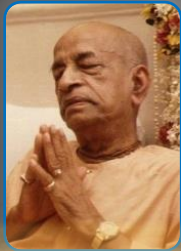


# Freedom Newsletter



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

## ISKCON Prison Ministry / March 2024

PO Box 2676  
Alachua, FL 32616

### PRABHUPADA SPEAKS OUT —on Women's Liberation

*This exchange between His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and a woman reporter took place at Chicago's Kṛṣṇa center during the summer of 1975.*

**Reporter:** What advice do you have for women who do not want to be subordinate to men?

**Srila Prabhupada:** It is not my advice but the advice of the Vedic literatures that a woman should be chaste and faithful to her husband.

**Reporter:** What should we do in the United States? We're trying to make women equal with men.

**Srila Prabhupada:** You will never be equal with men, because in so many respects your functions are different. Why do you say artificially they're equal with man's? The wife has to become pregnant, not the husband. How can you change this? Both the husband and wife will become pregnant—is it possible?

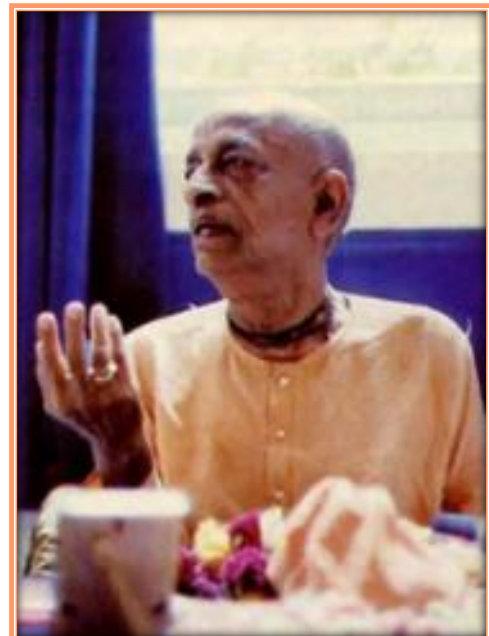
**Reporter:** [No reply.]

**Srila Prabhupada:** Is it possible?

**Reporter:** No. It is not.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Then by nature, one has to function differently from the other.

**Reporter:** Why does this mean that women have to be...can't...?



**Srila Prabhupada:** By nature, as soon as you get children you require support from your husband. Otherwise, you are in difficulty.

**Reporter:** Many women with children have no support from their husband. They have no—

**Srila Prabhupada:** Then they have to take support from others. You cannot deny that. The government is giving them support. Today the government is embarrassed. If the husband supported the wife and children, the government would be relieved of so much welfare expenditure. So that is a problem.

**Reporter:** What happens when women support men?

**Srila Prabhupada:** First of all, try to understand that you are dependent. After a man and woman unite, there are children. And if the man goes away, you are embarrassed—the woman is embarrassed. Why? The poor woman is embarrassed with the child—she has to beg from the government. So do you think it is a very nice thing? The Vedic idea is that a woman should be married to a man, and the man should take care of that woman and the children—independently—so that they do not become a burden to the government or to the public.

**Reporter:** Do you think that the social unrest—

**Srila Prabhupada:** I am thinking like this. You give me the answer! Simply you go on questioning. I will question you—Do you think this burden to the government and the public is good?

**Reporter:** I don't understand what you're saying.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Every year the government has to pay out millions of dollars in aid to dependent children. Do you think that this burden caused when the husband goes away from the wife this burden to the government and the people is good?

**Reporter:** No.

**Srila Prabhupada:** That has happened—because the woman does not agree to be subordinate. She wants “equal freedom.”

**Reporter:** And if women were subordinate to men, I suppose that would solve all of our problems?

**Srila Prabhupada:** Yes. The husband wants that his wife should be subordinate—faithful to him. Then he's ready to take charge. Man's mentality and woman's mentality are different. So, if the woman agrees to remain faithful and subordinate to the man, then family life will be peaceful. Otherwise the husband goes away,

and the woman is embarrassed with the children, and it becomes a burden to the government and the people in general.

