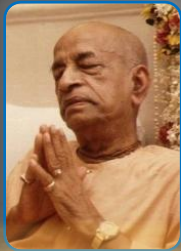


Freedom Newsletter



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

ISKCON Prison Ministry / June 2026

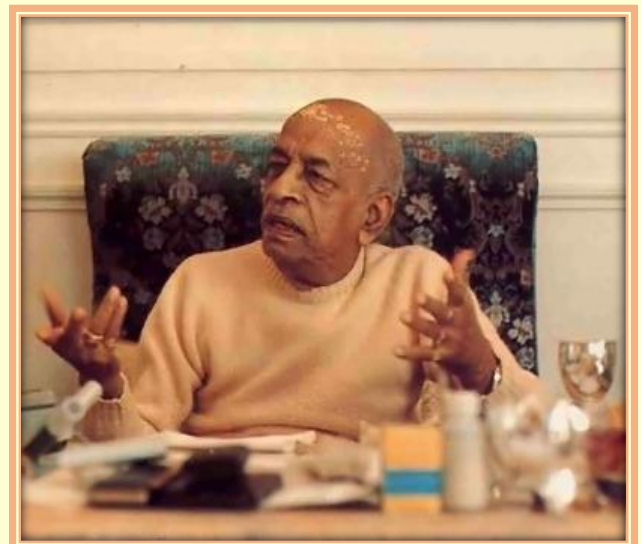
PO Box 2676
Alachua, FL 32616

PRABHUPADA SPEAKS OUT — Nirvana: Annihilation or Devotion?

This is an exchange between Srila Prabhupada and his disciple Hayagriva dasa, about the philosophy of German pessimist philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), who thought that nirvana, (freedom from suffering) means becoming desireless—putting an end to our will. But His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada disagrees.

Hayagriva dasa: Arthur Schopenhauer was a nineteenth-century German philosopher who took some of his ideas from the Indian Vedic literature. For Schopenhauer, happiness meant inactive satisfaction—nirvana. Since he thought that the will to enjoy the material world is the irrational urge that brings about all suffering, he advocated the extinction of the will. In his main book, *The World as Will and Idea*, he wrote, “The Indian *Vedas* and *Puranas* have no better simile than a dream for the actual [material] world, which they call ‘the web of *maya*,’ and they use none more frequently.” From this Schopenhauer concluded, “Life is a long dream... What is this world of perception but my idea?” He goes on to conclude that life is a projection of the will.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, material life is a projection of the material will, or material desire. And nirvana means that material desires are finished. But the living entity



cannot be desireless, because he is an eternal spiritual being. Thus, even when he finishes his material desires, he still has spiritual desires. In the materially conditioned state, these spiritual desires are covered by material desires, but in any case desire is the constant companion of the soul, or living entity.

The soul transmigrates in this material world from one body to another, and he creates desires according to the type of body he gets. God's supreme will affords the living entity various bodies so that he can fulfill his minute will, which is made up of material desires. In other words, the living entity wills something, and the supreme will (God, or Krishna), understanding the finite will of the living entity, gives him facilities to fulfill his particular desire. In this way, the will of the living entities is the cause of this material existence. However, Schopenhauer was wrong in thinking that you can become happy by extinguishing your will. Since you are a living being, you must always have desires. If your desires are stopped, you become like a stone. So instead of trying to put an end to all desire, you should try to cleanse the diseased form of desire (*sarvopadhi-vinirmuktam*). That cleansing process is Krishna consciousness (*bhakti*). Presently our desires are desires of the body. When the living entity acquires the body of an American, a European, a Chinaman, or whatever, he desires like a human being. When he changes his body to that of a dog, he spends his time barking. According to his desires he has received a particular type of body. But these desires are temporary, and thus the living entity moves from one body to another. Because he is materially covered, he considers the temporary world to be reality; but because it is constantly changing, it is not. Therefore, in one sense, this material world is all a dream.

