# Spiritual Perspectives

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

October 2020

# Spiritualize the Corporate Space

By Radha devi dasi

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically changed the world in less than a year. The resulting human tragedy includes lost lives, broken families, and scarred communities. The pain that has been experienced is personal, emotional, psychological, societal, economic, and cultural; and it will leave scars. Perhaps the most significant long term effect of the pandemic will be economic. Thus far, the pandemic has served to widen the gap between rich and poor.

The World Bank estimates that COVID-19 could push between 71 million and 100 million people into extreme poverty in 2020. Economists expect this economic effect to be long lasting, going so far as to affect the economic prospects of future generations. The irony here is that, while those without significant financial resources are in a dire situation, stock markets continue to generate wealth for those who have the resources to invest. Governments have historically shown only a limited ability and willingness to redistribute wealth from rich to poor. Individual charitable efforts are equally limited. But there is another

group that has the power to mitigate the economic effects of this pandemic. Corporate leaders have to funnel resources directly to people who desperately need them.

But when times are hard, we generally see low wage workers who are most dependent on their wages lose a greater percentage of those wages than higher paid employees. CEOs may not see their salary drop at all. Most CEOs spare little thought for the well-being of their workers and none at all for people in poverty. They are motivated to increase investors' return on investment and are significantly rewarded when they do.

Vaishnava culture emphasizes the interdependence of various sections of society. That culture places a duty on employers to care for their employees. The more prosperous the employer is, the greater their duty of care. A *ksatriya* or *vaisya* in the *varnashrama* system would not consider putting workers at risk of hunger or homelessness to increase profits. Secular employers do this all the time.



Lining up at a food distribution center in Bangkok this month

Some corporate leaders have made a point, however, of using their power in order to benefit workers or vulnerable groups. For example, a few years ago Dan Price, the CEO of Seattle-based payment processing company Gravity Payments, raised all of his employees' salaries to at least \$70,000 a year and took a huge pay cut himself to make it happen. He faced a media firestorm predicting that higher paid employees would resign, that profits would fall, and that customers would stop doing business with Gravity Payments. However, Price held to his Christian principles. He is pleased by the company's subsequent growth but more pleased by the fact that the \$70,000 minimum wage has allowed more employees to have children, buy homes, and generally improve their quality of life.

The pandemic has provided opportunities for other forms of corporate welfare work.

Jack Ma, the co-founder of Alibaba, through the Jack Ma and Alibaba foundations, donated coronavirus test kits and other medical supplies to many countries around the world. Jack

Dorsey, the founder and boss of Twitter pledged to donate 1 billion US dollars towards an effort to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. Bill Gates has been diligently encouraging global cooperation on this front. This type of corporate behavior is called corporate social responsibility and there is a growing tendency among corporate leaders to value efforts that benefit people generally, not just what ends up in the pockets of investors.

But the truth is that these are rare examples. Corporate social responsibility is often the last consideration for CEOs in good times and the first casualty of any effort to rein in corporate spending. Most companies engage in some form of charity but are rarely willing to significantly reduce investor profits to do so. The benefits of corporate social responsibility are not enough to sustain significant corporate efforts. However, when corporate social responsibility is supported by a culture that values charity, as in the case of Gravity Payments, corporate actions tend to go farther and last longer.

Academics who study business organizations are advocating for corporate spiritual responsibility. Our Vaishnava philosophy provides a coherent spiritual framework for understanding the role of business leaders in maintaining the social good. Giving in charity is a spiritual responsibility for practitioners



of Krishna consciousness. Similarly, Vaishnava business owners understand that they are responsible for the welfare of their workers. Spreading these values to the corporate world may be one of the best ways to share both our philosophy and the benefits of a compassionate lifestyle.

# TOVP Construction Resumes

By: Sunanda Das, www.tovp.org, September 18, 2020 https://bit.ly/30ssqc8

After over six months of halted construction on account of the India lockdown, work on the TOVP has successfully resumed.

