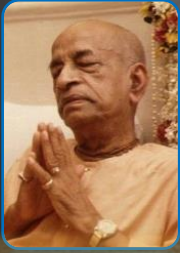


Freedom Newsletter



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

ISKCON Prison Ministry / MARCH 2021

PO Box 2676
Alachua, FL 32615

ON CHRIST AND KRISHNA

The Tolerance And Compassion Of Christ

The *Srimad-Bhagavatam* states that any bona fide preacher of God consciousness must have the qualities of *titiksa* (tolerance) and *karuna* (compassion). In the character of Lord Jesus Christ we find both these qualities. He was so tolerant that even while he was being crucified, he didn't condemn anyone. And he was so compassionate that he prayed to God to forgive the very persons who were trying to kill him. (Of course, they could not actually kill him. But they were thinking that he could be killed, so they were committing a great offense.) As Christ was being crucified he prayed, "Father, forgive them. They know not what they are doing."

Christ, the Friend Of All Living Beings

A preacher of God consciousness is a friend to all living beings. Lord Jesus Christ exemplified this by teaching, "Thou shall not kill." But the Christians like



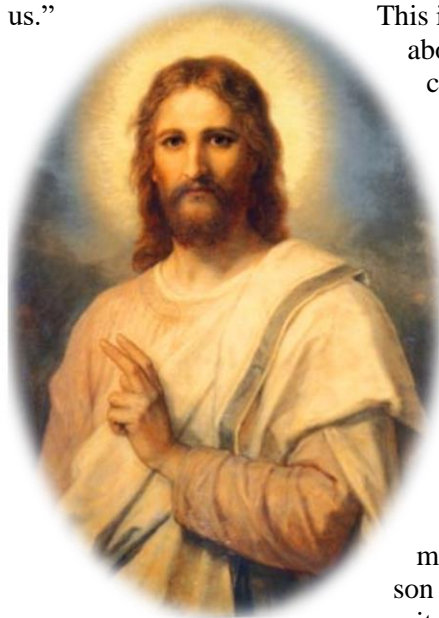
to misinterpret this instruction. They think the animals have no soul, and therefore they think they can freely kill billions of innocent animals in the slaughterhouses. So although there are many persons who profess to be

Christians, it would be very difficult to find one who strictly follows the instructions of Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ Goes On Suffering for Your Sins?

A Vaisnava [a pure devotee of the Lord] is unhappy to see the suffering of others. Therefore, Lord Jesus Christ agreed to be crucified—to free others from their suffering. But his followers are so unfaithful that they have decided, “Let Christ suffer for us, and we’ll go on committing sin.” They love Christ so much that they think, “My dear Christ, we are very weak. We cannot give up our sinful activities. So you please suffer for us.”

Jesus Christ taught, “Thou shalt not kill.” But his followers have now decided, “Let us kill anyway,” and they open big, modern, scientific slaughterhouses. “If there is any sin, Christ will suffer for us.”



This is a most abominable conclusion.

Christ can take the sufferings for the previous sins of his devotees.

But first they have to be sane: “Why should I put Jesus Christ into suffering for my sins? Let me slop my sinful activities.”

Suppose a man—the favorite son of his father—commits a murder. And suppose he thinks, “If there is any punishment coming, my father can suffer for me.” Will the law allow it? When the murderer is arrested and says, “No, no. You can release me and arrest my father; I am his pet son,” will the police officials comply with that fool’s request? *He* committed the murder, but he thinks *his father* should suffer the punishment! Is that a sane proposal? “No. *You* have committed the murder; *you* must be hanged.” Similarly, when you commit sinful activities, you must suffer—not Jesus Christ. This is God’s law.

We Adore Lord Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ was such a great personality—the son of God, the representative of God. He had no fault. Still, he was crucified. He wanted to deliver God consciousness, but in return they crucified him—they

were so thankless. They could not appreciate his preaching. But we appreciate him and give him all honor as the representative of God.

Of course, the message that Christ preached was just according to his particular time, place, and country, and just suited for a particular group of people. But certainly he is the representative of God. Therefore we adore Lord Jesus Christ and offer our obeisances to him.

