His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, came to America in 1965, at age 69, to fulfill his spiritual master’s request that he teach the science of Krishna consciousness throughout the English-speaking world. In a dozen years he published some seventy volumes of translation and commentary on India’s Vedic literature, and these are now standard in universities worldwide. Meanwhile, travelling almost nonstop, Srila Prabhupada moulded his international society into a world wide confederation of ashramas, schools, temples and farm communities. He passed away in 1977, in Vrindavana, the place most sacred to Lord Krishna. His disciples and followers are carrying forward the movement he started.
Symptoms of the Liberated
How we can recognize a person truly free from the influence of material nature.

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

prayena munayo rajan nivrtta vidhi-sedhata
naigunya-stha ramante sma gunanukathane hareh

“O King Parikshit, mainly the topmost transcendentalists who are above the regulative principles and restrictions take pleasure in describing the glories of the Lord.”
—Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.1.7

There is a stage called the paramahamsa stage. At that time, one does not very strictly follow the regulative principles. Or, rather, it is not that the paramahamsas are not following, but they're above all regulative principles. We should not imitate that position: “Now we have become paramahamsas, and we can neglect all regulative principles.” No. You must prove that you are a paramahamsa.

What is the paramahamsa stage? Naigunya-stha ramante sma gunanukathane hareh—when one's only business is to glorify Krishna. A paramahamsa does not think, "I have become a paramahamsa. Let me eat and sleep." No. The symptom is that one cannot waste a moment without glorifying Krishna. That is a paramahamsa. When you cannot remain even for a single moment without describing Krishna, then you can know that you are on the paramahamsa stage. No attachment for anything material; simply attachment for Krishna.

Then you can give up the regulative principles. Not before that. Don't imitate. You must first come to that positive stage.

Desirelessness Impossible

The paramahamsa stage is not simply negative. You must stand on a positive platform. Those who are shunyavadi [voidists] are simply concerned with the negative. The other day a Zen Buddhist came. He said that the goal is "to become desireless." These people do not know that it is impossible to become desireless Therefore they are disturbed always. It is not possible to become desireless. That is a negative post, nirvana. voidist

That is Buddha philosophy, nirvana. "Stop these material nonsense activities." But unless one has positive activities, how can he give up this nonsense? Param drstva nivartate [Bhagavad-gita 2.59]. You must give someone good engagement. Otherwise, he'll go on committing all nonsense. Just like you. You have been given good engagement—deity worship and so many other things. You are engaged. Therefore you have no time to divert your attention for nonsense things.

To try to stop nonsense artificially will not work. The U.S. government tried to stop intoxication—LSD—by spending millions of dollars. Not a single man was stopped. And here in Krishna consciousness, as soon as they come, immediately they stop. Why? Param drstva nivartate. When one understands that he is getting better "intoxication," then he thinks, "Why shall I go to LSD?" That is required.

Here it is said, nivrtta vidhi-sedhatah. There are two things—vidhi and nisedha, or do's and don'ts. We say, "Chant the Hare Krishna mantra," and "No illicit sex." Positive and negative. Vidhi means do's, and nisedha do not's.

These do's and don'ts are the beginning of life. Don't try to become a paramahamsa from the very beginning. Then you'll fall flat. Naigunya means above material nature. Material nature is called traigunya. Traigunya means the three modes of material nature: goodness, passion, and ignorance. When you rise above these three gunas, or modes, then there is the possibility of becoming a paramahamsa.

Krishna advised Arjuna, traigunyavisaya veda nistraigunyo bhavarjuna [Bhagavad-gita 2.45]. The Vedas deal with the three gunas, giving directions according to each one. For persons in sattva-guna, or the mode of goodness, there are six Puranas. There are eighteen Puranas in all. Some of them are for persons situated in the mode of goodness, some of them are for persons in rajo-guna (passion), and some of them are for persons in tamo-guna (ignorance).

In the Vedas there is a recommendation to worship goddess Kali. That is for the tamo-guna, not for the sattva-guna. The Puranas for sattva-guna include the Vishnu Purana, Brahma Purana, Brahma-vaivarta Purana, and
Rise Above the Modes

On the whole, we are always mixed up with the sattva-guna, rajo-guna, and tamo-guna. That is our material position. Therefore sometimes we come to Krishna consciousness when we are in sattva-guna, and when tamo-guna or rajo-guna attacks, we sometimes fall down. So we have to rise above these gunas. Traigunya-visaya veda nistraigunyo bhavarjuna. Krishna advised Arjuna, “Rise above these three gunas.”

How it can be done? Simply by hearing about Krishna. This is nairgunya-stha ramante sma gunanukathane hareh. If you simply engage yourself only in hearing about Krishna, then you are nistraigunya, above the modes. That is the process. Simple. No other business than hearing about Krishna.

We have given you so many books. Don’t sleep. Don’t waste a single moment. Of course, you have to sleep, but reduce it as much as possible. Eating, sleeping, mating, and defending—reduce them.

That is the example shown by the six Gosvamis. Nidraha-viharakadivijitaau: they conquered eating, sleeping, and sex. That is the spiritual platform. No more sleeping, no more eating, no more sex life. That is perfection. And one who can conquer these three things—eating, sleeping, and sex—is fearless, automatically. There is no requirement of defense because such a person can meet any situation.

That is the paramahamsa stage, where there is no regulation. Don’t imitate. Some of our students have exhibited that their thought is “There is no need of regulations. We are all paramahamsas.” Not paramahamsa—rascal number one! Here is the test of the paramahamsa: one who is not influenced by the material qualities—rajo-guna, sattva-guna, and tamo-guna. And the test of that is that one has conquered eating, sleeping, and sex enjoyment.

Rise above the modes by hearing about Krishna. The Gosvamis were always writing books about Krishna. Following their example, we are simply describing the different activities and attributes of Krishna. In today’s verse it is said, gunanukatha: “describing the glories of the Lord.” Anu means not whimsically, but by following the superior authorities. You cannot write anything not approved by the superior authorities. Therefore, we have to give examples, with quotations from the shastra, the scripture. What I am speaking, it is supported by the shastras. Not that I have inventive power—I can write anything I like.” That is nonsense. Anukathane means you must hear from the authority perfectly. Then try to write. Not that you write whimsically, whatever you like. That is not allowed. And that will not be accepted.

