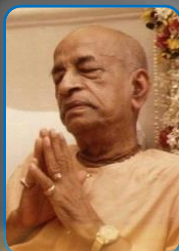


Freedom Newsletter



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

ISKCON Prison Ministry / April 2026

PO Box 2676
Alachua, FL 32616

PRABHUPADA SPEAKS OUT —We Worship Everything

The following conversation between His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and some of his disciples took place in Los Angeles on May 14, 1973.

Devotee: Srila Prabhupada, if material nature is the absence of Kṛṣṇa, then what is material?

Srila Prabhupada: Nothing is material. If you continue Kṛṣṇa consciousness, there's nothing material. When we offer this flower in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is it material?

Devotee: No.

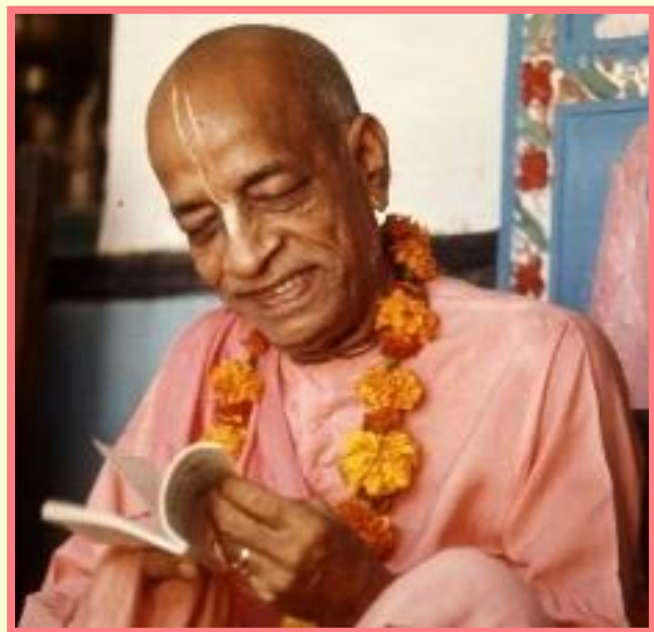
Srila Prabhupada: So how has it become spiritual? It was material in the tree and now it has become spiritual? No. It *is* spiritual. As long as I was thinking that it is meant for my enjoyment, it was material. As soon as I take it for Kṛṣṇa's enjoyment, it is spiritual.

Devotee: So actually this entire world is spiritual.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. That we want - to engage everything in Kṛṣṇa's service. Then this world will be the spiritual world.

Devotee: So we can also appreciate Kṛṣṇa's creation in that light? For example, this flower is very beautiful because it is Kṛṣṇa's.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. We realize that. The Mayavadi philosophy says *jagan mithya*: "This world is false."



We don't say that. Krsna has created so many nice things for His enjoyment, why shall I say *mithya* [false]? Suppose you build a nice house and you call me.; "Just see," and I say, "It is all *mithya*."

Devotee: I'll be offended, because I can't enjoy it if it is false.

Srila Prabhupada: [Laughing]: How depressed you'll be! The *Bhagavad-gita* explains that the demons say like this - *asatyam apratistham te jagad ahur anisvaram*. The rascals, the demons say that this world is *asatyā*, untruth, and that there is no cause, no *isvara*. This is the declaration of the demons. But if Krsna is a fact. His creation is a fact. His energy is a fact. Why shall I say it is false? We don't say it is false. the Mayavadis say it is false.

Devotee: If someone looks at the Deity of Krsna and thinks it's only stone or wood, for him it's still material?

Srila Prabhupada: That is his ignorance. How can it be material? The stone is also Krsna's energy. For example, electricity is everywhere, and the electrician knows how to utilize it. Similarly, Krsna is everywhere, even in the stone, and the devotees know how to utilize stone to appreciate Krsna.

The rascals do not know. The devotee knows because he has no other view than of Krsna. Why should the stone be without Krsna? "Here is Krsna." That is real oneness. The Mayavadi philosophers propose oneness, but they divide - this is stone, this is not Krsna. Why bring another thing?

Devotee: For a Krsna conscious person is Krsna as much in the stone as in the Deity?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes.

Devotee: Just as much?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. Why not?

Devotee: But we order Deities all the way from India?