Jesus Is Our Guru


Once, in Melbourne, a group of Christian ministers came to visit me. They asked, “What is your idea of Jesus Christ?” I told them, “He is our guru. He is preaching God consciousness, so he is our spiritual master.” The ministers very much appreciated that.

Actually, anyone who is preaching God’s glories must be accepted as a guru, Jesus Christ is one such great personality. We should not think of him as an ordinary human being. The scriptures say that anyone who considers the spiritual master to be an ordinary man has a hellish mentality. If Jesus Christ were an ordinary man, then he could not have delivered God consciousness.

Krishna or Christ, The Name Is the Same

Christ comes from the Greek word *Christos*, and *Christos* is the Greek version of the word *Krsta*. When an Indian person calls on Krishna, he often says “Krsta.” *Krsta* is a Sanskrit word meaning “the object of attraction.” So when we address God as “Christ,” “Krsta,” or “Krishna,” we indicate the same all-attractive Supreme Personality of Godhead. When Jesus said, “Our father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name,” that name of God was *Krsta* or *Krishna*. “Christ” is simply another way of saying “Krsta,” and “Krsta” is another way of pronouncing *Krishna*.

Therefore, the Christian clergymen should cooperate with the Krishna consciousness movement. They should chant the name Christ or Christos and should stop condoning the slaughter of animals. This is not some philosophy that I have fabricated; it is taught in the Bible. If the Christians follow these principles, the world situation will improve. If they simply stop killing animals and chant the holy name of Christ, everything will be perfect. The Bible also demands this. So the Christians should cooperate with us and chant.

Actually, it doesn’t matter—Krishna or Christ—the name is the same. The main point is to chant the name of God. The easiest way is to chant the *maha-mantra*: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare /Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. 



HOW I CAME TO KRṢṂA CONSCIOUSNESS

NOW I KNOW WHY —by Krishnamayi Devi Dasi

A young journalism student's path to Krishna consciousness takes her from curiosity to conviction.

It was 4:15 in the morning. On the north side of Chicago, not even the birds were up. But I was. And not only was I up, but I was chanting and dancing around a room with thirty other people, all members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON).

To most Americans, the scene would have appeared odd, to say the least. The men wore either white or saffron Indian dhotis, and we women were dressed in bright saris. On our foreheads we all wore *tilaka*, the white, V-shaped clay markings indicating devotion to God, and around our necks we wore strands of beads indicating dedication to God and the spiritual master. *Samsara davanala lidha-loka . . .* It was mangal-arati, the ceremony that begins each day for Hare Krishna devotees. The men and women, filling the front of the room, faced the Deity forms of Lord Krishna and His consort, Srimati Radharani. Some played Indian drums, producing exotic, throbbing rhythms. Others clashed small hand cymbals with a regular one-two-three, one-two-three. We clapped and danced to the rhythm of the drums, cymbals, and were chanting. *Vande guroh sri-caranaravindam . . .*

Several times that morning I asked myself, Why am I here? I was a “normal” college junior doing well in school. I wasn’t consciously searching for any kind of supreme truth, the way I’d always heard people did before they got involved with the Hare Krishnas. Yet, although it was spring break, I wasn’t in Fort Lauderdale or any of the other fun spots that cater to college students. I was at the Chicago Hare Krishna temple.

Why? Why was I involved in worshipping God, Krishna, in this way? Well, as yet even I didn’t know the answer to that one. I didn’t know if I was acting out a fantasy, if I was just curious, or if I really wanted to believe as the devotees did. All I knew for sure was that I enjoyed spending time with them and that I respected them for their strong faith and their courage in sticking with beliefs society frowns on as alien.



The story of my interest in the Hare Krishna movement goes back to when I was a seventeen-year-old freshman at Southern Illinois University, in Carbondale. When those strange-looking people with the orange robes and shaved heads first appeared on campus, I had no idea who they were. But I was curious. So I overcame my timidity and talked to them. Then I reported what I’d found to my friends, and a well-meaning roommate threw at me the frightening word *cult*.

