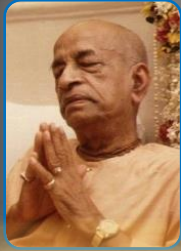


Freedom Newsletter



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

ISKCON Prison Ministry / May 2024

PO Box 2676
Alachua, FL 32616

THIS MATERIAL WORLD IS ZERO

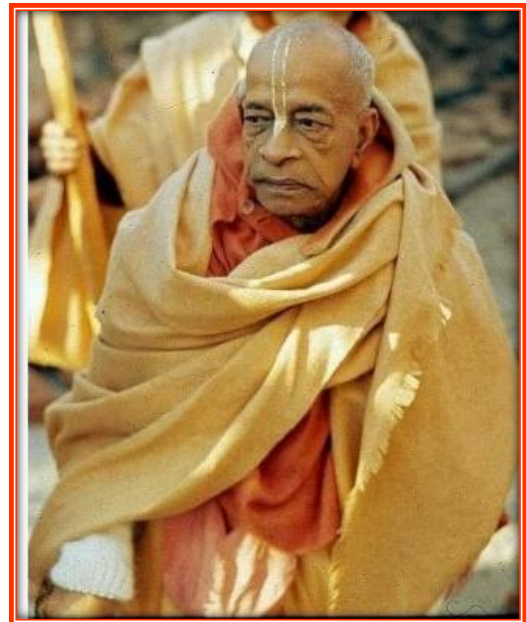
This exchange between His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and a graduate student took place in Los Angeles, near the shore of the Pacific Ocean, during January of 1974.

Student: Today's scientists and philosophers and psychologists—they say the only authority they can accept is their own mind.

Srila Prabhupada: In Sanskrit they are called *mano-dharmi*—mental speculators.

Student: But don't we have to experiment with different mental perspectives if we're going to understand the world?

Srila Prabhupada: Actually, mental speculators have been condemned—*Mano-rathenasati dhavato bahih* [*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 5.18.12]—because they are simply carried away by the chariot of the mind. The mind is flickering, always changing. *Sankalpa-vikalpa*: the mind's business is to accept something and again reject it. All these mental speculators are doing just that. Somebody's putting forward some theory, and after a few years he will himself, reject it, or somebody else will reject it. So by mental speculation you will remain on the material, changing platform. You cannot get any lasting idea.



Student: But the scientists feel strongly about their research. They're convinced they've done some real good for the world.

Srila Prabhupada: They think, "This is bad; that is good." But they do not know that in this material world, saying, "This is bad" and "That is good" is all mental speculation, all a mistake. They do not know that in this material world, "bad" and "good" are the same thing—because both are simply matter.

Student: How can you say that "bad" and "good" are the same thing?

Srila Prabhupada: For instance, when we are walking on this road, sometimes we say, "This is very good," and sometimes we say, "This is very bad." But the road is the same. So how is it both "good" and "bad"? This is simply speculation. Today we may say, "This road is dry; it is dusty. Bad." Tomorrow we may say, "This road is dry; it is not at all muddy. Good." It is simply mental speculation.

Student: It's still a bit hard to understand what you're saying.

Srila Prabhupada: Here is another example. In India the villagers pass stool out in the open fields. By the end of the day, the sun has left the top part of the stool dry. So when some fool sees the dry part of the stool, he may say, "Oh, this part is very nice." He forgets that after all, it is stool—so what is the difference

whether it is dry or moist? In the same way, the scientists are making great advancement, but death is still there. So we have to ask, "What is the difference whether you make advancement or no advancement? One who has not advanced in science will die, and you so-called advanced people will also die. Then what is the use?" Neither the scientist nor the ordinary person can protect himself from death. Then what is the meaning of "good"—"This is good," "This is advancement"—or "This is not advancement"?

Student: But I think the distinction between "good" and "bad" depends on the consciousness of the individual.

Srila Prabhupada: "Relativity"—the "law of relativity": "One man's food is another man's poison." So how can you distinguish whether this is "food" or "poison"? One man will say, "No, it is food!" Another man will say, "It is poison!" So how will you distinguish? You see? This "good" and "bad" is simply mental speculation. Because it is on the material

platform, there is nothing good. All that the scientists and philosophers are doing is cheating. They say, "We are advancing." In what way are you advancing? The problem of birth and death is still there—so what is the meaning of your advancement?

