

# *Spiritual Connections*



FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION

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# Spiritual Connections

Vol. 12

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**A MAGAZINE FOR THE DISCIPLES  
AND WELL-WISHERS OF  
HIS DIVINE GRACE  
BHAKTI CHARU SWAMI**

**FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION**

Address for correspondence:  
Manjari devi dasi, Spiritual Connections,  
P.O. Box 16146, Circus Avenue,  
Calcutta 700017

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# Contents

<b>Guru-maharaja's Personal Message .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Srila Prabhupada on Book Distribution .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>A selection of quotes from Srila Prabhupada Siksamrta.</i>	
<b>All glories to the Sankirtan Devotees! .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<i>H. H. Harikesa Swami's glorification of the sankirtan devotees.</i>	
<b>COM Questions and Answers on Book Distribution .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<i>Guru-maharaja's answers to questions by Haridas Thakura Das.</i>	
<b>Interview with Guru Maharaja .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<i>Guru-maharaja's involvement in translating and distributing books.</i>	
<b>A Letter to all Disciples for the Srila Prabhupada Marathon .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<i>Guru-maharaja's letter to his disciples for the 1994 marathon.</i>	
<b>How to Distribute Books .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<i>Practical instructions from ISKCON's expert book distributors.</i>	
<b>Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's Sankirtan Yajna .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<i>A class by Guru-maharaja on book distribution and preaching.</i>	
<b>Instructions to a Disciple on Distributing Books .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<i>A selection of quotes from letters to Muralidhara Das, a book distributor in Zurich.</i>	
<b>Servant of the Servant .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<i>Selections from this book by H. H. Tamal Krishna Goswami</i>	

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## Guru-maharaja's Personal Message

To my disciples and friends,

Spiritual knowledge descended from the spiritual sky when Krishna imparted that knowledge to Lord Brahma. Krishna gave him the Gayatri *mantra* and meditating upon Gayatri, knowledge of the spiritual reality dawned in Lord Brahma's heart. Since then, that knowledge has been flowing incessantly into this material world through the disciplic succession.

Until the age of *Kali*, this knowledge was transmitted through aural reception. Therefore, Vedic wisdom has two aspects, *sruti* and *smrti*, hearing and remembering. But hearing alone is not enough. It must also be retained in the memory otherwise it is useless. Before *Kali-yuga*, human beings, especially the *brahmanas*, had photographic memories. Just by hearing once, they could remember so there was no need of writing or printing books.

However, in *Kali-yuga*, due to excessive attachment to matter, people became '*sumanda-mataya*', or dull. What to speak of remembering, in this age spiritual concepts don't even enter into our memories unless it is forced. Therefore, Srila Vyasadeva, seeing the advent of *Kali-yuga* and its precarious condition, systematically presented Vedic wisdom, knowledge of the spiritual realm, in its written form.

Next came Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He enunciated the *yuga-dharma* (religious principles of the age) - *harinama sankirtana*. In this age, simply by chanting the holy

name of the Lord, one can go back to Godhead. However, no matter how simple the process is, for the atheistic people of this age, it is still difficult for them to accept it. Therefore, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu instructed Rupa Goswami and Sanatan Goswami to present a philosophical basis to Krishna consciousness.

The six Goswami's of Vrindavana, under the leadership of Sri Rupa and Sanatana, executed that mission most wonderfully:

*nana-sastra-vicaranaika-nipunau  
sad dharma-samsthapakau  
lokanam hita-karinau tri-bhuvane  
manyau saranyakarau  
radha-krishna-padaravinda-bhajana  
nandena mattalikai  
vande rupa-sanatanau raghau-yugau  
sri-jiva-gopalakau*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the six Goswamis, namely Sri Rupa Goswami, Sri Sanatana Goswami, Sri Raghunatha Bhatta Goswami, Sri Raghunatha dasa Goswami, Sri Jiva Goswami, and Sri Gopala Bhatta Goswami, who are very expert in scrutinizingly studying all the revealed scriptures with the aim of establishing eternal religious principles for the benefit of all human beings. Thus they are honored all over the three worlds, and they are worth taking shelter of because they are absorbed in the mood of the *gopis* and are engaged in the transcendental loving service of Radha and Krishna.

(verse 2, Sri Sri Sad-gosvamy-astaka by Srinivasa Acarya)

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's mission is to preach the glory of the holy name. And to spread this mission all over the world, He sent His most qualified general, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Being directly empowered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, His Divine Grace spread Krishna consciousness most effectively all over the world. If anyone wants to preach Krishna consciousness, they must follow in the footsteps of Srila Prabhupada who gave this very simple formula:

Preaching is the essence  
Books are the basis  
Purity is the force  
Utility is the principle.

Preaching is the essence of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's *sankirtana* movement and books are the basis. This is why Srila Prabhupada took so much trouble to translate so many volumes of books with his Bhaktivedanta purports and put so much emphasis on distribution of those books. Distributing Srila Prabhupada's books is the most bona fide process of spreading Krishna consciousness all over the world.

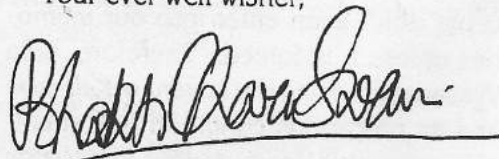
There are different types of devotees, first, second and third class. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu classified them according to their attachment to the holy name. They can also be classified according to their attachment to Srila Prabhupada's books. The greatest preacher, the first class devotee, is he who has a burning desire to make sure everyone reads Srila Prabhupada's books.

Please take up this mission very sincerely. Read Srila Prabhupada's books, live your life according to Srila Prabhupada's books, distribute Srila Prabhupada's books, inspire people to read Srila Prabhupada's books. Then, this Krishna consciousness movement will spread all over the world in leaps and bounds. Just follow Srila Prabhupada's formula and you are bound to meet with success.

What is that success? To go back to Godhead? No. For a follower of Srila Prabhupada, going back to Godhead is not a big thing. His only objective is to send everyone else back to Godhead, and to accomplish that he is prepared to do anything and make any sacrifice. One who makes this endeavor is rewarded by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in the most wonderful way.

Now, that you are all engaged in Srila Prabhupada's marathon, please plunge into this ocean of nectar and experience real ecstasy by distributing that nectar to everyone you meet. Make sure they not only drink this nectar themselves, but distribute it to others as well. That will be the real result of your preaching.

Your ever well wisher,



Bhakti Charu Swami

# Srila Prabhupada on BOOK DISTRIBUTION

*A selection of quotes from Srila Prabhupada Siksamrta*

## **Book Distribution - Colleges, Libraries, Universities**

"I am very glad to learn that the programme for distributing our books in the libraries and classrooms is having such outstanding success. I have already assured this and I have personally placed my books formerly in the library of Bombay which they were very glad to accept. So press this matter until every library and school has fully stocked our literatures and that will be a very real success." (SPL to Rupanuga dasa, 13th November, 1970)

"Our literatures are unique in the world and we want to introduce our philosophy in learned circles, so your report of library distribution is good news for me. Keep trying to place my books in auspicious places such as libraries, universities, clubs etc. and someday the world will realize and appreciate these transcendental literature." (SPL to Bhagavan dasa, 18th December, 1970)

"I am very glad to learn that you are trying to distribute our books. Please continue with this program as it is so important. Especially try to place our books in the schools and libraries. Our literatures are for the intelligent class also." (SPL to Gopala Krishna, 21st, January 1971)

"Someway or other we have to push

these literatures, whether through schools, colleges, libraries, membership or ordinary sales. In your country practically there is no illiteracy. Everyone can read and write. So when they will read Krishna book, certainly they will enjoy this as a story or philosophy, morality, religion etc. and gradually they will become perfect in Krishna consciousness. (SPL to Karandhara, 18th March, 1971)

"...but I think your proposal for seriously organising the college programmes is first-class. If this programme is conducted in the proper fashion it can be our biggest book distribution outlet, I am convinced of this." (SPL to Rupanuga dasa, 14th February 1973)

"I am especially pleased to learn that you are introducing my books as textbooks in the colleges. We especially have to try to attract the educated young men and women." (SPL to Govinda dasa 7th April, 1973)

"...we cannot give books away free to anyone. They must be paid for." (SPL to Kirtiraja dasa, 28th May, 1975)

"On the whole it is very encouraging that the professors like our books. This is our success." (SPL to Ghanasyama dasa, 20th November, 1975)

### Book Distribution to Important People

"Your report of the book distribution there is very encouraging. Make programme to distribute our books all over the world. Our books are being appreciated by learned circles, so we should take advantage. Whatever progress we have made, it is simply due to distributing these books. So go on and do not divert your mind for a moment from this. I have full confidence in you." (SPL to Ramesvara dasa, 11th October, 1974)

"Try to increase the book distribution as much as possible. This is our business - to put our books in the hands of intelligent men of America. If they read even one page, the influence will be so great." (SPL to Jagadisa dasa, 2nd February, 1975)

"I was very pleased to see how you are getting top-ranking men to read my books. That is real preaching. If all the government officers at least purchase some of our books, it will be a great credit, so do it very nicely." (SPL to Tejyas dasa, 18th June 1976)

### Book Distribution Techniques - Honesty and Cheating, etc.

"My only suggestion for this selling is to get the books widely reviewed in different papers and that is the only standard method for promoting this publication. By such reviews as soon as there is some demand all the book sellers will purchase from the publisher at least three copies each. That is the way of propagating the sales organisation." (SPL to

Brahmananda dasa, 19th Dec. 1968)

"You can show them Krishna books and ask them to read any part and if they like what they have read they should purchase and if not you will walk away. Who could resist? Krishna book is so nice that everyone will like it."

"These books are the best advertising, they are better than advertising. If we simply present Krishna consciousness in a serious and attractive way, without need to resort to fashionable slogans or tricks, that is sufficient. Our unique asset is our purity. No one anywhere can match it." (SPL to Yogesvara dasa, 28th December, 1971)

"We don't want to irritate anyone, however. If he goes away by your aggressive tactics, then you are nonsense and it is your failure. Neither you could sell a book, neither he would remain. But if he buys a book that is the real successful preaching." (SPL to Bali Mardan, 30th September, 1972)

"There is sufficient merit in our books that if you simply describe them sincerely to anyone, they will buy. That art you must develop, no art of lying. Convince them to give by your preaching the Absolute Truth, not by tricking, that is the more mature stage...." (SPL to Sri Govinda das, 25th December, 1972)

"Regarding book distribution, everyone, including book distributors, must follow the standard regulations. Book distribution is preaching, it should not be thought of as done for money. It is executed as a preaching purpose. With these guide-lines in mind, try to distrib-

ute many books as possible." (SPL to Kurusrestha, 23rd July, 1973)

"Whatever we have to do to induce people to take a book, that is nice. We shall judge the thing by its result, not by its means. But at the same time, we must avoid irritating anyone or disappointing anyone....." (SPL to Damodara, September 1st, 1973)

"I am very keen on the distribution of my books and I am very indebted to all of you for your untiring efforts to see that every man and woman in America get one of my books. If they simply read one page, even if they do nothing else, they can become perfect. I have read the plans of Ramesvara and Tripurari to attend a fair and distribute to the thousands of people who are coming. Whatever transcendental tactics you leaders think best for distributing the books you can employ. Please keep me informed of your progress as the fair develops." (SPL to Bhavananda and Jayapataka, 20th April, 1974.)

