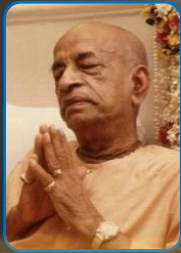


Freedom Newsletter



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

ISKCON Prison Ministry / AUGUST 2021

PO Box 2676
Alachua, FL 32616

THE NIGHT-AND-DAY DREAM

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

Student: In your books you say this world is like a dream.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. It is a dream.

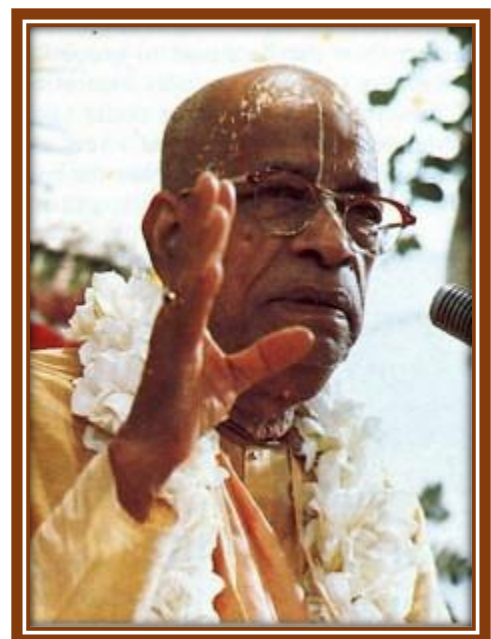
Student: How is it a dream?

Srila Prabhupada: For example, last night you had some dream, but now it has no value. It is gone. And again, tonight when you sleep, you'll forget all these things and dream. You won't remember, when you are dreaming tonight, "I've got my house; I've got my wife." You'll forget it all. So all of this is a dream.

Student: Is it true, or is it not true?

Srila Prabhupada: How could it be true? At night you forget it. Do you remember when you sleep that you've got your wife and you're sleeping on a bed? When you have gone some three thousand miles away and seen something totally different in your dream, do you remember that you've got a place to reside in?

Student: No.



Srila Prabhupada: So this is a dream. Tonight, what you are seeing *now* will become only a dream, just as what you saw last night—now you know it was only a dream. So both are dreams. You are simply a visitor, that’s all. You are seeing this dream and that dream. *You*, the spirit soul, *are factual*. But your material body and the material surroundings you are seeing—this is a dream.

Student: But I have the impression that this experience is true, and my dream is not true. What is the difference—

Srila Prabhupada: No. This experience is all untrue! How could it be true? If it were true, how could you forget it at night? How could you forget it if it were true? At night do you remember all this?

Student: No. I don’t remember.

Srila Prabhupada: Then—how could it be true? Just as you don’t remember the dream you saw last night and so you call it a “dream,” similarly this experience—because you forget it at night—this is also a dream....

Student: But I have the impress—

Srila Prabhupada:

This is a daydream; that is a night dream. That’s all. When you dream at night, then you perceive *that* as being real. Yes. You think that is real. It is a dream, but you are crying, “There is a tiger! Tiger!



Tiger!” Where is the tiger? But you are seeing it as fact—a tiger. “I’m being killed by a tiger.” But where is the tiger? ... Or you dream you are embracing some beautiful girl. Where is that beautiful girl? But actually it is happening.

Student: It is happening?

Srila Prabhupada: In one sense it is happening, because there is discharge of semen. Nocturnal emission. But where is that girl? Is it not a dream? But similarly, this so-called real-life experience is also a dream. You are getting the impression of factuality, but it is a dream. Therefore it is called *maya-sukhaya*, illusory happiness. Your nighttime happiness and your daytime happiness are the same thing. At night you are dreaming you are embracing a nice, beautiful girl, and there is no such thing. Similarly, in the daytime also, whatever “advancement” you are making—this is also like that. *Maya-sukhaya*: you are dreaming, “This process will make me

happy” or “That process will make me happy,” but the whole process is only a dream. You are taking this daydream as reality because the duration is long. At night when you dream, the duration is just half an hour. But this daydream lasts for twelve hours or more. That is the difference. This is a twelve-hour dream, and that is a half-hour dream—but actually both of them are dreams. Because one is a twelve-hour dream, you are accepting it as real. That is called illusion.

