brahmā and visit the Siddhalokas, the planets where live materially perfect beings who have all powers to control gravity, space and time. No need for that to abandon one's subtle, ethereal body (composed of the mind, intelligence and false ego): one must only let go of one's material body, of dense matter. Each planet has a particular atmosphere, and if you want to go to a given planet, you have to adapt your body to the climatic conditions that are specific to it. If one wants to get from India to Europe, where the climate is different, it is necessary to change clothes. Likewise, one must completely change one's body to reach the transcendental planets of Vaikuṅṭha. However, the one who aims at the higher material planets, paradisiacal, can keep the subtle garment, but he must leave his carnal envelope of dense matter, made of earth, water, fire, air and ether.

When one goes to a transcendental planet, it is necessary to leave both one's ethereal body and one's dense matter body, for one has to gain the spiritual world in a purely spiritual form. However, this change of body will occur automatically at the time of death if one has the desire. In truth, we can obtain a new material body corresponding to the desires which inhabit us at the moment of death. It is the desire of the mind that carries the soul to a suitable atmosphere, just as the wind carries an aroma from one place to another. Unfortunately, unlike realized souls, the low materialists who, throughout their existence, indulge in the pleasures of the senses, are bewildered by the mental and physical disorder that marks the moment of their death. These gross sensualists, bogged down in the conceptions, desires and relationships that marked their life, then covet what goes against their interests and stupidly put on new bodies which only perpetuate their material suffering. We must therefore train the mind and intelligence in a systematic way so that at the moment of death we can consciously desire a body that suits us, either on this planet earth, or on another material planet, or even on a transcendental planet. A civilization that does not take into consideration the gradual upliftment of the immortal soul only encourages a life of bestial ignorance.

It is unreasonable to believe that every soul that passes from life to death attains the same destiny. Either she goes to the place she has chosen for herself, or she is forced to undergo a condition determined by the life she has just led. What distinguishes the

materialist from the spiritualist is that the former cannot determine his next body while the latter can consciously acquire one which enables him to experience the pleasures of the higher planets. All his life, the low materialist, obsessed with the satisfaction of his senses, devotes his days to working to provide for his family and at night wastes his energy in carnal pleasures or falls asleep meditating on what is happening. he performed during the day. This is the monotonous story of the materialists. Although they are classified differently as businessmen, lawyers, politicians, teachers, magistrates, porters, pickpockets, laborers, etc., they actually have no other worries than eating, sleep, defend themselves, and satisfy their senses. They thus sacrifice their precious life to seek material pleasures and fail to attain the perfection of existence through spiritual realization.

The spiritualist seeks this perfection. Also, everyone should become a realized soul. Yoga (the practice of union with God) enables the soul to be connected to the Lord through his service. One can only practice such yoga without having to change one's social position if one is guided by a master. As we have already said, the spiritualist can go to a place of his choice without using any mechanical means, because he knows the art of locating his mind and his intelligence within the air which circulates in his body. By maintaining his breathing, he then integrates this air with the universal breath outside his body. By this universal air, the spiritualist can go to the planet of his choice and acquire a carnal envelope adapted to his atmosphere. To better understand this process, we can compare it to the electronic transmission of radio waves. Sound waves produced by a radio transmitter can travel the entire earth in just a few seconds. Now, sound proceeds from the ethereal atmosphere, as explained previously, more subtle than the ether is the mind, and still more subtle than the latter is the intelligence. Finally, spiritual energy, which is totally different from matter, even surpasses intelligence. So one can hardly imagine the speed at which the soul can travel in the universal atmosphere.

To come to manipulate subtle elements like mind, intelligence and soul requires training, a proper way of life and the company of competent people. Such training is based on sincere prayers, devotional service, success in the practice of mystical yoga, and self-absorption into the activities of the separate soul and the Supreme Soul. So the coarse materialist, whether he is an empiricist philosopher, man of science, psychologist or any other, cannot experience such success either by his derisory efforts or by his fine words. The materialist who makes sacrifices is relatively superior to the more primitive one who only knows his single laboratory, his test tubes, and nothing beyond. He can access the planet called Vaiśvānara, an igneous star identical to the sun, located on the path leading to Brahmāloka, the highest planet in the galaxy. There he can completely free himself from vice and its effects. Thus purified, it can rise to the orbit of the pole star, where the twelve celestial beings, the twelve sages and the spiritual planet of our galaxy evolve.

The materialist purified by numerous sacrifices, harsh ascetics and the charity offering of the major part of his goods can access the pole star and other similar stars, and if

he purifies himself even more there, it can rise to even higher orbits and cross the center of the galaxy to reach Maharloka, home of Bhiṛgu Muni and other sages, where one can live until the partial annihilation of the galaxy. This originates from Anantadeva, the full emanation of Krishna, who, from the confines of the galaxy, produces an immense blaze whose heat extends to Maharloka. So, all who inhabit this planet leave for Brahmaloaka, which exists during Brahma's lifetime, which is 311 trillion 40 billion of our years. In Brahmaloaka there are countless aircraft whose movement is provided by psychic rather than mechanical energy. Endowed with a mind and an intelligence, the beings there know joys and sorrows, but they are freed from the sufferings linked to old age, death, fear or distress. They nevertheless sympathize with the sufferings of those consumed by the fire of devastation. Devoid of a body of dense matter, at the hour of death they only have to convert their ethereal body into a spiritual body to access the spiritual world. There are three ways by which the people of Brahmaloaka attain perfection. The pious souls who have gained to live on Brahmaloaka by dint of virtuous acts, become the celestial beings-masters of different planets, right after the resurrection of Brahmā. The worshipers of Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu are released with Brahmā, and the pure devotees of God, the Supreme Person, immediately cross the universal envelope into the spiritual world.

The countless galaxies are gathered in clusters similar to clusters of foam, so that only some of them bathe in the waters of the Causal Ocean. When agitated by the gaze of Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, material nature produces the total elements, which are eight in number and which progressively evolve from finer to gross. From the ego proceeds the ether; ether, air; air, fire; fire, water; and finally water, land. A single galaxy thus extends over more than seven trillion kilometers in diameter. The spiritualist, who wishes to liberate himself gradually, will have to cross the various *barks* of the galaxy, including the ethereal layers which form the three attributes and modes of influence of material nature; virtue, passion and ignorance. He who never succeeds is reborn in this mortal world.

Only he who clearly conceives the Sovereign Lord and Vaikuṅṭha, the spiritual world, will be able to know perfection. Everyone should constantly meditate on and glorify God, the Supreme Person. Lord Chaitanya has made these topics easier for the fallen souls of the present age to access, and he has presented them in such a way that they are easily understood by those interested. Although his only proper functions are entertainment, out of sheer mercy the Lord nevertheless performs an activity for the good of fallen souls. He delivers fallen beings by offering them the four kinds of liberation, that which allows to live on the same planet as the Lord, that which gives the same bodily features as the Lord, that which allows to benefit from the same opulence as the Lord, and that which allows one to live in the company of the Lord.

There are two ways to achieve liberation: by the grace of the Lord or by one's own efforts. It is this second path that the impersonalist (the believing Jew, Christian, Muslim...) adopts to blend in with the radiance, the dazzling brilliance of the Lord.

The pure soul, through the practice of devotional service, is offered one of the following four forms of liberation: that which allows one to live on the same planet as the Lord, that which allows one to live in constant company with the Lord, that which allows to benefit from the same perfections as the Lord or that which allows to have the same bodily features as the Lord. Those who obtain the liberation of merging into the dazzling radiance emanating from the body of the Lord remain outside the kingdom of Vaikuṅṭha, the threshold of which they cannot cross. Outside the Vaikuṅṭha planets of the spiritual world extends the radiance formed by the supremely luminous rays emanating from the body of Lord Kṛiṣṇa. This expanse located beyond material nature is called Siddhaloka. Although spiritual in essence, it reveals no variety. We compare it to the homogeneous radiance that surrounds the sun. But in the star itself there are chariots, horses and other emblems of the glory of the celestial being master of the sun. Beyond Vaikuṅṭha, the abode of Kṛiṣṇa, extends the radiance formed by the dazzling rays emanating from the body of Kṛiṣṇa. The transcendental region where this radiance shines is called Siddhaloka or Brahmhaloka. Impersonalists who achieve liberation merge into this Brahmhaloka. Although assuredly spiritual, we do not detect any spiritual activities or varieties. So we compare it to the radiance of the sun, which hides the star itself, the seat of various manifestations.

Just as by devotion to the Lord one gains to return to his home, many are those who achieve this goal by ceasing their sinful acts and by absorbing themselves in the mind of the Lord animated by lust, envy, fear or affection.

Krishna, God, the Absolute Spiritual Being, can eliminate all material symptoms of the one He seduces. Even if our attraction for God is based on a material lust, this attraction can be metamorphosed, by the grace of the Lord, into a spiritual love for his person. Likewise, one who is united with the Lord by a feeling of fear and animosity is also seen purified by virtue of the spiritual fascination which He exercises. God is great and the living being tiny, but they both remain separate spiritual entities. Nevertheless, as soon as a reciprocal exchange is established between them thanks to the free will of the living being, the Supreme Spiritual Being attracts the tiny being and thus frees it from any bondage to matter.

The cosmic manifestation visible to the eyes of the conditioned soul is caused by the Absolute Truth, God, the Supreme Person, who uses his specific energies to this end. On the contrary, atheists conclude from their deliberations that the unfolding of the cosmic manifestation is due to material nature. The energy of Absolute Truth manifests itself in three ways, spiritual, material and marginal. Absolute Truth is identical to its spiritual energy. Only the contact of the latter allows the material energy to enter into action; thus the temporary manifestations of matter appear to be active. In the conditioned state, marginal energy living beings are a combination of material and spiritual energy. Marginal energy is originally found under the control of spiritual energy, but under the sway of material energy living things have wandered into oblivion within the material world since time immemorial.

The conditioned state is caused by the misuse of individual independence proper to the spiritual level, because the living being, the embodied soul, thus loses contact with spiritual energy. But when the living being is enlightened by the grace of the Supreme Lord or his pure devotee and feels inclined to return to his normal condition in the service of love, he then finds himself at the most auspicious level, that of knowledge and of eternal bliss. The living being misuses his independence and becomes rebellious to the attitude of eternal service when he independently believes that he is the master of energy rather than energy. This false conception that he has of his existence leads him to want to dominate material nature. Material nature seems to be the complete opposite of spiritual energy. In fact, the first can only act on contact with the second. Originally, the energy of Kṛṣṇa is spiritual, but it acts in various ways, such as electricity which can be used for refrigeration or heating according to its various manifestations. Material energy is none other than spiritual energy covered by a veil of illusion, or *māyā*. Therefore, material energy is not sufficient on its own in action. Kṛṣṇa invests her with her spiritual energy and she can then act, just as iron can perform the function of fire after being heated by the latter. Material energy can act only when it is empowered by spiritual energy.

When covered by the cloud of material energy, the living being, also a spiritual energy of God, the Supreme Person, forgets all that has to do with the activities of the spiritual energy and considers all that takes place in material manifestation as a wonder in itself. However, one who becomes absorbed in devotional service with full awareness of God and therefore already finds himself in spiritual energy, can understand that material energy has no independent power; all activity that takes place is due to the competition of spiritual energy. Material energy, a perverted form of spiritual energy, presents everything in a distorted light, thus causing misconceptions and dualities. Scientists and materialist philosophers, conditioned by the influence of material nature, suppose that material energy acts on its own and they find themselves frustrated like one who, in the grip of illusion, strives expressing milk from the fleshy udder-like appendages on the necks of goats. It is just as impossible to succeed in understanding the original cause of creation by advancing theories born of material energy as obtaining milk from these pieces of skin. Such an undertaking is a manifestation of ignorance. The material energy of God, the Supreme Person, is called *māyā* or illusion, for in two ways (*by producing the material elements and by bringing about the material manifestation*) it renders the conditioned soul incapable of understanding the pure truth of creation. However, when the living being is freed from the conditioned existence imposed on it by matter, it can experience the two different actions of material nature, namely covering and leading astray.

God, the Supreme Person, is the origin of creation. The cosmic manifestation acts under the direction of the Supreme Lord, who appoints the three attributes and modes of influence of material nature; virtue, passion and ignorance, to material energy. Stirred by these three influences, the elements provided by material energy

produce a variety of things, just as the artist creates various paintings by mixing the three colors red, yellow and blue. Yellow represents virtue, red represents passion, and blue represents ignorance. The colorful diversity of creation is therefore only the interaction of these three attributes, manifested in eighty-one varieties of combinations. Illusioned by material energy, the conditioned soul, enamored of these eighty-one varied manifestations, desires to dominate it, just like a fly attracted by fire. This illusion is the sure result of his forgetting the eternal relationship which unites him to God, the Supreme Person. When conditioned, the soul is moved by material energy to seek the satisfaction of the senses, while the being enlightened by spiritual energy offers itself to the service of the Supreme Lord, according to his eternal relationship.

Kṛiṣṇa is the original cause of the spiritual world, and He is the veiled cause of material manifestation. It is also the original cause of marginal power, made up of living beings, souls. He is both the guide and the support of all living beings. These are called marginal power, because they can act under the protection of spiritual energy or under the veil of material energy. With the help of spiritual energy, we can understand that independence only appears in the person of Kṛiṣṇa, who, thanks to his inconceivable energy, can act as he wishes.

God, the Supreme Person, is the Absolute Whole, of which all living beings are parts. This relationship that exists between them is eternal. Let us never make the mistake of thinking that the spiritual whole can be broken down into tiny parts by the insignificant material nature. Truly, living beings are everlasting tiny fragments of the Supreme Spirit Whole, Krishna. Just as a part can never equal the Whole, the living being, as a tiny fragment of the Spiritual Whole, cannot equal the Supreme All, the absolute Divine Person. Although, according to a quantitative report, the Lord and living beings are related as the Whole and its parts, the parts nonetheless remain qualitatively identical to the Whole. Consequently, living beings find themselves in a relative position, despite their qualitative identity with the Lord. God reigns supreme over all things, and being, for his part, is always governed either by spiritual energy or by material energy. So he can never come to be the master of one or the other of these two energies. Its natural position is to always keep itself subordinate to God, the Supreme Person. The one who accepts to behave in this way attains the perfection of existence, but the one who revolts remains in the conditioned state.

The spiritual soul participates of the same nature as the Supreme Lord, and is qualitatively One with Him. It is therefore at the absolute level, between the distinct spiritual being and the Supreme Spiritual Whole, the Sovereign Being, God, that the exchanges of love find their origin, and also their total unfolding. The Lord is the source of all pleasures. It is when the individual being distinct from God comes into contact with Him, exchanging again with Him a feeling of natural and eternal love through which they are united, that he finds true happiness.

The Lord teaches that his coming and his actions are purely spiritual, and that any living being happy enough to know their sublime nature can immediately become free from the chains of matter and qualify to return to Him, to His kingdom. Knowing the absolute nature of the advent and deeds of Lord Krishna is enough to achieve liberation. Unless one serves Krishna, God, the Supreme Person with love and devotion, no one can find real satisfaction. The individual being distinct from God is the eternal servant of the Eternal Master, the Supreme Lord.

This is the natural and eternal relationship that unites them. If the Lord has multiplied himself into innumerable distinct beings, it is in order to accept from them a service of love, and only this exchange will be able to satisfy both the Lord and the distinct beings. After liberation, which is the last of the four principles which are the search for riches, the pleasure of the senses and salvation, based on acts of piety, the being adopts the practice of pure devotional service, and is therefore located at level of spiritual realization where he finally finds full satisfaction. But this satisfaction is in itself only the beginning of spiritual bliss. It is therefore first necessary to achieve some progress in this relative (*material*) world by achieving equanimity, equality of mind, in order then to establish oneself in the service of the Lord's sublime love. This is the teaching of the Divine Person. The first necessity for man is to realize the eternal relationship which unites him to the Lord, in order, without further delay, to abandon himself to Him. Our only occupation should be to love Krishna, God, the Supreme Person.

Teaching of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to his disciple Sanatane Gosvami.

Krishna, God, the Supreme Person says: *Before the creation of the cosmos, I alone exist to the exclusion of all gross, subtle or causal phenomena. After creation, I alone live in everything, and the time of annihilation has come, I alone remain forever.*

As Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu revealed the absolute truth and taught the science of God to his disciple, Sanatane Gosvami, the latter asked him the following questions:

By accepting me as your servant, You have delivered me from the chains of material existence. Now tell me what is my liberated soul duty?

Who am I, why am I constantly in the grip of the three forms of suffering, finally tell me how to escape this material stagnation?

Why do I have to undergo the three forms of suffering, (Those from the body and the mind, those caused by other living entities and those from nature such as cold or extreme heat, lightning, earthquakes, hurricanes, drought, etc.?)

I don't know how to inquire about spiritual empowerment, but I implore you to have the kindness and grace to teach me everything I need to know.

Lord Chaitanya replied: *Krishna has blessed you, so that you already know everything, besides being free from all the sufferings associated with material existence. As a humble devotee, you nevertheless ask me to confirm what you already know. And this is very well so. You are able to protect the devotional service of the Lord, so it is my duty to teach you the science of God, which I will do step by step.*

The three forms of suffering in question are called adhyatmika, adhibhautika, and adhidaivika.

The term adhyatmika designates the sufferings arising from the body and the mind. The living being sometimes suffers from physical ailments, sometimes from mental afflictions. We have experienced these two varieties of adhyatmika from the very time of our stay in our mother's womb. Several forms of suffering thus seem to take advantage of the fragility of the human body to torment us.

Suffering caused by other living entities is called adhibhautika. Many animals from larvae, including some insects, can disturb our sleep. Cockroaches and other unwanted species can also inflict pain on us, as can various beings born on planets other than ours.

The word adhidaivika corresponds to the sufferings which originate in the celestial beings of the higher planets. For example, cites extreme cold or heat, lightning, earthquakes, hurricanes, drought, etc. Either way, we are constantly exposed to one or other of these three forms of suffering.

Approaching a spiritual master is not just a fad. This is a necessity for anyone who is only too aware of material suffering and wishes to be free from it. Such a person must approach a spiritual master. We also find an example of this in the Bhagavad-Gita. When Arjuna became perplexed, not knowing whether or not to fight, he accepted Krishna as Spiritual Master. And here again, the Supreme Spiritual Master personally revealed the intrinsic nature of the being, this time to Arjuna. The distinct being (*the individual soul distinct from God*) is by nature intrinsic, a spiritual soul, foreign to matter, as such, it constitutes a spark of the Supreme Soul, the Absolute Truth, the Divine Person. The separate soul must surrender completely to Krishna, the Supreme Soul, to find happiness.

In his answers to Sanatane's questions, Lord Chaitanya takes up this same truth, with the difference that He does not present the data on the soul already contained in the Bhagavad-Gita (*Words of Krishna, Christ, God, the Supreme Person*). Rather, he begins his teaching where Krishna's ends. All great devotees recognize that Chaitanya is none other than Krishna, and his teaching in Sanatane begins where He concluded in the Gita, (*Words of Krishna, Christ, God, the Supreme Person*).

The Lord said: *By your intrinsic nature you are a living soul of purely spiritual essence. The material body cannot be assimilated to your true identity, nor can the mind, intelligence or false ego which is identification with the body. Your true identity is to*

be the eternal servant of Krishna, God, the Supreme Lord. Your status is transcendent in nature. The higher energy of Krishna is of spiritual essence while the lower, external energy is of material essence. Located between these two energies, you therefore belong to the marginal energy of Krishna, which means that you are one with Him while being distinct from Him. Being spiritual in nature, you are identical to Krishna. But because you are only a tiny fragment of it, you are at the same time different from Him.

This simultaneous identity and difference have always characterized the relationship which unites beings with the Supreme Lord. The marginal status of the distinct being allows us to understand this notion of *simultaneous identity and difference*. The living being is like a molecule of the sun, while Krishna can be compared to the star itself, in all its glory. Lord Chaitanya compares living beings to sparks of fire and the Supreme Being to the very inferno from which they emanate. In this context, the Lord quotes a verse from the Visnu Purana (*sacred book*) where it is said that all cosmic manifestation is only the energy of the Supreme Lord. Like the fire which, from where it burns, diffuses its light and its heat all around, the Lord, who is in a given point of the spiritual world, deploys and manifests his different energies everywhere. Indeed, the entire Creation is made up of various manifestations of its energy.

As spiritual sparks emanating from the rays of the transcendent body of the Lord, the spiritual being is eternally connected with Krishna, God, the Supreme Person and participates of the same nature. The soul is a much brighter, more radiant, and more powerful spiritual spark than the sun. Spiritual and absolute is the energy of the Supreme Lord, an energy of which living beings are an integral part. However, there is another energy, called matter, which the cloud of ignorance covers and which therefore has three modes of influence, or *gunas* (*virtue, passion, ignorance*). Lord Chaitanya who is none other than Krishna himself, again quotes the Visnu Purana, according to which all inconceivable energies reside in the Supreme Person of the Lord, and the entire cosmic manifestation operates through them.

The Lord adds that the living being is also qualified as knowing the field of action. The body is the field of action and the living being, the spiritual soul, as it knows this field. Although the being is intrinsically familiar with spiritual energy or has the power to know it, being covered by material energy, it identifies with the body. This feeling of being what it is not constitutes what is called the *false ego*. Mystified by the latter, the lost being in the midst of material existence takes on different bodies and undergoes various forms of suffering, while different classes of living beings possess in varying degrees the knowledge of their true nature. In other words, every living being participates in the spiritual energy of the Supreme Lord. Since material energy is of an inferior nature, the human being has the power to escape its grip to take full advantage of spiritual energy. The higher energy is veiled by the lower one, which subjects the living being to the sufferings inherent in the material universe according to the thickness of the veil which covers it. Somewhat enlightened souls suffer less

than others, but on the whole all are prone to suffer from the fact that material energy envelops them.

The Lord adds that earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego together form the lower energy of the Supreme Being. The true identity of being, however, lies in the higher energy, on which the functioning of the material universe depends entirely. The cosmic manifestation, formed of material elements, cannot in fact come to life without the presence of the higher energy, which the living being, the soul, embodies. In reality, the latter's conditioned existence results from his forgetting of the relationship which unites him to the Supreme Lord within the higher energy. It is only when the human being rediscovers his true identity as an eternal servant of the Lord that he achieves liberation. Since no one can trace the origins of the living being's stagnation in material energy, the lord says he has no beginning. That is, conditioned existence precedes Creation. It simply manifests itself during and after Creation. Forgetting his spiritual nature, the living being undergoes all kinds of suffering within matter. Let us understand here that there are also beings who, free from any material connection, inhabit the spiritual world. These liberated souls are still engaging in Krishna consciousness, in devotional service.

