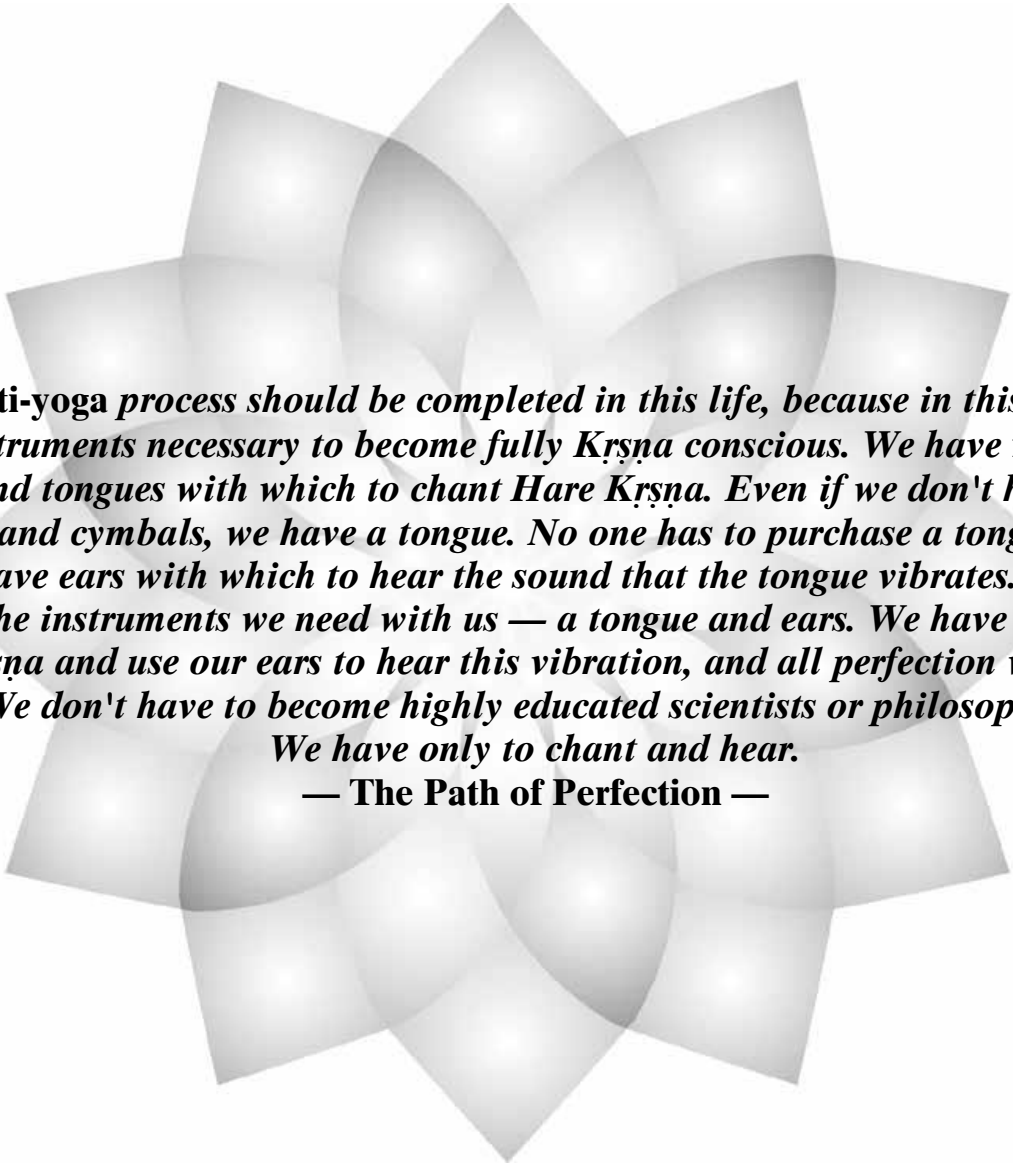




The Simple Things He Taught Us

— Presented by Śrīmatī Dāsī and team
ISKCON, Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma



The bhakti-yoga process should be completed in this life, because in this life we have all the instruments necessary to become fully Kṛṣṇa conscious. We have mṛdaṅgas and cymbals and tongues with which to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Even if we don't have mṛdaṅgas and cymbals, we have a tongue. No one has to purchase a tongue. We also have ears with which to hear the sound that the tongue vibrates. Therefore we have all the instruments we need with us — a tongue and ears. We have only to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and use our ears to hear this vibration, and all perfection will be there. We don't have to become highly educated scientists or philosophers. We have only to chant and hear.

