

Beyond Race: The Bhagavad-gita in Black and White



CHARLES MICHAEL BYRD

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I dedicate this book to my twin sons, Sean Christopher and Michael Alexander who will, I fervently desire, see that blessed day when America is finally purified of her contaminated race-consciousness.

Additionally, I dedicate this book to a soul that is dear to me: Maria Dixon, who presented me with my first copy of the Bhagavad-gita. I am eternally in her debt.

Further, I want to acknowledge all the great writers who have contributed mightily to the Interracial Voice website. Here is an alphabetical list of all previous IV Guest Editorialists and Essayists:

Stone Abang, Adam Abraham, Robyn Alezanders, Tanya Bowers, Deb Brown, Sheila Varnado Brown, Ward Connerly, Kimberly Cooper-Plaszewski, Tracy Cope, Emory Curtis, Glenn D'Cruz, Peter d'Errico, Nathan Douglas, Arana M. Fossett, Pearl Gaskins, Alana Gaymon, Beth Gray, Ronald E. Hall, Susanne M.J. Heine, Demian Hess, Eleanora Hill, Jayne Obiageli Ifekwunigwe, Vandon E. Jenerette III, Kim Jenkins, Maria K. B. Kolby, James A. Landrith, Jr., Neal A. Lester, Sheryl Levart, Tracy Mack, Liam Martin, Lani Kwon Meilgaard, Candace Y. Miller, Richard "Warbird" Miller, Ami Chen Mills, Emily Monroy, Frank Montalvo, William Javier Nelson, Andrew Polk, A.D. Powell, Jason Rabbitt-Tomita, Sabu, Emilie Schlegel, Steve Sedberry, Frank W. Sweet, Leah Swift, Orli Trone, Mitzi L. Uehara-Carter, M. Royce Van Tassell, Lucia Vilankulu, Francis Wardle, Steve and Ruth White, George Winkel and Naomi Zack.

Finally, I dedicate this work to the memory of the late Jean Toomer, the esteemed author of Cane, who was far ahead of his time by articulating a lifelong philosophy that stated that society could not locate him within traditional "racial" definitions and classifications.

Thank you all.

- *OM (front cover graphic) is the symbol for God. OM is the basis for all creation and is found in all spiritual traditions. What is OM to the Hindu is the sacred word Hum to the Tibetans, Amin to the Moslems, and Amen to the Egyptians, Jews, Christians, Greeks and Romans. It is the Universal vibration, the essence of all sentient and non-sentient beings. This transcendental sound is identical with the form of the Lord.*
- *Author photo on back cover by Lynn Goldsmith, New York City*

Introduction

In my experience, people who consider themselves of “mixed-race” inevitably question not only the *wisdom* of racial identification but also the very scientific and biological foundation of “race” itself. To lend public expression to these heretofore private individual challenges to the “racial” paradigm was one of the reasons I launched, in September 1995, the Interracial Voice website (<http://interracialvoice.com>), a networking newsjournal serving the “mixed-race” community in cyberspace. Furthermore, I believe that individuals of mixed racial backgrounds quickly begin searching for a higher spiritual truth, something that allows them to make sense of the madness behind lumping human beings into separate and distinct “racial” groupings.

The ability or desire to see “beyond the body,” to see oneself as more than a mere aggregate of material elements, is a blessing indeed. It is difficult to perceive more than that which is clearly visible, for to do so, one must transcend the norm, one must walk “a road less traveled.”

For the past twenty years or so, I’ve been walking — albeit haltingly at times — down the path of self-realization. At this point, however, I can honestly say that every discipline I’ve ever studied to any degree — be it Taoism, Rosicrucianism, the New Age teachings of Deepak Chopra and James Redfield, L. Ron Hubbard’s controversial Scientology system, or the 17th Century impersonalistic philosophy of Baruch Spinoza — coalesces rather nicely with the message of one book: Bhagavad-gita.

Bhagavad-gita (incorrectly referred to by some Westerners as the “Hindu Bible”) is the essence of India’s Vedic wisdom and one of the great spiritual and philosophical classics of the world. It comes to us in the form of a battlefield dialogue between Lord Sri Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and Arjuna, His intimate friend and devotee, whom He instructs in the science of self-realization.

The perennial philosophy of the Gita has intrigued the philosophical mind of man, both Eastern and Western, for millennia. Henry David Thoreau wrote that in relation to Bhagavad-gita, “our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial.”

Most of us are familiar with the late, former Beatle George Harrison’s 1970 hit “My Sweet Lord” in which he sings of longing to be with and to see Lord Krishna. More recent proof of the growing influence and popularity of the Bhagavad-gita’s message in the West was the November 2000 movie release, “The Legend of Bagger Vance.” Set in 1931 in the southern United States, “The Legend of Bagger Vance,” based on the book of the same title by Steve Pressfield, is a timeless tale of golf, friendship, and the lessons of life. Rannulph Junuh, a World War I war hero, is invited to play in a 36-hole golf tournament to celebrate the opening of a new golf course. Feeling that his game is a bit rusty, he turns to Bagger Vance for instruction and advice and ends up learning a lot more than a few new strokes. Directed by Robert Redford, the film is narrated by Jack Lemmon, who also makes a brief appearance as a veteran golf champion.

According to Mr. Pressfield, the character of Bagger Vance (played by actor Will Smith) and his story are indeed based on the Bhagavad-gita in which Bhagavan (Krishna), the Supreme Personality, teaches his follower, Arjuna (R. Junuh), about life. The parallels between the ancient spiritual classic and the novel (and movie) are elaborated upon by Bhagavad-gita scholar Steven J. Rosen in his book *Gita on the Green: The Mystical Tradition Behind Bagger Vance* (Continuum, 2000).

Far from proselytizing for a particular faith, I humbly submit

that everyone, not just “mixed” people, can use the Gita’s message to rise above America’s oppressive race-consciousness — which, itself, has evolved into a sort of proselytizing religion. Consequently, I’ve named and fashioned each section of my book after the eighteen chapters of the Bhagavad-gita. Along with two synopses of each Gita chapter (one taken directly from Gita itself followed by my own take on how each section relates to transcending race-consciousness) I’ve included commentary — culled nearly entirely from my 1995-2001 Interracial Voice editorials. In addition, during or after each chapter’s “race” commentary, I’ve included a specific Gita verse for the purpose of expanding on that commentary from the Vedic perspective.

As I cannot hope to approach the scope and depth of the Bhagavad-gita’s seven-hundred verses in this limited work, I recommend that the reader obtain a copy of the Gita for his or her own personal reading. I recommend *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* (<http://www.asitis.com>), with translation and commentary by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. It is this version of the Gita that I shall quote throughout the present work.

After the book’s conclusion, I’ve included the text of a speech I delivered on July 20, 1996 in Washington, D.C. at the Multiracial Solidarity March. Even then I viewed the discussion of “mixed-race” as an intermediate point or way-station between society’s current obsession with race and a future of *racelessness*. I leave it up to the reader to determine whether over the years following my Washington speech I’ve succeeded in transcending race-consciousness and am on the track of spiritual enlightenment. Whatever your conclusion, my love and best wishes to you as you embark on your own personal journey.

On the Battlefield of Kurukshetra, Arjuna eventually submits to Lord Krishna as His disciple, and Krishna begins His teach-

ings to Arjuna by explaining the fundamental distinction between the temporary material body and the eternal spiritual soul. The Lord explains the process of transmigration, the nature of selfless service to the Supreme, and the characteristics of a self-realized person.

Arjuna realizes that everyone must engage in some sort of activity in this material world, but actions can either bind one to this world or liberate one from it. By acting for the pleasure of the Supreme, without selfish motives, one can be liberated from the law of karma (action and reaction) and attain transcendental knowledge of the self and the Supreme. Arjuna eventually realizes that it is his duty as a *ksatriya* (literally, “one that protects others from harm”) — a warrior or administrator in the ancient Vedic social system (not to be confused with the perverted and corrupt caste system in *present-day* India) — to fight, because God desires the battle.

Beyond Race does not seek to recreate the conditions of a 5,000-year-old Indian battlefield. It does, however, seek to convey some of the same basic truths that were revealed on that battlefield. If Arjuna, the hero of the Gita, was able to understand that a wise man does not lament even in the face of death, because he knows that the soul within the body never dies, surely, in the 21st century, we can conquer the fear of offending others while both expressing and exercising our honest beliefs and personal “identity” preferences. By cultivating transcendental knowledge as revealed in the Gita, we can certainly learn to go beyond race.

1

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 1: Observing the Armies on the Battlefield of Kurukshetra

As the opposing armies stand poised for battle, Arjuna, the mighty warrior, sees his intimate relatives, teachers and friends in both armies ready to fight and sacrifice their lives. Overcome by grief and pity, Arjuna fails in strength, his mind becomes bewildered, and he gives up his determination to fight.

Synopsis of Chapter 1 relative to transcending race-consciousness:

It is not easy to overcome the racial identity imposed upon you by a racially obsessed society, a society that still embraces “hypodescent,” or the inheritance of only the lowest status racial category of one’s ancestors (a.k.a., the infamous “one-drop of ‘black’ blood rule”), a society that has made the conscious decision that multiracials should be content to parcel out their identities to “federally recognized groups” — all in the name of achieving social justice.

* * *

Nine “white” guys on the United States Supreme Court struck down this country’s remaining anti-miscegenation laws with its watershed “Loving vs. Virginia” decision in 1967. “Loving” also dealt a blow to the aforementioned *one-drop rule*, which holds that any degree of African ancestry makes one 100% “black” and nothing else. The one-drop rule was an unevenly applied social custom during the slavery period, but state legislatures codified it into law, along with prohibitions against interracial marriage, during the Jim Crow era of the early 20th century. So, while the high court’s 1967 ruling effected a modicum of social justice by legalizing interracial marriages in all 50 states, one-drop ideology, at the time I write this book, is still alive and well in America — and this despite the “Loving” ruling.

Changes to the 2000 Census brought us the politically-correct version of the one-drop rule. The politically-correct version of the one-drop rule is the government’s *check all that apply* policy that one-drops multiple “race” checkers (along with those who either leave the “race” boxes unmarked or put “American,” “human,” or some other nonracial response) into a sole minority category for the purpose of “monitoring civil rights violations and discrimination.”

While all *mixed-race* Americans (hapas, mestizos, metis, creoles, latinos, melungeons, and so on) are susceptible to being one-dropped for the purpose of keeping a particular group’s “official membership count” as high as possible, one-droppism particularly stigmatizes those individuals with any degree of African ancestry.

Few, however, are willing to acknowledge the nature and the scale of the brainwashing visited upon the American mulatto (commonly defined as any person of mixed Caucasian and Negro ancestry) over the decades. Today’s “black” identity (for such a person) requires the twin elements of fear and ignorance to

sustain itself — fear of long-standing intimidation and harassment if a “black”/“white” person identifies himself or herself in an alternative way, and ignorance of the fact that the one-drop rule is no longer legally enforceable.

Many mulattoes genuinely fear being demonized by people — including, at times, close family members — who, like well-oiled automatons, repeat their pernicious mantras: “You’re running away from your blackness; you’re trying to be white; you’re confused; to the white man, you’ll always be a nigger.” Since it is “black” politicians who purposely slight “Loving” as well as the impact of that particular detail of civil rights history — *i.e.*, *this country’s burgeoning “mixed” population* — is it really “the White Man” who treats *multiracials* like “niggers”?

The only way to keep “mixed-race” within the “black” clan, particularly since one-drop is not enforceable, is to engage in a form of mind control not unlike something from Orwell’s *1984*. And this is precisely what goes on in modern America.

Consider the case of the late *New York Times* book critic Anatole Broyard — a person of mixed race — who chose not to identify himself as “black.” While Harvard Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr. now defends himself by saying he was merely “exploring complexity,” conventional wisdom holds that he “outed” Broyard in the June 17, 1996 edition of *The New Yorker* magazine by accusing him of passing for white. What Gates and other self-identified blacks are ever-so-slowly beginning to realize is that their choices of identity, philosophy, political affiliation and religious belief are not necessarily other people’s choices. With respect to Broyard and others like him, “blacks” need to understand that they are not reacting to his decision to not identify as “black” but to their own feelings *about* that decision. The Anatole Broyards of the world are not responsible for the feelings of indignation and jealousy experienced by individual black people. When they fully recognize and understand this, they will be ready to take individual responsibility for how they feel, and they will be able to change it.

* * *

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 1, Verse 28:

Arjuna said: My dear Krishna, seeing my friends and relatives present before me in such a fighting spirit, I feel the limbs of my body quivering and my mouth drying up.

In his purport to this Bhagavad-gita verse, Srila Prabhupada, the commentator, writes that any man who is genuinely devoted to the Lord possesses all the good qualities of both godly persons and demigods. The nondevotee, however advanced he may be in material qualifications by education and culture, lacks godly qualities. Arjuna, as the superlative devotee, indeed exhibited all good traits, one of which was compassion. Consequently, when he saw his friends and relatives on the battlefield, he was overwhelmed by a sense of empathy, feeling deeply for those who had decided to fight in the massive war of Kurukshetra.

Our fight against a particular earthbound ideology need not diminish our compassion and love for those adamantly adhering to opposing ideals. This holds true whether or not those in opposition to us are family, friends, or complete strangers. Quite often the people who oppose us the most — those in positions of authority who embrace the racist doctrine of “one-drop,” those who attempt to assert their status as elitist members of the media, academia, the political intelligentsia or even the clergy over those they consider to be less intelligent or less qualified — are not spiritually advanced. Moreover, even their *material* credentials and qualifications are usually blown out of proportion, and certainly do not qualify them for the status they believe they deserve. Nonetheless, such people still deserve our compassion, even if we must simultaneously wage battle against their outmoded reasoning.

Clearly, Arjuna was sympathetic and compassionate, even toward the soldiers of the opposite party. Foreseeing their immi-

nent death, the limbs of his body began to quiver, and his mouth became dry. He was more or less astonished to see their fighting spirit, as we today marvel at the misplaced resolution of those who uphold the black/white racial dichotomy of decades past rather than aid in designing a more glorious future of *racelessness*.

Nearly the entire community of Arjuna's day, many of whom were his blood relatives, had come to fight with him. This overwhelmed him, and we can easily imagine that not only were his limbs quivering and his mouth drying, but that he was also crying, with tears pouring down his cheeks. Such symptoms in Arjuna were not due to weakness but to his softheartedness, a characteristic of a pure devotee of Krishna.

Those who value the higher dimensions of existence will, like Arjuna, feel for the suffering of other living beings, and they will especially be compassionate to those who remain trapped in the bodily concept of life.

* * *

"Hypodescent regarding African ancestry has singly been responsible for more human misery in the United States of America than any other so-called 'ordinary' custom I can think of, with the possible exception of (male) chauvinism."

— William Javier Nelson describing hypodescent (a.k.a. "the one-drop rule") or the inheritance of only the lowest status racial category of one's ancestors.

I believe in giving credit where it is due, which is why I applaud Lise Funderburg (the quite white-looking mulatta author of *Black, White, Other: Biracial Americans Talk About Race and Identity*) for admitting the following in *Time* magazine ("I Am What I Say I Am," March 26, 2001):

Sure, the formula is an embrace of the old one-drop rule (one drop of black blood makes you black), but this retro-

grade remedy is an appropriate answer to backward thinking, and what could be more backward than racism?

It matters not that I disagree with the overall tone of this passage, particularly the popular notion amongst minority academics and politicians that *race matters*, that the only way to remedy the historical discrimination of a bogus racial classification scheme is by conserving it. Actually, more backward than racism — and its root cause as well — is a belief in “race” itself. That said, Ms. Funderburg concedes what others have gone to great lengths to deny — that the Office of Management and Budget’s decision to reallocate multiple “race” checkers to the minority race is a politically-correct application of hypodescent that contravenes the 1967 Supreme Court decision “Loving vs. Virginia.”

In a March 15, 2000 essay entitled “How Race Counts in the 2000 Census,” syndicated columnist Clarence Page mocked those who dared utter the words “*one-drop*.” Mr. Page said that OMB’s policy seeks to assure that “no one’s victimization by racial discrimination falls through the cracks of the new census counts.” What Mr. Page fails to realize — or just doesn’t want to publicly acknowledge — is that individuals of mixed ancestry often face discrimination and ridicule from within so-called minority communities simply because they are mixed and identify themselves as such!

New York Times reporter Eric Schmitt’s article “Multiracial Identification Might Affect Programs” from March 14, 2001 includes an excellent example of the feeling of constantly being under the gun to identify in *the proper manner*:

A University of Michigan study in 1995 found that when 20,000 adolescents of all races were asked about their racial identity, about 7 percent said they were mixed race when asked in an anonymous survey at school. But when asked at

home by an interviewer, often with a parent present, only 3.5 percent of the children said they were mixed race.

While “*check all that apply*” certainly facilitates the continued flow of government funds based on group identity, it does not go nearly far enough toward eliminating the intense psychological pressures society exerts on mixed children, particularly vis-à-vis long-term “racial” identity formation and political philosophy. That notwithstanding, educators like Interracial Voice contributor Kimberly Cooper-Plaszewski will use the new Census data to bolster their arguments for changes in school curriculum to reflect the concerns and needs of *mixed-race* kids.

I came to the conclusion back when the Census 2000 debate was still raging that we as a nation need to summon the courage to do away with these idiotic “race” and “ethnicity” boxes. They serve only to divide us into racial voting blocs, agitating for one kind of political legislation or another, regardless of whether the *individuals* within those blocs deem themselves part of the group in the first place — much less whether they agree as to the appropriateness of the proposed policy. As long as these groups continue groveling and fighting over government largesse and attempting to intimidate others into staying within the fold, the ability of Americans to construct a true national identity — what to speak of a heightened spiritual awareness — is ripped to shreds. A clear and recent example: The NAACP publicly exhorted people during the Census 2000 enumeration period to only *check the black box!*

Until this changes, we can continue giving credit where it is due: We should all applaud the mulatta Lise Funderburg’s brave admission that one-drop is still alive and well. Well, it’s still alive, anyway.

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 2: Contents of the Gita Summarized

Arjuna submits to Lord Krishna as His disciple, and Krishna begins His teachings to Arjuna by explaining the fundamental distinction between the temporary material body and the eternal spiritual soul. The Lord explains the process of transmigration, the nature of selfless service to the Supreme, and the characteristics of a self-realized person.

Synopsis of Chapter 2 relative to transcending race-consciousness:

We are not our bodies; ergo, we are not representatives of various racial groupings. Devotional service should be to God, not to any “racial” or “ethnic” leader and his political agenda.

* * *

On the second day of the Third Pan Collegiate Conference on the Mixed Race Experience (which was held on February 6-7, 1999, at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut), two young ladies from Amherst College (in Massachusetts) —

members of that school's Students of Mixed Heritage And Culture organization — stopped me in one of the hallways of Shanklin Laboratory. Earlier that morning I had delivered a workshop entitled, "The mixed-race community being at the forefront of freeing Americans from outdated ways of 'racial' thinking — toward an embrace of humanity." Actually, I added that last bit about humanity too late for conference coordinators to include it in the printed programs. In the weeks leading up to the workshop, I grew increasingly uncomfortable with merely presenting a vision of moving beyond this country's obsession with race. *Where do we go from there?*, I wondered.

It occurred to me that some folk were already easing themselves out of "racial" identifiers and sliding into ethnic and cultural alternatives. The problem here is that while most people believe there's nothing wrong per se with a person proclaiming his ethnic or cultural pride, both can be traps when used in precisely the same manner as "race" — to divide and segregate.

I used to think there was nothing wrong with a person asserting ethnic and cultural pride. Daily media accounts in recent years of the wanton slaughter of members of one ethnic group or tribe by members of another, as in Bosnia, Kosovo, Kurdistan, East Timor, Chiapas, Rwanda, Congo, Northern Ireland, Kashmir, Chechnya, and so on, more than convinced me that it's not such a great idea after all.

Nowadays, culture merchants speak incessantly of the need to preserve both "white" and "black" culture, yet none can provide a precise definition of either. Is "culture" becoming the last refuge of committed racials of all hues, including dyed-in-the-wool racists? On this issue, I bow to the late James Baldwin who wrote in *Nobody Knows My Name: More Notes of a Native Son*:

Nothing is more undeniable than the fact that cultures vanish, undergo crises; are, in any case, in a perpetual state of

change and fermentation, being perpetually driven, God knows where, by forces within and without.

Anyway, back to the hallway and the two Amherst College females, one of whom exclaimed: “Mr. Byrd, your presentation was so provocative! At first I said to myself, ‘Wha-a-a-t!?’ Could you come to our school and give the same talk?” Think about it for a minute. What I said was so frank and provocative that it initially took them aback, yet they want to hear more. That tells me that these kids are already fed up with the lies they constantly hear about who they really are, about which “racial,” ethnic or cultural group they are supposed to pledge allegiance to, about which political party and philosophy they are supposed to join, etc., etc., ad infinitum, ad nauseam. They *are* receptive to the idea that what really matters at day’s end is what they think about themselves as *individuals*, not what official racial or ethnic representatives tell them they should think.

Ideas alone have the power to transform, and this scares the living hell out of American monoracists — of all colors — who cling so tenaciously to the furtherance of an immoral, segregated classification system, one which defines racial mixture as illegitimate, telling us that we should all know our place and stay in it. Such people want to persuade us to meekly accept our role, hoping that this will be the invisible glue which holds the current paradigm in place, not allowing it to fall and shatter as it should — and surely will.

I have long believed that mixed-race folk not only have a golden opportunity but an obligation to guide America beyond antiquated racial thinking. Within our individual spheres of influence — no matter how large or small — we must consistently and relentlessly challenge the notion that coerced membership in an artificial grouping is the optimal way to define a human. We must also demonstrate that rejecting the racist ideologies of “blackness” and “whiteness” — each predicated on its own queer notion of “purity” — is not the same as repudiating, much less

demonizing and hating, those individuals who still feel compelled to identify with such categories.

The students who assembled that weekend at Wesleyan know well that we can readily change the various names, labels, tags and identifiers — first and last names, racial designation, religious affiliation, state residency, and myriad more — which we use to present our physical forms, our bodies, to the world. We can change all these things and yet remain unchanged ourselves. Are we, then, our bodies? That's one of the questions that made some of the students say, “Wha-a-a-t?!”