Souls conditioned by material nature engage in activities which result in them putting on various kinds of bodies over the course of their successive lifetimes. In the material universe, these souls are thus entitled to various punishments and rewards. Their meritorious deeds can elevate them to the higher planets, where they can join the ranks of the many celestial beings. Their reprehensible acts can on the contrary precipitate them towards various infernal planets to suffer more there the torments of the material life.

The Lord cites here a very fine example: In the old days, kings punished criminals by dipping them into a river, then raising them to the surface for a breath of air, after which they again plunged them back into the water. Material nature rewards or punishes beings in an analogous way, by plunging them into the waters of suffering or by extirpating them for a time. The rise to the higher planets (*Edenic, paradisiacal*) or to a higher standard of life is never permanent, it is always followed by a new submersion. Thus material existence is perpetuated. We are sometimes promoted to higher planetary systems, Edenic, paradisiacal, sometimes thrown into hellish living conditions. *Maya*, the material nature, causes us *to forget our relationship with Krishna*. In fact, *maya* means *that which is not, or illusion*, that which has no existence. It is therefore wrong to believe that the living being has no connection with the Supreme Lord. He may not believe in the existence of God, or think that nothing connects them, but these are illusions or *maya*. In the grip of this false conception of life, the human being languishes with endless fears and anxieties. In other words, any conception of life without God comes under *maya*.

Whoever is versed in holy literature surrenders to the Sovereign Lord with great devotion and recognizes in Him the ultimate goal of their existence. As soon as the

being forgets the fundamental nature of his relationship with God, he succumbs to material energy, hence his false ego, his identification with the body, which he mistakes for the self. His entire conception of the material universe arises from this false conception of the body. Attaching himself to the latter, he also attaches himself to all that he can produce. To escape this slavery, he has only to do his duty by relying on the Supreme Lord with intelligence, devotion and a sincere awareness of Krishna, of God.

The conditioned soul mistakenly believes itself to be happy in the material universe, but when blessed by the teaching of a pure devotee it relinquishes its desire for material enjoyment and finds itself enlightened by Krishna consciousness. As soon as she accesses this consciousness, her material desires are annihilated and she gradually gets rid of the bondage to matter. There can be no question of darkness in the presence of light. Now, Krishna consciousness is that light which dispels the darkness of material enjoyment. The Krishna conscious being never subscribes to the mistaken idea that he is one with God. Knowing that he would not be happy working for himself, he devotes all his energies to the service of the Lord and thus sees himself freed from the clutches of the energy of temporal illusion. The material energy composed of the three *gunas* (*the three attributes and modes of influence of material nature; virtue, passion and ignorance*) turns out to be so powerful that one can hardly escape it. But whoever surrenders to Krishna is easily freed from the hold of *maya*.

The Lord goes on to teach that every moment devoted to self-interested action plunges the conditioned soul into oblivion of its true identity. Sometimes tired and disgusted with material action, she longs for liberation and to become one with the Supreme, while at other times, she believes that by struggling to satisfy her senses, she will find happiness. In either case, the material energy covers it. In order to enlighten souls thus lost, the Lord presents to humanity the original holy scriptures, also called the true gospel, designed to guide the human being in his return to God.

The Lord also explains that the conditioned soul, which the spiritual master accepts out of compassion and guided by the Supreme Soul, uses the various scriptures to acquire knowledge and progress in spiritual realization. Let us understand that it is by the perpetual grace of Krishna towards his devotees that were produced all these Vedic texts (*of the Vedas, the original holy scriptures*), so that we can know the relationship which unites us to Him and act accordingly. Thus can one attain the ultimate goal of existence.

In fact, all living things are destined to reach the Supreme Lord, and all can know the relationship between them. The performance of duties aimed at perfection is called *devotional service*; when it reaches maturity, this service becomes love for God, the true goal of life for all. The being is not destined to experience success in religious rites, economic growth or pleasure of the senses. He doesn't even have to aspire to liberation. His only desire is to reach the level of sublime loving service offered to the

Lord. The endlessly fascinating traits of Krishna promote our access to Krishna consciousness, which, when engaged, enables us to realize the connection between self and God.

Only devotional service makes it possible to find God, and to approach him. The only alternative, therefore, is to seek the hidden treasure, Krishna, God, through devotional service performed in full Krishna consciousness. Such is the hidden fortune which never dries up, so that by acquiring it, one becomes rich forever. Whoever is poor in devotion and Krishna consciousness will always lack material gains, sometimes suffering from the bites of poisonous creatures, sometimes suffering failure, sometimes still adhering to the doctrine of monism losing their identity or being devoured by one. huge snake. Only by relinquishing all of this to establish a firm footing in Krishna consciousness, in the devotional service of the Lord, will one experience the true perfection of existence. The paths of self-interested action, speculative knowledge and meditation do not lead to perfection, while the practice of devotional service is sure to approach the Lord. That is why all the Vedic writings recommend the adoption of this path.

The Lord said: *No one can, through philosophical speculation, yoga or austerity, give Me as much pleasure as through the practice of devotional service.*

The Lord is dear only to his devotees, and only the service of love and devotion offered to God makes it possible to reach him. Even if he is of the lowest social class, the devotee is automatically cleansed of all filth. Devotional service is the only way of access to God, the Supreme Person.

This is the only perfection recognized by all Vedic scriptures. Just as a poor person becomes happy as soon as he receives some treasure, so the person who establishes himself in the practice of devotional service naturally sees his material torments vanish. As she progresses on this path, she acquires love for God and, developing it, frees herself from all material bondage. Let us not believe, however, that ending poverty and liberation is the end of love for Krishna. Rather, it is in enjoying this loving exchange of service that the love for God, Krishna resides. All the Vedic texts state that access to this loving relationship which unites the living being with the Supreme Lord constitutes the *raison d'être* of devotional service. Our true occupation is devotional service, and our ultimate goal is the love of God. All the Vedic writings, the original holy writings, thus have Krishna as their ultimate center, for one can provide a solution to all the problems of existence through the knowledge of Krishna.

The Lord then revealed that the planets of the spiritual world, called Vaikounthas, and the galaxies of the material manifestation, the material cosmos, actually represent different types of manifestations, coming from two different varieties of energy, spiritual and material. Krishna, He, is fully established in his spiritual energy, or more specifically in his internal power. Since everything within the cosmic creation is based on the Supreme and Absolute Truth, the creative manifestation or

manifestation of Visnu, the various celestial beings and the manifestations of his energy, living beings and material elements, all depend on Krishna, who embodies the Supreme Truth. Krishna is the supreme refuge from all things. It follows that perfect knowledge can only be acquired through analytical study of Krishna.

Although Krishna is the Supreme and Absolute Truth, the cause of all causes and the origin of all emanations and Avatars, his form remains eternal, all in bliss and absolute knowledge. He is both the refuge and the possessor or Master of all that exists. Krishna is the Supreme God whose body is bathed in knowledge, eternity and bliss. Original Person, He embodies the first cause of all causes. So Krishna is God, the Original Person, and He possesses the six excellences in their fullness. His home, Goloka Vrindavana, also belongs to the highest planetary system of the spiritual world. It is the highest of all the planets, both material and spiritual.

Lord Chaitanya clearly states that all of the mentioned Avatars are either direct emanations, or, indirectly, emanations of emanations of Krishna, whose Name designates God, the Original Person, who appears on this Earth, in our galaxy. Milky Way or any other, whenever demonic beings, who always seek to destabilize the administration of celestial beings, wreak havoc. Those who know the Absolute Truth describe it in three aspects: the Impersonal Spiritual Being, the all-pervading Supreme Soul, and Krishna, God, the Supreme Person. In other words, the Spiritual Being, the impersonal aspect, the Supreme Soul, the aspect located in our heart, and the very Person of God, are one and the same Entity. The awareness of the aspect of Krishna as Impersonal Spiritual Being is due to the perception of the only radiance which emanates from the spiritual body of Krishna, which constitutes the infinite impersonal manifestation of his Person, where innumerable galaxies float, each populated by countless planets.

Lord Chaitanya also emphasizes that the Supreme Soul also called Holy Spirit, the omnipresent aspect of God seated in the body of every being, is only a partial manifestation or emanation of Krishna. As the Soul of all souls, Krishna is called the Supreme Self.

The Lord is also a living being, except that He is the Supreme, to whom all other beings are subordinate. The latter can therefore experience spiritual bliss, eternity and perfect knowledge in his company. Lord Krishna Himself penetrates into our galaxy through one of his plenary emanations, Garbhodakashayi Visnu, as well as into every galaxy in the form of Kshirodakashayi Visnu, to finally multiply in the form of the Supreme Soul located in the heart of each person. Anyone who desires to know and fully understand the Supreme and Absolute Truth must embrace devotional service in full Krishna consciousness. Only then will it be possible to fully grasp the Absolute Truth.

In his two-armed aspect, the Lord manifests himself as Balarama, who is no different from Krishna Himself, except that his complexion is light (*white*) while that of Krishna

is dark (*blue-black*).). The two-armed aspect was also revealed when Krishna appeared before his mother Devaki in the four-armed form of Narayana, right after his coming into this world. However, He transformed it into a two-armed form at the request of his parents. Thus He manifests sometimes four arms and sometimes only two. The two-armed form is called vaibhava-prakash and the four-armed form is called prabhava-prakash. In his personal form, Krishna takes on and considers himself a little shepherd. But when He takes the form of Vasudeva, He sees himself as the son of an administrator, and behaves like a princely administrator.

As the son of Nanda Maharaj, Krishna fully manifests his form, opulence, beauty, wealth, power of fascination and entertainment. In truth, we read in some Vaishnavian (*branch of Hinduism*) writings that Vasudeva Himself sometimes feels the attraction of the form of Govinda (*full manifestation of Krishna*) to Vrindavana (*sublime region of the planet where eternally resides Krishna, in the company of his pure devotees*). So he sometimes wants to be entertained like Govinda, although the forms of Vasudeva and Govinda share a unique identity. In this context, let us quote a passage from the fourth chapter of Lalita-madhava (*sacred book*), where Krishna says to Uddhava [*Friend and most confidential adviser of Lord Krishna to Mathurâ and Dvârakâ*.]:

Dear friend, the form of Govinda, the little shepherd, fascinates Me. Truly, like the young girls of Vraja, I would like to feel the attraction of this form of Govinda.

Krishna adds: *O wonder! Who is this person?*

Having seen her, I feel such an attraction that I desire to hug her as Radhika does.

When this form of Krishna takes on a somewhat different aspect, it is called tadekatma-roupa, because it is related to his personal form. The latter can be divided into two other categories, which themselves exhibit many different traits and in turn fall into two groups: prabhava and vaibhava. As for the vila forms, there are countless prabhava-vilas [*four-armed forms, which are named differently according to the arrangement of their symbols: mace, disc, lotus, and conch*] through which Krishna stands. multiplies in Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha.

The Lord sometimes thinks he is a little shepherd, sometimes an administrator, son of Vasudeva. It is these various *ways of thinking* of Krishna that we call *Entertainment*. In reality, its four-armed form does not differ from the so-called two-armed one, although it appears differently in the features of Krishna and Baladeva. As for the aforementioned emanations, Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, they form the four original emanations, composed of manifestations with four arms. [*Krishna is the original source of all divine emanations, the first four of which are Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Pradyumna and Aniduddha. When these four Deities are represented together, Vasudeva and Sankarsana stand in the center, Pradyumna to the right of Sankarsana and Aniruddha to the left of Vasudeva. They are called the four aides-de-camp of Lord Krishna.*]

There are countless quadruple emanations on different planets and places, including Dvaraka and Mathoura, India, where they have been manifested from all eternity. From this original quartet emanate the twenty-four main vaibhava-vilas, forms that are named differently according to the arrangement of the symbols they carry in their hands. These four manifestations of Krishna are also present on each of the planets of the spiritual world, planets which are called Narayana-lokas or Vaikountha-lokas. The Lord manifests there in the four-armed form of Narayana, from which emanate the forms of Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha mentioned above. Narayana occupies the central place there, and thus surrounds himself with the four quadruple emanations. Each of these then multiplies into three others with different names, the first of which is Keshava, resulting in a total of twelve forms known by different names depending on the arrangement of the symbols that Narayana holds in her hands. As for the form of Vasudeva, the three manifestations that emanate from it are Keshava, Narayana and Madhava. The three forms of Sankarsana are called Govinda, Visnu and Shri Madhusudane. It should be noted here that this form of Govinda is not that of Nanda Maharaj's son in Vrindavane. Likewise, Pradyumna multiplies into three forms named Trivikram, Vamana and Shridhar, while the three forms of Aniruddha are Hrishikesh, Padmanabhe and Damodar.

The different forms of Krishna are thus present in our galaxy and in all the others for the pleasure of his devotees. Indeed, the latter do not originate in India, but in all parts of the world. Even when they have forgotten their real identity, these forms come into being for their satisfaction as well as to restore devotional service and perform other activities of vital importance to the Lord God. Some of these forms are Avatars mentioned in the original holy scriptures.

Krishna first incarnates in the form of the three Supreme-Avatars: Karanodakashayi or Maha-Visnu, Garbhodakashayi Visnu and Kshirodakashayi Visnu. The energies of Krishna can also be divided into three categories, namely the energy of thought, the energy of feeling and the energy of action. He manifests the first as Supreme God, the second as Vasudeva and the third as Sankarsana Balarama. Creation cannot exist without thought, feeling and action. Although we cannot speak of creation with regard to the spiritual world, the material universe is indeed created. However, both the spiritual world and the material universe are manifestations of Krishna's energy of action, through which He intervenes in the form of Sankarsana and Balarama.

The spiritual world, with its planets Vaikuntha and Krishnaloka, relies on the thought energy of the Divine. Although there can be no question of creation in view of its eternal nature, let us understand that the spiritual planets nevertheless depend on the energy of the mind of the Supreme Lord. This energy is described in the *Brahma-samhita (sacred book)*, where it is said that the Supreme Abode, Goloka, manifests as a lotus with hundreds of petals. Everything is manifested there by Ananta, Balarama or Sankarsana. The cosmic manifestation and its various galaxies are manifested through maya, the material energy. Let us not believe, however, that nature, material energy, is the cause of the entire cosmic manifestation. Rather, it is the Supreme Lord,

whose different emanations operate through material nature, who is the cause. In other words, there can be no question of creation without the guidance of the Lord. The form through which the energy of material nature operates creation is called Sankarsana. It is therefore understood that the cosmic manifestation, (*the material cosmos*), is created under the supervision of the Supreme Being. We give on this subject the example of iron which, on contact with fire, becomes similar to it.

Lord Chaitanya continues; the emanations of Lord Krishna appearing within the material creation are called *Avatars*, or incarnations. The word *Avatar* means, *which descends from the upper, spiritual world*. The latter is populated by innumerable planets called Vaikuntha, from where the emanations of the Lord descend into our galaxy. Hence they are called *Avatars*.

The first Avatar of the Supreme Person, God, to emanate from Sankarsana is the Avatar-Supreme. When God descends in the form of the first Avatar-Supreme, He immediately manifests the sixteen elementary energies of material creation. Called Maha-Visnu, He rests on the waters of the Causal Ocean and is the Original Avatar of the material galaxy, the Master of time, of nature, of causes and their effects, of the mind, of the ego, of the five elements, of the three modes of influence of nature, of the senses and of the universal form. Although He is the Lord of all things, mobile and still, He remains no less independent. Material nature cannot exert its influence beyond the Causal Ocean. Neither the attributes of nature (*Virtue, Passion and Ignorance*) nor material time have the slightest influence on the spiritual planets Vaikuntha, where Krishna's companions live eternally, those liberated souls worshiped by heavenly beings and anti-gods.

Material nature plays two roles, that of direct cause, or *maya*, and that of global material energy in the unmanifest state, linked to the manifestation of the temporal elements. When Maha-Visnu, the first Avatar-Supreme, sets his gaze on material nature, it sets in motion, and it is then that He injects living beings into matter. This single gaze is enough to create consciousness, which is called *mahat-tattva* and of which the guardian Deity is Vasudeva. Consciousness is then divided into three sectors of activity according to the three modes of influence of nature; virtue, passion, ignorance. Consciousness under the sign of virtue has Aniruddha as its guardian deity. Consciousness under the sign of passion engenders intelligence, and its guardian divinity is Pradyumna, the Master of the senses. Consciousness under the sign of ignorance produces ether, space and the sense of hearing. Cosmic manifestation is all of these elements, and countless galaxies are created. These countless galaxies emanate from the pores of Maha-Visnu's body like so many dust particles that would pass through the holes of a mosquito net. Countless galaxies are also created and wiped out by its blast. All the energies of Maha-Visnu are spiritual: they have nothing in common with material energy. Brahma, the sovereign celestial being of each galaxy, lives only the time of a breath of Maha-Visnu. This is therefore the original Supreme Soul and the original Master of all galaxies. So much for the description of the first Avatar, Maha-Visnu.

Garbhodakashayi, the second Avatar of Visnu, enters each of the galaxies, then lies down on the water He produces from his own body. From his navel arose the stem of a lotus which became the birthplace of Brahma, the demiurge and first created being. In the stem of this lotus are the fourteen planetary systems, created by Brahma. The Lord is present in the form of Garbhodakashayi Visnu in every galaxy, of which He is the support. Despite this universal presence, the influence of material energy cannot touch him. In due time, this same Visnu takes the form of Siva and annihilates the cosmic creation. These three secondary incarnations, Brahma, Visnu and Siva, are the guardian deities of the three attributes of material nature. The second Avatar of Visnu, Garbhodakashayi, who is worshiped as the Supreme Soul, or Hiranyagarbha, and whom the Vedic hymns describe as having thousands of heads, imposes himself as the Ruler of the galaxy, and despite his presence in the midst of material nature, He is in no way affected by it.

The third Avatar of Visnu, named Kshirodakashayi, also embodies virtue. Supreme Soul of all living beings, He resides on the Milky Ocean of the galaxy. This is the description of the Supreme Avatars given by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He then describes the Lila-Avatars [*Divine Manifestations which at various times descend into the material galaxy to make visible the spiritual and absolute entertainments of the Supreme Lord*], who engage in different entertainments, and points out that their number is infinite. The Lord portrays a few, however: Matsya, Kurma, Raghunath, Nrishingha, Vamana and Varaha. Next come the three Guna-Avatars, or incarnations of Visnu personifying the attributes of material nature. The first, Brahma, is one of the created living beings, except that his devotional service endows him with great power. Such a primordial being, become Brahma by the influence of the material Passion, is directly empowered by Garbhodakashayi Visnu to create myriads of living beings. Brahma is compared to precious jewels illuminated by the rays of the Sun, the star of the day which is himself similar to the Supreme Lord in the person of Garbhodakashayi Visnu. If at a certain age no living being is able to perform the functions of Brahma, Garbhodakashayi Visnu Himself becomes Brahma and performs the functions associated with this position.

Similarly, the Lord manifests himself in the form of Siva when the time comes to annihilate the material galaxy. Siva, through his contact with Maya (*material energy*), himself assumes several forms, generally eleven in number. Not belonging to the common living beings, he is more or less Krishna Himself. The example of milk and yogurt is often cited in this context: yogurt is a dairy product, but it cannot replace milk. Likewise, Siva is an emanation of Krishna, but he can neither play the role of Krishna nor, like Him, give us reintegration into our spiritual condition. Unlike Visnu, Siva indeed lives in contact with material nature; that is what essentially distinguishes them. Siva embodies the amalgamation of the three altered forms of consciousness called virtue, passion and ignorance.

For his part, although He is the Master of virtue in every galaxy, the Guna-Avatar Visnu is in no way influenced by material nature. However, even if he is the equal of

Krishna, the latter remains the primary source. Krishna embodies the whole of which Visnu is a part. This is the teaching of the Vedic writings, the Vedas, the original holy writings. The Brahma-samhita offers the example of a first candle whose flame is used to light a second. Although of equal power, the first remains the source from which the second draws its light. The Avatar Visnu can thus be assimilated to this second candle. He is as powerful as Krishna, but Krishna remains the original Visnu. Brahma and Siva are therefore devoted servants of the Supreme Lord while Visnu is an emanation of Krishna.

After having described the Lila-Avatars and the Guna-Avatars, Lord Chaitanya explains the Manvantara-Avatars [*The different Manus, fathers of humanity, whose function is to populate the galaxy and to establish there the laws of a fair and balanced society*] in Sanatane Gosvami. He first specifies that it would be impossible to count them all. Indeed, during a single day of Brahma, fourteen Manus manifest themselves. However, such a day covers 432 million of our years, and a life of Brahma includes one hundred years on this scale. Therefore, if fourteen Manus (*fathers of humanity*) appear in one Brahma day, there will be 420 in a month and 5,040 in a year. And since Brahma lives one hundred years, it is established at 504,000 the number of Manus who manifest during his lifetime. Considering the countless galaxies, one can only imagine the total number of Manvantara-Avatars, Manus or fathers of humanity. Since all galaxies are born simultaneously from the expiration of Maha-Visnu, who could estimate how many Manus are manifesting at the same time?

And each of these Manus has a different name. The first is Svayambhuva, Brahma's own son. The second, Svarochisha, is the son of the tutelary deity of fire. The third, named Uttama, is the son of King Priyavrata. The fourth, Tamasa, is Uttama's brother. The fifth Manu, Raivata, is Tamasa's brother, as is Chaksusa, Chaksu's son. The seventh is called Vaivasvata and is the son of the celestial being of the Sun. The eighth, Savarni, is another son of the celestial being of the Sun, albeit born to a different wife named Chaya. The ninth Manu, called Daksa-savarni, is the son of Varuna. The tenth, Brahma-savarni, is the son of Upashloka, and the other four Manu are Rudra-savarni, Dharma-savarni, Indra-savarni and Rauchya, all sons of Siva.

After concluding his description of the Manus, the fathers of mankind, the Lord portrays the Yuga-Avatars [*The Divine manifestations appearing in each age or millennium (yuga) to teach therein the method of spiritual realization, which is peculiar to it*] by informing Sanatane Gosvami that there are four millennia, named Satya, (the golden age) Treta, (the silver age) Dvapara (the copper age) and Kali (the iron age)). In each of these ages the Lord is incarnated in a different color. In the golden age, the main one, the Avatar takes on a white complexion; in the silver age, its form is red; in the Copper Age the main incarnation, Krishna, is black-blue, and in the Iron Age, the main Avatar takes on a yellow complexion.

The method of spiritual realization advocated in the Golden Age was meditation, and it was taught there by the White Avatar, who then granted sage Kardama the grace of

having a divine incarnation as a son. In this age, all were meditating on Krishna and every living being was bathed in perfect knowledge. In our time, this practice is no longer recommended, although it remains, in various forms, the instrument of the search for individuals whose knowledge is incomplete. During the Silver Age, the recommended spiritual path was the accomplishment of sacrifices, according to the teaching of the Avatar with the red complexion. Then came the Copper Age, when all worshiped Krishna, then personally present, to achieve self-realization. Stormy color, Krishna incarnates in his own form and prompts people to worship him, as the Bhagavad-Gita reports. Srimad-Bhagavatam teaches us for its part that we worship Krishna through the following hymn: *I offer my respectful homage to God, the Supreme Person, whom we call Vasudeva.* So the worship of the Sovereign Krishna was practiced in the Copper Age.

