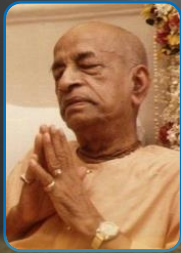


Freedom Newsletter



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

ISKCON Prison Ministry / **June 2022**

PO Box 2676
Alachua, FL 32616

WHY OUR SCHOOLS DON'T HAVE A PRAYER

This exchange between His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and a divinity student took place in Los Angeles, during January of 1974.

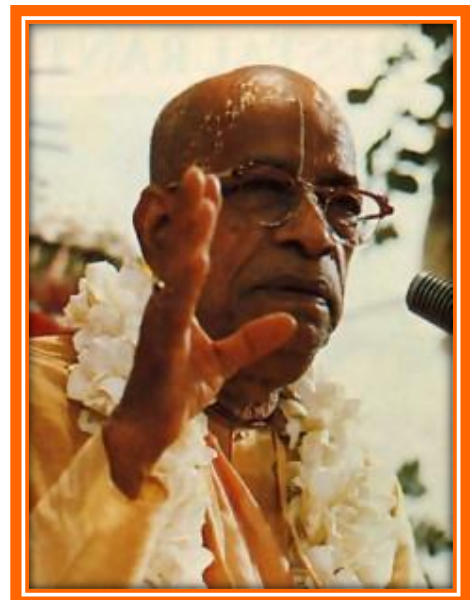
Student: Many people are frightened about the way the schools are falling apart ... students not even learning how to read and write, many turning to drugs and robbing and raping their teachers.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. What is the value of this kind of schooling?

Student: Not an awful lot.

Srila Prabhupada: It is all cheating. You have left God out. That is the height of cheating. So naturally the rest of your so-called schooling must also be cheating. Suppose you are doing a mathematical calculation and you start by figuring, "2 + 2 = 3." After that you may use the most sophisticated techniques and formulas, but your whole calculation will be wrong.

Student: Now things have gotten to the point that we can't even have prayer in the public schools. We used to have a prayer at the beginning of each school day. But then one atheist lady (and no doubt other people behind the scenes) pushed and pushed until the



Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional. Now prayer in the schools is banned.

Srila Prabhupada: But even if prayer were allowed, that would not help. Prayer is still going on in the churches, and what is the benefit? People are losing interest, because it has all become simply a ritualistic show—"Churchianity." The thing is, you have to become educated in the science of God. You must have direct, scientific experience of God. People aren't interested in dry words. They have become scientific-minded; they want results.

Student: Well, most people still have a sentimental attachment to God, so most likely they would like to see at least a semblance of prayer in the schools ...

Srila Prabhupada: No. Do something practical! "Prayer" means chanting the holy name of the Lord. If you don't know the holy name of the Lord we are giving it. You'll have no expenditure, and no loss. So why don't you try this? Chant Hare Krsna. And if you actually chant Hare Krsna, you will get scientific, realized knowledge of God—direct, personal experience of God. Then everything beneficial will follow for society.

Student: Yes. But, you see, right now you can't chant Hare Krsna in the schools. That law is still there on the books. You can't chant until somebody changes the law.

Srila Prabhupada: So my disciples can do that.

Student: They should try to fight the law?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. Just recently I heard that the senators and congressmen have set aside one special day each year for public prayer. Just one day—but they still want prayer. So if they actually *want* prayer, why are they prohibiting it all the rest of the year? Just see the contradiction! They have banned prayer because of their inexperience. And now they are experiencing, "This does not help us." Otherwise, what is the use of introducing prayer again? They have experienced that without prayer things have failed. That is a fact.

Student: You were saying earlier that fifty to sixty percent of the senators and congressmen are lawyers...

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, and nowadays "lawyer" means cheater. One who can tactfully break the law—he is a good lawyer. They will find some flaw in the



letter of the law so that they can avoid the spirit of the law.