But I, always the rebellious one in our family, wanted to see for myself whether the reported “brainwashing” would take place for me. It never did. And because I had expected a bit of magic, I was a little disappointed. But I did keep talking to the devotees whenever they came to Carbondale, and though their beliefs were hard to understand at first, after a year or so of questioning and studying the philosophy of Krishna consciousness, I began to find it more acceptable; it all began to make sense. And I found my admiration growing for the devotees’ spiritual knowledge, strength of character, and high moral standards.

After two years of chance meetings with devotees, I learned that a small Hare Krishna center was opening in town. I was thrilled. I loved the prasadam (the spicy, sanctified food they served), the beautiful saris the women wore, and the feeling of being part of a worldwide, growing movement. The center soon gathered a few followers, including myself. But my following was only tentative, sporadic, and very cautious. Playing at being a devotee was fine, I thought,

but I certainly wasn't ready to give up my plans of being wealthy and worldly-wise.

Then, during spring break, the center's director, Damodara Pandita, decided to take his wife and their two-year-old son to the Chicago temple for a week. A few people went with them, and I followed several days later with some friends.

The group of us making the trip got in late at night late, that is, for devotees, whose days start at 3:30 a.m. Damodara Pandita was waiting for us at the temple and took us two blocks down an alley to the apartment we were to share with his wife. Since she was staying there just temporarily, it was bare except for bunk beds along the walls.

When 3:30 came, I was already awake. I excitedly jumped out of bed and took my turn in a quick shower, tied my hair back into a braid, carefully applied the clay tilaka markings, covered my head (as a sign of chastity), and stepped out into cold, predawn Chicago. It's one thing to be told that the early-morning hours are best for spiritual practices. It's quite another to experience it. I could almost touch the stillness in the damp, thick air as we walked through the alley. The late spring air chilled us, and soon we were walking faster and faster, finally breaking into a run the last few yards before we reached the temple building.

After scurrying up three flights of stairs, we entered a dimly lit room as big as a basketball court. We clanged



a bell hanging by the door to announce our presence to the Deities, sank to our knees and offered obeisances by touching our foreheads to the checkerboard marble floor.

The Deity forms of Radha and Krishna smiled down from a lighted chamber along one wall of the room. Ancient Vedic scriptures say that if the Deities are installed in the temple with the proper ceremonies, God will consent to reside within Them. But bowing down

before the Deities is one thing some people can't understand; it seems degrading. But I enjoyed it. Thanks to rituals learned during childhood judo lessons, I had never thought myself too good to bow to a superior. And God, I thought, is as superior as you can get.



When the mangala-arati ceremony was over, it was time for individual chanting. Each devotee carries around his or her neck a cloth bag containing a string of 108 japa beads, similar to a rosary. While turning each bead between the thumb and second finger, the devotee chants the mantra Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

Hare means "O energy of God," and Krishna and Rama are names of God. Chanting is a spiritual call for the Lord and His energy to give protection to the conditioned soul and engage him in the Lord's service. And, since God is absolute. He and His names are non-different. I actually felt His presence while chanting.

When all 108 beads have been chanted, a "round" is done. Sixteen rounds are required every day from each initiated devotee. But I, with a poor early-morning attention span, was having a difficult time concentrating. I looked around at some of the older devotees, a few of whom had been in the movement for ten or twelve years, and saw them chanting easily and with pleasure. Some paced as they chanted, some sat still, and some rocked back and forth, but all had looks of deep concentration on their faces. Inspired (and not wanting to appear too much of a novice), I closed my eyes and began again. This time it was easier, and I started to savor the names of the chant.

I opened my eyes and looked around, feeling a warmth slowly spread through my body. The temple seemed almost like home. I knew that an outsider might see it as segregated; men were generally aloof from the women and vice-versa but that was because distractions had to be minimized so one could concentrate on

spiritual life. Both sexes seemed to want it that way. And when we did get together, to watch video tapes or to discuss the day's activities, I sensed comfortable relationships without the strain of flirting.