Therefore, in the beginning of this chapter [2.1.1] we learned,

vairyansaṭe prasnah kṛto loka-hitam nrpa
atmavit-sammataḥ pumsam srotavyadisu yaḥ parah

“My dear King, your question is glorious because it is very beneficial to all kinds of people. The answer to this question is the prime subject matter for hearing, and it is approved by all transcendentalists.” Atmavit-sammataḥ: “It is approved by the realized souls.” Not that whimsically I do something or you question something. No. The question must be approved by atmavit, a self-realized person, and the answer should be given by the self-realized person. That is wanted.

No Independence

We have no independence, either materially or spiritually. But we’re falsely thinking to become independent. That is called illusion, maya. The rascals do not know that there is no independence at all, either materially or spiritually. Just like the outlaws—they have no independence, either criminally or civilly. When a person is a good citizen there is no independence, and when he’s a criminal there is no independence. So why is he thinking, “I shall act criminally and become independent”? That is not possible. And because he cannot understand it, he is a rascal. His independence is illusion.

Where is your independence? Illusion. Maya. When you are under the strict rules and regulations of material nature, how are you independent? Daivi hy esa yumāyai mama maya durataya [Bhagavad-gītā 7.14]. People
think that to surrender to Krishna is a slave mentality. "I shall remain free." But where is your freedom, sir? That is illusion.

As long as one is a rascal, falsely thinking that he's independent, he must observe the regulative principles, vidhinedha. When he's actually situated on the transcendental platform, that is called nairgunya-stha. Stha means "situated," "not flickering," "permanent." So nairgunya means devotional service. That is nairgunya.

That is stated in the Bhagavad-gita:

\[
mam ca yo 'vyabhicarena bhakti-yogena sevate
sa gunan samatiyaitan brahma-bhuyaya kalpate
\]

"One who engages in full devotional service, unfailing in all circumstances, at once transcends the modes of material nature and thus comes to the level of Brahman." [14.26]

\[
brahma-bhutah prasannatma na socati na kanksati
samah sarvesu bhutesu mad-bhaktim labhate param
\]

"One who is thus transcendently situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman and becomes fully joyful. He never laments or desires to have anything. He is equally disposed toward every living entity. In that state he attains pure devotional service unto Me." [18.54]

**Everything is there in Bhagavad-gita**

Nairgunya means one who is twenty-four hours engaged in devotional service. He's on the nairgunya platform and is no longer influenced by the material qualities. Mam ca yo 'vyabhicarena. Aavyabhicarena means without any flaw, without any fault. When one is strictly following and engaged in devotional service according to the restriction, or instruction, of the shastra and spiritual master, one can conquer or surpass the three modes of material nature. And that stage is brahma-bhutah.

**Symptoms of the Spiritual Platform**

Now, everyone can say, "I am now in the brahma-bhutah." But the symptom of one on that platform is given, so you cannot cheat. What is that symptom? Brahma-bhutah prasannatma. If you are actually on the brahmabhutah platform, then the symptom will be prasannatma: jolly, always. There will be no more moroseness. Always jolly. That is the first symptom. "Oh, I am now free from the material clutches."

As soon as you are actually engaged in devotional service, there will be no more punishment by the material nature. Therefore you will always be jubilant, prasannatma. What is the meaning of prasannatma? Prasannatma means na socati na kanksati: not desiring anything, and not lamenting for anything. That is the brahma-bhutah stage. If something is lost, "Never mind. Krishna desired the loss. That's all right." And if there is a gain, one does not jump like a monkey—"Oh, I have gained this! I have gained this!" [Laughter.]

No. Everything is Krishna's. I am engaged in Krishna's service. If there is some loss, it is Krishna's desire. And if there is some profit, it is Krishna's money. I don't possess anything. Why shall I jump? Of course, we can jump. "Oh, we have gained so many things for Krishna!" That is different.

Another symptom of the brahmabhuta stage is samah sarvesu bhutesu: equal to everyone. One who understands that everyone is a spirit soul, some way or other entangled in a material body, is fit for transcendental service to the Lord.

After being liberated from the three material modes, one has to be situated in nistraigunya. Here it is stated "nairgunya." Nairgunya and nistraigunya have the same meaning. Nairgunya-stha ramante: one enjoys life. As soon as you come to the platform of nairgunya, free from the infection of the three material qualities, then ramante: everything is pleasure.

Therefore those who are yogis—who are bhaktas, bhakti-yogis—also enjoy life. It is not that we restrict: "Don't enjoy the senses." Sense "enjoyment" is not enjoyment; it is bondage. Suppose I am enjoying either illicit or legal sex. I am under bondage. Even it is legal sex life, I get children, and then I have a duty to the children. So either in goodness or in ignorance, there is bondage.

Therefore one has to rise above the three modes, and then one enjoys. What is that enjoyment? Ramante yogino 'nante. That is not limited enjoyment, for few minutes. No. Anante, eternal enjoyment. And that is satyanande, that is real ananda. That is real bliss. When your ananda does not stop, that is real ananda. And the ananda, or the
pleasure, which is for a few seconds or a few minutes, that is not ananda. That is illusion. Real ananda will continue. It will never stop. It will never end. Therefore it is said,

ramante yogino 'nante satyanande cid-atmani
iti rama-padenasau param brahmabhidhiyate

"The Supreme Absolute Truth is called Rama because the transcendentalists take pleasure in the unlimited true pleasure of spiritual existence." [Padma Purana] When we enter the platform of continuous blissfulness, ananda, that is the connection with, and that is the meaning of, Rama. That means that when one is situated in the service of the Param Brahma, the Supreme Truth, his life is successful.

**Fix the Mind On Krishna**

Here it is said, nairgunya-stha ramante sma gunanukathane hareh: when not a single moment is wasted without talking about Krishna. So practice this. First of all, fix your mind on the lotus feet of Krishna. If your mind is fixed, then the other senses will act, because the other senses act under the leadership of the mind. Your mind is your enemy or your friend. The mind engaged in Krishna consciousness is your friend. And the mind engaged in other consciousness is your enemy.

