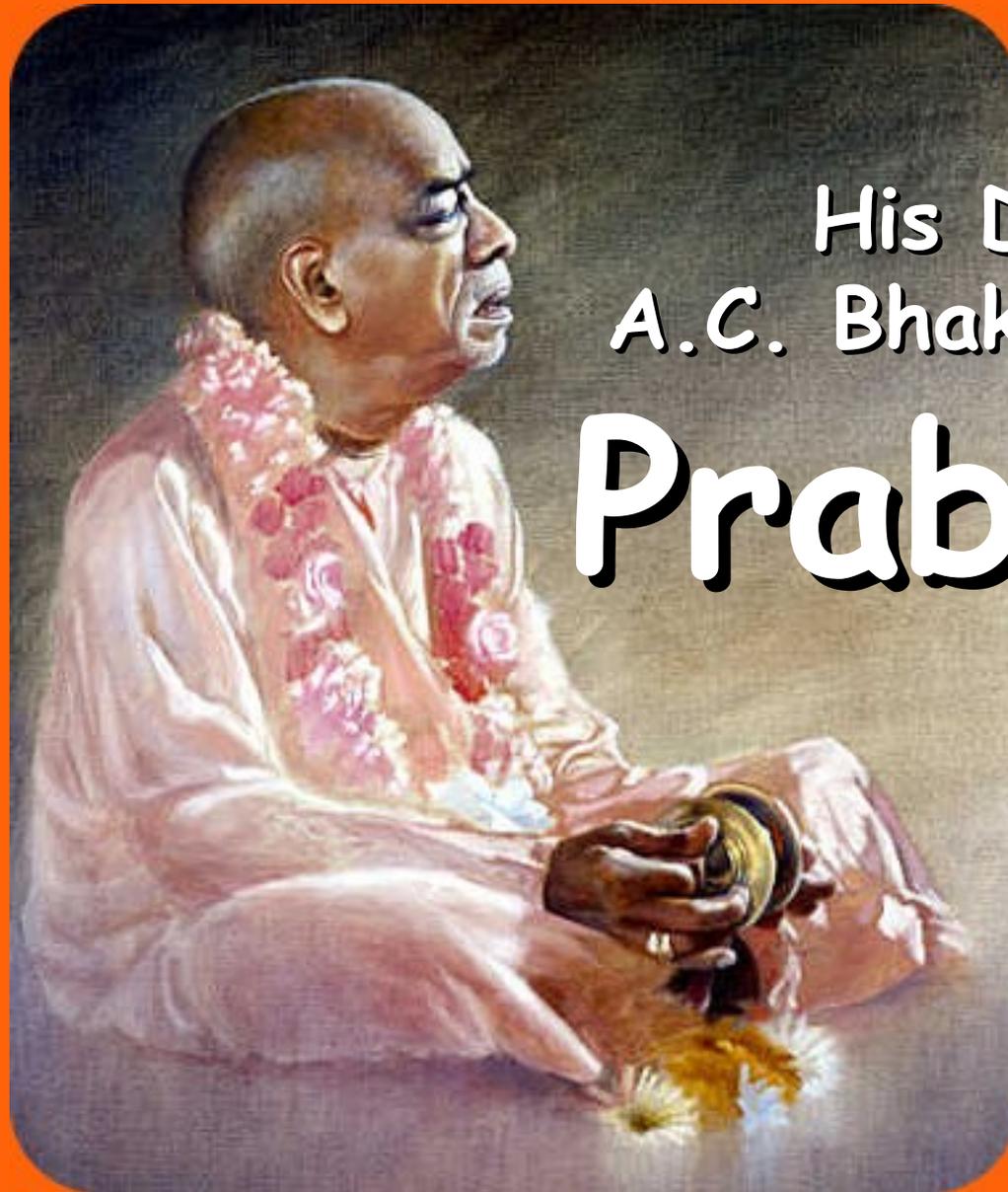


A life in service to God and humanity

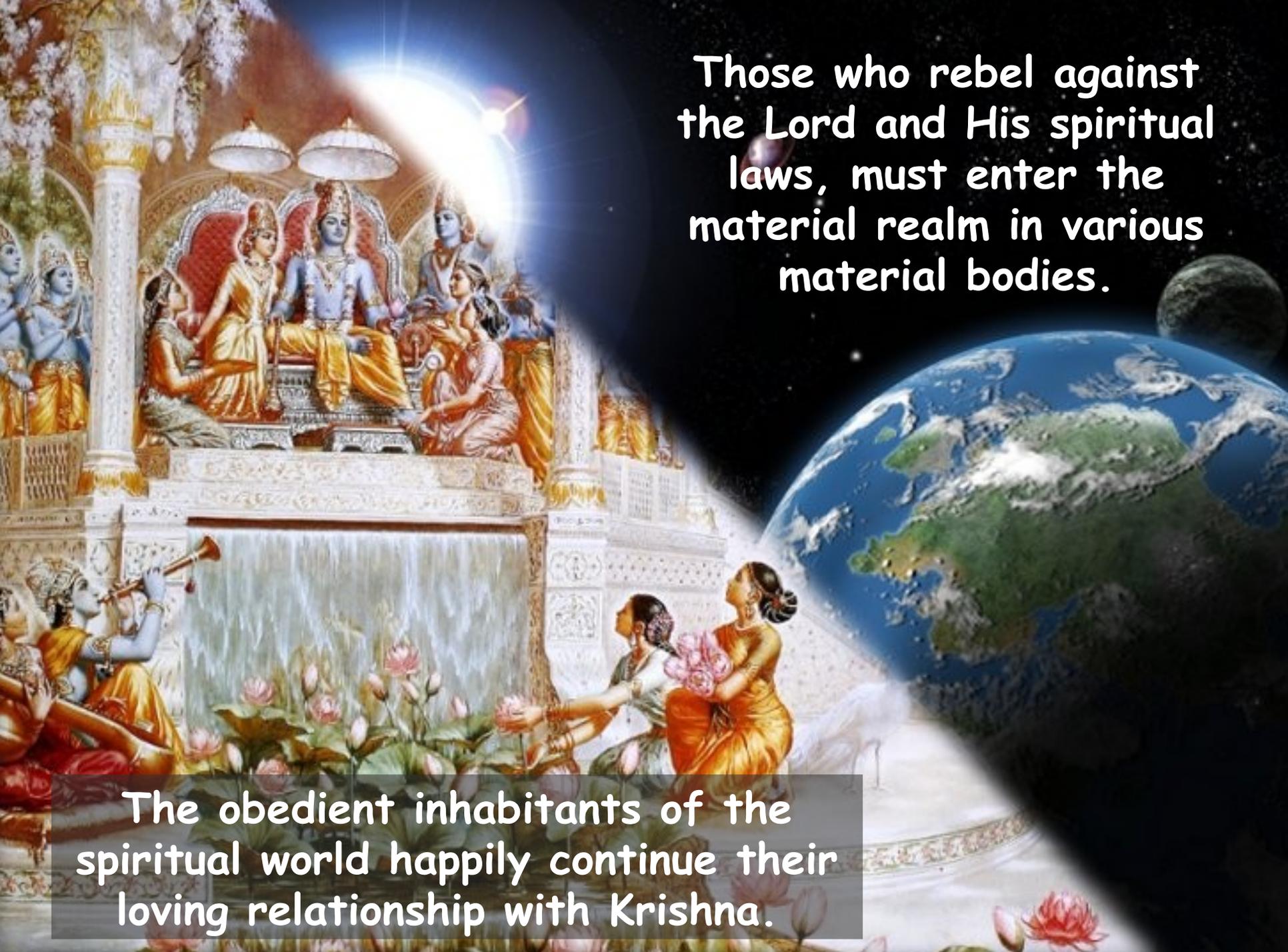


**His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami**

Prabhupada



Long, long ago, at the dawn of time, the Lord created the material universes with all the planets and living beings.



Those who rebel against the Lord and His spiritual laws, must enter the material realm in various material bodies.

The obedient inhabitants of the spiritual world happily continue their loving relationship with Krishna.

Spoken by Krishna Himself, the Vedic wisdom had been passed by aural reception from generation to generation of topmost saints and great ascetics...



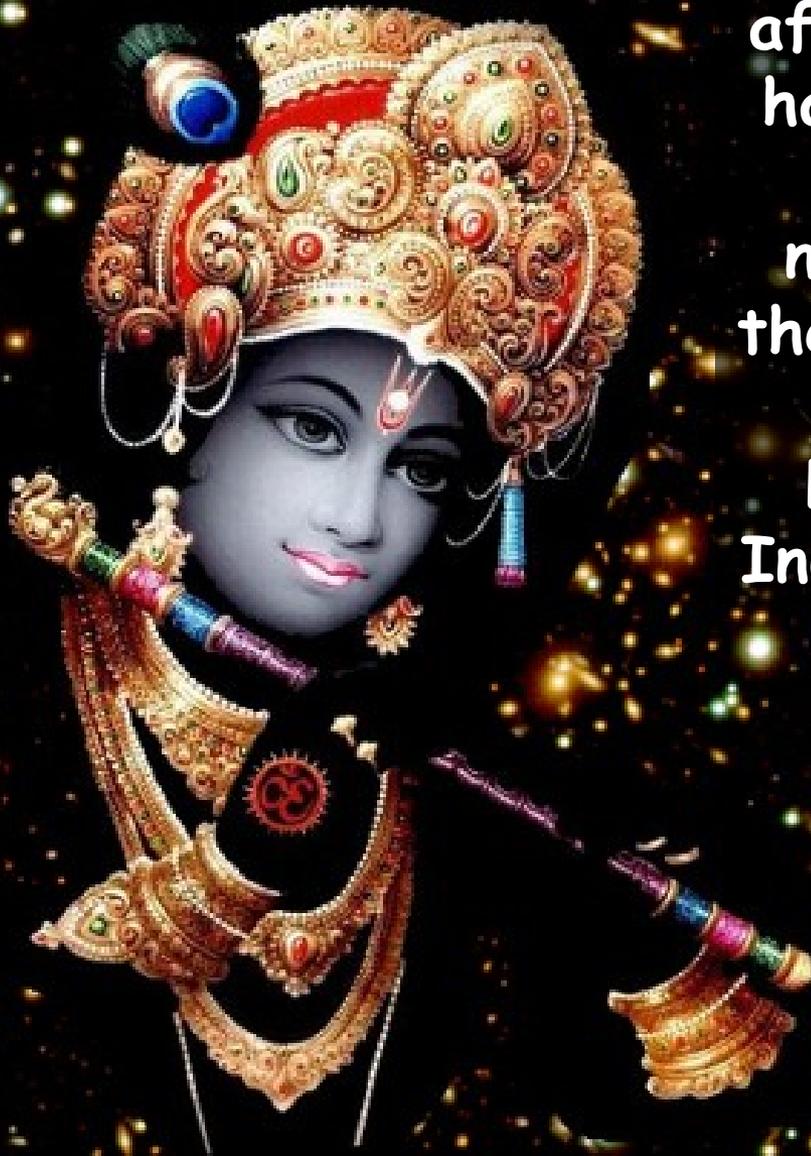
...until it was written down by Srila Vyasadeva, who was empowered by Krishna, more than 5,000 years ago.



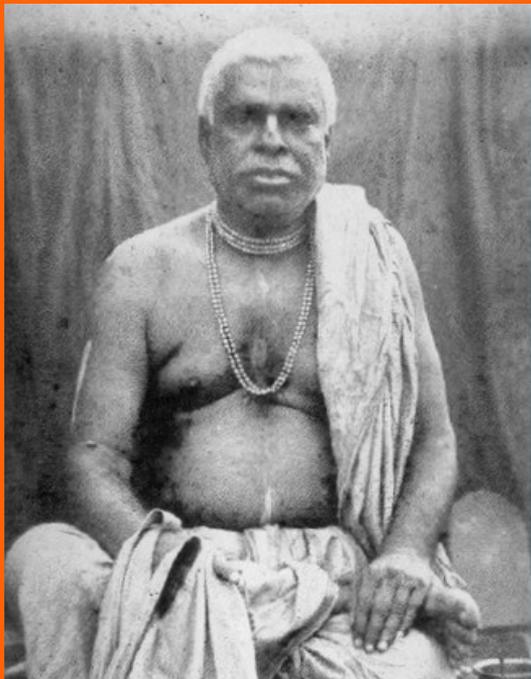
In order to preserve the timeless Vedic wisdom for eternity, Lord Krishna created a chain of spiritual masters who have passed it to our hands.

Out of them, one outstanding for his spiritual acumen, compassion, knowledge and determination was predicted thousands of years ago.





In the *Brahma-vaivarta Purana*, Lord Krishna describes that after 5,000 years of Kali-yuga have passed, a great sage and worshiper of Krishna's holy names will appear and spread the chanting of Krishna's names (in the form of the Hare Krishna *mantra*), not only in India but throughout the world.



Later, in the 1800's,
Bhaktivinoda Thakura, a great
devotee, predicted in his
magazine *Sajjana-toshani*:



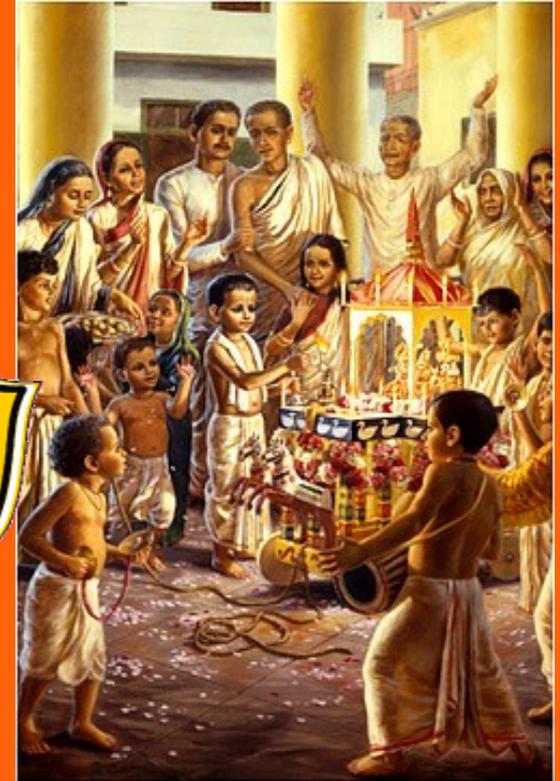
*"Soon there will be a time when chanting of
Krishna's name will be heard in England, France,
Russia, Germany and America."*

In answer to these prayers and predictions, in the year of 1896, there appeared Abhay Charan De, later known as His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

Calcutta 1896



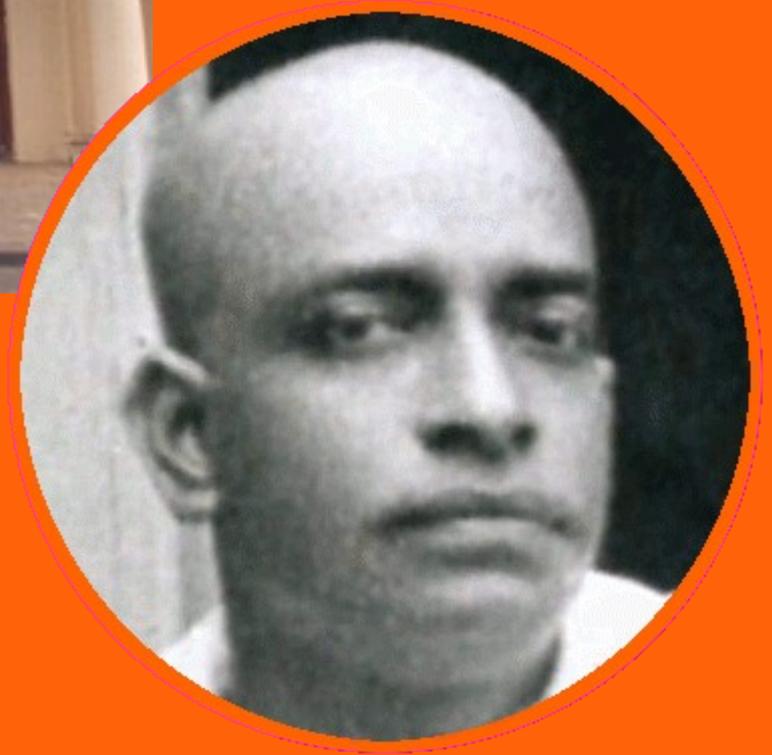
Srila Prabhupada's father once bought him a small cart to pull the Deity of Lord Jagannatha (Krishna).