Hayagriva dasa: And trying to enjoy this dream is the source of frustration?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, because it is a fact that we cannot fulfill our material desires, which come and go like dreams. All material activities, subtle or gross, are manifestations of various dreamlike desires. Therefore the impersonalist Mayavadi philosophers say *brahma satyam, jagan mithya*: "The dreamer is a fact, but the dream is false." Our Vaisnava philosophy agrees that the dreamer is the factual living entity; but we say that the dream of this material world is not false—but temporary. Therefore the dreamer has to come to the real, eternal spiritual platform so that his flickering material dreams can be extinguished. As explained in the *Narada-pancaratra*,

*sarvopadhi-vinirmuktam
tat-paratvena nirmalam
hrsikena hrsikesa-
sevanam bhaktir ucyate*

"*Bhakti*, or devotional service, means engaging all our senses in the service of the Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the master of all the senses. When the spirit soul renders service unto the Supreme, there are two side effects: he becomes free from all false material designations, and his senses become purified." When one abandons the dream and awakens to reality, that is Krishna consciousness, or *bhakti*.

Hayagriva dasa: Then will, or desire, can never be annihilated?

Srila Prabhupada: No, not even for a second. It is stated in the *Bhagavad-gita* [3.5] that we cannot live for a second without desires. Because we are living, we must will and desire.

Hayagriva dasa: What about the Buddhists? They advocate a state of desirelessness.

Srila Prabhupada: They believe that if you dismantle this material body, there will no longer be will, desire, or suffering. But this is not a fact. The fact is that you are an eternal spirit soul; you do not die after the destruction of the body. Consequently, thinking, feeling, and willing are actually carried from this body to another body in the process of transmigration. When the body dies, the living entity's will carries him away, and according to the quality of his will, he receives another body. That body may be the body of a demigod, a dog, a human, or whatever. In any case, will or desire is the carrier. Desirelessness in action—devotees serve Krishna: "Even when the living entity finishes his material desires. He still has spiritual desires..."

Hayagriva dasa: Schopenhauer was greatly influenced by some of the Vedic writings. He wrote, "Every keen pleasure is an error and an illusion, for no attained wish can give lasting satisfaction.... All pain rests on the absence or passing away of such illusory pleasure. Thus both pain and pleasure arise from defective knowledge. The wise man, therefore, holds himself equally aloof from joy and sorrow, and no event disturbs his composure."

Srila Prabhupada: In this material world people say, "This is good, and that is bad." But actually there is no question of good and bad, because everything material is on the temporary platform. Also, the *Bhagavad-gita* states that the pains and pleasures experienced in the material world do not touch the spirit soul. When a spirit soul is under the illusion that he is his material body, he becomes concerned with the body's pains and pleasures—because he thinks that those pains and pleasures are his. But this is not a fact. Therefore Krishna advises,

*matra-sparsas tu kaunteya
sitosna-sukha-duhkha-dah
agamapayino 'nityas
tams titikhasva bharata*

“O son of Kunti, the nonpermanent appearance of happiness and distress, and their disappearance in due course, are like the appearance and disappearance of winter and summer seasons. They arise from sense perception, O descendant of Bharata, and one must learn to tolerate them without being disturbed” [Bg. 2.14]. Since pleasures and pains come and go in due course, they are not the reality. So why bother about them? If I feel pain, let me tolerate it and go about my business of serving Krishna.

Hayagriva dasa: Schopenhauer saw happiness in the world as at best a negative state—simply a momentary suspension of suffering.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, that is explained by Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Sometimes when a man is to be punished, he is held under water to the point of suffocation. Then he is let up, and when he can finally breathe, he thinks, “Ah! Happiness at last!” But he is then immersed in the water for another period of suffering. So the



point is that real happiness means to be relieved of suffering permanently, not for just a few moments. Krishna consciousness: “a better life—with superior thoughts, philosophy, food, song, poetry, and art. For instance, we worship the Deities [Lord Krishna and His eternal consort Radha, above] in the temple—that is actual ‘aesthetic salvation.’”

Hayagriva dasa: Schopenhauer felt that the greatest crime of man was that he was ever born.

Srila Prabhupada: That’s all right, but when you understand that there is a crime, you must understand that there is someone to punish you for that crime. If you suffer because of that crime, you must understand that there is someone who has judged you to be a criminal.

Hayagriva dasa: Schopenhauer would disagree. He wrote, “Human life must be some kind of mistake.” And because he thought the world mad or irrational, he concluded that it could not possibly have an author. He believed that if there were a God, He would have set the world in order.

Srila Prabhupada: We have certainly experienced that there are madmen in the world, but there are also hospitals where such men can be treated. The world may be mad, but God is providing hospitalization and treatment—the process of Krishna consciousness.

