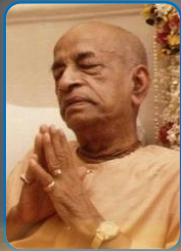


Freedom Newsletter



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

ISKCON Prison Ministry / July 2024

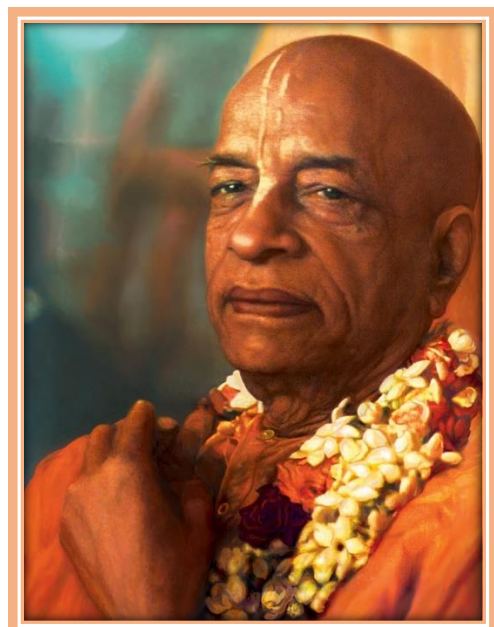
PO Box 2676
Alachua, FL 32616

HUMAN SUFFERING AND AN UNJUST GOD

This conversation between His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and social worker Ashoka Chugani took place in Bombay, India.

Mr. Chugani: I feel that your Krsna consciousness movement is doing very valuable work here in India. Perhaps you know of our success, also. We are making arrangements for many villagers in the outlying areas around Bombay to receive greatly needed eye operations. We have facilities for 5,200 patients.

Srila Prabhupada: We are following *Bhagavad-gita* as it is. *Bhagavad-gita* doesn't teach that you help the people by taking care of their eyes. Krsna does not give us any such philosophy in *Bhagavad-gita*. That is your own idea. But we are applying *Bhagavad-gita* as it is. That is the difference between your work and ours. Our program is, instead of giving relief only to the eyes, we give people real relief. If you give a man Krsna consciousness, he won't have to take another birth in this material world. That means no more material bodies-no more eyes, no more disease. This is real relief from suffering. Somebody's taking care of the eyes, somebody's taking care of the stomach, somebody the teeth, somebody something else,



on and on. But this will not solve the problem. The real problem, *Bhagavad-gita* says, is *janma-mrtyu-jaravyadhi*—birth, death, old age, and disease. Because you took birth, you have these eyes, so you’re bound to have eye disease. Birth, death, old age, and disease: because you have accepted birth, you must accept old age, disease, and death. Hospitals may give some temporary relief, but that is not the solution. The solution is to stop birth, death, old age, and disease. If you are able to give that solution, then there will be no more eye trouble, ever.

Suppose a diseased man goes to a doctor for treatment.

His symptoms are sometimes headache, sometimes eye-ache, sometimes stomachache. Now, if the doctor gives medicine only for the symptoms, is that the cure? No. This man has a disease, and if you cure the disease, the symptoms will be cured automatically. Similarly, *everyone within this material world is suffering from repeated birth and death*. But *Bhagavad-gita* is meant for giving the real cure—how not to take another birth in this material world.

Krsna’s advice in the *Bhagavad-gita* is that we tolerate this temporary suffering. Just as your body is not permanent, so your diseases are also not permanent. You should tolerate the temporary suffering and solve the real problem—you must stop your repetition of birth and death. But people do not know that birth and death can be stopped, so they are simply busy with the temporary problems.

The *Bhagavad-gita* explains how, on leaving his body at the time of death, one can go back home, back to Godhead—*tyaktva deham punar janma naiti mam eti*. No more birth in this material world—that is the real cure for all suffering.

Mr. Chugani: What about the problem of starvation? We are working to solve...

Srila Prabhupada: Starvation? This is not a problem. The *Vedas* say, *nityo nityanam cetanas cetanana/ eko bahunam yo vidadhati kaman*. God is perfectly providing food for all living beings. If someone is not getting any food, that is a blessing. It is God’s arrangement to correct him.