**Reporter:** Is there anything wrong when the woman works?

**Srila Prabhupada:** There are so many things wrong, but the first thing is, Why should some man's wife and child become a burden to the government or the public? First of all answer this. Why should she become a burden?

**Reporter:** [No reply.]

**Srila Prabhupada:** What is your answer?

**Reporter:** Well, men are burdens to the government, too.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Do you think, from the social point of view, that this situation of women and fatherless children is a very nice thing?

**Reporter:** What I'm trying to say is that ... this may happen to some women ... I'm talking about women who are not—

**Srila Prabhupada:** This is the general pattern. You cannot say “some.” In America I see they are mostly women.... The woman should be subordinate to the man, so that the man can take charge of the woman. Then the woman is not a problem for the public.

**Reporter:** Is this true for all women and all men?

**Srila Prabhupada:** Yes. That is the law of nature. You take even the dogs—they also take care of their children. The tigers—they take care of their children. So in the human society, if the woman is made pregnant and the man goes away, then she is embarrassed—she has to beg from the government. That is not a very good situation.

**Reporter:** What about women who do not have children?

**Srila Prabhupada:** Well, that is another unnatural thing. Sometimes they use contraceptives, or they kill their children—abortion. That is also not very good. These are all sinful activities.

**Reporter:** Excuse me?

**Srila Prabhupada:** These are sinful activities—killing the child in the womb and taking shelter of abortion. These are all sinful activities. One has to suffer for them.

**Reporter:** Is the social unrest in this country caused because—

**Srila Prabhupada:** Because of these things. They do not know that. 🌸

## Gold Nugget!

**Prabhupada:** Maya [illusion] means that you are unfortunate. Here it is light, and there it is darkness. If I tell you to come from the darkness into the light and if you don't come, that is your misfortune. Maya is there, and God is there. If you want to remain in maya, then how can you be saved? I can help you by saying, "Don't remain in darkness. Please come out into the light." But if you say, "No, I shall remain here," then how can I save you? You have your choice. God is there, and maya is there. If you take to maya you remain in maya. What can I do, and what can God do? That is your choice.

**Interview with the New York Times – September 2, 1972, New Vrindavan**

# As the Crow Flies

By Ananga Manjari Devi Dasi

It was the beginning of the school year, mid-September, 1965. I was just about to turn twelve. I walked with my childhood friend near my home by the sea in the Northeastern part of Boston. We were discussing our new school experiences. Earlier that summer I had been inspired to leave the public school system to attend 7<sup>th</sup> grade in a Catholic school. It was my choice because I wanted to learn more about God. As we chatted, my friend casually inquired about my new school, “So, what are you going to do?” She meant “for fun.”

For no apparent reason, something deep stirred inside me. “What am I going to do? What am I going to do.....with my life?”

Surprised at the depth of this thought, I instinctively turned around and looked up at the sky as if I would find the source of this inspiration there.

I noticed the trees swaying in the breeze as if something profound must have stirred them as well. There was a distinct feeling of something life-changing happening in the air. As I turned back around it was as if the breeze entered me and I heard it whisper to my heart, “Search the Absolute Truth.” Being so young, I felt surprised by the words “absolute truth.” Still, I understood that God was encouraging me to know Him.

I then turned back to my friend who I knew would not understand these thoughts. I answered her in a typical

pre-teen way, “I don’t know, what are you going to do?” Internally I knew that an exciting spiritual adventure was about to begin, and that this was an important experience for me to always remember.

Four years later I learned that this moment of spiritual stirring in my soul took place during the same month and year, September 1965, when His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada stepped off the Jaladuta ship onto Boston’s Commonwealth Pier after a long journey from India.

As he stood looking out from the Boston Harbor, he offered a deep, heartfelt prayer to his Lord Krsna. “How will they understand You? Please make my words fitting for them to understand You.”

The fervent prayers of a saintly person are powerful. They pierce through the coverings of dull matter to awaken souls on their journey toward Godhead. His empathic intention to uplift souls with transcendent knowledge had been carried through the breeze. I was only a few miles away as the crow flies.

