

Freedom Newsletter



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

ISKCON Prison Ministry / April 2022
PO Box 2676
Alachua, FL 32616

ON BEING SUBORDINATE

The following conversation between His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and a guest took place in September 1968 at the Seattle Kṛṣṇa center.

Guest: Can you explain subordination?

Srila Prabhupada: Subordination? Yes, it is simple. Everyone must be subordinate to somebody else. Are you not subordinate to somebody?

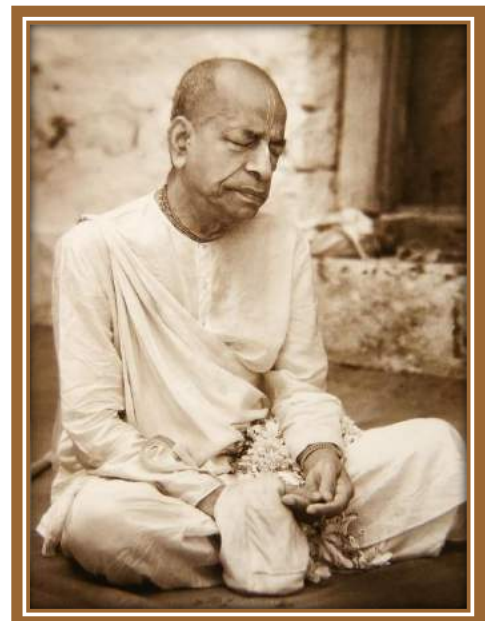
Guest: Yes, in a material sense. But in the spiritual sense, I don't feel subordinate to anyone.

Srila Prabhupada: When you understand what spiritual life is, you will see that in the spiritual sense also you are subordinate, because your nature is to be subordinate. What do you mean by spiritual and material?

Guest: Well, for example, at my job I'm subordinate to my boss, but in my real being, my spiritual being, I don't feel I am subordinate to my boss or anyone else. In other words, I don't feel that I have to bow down to anybody, and I don't feel that anybody has to bow down to me.

Srila Prabhupada: Why do you not want to bow down?

Guest: Because I don't feel that I owe anyone anything, or that anyone owes me anything.



Srila Prabhupada: So, this is the material disease. We are *forced* to bow down, yet we think that we do not have to bow down. This is the disease.

Guest: No one can force me to bow down.

Srila Prabhupada: Just try to understand. You say that you do not want to bow down—is that right?

Guest: That's basically true, yes.

Srila Prabhupada: Why?

Guest: Because I don't feel that I'm inferior to anyone.

Srila Prabhupada: This is the disease of material existence. You have diagnosed your own disease. Everyone is thinking, "I want to be the master. I don't wish to bow down." Everyone is thinking like this. This is not only your disease; everyone has this diseased mentality: Why shall I bow down? Why shall I become subordinate?" But nature is *forcing* me to become subordinate. Now, why are people dying? Can you answer this question?

Guest: Why are people dying?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, nobody wants to die, yet everyone is dying. Why?

Guest: Well, death is biologically determined—

Srila Prabhupada: That means biological force! You are subordinate to biology. Then why do you say that you are independent?

Guest: Well, I feel that I'm—

Srila Prabhupada: You are feeling wrongly. That is my point. You are subordinate, and you must bow down to biological force. When death comes, you can't say, "Oh, I don't obey you." Therefore, you are subordinate.

Guest: I am subordinate to God, yes.

Srila Prabhupada: No, forget God for now. God is far away. Now we are speaking of the material nature. Just try to understand that although you do not want to die, you are forced to die because you are subordinate.

Guest: Oh, yes, that makes sense.

Srila Prabhupada: Then you understand your position—that you are subordinate. You cannot declare, "I am free; I am not subordinate." If you are thinking that you don't



wish to be subordinate, that you don't have to bow down, then you are diseased.

Guest: O.K. But who or *what should* I bow down to?

Srila Prabhupada: First of all try to fully understand your disease. Then we shall prescribe your medicine. You are bowing down to death, you are bowing down to disease, you are bowing down to old age—you are bowing down to so many things. You are forced to bow down, yet still you are thinking, "I cannot bow down; I don't like to bow down." But you *have to* bow down. Why do you forget your position? That forgetfulness is your disease.

The next step is to understand that since you are being forced to bow down, now you have to find where you shall be happy even by bowing down. And that is Krsna. Your bowing down will not be stopped, because you are meant for that, but if you bow down to Krsna and Krsna's representative, you become happy. That's the difference. If you don't bow down to Krsna and His representative, you'll be forced to bow down to something else—*maya* [Krsna's material nature]. That is your position. You cannot be free at any moment.

