

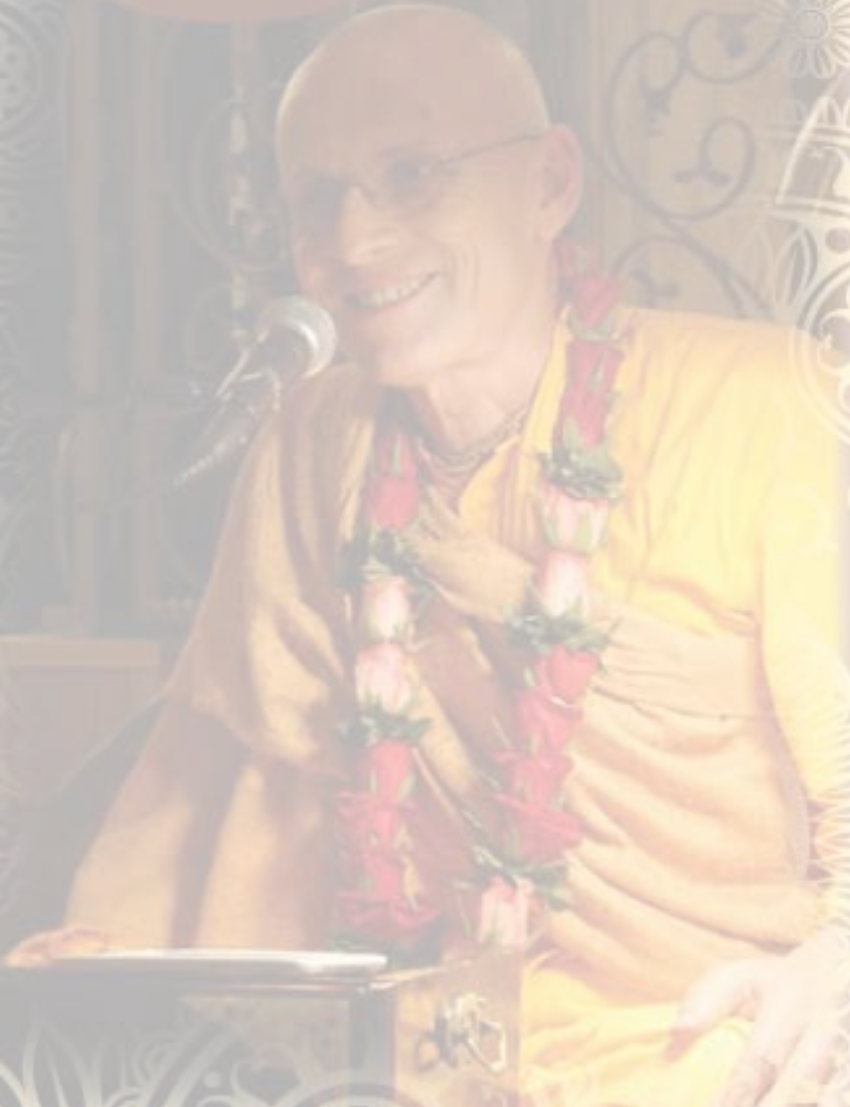


śabda
Books



Kadamba Kanana Swami

*Words Of a
Public
Hermit*



Kadamba Kanana Swami

Compiled by the disciples of Kadamba Kanana Swami

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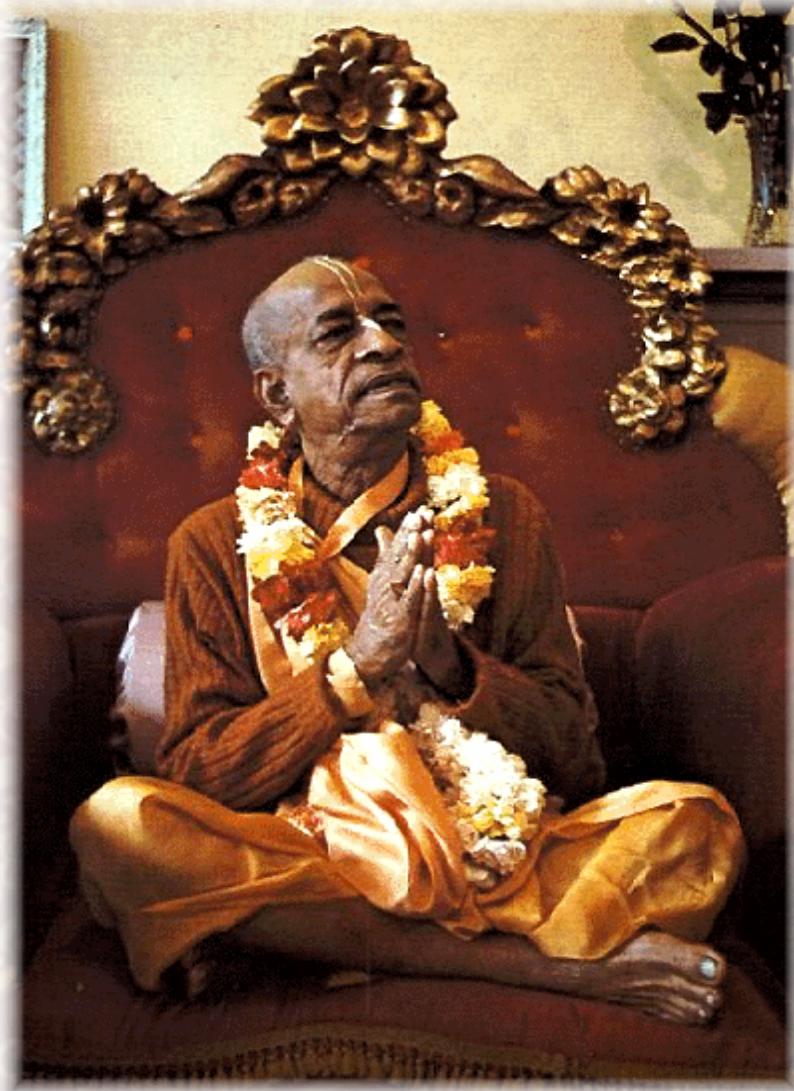
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Dedication



*For the pleasure of Srila Prabhupada
and all his followers.*



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INTRODUCTION

If you would ask me to describe who I really am, I guess my answer would be that I am a “Public Hermit”. In our Gaudiya Vaisnava tradition there is reference to those who are bhajananandis and others who are gosthy-anandis. The first category, the bhajananandi is turning away from the world to be fully absorbed in hearing, chanting and remembering about the glories of Krsna. And the second, the gosthy-anandi, is internally turning away from social life and focusing on his worship of Krsna and yet lives surrounded by people, who he is trying to stimulate to become more involved in devotional service. The latter could be called a “Public Hermit”. It’s almost a contradiction in terms because a hermit on the spiritual path seeks out solitude and peace to allow himself to go deep in his relationship with God, while to get involved with people who want to be Krsna conscious but at the same time are looking to satisfy some material desires - with the best among them, doing so in a way authorized by guru, sadhu and sastra- could be quite a distraction from ones personal purpose. That is the burden of a “Public Hermit”, and he must take time and make time, especially early, early in the morning, to be alone with Krsna, chant His name, glorify Him, hear about Him, worship Him and meditate on Him to his heart’s content, so that he may not become overwhelmed by the mundane. On the other hand though, a “Public Hermit” gets special perks from Krsna as well; when he is speaking in front of an audience eager to hear, he sometimes surprises himself with the words that come from his own mouth, disclosing realizations

about Krsna that he didn't know he had. A "Public Hermit" dedicates himself to giving generously. He gives himself and all he has to give Krsna to the world. And in the process his heart melts, and he can think of only Krsna and how to bring all living beings to His feet.

Topics of Krsna are all-auspicious. It is said that the speaker is purified, the enquirer is purified and the audience is purified. I have spoken these words about Krsna on different occasions- first of all for my purification and then to contribute something to the world. Although I am not a great man, I have great teachers, so hopefully there is something good in my words. These are excerpts of lectures in a raw and unedited form. I guess it's the way I live; I tend to get too busy in too many things. As far as this book is concerned, the wonder is not in the literary composition but what is wonderful is Krsna. The world is burning in a blazing forest fire of lust and envy and the likes, samsara-davanala-lidha-loka. Therefore, it is the transcendental glorification of Krsna that can change the situation. You can try for yourself and it is guaranteed that you will find peace of mind.

Pure devotional service is described in the Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu as subhada, all-auspicious. In other words no one is the loser and no one misses out! There are three reasons why devotional service is all auspicious:

- Jagat prinanadi dvaya pradatvam, it saves one from selfishness and makes one develop love for all living beings in the entire world. Then as a natural result, one also

becomes an object of affection for all. It is a key to a better world.

- Sad gunadi pradatvam, one develops all good qualities

sarva maha-guna-gana vaisnava-sarire
krsna-bhakte krsnera guna sakali sancare
(Cc Madhya 22.75)

All great qualities manifest in the body of a vaisnava. Gradually a vaisnava develops all the good qualities of Krsna.

- Sukha pradatvam, it bestows happiness. Not the happiness derived from temporary pleasure, but lasting fulfillment.

This is my desire, that such ecstatic, pure devotional service may develop in my heart and may immerse the entire world in overwhelming happiness. As Prahlada Maharaja mentions:

svasty astu visvasya khalah prasidatam
dhyayantu bhutani sivam mitho dhiya
manas ca bhadram bhajatad adhoksaje
avesyatam no matir apy ahaituki

May there be good fortune throughout the universe, and may all envious persons be pacified. May all living entities become calm by practicing bhakti-yoga, for by accepting

devotional service they will think of each other's welfare.
Therefore let us all engage in the service of the supreme
transcendence, Lord Sri Krsna, and always remain absorbed
in thought of Him.

(Bhag. 5.18.9)

Dasanudasa,
Kadamba Kanana Swami

26 March 2011
Srivasa Pandita's Appearance day



Starting the day...

When we are rising in the morning, we should know that we have another opportunity to be glorifying Krsna and worshipping Krsna. When we are waking up and paying our obeisances, it should be an act of happiness that we are beginning to offer this day to Krsna. That is the beginning of the day. Pure devotional service in this way is wonderful because one knows that every moment one is giving his very best so there is no shadow of guilt or anything hanging over our head or a sense of, 'I'm holding back.'





knowing our TRUE SELF

...self-realization means that finally you stop acting out the role in a play. We are in so many plays, we wear different masks and have different identities. Oh yes, someone is a headmistress of a school- no, take off that mask now... who are you really? 'Oh I am...' and then the name follows, take off that mask now... who are you really? 'Well, I have a PhD!' take off that mask. 'I am from the country of my birth...' take off that mask! And mask after mask we take off until finally, finally we come to our real face. And what is written on that face? KRSNA DAS or DASI! That is written there- eternal servant of Krsna! 'That's me...I never knew- eternal servant of Krsna! I never thought of that, that's me...' finally, no more mask! But we're attached to our mask because it looks nice, it's been there for so long and it's almost grown together with ourselves. So in this way it's so difficult to give up our false ego. But by chanting Hare Krsna, by transcendental knowledge, will cut the knot of karma, then gradually our real self will emerge. That is why self realization is the point where one becomes really happy in life, because then you're finally your real self...





The higher path in life

Anyone who gives his life in service is higher than a man who is thinking about himself. 'I and mine are the only things important in this world.' That is a greedy person - a miser. But a person who gives to others and who cares about others and who is always working for others, is known by many as a great man. To do a sacrifice for the welfare of others is a higher path in life. But from a vaisnava perspective if this welfare work is only for the benefit of the body, the result is only temporary, so what is the real gain? The highest sacrifice that can be made is to give devotional service to Krsna, then there is eternal gain, that is real welfare work. It is so perfect it benefits both the giver and the receiver.





Seeing things as they are

Sometimes it is thought that this world is a gift of Krsna to us, 'Krsna was so kind that He made this material world for us so that we have a good time here!' That's the idea and therefore they think that religion is to say, 'thank you Krsna for giving us this nice world, where we can have a great time!' And that's going on and in the middle of it some disaster happens, either on a large scale or a private scale! Then suddenly it's not such a nice world anymore, 'how is this possible, how can this happen?' Then the world is not so nice. A sober person who is not so passionate can see things as they are. In this world there is also suffering and the happiness is only a drop, never enough to really satisfy the heart. We are here only to realize that actually we belong in the spiritual world.





ill up the space...