Student: Actually, to ban prayer in the schools they had to avoid the whole point of the First Amendment—that "Congress shall make no law prohibiting the free exercise of religion." They said a prayer might trample an atheist's right not to pray.

Srila Prabhupada: So now the children cannot have a prayer in their schools. These government men are mostly lawyers, cheaters. Like Nixon. What is Nixon's situation now?

Student: Well, he couldn't get any less popular; so now he's getting more popular. People forget.

Srila Prabhupada: People have become cheaters, and that is why they elect such cheaters as their representatives. You Americans

can make all the propaganda you want, but you will not be happy without offering prayer to God.

Student: That's right.

Srila Prabhupada: But be scientific. To begin with, follow God's laws and lead a pure life: no illicit sex, no meat-eating, no intoxication, no gambling. If you reinstate prayer in the schools, that is not bad; but unless you first become pure, your prayer will have no practical effect. You yourselves must be free from all these impure activities. Then from among yourselves you can elect a good leader. If you really want a good leader, then you yourselves must become good. And you can become good by offering prayer to God.

Student: Forgive me, but this sounds like we're getting into some sort of vicious circle. A moment ago you said we have to become pure or good *first* ... otherwise our prayer will have no effect. So now how can you say we can become good by offering prayer?

Srila Prabhupada: Not just any kind of prayer. "Prayer" means that you chant the name of God. If you simply chant Hare Krsna, you will be in touch with God—the all-good. And then naturally you will become good. Why don't you try it?

Student: We have little more to lose.

Srila Prabhupada: But if you chant Hare Krsna, you will be the gainer. Just chant and see the result. 🌸

"There is no such discrimination that 'here is a devotee, so he's superior, and here is a non-devotee, he's inferior'. That is not God's discrimination; that is your discrimination."

Srila Prabhupada —Mayapur, March 5th, 1976

Book Distribution Stories!

YOU'RE A BEGGAR, YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A BEGGAR

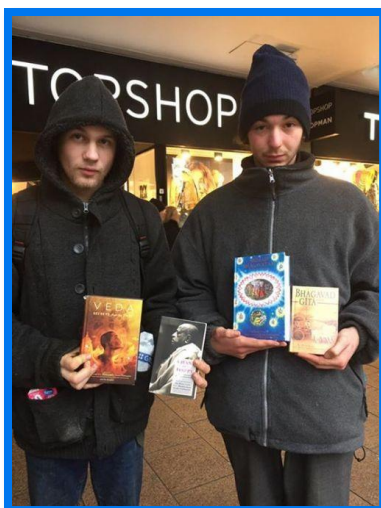
By Geeta Bhandari

Yesterday someone walked past me and said, "You're a beggar, you're nothing but a beggar". He then walked off. His comment was said with malice, yet I knew he was sent by Caitanya Mahaprabhu to remind me that yes, I **am** a beggar, a beggar begging for the mercy and love of God. I also realized that as a book distributor, I'm on the streets begging myself and others to awaken our spiritual identity in order to be able to relate to each other in the mood of pure selflessness so that we can derive unlimited happiness.

That is ultimately our purpose in life. Ironically, today two boys approached me. Rhys (on the left) asked for a copy of the Bhagavad-Gita, and I noticed his friend Leoa (on the right) held a copy of the book *Veda* in his hand. Leoa then picked up the Srimad-Bhagavatam displayed on my trolley. Rhys explained that he was given a copy of *Veda* a few days ago and he and his friend had been reading it together. They were most fascinated by what they had read so far, and now they wanted a copy of the Gita. I asked who had given him his book and he said it was an older lady who was standing outside a specific bookstore.