Unfortunately, Schopenhauer had no knowledge of the hospital or the treatment. He speaks of sinful life, but he does not accept the judge who gives the punishment for sinful life. He sees that the world is mad, but he does not know the treatment for madmen.

Hayagriva dasa: In *The World as Will and Idea*, Schopenhauer wrote, “If we narrowly analyze the reality of our body and its actions... we find nothing in it except the will; with this the body’s reality is exhausted.” He goes on to state that “the genitals are the focus of the will.”

Srila Prabhupada: As I said before, one wills in accordance with his body. We should understand that we have nothing to do with this material world, which is the production of the material will. We are spiritual, and when we will spiritually, we are Krishna conscious. When we will materially, we get different types of material bodies. It is true that the basis of material life is sex. *Yan maithunadi-grhamedhi-sukham hi tuccham:* “The basic principle of those who are addicted to the material world is *maithuna*, sexual intercourse.” This strong desire for sex



will continue as long as we are in material existence, because sex is the center of all material pleasure. However, when we get a taste of spiritual pleasure—pleasure in Krishna consciousness—we can give up sex. *Param drstva nivartate:* by experiencing a superior pleasure, we can give up an inferior one.

Hayagriva dasa: Schopenhauer

considered sex to be selfishness, whereas real love means sympathy.

Srila Prabhupada: Sex is animalistic. It is not love but lust. Sex simply means the mutual satisfaction of the material senses, and that is lust. All this lust is taking place under the name of love, and out of illusion people mistake this lust for love. One who has real love—love for Krishna and for all living entities—thinks, “People are suffering from a lack of Krishna consciousness. Let me do something for them so that they can understand the value of life.”

Hayagriva dasa: Schopenhauer considered that immoral acts result from a sense of egoism.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, that is so. To be immoral means to avoid surrendering to the will of Krishna. Immoral people think, “Why should I surrender to

Krishna? Krishna is a person, and I also am a person.” Such thinking is demonic. Rascals cannot understand that by surrendering unto the supreme will and satisfying the supreme will, they can attain salvation.

Hayagriva dasa: Schopenhauer felt that it is possible to crush egoism and desire by love.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes—but we must direct that love toward Krishna. If I do not love Krishna, I cannot surrender to Him, and if I do not surrender to Krishna, my false egoism will continue. So the more you love Krishna, the more your surrender is perfect. But when there is a lack of love, the mentality by which you can surrender will not develop. For instance, if you have some love for me, you will carry out my orders. There is no question of forcing you to surrender. Or take the example of a child: a small child naturally surrenders to his parents because there is love for the parents. In the same way, the living entity is free to love Krishna or to reject Him. Without freedom, there cannot be love. Therefore Krishna consciousness means learning to love Krishna.

Hayagriva dasa: Schopenhauer looked on love as compassionate sympathy for one who is suffering. Through this compassionate love we can lose our selfish desire.

Srila Prabhupada: Why should we love those who are suffering but not those who are enjoying?

Hayagriva dasa: Schopenhauer saw everyone as suffering.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, we agree to this. Everyone within material nature is suffering. Therefore Krishna descends and speaks the *Bhagavad-gita* to deliver all fallen souls. Similarly, a Vaisnava [a devotee of Visnu (Krishna)] takes *sannyasa*, the renounced order, out of compassion for others—because a *sannyasi*'s only duty is to preach the message of Krishna consciousness. People in this world are suffering because of ignorance. They think, “Oh, now I have a nice car, an apartment, and a girl friend; therefore I am happy.” Actually, this is not happiness but suffering. Because the Vaisnava loves Krishna and understands that he is part and parcel of Krishna, he realizes that the conditioned living entities are suffering for want of Krishna consciousness. Therefore, out of compassion the Vaisnava takes *sannyasa* and goes forth to preach.

Hayagriva dasa: Schopenhauer saw the pleasures of this world as ultimately frustrating. “Death simply means a suspension of the will for a few months – that’s all. If you fail to train your willing process properly you have to suffer, life after life, but if you train your will properly – to serve Krishna’s supreme will – you can go to Krishna’s supreme planet immediately after death.”