Sometimes the analogy is used that our consciousness is a pond. In that pond we throw different stones and all these stones are impressions. If we fill up the pond with Krsna stones more and more, then gradually as it fills up there's not much space for any other stones, for any other impressions. In fact, when the stones are filling up all the way to the surface of the water, then even if you throw in another stone it will just bounce out and it won't go in anymore- it will just go straight out! In this way we must fill our consciousness completely to the top with Krsna. Then it is said that there are still small, small spaces between the stones- those you must fill up with little stones, with smaller things, with refined things, with more refined ways of meditating on Krsna, remembering Krsna and appreciating Krsna. And then still finer, in between the big stones and small stones, where there's still a little space filled up with sand, until there is no space left.

So not only must our Krsna consciousness increase, but the smaller stones also mean that we must now start paying more attention to the detail and do it right!





NOT by our strength...

There's a famous story about Visnujana, which I like a lot. Visnujana, for those who don't know, was a very famous kirtan leader. So someone asked Visnujana, 'Why are you always so enthusiastic in kirtan? Where are you getting this amazing energy from?'

Visnujana said, 'Actually I'm not always enthusiastic in kirtan, but I just act enthusiastic, then the devotees become enthusiastic and that makes me enthusiastic!' That's such a nice story because it really describes the reality of our life and it is really how it works. Sometimes we forget who we really are and we see ourselves walking around with our neck beads, our kavaca, our brahmana threads, all the attributes we have and all the slokas we know and all the other things, and we think, 'Well, we are actually vaisnavas!' in the sense of like real vaisnavas but we are vaisnavas very much by the grace of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Lord Nityananda, . And by the grace of the Lord and His pure devotee, Srila Prabhupada, somehow or the other we are here.





The landscape of Krsna Consciousness

Spiritual life can also be compared to driving and in our spiritual life, we start driving in the night. So in the night when it's pitch dark, you can't see anything and all you do is just drive on the white lines on the side of the road - the striped lines on the road. You are just watching those white lines; your eyes are all the time going to the line and you're trying to stay within the lines and you don't see anything. You have a little bit of headlights but you don't see much. That's how spiritual life is in the beginning. So in the beginning we are very much focused on the regulations and we have some light of hearing and chanting but the light doesn't reach very far.

But then as we are making spiritual advancement and while driving, gradually the day breaks. The light comes through and we suddenly begin to see that there is a whole landscape out there. We're driving and we still stay between the lines but we also see the whole landscape of Krsna consciousness. And we see that there are so many varieties of wonderful tastes and experiences in that landscape of Krsna consciousness. So in the beginning it's narrow but gradually our vision of what Krsna consciousness is increases and we realise that actually it's not narrow; it's unlimited! It is full of all kinds of varieties and gradually, by Krsna's mercy, we become empowered.



our saving grace



When we are going through some very difficult situation in the material world, then we can really remember that this is not a very nice place and we become fixed to going back to Godhead. 'Yes, I am ready, I really want that now.' But one can only sustain the desire for going back to Godhead by being attracted to serving Krsna. Attraction to Krsna must manifest in attraction to serving Krsna. If we simply are inactive and appreciate

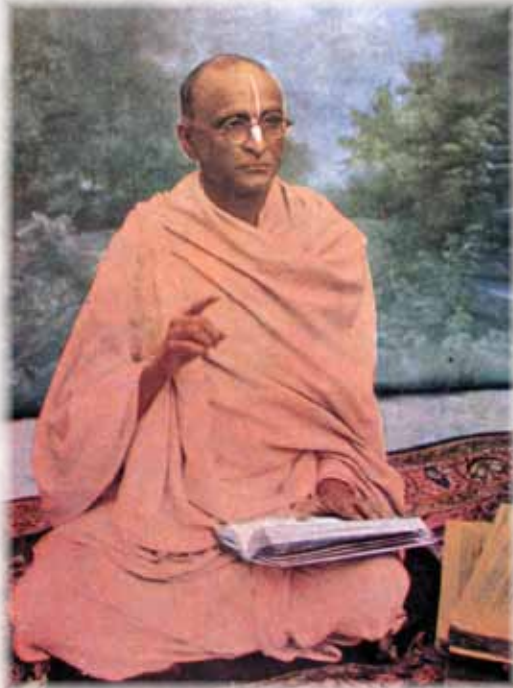
Krsna's glories then we are in *santa rasa*. Prabhupada said that *santa rasa* is almost impersonalism, therefore one must at least become *dasyam*, at least engaged in service. We must take up some service for Krsna. Whatever that service may be, one must take that very seriously.

'That serviceand that I am doing for Krsna.' If we have the service then we have spiritual life and then our attraction to Krsna will also develop. As a consequence of that service we will also start to appreciate the Name, Fame and Qualities of Krsna. Our connection is the service and when we forget to take on some practical service and we try to go deep in meditation on Krsna- it will not work. It is that service that is our saving grace. It is through that service that Krsna is saving us by His mercy.



Duty must be there

First in Krsna Consciousness there is a duty, which must be there. There are so many duties – duties to the spiritual master, duties to principles of purity, duties according to the scriptures, duties given to us by the arcaryas. It governs everything - the time we rise and the duty must be there first. If duty is not in place, then there is something hollow, and then there is the vacuum in our spiritual life. When there is such a vacuum, than our bhakti cannot really grow. For sometime, it may look like that bhakti grows very nicely, but if there is a vacuum remaining in our duty, then all that bhakti that emerges so nicely, will at one point just collapse! So the duty must be there.





Krsna, the Supreme ARTIST

We become a servant in the hands of Krsna. Krsna is like the Supreme Artist, who is carving a servant out of us. He takes the stone- that's us- and is slowly changing the stone...



Krsna is our only shelter

Everyone needs shelter in this world. We know this very well. Today it was shelter from the heat and sometimes it is shelter from the cold. Shelter from dangers in the world – always shelter, shelter, shelter! But where is our shelter other than at Krsna's lotus feet? There is no other shelter. Everything else is illusory shelter. We feel secure when we lock the doors but then someone else also has the keys – so what security is there anyway? Real security and shelter is found in Krsna and that's really the essence of spiritual life.





Are you convinced?



Conviction cannot be based on intellectual understanding. Are we convinced that Krsna consciousness is true? ‘Yes, I am because it makes sense.’ But that’s just the beginning and it is a lot more than that. It has to be experienced in the heart. It must be really felt that Krsna consciousness is the most wonderful thing. That’s living on the cutting edge and spiritual life is about living on the cutting edge! It cannot become routine because as soon as it does then we get into trouble as we start to dry up and feel the austerity and the weight of spiritual life – the weight of the promises and the strictness because we are practicing in the spirit of routine. But each time we apply ourselves to service and give it our best, that’s when we are on the cutting edge. Then spiritual life becomes magic when we are inspired. So one has to conquer Krsna!



alking about Krsna

– the best!

How long can anyone be quiet? The birds sing, lions roar, babies cry, people talk who can be quiet and for how long? And what to talk about? The best thing really is to talk about Krsna! And that is sankirtana, to talk about the 'kirti', the fame of Krsna. And then comes the chanting of His Holy Name and more devotional service.



he world speaks one

language

So in this world there are so many different people and they all speak different languages. So I'm in a country very far away and therefore I don't speak your language but all the people of the world speak one language and that is the Hare Krsna maha mantra. It doesn't matter, the people from America, the people from Africa or the people from China – they all like the chanting of the Hare Krsna maha mantra. We cannot speak to each other because we don't know each other's names and languages but still we can have a nice time together and become friends together when we chant Hare Krsna. This chanting of Hare Krsna touches the soul, it comes from the heart, this chanting of Hare Krsna brings love out of our heart. So therefore by chanting Hare Krsna everyone becomes happy.



Becoming Saintly

Saintly people can touch the heart of all. In this day and age, as soon as we speak about a saintly person, we turn to Srila Prabhupada first. He is the emblem for us of a saintly person. His qualities of saintliness are important and it is that which should be in the forefront in our spiritual life - to become saintly. It's not about belonging to a society, it's not about being part of a certain temple, it's not about belonging to a certain group of people. That's not enough. That's just some arrangement to give us some help and support in becoming saintly people. Krsna says that the sadhus, the saintly persons, they are dear to Him. And Krsna is dear to the saintly persons and thus never for a moment, forgets the saintly persons. Not for a moment are they out of His mind.





The greatest treasure



The instructions of the spiritual master are siromani, are like jewels on the head, they are carried like a jewel, like a great treasure.

Whatever the spiritual master said is siromani; it is not a casual thing at all. It is never to be taken as light thing. It is always to be taken as something very important- everything that the spiritual master says!



We have to think

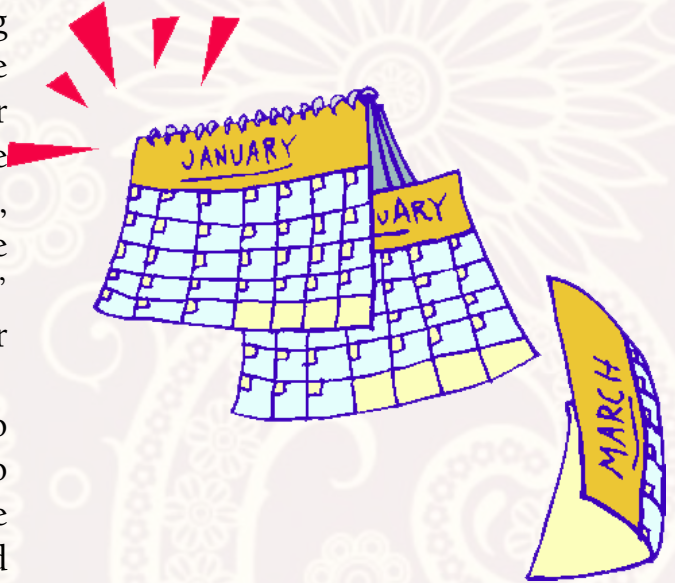
We must think deep, but people don't think because modern time tells you, "Don't think, whatever you so- DON'T THINK! Turn on a TV- quick! Work- all day, make money, buy and spend, go to the mall- spend whatever you've made! And even what you haven't made, you can have a CREDIT CARD! Yes! And more than one- oh yes! And then you can buy and shop and shop and shop- Don't think, don't think... spend, buy... CONSUME! And then come home- eat, eat, eat, drink, yes and just enjoy, enjoy, enjoy! Then when you're dull and full and tired- watch TV..." and this is life! And we never think, and it becomes so much a habit that is we have to think, all we can say is "uhhh..." We've forgotten to think. But Krsna is asking us to use our intelligence; He gave us intelligence, now we must think, "What am I doing? Where am I? What is the purpose of my life?" these are the questions that one has to ask...



What have I done for Krsna?

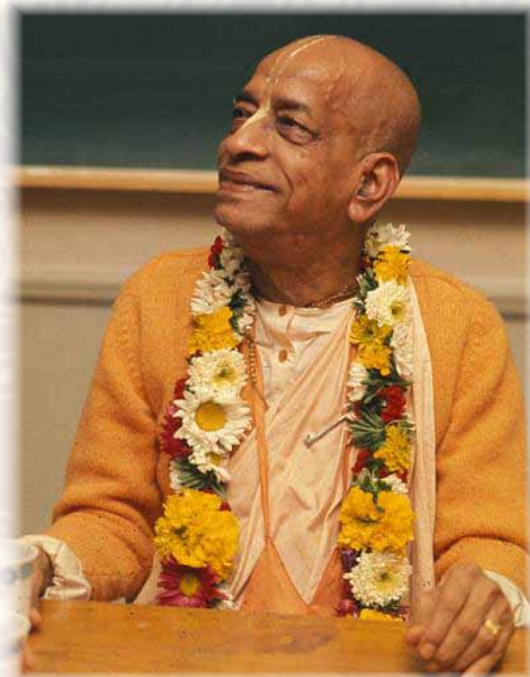
...the real thing in life is that we do something for Krsna. So you have to everyday think, “What have I done for Krsna today?” and it doesn’t matter who you are; everyone has to do that. I have to do that; everyday I have to think, “What did I do for Krsna?” and

I know everyday it should have been more, so tomorrow I better do better. And that’s spiritual life- you better do better for the second half of the day than the first half of the day, because so far it wasn’t that impressive yet what we did today. Was it really that good what we offered to Krsna today? Was it? So there’s still some time left to try and make up and still do something useful today. And unless we think like that everyday, our spiritual life will always be slack. And that’s what it takes- that little bit of extra effort...





Because of Srila Prabhupada



Somehow or other we are here. How is it that we became interested in Krsna consciousness? That is may be a question that comes to mind and we rest assured know that it is to none of our credit- not at all! We say, 'No, no but I was spiritually inclined!' No. It was simply because Lord Caitanya was smiling upon the universe and suddenly people felt spiritually inclined! That's all- a little mercy and thus,

we became devotees. Because Srila Prabhupada came, and thus, somehow or other, we become influenced by his mercy, which spread and touched our heart. Because, when you see a sincere person in front of you, how can you walk away and still have a sense of self-esteem? Still call yourself sincere? If you see a pure devotee, one who really is sincere, then how can you just ignore him? It is in that way that Srila Prabhupada had conquered the entire world; people from all cultures responded to his sincerity...