The answer is “No, we are NOT our bodies.” We are the life-force, the spirit animating the physical form, and that rings true with everyone at a certain level of consciousness. Though even a cursory consideration of spirituality was the furthest thing from their minds when they entered the room, most of the students in attendance that day left with a higher level of personal awareness, some of them even ready to shrug off the various labels we use to identify ourselves. They also left with new ideas about the individuals they encounter daily who are not so aware, souls who long ago decided to agree with the notion that they are their bodies, people willing to accept the names society assigns to their physical forms — and to identify this as their selves.

The workshop attendees, perhaps, will also view the race/ethnicity/culture trinity as an alluring seducement to be avoided — something to leave in the dust as we move toward humanity and beyond.

* * *

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 2, Verse 12:

Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings; nor in the future shall any of us cease to be.

The Vedic literature states that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the maintainer of innumerable living entities — it is because of God that we exist, and continue to exist. He guides us, whether or not we are aware of it, through our sojourn in this world. God is also, by His plenary portions, alive in the heart of every living entity. Only saintly persons can perceive this, however. When we, too, reach this level of awareness, we can actually attain perfect and eternal peace.

These truths apply to everyone, even those who pose themselves as very learned — including official racial or ethnic representatives — but who, in actuality, have but a poor fund of knowledge. The *Gita* clearly says that God, Arjuna, and all the kings who were assembled on the battlefield, are eternally individual beings, and this applies to everyone else as well. Our individuality existed in the past, and it will continue in the future without interruption.

The theory that after liberation from the material realm the individual soul merges into an impersonal void and loses its individual existence is not supported in the *Gita* by Lord Krishna, the supreme authority.

If we elevate our own personal levels of consciousness, we will comprehend the truth behind our actual existence: As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. But, make no mistake, the soul remains an individual being. This does not bewilder a self-realized person — nor is he or she taken in by groupthink, whether ancient or modern. The enlightened soul sees beyond the bodily concept of life. They see as follows: We are, and always have been, eternal individual souls. And individual spiritual souls we will continue to be. Bodily identification is backward, a product of superficial thinking.

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 3: Karma-yoga

Everyone must engage in some sort of activity in this material world. But actions can either bind one to this world or liberate one from it. By acting for the pleasure of the Supreme, without selfish motives, one can be liberated from the law of karma (action and reaction) and attain transcendental knowledge of the self and the Supreme.

Synopsis of Chapter 3 relative to transcending race-consciousness:

One of the most important activities a person of “mixed-race” can engage in is showing others the falsity of “race” and pointing them in the direction of The Supreme.

* * *

“I am convinced that when the intellectual history of our times comes to be written, the idea of race, both the popular and the taxonomic, will be viewed for what it is: a confused and dangerous idea which happened to fit the social requirements

of a thoroughly exploitative period in the development of Western man.”

— Ashley Montagu

Many scientists now know, and are even willing to publicly affirm, that genetic variation from one individual to another—even if these individuals are from the same so-called “race”—overwhelms the average differences between racial groupings. In short, we now know that the questionable idea of “race” is without any scientific backing. Against that backdrop, it is interesting to observe how, today, racialists of all colors quickly denigrate the notion that there is no biological foundation for race, as they fear losing an identity built on the shifting sands of nescience.

In 1775 Johann Blumenbach wrote a book called, *On the Natural Varieties of Mankind*. Blumenbach is widely considered the “father” of anthropology, and his book synthesized the earlier attempts of individuals such as Frangois Bernier, Georges Buffon, and Carolus Linneaus, who were experimenting with the idea of classifying human-kind into various, rather arbitrary, groupings. Blumenbach distinguished five varieties of mankind determined by climate, pigmentation, and skull size: Mongolian, Ethiopian, American, Malay, and Caucasian.

Some historians maintain that Blumenbach was not a racist per se. They base this on his famous statement regarding mankind: “You see that all do so run into one another, and that one variety of mankind does so sensibly pass into the other, that you cannot mark them out the limits between them.” It cannot be denied, however, that Blumenbach left a racial door slightly ajar, and others later used his cue to advance their views.

Europeans engaged in transatlantic enslavement had to find a justification for subjugating their fellow humans while remaining faithful to their religious beliefs. The easiest way to do that was to champion the idea of a superior white or Aryan race. For the sake of maintaining “white” purity, they said, we should never

mix with Africans, whom the slavers designated as sub-human beasts of labor. It therefore followed, at least in the slavers' minds, that if Africans were not human, it would be no affront to God to enslave them to thereby make the New World plantations profitable.

Today, black politicians and academics alike point to this crime against humanity — in which, by the way, West African tribal chieftains willingly participated — to justify their advocacy of one of atheistic Marxism's fundamental tenets: redistribution of wealth cloaked in the guise of reparations for slavery.

As a student of Vedic scriptures, I prefer what this particular tradition says — or, more correctly, what it doesn't say — about race. Vedic literature refers to many "species" of humans. Unlike modern biologists, though, the Vedas do not draw distinctions based upon gross physical appearance or morphological nature alone. The major deciding difference in species is the level of spiritual consciousness, and of these, there are many.

Thus, we do not regard "mixed-ness" as a buffer in a vertical, top-down racial hierarchy between "white" and "black." Rather, we view a consideration of "multiracialness" as one transcending "black" purity (particularly the excruciatingly tortured "logic" of a pure, mixed or rainbow "race") and "white" purity, enjoying a position above both which, in essence, occupy the same platform. The necessity to change or raise our level of consciousness means more than just viewing race as the illegitimate construct it is, but also being consciously aware of a higher truth: That the living being, whatever his outer bodily covering, is beyond the mundane abstractions of either "blackness" or "whiteness."

* * *

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 3, Verse 4:

Not by merely abstaining from work can one achieve freedom from reaction, nor by renunciation alone can one attain perfection.

It is not enough merely to *know* with full certainty that race has no biological underpinning, that it is a bogus and ill-conceived concept. It is not enough merely to take that knowledge and go live in the mountains or forests. No. The *renounced* order of life can only be adhered to when one is purified of material attachments and (mis)conceptions. Without purification, one cannot attain success by abruptly adopting the renounced order of life (*sannyasa*), or by neglecting social roles and obligations.

Religion without philosophy is sentimental and therefore fanatical; philosophy without religion is mental speculation. If we believe that, then we need devise and advance a philosophy regarding “race” that not only encourages people to transcend it but discourages them from seeking to replace it with considerations of ethnic or cultural pride. Since we must all engage in some form of activity in this material world, what could be of a higher calling than diverting folk away from the path of the *political color continuum* and shifting their focus onto their own — all too often neglected — spiritual nature? Srila Prabhupada refers to empirical philosophers who assert that, simply by adopting *sannyasa*, or retiring from fruitive activities, one at once becomes as good as The Supreme Himself. Krishna does not approve this principle, however. Without purification of heart, *sannyasa* is simply a disturbance to the social order.

Accordingly, the “mixed-race” population is perfectly situated — if it is willing to seize the moment — to be society’s racial mentors, if you will, demonstrating the sheer ludicrousness and destructiveness of race-consciousness.

* * *

It is unfortunate that there are some, even in the community “of color,” who suggest that “black” is an appropriate term to

represent all non-whites, even those of mixed descent. Here's the thinking as once explained to me by a biracial college professor who self-identifies as "black":

The fundamental racial distinction in America is between white and non-white. Non-black racial designations carry their own unique freight, but in the American context these have always functioned as intermediate points on the black/white continuum. This is true because in America, race is about purity, and whatever is not white is dirty. The intermediate status of Asians, for example, on this continuum, serves to reinforce the racial hierarchy.

According to adherents of this philosophy, Asians, Native Americans, Hispanics, multiracials and any other "non-whites" are all, presumably, part of the permanent minority and, consequently, "black" or "of color."

This philosophy also suggests that to fight racism, we are to use racism. It proposes that until the last remnant of white racism is verifiably eliminated from the Earth, all "non-whites" — however one defines that — must contribute to the continuation and the strengthening of the aforementioned "fundamental racial distinction" in America by identifying solely with their non-European roots.

Instead of attempting to bridge the chasm, to minimize this long-standing dichotomy along racial lines, we are to help perpetuate this senselessness. Once the black segment of the black/white continuum is "victorious," how many centuries will we have to wait until the black racism necessarily engendered by this struggle itself vanishes? This is like a pendulum swinging back and forth between two opposing sides in a never ending battle for racial supremacy. When does it end?

If you could line up every individual on the planet, shoulder to shoulder, starting with the lightest color on one end and the darkest on the other, you could indeed say there is a color continuum. (*You would also find it difficult to discern where one*

race ends and another begins.) Amazingly, humans delight in ascribing a political interpretation to this naturally occurring biological phenomenon. Europeans did this when they introduced the concept of race into the Western Hemisphere centuries ago, and the historical victims of white racism now use their own interpretation to foster *their* racial worldview.

We see evidence of this in yet another political interpretation — the one concerning *Homo Erectus*. Most anthropologists agree that “Original Man” came to be in what is we *now* call Africa. Does this make us all Africans, as afrocentrists delight in claiming? That would depend on whether the question is political or scientific, doesn’t it? I’d say it’s political about 99.9% of the time, and it’s used for the greater glory of the black side of the black/white continuum.

Nonetheless, it’s an argument that many believe to be a sufficient and appropriate counterweight to the long-standing notions of white supremacy. Yet both sides of this argument are dangerous, and we should not fall into the sway of either party.

How does the political color continuum reconcile the slaughter in Rwanda, where both the Hutus and the Tutsis are black? Was our outrage over the attempted genocide of the Muslim population in Bosnia unjustified simply because they are white? Should we ignore the bloodletting in Northern Ireland because it’s about two sects from the white side of the continuum? Should our attitude be, “Who cares about them anyway?”

Then there is South African novelist and winner of the 1991 *Nobel Prize for Literature* Nadine Gordimer’s essay in the June 8, 1997 “How the World Sees Us” Special Issue of *The New York Times Magazine*. Gordimer contrasts black South Africans who “have their own earth under their feet, their own mother tongues, their own ancestral names” with American blacks who “want to stay segregated.” She further writes, “And who can blame them? The history of the country isn’t theirs.”

Personally, I believe that blacks have contributed mightily to both the history and the culture of America, and black/white

multiracials are compelling proof. The unwillingness of blacks to recognize the legitimacy of a *multiracial* identifier, however, supports Gordimer's basic conclusion:

It is unfortunate to have to say it: history is against you, in the U.S.A. White Americans cannot give back to blacks a lost identity; black Americans are reluctant to accept that that identity cannot be found in an avatar of apartheid. They are all Americans, and whether the whites like it or not, and whether the blacks like it or not, a common destiny has to be worked out. Alas, Martin Luther King is dead and you have no Mandela. A common identity is not simple. It's not simple in South Africa either, but in my observation (and participation) we are doing better than the U.S.A., despite staggering problems of poverty, unemployment and vast numbers of the homeless, a legacy of the apartheid regime.

Isn't it interesting that a South African points out many of the same things that Interracial Voice has been saying for a long time, principally that too many American blacks are nostalgic for the days of Jim Crow? Interesting, too, that mixed-race activists are accused of trying to establish an American version of apartheid by advocating for a new multiracial Census category (decried by its opponents as merely replicating the S.A. "Colored" classification). In spite of all this, a world renowned South African author nails the issue perfectly — "black Americans are reluctant to accept that that identity cannot be found in an avatar of apartheid."

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 4: Transcendental Knowledge

Transcendental knowledge — the spiritual knowledge of the soul, of God, and of their relationship — is both purifying and liberating. Such knowledge is the fruit of selfless devotional action (karma-yoga). In this chapter, the Lord also explains the remote history of the Gita, the purpose and significance of His periodic descents to the material world, and the necessity of approaching a guru, a realized teacher.

Synopsis of Chapter 4 relative to transcending race-consciousness:

There is no shortage of teachers on this planet who can guide us away from modern-day forms of tribalism (“race” and “ethnic” pride) toward transcendental knowledge of the Supreme. Common sense and simple logic will also help in this endeavor, but there is no substitute for a good teacher, an enlightened soul who can expose the foolishness of bodily consciousness.

* * *

In *Wisdom of the Mystic Masters*, Joseph J. Weed, a Rosicrucian, writes:

Every man, woman and child in the world is advancing and developing, whether he or she realizes it or not. For some, the rate of progress is slow; others go along at an average pace, a few are far out ahead. Each person is different. There are no carbon copies. Some strive to improve and others care for nothing but their own physical satisfactions. Those who want to develop and really try soon outdistance their fellows and come earlier to a true understanding of life. Their open minds, their intellectual curiosity and their persistent efforts bring them eventually to a Teacher who can lead them on the path to illumination and Cosmic Consciousness.

Ask any quantum physicist worth his salt what solid matter breaks down to and he will tell you — regardless of his religious belief, or lack thereof — that physical matter is made up of atoms which in turn are composed of electrons and protons and neutrons, all in violent motion. In other words, particles of energy moving at incredibly high speeds. Everything we can see, feel, smell, hear or taste is a form of energy vibrating at different rates, and this vibration produces the illusion of solidity. Far beyond atoms and molecules, at the level of the quantum field, there is nothing other than energy, information and intelligence — pure consciousness, the symptom of the living entity.

However, few are aware of this. And this is why so many scurry about demanding that others swear allegiance to the bodily concept of identity in general and to a particular race specifically. This is also why so many weak minds submit to those demands and, indeed, pledge fidelity to one particular race or another. They have lost sight of their inherent individuality and the myriad opportunities this life offers anyone who can be his or her own adviser, keep his or her own counsel and abide by his

or her own decisions. Theirs is the contaminated state of race-consciousness.

That said, why do so many people, regardless of color, have such a hard time relinquishing this inferior mode of consciousness?

* * *

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 4, Verse 10:

Being freed from attachment, fear and anger, being fully absorbed in Me [God] and taking refuge in Me, many, many persons in the past became purified by knowledge of Me — and thus they all attained transcendental love for Me.

Prabhupada reminds us that it is very difficult for a person who is too materially affected to understand the personal nature of the Supreme Absolute Truth. People who are attached to the bodily conception of life are so absorbed in materialism that it is almost impossible for them to understand that there is a transcendental body which is imperishable, full of knowledge, and eternally blissful. In the materialistic concept, the body is perishable, full of ignorance, and completely miserable. Generally, people keep this same bodily idea in mind when someone informs them of the personal form of the Lord. For such materialistic people, the form of the immense material manifestation is supreme. Consequently, they consider the Supreme to be impersonal, and because they are too materially absorbed, the conception of retaining personality after liberation frightens them. When they ultimately realize that spiritual life is also individual and personal, they become afraid of becoming persons again — their personhood having caused them such pain throughout their lives. Thus, they naturally prefer a sort of merging into the impersonal void. And they remain unaware of the unlimited bliss that can come from true spiritual individualism.

Further, there are those who cannot understand spirituality at all. Bewildered by so many theories and by philosophical contradictions of various types, they become disgusted or angry and foolishly conclude that there is no supreme cause, or that ultimate reality is somehow void. Such people are terribly unfortunate. Their only hope is to find a spiritual teacher, someone who can help them rise beyond their spiritually bankrupt condition.

* * *

In February 1998, my Interracial Voice website was flooded with interesting “Letters to the Editor,” producing a white-hot argument between Interracial Voice essayist A.D. Powell and reader Heather Aston. The debate centered on one Dr. Charles Drew (1904-1950) and the choices he and others like him had made in relation to racial self-identification. Dr. Drew clearly was a *blended* or *mixed-race* individual, though he identified as black. Ms. Aston asserted that any attempt to identify Dr. Drew otherwise would be revisionist, as he never publicly called himself anything else. With sincere respect to Heather, however, her technically correct argument is disingenuous.

Owing to Jim Crowism and pressures from within the black community, people like Dr. Drew, Walter White, Jean Toomer, Anatole Broyard and countless others had two choices — be black or pass for *white*. Those who were not light enough for the latter didn’t even have that choice. Now, many hit the ground running with a black identity, never questioning it, the instant they crossed the threshold of the channel of life. Others spurned blackness and pursued careers as members of the Caucasian persuasion, and it is my personal opinion that *no one* has the moral authority to cast aspersions upon anyone who *passed*. People need to realize that their choices are not necessarily other people’s choices, and one person’s evaluation of what he or she

needs to do to survive and prosper in life — provided they do not infringe upon the rights of another — is solely his or her business.

There was also an in-between group, of which Dr. Drew may have been a member, though Jean Toomer certainly was. At some point in their lives, the deeply introspective, spiritually aware members of this group stop dead in their tracks and, in the solitude of their stillness, question the staggering discrepancy between image in the mirror versus societally imposed identity.

Drew had to have known, though, that there was a price to pay for “running away from blackness,” the inane accusation made against self-identified multiracials that persists even in this new millennium. Though Jean Toomer was incredibly straightforward and candid about not wanting to be called *colored* or *white*, to this day some view him as having felt he was too good to be *black*.

As authors Cynthia Earl Kerman and Richard Eldridge write in *The Lives of Jean Toomer: A Hunger for Wholeness*:

Toomer’s position against separateness and racial definitions was maligned both during his lifetime and later. One of the kindest things said about his racial stance by a black critic is Alice Walker’s comment in her review of *The Wayward and the Seeking*:

‘Cane’ was for Toomer a double ‘swan song.’ He meant it to memorialize a culture he thought was dying, whose folk spirit he considered beautiful, but he was also saying goodbye to the ‘Negro’ he felt dying in himself. ‘Cane’ then is a parting gift, and no less precious because of that. I think Jean Toomer would want us to keep its beauty, but let him go.

The implication is that an individual has to be on one side of the line or the other. The prevailing American attitude still is that the line between black and white is inexorable and that if one is a little bit black, one is all black.

University of Iowa professor Darwin T. Turner, in the 1975 introduction to the paperback version of *Cane* refers to Toomer as being “ranked among the finest artists in the history of Afro-American literature,” notwithstanding Jean’s insistence that he was simply “an *American*.”

Nobel Prize winning author Toni Morrison, in an Associated Press interview from January 1998 promoting her newest work — *Paradise* — committed quite a gaffe by referring to Toomer as one of the “black” writers who affected her the most. True to form, no one said a word about it. But imagine the ensuing brouhaha if she had referred to Charles Drew as one of the preeminent *mixed-race* physicians of the Twentieth Century. My God! Jesse Jackson and Kweisi Mfume would have popped up on the Sunday morning news professing that Drew was indeed an *authentic black* and that “a vast right-wing conspiracy” had co-opted Ms. Morrison into helping it gut affirmative action! (*Such has always been the “civil rights” community’s simple-minded take on the mixed-race initiative.*)

In *Neither White Nor Black: The Mulatto Character in American Fiction* (New York University Press, 1978), Judith Berzon writes in the chapter “The Mulatto as Race Leader”:

Since, as we have seen, the mixed blood has even greater reason to identify with the dominant caste than does his full-blooded brother, his identification with the lower caste must be developed and nurtured. “By losing himself in a cause larger than himself,” Everett Stonequist explains, “the marginal nationalist overrides, if he does not solve, his own personal conflicts.” Stonequist theorizes that a primary cause of the mulatto’s emergence as a leader of his race is “the disparity between his aspirations and his status”; this disparity will “make him the kind of marginal man who integrates his personality through reacting back to the Negro group and working to raise its status.”

In conclusion, we see that two mitigating factors influenced the decision of whether to both choose and openly proclaim a black or white identity (or whether to relinquish one's race-consciousness altogether): (1) ridicule and claims of ownership from the black community (persisting to this day); and (2) a desire to raise the status of one's "black brethren" — due not just to the likelihood of the mulatto's having had a superior education but also to a regrettable resignation to one's station in life. To deny this would be no less revisionist than to say Dr. Drew claimed to be multiracial.

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 5: Karma- yoga – Action in Krishna Consciousness

Outwardly performing all actions but inwardly renouncing their fruits, the wise man, purified by the fire of transcendental knowledge, attains peace, detachment, forbearance, spiritual vision, and bliss.

Synopsis of Chapter 5 relative to transcending race-consciousness:

Teachers should not act for sense gratification or to lord their celebrity status over others. All too often modern-day preachers seek to wield power over their congregations for political purposes. Accordingly, many Americans doubt their spiritual leaders, and America itself is in need of a spiritual re-awakening. Plagued by such doubt and spiritual lethargy, it is no wonder that modern men and women have a difficult time engaging in spiritual action and thus rarely develop true knowledge, peacefulness, detachment, and so on.

* * *

Expressing somewhat similar sentiments was *The New York Times* “Religion Journal” section of Saturday, July 24, 1999, entitled: “From Witches to Angels, Alternative Spirituality.” *Times* writer Gustav Niebuhr wondered whether esoteric forms of spirituality have ever been so publicly available as they are today. He posed this and other questions to Richard Smoley, co-author of *Hidden Wisdom: A Guide to the Western Inner Traditions*, a wide-ranging book about alternative spiritual paths. Smoley responded that he believed ecclesiastical, institutional religion is weaker in the United States and Europe than it has ever been. He also noted what he considered an underlying trend that he expected to continue, and that is an interest in higher consciousness, a belief that “the human makeup is considerably higher and deeper than we know or have access to.” This leads to an awareness and deeper penetration of highly esoteric issues.

Niebuhr’s article also reminded me that about the only thing worse than present-day black ministers and reverends who hustle “race” and “race pride” to further a political agenda and to line their own pockets, were those white ministers and reverends who supported — at least tacitly, through their silence — this country’s long, dark night of racial oppression. He cites the Southern Baptist Convention, which offered an apology to blacks in 1995 for many members’ support of slavery and Jim Crow racial segregation. What organized religion still refuses to do, however, is take the next step and denounce “race” as the bogus construct it really is. Most religious sects still march in unconscious lockstep to the American “racialist” party line that proclaims the existence of separate and distinct racial groupings on planet Earth.

* * *

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 5, Verse 12:

The steadily devoted soul attains unadulterated peace because he offers the result of all activities to Me [God]; whereas a person who is not in union with the Divine, who is greedy for the fruits of his labor, becomes entangled.

