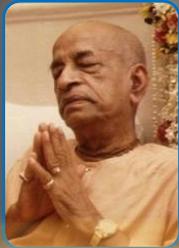


Freedom Newsletter



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

ISKCON Prison Ministry / January 2026

PO Box 2676
Alachua, FL 32616

PRABHUPADA SPEAKS OUT — Illicit Sex and Public Opinion

The following conversation between His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and a social worker took place in Melbourne, Australia.

Social worker: I deal with divorce cases and adoption. Nowadays it has become very easy to get a divorce.

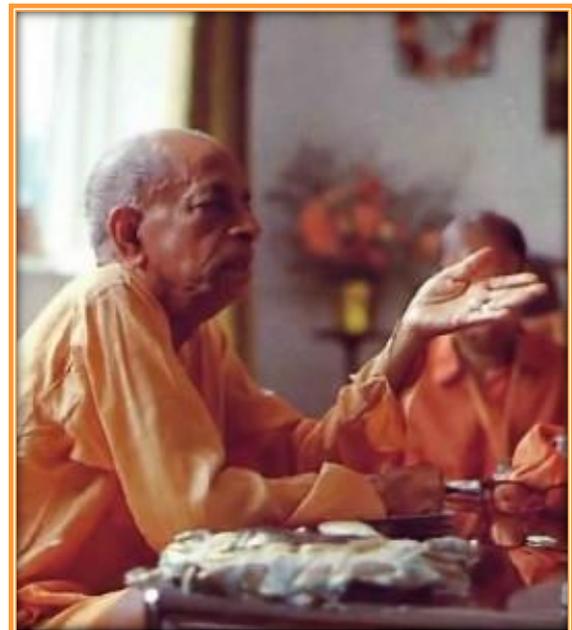
Srila Prabhupada: So, the first defect of today's leaders is that they allow divorce. That is very dangerous for society, because it encourages illicit sex.

Social worker: Society wants it that way.

Srila Prabhupada: Society is just like a child. If a child wants to go to hell, should the father allow it? Society may want so many nonsensical things, but it is the duty of the government to know how to uplift the citizens.

Social worker: It would be impossible for my department to teach...

Srila Prabhupada: It's not impossible. Simply the government does not know how to do it. That is another defect—there is no method for training first-class members of society. But the ideal man is described in the *Bhagavad-gita*, and, we are training our men to that



standard. That is the purpose of the Krishna consciousness movement. Now there are no ideal men in the society, because you allow the young people to commit all kinds of sinful activities. Yesterday I was talking with a priest about illicit sex life. He said, “What is the harm? It is a great pleasure.” But my first condition before accepting a disciple is that he must give up illicit sex, meat eating, intoxication, and gambling.

Social worker: But the people you can train will be only a tiny percentage of the population.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, but example is better than precept. If even one percent of the population is trained as ideal men, the other ninety-nine percent will see and follow. But that example is lacking in society today. Even the priests have become licentious, and thousands of priests are going to the hospital to cure their drinking habit. They are sanctioning homosexuality. In a Christian newspaper I read about a priest even performing marriage between two men. So outside of this Krishna consciousness movement, I don’t find any group of ideal men. Therefore, if you want to help society, you must learn from us how to train men of ideal character.

Social worker: What you call “ideal character” is only your opinion. It may not be ideal to someone else.

Srila Prabhupada: No, it is not my opinion—it is the verdict of the *sastra*[scripture]. Opinion—what is the value of opinion when the people are like dogs and asses? What is the use of taking the opinion of an ass? This *vox populi*—taking the opinion of the public—is degrading modern society. If the public is composed of drunkards, smokers, meat eaters, gamblers, and woman hunters, then what is the value of their opinion? Why take the opinion of fourth-class men? What Krishna says—that is the standard. Krishna is the supreme, and His version is final. No other opinion is allowed. When I introduced the principle “No illicit sex life,” I didn’t ask for opinions—”It must be done.”

