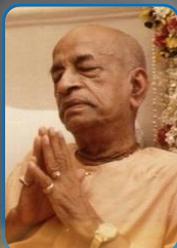


Freedom Newsletter



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

ISKCON Prison Ministry / **October 2025**

PO Box 2676
Alachua, FL 32616

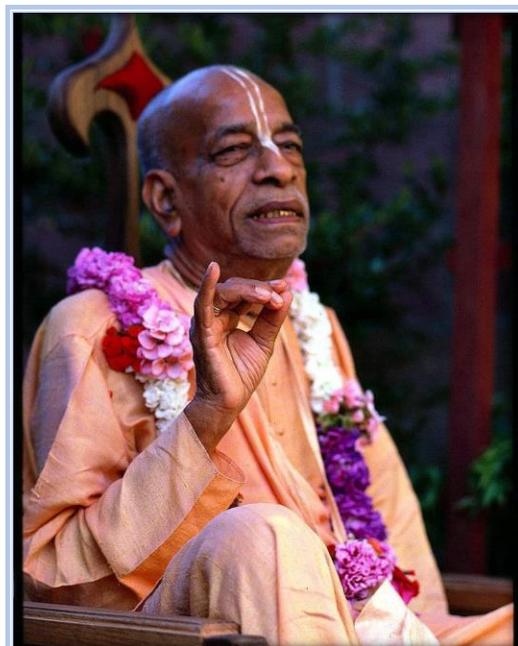
PRABHUPADA SPEAKS OUT —Getting a Permanent Body

The following a conversation between His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and a guest took place in Gorakhpur, India, on February 17, 1971.

Guest: If the soul is always changing from one body to another, how is the soul liberated?

Srila Prabhupada: In this material world the soul is accepting material bodies. And when he becomes a bona fide servant of Krishna, he'll be offered a spiritual body. As long as a person is not a soldier, he will not be awarded a uniform. But as soon as he accepts service as a soldier, he is given the uniform. So you are accepting different bodies in the material world. That is *bhutva bhutva praliyate*: You accept one type of body, it is vanquished, and again you have to accept another. But as soon as you become perfectly Krishna conscious, after leaving this body you do not come to the material world – *tyaktva deham punar janma naiti*. You are immediately transferred [to the spiritual world], and you accept a spiritual body.

Is that clear or not? You are accepting material bodies now, birth after birth. That is transmigration. Sometimes you accept a human body, sometimes a



dog's body, sometimes a king's body, and sometimes some other kind of body.

Now when you are Krishna conscious, you haven't got to accept a material body. You go directly to Krishna and accept a spiritual body. Then your life is eternal.

Guest: You will not again get a material body?

Srila Prabhupada: No. *Tyaktva deham punar janma naiti*. When you are Krishna conscious, you no longer accept a material body. Krishna says, *mam eti*: "The soul comes to Me."

And *mam eti* means that whoever goes to Krishna has as good a body as Krishna. That is oneness.

Guest: Then what does it mean when Krishna tells Arjuna on the battlefield, "Never was there a time when you and I were not existing."

Srila

Prabhupada: Krishna and Arjuna are existing, and you are existing. You are eternal. You are simply changing bodies. What is

the difficulty in understanding this fact? But Krishna is not changing His body. That is the difference.

Guest: The soul will not merge into Krishna's light?

Srila Prabhupada: The soul is changing bodies. Why are you talking of merging? You are changing your body, I am changing my body, but we are individuals. I may change to a dog's body; you may change to a demigod's body. That is going on. According to one's karma one is changing bodies.

Now, when you are fully Krishna conscious, a change of body will also take place. But that new body will be spiritual. As long as you get material bodies, you have

to change – one after another, one after another, one after another.

For example, if you purchase something cheap, it goes wrong and you have to purchase a new thing. But if you purchase a real, nice thing, it will continue for good. Similarly, as long as you are getting a cheap body, a material body, you have to change. And as soon as you get the most valuable body, a spiritual body, there will be no more change.



One who does not know what is Krishna thinks that someone is greater than Krishna. But anyone who knows Krishna as He is gets that permanent body immediately – simply by knowing Krishna.

janma karma cha me divyam

evam yo vetti tattvatah tyaktva deham punar janma naiti mam eti so 'rjuna

[“One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the

body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna.” (*Gita* 4.9)] So you simply have to understand Krishna. Then the whole problem is solved.