Suppose a child is diseased and his father does not give him any food to eat. That is not starvation—it is his father’s blessing. It is the cure. Why should the child complain? The so-called starvation problem is just a



As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, similarly, the soul accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones.

Bhagavad-gita 2.22, Translation
Srila Prabhupada

mental concoction. But we don’t concoct anything; we get our knowledge from the scriptures. *Tat te ’nukampam susamiksamano bhunjana evatma-krtam vipakam*: if a devotee of the Lord is starving, he doesn’t complain. He takes it as God’s blessing. “I did something wrong, so God has put me into this difficulty. It is His blessing.” This is our view; this is scripture.

People often ask this question: “How can God be unkind to some people and kind to others? It’s unjust.” But this is foolishness. God is not unjust; God is good, but people do not understand God. Because you are

unintelligent, when you see that people are starving you say that God is not good. But the fact is that *you* are not good. Each man’s suffering is simply his own fault. So a devotee takes suffering as Krsna’s blessing, and because a devotee is thinking like that, his liberation is guaranteed (*mukti-pade sa daya-bhak*).

Mr. Chugani: The ways of God in the world are difficult for us to understand. They do seem unjust.

Srila Prabhupada: Actually, you don’t believe in God. And this godlessness is the real problem. You only believe in God if God is your servant and order supplier. “God, if You don’t help me, I won’t serve You.” People think of God as their servant and order supplier.

One of my Godbrothers—from Germany—told me that in the

Second World War, when the men of Germany went to fight, all the women were left at home. So, they went to the church and prayed to God that their husbands, their fathers, and their sons would return home. But none of them returned home, and the people all became atheists. “Ah, it is useless to go to the church! I prayed so much for my husband, but he did not come. It is useless!” So this is their understanding of God. When the war was declared, they didn’t consult God. But when their husband is going to die, then they petition God. They order God to make their husbands return from the war unharmed. “God did not bring him back. He did not carry out my order. So God is unjust. We’re not interested in God.”

And this is the attitude here, also. When people act sinfully, God is never consulted. But when they suffer, then they cry to God. And if He doesn’t supply their order, they become atheists. “God is unjust!” they say. This is their rascaldom. 🌸

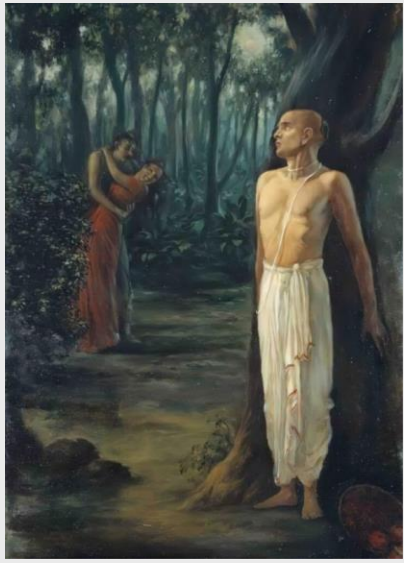
STORIES FROM THE ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

THE DELIVERANCE OF AJAMILA

A story from the 6th Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Translation and commentary by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

There was once a young *brahmana* named Ajamila (*aj-a-meel*), who was a reservoir of good character and conduct. He was mild and gentle, always truthful, well versed in the Vedic scriptures, and very pure.

One day, on the request of his father, Ajamila went to the forest to collect fruit, flowers and grasses. On the way home, he came upon a very lusty low-class man embracing and kissing a prostitute. Both of them were drunk, and the man was smiling,



singing and enjoying himself without shame. The prostitute's eyes were rolling in intoxication, and her dress had become loose.

When Ajamila saw her, the lusty desires in his heart awakened, and in illusion he fell under their control. Remembering the instructions of the scriptures, Ajamila

tried not to gaze at the woman. He strained to control his lusty desires with the help of his knowledge and intellect, but he failed and as a result lost all his good sense. In the days that followed he always thought about the prostitute, and within a short time he took her as a servant in his house and abandoned all the brahminical (virtuous) principles.

