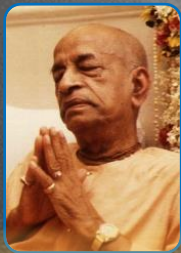


Freedom Newsletter



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

ISKCON Prison Ministry / July 2023

PO Box 2676
Alachua, FL 32616

CHEMICALS HAVE AN ORIGIN

This exchange between His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, a guest, and a disciple named Dr. Thoudam D. Singh took place in December of 1973, during a morning walk at Venice Beach, in Los Angeles.

Dr. Singh: The scientists say that at one point the earth, was composed of dust particles floating in some gaseous material. Then in due course this colloidal suspension condensed and formed the earth.

Srila Prabhupada: That may be, but where did the gas come from?

Dr. Singh: They say it just existed!

Srila Prabhupada: Lord Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gita* [7.4],

*bhumir apo 'nalo vayuh
kham mano buddhir eva ca
ahankara itiyam me
bhinna praktir astadha*

“Earth, water, fire, air, ether; mind, intelligence, and false ego—all together these eight comprise My separated material energies.”

Here Kṛṣṇa explains that *vayu* (gas) came from Him. And finer than *vayu* is *kham* (ether), finer than ether is mind, finer than mind is intelligence, finer than



intelligence is false ego, and finer than false ego is the soul. But the scientists do not know this. They understand only gross things. They mention gas, but where does the gas come from?

Dr. Singh: That they cannot answer.

Srila Prabhupada: But *we* can answer. From *Srimad-Bhagavatam* we know that gas has come from *kham*, or ether, ether comes from mind, mind comes from intelligence, intelligence comes from false ego, and false ego comes from the soul.

Dr. Singh: The scientists argue that before Darwin's biophysical type of evolution could take place, there had to be what they call "prebiotic chemistry," or chemical evolution.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. And the term "chemical evolution" means that chemicals have an origin, and that origin is spirit, or life. A lemon produces citric acid, and our bodies produce many chemicals in urine, blood, perspiration, and other bodily secretions. This is proof that life produces chemicals, not that chemicals produce life.



Dr. Singh: Scientists say that once the seed of life is present in the cells, then the living entity automatically develops and functions.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, but who gives the seed? In the *Bhagavad-gita* [7.10] Krsna answers this question. *Bijam mam sarva-bhutanam viddhi partha sanatanam:* "O son of Prtha, know that I am the original seed of all existences." And later [14.4] Krsna says,

*sarva-yonisu kaunteya
murtayah sambhavanti yah
tasam brahma mahad yonir
aham bija-pradah pita*

"It should be understood that all species of life, O son of Kunti, are made possible by birth in this material nature, and that I am the seed-giving father."

Dr. Wolf-Rottkay: But in all humility, Srila Prabhupada, suppose the scientists actually succeed in artificially creating a living organism, or even a living cell. What would you say?

Srila Prabhupada: What would be their credit? They would only be imitating what already exists in nature. People are very fond of imitations. If a man in a nightclub imitates a dog, people will go and pay money to watch him. But when they see a real dog barking, they don't pay any attention to it.

Dr. Singh: Srila Prabhupada, the idea of chemical evolution came from a Russian biologist in 1920. He demonstrated that before biochemical evolution, the earth's atmosphere was in a state of reduction. In other words, it was mostly full of hydrogen, with very little oxygen. Then, in due course, the sun's radiation caused

these hydrogen molecules to form into different chemicals:

Srila Prabhupada: This is a side study. First of all, where did the hydrogen come from? The scientists simply study the middle of the process; they do not study the origin. We must know the beginning. There is an airplane. [*Srila Prabhupada indicates an airplane appearing on the horizon.*] Would you say the origin of that machine is the sea? A foolish person might say that all of a sudden a light appeared in the sea and that's how the airplane was created. But is that a scientific explanation? The scientists' explanations are similar. They say, "This existed, and then all of a sudden, by chance, that occurred." This is not science. Science means to explain the original cause.