But if you bow down to Krsna and His representative, you'll be happy. For example, a child is always bowing down to his parents, and he is happy. His mother says, "My dear child, please come and sit down here." "Yes," says the child, and he is happy. This is the nature of the child's relationship with his mother. Similarly, Krsna and His representative are like loving parents, and we are like helpless children in the clutches of *maya*. But if we bow down to them we shall be safe and happy.

So you cannot stop your bowing down—that is not possible. But you simply have to seek out the proper persons to bow down to. That's all. If you artificially think, "I am not going to bow down to anyone—I am independent," then you suffer. You simply have to bow down to the right person—and that is Krsna, or Krsna's representative. 🌸

IMPORTANT: IF YOU TRANSFER to a new unit/address:

If you have a change of address, please inform IPM (NOT the BTG Office), at the address below. And please write "CHANGE OF ADDRESS" on the outside of the envelope so we can process it immediately. Thank you.

ISKCON Prison Ministry, PO Box 2676, Alachua, FL 32616

The same goes for the *Freedom Newsletter*, if you want to make sure you continue to receive it.

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare

Appearance Day of Lord Nrisimhadeva (you can also say Lord Nrsimha)

**namas te narasimhaya
prahladahlada-dayine
hiranyakashipor vaksaha
shila-tanka-nakhalaye**

I offer my obeisances to Lord Narasimha, who gives joy to Prahlada Maharaja and whose nails are like chisels on the stonelike chest of the demon Hiranyakasipu.

**ito nrisimhah parato nrisimho
yato yato yami tato nrisimhah
bahir nrisimho hrdaye nrisimho
nrisimham adim sharanam prapadye**

Lord Nrsimha is here and also there. Wherever I go Lord Nrsimha is there. he is within the heart and is outside as well. I surrender to Lord Nrsimha, the origin of all things and the supreme refuge.

**tava kara-kamala-vare nakham adbhuta-srngam
dalita-hiranyakasipu-tanu-bhrngam**

keshava dhrta-narahari-rupa jaya jagadisa hare
O Keshava! O Lord of the universe! O Lord Hari, who have assumed the form of half-man, half-lion! All glories to You! Just as one can easily crush a wasp between one's fingernails, so in the same way the body of the wasp like demon Hiranyakashipu has been ripped apart by the wonderful, pointed nails on Your beautiful lotus hands.

The fourth incarnation of the Lord is Nrsimha. He appeared to save His pure devotee, Prahlada Maharaja, who was then a five-years-old boy who was being tortured by his atheistic father, Hiranyakashipu. The Lord appears with two purposes. *Paritranaya sadhunam*: just to give protection and rescue the devotees, and to kill the demons, *vinasaya ca dushkritam*. So Prahlada Maharaja, five-years-old boy, his only fault was that he was Krishna conscious. He was devotee of Krishna. That was his only fault.

It was a time of intense misery for the whole universe, because of this powerful demonic king. Hiranyakashipu desired to overthrow Lord Brahma, the supreme administrator in the universe, from his position and take over universal affairs. He stood on the tip of his toes, erect and still, with upraised arms. His determination was to stand like that for many births to gain unlimited power. [performance of austerities grants one mystic powers]

After 100 celestial years [one day of Brahmā equals many millions of years on this planet] in that posture, a blazing fire, like that of the sun at the time of universal dissolution, emanated from the top of his head and

created intense heat all over the universe, giving pain to everyone. The demigods rushed to Lord Brahma for resolution of this crisis. Lord Brahma then decided to go before Hiranyakashipu and ask him what he desired.



When Lord Brahma reached the Valley of Mandarachala Mountain, Hiranyakashipu was nowhere to be seen. He had been standing motionless for so long that ants had eaten all the fat, flesh, and blood of his body. His skeleton was buried in an anthill; his life air still circulating in his bones. Lord Brahma expressed amazement at the severity of this austerity, saying it was an unprecedented performance that would never be repeated in history. Lord Brahma sprinkled pure spiritual water from his kamandalu pot and



Hiranyakashipu immediately rose from the anthill in a strong, lustrous, youthful body. Hiranyakashipu then offered humble prayers to Lord Brahma and then revealed the real purpose of performing his severe austerities; he wanted to be granted the boon of immortality. Brahma said, “That is not possible because even I am not immortal. Nobody in this material world is immortal. That is not possible.”