Student: Illusion.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes.... You are making a distinction between an animal and yourself, but you are forgetting that just as the animal will die, you will also die. So where is your advancement? Will you remain forever? You will also die. So where is your advancement over an animal? That is stated in the Vedic literatures. *Ahara-nidra-bhaya-maithunam ca/ samanam etat pasubhir naranam*: this business—eating, sleeping, sex life, and defending—this is also the animal’s business, and you are doing the same. So how are you distinct from an animal? You will die; the animal will die. But if you say, “I will die after one hundred years, and this ant will die after one hour,” that does not mean that you are in reality. It is a question of time. Or take this huge universe—it will all be destroyed. As your body will be destroyed, this universe will also be destroyed. Annihilation. Dissolution. Nature’s way—the whole thing will be dissolved. Therefore, it is a dream. It is a long-duration dream, that’s all. Nothing else. But the advantage of having this human body is that in this dream, you can realize the reality—God. That is the advantage. So if you don’t take advantage of this dream, then you are missing everything.

Student: So I’m half-asleep?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. This is the situation.

Therefore, the Vedic literatures say, *uttistha*: “Get up! Get up! Get up!” *Jagrata*: “Become awakened!”

Prapya varan nibodhata: “Now you’ve got the opportunity, utilize it.” *Tamasi ma jyotir gama*: “Don’t stay in darkness, come to the light.” These are Vedic

injunctions. And we are teaching the same thing.

“Reality is here—Krsna. Don’t remain in this dark place. Come to this higher consciousness.” 🌸



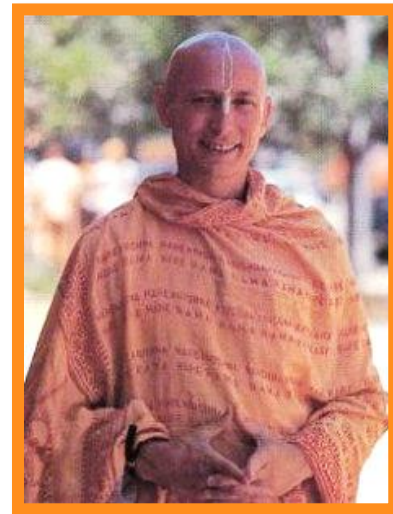
HOW I FOUND A REAL YOGA TEACHER

—After thirteen years with a “Yoga Cheater”

By Amal Bhakta Dasa (now Swami)

The path from the hatha-yoga ashram to the Radha-Krishna temple is a well-worn one. Many people who are now ISKCON devotees had in the past performed various stretchings, contortions, breathing exercises, headstands, and silent meditations before they learned of the higher yoga of Krishna consciousness. But Amala-bhakta’s case is extraordinary: not only was he an expert hatha-yogi when he came to the Los Angeles temple in February of 1976, but he was also in the most respected order of spiritual life (sannyasa), and he had been running a major yoga center in New York for almost thirteen years. Here is his account of why he took up hatha-yoga and then left it and his teacher for Krishna consciousness.

In 1957 my life was pretty much up in the air. I had dropped out of New York University at twenty-five and had gone to Los Angeles to “find myself.” I was working at odd jobs and reading a lot of philosophy when, in July of that year, I began to read a book on yoga. This book set off a volcanic eruption in my life. I suddenly realized very starkly, very pointedly that all of us fear death. We may not know we fear death, but our every step, our every glance, our every gesture, our every word betrays this fear. And I realized that I certainly feared death. I also saw that no one, myself included, was really happy, and that I could achieve happiness only by giving myself to God and His work, in other words, by realizing Him. I felt that since God is eternal and transcendental to the world’s miseries, I could conquer fear and gain happiness by becoming God conscious. With this idea burning in my mind, I hitchhiked back to my parents’ country home in New Jersey and started practicing hatha-yoga and meditation. But soon it became clear that I needed some personal instruction. One day, after some searching, I stopped into a book shop in downtown Manhattan and saw an ad for a yoga teacher. Soon I began studying under him. My teacher showed me hatha-yoga, which included a lot of stretching and bending exercises, and also breath control and meditation. He didn’t instruct me in bhakti-yoga, the yoga of devotion to God. But before coming to him I had read about some of the techniques of bhakti-yoga, and I had felt impressed and charmed by them. Since my basic desire was to realize God,



meditation on God’s form, or on His holy names, appealed to me more than meditation on silence or light, which was what my teacher showed me. So I began incorporating some of the bhakti techniques into my own program.

In 1963, after five years in the United States, my teacher went back to India. At that time he asked me to take charge of the yoga ashram he had begun in a Manhattan hotel. The same classes I had been studying in I was now teaching. Now it was my responsibility to carry on my teacher’s lecture program and classes in hatha-yoga and meditation, and to talk with people who felt they wanted guidance.

