



Divine Instructions





*grantha-dwārā vaiṣṇava-janer kṛpā pāi
vaiṣṇava-kṛpāy kṛṣṇa-lābha hoy bhāi*

“If all the devotees thus appreciate this book, then I will receive the causeless mercy that they will shower upon me. Oh brothers! And by the mercy of all these Vaiṣṇavas, I will attain devotion to the Supreme Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa.”

(From Sri Sri Kalyāna Kalpa-taru
by Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura)



śrī śrī guru-gaurāṅga jayate



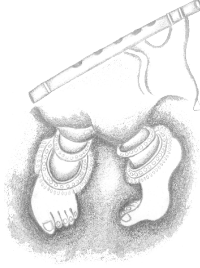
Divine Instructions

GOPAL KRISHNA GOSWAMI



Back to culture





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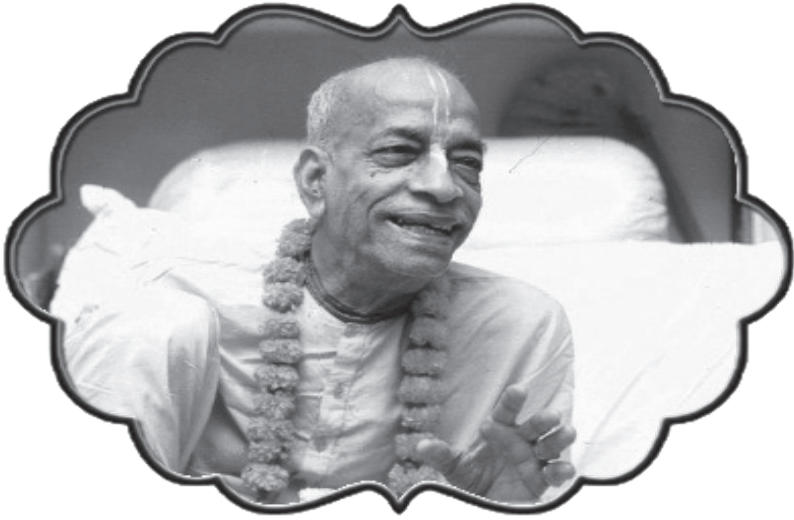
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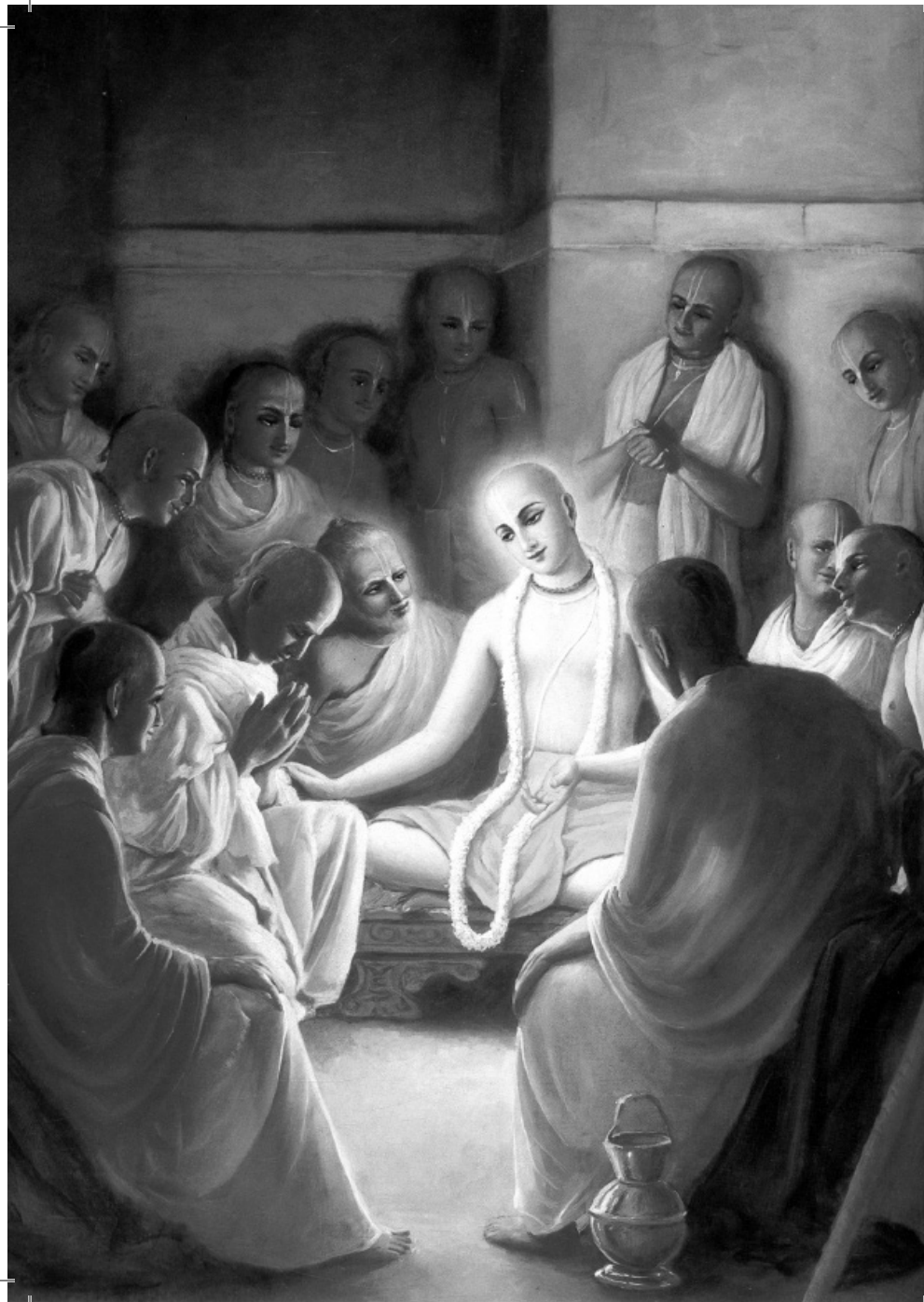
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Dedication



HIS DIVINE GRACE A. C. BHAKTIVEDĀNTA SWĀMI PRABHUPĀDA
FOUNDER-ĀCĀRYA OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS





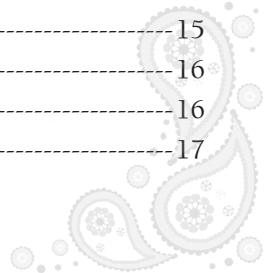
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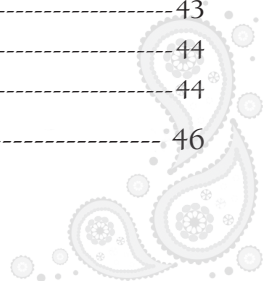
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Introduction



*guru-mukha-padma-vākya, cittete koriyā aikya,
āra nā koriho mane āśā |
śrī-guru-caraṇe rati, ei se uttama-gati,
je prasāde pūre sarva āśā ||*

"Make the teachings from the lotus mouth of the spiritual master one with your heart, and do not desire anything else. Attachment to the lotus feet of the spiritual master is the best means of spiritual advancement. By his mercy all desires for spiritual perfection are fulfilled."

'Divine Instructions' is a step to make available the teachings from the lotus mouth of our beloved spiritual master Śrīla Gopāl Kṛṣṇa Goswāmī Mahārāja. This book is a compilation of nectarean instructions from His Holiness to his disciples, which appeared in various letters. The instructions have been organized alphabetically into various topics for easy reference.