"If we simply speak nicely to a person and try sincerely to get him to take a book he'll take it. Why should we adopt unfair means? We should not do anything which will create a bad impression or make us unpopular. People are after these books, they are hankering for them. We don't need to take cheating method." (SPL to Ramesvara, 1st January, 1975)

"Regarding the problem of how to be aggressive on *sankirtan* and submissive in the temple, my request to you is that you should go on being aggressive on *sankirtan*. I myself was aggressive in coming to your country. No one invited me. Even you boys and girls did not invite me.

But, I came and I preached aggressively, and therefore you are now my disciples. So now you well know you have to approach the men and women of your country, and it may appear that superficially that you have to disturb them. They are doing their business peacefully, and you come and disturb them, 'Please take this Krishna book.' (SPL to Srimati Jagaddhatri, Pasupati, Sailogata, and Pamela devi dasi's, 30th July, 1975)

### **Book distribution door to door**

"I am so glad that to hear that you are beginning door to door *sankirtan*. This door to door *sankirtan* is the mission of Lord Chaitanya. Even there is language barrier, this door to door *sankirtan* will fulfill your mission and you can introduce our literatures to the higher circles as you have done by presenting Krishna book to the Prime Minister. I have news from Bali Mardan that Krishna book is in great demand in that part of the world. I do not know if in Fiji it is the same." (SPL to Upendra, February 16th, 1971)

### **Book distribution and traveling *sankirtan* party**

"The moving *sankirtan* party was programmed long, long ago even when I was in India. When there was talk about our preaching amongst our Godbrothers, I used to say to my Godbrothers that when I would begin preaching I shall take two trunks, one for *sankirtan* party and one for carrying requisites, and I would go from village to village throughout the whole world preaching Lord Chaitanya's



message. So the time has come as per my dream, by the grace of Krishna you are carrying on this program. Please therefore organise this moving *sankirtan* party....." (SPL to Rupanuga, 27th April, 1970)

"If there were three or four such traveling parties, it would be a grand scale propaganda. So do it with great enthusiasm and surely you will have the blessings of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. And wherever you go, if there is good response you can try and open a center there. This is first-class scheme and surely will be 'The greatest show on earth.'" (SPL to Kirtanananda Maharaja, 6th November, 1971)

"The traveling SKP and teaching in the schools and colleges which you are organising is excellent proposal, and I think that this is the best program for pushing on this Lord Chaitanya's movement: simply traveling and preaching, and infiltrating the schools where boys and girls are interested to learn something which will satisfy them. In both activities you may distribute many of our literatures, and that will please me very much." (SPL to Jagadisa, February 5th, 1972)

"I was extremely pleased to hear your report from your traveling buses. It sounds that your program is very, very wonderful and I am very encouraged to hear that such a program is coming along so nicely. I am glad that you have understood the importance of my books, therefore I am stressing it so much. Let everyone take these books. If he simply reads one page then he is getting something substantial, a real eternal benefit. Or if

one hands it over to his friend and he reads one page the same result is there. So continue these festivals constantly and make them all Krishna conscious. Overflood the whole country by this preaching work. Let the whole United States become *Vaishnavas*, then everyone else in the whole world will follow. That is my real ambition. Therefore your program is very glorious. This is really preaching." (SPL to Tamal Krishna Goswami, 28th December, 1974)

### Book Distribution and Street Chanting

"This *sankirtan* party and our book department are very, very important; they are our right and left hands, so everything should be done very carefully and in remembrance that this is Krsna's business that we are executing. Because we are doing Krsna's business does not mean that we should be less careful, but it means that we should be more careful than someone who is performing activities simply for sense gratification. So instruct the boys in that way." (SPL to Brahmananda, 16th July, 1969)

"Yes, my order still stands. Please organise Back to Godhead distribution and do it nicely. The *sankirtan* party and distribution of our magazines and books is our real program. Other things are secondary. So during the summer time you should utilize this program of *sankirtan* and book distribution vigorously. Attention diverted to incense business is not a very good sign. We should give all our energy for distributing Back to Godhead." (SPL to Satsvarupa, June 21st, 1971)

"Sell books, hold the *kirtana* in public places like schools and colleges, preach - if you practice these things, and try to improve them more and more, simply by your practicing sincerely, that simple program will please Krishna the most and you will see that very soon." (SPL to Sudama, 25th November, 1972)

"Regarding the *sankirtan* and book distribution, book distribution is also chanting. Anyone who reads the books that is also chanting and hearing." (SPL to Rupanuga dasa, 19th October, 1974)

"Regarding *sankirtan* and book distribution, both should go on, but book distribution is more important. It is *brhad kirtana*. In Tokyo airport one boy had come up to me asking if he could speak with me. I said yes, and then he asked me 'Swamiji, where do you get all that knowledge in your books?' Of course it is Krsna's knowledge, not mine. But the effect is there. So for - *kirtana*, book distribution is better. Book distribution is also *kirtana*." (SPL to Tamal Krishna Goswami, 23rd October, 1974)

".....one who worships the Deity with great devotion but doesn't show any devotion to the devotees of the Lord, or doesn't preach Krishna consciousness for the benefit of the general public, he is in the lower stage of devotional service." (SPL to Madhusudana, 1st February, 1968)

"In this age, chanting of Hare Krishna *mantra* is the prime business of the devotee, and preaching of this Hare Krishna *mantra* by outdoor *sankirtan* and propagation of literature is our more important business. Side by side, Deity worship is recommended, but when there is a ques-

tion of accepting one of them, we shall prefer to accept chanting of the Hare Krishna *mantra* first." (SPL to Hamsaduta, 5th September, 1969)

"Sankirtana and distributing *Back to Godhead* and our other literatures is the fieldwork of this movement. Temple worship is secondary." (SPL to Cidananda, December 15th, 1969)

"I am very glad that your distribution to the libraries is well received. Please get our books at least one full set in every city and college library in your neighbouring areas. And if you read these literatures carefully you will realise the topmost science of Krishna consciousness and be more inspired to spread the same to all persons as their real welfare benefit." (SPL to Bansidhari, November 16th, 1970)

".....continue this book distribution program very nicely, and at the same time take advantage of these books yourselves. Not that you just distribute but neglect reading them yourself." (SPL to Trai dasa, May 5th, 1972)

"Regarding book distribution, everyone, including book distributors, must follow the standard regulations. Book distribution is preaching, it should not be thought of as done for money. It is executed as a preaching purpose. With these guide-lines in mind, try to distribute as many books as possible." (SPL to Kurusrestha, 23rd July, 1973)

# *All glories to the* **SANKIRTAN DEVOTEES!**

BY HIS HOLINESS HARIKESA SWAMI

## **All glories to the Sankirtan Devotees!**

Despite the frozen cold, scorching heat, relentless rain, and maddening wind off the sides of frozen mountains, Srila Prabhupada's Sankirtan warriors bring the mercy of his books to every door. Tolerating the constant change of weather, drinking water, sleeping places, and food, they go from town to town, village to village, bringing a gift of love rarely seen in this world, and even more rarely attained. Tolerance is their regulative principle; tolerating the taunts and shouts of ignorant and trivial onlookers; tolerating being pushed, shoved, beaten or spit upon; tolerating needless Police interference; tolerating the pains in the back or feet; and above all, tolerating the mind. Such tolerance is found only in the greatest of *yogis* who have practiced their mystic art for many lifetimes. The mercy of the Lord on His Sankirtan warriors is hard to describe, but He is inspiring me to do so. May He help me in this endeavour.

## **All glories to the Sankirtan Devotees!**

Without concern for their bodily comforts, or care for the whims of the constantly complaining mind and senses, they are promptly on the street early in the day and remain there till all the materialistically minded people have gone home for the night. When they think of the so-called pleasure of the fruitive workers, their lips curl in disgust and they spit on it. But remembering their spiritual master's warning not to be too proud of their renunciation - for that can lead to falldown - they regret this spontaneous external display of their higher taste and again fix their minds on the preaching mission. Who can maintain attachment to the material world after having tasted the nectar of the Lord's mercy? O devotees of the Lord, hear me well. If you wish to remain attached to home, family, nation, society and the rest, do not go out preaching on the Sankirtan mission, for on the streets of the cities, towns and

villages, the flute sound of the Lord may be heard, even today, inviting His devoted followers to return to the shelter of His holy lotus feet.

### **All glories to the Sankirtan Devotees!**

Some of these transcendental warriors have been distributing for years, without stop, day in and day out. They are fully dedicated to the Sankirtan service of their spiritual master and Krishna. Although such souls are rarely to be found in this world, the materialists cannot imagine that there are only a handful of them. "I see you people everywhere. How many of you are there anyway, thousands?" Due to the Sankirtan devotee's intensity of endeavour and boundless enthusiasm, the materialists cannot imagine that such an impact comes from a handful of dedicated men. This is the potency of one Sankirtan devotee; he can deliver a whole country by his spiritual determination to bring the books of Srila Prabhupada to every door.

### **All glories to the Sankirtan Devotees!**

The Sankirtan devotees have the greatest association in the universe, for Ksirodakasayi Vishnu, the *Paramatma*, the Supersoul within the heart of all living beings, is also a Sankirtan devotee. Caring for all living beings as the eternal spiritual guide within, the Supersoul is always inducing the conditioned soul to walk in the path of the waiting distributor, hear what the devotee has to say, reach into his wallet and take out the biggest note he has. Every Sankirtan devotee is glorious, for they know well that without their

transcendental partner, the Supersoul, no one would take a book. Because of His constant transcendental association, the Sankirtan devotees have forgotten the meaning of the word, 'loneliness', although they can see it on the faces of the people on the streets. And remembering, only a devotee knows the real meaning of the word 'love'.

### **All glories to the Sankirtan Devotees!**

The concept of mercy can only be understood by examining the mercy the Sankirtan devotees daily pour on the seemingly undeserving souls lost in an ocean of ignorance. Only by carefully studying this mercy can we know how Lord Chaitanya and Lord Nityananda poured Their divine grace on the conditioned souls 500 years ago. No need to wonder how it happened then, for it is happening again now. Only the most fortunate persons are born at this time, for they can accumulate piles of pious activities and acquire the seed of devotional service by simply purchasing a book of Srila Prabhupada. If they simply read it, the seed of *bhakti* will quickly sprout in their hearts. We look through the many letters of appreciation from the readers of our books, and we sit stunned, unable to fathom the unlimited mercy of the Sankirtan devotees.

