

CANTO 12 CHAPTER THREE

The Bhūmi-gītā

This chapter describes how the earth took note of the foolishness of the many kings bent on conquering her. It also describes how even though the age of Kali is full of faults, the glorification of the name of Lord Hari destroys them all.

Great kings, who are actually just playthings of death, desire to subdue their six internal enemies—the five senses and the mind—and afterward they imagine they will go on to conquer the earth and all its oceans. Seeing their false hopes, the earth simply laughs, for eventually they all must leave this planet and go elsewhere, as have all the great kings and monarchs of the past. Moreover, after usurping the earth or some part of it—which is actually unconquerable and must in every case be given up—fathers, sons, brothers, friends and relatives quarrel over it.

Thus the study of history naturally leads to the conclusion that all worldly achievements are temporary, and this conclusion should give rise to a sense of renunciation. Ultimately, the highest goal of life for any living entity is pure devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, which annihilates all inauspiciousness. In the age of Satya, religion was complete, still possessing its four legs of truth, mercy, austerity and charity. With the coming of each succeeding age, starting with Tretā, these religious qualities each diminish by one quarter. In Kali-yuga the legs of religion retain only one fourth of their power, and even that will be lost with the progress of the age. The mode of goodness is predominant during Satya-yuga, and the mode of passion is predominant during the Tretā-yuga. The mixed modes of passion and ignorance are predominant during Dvāpara-yuga, and in the age of Kali the mode of ignorance is predominant. Atheism, the smallness and inferiority of all things, and devotion to the genitals and belly are very much evident in the age of Kali. Living entities contaminated by the influence of Kali do not worship the Supreme Lord, Śrī Hari, even though they can be freed from all bondage and easily achieve the supreme destination simply by chanting the glories of His name and taking shelter of Him. But if

somehow or other the Supreme Personality of Godhead becomes manifest within the hearts of the conditioned souls in Kali-yuga, then all faults of place, time and personality inherent in the age will be destroyed. Kali-yuga is an ocean of faults, but it possesses one great quality: simply by the chanting of the name of Kṛṣṇa, one can be delivered from material association and attain the Absolute Truth. All that was accomplished in the age of Satya by meditation, in the age of Tretā by sacrificial performances and in the age of Dvāpara by temple worship is easily gained during the Kali-yuga by the simple process of *hari-kīrtana*.

TEXT 1

śrī-śuka uvāca
dṛṣṭvātmani jaye vyagrān
nṛpān hasati bhūr iyam
aho mā vijigīṣanti
mṛtyoḥ krīḍanakā nṛpāḥ

SYNONYMS

śrī-śukaḥ uvāca—Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said; *dṛṣṭvā*—observing; *ātmani*—of herself; *jaye*—in conquest; *vyagrān*—busily engaged; *nṛpān*—the kings; *hasati*—she laughs; *bhūḥ*—the earth; *iyam*—this; *aho*—ah; *mā*—me; *vijigīṣanti*—they are desiring to conquer; *mṛtyoḥ*—of death; *krīḍanakāḥ*—playthings; *nṛpāḥ*—the kings.

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Seeing the kings of this earth busy trying to conquer her, the earth herself laughed. She said: “Just see how these kings, who are actually playthings in the hands of death, are desiring to conquer me.

TEXT 2

kāma eṣa narendrāṇām
moghaḥ syād viduṣām api
yena phenopame piṇḍe
ye 'ti-viśrambhītā nṛpāḥ

SYNONYMS

kāmaḥ—lust; *eṣaḥ*—this; *nara-indrāṇām*—of the rulers of men; *moghaḥ*—the failure; *syāt*—becomes; *viduṣām*—who are wise; *āpi*—even; *yena*—by which (lust); *phena-upame*—comparable to ephemeral bubbles; *piṇḍe*—in this lump; *ye*—who; *ati-viśrambhitāḥ*—perfectly trusting; *nṛpaḥ*—the kings.

TRANSLATION

“Great rulers of men, even those who are learned, meet frustration and failure because of material lust. Driven by lust, these kings place great hope and faith in the dead lump of flesh called the body, even though the material frame is as fleeting as bubbles of foam on water.

TEXTS 3–4

*pūrvam nirjitya ṣaḍ-vargam
jeṣyāmo rāja-mantriṇaḥ
tataḥ saciva-ṭaurāpta-
karīndrān asya kaṇṭakān

evam krameṇa jeṣyāmaḥ
pṛthvīm sāgara-mekhalām
ity āśā-baddha-hṛdayā
na paśyantī antike 'ntakam*

SYNONYMS

pūrvam—first of all; *nirjitya*—conquering; *ṣaḍ-vargam*—the five senses and the mind; *jeṣyāmaḥ*—we will conquer; *rāja-mantriṇaḥ*—the royal ministers; *tataḥ*—then; *saciva*—the personal secretaries; *ṭaura*—the citizens of the capital; *āpta*—the friends; *kari-indrān*—the elephant keepers; *asya*—ridding ourselves of; *kaṇṭakān*—the thorns; *evam*—in this way; *krameṇa*—gradually; *jeṣyāmaḥ*—we shall conquer; *pṛthvīm*—the earth; *sāgara*—the ocean; *mekhalām*—whose girdle; *iti*—thus thinking; *āśā*—by hopes; *baddha*—bound up; *hṛdayāḥ*—their hearts; *na paśyantī*—they do not see; *antike*—nearby; *antakam*—their own end.

TRANSLATION

“Kings and politicians imagine: ‘First I will conquer my senses and mind; then I

will subdue my chief ministers and rid myself of the thorn-pricks of my advisors, citizens, friends and relatives, as well as the keepers of my elephants. In this way I will gradually conquer the entire earth.' Because the hearts of these leaders are bound by great expectations, they fail to see death waiting nearby.

PURPORT

To satisfy their greed for power, determined politicians, dictators and military leaders undergo severe austerities and sacrifice, with much self-discipline. Then they lead their great nations in a struggle to control the sea, land, air and space. Although the politicians and their followers will soon be dead—since birth and death are all inevitable in this world—they persist in their frenetic struggle for ephemeral glory.

TEXT 5

*samudrāvaraṇām jitvā
mām viśanty abdhim ojasā
kiyat ātma-jayasyaitan
muktir ātma-jaye phalam*

SYNONYMS

samudra-āvaraṇām—bounded by the ocean; *jitvā*—having conquered; *mām*—me; *viśanti*—they enter; *abdhim*—the ocean; *ojasā*—by their strength; *kiyat*—how much; *ātma-jayasya*—of victory over the self; *etat*—this; *muktiḥ*—liberation; *ātma-jaye*—of victory over the self; *phalam*—the fruit.

TRANSLATION

“After conquering all the land on my surface, these proud kings forcibly enter the ocean to conquer the sea itself. What is the use of their self-control, which is aimed at political exploitation? The actual goal of self-control is spiritual liberation.”

TEXT 6

*yām viśrjyaiva manavas
tat-sutāś ca kurūdvaha*

*gatā yathāgatam yuddhe
tām mām jeṣyantya abuddhayaḥ*

SYNONYMS

yām—whom; *visṛjya*—giving up; *eva*—indeed; *manavaḥ*—human beings; *tat-sutāḥ*—their sons; *ca*—also; *kuru-udvaha*—O best of the Kurus; *gatāḥ*—gone away; *yathā-āgatam*—just as they had originally come; *yuddhe*—in battle; *tām*—that; *mām*—me, the earth; *jeṣyanti*—they try to conquer; *abuddhayaḥ*—unintelligent.

TRANSLATION

O best of the Kurus, the earth continued as follows: “Although in the past great men and their descendants have left me, departing from this world in the same helpless way they came into it, even today foolish men are trying to conquer me.

TEXT 7

*mat-kṛte pitṛ-putrāṇām
bhrātrṇām cāpi vighrahaḥ
jāyate hy asatām rājye
mamatā-baddha-cetasām*

SYNONYMS

mat-kṛte—for the sake of me; *pitṛ-putrāṇām*—between fathers and sons; *bhrātrṇām*—among brothers; *ca*—and; *api*—also; *vighrahaḥ*—conflict; *jāyate*—arises; *hi*—indeed; *asatām*—among the materialistic; *rājye*—for political rule; *mamatā*—by the sense of possession; *baddha*—bound up; *cetasām*—whose hearts.