The difference between a person in higher consciousness and a person in bodily or race consciousness — including far too many contemporary ministers and reverends of all colors — is that the former is attached to Krishna or God, whereas the latter is attached to the results of his activities, to the “power” of his ministry. The person who is attached to the Divine and works for Him only is a liberated person and is not eager for fruitive rewards. In an ancient Indic text called the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, the cause of anxiety over the result of an activity is explained as being due to one’s functioning in the conception of duality, that is, without knowledge of the Absolute Truth. Krishna is the Supreme Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead. Once one understands the Absolute Truth, there is no duality. All that exists, in the vision of a pure soul, is a product of Divine energy — and that is all good. Therefore, activities in God consciousness are on the absolute plane; they are transcendental and have no material effect. One is, resultantly, filled with peace. One who is, however, entangled in profit calculation for sense gratification, political ambition, and race hustling — even if he or she thinks of himself or herself as a person devoted to God — cannot have that peace. This is the secret of spiritual consciousness — realization that there is no existence besides God or Krishna is the platform of peace and fearlessness.

* * *

On January 30, 1996 I appeared on the now-defunct Mark Walberg television talk-show. I appeared along with Steve and Ruth White of the “A Place For Us” organization and other guests, including Reverend Joseph Lowery, who was at that time affiliated with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. We debated the Census 2000 multiracial category issue, and, as one might expect, Lowery voiced strong opposition to the idea, declaring that he would fight such a designation until his last breath. This should not be surprising, since Lowery is a longtime member of the black political priesthood — the afrocentric equivalent of Iran’s ruling mullahs. This is a priesthood that embraces one-drop ideology as its Eleventh Commandment.

What *was* surprising was Ruth’s admonishment that, as a reverend, Lowery had no business touting race to begin with. In (an attempted) response, the preacher could not utter a word. He was shocked. I know. I sat next to him.

Ruth’s reprimand was astonishing in light of the unwritten rule within the black community that one dare not criticize black leaders in public, lest one airs the community’s dirty laundry for the “white” man to see. This holds doubly true with respect to the “black” clergy. Couple that with the considerable role that blacks of the cloth continue to play in the political arena — not to mention their viselike grip on the minds of black Americans, which far exceeds that of any other “community’s” priesthood — and you can see how Ruth, an ordained minister herself, along with husband Steve, was courting condemnation from this religious elite.

While considering Ruth’s plight, two questions come to mind: (1) If it is appropriate to criticize the Christian Fundamentalist Right (Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, and so on) for sticking its nose into political affairs, why is it not also proper to pan the Christian Fundamentalist Left (Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton, Jo-

seph Lowery, ad infinitum) for doing the same?; and (2) If we define religion as the development of love for God, or if we say that religion is about all of humanity finding relationship to one higher source, what business, then, does any religionist have engaging in the sordidness of racial identity politics?

Jesus Christ, for one, did not preach the gospel of race-consciousness.

Even those who do not bear designations such as “reverend,” “minister,” and “pastor” regularly invoke scripture and raise the specter of epic battles in order to support their agenda. While speaking before the National Baptist Sunday School and Baptist Training Congress in Fort Lauderdale, Florida on June 15, 2000, NAACP Chairman Julian Bond warned that moves to end race-based affirmative action signal a “full-scale attack” on the civil rights advances won over the past 30 years. Bond called affirmative action “the spoils of a righteous war” and decried movements in several states, including Florida, to dismantle racial preference programs.

The “righteous war” that was the civil rights movement of the ‘50s and ‘60s, however, failed to engage the final battle. Indeed, today’s so-called leaders seem unwilling or even afraid to move beyond the prison of their past conditioning — afraid to reach for, grasp, and point the way to higher consciousness. Since race was now the building block not merely for social programs and legal redress but for black self-esteem and black political power (i.e., the Black Power movement that reached its zenith in October 1995 with Nation of Islam Minister and anti-Semite Louis Farrakhan’s “Million Man March”), few people saw race-consciousness — along with the omnipresent human vs. non-human background noise — as the evil it was and still is. Indeed, they reveled in it and continue to do so.

The sad reality is that individuals of all colors who are supposed to be teaching love of God, love of humanity, and

liberation from the material concept of life continue preaching the gospel of race-consciousness, and woe be unto anyone who braves mentioning this idea publicly!

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 6: Dhyana-yoga

Dhyana-yoga, the yoga of meditation, is part of an overarching technique called Ashtanga-yoga. This latter form of yoga, a mechanical meditative practice that involves physical exercises, controls the mind and senses and focuses concentration on Paramatma (the Supersoul, the form of the Lord situated in the heart). This practice culminates in samadhi, full consciousness of the Supreme. This same result is more easily attained by practicing Bhakti-yoga, or the yoga of developing love of God.

Synopsis of Chapter 6 relative to transcending race-consciousness:

In our day-to-day interactions, we should approach and address each other as spiritual beings — not as the flesh bodies that we believe we see. We need to see each other as emanating from the same source. We should embrace age-old techniques, such as yoga, if they allow us, or inspire us, to go beyond the body. We must, in essence, find a disciplined way of life, one that will teach us to focus on transcendental topics, for only by doing so can we rise beyond the mundane sphere.

* * *

“The millions are awake enough for physical labor; but only one in a million is awake enough for effective intellectual exertion, only one in a hundred million to a poetic or divine life. To be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who was quite awake. How could I have looked him in the face?”

— Henry David Thoreau

A number of years ago a friend mailed me a copy of the Winter 1988 issue of *Gnosis: A Journal of the Western Inner Traditions*. As I often do, I laid it aside and didn't give it a serious look for some time. I wish I had leafed through those pages sooner. The publication's Forum section included an intriguing mini-essay by William Allen, entitled, “Mystics must enter the public arena to change it.” Let's consider the particulars of Allen's piece as we simultaneously contemplate moving *from mixed-race to spiritually enlightened . . .*

Mystics must enter the public arena to change it

Among New Age groups there seems to be a division between those who believe that political action can be a spiritual activity, and those who believe that politics (as well as economics, science, technology, social systems, etc.) is so unspiritual or profane a realm that they will have nothing to do with it, preferring instead to focus exclusively on their interior practice, whether it be study, meditation, chanting, channeling, etc. This division reflects differences of definition. Is spirituality purely an interior process “of or relating to sacred matters” and incorporeal worlds, or is it a combination of interior process and exterior action?

One definition of a mystic is someone who, through various inner experiences, intuits that the ground of his or her being is something called a “soul” or a “spark of God.” Utilizing the depth

of this transcendent perception, the mystic connects all his or her work and activities directly to the Godhead, who is manifesting all the universes at every moment.

To be sure, interior practices are an essential component of spiritual growth. The self, the Soul, the Vision, etc. must be found within. But is this activity the only one spiritual? And assuming one has contacted the Self or grasped the Vision, is the work necessarily done?

Vedic teachings hold that Divine Love is the strongest spiritual force on Earth and can enhance the unity of hearts amongst all humans, thereby establishing real peace in the world. In fact, all animated beings are interconnected and are parts of the potency of One Organic System — The All-Pervading Soul. The knowledge of our common relation to that Absolute Soul fosters in us love and affinity for each other, since we all have the same source.

It is said that the cause of our suffering on this planet is that we are averse to God, that the root of our afflictions is forgetfulness of our eternal relation with Him. Individual conscious units, or spirits — you and me — are atomic spiritual sparks who naturally engage in thinking, feeling, and willing. We either use our capacity for thinking, feeling, and willing properly (i.e., as they were meant to be used), or we do not. Misuse of that relative independence or volition is the cause of our averseness to God.

Consciousness is originally pure, like water, but if we mix water with a certain color, it changes. We do not then see the water as it originally exists, as it is meant to be perceived. Consciousness is pure for the spirit soul is pure, but consciousness — specifically our informational component — changes according to association with material nature, according to the falsehoods one hears and believes over time, according to our conditioning. Recognizing and eliminating the false data that contaminates one's consciousness allows one to rehabilitate his innate intelli-

gence and remember his eternal, original position. Taking birth in the human form is so important because this is the best opportunity for the individual soul to do just that: to remember its eternal position relative to the Supreme and to stop the cycle of birth and death by returning to the Divine Source.

As William Allen asks, however, is grasping this vision all we need do?

In a recent published interview, an actress-turned-spiritual mentor was asked what to do about the present chaotic, dangerous state of world affairs. Her reply was to the effect that there is nothing one can do personally about the ugliness and gross injustices in the world. What one can do, however, is change one's perception and experience of the situation, by finding peace within, etc. This is not uncommon. There is today no shortage of teachers, embodied or disembodied, who proclaim that all we need do is look inside, see and experience ourselves as God, or the Goddess, and know that "everything is beautiful and perfect just the way it is." This is paralleled by the widespread belief that when a mathematical proportion of individuals have, through inner processes, raised their consciousnesses to a heightened level of awareness, world affairs will automatically begin to transform.

The question is, do we simply twiddle our thumbs, waiting for this "critical mass" or mathematical proportion of humans to become magically "enlightened," or do we nudge the process along? A higher level of consciousness will unquestionably trigger positive change on this planet, but can we trust elected officials and those in the pulpit to be catalysts for such change? Not the way things stand today!

Allen is correct in his assessment that many consider politics, economics, science, technology, and social systems so mundane and unspiritual that they will have nothing to do with them. Conversely, there is a school of thought that holds that the human intellect is expressly developed for advancement in art, science, philosophy, physics, chemistry, psychology, economics,

politics, and other fields. The question is how to properly use these things.

Through the culture of knowledge, humanity can attain the perfection of life, culminating in the realization of the higher source, God. When we apply this knowledge in service to God, the process of advancement becomes spiritualized. This second school of thought, then, recommends that art, science, philosophy, physics, chemistry, psychology and other branches of knowledge be applied in the service of raising consciousness, in the service of glorifying The Supreme.

There are elements of truth in these concepts. But, the glamorous manner in which these ideas are currently being presented and applied is, in too many instances, Old Age behavior under a New Age guise — Old Age in that it is a perpetuation of one of the greatest errors of our civilization: the fragmentation of life into sacred and profane, the separation of spirituality from all modes and institutions of human expression except those deemed “religious” or “mystical,” and its relegation to the interior life. So while millions through the decades have paid much attention to the mystical inner life, humanity’s outer expressions — its political, economic, social, scientific, cultural systems and conditions have been allowed to become the irrational, corrupt, unjust, cruel institutions that they are today. At the same time, some of the most ill-suited persons have been allowed to lead.

When Allen refers to the fragmentation of life into sacred and profane, the separation of spirituality from all modes and institutions of human expression except those deemed “religious” or “mystical,” he is referring to the notion that the source of the physical universe is unknown and that we simply need to work on raising our individual levels of consciousness.

The great sages, however, explain that all phenomena in the universe emanate from the Divine because He, through His inconceivable energies, has set in motion the actions and reactions of the creation. Everything has come into being out of His en-

ergy; everything rests on His energy; and, after annihilation, everything merges into Him. Therefore nothing is different from the Lord, though the Lord is always different from His creation. He is inconceivably one with it and different from it as well.

Vedic scriptures advise that the learned — those not ensnared by illusion — aspire to spiritual life. For example, philosophers should apply their work in the service of enlightenment, aiming to establish the Supreme Truth as sentient and all-powerful. All other branches of knowledge should similarly be engaged in this manner. Allen continues,

Fortunately, a growing number of individuals and groups are beginning to understand that the inner divinity cannot be expressed or manifested adequately in a corrupt world, and that we must work to transform our political, economic, and social structures to allow that divinity to flourish. Understanding, cooperation, goodwill, and the principle of sharing must be “institutionalized” in the place of competition, greed, rabid nationalism, and hatred. The new world will not be built by channeling, creating rituals, focusing crystals or studying ancient texts in monastic seclusion. It will come when the mystics and the people of vision awaken to the true needs of the time and enter the difficult arena of public life and work.

I would revise Allen’s second sentence as follows: Understanding, cooperation, goodwill, and the principle of sharing knowledge and information must be “institutionalized” in the place of (a) the socialist welfare state that spawns greedy competition for government largesse between racial and ethnic groups; (b) the exploitative, sweatshop version of capitalism; and (c) rabid nationalism, hatred and race and ethnic pride — the latter two being merely modern-day forms of tribalism.

★ ★ ★

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 6, Verse 1:

The Blessed Lord said: One who is unattached to the fruits of his work and who works as he is obligated is in the renounced order of life, and he is the true mystic: not he who lights no fire and performs no work.

In this chapter Krishna explains that the process of the eight-fold yoga system is a means to control the mind and the senses. According to Srila Prabhupada, this is very difficult for people in general to perform, especially in the current age of Kali, also known as the “Age of Quarrel and Hypocrisy.” Although the eight-fold yoga system is recommended in this chapter, the Lord states that the process of Karma-yoga, or acting in Krishna consciousness, is better. Everyone acts in this world to maintain his family and health, but no one is working without some self-interest, some sense gratification, be it for one’s *personal* self or extended (in terms of family, friends, or nation). The criterion of perfection is to act in Divine consciousness, and not with a view to enjoying the fruits of work — particularly work in the fields of art, science, philosophy, physics, chemistry, psychology as well as other branches of knowledge.

To act in God or Krishna consciousness is the duty of every living entity because we are all constitutionally parts and parcels of the Supreme. The parts of the body work for the satisfaction of the whole body. The limbs of the body do not act for self-satisfaction but for the satisfaction of the complete whole. Similarly, the living entity who acts for satisfaction of the supreme whole and not for personal satisfaction is the perfect sannyasi or renunciant, the perfect yogi or mystic.

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 7: Knowledge of the Absolute

Lord Krishna is the Supreme Truth, the supreme cause and sustaining force of everything, both material and spiritual. Advanced souls surrender unto Him in devotion, whereas impious souls divert their minds to other objects of worship.

Synopsis of Chapter 7 relative to transcending race-consciousness:

In materialistic culture, when we divert our minds from the Supreme, we become ensnared by illusory pursuits — in superficial games such as advocating racial pride and competition, furthering one group over another.

* * *

Hypodescent enthusiasts invariably refer to author Jean Toomer (1894-1967) as “black” or “African-American.” Toomer was, in reality, as are many of us, a blended or mixed-race individual who steadfastly did not identify monoracially. In fact, he

considered such classification the nemesis of mankind, a reflection of intellectual empty-headedness. As authors Cynthia Earl Kerman and Richard Eldridge write in *The Lives of Jean Toomer: A Hunger for Wholeness* (1987, Louisiana State University Press):

He believed that everyone's physical, emotional, and mental development was narrowed by society's labeling:

I would liberate myself and ourselves from the entire machinery of verbal hypnotism. . . . I am simply of the human race. . . . I am of the human nation. . . . I am of Earth. . . . I am of sex, with male differentiations. . . . I eliminate the religions. I am religious.

And he had lived among blacks, among whites, among Jews, and in groups organized without racial labels around a shared interest such as literature or psychology, moving freely from any one of these groups to any other. One mark of membership in the 'colored' group, he said, was acceptance of the 'color line' with its attendant expectations; neither his family nor he had ever been so bound. To be in the white group would also imply the exclusion of the other.

*What then am I?
I am at once no one of the races and I am all of them.
I belong to no one of them and I belong to all.
I am, in a strict racial sense, a member of a new race.*

This new race of mixed people, now forming all over the world but especially in America,

may be the turning point for the return of mankind, now divided into hostile races, to one unified race, namely, to the human race.

It was a new race, but also the oldest. The different racial and national groups could still contribute their distinctive richness:

I say to the colored group that, as a human being, I am one of them. . . . I say to the white group that, as a human being, I am one of them. As a white man, I am not one of them. . . . I am an American. As such, I invite them [both], not as [colored or] white people, but as Americans, to participate in whatever creative work I may be able to do.

Thus Toomer propounded the rather unpopular view that the racial issue in America would be resolved only when white America could accept the fact that its racial ‘purity’ was a myth, that indeed its racial isolation produced blandness and lack of character. On the other hand, racial purity among blacks was just as much a myth and only encouraged defensiveness and unconscious imitation, like that of an adolescent who defines his revolt against his parents by the very values he is trying to renounce. Race, he said, was a fictional construct, of no use for understanding people:

Human blood is human blood. Human beings are human beings. . . . No racial or social factors can adequately account for the uniqueness of each — or for the individual differences which people display concurrently with basic commonality.

In the poem “Blue Meridian” (1936), Toomer explores the definition of this new race, a blend of all European, African, Asian, and American Indian cultures. Jean realized that racial conditioning would force most Americans to wear “queer bifocals” that would prevent their acceptance of the concept of the American blend. Toomer recalled reading his poem to “a man of intellect” who insisted afterward that he was black and Toomer was white, and any thought of a new blend was nonsense. Jean’s response to the man whose skin color was just a shade darker than his own discloses his early commitment to a supraracial identity:

So far as I knew, they never realized that racial strains do not exist separately in a man but blend to form a new product. . . . They never understood that the real factors operating in

the United States . . . are creating a new people in this world, a people to whom all Americans, without exception, belong. . . . At one time they would live in the colored world, at another, in the white world. They were under the compulsion to be this or that. They could have been self-determined to be this and that.

Jean Toomer felt that he could not be located within traditional definitions and classifications, and this belief remained consistent for his entire life. Today in our “enlightened” times, some NAACP type would doubtless declare: “While we’re sensitive to Mr. Toomer’s right to not locate himself within traditional definitions and classifications, we feel that, if it became popular, his philosophy would have a deleterious effect on the black community in the aggregate and would signal the end of Affirmative Action!” Sweet Jesus.

Toomer, who also penned the classic work *Cane* (1923) — a collection of short stories, poems and sketches focusing on mulattoes and blacks in the South — believed that love for humanity transcended the highest possible level of affinity for any of the so-called races. His love for the life-force of the universe eclipsed his love for any earthbound doctrine that would subordinate the will and aspirations of the individual to that of an artificial grouping. He might also agree that allowing, even encouraging, a “people” to wallow in their fear of change is no manifestation of love. It is, rather, evidence that the one professing this “love” has been so thoroughly indoctrinated in collectivist, identity politics dogma as to not even be aware! Let us take his ideas further,

Sooner or later the race game will be played out and at that time the substitute word will probably be the word “ethnic” group, which is a term that is as ambiguous (and in reality) as dangerous to personal freedom and liberty as the term “race” is today. Culture is thrown about as a close relative to this term. Neither one makes sense as a collective grouping of individuals unless you are dealing with a social group that has an identical pattern of survival needs in an identical environ-

mental setting. But, people will begin to assign and group individuals based on origin and/or skin color to achieve the same end that the term “race” does today. We must be vigilant against any threat to individual free will and choice. Beware. There will always be those who claim to be “our” people or say that they are part of our “community.” To be truly free, a person has to have the choice of which community is his or hers, which people are his or hers — and to decide where they wish to be — not the other way around! Where a community or a people can claim some kind of ownership over an individual free human being based upon some superficial skin pigmentation or common ancestral characteristic, there can be no freedom!

—Vandon Jenerette in an IV “Letter to the Editor” from 21
July 1997

Jean Toomer also wondered how the human community could retain the strength of ethnic contributions without being destructively separated by the differences. This is why we must protest and fight all forms of official classification, racial or ethnic. For an individual to express *pride* in his or her ethnic identity is one thing, but for any level of government to require the listing of such things on official forms is quite another, and we should not tolerate it. Such a requirement would produce a situation that is no less divisive and coercive as the current situation with racial categories.

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Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 7, Verse 5:

Besides this inferior nature, O mighty-armed Arjuna, there is a superior energy of Mine, which are all living entities who are struggling with material nature and are sustaining the universe.

In his explanation of this verse, Swami Prabhupada states that living entities belong to the superior nature or energy of the

Supreme Lord. The inferior energy is matter manifested in different elements, namely earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego (or the illusion of materialistic identity). Both forms of material nature, namely gross (earth, etc.) and subtle (mind, etc.), are products of the inferior energy. The living entities, who are exploiting these inferior energies for different purposes, are the superior energy of the Supreme Lord, and it is due to this energy that the entire material world functions. The cosmic manifestation has no power to act unless the superior energy, the living entity, moves it. Energies are always under the control of the energetic, and therefore God is always the source of the living entities — they have no independent existence. The distinction between the living entities and the Lord is described in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (10.87.30):

“O Supreme Eternal! If the embodied living entities were eternal and all-pervading like You, then they would not be under Your control. But if the living entities are accepted as minute energies of Your Lordship, then they are at once subject to Your supreme control. Therefore real liberation entails surrender by the living entities to Your control, and that surrender will make them happy. In that constitutional position only can they be controllers. Therefore, men with limited knowledge who advocate the monistic theory that God and the living entities are equal in all respects are actually misleading themselves and others.”

The Supreme Divine Person is the only controller, and He is the Overseer and source of all living entities. Again, these living entities are His superior energy, because the quality of their existence is one and the same with the Supreme, but they are never equal to the Lord in quantity of power. An example is given: Just as a drop of sea water, chemically analyzed, has the same composition as the entire sea (qualitatively), it does not have the same amount of chemicals, being only a small sampling of the water (quantitatively).

While exploiting the gross and subtle inferior energy (matter), the superior energy (the living entity) forgets his real spiritual mind and intelligence. This forgetfulness is due to the influence of matter upon the living entity. When the living entity becomes free from the influence of the illusory material energy, however, he or she attains the stage called *mukti*, or liberation.

The false ego, under the influence of material illusion, thinks, “I am matter, and material acquisitions are mine.” The soul realizes his or her actual position, however, when they are liberated from all material ideas, including the notion that they will become one in all respects with God. The *Gita* confirms that the living entity is only one of the multi-energies of Krishna. When this energy is freed from material contamination, it becomes fully Krishna conscious, or liberated.

* * *

The clamor over hate-crime legislation is a perfect example of how competing racial and ethnic divisions are tearing our country asunder. In the aftermath of the vicious dragging death of James Byrd, Jr. by three white supremacists in Jasper, Texas, NAACP President Kweisi Mfume said the case “clearly shouts across the world for the urgent need of this Congress to move quickly to strengthen and to pass anti-hate legislation.” As I wrote in “A Guilty Verdict in Jasper,” Mfume’s remarks border on the preposterous, as if to say that Byrd would still be alive today if Texas had anti-hate legislation on the books, and if his killers knew of it beforehand.

Although anti-hate legislation may result in courts meting out heftier sentences after the fact, these laws won’t resurrect the dead. Why is there no emphasis on deconstructing race, on teaching our children, from first grade on, that it is a social construct, that differences between human beings — whether between white and black or between Serb and Kosovan — are largely perceived?

One answer is that such an educational enterprise would spoil the plans for creating a separate-but-equal black nation within the friendly confines of the larger American nation, a black nation whose identity is firmly ensconced in a racial essence, a racial consciousness.