You can create your mind as friend or enemy—according to your desire. Deity worship means to fix your mind on the lotus feet of Krishna, always worshiping Krishna. If you fix your mind on the lotus feet of Krishna, immediately you are nairgunya-stha—situated in the nairgunya, the transcendental platform.

In another place, it is said,

srnvatam sva-kathah Krishnah punya-sravana-kirtanah
hrdy antah-stho hy abhadrani vidhunoti suhrt satam

"Sri Krishna, the Personality of Godhead, who is the Paramatma [Supersoul] in everyone's heart and the benefactor of the truthful devotee, cleanses desire for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee who has developed the urge to hear His messages, which are in themselves virtuous when properly heard and chanted." [Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.2.17]

Krishna is situated within your heart. He's your best friend. Suhrdam sarvabhutanam. He's always considering how your perfect welfare can be done. Krishna is so nice a friend. When I take the body of a hog, Krishna is there advising me. And when I am in the body of a human being, there also Krishna is advising me. Krishna is so kind. Therefore suhrdam sarva-bhutanam. He's the friend not only of human beings, but even of the hogs, dogs, cats—everyone. Suhrdam sarva-bhutanam.

This is the science one has to know. People are trying to become leaders of society to act for others' welfare, but that is impossible. If a person is a rascal, how can he become the friend of the citizens? One's business should be to make friendship with Krishna and advise others to make friendship with Krishna. That is real leadership. But the rascals do not know what is their own benefit, and they have become leaders.

Sanatana Gosvami said to Lord Chaitanya, apanara hitahita kichui na jani.... "Sir, I was a government minister. People used to say that I was a very learned scholar, and I accepted that. But when I came into contact with you, I thought, 'What kind of leader am I? I do not know what is beneficial for me. I am such a leader. I am such a fool. I do not know my own benefit, and I want to become a leader to lead others for benefit in life.'"

Andha yathandhair upaniyamanah. How can a blind man lead other blind men? That is cheating. All these leaders are blind themselves. They do not know the aim of life, and they're becoming leaders. So the blind leader and the blind followers are all going to hell. That is the position of the world.

Therefore we should be careful that we don't imitate—"I have now become a paramahamsa. I do not require to follow the rules and regulations. Let me do whatever I like." Don't do that. The test is there: gunanukathane hareh. When you are a paramahamsa, you have no other business than simply to hear about Krishna and chant about Krishna. 😊
SRILA PRABHUPADA SPEAKS OUT

LSD And Liberation

The following conversation between Srila Prabhupada and the poet Allen Ginsberg took place in Columbus, Ohio, on May 11, 1969.

Srila Prabhupada: Nobody is free from service because we are constitutionally servants. Either we become the servant of the Great or maya. Just like in any condition of our lives, we have to abide by the state laws. If you don’t abide, then you come to the prison house. You will be forced. Similarly, maya and Krishna. If we don’t abide by Krishna, then we come to maya. We cannot be free. That is not our position. Freedom results in frustration.

Allen Ginsberg: Do you remember a man named Richard Alpert? He used to work with Timothy Leary in Harvard many years ago. And then he went to India and found a teacher and is now a disciple of Hanumanji, or a devotee of Hanuman. We were talking about maya and the present condition of America. So he said that his teacher in India told him that LSD was a Christ of the Kali-yuga for Westerners.

Srila Prabhupada: Christ?

Allen Ginsberg: Of the Kali-yuga for Westerners. As the Kali-yuga got more intense, as attachment got thicker and thicker, salvation would also have to get easier and easier.

Srila Prabhupada: That is a very nice statement that in the Kali-yuga salvation becomes much easier. That is the version of Srimad-Bhagavatam also, but that process is this kirtana [chanting the names of God], not LSD.

Allen Ginsberg: Well, the reasoning was that for those who would only accept salvation in a purely material form, in a chemical form finally, Krishna had the humour to emerge as a pill.

Srila Prabhupada: No, the thing is that with any material form, where is there salvation? It is illusion.

Allen Ginsberg: Well, the subjective effect is to cut attachment during...

Srila Prabhupada: No. If you have got attachment for something material, then where is the cut-off of attachment? LSD is a material chemical.
Allen Ginsberg: Yeah.

Srila Prabhupada: So if you have to take shelter of LSD, then you are taking help from matter. So how are you free from matter?

Allen Ginsberg: Well, the subjective experience is, while in the state of intoxication of LSD you also realize that LSD is a material pill, and that it does not really matter.

Srila Prabhupada: So that is risky. That is risky.

Allen Ginsberg: Yeah. Now, so if LSD is a material attachment, which it is, I think, then is not sound, shabda, also a material attachment?

Srila Prabhupada: No, shabda is spiritual. Just like in the Bible it is said, "Let there be creation." This sound is spiritual sound. Creation was not there. The sound produced the creation. Therefore, sound is originally spiritual, and from sound, sky develops; from sky, air develops; from air, fire develops; from fire, water develops; from water, land develops.

Allen Ginsberg: Sound is the first element of creation?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, yes.

Allen Ginsberg: What was the first sound traditionally?

Srila Prabhupada: The Vedic literature states, om. So at least we can understand from your Bible that God said, "Let there be creation." So there is this sound, and then there is creation. God and His sound are nondifferent, absolute. I say, "Mr. Ginsberg," and this sound and I are different. But God is nondifferent from His energy. Shakti shaktimator abhedah. Shakti, energy, and shakimat, the energetic. They are nondifferent. Just like fire and heat, they are nondifferent, but heat is not fire. You cannot differentiate heat from fire, or fire from heat. But fire is not heat.

Allen Ginsberg: Well, the sound Krishna...

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, it is nondifferent from Krishna.

