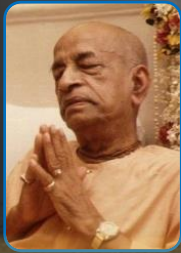


# Freedom Newsletter



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

## ISKCON Prison Ministry / May 2023

PO Box 2676  
Alachua, FL 32616

### THE GOD-BLIND SCIENTISTS

*The following conversation between His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and some of his disciples took place in December of 1973, during a morning walk at Venice Beach, Los Angeles, California.*

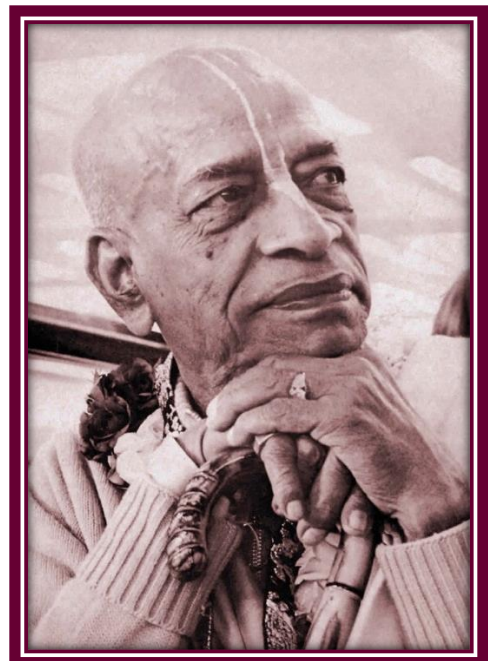
**Devotee:** The scientists say their power of reason tells them there's no God. They say if you believe in God, it's strictly a matter of faith.

**Srila Prabhupada:** It is not a matter of faith—it is fact.

**Devotee:** When scientists say “fact,” they mean something they can perceive through their senses.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Yes, and in Kṛṣṇa consciousness we can perceive God through our senses. The more we engage our senses in devotional service—service to God—the more we are able to perceive Him. *Hṛsikena hṛsikesa-sevanam bhaktir ucyate*: “When one engages his senses in service to the Supreme, that relationship is called *bhakti* [devotion].” For example, we use our legs to walk to the temple, and our tongue to glorify God and eat *prasada* [“the Lord’s mercy,” vegetarian food offered to Kṛṣṇa].

**Devotee:** But the scientists say these are acts of faith. They say that when we offer food to God, it's only our faith that makes us think God accepts it. They say *they* can't see Him eating.



**Srila Prabhupada:** They cannot see, but I can see. I am not a fool like them. They are spiritually blind—suffering from cataracts—ignorance. If they come to me, I shall operate, and then they’ll see God also.

**Devotee:** Well, the scientists want to see God now.

**Srila Prabhupada:** But Kṛṣṇa will not reveal Himself to them now, because they’re rascals—big animals. *svavid-varaha ustra-kharaih samstutah purusah pasuh:*

“Anyone who’s not a devotee of God is just a big animal—a big camel or a big dog or a big swine—and the people who praise him are the same.”

**Devotee:** They say we’re just dreamers—that we make up fantasies about God and the spiritual world.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Why do they say “fantasies”? They have no brain to understand—so they say “fantasies.”

**Devotee:** Well, their standard of objectivity is what they can perceive through their senses.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Yes, they can perceive God through their senses. When they perceive

sand through their senses, who do they think made the sand? They didn’t. When they perceive the ocean through their senses, who do they think made that? Why are they such fools that they don’t understand this?

**Devotee:** They say that if God made these things, they’d be able to see Him, just as they can see the ocean.

**Srila Prabhupada:** And I say to them, “Yes, you can see God—but first you have to have the eyes. You are blind; you have cataracts. Come to me and I will operate. Then you’ll see God.” This is why the Vedic scriptures say, *tad-vijnanartham gurum eva abhigacchet:*

“To see God, you must approach a bona fide spiritual master.” Otherwise, how can they see God with their blind eyes?

**Devotee:** But the scientists don’t have any faith in the kind of seeing you’re talking about. The only kind of seeing they put any faith in is what they can gather through their eyes and their microscopes and telescopes.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Why? If you look up in the sky now, you will think it is vacant. But it is not vacant—your eyes are deficient. There are innumerable planet and stars in



the sky, but you cannot see them—you are blind to them. So just because you cannot see the stars and planets, does this mean they do not exist?