— The Path of Perfection —

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The Simple Things He Taught Us

Śrīla Prabhupāda gave us so much, so easily. There was no fanfare, for he was graciously unassuming, seeing himself simply as an instrument and messenger of his Guru Mahārāja. Our conditioned nature may sometimes have trouble with this, for that nature tends to be a little gross, doubtful and forgetful. Perhaps the preciousness and potency of what Śrīla Prabhupāda gave us has not really impressed upon our hearts. Perhaps our enthusiasm to follow the simple things he taught us has waned with the passing of time, or been butchered by mechanical, mindless habit. And so, let's take another look at some of the simple things he taught us — this time, through the divine eyes of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī.

Please Offer Obeisances

Just by offering obeisances to Lord Hari even once, a devotee can attain His transcendental abode.

—*Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, Vilāsa 8, Text 367 (V8.367)*



Those who offer obeisances everyday to the Supreme Lord, who is unlimited, the destroyer of demons, and beginningless, can avoid taking a trip to the abode of Yamarāja.

—**V8.374**



Even if one offers obeisances to Lord Hari with duplicity, all of his sinful reactions that have accumulated during hundreds of previous lives are at once eradicated.

—**V8.370**



Please Honor *Caraṇāmṛta*

Know for certain that in Kali-yuga, drinking Lord Hari's *caraṇāmṛta* is the best atonement for all kinds of sinful activities. Just by drinking *caraṇāmṛta*, one's body becomes purified.

— V9.26,51



Planetary positions cannot harm a person who regularly drinks *caraṇāmṛta*, nor can thieves and rogues plunder him.

— V9.43



Lord Hari's *caraṇāmṛta* is more sanctified than all the holy places of pilgrimage and it destroys the sinful reactions of killing millions of living entities. Simply by drinking *caraṇāmṛta* and sprinkling a few drops on one's head, a devotee can please all the demigods.

— V9.25

Please Offer a Flower to Kṛṣṇa

I worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. Simply offering flowers at His lotus feet transforms even an evil-minded person into a pure-hearted soul.

— V7.1



Those who worship Lord Hari with the best of flowers, (*mallikā, mālatī, kadamba, campaka, bakula*, lotuses etc.) become purified and ultimately attain His lotus feet.

— V7. 51-52



Simply by worshiping the Lord with an offering of any flower, whether it grew in the water or on land, one becomes eligible to reside in the supreme abode of the Lord.

— V7.54

Please Offer Tulasī, Too

Worship of Lord Viṣṇu with a garland of *tulasī* leaves is the best means of deliverance for those who have fallen into the dark well of material existence.

— V7.307

One who worships the lotus feet of Lord Hari with offerings of tender *tulasī* leaves never returns to this miserable world after attaining the abode of the Supreme Lord.

—V7. 322



Lord Keśava becomes very pleased with a devotee who prepares a garland of *tulasī* leaves and *mañjarīs* and then offers it to Him. Indeed, He awards such a devotee residence in the spiritual world.

—V7. 340



Please Offer Kṛṣṇa Incense and a *Ghee* Lamp

Those who offer incense to the Supreme Lord achieve prosperity in this life and enter the spiritual world in the next. Just as the incense smoke rises, the devotee who offers incense every day advances towards an exalted destination as a result of his devotional activities.

—V8. 25

The purification one achieves by bathing in hundreds of millions of holy places can be achieved simply by smelling the remnants of incense offered to Lord Hari.

—V8. 30

Lamps give us vision and upliftment. The more a devotee offers lamps to the Lord, the more he makes advancement.

— V8. 70



Lust, anger and pride that are born of ignorance, as well as one's material entanglement, are destroyed simply by worshiping the Lord with a beautiful *ghee* lamp.