Hiranyakasipu then tried to cheat Brahma, by asking indirect boons which would, de facto, grant him immortality. He asked Brahma to not be killed:

- during the day or the night
- by any man or beast
- by any demigod or demon
- on land, in the water or the air
- by any weapon
- inside or outside

Brahma agreed and Hiranyakashipu was convinced that he had, at last, attained immortality. He thus became fearless and his arrogance grew; he unleashed a reign of terror in the universe subduing the demigods, transgressing all the Vedic laws, and completely dismantling the universal order ordained by the Supreme Lord, Vishnu. Hiranyakashipu bore a deeply inimical attitude towards Lord Vishnu whom he despised for having killed his brother Hiranyaksha. [a whole other story 😊]

The demigods approached Vishnu for relief from the excruciating conditions. Lord Vishnu said that Hiranyakashipu had brought death upon himself by tormenting and killing cows, brahmanas and saintly persons. His ruin was inevitable and would occur when he would harass his own son who was His exalted devotee. Though born of the demon Hiranyakashipu, Prahlada was in fact a great devotee of Lord Krishna from his very birth. As a small boy of five he would



preach about Krishna to his school friends and make them dance in kirtan, any time the teachers left the classroom.

One day, Hiranyakashipu sat Prahlad on his knee and with affection asked his boy, “What is the best thing you have learned from your teachers?” Prahlad replied honestly to his father. “O best of the demons, I haven’t learned anything good at all from my teachers. But I do know the best thing.” “Oh? And what is that best thing?” “I have heard that the best thing is to leave this dark well of material life and to take shelter of Lord Krishna.” This answer enraged the king and he asked,

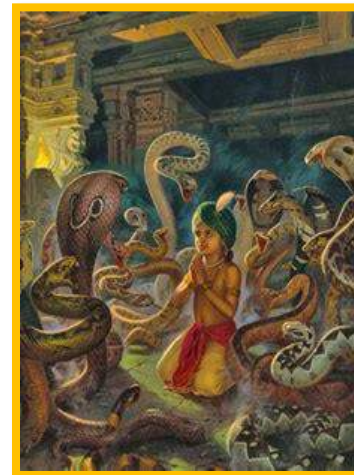
“What is this teaching that you could not learn from our Brahmins? What is this teaching of Krishna?”

The boy replied, “My dear atheist father, if I told you, you could not understand, even if you took courses in it, still you would not understand, because you are too attached to sense gratification.”

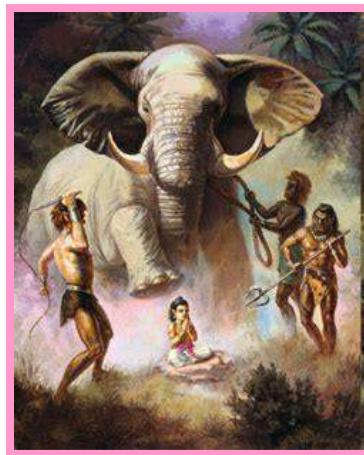
Livid, Hiranyakashipu pushed Prahlad off his lap, throwing him on the ground. He directed his demoniac servants to kill his five years old son.

They first threw Prahlad into a pit of snakes, but they did not harm him. They placed Prahlad under the foot of an elephant, but with his trunk the pachyderm picked the child up and placed him on his back for a triumphant ride.

They tried to pierce him with their tridents, to no avail. The fierce king forced Prahlad’s mother to put poison in the boy’s food, but it did not take effect. The king’s attendants then threw the boy off a cliff, but Lord Kṛṣṇa caught him in His arms and broke his fall. Prahlad was left in a



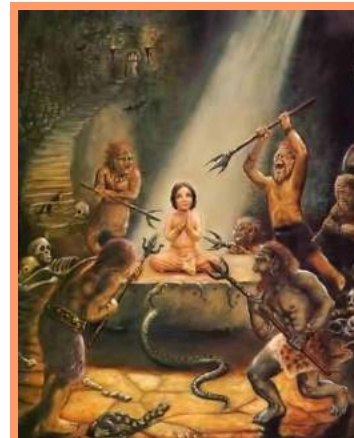
snowstorm and then in the path of a hurricane, but nothing harmed him. During these ordeals, Prahlad never stopped chanting the holy name and constantly remembered Lord Kṛṣṇa. He never felt any fear. Astonished, the king at last asked Prahlad,



“Where do you get your supernatural powers from?”

“From the same place you do,” Prahlad replied mildly. “From God.”

“God!? What is God? Where is your God?”