Srila Prabhupada: Krsna explains, "Everything is in Me, but I'm not everything." This is called *acintya-*

bhedabheda - simultaneous oneness and difference. Everything is Krsna, but you cannot worship this bench as Krsna. That is rascaldom. The sunshine is also sun. Is it not? But when the sunshine is in the room, you cannot say, "The sun is in my room." This is called *acintya-bhedabheda*.

Devotee: But you said one can see Krsna within the stone.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. Why not?

Devotee: And one can worship Him within the stone or within everything.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. We worship everything. We see Krsna everywhere. We don't see the tree; we see Krsna's energy. Therefore the tree is also worshipable because Krsna and Krsna's energy are both worshipable. Therefore we say, "Hare Krsna." *Hare* means Krsna's energy. We worship everything. In our childhood we were taught by our parents that if a grain of rice falls on the floor, we must pick it up and touch it to our head to show respect. We were taught like this - how to see everything in relationship with Krsna. That is Krsna consciousness. Therefore, we do not like to see anything wasted, anything misused. Why are we preaching? Because we see that so many rascals are misusing their

life. We think, "Let us give them some enlightenment." This is our mission. We could think, "Let them go to hell." Mayavadi *sannyasis* engage in meditation or go to the Himalayas, but we have come to Los Angeles. Why? This is our mission. "Oh, these people are being misused under maya. Let them gain some enlightenment."

We are teaching how to utilize everything for Krsna, how to understand Krsna in everything. That is our mission. See Krsna in everything. Krsna says, "Anyone who sees Me everywhere, and everything in Me, is perfect." 🌸



Nectar of the Holy Name

Although Kali-yuga is full of faults, there is still one good quality about this age: simply by chanting the Hare Krsna maha-mantra, one can become free from material bondage and be promoted to the transcendental kingdom —SB 12.3.51

REQUESTING MATERIAL?

- 1) When requesting books, please make sure the address you give us is correct so that it is not returned. Returns are costly. Many institutions now have different addresses for letters and for receiving books. Write this information in each letter in which you request material
Also tell us if you are allowed hardbound books, or only softbound, and how many at a time.
- 2) When requesting prayer (japa) beads or neck beads, please make sure that you are allowed to receive them. Our japa beads are white, strung on a strong nylon cord, and are about 25” long (folded).
Give us an authorization form if one needs to be included and let us also know if you can receive them directly or if they need to be sent through the chaplain. Only request beads if you intend to chant Hare Krishna on them.

Thank you!

DEITY WORSHIP, NOT IDOL WORSHIP

“Just like in front of your door there is a mailbox. That mailbox, although it appears to be small box, but is Post Office. It is not different from Post Office. The practical example is that you place your letters within the box and it goes thousands and thousand miles away. Therefore it is Post Office. Don't think that it is different from the Post Office.

Similarly, ānanda-cinmaya-rasa expansion—this Deity. When you are worshipping this Deity, exactly just like you are posting your letters in the mailbox, it is accepted by Kṛṣṇa. Don't think that you are worshipping some doll. No. As the Post Office kindly places a box before your house to facilitate your business, similarly Kṛṣṇa, goloka eva nivasati, He is living in the Goloka Vṛndāvana, but He expands Himself as Deity to accept your humble service.”

Lecture Brahma-Samhita 5.37 - London

“In our present state of imperfect material existence, we cannot see the Supreme Lord, due to imperfect vision. Yet those devotees who want to see him by means of material vision are favored by the Lord, who appears in a so-called material form to accept His devotee's service.”

Sri Isopanisad Mantra 5, Purport

“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.”

Science of Self-Realization, Chapter 1

“Therefore, the bhakti-yogī accepts the Deity of Kṛṣṇa as worshipable because there is some bodily conception fixed in the mind, which can thus be applied. Of course, worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His form within the temple is not idol worship. There is evidence in the Vedic literature that worship may be saṅuṇa and nirṅuṇa-of the Supreme possessing or not possessing attributes. Worship of the Deity in the temple is saṅuṇa worship, for the Lord is represented by material qualities. But the form of the Lord, though represented by material qualities such as stone, wood, or oil paint, is not actually material. That is the absolute nature of the Supreme Lord.

A crude example may be given here. We may find some mailboxes on the street, and if we post our letters in those boxes, they will naturally go to their destination without difficulty. But any old box, or an imitation, which we may find somewhere, which is not authorized by the post office, will not do the work. Similarly, God has an authorized representation in the Deity form, which is called arca-vigraha. This arca-vigraha is an incarnation of the Supreme Lord. God will accept service through that form. The Lord is omnipotent and all-powerful; therefore, by His incarnation as arca-vigraha, He can accept the services of the devotee, just to make it convenient for the man in conditioned life.”