It is to be noted that what Māhārāja says in a letter may be specific to the time he wrote and the person to whom it was sent. In this regard care has been taken, while editing, not to touch upon any personal instructions.

With this book, we hope to bring out the teachings that we all need and aspire to deepen our sincere prayers and service at his lotus feet.

We pray for Guru Māhārāja's mercy, without which the purport of these teachings would never enter our hearts.

From the core of my heart I am thankful to Sitarani Devi Dāsi & Sammohini Rupā Devi Dāsi who took their precious time to edit this book. I am also grateful to His Grace Vrindāvan Vinod Dāsa who has designed a beautiful cover for this book. My special thanks to Bhaktin Divya Rādhikā who has whole heartedly drawn the sketches which we used at various places in this book. Also I would like to thank Anuttam Hari Dāsa for arranging the design and layout.

We pray to Śrīla Prabhupāda, Srī Srī Nitāi Gaur Sundar, and our worshipable deities Srī Srī Rādhā Pārthasārathī to bless them all with pure devotion. Also, finding ourselves unqualified to take up this task, I beg the blessings of all the vaiṣnavas in the service to Guru and Gaurāṅga. Desiring the mercy of all the Vaiṣnavas.

Sarvasākṣī Dāsa

Lord Balarāma Appearance,

Śrī Śrī Radha Pārthsarathi Mandir,

New Delhi, India.

09 August 2006



Message to Disciples



Dear Disciples,

Please accept my blessings. All Glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I am writing this message in response to Sarva Sakshi Dasa's request. I understand that he is bringing out a small publication for disciples.

I would like to see all of you make spiritual advancement. All of you are very fortunate as you have come in contact with Srila Prabhupada's movement. Srila Prabhupada presented the absolute truth in a very simple manner and because of his purity conditioned souls all over the world are embracing Krishna consciousness. We get information about Prabhupada's instructions from his books, that is - both letters and conversations.

Attentive chanting, regular reading of Prabhupada's books, associating with devotees and rendering practical devotional service are the key elements for advancing spiritually.

Since Lord is non-different from His holy name, we should be very attentive while chanting the holy name. I want to request that you try to complete your rounds in the morning hours.

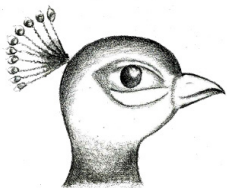
The more attention you pay to your chanting, the faster will you gain freedom from the effects of illusory energy.

Read Prabhupada's books regularly and try to attend Sunday program every week in your area. Attend the Sunday feast

lecture and if possible at least one Bhagavatam lecture a week. Be anxious to do practical service also. Start nama-hatta preaching programs or take part in the other nama-hatta programs. Human life is very rare and can end at any time. Serve enthusiastically and experience Krishna conscious happiness.

Your ever well-wisher in service to Srila Prabhupada,
Gopal Krishna Goswami
Sri Sri Radha Parthasarthi Mandir
New Delhi, August 2006





Instructions on Various Topics



THE MATERIAL WORLD

In the material world, we are all in a dangerous condition. Therefore, one has to be very careful on the spiritual path. King Bharata had renounced his wealth, beautiful wives, children, but unfortunately he got attached to a deer and he then had to take his birth as a deer. The point is that we should not be distracted from the spiritual path.

A WEAPON TO CAPTURE KṚṢṆA

Kṛṣṇa has blessed you with the right wisdom in regards to your relationship with the Spiritual Master and the Supreme Lord. You are a very sincere devotee and therefore Kṛṣṇa is giving you more and more responsibilities. The BBT service is very important. Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted all his books to be translated in all the major languages of the world. Therefore, you should enthusiastically execute this service.

Vaisnavas are by nature very kind and it is only a Vaisnava who can appreciate the kindness of other Vaisnavas. You can associate with me by following my instructions and by regularly writing to me. The moment one forgets Kṛṣṇa, māya will be there. Just like the moment you leave the doors of your house open thieves will come in. The best solution is to be always engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Besides chanting and reading, one should also do some practical service. You are engaged very nicely in something that was very dear to Śrīla Prabhupāda then I would be very happy about it. Always remain humble and chant the holy name.



Humility is a weapon by which you can capture Kṛṣṇa. As you are engaged in translation work, you are automatically reading the scriptures and expanding your spiritual knowledge. With this spiritual knowledge, your intelligence will get sharper and sharper and eventually it will become so sharp that the moment *māya* tries to strike, it will be cut to pieces.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's books are meant for the entire humanity. Śrīla Prabhupāda said that his books will be read for the next ten thousand years.

You should be respectful to all Vaisnavas and all spiritual masters. A disciple no doubt has a special relationship with his spiritual master, but at the same time is respectful to all senior Vaisnavas. It should not be that one gives respect to his guru and disrespects other spiritually advanced entities.

ALWAYS BE ENTHUSIASTIC

If all the devotees work together with enthusiasm, then the preaching in your center will expand.

By Lord Caitanya's mercy, a blind man can see, a deaf man can hear, and a lame man can cross mountains. In addition to chanting and reading, one should be engaged in regular service. Hence be determined to stay on the spiritual path and always be enthusiastic in the service that is assigned to you.



ATTENTIVE CHANTING

I was very happy to read about your promise to stay fixed at the lotus feet of the spiritual master even if it is difficult. This is the proper understanding that a devotee should maintain. Kṛṣṇa promises that, one who remembers Him and follows His path, will definitely return to His Abode. A devotee is often tested by the Lord, in the *Bhāgavatam* you read how Dhruva Māhārāj was tested by Narada Munī. If you are determined to follow the spiritual master, then you will never get disturbed and never deviate. When a devotee is in difficulty, he just meditates more deeply on the spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa and he does not get discouraged. The strength to become determined and steady will come from attentive chanting of the holy names of Kṛṣṇa. Hence please chant your rounds attentively and read at least one hour a day. Also visit the temple as often as you can.

BE TOLERANT

Of course, other Vaisnavas should recognize your Vaisnava qualities and respect you, but if they do not, just be tolerant and tolerate the insults etc. By being tolerant you will always be victorious.

You can increase your devotional activities by getting attached to the instructions of the spiritual master. Somehow or other you should chant your rounds attentively and read the books without fail.



BE SERIOUS AND DETERMINED

I was happy to know that you are anxious to avoid offenses while chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. There are three stages of chanting the *mantra* - chanting with offenses, cleansing stage and finally the pure stage which means chanting without any offense. The highest goal is to come to the third stage and I am happy that you are aspiring for that. It is important to be attentive while chanting the *mantra*.

I am happy to know that you are following the course on Śrīla Prabhupāda lilamarta. Please understand the life of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Prabhupāda was very anxious that the people of Indian origin take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness seriously. Prabhupāda felt sorry that Indians are forgetting the real heritage and just trying to imitate the West. In addition to your *karmī* duties, please also become Kṛṣṇa conscious and that will make you happy. Never forget that material arrangements can never give real happiness. You are an intelligent girl and therefore you have come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, so please be serious and determined.

BECOME IDEAL GRHASTHA PREACHER

It is only if one has firm faith in the spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa that all the purports of the *Vedas* will be revealed. Please always maintain strong faith and Kṛṣṇa will save you from the most difficult situations.