Perhaps the scientists can create imitations of nature, but why should we give them credit? We should give credit to the original creator, God; that is our philosophy.

Dr. Singh: When a scientist discovers some natural law, he usually names it after himself.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, exactly. The law is already there in nature, but the rascal wants to take credit for it.

Dr. Singh: They are actually fighting against the laws of nature, but often they take a certain kind of pleasure in the struggle.

Srila Prabhupada: That pleasure is childish. Suppose a child builds a sandcastle on the beach with great effort. He may take pleasure in it, but that is childish pleasure.

That is not a grown man's pleasure.

Materialistic men have created a standard of false happiness. They have created a gorgeous arrangement for maintaining a comfortable civilization, but it is all false because they cannot create



a situation in which they will be able to enjoy it permanently. At any moment, anyone can be kicked out by death, and all his enjoyment will be finished.,

Dr. Singh: That is why they say that God hasn't given us everything—because we are not able to live here forever.

Srila Prabhupada: But God has given them everything necessary to live peacefully, and everything necessary to understand Him. So why will they not inquire about God? Instead, they do things that help them forget God.



What are the Vedas?

And originally the Veda is one, Yajur Veda. And because it was very difficult to understand... Veda was spoken by Lord Himself to Brahmā. So, seeing, foreseeing the condition of the present age, Vyāsadeva divided four Vedas, one Veda into four. The original Veda is Yajur Veda. Then he divided into Sāma, Yajur, Ṛik, Atharva. Then again, the Vedic literatures were explained in Purāṇas; eighteen Purāṇas. Then Mahābhārata. [*Bhagavad-gita is part of the Mahabharata*] Then again, he summarized all the Vedic knowledge into Vedānta-sūtra, Vedānta-sūtra, summarized. Then again, the Vedānta-sūtra is explained by Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. These are all the Vedic literature.

Excerpt from Śrīla Prabhupada's lecture on Bhagavad-gita As Is Is — 3.17-20

THE SADHANA SERVICE!

Excerpts of letters from Bhaktin Kimberly S., —Ocala, Florida

Note from Bhakti-lata Dasi: Bhaktin Kimberly has been practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness since October 2021. She is imbued with Lord Caitanya's mood of sharing this matchless gift with others and has started a very successful group of like-minded souls. Her enthusiasm is so infectious that I sometimes playfully call her "Utsāha" ("enthusiasm" in Sanskrit). Here are some highlights from her letters from 2/3/22 to 5/26/23. She is now also corresponding with Ramaniya Devi Dasi.

2/17/22

Others also come and sit in our service as we have to keep it open to everyone... We have some Buddhists, one Hindu and several Messianic Jewish and Christians who attend. They have expressed their desires to change their religion preference to Hare Krishna. We had twenty-three people in class today, which is a fairly large group for a compound of this size... We only have 425 women in total.

I am doing the best I can here to guide our group as I was the only one here originally listed under the Hare Krishna faith and who requested a service time... I am not by any means qualified and do not feel nearly worthy enough to do this alone. However, my karma is as such and I am doing my best. I am merely a woman trying to live and practice my chosen faith. I am asking for any guidance you may be able to provide.

2/27/22

When we meet, we usually read, and study for thirty minutes then use an hour for chanting the mahamantra... Our group is growing, and the original members are faithful and supportive. We wish to further our studies and understanding... It took me a year to get recognition and longer to get a day/time spot at the chapel for us to be able to meet.

1/24/23

Hare Krsna Bhakti Lata.....So we had our service time.....we were only allowed thirty minutes and were advised that it was for self-study until we can get a volunteer and schedule a regular weekly service ...we

didn't complain because one thing we've learned is that it's a process in FLDOC.....lol! We will eventually get there. Krsna is soooooo good to us! I was so excited to write you because even though it wasn't perfect, we did have service time.