Ajamila eventually abandoned his beautiful wife, who came from a very respectable family, and his parents, who suffered in their old age. He began spending the money he had inherited from his father on various gifts to satisfy the prostitute. Thus Ajamila spent his long life irresponsibly breaking all the rules and regulations of the holy scriptures. He was unclean and addicted to forbidden activities. Living extravagantly, he maintained his family by harassing others, cheating, gambling and theft.

Over the eighty-eight years of Ajamila's life, he fathered ten sons by the prostitute. Ajamila's youngest son, whom he named Narayana, was naturally very dear to both his father and mother. The small child's broken language and awkward movements greatly endeared him to old Ajamila, who always took care of him and enjoyed his activities.

Narayana is a name for God, and thus, unintentionally, the old man was always chanting the holy name of the Lord. Although he was referring to his son and not the original Narayana, Ajamila was becoming purified because the holy name of Narayana is very powerful. Always taking care of his son and calling his name, Ajamila was not aware that his own life was now exhausted. As the time of death approached for the foolish Ajamila, he began thinking exclusively of his son Narayana.

At the moment of death, Ajamila saw three fearful persons with fierce and twisted faces, and hair standing erect on their bodies. They were the Yamadutas (*ya-ma-doo-tas*), who are the servants of Yamaraja (*ya-ma-raj*), the Lord of death. They have jurisdiction over all sinful living beings and had come to take Ajamila away to their master's abode. When Ajamila saw them, he became extremely fearful and bewildered, and because of his attachment to his child, who was playing a short distance away, he loudly and tearfully called the child's name: "Narayana! Narayana!"

The Yamadutas were forcibly pulling the soul from the body of the dying Ajamila. Immediately, three resplendent personalities arrived at the spot. They were beautiful, glowing, and decorated with shining ornaments. They were the Viṣṇudūtas (*vish-noo-doo-tas*), the messengers of the Supreme Lord Vishnu (Narayana). With resounding voices, they ordered the Yamadutas to stop, and thus saved Ajamila from death.

The Viṣṇudūtas had heard the holy name of their master, Narayana, from the mouth of the dying Ajamila, who had chanted without offense because he had chanted in complete anxiety.

When the Yamadutas were thus forbidden from carrying out their mission, they exclaimed, “Who are you, sirs, that you dare challenge the jurisdiction of Yamaraja? Whose servants are you, where have you come from, and why are you forbidding us to touch Ajamila? You may know that this man Ajamila did not undergo atonement for his sins. Because of his sinful life, we must take him to the court of Yamaraja for punishment. According to the extent of his sinful acts, he will be punished and thus purified.”

The Viṣṇudūtas replied, “Ajamila has already atoned not only for sins performed in one life but for those performed in millions of lives, for in a helpless condition he chanted the holy name of Narayana. Although he was calling his son’s name, he nevertheless uttered the four syllables *na-ra-ya-na*. Simply by chanting the name of Narayana in this way, he sufficiently atoned for the sinful reactions of millions of lives.

“Chanting the holy name of the Lord is the best process of atonement for a thief, for a drunkard, for one who betrays a friend or relative, for one who kills a *brahmana*, for one who indulges in sex with the wife of his *guru* or another superior, for one who murders women, the king or his father, for one who slaughters cows and for all other sinful men. Simply by chanting the holy name of the Lord, such sinful persons can attract His attention. “At the time of death, Ajamila helplessly and very loudly chanted the holy name of the Lord. That chanting alone has already freed him from the reactions of all sinful life. Therefore, O servants of Yamaraja, do not try to take him to your master for punishment. One who chants the holy name is immediately freed from the reactions of unlimited sins, even if he chants indirectly to indicate something else, jokingly, for musical entertainment, or even neglectfully. This is accepted by all the learned scholars of the scriptures. If one chants the holy name of Hari and then dies because of an accidental misfortune, one is immediately absolved from having to enter hellish life, even though he is sinful.

“Although one may neutralize the reactions of sinful life through austerity, charity, vows and other such methods, these pious activities cannot uproot the material desires in one’s heart. However, if one serves

the Personality of Godhead, he is immediately freed from all such contaminations. If a person unaware of the effective potency of a certain medicine takes that medicine, it will act even without his knowledge because the medicine’s potency does not depend on the patient’s understanding. Similarly, even though one does not know the value of chanting the holy name of the Lord, if one chants knowingly or unknowingly, the chanting will be very effective. However, if one acts sinfully, thinking the holy name will absolve him of the reactions, commits the greatest offense and will suffer accordingly.”