How can we recognize an Avatar?

And the Lord answered: *Just as we recognize the different Avatars in the light of the Vedic texts, (the Vedas, the original holy scriptures), we can know who is really the incarnation of God in this age of Kali.*

Hence the importance of relying on the authoritative scriptures on the matter: it is not a question of seeing an Avatar in any person, according to his whims, but rather of understanding the characteristics of a person. true Avatar, defined and mentioned in sacred literature. A genuine Avatar never proclaims himself such, so his followers must distinguish him from impostors by referring to the proven holy scriptures. The true Avatar is mentioned in the original holy scriptures. It mentions the name of the city where He will appear, as well as the names of his father and mother.

Any intelligent person can recognize the characteristic traits of the legitimate Avatar by two criteria, namely his personality, the main criterion, and his secondary characteristics. Thus the scriptures describe the bodily features and activities of the Avatar, the former constituting the main criterion which enables him to be identified, and the latter his secondary attributes. The very first verse of Srimad-Bhagavatam confirms this by describing the characteristics of an Avatar as best as possible by the words param and satyam which, according to Lord Chaitanya, reveal the main traits of Krishna. Its secondary characteristics, such as teaching Vedic knowledge to Brahma and taking the Avatar-Supreme form to create the cosmos, are only manifested occasionally and for specific purposes.

The particular signs of Krishna, his plenary emanations and the Avatars.

It is written in the original holy scriptures: *All Avatars, incarnations of the Supreme Lord, who descend into this world, are plenary emanations of Lord Krishna or emanations of his plenary emanations. But He, Krishna, is God in person, in his original most complete form.*

In order to avoid anyone pretending to be an Avatar, let us know that the true Avatar will be recognized by the particular signs and characteristics of his Divinity, which he wears on his body, the palms of his hands, and the soles of his feet.

The signs of the soles of the feet of the Lord: A standard, a lightning bolt, a mahout's staff, a fish, a parasol, a lotus flower and a disc.

The signs of the palms of his hands: Lotus flowers and chariot wheels.

Seven parts of her body glow with a reddish glow: Her eyes, the palms of her hands, the soles of her feet, her palate, her lips and her nails.

The Avatar who has none of these signs is not, or is simply an impostor.

Krishna, God, the Supreme Person, just like Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu who is none other than Krishna Himself, can show their gigantic universal form made up of the entire cosmic manifestation. When Lords Krishna or Chaitanya manifest their universal form, it is to prove that They are indeed God, the Supreme Person. Krishna also wears a peacock feather on his magnificent curly hair, and a tuft of white hair on his broad chest.

Whoever dares to take himself for God or who lets it be believed, and who is not able to manifest this gigantic universal form, nor does not wear the signs mentioned above, is only an impostor. It is important to understand and distinguish the main and marginal characteristics of the Avatar. No one can claim to be divine incarnation without possessing both, which no intelligent being will fail to study before considering anyone to be an Avatar. When Sanatane Gosvami sought to confirm that Chaitanya's personal characteristics were those of the Avatar for this age, the Lord indirectly admitted that this was the case by simply saying: *Let's move on; Let us continue with the description of the inverted Avatars of powers.*

The Lord clarified that one cannot estimate the number of Avatars invested with powers either, although it is possible to cite a few examples. There are two varieties of incarnations said to be empowered: when the Lord Himself appears, it is designated by the name of personal manifestation, or Avatar invested with full power, while when He invests a being with powers alive to represent it, it is an indirect incarnation.

The four Kumaras, Narada, Prithu and Parasurama belong to this second category of Avatars, who are in reality individual beings distinct from God endowed with powers by the Supreme Being. Sesa and Ananta can be cited as examples of direct incarnations of the Lord. When a distinct being is invested with a particular attribute of the Lord, he is called Avesa-Avatar. The Kumaras thus embody the knowledge of the Supreme Lord, and Narada, his devotional service, just like Lord Chaitanya, who is

however considered to be the full embodiment of devotion. In Brahma was invested the power to create, and Ananta that to support all the planets. Avatar Sesa is empowered to serve the Supreme Lord, and King Prithu was given the power to maintain living beings. Parasurama was likewise endowed with the power to decimate the unhealthy elements. When a being seems endowed with unusual beauty or power, we must conclude that he has received exceptional favor from the Sovereign Lord.

Krishna still has the appearance of a young man of sixteen. When He desires to descend into our galaxy, He first makes His father and mother appear, who are His devotees, and then He manifests as an Avatar or comes Himself in person. All of its activities, starting with the killing of the evil Putana, unfold in countless galaxies, endlessly. Truly, every moment, every second, its various manifestations and entertainments are being revealed in different galaxies. Thus his activities and entertainment are comparable to the waves of the Ganges, which follow one another without end, because the incarnations of Krishna in different galaxies know no interruption, manifesting from childhood many entertainments which culminate in the rasa dance. The rasa dance, the highest of all Krishna's entertainments, which He manifested on earth 5,000 years ago. He then danced in the forest of Vrindavana with Radharani and all the other gopis, the young girls of Vrindavana, his companions and pure devotees, simultaneously making himself the rider of each of them.

All of Krishna's Entertainments are referred to as Eternal in all scriptures. Generally speaking, people cannot understand how they are going. Lord Chaitanya therefore resorted to the example of the orbit of the Sun to help them. According to Vedic astrology, the twenty-four hours of the day and night are divided into sixty dandas, themselves divided into 3,600 palas. The solar disk can thus be perceived at each slice of sixty palas, which constitutes a danda. Eight dandas equal one prahara. The Sun rises and sets in the interval of four praharas. Likewise, the night covers four praharas, after which the day star rises again. And all of Krishna's entertainments can be seen in each of the galaxies just as the Sun can be seen in its orbit covering 3,600 palas.

Lord Krishna only dwells in our galaxy, the Milky Way, for 125 years, but all the fun that this period covers is manifested in each of the galaxies. His entertainments include his advent, childhood, youth, and subsequent entertainments, until their conclusion at Dvaraka [*Krishna's Eternal Abode, where He manifests His opulence. While on earth, Krishna moved the entire population of Mathurâ, to Dvarakâ. The kingdom of Dvarakâ was located on an island, at the western end of India (now Gujarat). Lord Krishna 5,000 years ago manifested his spiritual and absolute entertainments there.*]. Since they always take place in one or the other of the myriads of galaxies, they are said to be eternal. In other words, as the Sun exists at all times, although we see it rise and set according to our planetary situation, the entertainment of the Lord continues endlessly, even though we do not perceive the manifestation in our galaxy. only at certain intervals. It has already been said that his home is Goloka Vrindavana, the supreme planet; and by their absolute nature, the

Name, Fame and all other attributes of Krishna are identical to Him. Now, Krishna's will is that this same Goloka Vrindavana manifests in different galaxies, including our own.

As a result, although the Lord still resides in his supreme abode, Goloka Vrindavana, through his supreme will, the activities that He performs there are also manifested in countless galaxies and when He appears, it is in these places. precise, where each of its manifestations reveals its six excellences.

The Lord resumes his teaching by explaining to Gosvami [*One who perfectly masters his senses and his mind*] the situation of the different Vaikuntha planets which inhabit the spiritual world. The galaxies of material creation are limited in size, but the Vaikuntha planets, by their spiritual nature, extend into infinity. So Lord Chaitanya informed Il Sanatane that each of them covers millions, even billions of kilometers. No one can therefore measure its extent. All their inhabitants are endowed with the six excellences: wealth, strength, knowledge, beauty, renown and renunciation. On each of these planets a different emanation of Krishna, the Supreme Lord, resides eternally. Krishna Himself has his own original, eternal abode, which is called Krishnaloka or Goloka Vrindavana. In our galaxy, even the largest star occupies only part of space. Although it is millions of times larger than the Earth, the Sun does not fill space on its own. Likewise, each of the Vaikuntha, spiritual planets, despite its incalculable dimensions, occupies only a part of the spiritual sky, the radiance of the Lord, which the Brahma-samhita (*sacred text*) describes as being undivided, unlimited and without any trace. material attributes of material nature. All the Vaikunthas are like the petals of a lotus whose heart is Krishnaloka or Goloka Vrindavana, the center of all these planets. Krishna's emanations in the various forms described in this work, as well as his abodes on the various planets of the spiritual world, are all infinite in nature. No one can estimate the extent of the Vaikunthas.

Ananta Himself, the embodiment of the strength of the Lord, can find no limit to the power of the Lord or to the area of the different planets Vaikuntha. Krishna is God, the Supreme Person, no one surpasses him or even the equal. This is the obvious conclusion. Although they are masters in each of the galaxies, Brahma, Siva and Visnu nonetheless remain the servants of Krishna, the Supreme Being. First cause of all causes, Krishna is also at the origin of Maha-Visnu, the first Avatar and ruler of material creation. From Maha-Visnu emanate Garbhodakashayi and Kshirodakashayi Visnu. So Krishna is the Master, besides being the Supreme Soul seated in every living being, in every galaxy. The Brahma-samhita (5:48) describes Maha-Visnu thus: His breathing creates innumerable galaxies, each of which receives infinite plenary emanations or emanations of Krishna emanations. Let us understand, however, that Krishna is its Master, and that They are only full emanations.

Krishna resides in three spiritual places, the most intimate of which is Goloka Vrindavana, where He lives with his father, mother and friends. There he manifests various transcendent relationships and bestows his compassion on his eternal

surroundings. There, Krishna's internal power becomes his servant for the purpose of the rasa dance. So the inhabitants of Vrajabhumi think: *The Lord is glorified by the smallest manifestations of his sublime grace and affection, and we, the inhabitants of Vrindavana, are freed from all anguish by his merciful existence.*

All of the Vaikuntha planets of the spiritual world, named Visnu Lokas, are found under the supreme planet named Krishna Loka. On this star, the Lord delights in spiritual ecstasy in multiple forms, and all the excellences of the Vaikunthas are fully manifested on this one planet. Krishna's entourage is also endowed with the six excellences. The material and spiritual energies are separated by the waters of the Viraja River, which emanates from the sweat of the first Avatar-Supreme. On one bank of the Viraja is eternal nature, as infinite as it is blissful, and known as the spirit world, or the Kingdom of God. The spiritual planets are called Vaikunthas because there is neither lamentation nor fear, everything is eternal. The spiritual world is estimated to be made up of three-quarters of the energies of the Supreme Lord, while the material manifestation, the material cosmos, is only a quarter. No one can comprehend what it is about these three quarters, because even the temporal universe which forms only one quarter of the energies of the Lord, cannot be adequately described.

The Lord is given the Name of Tryadhishvara, in reference to his three main residences, Gokula, Mathura and Dvaraka where absolute opulence reigns. Established in his transcendent power, Krishna is the Master of these three sojourns and of all spiritual energies, besides possessing the six excellences in their fullness. This is why all the Vedic scriptures proclaim that He is God, the Supreme Person. Lord Chaitanya then sang before Sanatane Gosvami a sublime song describing Krishna's excellences:

All Krishna's Entertainment is like the activities of humans. So let's understand that its shape is similar to that of man. In truth, the human form only imitates his. Flute in hand, Krishna appears like a shepherd in his early youth. Always playful, he is entertained like the average boy.

Desiring to sensitize Sanatane Gosvami to the immeasurable beauty of Krishna, the Lord declared that whoever appreciates his sublime attributes bathes in an ocean of nectar. Although beyond the material energy, the inner power of Krishna is nonetheless manifested by the Lord in this very world, for the sole satisfaction of his inner devotees. It follows that it is for this purpose that He appears in our galaxy. So fascinating are his attributes that Krishna Himself aspires to understand himself. Adorned in all his finery, He adopts his curved posture in three places, the eyebrows dancing incessantly above his eyes, so fascinating that all the gopis [*Companions of Krishna in Vrindavana. They embody, because of their pure love for Him, the highest devotion to the Lord*] become as if bewitched. At the top of the spiritual world is his transcendent home, where he resides with his companions, the gopis and all the goddesses of fortune. He is known there under the name of Madane-Mohane.

Many of Krishna's entertainments include those which He performs as Vasudeva and Sankarsana, and, in the material world, as the first Avatar-Supreme, the creator of the temporal galaxy. Without forgetting those of the Avatar-Pisces and the Avatar-Tortoise, manifestations of his embodied powers, nor those where He borrows the forms of Brahma and Shiva, the incarnations of the attributes of matter. He also plays the role of King Prithou, Avatar invested with powers, in addition to being the Supreme Soul seated in the hearts of all beings and embodying the impersonal Spiritual Being. However, of these innumerable entertainments, the most important are those which are connected with the activities of the human beings when He sports in Vrindavana, dances with the gopis, is entertained with the Pandavas [*The five sons of king Pandu. Also referred to by this name are all the warriors of the camp of the Pandavas during the battle of Kuruksetra*] on the battlefield of Kuruksetra, [a place of pilgrimage held to be sacred since ancient times. It is near the current location of New Delhi, India. There are 5 000 years at this point was stated in the Bhagavad-gita (Words of Krishna, Christ, God, the Supreme Person), by Lord Krishna to his devotee Arjuna, before the famous battle which resulted in victory of the Pandus and the enthronement of Maharaja Yudhisthira. Through this battle, Krishna either wiped out all demonic kings] or has fun in Mathura and Dvaraka. None of Krishna's entertainments are more important than those where He appears as a young shepherd playing his flute. Let us understand that a simple partial manifestation of his entertainments in Goloka, Mathura and Dvaravati or Dvaraka, can flood the whole universe with love for God. All beings can feel the attraction of the sublime attributes of Krishna.

Although his internal power is not even manifested in the kingdom of God or on the Vaikuntha planets, He brings it to play in this universe when, in His inconceivable compassion, He descends there from His personal abode. Krishna is so fascinating, so wonderful, that He Himself feels the attraction of his own beauty; this is the proof of the inconceivable powers which He fully possesses. As for the finery with which He adorns her body, it does not seem that they add to her beauty but rather that they themselves become beautiful by caressing her body. When He adopts the curved posture in three places, He fascinates all beings including celestial beings. In truth, none of the Narayana emanations that reign over the Vaikuntha planets can resist this fascination.

Krishna is the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Being, established in his internal power, called svarupa-shakti, or atma-shakti. It multiplies in innumerable forms, some of which are said to be personal and others, distinct. Thus does He perform His entertainment on all the spiritual planets as well as within the material galaxies.

The distinct emanations of its forms are designated by the name of living beings, the celestial beings inhabiting the Edenic planets, the human beings, the animals and the plants, and they are subdivided into two classes according to their relation to the energies of the Lord, the ones being eternally liberated and the others eternally conditioned. The former never come into contact with material nature and do not

know of temporal existence. Eternally absorbed in Krishna consciousness, or devotional service to the Lord, they are counted among Krishna's companions. Their only happiness lies in the service of spiritual love which they offer to Krishna. Conversely, eternally conditioned beings turn away forever from this loving service, and consequently suffer the three forms of suffering inherent in material existence. Due to their perpetual distancing attitude from Krishna, material energy grants them two types of body: one coarse, of dense matter and formed of the five elements, earth, water, fire, air and ether, the other subtle, ethereal, and formed of mind, intelligence, and ego. Covered by these two bodies, the conditioned soul is forever in the grip of the three forms of material suffering [*Those which arise from the body and the mind, those which are caused by other living entities, and those which originate from the elements of material nature, e.g. extreme cold or heat, lightning, earthquakes, hurricanes, drought, etc.*] and the onslaught of six enemies (*anger, lust, greed, dementia, illusion and envy*). Such are the pangs that endlessly gnaw at the conditioned soul. Thus afflicted and conditioned, the living being wanders endlessly in the galaxy, sometimes promoted to higher planetary systems, sometimes forced to transmigrate to lower systems, so that he ends up finding it normal to live in this way. He can only be freed from his illness when he meets and follows the example of the physician par excellence, the authentic spiritual master. When the conditioned soul adheres with faith to the instructions of such a master, it sees itself cured of its material fever and enters the plane of liberation, where it returns to the devotional service to Krishna to finally return to Him, in its original home. The conditioned being must become aware of his true nature and pray to the Lord in these terms: *How much longer will I have to live under the influence of anger and concupiscence, to name only these plagues?*

Far from being compassionate, the masters of anger and lust forever reduce the conditioned soul to slavery. But when she regains her true consciousness, Krishna consciousness, she leaves these evil masters to rely on Krishna, sincerely seeking refuge with Him and begging him to engage her in his service of spiritual love. The Vedic writings, the Vedas, the original holy writings, sometimes make great mention of self-interested action, the yoga of powers or the speculative quest for knowledge as so many methods of self-realization. But they nonetheless recognize the superiority of devotional service. In other words, devotional service to Krishna is the most perfect path to spiritual realization. We recommend that you devote yourself directly to it. Self-interested action, meditation, and philosophical speculation are not direct methods of self-realization because, devoid of devotion, they cannot lead to the highest spiritual perfection. Indeed, all depend, in the final analysis, on the practice of devotional service.

The Lord compares Krishna to the sun, and maya, the power of material illusion, to darkness. Whoever is constantly bathed in the sunlight of Krishna cannot be confused by the darkness of temporal energy. Maya, the power of illusion, is ashamed to come before Krishna. Nevertheless, the living being is continually mystified by this same

power. In his conditioning, he discovers several forms of verbal juggling that give him the impression of being able to free himself from the clutches of maya. But, in truth, it is enough for him to surrender himself sincerely to Krishna by saying only once: *My dear Lord, from this day I belong entirely to you.*

To immediately escape the chains of material energy. The Lord said: *I promise, and I owe Myself, to always protect anyone who surrenders completely to Me.*

A person may think that he benefits from self-serving action, from liberation, from the perfection of yoga, but if, luckily, he becomes truly intelligent, he will abandon all these practices to engage sincerely in the devotional service offered to the Lord. The intelligent man or woman consumed with material desires or thirsty for liberation should embrace perfect devotional service.

Those who seek to derive material benefit from devotional service are not pure devotees, but are nonetheless considered fortunate because they engage in this service. Even if they ignore that material blessings or pleasures are not the goal of devotion to the Supreme Lord, they will eventually come to this conclusion. Krishna Himself declares that those who desire some material benefit in return for their devotional service are foolish as they seek to poison their existence instead of settling on the level of love for God. Even if one desires certain material blessings from Krishna, He, almighty, considers his position, gradually frees him from his temporal ambitions, and engages him in devotional service. By truly devoting himself to it, he will forget his material aspirations and desires.

Krishna grants the desires of devotees who approach him to serve him with devotion, but not those who risk causing further suffering. Despite their temporal ambitions, such devotees are gradually purified by their transcendent service, from all desire for material enjoyment and come to covet the pleasure born of devotion. Generally speaking, the company of devotees is sought in the hope of alleviating some material distress. But the influence of the pure devotee will free us from all material desire, so that over time we will develop a taste for devotional service, which turns out to be so pure and wonderful that it purifies the devotee and makes him forget all his material aspirations as soon as he fully engages in Krishna's sublime loving service.

Transmigrating through the 8,400,000 life forms, the living being is sometimes compared to a log which, going down a river, accidentally ends up on the bank without being carried away further by the current. No one should be in despair, thinking that he will never escape the grip of matter, because it is possible to be saved, like a log which, going down a river for some time, can reach some. the shore. Such happy incidents mark the beginning of the decline of conditioned existence; they occur through contact with pure devotees of the Lord, a contact which promotes the awakening of our attraction to Krishna. There are various kinds of rituals and activities, some of which turn into material enjoyment and others into material liberation. But if one adopts ritualistic activities that allow pure devotional service to

the Lord to flourish in the company of pure devotees, his or her mind will naturally be imbued with devotional service.

When a conditioned soul dedicates itself to Krishna, the Lord, by his unmotivated mercy, instructs him in two ways. From the outside, through the spiritual master, and from the inside, through the Supreme Soul. It is written:

Dear Lord, even being endowed with the longevity of Brahma, no one can express their gratitude to you for the blessings derived from your remembrance. By your mercy without cause, you remove from the devotee any harmful condition by manifesting yourself externally as the spiritual master and internally as the Supreme Soul.

If in one way or another, a person comes in contact with a pure devotee, and thus develops the desire to serve Krishna with devotion, he gradually rises to the level of love for God and comes out of the clutches of material energy.

the Lord said: *When a person spontaneously feels attraction to My activities, not being attracted or repelled by material activities, the path of devotional service which leads to the perfection of love for God becomes available to him.*

However, it would be unthinkable to achieve this perfection without the grace of a pure devotee or a great soul, servant and servant of God. Without this grace, impossible even to let go of the hold of matter, what to say to rise to the level of love for God.

Lord Chaitanya informed Sanatane Gosvami that all scriptures insist on the company of pure devotees of the Supreme Lord. The chance to come into contact with these marks the beginning of our total perfection. The benefits and advantages acquired from a pure devotee are incomparable. They cannot be compared to the elevation to the celestial spheres or to liberation.

Krishna also confirms when He says: *Dear Arjuna, always fill your mind with Me and become My full devotee, constantly devote your worship to Me and simply surrender to Me. This is the only way to access My Kingdom. I am revealing to you here the most secret of knowledge, because you are My friend, infinitely dear.*

Such direct instruction from Krishna to Arjuna turns out to be more important than any Vedic directive or service performed according to the rules. There are certainly several Vedic recommendations regarding sacrificial rites and ceremonies, regulatory duties, meditation and the speculative culture of knowledge; but Krishna's direct order - *Just renounce everything and become My devotee, My worshiper* - must be taken as the final order of the Lord, to which we must adhere above all else. The mere fact of being convinced of this and embracing devotional service to the Lord, abandoning all other occupations, will undoubtedly bring us success.

Faith is in this unshakeable conviction. So those who have faith are firmly convinced that by simply devoting themselves to the devotional service of Krishna, they are automatically fulfilling everything, including the regulatory principles related to the rites of sacrificial offerings, the practice of yoga, and the speculative quest for knowledge. Everything is automatically accomplished by the person convinced that devotional service to the Lord is all encompassing. As the Srimad-Bhagavatam, Words of Wisdom, (4.31.14) teaches: *Just as, by watering the root of a tree, one also nourishes the branches, twigs, leaves and fruits, and just like, by giving food to the stomach, one satisfies all the senses, it is enough to serve Krishna with devotion to automatically perform any other form of worship or recommended method.* The person who has faith and who animates this firm conviction is worthy of becoming a pure devotee.

There are three classes of devotees according to their degree of conviction. The first-rate devotee is versed in all Vedic scriptures and imbued with the conviction described above. He can alleviate the material suffering of all other beings. The second-rate devotee is one whose conviction and faith are firm, but who is hardly able to cite the revealed scriptures to support his point. The third-order devotee is one whose faith remains fragile but who, through the gradual development of devotional service, will in time become worthy of being promoted to the second or even the first level.