Now that you are initiated and few other members of the congregation are also initiated, all of you should work together and attract the congregation to follow the spiritual standards that Śrīla Prabhupāda has established. Also, America has the most opportunities and most of the Indians there are so bewildered by the illusory energy that they cannot even think of self realization. The congregation visiting the temple is fortunate, but they need to be preached to; and the best preachers are *gṛhasthas* like you. The reason is simple; if the congregation sees there are householders chanting 16 rounds attentively, following the spiritual standards, plus maintaining their family and doing jobs, then they are also inspired to follow their example. Fortunately, your wife is also committed to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and both of you should go out for few days or week to preach to other householders. Śrīla Prabhupāda had great desire to see Indians rise up to their spiritual heritage. Unfortunately our Indian devotees, even after coming to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, develop the desire to make money and get distracted from their full time commitment to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I will be very grateful if all of you initiated *gṛhasthas* help the local temple. By preaching, every thing will be possible. Do not underestimate how Kṛṣṇa's mercy can flow. All the Lord wants is our determination and sincerity. Please chant your rounds attentively and spend as much time as you can in reading and preaching.



BOOK DISTRIBUTION

I was happy to read that you are participating in the book distribution marathon. Śrīla Prabhupāda considered book distribution to be the most important activity. A Vaisnava must develop the desire to preach. A Vaisnava cannot be complacent when he sees that others are rotting in the material world. The spirit of preaching must be cultivated. By distributing these books we give Śrīla Prabhupāda a chance to preach to the ignorant masses. People are appreciating Śrīla Prabhupāda's books all over the world very much. Never in history has humanity seen such a powerful presentation on the science of God.

The determination to stick to book distribution will come from attentive chanting and hearing. Because the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is spiritual, the chanting never becomes tiresome. In the material world, we are simply chewing the chewed-throwing it away, picking it up and then chewing it again.

BRAHMACARI LIFE

I was very happy to read about your determination to remain a brahmacāri. Brahmacāri life is definitely auspicious for spiritual advancement, so please remain determined. I also appreciate your determination to attend *mangala-arati* every day. You are not the only one whose mind gets disturbed. Attentive chanting, reading and execution of service will help you to control the turbulent mind.



DEMIGODS ARE SUBORDINATE

Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the demigods are subordinate to the Supreme God. Just like by watering the root of the tree, all the branches get nourished, similarly, by worshiping Kṛṣṇa, the demigods are also satisfied. Therefore, the *Vedas* conclude that one should focus on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the source of real pleasure and happiness. The disciple associates with the spiritual master by following his instructions. Always chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *maha-mantra*. Think of Kṛṣṇa and serve Kṛṣṇa and this will take you back to Godhead.

DETERMINATION

You appear to be a very sincere devotee and I hope that you will always remain determined on the spiritual path. Determination is very necessary for spiritual advancement and even if there are difficulties, which are bound to happen, do not withdraw yourself from devotional service. Always maintain a humble attitude and be ready to offer respect to others. This way you will never go wrong.

DO NOT BE IDLE

We can develop love for Kṛṣṇa by adopting the process given by great acaryas. The process is very simple. Chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, read, associate with devotees and serve as much as possible.



Please keep yourself engaged in devotional activities and do not be idle even for a minute.

ENDLESS TUNNEL

Śrīla Prabhupāda's books should be read and re-read. Śrīla Prabhupāda's books are like endless tunnels where the end can never be seen. You are fortunate that you have a place for reading. One of the biggest problems is that most devotees don't have a place for reading. Just like the tongue is attracted to *prasada*, the ears should get attracted to the holy name and transcendental messages of the Lord. I always encourage disciples to remain committed to Deity worship.

EXPENSES TO THE MINIMUM

I am happy that you are doing *prasada* distribution and there are ten families that are actively practicing in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. At the present moment, you should keep your expenses to the minimum. As things expand, then you can get a bigger facility. Always chant your rounds and be attentive in executing devotional service.

Householder situation has been compared to a dark well by Prahlada Maharaja. One has to be very careful in the *Gṛhasṭha-asrama*, if one wishes to go back to Godhead. Please always chant your rounds attentively and also read Prabhupāda's books. The more you read the sharper your intelligence will become and you will become spiritually stronger.



FAITH AND ATTENTION

It is impossible to make spiritual advancement unless we chant regularly with full faith and attention. If you have too much work, then reduce the work so that your chanting of 16 rounds must be executed without fail. If you want to develop love of God, then you have to make an effort. I hope you will take my advice seriously and adjust your schedule so that you can chant your rounds attentively.

You have my blessings for your spiritual advancement. I know you are sincere and if you maintain strong faith in the spiritual master, then you will definitely make spiritual advancement.

FAITH IN SPIRITUAL MASTER

I am glad that you enjoyed the Vyāsa-pūjā celebration and also your trip to India. Faith in the spiritual master is essential to make spiritual advancement. It is revealed in the scriptures that one who has faith in Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master, will all the purports of the *Vedas* be revealed. Unfortunately, today even after accepting initiation people do not understand the Vedic message and find fault with the spiritual master. I know that you and your wife are very sincere and therefore Kṛṣṇa is guiding you on the right path. You are also well versed in the scriptures due to your upbringing.

You should now start lecturing. You can lecture in the *sat-sangas* at devotee homes plus even in public programs.



In many parts of the world, *grhasthas* living outside are very active preachers. The secret is to repeat what one has heard from the spiritual master. Preaching is the life and soul of a devotee. Preaching increases our dependence on Kṛṣṇa and brings us closer to the mission of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Preachers should be spiritually strong, determined, enthusiastic and at the same time patient and gentle. We have to preach from the heart. This means that we should be convinced that without Kṛṣṇa there is no hope. You have the fortune of having been exposed to Lord Caitanya's teachings from a young age. Please understand the mission of Caitanya Mahaprabhu which is not to make people Hindus, but to teach them selfless service to the Lord. Please be determined and please help expand the preaching.

FIRST CLASS GRHASTHA

I have just received your letter and the invitation to your wedding. I hope both of you will live happily as husband and wife and serve the Supreme Lord in all situations. There are some books on *grhastha* life which are based on quotes about *grhasthas* and I would advice you both to read Śrīla Prabhupāda's advice to *grhasthas*.

Please chant your rounds regularly and visit the temple as often as you can. Remain engaged in devotional service—that is more important. Try to write to me once a month even if you don't receive my replies.



Regarding Brahmin initiation, as I said earlier, I am not opposed in principle, but it is advisable if you wait for some time. I was very happy to read that you have a desire to serve the Deities and cook and I am sure Kṛṣṇa will arrange for you to take Brahmin initiation at the right time.

Act like a first class *grhastha* and work for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa. Please be convinced that nothing except serving Kṛṣṇa will please you.

FOOD FOR LIFE

Food for life programme is an activity that is very important in *Kaliyuga*. This program is generating a lot of public response. I will be happy if you are actively engaged in devotional service. An idle brain is a devil's workshop. Keep yourself fully absorbed in devotional activities and you will always be happy.

GIVE UP SELFISH MENTALITY

If responsible and serious devotees like you do not show a good example then how will the other junior devotees advance? When we come to ISKCON, we have to give up our selfish mentality in favour of doing what is best for the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Your goal in life should be to serve as directed by your guru, not that you force your guru to approve your staying in a particular location.



GOAL OF LIFE

I understand your anxiety because of your situation at home. It is not uncommon what the devotees have to go through. You should never forget that the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is in your heart and he will protect and guide according to your desire. Please remain steady and have full faith that the holy name is the most valuable asset and pleasing Kṛṣṇa is the real goal of life. At times Kṛṣṇa will test you. I am pleased to know that your sister is also very much inspired to stay on the spiritual path and I pray that both of you make spiritual advancement so that the goal of life is realized. In addition to chanting and reading, you should visit the temple whenever you can.

