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Janmāṣṭamī and Rādhāṣṭamī:

*Honouring the Divine Couple with
Gratitude and Loving Service*

The Compassion of Srila Prabhupada



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**FROM THE
DESK OF THE
FOUNDER
ĀCĀRYA**



Light of Bhagavata

By A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

The colorful greenery of the newly grown grass, the seasonal flowers, the frog's umbrellas, the butterflies, and the other variegatedness of the rainy season perfectly represent a well-to-do family absorbed in vanity over their personal assets.

A rich man displays his opulence in various colorful ways. He has a good residential bungalow with sufficient property and a well-trimmed garden. The bungalow is decorated with up-to-date furniture and carpets. There are motor cars with dazzling polish, and a radio set receiving and broadcasting colorful news and melodious songs. All these captivate their proprietor as though he were in a dreamland of his own creation.

When the same man was as dry as fallow land and had none of these opulences, he was plain in behavior, but since obtaining all these material means of enjoyment he has forgotten the principle that everything in the world comes and goes away like the changing seasons. The beautiful Red Fort and the Taj Mahal were built by Shah Jahan, who left the place long ago, and many others have also come and gone in the same place, like seasonal flowers. Material assets are like seasonal flowers only. Either the flowers wither, or the gardener himself leaves. This is the law of nature. Therefore, if we want permanent life, knowledge and bliss, we must seek them somewhere else, not in the changeable, temporary rainy season, which is flooded with so many varieties of pleasing sights that vanish when the season ends.

Material manifestations of things are but shadowy representations of reality. They are compared to mirages in the desert. In the desert there is no water, but the foolish deer runs after illusory water in the desert to quench his thirsty heart. Water is not unreal, but the place where we seek it is misleading. The advancement of materialistic civilization is just like a mirage in the desert. The deer runs after water in the desert with full speed, and the illusion of water moves ahead at the same speed as the foolish deer. Water is not false, but we must not seek it in the desert. A living entity, by his past experience, remembers the real happiness of his original spiritual existence, but since he has forgotten himself he seeks spiritual or permanent happiness in matter, although this is impossible to achieve.

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda



Janmāṣṭamī and Rādhāṣṭamī:

Honouring the Divine Couple with Gratitude and Loving Service

By Gauranga Darshan Das

Every year, devotees across the world joyfully celebrate two of the most cherished festivals in the Vaiṣṇava calendar—Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī and Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī, the auspicious appearance days of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Temples adorned with flowers and sparkling decorations resound with melodious kīrtanas and hari-kathā as devotees celebrate these sacred occasions through worship, chanting, dancing, fasting and feasting.

Yet these festivals are far more than annual commemorations of two divine appearance days. Together, they reveal the heart of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology. Kṛṣṇa is the supreme object of love, while Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the supreme embodiment of love for Him. Kṛṣṇa enchants the entire universe (jagan-mohana), yet Śrī Rādhā enchants even Kṛṣṇa Himself (jagan-mano-mohana-citta-mohinī).

Janmāṣṭamī invites us to meditate on Śrī Kṛṣṇa's unlimited beauty, sweetness and compassion, while Rādhāṣṭamī invites us to contemplate on Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's unparalleled devotion and seek Her blessings to develop sincere devotion for Kṛṣṇa.

In truth, these two appearances are inseparable, complementary manifestations of divine compassion. Kṛṣṇa appears to bestow His association upon the conditioned souls and delight His eternal devotees with His enchanting pastimes. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī appears to reveal the supreme glory of selfless, pure devotion to Kṛṣṇa. We are eternal amśas of Kṛṣṇa (Bhagavad-gītā 15.7), and whatever devotion awakens within our hearts is but a tiny amśa of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's limitless devotion, bestowed upon us by Her causeless mercy.



The Compassion Behind Kṛṣṇa's Descent

The circumstances of Kṛṣṇa's appearance beautifully reveal both His majesty and His sweetness. He first appeared before Vasudeva and Devakī in the prison of Kāṁsa in His majestic four-armed form, inspiring them to offer heartfelt prayers in awe and reverence. By His inconceivable potency, He simultaneously manifested in Gokula as the beloved son of Nanda Mahārāja and Mother Yāsoḍā. Thus, in Mathurā He revealed His aiśvarya, or divine majesty, while in Vraja He revealed His incomparable mādhubhya, His intimate sweetness.