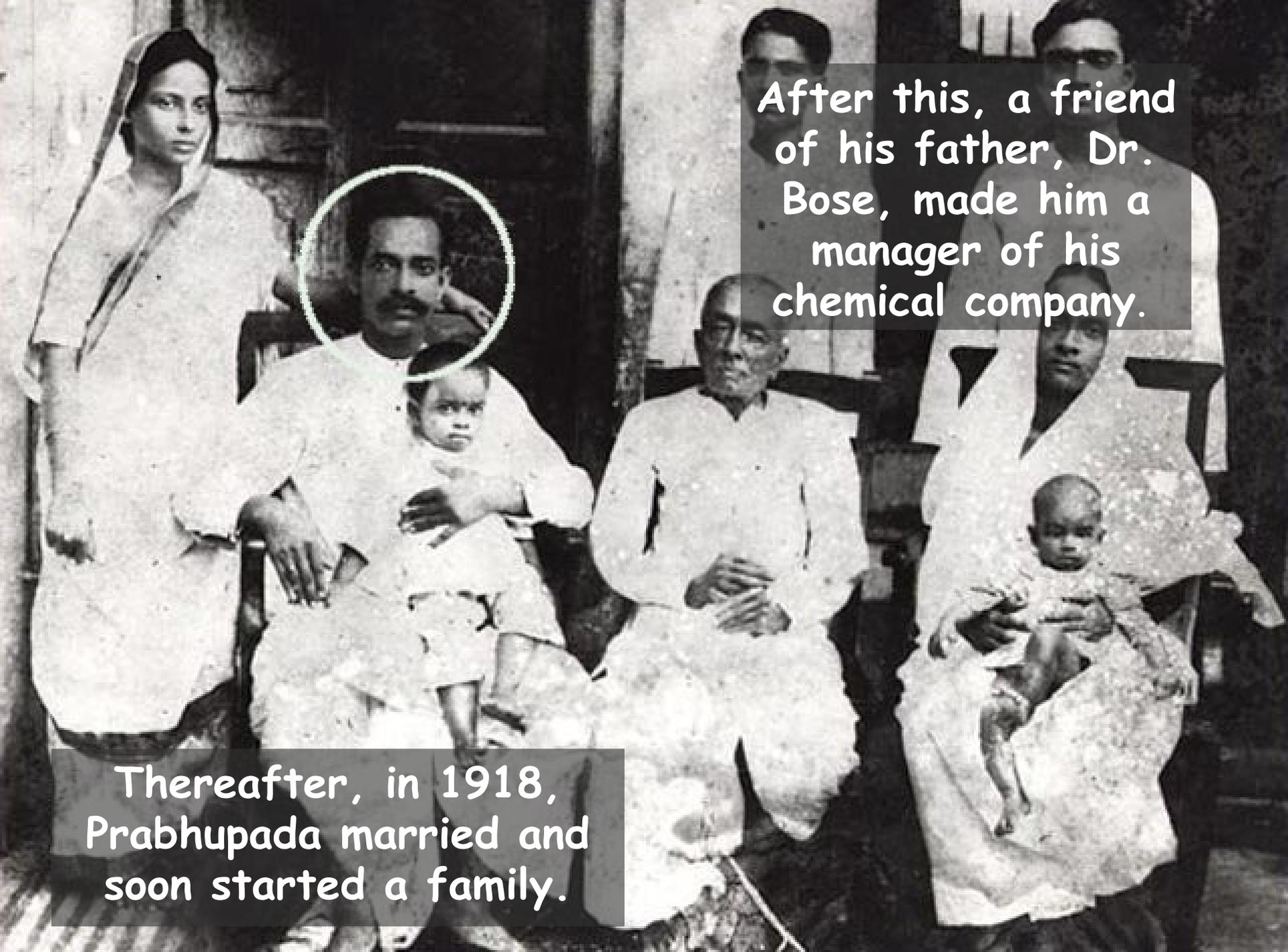
So, Prabhupada would organize little festivals in his neighborhood. Even then, among his playmates, Srila Prabhupada was always considered the leader.



Prabhupada later attended Scottish Church College in Calcutta, which was administered by the British.



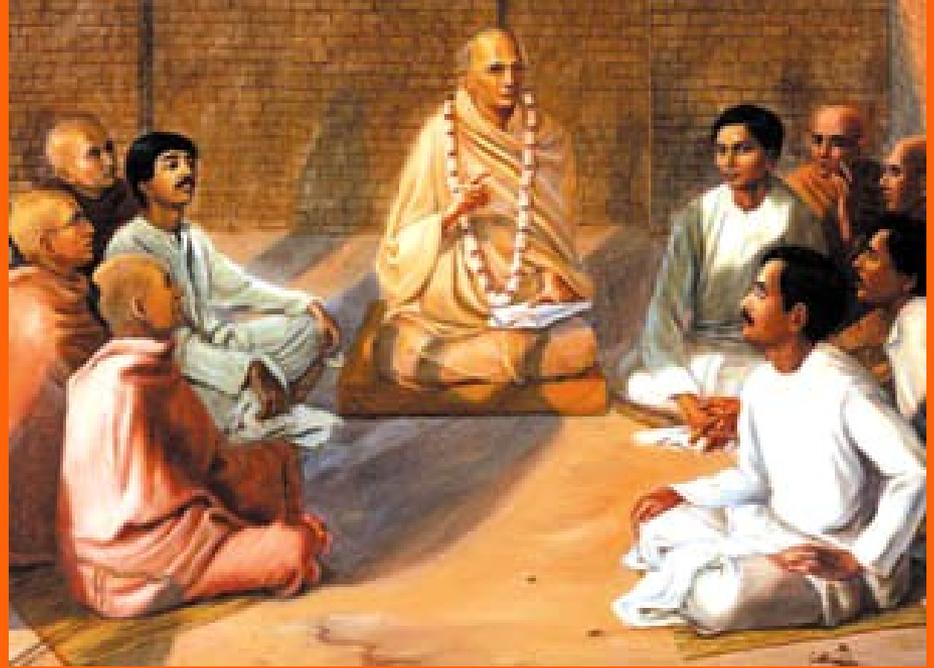
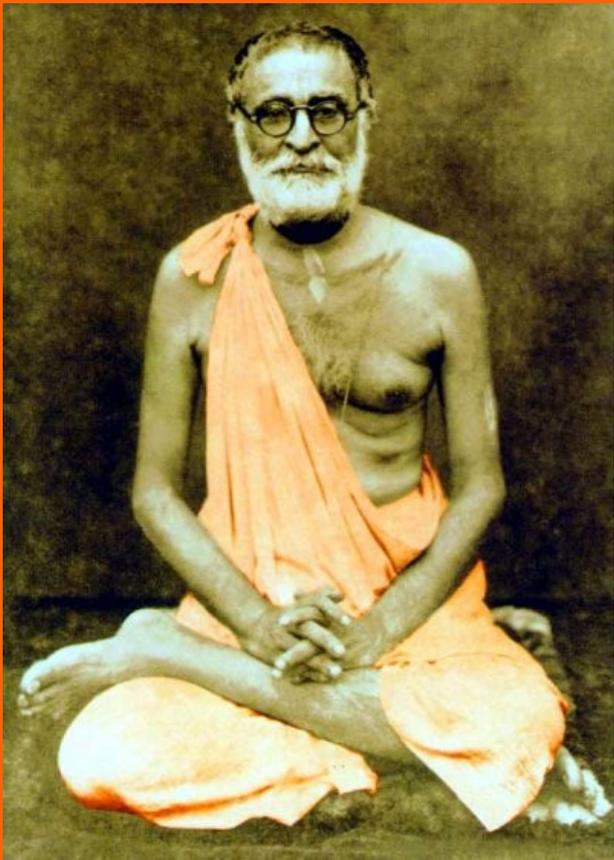
Later, he refused to accept his diploma from that college as a protest against British oppression, although he had actually completed all the requirements for the degree.



After this, a friend of his father, Dr. Bose, made him a manager of his chemical company.

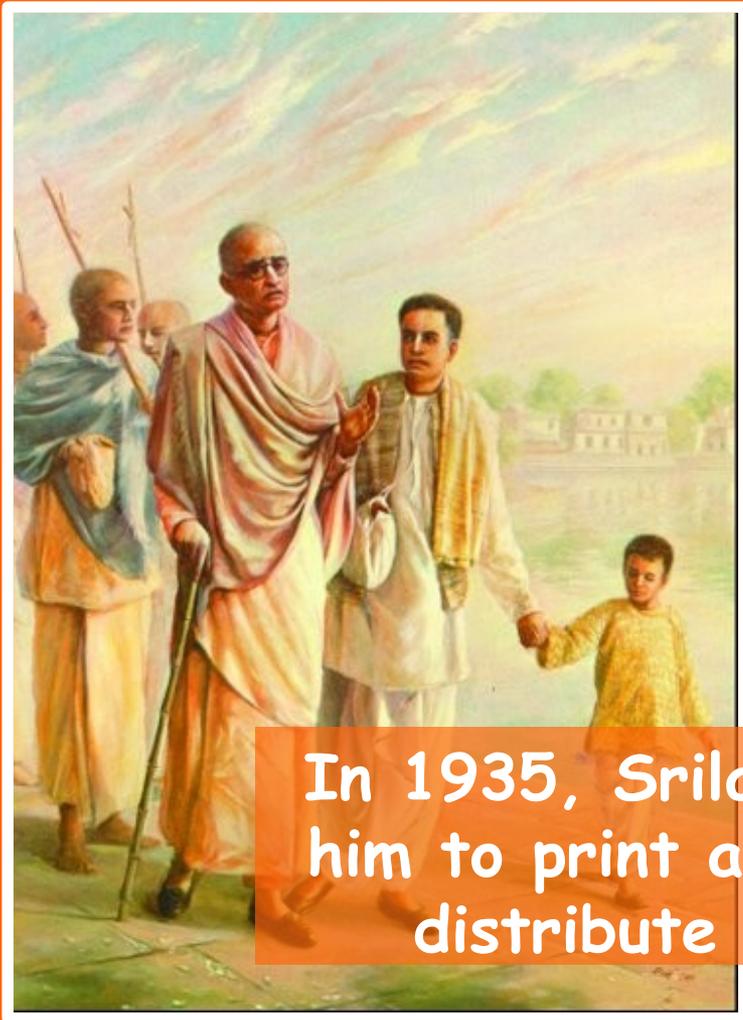
Thereafter, in 1918, Prabhupada married and soon started a family.

It was in 1922 when Srila Prabhupada met his spiritual master, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, for the first time.

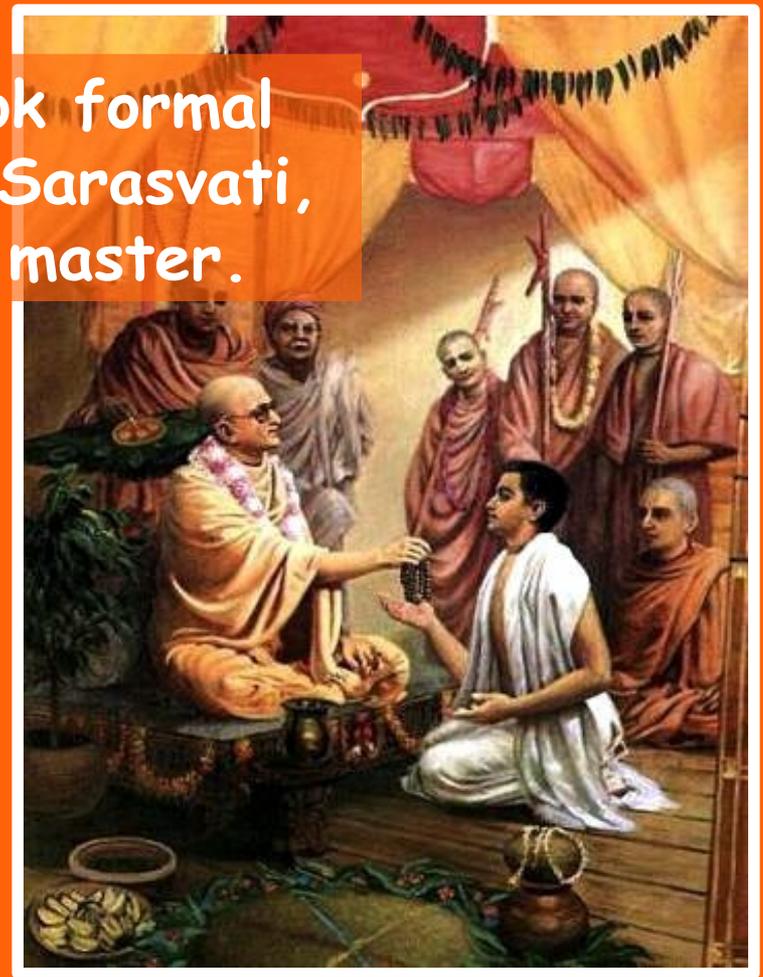


Bhaktisiddhanta told Srila Prabhupada: "You are a nice young man, and you know English; therefore, you should preach this mission of Lord specifically to the English-speaking countries in the Western world."

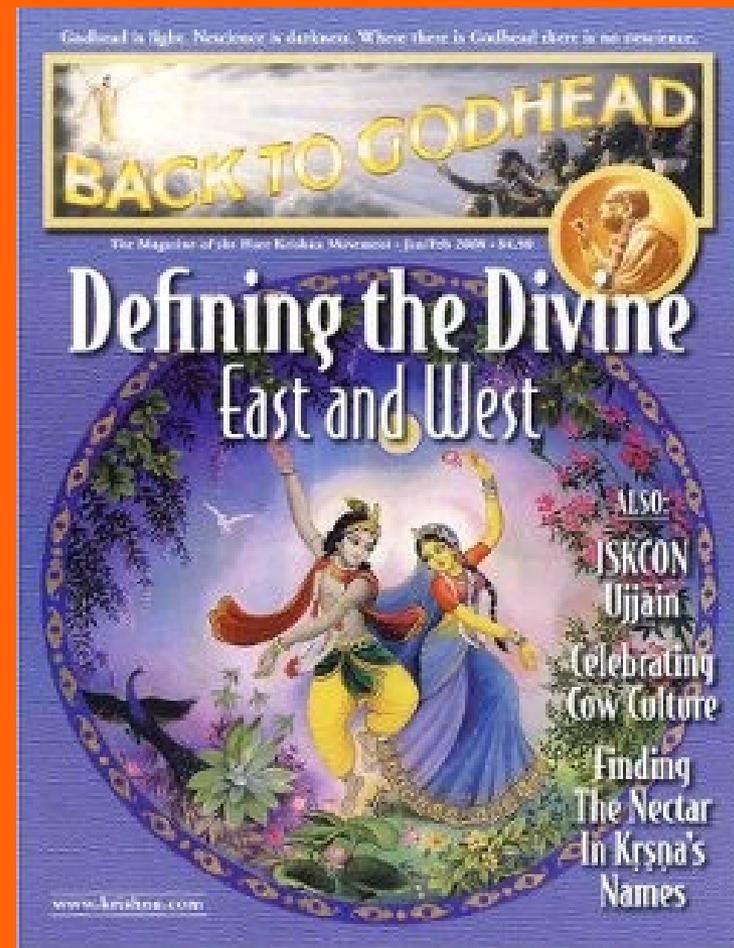
In 1933, Srila Prabhupada took formal initiation from Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, accepting him as his spiritual master.



In 1935, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati told him to print as many books as possible and to distribute them throughout the world.

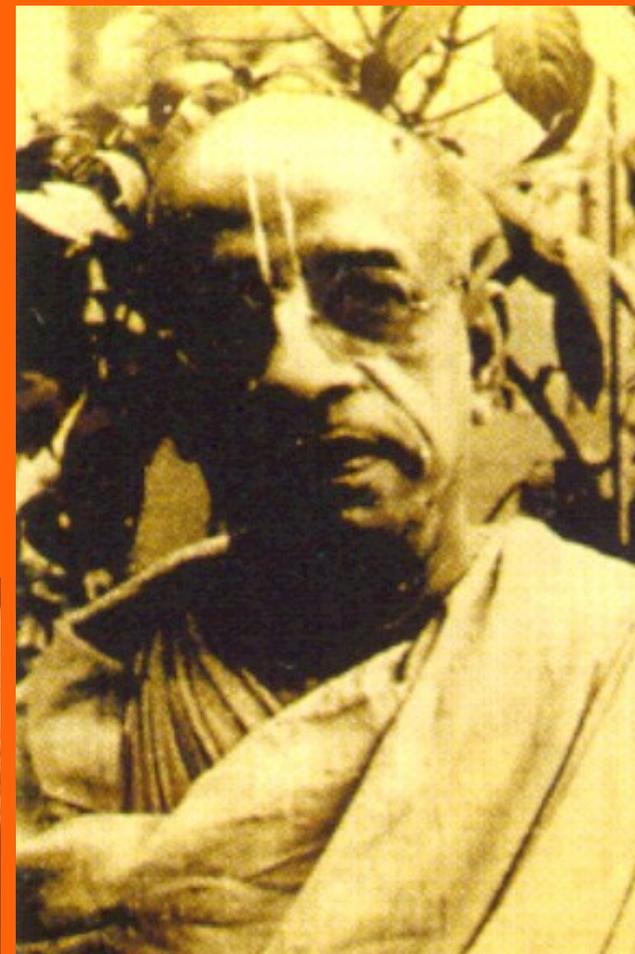


Following the desire of his spiritual master, Prabhupada began publishing his *Back to Godhead* magazine in 1944. He wrote them himself, had them printed, and even rode into town on the bus to distribute these one-page sheets. But he never stopped.