TRANSLATION

“For the sake of conquering me, materialistic persons fight one another. Fathers oppose their sons, and brothers fight one another, because their hearts are bound to possessing political power.

TEXT 8

mamaiveyam mahi kṛtsnā

*na te mūḍheti vādinah
spardhamānā mitho ghnanti
mriyante mat-kṛte nṛpāḥ*

SYNONYMS

mama—mine; *eva*—indeed; *iyam*—this; *mahī*—land; *kṛtsnā*—entire; *na*—not; *te*—yours; *mūḍha*—you fool; *iti vādinah*—thus speaking; *spardhamānāḥ*—quarreling; *mithaḥ*—each other; *ghnanti*—they kill; *mriyante*—they are killed; *mat-kṛte*—for my sake; *nṛpāḥ*—kings.

TRANSLATION

“Political leaders challenge one another: ‘All this land is mine! It’s not yours, you fool!’ Thus they attack one another and die.

PURPORT

This verse describes with brilliant clarity the mundane political mentality that provokes innumerable conflicts in the world. For example, as we prepare this translation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, British and Argentine military forces are bitterly fighting over the tiny Falkland Islands.

The fact is that the Supreme Lord is the proprietor of all land. Of course, even in a God-conscious world political boundaries exist. But in such a God-conscious atmosphere political tensions are greatly eased, and people of all lands welcome each other and respect each other’s right to live in peace.

TEXTS 9–13

*ṛṥthuh purūravā gādhir
nahuṣo bharato ’rjunah
māndhātā sagaro rāmah
khaṭvāṅgo dhundhuhā raghuḥ*

*ṛṇabindur yayātīś ca
śaryātīḥ śantanur gayah
bhagīrathaḥ kuvalayāśvah
kakutstho naiśadho nṛgaḥ*

hiraṇyakaśīpur vṛtro

*rāvaṇo loka-rāvaṇaḥ
namuciḥ śambaro bhaumo
hiraṇyākṣo 'tha tārakaḥ*

*anye ca bahavo daityā
rājāno ye maheśvarāḥ
sarve sarva-vidaḥ śūrāḥ
sarve sarva-jito 'jitāḥ*

*mamatām mayy avartanta
kṛtvocair martya-dharmināḥ
kathāvaśeṣāḥ kālena
hy akṛtārthāḥ kṛtā vibho*

SYNONYMS

pṛthuḥ purūravāḥ gādhiḥ—Mahārājas Pṛthu, Purūravā and Gādhi; *nahuṣaḥ bharataḥ arjunaḥ*—Nahuṣa, Bharata and Kārtavīrya Arjuna; *māndhātā sagaraḥ rāmaḥ*—Māndhātā, Sagara and Rāma; *khaṭvāṅgaḥ dhundhuhā raghuḥ*—Khaṭvāṅga, Dhundhuhā and Raghu; *ṛṇabinduḥ yayātiḥ ca*—Ṛṇabindu and Yayāti; *śaryātiḥ śantanuḥ gayaḥ*—Śaryāti, Śantanu and Gaya; *bhagīrathaḥ kuvalayāśvaḥ*—Bhagīratha and Kuvalayāśva; *kakutsthaḥ naiṣadhaḥ nṛgaḥ*—Kakutstha, Naiṣadha and Nṛga; *hiraṇyakaśipuḥ vṛtraḥ*—Hiraṇyakaśipu and Vṛtrāsura; *rāvaṇaḥ*—Rāvaṇa; *loka-rāvaṇaḥ*—who made the whole world cry; *namuciḥ śambarāḥ bhaumaḥ*—Namuci, Śambara and Bhauma; *hiraṇyākṣaḥ*—Hiraṇyākṣa; *atha*—and; *tārakaḥ*—Tāraka; *anye*—others; *ca*—as well; *bahavaḥ*—many; *daityāḥ*—demons; *rājānaḥ*—kings; *ye*—who; *mahā-īśvarāḥ*—great controllers; *sarve*—all of them; *sarva-vidaḥ*—all-knowing; *śūrāḥ*—heroes; *sarve*—all; *sarva-jitaḥ*—all-conquering; *ajitāḥ*—unconquerable; *mamatām*—possessiveness; *mayi*—for me; *avartanta*—they lived; *kṛtvā*—expressing; *uccaiḥ*—to a great degree; *martya-dharmināḥ*—subject to the laws of birth and death; *kathā-avaśeṣāḥ*—remaining merely as historical narrations; *kālena*—by the force of time; *hi*—indeed; *akṛta-arthāḥ*—incomplete in perfecting their desires; *kṛtāḥ*—they have been made; *vibho*—O Lord.

TRANSLATION

“Such kings as Pṛthu, Purūravā, Gādhi, Nahuṣa, Bharata, Kārtavīrya Arjuna,

Māndhātā, Sagara, Rāma, Khaṭvāṅga, Dhundhuhā, Raghu, Tṛṇabindu, Yayāti, Śaryāti, Śantanu, Gaya, Bhagīratha, Kuvalayāśva, Kakutstha, Naiṣadha, Nṛga, Hiraṇyakaśipu, Vṛtra, Rāvaṇa, who made the whole world lament, Namuci, Śambara, Bhauma, Hiraṇyākṣa and Tāraka, as well as many other demons and kings who possessed great powers of control over others, were all full of knowledge, heroic, all-conquering and unconquerable. Nevertheless, O almighty Lord, although they lived their lives intensely trying to possess me, these kings were subject to the passage of time, which reduced them all to mere historical accounts. None of them could permanently establish their rule.”

PURPORT

According to Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī, and as confirmed by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, the King Rāma mentioned here is not the incarnation of Godhead Rāmacandra. Pṛthu Mahārāja is understood to be an incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead who completely exhibited the characteristics of an earthly king, claiming proprietorship over the entire earth. A saintly king like Pṛthu Mahārāja, however, controls the earth on behalf of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whereas a demon such as Hiraṇyakaśipu or Rāvaṇa tries to exploit the earth for his personal sense gratification. Nevertheless, both saintly kings and demons must leave the earth. In this way their political supremacy is ultimately neutralized by the force of time.

Modern political leaders cannot even temporarily control the entire earth, nor are their opulences and intelligence unlimited. Possessing hopelessly fragmented power, enjoying a miniscule life span, and lacking deep existential intelligence, modern leaders inevitably are symbols of frustration and misdirected ambition.

TEXT 14

*kathā imās te kathitā mahīyasām
vitāya lokeṣu yaśaḥ pareyuṣām
vijñāna-vairāgya-vivakṣayā vibho
vaco-vibhūtīr na tu pāramārthyam*

SYNONYMS

kathāḥ—the narrations; *imāḥ*—these; *te*—unto you; *kathitāḥ*—have been spoken; *mahīyasām*—of great kings; *vitāya*—spreading; *lokeṣu*—throughout all the worlds; *yaśaḥ*—their fame; *pareyuṣām*—who have departed; *vijñāna*—transcendental knowledge; *vairāgya*—and renunciation; *vivakṣayā*—with the desire for teaching; *vibho*—O mighty Parīkṣit; *vacaḥ*—of words; *vibhūtīḥ*—the decoration; *na*—not; *tu*—but; *pārama-arthyam*—of the most essential purport.

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O mighty Parīkṣit, I have related to you the narrations of all these great kings, who spread their fame throughout the world and then departed. My real purpose was to teach transcendental knowledge and renunciation. Stories of kings lend power and opulence to these narrations but do not in themselves constitute the ultimate aspect of knowledge.

PURPORT

Since all the narrations of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* bring the reader to the perfection of transcendental knowledge, they all give supreme spiritual lessons though apparently dealing with kings or other mundane subject matter. In relation with Kṛṣṇa, all ordinary topics become transcendental narrations, with the power to bring the reader to the perfection of life.

TEXT 15

*yas tūttamaḥ-śloka-guṇānuvādaḥ
saṅgīyate 'bhīkṣṇam amaṅgala-ghnaḥ
tam eva nityaṁ śṛṇuyād abhīkṣṇaṁ
kṛṣṇe 'malāṁ bhaktim abhīpsamānaḥ*

SYNONYMS

yaḥ—which; *tu*—on the other hand; *uttamaḥ-śloka*—of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is praised in transcendental verses; *guṇa*—of the qualities; *anuvādaḥ*—the recounting; *saṅgīyate*—is sung; *abhīkṣṇam*—always; *amaṅgala-ghnaḥ*—which destroys everything inauspicious; *tam*—that; *eva*—indeed; *nityam*—regularly; *śṛṇuyāt*—one should hear; *abhīkṣṇam*—constantly; *kṛṣṇe*—unto Lord Kṛṣṇa; *amalām*—untainted; *bhaktim*—devotional service; *abhīpsamānaḥ*—he who desires.