The self-appointed leaders of these racial and ethnic groups know well that pitting group against group causes friction that often leads to violence. Will they recognize the transcendence of artificial group consciousness as a solution? No. Instead, their solution is to call for hate-crimes legislation to deal with the violence they are certain will ensue while maintaining power over the individuals within these artificially created groupings.

Once this country's race leaders cease exploiting the gross and subtle inferior energy (matter) for their own financial and political purposes, the superior energy (the living entity) will have a better chance to remember his or her real spiritual mind and intelligence and transcend this senseless race-consciousness. Only by developing this spiritual insight will we be able to co-exist on this planet and gradually work toward understanding our common source, God.

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 8: Attaining the Supreme

By remembering Lord Krishna in devotion throughout one's life, and especially at the time of death, one can attain to His supreme abode, beyond the material world.

Synopsis of Chapter 8 relative to transcending race-consciousness:

We fear death because of our misidentification with our bodies. If we become self-realized, we do not fear death, nor do we fear moving beyond identifying racially or ethnically. In fact, a natural by-product of self-realization is overcoming fear of all kinds: We will not fear differences, and thus we will not need to identify with artificially constructed races and ethnic groups; we will not fear the natural consequence of the body — death — for we will know that it is merely the dismantling of material elements, quite removed from who we are and what life is really all about.

★ ★ ★

Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn't matter with me now. Because I've been to the mountaintop. And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land. And I'm happy, tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.

— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., from a speech he delivered in support of striking sanitation workers at Mason Temple in Memphis, Tennessee on April 3, 1968 — the day before he was assassinated.

Had Martin Luther King, Jr. glimpsed God or Krishna's supreme abode before giving that famous "mountaintop" speech? Possibly.

Did Malcolm X's spiritual consciousness rise sufficiently during his 1964 pilgrimage to Mecca to allow him not only to take an initiated Muslim name — El Hadj Malik El Shabazz — but to transcend all fear of body death? Again, possibly.

The answer for both King and Shabazz, however, might just as easily be "no."

Since none of us know the precise moment of our death, and unless we have disciplined our minds to *always* remember the Supreme, there is little guarantee of breaking the cycle of birth and death and returning to the eternal spiritual realm.

Even if Martin Luther King, Jr. could have foreseen the exact time of his assassination — was he so transfixed on remembering God that he would have been able to rise beyond the pain of the metal slugs tearing into his body?

Even if Malcolm X realized with crystal clarity that his mortal enemies would gun him down inside Harlem's Audobon Ballroom back in 1965, could he have possibly meditated on the Divine up until such time that he drew his last breath?

Fear is indeed the mind-killer, and as much as many folk would like to believe that King and Shabazz had conquered their fear of death — a fear predicated on misidentifying not only as a flesh-and-bones body but also as a representative of a racial grouping — we simply cannot be certain.

The sages affirm, however, that the spiritual progress we make in this life carries over to the next. It is not for naught. Whatever degree of God realization the two murdered leaders achieved will serve as the new platform from which those souls continue their journey back to Godhead.

* * *

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 8, Verse 8:

He who meditates on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, his mind constantly engaged in remembering Me, undeviated from the path, he, O Partha [Arjuna], is sure to reach Me.

In this verse Lord Krishna stresses the importance of remembering Him. One's memory of Krishna is revived by chanting the maha-mantra (*Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare*) or by contemplating any other legitimate name of God. By this practice of chanting and hearing the *transcendental sound vibration* of the Supreme Lord, one engages one's ear, tongue and mind in His service. A mystic meditation that is easy to practice, it helps one attain the Supreme Lord. Prabhupada states that the devotee can constantly think of the object of worship, the Supreme Lord, by chanting the *Hare Krishna* prayer. This prac-

tice will purify such a person, and at the end of his or her life, due to his or her constant chanting, he or she will be transferred to the kingdom of God.

Yoga practice is meditation on the Supersoul within; this is a preliminary step toward God realization. By chanting *Hare Krishna*, one fixes one's mind always on the Supreme Lord and can supersede all preliminary steps. The mind is fickle, however, and mantra meditation must thus be practiced with the utmost concentration. It is therefore necessary to almost forcefully engage the mind in thinking of Krishna. This is the concept of energy following thought.

To understand the idea of energy following thought, consider the caterpillar who thinks of becoming a butterfly — and is soon transformed into a butterfly in the same life. Similarly, if we constantly think of God or Krishna, it is certain that at the end of our lives we shall have the same bodily constitution as Him, and we will go to Him after death.

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 9: The Most Confidential Knowledge

Lord Krishna is the Supreme Godhead and the supreme object of worship. The soul is eternally related to Him through transcendental devotional service (bhakti). By reviving one's pure devotion one returns to Krishna in the spiritual realm.

Synopsis of Chapter 9 relative to transcending race-consciousness:

By realizing our eternal relationship to God, we are no longer affected by others' attempts to control our energy, to bend us to their will.

* * *

If someone insults you — your mind, body, or bodily extensions — more than likely you would choose to be offended, particularly if you are immersed in the bodily concept of identity. If someone compliments you, more than likely you would choose to be pleased or flattered — again, especially if you identify with the body. Either way, though, it is a choice you must

make for yourself, either consciously or unconsciously. Now, I don't advocate the indiscriminate insulting of others simply to prove the truth of this or for perverse sport, but if, for instance, Joseph Lowery (see Chapter 5 reference) felt in any way insulted or offended by Ruth White's remarks, that was a choice he had to make for himself. No one forced him to be offended, and Ruth had every right to say what she did.

In other words, if you feel insulted by my refusal to let you control my mind, that's your problem, and you had best deal with that yourself.

Correspondingly, as I mentioned in Chapter 1, few are willing to acknowledge the nature and the scale of the brainwashing visited upon the American mulatto over the decades. I honestly can't recall any white person calling me a nigger while growing up in my native Virginia, yet I often heard it come out of the mouths of black folk, including a relative here and there. Now, what does that tell you? Similarly, one of the most idiotic things I've ever heard is that "nigger" — when uttered by a black person — is a term of endearment as opposed to one of intense hatred, as when it is voiced by a white person.

Consider what Arthur A. Fletcher, former Chairman of the United States Commission on Civil Rights (an agency of the Executive Branch), foresaw as the inevitable result of a multiracial Census category. His remarks appeared in the January 1996 edition of *Emerge* magazine (the issue with Johnnie Cochran *striking the pose* next to the caption "RACE MAN") in an article on the now-dead census initiative:

"Light-skinned Blacks will run for the door."

Mull those words over, and see if you don't agree that they reflect an overseer's mindset, that of one "duty-bound" to preserve a master-slave relationship. What is it about "blackness" that Fletcher views as so hideous, so odious, that he and others

must shamelessly embrace the immorality of one-drop in order to place people of mixed ancestry under lock-and-key?

William Javier Nelson, in an Interracial Voice Point-Counterpoint debate, says that hypodescent — the principle that a person of mixed racial heritage must assume the racial identity of the lowest-ranking racial group of that heritage, a.k.a. the one-drop rule — “regarding African ancestry has singly been responsible for more human misery in the United States of America than any other so-called ‘ordinary’ custom I can think of, with the possible exception of (male) chauvinism.”

What is the source of the moral authority which black leaders attempt to use to enforce this relic of Jim Crow racism on mixed-race Americans? Is it the institution of slavery that ended one hundred and thirty-six years ago and under which none of these so-called leaders suffered? No, because it *did* end one hundred and thirty-six years ago. Does this moral authority somehow reside in the memories of those who perished during the legitimate civil rights struggles of the ‘50s and ‘60s? No, because obsessively lamenting the past condemns you — and those you purport to represent — to repeat it, condemns you to squander the present, a gift, at the expense of the future. By all means, learn from the past, and then get out, move on. The authority that beseeches men and women to perform devotional service emanates from a higher, spiritual source, and that surely isn’t the current leadership of the civil rights industry.

One can’t help being amused, though, upon hearing black nationalists claim: “Well, you know, Martin was coming around to our way of thinking right before he died.” Really? Then the so-called mainstream-moderate black leaders proudly assert: “Well, you know, Martin would have approved of this current system of racial classification.” Really? How do they know? Even those who knew MLK personally could not possibly have duplicated, perfectly, his thought processes. It would be impossible to do so, because each individual soul is distinct and unique; there are no carbon copies when it comes to human personality.

Are we to view the current crop of civil rights leaders as the most recent in a preceptorial channel of “Divine Teachers” dating back to the rulers of ancient Africa? Critics of afrocentrism decry it as a fraudulent discipline based on the idea that you can make people feel better about themselves if you give them a glorious history and persuade them that a landmass is worshipable. In fact, the history of ancient Africa *is* glorious. For instance, many credit the Egyptian king Akhnaton as being the founder of the supreme concept in human thought: One God, One World, One Universal Law — the harmony of mankind. The real name of this philosopher king — who lived about fourteen hundred years before Christ — was Amenhotep IV. He assumed the name Akhnaton, which means “dedicated to God.”

The teachings of Akhnaton, however, seem vastly different from the contemporary notion of “reuniting the Diaspora” seemingly in hopes of procreating a worldwide, political-economic power to eventually overtake, dominate and subjugate “whiteness.” That mindset is no different from its polar opposite, which prays nightly for the ascent of a Fourth Reich.

I say without any fear of contradiction that one of the black community’s biggest problems today is this notion of a “monolithic blackness,” this collectivist ideal of only one way to be black. Presently, if you’re black, you take your cue from the NAACP or whichever individual leader is particularly charismatic (read: in front of the cameras) at any given time. According to many, Jesse (Keep Hope Alive!) Jackson currently reigns supreme in that regard.

Inasmuch as “hoping” is the same thing as “postponing” — i.e., it is not “doing” for oneself — what is Jackson actually advocating that black folk do? Think about that, won’t you?

In direct contrast to this, a self-realized individual who has discovered that the best source of guidance comes from within may voluntarily opt to be a part of any group, though not because he feels he has to. He does not view membership in a particular group as magically validating the identity he has con-

structed for himself, nor does he think it will allow him to manifest the changes in his life that he desires, changes that he can effect through his own initiative and free will. Such a person moves freely between different thought-groups sharing diverse interests such as literature, philosophy, politics, religion, spirituality — sans any coerced considerations of race, ethnicity or phenotype. Such a person is truly free, not only of external designations but of materialistic misconception — the only allegiance of such a person is to God and to God alone.

* * *

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 9, Verse 34:

Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, offer obeisances and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me.

Only total absorption in God will do the trick: If we want to transcend the bodily concept and develop love for our Creator, we have to learn to meditate on Him with full attention. The Gita goes on to explain that Krishna or God consciousness is the *only* means of being delivered from the clutches of this contaminated material world. In his purport, Srila Prabhupada asserts that unscrupulous commentators distort the meaning of what is directly stated in the Gita: that all devotional service should be offered to Krishna, who is not an ordinary human being but is in fact God. He is Absolute Truth. His body, mind and He Himself are one and absolute — not made of material elements. But because they do not know this science of Krishna, some commentators hide Krishna and divide His personality from His mind or from His body. These are people who pose as knowers of the truth but are actually swindlers in the dress of saints. Similarly, in all fields there are those who are pretenders, who make profit

out of misleading people — I can think of few better examples of this than race hustlers who corrupt people's minds by preaching the virtues of preserving race-consciousness.

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 10: The Opulence of the Absolute

All wondrous phenomena showing power, beauty, grandeur or sublimity, either in the material world or in the spiritual, are but partial manifestations of Krishna's divine energies and opulence. As the supreme cause of all causes and the support and essence of everything, Krishna is the supreme object of worship for all beings.

Synopsis of Chapter 10 relative to transcending race-consciousness:

America's success is by the grace of God, but our nation tends to neglect this truth. Moreover, we seem to ignore our virtues as a nation and prefer, instead, to break into small factions and warring groups.

* * *

Whenever one sees some extraordinary power, one should understand that it is derived from God's power. It logically follows, therefore, that America's predominance in the world is due

to God's favor. Notwithstanding the increasing number of interracial marriages and their offspring, America, seemingly at the behest of the government's executive branch, various "civil rights" groups and their media sympathizers who purposely and consistently present a stark black/white dichotomy to the public, appears dead set on dichotomizing into several smaller autonomous "states" that may eventually commence fighting each other like cats and dogs. This is due to a depraved devotion to race-consciousness. In fact, it would not be far off to say that in our country — and throughout most of the modern world — race-consciousness has replaced God-consciousness.

* * *

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 10, Verse 20:

I am the Self, O Gudakesha [Arjuna], seated in the hearts of all creatures. I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all beings.

In this verse Krishna addresses Arjuna as *Gudakesha*, which means "one who has conquered the darkness of sleep." For those who are sleeping in the darkness of ignorance — including those misidentifying with the body, those misidentifying as members of racial or ethnic groups — it is not possible to understand how the Supreme Godhead manifests Himself in the material and spiritual worlds. Thus, this name given by Krishna to Arjuna is significant. Owing to Arjuna being above such darkness, the Personality of Godhead agrees to describe His various opulences. Because He was able to pull Arjuna out of ignorance, He was able to reveal higher truths to Him. Otherwise, it would have been quite impossible.

Krishna first informs Arjuna that He is the Self or soul of the entire cosmic manifestation by the power of His primary expan-

sion. Before the material creation, the Supreme Lord, by His plenary existence, accepts the *purusha* incarnations (the primary expansions of Lord Vishnu that effect the creation, maintenance and destruction of the material universes), and from Him everything begins. Therefore, He is the ultimate *atma*, the soul of the *mahat-tattva*, the universal elements. The total material energy is not the cause of the creation, but actually, as Maha-Vishnu, God enters into the *mahat-tattva*, the total material energy, and He causes the creation in this way. He is the Oversoul, as opposed to us — we are ordinary souls, subordinate to Him.

When Maha-Vishnu enters into the manifested universes, He again manifests Himself as the Supersoul in each and every entity — in the hearts of all beings. We have experience that the personal body of the living entity exists due to the presence of the spiritual spark. Without the existence of the spiritual spark, the body cannot develop. Similarly, the material manifestation cannot develop unless the Supreme Soul — Krishna — enters into it.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is existing as the Supersoul in all manifested universes, though individuals sleeping in the darkness of tribal ignorance — often under the influence of atheistic Marxism — find this hard to believe. We are so conditioned to look for what separates us, what makes us “different” — witness especially the contemporary “diversity” movement — that we fail or refuse to recognize that our innate spirituality is the common denominator we should all eagerly embrace. Recognition of God as the source of all, the common Lord of each body, would be a big step in this direction.

In the introduction to his 1980 bestseller, *The Third Wave*, Alvin Toffler contends that in a culture of “warring specialisms, drowned in fragmented data and fine-toothed analysis, synthesis

is not merely useful — it is crucial.” He proffers his book as one of large-scale synthesis, contrasting the old industrial civilization with the new information-age that most could not have imagined just twenty years ago. (The book divides civilization into only three parts — a First Wave agricultural phase, a Second Wave industrial phase and a Third Wave phase that we are now experiencing.) Toffler continues:

So profoundly revolutionary is this new civilization that it challenges all our old assumptions. Old ways of thinking, old formulas, dogmas, and ideologies, no matter how cherished or how useful in the past, no longer fit the facts. The world that is fast emerging from the clash of new values and technologies, new geopolitical relationships, new life-styles and modes of communication, demands wholly new ideas and analogies, classifications and concepts. We cannot cram the embryonic world of tomorrow into yesterday’s conventional cubbyholes. Nor are orthodox attitudes or moods appropriate.

Though humans fear transitional change — opting all too often for the comfort of the prison of their past conditioning — Toffler correctly argues that there is good reason for long-range optimism, even if the civilizational shift manifests an outwardly stormy appearance. After all, change is not only good but also natural.

The grand metaphor of Alvin Toffler’s book is that of colliding waves of change, colliding and overlapping, and nothing symbolizes that more today than the growing resistance to this government’s continuing racial fixation.

It is patently absurd to say that the only way to remedy the historical discrimination of a bogus racial classification scheme — and the accompanying racial hierarchy — is by continuing that same scheme. A thinking person knows that the result is going to be bogus and divisive, just as it’s always been. (The resultant system of “federally recognized groups” battling each

other over shares of government largesse corresponds to Toffler's warring specialisms, and the absence of official recognition for "mixedness" certainly coheres with his thoughts on our drowning in fragmented data camouflaged as fine-toothed analysis.) The joke is on us, though, if we are fool enough to believe that this is the goal, notwithstanding how many times we hear the specious pronouncement: "A multiracial identifier won't do anything to eradicate lingering racism, so we oppose it." My friends, eliminating racism is not the goal; rather, keeping it under control, maintaining it within acceptable parameters, keeping an eye on it, *is*.

The game plan is not to *eradicate* racism, itself the by-product of the *belief* in the existence of separate races and a racial hierarchy, but merely to *control* it as much as possible. You don't have to take my word for it, though. Allow me to cite a paper by Cornel West, professor of Afro-American studies and philosophy of religion at Harvard University. His paper, entitled "Toward A Socialist Theory Of Racism," admits that the strategy of coerced membership into mutually exclusive racial and ethnic categories does not lead to an eradication of racism. West writes:

We must frankly acknowledge that a democratic socialist society will not necessarily eradicate racism. Yet a democratic socialist society is the best hope for alleviating and minimizing racism, particularly institutional forms of racism.

Over the decades, we've all heard exhortations to fight for "Racial Equality!" This begs the question: since "races" don't exist to begin with, how do you make them equal? In the specific case of the white race and the black race, how do you make these two nonexistent entities equal? (Indeed, why spend the effort of trying to equate zero with zero?) Do you do it by keeping race-based statistics that leave the construct of race and all of the attendant differences between the races in place at day's end? How does this approach ensure that tomorrow's executives and

officials at Texaco, Denny's, Adams Mark Hotels, New Jersey State Police, and so on, won't be as racist as civil-rights groups maintain their predecessors are today if we're unwilling to attack the actual belief system that spawns racism, race-hatred and race-based violence? A cynic might suggest it provides an inexhaustible supply of future targets to charge with "institutional racism." That's unthinkable, though. Or is it?

In the 1999 New Jersey case, the Department of Justice reached a settlement over allegations that state police engaged in a pattern of stopping motorists based on their race, which is also known as "racial profiling." New Jersey now prohibits state troopers from relying on race or ethnicity when making traffic stops unless they have information at least partially identifying a suspect by race. The state must also document the race and gender of all motorists the state police stop as well as the reason for the stop or search. Is something wrong with this picture? Forget that, sometimes, guessing someone's race is problematic at best; a trooper might peg me as a "white," "Latino" or, since *mixed-race* doesn't exist in America, a "light-skinned black"! Forget, too, that the reporting process mandated in the agreement is itself ripe for the fraud and deceit it is supposed to correct. The deeper issue is that this does absolutely nothing to change the troopers' racial consciousness; if anything, the requirement that they document the race and gender of all motorists they stop will *reinforce* it! Again, the idea is not to eradicate racism but, as in this case, to place it under the *watchful eye* of Big Brother.

Contrary to what West and others try to convince us of, the problems facing Americans in the 21st century are not racial but economic and class-based as well as spiritual. "*Workers of the world, unite!*" and other hackneyed slogans from a long-ago, discredited era, however, will not improve the lot of those who need help most. Democratic governance, unfettered global trade, vigilant monitoring of labor standards and economic growth will increase the workingman's compensation — no Marxist-Leninist-inspired race struggles required, thank you.

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 11: The Universal Form

Lord Krishna grants Arjuna divine vision and reveals His spectacular unlimited form as the cosmic universe. Thus, He conclusively establishes His divinity. However, Arjuna prefers Krishna's original two-armed form, which Krishna reveals is the source of everything that be — His own all-beautiful humanlike form is the original form of the Godhead. One can perceive this form only by pure devotional service.

Synopsis of Chapter 11 relative to transcending race-consciousness:

We tend to forget that we live in a vast physical universe with untold billions of galaxies, solar systems, planets, moons, suns, etc. Therefore, we should view a global battle on Earth between black and white as not worth our time.

* * *

Spinoza was only eight when he witnessed a scene that spurred him to philosophical speculation. It was at the

Amsterdam synagogue. The members of the congregation were trampling over a man who was lying across the threshold.

“What is this man’s name?” Spinoza asked his father.

“Uriel Acosta.”

“What did he do to deserve this punishment?”

“He is a freethinker, Baruch.” And then his father explained how Acosta had been expelled from the Jewish congregation because he had questioned their religion; and how the members of the congregation were now “stamping” the sins out of him before his readmission into the synagogue.

Little Spinoza went home in a thoughtful mood. That afternoon, as he was playing in the street, he tried to express his sympathy for the victim; but one of his playmates struck him in the face.

The next day, the Acosta tragedy came to a head. Unable to endure his public disgrace, the young freethinker shot himself to death.

A strange world of foolish people, thought little Spinoza. Everybody was trying to hurt everybody else, it seemed. Baruch was wise beyond his years. Along with the rest of his family, he had been driven out of Spain because the Christians hated the Jews. And now the Spinozas lived in Holland where the Jews hated their own kind. What was the meaning of all this? “When I grow up,” he said to his father, “I’ll try to find a way to stop people from hating one another.”

— Henry Thomas, from *Understanding The Great Philosophers*

Precious few things have changed since the seventeenth century: Though America’s racial elders don’t stamp, expel or excommunicate freethinkers — with the noteworthy exception of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, that is — we simply pick our behinds up off the pews and head for the doors. That’s when the choir launches into an aria of ridicule and scorn — *from page 301 of your hymnals, brothers and sisters!* — aimed at the accursed traitors to the glorious memory of Mother Africa.

In 1656, the elders of the same Amsterdam synagogue that had excommunicated Acosta sixteen years earlier did the same

to twenty-four-year-old Baruch Spinoza. They had previously offered Baruch five hundred dollars a year to keep quiet about his unorthodox religious and spiritual views. The elders wanted him not to teach them wisdom but to hold his tongue. Spinoza refused, stating that he was content to live with an empty pocket and a free soul.

Spinoza listened to this excommunication and felt no rancor against his persecutors. "It is my business not to criticize, to execrate, or to condemn," he wrote, "but to understand." He realized that the elders of the synagogue believed themselves desperately in the right. For the Jews, tormented on every side, found their only stronghold in their faith. They believed that any attack against this stronghold threatened the very existence of their people. Hence they looked upon Spinoza as a traitor. They were anxious to prove to the entire world that they were a people united in their determination to survive. Spinoza threatened their survival, as they thought, and therefore he must be expelled from the community of the Jews.