During the first few years I headed the ashram, I gradually added more of the devotional practices of bhakti-yoga. I considered them enjoyable and effortless ways to concentrate the mind. Then, in 1967, I started noticing the Hare Krishna devotees on Fifth Avenue. (Srla Prabhupada had founded the International Society for Krishna

Consciousness a year earlier on Manhattan's Lower East Side.) The place where they chanted every day was close to my ashram. And although I looked upon them as an odd bunch and thought

they were too far-out to succeed in the West, I was nonetheless fascinated by their cymbal and drum playing and chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra. So I thought the best thing to do would be simply to adopt some of ISKCON's

practices in my own program and see if I could interest my own students in devotional yoga. I began giving over a portion of each evening from about 7:00 to 9:30 to congregational chanting of God's holy names. At that

time I was also deeply immersed in editing an English translation of the Ramayana (the story of Lord Ramacandra, an incarnation of God who lived millions of years ago). I was becoming enraptured by the pastimes of Lord Rama and His consort, Sita. So, in imitation of the Hare Krishna devotees I had seen on Fifth Avenue, I would chant "Sita-Rama, Sita-Rama ..." several times, my students would answer, and we would go on like that for some time, in call-and-response fashion. Also, on Sunday nights, I would read to my students from an abridged version of the Ramayana. Some time previously I had also read the story of Krishna, and I knew that He and Rama were actually the same Divine Person. So another thing I did to increase my devotion was to mount beautiful posters of Krishna and Rama on the walls of the classroom where I taught hatha-yoga.

Unfortunately, my teacher had not taught me how to devote myself to a personal God. He wasn't a bhakta, a devotee; basically he was an impersonalist. He neither wrote, talked, nor acted in the mood of a devotee. Rather, he acted like a cool businessman. So I began feeling more and

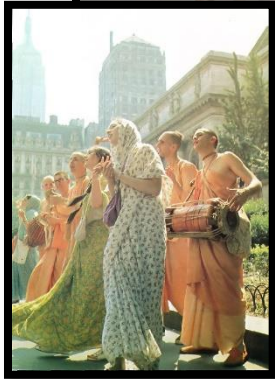
more that the devotion I had cultivated by reading Lord Ramacandra's pastimes and chanting His holy names needed a new outlet.

Then, in June of 1975, someone sent me a *Back to Godhead* magazine. I carefully read an article by Srila Prabhupada, entitled "What is a Guru?" After studying the Vedic principles Srila Prabhupada revealed there, I concluded that my teacher was a cheater, a charlatan he was exploiting gullible seekers, squeezing money out of them under the pretense of spirituality. I further understood that Srila Prabhupada was not using such deceitful

methods. He was giving the Vedic philosophy straight, speaking boldly yet compassionately, without caring what anyone thought. Srila Prabhupada was trusting completely that the Lord's mercy would sustain the big projects he had started. He was sincere, and he was attracting the sincere.

Just after I read that *Back to Godhead*, something happened that quickened my coming to Krishna consciousness. One day a man came to me for a consultation. He was contemplating suicide. (He was out of money and out of work and had about six kids to take care of.) He had known of my fifteen-dollar-for-fifteen-minutes consultation fee, a policy set up by my teacher, but he had been too embarrassed to ask for a "pay later" appointment. Finally, after two weeks, he had been able to scrape up the money. When I saw him he cried like a baby for a long time. Finally, he told me how desperate he was to talk to me because he considered me his spiritual advisor. He said that if he had had to wait another day, he just might have finished himself off. I then told him that from then on, he could see me whether he could pay or not. I decided this was simply what I had to do. I no longer cared about the rules or the regulations or the principles or the policies.

This incident really stung my conscience. I realized that this consultation-fee policy could have killed a man! And I also thought, "How can I inspire this man to love God if my love for him is conditional?" I knew beyond a doubt that I could



not produce a change in his heart unless I gave freely of my understanding and knowledge. At the same time, I was well aware that the Krishna devotees would never think of charging anything for consultation and guidance. The contrast with my own teacher's policy had a very powerful effect on me.

That wasn't my teacher's only shortcoming. For one thing, he would offer initiation only to people who could pay him \$191.00. You didn't have to take any vows, follow any principles, or serve him before initiation, nor did you have to serve him even afterward. The whole thing seemed like an assembly line: it took just five or ten minutes to turn out each new disciple, and then my teacher would call the next candidate into his room.

On the other hand, the initiation that Srila Prabhupada gives is free, but generally one must serve faithfully for six months. At Srila Prabhupada's initiation ceremony the disciple vows to abstain from meat, fish, eggs, and intoxicants, as well as gambling and illicit sex. He also promises to chant sixteen rounds of japa (1,728 repetitions of the Hare Krishna mantra) each day. There is a beautiful fire ceremony, along with a lecture on the real meaning of initiation and the eternal obligations of the disciple toward the spiritual master.