Becoming happy

And what will please Prabhupada the most? Well, I remember that Tamala Krsna Maharaja was appointed the GBC secretary for India and he was taking care for all of India. So that was very important. There were these big projects- big, big projects- but Tamala Krsna Maharaja had for some time been preaching in America with the Radha Damodara party. Then Prabhupada said that since he had left India, it didn't go well. So Prabhupada said he should go back to India and resume that GBC post. But he didn't want to go because he had a good time preaching. So how did he convince Prabhupada? He brought a whole group of new devotees that he had made and they were all nicely dressed up as brahmacaris with tilak etc and he brought them to his room and he said, "Prabhupada, we have been preaching now with the bus party and these are all the new devotees that we made." And he introduces them, this is bhakta so and so and bhakta this and that- it was a whole room! And Prabhupada's eye's just became round and excited and he said, "All right, yes, you continue this program! You continue this program!" It was worth more than all the buildings and everything because what Prabhupada really cared for was that people would become devotees. So let us do something to make devotees. How can we make devotees? Prabhupada said, "very easy! You just show people how happy you are!" easy, isn't it? So we have to firstly become really happy.



*Ring! Ring! This is your
senses on the line!*



Tongue: “Ring, Ring! This is your tongue!
We haven’t eaten for 15 minutes! We want
to taste something; at least a sweet!
Something light okay!”

Us: “Yes Mr. Tongue, just a moment please.
I don’t have anything in my pocket but I’ll
bring something”

Tongue: “Okay and hurry up!”

Eyes: “Ring, Ring! Here are your eyes; we are bored stiff! We
are looking all the time and it’s the same boring things! Is
there anything exciting to see?”

Us: “Well, what do you think of a movie?”

Eyes: “Hmmm, isn’t there anything more exciting than that?
Something real life too?”

Us: “I’ll I’ll do my best; I’ll get back to you”

Eyes: “Okay.”

Tongue: “Ring, ring, ring! This is your tongue again! Are you
doing something for me or what!”

Genital: “Ring, Ring, Ring, Ring Ring!!! The genital on the
line!”

Us: “AyayayRyessss, I know you’re there”

Genital: “We want action!”

Us: “Oh, I see!”

Genital: “Right away!”

Us: “Yes sir! I’ll try and do something about it. But lately I
haven’t been very lucky you know. No one was interested in
me-what to do! Anyway, I’ll try”

We go into the streets and like- “wink, wink!”- you know! What can you do when you have to satisfy the demand of your senses! And again as we’re busy satisfying one, the other one’s ringing- “Hey! What about me? What about me?” So like this, at the end of the day we’re exhausted! We worked so much all day; we broke our backs to satisfy the senses- yes. And you know what we get? Al we get is when we’ve done everything for them is, “Is this all you could do? Is this all? Couldn’t you bring something better? Is this all? Go back and try again you useless bum!” and then we go again

Why work for such thankless masters! Just quit right now! But we hesitate, what will the senses say?



Taste comes from a person

Faith develops by association and taste- someone who will connect us with transcendental sound vibration and someone who experiences taste can transmit this taste. One human exchange with a devotee can open up a universe- that’s all it takes!





Learning from Failure

Failure is the pillar of success. You learn a lot from failure.



Each time that you fail you also realise what you did wrong. You realise a lot from your failure and therefore failure gives us an opportunity to try better and then you fail again and then you learn again... Untill one day you can stand on your own two feet in spiritual life.



Little changes make a big change...

We need to take advantage of little opportunities. Chant a little bit extra- maybe not 64 rounds, but a little bit more. Read something extra, listen to some lectures - just turn it on. It is difficult to walk to the gadget and to actually push the button, it's hard to take your phone out of the pocket and put it on the mp3 part- difficult. But if we would just do these little things, then so much would change. And suddenly the spiritual world would look so much closer and so much more like a reality. Then the material world would begin to look more insignificant and more and more meaningless to us.





Krsna is taking care of us



So this is spiritual life; we don't have to worry. It is not that we have to build a staircase to heaven and then ascend the staircase and somehow or the other reach. Or it doesn't mean that by our own power and our own strength we have to figure it all out. No, we have to simply take shelter of Krsna and Krsna will make all the arrangements. As Krsna was making plans in the life of Uddhava, Krsna is

also taking care of us and making all the arrangements. And He has a plan, He has it all figured out; we cannot see and we're thinking, 'Oh, I'm left alone here to battle and to struggle, and it's so difficult. I am fighting here with the material energy and it is so hard, so hard to fight the material energy- prakrti sthani karsati- the struggle with the material energy. The struggle with survival- so tough- and somehow or other in the midst of that struggle I have to be Krsna conscious and it's difficult and I don't know how to do it!!! Will I be successful?' Hmmm....everything we need will be provided! Just at the right time Krsna will arrange and He will send us someone. He will make an arrangement; somehow He will create circumstances that will make everything favourable for us.



Inspiration...

The difference between an inspired devotee and an uninspired devotee is in giving. The uninspired devotee is looking at, “What am I getting?” The inspired devotee is looking at, “What can I give?”

“Ya, but you have to be inspired before you give.”

No, you have to give before you can be inspired. That’s how it is. Even if you are not inspired, get into this mood of giving. What do we give? We can give our energy, we can give our possessions, we can give our intelligence and we can give our words but more than that we can give everything. We can give ourselves. That’s the greatest thing. We can give ourselves. Completely give ourselves. “Yes, I give myself to serving the devotees. I give myself to this movement. I give myself as much as I can at any time and at any moment.” This is the spirit.





our meditation

changes with time...



When I first got the maha mantra, I got it from a musician named Burton Greene, who was doing jam sessions with me. We were doing ragas and somehow or the other, Burton Greene, after the ragas, said, "Let's do some mantra." We did, and it was the maha mantra. Later I read the Lilamrta and I saw that Burton Greene was a piano player, who in the

Matchless Gifts storefront used to play on that string board from the piano! He used to hammer on the keys there! So I got the maha mantra in parampara through Burton Greene from Prabhupada! Just see! Little did I know!

And at that time the mantra was for me only sound, spiritual sound. I didn't have any other association with it; I had no other meditation than sound. That much I knew

- it's spiritual sound. So I had a little meditation. Someone else might just think, 'What's this? Hare Krsna? What is it? Hare Krsna? I mean, what is it, what is it?' At least I knew it's a mantra and it's spiritual sound. So I knew a little more than just some 'Joe Blo', but I had no association...yellow dhoti, flute, peacock feather....nothing. Now if you say, 'Krsna,' my mind goes like...Govardhana Hill...

Yamuna-tira-vana-cari. You say 'Krsna' and I can go for a long time by Prabhupada's mercy because so much went in. So with time our meditation changes and we know so much more about Krsna.



What security is there?

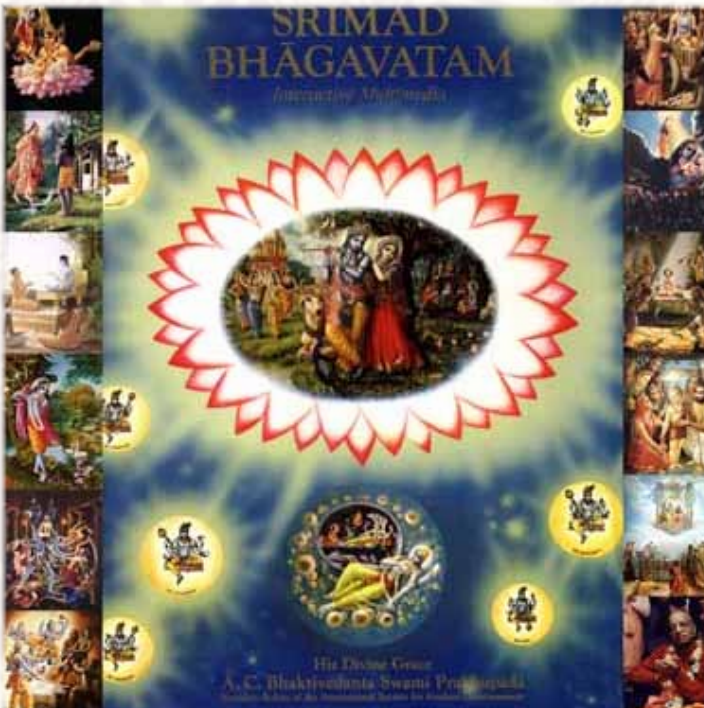
We have so many false shelters. My family gives me protection, fallible soldiers, what kind of protection can they give us? My money will protect me - and then you get some economical crises or suddenly your bank has gone bankrupt and you lose your money or it has no more value. So what security is there in this world? No security. Our only security is simply Krsna.





*The scriptures are practical...
if you follow them*

When the scriptures remain theoretical for you that means you're not following them! That's obvious. And when you're following the scriptures, they become practical. So, maybe the scriptures indeed, are actually a guide to life! Yes, if you follow them then something happens to your life, it's pretty far out! 'Far out! Amazing! Never thought of that! Really, I thought it was very interesting these books but I never thought that they were designed to be followed.' But that actually is the deeper purpose of the Bhagavatam. It's known only to a few but actually Bhagavatam is a guide to life- believe it or not!





TOTALLY RIDICULOUS



Mr Bean, he comes into a hotel with the little Mini, which he parks outside. He comes into the hotel and on the desk of the hotel there is one of these bells with the metal pin and you have to hit on it. So Bean goes like, (imitates) Bing! Bing!

Bing, bing, bing! And then he wants a room and they show him a room all the way upstairs and he looks around in the room and he takes it. All right, he is in the room and then he looks around in the room and he is thinking, 'well, let me make it a little nicer!' So he opens up his suitcase and he takes out a Black and Decker drill and different paintings and (drill sound) drills a hole in the wall and starts to hang the paintings. Then he has a flower vase with plastic flowers and he takes it out and he puts it there. Then at the end, out of the suitcase comes a sign, 'Home sweet home' (drill sound) and that also goes on the wall. Then, after all that, he wants to use the bathroom and he realises that there is no attached bathroom but that it is out in the corridor! So he goes and checks it out (imitates) and he sees that it's right there next to his room. So...bing!

He puts a saw blade on a drill (saw blade sound), cuts out a door, hangs some hinges also, fixes the whole thing, locks the bathroom from the inside and everything great, puts on his sleeping hat, takes his teddy bear and goes to bed, ready for the night! It's ridiculous! It's totally ridiculous! And why is it ridiculous? Because he treats a temporary situation like a permanent one! Isn't it? And that's the ridiculous thing! And we are just as ridiculous! Yes, that's the situation.



spiritually self-sufficient



Every devotee has to be what I call 'spiritually self-sufficient.'

Spiritual self-sufficiency means that one must at least be able - independent from association - to apply the process of Lord

Caitanya and derive from there a certain amount of inspiration and keep on going. That is what I call spiritual self - sufficiency and that is required. Then beyond that one may take inspiration from other great personalities and we are also dependent on that, and

obviously our spiritual master and

other great vaisnavas we take inspiration from. And we need those moments of inspiration. But spiritual self-sufficiency, we must develop!



Krsna knows everything

When we go before Krsna, when we pray to Krsna, who are we? What are we bringing Him? He knows, He knows very well...Sometimes I look at that painting- you may know the one that I'm talking about- Mother Yasoda is there and she has little baby Krsna on her lap, and He's looking at you! You know that painting? He's a baby but He's looking like anything- very intensely looking at us! I mean that painting, wherever you're in a room you can see Him looking at you! I know it you know, I know it very well! The interesting part is that when you travel around the world then from time to time you encounter the same painting because



the copies are around. So sometimes I'm in a room and there's that painting again! Like in Sydney, in the room they have it. And I know, Krsna's watching every move I make! I know it very well, He sees right through me, He sees into my heart, He knows what I think, He knows where I'm at... He knows everything!



Shining our beads, shining our heart

It is said that when we chant then gradually we come in this mood of just chanting for the pleasure of Krsna and then we become free from all oppressive things. And as we develop this freedom, then the higher taste will come. So therefore, let this be the seed of chanting every day. If only we can do that, at least one round every day and if possible more, then we will see a change after some time. Try it for a month because psychologists have discovered that if you do something for one month then it becomes a habit. So just try it for one month, sign on the dotted line and see what happens...! And after one month you'll say, 'well, maybe I'll try another month...' and then maybe another and another and then we've done one year and then maybe go for a second year...I am in my 33rd year now! And then the beads will start shining with time because by moving the beads you polish the beads and they start to shine and as the beads start shining then something in you starts shining also! That is the secret of Lord Caitanya's movement, who taught this chanting of the holy name. But before you start your one round, always say,



Jaya Sri Krsna Caitanya
Prabhu Nityananda
Sri Advaita Gadhadhara
Srivasa adi gaura bhakta vrnda

and then it will work!



