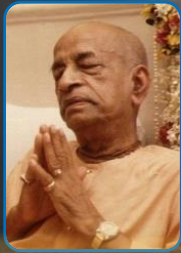


Freedom Newsletter



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

ISKCON Prison Ministry / **OCTOBER 2021**

PO Box 2676
Alachua, FL 32616

THE HARE KRISHNA PUZZLE

The following conversation between His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and Satsvarupa dasa Gosvami took place in Calcutta, India, in January 1977.

Satsvarupa Gosvami: Srila Prabhupada, a newspaper came today from America—the *Boston Globe*—with a long article titled “The Hare Krishna Puzzle.” A statement by one woman describes the devotees as “parasites.”

Srila Prabhupada: We are not parasites. We are publishing the best literature in the world. Does this literature come from illiterate hippies? We are accepted by so many scholars—how are we parasites? An intelligent person is not supposed to work like an ass. If we are parasites, then a high-court judge is also a parasite. A rascal sees a judge sitting—talking a little and getting a high salary—so he calls the judge a parasite.

Satsvarupa Gosvami: A parasite is one who lives off others.

Srila Prabhupada: If I enjoy another’s property without his approval, then I’m a parasite. But we aren’t



doing that; we are enjoying our father's property. Krishna is the proprietor. We are good children of Krishna, and Krishna says to everyone who takes shelter of Him, "Don't worry, I shall give you everything." *Sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja*: "You just surrender to Me; I will give you protection." Why do they say we are "parasites"?

Satsvarupa Gosvami: They are referring to the devotees' begging in the streets.

Srila Prabhupada: What we are doing is not begging, it is humbleness. People are puffed up, so we are approaching them in humbleness. Besides, if I sell a book about Krishna, is that begging?

Satsvarupa Gosvami: They see it as begging.

Srila Prabhupada: No, it is humbleness. In India many highly scholarly persons beg. They are titled *bhiksu-tridandi-svami*. They beg to learn pridelessness and humility. In Vedic culture it is allowed; the *brahmacaris*, *sannyasis*, and *brahmanas* are allowed to beg alms.

Satsvarupa Gosvami: But what if the culture is entirely different, as in the West?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, your culture is different, and therefore the youth are becoming hippies, and the mothers are killing their own children in the womb—all in the name of "freedom." Actually, there is no culture in the West; therefore, the whole atmosphere is abominable. But in a civilized culture a young boy may beg, as a discipline, just to learn humbleness. Even though he may be from a big family, he begs in order to become meek. And Christ said, "To the meek God is available." You

are right when you say you have an entirely different culture. You don't know real culture. You have a culture that kills children, so how will you understand the higher Vedic culture? Our disciples are going out and selling books on Krishna consciousness just to give you a chance to understand what real, spiritual culture is—and you are calling them "parasites." What else are they saying?

Satsvarupa Gosvami: The opposition is claiming that joining Krishna consciousness is not an exercise of freedom of religion, but that we are guilty of "mind control."

Srila Prabhupada: Him whose mind is already in Krishna consciousness the "deprogrammers" want to control by force. They are guilty of mind control, not we. They kidnap him and force him to think like them.

Satsvarupa Gosvami: Many times our opposition consists of businessmen and parents of devotees. They are very alarmed.

Srila Prabhupada: They should be alarmed. If the Hare Krishna movement goes on, their culture is finished. Now we are being recognized as the enemy of *maya* [illusion]. A fight is a fight. They are using their tactics; we are using ours. We will prove that they have no intelligence. As long as they don't know Krishna, they remain fools.

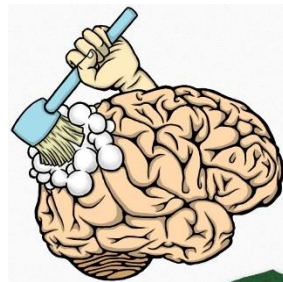
Satsvarupa Gosvami: One man was challenging, "What if everyone became like you devotees?" He was worried. He thought the economy would collapse if everyone took to Krishna consciousness.

