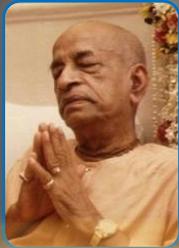


Freedom Newsletter



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

ISKCON Prison Ministry / November 2025

PO Box 2676
Alachua, FL 32616

PRABHUPADA SPEAKS OUT —The Secret of Real Religion

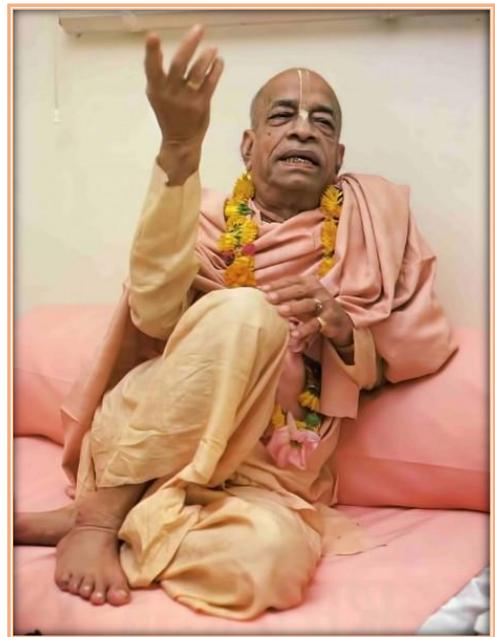
This interview with His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and freelance reporter Sandy Nixon took place in July 1975, the Kṛṣṇa temple in Philadelphia.

Ms. Nixon: My first question is very basic. What is Krishna consciousness?

Srila Prabhupada: “Krishna” means God. We are all intimately connected with Him because He is our original father. But we have forgotten this connection. When we become interested to know, “What is my connection with God? What is the aim of life?” then we are called Krishna conscious.

Ms. Nixon: How does Krishna consciousness develop in the practitioner?

Srila Prabhupada: Krishna consciousness is already there in the core of everyone’s heart. But because of our materially conditioned life, we have forgotten it. The process of chanting the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*—Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare—revives the Krishna consciousness we already have. For example, a few months ago these American



and European boys and girls did not know about Krishna, but just yesterday we saw how they were chanting Hare Krishna and dancing in ecstasy throughout the whole Ratha-yatra procession. Do you think that was artificial? No. Artificially, nobody can chant and dance for hours together. They have actually awakened their Krishna consciousness by following a bona fide process. This is explained in *Caitanya-caritamṛta* [Madhya 22.107]:

*nitya-siddha-Krishna-prema 'sadhya' kabhu naya
sravanadi-suddha-citte karaye udaya*

Krishna consciousness is dormant in everyone's heart, and when one comes in contact with devotees, it is awakened. Krishna consciousness is not artificial. Just as a young boy awakens his natural attraction for a young girl in her association, similarly, if one hears about Krishna in the association of devotees, he awakens his dormant Krishna consciousness.

Ms. Nixon: What is the difference between Krishna consciousness and Christ consciousness?

Srila Prabhupada: Christ consciousness is also Krishna consciousness, but because at present people do not follow the rules and regulations of Christianity—the commandments of Jesus Christ—they do not come to the standard of God consciousness.

Ms. Nixon: What is unique about Krishna consciousness among all religions?

Srila Prabhupada: Primarily, religion means to know God and to love Him. That is religion. Nowadays, because of a lack of training, nobody knows God, what to speak of loving Him. People are satisfied simply going to church and praying, “O God, give us our daily bread.” In the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* this is called a cheating religion, because the aim is not to know and love God but to gain some personal profit. In other words, if I profess to follow some religion, but I do not know who God is or how to love Him, I am practicing a cheating religion. As far as the Christian religion is concerned, ample opportunity is given to understand God, but no one is taking it. For example, the Bible contains the commandment, “Thou shall not kill,” but Christians have built the world's best slaughterhouses. How can they become God conscious if they disobey the commandments of Lord Jesus Christ? And this is

going on not just in the Christian religion, but in every religion. The title of Hindu, Muslim, or Christian is simply a rubber stamp. None of them knows who God is and how to love Him.

Ms. Nixon: How can one tell a bona fide spiritual master from a fake?