Simple living and high thinking



Gandhi once said that a man by nature can only deal with a family or a village, how many people can one know? I have thousands of Facebook

friends and I'll probably never know who they really are! So Gandhi continued and said that any speed faster than walking is unnatural. Well I just flew half way around the world, and I have travelled a lot in my life, many passports filled with many stamps. I have flown over many countries, landed in a few cities, saw a few streets and really only got close to a few people all over the world. Now I've got my little family of devotees and friends, spread out all over the world, in what they call the global village. I have travelled so much, lived abroad so much, the country of my birth is no longer home, I've become a 'world citizen'. However I must admit that Gandhi is right, I am still a simple villager at heart, 'oh when can I return home, to that eternal village, where Krsna resides with His devotees, where walking in the forest and the pasture grounds is the daily pastime of the Lord and his friends?'



Krsna whatever You want...

It is a fact that we have to give up all the sense for proprietorship. At one point we just have to accept that nothing is ours. In the Caitanya Caritamrta, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu tells to Sanatana Goswami that even his own body wasn't his. Caitanya Mahaprabhu says, 'You have surrendered to Me, therefore your body is My property.' So we have to gradually come to this point when we really say, 'all right, it's all Your property' and to let go the tendency to control a destiny of our life and to just say, 'okay Krsna, whatever You want.' Well, whether we have that mood or not, it is anyway going to be like that. Krsna will anyway do what He wants!

Yes, the weakness of heart is also described. And it's said that weakness of heart means that we are worshipping Krsna but still we are looking for glorification of ourselves. We are worshipping Krsna and we are looking for recognition. 'Just see how nicely

I'm serving
Krsna! See
me! Look at
me! Look,
look at me
how great I
am! Look,
Look...'



Yes, everyone is thinking, 'look at what I'm doing, look...' so this weakness of heart is interfering. We are miserly; we must become generous. So we must give, give to Krsna - everything to Krsna! Everything we have, yes it's Krsna's.

Then we must give ourselves to Krsna. 'Yes, Krsna, I am Yours! My body is Yours, my time is Yours, my energy is Yours and I will not calculate. I will not calculate- can I afford it?' Usually we give some charity and we look in the wallet and we see what we have and we pull out something and we calculate how much can I afford? But in serving Krsna, it's not a matter of what we can afford; it's a matter of what Krsna requires, because different situations arise and service is required. There is no pujari...who will do? 'All right I'll do it.' So as Krsna requires, as the situation makes it clear, we will do. And why only that? We will do more. When the opportunity arises, oh yes, how to miss it? Can we ever miss an opportunity for service? That will be very foolish. The opportunities are there, let's take them, let's look for opportunities for service...this is how Krsna comes closer and closer. This is how Krsna becomes more and more a part of our life, this is how Krsna takes over our life, and this is how one day Krsna will be everything!



The ultimate fight

In Caitanya Caritamṛta it is said that one must accept Lord Caitanya in the innermost chambers of his heart. Our heart can be compared to a palace with many rooms. In the centre of the palace are the private chambers. There we have our hidden life, the private life, there we keep our hidden separate desires. It is a big challenge to really give that one to Kṛṣṇa also. As long we have any hidden separate desires we will still have that private chamber which is locked so that Kṛṣṇa can't get in...

So it is the private chamber we have to open for Kṛṣṇa and that is difficult. In the beginning of the process we have to fight with our mind and senses. It is a big fight, but we must do it. And then, there is a fight to carry on in devotional service. That is also the tough one. But the ultimate fight is to open up the private chamber. That is the biggest fight and to give that chamber to Kṛṣṇa and to say, 'You do with it whatever You like, Kṛṣṇa. I am Your puppet. I will dance just as You like.'





The medicine of devotional service



To really get the benefit from the medicine of devotional service, we really have to adjust our lifestyle and therefore make a conscious endeavour to change. Krsna consciousness is about changing, it's about us changing. We don't have to change the one we are but we have to change our orientation. All our qualities have been going in the wrong direction. Now we have to put it back and move it towards Krsna.



Extraordinary things...



...it is something that is a little bit difficult for us, something special and something which we think, 'maybe I can do this...' that's what we should do.

Extraordinary things...well, it can be in our own spiritual practices, in sadhana - in hearing and chanting, in reading the books- it can be in preaching, it can be in serving Krsna...

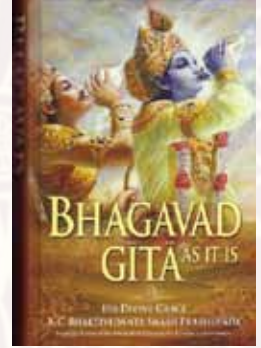
So we try to do something extraordinary in whatever service we're doing- not just the ordinary- we try to make a quality offering to Krsna and offer Krsna something really nice...after all He's the Supreme Personality of Godhead. For Him nothing but the best will do! Are we offering Him our best?



e just don't do it...

What is the point when one is not making the Gita one's meditation? Like the famous burnt out sankirtan devotee that hasn't read for a week: 'Prabhu how are you?' 'I don't know...terrible! I'm in Maya! I don't know what's wrong with me; I didn't read for a week!'

'Don't worry...Quick! Quick! Bring a book!...'The yogi who's mind is fixed on Me verily attains the highest perfection of transcendental happiness. He is beyond the modes of passion, he realises his qualitative identity with the Supreme and thus he's freed from all reactions...' Feel better Prabhu? A little bit?' 'Yeah, I do...'



This is using the Bhagavad Gita as some sort of allopathic medicine- as a headache pill! It's like, 'I feel burnt out...quick! Give me a few slokas...I can go again...good stuff!' But that is not the actual way. It means deep absorption, it means deeply making a big change in our life. That's our chance; we got a chance, we get a chance this life, we come so close and then we miss it! We're almost there and then we just miss it! We just don't take it. And we even came into this movement and still we don't take it and we think, 'Well, but I've joined so I've taken it...' but we still don't do it. So that's why we sometimes say, initiation is just the beginning and one actually has to become a cent per cent pure devotee- cent per cent pure devotee. Well, that is a big thing...



May we be such a follower

We take advantage of Srila Prabhupada words and become what he wanted us to become. That is why we are here and thus we are very much conscious that Srila Prabhupada is present and that in this movement Srila Prabhupada is still alive. In the Srimad Bhagavatam, if you open up the book in the beginning, then it is said, “He lives forever in his instructions and the follower lives with him.” So that’s a very big statement, which is like a great blessing. It’s not a small little thing that, ‘Oh ya, we must write something on the first page...’ Sometimes I see a big encyclopedia written by three professors and then on the opening page it says, “To Emily,” and I was thinking, did you really do all of that for Emily? Poor Emily, she has to read that whole book! But when I think of the Bhagavad Gita and what Prabhupada wrote there in the opening words: “He lives forever in his instructions and the follower lives with him.” So this is very nice.

Therefore there is nothing lacking...Prabhupada did not go to every town and village; he visited a lot of places, he didn’t personally go everywhere but Prabhupada is present there where he is remembered-there he is present. Where his



He lives forever in his instructions and the follower lives with him...

teachings are remembered - there he is present. Where his words are taken seriously- there he is present and thus his movement is still his movement and it’s still unique.



I really didn't want to do it

I did want to do the service, but when the devotees asked I thought it didn't look good if I would say 'no'. Then I did it, reluctantly and afterwards the devotees glorified me for all that I did. ...and then they asked me to do more service. And so it happened again and again. Now I have done devotional service for most of my life, what else will I do? In fact I started to like it a bit, now I ask the devotees, please can I do some devotional service?





According to Lord Caitanya



Unless we see devotional service in the context of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, it will not be complete. Devotional service in this age has to centre around harinam sankirtan, around distributing love of God and any type of service that does not include that spirit, will dry up.



The perfect relationship...

Krsna's pastimes are unlimited and centering around the relationship with His devotees. Krsna is always absorbed in remembering His devotees and the devotee is always remembering Krsna, and both are experiencing deep emotional attraction to one another. In this way devotional service is a personal process, never a mechanical one. We can understand from the pastimes of Krsna that devotional service is not a process of washing the heart from all the dirt, but rather that it is a matter of pleasing Krsna by our service, and Krsna will make all the arrangements. Krsna takes away all the impurities from the heart and whenever Krsna is pleased, then He will reveal something within our heart. Therefore, the devotee is always acting for the pleasure of Krsna and Krsna is always acting for the pleasure of the devotee!





They are gonna get YOU!!!

We're all experiencing the higher nature and the lower nature and every devotee is going through that fight- that the lower nature is drawn to the material energy.

(Dramatic) 'We know it's Maya! Take it away, I don't want it!' But meanwhile it's very much there! It's in everyone and no one is exempt! Even the demigods are not exempt; they have it too, what to speak of human beings! Human beings very much have a lower nature and this lower nature is strong. This lower nature is just, (dramatic wild voice) 'Ag! Ag! What do you care! Ag! Come on, you know! Don't be a square! Just go for it, you know what I mean! Like, just switch off that mind and **JUST DO IT!!!** Do what you really feel! Be real! Be **YOU!** Be like **GENUINE!** Be the one you really are! Follow your heart! Don't let anything stop you! Live the real life- you might suffer a little bit- but at least you can say you lived to the fullest extent! Yes! Are you ready? Yes, c'mon, let's go! Get moving, don't waste any time!'

So of course, it doesn't quite work out like that...At the first attempt of going on the wild side...**BANG! SLAP! BANG -**

another one! Yes! You think you're going out there to enjoy? Oh, there are sharks and crocodiles waiting for you! And they're gonna get you, they will exploit you...they will, somehow or other!





*K*rsna The Supreme judge

This especially is a very important verse: “Not considering who asked for it and who did not, nor who was fit and who unable to receive it, Caitanya Mahaprabhu distributed the fruit of devotional service.” (Cc. Adi-lila 9.29)

This is something we can remember in our preaching, that simply we take the opportunity to glorify devotional service, to glorify the Supreme Lord and the result depends upon the Supreme Lord to see who will take up devotional service or not. It is difficult to judge who is fit and who is not fit.





Prabhupada— the living proof



Prabhupada was real, Prabhupada was genuine, Prabhupada loved Krsna, Prabhupada saw Krsna, and because Prabhupada said God is blue, He is blue! It's as simple as that! Prabhupada is the living proof of Krsna Consciousness!



Infalible Krsna



One of Krsna's names is Acyuta, the one who is infalible. Srila Prabhupada gave one explanation in the Krsna book of this name of Krsna, Acyuta, and he said, Krsna is known as Acyuta, the infalible one, because He never fails to notice the smallest service that has been offered...



The world is on fire

We have to get out of the comfort zone and do something to present Krsna consciousness to the world because the world is on fire and we cannot just sit in our own temples and expect that that fire will not affect our temples. It will. The world is on fire!

Samsara-davanala-lidha-loka, and we have to become rain clouds. tranaya karunya-ghana-ghanatwam, we have to become rain clouds to save the people from this blazing forest fire. This is truly a serious point...





inding real happiness



Sooner or later one must actually find real happiness in Krsna consciousness. It may not be enough that it offers morality, a secure society, it may not be enough to get a taste out of the kirtan, it may not be enough over the years to give one's whole life...

One has to really make Krsna everything. One has to be absorbed. To be absorbed means to make Krsna everything. It cannot be that we like Krsna Consciousness amongst other things. It's good, inspiring but we are not completely convinced. It has not captured us to the point where Krsna is everything. Why is that? It is because we have not made the service our

everything. As long as we are still karmis, as long as we still have personal desire, wanting to fulfill many personal ambitions then it will only partially capture us. Then all these other agenda items may grow and one day we take them up again.

Therefore the question is, 'What service are we doing?' In the beginning it is natural that we are more concerned with what we are getting. What taste am I getting? What inspiration am I getting? So in the beginning it's about what we are getting. 'Oh, someone is so inspiring, so inspiring!' But it's not about a person who is so inspiring, it's the service that's so inspiring. The person is a bonus! But what is ultimately so inspiring is that the devotional service is inspiring because we must become inspired to serve. Otherwise what's the point? I'm so inspired! Okay but what's the consequence of that inspiration? How does it translate into service? Otherwise, 'I'm so inspired!' Okay, take a cold class of water and you may feel better. After that what are you going to do? Because ultimately inspiration is not a matter of excitement; inspiration must go deep and be serious. Inspiration means, 'now I will give my life to it.' That is needed.



ollecting blessings

One has to begin to collect blessings- as much as we can- because really, I don't think there is any devotee or aspiring devotee of Krsna, who thinks he has a very good track record. I don't think anyone thinks, 'I did so well in Krsna consciousness'- I don't think so. If anyone stands in front of the mirror (it doesn't matter who we are- big and famous or small and insignificant) we know very well that we could have done better.