Under the direction of Ambarisa Das, a special *yajna* (fire sacrifice) was performed on August 29<sup>th</sup>, the Appearance Day of Lord Vamanadeva, to bring auspiciousness to the planned restart of the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium's (TOVP) construction. As Vamanadeva took three steps which covered the entire universe, the TOVP team prays that this *yajna*, their endeavors and the prayers and blessings of all the Vaishnavas will bear spiritual fruit allowing them to complete the TOVP within the next three years and relocate the beloved Mayapur Deities into Their new home.

The next milestone in their efforts will be the grand and historic installation of the new Prabhupada *murti* in the TOVP during a three-day celebration of Srila Prabhupada's 125<sup>th</sup> Appearance Anniversary Year in February 2021.

February 25 – Nityananda Trayodasi /Worldwide Prabhupada *Abhisheka* 

February 26 – Bhakti Charu Swami Samadhi Opening February 27 – New Prabhupada *Murti* Installation

If you wish to contribute to the Prabhupada *Murti* installation please go <u>HERE</u> to find out more.



Construction work resumes at the ToVP site

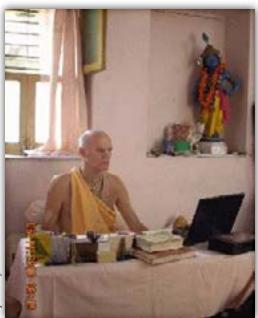
# Chanting Hare Krishna...It Really Works

By:Administrator, www.dandavats.com, September 24, 2020 https://bit.ly/3lc7r5l

The incident will always be fresh in my mind. I had been a practicing devotee for ten years, eight of which were in the sacred holy land of Sri Dham Mayapur in India. Little did I know that Krishna would be sending me the test of my life, the test of chanting His holy names.

As had been the routine since 1979 when devotees from Mayapur had inaugurated the Nama Hatta preaching by introducing the chanting of the holy name in every town and village, as ordered by Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu, I had just returned from such a village preaching engagement in the month of March 1984. I had § joined the Hare Krishna Movement

exactly 10 years earlier, January 1974, in Ottawa, Canada's capital city. After serving in Ottawa for devotees arriving from different parts of the world. two years, Krishna had arranged that I travel to India to attend the yearly Gaura Purnima Festival that takes place in the month of February/March. While serving in Ottawa as the head-cook for close to two years, the chance to visit the birthplace of Lord



His Holiness Bhakti Raghava Swami

Caitanya, that very personality who had inaugurated the chanting of the holy names in this same Sri Dham Mayapur some 500 years earlier, had come upon three young brahmacaris serving at the Ottawa temple. By some divine arrangement, I was able to continue serving in India since that first visit in March of 1976.

Just a few days before the Gaura Purnima festival in March 1984, during the annual GBC meetings conducted earlier in the month, I had been recommended to take sannyasa and, as was the custom in those earlier days, I was to take sannyasa the next year, Gaura Purnima of 1985. Soon after the GBC meetings, we prepared ourselves to receive the hundreds of

One of my regular duties during each Gaura Purnima festival was to receive and register devotees at the Reception Office, assigning them rooms and giving out prasadam coupons. We had no computers in those days and all the work was done by

hand in one main ledger, a time consuming and tedious task. By law, the local Foreign Registration Office (FRO) requires all foreigners visiting India to officially register following a special Proforma. Devotees in those earlier days would travel by large groups from different countries to converge at the Dum Dum Airport in Kolkata and would then take buses (as many as 10 to 15 buses or more) to travel, caravan style, to the mystical land of Sri Dham Mayapur. My first experience in 1976 of travelling to Mayapur in this way was a memorable one and all new-comers to the annual Gaura Purnima Festival have a similar experience. This meant that hundreds of devotees had to be registered at one time, following the slow system used in most government offices, i.e. without using computers. Needless to say this was taxing on both those who had to register and the person doing the registration, namely me. Immediately after the devotees left Mayapur to visit Vrindavana, wanting to take a break from those pressured days, I had travelled to some Nama Hatta village in the district of Birbhum, close to Ekachakra, the birthplace of Lord Caitanya's closest associate, Lord Nityananda Prabhu.

The visit was very short and within a few days, I returned to Sri Mayapur. Most of the rooms where visiting devotees had stayed before leaving for Vrindavana a few days earlier, were still not cleaned and had remained open. Feeling tired from the long trip that day, instead of sleeping in my regular quarters located in the basement of the Cakra Building where we had no fans, I went to the second floor of the building and chose one of the open rooms, all of which had two fans.