Srila Prabhupada: If he had taken his frustration seriously, it might have made him successful. I receive many letters from frustrated students who understand that frustration is hell. Eventually they come to understand that they should seek the real shelter—Krishna consciousness. So frustration is really not so bad. If you are put into a dangerous position and you know how to save yourself from it, that very danger can become a source of pleasure for you.

Hayagriva dasa: In *The World as Will and Idea*, Schopenhauer wrote, “Eternal becoming, endless flux, characterizes the inner nature of will. Finally, the same thing shows itself in human endeavors and desires, which always delude us by presenting their satisfaction as the final end of will. As soon as we attain our desired objects, they no longer appear the same; therefore, they soon grow stale or forgotten, and we throw them aside as vanished illusions.”

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, all this is going on, and therefore the living entity acquires one body after another.

Hayagriva dasa: Schopenhauer saw everyone going through a constant transition from desire to satisfaction, and from satisfaction to a new desire. For Schopenhauer, it is this flux from desire to satisfaction that characterizes the will’s activities in the phenomenal world. Outside this flux, he thought, there is only nirvana, extinction of the will.

Srila Prabhupada: That is not a fact. One has to understand that behind the will and its satisfaction is a *person who is willing*. Schopenhauer did not take that person into consideration; he considered only the will and its satisfaction. It is the individual soul who is willing. If the soul succeeds in stopping this flickering willing, what next? Even the stopping of the will is temporary. You may stop one kind of willing, but you will adopt another kind of willing and another kind of satisfaction. We must understand that behind the whimsical will is the spirit soul. When that spirit soul understands his real identification as the eternal servant of Krishna, his will is purified. One should not be satisfied by simply annihilating the whimsical will. One should understand the real will of the real person. That is the beginning of spiritual life.

It will not help simply to negate the temporary material will. One has to will in reality, and that is his eternal willing—that is Krishna consciousness. In the material world, the living entity directs his will toward sense satisfaction, because he has forgotten the spiritual field of willing. When the same will is directed towards satisfying the senses of the Supreme—Krishna—that is the eternal willing of the living entity. *Jivera ‘svarupa’ haya krsnera ‘nitya dasa’*: “When one comes to the platform of real knowledge, he understands that he is

the eternal servant of God.” When we concentrate our will on how to serve God, we attain our real position of eternity, bliss, and knowledge.

Hayagriva dasa: Schopenhauer apparently believed in life after death. He wrote, “If a man fears death as his annihilation, it is just as if he were to think that the sun cries out at evening, ‘Woe is me! For I go down to eternal night....’”

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, because the will is eternal, death is not the stoppage of life. One simply gets

another body. In the *Bhagavad-gita* Krishna says, *tatha dehantara-praptih*: “When the body dies, the soul transmigrates to another body.”

This is proof that the life of the person is eternal. And because the person is eternal, his desire and will are also eternal. But Schopenhauer did not know what that eternal willing is. The eternal will of every living entity is to serve Krishna always.

Hayagriva dasa: Schopenhauer looked on Indian philosophy as a philosophy of the denial of the will...

Srila Prabhupada: But he did not study Vedic philosophy and religion perfectly. He simply had some idea of some portions of the impersonalist and Buddhist philosophies.

Evidently he did not know about Vaisnavism. Although he touched the *Bhagavad-gita*, he did not study it thoroughly. In the *Bhagavad-gita*, Krishna tells Arjuna that if he simply tries to attain knowledge of God—Krishna—his will and his life will be purified, and he will return back to Godhead upon giving up his body. In the fourth chapter Krishna says,

*janma karma ca 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” [Bg. 4.9]. Either Schopenhauer did not study the *Bhagavad-gita* very thoroughly, or he could not understand it for want of a real spiritual master. According to the *Gita* itself, one should go to a bona fide guru who has actually seen the truth. Schopenhauer simply speculated on the basis of his own experience, and consequently, although everything is there in the *Bhagavad-gita*, he could not see it.



Lord Krishna speaks the *Bhagavad-gita* to His pure devotee, Arjuna, on the battlefield of Kuruksetra

Hayagriva dasa: According to Schopenhauer, the man of knowledge is imperturbable in any condition. He wrote, “Such a man would regard death as a false illusion, an impudent specter which frightens the weak but has no power over him who knows that he is himself the will of which the whole world is the objectification or copy, and that therefore he is always certain of life....”