2/18/23

We have two new ladies now.....they have been studying with us for quite a few months. They are great! Amber and Samantha both put in the request to the chaplain to have their religious preference listed as Hare Krishna. I usually wait a while before I request books, etc. for any newcomers just to see if they are serious. But both these young ladies are serious and dedicated. Amber goes home around the same time as I do but Samantha still has a few years to be here.....it's unfortunate as she is very bright and truly wants to follow Krsna! The first time she chanted she came to me all happy and teary-eyed expressing to me " it just felt right ". I smiled as I completely understood.

3/3/23

Haribol..... in hopes that you are well! Everyone here is good. We had our service this afternoon and everyone brought all their books.....I must say they were so happy and excited to see all the material you sent! We are so grateful. All the volumes of Srimad-Bhagavatam are safe on our shelf.....everyone is taking turns with each volume, and they can go to the chapel and check them out and exchange them as necessary...

We are preparing for Gaura-Purnima.....I asked Ramaniya to walk me through the festivities... For a long

time it was only myself so I did what I could....then last year new the ladies came, and now we are here.....we have several attending this year.....we plan on meeting and performing kirtans, japa, singing, prasadam, and explaining the meaning behind the celebration, etc.....we will be using a white sheet and some paper flowers I am making, plus the pictures you sent prior.....that will have to be our altar.....We will be allowed a bag of vegetarian foods the kitchen is preparing for us, plus we will be bringing our own items.... milk, nuts, etc. it is wonderful and exciting.

3/13/23

Haribol.....in hopes that all is well. We are good. I wanted to let you know that we received the second set of Srimad-Bhagavatam. Now we have two of each volume so its quicker for us to read. We stored each set in the libraries and we exchange the volumes as needed. These two sets are perfect and should be sufficient..... Thank you.

We had a wonderful time during Gaura Purnima. It was beautiful! We used a sheet for the altar and posted pictures you provided us.....I made pretty flowers out of paper and we placed food items on the altar. All the ladies were so helpful....we also had a table for us that we decorated. We each read scriptures or an article pertaining to Gaura Purnima. We prayed and had a nice talk.....we even tried our hand at dance this time.....smile. We were so happy to be able to meet and celebrate. Thank you for your guidance and direction. Ramaniya was also very helpful and explained to each of us the meaning behind the celebration.

Ramaniya has been so wonderful! The ladies are very excited to receive guidance from her.....I think they are keeping her pretty busy with all their questions.....smile! All of them tell me " wow! She's so quicksmile! and she explains things so clearly " I am so grateful you asked her to write to us!!! That's all for now..... we appreciate you! till next time.....Hare Kṛṣṇa
4/3/23

As to our service...things are coming around and they are starting to respect our beliefs and are more aware of our needs. They have been pretty accommodating for our observance of Gaura Purnima.....so we are pleased. I know it seems strange to those who do not understand, but they are at least respectful and trying!!! I am happy you are trying to reach the chaplain because once they know you have support from your religious organization, they treat you much differently! Up until now all we've had is me and they do not respect me (smile) they want

an outside minister/volunteer. They are well aware that I am the inmate coordinator/contact person on the inside for us and that I receive instructions, study material, etc. from you directly but you actually talking to him and establishing that contact will definitely change things.....right now all they have is my word and the fact that we are an approved religion on the FLDOC approved religions list so they are obligated. Getting volunteer/s are the number one priority now ...this will solve quite a lot of issues.....plus they will have a contact person if they have any questions concerning our practices.....it will cut down on the prejudice somewhat knowing that not only are we serious about our service but we have a bona fide society supporting us.

5/21/23

I am thrilled to finally be getting somewhere! When Mr. Mahoney was here from Tallahassee, I showed him your email where you said you turned in the previous forms, way back in October, and Mr. K. was standing there looking puzzled. Mr. Mahoney stated that this was unacceptable for this to be taking this long and advised him to take care of this ASAP. Mr. K. advised me to contact you and he would see to it.....I am happy he is remaining true to his word.