TRANSLATION

The person who desires pure devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa should hear the narrations of Lord Uttamaḥśloka's glorious qualities, the constant chanting of which destroys everything inauspicious. The devotee should engage in such listening in regular daily assemblies and should also continue his hearing throughout the day.

PURPORT

Since any topic related to Lord Kṛṣṇa is auspicious and transcendental, the direct narration of Lord Kṛṣṇa's own activities, political and nonpolitical, is certainly the supreme subject matter for hearing. The word *nityam* here indicates regulated cultivation of the topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and *abhīkṣṇam* indicates constant remembrance of such regulated spiritual experiences.

TEXT 16

śrī-rājovāca
kenopāyena bhagavan
kaler doṣān kalau janāḥ
vidhamiṣyanty upacitāms
tan me brūhi yathā mune

SYNONYMS

śrī-rājā uvāca—King Parīkṣit said; *kena*—by what; *upāyena*—means; *bhagavan*—my dear lord; *kaleḥ*—of the age of Kali; *doṣān*—the faults; *kalau*—living in Kali-yuga; *janāḥ*—people; *vidhamiṣyanti*—will eradicate; *upacitān*—accumulated; *tat*—that; *me*—to me; *brūhi*—please explain; *yathā*—fittingly; *mune*—O sage.

TRANSLATION

King Parīkṣit said: My lord, how can persons living in the age of Kali rid themselves of the cumulative contamination of this age? O great sages please explain this to me.

PURPORT

King Parīkṣit was a compassionate, saintly ruler. Thus, after hearing of the abominable qualities of the age of Kali, he naturally inquired as to how those born in this age can free themselves of its inherent contamination.

TEXT 17

*yugāni yuga-dharmāṁś ca
mānam pralaya-kalpayoḥ
kālasyeśvara-rūpasya
gatim viṣṇor mahātmanaḥ*

SYNONYMS

yugāni—the ages of the universal history; *yuga-dharmān*—the special qualities of each age; *ca*—and; *mānam*—the measurement; *pralaya*—of annihilation; *kalpayoḥ*—and of universal maintenance; *kālasya*—of time; *īśvara-rūpasya*—the representation of the Personality of Godhead; *gatim*—the movement; *viṣṇoḥ*—of Lord Viṣṇu; *mahā-ātmanaḥ*—the Supreme Soul.

TRANSLATION

Please explain the different ages of universal history, the special qualities of each age, the duration of cosmic maintenance and destruction, and the movement of time, which is the direct representation of the Supreme Soul, the Personality of Godhead, Lord Viṣṇu.

TEXT 18

*śrī-śuka uvāca
kṛte pravartate dharmas
catuṣ-pāt taj-janair dhṛtaḥ
satyam dayā tapo dānam
iti pādā vibhor nṛpa*

SYNONYMS

śrī-śukaḥ uvāca—Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said; *kṛte*—in the Satya-yuga, the age of truth; *pravartate*—exists; *dharmas*—religion; *catuṣ-pāt*—with four legs; *taj*—of that age; *janaiḥ*—by the people; *dhṛtaḥ*—maintained; *satyam*—truth; *dayā*—mercy; *tapas*—austerity; *dānam*—charity; *iti*—thus; *pādāḥ*—the legs; *vibhoḥ*—of mighty religion; *nṛpa*—O King.

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: My dear King, in the beginning, during Satya-yuga, the age of truth, religion is present with all four of its legs intact and is carefully maintained by the people of that age. These four legs of powerful religion are truthfulness, mercy, austerity and charity.

PURPORT

Just as there are four seasons, there are four ages of the earth, each lasting hundreds of thousands of years. The first of these is Satya-yuga, when such good qualities as charity are prominent.

Actual charity, here referred to as *dānam*, is to award fearlessness and freedom to others, not to give them some material means of temporary pleasure or relief. Any material “charitable” arrangement will inevitably be crushed by the onward march of time. Thus only realization of one’s eternal existence beyond the reach of time can make one fearless, and only freedom from material desire constitutes real freedom, for it enables one to escape the bondage of the laws of nature. Therefore real charity is to help people revive their eternal, spiritual consciousness.

Religion is here referred to as *vibhu*, “the mighty,” because universal religious principles are not different from the Supreme Lord Himself and ultimately lead one to His kingdom. The qualities mentioned here—truthfulness, mercy, austerity and charity—are universal, nonsectarian aspects of pious life.

In the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the fourth leg of religion is listed as cleanliness. According to Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, this is an alternative definition of the word *dānam* in the present context.

TEXT 19

santuṣṭāḥ karuṇā maitrāḥ
śāntā dāntās titikṣavaḥ
ātmārāmāḥ sama-dṛśaḥ
prāyaśaḥ śramaṇā janāḥ

SYNONYMS

santuṣṭāḥ—self-satisfied; *karuṇāḥ*—merciful; *maitrāḥ*—friendly; *śāntāḥ*—pacified; *dāntāḥ*—self-controlled; *titikṣavaḥ*—tolerant; *ātma-ārāmāḥ*—

enthused from within; *sama-dṛśaḥ*—possessed of equal vision; *prāyaśaḥ*—for the most part; *śramaṇāḥ*—endeavoring diligently (for self-realization); *janāḥ*—the people.

TRANSLATION

The people of Satya-yuga are for the most part self-satisfied, merciful, friendly to all, peaceful, sober and tolerant. They take their pleasure from within, see all things equally and always endeavor diligently for spiritual perfection.

PURPORT

Sama-darśana, equal vision, is based on the perception of the Supreme Spirit behind all material variety and within all living entities.

TEXT 20

*tretāyām dharma-pādānām
turyāmśo hīyate śanaiḥ
adharmā-pādair anṛta-
hiṁśāsantoṣa-vigrahaiḥ*

SYNONYMS

tretāyām—in the second age; *dharma-pādānām*—of the legs of religion; *turya*—one fourth; *aṁśaḥ*—part; *hīyate*—is lost; *śanaiḥ*—gradually; *adharmā-pādaiḥ*—by the legs of irreligion; *anṛta*—by falsity; *hiṁsā*—violence; *asantoṣa*—dissatisfaction; *vigrahaiḥ*—and quarrel.

TRANSLATION

In Tretā-yuga each leg of religion is gradually reduced by one quarter by the influence of the four pillars of irreligion—lying, violence, dissatisfaction and quarrel.

PURPORT

By falsity truth is diminished, by violence mercy is diminished, by dissatisfaction austerity is diminished, and by quarrel charity and cleanliness

are diminished.

TEXT 21

*tadā kriyā-tapo-niṣṭhā
nāti-himsrā na lamṭatāḥ
trai-varḡikās trayī-vṛddhā
varṇā brahmottarā nṛpa*

SYNONYMS

tadā—then (in the Tretā age); *kriyā*—to ritualistic ceremonies; *tapāḥ*—and to penances; *niṣṭhāḥ*—devoted; *na ati-himsrāḥ*—not excessively violent; *na lamṭatāḥ*—not wantonly desiring sense gratification; *trai-varḡikāḥ*—interested in the three principles of religiosity, economic development and sense gratification; *trayī*—by the three *Vedas*; *vṛddhāḥ*—made prosperous; *varṇāḥ*—the four classes of society; *brahma-uttarāḥ*—mostly *brāhmaṇas*; *nṛpa*—O King.

TRANSLATION

In the Tretā age people are devoted to ritual performances and severe austerities. They are not excessively violent or very lusty after sensual pleasure. Their interest lies primarily in religiosity, economic development and regulated sense gratification, and they achieve prosperity by following the prescriptions of the three *Vedas*. Although in this age society evolves into four separate classes, O King, most people are *brāhmaṇas*.