*The steamship Jaladuta, carrying His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, arrived at Boston’s Commonwealth Pier at 5:30 a.m. on September 17, 1965.*

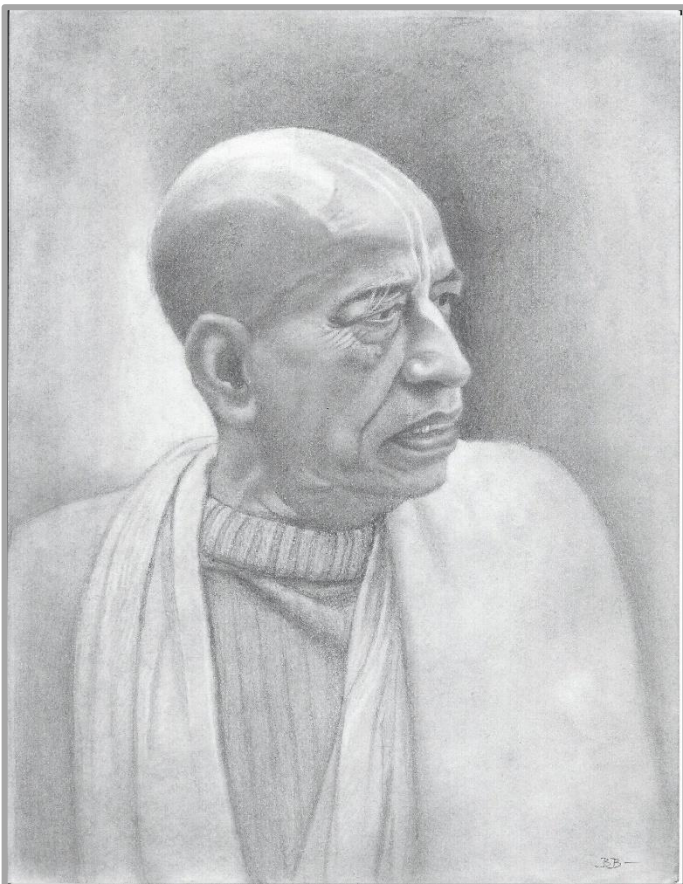




# Inmate Artwork



**Panchatattva by Brian Babinski**



**LEFT: Drawing of Śrīla Prabhupāda  
—by inmate Brian Babinski - California**

# Book Distribution Stories!

## From Drunkard to Devotee: A transformation through the Bhagavatam

In a serene village far from the busy city life of Pune (India), Sachi Nandan Bhagawan prabhu embarked on the mission of spreading the spiritual wisdom of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. He brought with him a dedicated group of devotees in a bus, eager to share the profound teachings of Lord Krishna.

The bus trundled through the village called Vita in the Sangli district of Maharashtra, and it came to a halt at a quaint crossroads. There was a man, lost in his own world of intoxication. His bleary eyes fell upon the volumes of the *Bhagavatam*, and a spark of curiosity ignited within him.

"Excuse me," he slurred, "how much for these books?" Sachi Nandana Bhagavan, sensing a genuine interest, explained the books' significance and quoted a price. To everyone's surprise, the man fumbled for his wallet and handed over the cash without hesitation. However, his inebriation made it impossible for him to carry the weighty boxes of volumes. Compassionate devotees stepped forward, offering to transport the treasures to his humble abode.

Arriving at his doorstep, the devotees were met with a storm of disapproval from the man's family members. They questioned his decision, citing his lifestyle choices and lack of discipline. "These books are too pure for him," they argued. "He'll never read them. Please take them away." Undeterred, the devotees returned to their bus, resolved

to leave the books. A transformation was already underway.