The Viṣṇudūtas then released the *brahmana* Ajamila from the bondage of the Yamadutas and thus saved him from death. Ajamila, now free from fear, came to his senses and immediately offered respects to the Viṣṇudūtas by bowing his head at their feet. He was extremely pleased by their presence, for they had saved him from the Yamadutas. When the Viṣṇudūtas saw that Ajamila was attempting to say something, they suddenly disappeared.

Having heard the discourse between the Yamadutas and the Viṣṇudūtas, Ajamila could now understand the transcendental religious principles concerning the relationship between the living being and the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Furthermore, since Ajamila had heard their glorification of God, he was now a perfectly pure devotee and could thus remember all his past sinful activities, which he greatly regretted having performed.

“I am such a sinful person,” he said. “But now since I have this opportunity, this second chance, I must completely control my mind, life and senses and always engage in devotional service so that I may not again fall into the deep darkness and ignorance of material life. Because I identified myself with my body, I was subjected to desires for sense gratification and thus performed many pious and impious acts. That was my material bondage.

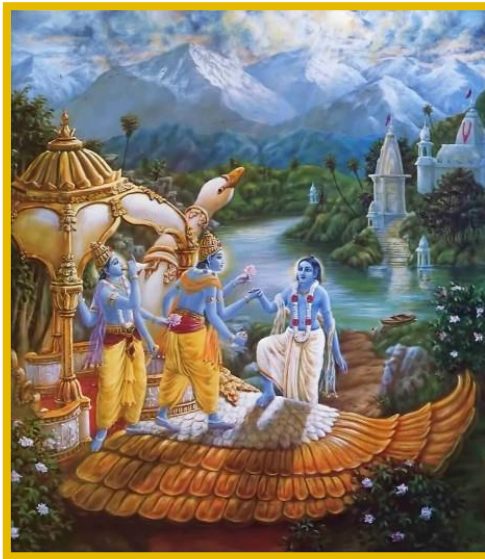
“But now I shall disentangle myself from that bondage. Being a most fallen soul, I was victimized by illusions and was like a dancing dog led around by a woman’s hand. Now I shall give up these lusty desires and free myself from these illusions. I shall become a merciful, well-wishing friend to all living entities and always absorb myself in Krishna consciousness.”

Because of a moment's association with devotees of the Supreme Lord, Ajamila was able to detach himself with determination from the material conception of life.

Freed from all material attraction, he immediately started for the city of Hardwar on the Ganges River. In Hardwar, Ajamila stayed at a Viṣṇu temple, where he executed *bhakti-yoga*, the process of devotional service. He controlled his senses and fully applied his mind in the service of the Lord. When his intelligence and mind were fixed on the form of the Lord, Ajamila once again saw before him the four celestial messengers of Viṣṇu. Recognizing them as the ones he had seen previously, he offered his respects by bowing down before them.

The Viṣṇudūtas had gone away for some time to allow Ajamila to become firmly fixed in meditation on the Lord. Now that his devotion had matured, they returned to take him back to the spiritual world. Upon seeing the Viṣṇudūtas, Ajamila gave up his material body and regained his original spiritual body, which was just suitable for an associate of the Lord.

This is the result of perfection in Krishna consciousness: after giving up the material body, one is immediately transferred to the spiritual world in one's original spiritual body to become an associate of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Accompanied by the Viṣṇudūtas, Ajamila then boarded a spiritual, golden airplane that took him through the airways, directly to the abode of the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, the husband of the goddess of fortune. Although



he had been destined to be carried away to hell by the Yamadutas, Ajamila was saved by the Viṣṇudūtas and was able to go back home, back to Godhead, because he chanted the holy name of the Lord at the time of his death. Therefore if a person faithfully and inoffensively chants the holy name of the Lord, who can doubt that he will return to Godhead?