Try to understand Krishna. Krishna can be understood simply by devotional service. Krishna says, *bhaktya mam abhijanati*. And that begins with surrender to Krishna. *Sarva-dharman parityajya*: Whatever nonsense you have known, throw it away. Simply surrender to Krishna. That is the beginning of *Bhagavad-gita*. 🌸



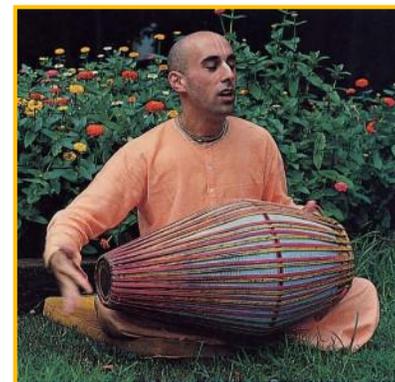
HOW I CAME TO KRṢṂA CONSCIOUSNESS

A Young Man's Search For Identity takes Him From Crisis To Krsna.

by Amritamsa Dasa

I grew up in Connecticut in the fifties and sixties. Always “the observer,” dissatisfied with the status quo, I saw my parents' lifestyle as boring and futile. They had to bear the burdens of clothes for the kids, schooling for the kids, toys for the kids, and lip from the kids, and their only reward was a yearly summer vacation. I understood that there had to be more to life

than this, so I began investigating my inner potential without depending on the established social order.



I also became disillusioned with my religious training as a Catholic—no one seemed to have solid philosophical convictions. One Sunday, for instance, I was on my way to a softball game, but before I could get out the door my mother stopped me: “Aren’t you going to Mass?”

“Well,” I replied, “the purpose of Mass is to love your neighbor as you love God. So how can I reject my friends now?”

Mother made no philosophical retort, and that was the end of my going to Mass.

My two brothers entered the priesthood, but they lost heart. They didn’t find the purity of thought, word, and deed they were looking for. To me, the philosophy that God put us here for a specific purpose appeared unrealizable; no guide or teacher exemplified that higher purpose.

As for “higher education,” I saw the colleges as training grounds for a kind of life I had already rejected. I couldn’t accept such a process of so-called learning.

My life, therefore, became less a scrutiny of people and ideals and more a search for beauty in nature. Having read books by Rachel Carson, Tom Wolfe, Herman Hesse, and Carlos Castaneda (whose drug-induced visions were, to me, boring phantasmagoria), I decided to get firsthand realizations from practical experience. I



resented the much-advertised culture of gross materialism, symptomized by industrial pollution and hellish factories that corroded people’s enthusiasm for

striving for anything beyond the basic necessities and the crassest kind of sense pleasures. In search of an older, more natural culture, I frequented art museums, and thus I developed the desire to use photography and painting to capture delicate moments of the fleeting seasons and record the artistry etched on nature by time. I wanted to show the beauty of nature to people who, sunk in the rut of work-a-day existence, never explored the world.

I enrolled in the Rhode Island School of Photography and became absorbed in nature. In the mountains and at the seashore, I saw the extremes that living creatures undergo to survive—from lichen gripping boulders high

in the cold, wind-swept mountains to the gasping sandfleas flailing their legs to uncover themselves from the sand dropped on them by the pounding waves of the ocean. I felt fortunate not to be trapped in such horrible conditions of life.

But upon returning to the city, I would see that people had willingly placed themselves in similar extreme situations. With the unspoiled beauty of nature only a few hours’ drive away, people foolishly packed themselves together in the physically and mentally polluted atmosphere of the city. I grew disgusted with the prevailing alienation and unhappiness in society and with how people were being taught to accept this crippled condition as normal.

My desire to accomplish something for society and for myself intensified as I came to realize that in practically no time at all, compared with eternity, my life would end.