Srila Prabhupada: Well, anyway, *he* will not take to Krishna consciousness, and the materialistic economy will go on. As long as there is a class of men like him, there is no problem—the economy will go on. "If the prisoners become reformed, how will the prison continue?" Is that a very intelligent question? Their thinking is like that. We are giving up meat, and the slaughterhouse proprietors are sorry—"How will the business go on?"—as if that were a very wonderful business. The sooner you close that business, the better. That will be good for you. Liquor shops, breweries, cigarette factories—they are all worried how business will go on. Cow slaughter is the greatest sinful activity. They don't know what they are doing. Therefore, a thorough overhaul is required; otherwise their stool-bound brains can't be cleansed. Yes, we are washing your brain because you have so much stool in your brain. We are sweepers

engaged on behalf of God to wash the stool from your brain. We have to do it. You modern civilized atheists can't even sleep peacefully—which a dog can do—yet you claim education. We are teaching that if you have illicit sex life you'll be implicated in so many ways. So if I say, "No illicit sex," what is the harm? But you are so sinful that you are killing your own children, and you don't even know it is sinful. We have to wash your brain.

Satsvarupa Gosvami: This article from the *Boston Globe* says it is a great puzzle whether the Hare Krishna movement is good or bad.

Srila Prabhupada: At least they are now considering. Formerly they said it was bad. Now they have come to the marginal point—whether the Hare Krishna movement is good or bad. Finally the day will come when they say, "Yes, it is good." 🌸



A LEGAL JOURNEY OF RECOGNITION FOR LORD KRISHNA

By Krishna Kirtan das

The following is an account of Krishna Kirtan's valiant fight to have the Vaisnava Holy days recognized in his institution.

Hare Krishna! Vaishnava pranam! Jaya Srila Prabhupada!

Let me first state that I take no credit for any success I may have had. I'm less than a grain of sand on all the planet's shores. All glories to my spiritual master, Sarva-Drik dasa, our Universal Shiksha and inspiration, Srila Prabhupada, Lords Gaura-Nitai, and our beloved and wondrously sweet Gopala.

And of course, Jaya Bhakti-lata Mataji, who watered the vine of devotional service within my atma. Starting in 2007, Mataji and I began a fourteen-year written correspondence. I've never met her in person, but she has always been there in writing, inspired by Srila Prabhupada. Over kala [time], she's watched the tribulations...along with the miracles I've experienced practicing our faith.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons isn't a great environment to begin an Eastern, spiritual practice to say the least. Lord Chaitanya though, continues to work miracles for His devotees no matter where they are living.

In 2011 after a rocky start in the B.O.P., I was transferred to the Federal medium security institution in Petersburg, Virginia and met supervisory chaplain, Juan Alba. This was obviously where Krishna had meant for me to be. Chaplain Alba allowed me to fully equip our service with devotional items (incense, mrdangas, kartals, harmoniums, deities, Gangajal (Ganges water),



tilak, and a bunch of other devotional items.) The sanga grew and many, many inmates got to hear the Holy Name for the first time. I shaved my head, grew a sikha [tuft of hair in the back of the head] and tried to be a

good brahmachari and practice all 4 regs while chanting 16 rounds a day. Kirtans got LOUD! My Gurumaharaja began visiting our group on a monthly basis and in 2012, on Srila Prabhupada's disappearance day, I received initiation with the BOP's first Agni-Hotra [fire sacrifice: example in the picture on the right], out behind the chapel. Those



who attended were blessed with Tulsi and Shalagram Shila. I was given the name *Krishna Kirtan* for obvious reasons (I love kirtan). Kirtan could be heard OUTSIDE the chapel.

Tuesday night it was the place to be. Nearly twenty inmates regularly attended our services, and we had many inmate visitors who partook of our uninstalled deity's prasada of cheese quesadillas offered to Prabhupada, Lords Gaura-Nitai and Sri-Sri Radha-Krishna. It was wild. It was ecstatic. It was sublime.

Krishna embraced me tightly and tested my faith. I was shipped to a low security prison in Elkton, Ohio which was awful. Bliss reigned supreme though and I was transferred back to Petersburg six months later by the mercy of Sri Radha and Lord Nitai.

Now, though, back at Petersburg, I had to deal with the "Ravana" of BOP chaplains. Alba was gone and a mlecca [low-class man], a true *duskritina* [the lowest of mankind] of a BOP staff member, Supervisory Chaplain Christopher "Ravana" Houston had built himself an oppressive command and control center in the chapel. He took one of our worship rooms for his office even though he had a perfectly acceptable one with the rest of the chaplains. And thus, my epic, seven-year battle with him began.

