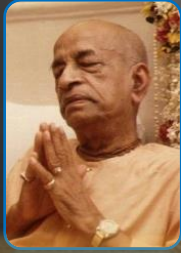


Freedom Newsletter



Dedicated to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
Founder Acarya of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

ISKCON Prison Ministry / January 2022

PO Box 2676
Alachua, FL 32616

THE VISION TO SEE LIFE IN STONE

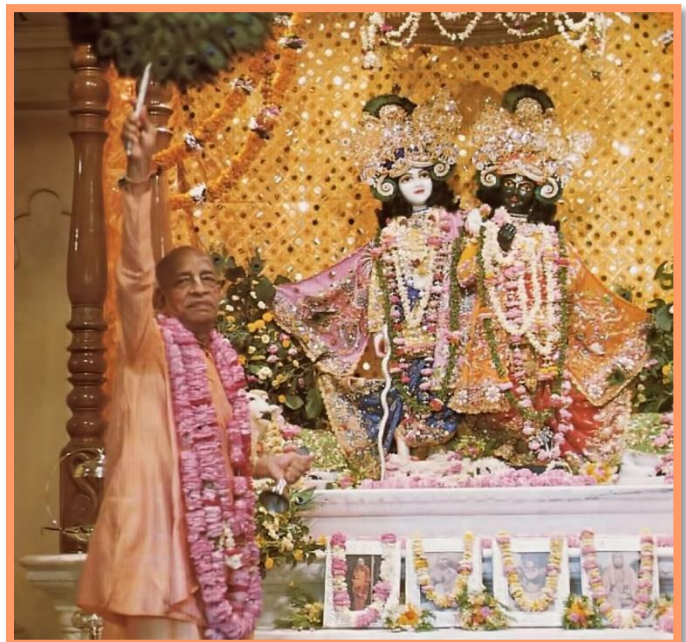
The following conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and several of his disciples took place in June 1974 in Paris.

Devotees: A man came to the temple a couple of days ago and argued that we really can't say for sure that there's life after death, so why worry about it? Better to build a more prosperous society. At least this we can understand, and it would be a meaningful accomplishment.

Srila Prabhupada: He may not understand that the soul takes another body after death, but he can understand that he'll be kicked out of his present body. Didn't he understand this?

Devotee: He thought it was more important to engage in economic development.

Srila Prabhupada: Therefore he's a fool. Suppose I am visiting here in Paris, and you say, "As soon as your visa expires you'll be kicked out." Shall I be interested in creating anything elaborate? I shall be kicked out after two months, so why should I construct a big building? Only a foolish rascal would do that. The



rascal knows that he will be kicked out, but still he works day and night to collect bricks and stones, and he becomes a “big man.” A foolish rascal is considered a big man. Therefore *Srimad-Bhagavatam* [2.3.19] says, *sva-vid-vara-hostrakharaih samstutah purusah pasuh*: “Men who are like dogs, hogs, camels, and asses praise foolish rascals, the non-devotees.”

Devotee: Sometimes people argue that God has given us our senses, so we should enjoy them.

Srila Prabhupada: The dog is also enjoying his senses. I say to such people, What are you enjoying that



the dog doesn't enjoy? You eat; the dog also eats. You sleep; the dog also sleeps. You enjoy sex; the dog also enjoys sex. You are afraid of your enemy; the dog is also afraid

of its enemy. So what is the difference between the dog's mentality and your mentality?

God has given you the intelligence to understand that you are nothing and He is everything. Just realize it—that is intelligence. When you understand, “God is great; I am His servant,” that is real intelligence. Otherwise, you'll be exactly like the dogs.

Devotee: People today have reasoned that God is dead.

Srila Prabhupada: To them I reply, God is not dead; your intelligence is dead. You have a dead body, and you're proud of it. The body is just like a motorcar. A motor car is dead, and if there is no driver it does not work. Similarly, the body is dead, and as soon as you, the soul, leave the body, it stops working. That means you are occupying a dead body. It is working only as long as you are there, but actually the body is dead. And you are decorating a dead body. All your acquisitions are simply decorations on a dead body. *Apranasya hi dehasya mandanam loka-ranjanam.*

Some rascal may applaud, “Oh, you are so intelligent; you are decorating your body so nicely.” But an intelligent man will say, “What a fool he is, that he's decorating a dead body.”