The Srimad-Bhagavatam (11.2.45-47) teaches that the first-rate devotee always sees the Supreme Lord as the Soul of all living beings. So he sees Krishna, and nothing else, in everyone. The mid-level pure devotee places all his trust in God, the Supreme Person, befriends other pure devotees, helps the innocent, and shuns atheists or those who oppose devotional service. The third-order devotee practices devotional service as directed by the spiritual master, or by family tradition, and worships Deity; however, he is not well versed in the science of devotion and fails to distinguish a devotee from a non-devotee. Such a neophyte cannot really be considered a pure devotee; although he is almost established in the devotional path, his position indeed remains precarious.

It can therefore be concluded that when a person shows love for God and friendship with devotees, shows compassion for the innocent and unwilling to associate with non-devotees, he can be considered a pure devotee. As she progresses in devotional service, she will perceive that every living being is an integral part of the Supreme. She will be able to see in everyone the Divine Person, and thus attain a high degree of fulfillment in Krishna consciousness. Having reached this level, she will cease to distinguish between devotees and non-devotees, seers all occupied in serving the Lord. She will nevertheless continue to develop all commendable qualities even as she practices Krishna consciousness and devotional service.

All the outstanding virtues of heavenly beings are manifested in anyone who has developed a pure and unadulterated devotion to the Supreme Lord. On the contrary,

the being devoid of such a service is sure to go astray, despite all his material qualities, since he wanders at the mental level. Its material qualities therefore prove to be worthless.

A Krishna-conscious person, who devotes himself entirely to the Lord's sublime loving service, acquires many divine virtues from heavenly beings, only some of which Chaitanya describes to Sanatane Gosvami. Always benevolent towards all, the devotee does not seek quarrel with anyone. His interest is in the essence of life, which is spiritual in nature. Equally disposed towards all, no one can find fault with him. His magnanimous mind is always pure and devoid of any material obsession. Benefactor of all living beings, he is peaceful and always surrendered to Krishna. Devoid of material desires, he is very humble and determined. Having conquered the six material faults, including anger and lust, he does not eat more than necessary. Always sane and respectful, he does not seek respect for himself. He is serious, merciful, friendly, poet, expert and silent.

Whoever is fortunate enough to serve a great soul is assured that the path to liberation is wide open to him. On the other hand, those who cling to materialists take the path of darkness. Holy souls are spiritualists as calm as they are peaceful; anger is foreign to them and they extend their friendship to all living beings. The mere fact of associating with such souls can transform a person into a devotee of Krishna. In truth, the company of devout saints is essential to the development of love for God. The path to spiritual progress is accessible to anyone who comes into contact with a holy person. By following this path one is sure to develop one's Krishna consciousness as part of integral devotional service.

The Lord then informed Sanatane Gosvami of the way in which the devotee, the servant of God, behaves. The essential point of Chaitanya is here that one must avoid any bad attendance. This is the essence of the conduct of the devotee. And, by bad association, we must understand the association of those and those who prove to be too attached to the opposite sex or who are not devotees of Krishna. As it is recommended to seek the company of the holy devotees of the Lord, it is advisable to carefully avoid that of the non-devotees. The pure devotees of Krishna are therefore careful not to associate with the two classes of individuals mentioned above. We must avoid any contact with those who are the toys of women, because the association of such ungodly people would deprive us of any quality worthy of the name, such as truthfulness, purity, compassion, seriousness, intelligence, reserve, beauty, fame, forgiveness, mastery of mind and senses, as well as all the excellences which the devotee automatically acquires. Nothing degrades a man more than associating with people who are too attached to women.

In this context, Lord Chaitanya also quotes a verse from the *Katyayana-samhita* (*sacred text*): *Better to be a prisoner of a cage surrounded by a blazing fire than to live in contact with those who are not devotees of the Lord.*

We advise not even to look at the faces of unbelievers or beings devoid of devotion to the Supreme Being. The Lord recommends that one scrupulously renounce the company of all unwanted beings and take full refuge in Krishna, the Supreme Lord. Krishna Himself gives this instruction to Arjuna at the end of the Bhagavad-Gita: *Leave everything and simply surrender to Me. I will take care of you and free you from all the consequences of your faults.*

A person who is intelligent and able to understand the philosophy of the consciousness of God will naturally abandon everything to take refuge in Krishna. In this context, Lord Chaitanya recited a verse uttered by Uddhava [*Lord Krishna's most confidential friend and advisor to Mathurâ and Dvâarakâ.*] in Srimad-Bhagavatam: *How could one take refuge in anyone other than Krishna, Him so benevolent?*

There is no essential difference between a soul who surrenders completely to the Lord and a person established in the order of renunciation. The only difference is that the former depends entirely on Krishna. The six criteria for abandonment are:

- 1) To accept with determination whatever is favorable to devotional service or duties to Krishna.
- 2) Reject with so much determination anything that hinders devotional service.
- 3) Be firmly convinced that only Krishna can protect us and that He will grant us his protection. Note here that the impersonalist believes that his true identity is to be One with Krishna, or the Supreme Lord, but the devotee does not destroy his identity in this way. He remains fully confident that Krishna will protect him under all circumstances.
- 4) The devotee should always see Krishna as his support. Those who yearn for the fruits of action usually hope to be protected by heavenly beings, but the devotee does not rely on the protection of either, being firmly convinced that Krishna will protect him from any unfavorable condition.
- 5) The devotee is always aware that the satisfaction of his desires does not depend only on him, and that unless they are fulfilled by Krishna, they will remain unfulfilled.
- 6) The distinct being must always regard himself as the most fallen soul of all souls, in order for Krishna to take care of him.

The soul thus submitted must seek refuge in a holy place like Vrindavana, Mathura, Dvaraka or Mayapour, and surrender to the Lord saying: *My Lord, from today I belong to you. Protect me or kill me, as You see fit.*

When the devotee takes refuge in Krishna in this way, the Lord shows himself so grateful that He accepts and protects him in various ways. The Srimad-Bhagavatam (11.29.34) confirms this by saying that if a dying person takes full refuge in the Supreme Lord and places himself under his full protection, then he will attain immortality and become worthy to live in the companionship of the Lord and to taste spiritual bliss.

The Lord then explained to Sanatane Gosvami the different forms and manifestations of devotional service in practice, that is, accomplished through our present senses. In reality, devotional service is the eternal function of the living being, and slumbers in everyone's heart. The learning that awakens this latent devotion is called *devotional service in practice*. Let us understand here that, by its nature, the distinct being is an integral part of the Supreme Lord. We can compare it to the sun, and living beings, to the light particles that emanate from it. Under the influence of the power of illusion, the spiritual spark is almost entirely extinguished, but the devotional service in practice can revive its original condition. In short, the one who practices devotional service returns to his or her first, normal condition of a liberated soul. And this devotional service can be accomplished with the help of the senses under the guidance of a genuine spiritual master.

Listening is essential as the first spiritual activity able to promote progress in Krishna consciousness, in devotional service. As this is the most important practice in this regard, opportunities to hear the glories of Krishna should be sought with great enthusiasm. Letting go of the pursuit of speculative knowledge and self-serving action, we should simply practice worshiping the Lord and seeking to develop our love for Him. This love exists from all eternity in each of us; it suffices to awaken it by the assiduous practice of listening. Listening, followed by singing, embody the main devotional practices. Devotional service can be performed according to the rules or by spontaneous affection. Now, anyone who has not developed a spiritual affection for Krishna must lead his life according to the rules and principles of the scriptures and the instructions of the spiritual master. Thus the real practice of devotional service depends on the constant remembrance of God within, and this practice is not governed by any regulatory principle, nor dependent on any other activity whatsoever, prescribed or prohibited. In general, however, the following principles should be adhered to in devotional service:

1. Seek refuge with an authentic spiritual master, a true servant of Krishna.
2. Receive spiritual initiation from him.
3. Serve it.
4. Inquire with him and learn from him to love.
5. Follow the path traced by the saints dedicated to the service of the Lord's sublime love.
6. To know how to renounce all forms of pleasure and tribulation for the satisfaction of Krishna.
7. Live, as much as possible, in a place where Krishna's entertainment has taken place.
8. Be satisfied with what Krishna gives us to meet our needs, without seeking more.
9. Respect the fast of Ekadashi, sacred day occurring twice in the month, in order to purify the soul and the body. These two days are dedicated to Krishna, the

eleventh day following the full moon and the new moon. We must then refrain from consuming grains, cereals, legumes, and eat in moderation only vegetables and milk, while increasing the chanting of the Holy Names of God, Hare Krishna, reading the original holy scriptures, etc.

10. Honor devotees, cows and sacred trees, including the banyan.

It is essential for the neophyte devotee who begins to follow the path of devotional service, to observe these ten principles. He should also refrain from committing the following ten offenses in the practice of devotional service and the chanting of the Holy Names of God:

1. Blaspheme against a devotee of the Lord.
2. Put the Lord and heavenly beings on an equal footing, or believe that there are several Gods.
3. Neglecting the instructions of the spiritual master.
4. Minimize the authority of the original holy scriptures (*the Vedas*).
5. Interpret the Holy Names of the Lord.
6. Carry out sinful acts by relying on the chanting of the Holy Names to reverse the consequences.
7. Teach the glories of the Name of the Lord to unbelievers.
8. To assimilate the chanting of the Holy Names to an act of material piety.
9. Be inattentive while chanting the Holy Names.
10. To remain attached to material things despite the chanting of the Holy Names.

Ten other rules should also be observed:

1. Refrain from committing the above offenses in connection with devotional service and the chanting of the Holy Names.
2. Avoid the company of ungodly non-devotees.
3. Do not try to make many disciples.
4. Avoid engaging in the study of various works, or even the summary study of a given work, as well as debating different doctrines.
5. Show equanimity in both gain and loss.
6. Do not succumb to any form of spite.

7. Do not disrespect any holy being or any other scripture.
8. Do not tolerate blasphemy of the Supreme Lord or his devotees.
9. Turning away from the secular content of novels and works of fiction, without ignoring the news, which no ban hits.
10. Do not torment any living thing, including insects.

The first ten principles are of an incentive nature while the last ten have the value of prohibitions. In the same vein, it is advisable to act in a very liberal way while avoiding any undesirable behavior. However, of the twenty rules set out above, the most important are to seek refuge with a genuine spiritual master, to receive spiritual initiation from him and to serve him. Anyone who practices devotional service in full awareness of Krishna, God, automatically discharges all debts to the sages, heavenly beings, and ancestors, to whom we are generally indebted. It is written in the Srimad bhagavatam:

Whoever engages fully in the service of the Lord no longer has any duties or obligations towards heavenly beings, sages, his family, his ancestors, humans and living beings in general.

Let us understand that, from the moment of his birth, each human being is so indebted to all that he is expected to perform various prescribed rites. The being who surrenders completely to Krishna is, however, freed from any debt, any obligation to anyone else. Moreover, it should be noted that whoever renounces all his temporal duties to devote himself to the exclusive service of Krishna frees himself by the very fact of all personal desire and in no way risks committing any sin whatsoever. If, however, he should do wrongdoing, not deliberately, but by accident, Krishna will give him full protection, and he will not be required to purify himself in any way, as the Srimad-Bhagavatam confirms:

The devotee who fully engages in the service of absolute love of the Lord is protected by the Supreme Person. But if, despite himself, he commits some sin or is forced to commit a reprehensible act in exceptional circumstances, the Lord, seated in his heart, will grant him full protection.

The paths of speculative knowledge and renunciation are not essential to the completion of devotional service. Neither is it necessary to adhere to the principles of non-violence and mastery of the senses, strictly advocated by other elevation paths. Without even subscribing to such methods, the devotee develops all these virtues through the sole devotional service of the Lord. In the eleventh Song of Srimad-Bhagavatam, the Lord himself says moreover that it is not necessary to cultivate speculative knowledge and renunciation when one is actually engaged in his devotional service.

The Lord said to Sanatane Gosvami: *I have so far described the practice of devotional service in accordance with the regulatory principles. Now, I'll explain it to you from the angle of spiritual attachment.*

Devotional service from the perspective of spiritual attachment.

Attachment-based devotional service is accomplished in two ways, one external and the other internal. Outwardly, the devotee strictly adheres to regulatory principles, beginning with chanting and listening, while inwardly meditating on the attachment that prompts him to serve the Supreme Lord. In truth, he is constantly thinking of his devotional service and dedication. Such an attachment in no way violates the regulatory principles of devotional service, to which the true devotee strictly adheres, but without forgetting his particular attachment to the Lord.

Since all the inhabitants of Vrajabhumi, also called Vraja or Vrindavana, [*Mathura region in India, which covers about two hundred and sixty square kilometers, where the Supreme Lord, Krishna, manifested his sublime entertainments 5,000 years ago in the company of his pure devotees. It is the main place of pilgrimage for all the wise and pure devotees. This region is the sum and the essence of all the holy places, and designates also and more directly Vrindavana*] are very dear to Krishna, the devotee who inhabits such an attachment chooses one of whom he follows the example in order to perfect his own devotional service. The pure devotee who feels attachment to the Lord always walks deep inside in the footsteps of an inhabitant of Vrajabhumi. The Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu (*holy book*) moreover recommends to the pure devotee animated by such a devotional attachment to always remember the activities of a specific inhabitant of Vraja so as to constantly meditate on Vrajabhumi, or Vrindavana (*one also says Vrindavane*), even if he cannot live there himself.

The devotees who are intimately attached to the Lord and to his service are of various orders; thus some are his servants and others, his friends, his parents, even his lovers or his spouses. However, in all cases, devotional service marked by attachment must be practiced following the example of a specific model of Vrajabhumi.

The Lord said: *The word mat-para can only designate a person filled with the idea of being attached only to Me, seeing in Me his soul, his friend, his son, his Master, his benefactor, his God and his ultimate goal. These devotees are in no way influenced by the weather.*

The author of the Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu (*sacred book*) offers his respectful homage to all those who constantly meditate on Krishna as He is, as son, benefactor, brother, father, friend Or other. Anyone who honors the principles of devotional service imbued with attachment by following the example of a devotee of Vrajabhumi attains in that spirit the highest perfection of love for God. Two traits characterize the development of the germ of love for God, namely attachment, and the state of mind which immediately precedes love for God. And the Supreme Lord, Shri Krishna, is

immediately conquered by the devotees who manifest these traits prior to the appearance of the first signs of love for God. Lord Chaitanya gave these explanations to Sanatane Gosvami while specifying that He had only given her a glimpse of devotional service imbued with attachment, an inexhaustible subject if any. Then He set out to define the ultimate goal of devotional service, the very one that should be pursued by anyone who aspires to perfection. When the attachment to Krishna becomes very deep, there is access to what is commonly called the love of God, held to be the permanent condition of the devotee. In this context, Kaviraj Gosvami offers his respectful homage to Lord Chaitanya for having delivered to us his sublime teaching on the love of God. As he says so well in his Chaitanya-charitamrita: *O Supreme Lord, who other than You has conferred pure devotional service?*

O magnanimous incarnation of God among all, I offer You my respectful homage, You who we know under the name of Gaura Krishna.

Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu compares the love of God to the radiance of the sun in that it never ceases to soften the heart of the devotee, forever established in transcendence, even beyond material virtue. And the process by which the heart is purified more and more under the effect of the sun of divine love is called *bhava*. Rupa Gosvami (*disciple of Lord Chaitanya*) explains in this regard that the *bhava* is held to be the permanent asset of the distinct soul, and that the crucial point of the evolution towards the *bhava* is what is called marginal love for God. It is when this state, the *bhava*, becomes deeper and deeper that scholarly devotees give it the name of God's love. According to the Narada-Pancharatra (*sacred book*):

When one is firmly convinced that Visnu is the sole object of love and worship, and that no other, even a heavenly being, is worthy of devotion, only then does one experience a sense of intimate love towards God. This is what such eminent figures as Bhisma, Prahlad, Uddhava and Narada have to say.

If, as a result of some godly activity that can bring about devotional service, one becomes eager to serve the Lord and seek the company of pure devotees, one will not be long in developing an attachment to singing and listening. As you continue to sing and listen in this spirit, you will always progress more in the devotional service of the Supreme Lord according to the rules. Little by little, the ties and apprehensions linked to the material sphere will then fade. The devotee who progresses in singing and listening in this way sees his initial faith strengthened with each step, until he perceives a real attraction for devotional service which will gradually turn into attachment. When this attachment is purified, it assumes two characteristics, the *bhava* and the *rati*, which, as it grows, takes on the name of God's love, the ultimate goal of human life.

Rupa Gosvami sums up this evolution as follows in his Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu: *Faith is the first requisite; it is this which prompts us to seek the company of pure devotees, thanks to which the devotional service develops, able to dispel all our doubts. From*

then on acquiring a firm conviction, one develops an attraction, then an attachment for devotional service which makes us adhere to the principles which govern it. Beyond that, we end up having access to love for God, to his eternal condition. And this love for God increases and then deepens until it reaches its peak.

In Sanskrit, this ultimate level is called *prema*, and it is defined as the love of God free from all expectations. The words *prema* and *love* are not perfectly synonymous, but it is all the same to say that the *prema* corresponds to the highest form of love. And the human being who reaches this level is undoubtedly the most perfect of all, as confirmed by the Srimad-Bhagavatam (III.25.25):

It is only through contact with pure devotees that one can conceive of an attraction to Krishna consciousness and, by striving to apply it in one's life, attain the levels of bhava and prema.

Then describing the traits of a person who has evolved from faith to love for God, Lord Chaitanya specifies that she is never disturbed, even when she should be. Always eager to act within the framework of Krishna consciousness, she never wastes even a second of her time. Even though she has no specific occupation, she always finds some task to accomplish for Krishna's satisfaction. She does not like anything unrelated to Krishna, and although she occupies the best possible position, she does not covet honor or respect for herself. Confident in what she is doing, she never has the impression of not progressing towards the ultimate goal of existence, the return to God, in her first abode. Firmly convinced that she is progressing in this direction, she strives with growing confidence to achieve the ultimate goal of existence. She is constantly inclined to satisfy the Lord, to sing or listen to his glories, as well as to describe his divine attributes at all times. She further aspires to live in a holy place like Mathura, Vrindavane (or Vrindavana) or Dvaraka. These are the characteristics visible in the person who has reached the level of love for God. King Parikshit offers us a good example. Sitting on the bank of the Ganges awaiting the death to which the curse of a young priest had condemned him, he said: *Know, Mother Ganges and all of you wise men assembled here, that I am a completely abandoned soul. to Krishna. Let the serpent invoked by the young priest's curse bite me instantly, provided you keep chanting Krishna's message.* Such a devotee always makes sure not to waste his time in any activity unrelated to Krishna. In no way appreciating the benefits of self-serving action, meditation yoga or the cultivation of knowledge, he has no attachment except to praises to the glory of Krishna. The pure devotee of the Supreme Lord always prays to him with his eyes bathed in tears, his mind unceasingly absorbed in the memory of his deeds and the body always busy offering Him homage. So he finds satisfaction. Every devotee acting within the framework of devotional service dedicates his whole life and body to the Lord's mission.

The Lord then proceeded to describe the characteristics of true love for Krishna, making it clear that no one can understand the one who has developed such love, whether it is his words, his activities or his attributes. Even the greatest scholar finds

it difficult to understand the pure devotee in love with the Lord, as confirmed by the *Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu*. The person engaged in devotional service languishes in his heart when he sings the glories of the Supreme Lord. As this one is very dear to her, when she glorifies her Name, her Fame, etc., she becomes as if struck with madness and, in this state, she sometimes laughs, cries or dances, and this, without take no account of those around him. As he gradually develops his love for God, his affection, emotion and ecstasy increase. Such an attachment represents the pinnacle of devotional love, comparable to rock sugar, the most refined and flavorful form of sugar. The love of God thus develops in the true devotee until his transcendent pleasure is intensified to the highest point.

Lord Chaitanya thus explained the absolute level, spiritual bliss, but without going into details. Specifying that this is the fifth perfection. He taught that the first step to perfection is to practice religion as we know it in the material world. The second step is to acquire material wealth. The third is to achieve the highest enjoyment of one's senses, and the fourth is the knowledge of liberation. But beyond that are the liberated souls established in the fifth perfection: Krishna consciousness, or devotional service to the Lord. The highest devotional perfection, within the framework of Krishna consciousness, indeed allows one to taste spiritual ecstasy.

The Lord then informed Sanatane Gosvami that He had previously instructed his younger brother, Roupa Gosvami, in Prayag (*Allahabad, city of India*). He assured Sanatane that He had bestowed full powers on Roupa to spread the knowledge He had given him. Chaitanya then ordered Sanatane to write works on the service of spiritual love of the Lord, and authorized him to rediscover the various sites of the entertainment of Krishna in the area of Mathura. He also advised him to build temples in Vrindavane and to write books on the principles of Vaisnavism, the action initiated by the transcendentalists of the highest order, who express love and devotion to Lord Krishna, and thus take pleasure in spreading the knowledge of his Divine Person and his teaching for the greater good of human beings.

Lord Chaitanya also taught him how to experience an integral relationship with Krishna in the material universe as well as the futility of arid renunciation. Let us understand here that in the present age, many are those who adopt the order of renunciation without having reached a high degree of spiritual consciousness. Lord Chaitanya did not approve of adopting the path of renunciation without having a perfect knowledge of Krishna consciousness. We find in fact that the activities of many so-called renouncing or hermits, turn out to be lower than those of ordinary people, while they claim to belong to the order of renunciation. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu did not accept such hypocrisy. Also he asked Sanatane Gosvami to write in an elaborate way on the question in his various works.

Spiritual perfection, which can be experienced even in the material universe, is described in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, *Words of Krishna*, *Christ*, *God*, *the Supreme Person*, by Lord Krishna, when He says:

The devotee, envious of nothing, who behaves with everyone as a benevolent friend, who does not believe himself to be the possessor of anything, who is freed from the false ego and remains the same in joy as in sorrow, who forgives, who always knows the contentedly and resolutely engaged in devotional service, and whose mind and body are surrendered to the Supreme Lord, he is very dear to Me.

The devotee who never causes agitation for others and whom joys and sorrows do not affect, who does not depend in any way on the modes of material action; the pure being, expert in everything, free from all anxiety, free from suffering, and who does not seek the fruit of his acts, this one is very dear to Me.

He who takes neither joy nor sorrow, who neither grieves nor covets, who renounces the favorable as well as the unfavorable, this one is very dear to Me.

He who shows himself equal to friend or foe, who remains the same in glory or reproach, heat or cold, praise or blame, forever clean from all filth, always silent, satisfied of everything, heedless of lodging, and who, established in knowledge, serves Me with love and devotion, this one is very dear to Me.