Bhagavad-gita As It Is, 12.5, purport



“The Lord in the temple in the worshipable form is never to be considered to be made of stone or wood, for the Lord in His *arca* incarnation as the Deity in the temple shows immense favor to the fallen souls by His auspicious presence. By the hearing process, as mentioned hereinbefore, this realization of the presence of the Lord in the temple is made possible.”

Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.3.21, Purport

“The Lord is transcendental to our mundane senses. He cannot be seen with our present eyes, nor can He be heard with our present ears. To the degree that we have entered into the service of the Lord or to the proportion to which our lives are freed from sins, we can perceive the Lord. But even though we are not free from sins, the Lord is kind enough to allow us the facility of seeing Him in His *arca-murtis* in the temple. The Lord is all-powerful, and therefore He is able to accept our service by presentation of

His *arca* form. No one, therefore, should foolishly think the *arca* in the temple to be an idol. Such an *arca-murti* is not an idol but the Lord Himself, and to the proportion to which one is freed from sins, he is able to know the significance of the *arca-murti*. The guidance of a pure devotee is therefore always required.”

Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.1.17, Purport

“Just as by clapping the hands one can cause many birds to fly away, similarly the birds of all sinful activities which are sitting on the body can be made to fly away simply by dancing and clapping before the Deity of Krishna.”

Nectar of Devotion, Chapter 9

“*Mayavadis* (impersonalists) and atheists accept the forms of the Deities in the temple of the Lord as idols, but devotees do not worship idols. They directly worship the Personality of Godhead in His *arca* incarnation. *Arca* refers to the form which we can worship in our present condition. Actually, in our present state it is not possible to see God in His spiritual form because our material eyes and senses cannot conceive of a spiritual form. We cannot even see the spiritual form of the individual soul. When a man dies we cannot see how the spiritual form leaves the body. That is the defect of our material senses. In order to be

seen by our material senses, the Supreme Personality of Godhead accepts a favorable form which is called *arca-vigraha*. This *arca-vigraha*, sometimes called the *arca* incarnation, is not different from Him. Just as the Supreme Personality of Godhead accepts various incarnations, He takes on forms made out of matter—clay, wood, metal and jewels.”

Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.25.35, Purport

“This function of installing the deity is authorized. Several times I have given the example that when you put your mail in a box on the street, because it is written there "US Mail" you know that it is an authorized box. And if you put your letters within this box, they will surely reach the destination. The post office will work. So there is no difference between the huge post office building and that small box, because it is authorized. Similarly, the difference between idol worship and

deity worship is like that. Unless the authorized process is accepted, it is idol worship. That is the general rule. If somebody thinks, "There is a box, red and blue, on the street. Why shall I go to that box? Let me have a similar box at my door, and it will be cleared by the postman because it is blue and red," oh, that will not be. Because the box you put at your door is not authorized.

(...) Krishna is the Parambrahman. That is stated in

the Bhagavad-gita (10.12). Therefore you have to keep yourself very purified; otherwise you cannot touch Krishna. That is not possible. It is fire [spirit], so you have to become fire. And how to become fire? You are also fire, but now you are covered fire, covered by this material body. Therefore you have to spiritualize this body by the purificatory process. An iron rod is iron, but if you put it into the fire, it becomes warm, warmer, warmer, then red-hot; then it is fire. Similarly, by chanting and following this regulative process, you are becoming warmer, warmer, warmer, warmer. And when you fully become red-hot warm, then your body is as good as Krishna's.

So we have to keep ourselves always in the fire of Krishna consciousness; then everything is all right. Otherwise, it will become dull, and it will be simply idol worship. That's all. That is the difference between idol worship and deity worship. If there is no life, then it is idol worship, hedonism. And when there is life, feeling, “Where is Krishna? Here is Krishna. Oh, I have