5/26/23

Haribol!!!! I am so happy things are finally moving along..... I always had faith that if I kept fighting for my God sisters, Kṛṣṇa would make a way! I am strong and enthusiastic as you well know.....smile! We have dealt with a lot of prejudices and even though one of our rules to this program is "do not disparage the religious beliefs/traditions/rituals of another" that does not happen.....it even comes from staff.....Kṛṣṇa used me for this assignment and I am passionate and will do what I feel is required of me! Kṛṣṇa gave me the desire, drive and inside knowledge and also placed me in a position where I could be of best service! The right place at the right time so to speak with the important people who could help.....I am grateful and humbled by this whole experience. Mr. Patrick Mahoney is the head honcho.....smile.... from our home office of the FLDOC in Tallahassee.....he is the director of programs. Always know that you can contact him if there are any problems. Also, Mr. Kovalyshn.....is from Tallahassee and he is the regional director of the chaplaincy dept.....he handles this program directly and all chapels and chaplains (he is the big supervisor over all the chaplains in his assigned region) I spoke to him myself a few days after I spoke to Mr. Mahoney.....Thank you for following up as well and we are all so excited!

Sometimes in this environment people lose interest if they feel there is no outside support and when we are not treated or respected as well as other religious faiths.....they get discouraged. So this is BIG.....first it will give the sisters more knowledge and instruction to get closer to Krsna.....secondly it lets the staff know that we have outside support and lastly it's the fellowship! Thank you for going the extra mile and following through.....for a lot of years I was alone in this and studied from the few books I had.....Krsna found me (or should I say I found him haha) at the lowest point of my life!



In 2016, I found a book and the picture on the outside was so beautiful I picked it up and read it.....over and over!!! I found another book shortly thereafter and started reciting the maha-mantra.....so, for years that was it.....just me.....some people would ask me and I would tell them about Krsna.....all I knew was that it felt

right.....later that same year, I suffered a great personal loss; I did not think I would make it. But Krsna was what got me through.....I read the Gita and then I found the address for ISKCON and started corresponding with this first sister you had writing me (Mother Bhranti). Then I received books and I started our Sadhana Service.....and the rest you know.....smile. It has been so humbling, and I now have a better understanding and more knowledge. I said all this to get to this; even if it's just one person (like I was) it is worth it.....one person at a time is all it takes. Anyway.....again I thank you and will be forever grateful.....[I'm sharing this to show] how important reaching those like me really is.....I'm sure you already know... smile... you've been doing this a while lol. Oh, before I forget; they now just call us *Krishna Consciousness*, rather than the Sadhana Service.....Thank you for your generosity. 🌸

NEW YORK RATHA YATRA IN RETROSPECT

By Thomas Haribol, ISKCON News Managing Editor | Jun 20, 2023

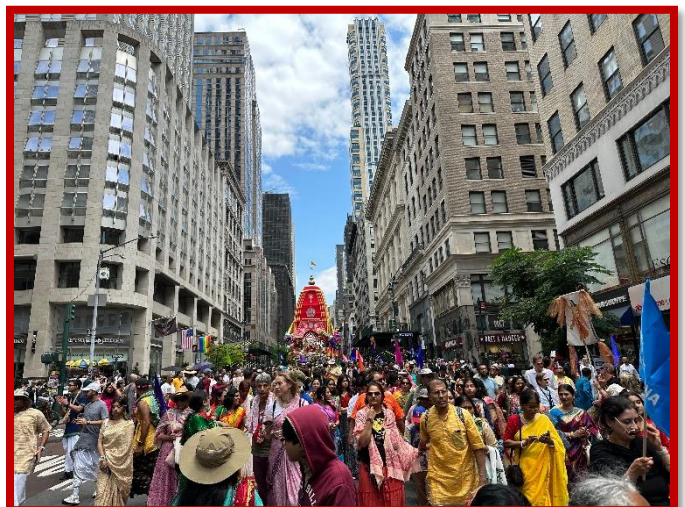
NOTE: *Ratha Yatra* is derived from two Sanskrit words, *ratha*, which means chariot or carriage, and *yatra*, which means journey, or pilgrimage. The Ratha Yatra is the joyous festival of Lord Jagannatha (the Lord of the Universe, or God), Who journeys through the streets of a city, to give everyone the opportunity to see and serve Him. Thanks to Śrīla Prabhupada who brought this festival to the West, this grand festival now takes place in all major cities all over the world.