Whoever, full of faith, in this imperishable way of devotional service is fully committed, making Me the supreme goal, this is very dear to Me.

The person who is never inclined to material happiness, hatred, affliction and ambition, detached from any favorable or harmful activity of the universe of matter and fully dedicated to the consciousness of God, is very dear to Krishna. The devotee who shows himself equal to the so-called friends and enemies of this world, and whom neither heat nor cold disturbs by any attachment to the body, who feels no attachment and remains equanimous (*equality of soul, of mood*) whether respected or insulted, which always remains serious, satisfied in all circumstances, without a fixed residence but always established in Krishna consciousness, this one is infinitely dear to the Lord. Even without being established in such a transcendent position, the mere fact of approving such transcendence will make us dear to Krishna.

The devotee must always depend on the mercy of the Supreme Lord. As for his material needs, he must be satisfied with what he obtains without difficulty. In this context, Sukadeva Gosvami, a great sage, advises the devotee never to seek the help of a materialist. As far as one's livelihood is concerned, one can pick up the torn clothes lying around in the street, pick the fruit from the trees, drink the water from the rivers and live in a natural cave. Even if it is impossible to do so, one must nevertheless depend entirely on the Supreme Lord, realizing that He provides everyone with food and shelter. So the Lord will never fail to care for those devotees who have been completely surrendered to Him. Whatever happens, the devotee is always protected and therefore need not worry about his survival. Sanatane Gosvami thus inquired about all aspects of devotional service, and Lord Chaitanya imparted to him the confidential teaching of the authoritative holy scriptures in the matter, including the Srimad-Bhagavatam, Words of Wisdom.

The Lord then referred to the Vedic text of the Harivamsa, which deals with the spiritual realm of Krishna. This information was revealed by Indra when he offered prayers after being defeated while challenging the power of Krishna. The Harivamsa therefore asserts that although they can fly, neither birds nor planes can reach the higher planetary systems, which begin with the Sun, which is at the center of the galaxy. Beyond the solar star exist other planetary systems populated by beings raised by their harsh austerities. The material galaxy as a whole is called Devidhama; beyond is Kailasa, the abode where Siva and his wife Parvati reside eternally. Beyond this planetary system, we discover the spiritual world with countless intangible planets called Vaikuntha. Above is Krishna's planet: Goloka. The word goloka means *planet of cows*. As Krishna is very fond of cows, his home is named Goloka. Goloka is larger than all the material and spiritual planets put together.

In the prayer contained in the Harivamsa, Indra admits that she cannot understand Goloka's situation even after questioning Brahma. Devotees of Narayana, the emanation of Krishna, reach the Vaikuntha planets, but it is very difficult to reach Goloka Vrindavane. In reality, only devotees of Lord Chaitanya or Shri Krishna achieve this.

The Lord establishes that the word brahman means the best in everything. No one surpasses the Lord in wealth, power, fame, beauty, knowledge, and renunciation. Thus the word brahman designates God, Krishna, the Supreme Being. The Visnu Purana (*sacred book*) thus defines brahman: the infinitely great, whose capacity for deployment has no limit. One can try to imagine the greatness of Brahman, God, but it increases in such a way that no one can estimate it. One can realize God, the Supreme Being, under three aspects, which nevertheless form a single and unique Entity. The Absolute Truth, the Supreme Person, Krishna, exists from all eternity. He existed before the manifestation of the cosmos, He exists during its manifestation, and He will continue to exist after its annihilation. Therefore, He is the Soul of all higher things. Omnipresent witness, He embodies the Supreme form of all that is. The Vedic writings mention three spiritual paths to understanding and attaining the supreme perfection of Absolute Truth: the quest for knowledge, the yoga of supernormal powers, and devotional service. The followers of these three paths realize Absolute Truth in three different ways. Those who adopt the first path realize its impersonal aspect, called Brahman; those who prefer the second realize its localized aspect, called Supreme Soul; finally, those who practice devotional service realize that the Absolute Truth is none other than the Supreme Person, God, Shri Krishna. In other words, although the word brahman means Krishna and nothing else, spiritualists discover the Lord in three different ways depending on the path they take.

Devotional service develops in two stages. It is first approached from the angle of devotion governed by the regulatory principles and then at the higher level, one reaches the service of devotion imbued with pure love. God, the Supreme Person, embodies the Absolute Truth, but He also manifests through the deployment of

various energies. Those who adhere to the regulatory principles of devotional service ultimately reach the Vaikuntha planets of the spiritual realm. But whoever comes to adhere to the principles of love in the practice of such service joins the supreme abode, Krishnaloka or Goloka.

There are also three orders of spiritualists. Those who are devoid of any material desire, those who seek to free themselves from the sufferings of matter, and those who aspire to material enjoyment. The most intelligent of spiritualists forsake all other paths to engage in the devotional service of the Lord, even if he is saturated with desire. One cannot attain the highest perfection through any spiritual activity, nor through self-interested action, the cultivation of knowledge, or the practice of power yoga, without adding a hint of devotion. Any spiritual path other than devotional service is akin to the fleshy appendages that hang from a goat's neck. No matter how hard you squeeze these appendages, no milk will come out. To achieve true perfection, one must embrace the devotional service offered to Krishna. We read in the Bhagavad-Gita (7.16) that four orders of neophytes with virtuous backgrounds practice devotional service: the unfortunate, the curious, the one who pursues wealth and the wise. When these four categories of beings have previous godly acts to their credit, they adopt the devotional service of the Lord. Of these four, the unfortunate and those seeking material riches are called *devotees of desire*, while the other two groups, the curious and those seeking wisdom, are said to be *thirsty for salvation*. But because they worship Krishna, they are all considered very fortunate. In time, if they let go of any desire to become pure devotees of the Supreme Lord, they will be called *extremely fortunate*.

These blessed neophytes can flourish only in contact with pure devotees of Krishna, thanks to whom one can oneself become a pure devotee. What Srimad-Bhagavatam confirms: *The intelligent being, through contact with pure devotees, gains from hearing the glories and activities of Krishna.*

These activities turn out to be so fascinating that listening to them does not encourage us to abandon the presence of the Lord. Any association other than that of pure devotees is deceitful. This is confirmed by the Srimad-Bhagavatam, where it is said that any deceptive path that may hinder spiritual realization must be rejected. The Bhagavatam enables one to understand reality as it is, and such understanding helps to transcend the three forms of material suffering. Compiled by the greatest of wise men, Avatar Vyasadeva, this work proceeds from his own experience and his great personal maturity. Understanding Srimad-Bhagavatam and practicing devotional service immediately captures the Supreme Lord in one's heart.

Lord Chaitanya then explained that the word *projjhita* means *desire for liberation*. One prominent commentator asserts that the thirst for liberation represents the most formidable obstacle on the way to the realization of the Supreme Lord. If somehow a being comes to Krishna and begins to listen to his glories, Krishna, in his infinite goodness, grants him to know him. Endowed with such a focal point, the

devotee, or spiritualist, forgets everything to engage in the devotional service of the Lord. When we approach the Lord with devotion, or with full Krishna consciousness, the Supreme Being Himself becomes our reward. Once absorbed in his service, we no longer ask for anything, unlike the unfortunate and those who are greedy for material goods. The practice of devotional service, this very service and the company of pure devotees by the unmotivated grace of the Lord: these three elements operate in such a wonderful way that the devotee, be he a soul in distress, in search of material goods or in curiosity, even a sage who cultivates knowledge, can abandon all activity to absorb his thoughts in Krishna. To sum up, Krishna alone is now implied in all the words of the verse, the one who is always content in Himself. So far, Lord Chaitanya has only introduced this verse. He will now discuss its deeper meaning.

Two classes of spiritualists devote themselves to the cultivation of knowledge: the first venerates the Impersonal Spiritual Being, and the second is in search of liberation. As the monists worship the impersonal aspect of God, they are said to be worshipers of the Impersonal Spiritual Being, the only aspect of God that Jews, Christians and Muslims also revere. These, in their turn, are subdivided into three orders: the neophytes, those absorbed by the realization of the Spiritual Being and those who have realized to be themselves their true identity of spiritual soul. If he also adopts devotional service, he who knows the Spiritual Being can then attain liberation; otherwise, it remains impossible. Anyone who fully engages in devotional service, in Krishna consciousness, is considered a soul who has already realized his spiritual aspect. Such is the power of devotional service that even those engaged in the worship of the Supreme Spiritual Being can be drawn to Krishna. The Lord bestows perfection on his devotee in the form of a spiritual body, and the devotee is eternally absorbed in the transcendent nature of Krishna. It is when he grasps the sublime attributes of Krishna and becomes fascinated with them that the devotee wholeheartedly engages in devotional service. For example, the four Kumaras and Sukadeva Gosvami were from the start liberated souls; They were nonetheless subsequently fascinated by Krishna's entertainment, so much so that they became his devotees. Devotees like the Kumaras, including Sanak, who felt the allure of the fragrance of the flowers offered to Krishna, were captivated by the spiritual attributes of the Lord and adopted his devotional service. The nine mystics mentioned in the Eleventh Song of Srimad-Bhagavatam are for their part recognized as spiritualists by birth by virtue of their listening to the sublime attributes of Krishna, enunciated by Brahma, Siva and Narada.

Sometimes one will be fascinated by Krishna and his spiritual and absolute attributes just by contemplating the beautiful features of his transcendent body; one will then cease to aspire to liberation to engage in the devotional service of the Lord. The devotee regrets having wasted so much time in the so-called cultivation of knowledge and without further delay becomes a pure devotee. There are two orders of liberated souls, even if they are endowed with a material body. Souls liberated by the practice of devotional service and souls liberated by the cultivation of knowledge.

With the difference that, fascinated by the sublime attributes of Krishna, the soul freed in the framework of devotion always rises higher. While the one who indulges in arid speculations, cultivating only knowledge without devotion, falls from her position because of her multiple offenses. Anyone who listens attentively to this teaching of Lord Chaitanya to Sanatane Gosvami will gain access to Krishna consciousness without delay and engage in the devotional service offered to the Lord.

There are three types of candidates for liberation through the acquisition of knowledge: aspirants for salvation, souls freed into material existence and souls actually realized. There are many in this world who seek liberation, and there are those who practice devotional service for this purpose. Anyone who truly desires liberation abandons the worship of celestial beings and, free from all envy towards them, concentrates his thoughts on Narayana, God, the Supreme Person. Then, when such a person meets a pure devotee, he adopts Krishna's devotional service and renounces his plan for liberation. It is written in the Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya (*sacred book*):

O magnanimous soul, despite the many flaws inherent in this miserable existence, there is a glorious thing, namely the company of pure devotees. So seek their presence, which has the effect of quenching the thirst for liberation.

In the human being, fear arises from a material conception of existence and from forgetting his eternal relationship with the Supreme Lord. Under the influence of material energy, he no longer has anything but distorted memories. Thus anyone with sufficient intelligence will fully engage in devotional service, holding the Supreme Lord as his spiritual guide and the object of his worship. In conclusion, no one can revolutionize their life without embracing the service of the Lord. And it is only when one is effectively cleansed of all material filth that one can fully devote oneself to Krishna consciousness. He or she who practices devotional service in order to grasp reality as it is, but without the slightest intention of penetrating Krishna consciousness, will reap only sorrows and miseries, and his or her life will remain devoid of substance. Every living being is an integral part of the Supreme Lord and must therefore serve him, the Absolute All. Deprived of this service, the being can only sink into material mire.

Lord Chaitanya concludes by saying that the six classes of spiritualists embrace Krishna's devotional service in one form or another. In other words, over time all spiritualists come to grasp the need to serve Krishna with devotion and to become fully aware of Him. However, anyone can embrace the Lord's devotional service, whether they are very learned or very eccentric.

The six classes of spiritualists are: the neophyte, the confirmed spiritualist, the one who is already established in transcendence, the one who aspires to liberation, the one who is already liberated, and the one who acts in harmony with his intrinsic nature. All are qualified as spiritualists. Now, when one becomes a spiritualist, a great

thinker under the sign of Krishna consciousness, one engages fully in devotional service. If we stick to the grammatical rules, there are different types of spiritualists, but the word spiritualist is in itself sufficient to encompass them all, and in the collective sense all spiritualists are prone to worship Krishna, the Supreme Lord. The transcendentalist, the holy being, who adores the Supreme Soul present in him also bears the name of spiritualist, and spiritualists themselves divide into two classes, respectively called sagarbha and nigarbha. Some transcendentalists meditate in their hearts on the localized aspect of Visnu, whose four hands bear four symbols: the conch, the disc, the mace and the lotus. The spiritualist who meditates on the four-armed form of Visnu becomes absorbed in devotional ecstasy and manifests the signs associated with this state of soul, sometimes weeping, sometimes feeling separation from the Lord. So he bathes in transcendent bliss and becomes captive, like a fish in a net.

The word atma (*individual spiritual soul*) also has the meaning of *effort*. All practice requires effort, and the ultimate effort is aimed at attaining the highest devotional perfection. We must seek to achieve the sovereign goal, which is not found in any planetary system, superior or inferior. Let us understand here that suffering and material happiness naturally follow one another in all planetary systems, but that the highest perfection, devotional service, is nowhere to be found without effort. Also, anyone who earnestly strives for the highest devotional attainment can achieve everything through that effort alone. One cannot therefore reach the highest devotion without making a personal effort. As Krishna says so well in the Bhagavad-Gita, He who is in the heart of all beings:

Those who always serve Me and adore Me with love and devotion, I give them intelligence through which they will be able to come to Me.

Another meaning of the word dhriti is the *awareness of one's own elevation*, by virtue of which one feels free from all suffering and has reached the highest level of existence. Thus all fully Krishna conscious devotees are detached from all forms of material pleasure. Entirely absorbed in the transcendent service of the Lord, they are always joyful by the very fact of their devotional practice. They are indeed humans as happy as they are accomplished, and such is their happiness that they do not even aspire to be promoted to the spiritual planets, for they are delighted in all spheres of existence. Filled with the spiritual service of the Lord, they covet neither material goods nor sensual pleasures. According to the Gosvamis: *People whose senses are anchored in the service of the Supreme Lord can be described as serene.*

The word atmarama therefore indicates that even birds, animals and fools, in short, all beings become fascinated by the sublime attributes of Krishna, therefore commit themselves to serve him and thus end up achieving liberation.

Another meaning of atma would be *intelligence*. People endowed with exceptional intelligence also bear the name of atmarama (*spiritualist*), and are of two types: the

wise scholar and the uneducated devoid of book knowledge. Both may have the opportunity to rub shoulders with a pure devotee, and even the uneducated atmarama may then abandon everything to engage in pure devotional service, in full Krishna consciousness. The Lord embodies the origin of everything and everything emanates from Him. Now, any truly intelligent person can understand that Krishna, the Supreme Lord, is the source of everything, and therefore engages in his service.

We also read in another verse of Srimad-Bhagavatam: *What about beings intelligent enough to study the Vedas [the original holy scriptures], even those who do not have so much intelligence, whether they are simple workers, women, outcasts, birds or animals in general, can, all as long as they are, attain the highest perfection.* The Lord further states that when a person becomes intelligent enough to engage in Krishna consciousness, the Supreme Lord in return gives him the intelligence required to attain his divine abode.

The Lord then informed Sanatane Gosvami of what the company of exemplary devotees, the practice of the transcendent service offered to the Lord, the study of Srimad-Bhagavatam, the chanting of the Holy Name of the Lord and the establishment of his residence in Vrindavane or Mathura are five very important factors for rising spiritually. And what about adopting all five, it is enough to master one of them to surely be raised to the level of the love of God. Either way, any truly intelligent being will give up all material desire to engage in the sublime service of Krishna. Such is the ascendancy of devotion that in adopting it one comes to renounce all material aspiration in order to cleave with his whole being to Krishna, deeply touched by the divine attributes of the Lord. Such is the beauty that the Lord puts on in the eyes of his devotee.

The word *atma* can also mean *nature*. The term *atmarama* then indicates that each one enjoys the particular nature that he has acquired. Nevertheless, the ultimate nature - or the eternal nature - of the living being consists in serving the Supreme Lord, and who completes the understanding of his real nature as an eternal servant of God renounces his designative conception (*material or bodily*) of existence. This is the real knowledge. So those in search of knowledge who are offered the opportunity to come into contact with a pure devotee also engage in the devotional service of the Lord. In short, both wise men like the four Kumaras and fools like birds can practice this transcendent service. Blessed by Krishna's unmotivated mercy, all can be elevated to the level of Krishna consciousness.

One is first fascinated by the sublime attributes of Krishna, then one begins the practice of devotional service. The Srimad-Bhagavatam glorifies Vrindavane as follows: *This land of Vrajabhumi is glorified at the touch of your feet. Touched by your fingers, ivies also glorify you. When your gaze rests on the hills, the rivers and the so-called lower animals, all become glorious, and so do the gopis when you embrace them with your sublime arms.* The gopis glorify Vrindavane in these terms: *Dear friends, all the inhabitants of Vrajabhumi, including the birds, the animals and the*

trees, are glorified at the sight of Krishna who, while playing his flute, leaves for the pastures surrounded by his friends and Baladeva.

The Lord affirms that the word *atma* also designates the *body*. Spiritualists who practice various physical exercises, holding the body to themselves, are also promoted to the spiritual service of the Lord if they come into contact with pure devotees. The very many people who hold the body for themselves engage in many self-serving actions, including ritual ablution and everyday material activities. However, in contact with a pure devotee, they too adopt the spiritual and absolute service of the Lord. Even those who identify the body with the self, or entertain a thousand material desires, are also, in a sense, *atmarama*. In contact with pure devotees of the Lord, they will in fact abandon their temporal aspirations and become perfect in the service of the Lord. The *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* (*sacred text*) offers us the best example of this in these words from Dhruva Maharaj (*great devotee of the Lord*):

Dear Lord, I adored you in order to obtain an earthly domain, but luckily I obtained you, you, who escape the perception even of the great sages and saints. In search of worthless bits of glass, I discovered a gem as precious as You. Now satisfied, I do not aspire to anything else.

The word *nirgrantha* can also mean *poorly intelligent hunter* or *miserable man*. Let us quote here, by way of example, the story of a hunter who found salvation and engaged in the devotional service of the Lord through contact with the pure devotee who is Narada. Here is his story. A man hunting in Prayag Forest was fortunate enough to meet Narada. The sage had just visited Lord Narayan, in Vaikuntha, and was going to Prayag to do his ablution at the confluence of the Ganges and the Yamuna. As he walked through the forest, he saw a bird lying on the ground half-dead, pierced with an arrow and chirping pitifully. Farther on he saw a fallow deer writhing in pain, then a wild boar and a hare, all in excruciating pain. His compassion thus awakened, he thought: *But what fool could have committed such crimes?*

Indeed, if the devotees of the Lord are generally sensitive to the sufferings of others, what about the great sage Narada?

Deeply distressed by the distressing scenes which presented themselves to his sight, he continued on his way and found a little further on a hunter armed with a bow and arrows. Inky complexion and bloody eyes, he was as menacing as a servant of Yamaraja, death personified. Penetrating further into the forest, Narada Muni nevertheless advanced towards him, and at his approach, all the animals trapped in the hunter's traps fled. Furious, the latter was about to insult Narada, except that the influence of the holy man made him powerless to utter the slightest insult. On the contrary, he asked her very kindly:

Why, sire, have you come here while I'm hunting? Have you strayed from your path?

Now all the animals I captured have fled.

- I'm sorry, replied Narada. I came to you in search of my way, and I passed several animals, wild boars, deer and hares, lying on the ground half dead and suffering agony. Who could have committed these atrocities?

- None other than me, and I do not see any harm, to answer the hunter.

- If you are the one who chases all these poor animals, why not kill them on the spot?

By killing them only half, you make them suffer agony, and this is a serious fault. If your intention is to kill them, why not kill them completely, why let them die at the end of their blood?

- Know, lord, that my name is Mrigari, the enemy of animals. It was my father who taught me to kill like this, and I just stick to his instructions. I am very happy to see animals suffer in this way.

- I only ask you one thing, and beg you to grant it to me, implored Narada.

- It is with pleasure that I will give you whatever you want. If these are the skins you want, just come to me. Among other things, I keep many tiger and deer skins there, and I will give you whatever you like.

- Thank you, but I don't want your skins. I have something else on my mind. If you agree to grant it to me, I'll tell you what it is. Here is: from now on, when you want to kill an animal, do not leave it half-dead. Finish it off.

"Why ask me such a thing, sire, what does it matter if I kill him or leave him half-dead?"

- By leaving him half-dead, you make him suffer greatly, Narada explained to him. So you are guilty of a very serious fault. Killing an animal is a serious offense, but not as bad as leaving it half-dead. In truth, you yourself must suffer in the same way in a future life.

Although he was a great sinner, the hunter saw his heart soften at the touch of the great devotee Narada, and he began to fear the consequences of his faults. In general, great sinners do not hesitate to make mistakes, but we see here that, purified in contact with Narada, the hunter began to apprehend the consequences of his reprehensible acts. Hence his answer:

- Dear Lord, I was taught from childhood to kill animals like this. So have the kindness to tell me what I must do to free myself from all the sins and offenses that I may have accumulated. I surrender at your feet and ask you to spare me the consequences of all my past faults by showing me the right path to follow.

- *If you are really ready to follow my instructions, I will show you the way that will free you from the consequences of your faults.*

"Whatever you tell me to do, I will do it without hesitation," the hunter promised.

Narada first begged him to break his bow, after which he would point out the path to liberation.

- But if I accept, protested the hunter, how can I support myself?

- Do not worry, because I will supply you with cereals so that you can survive, replied Narada.

The hunter therefore broke his bow and fell at the feet of Narada, who helped him to get up by giving him the following instructions: *Go home and distribute to the devotees and Brahmins all money and valuables in your possession. Then, dressed in one garment, come and follow me. Build yourself a small cottage by the river and plant a tulasi shrub next to it. After making a circular walk around the shrub, savor one of the fallen leaves each day. Recite or chant the mantra*

*Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare /
Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.*

As for your sustenance, I will send you all the grain required, but you will only take what is necessary to feed yourself and your wife.

Narada then revived the half-dead animals which, freed from their horrible condition, immediately fled. At the sight of this miracle, the black hunter, amazed, bowed again at the feet of Narada after having accompanied him back.

Once home, the hunter put Narada's instructions into practice. In the meantime, word spread to all the villages that the hunter had become a devotee of the Lord, so that all the villagers were visiting the new Vaishnave (*holy man*). The Vedic custom of bringing fruit or grain when visiting a holy person, all brought him food. He thus received daily cereals and fruits in such quantity that he could have fed at least ten to twenty people. And according to Narada's directives, he kept only what he and his wife needed for a living.

A few days later, Narada said to his friend, Parvata Muni: *I have a new disciple. Let's go see if he's doing well.*

The two wise nobles having arrived in sight of the former hunter's home, the latter recognized his spiritual master in the distance and walked towards him with great respect. But the presence of numerous ants delayed his march and, when he bowed down to his visitors, he understood that he could not offer them his homage without crushing several insects; so he gently pushed them aside with a piece of his clothes. Seeing his disciple thus seeking to save the lives of ants, Narada remembered a verse

from the Skanda Purana (*sacred text*): *Is it not wonderful that the devotee of the Lord is not inclined to inflict any suffering, even to an ant?*

Even though the hunter had once taken great pleasure in leaving half-dead animals, now a great devotee of the Lord, he was unwilling to cause even an ant to suffer. Finally welcoming the two great sages under his roof, the hunter made them sit down, washed their feet, brought them water to drink and then sprinkled his head and that of his wife with the water in which he had bathed them. Then transported with ecstasy, the two spouses began to dance singing

*Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare /
Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.*

Their arms were stretched towards the sky and their clothes rippled with their movements.

Witness to the manifestations of ecstatic love for God in the ex-hunter, Parvata Muni said to Narada: *You are a true philosopher's stone, since at your contact, even a formidable hunter could be transformed into an illustrious devotee.*

One can read in the Skanda Purana: *Dear Devarshi [Narada], you are a glorious soul whose grace was able to elevate the last of men, a hunter, to the level of devotion, where he developed a transcendent attachment for Krishna.*

Narada finally asked the hunter turned devotee:

Do you eat regularly?

"You send me so many visitors," replied the former hunter, "loaded with so many provisions that we would be unable to eat them all."

- Perfect, Narada said. Now continue to practice devotional service like this. And with these words, Narada disappeared with Parvata Muni.

Lord Chaitanya was keen to relate this story to show that, through the influence of a pure devotee, even a hunter can embrace Krishna's devotional service.

Resuming his explanation of the verse *atmarama*, the Lord pointed out that the word *atma* also designates all manifestations of the Person of God. Generally, Krishna, God Himself in his personal form, and his various emanations are all referred to as Supreme Being. Anyone who devoutly serves one or the other of the multiple forms or emanations of God, the Supreme Person, is therefore also called an *atmarama*. All of these devotees are absorbed either in devotional service according to regulatory principles or in devotional service imbued with spiritual love. And they themselves subdivide into three classes: the companions of the Lord, those who have reached the perfection of devotional service and the new postulants. These in turn are divided into two groups depending on whether or not they have developed an attachment to the Lord. Now, taking into account the two forms of devotional service, namely

according to the rules or imbued with transcendent love, these four groups of devotees form eight. Then, by adhering to the regulatory principles of devotion, the Lord's accomplished companions can still be divided into four classes: servants, friends, elder relatives, and brides. Some devotees attain perfection through the practice of devotional service, while others are eternally perfect. There are two kinds of people who adhere to the regulatory principles of devotion, the neophytes and the advanced devotees. Now, within the framework of the service of spiritual love of the Lord, there are sixteen varieties of devotees, so that the atmaramas then form thirty-two distinct categories. And when we add the terms muni, nirgrantha, cha and api to them, we get fifty-eight varieties of devotees, all of which can be grouped under a single term: atmarama, just like, even if several varieties of trees form a forest, the single word *tree* is enough to designate them all.

So the Lord presented sixty different interpretations of the word atmarama, adding moreover that the word atma designates *the living being, from Brahma, the first created being, to the ant*. He cited in this regard a verse from the sixth chapter of the Visnu Purana where it is written that all the energies of the Lord are of a spiritual nature. The energy recognized as the origin of the living being is also spiritual, while the other energy, saturated with ignorance and manifested in material action, is called *material nature*. Even within the material creation, living beings are legion, and if, happily, they associate with a pure devotee here on earth, they will be able to serve Krishna with pure devotion. *I had so far devised sixty different interpretations of the word atmarama, but here is a new definition popping up in My mind because of your presence*, says the Lord.

Listening to the multiple explanations of the word atmarama offered by the Lord, Sanatane Gosvami was so amazed that he fell at the feet of Shri Chaitanya in a surge of devotion:

I realize that You yourself are Krishna, God, the Supreme Person, and from your breath emanate the myriad of Vedic writings. Master of Srimad-Bhagavatam, You know perfectly well the meaning of its verses. No one can understand the deep significance of Srimad-Bhagavatam without your grace.

Don't glorify me like that, the Lord replied to him. Rather, strive to understand the true nature of Srimad-Bhagavatam, this sonic manifestation of the Supreme Lord, Krishna; not different from Him, it is infinite in each of its words as well as of its letters, with innumerable meanings. As we can only understand these in contact with devotees, do not say that the Bhagavatam is only a collection of questions and answers.

Indeed, six questions had been asked by the sages of Naimisaranya [Meeting place of the great sages] to Sukadeva Gosvami [Son of Avatar Vyasadeva. He belongs to the group of the twelve great sages], whose answers, or explanations, are found in the Srimad-Bhagavatam. We can read in a Vedic text the following words of Siva:

Sukadeva, Vyasadeva and I may be familiar with Srimad-Bhagavatam, but it should be known that in reality it can only be understood through devotional service and only from a devotee, for it escapes intelligence and academic commentary.

The sages of Naimisaranya asked: *Dear master, tell us if the principles of spirituality have followed the Lord, now that He has returned to his personal kingdom. How to find these principles now?*

And they were answered: *After the departure of Krishna for his kingdom, followed by all religious principles, his representative, the Srimad-Bhagavatam or Maha-Purana remains like a dazzling sun and source of light.*

Lord Chaitanya then said: *This is how, as if in madness, I have described the verse atmarama to you in many ways. So do not hold it against Me if I have uttered some extravagance. But if someone, like Me, loses his sanity, then he will be able to understand the true message of Srimad-Bhagavatam, as I have explained it.*

Sanatane Gosvami then threw himself at Chaitanya's feet while praying, his hands joined: *Dear Lord, You have asked me to present the regulatory principles of devotional service. But since I belong to the last social class, I don't know anything about it. I don't know how to accomplish such an important task. So be so kind as to give me some indications on the writing of such a book which may qualify me for this enterprise.*

The Lord immediately blessed him with these words: *Whatever you write, by the grace of Krishna, will emanate from your heart and be accepted according to your prayer. Here is some data you can write down. The essential point is the need to accept a genuine spiritual master. Thus begins the spiritual life.*

Lord Chaitanya then asked Sanatane Gosvami to put down in writing the characteristics of a true spiritual master and a true devotee, as described in the Padma Purana: the qualified Brahmin [*wise scholar, spiritual master and spiritual guide of society*], who simultaneously manifests all the signs of the genuine devotee can become the spiritual master of anyone, and such a devotee and spiritual master should be respected as well as God Himself. On the other hand, even from a family of highly respected Brahmins, no one can become a genuine spiritual master without being so devout of the Lord. We must therefore not mistakenly believe that such a master must be born into a so-called family of Brahmins. Let us understand rather that the spiritual master must be a qualified Brahmin, that is to say competent by his actions.

The Lord then asked Sanatane to describe the qualities required to receive the sacred hymns, and how these are to be understood and completed through ritual practices. The Lord then describes the initiation, the morning duties and the rules of cleanliness, washing the face and brushing the teeth, the work and the prayers to be recited morning and evening. He also explained how to venerate the spiritual master and

mark his body with tilaka [*U-shaped signs drawn in twelve places including the forehead with a specific powder, which indicates that one is indeed Krishna's servant, belonging to a religious group, and a sign of purity like a bath in the Ganges, the sacred river*], how to pick tulasi leaves (*from the tree of the same name*) and how to clean the bedroom and the temple of the Lord, as well as the art of awakening Krishna from sleep. Then, He defines the different ways of worshiping the Lord with the help of five or fifty articles, worship which must include five daily aratis [*ritual, offering of respect, welcome and worship to Krishna*] accompanied by offerings. food to Krishna, which must also be put to bed day after day, at the appointed time for his rest. This is, of course, the representation of the Lord in the temple. Different characteristics also mark the form of the Lord. Chaitanya also explained the importance of visiting the holy places, where there are different temples of the Lord, and of contemplating the form of God that is worshiped there. He further mentioned the glorification of the spiritual and absolute name of the Lord, as well as the various offenses that can be committed during his worship. This also requires certain articles and practices, including the conch, water, fragrant flowers, hymns and prayers, circular walking and the offering of homage. It is also necessary to adhere to the regulating principles of the sacred hymn, of the offering of water and food to Lord Krishna, to honor the food offered to Krishna and to reject the food not offered to Krishna, and yet to refrain from defaming the devotee who actually manifests devotional characteristics.

Let us not forget, however, the characteristics of a holy person, the way to satisfy a sage and reject the company of undesirable beings, as well as the constant listening to Srimad-Bhagavatam, the daily, monthly and fortnightly duties, including the Ekadashi fast, the celebration of the coming of the Lord (*Janmashtami*) or the three specific fasting days of Vamana-dvadashi, Shri Rama-navami and Nrishingha-chaturdashi. On the other hand, when fasting days overlap with other days (*viddha*), they promote the evolution of devotional service. Lord Chaitanya again begged Sanatane Gosvami to cite references from the Puranas in each case. He also mentioned how to establish temples of the Lord, in addition to describing the general behavior, characteristics, duties and occupations of the holy man. So the Lord summed up all the data required to write a book on the Vaisnavian (*holiness*) regulating principles. [*The rules and regulations of the Vaisnava principles of holiness practiced by holy men purify the heart. It is the process of loving and devotional service offered to Krishna, God, the Supreme Person. Anyone can be purified by following the principles of devotional service in Krishna consciousness, for Krishna consciousness or God consciousness is so powerful, that it can purify even the outcasts, the unclean, and transform them into highest holy men. Even practicing the Vaisnavian principles of holiness to a small extent can save someone from the greatest danger of material existence.*]

Attachment purely ecstatic Krishna, resulting from a thorough understanding of what his Person and his name are identical is called bhava, and he (*or she*) who accesses is

not contaminated by material nature, but truly tastes a spiritual happiness which, as it intensifies, takes on the name of God's love.

Lord Chaitanya explains that the Holy Name of Krishna, also called maha-mantra (*the great song*), enables anyone who vibrates it to attain the love of God, which is the intensified bhava. This love embodies the object of the ultimate quest of the human being, next to which the other sources of satisfaction or fulfillment that are religion, economic development, satisfaction of the senses and liberation are very poor. Anyone who remains captivated by a temporary existence under the sign of multiple designations can only covet the pleasures of the senses or the liberation. The love of God is specific to the soul and corresponds to its eternal nature, it is immutable, without beginning or end. Therefore, neither the temporary satisfaction of the senses nor the thirst for liberation supports comparison with the love of God, of a purely spiritual nature, and moreover qualified as the fifth dimension of the human quest. Compared to the ocean of love and spiritual happiness, the very realization of the Impersonal Spiritual Being is hardly more important than a drop of water.

When a person constantly engages in devotional service to Krishna by chanting his Holy Name, he becomes so attached to this chanting that his heart naturally softens, without any further effort being required. The manifestations of ecstasy then appear in her, so much so that she sometimes laughs and sometimes cries, singing or dancing, not in a particularly artistic way, but rather as if she had lost her mind.

The spiritual happiness that the song of the hymn

*Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare /
Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare*

brings is like an ocean in front of which all other happiness, including that of impersonal realization, resembles the thin trickle of water from a ditch.

The song Hare Krishna means: - O Lord, O energy of the Lord, let me serve You!

The spiritual sound vibrations of the sublime chanting of the Holy Names, allows to obtain the highest fruit of spirituality, that of being raised up to Goloka Vrindavana, the highest planet of the spiritual world. One can thus immediately appreciate the benefits which flow from the advent of Lord Krishna; and the fact that He thus relieved the burden on mankind is nothing extraordinary.

Rather, it is recommended to sing the hymn:

*Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare /
Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.*

In fact, in this Kali Age, the Iron Age, under the sign of discord, there is no other way of spiritual realization that is worthwhile. God, Absolute Truth and Supreme Person, can be compared to an inferno of which the innumerable living beings are sparks.

Although they both participate in fire, the living being differs from the Sovereign Visnu in that he is only a spark, infinitesimal, while He is infinite. However, since the infinitesimal souls emanate from the original and infinite Soul, their first and eternal condition does not include any trace of matter. Living beings are never the equals of Narayane, Visnu, who transcends material creation. In reality, living beings do not belong to temporal creation any more than Visnu Himself. But why, at the beginning, to have created such tiny spiritual sparks?

The answer lies in the fact that the Supreme and Absolute Truth is only perfect in every way when It is both infinite and infinitesimal. If She was only infinite, She wouldn't be completely perfect. Its infinite aspect is the Visnu-tattva, that is to say God, the Supreme Being, while living beings constitute its infinitesimal aspect. The infinitesimal desires of the Supreme Lord generate the spiritual world while the infinitesimal desires of living beings give birth to the material world. When tiny beings seek to satisfy their limited desires for material enjoyment, they are referred to as jiva-shakti, while when they bind to Infinity, they are referred to as liberated souls. We therefore do not have to wonder why God created infinitesimal beings. They are quite simply complementary to Him. It is indeed essential for the Infinite to have infinitesimal emanations, distinct souls inseparable from Him, the Supreme Soul. As living beings are tiny parts of the Supreme, there is reciprocity of feelings between the Infinite and the Infinitesimal. In the absence of the tiny beings, the Supreme Lord would have remained inactive, and the spiritual life would have been devoid of variety. If there were no infinitesimal beings, the notion of the Supreme God would lose all meaning, just as there can be no king without subjects. Wouldn't the title of "Lord" lose its meaning if there was no one over whom to exercise supremacy?

Living beings, spiritual entities or spiritual souls, are regarded as emanations of the energy of the Supreme Lord, and God, Krishna, as the energy source. Being eternally an integral part of God, the living being who has reached liberation finds his original and eternal identity. The realization of the aham brahmasmi aphorism (*I am not this body*) does not mean that the being loses his identity. I currently believe to be matter, but once released I will understand that I am in fact a spiritual soul, a fragment of Infinity, Krishna. Becoming Krishna aware, or spiritually enlightened, and engaging in his service of absolute love are the real signs of liberation.

The energy of the Supreme Lord falls into three categories: para, ksetragya and avidya. The para energy is in fact that of the Lord Himself, while the ksetragya energy is that of the living being, the individual soul distinct from God, and the avidya energy, that of the material universe, or maya (*the illusion*). It is called ignorance, because under the influence of material energy, we forget its true nature as well as the relationship that unites us to the Supreme Lord. Living beings represent one of the energies of the Sovereign Lord, tiny parts of Him. All visible phenomenon of cosmic manifestation belongs to the energy of the Supreme Lord, not different from Him. Therefore, He is the master, friend and support of all living beings. Let us therefore

live by the grace of God, and take only what is due to us, without encroaching on the part of others. So we can live happily.

The Lord said: *I am the supreme center of the relationships of all living beings. Knowing myself is the king of knowledge. The way allowing the living being to reach Me is called abhidheya, and it confers the highest perfection of existence, namely the love of God. Once reached the level of love for the Divine, the life of the being becomes perfect.*

Lord Chaitanya specifies that no one can know the intrinsic nature of the Supreme Lord, that is his position, his attributes, his acts and his excellences, all spiritual and absolute. Neither intellectual speculation nor formal education allows us to apprehend them. Only the grace of the Lord gives access to it. Thus the person blessed by divine grace can know and understand all these notions. The Lord existed before the material Creation. The ingredients of matter, nature and living beings therefore all emanate from Him and rest in Him after the dissolution or end of the world. When creation is manifested, He sustains it. At the same time, any visible manifestation is only a transformation of its external energy. When the Lord absorbs it, everything comes back to Him. The Lord is the master of the internal, external, marginal and relative energies, as well as of the cosmic manifestation and of living beings. External energy is manifested by the three modes of influence of material nature (*Virtue, Passion and Ignorance*). Who can understand the nature of being in the spiritual realm can truly grasp perfect knowledge. The Supreme Lord cannot be understood by the sole analysis of material energy and the conditioned soul. But when one is immersed in perfect knowledge, one is freed from the influence of external energy. The moon reflects the light of the sun, without the solar star, the moon cannot illuminate anything. Likewise, the manifestation of the material cosmos is only the reflection of the spiritual world.

Once freed from the spell of external energy, one can know the intrinsic nature of the Supreme Lord. Only devotional service gives access to the Lord. Anyone, in any country and under any circumstances, can adopt it. Devotional service surpasses the four tenets of religion and the understanding of liberation. Even the preliminary practices of such devotion transcend the highest liberation achievement associated with popular religion. Let us therefore approach an authentic spiritual master without taking into account our social position, our confession, our color, our country, to hear from him all that has to do with devotional service. The real purpose of existence is to rekindle our latent love for God. In truth, this is our ultimate necessity.

Knowledge consists of data drawn from the holy scriptures, and science corresponds to the practical realization of this knowledge. Knowledge is scientific when it comes from the scriptures and is received from an authentic spiritual master who has fully realized it. Interpreted in a speculative way, it has only limited personal value. By gaining a scientific understanding of scriptural data through an authentic master, one learns, by one's own realization, the true nature of God, the Supreme Person. The

transcendental form of the Lord differs from material manifestations and is not subject to the interactions of matter. Without a scientific understanding of both the spiritual and personal form of God, one becomes an impersonalist. Unless you are freed from the influence of material energy, it is impossible to understand the Supreme Lord and his different energies. Bewitched by material energy, one cannot apprehend the spiritual form of the Lord. Unless one realizes the transcendent form of the Supreme Person, there can be no question of love for God. Without this realization, loving God is fiction, and human life cannot know perfection.

This realization is expressed as follows: just as the five raw elements of nature, earth, water, fire, air and ether exist both inside and outside of all living beings in this world, the Supreme Lord exists simultaneously in all and outside all that exists, so his devotees can realize it. Pure devotees know well that they are to serve God, the Supreme Person, and that anything that exists can be used in this service. Blessed by the Supreme Being who resides in his heart, the devotee can see him wherever he looks. In truth, he sees nothing else. The Srimad-Bhagavatam confirms in these terms the relationship which unites the devotee to the Lord: *If a person's heart is always attached to the Sovereign Lord through the bonds of love for God, the Lord never leaves him. In truth, even if her memory remains imperfect, she must be regarded as the highest in devotion.*

Krishna is the originator of the entire Creation, and not only is he its creator and upholder of the universe, but He is also its destroyer. By his will, the cosmic manifestation is created at a precise moment, maintained for a certain time, and then annihilated. His supreme will is therefore found in the background of all cosmic events. The Vedic scriptures teach us that the Absolute Truth, the Divine Person, is supreme among all people. From Brahma, the first created being, to the tiniest ant, all living things are distinct from one another. Even some, superior to Brahma, do not also possess their own individuality. Now, the Divine Being is also a living being, and like all other beings, He has an identity of his own, but his intelligence is supreme, and He has an infinite variety of perfectly inconceivable energies. Now, if the human brain can create a space shuttle, it is certainly easy to understand that a higher brain is capable of infinitely greater wonders still.

The form of the Supreme Lord manifested by his internal power is distinguished from his external power, which brings out the material universe that we experience. There is a very clear distinction between the two powers of God. The internal power is very real, while the manifestation of the external energy, in the form of material existence, is only illusory and temporary, like a mirage in the desert. Glamor does not contain water per se, but only the appearance of water. The water itself is found elsewhere. Likewise, the manifestation of the cosmic creation presents itself to us as absolute reality, but it is in fact only the shadow of this reality, which is found elsewhere, in the spiritual world, where no glamor exists. Absolute Truth belongs to the spiritual world, and not to this material universe where all truth is only relative, an apparent truth always depending on another apparent truth. This cosmic creation

results from the interaction of the three modes of material influence, and the temporary manifestations found therein are created in such a way as to provide an illusion of the real for the lost mind proper to the conditioned soul, which is incarnates in different forms of life, including in the more evolved beings that are the celestial beings such as Brahma, Indra and Chandra. In truth, there is no reality in the universe of the cosmic manifestation or material cosmos, and if it still seems real, it is thanks to the existence of a tangible reality in the spiritual world, where the Lord lives eternally with all his entourage.

The chief engineer of a complex construction does not directly put his hand to the work, but only he knows all the aspects, directly and indirectly, because everything is accomplished under his sole direction. Likewise, the Supreme Lord, Supreme Engineer of the cosmic creation, knows every nook and cranny of it, although everything seems to be accomplished through others than Him. From Brahma to the most insignificant of ants, no one is independent at the heart of material creation. Everywhere the Supreme Lord extends his hand. From Him alone emanate all material elements as well as spiritual sparks, and all that exists in this world is due only to the interaction of these two energies, material and spiritual, controlled by the Absolute Truth, the Person. Supreme, God, Shri Krishna. A chemist can produce water in his laboratory by mixing hydrogen and oxygen, but he is in fact acting under the direction of the Supreme Lord, besides the elements he manipulates are also supplied to him by Him. As such, God knows everything directly as well as indirectly. He knows all things in their finest details and He always remains perfectly independent. It is compared to a gold mine, and the various cosmic creations, in their myriad forms, galaxies, to items made from this gold. The gold of various objects, rings, necklaces, etc., shares the same properties as the gold of the mine, qualitatively is one with it, but differs in quantity. This is why it is affirmed of the Absolute Truth that It is simultaneously different and not different from all that is. Nothing is absolutely equal to Absolute Truth, but at the same time everything depends on it.

Conditioned souls, from Brahma, the first created being and ruler of the galaxy in which we live, to the tiny ant, are engaged without exception in the creative act, but none are independent of the Supreme Lord. The materialist mistakenly believes that he is no other creator than himself. This is called maya, the illusion. Because of his meager knowledge, he cannot see beyond what his imperfect senses allow him to perceive, and he thus comes to believe that matter forms itself, without the aid of a superior intelligence. The Complete Whole, the Absolute Truth, being the source of all that exists, nothing is independent of Him. Every action and reaction of each embodied body is automatically known to the Whole, Krishna. Likewise, if the entire creation represents the body of the Absolute All, the Absolute has direct and indirect knowledge of everything. No one except the Supreme Being, God, is fully aware of everything and perfectly independent. Everyone must acquire knowledge from a superior teacher. The Lord, in his total perfection, looks at matter and thus creates

living beings, which are an integral part of his Person. They are indeed so many spiritual sparks with which He permeates the vast material creation. It is then that the creative energies are set in motion to generate so many wonders. All must obey Him wholeheartedly, and whoever aspires to break the slavery of matter must surrender to Him.

Unless you surrender yourself to the Supreme Lord, you are sure to fall into delusion, even if you are a great thinker. Only when a great spirit surrenders to God and fully recognizes Him as the cause of all causes, can it become a great soul with a truly broad mind. Such souls are very rare, but only great souls can know the Supreme Lord, the Absolute, the root cause of all creation. It is called the Ultimate Truth, because all other truths are relative to Him, and He remains free from the illusion that takes hold of anyone who knows only the relative.