But Spinoza felt equally convinced of his own right. He saw the world "under the aspect of eternity," while his judges saw it only under the aspect of the moment. He decided to stay in Amsterdam, alone with his thoughts and his books — a stranger among his people but "a constant companion of God."

— Henry Thomas, *op. cit.*

What specifically had Spinoza done to warrant excommunication? He simply came to understand that there was a higher purpose to his existence than being a loyal and obedient Jew. He declared: "The different religions divide people, but it is my desire to unite them."

Similarly, many individuals who can claim varying degrees of African heritage have concluded there is a higher purpose to our existence on this planet than being loyal and obedient blacks. It is our desire as self-determined, self-identified *multiracial* indi-

viduals to lead society beyond racial divisions. Our unique life experiences as individuals who have, time and again, positioned ourselves on either side of the color line, qualify us to shepherd this civilization toward an understanding that we are not here to build and perpetuate racial political empires with which to control the lives of others. Instead, we are all on this planet to consciously evolve, to awaken to a higher destiny. To remember the future.

As one character in James Redfield's *The Celestine Prophecy* declares: "At some level, you knew that life's meaning was connected to the problem of transcending our past conditioning and moving our lives forward." Accordingly, my basic life question is simple: How do I evolve spiritually so that I transcend the construct of race in my own life and help society do the same?

Leaders of the traditional civil rights organizations confuse love for the so-called "races" with that level of affinity more appropriate for the life-force of the universe. (Verily, one could ascribe this confusion to far too many people regardless of "racial" affiliation.) These souls are experiencing dreadful difficulty transcending their past racial conditioning — due largely to their fear of change, their fear of losing the crutch of past suffering — and they see this country only under the aspect of the moment. We, however, view the world and the universe under the aspect of eternity, and we do not envisage Earth divided in perpetuum in a pathetic battle for racial supremacy. The "longer now" we see is something the others cannot presently imagine.

On one occasion he was almost lynched by an infuriated mob. He had received an invitation for a philosophical chat with Prince de Condé, who had invaded Holland at the time. On his way home from the camp, Spinoza was assailed with stones and angry shouts: "Renegade!" "Atheist!" "Traitor!" He had a hard time convincing the mob that he was merely a philosopher and not a spy. The conflicts of men had no greater concern for him than the battles of spiders. He was not a

nationalist; he subscribed only to the international brotherhood of free and fearless men.

— Henry Thomas, op. cit.

The *multiracial* mindset opposes any coerced connection to the political color continuum and the curse of binary thinking that permits the afflicted to behold only a protracted global war between white and black or white and “of color.” *Multirace* is safe-space, a sanctuary created by those of us who have consciously decided to step out of, and a good distance away from, the continuum. This safe haven is where we catch our breaths, lick our wounds, and allow our scars to heal. We foster a sense of community between ourselves and welcome others who also grow weary of the constant combat to join us — if they desire.

Ultimately, a majority of color continuum combatants — of all hues and backgrounds — will become consciously aware of the mindlessness of the bloody conflict and lay down their weapons to join us. At that point, we will have thoroughly repudiated the construct of race, and we will have shown the abject stupidity of categorizing humans into mutually exclusive racial and ethnic categories.

* * *

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 11, Verse 13:

At that time Arjuna could see in the universal form of the Lord the unlimited expansions of the universe situated in one place although divided into many, many thousands.

Swami Prabhupada informs us that the word *tatra* (there) in the original Sanskrit text is significant. It indicates that both Arjuna and Krishna were sitting on the chariot when Arjuna saw the universal form. Others on the battlefield could not see this form, because Krishna gave the vision only to Arjuna who could see in

the body of Krishna many thousands of universes. The Vedic scriptures declare that there are many universes and many planets. Some of them are made of earth, some are made of gold, some are made of jewels, some are very great, some are not so great, etc. Sitting on his chariot, Arjuna could see all these universes, but no one could understand what was going on between Arjuna and Krishna.

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 12: Devotional Service

Bhakti-yoga, pure devotional service to Lord Krishna, is the highest and most expedient means for attaining pure love for Krishna, which is the highest end of spiritual existence. Those who follow this supreme path develop divine qualities.

Synopsis of Chapter 12 relative to transcending race-consciousness:

The highest end of spiritual existence is not Sunday services at your local church. It involves the cultivation of spiritual consciousness, whatever one's institutional affiliation may be. Unfortunately, too many preachers of all colors propagate the gospel of race-consciousness and lead their followers astray. They do this not only by trying to legitimate the bodily concept and race-consciousness but by teaching that religion is about church attendance and mundane rules of behavior. In other words, they teach that the "shell" of religion is its essence, and they ignore its real essence: Love of God.

★ ★ ★

If the esoteric and New Age groups do not have a political agenda — political in the broad sense of the complex of social and structural relations between members of a society — then they will be among the most ineffective of groups in the movement for world transformation.

— From William Allen, *Mystics must enter the public arena to change it*

Not all religionists, ministers, reverends, pastors, priests, fathers, rabbis, imams, gurus, etc., peddle race-consciousness. Along with those who don't are members of "New Age" groups and even the old Secret Societies — no longer secret, mind you, particularly with the advent of the Internet. These folk might well constitute the frontline forces in a *jihad* or Holy War against race-consciousness.

One individual who probably *won't* be leading the charge against race-consciousness, however, is Nation of Islam Minister Louis Farrakhan. In fact, there's probably no religionist on the scene today who has done more to lead people astray from the word of God.

1-The Nation of Islam's separatist Weltanschauung

The astonishing thing about the October 1995 "Million Man March" is that 400,000+ African-American males seemingly needed a known racial separatist, Louis Farrakhan, to clue them in to the worthiness of personal responsibility and accountability. Is it conceivable that these men had no prior understanding of and appreciation for such a basic human tenet as ensuring the long-term survival of self, family and community by working and by not engaging in counter-survival activity such as crime, drug use and family abandonment? Of course they knew, for this was not a day of "atonement." This was a day to herald the ascen-

dancy of Farrakhan and his Nation of Islam to the throne of African-American politics.

Over the past years, separatist ideology has steadily gained support among the traditional civil rights organizations, especially those that denounce the multiracial initiative. Farrakhan's reign over black politics is but the culmination of a decades-long debate over whether integration was a bad idea. Sadly, the separatists/nationalists have apparently won the day in the African-American community.

In his *New York Times* article of October 1, 1995 entitled "The New Dilemma: Look Who's Saying Separate Is Equal," Steven A. Holmes quotes Edward J. Newsome, a black member of the Kansas City school board as saying, "I think desegregation is dead and should have died a long time ago, if the focus is on trying to have a physical mixing of the races." Newsome's remarks are representative of those by individuals who have lately breathed new life into the once discredited doctrine of "separate but equal" that the Supreme Court struck down in 1954. That year the Court declared that separate could never be equal, that segregation was meant to hurt blacks (and that it succeeded in doing so) no matter what the quality of particular segregated institutions. Recently, though, Newsome and other black members of school boards in Denver and Kansas City questioned whether trying to force whites to mix with black children was not only demeaning to blacks but unnecessary to achieve equal academic opportunities.

In the same *Times* article, Professor Alex M. Johnson Jr. of the University of Virginia Law School is quoted as saying that integration has failed blacks and that the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision was a mistake. He said he could not have made those statements 20 or 30 years ago because they "would have been so far outside the mainstream that, frankly, they would have been unthinkable by an African-American scholar employed at a prestigious law school. Quite the contrary, the views

expressed herein might have been more easily attributed to an avowed racist.”

Speaking of Farrakhan and his Nation of Islam, Lynne Duke of the *Washington Post* wrote in 1994: “The Nation presents its teachings as the antidote to racial prejudice still present in American society as well as the self-hatred and ignorance the Nation says have afflicted generations of black people. While most black groups have fought for integration, the Nation advocates separation and asks why blacks should seek partnership with people who historically have excluded them.”

Young blacks in particular who can't fathom the measurable gains accomplished since *Brown vs. Board of Education* seem most vulnerable to the separatist ideology of Farrakhan and the Nation. Jesse Jackson and older blacks who've been through the struggle and who know well the positive strides that have been made should be ashamed of themselves for having participated in the “Million Man March.” Jackson, unfortunately, has become a pathetic figure whose political star has twice been eclipsed in recent years. He knows that if America will at last have a non-white President, it will likely be a retired four-star general named Powell and not a '60s-era civil rights leader who can only speak in irritating rhyme. Jackson also has seen Farrakhan cash in his IOU for having come to Jesse's defense in 1984. Farrakhan defended Jackson's reference to Jews as “Hymies” and to New York as “Hymie town” by calling Zionism a “dirty” religion, by accusing Jewish groups of being behind death threats made against Jackson and by threatening holy revenge if harm came to Jackson. Jesse had to come to Washington for “Million Man” to pay off his debt.

2-Blood on the hands

That the Nation of Islam murdered Malcolm X in 1965 is hardly in dispute. Lynne Duke's *Washington Post* piece gives some background:

A former calypso singer named Louis Eugene Wolcott, Farrakhan was recruited into the Nation by Malcolm X in the 1950s and rose to prominence with his recording in 1960 of a song titled "The White Man's Heaven is the Black Man's Hell." Still, he was eclipsed by his mentor, Malcolm X, who was Elijah Muhammad's main minister and the movement's leading light.

When Malcolm X and Muhammad fell out in a bitter public dispute over allegations that Muhammad had fathered illegitimate children, Farrakhan stepped into the void. He wrote a series of articles in the Nation's newspaper, then called Muhammad Speaks, in which he called Malcolm X a 'dog' and said he deserved death.

After Malcolm X's assassination by members of the Nation angered by his split from Elijah Muhammad in February 1965, Farrakhan's star rapidly rose.

Do any of the 400,000+ march participants remember this? Do they care that one of the last two great black leaders of our times, Martin Luther King, Jr. being the other, was gunned down in cold blood by the Nation?

Actually, NOI thugs didn't murder "Malcolm X." By then he was El Hadj Malik El Shabazz, the name he assumed after his 1964 pilgrimage to Mecca during which he became an orthodox Muslim. His travels that year to the Middle East and Africa gave him a more optimistic view regarding potential brotherhood between black and white Americans. He no longer preached separation between the races.

Farrakhan's nearly 3-hour harangue on October 16, 1995 during Million Man is a lightweight speech. Rather, a more memorable and moving speech was the one Malcolm X delivered in December 1964 at the Oxford Union in England:*

I read once, passingly, about a man named Shakespeare. I only read about him passingly, but I remember one thing he wrote that kind of moved me. He put it in the mouth of

Hamlet, I think it was, who said ‘To be or not to be.’ He was in doubt about something. (Laughter)

Whether it was nobler in the mind of man to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune — moderation — or to take up arms against the sea of troubles and by opposing, end them. And I go for that. If you take up arms, you’ll end it, but if you sit around and wait for the one who’s in power to make up his mind that he should end it, you’ll be waiting a long time.

And, in my opinion, the young generation of whites, blacks, brown, whatever else there is, you’re living at a time of extremism, a time of revolution, a time when there’s got to be a change. People in power have misused it, and now there has to be a change and a better world has to be built, and the only way it’s going to be built is with extreme methods.

And I for one will join in with *anyone*, don’t care what color you are, as long as you want to change this miserable condition that exists on this earth.

Thank you.

Malcolm finally realized that empowering this planet’s poor and oppressed could not be accomplished with venomous diatribes against a particular racial or ethnic group, by advocating separatist ideology. As a result of evolving into this higher plane of thought, and for other reasons, he was murdered in cold blood on February 21, 1965.

Those who marched with Farrakhan on October 16, 1995 now carry the blood of Malik El Shabazz on their collective hands. Cleansing them and *atoning* for his death won’t be easy.

(*Reference the PBS documentary “Malcolm X: Make it Plain” a part of the “American Experience” series.)

* * *

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 12, Verse 13-14:

One who is not envious but who is a kind friend to all living entities, who does not think himself a proprietor, who is free from

false ego and equal both in happiness and distress, who is always satisfied and engaged in devotional service with determination and whose mind and intelligence are in agreement with Me — he is very dear to Me.

A pure devotee is never disturbed in any circumstances, nor is he envious of anyone as Farrakhan was of Malcolm. A devotee never becomes his enemy's enemy; he thinks that one is acting as his enemy due to his own past misdeeds. Thus it is better to suffer than to protest. Whenever a devotee is in distress or has fallen into difficulty, he thinks that it is the Lord's mercy upon him. He thinks: "Thanks to my past misdeeds I should suffer far, far greater than I am suffering now. So it is by the mercy of the Supreme Lord that I am not getting all the punishment I am due. I am just getting a little, by the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead." Therefore he is always calm, quiet and patient, despite any distressful conditions. A devotee is always kind to everyone, even to his enemy or to one who mistakenly believes himself to be a devotee's enemy.

The Sanskrit word *nirmama* means that a devotee does not attach much importance to the peace and trouble pertaining to the body because he knows perfectly well that he is not the material body. He does not identify with the body; therefore he is freed from the conception of false ego and is equipoised both in happiness and distress. He is tolerant, and he is satisfied with whatever comes by the grace of the Supreme Lord. He does not overly endeavor to achieve something with great difficulty; therefore he is always joyful. He is a completely perfect mystic because he is fixed in the instructions received from the spiritual master — a bona fide spiritual master, not one such as Elijah Muhammad who preached race hatred — and because his senses are controlled, he is determined.

He is not swayed by false argument, because no one can lead him from the fixed determination of devotional service. He is fully conscious of the eternal Lord, so no one can disturb him.

All his qualifications enable him to depend entirely on the Supreme Lord. Such a standard of devotional service is undoubtedly very rare, but a devotee becomes situated in that stage by following the regulative principles outlined in the *Bhagavad-gita*. Furthermore, the Lord says that such a devotee is very dear to Him, for the Lord is always pleased with all his activities. What the Lord sees, in other words, is His devotees' sincere effort.

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 13: Nature, the Enjoyer, and Consciousness

One who understands the difference between the body, the soul and the Supersoul beyond them both attains liberation from this material world.

Synopsis of Chapter 13 relative to transcending race-consciousness:

If we but listen to our conscience (the Supersoul, the Ultimate Knower of our bodily Field), we will intuitively know that identifying racially is wrong.

* * *

Consciousness is the most fundamental part of human experience; nothing is more intimate or more immediate. Every sense impression — such as seeing the words on this page — means something to us because we are conscious. A chair registers no sensory impression; it is not conscious; it has no soul. But I do; I am; I have a soul. Or do I? Do I have a soul or do I have a body? Who am I — the soul or the body?

Ancient scriptural texts, especially those from India, sim-

plify fundamental ontological questions. For example, in certain classical schools dating back to the Vedantic tradition, there is an elementary exercise that runs something like this: Can I be conscious of my body? Can I be conscious of my hand? My legs? My face? My heart? My mind? Yes, I can be conscious of any part of my body, its pleasures, its pains.

Now, can the body be conscious of itself? The immediate answer is no. My body cannot be conscious of itself; rather I am conscious of my body. This simple reflection on the nature of consciousness makes it clear that there is a separation between the body and the self, the living being within who is conscious of the body.

— Steven Rosen, *The Reincarnation Controversy: Uncovering the Truth in the World Religions*

In October 1996, radio and television talk-show host Tony Brown asked me about the difference between self-identified blacks and those of us who opt for multiracial, since — to repeat the one-drop mantra — most blacks are mixed anyway. Notwithstanding that not all mixed-race persons are of the black/white combination, the fundamental difference, then and now, is the mindset or level of consciousness.

One aspect of this different mindset is the refusal to see ourselves as part this, that and the other. Rather, our focus is on the integral being, the world citizen. Mr. Brown, for example, refers to himself, culturally, as “an Americanized African.” He speaks of black culture in America as derived from “our African experience modified by our American experience.” Note the emphasis (read: eagerness?) to articulate space, distance, a separation between “blackness” or “Africanness” on one hand and “whiteness” “Europeanness” and even “Americanness” on the other. Note, too, the emphasis on maintaining loyalty to a geographical landmass, the African continent, upon which most African-Americans have never stepped foot — nor will they ever.

To the contrary, we eschew this nonsense that we should, somehow, keep the various races or ethnicities separate within

us — especially so government demographers can assemble their *rich racial data*. We emphasize the blend. (Try selling your kid on the idea that his green Crayola is really a blue crayon modified by the yellow experience and that he should always bear that in mind. I guarantee he will look at you as if you've gone stark raving mad.)

A thinking person also rejects the hackneyed, politically-correct cliché about mixed-race folk “building bridges” between the various “races.” As “races” don't exist to begin with, these bridges merely wind their way into oblivion.

A second facet of the multiracial mindset or level of consciousness is the refusal to let others cram their separatist political agendas down our throats, and isn't that really what the religion of “monorace” has degenerated to as we engage the new millennium — naked political ideologies based on keeping “headcounts” as artificially high as possible so that funding streams for government dollars remain unobstructed?

* * *

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 13, Verse 35:

One who knowingly sees the difference between the body and the owner of the body, and can understand the process of liberation from this bondage, also attains to the supreme goal.

The *Gita* explains that one who is truly wise should know the distinction between the body, the owner of the body, and the Supersoul. A faithful person should at first have good association to hear of God and thus gradually become enlightened. If one accepts a spiritual master, he can learn to distinguish between matter and spirit, and that becomes the stepping stone for further spiritual realization. A spiritual master teaches his students to get free from the material concept of life by various

instructions. For instance, in *Bhagavad-gita* Krishna instructs Arjuna to free himself from materialistic considerations.

One can understand that this body is matter, that it can be analyzed in terms of its twenty-four material elements. The *Gita* calls this the gross manifestation. The subtle manifestation is the mind and psychological phenomena. The symptoms of life are the interaction of these features. Over and above this, however, there is the soul, and there is also the Supersoul. The soul and the Supersoul are two. You and me — we're the soul. God, He's the Supersoul.

This material world is working by the conjunction of the soul and the twenty-four material elements. One who can see the constitution of the whole material manifestation as this combination of the soul and material elements and who can also see the situation of the Supreme Soul becomes eligible for transfer to the spiritual world. These things are meant for contemplation and for realization, and one should have a complete understanding of this chapter with the help of a spiritual guide.

If the Lord is situated in everyone's heart as the Supersoul (and is thus in more than one place at a given time), has He become divided? No. He is actually one. The perfect example that we find in Vedic literature is that of the sun: The sun, at the meridian, is situated in its place. If one goes for five thousand miles in all directions, however, and asks, "Where is the sun?" everyone will say that it is shining on his head. Analogically, this example shows that although God is not divided, He is situated in each of us as if He were.

* * *

And yet there is a heartening phase to Spinoza's philosophy. Our destiny, he declares, is greater than we think. Each of us, though a small part of God, is an equally important part. Under the eternal aspect of existence, there is no such thing as smaller or greater. Our present life, as the Spinozist Walt

Whitman has observed, is but a stage in our ultimate development. All of us — from the vagabond in the gutter to the king on his throne — are interrelated pupils in the classroom of eternity. At this moment we happen to be in different grades, depending upon our present mental and spiritual development. All of us are taught in accordance with our capacity to learn. But in the long run, whatever our grade or degree of knowledge at this stage of our learning, every one of us will reach the senior class of the elect.

— Henry Thomas, *op. cit.*

Ideally, the multiracial mindset does not subdivide into black and white multiracials (why impose upon the mixed-race community the same ruinous dichotomy that tortures the remainder of the population) or even multiracials “of color” (show me one human who doesn’t have color), though we must recognize that many of us are at varying degrees of personal evolution on this issue.

A consideration of multiracialism symbolizes an intermediate point between our society’s race-obsessed present and the ideal future of racelessness. Critics of this philosophy scream: “But you’re using the same racial terminology, so you’re a hypocrite!” The answer to these people is that before they even became aware of the “multiracial movement” they, in all probability, did nothing themselves to deconstruct race or the notion of racial purity on even the most modest of scales. Who are the true hypocrites, and where is their new non-racial lexicon?

Deconstructing race is the only legitimate method to eliminate racism, race-hatred and race-based violence. In July 1998, the Office of Drug Control Policy launched a \$195-million-a-year campaign to create and run ads on television, radio and movie screens, in newspapers and magazines, and on the Internet to fight illegal drug use among young people. Now, it’s hard to oppose even this umpteenth effort to show someone what their brain looks like on drugs: a scrambled egg, remember? Why can’t our government — or more likely, a private consortium —

spend a similar amount of dinero deconstructing race? (By deconstructing race, I'm not speaking of the mass-miscegenation technique proposed by Warren Beatty in his movie "Bulworth," though that idea rates honorable mention.) It could run ads with sports & entertainment celebrities and anthropologists delivering the message to Americans of all ages that race is an illegitimate idea. I've said it before, and I'll say it as long as I draw breath: When people fully understand that they have predicated their hatred and bigotry upon a false notion, hatred and bigotry will necessarily begin to dissipate. It will have no choice!

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 14: The Three Modes Of Material Nature

All embodied souls are under the control of the three modes, or qualities, of material nature: goodness, passion, and ignorance. Lord Krishna explains what these modes are, how they act upon us, how one transcends them, and the symptoms of one who has attained the transcendental state.

Synopsis of Chapter 14 relative to transcending race-consciousness:

We should strive to perform all our actions in the mode of goodness while simultaneously noticing those around us who act in passion and ignorance. The mode of goodness allows us to think clearly and to bid adieu to race-consciousness — and to other unsavory conceptions of falsity. Goodness also acts as a springboard to transcendence, allowing us to realize our innate relationship with God.

* * *

The uproar back in 1999 over Aaron McGruder's "Boondocks" comic strip brings to mind the decades-old question of whether blacks can be racist. Since the 1960s, the radical-left has posited that while blacks are certainly capable of being prejudiced or bigoted against other individuals or groups of individuals, they cannot be racist because the power element is lacking from the equation. What equation am I referring to? The one that reads: Racism = Race Prejudice + Power. Since blacks, as permanent victims of white oppression here in America, lack the political and economic power necessary to enforce their racial prejudice or bigotry, they cannot possibly manifest any truly racist acts toward anyone. Or so the argument goes.