Devotee: Someone might ask why we decorate the Deity in the temple.

Srila Prabhupada: Because it is not dead. It is living. One who puts forward this



argument does not know that we are decorating the real, living body.

Devotee: You say the Deity is the real body, but it appears to be stone. There are no symptoms of life in the Deity.

Srila Prabhupada: There is life—the supreme life—but you have no eyes to see it. *Premanjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena.* A devotee—he can see that the Deity is alive. Are we fools, rascals, that we are worshiping a dead body? You think that after reading so many scriptures we are worshiping stone? You have no eyes to see the truth. You have to purify your vision to see that Krsna is personally present in the Deity.

Devotee: Most people can't even understand the existence of the soul. So how can they understand the Deity?

Srila Prabhupada: Therefore they have to become our students, our disciples, to understand this science. Then they will see that the stone Deity is also Krsna.

Devotee: Is my body also Krsna, since it is made of earth, like the Deity?

Srila Prabhupada: No, but it is Krsna's energy. Therefore the body should be engaged in Krsna's service. That is Krsna consciousness. As soon as you understand the body is Krsna's energy, you will not employ it for any purpose other than His vice. But people do not have this realization. They think the body is theirs, or that they are the body. This is illusion.

Devotee: When impersonalistic philosophers read in *Bhagavad-gita* [18.61] that Supreme Lord is situated in everyone's heart,” they argue that since Krsna is in heart of every living entity, every living entity *is* Krsna.

Srila Prabhupada: Why? If I am in a room have I *become* the room? Is that argument very sound? Krsna is within my body, and I am also within my body, but does that mean I am the body or that Krsna is the body? Krsna is everything, and yet, Krsna is apart from everything. In *Bhagavad-gita* [9.4] Krsna says, *maya tatam idam sarvam jagad avyakta-murtina*: “I am spread all over the universe in My impersonal feature.”

Mat-sthani sarva-bhutani: “Everything is in Me.” *Na caham tesv avasthitah*: “But I separate from everything.” This is the philosophy of simultaneous oneness and difference (*acintya-bhedabheda-tattva*).

Devotee: Other religions do not give information—

Srila Prabhupada: We are not talking religion; we are talking of science. Don't bring in

“religion.” There are so many religions where people

are doing things blindly. Such “religion” is not our concern.

We are talking of science.

Devotee: The science of how God’s energies are working?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. For example, say that heat is fire, is that wrong?

Devotee: No because it comes from fire.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. Heat is the *energy of fire*. Therefore one can say that heat is fire, but at the same

time it is not fire. It is simultaneously one with fire and different from fire.

Devotee: Someone might say, “If stone is also Krsna, then why aren’t you worship all stones?”

Srila Prabhupada: When we make the form of Krsna in stone, then we worship stone. Not that we worship *any* stone. Because Krsna is everything by the expansion of His energies, that does not mean we have to worship the dog. No. Our business is to worship the form of Krsna. 🌸



EKADASI: Kṛṣṇa’s special day for everyone

Edited from articles by Rohininandana dasa and Krishna.com

Ekadasi (pronounced *e-ka-da-shee*) is called Hari Vasara, “the day of Lord Hari (Hari is a name for Krishna). Ekadasi is a Sanskrit word for the number *eleven*. It means the 11th day of each half of the month in the Vedic lunar calendar. So there are two Ekadasi days in each month of the Vedic calendar. One is in the first half of the month while the moon is waxing (growing). This is known as the bright fortnight. The second is in the second half of the month while the moon is waning (shrinking). This is known as the dark fortnight. Just as certain places have a special atmosphere conducive for our purification and spiritual advancement, so do certain phases of time. The Ekadasi day is spiritually surcharged with devotional energy.

I like to think of Ekadasi as a special opportunity to increase my efforts to be Krishna conscious, rather than a list of “don’ts.” The don’ts may be present, but they are subservient to the “do’s”: **do** remember Lord Krishna; **do** chant His names; **do** relish the chance to spend a long, uninterrupted period of time to hear and chant about Krishna; **do** take advantage of the opportunity to make some substantial spiritual progress. Srila Prabhupada never told us that we had to observe a total fast. He simply asked us to use this day to increase our remembrance of Krishna. And he gave us only one restriction: on Ekadasi, don’t eat beans or grains. So we avoid eating grains and beans, and anything made from them or anything that has them in it. This means

avoiding bread, pasta, lentils, rice, and things made with bean flours.

