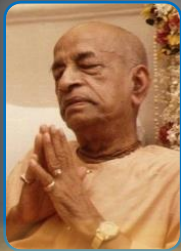


# Freedom Newsletter



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

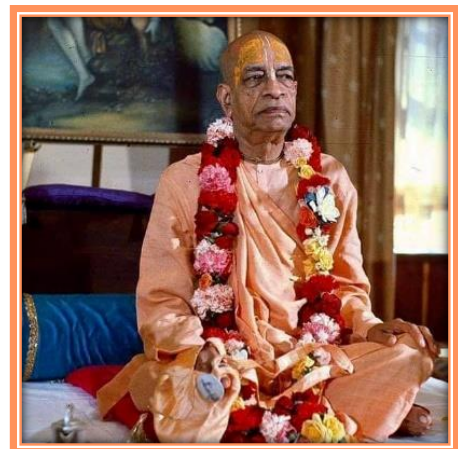
## ISKCON Prison Ministry / January 2024

PO Box 2676  
Alachua, FL 32616

### PLAIN LIVING, HIGH THINKING

*The following conversation between His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Kirtanananda Swami, and Kulasekhara dasa took place in New Vrindaban, West Virginia, in June of 1976.*

**Srila Prabhupada:** The Western civilization is a nasty civilization, artificially increasing the necessities of life. For example, take the electric light. The electric light requires a generator, and to run the generator you need petroleum. As soon as the petroleum supply is stopped, everything will stop. But to get petroleum you have to painstakingly search it out and bore deep into the earth, sometimes in the middle of the ocean. This is *ugra-karma*, horrible work. The same purpose can be served by growing some castor seeds, pressing out the oil, and putting the oil into a pot with a wick. We admit that you have improved the lighting system with electricity, but to improve from the castor-oil lamp to the electric lamp you have to work very hard. You have to go to the middle of the ocean and drill and then draw out the petroleum, and in this way the real goal of your life is missed. You are in a precarious position, constantly dying and taking birth in various species of life. How to get free of this cycle of birth and death—*this* is your



problem. And this problem is meant to be solved in the human life. You have advanced intelligence for self-realization, but instead of using your advanced intelligence for self-realization, you are utilizing it to

improve from the castor-oil lamp to the electric lamp. That's all.

**Kulasekhara dasa:** People would say that your suggestion is impractical. Besides, electricity does many other things besides produce light. Most of our modern comforts



depend more or less on electricity.

**Srila Prabhupada:** In this life you may be living very comfortably, but in the next life you might become a dog.

**Kirtanananda Swami:** People don't believe that.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Whether they believe it or not, it is a fact. For example, a boy does not know that he is going to grow into a young man, but his mother and father know. If the boy says, "No, I'm not going to become a young man," that is childish. The father and mother know that the boy will grow into a young man and that they should educate him so he can be properly situated. This is the guardians' duty. Similarly, when we talk of transmigration of the soul, a rascal may say, "I don't believe in it," but it is still a fact. A rascal, a madman, may say transmigration is not a fact, but the real fact is that he'll have to accept another body according to the quality of his endeavor in this life. (*karanam guna-sango 'sya sad-asad-yoni-janmasu*).

**Kirtanananda Swami:** What if someone says, "This life of growing the castor seeds is very difficult, and farming in general is very difficult. It is easier to go to the factory for eight hours, come home with my money, and enjoy."

**Srila Prabhupada:** You may enjoy, but by enjoying you forget your real goal in life. Is that intelligent? You have been given the human body to improve your next life. Suppose you become a dog in your next life. Is that success? You must know the science of Krsna consciousness. Then, instead of becoming a dog, you will become like God.

**Kulasekhara Dasa:** Once, at John Lennon's estate in London, you said that the tractor is the cause of so much of the trouble today. It took all the work from the young men and forced them to go to the city for work, and they became entangled in sense gratification. I've noticed that life in the country is simpler, more peaceful. It's easier to think of spiritual life.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Yes. The country is less disturbing, less taxing on the brain. Just work a little for your food,

and the rest of the time engage yourself in Krsna consciousness. This is ideal life.

[*Srila Prabhupada holds up a flower.*] See the minute fibers in this flower. Can anyone manufacture this in a factory—such small fibers? And how brilliant the color is! If you study only one flower, you become God conscious. There is a machine that you call "nature," and from this machine everything is coming. But who has built this machine?