Allen Ginsberg: Under all circumstances.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, under all circumstances. But it is a question of my appreciation, or my realization. That will depend on my purity. Otherwise, this Krishna sound and Krishna are nondifferent. Therefore if we vibrate the sound Krishna, then we are immediately in contact with Krishna. And because Krishna is wholly spiritual, then we become spiritualized. Just like if you touch electricity, immediately you’re electrified. And the more you become electrified [by vibrating the sound Krishna], the more you become Krishna-ized. So when you are fully Krishna-ized, you are on the Krishna platform. Tyaktva deham punar janma naiti mam eti so ‘rjuna. You don’t come back to this material existence. You remain with Krishna.

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Sri Vrindadevy-ashtaka

(1) 
*gangeya-campeya-tadid-vinindirochih-pravaha-snapitaya- vrinde bandhuka-bandhu-dyuti-divya-vaso vrinde namas te caranaravindam*

O Vrinda Devi, I offer my respectful obeisances to your lotus feet. You are bathed in your own splendour, which defeats the effulgence of lightning and the golden champaka flower. The luster of your transcendental garments is the friend of the leandhilia flower.

(2) 
*bimbadharoditvara-manda-hasya-nasagra-mukta-dyuti-dipti-asya vicitra-ratnabarana-shriyadhyeye vrinde namas te caranaravindam*

O Vrinda Devi, I offer my respectful obeisances to your lotus feet. Your face is illuminated by the splendour of the pearl decorating the tip of your nose, and by the extraordinary gentle smile on the two bimba fruits which are your lips. You are enriched by the beauty of the amazing and colourful jewels and ornaments you wear.

(3) 
*samasta-vaikuntha-shiromanau shri-krishnasya vrindavana-dhanya-dhamni dattadhikare vrishabhanu-putrya vrinde namas te caranaravindam*

O Vrinda Devi, I offer my respectful obeisances to your lotus feet. Srimati Radharani, the daughter of King Vrishabhanu, has made you the ruling monarch of Lord Krishna’s opulent and auspicious abode of Vrindavana, which is the crest jewel of all the Vaikuntha planets.

(4) 
*tvad-ajnaya pallava-pushpa-bhringa-mrigadibhir madhava-keli- kunjah madhv-adibhir bhangi vibhushyamana vrinde namas te caranaravindam*

O Vrinda Devi, I offer my respectful obeisances to your lotus feet. Because of your order, the groves where Lord Madhava performs His pastimes appear very splendid, decorated with blossoming flowers, bumblebees, deer, and other auspicious animals, flowers, and birds.
O Vrinda Devi, I offer my respectful obeisances to your lotus feet. Who can describe your good fortune? You were the messenger who brought about the perfection of the amorous pastimes of Radha and Krishna, the youthful couple, who enthusiastically sport in the groves of Vrindavana.

Those who have studied the Satvata-tantra glorify you. You are Lord Krishna's potency for performing pastimes, and you are known as Tulasi Devi in the human society.

O Vrinda Devi, I offer my respectful obeisances to your lotus feet. The living entities who attain the service of the lotus feet of your Lord reside in Vrindavana. And the desire to understand the Lord's amazing pastimes of the rasa dance is only by your mercy.

Those who are devoid of devotion to Lord Hari, and who are thrown by their offenses into the waves of lust and other inauspicious qualities, may take shelter of you.

Let a person who becomes like a bumblebee at the lotus feet of Radha-Krishna, and who reads or hears these eight verses describing the glories of Vrinda Devi, eternally reside at Goloka Vrindavana. He attains devotional service in pure love of Godhead, and all his spiritual aspirations become fulfilled.
Devotees of Krishna worship a little tree. But she’s not an ordinary tree. She’s Tulasi Devi, Krishna’s favorite plant.

Tulasi has delicate purple and green leaves, flower tassels like miniature temple spires, and an arresting, sweet fragrance famous for attracting the minds of yogis to Krishna’s service. Tulasi’s wood is carved into the japa beads on which devotees chant Krishna’s name. Devotees wear strands of Tulasi beads around their necks. Her leaves and flowers decorate the Deity of Krishna in the temple and are placed on food offered to Him. She has taken the form of a tree so that everyone, even the poorest person, can offer something wonderful to Krishna.

My fascination with Tulasi Devi began very soon after meeting Srila Prabhupada in 1967. I searched Indian stores all over New York City to find a set of Tulasi japa beads. One clever man sold me rosewood beads, assuring me they were Tulasi. When I presented them to Srila Prabhupada, he held them and looked at them with scrutiny, then simply said, “No, not Tulasi.” But he chanted on them anyway.

Later, in 1968, as I was cleaning Srila Prabhupada’s room I found his Tulasi japa beads laying near his bead bag on his cushion. As I carefully put them back into their bag, I was mesmerized by their smooth touch and golden glow. They were large, round beads, shiny from years of use, with a mystical quality that still sticks in my mind.

In 1969, Srila Prabhupada sent me to Honolulu to open a temple. I spent much time at the research library of the University of Hawaii’s East-West Center. I found many ancient texts from India, some by Srila Prabhupada’s guru and other Vaishnava saints. And I found information on Tulasi Devi—her botanical names, her history, and ways to grow her. My desire to grow Tulasi became an obsession, and somehow I got seeds from India.

The first set of seeds did not grow. I daily worshiped a thin green sprout until it became painfully evident that it was a blade of grass. The second batch of seeds proved fruitful, however, and tiny heart-shaped seedlings spread their delicate leaves in our Honolulu home. That was the beginning.

I still didn’t know why growing Tulasi was important to Srila Prabhupada or his mission. But when I later presented two small Tulasi plants to him in Los Angeles, he was delighted. He held one of the small pots in his hand for a long time, gazing at the seven-inch seedling, noting that she was indeed Srimati Tulasi Devi.

Prabhupada talked on and on about the glories of Tulasi Devi, and he was in such joyful spirits! Srila Prabhupada’s servant, Kartikeya Dasa, was astonished. He later told me that he had not seen Srila Prabhupada so light-hearted and happy in over a year.

At one point, Srila Prabhupada told us that Tulasi Devi was a great devotee of Lord Krishna, and that her husband, a demon, was killed by Krishna. Then Prabhupada stopped short and became thoughtful. My intuition was that he had given us as much as we could then understand.