Srila Prabhupada: This is contradictory. On the one side Schopenhauer has a desire for the certainty of life,

and on the other he says that nirvana, annihilation, is the only answer. Which does he want? He simply tried to adjust things to fit his theory. But he couldn't understand the philosophy behind purification of the will.

Hayagriva dasa: Apparently he had no other solution than the suppression of the will.

Srila Prabhupada: But that is not possible. In order to be happy, you must change the quality of your willing through purification. The purification process is *bhakti*—chanting and hearing the pastimes of the Lord (*sravanam kirtanam visnoh*). That purifies the will. Schopenhauer missed the point.

Although he accepted the fact that life is eternal, he thought that its purpose is nirvana, putting an end to the will. Unfortunately, he did not know what nirvana is. Nirvana means putting an end to

the whimsical will and coming to the platform of willing in Krishna consciousness.

Hayagriva dasa: For Schopenhauer, there were three means of salvation—esthetic, ethical, and religious. Through esthetic salvation—contemplation of the Platonic ideals—we rise above passion through poetry, music, and art. Through the contemplation of these higher ideals, we reach a plane of desirelessness.

Srila Prabhupada: This is not a new idea; it is mentioned in the *Bhagavad-gita: param drstva nivartate*. The students of this Krishna consciousness movement have abandoned their abominable living habits because they have received a better life—with superior thoughts, philosophy, food, song, poetry, and art. When the mind is filled with Krishna consciousness, there is no chance of its engaging in the contemplation of nonsense.

Hayagriva dasa: For Schopenhauer, esthetic salvation is a temporary experience. For instance, when one looks at a beautiful painting, he transcends the lower levels of

consciousness and for a few moments becomes “will-less,” or desireless.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, we admit that this may be the case, but we wish to remain in that higher consciousness continuously—not momentarily. This is possible if we practice. By practice a child learns to read and write, and thus he becomes educated. It is not a momentary thing. If we practice Krishna consciousness daily, lower consciousness will automatically vanish. For instance, we worship the Deities in the temple—that is actual aesthetic salvation. But unless you apply the aesthetic sense with reverence and respect, you cannot derive benefit from worshipping the Deities.

Hayagriva dasa: According to Schopenhauer, you achieve ethical salvation by attempting to satisfy your will. When you satisfy your will, no new desires can arise, and you experience happiness.

Srila Prabhupada: Apart from the individual will, there is the supreme will. If we satisfy the supreme will, we are happy. But we cannot know the supreme will directly, and therefore we must approach a spiritual

master. Our philosophy is that by satisfying the spiritual master, the representative of God, we satisfy the supreme will (*yasya prasada bhagavat-prasada*).

Hayagriva dasa: For Schopenhauer, the third and most effective type of salvation is religious salvation. He felt that by denying the will through asceticism, you can attain the state of nirvana, nothingness.

Srila Prabhupada: But Schopenhauer did not know that since the soul is eternal, willing is also eternal—although the will may be suppressed for some time. For instance, after death, when a living entity enters a mother’s womb, he spends nine months developing his next body, and there is a temporary suspension of the will. But when he emerges from his mother’s womb, he resumes the willing process. Death simply means a suspension of the will for a few months—that’s all. If you fail to train your willing process properly you have to suffer, life after life, but if you train your will properly—to serve Krishna’s supreme will—you can go to Krishna’s supreme planet immediately after death.



The Lawsuit has been filed

On April 21st, 2026, federal civil rights lawsuit has been filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida challenging the Florida Department of Corrections’ statewide ban on the **Bhagavad-gītā As It Is**, by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

The plaintiff, an inmate at Jefferson Correctional Institution in Monticello, alleges that Prison Officials and the FDOC’s Literature Review Committee have unlawfully prohibited him from possessing his primary sacred scripture, in violation of the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) and the Religion Clauses of the First Amendment.

According to the complaint, prison officials banned **Bhagavad-gītā As It Is** on the grounds that it is “written in code or otherwise not reasonably subject to interpretation by Department staff,” and that it is “detrimental to the safety, security, or rehabilitative interests of the facility, or likely to create a risk of disorder.”

The lawsuit asserts that these justifications are offensive, factually incorrect, and discriminatory, noting that the **Bhagavad-gītā** is a central scripture for hundreds of millions of Hindus and related traditions worldwide. The text is widely used in academic, religious, and correctional settings throughout the United States, and mainstream scriptures such as the Bible and Qur’an are routinely permitted in Florida prisons.