GRHASTHA LIFE

In Kṛṣṇa conscious marriages the husband and wife live together with the purpose of pleasing Kṛṣṇa, not their senses. The *grhasthas* are allowed to have children with the understanding that the children will be used to serve the Supreme Lord. Illicit sex life is clearly prohibited in Kṛṣṇa conscious householder situation also. Then it is not *grhastha* life, but it will become *grhamedhi* life. The four regulative principles must be followed by everyone whether one is in a *brahmacārī* asrama or in a householder situation.



GURUKULA

The *Gurukula* is an institution where the future devotees of ISKCON are being trained. If the children are trained from a young age in spiritual life, then they grow up in good consciousness. Unfortunately, most of the children today are being neglected by their parents and they are growing up with materialistic propensities.

HOW TO ADVANCE SPIRITUALLY

I understand that you are not living in the temple anymore but staying at home. Wherever you may be, please practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This is most important. This human form of life is meant to achieve love of God.

I hope that you are visiting the temple regularly. Are you able to chant your rounds regularly at home? Without chanting and reading plus the association of devotees, it is impossible to make spiritual advancement. You should not only chant but you should make sure that the quality of your chanting is good. Please try to do some practical service for the temple. You know how to type plus you have so many other skills. Rupa Goswāmī has advised that without determination, it is impossible to make spiritual advancement. You must visit either the farm or Phoenix temple regularly.

Please be fully convinced that all the desires will be satisfied once you become Kṛṣṇa conscious.



HOW TO REPEL MĀYA

Please always be humble and Kṛṣṇa will bless you with more and more service. I was very pleased to read that you are working as a treasurer, temple commander and pujari. As treasurer, you should make sure that Kṛṣṇa's Lakshmi is not wasted. And as a pujari you should make sure that you do your service with punctuality and maintain cleanliness. One can repel māya only by absorption in devotional activities. Māya's business is always to distract you from the spiritual path, so always be alert.

HUMILITY MEANS

I have told you many times that you should not work so hard that you have no time left for your spiritual activities. The most important thing in life is to execute spiritual practices. On the devotional path everybody has the freedom to follow the instructions of the guru, to reject or to partially follow. Just like the individual has the freedom whether or not to accept Kṛṣṇa's teachings.

In the Bhagavad-Gita Kṛṣṇa clearly states that He reciprocates based on one's surrender. Caitanya Mahāprabhu has advised that one should practice extreme humility if one wants to make spiritual advancement. Humility means to generally accept himself to be a fool and to beg for spiritual guidance from guru, sādhu and sāstra.



ILLUSORY ENERGY

I understood that you are suffering from high blood pressure. This body will always be a source of trouble. There is some reason or other to remind us that we cannot be happy in material life. The illusory energy makes us believe that there's nothing but happiness in this material world.

I hope that your centre has developed nicely and that new people are being attracted to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The key to success for spiritual life comes from execution of devotional practices. You must chant your rounds without fail, attentively and also read for one hour a day at least. Reading and chanting is the key to spiritual advancement.

KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS

In your detailed letter, you have raised many important points and I appreciate your frankness. In the material world, confusion often takes place. The confusion is whether to take to the spiritual path or material path. You are not the first devotee who is thinking like this. Due to past association one thinks that family association and a professional career is paramount and spiritual life can be practiced on the side. Also, your observation about the *grhasthas* who are just collecting for themselves is also right. It is natural for a young devotee to be confused when the example displayed by senior members is not impressive. However, there are many senior devotees who are also setting very good examples. As



the *grhasthas* have to maintain themselves, they have to do business or develop some sort of independent income.

You have correctly stated, "The real problem is becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious". My request is that you just concentrate on developing your Kṛṣṇa consciousness by the means that Śrīla Prabhupāda has given us and gradually your attachment to Kṛṣṇa will increase. Be determined as Rupa Goswāmī has advised us.

Do not get influenced by illusory concepts of happiness. Every girl eventually has to get married, in philosophy, and at the appropriate time Kṛṣṇa makes the arrangement. Please be patient and things will work out. A devotee has firm faith that "whatever Kṛṣṇa does, He does for my benefit". you are intelligent and sincere, so just keep marching ahead.

LIVING IN AN ASRAMA

The real guideline is that we should look at the good qualities of all other Vaisnavas. By living with devotees, one is helped by the spiritual association. No doubt, there is an inconvenience in living in an asrama, but there is also much to gain on the positive side.

MATERIAL ABILITY

I have read your two articles in the BTG and I want to congratulate you for your efforts. You parents have given you good education and I am very pleased at the way you



and your brother are developing. Please keep writing. Kṛṣṇa explains that he is the source of all abilities. You have this material ability to write so please keep developing it. It will be nice if you can write regularly for BTG and IWR.

MATERIAL ATTACHMENT

I will be happy if you are engaged in something practical. Your material attachment will go away as you get more absorbed in serving the mission of the Lord.

MATERIAL WORLD

My advice to you is to visit the temple as often as you can. Please do not get discouraged but rather use the difficult position to become more dependent on Kṛṣṇa. You should read the prayers of Queen Kunti from Sṛīmad-Bhagavatam 1st Canto. In the material world, there will always be difficulties and disturbances. Attentive chanting and reading plus association of devotees give us the strength to remember Kṛṣṇa and to face the onslaughts of the illusory energy.

MEDICINE AND DIET

I was happy to read that you are distributing prasādam in the café. In spiritual advancement, we need both, medicine and diet. Medicine for spiritual advancement is chanting and reading and the diet is service. By serving



Kṛṣṇa practically, we are able to demonstrate our love for the Lord. There are many people in India who just chant but do not serve or offer results of their efforts. Please keep serving and keep yourself busy. An idle brain is a devil's workshop.

MY ADVICE

I will be very happy to guide you spiritually. My advice is that you should be very serious about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. After going through many millions of births and deaths, the fortunate soul is guided on the path of devotional service. Now the important thing is to remain on this path. Many times we take to spiritual life enthusiastically and after some time we become weak and slackened. If one is alert in executing Kṛṣṇa conscious practices, then there will be no question of ever becoming weak. Please keep yourself actively engaged in devotional activities. Prabhupādā wanted us to be fully engaged so there is no time for māya. "An idle brain is devil's workshop". Hence please do not be idle even for a minute.

NATURE OF MATERIAL WORLD

Your letter was very frank and honest and I appreciate this frankness. The material world has nothing pleasurable. Materialists think that they can squeeze real happiness out of this material arrangement, but there is no happiness in material arrangement. You have realized this and therefore



you are executing the process of *sadhana-bhakti* even at home. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is such a nice process that it can be practiced in any situation. Of course, staying in the temple is more conducive as devotee association enables one to get up early in the morning, follow the process of *sadhana-bhakti* and execute service. However, as you have desired to stay at home there is no harm. Since you are also chanting and executing the other devotional practices.

Please keep reading the *Srīmad-Bhagavatam*. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and *Bhagavad-gita* have the capacity to destroy all material attachments. Kṛṣṇa Book will enable you to understand how great the Lord is. Just knowing that God is great is not enough. We must know how great Kṛṣṇa is. When Kṛṣṇa appeared on this planet, He performed so many superhuman activities which cannot be equaled by anyone ever.

Anybody who has an independent income must use a certain percentage for serving the Supreme Lord; otherwise one has to take on all the reactions.