Social worker: You don’t think the people have any mind of their own?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, they have a mind, just like a madman has a mind. But what is the value of his mind? Are you going to take the opinion of a madman? The *Bhagavad-gita* says, *mayayapahrta-jnana*: “The miscreant’s knowledge has been taken away by *maya* [illusion]; therefore, his mind is distorted.” So a madman’s opinions have no value.

Social worker: Our business is to look after those who are in trouble.

Srila Prabhupada: At the present moment even the government leaders are in trouble.

Social worker: Well—that is not part of our public...

Srila Prabhupada: Why don’t you send your supervisor to us for training? These leaders are also drunkards, woman hunters, meat eaters, and gamblers.

Social worker: You want to change the whole society!

Srila Prabhupada: Unless you change the society, how can you do social welfare? If you keep society in the same condition it is in now, then where is the question of social welfare? You are working with the public, and we are also working with the same people. We take the same people—those addicted to drinking, addicted to prostitution, addicted to meat eating—and we make them into saintly persons. So our method is practical. You can see what their previous history was, and what they are now. You must train up one class of men like them—men of ideal character.

Social worker: Well, I’m a public servant, and we just try to follow public opinion.

Srila Prabhupada: So the public elects a President Nixon, and then they drag him out of office. This is your public opinion.

Social worker: Yes, that is how the society works. If you change society, then we must change. I do what I’m asked; otherwise, I’ll lose my job.

Srila Prabhupada: Our program is not *vox populi*. We are saying only what the authoritative scriptures say. If you actually want to do social welfare, then you *must* take to the standard formula as given in the scriptures. In the *Bhagavad-gita* Krishna explains how one can become peaceful—a first-class man. But if you don’t accept His authority—if you’d rather follow public opinion—you will never be successful. You want to make a peaceful society, but you do not know how. Therefore you must adopt this process of Krishna consciousness. If anyone—even a madman—agrees to follow our principles, then he can become peaceful. He can become a first-class man.

Social worker: How do you explain the fact that you are such a small percentage of the population?

Srila Prabhupada: In the sky there are so many stars, but there is only one moon. In terms of percentage, the moon is nothing. But in terms of its *value*, the moon is far more important than all the stars combined. So in our Krishna consciousness movement, our aim is to educate a few men of ideal character. If you and other leaders of society support this movement, you will be performing the highest social welfare.

Social worker: The head of the Social Welfare Bureau is also a servant of the people.

Srila Prabhupada: That is the defect: the people are rascals, and they elect another rascal. But the Krishna consciousness movement will go on without depending on these rascals. We are publishing our books, we are spreading our movement, and we are training first-class

men. For example, we don't prohibit sex, but we say, "No illicit sex." Have you any objection?

Social worker: Yes, a private one.

Srila Prabhupada: You have illicit sex?

Social worker: Yes, I couldn't live without it.

Srila Prabhupada: Just see! This is the defect in society. You are like a patient who wants treatment from a physician, but who at the same time wants to continue with his diseased activities. You have failed to help society, therefore you have come to me for help with your social welfare work. So why do you reject my advice? If you reject the medicine prescribed by the physician, you will not be cured. But when I give you

the prescription, you want the other patients to vote on it first. Daily one or two gentlemen like you visit me. They also find our prescription very strict. But we are not going to change it.

Social worker: Well, I do believe you should maintain a standard.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, and that is making us successful. We do not make any compromise. This is our method. If you like it, you can take it; if you don't like it, you can reject it. We don't mind. We are not interested in *vox populi*. 🌸



Book Distribution Stories!

QUIET MIRACLES —By Gurushakti Dasi

Meet my friend Steve. We first met in December 2016, on my very first visit to Southampton during Srila Prabhupada's Book Marathon. Each year we stood opposite one another, us distributing books and Steve managing the carousel ride.