**Devotee:** The scientists admit they’re ignorant about some things. But still, they won’t accept your explanation of things they can’t see with their own eyes.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Why not?

**Devotee:** Because they think that what you tell them may be wrong.

**Srila Prabhupada:** That is their misfortune. Our gross senses cannot approach God. To know Him we have to hear from an authority—that is the process for gaining higher knowledge.

**Devotee:** But that step requires faith. Faith in the *guru*.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Not faith—common sense! If you want to learn medicine, you have to go to an expert physician. You cannot learn it by yourself.

**Devotee:** Srila Prabhupada, from all you’ve said, it’s obvious we can support our ideas as well as the atheistic

scientists can support theirs. But they’re in control of society. They’re dominant.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Dominant? [Laughs.] One kick from *maya* [Kṛṣṇa’s material energy] and all their “dominance” is finished in one second. They are controlled by *maya* [the illusory energy] but they are thinking that they are free. This is foolishness.

**Devotee:** They don’t want to come to their senses.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Therefore they are rascals. A rascal is someone who will insist he’s right even after you have proved he’s wrong. He will never take a good lesson. And why do they remain rascals? *na mam duskrutino mudhah:* because they are *duskrutina*—very, very sinful. Don’t you see how they are making a world of slaughterhouses and brothels; how they are ruining everyone’s life by promoting sensual enjoyment? These are all sinful activities. And because the scientists are so sinful, they will have to suffer in the darkest regions of hell. In their next life they’ll become worms in stool. Yet out of ignorance they are thinking they are safe. 🌸

**Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare**

**Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare**

# HOW I CAME TO KRṢṂA CONSCIOUSNESS

## A Young Man goes from the Army to Lord Caitanya's Army

By Nagaraja Dasa

I first met Hare Krishna devotees in the fall of 1969, during my first year at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. Some classmates and I were enjoying a rare weekend away from the Academy when we saw a group of devotees chanting in downtown Denver. The men's shaven heads, the flowing Indian robes, the unusual rhythmic drumbeat, and the unfamiliar chant took us by surprise. "Maybe they're from another planet," we joked. We concluded they must be hippies, and we wanted to talk with them. Despite six months of military indoctrination and despite the sharp dichotomy between the military and the hip culture, we still held our old ideals and the ideals of our civilian contemporaries.

"Are you guys stoned?" I asked one of them. "Stoned?" he replied. "I gave up drugs a long time ago. Drugs are artificial. Once you've experienced the pleasure of Krishna consciousness, you don't need drugs."

His answer surprised us. We thought all young people took drugs. We were even a little envious of those who could enjoy a life of unrestricted merrymaking while we slaved through a year of rigid discipline, with upperclassmen screaming at us at every turn, relentless drill instructors, predawn runs with rifles. We yearned for a life without rules and regulations. Though we had voluntarily accepted the rigors of life at the Academy, we still felt some attraction for the intoxicated bliss of the hippies. But this Hare Krishna devotee was saying that he had already been through all that and was now experiencing a pleasure that far surpassed drug-induced ecstasy. That might be true, I thought, but it's hard enough being a social outcast with short hair. How could I think of becoming a Hare Krishna with no hair at all!

My conservative upbringing forced me to reject the Hare Krishna devotees as eccentric and radical. I took their

*Back to Godhead* magazine, but it seemed too strange. I never read it.

I was raised by devout Catholic parents in a small town in a part of Vermont called the Northeast Kingdom. I imbibed the traditional American middle-class values and wanted to be a success.

As I grew older my idea of success changed. In grade school I liked being an altar boy and thought of becoming a priest. Despite attending a Catholic high school, however, my aspiration for a religious life faded. It was the late sixties, and I was influenced by the countercultural ideas of the hippies. But my desire for success was strong, and I began to think of going to college and entering the professional world.