Unlike ordinary living beings, Lord Kṛṣṇa does not appear under the force of karma. His appearance is entirely transcendental, arising solely from His own independent will. Therefore, He declares in the Bhagavad-gītā:

*janma karma ca me divyam evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti mām eti so 'rjuna*

"One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna." (Bhagavad-gītā 4.9)

The Lord descends to protect His devotees, curb the influence of the wicked and re-establish the principles of dharma. Yet beyond these well-known purposes lies an even more intimate reason for His appearance—to reciprocate with the love of His devotees. His descent is not merely a divine intervention in history but an invitation to every soul to revive its eternal relationship of loving reciprocation with Him.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī beautifully reveals this confidential purpose:

*anugrahāya bhaktānāṁ manuṣāṁ dehaṁ āśritaḥ
bhajate tādṛśiḥ krīḍā yāḥ śrutvā tat-paro bhavet*

"To bestow His mercy upon His devotees, the Supreme Lord accepts a humanlike form and performs such wonderful pastimes that anyone who hears about them becomes devoted to Him." (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.33.36)

Kṛṣṇa appears not merely to demonstrate His supremacy but to reveal His affection through His enchanting pastimes with His pure-hearted devotees, especially the residents of Vṛndāvana. There He lovingly reciprocates in the mellows of servitorship, friendship, parental affection and conjugal love. Although He is the all-powerful Supreme Lord, He willingly becomes conquered by the love of His devotees (bhaktair jitatvam). In doing so, He proclaims the unparalleled glory of bhakti, the supreme spiritual path that reconnects the eternal soul with its beloved Lord.



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Therefore, Janmāṣṭamī is much more than a celebration of Kṛṣṇa's appearance in Mathurā over five thousand years ago. It is an opportunity to pause and reflect upon His unending efforts to bring us back to Him. As we gaze upon the beautiful Deities, hear the narrations of His divine pastimes and chant His holy names, our hearts can naturally respond with gratitude. We may pray, "My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, You descended from Your eternal abode solely to bestow Your mercy upon us. You performed enchanting pastimes to attract our hearts, spoke the Bhagavad-gītā to guide us, and continue to reach out to us through Your empowered devotees. Please help me recognise Your compassion, respond to Your loving invitation, and dedicate my life more sincerely to the path of bhakti."

The Lord's appearance in the dark prison of Kāṁsa is also deeply symbolic. Just as His presence immediately dispelled the darkness of that prison, His presence in our hearts dispels the darkness of ignorance, fear and material attachment. When we sincerely invite Kṛṣṇa into our lives through devotional service, He gradually transforms our consciousness, replacing despair with hope, confusion with wisdom, and material anxiety with the joy of loving service.

And the highest expression of that loving service is personified by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. If Kṛṣṇa's compassion inspires us to dedicate our lives to Him, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's spotless devotion inspires and empowers us to love Him in the purest possible way. It is to Her sublime example and boundless mercy that we now turn.

The Gift of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's Appearance

Rādhāṣṭamī invites us to marvel at the unsurpassed glory of the one who loves Kṛṣṇa the most. Just as the flower and its fragrance are inseparable, Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are eternally united, together revealing the complete truth of divine love.

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī manifested in the home of King Vṛṣabhānu and Queen Kīrtidā in the sacred land of Vraja. Although She appeared as an exquisitely beautiful child, She kept Her eyes closed from birth. When Mother Yaśodā visited with baby Kṛṣṇa in Her arms, Rādhārāṇī opened Her eyes for the very first time, beholding His enchanting face. This cherished pastime beautifully conveys that Her entire existence is meant for Kṛṣṇa. Every aspect of Her being is dedicated to His service, His pleasure, and His glory.

For this reason, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī introduces Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī with one of the most profound descriptions: devī kṛṣṇa-mayī proktā rādhikā para-devatā (Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 4.83).

The expression kṛṣṇa-mayī means "completely pervaded by Kṛṣṇa" or "filled with Kṛṣṇa." It signifies far more than constant remembrance of Kṛṣṇa. Every faculty of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's being exists solely for Him. Her eyes delight in beholding His beautiful form, Her ears rejoice in hearing His names and pastimes, Her voice finds fulfilment in glorifying Him, and Her hands eagerly engage in His service. Her intelligence seeks only what will increase His happiness, and Her heart knows no desire apart from His pleasure. Even Her slightest smile, glance or movement exists only to bring joy to Kṛṣṇa.





Ordinary devotion often begins with our own needs. We approach the Lord seeking happiness, protection, guidance or purification. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's love, however, is entirely selfless. Her only concern is Kṛṣṇa's happiness, and His happiness is Her life's fulfilment. Thus, She is not merely the greatest devotee of Kṛṣṇa but the very personification of pure devotion. Kṛṣṇa is the perfection of the Absolute Truth, while Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the perfection of devotion to that Absolute Truth. Although we can never imitate Her devotion, we can seek Her shelter and pray for even a particle of Her selfless mood.

Whatever devotion awakens within our own hearts is but a tiny reflection of Her limitless love.

Indeed, Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself explains that genuine devotees are sheltered by His divine internal energy:

*mahātmānas tu mām pārtha daivīm prakṛtim āśritāḥ
bhajanty ananya-manaso jñātvā bhūtādim avyayam*

"O son of Pṛthā, those who are not deluded, the great souls, are under the protection of the divine nature. They are fully engaged in devotional service because they know Me as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, original and inexhaustible." (Bhagavad-gītā 9.13)

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains: "In the above-quoted verse from Bhagavad-gītā, the words daivīm prakṛtim refer to the control of the internal potency, or pleasure potency, of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This pleasure potency is manifested as Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, or Her expansion Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune. When the individual jīva souls are under the control of the internal energy, their only engagement is the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa, or Viṣṇu. This is the position of a mahātmā." (NOI 2)

Thus, genuine devotion to Kṛṣṇa flourishes under Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's compassionate shelter. We approach Kṛṣṇa most naturally and most successfully by taking shelter of the one who loves Him perfectly.