Srila Prabhupada: Whoever teaches how to know God and how to love Him—he is a spiritual master. Sometimes bogus rascals mislead people. “I am God,” they claim, and people who do not know what God is believe them. You must be a serious student to understand who God is and how to love Him. Otherwise, you will simply waste your time. So the difference between others and us is that we are the only movement that can actually teach one how to know God and how to love Him. We are presenting the science of how one can know Krishna, the Supreme

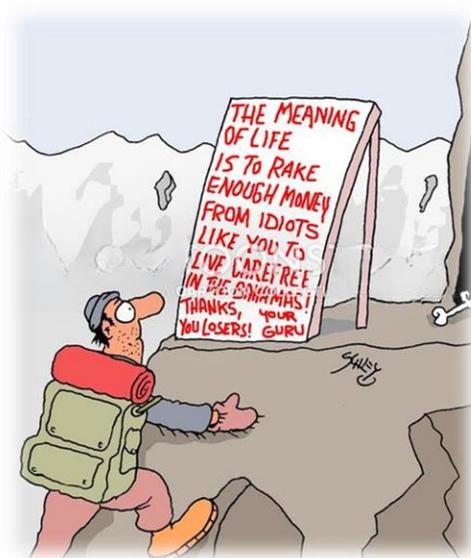
Personality of Godhead, by practicing the teachings of the *Bhagavad-gita* and the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. They teach us that our only business is to love God. Our business is not to ask God for our necessities. God gives necessities to everyone—even to one who has no religion. For example, cats and dogs have no religion, yet Krishna supplies them with the necessities of life. So why should we bother Krishna for our daily bread? He is already supplying it. Real religion means to learn how to love Him. The *Srimad-Bhagavatam* [1.2.6] says,

*sa vai pumsam paro dharmo
yato bhaktir adhoksaje
ahaituky apratihata
yayatma suprasidati*

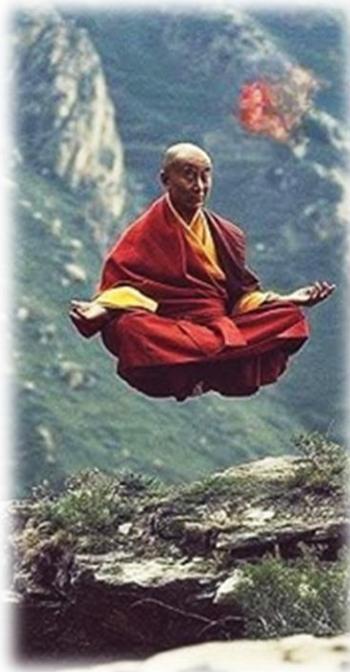
“First-class religion teaches one how to love God without any motive.” If I serve God for some profit, that is business—not love. Real love of God is *ahaituky apratihata*: it cannot be checked by any material cause. It is unconditional. If one actually wants to love God there is no impediment. He can love Him whether he's poor or rich, young or old, black or white.

Ms. Nixon: Do all paths lead to the same end?

Srila Prabhupada: No. There are four classes of men—the *karmis*, the *jnanis*, the yogis, and the *bhaktas*—and each achieves a different goal. The *karmis* work for some material profit. For example, in the city, many people work hard day and night, and their purpose is to get some money. Thus, they are fruitive workers, or *karmis*. A *jnani* is a person who



thinks, “Why am I working so hard? The birds, bees, elephants, and other creatures have no profession, yet they are also eating. So why should I unnecessarily work so hard? Rather, let me try to solve the problems of life—birth, death, old age, and disease.” *Jnanis* try to become immortal. They think that if they merge into God’s existence, then they will become immune to birth, death, old age, and disease. And *yogis* try to acquire some mystic power to exhibit a wonderful show. For instance, a *yogi* can become very small: if you put him into a locked room, he can come out through any little space. By showing this kind of magic, the *yogi* is immediately accepted as a very wonderful man. Of course, modern *yogis* simply show some gymnastics—they have no real power. But a real *yogi* has some power, which is not spiritual but material. So the *yogi* wants mystic power, the *jnani* wants salvation from the miseries of life, and the *karmi* wants material profit. But the *bhakta*—the devotee—doesn’t want anything for himself. He simply wants to serve God out of love, just like a mother serves her child. There is no question of profit in a mother’s service to her child. Out of pure affection and love, she cares for him.



When you come to this stage of loving God, that is perfection. Neither the *karmi*, the *jnani*, nor the *yogi* can know God—only the *bhakta*. As Krishna says in the *Bhagavad-gita* [18.55], *bhaktya mam abhijanati*: “Only through the process of *bhakti* can one understand God.” Krishna never says one can understand Him by other processes. No. Only through *bhakti*. If you are interested to know God and love Him, then you must accept the devotional process. No other process will help you.

Ms. Nixon: What transformation does one undergo on the path?

Srila Prabhupada: No transformation—your original consciousness is Krishna consciousness. Now your consciousness is covered with so much rubbish. You have to cleanse it, and then—Krishna consciousness. Our consciousness is like water. Water is by nature clear and transparent, but sometimes it becomes muddy. If you filter all the mud out of the water, it again comes to its original clear, transparent state.