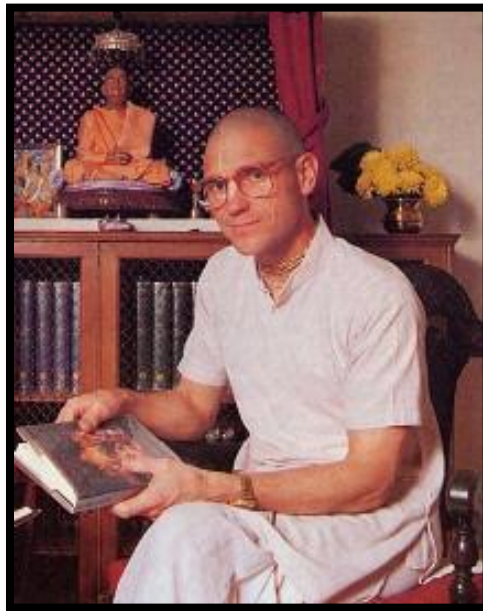
After graduating from high school, I entered the Air Force Academy. Life at the Academy was demanding. We were training to become "whole men," ready to meet the challenge of preserving peace in our volatile times. We were learning self-discipline and a reverence for duty, honor, and country. But I had an itch for a more basic constitutional right: liberty. I wanted to be free to do my own thing. But I also equated freedom with financial security and decided to remain at the Academy, inspired by the financial rewards that would come after graduation.

By the time I graduated from the Academy, however, I had begun to wonder just what kind of success I wanted. The Academy had provided plenty of opportunity. I had set and achieved many goals. I wasn't an underachiever. But I doubted the ultimate value of all my goals and accomplishments.

On graduating from the Academy in June of 1973, I was commissioned a second lieutenant and assigned to an Air Force base in Sacramento as a civil engineer. I worked in an office with fifteen civilian military engineers, some

of whom had been there for twenty years. I soon realized I didn't want to end up like them. I heard their conversations and thought how empty their lives must be. And I was following the same path. Why should I work so hard just to come to this; more work, more bills, more family problems? And the senseless habits, like smoking, drinking, and watching television for hours. None of my coworkers were happy. When they arrived in the morning, I could see it in their faces. I could see it at the end of the day as they stood holding their coats, waiting impatiently for the bell to release them from their drudgery. And these were the higher echelons, the white-collar workers with their airs of success and security. "But they're suffering as much as anyone else," I thought, "and I don't want to end up like them."

I began to think more seriously about life. I remembered moments of philosophical questioning in the past. In high school I would sometimes challenge the Sisters teaching the daily religion class. I was often dissatisfied with their answers. They would say it was a matter of faith, but I wasn't convinced of the reasonableness of that faith. I read Edith Hamilton's Greek Mythology in my senior year and thought it was just as believable as the Catholic doctrines. I thought there must be more to religion than mere faith.



### **Nagaraja Dasa**

At the Air Force Academy, a full academic load, combined with the rigors of military training and extracurricular activities, had left little time for philosophical introspection. Nor was liberal thinking encouraged at the Academy. After all, they wanted officers, soldiers, not philosophers.

As an engineer, I found that the relative freedom of my nine-to-five job gave me more time to think about the meaning of life. I was still looking for answers, though I noticed that most people had stopped asking questions. They had concluded, probably out of frustration, that no one knew more than anyone else, that everyone was guessing. But I was determined not to live in ignorance. I began reading many books that dealt with the problems of human existence: Who are we? Where do we come from? Why are we suffering? Is there a God? I had already abandoned most of the religious beliefs I had held in childhood. I wasn't even sure God existed. I

tended to believe He didn't, and most of the books I read reinforced that belief. I'd had my fill of religious dogma. I now favored the secular Western philosophers, who rejected God, and the Eastern mystics, who concluded that everything was God. In my speculative quest I reached a tentative conclusion: everything is relative. There is no right or wrong, no absolute morality. Everyone is right because everyone is acting according to his own nature.

I wanted the freedom to act according to my nature. Armed with my philosophical convictions, I went to the personnel office on the base and asked for a discharge. The lady at the desk replied frankly, "You're an Air Force Academy graduate. You have a five-year commitment to the Air Force. There's no way you can get out early except desertion." Well, I thought, maybe everything isn't relative. I realized then that even though I could say that everything is absurd or relative or meaningless, I couldn't base my life on such a philosophy. It simply was not practical.

I was also beginning to feel uncomfortable with my life and my cynical philosophy. Though I was ostensibly searching for the truth, I was still attached to petty mundane habits like smoking and drinking. I didn't like depending on those substances for pleasure.