OBSTACLES FROM RELATIVES

You are not the only one who had to face difficulties and obstacles from relatives. In the *Bhagavatam*, you read about Prahlada Maharaja, about how he had to go through so many obstacles to maintain his faith in Kṛṣṇa. Please be determined and by the mercy of Guru, *Sadhu* and Kṛṣṇa, all obstacles will be overcome.



ONE MEDICINE FOR ALL

I am very happy to know that you are enjoying your service in the *Gurukula*. The *Gurukula* is a very important service because the future leaders of ISKCON are being groomed. It is nice that the *Gurukula* children are also doing book distribution once a week. From book distribution, one is able to develop preaching spirit and understanding the importance of being compassionate.

I have no doubt that if you keep following the process seriously, then you will definitely be able to free yourself from the *anarthas*. The *anarthas* are a problem for everyone. Hence there is only one medicine for all the diseased individuals. Through the process of *bhajana kriya*, these *anarthas* can be destroyed.

OUR CONSTITUTIONAL POSITION

I am pleased to know that your son is also progressing spiritually and is helping you in book distribution efforts. You have named him Kṛṣṇa dasa so now you should make sure that he becomes a Kṛṣṇa dasa in this life. The problem is that we do not understand our constitutional position which is to be a Kṛṣṇa dasa. Instead we begin to identify with the illusory energy and instead of being a servant we act like a master.

People all over the world are suffering due to lack of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Please become an instrument of Lord Caitanya and do this honourable service of saving the conditioned souls from the material existence.



PLEASE BE DETERMINED

Your goal should be to follow in the footsteps of those who have successfully executed devotional service rather than meditate on those who left due to the influence of the illusory energy. I am inviting all disciples to chant their rounds very attentively and read also. I know that you are a sincere devotee and please be determined to never deviate from the auspicious path of devotional service. This determination will please the spiritual master, Prabhupāda and Kṛṣṇa.

PRACTICE PURITY

In order to succeed in any service, we must practice purity. Purity comes by attentively chanting our rounds and reading Prabhupāda's books. Caitanya Mahāprabhu explains that the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* cleanses the heart of all the dust accumulated from time immemorial.

PRASĀDAM DISTRIBUTION

There is no harm if you are worshiping Gaura-Nitāi Deities at home. In fact, *grhasthas* are recommended to worship deities at home. You can offer *mangala arati* in the mornings and two more *aratis* during the day if possible. You may offer fruits and water to the deities before the *aratis*.

I understand you are now engaged in prasādam distribution. *Prasādam* distribution is no doubt also important, especially in *Kaliyuga*. Prabhupāda said that in



Kaliyuga, you win people through the stomach. However, you should not give up book distribution activities and you must think of a way where along with *prasādam* distribution, you can also distribute books.

Please follow rigid *sāadhanā* at home. Without a strong *sadhanā*, it is impossible to make spiritual advancement. Please read every day and associate with the devotees. Work cooperatively with the authorities and be determined to push on Kṛṣṇa Consciousness.

PREACH BY EXAMPLE

You have to set an ideal example. Our philosophy is to preach by example. If we want the other devotees to follow a certain standard, then we have to show by example how this standard has to be maintained. Because you are a sincere and determined devotee, Kṛṣṇa is gradually giving you more and more responsibility. When you are discharging a position of responsibility, please do not get discouraged if there is some criticism. There will be criticism, the moment you are given responsibility some people will like you and some people won't, but you should not be concerned by this. Your principle should be to remain strict to the spiritual practices and to act on the instructions of the superiors in a humble Vaisnava manner.

Be light and friendly with all the Vaishnavas, beg them to do service, win their cooperation with love and exemplary behaviour. By chanting your rounds attentively



and reading Prabhupāda's books, purity will develop and purity will inspire you to become more and more enthusiastic.

Your first duty is to go Back to Godhead. Therefore, as Rupa Goswāmī has said nothing should be done to compromise this principle goal. However, as you are a householder with a wife and child, you should also take care of them, but in a Kṛṣṇa conscious manner. For the relatives to understand the importance of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is hard, especially when they are not practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness themselves.

PREACH TO THE INTELLECTUAL CIRCLES

You have a sincere desire to preach and Kṛṣṇa is giving you more and more opportunities. It is very important to preach to the intellectual circles in your country. This will help establish the credibility of our movement. Just be determined, patient and humble. And repeat what you have heard from your spiritual master and Śrīla Prabhupāda. This way you will never go wrong.

PREACHER

Kṛṣṇa declares in the 18th chapter that of all types of devotees, the most dear to Him is the preacher who canvasses on His behalf. Therefore please try your best and Kṛṣṇa will help.



PRINCIPLE OF PURITY

I appreciate very much the mood of humility that you have communicated in your letter. Caitanya Mahaprabhu has advised that in order to be able to chant the holy name constantly, one must act with the following understanding;

*tṛṇād api sunīcena taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*

I was very happy to hear that you like to associate with devotees who are dedicated to book distribution. One must be convinced about the value of book distribution and then it will be easy to dedicate oneself to this service.

Yes, by pleasing the spiritual master one obtains the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa assures in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that for the sincere devotees, He preserves what they have and makes up for what they lack. So keep endeavouring and gradually your results will get better.

Spiritual strength comes from following the principles of purity. Therefore please practice the principles of purity and you will gradually become more and more determined to pursue spiritual life.

PURIFYING & CAPABLE

Please dedicate yourself to Lord Caitanya's book distribution process and help to reclaim the conditioned souls and send them back to Godhead. This activity is very



purifying and capable of making devotees very dear to the Lord.

READ THE SCRIPTURES

The important thing is to read the scriptures. It doesn't really matter whether you read Prabhupāda's books alone or with your husband. Reading will give you spiritual strength plus it will make your intelligence sharper. Since your husband is also Kṛṣṇa Conscious, both of you must cooperate in pushing Lord Caitanya's movement. Lord Caitanya wanted to reclaim all the conditioned souls. Hence we have to work to realize that desire of the Lord. You and your husband are good book distributors. Try your best to get people to read these books. By preaching, everybody benefits. You should also chant your rounds attentively and associate with devotees as without devotees association, it is difficult to have spiritual development.

REAL PATH

The whole world is starving for want of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Unless people take responsibility, how will Kṛṣṇa consciousness spread?

People do not know the real path of happiness. The real path of happiness is to serve the Supreme Lord. Prabhupāda has very kindly translated so many books and when we read these books we develop a sound understanding of how to perfect this human life. Please go on organizing as many



programs as you can. Work cooperatively with the local leaders and you will always be happy.

I was happy to note that your daughter is also trying to engage in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The parents definitely have a powerful influence on the children. Because you are Kṛṣṇa conscious, your daughter is also being influenced. Therefore, Prahalada Maharaja has said that from a young age the children must be trained in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

REAL PLEASURE

The important point is to realize that if you are not engaged positively, then the senses will be engaged negatively. Please be convinced that there is no real pleasure in the material world; and if one desires real pleasure, then one must surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Lord Caitanya has given us a very easy process of surrender which is to chant the holy names of Kṛṣṇa. Please chant attentively and be determined to stay on the spiritual path.

REAL VRINDAVANA

I was very happy to read of your desire to meet in Vṛndavana. Real Vṛndavana is to always remember Kṛṣṇa.