The next morning, after completing their mangal-arti ceremony, japa, and guru puja ceremony, the devotees were about to set off for another village. The man who had purchased books then arrived there. His eyes were now clear and determined. He recounted the ordeal he had faced with his family and how their criticism

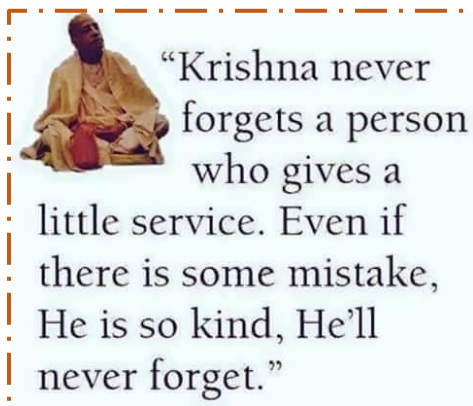
had spurred a change within him. "I've decided to turn my life around," he declared. "No more liquor, no more smoking. And I'll dedicate at least two to three hours each day to reading and absorbing the teachings of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*."

Touched by his sincerity, the devotees provided him with chanting beads, imparting the sacred practice that would further deepen his connection to Lord Krishna.



As the days passed, the once-drunkard transformed into a devoted seeker of Truth. The grace of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* worked its magic and guided him on a path of spiritual awakening.

Word of his remarkable transformation spread throughout the village. This inspired others to take a step toward a more meaningful and purposeful life. And so, in the hearts of the villagers, the potency of spiritual wisdom unfolded, a testament to the *Bhagavatam's* transformative power. 🌸



# YOU ARE DYING - JUST CHANT HARE KRISHNA!

By Ananda Vrindavani Dasi

*Lying in the hospital in a critical condition, a devotee is blessed with great realizations.*

The doctors reported that I was on the verge of death and could leave at any moment. This news was conveyed to our devotees in Kazakhstan, just at the time of the Sunday program. The devotees, infinitely merciful and afraid for me, began to sing a three-hour kirtan and asked Krishna to help me. And thanks to their prayers, Krishna showered mercy on me. The holy name is not located within the material space; their kirtan in Kazakhstan reached me in Ranagat (India) in the following way.

When I regained consciousness, I uttered some kind of cry or groan due to severe pain. At this time, the face of an Indian nurse bent over me. "Why are you shouting?" she said sternly to me, "You are dying; just chant Hare Krishna!"

Hearing "Hare Krishna" from her lips, I felt a great relief. Finally, I remembered what to chant at the moment of death. Gathering all my strength, I tried to say "Hare Krishna," but unfortunately all my muscles, including speech, were completely paralyzed and I could only mumble indistinctly. I couldn't pronounce "Hare Krishna!" This made me so desperate that tears began to flow from my eyes and I just tossed about on the bed, entangled in tubes and hoses. Then I heard the voice of the doctor addressing the nurse. "Who is this?" he asked. "She's from ISKCON," the nurse replied. And lo and behold! The doctor sat down beside me and began to chant: "*Heh Krishna, Karuna sindu, Dina bandu jagat pate, gopesha, gopika Kanta, Radha kanta namas tu te*" [a prayer glorifying Krishna] —and then he began to chant Hare Krishna. So the kirtan of the devotees in Kazakhstan manifested itself to me, through this doctor in the Ranagat hospital!

I was scared because I realized that I completely flunked the exam. I thought, "What a fool I am to have treated the holy name so superficially all my life." I scolded myself so much!



Feeling great gratitude for this doctor, as well as great remorse for my stupid life and offensive japa, I left my body.

At that moment I suddenly saw my Deities, which I had been worshiping for twenty-three years; Jagannath, Baladev, and Subhadra. Baladeva and Subhadra (forms of Krishna) were in the distance and I could only vaguely see Their silhouettes. But Lord Jagannath stood very close and was clearly visible. Suddenly I saw that all the deities of Lord Jagannath are one Lord manifested in many forms. And then I saw Him in human form. It was Lord Jagannatha, but He was also Krishna Himself. He had arms and legs, and a very beautiful figure and posture. His skin was blue as a flax flower, and His face was very handsome, with huge eyes and an enigmatic soft smile. He didn't say anything, but all of a sudden He showed me my whole life from the moment I joined ISKCON and started practicing Krishna consciousness.

My whole life passed before my eyes like on a film, and I saw that during this whole time, when I played some roles, Lord Jagannath was standing next to me, invisible to my material eyes. At that moment, I was in such shock, realizing that Krishna did not leave me for a minute from the day I started chanting His name, He was always there and protected me in many dangerous situations, when it seemed to me that I was alone with my problems.