Love at first sight?

Yes, first the love is in practice. We can say, 'love under construction', just like 'work in progress', 'house under construction', - 'love under construction'. You cannot just love like that. So-called love at first sight doesn't go so deep. Love at first sight may be initial attraction but how deep does it go? So therefore, love for Krsna develops by finding out more and more about Krsna- who He is, what He does, what He says, and what He likes. And then if we begin to act in such a way that is pleasing to Krsna, then gradually everything becomes favourable. Then we begin to slowly develop our love for Krsna because Krsna is wonderful and by acting in a way that is pleasing to Him, we too will become pleased, because Krsna's directions are perfect, full of depth and wisdom and whoever dedicates his life to that, will see that his life will become perfect.





Mystical Power

In India, during the Kumbha Mela, I have seen a yogi, who stood with his head dug in the ground. In my mind, I was thinking there are three options: 1.) He is dead 2.) He has a hidden oxygen bottle under the ground 3.) He has actually some real mystic power. I had heard about yogis who could remain buried for three weeks under the ground and then be dug out and prove to be healthy and alive. Prabhupada knew so many things about so many things. For example, he once explained that frogs just like yogis know the art of kumbhaka, where the ingoing breath goes in to a balance with the outgoing breath and one can stop breathing for a prolonged period of time. "Yogis know the art and frogs do as well," Prabhupada pointed out. What is the point to be astonished by the mystic feats of yogis? All their super natural feats are within the scope of material nature. The real mystical experience is to develop love for Krsna.





*n every atom of
his existence*



The other day I was reading that the topmost devotee feels the presence of his spiritual master in every atom of his existence. So the more we try to adjust our life according to the desire of the spiritual master, the more he's always present. That's the secret! So you should always think, 'He's watching everything I do.' The spiritual

master may not be with us but if he sees us after 6 months, then one look at our face and by the expression on our face, he can see what we have done for the last 6 months! We can only come close to the spiritual master in surrender in service. And then even when we're far away, we feel very close.



pure devotional service

for everyone

Pure devotional service is not an easy thing but everyone is supposed to pursue it. Not that in this movement a few are supposed to try, but a unique feature of our movement is that it's a movement of no compromise in principles of purity- we must all pursue. Every single member of this movement has the same goal- to become a pure devotee.



siksastakam



The Siksastakam are more than just prayers. They are very much the foundation of our spiritual life. We are meant to take shelter of them and they are meant to be guiding beacons in our spiritual life...



Improving the quality of chanting

So we sit down to repeat a mantra, 'Hare Krsna Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare, Hare Krsna Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare...did you notice that there are no paintings in this room? Hare Krsna Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare...nothing to look at! It's very distressful. There's like no escape. You have to chant here, there's nothing else.' You cannot just look at some picture, to just sort of drift away and forget about it. It's just chanting, 'Hare Krsna Hare Krsna...is there anything else we can do? Hare Krsna Hare Krsna...isn't there something else more



important? Hare Krsna Hare Krsna... something I have to say to someone? Hare Krsna Hare Krsna... oh I have something very important, you know. I have to go to the bank today, Hare Krsna Hare Krsna... maybe I should write that down, put it on my cell phone. That's too important!' And in this way, let's see

how long we can chant before we find an excuse to stop. And we'll find it. So, this is the nature of trying to chant. So we find that when we are trying to chant, it's very difficult to focus the mind. Even those who have chanted for 25 years or whatever, they still find it very difficult. Still, the same old topic, 'Oh, I don't know how to really fix the mind. It's very difficult. The mind goes everywhere.'

So how to improve the quality of our chanting, how to become more absorbed in the chanting? The real answer to this is by serving Krsna. The more we serve Krsna, the more we will change our whole mood in the chanting and the more we develop the service attitude of doing something for Krsna without wanting any profit.



making real progress

Human life is meant for sreyas, for the long term benefit. Human life is meant to make some real progress. So let us somehow or other focus on that...



God is personal

‘Everyone has personality, but God- no, He doesn’t!’ they say, ‘God has no personality, He’s only an energy.’

But if He only is energy and if everything is His creation, and if there’s personality in His creation then how could it be that it’s not in Him? It’s His creation, so it’s obviously in Him also. Whatever you make reflects your nature. Just look at human beings- they made a car...and it looks just like a human being! Doesn’t it? It has a nose, it has an inlet, it has a tank... and it has an exhaust pipe! And old cars, they make more noise! Isn’t it just the same? What’s the difference? I mean, cars look a lot like human beings if you think of them; they have lights, they have a nose- yes, they do- sometimes they go on all fours- we also do, they have a whole intricate nerve system of wires inside...just look, cars and human beings- very close, because we made them. Thus the car tells something about us- quite a bit actually! If you’ve never seen a human being but you’ve seen a car, you can start to understand a lot about human beings. You may not understand everything- but something. Thus through the

creation we can understand something about God.





Humility attracts Krsna

Humility is the key element in our spiritual life. Humility means that we are ready to put our own ideas aside and that is an essential element in humility. It is not necessarily that one is always walking with the head a little bowed down, looking at the ground with folded hands...that may not necessarily be humble. Humility is simply that we are ready to accept others as our superiors and we're open to accept guidance from others. That is true humility. So humility must not be mistaken for externally acting very timid and keeping oneself always in the background; that is not true humility. True humility, rather, is simply submitting oneself before superior persons and ask, 'What should I do?' That is true humility. It's not simple. To take guidance from the vaisnavas, to take guidance from the scriptures - that is humility. To hold the scriptures in such high esteem and say, 'Yes, these scriptures will become the guidelines in my life,' that is humility.

We can see that we don't have it, that rather we are practicing and under the circumstances we're trying to have a humble attitude but it's very difficult to take shelter of superiors - very hard. Our independence is very great and we'd rather figure it out ourselves. 'Is everything fine?' 'Yes, yes, very fine...' and then afterwards it's total chaos but somehow we'll work it out because we rather not take the risk that someone else tells us to do something we don't like. So humility requires that we are ready to allow others control our lives. That's a big thing.

This theme of humility is a major theme in spiritual life and that's why we're looking at it, because it can purchase the Lord.





Too Late...

I had this cartoon which showed a baby and the caption underneath it said, 'Too young!' Next caption - a couple in love, full moon behind their heads saying, 'Too much in love!' Next picture showed a family - both husband and wife had 6 arms and they were full. He had a Black and Decker computer, a phone and a brief case and she had 3 children, shopping bags and what not - 'Too busy!' Next picture showed an old man- deaf like anything - 'Too old!' Last picture - a cross on the grave... 'Too late!'



The value of one devotee

Sometimes we don't understand how deeply personal this movement is and that one soul who has rendered service is being so much appreciated by Krsna, is being so much appreciated by Krsna's pure representative. Just one devotee. If only we could understand the value of just one devotee then maybe our whole devotee association would be different.





Too much service = no

time for the mind

This is really how one comes to the spontaneous platform. One way is to just take up a lot of service. Instead of worrying all the time about controlling our mind and controlling our senses, just be busy with devotional service because in the course of devotional service everything gets burned up automatically. Too much service, no time for the mind! Too busy now, come back later. 'Hello, this is your mind!' 'Yes, very nice. Can you see me when I'm finished with my service? I really have no time now; I have so much to do.'

In this way, Srila Prabhupada designed this movement where there is no end, no end to what is there to do. And if we just take up something to do in the service of Krsna and we take it very seriously, then there's never enough time and we'll just find that there is every day so much service to do for Krsna. And that every day we can write down 50 things to do for Krsna and at the end how many things have we done? Do you also have that problem? My whole life is like that! So many things to do and I never get them done. Some things I get done but so many things I just don't get done. There's too much to do. This is the nature of devotional service; that indirectly the mind and senses become controlled. Instead of consciously endeavouring and fighting we are now just simply engaging our mind and senses in the service of Krsna. And then automatically there is no more time, no more energy for Maya, no more energy for our weakness. Then we become purified.



No one Like Prabhupada



When the devotees went to Vrndavana with Prabhupada for the first time, the first devotees, Kirtananda and Acutyana, they were thinking, 'Now we are going to Vrndavana and Vrndavana will be full of devotees like Prabhupada, pure devotees.'

But it wasn't, it wasn't. They had heard that in Vrndavana everyone is a devotee and they saw that but they also saw that 'no one is a devotee like Prabhupada, nobody!'

Even in Vrndavana there was nobody like him! Vrndavana, the best place of India, the place of the devotees, but even there in that place no one could match Prabhupada. No one had that mood of, 'everything for Krsna, just everything for Krsna.'

So thus he started this movement and took it to the west to people who have no idea about anything, who were fallen and habituated to sinful things and Prabhupada gave that extraordinary pure devotional service to them!



The friend of all living beings

Krsna is the embodiment of all rasas, He maintains eternal relationships with various devotees who are attracted to serve Him in different rasas according to their moods, different tastes and mellows. Krsna is maintaining unlimited relationships with unlimited devotees and with all these unlimited devotees, Krsna is having a variation of relationships and all are dear to Him. It is not that any living being is not dear to Krsna. Krsna is described as the friend of all living beings. So Krsna maintains relationships with all devotees and everyone is dear to Him.





Spiritual life is

everyday...

Spiritual life is meant to touch every moment of our life. Spiritual life is not reserved for a particular day of the week or for a particular place, such as the temple or for a festival at the beachfront, which takes place at Easter once a year, but spiritual life is truly meant for touching every aspect of our life. Krsna consciousness immediately brings about a major change, Krsna consciousness immediately begins to eliminate



all the negative, sinful activities from our life, Krsna consciousness will gradually bring us to a point where our life becomes pure and free from fault...



Building up the momentum

Srila Prabhupada, he is still bringing people, still capturing more and more people. This movement has not reached its full momentum yet. It is just sort of starting. It is like Prabhupada has pushed something which is now rolling down the mountain and catching more and more speed and taking more and more along in its course!



The mercy of Lord Caitanya

The more we are entering into the relationship with Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the more we will be able to actually have self confidence. Maybe our biggest struggle in spiritual life is not that we don't believe in Krsna consciousness - we do - but our biggest problem is that we don't believe in ourselves. Krsna consciousness- 'yes, I believe it's true, but can I really follow it?' That's the doubt that is sort of much stronger than any other one- our lack of faith in our own ability to follow this. But the mercy of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is really meant for making up in where we are falling short...





absorbed in reading

I would say that in our movement, one of the reasons devotees are becoming dry in their spiritual practices is that they don't get absorbed in reading. Chanting is something we do because we measure it- 16 rounds- so it is very clear. But we don't vow one hour of reading, we just don't vow it. So we don't give it the same urgency but it practically has the same urgency. It's very important- very, very important. If we are not reading, everything will become stale. This reading has the capacity to just change our whole vision back to transcendental. So it's very important and many devotees will say to you, 'I used to read much more before I joined than after...' Many devotees would say that. Many would agree with that statement.

But we should somehow or other struggle, one has to struggle, to keep reading. I understand that circumstances and the culture in which we live are not favorable for us, but we have to struggle and do it. It's important, it really is important. And if you have so much service that you never have time to read, then maybe it's time to speak to the senior vaisnavas and say, 'I have so much service, I never have time to read. Please give me the time...' of course I know that when you get that little time then you fall asleep within two minutes. But I knew one devotee then who was really fired up and he had a little bucket with a sponge... and he became very learned! He did! He used to be cleaning with one hand and with the other he was learning slokas! Of course he has glasses now, that's for sure-that's what you also get from too much reading, but it looks intellectual!



The recording is the same

The recording has all the potencies of the speaker. In the Bhagavatam itself, there's a description of how Vyasadeva was going into the forest and calling out the name of Sukadeva, but Sukadeva never came. So then it is described- not in the Bhagavatam itself but in Puranas- that actually what happened was that in order to get Sukadeva to come back, after he had left, Vyasadeva arranged that verses were recited. Some verses were recited- the verses of Bhagavatam - and these verses were echoing off the trees and the echo also counted as chanting. So recording is nothing but an echo- it's an echo of a real sound. Echo is also bona fide, so recordings are bona fide. Sometimes people have a view that recordings are not bona fide, but they are bona fide, and in that sense, equally transcendental.