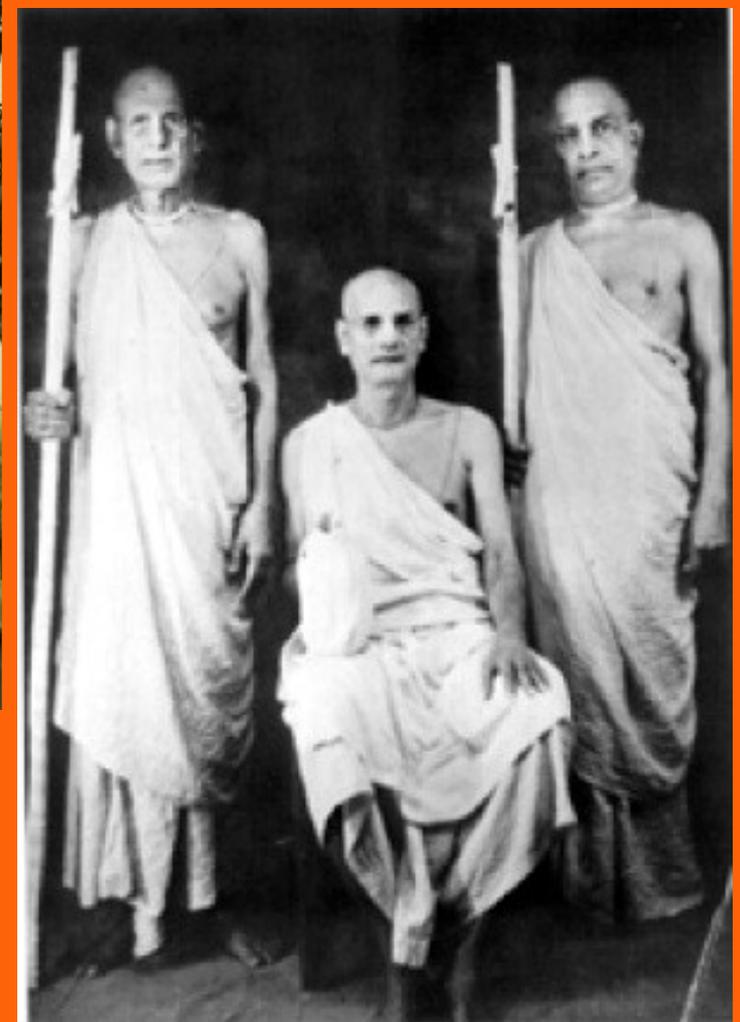
To this day, the *Back to Godhead* magazine has been published monthly by his faithful followers and distributed in many languages.

In 1953, he had started his *League of Devotees*, a small organization of Krishna-conscious people. This was a forerunner of what was to be *The International Society for Krishna Consciousness*.



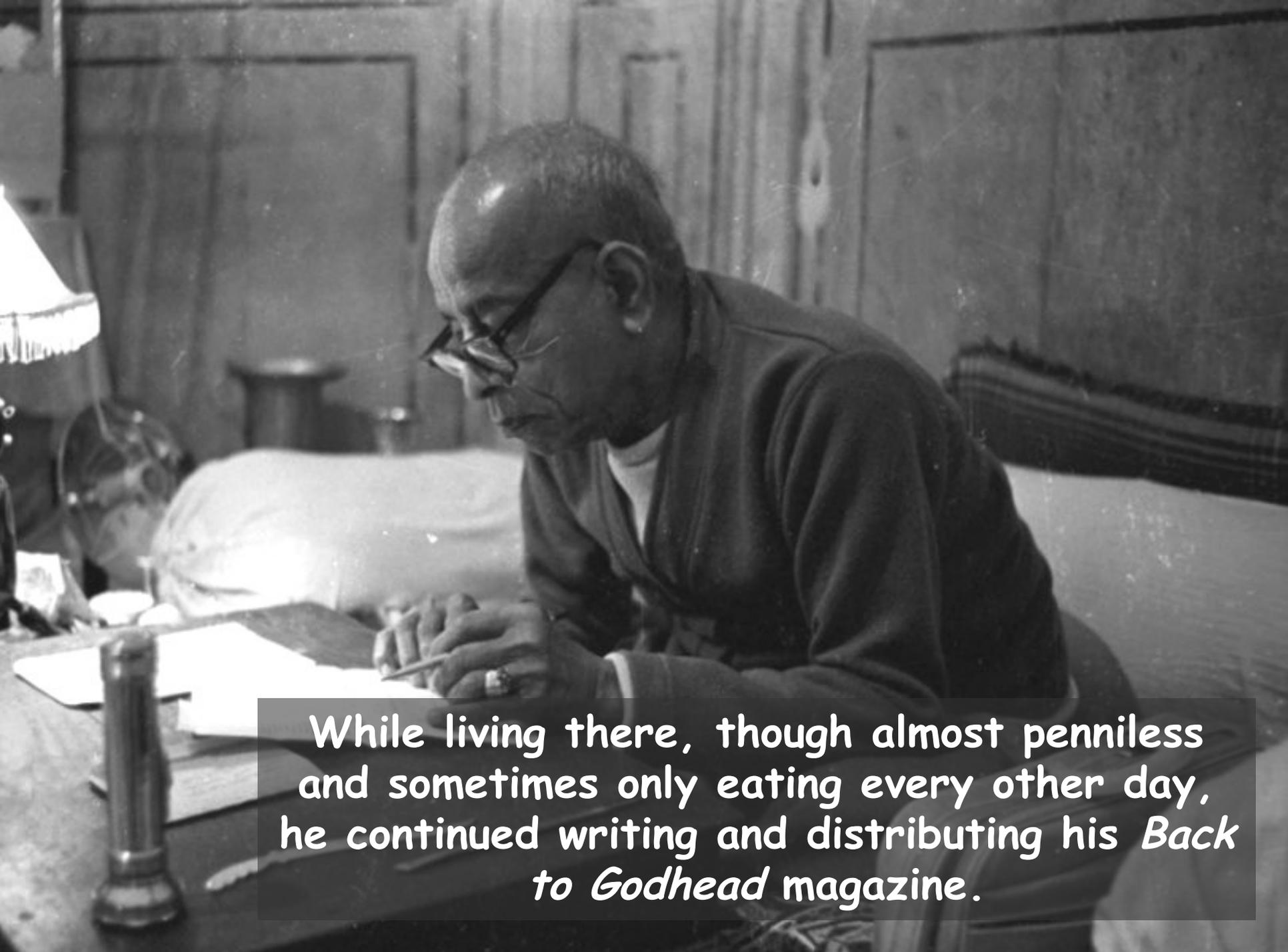


In 1959, Srila Prabhupada accepted the renounced order (*sannyasa*) at the Gaudiya Matha Keshava Temple in Mathura to execute the order of his spiritual master by preaching and writing in the English language.



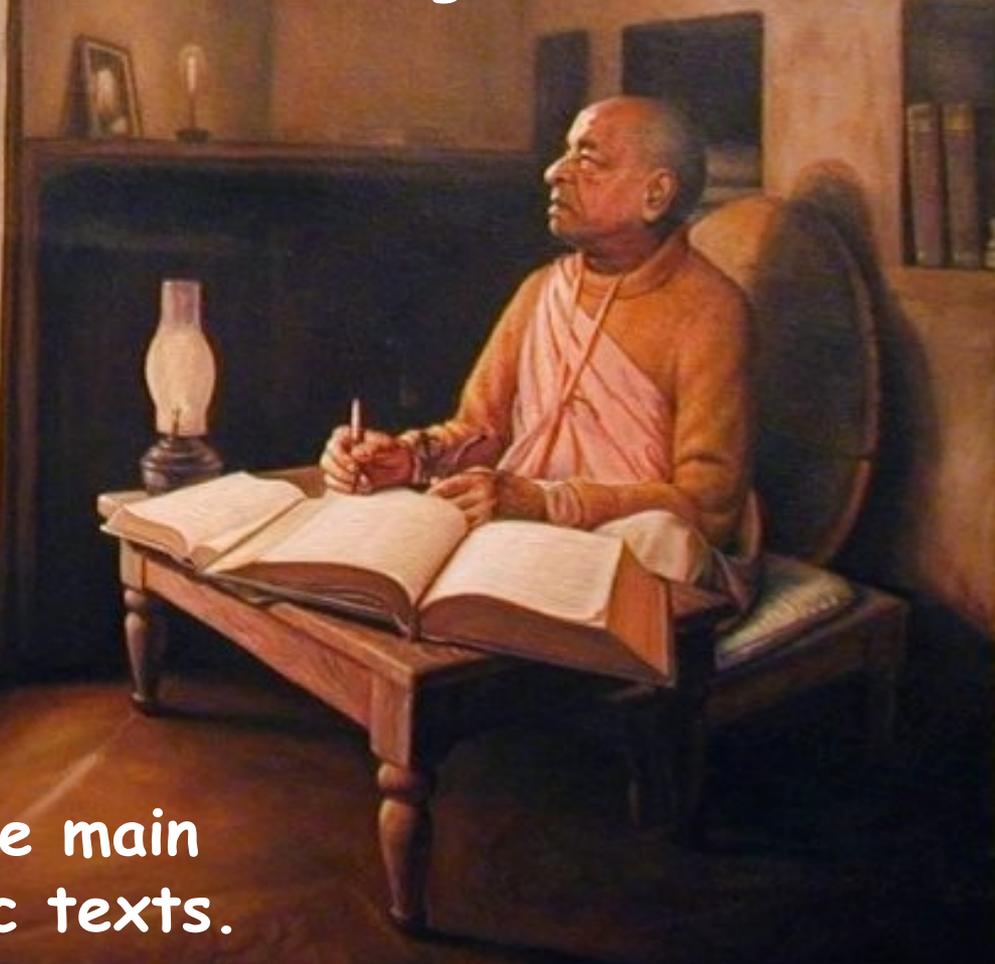
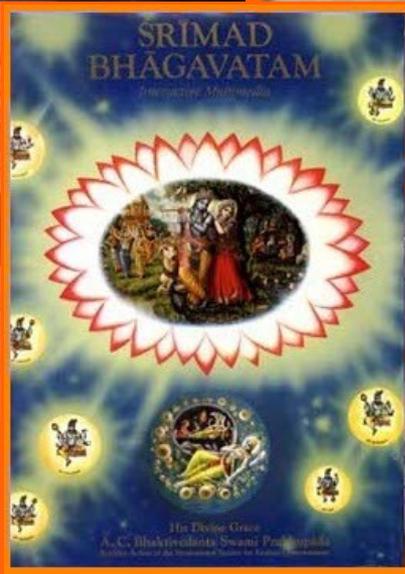
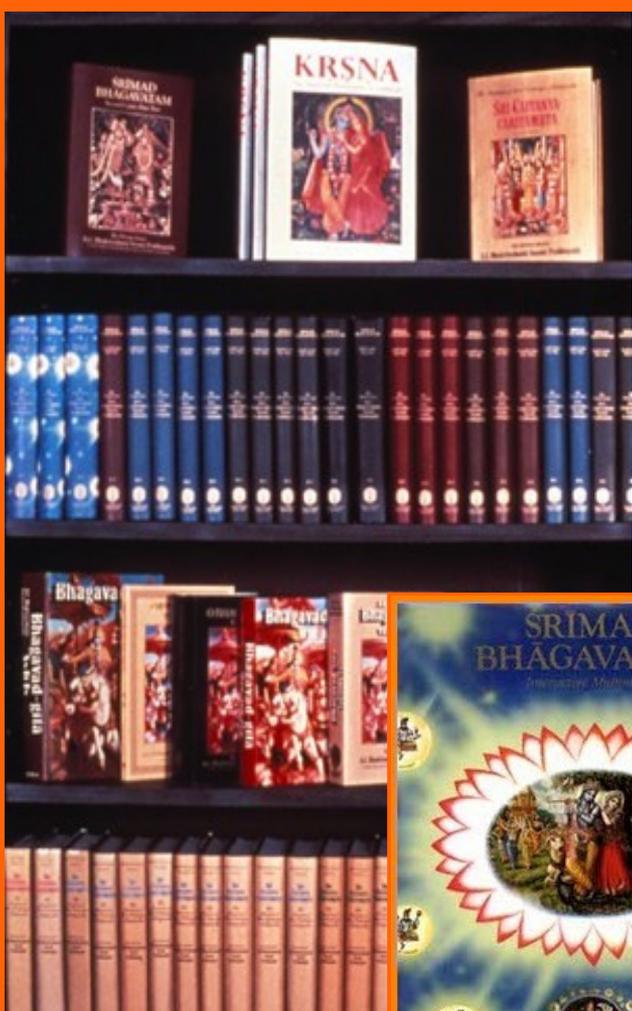


Thereafter, he took up residence in Vrindavana, the land of Krishna's birth. After some years, he occupied a room in the Radha-Damodara temple.



While living there, though almost penniless and sometimes only eating every other day, he continued writing and distributing his *Back to Godhead* magazine.

In addition to that, Srila Prabhupada seriously spent most of his time from 1959 to 1965 translating the multi-volume *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.



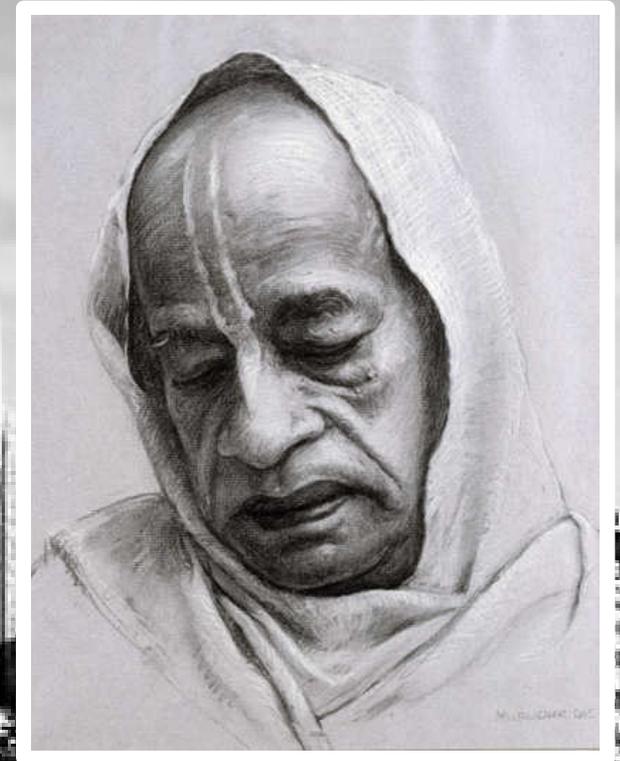
Srimad-Bhagavatam is the main scripture of the 18 Puranic texts.

By 1965 he had raised funds to publish the first three volumes of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.



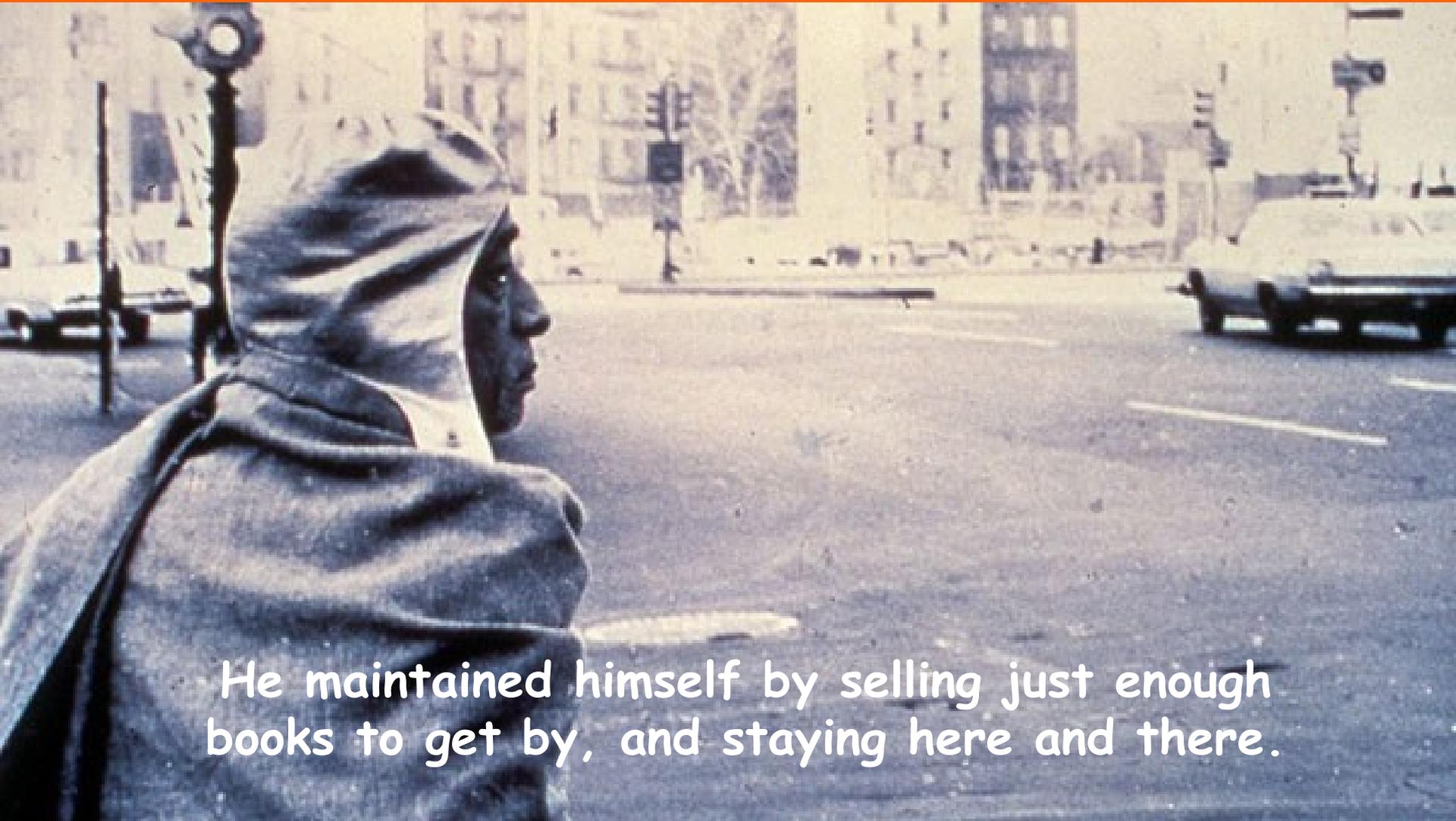
Armed with this, Prabhupada felt ready to finally carry out the instructions his spiritual master had given him nearly 40 years earlier. Then he decided to travel to America.