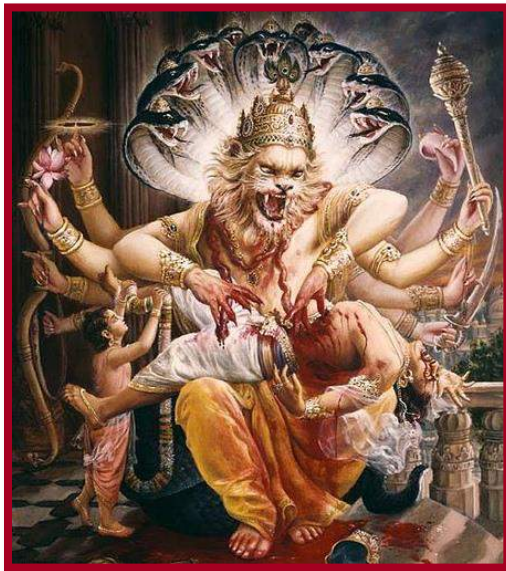
“My God is everywhere,” Prahlad replied.



“Everywhere?”
“Yes, everywhere.”
Hiranyakashipu drew his sword.
“Is He in this pillar?”
Hiranyakashipu exclaimed, pointing with his weapon to a nearby column of marble.
“Yes,”
Prahlad replied.
At this, the mighty

demon drew his sword back and struck a formidable blow at the column. Then, just as his sword fell upon it, the pillar burst into a thousand pieces and, with a roar that deafened half the cosmos, a most wonderful Being leapt out from within. He was Lord Nrsimha, half-man, half-lion. He was Ferocity personified.

A savage fight ensued. In the end, the Lord placed the king on His lap and ripped his abdomen with His sharp nails, placing his intestines around His neck like a garland. In this way, Hiranyakashipu was killed neither on the land, sea nor in the air but on the lap of the Supreme Lord. He was killed neither during the day or the night but at twilight. He was killed neither by a beast nor a man, but by the half-man, half-lion form of



the Lord (who is also not a demigod or a demon). And he was killed not with any weapons but with the nails of Lord Nrsimhadeva, and neither inside nor outside but in the doorway.

What follows is an excerpt from Srila Prabhupāda’s lecture on Srimad-Bhagavatam 7.5.22-34 in Los Angeles, May 27, 1972

(...) the Lord is so cunning that He kept intact all the benedictions given by Brahma, still he was killed. This is the difference between the Lord’s intelligence and our intelligence. We are thinking that we can cheat the Lord by our intelligence, but the Lord is more intelligent than us. (...) Similarly, we may make plan, we may make very advancement in scientific knowledge, but the killing process of nature will be there. Nobody can escape. By our intelligence we cannot escape. The four principles of material existence mean birth, death, old age, and disease.

We can manufacture many medicines, many weapons, many means, many methods, but you cannot escape these four principles of material existence, however great you may be. That was proved by Hiranyakasipu. Hiranyakasipu was one of the stalwart materialistic and he wanted to live forever, enjoy, but he also could not live. Everything was finished.

(...) The demons are so much against God consciousness that even at his home he would not allow his own child to become God conscious. This is demoniac civili... So you’ll find many critics, many enemies, because you are making progress in Krishna consciousness. So the demons are always against this Krishna consciousness movement. That is the whole history. Just like Lord Jesus Christ, he was crucified. What was his fault? He was preaching God consciousness, that’s all. This society is so cruel.



QUOTE:

“Don't be proud. Always remain humble, meek, that "I am nothing." That will be nice. (...) A Vaisnava must think like that, that "I am rotten. I have no value." Don't be proud. Then the things will go on nicely. Always remain humble servant, and you will be happy.”

Srila Prabhupāda —Lecture on Srimad-Bhagavatam 6.1.50 –August 3, 1975, Detroit

Excerpts from inmates' letters

Dear Sriman Balabhadra Prabhu, Please accept my humble obeisances, Hare Krishna!