The ingredients for loving relationships



The vaisnavas have compassion. The vaisnavas care for our predicaments and they give us support to face these in a Krsna conscious way. Sometimes we already know but still, to hear a confirmation - if we are emotionally affected by a difficult situation then we know that our duty is to be transcendental. But it's hard to be transcendental if one is emotionally affected. Then to hear the instruction one already knows from the vaisnavas just gives that resolution to sort of go beyond these emotional conditions. So in this way, service to saintly persons creates a relationship and that relationship will carry us. The guru-disciple relationship is in this way based on certain principles, that the spiritual master is the well-wisher and that's an important

point. He will be there when it is required. So this is very nice because we see that in the vaisnava relationships there are all the ingredients for genuine loving relationships.



Are we Vedic— yes or no?

Sometimes devotees say that we are representing Vedic culture. Are we really? Have we even read the Vedas? Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura writes in his book, *Kṛṣṇa Samhita*, that these days only 6 per cent of all the Vedic literature is available. The rest is lost. I was a little shocked when I read how low that number is. But then there is *Srimad Bhagavatam*; the sages had assembled in the forest of Naimisaranya and they were enquiring from Suta Gosvami, “What is the essence of all Vedic scriptures.” The answer is, “Pure devotional service that is uninterrupted and unmotivated.” The answer is, “The *Srimad Bhagavatam* is the answer of all Vedic scriptures. *nigama-kalpa-taror galitam phalam* (Bhag. 1.1.3), it is the ripened fruit of all Vedic knowledge. Therefore we are representing Vedic culture by following the *Bhagavata*, not just Vedic culture but the very essence of it. But those part of the Vedas that are *traigunya*, mundane, within the three modes of material nature- such as *karma-kanda*, vedic rituals for temporary worldly gain or *jnana-kanda*, those sections of the Vedas dealing with impersonal liberation- those parts we are not representing. Those parts we reject openly as *kaitava dharma*, cheating religion. We are representing the essence of the Vedas, namely pure devotional service to Sri Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.





Attaining Krsna



If we have attained Krsna, then we have attained everything. We may attain many things in life but then, it's not everything. Every time we have something we consider that maybe there is still something more. But when we've actually attained Krsna, we come to that point where we feel we've come home - there's no need to go any further, there's no need to acquire anything new. We know, now we have come to a point we were waiting for. This is the wonderful thing about Krsna consciousness: it's that state of consciousness where one has become a devotee of Krsna.



Only serving Krsna

Every one of us has been given some energy; not so much energy but some energy. Some people have more energy than others, but then again everyone has some and it's amazing - everyone can do something better than somebody else, whatever that may be. In that way everybody has some special blessings and also some special limitations to carry in this life. So we all have some energy and whatever energy we have, that energy should be used to be the via media of the mercy of the Lord.

So somehow or the other, we carry that mercy of the Lord and that is the main thing. Not our thinking, feeling and willing. Whatever we experience in terms of thinking, feeling and willing, that is there and that is naturally becoming touched with Krsna, *tesam evanukampartham aham ajnana-jam tamah nasayamy atma-bhava-stho* (Bg. 10.11). Krsna says that He is residing within the consciousness of every being and as soon as we take a step towards Krsna, then Krsna reveals Himself within our consciousness. Then our thinking, feeling and willing will automatically become influenced by thoughts of Krsna, by feelings towards Krsna, by desires in relation to Krsna. But we have to purify these desires. Instead of asking Krsna to improve our material conditions of life, we have to come to the point where we are simply dedicated servants of the desires of the Supreme Lord, *hrsikena hrsikesa-sevanam bhaktir ucyate* (Cc. Madhya-lila 19.170), we have to come to the point where we are only serving Krsna...



ew horizons

“I wanted to do some preaching in a real pioneering spirit and take Krsna consciousness to new horizons,” Badri Narayana said. “So I decided to go to New Guinea. When I arrived in the hotel, the receptionist behind the counter was reading one of Prabhupada’s books!” Prabhupada was already there. Yes, that is a fact, Prabhupada did the lion share, we are just assisting him. Nonetheless there is still work to do for pioneers, who want to move in to new areas. There are several major frontiers for those looking for a challenge: one such area is China; another area for heroes is found on the farms, to just live off the land; and Africa is yet another area, there every word is a song and every step is dance. It is almost the spiritual world, just a few more things to do. If you feel inspired, please come and join us.



JUST milking?

Sometimes in the beginning stages, people see the relationship with the spiritual master as everything. But they are looking at what they can get from that relationship and they are looking to kind of get the maximum attention - to get a letter a day, to get a phone call in between - to get as much as possible, and milk and milk and milk!



No, it's not like that! We must give, we must give to our spiritual master. It's what we give that is the key to the relationship. We must give ourselves wholeheartedly and then whatever comes in return, we accept. And then we are able to appreciate it, then if we have given ourselves in surrender and in service as much as we can, then we can also have the eyes to see the value of what comes in between. And then we have the eyes, strength, insight and the intelligence to take advantage of the mercy we are getting. Otherwise if we simply try to take and take and still not be satisfied - 'I'm just not getting enough! I'm not getting enough mercy! I'm not getting enough association! How can I be expected to carry on like this?'

No, that is the neophyte stage. That should not exist after the vows; that may exist before the vows. After the vows that should not exist anymore. After the vows one has to go to a level of maturity in the relationship and become a servant and give and be grateful for what comes....



Speaking— an adventure!



When you speak, you go from one thing into another and it's like an adventure! When we are speaking about Krsna consciousness it's like an adventure because you don't always know where you wind up!



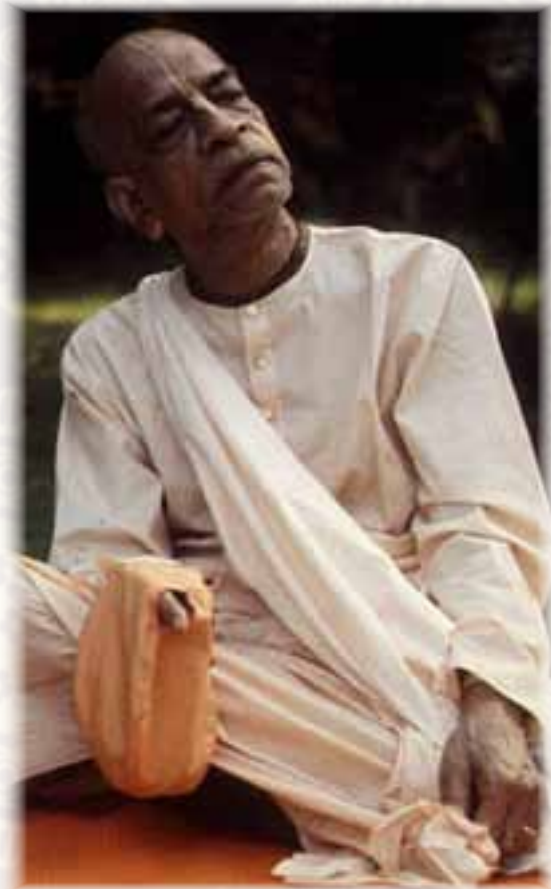
Don't just follow the mind

In spiritual life we don't just follow the mind. Not every time when the mind tells us, 'This is good!' that we do it. In spiritual life we think about it, 'Is this really good? Is this really going to be good in the long term?' If not, forget it!





Here our happiness Lies...



Taking shelter means, there where we rest our faith and faith is where we think our happiness can be found. Ananda mayo bhyasat (Vedanta Sutra 1.1.12), the living being by nature is pleasure seeking. Therefore, wherever we think that this pleasure or happiness can be attained, our faith will be invested and that's where we will put our energy, and attachment will develop. And thus we enter into all kinds of relationships with these varieties of form, taste, touch, sound and smell.

But the fact of the matter is that real happiness is found only in Krsna and therefore we take shelter of the holy name because that is how we can access Krsna immediately. Wherever we are in any condition of life, Krsna is always available to us, very quickly by chanting His name.



Loving Krsna

Loving Krsna comes from seeing how Krsna is full of love. One cannot love a stone, that is not possible. One cannot love a piece of ice - maybe in the summer for a little while, but not for very long. Love is brought out in the heart by kindness and mercy. When there is kindness, when there is mercy, when there is great consideration, then love awakens in the heart. So therefore the devotee sees all the noble, merciful and kind qualities in Krsna everywhere, in His creation, in the total cosmic plan.





Our everything



Behind the vows is the spiritual master, who plays a big part, because in that relationship we can find love, we can find strength, we can find inspiration...we can find so much, if we invest in it! So we must invest in it and be grateful in whatever we get in return. When one is relating to a spiritual master, one has to invest in the relationship as much as one can and you never know what may come in return. 'After we've slaved...he didn't even smile at me- not even a smile!' And one has to be grateful, 'God, we have to be grateful! One has to be appreciative, 'God! We've slaved for one month and we have to be appreciative? Not a word of thanks! God! You wouldn't do that to your dog! My God! What kind of person is this!'

We must serve, we must give everything- selflessly. And whatever comes, we must be grateful and whatever doesn't come, we also accept and wait patiently. And then whatever mercy comes we will accept it- not as something ordinary. Whatever attention, whatever way it comes we never accept it as ordinary.

One has to tell the mind, because the mind tends to take it ordinary at times but we have to tell our mind, 'No! This is not ordinary! This is valuable!' But if we invest in this relationship then it becomes a great source of strength, then it becomes a great inspiration in our spiritual life. And in fact, we realise that at one point, it's our only means to Krsna...it's our everything!



Making that special endeavour...

We cannot be here on automatic pilot; we must capture Krsna by making a special sacrifice. Then when we have captured Krsna, we see that one cannot keep Krsna. Mother Yasoda captured Krsna and Krsna was not only bound by Mother Yasoda's ropes but Krsna was bound by Mother Yasoda's love. But when Krsna was 11 years old, Akrura came and he took Krsna away from Vrndavana. And from that day on they lived in separation and all the residents from Vrndavana, no matter what they did, could not capture Krsna because it's not automatic. And Krsna was driving them mad - mad in separation! Mad in their attachment to Him! So one has to earn Krsna's favor again and again. This is an important point and therefore, again and again we are trying. But still, Krsna is such that whatever service is rendered to Him, He will never forget. So if we render this service in the month of Kartik, Krsna will not forget...





anxiety, anxiety, anxiety...

Our nature is to be in anxiety. That is material existence. This is the place of anxiety- always in anxiety about something, about, 'Is it going to work out? Is it not working out? It doesn't look like it's working out? And what now? What will I do and how will I deal with this? And what can I do now to save the day and save the situation?' Anxiety, anxiety, anxiety! 'It's not working...oh no! It looks bad.... help! What can I do?' Anxiety, anxiety... 'I hope, I really hope that it's going to work. I've invested a lot of energy into it and I really hope it's going to work. Yes, yes it is happening and I hope that nothing bad would happen and I have horses' hooves and rabbit tails and fingers crossed and everything that brings luck, luck, luck. Lucky, lucky, I do puja, I burn incense, I burn lamps because anything can happen at any moment!!! And I'm in total anxiety!!!'

No, not required, because actually Krsna is protecting. Raksisyatiti visvaso (Hari-bhakti-vilasa 11.676), knowing that Krsna will protect us, being very sure. That means no more anxiety. It means accepting, 'all right, now I've taken up spiritual life I'm no longer just under the law of karma. Now Krsna has personally taken charge of my life. Therefore now I don't have to worry. Now I know that everything is in the perfect hands of the all-merciful, perfect Supreme Personality of Godhead. So what can go wrong? Nothing can go wrong!'

Although sometimes it looks like it's wrong, yes it does. Then we have to remind ourselves, then we have to tell this

mind, 'Dear mind, we don't overdo it...' Like a child; children over- react and they cry for no real reason. And we tell them, 'No, it's all right, there's nothing wrong. Everything is fine.' And still they don't believe it. So the mind is like that also, getting all worked up and we are used to this. We are conditioned by this. We must recognise this in ourselves, this tendency that our mind is very childish.





ow can one remain

always enthusiastic?



By everyday starting this process of sravanam kirtanam visnoh smaranam, by everyday again hearing about Krsna. We have to hear about Krsna and then we have to chant the glories of Krsna so that we can remember Krsna because when we remember Krsna, then we'll see things as they are and then we'll be enthusiastic. But when we don't hear, when we never hear about Krsna, and when we chant miserly, just the very minimum, '16 rounds...finished! And not one mantra more...not one more! Not one more... Hare

Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama
Rama Rama, Hare Hare...4 more to go...3 more to go, 2 more
to go, 1 more to go...zero...aaaah! Relief!