— V8. 303



Please Also Remember to Pray to Kṛṣṇa

The father of the universe does not become as satisfied by prayers of learned scholars as He does by sincere prayers offered by innocent devotees.

(V8. 350)



Just as a mother picks up her child and feeds him her breast milk, the compassionate Lord affectionately gives shelter to sincere devotees who offer Him prayers with devotion.

(V8. 351)



O respected *brāhmaṇa*, Lord Madhūsudana is not as pleased by an offering of a huge amount of wealth as He is by an offering of suitable prayers.

(V8. 347)



And Please Carefully Study Your “ABCs” Daily

By drinking Ganges water in the form of hearing *Bhagavad-gītā*, which was spoken by Śrī Kṛṣṇa and which is the essence of the *Mahābhārata*, one does not have to experience birth again in this material world. Those who desire to accomplish the four objectives of life should daily recite or hear the *Bhagavad-gītā*, which has emanated from the lotus mouth of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

— V6.226-227

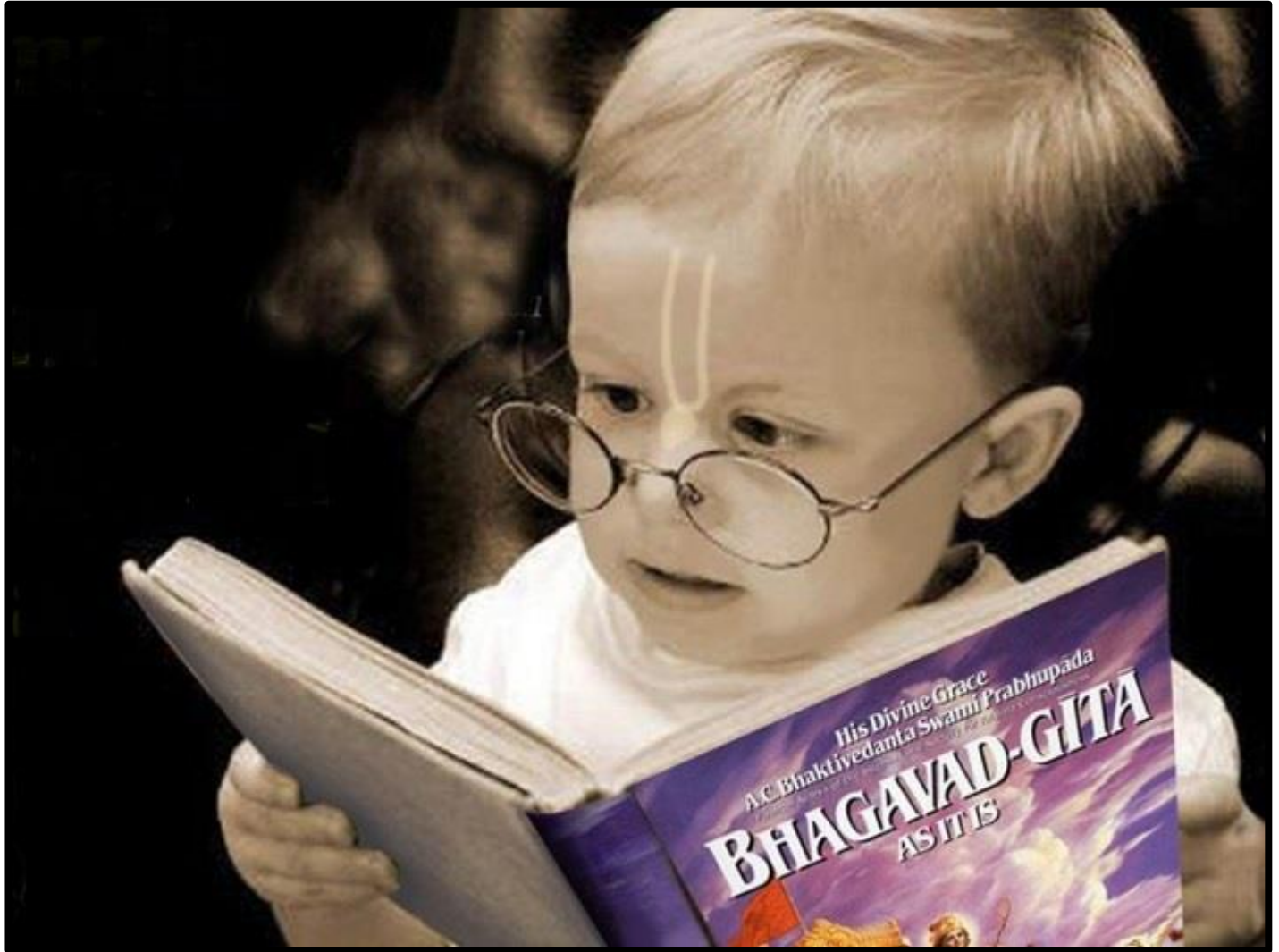


The piety one achieves by studying all of the *Vedas*, histories and *Purāṇas* can be achieved simply by studying the *Bhagavad-gītā*. A person who regularly recites the chapters of the *Bhagavad-gītā* containing the revelation of the universal form and the descriptions of the opulence of the Lord will become pleasing to everyone in the universe.

— V6. 221-222

One who recites the *Bhagavad-gītā* is considered to possess all kinds of knowledge, and he obtains the merit of giving 10,000 cows in charity. One who recites the *Bhagavad-gītā* every day achieves the eternal abode of the Supreme Lord, which is beyond the jurisdiction of fear.

— V6.218



Amazing, isn't it?! Each of the simple little things Śrīla Prabhupāda taught us has the potency to take us Home, to free us from the debilitating bondage of material existence. So why aren't we always feeling the benefits?

Hmm! That's a question we have to individually and honestly answer!

So Simple!

— Are We Missing out on Anything?! —

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mood of simplicity pervades most aspects of ISKCON — even its festivals! Many Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas practice severe austerities and self-imposed restrictions during such festivals as Kārtika vrata. These restrictions often include:

- Eating very simply once a day in silence
- Remaining awake all night or at least during the last three hours of the night
- Sleeping on the floor
- Maintaining strict self-control
- Offering 108 obeisances daily, etc.