After the *guru-puja* ceremony (in which we worship Srila Prabhupada), we had a forty-five-minute philosophy class on an ancient Sanskrit spiritual classic called the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. The morning ended with a delicious breakfast of fruit, cereal, chickpeas, and hot milk.

After breakfast, a six-year-old girl devotee and I started walking back to the apartment together. Halfway down the alley, we were surprised by two little boys who popped out of their backyard and began to scream at us. "We believe in Jesus Christ," they yelled, making faces, "not your #\$\$@&!! old God!" The little girl looked at me, bewilderment and hurt glistening in her wide eyes. "But I believe in Jesus, too," she said. I held her hand tighter. How do you explain religious prejudice to a child? "Don't worry, it's okay," I told her. "Those boys don't understand. They don't look very happy, do they?" She agreed they didn't, and we walked on. I knew that devotees regard Christ as an empowered representative of God and that they actually worship him as a pure devotee, a spiritual master. It's too bad most people can't understand that devotees of Krishna aren't enemies of Christianity.

Devotees don't eat meat, or use intoxicants, or have illicit sex, or gamble either. I had to admire the devotees for their self-control, even though I wasn't ready to follow all those regulations at that time. All in all, I could see why the Hare Krishna religion was attracting so many admirers. Its purity, combined with incidents like the one with the little boys, made me want to defend it for all the goodness I knew to be there. I still had my doubts about parts of the philosophy, but just being around devotees made it easier to believe. More than anything, I realized suddenly, I wanted to belong to this movement. Maybe not just then, but someday.

At the end of my visit, as I expected, the devotees invited me to stay. But I felt an insistent need to get back to journalism school, my boyfriend, my job, and my plans. I just wasn't ready to make that kind of commitment.

So I left. But even though I drove out of Chicago, I didn't really leave the movement. I kept visiting the St. Louis temple (it was the closest one to Carbondale), and one by one my doubts and questions were answered. Back at school I worked my way up to a position as editor on the student newspaper, and after graduation I went on to work for several professional newspapers in the Midwest. Krishna consciousness always remained a part of my life, and gradually the desire grew in me to make it even more so. Then, one day in St. Louis, I made my decision. I was confident that moving into the temple community and serving Krishna full time was the right thing to do.

Six months later I received formal initiation and the name *Krishnamayi* -devi dasi, meaning "servant of



Radharani." My parents and some of my friends were astonished, but I never regretted my decision. I haven't given up my plans to be a writer in fact, the first articles I ever sold to a national magazine were written after I had become a full-time devotee. Only now my writing is devotional service to Krishna, and it's much more satisfying than writing for prestige.

Days still start before the birds are up. Only now I know why I'm up that early and why I'm chanting before the beautiful Radha-Krishna Deities at the Dallas temple, where my husband and I live with our newborn child. I'm not just pretending to be a devotee anymore; I'm living a life based on the deep understanding that I'm a servant of God and that all I do should be done with devotion as an offering to Him. And that kind of life is becoming more and more satisfying every day. 🌸



Excerpts from inmates' letters

I was convicted and sentenced to 'life plus sixty years in prison! I never stopped chanting the entire time I was in jail. I was strong in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness up until I heard them say 'guilty' and sentence me, then my entire mind, thoughts, actions 'froze up.' Although I knew that the entire trial process was unlawful. I couldn't chant, eat, or sleep for days. It took some Christian guy to remind me of the story of Job in the Bible to bring me back to reality. I accept Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but you know, a lot of people see me chanting etc. and assume it's witchcraft because it's 'different' from their belief. Recalling the story of Job was all I needed to remind me of KRSNA's omnipotence. Now I'm sure I will find stories similar to Job in 'KRSNA BOOK' you sent (thanks) which definitely predate Biblical stories. I am now back to Devotional Service and done thinking that KRSNA has rejected me as His servant. I met another Bhakta, actually, he is the 1st Bhakta I've ever met in person, named 'Fernando'. He knows you and told me to tell you we met. He is here with me, but in another dorm. I had the Kṛṣṇa book in my hand and he saw it and came over to me and said "Prabhupada". I smiled ear to ear, amazed to finally meet someone who not only was familiar, but also a devotee.