With this understanding, we celebrate Rādhāṣṭamī not merely as the appearance day of an exalted devotee but as the advent of the Supreme Goddess of Devotion, who nourishes our relationship with Kṛṣṇa. By glorifying and worshipping Her, we pray to replace self-interest with selfless service, and material expectations with wholehearted dedication to Kṛṣṇa's satisfaction.

The true significance of Rādhāṣṭamī, therefore, is not simply to admire Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's devotion but to pray for a drop of it. As we sincerely seek Her shelter, our hearts gradually become reoriented toward Kṛṣṇa's happiness rather than our own, allowing us, however faintly, to understand the profound meaning of becoming kṛṣṇa-maya.

Janmāṣṭamī reveals the all-attractive Lord, while Rādhāṣṭamī reveals the supreme embodiment of love whose devotion captivates even Him. Together they unveil the complete science of bhakti, teaching us not only whom to love, but also how to love Him.

Honouring the Divine Couple in Our Lives

The festivals of Janmāṣṭamī and Rādhāṣṭamī are not merely occasions for remembering sacred events of the past. They are invitations to transform our devotional lives.

Janmāṣṭamī reminds us that the Supreme Lord is not an impersonal force or a distant ruler beyond the reach of His devotees. He is the all-attractive Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose beauty captivates every heart and whose compassion draws even the most fallen souls toward Him.

Rādhāṣṭamī, in turn, reveals the spirit in which the loving invitation from Kṛṣṇa is to be accepted. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī demonstrates that the essence of devotion lies not in what we receive from Kṛṣṇa, but in seeking His happiness. Her spotless devotion reveals the perfection of selfless love. As Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī explains:

ātmendriya-prīti-vāñchā—tāre bali
'kāma'

kṛṣṇendriya-prīti-icchā dhare 'prema'
nāma

"The desire to gratify one's own senses is called kāma (lust), whereas the desire to please the senses of Lord Kṛṣṇa is called prema (love)." (Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 4.165)



This profound teaching has practical implications for every devotee. Love naturally expresses itself through service with pure intention. Whether offering a flower, worshipping the Deities, chanting the holy names, serving the Vaiṣṇavas, or performing the smallest task, every act becomes spiritually beautiful when done solely for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure. Cleanliness in the temple, attentiveness in worship, punctuality in service, and sincerity in our dealings are not mere disciplines—they are expressions of love.

Another hallmark of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's devotion is complete freedom from selfishness. This same spirit shines throughout Vṛndāvana. The Vrajavāsīs rejoice whenever Kṛṣṇa is pleased, regardless of who receives the opportunity to serve Him. Their happiness lies not in personal recognition but in His satisfaction. As we learn to celebrate Kṛṣṇa's pleasure above our own prestige and preferences, our hearts become purified and our devotion deepens.



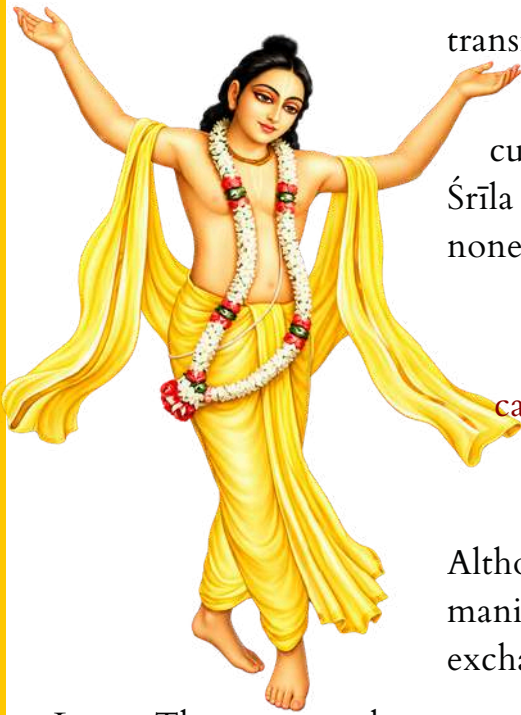
Ultimately, Rādhāṣṭamī invites us to become, in our own small measure, kṛṣṇa-maya. We can never imitate Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's limitless love, yet we can sincerely aspire to follow Her example. Spiritual advancement is nothing but the gradual reorientation of our lives toward Kṛṣṇa. Little by little, our thoughts, words and actions become centred on His pleasure.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī beautifully describes the transformation that takes place in the heart of one whose life becomes absorbed in Kṛṣṇa:

nāmāni praṇayena te sukṛtinām tanvanti tuṇḍotsavam
dhāmāni prathayanti hanta jalada-śyāmāni netrāñjanam
sāmāni śruti-śaṣkulīm muralikā-jātāny alaṅkurvate
kāmanīvrta-cetasām iha vibho nāśāpi naḥ śobhate