The case is pending in the Northern District of Florida, Tallahassee Division.

Drops of Nectar

Prabhupada: These cows are also devotees, and Krsna is fond of keeping cows, taking care of them. The same love affairs, exchange of love. Just like Vrndavana-bhumi or the trees, the plants, they are serving Krsna silently. And the cows and servants, they are offering superior service. The friends, they are offering service as friend. The Gopis, or the motherly gopis, just like Yasoda and ladies, offer loving Krsna as son, and the younger girls, they’re loving Krsna as husband, as lover. So in this way in Vrndavana there are different transcendental mellows of loving affairs. So the cows are on dasya-rasa, giving service, just like master and servant. They are situated in this transcendental humor. But they’re all one with Krsna. Nobody is inferior than Krsna, but the relationship is exchange of loving service. That’s all.

Srila Prabhupada lecture— November 13, 1968, Los Angeles

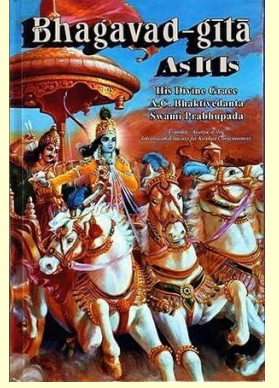


QUESTIONS TO HELP YOUR STUDY OF THE BHAGAVAD-GITA As It Is

CHAPTER 3: KARMA-YOGA

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

3.9, 3.14, 3.21, 3.27



QUESTIONS

1. Why does Arjuna say that he was confused by what he heard from Lord Krishna in Chapter 2?
2. What are the two classes of men, and how do they try to understand the Self?
3. Why does Lord Krishna address Arjuna as “O sinless one”?
4. What compels one to act in this material world?
5. What does Krishna say about those who restrain their senses but whose minds are on sense objects?
6. What does Lord Krishna say about one who sincerely tries to control one’s senses and begins to work in karma-yoga?
7. What does Krishna say about performing one’s duties as opposed to not doing them?
8. How can one free oneself from bondage to the material world?
9. In the beginning of creation, what did the Lord of all creatures do?
10. Who is the Lord of all sacrifices?
11. What is the relationship between humans and demigods, and what are their duties?
12. How are the devotees of Lord Vishnu released from all sins?
13. How are the food grains that we need for sustenance produced?
14. What are the Vedas, what is their function, and where did they originate?
15. What is the consequence for one who does not follow the cycle of sacrifice as per Vedic injunctions?
16. What is the consequence for one who is self-realized?
17. How should one carry out one’s duties to attain the Supreme?
18. Who is King Janaka, and how did he attain perfection?
19. What is Lord Krishna’s definition of leadership, and how is one considered a leader?
20. Why is Lord Krishna engaged in performing His prescribed duties?
21. What would be the consequence if Lord Krishna did not do His prescribed duties?
22. How, according to Krishna, should the learned lead those who are ignorant?
23. What influences the jivatma to believe that he is responsible for all actions?
24. What does Lord Krishna say about one who is in knowledge of the Absolute, and how does he conduct himself?
25. What does Krishna say about the activities of the ignorant, and how should the knowledgeable treat such people?
26. Having informed Arjuna about Vedic scriptures and how to be a Krishna conscious leader, how should Arjuna now perform his duty?
27. What is the result for those who execute their duties faithfully, following the will of the Lord?
28. What is the result for those who do not execute their duties following the will of the Lord?
29. What does Lord Krishna say is the use of repressing one’s actions when we helplessly act according to the nature we acquired from the three modes?
30. What does Krishna say are the stumbling blocks on the path of self-realization?
31. What does Lord Krishna say is the consequence of doing another’s duty correctly compared to performing one’s prescribed tasks imperfectly?
32. After having been told to do his duty of fighting, what does Arjuna ask Lord Krishna?
33. Why does Arjuna address Lord Krishna as “O descendent of Vrishni” in verse 36?
34. Why is one impelled to commit sinful acts?

35. What metaphor does Krishna use to describe how this lust covers a living entity?
36. What effect does this lust have on the wise living entity, and what are its characteristics?
37. Where in the human body does lust reside?
38. What advice does Lord Krishna give Arjuna to tackle lust?
39. What hierarchy does Krishna give to describe the position of the soul?
40. What further advice does Lord Krishna give to Arjuna to tackle lust?

**Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna / Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare
Hare Rama, Hare Rama / Rama Rama, Hare Hare**

WANT BOOKS and other material?

- 1) When requesting books, please specify if you are allowed hardbound or only softbound, and how many at a time.
- 2) When requesting prayer beads (to chant Hare Krishna) or neck beads, please make sure you are allowed to receive them (your institution may not allow the color and size of prayer beads we have). And if there's a need of an authorization form, tell us in advance and send it to us so we can enclose it with the beads.

Thank you!

Excerpt from the book **Mind it!** by Chaitanya Charan Dasa

Absent-minded means not that the mind is absent, but that our control on it is absent.

“A man must elevate himself by his own mind, not degrade himself. The mind is the friend of the conditioned soul, and his enemy as well.”
BG Chapter 6, text 5

**The mind may show us a
horror movie, but we
don't have to watch it.**

In common parlance, the word ‘mind’ refers to one’s attention, as in, “Give your full mind to what you are doing.” In the Bhagavad-gita’s philosophical parlance, ‘mind’ refers to something deeper – the subtle object that underlies our capacity to be attentive. The mind is the interface between us souls and the outer world.

Its assistance enhances our attentiveness, whereas its interference sabotages our attentiveness. Pertinently, the Gita (06.5) warns that the mind can be our friend as well as our enemy.

As the mind is essential for the flow of consciousness between the world and us, it can never be absent, even when we are absent-minded. At those times, what is absent is our control on the mind. Due to this lack of control, the mind misdirects our attention away from where we wanted to focus it to whatever catches the mind’s fancy.

Bhakti-yoga changes the mind’s fanciful nature by introducing it to the supremely fulfilling object of thought: Krishna. And this yoga of devotion reveals how He is present everywhere, thereby enabling us to connect the mind with Him and thus stabilize it even when it wanders out of control. Many mind control teachers advocate combating absent-mindedness by conscientiously striving to keep the mind in the present. But often the present is just not interesting enough to retain the mind’s attention. Bhakti-yoga offers a more workable and even relishable alternative: keep the mind in Krishna. As He is unlimitedly attractive, He can retain the mind’s attention – a retention that increases as we become more and more purified.

Moreover, because Krishna permeates everything including the present, keeping the mind in Him enables us to, when necessary, keep it in the present too – and keep it not only controlled but also contented. 🌸



Excerpts from inmates' letters

I was looking thru books on Edovo and I came across the IPM BOOKS. I'm a religious person and I believe in a higher power greater than myself. I'm wanting to learn more of a variety of all angles of that higher power. I saw that it was interesting and whenever I was reading I felt more aware of my consciousness and felt free. If that makes sense. I've always had an interest in psychology and the study of the mind and brain. So I believe that !y higher power greater than myself is telling me to learn more of Krishna Consciousness so I can become the vessel in which others can come to for help. **Brandon C. —Boise, Idaho**

Tonight I received the May/June edition of back to Godhead magazine. I want to thank you for putting me on the mailing list for the magazine. Lately I've been drifting from the path to Krishna Consciousness. I haven't been taking care of the things I need to since I've moved to the current facility I'm housed at and the magazine you sent was a great reminder of Krishna's love. I need to get back on the right track, and I thank you for the help. Hare Krishna!
Alexander B. —Beaumont Texas

Having Bhagavad-gita on the Edovo app has also been great. I listen to the chanting and it adds a special meaning, hearing Prabhupada's voice. Yes, Katie and I are together and study and chant each day.
Kimberly S. —Ocala, Florida

I got incarcerated in 2018, and got released in 2022 (got in touch with Kṛṣṇa consciousness in 2021). Upon my deportation to India, I was fortunate that my parents had gotten involved in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and had pushed me to start chanting, reading Prabhupada's books more, feeding me prasadam 24x7, and by Kṛṣṇa's mercy, I was able to get a job, and receive association of devotees at a temple close to me, where I am still doing services. The mercy of Vaishnavas has no limit. I have been running a small program with some 10 prabhus, and I feel fortunate some of them are serious, taking to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and are eager to progress. I go on sankirtan and book distribution every week. I have been fortunate to meet some very good devotees who inspire me, and motivate me to progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa has arranged a wonderful job

for me, where I am not overworked, can maintain myself comfortably, and have favorable bosses who are not exploitative.