When observing Ekadasi we should think of it as part of our devotional service. The fast does not need to be extreme and you don’t have to starve yourself; just eat light.

Some of us may be able to offer a full fast as their Ekadasi sacrifice, avoiding all foods *and* drink (this is called “nirjala” —pronounced *neer-jal*), but not everyone can do this. If you do, make sure to drink a glass or two of water (with lemon juice and salt in it, if you have access to it) first thing in the morning and, if possible, eat only a couple of

hours later.

Fasting should cause buoyancy of feeling and not tiredness or fatigue. We should only practice as much fasting as our capacity allows.

If, on Ekadasi, I’m trying to chant and hear about Krishna more than usual, I’ll naturally want to sleep and eat less. And when I begin to feel spiritually surcharged by my chanting and reading, I’ll feel less sleepy and hungry than I normally might. But everyone’s constitution is different and one should assess what is best for him/her. There is no use of comparing ourselves with others; do what is practical according to your body/mind constitution and your circumstances. The point of Ekadasi is to please Lord Kṛṣṇa, not to impress others. So be realistic and know



yourself. A person who follows Ekadasi should find himself becoming light and free, not heavy with worry.

There are many side benefits from observing Ekadasi, such as good health (regular fasting allows our digestive organs to rest) and economy (if everyone followed Ekadasi, imagine how much food would be saved). But by far the main purpose of following Ekadasi is to help us awaken our love for Krishna. Prabhupada taught that following Ekadasi means minimizing the demands of the body and maximizing our service to Krishna. On Ekadasi we should eat more simply and try to put into practice the maxim “Eat to live, not live to eat.”

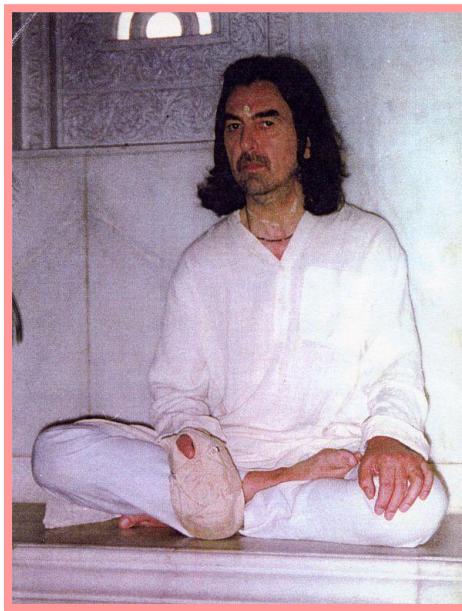
Srila Prabhupada advised that on Ekadasi we increase our chanting of the holy names—Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. To a disciple who asked, “Should we chant twenty-five rounds on Ekadasi?” Srila Prabhupada replied, “Why only twenty-five rounds? You should chant as many as possible.”

Apart from taking more energy to digest, on Ekadasi grains are affected by universal sinful reactions. Ekadasi is an extremely auspicious day, but anyone who eats grains becomes implicated in sinful reactions.

Sometimes a person may forget that a day is Ekadasi and only remembers after already eating some grains. If this happens to you, the best to refrain at once from eating any more grains and then observe your Ekadasi fast the next day. Again, see it that’s possible in your circumstances.

Once a year in the early summer there is a special Ekadasi known as the Pandava-nirjala Ekadasi or Bhima (pronounced *bee-ma*) Ekadasi. Back in the days of the Mahabharata, five thousand years ago, Arjuna’s

elder brother Bhima —one of the strongest warriors and also a voracious eater— had great difficulty fasting (in those days everyone would fast completely from all food and water). So Bhima was given permission by the sage Vyasadeva to observe the full Ekadasi fast only once a year. In the Krishna consciousness movement some devotees, when they can, follow this *Pandava Nirjala Ekadasi* (June 11 this year) to compensate for any discrepancies in their observance of the previous twenty-three Ekadasi days.



ABOVE: Bhakta George Harrison chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa on his beads.

Some devotees choose to fast from food, water, *and* sleep as a regular Ekadasi austerity. They stay up all night, usually with some friends (it’s hard to do this alone), and chant, sing, and read together.