Another thing that disturbed me was that whenever my teacher visited the United States, he would stay at a first-class Manhattan hotel. Once he stayed there for six months at seventeen hundred dollars a month, when he could have stayed at our ashram at no expense. On the other hand, I noted that Srila Prabhupada always stayed with his devotees at the temples. He wanted all available money to be used for educating people in the science of bhakti-yoga, which would alleviate their suffering.

Finally, for one thousand dollars my teacher would sell a "mystic amulet" to disciples who lived outside our ashram. He claimed they could "get more benediction and protection from God" if they wore this amulet. In other words, the name of God that they had received through initiation wasn't powerful enough the amulet had a little something extra going for it! God's name needed help from an amulet? This was totally illogical to me.

Srila Prabhupada, however, emphasized that if you sincerely chanted the holy names and steadily performed devotional service, that was all you

needed to receive the mercy of God. Srila Prabhupada did not deprecate God's name by saying that some cheap charm could enhance its power.

So all these contrasts had a huge effect upon my life. It became obvious that my so-called teacher was not really interested in spreading the science of yoga. Rather, he was interested in spreading out his pocket, filling it up, and carrying away the cash.

Somehow, before 1976 I had never actually visited an ISKCON temple. (I had gathered all my information from some fellow disciples who would visit temples and report back to me.) By this time I had been in the sannyasa order, the senior order of spiritual life, for three years. Consequently, I had vowed to follow my teacher's instructions as if they were God's, and I did not want to break my vow by visiting another yoga center. But as I watched my teacher's crookedness come to light, I began to think seriously of leaving.

Finally, I paid a visit to the New York Krishna temple, on 55th Street. I had a four-hour discussion with Kapindra dasa, the receptionist, and after talking with him I no longer had any question in my mind: I would leave my cheating "guru" and take up Krishna consciousness. So, at four the next morning I packed a couple of bags and left the quarters of the yoga society I had been part of for eighteen years. Glad to be out of this intolerably depressing environment, I checked into a hotel near the New York temple.

That night I attended the arati ceremony, in which the devotees lavishly worship the Deities of Radha and Krishna. What a beautiful experience! As I watched the devotees singing and dancing for the Deities, I felt enthralled.

The next day I attended the morning program, which began with an arati at 4:30 a.m. and continued with an inspiring talk by Hridayananda Gosvami. The wealth of Vedic philosophy he expounded greatly impressed me and cleared up any lingering doubts I might have had that Krishna consciousness was really what I wanted. The next day I left for Los Angeles to visit my mother, who had moved there from New York. And two days later I moved into the Los Angeles Radha-Krishna temple.

As the weeks flew by, I discovered the world of Krishna consciousness especially in Srila Prabhupada's books. It was then that the full magnitude of my former teacher's cheating became clear to me. This so-called "guru" had taught that everyone was God, though each of us had "forgotten" his divinity. Supposedly, when our impurities dissolved we would regain our true, divine position. As he had explained it, God realization meant realizing "I am God" and merging with the "infinite light."

Now, in view of what I had learned from reading Srila Prabhupada's books, nothing seemed more absurd than the idea that the Absolute Truth who controls the entire universe could become deluded and forget His divinity. Had God forgotten His divinity just to undergo the pain of birth and death? Could He be fond of suffering? No, the whole idea that the individual soul and God are identical was patently ridiculous.

Actually, the living entity is an infinitesimal particle of spirit. As such, he is never equal to God, the Supreme Spirit. So to equate the living entity with God is nonsense; it's just a disguised form of atheism. The real reason why someone poses himself as God is so that he won't have to worship anyone but himself. This is generally what people like, especially in the present degraded age of Kali. People don't want to serve God; they want to be God. They want to be served, adored, and glorified like my teacher in that lavish hotel suite.

But the whole idea is absurd. The part can never be equal to the whole, any more than the hand can be equal to the entire body. Nor can we enjoy like the Lord although we try to, and this is our downfall. Our real enjoyment is to give enjoyment to the Lord, just as the hand's enjoyment is to give enjoyment to the whole body.



ABOVE: Amal Bhakta Swami, now in his eighties, still lives in Los Angeles, and is still fully engaged in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness.

Suppose your hand had a will of its own, and that it tried to directly enjoy your food instead of placing it in your mouth and letting it go to your stomach. Could the hand enjoy the food that way? No, of course not, and if it persisted it would simply wither away from lack of nourishment. Similarly, people today are withering away from a lack of spiritual pleasure because instead of giving whatever they have to God, they're trying to hoard it for themselves.