Speaking about Ratha Yatra during a July 12, 1973 lecture in London, Srila Prabhupada said, “Organize this all over the world. They will be saved. They will understand Krsna.” For the last fifty years, devotees have taken up this instruction with great success, and this 2023 season has seen record numbers at events across the globe. New York City, in particular, saw a surprising number of participants at its peaceful procession down Fifth Avenue on June 10th. The event was even covered by a leading Indian newspaper.

Hazardous smoke from Canadian fires threatened to postpone the event, but the skies cleared just before the parade date. The only thing in the air seemed to be the melodious chanting of the Holy Names along one of the most iconic stretches of the Big Apple. City officials and local police worked closely with ISKCON NYC to make the event successful. “The police department was grateful at how peaceful the parade and the devotees were,” said Gopal Campu Dasa, Vice-President of

ISKCON NYC, “They look forward to the parade every year.”

It's impossible to know the total number of people who were worshippers or witnesses to the sacred journey





Over 15,000 souls received free prasadam [sanctified food] at Washington Square Park, only a percentage of the total number of participants at the day's festivities, as many other food vendors were available. Devotees also distributed over 4,500 books throughout the day. At the same time, thousands visited the tents at the park showcasing topics like reincarnation and vegetarianism, or crowded around the multiple stages with devotional dance performances and kirtans.

Looking to the future, Gopal Campu said enthusiastically, "We are already starting to meditate on the 50th Annual Ratha Yatra that will be held in 2026. We plan to make that one the grandest yet!" 🌸

down Fifth Avenue. Still, participants noted that the streets and sidewalks were packed to see the purifying procession to Washington Square Park. Many who actively participated this year are new to Krishna Consciousness.

Alex, a newer devotee introduced to the philosophy a couple of years ago, traveled from Memphis to attend this year's event. "It was an amazing experience getting to see bhakti on display in New York City and the general public stopping to see what was happening," said Alex, "The parade was an amazing experience, and the energy all along the route and at Washington Square Park was beautiful. So many sweet souls. It will be a treasured memory in my bhakti path."



EKĀDAŚĪ: KRṢṂA'S SPECIAL DAY FOR EVERYONE (slightly edited)

By Rohiṇinandana Dāsa

I like to think of Ekādaśī as a special opportunity to increase my efforts to be Kṛṣṇa conscious, rather than a list of don'ts. The don'ts may be present, but they are subservient to the do's: **do** remember Lord Kṛṣṇa; **do** chant His names; **do** relish the chance to spend a long, uninterrupted period to hear and chant about Kṛṣṇa; **do** take advantage of the opportunity to make some substantial spiritual progress.

Śrīla Prabhupāda never told us that we had to observe a total fast or go without sleep. He simply asked us to use this day to increase our remembrance of Kṛṣṇa.

And he gave us only one restriction: on Ekādaśī, don't eat beans or grains.

I've heard that Sanātana Gosvāmī commented that all the many rules and regulations he compiled in his book *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* are simply meant to help people remember Kṛṣṇa at every step of their lives.