To this day, that lame dogma continues to provide cover for attitudes and actions that any thinking person would interpret as racist. Leading the pack of those who refuse to acknowledge Spike Lee's ability (read: power) to bankroll a film, "Jungle Fever," that denigrates interracial romance and marriage are those Caucasians who, inexplicably, feel guilty about slavery. They dare not speak against it for fear of someone calling them racists. For the same reason they will not open their mouths about Aaron McGruder's ability (read: power) to portray multiracial females as confused (don't they know they're 100% black) cutie-pies in a nationally syndicated comic strip. Do I even have to go into the NAACP's ability (read: power) to thwart the multiracial Census initiative? I didn't think so.

Conversely, blacks certainly recognize the existence of the equation's power element but are too busy celebrating their new found mastery to notice what they have become — a one-hundred and eighty degree opposite number of that which they have so long fought against. If, then, the only individuals willing to open their mouths about it are self-identified multiracials, so be it.

Now, I can't draw worth a darn, but suppose I collaborated with someone on a comic strip that we'll call "Harlem River." The main character or protagonist, one Cat Michaels, self-identifies as mixed, multiracial, mulatto or whatever. While walking through the Upper East Side of Manhattan, he approaches a man we'll name Joe who self-identifies as black. The following dialogue, regarding contemporary identity politics, ensues through the strip's panels:

Panel #1

Joe: "I'm a black man."

Cat: "No you're not. I mean have you ever seen anyone the color of coal or snow? Exactly what part of you, besides your shoes, is black, Joe? Black people are actually a shade of brown as all humans are."

Panel #2

Joe: (Looking up from his feet, fairly glaring at Cat) "Man, what I mean is, I'm a member of the black race. I'm part of the African Diaspora, the global black community."

Cat: "Race has no scientific validity, Joe, and were you actually born in Africa? Obviously, you can call yourself what you want, but at least give some thought to the labels we all use to identify ourselves, names we use to present ourselves to the world at large. Nowadays, black and white are just political identifiers. Okay, Joe?"

Panel #3

Joe: "Well I don't know about all that political stuff, but I'll keep it in mind. Later."

With that, Cat watches as Joe trots back onto the nearby basketball court for another game of HORSE, confused and as ignorant as ever about this thing called "blackness."

Since this is just a harmless comic strip — to mimic McGruder's supporters — should I expect no outcry from the black community, or is that an extremely naive notion? First, no newspaper in America would run it, because it is politically incorrect. It does not buy into the prevailing mindset that "mixed"

is synonymous with “black,” and most newspaper editors will go out of their way not to offend self-identified blacks as well as the civil rights industry.

Second, do I believe America’s newspapers should ban “Boondocks” from their comic sections? Absolutely not. As a libertarian who believes that the free speech prerogative must reign supreme, I wholeheartedly support McGruder’s right to promote whatever race-based credo he desires. Let us also not forget that many within the black power establishment — as well as their allies both in the media and in the United States government — would dearly love to see Interracial Voice and our sister websites go out of business for good.

Aaron McGruder, however, is in dire need of a good dose of enlightenment vis-à-vis the question of power. The young man is wielding it in a racist manner that those on the left, the right and in the middle can plainly see.

* * *

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 14, Verse 22–25:

The Blessed Lord said: He who does not hate illumination, attachment and delusion when they are present, nor longs for them when they disappear; who is seated like one unconcerned, being situated beyond these material reactions of the modes of nature, who remains firm, knowing that the modes alone are active; who regards alike pleasure and pain, and looks on a clod, a stone and a piece of gold with an equal eye; who is wise and holds praise and blame to be the same; who is unchanged in honor and dishonor, who treats friend and foe alike, who has abandoned all fruitive undertakings — such a man is said to have transcended the modes of nature.

In Verse 21 of the *Gita*’s Fourteenth chapter, Arjuna submits three different questions, and the Lord answers them here one after another. In these verses, Krishna first indicates that a person

transcendentally situated neither envies anyone nor yearns for anything. When a living entity stays in this material world embodied by the material body, we should understand that he is under the control of one of the three modes of material nature. When he is actually out of the body, then he is out of the grasp of the material modes of nature. As long as he is not out of the material body, though, he should be neutral. He should engage himself in service to the Lord so that his identity with the material body will automatically be overcome. When one is conscious of the material body, he acts only for sense gratification, but when one transfers the consciousness to Krishna, sense gratification automatically stops. One does not need this material body, and he does not need to accept the dictations of the material body. Similarly, he ought not dictate to others how they view their bodies — even if it is via something as “harmless” as a comic strip — particularly as it pertains to “racial” identification. That, unfortunately, only happens when one is so influenced by the mode of ignorance that he sees himself and others merely as members of competing tribes. The qualities of the material modes in the body will act, but as spirit soul the self is aloof from such activities. How does he become aloof? He does not desire to enjoy the body, nor does he desire to get out of it. Thus transcendently situated, the devotee becomes automatically free. He doesn’t have to attempt to become free from the influence of the modes of material nature.

The next question concerns the dealings of a transcendently situated person. The materially situated person is affected by so-called honor and dishonor offered to the body, but such false honor and dishonor do not affect the transcendently situated person. He performs his duty in Divine spirit and does not mind whether a person honors or dishonors him. He accepts things that are favorable for his duty in God or Krishna consciousness, otherwise he has no need of anything material. He takes everyone as his dear friend who helps him in his execution of Krishna consciousness, and he does not hate his so-called

enemy. He is equally disposed and sees everything on an equal level because he knows perfectly well that he has nothing to do with material existence. Social and political issues do not affect him because he knows them to be temporary upheavals and disturbances in the midst of eternal time. He can attempt anything for Krishna, but for his personal self he does not attempt anything. By such behavior one becomes actually transcendently situated.

* * *

Continuing with this proposition of noticing those around you who act in the modes of passion and ignorance, I offer Douglas A. Sylva's review of *The New Colored People: The Mixed-Race Movement in America* by Jon Michael Spencer (New York University Press) that appeared in the *New York Times Book Review* (October 26, 1997):

*Many members of minority groups have long argued that society must recognize and accept an individual's racial identity for that individual to enjoy feelings of self-esteem. Ironically, however, the very success of this message threatens the black community, since many people traditionally considered black now think of themselves as multiracial or of mixed race. Some even demand the right to define themselves this way on government documents. In *The New Colored People*, Jon Michael Spencer takes on the difficult task of explaining, from a civil-rights perspective, why government should refuse to recognize such a category. Spencer, who teaches American studies and music at the University of Richmond, worries that new classifications will sap the black community of skill and vigor. He also fears that Federal relief funds for blacks will dwindle if their officially registered population declines. Whether or not he is correct, this type of argument entails a plea to put aside the desire for recognition and self-esteem for the greater good of the community. Oddly, it resembles arguments for assimilation rejected by minority leaders decades*

ago. Spencer believes that a new ethnic category will increase racial hatred. To bolster this contention, he vividly describes how South Africa's official acceptance of mixed-race people as a separate category created dissension and distrust. But since this classification existed as part of the apartheid system, it proves difficult to isolate its particular effects upon race relations. Spencer denigrates the motives of his opponents in this debate: "As some multiracialists begin down the road of racial bigotry by cock-a-doodling about their alleged specialness, certainly in part to bolster the identity and self-esteem of themselves or that of their mixed-race children, they subtly assault the identity and self-esteem of black Americans." Such sentiments mar this otherwise thought-provoking, if not always persuasive, book.

The Office of Management and Budget's decision to formally incorporate the "check all that apply" scheme into Directive 15 makes any discussion of a multiracial category moot. On behalf of those who advocated for such a category until the very end, however, we offer a rebuttal to Spencer. We also marvel at how close "check all that apply" advocates come to parroting his inanities.

If not for his prominent station in academia, we could credit Jon Michael Spencer with being one of America's more accomplished standup comics. His position at the University of Richmond, however, means that some will take his rantings seriously, perhaps even as gospel truth.

This is the same man who told *New York Newsday* in 1995, when he was Professor of Afro-American Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, that "If the multiracial movement had taken root, or a 'mulatto' category had been kept throughout the 20th century, black progress might have been no progress at all." I always thought that statement insulting and degrading to black folk. Humans are very resourceful at crafting ways to enhance their survival, yet Spencer and others of his ilk suggest that African-Americans don't have the capacity to flourish and prosper unless aided by government numbers crunchers.

Spencer assumes that in the multiracial movement, those who prefer to identify as mixed would not fight for the civil rights of others, that we would stand by and passively observe a return to lynchings, for example, and respond with disinterested yawns. Again, separatist ideology rules while many so-called intellectuals merely conceive of a society in which each tribe is only fighting for its own rights, and no one exists who might fight for the rights of others. That mixed America would not fight for the rights of others is unconscionable fearmongering perpetrated by the Jon Michael Spencers of the world, and any intelligent person should see through it.

Spencer is an obvious proponent of the *all for the collective* philosophy that orders the individual to subordinate his or her own personal identity for the benefit of the larger community. This is the same Marxist/Leninist ideology that most Russians never again want to see rule the Kremlin. Yet collectivist disciples in the black community demand that multiracial Americans be blindly obedient to this credo.

The most laughable of Spencer's assertions is his claim that "As some multiracialists begin down the road of racial bigotry by cock-a-doodling about their alleged specialness, certainly in part to bolster the identity and self-esteem of themselves or that of their mixed-race children, they subtly assault the identity and self-esteem of black Americans."

If any self-identified black feels a drop of self-esteem or feels that others self-identifying as mixed or multiracial have offered dishonor to his body, then that person's self-esteem was abysmally low to begin with. Sadly, there is a pervasive fear that if a multiracial identification became widespread, blacks would be forced to question their identity, forced to relive the emotional pain and confusion that went into claiming an exclusive blackness. They need to summon the courage and energy to tackle their materially situated racial identity issues without throwing stones at others who have opted for something different.

I can guarantee you that I and others would not hurt the feelings of, say, General Colin Powell by identifying as something other than black. Why? Because General Powell does not derive his self-esteem solely from coerced racial group affiliation. Rather, it comes from a tremendous sense of self worth aided largely by strong family and ethnic ties going back to their native Jamaica. Spencer would have multiracial and/or black kids believe that their identities should forever be defined and enforced by people like him, and that no individual worldviews should ever be permitted.

How sad.

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 15: The Yoga of the Supreme Person

The ultimate purpose of Vedic knowledge is to detach oneself from the entanglement of the material world and to understand Lord Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One who understands Krishna's supreme identity surrenders unto Him and engages in His devotional service.

Synopsis of Chapter 15 relative to transcending race-consciousness:

The purpose of this book is to help you detach yourself from considerations of racial and ethnic identity.

* * *

Back in May 2000, the United States House of Representatives passed a bill that would give Communist China permanent normal trade status. The 237-197 vote was a big victory for the Clinton administration and a blow for organized labor. After a fierce lobbying campaign, 164 Republicans and 73 Democrats

backed normal trade ties with Beijing. After the vote, union leaders said Democrats who voted for the bill could pay a price in the fall, and House Democratic Whip David E. Bonior of Michigan stated that the battle's bitterness may lead to a political realignment.

I believe in the principle of unfettered global trade if, along with democratic governance and economic growth, there will be an increase in the workingman's compensation. Whether this new status and subsequent membership in the World Trade Organization — with its international rules on trade, tariffs and investments — compels China, as the prevailing theory holds, not only to improve its dreadful human rights situation, including religious persecution, but to curtail its nuclear weapons proliferation as well is another matter. The Communist Party leadership said it was gratified by the vote, but it labeled as “unacceptable” provisions in the bill setting up a panel to monitor that country's human rights abuses.

International trade and union support for one party over another are not the only arenas where we might entertain the notion of realignment, however. In fact, such an idea is likely to resonate more favorably as it relates to race and race-consciousness than regarding big-labor bosses abruptly throwing their support to Ralph Nader or future Green Party presidential candidates.

I sense that many Americans are eager to embrace a new no-race paradigm, specifically prohibiting government — which, since the state is but an extension of the individual selves, ostensibly serves the will of the people — from collecting information on race and ethnicity. In April 2000, 77% of the respondents to a Zogby International poll answered “no” to the question: “Do you feel the government should require you to disclose your race?”

An overwhelming majority of Americans oppose having the government decide to what race a person belongs, especially if the person declines to volunteer that information. Particularly opposed to this were those respondents who described them-

selves as “multiracial.” While the overall rate was 91.2% and cut across all political, racial and ethnic lines, 93.8% of multiracials told Zogby that they oppose what we now know is the politically-correct version of the one-drop rule.

Along these lines, Zogby’s data also shows that the American public no longer endorses the racist one-drop rule for deciding who is black. When asked what race the child of one black parent and one white parent would be, more than 5 in 6 answered “multiracial.”

The Zogby figures don’t mean that every American who identifies as “mixed” will now agitate in favor of removing the stupid “race” and “ethnic” boxes from all levels of government. As I type this, representatives of the same multiracial/multiethnic organizations that eagerly signed on to “check all that apply” in 1997 are contemplating yet another round of supplicating the “civil rights” organizations that dictate Census policy. The multiracial activists want the government (for the upcoming 2010 census) to recognize folk who identify as multiracial as a “protected” group in terms of the enforcement of civil rights and other claims.

Most multiracials, however, aren’t interested in being part of a federally recognized group, demanding new entitlement programs by claiming permanent victim status, permanently situated on the “black” or “of color” side of the black/white political color continuum. (One telltale symptom of “Binary Consciousness Syndrome” is the inability or unwillingness to consider an identity, personal or political, for yourself or for someone else, that transcends white and black or the latter’s amplified form: “of color.”) Many are tired of a left-of-center political ideology that places more value on the rights of artificially created “racial” and “ethnic” groups than on the rights of individuals.

Many are also tired of having the traditional civil rights organizations, by way of their appointed mouthpieces scattered throughout the “mixed” community, preach to them about how, because racism still exists, multiracials should not ignore the

impact on civil rights “history” as that would serve to ignore their own roots in all the communities “of color.”

First, you root out still-lingering racism by deconstructing race — not by intentionally furthering the canard that keeping race-based statistics does anything other than perpetuate the same race-consciousness that we seek to jettison.

I and others have written this before, but it bears constant repetition for the benefit of those whose cognitive abilities inexplicably shut down whenever someone dispassionately discusses race. A belief in not only the existence of separate races — with all the attendant “differences” — and a racial hierarchy, but also in the appropriateness of grouping *Homo sapiens* into arbitrary “racial” and “ethnic” categories is the primary cause of racism and discrimination. You cannot take seriously anyone who rails against racism yet is perfectly willing to see the belief system, the race-consciousness — which spawns racism, race-hatred and race-based violence — remain intact.

* * *

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 15, Verse 5:

One who is free from illusion, false prestige, and false association, who understands the eternal, who is finished with material lust and is freed from the duality of happiness and distress, and who knows how to surrender unto the Supreme Person, attains to that eternal kingdom.

In his explanation to this verse, Prabhupada describes the surrendering process. The first qualification is that one should not be deluded by pride, whether racial, ethnic or tribal. Due to the conditioned soul’s arrogance, thinking himself the lord of material nature, it is very difficult for him to surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One should know by the cultivation of real knowledge that he is not lord of material nature

and should not, therefore, seek to wield race-based power over anyone. The Unlimited Supreme Personality of Godhead is the Lord — not limited living beings. When one is free from delusion caused by racial and ethnic pride, one can begin the process of surrender. For one who is always expecting some honor in this material world, it is not possible to surrender to the Supreme Person. Pride is due to illusion, for although one comes here, stays for a brief time and then goes away, he has the foolish notion that he is the lord of the world.

Man is always in trouble because of this propensity to lord it over others. The whole world moves under this impression of one being better than another. People think that the earth belongs to human society, and they have divided the land under the false impression that they are the proprietors. One has to get out of this false notion that human society is the proprietor of this world and that it has the right to coerce its members into artificially created racial and ethnic groupings. When one is freed from such a false notion, he or she becomes free from all the false associations caused by familial, social, and national affections. These fake associations bind one to this material world. To become free of this, one has to develop spiritual knowledge. One has to cultivate knowledge of what is actually his own and what is actually not his own. When one has an understanding of things as they are, he becomes free from all dual or binary conceptions such as happiness and distress, pleasure and pain, black and white.

* * *

In a *Wall Street Journal* (May 30, 2000) editorial entitled “Race Counts,” the Zogby poll was mentioned. In this article, Abigail Thernstrom of the Manhattan Institute reminded the paper’s editors that, even though there is a backlash against gov-

ernment “race” counting, many laws and social programs depend on such information. She added:

The legislation is not going to go away. The court decisions that have interpreted the Voting Rights Act such that it is permissible to racially gerrymander districts to some extent — none of this is going away.

State legislators create or draw congressional districts to comply with the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This Act prohibits districting plans that systematically dilute minority voting strength. A previous Justice Department’s interpretation, however, transformed the Voting Rights Act into a tool for racial gerrymandering of districts, which is essentially a tool for racial segregation. Legislators began gerrymandering districts in such a way that they were using “race” as the sole predominant determinant for where they were drawing district lines; they were using race to draw lines of separatism as opposed to integration. When you factor in the near lily-white districts that were created next door, the problem for those of mixed-ancestry becomes obvious. Unless you’re willing to subordinate your own personal identity for a greater political cause — which should always be the individual’s prerogative — where do you call home in this neo-segregationist environment? Is it a return to “Jim Crowism,” inspired as much if not more by Pan-African *cultural communism* (e.g., the socialist *ujamma* collectives of the late Tanzania strongman Julius Nyerere) as by white racism?

Thernstrom points out that if the government didn’t collect its own data, it would most likely use other, possibly less accurate, private sector sources. She suggests that people who don’t like the law and its effects — such as racial data-gathering — should work to change the law.

This notion of “minority voting strength” — borne out of the “racially” polarized ‘60s — is problematic at best, though. How do you define, for instance, black voting power? Who is to say

what political ideology best serves the interest of self-identified black people? Is it socialism? If so, where is that etched in stone, and, more importantly, who etched it? God? Why do its self-appointed leaders seemingly regard the black community as a closed society, permanently segregated from the rest of America? The attempt to maintain the illusion of a cohesive monolith, an absolute blackness is a fraud just as is any white supremacist's claim of an absolute, cohesive whiteness. It was fraudulent back in the '60s, and it is fraudulent today.

Ask any group of *tri-racial isolates*, such as the Melungeons, whether they feel that identifying as something other than black adversely impacts the ability of civil rights groups to identify black voters in terms of fair representation. The fact is, the Melungeons and other mixed-race populations have never viewed themselves as anything other than as groups separate from both whites as well as blacks. To say that these people are ignoring their "roots in the communities of color" is absurd, since they have been mixed for generations. Their reality as far as having monoracial white or black parents is nil.

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 16: The Divine And Demoniatic Natures

Those who possess demoniac qualities and who live whimsically, without following the regulations of scripture, attain lower births and further material bondage. But those who possess divine qualities and live regulated lives, abiding by scriptural authority, gradually attain spiritual perfection.

Synopsis of Chapter 16 relative to transcending race-consciousness:

A perfect example of one who possesses demoniac qualities is one who not only hates because of racial differences but also encourages violence upon the bodies of those who are different.

* * *

Contrary to what monoracist activists assert, “mixed-race” folk are perfectly aware that neo-Nazi white supremacists as well as others who conceal their bigotry behind a cross view multiracials as merely quasi-human (e.g., Matthew Hale, whose “World Church of the Creator” is but a demoniac perversion of

ancient scriptures). They do not, however, represent the majority of white Americans who operate outside the realm of religious zealotry. More importantly, though, the lingering presence of these bigots does not impact how an intelligent person identifies racially, or, better yet, transcends race altogether.

Speaking of bigots, Texas will execute white supremacist John William King by lethal injection for his role in the dragging death of James Byrd, Jr., which occurred back in June 1998 in Jasper, Texas. King was the first of three whites to go on trial for the murder, which prosecutors said he carried out because he wanted to do something dramatic to gain credibility for a racist group he was organizing.

The guilty verdict handed down by the jury of eleven whites and one black on February 23, 1999 was the correct one and hardly a surprise. What was interesting were the remarks of three prominent Americans whose longheld public posture regarding the notion of race — that it has validity and is worth maintaining at all cost — is not far removed from that of King and his two accomplices, Shawn Berry and Lawrence Russell Brewer.

A few words about John William King: Here is a member of the human family who, quite to his detriment and that of Mr. Byrd, completely swallowed the lies he heard growing up — lies stating that there exist different and distinct “races” upon the Earth and that the “white race” — due either to genetics or Divine Will — is superior in all respects to every other race, particularly the black one.

Now let us say a few words about the three prominent Americans: *New York Newsday* reported Reverend Jesse Jackson as saying: “I hope he receives life without parole. If these three men saw killing as a solution in their sick state, then we in our sober and sane state must know killing is not a solution.”

The paper also quoted NAACP President Kweisi Mfume as saying the case “clearly shouts across the world for the urgent need of this Congress to move quickly to strengthen and to pass anti-hate legislation.”

Lastly, *Newsday* reported President Clinton saying that nationwide expressions of outrage over Byrd's death "demonstrate that an act of evil like this is not what our country is all about." The President added: "Our work for racial reconciliation and for an end to all crimes of hatred in this country will go on."

For my money, Jackson comes the closest to being on the mark, though he refuses to state the obvious — that the sickness to which he alludes is a belief in race and a racial hierarchy (of which racism, race-based violence and race-hatred are by-products). In fact, it is an infirmity that afflicts far too many Americans of all colors, including a great many who consider themselves sober and sane. Why can't a black politico just come out and say this?

Mfume's remarks border on the absurd, as if to say that Mr. Byrd would still be alive today if Texas had anti-hate legislation. In his closing argument, Pat Hardy, one of the Jasper prosecutors, asked: "What makes a person hate so hard to do something like that to a person they don't even know?" When race hatred so consumes an individual, no legislation will miraculously dissipate it. Anti-hate legislation may well result in courts meting out heftier sentences after the fact (though a penalty harsher than death is hard to fathom — *instant karma* if you will). But future James Byrds will not be supernaturally resurrected because of such laws.

We should weigh Clinton's comments about racial reconciliation in light of his vaunted Race Commission stiff-arming concerned anthropologists who asked to be on the panel. The message the scientists wanted to convey to all Americans was and still is that race is a bogus concept. Clinton's panel, headed by the "venerable" civil-rights leader John Hope Franklin, however, gave them the thumbs down.