Steve was always kind & would always check in on us throughout the day. Without fail, each year I would enthusiastically ask Steve to take a Bhagavad-gita. And every year, just as firmly, he would decline, explaining that he couldn't read or write.

Each time I would tell him it didn't matter. All he needed to do was keep the Bhagavad-gita in his home, next to his favorite chair or by his bed, and simply touch and open it daily. And by just having the Gita in his home, it would bring so much auspiciousness. Even then, Steve would resolutely refuse, even when I insisted it would be a gift from me.

This year, when I arrived in Southampton, the carousel was no longer part of the Christmas market. I immediately wondered how Steve was and hoped he was well.

Today, as I stood distributing books, to my surprise Steve walked past. We were both completely elated to see one another. He told me he has now retired and spends his days strolling through the town. I placed the Bhagavad-gita in his hands once again and repeated what I had shared with him over the years.



This time, without hesitation, Steve accepted the book and even gave a donation. He laughed and said he remembered exactly what I had always told him. He promised he would embrace the Bhagavad Gita daily, first thing in the morning and last thing at night.

We both smiled. Nine years later, Steve finally and graciously accepted the Bhagavad-gita.

Steve's journey with the Bhagavad-gita wonderfully illustrates that sankirtan is to never give up. We may persuade, convince, and beg, however only Krishna knows when the soul is truly ready to receive. Our role is simply to show up, to offer and to trust the process.

Srila Prabhupada arranges these quiet miracles of book distribution, where time, mercy and sincerity meet. Krishna is in everyone's heart, and he gives direction from within, allowing the fortunate soul to reach out and take the sacred book. When it happens, how long it takes and how many moments it requires is not for us to know. That is between Krishna, Srila Prabhupada and the destined soul. 🌸

On the front lines we experience the Mystical Magic of Krsna —By Vanamala Dasi

Last year on the end of year marathon, I was with Gokul-lila and it was raining heavily and we were struggling to find a place to distribute books. We happened to drive past a *Yogi's Indian Food* shop and thought to stop and try to distribute a few Bhagavad-gitas with the hope of meeting some nice Indians at

least, because it was Gita-jayanti [the appearance of the Bhagavad-gita]. We felt quite stuck with the rain and were just standing outside this shop, when Gokul-lila just thought of asking the owner if we can set up a table. They agreed and we stood there for a few hours and had a decent struggle, with not many books going out. Deciding to call it a day, we started packing up, but as we did so, people randomly started to take books! To the point that we were just walking towards the car and randomly calling out to people, and they were taking them out of our shopping trolley. It was a good reminder that if Krishna wants, He can allow people to take the books. Feeling absorbed in the special sankirtan energy, we drove away but kept looking for places where we could stop to distribute a book. We saw this man talking on the phone on the pavement and Gokul-lila drove up to him and pressed my window