Student: So we have to get off the chariot of the mind?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. If you remain on the chariot of the mind, then whatever you accept you'll have to reject again. And that is just what they are doing. The so-called scientists and philosophers—they are putting forward some theory, and after some time they reject it. So if you remain on the mental platform, then this business of accepting and rejecting will go on. You'll never come to a lasting conclusion. One has to rise to the spiritual platform. That is *nityah sasvato 'yam*—eternal, everlasting.

Student: Are you saying everything in this world is worthless?

Srila Prabhupada: Just try to understand. It *can* have value and meaning. For instance, you can add thousands of 0's together, one after another, but the value will still be 0. It will never become 1. But by the side of 0, if you bring 1, immediately that becomes 10.

Add another 0, immediately you have 100. You have increased it ten times. But that 1 must be there—that is *ekam brahma*, the one Supreme Spirit. Then 0 increases in its value. Similarly, this material world is zero. Bad.

But if there is Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then it has value. Then it has value.

Student: Doesn't the chariot of the mind have any value at all?

Srila Prabhupada: No. It has no value.

Student: But the whole Western philosophical—

Srila Prabhupada: *Mano-rathenasati dhavato bahih:* by mental speculation you'll remain in this temporary field. *Asat* means "that which does not exist." You take anything in this material world—some day it will not exist. Anyone knows it. A skyscraper is constructed, but everyone knows that it will not exist; some day it will fall down. Everyone knows. It will not endure. Therefore Prahlada Maharaja says, *maya-sukhaya bharam udvahato vimudhan:* for illusory happiness people are making huge, gorgeous arrangements and working day and night. For something that will be zero. It has begun as zero, and it will end as zero; in the middle they're busy. Just see'. Therefore they're *vimudhan*—fools and rascals. 🌸



Above: The five horses represent the five senses (tongue, eyes, ears, nose and skin). The reins—the driving instrument—symbolize the mind. The driver is the intelligence, and the passenger is the spirit soul. (see Bhagavad-gita As It Is, 6.34)



We have some 2024 ART CALENDARS left

If you want a 2024 Art Calendar, please write to:

Upendra Dasa
PO BOX 9116
BOISE, ID 83707-9116

However before requesting a calendar, , please confirm with your institution that you are allowed to receive it. Thank you.

Book Distribution Stories!

Typical Sankirtan Afternoon in Dallas, Texas

—By Mishra Bhagavan Dasa

Today was a beautiful Sunday afternoon in Dallas, as I distributed books in a Walmart parking lot. A variety of about fourteen people bought Srila Prabhupada's books.

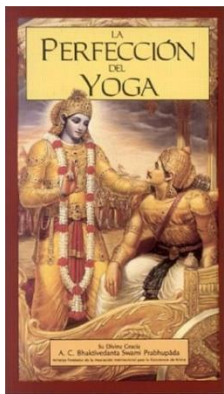
I approached an African-American couple who turned out to be Muslim followers of the championship boxer, Muhammad Ali. I told them that once Muhammad Ali had bought a Bhagavad-gita and they said it was because their tradition requires them to read about all world religions such as the Bible, the Tao, the Koran, etc. They were quite happy to purchase *Bhakti the Art of Eternal Love*, in order to learn more about the Hare Krishnas.

Another man I met, who was sitting in his pick-up truck, was Fransisco, who had originated from Mexico.

I said to him, "You mean Saint Francisco?" He was charmed by the comparison I made. After he read quite a few pages from the *Perfeccion Del Yoga*, he gave me a few dollars, while praising the book as something he had been waiting for. Apparently he had previously met Hare Krishna devotees.

Sheila, from the Philippines bought *The Perfection of Yoga*, even though she did not seem particularly interested. But because I had previously been stationed in the military in the Philippines, I spoke some of her language, so she purchased the book.

I have found it is very helpful when doing book distribution to be able to speak as many languages as



possible, as it helps people to feel more comfortable when you can speak their mother tongue. Then I saw a typical, middle-age Caucasian couple, who were piling groceries into their massive SUV. As I approached them I expected them to blow me off with a, 'We don't need anything, keep moving.' As it turned out, they were patrons of *Kalachandji's Restaurant*, and had read the *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, so they gave me a few dollars for a copy of *Bhakti the Art of Eternal Love*. Next, I approached two ladies with a baby, who were coming out of their car, and they bought a hardback copy of *The Science of Self Realization*. This was a reminder for me to approach everyone, as we should never judge from external appearances who might be interested in receiving a book.