At the time of death one is certainly bewildered because his bodily functions are in disorder. At that time, even one who throughout his life has practiced chanting the holy name of the Lord may not be able to chant the Hare Krishna *mantra* very distinctly. Nevertheless, such a person receives all the benefits of chanting the holy name. While the body is fit, therefore, we should chant the holy name of the Lord loudly, distinctly. If one does so, it is quite possible that even at the time of death he will be able to properly chant the holy name of the

Lord with love and faith and return home, back to Godhead, without a doubt. 🌸

Question: *should I chant the name of Narayana or Krishna?*

Answer: *in this age of Kali, the religion of the age is to chant the Hare Krishna maha mantra:*

**Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama
Rama Rama Hare Hare**

harer nāma harer nāma
harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva
nāsty eva gatir anyathā

In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy, the only means of deliverance is the chanting of the holy names of the Lord. There is no other way. There is no other way.

C.C. Madhya, 6.242

Everyone is God's son.... If you trust in God, then you must be equally kind and merciful to all living entities. That is God consciousness.

(Lecture, 20 April 1973, Los Angeles)



His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami
Srila Prabhupada
(Founder Acharya - ISKCON)

Excerpts from inmates' letters

I am reading *Beyond Birth and Death*. The mail is at this time going to remain Text Behind, and as long as the books are marked religious literature I will still receive them. So please send what you can. I am finding the literature very enlightening and informational.

Dane H. —Sturtevant, Wisconsin

Hare Krishna Bhakti-lata!
Thank you so much for the copies of the books. I will diligently read and ask questions along the way and treasure both volumes as gifts from Krishna, delivered by His wonderful servant. I am replete with all the recommended resources listed on the booklist you sent me. I hope to be a faithful and humble servant of Krishna for my remaining years on this earth and I thank you for all your kindness and patience extended to me over the course of more than two years. My heartfelt gratitude and humble obeisances. Hare Krishna!

Victor R. — Kingman, Arizona

Hare Krishna, Bhakti-lata Dasi,
I am a facilitator of the Buddhist group here in Ft. Dodge. I was given the chance to look at your materials and help distribute them in a proper manner. We gave some to the Taoist group and put books on our shelves in the prison chapel library. I have seen someone already with the Krsna Book, and all the Bhagavad-Gita texts are checked out as well. Guys seem to dig your vibes; thank you very much for the DVDs and CDs as well. We have been learning to do mantras and chants, so this stuff is very useful. THANK YOU VERY MUCH. Sincerely,

Dennis S. —Fort Dodge, Iowa

The following excerpts are from previous years.

Thank you very much for all the times you have helped me to receive what is to me THE best magazine in the world. I mean I have learned more now and have a clear understanding of what is going on, not only in my mind but I feel it in my soul too.

Mark F. —Susanville, California

I can't express how vital BTG is in helping me maintain my sanity in this environment. I set up my makeshift

altar on my bed in this 50-men dormitory-style barrack almost daily, time permitting. I line up photos of my spiritual master, Their Lordships Sri-Sri Radha Nila-Madhava (from Houston) and Baladeva, Subhadra & Jagannatha (from Philadelphia). Then I lay out copies of two or three BTGs, opened to harinam photos or articles, etc. I rise around 1:30 or 2:00 AM, clean up, and then start on my japa. All the men can see me do this daily, and a few ask questions or sometimes make sarcastic or crude comments behind my back. So be it. Some I can help, some are beyond help!

Bruce Kirwan —Pine Bluff, Arizona



Hello, prabhu, just wanted to thank you for the BTGs. They mean the world to me. Haribol! With respectful obeisances, your servant.

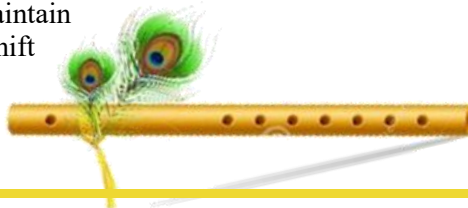
Kalki Das —Corcoran, California

I received the *Back to Godhead*, which was sent to me and I wanted to write and thank you and everyone else who made it possible for me to receive a new issue. I have been a member of ISKCON for about two years now and some of my pen pals have sent me back issues of BTG and I thoroughly enjoy the magazine. I would subscribe to the magazine, but I just don't have the funds available, so being able to receive a fresh copy is a treat. Then again, any copy I receive is new and fresh to me and I read and re-read every copy several times, before I set them out for others to read, in the hopes that maybe others will join me in the quest for Krsna realization.