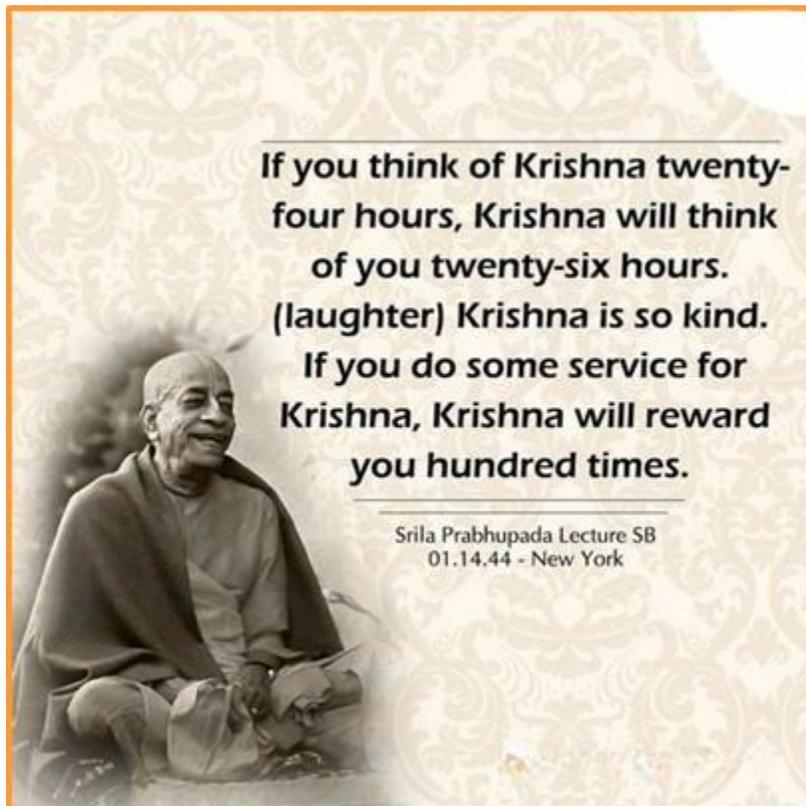
down for me to talk to him. It was so funny and the shortest exchange I've ever had:
The window rolled down and without saying hi, I said: "Do you have one of these?" Showing the stack
Although he was on the phone, he said, "No. How much?"
Me: "\$25"
Him: "I've no cash"
Me: "I have eftpos [electronic payment]"
Him: "Ok" and tapped his card to my eftpos machine and I passed him the books and smiled and drove away.

I couldn't believe it! It was like he was waiting for us there. Anyways, it was a nice experience that book distribution can be a very fun and mystical adventure which exceeds our ordinary expectations. 🌸



WHAT IS MAYA?

What is maya is illustrated by this story; someone asked a saint "What is maya?" The sage, instead of launching into a lengthy explanation, jumped up, ran to a tree, and embraced it tightly, yelling, "Help me, the tree is holding me! Help me get free!" The conclusion to this brilliant story is that we are the ones who are attached, who are holding on, who don't want to let go. By chanting Hare Krsna, serving Him, He will be pleased and will give us the intelligence to realize what we are doing; we are the ones creating our own suffering, no one else. It is up to us to let go and direct our attachment toward Krsna.



**If you think of Krishna twenty-four hours, Krishna will think of you twenty-six hours.
(laughter) Krishna is so kind.
If you do some service for Krishna, Krishna will reward you hundred times.**

Srila Prabhupada Lecture SB
01.14.44 - New York

Gold Nuggets!

As far as my blessing is concerned it does not require my physical presence. If you are chanting Hare Krishna there and following my instructions, reading the books, taking only Krsna prasadam etc., then there is no question of your not receiving the blessings of Lord Caitanya whose mission I am humbly trying to push on.
Prabhupada, Letter to: Bal Krsna —June 30, 1974

So instead of approaching God, if you chant, God will approach you.

Room conversation —December 13th, 1970

Yes, it is a fact that no one can see Krsna without being a pure devotee of the Lord. Every living entity is the son of God, but not all of the sons are faithful to their Father. This is explained in Bhagavad-gita. So, one who turns away from his father naturally cannot see his father; but the faithful son can see his father at any time. Under the circumstances, we can understand the word of John because amongst all the people of that place Jesus Christ was the only faithful son of God, Krsna. Lord Jesus says (John 6:46), “Not that any man hath seen the father, save he, which is of God, he hath seen the Father.” So, one who is a devotee of the Lord in pure love, who teaches others how to love God is the messenger of God and he can see God without any doubt.

Srila Prabhupada's Letter to: Gerald —ISKCON: Bombay - February 19th, 1971

So you should take it that your hospitalization is an opportunity of chanting Hare Krishna mantra 24 hours. After all we are not this body so bodily disorders cannot hamper our advancement in Krishna Consciousness.

So long the tongue is active we can chant. Even if the tongue is not active, we can think of Krishna. Someway or other if we can keep in touch with Krishna that is our success of life.