Nārada Muni also states:

ārādhito yadi haris tapasā tataḥ kim
nārādhito yadi haris tapasā tataḥ kim

“If Kṛṣṇa is worshiped, what is the use of extraneous austerity? And if Kṛṣṇa is not worshiped, what is the use of austerity?” The idea expressed here is that devotional service to Kṛṣṇa includes austerity as a natural course.

For instance, if on Ekādaśī I’m trying to chant and hear about Kṛṣṇa more than usual, I’ll naturally want to sleep and eat less. And when I begin to feel spiritually surcharged by my chanting and reading, I’ll feel less sleepy and hungry than I normally might.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is intended not to burden us but rather to take away our burden. In Vedic literature there are many, many detailed instructions for all kinds of personal, social, and cultural affairs—Śrīla Prabhupāda once said, “If I told you them all you would faint.”—but their purpose is to help and not hinder us in becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious in our practical day-to-day life. A person who follows Ekādaśī should find himself becoming light and free, not heavy with worry.

Śrīla Prabhupāda explained that Ekādaśī means “the eleventh” and it refers to the eleventh day of both the waxing and the waning moon. So Ekādaśī falls twice a month. Just as certain places have a special atmosphere conducive for our purification and spiritual advancement, so do certain phases of time. The Ekādaśī day is spiritually surcharged with devotional energy.

There are many side benefits from observing Ekādaśī, such as good health (regular fasting allows our digestive organs to rest) and economy (if everyone followed Ekādaśī, imagine how much food would be saved). But by far the main purpose of following Ekādaśī is to help us awaken our love for Kṛṣṇa. Prabhupāda taught that following Ekādaśī means minimizing the demands of the body and maximizing

our service to Kṛṣṇa. On Ekādaśī we should eat more simply and try to put into practice the maxim “Eat to live, not live to eat.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda advised that on Ekādaśī we increase our chanting of the holy names—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. To a disciple who asked, “Should we chant twenty-five rounds on Ekādaśī?” Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, “Why only twenty-five rounds? You should chant as many as possible.”

Lord Caitanya asked His mother (and, through her, His other followers) to fast from grains on Ekādaśī.

Apart from taking more energy to digest, on Ekādaśī grains are said to be affected by universal sinful reactions. Ekādaśī is an extremely auspicious day, but anyone who eats grains on that day is unconsciously implicated in those reactions.

Sometimes a person may forget that a day is Ekādaśī and only remember after he has already eaten some grain. If this happens to you, best to refrain at once from eating any more grains. Then observe your Ekādaśī fast the next day.

Once a year in the early summer there is a special Ekādaśī known as the *Pāṇḍava-nirjalā* Ekādaśī or *Bhīma* Ekādaśī. Back in the days of the Mahābhārata, five thousand years ago, Arjuna’s elder brother Bhīma had great difficulty fasting. (In those days everyone would fast completely from all food and water.) So he was given permission by the sage Vyāsadeva to observe the full Ekādaśī fast only once a year. In the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement many devotees are accustomed to following this Bhīma Ekādaśī, refraining from all food and water, to compensate for any discrepancies in their observance of the previous twenty-three Ekādaśī days.

Ekadasi
the day dear to
Lord Krishna

As fire can immediately
burn a great pile of
cotton, so even just one
Ekadasi can burn the
great Mount Meru of
sins accumulated over
one hundred births.
(Vedic Scripture -
Garga Samhita 8.44)

Some devotees choose to fast from food, water, and sleep as a regular austerity. They stay up all night, usually with some friends (it's hard to do this alone), and chant, sing, and read together. If you ever decide to do this, or to fast even from water (nirjala), there's a very healthful method of breaking your fast. Drink a glass or so of water with lemon juice, some black pepper, and a pinch of salt. Then before you eat anything, let a couple of hours go by.

