

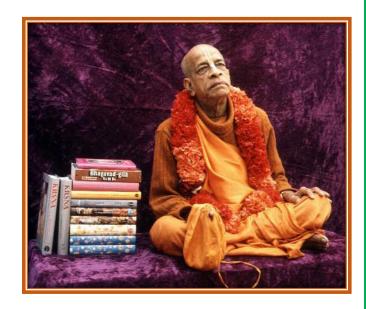
ISKCON Prison Ministry / November 2024 PO Box 2676 Alachua, FL 32616

SLAVE MENTALITY

What follows is a conversation between His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, one of his disciples, and a reporter from a leading Paris newsweekly.

Interviewer: To me, God means freedom.
Srila Prabhupada: Yes—God means freedom,
provided you surrender to God. That is real freedom.
Interviewer: But I may not accept your idea of God. I
may want to worship God, or I may not want to worship
God. That is my freedom, and that's the most important
thing to me.

Srila Prabhupada: A child's freedom, for instance, is to live completely under the protection of his parents—then he has freedom. But without their protection, he'll have no freedom, only suffering. If the child is very rebellious, he may think he doesn't need his parents—he wants to be free. But he is just a rascal. He does not really know what freedom is. Similarly, if you don't surrender to God, then you are misusing your freedom. And you'll lose your freedom. The *Bhagavad-gita* says,



daivi hy esa gunamayi mama maya duratyaya: "Material nature is so strong that she will not allow you to get free." But, mam eva ye prapadyante: "If you surrender to Krsna instead of Krsna's maya, then you'll become free." If you don't agree to accept the control of Krsna, you'll be forced by Krsna's material energy. So what is this so-called freedom? You have to surrender.

Interviewer: But isn't that a rather stifling kind of slave mentality? **Srila Prabhupada:** We want to become the slave of Krsna, and you want socalled freedom. But you do not know that if you don't become a slave of Krsna, then you must become a slave of maya. The nature of the soul is to be a slave that is your natural position. And we can see this practically: if people are not slaves of this material nature, then why are they dying? You don't want to die, but you'll be forced to die. So how are you free? But because people are rascals, they don't understand this. They are imagining themselves free.

Interviewer: But throughout history

people have fought valiantly for the freedom to enjoy life to the fullest—the pursuit of happiness.

Srila Prabhupada: That means that they're thinking that freedom means to become the servant of the senses. Our Krsna consciousness philosophy teaches, "Don't become the servant of your senses." And people think, "Oh, but this is our freedom." They do not know that by trying to become free, they are becoming servants of their senses. Where is your freedom? To freely enjoy sense gratification means to become the servant of your senses. This is *maya's* illusion. You are voluntarily accepting maya's slavery and thinking, "Now I'm free." This is illusion. Your senses are pulling you by the ear—"Come here. Do this and you'll be happy." Just like a dog: as soon as his master pulls the leash— "Come on! Come on!"—he has to follow. So people are becoming just like dogs, and they are thinking "free." Because they are unintelligent rascals, they cannot understand what real freedom is. But we are teaching that real freedom comes when you surrender to God. **Interviewer:** But how can you surrender to something you don't know? You can't really know God. You can't even speak about Him.

Srila Prabhupada: Our position is that we know God from God's explanation of Himself. We don't try to speculate about God like you. We're not such rascals. I agree that I cannot know God, but in the *Bhagavad-gita*

God Himself says, "I am like this," and I accept it. That's all. That is my position—this is my full surrender to God. I may not know what He is, but when He says, "I am like this," I accept it. I never say, "I have understood God." How can I know God? I am limited, and God is unlimited. But He says, mattah parataram nanyat: "There is no greater truth than Me." And I accept this. You can call it "slave mentality" or

whatever you like, but I accept the words of Krsna. Instead of endeavoring foolishly to know God by mental speculation, I submit to the statement of God that He is the Supreme Person. So which way is better: to speculate on God foolishly, or to accept the statements of God? Which is better?

Interviewer: To accept the statements of God.

Srila Prabhupada: So, you are more intelligent than the rascals. The rascals will remain fools by speculating on God for many, many lives. And when they become actually wise, they'll surrender to God. This is also stated by the Lord in *Bhagavad-gita—bahunam janmanam*

ante jnanavan mam prapadyate: "After many, many births of mental speculation, when one actually becomes wise he surrenders unto Krsna." I have already surrendered to Krsna. Why should you wait?