In 1965, Srila Prabhupada reached the shores of the USA on the steamship *Jaladuta*. He arrived with the equivalent of eight dollars in Indian rupees, a pair of hand cymbals, and a small trunk of his books.



During his voyage at sea, Srila Prabhupada suffered two severe heart attacks.

Not knowing anyone, he thought, "I am an old man. I cannot do very much. But what I can do, let me do in New York City, which is the biggest of all cities in the world."



He maintained himself by selling just enough books to get by, and staying here and there.



Humbly considering himself to be the most insignificant servant of his spiritual master, Prabhupada pushed on with great determination to try to accomplish many ambitious things before the time he would die.



In July of 1966, Prabhupada secured a storefront (called "Matchless Gifts") with an adjoining apartment at 26 Second Avenue. He began holding *Bhagavad-gita* classes at 6 AM and 7 PM.



Only ten months after his arrival to the USA, prospective devotees started coming to his Matchless Gifts temple.



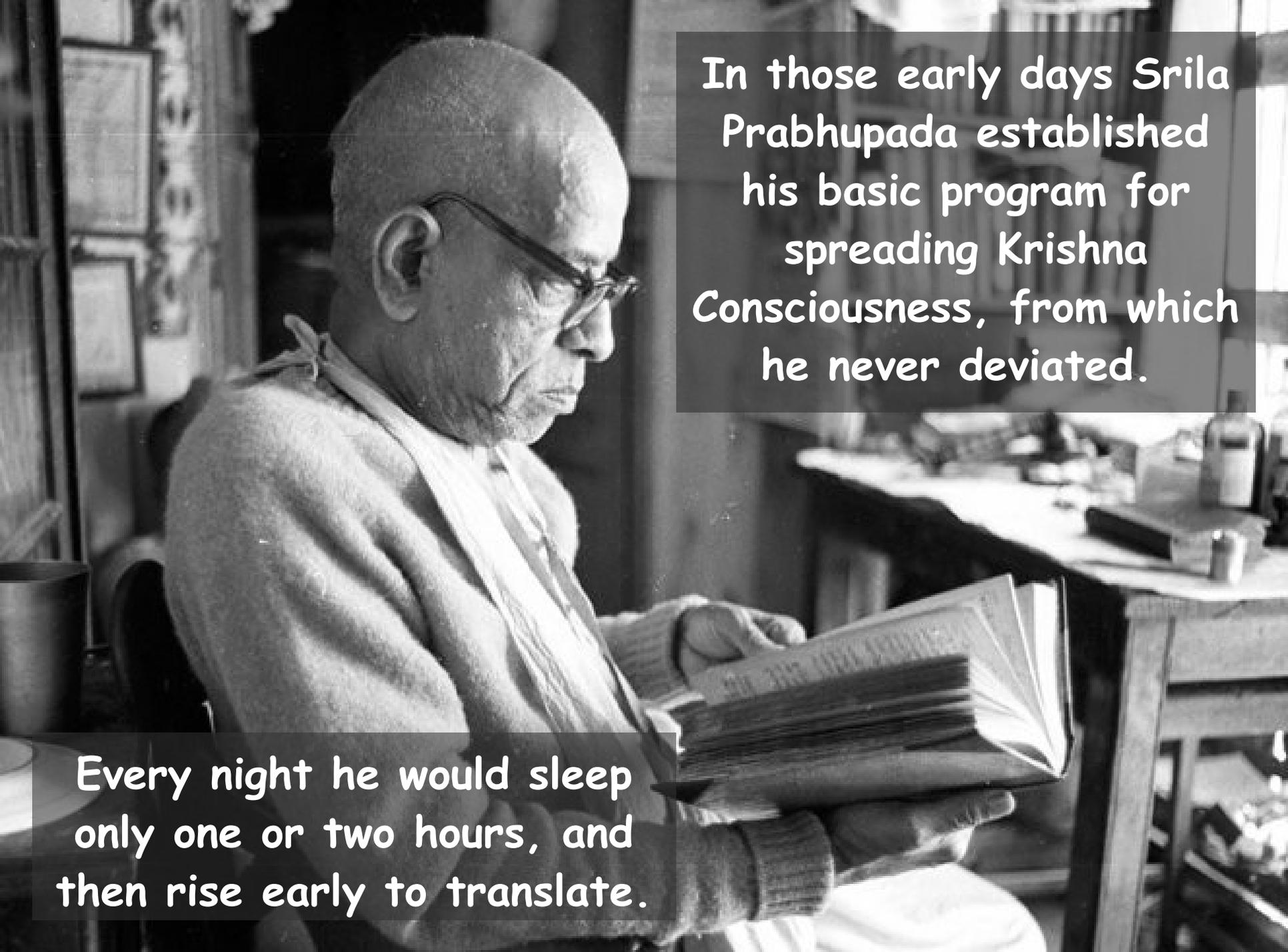
In 1966, Prabhupada officially founded The International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

The Hare Krishna Movement

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY
FOR
KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS

Founder-Acharya His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Some devotees argued for using 'God Consciousness' instead. But Prabhupada replied sternly, "God has a name - Krishna. So, why not use it?"

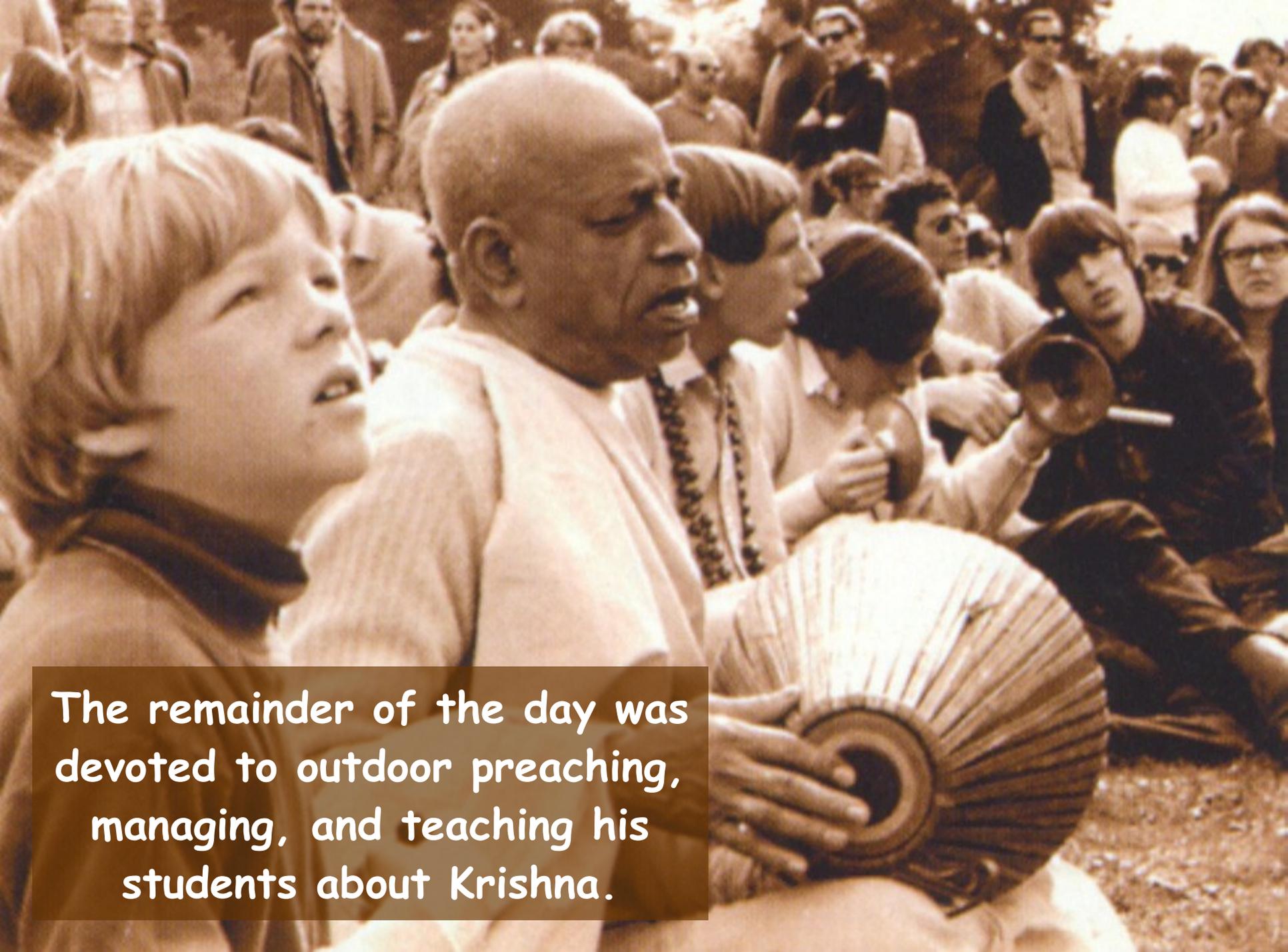


In those early days Srila Prabhupada established his basic program for spreading Krishna Consciousness, from which he never deviated.

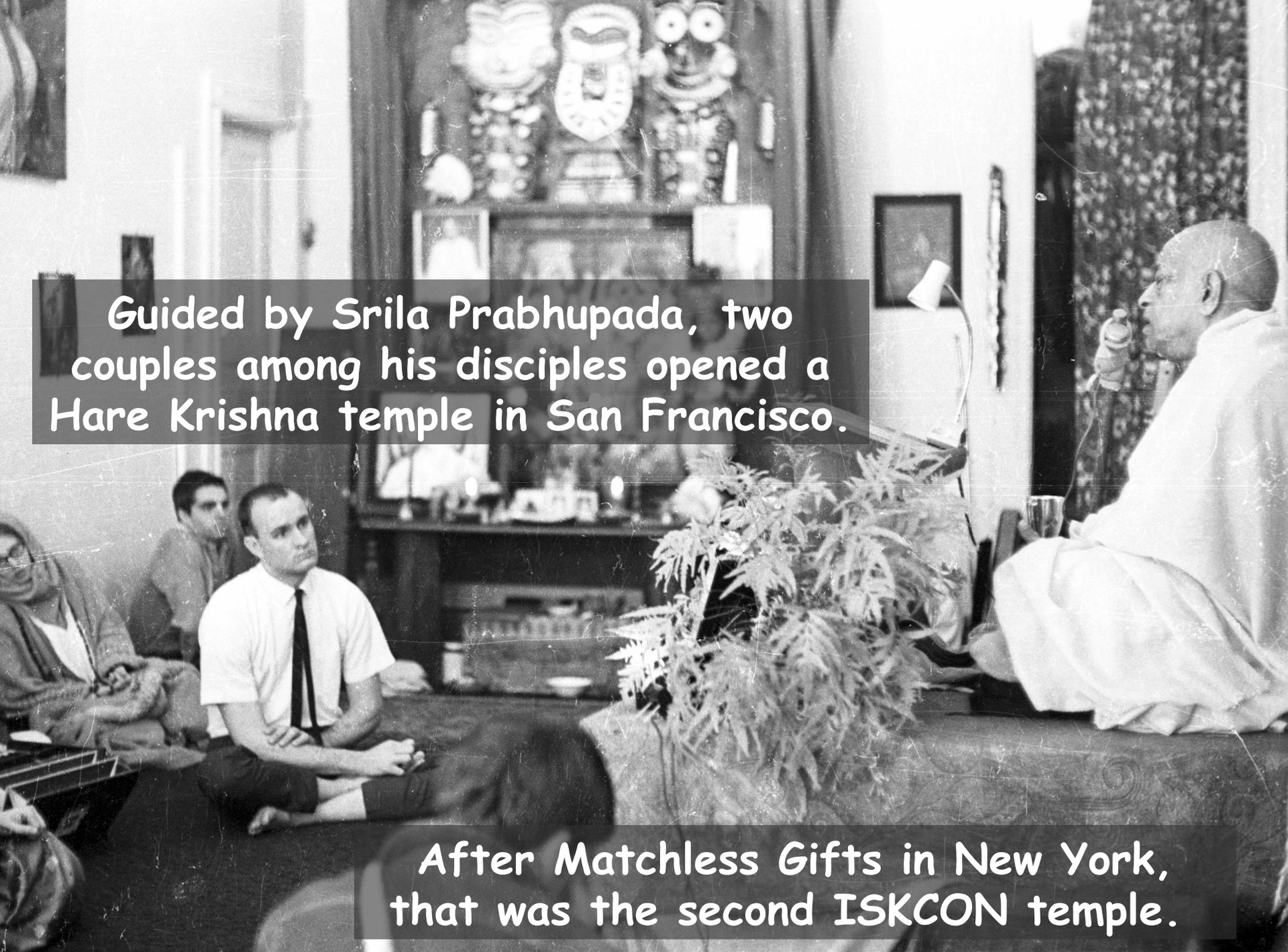
Every night he would sleep only one or two hours, and then rise early to translate.

In the morning hours
he would have the
early morning worship
and then give lecture.





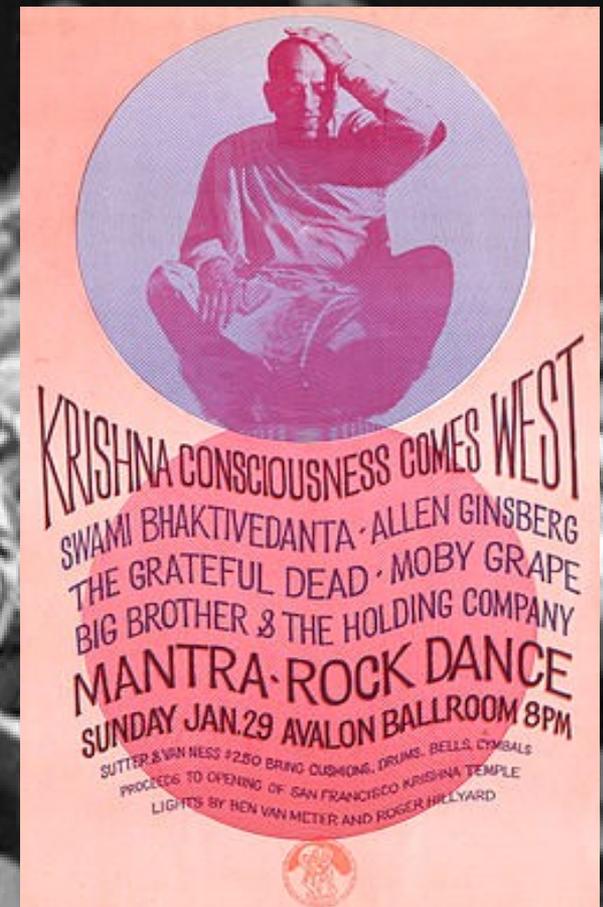
The remainder of the day was devoted to outdoor preaching, managing, and teaching his students about Krishna.



Guided by Srila Prabhupada, two couples among his disciples opened a Hare Krishna temple in San Francisco.

After Matchless Gifts in New York, that was the second ISKCON temple.