Everyone has a different constitution, and for some people fasting even from water can be too much of a strain on health. Śrīla Prabhupāda once told a disciple that in order of importance first comes health, then our sādhana (spiritual practices), and then our service to help give Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others. This is not to imply that health is more important than chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa! The idea is that without some form of good health it's difficult to do anything. In fact,

Prabhupāda instructed that if by fasting on Ekādaśī a devotee feels too weak to do his devotional service, it's better for him/her to eat. He himself used to like to eat banana chips, amongst other things, as his "Ekādaśī food." In our ISKCON temples the cooks sometimes prepare a feast on Ekādaśī, using such ingredients as potato and buckwheat to make preparations that resemble their grain-based counterparts.

Whatever way you decide to observe Ekādaśī, it's best to mentally prepare yourself the day before by planning what you intend to do. Try to make it a day in which you break your regular pattern of life and increase your spiritually oriented activities. Ekādaśī is also a good time to reflect on your spiritual progress in general. Good luck! 🌸

Rohiṇīmandana Dāsa lives in southern England.

Gold Nugget!

PREPARING FOR OUR NEXT LIFE

Excerpt from a lecture on Bhagavad-gita As It Is, 3.17-20, in New York, May 27, 1966, given by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivendanta Swami Prabhupada's, Founder-Acarya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

I mean, the technique of death. At the time of death, whatever you are thinking, that means you are preparing your next life like that. Therefore, the whole life shall be so processed but at the same time, at the end of our life we can at least think of Kṛṣṇa. Then sure and certain you go back to Kṛṣṇa. This practice has to be done. Because unless we practice while we are strong, and stout and our consciousness in right thinking [we will not remember Kṛṣṇa when we are old and dying]. So instead of wasting time in so many things for sense gratification, if we go on concentrating on Kṛṣṇa consciousness, that means we are making a solution of all the miseries of our material existence. That is the process, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, always thinking of Kṛṣṇa.

Therefore, Kṛṣṇa comes, and He presents Himself just like ordinary man acting. Why? Just like here in the Bhagavad-gita Kṛṣṇa is present in the battlefield of Kuruksetra. Oh, He had no necessity of presenting Himself in the battlefield of Kuruksetra. But it is for us because we are very much anxious to know where battle is going on, where fighting is going on, where detective is working, where murder is committed. All these literatures attract us very much. Stories and literatures, all these things, they attract very much. In a bookshop you go, if you ask them, "Supply me one copy of Bhagavad-gita," he will have to find out. But if you ask a bookseller, "Give me some novels," oh, he will present so many things. Because our inclination is like that. We are always anxious to learn these mundane affairs. We have no taste for spiritual upliftment. That taste we have lost.

That is the stage of our present existence—forgetfulness. We do not know how our taste should be created, how our taste should be converted from material to spiritual. That we do not know. Therefore, Lord is so kind, Kṛṣṇa, that He creates a battlefield for you so that you may be anxious to know, "Who is fighting with whom? Who is fighting with whom." Because we are always very much anxious to learn stories. 🌸

Book Distribution Stories!

A HATHA YOGI WHO UNDERSTANDS THAT THE GOAL IS BHAKTI —By Shastra-krit Dasa

We saw a yogi-type looking girl walking past our book table, so I called out, “Have you tried any yoga and meditation?” She was super favorable and said, “Yes, I’m doing a yoga teacher-training course right now, and as part of my course I’m reading the Bhagavad-gita.”

Many times, people say that they are reading or own a Gita, but it is translated by some mayavadi [impersonalist], so I didn’t take her seriously.

I asked, pointing to Prabhupada’s translation, “Do you have this edition?”

To my surprise she said yes! She pulled out the copy from her bag to show me, and it was looking worn out from her reading.

She said that she is the only one reading the Gita As It Is in her class, and, to her disappointment, they never talk about pure bhakti as the goal of asanas.

She is halfway through the book and loves reading Prabhupada’s commentaries.

She was eager for more books and wondering where to find the devotees.

She gladly took two more books and gave a nice donation. When I thanked her profusely for the donation, she began to recount an event two years prior.