When I started preaching to Muslims in my country, they threatened to cut off my head and pursued me for a long time. In the end they left me alone and I thought that I had hidden from them well, but it turns out that Jagannatha protected me from their attacks. Several times they wanted to put me in jail for preaching in scientific circles, and I was dying of fear, believing that Krishna had abandoned me and I was finished. But in the end, they also left me alone, and as I later found out, all the workers involved in my case were laid off from work. And this was also the protection of Lord Jagannatha!

One night a maniac had attacked me, but suddenly a huge woman appeared from the darkness and drove him



away with loud screams. And that was also the protection of Krishna.

Then one day they wanted to put me in prison again and I again cried out of fear all night. Jagannath came to me in a dream and showed me that everything would be fine. And so it happened.

So looking at my whole life flashing before me, I realized that Lord Krishna never leaves His devotees, no matter what circumstances they get into because of their past sins. And even when it seems to us that we are completely alone, helpless, defenseless, Krishna always stands by our side and protects us in an invisible way.

Krishna also showed the most important thing when scrolling the tape of my life in front of me. He showed that the most important thing in it was the kirtans in which I participated. It's amazing, but I saw in detail every kirtan

that I sang during my life, even those kirtans where only three or four devotees participated. He did not show me any material events that I had thought were important, but He showed what was important to Him and for me as a soul: the joint chanting of the holy names.

I saw that during each kirtan, streams of sparkling energy of gold, blue, and pink colors rose from the chanters. And these streams reached the heavens and filled the universe. It is so strange that even small kirtans performed by a small group of devotees had such incredible power. So infinitely powerful is the holy name, and so dear to Krishna is our attempt to chant!

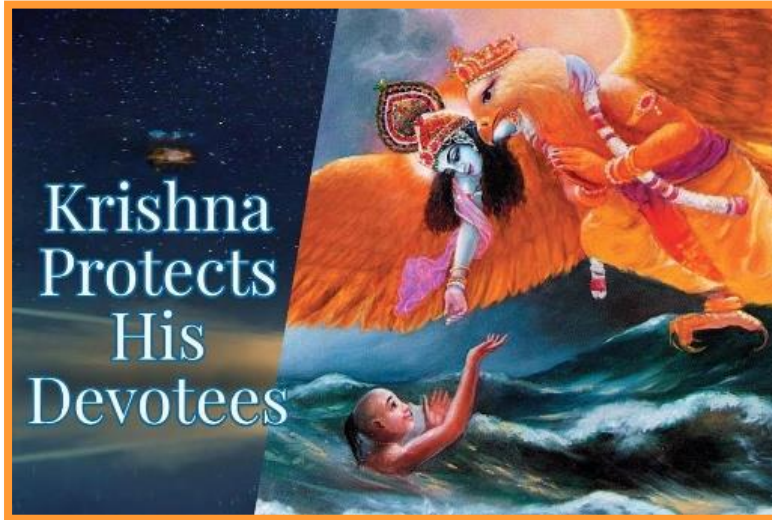
Looking at my life from this reality, I was in complete amazement and bliss. And then it all ended. I returned to the body so that, as Ajamila, I would get another chance—a chance to treat the Holy Name of the Lord in a different way.

I found out much later after my recovery that this nurse who told me to chant Hare Krishna was a Muslim who even refused to accept Srila Prabhupada's books from

me when I left the hospital. When I asked her why, in intensive care, she advised me to chant Hare Krishna, she just shrugged her shoulders and said, "I don't know." I understood that Krishna, from within, had inspired her to remind me of His name.

Maybe someday, by the grace of Krishna and the devotees, all my anarthas [unwanted

desires in the heart] and material consciousness will be purified by the power of the holy name of Krishna, and I will learn to chant it sincerely and purely. I would like to thank Shivarama Swami for the many instructions and lectures on the holy name, Janmashtami prabhu for the daily inspiration of attentive and sincere japa, Jivanatha prabhu and the harinam devotees, for the daily opportunity to participate in the yuga dharma (congregational chanting of the Holy Name), and most importantly, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who gave the greatest mercy to the most fallen living beings. Hare Krishna!