I was taking rest very peacefully when all of a sudden I heard some tumultuous sounds coming from the temple side. Still half asleep, I walked over to the balcony to observe large sparks of light flashing in the dark night. I looked at my watch and it was 12:30 a.m. The loud thundering sound continued and I could understand that these were bomb blasts. Our temple was being attacked! As I was standing on the balcony, I would also hear large cries from devotees. Suddenly, a group of devotees, possibly 20 strong, rushed from the Chakra Building to the Lotus Building where the temple was located. As they ran up the stairs, they became baffled to see the gate locked. Fortunately they were able to climb inside the building by bypassing the locked gate.

Naturally, I wanted to also get involved so I ran down-stairs to my room in the *Nama Hatta* section of the basement. A few devotees were still in some of the rooms, no one really knowing what to do. One new person who had stayed in one of the Gaudiya Maths was urging the devotees to lock themselves inside their rooms and not venture out. I gathered a few devotees together and, taking my padlock from the door and

two walking sticks from my room, led the devotees towards the backside of the Lotus Building where all the fireworks were still going on.

As we turned the corner of the Lotus Building, we could hear loud sounds in the temple area. In my mind I was convinced that the devotees were fighting it out with dacoits and surely needed some help. Passing by a pile of bricks lying closeby, I exchanged my padlock for a larger weapon, a brick. As we all ran from that corner of the building towards the only gate open to enter the temple, I held in my right hand the brick and in my left hand the two walking sticks which I wanted to use as latti or fighting sticks. I was leading the group of some seven devotees toward that gate where I could see one person guarding it. As I approached the gate, another person appeared at the gate. It was very dark. I could not clearly see what this second person was doing. It seemed as if he was waving his hands warning me not to come closer, which indeed he was doing, but little did I know that he was actually preparing to throw a bomb in my direction.

As things happen in most unexpected accidents, the bomb made a huge sound upon hitting my body as it exploded. Upon contact with the bomb, my body flew a few feet in the air and I suddenly found myself crashing on the ground, flat on my back, suddenly realizing that a bomb had hit me. My arm had spontaneously reached my right leg where my knee bone was sticking out and blood was bleeding profusely. I had remained conscious from the moment I was hit by the bomb and the first reaction was to loudly start chanting the Hare Krishna maha-mantra.

I can recollect chanting very clearly and very loudly. I felt no pain but rather was experiencing a type of calm and serenity that took me beyond the bodily platform. The fighting was still raging inside the temple and I had no idea how long the whole ordeal would last. I also had no idea if I would survive the injury since I knew I was losing a lot of blood, my extended right hand and arm feeling the hot sulfur used in making the cocktail bomb. But as I lay on my back in that somewhat precarious condition, I realized that chanting the holy name had become a spontaneous reaction and I was feeling great comfort in simply taking shelter of the holy names. I was mentally prepared to leave my body if that was Krishna's desire.

I occasionally share this experience with devotees as it further deepened my conviction that the chanting of the holy names can bring solace and comfort to one who may be in the most precarious of conditions. I have heard similar accounts from devotees having similar experiences. Chanting the holy names of Krishna really does work. Hare Krishna.

Please Send Your Feedback To: feedback@mukundagoswami.org

## On His 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday, A Documentary Project Launched to Honor Bhakti Charu Swami

By: ISKCON News Team, ISKCON News, September 18, 2020 https://bit.ly/30rcTJs

On July 4, 2020, the world lost one of its most inspiring spiritual leaders, Bhakti Charu Swami, to COVID-19. The shock and the loss made thousands of his followers numb, while others expressed their pain by posting their appreciations of their beloved master, or friend, on many different forums around the globe:

"The vacuum felt by Bhakti Charu Maharaja's departure is immense. And that is how it should be. These feelings of separation are the proper testimony to Bhakti Charu Maharaja's life—so exemplary, so well lived." (Bhadrinarayan Swami, San Diego, CA, USA)

"You touched so many hearts from coast to coast, just as you did in Europe, India, and everywhere." (Kalakantha Dasa, Gainesville, FL, USA)