Mario S. —Pelham, Georgia

I agree with you when I say that I didn't find Kṛṣṇa by chance! The Supreme Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa who dwells within my heart as Paramatma knows all because He created all. He knows I needed him long before I knew I needed him. He knew that this chapter of my life would come to pass where I would have nothing nor no one and at just the right time, Kṛṣṇa revealed Himself to me. Why? Because, like everyone else on Earth, I was deceived by maya, or this material nature/ world. Kṛṣṇa delivered the *Gita* to me along with help from other devotees and the Maha Mantra to unlock me from bondage from the material world by showing me that it's all an illusion and that in the true self is pure soul, nothing else matters. Perform your duties, Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, chant Maha Mantra, renounce everything, don't give into sense gratification, etc., etc. Let it go because in the end it don't matter anyway it's all an illusion! Hare Kṛṣṇa. It doesn't get no simpler than living via Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. No worries, Hare Kṛṣṇa! I ain't the best at explaining things but you get the gist of what I mean. I understand everything Swami Prabhupada teaches and apply it.

Ricky H. —Big Stone Gap, Virginia

I am writing because I am on trial [again]. A postcard with the beautiful visage of Lord Kṛṣṇa that you sent a few years ago [while I was in prison] reminded me of the shelter the prison ministry so graciously provided me during my previous incarcerations. I wanted to seek that solace again. So, here I am again, begging for Vaisnava association. I pray that you are happy and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa as always.

Timothy S. —Kaukauna, Wisconsin

So many poor and lost souls in prison are just wanting love. Sure, there are plenty of souls in the world that are in similar positions but overwhelmingly so, it seems, in here. Atheists abound while others cling to ritualistic religion without grasping that love is required. How many relish meat in here as if it is the main food group and something they clamor for? Those who try the offered prasadam food that I made are amazed by the taste from such simple ingredients and, though I try to explain that it is more than that, many refuse to accept that it is not me by Kṛṣṇa's doing. I wish I was a stronger soul to not be pulled down into maya through associations with such people. Yet, I am fallen and struggle to not fall into my old ways. It is a miserable, suffering world I chose to come to and so I need to stop my foolishness and accept what is Kṛṣṇa's way and quit wishing I was in a better situation. I can attain that better situation if I just purify myself and I need to remember that in these moments of doubt. The love I am seeking is there in Kṛṣṇa if I just surrender unto him.

David B. —Danville, Connecticut

I knew I had to drop this note to let you know how I really appreciate the four books you send me and I really have been longing to get the book *Bhagavad-Gita As It Is*. I read it back in 2012 or 2013 and ever since then I wanted my own [copy of] *Bhagavad-Gita As It Is*. I'm still on *The Science of Self-Realization*. I would have been finished with it if I had just read one book at a time. I was like a child that gets too many toys at once and does not know which one to play with first. I began to read from all of them until I made up my mind to just read "Self-Realization."

I like how it sees Jesus as who He came to be. Anytime I read things about GOD I do measure it by the Bible and I see the *Bhagavad-Gita As It Is* is saying the same thing. When it comes to how to really surrender to God, the *Bhagavad-Gita* is the best I done come across. The Holy Bible does not break it down like that. So, now I

got two Bibles. So, thanks again for the books and I know I am going to enjoy them all because it is what I have been looking for.

Paul Mc P. —Raiford, Florida

Just to let you know that all the books including the Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta, with the religious materials, has arrived. Our kind regards to you, the devotees, and this ministry, in providing us these priceless transcendental books and religious materials. We are in debt to your

kind service. May Kṛṣṇa continue to bless you and this ministry. We are overwhelmed that the devotees gave us support and such beautiful gifts. We are ecstatic! With much appreciation, we thank you for providing to a bunch of rascals and helping us in achieving Bhakti and giving us all a chance.

In His service, your humble servant,
Charles B. —Tennessee Colony, Texas



Book Distribution Stories!