### **All glories to the Sankirtan Devotees!**

The householders who remain at home with their economic problems, family encumbrances and needs, secretly lament that they cannot join these liberated Sankirtan men and women who wander

freely, without restriction, throughout the three worlds. Although the Sankirtan devotees are fully capable of enjoying their senses to the greatest degree, they are averse to do so, for they only wish to please their spiritual master and Krishna. Family life, household affairs, children, problems, housing bills, *gurukula* costs, and all the other unfortunate 'requirements' in a world covered by *maya's* unique power, seem distant and unreal to those desiring to shower the rain of mercy on souls burning in the fire of material existence. They cannot discriminate the cries of some living entity posing as their baby as different from the cries of the conditioned souls on the street who are lost and bewildered without anyone to care for them. Considering themselves the real protector of the living entities who stand before them, they nurse these lost souls back to life with the milk of kindness and the all-powerful healing drug, the holy name of the Lord.

#### **All glories to the Sankirtan Devotees!**

Even if they win the weekly Sankirtan competition, they still know that the real victory is to conquer the senses and the mind. The sincere and enthusiastic cheers of the devotee audience honestly ecstatic to hear the wonderful results of their worthy heroes, only add another burden to the sincere distributor's struggle, and therefore the experienced 'winners' inwardly laugh, fully aware that this sophisticated snare of *maya* is waiting to find some subtle weakness and ruin their Sankirtan spirit. Who in the three worlds can give up attachment to the fruits of

their results? No one. But even the demigods learn a good lesson in renunciation by secretly observing the Sunday meetings of the Sankirtan men in the temple. They are amazed at the submissive attitude of these devoted souls, completely devoid of the concept of self-glorification. Indeed, such great souls push off all attempts to glorify them as if they were avoiding disease personified. Who can understand their own minds besides themselves? We can only pray to associate with such selfless personalities life after life. A birth as a bug in the book bag of such great souls is superior to becoming a *Brahma* devoid of the Sankirtan spirit.

#### **All glories to the Sankirtan Devotees!**

For they are gentle souls who are kind to all. Who can be more gently than the devoted Sankirtan devotees who only think of the advancement of the fallen-conditioned souls devoid of all understanding of spiritual life? Who can be kinder than they who profusely distribute the greatest gift in the universe? The Sankirtan devotees are like a wish fulfilling tree, for they know the real desires of the people; to be happy, peaceful, and eternally situated in their natural, constitutional positions as parts and parcels of the Supreme Lord. Because the Sankirtan devotees are displaying their kindness throughout every town, we can understand something of the vast mercy of Lord Chaitanya; otherwise, it would remain a mere theory. I offer again and again my humble obeisances unto the feet of such exalted *Vaishnavas* as these, and pray that I may assist them in any way that I can.

### **All glories to the Sankirtan Devotees!**

Because of their devotion and dedicated endeavours, Srila Prabhupada's books are throughout the whole world. From Rome, Alaska, east to Tokyo, Japan, Srila Prabhupada's books have been distributed in massive numbers and have found Their way into nearly every town and village. Where no books could conceivably go, these books go, for They are transcendental living entities, capable of intelligent and directed motion, wishing to bestow the greatest mercy on the conditioned souls throughout the world. These books are creating a revolution in the hearts of people absorbed in a misguided civilisation seemingly bent on self destruction. It seems that there are people everywhere interested in the *Bhagavad-gita*, *Srimad Bhagavatam* and any literature from Srila Prabhupada they can get their hands on. None but the rich, proud, and arrogant avoid the nectar of this Sankirtan mission. And now the Soviets are importing our books and encouraging their translation. Need I say more than this?

### **All glories to the Sankirtan Devotees!**

Someone once said that some demigods have appeared as human beings to distribute these books in great quantities. Certainly this sounds nice, but a real Sankirtan devotee does not believe it; for after all, he knows he was saved by his spiritual master. We were lost in a pit of ignorance and knew nothing of the higher realms of reality when the spiritual master saved us from eternal doom. We were

fallen then, and outside of the mercy emanating from these transcendental literatures, we would be now. A Sankirtan devotee is intelligent, and knows that he is personally nothing but the mercy of his spiritual master. And he is happy in this understanding. All Sankirtan devotees are happy simply being instruments in this great mission. They know that the books themselves distribute themselves when we surrender to them and their mission. Actually we have been picked up from the lowest platform of existence and elevated to very high positions simply because we are associating with the supremely opulent Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Krishna and we are happy simply knowing Him as our master. As the servants of the king live on the same level as the king, so the Sankirtan devotees are glorified and living nicely as the servants of the Supreme Controller. Is it possible to attain more opulence than this?

### **All glories to the Sankirtan Devotees!**

They drive their vans with great care and attention, filling in petrol, regularly changing the oil, the water, the anti-freeze, and the tires, for they consider their Sankirtan vehicle as reverential paraphernalia of the Lord. They take care of their vans as if these vehicles were members of Lord Krishna's transcendental family - representatives of Garuda. Every Sankirtan warrior knows well that without these faithful carriers of the book deities, the Sankirtan mission would quickly grind to a halt. Never driving too fast, although always impatient to bring knowledge to every town, the

Sankirtaners depart at the proper time to attain their destination without hurry. Although Krishna is protecting them, they never want to disturb Krishna's transcendental pastimes by forcing Him to catch their van as it is rolling off a slippery road. They are models of safe and cautious driving since they know that their cargo, the empowered Sankirtan devotees and these transcendental books, are more valuable than piles of gold and jewels.

### **All glories to the Sankirtan Devotees!**

They are so humble and meek that although they know well that they are engaged in the most important devotional service of all, the direct preaching mission of the Lord, they never demean the service of other devotee who live in the temple and support the Sankirtan mission. Thus they are truly glorious in the eyes of all. They are devoid of the stain of false pride, for they know that without the support of the devotees in the temple, the *sankirtan* could not go on. The Sankirtan devotees are thankful to those dedicated souls' taking the responsibility to wash the floors, worship the Deity, and cook the noon offering. Every Sankirtan devotee knows perfectly well how hard it is to live in the temple, for without having to struggle in the preaching mission, control the mind and sense is most difficult to achieve. Therefore, out of great humility, they bend low during their weekends in the temple, like trees overburdened with ripe fruit, while offering their respects to even the temple ants. Having seen enough materialists during the week, the Sankirtan devotees know how rare it is for a devotee of the Lord to

be fully engaged in devotional service in the temple.

### **All glories to the Sankirtan Devotees!**

For they actually care about the people to whom they distribute. They do not consider numbers more important than people, for they want the people to really read and understand these transcendental gifts. If they did not care about the fallen souls, how could they go on, year after year, day in and day out, simply sustained by the satisfaction of the Lord? These Sankirtan warriors want to die on the battlefield. They wish to continue to distribute these literatures in some form or other throughout their whole lives. There is nothing else other than this intense and gratifying mission. The Sankirtan devotees know an open secret; if they can just continue distributing, they will get the mercy of their spiritual master and Krishna and in this very life, go straight back home, back to Godhead. Keeping this dearest secret close to their hearts, they only wish that all other living entities would also take up devotional service and become auspicious and glorious too, for it is easy, sublime, and beyond the material world. All glories to the Sankirtan devotees!

Their servant, Harikesa Swami

# COM Questions and Answers on Book Distribution

*Guru-maharaja's Answers to Questions by Haridas Thakura Das*

Text 241899 (104 lines)

From: Bhakti Caru Swami

Date: 14-Nov-95 10:52 SWT

To: BCS Questions and Answers

Subject: Question from Haridas Thakur das

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Dear Haridas Thakur,

Please accept my blessings. All glories to Srila Prabhupada. Thank you for your question in the conference. I just returned to India from South Africa, and ever since I came back I have been busy in meetings and seminars from the morning till the night therefore, I couldn't reply earlier.

I am very happy with your question. Srila Prabhupada always said that asking questions is a sign of intelligence. There are different stages of devotional service. In the initial stage, one just acts according to the instructions he gets from his authorities. Then he comes to the stage when he is engaged by the spiritual master or authority according to his propensity. Then comes the stage when he realises what needs to be done and he does it without any consideration of personal liking or dislike.

In this respect Srila Prabhupada writes "Neophyte means no independent decisions no free will, that means surrender. But when he is trained up then automatically he gets his freedom. Just like a small child can only eat such things which are sanctioned by his parents."

In another place Srila Prabhupada mentions "If you turn over your intelligence to Him, He will bestow upon you more and more intelligence how to serve the spiritual master and Krsna in full Krsna consciousness."

Question: You asked "How will such service as book distribution go on, if everybody is engaged according to his nature and liking?"

Answer: ISKCON is a preaching movement and books are the basis of our preaching. Therefore the more one matures the more he will render his service in such a way that book distribution will increase. Initially one may need to be forced or compelled to go out and distribute books, but as he advances his service attitude will become more and more spontaneous.

Preaching and book distribution cannot be separated. Effective preaching will en-



courage people to read books and as their interest increases the book distribution will also increase. We should never separate preaching and book distribution. As a matter of fact book distribution is the means to preach. Preaching without generating the interest to read books, will not make people into devotees. Book distribution without preaching will not make devotees either.

Therefore, sincere devotees will either become engaged in direct book distribution or will become engaged in preaching activities in such a way that the book distribution will increase. Therefore there is no need to be afraid that if people are given the freedom to render their service according to their propensity or liking, then book distribution will stop.

Question: "Should we give devotees a vision of what they can do or what they can become in ISKCON? Or should we just strive to become like tools in the hands of temple authorities, to be used at any time in any way they want?"

Answer: Yes, devotees must have a vision and that vision is that this Krishna consciousness movement must spread in every town and village in order to deliver all the fallen souls. To execute this vision every devotee must realise that they must become a tool in the hands of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and His representatives like the GBC Body, Zonal GBC, spiritual master, temple president, etc. Yes, a good devotee should always be prepared to be used at any time in any way necessary.

Question: "Are desires for other kinds of preaching which may sometimes come up in our hearts designated as material or materially tinged?"

Answer: Material or materially tinged means for sense gratification. Therefore one should try his best to get rid of that kind of service which is tinged with sense gratification. Pure devotional service means '*anyabhilasita sunyam*' — there is no room for sense gratification. The only consideration is to please Krishna's transcendental senses.

Book distribution is preaching. It should not be thought of as done for money; it is executed as a preaching purpose. With these guidelines in mind, try to distribute as many books as possible.

Not only book distribution, neophyte devotees will be reluctant to anything besides eating and sleeping. Because that is what they have been doing for so many lifetimes in the past. Therefore, to change the habit initially you have to push them but then when they get the taste of it they will spontaneously do it. The goal of Krishna conscious activities is come to this spontaneous platform. I hope this meets you in the best of health and blissfully distributing Srila Prabhupada's books.

Your ever well-wisher,

Bhakti Charu Swami

# INTERVIEW WITH GURU-MAHARAJA

## *Guru-maharaja's involvement in translating and distributing books.*

**Question:** When did you begin translating Srila Prabhupada's books?

**Guru-maharaja:** Soon after I joined in Mayapur (1976), even before I met Srila Prabhupada, I started translating some articles for Back to Godhead. I compiled them into a Back to Godhead magazine in Bengali and printed it locally at a press in Svarupaganj. Then, after I met Srila Prabhupada, his first instruction to me was to translate his books.