Charles B. —Tennessee Colony, Texas

I want to thank you so much for mercifully ministering to me on a personal level in the form of sending transcendental items for my sadhana. I have received the two BTG magazines that you sent; one just recently and the other some months ago. Greatly appreciated! For when my mind is disturbed, which is quite often these days, and I cannot concentrate well enough to read a book I can always turn to BTG so as to simply look at the spiritually potent pictures, and at times, read a short article or a few captions and 'Vedic Thoughts.' Again, mata, I am certainly grateful for these wonderful gifts given in Krsna consciousness. Uplifted, as well!

Jason M. —Columbia, South Carolina



Book Distribution Stories!

LIVE AS IF YOU WERE TO DIE TOMORROW, LEARN AS IF YOU WERE TO LIVE FOREVER

by Guru Sakti Devi Dasi

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 stunned as I realized that 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, emphasizing his meticulous word-for-word translation from Sanskrit to English. I explained that it is a synopsis of life's purpose and unravels life's profound mysteries.

Mr. James warmly accepted the Bhagavad-Gita, divulging 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 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. 🌸

MERCY AS IT IS ON THE GITA'S ADVENT DAY

Nélio approached us, asking: "What is your religion?" Mahananda Murari explained that we exist to serve God, and the Hare Krishna Mantra is, precisely, a request for service. After a frank and relaxed conversation, Nelio and his sister Neliane revealed that they now had a totally different view of us, and happily bought a Bhagavad-Gita! 🌸



Manohara went out after the Sunday Festival and was worried about his chances of distributing Gitas so late at night. The first people he approached were friendly. The man said, "Listen, I have to show you something," and handed Manohara his to-do list for the day. One of the items still unfulfilled was, "Buy a Bhagavad-Gita." Manohara couldn't believe it. He left the man and his friend with a Gita each, plus several other books. 🌸



PANEL DISCUSSION IN NEW JERSEY

In March 2024, one of our IPM volunteers, Govindanandini Dasi, was invited by Chaplain Woolever to participate in a panel discussion at Saint Peter's Prep School in Jersey City, New Jersey. Below is her invitation.

Before I dive into it, I just want to say how moved I am by your work. It is encouraging to know that people who find themselves intertwined in our criminal justice system have access to people like you. Each spring, St. Peter's has an Arrupe Justice Initiative. Inspired by Jesuit Pedro Arrupe. The annual event strives to raise awareness about different justice concerns and even strategize about how to become involved. Our Arrupe theme for this year is pilgrimaging in and with the prison system. I am working with twenty reflective upperclassmen to create a week of reflections and activities to help guide our Prep community on an introductory journey into the realities of the US prison system. They are really interested in learning from people who have experienced being in prison firsthand. We understand that rejoining society after being incarcerated comes with many challenges, and thought that we could potentially get closer to the real voice of people who have or are in prison in a panel discussion with persons who have provided religious and spiritual care to inmates.

The school itself is affiliated with the Catholic tradition, but students were enthused by the idea of hearing from people of other religious traditions.

Chaplain Susan Woolever —New Jersey

Below is a description of the event itself, by Govindanandini Dasi.

I have been one of the ISKCON Prison Ministry volunteers since 2013, corresponding with prison inmates via letters, email and phone calls. I assist them in navigating their spiritual journey using Srila Prabhupada's books

and Krishna Consciousness. My role involves writing letters, answering questions, encouraging and supporting inmates who show interest in reading Srila Prabhupada's books.