SRILA PRABHUPADA TOUCHES PEOPLE'S HEARTS

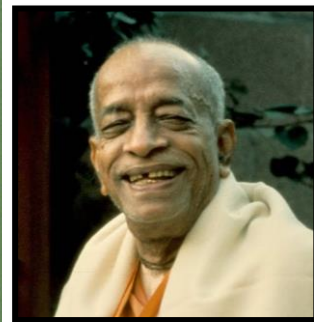
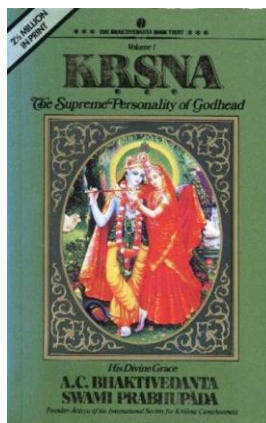
—Story told by Sri Radha Raman dasa

Once I was distributing in a very small sheep farming town Western Australia. I knocked on the door of a rundown small country style house and a very fragile bodied old lady answered the door. It was quite clear that she was living on her own and looking after herself in the last years of her life. Normally, in that situation, people aren't used to strangers coming to the door in a small town. She said "Oh! Come in." She opened the door wide and took me into her living room and before I could say anything she said "I have to talk to you. It's about the book. Now, if you've come to get the book then I have to talk to you." I told her that I wasn't sure what she was talking about. She said, "Aren't you the little fellow who came last year?" I told her that I had never been to this town before. She replied, "Oh! I feel so relieved because I thought that you had come to get your book. There was no way that I was going to let you take the book away."

She took me into her room where she takes rest at night and explained that someone had come last year to sell something and, although she couldn't afford to buy anything, she confided in him that she was having trouble sleeping at night because her husband had died and she was feeling very lonely. The devotee suggested that he give her a book to read before she went to sleep. She told him that she couldn't read anymore.

The devotee told her, "Well, I'm going to give you a book anyway, and even if you can't read it just keep it and it will give you some solace." She showed me on

the night stand next to her bed one of the small green paperback Kṛṣṇa books that used to come in a two volume set gift pack. She said, "I keep this book by my bed. I can't read it because, well, I can't read anything these days but let me show you something." I had a closer look and could see that the book was actually turned around so that the back side was facing up and on the back cover was a portrait of Srila Prabhupada. It was a very casual photo where Srila Prabhupada was laughing. Then she told me, "I'm just so grateful for this book. Even though I can't read it, I just keep it by my bedside because this man's photo gives me so much comfort and that's how I get by."



PAYING FOR YOUR NAME

—Story told by Madhu-Gopal dasa

One day while on Harinam in Amsterdam we were approached by a group of about seven persons, all wearing grey bandanas around their foreheads and

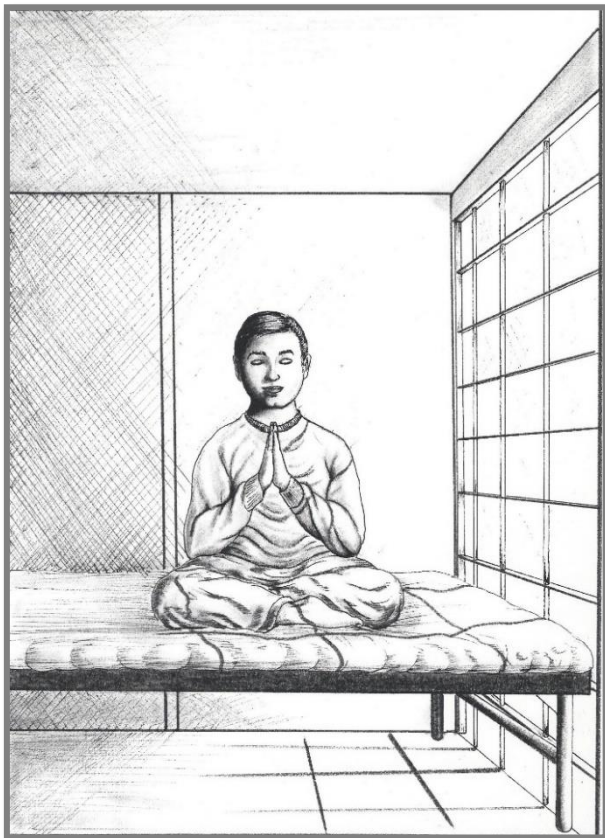
necks. These persons were delighted to meet the harinam party. They explained that they were on a 'scavenger hunt' (there were part of groups of people with a list of unusual items and whatever group collects the most items wins). The group explained that we fulfilled about several needed objects on their list (musical instrument, fun, drum, etc.). They excitedly proposed that we return with them to the hotel where they were staying, giving us a donation. We agreed and chanted Hare Krishna on the walk to the hotel. There