It seems to me that every person that took a book today made it a special event. 🌸

The More Maya Yelled, The More The Gita Held Him

—by Bala Gopal Dasa

Last night in Sridham Mayapura during Gita Jayanti, Vinod Gopal Prabhu and I were stationed inside one of the temple's book shops. We were trying to give out *Bhagavad Gita As It Is* to the colorful array of universally fortunate pilgrims, the guests of the Supreme Lord, Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

I spotted a slightly more Westernized-looking man in his 30s, wandering through the crowded shop, looking at the books, and at Lord Chaitanya's Lila exhibit. I decided to speak to him in straight English, instead of my laughable attempts at Bengali.

Anticipating the usual excuses, I introduced the Gita as being especially transformative and special, having turned people from all over the world toward Krishna-bhakti. Moreover, the Gita would protect him and his young family from the influence of Western values,

especially as those values entered India via Bollywood, video games, and so on.

As the young man listened with seriousness and attention, his son of around 3-4 years started throwing one of the best tantrums I have ever witnessed. There was pulling and screaming and throwing fists at his mother, grandmother and grandfather, and at times even threatening his father. The family then dragged the boy to the shop's doorway, as we continued to speak to the young man, who was becoming more and more receptive to our pleas about the Gita's great importance.

As the boy's yelling, scratching, and hitting rose to the level of full hysteria, the man's wife and mother started to lose their patience. They yelled to their man to leave, to help, to come NOW! But despite their desperate facial expressions and dramatic appeals, the Gita held the young man there so strongly I was amazed at how the world's illusory energy was powerless to drag him off. He dismissed everyone's cries for solace and took the sacred edition of Srila Prabhupada's and the Supreme Personality of

Godhead's *Bhagavad Gita As It Is* straight through the huge crowd to the cash counter for purchase.

I was stunned by what I had just witnessed. The more the young man's family had pleaded with him to forget



the Gita, the more Krishna as Hrishikesh, the owner and master of the senses, had worked His magic. With the Supreme Lord's support, nothing would deter this sincere soul from stepping toward Krishna.

We shook hands as he left, and I said we were

proud of his sincere interest in this sacred subject as he merged into the crowd, blessed with Lord Krishna's living words of direction.

I am begging to remain witness to these magical sankirtan experiences. 🌸



COMING SOON ON YOUR TABLETS!

One of our prison ministry's volunteers, Premananda Dasa, has been researching the process of adding Śrīla Prabhupāda's books to prison tablets. He has made progress with the company Edovo. They are currently serving about 370 correctional facilities today, which translates to 125,000 inmates on their platform each month. By year's end, they're projecting to be reaching over 700 correctional facilities and 250,000 inmates each month through the various tablet providers they work with across the USA.

We hope that soon you'll have access to a great variety of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books on your tablets. We will give you an update in the next newsletter. In the meantime, you can check on your tablets regularly to see if this has become a reality.

HOW I CAME TO KRṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS

by **Brahma-muhurta Dasa**

Many of my friends thought life was just a huge meaningless game. But I always felt there was something more—and I had to find it.

I was born near Boston in 1958. My father had a Master's in Architecture from Harvard, my mother a B.A. in Literature from Smith. They were well-to-do, yet they instilled in me the understanding that money wasn't the ultimate cause of happiness. Before I

was born they had moved out of Boston to the country, to bring up their family in a place where they felt moral values could flourish.

My parents would often host large gatherings of well-known writers and artists from the neighboring

McDowell Colony. (Margaret Mead, a good friend of the family, was often there.) I would listen as they went on hour after hour, throwing ideas about life and art back and forth.

At seventeen I graduated from the Cambridge School of Weston, Massachusetts (a prestigious prep school), but I decided not to go on to college right away. Growing up in a hyper intellectual atmosphere had given me the desire to find out the meaning of life, but I wasn't learning that at school, nor at the endless parties where my friends and I would go from one pill or joint to the next, rapping aimlessly far into the night. To put it mildly, my perception of truth and reality was becoming duller, not more vivid.