The first book I translated was *Bhagavad-gita*. When I showed Srila Prabhupada my first translations, he was very happy. He liked the style, although my language was very simple. Generally, when one translates the matter tends to become stiff, but Srila Prabhupada felt that my translation flowed nicely because it was done in a simple language. As I was serving Srila Prabhupada then, I would read out the translations I had done to Srila Prabhupada and he would correct me. This is how Srila Prabhupada guided me and trained me to translate his books. He was very happy with my work. Tamal Krishna Maharaja told me later that Srila Prabhupada said some nice things.

**Question:** What did Srila Prabhupada say, Guru-maharaja?

**Guru-maharaja:** (Laughing) He said something like: now you have got a first class Indian.....

**Question:** Can you please tell us how Srila Prabhupada gave you the service of

translating his books?

**Guru-maharaja:** Yes, I remember the day Srila Prabhupada actually gave me this service. I was traveling with Srila Prabhupada from Allahabad to Calcutta. A complete carriage of the train (first class) was booked for Srila Prabhupada and fourteen other devotees traveling with him. The train departed at 9pm. The next morning, I took bath and was sitting and chanting my rounds in my compartment. Around 6.30am, Bhavananda Maharaja came in and told me he was taking me to see Srila Prabhupada. I felt extremely unqualified to go near Srila Prabhupada. Srila Prabhupada was just a few feet away from me, only two compartments away. Seeing my hesitation Bhavananda Maharaja took me by the hand and dragging me through the corridor, opened the door to Srila Prabhupada's compartment and pushed me in. I fell on the floor offering obeisances to Srila Prabhupada. When I got up, I saw Srila Prabhupada looking at me very mercifully. He smiled and asked me to sit next to him. Srila Prabhupada was sitting on one side of the compartment and on the other side was Bhavananda Maharaja, Rameswar Maharaja, and Jayapataka Maharaja. On the floor was Abhiram Prabhu, the temple president of Calcutta at that time.

When Srila Prabhupada asked me to sit next to him I felt very embarrassed. I told him that I would sit next to him on the

floor but Srila Prabhupada said, "No, you sit here." When Srila Prabhupada insisted, I had to sit next to him. A blanket was spread over his seat, so I rolled up the corner of the blanket and sat down. After some initial exchanges Srila Prabhupada told me, "You translate my books into Bengali." I felt very unqualified and small. I asked Srila Prabhupada how I would be able to do it. Srila Prabhupada said, "Just do it. Practice makes a man perfect."

This is how I got this service from Srila Prabhupada in our very first meeting.

**Question:** We heard that Srila Prabhupada gave you the instruction, "Just translate my books and go back to Godhead." When did he say that?

**Guru-maharaja:** In the spring of 1977, when I was serving His Divine Grace in Bombay.

**Question:** In what ways have you been involved with the BBT?

**Guru-maharaja:** I took over the management of the Bengali BBT in 1980 and started printing books in Bengali. In two years we printed about eight titles - *Bhagavad-gita*, Nectar of Devotion, a set of Krishna Books, Science of Self Realization, *Srimad Bhagavatam* First Canto and quite a few other titles. We didn't have our own printing press at that time so we printed outside. It was quite nice in those days. I was based in Calcutta. I would translate in the morning and supervise the printing in the afternoon. I used to be very busy the whole day and then in the evening I would go to the Ganga for a bath.

I also started translating *Chaitanya Caritamrta* in 1983. I was translating *Srimad Bhagavatam* and the first canto, volume one was completed. But then the devotees asked me to translate *Chaitanya Caritamrta* for Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's 500th Anniversary in 1986. I stopped translating the *Bhagavatam* and started translating *Chaitanya Caritamrta* and it was completed in 1986.

In 1987 I became a member of the GBC and that was the end of my translation for a while. ISKCON was in a critical situation then and I could not find any time to translate. In 1992 I started translating again and in 1993 I decided to complete the *Bhagavatam* as an offering to Srila Prabhupada for his Centennial in 1996.

**Question:** You were the *sankirtan* leader for Mayapur. When was that?

**Guru-maharaja:** In 1978, Yogesh Candra Prabhu from France organized the December Marathon in Mayapur. He was a very dynamic person, a big time *sankirtan* organizer in France. He felt that India had a very big potential for *sankirtan*. HH Jayapataka Maharaja encouraged him to get involved in the marathon in Calcutta and Mayapur, and because of his involvement we did very big. That year Mayapur won the marathon and was the top book distributor for the whole world.

After the marathon, Yogesh Candra Prabhu told us we should maintain our position as the top temple in the world and continue with the book distribution to maintain the scores. He felt that to have a successful book distribution party,

*Continued on page 38 . . .*

# A Letter to all Disciples for the Srla Prabhupada Marathon

*Guru-maharaja's letter to his disciples for the 1994 marathon.*

Dear *sankirtan* devotees,

Please accept my best wishes and humble obeisances. All glories to Srla Prabhupada. All glories to Srla Prabhupada's Book Marathon.

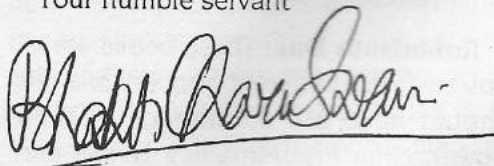
It gives me great joy to receive news of your successful distribution of Srla Prabhupada's books this year. Srla Prabhupada and your spiritual master are extremely happy to see your sincere endeavors to help the preaching mission of freeing the conditioned souls from their material bondage. Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, personally came down as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu to accomplish that mission. Therefore, you can well image how important this mission is of preaching Krishna consciousness, and how pleased Krishna Caitanya Mahaprabhu becomes when someone helps Him in His mission. It has become so easy to go back to the spiritual sky in this age. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, along with his devotees, are rescuing everyone from this dangerous ocean of material existence. And those who are being rescued, are also joining there rescuing team Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, along with his devotees, are rescuing them from this dangerous ocean of material existence. Those who are being rescued, are also joining there rescuing team, and rescuing others. and rescuing others. In previous ages one could not even image such

good fortune, but due to the merciful appearance of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the living entities are receiving this inconceivable fortune.

Now that you have joined Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's rescuing team, you have already become liberated. Your activities as His team-mates although being executed on the material platform, are actually spiritual. You have received this inconceivable good fortune by the causeless mercy of Srla Prabhupada. Through his ISKCON you are not only getting shelter in the dangerous ocean of material existence, but you are safely sailing towards the spiritual sky. Therefore, never give up the shelter of his lotus feet. Just remain in his ISKCON and, in due course of time, you will receive the greatest spiritual benediction in the form of eternal association with Sri Sri Radha Krishna in Goloka Vrindavan.

I repent for my inability to be with you to celebrate your achievements. However, in spirit I will be with you. I wish you a lot of success in rescuing the fallen souls according to Srla Prabhupada's desire.

Your humble servant



Bhakti Charu Swami  
(Durban, 31.12.94)

# How to Distribute Books

*Practical instructions from ISKCON's expert book distributors.  
Quoted from the Nectar of Book Distribution.*

## **Techniques Aren't the Most Important Thing**

Our only technique is to be very devout followers of the rules and regulations.

## **Practical Techniques of Mass Distribution**

The fact is that we have to adopt the same tactics as ordinary salesmen adopt, but the difference is we do it for the satisfaction of Krishna, and they do it for sense gratification.

Techniques means ways of distributing books to dissimilar people in various circumstances. The book distributor endeavors in different ways, and although the techniques aren't the decisive factor, it is enlightening to see how the conviction of top distributors manifests in action. What are they saying? How are they presenting the books? Or as Arjuna asked: "What are the symptoms of one whose consciousness is thus merged in transcendence? How does he speak, and what is his language? How does he sit, and how does he walk?"

## **Preaching While Distributing**

**Rohinisuta Das:** These books are all powerful - nondifferent from Krishna. We should have full confidence in their power. Srila Prabhupada's books can change the world and the consciousness

of people. What we say, our preaching, should inspire people to take and read the books. That is our duty. What's the use of preaching for a long time if in the end they say, "Thank you, that was interesting. But I don't want the books. Maybe another time. I want to meditate on what you said. I like speaking more than reading. I like personal contact. Books I don't like." They say this many times. A devotee should never make this compromise of just speaking. Our goal is to make them take the books and associate with Srila Prabhupada directly. That makes the change. If they don't take the book, they're not serious, and they will forget everything. They've cheated you and wasted your time. Many people are good at asking a lot of questions and appearing interested, but they simply don't dare to say no right away. When you realize this at the end, you become frustrated, because you were thinking you had met an interested person. Therefore our approach in the beginning is always short and direct. Present the books in a nice way. Then you will immediately understand how interested they really are. When they have bought the book and given a donation, then you can preach a little more and explain how to read the books. Now they are purified, and maybe they will become so inspired that they take even more. And when they get back home, they feel they had a nice experi-

ence meeting you. They never forget that impression, even if many years pass. The devotees are inspired because of the power of Lord Chaitanya and the mission and blessings of the spiritual master. Because of this enthusiasm, people become inspired and enlivened. But as soon as you go away, they forget everything. *Maya* offers them sense gratification, and they forget whatever you told them. But if they have the books as a souvenir, they always remember the situation and their encounter with a devotee. Then one day Krishna from within their heart gives them inspiration to read the books.

**Jaya Gurudeva Das:** If one is not a *maharathi*, one can consider preaching a little to interested people. But if one is a *maharathi*, if one can distribute a lot of books, then one shouldn't spend too much time. One should just distribute books. The books speak for themselves. Because if one is empowered by Krishna to distribute hundreds of books a day, Krishna will not send certain types of people. Such a distributor has a deep conviction about distributing the books — has a different kind of *shakti* — and he often just gives out books, and people don't ask questions. Harinamananda can give out a whole set, and the people don't ask any questions. They just take the books and they say they've bought the best books in the world. They know it, that are sure, but they don't ask any questions. But in the case of another devotee, they ask, "What kind of book is this?" and the devotee explains. There's nothing bad about that either, if we don't spoil the person with our explanation. We're all individuals. Every devotee has a spe-

cific way of distributing books.

**Harinamananda Das:** It's much more satisfying for the distributor of people appreciate the books, and therefore we should take the time to explain to them the importance and contents of the books. This is important. After selling the books, if we open the books and talk about them, people see that we're not simply interested in selling the books and getting the money. They think, "He wants me to understand these books. He already has gotten the money. He doesn't need to spend any more of his time with me, but he's taking the time." So they are positively inspired. They see that we also read the books, know them, and are convinced. They don't expect a book salesman to know all of his books so well. This attitude is important for everyone desiring to distribute books for a long time. In a small country like Switzerland where one always meets the same people it is especially important. Then people are not deceived or burned out: Even if the people aren't interested and don't take a book, we should always avoid burning them out. We should always remain friendly. It is important to come to the platform of giving people *brahminical* instruction. I meet many people who have our books, but they buy again and again. It is mystical. The people become purified through the association of these books. Krishna in the form of these books does not expect gorgeous worship. The spiritual master explains that the Lord is satisfied to sit on the selves in people's apartments. It is better than laying in a cold storehouse. Thus the books start to diffuse transcendental radiation, and all

those people become purified.