I am writing you to inform you that everyone has received their books, Jaya! We start our study next week. We are so grateful and indebted to your service. We will certainly encourage our participants to correspond with you. You have no idea how incredible of a thing you have done for us here. You have provided a source of truth and wisdom for those who are seeking, one that is not contaminated by ego. You have given a few souls the opportunity to truly advance themselves and have aided in creating a platform that will hopefully be here for years and years to come. Never before has there been a place to study and worship Krishna at this prison unit before. It is because of your contributions that this has been made possible. I am so overwhelmed with emotion that tears flow from my eyes as I write and reflect upon the gravity of your selfless contribution. We bhaktas here extend our most humble obeisances to you. Thank you so much for your support and your time. Great acts performed by great individuals like yourself make a true meaningful impact on one's self. I can't thank you enough. Much love. Your humble servant,

Bhakta Andrus T. —Safford, Arizona

I began studying Hinduism in 2016. It's blurry as to what lead me to it. All of a sudden, I was practicing yoga, meditating, studying the works of Swami Sivananda, Vivekananda etc. That's when it happened. I walked in to look for a book in the Islamic Community's bookshelf. A friend of mine asked if I dropped brochure. It appeared out of thin air. It was from ISKCON, talking about Lord Vishnu, and it had the Maha Mantra on it, the Hare Krsna mantra. I was breath taken! I couldn't believe it. I read the entire brochure and then gave it back, I think he discarded it, how dreadful. At that point, I knew I had read the truth. I thought that since the brochure that came to me was from the International Society of Krsna Consciousness, I needed to learn from ISKCON the higher science and knowledge of Lord Visnu.

James Collins —El Paso, Texas

Thank You. Thank You. Thank You. I received five books today and immediately all anguish just disappeared. When the CO stood in front of the appointed cell. I look outside the cell window and saw the Bhagavad-gita in his hand and without hesitation I began to smile for I knew the books were for me. Then he gave me four more books. WHAAAAT!! 😊 Thank you. I had just mailed to Srutadeva das in Imperial

NOTE:

Some excerpts are recent, some may be from previous years.

Beach, CA. A completed response to my lesson (homework) we are on lesson #81. He has been incredibly awesome. With him as my teacher I have changed many of my ill-thinking habits. Having sibling that are born and raised in the movement allowed me to also talk to more than my teacher about Krsna.

I am going to read each one of these books with intensity. And leave them on my desk with anticipation that someone sees them and inquire what it is that I am reading today. I also would like to thank everyone at ISKCON Prison Ministry for being so dedicated with sending the *Back to Godhead* magazine as well as the Freedom Newsletters. I have added with this letter a picture [I drew] that I mimic from the cover of a BTG magazine the Nov/Dec. 2019 edition 😊

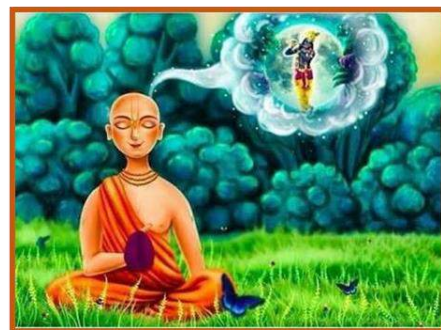
Jabari V. —Talladega, Alabama

I have been all over the world and on every continent and have noticed we are all basically the same with our dreams, hopes, worries, fears, etc. All places in this material world have positives and negatives. No place is perfect or worry-free. As you said, only Krsna is the perfect shelter. I actually realized that I prefer adversity to comfort – If I am comfortable, I am wasting this life and not challenging myself to change and learn what I need to in this life.

I am actually chanting 30 rounds daily as 25 rounds I found, was still not enough to challenge myself. 30 rounds seem right and balanced for me at this point. I had been chanting 25 rounds daily without fail for many months now and it is not the right level for me at this point.

I love chanting because I feel emotionally and physically connected and living in Krsna's presence and His Lilas when I do so. I am there and so is He and the material world fades away and I am left with a huge smile and a feeling of great bliss and ecstasy. I feel alive in those moments and at peace. Japa helps me in finding those moments again but I still long to not blink but to always be in Krsna's company.

My latest bunkie is Eastern Orthodox but is struggling with the existence of God and so we have had long



interesting conversation on the matter and his struggle. My neighbor is an Orthodox Jew and we also have a lot of interesting conversations of God and respect each other's beliefs. No arguments, only great intellectual discussions. Though technically not allowed, I still set up my altar for arati, darshan, and offering of food at certain times of the day and then take it down (not great but best I can manage at the moment) and so others notice my service and the altar. Many are curious and that leads many times to great conversations as well.

Janmastami was great considering the current lockdown situation and I was able to cook the laddus, cheesecake, kitri [vegetable dish], etc. I was able to make all that

thanks to Krsna's mercy. I still make yogurt for many people for free as long as they provide the milk and in doing so I am able to offer it all first and therefore Krsna has been kind so I can give prasadam of such to so many souls. I also am able to make various cheeses as well and freely share with those who donate milk to the cause. It is very popular – anything different to break up the monotony and anything fresh instead of the packaged or canned is greatly sought after in here. I could actually name my price, but I like how everyone benefits and they don't even realize it – no material wealth, that is so temporary, is worth that benefit.

David B. —Danbury, Connecticut.



THE LIFE OF JAHNAVA MA

Sri Nityananda's two wives, Sri Vasudha and Sri Jahnava Devi, are expansions of Lord Balarama's eternal consorts Varuni and Revati (during His Vrindavan pastimes). Jahnava Ma, is an affectionate name given by the devotees ("ma" or "mata" means mother). She traveled throughout Gaura and Vraja mandalas [regions of India]. Wherever she went the Gaura bhaktas happily greeted and served her. Jahnava Ma overflowed with prema bhakti [love of God]. She delivered many atheists and sinners by her compassionate preaching. Especially after the disappearance of Lord Caitanya [pronounced *tchai-ta-nya*] and Lord Nityananda, she became a leading figure in the sankirtan movement.



associates suddenly appeared to everyone's vision, to the delight of all. There was also an opulent feast. and six sets of beautiful Deities were installed. Indeed, the installation of the Deities took place under Jahnava Ma's direction, and she also supervised and personally participated in the cooking: she cooked a matchless feast, made the first offering to the Deities, and then personally served all the Vaishnavas.

During Jahnava Devi's travels, on the road from Kheturi to Vraja, she stopped in a prosperous village where she delivered some atheistic unbelievers and criminals and bestowed Krishna-prema upon them.

When she arrived in Vrindavan, she

saw the samadhi of Gauri Das Pandit which moved her to tears. When in Vrindavan, the leaders of the Vaishnava community such as Jiva Goswami, Gopal Bhatta Goswami, Lokanatha Goswami, Bhugarbha Goswami, Madhu Pandit, etc., all came to offer her their respectful greetings. Taking these leaders with her, she visited the principal temples of Vrindavan — Madana Mohana, Govinda and Gopinath — before going to Radha Kund. There she met Raghunath Das Goswami, who was engaged in constant chanting of the Holy Names, and whose body was emaciated by his austerities.

After the disappearance of the Pancha-tattva and many of Lord Caitanya's eternal associates, a huge sankirtan festival was held in Kheturi on Gaura-Purnima. Thousands of Lord Gauranga's followers such as Narottama, Shyamananda, Shrinivasa, Vrindavana Dasa, Murari Chaitanya, Paramesvara, and Miniketana Rama attended the festival.

They celebrated Gauranga's appearance day with thunderous chanting, exuberant dancing. During Narottama Dasa Thakura's kirtan, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Sri Nityananda Prabhu, and all Their

Jahnava remained in Radha Kund for three days, engaged in bhajan. She heard the sound of Krishna's flute while sitting on the banks of the pond and had a vision of Sri Krishna which overwhelmed her with waves of divine love. The ghat [landing] where Jahnava bathed and had this vision is today known as Sri Jahnava Ghat. She then took the company of Vaishnavas on a parikrama of Vraja-mandala. During this parikrama she heard Jiva Goswami discourse on Brihad-Bhagavatamrita.

Jahnava Ma disappeared on the shukla navami tithi of Vaishakh [in the lunar calendar]. This year it is on May 10th of our solar calendar.

It is said that she left this world by entering the Deity of Gopinatha in Vrindavan.

Srila Thakura Bhaktivinoda offers this prayer to Jahnava Mata in Kalyana-kalpa-taru:

"Oh Jahnava Devi! By the power of your divine qualities, be merciful to this servant of yours. Dispel this illusion which torments me. And relieve me of material existence. Let me take shelter at your lotus feet. You are Nityananda-sakti, the divine energy of Lord Nityananda Himself. You are the guru of Krishna bhakti. Be merciful to me and grant me the shade of your lotus feet, which are like a desire tree. You have delivered countless abominable sinners. Please deliver me in the same way. Today, praying for your mercy, this lowly sinner falls at your holy feet."

[The letter "S" in the word *Sri* or *Srila* is pronounced as "SH", like *Shri*, or *Shrila*]



HOW I CAME TO KRṢṂA CONSCIOUSNESS

SOLACE FROM THE PAIN OF LOSS —Edited from a 2008BTG article

By Radhika Kripa Devi Dasi

The loss of a loved one brought pain, philosophical inquiry, and soon Srila Prabhupada's shelter.

The dark, foggy night of December 22, 1998 death became real to me as it barged into my life and snatched away my dearest, most beloved friend: my father.