So I decided to take a year off instead of plunging into college. My parents encouraged me to look around for the most fulfilling answers to my questions. They bought me a plane ticket to Europe, and I brashly promised them I wouldn't return until I'd found the meaning of life.

I traveled first to England, then down to France, over to Holland and Germany, then through Scandinavia, Yugoslavia, and Italy. I had some money, but mostly I hitched rides and stayed at youth hostels. Yet through all these travels I didn't find what I was looking for. Sure, I saw people of many nationalities, heard many languages, ate many different kinds of food. But behind all the differences, I saw that people were doing the same thing everywhere: trying to earn money and enjoy themselves. I felt there *had* to be some higher purpose to life than this.

Then I heard that a lot of young people in search of spiritual values were heading toward the Greek island of Mykonos. I decided to find a cave there and seclude myself until I was free of all desire, at peace with myself and the world around me. Then I would be able to realize my true nature. I would fully understand myself and know just what to do next—if a self-realized person does anything.

On Mykonos I found hundreds of young people like me, each with his own philosophy and his own method of reaching "self-realization." Some, like me, had just arrived on the island. Others had been practicing some austerity (such as drinking only fruit juice and sun-bathing all day) but were now heading back to their families or schools, or looking for work.



ABOVE: *Brahma-muharta dasa with his family at their home.*

I found a cave, sat down, and started listening intently to my boggled mind. After a few days of this, it became clear that I had to find some guidance. I needed a teacher. But who? Although some of the seekers on Mykonos

claimed to have found The Answer, everyone I met was indulging in sensual pleasure in the name of meditation, *yoga*, self-realization, and so on. Superficially they might have appeared more peaceful and satisfied than ordinary people, but their philosophy was always full of flaws, and their actions proved how empty their so-called spiritual life really was.

I felt completely helpless. I had found no one who could really give me a clue about the purpose of life. Was life just a huge meaningless game, as many of my fellow seekers thought? If so, I didn't want to play. But I still felt there was something more to life. I had to do something to find it—but what?

In deep distress I prayed out loud: "If there is someone behind all this, I want to know You. Please guide me so I may come to know You. I will be obedient to Your will." I prayed from my heart, with every bit of sincerity I could muster. At the time, I thought that if there actually was a God, a controller who directs everything, He must have heard me.

A short time later I was impelled by a strange desire to travel. I say "strange" because I had already traveled all over Europe and had now come to Mykonos, which seemed the most likely place to find self-realization. Still, I left by boat for the heel of Italy, took a train north, and then hitchhiked through the Swiss Alps. As I stood looking down at smog-filled Zurich, with cars zooming back and forth, I wondered, "What did I come here for? This is exactly what I've been trying to get away from." Yet something was spurring me on.

I arrived in Zurich late at night. After searching everywhere for a place to stay, I finally found a youth hostel just before it closed. I got the last vacant space. In the room next to mine were a group of Hare Krsna devotees dressed in traditional Indian robes.

One devotee introduced himself as Jaya Gurudeva and then frankly told me I looked like I was really suffering in the material world. Another, named Rohini-suta, was very eager to talk to me about Krsna consciousness—but he barely spoke English, and I barely spoke German. He gave me a German BACK TO GODHEAD. A third devotee gave me an English edition of *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Then the devotees said they had to get to sleep, since they were all going out early the next day to sell books.

When I woke the next morning I looked at the *Bhagavad-gita* and thought, “Oh, here’s another one of the millions of books people have told me I should read.” But then I thought how happy the devotees had looked, how enthusiastic and confident they had been about what they were doing. I decided to read the *Bhagavad-gita*, and having nothing else to do, I sat down all day and read the whole book. I found answers to many questions I’d been struggling with for years. By the time the devotees arrived back at the hostel late that night, I felt I’d found a real *guru*: Srila Prabhupada.

Still, it all seemed too good to be true, and I began firing away with questions, trying to pick out some flaw in the Krsna conscious philosophy.

“It says here that we are all spirit souls, not these material bodies, and that we were all originally with Krsna in the spiritual world. If it was really so nice there, why did we leave and come to this place of birth, old age, disease, and death?”