Ms. Nixon: Can one function better in society by becoming Krishna conscious?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, you can see that my disciples are not drunkards or meat-eaters, and from a physiological point of view they are very clean—they’ll never be attacked by serious diseases. Actually, giving up meat-eating is not a question of Krishna consciousness, but of civilized human life. God has given human society so many things to eat—nice fruits, vegetables, grain, and first-class milk. From milk one can prepare hundreds of nutritious foods, but no one knows the art. Instead, people maintain big slaughterhouses and eat meat. They are not even civilized. When man is uncivilized, he kills poor animals and eats them.

Civilized men know the art of preparing nutritious foods from milk. For instance, on our New Vrndavana farm in West Virginia, we make hundreds of first-class preparations from milk. Whenever visitors come, they are astonished that from milk such nice foods can be prepared. The blood of the cow is very nutritious, but civilized men utilize it in the form of milk. Milk is nothing but cow’s blood transformed. You can make milk into so many things—yogurt, curd, ghee (clarified butter), and so on—and by combining these milk products with grains, fruits, and vegetables, you can make hundreds of preparations. This is civilized life—not directly killing an animal and eating its flesh. The innocent cow is simply eating grass given by God and supplying milk, which you can live on. Do you think cutting the cow’s throat and eating its flesh is civilized?

”If you are interested to know God and love Him, then you must accept the devotional process. No other process will help you.”

Ms. Nixon: No, I agree with you one hundred percent... One thing I’m very curious about: can the *Vedas* be taken symbolically as well as literally?

Srila Prabhupada: No. They must be taken as they are, not symbolically. That is why we are presenting *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*.

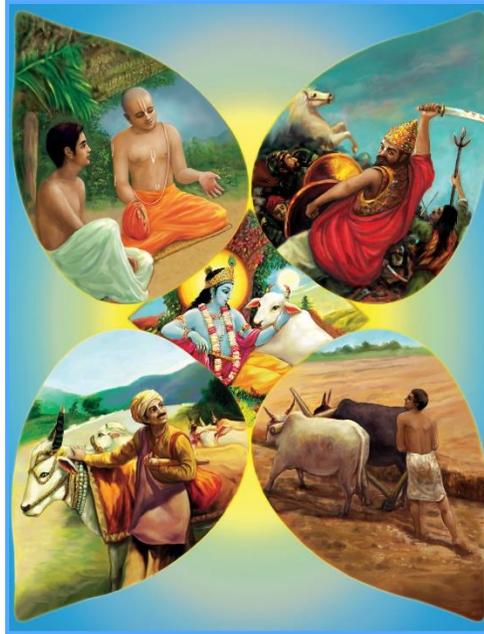
Ms. Nixon: Are you attempting to revive the ancient Indian caste system in the West? The *Gita* mentions the caste system—



Srila Prabhupada: Where does the *Bhagavad-gita* mention the caste system? Krishna says, *catur-varnyam maya srstam guna-karma-vibhagasah*: “I created four divisions of men according to their quality and work” [Bg. 4.13]. For instance, you can understand that there are engineers as well as medical practitioners in society. Do you say they belong to different castes—that one is in the engineer caste, and the other is in the medical caste? No. If a man has qualified himself in medical school, you accept him as a doctor; and if another man has a degree in engineering, you accept him as an engineer. Similarly, the *Bhagavad-gita* defines four classes of men in society: a class of highly intelligent men, a class of administrators, a class of productive men, and ordinary workers. These divisions are natural. For example, one class of men is very intelligent. But to actually meet the qualifications of first-class men as described in the *Bhagavad-gita*, they need to train, just as an intelligent boy requires training in a college to become a qualified doctor. So in the Krishna consciousness movement we are training the intelligent men how to control their minds, how to control their senses, how to become truthful, how to become clean internally and externally, how to become wise, how to apply their knowledge in practical life, and how to become God conscious. All these boys [gestures toward seated disciples] have first-class intelligence, and now we are training them to use it properly.

We are not introducing the caste system, in which any rascal born in a *brahmana* family is automatically a *brahmana*. He may have the habits of a fifth-class man, but he is accepted as first-class because of his birth in a *brahmana* family. We don't accept that. We recognize a man as first-class who is trained as a *brahmana*. It doesn't matter whether he is Indian, European, or American; lowborn or highborn—it doesn't matter. Any intelligent man can be trained to adopt first-class habits. We want to stop the nonsensical idea that we are imposing the Indian caste system on our disciples. We are simply picking out men with first-class intelligence and training them how to become first-class in every respect.