But what could I do? All occupations seemed to end ultimately in death. Choosing an occupation meant assuming a certain false identity and becoming entangled in a great endeavor to artificially push myself forward as a certain sort of person. Becoming a photographer or an artist wouldn’t solve the problem of death any more than becoming a doctor, lawyer, or movie actor would. The doctor may refuse to die, but surgery and drugs can’t hold back the white sheet being drawn over the cadaver. The lawyer may dig up some appeal from his vast library, but when his time comes, he’ll be helplessly ushered out of the courtroom of life. And the actor may play the role of a powerful man, but in his final act his make-up will streak as sweat pours off his feverish dying body.

After I’d finished photography school and been employed in a photo shop for a couple of years, I came to the conclusion that my intelligence and creativity were being suffocated. So I arranged that my employer lay me off. I spent a winter alone in a cottage on Cape Cod, recording



nature with my paintbrush and camera. How pleasant this simple life was: eating vegetarian foods, breathing fresh air, seeing the sparkling ocean and clear sky, and hearing the sounds of wildlife. But as I painted or clicked away from sunrise to sunset, through sunshine

and snow and fog, alone in my cottage, I began to feel a little unsettled without a culture to identify with.

On a visit to Boston I met Larry Burrows, a friend of a friend. We were reading the same book on vegetarianism. One morning, as we shared breakfast, he explained to me that I was not my body but an eternal spirit soul. A little while later he left for Hawaii, to live on a Hare Krsna farm.

I wrote to him and he sent me a copy of *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. As I read this book I felt that God had heard all my intimate prayers and was now revealing to me His highest teachings. All my scattered thoughts about life were assembled, clarified, and given a meaningful direction by the mystically familiar teachings of the *Bhagavad-gita*. It contained the most complete and intellectually satisfying philosophy I had ever read. My mind was doing backward somersaults.

Between letters to Larry, I visited Manhattan, where my brother Tony was studying to be a mortician. While he was at school I walked to Washington Square Park. A flat-bed truck with a colorful canopy pulled up to the perimeter of the park. It was full of Hare Krsna devotees, and one of them (Kapindra dasa) offered me a BACK TO GODHEAD magazine. One article was by a mathematician with a Ph.D.; I was impressed to see that what I'd read in the *Bhagavad-gita* wasn't simply sentimental; it was scientific.

In his last letter Larry had suggested I might like the Hare Krsna temple in Boston. So the following weekend I attended the Sunday program there.

A devotee greeted me at the front door amid inundating clouds of frankincense. Within the temple, shaven-headed men prayed, sang, danced with arms upraised, and played drums and cymbals. Later a devotee spoke on the philosophy of Krsna consciousness, and I asked some questions. During the feast I politely declined most of the cooked dishes, since I was accustomed to raw foods. I spent the night and attended the morning services, chanting Hare Krsna on beads for the first time.

Back in Connecticut, I was surprised to find an unabridged edition of *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* in the

public library. Larry had sent me the abridged version, which I found fascinating, but I found the unabridged edition even more interesting and I read it day and night for a week until I finished it. During that week, my aunt passed away suddenly, and the firsthand experience I gained of people's emotions during the ritualistic funeral helped me understand Lord Krsna's teachings in the *Gita* about "mourning for that which is not worthy of grief." On this verse Srila Prabhupada comments, "The body is born and is destined to be vanquished today or tomorrow; therefore the body is not as important as the soul. One who knows this is actually learned, and for him there is no cause for lamentation, regardless of the condition of the material body."

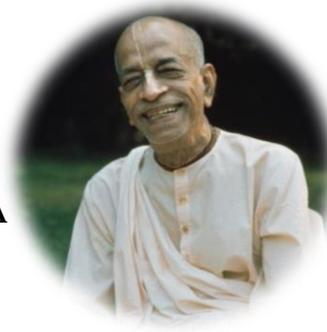
Chapter by chapter, *Bhagavad-gita* broke down my misconceptions about what I thought I might be and helped me understand that in reality I am an eternal servant of Lord Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Here was the most special of all occupations. Krsna was in fact God, and my real identity in life was to be His eternal loving servant. One evening as I sat alone on my living room floor reading the *Bhagavad-gita*, I felt inspired. Setting aside the *Gita*, I lay down on the floor, stared at the ceiling and, feeling protected, prayed, "Krsna, I am Yours. Do with me as You like."



The following weekend I visited the Boston temple again. I met Aja dasa, the temple president, and asked him if I could join the Hare Krsna society and help spread the philosophy of Krsna consciousness for the benefit of all suffering souls.