How different Krishna consciousness is. I am now directly experiencing that the more I serve Krishna through Srila Prabhupada, the more blissful I become. Every day I'm learning more about my personal relationship with Krishna. (That's what makes the relationship with Him so beautiful' it's personal.) I'm reading about Krishna every day, and the more I learn about the way Krishna looks and talks and acts, the more I realize that serving Krishna is infinitely more pleasurable than the best of this world's pleasures. Everything here is

limited and temporary, but our relationship with Krishna is eternal and full of bliss and knowledge. We have to realize that our relationship with Krishna is the only thing that will last, and that hearing about Him, chanting about Him, remembering Him, serving Him, worshipping Him, offering prayers to Him, carrying out His orders, establishing friendship with Him, and surrendering everything to Him are the only activities that can make our lives full.

Now my goal is to serve Srila Prabhupada purely realizing that the little drop of gratitude I offer him can never compared with the ocean of mercy he has given me. May I always remember how fortunate he has made me, and more, may I always remember to tell other people about Krishna, so that they may one day become just as fortunate. 🌸

Amal Bhakta Swami has wonderfully narrated most of Prabhupada's books (including Bhagavad-gita, Srimad-Bhagavatam and Caitanya-caritāmṛta). These narrations are available in MP3 CDs and USB drives. He is also the author of many books.

WHO IS LORD BALARAMA? (Pronounced ba-la-ram)

During Krishna's pastimes on earth, Balarama was present as His elder brother.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, is the fountainhead of all incarnations. Lord Balarama is His second body. They are both one and the same identity. They differ only in form. Balarama is the first bodily expansion of Krishna, and He assists in Lord Krishna's transcendental pastimes. He is the source of the entire spiritual world and is the adi-guru, the original spiritual master.

He assumes five other forms to serve Lord Krishna. He Himself helps in the pastimes of Lord Krishna, and He does the work of creation in four other forms called the *catur-vyuha* (four-armed) forms known as Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Anirudha. He executes the orders of Lord Krishna in the work of creation, and in the form of Lord Sesa He serves Sri Krishna in various ways. In all the forms He tastes the transcendental bliss of serving Krishna. No one can approach Krishna without first getting the mercy of Baladeva (another name of Balarama, pronounced ba-la-dev).

Whenever Krishna appears in the material world, He is accompanied by His associates and paraphernalia. Balarama appeared first. When Baladeva appeared as the seventh child in the womb of Devaki, she could understand that this was a divine child, and this made her all the more concerned about His safety. At this time Krishna instructed Yogamaya, His internal potency, to transfer the unborn child from the womb of Devaki to that of Rohini, one of the other wives of Vasudeva, who was hiding from Kamsa in the house of Nanda Maharaja in Gokula. In this way Balarama was born in Gokula, under the protection of Nanda Maharaja.

The form of Lord Balarama

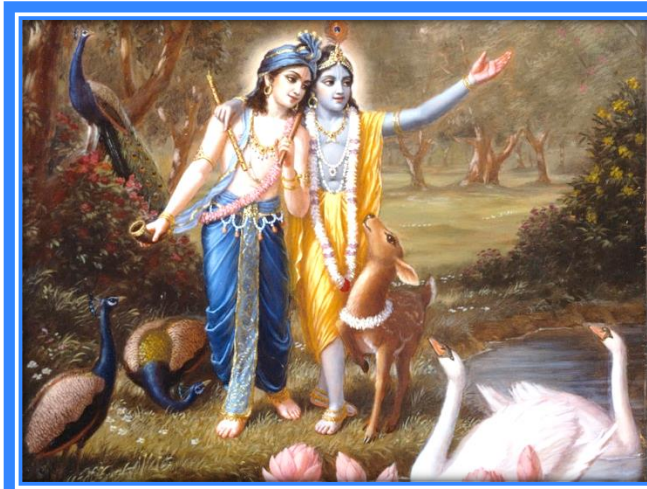
Powerful Lord Balarama is sixteen years old, full of the luster of youth and has a fair complexion the color of crystal. He wears blue garments and a garland of forest flowers. His handsome hair is tied in a graceful topknot. Splendid earrings adorn His ears, and His neck is

splendidly decorated with garlands of flowers and strings of jewels. Splendid armlets and bracelets ornament Balarama's graceful and very strong arms and His feet are decorated with splendid, jeweled anklets. Lord Balarama's beauty is enhanced by the earrings

touching His cheeks. His face is decorated with tilaka made from musk, and His broad chest is ornamented with a garland of gunja. Balarama's voice is very grave, and His arms are very long, touching His thighs.