For a President seemingly so concerned with how history will treat him, Clinton will be remembered by many for nothing more than the Lewinsky affair, his impeachment, and his failed race initiative. This man had the opportunity to look into the

television cameras and tell his fellow Americans that race is a bogus concept, but he choked. Why? Because the “civil rights” community would not have accepted such a plea — any such declaration would call into question the legitimacy of all race-based entitlement programs and all race-based remedies for past discrimination. This is why a Jesse Jackson will merely come close to telling the truth but no further, and a Kweisi Mfume will suggest that statutes alone will, inexplicably, cleanse a racist’s tortured soul. Add to that Clinton’s desire to keep the black community firmly ensconced in the Democratic Party’s left hip pocket, and you can see why he acquiesced to the “civil-rights” community’s demands on his race initiative. The man did the country and humanity a huge disservice when he spit the bit on race.

We should school our children from kindergarten by teaching them that race is not real, but we won’t. We’ll continue to focus on battling racism, race-based violence and race-hatred, but we’ll be content to leave the construct of race standing as if it has a basis in reality. It sounds good and noble, but it’s akin to fighting the symptoms of a disease without giving a damn about combating the root cause.

Such an educational endeavor is way too late for the John William Kings of the world. But if we don’t start now, how many future Jaspers will we shake our heads and tut-tut over? Considering the deep hole we’ve dug for ourselves in this country regarding this race issue, methinks it will be far too many.

* * *

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 16, Verse 18:

Bewildered by false ego, strength, pride, lust and anger, the demoniac person becomes envious of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is situated in his own body and in the bodies of others, and blasphemes against genuine religion.

A demoniac person, being always against God's supremacy, does not like to believe in scriptures of any kind. Such an unfortunate soul is also envious of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is caused by one's false sense of prestige — usually predicated on some misconceived notion of racial pride and supremacy — and his accumulation of wealth and strength. Such a person does not know that the present life is a preparation for the next life. Not knowing this, he or she is actually envious of others.

As with Matthew Hale, those on the bodily platform even create a new church and religion out of thin air. The demoniac person thinks himself independent and powerful in every action. He thinks that since no one can equal him in strength, power, or in wealth, he can act in any way and no one can stop him. If he has an enemy who might get in the way of his sensual activities, he makes plans to cut him down by his own power.

* * *

Almost as a mirror-image of white supremacist ideology, the myth of a black race undergirds the twin iniquities of black racism and black nationalism. Curiously, many are blind to this, particularly in regard to the latter.

In an essay entitled, "Whites must recognize privileges they enjoy because of skin color" in the March 1998 *SPLC REPORT*, a publication of the Southern Poverty Law Center, NAACP Chairman of the Board Julian Bond laments the metamorphosis of the 1960s civil rights struggle from one in which whites and blacks fought discrimination in unison to one which he calls a "black-led black movement in the 1990s." Has it never occurred to him that one reason for white flight from the civil rights movement was the pronounced shift of black people toward afrocentric nationalism — accurately viewed by many mixed-race folk as a euphemism for black racism? This monumental shift by the black

community began en masse in the late '60s, particularly after the assassinations of Malik El-Shabazz and Martin Luther King, Jr.

In an interview with *Salon Magazine* promoting his book "Always in Pursuit: Fresh American Perspectives," Stanley Crouch comments:

Black nationalism didn't just derail the civil rights movement; it obliterated it in favor of a tribalism that was based on some kind of black unity and eventually some kind of Third World unity, functioning in opposition to the great devil of all times, the West.

The salacious embrace of an afrocentric *Weltanschauung* by the NAACP itself has not been lost on many within the centrist/libertarian wing of the mixed-race community. The spectacle of then Maryland Congressman Kweisi Mfume — who later became NAACP president and chief executive officer — practically striding in lockstep with Louis Farrakhan at the Million Man March opened the eyes and mouths of a great many people. In his February 28, 1998 *New York Times* article, entitled, "NAACP Post Gives Julian Bond New Start," Steven A. Holmes speaks to the issue of black separatism while profiling the organization's new chairman:

He is also a throwback to the group's unabashedly integrationist philosophy which, in recent years, has been diluted as the group's board and membership have become increasingly black and its rhetoric increasingly reflective of a black nationalist philosophy.

The two organizations most representative of the black nationalist philosophy of which Mr. Holmes speaks are the Nation of Islam and the New Black Panther Party. This book touches on the NOI in other chapters, but what about the NBPP?

The Southern Poverty Law Center's (<http://www.splcenter.org>) Spring 2001 *Intelligence Report* informs us in an article, en-

titled, "Once Again, Arson Follows New Black Panther Protest," that:

Members of the New Black Panther Party made clear how they felt about the A-1 Grocery in Washington, D.C. In a week of sidewalk protests, they told blacks to boycott the Korean-owned store and led chants of "Death to the bloodsucker," "Shut them down!" and "Black power!" One unidentified protester reportedly called into a megaphone, "We will use all means necessary, any means necessary, to shut this store down."

Then a pipe bomb exploded on Nov. 30, charring the A-1 storefront. Spray-painted across the wall were racial epithets and the words "Burn them down, Shut them Down, Black Power". Malik Zulu Shabazz, the New Panther Party's national spokesman who had organized the A-1 boycott, said his group had "absolutely nothing to do" with the attack, and no charges have been filed.

The boycott started after a Nov. 22 dispute between the A-1 owner and a black teenage girl over the price of a 65-cent ice cream bar. The disagreement escalated into a melee in which the store was ransacked. Shabazz lay the blame for his boycott on "Asian merchants" and ignored accusations from a grocers' association that he was inspiring "racial hatred."

The incidents recall a still-unsolved 1994 arson of a Wedowee, Ala., high school, whose white principal had recently made headlines for banning interracial dating at his school's prom. Hours after a New Panther leader spoke at a secret meeting nearby, an arsonist burned the school to the ground.

The New Panthers, who are unrelated to the original Black Panthers of the 1960s, also made news in November in Norfolk, Va. Hoping to restore "civility" to city council meetings after an inflammatory speech by local Panther leader Michael Muhammad, the city council voted to restrict public comment at meetings. In retrospect, one of Muhammad's remarks stood out.

Muhammad pointed to the sunset above the city skyline outside. "I see how much it resembles fire," he said. "Looks good to me."

* * *

That so many minds agree sustains the “reality” of race. Yet our freedom as individuals depends upon our courage to alter our considerations of, among other things, race. Only when Homo sapiens fully understand the counterfeit nature of the bodily concept of life will we comprehend the foolishness of clinging to and advancing such insanities as white supremacy and black nationalism.

Shattering the compact which supports the “reality” of race is not in the best interest of black and other “of color” leaders, however, who count on that construct being the foundation of their political power well into the new century. The recent Census 2000/multiracial category battle provided ample evidence of the depth of investment that these politicians have in *identity politics* — the queer notion (a *politically-correct* version of the centuries-old European scheme) that membership in artificial racial and ethnic groups adequately defines humans. At the dawn of a new millennium, we astonishingly have a situation in America where the historical victims of the most vicious manifestations of race are the ones least eager to reverse the dwindling spiral of race-obsession that is dragging our nation down the tubes.

In conclusion, would a candid Presidential admission of the artificiality of race convert every member of the Ku Klux Klan, Aryan Nations, Nation of Islam or New Black Panther Party from white or black racist/supremacist/separatist to loving and caring member of the human family overnight? No (and surely the vast majority of white and black Americans do not devote themselves to such demoniac hatemongering), but at some point we need to plant the seed. Why not now?

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 17: The Divisions of Faith

There are three types of faith, corresponding to and evolving from the three modes of material nature. Acts performed by those whose faith is in passion and ignorance yield only impermanent, material results, whereas acts performed in goodness, in accord with scriptural injunctions, purify the heart and lead to pure faith in Lord Krishna and devotion to Him.

Synopsis of Chapter 17 relative to transcending race-consciousness:

“Ministers” in the mode of passion and ignorance head many so-called churches, but their preaching does not serve to purify the hearts of their parishioners.

* * *

Scriptural injunctions dating back to antiquity teach that for one to be truly serious about achieving spiritual enlightenment, to be truly serious about becoming a God-conscious initiate, one needs to avoid the following four sinful activities:

(1) Eating meat, fish or eggs:

The *mahatmas* or great souls maintain that these foods are saturated with the modes of passion and ignorance and therefore cannot be offered to God. (Material nature consists of the three modes — goodness, passion and ignorance. When the living entity comes in contact with nature, he becomes conditioned by these modes.) A person who eats these foods participates in a conspiracy of violence against helpless animals and thus stops his spiritual progress dead in its tracks.

(2) Gambling:

Gambling invariably puts one into anxiety and fuels greed, envy and anger.

(3) The use of intoxicants:

Drugs, alcohol and tobacco, as well as drinks or foods containing caffeine, cloud the mind, overstimulate the senses, and make it impossible to understand or follow the principles of devotional service to God.

(4) Illicit sex:

This is sex outside marriage or sex in marriage for any purpose other than procreation. Sex for pleasure compels one to identify with the body and takes one far from God-consciousness. The scriptures teach that sex is the most powerful force binding us to the material world. Anyone serious about advancing in God-consciousness should minimize sex or eliminate it entirely.

Right about now you're probably saying to yourself, "Damn, man, have you renounced all this good stuff — especially sex?" The answer is no. But let me be clear: I am not someone publicly offering himself as an ordained minister, an initiated unalloyed devotee of God committed to showing others the path to righteousness. Jesse Jackson *is*.

With the February 2001 accusation of yet another sexual affair between Jackson and a Rainbow Coalition staffer (Sherva Jenkins-Smith) still penetrating the public consciousness, some-

one needs to just come out and say it: Jesse Jackson ought not call himself Reverend.

Regarding Prohibition #1, I know not whether Jackson has gone the vegetarian route, and this is surely a tough one to lick for anyone in a society of voracious meat-eaters. Interestingly, many early Christians and chroniclers of Christian tradition supported vegetarianism. Like Jesus and the Biblical prophets, they taught, by their words and deeds, that mercy and compassion should extend to all creatures — a definition far broader than that held by most Christians today.

Regarding Prohibition #2, I know not whether Jackson spends time at Atlantic City's crap tables or at Aqueduct's paramutual window, but he passionately promotes "wealth-building strategies for blacks searching for financial freedom." Read: gambling with risky stock-market investments. Even the title of the book he and his congressman son co-wrote, "It's About the Money!: The Fourth Movement of the Freedom Symphony: How to Build Wealth, Get Access to Capital, and Achieve Your Financial Dreams," suggests that Jackson's real calling in life is that of *financial* not *spiritual* guru.

Regarding Prohibition #3, I know not whether Jackson "liquors up" regularly, irregularly, or not at all, and, frankly, it's none of my business. It's public knowledge, however, that since 1998 his family has held exclusive rights to distribute Anheuser-Busch Inc. products in part of Chicago's North Side. I'm not sure that aiding and abetting the flow of alcohol into any community — black or otherwise — constitutes a priestly act in the mode of goodness.

Regarding Prohibition #4, we all know of Jackson's illicit romance with Karin Stanford (the first sexual affair between Jackson and a Rainbow Coalition staffer of which the public became aware) and their baby daughter born out of wedlock.

Consider also that Jackson was never particularly interested in taking the three courses he lacked — pastoral care, international relations, and preaching — to earn his degree at the

Chicago Theological Seminary, after he left in 1966. He still hasn't taken the courses but recently received his master of divinity degree after faculty members merely examined his writings and gave him an oral examination on the theological underpinnings of the death penalty.

Conventional wisdom holds that Jackson feels immune from criticism due to his viewing himself as "President of Black America." Interestingly, the notion of a separate-but-equal black nation within the boundaries of the U.S. of A. harkens back to the thoroughly Marxist "Black Nation Thesis," but that's subject matter for a future editorial or even another book.

Jesse Jackson has every right to continue being exactly what he is — a shrewd and wealthy political operative for the civil rights industry and the Democratic Party. However, Jesse Jackson ought not, again, call himself *Reverend*.

* * *

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 17, Verse 3:

According to one's existence under the various modes of nature, one evolves a particular kind of faith. The living being is said to be of a particular faith according to the modes he has acquired.

Everyone has a particular type of faith, regardless of what he is. His faith is considered good, passionate or ignorant, however, according to the nature he has acquired. Thus, according to his particular type of faith, one associates with certain persons. In fact, every living being is originally a fragmental part and parcel of the Supreme Lord. Therefore, one is originally transcendental to all the modes of material nature. When one forgets his relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, however, and comes into contact with material nature in condi-

tional life, he generates his own connection with the modes by his association with them. The resultant artificial faith and existence are only material. Therefore, one has to become cleansed of material contamination to regain his relationship with the Supreme Lord. Ultimately, the only path back is God or Krishna consciousness. If one does not take to this path of self-realization seriously, he is sure to be consumed by the modes of nature.

It should be understood that if one's heart is in the mode of goodness, his faith is also in the mode of goodness. If his heart is in the mode of passion, his faith is also in the mode of passion. If his heart is in the mode of darkness, illusion, his faith is also thus contaminated. We find, then, different types of faith in this world, and there are different types of religions and religious leaders due to different types of faith. The real principle of religious faith is situated in the mode of pure goodness, but because the heart is tainted, we find different types of religious principles. Thus according to different types of faith, there are different kinds of worship. And this leads to diverse conceptions of life. Some are desirable, and some are not.

* * *

While it is entirely appropriate for us to be mindful that white supremacists dream of transforming Idaho and Montana into a "whites-only" Shangri-La, we should not forget that as recently as the 1960s the Nation of Islam petitioned the United Nations to compel the United States to turn over a number of Southern states for the purpose of creating a black homeland. Let us also not forget that afrocentric nationalism, with a decidedly Marxist flavor, is the ascendant sociopolitical mindset within the community of self-identified black Americans, a mindset that enjoys the wholehearted support of America's most virulent white supremacists.

White Aryan Resistance (WAR) leader Tom Metzger, for example, wildly applauded the success of Louis Farrakhan's Mil-

lion Man March. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center's Joseph J. Levin Jr. in his article, "Farrakhan: A Long History of Hate," Metzger pointed to the successfulness of the March and proclaimed 1995 "a banner year for racial separatists." It is also worth remembering that many of the head honchos of the civil-rights community, including Jackson and Mfume, eagerly accepted Farrakhan's invitation to speak at MMM.

If hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, didn't follow him and embrace his philosophy, we could dismiss Farrakhan as just another black nationalist-separatist cast from essentially the same mold as the Angela Davises and the Kwame Turés (formerly the late Stokely Carmichael) of the world. Farrakhan enjoys widespread support in the African-American community, however, as the October 1995 Million Man March demonstrated. He is the *de facto* leader of black America. No one else can lay claim to that title, as no other black leader can command the attention on the national or international stage as can the *Minister*.

Recently, there seems to be an orchestrated effort by some in the black community (and by certain of its mainstream media allies) to reconstruct Farrakhan's image of a venom-spewing racist and an anti-Semite. After all, his nationalist rantings are right up the alley of those — black and white — who pine for the days of "separate but equal." The April 16, 1996 *Village Voice* article "Romancing Jim Crow: Black Nostalgia for a Segregated Past" by Adolph Reed, Jr. is but one example of the aforementioned sentiment.

In another piece — one commemorating the storied legacy of America's black media — from that same *Village Voice* edition, Nat Hentoff reports on the "Newsmaker of the Year" award bestowed upon Farrakhan by the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), a national organization of the black press. According to NNPA Executive Director William Reed: "Who did the most in 1995 to lead blacks to a higher plateau? Through informal polling of numerous grassroots and establishment leaders by the staff of the National Newspaper Publishers

Association, there was a total consensus that such an undisputed individual is Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam.” Reed pointed out that his association honored Farrakhan for his creation of the Million Man March, among other dimensions of what the NNPA calls his leadership. Says Reed: “In his 40th year of public ministering, some believe the 62-year-old, Jesus-quoting Muslim has eclipsed even the stature of Martin Luther King at his apex.” Hentoff further reports that Reed told him, “You see, people need to go from door to door in the black community to know his actual status. Farrakhan is in touch with these people more than the NAACP is.”

That’s the scary part, but it’s no longer an eye-opening revelation. After the assassination of King, the black community took the wrong fork in the road, eschewing the transcendent nature of King’s movement which pointed to the equality of human beings as the benchmark for social justice and which was evolving into a grassroots movement that included whites as soldiers in the cause of justice for black Americans. Afrocentric nationalism polarized and hurt the civil rights movement, replacing effective strategy with empty shouting and posturing of the sort that allowed America the opportunity to avoid both identification with black people and the job of bettering this nation.

The culmination of the black community’s following the path of Afrocentric nationalism for twenty-seven years was the Million Man March. The NNPA’s “Newsmaker of the Year” award to Farrakhan validates the ascendancy of nationalist-separatism to the pinnacle of black political leadership.

Addressing one of the basic tenets of black-nationalism, the separation of the races, Farrakhan told Mike Wallace on the April 14, 1996 “60 Minutes” program:

Farrakhan: I believe, Mike, that if we can’t get along in peace, then we should separate. We have serious differences that are exacerbated now, over time, between black and white. The

question that we have to answer: are those differences irreconcilable?

Wallace: Are they?

Farrakhan: I don't know. Have we tried as hard as we could to reconcile them? And if we have, and we cannot, then separation would be the best answer.

An admonishment is due Wallace for playing into the hands of those — including himself? — who consider the construct of race to be valid and worth preserving.

Nowadays, Farrakhan freely admits being of mixed-race, though he steadfastly employs the oxymoronic and hypodescent-induced “light-skinned black” terminology (How can something “black” be “light,” and what, after all, accounts for the “light-skinnedness” of a “light-skinned black”?). In the special *Black In America* April 9 & May 6, 1996 combined edition of *The New Yorker*, from an article written by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. called “The Charmer”:

Farrakhan explained that his father was very light-skinned and had straight hair, and that his mother had told him his father's parentage was, in fact, white Portuguese. Then he said, “I'm going to tell you something. You really want to know what I think? I think they were members of the Jewish community.” This sounds like a fantastical joke, but it is highly probable, given what we know about migration to the West Indies. Orlando Patterson, a historical sociologist at Harvard, who has made a study of merchant populations in the islands, confirms that nearly all people of Iberian descent in Jamaica and Barbados, even today, are of Sephardic Jewish ancestry.

Farrakhan goes on to state that “If in my lineage there are Jews, I would hope that in the end, before my life is over, I not only will have rendered a service to my own beloved community of black people but will also have rendered a service to the Jewish community.”

Is Louis Farrakhan, then, a mixed-race Jew? You decide that

one, sports fans. Let me offer, however, that separating the races is not only undesirable but impossible — just ask anyone of mixed-race. That many revere such a man as Farrakhan is not so much testimony to his oratorical skills and leadership qualities, but to so many individuals viewing their lives as being predicated solely upon monolithic and monoracial political considerations and to them not seeking enlightened solidarity with the whole of humanity. In a quiet moment of personal stillness and honest reflection, Louis Farrakhan would be forced to admit the same thing.

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 18: Conclusion – The Perfection of Renunciation

Krishna explains the meaning of renunciation and the effects of the modes of nature on human consciousness and activity. He explains Brahman realization, the glories of the Bhagavad-gita, and the ultimate conclusion of the Gita: the highest path of religion is absolute loving surrender unto Lord Krishna, God, which frees one from all sins, brings one to complete enlightenment, and enables one to return to Krishna's eternal spiritual abode.

Synopsis of Chapter 18 relative to transcending race-consciousness:

Abandon all allegiances to mundane abstractions such as race, ethnicity, and culture. Instead, embrace your humanity as well as your higher spiritual nature. By this method, surely, you will gradually rise to transcendence and develop love for God

* * *

During a picnic in New York City's Central Park in September 1999, Pearl Fuyo Gaskins (author of *What Are You? Voices of Mixed-Race Young People*) reminded me that there were many people within the civil rights bureaucracy who wondered which way the mixed-race community would or should go in terms of supporting either whiteness or blackness. My answer to her then is the same as it is today, and that is a resounding "Neither one." It is not inconsistent to embrace and love self-identified white people while simultaneously rejecting the notion of a particular group eternally occupying the top rung of a phony racial hierarchy predicated on the writings of Johann Blumenbach. It is also not inconsistent to embrace and love self-identified black people (or "people of color" for those who have a fondness for that queer construction) while simultaneously rejecting the fanatical obsession with identity politics — the belief that membership in this or that racial or ethnic group, often a group cultivating its sense of solidarity by nurturing its grievances and "permanent victim" status, adequately defines a human being.

To paraphrase the esteemed Jean Toomer, a certified "Third Wave" practitioner in his own right, we should meditate on liberating ourselves and others from the entire machinery of verbal hypnotism. We owe no allegiance to these mundane abstractions we've come to know as "whiteness" and "blackness." Consequently, we are neither "light-skinned blacks" or "dark-skinned whites" or any of the other "people of color" (Asians, Native Americans, Hispanics — each busy perfecting or constructing its own version of a nation within a nation) who supposedly occupy intermediate positions along the political color continuum. We are simply of the human race, and, since energy follows thought, this multiracial synthesis will be the turning point for the return of mankind, now divided into hostile races, to one unified race, namely, to the human race.

* * *

Bhagavad-gita, Chapter 18, Verse 66

Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me [God]. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear.

Throughout the preceding chapters of the *Bhagavad-gita*, the Lord has described various kinds of knowledge, processes of religion, knowledge of the Supreme Brahman, knowledge of the Supersoul, knowledge of the renounced order of life, knowledge of nonattachment, sense and mind control, meditation, etc. He has described in so many ways different types of religion. Now, in summarizing the *Gita*, the Lord says that Arjuna should give up all the processes that have been explained to him, that he should simply surrender to Krishna. That surrender will save him from all kinds of sinful reactions, for the Lord personally promises to protect him. This same promise is extended to all of us.

In the Eighth Chapter of the *Gita*, we read that only one who has become free from all sinful reactions can take to the worship of Lord Krishna. Accordingly, one may think that unless he is free from all sinful reactions he cannot take to the surrendering process. To allay such doubts, Krishna says here that even if one is not free from all sinful reactions, simply by the process of surrendering to Him the individual is automatically freed. No strenuous effort is necessary to free oneself from sinful reactions. One should unhesitatingly accept Krishna as the supreme savior of all living entities. With faith and love, one should surrender unto Him.