Ravana did everything he could in his infinitesimal power to break the spirit of our sanga. He moved our service time to early Saturday morning; he moved our study time to an hour frequently interrupted by compound closures; he confiscated our entire library of

Hare Krishna DVDs under the guise of investigation for "risk relevance" (six months later, the Associate Warden ordered him to give us back our movies); he refused to fulfill liturgical order requests while supplying his command and control center with the latest spy tech; he

constantly interrupted our services and studies (one time, storming in because he the word "chit" as in "sat-**chid**-ananda" was profanity); he wouldn't process change of religion forms when an inmate changed from protestant to Hindu; and, finally —among a long, continuing list of discriminatory injustices— refused to acknowledge our Holy days by NOT providing fast replacement meals in the same manner in which he provided them to all the other faith groups.

Lord Narasinga (as seen on the right) and Ananta Sesa (right, below) are tattooed on my arm, and it was with Their shakti that I fought every injustice with administrative remedies. Ravana's connection with the BOP Region and Central Office asuras were strong and the remedies were denied all the way up the chain of command. He even allowed one of his rascal chaplains to lock me up for a contrived reason. The Associate Warden who had ordered Ravana to give us our movies back was the same who sprung me from the SHU. Ridiculous charges expunged.

With administrative remedies exhausted, it was time to go to District Court. Let's see how the U.S. Attorney and the Judges feel about this. I wrote all the temples up and down the East Coast, requesting help to find a Pro Bono civil rights attorney. ISKCON of Washington, D.C. stepped up and referred us to a native Indian associated with the Hindu-American Association, the eminent Harsh Voruganti. (Incidentally, *Harsh(a)* in Sanskrit means jubilant. A VERY good sign!) He was IDEAL. Located in Alexandria, Virginia, Harsh was right in the beltway, positioned close to the BOP central office apparatus. He filed a "Complaint for Injunctive Relief" in March of 2017.

Our sanga was saddened when we heard Harsh had taken a position with the U.S. Government and had to give up the case. Nitai's mercy again reigned supreme. Lord Chaitanya knew we had come so far, He wouldn't let us down. Talk about divine reciprocation. Harsh got the preeminent and well-known Washington, D.C. law firm of *Clinton and Peed*.

known for their outstanding Civil Rights litigation, to represent us. Our noble esquire attorney, heroic in his ability, is the renowned Greg Lipper. A legal mind blessed by Sarasvati. After my first 3-hour legal call with him, I knew the government couldn't hold a candle to him! The devotional service Greg has rendered to our group is nothing short of stunning. Heroic, Supra-Intellectual, Amazingly Personable, Supremely Communicative —these are just a few of the superlatives associated with this amazing individual.

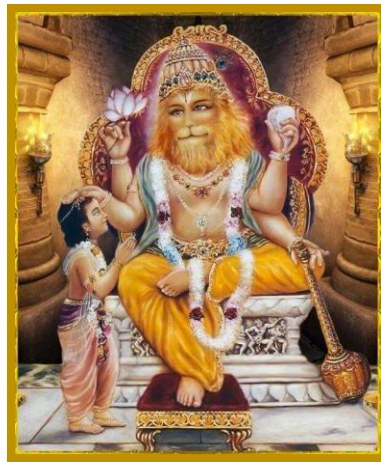
We began litigating a few months ago. I was deposed on April 12th, and on April 19th, the entire day was spent on a legal call for a Settlement Conference with the Assistant U.S. Attorney, Greg, a magistrate judge, myself, and a court reporter. By the end of the day the government agreed to pay Greg's substantial attorney fees and to recognize the 15 main Gaudiya Vaishnava Holy Days as listed on the BBT calendar. They will now be required to provide fast replacement meals for each of those days. Even though they may still be considered "personal" fasts according to B.O.P. policy, they'll be treated as "public" fasts. We compromised an actual change in the listed policy for a guarantee that we win on the accommodation and recognition of these fasts. The settlement may not be considered "precedential" yet, according to Greg, can be used by —any— inmate

bhakta as "evidence" that the B.O.P. is required to provide accommodation for the Holy Days to each inmate bhakta who requests such.