So my understanding became quite basic: somehow, growing Tulasi made Srila Prabhupada very, very pleased. That was enough. I proceeded to cultivate Tulasi plants on a large scale. I wrote a booklet entitled “How to Grow Tulasi Devi,” sent seeds and booklets to every temple, and tried to offer advice and assistance to devotees in their efforts to cultivate Tulasi.

Later, I came across the following purport by Srila Prabhupada in the Srimad-Bhagavatam (4.8.55):

It is specifically mentioned herein that tulasi leaves are very dear to the Supreme Personality of Godhead and devotees should take particular care to have tulasi leaves in every temple and center of worship. In the Western countries, while engaged in propagating the Krishna consciousness movement, we were brought great unhappiness because we could not find tulasi leaves. We are very much obliged, therefore, to our disciple Srimati Govinda Dasi because she has taken much care to grow tulasi plants from seeds, and she has been successful by the grace of Krishna. Now tulasi plants are growing in almost every center of our movement.

Only then did I become truly aware of the importance of cultivating Tulasi plants. I realized that my initial attraction to Tulasi and my obsessive desire to grow Tulasi plants, though not inspired by a direct instruction from Srila Prabhupada, were communicated from within the heart by the Lord to please and assist Srila Prabhupada in his mission. I felt humbled and joyful that even in my ignorance I had been given an opportunity to serve him in this way.

Learning Respect for Tulasi

In 1968, before Tulasi made her appearance in the West, Srila Prabhupada sometimes talked about her. I recall him saying that in India every-one considers Tulasi plants sacred, and no one will cut or uproot them. Even non-Hindus, he said, will not destroy Tulasi to build a house on a spot where she is growing—they’ll look for a place not inhabited by Tulasi. When Bhaktivinoda Thakura discovered the birthplace of Lord Chaitanya, it was so overgrown with Tulasi that no one had settled there, thinking it to be a sacred place. Even non-Hindus considered that disturbing Tulasi plants would bring ill fortune.

When Prabhupada came to Hawaii in 1971, he admired our lush Tulasi garden in front of the entrance to the temple. Because these Tulasis had grown far larger than we had expected (some nearly seven feet tall and with stalks two inches in diameter), we had a problem. The Tulasi branches were beginning to cover the entrance, and people unavoidably brushed up against her. We pointed this out to Srila Prabhupada and asked his permission to trim some of the branches. He became alarmed and exclaimed, “You cannot cut Tulasi—that is the greatest offense! You must never cut her. But you can tie back the branches obstructing the entrance.”

Even after tying back the branches, Tulasi kept growing, and the problem continued. When we told Srila Prabhupada that people had to bend down when passing through the Tulasi archway on the way into the temple, he was delighted. He smiled, his eyes sparkled, and he said, “That’s good. It is good that they have to bow to Tulasi before entering Krishna’s temple.”

When Srila Prabhupada came for a later visit, he carefully entered the Tulasi archway by going through sideways to avoid brushing against her leaves and branches. And while walking along the
walkway to the temple, which was lined with more Tulasi plants, he told his secretary, Shyamasundara, "Don't step on her shadow." In these ways Srila Prabhupada showed great respect for Tulasi Devi.

In his books, too, Srila Prabhupada called attention to the exalted position of Tulasi Devi. He writes in a purport to the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (3.16.21):

The goddess of fortune, Lakshmi, is sometimes envious of the tulasi leaves which are placed at the lotus feet of the Lord, for they remain fixed there and do not move, whereas Lakshmiji, although stationed by the chest of the Lord, sometimes has to please other devotees who pray for her favour. Lakshmiji sometimes has to go to satisfy her numerous devotees, but tulasi leaves never forsake their position, and the Lord therefore appreciates the service of tulasi more than the service of Lakshmi.

In *The Nectar of Devotion*, Srila Prabhupada quotes from the *Skanda Purana*:

Tulasi is auspicious in all respects. Simply by seeing, simply by touching, simply by remembering, simply by praying to, simply by bowing before, simply by hearing about, or simply by sowing this tree, there is always auspiciousness. Anyone who comes in touch with the tulasi tree in the abovementioned ways lives eternally in the Vaikuntha world.

Srila Prabhupada taught us never to think of Tulasi as an ordinary plant. She is a great devotee standing before us in the form of a small tree. She appears as a delicate tree in this world to serve the Lord and uplift human society.

Tulasi Devi can be used in many ways to please the Supreme Lord, but never for gratifying one's senses. To offer Tulasi Devi with a material incentive—to destroy one's enemies, to remove anxieties, to make medicine—will be the bridge by which one enters the hellish regions.

Tulasi Devi has come to the West to give us the opportunity to serve her for our benefit. If we care for
Due to Baba’s efforts, a beautiful painting of Vrinda Devi was completed. It was as if the Lord had left his work to reliable people who were also devoted to Tulasi Devi. Somewhere, by the divine arrangement of the Lord, he ended up at ISKCON’s Krishna-Balarama temple. 

At that time, I felt a strong urge to assist him and began by helping with his medical expenses. Later, when he became bedridden in February and March of 1990, I worked with Vidyā Dasi, Muralidhara Dasa, and Mohana Dasa to help provide nursing and medical care for him in his final days.

On meeting him, I felt an immediate connection. Because Baba had become old and ill, he wanted to leave his work to reliable people who were also devoted to Tulasi Devi. Somewhere, by the divine arrangement of the Lord, he ended up at ISKCON’s Krishna-Balarama temple.

At that time, I was inspired to paint a picture of Vrinda Devi. Madhava Baba knew all the scriptural references to Vrinda Devi, and he carefully supervised the tiniest details of this painting. The scriptures describe Vrinda Devi as having a beautiful complexion like molten gold, a shimmering golden effulgence, and an enchanting pearl on her nose. A gentle smile adorns her lips. She wears blue garments and is decorated with pearls and flowers. Her right hand is raised in blessing the devotees, and on her left hand she holds her yellow parrot, Daksa, who has thousands of parrot disciples of various colours: red, green, yellow, blue, white. The parrots serve Vrinda Devi by carrying messages to various parts of Vrindavan.