Miserly! When we hear and chant then we remember and
then enthusiasm will come. So we're always eager to be with
those who are into hearing and chanting; we're looking for
devotees who are into hearing and chanting. Ah yes, let's do
some hearing and chanting...what shall we do? Well, how
about some hearing and chanting? It's raining today, what
are we going to do? Let's have hearing and chanting! The
sun is shining, and what are we going to do? Let's have some
hearing and chanting!

And yes, this is what we do- hearing and chanting! Hearing
and chanting all the time as much as possible because then
we will always be enthusiastic- always.

Lava-matra sadhu-sange sarva-siddhi haya (Cc. Madhya-lila
22.54), it is said that it takes just a moment, just a moment
to hear the truth. Then suddenly it can penetrate the heart in
one blow and we'll suddenly realise that, 'my problem is that
there is not enough hearing and chanting. That's why I'm
not enthusiastic! This is it, that's it! That's it...' bang!
Lightning bolts! Struck by thunder! 'Finally I understand...
that's it! Not enough hearing and chanting and not enough
remembering of Krsna.'



ry for an

extraordinary day

Many times we are speaking about pure devotional service and it feels so far away from our condition but for us it is our goal, a goal that we are meditating upon every day. In the morning when we rise we meditate upon this goal and that we will try to do better than yesterday.



he beginning of

a new life...

Initiation in one sense is a beginning. It is the beginning of making a very serious commitment because at the time of initiation we are committing ourselves to try and become a pure devotee of Krsna...Let us then take advantage and take it in our heart that we take initiation to make a real change in our life.





Without the spiritual master...

The only thing that can save us from our madness is by taking shelter of the spiritual master. Without the spiritual master we are like a ship without a rudder on the waves of the ocean of nescience and the three modes of material nature will just take us here and there.





regular means daily

How sincere are we really? That is the question. We should not so easily accept that we are sincere but rather we should see that we fall short in sincerity and that we should deepen our sincerity. In other words we should increase our commitment because sincerity is measured in the commitment that we make, in sadhana and in



service. It is that to which we must come to. Our Krsna consciousness is measured in what sacrifices we are ready to make for Krsna. We must make some sacrifice- not in the mode of passion, but a sacrifice in the mode of goodness, which means a lasting sacrifice. Not that one day we get up at one 'o clock and the next day we get up at nine 'o clock! Not that one day we chant 64 rounds and the next day we chant 4 rounds! No, no, we must make a commitment. Krsna is asking for this, sankhya-purvaka-nama-gana-natibhih (Sad-Gosvami-astaka 6); He wants us to chant a fixed number of rounds- not just as we feel. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura said that when we touch our beads, then we touch the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya! Isn't that nice? I like that, myself! By touching our beads, we touch the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya! So that is quite a deep statement. It is said by touching the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya, there is mercy obviously because He is the most magnanimous incarnation. So we must understand really how much

benefit is there in the chanting, that we must do it. But the mind says, 'Oh! So difficult! Oh! Other interests...other things to do.' And we are controlled by the mind. Thus we are not so sincere, we can see that. But we can strengthen ourselves by regular hearing and chanting and associating with devotees. That is really what we need to do. Regular means daily.



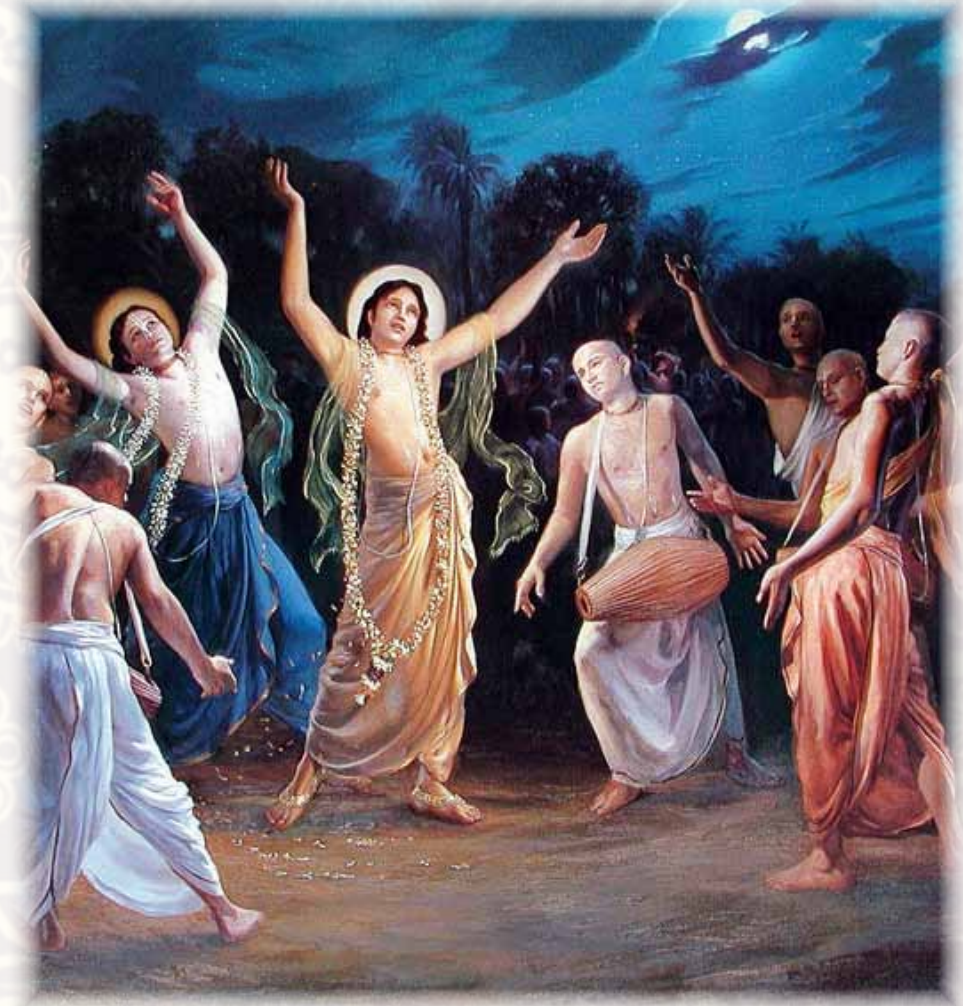
Upholding these vows

When we live with these vows in Krsna consciousness then these vows are in the centre of our spiritual life. They are like a central pole which is fixed there and we walk around these vows and we sort of always lean on these vows; it's sort of home base that we return to. And we have to do something to uphold these vows. This is our system. For that we have a relationship with a spiritual master who gives us enthusiasm, who gives us example, who gives us advice, he protects us... for that we have devotees, temples, prasadam...we have so many things! We have a vision, we have a goal- devotees have to go back to Godhead. We must keep in mind that whatever we have in mind, all right, have a nice time- but let's go back to Godhead...



The perfect process

The wealth of the spiritual world is that everyone in great love and ecstasy is chanting the names of Krsna and then taking prasadam. And we're doing the same! Thus I could see that the process and the goal are the same - Lord Caitanya gave us the perfect process!





et's do it

If we want to go fast, if we really want to go quickly to Krsna, then we must fill the maximum amount of time, we must use the maximum amount of our energy simply for glorifying Krsna. That can be done in many ways - it can be done by energy, can be done by possessions, can be done by intelligence, can be done by wit -but somehow or other, we must always glorify Krsna.



*adjusting to the desire
of the spiritual master*

Srila Prabhupada often said that one doesn't require to be a big scholar; one should simply cent per cent surrender to the order of the spiritual master...We have no other choice and therefore we have to deeply meditate on how to become a better servant of the spiritual master. It's not just a matter of doing nice things, trying to do your best- no. Servant means that one has to adjust to the will of the spiritual master. We can have our own idea on 'how I am going to be a good devotee' and we can have our own projection of the role of a good devotee and then we can go play the pure devotee profile. And whatever we've learnt from scripture about the pure devotee, we just try and act it out! And then we think that we are a good disciple! No, because the spiritual master may want something else for us...



Pushed along the waves

Prabhupada said that if one can simply read one verse a day, then all perfection can be attained. Even if one reads one line of a verse everyday, perfection can be attained. Even if one reads one word, just one word a day. And we go, 'One word a day? So much!' Have we already read one word in the Bhagavad Gita today? Somehow or the other that is difficult... We simply allow ourselves to be pushed along by the waves of material existence. We just go along with it, we go along with wherever the waves push us, whatever happens during the day we go along with it. But we are not really investing in spiritual life...





Let's add to the pleasure

We are just tiny little sparks of Krsna's energy, but we can also add to that unlimited reservoir of pleasure, and that's what Krsna wants from us. Let's add to the pleasure.



The one thing we must do

It is Krsna who gives us the reward in our practice in bhakti yoga. It is Krsna, Krsna and only Krsna! It's not us who are just doing but we must try to do something very nice for Krsna. We must try that. It is the one thing we must do...



Do I have to do all

the work?

Our problem is not that the chanting doesn't work. Our problem is that we don't work when it comes to chanting. Our problem is that we think, 'Phhheeww, do I really have to lift my hand? And put it all the way inside that bead bag. These beads are very heavy! Then do I have to do all that work? And move my fingers on these beads? It's tiring! I really have to do all that? Better I take a little rest first so that I will have some energy. Oops, it's already prasadam time!'

In this way, the rounds will remain for the late night. It's that time that we chant. Maybe, with one finger on the

keyboard of the computer and a few rounds while driving. Then a few rounds while shopping, and the rest of the rounds in front of the TV. Like that we somehow or other faithfully everyday chant our 16 rounds for the pleasure of the Lord. 'My dear Krsna this is my offering to you and I'm doing it with love and devotion.'





Let's go to the other dimension

When we begin to glorify Krsna, then we are acting on the pure spiritual platform. Anything to do with the glorification of Krsna is actually awakening the soul from its slumber here in the embodied stage. And gradually, when the soul becomes completely awakened, it becomes completely blissful and becomes completely alive...so therefore we must chant Hare Krsna to take us to that other dimension.





Opening up the Lotus



These rituals of initiation are meant to be a blessing and that is it. We should always look to take advantage of this blessing. They are like seeds that we put in the ground and from this seed our bhakti should really grow now. Just like at the time of initiation, one receives a lotus flower but the lotus flower is closed and one has to open the leaves. When we go to work, to open up its leaves, to use it for pure devotional service in all kinds of ways- use it to learn the science of devotional service, use it to chant the holy name with quality, use it to make Krsna consciousness our first priority in life, and still do our material duties as nice as possible as we did it before, but our interest has shifted- then we can gradually open this lotus until it leads to deep and mature Krsna consciousness, where we develop deep attachment to Krsna. And gradually our love for Krsna develops. And as it does, shoo! Krsna consciousness becomes the most wonderful thing in the world...!