All of these austerities are sastrically approved in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava literatures like *Śrī Hari Bhakti Vilāsa* — but they were never encouraged by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

The ISKCON standard for Kārtika is so, so simple:

- Daily offer a *ghee* lamp to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa at the temple and/or at home
- Come together to sing *Dāmodarāṣṭaka*
- Maintain the usual ISKCON morning and evening program
- And of course don’t offer or honor anything containing urad dāl.

Hmm! What does Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī have to say about the simple things we do during Kārtika?

Before we answer that question, let’s take a brief look at what he says about Kārtika in general....

I surrender myself at the lotus feet of Their Lordships, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara. Śrī Dāmodara is the predominating Lord of the month of Kārtika. By His influence, the month of Kārtika has become glorious. Among all the months, Kārtika is definitely the best. It is more auspicious than the most auspicious and more sanctified than the most sanctified.

(HBV 16.1, 36)



Just as Lord Dāmodara is known to be very affectionate to His devotees, His favorite month, Dāmodara, or Kārtika, is also very magnanimous because even a small service rendered during that month is accepted as very great.

(HBV 16.42)



This valuable human form of life is rarely achieved by the conditioned souls and even rarer is the opportunity to observe the vow of Kārtika, which is very dear to Lord Hari. O lion among sages, liberation from material existence is guaranteed for a person who, according to his own ability, observes the vow of Kārtika as it is prescribed in the scriptures.

(HBV 16.43, 51)



The benefit one receives by observing vows in this world accompanies a person for only one lifetime, but the benefits one receives by observing the Kārtika vows accompanies a person for one hundred lifetimes.

(HBV 16.45)



Because of being worshiped during the month of Kārtika, the Supreme Lord Hari becomes inclined to forgive one thousand offenses and even grave sins performed by His worshiper.

(HBV 16.88)

Interesting! And what does Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī have to say about the simple things we do during Kārtika?



Following the ISKCON morning and evening program given by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Both these programs centre around coming together to worship the Deity and hear *kṛṣṇa-kathā*. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has something to say about both these activities when performed during Kārtika.