Vrinda Devi is in charge of Vrindavan līlā—the pastimes of Radha and Krishna. She decides which flowers will bloom, which birds will sing, which songs will be sung, which breezes will blow, which food will be served, which games will be played, which musical instruments will be played.

Lord Krishna and Srimati Radharani have given Vrinda Devi her role as queen of Vrindavan. Vrinda Devi may be likened to a grand director or choreographer of the Vrindavana līlā, and her parrots are her communication service. She always stays in Vrindavan, absorbed in love for Radha and Krishna. Her great yearning is to expertly arrange Their meeting, and by doing this she feels the greatest joy.

When the painting was finished, I would hold it up before Baba daily, and he would chant his prayers to Vrinda Devi, his worshipable deity. Often he would cry when he saw her.

Once he looked up at me and very humbly said, “Thank you, Mataji. You have made just the exact replica of Vrinda Devi.”

I told him, “Baba, because you are now unable to walk and go see your beloved deity, Vrinda Devi has arranged to come to see you.”

We pressed Baba to tell us his life story so we could tape it for future publication. He was reluctant.

“No Mataji, I don’t want name and fame.”

We persisted, imploring him that it would be a necessary part of continuing the development of Vrinda Kunda. We pleaded that name and fame would come after he had left this world. He finally agreed, for the service of Vrinda Devi, and we began documenting his life story and the story of the development of Vrinda Kunda.

Srila Prabhupada had told us that Vrindavan is named after Vrinda Devi. It means “forest of Tulasi.”

Baba explained, “This Vrindavana-dhama belongs to Sri Krishna. It is the shining crest jewel of all the Vaikunthas, and Srimati Radharani, the daughter of King Vrishabhavanu, has made Vrinda Devi the ruling monarch of Lord Krishna’s opulent and auspicious abode of Vrindavan.”

During this time, I visited Vrinda Kunda. There is a small, simple temple there, and a lovely pond lined with Tulasi trees. The atmosphere was surcharged with a unique spiritual essence. I sat quietly and chanted and meditated beside Tulasi Devi. In my mind I had a fleeting “glimpse” of a beautiful palace, with winding crystal staircases and shimmering decor. I wondered at this, and when I saw Baba I asked him about it. He began to describe such a palace from various scriptural quotations. I was stunned.

In a miraculous way that only Lord Krishna could have designed, this aged saint, who was born in a highly situated brahmana family and who had spent his entire life as a sadhu, was now being cared for by a small crew of American and European disciples of Srila Prabhupada. Witnessing his love and devotion for Vrinda Devi was our greatest gift. It was as if Srila Prabhupada had arranged for us to receive further instruction and opportunity to serve Srimati Tulasi Devi by sending Baba into our midst.
A concise refresher on Lord Krishna's immortal teachings.

In 1968 His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada published the Bhagavad-gita As It Is, which has since sold tens of millions of copies in dozens of languages. As a lifetime devotee of Krishna and a consummate Sanskritist, Srila Prabhupada spells out the clear conclusions of the Gita that are often obscured by arms-length commentators with their own agenda. Srila Prabhupada's purports (commentaries) illuminate for us the verses spoken by Krishna and Arjuna. The following condensed version of their historic conversation combines key points from the verses and purports in the same sequence as the original. These are not direct quotes and thus cannot replace the complete Bhagavad-gita As It Is. Instead, this version provides an overview of the philosophical thread of the Gita. It is consistent with Srila Prabhupada's comprehensive edition and can be used for introduction or review.

PART 1: ACTION

Arjuna: Krishna, please drive my chariot between the two armies. Let me see which followers of that criminal Duryodhana have come here to fight.

Krishna (Steering the fine golden chariot between the two huge armies facing each other on the vast, flat battlefield): Just see, cousin, all the great warriors assembled here.

Arjuna (aghast): Krishna, I can't fight all these dear relatives, teachers, and elders. My whole family would be destroyed. I'd rather die, or just live as a beggar.

Krishna (smiling kindly): You forget that everyone is an eternal soul, not a physical body. You can kill the body but not the soul.

Arjuna: Krishna, how could I kill these worshipable men? Any victory would be tainted with their blood. I don't know what to do. Please instruct me.

Krishna: My friend, you're a warrior. Fight, but not for yourself. Fight for the Supreme. Then you're acting as the eternal soul you truly are. Fight all varieties of materialism and be a yogi.

Arjuna: What do yogis do? How do they behave?

Krishna: Yogis perform their external duties without attachment because they have mastered their mind and senses. They enjoy an inner happiness that is lost to most people.

Arjuna: You're telling me to be happy within and fight at the same time. That's a contradiction.

Krishna: You can't live without acting, Arjuna. Instead of acting for yourself, turn what you do into a sacrifice for the Supreme. Then you'll be happy.

Arjuna: What is this power pushing me toward acting selfishly?

Krishna: Lust, Arjuna, born of festering desire. Lust destroys your ability to think clearly. For a long time I've been teaching people how to use yoga to conquer lust. I taught the Sun-god, who taught his son, who started a long chain of teachers. Somehow, though, the original knowledge has been lost, so today, dear friend, I'll teach it to you Myself.

Arjuna: How could You teach the Sun-god, who's so much older than You?

Krishna: Ordinary bodies age and die, Arjuna, but My body is spiritual and never deteriorates. From time to time I appear in society to help the good people and to vanquish the bad. Good people get rid of their lust and turn their love to Me. But there are many kinds of people, and I respond to everyone individually.

Act for My sake, Arjuna. When you do, everything involved—your work, your equipment, your knowledge—becomes part of a blissful offering, a sacrifice for the Supreme. There are many ways to sacrifice, Arjuna, so you need to find a truly enlightened guru to help you sort them out.
Me. To do this you may find it helpful to perform the long austerities involved with the mystic process of yoga and meditation.

Arjuna: Making the mind sit still is like trying to control the wind. Mystic yoga seems too hard for me.

Krishna: Yes, it is hard, but it’s possible.

Arjuna: What if I start the path of yoga and fail? Then I’m a loser, materially and spiritually.

