



Spiritual Perspectives

Seeing the World through Spiritual Eyes
For Friends and Followers of Mukunda Goswami

What is our duty?

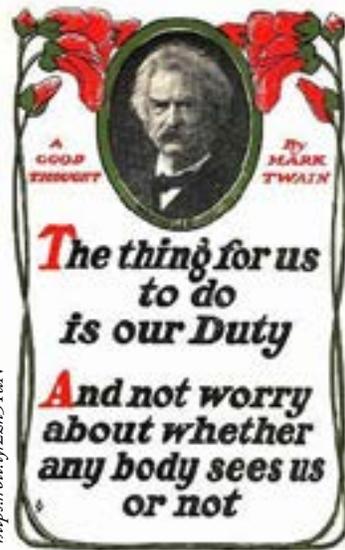
By Radha devi dasi

Duty is an almost old-fashioned word these days. We value innovation and excitement. Duty seems to belong to a stodgy, traditional past. Moreover, the word can be used to justify almost anything. The fact remains, however, that doing one's duty is a fundamental concept of bhakti-yoga.

Unfortunately, the misuse of the concept of duty is rife in *Kali-yuga*. For example, the chief executive of a small pharmaceutical company recently defended hiking the price of an essential antibiotic by more than 400 percent. He told the *Financial Times* that he thinks "it is a moral requirement to make money when you can."

Nirmal Mulye, CEO of the small Missouri-based drug company Nostrum Laboratories, raised the price of a bottle of nitrofurantoin from \$474.75 to \$2,392. The drug is a decades-old antibiotic that the World Health Organization lists as an essential medicine. In line with this perspective, Mulye took a moment to defend Martin Shkreli, who gained notoriety for buying exclusive rights to another decades-old drug and ruthlessly raised its price by more than 5,000 percent virtually overnight.

While we may instinctively reject the idea that price gouging is "moral," the *varnashrama dharma* system does provide some basis for arguing a moral duty in the marketplace. Each of the four *varnas* comes with certain duties. If one is a *vaisya*, it is indeed one's duty to make money. Similarly, a householder has a duty to make money to support his family. However, this type of duty is not absolute.



<https://bit.ly/2zn51dN>

Other duties, to both family and society have to be considered. Treating others with respect and compassion is an important element of a healthy society.

In a market economy, however, corporate decision makers hold a significant degree of power over the kind of society we live in. And for a corporation in the modern era, making money is the primary duty. Thus, we see people around the world denied basic necessities like food, water, shelter and medicine if they can't pay the price.

Our real duty in life has nothing to do with temporary goals like wealth accumulation. As Srila Prabhupada explains, the very *dharma* (or essential

characteristic and occupation) of the living being is service. "Service" presupposes action, and the *Bhagavad-gita* states that it is impossible for the living being to cease from action even for a moment. Lord Caitanya states that the *svarupa*, or constitutional position, of the living being is the rendering of service to God. From this statement, Srila Prabhupada deduces that there is no living being who does not render service, and that at no time does the living being stop rendering service.

Understanding that we must serve the Lord is the first step. Understanding how to serve the Lord is crucial, though. With the knowledge that all spirit souls are related, that material gains are temporary, and that our life has a higher purpose, we should easily conclude that making money for the sake of accumulating more and more wealth is a relatively trivial pursuit.



<https://nyti.ms/2wrT4CL>

Hare Krishna School Students Perform on Top New Zealand TV Show

By: Madhava Smullen, *ISKCON News*, October 19, 2018
<https://bit.ly/2Sum3PX>

Students of the Hare Krishna School on the New Varshana farm near Auckland, New Zealand performed *Harinama* live on one of New Zealand's top TV shows on Sunday, October 7th.

What Now? is a New Zealand institution. The children's television program has been running for nearly forty years and is one of the top ten most popular shows in the country. It is filmed before a live audience at a different school in Auckland every week, and airs every Sunday at 8 a.m. on the national TV station TVNZ 2.

Producers contacted the Hare Krishna School's principal Krsnananda Das about having the children and members of the New Varshana community featured in their next live program, which was to be held at a nearby school.



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Devotees chant live on National TV in New Zealand

"They explained that they wanted the Hare Krishnas because we are important members of the greater community, and are so colourful and joyful," says New Varshana temple president Kalasamvara Das.

Since he would be traveling in India at the time, Principal Krsnananda Das handed over organization of the performance to Bhaktin Harriet, mother of one of the children at the Hare Krishna school, who made the event a great success. Around fifty primary school students, former students and other New Varshana community members turned up for the show.

Devotees chanted *Harinama* in the school courtyard on a stage decorated with intricate designs, under a large screen that read "The Krishna Crew." Dressed in beautiful, colorful outfits, spinning and dancing, playing drums and calling out the Holy Name, they entranced everyone.

Afterwards, they distributed simply wonderfuls, an ISKCON staple sweet, amongst audience and crew members.

Fifty Hare Krishna School students, former students and New Varshana community members performed *Harinama* live on popular NZ TV show What Now?

Meanwhile Varshana Pere, a local Maori devotee whose parents are also devotees, spoke to What Now? host Erin Wells about the joy of being a Hare Krishna.

"Overall it was a great and wonderful experience for all," says Kalasamvara Das. "The crew, the audience, the devotees; and of course thousands of Kiwis got the opportunity to see happy and colorful Hare Krishnas dancing and chanting the Holy Names of the Lord on National TV in their homes."

ISKCON's Global Contributions Recognized at the World Hindu Congress

By: ISKCON News Staff, *ISKCON News*, September 8, 2018
<https://bit.ly/2DgtNRe>



ISKCON's Governing Body Commissioner and International Director of Communications Anuttama Dasa received the felicitation on behalf of the Hare Krishna movement

The World Hindu Congress, which has been billed by many as one of the largest international Hindu conferences with over 2,500 participants from 60 countries, recognized Srila Prabhupada and his International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) for its vital role in spreading the message of *Bhagavad-gita* around the world and introducing the ethnic population to the teachings of Hinduism at its inaugural plenary yesterday in Chicago, Illinois, USA.

The plenary session began with Sanskrit prayers sung by Chandrika Tandon, a Grammy nominated artist and a Trustee of New York University. A video message by the Dalai Lama, who could not travel due to health reasons, was played which was followed by a message from the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi.

For an organization that began in the streets of the Bowery in New York City, which today is one of the largest religious institutions in the world, ISKCON has come a long way in successfully taking the message of Vaishnava Hinduism to all corners of the world and introducing the native population the teachings of *Bhagavad-gita*.

“Whatever success we [ISKCON] have is a testimony to the profound value of our shared culture and profound knowledge with which we all have



The three day event has drawn spiritual leaders, scholars, social activists, politicians, business leaders and celebrities who aim to develop a global platform for Hindus to connect, share ideas, inspire one another, and impact the common good

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been blessed... Real peace and success lies in understanding our divinity and our relationship with the divine. This world is not ours to conquer because it belongs to God and only when we understand this can there be real peace. This is our shared message” said Anuttama Dasa.

ISKCON members and followers also spoke at various breakout sessions addressing the topics of reaching unreached areas, sustainable ecological practices among others.

Link to the video of his speech: <https://youtu.be/G5BKnjKckRY>



BBT Project Manager Helps Create Automated Systems for More Responsible Publishing of Prabhupada’s Books

By: Madhava Smullen, *ISKCON News*, September 7, 2018
<https://bit.ly/2RvBoyr>

Often we don’t realize how much work continues to go into producing Srila Prabhupada’s books at the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, or who is responsible behind the scenes.

Meet one of these devotees – Hare Krishna Das from Russia. A member of a BBT team headed by trustee Brahma Muhurta Das, he is helping to develop incredible automated systems to optimize the production, ensure accuracy and make proofreaders’ and editors’ jobs easier.

Growing up in Uzbekistan, Hare Krishna Das always had an innate attraction to books and dreamed of working with them.

In 1990, while the Soviet Union was crumbling and he was still in school, he first came in contact with his destiny. An art teacher at school happened to be a devotee, and somehow

evaded authorities’ radar to go from classroom to classroom, presenting Srila Prabhupada’s books. Intrigued, Hare Krishna Das took *Sri Isopanisad* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam* 1.1 from her.

“When I read the books I felt like Prabhupada was speaking directly to me,” he says. “I always wanted something non-materialistic and idealistic, and he answered many of my questions.”

Soon after, another devotee stopped by Hare Krishna’s apartment, and he raced downstairs to stop his sister from shutting the door so that he could purchase a *Bhagavad-gita* As It Is. Asking for an address where he could attend regular programs, he then joined ISKCON at only sixteen years old.

After getting his university degree in physics Hare Krishna Das began traveling with

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Hare Krishna Das in a book binding class during the BBT's recent Annual General Meeting

B.B. Govinda Swami as his translator from 1997 to 2001, then was offered the service of production manager at the Moscow branch of the North European BBT in 2001.

“I was immediately attracted to work for the BBT because when I joined ISKCON books were the basis of everything,” he says. “We only had a few books, but everything we did revolved around them.”

After eight years serving at the North European BBT headquarters in Korsnäs Gärd, Sweden from 2004 to 2012, Hare Krishna Das and his family moved back to Russia in 2012, where he now works for the NE BBT from a small town called Kaluga.

Hare Krishna’s service as a project manager involves assisting in the development of books from concept to print. For each book he has to assemble a team of qualified editors, proofreaders and translators, and make sure they have the right tools and resources. He works with every facet of production, including layout, technical processes, e-book and app production, and websites.

To make the whole process easier and to ensure accuracy and responsible publishing, Hare Krishna has been helping develop a number of new automated systems for the past five years.

Instead of using the old print-book-first approach, the NE BBT is switching to the e-book-first approach where a proprietary file format is used to generate everything — e-books, iOS, Android and Kindle versions, apps, etc — from one single set of files.

“In the old way, if we found a mistake, say in the Devanagari Sanskrit script, we’d need to manually

make the correction across all the different versions and the forty-five languages or so the BBT publishes in – a total of about 270 sets of files,” says Hare Krishna Das. “With the new electronic format, we just have to make the correction once and the files all get regenerated on their own, removing the difficult human factor.”

Automated systems also generate the Devanagari script in Prabhupada’s books automatically, so that when someone makes a change in the transliteration, it is immediately applied to the Devanagari.

Other uses are fascinating. When translating Srila Prabhupada’s books into other languages, sometimes due to human error a verse or translation can be omitted. But the automated systems are able to check against the original English edition to make sure that nothing is lost.

The systems can also spellcheck Sanskrit verses and automatically fix hard-to-spot duplicate spaces or commas that should be italicized. They can even automatically do layout.

“The human touch is of course very important, and technology is nothing on its own,” says Hare Krishna Das. “But when you combine the two, you have an excellent process.”

Another important element of responsible publishing is the BBT’s repository system, based on Git, a version control system developed by Linux creator Linus Torvalds.

The repository is one central point where files for all the books are stored. It also records every change made, and who made them. Furthermore it keeps all “slices” of a project at each stage of

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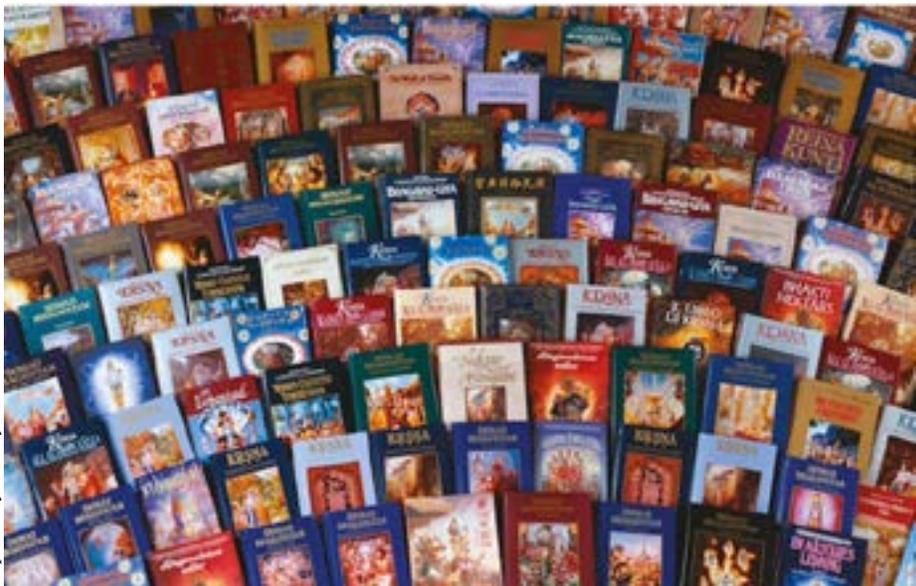
development. Thus if a mistake is made, or work is somehow destroyed, one can always return to the previous stage with minimal loss.

Meanwhile in a related BBT project, the Editorial Audit Trail, Ananta Krishna Das is uncovering who did what in editing Prabhupada's books during the time before the repository existed. This project covers not only English but other languages as well.

"Responsible publishing means that we should know where every word in our books came from," Hare Krishna Das says. "How faithful is it to what Srila Prabhupada wrote? And is it complete?"

The combination of the Editorial Audit Trail and the repository, according to Hare Krishna, will be invaluable to future generations of ISKCON. "With the repository system, we'll be able to track every single change made for the next thousand years," he says. "Anybody in the future will be able to go back and see who made each change, when it was done, and why."

The BBT is also developing a digital corpus of Srila Prabhupada's books in English, so that they never get lost and will be accessible to future generations to publish their own editions.



<https://bit.ly/2RuBoyy>

Hare Krishna Das is part of the team that helps create better systems for publishing Prabhupada's books

Used along with machine learning, a subset of artificial intelligence, this corpus will also be very useful in the present in different ways. For instance, BBT staff will be able to check the faithfulness of a translation against the original English books, even if they themselves do not speak the language.

All this is a lot of work, but for Hare Krishna Das, it continues to be as exciting as it was when he first started nearly twenty years ago.

"This field is very satisfying and full of meaning," he says. "And it's so huge, you can dedicate your life to it."

Motivation in Krishna Consciousness

By: Rashi Singh, www.dandavats.com, October 21, 2018

<https://bit.ly/2zihIGx>

Somehow, it happens that our motivation in Krishna consciousness may falter. Usually that faltering comes in the form of lacking the desire to do some practical service, associate with devotees, or develop our spiritual practices, such as improving the quality or quantity of our chanting or of our reading of Srila Prabhupada's books. Whenever this happens to me or a friend, I realize the urgency and fragility of devotional service and the importance of remaining inspired. How can we proactively and practically manage our own level of motivation in our devotional lives? How can we inspire ourselves and others in moments when our inspiration is lacking? This article humbly attempts to provide practical

insights into how to maintain one's enthusiasm and motivation in Krishna consciousness.

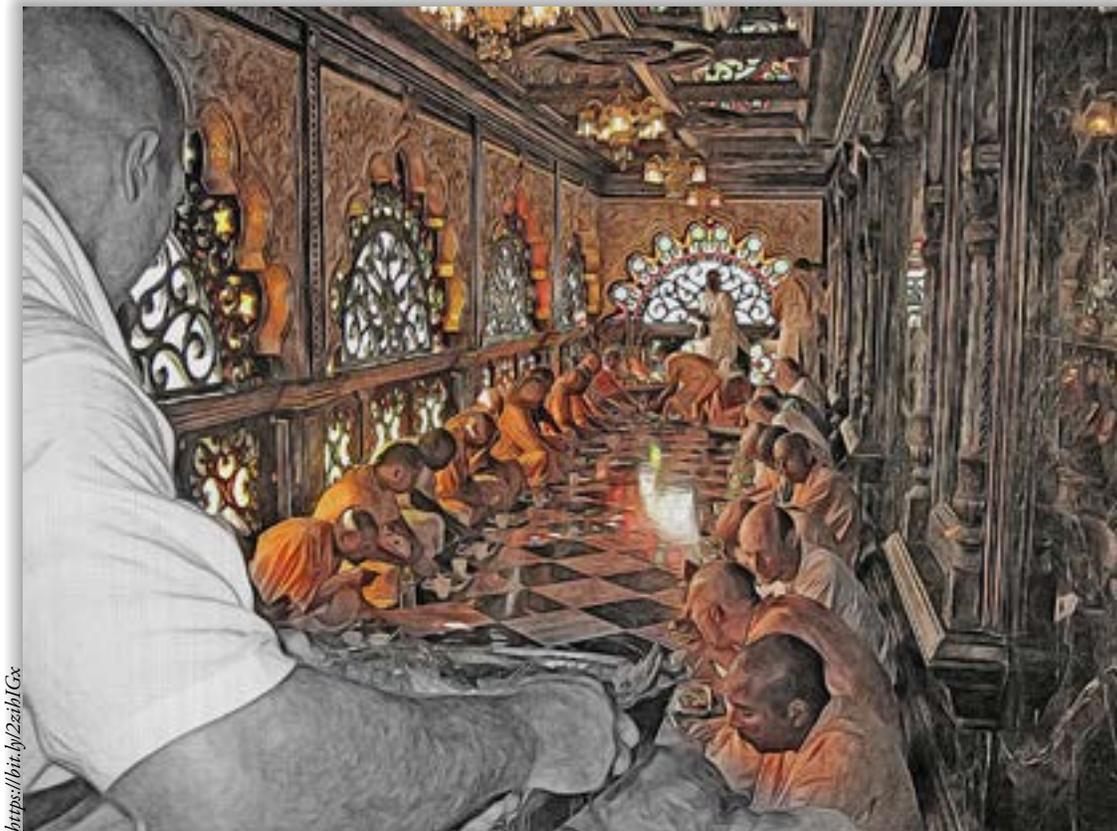
Some suggestions on how to stay inspired Chant in the Morning

"There never seems to be enough time in the day."

Quite honestly, besides the Hare Krishna mantra this is my other daily mantra.

Some years ago a devotee whose advice I value told me to "just try" to chant sixteen rounds on my beads every day, and specifically in the morning before leaving home. If I were able to do so, he said, Krishna would clear a path for me: My day would be increasingly efficient, and

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Association with devotees provides inspiration

I would find extra time in the evenings for other devotional activities. I've since also discovered that feeling stressed or overwhelmed about daily tasks occupies much more time than we realize. Chanting in the morning helps clear the mind and thus makes us far more focused and productive throughout the day. The same devotee also told me that the material world is one of exploitation and deceit, and chanting in the morning places a protective shield around us that prevents others from hurting us.

Considering the copious amount of time we make for so many people and activities in a given day, why not make some time for the most important person, Lord Krishna, at the onset of our day—to talk to Him, associate with Him, and tell Him we care about Him? Whether for ten minutes or two hours, beginning the day by associating intimately with Krishna is incredibly sublime. Chanting our rounds is the basis for a spiritual day. Committing to a certain amount of chanting each day will help maintain and increase our motivation in Krishna consciousness. If we can try to chant in the morning, we stand an even better chance. While it may sound overly simplistic, chanting is the answer to everything. There's a reason Srila Prabhupada coined the phrase "Chant and be happy." And as far as possible, finish those rounds in the morning.

Remember that Krishna Is a Person

Perhaps this too sounds overly simplistic.

When we want to express affection for a friend or family member, we try to cultivate and nourish our relationship by expressing love and service through multiple acts of kindness, affection, and love. At every moment of every day Krishna is expressing His kindness, affection, and love for us. He is the friend who longs for us to associate with Him. He is with us always, willing us to Him. But to love Him is to exercise our free will. He can't force us to love Him, because it takes the nectar and sweetness out of the relationship.

If you've ever put more effort into a relationship than you've received, then you know that this is a painful position. When you feel unmotivated, try to think about how much Krishna has blessed you with, and how little He asks for in return. Remember that He is your friend, longing for a loving reciprocal relationship with you. If we just pay some attention to Him daily through chanting and other services, we will feel His reciprocation. One of the best ways to keep the desire to know Krishna better is to serve and associate with His devotees. They provide much inspiration by being naturally happy, devoted, and loving. Srila Prabhupada has provided us

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SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES

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with a home within which to take advantage of their association.

Scrub a Floor

Yes. Scrub a floor.

Srila Prabhupada said that cleaning the temple floor will clean the heart. When we feel unenthusiastic in our Krishna consciousness, rendering menial service, particularly in the association of devotees, can have a profound effect.

Before the *Ratha-yatra* festival in Jagannatha Puri, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and His associates would clean every nook and corner of the Gundicha temple, where Jagannatha, Baladeva, and Subhadra spend a week as part of the festival. With meticulous attention to detail, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and His associates cleaned the temple with deep love and determination.

In the *Chaitanya-caritamrita* Srila Prabhupada explains how the cleansing of the Gundicha temple is a metaphor for the cleansing of our own hearts:

“To give us practical instructions, Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu cleansed the temple twice. His second cleansing was more thorough. The idea was to throw away all the stumbling blocks on the path of devotional service...

By His practical activity, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu informed us how to cleanse our hearts.... The Lord was very pleased with those who could cleanse the temple by taking out undesirable things accumulated within. This is called *anartha-nivritti*, cleansing the heart of all unwanted things. Thus the cleansing of the Gundicha-mandira was conducted by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to let us know how the heart should be cleansed and soothed to receive Lord Sri Krishna and enable Him to sit within the heart without disturbance.”