Devotee: One problem is that they never had authorities they could surrender to. Even their parents have cheated them

Srila Prabhupada: That is a fact. The parents are also rascals. Unless you approach a person who is the representative of Krsna, who has understood Krsna, then the rascaldom continues. You have to find out a person who has understood the Supreme Truth—otherwise, you'll simply find another rascal, another rascal, another, another.

But you should not think that just because you have been cheated, there is no genuine authority. That's simply another kind of rascaldom. If someone has been cheated with counterfeit money, he should not conclude that there is no real money. So, don't become illusioned just because you were cheated by counterfeit authorities in the past. Unfortunately, people are so unintelligent that they cannot judge what is the real authority and what is unreal. They take the real to be counterfeit and then follow the blind rascals.



THE FIRST JAPA BEADS —Tidbit of history

By Gargamuni dasa

he first japa beads were large red beads, or some were green. Mine were red (see picture below). Sometimes the art store would run out of red beads, so devotees purchased smaller green or natural color beads. This month marks my 58th anniversary of initiation. I am presently the oldest initiated devotee of Srila Prabhupada living in India for the last 25 years. In the beginning there was no bead bags, until Himavati devi, started to sew them for the devotees for a small price. One had to string his own beads. One had to tie a long piece of string to a doorknob. The string had to be thick enough for the bead to fit through and then tie a knot between each bead. It took



some time to do this while chanting to each strung bead.....Then upon initiation the beads were offered to Srila Prabhupada for chanting, thus sanctifying one's initiation into the Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu Sampradaya.....Later on we made smaller counter beads to keep track of how many rounds chanted......





ABOVE LEFT: Gargamuni dasa, front row, second from the right) —October 1966, in New York **ABOVE RIGHT**: Gargamuni dasa —2019, in Vrindavan, India

ALTERNATIVES TO JAPA BEADS

If you don't have or are not allowed to receive our japa (prayer) beads, please do not be discouraged. Here are a few alternatives you can use instead of traditional japa beads.

- 1) Christian rosaries are a very good substitute. They have 54 beads, so when you chant two times around them, it is equal to one round on our japa beads (which have 108 beads).
- 2) You can make your own japa beads. Inmates have been very creative in coming up with systems to help them keep track of the rounds they chant. Here are a couple examples:
 - Shoelaces, or long strips of ripped cloth, or even sandwich wrappers (twisted and tied together), on which 108 knots are tied.

- A bottle with 108 aspirin (or any tiny objects). An inmate would empty it on his bed and put one aspirin back in the bottle for each mantra chanted. When all the aspirins were all back in the bottle, he knew he had chanted one round.
- A bunch of pencils cut up in 108 small pieces, with the centers hollowed up, then strung on a string.
- **3**) You can use your fingers as a counting device (see information below).

In Russia, at the beginning of the movement there, imprisoned devotees would roll up 108 little balls of bread and let them dry on a string (interestingly, the only food these devotees had every day was a small quantity of bread and, although starving, they would sacrifice some of that in order to make their "beads").

There are many other ways to creatively make up for the lack of official japa beads. Again, what is important is the focus, devotion, and clarity of pronunciation with which one chants Hare Krsna. When Krsna is pleased with our efforts, He *reveals* Himself to us, from within, more and more.

FINGER JAPA





Right hand Diagram A

Finger japa is a method that gets some getting used to. If you choose to try it, be patient. Once you master it, it becomes second nature and it is practical, as your hands are with your wherever you go! (3) Here's how finger japa works:

1) Beginning with the right hand, (Diagram A), extend the thumb to segment 1,

located on the middle of the 4th finger. Chant one complete maha-mantra.



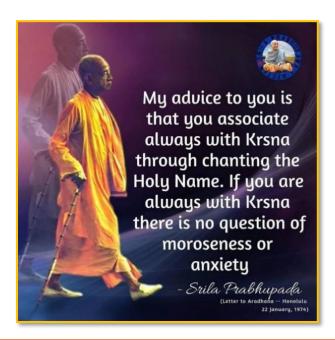
- 2) Next move the thumb down to segment 2, located at the bottom of the 4th finger. Again, chant one complete maha-mantra.
- 3) Continue the process, moving the thumb to each successive numbered segment, chanting one complete maha-mantra each time.
- 4) The left hand is to keep track of how many times one has chanted 10 mantras on the right hand; after finishing 10 repetitions of the maha-mantra with the right hand, begin using the left hand in a similar fashion, (diagram B), by placing the left thumb onto segment 1, located on the middle of the 4th finger.