Krishna: If you do the right thing, how can you lose? At least in your next lifetime you’ll be better off. On the other hand, if you simply learn to serve Me with love, at death you’ll come to Me and leave this horrible world.

PART 2: DEVOTION

Krishna: Arjuna, just listen. You’re one of the rare souls who want to know the truth. Just try to understand these points:

Everything comes from Me, Arjuna, even the three types of materialism, which affect everyone except Me, their creator.

People who are materialistic, arrogant, falsely wise, or dull ignore Me. People turn to Me when they’re curious, desperate, sad, or wise.

People who think I’m just a mouthpiece for Brahman, the formless spirit, never get to know Me personally. But wise people who serve Me come to Me after death.

Arjuna: Tell me about this formless spirit, please, as well as the gods, the soul, karma, and Your presence in my heart. And, please, how do I know You at death?

Krishna: The formless spirit, or Brahman, is my spiritual effulgence, and the spark-like individual spirit souls are of the same spiritual substance. By nature, the individual souls serve, but if they choose to serve this endlessly changing world of matter they suffer karma. As for the gods, I create them to manage this material world. And yes, I do live in your heart as the Supersoul, Arjuna.

As for remembering Me at death, practice by thinking of Me as you fight. At other times think of Me as both ancient and fresh, grand and minuscule, but always as a person, shining like the sun. Mystic yogis train themselves with long, deep, mechanical meditation to leave their bodies at just the right time. That helps them proceed to Me in the spiritual world—the only world free of the extended misery of birth and death. But you can get there simply by remembering Me. In fact, by serving Me you gain whatever you might achieve from study, austerity, charity, renunciation, or any sort of religion.

Let Me tell you more. These lessons comprise the king of education, Arjuna. Because you have no envy toward Me you’re able to understand them. You must simply listen with faith.

I create the universe and everything in it, but I remain an individual, untouched by My creation. Fools see Me as an ordinary man, but great souls bow to Me and serve Me with love. Some offer great sacrifices to the gods instead, for they like the material enjoyment the

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In short, just know that I create everything. Devotee, and I promise you’ll come to Me.

Some people meditate on Me as an endless spirit. That kind of meditation is troublesome, but eventually they may achieve Me. But if you directly think of Me, I swiftly rescue you from the sea of birth and death.

If you can’t always think of Me, then hear and chant about me in the practice of bhakti, or devotional yoga. If you can’t do that, then work for Me, or at least work for charity, because detachment brings peace—more so than mere knowledge.

Those who think of Me in devotion show wonderful qualities of kindness, tolerance, steadiness, and determination. They love Me, and I love them.

PART 3: SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

Arjuna: Krishna, what is the relationship of the body and the soul?

Krishna: The body is like a field of action for the soul. An ordinary soul interacts with the body by using the senses and by feeling emotions such as lust and hate. However, taking help from a guru, a wise soul becomes detached from the material body. Such a person is humble, equipoised, and truly independent.

As the Supersoul, I offer guidance to all souls, however wise or unwise they may be. Each soul can choose between Me and materialism. Those who choose materialism suffer repeated birth and death in different species. Those who choose Me come to see the whole situation—the compassionate Supersoul and the plight of a spiritual soul encased in dull matter.

Let me tell you more about matter. It comes in three varieties, or modes: goodness, passion, and ignorance. As the seed-giving father, I bring dead matter to life by implanting the soul. Then the modes take over. Goodness forces the soul to happiness, passion to ambition, and ignorance to delusion. The three modes compete for supremacy, knocking you, the eternal soul, from one material situation to the next. Only when you are free of their control can you taste real happiness.

Arjuna: How does one rise above the three modes, and having conquered them, how does one behave?

Krishna: To conquer the modes and be free of karma, simply love and serve Me in every circumstance. Then as the modes come and go you’ll observe them without loving or hating them. At that point you’ll be unshakably calm and treat everyone equally.

Arjuna, imagine this world as a great, ancient banyan tree with branches that grow down to become roots. No one can figure out where such a tree begins or ends. If you want to escape its entangling branches, you must cut it down. Then you can enter My self-illumined abode, where there is no need of sunlight or electricity. When you go there, you won’t miss this mortal banyan tree.

I want everyone to come to My abode, so I sit in every heart as the Supersoul, offering guidance. I also write the Vedic literature so that people can understand Me. I exist beyond both the materialist and the enlightened soul. If you know Me, you’ll be wise and everything you do will come out perfect.

I’ve told you something about enlightened souls; they’re...
honest, pure, self-controlled, and detached. You are such a person, Arjuna, but I'd like you to hear something about the materialistic, atheistic demons.

Demons don't know what to do or what not to do. They're unclean, dishonest, and preoccupied with sex. Thinking My creation to be their personal property, they build costly, destructive weapons and feel powerful and proud. Their occasional pretenses of religion or charity are meaningless, for lust enslaves them. Chained to materialism by greed and anger, they fall into lower species of life birth after birth.

The Vedic scriptures, which could save them from such a fate, are of no interest to demons.

**Arjuna:** What becomes of those who don't refer to the Vedas but make up their own ways of worship?

**Krishna:** Religion by imagination is a product of the three modes. In goodness one worships the gods, in passion, powerful demons, and in ignorance, ghosts.

The three modes affect everything, even your food. Juicy, fatty, wholesome foods are in goodness; bitter, salty, pungent foods are in passion, and stale, cold, putrid foods are in ignorance. The modes also influence what kind of charity you give and what kind of discipline you impose on yourself. Still, you should not renounce charity or penance.

**Arjuna:** What does it mean, then, for one to be renounced?

**Krishna:** Renunciation means detachment from the fruits of your work. One in the mode of goodness works dutifully but renounces the result. One in the mode of passion renounces work when it grows troublesome. One in ignorance renounces work out of laziness or confusion.

By seeing others as souls and acting with that understanding, you will stay in goodness. That takes a determined mind, but the initial trouble will later bring you happiness. Happiness in passion seems splendid at the start but ends up being painful. Happiness in ignorance, such as taking intoxicants, is bitter from beginning to end.