Worshipping the Deity

O Bhārgava, by bathing at Kurukṣetra, one achieves millions of times more merit than by an ordinary ritualistic bath. The same merit is attained by regularly bathing in the Ganges. One obtains more merit than this by taking a holy bath at Puṣkara. More than that is obtained by bathing at Dvārakā but by bathing and worshipping the Supreme Lord during the month of Kārtika, one is transferred to the planet of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

(HBV 16.151)



Taking a holy bath, giving charity and especially offering worship to the Supreme Lord during the month of Kārtika in any country awards one the merit of performing an *agnihotra* sacrifice.

(HBV 16.150)

Kṛṣṇa-kathā

One who hears the topics of Lord Hari with great devotion in a regulated manner during the month of Kārtika will achieve the merit of donating one hundred cows in charity, even if they have understood only one-half or one-quarter of a sloka.

(HBV 16.75)



O great sage, during the month of Kārtika, one should give up all varieties of religious performances and simply hear narrations of the scriptures in the presence of the Deity of the Supreme Lord.

(HBV 16.76)



O lion-like sage, one who glorifies the names, forms, qualities, and pastimes of Lord Hari during the month of Kārtika, whether for his ultimate benefit or some material motive, will deliver one hundred generations of his family.

(HBV 16.77)



Lord Madhusūdana becomes more pleased with those who discuss the scriptures during the month of Kārtika, than he does with those who give charity, even cows and elephants, and those who perform sacrifices.

(HBV 16.79)

O lion among sages, one who hears discussion of Lord Hari during the month of Kārtika will be freed from all suffering during the next ten million lifetimes.

(HBV 16.80)



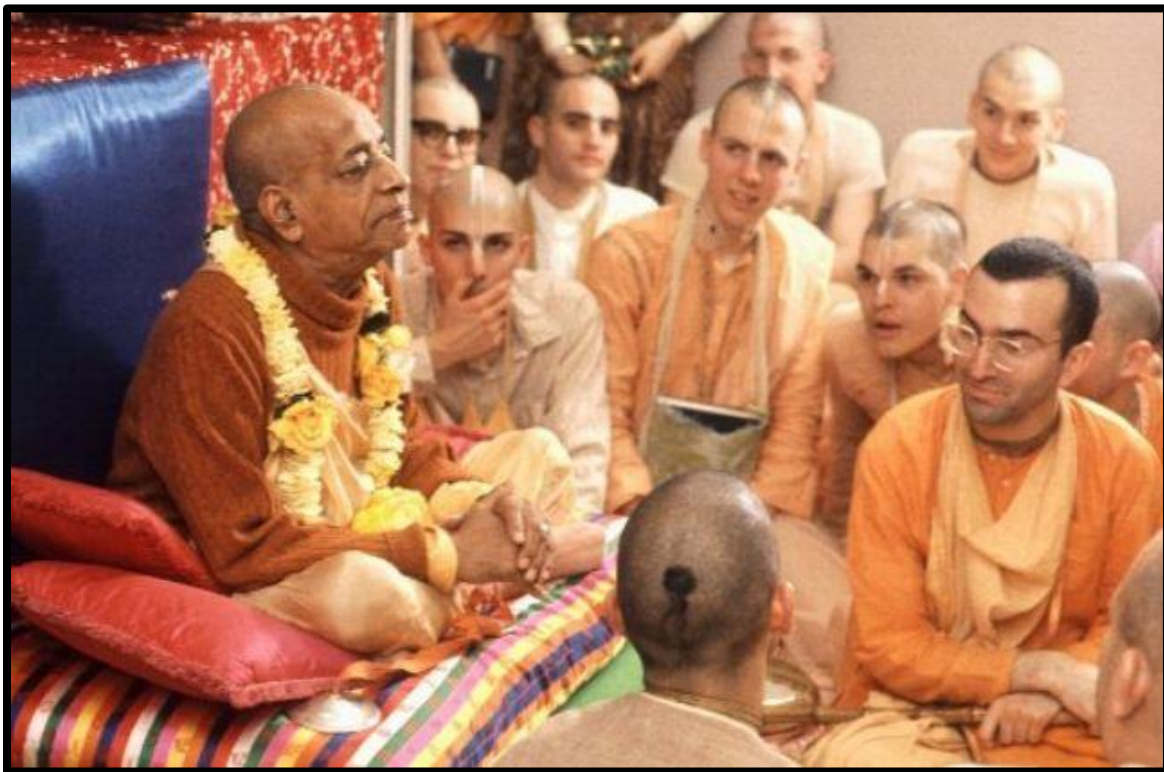
O sage, during the month of Kārtika, if a person daily recites even a single sloka of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* with great devotion, he will attain the merit of studying the eighteen *Purāṇas* in their entirety.