## POEM CORNER

### KRISHNA SAID TO ME

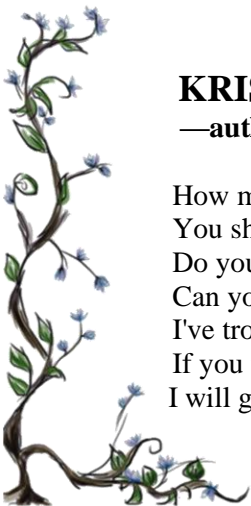
—author unknown

How much longer are you going to struggle?  
You should turn to Me, on the double!  
Do you really think you are God?  
Can you lift Govardhan hill, and walk where  
I've trod?  
If you turn to Me, this I promise  
I will give you bliss, in the highest.

So turn to Me, without waiting  
I will make you happy, you, suffering being  
So turn to Me, turn to Me.

### THE MAN SAID TO ME

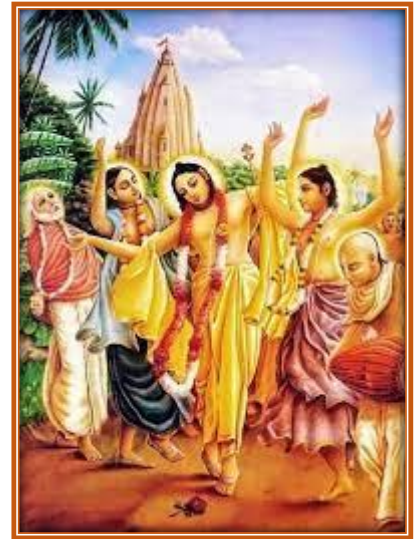
When are you going to give ISKCON a chance?  
If you come home to Krishna, though you're covered  
in sin,  
pray to Him and He will take you in!



# Calendar

## 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  
(see picture: the Personality in the middle →)



## 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

## MAY 2024

- 01 May 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Abhirama Thakura
- 03 May 2024 - Disappearance Day of Srila Vrndavana Dasa Thakura
- 04 May 2024 - **Varuthini Ekadashi**
- 08 May 2024 - Appearance Day of Sri Gadadhara Pandita
- 12 May 2024 - Appearance Day of Sri Sankaracharya
- 17 May 2024 - Appearance Day of Srimati Sita Devi
- 17 May 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Madhu Pandita
- 17 May 2024 - Appearance Day of Srimati Jahnava Devi
- 19 May 2024 - **Mohini Ekadashi**
- 21 May 2024 - **Disappearance Day of Sri Jayananda Prabhu**
- 22 May 2024 - **Appearance of Lord Narasimhadeva**
- 23 May 2024 - Appearance Day of Sri Madhavendra Puri
- 23 May 2024 - Appearance Day of Sri Srinivasa Acharya
- 23 May 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Paramesvari Dasa Thakura
- 28 May 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Ramananda Raya

## JUNE 2024

- 03 June 2024 - **Apara Ekadashi**
- 03 June 2024 - Appearance Day of Srila Vrndavana Dasa Thakura
- 16 June 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana
- 16 June 2024 - Appearance Day of Srimati Gangamata Goswami
- 18 June 2024 - **Pandava Nirjala Ekadashi** (fasting all day from food and water for those who are able to)
- 22 June 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Mukunda Datta
- 22 June 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Sridhara Pandita
- 23 June 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Syamananda Prabhu
- 26 June 2024 - Appearance Day of Sri Vakresvara Pandita

## WHO ARE THEY?

You have noticed that in the calendar there are dates of the appearance and disappearance days of many exalted personalities that you don't know about yet.

The reason we include them in your calendar is that, as you read Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, you will come across these names. If you feel inspired to honor them on their appearance and disappearance days, you will know when to do so.

Devotees honor great personalities by remembering and/or discussing their lives and achievements, praying to them for their blessings, and sometimes by fasting (most often till noon, or, in the case of Lord Krishna and His incarnations, all day).