"Now that we have become Your devotees, Your holy names have affectionately created a jubilant festival in our mouths. Your bodily splendour, like a dark raincloud, has become the black ointment of our eyes, and the music of Your flute has become the ornament of our ears. We no longer take pleasure in material things. O Almighty Lord, material pleasures no longer appear beautiful to us." (Padyāvalī 59)

When the heart becomes absorbed in Kṛṣṇa, His holy names become a festival for the tongue, His beautiful form becomes the ointment for the eyes, and the sound of His flute becomes the ornament of the ears. Material attractions eventually lose their hold, not through forced renunciation, but because one has discovered a higher taste. Such is the



transformation inspired by the mercy of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition reaches its most beautiful culmination in the appearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī explains that Śrī Caitanya is none other than Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa united in one form:

rādhā-kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtir hlādinī-śaktir asmād
ekātmānāv api bhuvi purā deha-bhedam gatau tau
caitanyākhyam prakaṣam adhunā tad-dvayam caikyam āptam
rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalitam naumi kṛṣṇa-svarūpam
(Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 1.5)

Although Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are eternally one, They manifested as two to relish the sweetness of Their loving exchanges.

Later, They appeared as one again in the form of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, with Kṛṣṇa accepting the mood and golden complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in order to experience the glory of Her love for Him. Yet He did not come merely to relish that love Himself. He came to distribute it freely through the congregational chanting of the holy names.

Recognising this unparalleled compassion, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī offered his celebrated prayer:

namo mahā-vadānyāya
kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te
kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya-
nāmne gaura-tviṣe namaḥ

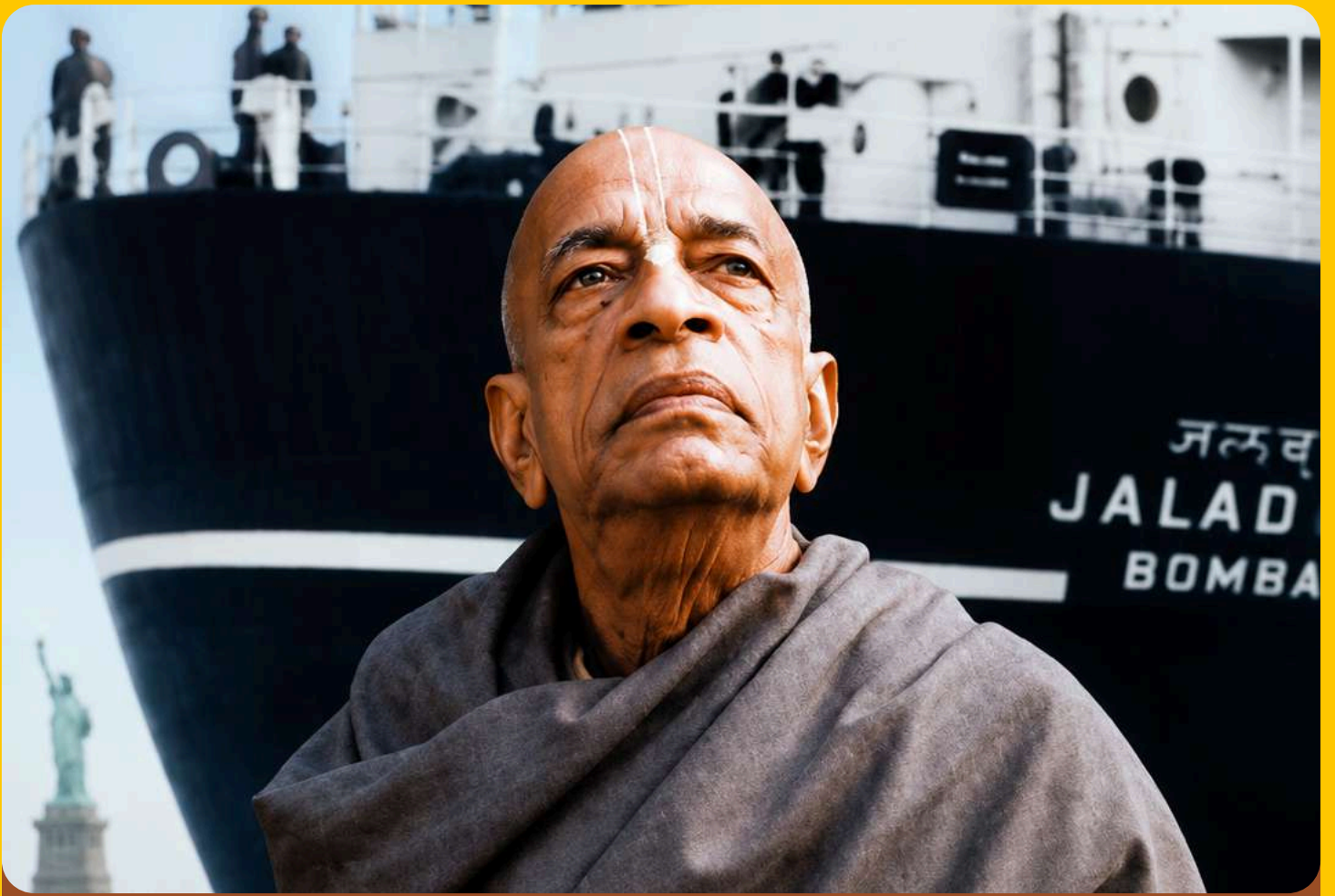
"I offer my respectful obeisances unto the most munificent incarnation, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself appearing with a golden complexion to freely bestow love of Kṛṣṇa."