According to the devotional process, one should simply accept those religious principles that lead ultimately to devotional service of the Lord. Anything that does not lead to the perfectional

stage of Krishna consciousness should be avoided. One should be confident that in all circumstances Krishna or God will protect him from all difficulties. There is no need of thinking how one should keep the body and soul together. Krishna will see to that. One should always think himself helpless and should consider Krishna the only basis for his progress in life. As soon as one seriously engages in devotional service to the Lord in full Krishna consciousness, at once he becomes freed from all contamination of material nature. There are different processes of religion and purificatory processes by cultivation of knowledge, meditation in the mystic yoga system, etc., but one who surrenders unto Krishna does not have to execute so many methods. That simple surrender unto God will save him from unnecessarily wasting time. One can thus make all progress at once and be freed from all sinful reaction.

One should be attracted by the beautiful vision of Krishna as revealed in the scriptures and in the esoteric Vaishnava tradition. His name is Krishna because He is all-attractive. One who becomes attracted by the beautiful, all-powerful, omnipotent vision of Krishna is fortunate. There are different kinds of transcendentalists — some of them are attached to the impersonal Brahman vision (a formless conception of God), and some of them are attracted by the Supersoul feature (a pantheistic world-view). But one who is attracted to the personal feature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and, above all, one who is attracted by the Supreme Personality of Godhead as Krishna Himself, is the most perfect transcendentalist. In other words, devotional service to Krishna, in full consciousness, is the most confidential part of knowledge, and this is the essence of the whole *Bhagavad-gita*.

★ ★ ★

When Spinoza gave his philosophy to the world, he was assailed in orthodox circles as “the most impious atheist that ever lived.”

— Henry Thomas, op. cit.

The mixed-race dialogue exposes the concept of “black and white” and the other official pigeonholes for what they are: second-tier political appellations and nothing more! It is my fervent desire that the discussion also serves as a wake-up call to the community of black-identified Americans in particular, as they have nearly completely lost sight of their individuality, allowing it to be subjugated for the greater good of a monolithic, Marxist/Leninist-based “commune of color.” Sadly, they lack the realistic view of what’s happening when you’re in the center of a hurricane, and it would do them a world of good to also realize that there is a higher calling in their individual lives — one that supersedes their being loyal and obedient blacks.

Our highest calling is the clarion call to return to God. I have tried in this short book to explain the importance of transcending race-consciousness, for only by so doing will we transcend the bodily concept of life. We do ourselves a disservice to think in terms of race and ethnicity. We do the world a disservice to think in these terms, too. Violence begins at home. And if we identify with our bodies, we commit the greatest violence to ourselves and to others as well: We see ourselves as something other and neglect our genetic bonding with all that lives — this is the beginning of all violence and even of war. Unless we recognize our spiritual birthright, our relation to every living being in existence, we cannot recognize our common Father. And if we do not recognize Him, we recognize nothing.

Multiracial Solidarity March Speech, July 20, 1996

Thank you all for coming this afternoon, and what a great day to be multiracial in America! Let me also thank Washington's own Interracial Family Circle, its President Phillip Savage and the other organizations that endorsed this March, including "A Place For Us" — the first national organization to sanction the Multiracial Solidarity March. This is a precedent-setting event, and you should be proud that you're a part of it. Never before has there been an attempt to offer the perspective of racially mixed people on racial issues, but that blessed day has finally arrived.

We are no longer invisible, and "mixed-race" should never have been viewed merely as a "subset" of "blackness." That is patently absurd, is hypodescent-driven, and it ignores other mixed-race individuals not of the black/white variety — such as hapas, mestizos, metis, creoles and latinos. Identifying all individuals of mixed-race as black is nothing more than a lustful embrace of the mythical concept of white racial purity, and proponents of such an ideology are essentially in bed with the slavemaster. We reject the notion of white racial purity, and we affirm the right of otherwise self-determined individuals to identify as they see fit — not as others would force them to identify. Hypodescent, the

inheritance of only the lowest status racial category of one's ancestors, also known as the infamous "one-drop rule," is no mere "curious quirk." It is an integral aspect of American racism, and it could not — did not — survive and does not survive today without the complicity of many of its victims. This is unacceptable and must end.

To those who say that we're trying to create a new race, I submit that this new "race" or "new people," if you will, was created centuries ago when European settlers and African slaves mingled with the indigenous people of North America. Lamentably, this "new race" or "new people" was initially swept under the rug by white racists. That practice is sadly carried on today by racists "of color" in the name of numerical strength, and by their white political allies in the name of social segregation. In doing so, both deny us the right of self-determination and the right to name ourselves.

Often our detractors say that we're "running away from our blackness" or "trying to become honorary whites." These are examples of a pathetic guilt-trip that others try to lay upon anyone who has at least one forebear of African descent but who identifies as multiracial. Many will argue that it doesn't matter what you call yourself because white people will not view you any differently, because whites will always discriminate against non-whites. This question of the inevitability of white racism was recently addressed by William Javier Nelson, author of the *Racial Definition Handbook*:

"After looking at the objections given by some to the multiracial initiative, I have been impressed with the deep cynicism of those who would keep the One-Drop rule in place. Instead of focusing on such things as ethnicity and culture, One-Droppers usually point to the inevitability and 'normalcy' of the prejudice and discrimination of 'whites.'

"Left without the external control of outside policing based on rigid 'racial' categories, 'whites' are assumed to lack the INTERNAL control to ignore color differences in day-to-day living.

“North Americans are so used to ‘racial’ conflict and the normal state of the U.S. mind as ‘racist’ that they have mortgaged the responsibility to grow beyond Jim Crow. Moreover, most of them are able to disclaim racism anyway by saying it’s something the other fellow does.

“There is nothing inherently normal about the type of racism practiced in the U.S.

“There is nothing inherently normal about being a racist.

“There is nothing inherently normal about One-Drop (hypodescent).”

I submit that it is *not* the mixed-race community that is “distancing” itself from “color” but quite the reverse. The black community in general and its political leadership specifically that I see in 1996 are not the same that I observed in 1966, and the change has not been for the better. Thirty years have produced tremendous changes, as the black leadership today is more separatist-inspired and too often exhibits the same racist mentality of the long-standing white power structure.

After the assassinations of Malik El-Shabazz and Martin Luther King, Jr. the black community took the wrong fork in the road, particularly forgoing the transcendent nature of King’s movement which pointed to the equality of human beings as the benchmark for social justice and which was evolving into a grassroots movement that included whites as soldiers in the cause of justice for black Americans. Afrocentric nationalism polarized and hurt the civil rights movement, replacing effective strategy with empty shouting and posturing of the sort that allowed America the opportunity to avoid both identification with black people and the job of bettering this nation. My friends, replacing a white ideal with a black ideal doesn’t improve things, it just reverses them.

The arrogant assumption on the part of those who subscribe to nationalist thinking was and still is that those of mixed-descent would meekly tag along — and many have! I, however, cannot sanction racism or separatist ideology just because someone might accuse me of “selling out” or “running away” from “blackness,”

or just because the racist happens to be “of color.” I suppose if you’re not old enough to remember back three decades, then the present seems perfectly natural to you — the way things ought to be. The turn towards Afrocentric nationalism by the black community coupled with the 1967 Supreme Court decision over-throwing the remaining anti-miscegenation laws in this country, are the two most important factors in the genesis of the multiracial “movement.”

Our detractors persist, however. Jon Michael Spencer — Professor of Afro-American Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill — once stated that, “If the multiracial movement had taken root, or a ‘mulatto’ category had been kept throughout the 20th century, black progress might have been no progress at all.” I wonder if anyone else finds this statement insulting and degrading to blacks? Humans are very resourceful at crafting ways to enhance their survival, yet Spencer suggests that African-Americans don’t have the capacity to flourish and prosper unless aided by some numbers cruncher. Forget that he sees no merit in people of mixed heritage identifying as such, but does anyone else honestly believe that blacks would have made no progress at all if their collective numbers had been measured accurately and not artificially inflated by including us? Spencer assumes that in a multiracial movement, those who prefer to identify as mixed would not fight for the civil rights of others. Separatist ideology rules once again. Why is it that so many so-called intellectuals can only conceive of a society in which each tribe is only fighting for its own rights, and no one exists who might fight for the rights of others?

The burning of African-American churches and any attack against freedom of religion should be deplored by all human beings, and it should be made clear today that our identity as multiracial does not lessen our desire to see these criminals prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

On issues such as affirmative action, however, many of us believe that race-and gender-based entitlement programs should

be modified though certainly not abolished. Affirmative action should be based on need, & economics, for it is this country's poor that need empowering, whether they be poor blacks — who as we all know represent a disproportionate amount of America's impoverished — poor whites, poor Hispanics, poor Native Americans, poor females or poor multiracials. Too often the people who benefit the most from affirmative action are those kids whose families can afford to send them to expensive colleges and universities. The seemingly permanent black underclass against whose steady growth many African American leaders regularly rail benefits little from affirmative action. Has the black political intelligentsia decided to treat the underclass with a Moynihanesque “benign neglect” in order to perpetuate the middle-and upper-classes? Perhaps so, yet they disingenuously berate a multiracial identifier as being the villain that will eviscerate gains made by minorities under affirmative action.

Some say a multiracial classification would merely replicate the South African Colored category that existed under apartheid. In my opinion, “not” imposing the one-drop rule upon those South Africans of mixed-race was the only thing the racist Afrikaners actually got right! On the other hand, what could be more apartheid-like than creating the equivalent of black homelands here in the United States through the practice of gerrymandering in order to produce mostly black voting districts? What most proponents “of color” of this gerrymandering won't tell you and what many whites gleefully keep to themselves is that the practice invariably produces near lily-white voting districts next door! This is nothing less than a return to “separate but equal,” and the question we as multiracial Americans have to ask is where are we supposed to position ourselves: amongst segregationist whites or amongst separatist blacks? The point is largely moot, however, since the U.S. Supreme Court recently ruled against the constitutionality of these bizarre shaped districts that one justice referred to as looking like “a sacred Mayan bird.” No principled multiracial can endorse separate but equal. How can

we? We are the living, breathing antithesis of separatist and racist dogma. We can not be separated!

We are here today to proclaim that individuals of mixed-race and of mixed-ethnicity should have the right to legally self-identify. Our opponents feel that we should be forced to adhere to a particular political agenda against our will, reducing us to nothing more than abstract figures in a Census headcount. Along this line, historian A.D. Powell addressed the concept of ethnic rape back on June 4. She wrote:

“Throughout history many nations and ethnic groups have tried to forcibly assimilate others. The English tried to assimilate the Celtic nations of Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The Castilians tried to assimilate the Basques and Catalans. The government of Turkey says there is no such thing as a Kurd, only another variety of Turk. Black Americans are one of the few cases of a subordinate ethnic group thinking it has the ‘right’ to commit the ethnic ‘rape’ of conquerors. American Indians, Asian-Americans and others might inappropriately claim some mixed people but they do not generally go into a towering rage over the thought of losing the ‘blood’ of their ‘white’ rivals.

“The ‘one drop’ advocates should be told that they have no right to commit racial or ethnic ‘rape,’ telling others that they will be taken against their will. They have no right to ‘rape’ either the living or the dead — ‘blackening’ the names of people who were not ‘black’ and never claimed to be (Jean Toomer, Alexander Dumas, Alexander Pushkin and numerous others subjected to ‘kidnapping’ when they are dead and unable to defend themselves). Anyone who says he wants to ‘unite’ with you and will do so whether you like it or not is a rapist. Ethnic rape can be just as real and demeaning as sexual rape.

“The people who are subjected to the ‘You just don’t want to be black’ accusation should proudly respond in the affirmative and say that they don’t want to pretend to belong to a ‘race’ that doesn’t describe them merely to ease the inferiority complex of the ‘one drop’ advocates. Indeed, let the ‘one drop’ advocates

say to the Hispanics (almost all mixed race), Jews, Italians, Greeks, etc. that those groups cling to their various heritages just because they don't want to be 'black.' That's partly true. They don't want to be something else either. They want to be who they are."

Some thought A.D.'s composition a tad harsh. The June 17 edition of *The New Yorker* magazine, however, proved her words prophetic. That edition included an article by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. entitled "The true lies of Anatole Broyard," in which Gates sought to trash the reputation of the late *New York Times* book critic, a man now six years in his grave. Gates attacked Broyard as "really black" and only "passing" as white. Gates' racist article is an extreme example of the devotion to the myth of white racial "purity" and to the "one drop" mythology that is still so prevalent amongst minority academicians and politicians. Broyard, of Louisiana Creole descent, is also victimized by the typical ploy of claiming that because there are no 100% "pure" whites in his immediate ancestry, he is really descended from "blacks" and has only a "small amount" of white ancestry from a "distant" ancestor. Gates and other "one drop" fanatics know no shame.

How is it anyone's business that Broyard did not identify as black? If it's valid to assert that Broyard was "passing for white," is it also not valid to say that the likes of Gregory Howard Williams are "passing for black"? Broyard was and Williams is as light-skinned as any person who identifies as white that you've ever seen walk down the street, yet the former is viciously vilified in death because of his refusal to adhere to the one-drop rule, and the latter is glorified to the hilt because he embraces it tenaciously. Williams is the author of "Life On The Color Line," the story of a young lad born in Virginia — my home state, too — who thought he was "white" until he moved to Indiana and then suddenly found out he was "black." Of course, Williams was "black" because of hypodescent, and he plays that card at every turn today.

Gregory Howard Williams' story is not unique. There are plenty of mixed-race folk who are so light they "involuntarily"

pass for white every day. I have many pictures of me standing next to black relatives, and most people looking at the photos would say: "Who's the white boy?!" The difference between me and Williams is that I encountered "one-drop" from day one and came to loathe it. He was introduced to hypodescent later in life and is now seemingly embracing it as some sort of profound political statement. That, however, is in direct contradiction to his statement a couple of months ago to Nightline's Ted Koppel that he views race as an artificial, social construct. Well, if Gregory Howard Williams views "race" as being invalid, how can he so strongly proclaim that he is "black" and not also touch upon alternative identities? It is his right to identify as he desires, but not once did Williams, Dean of the Ohio State Law School, speak to the validity of a multiracial identifier that many of us have adopted.

It is contradictory to say on one hand that race is invalid, but on the other hand that you're black because of the one-drop rule. The sense was that ABC and Ted Koppel wanted to leave the impression with Nightline's viewers that hypodescent was still the rule of thumb vis-à-vis identity formation in mixed-race individuals. Unfortunately, Williams seemed all too willing to go along. Anatole Broyard, however, is punned in death because he "refused" to go along.

Two excellent books which address being racially & culturally mixed in America are "American Mixed Race: The Culture of Microdiversity," edited by Naomi Zack and published by Rowman & Littlefield, and Maria Root's "The Multiracial Experience: Racial Borders as the New Frontier" by Sage Publications. Root has also written what she calls the "Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People." It reads as follows:

I HAVE THE RIGHT . . .

Not to justify my existence in this world.

Not to keep the races separate within me.

Not to be responsible for people's discomfort with my physical ambiguity.

Not to justify my ethnic legitimacy.

I HAVE THE RIGHT . . .

To identify myself differently than strangers expect me to identify.

To identify myself differently from how my parents identify me.

To identify myself differently from my brothers and sisters.

To identify myself differently in different situations.

I HAVE THE RIGHT . . .

To create a vocabulary to communicate about being multiracial.

To change my identity over my lifetime — and more than once.

To have loyalties and identification with more than one group of people.

To freely choose whom I befriend and love.

I deeply regret that Anatole Broyard never had the opportunity to read that, and I strongly urge Henry Louis Gates, Jr. to read it and to try to learn something.

Ladies and gentlemen, today we are initiating the most serious and honest dialogue on race that this country has ever witnessed. Eventually all racial categories must be discarded, but until our society becomes sufficiently enlightened to do so, interracial individuals deserve to be able to identify themselves as they see fit. As my Seattle colleague Jana Wright, who submits a regular book review to *Interracial Voice*, says:

“My struggle for identity is much like anyone else's: I am here, valuable, and damn it I want to be accepted for who I am. I believe in alliance with all folks struggling for the simple right of acceptance and decent treatment in this country.”

Ladies and gentlemen, I firmly believe that we have satisfied

the goals of this Multiracial Solidarity March. Coming in, they were:

(1) To petition the government to establish a multiracial category for the 2000 Census, giving mixed-race individuals the currently denied right to legally self-identify.

(2) To show the country that multiracial individuals aren't mere abstract considerations but "flesh and blood" humans who are not sickly mutants born of "savage couplings." I've been reminded that in one of David Duke's essays he referred to us as "harbingers of the Apocalypse." I would say to the former Klansman and current Louisiana senatorial candidate that mixed-race folk *are indeed* forerunners but of the sort that will lead this country away from its race-obsessed present to an ideal future of race-less-ness in which his kind are considered *persona non grata*.

(3) To allow those individuals who've had to previously choose one side of their racial/ethnic heritage at the expense of the other to both publicly and proudly affirm their multiraciality, to allow them to see they no longer have to choose and deny to satisfy a particular political agenda.

(4) To unmask hypodescent — the inheritance of only the lowest status racial category of one's ancestors, a.k.a. the infamous "one-drop rule," — for what it is: one of the most vicious aspects of American racism.

(5) To spur the creation of a political alliance between all multiracial & multiethnic individuals, not just black/white but hapas, mestizos, metis, creoles, latinos, and all the rest.

(6) To allow interracialy involved monoracials to publicly affirm that their offspring should have the inalienable right to legally recognize and to honor both heritages.

(7) To repudiate the rising tide of separatist ideology that is engulfing the traditional civil rights organizations and their leaders.

(8) To signal the beginning of the end of "race" as the social construct that divides humanity.

Would you all agree with me that this March has been a success? Have we achieved its goals? Are we achieving solidarity as a community? I think so, too! I love you all. Power and Solidarity!

RACE GLOSSARY:

Biracial: A first-generation *mixed-race* person — the product of an interracial relationship between people of two different “racial” groups (e.g., the progeny of an Asian-American father and a European-American mother).

Blackinese: Someone who is half “black” and either half Japanese or Chinese.

Cape Coloured: The “multiracial” population of South Africa, directly descended from that country’s “mixed race” slave population. The slaves were Malay, Malagasy and Khoi people. These various groups intermarried freely, and were augmented by quite a few marriages and informal partnerships with Dutch settlers.

Colored: A person of a “racial” group not regarded as white, a person of mixed “racial” ancestry.

Creole: A person of mixed “black” and European ancestry who speaks a creolized language, especially one based on French or Spanish. Also, a “black” slave born in the Americas as opposed to one brought from Africa.

Eurafrican: (New and not widely used) A person of mixed European and African descent.

Half-Breed: (Offensive) The offspring of parents of different “races.”

Half-Caste: (Offensive — generally used outside the United States) A person of mixed “racial” descent. One born of a European parent on the one side and of a Hindu or Muslim on the

other. Also, in Australia, one born of a “white” parent and an Aboriginal parent.

Hapa: Originally a Hawaiian word meaning foreigner. Today, “hapa” generally refers to anyone of partial Asian ancestry.

Interracial: Relating to, involving, or representing different “races”; involving or existing between two or more “races”; involving or composed of different “races.”

Jungle Fever: (Offensive) That lustful malady one contracts after becoming sexually attracted to another of both the opposite sex and “race.” Many “blacks” use this term to deprecate interracial romance. (See the Spike Lee movie of the same name.)

Melungeons: A semi-isolated group of people living in Appalachia in the southern United States. Often referred to as tri-racial isolates because, for centuries, they remained almost invisible to the American mainstream. They lived hidden away on inaccessible mountain ridges, and a racially segregated society wrote them off as a mixture of “white,” “black” and American Indian.

Mestizo: A person of mixed racial ancestry, especially of mixed European and Native American ancestry.

Metis (Metisse): A person of mixed Indian and French-Canadian ancestry.

Mulatto (a): Originally, a person having one *full-blooded* “white” and one *full-blooded* “black” parent. Contemporarily the term has come to refer to anyone who is mixed with “white” and “black” to any degree.

Miscegenation: The interbreeding of what are presumed to be distinct human “races,” especially marriage between “white” and *nonwhite* persons.

Mongrel: (Offensive) Used primarily by “white” supremacists to describe mixed-race individuals. Die-hard supremacists consider Africans sub-human, and they look upon mixed-race folk as no better than quasi-human. Supremacists often point to the increasing number of multiracial Americans and speak of the growing mongrelization of the *proud white race*.

Monoracial: A so-called *racially pure* person, someone who self identifies, for example, as “white,” “black” or Asian.

Multigenerational mixed-race: Someone who is the child or descendent of other mixed-race people. Individuals in this group often refer to themselves as *multiracial*.

Multiracial, mixed-race, racially mixed, mixed-blood: These terms are essentially interchangeable, referring to people who can trace their ancestry back to more than one “racial” group.

Octoroon: A person who is one-eighth “black.”

One-Drop Rule: The notion that one-drop of “black” blood (African ancestry) made you 100% “black” and nothing else was an unevenly applied social custom during the slavery period. The key phrase is *unevenly applied* as, in some states, one could petition the local courts to declare one to be “officially white.” Racist state legislatures, however, in an effort to preserve the *purity* of the *white* “race,” codified one-drop ideology into law, along with prohibitions against interracial marriage, during the Jim Crow era of the early 20th century.

Though the United States Supreme Court effectively struck down the one-drop rule along with remaining state prohibitions against miscegenation (interracial marriage) with its 1967 decision “Loving vs. Virginia,” the one-drop mentality persists. Today, minority groups deem it necessary to continue counting someone who is, for example, part “black” as all “black” for the purpose of keeping the official head count of that particular “racial” group as artificially high as possible.

In academic circles, one-drop is also known as social *hypodescent* or the inheritance of only the lowest status racial category of one’s ancestors.

Passing: That phenomenon whereby a sufficiently light-skinned individual of mixed-race deliberately assumes a monoracial “white” social identity in order to take advantage of all the opportunities that, supposedly, would not be available to a “black”-identified person. *Passing* was more prevalent during

the days of legalized segregation in America when racial identity was a stark either-or proposition. Nowadays, many of those *passers* would simply identify as multiracial.

Quadroon: A person who is one-quarter “black.” Unlike the term mulatto, which some people still employ today, the terms quadroon and octoroon — particularly distasteful vestiges of the slavery era — have largely faded from our present-day vernacular.