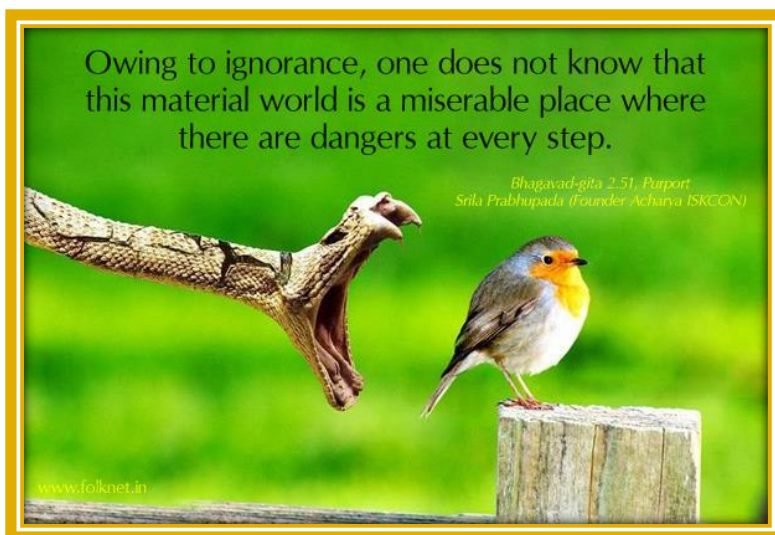
Immediately I knew they were talking about my aunt, Meena, as she was distributing with me a couple of days ago and she told me that she was going to stand

there as she wanted to compete with the bookshop. Rhys held out a handful of change and placed it into my hand. He said he didn't know whether it was enough to cover the cost but it was all the money they had collected over the last couple of days. He explained that they were homeless. I was astonished and asked why they were both homeless. Rhys said they both had been extremely wealthy but then had gotten into the wrong association and tragically had lost their money, homes, and flash cars. Now they only had each other, and they wanted to read more about our philosophy as this had struck a real chord with them.



I noticed that during my entire conversation, Leoa had been holding the Srimad-Bhagavatam, simply staring at it. I was so moved by their story that I gave them the Bhagavad-Gita, Srimad-Bhagavatam, and Chant & Be Happy. I then requested if I could take their photo and put their story on Facebook. They agreed. After I took the photo, Rhys asked if he could take a look at the photo, as he wanted to ensure he looked presentable. I was really moved at this point. He was homeless, a beggar, yet a gentleman with the utmost dignity. He smiled when he saw the photo and they both thanked me and walked off. I then remembered the

incident from yesterday, and it dawned on me that book distributors are also beggars with 'dignity', begging people to accept the mercy of Srila Prabhupada's books and to take shelter of his incredible movement. 🌸



Excerpts from inmates' letters

As you alluded to in your letter below, I am one of those who is *thirsty* for spiritual satisfaction - in my 50+ years of life, I haven't found it. The closest I got to spiritual satisfaction was in following Buddhism, but still it wasn't enough. I will say that I have traveled many spiritual paths which has ultimately brought me here - including "Siddha Yoga" and the lessons taught through that way of life in their prison project, "*In Search of the Self*". Yet I still I thirst for spiritual rightness and spiritual satisfaction... more poignantly, spiritual *wholeness*.

Material things have landed me nowhere... except prison both *physically* and *spiritually*. There is this feeling of being *trapped* and I know there is a Spiritual Way of Life that will lead me out of this trap that I have spent 25+ years in. I feel like that proverbial fish out of water... I feel that I am thrashing in agony and dying inside - and I know there is something greater out there that will help me feel *alive* and *thriving in truth and satisfaction*.

I know that my woes are probably all too familiar to you with other people in prisons that you have talked to and dealt with, but they are real and they are *vicious*. This is a vicious cycle I have gotten myself sucked into - rather, that I *jumped into* full force, feet first... the only problem is that though I jumped in feet first, I landed squarely on my head.

The purpose of my writing was to request books and guidance in your faith, in your spiritual way of life, that perhaps I might find peace within through learning about Krsna. I hope that my letter has touched you and that you will be the guidance I am looking for, for it is with a sincere heart that I write to you.

I would like books to learn and quench this spiritual thirst I have. Thank you for what you do for people like myself who have no one else and who are on a journey to a better place. I am hoping that Kṛṣṇa Consciousness can lead me there. I look forward to hearing back from you at your next and earliest convenience!