Ms. Nixon: How do you feel about women's liberation?



Srila Prabhupada: So-called equal rights for women means that the men cheat the women. Suppose a woman and a man meet, they become lovers, they have sex, the woman becomes pregnant, and the man goes away. The woman has to take charge of the child and beg alms from the government, or else she kills the child by having an abortion. This is the woman's independence. In India, although a woman may be poverty-stricken, she stays under the care of her husband, and he takes responsibility for her. When she becomes pregnant, she is not forced to kill the child or maintain him by begging. So, which is real independence—to remain under the care of the husband or to be enjoyed by everyone?

Ms. Nixon: How about in spiritual life—can women also succeed in Krishna consciousness?

Srila Prabhupada: We make no distinction on the basis of sex. We give Krishna consciousness to both men and women equally. We welcome women, men, the poor, the

rich—everyone. Krishna says in the *Bhagavad-gita*:

*vidya-vinaya-sampanne
brahmane gavi hastini
suni caiva svapake ca
panditah sama-darsinah*

“The humble sage, by virtue of true knowledge, sees with equal vision a learned and gentle *brahmana*, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and a dog-eater” [Bg. 5.18].

Ms. Nixon: Could you explain the meaning of the Hare Krishna mantra?

Srila Prabhupada: It is very simple. *Hare* means, “O energy of the Lord,” and *Krishna* means, “O Lord Krishna.” Just as there are males and females in the material world, similarly, God is the original male (*purusa*), and His energy (*prakrti*) is the original female. So, when we chant Hare Krishna, we are saying, “O Lord Krishna, O energy of Krishna, kindly engage me in Your service.”

Ms. Nixon: Could you please tell me a little bit about your life and how you knew that you were the spiritual master of the Krishna consciousness movement?

Srila Prabhupada: My life is simple. I was a householder with a wife and children—now I have

grandsons—when my spiritual master ordered me to go to the Western countries and preach the cult of Krishna consciousness. So I left everything on the order of my spiritual master, and now I am trying to execute his order and the orders of Krishna.

Ms. Nixon: How old were you when he told you to go to the West?

Srila Prabhupada: At our first meeting, he ordered me to preach Krishna consciousness in the West. I was then twenty-five years old, a married man with two children. I tried my best to carry out his orders and started managing *Back to Godhead* magazine in 1944 (picture on the right), when I was still in household life. I started writing books in 1959 after retiring from family life, and in 1965 I came to the United States.



Ms. Nixon: You have said that you are not God, and yet it appears to me, as an outsider, that your devotees treat you as if you were God.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, that is their duty. Because the spiritual master is executing God’s order, he should be respected as much as God, just as a government officer should be respected as much as the government because he executes the government’s order. Even if an ordinary policeman comes, you have to respect him because he is a government man. But that does not mean he is the government. *Saksad-dharitvena samasta-sastrair, uktas tatha bhavyata eva sadbhih:* “The spiritual master is to be honored as much as the Supreme Lord because he is the most confidential servitor of the Lord. This is acknowledged in all revealed scriptures and followed by all authorities.”

Ms. Nixon: I also wonder about the many beautiful material things that the devotees bring you. For instance, you left the airport in a beautiful, fancy car. I wonder about this because—



Srila Prabhupada: That teaches the disciples how to regard the spiritual master as good as God. If you respect the government representative as much as the government, then you must treat him opulently. If you respect the spiritual master as much as God, then you must offer him the same facilities you would offer to God. God travels in a golden car. If the disciples offer the spiritual master an ordinary motorcar, it would not be sufficient because the spiritual master has to be treated like God. If God comes to your home, will you bring him an ordinary motorcar—or will you arrange for a golden car?

Ms. Nixon: One of the most difficult aspects of Krishna consciousness for an outsider to accept is the Deity in the temple—how it represents Krishna. Could you talk a little bit

about that?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. At the present moment, because you have not been trained to see Krishna, He kindly appears before you so you can see Him. You can see wood and stone, but you cannot see what is spiritual. Suppose your father is in the hospital, and he dies. You are crying by his bedside, “Now my father is gone!” But why do you say he is gone? What is that thing which is gone?

Ms. Nixon: Well, his spirit is gone.

Srila Prabhupada: And have you seen that spirit?

Ms. Nixon: No.

Srila Prabhupada: So you cannot see spirit, and God is the Supreme Spirit. Actually, He is everything—spirit and matter—but you cannot see Him in His spiritual identity. Therefore, to show kindness toward you, He appears out of His unbounded mercy in the form of a wooden or stone Deity so that you can see Him.

Ms. Nixon: Thank you very much.

Srila Prabhupada: Hare Krishna!