Those who work in goodness, or *brahmanas*, are often judges, teachers, or priests. *Kshatriyas*, those who work in passion, are often administrators, police or soldiers. Passion and ignorance combine to produce *vaishyas*, businesspeople or farmers. Those largely in ignorance are called *shudras*, and they work as artisans, labourers or servants.

Regardless of the kind of work that best suits you, by doing your work for the Supreme you turn it to yoga and become enlightened. For that reason it's better to do your own work imperfectly than someone else's perfectly.

My dear Arjuna, here is a final summary of what I have been teaching you.

---

By serving Me you will learn to act and live in simple wisdom, controlling your mind and senses and renouncing the fruits of your work. Soon you will enjoy peace and insight as you achieve unprecedented happiness and appreciation for everyone. In such a state of mind you will attain My abode.

Think about Me and stay with My devotees; I will clear every obstacle from your path. If you become egoistic and think that you can make it on your own, you'll be lost.

You're a warrior, Arjuna; because of your nature you'll fight no matter what. Fight for Me and you'll return to your original home in My abode.

Now I've told you the secrets of perfection. Think over what I've said, and then do whatever you wish to do.

Since you are very, very dear to Me, I'll conclude with this:

Think about Me always. Become My devotee. Worship Me and give Me homage, and you will return to Me. Give up all other duties, Arjuna, and submit yourself to Me. Don't worry; I'll free you from the results of any past mistakes.

Please, repeat these words of Mine, but only to pious people. That too shall ensure that you will return to Me, for no one is more dear to Me than one who shares this message. And anyone who hears it faithfully, without envy, attains to the worlds of the pious.

Arjuna, do you understand?

**Arjuna (firmly):** Infallible Krishna, You have destroyed my illusions and doubts. By your kindness I have remembered who I really am. Now, according to Your instructions, I shall fight. 🙏
ISKCON Bangalore's Sri Krishna Kalakshetra conferred the title - Asthana Vidwan / Vidushi on six eminent musicians for their contribution to the preservation of Vedic culture and glorification of Lord Krishna through their talents on Nov. 26, 2011 at Sri Racha Krishna Mandir's Open Air Theatre.

Sri Chanchalapathi Dasa (Vice President, ISKCON Bangalore), Sri Tiru Dasa (Director Sri Krishna Kalakshetra) Asthana Vidwan / Vidushi awardees Vid. C Ramadas Vid. B K Chandramouli, Vid. R K Padamanabha, Dr. Vidyabhusana, Vid. M S Sheela and Dr. T S Salyavathi. Sri Kashiv (M D, Maxworth Realty), was also present at the event.

Ganakalabhushana Vid. R K Padmanabha & party presented Goshti Gayanam "Krishna Vande Jagadgurum"
Guruguhaaganam

ISKCON Bangalore’s Sri Krishna Kalakshetra & Guruguhamrta jointly, presented ‘Guruguhaaganam 2011’,
a homage to Muthuswami Dikshitar, on Nov. 27, 2011 at ISKCON Bangalore’s Multi Vision Theatre.
During this unique programme, eminent music historians and musicologists presented lecture-
demonstrations on various facets of shishya sampradaya and the life of Muthuswami Dikshitar. Renowned
and upcoming musicians of our country presented a few rarely heard compositions of the Dikshitar.

Concert rendered by
Padma Bhushana Sangeetha Kalanidhi
Madurai T N Sheshagopalan & Party

Prof. R Vishweshwaran’s
lec-demo on Raaga
Sampradaya of Dikshitar

Akhand Vishnu Sahasranama Parayana

On the occasion of Kannada Rajyotsava, Sri Krishna Kalakshetra had organized the congregational chanting
of Sri Vishnu Sahasranama by the members of various mandals in India for the welfare of society.

Inauguration by Sri Tiru Dasa, Director
Sri Krishna Kalakshetra & Sri Ramji, President
All India Vishnu Saharanama Cultural Federation

Sri Tiru Dasa felicitating Sri Ramji

Sahasranama Parayana by the members of various mandalis
The Hare Krishna Movement - Guwahati conducted Goloka Shades 2011 (GS) for students of L.K.G to Class 10.

GOLOKA SHADES SPREAD COLOURS IN GUWAHATI: It was the first time ever that Goloka Shades spread the colourful fun in the city of Guwahati as well. It was a riot of colours' everywhere - sparkling blue, night black and refreshing green. About 2500 students from 4 schools unleashed their creative best at the Goloka Shades Contest -2011 held at Guwahati.

BANGALORE: Union Bank of India donated a vehicle to The Akshaya Patra Foundation. Sri M.V.Nair (CMD of Union Bank of India) handing over the key to Sri Chanchalapathi Dasa (Vice Chairman, The Akshaya Patra Foundation).
ISKCON Sri Sri Krishna Balarama
RATHA YATRA

Mysore
Saturday, Jan 7, 2012

Bangalore
Saturday, Jan 14, 2012

Bellary
Saturday, Jan 21, 2012

Hubli
Saturday, Jan 28, 2012

Dharwad
Saturday, Feb 4, 2012

Mangalore
Saturday, Feb 25, 2012

Chennai
Saturday, March 17, 2012

Come... pull the chariot

For package tour details
contact ISKCON Reception or call 080-2347 1956

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare
Bhagavad-gita distributed to dignitaries during Gita Jayanti month

Sri Eshwarappa, President, Karnataka State BJP Unit, Chief Minister Sri Sadananda Gowda, Sri Lalaji Mendon, MLA, Kapu & Sri V Somanna, Minister for Housing

Sri Dharam Singh, Former Chief Minister & MP, Bidar

Sri Dinesh Gundurao, MLA, Gandhinagar

Smt Sharadamma, Worshipful Mayor of Bangalore

Sri Bharatarshabha Dasa lecturing at the BJP Legislature party meet

Sri K C Kondaiah, MLC, Indian National Congress

Sri H C Balakrishna, MLA, Magadi & Sri Putte Gowda, MLA, Shravanabelagola

Sri Shankar Linge Gowda, IAS, BBMP Commissioner