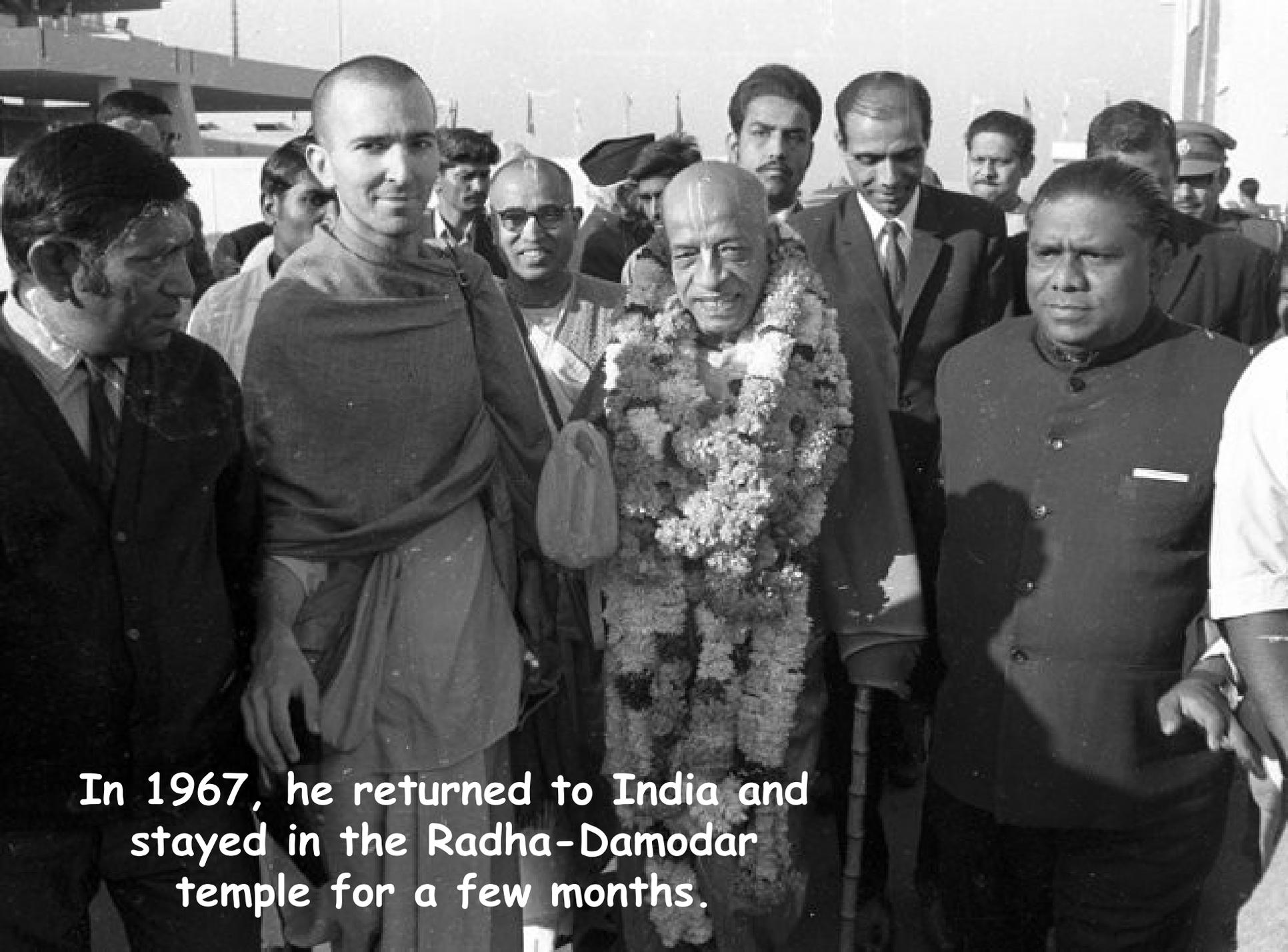
January 29, 1967: all the cutting-edge San Francisco bands (*The Grateful Dead, Moby Grape, Janis Joplin, Big Brother & the Holding Company, Jefferson Airplane, Quicksilver Messenger Service*) ...



... had agreed to appear with Srila Prabhupada at the Avalon Ballroom's Mantra-Rock Dance, proceeds from which went to the newly opened local Hare Krishna temple. Thousands of jubilant hippies packed the hall.



His disciples were going out and opening new branches. After NY and SF, new temples were opened in Montreal, Los Angeles, Detroit, Boston, Philadelphia, Columbus...



In 1967, he returned to India and stayed in the Radha-Damodar temple for a few months.

In 1971 he visited Vrindavan with forty western disciples. They traveled across India, setting up public programs for thousands of people. Many Indian people joined his spiritual family.





**Some of Srila Prabhupada's
unparalleled achievements**

He sent his followers, chanting the names of God, into the streets of cities and villages. Thus, the Hare Krishna mantra became famous in nearly every corner of the earth.

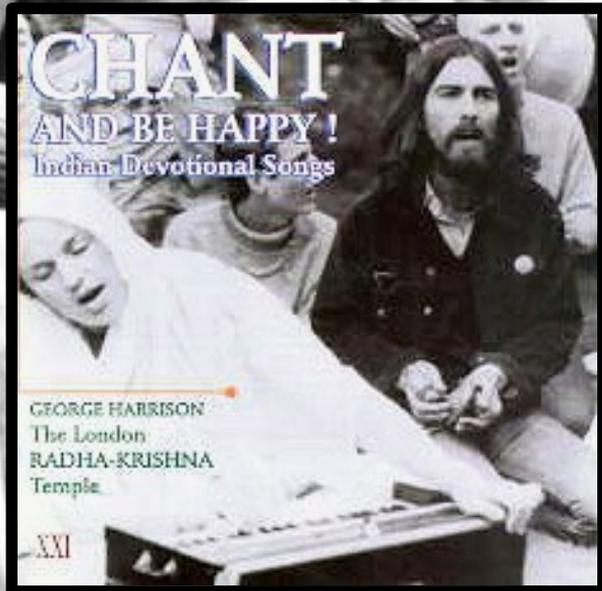




He organised traveling bus parties in the USA and Australia to spread Krishna's teachings, spoken in the days of yore and written 5,000 years ago in the timeless Vedic literatures.

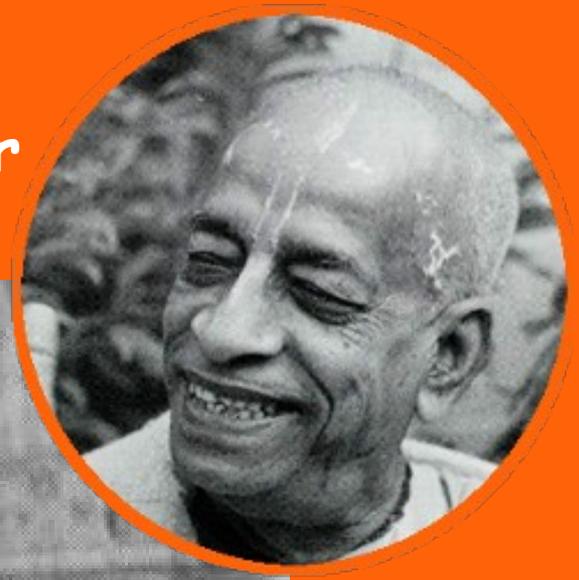


He sent his disciples to London, where they recorded the single, "Hare Krsna Mantra", with George Harrison, in 1969.



It became the fastest selling of all the Apple Corporation's releases, including those of the Beatles.

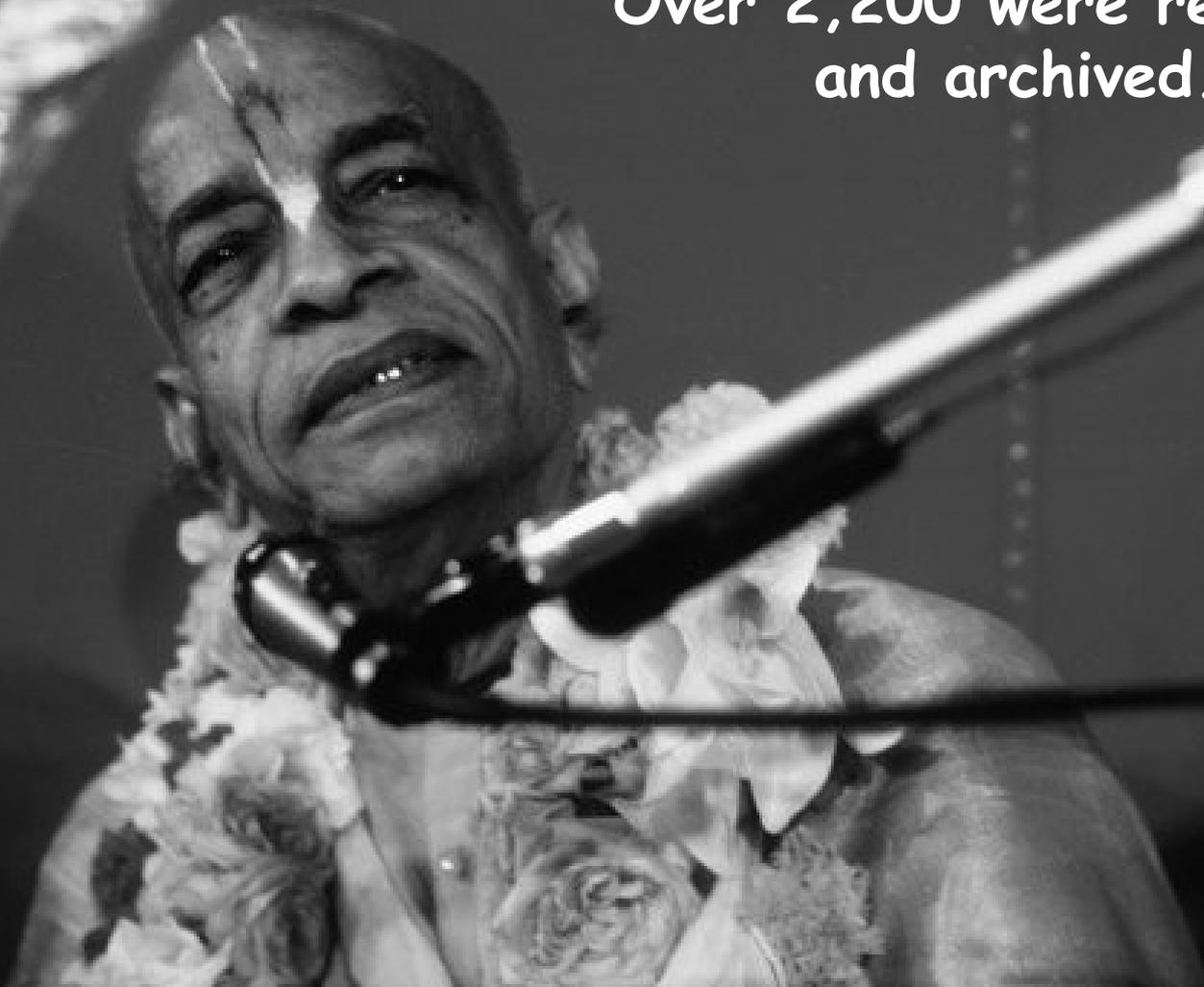
Srila Prabhupada came to London the same year and for the first time addressed the English public in October 1969 in Conway Hall.

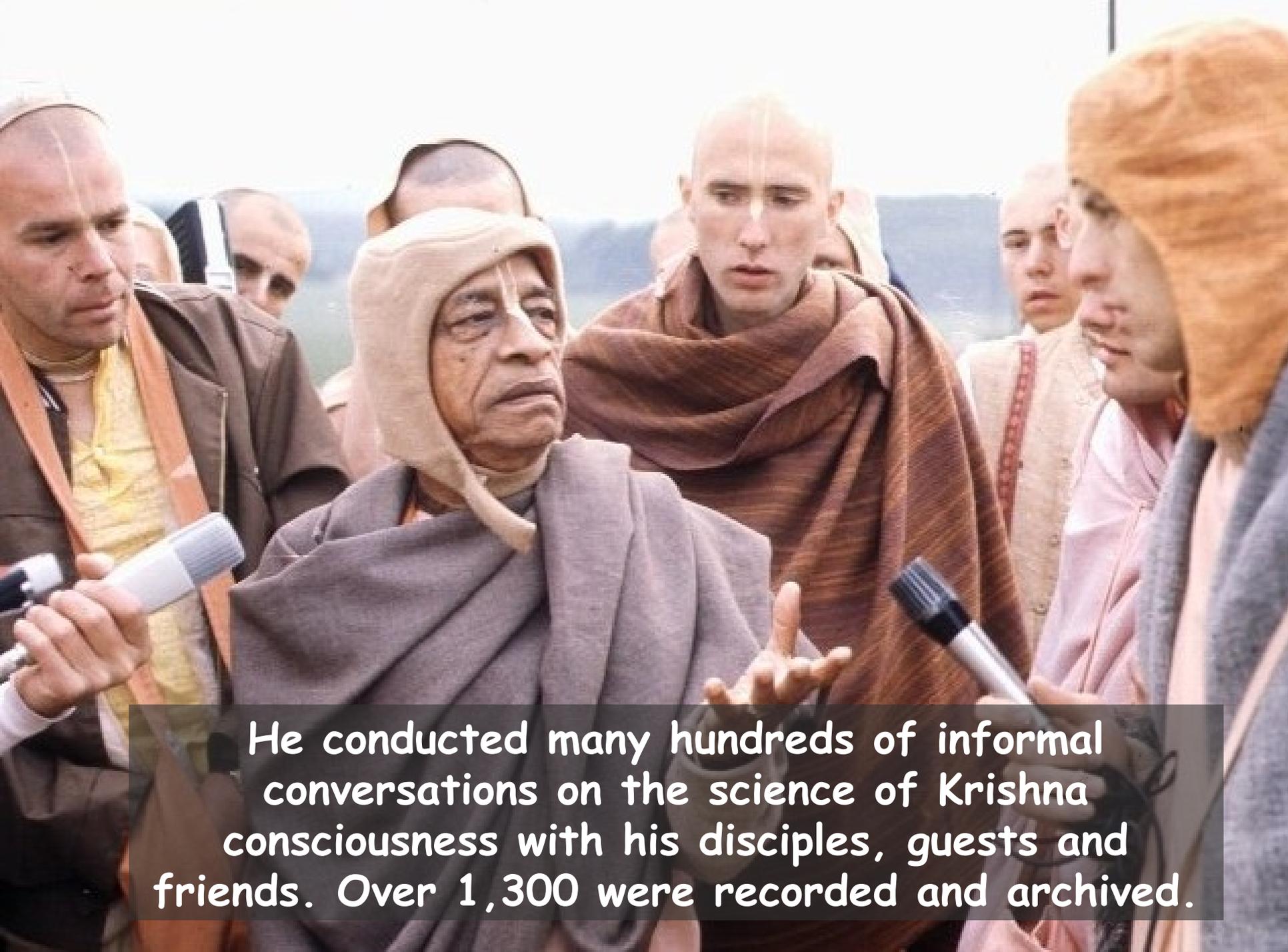




He formally initiated approximately five thousand disciples. These initiates represented a sweeping diversity of nationalities, races, ethnicities, and religious backgrounds.

He spoke daily on the philosophy of Krishna consciousness, delivering thousands of formal lectures. Over 2,200 were recorded and archived.





He conducted many hundreds of informal conversations on the science of Krishna consciousness with his disciples, guests and friends. Over 1,300 were recorded and archived.

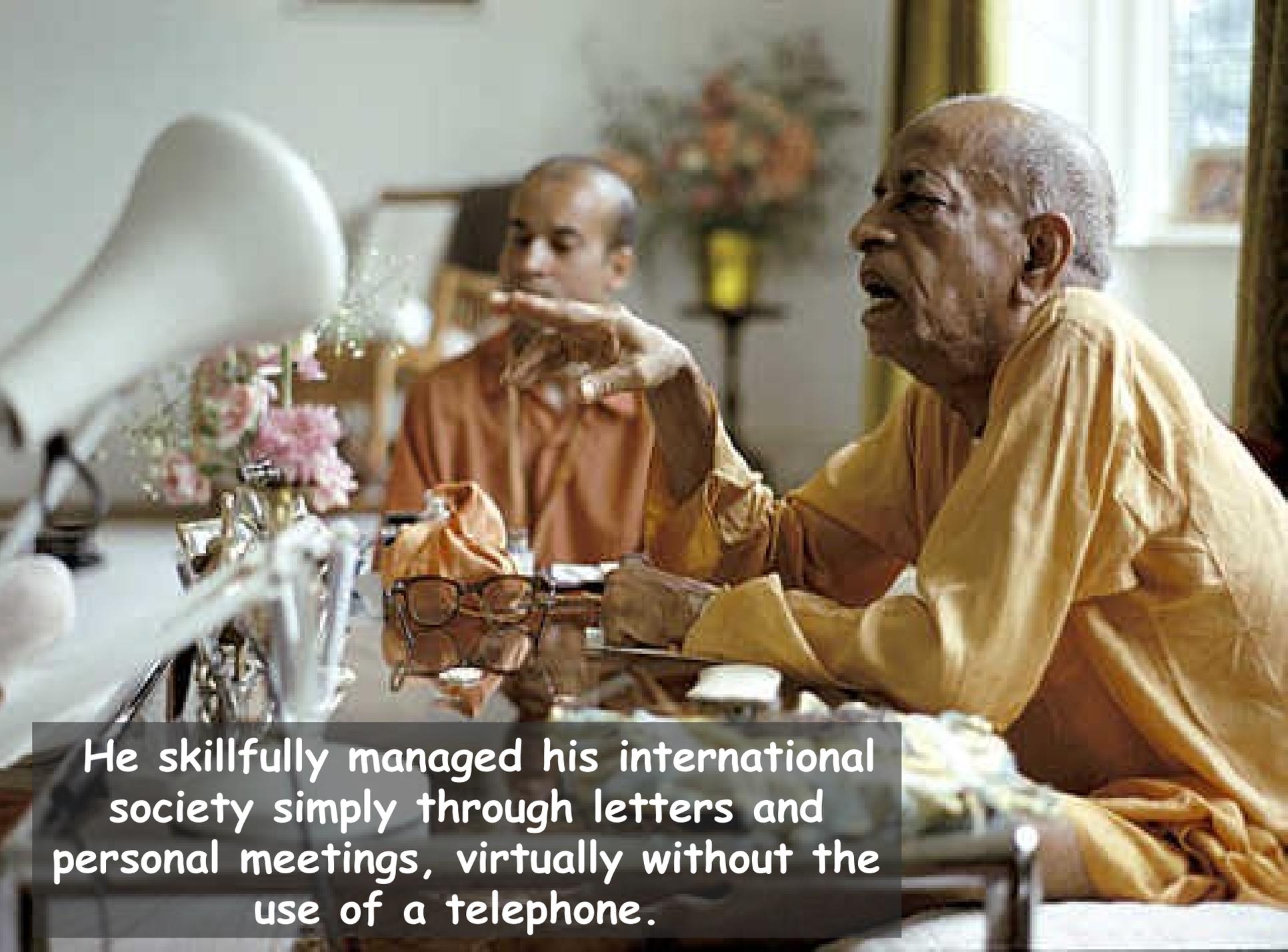
He founded the Bhaktivedanta Institute to advance Krishna consciousness within the scientific community, engaging serious academics in the consideration of the science of self-realization.