**Kulasekhara Dasa:** In London you said people don't know that the flowers are painted by Krsna—with thought.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Yes. Do you think that without an artist the flowers can come out so beautiful? This is foolish. What is nature? It is Krsna's machine. Everything is being done by the machine of Krsna. So improve your mode of living at New Vrindaban. Live in an open place, produce your own food grains, produce your own milk, save time, chant Hare Krsna. Plain living, high thinking: ideal life. But if you increase the artificial necessities of your life—your so-called comforts—and forget your real work of Krsna consciousness, that is suicidal. We want to stop this suicidal policy. Of course, we don't insist that people



stop the modern advancement of technology. We just present the simple formula given by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu: Chant Hare Krsna. Even in your technological factory you can chant. What is the difficulty? You can go on pushing the

buttons on your machine and simultaneously chant Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

**Kirtanananda Swami:** And if people take up the chanting, gradually they will give up the technology?

**Srila Prabhupada:** Of course.

**Kirtanananda Swami:** So you're sowing the seeds of their destruction.

**Srila Prabhupada:** No, not destruction; rather construction. The repetition of birth and death, the constant change of bodies—this is destruction. But by our method, you live forever—*tyaktva deham punar janma naiti*: you don't get another material body. But without Krsna consciousness, *tatha dehantara-praptih*: you have to accept another body, which means suffering. So, which is better? To accept material bodies, one after another, or to accept no more material bodies? If we finish our suffering with this body, that is intelligent, and if we create another body for further suffering, that is unintelligent. But unless you understand Krsna, you have to accept another body. There is no alternative. 🌸

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

## Book Distribution Stories!

### UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTER —by Geeta Dasi

Taha, born into the Muslim faith, was on his way to Liverpool train station (England) when visiting a shop led him to deviate from his planned route, leading to our unexpected encounter. Intrigued, Taha disclosed that, despite having numerous Hindu friends, he has yet to explore and grasp our scriptural teachings, and he also revealed his longstanding desire to read the *Bhagavad-gita* for personal learning and awareness. I briefly delved into the intricate teachings of the *Bhagavad-gita*. Taha found it fascinating that we worship a singular God, Krishna, the Supreme Lord, contrary to what he has been told about the existence of many gods.

I clarified this misconception by explaining that while there are numerous demigods, those pursuing spiritual salvation worship Lord Krishna, whereas those seeking material gains worship demigods. I further explained that devotees hold great respect for demigods, as they are manifestations of the Supreme Personality's energy; however, we don't worship them because the supreme authority behind the demigods is Lord Krishna.

As our conversation unfolded, I explained that the essence of human life is meant for being elevated to the highest platform of good character, controlling the senses and mind, and ultimately surrendering to the Lord.

In a fascinating turn of events, Taha shared he had authored a book titled "*Child*." It explores human

behaviors, relationships, and tendencies from an analytical standpoint. With plans to write the sequel, "*Adult*," he expressed a belief that the *Bhagavad-gita* will significantly contribute to his exploration of transformative wisdom, especially in understanding the intricacies of controlling the mind and elevating one's character and nature.

As Taha departed, he shared how he truly felt blessed for our destined meeting and was astounded by the fact that even the most minor deviations in our paths can orchestrate extraordinary chance encounters.

In the context of the misconceptions shared by Taha, our interaction endorses Srila Prabhupada's monumental dedication and aspiration

to ensure that the transcendental wisdom within his teachings is not only comprehended but also reaches the global population. Our meeting vividly illustrates how the knowledge derived from authentic scriptures can instantly reshape an individual's perception of Vedic philosophy. 🌸



Meet Sri Madhava Mahotsava Das, younger son of Rambhoru Mataji and Prithu Prabhu (ACBSP). Even if no one is there, he goes alone to Venice (LA) for two hours minimum and does Harinam alone. He has a speaker on his chest that plays on alternate days Srila Prabhupada's and Aindra Prabhu's kirtans, and he repeats along on a microphone. He gives mantra cards and small books and a playing instrument and encourages people to sing. He becomes blissful and says, "It's working, it's working" --Mahaprabhu's prophecy... yuga dharma!" He also gives toffees to children participating. 🌸



## Excerpts from inmates letters

I loved the book, “*A Place of Sandalwood and Roses*”! I really liked Govinda Dasi’s different perspective, and it was a delightful change from the more testosterone-tinged accounts. Helps fill out and balance the story, and I just wish it was longer. By the way, I read everything you send me. I would be a bigger fool than I already am and rather disrespectful to you if I didn’t.

**David B. —Danbury, Connecticut**

I’ve got several books my daughter has ordered for me, the *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, *Nectar of Devotion*, and *Krsna*. Since getting all of these, I’ve learned a lot about life; why I’m here, what happens after death, and who is God. I know that I have a lot more to learn, but I am determined. I am trying to eat vegetarian here, but the quality of food is low. There are also no other Krishna devotees here that I am aware of.