The left hand is used for keeping track of each group of 10 maha mantras that you chant with the right hand. For instance, after you have chanted 50 repetitions of the maha mantra, your left thumb would then move up to segment 5 located at the top of the little finger of the left hand.

- **5**) Continue chanting in this way with both hands until all 10 numbered segments of the left hand have been completed.
- **6)** At this point, simply chant 8 more times withthe right hand. You have now finished one complete "round" of finger japa (108 Hare Kṛṣṇa maha-mantra), the equivalent of chanting one full round on japa beads.

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare



Gold Nugget!

Question: How does Kṛṣṇa Consciousness Differ from Samādhi?...

Prabhupāda: It is samādhi itself. Samādhi means to be absorbed in some particular type of thought. That is called samādhi. So if you are fully Kṛṣṇa conscious, that is samādhi. Twenty-four hours samādhi. Not that a periodical samādhi. Of course, samādhi is not, ordinary term. Suppose if he can remain in samādhi, say, for a little period, say, one hour, two hours, but Kṛṣṇa conscious person is in samādhi twenty-four hours, cent percent, because he is always thinking of Kṛṣṇa. That is being explained. If one performs yoga, taking shelter of Kṛṣṇa and always thinks of Kṛṣṇa, then he is in samādhi.

Lecture on Bhagavad-gita 7.1 — March 17, 1968, San Francisco

MEMORIES of Śrīla Prabhupāda

Abhirama das Remembers Srila Prabhupāda

Directly seeing and hearing from Srila Prabhupada removed any traces of doubt I may have had. It made it very clear to me that "this is a perfect master." I already knew that by reading his books and by following his path in a rudimentary way, but by directly seeing him, my conviction deepened. He was in harmony with the Divine. He was a true saint. Srila Prabhupada's mission was to avoid being tagged as God, or as a god. In those days gurus were talking about becoming God, but Srila Prabhupada was very clearly not God and not a god, but a saint [a pure devotee of the Lord]. To accept someone as a god is a kind of mass hypnosis, a mass agreement to be in delusion while deep in our heart we know that it's a great fake. But to see a real saint, that is a very profound truth.

Srila Prabhupada had a very powerful countenance. Once, three or four of us were walking with him from Henry Street to the old press building in Brooklyn, New York. We had to cross the freeway and a bridge and pass a very bad section of warehouses where stolen cars were stripped down. It was a chilly winter morning, and Srila Prabhupada was carrying his cane and walking with his head tilted up slightly. As he walked past some row houses, three tattered and torn homeless winos were lying on the warmth of the stoop, away from the wind. They appeared beaten by the world. As we came along they suddenly noticed Srila Prabhupada, and all three of them, without communicating to one another, stood up in a straight line like saluting soldiers, like someone had pulled them from the nape of the neck. Their eyes opened, and they looked at Srila Prabhupada with awe in their face and nodded at him in recognition. Srila Prabhupada turned and said, "Hare Krishna" and marched right by. It was a surprising thing. But that was Srila Prabhupada's countenance. People recognized him as somebody, a saintly person, even if they had no idea who he was.

I always felt that Srila Prabhupada believed in me more than I believed in myself, that he had more faith in me than I had in myself. Srila Prabhupada saw the best in us, and that was one of his strong leadership points. Of course, a person tends to see others as he sees himself. A thief will think everyone is trying to cheat him. Srila Prabhupada, being a saint, saw in us all good and saintly qualities. Of course, he could

realistically observe our faults, and he did so, but overall he saw the very best in us. And we felt, "I don't want to disappoint him. I've never been appreciated like this before, and I really like this



identity of being a pure, spiritual person and a servant of Krishna." This was a very strong and encouraging aspect of interacting with Prabhupada. He treated me as if I were a gentleman. He was polite and courteous and concerned about my well-being, which increased my desire to do something special for him and not to disappoint him.