Thus, the celebrations of Janmāṣṭamī and Rādhāṣṭamī naturally lead us to the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Janmāṣṭamī reveals the Supreme Beloved. Rādhāṣṭamī reveals the supreme embodiment of love for that Beloved. And Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu reveals that this divine love is not reserved for a select few, but is freely offered to every sincere soul.

As we celebrate these sacred festivals, may Janmāṣṭamī deepen our appreciation for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, may Rādhāṣṭamī awaken within us a longing to follow the spotless devotion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and may the causeless mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His followers purify our hearts so that every thought, every word and every action may be offered for the pleasure of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

For the true purpose of honouring the Divine Couple is not merely to celebrate Their appearance with flowers, songs and festivals, but to allow Their divine love to reshape our hearts. As we honour Janmāṣṭamī and Rādhāṣṭamī year after year, may we gradually learn to love Kṛṣṇa under the compassionate guidance of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Then Janmāṣṭamī and Rādhāṣṭamī will no longer be merely annual festivals; they will become the guiding inspiration of our lifelong practice of bhakti.





The Compassion of Srila Prabhupada

By Tulasi Gopika Devi Dasi

What does it mean to associate with a Vaishnava? Must we always be physically present in the company of an exalted devotee in order to receive their association? Our consciousness is constantly being shaped by what we choose to hear, speak, discuss, and meditate upon. Where our attention goes, energy flows. This is especially significant in spiritual life, where the association we seek can determine the direction in which our consciousness develops.

Srimad Bhagavatam reveals that association can be received through hearing about the qualities, character, and pastimes of the Lord and his devotees. When we repeatedly hear about the qualities of exalted Vaishnavas, discuss their lives, speak about their mood, and meditate upon their examples, we are allowing their consciousness to purify our own. Srimad Bhagavatam (3.13.4) describes:

śrutasya puṁsām sucira-śramasya
nanv añjasā sūribhir īdīto 'rthah
tat-tad-guṇānuśravaṇam mukunda-
pādāravindam hṛdayeṣu yeṣām

"Persons who hear from a spiritual master with great labor and for a long time must hear from the mouths of pure devotees about the character and activities of pure devotees.

Pure devotees always think within their hearts of the lotus feet of the Personality of Godhead, who awards His devotees liberation.”

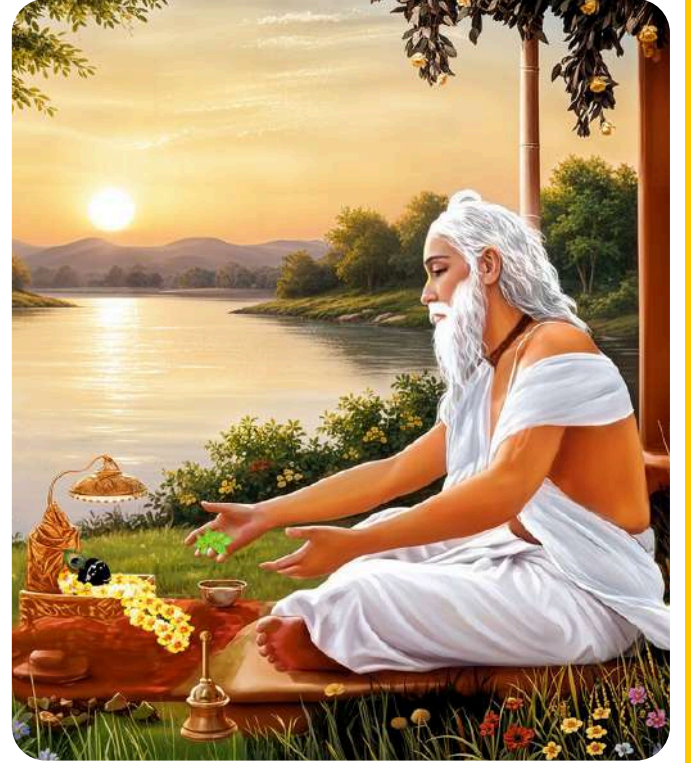
Srila Prabhupada describes in the purport that transcendental students not only hear about the Lord, but about the “transcendental qualities of the devotees who are constantly thinking of the lotus feet of the Lord within their hearts”.

One such transcendental quality is compassion.