I kept trying to find life's meaning reading, writing, and, at times, out of desperation (and despite my agnostic tendencies), praying. I should have been satisfied with my college degree, promising career, apartment, sports car, stereo, girlfriend but I wasn't. I felt an unfulfilled need to know the truth of life.

Then one sunny June day in Sacramento, in 1974, I was browsing in a flea market when a young lady handed me a book titled *Krishna, the Reservoir of Pleasure*. That evening as I began to read it, I remembered the Hare Krishna devotees I had seen chanting on the sidewalk some four and a half years earlier in Denver. Maybe I'll find out why they don't need drugs, I thought. To my great pleasure I found much more. I found convincing answers to philosophical problems I had wrestled with for years. I wanted to learn more.

The next day I drove eighty miles to the Hare Krishna temple in San Francisco. I told the young lady at the door that I had received one of their books and wanted to hear more about Krishna. “Oh, a pure soul,” she said. “Please come in.”

I thought that was an odd statement. A pure soul? I’d just put out a cigarette on the temple steps. My hostess explained that serious inquiry about God is rare. When God sees such sincerity in a person, He reveals Himself. She had called me a pure soul because of my desire to learn about Krishna.

I spoke with the devotees for several hours that day and attended the Sunday festival. I had never before encountered such a satisfying philosophy. It seemed to connect the loose ends of the various philosophies I had sampled. It answered questions I had carried with me since my high school religion class. It even awakened and strengthened the faith in God I had imbibed in childhood.

Krishna consciousness was also practical. That was shown by the devotees themselves. They weren’t frustrated cynics jeopardizing their philosophical convictions by living in an absurd world. They were happy people, living with joy and enthusiasm in a world they knew belonged to Krishna. Their lives were meaningful because everything they did was connected to the Absolute Truth, Krishna, who gives meaning to everything.

While speaking with the devotees, I felt sure that Krishna consciousness was the truth for which I had been searching. Real success, I thought, is to become a pure devotee of God. But I doubted that I could live like the devotees rising early, following strict religious principles, renouncing materialistic endeavors. Their lives seemed too austere.

I knew, however, that I had to try. The philosophy seemed so right. As I got into my car to drive back to Sacramento, I instinctively reached for a cigarette. “All right,” I said to myself, “but this is your last one.”

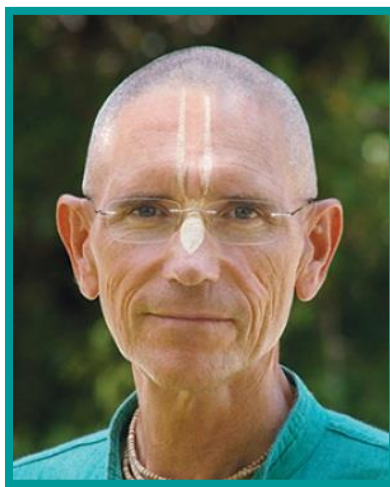
Within a week I had turned my small apartment in the officers’ quarters into a temple, where I followed a morning schedule of reading, chanting, and meditating similar to the devotees’ morning devotional program in San Francisco. I began chanting sixteen rounds of the Hare Krishna mantra on beads daily and following the four regulative principles given in the Vedic scriptures: no meat-eating, no illicit sex, no intoxication, no gambling. I found that the self-discipline I’d learned at the Academy helped. I accepted the challenge of Krishna consciousness with the kind of vigor with which I used to attack an obstacle course.

The thrill of becoming a devotee, however, was my greatest source of inspiration. I began to experience, as the devotees had said I would, that living as a devotee of Krishna is not dry or difficult. It is a joyful life. As I began to practice Krishna consciousness, I felt a satisfaction that had eluded me throughout my years of material achievements.

I spent the next six months on the base during the week and at the temple on weekends studying the many books of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. I learned that I could practice Krishna consciousness while remaining in the Air Force. But as I studied, I became convinced that I wanted to live with the devotees and assist them in their mission of distributing the knowledge of Krishna consciousness to others. By giving Americans Krishna consciousness, I could serve my country better than I ever could as an Air Force officer.