RE - READ BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ

I was very pleased of your strong desire to become Kṛṣṇa conscious. Kṛṣṇa explains in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that after many millions of births and deaths, one who is a fortunate



soul realizes that Kṛṣṇa is the cause of all causes. Kṛṣṇa's desire can be understood by reading the *Bhagavad-gītā*. After the Lord had departed from the planet, Arjuna derived great pleasure in meditating on the instructions of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Read and re-read the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Every verse of the *Bhagavad-gita* has such a powerful message and you must very attentively read Prabhupāda's purports because in the purports, Prabhupāda has very nicely explained the real philosophy. I am glad that you are also chanting 16 rounds daily. Chanting is a cry for the Supreme father. Scriptures advice that chanting must be very attentive and we should always endeavour to avoid the ten offenses.

SPIRIT OF PREACHING

The spirit of preaching must always be there. Otherwise a devotee becomes dry. Preaching is what sustains our spiritual life. Please always remain focused on the spiritual path. In *Kaliyuga* we are all brought up in a contaminated society. Therefore, even after we come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness it takes time to rectify our weakness. With determination, however, the impossible becomes possible. We should intelligently analyze that material attachment will only give us pain later. In the story of King Citraketu, we see that the King was very attached to his son, but when he lost his son he became very sad. Therefore, any material relationship that gives you pleasure today will make you cry tomorrow. Hence we



should focus our love on God, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa.

I pray that you will always stay on this path of service and keep spitting at thoughts of sense enjoyment. Live peacefully and work cooperatively.

SPIRITUAL BOMBS

Thank you for dedicating yourself for the book distribution process. Why is book distribution so important? Why is it that Prabhupāda emphasized this service again and again? It is the desire of the Lord that all conditioned souls should be brought back to Him. They can only be brought back if somebody preaches to them about the foolishness of pursuing a materialistic way of life. Śrīla Prabhupāda's books are spiritual bombs. They can destroy the illusion that bewilders us to identify with the body. Kṛṣṇa consciousness means to get off the bodily platform and come to the spiritual platform of understanding that I am the eternal servant of God. Even if you have to struggle with your mind and the senses to do the service, please do not be discouraged. As you surrender to Guru and Kṛṣṇa, the Lord will bless you with more and more strength.

SPIRITUAL LIFE

I understand from your letter that you are a very sincere candidate, searching for spiritual life. The desire to develop spiritual life is obtained after millions of births and deaths.



Since now that desire is developing, please make sure that nothing is done to destroy this desire. Caitanya Mahaprabhu has advised that this desire can be increased by attentive chanting and hearing and by spiritual association.

SPIRITUAL MASTER

Of course, I do remember you. Spiritual master never forgets the disciple. But I do not know if you remember the instructions that your guru has given to you. Are you chanting your 16 rounds regularly without fail, reading Prabhupāda's books and following the four regulative principles? Let me know. Some time you should try and come to see me also. I am regularly in Delhi, so for you to see me is not so difficult, but you must be determined.

SPIRITUAL PATH

You have a good handwriting and also you write well. I hope that you will remain determined on the spiritual path and be determined to succeed spiritually. In the *Caitanya Caritamṛta* it is stated that pure devotional service cannot be had even by pious activities in hundreds and thousands of lives. It can only be attained by an intense greed to obtain it. Always chant your rounds and be greedy to become Kṛṣṇa conscious.

SPIRITUAL PATH OR DESTRUCTIVE PATH

The important point is to understand that sense enjoyment cannot give happiness. The focus of attention should always



be Kṛṣṇa and not any other person. In Kṛṣṇa consciousness, ladies have to get married but you should be patient for the right opportunity to present itself. If you constantly meditate on men, then your spiritual life will be destroyed. Do not think that marriage will solve your problems. Problems will only be solved once you understand that you have to be engaged in service to Kṛṣṇa. The process of getting attached to Kṛṣṇa is very simple - chant your rounds attentively, read Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and engage in practical service. Preaching constantly reminds one of the philosophy. Therefore preach as much as you can. If you do not take advice of guru, *sādhū* and Kṛṣṇa, then your mind will gradually drag you towards hell. You have to make the choice, whether you want to take the spiritual path or the destructive path.

SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

Please be determined to succeed spiritually because unless you are determined, spiritual progress will be very difficult. There will always be family problems. Rupa Goswāmī has advised that we should accept every thing favorable for spiritual progress and reject every thing unfavorable.

STAUNCH DEVOTEE

Since you have made the decision to get married, my only advise is that you should make the best use of bad bargain. I am not opposed to devotees entering grhastha asrama. I would like you to keep serving Srila Prabhupads's movement



even as a *grhastha*. I have seen many devotees get married and gradually they become independent in devotional service. You have always been a good devotee and I would like you to remain a staunch devotee all your life.

STRICT SADHANA

Strict *sāadhanā* is very necessary if you want to make spiritual advancement. Rupa Goswāmī has explained this in detail in '*Nectar of Devotion*'. The morning program is a great help in regulating the mind and the senses and engaging the mind in the service of the Lord.

SUFFERING HUMANITY

Please be determined and go on distributing Prabhupāda's books. These books are the only hope for the suffering humanity. Prabhupāda told us that these books will be read for the next 10,000 years. All problems of the world can be solved if we take shelter of the messages in these books.

SURRENDER

I was happy to know of your travel schedule and the fact that you are concentrating on book distribution. Book distributors should be determined to distribute as many books as one can and convince as many individuals as one can. Unfortunately, most people may not show interest, but with the sincere devotee and the mercy of the guru and Kṛṣṇa, the insincere can become sincere or rather the blind can be given vision. You should view



every conditioned soul as part and parcel of the Supreme Lord's family.

I sincerely hope that you will remain dedicated to this mission. By surrendering to Kṛṣṇa, everything will be easy. Our surrender and love of Kṛṣṇa is developed by following the disciplic succession. Kṛṣṇa would like to see all conditioned souls return to Him. You and your party are being used as agents to bring the conditioned souls back.

You should not be looking forward to being respected. Our problem is that we all expect respect and when we do not get it then we feel hurt.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

Please take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness very seriously. The opportunity to become Kṛṣṇa conscious is possible after millions of births. Now that you have come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, please take the process seriously and do not in anyway get distracted from the process of devotional service. I understand that you are staying at home and practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You have mentioned that you want to become my disciple. The rule in ISKCON is that one should be chanting 16 rounds regularly for atleast six months. If you are following the spiritual standards for a period of time, then you may approach the local temple president. Once you pass the test, then I will give you the permission to chant my *pranama mantra*.



It would definitely be best if you could move to the temple. However, if you feel that it will be difficult for you to adjust in the temple environment, then you may stay at home. Please visit the temple as often as you can. Though living in the temple forces you to make certain adjustments and also go through certain inconveniences, it is definitely beneficial as it forces you to become more strict and serious about practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Thank you very much for reflecting a surrendered attitude in your letter. Only by having complete faith in guru and Kṛṣṇa, can you make spiritual advancement and understand the meaning of the *Vedas*.

THE BEST SOLUTION

After many millions of births and deaths a fortunate soul gets the opportunity to go on *parikrama* with other Vaisnavas. This body will always give trouble, so please do not get disturbed. The best solution is to become Kṛṣṇa conscious. Rupa Goswāmī advised us that as we execute devotional service our *anarthas* will go down and our faith and determination to chant the holy name and to serve guru and Kṛṣṇa will increase.

I hope that you are able to chant your rounds plus read regularly. The more you read about Prabhupāda the more you will realize how great he was.



THE BEST WAY TO PREACH

Lord Caitanya's teachings have been the only hope for the suffering humanity. Please dedicate yourself to book distribution. The best way to preach is by example. Therefore please maintain a strong spiritual character and protect the principle of purity. This will give me great pleasure.