The splendor of Lord Balarama's transcendental form eclipses many millions of glistening rising moons, and the slightest scent of His boundless strength is sufficient to destroy many armies of demons. Although He knows the supernatural power of His younger

brother, Krishna, still, out of love for Him, He never leaves Krishna alone in the forest even for a moment. Balarama is Sri Krishna's dearest friend and is a great reservoir of the nectar mellows of many kinds of transcendental pastimes.



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

SOME OF LORD BALARAMA'S PASTIMES

Balarama slays Dhenukasura

Dhenukasura was a powerful demon who had assumed the form of an ass. With his demon friends he was occupying Talavana, one of the twelve forests of Vrindavana. Out of fear of these demons no one could approach Talavana and enjoy the numerous flowers and fruits in the forest. Balarama, induced by His cowherd friends, entered the forest desiring to kill the demons. He began shaking the fruit trees, making a big noise. Dhenuka, furious at the intrusion, attacked Balarama with his rear legs, but Balarama easily picked him up by his legs and whirled him around until he died. As the other demon friends of Dhenuka rushed to attack, Krishna and Balarama picked them up and threw them on trees, killing them. Soon the forest was free of all demons, and it appeared that the bent trees were being directed by Balarama to pay obeisances to Krishna.

Balarama kills Pralambasura

Once when Krishna and Balarama were playing with the cowherd boys, a demon named Pralamba entered their midst, disguised as a cowherd boy.



Understanding the invincible potency of Krishna, he instead decided to abduct Balarama. At the end of the game, as the losing party he was supposed to carry Balarama on his shoulders. Carrying the Lord on his shoulders he ran swiftly, but Balarama realizing the true identity of demon began to

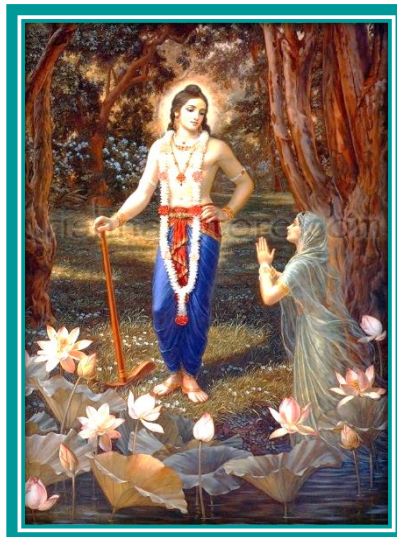
make himself heavier and heavier. Unable to bear the weight, the demon assumed his original form, which was like a huge dark effulgent cloud, decorated with golden ornaments. Balarama then brought His fist down the head of the demon splitting it into two and causing him to give up his life.

Balarama glorified by Krishna

As the elder brother of Krishna, Balarama was the object of His love and respect. Once when walking in the forest of Vrindavana, Krishna observed the trees bending down as if paying obeisances. He glorified the lotus feet of Balarama as being the object of devotion even for the demigods. He said that the trees, which were impersonalists in previous lifetimes, witnessing the personal form of Balarama were now praying for His devotion. At other times when Balarama would get tired by playing, He would lie down the lap of one of the cowherd boys and Krishna would personally massage His feet, fan Him and give Him service. Such was the sweet reciprocation of love between Krishna and Balarama.

Yamuna Devi chastised

Once Lord Balarama (at the time living in Dwarka) came back to Vrindavana for two months. He enjoyed pastimes with His gopi friends (different from Krishna's gopis). Enjoying such pastimes



on the bank of Yamuna, He summoned the river Yamuna so that He could sport in her waters. When Yamuna Devi did not respond, Lord Balarama took His plow and began to drag Yamuna in a hundred streams. Understanding the position of Balarama, Yamuna devi personally appeared and offered her obeisances to the Lord with many prayers in His glorification. Thus appeased, the Lord entered and bathed in the waters of the river.

The Kauravas chastised

Samba, the darling son of Jambavati and Krishna, kidnapped Laksmana the daughter of Duryodhana from the assembly where she was supposed to choose her husband. The furious Kauravas after a prolonged fight, finally arrested Samba by sending in six of their greatest warriors. When the Yadavas heard of this they prepared for battle, but Lord Balarama pacified them, preferring to find a peaceful solution. However when He requested the Kauravas to return Samba and Laksmana, the Kauravas responded by insulting Him and the Yadava dynasty. Understanding them to be ignorant in their false prestige, Balarama took His plow and began to drag Hastinapura into the Ganges. The terrified Kauravas now surrendered to the lotus feet of Balarama, begging for His mercy. They immediately returned Samba and Laksmana and had them married ceremoniously with many opulent gifts.