Once in Calcutta I had a little tiff with my wife, and Srila Prabhupada somehow became aware of it. It was not known in the temple, but that day Prabhupada could see that I was disturbed and when he probed I mentioned that that we had had an argument. Srila Prabhupada was not only a powerful orator, a knower of the Supreme Truth and the mystery of the Bhagavat, but he was also kind to and interested in people around him, and he could also laugh heartily on hearing a good joke. In every respect he was a most sublime and developed person.

Another time, Prabhupada said to me, "Everything is so nice in the Western countries; if they would simply stop eating the cow. Isn't there any other kind of meat they can eat besides the cow?"

Once at midday Prabhupada was lying on his bed resting in London. I was chanting softly on my japa beads, attending to him to see if he needed anything. His eyes were closed, so he appeared to be resting, but suddenly he said, "The drum should not be louder than the voice." This was during a completely quiet, peaceful summer afternoon at Bhaktivedanta Manor. I didn't know what he was talking about. Most of the devotees were on sankirtan because they were eager to please Prabhupada, so the temple was practically empty. I listened very carefully and through the floor I

could hear arati going on in the temple room, which was underneath Prabhupada's room. I ran downstairs. There was one brahmachari playing the mridanga, one brahmachari playing kartals, and one pujari offering arati. While seemingly sleeping, Prabhupada gave that instruction, "The drum should not be louder than the voice." Prabhupāda's hearing was extremely sharp.

I observed Prabhupāda's so-called sleep every single day in those last six months. When Srila Prabhupada slept he would close his eyes, usually fold his hands across his chest, and relax his mouth slightly. I never heard him snore. But when he awoke, I never saw any grogginess. His eyes would open calmly, and he would be fully alert. There was no intermediate period, which I found very surprising, especially considering his condition, how little sleep he got, and all the physical traumas that he underwent, like surgery and traveling in bad conditions. Another of Prabhupada's surprising characteristics was that sometimes he would have a casual conversation, and midway in the conversation he would become quiet. The conversation wouldn't progress to a conclusion. After a while there would be a new subject, or nothing. Suddenly, a week or two later, he would start talking in the middle of a sentence. So I'd search my memory, and I'd remember the conversation that we had a week or two before, and that he had again begun talking exactly where it stopped. Prabhupada expected me to remember. He certainly hadn't forgotten,

because for him there was no space of time in there. I was absolutely amazed at the incredible power of his memory and the fact that there was no time in his consciousness. It was not a limiting factor for him.

At the end, for five or six hours at different times during the day I would massage Prabhupada. By then there were a lot of devotees in Vrindavan, so I was able to get more sleep. I would go to the next room and lie down knowing that there were at least six or eight people watching and they would call me if anything were needed. One hot night I was sleeping under the fan in Prabhupada's prasadam room in Vrindavan, when a devotee roused me and said, "Srila Prabhupada's calling for you." I went in the room, and apparently some sound had been disturbing Prabhupada's sleep. He had asked the devotees what it was, but they didn't know. They couldn't hear anything. So he said, "Call Abhiram." When I came in, Prabhupada said, "What is that sound?" I listened carefully and just barely made out in the distance a slight "whoo, whoo, whoo," which was the ceiling fan I was sleeping under. I said, "Oh, Prabhupada, that is the ceiling fan I am sleeping under. I'll turn it off." He said, "No, no." He put his hand on my hand, "It is for your comfort." I said, "Srila Prabhupada we are here only for your comfort." He said, "No, no, no." I said, "No, I don't mind, Prabhupada. I'll turn it off." Srila Prabhupada was always very considerate.

Book Distribution Stories!

MEETING MY TEACHER

By Geeta Bhandari, — at Coventry City Centre, England.

Today, in Coventry (England), I stopped a senior gentleman who revealed he was familiar with the Bhagavad-gita, having been a schoolteacher for decades. As we spoke further, I was left stunned as I realized he was my teacher in my final year at primary school - Mr. James!

When I quoted his name, he was taken aback. Excitedly, I told him that I recognized him when he mentioned being the deputy at the primary school I attended. Our paths crossed after approximately 34 years!



I discussed Srila Prabhupada's Bhagavad-gita As It Is, emphasizing his meticulous word for word translation from Sanskrit to English. I explained it's a synopsis of life's purpose and unravels life's profound mysteries.

Mr. James warmly accepted the Bhagavad-gita revealing his unconventional approach to teaching; he conveyed his commitment to stimulating insights and realizations within himself so that he is able to bring about a deeper understanding and awareness for his students.