If any inmate bhakta is having trouble with his institution's supervisory chaplain recognizing and accommodating our faith, step-by-step instructions for navigating the BOP's administrative remedy process and templates for Civil Injunction complaints are available for the asking. **[just write the IPM office to request the details]**. If you have faith, Krishna will reciprocate your devotion and clear away obstacles to worship Him. I'm living proof of this.

Take no credit in your victories though. They all belong to our beloved Gopala.

All glories to Sri Guru and Gauranga! Haribol! Jaya Srila Prabhupada! 🙏



THE MONTH OF DAMODARA

"In the month of Kartika (the last month of Caturmasya) one should worship Lord Damodara (Lord Kṛṣṇa tied by Mother Yasoda) and daily recite the prayer known as *Damodarashtaka*, which has been spoken by the sage Satyavrata and which attracts Lord Damodara."

(Sri Hari-bhakti-vilasa 2.16.198)

(1)

namamisvaram sac-cid-ananda-rupam
lasat-kundalam gokule bhrajamanam
yasoda-bhiyolukhalad dhavamanam
paramrishtam atyantato drutya gopya

(2)

rudantam muhur netra-yugmam mrijantam
karambhoja-yugmena satanka-netram
muhuh svasa-kampa-trirekhanka-kanthasthita-
graivam damodaram bhakti-baddham

(3)

itidrik sva-lilabhir ananda-kunde
sva-ghosham nimajjantam akhyapayantam
tadiyeshita-jneshu bhaktair jitatvam
punah prematas tam satavritti vande

(4)

varam deva moksham na mokshavadhim va
na canyam vrine 'ham vareshad apiha
idam te vapur natha gopala-balam
sada me manasy avirastam kim anyaih

(5)

idam te mukhambhojam atyanta-nilair
vritam kuntalaih snigdha-raktais ca gopya
muhus cumbitam bimba-raktadharam me
manasy avirastam alam laksha-labhaih

(6)

namo deva damodarananta vishno
prasida prabho duhkha-jalabdhi-magnam
kripa-drishti-vrishtyati-dinam batanu
grihanesha mam ajnam edhy akshi-drisyah

(7)

kuveratmajau baddha-murtyaiva yadvat
tvaya mocitau bhakti-bhajau kritau ca
tatha prema-bhaktim svakam me prayaccha
na mokshe graho me 'sti damodareha

(8)

namas te 'stu damne sphurad-dipti-dhamne
tvadiyodarayatha visvasya dhamne
namo radhikayai tvadiya-priyayai
namo 'nanta-lilaya devaya tubhyam

TRANSLATION:

(1) To the Supreme Lord, whose form is the embodiment of eternal existence, knowledge, and bliss, whose shark-shaped earrings are swinging to and fro, who is beautifully shining in the divine realm of Gokula, who [due to the offense of breaking the pot of yogurt that His mother was churning into butter and then stealing the butter that was kept hanging from a swing] is quickly running from the wooden grinding mortar in fear of mother Yasoda, but who has been caught from behind by her who ran after Him with greater speed—to that Supreme Lord, Sri Damodara, I offer my humble obeisances.





(2) Seeing the whipping stick in His mother's hand,] He is crying and rubbing His eyes again and again with His two lotus hands. His eyes are filled with fear, and the necklace of pearls around His neck, which is marked with three lines like a conchshell, is shaking because of His quick breathing due to crying. To this Supreme Lord, Sri Damodara, whose belly is bound not with ropes but with His mother's pure love, I offer my humble obeisances.

(3) By such childhood pastimes as this He is drowning the inhabitants of Gokula in pools of ecstasy, and is revealing to those devotees who are absorbed in knowledge of His supreme majesty and opulence that He is only conquered by devotees whose pure love is imbued with intimacy and is free from all conceptions of awe and reverence. With great love I again offer my obeisances to Lord Damodara hundreds and hundreds of times.

(4) O Lord, although You are able to give all kinds of benedictions, I do not pray to You for the boon of impersonal liberation, nor the highest liberation of eternal life in Vaikuntha, nor any other boon [which may be obtained by executing the nine processes of bhakti]. O Lord, I simply wish that this form of Yours as Bala Gopala in Vrindavana may ever be manifest in my heart, for what is the use to me of any other boon besides this?