Recently I was invited to participate in a panel discussion at Saint Peter's Prep School in Jersey City, New Jersey. There, on Wednesday, March 20th, I had the



opportunity to speak about ISKCON Prison Ministry's contributions. The Catholic High School arranged a program to introduce their students to the realities of the US prison system and raise awareness about the challenges faced by inmates through an interfaith discussion panel. This panel included individuals who have

experience working with the prison population for religious and spiritual care. I represented the Hindu faith and ISKCON Prison Ministry

on this panel, alongside a Christian Pastor, a Muslim Imam, and a New Jersey Assemblyman. I elaborated on how ISKCON Prison Ministry provides a holistic spiritual support program to inmates and helps create a platform for them to practice the 'spiritual dimension' in their lives. I also shared how the Ministry volunteers celebrate inmates' spiritual progress by publishing—in the monthly Freedom Newsletter—their devotional expressions through writings, poems, and art. It was a proud moment for me to speak about the IPM volunteer community, which serves the mission of Srila Prabhupada, as encapsulated in his quote, "The holistic cure for society's ills, both individually and collectively, is to give an equal chance to all to practice spirituality and to understand the love of God."

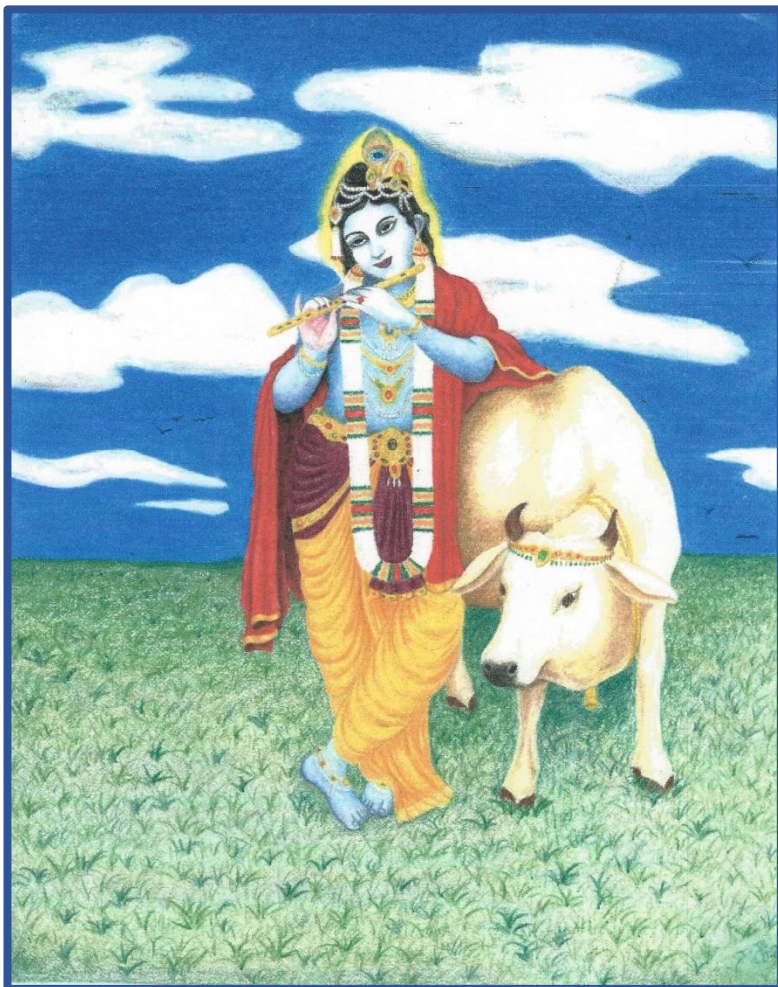
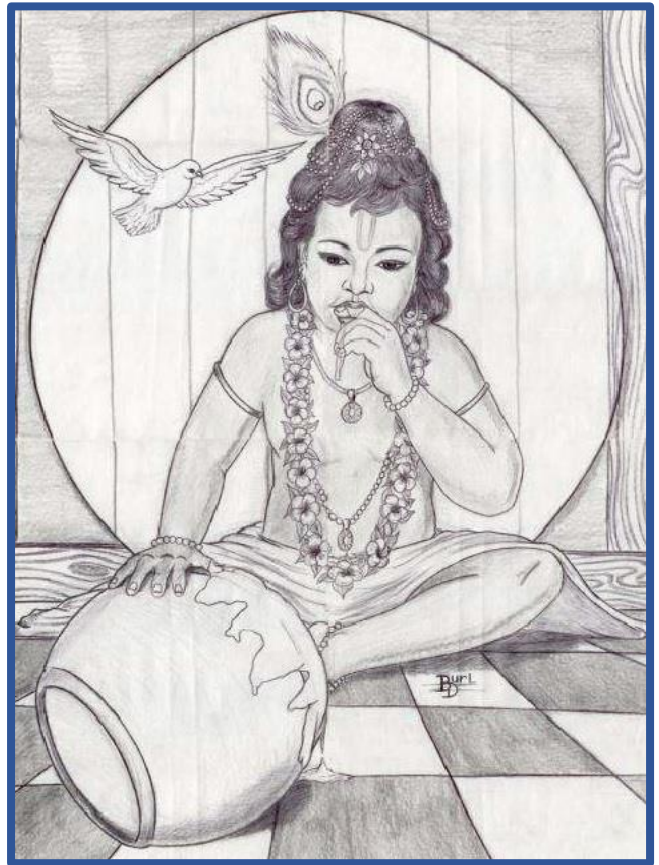