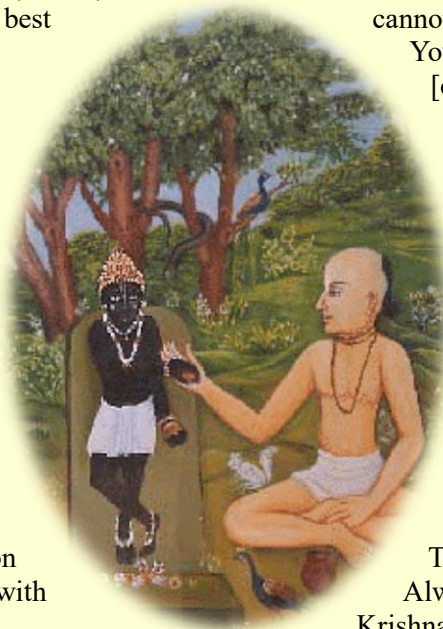


ABOVE: Prabhupada offering articles to the deities

to serve Krishna. I have to dress Him. I have to serve Radharani. She is here. Oh, I must do it very nicely. And as far as possible decorate Her to the best capacity.” In this way, if you always feel Krishna conscious, then you are fire. If you think this is a brass idol, then it will remain a brass idol to you forever. But if you elevate yourself to the higher platform of Krishna consciousness, then Krishna – this Krishna – will talk with you. This Krishna will talk with you.

Vamsidasa Babaji Maharaja, a contemporary of my Guru Maharaja, was talking with his deity. And the deity Madana-mohana was talking with Sanatana Gosvami. Sanatana Gosvami at that time, about five hundred years ago, had no temple; he was hanging his deity on the tree. So Madana-mohana was talking with him.

“Sanatana, you are bringing all these dry chapatis, and you don’t give Me even a little salt. How can I eat this way?”



Sanatana Gosvami said, “Sir, where shall I go? Whatever I get I offer You. Kindly accept it. I cannot move; I’m an old man.”

You see. So Krishna had to eat that. [chuckles] Because the bhakta is offering, He cannot refuse. The real thing is bhakti. What can you offer to Krishna? Everything belongs to Krishna. What have you got? What is your value? And what is the value of your things? They are nothing. Therefore the real thing is bhaktya; the real thing is your feeling. “Krishna, kindly take it. I have no qualification. I am most rotten, fallen [Prabhupada chokes up], but I have brought this thing for You. Please take it.”

This will be accepted. Don’t be puffed up. Always be careful. You are dealing with Krishna. That is my request.

Thank you very much.”

Lecture on the occasion of the installation of the deities —July 16, 1969, Los Angeles



Excerpts from inmates’ letters

Hare Krishna! All glories to Srila Prabhupada! I’m happy to let you know I’m out now! Thanks for keeping my faith strong in times when I needed it. Keep the mission! You’re near to my soul and have touched my heart many times. Thank you.

Anthony K. —Colorado

I’d like some info about Bhakti-yoga. Though I am a Christian I’d like to broaden my spirituality and learn more about the cultural and religious practices of others. Thank you for your kindness.

Josh L. —New Castle, Indiana

My name is Joshua Presley. I’m currently incarcerated in Illinois. I have recently discovered Kṛṣṇa on my Edovo tablet and I’m interested in learning more about Kṛṣṇa. I’m very drawn to this. I have been chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa daily and reading all that is on the tablet. Is there a Bhagavad-gita Bible? Any information to help me further my studies would be great. Thank you.

Joshua P. —East St. Louis, Illinois

I became interested in Krishna consciousness after reading "Bhagavad Gita As It Is" which is available on the Edovo app on our tablets. From there I read some of the other books by Prabhupada, and I'm currently reading the Srimad Bhagavatam, so there is quite a lot to read on the subject on our tablets. I find it so truly fresh and fascinating! I come from a conservative Christian background, and early on I rejected that faith and became an atheist in my angry teen years.

John G. —Little Rock, Arkansas

Thank you so much for sending me books. I am really grateful for such a kind, generous, and thoughtful gesture. I read two of them within the first night of receiving them.

Devin N. —Fresno, CA

We inmates need, crave [KC], and perhaps our spiritual greed is growing as these periodicals —like the Freedom Newsletter— you bless us with are so enlightening to us poor lost souls.

Jose M. A. —Fairton New Jersey

I'm not sure who to address this letter to, but whoever it reaches I send you my eternal gratitude. I'm currently incarcerated in San Marcos Texas, and I came across your series of e-books on Edovo, via my Securus tablet. Words cannot describe the amount of joy and bliss I felt once I discovered these beautiful books. I've been incarcerated for 22 months. Prior to my incarceration I was living a life filled with crime and poor choices. However, I have taken advantage of this time away from the distractions of the free world to study the Bhagavad-Gita.