Born into an affluent family, I had trod on the path of life without ever stopping to ponder its meaning. I strived for material products, and happiness to me meant possessing worldly things. Basking in the love of my near and dear ones boosted my feeling of security. My world was a caring husband, two beautiful, affectionate children, and doting parents. What more could I ask from the Lord? Foolishly enough, I was enjoying this sunshine, thinking it to be eternal, forgetting that life in this world is fragile. Surrounded by loved ones, we forget that we have higher goals to accomplish. Pain caused by the loss of a near one can be the best of tutors. Although I was like other materialists in many ways, the spiritual principles of my childhood helped me learn from my pain. As a child, I

visited temples and gurudwaras (shrines of the Sikh community) and followed some rituals. I read the Guru Granth Sahib (the scripture of the Sikhs) regularly in the morning and evening, though without much comprehension.

My father was admitted to hospital for angioplasty and although he doctors said the procedure was safe, it ended in tragedy. When the doctors informed us that he was in critical condition, I prayed to God to save him. Although it might seem that those prayers were to no avail, I'm sure that they must have helped him in some way in his last moments, but these prayers did revolutionize my life. The Lord started guiding me towards Him. Right after the doctors announced they were losing my father I decided to become a vegetarian. I still don't understand what inspired me to take that vow, but today I thank the Lord for showing me the way.



MY QUEST BEGINS

The pain of separation made me morose and flooded me with questions. Searching for answers, I writhed in pain. Still, I wondered why I had never asked the questions before. They seemed so basic, but it took thirty-eight years for them to invade my consciousness. Questions like, who are we? Why are we here? Where will we go after death? And especially, who is God? The next six months, I traveled to various religious places in search of answers to these questions. I prayed to Hanuman, to Lord Siva, to Durga, not for any material gain but for the answer to my main question: Who is God? I also visited temples and gurudwaras and started reading the scriptures with great intensity.

VISIT TO SRI VRINDAVANA DHAMA

Srila Prabhupāda, who is the siksa (instructing) guru for everyone, has rightly said that Krishna sees our sincere endeavor to know Him. In 1999 Krishna answered my prayers and pulled my family and I to His holy dhama of Vrindavana. Although I had resided in Delhi since birth, I had never visited Vrindavana. The devotees answered all my questions and all my doubts disappeared. We joined the devotees in kirtan and time flew. The joyful kirtan echoed in the air. The atmosphere was electrified; the melodious sounds of mrdangas [drums] and karatals [hand cymbals] filled the temple hall. Everyone was involved, all feet dancing, all hands clapping. Everyone was overjoyed at the sight of the Lord. It was an amazing, out of this mundane world, spiritual experience. Krishna gave both my husband and I the intelligence to come to Him. We departed with hearts filled with newfound joy. I sensed in the deepest core of my heart that we had been blessed.

TAKING UP THE PRACTICE SERIOUSLY

Shortly thereafter we visited the small ISKCON center in Punjabi Bagh, near our home. It had been there for eighteen years but previously never appealed to us. Our destiny was to first receive the mercy of Srila Prabhupada in the holy city of Vrindavana. Without

guru-kripa —the mercy of the guru —one cannot reach his real destination. Soon we were chanting sixteen rounds on our beads and following the rules and regulations Srila Prabhupada had prescribed. We could feel the mercy flowing in our lives. The love and compassion the devotees showered on us made me forget the agony I was going through. I could now understand the real purpose of life. My mind could now comprehend the religious scriptures that I had

previously read but never understood. In 2001 we received formal initiation.

Today I feel myself steering ahead on the safe road of Krishna consciousness. My own transformation has been enormous. As Srila Prabhupada has rightly said, when in touch with the Supreme Lord we become aware of our abilities and can use them in the service of the Lord. I now give lectures on Krishna consciousness.

Recently, I gave ten lectures in Pakistan, one at a program attended by eleven hundred people. I also spent three weeks in Sydney, Australia, where I spoke twenty times at various places. Last year, I was on television in India every day for four months, speaking on the Gita for fifteen minutes. I am also a working woman, a fashion designer by profession. I design and produce Indian dresses, and I've begun designing outfits for ISKCON Deities. Last year I also published a book of my poems glorifying the Lord, Srila Prabhupada, and my spiritual master. My husband is a businessman. He has an Ayurvedic medicine factory and deals in real estate. He also designs wooden altars. We are both deeply grateful for the blessings we've received, especially the opportunity to serve the Lord. It all began with our contact with Srila Prabhupada through his temples and his Society. We encourage everyone to clutch his hand and toddle with us back to Godhead. 🌸

Radhika Kripa Devi Dasi is the author of Vaiglava teachings in Sikhism and a collection of devotional poems..