we entered a banquet room. We chanted the holy names for seventy business people, loudly accompanied by mrdanga and kartals.

Simultaneously one business man was handing out the cards with the Hare Krishna Maha Mantra on it and recommending that everyone give a donation because of us being 'monks.'

Inmate Artwork!



Another business man was handing out our harinam flyers and telling everyone, 'Haribol, Haribol' and asking everyone to chant Hare Krishna. We told them about our mission, answering their questions.

Sankirtan lasted for about five minutes and then we distributed all the books we had brought with us that day; about seven hardbound and five softbound books.



Then we left and kept right on chanting Lord Krishna's holy name in the streets. 🌸



↑ ABOVE: Drawing of the Paramatma (the Lord in the heart) by Juan Martinez
 ←LEFT: Devotee praying —unknown artist

Professor Thomas J. Hopkins, Scholar and Friend of ISKCON Passes Away

Dr. Thomas Hopkins, Emeritus Professor from Franklin and Marshall College in Pennsylvania was one of the earliest scholars in the United States to meet Srila Prabhupada and take interest in the fledging ISKCON movement.

One of ISKCON's best friends and scholarly supporters, Professor Thomas J. Hopkins, passed away the morning of Saturday, February 20, 2021, at the age of ninety-one. Dr. Hopkins was Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies at Franklin and Marshall College, USA, and an expert in the study of Caitanya Vaishnavism.

Professor Hopkins met Srila Prabhupada and the early ISKCON devotees in 1966 at 26 Second Avenue in New York City, ISKCON's first temple. He purchased a set of Srila Prabhupada's original publication of the "Srimad-Bhagavatam" during that visit. At one point, Professor Hopkins arranged for Srila Prabhupada to teach a course at Franklin and Marshall College, where he was a professor. In the end, Srila Prabhupada declined this offer because Srila Prabhupada was too busy establishing ISKCON's temples and centers.



Professor Hopkins wrote an oft-quoted review of the Bhagavad-gita As-It-Is, wherein he commented: "There is little question that this edition is one of the best books available on the Gita and devotion. Prabhupada's translation is an ideal blend of literal accuracy and religious insight."

Professor Hopkins contributed his own eloquent writing to many ISKCON publications, such as his article entitled, "A Vital Transition: The Molding of the Hare Krishna Movement in British India," for the BTG Magazine (Vol. 16, No. 8). A "Preface" to one of Kusakratha Dasa's works, a "Foreword" to Hari Sauri Dasa's book, "A Transcendental Diary," another "Foreword" to Satyaraja's recent work entitled, "Swamiji: An Early Disciple, Brahmananda Dasa, Remembers His Guru," and other works.

Perhaps Professor Hopkins's most well-known writing among ISKCON members is his "Foreword" to the second volume of Satsvarupa Dasa Goswami's biography of Srila Prabhupada, "Planting the Seed." He begins with his famous first words: "The story you are about to read is, like many true stories, highly improbable." He goes on to write, "What follows is a remarkable tale of faith, determination, and success beyond anyone's expectation."

Dr. Graham Schweig, aka Garuda dasa, comments, "Tom and I were good friends and close colleagues. Tom had truly a great love for devotees, for Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON, and for the vibrant Vaishnava tradition and its rich literature."