Surrender means now

Surrender, Srila Prabhupada said, means to follow all the rules and regulations- even the small ones! That is surrender. It means to give up our own ideas. Surrender means that we stop thinking of what I want for my life. Our whole life we've developed the idea, 'this is what I want, this is what I desire...' now, forget it! Just now- not tomorrow? No now. 'Now? After the class?' No, NOW! 'After 5 minutes?' No, no, NOW! Now! 'Right now?' Right now! This very moment, forget it, forget. This is surrender. Surrender doesn't mean tomorrow; 'tomorrow I will surrender.' No, no surrender is from moment to moment. Surrender means in the now, surrender means in the present, surrender means it has to be done now. When we say, 'I'll surrender tomorrow' it means, 'I will start



meditating on it and I hope maybe tomorrow I'll be that far,' No, just do it! Get the T-shirt and just do it! Just don't think about it...surrender is something one does now. It is about doing the right thing right now.



azy mind

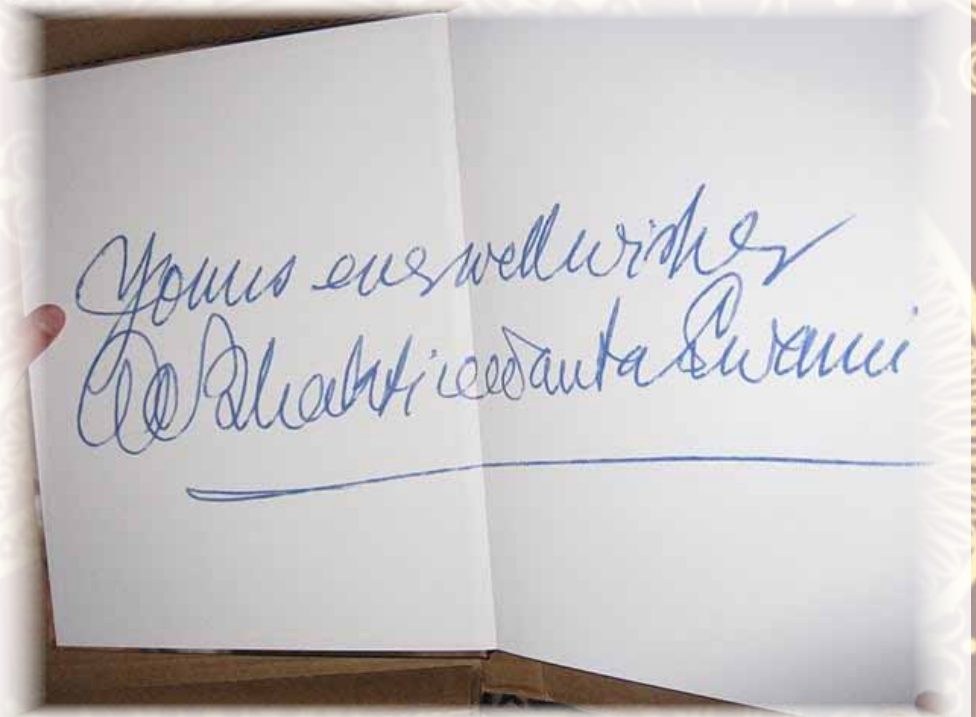
We have to always be strict with our lazy mind, because our mind says, 'Well, you know...' and says, 'well, you can't be fanatic!' which translates in, 'oh well, let's just be lazy' actually. So the tendency to be a little lazy about standards and rules is very strong in all of us and we should never think that that will not happen; that will happen in spiritual life, that laziness comes out.





our ever well wisher

It was Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura who first signed his letters with, 'Your Ever Well-Wisher' and coined that English phrase. And it was Srila Prabhupada who made this phrase the very core of the relationship between him and his disciples and therefore we are also taking it at times and say, 'Your Ever Well-Wisher' because that is the fact, that is the relationship. Just like a parent with his child, looking down so lovingly at his little boy, full of affection- his ever well-wisher...!





e are all mad

How can we stop being mad? It's difficult for all of us to not listen to our mind, not listen to our senses- it's difficult. So we have to train ourselves, 'I am the servant of my spiritual master. You rascal, you are the servant of your spiritual master.' You tell yourself all the time, everyday, 100's of times, 'Do what your spiritual master wants. Don't do anything... even if you want to do it very much, don't do it without blessings. At least that...' And even to always approach the spiritual master, 'Can you please bless this? Can you please bless that? Can I do this? Can I do that? Do I have your blessings for this? Do I have your blessings for that?' then, even that's not so good. Better still is to just ask, 'is there anything I can do? What would you like me to do?' But don't worry, we are all mad! So Prabhupada knew that very well, you know. When Prabhupada started preaching he knew that it was a circus! He knew it very well! He knew that all these people were like really not all the way there! But somehow or other he worked around it and tolerated it. In that way you just have to hang in there, that is the thing- HANG IN THERE! So to some extent we have to control our madness; we cannot allow our madness to take us away from the devotees, that is too much! Then we take it too far. But take shelter of guru, take shelter of vaisnavas, don't make independent decisions- independent decisions cause suffering...





ou might just miss it

Tribhuvanatha said that Prabhupada, during a lecture in England suddenly said; “Krsna consciousness is so simple you might just miss it.”



et's go

Our real focus is just to get out of here, from this material world, and go back to Godhead...





Even Krsna cannot break it

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura said, “I will hear from that person, who has bound Krsna with such a strong bond of love in his heart, that even Krsna Himself cannot break it.” Let’s fix ourselves in commitment to a principle, let’s fix ourselves in some service, let’s fix ourselves in commitment to chanting Hare Krsna and then maintain it.... and then fix ourselves in more of the same and more and more...and never take a step backwards. Just follow in the footsteps of the great devotees, gopi-bhartuh pada-kamalayor dasa-dasanudasah (Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Padyavali 74). Then one day, we will obtain that unbreakable love...





urtle lane and fast lane



Some years ago in Germany, they had a sign on the autobahn, where there is no speed limit, that said, “Turtles to the Right” with a picture of a whole line of turtles walking. Then in the middle lane there’s a medium speed and in the fast lane there’s unlimited speed

but all the turtles to the right. So in the sankirtana movement of Lord Caitanya, there also are different lanes and many of us may be in the turtle lane! What to do, right?

If you then look at Rupa Gosvami, Sanatana Gosvami, Srinivasa Acarya they are in the fast lane and it’s just inconceivable – ‘whoosh!’ They flash their lights and they don’t eat, they don’t sleep, they just fly by and we are looking like... ‘how is this all possible? This is inconceivable!’

So in this way we are just struggling a bit but we do our best. Our best is to be faithful, faithful in chanting and then we come together and have these kirtana gatherings and tank up and get some energy. We will walk away from here with something- with some strength, some energy to apply ourselves once again and then in the end we are very optimistic because we know that there is the mercy of Srila Prabhupada. That mercy of Srila Prabhupada extends even further than what Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu brought. It said Lord Nityananda made a channel to make Krsna prema descend into this world and then Prabhupada brought it to the modern world in the West.

Then Prabhupada, on the strength of his service- on the strength of his extraordinary service- attracts Krsna and by attracting Krsna he can even attract the mercy of Krsna upon those who are not very pure and serious at all. And that is our hope, that simply by taking shelter of Srila Prabhupada, Krsna's mercy will be attracted.



Life without devotional service

Sometimes we are not happy in our life because our life is void, it is empty. We haven't filled our lives with blessings and service. If we fill our life with blessings and service then there is no question of emptiness, loneliness or unhappiness. Then it doesn't exist. It all comes from emptiness and that emptiness is simply due to the fact that we haven't filled our life with devotional service.





The biggest challenge

There are many challenges that we are facing in spiritual life and if we ask ourselves, 'What is the biggest challenge that we are facing in spiritual life?'

If you really think about it, most people would say, 'Material desires! If only I could become free from my material desires then it would be easy...I could fly in Krsna consciousness because I have a taste for Krsna consciousness. But, I have these material desires and if only I was free from these material desires...'

Therefore it seems that the biggest obstacle in spiritual life is our material desires.

But that is not at all the conclusion of the scriptures. The conclusion of the scriptures has a totally different angle on the matter. The scriptures are saying that the biggest problem is not material desires because material desires are doomed, they can't survive.

So, the one thing that is a problem in spiritual life are offences - offences made against the Name and against the vaisnavas. Disrespect for the Name, disrespect for the vaisnavas, disrespect for the Deities and disrespect for the scriptures. This kind of attitude can cause a delay in spiritual progress. Therefore this is our biggest problem.

This kind of attitude can bring out a tax of material desires which otherwise will automatically diminish. Therefore, this attitude of serving the vaisnavas and treating the vaisnavas with the greatest respect is actually the solution in our spiritual life. It will take us to the point where we will begin to experience taste.



One day I will walk



Knowledge can increase our eagerness in devotional service. The more knowledge we develop about the potency of the Holy Name, the potency of devotional service, the more eager we will be to perform and to take advantage. Then we realize that it is not impossible. Although emotionally at present spiritual life seems too difficult, 'It is nice, it is good, it is the truth, but it is too difficult.'

This tendency to think that, 'Yes I believe in Krsna consciousness, I believe in bhakti yoga, I believe that it is the truth but I don't believe in myself, I don't believe that I can do it' - this is the more subtle form of faithlessness.

People that say, 'I don't have faith in devotional service,' we can say that is unfortunate but if we just study the arguments and logic then many of us can accept it - Why would God

not be ever fresh? Why would He not be all powerful? Why would He not be all knowing? Why would He not be all famous? Why would He not be a person? When everywhere there is a person and everywhere there is a personality then why not Him, if He is the origin. Shouldn't the creation reflect the nature of the creator logically speaking?

Like that one can hear the logical argument and accept the system of belief of Krsna consciousness and it makes sense and it gives a complete picture but then what?

We have no self confidence, 'I have never been successful in my life,' 'I know my limitations, I just can't do it, I have already tried and I couldn't do it. I tried following the four regulative principles but I couldn't do it and therefore it is too difficult for me so maybe I go and do hatha yoga.'

We are totally missing the point that success is not measured whether we can follow the four regulative principles or not. In the pre stages we may not be able to follow the four regulative principles and that doesn't matter. We simply keep trying. Prabhupada often said that failure is the pillar of success just like it is natural for a child to walk but it takes a certain amount of effort. Like in the beginning the child will fall and fall and fall again and again and again until one day he will walk.



smash!

Karma can never be an obstruction to bhakti. There is no question that anyone's karma is so bad that it would become an obstacle to bhakti. There is no question. So even for ourselves, we cannot use that excuse. On Krsna's lotus feet we see that there are different symbols. And one of the symbols found on Krsna's lotus feet is a thunderbolt. The thunderbolt is there just to establish that even if you have a mountain of karma or in other words, if your karma is so bad that it is insurmountable, that thunderbolt on Krsna's lotus feet can just smash it to pieces!





n expansion of the SPIRITUAL WORLD



Externally, the arrangements that we make can have a great effect on our consciousness.

Pictures of Vrindavana, nice pictures around us- yes, it helps a lot! It reminds us of Krsna. And not just

a picture...’okay, Maharaja said we have to have a picture of Vrindavana, so we to goggle, type in Vrindavana - 20 pictures come up and download one and put it up...’ No! The picture that you collect has to be a picture that really strikes you! Put that on your wall. Put on something that really speaks to you. Put on something that overwhelms you again and again. Put that on your wall! Make that wall an extraordinary wall - the spiritual world! In this way we surround with spiritual impressions and make our home into a holy place. In the same way we are listening to transcendental music, something that touches our heart. all these things that speak to our heart create an external world that will support us, that will inspire us...it helps a lot and we need it!



ood on all sides!

It doesn't matter where you start reading about Krsna because it is like something sweet, like ice cream- it tastes good on all sides! It doesn't matter whether you start in the front or the back or on top, or nibble off the sides- it's good from all sides! In the same way when we start hearing about Krsna, it's good from all sides!



For many years Kadamba Kanana Swami has been inspiring devotees from around the world with his deep understanding and practical application of the teachings of Srila Prabhupada. The KKS Blog features many of Maharaja's quotes and spiritual travel experiences around the world. Visit the Blog for your daily spiritual dose of nectar:



www.kksblog.com



About Kadamba

Kanana Swami

As a youthful seeker, Kadamba Kanana Swami journeyed high in the Himalayan mountains in search of India's deep spiritual wealth. There he was inspired by Srila Prabhupada's Bhagavad Gita and became convinced by his words. Thus he began the path of Krsna consciousness in the mystical holy land of Vrndavana. Often known as the lap of Krsna, Vrndavana was where he felt at home.

Kadamba Kanana Swami had never personally met Srila Prabhupada having joined in 1978. Yet he strongly desired to be a dedicated servant in his mission. He spent many years serving in the holy dham in positions both menial and managerial. In Sridham Mayapur, he saw to the completion of the pushpa samadhi of Srila Prabhupada. Later he served as the temple president of the Krishna Balarama temple in Vrndavana for five years.

On the order of his spiritual master, Sripad Jayadvaita Swami, he received sannyasa in 1997. He now serves as an initiating spiritual master and travels and preaches widely.

Once Kadamba Kanana Swami was asked about his credentials as a writer. He replied, "Whatever I am today, I have no qualification. I am not a devotee of Krsna but I can't forget Him because I am simply made of His mercy." Within this book are the words that describe that mercy.



Acknowledgements

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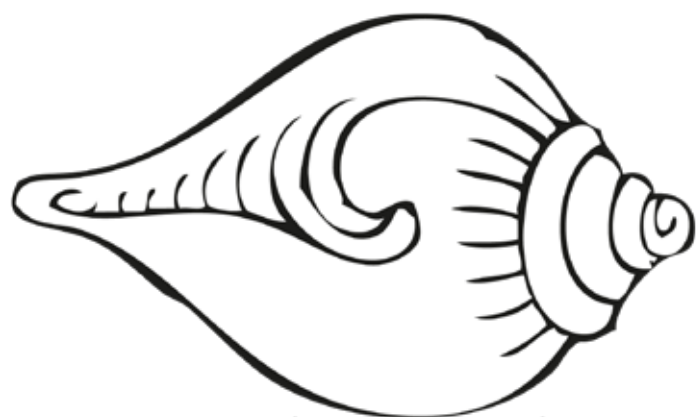
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A decorative border with intricate floral and scrollwork patterns in a dark brown color, framing the central text.

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama
Rama Rama Hare Hare



śabda

Books