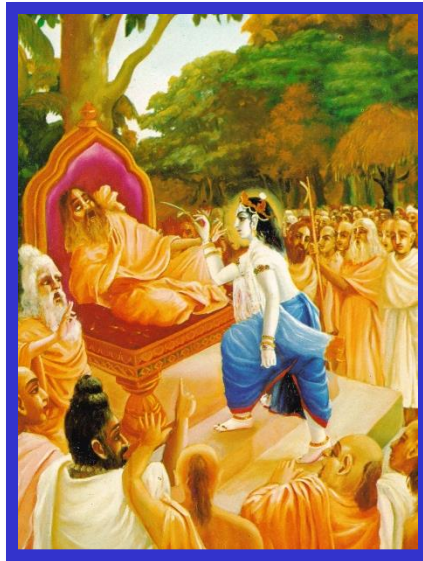
Balarama in the Mahabharata

In general Balarama was equally affectionate to both the Pandavas and the Kauravas. He accepted both Duryodhana and Bhima as His disciples in the art of mace-war. As a teacher He appreciated the superior technique of Duryodhana as opposed to the raw strength of Bhima. At the time of Mahabharata, He refused to take sides and instead went on an extended pilgrimage to the holy places

Killing of Romaharshana

Towards the end of Dvapara yuga, thousands of sages assembled on the banks of Naimyasharana to perform a thousand-year yajna in an effort to reverse the onset of Kali yuga. They appointed as their leader Romaharshana, one of the main disciples of Vyasadeva, who was also present when Sukadeva Goswami had narrated Srimad-Bhagavatam to King Parikshit. When Lord Balarama entered the assembly, understanding Him to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead, all who were present rose to offer Him respect.

However Romaharshana, proud at occupying the position of the leader did not get up. Lord Balarama could understand that even though Romaharshana was an expert Vedantist, he had not yet realized these teachings. Considering him unqualified to lead the ceremony, Balarama killed him simply by touching him with a blade of grass. He then



instituted Suta Goswami, the son of Romaharshana, as the leader of the assembly and continued with His pilgrimage.

Mercy of Lord Balarama

Lord Balarama exemplifies the service attitude to Krishna. His only mission is to please Krishna by rendering service to Him, whether it is in the creation of the material worlds, maintaining the spiritual world or as His personal paraphernalia. Lord Balarama is the eternal companion of Sri Krishna. He came as Lakshmana with Rama, and later as Nityananda Prabhu with Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He is the original spiritual master, and anyone desiring to make spiritual progress must first get the mercy of Lord Balarama.

Excerpts from inmates' letters

Reading the Srimad-Bhagavatam and studying it has opened up to me a whole new level of understanding Kṛṣṇa, not merely on an intellectual level but on a deeper spiritual level. I want to thank you so much for sending it here. As of right now I am on chapter fifteen of the fifth Canto. One of my favorite chapters is in the fourth Canto "Chanting the Song Sung by Lord Shiva" to Kṛṣṇa. I am working on memorizing the whole prayer so that I can chant it. That prayer is so beautiful and uplifting. I am amazed at the boundless knowledge and wisdom of His Divine Grace Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. The way that he explains the different individual verses in his purports is so nice and allows me to gain a thorough understanding. Sometimes, while reading the Srimad-Bhagavatam, I find myself crying and sitting teary-eyed due to the beautifulness of its message. I know that makes me sound soft and corny (which is a feeling I'm not used to at all) but it also makes me feel good inside. Right now I'm so thankful that Kṛṣṇa has given me the opportunity to indemnify my past sins and learn His word so that I can teach others.

I also love reading the Back to Godhead magazines, and I love sharing them with others.

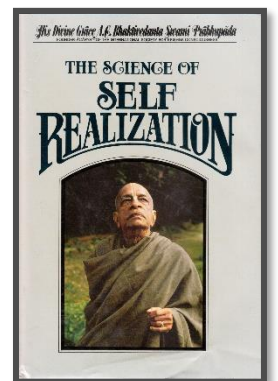
Dale D. —Oglethorpe, Georgia

I'm in a bad place right now. Officials have made me a target, they don't expect me to be alive a year from now. They believe that I am prey, encouraging others to harm me but there is no one I can complain to for this compound is known for its brutality and for covering

incidents. All I may do is make myself small and hopefully they miss me. I know I brought this Karma upon myself, and I want out of this entanglement so I will study heavy duty and obey all regulations required by Vedic and Prabhupada's teachings for Kṛṣṇa will defend me against these cruel people and Kṛṣṇa will turn this hardship into a lesson in spiritual advancement.