(HBV 16.81)



O Nārada, one who discusses the *Bhagavad-gītā* during the entire month of Kārtika will never again return to this material world.

(HBV 16.68)



Singing Dāmodarāṣṭaka

During the month of Kārtika, one should daily recite the famous prayers, *Dāmodarāṣṭaka*, which were composed by Satyavrata Muni. The offering of these prayers is the best form of worshiping Lord Dāmodara because this attracts His mercy.

(HBV 16.198)

Offering a ghee lamp

As a result of offering a *ghee* lamp, even a fraction of a second, during the month of Kārtika, all the sinful reactions that are accumulated during thousands of millions of previous lifetimes are destroyed.

(HBV 16.99)

O foremost brahmana, hear now the glories of offering a *ghee* lamp during the month of Kārtika, which is very dear to Lord Kesava. One who offers a *ghee* lamp during that month will never take birth in the material world.

(HBV 16.100)



Just by offering a *ghee* lamp to Lord Janārdana during the month of Kārtika, even one who never chants mantras, or never performs rituals or other acts of purification, will attain full perfection.

(HBV 16.103)



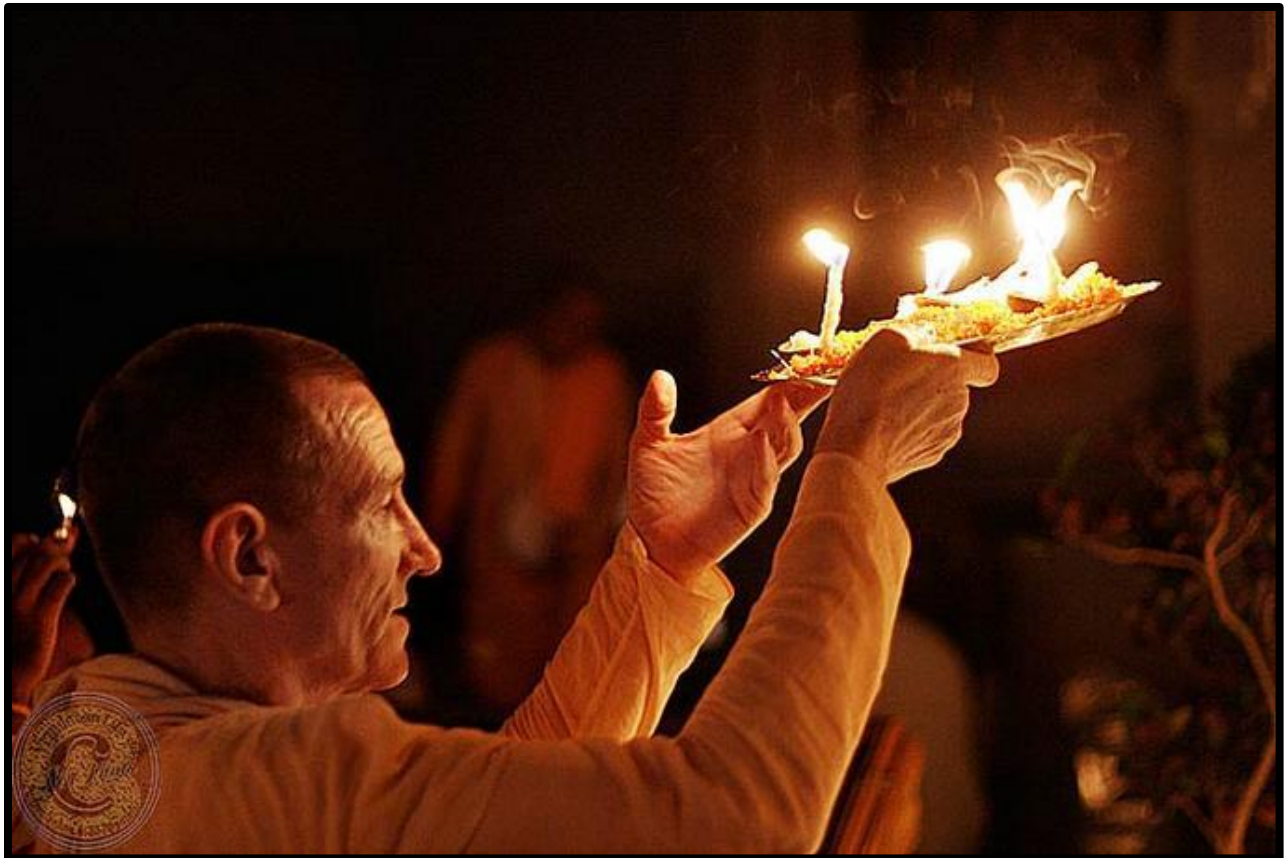
By offering a *ghee* lamp before Lord Vāsudeva in the temple, or in the courtyard, during the month of Kārtika, one achieves the highest perfection of going back to Godhead.