Describing the photo on the left Garuda writes, "The picture is of Tom and I in his library at his home in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, taken about two years ago when he was eighty-nine years of age. Of special note are the books on some of the shelves behind us: all the Lilamrita volumes, the three original "Delhi" Bhagavatams, other books by devotees, and a complete set of the Journal of Vaishnava Studies on the top shelf."

Professor Hopkins was the Academic Director of the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies (OCHS) in the UK during 1998-1999. He remained a Senior Associate Fellow at the Centre until his passing. In that capacity and others, he helped to train a new generation of Vaishnava scholars.

Shaunaka Rishi Das, Director of OCHS (The Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies) said, "Tom was a gentleman, a scholar, and a good

ABOVE: left to right: Garuda dasa and Professor Thomas Hopkins

friend. He was an academic of great integrity. A religious man with an open heart and an appreciation of goodness wherever he found it. It was a great pleasure working with him. He was dedicated, grave, funny, and warm in his dealings—above all, he was kind. At the OCHS, we owe him a great debt. As our Academic Director, he identified the Centre as a bridge, between scholars, between communities, and between cultures—a policy which has influenced the ethos of the Centre ever since.

Dr. Ravi Gupta, aka Radhika Raman das, wrote that “This is indeed a sad day for ISKCON and the scholarly community. Professor Hopkins was a pioneer in the field of Vaishnava studies—one of the first American scholars to study the *Bhagavata Purana*, Krishna bhakti, and ISKCON's development in the West. He will be deeply missed within the Vaishnava community and among scholars of religion.”

Professor Hopkins was the key-note speaker at an academic conference held at Harvard University's Center for the Study of World Religions in 2016, entitled "The Worldwide Krishna Movement: Half a Century of Growth, Impact, and Challenge." His article, and the book from that conference, are forthcoming.

In the film, Professor Hopkins urges ISKCON to study its history and define its theology before others, who are less informed, fill the vacuum. He ends his remarks with a jolly, "Haribol!"

Garuda concluded, "Tom Hopkins' unique contributions to Srila Prabhupada's legacy will never be forgotten. Let us wish him well as he leaves this world after having given so much to the understanding of Krishna Bhakti in the intellectual world. And let us wish him well by celebrating him as one who offered both his mind and heart to the spread of Krishna's love around the world." 🌸



Calendar

MARCH 2021

- 03 Mar 2021 - Appearance Day of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura
- 03 Mar 2021 - Disappearance Day of Sri Purusottama Dasa Thakura
- 09 Mar 2021 - **Vijaya Ekadashi**
- 10 Mar 2021 - Disappearance Day of Sri Isvara Puri
- 12 Mar 2021 - Siva Ratri
- 14 Mar 2021 - Disappearance Day of Srila Jagannatha Dasa Babaji
- 14 Mar 2021 - Disappearance Day of Sri Rasikananda
- 17 Mar 2021 - Appearance Day of Sri Purusottama Dasa Thakura
- 25 Mar 2021 - **Amalaki Vrata Ekadashi**
- 26 Mar 2021 - Disappearance of Sri Madhavendra Puri
- 28 Mar 2021 - **GAURA PURNIMA** (appearance day of Lord Caitanya)
- 29 Mar 2021 - Festival of Jagannatha Misra

APRIL 2021

- 04 April 2021 - Appearance Day of Sri Srivasa Pandita
- 07 April 2021 - **Papamochani Ekadashi**
- 08 April 2021 - Disappearance Day of Sri Govinda Ghosh
- 14 April 2021 - Beginning of Salagrama and Tulasi Jala Dana
- 17 April 2021 - Appearance Day of Sri Ramanujacharya
- 21 April 2021 - Rama Navami
- 23 April 2021 - **Kamada Ekadashi**
- 24 April 2021 - Damanaka Ropana Dvadasi
- 27 April 2021 - Sri Balarama Rasayatra
- 27 April 2021 - Sri Krishna Vasanta Rasa
- 27 April 2021 - Appearance Day of Sri Vamsivadananda Thakura
- 27 April 2021 - Appearance Day of Sri Syamananda Prabhu