He allowed me to stay, and I have never left, for I've experienced the higher pleasure—a pleasure one automatically feels by serving Krsna, the Supreme Lord.

Just as a fish is satisfied only in water, or the hand functions only after feeding the stomach, the spirit soul can enjoy the topmost pleasure only by serving Krsna with devotion. The knowledge contained in Srila Prabhupada's books—*Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, *Caitanya-caritamrta*, and others—can reawaken one's transcendental love for Krsna. Therefore, intelligent people should seriously hear and propagate the philosophy of Krsna consciousness contained in these books, for that knowledge will destroy the pangs of material existence and bring them eternal happiness. 🌸



A TOAST TO PRABHUPADA

By Jivananda dasa

Lift your cups of nectar Prasad
And let's have a toast.
To our pride in our wonderful guru
And Kṛṣṇa let us boast.
Kṛṣṇa hears every maha-mantra
And he sees every devotional act.
He will never forget them, my Prabhus
And that's an honest fact.
He is always calling us
But it might take a million years.
Our hearts push us playfully
To Him we hold so dear.
Don't wonder why we find ourselves in prison
It's all part of Kṛṣṇa's plan.
By guru's mercy we'll come to Him
It's by Prabhupada's grace we can.
We've roamed the many universes
So many lives we have spun.
But the distance we've come to find guru
Is much greater than from here to the end.
But let's not tip our cups in our victory
It's by nothing that we've done.
Because it's all by his causeless mercy
It's by guru's grace that we've won!



LOCKED AWAY TOO

By Bhakta Scott Gardner

Though I came to prison, through my own fault
Here I discovered something precious, locked away
like in a vault
There was no other way, this lesson to me to teach
Krishna directed me to come here, so me He could
reach
Through many a test and travail
His grace and mercy did prevail
He introduced Vaishnavas into my life
To show me how to get out of the struggle and strife
Through IPM Upendra Dasa I did meet
Who told me I should surrender at Sri Krishna's feet
Follow Prabhupada he instructed me
For he has the knowledge that will set you free
Chanting Maha Mantra as Swami said in his books
I gave it my all, until I trembled and shook
With goosebumps and hair standing on end, I cried
out
From this ocean of birth and death, please pull me out
Now every day I fall at Sri Guru's lotus feet
To drink the nectar so nourishing and so very sweet
Chanting 16 rounds and praying three times a day
Prabhupada told us that this is the way
Also this is the path that was meant for me
Don't be blinded, don't fail to see
Don't let Maya, take you for a fool
In Martyaloka you are locked away too
Escape from the big prison house, it's not that hard a
task
If we only follow Prabhupada and do what Krishna
asks

Would you like to see your story, poems, or artwork in the *Freedom Newsletter*?

1) Write the story of how you came to Kṛṣṇa.

2) draw and write poems about Kṛṣṇa, whether you are known as an "artist", a "writer" or not. What matters is your *desire* to please Kṛṣṇa.

3) Send your story poem and/or artwork to: **Attn. Bhakti-lata Dasi, ISKCON Prison Ministry, PO Box 2676, Alachua, FL 32616**

Please be patient: due to the high volume of mail, it may take a few months before you see your submission in the newsletter.

Book Distribution Stories!

NEW ZEALAND MARATHON TALES —by Nitai-jivana dasa

During this winter's book distribution marathon (yes, it's winter down under!), Hriman Krishna and Nitai Jivana Prabhus distributed three Srimad-Bhagavatam sets.

In Rotorua's K-Mart car park, Hriman Krishna met a friend of the devotees who so much appreciates Srila Prabhupada's books and followers (see picture attached) that she spontaneously gave \$55; so he showed her the Srimad-Bhagavatam set and explained its value for material and spiritual education. Inspired, she made the down payment for the set and will continue to make payments on top of what she's already regularly donating to our brahmacari ashram. (Note: another lady in Timaru has been donating to the ashram for the last three-plus years). That's how appreciative the local people are of Prabhupada's books and devotees.

Now Nitai-jivana's Bhagavatam set stories:



TRANSCENDENTAL TEAMWORK

Today, as he dropped me off in Waihi, Hriman Krishna Prabhu encouraged me to take a Srimad-Bhagavatam set out with me.