"The sweetest person I have ever known." (Pragosh Dasa, Dublin, Ireland)

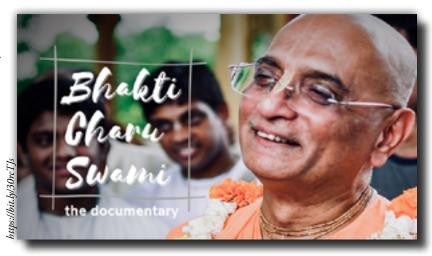
"Although we know intellectually from our philosophy that the 'soul is eternal and never dies,' we cannot deny the sadness we feel when a devotee departs." (Indradyumna Swami)

On Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, Bhakti Charu Swami's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, a team consisting of Bhakti Charu Swami's disciples, admirers as well as professional filmmakers, have launched a documentary film project with the purpose of celebrating Maharaja's life and presenting the impact he made in the world to a large global audience.

Depending on the support they get via the project's IndieGoGo campaign (https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/bhakti-charu-swami-the-documentary/x/5490780#/) and other channels, they are planning to produce two films. A shorter one (10-15 min.) for vast social media distribution to be released around the time of Bhakti Charu Maharaja's Samadhi Inauguration early next year, and a longer version for television, Amazon Prime, other streaming platforms, and educational distribution, to be released on Maharaja's disappearance day, on July 4, 2021.

Both films will be subtitled in a minimum of 10 languages (Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Portuguese, French, and German.) Additionally, they will also be sent to film festivals.

The project's core team has several advisors, such as Anuttama Dasa (ISKCON Communications Minister, Washington, DC); Yadubara Dasa and Visakha Dasi (award-winning filmmakers of Inner Voice Productions, creators of the feature documen-



tary "Hare Krishna! The Mantra, The Movement, and the Swami Who Started It All"); Bhakti Prema Swami (Chairman of the Board of ISKCON Ujjain); Mark J. DeGasperi (film critic at Sony Pictures Entertainment, Hollywood, CA, USA; and screenwriting professor at New York University); and Avelo Roy (Ajita Dasa - serial entrepreneur, MD Kolkata Ventures, 4x TEDx speaker, Kolkata, India).

On the production team are Sharon Hamilton-Getz (Saranagati Dasi) - Founder - UN Rep. - ProjectHarmony, Institute of International Social Development, New York, USA; Arundhati Biswas (Aparajita Radhika Dasi) - MD, activist, Chicago, IL, USA; Krishna Kishor Dasa - Bhakti Charu Swami's secretary in his last years, Ujjain, India (associate producer); and Deena Krishna Dasa - Bhakti Yoga Guide, London, UK (associate producer).

Filip Cargonja (Gaura Govinda Dasa) will be in charge of the principal cinematography; Aradhya Bhagavan Dasa and Arjun Bhattarcharyya from Kolkata are providing the core pictures of the still photography, while Ram Charan Dasa from Ujjain will manage the archival materials.

The sound engineering and color editing will be done by award-winning filmmakers Maxim Varfolomeyev (Shyam Gopal Dasa) and Olga Avramenko (Vijay Radhika Dasi) of Five Pictures, Dubai, UAE, the creators of *Reconnection*.

The company overseeing the process is Karuna Productions (a New York-based company that produced several award-winning films) in association with the Institute of International Social Development, New York, USA - an NGO with a Consultative Status at the United Nations.

The film's director is Krisztina Danka, Ph.D. (Krishna Lila Dasi) - a Hungarian USA-based academic and multi-award-winning filmmaker, the producer-director of dozens of short, and three feature films, including the The *Joy of Devotion*, *The Stolen River* and *Nature's I.Q.* (For a full list of Krishna Lila's films visit: <a href="https://www.karunaproductions.com">https://www.karunaproductions.com</a>)

"I feel very enthused by the support and encouragement our team has been getting for this project from all over the world," film director Krishna Lila says. "When we showed the trailer to the devotees at the Zoom *Vyasa-puja* celebration, they were visibly moved, many of them broke down in tears. We keep getting messages like 'our heart is still broken, and this film project is something that could help us heal.' I do have faith in art's healing potentials, but more importantly, I know

that Bhakti Charu Maharaja loved films and fully understood the transforming power of visual storytelling. Therefore I feel a documentary film is a very appropriate way to celebrate his life and help preserve his legacy."