I was going through the MP3 library that we have and found about 25-ish Hare Krishna related titles, including the 5th Edition of some stuff put out by ISKCON - I will be downloading them when I get some funding from my job to do so. I didn't realize there was stuff on our MP3 music service from ISKCON until today. I will search more later!! Just thought you'd like to know I will have access to some stuff!

In Spiritual Solidarity,

Bhakta Marshall McG. —Butner, North Carolina

I have been humbly trying to spread Kṛṣṇa's love around this desolate place, being that Kṛṣṇa is so attractive that he will eventually win people's hearts. I donated a few books to the chaplaincy here. I want to help inmates learn about Kṛṣṇa. We are still on modified schedule due to the virus so it's hard to go to the chapel.

I set up my altar toady with a Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna (the last page of 2021 calendar), Srila Prabhupada, Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu and associates, Radha-Kṛṣṇa, Bhagavad-gita As It Is, and Srimad-Bhagavatam. It looks awesome and in this way I could offer my obeisances, pray, and cook the food, offer it, then consume the remnants. Also, my japa has increased to ten rounds a day. Thanks to Srila Prabhupada, Lord Kṛṣṇa and all the Vaisnavas, I'm finally settled down. Once again I offer my humble obeisances to you and your ministry for all the good work you are doing for us bhaktas in prison. I do not drink coffee anymore, no eggs, no mushrooms, and no watching TV or reading showbiz magazines, and to tell you the truth, I feel awesome and cleaner this way. Thanks to Kṛṣṇa! Humbly, the servant of the servant of Kṛṣṇa.

Bhakta Jose A. —Fairton, New Jersey

The Spanish translation are very popular. Please send more. The Hispanic community is hungry for Krsna, Hare Krsna. Whenever they see me, they exclaim loudly "Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa" I am so honored. My plan is to go to Boston when I'm released next year. I will serve through the senior devotees there and advance in that way. The luster of my physical body has increased over the last few years. It's the glow of a devotee.

Bhakta Michael —Lakeview, Oregon

Hare Krsna. I have read and study the four books you sent. I would like to say how much I love Kṛṣṇa! It's so blissful for me to practice yoga meditation. I pray till 15:30 min on the mantra. I also follow prasadam in bhakti-yoga practice. In the mornings I swim in the intellectual studies of the Bhagavad-Gita. It makes my day magnificent ... I feel like every word comes alive in my head. I have so much to ask on my path to self-realization. The Bhagavad-Gita says the Supreme science is passed through disciplic succession. I'm ready for a personally motivated change in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It's a transcendental journey.

Chad

Get ready for Caturmasya, starting on July 14 !

Caturmasya means “four months”. The main goal of observing Caturmasya is to decrease attachment to material things and to increase devotion to Krishna. So please take this opportunity to engage yourselves in the service of the Lord with enthusiasm and increased determination and make your life sublime!

Prabhupāda urges us to use our common sense and to be practical; increase your service according to your circumstances, even if it means to only increase your *smaranam*, your remembering and thinking about Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa knows when we do our best to please Him. 😊

Inmate Artwork!

RIGHT: Maha-Vishnu lying on Ananta Sesa
—by unknown



LEFT: Lord Nrsimhadeva —
by unknown

Who is Sanatan Goswami?

Sanatana Goswami, the elder brother of Srila Rupa Goswami, was the most senior among the six Goswamis of Vrindavana.

Shri Sanatana Goswami appeared in 1488, five years before Shri Rupa Goswami, in a Sarasvata brahmana family in Bengal. Sanatana and his two brothers, Rupa and Anupama, were always absorbed in bhava bhakti from early childhood. Remembering Vrindavana, they named the forests in which they played after Vraja's twelve forests (Talavana, Madhavana, Kamyavana, Mahavana). They called their favorite bathing ponds Radha-kunda and Shyama-kunda.