### Techniques of Approaching People

**Harinamananda Das:** Basic techniques must be there, but it is important to know that one cannot imitate the techniques of other devotees. One must understand that book distribution is completely individualistic and one should distribute according to one's capacity and nature. In my case the first point in approaching people is my appearance. I always have a lot of books on my arm so when the people see me, they immediately know that something is going on. They realize that we are not a sect with just small booklets to give away. They see a person carrying an entire encyclopedia. If we contact the people in that way, they are impressed. They understand something is going on, and they want to see what. And nobody ever thinks that it is for free. You don't even have to mention it. They ask, "What can I give you?" I can see that when one is going around timidly, without life and enthusiasm, then people are not attracted. Although he seems to be humble and unimposing, no one is attracted. No one is ready to listen to him. They are not even inspired to stop and listen to him. But if you're vivaciously representing something and standing behind what you're doing and saying, then the people are impressed that you know what you're doing and saying, then the people are impressed that you know what you're doing. A lame and fearful attitude, without faith and determination, simply attracts the demons and other envious people, and they will try to stop you completely. But when there is power and conviction, Krishna is very

pleased, and He gives all protection, and one can completely explode and go beyond oneself.

When I approach people, I don't make a distinction between people. I don't distinguish based on the external appearance. Of course, there are two different cases. While going door to door or shop to shop, one is forced to approach all the people. The other possibility is that on the street or in public places, many people are coming at the same time. Then one has to select whom one wants to approach. If I have to choose between an old man, a housewife, or a young person who looks sane and together, then I obviously go to the young person. But if there are only a few people, then I don't make any distinctions. I approach them all, even the oldest people and the *sudras*. This is important because our philosophy is not to make distinctions.

As I approach people on the street, I try to surprise them a little. When I am on an open street or a parking lot, I try to approach them from an angle in order to surprise them. I try to avoid being seen from one hundred meters away, selling something. Otherwise the defense systems in their minds start to function. One has to be clever and surprise the people, but not shock them, especially the ladies. In this way, people are confronted with a completely new situation, and the mind is surprised. They don't know how to classify the new situation. Then one tries to encourage them, "Are you from this city too?" "Yes." "So we have something nice for you." Or "No." Then, "Oh, nice that you have come because we're passing out these books today." During that time I

hand them two or three books so they have something to hold. If one can do this with some enthusiasm then the people themselves become enthusiastic about the whole thing. The most important point is that people take the book in their hand. I can say from my experience that 90% of the people who don't take a book in their hand will not buy it. One doesn't need to invest much time — one can immediately go to the next person. One doesn't waste any time with people. Of course, there are exceptions, and you have to be alert to sense them.

Another point is that whenever one approaches someone, there is some suspicion due to seeing a stranger. And if you just mechanically hand them some books and start asking personal questions without establishing a personal relationship, you will bite the granite. They will always say no. "Are you from this city?" "No." "Do you have a family?" "That's none of your business." "You could take a book for your wife." "Get lost!" Or they say, "I don't need your books — I buy books at a bookstore." Those reactions are natural. As soon as somebody who wants something comes to them, their reaction is immediately, "No! No! No!" So generally I do ask questions, but not the kind of questions that they can answer with no. One should not give them the opportunity to say no. One should trick them so that they have to say yes. You get the people to say yes, and continue presenting the books so that at the end they are open and are ready to take the books. "Do you like these books?" "Yes, yes." And then, "I should have some contribution for the books." "Yes, yes." And then you can

continue, "Why don't you take this one also to make the series more complete." "Yes." And sometimes you can give them the whole set.

You often meet people who instinctively say no in the beginning. But there is no need to give up. They are programmed to say no to things they don't know. So you shouldn't immediately ask them if they are interested in Indian philosophy or whether they believe in life after death. If these are the first questions, then all of the people will say no, for these are very personal questions. People usually have a defensive attitude about this personal approach. Of course, if the devotee himself is on the platform of false ego, he will not have the humility or patience to counter their arguments. He will react in a frustrated way and tend to become angry, "If you don't like the book, that's your fault. I feel sorry for you." But one should think, "He is saying no, but that is just his mind talking, which is a complete madman, programmed by the material energy. Now he is spitting out his frustration, but afterwards he may be a very nice person when his frustrations are gone. And if all the problems are gone, then the real person comes out." If you try again, completely humble: "Please, take a look; these books aren't expensive," and if you completely depend on Krishna, then sometimes you can really approach the soul, the living entity himself beyond the mind. That is the secret of how to convince unwilling people to take the books.

One could say much more about this point. Until now I described only the externals. But if one analyses the situation



with the philosophy of Krishna consciousness, then one understands in what sense it is that ultimately the soul decides to take a book and the Supersoul gives the sanction. So the secret is that one is simply trying to cultivate this attitude and then taking a stack of books and going out to distribute. Then Krishna will give all the intelligence. Even if it takes some years, one should not lose his patience or faith. One should understand that this service is the most elevated service and to execute it is not a cheap thing. Book distribution is unlimited, and all different kinds of transcendental activities are included in this service.

**Navina-nirada Das:** You have to approach people and hand them the book in a respectful and gentle manner. Sometimes devotees, especially new devotees, just throw the book at them or push it into their stomach or chest, which agitates people. But if somebody is friendly with them and handing them the books, then every gentleman will take the time at least to look at the book to find out what it is all about. If we are falsely humble, fearing that we are cheating the people, or not doing the right thing, they will pick up the attitude that you're projecting and also feel unsure. But if you are completely sure of yourself, sure about the mission and the order of your spiritual master, sure about the mercy of Krishna and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu - that is real humility.

When you approach the people, the first thing is the eye contact. By this eye contact already so many things are accomplished. You can see what kind of person he is by looking at his physiog-

nomy. You look in his eyes, then you see if he wants to avoid you or if he is really brilliant or sharp or if he is just a lazy person. This you can see from the person's eyes and from his face. In this way a devotee gets much information. So one should not think that these things are external, because they tell the distributor what kind of covering the spirit soul has and how he can conquer over that covering and get the spirit soul to take Krishna consciousness and appreciate it. You have to look out, because you can say things that are true, but say them at the wrong moment and completely turn people off or spoil their interest.

**Harinamananda Das:** I continue the presentation in such a way as to answer their mostly unspoken doubts: What's it all about? How much does it cost? Usually I say I'm studying Sanskrit literature with my friends. I ask them whether they know about Sanskrit or know something about India. Then I say that I'm a student of this subject and that this is the oldest language in the world; these books were compiled five thousand years ago. Usually, I show the picture of Srila Prabhupada and tell people that he was an Indian monk and a great saint. By that I also indicate that he passed on, because then people tend to have more respect for his accomplishments and no suspicions about him as a *guru*. I go on to say he translated these books into English and now we're translating them into German. And today there's a special offer. Later on, in the book stores, these books will cost a lot — I mention both the bookstore price of the books like these, which

is high, and our price for each book. I mention it clearly so that they know what minimum price I expect. And I say, "Whatever you give above that supports the translation work." Or simply I say, "Whatever more you give is my earning." People want to know where the money goes. Most of them are quite fed up giving money to welfare institutions that misuse the money. They appreciate our honesty in admitting, "Yes, it is for me." I don't speak about our organic farm or this or that. Later, of course, if they show further interest, I also mention that we have a temple, a farm, and other projects. But at this point I simply say that the money is covering the production expenses, and any extra is for me and my friends. Then people are always generous and no longer fear misuse of the money or some bogus *guru* in the background raking it in.

#### Giving Many Books At Once

**Navina-nirada Das:** Giving many books at once doesn't mean giving a person one book, he pays for it, and then you give him another book and let him pay again, and so on. I always give two or three books as an introduction, and then I see how they react. I explain what the books are and show them one or two more. This I do whenever somebody takes the books and looks at them, before they pay anything. Very quickly you can find out how much they're interested. If they show some interest, then I give them two or three books more, and I mention the production price we pay. What I say is about double the BBB price, which is a good yet reasonable price. Everyone who knows what books cost in a bookstore can understand that our prices are fair

and cheap. And just when they are about to pull out their wallet, you can give another two books and say in a detached way, "If you give a little more, then I'll also give you these two books to make things more complete." Then you see how they respond. And you see what the donation is. If he is really into giving, then you give one or two books more, and the person will understand that a further donation is expected. In this way you can pile up, pile up, and keep inspiring them. From that point it is not a big step anymore to the set.

When it gets into many books, you have to give people confidence in what they're buying and assurance about who we are and what we do. Generally I'm saying we're *bhakti-yoga* teachers from Zurich or wherever the nearest temple is. Then people know that it's a bona fide thing. You can't be just some idealist from an alternative farm — although mentioning the farm is not bad — and then expect that you can get into many books and good donations. The people sense it immediately when you're not together or just timid and small-time, having only a few books with you, talking about a farm or some welfare work. They wonder what this has to do with your books. People will wonder where you come from and where your books come from — "Maybe he's stolen them, and that's why he's timid." They become suspicious and don't know if it's legal, or what consequences buying something from you will bring. Or you may just be nice, and they may think you're nice, but you won't get into distributing many books and getting good donations with that style. ☸

# Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's Sankirtan Yajna

A LECTURE BY  
HIS DIVINE GRACE BHAKTI CHARU SWAMI

For performing *sankirtan* we don't really need anything. It is enough to simply have a pair of *karatalas*. After taking *sannyas*, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu traveled and preached. He did not have any possessions. He even wanted to travel alone but Nityananda Prabhu persuaded Him to take at least one person with Him. Nityananda Prabhu reasoned that someone would have to carry Mahaprabhu's water pot and clothes while He chanted and sang. When people heard Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu chanting, they chanted, and when they heard Him sing, they also started singing. Millions of people followed Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and they all chanted in ecstasy.

In *Brhat Bhagavatamrita*, Sanatan Goswami describes how a devotee, Gopakumar, went back to Goloka Vrindavan. Gopakumar was a cowherd boy from Govardhana, Gokula Vrindavan (Vrindavan in the material realm). He was initiated by a *maha-bhagavata guru* who gave him a *mantra*. As Gopakumar made spiritual advancement by chanting the

*mantra*, he went from the Earth planet to the heavenly planets, and from there to Maharloka, Janarloka, then Tapaloka, Satyaloka and finally Vaikuntha. When he was in Vaikuntha, Gopakumar was not fully satisfied. He was promoted to Ayodhya where he associated with Lord Ramachandra.

He was still not satisfied so he was promoted to Dvaraka. Then one day, Narada Muni asked him, "Gopakumar, what is the matter with you? Although you are in Dvaraka, the topmost region of Vaikuntha, and the Lord is so merciful to you, why are you still not satisfied?" Gopakumar explained to Narada Muni how his heart was yearning for someone who tends cows in the forest, wears a peacock feather, and plays the flute. Narada Muni said, "Your attachment is actually for Vrindavan. You must go there." He advised Gopakumar to go to *bhauma* (earthly) Vrindavan and perform *sankirtan* there, that would qualify him to go to Goloka Vrindavan. Gopakumar thus came to *bhauma* Vrindavan in India, the place where we can become qualified to

go back to Goloka Vrindavan. He performed *sankirtan* - chanting the Holy Names of Krishna, "He Govinda! He Gopal! He Nandanandana! He Yasodanandana! He Giridhari! He Gopijanavallabha!"