"That's what we are all about," he said.

I am aspiring for that vision, but I did have reservations: Set boxes can easily take a beating when rolled out in the street. I would be out all day with rain in the forecast. But after hearing the encouragement, I dropped my reservations and rolled out the set.

That same day Nathan received a lump sum of laksmi and couldn't figure out why he had received it or what to do with it. He has read many of Prabhupada's books. He always keeps a Gita with him and behaves like a new devotee. When I offered him the set, he turned it down at first, though it was clear to me he'd love to have it. He said it wasn't the right time, but 15 minutes later he came back and said he realized the laksmi he had received was actually sent by You, Lord, for the

Bhagavatam set and was ready to use such an extraordinary gift for the most extraordinary literature. Those were his own God-conscious words.

As You continue to send Nathan laksmi, he continues to drop off the remaining installments. Each time he does, he meets with one of our bhakta friends in Waihi, who happens to be an old schoolmate of his. The world is small in NZ, but not too small for SB set consciousness.

Oh Lord, please allow us to broaden our vision for helping others. Please allow us to be more courageous in spreading Your glories. Please allow us to overcome selfish concerns.

All credit for today's Bhagavatam set sale to Nathan goes to You, O Lord, and Hriman Krishna Prabhu.

NOURISHED

I jumped out of the bus after parking it on Main Street in Dannevirke. The first person took a Teachings of Queen

Kunti. We were off to a good start.

I approached two friends talking in front of a bakery. They had received Srila Prabhupada's books before and liked them, but as fate would have it, they had lost the books.

Karl had actually been feeling separation from the books. He wanted them again and even guessed that there must be more, something more elaborate and comprehensive than the Gita he had read.

Not 20 minutes after my arrival in Dannevirke, Karl had left and returned with 500 NZD cash, for the Bhagavatam set plus extra stacks. He also covered the SSR his friend was after.

This is the imperceptible effect of our collective book distribution endeavor! My heartfelt thanks to all of you. Our books are read and appreciated to the point that individuals want more.

Both of these set distribution cases speak very strongly to the glory of Srila Prabhupada's books. Individuals meet a distributor on the street and associate with Srila Prabhupada in his purports. That's enough for them to feel nourished, to feel "for real," and take the next step.

I am happy to be able to plug into this service with focus. I cannot imitate strong focus, but I pray to develop it, to be able to commit more to the Lord's cause.

This is the right place, the right time. The right pace to make our unique contributions. To grow in sincerity as we try our best. To experience the peace and satisfaction that comes from going out all day. Please help us to not get fatigued distributing again and again, and to be balanced in our spiritual lives.

It is clear that we are not out for our own happiness. We mysteriously feel satisfied in trying to connect others to You, O Lord. And slowly You open our eyes, by Your Grace. We won't accept the counterfeit happiness of this world, seeing how hard those we meet struggle under Your external energy. Please nourish our taste for hearing Your glories. And let those who

struggle begin their devotional service by taking a book. Their life is changing course.

Without this higher knowledge, what alternative will remain for them than toiling until ultimate defeat?

Please therefore allow us to serve You more and more in this capacity of attempting to distribute Your glories. Please allow us to serve Your empowered servants who are dedicated to this mission.

Please help us feel compassion in our hearts. Otherwise, how can we relate to others? We are going out to help people feel how we feel their struggles. It takes heart and resolve to keep going out.



We can understand that this is the best use of the creative spark that You are providing us. And as Your creative sparks, how much you provide! Sending Lakshmi at the right time. Attracting souls to hear about You, to seek You out. Giving knowledge and remembrance. Inspiring our words as we take risks and make appeals. Allowing our feet to touch the pavement.

Growth takes time. Consistency makes for unforgettable experiences. We are grateful for any opportunity. Every endeavor to distribute Prabhupada's books is worthwhile. And as we are rightly situated, spontaneity follows. 🌸

HE JUST KEPT RUNNING INTO THE HARE KRSNAS —by Bhava sandhi Devi Dasi

We had a lot of Srimad-Bhagavatam distribution leading up to Bhadra Purnima (auspicious full moon), but one story stuck in my head because of how an inspired young man had many small encounters with devotees that fanned his bhakti flame.