In his youth, Shri Sanatana dreamed that a beautiful brahmana boy gave him a Shrimad-Bhagavatam. Feeling ecstatic he awoke. But seeing neither the boy nor the Bhagavatam he felt sad. When Sanatana began his puja that morning, however, Krishna Himself, disguised as a beautiful brahmana boy, came and said, "Take this Shrimad-Bhagavatam from Me, always study it, and you will attain perfection. "

In Krishna-lila-stava, Shri Sanatana Goswami glorifies the Shrimad-Bhagavatam: "O holy Bhagavata, you are my only company, my only friend, and my guru. You are my greatest treasure and my personal savior. You are the emblem of my highest fortune and the very form of ecstasy. I offer my obeisances unto you."

Forced to submit to the ruling Muslim government, Shri Rupa and Shri Sanatana became ministers and lived at Ramakeli. But their real engagement was teaching shastras (scriptures) which they learned from Vidyavachaspati, brother of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya. Pandits and brahmanas from all over India came to study under the two brothers. Shri Rupa and Sanatana were acclaimed as the "crest jewels of the Gaudiya Vaishnava scholars." After the Lord visited Ramakeli and freed them, they renounced everything for Lord Gauranga's service. Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu ordered Shri Rupa and Sanatana Goswamis to move to Vrindavana and perform four services:



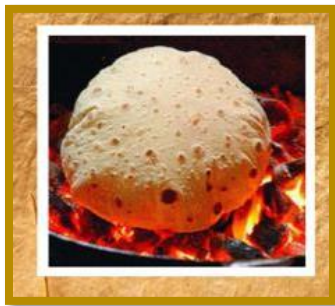
- (1) Uncover Shri Krishna's pastime places
- (2) Install Deities and arrange for Their puja
- (3) Compile bhakti scriptures
- (4) Propagate the rules of devotional life

"Entering Lord Chaitanya's service, they resolutely gave up power, riches, and position to live in Vrindavana as humble beggars absorbed in bhajan. One cannot properly perform Krishna bhajan until one renounces all attachments both internally and externally and adopts a life of simplicity and humility." (Shri Vraja Mandala Parikrama).

"O holy Bhagavata, you are my only company, my only friend, and my guru. You are my greatest treasure and my personal saviour. You are the emblem of my highest fortune and the very form of ecstasy. I offer my obeisances unto you."

They traveled extensively through Vraja mandala discovering many lila sthanas (places of pilgrimage) of Radha-Madhava. Having no fixed residence, they would catch a few winks of sleep (no more than one and a half hours per day) under a different tree or bush (so they wouldn't get attached to even a sleeping place). Shri Rupa and Shri Sanatana Goswamis spent all their time writing, discussing Krishna's pastimes, and chanting Krishna's Holy Names.

To maintain himself Sanatana would beg some wheat flour, roll it into a ball by adding a touch of Yamuna water, and drop it in smoldering coals to cook. He would offer this bati (salt-free, baked bread ball) to his



Deity of Madana Mohana. Giving up all kinds of material enjoyment, the Goswamis accepted the poorest way of life as mendicants. They ate just enough to maintain their bodies.

The Radha-Madana Mohana mandir (temple) established by Sanatana Goswami was the first one opened in Vrindavana by the six Goswamis (picture below). Described as "the personal extension of the body of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu," Shri Sanatana is the ideal spiritual master because he gives one shelter at the lotus feet of Madana Mohana. The three Vrindavana Deities (Madana Mohana, Govindaji and Gopinatha) are the life and soul of the Gaudiya Vaishnavas. The Deity of Madana Mohana has the specific quality of helping the neophyte Devotees understand their eternal



relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Shri Krishna.

"Madana Mohana" means Krishna who is so indescribably beautiful that He even attracts Cupid, Kamadeva. Sanatana Goswami is the sambandha acharya who gives us knowledge of our proper relationship with Krishna, And his Deity, Madana Mohana, helps us overcome our attraction for material sense gratification (Cupid) and fix our minds on devotional service.