I first came across the dialogue of Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa years ago when I was in college. One of my philosophy professors introduced me to the Gita, and I thought it was the most beautiful story I have ever heard. I fell in love with Hinduism and Kṛṣṇa's divine glory!

I'm thrilled to find this address. I finally found someone who can help guide me down the path of devotion. I'm seeking some help and guidance in any form.

I'm currently waiting to be transferred to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. I will be incarcerated for at least another 8 years maybe longer. I hope your books will remain on Edovo during my incarceration. I plan on dissecting these books and studying them diligently. I already started digging through chapter 3 of the Gita to learn how to read the Gita in Sanskrit. I've been reading various English translations, but I want to dive into the Sanskrit and learn as much as possible in the name of our Lord. Once again, I send you a million thank yous, whoever you are. I hope to hear from you one day, I hope you continue the beautiful work. I plan on sharing these treasures I have found with many people, and I plan to send more people your way. You're more than welcome to use this letter for your future newsletters.

Alexander B. —San Marco, Texas



LETTER OF SUPPORT for the lawsuit against the Bhagavad-gita ban in Florida

MY LIFE TRANSFORMATION —FROM CRIMINAL TO KRISHNA —By Danny G.

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to tell you what the Bhagavad Gita did for my life, because without this book I would not be the person I am today — and I very likely would not be alive outside of a prison cell.

Before I found the Gita, I was a drug addict and an extremely violent man. I lived for chaos. I took pleasure in causing fear in other people. My days were filled with partying, using drugs, sleeping, and then doing it all again. When the stress caught up with me, I would drink myself into oblivion and go on violent rampages, robbing drug dealers and destroying everything in my path. I had no purpose, no discipline, and no idea how to be a man. I was completely lost.

Eventually, that life put me in prison after I seriously assaulted someone. Sitting behind those four walls, I began to realize that if something didn't change, my future would be nothing more than a cycle of cages, courtrooms, and destruction — both for myself and everyone around me.

In prison I started looking for a way to control the anger that ruled me. I began studying Buddhism and attending meditation classes. That helped, but it was only the beginning. With access to the prison library, I went deeper into Eastern philosophy, searching for something that could give me structure, meaning, and a way to live. That is when I came across the Bhagavad Gita.

From the very first pages, I was captivated. Within two days, I gave up the television in my cell so I could study the Gita every day and practice what it taught. I wasn't just reading words — I was being shown how to live. Slowly, something inside me began to change.

People noticed. My cell became clean and orderly. I was calm, active, and joyful, even in the harsh conditions of prison life. I had no contact with the outside world. I was completely alone — except for this book. The Gita gave me companionship, guidance, and a sense of fulfillment when I had nothing else.

It taught me how to be a man. I grew up without a father figure, and I never learned discipline,

responsibility, or self-respect. The Bhagavad Gita filled that void. It gave me principles to live by, showed me how to master my mind instead of being ruled by it, and helped me find dignity where there had only been chaos.

Since leaving prison, the transformation has continued. I now work as a delivery driver for Iceland, where I was awarded Best Colleague for November 2025. I have also started my own farm business in Canterbury. I have been vegetarian for years. I do not use drugs. I don't smoke, vape, or drink. My mind is clear, my conscience is clean, and I am proud of the person I am and the contribution I now make to society.

I have plans for the future. I have goals. I have stability. But before I found the Bhagavad Gita, the only future I could see was one behind bars, costing taxpayers money and spreading pain everywhere I went.

This book didn't just give me comfort — it gave me a new life. It took a violent, addicted, hopeless man and helped turn him into someone who can work, serve, create, and live with purpose. That is something I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

With deep gratitude Danny G. —England



QUESTIONS TO HELP YOUR STUDY OF THE BHAGAVAD-GITA As It Is

CHAPTER 1: Observing the Armies on the Battlefield of Kuruksetra

Suggested texts to memorize in English and, if possible, in Sanskrit as well: **1.1**

QUESTIONS (the answers are not provided; you will find them in the texts themselves):