“Because we have minute independence,” the devotees answered. “The spiritual world is for those who love God. But without free will there is no question of love. Because we misused our free will and chose not to love God, we have been put here in this material world, which is like a prison for everyone who chooses to forget Krsna.”

“So because we wouldn’t love Him, God has just left us here to suffer. Sounds pretty cruel to me.”

“No, Krsna is our eternal loving father, so He wants us to return to Him in the spiritual world. Therefore He comes here Himself to teach us Krsna consciousness (as in the *Bhagavad-gita*), or He sends His representative,

the spiritual master. In this way Krsna gives us all the chance to reawaken our loving relationship with Him.”

“This sounds a lot like Christianity.”

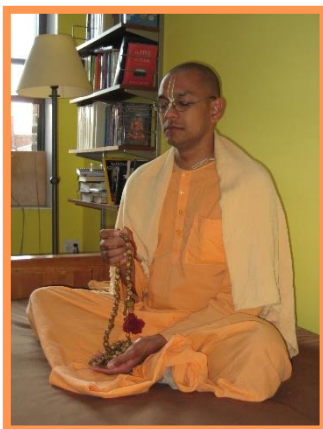
“Yes, the purpose of every true religion is to develop your original loving relationship with God.”

“Well, a lot of people say they love God.”

“Then they have to prove it by their actions. If you really love a person, you will try to please him by serving him. God is also a person—the Supreme Person—and if we truly love Him we must find out what He wants and try to satisfy Him. Only if we serve God according to His desires will He choose to reveal Himself to us.”

“So...I’m doing what I think God wants me to do.”

“No, you can’t concoct your own process; you have to accept *His* process. In the *Bhagavad-gita* Krsna says, ‘Always think of Me. Become My devotee.’ And when Krsna appeared more recently as Lord Caitanya, He taught that the best way to think of Him and develop devotion to Him is to chant His name. That’s why we are chanting Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. The Sanskrit word *Krsna* is a name for God that means ‘the all-attractive Supreme Person.’ Because Krsna is absolute, His name and He Himself are nondifferent. So by chanting Hare Krsna we are coming in touch with Krsna personally. From this contact our consciousness becomes purified more and more, until one day we will realize God’s presence in our heart and reawaken our loving relationship with Him. This is the goal of human life. Why don’t you try the chanting? The proof of the pudding is in the eating.”



I decided to give the chanting a try. I had tried almost everything else, so what did I have to lose? After chanting Hare Krsna and living with the devotees for a few days, I thought, “This is really a nice life.” But the devotees were pressuring me to become more serious about spiritual life. They wanted me to live in a temple and practice Krsna consciousness full time. But I had become accustomed to resisting all pressure, so I decided to leave. As I packed my things, Jaya Gurudeva asked me where I was going.

I said I was taking a break. “Do whatever you want,” he said casually.

It was then that I understood that Krsna consciousness was completely voluntary. Sure there

were austerities, but they were for the highest purpose—becoming God conscious. I knew from experience that it was impossible to avoid austerity and difficulty in any case. So why not undergo some trouble for a worthwhile goal? I decided to give Krsna consciousness an honest try.

A year went by in the Hare Krsna temple in Amsterdam. After my father and I had exchanged many letters back and forth, he came to visit me for two weeks at the temple, and later my mother stayed at the temple in southern France while I was there. By getting the inside story of my life as a devotee, my parents gradually began to appreciate Krsna consciousness

more and more. And when I left Europe and came to live at the temple in Boston, my brothers and sisters also began to discover Krsna consciousness. Now my whole family is well acquainted with the Hare Krsna movement, and they feel they have benefited in many ways.

As for me, one thing I can say to my family with all humility is that I kept the promise I made so naively some seven years ago: I've returned home to Boston, but not before finding the ultimate meaning of life—developing love for God. 🌸



FIRST-EVER THAI ISKCON YOUTH BUS TOUR TRAVERSES THE COUNTRY

By Kulavati Krishnapriya Devi Dasi

Sumadhuri Devi Dasi recently achieved a significant milestone by successfully organizing the first-ever ISKCON Youth Bus Tour across Thailand. Led by Kavicandra Swami and BVV Narasimha Swami, the tour provided participants with enriching devotional experiences.