Inmate's Appreciation of Bhagavad-Gita As It Is

I got Bhagavad-gita As It is from the Vedic resources. I learned it is Divine instruction for the battlefield of one's life to serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead. My favorite verse is in chapter 9, "This knowledge of Bhagavad-gita is king of education, the secret of all secrets". It is the purest of all knowledge and because it gives direct perception of self-realization, it is the perfection of all religion. This is Raja-Vidya as there is no higher knowledge than Bhagavad-gita. It is spoken on the battlefield of Kuruksetra between Sri Krishna and His disciple friend Arjuna.

Mark B. —Canon City, Colorado

I found a Bhagavad-gita As It Is in a used bookstore. As soon as I saw it I purchased it; I was already familiar with Srila Prabhupada's books by reading BTG (Back to Godhead Magazine), BTG was given to me by sankirtan devotee. Under Srila Prabhupada's expert qualified guidance, I learned that Bhagavad-gita must be understood in the disciplic chain of succession. When approached by a sincere student, a bona fide guru transmits knowledge of the Absolute Truth, namely knowledge of soul, the relationship between soul and Supersoul, understanding of the time activity and cosmic manifestation. This knowledge is contained in the Bhagavad-gita, and Bhagavad-gita must be accepted in the manner Arjuna, disciple accepted from Sri Krishna the original guru.

Anonymous inmate

In verse 2.66 (of the Bhagavad-gītā) it is stated that "One who is not connected with the Supreme (in Krishna Consciousness) can have neither intelligence nor a steady mind, without which there is no possibility of peace and how can there be any happiness without peace?" I am very impressed with the Bhagavad-gita because it has answered my questions, and if I want to read about something in particular I will look in the general index and it will take me to what I want to read about. I have learned from the Bhagavad-gita that we are not this body and we are spirit soul (Bg. 2.2). *The six promises of Lord Krishna are:* 1-Therefore Arjuna you should always think of me (Bg. 8.7) 2- Engage your mind always in thinking of Me (Bg 9.34) 3-To those who are constantly devoted to Me (Bg. 10.10) 4- My dear Arjuna, he who engages in my pure devotional service (Bg. 11.55) 5-Just fix your mind on Me the Supreme Personality of Godhead (Bg. 12.8) 6-Always think of Me, become My devotee (Bg. 18.65)

Gordon S. —Salem OR

I read all the books on Buddhist philosophy and I was not satisfied. As I read Bhagavad-gita As It Is, Krishna began to reveal Himself to me and the realizations were so deep. The information of Bhagavad-gita totally made Buddhist

literature seem weak. Besides reading Bhagavad-gita, I decided to chant one round of Hare Krishna Mahamantra. By doing these two things I had a spiritual experience; this is something I will never forget, something that has changed my life forever.

Kyle W. —Mineral Wells, Texas

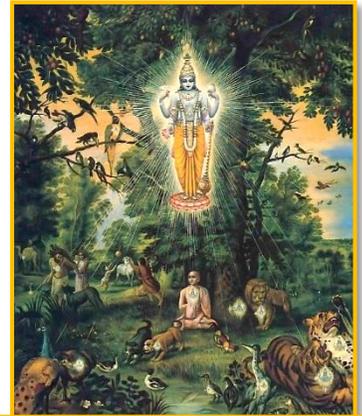
I received the copy of Bhagavad-gita in 2001. I have learned from the Bhagavad-gita that I am not this body I am spirit soul, I am eternal and once dwelled with God. My goal is to return home back to Godhead, and only way to do this is through devotional service unto Lord Krishna; and I must become His devotee. To become Lord Krishna's devotee I must render service unto Him and follow His will which is set forth in the Vedic literature specifically set forth in the Bhagavad-gita. The basic of devotional service is the hearing and chanting of Krishna's glorious pastimes and names and to follow the four regulative principles.

Travis B. —Parchman, Mississippi

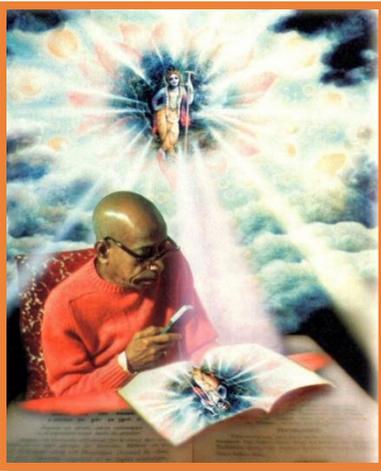
By reading Bhagavad-gita and studying Prabhupada's books I gain wisdom and knowledge of God. Krishna says in the Bhagavad-gita – verse 9.34, "Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, become My devotee, offer obeisances unto Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me." The same is true in the Bible, "Love your God with all your heart, mind, strength and soul". Constantly my mind is completely absorbed in God. One should engage his/her mind on the eternal form of Lord Krishna (God), with conviction in his/her heart that Krishna (God) is Supreme, he/she engage themselves in worship.