Letter to: Cidananda -- Nairobi September 28th, 1971

Our duration of life is being taken away by the sun, beginning from his rising up to the end of setting. We

are daily losing the duration of our life. Bhagavata says that from the beginning of the sunrise up to the end of sunset, your duration of life is being taken away. That is the business. *Kalah*; this is called time: past, present, and future. What is present, tomorrow it will be past, and again future. But what is this past, present and future? This is past, present, and future of this body. So far I am concerned, I do not belong to the category of the past, present and future; I belong to the category of eternity. Therefore we should be careful how to attain, how to be elevated to the platform of eternity. That is our business.

Srimad-Bhagavatam Lecture – July 12th, 1969, Los Angeles

The idea is that the time which you are devoting here in this Krsna consciousness temple, this time the sun cannot take away. This is becoming your asset. Plus. It is not minus. The duration of life, so far your body is concerned, that may be taken away. That will be taken away, however I may try to keep it intact. Nobody can keep it; it will be taken away. But the spiritual education which you are receiving in this class, oh, either the sun or sun's father, his father, nobody can take it away. It becomes a solid asset.

Srimad-Bhagavatam Lecture – July 12, 1969, Los Angeles

To them [who say that God is dead] I reply, God is not dead; your intelligence is dead. You have a dead body, and you're proud of it. The body is just like a motorcar. A motorcar is dead, and if there is no driver it does not work. Similarly, the body is dead, and as soon as you, the soul, leave the body, it stops working. That means you are occupying a dead body. It is working only as long as you are there, but actually the body is dead.

And you are decorating a dead body. All your acquisitions are simply decorations on a dead body. *Apranasya hi deha-sya mandanam loka-ranjanam.* Some rascal may applaud, “Oh, you are so intelligent; you are decorating your body so nicely.” But an intelligent man will say, “What a fool he is, that he's decorating a dead body.”

Prabhupada -Conversation in Paris, 1974





REMINDER: no more BTGs

This is a reminder, in case you missed this: ISKCON Prison Ministry will not be able to provide *Back to Godhead* magazines (BTG) for a while, due to the price increase. It now costs \$11.28 to send one BTG. Our little ministry simply doesn't have the budget to maintain such an endeavor. Maybe in the future another sponsor will volunteer for this project.

We thank each of you who have avidly read the BTG and shared it with many others, spreading the mercy!

For over 20 years we have flooded the prison system with BTGs. *Last year alone*, we sent about 4,300 BTGs to different chaplains in different institutions and nearly 1,500 to individual inmates. So, chances are, you may be able to find a magazine in the chapel libraries and/or other inmates may be able to share their copies with you.

By Kṛṣṇa's grace, we will continue to send books, free of charge. Srila Prabhupada's books are surcharged with transcendental knowledge and will not only transform your consciousness and your life, but they also have the power to free you from the cycle of birth and death and bring you back home, back to Godhead at the end of this very life, would you choose to practically apply their instructions.

If you can, you or your family and friends can take a subscription directly from the BTG office. The prices are:

1 year: \$37.95 or 2 years: \$72.95

You can contact:

BTG Office
PO Box 430
Alachua FL 32616
<https://btg.krishna.com/contact-us/>
(386) 462-7794



Nectar from Śrīmad-Bhagavatam

*śṛṅvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ
punya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ
hṛdy antaḥ stho hy abhadrāṇi
vidhunoti suhṛt satām*

SB 1.2.17

SYNONYMS

śrīvratām — those who have developed the urge to hear the message of; *sva-kathāh* — His own words; *kṛsnah* — the Personality of Godhead; *punya* — virtues; *śravana* — hearing; *kīrtanaḥ* — chanting; *hr̥di antaḥ sthaḥ* — within one's heart; *hi* — certainly; *abhadrāni* — desire to enjoy matter; *vidhunoti* — cleanses; *suhṛt* — benefactor; *satām* — of the truthful.