TEXT 22

*tapāḥ-satya-dayā-dāneṣu
ardham hrasvati dvāpare
himsātuṣṭy-anṛta-dveṣair
dharmasyādharma-lakṣaṇaiḥ*

SYNONYMS

tapāḥ—of austerity; *satya*—truth; *dayā*—mercy; *dāneṣu*—and charity; *ardham*—one half; *hrasvati*—diminishes; *dvāpare*—in the age of Dvāpara; *himsā*—by violence; *atuṣṭi*—dissatisfaction; *anṛta*—untruth; *dveṣaiḥ*—and hatred; *dharmasya*—of religion; *adharmalakṣaṇaiḥ*—by the qualities of irreligion.

TRANSLATION

In Dvāpara-yuga the religious qualities of austerity, truth, mercy and charity are reduced to one half by their irreligious counterparts—dissatisfaction, untruth, violence and enmity.

TEXT 23

*yaśasvino mahā-śilāḥ
svādhyāyādhyayane ratāḥ
ādhyāḥ kuṭumbino hr̥ṣṭā
varṇāḥ kṣatra-dvijottarāḥ*

SYNONYMS

yaśasvinaḥ—eager for glory; *mahā-śilāḥ*—noble; *svādhyāya-adhyayane*—in study of the Vedic literature; *ratāḥ*—absorbed; *ādhyāḥ*—endowed with opulence; *kuṭumbinaḥ*—having large families; *hr̥ṣṭāḥ*—joyful; *varṇāḥ*—the four classes of society; *kṣatra-dviya-uttarāḥ*—represented mostly by the *kṣatriyas* and *brāhmaṇas*.

TRANSLATION

In the Dvāpara age people are interested in glory and are very noble. They devote themselves to the study of the *Vedas*, possess great opulence, support large families and enjoy life with vigor. Of the four classes, the *kṣatriyas* and *brāhmaṇas* are most numerous.

TEXT 24

*kalau tu dharma-pādānām
turyāmśo 'dharma-hetubhiḥ
edhamānaiḥ kṣīyamāṇo
hy ante so 'pi vinañkṣyati*

SYNONYMS

kalau—in the age of Kali; *tu*—and; *dharma-pādānām*—of the legs of religion; *turya-amśaḥ*—one fourth; *adharmā*—of irreligion; *hetubhiḥ*—by the principles; *edhamānaiḥ*—which are increasing; *kṣīyamāṇaḥ*—decreasing; *hi*—indeed; *ante*—in the end; *saḥ*—that one quarter; *api*—also; *vinañkṣyati*—will be

destroyed.

TRANSLATION

In the age of Kali only one fourth of the religious principles remains. That last remnant will continuously be decreased by the ever-increasing principles of irreligion and will finally be destroyed.

TEXT 25

*tasmin lubdhā durācārā
nirdayāḥ śuṣka-vairiṇaḥ
durbhagā bhūri-tarṣās ca
śūdra-dāsottarāḥ prajāḥ*

SYNONYMS

tasmin—in that age; *lubdhāḥ*—greedy; *durācārāḥ*—ill-behaved; *nirdayāḥ*—merciless; *śuṣka-vairiṇaḥ*—prone to useless quarrel; *durbhagāḥ*—unfortunate; *bhūri-tarṣāḥ*—obsessed by many kinds of hankering; *ca*—and; *śūdra-dāsa-uttarāḥ*—predominantly low-class laborers and barbarians; *prajāḥ*—the people.

TRANSLATION

In the Kali age people tend to be greedy, ill-behaved and merciless, and they fight one another without good reason. Unfortunate and obsessed with material desires, the people of Kali-yuga are almost all *śūdras* and barbarians.

PURPORT

In this age, we can already observe that most people are laborers, clerks, fishermen, artisans or other kinds of workers within the *śūdra* category. Enlightened devotees of God and noble political leaders are extremely scarce, and even independent businessmen and farmers are a vanishing breed as huge business conglomerates increasingly convert them into subservient employees. Vast regions of the earth are already populated by barbarians and semibarbarous peoples, making the entire situation dangerous and bleak. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is empowered to rectify the current dismal state of affairs. It is the only hope for the ghastly age called Kali-yuga.

TEXT 26

*sattvaṁ rajas tama iti
dṛśyante puruṣe guṇāḥ
kāla-saṅcoditās te vai
parivartanta ātmani*

SYNONYMS

sattvam—goodness; *rajaḥ*—passion; *tamaḥ*—ignorance; *iti*—thus; *dṛśyante*—are seen; *puruṣe*—in a person; *guṇāḥ*—the modes of material nature; *kāla-saṅcoditāḥ*—impelled by time; *te*—they; *vai*—indeed; *parivartante*—undergo permutation; *ātmani*—within the mind.

TRANSLATION

The material modes—goodness, passion and ignorance—whose permutations are observed within a person’s mind, are set into motion by the power of time.

PURPORT

The four ages described in these verses are manifestations of various modes of material nature. The age of truth, Satya-yuga, manifests the predominance of material goodness, and Kali-yuga manifests the predominance of ignorance. According to Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, within each age the other three ages occasionally manifest as sub-ages. Thus even within Satya-yuga a demon in the mode of ignorance may appear, and within the age of Kali the highest religious principles may flourish for some time. As described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the three modes of nature are present everywhere and in everything, but the predominant mode, or combination of modes, determines the general character of any material phenomenon. In each age, therefore, the three modes are present in varying proportions. The particular age represented by goodness (Satya), passion (Tretā), passion and ignorance (Dvāpara) or ignorance (Kali) exists within each of the other ages as a subfactor.

TEXT 27

*prabhavanti yadā sattve
mano-buddhīndriyāṇi ca
tadā kṛta-yugaṁ vidyāj*

jñāne tapasi yad ruciḥ

SYNONYMS

prabhavanti—they are predominantly manifest; *yadā*—when; *sattve*—in the mode of goodness; *manaḥ*—the mind; *buddhi*—intelligence; *indriyāṇi*—senses; *ca*—and; *tadā*—then; *kṛta-yugam*—the age of Kṛta; *vidyāt*—should be understood; *jñāne*—in knowledge; *tapasi*—and austerity; *yat*—when; *ruciḥ*—pleasure.

TRANSLATION

When the mind, intelligence and senses are solidly fixed in the mode of goodness, that time should be understood as Satya-yuga, the age of truth. People then take pleasure in knowledge and austerity.

PURPORT

The word *kṛta* means “performed” or “executed.” Thus in the age of truth all religious duties are duly performed, and people take great pleasure in spiritual knowledge and austerity. Even in the Kali-yuga, those who are situated in the mode of goodness take pleasure in the cultivation of spiritual knowledge and the regulated performance of austerity. This sublime state of existence is possible for one who has conquered sex desire.

TEXT 28

*yadā karmasu kāmyeṣu
bhaktir yaśasi dehinām
tadā tretā rajo-ṛttir
iti jānīhi buddhiman*

SYNONYMS

yadā—when; *karmasu*—in duties; *kāmyeṣu*—based on selfish desire; *bhaktiḥ*—devotion; *yaśasi*—in honor; *dehinām*—of the embodied souls; *tadā*—then; *tretā*—the age of Tretā; *rajaḥ-ṛttiḥ*—predominated by activities in the mode of passion; *iti*—thus; *jānīhi*—you should understand; *buddhi-man*—O intelligent King Parīkṣit.

TRANSLATION

O most intelligent one, when the conditioned souls are devoted to their duties but have ulterior motives and seek personal prestige, you should understand such a situation to be the age of Tretā, in which the functions of passion are prominent.

TEXT 29

*yadā lobhas tv asantoṣo
māno dambho 'tha matsaraḥ
karmaṇām cāpi kāmyānām
dvāparam tad rajas-tamaḥ*

SYNONYMS

yadā—when; *lobhaḥ*—greed; *tu*—indeed; *asantoṣaḥ*—dissatisfaction; *mānaḥ*—false pride; *dambhaḥ*—hypocrisy; *atha*—and; *matsaraḥ*—envy; *karmaṇām*—of activities; *ca*—and; *api*—also; *kāmyānām*—selfish; *dvāparam*—the age of Dvāpara; *tat*—that; *rajaḥ-tamaḥ*—predominated by a mixture of the modes of passion and ignorance.

TRANSLATION

When greed, dissatisfaction, false pride, hypocrisy and envy become prominent, along with attraction for selfish activities, such a time is the age of Dvāpara, dominated by the mixed modes of passion and ignorance.