James S. — Carson City, Nevada

The first copy of Bhagavad-gita As It Is was sent to me



The Supersoul in everyone's heart.



The spiritual master reveals Lord Krishna

by Tirtha Dasa. I was amazed by looking at the cover, pictures and pages. I began reading it with no understanding and no attention. When I got to the last page, I placed Bhagavad-gita in a box filled with old books; which contained the books I have read a long time ago. One day in spiritual crisis, I

opened the box, looking for something though unsure what I was looking for. There laid Bhagavad-gita. I picked it up and began reading. Again I didn't understand a thing that I read but this time something was different. I felt something different. I felt calm when reading from this book; I felt that this book contained the answers which I needed. If I am right about anything in my life it is this that Bhagavad-gita contains all the answers I need in life. Though still I don't understand much of what I read in Bhagavad-gita As It Is, I know that I am looking in the right direction; I must continue to read Bhagavad-gita and study it daily.

Mark M. —Huntsville, West Virginia

In When I first received my Bhagavad-gita As It Is from Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, it was like opening a treasure. I have truly found the answers that I have been searching for all my life. I know that continuing to study and read Bhagavad-gita and other scriptures, associating with devotees and dedication to my devotion of practicing Krishna Consciousness will make the rest of my life in this body a much more pleasant place to be.

Michael H. —Salem, Oregon

My cellmate introduced me to Krishna Conscious philosophy and I was very much attracted to the artwork and philosophy. I wrote to Shyama Priya Mataji and explained to her that I carry emptiness due to my different beliefs. Shyama Priya wrote me a nice letter and sent me a Bhagavad-gita. I read her letter very carefully and read Bhagavad-gita. It may be hard for others to understand the Bhagavad-gita but I truly found what my body and soul is looking for in

Bhagavad-gita. I filled that void of emptiness in my heart by reading Bhagavad-gita. You can see the impact Bhagavad-gita has made in my life and I will always practice and carry Bhagavad-gita in my physical life.

Pedro P. —Corcoran California

I have learned from the Bhagavad-gita As It Is that we as human being have forgotten our true self and position, as servants of God – Lord Krishna, eternally I have learned that it is by His mercy that we even have the chance in human form to acknowledge even His lotus feet, and try to get back to home Back to Godhead position. I have also learned that to know Lord Krishna, first one must know one's self and Supersoul. The only way to truly know these things is by hearing from proper authority such as Lord Krishna Himself, the Vedic literature and other advanced devotes. As of my favorite verse, I would have honestly have to say that every verse in the Bhagavad-gita is my favorite verse.

Gregory I. — Reidsville, Georgia

1978 my friend took me to the Los Angeles temple for the Sunday feast program. This was the first time I saw the Bhagavad-gita As It Is and devotees gave me one to take with me, and after three days I moved into the temple. Many texts in the Bhagavad-gita I love so much, it's very hard to pick one as my favorite. But maybe verses 12.13-14 and purport I love very much. In purport Srila Prabhupada writes "*Thanks to my past misdeeds I should suffer far, far greater than I am suffering now, so it is by the mercy of the Supreme Lord that I am not getting punishment I am due.*" I am just getting a little suffering by the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. How wonderful Krishna is to bless this old fool with so much facility to come to Him.

Jivananda Dasa —Portland Oregon

I received my first Bhagavad-gita on my birthday (June 20, 2005). It was best present I have received. Bhagavad-gita has taught me the most important thing is devotion to Lord Sri Krishna, it shows that true path is Bhakti Yoga or devotional service. I read nine verses every morning to help start my daily routine along with chanting Hare Krishna Mahamantra. I share the verses of the Bhagavad-gita with others when one comes to my attention, they find verses interesting. I love the Bhagavad-gita and I love the words spoken by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad-gita.

Jennifer R. —Draper Utah



BBT Books Shine at Monterrey International Book Fair

By Atma Tattva Das — Nov 04, 2025 (edited article)

Devotees from Bhakti Center Monterrey represented the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT) at the 2025 Monterrey International Book Fair, distributing nearly 850 of Srila Prabhupada’s books and sparking spiritual curiosity across Mexico’s industrial north.

When the fair opened this October for its ten-day run, the small but determined team from the Bhakti Center stepped into the crowded exhibition halls with a clear mission: to share Srila



Left to right: Radhanath Das, Nandini Kisori Devi Dasi, Draupadi Devi Dasi, Eder, and Jayadeva Hari Das.