Manorama Das, ISKCON Youth Minister, said, “This was a heroic effort by Sumadhuri Devi Dasi, Rajasuya Dasa, and Yogeshwara Dasa, and several helpers at temples in different parts of Thailand. This was their first tour, and it was organized on short notice (they only had one month to prepare before the big vacation month in Thailand, which is April).”

He continued, “They had 15+ youth, several adult helpers/chaperones, and the Swamis... [they had] daily morning programs with inspirational classes along the tour route, several Harinama Sankirtana processions, a kirtan festival, and a Ratha-yatra... These tours are

meant to train, inspire, engage, and empower the next generation of our ISKCON youth to develop a desire to help carry on the mission.”



“I had the opportunity to travel with the group of 18 youths from the Thai yatra,” said BVV Narasimha Maharaj, “We visited centers at Phuket, Khaolak, Krabi, Kho Samui, Huo Hing, Pattaya and finally Bangkok. In each place, we had Harinama Sankirtan and book distribution. It was fun to be with them, and I marveled at their chanting and singing skills. They seem to have a natural affinity for the holy name,” he continued, “They have grown up with the holy name





and they like to give the holy name to others. Being more than fifty years their senior, I was like their grandfather, and they were always kind to me. It was my good fortune to be with them.”

One of the youth participants, Mohanrupa, said, “I really liked being on the first bus tour. It was really nice being with friends all these days and going out on sankirtan every day. I want to thank HH BVV Narasimha Swami for his association and guidance, and

a big thanks to the organizers for making this tour. I cannot wait for the next tour. One year seems too long.”

The inaugural ISKCON Youth Bus Expedition in Thailand not only showcased the zeal and dedication of its participants but also underscored the enduring spirit of community, mentorship, and spiritual growth within the ISKCON family. It was truly a milestone and an inspiration for the Thai youth. 🌸



TRIO OF VAISHNAVI PODCASTERS ARE BRINGING THE BHAGAVAD-GITA TO A GLOBAL AUDIENCE

By Atma Tattva Das

In a world often consumed by chaos and uncertainty, thousands of listeners are finding solace and direction through “The Modern Yogi Podcast”

hosted by Shyamali Pranati, Syama Sangita, and Priyadarsani. Together, these young Krishna-conscious women have embarked on a remarkable journey, bringing the transformative message of the Bhagavad-gita to a global audience. The trio of friends are the faces of the five-person effort and share a common vision—to make the teachings of the Bhagavad-gita accessible to all,

irrespective of age, gender, or background. Their podcast serves as a platform for discussing the Gita’s

relevance in contemporary life, exploring its philosophical depth and practical application.



Left to right: Priyadarsani, Syama Sangita, and Shyamali Pranati.

Born and raised in different parts of the world, each member of the team brings a unique perspective shaped by their personal experiences. Shyamali Pranati delves deep into philosophical insights; Syama Sangita brings her light-hearted approach to the discussion, and Priyadarsani balances the conversation with her calm demeanor, forming a harmonious blend that captivates their audience. In an ISKCON News interview, the team shared

glimpses of their personal journeys and the inspiration behind their podcast. Shyamali, reflecting on her upbringing, shared, “Growing up, the Bhagavad-gita

was always a part of my life. It was like a guiding light during challenging times.” Priya, echoing similar sentiments, added, “For me, the Gita is not just a scripture; it’s a way of life. It provides timeless wisdom that is relevant to every aspect of our existence.”

As the conversation unfolded, the team reminisced about the genesis of “The Modern Yogi Podcast” and the collaborative effort that brought it to life. Priya highlighted the team’s collaborative spirit, saying, “We each bring our strengths to the table. While Syama adds a touch of humor, Shyamali dives deep into the philosophical aspects, and I ensure the discussions flow smoothly.”

Shyamali shared, “The idea of starting the podcast emerged from Priya’s brilliant mind and manifested through a collective desire to make the teachings of the Bhagavad-gita accessible to all. We wanted to create a platform where we could discuss its relevance in contemporary life.” Syama added, “We are grateful for the unwavering support of Abhijit and Ella, who play a crucial role in bringing our vision to life. Their technical expertise and creative input have been invaluable.” This synergy among the five team members is evident in the podcast’s engaging and insightful content.