TEXT 30

*yadā māyāṅṛtaṁ tandrā
nidrā hiṁsā viṣādanam
śoka-mohau bhayaṁ dainyam
sa kalis tāmasaḥ smṛtaḥ*

SYNONYMS

yadā—when; *māyā*—deceit; *anṛtam*—false speech; *tandrā*—sloth; *nidrā*—sleep and intoxication; *hiṁsā*—violence; *viṣādanam*—depression; *śoka*—lamentation; *mohau*—and delusion; *bhayaṁ*—fear; *dainyam*—poverty; *saḥ*—that; *kalīḥ*—the age of Kali; *tāmasaḥ*—in the mode of ignorance; *smṛtaḥ*—is

considered.

TRANSLATION

When there is a predominance of cheating, lying, sloth, sleepiness, violence, depression, lamentation, bewilderment, fear and poverty, that age is Kali, the age of the mode of ignorance.

PURPORT

In Kali-yuga, people are almost exclusively devoted to gross materialism, with hardly any affinity for self-realization.

TEXT 31

*tasmāt kṣudra-dṛśo martyāḥ
kṣudra-bhāgyā mahāśanāḥ
kāmino vitta-hīnāś ca
svairiṇyaś ca striyo 'satīḥ*

SYNONYMS

tasmāt—due to these qualities of the age of Kali; *kṣudra-dṛśaḥ*—shortsighted; *martyāḥ*—human beings; *kṣudra-bhāgyāḥ*—unfortunate; *mahā-aśanāḥ*—excessive in their eating habits; *kāminaḥ*—full of lust; *vitta-hīnāḥ*—lacking wealth; *ca*—and; *svairiṇyaḥ*—independent in their social dealings; *ca*—and; *striyaḥ*—the women; *asatīḥ*—unchaste.

TRANSLATION

Because of the bad qualities of the age of Kali, human beings will become shortsighted, unfortunate, gluttonous, lustful and poverty-stricken. The women, becoming unchaste, will freely wander from one man to the next.

PURPORT

In the age of Kali certain pseudointellectuals, seeking individual freedom, support sexual promiscuity. In fact, identification of the self with the body and the pursuit of “individual freedom” in the body rather than in the soul are

signs of the most dismal ignorance and slavery to lust. When women are unchaste, many children are born out of wedlock as products of lust. These children grow up in psychologically unfavorable circumstances, and a neurotic, ignorant society arises. Symptoms of this are already manifest throughout the world.

TEXT 32

*dasyūtkṛṣṭā janapadā
vedāḥ pāṣaṇḍa-dūṣitāḥ
rājānaś ca prajā-bhakṣāḥ
śiśnodara-parā dvijāḥ*

SYNONYMS

dasyu-utkṛṣṭāḥ—predominated by thieves; *jana-padāḥ*—the populated places; *vedāḥ*—the Vedic scriptures; *pāṣaṇḍa*—by atheists; *dūṣitāḥ*—contaminated; *rājānaḥ*—the political leaders; *ca*—and; *prajā-bhakṣāḥ*—consuming the populace; *śiśna-udara*—to the genitals and belly; *parāḥ*—dedicated; *dvijāḥ*—the *brāhmaṇas*.

TRANSLATION

Cities will be dominated by thieves, the *Vedas* will be contaminated by speculative interpretations of atheists, political leaders will virtually consume the citizens, and the so-called priests and intellectuals will be devotees of their bellies and genitals.

PURPORT

Many large cities are unsafe at night. For example, it is understood that no sane person will walk in New York's Central Park at night because he knows he will almost certainly be mugged. Apart from ordinary thieves, who abound in this age, large cities are filled with cutthroat businessmen, who enthusiastically convince people to purchase and consume useless or even harmful products. It has been well documented that beef, tobacco, liquor and many other modern products destroy one's physical health, what to speak of mental health, and yet modern capitalists do not hesitate to use every psychological trick in the book to convince people to consume these things.

Modern cities are full of mental and atmospheric pollution, and even ordinary citizens are finding them unbearable.

This verse also points out that the teachings of the Vedic scriptures will be distorted in this age. Great universities teach courses on Hinduism in which Indian religion, despite limitless evidence to the contrary, is described as polytheistic and leading to an impersonal salvation. In fact, all Vedic literature is a unified whole, as stated by Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself in *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.15): *vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyah* “By all the Vedas I [Kṛṣṇa] am to be known.” All Vedic literature is meant for enlightening us about the Supreme Personal Absolute Truth—Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa. Although known by many names and appearing in many forms, God is a single absolute entity, and He is a person. But this true Vedic understanding is hidden in the Kali-yuga.

In this verse Śukadeva astutely observes that “political leaders will virtually consume the citizens, and the so-called priests and intellectuals will be devotees of their bellies and genitals.” How sadly true this statement is.

TEXT 33

*avratā baṭavo 'śaucā
bhikṣavaś ca kuṭumbinaḥ
tapasvino grāma-vāsā
nyāsino 'tyartha-lolupāḥ*

SYNONYMS

avratāḥ—failing to execute their vows; *baṭavaḥ*—the *brahmacārīs*; *aśaucāḥ*—unclean; *bhikṣavaḥ*—prone to begging; *ca*—and; *kuṭumbinaḥ*—the householders; *tapasvinaḥ*—those who have gone to the forest for austerities; *grāma-vāsāḥ*—village residents; *nyāsinaḥ*—the *sannyāsīs*; *atyartha-lolupāḥ*—excessively greedy for wealth.

TRANSLATION

The *brahmacārīs* will fail to execute their vows and become generally unclean, the householders will become beggars, the *vānaprasthas* will live in the villages, and the *sannyāsīs* will become greedy for wealth.

PURPORT

Brahmacarya, celibate student life, is practically nonexistent in the age of Kali. In America, many boys' schools have become coeducational because young men frankly refuse to live without the constant companionship of lusty young girls. Also, we have personally observed throughout the Western world that student residences are among the dirtiest places on earth, as predicted here by the word *aśaucāḥ*.

Concerning householder beggars, when devotees of the Lord go door to door distributing transcendental literature and requesting donations for the propagation of God's glories, irritated householders commonly reply, "Someone should give *me* a donation." Householders in Kali-yuga are not charitable. Instead, because of their miserly mentality, they become irritated when spiritual mendicants approach them.

In Vedic culture, at the age of fifty, couples retire to sacred places for austere life and spiritual perfection. In countries like America, however, retirement cities have been constructed wherein elderly people can make fools of themselves by wasting the last years of their lives playing golf, ping-pong and shuffleboard and by engaging in pathetic attempts at love affairs even while their bodies are horribly rotting and their minds are growing senile. This shameless abuse of the venerable last years of life denotes a stubborn unwillingness to acknowledge the actual purpose of human life and is certainly an offense against God.

The words *nyāsino 'tyartha-lolupāḥ* indicate that charismatic religious leaders, and even those who are not charismatic, will proclaim themselves prophets, saints and incarnations to cheat the innocent public and fatten their bank accounts. Therefore the International Society for Krishna Consciousness is working arduously to establish bona fide celibate student life, religious householder life, dignified and progressive retirement, and genuine spiritual leadership for the entire world. Today, May 9, 1982, in the sensual city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, we have awarded *sannyāsa*, the renounced order of life, to three young men, two Brazilians and one American, with the sincere hope that they will faithfully execute the rigid vows of renounced life and provide authentic spiritual leadership in South America.

TEXT 34

*hrasva-kāyā mahāhārā
bhūry-apatyā gata-hriyaḥ
śāśvat kaṭuka-bhāṣiṇyaś*

caurya-māyoru-sāhasāḥ

SYNONYMS

hrasva-kāyāḥ—having dwarfed bodies; *mahā-āhārāḥ*—eating too much; *bhūri-apatyāḥ*—having many children; *gata-hriyaḥ*—losing their shyness; *śāśvat*—constantly; *kaṭuka*—harshly; *bhāṣiṇyaḥ*—speaking; *caurya*—exhibiting the tendencies of thievery; *māyā*—deceit; *uru-sāhasāḥ*—and great audacity.

TRANSLATION

Women will become much smaller in size, and they will eat too much, have more children than they can properly take care of, and lose all shyness. They will always speak harshly and will exhibit qualities of thievery, deceit and unrestrained audacity.