Due to the nature of this student assembly, there wasn't much scope for comments or questions afterwards, though the atmosphere was one of appreciation. The organizers were very grateful and happy that the Hindu faith was represented there, so that their students could have the

perspective from a non-Abrahamic religion as well. 🌸

Inmate Artwork

RIGHT: Child Krishna, stealing butter.
—by inmate Burl Dees -Florida



LEFT: Krishna with one of His cows
—by unknown inmate.

Calendar

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 Goswami
- 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 New York
- 31 July 2024 - **Kamika Ekadashi**

AUGUST 2024

- 08 Aug 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Raghunandan Thakura
- 08 Aug 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Vamsidasa Babaji
- 16 Aug 2024 - **Pavitropana Ekadashi**
- 17 Aug 2024 - Disappearance Day of Srila Rupa Goswami
- 17 Aug 2024 - Disappearance Day of Sri Gauridasa Pandita
- 19 Aug 2024 - **Appearance Day of Lord Balarama**
- 20 Aug 2024 - Second Month of Caturmasya Begins
- 20 Aug 2024 - Srila Prabhupada's Departure for the USA
- 26 Aug 2024 - **Sri Kṛṣṇa Janmastami** (Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance day)
- 27 Aug 2024 - **Appearance Day of Srila Prabhupada**
- 30 Aug 2024 - **Annada Ekadasi**

SEPTEMBER 2024

- 08 Sept 2024 - Srimati Sita Thakurani Appearance Day
- 11 Sept 2024 - **Radhastami : Appearance of Srimati Radharani**
- 14 Sept 2024 - **Parsva Ekadashi**
- 15 Sept 2024 - Appearance of Sri Vamana Deva
- 15 Sept 2024 - Appearance Day of Sri Jiva Goswami
- 16 Sept 2024 - Appearance Day of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura
- 17 Sept 2024 - Disappearance Day of Srila Haridasa Thakura
- 18 Sept 2024 - Acceptance of Sannyasa by Srila Prabhupada
- 19 Sept 2024 - Third Month of Caturmasya Begins
- 24 Sept 2024 - Srila Prabhupada's arrival in the USA
- 28 Sept 2024 - **Indira Ekadasi**

What is a Vyasa-Puja Celebration?

This year, on August 27, is the day when Śrīla Prabhupāda appeared on this earth.

Every year, his disciples celebrate his appearance day with fasting (till noon), reading offerings devotees wrote, kīrtana, and honoring a prasadam feast cooked in his honor.

Why do we do that? As Prabhupāda himself explains:

"Actually there is no difference between hearing directly from Krishna and hearing directly from Krishna via a bona fide spiritual master like Vyasa. The spiritual master is the representative of Vyasadeva also. Therefore, according to the Vedic system, on the birthday of the spiritual master the disciples conduct the ceremony called Vyasa-puja."

Bhagavad-Gita As It Is, 18.75, purport

We want to encourage all of you to write a Vyasa-puja offering glorifying Śrīla Prabhupāda's exalted position and appreciating his impact on the world and on your life, along with words of gratitude, realizations, and/or petitions for mercy.

Such offerings can be short or long, as your heart dictates. They can be shared with others or kept between you and Prabhupada; in any case, they serve as a catalyst to increase your appreciation for everything Śrīla Prabhupāda has given you, and they thus deepen your love for and connection with him. 🌸