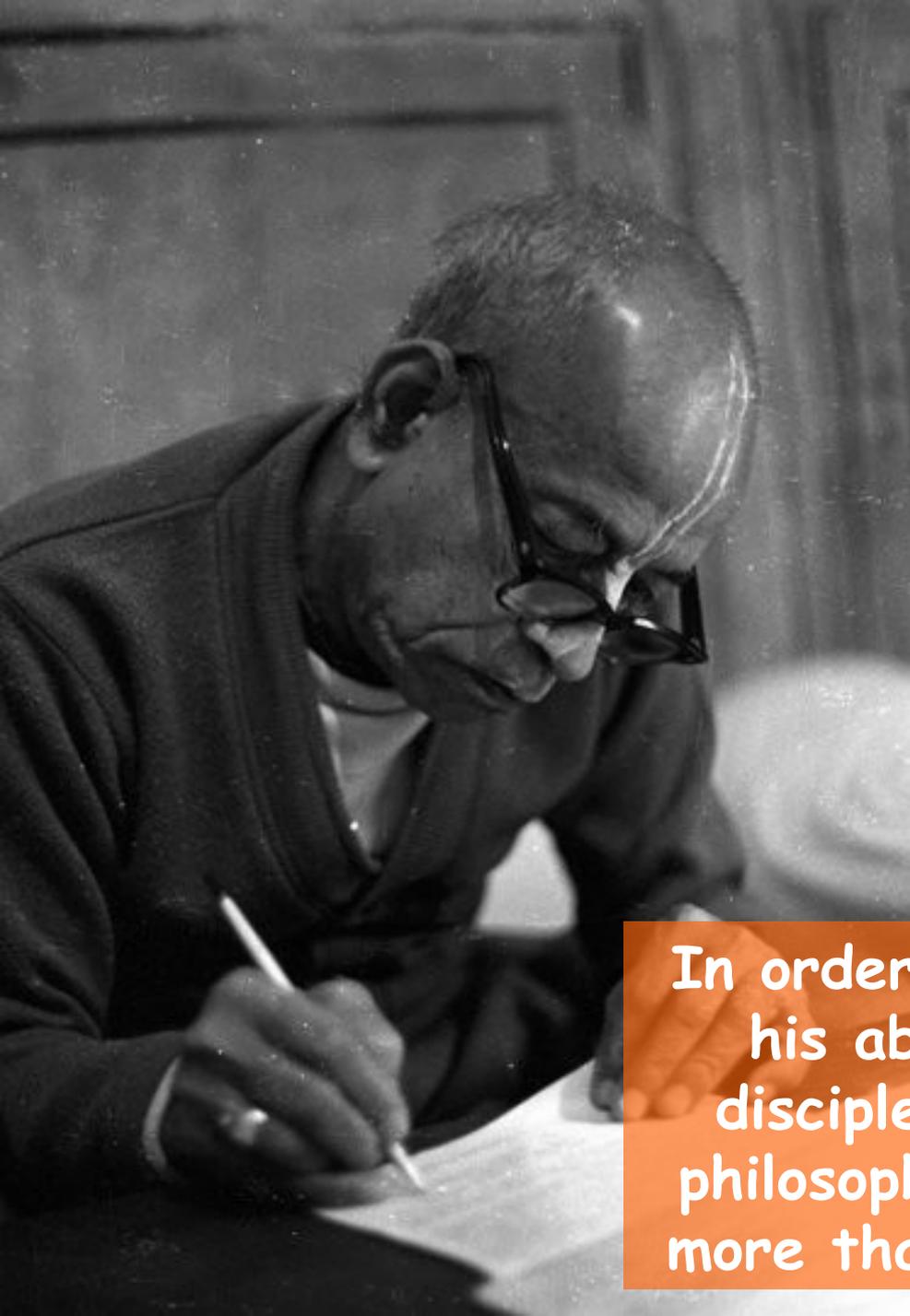


He had scores of interviews and philosophical discussions with news reporters, scientists, religious leaders and politicians, as well as meetings with world-renowned dignitaries and celebrities.





He skillfully managed his international society simply through letters and personal meetings, virtually without the use of a telephone.



Tridandi Goswami
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

Date: February 25, 1972
Camp: Sridham Mayapur (Reply: ISKCON Bombay)

My dear Prajapati,

Please accept my blessings. I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of January 28, 1972, along with the very nice book you have compiled "Prayers to Krishna." Actually, this book was so much enjoyed by me, and I think that you have done it perfectly and there is no need to make any changes. So today I have sent the book to Karandhar in Los Angeles and I have instructed his New Dwarika Press to make the lay-out immediately and have the pictures printed very nicely just as you have drawn them, and to send the finished manuscript to Dad Rippon for printing 10,000 copies at once.

I have appreciated also the newsclipping from Boston "Globe," and I understand this is a very famous newspaper in your country.

Because your wife is fully trained as classical dancer, and she taught in such big university, so she can organize classical dancing to portray stories about Krishna and His Pastimes and that will be very nice proposal. Recently in Bombay we have had a benefit charity performance called "Ware Krishna Benefit" performed by the Javeri Sisters, a famous classical dancing group from Mumbai. These dancers were depicting stories from Krishna's Pastimes, and the dancing was very nice. So this art of dancing, as any art, can be also employed in the service of glorifying the Supreme Lord. If she is expert dancer, your wife can organize a dancing group to depict very exquisitely stories from our Krishna Book.

As for your training in theology, if you simply present some of the popular western points of view of theology and then point by point you may defeat them or expose them as speculators who are simply misleading the innocent public, and that will be a very nice service, because when intelligent people begin to understand our philosophy and theology, that it is the absolute Truth and that if anyone becomes Krishna Conscious, that is the highest perfection of understanding philosophy, then our Krishna Consciousness Movement will advance very quickly because everyone like the common people respect the opinions of intelligent scholars. So if you work in this way to convince the intelligent class of men, that will be very great service and also the proper use of your educational training. Thank you very much for helping me in this way.

Hoping this will meet you in good health and happy mood.

Your ever well-wishes,
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

In order to carry on the mission in his absence, He counseled his disciples on complex managerial, philosophical and personal issues in more than 6,000 archived letters.

He inaugurated the Rathayatra Festival of Lord Jagannatha (Krishna) in major cities around the globe - in effect, bringing the temple to the people.



In 1971, he planted the seed of Krishna consciousness in Moscow, thus repeating the same preaching strategy he previously used in the USA.



Srila Prabhupada looked so lonely and all by himself as he walked towards the Red Square in Moscow.

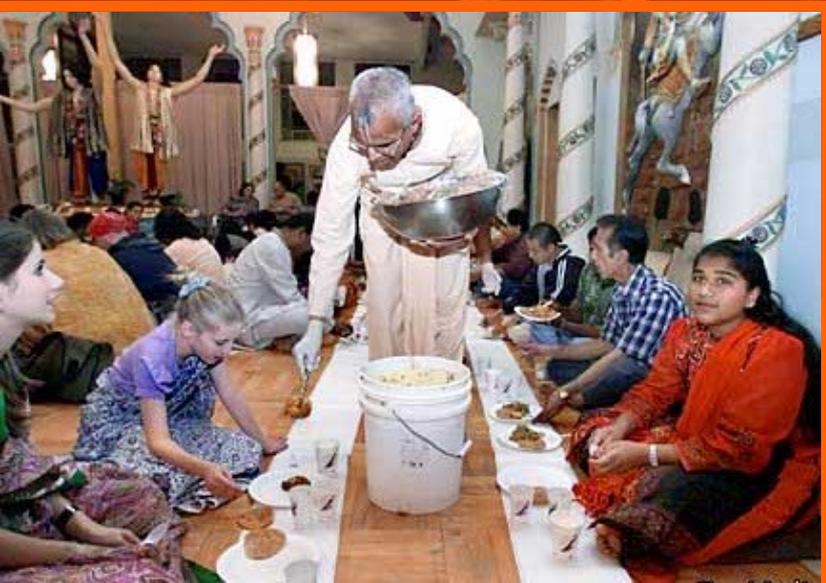
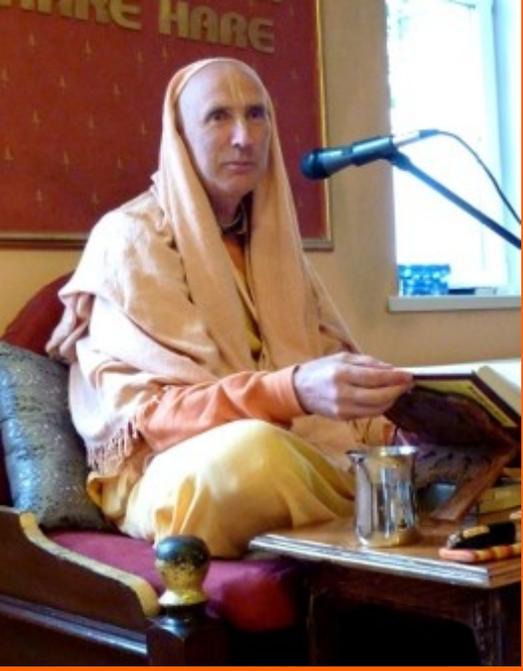
Srila Prabhupada created the world's first chain of vegetarian restaurants.



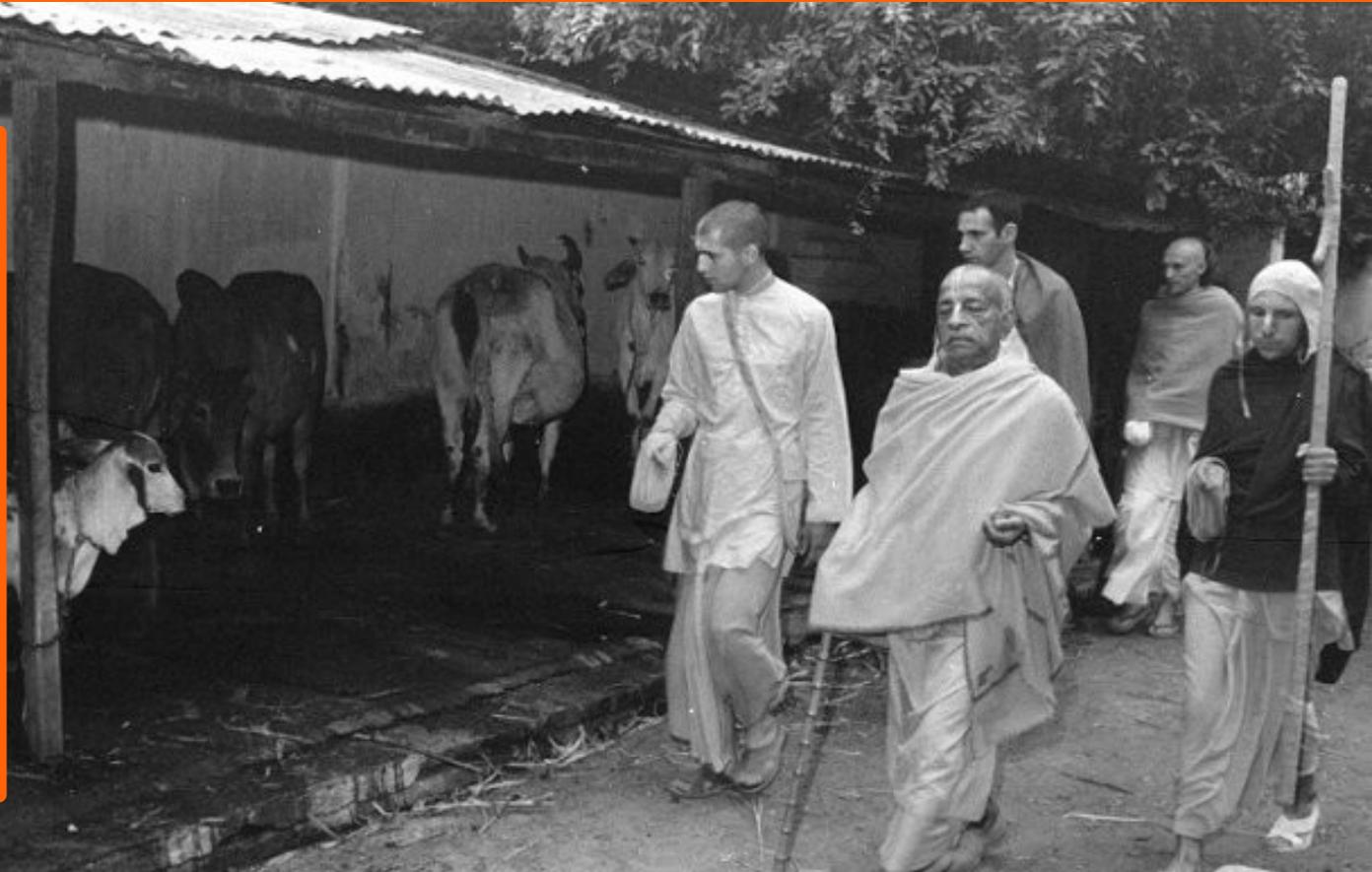
Govinda's

Vegetarian Restaurant





He introduced the "Sunday Love Feast" - *prasadam* (sanctified food) distribution, combined with spiritual music and lectures about Vedic wisdom.

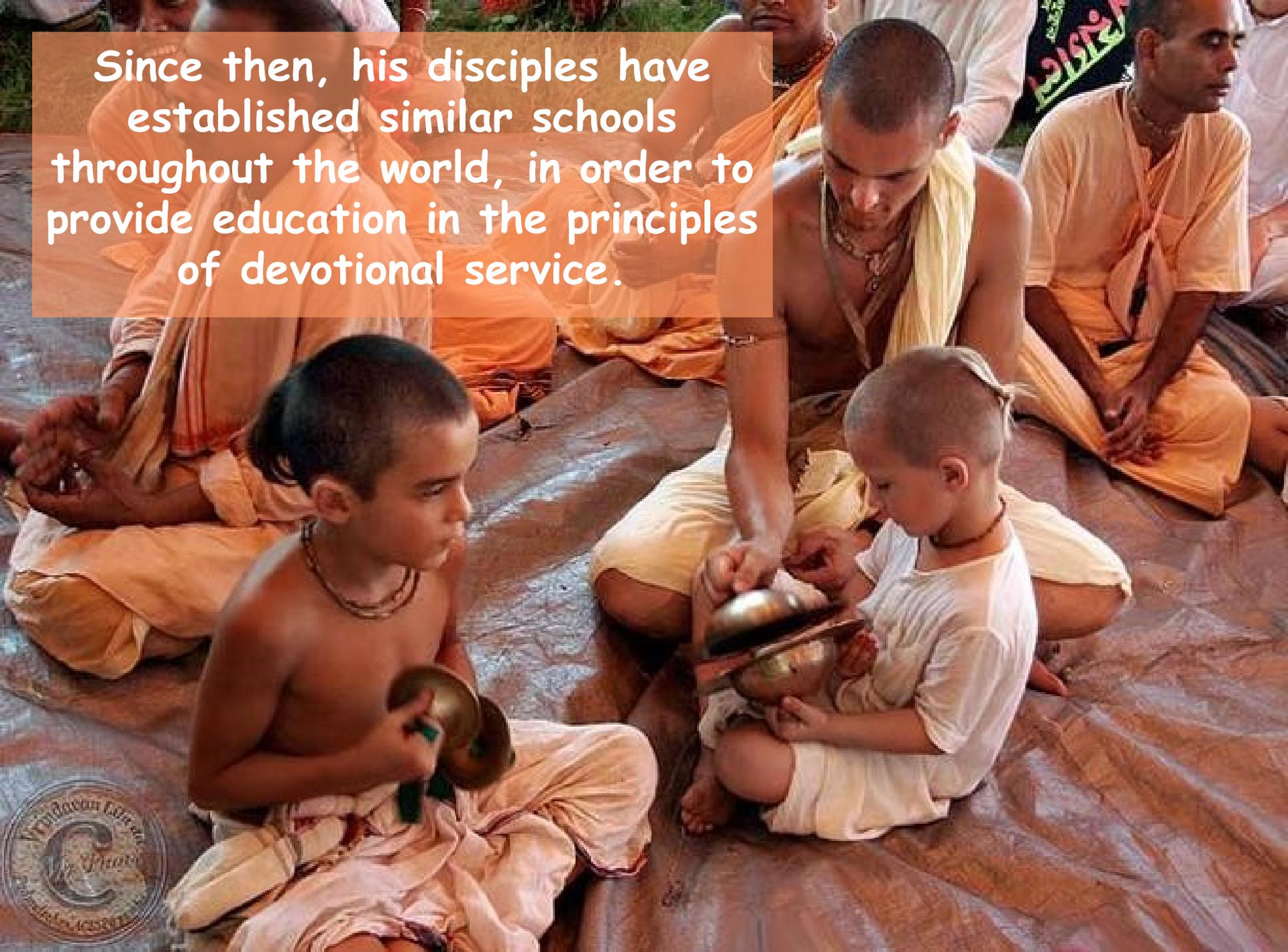


He set up farm communities to teach "simple living and high thinking", emphasizing cow protection and dependence on God and nature.