TEXT 35

paṇayiṣyanti vai kṣudrāḥ
kirāṭāḥ kūṭa-kāriṇaḥ
anāpady aṇi maṁsyante
vārtām sādhu jugupsitām

SYNONYMS

paṇayiṣyanti—will engage in commerce; *vai*—indeed; *kṣudrāḥ*—petty; *kirāṭāḥ*—the merchants; *kūṭa-kāriṇaḥ*—indulging in cheating; *anāpady*—when there is no emergency; *aṇi*—even; *maṁsyante*—people will consider; *vārtām*—an occupation; *sādhu*—good; *jugupsitām*—which is actually contemptible.

TRANSLATION

Businessmen will engage in petty commerce and earn their money by cheating. Even when there is no emergency, people will consider any degraded occupation quite acceptable.

PURPORT

Although other occupations are available, people do not hesitate to work in

coal mines, slaughterhouses, steel mills, deserts, floating oil rigs, submarines and other equally abominable situations. As also mentioned here, businessmen will consider cheating and lying to be a perfectly respectable way to do business. These are all symptoms of the age of Kali.

TEXT 36

*patim tyakṣyanti nirdravyam
bhṛtyā apy akhilottamam
bhṛtyam vipannam patayaḥ
kaulam gāś cāpayasvinīḥ*

SYNONYMS

patim—a master; *tyakṣyanti*—they will abandon; *nirdravyam*—lacking property; *bhṛtyāḥ*—servants; *api*—even; *akhila-uttamam*—most excellent in personal qualities; *bhṛtyam*—a servant; *vipannam*—incapacitated; *patayaḥ*—masters; *kaulam*—belonging to the family for generations; *gāḥ*—cows; *ca*—and; *apayasvinīḥ*—which have stopped giving milk.

TRANSLATION

Servants will abandon a master who has lost his wealth, even if that master is a saintly person of exemplary character. Masters will abandon an incapacitated servant, even if that servant has been in the family for generations. Cows will be abandoned or killed when they stop giving milk.

PURPORT

In India, the cow is considered sacred not because Indian people are primitive worshipers of mythological totems but because Hindus intelligently understand that the cow is a mother. As children, nearly all of us were nourished with cow's milk, and therefore the cow is one of our mothers. Certainly one's mother is sacred, and therefore we should not kill the sacred cow.

TEXT 37

*pitṛ-bhrāṭṛ-suhṛj-jñātīn
hitvā saurata-sauhṛdāḥ
nanāndṛ-śyāla-samvādā
dīnāḥ straināḥ kalau narāḥ*

SYNONYMS

pitṛ—their fathers; *bhrāṭṛ*—brothers; *suhṛt*—well-wishing friends; *jñātīn*—and immediate relatives; *hitvā*—giving up; *saurata*—based on sexual relationships; *sauhṛdāḥ*—their conception of friendship; *nanāndṛ*—with their wives’ sisters; *śyāla*—and wives’ brothers; *saṁvādāḥ*—associating regularly; *dīnāḥ*—wretched; *straiṇāḥ*—effeminate; *kalau*—in Kali-yuga; *narāḥ*—the men.

TRANSLATION

In Kali-yuga men will be wretched and controlled by women. They will reject their fathers, brothers, other relatives and friends and will instead associate with the sisters and brothers of their wives. Thus their conception of friendship will be based exclusively on sexual ties.

TEXT 38

śūdrāḥ pratigrahīṣyanti
tapo-veṣopajīvināḥ
dharmam vakṣyanty adharmajñā
adhiruhyottamāsanam

SYNONYMS

śūdrāḥ—lowly, common workers; *pratigrahīṣyanti*—will accept religious charity; *tapāḥ*—by shows of austerity; *veṣa*—and by dressing as mendicants; *upajīvināḥ*—earning their living; *dharmam*—the principles of religion; *vakṣyanti*—will speak about; *adharmajñāḥ*—those who know nothing about religion; *adhiruhyā*—mounting; *uttama-āsanam*—a high seat.

TRANSLATION

Uncultured men will accept charity on behalf of the Lord and will earn their livelihood by making a show of austerity and wearing a mendicant’s dress. Those who know nothing about religion will mount a high seat and presume to speak on religious principles.

PURPORT

The epidemic of bogus *gurus*, swamis, priests and so forth is explicitly described here.

TEXTS 39–40

*nityam udvigna-manaso
durbhikṣa-kara-karṣitāḥ
niranne bhū-tale rājan
anāvṛṣṭi-bhayāturāḥ*

*vāso-'nna-pāna-śayana-
vyavāya-snāna-bhūṣaṇaiḥ
hīnāḥ piśāca-sandarśā
bhaviṣyanti kalau prajāḥ*

SYNONYMS

nityam—constantly; *udvigna*—agitated; *manasaḥ*—their minds; *durbhikṣa*—by famine; *kara*—and taxes; *karṣitāḥ*—emaciated; *niranne*—when there is no food to be found; *bhū-tale*—upon the surface of the earth; *rājan*—O King Parīkṣit; *anāvṛṣṭi*—of drought; *bhaya*—because of fear; *āturāḥ*—anxious; *vāsaḥ*—clothing; *anna*—food; *pāna*—drink; *śayana*—rest; *vyavāya*—sex; *snāna*—bathing; *bhūṣaṇaiḥ*—and personal ornaments; *hīnāḥ*—lacking; *piśāca-sandarśāḥ*—appearing just like ghostly demons; *bhaviṣyanti*—they will become; *kalau*—in the age of Kali; *prajāḥ*—the people.

TRANSLATION

In the age of Kali, people's minds will always be agitated. They will become emaciated by famine and taxation, my dear King, and will always be disturbed by fear of drought. They will lack adequate clothing, food and drink, will be unable to properly rest, have sex or bathe themselves, and will have no ornaments to decorate their bodies. In fact, the people of Kali-yuga will gradually come to appear like ghostly, haunted creatures.

PURPORT

The symptoms described here are already prevalent in many countries of the world and will gradually spread to other places engulfed by impiety and

materialism.

TEXT 41

*kalau kākīṇike 'py arthe
vigṛhya tyakta-sauhṛdāḥ
tyakṣyanti ca priyān prāṇān
haniṣyanti svakān api*

SYNONYMS

kalau—in the age of Kali; *kākīṇike*—of a small coin; *api*—even; *arthe*—for the sake; *vigṛhya*—developing enmity; *tyakta*—abandoning; *sauhṛdāḥ*—friendly relations; *tyakṣyanti*—they will reject; *ca*—and; *priyān*—dear; *prāṇān*—their own lives; *haniṣyanti*—they will kill; *svakān*—their own relatives; *api*—even.

TRANSLATION

In Kali-yuga men will develop hatred for each other even over a few coins. Giving up all friendly relations, they will be ready to lose their own lives and kill even their own relatives.

TEXT 42

*na rakṣiṣyanti manujāḥ
sthavirau pitarāv api
putrān bhāryām ca kula-jām
kṣudrāḥ śiśnodaram-bharāḥ*

SYNONYMS

na rakṣiṣyanti—they will not protect; *manujāḥ*—men; *sthavirau*—elderly; *pitarau*—parents; *api*—even; *putrān*—children; *bhāryām*—wife; *ca*—also; *kula-jām*—born of a proper family; *kṣudrāḥ*—petty; *śiśna-udaram*—their genitals and belly; *bharāḥ*—simply maintaining.

TRANSLATION

Men will no longer protect their elderly parents, their children or their respectable wives. Thoroughly degraded, they will care only to satisfy their own bellies and genitals.

PURPORT

In this age many people are already sending their elderly parents away to lonely, and often bizarre, old-age homes, although the elderly parents spent their entire lives serving their children.

Young children are also tormented in many ways in this age. Suicide among children has increased dramatically in recent years because they are being born not to loving, religious parents but to degraded, selfish men and women. In fact, children are often born because a birth-control pill, a prophylactic or some other contraceptive device malfunctioned. Under such conditions, it is very difficult nowadays for parents to morally guide their children. Generally ignorant of spiritual science, parents cannot lead their children on the path of liberation and thus fail to fulfill their primary responsibility in family life.

As predicted in this verse, adultery has become common, and people in general are extremely concerned with eating and sex, which they consider far more important than knowing the Absolute Truth.