A Movement of Compassion

The compassion of the Vaishnavas can be seen throughout the history of devotional service. Prahlada Maharaja prayed for Lord Narasimhadeva’s merciful glance not only on himself, but on all other suffering living entities, including his own inimical father, Hiranyakashipu. Vasudeva Datta’s heart broke to see the sufferings of the conditioned souls. He prayed to accept all their sinful reactions and suffer perpetually in a hellish condition so that they could be delivered. Advaita Acarya, becoming deeply distressed seeing people absorbed in material life, offered a Tulasi leaf and Ganga water and called for the Lord to descend as Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Haridasa Thakura prayed for the forgiveness of those who attacked him, so much so that Lord Caitanya revealed that His desire to punish those who had harmed Haridasa Thakura was overcome by Haridasa Thakura’s own compassion for them. Rantideva Maharaja, after fasting for forty-eight days, repeatedly gave away the food and water he had received, ultimately giving away the only water remaining even though he himself was on the verge of death from thirst. Nityananda Prabhu, described as “preme matta nityānanda kṛpā-avatāra”, one who is intoxicated by ecstatic love and an incarnation of mercy, is the embodiment of compassion for all suffering souls.



What to speak of the compassion of pure devotees, Srila Prabhupada explains that Krishna Himself descends into this world out of merciful compassion for the fallen souls, who are undergoing a great struggle for existence. Thus, the Lord’s descent is itself an expression of His boundless compassion for the suffering conditioned souls.

As living entities, our constitutional position is to be eternal servants of the Lord, jīvera ‘svarūpa’ haya — kṛṣṇera ‘nitya-dāsa’. To sincerely serve Krishna therefore means to follow in the footsteps of those great devotees who have walked this path before us, mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ. By following their examples of compassion, we can aspire to become humble instruments of the Lord’s mercy, helping to relieve the suffering of conditioned souls by bringing them closer to Krishna.



Srila Prabhupada – The Embodiment of Compassion

Vaishnavas are described as para-duhkha-duhkhi, one who feels the suffering of others as their own. This mood was perfectly carried out by Srila Prabhupada, an empowered representative of the Lord's compassion.

Srila Prabhupada's compassion began with his profound understanding of the suffering of the conditioned soul. He did not see suffering merely as poverty, disease, loneliness, or the temporary difficulties on the material plane. He understood that behind all such suffering lies the deeper disease of material existence: the soul's forgetfulness of its relationship with Krishna. Therefore, the greatest compassion is not simply to relieve someone's temporary circumstances, but to give the suffering soul the knowledge and process by which he can return to his eternal relationship with the Lord.

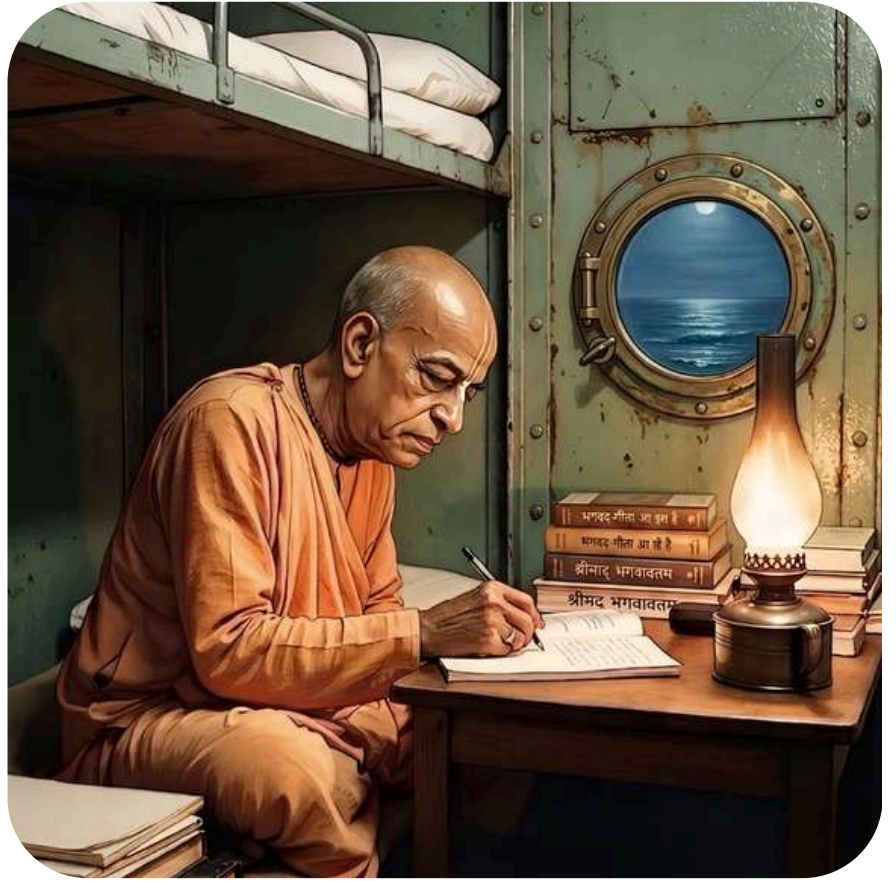
This understanding shaped the course of Srila Prabhupada's life. Long before coming to the West, he spent years preparing himself to fulfill the order of his spiritual master and to spread Krishna consciousness throughout the world. He translated, wrote, and practiced speaking extensively from his room at Radha-Damodar temple in Vrindavan.