THE BUSINESS OF DISCIPLE

I am glad that you understand your relationship with the spiritual master. The relationship with the spiritual master is the foundation for a strong spiritual life. The business of the spiritual master is to preach by example and to hand down the instructions that he has received from the Guru Parampara. The business of the disciple is to realize that he is fool no.1, hence he should accept the guidelines of the spiritual master for spiritual advancement. You are a sincere disciple and I know that you are trying your best.

Due to Lord Caitanya's causeless mercy the process of self realization has been made very simple in this age. Somehow or other we should get attached to the chanting of the holy names of the Lord. The Lord's holy name is called *sravana-mangala*. This means that one receives everything auspicious simply by hearing the holy name. In the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, the holy name is described as *punya-sravana-kirtana*. It is a pious act simply to chant and hear all about the Lord. The chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *maha-mantra*



is the greatest benediction. Please make it a point to chant your rounds everyday and make sure that you are chanting them attentively. In order to realize the full advantage of the chanting of the holy name, it is important that we chant attentively and avoid the ten offenses. Not only is the chanter of the *maha-mantra* purified, but the hearts of anyone who happens to hear the transcendental vibration is also cleansed. As long as you chant and read Prabhupāda's books, your faith in the Kṛṣṇa conscious process will always be strong.

TEACHINGS OF THE GOSWĀMĪS

The six *Goswāmīs* are eternal associates of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. They are *manjaris* and they descended just to make Lord Caitanya's pastimes more nectarean. There are so many pastimes of the six *Goswāmīs*. I would recommend that you read this book called *Six Goswāmīs* by *Satyaraja*. You should meditate on the teachings of the *Goswāmīs*, their life style and their desire to enter into selfless devotional service. The *Goswāmīs* lived very simple, but at the same time built very opulent temples for the Lord in Vṛndavan. Narottam Dāsa Thākura says when will the day come when he will be able to read the books of these *Goswāmīs*.

Rupa Goswāmī has explained

*ādaḥ śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-
saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā
tato 'nārtha-nivṛttiḥ syāt
tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ
athāsaktis tato bhāvas*



*tataḥ premābhyudañcati
sādhakānām ayaṁ premṇaḥ
prādurbhāve bhavet kramaḥ*

In the beginning there must be faith. Then one becomes interested in associating with pure devotees. Thereafter, one is initiated by the spiritual master and executes the regulative principles under his order. Thus one is freed from all unwanted habits and becomes firmly fixed in devotional service. There after, one develops taste and attachment. This is the way of *sādhanā-bhakti*, the execution of devotional service according to the regulative principles. Gradually emotions intensify, and finally there is an awakening of love. This is the gradual development of love of Godhead for the devotee interested in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness.

Please always chant your rounds attentively and read at least one hour every day and serve enthusiastically.

THE IMPORTANT ACTIVITY

Book distribution is very purifying and an activity which is very pleasing to Śrīla Prabhupāda. I know that you are sincere and therefore, I want you to become determined to achieve the goal of life which is Kṛṣṇa *prema*. It does not matter whether one has a male body or a female body. The important thing is to engage in devotional service.



THE INTELLIGENCE

The intelligence is meant to control the mind. When intelligence controls the mind, then spiritual life is possible. If the material mind controls the intelligence, then spiritual life becomes difficult. We should not jump like monkeys. You know your problems, so why waste this valuable human life. Kṛṣṇa advises that we should make our mind our friend and not let it continue as our enemy. By attentively chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, reading and absorbing oneself in devotional activities, the turbulent mind will come under control.

THE PHILOSOPHY

You are a sincere soul, but you need to develop determination to control the mind. We have to accept Kṛṣṇa consciousness by understanding the philosophy and not sentimentally. You like to read Prabhupāda's books - that is very good. Keep chanting and reading, but at the same time you should also do some service. Also, when one is living in an *asrama*, one has to be very accommodating so that everyone can live together peacefully. Just absorb yourself more and more and gradually all the material problem will end.

THE PRINCIPLE INSTRUCTION

Your faith in the process of devotional service will develop as you execute devotional service. In English they say that practice makes a man perfect. Rupa Goswāmī has advised



that our faith gets consolidated and we come to the *nistha* stage by following the instructions of the spiritual master. The principle instruction of the spiritual master is to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* at least 16 rounds everyday day, to read Prabhupāda's books everyday at least for one hour and to engage in practical devotional service. You have mentioned that you are unable to remember Kṛṣṇa. Attentive chanting will enable you to meditate on the Lord. By chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, we are actually praying to the Supreme Lord to please engage us in devotional service.

THE REAL PROBLEM

You should make sure that your wife is also chanting her rounds regularly even though she had just had a baby. If the mother is determined then she can chant her rounds even though she has just had the baby. Yes, the effect of *Kaliyuga* is very strong and our only hope is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Gurukula is recommended but if this is not possible, then the child may be trained up spiritually at home. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa says that wherever your mind is at the moment of death that is where one will have to travel in the next life. Therefore the scriptures say that mind should be focused only on Kṛṣṇa and if one is thinking of Kṛṣṇa, then everyone will be satisfied including the family members, friends, etc. That is why Kṛṣṇa says "*man-mana bhava mad-bhakto*" - Always think of Me. I was glad to know that you are distributing Prabhupāda's books and preaching. I will



be very grateful if you could encourage my other disciples there to preach and not get entangled in material existence. Preaching is the source of great pleasure.

TOLERANCE

Keep chanting, reading and serving as directed by the temple president and you will never go wrong. On the devotional path there will be difficulties also, but please be resolute. Tolerance is must for spiritual advancement, both internal and external.

Internal tolerance refers to tolerating the agitation of the senses and external tolerance refers to tolerating the material difficulties. As you read, chant and serve, your tolerance will automatically be strengthened.

VAISNAVA OFFENCE

One should definitely be careful not to commit offenses: *Vaisnava-aparadha*. Of the ten offenses, the first offense is very important. All good assets can be destroyed by committing offenses, especially Vaisnava offense. Of course a devotee is very forgiving. Just like Haridasa Thakura was very forgiving. He forgave even those who tried to beat him to death. *Anarthas* are enemies of spiritual advancement. The solution is simple and you have heard this over and over again.



Question & Answer on

Guru Tattva



QUESTION & ANSWER ON GURU TATTVA

Can a guru reject a disciple?

Gopāl Kṛṣṇa Goswāmī: The guru is an ocean of mercy. 'Hari Bhakti Vilāsa' says, "*Kṛpā sindhu sa sampurnah*." We sing *śrī-guru karuṇā-sindhu*. Prabhupāda once said that he was 80% lenient. But in certain circumstance, the guru may reject a disciple. Srila Bhaktisiddhānta says, "A good preceptor does not accept anyone who is not prepared to submit himself freely. He is duty bound to renounce a disciple who is not sincerely willing to follow his instructions fully. If he accepts a disciple, who refuses to be wholly guided by him, he is doomed to fall from his spiritual status."

He was so much more strict, that, Prabhupāda once said that he would have never accepted any of his disciples. One may also imagine himself to be the disciple of a particular guru but one may have never been accepted by such guru or may have been rejected due to one's offenses.

There may also be a temporary rejection like in the case of Jiva Goswāmī having been rejected by Rupa Goswāmī for having slightly disrespected Vallabhacarya. It is said that it was his duty as a guru. However, after a short while he accepted him again. And Jiva Goswāmī is never criticized for not having done his duty as a disciple and having stood up to defend his guru's dignity.