(5) O Lord, Your lotus face, which is encircled by locks of soft black hair tinged with red, is kissed again and again by mother Yasoda, and Your lips are reddish like the bimba fruit. May this beautiful vision of Your lotus face be ever manifest in my heart. Thousands and thousands of other benedictions are of no use to me.

(6) O Supreme Godhead, I offer my obeisances unto You. O Damodara! O Ananta! O Vishnu! O master! O my Lord, be pleased upon me. By showering Your glance of mercy upon me, deliver this poor ignorant fool who is immersed in an ocean of worldly sorrows, and become visible to my eyes.

(7) O Lord Damodara, just as the two sons of Kuvera—Manigriva and Nalakuvara—were delivered from the curse of Narada and made into great devotees by You in Your form as a baby tied with rope to a wooden grinding mortar, in the same way, please give to me Your own prema-bhakti. I only long for this and have no desire for any kind of liberation.

(8) O Lord Damodara, I first of all offer my obeisances to the brilliantly effulgent rope which binds Your belly. I then offer my obeisances to Your belly, which is the abode of the entire universe. I humbly bow down to Your most beloved Srimati Radharani, and I offer all obeisances to You, the Supreme Lord, who displays unlimited pastimes. 🌸



BIOGRAPHY OF DEVOTEES: His Grace Sriman Locana Das (ACBSP)

By: Sunanda das, Temple of the Vedic Planetarium on Sept. 25, 2021



In almost every ISKCON temple and center worldwide, a large or small murti of ISKCON Founder-Acharya His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada can be found. The murti is worshiped daily no different from any deity of the Lord, and Srila Prabhupada is thus considered to be personally present to accept our service and bless his devotees and followers.

What many devotees don't know is, who made most of these marvelous, lifelike deities of Srila Prabhupada that look so real and inspire us daily? The answer is His Grace Sriman Locana das, a disciple of Srila Prabhupada who has been making these murtis since even prior to Prabhupada's disappearance in 1977. Srila Prabhupada himself was highly pleased when he saw his own murti, the first of its kind, made by Locana for the FATE Museum in Los Angeles. This unique murti depicting Srila Prabhupada sitting and writing at his Vrindavan Radha Damodar temple desk has a head that moves up and down.



And shortly, commemorating Srila Prabhupada's 125th Appearance Anniversary Year, the TOVP will be unveiling his magnum opus, greatest achievement, in the form of a one-of-a-kind, worship-pose murti of Srila Prabhupada. This murti will sit before his beloved Sri Sri Radha Madhava and Pancha Tattva with eternally folded hands, personifying his statement, "Mayapur is my place of worship".

Recently, after a biopsy, it was discovered that Locan Prabhu has prostate cancer. Please pray for his treatments to be successful so that, with the Lord's grace, he can continue his service to Srila Prabhupada for many years to come.

Locana das has given his life for Srila Prabhupada and the continued making of his and other acharyas' murtis for ISKCON centers worldwide. He has thus, directly and indirectly, helped every single member of ISKCON in their personal spiritual advancement. 🌸