When, in an irresponsible way, I had previously tried to get out of the Air Force, my request had been denied. When I decided to dedicate my life to serving Krishna, however, Krishna made all the arrangements, and in January of 1975 I was awarded an honorable discharge. As I drove off the base and headed for San Francisco, I felt free, free to live and serve with the devotees of Krishna. 🌸

*Nagaraja dasa now lives in the Hare Krishna community in Alachua, Florida.*



### 2023 ART CALENDARS

We have a few 2023 art calendars left. If you would like one, please write to:

**Upendra dasa**  
**PO BOX 9116**  
**BOISE ID 83707-9116**

## Excerpts from inmates' letters

We are preparing for Gaura Purina.....they only give us the one day the sixth so we fast till moonrise.....but we are meeting on our own to have our little festival on the seventh in the afternoon....we only have the items we purchase ourselves from our canteen(store). They only have a few vegan/vegetarian items to buy but we make do.....milk, nuts, beans, pita bread, dried potatoes, etc....we prepare the items together for Krsna.....we offer prasadam and share afterwards..... those of us that have money pitch in to get enough for everyone and we are grateful to be able to offer what we have to Krsna.....we have our make shift alter with a towel and flowers (I made out of paper) and our pictures you sent. We do our best and Krsna see our hearts and efforts.

**Kimberly S. —Ocala, Florida**

Hello, my name is Javaughn and I am so grateful for the books that I have received from you all. Initially my brother has introduced me to Kṛṣṇa consciousness but never have had any books to study and apply the knowledge from. Besides, they don't have any of these types of books here in this prison library which is unfortunate because I believe everyone should be able to attain this knowledge and the secrets to life. You guys have changed my life for the better and I am forever in your debt. What I have realized so far since chanting at least once a day is that the response from chanting is in this form of bliss, or spiritual happiness, which is a much higher taste than anything in this material world. The more I do it the more I don't want to stop because I feel so at peace and no longer feel any stress or anxiety, just pure happiness. I am still learning more as I study the books I've received, and I will read them over again for better understanding. I am deeply grateful for all that you guys have done for me.

**Javaugh S. —Malone, Florida**

First, I would like to thank you for your previous donation to our library. The materials have been put to good use. Second, the Eastern Religious Class here is flourishing, due in no small part to your generosity. Word has spread about our brotherhood and positive energy!

**Daniel F. —Tennessee Colony, Texas**

## Inmate Artwork!



Above: Card by Rakesh P. —Florida



Above, right: Drawing by inmate Burl Dees — Florida

# Who are the six Goswamis?

By Mathura Vasi Devi Dasi

The six Goswamis are Sri Rupa Goswami, Sri Sanatan Goswami, Sri Raghunath Bhatt Goswami, Sri Gopal Bhatt Goswami, Sri Raghunath Das Goswami and Sri Jiva Goswami. [note: "sri" is pronounced "shree"]

They were no ordinary conditioned souls; rather, they were eternally liberated. About five hundred years ago, these six saints laid the philosophical foundation for the *Brahma Madhva Gaudiya Sampradaya* (the spiritual lineage the Hare Krishna devotees are part of).

It was the six Goswamis who not only founded the holy city of Vrindavan but also firmly established the teachings of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu through their various writings. They propagated the doctrine and philosophy of Sri Chaitanya for the benefit of the whole world.

The following is a brief description of the six Goswami which will enable us to understand what set them apart from everyone else during their time.

**Sri Rupa Goswami and Sri Sanatana Goswami:** they were born in a Hindu, brāhmaṇa family, but due to their association as minister of the then Muslim government, they were rejected from the brāhmaṇa society. They were accomplished scholars trained by



Vidyavachaspati, the brother of the great Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya [a most renowned scholar]. They made their headquarters at Ramakeli (then, the capital of Bengal). King Hussain Shah, the Muslim king

at the time, heard about the extraordinary qualifications of Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana, and so gave them responsible posts as ministers.



When Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu visited the town of Ramakeli, He met the two brothers and said " My dear Dabhir Khas and Sakara Mallika (the Muslim names given to them), you two are my old servants. From this day on your names will be Rupa and Sanatana Goswami. Have no fear of anything; birth after birth you have been my eternal servants. I am sure that Krsna shall soon deliver you."

Sri Caitanya ordered Srila Rupa and Srila Sanatana Goswami to move to Vrindavana and perform four services.