A month or so ago I got a message saying that a gentleman named Damien had contacted the Hare Krishna Auckland Facebook page saying that he was interested in Srimad-Bhagavatam. He had

purchased some books from the temple foyer book table whilst visiting the temple and had seen a poster for

Srimad-Bhagavatam and wanted to purchase the whole set. Side note- I set up a book table in ISKCON Auckland's foyer in 2016 so anyone visiting the temple will have a chance to purchase Srila Prabhupada's books even if there is no devotee there to meet them. The table has an honesty box for people to pay for books and has a variety of different languages, Bhagavad-Gitas and small, medium and large books, as



well as posters and flyers for courses at the temple. The table distributes 100's of books a year, and now a Srimad-Bhagavatam set!

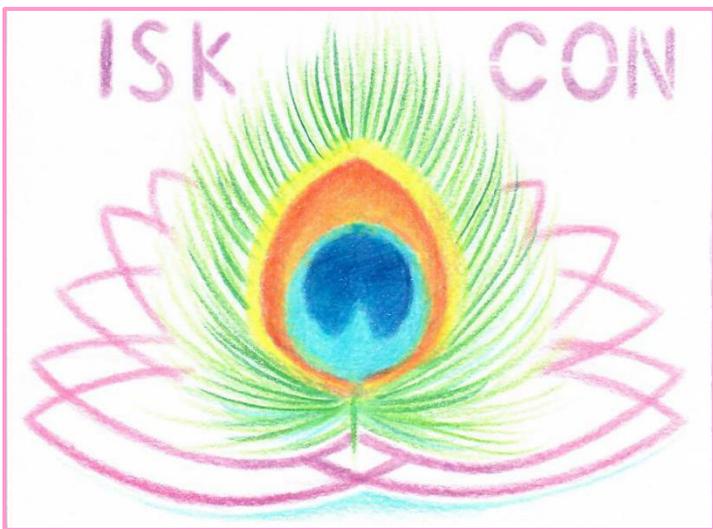
I connected with Damien via Facebook, he said he loved the small books he got from the table and that he found *Civilization and Transcendence* "Most gripping, it addresses a lot in a little packet". After messaging for more than a month he finally arrived from Hawks Bay to collect his Bhagavatam Set. He explained more to me about his journey, he had lived in Wellington for a while and kept meeting devotees in the street, he had favorable exchanges with them, and they invited him to Bhakti lounge, but he didn't get books or ever go. When he was up



in Auckland, he again met sankirtan devotees and decided to purchase a book which he read and relished. Later he went for a holiday at his parents' house in Australia and was shocked to find in his room a copy of Srila Prabhupada's Bhagavad-Gita, this Gita has been there all along, but only through exchanges with devotees and reading one of their books did he notice it, felt drawn to it and then understood it. All this inspired him to visit the temple when he returned to Auckland and there, he discovered more of Srila Prabhupada's books including Srimad-Bhagavatam.

All glories to all the devotees along the way who directed Damien to these transcendental books. 🙏

Inmate Artwork



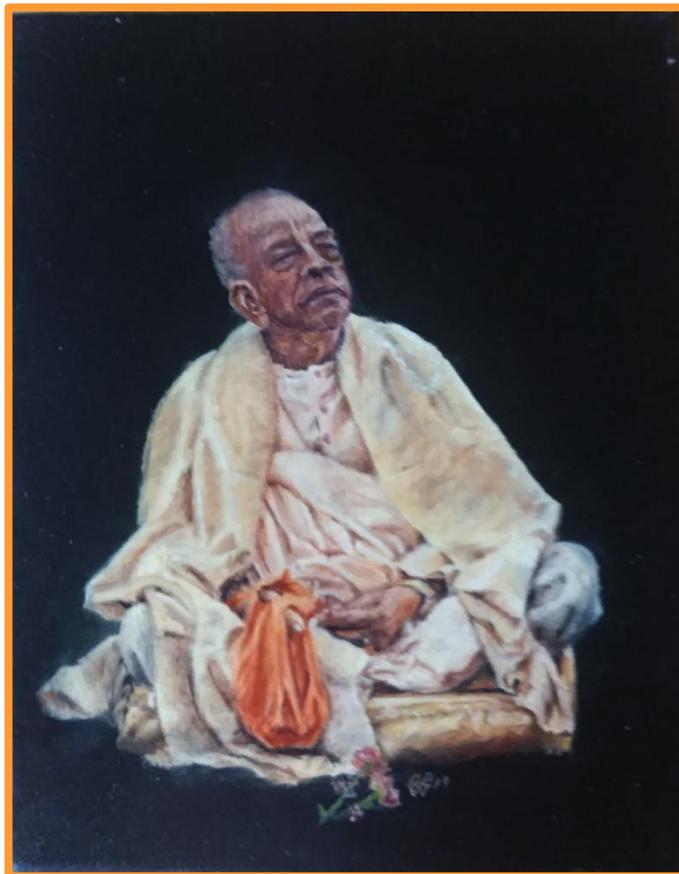
Thank you card —from Bhakta Rakesh P. and Bhakta Jason B. —Florida