In 1972 Srila Prabhupada introduced the Vedic system of primary and secondary education in the West by founding the *gurukula* school in Dallas.

Since then, his disciples have established similar schools throughout the world, in order to provide education in the principles of devotional service.



In 1974, shocked and saddened upon seeing a group of village children fighting with street dogs over scraps of food, Srila Prabhupada told his students to begin serving free meals to the poor and destitute.



**Hare Krishna
Food for Life**

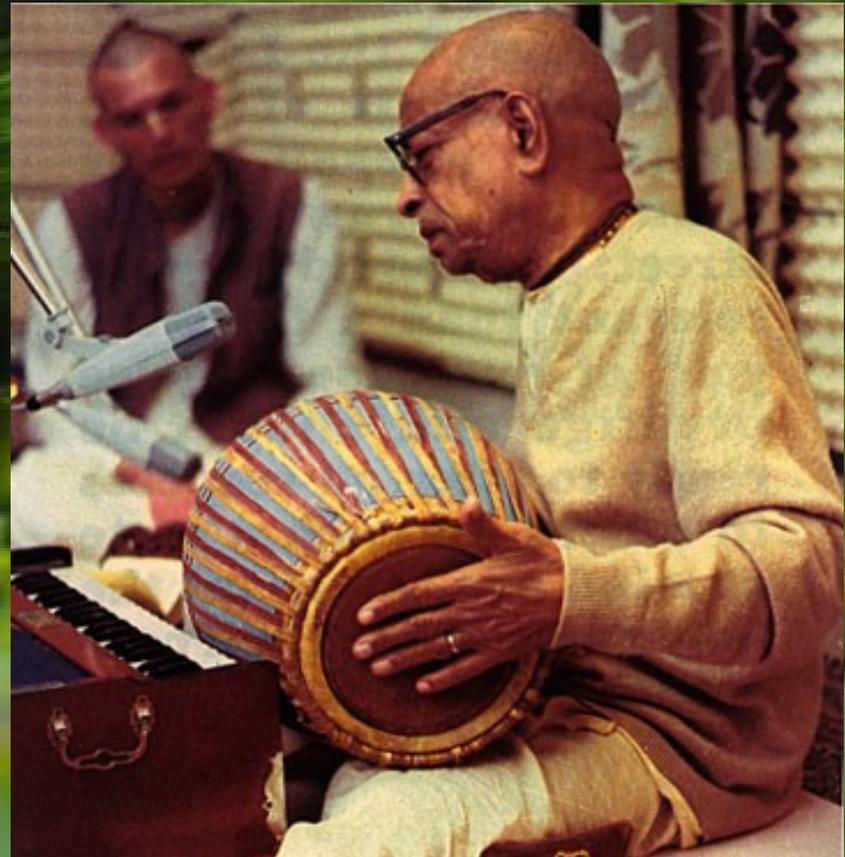




Prabhupada's followers were inspired to expand that original effort into a global network of free kitchens, vans and mobile services, establishing daily delivery to homeless and destitute people around the world.



He recorded more
than twenty albums of
devotional music.



He established 108 Krishna temples on six continents, installed the deity of Krishna in each center and trained his disciples in the process of deity worship.



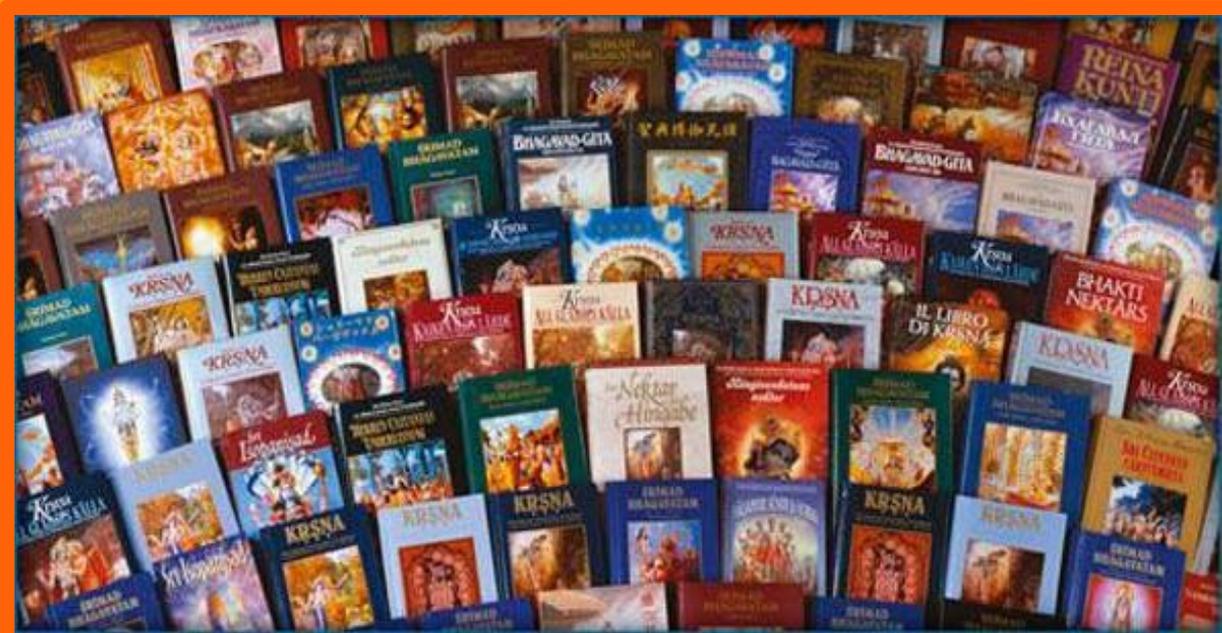
Srila Prabhupada's most significant contribution, however, is his books.

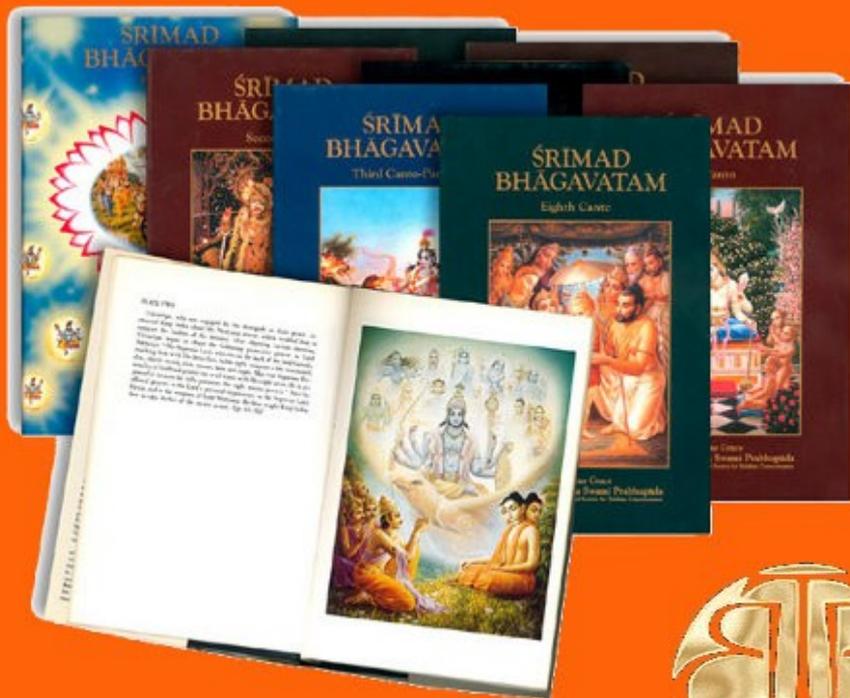


Highly respected by scholars for their authority, depth, and clarity, they are used in numerous colleges worldwide.

He wrote more than seventy books on the science of Krsna consciousness, sleeping only a few hours per day.

Dozens of prominent scholars and educators from leading universities praised his work.



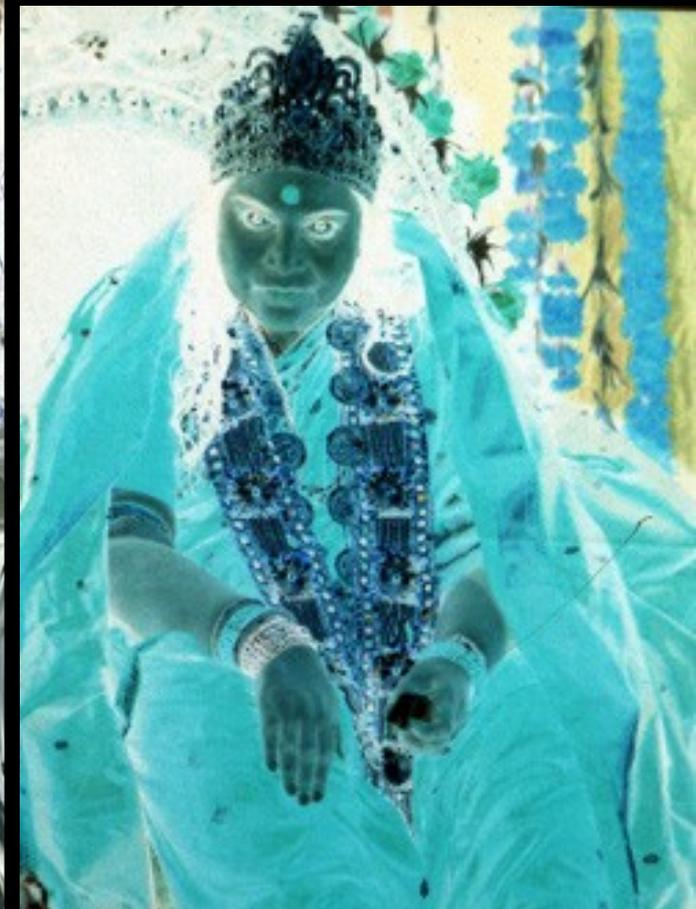


He founded the *Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT)* in 1972 to produce his books. By 1976, over 55,000,000 literatures had been published in twenty-five languages.

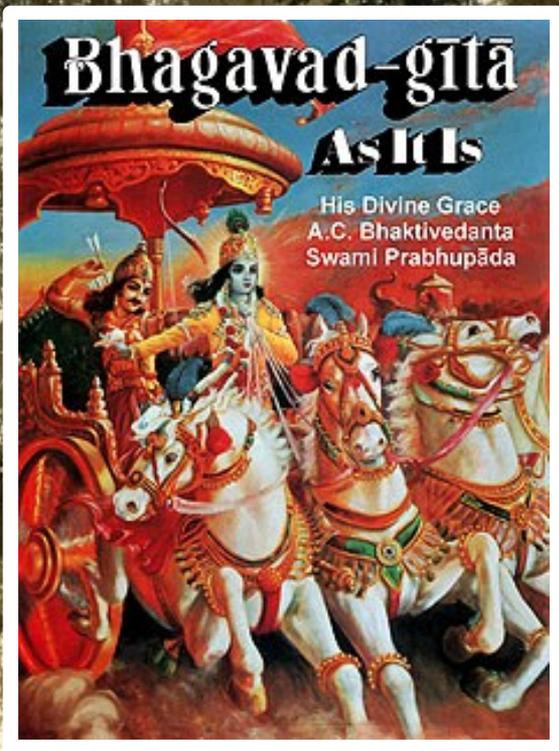


His books are being distributed in almost every country, making the BBT the world's largest publisher of spiritual and philosophical texts.





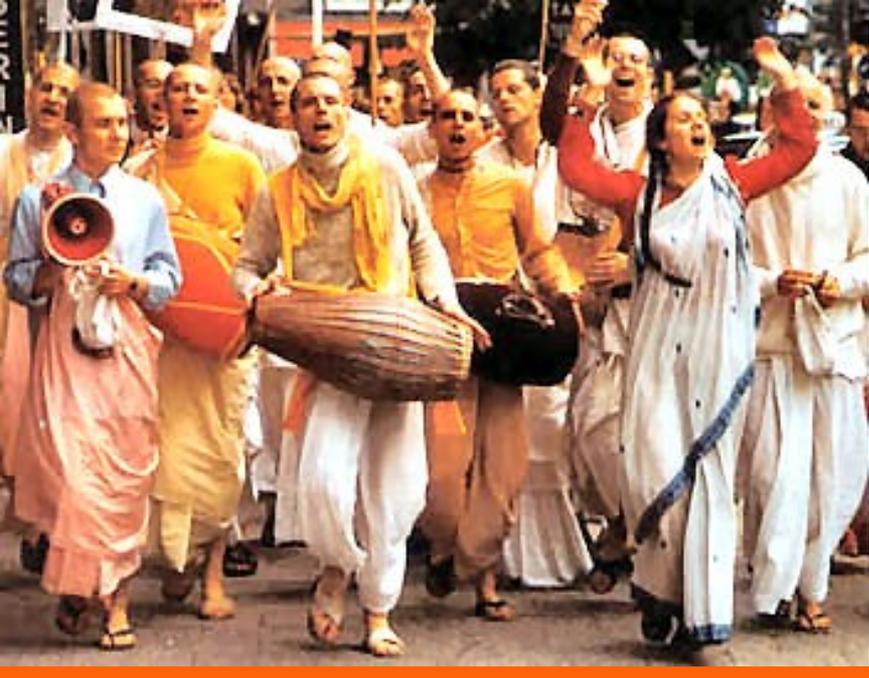
"So many cheaters have come from India, convincing their foolish followers to accept them as God, that those who are actually well versed and learned in Indian culture have become very concerned and troubled..."



...For this reason I am very excited about the publication of Bhagavad-gita A It Is, by Sri A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

Srila Prabhupada, from his very birth, was trained in the strict practice of bhakti-yoga, and he appears in a succession of gurus that traces back to the original speaking of Bhagavad-gita by Sri Krishna."

Prof. Kailash Vajpeye (University of Mexico, Oriental studies), 1976.



"...As I came to know the movement, I came to find that there was a striking similarity in the essence of what they were teaching and in the original core of Christianity."

...That is, living simply, not trying to accumulate worldly goods, living with compassion toward all creatures, sharing, loving and living joyfully.