Lord Chaitanya gives this advice:

Always read Srimad-Bhagavatam and seek to understand each verse. You will then grasp the true meaning of Brahma-Sutra or Vedanta-Sutra [Great philosophical treatise of Avatar Vyasadeva, made up of aphorisms, succinct formulas containing a deep teaching, in particular on the nature of Absolute Truth, Krishna]. You say that you are very keen to study Vedanta-Sutra, but you cannot understand it without a correct understanding of Srimad-Bhagavatam, Words of wisdom.

The Lord also advised him to always sing or recite the mantra:

*Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare /
Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.*

You will thus obtain very easily the liberation, and will then be able to reach the sovereign goal of the existence, the love for God.

The Lord then recited several authoritative passages from the holy scriptures, including the Srimad-Bhagavatam, the Bhagavad-Gita and the Nrisingha-tapani. He specifically cited a verse from the Bhagavad-Gita (18.54), according to which he who attains spiritual realization, knowing himself to be a spiritual being, finds there joy and happiness. He never grieves, he never longs for anything. He sees all beings on an equal footing. He becomes a pure devotee of God, the Supreme Person. A truly liberated person can understand the spiritual and absolute entertainments of the Sovereign Lord, and thus engage in his devotional service.

Lord Chaitanya then added that all the Vedic axioms of the Upanishads (*sacred book*) are aimed at truth, also called Brahman. By *Brahman*, we mean *the greatest*, which immediately designates God, the Supreme Person, the source of all emanations. Unless one possesses the six excellences in their fullness, no one can be called the greatest. This title belongs to the only Supreme Lord, the Master of the six excellences, beauty, knowledge, wealth, fame, power and renunciation. In other

words, the Supreme Spiritual Being is none other than God, the Supreme Person. Krishna, God, the Supreme Person, is moreover recognized as the Supreme Brahman. The notions of impersonal Brahman and localized Supreme Soul are included in the realization of the Supreme Person of God. He remains one person eternally, otherwise the six excellences cannot be present in their fullness. Therefore, when we characterize the Supreme Absolute Truth as impersonal, it is for the sole purpose of establishing that it is not a person belonging to the material universe.

In order to distinguish his spiritual body from the bodies of matter, some indeed describe it as being impersonal from a material point of view. In other words, any form of material personality is discarded in favor of a spiritual personality as far as it is concerned. The Absolute Being does not have any material hands or legs, but He nevertheless has spiritual hands enabling Him to accept whatever is offered to Him. He also does not have material eyes, but rather spiritual eyes through which He sees absolutely everything. Although devoid of material ears, He can also hear everything. His senses being perfect, He knows the past, the present and the future. In fact, He knows everything, but no one can know Him, for He escapes the material senses. Source of all emanations, He is the Supreme Person, the greatest of all beings, God. Krishna, God, the Supreme and Absolute Truth is a person who does not belong to this world of matter. All must adopt the devotional service offered to the Supreme Lord: *O my Lord, O Supreme Person, You are the support of all life and of the entire cosmos. That is why your devotional service is true religion. I therefore practice this devotional service in the hope that You will protect me and always engage me more in this sublime service, for you are God, the Supreme Person, embodying the eternal form and your radiance spreads throughout creation. Just as the blinding radiance emanating from the sun hides the solar disk from us, your spiritual form is veiled by your radiance. Desiring to discover you within this light, I ask you to withdraw this dazzling radiance.*

The everlasting, all-knowing and blissful form of the Supreme Lord is at the heart of the fiery radiance, which emanates from the personal body of the Lord. The personal form of the Lord is therefore the source of radiance. The Supreme and Absolute Truth is, simultaneously and eternally, personal and impersonal, though its personal aspect is more important than its impersonal aspect. The cosmic manifestation is only an emanation of God, the Supreme and Absolute Truth, and it rests moreover in Him, which therefore imposes itself in everything as the ablative, causative and locative agent, and by the same token. like the Supreme Person, for these are the characteristics of a person. As an ablative agent with regard to the cosmic manifestation, He must furthermore possess the faculty of thinking, feeling and wanting, for without these three psychic attributes the cosmic manifestation cannot be so wonderfully conceived and arranged. On the other hand, in his capacity as causative agent, He is the original architect of the cosmos, and in his capacity as locative agent, all that exists is based on his energy. In short, all of these attributes are clearly those of a person.

When God, the Supreme Person, wishes to make himself multiple, He permeates the material nature of his gaze. His gaze, or his vision, therefore, cannot be soiled by matter. And since he saw before the material creation existed, his body itself cannot be material. His faculties of thinking, feeling and acting are all of a transcendental character. In other words, it must be concluded that the mind of the Lord, seat of his thoughts, feelings and will, is spiritual and absolute, and so are his eyes, whose gaze rests on material nature. As everything in Him existed before the material creation, the Lord evidently possesses a perfectly spiritual and absolute body, senses and mind.

Beyond the limits of the material universe lies the spiritual world, with its many eternal planets, including the supreme, Kṛiṣṇaloka, where Krishna dwells and which is divided into three regions, Dvārakā, Mathurā and Gokula. In this abode, the Supreme Lord manifests in the form of four plenary emanations, Krishna, Balarāma, Pradyumna (*the transcendent cupid*) and Aniruddha, known as the original quadruple form. On Kṛiṣṇaloka there is a transcendent place called Śvetadvīpa, or Vṛindāvana. Below Kṛiṣṇaloka, in the spiritual sky, float the planets Vaikuṅṭha, and over each of them reigns Nārāyaṇa, the four-armed emanation of the original quadruple manifestation. The Divine Personality known as Nārāyaṇa in Kṛiṣṇaloka is the original Saṅkarṣaṇa (*Attractive Divinity*), and from the latter emanates a second Saṅkarṣaṇa called Maha-Saṅkarṣaṇa, who resides on one of the Vaikuṅṭha planets. Through its internal power, Mahā-Saṅkarṣaṇa ensures the transcendent existence of all the stars which float in the spiritual sky and where all the inhabitants are souls eternally liberated. The influence of material energy is conspicuous in its absence. On these planets reigns the second quadruple manifestation. Outside the Vaikuṅṭha planets there is the impersonal manifestation of Śrī Kṛiṣṇa known as Brahmāloka, and further still, the Causal Ocean. On the opposite shore of the Causal Ocean stands, without touching it, material energy. The spiritual waters of the Causal Ocean carry Mahā-Viṣṇu, the Original Supreme Being who proceeds from Saṅkarṣaṇa. He directs his gaze on the material energy, and by a reflection of his transcendent body He amalgamates with the material elements.

As the source of material elements, material energy takes the name of pradhāna, and as the origin of material manifestations it is known as māyā. However, the material nature is inert because it lacks the power to act autonomously. The gaze of Mahā-Viṣṇu confers upon him the power necessary to produce the cosmic manifestation; therefore it cannot be the original cause. It is Mahā-Viṣṇu's transcendent gaze on material nature that brings about this cosmic manifestation. Mahā-Viṣṇu then penetrates into each galaxy in the person of Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, uniting all living beings in Him. From Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu proceeds Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, the Supreme Soul of every living being. Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu also has his own planet Vaikuṅṭha in each galaxy, where He resides as the Supreme Soul, the Absolute Master. Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu lies down on the waters which fill part of the galaxy and gives birth to Brahmā, the first creature. The universal, imaginary form is a partial manifestation of Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu.

On the spiritual planet Vaikuṅṭha located in each galaxy is an ocean of milk, and on it, an island called Śvetadvīpa, home of Lord Viṣṇu. Lord Kṛiṣṇa is Himself the Absolute Truth, the ultimate reality, one and indivisible. He manifests himself in three aspects: the Impersonal Spiritual Being, the Supreme Soul and the Supreme Person in his personal, primordial, original form. In truth, the Impersonal Spiritual Being, the Supreme Soul or Holy Spirit and the Supreme Person Krishna in his personal and original form are all aspects of one and only Absolute Truth. The realizations of the impersonal Spiritual Being and of the Supreme Soul are thus only steps towards the ultimate realization, that of the Supreme Person of God. Krishna, the Supreme Lord, is the ultimate goal of the realization of the spiritual being. Nothing and no one surpasses Krishna.

It is important that every living being understands its intrinsic nature, that of the Lord and that of material energy, as well as their interconnection. It is first of all a matter of seeking to know the true nature of God, the Supreme Person.

The Lord has an eternal, conscious, blissful body, and his spiritual energy is characterized by eternity, knowledge, and bliss.

By his ecstatic aspect, He is the source of the power of bliss. By his eternal aspect, He is the cause of all that exists, and by his conscious aspect, He embodies supreme knowledge. The Name *Krishna* designates this sovereign knowledge. In other words, Krishna, the Supreme Person, is the reservoir of all knowledge, all pleasure and all eternity. Krishna's supreme knowledge manifests through three energies: the internal, the marginal and the external. Through his internal energy, He exists in Himself with his spiritual surroundings, through his marginal energy, He manifests in the form of living beings, and through his external energy, He manifests as the form of material energy. The manifestation of each of these energies rests on a background of eternity, bliss and knowledge.

The conditioned soul embodies the marginal energy under the influence of the external energy. However, when marginal energy comes under the sign of spiritual energy instead, it becomes worthy of the love of God. The Supreme Lord enjoys six excellences. In reality, Krishna, God, the Supreme Person, is the Master of all energies, while the individual being distinct from the Lord, an infinitesimal fragment of his Person, can be subjugated by material energy.

The Mundaka Upanishad (*sacred text*) gives us the example of two birds perched on the same tree. One of them eats the fruit while the other just observes it. When the first turns to the second, he frees himself from all anxiety. This is the position of the infinitesimal being. As long as he forgets God, the Supreme Being, he remains the prey of the three forms of suffering [*Those arising from the body and mind, those caused by other living entities, and those which originate from the elements of nature material, such as extreme cold or heat, lightning, earthquakes, hurricanes, drought,*

etc.]. But as soon as he turns to the Supreme Lord, or becomes his devotee, he frees himself from all the anguish and suffering inherent in material existence.

The distinct being (*the individual soul distinct from God*) is eternally subordinate to the Sovereign Lord, who forever remains the Master of all energies, while the distinct being is always under the control of the energies of the Lord. Although qualitatively identical to the Supreme, the living being seeks to dominate material nature, if only being infinitesimal, he is subject to the domination of material nature. Also it is said to represent the marginal energy of the Lord. Because it tends to be dominated by material nature, the living being can at no time be One with the Supreme Lord. If the distinct being were equal with God, he could never be dominated by material energy. The distinct being is like one of the energies of the Lord, although inseparable from its source, the energy cannot be equal to it. In other words, the living being is simultaneously different and not different from the Supreme Lord. Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego are the eight elementary energies of the Supreme Being, lower quality energies, while the distinct being is found to be of higher quality. The Supreme Lord is Eternal, all knowledge and bliss. Cosmic manifestation is a transformation of the energy of the Lord, although the Lord and his energy are non-different and inseparable. Even though He produces the gigantic cosmic manifestation, the Supreme Lord still retains His transcendent form.

The Lord is the Master of countless infinite energies, so He manifests the byproducts of these energies in various ways. Everything is under his domination. The Supreme Lord is also the Supreme Master, who manifests in countless energies and emanations. Absolute Truth, God, the Supreme Person, can never be impersonal, or nothing, since It possesses innumerable powers. It can present itself in multiple forms enjoying countless energies while remaining God, the Supreme and Absolute Person. Although She unfolds in multiple forms and diffuses her countless energies, She forever maintains her transcendent position.

Lord Chaitanya established that the Vedic literature (*of the Vedas, the original holy scriptures*) has three objectives: To know our relationship with the Absolute, God, the Supreme Person, to act according to this knowledge, this understanding and to attain the highest perfection of existence: the love of God.

The devotional service of the Supreme Lord is the highest perfection of human understanding. He even fascinates liberated souls who, by the inconceivable power of God, the Supreme Person, become his devotees. To attain pure consciousness is to understand that one is the eternal servant of the Supreme Lord. Under the influence of illusion, a person of less intelligence assimilates the self to coarse (*dense matter*) and subtle (*ethereal*) bodies, to a notion at the very foundation of the doctrine of transference. In truth, the integral parts of the Supreme (*God*) are not eternally subject to this mistaken notion of gross and subtle bodily existence. The coarse and subtle envelopes of the living being do not constitute its eternal form, for they are subject to change. In other words, the being can free himself from such an existence.

But as long as it identifies with body and mind, it only exchanges its spiritual identity for a material identity, hence the idea of *transference*. It goes without saying that atheistic impersonalist philosophers exploit this notion of transference by claiming that the living being deceives itself into believing itself to be an integral part of the Supreme, and that it is in fact itself the Supreme. This is indeed an unbearable doctrine, because it is false. The purpose of the devotee's mission is to convert even one person into a pure devotee. Thus his admission to the spiritual realm is assured.

Lord Chaitanya said: *Whoever takes complete refuge with the Supreme Lord is blessed by Him, who is called the Infinite. Such a person is also authorized to cross the ocean of ignorance. He, however, who identifies with his body of matter cannot receive appreciation, mercy without cause from God, the Supreme Person.*

The grace of God is acquired through that of his pure devotee. One can only attract the grace of the Lord through a devotee. Thus, the Lord can grant one of these five forms of liberation:

1. One that allows one to live on the same planet as the Lord.
2. The one that allows you to live in his company.
3. That which gives a transcendental form similar to that of the Lord.
4. The one who allows to benefit from the same opulence as Him.
5. That which consists in blending in with one's existence. In truth, none of these really interest the devotee, who is content to simply serve the Lord with love and devotion.

The formal performance of religious rites and principles is useless if it does not culminate in devotional perfection. Lord Visnu, the full emanation of Krishna, cannot in fact be fulfilled by mere ritual adherence to the Vedic precepts. He is only satisfied when one embraces devotional service. The human being inhabited by a material conception of existence cannot attain the highest perfection, even by respecting all the prescribed rules. One should begin one's spiritual life in devotional service by familiarizing oneself with the activities of the Lord with an accomplished devotee. By cultivating spirituality according to these principles and living honestly, it becomes possible to conquer Krishna the Invincible.

In this age it is not possible to acquire spiritual knowledge neither by renunciation, nor by mixed devotional service, nor by self-interested action under the sign of mixed devotion, nor by the simple pursuit of knowledge. Since people are hardly evolved, most of them actually fallen, and their life too short to allow them to rise in a gradual way, it is better, according to Chaitanya, that they remain as they are, while listening to the deeds and actions of the Supreme Lord, as described in the Bhagavad-Gita and Srimad-Bhagavatam. The message of these scriptures, however, must be received

from the lips of realized souls. Thus a person can continue to live according to his condition and still make spiritual progress, surely and clearly, until he attains full awareness of himself and of God, the Supreme Person. Access to the pure love of God constitutes the highest perfection. When love for God is established on the plane of affinity, it is called love of God, pure and spontaneous, the highest ecstasy that the spiritual soul can reach. Initially, no special relationship has yet developed between the Supreme Lord and the devotee. But when the love of God develops, such a relationship takes shape in the sign of varied spiritual feelings. The first of these feelings is expressed in an attitude of service, by virtue of which the Lord is seen as the Master, and the devotee as his eternal servant.

The sages specify: *There is nothing impossible for a pure devotee, for he is always engaged in the service of spiritual love of the Supreme Lord, whose listening to the name alone is enough to confer liberation.*

My Lord, those who remain apart from your service are powerless. Working on their own, they have no support from any authority. This is why I yearn for the day when I will be fully absorbed in your service of absolute love, without any desire for material satisfaction and without further wandering on the mental plane. I will not taste true spirituality until I practice this unadulterated devotional service.

Any personal relationship with God necessarily begins with a relationship of servant to Master and then, if necessary, to develop in friendship, then in parental love and finally in conjugal love. Whoever establishes himself in his own relationship with God, the Supreme Person, is in the best relationship possible for him. However, an analysis of the spiritual feelings that characterize the different relationships with the Divine reveals that the neutral (*passive*) relationship with the Supreme Lord is found at the first rung. A further realization of God is to see him as his Master and then, beyond, as his Friend, and still higher is the relationship in which one perceives the Lord as his Child. The parental relation is thus more evolved and of a higher quality than the relation of Friendship, but the supreme relation among all is that where one develops a conjugal love for the Sovereign Lord. Spiritual achievement with an attitude of service is in itself transcendent, but when that attitude turns into a feeling of brotherhood, the relationship deepens further. And when the affection intensifies, the relationship is then established at the parental level. Ultimately, however, marital love characterizes the highest relationship that can unite us to the Supreme Lord. All spiritual affection for the Supreme Lord, at whatever level, is undoubtedly transcendent, but that which is peculiar to a given devotee is more delectable to him than to any other.

The pure devotee ceaselessly absorbed in Krishna consciousness can sacrifice everything for the service of the Lord. Anyone who dedicates his life to the service of Lord Chaitanya, Krishna and the spiritual master, anyone who adheres to the principles of family life and anyone who honors the principles of renunciation in the lineage of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is a true devotee. When one is freed from all

material taint, one can taste the transcendent flavor of all relationship with Krishna. Conversely, and very unfortunately, those who have no experience of spiritual science cannot appreciate the different relationships that unite beings with the Supreme Lord. The service of love and devotion to the Supreme Lord is the very life of every being. It is written that Lord Krishna accepts from his devotees any form of devotional service which they render to him according to their own abilities, and that Krishna responds to them reciprocally. When a person wishes to establish a servant-to-Master relationship with Krishna, He plays the role of the perfect Master, and when one desires to have Krishna as a son in a parental relationship, Krishna plays the role of the perfect son. Likewise, when a devotee wishes to worship Krishna with a feeling of conjugal love, Krishna perfectly assumes the role of husband or lover. Having said that, He Himself admits that the marital relationship which unites Him with the young girls of Vraja represents the highest perfection.

The difference between simple religious practices and devotional service is immense. By performing religious rites, one can obtain the greatest material benefits, including prosperity, sense satisfaction or liberation, merging into the existence of the Supreme. But the fruits of devotional service are totally different from these temporary material benefits. The Lord's devotional service is of ever-renewed freshness and brings growing spiritual satisfaction. There is therefore an abyss of difference between the fruits of devotional service and those which flow from religious rites.

The powerful spiritual energy which governs the material universe, the administrators responsible for the various sectors of creation, the celestial beings, as well as all the products of the external energy of the Supreme Lord are but distorted reflections of the opulence of the Supreme. The celestial beings are in reality servants of God charged to assure under his orders the management of the material creation.

In the spiritual world there is another energy, the higher spiritual energy, or internal, which acts under the direction of the internal power of the Supreme Lord, itself under his direction, but in the spiritual universe. When the living being places himself under the tutelage of internal energy rather than external energy or material energy, he gradually becomes, by grace, a devotee of Krishna. But those who seek material wealth and happiness rely more on material energy or heavenly beings such as Siva. When one becomes established in one's purely spiritual identity and meditates on the service of absolute love offered to the Supreme Lord, one is promoted to the spiritual realm to live in the company of Krishna. In other words, by thinking of Krishna and his companions in full awareness of his spiritual identity, one qualifies to enter the spiritual realm. No one can envision or admire the activities of the spiritual world without being established in their pure spiritual identity. No one other than Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu can bestow spiritual love for God.

What is the highest level of education?

It is to know the science of Krishna, God. Material education is aimed at satisfying the senses, while spiritual education at the highest level is aimed at embracing the science of Krishna. The best occupation is that which satisfies God, the Supreme Person, and the best education is in the science of knowing which enables us to fully establish ourselves in Krishna consciousness. Listening and singing of the glories of the Lord, remembering, worshiping the Lord and praying, serving and befriending Krishna by offering Him everything, are the marks of the highest spiritual knowledge which that is.

Lord Chaitanya teaches us the science of the Absolute, the science of God, the importance and value of the *Hare Krishna* transcendent vibration.

Lord Chaitanya enjoins us to sing the Hymn of Glories of the Holy Names of Krishna;

Hare Krishna, hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, hare hare / Hare Rama, hare Rama, Rama Rama, hare hare.

He asks us to chant this song of the Holy Names of Krishna endlessly, for it will give us all protection. He tells us that you have to be humble, consider yourself inferior to a blade of grass in the street, be more tolerant than a tree, let go of any feeling of prestige and be ready to pay your respects to others, because it is animated with such a spirit that one can ceaselessly sing the philosophy of the Holy Name of the Lord.

Lord Chaitanya further wants to teach that anyone who seriously studies the science of the Absolute should stick to the words of his spiritual master. The instructions of the spiritual master must be scrupulously honored, for by adhering to them one becomes perfect in everything.

In truth, it should be known that the bottom line of the original holy scriptures lies in the understanding of Krishna. Knowing the original holy scriptures comes down to knowing Krishna, and our relationship to Him.

Who knows Krishna knows everything, and who knows Krishna always engages in his service of spiritual and absolute love.

Lord Krishna Himself said: From all that is I am the source, from Me all emanates. So whoever knows Me perfectly is fully committed to My service of transcendent love.

A Master-servant relationship eternally unites Krishna and the living being, and as long as the latter's service is inadequate, in other words, as long as the spiritual being distinct from Krishna is not fully established in the living being. Krishna consciousness

or God consciousness, let us understand that his study of the original holy scriptures remains incomplete. Anyone who does not understand what Krishna consciousness consists of, or does not serve Krishna with purely spiritual love, must be seen as hostile to the study of the holy scriptures and to the understanding of God, the Supreme Person.

As long as one evolves within the restricted framework of the action concerned or that one indulges in intellectual speculation, one may succeed in studying, even in teaching the theoretical aspect of Vedanta. -Sutra [*Philosophical treatise of Avatar Vyasadeva, made up of aphorisms on the nature of Absolute Truth, and composed as a conclusion to the Vedas, the original holy scriptures*], but without knowing the supreme, eternal and transcendental vibration. [*entirely free from all material influence*] of the hymn of the Holy Names;

*Hare Krishna, hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, hare hare / Hare
Rama, hare Rama, Rama Rama, hare hare.*

Which amounts to saying that whoever has been able to perfect the song of the transcendental sound vibrations of this hymn, does not have to study the philosophy of the Vedanta-Sutra separately.

Those who do not understand that transcendental sound vibration is not different from the Supreme and strive to become Mayavadi philosophers [*One gathers under this term supporters of various philosophies all subject to one or other of the two major categories of impersonalism, or Sankarism (which advocates identification with spiritual being), and nihilism (also known as vacuum philosophy, related to Buddhism (which denies the existence of the soul, and of God))*] or exegetes of the Vedanta-Sutra are all fools.

The study of the Vedanta-Sutra [*Philosophical treatise of Avatar Vyasadeva, made up of aphorisms on the nature of Absolute Truth, and composed as a conclusion to the Vedas, the original holy scriptures*] by the ascending path. The study of the Vedanta-Sutra by the ascending path is indeed just another form of foolishness. Conversely, whoever has developed an attraction for the chanting of the transcendental vibration [*Hare Krishna*] has already achieved the conclusion of Vedanta.