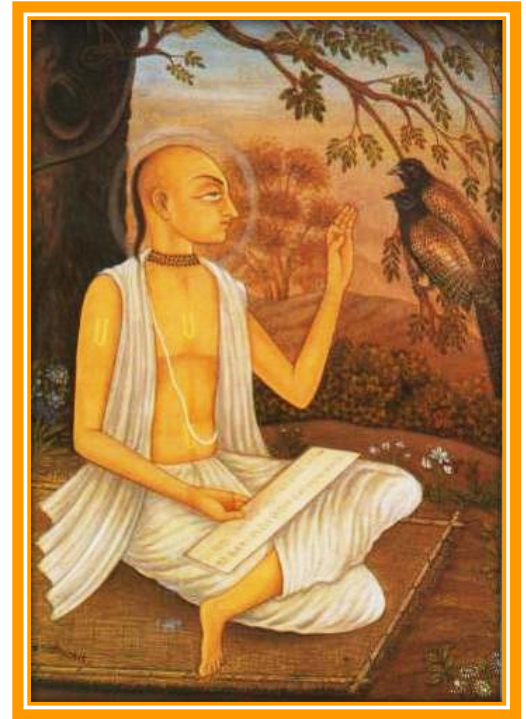
LIFE of PURE DEVOTEES

Raghunatha Bhatta Goswami

By the order of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Raghunatha Bhatta Goswami (one of the Six Goswamis) remained a lifelong brahmachari (celibate). His service was constant chanting of Hare Krishna and reading Shrimad Bhagavatam. In Jagannatha Puri, Raghunatha satisfied Lord Gauranga by his exceptional cooking and kirtan performances, which won him the title, kirtan acharya. (In the image: Raghunatha Bhatta Goswami).

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When he came to Vrindavana, the Vaishnavas (including Shri Rupa and Sanatana Goswamis) would regularly listen to his singing of Bhagavata shlokas in four tunes as sweet as a cuckoo. His recitation was unparalleled; even Vyasadeva enjoyed it. He fulfilled Lord Chaitanya's order to preach the glories and peerless significance of the grantha-rajā Shrimad Bhagavatam.



He fulfilled Lord Chaitanya's order to preach the glories and peerless significance of the grantha-rajā Shrimad Bhagavatam.

His tears of pure love for Radha-Govinda would wet the pages. Raghunatha Bhatta was so absorbed in Krishna-katha that he never heard or spoke worldly topics, what to speak of criticizing Devotees. He believed that all Vaishnavas are sincerely serving the Lord according to their realization, and therefore one should overlook their faults.

Under his inspiration, a wealthy disciple built a gorgeous Temple in Vrindavana for Shri-Shi Radha-Govindaji. Even after four-hundred and fifty years, this intricately hand-carved red stone

Temple remains the most beautiful Temple in Vrindavana and all of Northern India. Raghunatha Bhatta Goswami faithfully served Govindaji for forty years.

He was a scholar in all subjects, although he didn't write any books like the other Goswamis. Raghunatha Bhatta Goswami learned everything simply by hearing shastras. Fearing that Muslims might desecrate Raghunatha Bhatta Goswami's sacred form, Shri Jiva Goswami had his body burned. The ashes were placed in two samadhis, one in Radha-kunda, another in the 64 Samadhis Area. In Radha-Govindaji's nitya-lila he serves as Rasa or Raga Manjari, one of Shri Radha's asta (8) Manjaris. 🌸

DO YOU HAVE your copy of the *Kṛṣṇa Book*?

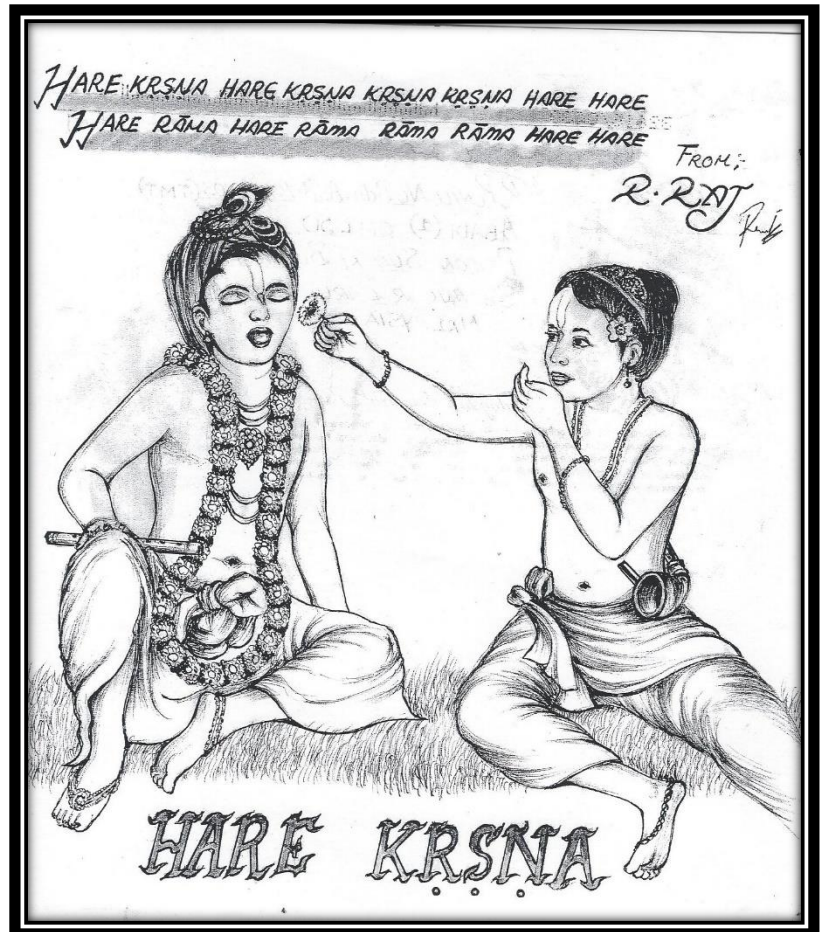
The **Kṛṣṇa Book** contains the original account of the extraordinary activities of Sri Krishna, who appeared on earth 5,000 years ago. This book is a summary study of the Tenth Canto of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