Now the question arises that Gopakumar was alone in Vrindavan, so how can he be performing *sankirtan*? One can do *kirtan* alone, but he was doing *sankirtan*. How was he performing *sankirtan*?

In Vrindavan, the trees are not ordinary trees, they are pure spiritual souls. Similarly, the animals, the birds, everything and everyone, are not ordinary, they are pure devotees of Krishna. And when Gopakumar was singing, "He Govinda! He Gopal!", at that time the trees, the animals, the birds were also singing along with him. And mind you, there were no instruments.

Therefore, *sankirtan* does not depend on anything material. When the pure spiritual soul chants the Holy Name of the Lord, it is *sankirtan*. *Sankirtan* has two aspects. This Sanskrit word, '*sankirtan*', is a combination of two words - *samyak* and *kirtan*. *Samyak* means 'total' and *kirtan* means 'chanting of the Holy Name of the Lord in music.' 'Total glorification of the Lord' has two connotations. One is '*bahu bin militva yat kirtan*', when many people get together and chant the Holy Name of the Lord; and the other connotation is when everything is used to glorify the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur established *sankirtan* depicting the real mood of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, i.e.

using everything in the glorification of the Lord. The material plane is contaminated because everything is disassociated from Krishna. Everything here is being used for the sense gratification of different living entities, therefore it is necessary to purify everything. Everything can be purified by being used in Krishna's service. In that respect, Srila Prabhupada uses the example of a metal becoming as hot as fire by coming in contact with fire. By being engaged in Krishna's service, matter becomes spiritualized.

That is the real purpose of *sankirtan*. A devotee's business is to use everything in Krishna's service and in thus transform everything from matter to spirit. Srila Prabhupada showed us how everything can be used in Krishna's service. He would say that when a microphone is used in Krishna's service, it is not material, it is spiritualized. A house becomes spiritualised when it is used in Krishna's service. It becomes a temple where Krishna is worshipped - it becomes the spiritual world. Just as it is an offense to think that the deities are made of clay or stone or wood, it is also an offense to think that the temple is a material place. A pure devotee like Srila Prabhupada, can transform the whole world into the spiritual sky.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur called a printing press a '*brhad mridanga*' - a huge *mridanga*. From this we can understand the kind of *sankirtan* he was doing. He called it a '*brhad mridanga*', not just a *mridanga*, but a huge *mridanga*. *Brhad* means very large or very big. That *mridanga* pumps out books which go out and convert people into devotees. Srila

Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur also used to call discussion about Krishna, Krishna *kirtan*. It is *sankirtan* and this *sankirtan* movement is destined to spread all over the world.

As followers of Srila Prabhupada, we must push on his mission. Srila Prabhupada has given us the formula: book distribution, *harinam* and *prasadam* distribution.

Srila Prabhupada understood the spirit of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's mission and he made perfect arrangements to spread Krishna consciousness. His vision was very broad. These three aspects are the most important aspects of *sankirtan*. The purpose of *sankirtan* is not our personal liberation - it is to liberate the whole world. A *sankirtan* devotee does not worry about going back to Godhead. He feels *mama janmani janmanisvare bhavatir bhaktir ahaituki tvai* - let me just serve You life after life. I do not care for liberation. Or in the spirit of Prahlad Maharaja and Vasudeva Datta, a *sankirtan* devotee feels: let everybody in the world go back and let me take all their sins and go to hell.

*Prasadam* distribution can be of many kinds. Having a restaurant is also *sankirtan*. By partaking of Krishna *prasadam* many souls will be delivered. It is very potent.

Devotees go out and chant the Holy Name on the streets of different cities. By hearing this people become purified and eventually become attracted to Krishna consciousness.

And what to speak of book distribution - when they read Srila Prabhupada's

books, their lives are completely changed. Recently, the day before I left Cape Town, a devotee told me about a man who had been robbed and shot. The bullet went through his head. He survived miraculously but was left partially paralyzed. Somehow he received Srila Prabhupada's books and started to read them. After reading the first book he was very impressed and got himself some more books.

While he read the books he became convinced about spiritual life but still he did not want to become biased. He thought, "maybe this is just Bhaktivedanta Swami's understanding. I may be influenced by his views." He got a *Bhagavad-gita* written by an English lady. He threw the book away after reading a few pages. Then he got a *Bhagavad-gita* by Sivananda of the Divine Life Society. While reading it, he could see that the guy did not know anything. He threw that book away as well.

As he was paralyzed, he could not move so he started to chant Hare Krishna. He made an altar at home and started to practice Krishna consciousness without the association of devotees. Finally, he called the temple and the devotees invited him to come visit and stay there for a few days. When I heard about him, I wanted to meet him. He came while I was giving the evening class. He used a walking stick and could barely walk and had to be helped.

After *Bhagavatam* class next morning, I asked him if he had any questions. He said, "I had many questions but while I

*Continued on page 38 . . .*

## Instructions to a Disciple on Distributing Books

*Below are quotes from letters from Guru-maharaja to Murlidhara Das, a dedicated book distributor at the Zurich temple for many years.*

### TRAIN BHAKTAS TO DISTRIBUTE BOOKS

Yes, it is true I emphasized that you distribute books, but if the temple authorities want you to become a *bhakta* program leader or give you any other service, just take it up and render that service in the best possible way. Actually everything we do in ISKCON is centered around book distribution. The *bhaktas* that you are training up are actually going to grow up to become book distributors. As a book distributor yourself, you should train them up to become very good book distributors too. I was also very happy to see how the devotees were cooperating and rendering devotional service together for spreading Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's *sankirtan* movement. And if you have to make any sacrifice to achieve this mood of cooperation, then do not hesitate to do so. Always remember sacrifice is an essential element for spiritual advancement. Please continue serving Srila Prabhupada's most glorious preaching mission and you will undoubtedly receive his causeless and magnanimous mercy.

### ISKCON IS A PREACHING MOVEMENT

I am very happy to know that you have done so well during the marathon. It pleases me very much when I see that my disciples are going out and are distributing Srila Prabhupada's books so sincerely. Our movement is a preaching movement and book distribution is the best form of preaching. Give Srila Prabhupada out to as many people as possible and their material lives will be finished and Krishna's mercy will be showered upon them. Always remember that you are in ISKCON simply in order to deliver the fallen souls of this world.

### KEEP HEALTHY TO PREACH

What Harinamananda Prabhu told you is right. Do not overdo and take care of your health. Krishna consciousness is blissful. We do not have to

strain ourselves to such an extent that we may become sick. By nature's arrangement some day we may become old and sick. But so long as we are young we should remain healthy in order to spread Krishna consciousness, which will mean eating well and taking rest when necessary. If you are in good health and good spirit, then your preaching will also be more effective. What is the use of distributing many books on one day and then collapsing for the rest of the week. It is better to maintain a steady standard.

### GREATEST SPIRITUAL BENEDICTION

When I see that my disciples are trying to serve Srila Prabhupada so sincerely, I feel very encouraged. Try to serve Srila Prabhupada with all sincerity, then you will see how he rewards you. You cannot actually imagine the extent of Srila Prabhupada's mercy that is being showered upon all his sincere servants. That is the best way to make spiritual advancement. When Srila Prabhupada is pleased, Krishna will be pleased. Always remember that this movement is designed by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to conquer the whole world with love of Krishna. Those who help Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in this mission will receive the greatest spiritual benediction.

### GURU-MAHARAJA'S DESIRE

When I see the volume of service you are rendering to His Divine Grace, I feel very insignificant and useless. I wish, instead of being a big leader I was just a humble *bhakta* and learn from you how to distribute Srila Prabhupada's books.

### IT'S OUR RIGHT

I am sorry to know that the matter of the court case in Germany is still pending. Do not feel disturbed by this, but take it as an opportunity to fight the demons who are always ready to disrupt the *sankirtan* mission of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Actually, as the representatives of the Supreme Lord, Sri Krishna, we have the absolute right to distribute Srila Prabhupada's books throughout the whole universe and these demons are trying to usurp this. Please do whatever you can to win this case.

### PRABHUPADA'S BOOKS - HIGHEST FORM OF MERCY

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu came to this material universe to distribute the most precious gift of the spiritual world, Goloka Vrindavana. That gift

was distributed throughout the whole world, according to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's desire, by Srila Prabhupada in the form of his books. Therefore to distribute these books is undoubtedly the greatest act of benevolence and the highest form of mercy. To distribute this mercy in the most effective way, Srila Prabhupada wrote over 80 books revealing the spiritual world to us in his unique Bhaktivedanta purports. We have seen in our own lives how powerful his books are. Whoever comes in contact with these books sooner or later becomes Krishna conscious. Just consider how you yourself became a devotee. Was it not by his books? It is a fact that your realization and spiritual transformation have come from reading Srila Prabhupada's books. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu brought the most precious gift to this material universe, but it was Srila Prabhupada who actually gave that to us and the whole world in his books.

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**BOOKS ARE SPIRITUAL TIME BOMBS!**

These books are so powerful that even if one just touches them, he will receive spiritual benefit, what to speak of reading them. As Harikesa Maharaja puts it, "They are like time bombs — in their own way they will explode and the material nature will be spiritualized. Even if someone does not read the books, but simply keeps them in his house, his house will become purified and some day he will read them and become a devotee. Therefore, even if we do not see an immediate effect, there is no doubt these books will in due course of time spiritualize the whole world.

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**OUR MOST IMPORTANT BUSINESS**

Srila Prabhupada, with his spiritual intelligence and vision, made this most wonderful arrangement of distributing the greatest mercy of the spiritual world through distributing his books. He wanted us to take up this book distribution as our most important business. As the books go out, more and more people will become attracted to Krishna consciousness, more and more devotees will be made, and more and more temples will be manifest. In this way we can see how these books are the basis of establishing Krishna consciousness throughout the whole world — how the books are the seed of the tree of Krishna consciousness, and how the branches of this tree will spread in every town and village.

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**COMPLETE ABSORPTION IN DISTRIBUTING**

Now Srila Prabhupada's book marathon is just about to begin. This is also the time of the year when the whole world sinks into an ocean of



sinful activities while celebrating the appearance of Jesus Christ. We have a great responsibility to rescue those people. Let us all go and throw them the lifebuoys of Srila Prabhupada's books to execute that rescuing mission. For this one month our mood should be that we have a mission to save all of these people who are drowning in the middle of an ocean of sin. At a time of such emergency, one cannot have any thought of eating and sleeping. Therefore, please try to appreciate this emergency and get fired up for your mission. If you feel hungry, then have a bite of whatever is available, and if you feel sleepy, just snatch a quick nap. Remember that the more you absorb yourself into distributing these books, the more Krishna will actually empower you to conquer eating and sleeping, and the more you can do without them, the more spiritual advancement you will make.