Everyone has a different constitution, and for some people fasting from food and water can be too much of a strain on health. Srila Prabhupada

once said that in order of importance, first comes health, then our sadhana (spiritual practices), then our regular service, and then reading. This is not to imply that health is more important than chanting Hare Krishna. The idea is that without some form of good health it’s difficult to do anything. In fact, Prabhupada instructed that if by fasting on Ekadasi a devotee feels too weak to do his devotional service, it’s better for him to eat. Buddhi yoga (Kṛṣṇa consciousness) is the yoga of intelligence; so for Ekadasi also, the point is not to be fanatical, but practical.

However you decide to observe Ekadasi, it’s best to mentally prepare yourself the day before by planning what you intend to do. Try to make it a day in which you break your regular routine and, if possible, increase your spiritually oriented activities; chanting, reading of scripture, praying, remembering, sharing Kṛṣṇa consciousness with others, and other services to the Lord. Happy Ekadasi! 😊🌸

ATTENTION:

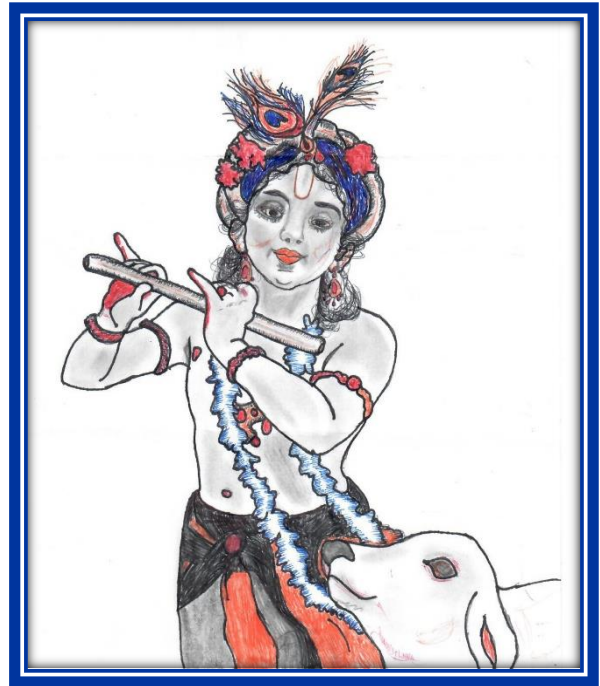
Sometimes inmates try to get more free material or information by writing to different temples, preaching centers, the BTG office, or Kṛṣṇa conscious stores. However, know that all inmate letters sent to these different places are all forwarded to our ISKCON Prison Ministry office. Sometimes months later. So please write us directly to avoid delays.

Also, please note that all Kṛṣṇa stores do not print catalogues anymore; everything is now done online.

Inmate Artwork!



LEFT: Drawing of Sri Radha
—by inmate Myo N. S., from Texas



ABOVE: Drawing of Lord Kṛṣṇa
—by inmate Jabari V., from Arkansas

Excerpts from inmates' letters

I received your beads that you sent and they've already have been put to wonderful use. I've been doing my rounds of chanting and I feel amazing! You wanted me to describe more of the effects it has on me and I can say that they are phenomenal! When I pause after a long period of chanting I am so filled with joy and happiness and it makes me love God so much. When I hear the name Krishna it just sounds so beautiful and eloquent. Also when I chant I am completely unaffected by material attraction and I also want to spread the knowledge of Krishna. I just want you to know that I've struggled with temptation and conquering material attachment and when I take up to chanting I smile and am completely impervious to The Illusion. I can never stop thanking you and I am honestly glad I came to prison just to become Krishna Conscious and Divine

Order led me here. Chanting has such a magical effect on my consciousness and I emanate pure positive energy, I even start sweating because it's purifying my entire being! I will definitely keep in touch with you when I go home because you helped bring me to the light as did Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Forever Krishna Conscious. **Bhakta Vincente R. —Lake City, Florida**

Sanātana Dharma— just resonates with me and feel like a homecoming. It just clicked and made sense to me as completely as though all the other teachings of other religious paths locked. I suppose in my own way I want others to have a similar experience but I don't want to push it upon others as I have seen too much of how that can hurt someone's progress.

I am so saddened to see souls identifying as this or that and fighting over the difference in the details instead of what they have in common and especially that we are all jivas created by Kṛṣṇa – related as brothers and sisters, with one father.