1. Who is Dhrtarastra?
2. Who is Sanjaya?
3. What did Dhrtarastra ask Sanjaya?
4. What is the deeper meaning of Dhrtarastra's question to Sanjaya?
5. Why does Dhrtarastra say Kuruksetra is a place of pilgrimage?
6. What was Sanjaya's response to Dhrtarastra?
7. What did Bhisma, the Commander in Chief of the Kaurava army, do in response to Duryodhana?
8. What was the response from the Pandava army?
9. What are the names of Lord Krsna's and Arjuna's conch shells?
10. What was unique about Arjuna's chariot?
11. What is the significance of Arjuna's flag?
12. How many horses pulled Arjuna's chariot?
13. Why did Arjuna ask Lord Sri Krsna to draw his chariot between the two armies?
14. Why did Arjuna address Lord Sri Krsna as Achyuta (O infallible one)?
15. Why did Sanjaya address Lord Sri Krsna as Hrsikesa and Arjuna as Gudakesa?
16. What did Lord Sri Krsna say to Arjuna after positioning the chariot between the two armies?
17. Why does Lord Sri Krsna address Arjuna as Partha?
18. Name all the relatives that Arjuna could see on the battlefield.
19. What happened to Arjuna after he saw all his friends and relatives on the battlefield?
20. What symptoms of the body did Arjuna display after seeing his friends and relatives on the battlefield?
21. Why did Arjuna display these symptoms of the body?
22. Why does Arjuna address Lord Sri Krsna as "killer of the Kesi demon"?
23. What was the first reason Arjuna gave Lord Sri Krsna not to fight?
24. Name a minimum of 6 reasons Arjuna gives Lord Sri Krsna not to fight.
25. Why does Arjuna address Lord Sri Krsna as "O Krsna," "O Govinda," "O Madhusudana," "O Madhava," "O Janardana," and "O descendent of Vrsni" in this chapter?
26. What does Arjuna do after giving his reasons not to fight?



Book Distribution Stories!

BOOK DISTRIBUTION MIRACLES —by Tapasa Dasa

On college book distribution, Bhrgupati [bree-goo-pa-tee] dasa and I set up our table and started approaching people. In the beginning nothing was happening at all, so we were thinking maybe we should go somewhere else, or maybe today will just be one of those rough days for distributing books. But then Bhrgupati prabhu handed me a Bhagavad-Gita and said to go to Chapter 9, text 5, and read aloud where the purport says:

"We may think of doing something, but there are so many impediments, and sometimes it is not possible to do as we like. But when Krsna wants to do something, simply by His willing, everything is performed so perfectly that one cannot imagine how it is being done." And: "Simply by His supreme will everything is created, everything is sustained, everything is maintained, and everything is annihilated."

Then Bhrgupati Prabhu told me if we desire something on our own, it may not happen. But Krsna, simply by His will, can create planets and universes, sustain them, and annihilate them. If He wants something, He can do it by His own will. So if Krsna sees that a sincere devotee is putting in the effort to please and serve Him, He will think, 'Okay, you devotees are trying your hardest, you are trying to serve Me, so I will reciprocate and make things a little easier for you.' In other words, if Krsna wants, He can turn things around and make miracles. And then Bhrgupati said: "Here, let us leave this page open on the table."

Immediately, an Asian professor walked straight up to Bhrgupati, spoke with him, was interested in the books, and ended up giving Bhrgupati a one hundred dollar donation. After he left, Bhrgupati looked at me with a big smile, grinning from ear to ear, and said, "See Prabhu, Krsna can make it happen. If Krsna wants, He can do anything. It is simply by His will that things happen."

Last September, when Bhrgupati Prabhu, myself, and another devotee were distributing books at the Los Angeles comic convention, a lot of people were taking books. But then it seemed like everyone was saying no and not even stopping to look at the books. Bhrgupati said we have to keep trying and pray to the Six Goswamis for their mercy.

A short time later, Bhrgupati stopped a young man who was walking by our table and spoke with him for about ten or fifteen minutes. And then Bhrgupati handed the man a stack of books and said thank you so much. After the man left, Bhrgupati turned around and told me the man had just given five thousand dollars in cash. I was in complete shock and so was Bhrgupati. He said that was the biggest donation he had ever received on sankirtana in his life.

I'm blown away at how amazing Krsna reciprocates with His devotees, especially on sankirtan. Those were two stories of many I have while distributing books with Bhrgupati Prabhu. I am so grateful for his association. Hare Krsna.

More about Bhrgupati dasa

Excerpt from: Bhrgupati dasa: Million-books Distributor —By Jahnava Mata Dasi

His Grace Bhrgupati Prabhu joined ISKCON in April 1973, at the famous Henry Street temple in Brooklyn, New York. Almost immediately he took up the service of distributing Srila Prabhupada's books. Bhrgupati, then Bhakta Jeffrey, recalls asking Srila Prabhupada to say something about the mercy of Lord Caitanya. Srila Prabhupada replied, "It is already said, *param vijayate sri-krsna-sankirtanam!* So continue doing sankirtan and you will be victorious!"