In this context, two verses of Srimad-Bhagavatam prove to be very instructive. The tenor of the first is that whoever practices the chanting of the transcendental vibration, even if he is of very low birth, has already clearly performed all kinds of austerity and acts of renunciation, offered all kinds of sacrifices and studied all Brahma-Sutras [*another name for Vedanta-Sutra*] to be able to sing in this way;

*Hare Krishna, hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, hare hare / Hare
Rama, hare Rama, Rama Rama, hare hare.*

The second verse emphasizes for its part that anyone who sings or recites the two syllables of the word *Hare* must be considered as having studied the four Vedas, namely the Rig-veda, the Atharva-veda, the yajour-veda and the Sama-veda.

Having said that, many pseudo-devotees believe that the Vedanta-Sutra is not intended for devotees, but rather for a specific class of men. They ignore that Vedanta is the only point of reference for pure devotees. All the great holy spiritual masters of the four philosophical schools have written a commentary on the Vedanta-Sutra, but the pseudo-devotees that are the prakrita-sahajiyas [*refers to people who imitate the signs of pure love for God, while remaining addicted to the low pleasures of sex and intoxication*] no less scrupulously refrain from studying the Vedanta-Sutra, wrongly taking the pure devotees and the great holy spiritual masters for pious followers of self-interested action or intellectual speculation. This is how they become mayavadis [*We group together under this term the supporters of various philosophies all falling under one or the other of the two main categories of impersonalism, or sankarism (which advocates identification with the spiritual being), and nihilism (also known as the philosophy of the void, akin to Buddhism (which denies the existence of the soul, and of God))*] and abandon the service of the Supreme Lord.

The study of the Vedanta-Sutra by the academic ways does not in any way allow us to understand the value of the transcendental vibration. The slaves of theoretical knowledge are conditioned souls who confuse the realities of *ego* and *mine*, and that is why they are unable to detach their minds from external energy.

By accessing spiritual knowledge, a person frees himself from this duality and adopts the service of transcendent love of the Supreme Lord, the only way to detach himself from material activities. The person duly initiated by an authentic spiritual master and singing the hymn;

*Hare Krishna, hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, hare hare / Hare
Rama, hare Rama, Rama Rama, hare hare,*

Gradually loses notions of *me* and *mine*, and therefore becomes attached to the service of the Lord's spiritual love under the sign of one or other of the five forms of sublime exchange;

[1 °) *The state of spiritual realization following liberation from material slavery corresponds to an exchange that can be qualified as neutral. 2) From there, when he has developed in himself the sublime knowledge of the internal perfections of the Lord, the devout holy being of Krishna can gain the level of active exchange which is called dasya. 3 °) On this new basis, the devotee can develop a feeling of respectful brotherhood towards the Lord, then beyond, friendship, where he begins to consider the Lord as his equal. These two stages are called sakhya, or devotional service in friendship. 4 °) Beyond is still the level of parental affection for the Lord, and this exchange is called vatsalya. 5 °) And finally, the level of loving feelings, or madhurya,*

which is the highest degree of love for God, although qualitatively there is no difference between the five levels of exchange described above].

This service transcends the physical plane, both material and ethereal, and it is only when one understands that there is no difference between the Supreme Being and his Name, that one can establish oneself in Krishna consciousness. It therefore becomes futile to get lost in grammatical analyzes, and we are only interested in the object of the subject: *Hare Krishna - O Lord, O energy of the Lord, let me serve You.*

The real commentary on the Vedanta-Sutra is none other than the Srimad-Bhagavatam, as its author himself, Avatar Vyasadeva, asserts in the Bhagavatam.

The disciple is judged perfect when he realizes the identity of the Holy Name and the Supreme Lord. However, unless one finds refuge with an accomplished spiritual master, the little understanding one can have of the Supreme is foolishness. Only service and devotion allow one to fully know the Absolute.

While singing the Hare Krishna hymn, also called maha-mantra, without committing offense, this transcendental vibration has the power to immediately deliver a conditioned soul from all material stain. In this age of kali, the iron age, there is moreover no alternative to chanting the maha-mantra, and it is said that the essence of all the Vedic writings [*of the Vedas, the saints original scriptures also called The True Gospel*] resides in the chanting of the Holy Name of Krishna:

Hare Krishna, hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, hare hare / Hare Rama, hare Rama, Rama Rama, hare hare.

In this age of discord, strife, hypocrisy and sin, the only instrument of deliverance is the song of the Holy Name of the Lord. There is no other path to success.

In three of the four ages, namely, the Satya-yuga or the golden age, the Treta-yuga or the silver age and the Dvapara-yuga or the copper age, people held honorable to pursue transcendence through disciplic succession [*from spiritual master to disciple*]. But in the age in which we live, under the influence of Kali, we lose interest in disciplic succession, preferring many ways invented from scratch under the sign of logic and argument.

This ascending approach to transcendence, however, is not sanctioned by the Vedas, for Absolute Truth [*Krishna*] can only descend from the absolute plane.

The Holy Names of the Lord:

Hare Krishna, hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, hare hare / Hare Rama, hare Rama, Rama Rama, hare hare;

Constitute a transcendental sound vibration, because they emanate from the absolute plane, from the supreme realm of Krishna. As there is no difference

between Krishna and his Name, the latter is as pure, perfect and liberated as Krishna Himself.

Neither logic nor any other form of argument can enable theorists to understand the absolute nature of the Holy Name of the Lord. The only way to know the transcendental nature of the hymn;

*Hare Krishna, hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, hare hare / Hare
Rama, hare Rama, Rama Rama, hare hare,*

consists in chanting or reciting these Names with faith and dedication, this practice having the effect of freeing us from the denominational conditions related to the material and ethereal bodies.

In this age under the sign of logic, argumentation and disagreement, the chanting of the Hare Krishna hymn imposes itself as the only means of achieving spiritual realization, and since only this absolute vibration can deliver the conditioned soul, it is held to be the essence of the Vedanta-Sutra.

According to the material conception of existence, there is duality between the name, form, attributes, emotions and activities of a person, and the person himself. However, no such limitation applies to the absolute vibration, because it descends from the spiritual world, where there is no difference between a person and the attribute of that person which is his name, even if such difference does exist in the material universe. Unable to understand this, the Mayavadi philosophers remain unable to emit the transcendental vibration.

Lord Chaitanya said: This song sometimes makes Me so feverish that I cannot help dancing, laughing or crying. In truth, I am going crazy. First of all wondering if the chanting of the mantra [or the hymn];

*Hare Krishna, hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, hare hare, /
Hare Rama, hare Rama, Rama Rama, hare hare.*

Hadn't made Me lose my mind.

We read in the Narada-pancharatra that all Vedic rites, mantras and precepts are concentrated in the eight words:

Hare Krishna, hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, hare hare.

Likewise, the Kalisantarana Upanishad states:

*Hare Krishna, hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, hare hare / Hare
Rama, hare Rama, Rama Rama, hare hare.*

These sixteen words are specifically intended to thwart the defilement of Kali. There is no alternative to singing these sixteen words to escape this contamination.

This is the transcendent nature of the Holy Names;

*Hare Krishna, hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, hare hare / Hare
Rama, hare Rama, Rama Rama, hare hare,*

they transport the human being into a kind of spiritual madness.

Anyone who sincerely chants or recites these Holy Names quickly rises to the level of the love of God, of which he goes mad. This condition, born out of love for God, is the first step towards human perfection.

The human being is generally interested in religion, in the economic development, in the satisfaction of the senses and in the liberation, but the love for God is beyond all these. When the authentic spiritual master chants the Holy Names;

*Hare Krishna, hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, hare hare / Hare
Rama, hare Rama, Rama Rama, hare hare,*

the transcendental vibration enters the ear of the disciple, and if the latter walks in the footsteps of his master and sings the Holy Name with so much respect, he comes to venerate the Holy Name. The Holy Name then sheds its own glories in the heart of the devotee, and when the latter fully qualifies to intone the spiritual vibration of the Holy Name, he becomes worthy to act as a spiritual master, in order to deliver all inhabitants of the earth.

Such is the power of the chanting of the Holy Name that it gradually establishes its supremacy over everything in this world. The devotee who practices this song, establishes himself in spiritual bliss and as a result, sometimes laughs, cries and in ecstasy. It happens that beings of little intelligence oppose the chanting of the Mahamantra Hare Krishna, but one who bathes in the love of God chants the Holy Name aloud for the good of all concerned. As a result, all become initiated into the chanting of the Holy Names;

*Hare Krishna, hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, hare hare / Hare
Rama, hare Rama, Rama Rama, hare hare.*

And through chanting and listening to the Holy Names of Krishna, a person can remember his forms and attributes.

Lord Chaitanya performs miracles.

The Lord has performed countless miracles, so I am only listing a few for you here.

During one of his childhood entertainments, still a baby, crawling in the courtyard of the family home, a snake approaches Him. The Lord begins to play with the reptile,

filling the whole household with fear and emotion. But after a few moments of play, the snake moves away, the child is carried away by its mother, reassured.

Another time, a thief, tempted by the jewels that adorn her body, kidnaps her. The plea looks for a lonely place where he can strip the young child, but he gets lost, turns in circles and finally finds himself in front of the house of Jagannatha Misra, his father. Frightened, fearing to be caught, he immediately abandons the child and flees. Of course, parents and friends are overjoyed when they see the lost child again, for whom the adventure was the occasion of a joyful ride on the thief's shoulders.

One day a pilgrim, a wise scholar, is received into his father's house. As he prepares to make a food offering to God, the young Chaitanya comes forward and begins to taste the dishes prepared for this purpose. The child has touched the sacred food, the latter can therefore no longer be offered as a sacrifice, and the sage must prepare a new offering. But the same incident occurs a second and then a third time, after which the child Chaitanya is put to bed. Around midnight, when the whole household is sleeping a deep sleep and all the rooms are closed, our wise scholar begins to repeat the offering to God, but there again, the child arrives and ruins the sacrifice. The wise pilgrim then begins to cry, but everyone is asleep, and no one hears him. Then the child, none other than the Lord Himself, shows himself to the fortunate sage as He is, in his Krishna form, thus revealing to him his true identity. But He forbids the wise scholar to reveal what he has seen, and He Himself returns to his mother.

During his family life, Lord Chaitanya did not perform as many miracles as one might expect from such a character. However, one day in the house of Srinivasa Thakura, He performed a great wonder. The glorification of the Supreme Lord through the chanting of the Holy Names of Krishna is at its peak, when the Lord asks His devotees what they want to eat. *Mangoes*, they replied. Lord Chaitanya then asks for a mango kernel to be brought to Him, although the fruit is out of season. The kernel is brought to Him, which He plants in the courtyard of Srinivasa. Immediately a young shoot appears from the pit, which in no time becomes an adult mango tree loaded with more ripe fruit than the holy beings gathered together could eat. This tree remained in the courtyard of Srinivasa, and the holy beings, the devotees of the Lord, could gather there at any time as much fruit as they wanted.

Going one day to Kurmaksetra, He performed a miracle by healing a leper.

He performs a second miracle by immediately making disappear, as soon as He touches them, the seven tals pierced by the arrow of Ramacandra, the son of Dasharath, arrow which also put an end to the days of the great Raj Vali.

In Benares, Chaitanya speaks with the devout Krishna scholars of the city, at the home of a wise scholar from Maharastra, who had invited them all. He performed a miracle thus fascinating all the devotees assembled there. It is impossible, even for learned scholars, to oppose the Lord for long, for some magic in Him touches their hearts, causing them to burst into tears for their greater spiritual good. The devotees

of Benares soon fall at Chaitanya's feet, imploring his grace. Chaitanya then teaches them pure devotional service and instills in their hearts a spiritual love for Krishna which prompts them to let go of all sectarianism. After this marvelous conversion, all the inhabitants of Bénares become devotees of the Lord and celebrate with great scope the song of the Holy Names of Krishna with their new Lord.

The miracles of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu performed in puri.

During the festival of chariots held in honor of Lord Jagannath [an emanation of Krishna. Jagannath means, Lord of the Universe] at the temple of Puri, the game was to move a chariot.

The faithful tried unsuccessfully to get him to move, despite the many methods employed. Many people had ropes tied to the front of the tank in order to tow it, but despite their efforts, the vehicle did not move at all. So the king chose great wrestlers to move the chariot, but they did not succeed. Then he ordered the mahouts to ask the elephants to pull the chariot, but even the latter still failed to move the vehicle.

But when Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu went to the back of the chariot and pushed it lightly with his head, the vehicle started to roll on the road, it was moving on its own. Lord Chaitanya slightly pushed the vehicle, which immediately began to move to the delight of the faithful.

Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, a wise scholar, despite his position had an oversized ego and very great pride in himself. He did not have much opinion on ChaitanyaMahaprabhu and took him for a simple stupid beggar. But when he found himself face to face with the Lord, he was struck by his profound knowledge of Sanskrit, of the service of love and devotion offered to the Lord which characterizes the commitment, once purified, the senses of being. individual at the service of the senses of the Lord, and of the great love which emanated from Chaitanya.

Immediately immersed in humility, Sarvabhauma converted and became the ardent disciple of Lord Chaitanya.

Vasudeva was a simple religious guide, who was excommunicated by society because he suffered from leprosy. Compassionate as He was, Chaitanya approached him and kissed him lovingly. Within a second, Vasudeva was freed from leprosy and recovered completely, becoming a normal being like everyone else.

This is the healing power of his love.

Pundit Sreebas was one of Lord Chaitanya's greatest devotees. A feast of glorifying the Supreme Lord was held at the residence of Sreebas on this day. Chaitanya and his disciples sang and danced in great joy. Sreebas's grandson died of cholera at that time without their knowledge. Although his wife was broken with pain, Sreebas chose to join the guests, in order to take part in the party, and thus continued to dance, unaffected by the tragedy that had struck him.

When Chaitanya learned of the death of the grandson of Sreebas, He requested that the boy's body be brought to Him. He ordered him to speak. The boy's soul immediately entered the body he had left to go to a wonderful world, and made it clear that he was happy to be there now. This magnificent divine gesture of Lord Chaitanya allowed the bereaved family to be assured and even blessed.

Lord Chaitanya would sometimes mysteriously come out of the locked rooms in which He was located, and He would then appear in several evenings at a time during the chariot festival at Jagannatha Puri, where the chanting of the Holy Names of Krishna was enthusiastically hummed. The chariot festival was celebrated annually to celebrate Krishna's return to Vrindavana after the battle of Kuruksetra.

During the chipped rice festival, He visited Lord Nityananda, his full emanation who accompanied him in his magisterium, being invisible, and the latter gave him pieces of chipped rice. Most of the gathered devotees did not understand what Lord Nityananda was doing, but those who benefited from the spiritual vision could see that Lord Chaitanya was present.

He also healed the wounds of Sanatana, and resuscitated the deceased son of Srivasa Thakura.

After some time, Lord Chaitanya leaves Puri again, this time to travel to northern India and visit Vrindavana, as well as the surrounding places. As He crosses the jungles of Jharikhanda in Madhya Bharata, behold all the animals, tigers, elephants, bears, deer..., join Him to participate in the chanting of the Holy Names of Krishna. He thus proves that by the propagation of the public and group glorification of the Supreme Lord through the chanting of his holy names, even wild animals can find peace and harmony.

Nitai, Sarvabhauma and Ramananda Ray [Eternal Companions of Chaitanya] had the privilege of being witnesses of the pure divinity of Chaitanya. Chaitanya would have revealed himself to them as a Divine Being with six (6) hands: two hands wielding bow and arrow, two playing the flute and the other two holding a Danda and a Kamandalu [a stick and a pot].

By this manifestation, He was indicating that He was both Rama and Krishna.

Disappearance of Lord Chaitanya, the Golden Avatar.

In his forty-eighth year, Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Golden Avatar, decides to make his disappearance during a sankirtane in the temple of Tota Gopinath, an activity which aims to spread the glories of God for the benefit of all. The main manifestation of Sankirtane is to sing in public and in groups the song of the Holy Names of the Lord,

*Hare Krishna, hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, hare hare / hare
Rama, hare Rama, Rama Rama, hare hare,*

always accompanied by dances and distribution of meals consecrated and offered beforehand to the Supreme Lord. Sankirtane is the only pure method capable of curbing all the harmful and degrading influences of the present age, that of discord, quarrels, hypocrisy and sin.

The chanting of the Holy Names of the Lord gives access to the highest planet of the kingdom of Krishna, God, the Supreme Person.

The spiritual sound vibrations of the sublime song of the Holy Names of God, allows to obtain the highest fruit of spirituality, that of being raised up to Goloka Vrindavana, the highest planet of the spiritual world. One can thus immediately appreciate the benefits which flow from the advent of Lord Krishna; and the fact that He thus relieved the burden on mankind is nothing extraordinary.

Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu came to earth in the guise of a very great sage, a very great Pure Soul, a very great Devotee of God, to teach us by his example pure love for Krishna, God, the Supreme Person. He came to teach how to perform pure devotional service with spontaneous love for God, the Supreme Person.

He sleeps very little, every day, every night, his emotions always transport him higher in the firmament of spirituality. Singing and dancing without worrying about himself, he is always bathed in bliss. All who come to Him see Him as the infinitely fascinating Lord, who appeared in this world for the good of all mankind. By his very comely nature, He embodies humility itself, and his adorable demeanor arouses joy in all who come in contact with Him.

It was during this Sankirtana in the temple of Tota Gopinath, that He disappeared from the sight of all the audience, in his forty-eighth year, in the year 1534. Verily, the appearances and disappearances of the Lord, as well as its activities, are all impenetrable.

Lord Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had simply disappeared by his internal power, so He left the material world, His divine mission completed. When the Lord disappeared from sight of all, it was in his original, eternal form that He did so. There is no difference between his divine body and his Soul, for they are one.

The Lord teaches that all his acts, as well as his appearances and disappearances in this world, are purely spiritual, and that he who knows their absolute character, will return to his eternal kingdom, and will not have to be born again in the universe. equipment.

Those who desire to attain the total perfection of existence must lend a submissive ear to matters pertaining to the entertainments and the spiritual and absolute attributes of the Supreme Lord, who always acts in a wonderful way.

Systematic listening to the entertainments, attributes and sublime Names of Krishna, God, the Supreme Person, leads to eternal life.

Systematic listening implies a deeper and deeper knowledge of one's Divine Person, which in turn leads to an evolution towards eternal life.

The glorification of the sublime acts of God represents precisely the remedy prescribed to neutralize the evils of birth, disease, old age and death, which concern all beings conditioned by matter. Access to such a level of perfection is identified with the purpose of human life, and the attainment of spiritual bliss.

The Lord has disappeared from the sight of living beings, humans, animals and plants, but He remains present in them all, however, because He resides in their respective hearts in his form of Supreme Soul, also called the Holy Spirit.

One has to be very intelligent to understand the appearance and activities of the Lord as an Avatar. In truth, the appearance, disappearance and activities of the Lord are all transcendent. The Lord has nothing to do with material activities.

One who understands the nature of the appearance, the disappearance and the acts of the Lord is immediately released. When he abandons his material body, he never has to put on others again, for he returns to the spiritual world. In our galaxy, the Milky Way, the earth is the most privileged of all the planets.

Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu says:

I will open the way for the religion of this age, the collective song of the holy name of the Lord. I will thus give the world to taste the four forms of sweet exchanges which are attached to the service of love and devotion, and thereby make it dance with ecstasy.

Accepting the role of a devotee, I will teach by My example the practice of devotional service.

I brought the remedy to the perpetual sleep in which all beings are immersed. Please accept the Holy Name of the Lord, the maha-mantra [the great mantra, the spiritual sound vibration] Hare Krishna, and wake up.

Glory to the chanting of the Holy Names of Krishna. From our hearts he sweeps away all unclean things accumulated over the ages, he extinguishes the burning fire of conditioned existence, with its endless births and deaths. The sankirtana movement [sankirtana: any activity which aims to spread the glories of God for the benefit of all beings. Its main manifestation is to hum in public the song of the Holy Names of the Lord, always accompanied by dances and distribution of consecrated food] spreads on all human beings the greatest blessing, diffusing its rays like the benevolent moon.

Weapon of spiritual knowledge, it makes the ocean of absolute bliss grow and it allows us to fully savor the nectar for which we ceaselessly yearn.

Here are the eight prayers left to us by Lord Chaitanya, his only writings.

(It's up to us to make them ours.)

Glory to the chanting of the Holy Names of Krishna. From our hearts he sweeps away all unclean things that have accumulated over the ages. He puts out the burning fire of conditioned existence, with its endless births and deaths. The movement of the sankirtana sheds the greatest blessing upon all men, shedding its rays like the benevolent moon. Soul of spiritual knowledge, it grows the ocean of absolute bliss, and allows us to fully savor the nectar after which we ceaselessly yearn.

Your Holy Name can alone, O Lord, fill the soul with all the graces. Now, sublime Names you possess in infinity, such as Krishna and Govinda, which you have invested with all your spiritual powers; to sing them, no strict rule. In your infinite mercy, O Lord, you allow that one easily approaches you by the song of your Holy Names, but in my misfortune, I am not capable of any attraction for them.

The Holy Names of the Lord, one should sing them without any pretension, in all humility, considering oneself less than a straw on the road, becoming more tolerant than the tree, and always ready to offer his respects to others. With such a spirit, it is then that one can sing the Holy Names of the Lord endlessly.

O Lord Almighty. I do not aspire to riches in any way, nor do I dream of pretty women, nor do I seek disciples. I only want to be endlessly absorbed, life after life, in your service of pure and absolute love.

I am your eternal servant, O Krishna, son of Nanda Maharaja, and yet for some reason I have fallen into the ocean of material existence. Please tear me away from these waves of death and rebirth, turn me into an atom of dust under your lotus feet.

When, then, O Lord, will my eyes be adorned with an endless stream of tears of love as I recite Your Holy Names?

When will my words be strangled while pronouncing your holy names and when will all the hair of my body stand up at the song of your holy names?

I feel you so far from me, O Govinda, that every moment seems to me twelve years or more, an eternity, and torrents of tears spring from my eyes. You absent, the whole universe seems empty to me.

Krishna remains and will always remain my only Lord, whether He crushes me in his embrace or breaks my heart by his absence. Total is the freedom that He has to act as

He pleases in all circumstances. It remains nonetheless the eternal object that I adore unconditionally.

I invite you to read and re-read, or study and re-study this wonderful teaching of Lord Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, in order to have a clearer and greater understanding. You will then find that you are making new discoveries each time, and your discernment will grow.

Anyone who listens to or reads the account of the Lord's entertainment immediately becomes cleansed of the taint of material existence.

Whoever hears them, reads them or repeats them to others, becomes aware of Krishna. Only Krishna conscious beings qualify to return to their original home, which is in the absolute kingdom of God.