Since it only comes in hardbound form, we will send you a copy only if you specify that you are allowed **hardbound** books. Thank you! Send your request to:

ISKCON Prison Ministry
PO Box 2676
Alachua, FL 32616

Inmate Artwork!

RIGHT: A cowherd boy tricking Kṛṣṇa by putting a flower in His lotus mouth.
—By inmate R. Raj



LEFT: Lord Kṛṣṇa with a calf.
—Unknown artist

Calendar

OCTOBER 2021

- 02 Oct 2021 - **Indira Ekadasi**
15 Oct 2021 - Ramacandra Vijayotsava (Lord Ramacandra's victory over the demon Ravana)
15 Oct 2021 - Appearance Day of Sri Madhvacharya
16 Oct 2021 - **Pasankusa Ekadashi**
17 Oct 2021 - Disappearance Day of Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami
17 Oct 2021 - Disappearance Day of Srila Raghunatha Bhatta Goswami
17 Oct 2021 - Disappearance Day of Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Goswami
20 Oct 2021 - Sri Krsna Saradiya Rasayatra
20 Oct 2021 - Laksmi Puja
20 Oct 2021 - Disappearance Day of Sri Murari Gupta
21 Oct 2021 - **Fourth Month of Caturmasya Begins (Month of Kartika)**
26 Oct 2021 - Disappearance Day of Srila Narottama Dasa Thakura
29 Oct 2021 - Appearance Day of Radha Kunda, Snana Dana
29 Oct 2021 - Bahulastami
30 Oct 2021 - Appearance Day of Virabhadra

NOVEMBER 2021

- 01 Nov 2021 - **Rama Ekadashi**
05 Nov 2021 - Appearance Day of Rasikananda
05 Nov 2021 - Govardhana Puja, Go Puja, or Go-kṛda
06 Nov 2021 - Disappearance Day of Sri Vasudeva Ghosh
08 Nov 2021 - **Disappearance Day of Srila Prabhupada**
12 Nov 2021 - Gopastami, Gosthastami
12 Nov 2021 - Disappearance Day of Sri Gadadhara Dasa Goswami
12 Nov 2021 - Disappearance Day of Sri Dhananjaya Pandita
12 Nov 2021 - Disappearance Day of Sri Srinivasa Acharya
15 Nov 2021 - **Utthana Ekadashi**
15 Nov 2021 - Disappearance Day of Srila Gaura Kisora Dasa Babaji Maharaja
15 Nov 2021 - Bhisma Pancaka
18 Nov 2021 - Disappearance Day of Sri Bhugarbha Goswami
18 Nov 2021 - Disappearance Day of Sri Kasisvara Pandita
19 Nov 2021 - Krsna Rasayatra
19 Nov 2021 - Tulasi-Saligram Vivaha
19 Nov 2021 - Appearance Day of Sri Nimbarkacharya
19 Nov 2020 - **Last Day of Caturmasya**
20 Nov 2021 - Katyayani Vrata Begins
30 Nov 2021 - Disappearance Day of Sri Narahari Sarakara Thakura



LEFT: Lord Kṛṣṇa lifting Govardhana Hill with the little finger of His left hand. This is celebrated as *Govardhana Puja* (this year, November 5th)