I finished the *Srimad-Bhāgavatam* you kindly donated to our chapel library.

I plan on starting the *Caitanya-caritamṛta*. I absolutely loved the *Srimad-Bhāgavatam* although at first it was tough going for me but now I want to re-read it someday and eventually I would like to read some of the stories more in depth as well – ambitious perhaps but, hey, I am an overachiever ☺. The *Srimad-Bhāgavatam* certainly delivers on its promise to not only teach how to live but also, as I continue to read, I fall more and more in love with Kṛṣṇa and I found myself longing for more of the stories —not just of the tenth canto—but of the demons, the demigods, the devotees, and the lessons on a broad range of topics that their interactions provided. I am really enjoying the *Kṛṣṇa* book too.

The *Srimad-Bhāgavatam* builds upon the Bhagavad-gita and supports Kṛṣṇa's technique in such a way that I came away from what I have read so far, not only satiated, but loving it all and craving more time/moments in such thoughts. Thank you again for such a generous donation to our chapel library!

You have helped me to learn to accept praise and acknowledge it for what it is—Kṛṣṇa empowering me as His servant; not that I am the controller but only surrendered to Him. The praise I have gotten in the past four months for my artwork around here, and also outside of these prison walls, has given me a chance to learn to be humble and remember who the rightful honoree of such results is. Thank you again for everything you do, not just for me, but for so many others I know and those I don't. It is certainly appreciated.

David B. —Danbury, Connecticut



I am going and doing well in my practice of Krishna Consciousness, thank you. I study my Bhagavad-Gita and do some chanting every day. I've been a devotee officially since March 10, 2008, when I was doing time in West Virginia. I met devotees there and was able to get and read Swami Prabhupada's books and learn to chant and I have never given up. Although I am not surrounded by devotees anymore, I have been able to form the most beautiful relationship with Lord Krishna. I have peace in my heart, and I am free from my awful past. I have all I need and my only desire I have is for the people of the world, as I now understand the pain and suffering they are in and how they can get out of it. It was heart-warming to get the post card for the Gaura Purnima Festival. When I was in West Virginia prison I

was given the opportunity to cook the meal for our Gaura Purnima Celebration. It was the one and only special Holiday the prison gave us. I miss the devotees there and the fellowship and support we gave each other. I really miss my friend and first teacher Thomas Drescher (aka Tirtha Dasa) who told me many pastime stories about Lord Krishna and His many devotees and got me

into the practice of devotional service. I now have new Karma, Hare Krishna! 😊! I am totally protected and at peace and want to be a better man and a good devotee even if I am not a 1st class devotee, I am a surrendered soul for sure. As I said, I am doing time and don't want to be a burden to the devotees that are giving service to the people in the free world. I have my *Bhagavad-Gita* and *Krishna Book* and *Teachings of Lord Caitanya* and a few more books. I used to have access to a partial set of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* but our good Christian librarian threw it out. Now we have a new librarian and Chaplain that might allow the devotees to send in some books to put in the library. It only took me six years and endless written request to get a set of Japa beads! My Dear Lord Krishna, please always sends me a way and encouragement when it's time. Hare Krishna! Anyhow I thank you and the devotees for the newsletters and the Back to Godhead magazine I get. Hare Krishna!
Bhakta Thomas Luther —Sterling, Colorado

IMPORTANT: IF YOU TRANSFER to a new unit or institution:

If you have a change of address, please inform our IPM office. And please write "**CHANGE OF ADDRESS**" on the **outside** of the envelope so we can process it immediately. Thank you.

The same goes for the **Back to Godhead (BTG)** magazine: please inform the IPM office, NOT the BTG office.

INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE HARRISON

In this interview by Mukunda Das, George Harrison talks about his experiences with mantra meditation, how he chanted with the other Beatles, and he also shares his thoughts on karma, vegetarianism, God, and the goal of life.

George: “Let’s face it. If you’re going to have to stand up and be counted, I figured, “I would rather be with these guys than with those other guys over there.” It’s like that. I mean I’d rather be one of the devotees of God than one of the straight, so-called sane or normal people who just don’t understand that man is a spiritual being, that he has a soul.

So it was a spiritual thing that just fit in with my lifestyle. I could still be a musician, but I just changed my consciousness, that’s all.”

Mukunda: As a practitioner of japa-yoga, what realizations have you experienced from chanting?