Despite nearing retirement, Mr. James expressed that a teacher never retires from the desire to learn and enlighten oneself on the meaning of life and above all, to continue to share the wisdom to others.

I was deeply moved by Mr. James. His wisdom truly shines through, recognizing that we are lifelong students. I actually do recall him as being a good and compassionate teacher.

I was left marveled at the beauty of Srila Prabhupada's arrangement, reuniting me with an old teacher who had once bestowed knowledge upon me as a kid. Now, I had the privilege of presenting him with the most sacred, life-changing wisdom. Mr. James is a fortunate soul...retirement is the commencement of a new journey of knowledge and growth, graciously gifted to him by Srila Prabhupada.

SURPRISE MERCY —By Dayamaya Dasi

It was early in the day, not long after I'd begun my efforts on Auckland's Queen Street [New Zealand]. The street was buzzing with the usual morning energy when

I spotted a man with long hair, dressed in pink pants. He had a carefree, almost ethereal aura—a modern-day hippie, I thought. Unsure of his background, I approached him anyway. We struck up a conversation, and he introduced himself as Manu.

"Manu?" I responded, a little surprised. "That name is mentioned in the Bhagavadgita." I then held out the 1st and 12th Cantos of Srimad-Bhagavatam, just to show him what I had. To my further surprise, Manu showed genuine interest, so I invited him to check out the full set of books at my trolley. As I explained how the Srimad-Bhagavatam is like an amazing encyclopedia of

spiritual knowledge, he did something even more surprising—he sat down right there on the

street, next to the trolley, and started flipping through the volumes.

"This set is incredible," I said, trying to gauge his reaction. "It's not much, only \$450." His jaw dropped open. "Is that for everything?" he asked.

Afraid I'd overwhelmed him, I offered a little perspective. "Yeah, \$450 is nothing these days—like a pair of shoes or a cheap phone. It's a great value for such wisdom." Manu paused for a moment, then perked up and said, "Yeah, exactly! These books are only \$450?"

Seeing his enthusiasm, I ventured further, "You know, you could sponsor a set for a library or a hospital." To my amazement, he said, "Sure, why not? Let's do it!" He took out his card and paid on the spot.

I couldn't believe it—after two years of working hard on Queen Street, this was such a pleasant and unexpected success. Given his laid-back, hippie-like

vibe, I had a further thought: "You know, it'd be nice if you took the set home with you. It will bring positive energy and create a spiritual atmosphere."

He was intrigued.

"I can keep them in my house?"

"Absolutely," I replied.

There was just one problem. I didn't have the complete set on me, only a few random volumes, so I suggested we meet in the afternoon when I could give him a fresh, complete set. He agreed, saying he'd be free after 1 p.m. At 1:30 I met Manu in a car park and handed him the full set of Srimad-Bhagavatam. As we chatted, I noticed he was drawn to the Bhagavad-gita. Fortunately, I had a stack with me, just in case.

"Would you like a copy of the Bhagavad-gita, too?" I asked. His eyes lit up, "I've been wanting to read this!"

I hesitated for a moment, unsure if I should ask for more, but I went for it. "Would you mind donating a little more for this one?"

He responded without hesitation: "Sure! How much?" "Maybe \$20?"

He smiled and added, "And a little more for your time." I told him \$25 would be fine.

As we wrapped up, I got to know more about Manu. To my surprise, he wasn't a hippie at all. He's actually an IT professional working in healthcare, helping develop systems for treating bowel cancer. His partner, from South Africa, is also in IT but now transitioning to

Śrī -Sri Gaura Nitai are incredibly merciful, yet They constantly raise the bar, pushing us to beg more deeply for Their mercy, and to realize that true dependence on Them is the way to spiritual advancement.

Excerpts from inmates' letters

My dear Brother Upendra Dasa,

May the love and blessings of our Murli Manohar Krishna be with all of you. I write this letter with a lot of gratitude and love for all of you who are a part of the ISKCON ministry, as I sit here reading your *Freedom Newsletter* for the month of May 2024.