H.C. —Live Oak, Florida

I have currently been in a material prison for going on four years now. From the beginning I have chosen to treat prison as an ashram and a time for deep, constant study, meditation and contemplation of the self and my relationship to the Supreme Lord. By the divine grace of Bhaktivedanta, his book, *The Science of Self-Realization* came into my hands, along with the *Bhagavad-Gita As It Is* and wow, my life has been forever changed. ISKCON Prison Ministry sent me a few older editions of Back to Godhead magazines and I LOVE THEM.



Jeffery S. —Fredonia, Kentucky

As of this writing I still do not know where I will reside [after I am released], but, to the best of my ability, I will maintain communication with my devotee pen pal

and continue firm in my devotion to Sri Sri Radha-Kṛṣṇa and chanting the Maha Mantra. Please accept my most sincere appreciation for the many books which I have received, especially *Bhagavad-Gita* and *Mahabharata*. I also especially enjoyed *Teachings of Lord Kapila*. These words of Vedic wisdom have taught me much and changed my life. Other prisoners, especially those who have known me the longest, have stated more than once that I am such a changed person

as to no longer resemble the me who first walked through those gates in 2009.

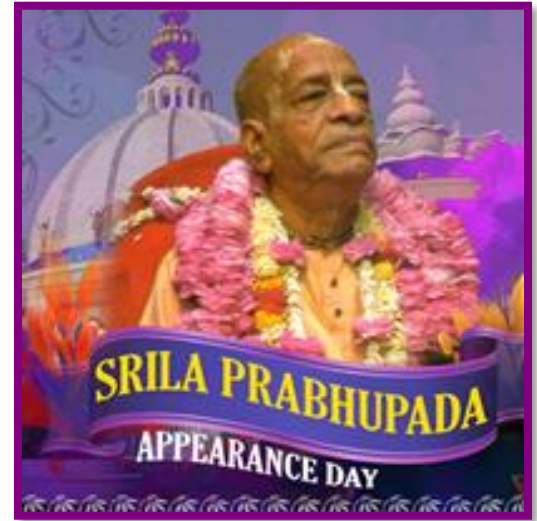
I have learned, through the words of Bhagavad-Gita and other books, that I have been blessed beyond measure. Any and all material possessions, friends, family, respect, and all other things associated with this material world are hindrances to Bhakti yoga. All my past hindrances have been removed. All I now have is my devotion to Krishna.

Troy P. —Huttonsville, West Virginia

Calendar

AUGUST 2021

- 01 Aug 2021 - Disappearance Day of Srila Lokanatha Goswami
- 02 Aug 2021 - The Incorporation of ISKCON in New York
- 04 Aug 2021 - **Kamika Ekadashi**
- 12 Aug 2021 - Disappearance Day of Sri Raghunandan Thakura
- 12 Aug 2021 - Disappearance Day of Sri Vamsidasa Babaji
- 18 Aug 2021 - **Pavitropana Ekadashi**
- 18 Aug 2021 - Radha Govinda Jhulan Yatra Begins
- 19 Aug 2021 - Disappearance Day of Srila Rupa Goswami
- 19 Aug 2021 - Disappearance Day of Sri Gauridasa Pandita
- 22 Aug 2021 - Jhulan Yatra Ends
- 22 Aug 2021 - **Appearance Day of Lord Balarama**
- 23 Aug 2021 - Second Month of Caturmasya Begins
- 23 Aug 2021 - Srila Prabhupada's Departure for the USA
- 30 Aug 2021 - **Sri Krsna Janmastami**
- 31 Aug 2021 - Nandotsava
- 31 Aug 2021 - **Appearance Day of Srila Prabhupada**



SEPTEMBER 2021

- 03 Sept 2021 - **Annada Ekadashi**
- 11 Sept 2021 - Srimati Sita Thakurani Appearance Day
- 12 Sept 2021 - Lalita Sasti : Appearance of Sri Lalita Devi
- 14 Sept 2021 - **Radhastami : Appearance of Srimati Radharani**
- 17 Sept 2021 - **Parsva Ekadashi**
- 18 Sept 2021 - **Sri Vamana Dvadashi : Appearance of Sri Vamana Deva**
- 18 Sept 2021 - Appearance Day of Sri Jiva Goswami
- 19 Sept 2021 - Appearance Day of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura
- 20 Sept 2021 - Ananta Caturdasi Vrata : Appearance Day of Padmanabha
- 20 Sept 2021 - Disappearance Day of Srila Haridasa Thakura
- 21 Sept 2021 - Sri Visvarupa Mahotsava
- 21 Sept 2021 - Acceptance of Sannyasa by Srila Prabhupada
- 22 Sept 2021 - Third Month of Caturmasya Begins
- 28 Sept 2021 - Srila Prabhupada's arrival in the USA