George: Prabhupada, acarya (spiritual master) of the Hare Krishna movement, told me once that we should just keep chanting all the time, or as much as possible. Once you do that, you realize the benefit. The response that comes from chanting is in the form of bliss, or spiritual happiness, which is a much higher taste than any happiness found here in the material world. That’s why I say that the more you do it, the more you don’t want to stop, because it feels so nice and peaceful.

Mukunda: How do you feel after chanting for a long time?

George: In the life I lead, I find that I sometimes have opportunities when I can really get going at it, and the more I do it, I find the harder it is to stop, and I don’t want to lose the feeling it gives me. For example, once I chanted the Hare Krishna mantra all the way from France to Portugal, nonstop. I drove for about twenty-three hours and chanted all the way. It gets you feeling a bit invincible. The funny thing was that I didn’t even know where I was going. I mean I had bought a map, and I knew basically which way I was aiming, but I couldn’t speak French, Spanish, or Portuguese. But none of that seemed to matter. You

know, once you get chanting, then things start to happen transcendently.

Mukunda: Did any of the other Beatles chant?

George: Before meeting Prabhupada and all of you, I had bought that album Prabhupada did in New York, and John and I listened to it. I remember we sang it for days, John and I, with ukulele banjos, sailing through the Greek Islands chanting Hare Krishna. Like six hours we sang, because we couldn’t stop once we got going. As soon as we stopped, it was like the lights went out. It went on to the point where our jaws were aching, singing the mantra over and over and over

and over and over. We felt exalted; it was a very happy time for us.

Mukunda: The maha-mantra was prescribed for modern times because of the fast-paced nature of things today. Even when people do get into a little quiet place, it’s very difficult to calm the mind for very long.

George: That’s right. Chanting Hare Krishna is a type of meditation that can be practiced even if the mind is in turbulence. You can even be doing it and other things at the same time. That’s what’s so nice. In my life there’s been many times the mantra brought things around. It keeps me in tune with reality, and the more you sit in one place and chant, the more incense you offer to Krishna in the same room, the more you purify the vibration, the more you can achieve what you’re trying to do, which is just trying to remember God, God, God, God, as often as possible. And if you’re talking to Him with the mantra, it certainly helps.

Mukunda: In 1969 you produced a single called “The Hare Krishna Mantra,” which eventually became a hit in many countries. That tune later became a cut on the Radha-Krishna Temple album, which you also produced on the Apple label and was distributed in



America by Capitol Records. A lot of people in the recording business were surprised by this, your producing songs for and singing with the Hare Krishnas. Why did you do it?

George: Well, it's just all a part of service, isn't it? Spiritual service, in order to try to spread the mantra all over the world. Also, to try and give the devotees a wider base and a bigger foothold in England and everywhere else.

Mukunda: How did the success of this record of Hare Krishna devotees chanting compare with some of the rock musicians you were producing at the time like Jackie Lomax, Splinter, and Billy Preston?

George: It was a different thing. Nothing to do with that really. There was much more reason to do it. There was less commercial potential in it, but it was much more satisfying to do, knowing the possibilities that it was going to create, the connotations it would have just by doing a three-and-a-half-minute mantra. That was more fun really than trying to make a pop hit record. It was the feeling of trying to utilize your skills or job to make it into some spiritual service to Krishna.

Mukunda: What effect do you think that tune, "The Hare Krishna Mantra," having reached millions and millions of people, has had on the cosmic consciousness of the world?

George: I'd like to think it had some effect. After all, the sound is God.

Mukunda: When Apple, the recording company, called a press conference to promote the record, the media seemed to be shocked to hear you speak about the soul and God being so important.

George: I felt it was important to try and be precise, to tell them and let them know. You know, to come out of the closet and really tell them. Because once you realize something, then you can't pretend you don't know it anymore.

I figured this is the space age, with airplanes and everything. If everyone can go around the world on their holidays, there's no reason why a mantra can't go a few miles as well. So the idea was to try to spiritually infiltrate society, so to speak. After I got Apple Records committed to you and the record released, and after our big promotion, we saw it was going to become a hit. And one of the greatest things, one of the greatest thrills of my life, actually, was seeing you all on BBC's Top of the Pops. I couldn't believe it. It's pretty hard to get on that program because they only put you on if you come into the Top 20. It was just like a breath of fresh air. My strategy was to keep it to a three-and-a-half-minute version of the mantra so they'd play it on the radio, and it worked. I did the harmonium and guitar track for that record at Abbey Road studios before one of the Beatles' sessions and then overdubbed a bass

part. I remember Paul McCartney and his wife, Linda, arrived at the studio and enjoyed the mantra.