TRANSLATION

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, who is the Paramātmā [Supersoul] in everyone's heart and the benefactor of the truthful devotee, cleanses desire for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee who has developed the urge to hear His messages, which are in themselves virtuous when properly heard and chanted.

PURPORT

Messages of the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, are nondifferent from Him. Whenever, therefore, offenseless hearing and glorification of God are undertaken, it is to be understood that Lord Kṛṣṇa is present there in the form of transcendental sound, which is as powerful as the Lord personally. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, in His *Śikṣāṣṭaka*, declares clearly that the holy name of the Lord has all the potencies of the Lord and that He has endowed His innumerable names with the same potency. There is no rigid fixture of time, and anyone can chant the holy name with attention and reverence at his convenience. The Lord is so kind to us that He can be present before us personally in the form of transcendental sound, but unfortunately we have no taste for hearing and glorifying the Lord's name and activities. We have already discussed developing a taste for hearing and chanting the holy sound. It is done through the medium of service to the pure devotee of the Lord.

The Lord is reciprocally respondent to His devotees. When He sees that a devotee is completely sincere in getting admittance to the transcendental service of the

Lord and has thus become eager to hear about Him, the Lord acts from within the devotee in such a way that the devotee may easily go back to Him. The Lord is more anxious to take us back into His kingdom than we can desire. Most of us do not desire at all to go back to Godhead. Only a very few men want to go back to Godhead. But anyone who desires to go back to Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa helps in all respects.



Above: Lord Krishna, as Paramatma, in everyone's heart.

One cannot enter into the kingdom of God unless one is perfectly cleared of all sins. The material sins are products of our desires to lord it over material nature. It is very difficult to get rid of such desires. Women and wealth are very difficult problems for the devotee making progress on the path back to Godhead. Many stalwarts in the devotional line fell victim to these allurements and thus retreated from the path of liberation. But when one is helped by the Lord Himself, the whole process becomes as easy as anything by the divine grace of the Lord.

To become restless in the contact of women and wealth is not an

astonishment, because every living being is associated with such things from remote time, practically immemorial, and it takes time to recover from this foreign nature. But if one is engaged in hearing the glories of the Lord, gradually he realizes his real position. By the grace of God such a devotee gets sufficient strength to defend himself from the state of disturbances, and gradually all disturbing elements are eliminated from his mind. 🌸



What is not possible to achieve in thousands of lives can be achieved in one moment if there is an opportunity to meet a saintly person.

Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.22.5 — purport



(Srila Prabhupada and his books are non-different; thus, by reading them, you are meeting a saintly person)

WORLD NEWS

NEED IS URGENT AS TYPHOONS DEVASTATE CEBU FOLLOWING EARLIER EARTHQUAKE

By Atma Tattva Das, ISKCON News Staff Writer | Nov 19, 2025

Less than six weeks after a magnitude-6.9 earthquake struck northern Cebu (Philippines), communities across the island found themselves facing a second wave of disaster. Typhoon Tino (Kalmaegi) made landfall on November 4, followed shortly by Super Typhoon Uwan (Fung-Wong). The storms brought sudden flash flooding, landslides, and storm surges that compounded the earlier destruction.



Isla Pula, one of the coastal and riverside communities completely devastated by flash floods and storm surge during Typhoon Tino.

Government Mobilizes Relief as Damage Spreads Across the Visayas

Local government reports estimate that over 180,000 families across the region have been displaced by the combined impacts of the earthquake and typhoons, with more than 200 fatalities and over 100 people still missing. Cebu's provincial government declared a state of calamity, activating emergency funds and coordinating with national agencies to lead search-and-rescue operations, distribute relief goods, and assess damaged infrastructure.

A temporary price freeze on essential goods was imposed, and the Social Security System (SSS) opened a calamity loan program to help affected workers. Neighboring provinces dispatched additional supplies, but ongoing aftershocks, collapsed roadways, and the scale of destruction left coverage gaps, particularly in areas farthest from main towns.