### PRABHUPADA'S RECIPROCATION

You are very fortunate to have had such a nice dream of serving Srila Prabhupada. From this dream it is clear how we can see that serving Srila Prabhupada's instructions in 1992 is nondifferent from serving his physical form in 1972. Book distribution is so very dear to Srila Prabhupada and is certainly the quickest way to become close to his heart. Therefore, your sincere efforts to distribute his books has brought you so close to his heart that he is now reciprocating with you in this way.

### DISTRIBUTING IS AN ACT OF LOVE

I am also very pleased with your humble mood of feeling you have no love for Krishna or your spiritual master. I am seeing how every day you are enduring all kinds of austerities to go out and distribute Srila Prabhupada's books. There is no doubt that this is an act of love and devotion because you know how pleasing it is to your spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada, and Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

### GAURA-NITAI WILL EMPOWER YOU

Regarding the prayer you are saying three times a day to help you in your book distribution, it is very nice. I am very happy to have such a sincere disciple as yourself. There is no doubt that Gaura-Nitai is reciprocating with your sincere desire and efforts and they will empower you to distribute more and more books. Even though the temple authorities are giving you a score of books to be distributed each day, at the same time keep in mind that the real score is the number of conditioned souls who received an opportunity to take the causeless mercy of Sri Chaitanya

Mahaprabhu in the form of Srila Prabhupada's books. Maintain your sincere mood of wanting to give this mercy to the suffering conditioned souls, then Gaura-Nitai will undoubtedly send you many people to take the books.

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**HELP SUFFERING SOULS**

I am very happy to know that you are sincerely engaged in distributing Srila Prabhupada's books under all conditions. Please try to realize the value of Srila Prabhupada's books and the benefit of these books for the suffering conditioned souls. They are suffering because they have forgotten Krishna and these books will remind them of their eternal loving relationship with Him. If they can get this opportunity to develop this relationship, they will automatically be elevated to the platform of transcendental joy.

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**BOOKS - FREEDOM FROM SUFFERING**

As devotees of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, we are the messengers of His causeless mercy and because he cares so much for the suffering conditioned souls, we want to give them these books. If they read these books, they will become free from their miserable existence and begin their spiritual life. Please distribute Srila Prabhupada's books as an expression of your compassion for all the suffering souls around you.

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**BE CONVINCED!**

Chant your rounds very nicely, follow the regulative principles and read Srila Prabhupada's books. You should read with the conviction that he has given us everything is his books. Your conviction should be that all we need to do is follow the instructions Srila Prabhupada has so kindly given us in the form of his books. All I want from you is that you become a pure devotee. By following Srila Prabhupada's instructions, this can be achieved very easily.

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**SPIRITUAL MASTER'S PLEASURE**

I am so happy that you had such a blissful marathon. Thank you so very much for everything that you are doing to distribute Srila Prabhupada's books. I am also happy to know that you applied yourself steadily throughout the marathon and distributed a consistent number of books every day. This is a clear indication that you are becoming more serious about rendering this service for the pleasure of Srila Prabhupada.

**DEPEND ON PRABHUPADA**

Please maintain your desire to distribute these books because they are the only way to save all the suffering conditioned souls in this material world. While distributing books, just depend upon Srila Prabhupada and Krishna. Some day Krishna will send you many nice people and on other days He may not. But still, your business is to shower his mercy on everyone. Never forget that you are not distributing books for name and fame, but simply to please Srila Prabhupada and Krishna

**NO UNFAIR METHODS**

While distributing Srila Prabhupada's books, always be aware of the fact that the purpose of book distribution is to preach and make devotees. Therefore it is important that you do not use any unfair means to distribute these books. We want to leave such a positive impression in the minds of the people we approach. Inspire them to read the books and encourage them to become devotees.

**SHOWER PRABHUPADA'S MERCY**

These books are the priceless gift of Srila Prabhupada coming directly from the spiritual sky. They are the most precious objects in the material nature. Therefore, please distribute as many books as you can and try to deliver all the fallen conditioned souls around you. Although they are completely unaware of it, they need your mercy to become free from their miserable material existence. Please shower the mercy of Srila Prabhupada's books upon them as abundantly as you can.

**BE FIXED UP**

You have always been a very good disciple and I am sure that Srila Prabhupada is very pleased with you. Now that you have offered yourself completely to Srila Prabhupada's mission and ISKCON, do not let any other desire deviate you from that goal. Your sincere involvement in this movement is good enough to take you back home, back to Godhead. Always remain aware of Srila Prabhupada's special mercy and try to render service unto his lotus feet.

**SECRET OF SUCCESS**

I am very happy to know that you have accepted my instructions so sincerely and distributing Srila Prabhupada's books so successfully. When

you desire to serve Krishna, then Krishna provides you with all help. Krishna does not need our service, but we need to serve Him to develop our love for Him. If Krishna desires, He could make the whole world Krishna conscious in a moment, but He is giving us a chance to become Krishna conscious ourselves.

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**IT'S THE BEST WAY**

Now that Srila Prabhupada's marathon is just around the corner, I am sure that you are preparing yourself for a big drive. Please try to distribute as many of Srila Prabhupada's books to the conditioned souls as you can. That is the best way to preach Krishna consciousness. As the books go out, Krishna's mercy spreads to different corners of the world and the conditioned souls get a chance to be delivered from their miserable bondage. Now that you are distributing Srila Prabhupada's books so sincerely, I feel very happy with you.

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**ISKCON IS FOR DISTRIBUTING MERCY**

I just got to know how wonderfully you are distributing Srila Prabhupada's books. It is very enlivening for me to know that you are trying to please His Divine Grace so sincerely. Srila Prabhupada designed this International Society for Krishna Consciousness to deliver conditioned souls all over the world. In order to accomplish that mission, he gave us three specific activities – book distribution, *prasadam* distribution and *harinam*. Of these activities, book distribution is the most important one. As the books go out, people get a chance to hear Srila Prabhupada speak, and once they hear this transcendental voice, that means the end of their material life. Most of us came to Krishna consciousness reading Srila Prabhupada's books and that is a clear indication of the potency of these books.

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**BECOME SURRENDERED**

I am very happy to know that you are going out and distributing Srila Prabhupada's books and regularly distributing so many of them. You are sincerely trying to serve Srila Prabhupada and Krishna, therefore, Krishna is rewarding you with success. Spiritual life means to become surrendered, and to become surrendered means not to depend upon one's own ability. In this way you become surrendered, and to become surrendered, means not to depend upon one's own ability. In this way, when you become surrendered, then Krishna becomes very pleased. And this is the best way to make spiritual advancement.

# SERVANT of the SERVANT

*The following is a selection of excerpts from "Servant of the Servant"  
a book by His Holiness Tamal Krishna Goswami.*

Srila Prabhupada was calling for a spiritual revolution. No one could offer anything to compare with the literary achievement of Vyasadeva. The Vedic literatures were unrivaled both in beauty and content. And Srila Prabhupada's Bhaktivedanta purports spanned the five thousand years of *Kali-yuga*, presenting Vyasadeva's teachings for modern man. Placed in the hands of its readers, our Krishna conscious literature would create a revolution within their hearts, uprooting the threefold miseries of material existence. Once this change of heart took place on a wide enough scale, the population would demand the election of Krishna conscious leaders qualified to restore the kingdom of God on earth, as in the former, Vedic times.

Was this a dream only, some impossible fantasy of a religious visionary? Not by Prabhupada's estimation, nor by that of his spiritual master, nor by any of the previous *acaryas*'. Each was convinced

that Lord Chaitanya's order would tangibly manifest itself, and toward that goal they were willing to dedicate their lives. While Prabhupada's peers had thought that Lord Chaitanya's prediction that Krishna's name would be chanted in every town and village was merely a poetic metaphor, Srila Prabhupada had taken this transcendental order absolutely and had worked tirelessly toward its fulfillment. It was this absolute faith in the words of Lord Chaitanya, delivered to him at the first meeting with his Guru-maharaja, which had sustained Srila Prabhupada through years of preparation in India while he wrote and prepared the *Bhagavatam* for its distribution in the West. Having gathered a small army of *sankirtan* soldiers, he now prepared to escalate the war with *maya* by urging them to unleash a barrage of transcendental literature all over the world. (pages 481-482)

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Within a few weeks our entire party had

been caught by the infectious mood of book distribution. Even the brand new *bhaktas* demanded a chance to try out for the part-time afternoon party. Now the problem became the shortage of vehicles, as well as qualified leaders to head the increasing numbers of aspiring preachers. A General Motors credit scheme solved the first problem, enabling us to immediately acquire three new maxi-vans. But there was no such bank from which we could "draw" devotees. Srila Prabhupada desired that I organize hundreds of buses and vans filled with *sannyasis* and *brahmacharis* to distribute books throughout America. He had not mentioned any zonal consideration, and I had given no thought to where we preached. Thus far we had been traveling freely for the benefit of all America temples. The festivals we held were the best public relations and were laying the ground for making so many devotees in the future. If in addition we did book distribution, it was the temples once again that would draw the long-range advantage. Interested readers would naturally contact the temples, wanting to find out more about our Krishna consciousness movement. (pages 486-487)

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In the morning *Bhagavatam* classes I tried to explain the philosophy in practical terms that the *sankirtan* devotees could relate to. Srila Prabhupada states in the Teachings of Lord Chaitanya that "the *sankirtan* movement inaugurated by Lord Chaitanya is a transcendental pastime of the Lord. 'By it I live simultaneously to preach and popularize this movement in the material world.'" Just as

Lord Chaitanya had faced so many opposing elements to propagate *sankirtan*, His followers could expect to meet with similar challenges. As long as one strictly followed the regulative principles he would be empowered to preach, guaranteed of the Lord's protection. Naturally, in the course of preaching sometimes there is need to argue with the contentions of opponents; but as far as possible I advised the devotees to avoid persons who approached them in an argumentative mood.

In the question-and-answer period following class, the *sankirtan* devotees sought advice on various preaching techniques, how to better fix their mind in their service, or answers to difficult queries posed by those whom they met. One morning a devotee asked if he could go out on book distribution in his Indian-style *dhoti*, with shaved head. I explained that we should adopt whatever principle was beneficial to expand our preaching work. If the conditions were suitable, certainly we preferred the natural devotional attire, but under the present circumstances it was unlikely that dressing visibly as a *Vaishnava* would facilitate *sankirtan*. Srila Prabhupada had clarified this issue in discussing the propagation of Krishna consciousness. In the *Chaitanya-caritamrta* (*Madhya-lila* 14.5) he writes, "Sometimes members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness - especially in the Western countries - find it difficult to approach people to distribute books because people are unfamiliar with the traditional saffron robes of the devotees. The devotees have therefore inquired whether they

can wear European and American dress before the general public. From the instructions given to King Prataparudra by Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, we can understand that we may change our dress in any way to facilitate our service. When our members change their dress to meet the public or to introduce our books, they are not breaking the devotional principles. The real principle is to spread this Krishna consciousness movement, and if one has to change into regular Western dress for this purpose, there should be no objection." (pages 490-491)

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I directed the men to push the stage and other festival paraphernalia to one side. Two hundred cases of Back to Godhead had just arrived, and I watched as they were loaded into the bus's bays in preparation for the departure to Gainesville. Prabhupada had ordered book distribution. My mind was firmly fixed, and there was no turning back from this course. He was Abhay Caranaravindam, "fearless for having taken shelter of Lord Krsna's lotus feet," and we were his servants. He had not played it safe and stayed in Vrndavana but had taken all risk to come for our deliverance. Now he was asking us to do the same for others. Our lives had been lost until he brought us back from the dead, so it was his decision, not ours, that we should go ahead at all costs. *Sankirtan* was a risk; there would be casualties. But in the end, for those who persevered, there was unlimited glory.