**Ron R. —Terre Haute, Indiana**

You listed items such as books and magazines you sent plus the DVD of the movie “*Hare Krishna!*” Since the letter, we have been going through Chaplains like changing socks! This present Chaplain is no better than most when it comes to religion and faith. We call the Chaplain and his workers the Church House Mafia. The Chaplain had a box of items and gave us the opportunity to rummage through it. Guess what was in the box? The DVD of the movie “*Hare Krishna!*”

I thought that the movie was great. Well done. The devotees who put the movie together know how to do it and do it well.

Everyone in our group of fifteen was completely captivated. Remember also, our group is of mixed faiths.



Because of Srila Prabhupada’s sacrifice, his action has found its way into a small cubicle at the Coffield Unit, in East Texas, and has profoundly shaken and brought life to this old fool. We never will understand fully of how our actions reverberate and affect other souls. Who could see at the early stage of ISKCON how far and wide the net of devotional love could be cast. And the net is still catching!

I am needing a Spanish *Gita* as well introductory material of Krishna Consciousness in Spanish.

Thank you and your staff for the movie and the support given to us. Your humble servant,

**Charles B. —Tennessee Colony, Texas**

I want to say thank you all for everything you sent to me. I am very grateful. I have been fighting this system for the things I need to study. This prison does not have a lot of things at all to offer me. I have been through a lot just to have the things I have now, which is not much. So am very thankful for everything you all sent me to continue my study in becoming more Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Thank you and I’ll continue to become a servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Thank you. Hare Kṛṣṇa .

**Eddie C. —Huttonsville, West Virginia**

I received two *Back to Godhead* magazines yesterday and read both, cover to cover. That’s usually how I am when BTG arrives; non-stop reading. Also, I am very much interested

in reading the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. I have only read what’s in the BTG; after 20 years being involved with ISKCON, I’m far overdue to read it.

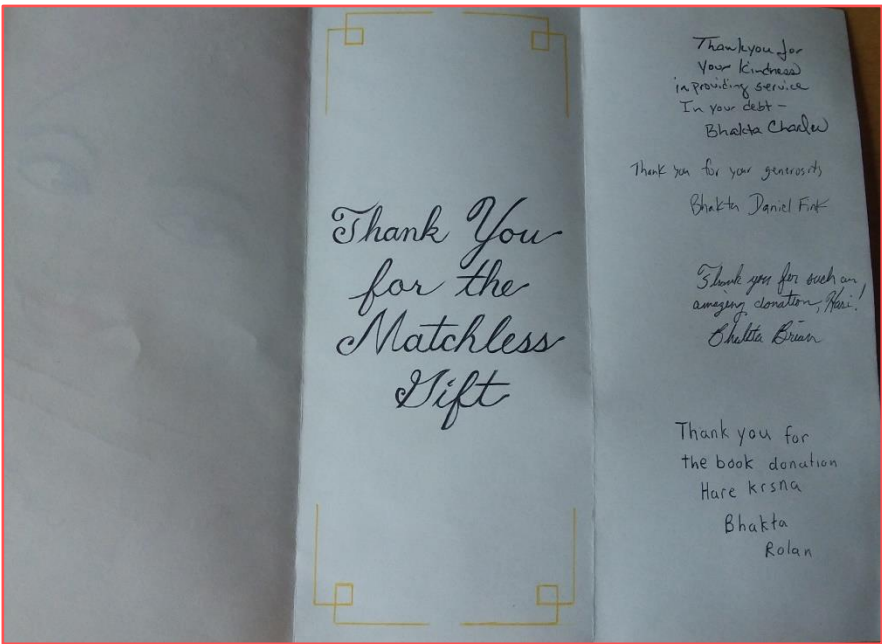
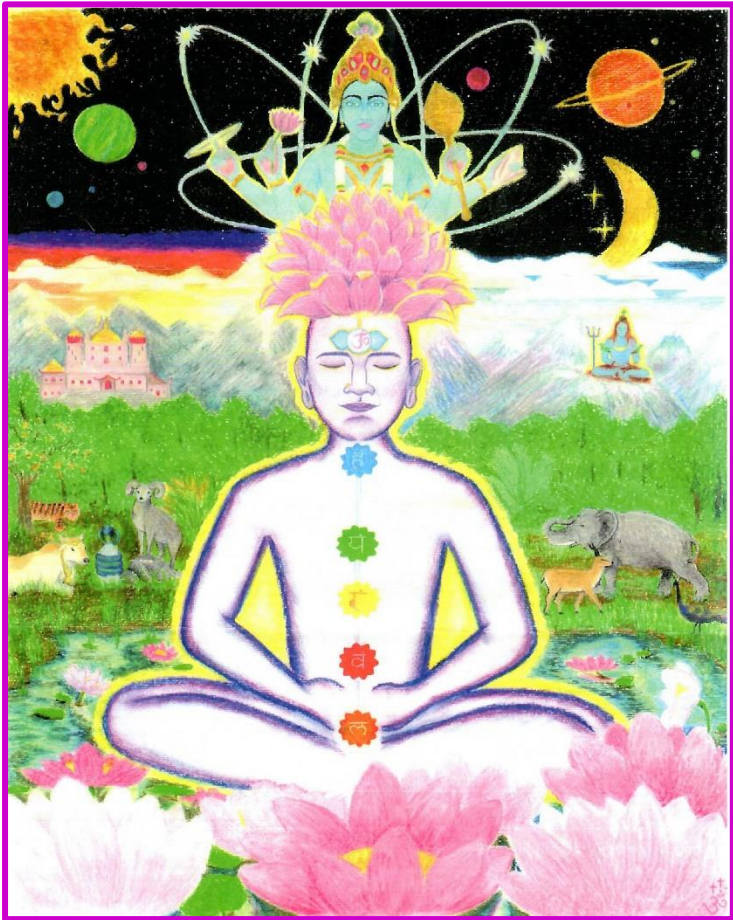
**Bobby G. —Whiteville, Tennessee**