To: Prison Ministry Seva team -
 May you be blessed during these holidays & New Year! Thankyou for your service to the prison community in true service to mighty Krishna! God bless you!
 Hare Bol! Om Shanti!

Raksh...
 (HARI BOL)

BRUNI 30

RIGT AND BELOW: Drawing of Srila Prabhupada —By David Burkman, Connecticut



NECTAR OF THE HOLY NAME

‘kanhara smarana jiva karibe anuksana?’
‘krsna-nama-guna-lila-pradhana smarana’

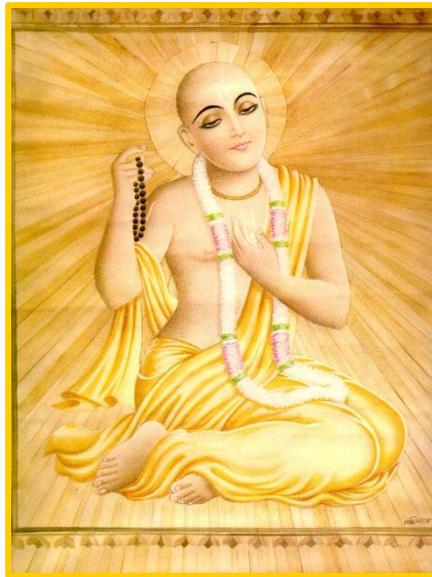
Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu asked, “What should all living entities constantly remember?” Ramananda Raya replied, “The chief object of remembrance is always the holy name of the Lord, His qualities and pastimes.”

(Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Madhya-lila 8.252)

krte yad dhyayato visnum
tretayam yajato makhaih
dvapare paricaryayam
kalau tad dhari-kirtanat
[Sukadeva Gosvami to Maharaja
Pariksit]:

“Whatever result was obtained in Satya-yuga by meditating on Visnu, in Treta-yuga by performing sacrifices and in Dvapara-yuga by serving the Lord’s lotus feet can also be obtained in Kali-yuga simply by chanting the Hare Krsna maha-mantra.”

(Srimad-Bhagavatam 12.3.52)



The Holy Name Is the Universal and Supreme Religion for this Age

harer nama harer nama
harer namaiva kevalam
kalau nasty eva nasty eva
nasty eva gatir anyatha

(Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Adi 17.21)

“In this age of Kali there is no alternative, there is no alternative, there is no alternative for spiritual

progress than the holy name, the holy name, the holy name of the Lord.”

krsna-varnam tvisakrsnam
sangopangastra-parsadam
yajnaih sankirtana-prayair
yajanti hi su-medhasah

“The pious results derived from chanting the thousand holy names of Visnu three times can be attained by only one repetition of the holy name of Krsna.”

(Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Madhya-lila 9.33)

trnad api sunicena
taror api sahisnuna
amanina manadena
kirtaniyah sada harih

“One should chant the holy name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking oneself lower than the straw in the street. One should be more tolerant than a tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige and ready to offer all respects to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly.”

namaparadha-yuktanam
namany eva haranty agham
avisranti-prayuktani
tany evartha-karani ca

Even if in the beginning one chants the Hare Krsna mantra with offenses, one will become free from such offenses by chanting again and again.

(Srimad-Bhagavatam 6.3.24)

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare