

Jayananda made his own notes

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Sri Siksastakam

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Introduction

The intentions for writing this book are numerous. Primarily, I wish to enliven the reader with some amazing stories and sublime qualities of Jayananda Dasa (Jim Kohr). And there is the hope to instill faith in God in the readers, just as Jayananda gave me faith, and continues to give me faith in God. Some readers, such as relatives and friends of Jim Kohr, may not be familiar with Krishna Consciousness, and we sincerely hope they will read and benefit from this book. In order to help everyone enter Jayananda's world, we give a list of Sanskrit terms and definitions as well as a “who's who” right after this Introduction. For those who knew Jayananda, I hope the literary experience of my meditations on him will intensify the rare privileged gift they received from God by having such a dear person in their lives. And we hope these memoirs of his devotion will inspire all with the joy and wonder of God's personal reciprocation with His dear servitors.

Because Jim Kohr's life was not confined to mere sectarian faith, a prior understanding of Lord Krishna is not a prerequisite. Although serving ultimately as a member of the Krishna Consciousness Movement, his life actually expressed a universal conception of God and the love for God and His creation, as well as His great mercy shown to His dear servitors. Jim received boundless mercy from the same God and Father Who is worshiped by different people in different countries and religions of the world. He is the same Father Who possesses countless names such as Jehovah, Yahweh, Allah, Buddha, Rama, and Krishna, *ad infinitum*. The same sun shines on everybody's head, and because we all live in different lands, the sun is known by many different names, such as el sol, helios, sauil, sonne, the sun, and so forth. Despite the different names, it is still the same sun. So God is one, although He is known by so many names, in many different ways.

God's special mercy upon Jim Kohr may be appreciated by observing his

rare quality of love for all types of people without discrimination. All men display various forms of affection, as seen in their life's activities. Some men (if not most) have affection only for themselves. Such gross selfishness is common in the world. Other men extend their affection externally, for wife and children. Sometimes it is said that the purest form of love in this material world is the love of a mother for her child. Some men love their dog or cat. Some have great affection for their particular social circle, such as a church group, or club, or football team, or their comrades in the workplace. Some extend their affection further to their nation, and some build hospitals for suffering humanity. And thus we see that men serve their nation and family and fellow men in various altruistic ways. Still, in such altruism there is seen a certain amount of extended selfishness because it is *their* family, *their* nation, and ultimately they serve just to get pleasure from such activities. On the other hand, when we examine the caliber of saints like Jim Kohr, we find a unique universal affection or love for all of humankind, for all creatures of God. More important than love for the bodily welfare of men, such saints work selflessly for the benefit of the immortal souls of all men. Acting on this exalted stage of love is only possible through God's grace. The common man can only theoretically imagine such a state of consciousness, and many of us cannot conceive of it, and even if we tried to imitate it, we cannot. Jim's life goes beyond all imagination, for as we see in these narrations, he lived this kind of divine love practically every minute of his life. Sometimes a person may argue that such altruistic love may have some vestiges of self-aggrandizement, being a desire for recognition and fame. But the reader will readily find that Jim had no such desire for fame in any way. His life was proof of the great mercy of God upon His dear servitor. And so by hearing and reading of the activities of Jayananda the Saint, we get more and more faith in God.

Out of all kinds of love, there are so many temporary conditions of love such as love of self, love of man and woman, love of money and power, love of cats and dogs. And then there is the everlasting love of the Supreme – love of God and His representatives, or saints. Out of all types of love, the most intense is the love of saints, who are the dearest servitors of God. This is because they bring the reality of the great mercy

of God right into our tangible lives, and they give us direct experience of what divine love actually is. This is the great gift of Jayananda's life to everyone who hears of his deeds and qualities.

Saints are almost invariably touchstones of mercy to people, seemingly in a mystical or magical way. They seem to spiritually change the hearts of others on a regular basis. Jayananda was such a mystical touchstone. He touched the hearts of so many common workaday people on a daily basis. Jayananda expressed no flowery beatitudes, no hackneyed religious catch-phrases, no rote sermon or scripture citing. He gave no soapbox pontifications or long-winded lectures or high-falutin theological excursions. No. There was only his pure heart and character and his simple sharing of the wonders and glories of God. And most importantly, Jayananda was real. Not contrived or forced or rote. His association and his loving conversations were real, from the heart. And since his heart was pure and unmotivated, everybody was moved and affected by his touchstone of love of God. He spoke in their language, on their level, telling simple stories or a reflective joke, and those few words laden with pure intent penetrated their hearts with lasting effect. His spirit stayed with them, remaining in their hearts, and took residence in their fond memories of him.

There are many great saints in history, both in the Eastern and Western traditions. The unique distinction of Saint Jayananda is that he was born in the Western world, yet he is virtually the first Western-born servant of God to have attained sainthood status within an Eastern spiritual discipline, namely the ancient tradition of *bhakti* or devotion to Lord Sri Krishna. And Jayananda's sainthood has been clearly established by Krishna Conscious authorities.

After their death, most men fade from our memory like a waning moon. But the fame of saints like Jayananda Thakur increases like a swelling crescent moon, increasing more and more after their disappearance from the mortal world. The fame of saints only increase as days go on, yielding compounded daily spiritual interest, expanding exponentially like the waxing moon. Indeed, saints like Jayananda Thakur manifest wonders while living, and their spiritual potency and memory become even more powerful in their apparent absence. As their spiritual legend grows daily in power, they thus continue capturing the minds and hearts of

generations far into the future.

When Jayananda passed away in 1977, we responded with great sadness. And yet the news brought no great surprise, as he was ill for some time, and we were thus expecting that phone call to come any day. At the time, I met the reality of his disappearance with somewhat stifled emotions. Being well-trained in the *brahmachari ashram*, I simply accepted the fact in the philosophical light of the *Bhagavad-Gita* – “Not to lament for the living or the dead.” But still, I went through the normal amount of lamentation due to separation from a great Vaishnava and a great friend. I stuffed a lot of emotion down inside and bottled it up, sealing it with a cork.

I adopted this same approach two years earlier when Jayananda had left us in Berkeley in 1975 to travel on the Radha-Damodara Traveling Sankirtan Party. I greatly missed his association then, but just accepted the fact in a philosophical mood. Almost 20 years later, in 1994 I had a profound experience with Jayananda appearing wonderfully in my dream. This was the night in which I was convinced I was about to die from a series of heart attacks. Jayananda came to me with such good timing – it seemed to be at my darkest hour – as a dearest friend. It was like a loving reunion after 20 years, with us embracing and crying on each others' shoulders. The emotional effect on me was extraordinary. After the dream, all the bottled-up emotions of my grief came pouring out. The cork popped, and separation flooded my days. Out of this catharsis of grief came the series of essays posted on my website that were dedicated to the life and sacred memory of our great friend and godbrother, Sriman Jayananda Thakur.

After speaking with Dhanistha Dasi and reading her book, I felt much wonder and ecstasy to hear her beautiful memoirs and love for Jayananda Prabhu. I wanted to share with her my love for Jayananda also. But she had no computer or e-mail or Internet access, and I realized that many other Vaishnavas also had no computer. Furthermore, I could suddenly die and not pay the server bill, and the website would then be lost. And so for these reasons I wanted to print the contents of the Jayananda website into a small book for the pleasure of the Vaishnavas. I asked for blessings from my godbrothers for this small project and was encouraged.

May the readers be blessed by these descriptions of Jayananda's wonderful life. May these narrations enliven the innate blissful nature of the soul, and thus give spiritual joy to Jayananda's readers. May his saintliness inspire us all to be more saintly in our lives. May I fervently attempt to recount his amazing deeds on earth, and how Jayananda's devotion to Srila Prabhupada and Lord Sri Krishna is the quintessence of all things beautiful in Krishna's creation. All opulence on earth appears to be like a twig or pebble in comparison to Jayananda's brief but great life of devotion. As time goes on, I pray to always hear from others who received Jayananda's blessed association. It seems that Jayananda stories are totally unlimited, for I keep hearing new ones all the time. May the spirit of Jayananda come back to conquer the great arrogance of this world. May we take up the essence of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's lower-than-straw third stanza of His *Siksastakam*, of which Jayananda is the personification. May I always hanker for the association of lower-than-straw Jayanandanugas.

His servant and friend, Vishoka Dasa

Sri Siksastakam

“Eight Beautiful Prayers”

by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

Since the *Siksastakam*, which are the eight verses Lord Chaitanya personally wrote, are referred to in several places in this book, we will now print the entire prayer. Also we will recite the *Maha-Mantra*, composed of the Holy Names of Lord Sri Krishna, which is the great chant of deliverance, and we encourage everyone to try to chant this prayer for its great spiritual benefit.

(1) Glory to the Sri Krishna *sankirtan*, which cleanses the heart of all the dust accumulated for years and extinguishes the fire of conditional life, of repeated birth and death. This *sankirtan* movement is the prime

benediction for humanity at large because it spreads the rays of the benediction moon. It is the life of all transcendental knowledge. It increases the ocean of transcendental bliss, and it enables us to fully taste the nectar for which we are always anxious.

(2) O my Lord, Your holy name alone can render all benediction to living beings, and thus You have hundreds and millions of names like Krishna and Govinda. In these transcendental names You have invested all Your transcendental energies. There are not even hard and fast rules for chanting these names. O my Lord, out of kindness You enable us to easily approach You by chanting Your holy names, but I am so unfortunate that I have no attraction for them.

(3) One should chant the holy name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking oneself lower than the straw in the street; one should be more tolerant than a tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige, and ready to offer all respect to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly.

(4) O almighty Lord, I have no desire to accumulate wealth, nor do I desire beautiful women, nor do I want any number of followers. I only want Your causeless devotional service birth after birth.

(5) O son of Maharaja Nanda (Krishna), I am Your eternal servitor, yet somehow or other I have fallen into the ocean of birth and death. Please pick me up from this ocean of death and place me as one of the atoms of Your lotus feet.

(6) O my Lord, when will my eyes be decorated with tears of love flowing constantly when I chant Your holy name? When will my voice choke up, and when will the hairs on my body stand on end at the recitation of Your name?

(7) O Govinda! Feeling Your separation, I am considering a moment to be like twelve years or more. Tears are flowing from my eyes like torrents of rain, and I am feeling all vacant in the world in Your absence.

(8) I know no one but Krishna as my Lord, and He shall remain so even if He handles me roughly in His embrace or makes me brokenhearted by not being present before me. He is completely free to do anything and everything, for He is always my worshipful Lord unconditionally.

**The *Maha-Mantra*,
or great chant of deliverance:**

Hare Krishna
Hare Krishna
Krishna Krishna
Hare Hare
Hare Rama
Hare Rama
Rama Rama
Hare Hare

Srila Prabhupada – He is the founder and spiritual master of our worldwide society called ISKCON, or the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Lord Sri Krishna, sometimes spelled Krsna – He is the eternal Supreme Personality of Godhead, the source of everything that is. He is the father of all living beings, He is the master of all of His multifarious energies, and He is the source of all the unlimited spiritual and material worlds.

Lord Chaitanya, or Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu – He is the incarnation of Sri Krishna Himself, who appeared as a devotee of Krishna only 500 years ago in India, and He performed many amazing pastimes that are elaborately recorded in four major biographies written by His contemporary devotees.

Lord Vishnu – He is an expansion of Lord Krishna.

Lord Ramachandra is also an expansion of Krishna.

Vaishnava – A devotee of Lord Vishnu.

Acharya – A great spiritual master who teaches by example.

Dasa – The servant; surname for male initiates in the lineage of Lord Chaitanya.

Dasi – surname for female initiates.

Guru – A spiritual teacher and instructor of the science of Krishna Consciousness.

Thakur – An honorary title given to a great Vaishnava who has departed this world.

Jayananda – “The triumph of bliss;”

Jayananda Dasa – spiritual name given to Jim Kohr upon initiation by his *guru*, Srila Prabhupada.

Jayanandanuga – A person who follows in the mood of Jayananda Prabhu.

Ratha-yatra – This is the ancient (and now global) religious festival of the chariots, a colorful annual procession of three large carts carrying the Deities of Lord Jagannatha, His sister Lady Subhadra, and His brother Lord Balarama. Jayananda Dasa was the indispensable expert at building these carts and organizing the festival and feast in the United States.

Kirtan – Glorification of God through congregational chanting of His Holy Name.

Hari-nama (“the name of God”) also means to chant in congregation; and **sankirtan** means **kirtan** with a group of people chanting loudly in the temple or out on the streets.

Namabhasa – A dim reflection of the Holy Name, yet which grants liberation.

Japa – Chanting the Holy Name to oneself on prayer beads.

Mantra – Literally means “To free the mind;” a Vedic sound vibration that liberates the chanter from illusion, especially the *Maha-Mantra*, which is chanted publicly in *kirtan* or privately as *japa*.

Maha-Mantra – The Great Chant of Deliverance – Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare. The prayer means, “O Lord, O energy of the Lord, please engage me in Your service.”

Prasadam – Also spelled **prasad** – Spiritual food that is first offered to Lord Sri Krishna, which has great spiritual potency for those who honor it by partaking of it.

Bhoga is the food meant for offering to Krishna before it becomes *prasadam*.

Maha-prasadam or **maha** is the food offering given directly to Sri Krishna on the temple altar, which has special spiritual potency. (**Maha** as a prefix also means “great,” as used in other places in this book.)

Bhakti-yoga – The process of reestablishing one's personal relationship with the Supreme Lord by performing devotional service. *Bhakti* means love, or devotional service to Lord Sri Krishna.

Jiva – One of the innumerable individual souls, who are eternally part and parcel of Lord Sri Krishna and who are all the eternal servants of their supreme father, Lord Sri Krishna.

Maya – The illusory darkness of material existence. It is the error of thinking that we are separate from Lord Sri Krishna. The literal meaning of *maya* is “that which is not.”

Kali-yuga – The Vedas tell us that the *jivas* go through four great ages on this planet that perpetually rotate in scheduled cosmic time; Kali-yuga is the fourth age of this cycle, which we are experiencing in the present, and it is the most degraded age of all, full of hypocrisy and quarrel. The means of deliverance from this sinful age of Kali-yuga is the chanting of the Lord's Holy Names, especially the *Maha-Mantra*.

Sri Siksastakam – Pronounced “*Shikshashtakam*,” these eight verses are the only writings personally left by Lord Chaitanya, although He inspired His direct disciples through their hearts to write many volumes of transcendental literature about the pastimes, names, forms and qualities of Lord Sri Krishna.

Vedas – A vast body of spiritual literature, compiled 5,000 years ago, which are the original revealed scriptures.

Bhagavad-Gita – The great scripture, recorded 5,000 years ago, which is spoken directly by Lord Sri Krishna Himself. It is known as the “Song of God.”

Srimad Bhagavatam – The great scripture about the life and divine pastimes of Lord Sri Krishna, also written 5,000 years ago. This book is known as the literary incarnation of God.

Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrita – The great biography and scripture of the life and pastimes of Lord Chaitanya, whose teachings and sublime transcendental activities were recorded only 500 years ago.

Also mentioned in this book are some other sublime Vedic literatures, such as *Sri Hari-Bhakti-Kalpa-Latika*, author unknown; *Sri Mukunda-Mala-Stotra* by King Kulashekhar; *Sri Lalita-Madhava* by Srila Rupa Goswami; *Light of the Bhagavat* by Srila Prabhupada.

Also we quote from several modern books containing stories about Jayananda Prabhu, written by contemporary authors: *Radha-Damodara Vilasa* by Vaiyasaki Dasa, *Prabhupada Guide Dreams to Rock My Soul* by Dhanistha Dasi, and *Jayananda: The Triumph of Bliss* by Dasaratha-suta Dasa. I recommend these works, and at the end of this book further information will be provided about them.

Invocation

Though my language be uncouth and though I grope for proper words and grammatical arrangement, please grant this fervent wish – may my dear Lord Krishna bless me and enhance my meager intelligence so that these words may convey the great love that Jayanandanugas feel for our saint, Sri Jayananda Thakur, and give a glimpse into the great meaning his beautiful life gives to the world. Begging to make these words in glorification of Jayananda worthy for the readers, I beg for the mercy of my spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada, and for the mercy of Lord Sri Krishna, and for the blessings of the Vaishnavas, and especially the blessings of Sriman Jayananda Thakur.

*namah om vishnu-padaya krishna-preshthaya bhutale
srimati bhaktivedanta-svamin iti namine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sarasvate deve gaura-vani-pracharine
nirvishesha-shunyavadi-paschatya-desha-tarine*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant

of Sarasvati Goswami. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Chaitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*vancha-kalpa-tarubhyas ca kripa-sindhubhya eva ca
patitanam pavanebhyo vaishnavebhyo namo namah*

I offer respectful obeisances unto all the Vaishnava devotees of the Lord, who can fulfill the desires of everyone, just like desire trees, and are full of compassion for the fallen conditioned souls.

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Deepest gratitude goes out to many wonderful devotees and Jayanandanugas, such as Dasaratha-suta Dasa, Mahaksha Dasa, Vaiyasaki Dasa, Govardhana Dasa, Kurma-rupa Dasa, Apurva Dasa, and many others for the inspiration they gave me to compile this book. I was wondering for many years when someone would write a biographical work on Jayananda Prabhu. I didn't think I knew enough to say much. Then the dream happened and I sort of came out of my shell and gave a spirited talk on Jayananda in Denver, Colorado. It seemed that the spirit of Jayananda produced an animated energy in my talk; Kurma-rupa Dasa was there, and he also caught up the spirit of Jayananda. Later he spoke to me and inspired me to endeavor to say more on Jayananda, stressing how important it was to tell the story of Jayananda so that other devotees could know more about our saint. Apurva Dasa was also encouraging me at that time as well. And later I got connected on the Internet and started to talk a lot about Jayananda, and my good cyber friend Mahaksha Dasa was there for me with much encouragement. Dasaratha-suta Dasa has helped me in every step of the way, and Govardhana Dasa was there and gave that creative boost that I needed. We all look forward to the Second Volume of Vaiyasaki Dasa's book on Vishnujana Swami and Jayananda (*Radha-Damodara Vilasa*), as well as Dasaratha-suta's large biography on Jayananda (*The Triumph of Bliss*). May God speed their work.

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*After the disappearance of Jayananda Dasa on May 1, 1977,
His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada instructed devotees all over*

the world to commemorate the event every year as they would any great Vaishnava's disappearance day. Jayananda was the all-American boy. Handsome, strong, intelligent, born in a more than middle-class family, Jayananda (Jim Kohr) took a degree in mechanical engineering from Ohio State University. With a background like that, it is surprising that Jayananda ended up as a cab driver in San Francisco. Karandhara once asked him why he didn't get a better-paying job. "I didn't fit in with the upper-class crowd," he said. – from Remembering Jayananda by Kalakantha Dasa

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Walking along Market Street in downtown San Francisco in 1973, I saw them. This time there were maybe eight devotees dancing, chanting, and playing drums and cymbals. The person leading was a tall, strong man with the kindest face, childlike innocence, and an intensity that took me to a higher level. He closed his eyes tightly in total concentration as he sang and stepped side to side with the rhythms of the mantra – Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare. I followed, recognizing the words from my favorite song (My Sweet Lord) and stayed glued to them until they turned to go back to the temple. This was it ... all paths crossed here. I often see in my mind's eye that tall strong man with the kindest face and childlike innocence who was leading the hari-nama-sankirtan party down Market Street the first time I saw devotees chanting ... that gentle soul was Jayananda Prabhu. – from Prabhupada Guide Dreams to Rock My Soul by Dhanistha Dasi

1. The First Time I Saw Him

Only those who render unreserved,

**uninterrupted, favorable service
unto the lotus feet of Lord Krishna,
who carries the wheel of the chariot in His hand,
can know the creator of the universe
in His full glory, power and transcendence.
(Srimad Bhagavatam 1.3.38)**

I knew Jayananda was a very extraordinary soul before I even laid eyes upon him or heard his name. Sounds impossible? Yes, this does seem impossible, but it is possible to see a Vaishnava's glory in the many eyes of a whole room full of people. Just as the sun's glory reflects at night from other astral bodies, so did Jayananda shine that day in a similar fashion – I saw his glory shining and reflecting from the many eyes and faces within a temple room full of devotees. They were all looking directly behind me as I got up from my obeisances. What I saw in their faces was something amazing. It was spontaneous and natural, not something formalized or followed. I thought, “What a wonderful person he must be, this person behind me,” then turned around.

It was right before one evening *arotik* service when I was standing in the temple room, and all of a sudden everyone hit the deck with big enthusiastic grins on their faces, their eyes looking up in rapture at someone, as if welcoming a great soul who had just entered. I turned around to see this giant of a man bowing down. Right then I knew that this man was an extraordinary devotee. He had hair and pants, yet even without the shaved head and saffron robe, you could tell that he was a special devotee by the way everyone reacted to him, and by the great surge of energy that suddenly filled the temple room. You could see his special charisma right away. When he picked up a drum and led the *kirtan*, jumping up and down, loudly chanting, it was really powerful. He was whipping up the devotees into a whirlpool of *bhakti*, they were just going wild. Then I knew that here was a great devotee; I was sure of it. I was attracted like iron filings to a magnet.

Jayananda the festival man

Soon after that, we all went to the San Diego festival. Jayananda drove the now famous red truck down to San Diego, loaded with all the festival paraphernalia. Jayananda quoted Srila Prabhupada, who said that he could give us a festival every day by honoring all the different Vaishnavas' appearance days. Jayananda was prepared to put on a festival every day. That was his favorite service – festivals. Jayananda pulled me into his service, and thus into Srila Prabhupada's service. I had never, ever, even dreamed that I would just voluntarily start to serve somebody else, without being cajoled into it. Normally I was averse to serving anybody else, being the typical selfish person looking out for #1. But before I knew it, I was helping Jayananda clean up after the festival and load the truck, and I didn't know why. It was starting to get dark and we were loading things up when Jayananda started an impromptu *kirtan* (he was famous for these causeless *kirtans*), dancing around the truck, everybody into it.

First exchange

Later I was up on top of the truck with Jayananda, helping him. I felt such warmth from him, like being back with an old, old friend. I asked him a question, “What is the problem? Why can't we just surrender to Krishna? It seems like an easy thing.” He gave me this blissful smile like he was pleased that I asked him a philosophical question. He said, “It's not so easy because we are all rascals.” I was surprised to hear him say that. I was naive at the time and thought all these shaven-headed devotees were so pure. I expected to hear him say that surrender wasn't easy for others, just the others, but he humbly included himself. This was our first exchange. It felt so good to be able to talk with Jayananda. I was thinking that he was such an exceptional person, and yet he would talk with me like an old friend.

Causeless good fortune

One day back in San Francisco, our temple president Bhakta Dasa came up to me and said, “Bhakta Tom, you are very lucky! Why, any other devotee would give their right arm for the privilege of what you're about

to get!” He was so correct. Somehow providence had allowed me to travel with Jayananda on a long trip. I was to go with him on a two-week incense run up to Salt Lake City, and then another week to Northern California. We hit the road in a van, and for the whole ride we had so many wonderful talks on Krishna Consciousness. He saved my life. I wasn't so strong, but he sort of trained me up in Krishna Consciousness in those three weeks. He gave me the strength that I might not have had without his intimate association.

Jayananda sees with equal vision

Jayananda's great quality was that he seemed to see the Deity in everyone's heart. He saw with equal vision – no matter who the person was, Jayananda only saw him as a good person, and Jayananda wanted to give him Krishna. He would never judge or criticize anyone, nor would he tolerate hearing criticism or anything bad about anyone. He understood the true meaning of *bhakti*, which is divine love, love for Krishna and His parts and parcels. Jayananda gave his love to everyone, he loved them for what they were, not making material distinctions about what this person is or is not. Jayananda only gave them love, and that is why everyone loved Jayananda. Jayananda loved Krishna and Srila Prabhupada, and therefore naturally he loved everyone else. He saw criticism as a hateful negative energy that corrupts everyone it contacts. He was always very positive; even in seemingly unsuccessful events, he would only see the good in it, and never dwell on the bad. That is why everyone felt good around him and never depressed. Other *sannyasis* said that Jayananda was the most advanced devotee in the Movement, and many of us said that he was ISKCON's saint. Jayananda didn't gain this reputation by intellectual prowess or by being a brilliant orator (ISKCON has seen many brilliant orators come and go). Jayananda earned his sainthood through his service attitude, and by using his mind, hands, and legs in Krishna's service. This may sound trifling (a lot of us used our hands and legs), but Jayananda's activities were not common, even though they appeared to be normal on the surface. His work was an endless inspiration of selfless service, a constant act of unselfishness, a proof of love for Krishna and His *jivas*,

and proof of his great love for Srila Prabhupada. It was pure *bhakti-yoga*. He offered up his body and mind as a sacrifice to Krishna and the spiritual master. In this way, Jayananda showed the meaning of *acharya*, teaching by one's example.

Jayananda's incessant devotion

Jayananda practiced the *yoga* of hands and legs, doing lots of things nobody else wanted to, doing the needful, doing the practical. He dumped the trash, he made the *bhoga* runs, and he cooked breakfast *prasad* for the *sankirtan* devotees and served it out to them. He stayed up late into the night cleaning the kitchen. He was sort of like our mother, always doing the things we were too lazy to do. He was always in the garage welding Ratha cart wheels, fixing automobiles, building *prasadam* carts. He was always serving out the *maha-prasadam* to the guests. He worked tirelessly, and simultaneously always glorified the other devotees for their service. In this way he endlessly inspired us with his enthusiasm and service attitude.

A lot of us get some kind of “special mercy” which allows us to stay in Krishna Consciousness. Some of us got personal “special mercy” from Srila Prabhupada. I know that Jayananda gave me this “special mercy,” just as he gave it to scores of other devotees. Without him, I just don't know if I could have made it. I could easily have been just a flash-in-the-pan, sentimental *bhakta*, who would have eventually succumbed to *maya*. Jayananda saved me! He gave me Prabhupada in a very special way. As we traveled down those highways, he told me countless intimate stories of his early days with Srila Prabhupada, and thus he made me a Prabhupada man. And I learned a love and respect that I had never known. I owe my love to him, and I do love him more than ever. On any sub-freezing cold day in the Ratha-cart parking lot of my mind, I'd tear off my shirt any time to cover his lotus feet. May Krishna bless all who knew him or remember him, or have heard of him. *Jaya Jaya* Sriman Jayananda Thakur, the personification of the great victory of blissful love.

Jayanandanugas – lower-than-straw devotees give tribute to

Jayananda Thakur

Dear Vishoka Prabhu, please accept my obeisances, all glories to Srila Prabhupada! Somehow – I can't even remember how I did it – I came across your web site and have been reading the nectar pastimes and remembrances of Jayananda Prabhu. Thank you for putting such transcendental subjects on the cyber waves. It's what they are meant to be used for. What more can I say? Your writings brought tears to my eyes, and believe me, that's not easy. – Your hard-hearted servant, Dhruva Maharaja Dasa

I really enjoyed your stories about Jayananda – brought tears of joy to my eyes – he is such a great Vaishnava and continued inspiration to us all. – Hari-bol, Damaghosh Dasa

Again, Thank you for inserting a positive ray of sunshine. I feel that I have really come to know Sri Jayananda Thakur, and if I can follow even an atomic portion of his life, I will consider myself extremely fortunate. – Hari-bol, Bharat

I do not want to be presumptuous, but I do want you to know that the stories you present concerning Srila Jayananda Thakur have had the effect of introducing him to me, and have given me the understanding that by following in the footsteps of his Christ-like humility and desire to be pleasing to Srila Prabhupada, the return to Mahaksha Dasa in this form was not a waste of effort. – Mahaksha Dasa

Dear Vishoka Prabhu, Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Jagat-guru Srila Prabhupada. It was good to have your association on the phone. The work you are doing is of topmost importance at this time. The message and example of Sriman Jayananda Prabhu must be circulated throughout the

world for the benefit of all. – Your servant, Dasaratha-suta
Dasa

2. A Kind Friend to All

*advesta sarva-bhutanam
maitrah karuna eva ca
nirmamo nirahankarah
sama-duhkha-sukhah ksami*

**One who is not envious but who is
a kind friend to all living entities,
who does not think himself a proprietor,
who is free from false ego and equal
both in happiness and distress, who is always satisfied
and engaged in devotional service with determination
and whose mind and intelligence are in agreement with Me –
he is very dear to Me.
(*Bhagavad-Gita* 12.13-14)**

This verse makes one think deeply of Jayananda. In fact, most of the 12th chapter of *Bhagavad-Gita* wonderfully reminds me of Jayananda, as he was the embodiment of all those wonderful qualities of a devotee extolled in this special, wonderful section of the *Gita*. “*Maitrah* and *karuna*,” meaning “friendly and kind,” are especially descriptive of Jayananda, who was indeed a “kind friend to all.” He was the best friend I ever had, and such a friend was he, like none I have ever experienced in my short, miserable life. Such a friend is like a fantasy genie out of a fairy-tale book. Those kind of people just don't appear in real life ... but Jayananda was larger than life. He was beyond all mundane material spheres, a devotee who was a great pleasure to his spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada, and therefore he was very pleasing to Lord Sri Krishna.

Thus he was pleasing to all people – a friend to all living entities. He was that way to everyone, though somehow I was thinking his treatment was special to me, in a unique way. I took his friendship very personally, with some kind of individual importance. I thought of Jayananda as “my friend.” And I was possessive of my wonderful friendship with him, although he was that way to one and all. A special friend to all.

The mango that never ends

One time I was coming back to the temple when Jayananda met me on the sidewalk and said, “Go up to my room, Bhakta Tom, and look on my small table. I got something for you, don't let anyone see.” I was very curious about what this special thing was and went up to his room – and on the table was the biggest, reddest mango I had ever seen. It was big and red all over. In those days, a mango all to oneself was a real privilege, almost like gluttony, and I wondered, “Should I? A whole big mango, by myself?” Well, since Jayananda gave this to me, then the answer was a resounding “YES!” ... as my taking of such mango was sanctioned by my good and wonderful friend, Jayananda. “I will not be selfish by honoring this mango,” I thought, and so I ate the whole thing with the most transcendently indescribable relish. And it was the sweetest and juiciest and tastiest mango there ever was. Mostly because it was a special gift from my special friend, Jayananda. That was his special kindness to me, and I'm still tasting that red mango of love, again and again. The memory is always better than the actual experience.

Jayananda was guru and friend

Jayananda was *karunika-guru*. Lord Chaitanya's command was for us all to be *guru*, and Jayananda did that – he gave Krishna to everybody, young or old, and so he was *guru*. But he was not a kind of sitting-high-on-big-seat type of *guru*. You never felt down there and him up there. Srila Prabhupada is Jagat Guru and we serve him in the mood of *dasya* and even *shanta-rasa*, that is, as an obedient servant and also in awe and reverence. Jayananda was more of a *guru* in *sakhya-rasa* or friendship, or a “kind friend to all” type of *shiksha-guru*. Not that I try to invent some

kind of *guru-rasa*. I know that this is not the mood of *guru* as described in *Bhagavad-Gita*, where Srila Prabhupada instructs that Arjuna's friendship with Krishna was over when he accepted Krishna as *guru*. Yet Jayananda had that authoritative way of commanding respect and cooperation and obedience to his wishes, and at the same time not coming off as a big authority. He was your friend, and you just naturally loved him. I loved him so much that I was ready to do anything for him. He brought one and all to the lotus feet of Srila Prabhupada, and he gave them good *shiksha* instruction at the same time and thus conquered them by his ever-present friendship and joyful mood of service. He was serving all the time, and had the knack for getting us to also serve, even against our will, as a lot of us were just lazy people. He got us to serve blissfully with him, and in that way he was *karunika-guru*, a kind friend to all.

The best medicine was Jayananda

One time we were all working hard on the Ratha carts in San Francisco, and it was so cold all the time that I got sick with the flu. I holed up in the *brahmachari ashram* alone, while everybody was gone all day, out doing service. That room was something else, if you ever experienced a *brahmachari ashram*, you'd know what I was talking about. It was more like our “*brahmachari ashtray*.” We had this big box in the center with laundry piled up, all twisted together, not even one sock matching another. All that mish-mash tangle of laundry was affectionately known as “*The various and sundry articles of clothing, all merged into the impersonal brahmachari-jyoti*.” Although these items appeared to be merged, still the impersonalist Mayavadis were defeated! Like the green parrot (that apparently merged) in the green tree, each garment retained its individual identity! Although each piece of clothing was merged into the “*jyoti*,” still each piece did not even remotely resemble another; so in this way they were all unique individuals! And where did they all come from? Nobody knew ... indeed, their origin was more baffling than the “origin of the *jiva*” conundrum. And they were all well-seasoned servants too, and some were very “holy” as well ... Well anyway, I was holed up in the *ashram*, too sick to even read much,

just laying there. One day turned into two, then three, and I wasn't getting much better. Then Jayananda showed up one day and really cheered me up and gave me the spiritual push I needed to get better. He said, "You know, Bhakta Tom, I wish you'd just come on back to the cart site, because ... just because I miss your association." That was so sweet and sincere. It was Jayananda, my friend. It wasn't like, "Come on back because we need to get this work done, it's behind schedule and we're short on manpower, so get up and pull your weight!" No, it was just because he was a kind friend to all, and especially because he was a very kind and special friend to me, like I've never had before. That was the best medicine ever. I got well, real quick.

Jayananda returns to our temple

Jayananda left to join the Radha-Damodara party, and then he came back to Berkeley around March of '76. Some devotees have described this event in comparison to Krishna meeting the inhabitants of Vrindavan at Kuruksetra. It was that ecstatic, the reunion after separation. I walked into the room and there was a crowd around Jayananda. Somehow I wormed my way in, and Jayananda and I hugged and looked each other in the eye for a long time with big smiles. I thought that I was supposed to offer my humble obeisances, but it didn't seem proper at the time since everybody had already done it. I remember Jayananda had once told me how he would get agitated sometimes when a certain devotee would always stop him and make him pay obeisances. Jayananda said it was proper, but he was always busy at the time and it seemed that at every turn the Prabhu was there to make him stop and hit the deck while he had something else to do.

Later we had *arotik* and I remember dancing so hard behind Jayananda, jumping very high in the air, because we were all so happy to have him in *kirtan* and association again. The next morning Jayananda and I just instinctively got on our dirty clothes and went out to the back of the temple. We just stood there and looked at each other and wondered what we were going to do. We always seemed to do something together in work clothes, but this time we didn't know exactly what it was that we were going to do ... but eventually we did something for Krishna.

Jayananda shelters most fallen

One time Tamal Krishna Goswami was with Jayananda and us in the garage at the Valencia Street temple in San Francisco. He said something like this to Jayananda, “You are so magnanimous, just like Lord Shiva who gave shelter to ghosts and hobgoblins, and you also give shelter to the most fallen.” I think he was talking about ME! It's true, Jayananda picked up us “lowest-fallens,” us “no-count riff-raffs,” and he made us feel like we “really mattered,” as Mahaksha Prabhu said.

Jayananda came for no reason

One night Jayananda visited me at the Ratha cart site. I was all alone and suddenly he showed up, apparently for no specific reason. I asked him why he came and he said, “Just to get your association.” He was always humble like that and always gave his kind friendship. We read about the Puranjana story from the newly-published Fourth Canto of *Srimad Bhagavatam*.

Jayananda commented how “Srila Prabhupada was the real poet.” It was always an intimate moment with Jayananda as we read Srila Prabhupada's books. I was so lucky to be there at the right time, at the right place, to be there in San Francisco in 1974-75, to be on the receiving end of the “kind friend to all.”

The Lord's mercy is very great indeed. Lord Krishna is very merciful to such a poor soul as me, even though I'm so undeserving. His first act of mercy was sending Srila Prabhupada to save my lost soul, and then His second act of boundless mercy was to give me the association of Jayananda. And, as if that was not enough, then even a third great act of mercy was bestowed upon me, which was Jayananda's munificent appearance to me in my dream 20 years later. Our Vaishnava philosophy is that dreams containing a Vaishnava's appearance or the spiritual master's appearance or the Lord's appearance are to be taken as factual, and I did take Jayananda's visit as explicitly real. Afterwards he came in intense *smaranam* (remembrance) for years. The Lord's mercy is very great indeed, as I'm ample proof. Jayananda is the sweet expression of

Krishna's mercy, as he always was and always will be ... “a kind friend to all.”

Like the Six Goswamis, Jayananda was “dear both to the gentle and the ruffians.” He was as much at home with the Italians at the produce market as with the brahmacharis in the temple. He would make friends on street sankirtan, and they would often come up to him and say, “Hey, where have you been?” Once a devotee was approached by a staggering drunk in San Francisco. The drunk looked at his robes and asked the devotee, “Hey, where’s my old friend Jayananda?” – from Remembering Jayananda by Kalakantha Dasa

Prabhupada told me that when you see a Vaishnava, you automatically think of Krishna. When I saw Jayananda, who invariably was steady in his devotion, I think of Krishna. Jayananda was one of the most unselfish people I ever met. – Guru Dasa

Many devotees, including Danavir and Chandan Acharya, had the experience of taking over Jayananda's old territory on incense-selling runs or bhoga runs. They would meet people who said such things as, “Where is Johnny Ananda?” or “That man – he’s the nicest and most pure man I’ve ever met.” One man told Chandan Acharya, “Well, I don't know much about your philosophy, but if that Jayananda is into it, it must be all right.” – from Remembering Jayananda by Kalakantha Dasa

3. Ratha-yatra Pastimes

**A devotee who is not dependent
on the ordinary course of activities,
who is pure, expert, without cares,**

free from all pains, and who does not
strive for some result, is very dear to Me.
(*Bhagavad-Gita* 12.16)

Certain as death and taxes

These little memories are often the best. One thing was very certain – just as certain as death and taxes – and that was Jayananda losing his bead bag on a daily basis. I remember this well. It seemed almost every day I would see Jayananda walking around the Ratha site, scratching his head and muttering, “Where's my bead bag?” He would hint that it would be nice if we helped him look for it. Then I would stop what I was doing and help him look, and the bead bag would always be in some obscure place – on some beam, or in some nook or cranny in the shadows, or somewhere underneath the canopy of the cart, or somewhere like that. Then Jayananda would touch his beads to his forehead and continue chanting his 16 rounds and we would go back to our tasks.

Maricha wannabe backs off

One night Jayananda and I were alone at the Ratha site, it was my watch and Jayananda was sleeping in a car, and along came this demon. He was either a descendant of Maricha (from *Rama-lila*), or he was some demon who came from the lower planets, or else he was just a town drunk raising Cain. And he decided it was his duty to defile our sacrificial arena with trash and garbage.

When devotees in the days of yore were preparing to conduct fire sacrifices for the pleasure of the Lord (as in the times of Treta-yuga, big fire sacrifice *yagnas* were done for Lord Vishnu), sometimes demons came to disturb the sacrifice. They would defile the arena with filth such as blood and pus and urine, and so forth. In Kali-yuga, devotees perform *hari-nama-sankirtan* as a *yagna* for the pleasure of Lord Chaitanya and Lord Krishna, and inevitably some demon would come along and disturb our street chanting, and sometimes our stronger devotees have to

brandish metal *kartals* in his face and drive him off. In this case, since Jayananda and the devotees were performing *yagna* for Lord Jagannatha, this parking lot became our sacrificial arena for building the sacred carts, and this demon came to defile it.

Lord Rama thwarts the demons

In the case of our reference to Maricha, this applies to the *lila* of Lord Ramachandra, which is recorded in Valmiki's great epic *Sri Ramayana*. There was a great *brahmana* named Vishva-mitra Muni, who was trying to conduct a fire sacrifice in the forest, and two powerful *rakshasa* demons named Maricha and Subahu were defiling his *yagna* by raining down unclean blood and flesh into the sacred fire. So Vishva-mitra Muni came to King Dasaratha, who offered to grant any request for him. In reply, Vishva-mitra Muni asked for Dasaratha's son, Sri Rama, to come with him and fight the *rakshasas*. The request left Dasaratha trembling and speechless, as he was very fearful to send his young son to fight with these monstrous demons, and so he offered his whole army to go instead. But Vishva-mitra was adamant and insisted on Rama. So King Dasaratha had already given his word to the *muni*; thus he was bound by *dharma* and his word, and so with extreme reluctance he had to give his dear son Sri Rama to the service of the sage. Then Lord Rama went with Vishva-mitra Muni to the forest and there defeated the demons Maricha and Subahu.

Jayananda saves the day

So now this big demon was standing on the sidewalk outside our parking lot, about 20 yards away, and he was throwing garbage bags over the fence and screaming and taunting me. I was really scared and wondered how we could persuade this demon, obviously in the lowest modes of ignorance, to cease and desist his obnoxious defilement of our sacred arena. I was thinking, "Why am I guarding Lord Jagannatha's carts? Here I am, a scrawny *brahmachari* – what can I do to guard the Lord's carts from this formidable demon?"

Then, to save the day, Jayananda somehow woke up. I guess he heard all

the ruckus. He and I stood there awhile, since he was still trying to wake up, and we stared at the Maricha wannabe throwing trash bags and defiling the ether with his foul exclamations. While I was helpless to solve the problem, Jayananda was empowered by Krishna with diplomatic skills to soothe any wild beast. And so he began to slowly stroll down the sidewalk toward this rascal, very nonchalantly, with a happy-go-lucky smile on his face and his arms swinging to and fro in a carefree manner – while my teeth were chattering with an ominous trepidation at what was about to happen. But I had firm faith in Jayananda and stood in my spot, so as not to intimidate the demon anymore and thus escalate the situation. I didn't know if the demon was going to fly into Jayananda's face or what, but I had faith that Jayananda knew what he was doing.

The demon watched Jayananda coming in his friendly mood, and instead of a possible row that I feared, the Maricha wannabe backed off and made retreat before the friendly yet formidable figure of Jayananda got close. Jayananda always knew just how to handle every confrontation with inimical people. And if the errant soul would have stayed, Jayananda undoubtedly would have befriended and endeared him. Jayananda was that way – always a kind friend to all ... even the ruffians.

Jayananda forgot to tell me

It was the summer of '75, and Srila Prabhupada came to the San Francisco Ratha-yatra. A bunch of us were up for initiation. Bhakta Dasa and Jayananda and Bahulasva Dasa were acting as temple presidents. I kept waiting for Bhakta Dasa or Jayananda to tell me that I was getting initiated, but they didn't. I was with Bhakta Dasa for an hour or so the night before Ratha-yatra, and I expected him to tell me about the initiations the next day and how I was a candidate, but he never said anything. Neither did Jayananda. And so I was thinking that I wasn't getting initiated.

The next day we were having the parade and Srila Prabhupada got out of his car to ride on Subhadra's cart. As he was walking toward the cart, he did a 180 degree turnaround and looked directly into my eyes. There

were hundreds of people there, but he seemed to look right into my eyes alone. It was as if he was saying, “Yes, I know you're here.” I've heard many stories like this from other devotees. We all had this similar experience with Srila Prabhupada, sort of like how Krishna was with all the *gopis* but each *gopi* thought He was with her alone. It is a mystical thing, and since other devotees have told me the same thing, I suppose I was not delirious to think that it actually happened to me.

Then we had the festival, and when evening came I did my night watch to guard the Ratha carts. Consequently I was sleeping in the next morning. I was suddenly awakened by Jayananda, who exclaimed, “Oh Bhakta Tom, I'm so sorry, I forgot to tell you – you were supposed to get initiated this morning. I'm sorry, you missed it. But don't worry, Srila Prabhupada wants to see you in his room.” I said that I thought I wasn't going to get initiated, and Jayananda said how I was “humility personified,” which was his usual way of praising other devotees.

Tooting my horn

So I went to Berkeley and got to go into Srila Prabhupada's room and be alone with him for a minute. This is another tall tale, but I was paying my obeisances and while reciting the *pranam* prayers, I happened to glance from the corner of my eye at Srila Prabhupada and saw a bright glow all about him. Blinding glow in fact. I've been told in retrospect that auras are easier to see from a peripheral angle of vision. Oh well, this is another story like the one in Vaiyasaki's book, *Radha-Damodara Vilasa*, with Vishnujana Swami telling of how Srila Prabhupada's room was full of blinding light. But since we've all heard stories in ISKCON even more amazing than this (how tears shot out from Srila Prabhupada's eyes when he was singing *Jaya Radha Madhava*, some devotees getting sprinkled by these teardrops several feet away, and how some devotees saw him floating down some stairs, his feet not touching the stairs, and so on) then I see no harm in telling what I saw. Then I got my beads and my name of Vishoka Dasa.

Before I entered the room, I was thinking of how the disciple should always feel a fool before the spiritual master. I had no problem feeling the fool. But ... there was a vestige of pride in my heart. It was like I was

thinking, “Well here I am – I'm getting initiated by the greatest *acharya* that was ever on the planet.” Even though this was philosophically correct, I was feeling unnecessary pride in my heart, and I was mentally tooting my own horn, so to speak. Srila Prabhupada looked at me and saw right through me and immediately detected the pride. Srila Prabhupada could read others' minds. He gave me a hard look and a sarcastic smile that cut me to the quick, totally devastating my petty pride. Although I was raised in Kansas, and although I never thought of myself as a hick, always thinking I was a city slicker – I had only one thought in my mind at that time, “I am just a hick from Kansas ... and that is all I am ... nothing more.” It was as if Srila Prabhupada projected this humbling thought into my brain.

After my initiation, Jayananda still kept calling me Bhakta Tom again and again. Jayananda and I had a special relationship, like he was the teacher and I was a student, yet friends too; but all of a sudden we became official godbrothers, and so it kind of changed things a little. Then one day he said, “I know you got a new spiritual name, and Vishoka is a very nice name. I'm sorry that I forget ... it's just that ... I guess I like to call you Bhakta Tom.”

Jayananda performed superhuman activities

Jayananda possessed a great mystic power. Those Ratha-yatra festivals would not have happened without Jayananda. He was empowered by Krishna to do superhuman feats that made Ratha-yatra happen ... even when the situation seemed impossible. Especially the New York Ratha-yatra in 1976, which Jayananda considered to be his crowning glory and the perfection of his life. At first he was not going to build the carts due to a bad back, but he got swept up into the service and agreed to do it. The New York temple had no money and Adikeshava Dasa said that “Srila Prabhupada doesn't trust us,” meaning that it was “iffy” in Srila Prabhupada's mind whether they could do it or not.

At first, Jayananda and devotees just drove around and around that area of town, and some devotee asked, “Why are we just driving around here all the time?” Jayananda was casing out the place. They were on a very low budget, so Jayananda made mental notes on where lumber and stuff

just seemed to be laying around ... and then they came back in the dead of night for some discount lumber and parts. Sometimes this is known as a five-finger discount, and in devotee circles sometimes it's known as transcendental repossession. As everybody in the world is thinking, "This is mine, this is mine," but the reality is ... that it's all Krishna's property. Always was and always will be. It was like Jayananda was saying to the New York residents, "My dear inhabitants of the Big Apple, please know that Lord Jagannatha already owns everything we see in this town ... actually He owns everything in the universe, we just forgot. And you may feel reluctant to freely donate, and so we guess that we'll just have to take some transcendental repossession of a few things for Lord Jagannatha's service ... and you will all benefit from it."

Jayananda gathered his materials by hook or crook. And sometimes (like his *bhoga* shopping) he could persuade some merchants to donate or give big discounts.

As for manpower, Jayananda would grab people off the streets or out of the temple – bums, hippies, lazy devotees – and get them to work day and night, even against their will. You just couldn't stop your lazy self from helping Jayananda, it was impossible. Jayananda's enthusiasm was a most powerful and contagious spiritual energy that spread and infected everybody around him. And carts that normally would take many thousands of dollars to build, Jayananda would just transcendently extract all the materials and manpower from the very woodwork of the neighborhood, so to speak – and he would stir his transcendental cauldron with the ladle of his great love for Srila Prabhupada – and poof! ... there would magically appear out of thin air ... these wonderful and colorful and majestic carts for Lord Jagannatha! In this way, Jayananda pulled off a veritable miracle by building carts on a practically nothing budget. Who could imagine such a feat? But wherever there is Jayananda and his ragtag band of merry street urchins (and discount parts and lumber laying about), there will certainly be opulence, victory, and extraordinary power. And then these wonderful majestic carts will certainly be rolling down the streets of big cities with thousands of devotees loudly chanting and dancing all around them to bless everyone with the Lord's mercy.

Impossible is not a word in Jayananda's dictionary

Then the day before the Ratha-yatra parade, a strong wind blew the dome over and there was a big groaning sound in the metal, the beam snapped, it was broken and devotees freaked out and were crying in despair. Some GBC said the whole thing was off, there'd be no parade, and they would have to tell Srila Prabhupada the bad news. The faint-hearted will perceive these kinds of things to be insurmountable, and they would give up and say it's impossible. But impossible is not a word in Jayananda's dictionary. As the cliché says, “When the going gets tough, the tough get going.” In devotee language it's more like – “When *maya* attacks the strongest, then devotees depend on Krishna even stronger.” This material world is full of trials and tribulations, some are like insurmountable oceans, but Krishna says “*mam eva ye prapadyante mayam etam taranti te...*”

**This divine energy of Mine,
consisting of the three modes of material nature,
is difficult to overcome.
But those who have surrendered unto Me
can easily cross beyond it.
(Bhagavad-Gita 7.14)**

Here Krishna says, “Those who surrender unto Me can easily cross beyond the ocean of *maya*.” And when a devotee surrenders to Krishna, then the oceanic difficulty shrinks down to the amount of water left in a calf's hoofprint, and he easily crosses over. So Adikeshava Dasa said, “Don't worry, we've got Jayananda.” Then Jayananda and his men rolled up their sleeves and went to work all that night. The next day, the beam was repaired and Lord Jagannatha's cart was rolling. This was Jayananda's superhuman activity in New York.

* * * * *

Right on up to the festival day in New York, Jayananda was becoming increasingly crippled with the swollen lymph glands on his legs. He could hardly walk. Especially during the last few

days before the parade, nobody got any sleep at all; that kind of schedule was very rough for us young, strapping youths, so certainly it must have been devastating for Jayananda with his failing health. But the amazing thing was that this crippled and hobbling Jayananda miraculously danced and danced and danced like an energetic teenager throughout the entire Rathayatra parade! All the way down Fifth Avenue from Central Park to Tompkin's Square Park – fifty-two blocks – Jayananda was dancing and chanting Hare Krishna while steering Lord Jagannatha's cart in the lead. He sometimes turned around and walked backwards in order to enthusiastically look up at Lord Jagannatha's smiling face, then he would turn around again and skip forward, shouting “Jaya Jagannatha!” as he raised one hand in the air. There is a movie taken of that parade, and you can see Jayananda cavorting about like a wild young stallion. So this was incredible to witness such a level of transcendental devotion being manifest in his person, especially if you were aware that his body was actually very ill and unable to walk very well. – Dasaratha-suta Dasa

So I saw Jayananda at that moment. He was just ... the look on his face was so ecstatic, you know it was like his crowning triumph. I couldn't help just bursting into tears, and I turned around and Srila Prabhupada also was crying, looking at Jayananda. And he said, “I am so pleased with him because he is so sincere.” – Adi-keshava Dasa

This is a tribute not to yourself, but to your shiksha-guru, Sri Jayananda, who I do actually remember. I was a herbed-out surfer puke who dropped by the San Francisco temple in 1971, and he was there, dirty, intensely laboring without anyone helping him, working on a large wooden cart. He stopped long enough to take time to say hari-bol to me and talk to me as if I mattered. He truly took Sri Siksastakam as his life and soul. –

4. Jayananda Serves the Holy Name

One who daily sings the glories of Yashoda's son,
Krishna, which are cooling as sandalwood and camphor,
is not troubled by the days of Kali-yuga.

For him at every step there is a
torrential flood of the sweetest nectar.

(Sri Kavi-ratna in *Sri Padyavali* by Srila Rupa Goswami)

What is the powerful proof that Krishna is God? It's *hari-nama-sankirtan*. Who among us have not experienced the divine presence during a great *kirtan*? Think of some really great *kirtans* and how we all came into direct contact with the divine internal energy. God's song is the only song that has been giving divine bliss to millions of people for thousands of years. No other song can claim this. Not the Beatles or anyone else, not one of their songs can enthrall the multitudes of humanity, time after time, for hundreds and thousands of years. Their song will get hackneyed. *Hari-nama*, or the chanting of the Holy Names of God, specifically –

**Hare Krishna Hare Krishna
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama
Rama Rama Hare Hare,**

– is always ever fresh. *Kirtan* alone does that, and the Holy Name does it at any given time. One simply has to go to a Hare Krishna temple and see for himself, it's happening every Sunday feast. We certainly saw this time after time at the old temple on Valencia Street in San Francisco, with Jayananda Prabhu. In this entry, I will attempt to recount the many divine *kirtans* that we had with Jayananda, and how he was always

absorbed in the service of Sri Nama Prabhu. Jayananda was always saying, “Somehow, you just have to have faith in the Holy Name.” He said this to everybody, at all times – it was his panacea cure for all the pains and problems of this material existence.

Three holy entities

Jayananda had explicit faith in three holy entities: Sri Nama, the words of Srila Prabhupada, and *prasadam*. This was his means of success in all his activities while giving Krishna Consciousness to others. First of all, he would always be serving *prasadam* to others, giving the mercy. Sometimes it was to bums on Market Street or the patrons of some bar. He was missing at a certain time every day, and devotees wondered where he was, and someone found him cooking *prasad* for the poor souls at some bar. They were trying to drown their sorrow in some kind of rotten ale, but somehow they got the mercy. Whenever Jayananda was at the temple, he jumped at every chance to serve out *maha-prasadam* to the guests. And he would cook breakfast *prasad* for the *sankirtan* devotees. The two occasions that I went on incense runs with him, to Salt Lake City and to Redding, California, he would always cook our meals, and it was always nectar *prasadam*. Or we would stay at devotees' houses here and there, it seemed he always knew somebody in every city, and he would cook for everyone and we'd have a program. In the same way, he was always giving the Holy Name, or chanting the Holy Name, starting a *kirtan* whenever he could. His impromptu *kirtans* were real famous, I'll talk about that later.

Jayananda in powerful kirtan

The following is a real memorial *kirtan* occasion for me, when I was very new at the temple. I did not know the importance of chanting and thought that knowledge was more important. I wanted to know scripture well. I thought that reading Srila Prabhupada's books at every opportunity was the thing.

Of course, it is still the thing, but back then I did not know the importance of *kirtan*. So one Sunday, after the feast, I thought that I was

going to go upstairs to the *brahmachari ashram* and read. I got up there and was reading when the *kirtan* started down below. I was sitting there trying to concentrate on the book. But the floor started vibrating, and I heard the beginnings of the *kirtan*, and soon the floor was shaking. The vibration was so powerful, I was looking at the words on the page, but nothing registered. The floor was soon bouncing up and down. The *kirtan* beckoned me like the sirens in *The Iliad*; the Holy Name was like a huge magnet and I was iron filings. However important I thought the book was, I had to stop reading and just go, as I was sucked into the whirlpool of the sound of the *kirtan* and was forced to come running downstairs.

When I got to the scene, it was a wonder. San Francisco was famous for its Sunday feast *kirtans*. After the feast, there was always a huge *kirtan* in the hallway. Why the hallway? I suppose there was no time to clear out the temple. But these hallway *kirtans* were wonders. When I got there, I saw Jayananda in the center, surrounded by 40 or 50 devotees, just going wild. The *kartals* and drums were like staccato transcendental machine guns annihilating every inch of *maya* for miles around. Jayananda was doing this dance, legs back and forth, twirling, going nuts, playing *kartals* like a madman, and everybody was equally mad, it was really powerful. I never saw such powerful energy, it was Krishna's internal energy. Maybe the sweet-rice had a little something to do with it! Yeah, mix ecstatic *prasadam* with ecstatic dancing and chanting, and you'll get a crowd of madmen/women there at the Frisco temple, every Sunday. It'll happen every time.

So many pastimes in San Francisco

Frisco was a transcendental *chakra*. My godbrothers/sisters who served there know what I mean. The whole material world is actually a vast wasteland, if it were not for the Lord's devotees. The soil of America has received the lotus feet of Srila Prabhupada and the many Deities he installed here. Also from America's soil came a great saint named Jayananda Thakur. Without such, this land would be one condemned hell-hole. One very holy place is San Francisco, because there is the transcendental abode of New Jagannatha Puri, the temple of Lord

Jagannatha. And Frisco is the site of many of the transcendental pastimes and activities of Srila Prabhupada and Jayananda. There are holy spots such as Stow Lake in Golden Gate Park, where Srila Prabhupada took his walk so many mornings. And there is Hippie Hill in the park, where Srila Prabhupada had those big *kirtans* with all the hippies. And there are meadows in the park, where many transcendental Ratha-yatras took place. There was the Avalon Ballroom, where Srila Prabhupada chanted at the Mantra-Rock Dance with the hippies. And there was Fisherman's Wharf, the site of many *hari-namas*.

Kirtan at the wharf

Boy, did we have *hari-nama* at the wharf! We had this wonderful place in Frisco called Fisherman's Wharf, and Jayananda would take us down there to give out the mercy. We would go double file down the sidewalks, and I remember how Jayananda would be in the front, and he'd turn around, facing us, and doing this nice dance backwards while beating the *mridanga*. It was neat to see him do this backward dance. The people were usually grumpy, trying to digest their putrid fish dinners (they got really nasty right after dinner time), but somehow the chanting made it so transcendental that at least they would laugh and mimic us in scorn, thus getting *namabhasa* and therefore liberation from their sordid lives and stinky fish dinners. The nasty vendors at the lobster-murder stand would throw hot stinky fish water at the devotees' feet as we went by. Later Jayananda brought them some cookie *prasad* and told them how nice it was that they were doing this nice service for us by cleaning the sidewalk!! They were melted.

Anyhow, they saw this big man dancing backwards towards them, with the devotees trailing behind, and they didn't know what to make of it. It was really cool though, whatever they thought, it certainly was the best day in their miserable sojourn in the long cycle of birth and death. We would chant around, up and down the sidewalk, and at certain points we'd huddle in a circle and chant, and people would gather around and stare. Jayananda would stop the *kirtan* and give a speech. He would be talking with his eyes closed, telling people the glories of the Holy Name. I can still see his face, intense, with eyes closed, preaching to the fallen

souls. Then he would request them to repeat the *mantra* and chant along. He said, “Just try saying this *mantra* with us, you've got nothing to lose. Now, just try to repeat these words,” and he'd say – “Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna” – and then wait for them to say it in return. But they just looked at us like we were from Mars. It was really hard to get them to chant, but Jayananda tried anyway. Regardless of what they thought, it was still the best day in their existence.

Happy campers get the mercy

One day, in deep hot summer, the whole temple decided to go to this swimming hole that was way out of town. It was a nice hot day, and we were swimming in this natural swimming hole, having really good Vaishnava fun. After a good deal of fun, the time was running out and Jayananda decided that we would do a little chanting before we left. There was an RV park just nearby with a lot of people lounging in their chairs next to their RV's and so on. And so we all had this little *hari-nama-sankirtan* on the little road in between all the RV's, in everyone's full view. I can imagine the surprise and wonder in their minds to see the devotees chanting in such an unlikely place. Just a peaceful day out in the middle of nowhere, and here they are, the shaven-headed devotees are dancing and chanting like anything for all the happy campers. We had come to this river with intentions of only enjoying the approved Vaishnava sport of swimming, and we did, but still Jayananda was thinking about the conditioned souls and so we did an impromptu *hari-nama* for the all lucky campers. Jayananda never missed a transcendental opportunity to spread the Holy Name to the lost *jivas* of this world.

Jayananda frowns on my argumentation

One time we were in Salt Lake City, and we were staying at the house of some devotee that Jayananda knew. They had a nice Tulasi-devi plant. I was still the *jnani* that I was (seeking dry knowledge), and there happened to be some guests there with a Christian leaning. They struck up some questions with me, and I got sucked into the trap. Meanwhile

Jayananda started a *kirtan* in the living room, and they were chanting and dancing while I was caught in the trap of this false argument with the Christians. Jayananda was glancing at me, giving disapproving looks, seeming to say, "Stop the nonsense and chant with us!" But to my great misfortune, I was so entangled in the argument that I could not get away from it, due to false ego and so on. Afterwards, there was a guest who commented, "I really don't know about the philosophy so much, but I really do like that chanting we did ... that, I really like!" All my arguing was worthless, and Jayananda's *kirtan* was everything.

His famous impromptu kirtans

Jayananda was always starting impromptu *kirtans* at festivals, like the Lord Chaitanya festival in Berkeley and festivals in San Diego and Santa Cruz. When everybody thought it was kind of over, and Jayananda was getting help to clean up, he would start a *kirtan* all of a sudden and we all joined in. I remember this really sweet *kirtan* in Berkeley, the sun was going down and we were all dancing in a big circle around the red truck, and it was really sweet and from the heart, it was pure spontaneous devotion.

Once at the Ratha site in Frisco we all took a break and were sitting around a circle and Jayananda distributed some bananas and buttermilk (his favorite) and we were taking *prasadam* very enthusiastically. He was asking this person and that person about relating some Krishna-*katha*, and in turn he asked me. I said something for a while, and then I related how I thought it was too late for me, that I joined the Krishna Consciousness Movement too late in life, I was too old and felt some hopelessness. Jayananda took this as a sentiment of Vaishnava lamentation and humility, and he went into an ecstasy and bloomed with a big smile as his face lit up. Then he got up and took some *kartals* and started dancing and chanting around the lot and we all followed in single file, going around in a big circle.

His powerful japa

Next are some episodes of us chanting *japa*, or the personal recitation of

the Holy Names of Lord Krishna. Jayananda's *japa* was so powerful. He would sit upright and chant really intensely. I vividly remember one occasion when we were in the temple one morning chanting *japa*. It was one of those rare occasions when Jayananda was not busy doing something else, and he somehow took time out for *japa* even though it was in the daytime, not the early morning hours. The sun was very bright, streaming down in the temple room. The temple room was really transcendently beautiful in the daytime, with sunlight effulgence enveloping the whole room, coming in from the skylight dome in the roof right over the middle of the temple. The walls were a nice yellow with many transcendental pictures on the walls. Jayananda was sitting on a mat like a *yogi*, back straight, his eyes closed in deep concentration, and the *mantra* shot out from his lips in a very strong and forceful staccato rapid-fire stream of nectar. It seemed that all of us stopped our minds for a few moments, stopped our wandering thoughts, our breath stopped for a few moments and we all took serious notice of Jayananda's powerful *japa*. We all stopped what we were doing and looked at Jayananda and looked at each other in a kind of wonder.

Then there were two new *bhaktas* who were sitting near the door, and they too stopped with blank looks on their faces, and then both of them started to laugh. I think Jayananda's *japa* was so strong and unusual and startling, so vividly real, that they reacted with the confusion of humor because they didn't know what to make of it. But I immediately gave them a glance and frown, sort of saying not to make fun of Jayananda's *japa*, and their faces immediately turned somber also. His loud *japa* went on for a quite a long time, too. He didn't know that we were all taking notice because his eyes were closed the whole time.

We walk in darkness and fear no evil

There was another incident in Sacramento, California. One morning, Jayananda and I took a *japa* walk outside. We walked down the road, but it was early morning and so dark that I couldn't see Jayananda walking in front of me. I just walked blindly in the dark following his loud *japa*. Usually darkness elicits fear, but I remember how secure and unafraid I was, how I walked with a feeling of shelter and protection in the

association of Jayananda and his loud *japa*. I remember specifically how his *japa* made me feel secure.

Lecturing on the Holy Name

I seem to have missed Jayananda's lectures for some reason, or do not have any specific memories of one. I had a tape of him lecturing, but somehow lost it. Jayananda did not come across as a big erudite scholar; he spoke simply, but was very intelligent and thought-provoking and convincing. My godbrother Srikanta told me of one of his lectures one time. It was not a lot of book knowledge or verses, but he told me of how Nalini-kanta and he were practically fainting in ecstasy when they were hearing Jayananda. Jayananda was just simply speaking about the boundless mercy of the Holy Name and how we must put our full faith in the Holy Name of Krishna. This sums up this entry; the important quality of Jayananda was his great faith and service to the Holy Name of Krishna, how we should always, “Just somehow, just have faith in Krishna's Holy Name and all success will follow.”

Jayanandanugas – lower-than-straw devotees give tribute to Jayananda Thakur

Karandhara remembers how Jayananda preached to him on his first day in the temple. As they worked together preparing a little garden for Srila Prabhupada at the old Los Angeles temple, Jayananda said, “You know, things don't always go just right in Krishna Consciousness. You have to keep chanting.” At the time, Karandhara couldn't imagine how anything could go wrong in Krishna's service. Years later, however, as he found himself still remembering those words, Karandhara could appreciate the real potency of what Jayananda had said. “So many things may come and go. Just have faith in the Name.”

Another example of his attachment to Krishna Consciousness is Jayananda's love for kirtan (chanting). Jayananda was always eager to take the whole temple out on hari-nama

chanting parties. He had a special attraction for chanting in the streets. Whether kirtan was held in the temple or in the street, Jayananda could always be seen dancing and chanting enthusiastically. When he was making Maharaja Dasa into a devotee, Jayananda would visit his house and have big kirtans. Even if there were only two of them, they would jump and chant "Nitai-Gaura Hari-bol!" Also, Karandhara recalls how one day after working very hard for ten hours straight, Jayananda suddenly announced, "Hey, it's ten to seven. Let's go to artik." Everyone else was so tired that artik was the last thing on their minds, but Jayananda quickly jumped into the shower and then bounced down to the temple room for artik. Jayananda was not only big and powerful in body; he was strong with faith in Krishna. Therefore nothing could frighten him. Once on San Francisco's Market Street, Jayananda was playing mridanga and leading a kirtan party when, down the street, an enormous man appeared. He was at least seven feet tall and weighed perhaps three hundred pounds. His unkempt beard and drunken appearance indicated that he was an old veteran living in the bars off his pension. As he approached the kirtan party, the temple's reserve kshatriyas, Keshava Dasa and Guru-kripa Dasa, readied themselves for a fight. Sure enough, the monster marched up to Jayananda, turned, and began to shout, "Stop that chanting!" Jayananda looked him straight in the eye and said firmly, "Just chant Hare Krishna! Just chant Hare Krishna!" To everyone's amazement, the drunk simply turned and walked away without a scrap. – from Remembering Jayananda by Kalakantha Dasa

I remember Jayananda Prabhu leading us down Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley singing the Holy Names of Krishna to his heart's content. In those days Berkeley, California, was known as "Berserkly" (According to Webster, the descriptive word was quite appropriately placed, meaning, "in a frenzied rage.")

There was a particularly acute representative of "Berserkly" who used to

follow our street chanting party, shouting obscenities and making threats, ironically enough in the name of God. His religious affiliation, he had determined, gave him the special privilege to condemn our efforts in public prayer ... we ignored him by following Jayananda's joyful dancing. One day in particular, however, Jayananda Prabhu looked very serious and, to me, seemed urgent in his efforts to drown out the intruder's curses. He would look the man right in the eyes while jumping up and down to the rhythm of the kartals (small cymbals) he played so emphatically. The man, however, wouldn't release his evil intentions and persisted in harassing our little chanting choir. As we came to a street crossing on our daily route, the light was red and we were temporarily held face to face with this irate fellow who had now focused on Jayananda one-on-one.

I saw Jayananda warn him with deep concern and compassion, "If you don't stop disturbing the devotees and Lord Chaitanya's mission, Krishna will kill you. Please, you should be more careful." The man continued, mad with rage. Then, in his blind climax of enthusiasm, the forever-angry man stepped off the curb and was immediately hit by a bus. The light had changed to green. We continued, unaware for a few moments, as the crowd gathered behind us. Looking back, we never stopped praying and our voices lifted in the clearing ether to the rhythm of ringing kartals. There was sadness in Jayananda's eyes that caused my heart to enlarge a bit, still I couldn't take it all in, like I saw that he did in full. – Dhanistha Dasi

5. "I Won't Care for the Comforts of My Body..."

**For one who has conquered the mind,
the Supersoul is already reached,
for he has attained tranquility.
To such a man happiness and distress,
heat and cold, honor and dishonor**

are all the same.
(*Bhagavad-Gita* 6.7)

Srila Bhaktivinoda writes, “I won't care for the comforts of my body ... let me preach the Name divine ... when, oh when, will that day be mine?” These words set the mood for how Jayananda was always oblivious to the comforts of his body. He only cared to preach the Name, and serve Srila Prabhupada and others. Sometimes he tolerated excruciating pain and braved the wild elements of nature with no regard. We shall see this mood in the following pastimes, which I'll attempt to recount.

Jayananda told me how one summer he was working so hard on the Ratha carts. He was always working hard on the carts every year, with sparse help sometimes, sometimes lots of help. Many times he would see a wandering vagrant hippie who happened to walk by the carts, and Jayananda would entice him with some *prasada*. The hippie would eat, and then Jayananda would persuade them to help on the carts. He got lots of help this way, and they got once-in-a-lifetime mercy.

Jayananda could not sleep

Anyway, Jayananda was working real hard this on particular Ratha-yatra. And what happened was he somehow stepped on a nail, which went right through his shoe and into his foot. Deep. It was very painful, but he did not let it stop him. He told me how he limped around for three days until the day of Ratha-yatra. Not only was his foot in pain for three days, but he did not sleep for those three days. Working day and night, 24 hours a day for Lord Jagannatha. This I also saw in the summer of '75. I would sleep a while at the Ratha site, and wake up any time of the night and see Jayananda working on Srila Prabhupada's *vyasasana* seat on the cart. It took him all night to get it the way he wanted it. After all, it was the day before the parade, and Srila Prabhupada would be riding on this cart, and Jayananda could not sleep until it was perfect. His devotion to Prabhupada was boundless.

He braves extreme elements of nature

We had some really cold summers in San Francisco. It sounds strange, but true. I think Mark Twain said something about that. The wind would blow in the cold ocean breeze, and it got real cold sometimes. I remember this one particular day, it was so cold! I had on a couple of shirts, sweatshirts and a coat or two. Then Jayananda came to the Ratha site, and he really blew my mind, I mean, my mind was really blown. I was standing there freezing to death, shivering with all my coats, and here he came – he was only wearing a T-shirt, and had recently shaved his head. The wind was just blasting all the heat away from his body and off his head, and I was standing, staring, awestruck, wondering how he was surviving hypothermia. He just worked away, like nothing was unusual. Then we got in the car and he read some *Bhagavad-Gita*, as we read some of Srila Prabhupada's books to each other at times. He spoke of the verse describing how the Supersoul is reached when one is equal to heat and cold, happiness and distress, honor and dishonor (*Bhagavad-Gita* 6.7).

Never a bad hair day

When you think about it, Jayananda really had a tough job. His office was out there in the street, or going from door to door, to offices and stores, dealing with commissioners, etc., and his work was always on the spur of the moment. There were no appointments, he had no secretary to assist him; rather, he was out there meeting people one-on-one, and often when they were in a rush. Yet they always came away with a good taste in their minds. He was meeting people constantly, winning them over with a big heart, and he was always in a good mood, never having a bad hair day. This was because he wasn't thinking about himself. Depression is due to self-absorption and thinking we are these bodies. In fact, every misery you can think of is due to thinking we are these bodies. Jayananda was never thinking that way, he was always acting as a spirit soul and servant of Krishna, free from the bodily conception of life, and he was only thinking of how to serve others and Srila

Prabhupada and Krishna. This would be a tough job for anybody else, to never have a negative mood swing – but Jayananda was always on the up-and-up, he was constantly in a high mood ... 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Jayananda's enthusiasm is irresistible

Here is another story I heard. It was in New York City. The temple had a gift shop on the third floor, but it seemed that nobody was into it, there wasn't much enthusiasm to shop there. And Jayananda was getting weaker and weaker. He had to use a wheelchair to get around. They gave the service of the gift shop to Jayananda. Before long, all due to Jayananda's enthusiasm and ingenuity, he somehow had customers thronging the gift shop, coming up the elevator and stairs, whereas previously the shop was neglected. There was no impediment to his devotional service.

The same thing happened in Los Angeles. Jayananda single-handedly organized the Ratha-yatra, making many phone calls from his bed. Sometimes he was so weak, confined to a wheelchair, but some mornings, he would come to *mangal arotik* and get up and dance. He was very weak in bed and told one Prabhu, "Someday, you're going to come in and find this bag of stool in the bed." The Ratha festival in Los Angeles proved to be the biggest ever, and it all came about due to the desire of Jayananda.

Jayananda's great devotion to Srila Prabhupada

Now, gentle and loving *bhaktas*, this next story will break your heart, it makes me cry when I think about it. I had never heard this before, please listen to the nectar of Jayananda's devotion. For some reason Jayananda was put in a clinic near San Diego, California, for his cancer condition. A nice devotee, Muktakesha, told how he came to Jayananda's room to bring something to him. Muktakesha was there in the room and casually began to sit on the bed, but Jayananda stopped him before he did, asking him to please don't sit on the empty bed. Muktakesha was wondering, why not?, and then he turned and noticed a picture of Srila Prabhupada

at the head of the bed, propped up by the pillow. Jayananda then explained how he had never had such a nice bed like this (as a devotee), and how he thought it was more appropriate that his spiritual master Srila Prabhupada should enjoy the bed. I tremble as I write this. Jayananda gave his nice bed to his beloved Gurudeva, in great love and devotion, and laid his cancer-riddled body on the floor in the small space in front of the bed.

Two letters from Jayananda

I received two handwritten letters from Jayananda, both within the final months. In the first letter Jayananda asked me to try to look around for his original brown-covered *Srimad Bhagavatams*, which he personally bought from Srila Prabhupada in 1967. Or he thought maybe he left them with me. He then said that the request was only an excuse to write to me. I wrote back to him and expressed my missing his association, etc., and that I didn't know about the *Srimad Bhagavatams* but would look around.

In Jayananda's second letter, which came in the final two weeks or so, he did what he always did, which was to make up imaginary qualities for me and imaginary faults for himself. I remember when I received the letter in my hand and saw his name on the envelope, I quickly opened it and went into the *prasadam* room to be alone as tears quickly came to my eyes. Then Mishra Bhagavan asked if we could read it together and we did, and he said how it was such a nice, and tearful letter. We were both aware of the short time we had left with Jayananda. I wrote back and told Jayananda that he was “going back to Godhead,” and cited the verse in *Srimad Bhagavatam*: “*ante narayana smrtih...*”

**The highest perfection of human life, achieved either
by complete knowledge of matter and spirit,
by acquirement of mystic powers,
or by perfect discharge of one's occupational duty,
is to remember the Personality of Godhead at the end of life.”**
(*Srimad Bhagavatam* 2.1.6)

I told Jayananda that he would be chanting and thinking of Krishna and Srila Prabhupada at the end, and especially that he would be absorbed in the thoughts of his main service to Srila Prabhupada – Ratha-yatra. I was told later that this is what actually happened. In the final moments, it was like he was absorbed in Ratha-yatra *rasa*. I have kicked myself over and over for somehow losing those two letters. They were extremely valuable, but I lost them somewhere in the *brahmachari ashram*. But now the memory is the important keepsake.

My final visit to Jayananda

I came to see him in Los Angeles. It was about two weeks before he departed. Somehow I found a good reason to come to Los Angeles from Frisco, having no idea how long he still had. I came into his room, and saw him in bed, being real weak. This was the last time I saw him. It was very sweet. Normally, I am very non-eloquent, being quiet and tongue-tied. Somehow the spirit entered into my heart and mouth, like I got a little help from Goddess Mother Sarasvati, it seemed. I had a great desire to say something very praiseworthy to Jayananda there, person-to-person. Some others were around, too. Besides, I sort of had him in a bind – he could not walk away – and so I took advantage of the situation.

All of a sudden I got some eloquence in my tongue and glorified Jayananda, using examples from *Chaitanya-Charitamrita* how Lord Chaitanya started the *sankirtan* Movement all over the universe, and similarly Jayananda started Ratha-yatra all over the world just from his personal desire to serve Srila Prabhupada and Lord Jagannatha. I also spoke from the *Bhagavatam*, how Maharaja Parikshit waited fearlessly for the snakebird to come and bite him on the 7th day, because he was plunged in the nectar of Krishna-*katha*, and similarly Jayananda was not afraid of this snakebird cancer thing because he was plunged in the nectar of Ratha-yatra service to his Guru Maharaja and his dear Lord. And so I went on like this, and Jayananda sat there and took the whole thing without blinking an eye, no waving of the hand for me to stop, no look of disgust on his face – in fact, he looked a little pleased with me

right then. And all the other devotees liked it, too. He graciously accepted my parting gift.

And now, dear *bhaktas*, this was Jayananda's final gesture of love and sweetness, and total disregard for his body. It came the time, as it always does, when one is forced to leave, and finally I had to go. I had no idea then that it was the last time I'd see him. I said my good-byes and turned to leave, walked away a little and turned back, to my horror, to see Jayananda getting out of his bed. I knew what he was going to do. I protested, I told him to stop that nonsense and get back in the bed where he belonged. He would not listen to me. He sat up, got out of bed, came over to me, and bowed his weak body down to the floor, his head touching the floor, asking me to accept his obeisances. Such sweetness and love! Such tears now, when I remember it! Such disregard for his body! We paid obeisances to each other, and hugged. I left and that was the last time I saw him in his earthly form. I kept that image, along with the many other sacred images of him, all inside, all locked up deep inside, not to forget or fade away.

Jayanandanugas – lower-than-straw devotees give tribute to Jayananda Thakur

Thank you so much for your help and inspiration from your web page. I wept deeply and spontaneously today reading about Jayananda giving his hospital bed to Srila Prabhupada. Jayananda has been giving me so much inspiration lately and his association thru the memories of other devotees is changing my dirty heart. Thank you, Prabhu. – Your servant, Krishna Prema Dasi

Dear Vishoka Prabhu – Obeisances – All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Jayananda Thakur!!!! Thanks for your latest letter and all that you've written, especially on Jayananda!! As usual, I need a tissue box handy when I read what you write about Jayananda because it speaks to the heart, something sorely needed in this day of heightened in-fighting amongst

devotees. When I read writing such as yours, it further convinces me of the truth of Krishna Consciousness – that it is Eternal, and always Blissful!! Why not live that way and be happy as Prabhupada always told us? Some will never get it, and some will – and THOSE devotees I consider my real associates. – Hari-bol, Damaghosh Dasa

I just visited your site and savored the experience of your most recent song of praise for Jayananda Prabhu – it is so inspiring to hear a devotee uplift another devotee with such a devotional spirit! Thank you for the ambrosia. – Hare Krishna, Celta

6. Only for the Benefit of Others

**One who is beyond duality and doubt,
whose mind is engaged within, who is
always busy working for the welfare of
all sentient beings, and who is free from
all sins, achieves liberation in the Supreme.
(Bhagavad-Gita 5.25)**

The deep secrets of *bhakti*. Somehow Jayananda knew the innermost secret of *bhakti*. It usually takes a *jiva* so long to get such a treasure. This is because it is so contrary to the nature of the material world. It is the essence of *bhakti* – unselfish love for Krishna and the spiritual master. Krishnadasa Kaviraja Goswami explains how love and lust are as different as gold and iron. The *gopis'* love for Krishna is devoid of selfishness. Krishnadasa Kaviraja writes – “When the *gopis* see Lord Krishna they derive unbounded bliss, although they have no desire for such pleasure ... The *gopis* have no inclination for their own enjoyment, and yet their joy increases. That is indeed a contradiction.” Yes, this is a great enigma in the material world. We cannot fathom how a person can

be happy unless he looks out for number one. It does not make any sense to us. It's an absurd equation to the materialist.

Try not to be happy

“What?” they say, “How can I be happy without a constant pursuit of bodily and mental gratification?” They may hear Mahaprabhu's mandate, *na dhanam, na janam, na sundarim*, from *Sri Siksastakam*, stanza four –

“O almighty Lord, I have no desire to accumulate wealth, nor do I desire beautiful women, nor do I want any number of followers. I only want Your causeless devotional service birth after birth.”

And they will say, “What is this madness? You people are crazy! What? No woman, no money, no circle of admirers – are you nuts?” What is day for the materialist is night for the transcendentalist, and vice-versa. But ... the Hare Krishnas have a secret formula for happiness, which is – just quit trying to be happy!! The more you try to be happy in this world ... just means more misery. Happiness comes on its own accord, as does misery, without separate endeavor. And real happiness comes when you stop trying to be happy, and chant Krishna's Names. Just glorify God and chant His Holy Names and forget yourself for a while, try to see our tiny lives in perspective of the vastness of the cosmos and the greatness of God. We ask everyone to try this formula and feel the results. There is a bumper sticker that says it all, “I feel so much better ... now that I've given up all hope.” This is our formula, that our hope has been misplaced in ordinary things, but it is a stickler to really understand and apply. A lot of us understand this concept, but so many of us still linger on with petty selfish desires. That is why we are here in the material world. We are here because we harbor selfish desires, apart from Krishna. Now we know the philosophy and we try to become pure. If we were pure, really pure, then we would be what Srila Prabhupada describes as a pure devotee, or one who desires only Krishna's happiness, even if it means great inconvenience to the self.

Come on ... let's 'fess up. Speaking for myself, at least, there are so many

desires that linger back there in the cobwebs of the mind. What to speak of the back of the mind, more like ALL OVER the mind! Working for Krishna and His *jivas* should be the ticket, but somehow I still reserve concern for the self, thinking that the material ego and body have their needs, and so forth. Attachments are there, be it home and hearth, or it may just be a nice wristwatch, or it may be your favorite *dhoti*. Or else it's fame and a little recognition now and then. It's all material ego attachment and does not fit into the penultimate equation of "Krishna's happiness is my desire," or "Srila Prabhupada's order is my only goal." The realization of this may be there in the theoretical realm, but practical application ... well, that is another thing. That is where Jayananda was light years ahead of the pack. He was not on the theoretical platform, rather he was doing it every waking (and perhaps sleeping as well) moment of his day – *kirtaniya sada hari*. This was his marvel of a life, one that is nearly impossible to imitate, and one that is very hard to understand, even for the seasoned *bhaktas*.

Jayananda did this so spontaneously and effortlessly. He was quite an amazing man. He always worked and served for the sake of others because he knew that all other souls were parts of Krishna, Krishna was always there in their hearts, and that is how we serve our Gurudeva and Krishna – by serving His parts and parcels. I will tell some stories now which will illustrate the compassion of Jayananda and how he always worked for the benefit of others.

Jayananda turns negative to positive

Jayananda would always turn a weird situation into doing benefit for the other person. Like the Fisherman's Wharf episode, when the lobster-murder stand people threw hot and stinky fish water at the devotees' feet as they went by on *hari-nama*. I would have gotten into a fight with them, like yelling and shaking fists, but Jayananda was in control of his senses and approached them with cookies and said, "Thanks for doing such a nice service of cleaning the sidewalk." This genuinely affected them. Similarly, he was always trying to give *prasadam* to others, like visitors of the temple, or taking out extra *prasadam* to the streets for the bums, and so forth. He was found to be cooking *prasad* for drunks in a

bar. He was always asking wandering hippies to help with the carts, not just to get their labor, but to engage them in service for their benefit, knowing that even a little service brings transcendental eternal blessing.

The birthday cake

One day I was at the Ratha cart site in San Francisco, and it was sort of a long and lonely day. It was Jayananda's birthday, and Viharini Dasi had baked a cake with frosting for Jayananda. She brought it to the site and left it in my trust until Jayananda returned. Well, it was a long time, many hours, in fact it seemed like all day long until Jayananda got there. Meanwhile ... I was lusting over this cake all day long. I was thinking, "Oh boy, does that cake look good!" (My rascal mind got the better of me – lusting over Jayananda's cake before he even got there!) I was thinking, "What a party we're going to have when Jayananda gets here!! Yeah, we're really going to chow down!! And I am going to scarf down a piece of that cake – oh boy – maybe TWO pieces of that scrumptious, beautiful delectable cake, *Jaya, Hari-bol!!*" I still had enough restraint to wait ... but it took so long, and I was meditating on it for so long. Well ... finally Jayananda got there, and some other devotees came, too. And I was really ready to reveal the surprise and start the party. My party-animal mode was in full bloom. As it started, Jayananda saw the cake and was surprised, and my mouth was watering. But – by some quirk of cruel fate – there appeared a little kid on the scene. He was some neighborhood kid. How he found out, I don't know. He just stood there.

Well, Jayananda looked at him and then he started to serve the cake. We had no knife or anything, and I couldn't believe it but Jayananda took a toothbrush and used the handle of it to cut the cake (after first wiping it on his pants). As you might have guessed, the first piece went to the little kid, whose eyes opened wide as a big smile crossed his face. "Okay, now we're going to party," my lusty mind thought. Wrong. Hardly a moment went by, when lo and behold, the second little kid appeared with hand extended. Second piece fell into his hand. By now, rumor had spread like wildfire, and I could see a stream of little kids pouring out of the apartments and running down the sidewalk to the

cart site. Apprehension gripped my mind with terrible thoughts, “Was there to be enough?” And Jayananda just kept on serving the kids, one after another. The cake was disappearing before my bulging eyes. My mind was screaming, “What are you doing, dear Prabhu, you are giving it all away!!” But I tried to hide my shameless emotions by forcing a straight face and a weak smile. But Jayananda could see through all that. This is the difference between a dirty heart and a pure heart. My impure mind could only think of how “I” could enjoy this cake, how “I” could selfishly enjoy. And the mentality of a pure heart, a pure mind – Jayananda's mind – he was just thinking, “How can I serve others with the Lord's mercy, *prasadam*? And if they take *prasadam*, then they will have begun their devotional service!” This was Jayananda's mercy to others. His meditation was always how to benefit others with the mercy. So Jayananda stopped for a moment to appreciate that the cake was made for him, and then he took a sizable crumb, the size of half my thumb, and popped it into his mouth. Then he looked at my face and read my miserable mind, which I tried to hide. He was compassionate to me, too, and finally gave me a piece. I was grateful and was trying to hide my despondency over how my plan was foiled. After it was all gone, and the kids all disappeared, Jayananda looked at me and smiled and said, “You know, the *Bhagavatam* says that we should feed the people with sumptuous *prasadam*.” I feigned weak acceptance. You know, he just did things for the benefit of others. That's the way he was.

The funky pants

There was another time at the Ratha cart site, it was a normal day, and Jayananda appeared on the scene. He had been out going around to different stores getting supplies. Somehow, somebody had given him a donation of a box full of white pants. I looked at the donation, and Jayananda explained how this old lady gave him the pants. They were all stuck together, and we peeled one off the top. These pants were like some kind of work pants that workers would use in an institutional laundry, like in the basement of a hospital or something. Jayananda held it up to the light, and it was starched stiff, just a thin sheet of starched white cloth that was smashed or ironed down into a pancake. Probably

went through some huge steamroller. I felt it in my hands. My rascal mind was scoffing, “Yeah, some donation, sure! These pants are really funky, and ugly, and stiff, and uncomfortable. Well, I wouldn't be caught dead in them!” I thought I would look weird in them, and I was unappreciative of this “weird” donation. “Just trying to get rid of junk,” I thought.

But I could soon see how Jayananda's mind worked. He was thinking that it was a sincere donation, and unless somebody “used” the donation, then the effect would not be merited to the donor. He was only thinking of the old lady. He was only thinking of her pious merit earned by donating something to the Vaishnavas, and how it might go in vain. Therefore, he thought, “somebody” is going to have to wear the pants! And he did. He put on a pair. And I was right. They looked real funky and stiff and uncomfortable. And Jayananda didn't look so comfortable in them, and they weren't long enough. But he did it anyway, because when all is said and done, he only did things for the benefit of others. I think that was the only time he wore them.

His service was his relationship with Srila Prabhupada

Jayananda did things only for others' benefit, for the benefit of Krishna's *jivas*, parts and parcels, and that service also included his spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada. Jayananda's service, his daily activities, his relationship with Srila Prabhupada, were only for the benefit of his beloved master. There were no business deals or trying to “enjoy” the spiritual master in Jayananda's devotion. He was willing to undergo so many inconveniences for Prabhupada.

It was the summer of '75, and we were hustling like anything, getting ready for Ratha-yatra and the coming of Srila Prabhupada. We all greeted Srila Prabhupada at the Frisco airport, and Jayananda was there with an umbrella and bouquet for him. There is a very nice photo of this in the *Vyasa Puja* book for '97. You can look at the photo and see the person holding the umbrella over Prabhupada, with flowers in his hands for Prabhupada, but can't see the person's face. One could notice that this person wore a cuffed white shirt, like a business shirt. Jayananda didn't even have a decent *kurta* to wear to the airport, and he wore this

dress-type shirt along with his *dhoti*. But he looked good in it; it was totally him, Jayananda. And Prabhupada was smiling so wonderfully. You could see the relationship, the master and the servant, and how Prabhupada was happy to be with his dear servant, Jayananda. Then we took Srila Prabhupada back to his room at the Berkeley temple. It was like a beehive, hundreds of devotees madly buzzing around, running here and there, back and forth. My godbrother, Tapanpuja, said it so nicely about Srila Prabhupada coming to a temple: it's like accidentally kicking an anthill and the ants are madly scrambling all over. That is what it was like when Prabhupada came to the airport and the temple. Devotees running all over madly, out of love for Prabhupada, ready to serve his slightest command.

Nectar hounds

So many devotees had come from all over the country for Srila Prabhupada and Frisco Ratha-yatra, including Vishnujana Swami and Tamal Krishna Goswami and the bus of Their Lordships Sri Sri Radha-Damodara, along with many other servitors. Everybody was ready to do anything just to get into Srila Prabhupada's room, to bask in his glory, to get a ray of special mercy, to catch a glance, to see a facial expression, to behold the slightest sublime gesture of His Divine Grace.

Everyone was a nectar hound, as far as they could push it. Mostly the senior devotees could remain in Prabhupada's room for a long time, and a few other lucky ones. But ... there was a blatant non-presence, someone was very conspicuous by his absence – Jayananda was not there, hardly at all. Finally Srila Prabhupada articulated his concern, “Where is Jayananda?”

I was sent from Berkeley to Frisco carrying this question respectfully on my head. Arriving at the Ratha site, there was Jayananda working hard. I relayed the message to him that Prabhupada was missing him, and why did he not come around to the room where Prabhupada stayed.

Jayananda's face winced, and he looked down and said with very deep conviction, “No ... I'm too fallen ... my relationship with my spiritual master ... is through my service!” He went back to work. He knew that pulling off this Ratha-yatra in grand style was his service, and this was

more important than personally being in the room with the master whom he served and loved so much. Jayananda was willing to forego any kind of “spiritual happiness” in order to serve his master, solely for the benefit of his master. Actually, later he did dutifully report to Srila Prabhupada's room.

Transcendental lies, only for the benefit of others

Next is a personal story. It took me a long time, like 20 years, to understand this. It's hard to explain, but I can't help trying to talk about it. I could never figure out why Jayananda was saying these little things to me, like when we were alone at the Ratha site or in the red truck. He always made these little confessions to me, saying how he had these defects and all.

I never believed him for one moment. I knew that he was saying these things out of humility. I knew they were all transcendental lies. But I later wondered why. Now I sort of know why. He said it for me. Because he never – never ever – he never did anything, he never said anything ... that was not for the benefit of others. It was always for other's benefit. That time it was for my benefit – I know that now.

Usually a person will talk about himself, and his problems, because he is thinking of himself. That was not the case with Jayananda and these things he said. It was not like him to meditate on himself and his own problems. He was much too busy to think about those things. He was beyond that kind of self-absorption. So why did he make these little confessions? He was saying it for my sake. He could see me as I was, and where I was at. He somehow knew that I “wasn't out of the woods yet,” no, not by a longshot. Sure, I was on the path, I was in Lord Chaitanya's merciful Movement, with the ocean of mercy falling down on me, Srila Prabhupada's mercy. But I was not out of the woods yet. I had more troubles to weather, because I had faults and defects to cope with, things that took time. A lot of time, in fact. Jayananda seemed to know that, and it was like he was saying, “Don't feel so bad, Bhakta Tom, sure, you might have some more time of purification to go through, but just look at me, just see! I've got defects, too! Don't feel so bad!”

A great person, in the transcendental realm, does not ever make others

feel like they are lower, and that he is higher than them. No, a great personality like Jayananda Prabhu will rather do the opposite – he will always make others feel like he himself is fallen, like he is lower and less fortunate than others. This was his greatness, this was how Jayananda Thakur always did everything ... only for the benefit of others.

Jayanandanugas – lower-than-straw devotees give tribute to Jayananda Thakur

I remember the wonderful Jayananda being so fatherly, making sure the women daily got either fresh bunches of parsley on their plates in the morning, or raisins, for iron. And I remember him hanging around the flowers a lot. And one time we went on a family outing, some of us, in a big old box van I think, to Nara-narayana's land a bit north, and on the way back Jayananda spotted a persimmon tree. Well, Jayananda got out and offered that whole tree, so that anyone who came by would benefit – that was typical of him, always thinking of others, and always taking creative, unconventional means to spread the mercy around. He and the boys got back in the van and presented us with a huge brown bag full of the plumpest juiciest persimmons – my first taste of those fruits – and we just feasted all the way home. He was such a fun kind of person. – Jaya Radhe Dasi

I traveled with Jayananda for about six months in the Radha-Damodara bus. I loved him well. He was like the big brother I never had growing up. He woke me up every morning by touching my feet and singing “jiv jago, jiv jago, gaura-chanda bole” – Wake up sleeping soul. Often he sang it very loudly accompanied by drum, kartals and even a harmonium one time when I was deep in maya. He always displayed great humility and gratitude towards Srila Praphupada, and he bestowed upon this young bhakta great mercy and kindness. – Vyasasana Dasa

Hari-bol, Vishoka Dasa. So many are bereft of good association with those who have lived only for the glory of the servants of Sri Govinda. I myself am bereft too, yet when you remind me always of Sriman Jayananda Thakur, I am reeled back in, knowing fully well of Srila Prabhupada's influence on his "bonafide" disciples. Jayananda Dasa was content, and HAPPY, as humble servant. He never had desires to be anything else. He hated the fact that his days were numbered, not because he feared death of the body, just that his service would be temporarily disrupted, that he would not get to the 1977 Ratha-yatra, knowing that this was his sweet service to his Guru Maharaja. Sriman Jayananda Thakur, who did not spend much time in erudite discussions or mental speculation, taught nevertheless by his example. Simple servitude to the desires of his Guru Maharaja, one-tracked purpose was his example, and this speaks volumes of philosophy that will bring us back home, to him, his Guru, his Gauranga. – Hari-bol, Mahaksha Dasa

7. Jayananda and His Love for Prasadam

**If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf,
a flower, fruit or water, I will accept it.
(Bhagavad-Gita 9.26)**

Jayananda's whole world was about *prasadam*. His whole day and his activities all revolved around *prasadam*. Collecting the *bhoga*, preparing the *bhoga*, offering *bhoga* to Srila Prabhupada, and serving *prasadam* to others, and taking it himself, and then speaking praises of *prasadam* – that was the typical day for Jayananda. When he wasn't collecting the materials, or planning the next festival (of which the distribution of

prasad was central), or when he wasn't cooking the offering, or offering it, or serving or honoring it, then he was thinking about *prasad*, or glorifying *prasad* or talking about the Lord's mercy. He had great faith in the process of *prasadam* and its transcendental effect upon the conditioned souls. This was his life and soul – to give *prasad* to others, as much as possible. In this way, this was his whole day, this was his whole existence, and it was all about the transcendental process of distributing and taking *prasad*. A devotee of Krishna does not want any possessions or fame or followers, he is satisfied with simple Krishna *prasadam* and knowing he is Krishna's servant.

He just plain loved *prasadam*

Bhuta-bhavana Dasa recently told me this story about Jayananda. Bhuta-bhavana was cooking for Radha-Damodara Traveling Sankirtan Party on the buses. Jayananda had joined this particular bus. The devotees would go out and work hard for Krishna all day and come back. Bhuta-bhavana had cooked that day, and the devotees were taking their meal. Jayananda was exclaiming, “Bhuta-bhavana! What nice *prasad* you have cooked!”

Jayananda was just relishing this *prasad* and praising Bhuta-bhavana. Bhuta was telling me how Jayananda was so enthusiastic about taking this *prasad* and praising him for such a job well done. Yet, Bhuta told me that he was like no special cook, or that the *prasad* was like nothing really very special. He said that later he realized that Jayananda just plain loved *prasad* and honoring it and praising it and praising the cook, and so on.

The *prasadam* song

Jayananda would sometimes talk about the “*sharira avidya-jal, jodendriya tahe kal*” song by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur, and say how it was such a nice song, with such a nice melody. This is the song that devotees always sing before honoring *prasadam*:

sharira avidya-jal, jodendriya tahe kal,

*jive phele vishaya-sagare
tar madhye jihva ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,
take jeta kathina samsare
krishna bara doyamoy, koribare jihva jay,
swa-prasad-anna dilo bhai
sei annamrita pao, radha-krishna-guna gao,
preme dako chaitanya-nitai*

“O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is most voracious and uncontrollable; it is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice *prasad*, just to control the tongue. Now we take this *prasad* to our full satisfaction and glorify You, Lord – Radha and Krsna – and in love call for the help of Lord Chaitanya and Nityananda.”

And Jayananda said how he would like to sing this song more throughout the day, except that it would remind him of how we were all about ready to take *prasadam*, and then he would be anxious for that to happen again. That was the real highlight of his day, when all devotees were sitting around in circles, smiling and singing “*sharira avidya-jal, jodendriya tahe kal,*” everyone eager to honor the Lord's remnants. This was the real life, taking the mercy with Jayananda.

Full to the neck

Jayananda felt guilty in the early days in San Francisco because he thought he was going there mostly to eat. And Prabhupada kept encouraging him to take more *prasad*. Jayananda said that Prabhupada would put all the preps on a big metal plate and serve him from the plate till he was full to the neck. Srila Prabhupada would cook special for Jayananda and make sure that he took. How Jayananda loved *prasad* in

those early days! He told me about a pot of *halava* always kept in the temple. He said how this *halava* was so potent and transcendental, how it made him so Krishna Conscious when he came back from a hard day in the taxicab. He gave donations to Prabhupada from his earnings as a cab driver, and when he would come in the morning and no one would be there, he was sure to be fed. In the evening he said that Srila Prabhupada would personally either hold the *prasadam* for him or personally cook the *prasadam* for him when he came back, and would exclude all of the other devotees just so he could give Jayananda *prasadam*.

His classic feast of buttermilk and bananas

Bananas and buttermilk, this was the classic Jayananda impromptu feast. When old devotees of San Francisco see buttermilk and bananas, they think of Jayananda. He was always going out and getting bananas and buttermilk and bringing it to us at the Ratha cart site. He was always alert when there was a *maha* offering newly transferred, and devotees were hovering around the trays. Jayananda would always get a tray and try to distribute some *maha* to devotees, but only after the guests were duly fed.

Each day in the kitchen, Jayananda would cook in the morning for the *sankirtan* devotees and then serve it out to them; and then late at night he would clean the kitchen, while we slept. It is painful now to think back how I slept while he was working into the night. That was how he wanted it – he wanted us to get rest so we could serve Krishna nicely the next day.

Strawberries rescued

We would go out on a *bhoga* run, and Jayananda would try to persuade some vendor to donate some *bhoga* to the Lord and His devotees. They would often give. They gave cheerfully because they loved him, like everybody did. Then he would rummage in the throw-out bins for produce that was still usable. I have fond memories of Jayananda half-immersed in a produce bin, then dipping down into it with a gleeful

smile on his face as he discovered some usable fruit or veggies. I remember one time we were driving out of the produce place when Jayananda spotted a box of strawberries spilled on the street. He immediately stopped and rescued the *bhoga* for the Lord's service, making sure to pick up the loose berries and return them to the box.

Everything is personal

I remember one time when I was serving *prasadam* to Jayananda. We can see the traces of our impersonalism even in the simple act of serving *prasad*. I was being an impersonalist at that time, because I somehow “merged” a prep into another prep on Jayananda's plate. He gave me a big frown. I then realized how every little action counts in Krishna Consciousness, that nothing is to be done haphazardly and whimsically. Due to my inattentiveness I had displeased my dear godbrother Jayananda, and I was immediately sorry for that. His plate was personal, the preps were personal, and he didn't like them merged.

Always meditating on the next festival

Jayananda was always meditating on the next festival at which there would be mass distribution of *prasad*. If it was not Ratha-yatra, then it was the Govardhana Hill festival in San Diego, or the Santa Cruz festival, or the Berkeley festival. Jayananda always had a project of some upcoming festival and feast. We had this old red truck, and Jayananda performed so many transcendental *prasad* pastimes with this old beloved red truck. I guess the slogan for Jayananda may well be:

“Have red truck, will travel ...
to the next festival and feast.”

He was always in the garage, building a *prasadam* cart, or building Ratha carts for the next festival and feast.

Not what it's cracked up to be

Jayananda showed us that the process of Krishna Consciousness was

always blissful and fun. Whereas the process of being in *maya*, which is built up as being so great and wonderful, is actually exaggerated and frustrating. Especially the expectations of sex life, regarding which Jayananda once told me, “It really isn't what it's cracked up to be.” The *Srimad Bhagavatam* says how the so-called glories of sex are simply exaggerated, and the *Bhagavad-Gita* says how lust is “our eternal enemy.” Lust is simple and plain selfishness and exploitation of other living entities and one's own body. Jayananda was so free of lust because he didn't have a selfish bone in his body. He was constantly working for the benefit of all living entities by assisting Srila Prabhupada in giving Krishna Consciousness to the whole world.

Jayananda was always a party man for Krishna, he was always the festival man. He proved that Krishna Consciousness was always a party, and that service to Krishna is always joyfully performed. On the other hand, material hankering, and the long struggle to satisfy such hankering, is always hellish hard work. The living entities of this world are intent upon being the enjoyers and masters of this world, but the harsh reality is that they are always struggling for existence. They forget their original constitutional position as eternal servants of Lord Krishna, and they try vainly to be masters of this world. *Bhagavad-Gita* tells us how all living entities are struggling hard for existence, which is called *prakriti sthani karshati* –

**The living entities in this conditioned world
are My eternal, fragmented parts.**

**Due to conditioned life, they are struggling very hard
with the six senses, which include the mind.**

(Bhagavad-Gita 15.7)

In the Seventh Canto of *Srimad Bhagavatam*, Srila Prabhupada says that materialists work very hard to go to hell, they work very hard building factories and slaughterhouses and brothels and big buildings of vice for drinking and meat eating and sex indulgence. But devotees very easily and blissfully go back to Godhead.

He invented throwing peanuts off the festival truck

Also Jayananda invented the transcendental peanut *prasad* that was thrown from the festival truck in New York. Adikeshava Prabhu describes this nicely, how when other devotees tried to throw the peanuts, many would end up on the ground, but when Jayananda threw them, the spectators got caught up with Jayananda's enthusiasm and would receive the peanuts with enthusiasm. By the way, the word “enthusiasm” means, in the original Greek, “in God,” or “*en thios*.” And Jayananda was certainly “in God” and he infected everyone around him with it. Adikeshava also told the wonderful story of the nocturnal watermelon and *burfi prasad* feast in the middle of the night, while they were taking the Ratha carts back to the site. It was like a second Ratha-yatra parade at night. Someone brought some watermelon and *burfi* and Jayananda woke them and they had a feast, then again fell asleep.

Always giving out the mercy

Jayananda was always bringing some nectar *maha* or *prasad* to us at the Ratha site. When the Ratha festival was over, he was always in anxiety to serve the leftover *prasad* out in the streets before it went bad. He would take the buckets to town and serve them out to the bums, or whomever. Even at the hospital, he was craving some *pakor*s and he asked for a bucket of them, and then he distributed them profusely. Also tons of *burfi* and *lugglus*, and then he asked for books and magazines to distribute around the hospital. He was always into distributing cookies to the neighbors around the Ratha site, or bringing more *prasadam* to the devotees at the site, or sometimes he even cooked *prasadam* in bars for the drunks. There was no impediment to his *prasadam* distribution. I have fond memories of those incense runs we did together. The highlight of our day in the incense van was his cooking and offering *prasad* in the morning or night. We would always stop at some devotee's house somewhere and Jayananda would always cook some transcendental *prasadam* for everybody, and we would have a program. He always knew somebody in town, whether it was Chico or Sacramento or Salt Lake City. We always had transcendental company and *kirtan* and *prasadam*.

Always seizing the moment

Nothing in this material world really mattered to Jayananda, except that we prepare and distribute and honor nice *prasad*. If there was a TV announcement that World War III had begun, and the bombs were on their way, Jayananda would just cook and serve *prasadam* to all of us while he chanted *hari-bolo*. And then we would all relish Krishna *prasadam* as Krishna's Holy Names resounded, and to hell with the bombs or whatever, because Jayananda would always seize the moment. *Hari-bol!*

Jayanandanugas – lower-than-straw devotees give tribute to Jayananda Thakur

Srila Prabhupada was always fond of Jayananda, and sometimes he would invite his budding disciple to take prasad with him in his room. “Srila Prabhupada would cook prasad and serve me,” Jayananda recalled. “He didn’t say anything – he just kept feeding me, and I kept eating.” – from Remembering Jayananda by Kalakantha Dasa

Every time he honors prasadam, he says, “This is the best prasadam I’ve ever had!” All the devotees smile and agree, “Jaya!” They know that Jayananda always says that. Invariably, some new bhakta will pipe up, “But you said that last time.” Jayananda always replies, “No, Prabhu, I’m telling you, this is the best prasadam I’ve ever had! Who cooked today? This is definitely the best!” He is so attracted to eating as a devotional activity that he is always glorifying prasadam. – from Radha-Damodara Vilasa by Vaiyasaki Dasa

When Jambavan Dasa was just becoming a devotee, Jayananda would bring him a plate of prasadam so big that he thought he could never eat it all. When he finally did finish the plate,

Jayananda immediately put an identical plate down before him. "I can't eat that," said Jambavan. "Srila Prabhupada said that we should eat 'til we waddle like a duck," said Jayananda. Jambavan would finish the second plate. – from Remembering Jayananda by Kalakantha Dasa

During the Sunday feast, Jayananda would help serve prasadam to all the guests and devotees until everyone was stuffed and the buckets were pretty well empty. Then he would sit down and deeply relish the ecstasy of feasting on Krishna prasadam with great joy. Afterwards, he made sure the pots and kitchen cleaning were getting done, usually leading the endeavor hands-on. Then, if there was a measurable amount of prasadam left over, he would round up a few eager devotees and we would take the remaining foodstuffs to the streets with accompanying devotional chanting. A very sweet opportunity, praising God and distributing free sanctified foods just like Lord Chaitanya wanted ... I always chose to go, when possible, for once I had begun book distribution at the airport there were not as many opportunities for me to engage in street chanting with Jayananda's hari-nama party. I missed the collective spirit special to these efforts. – Dhanistha Dasi

Once I was sitting with Jayananda in the prasadam room in the Valencia Street temple in San Francisco and two French devotees were talking about different diets. Then they finished their prasadam and left and Jayananda said to me, "You know, Hanuman, I've tried all these diets and the only thing that seems to work is, don't eat too much and work hard!" – Hari-bol! Hanumat Preshaka Swami

Jayananda worshiped prasadam. When a little prasada spilled on the floor, he would always bend down on all fours and lick it up. He loved to cook, offer, distribute and eat prasada in a*

big way. He would always take *prasadam* with him and distribute it, whether he was making a *bhoga run* (buying bulk foods from the market) or taking a chanting party downtown. He would even say “*prasadam*” in a special way that made you immediately want to take some. – from Remembering Jayananda by Kalakantha Dasa

* This was a traditional practice, since *prasadam* is considered sacred, and temple floors are kept spotlessly clean.

8. Transcendental Fraud

One who works in devotion, who is a pure soul,
and who controls his mind and senses,
is dear to everyone, and everyone is dear to him.
Though always working, such a man is never entangled.
(*Bhagavad-Gita* 5.7)

Everybody is looking for fame and recognition. Everyone admires actors and musicians and mundane writers, wishing to be like them, or to be noticed in some way by somebody. Even devotees sometimes want to be *kirtan* leaders, lecturers, and so forth. Haridasa Thakur told Lord Chaitanya that there was a fault in his heart, the desire for fame. Great devotees run from fame. *Chaitanya-Charitamrita* tells us how a devotee dodges fame, but still cannot escape it. Srila Madhavendra Puri saw it coming when the *pujari* told him how Lord Gopinatha hid the pot of sweet-rice behind His cloth for His devotee. Srila Madhavendra knew that crowds would gather, and then praise would pour down on him. He did not want that, and so he left in a hurry. But fame naturally followed him, since the great devotee cannot escape his spiritual reputation. Jayananda was like that. He tried his best to avoid recognition, but it followed anyway.

Moon in the sky

The fame of an ordinary man is like a burning meteorite speeding through the night sky and burning to a crisp. Fame is like a shooting star. The great devotee is like a bright moon in the sky. Only the pure devotee of God achieves lasting fame. Lord Chaitanya said a man is famous when he is known as a great devotee. This is real fame, as Srila Prabhupada says in his purport to *Bhagavad-Gita* 10.4-5:

“*Yashah*, fame, should be according to Lord Chaitanya, who said that a man is famous when he is known as a great devotee. That is real fame. If one has become a great man in Krishna Consciousness and it is known, then he is truly famous. One who does not have such fame is infamous.”

Jayananda was a moon in the sky of Srila Prabhupada's disciples. We can see this in a picture of the *Vyasa Puja* book of '97. Srila Prabhupada is at the airport and there is an umbrella above him, held by the same hands that hold a bouquet of flowers for Srila Prabhupada. The picture only shows the hands, but it is Jayananda. I remember the shirt he wore that day, and how he held the umbrella. You can see Srila Prabhupada's loving look on Jayananda. You can see how pleased Srila Prabhupada was with Jayananda in this picture. Srila Prabhupada's face is radiating. I remember that scene at the airport that day. Srila Prabhupada said he was always thinking of Jayananda.

The “most fallen” game

Jayananda and the rest of us devotees were always playing this funny game. It was the praise of him on our side, and being the most fallen on his side. There was the competition of us praising him, and him telling us how fallen he was. Jayananda always presented himself as lowly, and he praised other devotees endlessly. He would always say how he was just working in the garage, doing mundane things, and how the others were out on *sankirtan*, making such rapid advancement, going beyond himself. Actually this was not true, he was good at book distribution, and he was good at everything. He was always doing the needful, whether it was building Ratha carts, or distributing books, or cooking in the morning for the *sankirtan* devotees. Jayananda was the personification of the 3rd stanza of Mahaprabhu's *Sri Siksastakam*, *trinad api* –

“One should chant the Holy Name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking oneself lower than the straw in the street; one should be more tolerant than a tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige, and ready to offer all respect to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the Holy Name of the Lord constantly.”

Jayananda was always lower-than-the-straw in the street. He always felt himself low and humble, and we, on the other hand, knew that he was the most special. Thus praise naturally would spring to our lips; but we could not praise him, or he would just walk away.

He had it all backwards

This is the world of the cheaters and the cheated. Materially we are getting cheated or being cheaters ourselves. Well, spiritually also, there is transcendental cheating. Jayananda was good at this kind of transcendental cheating. He cheated us by making up imaginary qualities and ascribing them to us, and then he applied imaginary faults to himself ... but he had it all backwards! He had it all topsy-turvy. Actually, he was the exalted devotee and we were the most fallen. That was the actual fact. But he tried to make it the other way around. Simply cheating.

Not such a cheap thing

Here is an episode that is typical of Jayananda's transcendental fraud. This was a great fraud. Once in San Francisco it was summertime and a few *sannyasis* came to the temple, like Vishnujana Maharaja and Tamal Krishna Maharaja, getting ready for the upcoming Ratha-yatra. I was really naive then (still am), and I thought that it was the natural thing to do ... you know, when a devotee gets advanced, then if he is single he will just naturally take *sannyasa*. That is what you do. And they were always saying how Jayananda was the most advanced, so it seemed he was up for it. And so I asked Jayananda one day when he was going to take *sannyasa*, because it seemed like the natural thing to do.

He gave me this very severe and chastising look. I never remember him ever getting so real with me, getting in my face and all. He and I had this kind of special relationship. We knew that we were godbrothers, but it was like he was the teacher and I was the student. That is how it was. And he would sometimes chastise me like a teacher would, and sometimes give me looks of approval, which were really nice times. This time he gave me this hard staring look and said, "You know, it's not so easy to be a *sannyasi* in this age of Kali, it is not such a cheap thing!" I was a little taken aback by the sudden fury of his answer, wondering why at the time. Now, 20 years later, now I have finally figured it out. It was not that Jayananda was not qualified. Or even that he thought he was unqualified. He was supremely qualified. Because *sannyasa* is not just changing of the cloth and a *yajna* and then you're suddenly renounced. Renunciation must first take place in the heart, the *acharyas* say, and then later there is change of the cloth. As *Bhagavad-Gita* 6.1 says –

**One who is unattached to the fruits of his work
and who works as he is obligated is in the
renounced order of life, and he is the true mystic;
not he who lights no fire and performs no work.**

Jayananda was totally unattached to the fruits, and always working for Krishna. He was truly in the renounced order, without all the trappings. He didn't want the attention. He didn't want the clean cloth all the time, it was too much work to do.

Too busy for staff and clean cloth

No, Jayananda did not want people to bow down when he entered a room. He did not want to carry a stick around, because he was too busy building carts and stuff. He did not want a *maha* plate every day, because he always wanted to serve out the *maha* himself to the guests. He did not want the praise of a *sannyasi*, or have to give the class all the time. He gave great classes, but he did not want to all the time. Jayananda was too busy being our father and mother and doing all the needful things. He

deserved our worship, but would have none of it.

Now I can see, after all those years, how Jayananda made this plan. He was determined to wear white, and this was for a reason. Just like how he was always doing such mundane things (seemingly mundane, although it was all transcendental), like carrying out the trash and going on *bhoga* runs, working in the garage, welding cart wheels. He was always wearing dirty clothes. His hands were clean in the morning, but you could see the ground-in dirt and oil from the previous day. He would sit in class and look tired. This is because he was up late at night finishing his rounds (he never missed his rounds), and that was because he worked hard all day, and usually cleaned the kitchen at night when we were going to bed. Nobody really knew how much he slept. He had his own room in the garage. Nobody saw him go to bed. Someone said that at the old Fredrick Street temple in San Francisco Jayananda would sleep standing up in Prabhupada's class, and Prabhupada would tell the devotees not to disturb him because he knew how hard Jayananda was working. He looked really tired in class some mornings, and he would nod off and catch a little nap sometimes. But the funny thing was, when somebody asked a question at the end of class, Jayananda would suddenly wake up, as if he had not heard a word of class, and would give a perfect answer.

Running from any hint of fame

Getting off the track, well, back to his plan. This was his transcendental fraud. He had this scheme, this trickery of an idea, that he was going to live and leave this world as a fallen householder. That was his plan. Not that householders are all fallen, no, they do great service by having little Vaishnavas. But generally, especially in the West, householders are known to be a bit more materially attached. That is why the *sannyasi* is a Maharaja, or a great soul. One who has given up worldly connections. Jayananda wanted us to remember him not as an exalted devotee, which he was, but to be known as a fallen householder, who was a good devotee for sure, but who did all these ordinary things. Here he was, running from any hint of fame and recognition. He really did not want any praise or fame, not in the least. And so this was his fraud of an idea regarding how he was to live in this world, free from his rightful claim of what he

really was.

But we devotees, now in retrospection, especially those who really know, we are thinking, “No way, Josī!” It seemed that Krishna was thinking the same thing. Of course, I do not know what Krishna is thinking, but I feel that Krishna had a divine intervention in this fraud. Krishna put His transcendental hand into the play. Krishna seemed to step in and mess up Jayananda's fraudulent attempt. Little did Jayananda know what would happen when he posed for that famous picture. The photographer was there, and Jayananda had no shirt. He was wearing a *dhoti*-top, a sheet-like piece of white cloth draped like a cape over one shoulder. A lot of devotees wore them in those days, but Jayananda had little idea of how it looked so *sannyasa*-like.

Showing his true colors

So now we had the photo, and the lab technology. So we colored in the cloth, made it saffron, made it what it should be. Now we show his true colors. Now it was time to show his true renunciation. And he who ran from fame, the white-clothed ordinary devotee, now he is that blissful-looking *sannyasi* displayed on all the Ratha-yatra carts. Unwillingly, he got his colors; his renunciation was already there in his heart, and now the colors had followed. Now he is the Maharaja, which is what he always was, but wanted nobody to know. This was all Krishna's trick, for in transcendental trickery, Krishna is the best of them all, He always gets the last laugh. And so Prabhupada asked that we use Jayananda's picture at all Ratha-yatras. Now we will always advertise the glories of Jayananda by putting his blissful picture on the front of Lord Jagannatha's cart, and parade his image through the many cities of the world. Now thousands of people will see his picture in hundreds of cities. Those who are new devotees will say, “Who is that blissful-looking *sannyasi*?” And those who know little of the philosophy will say, “Who is that blissful-looking man? See how he smiles with his eyes!”

Jayanandanugas – lower-than-straw devotees give tribute to
Jayananda Thakur

Humility was certainly Jayananda's most prominent quality. He treated everyone as his superior, even new devotees. Maharaja Dasa remembers that Jayananda was always asking his advice: "Hey, Bhakta Mike, what do you think of this?" Although his service was glorious, he never wanted any glory. He avoided praise like the plague. Devotees got to know that if they wanted to be around him, they'd better not praise Jayananda. Otherwise he would simply leave. – from Remembering Jayananda by Kalakantha Dasa

Jayananda naturally stood in a yogic pose sometimes as he cooked or while casually conversing with other devotees. It was a fixed position with the right foot (leg bent at the knee) placed on the left inner thigh. He would hold perfectly still this way as the most natural thing. On one leg like the mystic yogic boy Druva Maharaja, Jayananda stood this way quite at ease ... lacking any pretension to the fact he was in yogic posture. In this unassuming position he once instructed me how to make puris in the kitchen all afternoon. – Dhanistha Dasi

As you say, everyone loved Jayananda. I only met him once. We were on our way to India and were stuck at one of the airports in New York and had to go to the other one. All of a sudden a beat-up old truck pulled up in front of all of us (about ten devotees). The driver asked where we were going, to which we replied the other airport. He said, "Hop in, I'll take you there." We got there just in time to catch our flight. As he left us off, I asked someone, "Who was that man?" The devotee said, "That was Jayananda!!!!" He also had perfect timing because he was so surrendered. – Your servant, Damaghosh Dasa

9. The Good Old Days

He who follows this imperishable path
of devotional service and who
completely engages himself with faith,
making Me the supreme goal,
is very, very dear to Me.
(*Bhagavad-Gita* 12.20)

I fondly remember the good old days back in San Francisco in 1974, how happy we were. How Jayananda was the natural leader and friend and father to us all. It was all so natural and from the heart, pure grass roots preaching, joyfully performed. We chanted at Golden Gate Park or Fisherman's Wharf in wild abandon, free and joyous, with no concern for public opinion. We were Prabhupada's children, and it seemed we would dance and sing Krishna's Names forever and forever. It seemed that nothing would ever change.

Those were the good ole days. Of course, devotional service is eternal and is always joyous and good. It was just so very special in those days because Jayananda and Srila Prabhupada were there, and a special *shakti* potency was there.

In the thick of it

Jayananda was there for all of us. He shunned even the mere shadow of any semblance of position or praise or reward. He was completely free of personal ambition. He lead the men and women on the personal level, right out there on the front line of activity. He was right there in the thick of it, leading the charge. He did not sit back and send out orders like a modern army general.

Huge like Bhishmadeva

In many ways, Jayananda was like Bhishmadeva (the great warrior we know from *Bhagavad-Gita*). Jayananda was huge physically, such a big man in more ways than one, and he was a great warrior like Bhishmadeva on the battlefield of Kali-yuga. He was the *maharathi*

commander of Lord Chaitanya's army, who could take on several *akshauhini* divisions of Kali single-handedly.

He did not lead from behind a desk or by meetings. No fault to those who did. Not that we cannot serve from behind a desk (I've spent a lot of time behind the desk myself). Service can be done in these ways, that's all right. But Jayananda could not sit still, he had to be out there in the field, out on the front line. He showed us how it is so sweet when the leader is there with all the devotees.

Sunshine plays on the fog

One early morning, Jayananda and I were sitting in a van somewhere around Redding, California. We were parked on the edge of a cliff, overlooking a valley. The sun was just rising and the valley was filled with morning fog. The sun rose and shone brilliantly upon the fog, casting colors and making the fog very white and beautiful. We were chanting *japa* for a long time there, just watching the whole show and appreciating Krishna's handiwork of artistic creation. Jayananda commented how beautiful it was and said, "Think how beautiful the Creator of all this is! How wonderful and gorgeous Krishna is!" Jayananda always made everything Krishna Conscious and always brought the point around to Krishna. Everything reminded him of Krishna.

Whatever he was doing at any given time, Jayananda was simultaneously always talking and hearing of Krishna. He had that spontaneous tendency to speak about Krishna and to hear of Krishna and read Srila Prabhupada's books in the association of devotees. Srila Prabhupada said that only advanced devotees could hear *Krishna-katha* continuously. Srila Prabhupada explains this to us in the Tenth Canto of *Srimad Bhagavatam*, 13th chapter, verses 1 and 2, that "Unless one is very advanced in Krishna Consciousness, one cannot stick to hearing the pastimes of the Lord constantly. Even though advanced devotees hear continually about the Lord for years, they still feel that these topics are coming to them as newer and fresher. Therefore such devotees cannot give up hearing the pastimes of Lord Krishna."

**Paramahamsas, devotees who have accepted
the essence of life,
are attached to Krishna in the core of their hearts,
and He is the aim of their lives.
It is their nature to talk only of Krishna at every moment,
as if such topics were newer and newer.
They are attached to such topics, just as materialists
are attached to topics of women and sex.
(Srimad Bhagavatam 10.13.2)**

Jayananda would remind us how to see Krishna's glories in all things beautiful, in sunsets and sunrises, in flowers and trees, in the beauty of the creatures of this world, as Krishna says in *Bhagavad-Gita* 10.41:

**Know that all beautiful, glorious,
and mighty creations spring
from but a spark of My splendor.**

Srila Prabhupada writes in *Light of the Bhagavat*, “The temporary (world) is also a relative truth. It is in fact the temporary picture of the eternal creation. The forgetful soul has no information of the spiritual creation, known as the *sanatana-dhama*, but the temporary creation gives an idea of this original creation.” The beauty of this world is a picture window of the real spiritual world, and the beauty of flowers and sunsets remind us of Krishna's amazing craftsmanship, and they also remind us of our mortality, as Shukadeva Goswami tells Maharaja Parikshit:

**Both by rising and by setting, the sun
decreases the duration of life of everyone,
except one who utilizes the time
by discussing topics of the
all-good Personality of Godhead.
(Srimad Bhagavatam 2.3.17)**

A lotus flower in full bloom is the perfect picture of Krishna's artistic prowess, and after a few days out of water, the wilting flower also reminds us of the temporary nature of this world. Jayananda always

made everything Krishna Conscious and always brought the point around to Krishna. Everything reminded him of Krishna.

Boy of blue with peacock feather in hair

Jayananda and I were distributing BTG's in Salt Lake City one night, and we were going back to take rest, and he was telling me about some group he approached, and this man declined the magazine and said it looked like communism. Jayananda was saying how ridiculous that was, "How can he see Krishna as a communist? Like, how can a youthful boy of blue with a peacock feather in his hair and a flower garland and holding a flute look like a communist?"

Serve, don't just stare

The Movement was built by front-line workers and preachers, book distributors, cooks, *pujaris*, Ratha cart builders, etc., and Jayananda showed this so nicely. But the early days had little bureaucracy, everything was the simple formula of Lord Chaitanya – just chanting, dancing and distributing *prasadam*.

Service attitude was the thing that Jayananda always taught us, by his example, and sometimes in stories. Jayananda told us this story of a *bhakta* in the San Francisco temple. He only wanted to remember Krishna and nothing else. He would sit around the temple all day and stare at a picture of Krishna and chant all day long.

Devotees would ask him to do some service or go on *hari-nama*, and so forth. But he would say, "No, Prabhu, I'm so fallen that I need to remember Krishna all day long." But, as plans of mortals seem to go awry ... well, what happened was ... he got tired of just sitting with the picture. So he would pace around the temple floor, looking at the picture. After a while, he got tired of that, so he would sit out on the step. He got tired of that, then he would pace in front, or circumambulate around the temple. He got tired of that, so he would circumambulate the block with the picture while he chanted. Then it was 2 blocks, then it was 3 blocks. Then 4, then 5. And then one day he went so far that he lost his way, or he forgot to come back.

Inspiration instead of legislation

Jayananda did not legislate and make rulings for others to engage in devotional service. He persuaded us newcomers very powerfully to serve Krishna by his shining example. He inspired us to do things for Krishna and Srila Prabhupada in a selfless spirit, without hope of material reward. Those who served at Valencia Street temple knew the impossibility of material enjoyment. Everyone had equal this and that, no envy over who had what, or who didn't. In those days, everyone was a tightly-knit family, and our service spirit was spontaneous. Jayananda was our friend and sire (and mother), Srila Prabhupada was our eternal Gurudeva, and Lord Jagannatha was our most worshipful Lord. Jayananda loved everyone. Whether man or woman, big devotee, little devotee, made no difference to him, and everyone loved him in return.

The formula is eternally the same

The formula is still the same. Preaching and serving is eternally the same. It just seemed that ISKCON preaching was so sweet back then. I wish I could inspire myself and others to do more, like it was back then, but I am not the leader type, and now I struggle just to maintain myself. I need to be pushed by the higher Vaishnavas. I have to be forced by higher Vaishnavas to want to go out to preach. I don't have the strength on my own. That is why the association of devotees is so important. If only I could follow Jayananda as much as I love him. If only I could just follow his example purely, then maybe someday, someday I hope, I will be with him and Srila Prabhupada again, and see their blissful forms, and serve them.

Jayanandanugas – lower-than-straw devotees give tribute to Jayananda Thakur

Once, near the Ratha-yatra cart work site, Jayananda invited Keshava to step inside a bar and meet some friends of his. They walked inside and immediately some 25 faces looked up and

smiled brightly. Someone said, “Oh, this must be your friend you were telling us about, the temple president.” They presented the two devotees with a sack full of vegetarian groceries, which they had chipped in together to buy. – from Remembering Jayananda by Kalakantha Dasa

Jayananda's preaching was very attractive for the non-devotees. Chandan Acharya recalls seeing Jayananda engaged in preaching late one night. It was 11:30 and Jayananda was up fixing a broken-down sankirtan van. As he lay on his back working under the van, he preached to two hippies who were standing nearby. All they could see of him was a pair of legs, but they stood by listening, completely absorbed, as Jayananda worked and preached away. – from Remembering Jayananda by Kalakantha Dasa

This was especially evident during Ratha-yatra time. Jayananda would organize a crew of cynics, bloopers, uncooperative personalities and non-devotees off the street to build the Ratha carts. Although many of his men sat down for a smoke during breaks, he would get them to work 10, 12 or 14 hours a day. He was always glorifying others and working hard himself. In fact, he worked harder than anybody else. All those qualities made him very inspiring to work with. – from Remembering Jayananda by Kalakantha Dasa

10. Sri Jayananda, the Perfect Receptacle of Sri Guru's Grace

**Lord Krishna told Arjuna,
“Those who are My direct devotees
are actually not My devotees,**

**but those who are the devotees of My servant
are factually My devotees.”**
(*Adi Purana*)

The thing that enchanted everyday ordinary people who met Jayananda was how he had this big huge body. He was a really big man, and yet he was so childlike and innocent with youthful exuberance. He was buoyant and carefree, and unfettered by the heavy weight of troubles and woes that everybody usually carries on their shoulders throughout the day. He was bubbling with enthusiasm and optimism. At a glance, people usually think that a childlike innocence in a big grown-up body means that the person is childishly naive or grossly immature, or even has a touch of lunacy. But after they talked with Jayananda, they understood that his gaiety and spirit sprang from a deep lake of philosophy and conviction, built upon the foundation of a profound gravity. Thus they were doubly amazed and charmed by his acquaintance.

I found the following verse of *Srimad Bhagavatam* very descriptive of Jayananda:

**Therefore I do not find a greater person
than he who has no interest outside of Mine
and who therefore engages and dedicates
all his activities and all his life – everything –
unto Me without cessation.**
(*Srimad Bhagavatam* 3.29.33)

This pegs Jayananda to a tee, in that he was always giving everything – his life, his energy, all his activities – unto Krishna and Sri Guru. He had absolutely no interests outside of Krishna. Therefore we cannot find a greater person, as Sri Krishna says in this verse.

He always turned the situation into Krishna Consciousness

I also found the following verse of *Srimad Bhagavatam* very descriptive of Jayananda:

**As the chariot of air carries an aroma from its source
and immediately catches the sense of smell,
similarly, one who constantly engages in devotional service,
in Krishna Consciousness, can catch the Supreme Soul,
who is equally present everywhere.
(Srimad Bhagavatam 3.29.20)**

Here again, Sri Jayananda was constantly engaged in service, devotional service to Krishna, in Krishna Consciousness, and in this mood, he could always catch the supreme soul everywhere. In other words, he could always turn the situation into Krishna Consciousness, no matter who was there or what was happening.

Don't sleep but hear

Jayananda told me one time how back in the Frederick Street temple devotees would sometimes bring their sleeping bags to class and they'd be sleeping there while Jayananda was the only one listening to Srila Prabhupada. Here is where we can see Jayananda's success in spiritual life. He was eager to hear from his spiritual master. In this way Jayananda pleased his Gurudeva, and was thus empowered to perform extraordinary devotional service.

Jayananda always thinking of Srila Prabhupada

Jayananda was telling me another time about how Srila Prabhupada came to California for some rest and recovery. Srila Prabhupada had just been through a health crisis and was very weak, and he came to see the devotees at the time of the 1967 Ratha-yatra in San Francisco. Jayananda was still lamenting, eight years later, over how he felt that he made the mistake of finding Srila Prabhupada a place to stay in Stinson Beach, which was so many miles up the coast from San Francisco. Jayananda and the devotees thought that the beach would be sunny and healing, but it turned out that the sun was always behind the clouds, and every morning the early rays were blocked by the easterly mountains.

Consequently Srila Prabhupada was feeling cold all the time and not getting any sun, and thus he was not getting any better. This was eight years later and Jayananda was still feeling bad and thinking about Srila Prabhupada's inconvenience, and how he picked the wrong place for him to rest. This caused Srila Prabhupada to make the serious decision to return to India for more sun and warm weather. This in turn caused major apprehension for the devotees, as they didn't know if they would ever see Srila Prabhupada again.

Now it all makes perfect sense

As Dasaratha-suta Prabhu told me, so many people have said to him that life makes no sense, that the Movement often makes no sense, but when they hear the life of Jayananda, then everything makes perfect sense. Jayananda had this power, he always had this supreme enthusiasm, or in Greek, *en thios*, meaning “in God.” Empowered devotees have a power coming directly from God. Jayananda had an energy like a powerful electric current coming straight from the power plant of Krishna. Srila Prabhupada talks about this in his purports of the Eighth Canto of *Srimad Bhagavatam*.

That section narrates the pastime of Bali Maharaja and the wars between the demons and demigods. The demons were getting severely beaten, and many were killed, including Bali Maharaja. But his *guru*, Shukracharya, knew the mystic art of *sanjivani*, or raising the dead, and he brought Bali back to life. Bali was very grateful to his *guru*, and served him faithfully. As a result, the *brahmana* descendants of Bhrigu were very pleased with Bali, and they helped him perform a sacrifice known as “Vishvajit.” Out of this sacrificial fire came a heavenly chariot covered with gold, and yellow horses like those of Indra, and a flag marked with a lion, and a bow and arrows and a quiver, all celestial.

Only by Guru's grace

Then Bali marched upon Indra's city with such power and confidence that Indra could tell, just by looking at him, that he was undefeatable. Indra's *guru*, Brihaspati, confirmed that Bali was indeed unbeatable due

to his service to his *guru* and by receiving his grace. Brihaspati told Indra that Bali possessed the power of *brahma-tejas*, and no one could conquer him. At that, all the demigods fled and Bali captured the heavenly realm. But before that happened, Brihaspati told Indra, “Not to worry, for Bali will lose his power later when he criticizes the Vaishnavas.” In his purports to this narration, Srila Prabhupada tells us that an advanced devotee never claims to have his own strength, but always knows that it is only by the *guru's* grace and favor that he has any *shakti* at all. This was totally Jayananda, through and through. He never took credit for anything; he always gave all the credit to Srila Prabhupada. We sing in the morning, “*yasya prasada bhagavat-prasado...*”

“By the mercy of the spiritual master one receives the benediction of Krishna. Without the grace of the spiritual master one cannot make any advancement. Therefore I should always remember and praise the spiritual master. At least three times a day I should offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of my spiritual master.”

It is only by the mercy of *guru* and by pleasing the *guru* that we get any success in spiritual life. Srila Prabhupada says in his purport: “By the pleasure of the spiritual master, one can get extraordinary power, especially in spiritual advancement. The blessings of the spiritual master are more powerful than one's personal endeavor for such advancement...” And later in the purport: “By the *parampara* system, one can thus be endowed with the original spiritual power coming from the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

Plugged into the original source of power

This we could definitely see in Jayananda – he possessed a great power, he had that power of *brahma-tejas*, which could only be coming down through the *parampara* system, which was endowed to him by the grace of Srila Prabhupada. The *sanjivani* mystic power is another gift of *guru*. Srila Prabhupada saved us all, we were all dead men before he came to America. Likewise, Jayananda was practically dead before he met Srila Prabhupada. Jayananda had lost all will to continue to live, and then one

day he read a newspaper article about Srila Prabhupada and said, “Let me give this a chance.” And in this way, Srila Prabhupada raised him from the dead.

The last part of this *Bhagavatam* pastime is also a lesson, in which Bali lost his power in the end due to offenses he committed to Vaishnavas. Jayananda knew this truth so very well. He was extremely careful not to criticize devotees or engage in any fault-finding or gossip. He knew that all power would be withdrawn if he ever transgressed this rule of spiritual life. As a result, he never waned in spiritual power, he was fully strong spiritually up to the end of life.

Therefore, we should all obey Srila Prabhupada and follow the example of Jayananda. By following in his footsteps, then we may also please Srila Prabhupada and receive his mercy, thus getting plugged into the original power house, the current coming through *parampara* directly from Krishna. Oh, my dear Jayananda, please give me a spark of your power and devotion, so as to get me out of *maya* someday ... and then I will see you and be with you again.

Jayanandanugas – lower-than-straw devotees give tribute to Jayananda Thakur

Jayananda was very eager to see everyone engaged in Krishna's service. He once wrote, “When I reflect on my consciousness had I not had association with devotees and Srila Prabhupada, I shudder to imagine the nightmare I would be in. If we could become a little dedicated to distributing the mercy, so many could be saved so much suffering.” – from Remembering Jayananda by Kalakantha Dasa

I especially appreciate your inclination to notice that Srila Prabhupada has bonafide disciples, thus authenticating his position as Jagat Guru. In the kanistha rush to find new gurus, many forget to approach his disciples to find his life still intact, as well as the lives of all the acharyas and Vaishnavas still intact. His disciples are often hidden by their Vaishnava

qualities and their adherence to the principles given in Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's Siksastakam. Not chair grabbers, they are content to always remain at His feet, birth after birth. To sing the names, pastimes, and glories of such disciples of Sri Vaishnava Acharya is pure nectarean transcendental activity, and is the thoroughly recommended process to instill and maintain memory of the sankirtan Movement. All glories to Srīman Jayananda Prabhu, whose very life is always spent in the service to Vaishnava Thakur. Where would any of us be without the instructions of Sri Shiksha-gurudeva? Hari-bol, friend, keep the sweetness of your page going. – Your servant, Mahaksha Dasa

By his example, Jayananda Prabhu exemplified the term godbrother. He was just so kind and unpretentious. His motivation was Prabhupada. The verses I read to learn the qualities of true devotional sainthood remind me how fortunate I am to have Srīla Prabhupada and Srīla Prabhupada's Jayananda in my life continuously. – Dhanistha Dasi

Yes, your dear teacher, Jayananda Thakur, writes so nicely. The “real” Vaishnavas can do this, they have the ability to write from other worlds for our benefit. Just meditate on his ability to take away all party spirit, demonstrate parampara as disciplic succession, to enable children to be happy in Krishna Consciousness simply by the attempt to follow in his footsteps. Srīla Prabhupada enables his disciples, headed by the likes of Jayananda Thakur, to give this love, and the giving just increases on its own and spreads around to all who come into contact with it. – Your friend, Mahaksha Dasa

11. The Shining Lamp of Knowledge

My dear friends, O sons of the demons,
you cannot please the Supreme Personality of Godhead
by becoming perfect *brahmanas*, demigods or great saints,
or by becoming perfectly good in etiquette or vast learning.

None of these qualifications can awaken
the pleasure of the Lord.

Nor by charity, austerity, sacrifice, cleanliness or vows
can one satisfy the Lord. The Lord is pleased
only if one has unflinching, unalloyed devotion to Him.

Without sincere devotional service,
everything is simply a show.

(Prahlada Maharaja – *Srimad Bhagavatam* 7.7.52)

Only unto those great souls
who have implicit faith in both the Lord
and the spiritual master, are all the imports
of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed.

(*Shvetashvatara Upanishad*)

Here *shastra* says that real spiritual knowledge is dependent upon faith in both the Lord and *guru*, not necessarily upon erudite scholarship. We also have the example in *Chaitanya-Charitamrita* of the illiterate *brahmana* in South India. Lord Chaitanya saw the *brahmana* weeping while looking at the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and others were deriding him for not being able to read. Lord Chaitanya asked him why he had the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and he replied that he was to read *Bhagavad-Gita* on the orders of his spiritual master. He wept in ecstatic love when he simply looked at the picture of Krishna being Arjuna's charioteer, and Lord Chaitanya said that he was the best scholar of the *Bhagavad-Gita*.

He knew the philosophy like nobody else

Jayananda was heavy in knowledge. In that way, I guess you could say he was *guru*. *Shiksha-guru* to be sure. Not the bookwormish kind of *guru*, mind you. Not that he had to study the Vedas for years to be convinced.

No, Srila Prabhupada convinced him with very few words. That is the potency of Srila Prabhupada. Still Jayananda knew the books and the philosophy like nobody else. And he didn't amaze the audience with *shlokas* and Sanskrit pronunciation and lofty excursions into esoteric realms of *raganuga-bhakti* and the like. No, he gave the straight stuff, the essentials, the parts that we really needed, the parts that gave us faith, that really helped us and inspired us to go out every day and do our service with enthusiasm. He was very heavy with knowledge, in that he acted on his knowledge without hesitation, in full faith, and simultaneously gave that knowledge to one and all in a very potent way while performing his service.

Always something to say about Krishna

I was with Jayananda out in California somewhere on an incense run. We were walking to the car and Jayananda stopped a man getting in his car next to us. Jayananda said something about the material world, something about the weather, I can't remember but what I do remember is how Jayananda always had something to say to everybody that related to Krishna Consciousness. There was also some storeowner that bought incense from Jayananda who was quoted to say that "I don't know what this philosophy is all about, but if Jayananda is into it, then it must be good!"

Unshakable faith in words of Srila Prabhupada

The most powerful thing Jayananda ever told me, one day as we were working at the Ratha site, was how the pure devotee never wastes a single word. He said that Srila Prabhupada's every word is full of volumes of meaning and never says even one word in an irrelevant way. He gave me some examples from the books. I understood very clearly then that Jayananda was so advanced and full of knowledge because he had unshakable faith in the words of Srila Prabhupada. That was his secret of success. That was how he was heavy with knowledge.

Jayananda underlined and made copious notes in his personal *Bhagavad-Gita*. Some may have the impression that he did not study much, but not

so. He and I, on several occasions, went up to his room for impromptu *Bhagavad-Gita* classes. His own *Bhagavad-Gita* was quite worn and noted, and he knew his *Bhagavad-Gita* well. At the Ratha site, we would read to each other often. On the incense trips, we always read to each other. He would also read the *Bhagavatam* a whole chapter at a time, to get a grasp on the story. He read the *Krishna Book* often. The only book he did not read well was the *Nectar of Devotion*, and he commented that he was sorry he did not read it as much.

From Jayananda's *Bhagavad-gita* class, January 1977:

“So, of course that's our good fortune that we've been able to contact, by Krishna's mercy, we've contacted a bonafide spiritual master or a pure devotee. Because in order to advance in Krishna Consciousness, the principle is that one has to accept a spiritual master... Just like Krishna revealed *Bhagavad-Gita*, spoke *Bhagavad-Gita* to Arjuna because he is a devotee as well as His friend; that is the qualification of a devotee. Because Srila Prabhupada is a pure devotee, therefore he becomes qualified to also speak *Bhagavad-Gita*, to instruct according to time and circumstance. Otherwise, how is it possible? How is it possible that we could take instruction from anybody else who wasn't a pure devotee? It's not possible because Krishna can only be known through devotion.”

All touched by his big heart

Jayananda took particular pride in being the transcendental garbage man for Krishna. As he said, he always wanted to be a garbage man, and somehow Krishna gave him this opportunity to do it very nicely and transcendently for Him. He did so many seemingly small tasks like *bhoga* runs, dump runs, selling incense to stores, working in the garage, fixing plumbing, building *prasadam* carts and Ratha carts. But in the midst of small activities, he always seemed to reach everyone around him. He attracted others like a magnet, as when he was preaching to hippies from under a car, or to the other patients while he was sick in the hospital. His big heart and enthusiasm and his constant *Krishna-katha* touched all. It made no difference who they were, they always

heard about Krishna from Jayananda in some way.

Imprinted within the minds and hearts

From mundane vision, it may seem that although Jayananda had the wonderful quality of talking to every person he met, and also that he made so many devotees, still it would seem to a statistician that he only reached a limited number of souls. But it is not like that. It did not stop with that limited sphere of souls that he came into physical contact with, because all his activities were seen and heard by so many others, and imprinted within the minds and hearts of so many devotees. All his seemingly small actions were not just the physical acts themselves, but were the very essence of spiritual service and devotion. And every act gave the highest inspiration to others. Real love was there in every act, and those few activities catapulted into a great wonderful legend and ongoing story of a great man, the Saint of ISKCON. Thus his *bhoga* runs and garbage chores were the source of liberation for a large number of ears that would hear of his service and devotion for many years into the future.

Fainting in class

When asked to give a class, Jayananda would often be heard to say, “When the lions are around, who cares for the jackals?” He was humble in this way, in that he thought other devotees always knew more on the books and philosophy than he. When he gave class, in his simple way, they were always inspiring, and we all listened with ears and hearts. Srikanta told me how he and Nalini-kanta nearly fainted in ecstasy one morning in class, hearing Jayananda talk about having faith in the Holy Name.

Jayananda was the paragon of truth. He was not an intellectual who thought in a linear way. Nobody ever bore the truth quite like him, or made devotees like him. That is the mark of a great Vaishnava. I love the man, and what he did for so many people, giving so many people Krishna in a beautiful way, even ordinary people, who would not be normally won by lectures and intellectual feats. Jayananda was a real

heart man, who had a great head also, but he did so much in the avenue of the heart. Of course, we read in *Chaitanya-Charitamrita* that “One must always alertly understand Krishna through the authority of *shastra*, *sadhu*, *guru*,” or there is danger of becoming a sentimental *sahajiya*. But that is not to say that devotees cannot speak through the avenue of the heart as well as the head.

Potency of the simple servitor of Krishna

The Russian writer Dostoyevsky wrote a compelling prediction of how the “Meek and humble monks and peasants will save Russia.” We can see that this element of “*trinad api*” (being more humble than a blade of grass) is indeed the vital ingredient in our Krishna Conscious philosophy, and may be the major factor in “saving Russia” as well as the rest of the world. Committee meetings and corporate management will not prove as effective as the potency of being the simple and humble servitor of the Lord. We see the shining example of Jayananda Prabhu in his display of the power of “*trinad api*” and winning over the hearts of everyone that he met. He was the personification of humility and tolerance and giving all respect to others, not wanting respect for himself, and ceaselessly serving and chanting the Holy Name. I believe this spirit of Jayananda – this “purity is the force” – is the main hope and the prime factor in the spiritual revolution of planet earth for the next ten thousand years.

I was practically an agnostic before, with all the Kali-yuga propaganda in my mind, being the bookish college philosophy type of guy, and it was particularly hard for me to get the real faith on my own before I moved into the temple. But Jayananda made me believe in Krishna. It was not an intellectual feat of conquering my mind with logic and facts, but it was like Jayananda was the real living proof of God, or Krishna, for me. Like so many, I somehow was unable to fully accept the mercy of Srila Prabhupada at that time, or could not, due to mental hurdles on the path. I would have been beaten up real bad by the material modes and could have been the worst of backsliders. But because I got so much association with Jayananda, I had to take his mercy. He forced his mercy on me. I was conquered by his heart and faith in Krishna and Srila

Prabhupada. Unwillingly I took his mercy and love and that special kindness of his, and it still sustains me to this day.

Srila Prabhupada's infinite look of mercy

The faithful disciple is blessed with knowledge. When the spiritual master becomes pleased with a disciple, he bestows all knowledge of the Vedas on that disciple. This is probably the most intimate time I ever had with Jayananda, or anybody for that matter. I can hardly talk about it.

We were alone one night at the Ratha site in Frisco. We were just standing around and talking. Jayananda got to talking about how Srila Prabhupada came to the airport one day. Jayananda did his *dandavats* right at Srila Prabhupada's feet, and somehow he looked upwards from the floor to Srila Prabhupada. Right then, Srila Prabhupada was looking straight down into Jayananda's eyes. It was a rare moment for me, how Jayananda described the look that Srila Prabhupada gave him. It was a look of infinite love and mercy, Jayananda said. Srila Prabhupada stood looking down to Jayananda, his face and his smile and his mercy all pouring down through his eyes to Jayananda, with all the love and mercy anyone could imagine. I can hardly remember just how superlative that description was, how Jayananda gave it to me, except that I was awed by it. And as Jayananda was telling me about the mercy glance of Srila Prabhupada, it seemed that he was showing me how it looked. Jayananda seemed to have the same kind of look on his face. There are rare times when one person is able to look into the eyes of another person for a very long time without turning away. At that time, I was able to look into Jayananda's face and eyes for a long time as he was giving me this mercy look he was describing. Sort of like I got initiated with the glance myself.

And at that time, I saw Jayananda's aura. It was dark outside, being nighttime, and somehow I saw an aura of light about his head. Some New Age people give classes on how to see auras. I saw his without effort. It was then that I realized the purport of his name: Jayananda – the victory of spiritual bliss. I saw waves of bliss emanating from his eyes and face and smile. It was waves of bliss. That was about the most

intimate time I ever had with Jayananda, actually with anybody. I don't think I could ever forget that look and those feelings, that story of the mercy vision of Srila Prabhupada, and the awe of those moments as long as I live, and hopefully after that.

Jayanandanugas – lower-than-straw devotees give tribute to Jayananda Thakur

I remember before Srila Prabhupada's arrival, early one morning, some of the brahmacharis and Jayananda Prabhu had gone for a japa walk through the Mission District neighborhood near the temple. When they returned, Krita-karma Dasa said Jayananda had taken off a flower garland he was wearing, given from the Deities, and carefully placed it around a statue of the Virgin Mary they passed during the walk. I had heard before that he did this sometimes, and later went to see for myself ... Sure enough, there she stood with hands to her heart and a pink and white carnation garland draped around her neck and shoulders. She would have seemed forlorn or a little forgotten if it had not been for this gesture of respect and devotion. It is remembrances like these that have inspired me to continue and to understand a little deeper (my capacity is minuscule). Understanding of true Vaishnava culture and behavior is a joy and source of relief in this world where disrespect and violence against innocent hearts of saintly men and women have become somewhat commonplace. – Dhanistha Dasi

Jambavan Prabhu remembers that many times the San Francisco devotees would go out to Berkeley to distribute the leftover prasada after a Sunday feast. "First Jayananda would be in the kitchen cleaning. Then someone would say, 'Hey, how about this leftover prasadam?' Jayananda would say, 'Okay, first let's get this kitchen clean.' He would organize the cleanup crew and then work twice as hard as anybody. Then he would

transfer the prasad, load it and the devotees into the van, drive the van to Berkeley, organize the distribution of prasad, and lead the kirtan while we distributed.” – from Remembering Jayananda by Kalakantha Dasa

Jayananda was a mechanical genius, an architect, a kind brother, and a true friend. Foremost, he was absolutely absorbed in love for his spiritual master. This ingredient empowered him with simplistic know-how in all fields of action. Folks loved him, and thus he brought souls to God daily. This devotee did not discriminate and could engage anyone, literally just off the street, in Krishna's loving service. He often got food and useful items donated from those whose hearts he touched. When we were near him, we were like him, like children trying to imitate a hero. – Dhanistha Dasi

12. Keep Me Searching for a Heart of Gold

**One who is equal to friends and enemies, who is
equipoised in honor and dishonor, heat and cold,
happiness and distress, fame and infamy,
who is always free from contamination,
always silent and satisfied with anything,
who doesn't care for any residence,
who is fixed in knowledge and
engaged in devotional service, is very dear to Me.
(Bhagavad-Gita 12.18-19)**

Neil Young once sang a song, “Keep me searching for a heart of gold, keep me searching and I'm growing old...” Some of you are probably cursing me for reminding you of this song, which is probably going through your head. But it's a good example of the real desire of the soul,

as Neil was searching for that heart of gold, and his fans were saying, “Yeah, Neil, I'm searching, too – oh where, oh where is that heart of gold, man, I'm so sick of being cheated!” And somehow we all know there's a heart of gold somewhere out there, and somehow God exists, and somehow we should all get out of this mess someday.

The dearest servitor of Srimati Radharani

But Neil Young and his fans might not recognize a heart of gold if one stood right in front of them. That is the power of the illusory energy. They think a golden heart is a buddy who is a true friend who will be there for them in their sense gratification. Some think it is a woman, or a man, who will fulfill my desires. But yet the golden heart will not always give you what you think you want, but rather what you really need – the real need of the soul, or *bhakti*. He is not the phony smile, or New Age seminar person who loves you for a fee, but the real heart of gold is the pure devotee of God who gives us the real thing – love of Krishna. Gold to the average man is that yellow stool, and the place where there's lots of yellow stool is the abode of Kali, where irreligion also resides. The meaning of gold to the devotee instead is the effulgent complexion of Lord Gauranga, assuming the luster of Srimati Radharani, who is “resplendent with the radiance of molten gold.” Srila Prabhupada also had a golden luster all about his person, a golden complexion, which was just a reflection of the golden effulgence from within his heart, as he is the dearest servitor of Lord Chaitanya and Srimati Radharani.

Sick of being cheated

Everybody is searching for a heart of gold. Where is it, oh where is that golden heart? Not everyone knows. But everybody wants that heart of gold. Some think it is a good friend who sticks with you through thick and thin. Or it is somebody who sees us as a person, and not just a body to exploit. Some think it is a heart full of love instead of lust. Mostly it is a heart that will not cheat us, as most of us are just tired of being cheated. Where, oh where is that person who does not cheat us? We're all getting cheated, real bad, and everybody knows it, down deep inside,

we all know it. Every *jiva* soul is hankering for that golden heart. The heart with the real love, the real thing.

Two rare hearts of gold

My religion is not *japa* or scripture or penance or austerity. My religion is daily thanking Jayananda Prabhu for showing me to the greatest heart of gold – His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada – and also for allowing me into the association with his own heart of gold, too. Jayananda had a heart of gold, which was Prabhupada's gift to him. And he let the gold from Prabhupada shine into his heart, which then became full, and he let it shine on out to others. I somehow saw that golden effulgence, enough to melt my dirty heart somewhat, but not enough. Actually, I am the greatest sinner of all, because I chanced upon not just one very rare heart of gold, but two very rare hearts of gold. And Jayananda's golden heart not only shined on me profusely, but he also took me in as a friend. And I was such a sinner to get such gifts of two great golden hearts and still kept a tightly-bound steel-framed heart, with chains and padlocks and a cement overcoat. I am such an ungrateful wretch because I got two hearts of gold freely given, and yet I neglected to open my own and let it all in and thereby let it shine a little to others.

There for the little guy

Jayananda was there for the other guy, all the time. He was there for the little guy, for there were no little guys to Jayananda. They were all spirit souls lost in the world of *maya*, and he had a heart big enough for them all. I am the best example of that. So insignificant, but Jayananda was so golden to me, for his golden heart shined on one and all with no discrimination. Jayananda's heart was always overflowing, every minute of the day, and he always spilled out the golden mercy to others. There is a nice verse from *Sri Hari-Bhakti-Kalpa-Latika*, which goes like this:

“Krishna enters the listening ear and goes to the heart. Flooding the lake of the heart, He leaves through the mouth as a swiftly coursing stream of

His transcendental qualities, names, and forms.”

In the same way, the effulgence of the golden luster shining from Srila Prabhupada's heart entered into Jayananda's eyes and ears and flooded his heart, until it also became golden, and then that same effulgence came flowing out through his eyes and mouth, out into the darkness of others' hearts, thus filling them with golden light and hope and love.

Young, old, made no difference

Jayananda was there for so many people. Young, old, made no difference. He was there for the seven-year-old boy that Jivadhara spoke about, how Jayananda told him of Krishna and they chanted and danced, and then Jayananda gave initiation to the boy and gave him the name of Parameshvara. The boy was ecstatic and painted one of Lord Jagannatha's wheels. There were also the cops Jivadhara Prabhu spoke about, how they respected Jayananda so much. They would come to the Ratha site and talk to him, and they took a day off to come to the parade, brought their families and cameras. Then there were the tool business people who always gave rental tools to Jayananda free of charge. This was happening all the time, every day, so many ordinary people were charmed by Jayananda's big and golden heart, and their lives were changed.

One of Jayananda's servants in the final months was Indranatha Prabhu, who always praised his golden heart so nicely, saying how Jayananda always made everybody feel good and happy in Krishna Consciousness, always there with nice *prasad* and *Krishna-katha* and good vibes. Jayananda was always saying how “Krishna Consciousness is so sweet,” and always saying how “Whatever you do, just get a taste for the Holy Name, and that will save you.”

Tiny speck of a life

And now, 20 years later, I got a wakeup call – it felt like heart attacks for a week, seemed like a brush with death. And that really let me know for sure how much I really did get that heart of gold, two hearts in fact,

and how precious it was, how it was the only good thing in my miserable life. And how I could die anytime, and nobody really cares for this tiny speck of a life, which is just like an insect's life. I will die someday and a sound will be heard in the far distance, “Oh so-and-so died” ... “Oh yeah, that's too bad.” That's about how far it'll go. Our lives are so insignificant compared to the multitudes of devotees of Lord Krishna, and we should see our speck life as so insignificant, all the plans and desires within the subtle mind are so insignificant, and the best deed we can do is to be completely receptive to the heart of gold of Srila Prabhupada, and try to reflect it onto others.

Ungrateful wretch that I am, someone could drag me into the street and horsewhip me and get no sin, only pious credit for such a deed. That is because I received two hearts of gold, but my heart still remains steel-framed. This is inexcusable, as one goes out into town and look at the people – they are not people, but walking lumps of misery. They are looking and looking for the gold, but only getting fool's gold, only getting a flash in the pan, only a tiny glitter of *maya*, never the real thing. Look at all the suffering out there in the world! We devotees have two priceless hearts of gold in Srila Prabhupada and Jayananda's example. We must pray to Lord Krishna to please open our hearts and absorb the effulgence from these golden hearts, so that we can shine some of that effulgence out to others. And then, some who are sincerely looking may then find the genuine 24-karat article – in Srila Prabhupada's books, and in his life, and in his followers. All glories to the devotees of Srila Prabhupada, especially Jayananda Prabhu! His golden heart is to be praised and sung about for as long as life still remains within my worthless mortal coil.

Jaya Jaya Sri Vaishnava Jayananda Thakur.

Jayanandanugas – lower-than-straw devotees give tribute to Jayananda Thakur

Srila Prabhupada loved Jayananda with all of his heart because of his selfless devotion and great Vaishnava qualities. Jayananda Prabhu is called the first ISKCON Saint. I was in

Srila Prabhupada's room when he heard that Jayananda Prabhu had left his body. Srila Prabhupada showed his great affection for Jayananda Prabhu and glorified him with tears in his eyes. He prayed to Krishna for him and told us that he went back to Godhead. I think he left the planet just in time to meet Srila Prabhupada in Krishna-loka a short time later. – from Gauridasa Pandita Dasa

Jayananda used to stand casually with the other devotees in the entrance hall to the temple, between various functions or before breakfast prasadam. Oftentimes the conversations took on current events within the society's walls, and sometimes this could sink to gossip or tremendous undue worry over different leaders or matters. I tended to watch Jayananda from some distance, often peripherally, so as not to interfere with his natural demeanor. When topics sometimes took a turn for the worst, that is, away from the delight of Krishna nectar to the refuse piles, he would gradually recede within himself. First, as he always had his hand in his bead bag, he would gently shake his beads and softly begin to chant. Within a few mantras his eyes would be closing and his consciousness withdrawing from the group of chatterers he stood amongst. His hand with his bead bag would draw slowly to his heart. Then transfixed, he would pull those of us who could manage to let go of the stranglehold we had on the conversation to the sweet taste of the Holy Names ... I remember whole rooms full of devotees gradually affected by a radiating wave of soft chanting, until unified, we would sanctify the whole universal atmosphere while Krishna danced on our tongues. – Dhanistha Dasi

Karandhara recalls another incidence of Jayananda's humility. "One day, before Ratha-yatra, I spent the whole day running around with Jayananda. By the time we got back to the temple it was midnight. The whole building was so crowded that we couldn't find any space to lie down. Finally we found room in

one little storage closet. I was so tired that all I could do was throw my sleeping bag on the floor and lie down. Then I saw Jayananda walking out of the room. I asked him, 'Where are you going?' He said he'd be right back, but I kept pressing him, and finally he explained that he had some rounds of japa chanting to finish up. He didn't want to keep me awake by chanting in our room, nor did he want me to feel bad because he was going out to do something else. He just wanted to slip away to some corner and fulfill his vow. I remember saying, 'Sometimes it's not possible to finish all one's rounds because there is so much work to do.' 'That's okay, I'm not too tired,' Jayananda replied. I was amazed not only by his consideration for me but by his full submission to Srila Prabhupada." – from Remembering Jayananda by Kalakantha Dasa

13. Real Love Lasts – for Eternity

**He is a perfect yogi who,
by comparison to his own self,
sees the true equality of all beings,
both in their happiness and distress, O Arjuna!
(Bhagavad-Gita 6.32)**

We all look for love, and finding it in this world is a matter of relative truth. When spiritual love is found, by divine grace, then the soul comes out of his bewilderment as to what real love is. The stop-and-start love affairs of this world are temporal at best, they are like driving in rush hour Los Angeles traffic with a tanker accident a block ahead, with five minutes left to get to the altar on time, and scores of red lights popping on, and all coming to a halt. The young couple falls in love, and everything seems wonderful, and even if they live “happily ever after” (I always wondered what the song means, “I will love you forever” – how is that possible?) still when the spirit soul leaves the body and takes on the

next, the soul forgets the former mate's face and name forever. Just a new name and face takes their place. It may be a hog's face, may be human, hey, it's still love, isn't it?

The love for eternity

Love of Krishna and His devotees is the love that stays for eternity. Jayananda showed us that kind of love by his activities of always serving others. He never stopped his love and *bhakti* for Krishna and His *jivas*. He always talked of Srila Prabhupada, whenever we had a break in our work he would tell us some story about Prabhupada. Jayananda really loved his spiritual master, and his love for Prabhupada and Krishna means that he loved everyone. When I read of the great servants of Lord Chaitanya, like Murari Gupta, and how the breeze blowing by their bodies would cast others into love of Krishna, Jayananda was like that – whenever he was present, the atmosphere was Krishna Consciousness and we were serving in bliss.

A moment expands into eternity

Actually, I did not get his association. What I mean is that it wasn't enough. It was only a year, and that year went by like a moment. That is the cruel handiwork of fate, that somehow by some causeless mercy you may come in contact with a pure soul like Srila Prabhupada or Jayananda, and fate just takes them away before the full realization hits you of how sacred those moments are. One year, or two, or ten years are not enough to satisfy the hankering for pure association with the servants of Krishna. Yet, *lava-matra, sadhu-sange sarva-siddhi haya* –

**The verdict of all revealed scriptures
is that by even a moment's association
with a pure devotee,
one can obtain all success.**

(Chaitanya-Charitamrita, Madhya-lila 22.54)

Just a moment's association with Krishna's dear servant gives all

perfection. That moment expands into eternity, by divine grace.

Krishna will never let you down

Krishna proves that He never stops loving us. He accompanies us as our friend, as Paramatma, in all our countless bodies, waiting for us to turn our face to Him. There is no friend like Krishna, nor will there ever be such a friend. Srila Prabhupada once told Pushta-krishna Prabhu, “Don't depend on me, I will let you down; depend on Krishna, He will never let you down.” Of course, this was Prabhupada's humility, he will never let his disciple down. He was conveying the never-ending love of Krishna. And Krishna's devotees, like their master, have that same quality of endless love. This is what I found in Jayananda. There is a nice verse by Srila Rupa Goswami in his *Sri Lalita-Madhava* which shows the endless love of Krishna:

**Great souls are always saved from sufferings.
Even if, somehow or other, a devotee
takes birth as an animal in the jungle,
as a human being in one of the directions of this world,
as a demigod in the three celestial planets,
or even as a resident of hell,
the Supreme Personality of Godhead always brings him
to His lotus feet. The Lord never wishes to abandon him.**

Beyond all limitations of time and space

The real love is there, beyond all limitations of time and space and dimension. Jayananda showed me that somehow, in his special way, by his association beyond the boundaries of this physical world. I wrote a former article which speaks of the psychological nearer-to-death experience I had a few years ago, and how Jayananda came to me in my dream. I wondered why it made me so emotional for such a long time afterwards.

I sort of got a clue to this from a George Harrison song. Being the father

of two teenagers, it is not surprising to some that I have had, on occasion, heard a song or two of George. And he is my old mentor, this is true. He was very instrumental in showing me the path, with the early *All Things Must Pass* album and his preface to Prabhupada's *Krishna Book*. Once I heard a song of George, and thought, "Hmm, George might be in a little *maya*, this sure sounds like a love song to me, and at his age?" But after hearing it again, and actually listening to the lyrics, I found it to be one of his best Krishna Conscious songs of all. He is singing to Krishna, saying, "I know You're in the sun, I know You're close to everyone, at times it's like You don't have a hold on me, I see You in the love, I see You in the moon above, but I want to know that You're not lost inside of me, I'm tired of playing games with You, though there's nothing else I want that would set me free, I know that You're a part of me, but it's a must to know that You love me too." This is the line that really got me: "To know that You love me too." It's important to know that God loves us too. Sometimes we think we are trying to love Him, but not sure of Him returning the love. Although He is always giving it, we are not receptive of it, or we are not perceptive of it. Mercy is always raining down, but our *maya* shields us from the full reception. Srila Prabhupada always loves us. Jayananda always loves me, and he loves all of us, this is the fact. This is what I really wanted to know – I loved Jayananda, and "It's a must to know You love me too" – and so he did show his love, in a very special way.

I sort of figured it out after a spell, as these things are not so easy for me to grasp. Life is certainly hard, as they say, "Life's a bummer, then you die." And after a hard life, then death is really hard, it's the most final and difficult experience of all, and you get no rehearsal for it, usually. My fear was that I would die alone, not remembering Krishna, and nobody caring. A hard end to a hard row of a life. That was almost the case when I had this nearer-to-death experience, I was all alone and thinking "This is it." I don't think any amount of words can convey that kind of feeling, the realization that "This is it, this life is all over, here's the big one, here's that ominous door creaking open with the big unknown behind it." And you feel like nobody gives a darn. Of course, that is not true, some really do care, but it seems like they don't because they are not there! But as endless love would prove it, Jayananda was

there for me. In my darkest hour, he was there for me. The dream was as real as waking life. Spiritual dreams are real, many of us have had Srila Prabhupada in dreams, and they are real.

And to prove that it was not just a hallucination or a weird concoction of the mind, Jayananda came in a powerful way to my inner sight, every day, for years afterward and on, to convince me that this really happened. To show how spiritual love is for real, not like the shadow of love we foolishly try to get. To prove that he cares, and will always care. This is how Krishna and His devotee will never let us down! This proves to me how their love is endless and eternal. This is the realization that is there for everybody; may we all somehow come to know this as a fact. Krishna's love, Srila Prabhupada's love, godbrothers/sisters hopefully, and saints like Jayananda, their love is there always for each and every one of us, eternal love.

That one makes it all worthwhile

There is a saying, “This baby is so ugly, only a mother could love him,” and by the same token it could be said that I was so insignificant that “Only a saint could love him ... only a Jayananda could love him.” It has also been said that “Although 99 people out of 100 may despise me, the one who loves me eclipses the other 99.” I can easily find 99 people who despise me, and I don't blame them. That's the nature of the material world, that we all envy and despise each other. If you have a little opulence, then others will envy you. If you are a loser, then they despise and ridicule you. We've all been on both sides of this fence. We've all been kings and we've all been beggars in some past life ... but we forget the ever-changing vicissitudes of wandering up and down on this merry-go-round carousel of the material world. But that one out of the 100 – if we get the great fortune to come into contact with a great saint such as Jayananda, or Srila Prabhupada – then that one person makes a miserable and condemned life worthwhile.

I say this with all sincerity: if we can only grasp this realization (I haven't yet) – that Krishna's love, *guru's* love, the saint's love, is always there for us, always, in all circumstances, at any time, with no conditions, never-ending – then this is the life of our life's breath and

sacred treasure of the heart that sustains us through all the tribulations of life. It gives success to our life and gives us passage back to their abode to get their full association.

Krishna and His servants always get us back on track

We can get their association anytime, it is always there. Physical or not, it is there; and feeling it, knowing it, is the same as seeing it. To see Krishna or His servant, or be with them, is wonderful; and equally, to feel their love and know it is there for eternity is the same as seeing or being there with them. We may get lost along the way, and they will always be there to guide us back out of the ditch and back onto the road. To believe this and know this is the most wonderful thing. Real love is the most wonderful treasure, nothing else will ever compare to it, since it comes down from divine grace, from Krishna, from our divine master Srila Prabhupada, and from the saints like Sriman Jayananda Thakur.

Jayanandanugas – lower-than-straw devotees give tribute to Jayananda Thakur

Dear Vishoka Dasa Prabhu, Hare Krishna! All glories to Srila Prabhupada and all of our acharyas. I am in deep appreciation of your transcendental feelings for Jayananda Prabhu. I believe that in this dark time of criticizing Vaishnavas, to see someone doing quite the opposite is wonderful, and an example for all to follow. Keep up the good work! – humbly, Mithiladhisa Dasa

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to read and never get enough of the “real” nectar that Prabhupada has given us. That is, he has given us “devotees,” absolute proof that he is indeed touchstone, for he can take a little sincerity of a disciple like Jayananda Thakur and make the candidate into such a saint. This stuff is sorely missing from the writings of the devotees at the millennium change. We seem to get hung up on the dots and dashes of things and miss the real love that cannot be

subject to mental analysis. I bring this stuff up as a writer to a writer – do not hold back, brother, feel free to describe the glories of Jayananda Thakur to their fullest extent, not worrying about style, authority, or other nitpicking you may encounter along the way. Thoroughly honest devotees will see through the haze of imperfection that all Kali-yuga folks possess to a certain degree, and they will experience the joy at seeing the touchstone of Prabhupada work on his sincere disciple. – Mahaksha Dasa

Jayananda was always ready to do whatever was necessary to push on Krishna Consciousness. He was expert at everything: cooking, preaching, Deity worship, public relations, sankirtan, selling incense, construction, and everything else it takes to run a temple. He was a tireless worker. He would be the first one up in the morning and the last one to sleep at night. It was Jayananda who was always running out to get the flowers, Jayananda who was washing dishes and making sure the kitchen was clean, Jayananda who was often missing class while he was out doing some service, and Jayananda who was always encouraging others to go out and preach, and setting the example himself. Whatever assignment he was given, he would always get done, even if he had to suffer personally for it. No matter how hard he was working, he would never stop for a nap during the day. He seemed to be inexhaustible. – from Remembering Jayananda by Kalakantha Dasa

14. Confessions of a Nitya-baddha

**A true yogi observes Me in all beings,
and also sees every being in Me.
Indeed, the self-realized man**

sees Me everywhere.
(Bhagavad-Gita 6.29)

The question is – how long does it take? How long will it take us to advance nicely in Krishna Consciousness? We have seen that for most of us it is a gradual process, as Srila Prabhupada has said. We can make it appear as if we have advanced suddenly, or we may contrive a semblance of advancement by the external trappings of dress and actions and position and so forth. I once heard this termed as “cardboard *bhakti*,” or holding up a cardboard facade for others to see, while internally there are other issues. External dress and practices and steady advancement in rules and regulations are all right, they are part of the process. We may be blissful for years, but still there may be tough weeds in our garden. Everything may seem fine for years, and then huge *anarthas* may suddenly manifest. We have seen graphic examples of this, time and time again.

This cannot be imitated

A higher Vaishnava once said that it is easy to imitate some of the symptoms of *bhava*, or love of God. But, there is one symptom of *bhava* that we can never imitate, and that is “*ahuituky apratihata*” or nonstop, unceasing devotional service to Krishna and His pure devotee. THAT we cannot imitate. The advanced devotee remembers Krishna 24 hours a day, even in his sleep, and serves Him constantly.

That is what we saw in Jayananda. Those who knew him said he was the most advanced devotee in the Movement. This is what we saw in his service attitude and attraction for the Name and service of the Name. It is said that a pure devotee is not recognized by his social position, number of followers, or *ashram* or so forth, but by his attraction to the Holy Name. Jayananda showed an unswerving and selfless dedication to propagation of the Holy Name and serving Krishna and Srila Prabhupada and others with *prasadam*, philosophy, and *hari-nama*. We have come to surmise that his advancement, which came so quickly, was not possible for the usual *sadhana-bhakta* devotee, who normally

goes through a long process of *sadhana* before he is able to reach perfection. It is by either the *kripa-siddha* or *sadhana-siddha* process that a *nitya-baddha* soul comes to perfection. How did Jayananda do this so quickly?

This is my confession. A *nitya-baddha-jiva* is one with millions of years of conditioning. He does not become suddenly advanced. But by the mercy of higher Vaishnavas he makes gradual advancement. He's a fool, but when he hears from the perfect, then repeats the perfect, then he is in perfect knowledge and is on the perfect path, even though it may seem that his advancement is slow. In other words, I may repeat the perfect as I've heard it, and thus I speak perfect knowledge. If I follow the perfect, then I'm situated in the perfect platform. That does not mean that I am in an advanced *siddha* position, or that I am without *anarthas*. I confess that I am one of those foolish *nitya-baddha-jivas* who just follows the perfect, and I saw that Sriman Jayananda Thakur was not one of us. He advanced in a very short period of time. He showed us steady, unwavering service, without hidden *anarthas*. We can say that it was either due to receiving *kripa-siddha* from Srila Prabhupada, or it was from *sadhana-siddha*, probably continuing from his past life. At any rate, neophytes usually do not advance in *sadhana* that fast.

Still climbing that hill

A godbrother pointed out from the evidence Srila Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakur presented in his book *Madhurya-Kadambini* that everybody goes through a step-by-step process in *sadhana-bhakti*, regulated devotional service. He mentions that practically all of us have been doing it for many years. We see that most of us take a very long time. It is usually a long haul uphill until one reaches *ruchi* (spiritual taste), and then after *ruchi* it is all sweetness. Most of us are still climbing up that hill, and after 20 years or so, are still in the six stages of unsteady or *anisthita* stages of *bhajana-kriya* (activities of worship). The sixth stage is enjoying the facilities of *bhakti*, or playing in the waves of the ocean of *bhakti*, a position known as *taranga-rangini*. This means that a devotee attracts followers and enjoys material gain, worship, and position, or *labha*, *puja*, *pratishtha*. Some seek pleasure in these weed-like

facilities, which are actually small waves present in the vast ocean of *bhakti*.

He would have none of it

Jayananda could have easily sought those things. Everyone loved him and would have served him, worshiped him, given him position and material things, but he would have none of it. At any hint of praise, he would walk away. He was beyond all those stages mentioned in *Madhurya-Kadambini*, He was in steady, uninterrupted service, or *bhava*. How could it be otherwise? Srila Prabhupada said he was always thinking of Jayananda. Srila Prabhupada requested us all to follow Jayananda's example. And Srila Prabhupada asked that a feast be offered to him every year, like we do for “other great Vaishnavas.”

He taught service, not position

Sometimes you would find Jayananda underneath a car changing the oil, and so forth. Is this not a strange position for one so advanced? That is the whole point – position. Jayananda was not desirous of any particular position or post. Any position was fine for him, if it served Krishna. Servant means no position, only service. He did not care anything for *pratistha* or distinction. He desired only to be the servitor of Krishna, and thought all others were Krishna's eternal servitors. This was his vision. This is *ekatvam*, or oneness of vision. He always said how others were advancing so nicely in Krishna Consciousness, going on beyond himself. Srila Prabhupada writes how this is the mood of one who is really pure: he thinks himself as lower than the low ... and all others as better servants of Krishna.

Not a controller, but blissful motivator

Jayananda was not a controller of others, nor desired to be so. It seems that when one has a strong desire to dominate others, this only betrays a lack of self-control. But Jayananda had the knack to manage others with

love, without trying to control. He persuaded them nicely and blissfully. He said, “Let's go do this” – not “You go do this.” He did everything with you, or sometimes he did it without you. In fact, he did a lot of things we were too lazy to do, like the trash, kitchen cleanup, so many things.

The perfect follower is the perfect leader

The point is that because Jayananda was the perfect follower of Srila Prabhupada, therefore he is the perfect leader. And we can also be the perfect followers of Srila Prabhupada and do the perfect thing by following the example of Jayananda, as Srila Prabhupada requested. Though I have failed so much in the past, I hope that I may glorify him and other devotees, and thus follow his example as best I can.

Jayanandanugas – lower-than-straw devotees give tribute to Jayananda Thakur

I believe that without Jayananda's presence and memory early on in my devotional life, at times I would have been completely forlorn and disillusioned. He is even more important to me now. I pray to Jayananda the Saint. He needs no canonization for us to recognize his qualities steeped in love and compassion. It was easy to follow his instruction and guidance. It is still easy and reassuring to feel his presence. He brought many souls to Srila Prabhupada's Krishna Consciousness Movement, and by his loving strength he kept us in good association, determined to keep our vows. – Dhanistha Dasi

Hari-bol Vishoka Dasa. Thank you for replying so fast. It's very kind of you to spread the glories of Jayananda Thakur. I was fortunate to meet him once in Laguna Beach during a time of great upheaval at the temple. He was traveling with the Radha-Damodara buses. Even though I got the mercy to drive different Swamis (Tamal Krishna, Guru Dasa, Vishnujana Maharaja's, etc.) from their buses to class, I was most

impressed with Jayananda's humility and service to the devotees and the bhakti in the prasadam he prepared for them. This impression was increased by a devotee telling me that Jayananda felt he was not qualified to take sannyasa. – A disciple in name only, Trilokesh Dasa

15. Best of Both Worlds

**One can understand the Supreme Personality
as He is only by devotional service.
And when one is in full consciousness
of the Supreme Lord by such devotion,
he can enter into the kingdom of God.
(Bhagavad-Gita 18.55)**

Jayananda instinctively depended on Krishna in every difficult impasse, and Krishna helped him without even being asked. Jayananda, like other saints, was not inclined to ask Krishna for things, neither material nor spiritual, but Krishna naturally gave him all facility for his service. Sometimes neophyte devotees want the best of both worlds, and they simultaneously want to enjoy both spiritual and material things. But Srila Prabhupada says in his purport in *Sri Mukunda-Mala-Stotra*:

“When a neophyte devotee deviates from the path of pure devotion and wants to simultaneously enjoy sense gratification and discharge devotional service, the all-merciful Lord very tactfully corrects the bewildered devotee by exhibiting before him the real nature of this material world.”
(*Sri Mukunda-Mala-Stotra* by King Kulashekhara, Purport by Srila Prabhupada)

Note that Srila Prabhupada uses the words “very tactfully.” Krishna doesn't force or cram it down our throats, like some of us tend to do. Krishna will grant all material and spiritual desires, and why not? He's

been fulfilling the desires of all living entities since time immemorial. Sometimes a devotee will ask Krishna for help and later will say, "I really needed something and I prayed to Krishna, I prayed to the Deity, but I didn't get it." Some lose faith over this. Oh we of little faith and patience! I know from personal experience that Krishna will satisfy our desires, but sometimes He takes His time, and it might take years ... and all for a good reason. This teaches us patience and fortitude. If Krishna immediately fulfilled all our desires, then we would become spoiled brats, always saying, "My dear Krishna, I need this, I need that..." Krishna is not hard-hearted, and He will grant desires, but He means to teach us that He's not our order supplier, that He's not a blue genie in a lamp waiting for us to rub and request and rub and request again and again. This sort of thing is not our real goal in life – our real goal is to attain love of God. As some people pray, "Our dear Lord, please give us our daily bread," which Srila Prabhupada says is not love of God, but it's love of bread.

It's an inside job

This is probably the singlemost important test in life – that of accepting responsibility for our own problems, and not blaming others. Those who accept life's defeats and setbacks and calamities with folded hands, praising God, and knowing that it's only due to their own past misdeeds that they are suffering, never blame God or other people ... they are ripe for liberation. Krishna has compassion for all suffering living entities, but the reactions to our past sinful misdeeds are inevitable in this material world, and Krishna assumes no responsibility for our sinful reactions because He gave us the perfect gift ... which is free will. We can use our free will for good, or we can misuse it; it's our choice. And by misuse, we're in this mess. Krishna will help us out, but He won't take the blame for our own misuse of our own free will. Whereas those who blame mother and God and everybody else for their own tribulations and reverses that occur in life, they are due so much more suffering, ohh, they've got SO MUCH more suffering to go through! After all, WE are the ones who decided to come to this dangerous material world; nobody else made us do it. We made our own beds, and now we must lie in them.

It's an inside job. It was never Krishna's fault, or mom's fault. We have to “own” our own problems and stop passing the buck to others, especially God.

In this regard, we saw that Jayananda never resented any bad turn given him; he never protested any detour on life's highway, even to the point of having to leave this world. He was always in agreement with his destiny and never complained. His only business was to serve Krishna and Srila Prabhupada, even down to his final moments.

God teaches us patience

Krishna teaches us a great lesson in patience by not showing Himself to our vision, even for a whole lifetime. Hayagriva Dasa was once frustrated and said, “I've been chanting for six months now, and still I've not seen Krishna!” Srila Prabhupada laughed. Krishna may not show Himself for many lifetimes, just to teach us patience and devotion. As Lord Chaitanya says in the 8th stanza of His *Siksastakam*, He will always worship Krishna, even if Krishna would not appear to His vision, “*adarsanan marma-hatam karotu va...*”

“I know no one but Krishna as my Lord, and He shall remain so even if He handles me roughly in His embrace or makes me broken-hearted by not being present before me. He is completely free to do anything and everything, for He is always my worshipful Lord unconditionally.”

Sometimes death approaches and a man will pray to God to save him, but a devotee accepts whatever Krishna wants, as Srila Prabhupada said, “If Krishna says we have to die, then we die – out of love.” In essence, this is what Krishna asked Srila Prabhupada to do, to come to this world and preach and die, and Srila Prabhupada accepted the task out of love.

Srila Prabhupada talks to Krishna

Here is another far-out mystical story. Actually, it's not so mystical for one who is a resident of the spiritual world, where it's a normal everyday

affair to see devotees talking to Krishna. For Srila Prabhupada, it's a normal thing to do ... but down here, amongst us earthlings, it's a rare sight to see Krishna's pure devotee talking to Him in His Deity form. For one who's bankrupt in faith, the Deity appears as a statue, and actually this perception is hellish, *naraka*. As Krishna says, "For the doubting soul, there is happiness neither in this world or the next." But for one who is stocked up in faith, and who hears from Krishna's pure devotee, especially of the many stories of Deities – like how the Sakshi Gopal Deity walked thousands of miles to bear witness for the reputation of His devotee; and how Lord Chaitanya saw Krishna standing in threefold bending form with a flute within the Deity of Lord Jagannatha; and in Los Angeles, how Lord Balarama would jump off the altar when *pujaris* were late, and so many other stories – then such faithful devotees see the Deity as directly the son of Nanda Maharaja. Just as our dear friend Sriman Kusha-kratha Dasa, our modern-day Vaishnava poet, who dreams in Sanskrit and composes and translates thousands of verses in glorification of Sri Radha-Krishna, says in his *Sri Sri Radha-Mukunda-Stava* – "I worship glorious-limbed Sri Sri Radha-Mukunda, who, pretending to be stone statues, truly stand, silent and unmoving by Their wish, in many temples in this world."

So, I was fortunate to see such an exchange of love between Krishna and His pure devotee, Srila Prabhupada. I was in the temple room in Los Angeles when Srila Prabhupada arrived from the airport, and I was in such an angle of vision to see him say a few quick words to Sri Sri Rukmini-Dwarakadhisha. I felt fortunate on one hand, and on the other hand felt like I trespassed into confidential territory. Still, it was a *maha* moment for me, to see how Krishna comes in His *archa-vigraha* form and converses with His own pure devotee, Srila Prabhupada. When we see the *Krishna Vision* slide show and we hear Krishna Prema Prabhu's wonderful recording of the many Holy Names of Deities from around the world, we become awestruck to realize how Krishna agrees to appear hundreds of times, all over the world, all for the sake of His pure devotee, Srila Prabhupada.

A sign from God

Sometimes people look for a “Sign from God” or hope to witness some kind of miracle in order to bolster their faith. A good friend of mine once told me that he was chanting before the Deity and suddenly he asked the Deity to please prove that He was God, saying in effect, “If You are really God, then please give me a garland as a sign that You hear me.” Then, just as soon as my friend turned around, somebody immediately approached him and put a large garland around his neck. My miracle from God was the night that Jayananda came to me in my dream. That was the most real and most spiritual piece of mercy ever bequeathed upon a poor soul like me. Daily I thank Krishna and Jayananda over and over again for Jayananda's sweet visit and association.

Once I did see another miracle of God's great servant. It was in Dallas, Texas, and Harer Nama Dasa and I went to a lady's house because she was getting local publicity about an alleged appearance of Mother Mary in her yard. She told us that an apparition of Mother Mary had appeared in the tree in her front yard and she showed us. Somehow Harer Nama Prabhu and I seemed to see the apparition. But that wasn't the best part. All around the tree were tulips, and she said that in hundreds of the petals of the tulips were images of Christ and Mother Mary. She then brought out about 20 samples for our inspection. I was an artist before, working on the FATE project, and so I was able to tell if they were fake or not. They were real and amazing images of Jesus and His associates, all embedded in the flower petals. It was a profound religious experience for Harer Nama Dasa and myself. The lady also told us that she liked devotees and had read the *Krishna Book*, and had seen images of Lord Jagannatha. I came back a second time with my wife, Pritha Dasi, and this time the lady gave me two photos, one of the Mother Mary apparition, and the other of Jesus embedded in a flower petal, and I still have them to this day.

But the dream where Jayananda came to me was a miracle a hundred times, a thousand times more miraculous. If you could imagine that you were dying, or were convinced that you were on the verge of your death, and then the best friend you ever had suddenly came to you, beyond the boundaries of life and death, and he held you, and comforted you, and cried on your shoulder, and he gave you assurance that everything was

all right ... this was the most amazing gift Jayananda gave me that night. The scene of that wonderful memory comes back strongly every day of my life, and thus I remember the great mercy of God and His dear servants.

Jayanandanugas – lower-than-straw devotees give tribute to Jayananda Thakur

Once a new boy came to visit the San Francisco temple. He wanted to help, so Keshava Dasa sent him to the trash area where Jayananda was preparing the weekly trash run. Jayananda told the boy, "I'm the garbage man around here. For years I've been watching garbage men carry out trash, and now Krishna is giving me a chance to do this for Him." The boy not only helped load the trash, but also accompanied Jayananda to the garbage dump. Later that boy became a devotee, and he recalled thinking, "If the garbage men at this temple can be so blissful, just imagine what the rest of the devotees are like!" – from Remembering Jayananda by Kalakantha Dasa

Hari-bol Prabhu, please accept my humble obeisances. All Glories to Srila Prabhupada. Obviously, it is appropriate for you to glorify Jayananda. Any of us who had the honor and privilege to know him, even slightly, recognize him to be the acharya of surrender. He was the very first devotee I ever spoke with, and his potency is undeniable. I will share an anecdotal remembrance of that very first conversation with him. On my first visit to San Francisco temple, on Valencia, I had the good fortune to assist Jayananda with the garbage detail. We were taking the trash out to a compactor when he explained some of the basics of Krishna Consciousness. He said that Krishna satisfied all the desires of His devotees. As an example, he told me that he had always wanted to be a garbage man, and just see, his wish had been fulfilled. I left that day thinking that

Jayananda was the temple garbage man. I had no idea of the magnitude of his service, but I thought to myself, "If this is the garbage man, how wonderful must be the other devotees?"

Well, I eventually came to know something of Jayananda's greatness, as I moved into the temple and got his divine association day in and day out for nearly a year before I moved to San Clemente with the then temple president, Bhutatma Dasa (and Keshava Dasa). Even that limited association permitted me a glimpse of the kind of sincerity and devotion, not to mention hard work that set Jayananda apart as a truly great example for us all.

I saw Bhutatma Dasa again recently, after many years of separation, and among other things, he told me that he was writing a book about Jayananda and those early years in San Francisco. Hopefully, you will encourage and assist him. I, for one, appreciate your efforts to glorify Jayananda, who was my original contact with the eternal Vaishnava community. Once, I was asking Bhutama Dasa what he thought about all the controversy and disagreement over the guru issue and he said, "I just think about Jayananda, and remember his greatness." Good answer. Let us remember and praise the admirable disciples of Srila Prabhupada rather than target others for complaint. Positive thinking, Krishna Consciousness. Keep up the good service. – Your fallen godbrother, Vatsara Dasa

16. Moments of Full Consciousness

**The value of a moment's association
with the devotee of the Lord
cannot even be compared to the attainment of
heavenly planets or liberation from matter,
and what to speak of worldly benedictions**

**in the form of material prosperity,
which are for those who are meant for death.**
(*Srimad Bhagavatam* 1.18.13)

**Better a moment of full consciousness,
because that gives one a start
in searching after his supreme interest.**
(*Srimad Bhagavatam* 2.1.12)

All in a dream. We drift in a dream. We walk around in a dream state, just going through motions, trying to fulfill animal propensities. We try to be happy, we try to be satisfied. We are always in a low consciousness of dream state, unaware of actual reality. Even when I came to the shelter of Srila Prabhupada, still it seemed that I was always in a dream state no matter what was happening. I could not be fully aware of the treasure that I had. I forgot on an every-moment's basis. Full consciousness is full gratitude for what we have received. It is a gratitude that fully overwhelms us, brings us to tears.

They say that the chances of meeting the bonafide spiritual master is like a turtle in the vast ocean, surfacing with his head popping right through a hole in a floating plank of wood. That very thing happened to me when I came to the mercy of Srila Prabhupada. But doubly lucky, I also came into the immediate association of Jayananda, personal association for weeks, like my *bhakta* program, and that was a double turtle head in the knot hole. It was like winning two lottery jackpots in two states on the same day. And all that time, I was still not fully conscious of my fortune, I still did not realize the level of gratitude that I could be fully capable of.

Full consciousness is that rare moment when the perception of the mercy of God comes all at once, the realization of God's mercy that brings you to your knees, that brings heavy tears to the eyes. Times that would embarrass you in public, things that most people would never express in front of other people. It is the moment when one has a complete catharsis of emotions in gratitude and thanks to the Lord and Sri Guru for one's good fortune.

Jayananda so good and saintly

There were a few times like this. One time was when Jayananda and I drove the large *murti* of Lord Chaitanya from San Francisco to Berkeley. The San Francisco temple has very nice mobile *murtis* of Gaura-Nitai. We were moving Them separately to the temple in Berkeley. Jayananda wanted me to ride in the back of the truck and hold Lord Chaitanya, so that He would not tip and fall. I was holding the chest of the Lord as we were crossing the Bay Bridge and the sun was rising. At that moment, it got really heavy for me. A rare moment. I was gazing at the Lord's face, seeing the sun coming up, and seeing all the iron of Kali-yuga all around, the bridge and cars and everything. I also saw the back of Jayananda's head and how he was chanting *japa* on his beads. It overwhelmed me how Lord Chaitanya was like the rising sun, as described in *Chaitanya-Charitamrita*, and how He was saving us from this iron age of Kali, how His face was so beautiful, and how Jayananda was so good and saintly in His service. How fortunate I was to have this daily association with Jayananda! I had a daily life with Jayananda, and those were the best years of my life, although I barely realized it at the time. I could not stop the tears of appreciation at the rare moment.

The real initiation

Another time was when Srila Prabhupada came to San Francisco for the Ratha-yatra festival in 1975. The best moment was when Srila Prabhupada was giving the lecture from the platform. There were thousands of people and I could not even get close to the stage, and I could not see Srila Prabhupada. But while listening to the lecture, every word I heard penetrated my heart very clearly and deeply, and it was an unusual time of aural reception for me. Every word from Srila Prabhupada was very profound to me. It was so heavy and wonderful that I could not stop the tears from flowing down my cheeks. It was a true moment of full consciousness, and I truly understood the nectar words of my spiritual master at that time. I feel that this was my actual initiation, rather than at the ceremony. As they say, *divya-jnana* is

injected into the heart of the disciple by the bonafide spiritual master, and that is initiation.

Be quiet and listen

Hearing from our spiritual master is the most important process of devotional service. This was vividly illustrated in another experience I had in Srila Prabhupada's presence. We were all on a walk with Srila Prabhupada on Watseka Avenue in Los Angeles, California, across the street from the temple. A major thing I remember was the profound silence around Srila Prabhupada. Usually on Watseka Avenue, there's always a great din in the air, like babies crying in the background, or shouts of "hari-bol," or devotees talking everywhere. But in the presence of Srila Prabhupada there was an absolute silence around the sidewalk. It was as if the Supersoul in everyone's hearts was telling us all to just be quiet and listen to the divine master. Adults, kids, insects, birds and animals were all silent in his divine presence. And we were all listening for the nectar from his lotus lips.

He's still here, and this is what we really need – more listening, less arguing. More Srila Prabhupada-*vani* and less opinions. The first and most important step in the nine-fold process of devotional service is hearing. And hearing from Srila Prabhupada, and about Srila Prabhupada, is the most important process of devotional service.

As Maharaja Yudhisthira said, it seems at times that we don't worry about dying, like we think it won't happen. Maybe it's because we are actually *sat-chit-ananda*, we are souls eternally full of knowledge and bliss ... and because we are used to being eternal, therefore death is something foreign to our eternal soul, and thus we don't expect our lives to come to an end. Then it happens at times that some of us get a glimpse into that terrifying world of death. Some of us get a peek through the ominous doorway into the darkness, some get very near to death and live to tell. Then truckloads of realization floods the mind, and one becomes penultimately more serious in his Krishna Consciousness. It is an actual blessing to get real close to death, to get truly scared to death, because there are not too many things that will wake one up more effectively – nothing will do it better than a close

brush with death.

Suddenly the *Bhagavatam* becomes so clear

When one thinks that he is near death, then full consciousness comes at once, and everything you've read in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* becomes so very true and clear. For example, how death is described to be like a black snake who quickly swallows up a rat, giving him no leniency. You may complain to death, saying that this is really bad timing, I didn't see you coming, dear death, and this really wasn't in my schedule, and it's not fair, I just need a little more time ... but the black snake of death cares not for your pleading. You may say that my age does not seem appropriate for death to come. "Too soon," I say, but the black snake cares not a mite for my opinion. I say that my family is in need, what will they do without me? The black snake cares not. I have all my plans still to execute, but he has no leniency. All that is near and dear to oneself will very soon be totally gone, all out of the picture, and you come to realize all the time you wasted, all the procrastinating you did. You realize all the spiritual advancement you meant to do, but didn't. You see all the spiritual things you somehow didn't get around to doing, and now it's all gone, the opportunity gone forever. Only the dark unknown looms in front of you.

The mental conviction that death is near, or that it's actually happening, does a profound psychological thing to the emotions and awareness. Just the idea that one is soon to die and be gone does something heavy to the psyche. It's like standing in front of a firing squad, or under the gallows with a noose round the neck, or it's like walking up to a guillotine. One knows the exact time at which one's life will be ended. It's like he sees the last hours and minutes go by, he is laid down and hears the blade falling, fully aware down to the last second. He knows that his head will fall into the basket. And you will no longer be a real person, not the person you are used to. Even if one's death sentence is somehow pardoned at the last second, still the psychological effects of the experience remain.

He is reveling in bliss, wherever he is

Jayananda and saints and everyday people are not necessarily gone when they leave the body. We have this strange conception in this material world in that we feel sorry for people who pass away. We think that we are having fun here on earth and they are not. There are so many conceptions about this. Some think that they are lying in the grave, being nothing. Some think that they are in some boring (as hell) heaven, just bored out of their wits, sitting around playing harps and such. We think that they are upset that we are down here having fun while they are bored up there. We think they are waiting in line to come down to earth on some angel assignment, and they just can't wait to get back to exciting earth and have some fun again. In this way we feel sorry for people who pass away.

But little do we know the truth. And yes, people do suffer after death, but not all of them. Not the saints like Jayananda and other departed Vaishnavas. We could not conceive the bliss and happiness that Vaishnavas experience once they depart from this miserable world. And they can come back here in their blissful spiritual forms as well. If angels (or Gandharvas) come and go from there to here every day, then certainly there can be saints from our line who still exist on earth in their *sadhaka* forms. And this information was given in Mahanidhi Swami's book entitled *Prabhupada at Radha-Damodara*. The book relates that a respected Brijabasi scholar in our lineage was telling Mahanidhi Swami that the great *acharyas* still exist in Vrindavan in their *sadhaka* forms, but we cannot see them (unless we become pure). We can think about that one for a long time and consider the possibilities, and know that Srila Prabhupada is certainly still with us, still present and watching us in more ways than one. He is here in many ways, in his books, in his *murtis*, and like we said – how can anybody say he is gone? And it's the same with Jayananda. He is certainly reveling in bliss, wherever he is. He is also with Prabhupada, because that was his wish: to go wherever Prabhupada was doing service to Krishna, and assist him in his mission. And it is said that after near-death experiences people usually see some saintly figurehead type of person at the end of the light tunnel or whatever. This was the case with me, seeing Jayananda in my dream the very night I thought I was dying. It was so very real.

Forgetting Krishna is the only misery

After that particular nearer-to-death experience, I became very emotional and sentimental. The emotional episodes of catharsis with tears came without solicitation on a daily basis. It wasn't just some ordinary emotions; rather it was very special communions with Jayananda, every day. The time would be right, I was alone, the emotions swelled up, and Jayananda would always be right there, his vision within. Somehow I saw him clearly, and he was somehow right there with me, as real as could be. I remember how these daily communions were times of full consciousness. There were three major thoughts that went on: First, was how I lamented to Krishna, begging God to forgive me for coming to this material world, to please forgive me for taking this material body. I had full consciousness of how wretched this material body was, and how wretched this material world was, that forgetting Krishna was our only misery. Second, was the constant thanking to Srila Prabhupada for coming to America to save my wretched soul. Over and over again I expressed my gratitude to him for coming. Third, was the profound lament of how Jayananda had to leave us so soon, and how he was so kind to give me his association. I will continually give my thanks to Sriman Jayananda Thakur for his association all those years ago as well as not-so-many years ago, for saints never die, and I thank him for the opportunity for the many moments of full Krishna Consciousness that he has given me.

Jaya Jayananda Thakur.

Jayanandanugas – lower-than-straw devotees give tribute to Jayananda Thakur

Chandan Acharya Prabhu remembers this special feature about Jayananda: “He was completely enamored by Krishna Consciousness. Even when he'd go out on incense runs all by himself, he would rise every morning before four, have a little mangal-artik, chant all his rounds, read and cook prasad. He

never deviated. He loved it. He was completely happy as long as he was practicing Krishna Consciousness.” – from Remembering Jayananda by Kalakantha Dasa

Those who knew Jayananda always noticed one remarkable quality about him: he could not criticize others. It was against his nature. Even if a devotee did something which warranted criticism, Jayananda would usually say nothing, or else something that made the mistake appear to be perfectly understandable. No matter who was giving class or leading kirtan, he would always appreciate it. He never spoke harsh words or chastised anybody. If one devotee was criticizing another within earshot of Jayananda, Jayananda would simply leave.

Of all the processes of Krishna Consciousness, Jayananda was most attached to preaching. Whether it was during the Sunday feast, while making incense runs, or while building Ratha-yatra carts, Jayananda was always trying to find some person with whom he could share his ecstasy in Krishna Consciousness. His preaching was very simple and easy to listen to. “We just have to keep chanting and have faith in the Name.” “We just have to chant and take prasadam. Srila Prabhupada is so kind to give us such a simple process.” – from Remembering Jayananda by Kalakantha Dasa

17. Separation and Grief—He Still Lives

**He for whom no one is put into difficulty
and who is not disturbed by anxiety,
who is steady in happiness and distress,
is very dear to Me.
(Bhagavad-Gita 12.15)**

How beautiful was Jayananda's life? I'll tell you, but it's not so possible to say in words. Listen to the sweetest piece of music, with angelic violins reaching an emotional crescendo, the great summits of snowy mountaintop heights, like some great Bach or Mozart symphony, or maybe the nicest and rarest moments of musical splendor from any great music you like the best. That is how beautiful Jayananda's life is. Transport yourself to a clear lake decorated with large lotus flowers, transcendently situated on some heavenly planet, with swans swimming about, cascading waterfalls, breezes of rose fragrance – and that is how beautiful Jayananda's life is. Not that it “was” beautiful, it still is. He still lives. As Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur has written:

**He reasons ill who tells that Vaishnavas die
When thou art living still in sound?
The Vaishnavas die to *live* and living try
To spread a holy life around!**

The memory goes on and on

The only thing that is better than a really wonderful event in one's life is the memory of it. In fact, the memory is better. That's because the event lasts only so long, but the memory goes on and on. Just like reading the *Krishna Book* for the first time; nothing can compare to the first reading of *Krishna Book*. I remember that first impression, I was thinking of all the books I've ever read before, they all shriveled away in the presence of *Krishna Book*. I kept telling myself, “This is the greatest story ever told!” The first-time reading only happens once, but the memory of what you have read, and the continued re-reading and remembering it again and again – that goes on and on.

It's like that with my precious time with Jayananda. My association with him was only for one year, and it went by like a flash, seemed like a moment. It was my short allotted time with him, but the memory goes on and on, as the sustained memory completes the experience in a lifelong way. Memories of Vaishnavas transcend all time barriers. And

Jayananda's memory continues to be bitter-sweet. The pain is his separation, which is acute for those who loved him. The nectar is his person and sweetness and noble deeds recalled again and again. His sacred memory is much greater than the short time I had with him on earth. It has to be. Jayananda was my best friend ever, and he was gone within a year. This kind of pain has been hard to comprehend. His memory brings tears, and I'm not sure if they are tears of pain or bliss, perhaps both. Srila Prabhupada said in his talk on Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's disappearance day that great Vaishnavas never disappear – for them there's no difference between appearance and disappearance. The Lord and His devotees never disappear. Srila Prabhupada says that there is no reason to lament a Vaishnava's apparent disappearance; but still we feel the pain of separation.

I saw tears in their eyes

Jayananda was dear to all, even ordinary workaday people. Police officers, city commissioners, hippies, he charmed all their hearts. There was a lady commissioner of some sorts who always gave devotees a hard time. But even her hard heart was conquered by Jayananda, and she burst into tears when she heard of his passing away. I also saw this personally: The year after his passing, I was going to some store to get a part for Ratha-yatra. When I told them about Jayananda, immediately I could see tears in their eyes, men and women, and they gave me the part free, in commemoration of him.

A visit from beyond

The great life of Jayananda is not separated by time or space, he lives there somewhere with Krishna and Prabhupada, and everywhere in devotee's hearts simultaneously. In 1994 I had a nearest-to-death type of experience, thought I was having heart attacks for a week, at nighttime. Could not sleep, thought my heart was giving out. That night, after a week of this, I thought I was dead for sure, and somehow I fell asleep, and Jayananda came to me in a dream. We were hugging, heads on shoulders, both crying on each other's shoulders, I cried in a wonderful

way, so glad to see and touch him again, feeling ecstatic about his blissful form and graceful visit. I woke, in bliss, thought death was near for sure, because I was going to that “somewhere” up there to see Jayananda again, no doubt, to see him again, see his blissful, beautiful form. But I was wrong, dead wrong, it was only ulcer pain in the chest, doctor gave me pills. Then it hit me, the grief of Jayananda's absence, 20 years later, the grief set in. I anguished so much. Jayananda's dream did something to my heart. Something about the whole near-death did something to me, made me so emotional and sentimental, so abnormally emotional. I saw the balance of life and death, and realized that Jayananda was really gone, but still there. I would be in some store and hear some mundane song on the PA, and emotions would be tripped off and the tears would come involuntarily. When I was alone, driving or walking or something, even in a store, the tears would start and Jayananda would come to me. I saw him somehow, he still lives. Not with eyes, or maybe it was with heart, or mind, or maybe it was only in my imagination – makes no difference – he came every day for years and more. Every day he came and I cried, sometimes it was hysterical crying, raging, and senseless delirium for a long time, crying out for him somehow, crying for God and Prabhupada, but mostly it was him. I saw him clearly, and sometimes his inner vision seemed ethereal, unearthly. Emotion swelled in the heart, crying like a baby, like a child for his mom. It was like the closest thing to love of God, just like a tiny smidgen of Krishna-*prema*, that's what it was like.

No way, not possible, there was not any possibility of love for Krishna in this lifetime, but one thing was sure: I did feel love for the servant of His servant. That was happening. Was it grief, finally come after 20 years? Or was it just love in separation from the great soul and friend of mine? Both. Both are the same. Grief and love are the same with great friends and Vaishnavas. You will know when someone you really love dies, you will know what I mean. Nothing hurts as much, and nothing is as beautiful as the visit of Jayananda and his sweet memories.

I know no greater treasure than the memories of Vaishnavas like Jayananda Thakur and our Guru Maharaja, Srila Prabhupada. Always serve and remember them in your heart and hear and chant of Vaishnavas, they are Krishna come to us for our deliverance. Remember

him, he still lives. He still touches. He still guides. He is there for everybody, as the great Prabhupada-follower-acharya.

18. Ode to Jayananda

*Ohe! Vaishnava Jayananda Thakur, why did you have to go?
You know, things aren't going so good, and we're full of fear
ISKCON isn't what it used to be ... like when you were here
and I really miss your association so...*

*We could have done better with you aboard
on this ISKCON ship, just a little longer
you could have steered the boat, but you left in a rush,
and now we're left yelling and sinking and floundering,
I really do miss your association so...*

*You taught us so nicely, to serve and think of others
to serve God and His parcels without remuneration
selfless service was the shining example you've shown
but I'm so selfish, such a bad learner, dear Jayananda
I only want your association for myself, like the old days,
because I really miss your association so...*

*When will we go on a bhoga run together again?
and those Bhagavad-Gita readings in your room together,
oh where did they go? When will we read shastra again?
And when will we have your blissful impromptu kirtans,
dancing around the red truck
like Prabhupada's simple children?
Come back, I miss your association so...*

*When will we built another Ratha cart in the Frisco sun?
with big wheels turning round, and lotus flowers abound?
When will I wake to see you working all night
so we could see Srila Prabhupada ride
on Lady Subhadra's cart?*

Oh Thakurji, I miss your association so...
 Oh Jayananda, you don't know the pain I feel,
 that separation from a Vaishnava like you,
 is the greatest calamity, worse than a ring of fire,
 here a few days and gone so quick, how can I live with that?
 And I miss your association so...
 I see you everywhere, your face at every turn,
 then I look around and wonder, "Where did you go?"
 such short brilliant years on this earth, what great injustice!
 while so many rascals (myself)
 live their long and useless years,
 where is the rhyme and reason to all this?
 I just miss your association so...
 Come on back, and steer the ship,
 help us weather the storm of un-cooperation,
 and eschew the deadly rocks of false ego,
 give up our selfish, petty and pathetic plans,
 and serve Lord Chaitanya's mission selflessly,
 before the world passes us all by,
 and I do miss your association so much...

19. Conclusion

That Jayananda passed away while Srila Prabhupada was still on the planet is not insignificant. In this way, Srila Prabhupada was able to confirm to all of us that "Everyone should follow the example of Jayananda." Certainly those who knew Jayananda should take it upon themselves to preach about his qualities of humility, eagerness to serve, equanimity, and devotion to Krishna and Prabhupada. We offer our humble obeisances to all such devotees who understand these qualities and try to share them. We offer our humble obeisances unto His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada and to Sri Srimad Jayananda Prabhu, the exemplary teacher of devotional service in Krishna Consciousness. – from Remembering Jayananda by Kalakantha

Dasa

Oh my dear Jayananda, it will certainly take many *crores* of lifetimes for me to get out of the clutches of *maya*, and be able to go where you are today. This is because I'm such a foolish and stubborn thick-skulled *mudha*. But, somehow, someday, it might just happen that I may reject this world of *maya* and get Lord Nityananda's great mercy, and then someday I might see you again. When, oh when, will that day be mine? Someday Srila Prabhupada may reveal to me, within my heart, what my eternal *rasa* is. May the following wish of mine be granted? I fervently pray, may I somehow humbly assist you, in some menial way, in your service to Krishna? I can only imagine the great and exalted service that you are doing for Radha and Krishna ... and so I just humbly ask that whenever – and if – I ever get out of *maya* and finally surrender to Krishna and go back to Him ... could I humbly assist you in your service? One day it may be that you are grinding sandalwood paste for Their Lordships, and you may need some fragrant ingredient ... and then maybe, could I run pell-mell to fetch some saffron or anything else for you to use in your task? Sometimes, you may be stringing a garland for Lord Krishna ... and then maybe, could I assist you by procuring some certain exotic flowers from a *kalpa-vriksha* tree, for Krishna's pleasure? Can I be just one of your many assistants?

It may be that you are simultaneously assisting Srila Prabhupada in the *lila* of Ratha-yatra somewhere in the material world, and so could I assist you in building the carts once again? Srila Prabhupada said that when we all go back home we will recognize each other and so on. With this information in hand, I fervently pray that I may somehow be an assistant to you in your eternal service, and always relish the mellows of your beautiful personality of Sriman Jayananda Dasa, when we all get back home ... for the rest of eternity ... this is my wish.

Oh Jayananda Thakur, oh my dear brother! I have tried to tell your beautiful life as far as this Kali-yuga intelligence allows! And though my memory is like a sieve, and my association with you was far too short. Please accept this attempt to recount your amazing deeds on earth, of how your devotion to Srila Prabhupada and Lord Sri Krishna is the

quintessence of all things beautiful in Krishna's creation. All opulence on earth appears to be like a twig or pebble in comparison to your great life of devotion. As time goes on, I pray to always hear from others who got your blessed association ... and it seems that the stories of your pastimes are just totally unlimited – there is no end to them – for I keep hearing new ones all the time. May the spirit of your name, Jayananda – the victory of spiritual bliss – come back to conquer the great arrogance of this world. May we take up the essence of the third stanza of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's *Siksastakam*, of which you are the personification. May I always keep your image and glorious deeds locked up in my heart for the remainder of these short days. May I always hanker for the association of lower-than-straw Jayanandanugas. Your insignificant insect of a servant, and a friend, Vishoka Dasa

Jayananda speaks *Bhagavad-gita* class:

“So therefore, we can have faith that Krishna will always protect us in any kind of situation. That's the potency of devotional service, that it's transcendental to the bodily concept of life even up to the point of death. Devotional service is more powerful, because devotional service can even attract Krishna. That's the strength of devotional service, the devotion can attract Krishna. So if we have ... if that devotion ... even Krishna says it's not so much the service that's there, but it's the attitude of the devotee, the sincere desire for Krishna's association. In that way, Krishna will protect us. Krishna says in the Bhagavad-Gita that for one who does good, he is never overcome by evil.”