TEXT 43

*kalau na rājan jagatām param gurum
tri-loka-nāthānata-pāda-ṣaṅkajam
prāyeṇa martyā bhagavantam acyutam
yakṣyanti pāṣaṇḍa-vibhinna-cetasah*

SYNONYMS

kalau—in the age of Kali; *na*—not; *rājan*—O King; *jagatām*—of the universe; *param*—the supreme; *gurum*—spiritual master; *tri-loka*—of the three worlds; *nātha*—by the various masters; *ānata*—bowed down to; *pāda-ṣaṅkajam*—whose lotus feet; *prāyeṇa*—for the most part; *martyāḥ*—human beings; *bhagavantam*—the Personality of Godhead; *acyutam*—Lord Acyuta; *yakṣyanti*—they will offer sacrifice; *pāṣaṇḍa*—by atheism; *vibhinna*—diverted; *cetasah*—their intelligence.

TRANSLATION

O King, in the age of Kali people's intelligence will be diverted by atheism, and they will almost never offer sacrifice to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the supreme spiritual master of the universe. Although the great

personalities who control the three worlds all bow down to the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, the petty and miserable human beings of this age will not do so.

PURPORT

The impulse to find the Absolute Truth, the source of all existence, has motivated philosophers, theologians and other intellectuals of various persuasions since time immemorial, and continues to do so today. However, soberly analyzing the ever-increasing plurality of so-called philosophies, religions, paths, ways of life and so on, we find that in almost all cases the ultimate objective is something impersonal or formless. But this idea of an impersonal or formless Absolute Truth has serious logical flaws. According to ordinary rules of logic, a particular effect should directly or indirectly embody the attributes, or nature, of its own cause. Thus that which has no personality or activity could hardly be the source of all personality and all activity.

Our irrepressible proclivity to philosophize about the ultimate truth often expresses itself through philosophical, scientific and mystical attempts to discover that from which everything emanates. This material world, which is a seemingly limitless network of interactive causes and effects, is certainly not the Absolute Truth, since scientific observation of material elements indicates that the stuff of this world, material energy, is endlessly transformed into different states and shapes. Therefore, one particular instance of material reality cannot be the ultimate source of all other things.

We may speculate that matter in some shape or other has always existed. This theory, however, is no longer attractive to modern cosmologists, such as those at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. And even if we do posit that matter has always existed, we still must explain the source of consciousness if we want to satisfy our philosophical impulse toward discovering the Absolute Truth. Although modern empirical fanatics state that nothing is real except matter, everyone commonly experiences that consciousness is not the same kind of substance as a stone, a pencil or water. Awareness itself, in contradistinction to the objects of awareness, is not a physical entity but rather a process of perception and understanding. While there is ample evidence of a systematic interdependent relationship between matter and consciousness, there is no rigid empirical evidence whatsoever that matter is the *cause* of consciousness. Thus the theory that the material world has always existed and

is therefore the ultimate truth does not scientifically or even intuitively explain the source of consciousness, which is the most fundamentally real aspect of our existence.

Furthermore, as demonstrated by Dr. Richard Thompson of the State University of New York at Binghamton and confirmed by several Nobel laureates in physics who have praised his work, the laws of nature governing the transformation of matter simply do not contain sufficiently complex information to account for the inconceivable complexity of events taking place within our own bodies and those of other life forms. In other words, not only do the material laws of nature fail to account for the existence of consciousness, but they cannot explain even the interaction of material elements at complex organic levels. Even Socrates, the first great Western philosopher, was disgusted with the attempt to establish ultimate causality in terms of mechanistic principles.

The heat and luminosity of the sun's rays demonstrate to the satisfaction of any rational man that the sun, the source of the rays, is certainly not a dark, cold globe but rather a reservoir of almost unlimited heat and light. Similarly, the innumerable instances of personality and personal consciousness within creation are more than adequate to demonstrate the existence, somewhere, of an unlimited reservoir of consciousness and personal behavior. In his dialogue *Philebus*, the Greek philosopher Plato argued that just as the material elements in our body are derived from a vast reservoir of material elements existing within the universe, our rational intelligence is also derived from a great cosmic intelligence existing within the universe, and this supreme intelligence is God, the creator. Unfortunately, in Kali-yuga many leading thinkers cannot understand this and instead deny that the Absolute Truth, the source of our personal consciousness, has consciousness and personality. This is as reasonable as saying that the sun is cold and dark.

In Kali-yuga, many people present cheap, stereotyped arguments, such as "If God had a body or personality, He would be limited." In this inadequate attempt at logic, a qualified term is falsely presented in a universal sense. What really should be said is, "If God had a *material* body or a *material* personality like those we have experienced, He would be limited." But we leave out the qualifying adjective *material* and make a pseudouniversal assertion, as if we understood the full range, within total reality, of bodies and personality.

Bhagavad-gītā, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other Vedic literatures teach that the

transcendental form and personality of the Absolute Truth are unlimited. Clearly, to be truly infinite God must be not only quantitatively but also qualitatively infinite. Unfortunately, in our mechanistic, industrial age we tend to define infinity only in its quantitative sense, and thus we fail to notice that an infinity of personal qualities is a necessary aspect of infinity. In other words, God must have infinite beauty, infinite wealth, infinite intelligence, infinite humor, infinite kindness, infinite anger and so on. Infinite is an absolute, and if anything we observe in this world is not contained, somehow or other, within our conception of the Absolute, then that conception is of something limited and not of the Absolute at all.

Only in Kali-yuga are there philosophers foolish enough to proudly define the most absolute of all terms—God—in materialistic, relative ways and then declare themselves enlightened thinkers. No matter how big our brain may be, we should have the common sense to place it at the feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

TEXT 44

*yan-nāmadheyam mriyamāṇa āturaḥ
patan skhalan vā vivaśo gṛṇan pumān
vimukta-karmārgala uttamām gatim
prāpnoti yakṣyanti na tam kalau janāḥ*

SYNONYMS

yat—whose; *nāmadheyam*—name; *mriyamāṇaḥ*—a person who is dying; *āturaḥ*—distressed; *patan*—collapsing; *skhalan*—voice faltering; *vā*—or; *vivaśaḥ*—helplessly; *gṛṇan*—chanting; *pumān*—a person; *vimukta*—freed; *karma*—of fruitive work; *argalaḥ*—from the chains; *uttamām*—the topmost; *gatim*—destination; *prāpnoti*—achieves; *yakṣyanti na*—they do not worship; *tam*—Him, the Personality of Godhead; *kalau*—in the age of Kali; *janāḥ*—people.

TRANSLATION

Terrified, about to die, a man collapses on his bed. Although his voice is faltering and he is hardly conscious of what he is saying, if he utters the holy name of the Supreme Lord he can be freed from the reaction of his fruitive work and achieve the supreme destination. But still people in the age of Kali

will not worship the Supreme Lord.

PURPORT

You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink.

TEXT 45

*puṁsām kali-kṛtān doṣān
dravya-deśātma-sambhavān
sarvān harati citta-stho
bhagavān puruṣottamaḥ*

SYNONYMS

puṁsām—of men; *kali-kṛtān*—created by the influence of Kali; *doṣān*—the faults; *dravya*—objects; *deśa*—space; *ātma*—and personal nature; *sambhavān*—based upon; *sarvān*—all; *harati*—steals away; *citta-sthaḥ*—situated within the heart; *bhagavān*—the almighty Lord; *puruṣa-uttamaḥ*—the Supreme Person.

TRANSLATION

In the Kali-yuga, objects, places and even individual personalities are all polluted. The almighty Personality of Godhead, however, can remove all such contamination from the life of one who fixes the Lord within his mind.

TEXT 46

*śrutaḥ saṅkīrtitaḥ dhyātaḥ
pūjitaś cādṛto 'pi vā
nṛṇām dhunoti bhagavān
hṛt-stho janmāyutāśubham*

SYNONYMS

śrutaḥ—heard; *saṅkīrtitaḥ*—glorified; *dhyātaḥ*—meditated upon; *pūjitaḥ*—worshiped; *ca*—and; *ādṛtaḥ*—venerated; *api*—even; *vā*—or; *nṛṇām*—of men; *dhunoti*—cleanses away; *bhagavān*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *hṛt-sthaḥ*—seated within their hearts; *janma-ayuta*—of thousands of births; *aśubham*—the inauspicious contamination.