"Relief efforts are slow as the local government units and personnel themselves are also victims," explained

Gopal Krishna Das of ISKCON Cebu, emphasizing the strain on already-limited local resources.

ISKCON Cebu Responds with Compassion and Urgency

As official systems struggled to reach every affected community, ISKCON Cebu's Food for Life team stepped in to support the worst-hit areas. Having already mobilized after the September earthquake, devotees expanded their service as the typhoons struck. "In our immediate area, thousands of families lost their homes, property, and livelihoods," Gopal Krishna said. Heavy rains gathered behind the mountain range and suddenly surged downstream, destroying dams, reservoirs, and flood-control structures. "We still have no water supply as the dam and pipes are being repaired," he added.



Residents of Talisay City were trapped by sudden, 20-foot flash floods after flood-control levees failed.

A Focus on Water as Supply Systems Collapse

With reliable water almost entirely cut off, the Food for Life team shifted its relief strategy to prioritize safe drinking water. "We are working daily to purchase bottled water, offer it, and distribute it as prasada," Gopal Krishna explained. For many families, bottled water is now used not only for drinking but also for cooking and basic sanitation, making it an urgent and costly necessity.

The GoFundMe campaign notes that water remains one of the most critical needs: "The dam and main water

pipelines are still not repaired... water hasn't been restored in the majority of towns.”

Shelter, Food, and Support Through Local Partnerships

To assist broader community efforts, Gopal Krishna's family opened their private school, Monterey School, Inc., as an evacuation center, sheltering displaced families during the storm and keeping the space open for days afterward. The school's Parent-Teacher Association coordinated food and essential supplies, while ISKCON Cebu volunteers focused on daily water distribution. This cooperation has allowed the team to reach several barangays that remain difficult to access due to landslides and damaged roads.



Monterey School Inc., led by director Raquel Del Monte, together with the admin team, teachers, staff, PTA officers, and student officers with prasadam packages for distribution.

Planning for Long-Term Relief and Rebuilding

As their service expands, ISKCON Cebu is preparing for long-term recovery. With homes destroyed, access roads unstable, monsoon rains ongoing, and water infrastructure heavily damaged, devotees anticipate months of continued relief. Their fundraising page highlights additional needs ahead: cooking supplies, hygiene kits, infant care items, medicines, sleeping mats, and basic tools for rebuilding. The community is also seeking broader international assistance with water filtration systems, transport logistics, and support for disaster-resilient infrastructure to help stabilize their relief efforts beyond the emergency phase.



Leaders Gopal Krishna Das and Jayasri Devi Dasi in Talisay City, one of the hardest-hit communities.

Global Devotees Rally Through a New Fundraising Initiative

To facilitate international support, Kula Pradipa Das and his wife, Jahnavi Jivana Dasi, launched the GoFundMe campaign “Support ISKCON Cebu After Natural Disasters.” As the organizers, they explain that every contribution is transferred directly to ISKCON Cebu's Food for Life program, helping bypass the limitations that Philippine NGOs face when receiving overseas donations.

They highlight the responders' dedication on the ground, citing that “Over 2,200 hot, plant-based, nutrient-dense bowls of prasadam have already been distributed,” despite aftershocks, inaccessible areas, and damaged infrastructure.

Their appeal also places this crisis in a broader environmental context, sharing that “With global warming intensifying, these weather disturbances are becoming more frequent and more destructive.”