Externally, he seemingly possessed everything he needed. He was with his beloved Deities, under the shelter of Sri Vrindavan-dhama, and in the association of devotees. There was no personal reason for him to leave. However, the depth of his compassion transcended any desire for comfort.

At an age when most people would naturally seek greater comfort and security, he made the order of his spiritual master his life's mission: to carry Krishna consciousness to the suffering souls of the West. On August 13th, 1965, Srila Prabhupada boarded the Jaladuta with little money, no contacts, and no certainty about what awaited him. He was leaving the sacred shelter of Vrindavan, the constant darshan of his Lords Sri Govinda, Gopinath, and Radha-Damodar, and the association of the Vraja-vasis, all for an unfamiliar land full of unfamiliar people.

In his Jaladuta diary, he expresses this deep separation. He had nothing to gain from such a journey for himself. Yet, he was willing to leave it because he felt compassion for those whom he had never even met.

At every step of the journey there was struggle. He endured severe seasickness and two heart attacks before even reaching American soil. After arriving in Boston, he stayed at a nearby YMCA to save money, yet lectured every day in churches, schools, and various clubs.

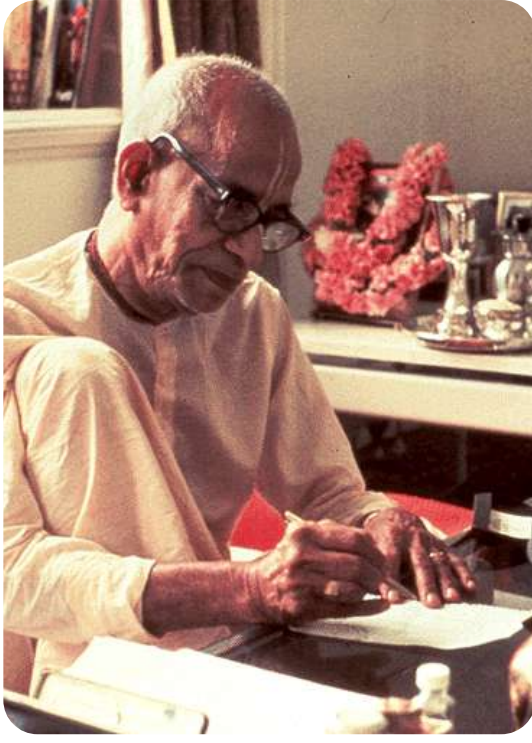


He continued speaking wherever he was accepted despite the various cultural and social barriers. Without any external support, not knowing where he would live or what he would eat, every decision he made was out of his compassion for the world. Srila Prabhupada's compassion was not simply the willingness to give something to others; it was the willingness to take something upon himself for their sake.

Compassion shifts our consciousness away from ourselves and towards others, away from selfishness and towards selflessness. It teaches us to see another person's suffering as an opportunity to serve. The Vaishnava does not simply see another person's suffering as an unfortunate circumstance; he sees an opportunity to serve that person and ultimately help them reconnect with Krishna.

Many of Srila Prabhupada's earliest followers came from backgrounds that, externally, seemed completely incompatible with the life of a Vaishnava. In the Lower East Side of New York, young people were struggling with alienation, addiction, loneliness, and a lack of spiritual purpose. Srila Prabhupada did not see them for their mistakes or struggles, but for their real spiritual potential. Where others might have seen a hippie, an addict, or a confused youth, Srila Prabhupada saw a soul who belonged to Krishna.

Srila Prabhupada's immense compassion was what attracted them towards Krishna. Many of the people who approached him could barely understand everything he was teaching. Yet they could experience his genuine concern, compassion, and affection for them. His compassion was deeply personal. Without inhibition, he gave people the holy name, delicious prasadam, philosophical knowledge, service, loving relationships, and the opportunity to transform their lives. In this way, Srila Prabhupada's compassion was both universal and transforming.



Perhaps one of the greatest expressions of this compassion was his determination to write and distribute transcendental literature. This act of compassion began years before he arrived in America and continued throughout his life, until his final days. Srila Prabhupada felt that his physical presence could reach only a limited number of people, but his books could travel into homes, universities, libraries, temples, and countries he might never personally visit. In this way, his books are an extension of his association, a way in which we can feel his compassion beyond his physical presence. The same mood of compassion that brought Srila Prabhupada to America continued to permeate everything he did thereafter.

Whether he was establishing temples, accepting disciples, traveling around the world, writing books, personally guiding devotees, or expanding the mission of Lord Caitanya, his activities were expressions of his desire to relieve the suffering of the conditioned souls by giving them the opportunity to return to Krishna.