— Sri *Chaitanya-caritamrita*, Madhya-lila 12.135, Purport

Menial service has a profound effect. Whether the service is washing dishes, cutting vegetables, or scrubbing the temple floor, it will transform our hearts and minds and thus make us more receptive to the mercy always available

to us. And there's an added benefit: Menial service in the association of devotees strengthens relationships with those devotees in real, perceptible ways that leave us feeling loved. Our inspiration to reciprocate with them and other devotees will keep us protected, motivated, and grounded in our Krishna consciousness.

Share—Any Way, Any How

Sharing what you know about Krishna consciousness is a truly transcendental experience. Share *prasada*, distribute books, or share whatever you know, no matter how little you think it might be. The knowledge you share will strengthen for you, and you will help others discover their own relationship with Krishna. When that happens you will feel Srila Prabhupada's and Krishna's reciprocation immediately. What better way to stay motivated? To share Krishna consciousness, on a small or larger scale, is both inspiring and humbling. Give it a try, and you'll see your enthusiasm and motivation in Krishna consciousness multiply.

Keep a Journal

Writing can be an extremely effective and powerful tool for reflecting on our realizations and motivation. Many devotees enjoy regularly writing letters to Srila Prabhupada or Krishna. It is a sweet, simple activity that will bolster your relationship with Krishna. Writing honestly and sharing thoughts on paper is a therapeutic motivational exercise for many devotees.

Maintain an Attitude of Gratitude

A moment's reflection on what Srila Prabhupada has given us will ensure that we carry out our devotional service with proper gratitude and motivation. Gratitude is a powerful instrument: It breeds sincerity and a concentrated effort to progress in our spiritual life.

Just Try

These are some small but practical methods we can apply in maintaining and increasing our motivation in Krishna consciousness. To feel unmotivated at times is natural. But if we can use those times as opportunities to grow and go deeper in our spiritual life, we will emerge stronger and even more inspired to engage in devotional service. “Just try.” We only have everything to gain.

We Would Appreciate Your Feedback
Please Send Your Response To :

feedback@mukundagoswami.org

Personal

Message...



Dear Friends,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

It's interesting that Krsnadasa Kaviraja, literally "King of the Poets," has highlighted several verses, excerpted from Vedic writings, in the latter part of the *Caitanya-caritamrta*, which includes Lord Caitanya's two-month continuous instruction to Sanatana Goswami.

The interesting fact is that most of these verses are drawn from books of knowledge that pre-date the *Caitanya-caritamrta*, such as the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and various *Puranas*.

This means that the Lord's continuous daily instructions to Sanatana Goswami were based on the writings of previous acaryas. These teachings were not the inventions of Lord Caitanya. This means that the *Hari-bhakti-vilasa* by Sanatana Goswami, which is more or less a complete manual of the philosophy and behavior of a Vaisnava, consists of the writings which are previous bonafide Vaisnava texts.

It is said in the *Mahabharata* and often quoted by Srila Prabhupada, *mahajano yena gatah sa panthah*. This verse, roughly translated, means that all knowledge is contained within the hearts of the twelve *mahajanas*, namely Brahma, Narada, Siva, the Kumaras, Kapila, Svayambhuva Manu, Janaka, Prahlada, Bhisma, Bali, Sukadeva and Yamaraja.

Furthermore, in the song of the Avanti Brahmana (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 11.3.57): "I shall cross over the insurmountable ocean of nescience by being firmly fixed in the service of the lotus feet of Krsna. This was approved by the previous acaryas, who were fixed in firm devotion to the Lord, Paramatma, the Supreme Personality of Godhead." This verse is to be recited three times daily by all sannyasis.

In the *Caitanya-caritamrta*, this verse was sung repeatedly and in ecstasy by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu (*Caitanya-caritamrta* Madhya 3.5-6) when he was walking through Radha-desa. This indicated that every instruction, every thought, every saying had to be based upon the realizations of previous acaryas – that nothing could be invented or contrived out of one's fertile brain.

Plagiarism, sometimes called reverse engineering and theft, is relatively commonplace in today's high technology environment and in the popular music industry. The modern British poet, TS Eliot, once said, "Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal." However, there is an English aphorism that goes, "There is nothing new under the sun." This latter saying is more consistent with Vaisnava conviction. Vaisnavas believe that everything comes from God (*Bhagavad-gita As It Is* 10.8) and that "originality" only has meaning in relation to Krishna. Srila Prabhupada almost always gave reference citations to the texts he quoted, although he didn't really have to. In this way, he avoided the academic offense known as plagiarism.

Your servant,

Mukunda Goswami