Mukunda: You've been a vegetarian for years, George. Have you had any difficulties maintaining it?

George: No. Actually, I wised up and made sure I had dal bean soup or something every day. Actually, lentils are one of the cheapest things, but they give you A-I protein. People are simply screwing up when they go out and buy beef steak, which is killing them with cancer and heart troubles. The stuff costs a fortune too. You could feed a thousand people with lentil soup for the cost of half a dozen filets. Does that make sense?

Mukunda: A lot of people, when they just get started in spiritual life, worship God as impersonal. What's the difference between worshipping Krishna, or God, in His personal form and worshipping His impersonal nature as energy or light?

George: It's like the difference between hanging out with a computer or hanging out with a person. Like I said earlier, "If there is a God, I want to see Him," not only His energy or His light, but Him.

Mukunda: What do you think is the goal of human life?

George: Each individual has to burn out his own karma and escape from the chains of maya (illusion), reincarnation, and all that. The best thing anyone can give to humanity is God consciousness. Then you can really give them something. But first you have to concentrate on your own spiritual advancement; so in a sense we have to become selfish to become selfless.

Mukunda: What about trying to solve the problems of life without employing the spiritual process?

George: Life is like a piece of string with a lot of knots tied in it. The knots are the karma you're born with from all your past lives, and the object of human life is to try and undo all those knots. That's what chanting and meditation in God consciousness can do. Otherwise you simply tie another ten knots each time you try to undo one knot. That's how karma works. I mean, we're now the results of our past actions, and in the future we'll be the results of the actions we're performing now. A little understanding of "As you sow, so shall you reap" is important, because then you can't blame the condition you're in on anyone else. You know that it's by your own actions you're able to get more in a mess or out of one. It's your own actions that relieve or bind you.

Mukunda: Anyone who is sincere about making spiritual advancement, whatever one's religion may be, can usually see the value of chanting. I mean if that person was really trying to be God conscious and trying to chant sincerely.

George: That's right. It's a matter of being open. Anyone who's open can do it. You just have to be open and not prejudiced. You just have to try it. There's no loss, you know. But the "intellectuals" will always have problems, because they always need to "know." They're often the most spiritually bankrupt people because they never let go; they don't understand the meaning of "to transcend" the intellect. But an ordinary person's more willing to say, "Okay. Let me try it and see if it works." Chanting Hare Krishna can make a person a better Christian, too.

Mukunda: Bob Dylan did a lot of chanting at one time. He used to come to the Los Angeles temple and came to the Denver and Chicago temples as well. In fact he drove across the United States with two devotees once and wrote several songs about Krishna. They spent a lot of time chanting.

George: That's right. He said he enjoyed the chanting and being with them. Also Stevie Wonder had you on one of his records, you know. And it was great the song he put the chanting in —"Pastimes Paradise."

Mukunda: When you were in Vrindavana, India, where Lord Krishna appeared, and you saw thousands of people chanting Hare Krishna, did it strengthen your faith in the idea of chanting to see a whole city living Hare Krishna?

George: Yeah, it fortifies you. It definitely helps. It's fantastic to be in a place where the whole town is doing it. And I also had the idea that they were all knocked out at the idea of seeing some white person chanting on beads. Vrindavana is one of the holiest cities in India. Everyone, everywhere, chants Hare Krishna. It was my most fantastic experience.

Mukunda: You wrote in your book: "Most of the world is fooling about, especially the people who think

they control the world and the community. The presidents, the politicians, the military, etc., are all jerking about, acting as if they are Lord over their own domains. That's basically Problem One on the planet."

George: That's right. Unless you're doing some kind of God conscious thing and you know that He's the one who's really in charge, you're just building up a lot of karma and not really helping yourself or anybody else. There's a point in me where it's beyond sad, seeing the state of the world today. It's so screwed up. It's terrible, and it will be getting worse and worse. More concrete everywhere, more pollution, more radioactivity. There's no wilderness left, no pure air. They're chopping the forests down. They're polluting all the oceans. In one sense, I'm pessimistic about the future of the planet. These big guys don't realize for everything they do, there's a reaction. You have to pay. That's karma.