### WHY IS THE FREEDOM NEWSLETTER LATE?

Yes, the January Freedom Newsletter almost didn’t happen. This is because the IPM office is going through some renovations. Things will be hectic for the next three months. Please bear with us the inevitable delays that will happen in our operations during the course of these renovations. The newsletter may also be shorter during that time. Thank you for your understanding.

# Inmate Artwork!

BELOW: from unknown inmate.



ABOVE: Thank you card; drawing of Lord Krishna  
—by inmate Charles Bryant - Texas

ABOVE: Inside of the thank you card.

# Calendar

## JANUARY 2024

- 07 Jan 2024 - **Saphala Ekadashi**  
07 Jan 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Devananda Pandita  
09 Jan 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Mahesa Pandita  
09 Jan 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Uddharana Datta Thakura  
12 Jan 2024 - Appearance Day of Sri Lochana Dasa Thakura  
14 Jan 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Jiva Goswami  
14 Jan 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Jagadisa Pandita  
21 Jan 2024 - **Putrada Ekadashi**  
22 Jan 2024 - Appearance Day of Sri Jagadisa Pandita  
31 Jan 2024 - Appearance Day of Srila Gopala Bhatta Goswami  
31 Jan 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Ramchandra Kaviraja

## FEBRUARY 2024

- 02 Feb 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Locana Dasa Thakura  
06 Feb 2024 - **Sat-tila Ekadashi**  
14 Feb 2024 - Appearance Day of Srimati Vishnupriya Devi  
14 Feb 2024 - Disappearance Day of Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura  
14 Feb 2024 - Appearance Day of Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi  
14 Feb 2024 - Appearance Day of Sri Raghunandan Thakura  
14 Feb 2024 - Appearance Day of Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami  
16 Feb 2024 - **Appearance Day of Sri Advaita Acharya**  
18 Feb 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Madhvacharya  
19 Feb 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Ramanujacharya  
20 Feb 2024 - **Bhaimi Ekadashi**  
21 Feb 2024 - Varaha Dvadasi  
22 Feb 2024 - Nityananda Triyodasi – Appearance Day of Nityananda  
24 Feb 2024 - Appearance Day of Srila Narottama Dasa Thakura  
29 Feb 2024 - **Appearance Day of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura**  
29 Feb 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Purusottama Dasa Thakura

## MARCH 2024

- 07 Mar 2024 - **Vijaya Ekadashi**  
07 Mar 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Isvara Puri  
11 Mar 2024 - Disappearance Day of Srila Jagannatha Dasa Babaji  
11 Mar 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Rasikananda  
13 Mar 2024 - Appearance Day of Sri Purusottama Dasa Thakura  
20 Mar 2024 - **Amalaki Vrata Ekadashi**  
21 Mar 2024 - Disappearance of Sri Madhavendra Puri  
25 Mar 2024 - **GAURA PURNIMA - Appearance of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu**

## APRIL 2024

- 02 April 2024 - Appearance Day of Sri Srivasa Pandita  
05 April 2024 - **Papamochani Ekadashi**  
06 April 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Govinda Ghosh  
13 April 2024 - Appearance Day of Sri Ramanujacharya  
17 April 2024 - **Rama Navami (Appearance day of Lord Rama)**  
19 April 2024 - **Kamada Ekadashi**  
23 April 2024 - Appearance Day of Sri Vamsivadananda Thakura  
23 April 2024 - Appearance Day of Sri Syamananda Prabhu