Prabhupada’s teachings with thousands of visitors seeking meaning amid the bustle of modern life. Hosted annually by Tecnológico de Monterrey, the event attracts publishers, authors, and readers from across Mexico and beyond. For the Monterrey devotees, this was their first time representing the BBT on such a prominent cultural stage, a milestone born of teamwork, determination, and faith.

PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION

Behind that milestone was a story of dedication and careful planning. For Divya-Priya Devi Dasi, a long-time devotee and Draupadi Devi Dasi, the project reflected years of steady service within their local congregation.

“We have a small committee,” said Divya-Priya. “Our goal is to share Srila Prabhupada’s teachings with as many people as possible, yogis, rehabilitation centers, and Food for Life programs, so we try to have an inclusive program.”

Applying to the fair proved to be no small task. “We had to wait almost a year and go through many requirements,” Draupadi explained. “They first give

priority to companies that have participated before, so we stayed in communication with the committee for eight months.” Booth space came at a significant cost, and participation required official BBT authorization.

Despite these hurdles, the Monterrey devotees pressed forward. “Alone, we can do nothing,” Divya-Priya said.

“It was really teamwork. Some stayed at the booth, others cooked prasadam or handled logistics, but everyone contributed.” About ten devotees worked in shifts, covering twelve hours a day for the entire ten-day fair, while others supported from home or work.

THE BOOTH EXPERIENCE

At first, the team didn’t know what to expect. “It was our first time,” Draupadi said, laughing. “We just said, ‘Let’s do this, and if it doesn’t work, we’ll learn and improve.’”

They quickly realized their booth offered something unique. “Other publishers had spiritual books, but mostly commercial ones,” Draupadi noted. “We had something different, books that carried depth and truth.”

The visitors proved that this difference mattered. Draupadi recalled one young woman who had been



searching the fair for something meaningful. “She said, ‘This is what I was looking for in all this fair!’” Another story stood out even more vividly. “An older man was looking at

the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. While a devotee was explaining the *Gita*, the man pointed to the *Chaitanya-charitāmṛta*, saying, ‘I want that book that shines.’ He bought the full set right there, in cash.”

These small miracles became the highlights of their days.

The devotees created a welcoming environment for all visitors, including students and children who came with their schools.

“The fair was very big,” Draupadi said. “For the kids, sometimes we only asked for the cost of printing so that they could take something home.” They distributed bookmarks with the Mahā-mantra and Food for Life contact details, inviting readers to stay connected.



By the end of the fair, they had distributed 848 books. But for the team, it wasn't about numbers. “We were saying, ‘Welcome to the most spiritual stand in the whole book fair,’ Divya-Priya recalled. “People felt the energy. We weren't selling, we were sharing.”

The organizers even allowed the devotees to hold kīrtan in the auditorium, filling the hall with the chanting of the Holy Names. “That gave us so much enthusiasm,” Draupadi said. “It made people curious and eager to learn more.”

Media coverage followed, including interviews on *El Heraldo*, one of Mexico's leading radio networks. The exposure led to new invitations for podcasts, yoga center collaborations, and future speaking events.

IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

The experience also changed the devotees themselves. “This service nourished our hearts,” said Divya-Priya. “We didn't make a profit, just covered expenses, but the joy we felt was immense.”

In the weeks following the fair, new guests began attending Sunday programs at Bhakti Center Monterrey. “Many said, ‘We were looking for this,’” Draupadi said.

“It showed us how much people are searching for real spirituality.”

The outreach extended beyond the fair. Through connections made there, the devotees were invited by the city's Office of Religious Affairs to perform a purification ceremony at a newly restored government building. “We did Harinam through all the offices,” Draupadi said. “All the employees left their desks and joined us.”

The center has also deepened its interfaith work. “We're members of the interfaith community,” Divya-Priya explained. “They call us for many events, sometimes *Bhakti Vriksha* programs, sometimes to chant or share prasadam.”

LESSONS AND LOOKING AHEAD

The fair reaffirmed for the team that cooperation is essential. “If there is no team, we are nothing,” Draupadi said. “Service saves us.”

Looking ahead, the devotees plan to build on their success by returning next year with new strategies and a stronger setup. “We want to improve, make it even



more impactful,” Draupadi shared. “We're grateful for this opportunity. We're just instruments in the hands of Srila Prabhupada.”

The Monterrey congregation continues to balance practical life with preaching, hosting kīrtans in local parks, feeding hundreds through Food for Life, and visiting rehabilitation centers

and schools. Their booth at the Monterrey International Book Fair was more than a one-time outreach; it was the start of a new chapter in sharing Srila Prabhupada's books with modern Mexico.