Calendar

APRIL 2022

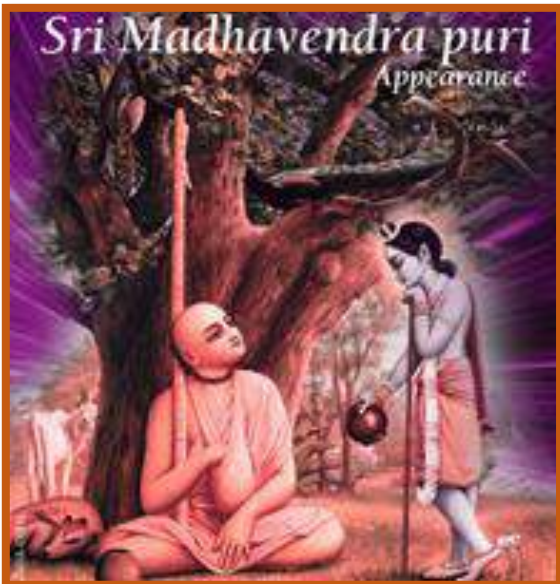
- 06 April 2022 - Appearance Day of Sri Ramanujacharya
10 April 2022 - **Rama Navami** (appearance day of Lord Rama)
13 April 2022 - **Kamada Ekadashi**
13 April 2022 - Damanaka Ropana Dvadasi
14 April 2022 - Beginning of Salagrama and Tulasi Jala Dana
16 April 2022 - Sri Balarama Rasayatra
16 April 2022 - Sri Krishna Vasanta Rasa
16 April 2022 - Appearance Day of Sri Vamsivadananda Thakura
16 April 2022 - Appearance Day of Sri Syamananda Prabhu
23 April 2022 - Disappearance Day of Sri Abhirama Thakura
25 April 2022 - Disappearance Day of Srila Vrndavana Dasa Thakura
26 April 2022 - **Varuthini Ekadashi**
26 April 2022 - Appearance Day of Sri Gadadhara Pandita

MAY 2022

- 04 May 2022 - Aksaya Tritya – Candana Yatra Starts
06 May 2022 - Appearance Day of Sri Sankaracharya
08 May 2022 - Jahnua Saptami
10 May 2022 - Appearance Day of Srimati Sita Devi
10 May 2022 - Disappearance Day of Sri Madhu Pandita
10 May 2022 - Appearance Day of Srimati Jahnava Devi
12 May 2022 - **Mohini Ekadasi**
13 May 2022 - Rukmini Dvadasi
14 May 2022 - **Disappearance Day of Sri Jayananda Prabhu**
14 May 2022 - End of Jala Dana
15 May 2022 - **Narasimha Caturdasi – Appearance of Lord Narasimhadeva**
16 May 2022 - Krishna Phula Dola, Salila Vihara
16 May 2022 - Appearance Day of Sri Sri Radha-Ramana Devji
16 May 2022 - Buddha Purnima – Appearance Day of Lord Buddha
16 May 2022 - Appearance Day of Sri Madhavendra Puri
16 May 2022 - Appearance Day of Sri Srinivasa Acharya
16 May 2022 - Disappearance Day of Sri Paramesvari Dasa Thakura
20 May 2022 - Disappearance Day of Sri Ramananda Raya
26 May 2022 - **Apara Ekadasi**
27 May 2022 - Appearance Day of Srila Vrndavana Dasa Thakura



ABOVE: Lord Caitanya discussed all points of Kṛṣṇa consciousness with Ramananda Raya, His pure devotee, whom He empowered to answer all His questions.



LEFT: Western religion usually teaches us that God is someone to fear and revere. In India, though, great spiritual masters have long taught that we can go beyond this limited conception and worship God as our master, friend, or child. And about five hundred years ago Madhavendra Puri taught that we can even worship God as our dear beloved.

Madhavendra Puri appeared almost mad in his love of God. He loudly chanted and sang the names and glories of the Lord without thinking of the time or place. Sometimes in his ecstasy he didn't know whether it was day or night. Sometimes he laughed and sometimes he wept. Sometimes he danced wildly and sometimes he fell to the ground unconscious. He took absolutely no interest in anything not connected with Krishna, and for fear of talking about anything other than the Lord, he always lived without a companion. He would eat only if someone offered him food—otherwise he would simply fast.