Bhrgupati has been distributing books practically every day since then. From 1973 till the present he has distributed more than 1,000,000 books!

At age 71 he shows little sign of slowing down and continues to go out five days a week. Competing against good distributors, many less than half his age, Bhrgupati was the top distributor in New Dvaraka for 2022, and he collected \$76,591.

May Srila Prabhupada bless Bhrgupati Prabhu to continue his book distribution at least until age 108!



Excerpt from: Distributing Books Through Thick or Thin —By Madhava Smullen | Sep 28, 2008

So what set Bhrigupati Dasa on his long and illustrious spiritual career? It began in 1973, the way most Krishna conscious journeys do—with one of Prabhupada’s books. On his way back home to the Bronx one evening, Bhrigupati was intercepted in the subway station by a devotee brandishing *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*. From the moment he opened it, he felt so inspired that he read the book without pause throughout his train ride, while walking to his house, while sitting propped up in bed until he finally finished it at 2 a.m. the next morning.



The next day, determined to lay his hands on one of those “*Srimad-Bhagavatams*” mentioned in the book, Bhrigupati gathered his life savings of thirty-three dollars and returned to the subway station. Sure enough, another devotee approached him, handed him a rose and asked for a donation. In one swift motion, Bhrigupati took the rose, handed over the thirty-three bucks, and asked, “How many *Srimad-Bhagavatams* could you give me for this?” When the devotee had finished staring in shock, he handed Bhrigupati three books and invited him to the Sunday Feast.

“I started off in a chanting party, occasionally handing out *Back to Godhead* magazines and small books to bystanders,” Bhrigupati says. “It wasn’t long before I had realized that I was distributing more than chanting, and moved on to full-time book distribution.”

Through the years of service that followed and the challenges that came with them—such as tackling different cultures and worldviews in Australia and England—Bhrigupati simply stuck with it, feeling Krishna working with him and helping him along the way.

He advises new book distributors to do the same. “I meditate on the *Bhagavad-gita*, as if I’m Arjuna and Krishna is talking to me,” he says. “It’s a personal reciprocation with Krishna, and it constantly yields miracles, without fail.”

Bhrigupati sees book distribution as a blessing and doubts he’ll ever stop. Today, he and his wife Chandravali travel across the US in a motorhome distributing books at schools and music festivals—some, such as Banaroo, south of Nashville, Tennessee, are attended by over 100,000 young people every year.

Bhrigupati is a firm supporter of traditional book distribution but also of new innovative methods like Vaisesika Prabhu’s Smart Table program. He hopes they will help more devotees realize how simple and blissful distributing books really is.

“We could have another dozen or two full-time distributors in America, and we wouldn’t be stepping on each other’s toes,” he says. “The opportunity is unlimited.” 🌸

Excerpt from: Remembering His Grace Tapasa Dasa —By Lalitanatha Dasa | June 25, 2025

On June 15 at 10:45 PM Tapasa Prabhu, leader and Temple president of ISKCON Stockholm, Sweden, and a veteran Scandinavian devotee, left his body surrounded by devotees chanting the Hare Krishna-mantra. His departure is truly a loss to ISKCON devotees in Sweden and Scandinavia who had his association for close to 45 years.

Tapasa Prabhu was born in Norway in 1956 outside of Bergen. His first contact with Krishna consciousness was in 1970 when he got the record *My Sweet Lord* with George Harrison which made him curious about Indian spirituality. In 1979 he met for the first time devotees of Krishna in London where he received a book, *Teachings of Queen Kunti*, which he read. Krishna gradually deepened his faith in different ways,

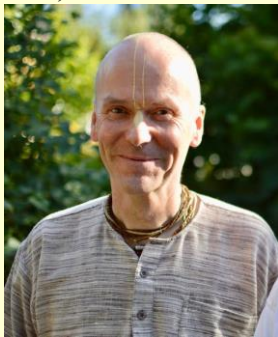
and he started to visit the ISKCON temple in Bergen regularly in 1981. In the beginning of 1982 he moved to Korsnäs Gärd, Sweden, outside Stockholm and then moved to the Oslo temple in Norway which he was connected with for the next many years.