A Call for Support and Solidarity
Through earthquake destruction, typhoon flooding, and widespread displacement, the Cebu



ISKCON Cebu devotees, engaged in ongoing Food for Life relief outreach

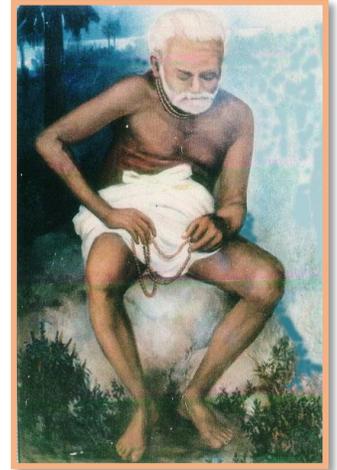
devotees have continued to serve with steady commitment and compassion. Their efforts stand as a refuge for families facing one of the most challenging disaster seasons in recent memory. 🌸



Calendar

JANUARY 2026

- 07 Jan 2026 - Appearance Day of Gopala Bhatta Goswami
08 Jan 2026 - Disappearance Day of Jayadeva Goswami
09 Jan 2026 - Disappearance Day of Locana Dasa Thakura
14 Jan 2026 – **Sat-tila Ekadasi**
23 Jan 2026 - Appearance Day of Raghunatha Dasa Goswami and Visnupriya Dasi
and Disappearance Day of Visvanatha Cakravati Thakur
25 Jan 2026 - **Appearance Day of Advaita Acarya**
27 Jan 2026 - Disappearance Day of Madhvacarya and Ramanujacarya
29 Jan 2026 – **Bhaimi Ekadasi**
30 Jan 2026 - Appearance Day of Lord Varaha
Appearance Day of Lord Nityananda



ABOVE: Srila Jagannatha Das Babaji —1750-1897 AD

FEBRUARY 2026

- 07 Feb 2026 - Appearance Day Narottama Das Thakur
06 Feb 2026 - **Appearance Day of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur** (fasting till noon)
13 Feb 2026- **Vijaya Ekadasi**
14 Feb 2026- Disappearance Day of Isvara Puri
18 Feb 2026- Disappearance Day of Srila Jagannatha Das Babaji
27 Feb 2026- **Amalaki Ekadasi**

IN A NUTSHELL

Who is Jagannatha Das Babaji?

Shrila Jagannatha Dasa Babaji Maharaja lived for 147 years. He gave valuable instructions on pure devotional service to Bhaktivinoda Thakura. In his old age, since he could barely walk, Bihari, his loving and very strong servant, used to carry him, in a basket, on his shoulders. But whenever there was a kirtan, Jagannatha Dasa Babaji would bolt out and leap four feet into the air. In great ecstasy he would begin to sing and dance. He performed vigorous bhajan despite physical limitations.

He lived as an ascetic, especially during Chaturmasya. The first month he ate only four bananas in the evening; second month only guavas; third month he only drank whey; fourth month only boiled banana flowers without salt.

While living in Navadvipa dhama, Jagannatha Dasa Babaji showed deep respect toward all residents. Even when some puppies ate from his plate he didn't protest. Bihari, his servant, became disgusted to see dogs devouring his guru's Prasadam and he drove them away. Jagannatha Dasa Babaji scolded Bihari, "These puppies are residents of the holy dhama. They are not ordinary living entities. I will not eat until they come back to share the Maha-prasadam from my plate." [this consciousness cannot be imitated; he truly saw the soul in every living entity]

Once he begged a roti (flat bread) from a Vrindavana street sweeper. Hearing about this, the leading men of Vrindavana criticized him for taking food from a "low-class" person. Babaji Maharaja replied, "You are all learned people. Don't you know the importance of the dust of Vrindavana? It is so surcharged with Krishna prema (highest love of God) that even Lord Brahma desires to become a particle of dust in Vrindavana. Therefore, isn't a Vrindavana sweeper, who is constantly serving the dust; breathing it, rolling in it, and bathing in it, more pure than anyone else?" Silence filled the air indicating everyone's acceptance of Babaji Maharaja's reply.

When Bhaktivinoda Thakur thought he had finally re-discovered the birthplace of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, he brought Jagannatha Dasa Babaji there to confirm his discovery. Jagannatha Das was 142 years old at that time; he couldn't see or walk anymore. Nevertheless, on arriving at the place, he leapt high in the air and began chanting the holy name and dancing, confirming that this was, indeed, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's Yogapitha [birthplace].