Shri Sanatana Goswami spent forty-three years wandering from village to village in Vrindavana. The Vrajavasis (inhabitants of Vrindavan) would affectionately care for him treating him like their



father. With patience and concern he listened to their problems. Then he would please all the villagers by his preaching and practical advice on everything from increasing crop yields to solving family quarrels.

"Renouncing all worldly pleasures, Sanatana Goswami was humble, detached, and always absorbed in study. Mahaprabhu often said that Sanatana Goswami was His favorite devotee. As an ocean of love and mercy, Sanatana excelled all other devotees in his compassion toward the suffering souls." (Bhakti-ratnakar)

In his last years, he left his beloved Deity of Madana Mohana with Krishna Dasa brahmachari, his disciple. He did bhajan on the banks of Manasi Ganga next to Chakaleshvara Mahadeva at Govardhana. Daily he walked the twenty-four-mile parikrama (original longer

route) of Govardhana Hill. Although he was sixty-five years old, he kept his daily vow of offering 1,008 obeisances to Govardhana Hill and to any Vaishnava whom he met.



Understanding the difficulty of His pure devotee, Shri Madana Mohana appeared one day and said, "Baba! You are too old. Don't take so much trouble to walk around Govardhana Hill every day." ["baba" is an affectionate nickname] Sanatana replied, "This is one of the daily activities of my bhajan: I must maintain it." "Since you are old," said Madana Mohana, "you may now give up this vow." Starting to walk again, Sanatana replied, "I will never give up my religious principles." Sanatana Goswami's firm determination to complete his daily devotional vow pleased Shri Madana Mohana (Krishna). But in the loving dealings between the Lord and His pure devotee, Krishna's desire to please His devotee often defeats the Devotee's desire to please Him. So out of loving compassion for His devotee, Shri Krishna stood on a large flat stone (Govardhana shila) taken from Giriraj, and He played His irresistible flute. The Govardhan shila melted in ecstasy, capturing the impression of Krishna's lotus feet.

Presenting this to Sanatana, Krishna said, "If you circumambulate this shila everyday it will be the same as going around Govardhana Hill every day. You will

keep your vow intact and not compromise your religious principles." Seeing that Giriraja Himself (Shri Krishna) had given the shila, Sanatana Goswami gratefully accepted. One can still see that Govardhana shila in the Radha Damodara Temple.

Shri Bhaktivinoda Thakura said in Jaiva Dharma: "Sanatana Goswami was empowered to explain the esoteric aspects of Krishna's manifest and unmanifest Vraja lila." Sanatana Goswami made a significant literary contribution to the *Gaudya sampradaya* with his *Hari-bhakti-vilasa*, *Brhad-Bhagavatamrta*, and *Brhad-Vaishnava-toshani*.

In the form of Labanga manjari Sanatana Goswami serves Shrimati Vishakha-sakhi in Radha-Madhava's nitya nikunja-lila. Sanatana Goswami's samadhi is behind Radha Madana Mohana's Temple.

Madana Mohana means Krishna who is so indescribably beautiful that He even attracts Cupid, Kamadeva. Sanatana Goswami is the sambandha



acharya who gives us knowledge of our proper relationship with Krishna, And his Deity, Madana Mohana, helps us overcome our attraction for material sense gratification (Cupid) and fix our minds on devotional service...The Radha-Madhana Mohana mandir established by Sanatana Goswami was the first one opened in Vrindavana by the six Goswamis. Described as "the personal extension of the body of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. 🌸

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare

POEM CORNER

POEMS by UJJAL DAS

WORD RAGA

Who made the jungle mountains?
Who built the riverbanks?
As sure as sexy ladies
It wasn't Northern yanks.
Lord Vishnu is a person:
Omnipotent and great.
He controls the cosmos:
Crooked bent and straight.
Across the blue-green waters.
Between the voidist's tricks
And chanting Hare Krishna
The pinnacle of kicks.
All glories to Sri guru and Gauranga!