She was minding her business, walking in Bloomington, Indiana, when someone handed her the Gita. She didn’t give anything to that person.

Every time she was reading the book, she was desiring to give a contribution somehow. It so happened that on this day I wasn’t getting many donations, and with her contribution all the cost of all the books given out that day were covered.

We exchanged information. I gave her beads and showed her how to chant. She was moved by our meeting, promised to start chanting, and wanted to visit us to do some kirtan soon. 🌸



DREAMING OF QUEEN KUNTI —By Lila-Madhava Dasa

I was distributing on a sidewalk at an intersection in Barcelona, Spain. Every day I would try to stop the same young lady, but she would ignore me. One day I walked with her a few meters, pleading with her in a friendly way.

“Come on! Just take one book!” Pointing to the book *Teachings of Queen Kunti* I was holding, I said, “Here, please take the teachings of the queen!”

But to no avail; she wouldn’t stop.

However, the next day when I saw her she humbly approached me and asked, “Can I buy the *Teachings of Queen Kunti*?”

Surprised, I replied, “How did you know the name of the queen?”

I clearly remembered not having mentioned Queen Kunti’s name to her but saying only ‘Please take the teachings of the queen.’ But here she was, asking explicitly for the *Teachings of Queen Kunti*.

She replied, “Actually, I had a dream of this Queen Kunti last night. She told me, ‘Go buy my book from that man.’”

Queen Kunti ki jaya!

The young lady gave such a nice donation that I also handed her a Bhagavad-gita.

When she saw it, she exclaimed,

“The Bhagavad-gita! I can’t believe it! My boyfriend has been telling me about this book for a whole year!”

Then I showed her all the books I had. She gave even more laksmi [money] and ended up buying my entire selection.

Book distribution is mystical. 🌸

TEACHINGS OF QUEEN KUNTI



His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness



Calendar

JULY 2023

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

AUGUST 2023

- 20 Aug - Disappearance Day of Sri Raghunandan Thakura
- 20 Aug - Disappearance Day of Sri Vamsidasa Babaji
- 27 Aug - **Pavitropana Ekadashi**
- 28 Aug - Disappearance Day of Srila Rupa Goswami
- 28 Aug - Disappearance Day of Sri Gauridasa Pandita
- 31 Aug - **Appearance Day of Lord Balarama**

SEPTEMBER 2023

- 01 Sept - Second Month of Caturmasya Begins
- 01 Sept - Srila Prabhupada's Departure for the USA
- 07 Sept - **Sri Krsna Janmastami - Appearance of Lord Krishna**
- 08 Sept - **Appearance Day of Srila Prabhupada**
- 20 Sept - Srimati Sita Thakurani Appearance Day
- 23 Sept - **Radhastami : Appearance of Srimati Radharani**
- 26 Sept - **Parsva Ekadashi**
- 26 Sept - **Appearance of Sri Vamana Deva**
- 26 Sept - Appearance Day of Sri Jiva Goswami
- 27 Sept - Appearance Day of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura
- 28 Sept - Disappearance Day of Srila Haridasa Thakura
- 29 Sept - Acceptance of Sannyasa by Srila Prabhupada
- 30 Sept - Third Month of Caturmasya Begins

OCTOBER 2023

- 05 Oct - Srila Prabhupada's arrival in the USA
- 10 Oct - **Indira Ekadasi**
- 24 Oct - Ramacandra Vijayotsava
- 24 Oct - Appearance Day of Sri Madhvacharya
- 25 Oct - **Pasankusa Ekadashi**
- 26 Oct - Disappearance Day of Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami
- 26 Oct - Disappearance Day of Srila Raghunatha Bhatta Goswami
- 26 Oct - Disappearance Day of Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Goswami
- 28 Oct - Disappearance Day of Sri Murari Gupta
- 29 Oct - Fourth Month of Caturmasya Begins



ABOVE: Lord Kṛṣṇa (right) and Lord Balarama (left)