I want you to know that I have regularly received your newsletters for the past 2 years. They have all been soul-elevating, and I have regularly shared them with two other Hindus here at this prison: Johnson and Steve. We were also lucky to receive videos and malas, which were sent to the prison for us. Even to this day, I use your malas to chant at least 2-3 hours a day. I also read Bhagavat-gita at least 3 times a day. In the past 2 years, I might have read the whole Gita at least over 120 times. It gives me the much-needed strength to go on and also keeps me anchored.

I just wanted to take time to say that I love you all and thank you very much for all your support and prayers. With Krishna's Supreme Love and Grace!

Suresh K.

We have a service once a week [to share Kṛṣṇa consciousness], and we listen to the CDs you sent and watched the two movies; *Hare Kṛishna!* and *Guide to Self-Realization*. We also chant the maha-mantra and read the Bhagavad-gita As It Is. I never ran a service in my life or been to one. I try my best to make sure we understand as much as we can, as everyone looks up to me [for guidance]. Thank you. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Eddie C. —Welch, West Virginia

Hare Krishna Bhakti-lata! I have been informed and have seen the large amount of book resources and magazines you have sent to our chapel facility! Thank you very, very much! Many have pursued the selections and are showing interest. Many, many thanks to

KRSNA for his mercy in making these resources available and accepted by our prison facility so that the transcendental message of His love for humanity may reach the many lost souls in need of spiritual direction back to Godhead! Many Blessings, my humble obeisances, and heartfelt gratitude! Hare Krishna!

Victor R. — Kingman, Arizona

I'm requesting the Kṛṣṇa book, hardcover please! What an amazing time in life for learning this wonderful science. Krishna makes time go by so much easier, and He is most kind to a rascal like me. Haribol. May He enlighten my days forever like this. Thank you guys for everything you do for us here in prison. This newsletter is always a gift every time I get it. Hare Krishna! —Just another short letter to say a heartfelt thank you for the books. Thank you for your kindness and mercy in providing the books. I've already read two of them. My dear friend loves, I mean this dude lives for these fantasy style games like Dungeons and Dragons. He spends hours upon hours at the table playing, drinking down coffee. Yet when I want him to give time to engage in chanting and reading well, he just doesn't have the time. O Krsna! I just didn't know what to do or say. I'm nowhere perfect devotee myself, so what right did I have to tell him about his activities. I became so frustrated that I just avoided him. But with Krsna's mercy, by reading the books, I got some real insight. In a nutshell – Krsna will rectify the situation. I've learned that as long as my friend is engaged in Krsna consciousness, he is in. I know he is sincere and is totally convinced that Krsna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Plus, his service to Krsna cannot be judged by appearance only. I do appreciate IPM for the support and books to study. Thank you for your kindness and service.

Charles B. —Tennessee Colony, Texas



Calendar Calendar

NOVEMBER 2024

- 02 Nov 2024 Appearance Day of Rasikananda
- 02 Nov 2024 Govardhana Puja
- 03 Nov 2024 Disappearance Day of Sri Vasudeva Ghosh
- 05 Nov 2024 Disappearance Day of Srila Prabhupada
- 09 Nov 2024 Disappearance Day of Sri Gadadhara Dasa Goswami
- 09 Nov 2024 Disappearance Day of Sri Dhananjaya Pandita
- 09 Nov 2024 Disappearance Day of Sri Srinivasa Acharya
- 12 Nov 2024 Utthana Ekadasi
- 12 Nov 2024 Disappearance Day of Srila Gaura Kisora Dasa Babaji Maharaja
- 15 Nov 2024 Disappearance Day of Sri Bhugarbha Goswami
- 15 Nov 2024 Disappearance Day of Sri Kasisvara Pandita
- 15 Nov 2024 Appearance Day of Sri Nimbarkacharya
- 15 Nov 2024 Last Day of Caturmasya
- 26 Nov 2024 Utpanna Ekadasi
- 26 Nov 2024 Disappearance Day of Sri Narahari Sarakara Thakura
- 27 Nov 2024 Disappearance Day of Sri Kaliya Krsnadasa
- 27 Nov 2024 Disappearance Day of Sri Saranga Thakura

DECEMBER 2024

- 11 Dec 2024 Advent of Srimad Bhagavat Gita
- 11 Dec 2024 Moksada Mahadvadashi
- 15 Dec 2024 Katyayani Vrata Ends
- 19 Dec 2024 Disappearance Day of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura
- 26 Dec 2024 Saphala Ekadasi