Aspiring For a Compassionate Heart

Hearing about the pure devotees of the Lord is a transformative force. If our consciousness is constantly absorbed in our own desires, frustrations, and comfort, our world naturally becomes centered around ourselves. But if we repeatedly hear about devotees whose lives are centered around service, whose hearts are concerned with the suffering of others, and whose greatest happiness is to help others come closer to Krishna, our own consciousness begins to change. We begin to understand that spiritual progress is not simply about trying to be peaceful or happy ourselves. It is about developing the heart of a servant.

The more we hear about the compassion of exalted devotees, the more we are able to recognize and act in opportunities for compassion within our own lives.

We may not be able to sacrifice for the suffering of all living beings, as Vasudeva Datta did. We may not yet possess the extraordinary compassion of Haridasa Thakura or the forgiveness of Prahlada Maharaja. We may not have the immense compassionate power of Advaita Acarya, who called the Lord to descend for all conditioned souls. And we may not be able to dedicate our entire lives to selflessly spreading Krishna consciousness across the world, as Srila Prabhupada did. But by repeatedly hearing about their lives, meditating upon their qualities, and trying to follow in their footsteps, we can gradually cultivate the heart of a Vaishnava.

We can aspire to cultivate the same spirit of compassion: to see another's real suffering, to not remain complacent or indifferent, and to sincerely desire to bring that soul closer to the eternal happiness of loving service to Krishna.



VERSE OF THE MONTH



Krishna, the Reservoir of all Rasas

ŚB 10.43.17

*mallānām aśanir nṛṇām nara-varaḥ
strīṇām smaro mūrtimān
gopānām sva-jano 'satām kṣiti-bhujām
śāstā sva-pitroḥ śiśuḥ
mṛtyur bhoja-pater virāḍ aviduṣām
tattvaṁ param yoginām
vṛṣṇīnām para-devateti vidito
raṅgam gataḥ sāgrajah*

The various groups of people in the arena regarded Kṛṣṇa in different ways when He entered it with His elder brother. The wrestlers saw Kṛṣṇa as a lightning bolt, the men of Mathurā as the best of males, the women as Cupid in person, the cowherd men as their relative, the impious rulers as a chastiser, His parents as their child, the King of the Bhojas as death, the unintelligent as the Supreme Lord's universal form, the yogīs as the Absolute Truth and the Vṛṣṇis as their supreme worshipable Deity.

ANALOGY ARENA



The children depend on the father's affection, and the father affectionately maintains the children.

Similarly, because devotees do not know anything but the lotus feet of the Lord, the Lord is always prepared to give protection to His devotees and fulfill their desires.

ŚB 8.12.47

An actor changes dress to play different parts, but is always the same man.

Similarly, the Lord assumes many thousands and millions of forms. He is always present with innumerable incarnations.

ŚB 8.18.12



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

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शिष्य कोर्स
हिंदी (ऑनलाईन)

4th से 15th Oct 2026
मंगलवार, गुरुवार, रविवार
शाम 7-8:30 बजे

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- Zoom (Zoom) वेबफॉर्म पर लाइव ऑनलाइन सत्र।
- प्रमाणपत्र प्राप्त करने के लिए वीडियो वेबकास्ट।
- रिकॉर्डिंग उपलब्ध होगी।

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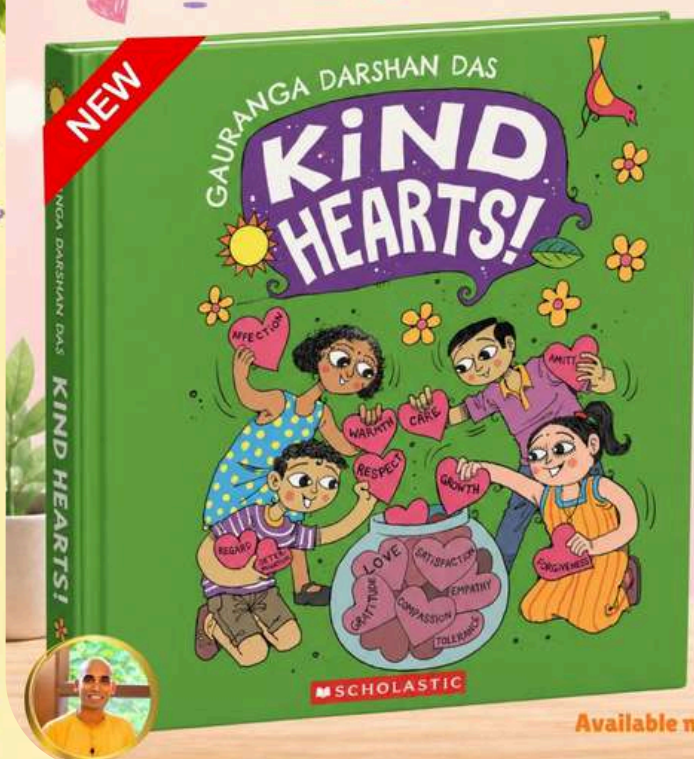
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