Srila Prabhupada on Jayananda –

“...Jayananda's death is glorious. It is very good that he had stated, what is the use of such a useless body, better to give it up. He has left his body very wonderfully, and he has been transferred to Vaikuntha. I have already sent a condolence letter for publication in Back To Godhead. Everyone should follow the example of Jayananda. I am very proud that I had such a nice disciple. If possible

Jayananda's picture should be hung in the Ratha of Lord Jagannatha, and in all of our temples a day may be set aside for holding a festival in his honor, just as we do on the disappearance day of the other great Vaishnavas..." – from Srila Prabhupada's Letter to Rameshvara – Hrishikesh, May 11, 1977

Appendix A: He Will Always be Remembered

For one who always
remembers Me without deviation
I am easy to attain, O son of Pritha,
because of his constant engagement
in devotional service.
(*Bhagavad-Gita* 8.14)

Everybody's guru

Devotees are the most wonderful and amazing people on this earth. Spiritual association with such devotees is the summit of our devotional career. We are always hankering for the association of devotees, and I especially savor those treasured moments of holy association with dear Jayanandanugas, those devotees who personally knew Jayananda, and also those who didn't actually physically meet him but who love him by hearing.

Once my daughter Vrinda Dasi and I went to Madhu-dvisha Dasa's house, which was nestled in the Sierra Nevada foothills in California. I never had a reason to go to his house before, but this time there was some reason and we came unannounced. I had no idea that Bhakta Dasa was there with Madhu-dvisha. This was a pleasant surprise for me. We three talked awhile, and the conversation came around to Jayananda. I said how I somehow always felt like Jayananda was my *guru*, I suppose like a *shiksha-guru*. Bhakta Dasa said, "Jayananda is everybody's *guru*." I didn't know then how prophetic Bhakta Dasa's words were. Jayananda

was more of a regional hero in California and New York City at that time. The rest of the devotee world didn't fully know his wonderful and glorious story, how he left us a glorious life vividly imprinted in the hearts of his godbrothers, written on tablets of fond memories with indelible images of golden deeds and sweet words, his example shining like a lighthouse beacon in a dark stormy sea of Kali-yuga.

Bhakta Dasa's words were prophetic in how Jayananda's story would be told by several biographers some day, how the world of devotees would realize his saintliness, how he would shine as the perfect disciple of Srila Prabhupada, how he would teach the world by his exemplary life, and how he would be a *shiksha-guru* for generations of Krishna-*bhaktas* into the future.

Rare transcendental artifacts

Then Bhakta Dasa did something very special. He had a small fragment of Lord Chaitanya's original *gamsha*, or bathing garment, which he procured from the Radha-Ramana Temple in Vrindavan, India. All the paraphernalia and clothing of the Lord is non-different from the Lord, and so Bhakta Dasa took me and Vrinda inside the house to the altar, where the garment fragment was gorgeously set within a frame, and he touched the garment *prasad* of the Lord to both our heads, and we felt great bliss.

Oh, how great is the spiritual potency of holy *tadiya* garments of the Lord, or *tadiya* articles used by His dear servitors! As the *Chaitanya-Charitamrita* says in *Madhya-lila* 12.38 –

O Devi, the most exalted system of worship
is the worship of Lord Vishnu.
Greater than that is the worship of *tadiya*,
or anything belonging to Vishnu.

Jayananda's profound message

Recently my wife and I went to Florida to be with our daughter for

Christmas. We got to Alachua, and decided to go to the temple for lunch *prasada*. Krishna Prema Dasi served us and then introduced my wife Pritha and I to a very senior Srila Prabhupada disciple, Jahnava Dasi. We had nice *prasadam* and nice conversation and then went to Jahnava's home to see her Radha-Krishna Deities. We had a very ecstatic *kirtan* and I was really blissed out in that *kirtan* as Jahnava led the chanting.

Afterwards, Jahnava Dasi showed us a very rare spiritual artifact. It was the original notebook of Jayananda's, in which he wrote:

Fire yajna

One must approach one who has realized the truth.

If we approach one who has not fully realized the truth
then what good will that association do?

This succinct statement is Jayananda Prabhu's profound message. Yes, the association of fully realized devotees is the most valuable thing in this material world. A moment's association with Krishna's pure devotee cannot compare to all the wealth in Solomon's coffers. I was blissed out to come into contact with that association of Jahnava and Krishna Prema and the holy *tadiya* artifact of Jayananda.

Gauridasa Pandita Dasa on Jayananda—the first ISKCON Saint

I had the good fortune to get Jayananda Prabhu's association in 1974. I had come from Seattle to the San Francisco Ratha-yatra. I came a week or so before the Ratha-yatra and Jayananda Prabhu asked me if I would help prepare the carts. I was happy to be engaged in that service. He drove us out to the Ratha cart site after morning prasadam every day. He would always be singing Hare Krishna or bhajans as he drove. He showed great compassion for all of the devotees and people. He was always bringing nice prasadam and treating everyone, even the garbage man, with great respect. This charmed everyone and made them want to offer some service back.

I ended up joining the Movement after this Ratha-yatra even though I had not planned on it. This may have been due to the inspiration I got from the great Jayananda Prabhu. Although I only had a few days' association with Jayananda Prabhu, it was enough to see that he was very Krishna Conscious. His body mind and words were totally engaged in the service of Sri Sri Guru and Gauranga.

Many devotees have memories of Jayananda and I hope they share them in the temples, homes and on the Internet. The humbleness and love for the Lord and the devotees was obvious to all who were fortunate enough to come into contact with Jayananda Prabhu, the first ISKCON saint. – Your servant, Gauridasa Pandita Dasa

Guru Dasa on Jayananda—the Vaikuntha all-time Vaishnava Hall of Fame

Dear Prabhus, Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Here are some stories about Jayananda Prabhu –

Prabhupada told me that when you see a Vaishnava, you automatically think of Krishna. When I saw Jayananda, who invariably was steady in his devotion, I think of Krishna. Jayananda was one of the most unselfish people I ever met.

Jayananda Prabhu was most known for his tireless work every year to make the Jagannatha festival a success. His service attitude was prevalent from the first day I met him in San Francisco. He motivated others and myself by example, doing as much as he could by himself before asking anyone else to help.

Jayananda gave Prabhupada five thousand dollars to keep our budding San Francisco temple blossoming. Jayananda drove a taxicab and turned his experience into becoming a celestial chauffeur by taking Prabhupada to many radio and television

programs, and to various places in Golden Gate Park for Prabhupada's morning walks. Stow Lake was Prabhupada's favorite place there.

I witnessed the respect Jayananda felt for Srila Prabhupada. I saw the love brimming from his eyes when he viewed his spiritual master, but Prabhupada brought that out in everyone he came in contact with.

Although Jayananda had a simple demeanor, he possessed a tremendous mind, retaining many details at once. In a playful mood Jayananda once asked me to name any street in San Francisco, and he claimed he would be able to tell me the adjacent streets, what stores or residences were on the street, and even what color the buildings were. I picked obscure streets, yet he remembered their details. He would tell me what stood on a street, road, lane or boulevard. He remembered whether a house was a Victorian, and he knew the cross streets. Then we would ride to the spot and his description was accurate. He also revealed to me that he gave up some academic scholarships or inheritance to become a devotee.

Anyone who knew Jayananda thought he was an honest and simple person. He never displayed his learning and never showed false ego or pride.

I relish all the association Jayananda bestowed upon me, starting with his presidency of the first San Francisco temple, as I was elected vice president. We planned together as we rode out to the farmer's market or the flower outlets.

He gave up his apartment for Jamuna and myself to live in, on Ashbury Street across from the Grateful Dead house, while he moved into the stark basement of the Frederick Street temple, where the bramacharis lived, to sleep on the floor.

We served together happily as our small family was close, learning and building together. I asked Jayananda to come to India, but everywhere he was, he was needed and useful. Jayananda and I finally got reunited when I was given charge

of a Radha-Damodara bus, traveling throughout the Pacific Northwest. Paribrajakacharya Maharaja and I gave three to four classes a day. During the lunchtime we set up a stage, prasadam counter and book table. Jayananda would man the prasadam distribution, as I introduced the chant and instruments and philosophy to students in Student Unions from Reed College to the University of Nevada.

From Tuesday till Saturday, Jayananda led the satellite sankirtan party out on the road. The two vans were under his leadership. I always trusted that the party was secure under his guidance. Even though I was officially in charge of the traveling party, I considered Jayananda the spiritual leader. The servant is the master. Jayananda Prabhu called me “Maharaja” but with so much friendship and without formality that he was more endearing, cutting through any pretense to get to the heart of the matter, which was our mutual goal: devotional service.

Whilst others were parading or posturing, Jayananda was working. He taught by example, therefore I humbly cast my vote for Jayananda to be in the Vaikuntha all-time Vaishnava Hall of Fame.

Your servant, Guru Dasa

Appendix B: Jayanandanugas Give Tribute to Jayananda Thakur

Feedback from the Jayananda website

Dear Vishoka Prabhu, Please accept my obeisances, all glories to Srila Prabhupada! Your website on Jayananda is very sweet and nectarean. Thank you for doing this excellent service. – Your humble servant,

Bhakta Dasa

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Congratulations with your NEW Jayananda Prabhu's Website. May it inspire the Vaishnavas to get their spiritual life together. Thank you very much, all glories to your service. May this meet you in good health. – Your servant, Ekanatha Dasa

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And I'm really looking forward to reading the latest Jayananda essays. I found the one you wrote about his visiting you in "trance" or dream state very interesting and moving. How wonderful if devotees who leave may return and inspire us! Who knows what wonders await devotees once this Movement gets back on track? – SS

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The Jayananda section ... WOW! MORE MORE MORE MORE !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! I'll endeavor to link to that from my UK Rathayatra site. – Your servant, Arjuna-natha Dasa

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All Glories to Srila Prabhupada! All Glories To Sri Sri Guru and Gauranga! All Glories To Lord Jagannatha! Hari-bol, I'm indeed very sad that I didn't get to know Jayananda Prabhu earlier. I came to know him after visiting your website. I've heard of him, but now I like him more! May Srila Prabhupada bless you. – Nitai

* * * * *

Hare Krishna, Dear Prabhus, please accept my most humble obeisance. All glories to Srila Prabhupada. Thank you for your wonderful service to present the website about Jayananda Thakur.

The article encourages me to read more of Prabhupada's books and try to apply his instructions in my life. Hari-bolo! – Your humble servant, Surya Locana Dasa, Central Borneo, Indonesia

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Dear Prabhu, Please accept my obeisances, all glories to Srila Prabhupada. Your web pages on Jayananda are absolutely great. I became aware, just a few moments ago, that today is Jayananda's Disappearance Day and I immediately thought of looking at your web, which I had bookmarked ¾ year ago, for some material to read. – Your servant, Anadi Krishna Dasa

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Hare Krishna Prabhu, Please accept my obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada. I really like your page on Jayananda Prabhu, it's beautiful. It is so sweet you honor him in such a way. Looks like he was a great devotee. Keep up the good work! Hari-bol. – Your servant, Megha

* * * * *

Hari-bol! This is a very nice site for a very nice devotee. Being part of ISKCON, I have heard many a cool story of Jayananda Thakur, the true example of a Vaishnava. Although I am too young to have ever met him in this lifetime, he has left a vast impact on me and many other Krishna youth. We love to huddle around on warm summer nights and listen to a senior devotee share nectar on Jayananda Prabhu ... there is nothing better that I can think of. My best-loved Jayananda story is the one in which he walked out of the store wearing unpaid-for pants ... that is a riot! If Jayananda was still around, he'd certainly be a guru ... and without a trace of doubt in my mind, I'd gladly take initiation from him. Long live Jayananda in all our hearts. May his spirit of pure asceticism continue. All glories to Saint Jayananda! Jaya Jayananda! Much blessings to the assembled

devotees! Hare Krishna! – Bhaktin Prahlad

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Hari-bol Vishoka – Obeisances, all glories to Prabhupada. I really enjoyed your stories about Jayananda – brought tears of joy to my eyes – he is such a great Vaishnava and continued inspiration to us all. – Hari-bol, Damaghosh Dasa

***Reply** – Thank you so kindly for the endearing words of encouragement, Jayananda is fully potent to bring tears to all eyes and change people's lives, just as he did all those years ago.*

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Praise devotees, don't criticize them

Dear Prabhu, I think this page was really a wonderful nectarean experience. It is rare to find such a perfect devotee, save Srila Prabhupada. It is facts like these that the media should be concentrating on to show that this is a bonafide Krishna Consciousness Movement, rather than dwelling on a few devotees who had strayed from the path. Most publicity I see and hear from the media is usually of the negative kind. Again, thank you for inserting a positive ray of sunshine. I feel that I have really come to know Sri Jayananda Thakur, and if I can follow even an atomic portion of his life, I will consider myself extremely fortunate. – Hari-bol, Bharat

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Dear Vishoka Dasa Prabhu, Hare Krishna! All glories to Srila Prabhupada and all of our acharyas. I am in deep appreciation of your transcendental feelings for Jayananda Prabhu. I believe that in this dark time of criticizing Vaishnavas, that to see someone doing

*quite the opposite is wonderful, and an example for all to follow. –
Humbly, Mithiladhisa Dasa*

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*I have looked up your Jayananda page, and it is very beautiful, as
opposite to what is going on here on Com. – Thank You, Hayagriva
Dasa*

* * * * *

*Dear Vishoka Prabhu – Obeisances – All glories to Srila
Prabhupada and Jayananda Thakur!!!! Thanks for your latest letter
and all that you've written, especially on Jayananda!! As usual, I
need a tissue box handy when I read what you write about Jayananda
because it speaks to the heart, something sorely needed in this day of
heightened in-fighting amongst devotees. When I read writing such as
yours, it further convinces me of the truth of Krishna Consciousness
– that it is Eternal, and always Blissful!! Why not live that way and
be happy as Prabhupada always told us? Some will never get it, and
some will – and THOSE devotees I consider my real associates. –
Hari-bol, Damaghosh Dasa*

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Experiences with the Vaishnava Saint

*Hare Krishna. Many thanks to my good friend Vishoka Prabhu for
his Jayananda nectar-katha. I practically immersed myself for the
entire day and still haven't finished. I'm not sure if I had any direct
contact with him except for a possible incense run we did in an old
beat up Volkswagen bug. This was back in San Francisco in the early
'70's. I wish my memory of those days were better. I remember feeling
very safe in his presence – especially surrounded by all that maya –*

as I was extremely new. – Your servant, Srestha Dasa

* * * * *

I only met Jayananda Prabhu a couple of times, and mainly towards the tail end of his stay. I was always impressed by his gentle nature and his one-pointed Krishna Consciousness. After his departure, I wanted to assist more in serving his desire for the Ratha-yatra in Los Angeles. There was an auction of his personal effects for raising funds for the festival of Lord Jagannatha. I was fortunate enough to have Jayananda Prabhu's small Deities come to stay with me. If I recall, only Babhrubahan Prabhu showed a serious interest in those Deities and he was quite close to Jayananda Prabhu. Now, by the mercy of Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra, we get to remember Jayananda Prabhu often, just by seeing his Deities. Keep up the good work! – Humbly, Mithiladhisa Dasa

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Dear Vishoka Dasa, Please accept my obeisances, all glories to Srila Prabhupada. About ten years ago I was real good friends with (the late) Buddhi-manta Dasa. He was “famous” for starting book distribution. something he NEVER took credit for. He was a devotee in San Francisco 1969, president was Keshava Dasa, the brother of Karandhara Dasa. We would talk a bunch. He told me many things. One thing I remember was this – “I am surprised that Jayananda became so special. He was always driving the cab. He couldn't read the Sanskrit so good in the verses. He did not know that many verses. He had not even read all of Srila Prabhupada's books. His classes were very simple and about the people he had met in the cab. He would stop at a grocery store and offer a bag of cookies, and give one to every passenger he had in the cab. Our sankirtan van would always break down, and somehow Jayananda would always get there and get us back on the road. I don't know how he did it. We would call the temple and he would show up and get us going. I never thought he would be someone so special to Srila Prabhupada.” This was told to

*Pandava-vijaya by Buddhi-manta Dasa in 1988-89. – Your servant,
Pandava-vijaya Dasa*

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Hari-bol, this is Nipuna Dasi. Jayananda used to baby-sit me for my mother Bhavatarini Dasi. In addition to all his service like washing pots and taking out the trash and getting all the local businesses to donate free bhoga like big metal dairy farm containers of milk and lots of sour cream and fresh fruit, and organizing Ratha-yatra, he would baby-sit me while my mother went out on sankirtan. My mother tells me it's because of Jayananda Prabhu that I was such a giant baby with huge cheeks. He is the one that made it possible for the temple to be so abundant in milk and yogurt and sour cream and all sorts of fresh fruit. I ate mangoes and sour cream, and bananas and sour cream, and cantaloupe and sour cream. Hee hee. Well, back to Jayananda ... this is how he would watch me. He would put me in those big rectangle-shaped flower boxes that we got the loose carnations in and give me candy, and I would be content to just watch him work. My father was the pujari on the cart at the first big San Francisco Ratha-yatra. His name is Devaprastha Dasa. I'm sure he worked with Jayananda Prabhu as well. – Hari-bol, Nipuna.

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Hare Krishna, Vishoka Prabhu! All Glories to Srila Prabhupada! You are quite welcome for the Jayananda-katha (anecdote). I have not seen Jayananda's face since San Francisco, so the photos are most enlivening. These relationships we share with Krishna's devotees are so powerful. I am so pleased that you are devoting an Internet page to his illustrious memory.

One of Jayananda's greatest glories, of course, is his refusal to take sannyasa, when so many were all too eager to ignore Lord Chaitanya's cautionary advice. So, again I thank you for engaging me in conversation about Krishna's devotee, and one of my all-time heros, Jayananda. When you've time, write again. I'll be visiting your

page often. – Sincerely, Vatsara Dasa

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Today, I do not care if I live or die, a NDE may produce different results, but somehow or other I feel that my fixed up fellow disciples, such as the wonderful Jayananda, will again act as my preceptors and speak to Srila Prabhupada on my behalf, not even considering my shortcomings, just as he did that day he stopped working on the cart and went through great effort to make sure that I received a plate of maha-prasadam. – Mahaksha Dasa

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All Glories To Srila Prabhupada! Please accept my obeisances. Hare Krishna! I am not worthy to even reply. Please forgive me for existing. Keep me informed of your efforts. It is possible that even the lowest of life forms may evolve exponentially thru the contact of a devotee. May all the blessed pastimes of Srila Jayananda be known eternally. Personally, I was the pick-up man after the great devotees like Jayananda passed away. Many close godbrothers and sisters in the Berkeley and San Francisco areas still have much nectar to share. – Hare Krishna, Gopal Dasa

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Here is a nice story that give proof that Jayananda was a maha-bhagavata – someone who can produce in others the sentiments of devotional love for devotees of Krishna by dint of their actions.

Spontaneous sentiments for Krishna and His devotees are generated by pure love for Krishna. This love and its taste are perceived in non-devotionally inclined persons when they get the merciful association of a maha-bhagavata devotee. Jayananda was such a devotee that he could inspire such feelings even after leaving the planet.

An occasion of this sort came when a devotee was approached by a

rather down-and-out fellow in the streets of New York. The man inquired about Jayananda and wanted to know if the devotee knew him. When he was told of Jayananda's departure, he began to weep profusely. "He was the only person I ever felt ever cared about me," said the derelict. He had worked on the Ratha-yatra carts with Jayananda Thakur.

As far as his total example goes, Jayananda-acharya was and will probably remain unbeatable. We have the proof in New York City Hall, in the streets and in our own hearts. If new devotees want to find a perfect example of humility, we have Jayananda for all of time in ISKCON. – (From COM, not sure who wrote this)

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I think often of Jayananda, his pleasing Srila Prabhupada. In such meditation, I also think of Srila Haridasa Thakur, who requested from Sri Chaitanya to be allowed to leave because he could not bear the separation if the Lord of his life preceded him. Similarly, I firmly believe that Sriman Jayananda could not bear to exist in the absence of Srila Prabhupada, and that his passing was the Divine Grace, and that together they are planning maha-festivals as I write this memo. – Your servant, Mahaksha Dasa

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A report on Ratha-yatra in France

It is wonderful you have created this site on Jayananda, with his stories when he was amongst us. Jayananda Prabhu has always been, for me, an example of a perfect servant of Srila Prabhupada. I often referred to him, here in France, to other devotees, explaining how Jayananda was such an exalted devotee, so faithful and dear to Srila Prabhupada. But, as you say, hardly anybody knows about him around the world, despite he is our first Saint. In fact, in France I am

the only one who had the privilege to meet him. Only a few of us in Europe had this rare opportunity.

I always remember when you and my brother Jiva-krishna Dasa and I went to visit Jayananda in his room in Los Angeles. At that time he was becoming very weak, but when he saw you, he jumped out of his seat and offered his obeisances to all of us. I'll always get that image in my heart, such a humble devotee. In fact, anything I have done in connection with Jayananda Prabhu always brings me happiness, such as building the carts with Vatsala Dasa and you in San Francisco, the cart that Jayananda had conceived. Even chanting my rounds in his red truck in Berkeley, after Jayananda's disappearance, was for me like a tirtha place.

I sometimes pray to him to guide us here, in organizing year after year the Ratha-yatra. This is so wonderful to glorify Lords Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra in the streets of Paris. Actually, I am part of the bureau here which organizes that festival each year with my godbrothers Advaita-chandra Dasa, Arishta-nashana Prabhu and Nitai-gaura Sundara Prabhu. We keep putting on, with the help of the Paris temple and the Indian congregation, the Ratha-yatra festival. When I help to participate in organizing that festival, it always puts me in connection with Jayananda Prabhu; that's why I chose to do this service, it reminds me of my first years in Krishna Consciousness. Thank you very much, Prabhu. Please keep pouring on us stories of Jayananda Prabhu, the world of devotees need it, specially now ... every devotee needs to see how Srila Prabhupada and Krishna made such a sincere devotee. We have a little journal in which we try to glorify, twice a year, the importance of Ratha-yatra. Having stories of Jayananda Prabhu will really enliven the devotees. Hari-bol. Jayananda Prabhu ki jaya!! – Your servant, Maharshi Dasa

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Hundreds of books on Jayananda

Dear Vishoka Prabhu, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to jagat-guru Srila Prabhupada. It was good to have your association on the phone. The work you are doing is of topmost importance at this time. The message and example of Sriman Jayananda Prabhu must be circulated throughout the world for the benefit of all. – Your servant, Dasaratha-suta Dasa

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Hari-bol, Jaya Jayananda Prabhu. Here are some comments made by phone. I was greatly blessed by the phone association of a wonderful Jayanandanuga last night, Dasaratha-suta Prabhu. We talked Jayananda-katha for an hour, and it was very nectarean. He is to come forth with his book on Jayananda, ***“Jayananda: The Triumph of Bliss, A Biography of Jim Kohr, America's First Hare Krishna Saint.”*** He is working full-time on it. He has interviewed many devotees (more than 100) about Jayananda, and so the book promises to have many more stories than we've heard so far. I am realizing more and more that there are so many stories out there that I've not heard yet. He is sending a story or so for the website, along with updated and edited versions of Adikeshava's page and others. He told me that so many devotees and people have talked to him about Jayananda. He said that almost always, that everybody has said the same thing, “The whole world, and our lives do not make sense. The problems we have in the Movement do not make sense. But after hearing the activities and qualities of Jayananda Prabhu, then everything makes perfect sense.” I find this to be a universal truth.

Jayananda has taught everyone who's been fortunate to hear of him, and touched everyone's heart who came into contact with him, of his life and stories. We look forward to Dasaratha-suta's book, and also Vaiyasaki's new book on Jayananda and Vishnujana Swami. And there's Mother Dhanistha's book, and perhaps there will be more. Vaiyasaki Dasa said that there could be 100's of books on Jayananda, and we all agree. We have much to look forward to, thanks to the good work of these devotees. Jaya Jayananda. – Your servant, Vishoka Dasa

Appendix C: Thoughts From Jim Kohr's Family

The next few messages are from Jane Pietrangelo and Steve Pietrangelo, Jayananda's niece and nephew –

Hello, My name is Jane Pietrangelo, Jayananda was my uncle. I was very young when he passed. I remember how we feasted at my parent's house, with delicious vegetarian food. I was only four or five years old at the time. I am so proud of my uncle, I wish I could have spent more time with him before his calling. I swaddled my son in his baby blanket, and will always keep his memory of peace and love for all Humankind. I am so glad I found this site, I know my uncle is with me at those times I am troubled and have negative feelings. I cannot answer too many questions about him, unfortunately, perhaps you will answer them for me! My upbringing was in a very conservative home, very devoid of emotion and expression at times. My Grandma Kohr and my Mother are so caring and compassionate, and always think of others. I give thanks for the gifts The Almighty has given me. Please e-mail if you have any other related sites or more information about Uncle Jim. He will always be my Uncle Jim, and always my guide, Jayananda. – Respectfully, Jane Pietrangelo

Vishoka's reply –

Hello, Jane. Your uncle Jim was a very great man. He was the greatest man from America I ever knew. He will be known as a great saint of America. The devotees of Krishna already know him as a saint. As more books come out about him, then the rest of America will know more. You are very lucky to be in his family, and to eat the vegetarian food that he prepared. You can be very proud of Jim. You will always be with him, especially by hearing about him from others. He was the best friend I ever had, and he left after only one year. You can imagine how painful that is to me. But, by his memory, we will always be together. Your grandmother is very blessed to have Jim for her son. I understand she is a very feeling and compassionate woman, as you said. I wrote to her once, and she wrote a very nice card back

to me. You know a lot about Jim already. God bless you and thanks so much for your e-mail. – Sincerely yours, Vishoka Dasa.

From Steve Pietrangelo –

Jayananda was my Uncle, Jim Kohr. My sister found your site and sent me the URL address. How wonderful to see my uncle remembered so well! I remember he came to visit us in the '70's in Colorado. I hated the food he cooked (at the time I only liked ice cream and cake!) but we always liked to listen to the record of the Krishna chant. My Mother and my Grandmother were devastated about the death of my uncle. The fear of that loss hit again when I was also diagnosed with cancer – my family had always thought I resembled my uncle very closely but this was too close! I'm fine, currently in remission with a cure rate of 90%. I'm looking forward to my Grandmother viewing your tribute to her son and my uncle. Thanks again! – Steve

Jayananda was kind to everybody...from Gaynelle Kohr Pietrangelo (Jayananda's sister)

Jim was kind to animals, too. I know he was on a beach in California and he sat there for like three hours and picked these ticks off this poor dog, this old mutt, I mean that's the kind of person he was. It was an old dog, and all I remember was he said that this dog had tons of ticks, and he just sat there two hours, three hours to take all these ticks off this old stray dog. I just remember him telling me about it.

When I was over at my mom's recently I saw a picture of him when he was about two years old, and I said, "He's like an old soul." Exactly, yeah. He was always ... he was a kid, but there was something always different about him. He was just different. Yeah, he was. That's the only way I could describe it, like an old soul. He was an amazing person, he really was, and he deserves to be a saint.

From Jayananda's mother, taken from *Radha-Damodara Vilasa* by Vaiyasaki Dasa –

Mrs. Kohr: At the age of four he was taken to a service in what we call the big church in Dayton, Ohio. He was very restless, standing up in the sanctuary and looking around. His grandmother inquired, "Jimmy, what's wrong? What are you doing? What are you looking for?"

"Where is God?" he replied.

More from Jane Pietrangelo –

I am so happy that you have made the decision to perpetuate Jayananda's life. I know that he came to you that night to bring you some peace, and to encourage you to help others find it as well. I once told you I wrapped my son Soren in his baby blanket. That was very significant for my child's developing spirit. My faith in the Creator, who goes by so many names, has always been there when nothing else was. His mercy and kindness are evident at all times, humans are capable of so many beautiful acts, and God has given us the choice to take the sometimes-turbulent path to find Him.

Often humans choose the path that is flat with no challenges, thinking it will lead to the same destination. But alas, many still, even at the end, will never go to the other path, even when they see the ultimate reward of purest love if they just choose Him, they turn away. I pray for my family in this way, and for all those who don't feel the power of God.

Once again, thank you for providing this resource for me. Well, please give all my respect and appreciation to all of the Devotees of Lord Krishna. All those who have faith in God, no matter what name they use to call Him by, will intersect one day. Evolution must take place to open the minds of the faithless. One can never give up the hope that even those who seem lost, can always find His love. This I pray for all Humanity as do you. Give thanks and praise to the MOST HIGH! –

Jane

About the Author

Vishoka Dasa joined Srila Prabhupada's mission in 1974 in San Francisco, where he met Jayananda Prabhu. By 1977, he was serving as a sculptor at FATE studios, working with Adi-deva and Bharadraja and many other talented devotees, with some of his work being displayed inside the museum of the Detroit Bhaktivedanta Cultural Center, as well as some gigantic eight-foot Vedic statues standing in the outdoor

gardens. In addition, he carved and produced many marble-like Deities of Their Lordships Sri Sri Gaura-Nitai. These Deities were distributed in several continents, including a set given to Kirtiraja Prabhu to be smuggled into communist Russia in 1981, being the first Deities to come to Russia. Vishoka lives in the New Vrindavan Community in West Virginia with his wife, Pritha Dasi, and has two daughters, Vishnu-priya and Vrinda-devi. He drives a truck cross-country for a living, and uses every spare moment at home to maintain his Jayananda Web Page as well as other devotional projects on the internet.