Another point is that Sanatana Goswāmī played a part in Rupa Goswāmī's re-acceptance of Jiva Goswāmī. A similar case is Chota Haridasa. When Caitanya Mahāprabhu rejected him, all the vaiṣṇavas gave him support, pleaded to the Lord on his behalf. Same thing with Kāla Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, Caitanya Māhāprabhu's servant who had fallen down in South India with a *Bhattahari* woman. Mahāprabhu said that he did not want to deal with him anymore but the devotees gave him shelter and service. Only envious non-vaiṣṇavas rejoice when someone is rejected.

How does the guru accept prayers or offerings to his picture.

Gopāl Kṛṣṇa Goswāmī: The guru and the Supersoul are intimately connected. Indeed, a bona fide guru is the external manifestation of the supersoul. When he accepts disciples, the guru expands, as Kṛṣṇa expands as *caitya-guru*. That is how he is aware and accepts prayers and offerings. He is a transparent via medium, so prayers properly offered through him go to Kṛṣṇa. He is an authorized agent, a bona fide spiritual master is empowered to do that. Guru is not cheap.

What about if someone falls down after initiation?

Gopāl Kṛṣṇa Goswāmī: Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta says that, "initiation does not preclude the possibility of aversion to the non-spiritual state. If the disciple sins after initiation, he may fall into greater depths of degradation than the uninitiated.



But initiation changes the outlook of the disciple on life. Although even after initiation, temporary setbacks may occur, they don't ordinarily prevent the final deliverance. The faintest glimmering of the real knowledge of the Absolute has sufficient power to change radically and for good, the whole of our mental and physical constitution, and this glimmering is incapable of being totally extinguished except in extraordinary unfortunate cases."

What is guru *dakṣiṇā*?

Gopāl Kṛṣṇa Goswāmī: It is a token of thanks to the spiritual master for his mercy. What the guru wants, you should give, unhesitatingly. And what does he want? That we give up our enjoying mood, that from *guru bhogi* we become *guru sevī*.

Actually preaching is real guru *dakṣiṇā*. The only thing the guru asks from his disciple is that he practices himself and also teaches others. And one should not lose enthusiasm and become discouraged because the majority of people are not accepting the message of Godhead.

In fact, even when it is apparently the disciple who gives something to the guru, it is still the guru's mercy which manifests itself in his instruction that one can preach. The six enemies headed by lust don't desert the heart even if one is externally away from bad association. The type of opportunity to give up the bad association of



these six enemies that comes by preaching and practicing in allegiance to a vaisnava is not to be had by any other method. And by preaching linked with practice, not only one's benefit is achieved but others are benefited also and that pleases the Lord.

Does the guru always know what the disciple knows?

Gopāl Kṛṣṇa Goswāmī: Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "Kṛṣṇa knows your inner thoughts. Nothing is secret to Him. Do you think your guru cannot tell which disciple is cheating and which is not? How do you think you can avoid Paramatma witnessing all your activities and thoughts? Don't worry if guru knows or doesn't know everything about you, your thoughts, your deeds. You are supposed to express them, reveal them. If you cannot see him regularly, send him a regular report. Some devotees complain that they don't have much association with their guru but writing provides the opportunity to deeply meditate on the Gurudeva and one's commitment to him, in addition to receiving direct instructions in answer.

What type of question should one ask a guru?

Gopāl Kṛṣṇa Goswāmī: When you approach a *sādhū*, you should be in a disciple's mood. That's the proper way to approach, not a challenging mood or a mood to just check out the person. The proper attitude is to think that



unless proven to the contrary, he is a bona fide devotee. And if he is very elevated, if he is actually a *sādhū*, then one should behave practically like a disciple. That is the way recommended in *sāstra*. Then one can benefit from *sādhū-saṅga*.

Real *sādhū-saṅga* means to imbibe the mood of a *sādhū*, to surrender to his teachings, in the sense, throwing oneself towards Kṛṣṇa according to the method of surrender described by the *sādhū-guru*. You have to ask questions mainly pertaining to the level you are on. That is called relevant inquiry, pertinent questions. You may ask questions to satisfy your desire to understand things properly, clarify your understanding and confirm it, clear misconceptions and doubts.

In fact, there is only one question: How can we surrender and give up our mundane attraction? How can we attain the Absolute God who alone will make us fully happy? But only a surrendered disciple has the right to ask questions. Without surrendering to the guru, Kṛṣṇa *kathā* does not really enter the ears. One cannot understand Kṛṣṇa. No one gets direct mercy from Kṛṣṇa.

Only by full surrender in full faith to a worthy spiritual preceptor, can one receive mercy. It is undoubtedly Kṛṣṇa's mercy – the mercy comes from Him. But that mercy is received through the *sādhū-guru*. In the form of guru, Kṛṣṇa bestows His mercy, *sādhū-guru*, not imitation or



self-made guru, is *Kṛṣṇa Kṛpā Murti*, the very embodiment of Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

His mercy is very powerful. But one has to be very eager. One has to cry in his heart, begging Kṛṣṇa to appear as a *sādhū*. One has to approach in the proper way. Then he gets protection from *māya* and receives the real benefit of *sādhū-saṅga* which is Kṛṣṇa *saṅga*.

And when the guru leaves this world?

Gopāl Kṛṣṇa Goswāmī: Śrīla Prabhupāda says that the guru's order should become the life and soul of the disciple. One should pray that, "From now on, I am living on your orders. Let this be a true statement of all times." And one should take that opportunity to examine oneself, like one whose 'guru' has fallen down, thinking that my guide and support in life has been withdrawn. This is a test of my sincerity, my determination, my commitment. What I have received from my guru, how well did I receive it and understand it? Am I a real disciple or by name only? How much mundane contamination is there, mixed with the real thing? How much do *anarthas* still plague me? What is to be eliminated and what will be the best way to go about it?

And then one must not think that he can do it alone. Prabhupāda said that when the guru leaves, the disciple cries. He must cry for help. And Kṛṣṇa will supply help, in one form or another. Help will come as a person.



What prevents one from full surrender to the guru's feet?

Gopal Kṛṣṇa Goswāmī: Past *sukṛiti* enables one to surrender fully at once, otherwise it takes longer, its more gradual. But the *sādhū* creates *sukṛiti*. Prabhupāda said he had created his disciples' good fortune or piety; by hearing from a *sādhū* you earn *sukṛiti* even if you didn't have much previously. Hearing, *śravaṇam* is service. Then you can surrender more, then you develop more faith, then more surrender, doubts are eradicated. One doesn't surrender because one clings to material attachments, which are deeply rooted in the heart. Material desires are what keeps one from fully surrendering. That's duplicity, the deep rooted desire to enjoy separately from Kṛṣṇa. That means one's faith is still tender, *komala* 'śraddhā, not very strong. Therefore keep on hearing the most potent medicine of Hari-kathā from the right source.

You have to understand and accept that Śrī Guru is very dear to Kṛṣṇa. Everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa's property is entrusted to His dear servants as they alone know how to fully engage it in their master's service without tampering with it. Without realizing that, it is not possible to surrender. You cannot become Kṛṣṇa dāsa without becoming guru dāsa and you cannot become real guru dāsa if you don't see and accept that everything should be offered to him for utilization in Kṛṣṇa's *sewa*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Śrīla Gopāl Krishna Goswāmī was born in Delhi on Aug 14, 1944. He became an initiated disciple of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaṅgavēdānta Swāmī Prabhupāda, the Founder-Ācharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) in 1969 and accepted the renounced order of life, Sannyās in 1982.

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