Whatever good is happening in my life is only the mercy of Guru and Gauranga - there is a prayer which comes to mind by Bhaktivinoda Thakur - *Yogyata Vichare kichu nahi pai tomara karuna sara* (I have no qualifications whatsoever, and whatever I have is by your (guru's) mercy only) I am indebted to the Prison Ministry for the spiritual time bombs of Prabhupada's books you planted in the prison libraries. Please pray for continued shelter at the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Your servant.

Anonymous —India —ex-inmate

Kṛṣṇa will always be a part of my life. Without Kṛṣṇa I would not be alive. My desire to not live in this world was going to be fulfilled one way or another. Only the most opulent conversation and consorting with the wonderful devotees of ISKCON kept my soul in this body. You and the devotee association that you brought into my life made possible my opening into God consciousness. I pray daily for your continued ability to do this for others and though I am unable to help, I pray continuously that Kṛṣṇa will provide for your continued endeavors.

Corey W. —ex-inmate, anonymous

This prison house is a good place to start spiritual life, but I'm lacking association with devotees as well as devotional service. You all have been instrumental to my learning and understanding Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but I'm still below the neophyte stage. Whenever I read books by devotees and Srila Prabhupada I understand that I'm not meeting my own expectations which are based in materialistic understanding. My chanting is full of offenses and very mechanical. With all this being said I thank Krishna for the love that has grown in my heart and for allowing me to associate with you all as a friend in Krishna consciousness, you devotees have surely helped us prisoners to loosen the chains of ignorance and become free from Maya. Not everything is bad it's just not where anyone with a bit of spiritual eagerness wants it to be.

Bhakta Jose A.—Fairton, New Jersey



Calendar

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**

JUNE 2026

- 11 June 2026 - **Parama Ekadashi**
- 24 June 2026 - Disappearance Day of Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana
- 25 June 2026 - **Pandava Nirjala Ekadashi**
- 29 June 2026 - Disappearance Day of Sri Mukunda Datta
- 29 June 2026 - Disappearance Day of Sri Sridhara Pandita
- 30 June 2026 - Disappearance Day of Sri Syamananda Prabhu

JULY 2026

- 05 July 2026 - Appearance Day of Sri Vakresvara Pandita
- 10 July 2026 - Disappearance Day of Sri Srivasa Pandita
- 11 July 2026 - **Yogini Ekadasi**
- 14 July 2026 - Disappearance Day of Sri Gadadhara Pandita
- 14 July 2026 - **Disappearance Day of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura**
- 15 July 2026 - Gundica Marjana – Lord Caitanya cleanses the Gundica temple
- 16 July 2026 - Disappearance Day of Sri Svarupa Damodara Gosvami
- 16 July 2026 - Disappearance Day of Sri Sivananda Sena
- 19 July 2026 - Disappearance Day of Sri Vakresvara Pandita
- 25 July 2026 - **Sayana Ekadashi**
- 29 July 2026 - Disappearance Day of Sanatana Goswami
- 30 July 2026 - **First Month of Caturmasya Begins**

AUGUST 2026

- 03 Aug 2026 - Disappearance Day of Srila Gopala Bhatta Goswami
- 06 Aug 2026 - Disappearance Day of Srila Lokanatha Goswami
- 07 Aug 2026 - The Incorporation of ISKCON in New York
- 09 Aug 2026 - **Kamika Ekadashi**
- 16 Aug 2026 - Disappearance Day of Sri Raghunandan Thakura
- 16 Aug 2026 - Disappearance Day of Sri Vamsidasa Babaji
- 23 Aug 2026 - **Pavitropana Ekadashi**
- 24 Aug 2026 - Disappearance Day of Srila Rupa Goswami
- 24 Aug 2026 - Disappearance Day of Sri Gauridasa Pandita
- 28 Aug 2026 - Jhulan Yatra Ends
- 28 Aug 2026 - **Appearance Day of Lord Balarama**
- 29 Aug 2026 - **Second Month of Caturmasya Begins**
- 29 Aug 2026 - Srila Prabhupada's Departure from India, for the USA



ABOVE: Lord Caitanya's Sankirtan movement; chanting Hare Krishna in public, to benefit all living entities.