From the beginning of his life as a brahmachari, he distributed Srila Prabhupada’s books, being on the streets of cities and villages of Norway often 8-12 hours six days a week in any weather condition with deep faith and dedication to the movement of Srila Prabhupada and Lord Caitanya. At this time he became known among the best and most steady book distributors in Europe and trained and inspired many more devotees to take up this service. All those who associated with him at this time were always impressed

by his deep philosophical understanding and intelligence.

Finally in 1995, due to health reasons, he stopped street distribution and moved to Stockholm, Sweden. He also

got married to Lajjavati Devi Dasi at that time, and the couple stayed and served together until his departure. At first he did various communication services but a couple of years later he took up the responsibility of temple president in Stockholm.



A few years of struggle followed, and his mood was always that, "If there is no one else ready to support the different projects of Srila Prabhupada, I will try, because his mission must go on with all its projects nicely." He sacrificed himself and also his health in this way for many years. Eventually the situation stabilized, and Tapasa Prabhu was more relieved to preach and take care of the devotees and lead the congregation, which was his real heart.

From 2020 his health deteriorated. Over the last two months the disease escalated to its last stages. Still Tapasa Prabhu maintained a clear consciousness and many devotees came and paid him a last visit. On June 15th he left his body at home with big Tulasi plants around him, while the holy name was being chanted by the surrounding devotees. He received holy waters and

Tulasi leaves in his mouth and dust from the holy places on his head. His departure was very peaceful. In his last half hour he just slowly and softly breathed out while still being conscious.

I last met him in April, and he was struggling with his breathing then, taking oxygen etc. But he was in good spirits and was remarkably stoic in his approach to his physical demise. We had a long chat about many things, but his overriding concern was for Krsna consciousness to flourish in Sweden.



Tapasa was loyal and faithful to Srila Prabhupada through and through and firmly adhering to Srila Prabhupada's instructions. It was this unwavering faith that allowed to

easily manage any all challenges that were visited on him either personally, or in his service, or with his relationships with others – he simply never faltered. Rather he always saw such challenges as an opportunity to both deepen his faith and also improve, in particular, how he interacted with others.

Tapasa is a genuine example of a hardworking and dedicated devotee, who was a real hero on the battlefield, even though many may not have known him. 🌸

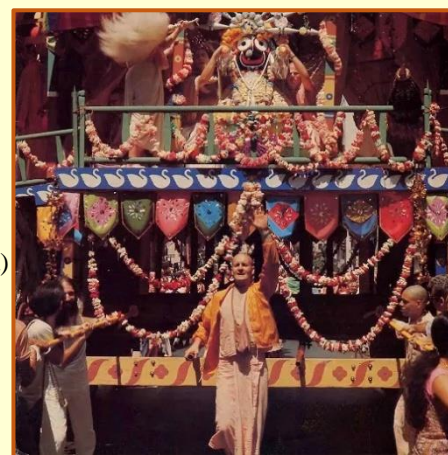
Calendar

APRIL 2026

- 02 April 2026 - Appearance Day of Sri Vamsivadananda Thakura
- 02 April 2026 - Appearance Day of Sri Syamananda Prabhu
- 09 April 2026 - Disappearance Day of Sri Abhirama Thakura
- 12 April 2026 - Disappearance Day of Srila Vrndavana Dasa Thakura
- 13 April 2026 - **Varuthini Ekadashi**
- 17 April 2026 - Appearance Day of Sri Gadadhara Pandita
- 25 April 2026 - Appearance Day of Srimati Sita Devi (wife of Lord Rama)
- 25 April 2026 - Disappearance Day of Sri Madhu Pandita
- 25 April 2026 - Appearance Day of Srimati Jahnava Devi (wife of Lord Nityananda)
- 27 April 2026 - **Mohini Ekadasi**
- 29 April 2026 - **Disappearance Day of Sri Jayananda Prabhu** (see picture →)
- 30 April 2026 - **Narasimha Caturdasi – Appearance of Lord Narasimhadeva**

MAY 2026

- 01 May 2026 - Appearance Day of Sri Madhavendra Puri
- 01 May 2026 - Appearance Day of Sri Srinivasa Acharya
- 01 May 2026 - Disappearance Day of Sri Paramesvari Dasa Thakura
- 07 May 2026 - Disappearance Day of Sri Ramananda Raya
- 13 May 2026 - **Apara Ekadasi**
- 14 May 2026 - Appearance Day of Srila Vrndavana Dasa Thakura
- 27 May 2026 - **Padmini Ekadashi**



ABOVE: Jayananda dasa, front and center.