A LASTING IMPRESSION

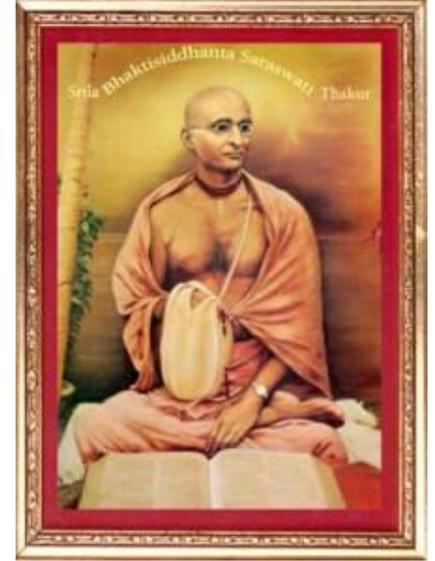
In a city known for its industry and speed, Bhakti Center Monterrey has carved out a spiritual heartbeat. Ten devotees, ten days, and 848 books later, they left behind not just readers, but seekers, people who, in the middle of a busy fair, found something that truly shone.



Calendar

NOVEMBER 2025

- 02 Nov 2025 - **Utthana Ekadasi**
- 02 Nov 2025 - Disappearance Day of Srila Gaura Kisora Dasa Babaji Maharaja
- 04 Nov 2025 - Disappearance Day of Sri Bhugarbha Goswami
- 04 Nov 2025 - Disappearance Day of Sri Kasisvara Pandita
- 05 Nov 2025 - Sri Krsna Rasayatra
- 05 Nov 2025 - Appearance Day of Sri Nimbarkacharya
- 05 Nov 2025 - Last Day of Caturmasya
- 15 Nov 2025 - **Utpanna Ekadasi**
- 15 Nov 2025 - Disappearance Day of Sri Narahari Sarakara Thakura
- 16 Nov 2025 - Disappearance Day of Sri Kaliya Krsnadasa
- 17 Nov 2025 - Disappearance Day of Sri Saranga Thakura



ABOVE: Srila
Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati
Thakura

DECEMBER 2025

- 01 Dec 2025 - Advent of Srimad Bhagavat Gita
- 01 Dec 2025 - **Moksada Ekadasi**
- 08 Dec 2025 - **Disappearance Day of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura**
- 15 Dec 2025 - Disappearance Day of Sri Devananda Pandita
- 17 Dec 2025 - Disappearance Day of Sri Mahesa Pandita
- 17 Dec 2025 - Disappearance Day of Sri Uddharana Datta Thakura
- 21 Dec 2025 - Appearance Day of Sri Lochana Dasa Thakura
- 23 Dec 2025 - Disappearance Day of Sri Jiva Goswami
- 23 Dec 2025 - Disappearance Day of Sri Jagadisa Pandita
- 31 Dec 2025 - **Putrada Ekadasi**
- 31 Dec 2025 - Appearance Day of Sri Jagadisa Pandita

SARANGA THAKURA (disappearance day on November 17th this year)

An important branch of the Shri Chaitanya tree, Shri Sharanga Thakura (Sharanga Murari) lived in Navadwipa (India). Staying under a Bakula tree, Sharanga Thakura worked hard every day to please his worshipable Deity. Single handedly, he would collect fruits, vegetables and firewood. He would also beg for rice, cook, bathe, dress, and feed his Lord. After a full day of Deity service Sharanga would cross the Ganges River to join Lord Caitanya's Hari-Nama sankirtan party in Mayapur. During one visit, Lord Gauranga noticed that Sharanga's beloved Bakula tree was drying up and almost dead. Lord Chaitanya embraced the tree with His beautiful golden arms. Completely rejuvenated, the tree burst forth with green leaves and fresh very fragrant flowers. To this day, devotees of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu worship this special tree. Some devotees collect small pieces of wood, which occasionally fall off, and make neck beads or worship it.

Sharanga Thakura vowed to never initiate disciples despite Lord Chaitanya's insistence. One day he relented and decided to initiate the first person he came across. While bathing in the Ganges, he brushed against a floating corpse. Suddenly it sprang to life. Stunned, the revived man identified his name as Murari and bowed down to Sharanga Thakura who had just miraculously renewed his life. After giving him mantra diksha, Saranga Thakura became famous as "Sharanga Murari Thakura."

By taking a forty-five minute rikshaw ride from downtown Navadwipa, you can still see the Deities of Sharanga Thakura and the Bakula tree. 🌸