Priyadarsani reflected on the journey, saying, “We’ve come a long way since our first episode. The success of the podcast is a testament to our teamwork and shared passion for sharing Srila Prabhupada’s spiritual wisdom.”

Their message is resonating with a global audience, Syama shared, “We receive messages from listeners around the world expressing gratitude for our discussions on the Gita. It’s heartwarming to see the impact we’re making.” Priya added, “We aim to bridge the gap in representation, particularly among young

devotees in the ISKCON community and seekers alike.”

Navigating the depths of the Bhagavad-gita has been both enlightening and challenging for the team. Shyamali reflected, “Delving into complex texts and topics has taught us resilience and patience. We’ve learned to approach difficult subjects with humility and an open mind, allowing for deeper understanding and growth.” Priyadarsani added, “It’s been a journey of self-discovery for us as well. The process of exploring spiritual concepts has helped us develop a deeper connection with our own spirituality.”

As young women in the ISKCON community, the team recognizes the importance of representation. Syama expressed, “I have come to understand the significance of our role as young female devotees. Our podcast represents a revolutionary shift, offering a fresh perspective on ancient wisdom.” Priya emphasized, “By amplifying the voices of women in spirituality, we hope to inspire others to embrace their spiritual journey, regardless of gender or background.”

Like any journey, “The Modern Yogi Podcast” has had its share of challenges. Syama recalled, “We faced technical issues with our equipment, which prompted us



to start a GoFundMe campaign.” The team was overwhelmed by the support they received from their listeners and friends. “It was heartening to see the community come together to help us overcome these challenges,” Priya said.

As the podcast approaches its 100th

episode, the team is filled with gratitude and excitement. “We plan to celebrate organically, much like our podcast’s vibe,” Shyamali Pranati shared. Additionally, the team is exploring new avenues to expand its reach, including populating its YouTube channel and launching merchandise as a fundraising effort to sustain the effort. 🌸

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



LEFT: Lord Chaitanya, Who is Lord Krishna Himself, Who appeared on this Earth over 500 years ago, to propagate the chanting of the holy name.

Calendar

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 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

JULY 2024

- 01 July 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Srivasa Pandita
02 July 2024 - **Yogini Ekadashi**
05 July 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Gadadhara Pandita
05 July 2024 - Disappearance Day of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura
07 July 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Svarupa Damodara Gosvami
07 July 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Sivananda Sena
12 July 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Vakresvara Pandita
17 July 2024 - **Sayana Ekadashi**
21 July 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sanatana Goswami
22 July 2024 - **First Month of Caturmasya Begins**
25 July 2024 - Disappearance Day of Srila Gopala Bhatta Goswami
28 July 2024 - Disappearance Day of Srila Lokanatha Goswami
29 July 2024 - The Incorporation of ISKCON in 1966, in New York
31 July 2024 - **Kamika Ekadashi**

WHAT IS CATURMASYA?

The main goal of observing Caturmasya is to decrease attachment to material things while increasing devotion to Krishna. That means, as far as possible, decreasing sense gratification and increasing devotional activities such as chanting, reading, talking about Krishna.

Also, during the four months of Caturmasya one should eat what he needs but practice giving up food intended only for sense enjoyment.

VRNDAVANA DASA THAKURA

He is considered the manifest Vyasadeva of Lord Chaitanya's pastimes. He was born shortly after the disappearance of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. At the age of twenty, he accepted formal initiation from Lord Nityananda. It was on Lord Nityananda's order that he wrote *Sri Chaitanya Bhagavata*, a great biography of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.. (See Sri Caitanya-caritamrita, Adi-lila 8.33-42 and 11.54-55.)

BALADEVA VIDYABHUSANA

He appeared in Remuna, Orissa, in the late 1600s. In 1706 he was sent by Srila Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura to Galta (near Jaipur, India) to prove the authenticity of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's movement. The local Ramanandis (a branch of Vaishnavas) had charged that the Gaudiya Vaishnavas, having no commentary on the Vedanta-sutras, were not a bona fide disciplic line and therefore they had no right to worship Govindaji or any of the other Deities of Vrindavana. By the grace of Govindaji, Srila Baladeva Vidyabhushana then swiftly wrote the *Govinda-bhashya* commentary. He also wrote commentaries on the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-gita.