Mukunda: Do you think there's any hope?

George: Yes. One by one, everybody's got to escape maya. Everybody has to burn out his karma and escape reincarnation and all that. Stop thinking that if Britain or America or Russia or the West or whatever becomes superior, then we'll beat them, and then we'll all have a rest and live happily ever after. That doesn't work. The best thing you can give is God consciousness. Manifest your own divinity first. The truth is there. It's right within us all. Understand what you are. If people would just wake up to what's real, there would be no misery in the world. I guess chanting's a pretty good place to start.

Mukunda: Thanks so much, George.

George: All right. Hare Krishna. 🌸

THINKING ABOUT KRISHNA AT THE TIME OF DEATH

"Regarding thinking of Krishna at the time of death. It is stated in Bhagavad-gita 8.8 as follows; '*He who meditates on the Supreme Personality of Godhead his mind constantly engaged in remembering me, undeviated from the path, He, oh Partha, is sure to reach Me.*' The process for remembering Krishna is very easily done by chanting Hare Krishna. How one should think of Krishna, that is given in the next verse: '*One should meditate upon the Supreme Person as the one who knows everything, Who is the oldest, Who is the controller, Who is smaller than the smallest, Maintainer of everything, and Who is beyond all material conception, Who is inconceivable, Who is always a person and luminous like the sun, and Being transcendental, beyond this material nature.*' So Krishna is not something impersonal or void. So you should read my books and try to understand the nature of Krishna the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then it will be easy for you to think of Him."

Excerpt from Srila Prabhupada Letter, August 20, 1974



"If one doesn't practice remembering Kṛṣṇa while he is struggling for existence, then it will not be possible for him to remember Kṛṣṇa at the time of death."

— BHAGAVAD-GITA AS IT IS, INTRODUCTION

Calendar

JANUARY 2022

- 03 Jan 2022 – Appearance of Locana Dasa Thakura
04 Jan 2022 – Disappearance of Jiva Gosvami & Jagadisa Pandita
13 Jan 2022 – **Putrada Ekadasi** & Appearance of Jagadisa Pandita
14 Jan 2022 - Makara-sankranti
22 Jan 2022 – Disappearance of Ramachandra Kaviraja & Appearance of Gopal Bhatta Gosvami
23 Jan 2022 – Disappearance of Jayadeva Gosvami
24 Jan 2022 – Disappearance of Locana Dasa Thakura
28 Jan 2022 – **Sat-tila Ekadasi**

FEBRUARY 2022

- 05 Feb 2021 - Appearance Day of Srimati Vishnupriya Devi (Lord Caitanya's second wife)
05 Feb 2021 - Disappearance Day of Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura
05 Feb 2021 - Appearance Day of Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi
05 Feb 2021 - Appearance Day of Sri Raghunandan Thakura
05 Feb 2021 - Appearance Day of Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami
07 Feb 2021 - Appearance Day of Sri Advaita Acharya
09 Feb 2021 - Bhismastami (Appearance day of Bhismadeva, the Pandavas' pure devotee grandfather)
10 Feb 2021 - Disappearance Day of Sri Madhvacharya
11 Feb 2021 - Disappearance Day of Sri Ramanujacharya
12 Feb 2021 - **Bhaimi Ekadashi**
13 Feb 2021 - Varaha Dvadasi
14 Feb 2021 - **Nityananda Triyodasi — Appearance Day of Lord Nityananda**
16 Feb 2021 - Appearance Day of Srila Narottama Dasa Thakura
21 Feb 2021 - Appearance Day of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura
21 Feb 2021 - Disappearance Day of Sri Purusottama Dasa Thakura
27 Feb 2021 - **Vijaya Ekadashi**
28 Feb 2021 - Disappearance Day of Sri Isvara Puri



LEFT: Grandfather Bhishma (a great warrior) was such a dear devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa that the Lord broke His own promise not to fight, just to fulfill Bhishma's vow that he would force Lord Kṛṣṇa to fight on that day. This brought great ecstasy to Bhishma.

The full story is in the book *Mahabharata*.

Lord Kṛṣṇa reciprocates with His devotees in a multitude of ways, depending on their desire and relationship with Him. He is always very personal.