1. Uncover Sri Krsna's pastime places.
2. Install deities and arrange for Their worship.
3. Compile bhakti scriptures.
4. Propagate the rules of devotional life.

After going to Vrindavana, the brothers Rupa and Sanatana preached devotional service and discovered many places of pilgrimage. They specifically initiated the service of Madan-Mohana and Govindaji (deities of two of the most important temples in Vrindavan). They brought various scriptures to Vrindavana and collected the essence of these by compiling many scriptures on devotional service. In this way they delivered all the rascals and fallen souls.

**Srila Raghunatha Das Goswami:** was a very, very rich man's son, but from his childhood he had no attraction for the material world. Hearing Krsna's pastimes from the pure heart of Srila Haridas Thakura, helped him to later receive the mercy of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Anxious to join Lord Gauranga (another name for Lord Chaitanya), Raghunatha repeatedly ran away from home, but his father had servants bring him back each time. Seeing his unsuccessful attempts, Lord Chaitanya advised, "Raghunatha be patient, live at home and accept the objects of sense gratification in a

spirit of renunciation. Outwardly discharge your worldly affairs, while inwardly cultivating intense attachment for the lotus feet of Sri Kṛṣṇa. By Kṛṣṇa's mercy you will soon join Me."

He had no taste for sense gratification. Formerly he was known as Raghunatha, but when he joined Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu he became Raghunatha Das Gosvami. He joined Lord Chaitanya in Jagannatha Puri and intimately associated with Him for sixteen years. Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu instructed him to not hear and talk of worldly matters; to not eat palatable food or wear fancy clothes, to always chant the holy name, free from the desire for honor, and to continuously serve Radha and Kṛṣṇa within his mind.

He performed *manasi-seva* (serving Radha and Kṛṣṇa within one's mind) He also memorized the divine journal notes of Sri Svarupa Damaodara, which became a priceless database for Srila Kṛṣṇa Das Kaviraj's compilation of Sri Caitanya Caritamṛta. After Sri Caitanya's disappearance Srila Raghunatha das Gosvami moved to Vrindavana where he performed exemplary bhajan for forty-one years on the banks of Shyamakunda (a sacred lake).

Raghunatha Das Gosvami followed the regulative principles so strictly and rigidly that they were compared to the lines etched on a stone; they could not be changed under any circumstances. (CC Antya 6,310). His Daily sadhana (discipline) included sixty-four rounds of japa; offering two-thousand prostrated obeisances to the Lord; bathing thrice in Radha-Kunda, performing manasi-seva, worshiping his Govaradhana-Sila (stone deity); eating only a few drops of buttermilk, and resting for a mere 1 ½ hours, and some days not resting at all. Sri Raghunatha das Gosvami was totally absorbed in serving the Lotus Feet of Radha and Kṛṣṇa 24/7.

**Srila Raghunatha Bhatta Goswami:** was known as the "kirtan Acharya" (teacher by example). While living briefly in Jagannatha Puri, he satisfied Lord Caitanya with his nectarean cooking, humble service attitude and his excellent kirtan performance. Following Lord Caitanya's request, Raghunatha Bhatta moved to Vrindavan and became an intimate friend of Srila Rupa Gosvami, whom he pleased by reciting each verse of the Srimad-Bhagavatam in three different sweet-sounding and melodious tunes. "He never talked nonsense or worldly matters, but always engaged in hearing about Kṛṣṇa twenty-four hours a day. Srila Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami never cared to hear blasphemy of a Vaisnava. Even when there were things

to be criticized, he used to say that since all the Vaisnavas were engaged in the service of the Lord, he did not mind their faults." (CC Adi 10.158) Srila Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami dedicated himself to the service of Radha-Govindaji in Vrindavana. He lived in Vrindavana for forty-five years, engaged in the service of Radha-Govinda and reciting the Srimad-Bhagavatam. Lord Chaitanya specifically instructed Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami to preach about the unparalleled significance and glories of the Srimad-Bhagavatam.

**Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami:** being pleased with Gopala Bhatta Gosvami's sincere service and devotion, Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu initiated him, and ordered him to move to Vrindavana after the disappearance of his parents and perform bhajan (chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa) and write. At the age of thirty Gopala Bhatta Gosvami came to Vrindavana and, having missed Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu, this saddened him. However, the all-knowing Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu, sent some of His personal items as a gift for Gopala Bhatta Gosvami. After Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu's disappearance, Gopala Bhatta Gosvami felt intense separation from the Lord. To relieve His devotee, the Lord instructed Gopala Bhatta in a dream: "If you want to serve Me, then make a trip to Nepal."

In Nepal, Gopala Bhatta bathed in the famous Gandaki River. Upon dipping his waterpot in the river, he was surprised to see several Salagrama silas (Lord Kṛṣṇa's deities made of stone) enter his pot. He dropped the silas back into the river, but the silas reentered his pot when he refilled it. After emptying and refilling his waterpot for the third time, Gopala Bhatta Gosvami found twelve Salagrama silas sitting there. Thinking this must be the Lord's mercy, he kept all the silas and returned to Vrindavana. One day, while absorbed in remembering how the half-man, half-lion form of the Supreme Lord had manifested from the pillar in Hiranyakasipu's palace, he prayed to the Lord: "Oh Lord, You are very merciful and always fulfill the desires of Your devotees. I wish to serve You in Your form playing the flute." Awakening the next morning he discovered that one of his twelve Salagramas, the "Damodara sila", had manifested as the beautiful three-fold bending form of Sri Radha-Ramana. Gopala Bhatta Gosvami resided for forty-five years in Vrindavana, and out of great humility he requested Srila Kṛṣṇa das Kaviraja not to mention his name in the classic Caitanya Caritamṛta.



**Srila Jiva Goswami:** after learning about Srila Jiva Gosvami's desire for a Deity, Srila Rupa Gosvamis personally carved, installed and offered a small Krsna Deity named "Damodar" to his disciple Srila Jiva Gosvami. In his youth Srila Jiva Gosvami mastered Sanskrit, and later he perfected his knowledge of the Vaisnava philosophy under the merciful tutelage of his uncles, Srila Rupa and Santana Gosvami. After their disappearance, Srila Jiva Gosvami became the Gaudiya Vaisnavas' leaders for the entire world of Krsna bhaktas. Srila Jiva Gosvami consolidated and commented elaborately upon the works Srila Rupa and Sanatana Gosvami. He wrote an astounding half-a-million Sanskrit verses based on authentic Vedic scriptures in order to conclusively prove that the philosophy and teachings of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu are the essence of Vedic wisdom and the perfection of religion.



ABOVE: the Radha-Raman deity

Srila Jiva Gosvami was one of the greatest philosophers the world has ever known, yet he remained extremely humble. He was expert in all practical dealings. Srila Jiva Gosvami built a library to preserve the Gosvamis' writings; supervised the excavation and development of Radha-kunda (a sacred lake); and personally managed the four temples of Radha-Madan-Mohan, Radha-Govindaji, Radha-Gopinatha and Radha-Damodara.

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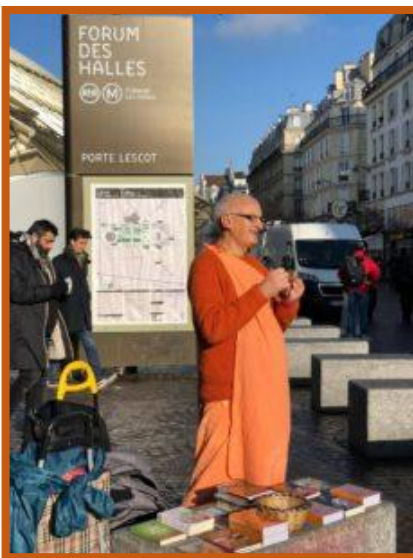
From the above descriptions, we realize that the six Gosvamis were not ordinary souls but eternal associates of the Lord. To deliver fallen conditioned souls, they gave up their material opulences and aristocratic titles and accepted loin cloths and became mendicants to preach the message of Godhead. All the six Gosvamis of Vrindavana were bona fide spiritual masters situated on the highest platform of devotional service, and for that reason they were called Gosvamis. They were always merged in the ecstatic ocean of love for Kṛṣṇa. 🌸

## Book Distribution Stories!

### A Lifetime Sankirtan Devotee —by Bhaktin Chandni

**A** most heartwarming sight during my visit to the French yatra is the example set by Janananda Goswami, a full-time sankirtan devotee (book distributor). He prefers being on the road and distributing Srila Prabhupada's mercy, in the form of his books, even in the harsh winters. He is the inspiration behind the sankirtan efforts in France, and he leads by example, tirelessly distributing books on streets or in airports, planes, and bus stations and everywhere else he sets foot.