RED ROSE RHYME

Green grasses for his cows
The lord
Yamuna river's water.
Clay- hand molded into shapes
Each bhakti yoga potter.

To cook and carry yogurt
Churned butter thief
Those neighbors' complaints
Lodged to his mother's
Ears: celestial
Sages savor.

Down by the meadow
Chirping birds
Talking parrots answer.
And in the rasa lila group: with Krishna
Blissful dancers.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada!
Hare Krishna!

RIGHT:
Yamuna River



A LETTER FROM SRILA BHAKTISIDDHANTA SARASVATI THAKURA

“I am overjoyed to hear that your enthusiasm for chanting is increasing. As our contaminations are removed by chanting, the Lord's form, qualities, and pastimes will be revealed to us in the holy name. There is no point in making a separate effort to artificially remember the Lord's form, qualities, and pastimes. The Lord and His name are one and the same. This will be understood clearly when the coverings in your heart are removed. By chanting without offenses you will personally realize that all perfections come from the holy name. Through chanting, the distinction that exists between the self, and the gross and subtle bodies, is gradually effaced and one realizes one's own spiritual form. Once aware of the spiritual body, as one continues to chant, one sees the transcendental nature of the Lord's form. Only the holy name reveals the spiritual form of the living being and then causes him to be attracted to Krsna's form. Only the holy name reveals the spiritual qualities of the living being and then causes him to be attracted to Krsna's qualities. Only the holy name reveals the spiritual activities of the living being and then causes him to be attracted to Krsna's pastimes. By service to the holy name we do not mean only the chanting of the holy name; it also includes the other duties of the chanter. If we serve the holy name with the body, mind, and soul, then the direction of that service spontaneously manifests like the sun in the clear sky of the chanter's heart. What is the nature of the holy name? Eventually all these understandings spontaneously appear in the heart of one who chants the holy name. The true nature of hari-nama is revealed by listening to, reading, and studying the scriptures. It is unnecessary to write anything further on this subject. All these things will be revealed to you through chanting.”

Calendar

JUNE 2022

- 10 June 2022 - Ganga Puja
10 June 2022 - Disappearance Day of Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana
10 June 2022 - Appearance Day of Srimati Gangamata Goswami
11 June 2022 - **Pandava Nirjala Ekadasi**
12 June 2022 - Panihati Cida Dahi Utsava
14 June 2022 - Snana Yatra
14 June 2022 - Disappearance Day of Sri Mukunda Datta
14 June 2022 - Disappearance Day of Sri Sridhara Pandita
15 June 2022 - Disappearance Day of Sri Syamananda Prabhu
18 June 2022 - Appearance Day of Sri Vakresvara Pandita
23 June 2022 - Disappearance Day of Sri Srivasa Pandita
25 June 2022 - **Yogini Ekadasi**
28 June 2022 - Disappearance Day of Sri Gadadhara Pandita
28 June 2022 - **Disappearance Day of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura**
30 June 2022 - Gundica Marjana



ABOVE: The River Ganges

JULY 2022

- 01 July 2022 - Ratha Yatra Starts
01 July 2022 - Disappearance Day of Sri Svarupa Damodara Goswami
01 July 2022 - Disappearance Day of Sri Sivananda Sena
04 July 2022 - Hera Pancami
05 July 2022 - Disappearance Day of Sri Vakresvara Pandita
09 July 2022 - Return of Ratha Yatra
10 July 2022 - **Sayana Ekadashi**
13 July 2022 - Guru (Vyasa) Purnima
13 July 2022 - Disappearance Day of Sanatana Goswami
14 July 2022 - First Month of Caturmasya Begins
18 July 2022 - Disappearance Day of Srila Gopala Bhatta Goswami
21 July 2022 - Disappearance Day of Srila Lokanatha Goswami
22 July 2022 - The Incorporation of ISKCON in New York
24 July 2022 - **Kamika Ekadashi**



RIGHT: Lord Jagannatha's Festival of the Chariots, held once a week, in all major cities of the world.