(HBV 16.109)



Offering a *ghee* lamp before Lord Vāsudeva during the month of Kārtika ensures one's transfer to the eternal spiritual world, which is free from all kinds of material obstacles.

(HBV 16.114)



**AMAZINGLY SIMPLE — AND YET SO
POWERFUL, ISN'T IT?!**

— We're Definitely Not Losing Out on Anything!!! —

WHEN SIMPLE IS SUBLIME

— And So Very, Very Deep! —

The essence of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mission can be summed up
in his own words

The bhakti-yoga process should be completed in this life, because in this life we have all the instruments necessary to become fully Kṛṣṇa conscious. We have mṛdaṅgas and cymbals and tongues with which to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Even if we don't have mṛdaṅgas and cymbals, we have a tongue. No one has to purchase a tongue. We also have ears with which to hear the sound that the tongue vibrates. Therefore we have all the instruments we need with us — a tongue and ears. We have only to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and use our ears to hear this vibration, and all perfection will be there. We don't have to become highly educated scientists or philosophers. We have only to chant and hear.

—The Path of Perfection

Here Śrīla Prabhupāda is telling us that the perfection of life can be attained very, very easily. Do we believe it?

Or have our fumbling, mumbling, stumbling — and sometimes grumbling — attempts to chant the Holy Name convinced us that

Sounds good, Śrīla Prabhupāda — but it doesn’t work!!!

It’s definitely true that **offensive** chanting doesn’t work — it doesn’t take us anywhere, except down. But any sincere and serious chanter has tasted a few crumbs of the Holy Name’s potency and compassion — and that taste keeps him moving forward, striving to serve — and chant — the Holy Name purely.

So what does it look like to chant the Holy Name purely? Let’s take a peek into Śrīla Prabhupāda’s life to answer this question.

I was a receptionist at the Brooklyn temple and I would greet guests whenever they would come in. Sometimes there would not be any guests so I would simply sit at my desk and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

One time it was very quiet and all of a sudden I heard something. It was Prabhupāda singing and playing his harmonium. He was alone. I didn’t hear any devotees. It was just Prabhupāda singing and playing the song, “sava avatar sar siromani.” I don’t know if the door was open, but I could hear it well and I was enjoying it very much because no one else was around.

As I was listening, all of a sudden Prabhupāda started sobbing and he stopped playing for a few moments. After a few more moments he started singing and playing the harmonium again. It was very special. He played and sang for Kṛṣṇa, and then awhile later he started sobbing again.

This happened a few more times. It was so special that I started crying. It meant a lot to me because I knew no one else was there. I could not believe what I heard – Prabhupāda having love for Kṛṣṇa and sobbing and crying and stopping, over and over again.

(Omkara Prabhu, Memories of Śrīla Prabhupāda, Volume 4, by Siddhānta Prabhu)

It's the Simple Things in Life that Make Life Sweet — So why complicate things???



*(jaya) śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

*Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare*