



The following is an article by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, published in Back To Godhead magazine Vol. 14, No. 14, January 1, 1979.

The Vedic literatures are full of references to God's form. For example, it is said that God has no hands or legs, but that He can accept anything you offer: *apani-pado javano grhita*. Also, it is said that God has no eyes or ears, but that He can see everything and hear everything. So, these are apparent contradictions, because whenever we think of someone seeing, we think he must have eyes like ours. This is our material conception. Factually, however, God does have eyes, but His eyes are different from ours. He can see even in the darkness, but we cannot. God can hear, also. God is in His kingdom, which is millions and millions of miles away, but if we are whispering something conspiracy He can hear it, because He is sitting within us.

So, we cannot avoid God's seeing or God's hearing or God's touching. In the (Bhagavad-gita 9.26) Lord Krsna says,

*patram puspam phalam toyam
yo me bhaktya prayacchati
tad aham bhakty-upahrtam
asnami prayatatmanah*

"If somebody offers Me flowers, fruits, vegetables, or milk with devotional love, I accept and eat it." Now, how is He eating? We cannot see Him eat, but He is eating. We experience this daily: when we offer Krsna food according to the ritualistic process, we see that the taste of the food changes immediately. This is practical. So God eats, but because He is full in Himself, He does not eat like us. If someone offers me a plate of food, I may finish it, but God is not hungry, so when He eats He leaves the things as they are. Purnasya purnam adaya purnam evavasisyate: God is so full that He can eat all the food that we offer and still it remains as it is. He can eat with His eyes. This is stated in the Brahma-samhita. Angani yasya sakalendriya-vrttimanti: "Every limb of the body of God has all the potencies of the other limbs." For example, we can see with our eyes, but we cannot eat with our eyes. But if God, simply sees the food we have offered, that is His eating.

Of course, these things cannot be understood by us at the present moment. Therefore, the Padma Purana says that only when one becomes spiritually saturated by transcendental service to the Lord are the transcendental name, form, qualities, and pastimes of the Lord revealed to him. We cannot understand God by our own endeavor, but God can reveal Himself to us. Trying to see God by our own efforts is just like trying to see the sun when it is dark outside. If we say, "Oh, I have a very strong flashlight, and I shall search out the sun," we will not be able to see it. But in the morning, when the sun rises out of its own will, we can see it. Similarly, we cannot see God by our own endeavor, because our senses are all imperfect. We have to purify our senses and wait for the time when God will be pleased to reveal Himself before us. This is the process of Krsna consciousness. We cannot challenge, "Oh, my dear God, my dear Krsna, You must come before me. I shall see You." No, God is not our order supplier, our servant. When He is pleased with us, we'll see Him.

So, our yoga process tries to please God, so that He will be revealed to us. That is the real yoga process. Without this process, people are accepting so many nonsensical "Gods." Because people cannot see God, anybody who says "I am God" is accepted. No one knows who God is. Somebody may say, "I am searching after truth," but he must know what truth is. Otherwise, how will he search out truth? Suppose I want to purchase gold? I must know what gold is, or at least have some experience of it. Otherwise, people will cheat me. So, people are being cheated accepting so many rascals as God because they do not know what God is. Anyone can come and say, "I am God," and some rascal will accept him as God. The man who says "I am God" is a rascal, and the man who accepts him as God is also a rascal. God cannot be known like this. One has to qualify himself to see God, to understand God. That is Krsna consciousness. Sevonmukhe hi jihvadau svayam eva sphuraty adah: if we engage ourselves in the service of the Lord, then we'll become qualified to see God. Otherwise, it is not possible.

Now, this Bhagavad-gita is the science of Krsna consciousness. No one can become Krsna conscious simply by mundane scholarship. Simply because one has some titles M.A., B.A., Ph.D. that does not mean he'll understand the Bhagavad-gita. This is a transcendental science, and one requires different senses to understand it. So one has to purify his senses by rendering service to the Lord. Otherwise, even if one is a great scholar-a doctor or a Ph.D. he will make mistakes in trying to find out what Krsna is. He will not understand it is not possible. This is why Krsna appears in the material world as He is. Although He is unborn (ajo 'pi sann avyayatma), He comes to make us know who God is. But since He is not personally present now, to know Him one must be fortunate enough to associate with a person who is in pure Krsna consciousness. A Krsna conscious person has realized knowledge, by the grace of Krsna, because He is satisfied with pure devotional service. So we have to acquire the grace of Krsna. Then we can understand Krsna, then we can see Krsna, then we can talk with Krsna-then we can do everything.

Krsna is a person. He is the supreme person. That is the Vedic injunction: nityo nityanam cetanas cetananam "We are all eternal persons, and God is the supreme eternal person." Now, being encaged within this body, we are meeting birth and death. But actually, we have no birth and death at all, because we are eternal spiritual souls. According to our work, according to our desire, we are transmigrating from one kind of body to another, another, and another. Yet actually, we have no birth and death. As explained in the Bhagavad-gita [2.20], na jayate mriyate va: "The living entity never takes birth, nor does he ever die." Similarly, God is also eternal. Nityo nityanam cetanas cetananam: "God is the supreme living entity among all living entities, and He is the supreme eternal person among eternal persons." So, by practicing Krsna consciousness, by purifying our senses, we can reestablish our eternal relationship with the supreme eternal person, the complete eternal person. Then we will see God.

Through realized knowledge, one becomes perfect. Through transcendental knowledge one can remain steady in his convictions, but with mere academic knowledge one can be easily deluded and confused by apparent contradictions. It is the realized soul who is actually self-controlled, because he is surrendered to Krsna. And he is transcendental, because he has nothing to do with mundane scholarship. For him, mundane scholarship and mental speculation (which may be as good as gold to others) are of no greater value than pebbles or stones.

Even if one is illiterate, even if he does not know the ABC's, he can realize God provided he engages himself in submissive, transcendental loving service to God. On the other hand, although one is a very learned scholar, he may not be able to realize God. God is not subject to any material condition, because He is the Supreme Spirit. Similarly, the process of realizing God is also not subject to any material condition. It is not true that because one is a poor man,

he cannot realize God, or because one is a very rich man, he shall realize God. No. God is beyond our material conditions (apratihata). In the Srimad- Bhagavatam [1.2.6] it is said, sa vai pumsam paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhoksaje: "That religion is first-class which helps one advance his devotional service and love of God."

The Bhagavatam does not mention that the Hindu religion is first-class or the Christian religion is first-class or the Muhammadan religion is first-class or some other religion is first-class. The Bhagavatam says that that religion is first-class which helps one advance his devotional service and love of God. That's all. This is the definition of a first-class religion. We do not analyze that one religion is first-class or that another religion is last-class. Of course, there are three qualities in the material world (goodness, passion, and ignorance), and religious conceptions are created according to these qualities. But the purpose of religion is to understand God, and to learn how to love God. Any religious system, if it teaches one how to love God, is first-class. Otherwise, it is useless. One may prosecute his religious principles very rigidly and very nicely, but if his love of God is nil, if his love of matter is simply enhanced, then his religion is no religion.

In the same verse, the Bhagavatam says that real religion must be ahaituki and apratihata: without selfish motivation and without any impediment. If we can practice such a system of religious principles, then we'll find that we are happy in all respects. Otherwise there is no possibility of happiness. Sa vai pumsam paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhoksaje. One of God's names is Adhoksaja. Adhoksaja means "one who conquers all materialistic attempts to be seen." Aksaja means "direct perception by experimental knowledge," and adhah means "unreachable." So, we cannot understand God by experimental knowledge. No. We have to learn of Him in a different way by submissive aural reception of transcendental sound and by the rendering of transcendental loving service. Then we can understand God.

So, a religious principle is perfect if it teaches us how to develop our love for the Godhead. But our love must be without selfish motive. If I say, "I love God because He supplies me very nice things for my sense gratification," that is not love. Real love is without any selfish motive (ahaituki) . We must simply think, "God is great; God is my father. It is my duty to love Him." That's all. No exchange "Oh, God gives me my daily bread; therefore I love God." No. God gives daily bread even to the animal the cats and dogs. God is the father of everyone, and He supplies food to everyone. So, appreciating God because He gives me bread-that is not love. Love is without motive. I must think, "Even if God does not supply me daily bread, I'll love Him." This is real love. As Caitanya Mahaprabhu says, aslisyava pada-ratam pinastu mam adarsanan marma-hatam karotu va: "O Lord, You may embrace me, or You may trample me down with Your feet. Or You may never come before me, so that I become brokenhearted without seeing You. Still, I love You." This is pure love of God. When we come to this stage of loving God, then we'll find ourselves full of pleasure. Just as God is full of pleasure, we'll also be full of pleasure. This is perfection.

Written by Srila Prabhupada

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