Janananda Goswami's enthusiasm is contagious, his dedication is admirable, and his determination simply beyond words. In the most indifferent of cities, like Paris, he blissfully mans a book table on his



own. As he stands alone, he picks up kartals, and chants Hare Krishna. Most people hardly notice him. Some passersby toss coins in his donation box, and in return he smiles and hands them a book, asking them to take this "cadeau" ("gift" in French).

He doesn't mind at all that he is all alone on the road with nothing but his unflinching faith in Prabhupada to support him. Many people perhaps take him for a poor, hungry, or even homeless man, who sings and sells books on the street for his maintenance. They have no idea that he is a representative of God for a devotee community that spans the world. But that is the last thing on his mind. He is only concerned about distributing books and bringing souls to Srila Prabhupada's lotus feet.

In this way, he exemplifies following his spiritual master's instructions to preach. At the beginning, Srila Prabhupada was all alone, preaching boldly, with no capital other than his faith in his guru maharaja. Following in Prabhupada's footsteps, he demonstrates what a real disciple of Prabhupada is, in doing exactly what Prabhupada himself did, and he urges everyone to

do the same. And the result? Young women and men in the Paris temple followed suit and started singing Hare Krishna in the streets, preaching and distributing books, fearlessly, with nothing but faith in Srila Prabhupada to back them up and give them strength and courage when it gets hard. 🙏

## Calendar

### MAY 2023

- 01 May 2023 - **Mohini Ekadasi**
- 03 May 2023 - Disappearance Day of Sri Jayananda Prabhu
- 04 May 2023 - **Narasimha Caturdasi – Appearance of Lord Narasimhadeva**
- 05 May 2023 - Krishna Phula Dola, Salila Vihara
- 05 May 2023 - Appearance Day of the Sri Radha-Ramana deity
- 05 May 2023 - Appearance Day of Sri Madhavendra Puri
- 05 May 2023 - Appearance Day of Sri Srinivasa Acharya
- 05 May 2023 - Disappearance Day of Sri Paramesvari Dasa Thakura
- 10 May 2023 - Disappearance Day of Sri Ramananda Raya
- 15 May 2023 - **Apara Ekadasi**
- 16 May 2023 - Appearance Day of Srila Vrndavana Dasa Thakura
- 30 May 2023 - Ganga Puja
- 30 May 2023 - Disappearance Day of Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana
- 30 May 2023 - Appearance Day of Srimati Gangamata Goswami
- 31 May 2023 - **Pandava Nirjala Ekadasi**

### JUNE 2023

- 04 June - Disappearance Day of Sri Mukunda Datta
- 04 June - Disappearance Day of Sri Sridhara Pandita
- 05 June - Disappearance Day of Sri Syamananda Prabhu
- 08 June - Appearance Day of Sri Vakresvara Pandita
- 13 June - Disappearance Day of Sri Srivasa Pandita
- 14 June - **Yogini Ekadasi**
- 18 June - Disappearance Day of Sri Gadadhara Pandita
- 18 June - Disappearance Day of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura
- 19 June - Gundica Marjana
- 20 June - Ratha Yatra Starts
- 20 June - Disappearance Day of Sri Svarupa Damodara Goswami
- 20 June - Disappearance Day of Sri Sivananda Sena
- 24 June - Disappearance Day of Sri Vakresvara Pandita
- 29 June - **Sayana Ekadashi**

### JULY 2023

- 03 July 2023 - Disappearance Day of Sanatana Goswami
- 04 July 2023 - First Month of Caturmasya Begins
- 07 July 2023 - Disappearance Day of Srila Gopala Bhatta Goswami
- 10 July 2023 - Disappearance Day of Srila Lokanatha Goswami
- 11 July 2023 - The Incorporation of ISKCON in New York
- 13 July 2023 - **Kamika Ekadashi**
- 29 July 2023 - **Padmini Ekadashi**