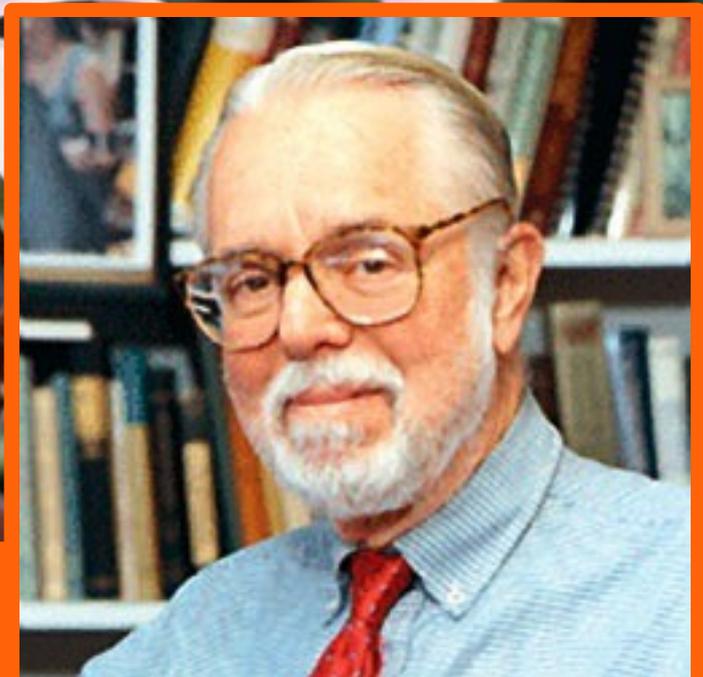


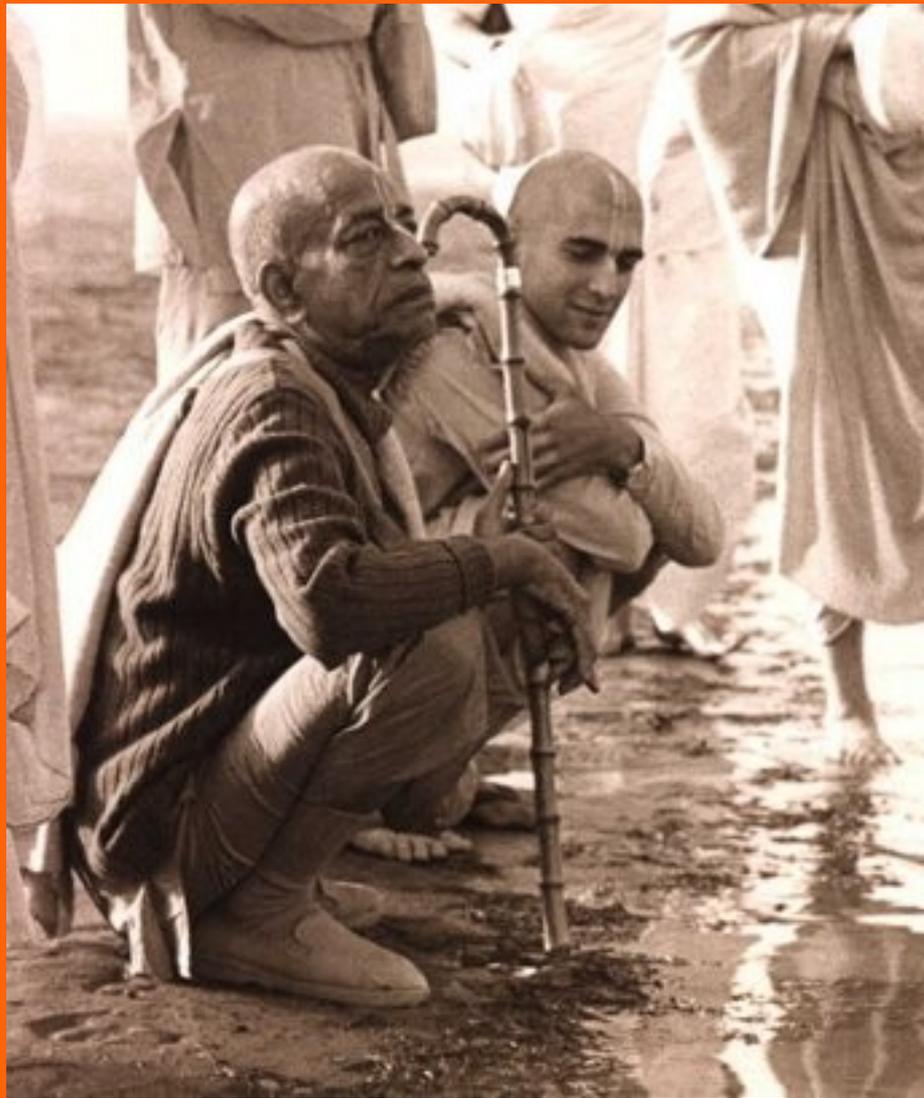


I am impressed with how much the teachings of one man and the spiritual tradition he brought have impacted themselves into the lives of so many people.

In my view, Srila Prabhupada's contribution is a very important one and will be a lasting one."

Harvey Cox, world-renowned professor of religion at Harvard University.





In spite of leading an international spiritual society, he preferred to keep a low profile, living modestly and riding mostly on the public transport.

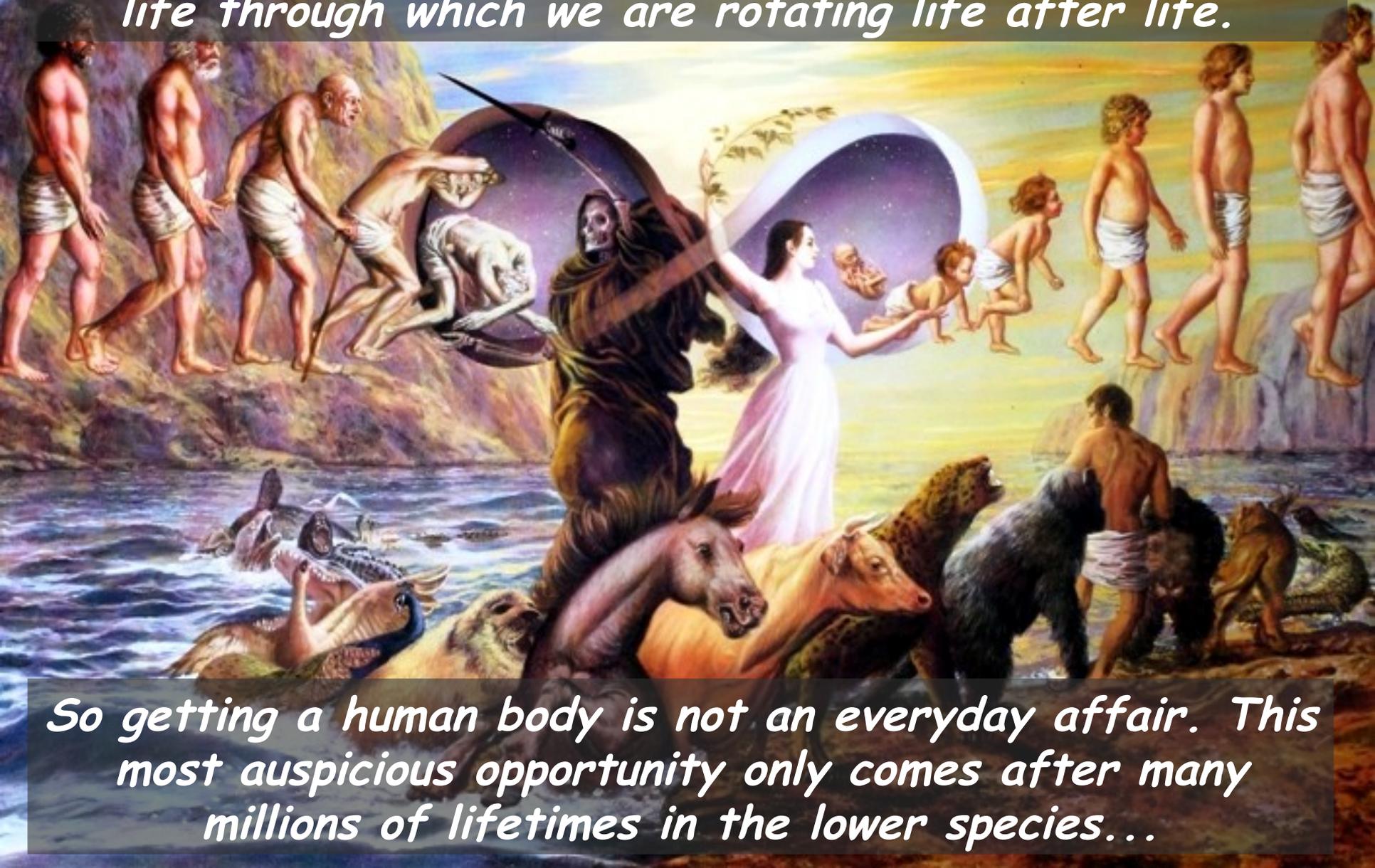


By dint of his spiritual power and great compassion, Srila Prabhupada turned many drug addicts, drunkards, criminals, etc. - into ...

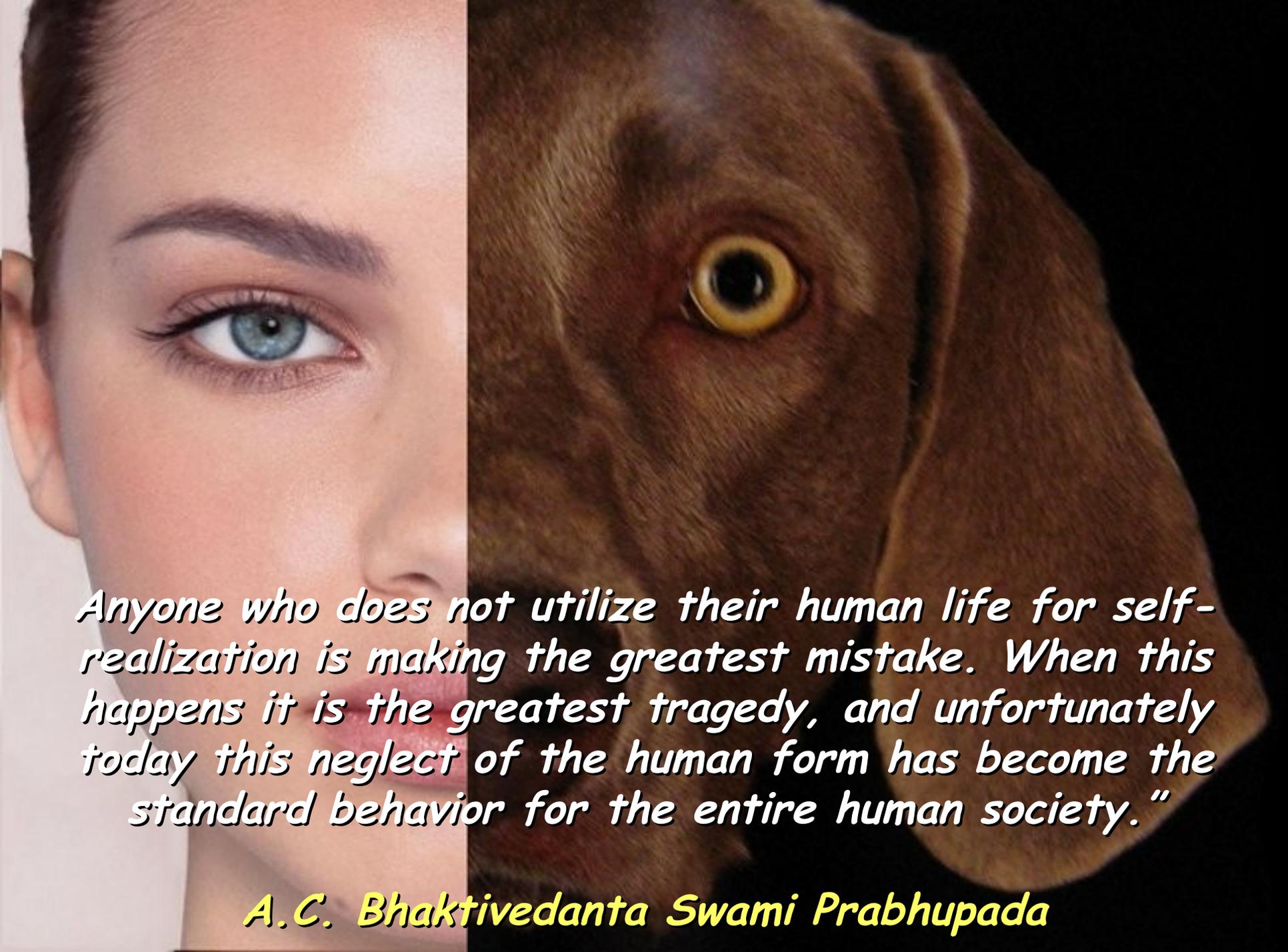


... virtuous and saintly people who have dedicated their lives to sharing spiritual happiness and wisdom with the whole world.

"Take advantage of this rare opportunity of this human form of life. There are 8,400,000 different species of life through which we are rotating life after life.



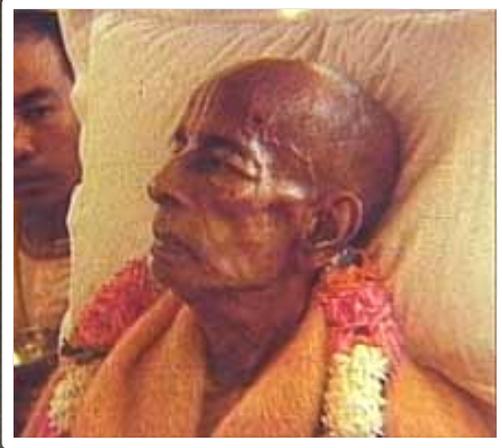
So getting a human body is not an everyday affair. This most auspicious opportunity only comes after many millions of lifetimes in the lower species...



Anyone who does not utilize their human life for self-realization is making the greatest mistake. When this happens it is the greatest tragedy, and unfortunately today this neglect of the human form has become the standard behavior for the entire human society."

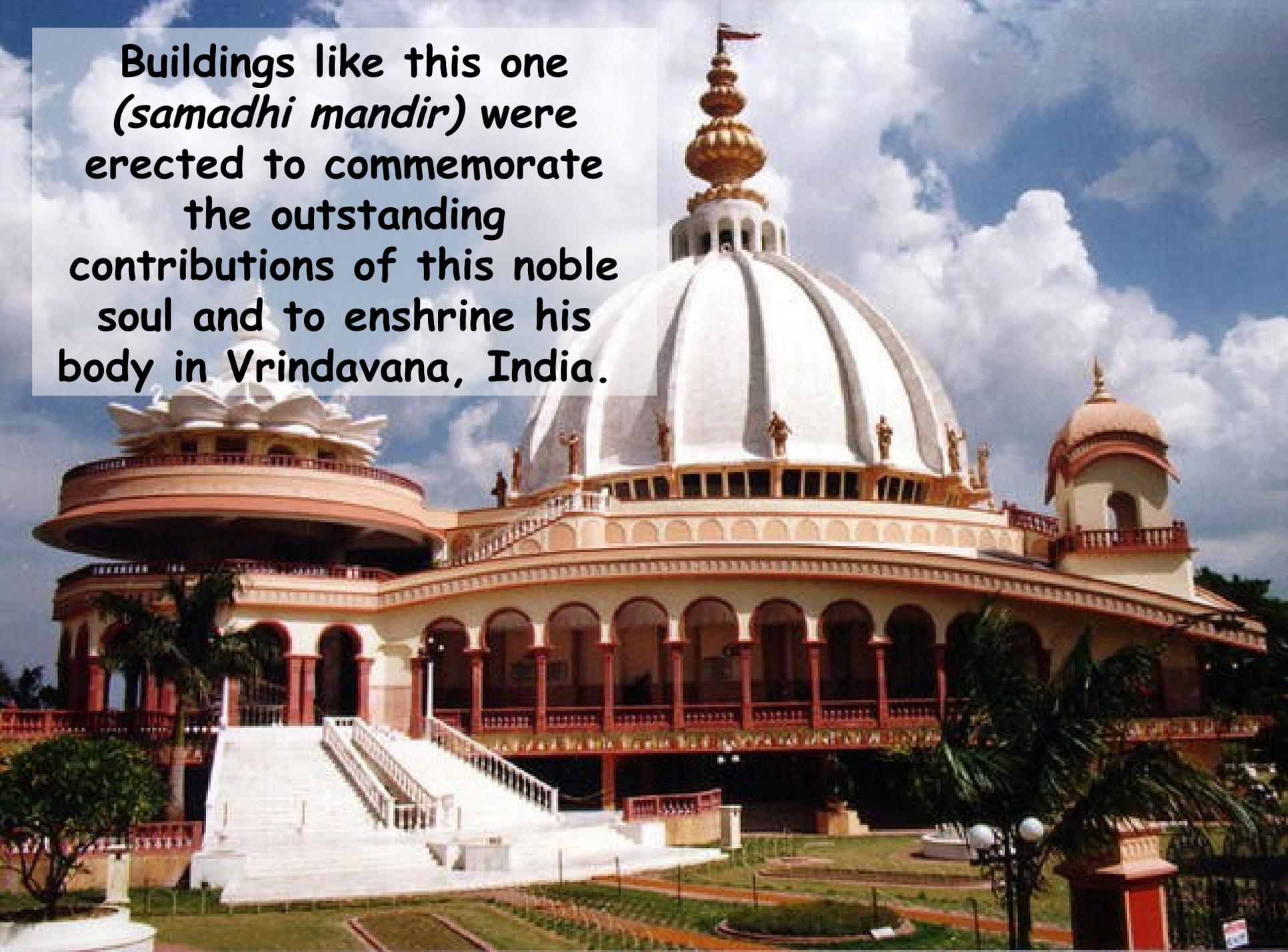
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Srila Prabhupada's whole life was exemplary. In November 1977, he also taught his followers how a real lover of God should leave his body.



Though utterly incapacitated and fragile, he spent the the last particles of his energy translating ancient *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, with a microphone held to his mouth.

Buildings like this one
(*samadhi mandir*) were
erected to commemorate
the outstanding
contributions of this noble
soul and to enshrine his
body in Vrindavana, India.



This outstanding person circled
the globe fourteen times and
visited every major country to
build the house in which the
whole world could live peacefully.



Author: Vrsabha das (ISKCON Bosnia)
Text editing: Lyn Welker (Labangalatika d.d.)

Most of the text was taken from
www.stephen-knapp.com
by Stephen Knapp



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