TRANSLATION

If a person hears about, glorifies, meditates upon, worships or simply offers great respect to the Supreme Lord, who is situated within the heart, the Lord will remove from his mind the contamination accumulated during many thousands of lifetimes.

TEXT 47

*yathā hemni sthito vahnir
durvarṇaṁ hanti dhātu-jam
evam ātma-gato viṣṇur
yoginām aśubhāśayam*

SYNONYMS

yathā—just as; *hemni*—in gold; *sthitaḥ*—situated; *vahniḥ*—fire; *durvarṇam*—the discoloration; *hanti*—destroys; *dhātu-jam*—due to the taint of other metals; *evam*—in the same way; *ātma-gataḥ*—having entered the soul; *viṣṇuḥ*—Lord Viṣṇu; *yoginām*—of the *yogīs*; *aśubha-āśayam*—the dirty mind.

TRANSLATION

Just as fire applied to gold removes any discoloration caused by traces of other metals, Lord Viṣṇu within the heart purifies the minds of the *yogīs*.

PURPORT

Although one may practice the mystic *yoga* system, his actual spiritual advancement is due to the mercy of the Supreme Lord within the heart; it is not directly the result of his austerity and meditation. If one becomes foolishly proud in the name of *yoga*, his spiritual position becomes ridiculous.

TEXT 48

*vidyā-tapaḥ-prāṇa-nirodha-maitrī-
tīrthābhiṣeka-vrata-dāna-japyaiḥ
nātyanta-śuddhiṁ labhate 'ntarātmā
yathā hṛdi-sthe bhagavaty anante*

SYNONYMS

vidyā—by worship of demigods; *tapah*—austerities; *prāṇa-nirodha*—exercise of breath control; *maitrī*—compassion; *tīrtha-abhiṣeka*—bathing in holy places; *vrata*—strict vows; *dāna*—charity; *jaṇyaiḥ*—and chanting of various *mantras*; *na*—not; *atyanta*—complete; *śuddhim*—purification; *labhate*—can achieve; *antaḥ-ātmā*—the mind; *yathā*—as; *hṛdi-sthe*—when He is present within the heart; *bhagavati*—the Personality of Godhead; *anante*—the unlimited Lord.

TRANSLATION

By one's engaging in the processes of demigod worship, austerities, breath control, compassion, bathing in holy places, strict vows, charity and chanting of various *mantras*, one's mind cannot attain the same absolute purification as that achieved when the unlimited Personality of Godhead appears within one's heart.

TEXT 49

tasmāt sarvātmanā rājan
hṛdi-stham kuru keśavam
mriyamāṇo hy avahitas
tato yāsi parām gatim

SYNONYMS

tasmāt—therefore; *sarva-ātmanā*—with all endeavor; *rājan*—O King; *hṛdi-stham*—within your heart; *kuru*—make; *keśavam*—Lord Keśava; *mriyamāṇaḥ*—dying; *hi*—indeed; *avahitaḥ*—concentrated; *tataḥ*—then; *yāsi*—you will go; *param*—to the supreme; *gatim*—destination.

TRANSLATION

Therefore, O King, endeavor with all your might to fix the Supreme Lord Keśava within your heart. Maintain this concentration upon the Lord, and at the time of death you will certainly attain the supreme destination.

PURPORT

Although the Supreme Lord is always in the heart of every living being, the words *hṛdi-stham kuru keśavam* indicate that one should endeavor to realize the Lord's presence there and maintain this awareness at every moment. Parīkṣit

Mahārāja is about to give up this world and is receiving final instructions from his spiritual master, Śukadeva Gosvāmī. In the context of the King's imminent departure, this verse has special significance.

TEXT 50

*mriyamāṇair abhidhyeyo
bhagavān parameśvaraḥ
ātma-bhāvaṁ nayaty aṅga
sarvātmā sarva-saṁśrayaḥ*

SYNONYMS

mriyamāṇaiḥ—by those who are dying; *abhidhyeyaḥ*—meditated upon; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *parama-īśvaraḥ*—the Supreme Lord; *ātma-bhāvaṁ*—their own true identity; *nayati*—leads them to; *aṅga*—my dear King; *sarva-ātmā*—the Supreme Soul; *sarva-saṁśrayaḥ*—the shelter of all beings.

TRANSLATION

My dear King, the Personality of Godhead is the ultimate controller. He is the Supreme Soul and the supreme shelter of all beings. When meditated upon by those about to die, He reveals to them their own eternal spiritual identity.

TEXT 51

*kaler doṣa-nidhe rājann
asti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ
kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya
mukta-saṅgaḥ param vrajet*

SYNONYMS

kaleḥ—of the age of Kali; *doṣa-nidheḥ*—in the ocean of faults; *rājan*—O King; *asti*—there is; *hi*—certainly; *ekaḥ*—one; *mahān*—very great; *guṇaḥ*—good quality; *kīrtanāt*—by chanting; *eva*—certainly; *kṛṣṇasya*—of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa; *mukta-saṅgaḥ*—liberated from material bondage; *param*—to the transcendental spiritual kingdom; *vrajet*—one can go.

TRANSLATION

My dear King, although Kali-yuga is an ocean of faults, there is still one good quality about this age: Simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, one can become free from material bondage and be promoted to the transcendental kingdom.

PURPORT

After mentioning the innumerable faults of this age of Kali, Śukadeva Gosvāmī now mentions its one brilliant aspect. Just as one powerful king can kill innumerable thieves, one brilliant spiritual quality can destroy all the contamination of this age. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, especially in this fallen age.

TEXT 52

*kṛte yad dhyāyato viṣṇum
tretāyām yajato makhaiḥ
dvāpare paricaryāyām
kalau tad dhari-kīrtanāt*

SYNONYMS

kṛte—in the Satya-yuga; *yat*—which; *dhyāyataḥ*—from meditation; *viṣṇum*—on Lord Viṣṇu; *tretāyām*—in the Tretā-yuga; *yajataḥ*—from worshipping; *makhaiḥ*—by performing sacrifices; *dvāpare*—in the age of Dvāpara; *paricaryāyām*—by worshipping the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa; *kalau*—in the age of Kali; *tat*—that same result (can be achieved); *hari-kīrtanāt*—simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*.

TRANSLATION

Whatever result was obtained in Satya-yuga by meditating on Viṣṇu, in Tretā-yuga by performing sacrifices, and in Dvāpara-yuga by serving the Lord's lotus feet can be obtained in Kali-yuga simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*.

PURPORT

A similar verse is found in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (6.2.17), and also in the *Padma Purāṇa* (*Uttara-khaṇḍa* 72.25) and the *Brhan-nāradīya Purāṇa* (38.97):

*dhyāyan kṛte yajan yajñais
tretāyām dvāpare ’rcayan
yad āṇnoti tad āṇnoti
kalau saṅkīrtya keśavam*

“Whatever is achieved by meditation in Satya-yuga, by the performance of sacrifice in Tretā-yuga, and by the worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet in Dvāpara-yuga is obtained in the age of Kali simply by glorifying the name of Lord Keśava.”

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has further quoted from the *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa* concerning the degraded condition of people in Kali-yuga:

*ataḥ kalau tapo-yoga-
vidyā-yajñādikāḥ kriyāḥ
sāṅgā bhavanti na kṛtāḥ
kuśalair api dehibhiḥ*

“Thus in the age of Kali the practices of austerity, yoga meditation, Deity worship, sacrifice and so on, along with their various subsidiary functions, are not properly carried out, even by the most expert embodied souls.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has also cited the *Cāturmāsya-māhātmya* of the *Skanda Purāṇa* concerning the necessity of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa in this age:

*tathā caivottamaṁ loke
tapaḥ śrī-hari-kīrtanam
kalau yuge viśeṣeṇa
viṣṇu-prītyai samācaret*

“In this way the most perfect penance to be executed in this world is the chanting of the name of Lord Śrī Hari. Especially in the age of Kali, one can satisfy the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu by performing *saṅkīrtana*.”

In conclusion, massive propaganda should be made all over the world to induce people to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, by which human society can be rescued from the dangerous ocean of the age of Kali.

Thus end the purports of the humble servants of His Divine Grace A. C.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda to the Twelfth Canto, Third Chapter, of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, entitled “The Bhūmi-gītā.”