\* \* \*

Juhu, Bombay, December 28, 1974

My dear Tamal Krishna Goswami,

Please accept my blessings. I am in due receipt of your letter dated 12-11-74 and have noted the contents carefully.

I was extremely pleased to hear your report from your traveling buses. It sounds as if your program is very very wonderful and I am very encouraged to hear that such a program is coming along so nicely. I am glad that you have understood the importance of my books, therefore I am stressing it so much. Let everyone take these books. If he simply reads one page then he is getting something substantial, a real eternal benefit. Or if he hands it over to his friend and he reads one page the same result is there. So continue these festivals constantly and make them all Krishna Conscious. Overflood the whole country by this preaching work. Let the whole United States become *Vaishnavas*, then everyone else in the whole world will follow. That is my real ambition. Therefore your program is very glorious. This is really preaching. Your intelligence is being properly utilized. In the beginning you took up the distribution of BTG's and you sold the most. Now you have taken up this van program and you will also be successful in the same way. This preaching spirit will make you recognized by Krishna. There is so much wonderful potential in USA for this type of program. So organize hundreds of such parties. This is fulfilling the mission of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. I am

very glad to hear that not only you are maintaining such program but that you want to expand it. Yes, this is our philosophy; anandambudhi vardhanam. It means to expand or to increase. Therefore I strongly encourage you to double your program by getting three more buses if you can do it. There is no difficulty. BBT will help. I have written Hansadutta one letter to you the van. BBT means fifty percent is for printing books and fifty percent for construction of temples. So your buses are all moving temples. Don't worry. There will be no scarcity of money. Go on with your program and increase and increase more and more. In the end of your letter you mention that people are not very much eager to go to temples but with your program you are bringing the temples to the people. In this way you will give everyone the opportunity to step in the direction of back to Godhead, back to home. So you and Vishnujana Maharaja and all of your nice bramacharis continue strongly with great enthusiasm and determination to spread this Krishna consciousness movement all over your country and Lord Chaitanya will certainly be pleased with you.

I hope this meets you in good health.

Your ever well-wisher,

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

Srila Prabhupada in his *vani* form greeted me upon my entrance into Gainesville and garlanded me with nectarean words of this special letter. Only once before had I remembered feeling so dear to Srila Prabhupada. It was

shortly after I took *sannyasa* in India. I had returned from my first preaching assignment, filling an invitation Prabhupada had received so that His Divine Grace could go to Africa. I was traveling from Ahmedabad to Madras, with a change of trains in Bombay, and although Prabhupada was staying at the Bombay temple, I had remained at the train station, strictly observing the etiquette that I should not again see my former wife, who at that time was residing at the temple. But in his eagerness to hear the report of his emissary, Prabhupada had pushed aside such etiquette and summoned me into his presence. When I arrived, he made the unusual gesture of asking the devotees to leave the room, something he rarely did. When we were alone together, he heard with rapt attention as I communicated the success of our Ahmedabad mission. But time was short if I was still to make the train. I begged to be excused that I might leave for Madras, to make preparations for Prabhupada's arrival. After I offered by obeisances, His Divine Grace stood up and, moving around his desk, came over and embraced me affectionately in his arms. Pressing his head against mine, first on one side, then on the other, Prabhupada whispered, "Krishna is in your heart. Go and preach!"

I remember feeling stunned by Prabhupada's intimate embrace, for rarely did he use his transcendental form in this way. And now once again, by intimate *vani* I felt his living embrace confirm his preaching mission within my heart. (pages 493-496)



*Continued from page 16 . . .*

we needed a good *sankirtan* leader. Somehow I was chosen, somehow got to wear the 'cap'! Thus I became the *sankirtan* leader. There were three groups of devotees going out. The group of new boys was considered to be the most difficult party. I took on that group. In January we traveled for about two and a half months. There was a big stock of Bengali books in Assam and Tripura, in northeastern India, so we went there.

There were six boys with me. We traveled to different places in a van and distributed books. Life on the road was so nice. The closeness and intimacy had a tremendous impact on those boys. Actually, I can see why those boys did so well during that time whereas later on practically all of them were dispersed. The fire of *sankirtan* and the closeness of being together actually kept them enthusiastically involved in Krishna consciousness. Although they were simple village boys and not very learned or philosophically advanced, they did very well. They used to park the van and distribute books the whole day. One boy would cook in the morning and evening, and we used to take *prasadam* together. Then I would either spend the evening with them doing *kirtans* and a *Bhagavad-gita* class or we would have a program outside. I was the *sankirtan* leader for about three months but then I had to leave for Chandigarh.

**Devotee:** Thank you very much Guru-maharaja.

**Guru-maharaja:** Hare Krishna. Jai Srila Prabhupada!

*Continued from page 26 . . .*

was listening to your class all of them were answered as if you were directly answering my questions." Simply by reading Srila Prabhupada's books this person became a devotee. This is the potency of Srila Prabhupada's books. This is how the *sankirtan* movement will spread. We do not really know how these books are going to affect people. We must simply have the faith that Srila Prabhupada has made perfect arrangements.

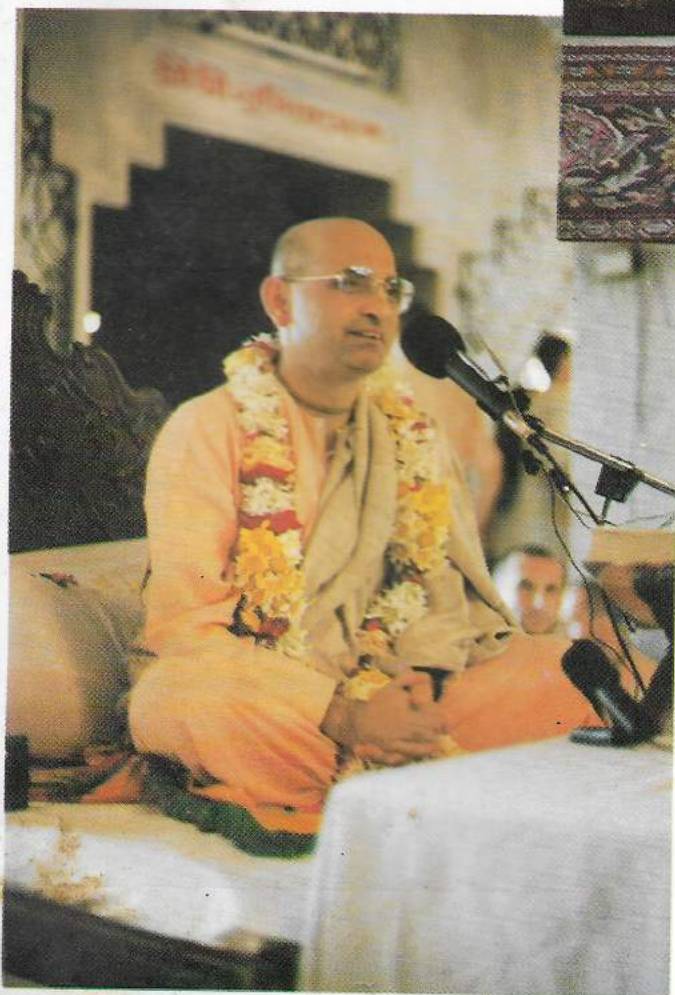
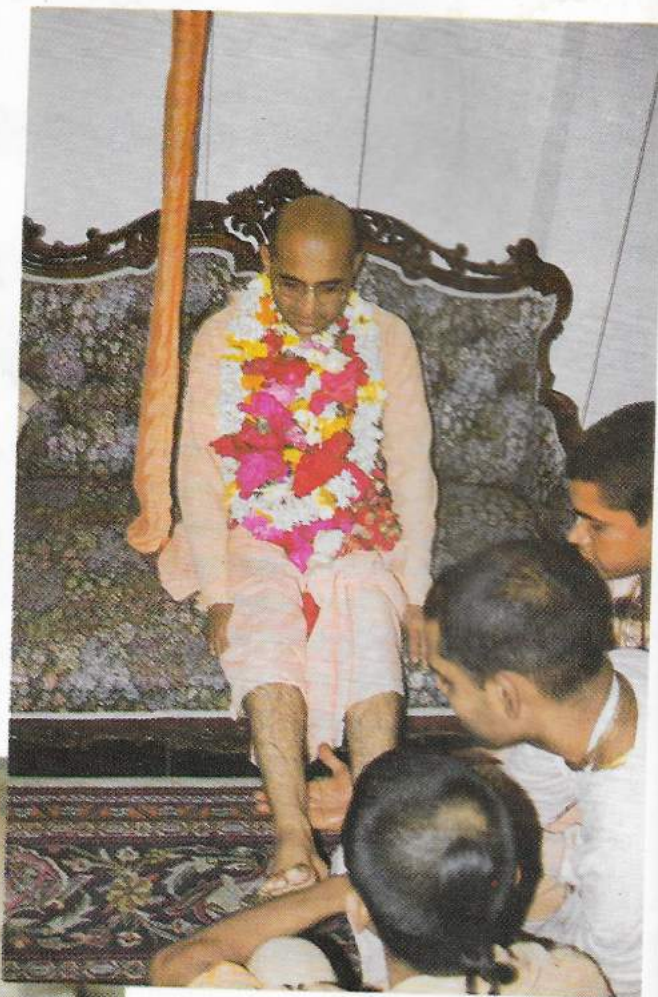
Someday, even if there is no devotee in this world, if Srila Prabhupada's books are here, then they will do the job. That is the potency of Srila Prabhupada's books. Actually we are too close to Srila Prabhupada to recognize his full glory. But as time passes, as people get to see Srila Prabhupada from a distance, they will be able to appreciate His glories more.

Materialists do not have the vision to appreciate the spiritual glory of Srila Prabhupada. But with the passing of time the whole world will see the greatness of Srila Prabhupada. They will see that ISKCON has spread to every town and village in the world. They will see thousands upon thousands of people accepting Krishna consciousness, and they will recognize that it is all because of Srila Prabhupada!"

So our business is to glorify Srila Prabhupada as much as possible and make people realize who Srila Prabhupada really is!

Srila Prabhupada ki jaya!

*yasya deve para bhaktir  
yatha deve tatha gurau  
tasyaite kathita hy arthah  
prakasante mahatmanah*



Only unto those great  
souls who serve  
*guru* and Krishna  
with implicit faith is the  
import of the *Vedas* fully  
revealed.

*(Svetasvatara Upanisad  
6.23)*