\* \* \*

Anyone would like to take part in the film project, or contribute to the production, please visit the project's IndieGogo page (https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/bhakti-charuswami-the-documentary/x/5490780#/), or contact bcsfilmproject@gmail.com.



The film's trailer, advisors, and personnel

# New Vrindaban Endures Through Covid-19, Provides Visitors with Respite in Safe Space

By: Madhava Smullen, ISKCON News, September 21, 2020 https://bit.ly/2Gc4AKU

At the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, ISKCON temples around the world closed their doors, and many found challenges in maintaining themselves without traditional in-person outreach activities.

By June, some had begun to reopen, with locally mandated restrictions. New Vrindaban, ISKCON's first farm community, in West Virginia, faced particular economic challenges due to the size of the facility and its focus on serving pilgrims and tourists.

Despite having to cut back in many areas, the pilgrimage site was able to survive with PPP funding from the government, and by reopening to visitors in May as an essential service with state-mandated restrictions.

While other temples maintain specific set times when visitors can register to come and take darshan (pay their respects to the Deities), New Vrindaban is open from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day.

The temple canceled its large festivals such as Festival of Colors, but is able to continue receiving guests in different safe and creative ways. Janmastami, Lord Krishna's birthday, was celebrated with precautions and a limited number of visitors, while the 24-Hour Kirtan was a mostly online event.

Weekend retreats on yoga, meditation and ecology have been held with five to ten guests each, while a regular Sunday Brunch has been held in Srila Prabhupada's Palace Rose Garden.

All this is possible partly due to sheer the space temple room vast, the community spread out over 2,200 acres, and the core iskcon New Vrindaban area is over 525 acres, making a visit more like going to a state park. In addition, there has been a relatively low number of Covid-19 cases Marshall in County, where the pilgrimage spot is located.

Left: A family enjoys Sunday Brunch at their own socially-distanced table in the Prabhupada's Palace Rose Garden Right: A cameraman from a local TV station gets a warm welcome from a baby peacock

More recently, New Vrindaban devotees welcomed guests on Labor Day Weekend, from September 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>. As always, masks, sanitization, and social distancing were in place over the weekend – the temple room is divided into a limited number of six by six feet spaces, and a security guard was engaged to ensure proper following of the precautions both inside and outside.

The number of programs were reduced, and were largely held outside in different parts of the 2,200 acre property.

There was an outdoor sound bath, held in the evening under the trees and lit by paper lanterns. Lying on yoga mats, people relaxed and listened to residents Kripamaya Das, a Prabhupada disciple, and Bhaktin Monique chant mantras such as *Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya*, *Ugram Viram Mahavishnum* and the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*. This provided a safe experience of kirtan, without the traditional call and response.

At Govinda's Restaurant, there was outdoor eating with Christmas lights and tiki torches in the evening, while inside the restaurant every other table was closed. There was also yoga, and an elegant, cosmopolitan Sunday Brunch at Srila Prabhupada's Palace Rose Garden, where each family sat at a

separate socially-distanced wrought iron picnic table amidst 100 varieties of fragrant pink, red and white roses.

The incredible menu included a continental breakfast of croissants, biscuits, jams, breads, fruit, granola, yoghurt made with milk from New Vrindaban's cows, almond milk, and more. In addition there was Indian street food such as idli, vada, sambar, uttapam, chutney, puri, and subji.

On Labor Day Weekend and on regular weekends as well as

during the week, New Vrindaban has also seen record book distribution, with people receiving Prabhupada's books along with their Who's Who and What's What booklet before going on a selfled tour. Srimad-Bhagavatam sets have also been distributed over the phone and mailed during the Bhadra Campaign.

"We're finding that people are more introspective

and respective

these days," says New Vrindaban Communications Director Anuradha Dasi. "They're looking for answers."

With the state of West Virginia promoting in-state day visits to local attractions, there have been more local day visitors to New Vrindaban, as well as more coverage by local radio and TV stations. One station's Walkabout Wednesday covered Govinda's restaurant and drew 25,000 views, while another show featured a new baby peacock as well as Sri Sri Radha Vrindaban Chandra's temple.

Guiding New Vrindaban through all these efforts has been interim temple president Jaya Krsna Dasa. Originally taking on the service as temple president of ISKCON New Vrindaban in 2011 and resigning in 2019 after eight years, Jaya Krsna was asked to step in again in December 2019, after an attempted three-director system did not work out.

Grateful for a familiar and experienced leader to take care of operations, especially amidst the unprecedented challenges of a pandemic, New Vrindaban devotees are now on the search once again for a new temple president to manage a spiritually inspiring temple in the service of Sri Sri Radha Vrindaban Chandra. Once the new president takes over – in January 2021,

it is hoped – Jaya Krsna Dasa will be free to focus on his service as GBC Zonal Supervisor.

Meanwhile New Vrindaban will continue to offer a safe space for people to recharge spiritually.

"Over the Labor Day Weekend, many people said they appreciated being in a large, beautiful space where they could take long walks, see the cows, and have food lovingly and carefully prepared," Anuradha says. "New Vrindaban, they felt, offered a respite from their day-to-day lives."

To apply for the position of temple president at New Vrindaban, please contact:

HumanResources@newvrindaban.com
Read the service description here:
<a href="http://www.dandavats.com/?p=87193">http://www.dandavats.com/?p=87193</a>
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Read about and watch local media coverage of New Vrindaban at the below links:

https://www.newvrindaban.com/post/walkabout-wednesday-comes-to-govinda-s

https://www.newvrindaban.com/post/a-star-is-born-by-anuradha-dasi

https://www.wtrf.com/community/peacock-chick-bringing-smiles-during-pandemicthinks-hes-more-human-than-bird

https://www.wtrf.com/destination-wv/destination-west-virginia/ destination-west-virginia-palace-of-gold/

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Guests on the self-guided peacock walk

# Personal Message





Dear Friends,

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

The following passage is found in Satsvarupa dasa Goswami's book Reading Reform:

Once a devotee protested to Prabhupāda about the aggressive tactics used by the book distributors. Prabhupāda did not accept the complaint. He desired that his disciples take up the active work of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But Prabhupāda himself complained that his book distributors were not reading his books. Unlike some literatures, Prabhupāda's books produce preachers, not  $b\bar{a}b\bar{a}j\bar{s}$ , but the preachers of Kṛṣṇa consciousness must themselves read the books regularly to remain strong and active in their service.

Srila Prabhupada is known for saying, "My only complaint is that my disciples don't read my books." Reading his books is so important that I have requested my disciples to read Srila Prabhupada's books -- at least 30 pages -- every day.

About four weeks ago, on behalf of the entire GBC body, Ramai Swami, this year's ISKCON global GBC Chairman, sent a message to all devotees requesting that all ISKCON members read Srila Prabhupada's books every day.

This principle is so important, that I have decided to include parts of this message in my Message to Friends section of this newsletter. He said:

"Besides attending Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam class every day, Srila Prabhupada wanted reading to be an essential part of every devotee's daily sadhana."

The message also included these words:

"Indeed, these books are filled with spiritual potency. Devotees who are reading them every day confirm that the Bhaktivedanta purports provide that which every devotee is hankering for – intimate association with Srila Prabhupada."

Here are two important quotes from Srila Prabhupada's teachings.

All the devotees connected with the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement must read all the books that have been translated (the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Bhagavad-gītā, and others); otherwise, after some time, they will simply eat, sleep and fall down from their position." (*Caitanya-caritāmrta*, Madhya-lila, 25.278/ purport)

It is not that because one has once finished *Bhagavad-gītā* he should not hear it again. The word *abhīkṣṇam* is very important. We should hear again and again. There is no question of stopping: even if one has read these topics many times, he should go on reading again and again because *bhagavat-kathā*, the words spoken by Kṛṣṇa and spoken by Kṛṣṇa's devotees about Kṛṣṇa, are *amṛtam*, nectar. The more one drinks this *amṛtam*, the more he advances in his eternal life. (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.14.3-4/ purport)

Your servant,

Mukunda Goswami

Mukeuda Loswanie

